

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, May 18

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

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

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

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

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, May 19

Senior Menu: Chicken alfredo, broccoli, blushing pears, whole wheat bread.

Girls Golf at Milbank, 10 a.m.

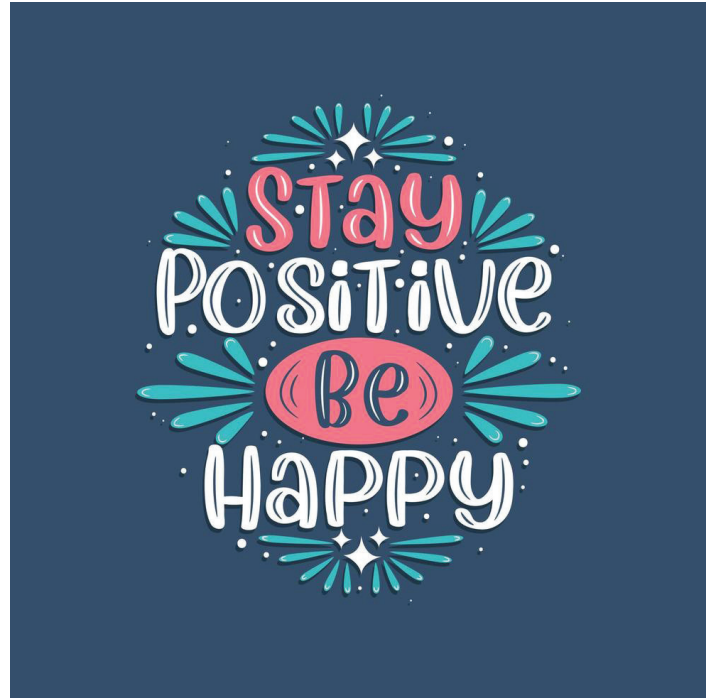
Junior High Northeast Conference Track Meet, 10 a.m.

Track at Warner, 11 a.m.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, Potluck at Noon

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

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

Tuesday, May 20

Senior Menu: Tatertot hot dish, green beans, pineapple, whole wheat bread.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.

Wednesday, May 21

Senior Menu: Cheeseburger on bun, lettuce/tomato/onion, potato salad, corn, fruit.

Region High School Baseball at two highest seeds

Groton United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

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We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

Remembering Justice David Souter: The Supreme Court Could Use More Like Him

Many Americans may have missed this week the passing of Justice David Souter, who retired from the Supreme Court in 2009, after a distinguished 20-year career on the nation's High Bench, but the oversight would be understandable. After all, it's not every week, or even every century, that a sitting U.S. President publicly muses about suspending the Writ of Mandamus, known as the "Great Writ," because of its standing, as Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase declared in 1868, as "the most important human right in the Constitution," what he described as "the best and only sufficient defense of personal freedom." It's not every century that the president, in defiance of the Emoluments Clause, contemplates accepting from Qatar a luxury plane worth some \$400 million that he can use for personal matters after leaving the White House. And, of course, there's no overlooking the chaos and turbulence of the economy, which drives the citizenry to distraction.

There was much to like and admire about Justice Souter, who was just 69 when he retired from the Court. Justice Harry Blackmun told a judicial conference that Souter, "perhaps, is the only normal person on the Supreme Court." Souter never sought to make Washington, D.C. his home, nor was he seduced by the trappings of power and the social scene that captured justices and politicians, alike. He embraced a simple life and preferred the physical and cultural setting of New Hampshire--the serenity and beauty of its forests, hiking trails and, like fellow New Englander, Henry David Thoreau, time for reading and reflection. Souter lived much of his life in his maternal grandparents' home outside of Concord and moved in the latter part of his life because the structure of the house was not strong enough to bear the weight of his personal library. When he joined the Court, Souter reluctantly packed up his car, in late September before the commencement of each Term, with just a few belongings in tow, and drove to his spartan Washington apartment, already looking forward to returning to New Hampshire after the High Court had finished its business. When he retired, Justice Souter said there was more to life, than life on the Court, no matter how much he enjoyed his time on the nation's highest court.

Souter, by every measure, worked exceptionally hard. He worked in his chambers late into the evening and spent his weekends in his office. Most days, he ate lunch—a cup of yogurt and an apple, including the core—at his desk. He was an intellectual powerhouse who wrote major opinions on issues of religion, First Amendment, privacy, abortion rights, federalism, race and the structure of democracy. By historical standards, Souter was viewed as a moderate conservative jurist, committed to precedent and the rule of law. Like Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, whose pragmatism he admired, Souter prized a modest, restrained role for the Court.

Legal scholars praised his dissent in *Bush v. Gore* (2000), in which the Court, in a 5-4 decision, halted Florida's recount in the contentious presidential election. He believed the Court acted without authority when it voted to terminate the recount process. As a former state supreme court justice, Souter would have given the Florida Supreme Court more time to supervise the process.

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Souter's most notable opinion was likely his co-authorship in 1992, with Justices Anthony Kennedy and Sandra Day O'Connor of a ruling that reaffirmed *Roe v. Wade*'s protection of a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy, which reflected his strong commitment to precedent. *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* was the Court's first opinion that recognized the relationship between reproductive rights and women's equality.

Souter's deep-seated concerns about the future of democracy were featured in a rare public interview in 2012, in Concord, before an audience of some 1,300 persons. Adam Liptak of the New York Times, in May 12 story, recounted Souter's pointed remarks about the threats to our democracy. He warned that pervasive public ignorance about the Constitution and the structure of government could give rise to an authoritarian, who would concentrate power in his hands. "That is the way democracy dies," he said. "An ignorant people can never remain a free people," Souter observed. "Democracy cannot survive too much ignorance." In various ways, until his death, Souter extolled the virtues of civic education.

David Adler is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality and civic education. This column is made possible with the support of the South Dakota Humanities Council, South Dakota NewsMedia Association and this newspaper.

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Confetti was shot into the air at the end of the GHS Commencement ceremony held Saturday. The forty-three students received their diplomas and are now GHS Alumni. The GDI will have a special section in the near future. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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2025 Amateur Baseball Schedule

June 7- vs Northville @7
June 8- vs Faulkton @4
June 17- @ Northville @630
June 25- @ Aberdeen @6
June 29- @ Redfield @4
July 6- @ Faulkton @4
July 13- @ Clark @4
July 15- vs Aberdeen @6
July 20- vs Redfield @4

Lightning Strikes Rapid Valley Home Friday Night

From the Rapid City Post

RAPID CITY, SD — Friday night at 3:00am lightning struck a family's home in Rapid Valley, damaging the home. The strike, which damaged the area of their daughters' bedroom left the family shaken. The homeowner, who wished to remain anonymous, stated on the event: "By miracle, [my daughter] just happened to fall asleep downstairs tonight and was not in her room. Firefighters said it was a good thing she wasn't".

Name Released in Lincoln County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash
Where: 282nd Street and 469th Avenue, six miles southwest of Worthing, SD
When: 11:52 a.m., Wednesday, May 14, 2025
Driver 1: Mikelena Flora Neal, 24-year-old female from Lake Andes, SD, fatal injuries
Vehicle 1: 2009 Nissan Maxima
Seat belt Used: No
Passenger 1a: One month old male from Sioux Falls, SD, minor injuries
Seat belt Used: Yes

Lincoln County, S.D.- One woman died and an infant passenger was injured in a single vehicle crash six miles southwest of Worthing, SD, Wednesday, May 14.

Preliminary crash information indicates Mikelena Flora Neal, the driver of a 2009 Nissan Maxima, was traveling west on 282nd Street near 469th Avenue when she lost control of the vehicle and over-corrected, leaving the south side of the road. The vehicle then rolled and Neal, who was not wearing a seatbelt, was ejected.

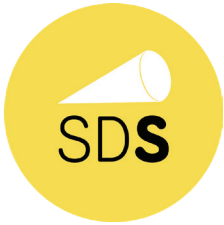
An infant passenger who was properly restrained remained in the vehicle and sustained minor injuries. Neal sustained fatal injuries.

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.

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Note: Records of state-reportable crashes are now available at <http://www.safesd.gov/> . Records should be available about 10 days after the investigation is complete.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

Race for South Dakota governor could be a race for Trump's favor by Dana Hess

It may seem a little early to start wondering about who's likely to be elected governor of South Dakota in November of 2026. However, November is not the date that's important. Just more than a year from now, in June 2026, the Republican Party will have its primary election to decide on a gubernatorial candidate. Since Democrats are close to a nonentity in this state, it's the GOP primary that will likely decide the next governor of South Dakota.

It was with that timing in mind that South Dakota News Watch, in cooperation with the Chiesman Center for Democracy at the University of South Dakota, conducted a poll of 500 registered Republican voters and asked them who they supported for governor.

A News Watch story accompanying the poll listed some important factors for the success of the candidates: the money they can raise, their name recognition and their standing in the state's geographic regions. What it didn't mention was perhaps the most important factor of all: who's the most likely to get the endorsement of President Donald Trump.

Hold on, you might say. Why does Donald Trump care who fills the governor's office in South Dakota? Maybe he doesn't, but history tells us he loves to make endorsements. Already for 2026 he has offered endorsements in races elsewhere for the U.S. Senate and House, state legislative races and governorships.

The News Watch poll found Trump with a 68% favorability rating among Republicans in South Dakota, a far better rating than any of the candidates likely to run in the GOP primary. Consequently, his endorsement would carry some weight. Just as it may not be too soon to poll Republicans on their choice for the next governor, it's not too soon to handicap which candidate might have the best shot at getting a thumbs-up from Trump.



From left, U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, Gov. Larry Rhoden, Attorney General Marty Jackley, Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden and state House Speaker Jon Hansen. (South Dakota Searchlight photos)

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The highest finisher in the poll was U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson with 28% followed by Gov. Larry Rhoden with 27%, Attorney General Marty Jackley with 18%, Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden with 4% and state Speaker of the House Jon Hansen with 2%. Hansen is the only one so far to announce that he's running for the nomination, though there is plenty of speculation about the intentions of the others.

Johnson, the marginal leader in the poll, also finds himself in the closest proximity to the White House. During Trump's second term he has embraced the president's policies, going so far as to introduce legislation that would allow Trump to purchase the Panama Canal. He's even praised the government-cutting efforts of Elon Musk's DOGE, while admitting that the whole thing could be handled better.

Rhoden, like Johnson, has been full of praise for the president's policies. Rhoden's connection to Kristi Noem, his predecessor and Trump's secretary of Homeland Security, may be valuable if the president chooses to endorse. However, you never know when the mercurial Trump may wake up angry. He went through three Homeland Security secretaries in his first term. While he has been supportive of the president, Rhoden has a long history in South Dakota politics that may be tainted by the current GOP philosophy that scorns bipartisanship.

Jackley has to wonder what a life in public service has been worth politically, garnering just 18% support in the poll. Serving as attorney general twice and running for governor once before has to be worth more than that. Jackley, too, has ingratiated himself to Trump, going so far as to visit Mar-a-Lago to consult with the president-elect on the politicization of the Justice Department. Known for his law and order stance in South Dakota, it must be galling for Jackley to consider the blanket pardons Trump handed out to the Jan. 6 insurrectionists.

At the bottom of the poll is the only official candidate, state Rep. Jon Hansen of Dell Rapids. His low finish in the poll is an indication that hard work in the Legislature doesn't necessarily result in name recognition within the party. Fortunately for Hansen, he has another legislative session as speaker of the House in which to make his mark. A leader in the state's anti-abortion and property rights efforts, he'll need to drum up a Trumpian issue to keep his name in the news and enhance his chances of getting an endorsement.

Finishing ahead of Hansen in the poll was Doeden. He's never held elective office but his influence can be felt in the Legislature. His Dakota First Action PAC helped elect a number of populist Republican candidates who had to notch primary wins against incumbents to get to Pierre. Doeden is known for his prolific videos that often point out what's wrong with the members of his own party. He has something brewing, announcing an event for May 28.

Of all these candidates, Doeden is the most Trump-like with his wealth and his disdain for the status quo. He now has a cadre of lawmakers beholden to his generosity who can carry his message to far-right members of the party. That wing of the party is known for getting out the vote during primaries. As Republicans have shown in recent elections, they have a penchant for voting for angry rich guys.

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.

OPENING MAY 2ND
CLOSING JUNE 2ND

WEBER LANDSCAPING GREENHOUSE

620 WEST THIRD AVENUE

GROTON

HOURS OF OPERATION

M-F 10-6

SAT 10-4

SUN 12-4





THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

ROMANS 12:17,18



Holy Family With a Bird by Simon Vouet (1633)

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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. Which king was stricken with leprosy because he disobeyed God's command and burned incense on a holy altar? *Uzziah, Solomon, Joab, Petra*

3. From 1 Kings 19, what prophet experienced an earthquake while standing on a mountaintop? *Paul, Ahab, Andrew, Elijah*

4. Who was the first woman to be ashamed of her lack of clothing? *Eve, Anna, Pilate's wife, Miriam*

5. In Acts 9, what dressmaker was restored to life by Peter's prayers? *Naomi, Priscilla, Lydia, Dorcas*

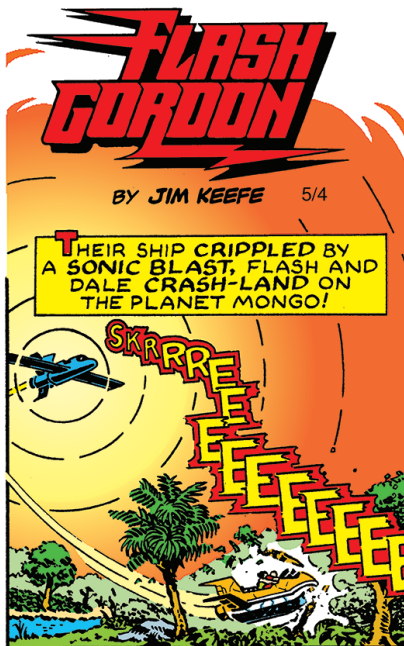
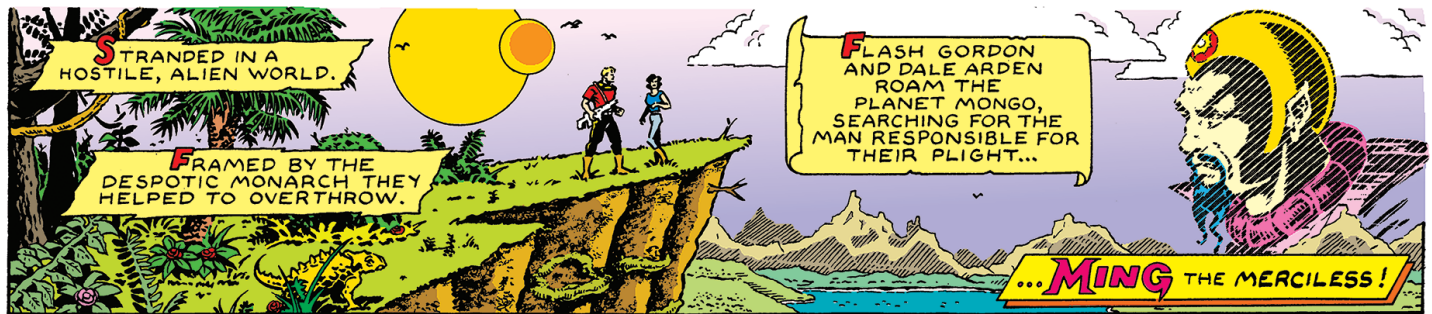
6. Where did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead? *Sinai, Bethany, Tarsus, Smyrna*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Uzziah, 3) Elijah, 4) Eve, 5) Dorcas, 6) Bethany

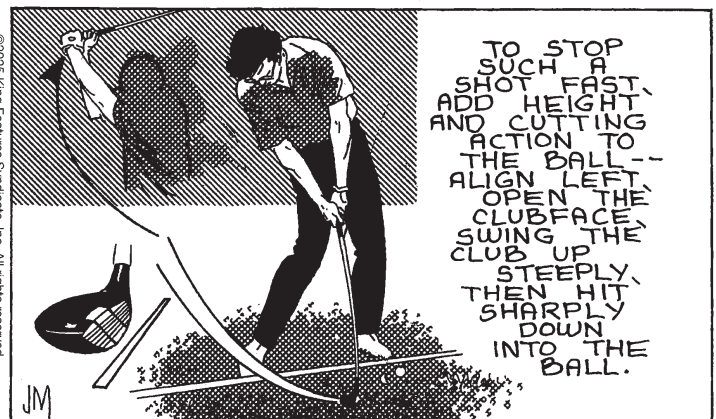
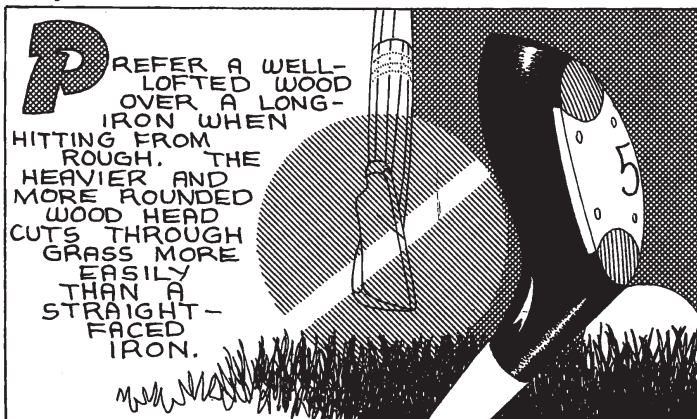
Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online.

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Not Everyone Who Has Artery Blockages Requires Surgery

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have HIV and pulmonary hypertension. I was part of a research study, and a scan found blockages of about 50% in my carotid arteries. I've never had any symptoms or a stroke. Do I need to have surgery? -- V.P.

ANSWER: In general, screening for blockages in the carotid arteries that provide blood flow to the brain is not recommended, but occasionally, I do see people who get the diagnosis made as part of a study or as a result of a diagnostic test that was performed for some other reason. Screening means that there are no present symptoms, and the management of asymptomatic blockages is different from symptomatic ones.

Not everybody with blockages needs surgical intervention. Guidelines recommend against surgery in people with no symptoms who have less than 70% stenosis. Only when the blockage is greater than 70% is surgery considered.

Medical treatment is effective at reducing the risk of a stroke and includes a high dose of a potent statin agent, aspirin, the careful control of high blood pressure and diabetes (if appropriate), quitting smoking, a healthy diet (such as Mediterranean-style), regular exercise, and weight reduction in some people.

HIV itself increases the risk of stroke by about 40% compared to people without HIV, so it is appropriate to be more aggressive at reducing risk factors. This is similar to what we see in people with chronic inflammatory diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, who have a higher heart disease and stroke risk than what would be expected based on their other risk factors.

Your HIV provider may wish to consult an expert in cardiovascular disease prevention to help you reduce your stroke risk, although many HIV experts are also skilled primary care doctors themselves. Keeping HIV under control (ideally with no detectable virus) may help reduce inflammation and consequently bring down the additional risk of heart attack and stroke associated with HIV.

DEAR DR. ROACH: My spouse is frustrated by a nagging case of plantar fasciitis. It's been continuing for five or six months now. No amount of stretching, icing or resting seems to help. They are considering using a plantar fasciitis sock device that holds the foot in a specific position to provide relief. I am wondering if you could provide any other suggestions on how to reduce or eliminate this problem. -- M.R.

ANSWER: Plantar fasciitis is among the most common causes of foot pain, with nearly 1% of people complaining of plantar fasciitis pain during the previous month. Inflammation and pain most commonly occur at the bottom of the foot, just in front of the heel. The pain is often worst during the first step in the morning.

Rest and cushioned shoes or heel pads are helpful for most people. I am cautious about recommending stretching, especially when the pain is severe, as overdoing stretching can make things worse. Still, most people find stretching to be of benefit.

When symptoms do not get resolved with conservative management, I refer patients to a podiatrist. Some people just take a long time to heal, but 80% are better within a year. When conservative measures have failed to bring relief, your spouse's podiatrist might consider an injection of a steroid.

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

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Milly Alcock, left, and Julianne Moore star in "Sirens." (Courtesy of Netflix)

"Disney's Snow White" (PG) -- This live-action adaptation of the 1937 classic "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" might finally be the catalyst to get Disney to stop making reboots. Rachel Zegler, who nailed her last role as Lucy Gray Baird in "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes," leads the film as the soft-spoken, kind-hearted princess, opposite Gal Gadot's Evil Queen.

Disney Studios poured about \$270 million into its budget, only for the film to become "memefied" during its release due to critiques of Gadot's acting and the film's poor CGI. Time to go back to the drawing board, Disney! Out now to rent. (Amazon Prime Video)

"A Minecraft Movie" (PG) -- Unlike the previous film, this adaptation of the video game Minecraft was an incredible box-office success, earning close to \$1 billion and becoming the second highest-grossing film of the year so far. Jack Black, who's a veteran of game adaptations ("The Super Mario Bros. Movie"), leads the film alongside Jason Momoa ("Fast X"). The film follows four characters who get pulled into the Minecraft world through a portal and must find their way back to the real world with the assistance of expert crafter Steve (Black). Danielle Brooks ("The Color Purple") and Emma Myers ("Wednesday") co-star in "A Minecraft Movie," out now to rent. (YouTube)

"Drop" (PG-13) -- This new thriller film out now to rent hails from Christopher Landon, director of a few notable horror films such as "Happy Death Day" and "Paranormal Activity: The Marked Ones." He signed on Meghann Fahy ("The White Lotus") to play the lead character, therapist Violet Gates. After the death of her abusive husband Blake, Violet is back on the dating scene, hoping to move on from the trauma of her past. She shows up for a fancy restaurant date with photographer Henry Campbell (Brandon Sklenar), but as she waits for him to arrive, she starts receiving threatening messages in the form of "digital drops" from an unknown person. Even after Henry arrives and the date commences, the threats only escalate, putting her young son Toby in terrible danger. (Apple TV+)

"Sirens" (TV-MA) -- Meghann Fahy has had quite the busy spring! In addition to leading the previous film, she's starring in this Margot-Robbie-produced TV series, alongside two other powerhouse actresses -- Julianne Moore ("Mary & George") and Milly Alcock ("House of the Dragon"). Fahy plays Devon, an edgy young woman who pays a visit to her sister, Simone (Alcock), at the beach estate where Simone works. But upon arriving, Devon realizes that Simone's boss, Michaela (Moore), has an intriguingly odd influence over Simone that has left her acting entirely different from the sister Devon once knew. This five-episode limited series premieres May 22. (Netflix)

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1. Name the recording artist born David Goldstein. Hint: He also writes musicals and has penned songs for the Drifters, Dolly Parton and several others.
2. Which Creedence Clearwater Revival song was used in the film "The Big Chill"?
3. "With a Little Help From My Friends" was released on which Beatles album?
4. Who wrote and released "It Might as Well Rain Until September"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Each day I live, I want to be a day to give the best of me."

