

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Sun., Dec. 7

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

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

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

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

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

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



- FFA State LDE @ Rapid City
- 7th Grade Soccer, 1 p.m.
- 4th grade boys basketball Triangular, 1 p.m.
- 6th Grade GBB Practice, 2 p.m.
- 4th Grade BB Practice, 2 p.m.
- 4th Grade boys basketball Triangular, 3:30 p.m.
- 5th Grade Girls Basketball, 4 p.m.
- Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.
- 6th Grade Boys Basketball, 6 p.m.
- 7th Grade Boys BB. 6 p.m.

## Mon., Dec. 8

Senior Menu: Chicken alfredo with broccoli, fruit, breadstick.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Pork chop, rice.

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

Groton Senior Citizens meet at Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

GBB at Florence: 7th grade @ 4pm, 8th grade @ 5pm

4th Grade Practice, 4 p.m.

JH WR @ Sisseton, 5 p.m.

5th Grade BBB, 6 p.m.

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

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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

### Stating the Importance of Restoring a Constitutional Presidency: What is the Why?

An insightful reader of this column, an exercise in civic education, recently suggested that readers may need to be persuaded of the importance to our nation of the restoration of a constitutional presidency. Why, indeed, should Americans rebuke the long rise, under both Democrats and Republicans, of Presidential Government, which is currently riding the rails of authoritarianism under Donald Trump, and embrace the concept of a chief executive, cabined by constitutional limitations, who will willingly comply with the metes and bounds of the office? In considering the essential "why?" behind this question, let's consider the impact of a rehabilitated presidency on the lives of Americans and the life of America.

For starters, the question is akin to asking about the value of the rule of law. In *Reid v. Covert* (1957), Justice Hugo Black gave voice to the first principle of American Constitutionalism: "The United States is entirely a creature of the Constitution. Its powers and authority have no other source. It can act only in accordance with all the limitations imposed by the Constitution." The principle that the government, including the president, has only those powers—express or implied—granted to it by the Constitution was an article of faith for the founders, and should be, I submit, a constant for every generation of American citizens.

Governmental subordination to the Constitution, what the framers regarded as the essence of the rule of law, is critical to a political system committed to government based on the "consent of the governed." That doctrine, indispensable to republicanism, declares, in the words of John Adams, principal author of the world's oldest constitution—the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780—and four other state constitutions drafted at the founding, "The people have a right to require of their magistrates an exact and constant observance" of the "fundamental principles of the Constitution."

The passage of time has disturbed neither the force nor the vitality of that requirement. If it were otherwise, it would be necessary to acknowledge that we have abandoned governance based on preestablished rules and embraced governance grounded on the whims of those who wield power. In the case of the presidency, this would result in government based, not on law, but on the will of the executive. "That might result in a benevolent despotism," Justice Benjamin Cardozo rightly observed, "if the judges," or presidents, for that matter, "were benevolent men." In any case, "it would put an end to the reign of law." And not merely an end to the rule of law, we should insist, but to republican principles as well.

"In a government of laws," Justice Louis Brandeis justly cautioned, "existence of the government will be imperiled if it fails to observe the law scrupulously." It is for this reason, as James Madison pointed out, that "it is our duty to take care that the powers of the Constitution be preserved entire to every department Government; the breach of the Constitution in one point, will facilitate the breach in another."

While achievement of the rule of law more than occasionally escapes our grasp, owing largely to the interests of those who exercise power, it is worthy of our effort and admiration, as victims of Auschwitz and Buchenwald would attest. The rule of law maintains the principle of limited government, promises to thwart arbitrariness, pledges government conduct in accord with known laws and procedures, applies brakes to unlimited discretion and power, provides a sense of certainty and predictability, and fulfills the

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will of the people, as manifested in their ratification of the Constitution. In practice, the rule of law means that government officials may not undertake acts that are prohibited by the Constitution.

The virtues of the rule of law apply with equal force to the presidency. A lawless presidency would be accountable, not to known rules and laws, but only to the president's ego, which would unleash a parade of horrors. Such a president might unilaterally take Americans to war, risking the blood and treasure of the nation for meritless causes, grant self-serving pardons, arbitrarily order troops to the streets, violate with impunity the Bill of Rights, and order the arrest of citizens without concern for due process of law. By slipping the chains of the Constitution, such a president could destroy the principle of government by consent of the people. A constitutional presidency is far more appealing.

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.

## Christmas Holiday Show!



**Featuring:  
The Shaun Johnson Big  
Band Experience:  
The Holiday Show**

Sunday, December 14, 2025  
4pm at the NSU Johnson Fine  
Arts Center

Tickets are on sale now!

- \$35/Adult & \$25/Student for non-members on-line or at IDC.
- \$25 for ACCA members (contact a board member or purchase at IDC Box Office for discount pricing.)

[www.AberdeenCommunityConcerts.org](http://www.AberdeenCommunityConcerts.org)



**DACOTA BANK**

**HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE**

**Cookies &  
Calendars**

**FRIDAY, DEC. 12**

**9:00 - 4:00 PM**

**7 East Hwy 12, Groton**

*Stop in lobby for  
cookies, coffee and a  
2026 calendar!*

MEMBER FDIC

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**ELDA STANGE'S  
102nd BIRTHDAY**  
**is on Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025.**  
Please join us in helping her celebrate her  
special day by sending her a card at:  
**PO Box 305  
405 N. 3rd Street  
Groton, SD 57445**



## Akena Drops Season-High 24 Points in Loss to Minot State

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State University men's basketball team suffered its first conference setback of the season Saturday afternoon, falling 91-79 to Minot State inside Wachs Arena. The Beavers delivered an efficient shooting performance, hitting 66.7 percent from the floor overall and 79 percent in the second half. Despite the loss, the Wolves produced 18 second-chance points and forced 14 points off turnovers.

Northern trailed 43-28 at halftime and faced an uphill battle, though the Wolves out-scored Minot State 51-48 in the second half. The Beavers held a slight 36-34 edge on the boards, but Northern led with 17 offensive rebounds. The Wolves also finished with a game-high 17 assists and connected on 14 three-pointers. They shot 40.8 percent from the field, 35.0 percent from beyond the arc, and 42.9 percent from the free-throw line, converting just three of seven attempts.

Northern tallied 32 points in the paint and received 17 points from its bench. Simon Akena and Joshua Book carried the offensive load, scoring 24 and 23 points respectively. Akena's performance marked a season high, while Book's total set a new career best. Book knocked down five three-pointers and shot 83.3 percent from long range. Akenena and Ty Rogers matched each other on the glass with eight rebounds apiece, while Rogers added a team-leading four assists. Book, James Glenn, and Benjamin Bowen each contributed three assists, and both Book and Marshawn Smith recorded five rebounds. Off the bench, Nelson Reynolds and Glenn finished with nine points apiece.

Akena concluded the afternoon with 24 points on 52.4 percent shooting and eight rebounds. Book added 23 points on 72.7 percent shooting, along with five rebounds and three assists.

Northern State returns to action next week, hosting Minnesota Duluth on Thursday and Bemidji State on Saturday, December 11 and 13. Tip-off is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Thursday and 4 p.m. Saturday at Wachs Arena.

## Flags at Half-Staff Statewide in Honor of Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Larry Rhoden ordered that flags be flown at half-staff statewide from sunrise until sunset on Sunday, December 7, 2025, in honor of Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

On Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, we remember the 2,403 Americans who were killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

## Groton Prairie Mixed Bowling League Week #5 Results

**Team Standings:** Shihtzus 13, Cheetahs 12, Jackelopes 11, Coyotes 10, Foxes 9, Chipmunks 5

**Men's High Games:** Ron Belden 204, Scott Kettering 203, Clay Wattier & Brad Larson 200, Doug Jorgensen 199

**Women's High Games:** Suzie Easthouse 183 & 160, Sam Bahr 156, Vicki Jorgensen 155

**Men's High Series:** Brad Waage 526, Dion Bahr 519, Brad Larson 518

**Women's High Series:** Suzie Easthouse 469, Sam Bahr 413, Vicki Walter 406

**Week 5 Fun Game:** Least Strikes – Chipmunks with 14!

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**A very good turnout was held at the Olive Grove Holiday Christmas Party held Saturday evening. People showed up for the food and to bid on prizes.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

## Moore drops 30 in NSU's first NSIC victory

ABERDEEN, S.D. – Powered by a 30-point performance from Izzy Moore, the Northern State Wolves secured their first NSIC win of the season on Saturday, defeating Minot State 68-62 at Wachs Arena. Northern shot 46.2 percent from the field, 36.8 percent from three-point range, and an impressive 92.9 percent at the free-throw line while adding 32 rebounds, 13 assists, seven steals, and two blocks in the conference victory.

The Wolves entered the fourth quarter trailing but stormed back with a 23-point final frame to overtake the Beavers. After Moore knocked down two free throws to ignite the push, Telia Graham added six points in just over two minutes to keep Northern in front. Minot State answered late, as Lara Dobbins scored a layup and grabbed a steal that led to a three-pointer by Taryn Hamling, cutting the Wolves' lead to two with under 90 seconds to play. Moore then closed the door, sinking three more free throws in the final minute to secure the win.

Moore was dominant throughout the contest, finishing with 30 points, eight rebounds, and two assists while shooting 64.7 percent from the floor, 75 percent from the arc, and a perfect 100 percent at the line. Taylor Tool added 10 points on 57.1 percent shooting, including a pair of threes, while Morgan Fiedler and Lily Klein each distributed four assists. Fiedler totaled seven points and three rebounds, and Klein added five points and six boards. Graham was perfect from the field, scoring six points, and Reagan Rus added six points and three rebounds.

Minot State was led by Hamling with 21 points, including five of the team's eight three-pointers. Dobbins followed with 12 points.

Northern State, now 5-3 overall and 1-2 in the NSIC, returns home for two more conference matchups, hosting Minnesota Duluth on Thursday at 7:30 p.m. and Bemidji State on December 13 at 6 p.m.

What can \$20 get you?



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Call/Text Tina at 605/397-7285

for details



**Annual Membership Rates**

Student is \$29.82 per month or \$255.60 per year  
Single is \$35.15 per month or \$319.50 per year  
2-Person is \$55.45 per month or \$575.10 per year  
Family is \$67.10 per month or \$702.26 per year

**Month-to-Month Rates**

Student is \$35.15 per month  
Single is \$40.48 per month  
2-Person is \$59.78 per month  
Family is \$72.43 per month

**While many other rates have gone up, ours has not.  
Same rates for several years!**



## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"*

LUKE 1: 39-42



Detail from "Two Women"  
by Fernand Léger (1922)

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TRUMP HAS HIS OWN PERSONAL "IRON DOME" DEFENSE



## BIBLE

## TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. Which Old Testament prophet said the most about the birth of Christ?  
*Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah*

3. From Matthew 1:18, when Mary became pregnant, she and Joseph were ...?  
*Married, Engaged, Just friends, Strangers*

4. In Luke 2:8-11, how did the shepherds learn of Christ's birth?  
*Magi informed, Joseph announcement, Mighty wind, Angel appearance*

5. Where did the wise men go first when they arrived in the Holy Land?  
*Nazareth, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron*

6. What does the Bible record as to when Jesus was born?  
*Late September, Dec. 25, March 17, Does not*

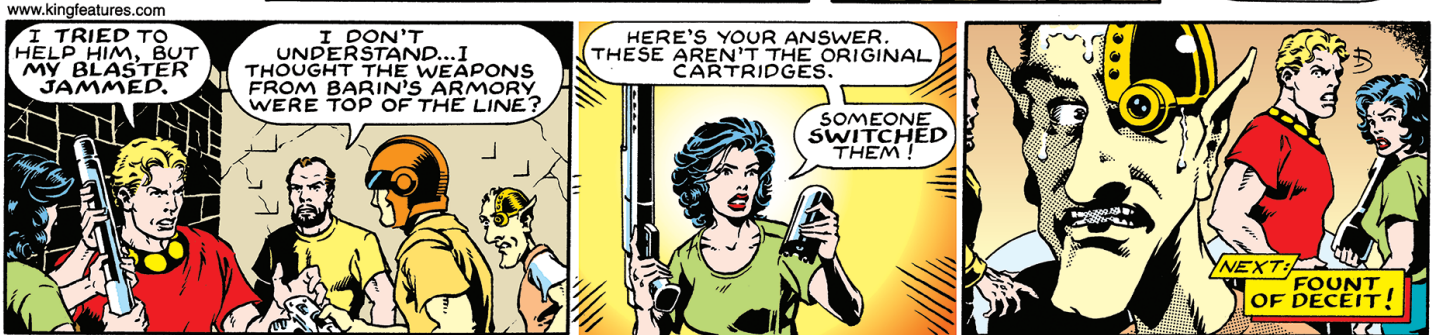
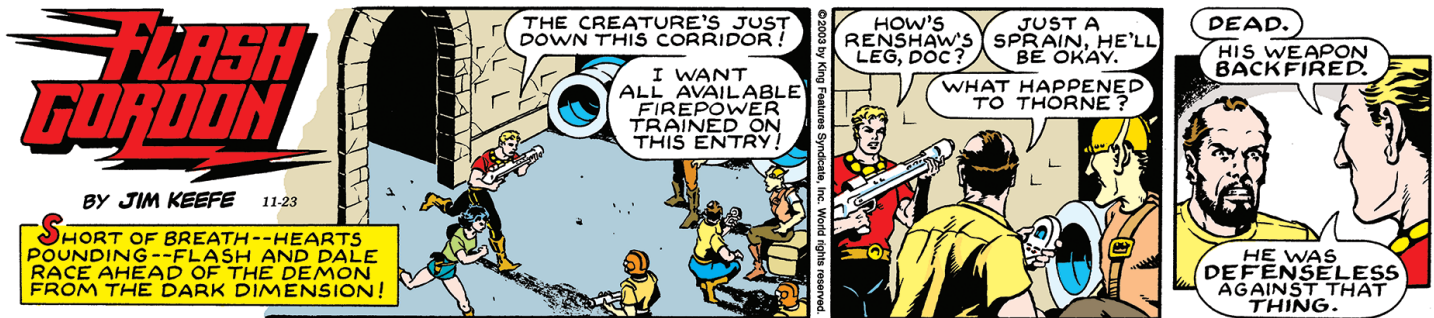
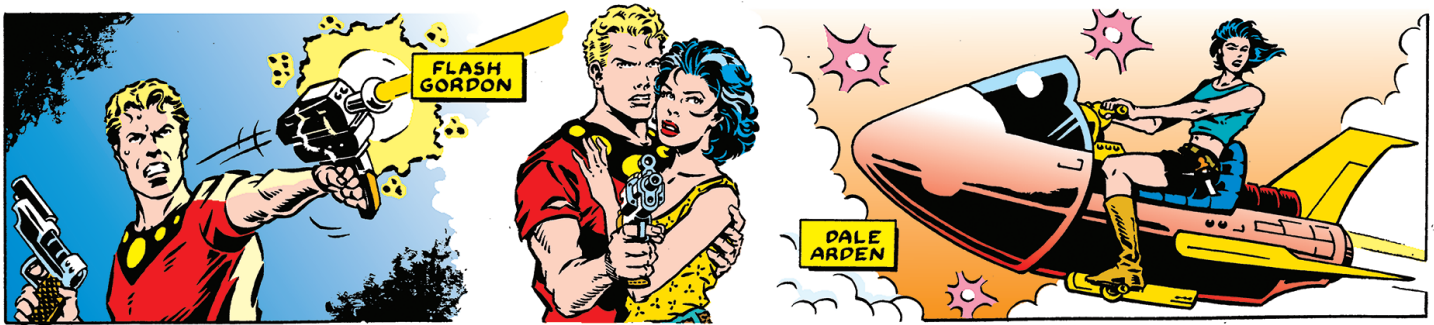
ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Isaiah, 3) Engaged, 4) Angel appearance, 5) Jerusalem, 6) Does not

*More than 1,200 brand-new trivia questions in Wilson Casey's latest book "Quest for Bible Knowledge" available in bookstores and online.*

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## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE THE FLAGSTICK REMOVED WHEN YOU CAN SEE THE HOLE? CLEARLY?

TRY LEAVING IT IN PLACE AND HAVING IT ATTENDED ON PUTTS OF SAY 30 FEET OR MORE.

YOU MAY JUST FIND THAT LEAVING THE PIN IN PLACE STRENGTHENS YOUR DEPTH PERCEPTION.

ALSO, IF YOU'RE LIKE ME, YOU'LL GET A BETTER SENSE OF DISTANCE, WHICH WILL SHARPEN YOUR SENSE OF THE AMOUNT OF FORCE YOU NEED TO APPLY TO THE BALL.

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## Metoprolol Prescription for Palpitations Exacerbates Anxiety

DEAR DR. ROACH: I just discontinued using metoprolol succinate extended release (ER) at a dosage of 6.25 mg. My heart rate is normally in the 70-80s, and my blood pressure is normal. My doctor prescribed it for palpitations, but it seems totally unnecessary. My issue is that I am experiencing tachycardia of over 100 beats every single night as well as dry mouth.

Could this be anxiety? And do you think an antidepressant like Zoloft or Paxil would help? I had a Holter monitor, which showed nothing wrong with my heart. The palpitations were sporadic only when I was anxious.

I stopped metoprolol because it exacerbated my anxiety and caused me depression as well as panic attacks. My doctor prescribed me 1 mg of Ativan

to take at bedtime, but I am very scared of getting addicted to it. So, I thought maybe an antidepressant would help instead. My doctor prescribed 25 mg of Zoloft, but I want another opinion. -- S.S.

ANSWER: Generalized anxiety disorder is a common problem and may be associated with panic attacks (sometimes depression as well). The most common and highly effective medication treatment for generalized anxiety disorder, with or without panic attacks, is an SSRI-type drug like sertraline (Zoloft). Therapy is another option, and the two together are more effective than they are separately.

Metoprolol is an effective treatment for the fast heart rate that some people get when they have anxiety, and metoprolol by itself is helpful for many people who have anxiety. (The high heart rate can make people feel even more anxious.) However, it sounds like metoprolol did not work for you. There is a small increased risk of depression among people who take beta blockers like metoprolol.

In my opinion, lorazepam (Ativan) is not a good long-term choice for an anxiety disorder, but it can still be helpful in some people while they're waiting for another treatment to start working (such as therapy or a medicine like Zoloft). It takes six to eight weeks to reach maximum effectiveness.

Addiction is not an issue when both the patient and prescriber agree that it will be only used as a short-term treatment. For Zoloft, 25 mg is a low dose, and some people need higher doses (sometimes much higher) to control their symptoms.

\*\*\*

DEAR DR. ROACH: Why shouldn't you use antibiotics for a cold? -- T.Y.A.

ANSWER: There are two main reasons. The first is that antibiotics are effective against bacteria; they're not effective against the viruses, which are the cause of colds. It is true that a person (or their doctor) cannot be 100% sure whether they have a virus, but people are generally pretty good about knowing when they have a cold.