Answers

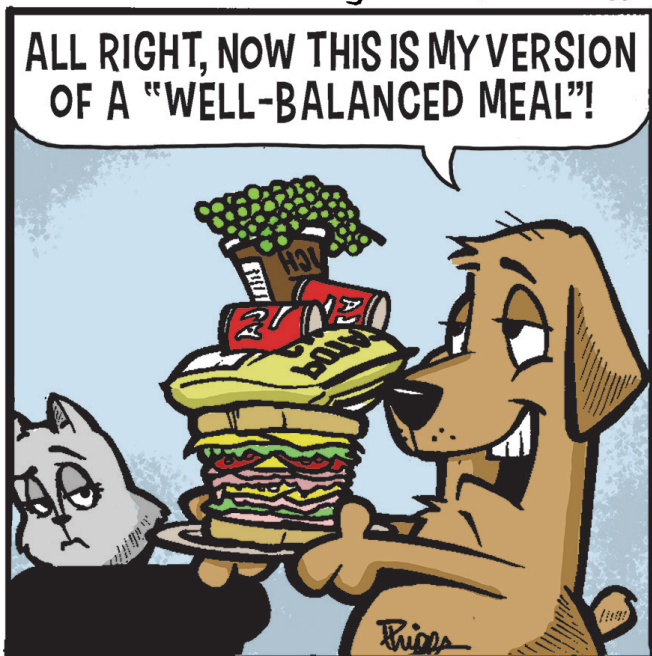
1. Rupert Holmes, of "Pina Colada" fame.
2. "Bad Moon Rising," in 1983. Other songs featured on the sound track included "I Heard It Through the Grapevine," "Joy to the World" and "The Tracks of My Tears."
3. "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," in 1967. It ranked No. 311 on the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time list. Joe Cocker released a cover a year later.
4. Carole King, in 1962.
5. "One Moment in Time," by Whitney Houston, in 1988. It was written as a promotion for the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics. The song charted around the globe, topping charts in the U.K., West Germany and the U.S.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

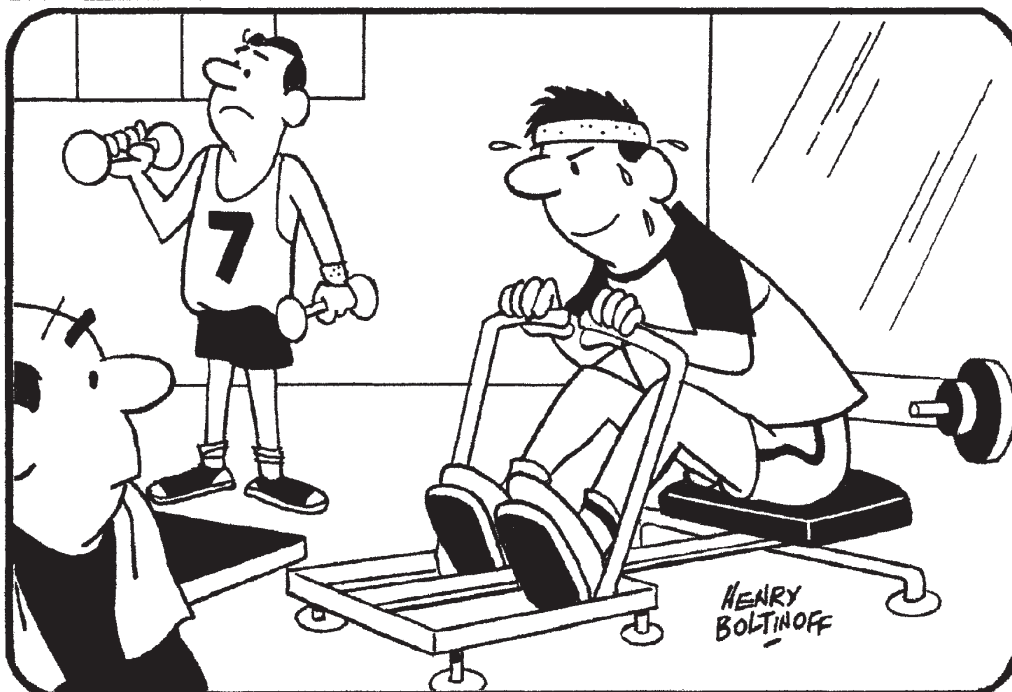
by Dave T. Phipps



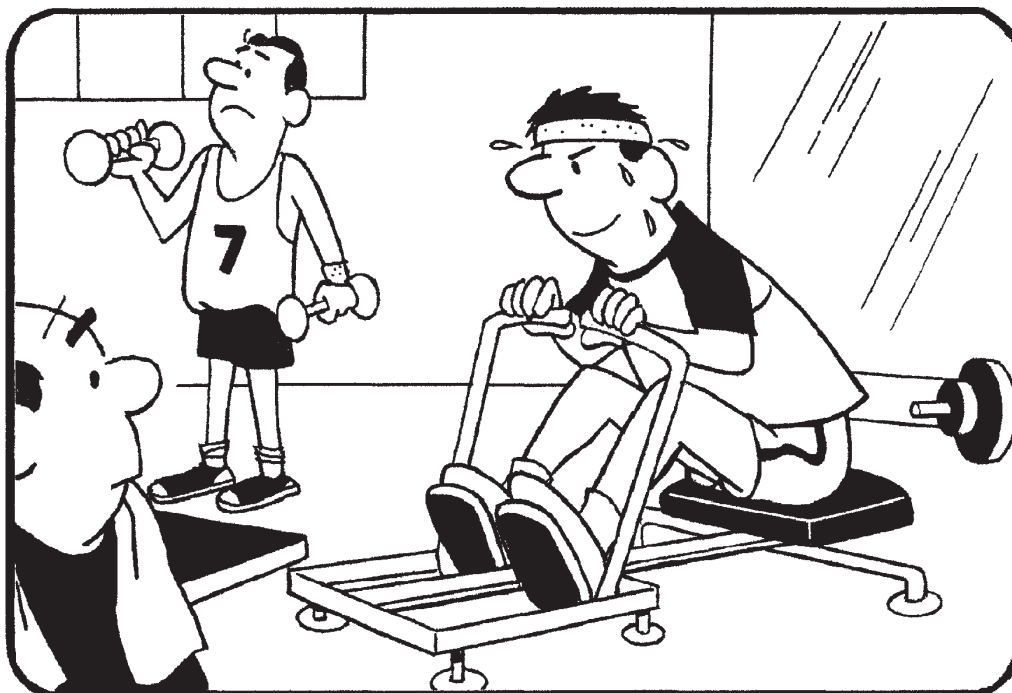
**“You’ve got some explaining to do, Figby!
What did I mean by this?”**

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Stripe on sock is missing. 2. Foot is moved.
3. Nose is smaller. 4. Towel is longer. 5. Hair is different.
6. Number on shirt is smaller.

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* It's barbecue time, and here's a fun, festive idea for your next backyard shindig: For each guest, stuff a mason jar with a clean bandanna (for a napkin) and a set of silverware. Write the name on the jar with a silver paint pen made to stay on glassware. Cute, functional and a keepsake! Here's more to get your grilling season started.

* "Bring a distinctive towel to a pool party so that you will know where your towel is. You can make an extra-large towel by sewing two smaller towels together, too." -- U.A. in New York

* "For a really fun take on kebabs, use fruit instead of meat. The kids especially love fruit on a stick. If you have some neat cookie cutters, you can score planks of watermelon and make shapes." -- M.M. in Michigan

* To keep ants from invading your patio, draw a thick line of chalk as a boundary. The ants will not like to cross the chalk line and will leave your patio party alone.

* "Set out wasp attractors at the far reaches of your yard so that the wasps will be busy out there and not attacking your guests." -- T.C. in South Carolina

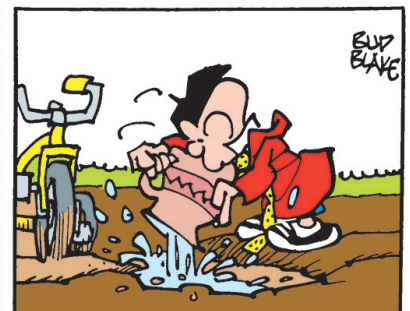
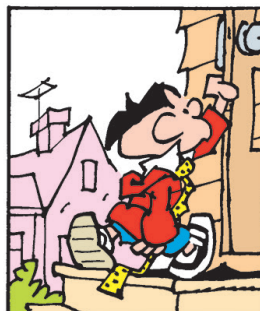
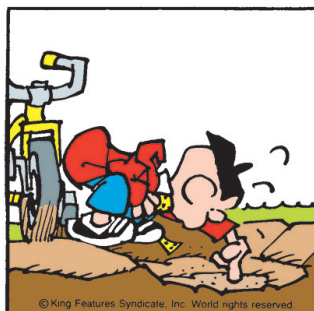
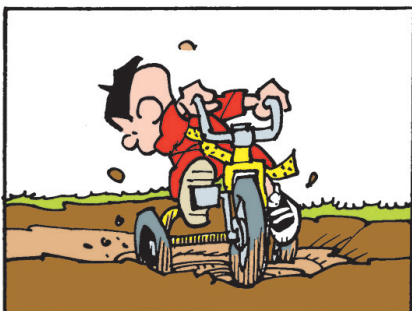
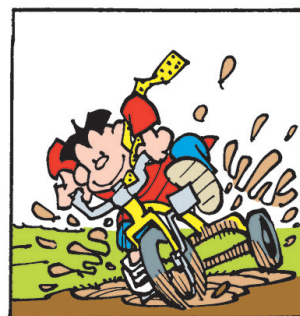
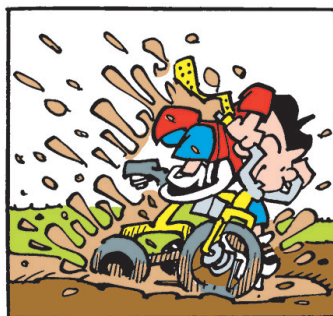
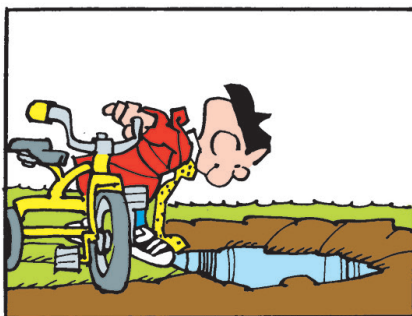
* Use a muffin tin on the table to serve condiments from. For larger portions (like lettuce, onion slices, maybe pickle spears) you can set a cup down in the muffin well.

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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BUD
BLAKE

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Eve's man
5 Agt.'s take
8 Summit
12 C&W artist
McEntire
13 Geological
period
14 Linguist
Chomsky
15 Magnificence
17 Leslie Caron
role
18 Next in line
19 Business goal
21 Poetic con-
traction
22 Feudal labor-
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23 Rx writers
26 Actor
McKellen
28 Cardio-
boxing rou-
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31 Nest egg
choices
33 Vat
35 Foolproof
36 Picture puzzle
38 Diner order
40 "Awesome,
dude!"
41 Muscat's land
43 Summer mo.
45 Spud
47 Scan again
51 Help a hood
52 French title
54 Go sightsee-
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- 55 " — you
sleeping?"
56 Mrs. Nick
Charles
57 Antitoxins
58 Susan of
"L.A. Law"
59 "Shoo!"
5 Views slyly
6 French vine-
yard
7 Infield covers
8 Long-haired
cats
9 Hairdresser
10 Creche trio
11 Send forth
16 Roman 602
20 Pensioned
(Abbr.)
23 Soviet space
station
24 Dad on
"Black-ish"
25 1942
Hitchcock
thriller
27 Gist
29 Bikini half
30 British ref.
work
32 Java neighbor
34 Total non-
sense
37 Perched
39 Calendar
abbr.
42 Wanderer
44 Big smiles
45 Bits of butter
46 Reed instru-
ment
48 Fair-hiring org.
49 Mystique
50 "Phooey!"
53 Mine material

DOWN

- 1 Golden
Fleece ship
2 "Wild" actress
Laura
3 "That's not —
idea"
4 "Olympia"
painter
Edouard

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King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

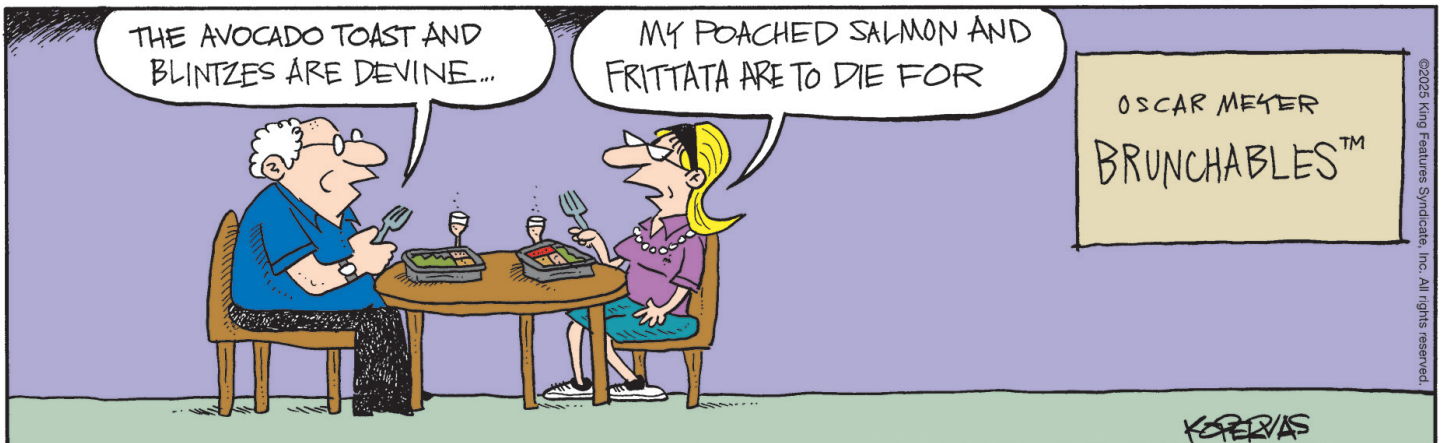
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Olive



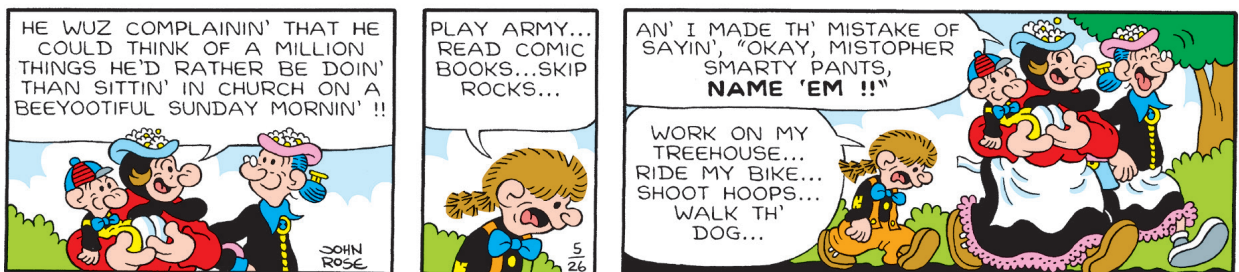
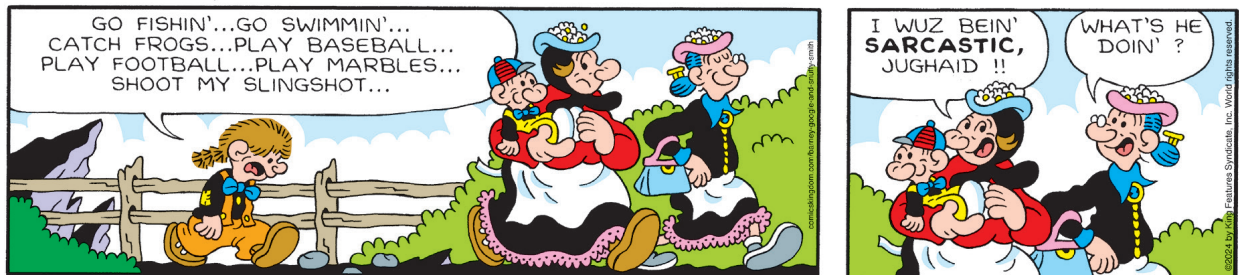
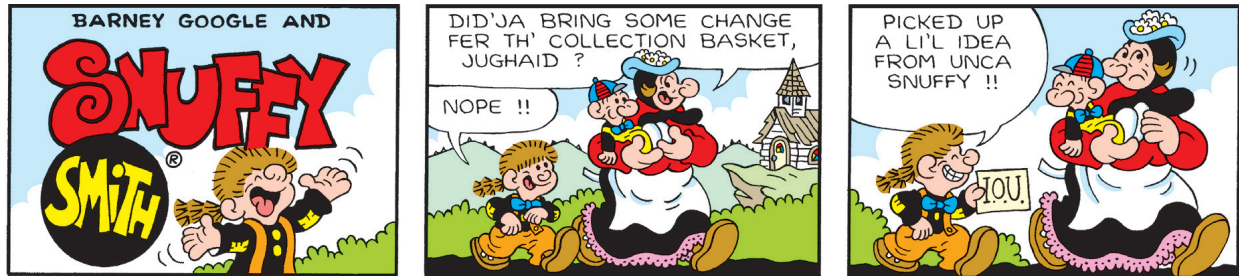
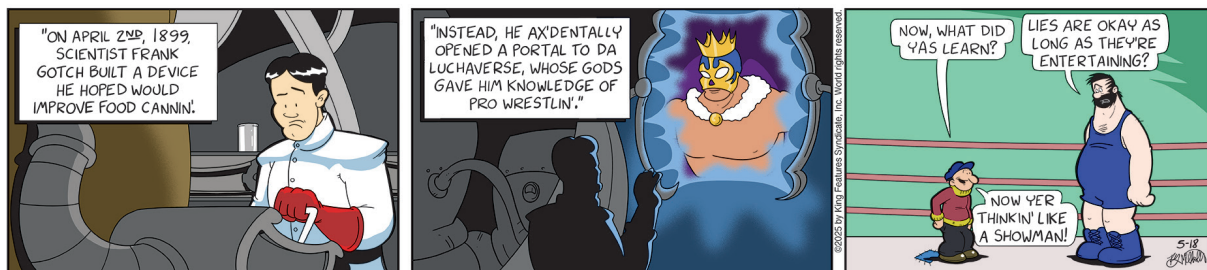
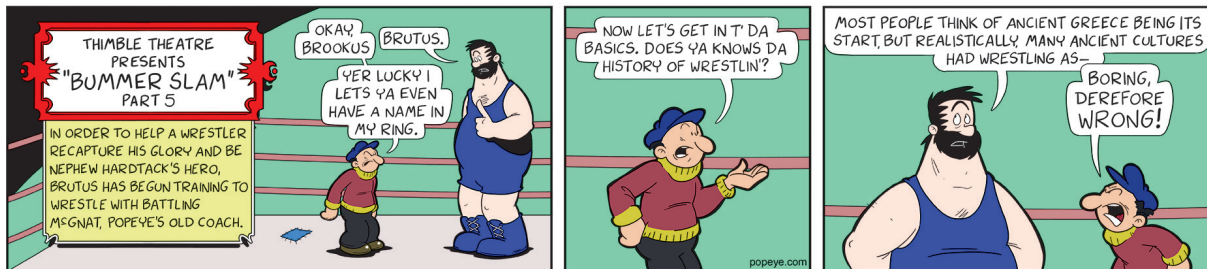
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



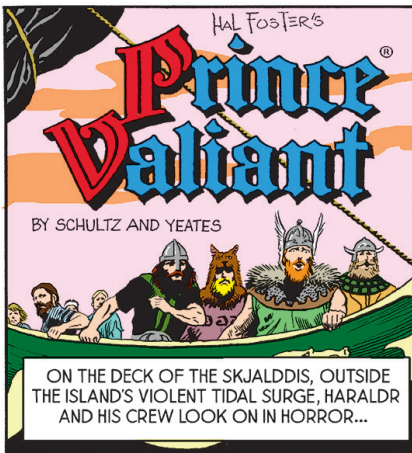
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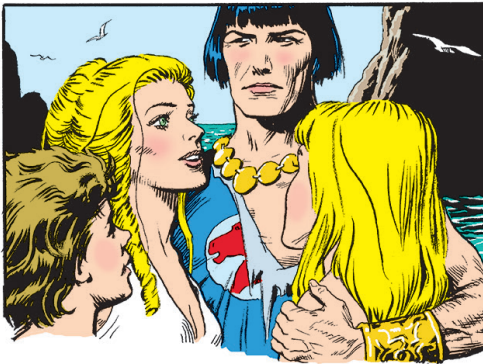
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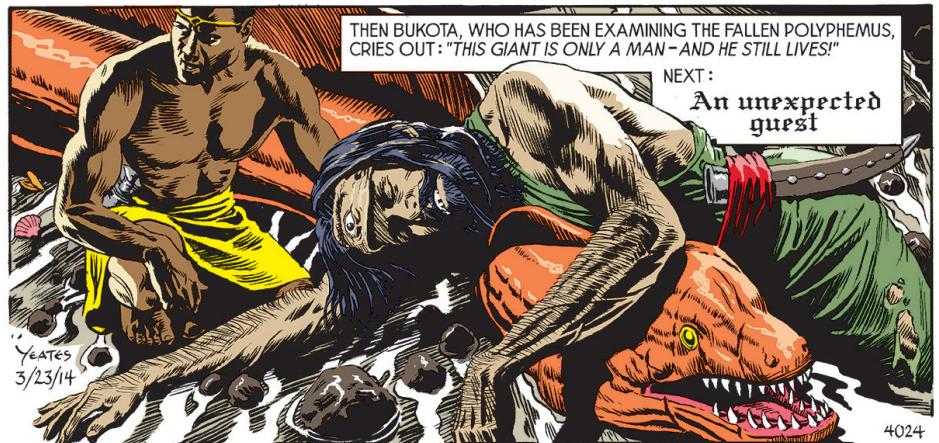


THERE ARE SURVIVORS, ALTHOUGH FEW. ON THE ISLAND'S ROCKY SHORE, ONLY ONE OF KAREN'S GUARDS STILL STANDS; AND HE IGNORES HIS FALLEN COMRADE, HIS FULL ATTENTION ON THE SINKING SHIP.

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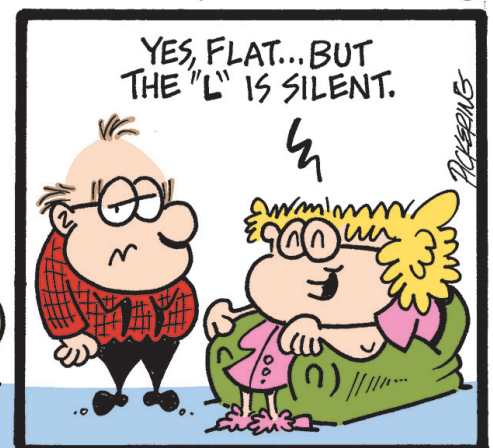
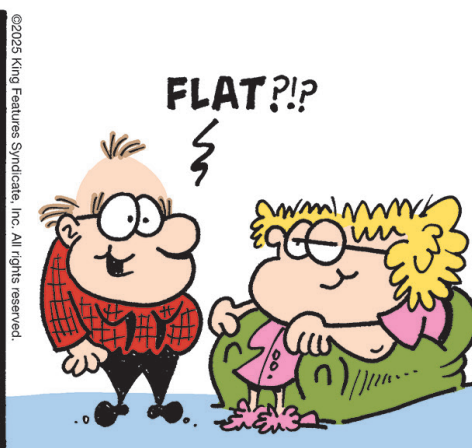
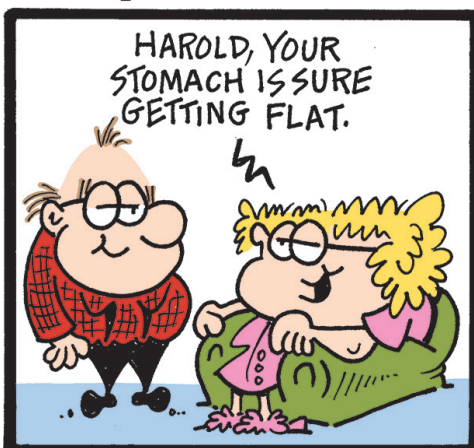


VAL IS RELIEVED TO FIND HIS FAMILY INTACT, BUT DISMAYED BY THE LOSS OF SO MANY OF THE CREW. AND HE NOTES GURYAN'S STRANGE BEHAVIOR.



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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PICKERING

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Retirement: Now what?

Some of us are new to retirement and the questions quickly become: Now what? What do I do with my days? Do I continue to set the alarm for the same time in the mornings?

If you planned in detail for your retirement and have a long list of things you intend to do, you know where to begin.

But the questions about what to do with our retired days can be poignant for those who perhaps didn't have a choice about retirement. Maybe there were health considerations. Maybe there were expectations of retirement upon reaching a certain age in a certain career. But for whatever reason, here's retirement, ready or not. Now what?

Start with a piece of paper and a pen. Make a list, the longer the better, of every interest you have. Ideally, somewhere on that list are the makings of worthwhile activities that are physical, social and mental.

Here are some random possibilities: explore photography, teach swimming at the YMCA, write a novel, knit or crochet hats and mittens for the local Santa fund next winter, create a family scrapbook with genealogy information and photos for the next generation, play pickleball at the rec center, become a Citizen Scientist (see CitizenScience.gov), join a walking group, take a pottery class with a grandchild.

Then there are the all-important brain-stretcher activities: learn to play piano or guitar (or brush up on old skills), take a college course, play chess online, take a computer class to upgrade your skills, learn a language online (see Duolingo.com), read a book a week or start a book club.

My personal list includes dogs at the animal shelter. There are lots of dogs who need to be taken on adventure walking afternoons to pick up their spirits. I can do that a few times a week.

Have you started your list?

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



Living Heart Fitness Center

Senior Citizens 65+

Physical Therapy.

\$20 a month

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1. The ball used in Gaelic ball-and-stick sports like hurling, camogie, rounders and shinty is known as what?

2. Happy Chandler, Commissioner of Baseball from 1945-51, served two separate terms as governor of what U.S. state?

3. In 1994, Conchita Martinez became the first female from what country to win the Wimbledon singles title?

4. Jimmer Fredette, 2011 NCAA Division I men's basketball scoring champion, played for what college team?

5. Name the Nebraska Cornhuskers quarterback who won a national championship in 1997 and the Heisman Trophy in 2001.

6. The Northern Star Award, presented annually to the top athlete in Canada, was formerly named after what athlete, referee and sportswriter?

7. Beat Feuz, gold medalist in the men's Alpine skiing downhill at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, competed for what country?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. A sliotar.