The second is that resistance to antibiotics has become a major issue in medicine. There are now strains of bacteria that are resistant to all antibiotics, and I have seen patients die because their bacteria were resistant to all the antibiotics we have. Using antibiotics less often and for shorter durations is a major goal to reduce the rate of antibiotic resistance. (Antibiotic use in animals that are raised for food is a major issue as well.)

Patients can help by not asking for (or demanding) antibiotics for what are almost certainly viral infections.

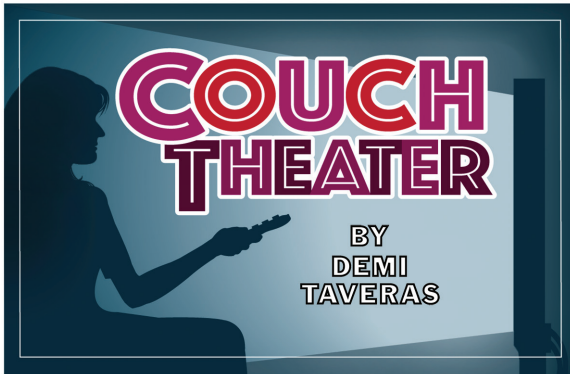
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).

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"Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery" (PG-13) -- The third installment in director Rian Johnson's "Knives Out" film series is finally arriving on streaming this week on Dec. 12. Of course,

**From left, Mila Kunis, Daniel Craig and Josh O'Connor star in "Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery."** (Courtesy of Netflix)

Daniel Craig ("Queer") busts out his beautiful southern drawl once again to reprise his role as detective Benoit Blanc, but this time around, he is far from the luxuries of a private island. In this latest case, he's brought to the church of Our Lady of Perpetual Fortitude to investigate the death of Monsignor Jefferson Wicks (Josh Brolin), alongside law police chief Geraldine Scott (Mila Kunis). There's an array of fun suspects played by an assortment of actors like Glenn Close, Kerry Washington, Jeremy Renner and Daryl McCormack. Deadline writer Damon Wise wrote that this installment might just be Johnson's best one yet. (Netflix)

"Bugonia" (R) -- Emma Stone seems to be director Yorgos Lanthimos' muse at the moment as she reteams with the director for the fifth time for this black-comedy film based on the 2003 South Korean film "Save the Green Planet!" Stone plays Michelle Fuller, the CEO of a pharmaceutical corporation that is responsible for the clinical trial of a drug, which leaves a woman comatose. The woman's son, Teddy (a very gaunt-looking Jesse Plemons), believes that not only is Michelle responsible, but she is also an "Andromedan alien" who wants to take over the world. (I know, I know, but hang in there.) Teddy enlists help to kidnap Michelle, subsequently shaving her head and forcing her to arrange a meeting with her alien higher-ups. Although Teddy seems deranged, Michelle must play along with his outlandish claims in the chance that she can get back to her normal life. Out now to rent! (Apple TV+)

"After the Hunt" (R) -- Director Luca Guadagnino ("Challengers") takes on a tricky theme in his latest psychological thriller film, focusing on the interesting nuances of what happens when a sexual assault victim speaks out about what they experienced. Starring two incredible leading ladies from different generations (Julia Roberts and Ayo Edebiri), the film picks up after Ph.D. student Maggie (Edebiri) claims that she was sexually assaulted by a professor named Hank (Andrew Garfield). She divulges this to Alma (Roberts), the professor at her school who she's the closest to, thus beginning the cycle of advances and setbacks that sexual assault victims deal with. Alma attempts to guide Maggie, despite her own messy past with sexual assault claims, but Alma also knows what's actually feasible within her own institution. While the film received mixed reviews from critics, it's a bold commentary from Guadagnino about the things that often get left unsaid in these types of cases. Out now! (Amazon Prime Video)

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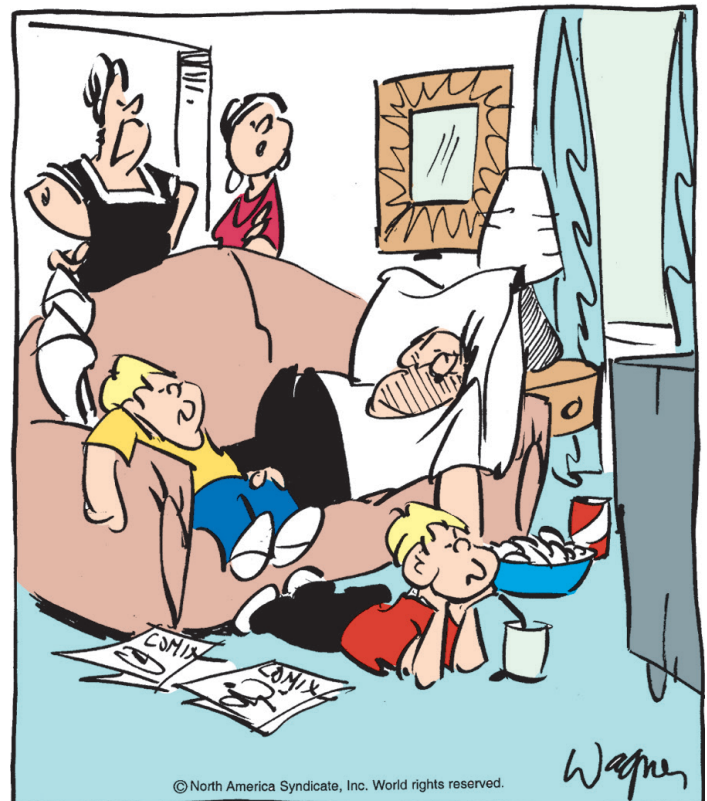
1. Which group released "You Really Got Me"?
2. Mel Carter had two hits that topped the charts. What were the songs?
3. Who wrote and released "Coming Up"?
4. Who released "Sowing the Seeds of Love"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "When I see her comin' down the street, I get so shaky and I feel so weak, I tell my eyes look the other way."

Answers

1. The Kinks, in 1964. The buzzy guitar sound was created by slicing open the speaker on the amp and sticking pins in it for the vibration. They named the amp "little green."
2. "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me" in 1965, and "Band of Gold" in 1966.
3. Paul McCartney, in 1980. He recorded the song at his Scotland farm one track at a time, beginning with drums, then guitars and finally vocals. John Lennon called that the "freaky version."
4. Tears for Fears, in 1989.
5. "I Go to Pieces," by Peter and Gordon, in 1965. Written by Del Shannon, it was the duo's first song that hadn't been written by two of the Beatles, John Lennon and Paul McCartney. The song made it to the top 10.

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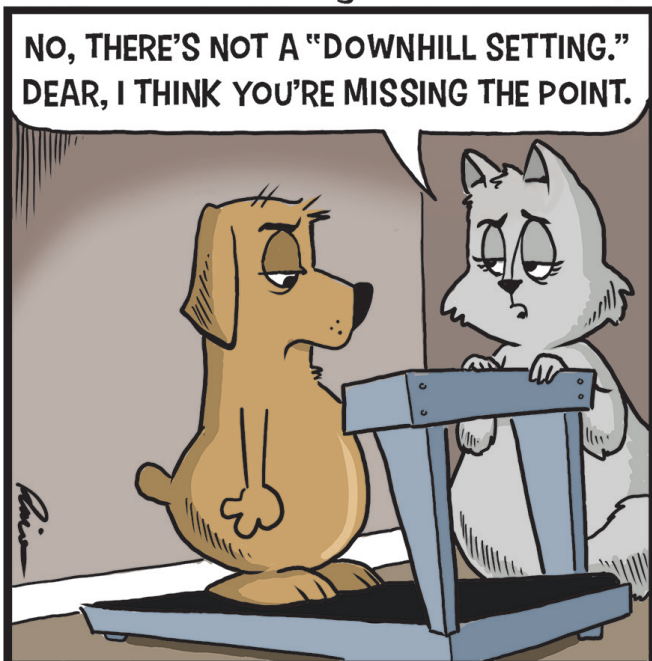
## GRIN and BEAR IT by Wagner



"I wanted Roscoe to spend more time with the boys. ... What was I thinking?"

## Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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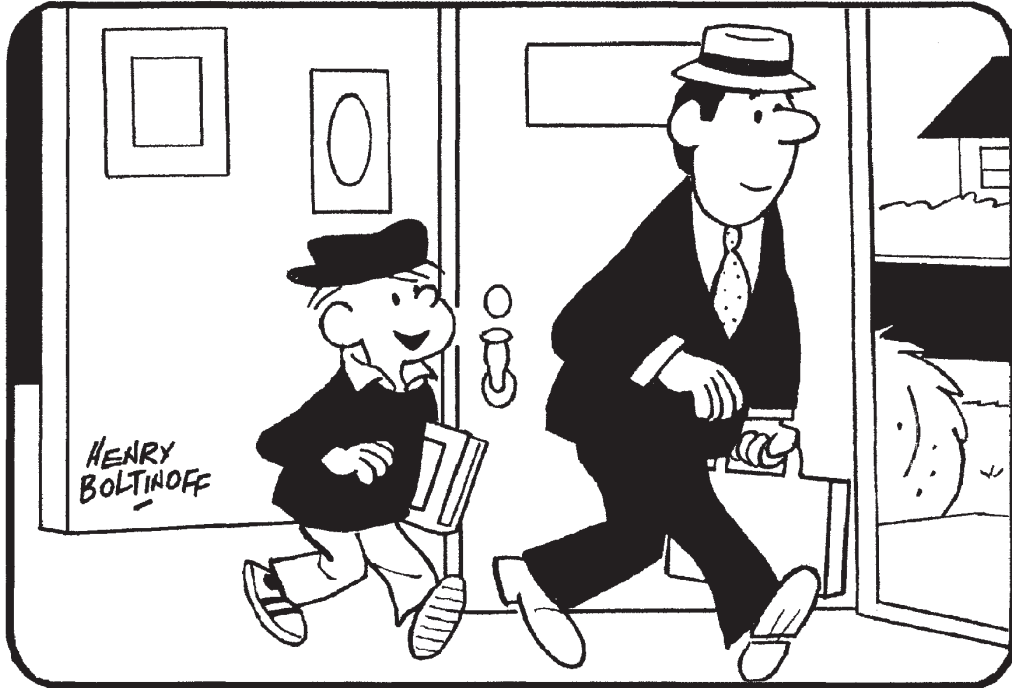
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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Picture frame is higher. 2. Doorknob is larger. 3. Hand is moved. 4. Collar is missing. 5. Stripe is added to sleeve. 6. Book is smaller.

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\* Is it a great price? Before you rush to stock up, read the signs in the grocery stores to make sure the item that looks like such a good deal really is. Oftentimes, products are "featured" with a tag that looks like a sale price, when the real price is only pennies more or no savings at all!

\* Honey has antibacterial properties? Yep! Try rubbing a bit of it over a small cut for faster, more natural healing.

\* "To keep egg whites and not yolks, simply crack eggs into a shallow bowl and "suck" the yolk out using an empty plastic water bottle. Squeeze the bottle slightly, then position the mouth of the bottle at the yolk and let go. It will magically slip into the bottle, and leave behind the whites." -- T.T. in New York

\* You can make your own gift wrapping from everyday items

like newspaper, children's drawings that can be glued together along the edges or inexpensive fabric.

\* "This time-tested tip will keep your houseplants in the green when you're away from home: Set plants in the bathtub in an inch or less of water. If your flowerpot does not have drain holes, get a short length of cotton rope and feed it from the topsoil to the tub. This will keep plants alive and thriving for a week or so." -- D.R. in Florida

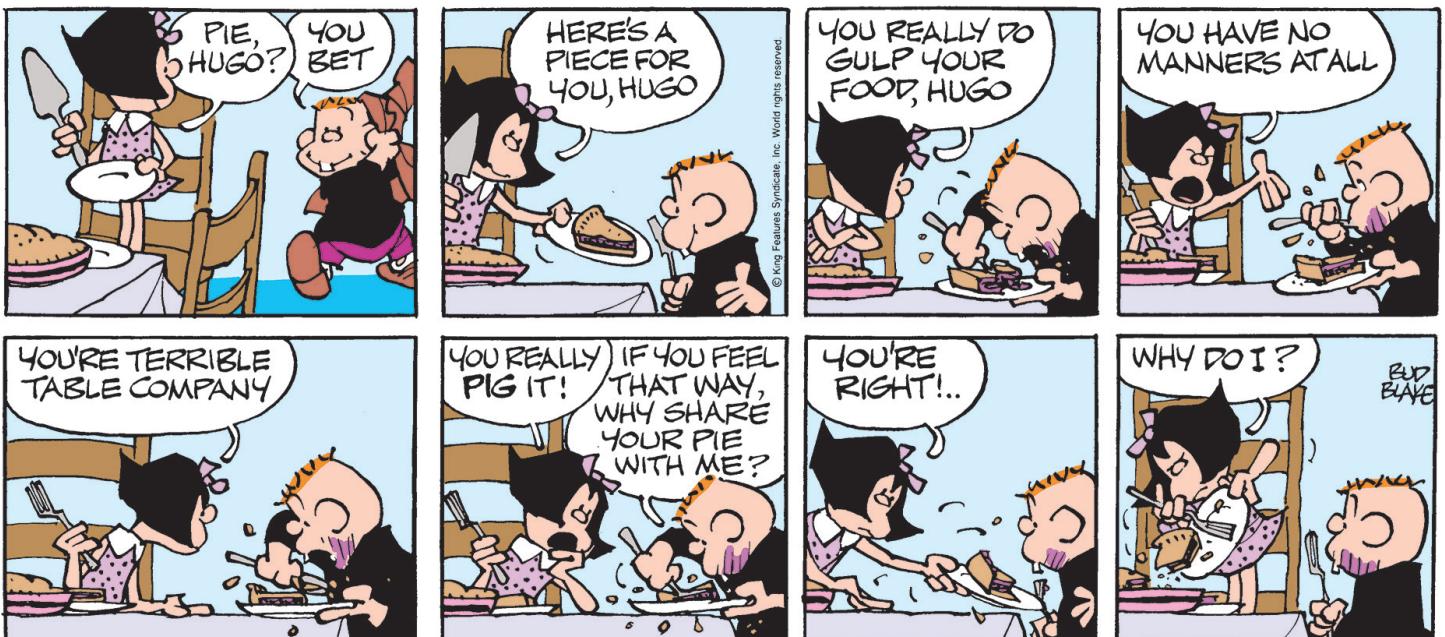
\* Unmatched socks are handy dandy cleaners and have so many uses. Keep one by the lint trap to get all the lint off. Shake it out or pop it into the wash when needed.

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

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## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Tousle
- 5 Resistance unit
- 8 Prego rival
- 12 Bickering
- 13 Zodiac animal
- 14 Pub orders
- 15 Tabula —
- 16 Sheer fabrics
- 18 Santiago resident
- 20 Playful sea critter
- 21 Mormon church, for short
- 22 Top card
- 23 Army bigwigs
- 26 Scolding
- 30 "Humbug!"
- 31 Cooking fuel

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
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30					31					32		
33			34	35				36	37			
				38				39				
40	41	42				43				44	45	46
47					48				49			
50					51				52			
53					54				55			

- 32 French pronoun
- 33 Upbeat
- 36 Rose protector
- 38 Weeding tool
- 39 Spanish gold
- 40 Parlor pieces
- 43 Bar exercises
- 47 Trailblazing congresswoman Shirley —
- 49 Power co. supply
- 50 Suffix for million
- 51 "Levitating" singer Lipa

- 52 Poet Teasdale
- 9 Oodles
- 29 Tom Collins liquor
- 53 Rolling stone's lack
- 10 Hereditary unit
- 31 "My word!"
- 54 Lair
- 11 Cold War initials
- 34 Stages
- 55 Threaded fastener
- 17 Central points
- 35 Ritzy
- 36 Part of TNT
- 37 Truthful
- 39 "Holy cow!"
- 40 Con job
- 41 Columbus' home
- 42 Evergreens
- 43 Crossword hint
- 44 — Bator
- 45 Lima's land
- 46 "Shoo!"
- 48 Quirky

### DOWN

- 1 Artist Chagall
- 2 Beehive State
- 3 Spanish ayes
- 4 Stable enclosures
- 5 Killer whales
- 6 Virtuoso violinist Hilary
- 7 2001, to Cato
- 8 Traveled the rapids
- 22 Sounds of relief
- 23 Telly network
- 24 Fan's cry
- 25 Sashimi fish
- 26 Automobile
- 27 "As I see it," in a text
- 28 Fish-fowl insert

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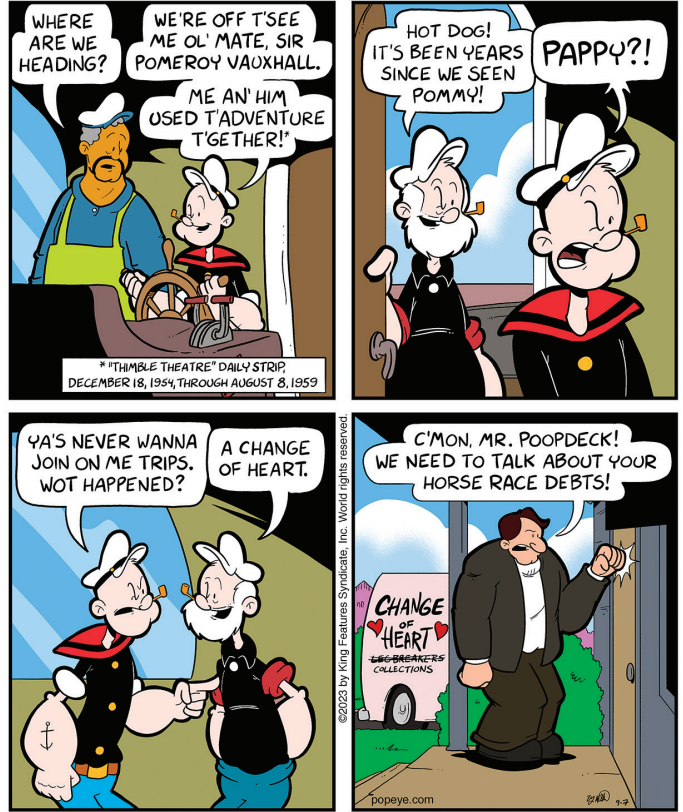
## King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.