2. Kentucky.

3. Spain.

4. The Brigham Young University Cougars.

5. Eric Crouch.

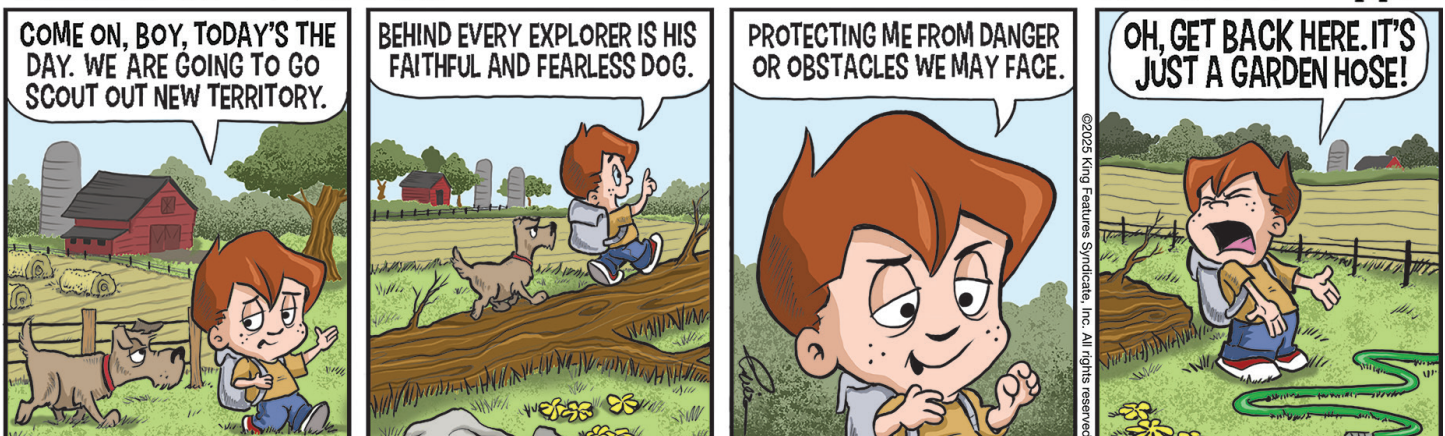
6. Lou Marsh.

7. Switzerland.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Should indoor cats wear flea collars?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: At my cat's last veterinary visit, it was recommended that she wear a flea collar or get a monthly flea treatment. "Belle" is a completely indoor cat and has never had fleas. Why do I need to prevent her from getting them? -- Carla G., Gulf Shores, Alabama

DEAR CARLA: While it seems totally reasonable to not treat Belle for fleas, there is always a risk of getting them. This is the same logic behind routine vaccinations -- it's unlikely that an indoor cat will be exposed to rabies, but there is always a chance.

I'll give you a personal example. Last fall, I took care of a friend's dog for a few weeks while they were away dealing with a family emergency. On the first day, I noticed that "Kerry" was chewing on his tail and his hair was almost gone at the base of his tail. I knew right away that he had fleas, and a visual check confirmed it. All of my pets are treated for fleas, even though my cat stays indoors. With my friend's permission, I treated Kerry with a topical flea treatment and kept him separated from the other pets for a few days until no live fleas could be found in his fur. I also monitored all my pets for fleas during his visit.

I hadn't planned on Kerry arriving with fleas, but his owner had forgotten to give him his monthly flea treatment for a couple of months. This unplanned situation could have been a real problem for me and my pets.

There's an old saying that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and that is certainly the case with fleas, which can be hard to eliminate from your home once they get a foothold. There are many options today -- not just collars -- to prevent fleas from getting on your cat. Talk to your vet about the treatment they recommend for Belle.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

* Benjamin Franklin never actually lobbied for the turkey to become the national bird, but he did write that the bald eagle was a fowl of “bad moral character” and that the turkey was “a much more respectable bird.”

* The world’s largest chocolate bar weighed 12,000 pounds.

* While digging up stones to build a house in 1885, Australian miner George Harrison found gold ore near Johannesburg, beginning the South African gold rush.

* In terms of galactic years, the sun is around 20.5 years

old.

* Victorian floriography, the practice of assigning codes to flowers to send messages via bouquets and arrangements, associated basil with hatred! The curious link came from the ancient Greeks, who felt basil leaves resembled the opening jaws of a basilisk.

* In the 1800s, ducks were called “arsefeet,” as their feet are so close to their posteriors.

* Painting designs and pictures on fingernails isn’t just a modern trend. It was a familiar practice with the Incas, many of whom sported eagle motifs on their nails.

* One percent of people are born with a 13th rib.

* To preserve the quality of the U.S. Constitution, on display in the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C., its protective cases contain argon gas and are kept at 67 Fahrenheit with a relative humidity of 40%.

* In the U.K., fish and chips were traditionally wrapped in old newspapers, giving the meal a unique newspaper ink flavor. The practice eventually ended for health reasons.

* During the 1904 Summer Olympic Games, American athlete George Eyser won six medals in a single day, including three gold and two silver, in the vault, parallel bars and rope climbing competitions ... with a wooden prosthetic left leg.

Thought for the Day: “Try to be a rainbow in someone else’s cloud.” -- Maya Angelou

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Casa Blanca lilies are easily grown in well-drained soil, if located where the upper plant is in full sun and the roots are in shade. Mulch around the plants to keep the roots cooler. Remove flowers as they fade; cut plants back only after the leaves and stems have turned yellow. Its flowers are showy and very fragrant. The plants may need staking if exposed to strong winds.

- Brenda Weaver

Source: www.missouribotanicalgarden.org



by Freddy Groves

Changes at the VA

Under the new presidential administration, and under the guidance of the new VA Secretary Doug Collins, the Department of Veterans Affairs has made several significant changes. The core mission: providing the best possible care and services to veterans, families, caregivers and survivors. As Secretary Collins said, "We have already stripped away many of the costly distractions that were coming between VA beneficiaries and the benefits they have earned."

Here are a few examples:

What Collins called "DEI and gender ideology" has been taken off the table, saying that the "VA should not be in the business of helping people try to change their sex." That's going to save the VA \$14 million.

Working from home is a no-no now, with a schedule being created to get everyone back in the office by summer. No more "phoning it in from home," per Collins. And I have to agree -- service on the phone is much better when employees are in the office within earshot of colleagues.

When it comes to duplicate and unnecessary contracts, so far the VA has identified "hundreds of millions of dollars" that they can divert back to services for veterans. They'll continue to take a look at the 130,000 VA contracts to see what further dollars they can save.

The modernization of the electronic health record program was something that stalled over the last two years, but already, just since March, they've worked to be able to bring nine more medical facilities online by next year and all of them by 2031.

In his opinion piece and video, Collins addresses the pushback he's gotten from various sources that only want the VA to keep going as before. Not going to happen, per Collins. His job is to work to put veterans first, and that's what he intends to do.

The video Secretary Collins made can be found on his X (formerly known as Twitter) account. Or if you prefer to read it, search for his opinion piece "First 100 Days at VA: Putting Veterans First" at DCJournal.com.

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Wishing Well®

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5	4	5	7	4	2	7	6	2	6	2	6	2
G	S	E	E	E	L	D	K	D	E	A	S	Y

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. ACRONYMS: What phrase does the acronym URL stand for?
2. MOVIES: What is the name of the ghost that haunts the girls' bathroom at Hogwarts ("Harry Potter" series)?
3. HISTORY: Which decisive battle ended the Revolutionary War?
4. LITERATURE: What is the pseudonym of the author Eric Arthur Blair?
5. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Which of the national parks is the most visited in the United States?
6. TELEVISION: Which medical series is based at Princeton Plainsboro Teaching Hospital?
7. GEOGRAPHY: What is the capital of Denmark?
8. U.S. STATES: In which state is Glacier National Park located?
9. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Who was the first vice president to die in office?
10. SCIENCE: What are elements like neon, helium and radon called?

Answers

1. Uniform resource locator.
2. Moaning Myrtle.
3. The Battle of Yorktown.
4. George Orwell.
5. Great Smoky Mountains National Park.
6. "House, M.D."
7. Copenhagen.
8. Montana.
9. George Clinton.
10. Noble gases.

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South Dakota Governor



Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Made in South Dakota

With President Trump back in the White House, there's been a lot of talk about making sure that more products are Made in America. Manufacturing has been struggling nationwide for quite some time now. You might not know this, but South Dakota is actually one of the only states in the nation where manufacturing is growing! Our manufacturing jobs are up over the last decade. We're making sure that products are not only Made in America – but Made in South Dakota!

Without giving away too many details – I recently visited a business that is moving towards taking over production of key components for two large companies in their industry. These companies had been having these components manufactured in China, but now they're reshoring that business. These products will be Made in South Dakota – that's fantastic news!

My Open for Opportunity tour across the state has been a great opportunity to visit all kinds of businesses. I've especially enjoyed the wide variety of manufacturers in communities in every corner of South Dakota. A lot of them feature a heavy dose of welding, which is my favorite hobby! My staff often jokes that they better move me along before I pick up a cutting torch and decide it's time to go to work for a South Dakota manufacturer.

I've been to so many great manufacturers. Here are some businesses that I've visited, all of whom manufacture things that you maybe didn't know are Made in South Dakota:

- 20 years ago, Masaba moved to South Dakota. Since then, their growth has been off the charts, and they're adding on another 145,000 square foot expansion, which will further strengthen the Vermillion community. They make incredible heavy-duty equipment to keep materials moving.

- Manitou in Yankton designed the first rough-terrain masted forklift and make other similar implements. I was quite impressed by their strong and growing operation!

- Solventum in Brookings is a key manufacturer of healthcare products. They help keep our economy, our workforce, and our public health strong.

- Scherer, Inc. in Sioux Falls makes high-performance roller mills to deliver precision grinding, crushing, and flattening for a variety of products, primarily in agriculture. They tailor every roll, mill, and service to their customer's specific needs.

- VRC Metal Systems in Box Elder does some incredible high-tech welding, and much of their work supports Ellsworth Airforce Base. Their innovative technologies are a great economic engine for our state.

- Glacial Lakes Rubber and Plastic in Watertown goes through about 45,000 pounds of rubber a week to make soles for the majority of combat boots for our U.S. military – and many other shoes besides.

- RPM & Associates, Inc. uses laser scanning technology and automatic welding systems to make impressive 3D printed metal components. Who knew that rocket parts were being made in Rapid City!

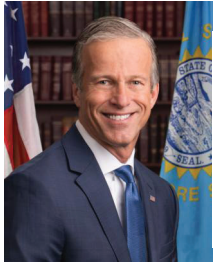
I could name off a whole lot more businesses that are doing incredible work – but if I did, I'd run out of column inches!

We make some pretty incredible things here in South Dakota. More businesses are choosing to move here all the time, and our existing companies are making hefty expansions at seemingly every turn. I'm proud of everything that our state is making.

As President Trump continues focusing on reshoring more manufacturing, South Dakota is very well situated to continue our strong growth. And to each and every South Dakota manufacturer: thank you for what you do to keep South Dakota Open for Opportunity.

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JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

The Fight to Save Ellsworth

On May 13, 2005, the U.S. Department of Defense announced it was recommending South Dakota's Ellsworth Air Force Base for closure. It was a gut punch for South Dakota. Ellsworth has been a point of pride in our state since World War II. Losing the base would have been devastating to western South Dakota and a significant loss for America's national security. So, we set out to save it.

In May 2005, I was a freshman senator just five months on the job. Saving Ellsworth was a longshot; history showed we had a 12 percent chance of success. There were just over 100 days from the announcement in May to the final decision in August, and that summer we worked harder than we ever had before.

It was a team effort. Bob Taylor and Qusi Al-Haj on my staff didn't see much of their families that summer. U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth, Sen. Tim Johnson, and then-Gov. Mike Rounds were all involved. Retired Air Force officers lent their voice and expertise to the cause. And countless local officials, community members, and of course, the 11,000 South Dakotans who came out to the hearing in Rapid City that June were all part of the team.

In the end, we saved Ellsworth by proving that it was too valuable to close. Moving Ellsworth's B-1s to another base was supposed to save money, but we proved that wouldn't be the case. We demonstrated that the Pentagon had failed to account for some critical factors in its analysis. Their plan to consolidate all the B-1s at a single base was a major vulnerability. Any issue at that base risked grounding the entire fleet, and consolidation risked overwhelming maintenance and training capacity there.

It turned out that Ellsworth was exactly what the Air Force needed. As retired Air Force Colonel Pat McElgunn testified to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission: "Ellsworth has operational advantages to make it the ideal base for the 21st century." The commissioners agreed, and they voted 8 to 1 to keep Ellsworth open. And in the years since then, the colonel's prediction has proved right.

Ellsworth's B-1s are an asset to our national security. In 2011, B-1s flew from Ellsworth to strike targets in Libya, marking the first time a B-1 fleet launched from the United States to strike overseas targets. Last year, Ellsworth B-1s conducted a first-of-its-kind combat mission: a continuous 31-hour flight from the continental U.S. to the Middle East and back without landing.

After fighting to save Ellsworth, we got right to work building it up to ensure its future would never again be in jeopardy. In 2007, the Air Force Financial Services Center arrived on base. In 2009, the state created the South Dakota Ellsworth Development Authority, which remains a strong partner in promoting the base and local community. In 2012, the 89th Attack Squadron came to the Black Hills to control MQ-9 Reaper drones in combat remotely. After a decade of work following the BRAC threat, we expanded the Powder River Training Complex, nearly quadrupling its size to make it the largest training airspace in the continental United States. And in 2021, the Air Force announced that Ellsworth would officially be Main Operating Base One for the new B-21 Raider, boasting both the schoolhouse and operational squadrons.

Twenty years ago, Ellsworth was said to be a liability. Today, it's very clear that it's a national security asset. From BRAC to B-21: that's the Ellsworth story. And I'm proud to continue to work to support the base and the surrounding community to write the next chapter of this great South Dakota story.

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Work Matters

BIG News

The House Agriculture Committee passed its portion of House Republicans' reconciliation package, commonly referred to as the "one big, beautiful bill." Our committee found more than \$290 billion in savings while making strong investments to support American agriculture and rural communities.

Many of my priorities were included, including portions of my bill, the America Works Act, to strengthen work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents receiving SNAP benefits (commonly known as food stamps). People who can work, should work. I'm glad our bill roots out abuse of the program to ensure those who truly need help the most receive it.

Additionally, the committee's bill supports farmers facing increased costs due to inflation, improves trade programs, and defends our livestock from foreign animal diseases. Reconciliation doesn't address everything farm country needs, so I'll keep working to get a strong Farm Bill across the finish line..

BIG Idea

I am gearing up to reintroduce the TEENS Act to give 14- and 15-year-olds more flexibility and opportunities in their work schedule. Today, a 14-year-old cannot work after 7 p.m. on a school night. My bill allows these students to work until 9 p.m. and up to 24 hours a week (an increase from 18 hours), if the teenager and their family decide to do so.

Many kids play video games all hours of the night, but we know work experience increases growth, development, and success. I want to encourage our kids to experience the reward of hard work, not prevent it..

BIG Update

It's National Police Week, which is an opportunity to reflect on the service and sacrifice of law enforcement officers in our communities. I had the honor of meeting the loved ones of two South Dakota law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. Those officers' names were added to the National Law Enforcement Officer's Memorial Wall in D.C. I'm grateful to the brave, dedicated men and women who work to keep us safe.

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APRIL 28 – MAY 11, 2025

Welcome back to another edition of the Weekly Round[s] Up. It has been a busy couple of weeks back in DC after the Easter holiday. However, we've had 31 South Dakota groups visit DC over the past two weeks, bringing a bit of home to Capitol Hill and a bright spot in

our busy days! In addition to those meetings, I've been attending hearings, voting on President Trump's nominees on the floor and sitting in on classified briefings. I even had the opportunity to introduce a couple of nominees at their Senate confirmation hearings over the past two weeks! More on this and the rest of my schedule in my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I met with: Over 30 - South Dakota Telecom Association; South Dakota members of the Association of Nurse Anesthetists; the South Dakota Snowmobile Association; South Dakota members of the American College of Physicians Services; South Dakota Rural Electric Association; the Independent Insurance Agents of South Dakota; Barry Dunn, President of South Dakota State University; South Dakota Emergency Nurses Association; the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce; South Dakota tribal students partaking in the Native Youth Policy Summit Expo; Benjamin Ostebee, South Dakota's representative for the National Community Pharmacists Association; South Dakota Emergency Nurses Association; members of the South Dakota Education Association; Charles and Heather Maude and their two children, Lyle and Kennedy; virtual meeting with Chamberlain High School's AP Government class; Teonna Randle, who represented South Dakota at the national Poetry Out Loud competition (and placed second overall!); leaders from the Rosebud Sioux Tribe; the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations; members of Northern Great Plains Joint Venture; the U.S. Cattlemen's Association, including President Justin Tupper of St. Onge; South Dakota members of the Association of American Railroads; members of the South Dakota Farmers Union; leaders from the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe; South Dakota members of the Truck Trailer Manufacturers Association; leaders from Thrivent; South Dakota members of the American Kidney Fund; South Dakota Concerned Women for America; South Dakota Dairy Producers; and Associated General Contractors of South Dakota.

South Dakota towns represented: Aberdeen, Bison, Box Elder, Brandon, Brookings, Burbank, Caputa, Chamberlain, Custer, Dakota Dunes, Dell Rapids, De Smet, Flandreau, Freeman, Gettysburg, Groton, Hermosa, Highmore, Hot Springs, Huron, Ipswich, Kimball, Lake Andes, Madison, Milbank, Mission, Mitchell, North Sioux City, Parade, Pierre, Plankinton, Rapid City, Reliance, Salem, Seneca, Sioux Falls, St. Onge, Tea, Vermillion, Watertown, Wessington Springs, Winner, Woonsocket and Wall.

Other meetings: Dr. Robert Kadlec, nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical, and Biological Defense Policy and Programs; Michael Obadal, nominee for Under Secretary for the Army; Adam Telle, nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works; Professor Lars-Hendrik Röller, Chairman of the Berlin Global Dialogue; Rwanda's Minister of Foreign Affairs; Pious Jung, CEO of CJ America; spoke at a fireside chat for the Hill & Valley Forum; attended the SeedAI Breakfast for AI Policy Practitioners; Thomas Tull, founder of Tulco LLC; Christopher Eisgruber, President of Princeton University; Katie Sutton, nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Cyber Policy; Ambassador Khazar Ibrahim, Azerbaijan's Ambassador to the United States; Bishop Zaidan of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Sean Callahan, CEO of Catholic Relief Services; Scott Donnelly, CEO of Textron; Binalf Andualem, Ethiopia's Ambassador to the United States; members of National Grid Renewables; King Abdullah II of

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Jordan; Paul Hudson, CEO of Sanofi; members of the General Aviation Manufacturers Association; Salim Ramji, CEO of Vanguard; and Michael Powers, nominee for Deputy Undersecretary of Defense.

I spoke at a breakfast hosted by The Hill about artificial intelligence.

Hearings: I attended nine hearings over the past two weeks. Five were in the Senate Armed Services Committee, three were in the Senate Committee on Appropriations and one was for the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. During the Banking Committee hearing, I spoke about the importance of reauthorizing and reforming the National Flood Insurance Program. Watch that clip [here](#). In addition, I introduced my friend and former advisor Katie Sutton at her nomination hearing to serve as the next Assistant Secretary of Defense for Cyber Policy, which you can watch a clip of [here](#).

I also had the honor of introducing Luke Lindberg of South Dakota during his nomination hearing at the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. He'll do a great job as Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs. You can watch a clip of my introduction [here](#).

Classified briefings: 3 – two were for the Select Committee on Intelligence. I attended one classified briefing as part of my work as Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee's Subcommittee on Cybersecurity.

Votes taken: 29 votes over two weeks – most of these were on additional nominees to executive positions. While the confirmation of these nominees may not grab headlines like the cabinet-level nominees, everyone being confirmed right now is critical to the Trump administration and the work they're doing for the American people.

My staff in South Dakota visited: Aberdeen, Belle Fourche, Gregory, Lower Brule, Spearfish, Sturgis, Wagner and Winner.

Steps taken: 52,890 steps or 26.31 miles during week one; 58,202 steps or 29.03 miles during week two.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

It's Not Always What I Don't Know

I would be the first to admit one truth about myself: I don't know everything. To quote a politician, "I don't know what I don't know."

That has been the theme of my life for as long as I can remember.

It all began with my parents. Whenever I got into trouble, they would usually respond, "Don't you know anything?"

Of course, as all parents are, they were right.

It's not that my memory is getting worse as I get older. It has always been bad since the day of my birth. I can't remember anything about the day of my birth or the weeks after.

One thing I don't remember very well is names. For example, I know 10 people whose first name is George. They all look different, so I do not know what a George looks like.

I think that's the reason somebody invented the name "Buddy." So confusing.

It also may be why I call my wife "Honey, my dear, sweetheart," because I don't remember her first name.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage does not have any memory failure. She can remember every day and what she has been doing since the day of her birth. Fortunately for me, I can count on her pristine memory.

On my way to my office the other day, I walked through the kitchen where she was preparing lunch. As I walked through, she said, "No, and I haven't seen it in weeks."

I stopped, looked at her quizzically and said, "What?"

She just smiled, so I continued to my office to begin work.

As I began, I looked for my tape recorder, which I use Sunday mornings to record my sermon, and I couldn't find it. I looked and looked and looked, but it was nowhere to be seen.

After 30 minutes, I peeked into the kitchen and said, "Did you see...?"

"Didn't you hear me?" She said, "I said no."

I stood there a little stunned, and all I could say was, "What?" How did she know what I would ask her 30 minutes before I asked her?

I sat in my office and thought about this for a moment. How could she know something like this before I even asked the question? What enables her to know ahead of time? Is she a prophet?

While trying to process this, I found my tape recorder under some papers piled on my desk.

A few days later as I walked through the kitchen on way to my office, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage looked at me and said, "It's this Thursday at 9 o'clock."

I stared at her and said, "I didn't ask you any question. What's this all about?"

She returned to her work, and I continued to my office.

About an hour later, I was updating my schedule for the week. I wanted to know when my next doctor's appointment was, but I didn't have it on my schedule.

I peeked into the kitchen and asked, "Do you know when my doctor's appointment is?"

She looked at me and said, "Don't you listen to me? I said this Thursday at 9 o'clock."

I then remembered she said that, but when she said it, I had no idea what she was talking about. How did she know I wanted to know when my doctor's appointment was? How did she know 45 minutes before I asked her what I would ask her?

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It was a Monday morning, and as I went to my office The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said, "They're in your vest pocket in your closet."

I was hurrying to get to my office because I had a business appointment at the bank, so I didn't listen very carefully to what she said.

I looked around for my car keys and could not find them. Finally, I went to the kitchen and said, "Do you know..."

"If you remember, I said earlier that they were in your vest pocket in your closet."

Thinking about it, I remember her saying that, but I had no idea what she was talking about at the time. How did she know I was going to look for my keys?"

When I returned home from the bank that afternoon, I pondered all of this.

When I see something, I think of how to use it to my advantage. It then hit me. I think I'm going to ask her which horse is going to win the race this weekend. I figured out how to present it so she does not know what I am doing.

I walked into the kitchen later, and she looked at me and said, "No, I am not helping you on the horse race."

Later, I thought about that and said to myself, "I did not know we were so intimately connected."

Sitting in my office, I thought about this and was reminded of what wise old Solomon said.

"1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;" (Proverbs 2:1-2).

My take is, I need to be proactive when it comes to knowledge. My knowledge will feed my wisdom, which in turn will apply my heart to understanding. I can't take for granted what I hear and I must learn how to pay attention to all that is around me.