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C	H	I	S	H	O	L	M		E	L	E	C
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## Olive



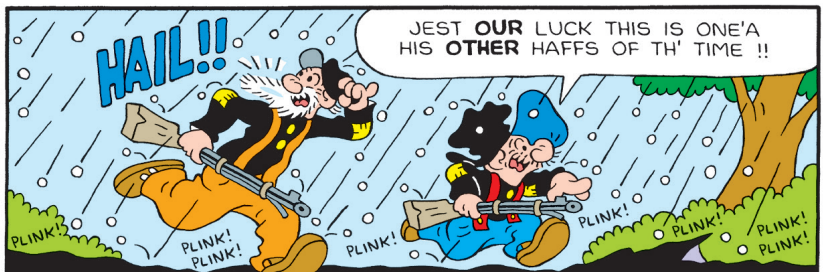
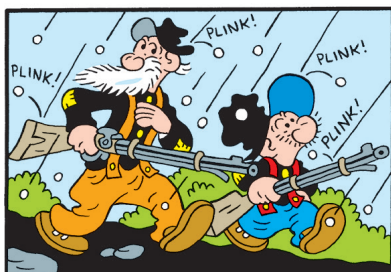
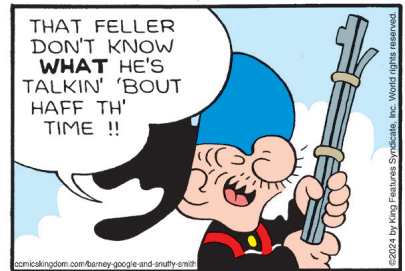
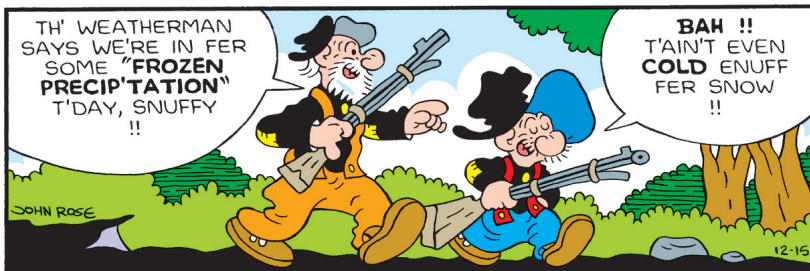
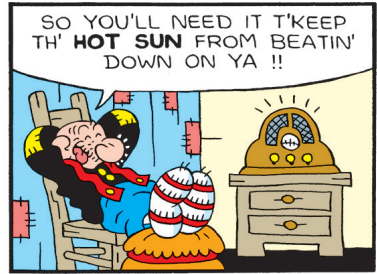
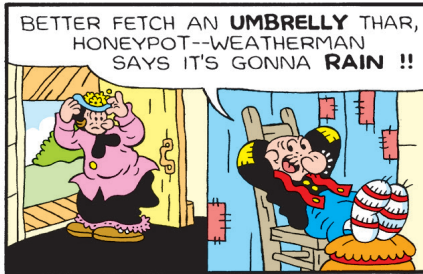
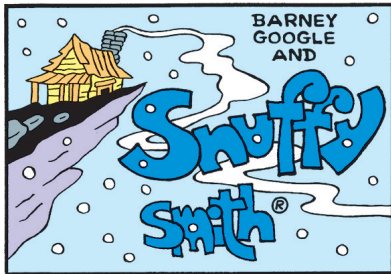
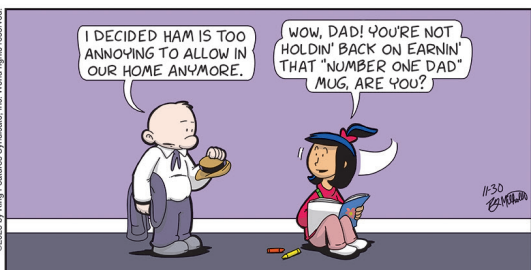
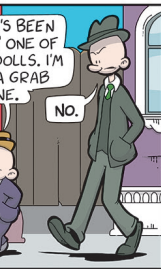
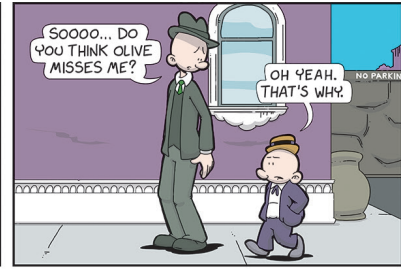
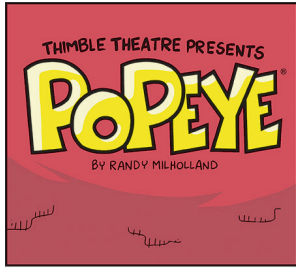
## Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



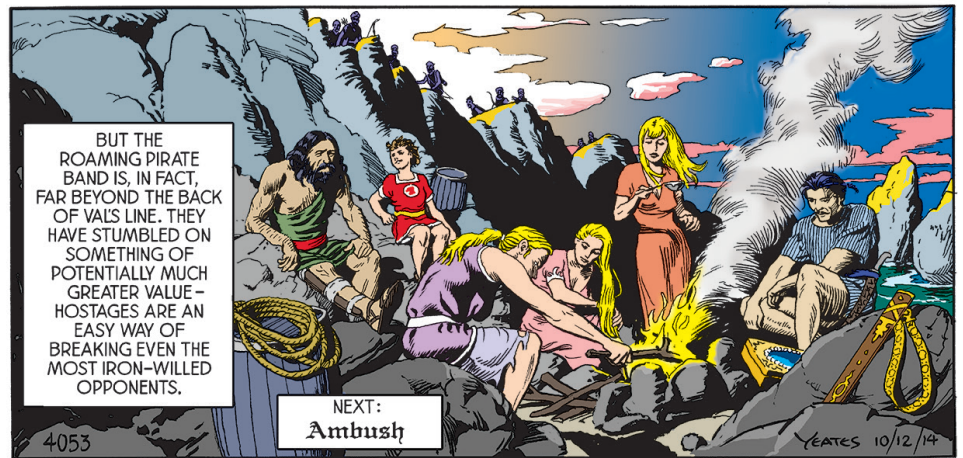
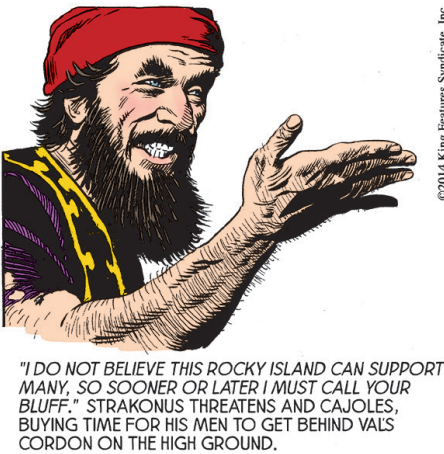
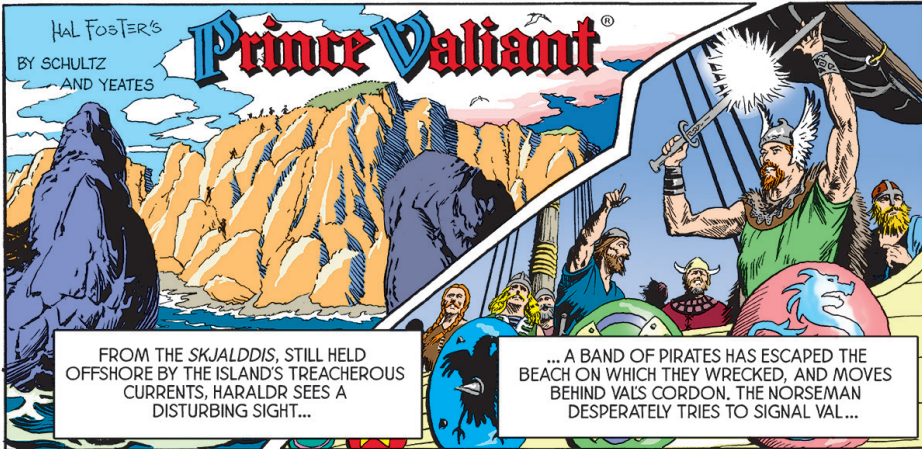
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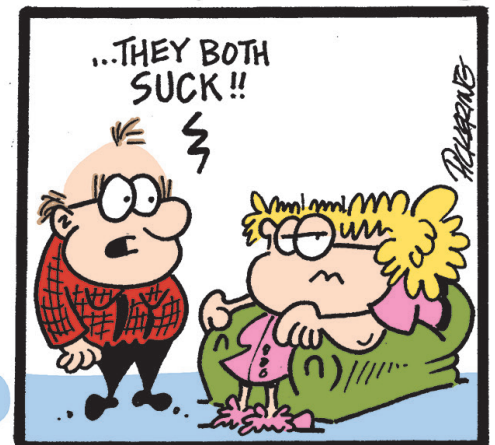
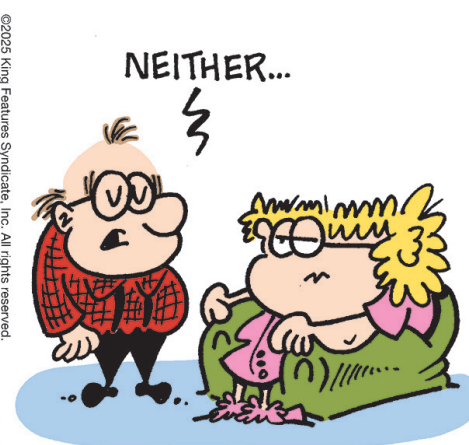
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## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Here's to a better 2026

Here we are, ready to wrap up another year. And there's a new one just around the corner. What can we learn from this year to help us in the next one?

Many seniors have had a rough time financially, and it doesn't look as though things are going to get better soon. Grocery costs have been a big part of that. What we've learned is that every time we go to the store, the items we usually buy will cost more and more. And the cost of the coat we've been eyeing is much more than last year. And our electric bill just isn't going to go down.

But we've also learned that the people who run the food bank are kind and helpful. And we've learned that we can get one more year out of our winter coat. And we've learned that wearing a vest at home can make up for the one degree we turn down the thermostat.

While it wasn't as bad as during the Covid pandemic lockdowns, our sense of isolation this year was made worse by finances because we didn't dare spend on too many lunches out with friends. For some of us, the sense of loneliness and anxiety took a toll on our health.

But all is not lost. We can look for free activities that bring us in contact with others: Book clubs at the library, art classes at the local museum and board games at the senior center all give us opportunities to socialize. Ask about organizing a karaoke night!

Even exercise can be free and can combine fitness with socialization. Look for pickleball at the rec center, and chair yoga at the senior center. Do you have an Advantage plan that covers Silver Sneakers workout classes?

The New Year can be better than 2025. Make your plans!

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Call/Text Tina: 605-397-7285



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**Living Heart Fitness Center**

Senior Citizens 65+  
Physical Therapy. **\$20 a month**

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1. What New Orleans Saints receiver crashed helmet-first into a sideline TV camera during a 1971 win over the Dallas Cowboys?

2. What three events make up horse racing's Canadian Triple Crown?

3. What women's pro tennis tournament was first played in 2021 in Cluj-Napoca, Romania?

4. At the 2000 Sydney Paralympic Games, what country's basketball team forfeited their gold medals after it was revealed that most of their players had no mental or physical handicap?

5. What Major League Baseball team owner claimed to have engaged in a fistfight with two fans in a hotel elevator during the 1981 World Series?

6. According to NBA rules, what is the maximum pressure (in pounds per square inch) of an official basketball?

7. What starting pitcher for the Kansas City Royals won two AL Cy Young Awards (1985, 1989) and was named MVP of the 1985 World Series?



by Ryan A. Berenz

## Answers

1. Danny Abramowicz (his cracked helmet is in the Pro Football Hall of Fame).

2. The King's Plate, Prince of Wales Stakes and Breeders' Stakes.

3. The Transylvania Open.

4. Spain.

5. New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner.

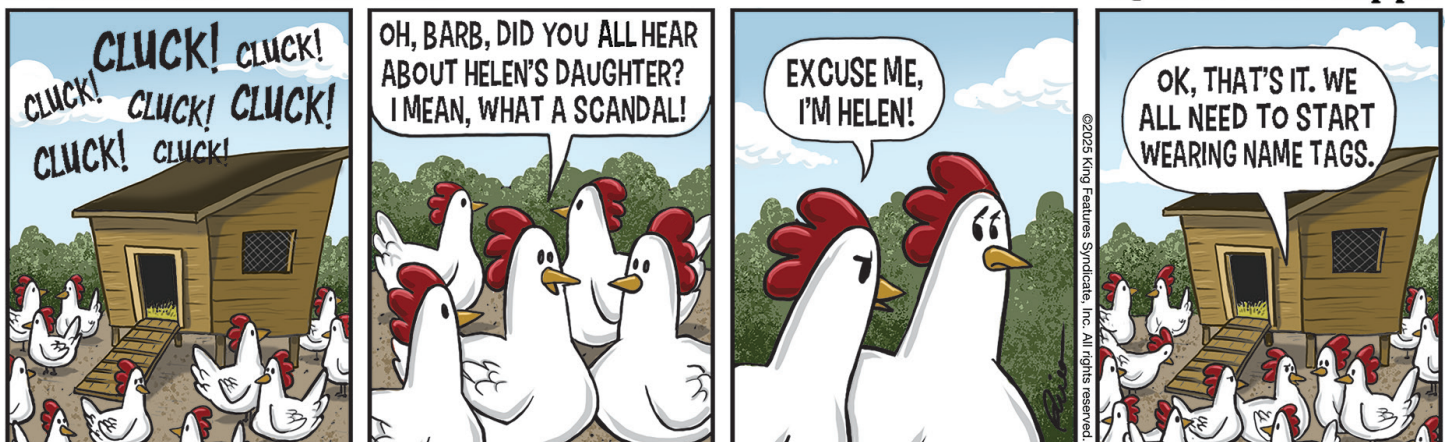
6. 8.5 PSI (the minimum is 7.5 PSI).

7. Bret Saberhagen.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





## Planning for a Christmas puppy

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I know you're probably going to scoff at this, but we want to give our kids a puppy for Christmas. The whole cute scene by the Christmas tree, and all. This isn't a last-minute decision, as we have been talking about it for several months. We feel that our children, who are 10 and 8 years old, are old enough to play a role in the puppy's care and training. Of course, we will take the lead in all matters. My husband researched the best family-friendly breeds, and we've contacted three different breeders to tell them our plan. What do you think? -- Zoey in Knoxville, Tennessee©

DEAR ZOEY: You'll get no scoffing from me. If there's a "right" way to give kids a Christmas puppy, this is it. Rather than a spur-of-the-moment decision, you're both

putting a lot of thought and planning into this. You have a realistic view of the kids' contribution to the puppy's care and training. You are talking with multiple breeders and communicating your plans to them. This is the responsible way to bring a new pet home.

Be ready for the wrinkles, however. You're adopting a living thing, and they grow by their own schedule. Good breeders will emphasize that they don't guarantee puppies will be ready for homes by a specific date, so have a contingency plan if the puppy isn't mature enough to come home on Christmas Eve. Your kids will be just as thrilled, and you can stage the "reveal" later so you can capture those family photos.

Building a little flexibility into your puppy plan will give you the opportunity to pick the exact breed of dog you'd like, and to meet the puppy ahead of time to determine its temperament.

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

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## Strange BUT TRUE

\* Picasso was once suspected of stealing the “Mona Lisa” from the Louvre. He was brought to court, where it was determined that he was indeed in possession of stolen art, but not da Vinci’s masterpiece, and was let off with a warning.

\* Ice from seawater melts into fresh water.

\* The modern sense of the term “Black Friday” likely originated in the 1950s when Philadelphia police began using it to describe the chaotic traffic of shoppers and sports fans after Thanksgiving and before the Army-Navy football game

on Saturday.

\* Jimmy Carter was the first American president born in a hospital.

\* Pepsi was originally called “Brad’s Drink,” after its creator, pharmacist Caleb Bradham, who believed it had digestive benefits.

\* Volcanoes can create lightning.

\* Ulysses S. Grant’s middle initial doesn’t stand for anything. He was christened Hiram Ulysses Grant, and the initial was added by Congressman Thomas Hamer when he nominated Grant for West Point, thinking it stood for Grant’s mother’s maiden name.

\* Fewer than one in 10,000 people possess the gift of perfect pitch.

\* The world’s largest beaver dam, located in Canada’s Wood Buffalo National Park and boasting a length estimated at more than 2,600 feet, is visible from space via satellite imagery.


\* Memorial Day’s date was first chosen because it was when flowers would be in full bloom.

\* In 2012, Susan Warren, who owned a cleaning business, broke into a house but stole nothing. Instead, she washed coffee cups, vacuumed, took out the garbage, and dusted ... then left the homeowners, who were asleep upstairs, her phone number and a bill for her services on a napkin.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: “If the world should blow itself up, the last audible voice would be that of an expert saying it can’t be done.” -- Peter Ustinov

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**The Garden Bug** **Solomon's Seal**

“Solomon’s Seal” is the common name for a number of species in the genus *Polygonatum*. These plants display broad, alternating leaves and many clusters of bell-shaped flowers that dangle along each stalk. They prefer rich, moist, well-drained soil, partly or fully shaded. They are drought-tolerant once established, have few insect or disease problems, and are not favored by deer. Beside their use as garden plants, they are used medicinally, and also prepared as food. - *Brenda Weaver*

Source: [hort.extension.wisc.edu](http://hort.extension.wisc.edu)



by Freddy Groves

## The VA year in review

Veterans who have a relative who gets medical care under CHAMPVA (Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs) will be happy to know that the massive backlog of applications has been eliminated.

CHAMPVA covers the 900,000 veterans' dependents, survivors, caregivers and spouses who need care. Until recently there were over 70,000 applications that were stuck in a backlog, some

taking 150 days to process.

That backlog no longer exists, even though 4,000 new applications are coming in per week. As of now, the process has been automated, which speeds things up. Appeals have seen similar success with a recent 20,000 appeals being reduced to 1,000.

Other things have been happening at the same time, per a VA news release:

The VA has set over a million appointments in the early morning, during evenings and on weekends to make it easier to get an appointment.

They're spending \$800 million to improve facilities.

This year they broke a previous record and processed 3,000,000 disability claims.

The VA hooked up with Medicare and Medicaid to pinpoint \$106 million in duplicate billing.

Permanent housing was found for over 51,000 homeless veterans.

The VA canceled the plan to install \$77 million worth of electric charging stations.

And in big dollar amounts, the VA has stepped up to deal with a potential \$272 million in medical bills that were caused when the previous administration halted the processing of co-payment claims for community care. The problem at the time was the PIT, the Program Integrity Tool, which was supposed to identify waste and fraud in community care billing. Instead, it was creating duplicate claims, overwriting claims and more. (The VA Office of Inspector General identified 18 defects in the program, which they estimated consisted of 40 million community care claims.)

As of last month, PIT is processing claims again.

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## Wishing Well®

6	8	4	8	4	2	8	5	2	3	2	7	6
A	Y	S	O	O	C	U	F	H	K	A	S	F
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N	E	L	C	I	Y	O	W	U	I	S	R	O
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6	7	6	5	3	8	3	6	4	3	5	7	3
K	C	E	V	S	E	E	N	Y	L	E	E	F

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

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1. TELEVISION: What is the name of the bloodhound featured on the sitcom "The Beverly Hillbillies"?
2. HISTORY: Which Chinese dynasty mostly built the Great Wall?
3. MOVIES: Which 2003 movie is about juveniles who are sentenced to work at a desert camp?
4. MUSIC: Which famous song begins with the line, "Hello darkness, my old friend...?"
5. ANATOMY: What's another name for the patella?
6. GEOGRAPHY: What is the capital of Chile?
7. FOOD & DRINK: Who perfected the Champagne method?
8. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What are the national flowers of Japan?
9. LITERATURE: Who wrote the novel "Love in the Time of Cholera"?
10. SCIENCE: Which wire is usually the main "hot" one in electrical work?