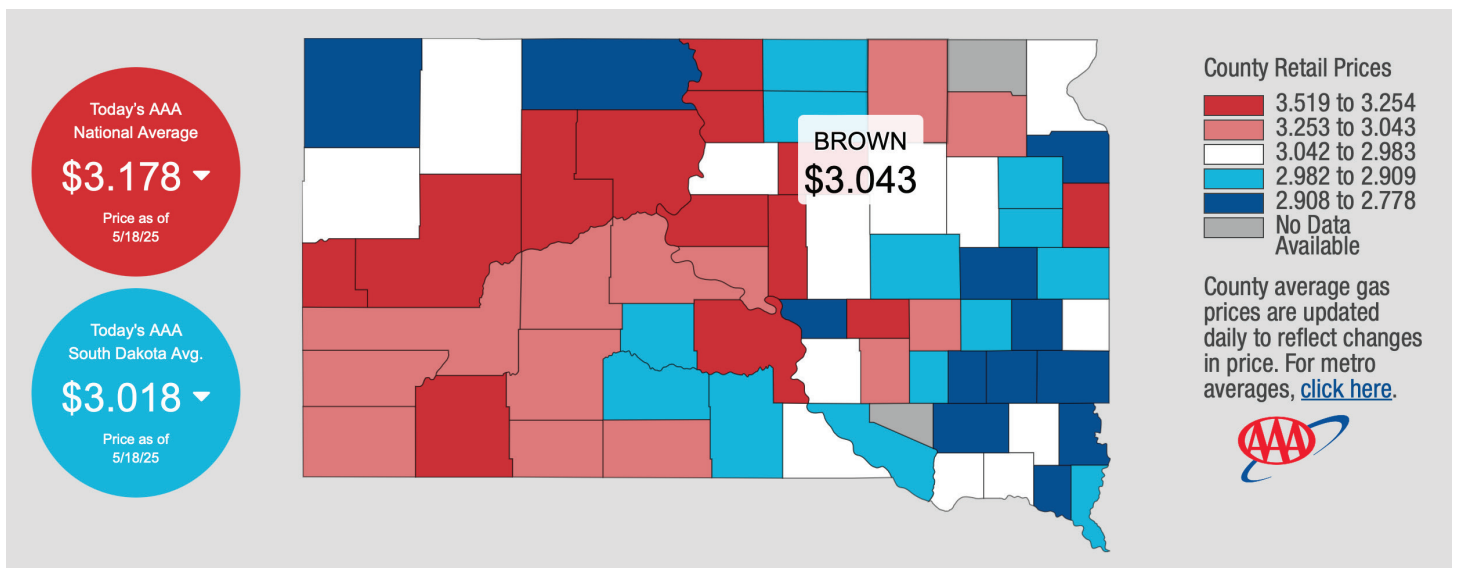
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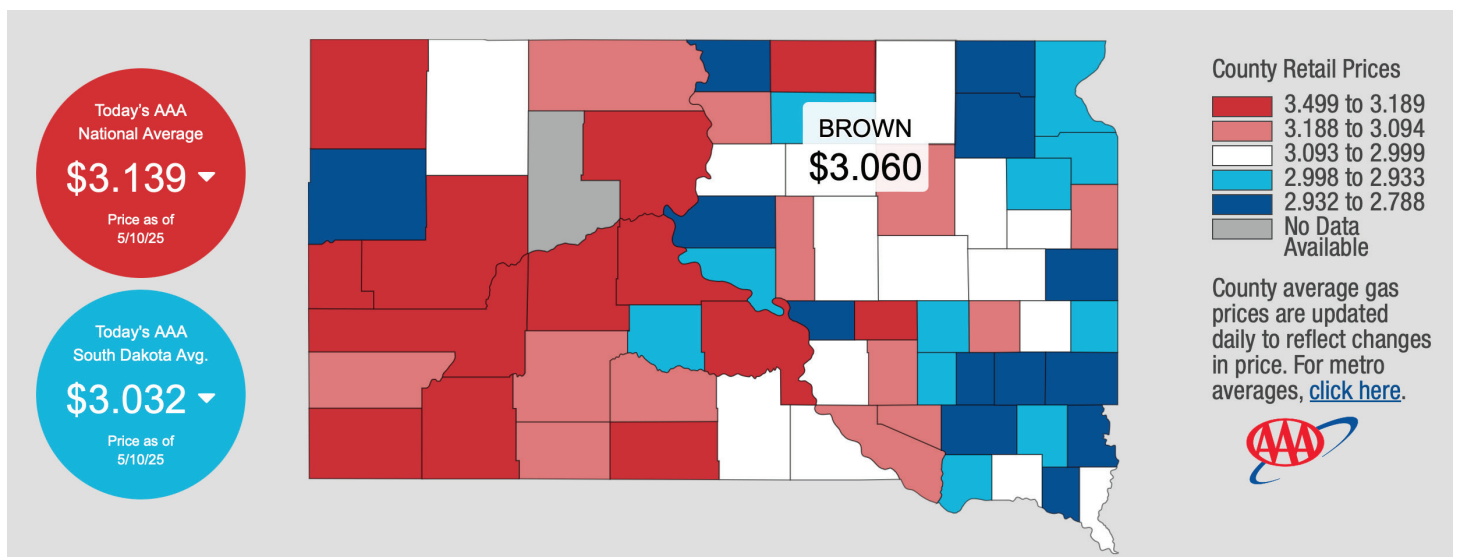
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.018	\$3.200	\$3.692	\$3.239
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.021	\$3.211	\$3.693	\$3.230
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.023	\$3.215	\$3.711	\$3.239
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.073	\$3.264	\$3.692	\$3.258
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.302	\$3.443	\$3.876	\$3.547

This Week



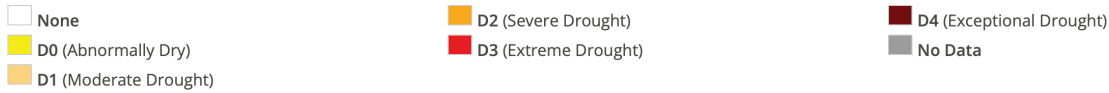
Last Week



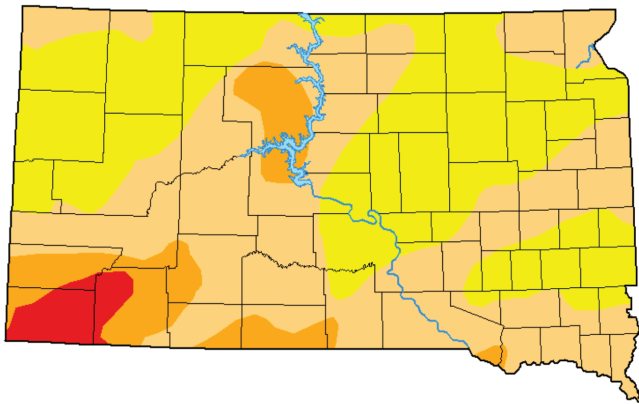
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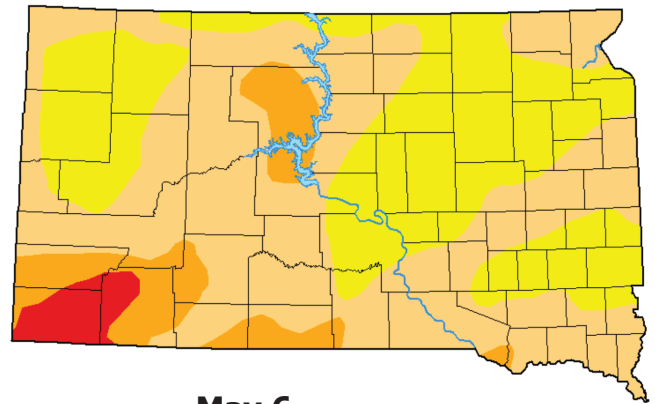
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



May 13



May 6

Warm temperature dominated the High Plains this week, with departures ranging up to 20 degrees F above normal, especially along the northern portions of the region, while cooler-than-normal temperatures were observed along the southern border. Precipitation fell across the western and southern portions of the region this week; however, in most areas, amounts were insufficient for significant improvement. Beneficial heavy precipitation (1 to 3 inches) in eastern Colorado and Kansas led to improvements in moderate to severe drought (D1-D2) and abnormal dryness (D0) in these areas. Conversely, dry conditions resulted in the introduction and expansion of drought. Extreme drought (D3) was introduced in western Nebraska, and moderate to extreme drought (D1-D3) expanded in western Colorado and eastern Nebraska. Abnormal dryness was also expanded in southern Wyoming this week.

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: Am I being exposed to harsh chemicals when I get a manicure or pedicure?
-- Susan Porter, via e-mail

The nail care industry is booming. Global market projections will near \$11 billion by 2027. But beneath the glossy finish of a manicure or pedicure may lie health and environmental concerns. Many consumers, and even salon workers, remain unaware of the chemical exposures involved in these beauty treatments.

Nail polishes, removers and adhesives often contain ingredients collectively known as the "Toxic Trio": toluene, formaldehyde and dibutyl phthalate. The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) says these chemicals come with serious health risks, including nervous system, respiratory and reproductive harm. Even short-term exposure can cause headaches, dizziness and skin or eye irritation. These risks are magnified for nail salon workers, many who are black or Hispanic. Dr. Charles Hwu, an internist in Queens, New York told The New York Times: "They come in usually with breathing problems, some symptoms similar to an allergy, and also asthma symptoms..." noting that many of these patients had no history of smoking or asthma, but all worked in nail salons. A 2023 report from Michigan State University's GlobalEdge says these workers often have disproportionate rates of chronic illness.

Some cities and states have responded with policy changes. California's Healthy Nail Salon Program offers voluntary certification to salons that improve ventilation and use safer products. And the University of Colorado Boulder has developed biodegradable artificial nails that break down safely in the environment, a shift in an industry dominated by plastic waste. Product reformulation is also gaining traction. Many brands now market themselves as "3-free," "5-free," or even "10-free," meaning they've eliminated several known toxic ingredients. Popular eco-conscious nail brands like Zoya and TenoverTen are part of this change, offering nail care designed to minimize exposure to toxic substances.

Still, gaps remain. The FDA does not require rigorous safety testing for cosmetics, and many harmful ingredients are still legally allowed. Additionally, OSHA guidelines for salons are advisory, not mandatory, and worker protections vary widely across states. Consumers can make a difference by choosing salons with good ventilation and "free-from" product lines. Asking for water-based or non-toxic formulas, reducing treatment frequency, or embracing DIY nail care at home can also lower risk. Further, supporting worker rights is key, as organized labor efforts can push for better transparency, safer conditions, and more sustainable practices. Nail treatments don't have to come at the cost of health. With greater awareness and support for greener innovation, we can shape a nail care industry that prioritizes long-term health over short-term beauty.

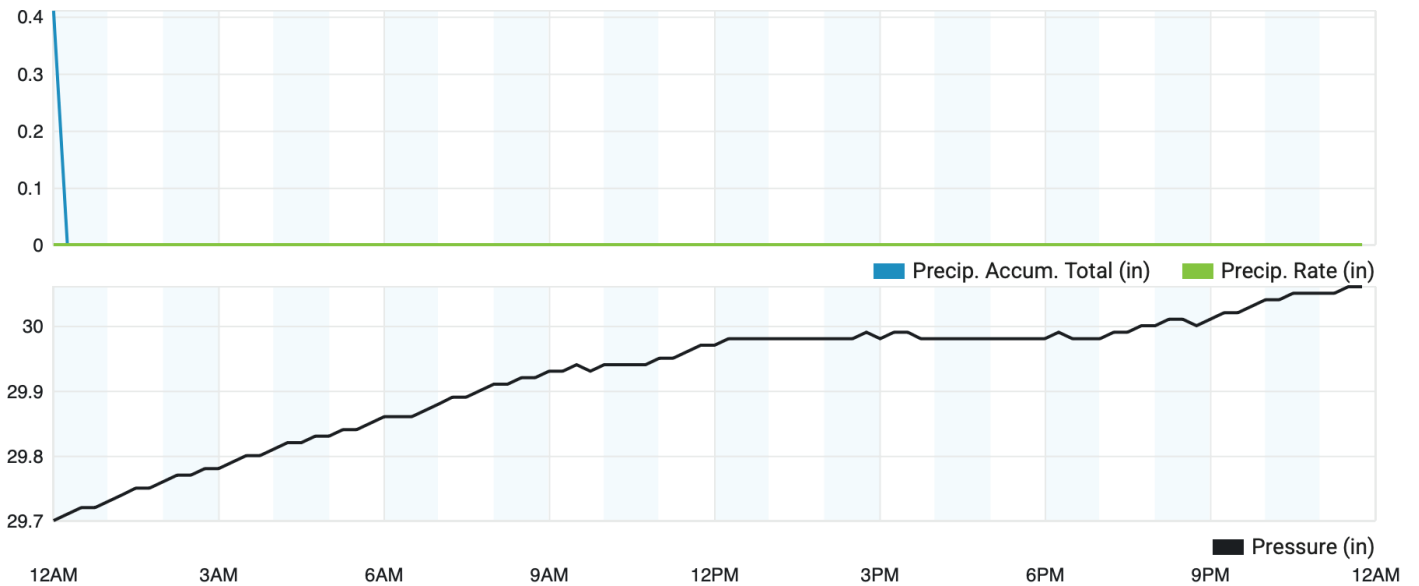
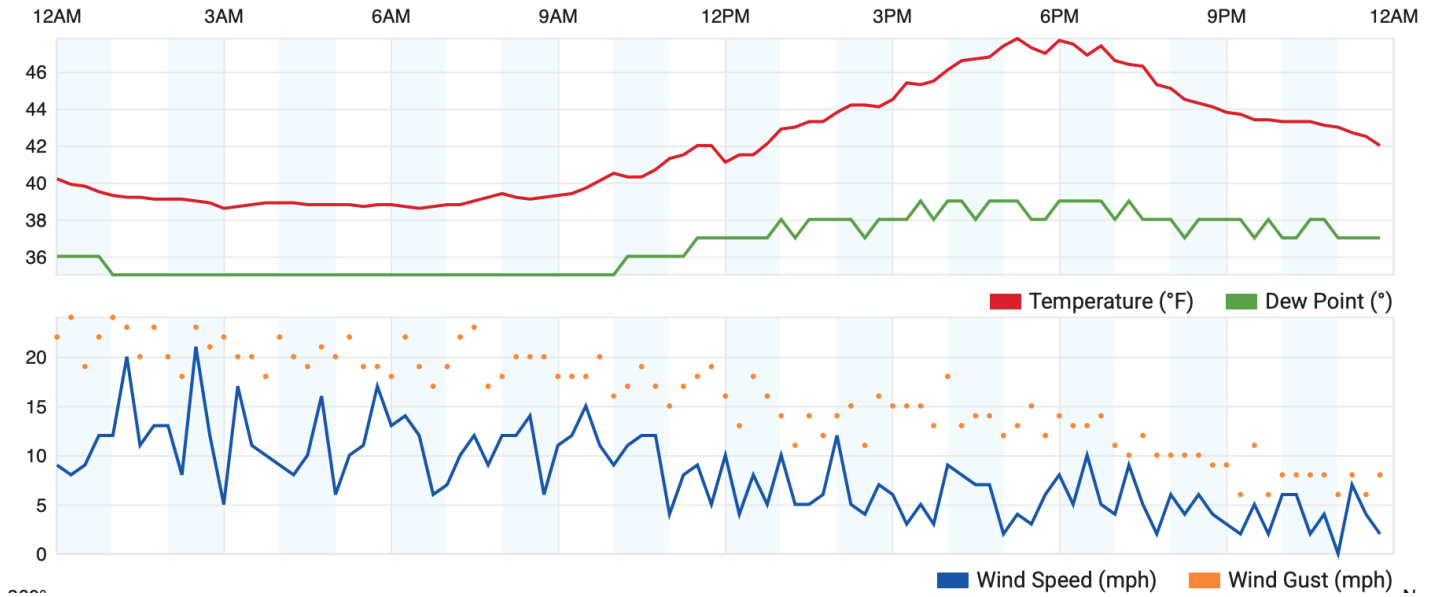


Beneath the glossy finish of a manicure or pedicure may lie health and environmental concerns. Credit: Pexels.com.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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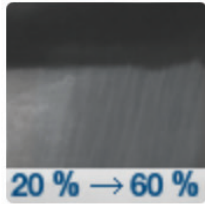
Sunday



High: 56 °F

Patchy Frost
then Mostly
Cloudy and
Breezy

Sunday Night

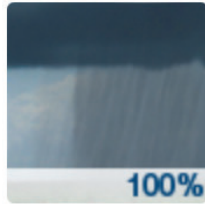


20 % → 60 %

Low: 40 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Showers
Likely

Monday

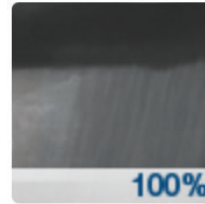


100%

High: 48 °F

Showers and
Breezy

Monday Night

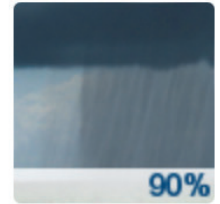


100%

Low: 38 °F

Showers and
Breezy

Tuesday



90%

High: 48 °F

Showers



Frost/Freeze Potential Sunday Morning

May 17, 2025
2:59 PM

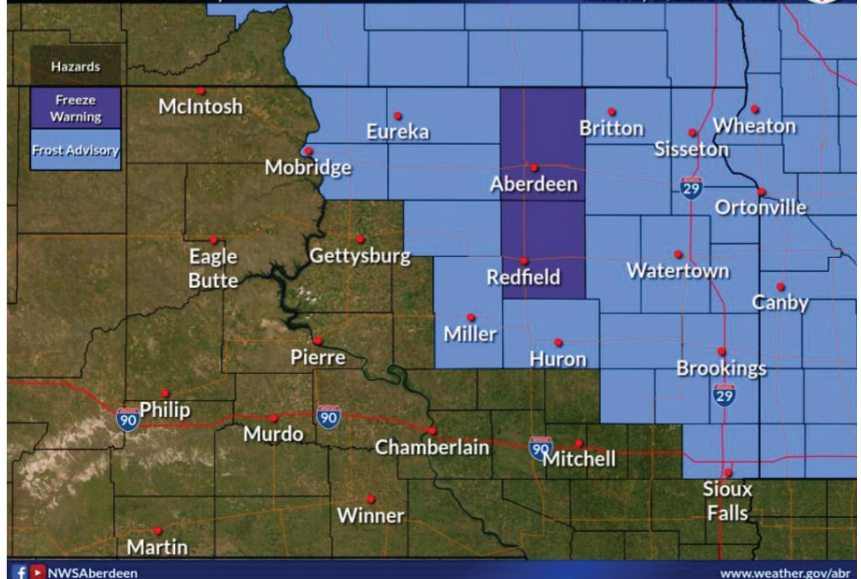
Key Messages:

- Chilly daytime temperatures followed by light winds and dissipating clouds this evening will allow temperatures to fall into the 30s tonight/Sunday AM.
- Main area of concern is **northeast SD & west central MN** with lows in the 31-36° F range.

Frost and Freeze Headlines

Valid 1 AM to 9 AM CDT Sunday

Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD
Issued May 17, 2025 2:41 PM CDT



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

The risk for frost/freeze across northeastern SD and west central MN continues this morning.

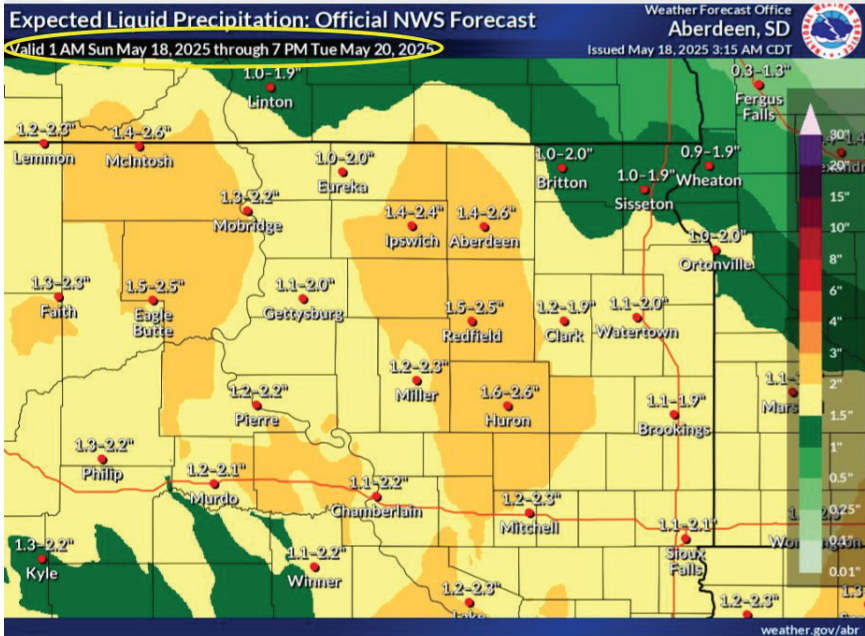
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Potential Two And A Half Day Precipitation Forecast

May 18, 2025
4:14 AM



Key Messages:

- Potential multi-day rain event
 - Sunday night through Wednesday
- 50% chance of rainfall amounts, at the end of Tuesday, falling between the ranges shown here
- Additional lighter amounts possible Tuesday night through Wednesday



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

With showers and occasionally thunderstorms in the forecast for a prolonged period of time, locally heavy rainfall totals will be possible. Over the next 72 hours (ending early Wednesday morning), the chances for receiving one to two inches (or more) of rainfall is high; greater than 60 percent for a large portion of the region.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 89 °F at 5:31 PM

Low Temp: 52 °F at 4:31 AM

Wind: 25 mph at 3:13 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 05 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1934

Record Low: 26 in 1915

Average High: 71

Average Low: 45

Average Precip in May.: 2.00

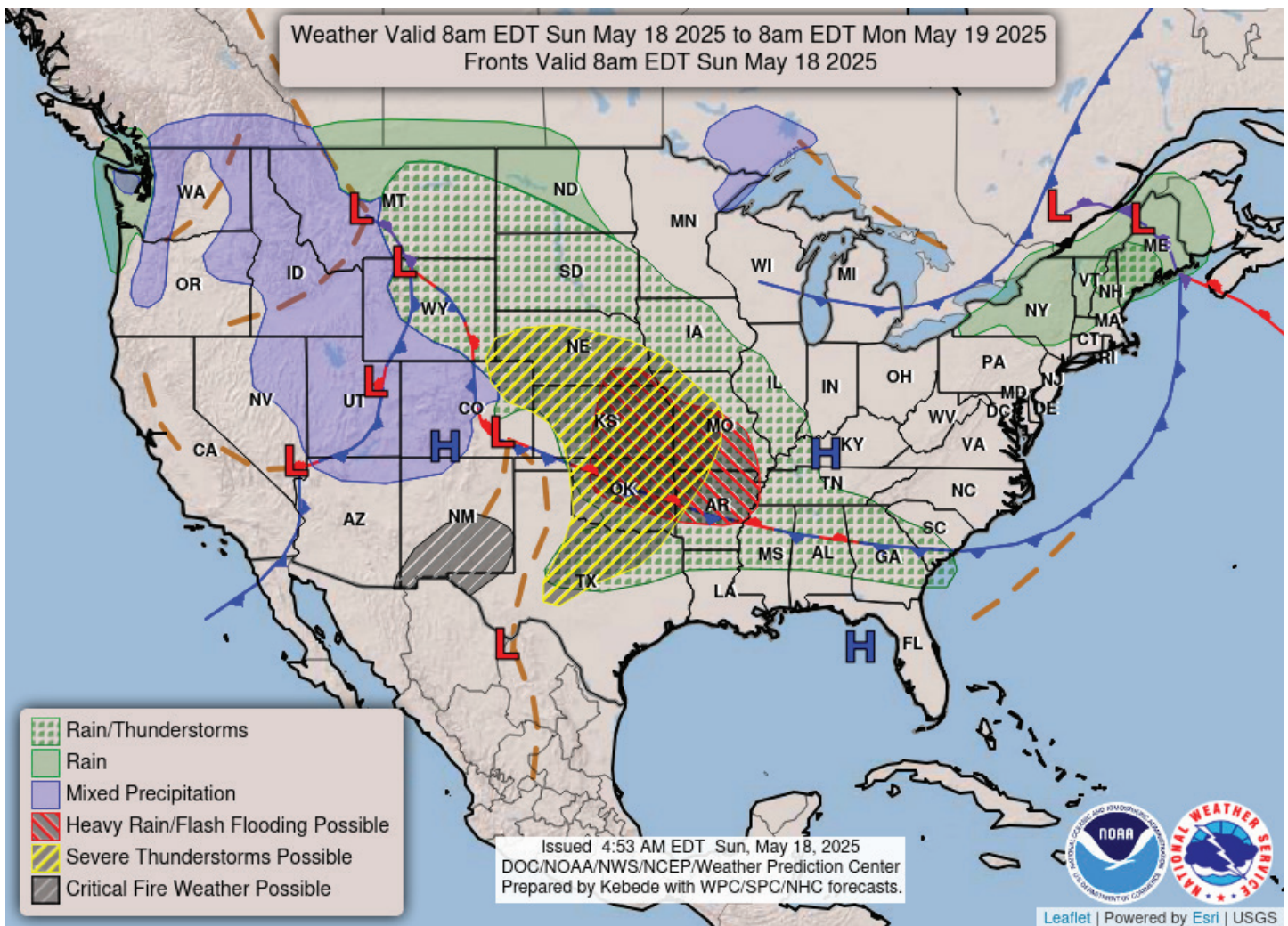
Precip to date in May.: 1.73

Average Precip to date: 5.97

Precip Year to Date: 4.36

Sunset Tonight: 9:01:29 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:55:13 am



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Today in Weather History

May 18th, 1918: An estimated F2 tornado moved NNE from 5 miles NNW of Ferney, across the eastern edge of Groton. Homes were unroofed, and barns were destroyed. Nine farms lost buildings. One man was injured in a barn, another in a car that was thrown from the road. The estimated damage was set at \$60,000. Tornadoes were also seen in Lincoln and Sanborn Counties in South Dakota.

Also, an estimated F2 tornado moved northeast through the townships of Akron and Artichoke in Big Stone County, Minnesota. About 300 farms were damaged. The funnel dissipated on Artichoke Lake.

May 18th, 1960: Pierre received 1.96 inches of rain in less than 30 minutes, which caused flash flooding. About 30 basements were flooded, and one home suffered extensive cave-in damage. Flash flooding from 2 to 3 inches of rain occurred near Presho, washing out county roads, three bridges, and a grain storage bin. Gettysburg also received 2.5 inches of rain.

May 18th, 1996: A brief F0 tornado touched down and cut a narrow path from 2 miles east of Willow Lake with no damage reported.

A 100 mph wind gust blew down 38 large trees on Highway 81 from the junction of Lake Norden corner on Highway 28 to the intersection of the Hayti corner. Also, four double-posted and five single-posted signs were broken off, and one single-posted steel sign was bent over.

1825 - A tornado (said to have crossed all of the state of Ohio) smashed into the log cabin settlement of Burlington, northeast of Columbus. (David Ludlum)

1960 - Salt Lake City UT received an inch of snow. It marked their latest measurable snowfall of record. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - Mount Saint Helens (in Washington State) erupted spewing ash and smoke sixty-three thousand feet into the air. Heavy ash covered the ground to the immediate northwest, and small particles were carried to the Atlantic coast. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms in Kansas, developing along a cold front, spawned tornadoes at Emporia and Toledo, produced wind gusts to 65 mph at Fort Scott, and produced golf ball size hail in the Kansas City area. Unseasonably hot weather prevailed ahead of the cold front. Pomona NJ reported a record high of 93 degrees, and Altus, OK, hit 100 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Low pressure anchored over eastern Virginia kept showers and thunderstorms over the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. Flash flooding was reported in Pennsylvania. Up to five inches of rain drenched Franklin County PA in 24 hours. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather from the Central Gulf Coast States to the Lower Missouri Valley during the day and evening. Thunderstorms spawned sixteen tornadoes, and there were 74 reports of large hail and damaging winds. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the central U.S. spawning a sixteen tornadoes, including a dozen in Nebraska. Thunderstorms also produced hail four inches in diameter at Perryton TX, wind gusts to 84 mph at Ellis KS, and high winds which caused nearly two million dollars damage at Sutherland NE. Thunderstorms deluged Sioux City IA with up to eight inches of rain, resulting in a record flood crest on Perry Creek and at least 4.5 million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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It seems as though there are more wrong turns in life than there are right turns. Many begin their careers strong, have high ideals, clear goals and objectives, and then, for one reason or another, they drop from sight.