### Answers

1. Duke.
2. The Ming dynasty.
3. "Holes."
4. "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel.
5. Kneecap.
6. Santiago.
7. A Benedictine monk named Dom Perignon.
8. The cherry blossom and the chrysanthemum.
9. Gabriel Garcia Marquez.
10. Black, although red also can be hot in two-wire circuits.

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South Dakota Governor



## Larry Rhoden



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

### Supporting Student Success

Ultimately, education is about our future. We want our kids and our grandkids to have the very best opportunity to learn and grow so that they can become well-informed and productive members of our society and get into the career of their dreams. Education is about having the freedom to learn so that our students can chase down opportunity.

I unveiled my budget recently, and it strengthens freedom to learn by supporting continued growth at our tech colleges. I'm proud of South Dakota's tech colleges – they are some of the very best in America. They're creating all kinds of opportunities for our kids to get into the careers of their dreams.

Truth be told, I never graduated from college. I did take a year of ranch management at Western Dakota Tech. I thought I'd spend my whole life running the ranch, but God had other plans. Maybe some of our students will follow a similar path – maybe they'll follow a different path entirely. That's the beauty of a strong education system: it gives our kids those options and opportunities.

My budget invests \$6 million one-time in a new James Abdnor Center for Advanced Manufacturing at Southeast Technical College in Sioux Falls. This facility will increase student capacity by 130 in several programs. The proposed project will include more than 53,000 sq. ft. of new and renovated space that includes state-of-the-art labs, classrooms, and collaborative spaces. This will benefit students in the Advanced Manufacturing Maintenance Tech, Advanced Manufacturing Automation Technology, Mechanical Engineering Technology, and Welding programs to meet the demand in these growing industries. As a welder myself – I approve! The state will support one quarter of the project, and the rest will come from a mix of federal, local, and private funds.

My budget also supports \$4.3 million one-time for equipment upgrades at all four of our tech colleges. This will provide two-thirds of the investment as we have done in recent years. Our tech schools will be able to make sure their students meet industry expectations, provide higher safety standards for students and instructors, and grow overall student capacity. My budget also increases ongoing aid to our tech colleges by \$1.7 million because of rising enrollment – which is great news! It means more kids are using our tech colleges to pursue opportunity and chase down their dreams.

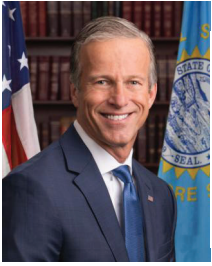
There's been a lot of chatter about the fact that we have to keep K-12 education flat this year, and I want to talk about that a bit. I wish we could give an across-the-board increase to the Big Three: K-12 education, Medicaid providers, and state employees. Unfortunately, with nearly all of our ongoing revenue spoken for by mandatory increases, that just isn't possible right now. But it was important to me to protect K-12 education to the greatest extent possible.

Some legislators have tried to push for 5% across the board cuts in the budget, which would result in a big chunk being taken out of K-12 education. I don't support that. I don't think it's right for South Dakota kids, teachers, or schools – so my budget did not make any such recommendation. So though I wish we could give an increase to K-12, I'm glad that we protected our schools from a budget cut.

I am committed to keeping South Dakota education strong, safe, and free. Thanks to our strong K-12 schools, growing educational freedom options, and state-of-the-art tech colleges, South Dakota kids have tremendous opportunities for their futures.

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

## Less Regulation, Lower Costs

Last month, the incoming mayor of New York City said of his agenda, "We will prove that there is no problem too large for government to solve, and no concern too small for it to care about." That's a dangerous way of thinking; it's how you get government growing unbounded. We saw a lot of this type of thinking during the Biden years, and Republicans have spent the last year cleaning up the mess it created.

During the Biden administration, we saw regulations, rules, and mandates creeping into seemingly every facet of Americans' lives. We had the federal government mandating masks for two-year-olds even when they were outside. The EPA was trying to regulate puddles and temporary streams, saddling farmers and ranchers with massive compliance costs. There were electric vehicle mandates, restrictions on energy production, and of course, a reckless tax and spending spree that caused a yearslong inflation crisis.

Since taking the reins of government in January, President Trump and Republicans have worked to clean up the consequences of Democrats' big-government actions. President Trump has repealed a number of burdensome regulations and rules, and in Congress we have used the Congressional Review Act to stop other executive actions from the Biden years.

Just this year, we've repealed four separate rules on appliances, which had become the latest focus of Democrats' radical environmental agenda. There were new standards for commercial fridges and freezers, which the Energy Department estimated would take 90 years to deliver savings to businesses. Another rule sought to take gas water heaters off the market, raising costs for homeowners and imperiling American manufacturing jobs. Then there were new requirements for household appliances, which one manufacturers' association described as a "burden without benefit."

We have also worked to dismantle Democrats' regulatory assault on Americans' cars. President Trump repealed the electric vehicle mandates. In Congress, Republicans blocked waivers that would have allowed California to impose a de facto electric vehicle mandate on the entire country. Then we repealed a Biden tire manufacturing rule that would have actually increased emissions of carbon dioxide and methane while costing tire manufacturers millions of dollars each year.

Republicans have also followed through on our promise to unleash American energy, and a big part of that is lifting unnecessary burdens and restrictions the Biden administration placed on energy producers. We stopped implementation of the Biden natural gas tax, which would have driven up energy prices and destroyed American jobs. And we've taken action to restore energy development in places where the Biden administration blocked it, restoring Americans' access to our nation's abundant natural resources.

Forty years ago, President Reagan said, "the nine most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the Government, and I'm here to help." While Democrats may think there's nothing that can't be improved with a little more government intervention, we know what too often happens when government decides to get involved. Regulations often mean costs, which are almost always passed on to the consumer. Republicans have been hard at work this year lifting regulatory burdens, and we'll continue our efforts to restore common sense and bring costs down for the American people.

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## OPPORTUNITY AND AFFORDABILITY

### **BIG Update**

Unnecessary federal regulations drive up costs for consumers. I've been working to undo burdensome red tape and make life more affordable for American families. It's estimated that American households pay an average of \$16,016 per year in hidden regulatory costs. Those federal rules affect many aspects of day-to-day life including auto emissions, energy efficiency standards on appliances, building code, health and food requirements, and more.

The Biden Administration piled on more than \$2 trillion of new regulations from 2021-2024. I've voted to repeal nearly two dozen Biden regulations, and there is more work to be done. This week, I voted to empower the Small Business Administration to evaluate other unnecessary federal rules that are burdening small businesses and making products more expensive for consumers.

### **BIG Idea**

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) does a great job preparing South Dakota's high school students to enter the workforce. This program helps students explore meaningful opportunities beyond graduation and builds the confidence and skills they need to pursue their goals.

I enjoyed talking with JAG participants this week to hear how the program has shaped their goals and improved their readiness for life after high school. By opening doors and expanding horizons, JAG helps young people step confidently into the next chapter of their lives and strengthens the future of our state in the process.

### **BIG News**

The Chinese Communist Party has sought to influence nearly every aspect of American life – including the American education system. There are at least 164 documented Confucius Classrooms at K-12 schools in the United States, which have been receiving money from the Chinese government. This is very concerning to me – our students shouldn't be influenced by the authoritarian agenda of China while they go to school on American soil.

This week, I voted to prevent Chinese Communist Party money from going to our K-12 schools to keep our kids safe from the malign interests of our biggest adversary. China should not be influencing our education system.



## Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

### Why Are Flies So Attracted to My Nose?

Throughout my life, I have dealt with many "pesky" things that provoke the dickens out of me. I sure do miss those "dickens." When I think I've got one pesky thing under control, another comes along.

I've had so many "pesky" things, but I'm still not a master in that area.

Recently, a new "pesky" thing entered my life.

The new "pesky" thing is a fly. I never knew flies could be so dominating in a person's life. After all, they're just little things with wings. About a month ago, I noticed flies buzzing around my head, especially around my nose, probably because I was wearing that suspiciously fragrant cologne I always wear.

I'm not sure why, because I blow my nose every day, and so there's nothing up my nose that should attract them. And yet, they are attracted to my nose all day long. No matter where I go, there is a fly somewhere attracted to my nose.

In a restaurant this past week, I was having lunch with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, and just as we were getting started with lunch, a fly buzzed around my nose.

I tried swatting him with both hands, but only hit my nose. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage looked at me and said, "What are you doing?"

I wasn't too happy, but I responded, "Don't you see these flies buzzing around me?"

Then she laughed. There are times I like when she laughs, and there are times when I really don't like her laughing about what she was laughing about.

Looking at me, she said, "Oh, you silly boy, where are those flies coming from? I don't see any!"

Then she told me she thought I might be seeing floaters in my eyes. I just looked at her and shook my head and tried to leave it at that.

It wasn't long until that fly came at my nose again. I clapped my hand on my nose, and wouldn't you know it, I got that fly. Looking at my wife, I grinned and said, "Does this look like a floater?"

She didn't know what to say.

Even when riding in the Sissy Van, I am being attacked by these frustrating flies. How they get into the Sissy Van is beyond anything I can think of right now. When I sit down in the Sissy Van, I buckle my seatbelt and then look around very carefully to see if there are any flies, and I don't see any.

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Somehow, they have a way of hiding long enough, then attacking my nose. The good thing is that I'm not driving; otherwise, there would be serious consequences.

Trying to hide her chuckle, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said, "Maybe it is the cologne you're wearing. They may be attracted to that cologne." Then her giggle broke out.

Finally, Sunday came and The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I went to our church service as we do every week. She plays the piano, I lead the singing, and then the preaching. Something we like to do every week.