Normally, it is not from a disaster or one single event. It's usually a combination of things. But, there is one "habit" that is mentioned again and again in Proverbs as a reason for failure: laziness. It is identified more than ten times as the reason for failure.

The word used for "laziness" leaves no room to wiggle away from the diagnosis: sluggard. If there is any living thing that most people want to avoid it is a "mollusk" or "slug." In fact, the very word "slug" brings to the mind's eye some "thing" that is lazy, sluggish, undirected and listless. Slugs seem to be on everyone's "avoid at all costs" list because they endanger plant life.

However, there is something interesting about "sluggard." In this verse, Solomon compared and contrasted the "way" of the sluggard to an ant. Now, on the one hand, few insects in life can be as annoying, bothersome, and troublesome as an ant.

On the other hand, however, ants show a vivid vision of a work ethic that is worthy of copying. Ants plan and prioritize, are motivated and industrious, disciplined and diligent, self-controlled and self-reliant — certainly a sign of "applied wisdom" that began with God in creation.

God's wisdom is practical, simple and sensible and can lead to our success. The ant is a great example: its wisdom, as does ours, comes from God!

Today's Prayer: Thank You, Father, for illustrating how little things in life can make a big difference. May we accept wisdom, that comes from You, guide us and guard us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones. Learn from their ways and become wise!" -Proverbs 6:6

We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.16.25

2 22 42 62 66 14

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$139,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.17.25

16 18 24 25 34 2

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$34,960,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.17.25

1 4 27 38 46 13

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 16 Mins 55 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.17.25

2 22 24 30 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.17.25

14 18 31 34 37 17

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.17.25

7 34 40 42 52 15

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$134,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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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

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Libraries are cutting back on staff and services after Trump's order to dismantle small agency

By NADIA LATHAN Associated Press/Report for America

Libraries across the United States are cutting back on e-books, audiobooks and loan programs after the Trump administration suspended millions of dollars in federal grants as it tries to dissolve the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Federal judges have issued temporary orders to block the Trump administration from taking any further steps toward gutting the agency. But the unexpected slashing of grants has delivered a significant blow to many libraries, which are reshuffling budgets and looking at different ways to raise money.

Maine has laid off a fifth of its staff and temporarily closed its state library after not receiving the remainder of its annual funding. Libraries in Mississippi have indefinitely stopped offering a popular e-book service, and the South Dakota state library has suspended its interlibrary loan program.

E-book and audiobook programs are especially vulnerable to budget cuts, even though those offerings have exploded in popularity since the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I think everyone should know the cost of providing digital sources is too expensive for most libraries," said Cindy Hohl, president of the American Library Association. "It's a continuous and growing need."

Library officials caught off guard by Trump's cuts

President Donald Trump issued an executive order March 14 to dismantle the IMLS before firing nearly all of its employees.

One month later, the Maine State Library announced it was issuing layoff notices for workers funded through an IMLS grant program.

"It came as quite a surprise to all of us," said Spencer Davis, a library generalist at the Maine State Library who is one of eight employees who were laid off May 8 because of the suspended funding.

In April, California, Washington and Connecticut were the only three states to receive letters stating the remainder of their funding for the year was cancelled, Hohl said. For others, the money hasn't been distributed yet. The three states all filed formal objections with the IMLS.

Rebecca Wendt, California state library director, said she was never told why California's funding was terminated while the other remaining states did not receive the same notice.

"We are mystified," Wendt said.

The agency did not respond to an email seeking comment.

Popular digital offerings on the chopping block

Most libraries are funded by city and county governments, but receive a smaller portion of their budget from their state libraries, which receive federal dollars every year to help pay for summer reading programs, interlibrary loan services and digital books. Libraries in rural areas rely on federal grants more than those in cities.

Many states use the funding to pay for e-books and audiobooks, which are increasingly popular, and costly, offerings. In 2023, more than 660 million people globally borrowed e-books, audiobooks and digital magazines, up from 19% in 2022, according to OverDrive, the main distributor of digital content for libraries and schools.

In Mississippi, the state library helped fund its statewide e-book program.

For a few days, Erin Busbea was the bearer of bad news for readers at her Mississippi library: Hoopla, a popular app to check out e-books and audiobooks had been suspended indefinitely in Lowndes and DeSoto counties due to the funding freeze.

"People have been calling and asking, 'Why can't I access my books on Hoopla?'" said Busbea, library director of the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library System in Columbus, a majority-Black city northeast of Jackson.

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The library system also had to pause parts of its interlibrary loan system allowing readers to borrow books from other states when they aren't available locally.

"For most libraries that were using federal dollars, they had to curtail those activities," said Hulen Bivins, the Mississippi Library Commission executive director.

States are fighting the funding freeze

The funding freeze came after the agency's roughly 70 staff members were placed on administrative leave in March.

Attorneys general in 21 states and the American Library Association have filed lawsuits against the Trump administration for seeking to dismantle the agency.

The institute's annual budget is below \$300 million and distributes less than half of that to state libraries across the country. In California, the state library was notified that about 20%, or \$3 million, of its \$15 million grant had been terminated.

"The small library systems are not able to pay for the e-books themselves," said Wendt, the California state librarian.

In South Dakota, the state's interlibrary loan program is on hold, according to Nancy Van Der Weide, a spokesperson for the South Dakota Department of Education.

The institute, founded in 1996 by a Republican-controlled Congress, also supports a national library training program named after former first lady Laura Bush that seeks to recruit and train librarians from diverse or underrepresented backgrounds. A spokesperson for Bush did not return a request seeking comment.

"Library funding is never robust. It's always a point of discussion. It's always something you need to advocate for," said Liz Doucett, library director at Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick, Maine. "It's adding to just general anxiety."

Portugal holds its 3rd general election in 3 years but the vote might not restore stability

By BARRY HATTON Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — Voters in Portugal returned to the polls on Sunday for a third general election in three years, as the country's increasingly fragmented political landscape defies efforts to unite behind policies on pressing national issues such as immigration, housing and the cost of living.

Hopes that the ballot might end the worst spell of political instability in decades for the European Union country of 10.6 million people could be dashed, however. Polls suggest the election is poised to deliver yet another minority government, leaving the Portuguese back where they started.

"What the polls indicate is that there will not be major differences from the last election results," says Marina Costa Lobo, head researcher at Lisbon University's Institute of Social Sciences. That outcome could bring another scramble to build political alliances in Parliament, she said.

For the past 50 years two parties have dominated politics in Portugal, with the center-right Social Democrats and the center-left Socialist Party alternating in power. They are likely to come out on top in this ballot, too.

But public frustration with their record in government has fueled the growth of new alternatives in recent years. That has denied the bigger parties enough seats in Parliament to snare a majority needed to ensure they serve a full four-year term.

"I really don't know who to go for," said 47-year-old Lisbon resident Patricia Fortes. "I'm fed up with the main parties, but then I feel I don't know the other parties well enough."

Polls suggest a center-right alliance is favored

A center-right minority government headed by the Social Democrats in partnership with the smaller Popular Party lost a confidence vote in parliament in March after less than a year in power, as opposition lawmakers teamed up against it. That triggered an early election, which had been due only in 2028.

Polls have suggested that the partnership, called Democratic Alliance, again has a small lead over the Socialists but likely not enough to secure 116 seats in the 230-seat National Assembly, Portugal's parliament.

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Voting began at 8 a.m. (0700 GMT) and ends at 8 p.m. (1900 GMT), when exit polls can be published. Most official results are expected by midnight (2300 GMT).

The confidence vote was triggered by a political storm around potential conflicts of interest in the business dealings of Social Democrat Prime Minister Luis Montenegro's family law firm. Montenegro has denied any wrongdoing and is standing for reelection.

Corruption scandals have dogged Portuguese politics in recent years. That has helped fuel the rise of Chega (Enough), a hard-right populist party whose leader Andre Ventura says he has "zero tolerance" for misconduct in office.

But Chega, which shot from 12 to 50 seats to come third in last year's election, has recently fallen foul of its own lawmakers' alleged wrongdoing.

One of them is suspected of stealing suitcases from the Lisbon airport and selling the contents online, and another allegedly faked the signature of a dead woman. Both resigned.

Immigration and housing are key issues

Chega owes much of its success to its demands for a tighter immigration policy that has resonated with voters.

Portugal has witnessed a steep rise in immigration. In 2018, there were fewer than a half-million legal immigrants in the country, according to government statistics. By early this year, there were more than 1.5 million, many of them Brazilians and Asians working in tourism and farming.

Thousands more are undocumented. The outgoing government announced two weeks before the election it was expelling some 18,000 foreigners living in the country without authorization. Though such a step is routine, the timing drew accusations it was trying to capture votes from Chega.

Socialist leader Pedro Nuno Santos, who is also standing for prime minister, described the move as a "Trumpification" of Portuguese politics, referring to U.S. President Donald Trump's focus on immigration policies.

A housing crisis has also fired debate. House prices and rents have been soaring for the past 10 years, due in part to an influx of white-collar foreigners who have driven up prices.

House prices jumped another 9% last year, the National Statistics Institute, a government body, said. Rents in and around the capital Lisbon, where some 1.5 million people live, last year saw the steepest rise in 30 years, climbing more than 7%, the institute said.

People complain they can't afford to buy or rent a home where they come from and that they and their children have to move away to buy.

The problem is compounded by Portugal being one of Western Europe's poorest countries.

The average monthly salary last year was around 1,200 euros (\$1,340) before tax, according to the statistics agency. The government-set minimum wage this year is 870 euros (\$974) a month before tax.

Russia launches biggest drone attack on Ukraine since start of war, killing at least 1

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia overnight into Sunday launched its most intense drone attack on Ukraine since the beginning of its full-scale invasion in 2022, after the first direct talks between Moscow and Kyiv in years failed to yield a ceasefire.

Russian President Vladimir Putin spurned Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's offer to meet face-to-face in Turkey after he himself proposed direct negotiations — although not at the presidential level — as an alternative to a 30-day ceasefire urged by Ukraine and its Western allies, including the U.S.

Talks in Istanbul on Friday broke up after less than two hours without a ceasefire, although both sides agreed on exchanging 1,000 prisoners of war each, according to the heads of both delegations. Ukraine's intelligence chief, Kyrylo Budanov, said on Ukrainian television Saturday that the exchange could happen as early as next week.

U.S. President Donald Trump said he plans to speak by phone Monday with Putin, and will then speak to Zelenskyy and leaders of various NATO countries, about ending the war in Ukraine.

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Russia fired a total of 273 exploding drones and decoys, Ukraine's air force said Sunday. Of those, 88 were intercepted and a further 128 lost, likely having been electronically jammed. The attacks targeted the country's Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk regions.

Yuriy Ihnat, Head of the Communications Department of the Ukrainian Air Force, told The Associated Press that the barrage was the biggest drone attack since the start of the full-scale invasion.

Russia's previous largest known single drone attack was on the eve of the war's third anniversary, when Russia pounded Ukraine with 267 drones.

Kyiv regional Gov. Mykola Kalashnyk said a 28-year-old woman was killed in a drone attack on the region and three other people, including a 4-year-old child, were wounded.

Meanwhile, Russia's Defense Ministry said its air defenses shot down seven Ukrainian drones overnight, and a further 18 on Sunday morning.

Israeli strikes across Gaza kill dozens and force a main hospital to close, health officials say

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip killed at least 103 people overnight and into Sunday, hospitals and medics said, and prompted the main hospital in northern Gaza to close as Israel intensifies its war in the territory that, after more than 19 months, shows no signs of abating.

More than 48 people were killed in airstrikes in and around the southern city of Khan Younis, some of which hit houses and tents sheltering displaced people, according to Nasser Hospital. Among the dead were 18 children and 13 women, hospital spokesperson Weam Fares said.

In northern Gaza, a strike on a home in the built-up Jabaliya refugee camp killed nine people from a single family, according to the Gaza health ministry's emergency services. Another strike on a family's residence, also in Jabaliya, killed 10, including seven children and a woman, according to the civil defense, which operates under the Hamas-run government.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the overnight strikes. Israel blames civilian casualties from its operations on Hamas because the militant group operates from civilian areas.

The bloodshed comes as Israel ramps up its war in Gaza with a new offensive named "Gideon's Chariots," in which Israel says it plans to seize territory, displace hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to Gaza's south and take greater control over the distribution of aid.

Israel's new offensive

Israel says the new plan is meant to ramp up pressure on the militant Hamas group to agree to a temporary ceasefire on Israel's terms — one that would free Israeli hostages held in Gaza but wouldn't necessarily end the war. Hamas says it wants a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and a pathway to ending the war as part of any new ceasefire deal.

Israel had said it would wait until the end of U.S. President Donald Trump's visit to the region before launching its new offensive, saying it was giving a chance for efforts to bring about a new ceasefire deal. And while teams are still negotiating a potential truce in the Qatari capital Doha, there appears to have been no breakthrough. Trump did not visit Israel on his trip, which wrapped up on Friday.

Israel shattered a previous 8-week ceasefire in mid-March, launching fierce airstrike that killed hundreds. Days before the end of that ceasefire, Israel also halted all imports into Gaza, including food, medicine and fuel, deepening a humanitarian crisis and sparking warnings of an increasing risk of famine in the territory — a blockade that continues.

Israel says that move is also meant to pressure Hamas.

The war in Gaza began on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and abducting 251 others. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 53,000 Palestinians, many of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants.

Strikes pound Gaza

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In northern Gaza, parts of which have been flattened by Israel's onslaught, at least 43 people were killed in multiple strikes, according to first responders from the health ministry and the civil defense. Gaza City's Shifa Hospital said among the dead, 15 were children and 12 were women.

In Jabaliya, a built-up refugee camp in northern Gaza, 10 people, including seven children and a woman were killed, according to the civil defense, which operates under the Hamas-run government. Among the dead were two parents and their three children and a father and his four children, it said.

Health officials said that fighting around the Indonesian Hospital in northern Gaza and an Israeli military "siege" prompted it to shut down.

The hospital was the main medical facility in the territory's war-wrecked north, after northern Gaza's previous main hospital, Kamal Adwan, was forced to stop serving Palestinians last year because of Israeli strikes, as was a second facility, Beit Hanoun Hospital. The Israeli military also had no immediate comment on operations at the hospital.

Israel has repeatedly targeted hospitals in its war against Hamas, pointing to what it says are the group's activities in and around the facilities. Human rights groups and U.N.-backed experts have accused Israel of systematically destroying Gaza's health care system.

In central Gaza, at least 12 people were killed in three separate strikes, hospitals said. One strike in the Zweida town killed seven people, including two children and four women, according to according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in the town of Deir al-Balah. The second hit an apartment in Deir al-Balah, killing two parents and their child, the hospital said. In Nuseirat camp, a strike hit a house and killed two people, said the camp's Awda hospital,

Nasser Hospital said it struggled to count the dead because of the condition the bodies were brought in.

Houthi rebels launch missile at Israel

As the war in Gaza grinds on, the conflict between Israel and the Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen has escalated.

The Israeli military said it intercepted a Houthi missile launched at the country early Sunday, which set off air raid sirens in multiple parts of the country.

The rebels said they fired two ballistic missiles — including a hypersonic one — towards Israel's main airport near Tel Aviv, whose grounds earlier this month were struck by a Houthi missile.

"The operation successfully achieved its goal, thanks to Allah, and caused millions of occupying Zionists to rush to shelters," said Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree.

Israel was left out of a U.S. deal to halt attacks on Houthi targets in Yemen in exchange for a stop to their strikes on U.S. shipping vessels in the Red Sea. On Friday, Israel struck Yemen for the eighth time since the war in Gaza began in response to the Houthi attacks.

Pope Leo XIV vows to work for unity so Catholic Church becomes a sign of peace in the world

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Leo XIV, history's first American pope, vowed Sunday to work for unity so that the Catholic Church becomes a sign of peace in the world, offering a message of communion during an inaugural Mass in St. Peter's Square before tens of thousands of people, presidents, patriarchs and princes.

Leo officially opened his pontificate by taking his first popemobile tour through the piazza, a rite of passage that has become synonymous with the papacy's global reach and mediatic draw. The 69-year-old Augustinian missionary smiled and waved from the back of the truck, but didn't appear to stop to kiss babies and the crowd.

During the Mass, Leo appeared to choke up when the two potent symbols of the papacy were placed on him — the pallium woolen stole over his shoulders and the fisherman's ring on his finger — as if the weight of responsibility of leading the 1.4-billion strong church had just sunk in.

He turned his hand to look at the ring and seal and then clasped his hands in front of him in prayer.

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Security was tight as civil protection crews in neon uniforms funneled pilgrims into quadrants in the piazza and up and down the boulevard that leads to it for the ceremony blending ancient ritual, evocative symbols and a dose of modern-day celebrity.

U.S. Vice President JD Vance, one of the last foreign officials to see Pope Francis before he died, led the U.S. delegation honoring the Chicago-born Leo after paying his respects at the Argentine pope's tomb upon arriving in Rome late Saturday.

The theme of Leo's papacy

In his homily, Leo said he wanted to be a servant to the faithful through the two dimensions of the papacy, love and unity, so that the church could be a force for peace in the world.

"I would like that our first great desire be for a united church, a sign of unity and communion, which becomes a haven for a reconciled world," he said. "In this our time, we still see too much discord, too many wounds caused by hatred, violence, prejudice, the fear of difference, and an economic paradigm that exploits the Earth's resources and marginalises the poorest."

His call for unity was significant, given the polarization in the Catholic Church in the United States and beyond.

Francis' radical 12-year pontificate, which emphasized care for the poor and marginalized and disdain for the capitalist economic system, often alienated conservatives and traditionalists. Leo's May 8 election, after a remarkably quick 24-hour conclave, has appeared at the outset to have pleased conservative Catholics who seem to appreciate his more disciplined, traditional style and Augustinian background, emphasizing core truths of Catholic doctrine.

"Let us build a church founded on God's love, a sign of unity, a missionary church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the word, allows itself to be made restless by history, and becomes a haven of harmony for humanity," he said, referencing some of the themes of Francis' pontificate as well.

Tight security and protocol

Strict diplomatic protocol dictated the seating arrangements at his inaugural Mass, with both the United States and Peru getting front-row seats thanks to Leo's dual citizenship. Vance, a Catholic convert who tangled with Francis over the Trump administration's mass migrant deportation plans, is being joined by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who arrived in Rome ahead of time to try to advance Russia-Ukraine peace talks.

Peruvian President Dina Boluarte is one of around a dozen heads of state attending, as well as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Russia is being represented by the culture minister, Olga Liubimova.

Diplomatic protocol also dictated the dress code: While most wore black, the handful of Catholic queens and princesses — Charlene of Monaco and Letizia of Spain among others — wore white in a special privilege allowed them. Three dozen of the world's other Christian churches sent their own delegations, the Jewish community had a 13-member delegation, half of them rabbis. Other representatives headed Buddhist, Muslim, Zoroastrian, Hindu, Sikh and Jain delegations.

Security was tight, as it was for Francis' funeral on April 26, which drew an estimated 250,000 people. Rome authorities are planning for another 250,000 on Sunday. The piazza and main boulevard leading to it, and two nearby piazzas were set up with giant television screens, and dozens of portable toilets have been erected in a nearby park.

Americans are rejoicing

U.S. seminarian Ethan Menning, 21, from Omaha, Nebraska, wrapped himself in an American flag, purchased at a truck stop in Iowa, to celebrate.

"Rome always felt like home for a Catholic, but now coming here and seeing one of our own on the throne of Peter ... it almost makes Jesus himself more accessible," he said.

Kalen Hill, a pilgrim from the U.S., got to St. Peter's soon after the gates opened at dawn Sunday morning and said he never expected an American would lead the 1.4-billion strong church.

"I would say all the Americans are emotional about it," he said. "It is really powerful for American Catholics who sometimes feel separated from the world church to be brought in and included in this community through Pope Leo."

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Signs of Leo's priorities

The two symbols of the papacy handed to Leo were the pallium, and the fisherman's ring. The pallium, draped across his shoulders, symbolizes the pastor carrying his flock as the pope carries the faithful. The ring, which becomes Leo's official seal, harks back to Jesus' call to the apostle Peter to cast his fishing nets.

The other symbolically important moment of the Mass was the representational rite of obedience to Leo: Whereas in the past all cardinals would vow obedience to the new pope, more recent papal installations involve representatives of cardinals, bishops, priests, deacons, nuns, married couples and young people participating in the rite.

Gregory and Susan Hudak, who lived for 40 years in the Chicago area, found themselves in Rome after booking a trip in February, with just a faint hope of perhaps glimpsing the pope. Seeing the popemobile pass by in front of them, with the Chicago-born Leo on board, was even better than watching Michael Jordan play, said Gary Hudak, a former altar boy wearing a Chicago Bears hat.

"Originally, the only hope I had coming here was to see the inside of the Sistine Chapel," he said. "Seeing the pope was not scheduled, it was a long shot hope. And this was a treasure, simple as that."

Romanians vote in a tense presidential runoff that pits nationalist against pro-EU centrist

By STEPHEN McGRATH and JUSTIN SPIKE Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Romanians were voting on Sunday in a tense presidential runoff between a hard-right nationalist and a pro-Western centrist in a high-stakes election rerun that could determine the geopolitical direction of the European Union and NATO member country.

The race pits front-runner George Simion, the 38-year-old leader of the hard-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, or AUR, against incumbent Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan. It comes months after the cancellation of the previous election plunged Romania into its worst political crisis in decades.

Polls opened at 7 a.m. local time and were to close at 9 p.m. By noon, more than 4.6 million people — or about 25% of eligible voters — had cast ballots, according to official electoral data. Romanians abroad have been able to vote since Friday at specially set-up polling stations, and more than 750,000 have already voted.

Romania's political landscape was upended last year when a top court voided the previous election after far-right outsider Calin Georgescu topped first-round polls, following allegations of electoral violations and Russian interference, which Moscow denied.

Simion appeared alongside Georgescu at a Bucharest polling station on Sunday and told reporters that he voted against the "humiliations to which our sisters and brothers have been subjected."

"We voted against abuses and against poverty. We voted against those who look down on all of us," he said. "I voted for our future to be decided only by Romanians, for Romanians and Romania. So help us God!"

What's going on in Romania?

Years of endemic corruption and growing anger toward Romania's political establishment have fueled a surge in support for anti-establishment and hard-right figures, reflecting a broader pattern across Europe. Both Simion and Dan have made their political careers railing against Romania's old political class.

Most recent local surveys indicate the runoff will be tight, after earlier ones showed Simion holding a lead over Dan, a 55-year-old mathematician who rose to prominence as a civic activist fighting against illegal real estate projects.

After voting in his hometown of Fagaras, Dan told reporters that he voted for Romanians "who are quiet, honest, and hardworking, and who have not felt represented for a long time."

"I voted for a change that brings prosperity, not one that brings instability and discourages investment in Romania," he said. "I voted for a European direction, and for strong cooperation with our European partners, not for Romania's isolation. I voted for a society where we can have dialogue, not one where we are destined to be divided."

Turnout is typically higher in the final round of Romanian presidential elections, and is expected to play

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a decisive role in the outcome on Sunday. In the first round on May 4, final turnout stood at 9.5 million, or 53% of eligible voters, according to official electoral data.

Dan founded the reformist Save Romania Union party in 2016 but later left, and is running independently on a pro-European Union ticket reaffirming Western ties, support for Ukraine and fiscal reform.

What's ahead?

The president is elected for a five-year term and has significant decision-making powers in matters of national security and foreign policy. The winner of Sunday's race will be charged with nominating a new prime minister after Marcel Ciolacu stepped down following the failure of his coalition's candidate to advance to the runoff.

After coming fourth in last year's canceled race, Simion backed Georgescu who was banned in March from running in the election redo. Simion then surged to front-runner in the May 4 first round after becoming the standard-bearer for the hard right.

A former activist who campaigned for reunification with neighboring Moldova, Simion says he would focus on reforms: slashing red tape, reducing bureaucracy and taxes. Still, he insists that restoring democracy is his priority, returning "the will of the people."

His AUR party says it stands for "family, nation, faith, and freedom" and rose to prominence in a 2020 parliamentary election. It has since grown to become the second-largest party in the Romanian legislature.

A stark choice: Russia or the EU?

His critics say Simion is a pro-Russian extremist who threatens Romania's longstanding alliances in the EU and NATO.

In an Associated Press interview, he rejected the accusations, saying Russia is his country's biggest threat and that he wants Romania to be treated as "equal partners" in Brussels.

"I don't think he is a pro-Russian candidate, I also don't think that he's an anti-Russian candidate," said Claudiu Tufis, an associate professor of political science at the University of Bucharest. "I think what is driving him is ... his focus on what I call identity politics."

In the first-round vote, Simion won a massive 61% of Romania's large diaspora vote, with his calls to patriotism resonating with Romanians who moved abroad in search of better opportunities.

Hours after voting abroad opened on Friday, Simion accused the Moldovan government of election fraud, claims that were quickly rejected by Moldovan and Romanian authorities.

"These statements are intended to sow distrust and hostility, with the aim of influencing the election process," Romania's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Poles vote for a new president as security concerns loom large

By VANESSA GERA Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Poles were voting Sunday in a presidential election at a time of heightened security concerns stemming from the ongoing war in neighboring Ukraine and growing worry that the U.S. commitment to Europe's security could be weakening under President Donald Trump.

The top two front-runners are Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski, a liberal allied with Prime Minister Donald Tusk, and Karol Nawrocki, a conservative historian with no prior political experience who is supported by the national conservative Law and Justice party.

Recent opinion polls show Trzaskowski with around 30% support and Nawrocki in the mid-20s. A second round between the two is widely expected to take place on June 1.

The election is also a test of the strength of other forces, including the far right.

Śławomir Mentzen, a hard-right candidate who blends populist MAGA-style rhetoric with libertarian economics and a critical stance toward the European Union, has been polling in third place.

Ten other candidates are also on the ballot. With such a crowded field and a requirement that a candidate receive more than 50% of the vote to win outright, a second round seemed all but inevitable.

Polling stations opened at 7 a.m. (0500GMT) and close at 9 p.m. (1900GMT). Exit polls will be released when voting ends, with results expected by Tuesday, possibly Monday.

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Polish authorities have reported attempts at foreign interference during the campaign, including denial-of-service attacks targeting parties in Tusk's coalition on Friday and allegations by a state research institute that political ads on Facebook were funded from abroad.

Although Poland's prime minister and parliament hold primary authority over domestic policy, the presidency carries substantial power. The president serves as commander of the armed forces, plays a role in foreign and security policy, and can veto legislation.

The conservative outgoing president, Andrzej Duda, has repeatedly used that power over more than the past year to hamper Tusk's agenda, for example blocking ambassadorial nominations and using his veto power to resist reversing disputed judicial and media changes made during Law and Justice's time in power from 2015 to late 2023.

A Trzaskowski victory could be expected to end such a standoff. He has pledged to support reforms to the courts and public media, both of which critics say were politicized under Law and Justice. Tusk's opponents say he has also politicized public media.

Monika Laskowska-Dzierbicka, a 36-year-old clinical psychology, voted in Warsaw for Trzaskowski. She said she feels "he would be able to resolve disputes, that he would not divide Poles."

"Rafał Trzaskowski is a competent person, he knows languages, so he will try to get along with everyone," she said.

Nawrocki, who leads a state historical institute, has positioned himself as a defender of conservative values and national sovereignty.

At the same Warsaw polling station, 88-year-old Jerzy Iwiński said Mentzen has a "sensible program" but that he didn't want to "waste" his vote on him, so he cast his ballot for Nawrocki. He said he views Nawrocki as a greater patriot than Trzaskowski.

Another Nawrocki supporter, Irena Kuczyńska, 79, shared her view: "From the old days of my family, God, Honor and Fatherland are the most important. And that's why I'm with Mr. Nawrocki."

Congo's coltan miners dig for world's tech — and struggle regardless of who is in charge

By DAVID YUSUFU KIBINGILA and MONIKA PRONCZUK Associated Press

RUBAYA, Congo (AP) — Nestled in the green hills of Masisi territory in Congo, the artisanal Rubaya mining site hums with the sound of generators, as hundreds of men labor by hand to extract coltan, a key mineral crucial for producing modern electronics and defense technology — and fiercely sought after worldwide.

Rubaya lies in the heart of eastern Congo, a mineral-rich part of the Central African nation which for decades has been ripped apart by violence from government forces and different armed groups, including the Rwanda-backed M23, whose recent resurgence has escalated the conflict, worsening an already acute humanitarian crisis.

As the U.S. spearheads peace talks between Congo and Rwanda, Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi has sought out a deal with the Trump administration, offering mineral access in return for American support in quelling the insurgency and boosting security.

While details of the deal remain unclear, analysts said Rubaya might be one of the mining sites which fall under its scope.

Eastern Congo has been in and out of crisis for decades. The conflict has created one of the world's largest humanitarian crises with more than 7 million people displaced, including 100,000 who fled homes this year.

The Rubaya mines have been at the center of the fighting, changing hands between the Congolese government and rebel groups. For over a year now, it has been controlled by the M23 rebels, who earlier this year advanced and seized the strategic city of Goma and Bukavu in a major escalation of the conflict.

Despite the country's exceptional mineral wealth, over 70% of Congolese live on less than \$2.15 a day. Metals for 'modern life and military preparedness'

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For the men working in the Rubaya's mines, who rely on the mining for their livelihoods, little has changed over decades of violence.

One of them is Jean Baptiste Bigirimana, who has worked in the mines for seven years.

"I earn \$40 a month, but that's not enough," he said. "Children need clothes, education and food. When I divide up the money to see how I will take care of my children, I realize it's not enough," he said, adding that he doesn't know where the minerals he mines go once they leave Rubaya.

The mines produce coltan — short for columbite-tantalite — an ore from which the metals tantalum and niobium are extracted. Both are considered critical raw materials by the United States, the European Union, China and Japan. Tantalum is used in mobile phones, computers and automotive electronics, as well as in aircraft engines, missile components and GPS systems. Niobium is used in pipelines, rockets and jet engines.

Congo produced about 40% of the world's coltan in 2023, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, with Australia, Canada and Brazil being other major suppliers.

The National Energy Emergency executive order, issued by Trump, highlighted the significance of critical minerals — including tantalum and niobium — and called for securing U.S. access to ensure both "modern life and military preparedness."

A 'murky' global supply chain

According to a U.N. report, since seizing Rubaya in April last year, the M23 has imposed taxes on the monthly trade and transport of 120 tonnes of coltan, generating at least \$800,000 a month. The coltan then is exported to Rwanda, U.N. experts said. But even before M23 seized control of the mine, analysts said that the mineral was sold to Rwanda, the only difference being it was done through Congolese intermediaries.

Experts say that it is not easy to trace how coltan arrives in Western countries.

"The global coltan supply chain is pretty murky," said Guillaume de Brier, a natural resources researcher at the Antwerp-based International Peace Information Service. "From eastern DRC, coltan is bought by traders, mostly Lebanese or Chinese, who will sell it to exporters based in Rwanda. Exporters will then ship it to the UAE or China, where it will be refined into tantalum and niobium, and sold to Western countries as metals from UAE or China."

The M23 has previously controlled Rubaya for periods of time, and the U.N. asserted that, even before the takeover of Goma, the group was facilitating the smuggling of these minerals to Rwanda. Since M23 took control of the mine, Rwanda's official coltan exports have doubled, according to Rwandan official figures.

At times the mines were also under control of the Wazalendo, a militia allied with the Congolese army.

Alexis Twagira said he feels some things have improved under M23. "I've been working in this mine for 13 years, and I've worked under the Wazalendo. When they were here, they would harass us, sometimes taking our minerals and demanding money," he said.

The U.N. has accused both the Congolese army and the M23 rebels of human rights abuses.

'We can't continue like this'

Congo is the world's largest producer of cobalt, a mineral used to make lithium-ion batteries for electric vehicles and other products, but U.S. access is complicated by the fact that Chinese companies control 80% of its Congolese production. Congo also produces gold.

In recent weeks, two U.S. companies opened doors to production in the region. Nathan Trotter, a U.S. firm, signed a letter of intent with Rwanda-based Trinity Metals, which owns Rwanda's largest tin mine. And KoBold Metals, which uses Artificial Intelligence to further energy transition and is backed by billionaire Bill Gates, brokered a deal to buy Australia's AVZ Minerals' interest in Congo's Manono lithium deposits.

Analysts warn that the implementation of a minerals deal in eastern Congo, if one was to materialize, will face many hurdles — especially with U.S. investors largely abandoning Congo in the last two decades.

"Turning a headline announcement into sustainable progress will require resolving deep suspicions between Rwanda and the DRC," Chatham House, a research institute, said in a recent report. "A deal will also need to account for complex local political problems of land access and identity, wider security challenges in a region that hosts myriad non-state armed groups, and issues of asset scarcity."

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If the deal were to include Rubaya, where all mining is currently done manually, U.S. companies would have to contend with both security concerns and a severe lack of infrastructure.

"With coltan, you're dealing with hundreds of thousands of miners, and not just M23, but other so-called auto-defense armed groups and individuals who rely on mining for survival," said de Brier from the International Peace Information Service. "You have to build all the infrastructure, you have to start from scratch. You will even have to build the roads."

Bahati Moïse, a trader who resells coltan from Rubaya's mines, hopes that, regardless who controls the mines, the workers who labor to extract the minerals will finally be valued as much as the resources themselves.

"The whole country, the whole world knows that phones are made from the coltan mined here, but look at the life we live," he said. "We can't continue like this."

Trump budget would cut ocean data and leave boaters, anglers and forecasters scrambling for info

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

Capt. Ed Enos makes his living as a harbor pilot in Hawaii, clambering aboard arriving ships in the pre-dawn hours and guiding them into port.

His world revolves around wind speeds, current strength and wave swells. When Enos is bobbing in dangerous waters in the dark, his cellphone is his lifeline: with a few taps he can access the Integrated Ocean Observing System and pull up the data needed to guide what are essentially floating warehouses safely to the dock.

But maybe not for much longer. President Donald Trump wants to eliminate all federal funding for the observing system's regional operations. Scientists say the cuts could mean the end of efforts to gather real-time data crucial to navigating treacherous harbors, plotting tsunami escape routes and predicting hurricane intensity.

"It's the last thing you should be shutting down," Enos said. "There's no money wasted. Right at a time when we should be getting more money to do more work to benefit the public, they want to turn things off. That's the wrong strategy at the wrong time for the wrong reasons."

Monitoring system tracks all things ocean

The IOOS system launched about 20 years ago. It's made up of 11 regional associations in multiple states and territories, including the Virgin Islands, Alaska, Hawaii, Washington state, Michigan, South Carolina and Southern California.

The regional groups are networks of university researchers, conservation groups, businesses and anyone else gathering or using maritime data. The associations are the Swiss army knife of oceanography, using buoys, submersible drones and radar installations to track water temperature, wind speed, atmospheric pressure, wave speeds, swell heights and current strength.

The networks monitor the Great Lakes, U.S. coastlines, the Gulf of Mexico, which Trump renamed the Gulf of America, the Gulf of Alaska, the Caribbean and the South Pacific and upload member data to public websites in real time.

Maritime community and military rely on system data

Cruise ship, freighter and tanker pilots like Enos, as well as the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard, use the information directly to navigate harbors safely, plot courses around storms and conduct search-and-rescue operations.

The associations' observations feed into National Weather Service forecasts. The Pacific Northwest association uses tsunami data to post real-time coastal escape routes on a public-facing app. And the Hawaii association not only posts data that is helpful to harbor pilots but tracks hurricane intensity and tiger sharks that have been tagged for research.

The associations also track toxic algal blooms, which can force beach closures and kill fish. The maps

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help commercial anglers avoid those empty regions. Water temperature data can help identify heat layers within the ocean and, because it's harder for fish to survive in those layers, knowing hot zones helps anglers target better fishing grounds.

The regional networks are not formal federal agencies but are almost entirely funded through federal grants through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The current federal budget allocates \$43.5 million for the networks. A Republican bill in the House natural resources committee would actually send them more money, \$56 million annually, from 2026 through 2030.

Cuts catch network administrators by surprise

A Trump administration memo leaked in April proposes a \$2.5 billion cut to the Department of Commerce, which oversees NOAA, in the 2026 federal budget.

Part of the proposal calls for eliminating federal funding for the regional monitoring networks, even though the memo says one of the activities the administration wants the commerce department to focus on is collecting ocean and weather data.

The memo offered no other justifications for the cuts. The proposal stunned network users.

"We've worked so hard to build an incredible system and it's running smoothly, providing data that's important to the economy. Why would you break it?" said Jack Barth, an Oregon State oceanographer who shares data with the Pacific Northwest association.

"What we're providing is a window into the ocean and without those measures we frankly won't know what's coming at us. It's like turning off the headlights," Barth said.

NOAA officials declined to comment on the cuts and potential impacts, saying in an email to The Associated Press that they do not do "speculative interviews."

Network's future remains unclear

Nothing is certain. The 2026 federal fiscal year starts Oct. 1. The budget must pass the House, the Senate and get the president's signature before it can take effect. Lawmakers could decide to fund the regional networks after all.

Network directors are trying not to panic. If the cuts go through, some associations might survive by selling their data or soliciting grants from sources outside the federal government. But the funding hole would be so significant that just keeping the lights on would be an uphill battle, they said.

If the associations fold, other entities might be able to continue gathering data, but there will be gaps. Partnerships developed over years would evaporate and data won't be available in a single place like now, they said.

"People have come to us because we've been steady," Hawaii regional network director Melissa Iwamoto said. "We're a known entity, a trusted entity. No one saw this coming, the potential for us not to be here."

The FBI is investigating the explosion at a California fertility clinic as an act of terrorism

By ERIC TUCKER, GENE JOHNSON and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

The person believed responsible for an attack targeting a Southern California fertility clinic Saturday posted rambling online writings before an explosion that investigators are treating as an act of terrorism, according to a law enforcement official.

The suspect, who died in the explosion that tore through the clinic and rattled the upscale California city of Palm Springs, also attempted to record video or stream the attack, said the official, who was not authorized to discuss details of the attack and spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press.

"Make no mistake: This is an intentional act of terrorism," Akil Davis, the head of the FBI's Los Angeles field office, told an evening news conference.

Authorities were still working to piece together a motive and build a chronology of events leading up to the attack. Though the FBI did not say how it had determined the explosion was terrorism, the writings left behind, in which the suspect communicated a belief that the world should not be populated, appear to shed light on the person's state of mind and help explain investigators' thesis that the attack was tar-

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geted and intentional.

Authorities have not released the identity of the person thought to be responsible but believe the individual died in a car explosion. Davis said investigators weren't looking for anyone else.

Four others were injured but details of the severity of their injuries weren't shared.

A burned-out vehicle was seen in the parking lot behind the clinic after the blast, which caved in the building's roof, sprayed debris across a five-lane road and shattered windows in businesses blocks away. The clinic was closed for the weekend, and the doctor who leads it told the AP its staffers were safe.

The blast gutted the American Reproductive Centers fertility clinic, housed in a single-story building along a five-lane street lined with palm trees.

Dr. Maher Abdallah, who leads the clinic, told the AP in a phone interview that the explosion damaged the practice's office space, where it conducts consultations with patients. The clinic's IVF lab and stored embryos are offsite and were not damaged.

"Thank God today happened to be a day that we have no patients," Abdallah said.

Palm Springs Mayor Pro Tem Naomi Soto called the clinic "a place of hope."

"This is a building that people go to to start or expand their families," she said. "We acknowledge their pain and concern across the community for the patients and staff."

Rhino Williams, 47, said he was chatting with customers at a hotel restaurant he helps manage just over a block away when he heard a huge boom. Everything rattled, Williams said, and he sprinted to the scene to see if anyone needed help.

Williams covered his nose with his shirt as he smelled burning plastic and rubber. He said he saw a building had "blown out" into the street, with bricks and debris scattered everywhere, and he spotted a car's front axle on fire in the parking lot.

It was the only car in the lot, said Williams, who ran into the building, calling out and peering behind the counter to see if anyone was inside. He did not hear a response and did not see anyone behind the counter.

Williams then ran around checking on other buildings. Multiple windows of the neighboring liquor store also were blown out. Once he saw authorities arrive, Williams headed back to the hotel, he said.

Steven Michael Chacon was in his car preparing to turn into a hospital across the street from the clinic when he felt and heard a massive boom as the building was torn apart, sending a massive plume of black smoke into the air. Not knowing what happened, he exited his car to flee the scene. Glass was all over the ground, and he saw what appeared to be a body part.

"I got out of my car and then people started screaming, there were people bloody, there was glass everywhere," he said.

Palm Springs, about a two-hour drive east of Los Angeles, is known for upscale resorts, golf courses and a history of celebrity residents.

The Trump administration condemned the attack.

"The Trump administration understands that women and mothers are the heartbeat of America," Attorney General Pam Bondi said in a statement. "Violence against a fertility clinic is unforgivable."

At least 18 killed as severe weather lashes Kentucky, and 9 more die elsewhere

By DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

LONDON, Ky. (AP) — Storms that swept across part of the Midwest and South killed least 27 people including 18 in Kentucky, where another 10 were hospitalized in critical condition, authorities said.

A devastating tornado in Kentucky damaged homes, tossed vehicles and left many people homeless. Seventeen of the deaths were in Laurel County, located in the state's southeast, and one was in Pulaski County: Fire Department Maj. Roger Leslie Leatherman, a 39-year veteran who was fatally injured while responding to the deadly weather.

Parts of two dozen state roads were closed, and some could take days to reopen, according to Gov.

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Andy Beshear, who announced the toll of dead and critically injured on Saturday. He also said the death toll could still rise.

"We need the whole world right now to be really good neighbors to this region," the governor said.

State Emergency Management Director Eric Gibson said hundreds of homes were damaged, Kayla Patterson, her husband and their five children huddled in a tub in their basement in London, the county seat, as the tornado raged around them.

"You could literally hear just things ripping in the distance, glass shattering everywhere, just roaring like a freight train," she recalled Saturday. "It was terrible."

The family eventually emerged to the sounds of sirens and panicked neighbors. While the family's own home was spared, others right behind it were demolished, Patterson said.

Rescuers searched for survivors all night and into the morning, the sheriff's office said. An emergency shelter was set up at a high school and donations of food and other necessities were arriving.

Resident Chris Cromer said he got the first of two alerts on his phone around 11:30 p.m., about a half-hour before the tornado struck. He and his wife grabbed their dog, jumped in their car and sought shelter in the crawlspace at a relative's nearby home because their own crawlspace is small.

"We could hear and feel the vibration of the tornado coming through," said Cromer, 46. A piece of his roof was ripped off, and windows were broken, but homes around his were destroyed.

"It's one of those things that you see on the news in other areas, and you feel bad for people — then, when it happens, it's just surreal," he said. "It makes you be thankful to be alive, really."

The storm was the latest severe weather to cause deaths and widespread damage in Kentucky. Two months ago at least 24 people died in a round of storms that swelled creeks and submerged roads.

Missouri pounded by storms, with deaths confirmed in St. Louis

About 1,200 tornadoes strike the U.S. annually, and they have been reported in all 50 states over the years. Researchers found in 2018 that deadly tornadoes were happening less frequently in the traditional "Tornado Alley" of Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas and more frequently in parts of the more densely populated and tree-filled mid-South area.

The latest Kentucky storms were part of a weather system Friday that killed seven in Missouri and two in northern Virginia, authorities said. The system also spawned tornadoes in Wisconsin, brought punishing heat to Texas and temporarily enveloped parts of Illinois — including Chicago — in a pall of dust on an otherwise sunny day.

In St. Louis, Mayor Cara Spencer said five people died, 38 were injured and more than 5,000 homes were affected.

"The devastation is truly heartbreaking," she said at a news conference Saturday. An overnight curfew was to continue in the most damaged neighborhoods.

Weather service radar indicated a likely tornado touched down between 2:30 p.m. and 2:50 p.m. in Clayton, Missouri, in the area of Forest Park, which is home to the St. Louis Zoo and formerly hosted both the 1904 World's Fair and the Olympic Games in 1904.

Three people needed aid after part of the Centennial Christian Church crumbled, according to St. Louis Fire Battalion Chief William Pollihan.

Stacy Clark said his mother-in-law, Patricia Penelton, died in the church. He described her as a very active church volunteer who had many roles, including being part of the choir.

At the zoo, falling trees severely damaged the roof of a butterfly facility. Staffers quickly corralled most of the butterflies, the zoo said on social media, and a conservatory in suburban Chesterfield was caring for the displaced creatures.

A tornado struck in Scott County, about 130 miles (209 kilometers) south of St. Louis, killing two people, injuring several others and destroying multiple homes, Sheriff Derick Wheatley wrote on social media.

Forecasters say severe weather could batter parts of the Plains

The weather service said that supercells are likely to develop across parts of Texas and Oklahoma Saturday afternoon before becoming a line of storms in southwest Oklahoma and parts of Arkansas, Louisiana

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and Texas on Saturday night.

The biggest risks include large to very large hail that could be up to 3.5 inches (8.9 centimeters) in size, damaging wind gusts and a few tornadoes.

These conditions were expected to continue on Sunday across parts of the central and southern Plains as well as parts of the central High Plains.

National Weather Service offices lost staff

The storms hit after the Trump administration massively cut staffing of National Weather Service offices, with outside experts worrying about how it would affect warnings in disasters such as tornadoes.

The office in Jackson, Kentucky, which was responsible for the area around London, Kentucky, had a March 2025 vacancy rate of 25%; the Louisville, Kentucky, weather service staff was down 29%; and the St. Louis office was down 16%, according to calculations by weather service employees obtained by The Associated Press. The Louisville office was also without a permanent boss, the meteorologist in charge, as of March, according to the staffing data.

Experts said any vacancy rate above 20% is a critical problem.

Severe weather leaves at least 27 dead, including 18 in Kentucky

By DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

LONDON, Ky. (AP) — At least 27 people have been killed by storms systems that swept across part of the U.S. Midwest and South, with Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear announcing Saturday that 18 of the deaths came in his state and 10 others were hospitalized in critical condition.

A devastating tornado in Kentucky damaged homes, tossed vehicles and left many people homeless. Seventeen of the deaths were in Laurel County, located in the state's southeast, and one was in Pulaski County: Fire Department Maj. Roger Leslie Leatherman, a 39-year veteran who was fatally injured while responding to the deadly weather.

Parts of two dozen state roads were closed, and some could take days to reopen, Beshear said. He also said the death toll could still rise.

"We need the whole world right now to be really good neighbors to this region," the governor said.

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Kayla Patterson, her husband and their five children huddled in a tub in their basement in London, the county seat, as the tornado raged around them.

"You could literally hear just things ripping in the distance, glass shattering everywhere, just roaring like a freight train," she recalled Saturday. "It was terrible."

The family eventually emerged to the sounds of sirens and panicked neighbors. While the family's own home was spared, others right behind it were demolished, Patterson said as the sound of power tools buzzed in the background. The neighborhood was dotted with piles of lumber, metal sheeting, insulation and stray belongings — a suitcase, a sofa, some six-packs of paper towels.

Rescuers were searching for survivors all night and into the morning, the sheriff's office said. An emergency shelter was set up at a local high school and donations of food and other necessities were arriving.

The National Weather Service hadn't yet confirmed that a tornado struck, but meteorologist Philomon Geertson said it was likely. It ripped across the largely rural area and extended to the London Corbin Airport shortly before midnight.

Resident Chris Cromer said he got the first of two tornado alerts on his phone around 11:30 p.m. or so, about a half-hour before the tornado struck. He and his wife grabbed their dog, jumped in their car and scrambled to the crawlspace at a relative's nearby home because the couple's own crawlspace is small.

"We could hear and feel the vibration of the tornado coming through," said Cromer, 46. A piece of his roof was ripped off, and windows were broken, but homes around his were destroyed.

"It's one of those things that you see on the news in other areas, and you feel bad for people — then, when it happens, it's just surreal," he said. "It makes you be thankful to be alive, really."

The storm was the latest severe weather to cause deaths and widespread damage in Kentucky. Two

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months ago, at least 24 people died in a round of storms that swelled creeks and submerged roads. Hundreds of people were rescued, and most of the deaths were caused by vehicles getting stuck in high water.

A storm in late 2021 spawned tornadoes that killed 81 people and leveled portions of towns in western Kentucky. The following summer, historic floodwaters inundated parts of eastern Kentucky, leaving dozens more dead.

Missouri pounded by storms, with deaths confirmed in St. Louis

About 1,200 tornadoes strike the U.S. annually, and they have been reported in all 50 states over the years. Researchers found in 2018 that deadly tornadoes were happening less frequently in the traditional "Tornado Alley" of Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas and more frequently in parts of the more densely populated and tree-filled mid-South area.

The latest Kentucky storms were part of a weather system Friday that killed seven in Missouri and two in northern Virginia, authorities said. The system also spawned tornadoes in Wisconsin, brought a punishing heat wave to Texas and temporarily enveloped parts of Illinois — including Chicago — in a pall of dust on an otherwise sunny day.

"Well that was.....something," the weather service's Chicago office wrote on X after issuing its first-ever dust storm warning for the city. Thunderstorms in central Illinois had pushed strong winds over dry, dusty farmland and northward into the Chicago area, the weather agency said.

In Missouri, St. Louis Mayor Cara Spencer said five people died, 38 were injured and more than 5,000 homes were affected in her city.

"The devastation is truly heartbreaking," she said at a news conference Saturday. An overnight curfew was to continue in the most damaged neighborhoods.

Weather service radar indicated a likely tornado touched down between 2:30 p.m. and 2:50 p.m. in Clayton, Missouri, in the St. Louis area. The apparent tornado touched down in the area of Forest Park, home to the St. Louis Zoo and the site of the 1904 World's Fair and Olympic Games the same year.

Three people needed aid after part of the Centennial Christian Church crumbled, St. Louis Fire Battalion Chief William Pollihan told The Associated Press.

Stacy Clark said his mother-in-law, Patricia Penelton, died in the church. He described her as a very active church volunteer who had many roles, including being part of the choir.

John Randle said he and his girlfriend were at the St. Louis Art Museum during the storm and were hustled into the basement with about 150 other people.

"You could see the doors flying open, tree branches flying by and people running," said Randle, 19.

At the Saint Louis Zoo, falling trees severely damaged the roof of a butterfly facility. Staffers quickly corralled most of the butterflies, the zoo said on social media, and a conservatory in suburban Chesterfield is caring for the displaced creatures.

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These conditions were expected to continue on Sunday across parts of the central and southern Plains as well as parts of the central High Plains.

"Be prepared to take action if watches and warnings are issued for your area," the weather service said.

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Experts said any vacancy rate above 20% is a critical problem.

FDA approves Novavax COVID-19 shot but with unusual restrictions

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Food and Drug Administration has issued a long-awaited approval of Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine but with unusual restrictions.

Novavax makes the nation's only traditional protein-based coronavirus vaccine — and until now it had emergency authorization from FDA for use in anyone 12 and older.

But late Friday, the FDA granted the company full approval for its vaccine for use only in adults 65 and older — or those 12 to 64 who have at least one health problem that puts them at increased risk from COVID-19.

Vaccines made by Novavax's competitors Pfizer and Moderna already are fully licensed for use in anyone 12 and older, and also are authorized for use in children as young as 6 months.

Next month, influential advisers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were set to debate if yearly COVID vaccines still should be recommended for everyone or only certain people at higher risk. The Novavax decision suggests the Trump administration may already have decided how to proceed in advance of that meeting.

Novavax chief executive John C. Jacobs welcomed the licensure.

"Market research and U.S. CDC statistics indicate that older individuals and those with underlying conditions are the populations most likely to seek out COVID-19 vaccination seasonally. This significant milestone demonstrates our commitment to these populations and is a significant step towards availability of our protein-based vaccine option," he said.

In its Friday approval letter, the FDA didn't explain the restrictions although they reflect skepticism about vaccines from Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and other Trump officials.

Novavax originally showed its vaccine was safe and effective in a 30,000-person clinical trial. The FDA had been on track to grant Novavax full approval — without restrictions -- by its April 1 target date, according to two people with direct knowledge of the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss confidential agency matters.

Novavax later announced the FDA instead was asking it to run an additional trial after approval, which is highly unusual. FDA did order several additional trials to be completed in the next few years, some examining whether the vaccine might be associated with some heart conditions. Another required study must assess the benefits of continuing vaccination in 50- to 64-year-olds who don't have health problems that increase their risk from COVID-19.

Journalism comes from behind to win the Preakness 2 weeks after finishing 2nd in the Kentucky Derby

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writer

BALTIMORE (AP) — Journalism jostled with horses down the stretch, shrugged off the contact, burst through the lane and came from behind to win the 150th running of the Preakness Stakes on Saturday.

The odds-on favorite was bumped by Goal Oriented near the quarter pole, and it looked like another second-place finish was coming two weeks after being the runner-up to Sovereignty in the Kentucky Derby. Journalism instead ran right by Gosger to give trainer Michael McCarthy his second win in a Triple Crown race.

"A lot of bouncing around there," McCarthy said. "When I saw that, I kind of resigned myself to the fact

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it was another fantastic effort and maybe come up a little bit short. But it just goes to show the testament that this horse has. Couldn't be prouder of him."

Gosger was second by a half-length. Sandman was third and Bob Baffert-trained Goal Oriented fourth. Journalism went 1 3/16 miles in 1:55.37.

Umberto Rispoli became the first jockey from Italy to win any of the Triple Crown races.

"When I crossed the wire, the first things that comes up to my mind, it's all of the 20 years of my career that pass in front of me," Rispoli said. "I had to wait so long to be on a champion like that."

Journalism handled the adversity and thrived on a warm day that dried out the track after torrential rain fell at Pimlico Race Course for much of the past week. Those conditions suited him better than the slop at Churchill Downs in the Derby

"This victory symbolizes so much about life," co-owner Aaron Wellman said. "It took guts for Umberto Rispoli to power his way through a seemingly impossible hole getting side-swiped and threading the needle and powering on through. And it took guts from an incredible horse to somehow will his way to victory."

Journalism paid \$4 to win, \$2.80 to place and \$2.40 to show.

"He's a remarkable horse," Baffert said of Journalism. "I wanted to be on the lead and was behind horses. I knew (Goal Oriented) was intimidated. He's never run that way. He ran well, but he's still too green for that."

Sovereignty did not take part after his owners and trainer Bill Mott decided to skip the Preakness, citing the two-week turnaround, and aimed for the Belmont on June 7. That made this a fifth time in seven years that the Preakness, for various reasons, was contested without a Triple Crown bid at stake.

But Journalism staked his claim for 3-year-old horse of the year by winning the \$2 million American classic race run at the old Pimlico Race Course for the last time before it's torn down and rebuilt. While work went on around him before the postrace news conference, Wellman asked, "Are they already tearing this place down?"

Not yet, and not before Journalism could add a memorable chapter by squeezing through the space he had to win.

"I still can't realize what this horse did," Rispoli said. "It's all about him. It's a pleasure and privilege to ride a horse like him."

The Preakness is set to be held at nearby Laurel Park, between Baltimore and Washington, D.C., next year before a planned return to the new Pimlico in 2027. McCarthy raved about the history at the place known as "Old Hilltop" and still remembers where he was when Sunday Silence beat Easy Goer at the wire in 1989 in a fashion similar to how Journalism won this time.

"Things kind of come full circle," McCarthy said. "I'm sad to see this place go, but we'll try to get back here next year, whichever locale it's at."

Journalism is the first horse to win the Preakness after running in the Kentucky Derby since Mark Casse-trained War of Will in 2019. He is the first Derby runner-up to follow that up by winning the Preakness since Exaggerator in 2016.

Only two others from the 19 in the Derby participated in the Preakness: Casse's Sandman and fellow Hall of Famer D. Wayne Lukas' American Promise, who did not have the same positive response as Journalism.

"The best horse won," Lukas said. "He finished beautifully."

Lukas, the 89-year-old who has saddled the most horses in Preakness history, referred to McCarthy once this week as "the new guy." This was just McCarthy's second, and he's 2 for 2 after Rombauer sprung the upset as an 11-1 long shot in 2021.

This one was more emotional, with McCarthy and his wife still displaced from their home by the Southern California wildfires.

"We'll get back there," McCarthy said. "Everybody will get back there. We'll rebuild. This is for Altadena."

Israel launches a new military operation in Gaza. Netanyahu tells negotiating team to stay at talks

By IBRAHIM HAZBOUN and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel said Saturday it launched a major military operation in the Gaza Strip to pressure Hamas to release remaining hostages, while Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a negotiating team to remain in Qatar for indirect talks with the militant group.

Defense Minister Israel Katz said Operation Gideon Chariots was being led with “great force.” Netanyahu had vowed to escalate pressure with the aim of destroying the militant group that has ruled Gaza for nearly two decades.

The military operation in the Palestinian territory came a day after U.S. President Donald Trump concluded his Middle East trip without a visit to Israel. There had been hope that his visit could increase the chances of a ceasefire deal or the resumption of humanitarian aid to Gaza, which Israel has prevented for more than two months.

An Israel official said that Netanyahu was in constant contact throughout the day with the negotiating team in Doha, Qatar, and U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff, and instructed the team to remain there. The official spoke on condition of anonymity, because he wasn’t authorized to discuss the sensitive negotiations with the media.

Hamas, which released an Israeli-American hostage as a goodwill gesture before Trump’s trip, insists on a deal that ends the war and leads to the withdrawal of Israeli forces — something Israel said that it won’t agree to.

Israel’s army said on social media it wouldn’t stop until the hostages are returned and the militant group is dismantled. Israel believes as many as 23 hostages in Gaza are still alive, although Israeli authorities have expressed concern for the status of three of them.

More than 150 people had been killed in Israeli strikes in the last 24 hours, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry. It said more than 3,000 have been killed since Israel broke a January ceasefire on March 18.

On Saturday afternoon, an Israeli strike killed at least four children in the Jabaliya refugee camp in the north, according to al-Awda Hospital, which received the bodies. Seven others were wounded in the strike, which hit a house. A later strike in Jabaliya killed four, the hospital said.

“This is unacceptable. Until when? Until we all die?” asked a sweating Naji Awaisa as he and others fled Jabaliya with their belongings down streets lined with shattered buildings. Smoke from airstrikes rose in the distance.

Airstrikes around Deir al-Balah in central Gaza killed 14 people, with the bodies arriving at al-Aqsa hospital. One strike on a house killed eight people, including parents and four children.

A strike hit outside a school sheltering displaced people in Gaza City, killing four, the Gaza Health Ministry’s emergency service said.

There was no immediate Israeli comment on the strikes. A separate statement said that the military had killed dozens of fighters while dismantling an “underground route” in northern Gaza.

Hundreds of protesters rallied Saturday night in Tel Aviv, some holding photos of Palestinian children killed in Gaza, with others demanding a deal to end the war and bring all hostages home.

“Let me be crystal clear. All of Israeli society, left, right, secular, religious, stands united in calling for a hostage deal. To miss this moment for a deal would be a betrayal of history, a stain that will never fade,” Dalia Kushnir-Horn, sister-in-law of hostage Eitan Horn, told the crowd.

Month 3 of Israel’s blockade

Gaza is in the third month of an Israeli blockade with no food, water, fuel or other goods entering the territory of more than 2 million people. Food security experts say Gaza will be in famine if the blockade isn’t lifted.

Earlier this week, a new humanitarian organization that has U.S. backing to take over aid delivery said that it expects to begin operations by the end of the month, after what it described as key agreements with Israeli officials. The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation identified several U.S. military veterans, former

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humanitarian coordinators and security contractors to lead the effort.

Many in the humanitarian community, including the U.N., said that they won't participate, because the system doesn't align with humanitarian principles and won't be able to meet the needs of Palestinians in Gaza.

Tom Fletcher, the U.N. humanitarian chief, said Friday that there's already an aid delivery plan with 160,000 pallets of supplies ready to move: "It is ready to be activated — today — if we are simply allowed to do our jobs."

The war in Gaza began on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and abducting 251 others. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 53,000 Palestinians, many of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants.

Bird man on red carpet leaves Cannes squawking

CANNES, France (AP) — Stars in glamorous gowns often peacock on the Cannes Film Festival red carpet, but one attendee Saturday night literally came as a bird.

Ahead of the the premiere of Lynne Ramsay's "Die, My Love," with Robert Pattinson and Jennifer Lawrence, a man came fully dressed as bird, complete with a beak and feathers.

The costume had a purpose. It was a tie-in with the documentary "I Love Peru," which is playing in the Cannes Classics section. The costume was specifically a condor, which in Peru has been seen as a creature connecting heaven and earth.

The Cannes Film Festival recently banned nudity and "excessively voluminous" gowns. But it has no policy against condors.

Wes Anderson talks 'The Phoenician Scheme,' Gene Hackman and his Cannes bus

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

CANNES, France (AP) — Wes Anderson isn't driving the bus. Laurent is. That's the name of the driver who's bringing Anderson, and his bus, to the Cannes Film Festival.

As they drive from his home in Paris to the South of France, Anderson explains by phone: "I don't drive the bus. You have to have, like, four years of training and an EU bus driver's license. The thing is, if you're going to drive a bus like this, you've got to be able to drive it in reverse, too."

For years, Anderson has, in favor of the normal festival cars that shuttle guests, brought his own bus to Cannes so his whole cast can arrive together at the premiere. On Sunday, Anderson and company (including Benicio del Toro, Mia Threapleton, Michael Cera, Scarlett Johansson and Bryan Cranston) will pile in for the premiere of Anderson's latest, "The Phoenician Scheme."

It's another example of how Anderson has made something quite unusual into a regular tradition.

With remarkable regularity, Anderson has been crafting movies uniquely his own since his 1996 debut, "Bottle Rocket." There are variations. Some are expansive family dramas ("The Royal Tenenbaums"). Some are more intimate ("Rushmore"). Some are more densely layered ("Asteroid City").

"The Phoenician Scheme," a leaner tale which Focus Features will release May 30, is Anderson working in high comic gear. A playful and poignant kind of thriller, it stars Del Toro as the tycoon Zsa-Zsa Korda, who decides to name his daughter, a novice (Threapleton) heir to his dubiously accrued fortune.

The wheels keep turning for the 56-year-old Anderson. But there are signs of time passing, too. The Cinémathèque in Paris is hosting an Anderson retrospective, as well as an exhibition of props, costumes and artifacts from his expansive personal archive.

Anderson, who has a 9-year-old daughter with his wife, the costume designer Juman Malouf, spoke about those things and others on his way to Cannes to unveil "The Phoenician Scheme," a movie that adds yet another fitting mantra to the world of Wes: "What matters is the sincerity of your devotion."

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AP: How was it to dig through all the things you've saved from your movies?

ANDERSON: We've been keeping this stuff for so long. The experience of doing it was kind of great. I'd sort of get pulled over there to approve things. And my reaction was, "Well, we have more stuff." So we kept adding things. My daughter has lived with a lot of this stuff. The "Fantastic Mr. Fox" puppets have been in our apartment in New York ever since we made the movie in boxes. Over the years, she takes them out and plays with them.

AP: Jason Schwartzman once told me your movies aren't for kids but it's "like they're for kids when they grow up." Do you agree?

ANDERSON: (Laughs) Jason, and Bill, have a way of catching you off guard with a turn of phrase. But I like that description. It's kind of an amazing experience to have had Jason involved in our movies for so long given that he was 17 when I met him. It's fun and a strange feeling. The decades have to elapse for you to have had that much time together. And it's quite shocking that they do. But there it is.

AP: The sweetest parts to "The Phoenician Scheme" are its father-daughter moments. Were you at all inspired by your own experience as a father?

ANDERSON: I didn't have something I thought I wanted to communicate about what it's like to be a father. The story really come out of an idea for Benicio and for this character. But I don't think he would have had a daughter if I didn't. That's my hunch. He's a special kind of a father, in all the worst ways. But nevertheless, there's something we related to. That's probably somewhere in the DNA of the movie.

AP: What drew you to Del Toro?

ANDERSON: If I were to say what is the first idea of the movie, it is that face. It's not an image of the setting, it's an image of Benicio in a close-up as this character. His face is just so expressive and interesting. It's a special advantage he has. He's quite mesmerizing just looking at him on camera, his chemistry with the exposure of film. In "The French Dispatch," there were electric moments on the set. But the electricity was amplified when we went back into the cutting room. The wheels started turning. When we showed "The French Dispatch" however many years ago in Cannes, I did mention to Benicio there, "Just be aware, there's something else coming."

AP: Is that a common way for you to start imagining a movie? I can see "Rushmore" starting with Murray's face with a cigarette dropping from his mouth, "The Royal Tenenbaums" with Gene Hackman's smile and "The Grand Budapest Hotel" with Ralph Fiennes as a concierge.

ANDERSON: Essentially, you've put your finger on the movies that were written for a specific actor, along with Jason in "Asteroid City." Owen and I were talking about Gene Hackman by the time we had 10 pages of a script. Ralph was the idea for the character in "Grand Budapest" before there was even one page. But I never had one where I thought of someone in such a tight close-up. With this movie, somehow it's the face and the eyes and the closest close-up.

AP: After Gene Hackman's death, Bill Murray and others talked about the tough time he gave you while making "The Grand Budapest Hotel."

ANDERSON: First of all, Gene Hackman, one of the greatest movie actors ever. He did enjoy the movie, I think, between action and cut. He said, "That's when I have a good time." But he really didn't enjoy the parts in between, which is most of the time. He wasn't wildly taken with the script in the first place. I don't think he loved the idea of being that guy. I think he thought: "There's a lot of things I don't like about this man and I'm not sure I want to live as him."

Also, I was very young. He was shy and reserved, though he could also get quite explosive. We didn't know each other well. Sometimes, when we had conflict, we often had open conversations about what just happened. And I felt like I learned so much about him in those times. And he would often become much more gentle.

I don't want to assume a great friendship because I don't think he would have ever have referred to our relationship (laughs) in those terms. But I really liked him. He just carried so much tension and he used in the work, but it was sometimes bordering on a little abusive, especially to me. (Laughs)

AP: Given how good he is in the film, it makes me wonder if the best parts for actors are the ones they

resist.

ANDERSON: I think that's the case sometimes. When he saw the movie, he told me, "I didn't understand what we were making." But he totally understood it when he saw the movie. It worked for him. He liked it, and I think he liked what he had done it. I later thought: I wish I had paused for three days of shooting, edited some of the scenes carefully and then shown him: Here's what you're doing and here's what we're doing. I think maybe if I had done that, we might have had a gentler time.

AP: You've managed to continue making movies for adults at some scale when hardly anyone can do that. Are you happy to avoid the changes in the industry or do they concern you?

ANDERSON: The path that I've had as a movie director, I don't know if that's totally available right now. I don't know if the kind of movies I started out making would have been made on the same scale or with the same support or with any audience available. To get to the point where I can make the movies I make I now, I just don't know what route that would take. I think some things have changed fundamentally. But I'm not 25 years younger than myself, so I just do what I do.

Trump says he will call Putin, then Zelenskyy, on Monday to push for Ukraine ceasefire

By YEHOOR KONOVALOV and JOANNA KOZLOWSKA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump said he plans to speak by phone Monday with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, followed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and leaders of various NATO countries, about ending the war in Ukraine.

Trump said the call with Putin will be about stopping the "bloodbath" in Ukraine.

"Hopefully it will be a productive day, a ceasefire will take place, and this very violent war, a war that should have never happened, will end," Trump wrote Saturday in a post on his social networking site Truth Social.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed in comments to Russian media that preparations were underway for Monday's call.

Trump's remarks came a day after the first direct talks between Moscow and Kyiv in years failed to yield a ceasefire. Putin had spurned Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's offer to meet face-to-face in Turkey after he himself proposed direct negotiations — although not at the presidential level — as an alternative to a 30-day ceasefire urged by Ukraine and its Western allies, including the U.S.

Also on Saturday, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio had a phone call with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov. During a visit to Rome, Rubio suggested that the Vatican could be a venue for Russia-Ukraine peace talks.

In Ukraine, a northeastern town declared a period of mourning after a Russian drone hit a bus evacuating civilians from front-line areas, killing nine people, Ukrainian officials said. The strike came hours after the Russian and Ukrainian delegations left Istanbul, after agreeing to what would be the biggest prisoner swap to date between the warring parties.

Zelenskyy faces a gamble as talks stall

The talks in Istanbul on Friday broke up after less than two hours without a ceasefire, although both sides agreed on exchanging 1,000 prisoners of war each, according to the heads of both delegations. Ukraine's intelligence chief, Kyrylo Budanov, said on Ukrainian television Saturday that the exchange could happen as early as next week.

But the Kremlin has pushed back against a proposal by Ukraine and its Western allies for a temporary ceasefire as a first step toward a peaceful settlement, and the parties remained far apart on key conditions for ending the fighting.

Since U.S.-brokered talks began in March, Ukraine's strategy has been to convince the Trump administration that Putin is unreliable, and that Kyiv is serious about peace. Trump has expressed frustration with the stalled talks and threatened to abandon his efforts if results aren't achieved.

He has also said that no peace would be reached until he held a face to face meeting with Putin. On

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Friday, Trump told reporters after boarding Air Force One to return to Washington from Abu Dhabi that he may call Putin soon.

"He and I will meet, and I think we'll solve it, or maybe not," Trump said. "At least we'll know."

The political theatrics are underscored by stark realities on the ground in Ukraine. In a war of attrition against Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine's position is poised to grow weaker as time goes on, unless powerful sanctions are imposed against Moscow and the U.S. continues arms deliveries.

Zelenskyy said that he had discussed the outcome of the talks with Trump and the leaders of France, Germany, Britain and Poland. In an X post from a European leadership meeting in Albania on Friday, Zelenskyy urged "tough sanctions" against Moscow if it rejects "a full and unconditional ceasefire and an end to killings."

Peskov on Saturday held open the possibility of Putin holding talks with Zelenskyy, providing the agreed prisoner swap goes ahead, and if the Russian and Ukrainian delegations reached unspecified further "agreements."

Peskov also told reporters that Moscow will present Ukraine with a list of conditions for a ceasefire, but gave no timeframe, or say what needed to happen before Zelenskyy and Putin can meet.

A town in mourning

In Ukraine, nine civilians were killed and seven others were wounded when a Russian drone struck a bus evacuating people from Bilopillia, a town around 10 kilometers (6 miles) from Russia's border, according to local Gov. Oleh Hryhorov and Ukraine's national police. The Associated Press couldn't independently verify the reports. There was no immediate comment from Moscow.

Zelenskyy described the attack as "deliberate killing of civilians," adding in a post on the Telegram messaging app that "Russians could scarcely not realize what kind of vehicle they were hitting."

The local media outlet Suspilne said that the passengers on the bus were being evacuated from the town when the strike happened. Authorities are working to identify some of the victims, most of them older women.

Local community chief Yuriy Zarko called the day "Black Saturday," and mourning was declared in the town through Monday.

Zelenskyy lamented the missed opportunity from Friday's peace talks, saying that "Ukraine has long proposed this — a full and unconditional ceasefire in order to save lives."

Ukraine's European allies strongly condemned the attack. U.K. Foreign Secretary David Lammy said that he was "appalled" by it. "If Putin is serious about peace, Russia must agree to a full and immediate ceasefire, as Ukraine has done," he wrote on X.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, speaking at a joint news conference with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, condemned Russia for "continuing their attacks today with undiminished ferocity." He vowed to continue to increase the pressure on Moscow with added sanctions.

Trump warns Walmart: Don't raise prices due to my tariffs but do eat the costs from those taxes

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Saturday ripped into Walmart, saying on social media that the retail giant should eat the additional costs created by his tariffs.

As Trump has jacked up import taxes, he has tried to assure a skeptical public that foreign producers would pay for those taxes and that retailers and automakers would absorb the additional expenses. Most economic analyses are deeply skeptical of those claims and have warned that the trade penalties would worsen inflation. Walmart warned on Thursday that everything from bananas to children's car seats could increase in price.

Trump, in his Truth Social post, lashed out at the retailer, which employs 1.6 million people in the United States. He said the company, based in Bentonville, Arkansas, should sacrifice its profits for the sake of his economic agenda that he says will eventually lead to more domestic jobs in manufacturing.

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"Walmart should STOP trying to blame Tariffs as the reason for raising prices throughout the chain," Trump posted. "Walmart made BILLIONS OF DOLLARS last year, far more than expected. Between Walmart and China they should, as is said, "EAT THE TARIFFS," and not charge valued customers ANYTHING. I'll be watching, and so will your customers!!!"

The posting by the Republican president reflected the increasingly awkward series of choices that many major American companies face as a result of his tariffs, from deteriorating sales to the possibility of incurring Trump's wrath. Trump has similarly warned domestic automakers to not raise their prices, even though outside analyses say his tariffs would raise production costs.

So far, those tariffs have darkened the mood of an otherwise resilient U.S. economy. The preliminary reading of the University of Michigan survey of consumer sentiment on Friday slipped to its second lowest measure on record, with roughly 75% of respondents "spontaneously" mentioning tariffs as they largely expected inflation to accelerate.

In April, Walmart CEO Doug McMillon was among the retail executives who met with Trump at the White House to discuss tariffs. But the Trump administration went forward despite warnings and has attacked other companies such as Amazon and Apple that are struggling with the disruptions to their supply chains.

Walmart chief financial officer John David Rainey said he thinks \$350 car seats made in China will soon cost an additional \$100, a 29% price increase.

"We're wired to keep prices low, but there's a limit to what we can bear, or any retailer for that matter," he told The Associated Press on Thursday after the company reported strong first-quarter sales.

The administration recently ratcheted down its 145% tariffs on China to 30% for a 90-day period. Trump has placed tariffs as high as 25% on Mexico and Canada due to illegal immigration and drug trafficking, harming the relationship with America's two largest trading partners.

There is a universal baseline tariff of 10% on most countries as Trump promises to reach trade deals in the coming weeks after having shocked the financial markets in early April by charging higher import taxes based on trade deficits with other countries. Trump insists he intends to preserve the tariffs as a revenue source and that a framework agreement with the United Kingdom would largely keep the 10% tariff rate in place.

Trump has also placed import taxes on autos, steel and aluminum and plans to do so on pharmaceutical drugs, among other products.

The tariffs and Trump's own reversals on how much he should charge have generated uncertainty across the U.S. economy, such that Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has held the central bank's benchmark rates steady until there is more clarity. Powell has warned that tariffs can both hurt growth and raise prices.

On Saturday, Trump repeated his calls for Powell to cut the benchmark rates. That could cause inflation to accelerate, but the president has maintained that inflationary pressures have largely disappeared from the economy.

"Too Late Powell, a man legendary for being Too Late, will probably blow it again - But who knows???" Trump posted on Truth Social.

Justice Department deal ends a ban on an aftermarket trigger. Gun control advocates are alarmed

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration will allow the sale of forced-reset triggers, which make semiautomatic rifles fire more rapidly, with the federal government ending a ban as part of a settlement that also requires it to return seized devices.

The agreement announced Friday by the Justice Department resolves a series of cases over the aftermarket trigger that the government had previously argued qualify as machine guns under federal law. The settlement is a dramatic shift in Second Amendment policy under the Republican administration, which has signaled it may undo many of the regulations that the previous administration of Democratic President Joe Biden had fought to keep in place in an effort to curb gun violence.

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"This Department of Justice believes that the 2nd Amendment is not a second-class right," Attorney General Pam Bondi said in a statement.

Gun control advocates said the settlement would worsen gun violence.

"The Trump administration has just effectively legalized machine guns. Lives will be lost because of his actions," said Vanessa Gonzalez, vice president of government and political affairs at GIFFORDS, a gun control group.

There had been several legal battles over forced-reset triggers, which replace the typical trigger on an AR-15-style rifle. The government for years had argued they are essentially illegal machine gun conversion devices because constant finger pressure on the triggers will keep a rifle firing essentially like an automatic.

The deal announced Friday was between the Justice Department and Rare Breed Triggers, which was previously represented by David Warrington, Trump's current White House counsel. Rare Breed Triggers argued that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives was wrong in its classification and ignored demands to stop selling the triggers before being sued by the Biden administration.

"This victory is a landmark moment in the fight against unchecked government overreach," Lawrence DeMonico, the group's president, said in a statement. "The ATF and DOJ tried to silence and bury us not because we broke the law, but because I refused to bend to the will of a tyrannical administration."

Under the settlement, Rare Breed Triggers has agreed not to develop such devices to be used on handguns, according to the Justice Department. The settlement requires the ATF to return triggers that it had seized or that owners had voluntarily surrendered to the government.

New standards for Oklahoma high school students promote misinformation about the 2020 election

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Oklahoma high school students studying U.S. history learn about the Industrial Revolution, women's suffrage and America's expanding role in international affairs.

Beginning next school year, they will add conspiracy theories about the 2020 presidential election.

Oklahoma's new social studies standards for K-12 public school students, already infused with references to the Bible and national pride, were revised at the direction of state School Superintendent Ryan Walters. The Republican official has spent much of his first term in office lauding President Donald Trump, feuding with teachers unions and local school superintendents, and trying to end what he describes as "wokeness" in public schools.

"The left has been pushing left-wing indoctrination in the classroom," Walters said. "We're moving it back to actually understanding history ... and I'm unapologetic about that."

The previous standard for studying the 2020 election merely said, "Examine issues related to the election of 2020 and its outcome." The new version is more expansive: "Identify discrepancies in 2020 elections results by looking at graphs and other information, including the sudden halting of ballot-counting in select cities in key battleground states, the security risks of mail-in balloting, sudden batch dumps, an unforeseen record number of voters, and the unprecedented contradiction of 'bellwether county' trends."

The new standard raised red flags even among Walters' fellow Republicans, including the governor and legislative leaders. They were concerned that several last-minute changes, including the language about the 2020 election and a provision stating the source of the COVID-19 virus was a Chinese lab, were added just hours before the state school board voted on them.

A group of parents and educators have filed a lawsuit asking a judge to reject the standards, arguing they were not reviewed properly and that they "represent a distorted view of social studies that intentionally favors an outdated and blatantly biased perspective."

GOP lawmakers can't muster enough support to reject the new standards

While many Oklahoma teachers have expressed outrage at the change in the standards, others say they leave plenty of room for an effective teacher to instruct students about the results of the 2020 election without misinforming them.

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Aaron Baker, who has taught U.S. government in high schools in Oklahoma City for more than a decade, said he's most concerned about teachers in rural, conservative parts of the state who might feel encouraged to impose their own beliefs on students.

"If someone is welcoming the influence of these far-right organizations in our standards and is interested in inserting more of Christianity into our practices as teachers, then they've become emboldened," Baker said. "For me, that is the major concern."

Leaders in the Republican-led Oklahoma Legislature introduced a resolution to reject the standards, but there wasn't enough GOP support to pass it.

Part of that hesitation likely stemmed from a flurry of last-minute opposition organized by pro-Trump conservative groups such as Moms for Liberty, which has a large presence in Oklahoma and threatened lawmakers who reject the standards with a primary opponent.

"In the last few election cycles, grassroots conservative organizations have flipped seats across Oklahoma by holding weak Republicans accountable," the group wrote in a letter signed by several other conservative groups and GOP activists. "If you choose to side with the liberal media and make backroom deals with Democrats to block conservative reform, you will be next."

Superintendent says his new standards 'encourage critical thinking'

After a group of parents, educators and other Oklahoma school officials worked to develop the new social studies standards, Walters assembled an executive committee consisting mostly of out-of-state pundits from conservative think-tanks to revise them. He said he wanted to focus more on American exceptionalism and incorporate the Bible as an instructional resource.

Among those Walters appointed to the review committee are Kevin Roberts, the president of The Heritage Foundation and a key figure in its Project 2025 blueprint for a conservative administration, and Dennis Prager, a radio talk show host who founded Prager U, a conservative nonprofit that offers "pro-American" educational materials for children that some critics say are not accurate or objective.

In a statement to The Associated Press, Walters defended teaching students about "unprecedented and historically significant" elements of the 2020 presidential election.

"The standards do not instruct students on what to believe; rather, they encourage critical thinking by inviting students to examine real events, review publicly available information, and come to their own conclusions," he said.

Recounts, reviews and audits in the battleground states where Trump contested his loss all confirmed Democrat Joe Biden's victory, and Trump lost dozens of court cases challenging the results.

Critics say Walters' new standard is filled with misleading phrasing that seeks to steer the discussion in particular direction.

Democrats characterized it as another political ploy by Walters, widely viewed as a potential candidate for governor in 2026, at the expense of school children.

"It's harmful posturing and political theater that our kids do not need to be subjected to," said Sen. Mark Mann, a Democrat from Oklahoma City who previously served on the school board for one of the state's largest districts.

Concerns about politicizing school standards

National experts on education standards also expressed alarm, noting that Oklahoma has historically ranked highly among the states for its standards.

Brendan Gillis, the director of teaching and learning at the American Historical Association who oversaw a research project that analyzed standards in all 50 states, said Oklahoma's social studies standards had been "quite good" until the latest version.

In addition to concerns about election misinformation, Gillis added: "There was also a lot of biblical content that was sort of shoehorned in throughout the existing standards."

He said a lot of the references to Christianity and the Bible misinterpreted the history of the country's founding and lacked historical nuance.

David Griffith, a research director at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a conservative-leaning education think-tank, said he was not aware of any other states that have tried to promote election misinformation

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in their curriculum standards.

He called the new standards an “unfortunate” departure from Oklahoma’s traditionally strong social studies standards.

“It is just inappropriate to promote conspiracy theories about the election in standards,” he said.

In Spain, a homelessness crisis unfolds in Madrid’s airport

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Every morning at 6 a.m., Teresa sets out in search of work, a shower and a bit of exercise before she returns home. For the past six months, that has been Terminal 4 of Madrid’s international airport.

Teresa, 54, who didn’t want her full name to be used because of safety concerns, is one of the estimated hundreds of homeless people sleeping in the Spanish capital’s airport amid a growing housing crisis in Spain, where rental costs have risen especially fast in cities like Madrid, the country’s capital, and Barcelona.

She and others sleeping at Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport — the third-busiest airport in Europe in 2023, according to Eurostat — described a situation where for months, authorities have neither helped them find other living arrangements nor have they kicked them out from the corners of the airport that they have occupied with sleeping bags unfurled on the floor as well as blankets, luggage carts and bags.

Soon, things could change.

Limits on entry

Spain’s airport operator AENA this week said that it would start limiting who can enter Madrid’s airport during low-travel hours by asking visitors to show their boarding passes. AENA said that the policy would take effect in the next few days, but didn’t specify exactly when. It said that exceptions would be made for airport workers and anyone accompanying a traveler.

Teresa, a Spanish-Ecuadorian who said she has lived in Spain for a quarter-century, told The Associated Press on Thursday that she hadn’t heard of the new policy. She and her husband would be forced to sleep outside on park benches and other public spaces if they aren’t allowed back in.

“We can’t make demands. We’re squatters,” Teresa said, using a controversial term common in Spain. “Squatters in what is private property. We are aware of that. We want help from authorities, but not a single one has come here.”

Political blame game

For months, a political blame game between officials at different levels of government has meant that the homeless encampments in the airport have largely gone unaddressed. In recent weeks, videos on social media and news reports of the airport’s homeless population put a spotlight on the issue.

Madrid’s city council on Thursday said that it had asked Spain’s national government to take charge and come up with a plan to rehabilitate every homeless individual sleeping in the airport. Spanish airports are overseen by AENA, a state-owned publicly listed company. A city council spokesperson said that Madrid’s city government had recently called for a meeting with officials from AENA, the regional government of Madrid and several national ministries that declined.

“Without them, there is no possible solution,” said Lucía Martín, a spokesperson for Madrid’s city council division of social policies, family and equality. She said that the national ministries of transport, interior, inclusion, social rights and health declined to participate in a working group.

A day earlier, AENA accused Madrid’s city authorities of providing inadequate help and said that the city government’s statements about the unfolding situation confirmed its “dereliction of duty” and abandonment of the airport’s homeless individuals.

“It’s like a dog chasing its tail,” said Marta Cecilia Cárdenas of the long list of authorities she was told could help her. Cárdenas, a 58-year-old homeless woman originally from Colombia, said that she had spent several months sleeping in Madrid’s airport.

Exact numbers are unknown

It’s not known how many people are sleeping in Madrid’s airport, through which 66 million travelers tran-

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sited last year. Spain's El País newspaper reported that a recent count taken by a charity group identified roughly 400 homeless people in the airport, many of whom, like Teresa, had previously lived in Madrid and were employed in some capacity.

AP wasn't able to confirm that number. Madrid city council officials, meanwhile, said that the Spanish capital's social service teams had helped 94 individuals in April with ties to the city, 12 of whom were rehabilitated into municipal shelters, addiction treatment centers or independent living.

Word of mouth

Teresa said she had heard about sleeping in the airport by word of mouth. Before she lost her job, she said she lived in an apartment in Madrid's Leganés neighborhood, earning a living taking care of older people.

She currently earns 400 euros (\$450) per month, working under the table caring for an older woman. With the earnings, Teresa said she maintains a storage unit in the neighborhood that she used to live in. Though the work is sporadic, she said it was still enough to also cover fees for the gym in which she showers daily, pay for transportation, and purchase food.

Over the last decade, the average rent in Spain has almost doubled, according to real estate website Idealista, with steeper increases in Madrid and Barcelona. Spain also has a smaller public housing stock than many other European Union countries.

Hope for the future

Teresa said that she hopes to find a job soon and leave the airport, whatever authorities may force her to do in the coming days and weeks. She and her husband keep to themselves, avoiding others sleeping in the brightly-lit hallway dotted with sleeping bags who were battling mental health problems, addiction and other issues, she said.

"You end up adjusting to it a bit, accepting it even, but never getting used to it," Teresa said over the constant din of airline announcements. "I hope to God that it gets better, because this is not life."

Easily distracted? How to improve your attention span

By DEVI SHASTRI and LAURA BARGFELD Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Feel like you can't focus? Like you'll never finish a book again? Like the only way to keep your mind and hands busy is to scroll on social media for hours?

You're far from alone. One body of decades-long research found the average person's attention span for a single screen is 47 seconds, down from 2.5 minutes in 2004. The 24/7 news cycle, uncertainty about the state of the world and countless hours of screen time don't help, experts say.

"When my patients talk to me about this stuff there is often a feeling of helplessness or powerlessness," said Dr. Michael Ziffra, a psychiatrist at Northwestern Medicine. "But you can change these behaviors. You can improve your attention span."

Here are ways to start that process. As you read, challenge yourself to set a 2.5 minute timer and stay on this article without looking at another device or clicking away.

How did we lose focus?

A shifting attention is an evolutionary feature, not a bug. Our brains are hardwired to quickly filter information and hone in on potential threats or changes in what's happening around us.

What's grabbing our attentions has changed. For our ancestors, it might have been a rustle in the bushes putting us on guard for a lurking tiger. Today, it could be a rash of breaking news alerts and phone notifications.

The COVID-19 pandemic warped many people's sense of time and increased their screen usage like never before, said Stacey Nye, a clinical psychologist at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Technology isn't the only thing that influences our attention, experts say, but the effects of those pinging notifications or hours scrolling through 30-second long videos can build up over time.

"Our attention span has really been trained to only focus in those little, small blips and it interrupts our natural focus cycles," she said.

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Give your wandering mind 'active breaks'

Experts say "active" breaks are among the best way to retrain your mind and your attention. They only take about 30 minutes, Nye said, and can be as simple as taking a walk while noticing things around you or moving to another room for lunch.

Don't be afraid to get creative. Develop a list of alternative activities or randomly choose ideas out of a fish bowl. Try craft projects, a short meditation, fixing a quick meal or talking a walk outside. All the better if you can involve a friend as well.

The break needs to be a physical or mental activity — no passive phone-scrolling.

When the brain is understimulated and looking for change, it'll usually grab onto the first thing it sees. The smartphone, an "ever-producing change machine," is an enticing option, said Cindy Lustig, a cognitive neuroscientist at the University of Michigan.

Turn off unnecessary notifications and put that "do not disturb" mode to good use, especially before bedtime. Better yet, put your phone in a whole different room, Lustig said.

Say no to multitasking

Multitasking may make you feel like you're getting more done, but brain experts recommend against it. "Be a single tasker," Nye said. "Work on one thing at a time, for a specified period of time and begin to work your way up."

Lustig is a big fan of the "Pomodoro technique," in which you set a timer and work on something for 25 or 30 minutes before taking a five-minute break.

She tells herself: "I can do anything for this amount of time," and the world will still be waiting for her at the end.

Start with something you actually like and set a goal

It's not enough to just have a hobby, Lustig said. It helps to choose hobbies that include deliberate practice and a goal to strive toward, whether it's playing guitar for an audience or improving in a sport.

It helps to pick something that you enjoy as well.

"You don't want to start with the heavy nonfiction or like 'War and Peace,'" Lustig said. "If you need to start with the romance novel, then start with the romance novel. You can work your way up."

It's also important to be kind to yourself. Everyone has good and bad days, and attention needs are different — and even vary from task to task.

The key is to make an intentional effort, experts say.

"It is in many ways similar to a muscle in the sense that we can build it up with practice and exercises," Ziffra said. "Conversely, it can weaken if we're not exercising it."

10 escape from New Orleans jail through hole in cell wall while lone guard left to get food

By JACK BROOK, JIM MUSTIAN and SARA CLINE Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Ten men broke out of a New Orleans jail Friday in an audacious overnight escape by fleeing through a hole behind a toilet and scaling a wall while the lone guard assigned to their cell pod was away getting food, authorities said.

Seven of the escapees, including suspects charged with murder, remain on the lam following the breakout that the local sheriff says may have been aided by members within the department.

Surveillance footage, shared with media during a news conference, showed the escapees sprinting out of the facility — some wearing orange clothing and others in white. They scaled a fence, using blankets to avoid being cut by barbed wire, and then some could be seen sprinting across the nearby interstate and into a neighborhood.

A photograph obtained by The Associated Press from law enforcement shows the opening behind a toilet in a cell that the men escaped through. Above the hole are scrawled messages that include "To Easy LoL" with an arrow pointing at the gap.

The absence of the 10 men, who also utilized facility deficiencies that officials have long complained

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about in their escape, went unnoticed for hours. It was not until a routine morning headcount, more than seven hours later, that law enforcement learned of the escape.

Officials from the sheriff's office say no deputy was at the pod where the fugitives had been held. There was a technician, a civilian there to observe the pod, but she had stepped away to get food, they said.

Soon after the escape, one of the men, Kendall Myles, 20, was apprehended after a brief foot chase through the French Quarter. He had previously escaped twice from juvenile detention centers.

By Friday evening, two more fugitives had been captured. Officials found Robert Moody, 21, in New Orleans thanks to a Crimestoppers tip, according to Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office. Dkenan Dennis was found near the Chef Menteur Highway, Louisiana Attorney General Liz Murrill announced on the social platform X.

Louisiana State Police say search is active

Seven escaped inmates remain at large, Louisiana State Police said in an update Saturday morning.

State police used a helicopter to transport the captured inmates to a state correctional facility outside the New Orleans area, the agency said.

The search remains active with numerous local, state, and federal agencies working together around the clock to locate and apprehend the remaining individuals, police said.

Sheriff blames 'defective locks' and possibly inside help

Orleans Parish Sheriff Susan Hutson said the men were able to get out of the Orleans Justice Center because of "defective locks." Hutson said she has continuously raised concerns about the locks to officials and, as recently as this week, advocated for money to fix the ailing infrastructure.

Hutson said there are indications that people inside her department helped the fugitives escape.

"It's almost impossible, not completely, but almost impossible for anybody to get out of this facility without help," she said of the jail, where 1,400 people are being held.

The escapees yanked open a door to enter the cell with the hole around 1 a.m.

At least one of the steel bars protecting plumbing fixtures "appeared to have been intentionally cut using a tool," according to a statement from the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office on Friday night.

The men shed their jail uniforms once out of the facility, and it is still unclear how some of them obtained regular clothing so quickly, officials said.

Authorities did not notice the men were missing until 8:30 a.m. Authorities initially said 11 had escaped, but at a Friday afternoon news conference said one man thought to have escaped was in a different cell.

Three employees have been placed on suspension pending the outcome of the investigation. It was not immediately clear whether any of the employees were suspected of helping with the escape. Officials also didn't say if the guard who left to get food was among the three suspended.

Who are the fugitives?

The escapees range in age from 19 to 42. Most of the men are in their 20s.

One of the fugitives, Derrick Groves, was convicted on two charges of second-degree murder and two charges of attempted second-degree murder last year for his role in the 2018 Mardi Gras Day shootings of two men. He also faces a charge of battery against a correctional facility employee, court records show. Law enforcement warned that he may attempt to locate witnesses in the murder trial.

Another escapee, Corey Boyd, had pled not guilty to a pending second-degree murder charge.

Hutson said the police department was actively working with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to search for the fugitives.

Police relied on facial recognition technology to identify and capture one fugitive, said Bryan LaGarde, executive director of Project NOLA, a nonprofit operating more than 5,000 cameras around New Orleans. His organization, which partners with Louisiana authorities, entered the escapees' images into the system and quickly found two in the French Quarter.

"They were walking openly in the street. They were keeping their heads down and checking over their shoulder," LaGarde said, adding that the other fugitive walked out of sight of the cameras.

State and local officials blast jail authorities

"This represents a complete failure of the most basic responsibilities entrusted to a sheriff or jail administrator," said Orleans Parish District Attorney Jason Williams. He blasted the sheriff's office for a multi-hour

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delay in notifying authorities and the public of the escape. "These inexcusable failures have put lives in danger."

Murrill, the state's attorney general, called the escape "beyond unacceptable" and said local authorities waited too long to inform the public. She said she reached out to surrounding states to alert them about the escape.

New Orleans Police Department Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick said her agency has put "a full court effort" to respond to the escape and is working with the FBI and U.S. marshals.

Officers were focused on identifying and providing protection for people who may have testified in their cases or may be in danger. One family has been "removed" from their home, Kirkpatrick said.

"If there is anyone helping or harboring these escapees, you will be charged," Kirkpatrick added.

Turmoil at New Orleans' jail

New Orleans' jail has for more than a decade been subject to federal monitoring and a consent decree intended to improve conditions.

Security problems and violence persisted even after the city opened the Orleans Justice Center in 2015, replacing the decaying Orleans Parish Prison, which had seen its own string of escapes and dozens of in-custody deaths.

A federal judge declared in 2013 that the lockup had festered into an unconstitutional setting for people incarcerated there.

Orleans Parish Sheriff Susan Hutson said staff is "stretched thin" at the facility, which is around 60% staffed.

Bianka Brown, chief financial officer of the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office, said they can't afford a maintenance and service contract to fix problems such as broken doors, lock replacements and other ailing infrastructure.

The jail contained numerous "high security" people convicted of violent offenses who required a "restrictive housing environment that did not exist," said Jay Mallett, Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office chief of corrections. The sheriff's office was in the process of transferring dozens to more secure locations.

The old slang term '86' probably started as restaurant-worker jargon. Suddenly it's in the news

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The slang term at the center of a political brouhaha swirling around former FBI Director James Comey is an old one, likely originating as food-service-industry jargon before extending to other contexts. Some of that spread has given rise to accusations from Republicans that it was meant as a threat to President Donald Trump.

In a since-deleted Instagram post, Comey wrote "cool shell formation on my beach walk" to accompany a photo of shells displayed in the shapes of "86 47."

He said in a follow-up post that he took it only as a political message since Trump is the 47th president, and to "86" something can be to get rid of it, like a rowdy patron at a bar or something that is no longer wanted.

But Trump and other Republicans took it more ominously. They say Comey, with whom Trump has had a contentious relationship, was advocating violence against the Republican president, given that the slang term has at times been used as a way to mean someone's killing.

It probably started in restaurants nearly a century ago

The slang origins of "86" go back to codes used in diners and restaurants as staff shorthand in the 1930s or so, said Jesse Sheidlower, adjunct assistant professor in Columbia University's writing program and formerly editor-at-large for the Oxford English Dictionary.

It meant that something on the menu was no longer available. Over time, he said, related uses developed.

"The original sense is, we are out of an item. But there are a bunch of obvious metaphorical extensions for this," he said. "86 is something that's not there, something that shouldn't be there like an undesirable

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customer. Then it's a verb, meaning to throw someone out. These are fairly obvious and clear semantic development from the idea of being out of something."

He said there have been uses of it as a euphemism for killing someone, as in certain fiction stories, but that usage is not nearly as widespread. More likely it means to jettison something that is no longer useful — a definition parodied in the popular 1960s TV show "Get Smart," whose lead character was known — wink, nudge — as Agent 86.

That type of meaning is reflected in the entry for "86" from Merriam-Webster, the dictionary used by The Associated Press. That definition says the meaning is "to throw out," "to get rid of" or "to refuse service to." While referencing that there have been uses of it to mean killing, the dictionary said, "We do not enter this sense, due to its relative recency and sparseness of use."

But Trump and his administration insist that was the intent of the usage in Comey's initial post Thursday. "He knew exactly what that meant," Trump said during a Fox News interview Friday. "A child knows what that meant. If you're the FBI director and you don't know what that meant, that meant assassination. And it says it loud and clear."

The usage has prompted a federal investigation

Trump's administration is investigating.

Comey said on social media: "I posted earlier a picture of some shells I saw today on a beach walk, which I assumed were a political message. I didn't realize some folks associate those numbers with violence."

The relationship between the president and Comey has been strained for years. Trump fired Comey as FBI director in 2017, early in Trump's first term. In 2018, in a book, Comey said Trump was unethical and "untethered to truth."

That a slang reference can cause this kind of agita is not surprising, especially not at a time like the one we are living in, said Nicole Holliday, acting associate professor of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley.

"I think that because we are in a hyperpartisan, polarized culture, everything is a Rorschach test," she said. "We're very sensitive about any indication that people are part of our in group or part of the out group."

Language can be a fraught subject because language and the meaning of words can be fluid based on context or culture or other factors. "We're always kind of navigating this issue of, 'Well, I said this word and it meant X. But you heard this word and you thought it meant Y,'" she said.

That navigation can be hard enough when it's person-to-person direct conversation. Taking it online the way much of our modern discourse is makes it even more so, she said.

"In real life, when you have a conversation with a human being, you are negotiating meaning. (But) when somebody posts ... There's no space. This is why people are always arguing themselves to death in the comments," Holliday said.

"We're not meant to communicate like this about serious issues," she said. "Really, we're not."

Today in History: May 18, Mount St. Helens erupts

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, May 18, the 138th day of 2025. There are 227 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 18, 1980, the Mount St. Helens volcano in Washington state erupted, leaving an estimated 57 people dead or missing.

Also on this date:

In 1863, the Siege of Vicksburg began during the Civil War, ending July 4 with a Union victory.

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Plessy v. Ferguson, endorsed "separate but equal" racial segregation. (The decision was reversed 58 years later by Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka.)

In 1927, in America's deadliest school attack, part of a schoolhouse in Bath Township, Michigan, was blown up with explosives planted by local farmer Andrew Kehoe, who then set off a bomb in his truck; the attacks killed 38 children and six adults, including Kehoe, who'd earlier killed his wife. (Authorities said

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Kehoe, who suffered financial difficulties, was seeking revenge for losing a township clerk election.)

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a measure creating the Tennessee Valley Authority, the largest public utility in America.

In 1973, Harvard law professor Archibald Cox was appointed Watergate special prosecutor by U.S. Attorney General Elliot Richardson.

In 1981, the New York Native, a gay newspaper, carried a story concerning rumors of "an exotic new disease" among LGBTQ+ people; it was the first published report about what came to be known as AIDS.

In 1998, the U.S. government filed an antitrust case against Microsoft, saying the powerful software company had a "choke hold" on competitors that was denying consumers important choices about how they bought and used computers. (The Justice Department and Microsoft reached a settlement in 2001.)

In 2018, a 17-year-old armed with a shotgun and a pistol opened fire at a Houston-area high school, killing eight students and two teachers.

Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Famer Reggie Jackson is 79. Musician Rick Wakeman (Yes) is 76. Musician-composer Mark Mothersbaugh (Devo) is 75. Country musician George Strait is 73. Actor Chow Yun-Fat is 70. Hockey Hall of Famer Jari Kurri is 65. Tennis Hall of Famer Yannick Noah is 65. Comedian-writer Tina Fey is 55. Rock singer Jack Johnson is 50. Heisman Trophy winner Travis Hunter is 22.