I was really involved in the service and the singing, and then started my Sunday sermon, not knowing a fly was about to turn the service into a comedy show.

As I began preaching, all of a sudden, there was a fly right in front of my face. I just swatted, hoping to chase it away. For a few seconds, I didn't see it and thought it had just gone away.

Then it all began. The fly landed on my nose, almost going up my nostril. I chased it away and thought it was gone forever. However, it came back and landed on my cheek, then on my ear, and I was getting very frustrated. I didn't want anybody to know that I was being distracted by this lousy fly.

I was preaching, and when I preach, I open my mouth. I never gave that a thought, but as I was preaching, all of a sudden, the fly went inside my mouth.

Now I have a dilemma here. What do I do? How do I get rid of the fly? Do you think I should spit it out in front of everyone? I didn't know what to do.

And then I did the unthinkable. I'm known for doing things without thinking. However, here was the worst example of that I've ever had.

I swallowed the fly, hoping nobody would see what happened

Did you ever swallow a fly? It is the most disgusting experience I've had in my whole life. I could feel that fly fluttering down my throat, landing in my stomach.

I didn't want anyone to know what I just did, so I coughed a little and then took a sip from my water bottle.

Eating a fly during a church service is not something I had ever thought about. I tried to keep my composure, hoping no one had witnessed what I just did.

On the way home, a verse of scripture came to my mind.

Philippians 4:6-7, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

No matter the aggregation, "the peace of God" is bigger and brings me peace that the world cannot take away.

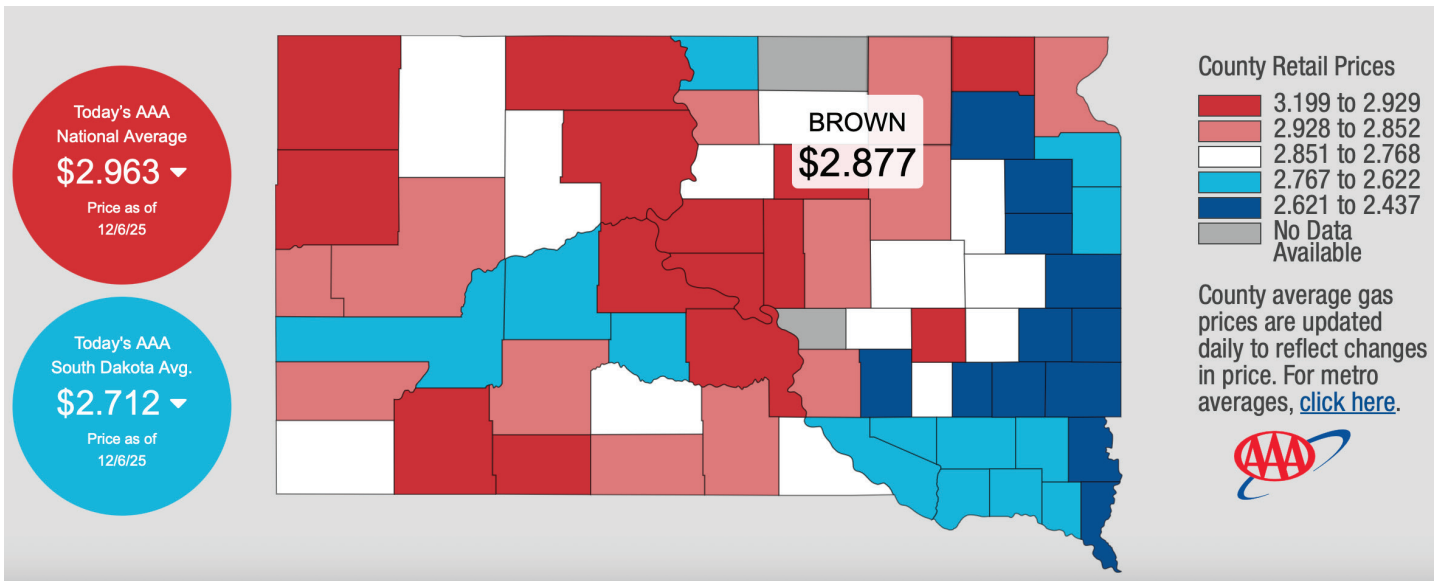
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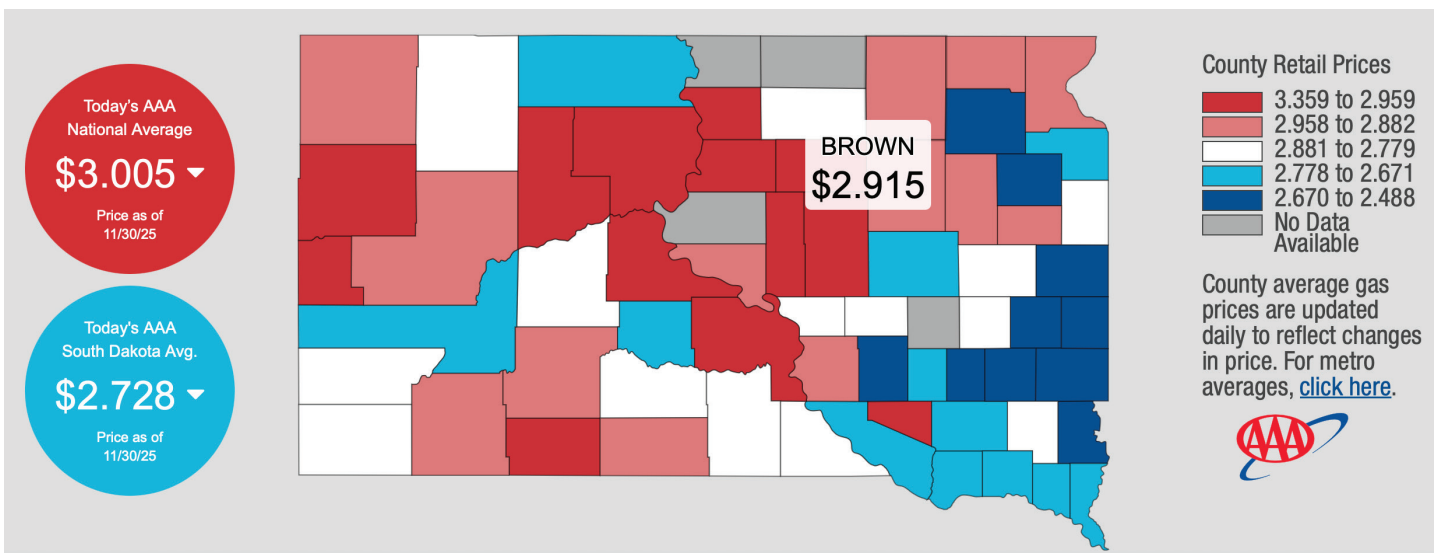
## South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$2.712	\$2.906	\$3.369	\$3.499
Yesterday Avg.	\$2.714	\$2.903	\$3.368	\$3.520
Week Ago Avg.	\$2.731	\$2.942	\$3.401	\$3.502
Month Ago Avg.	\$2.882	\$3.063	\$3.535	\$3.450
Year Ago Avg.	\$2.845	\$3.037	\$3.460	\$3.268

### This Week



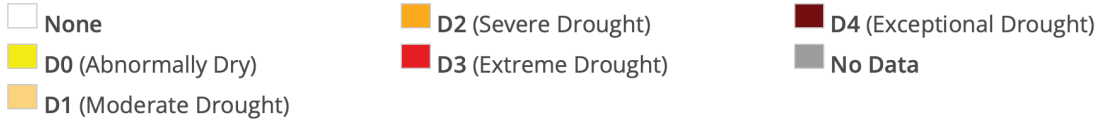
### Last Week



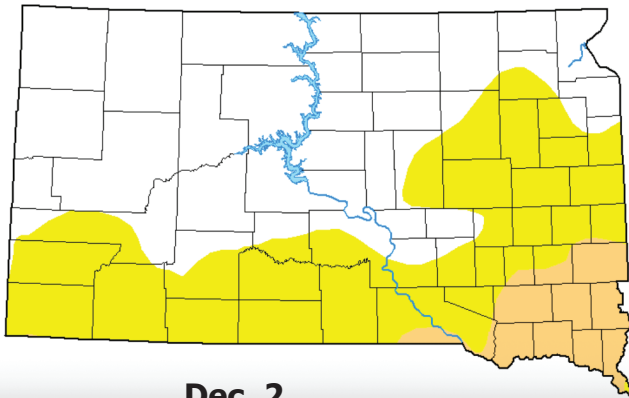
# Groton Daily Independent

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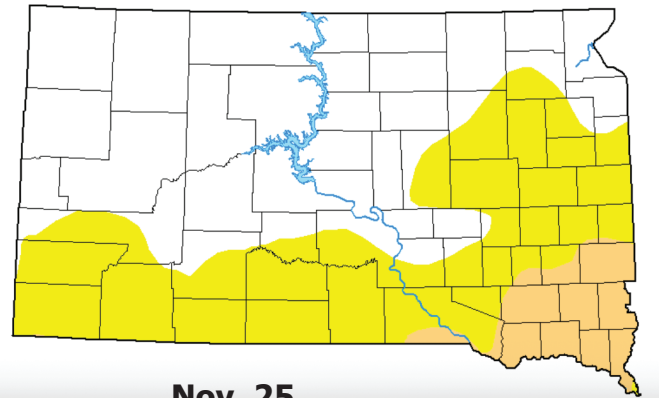
## Drought Classification



## Drought Monitor



Dec. 2



Nov. 25

On this week's map, only minor changes were made in the region. In eastern Kansas, two areas of lingering Moderate Drought (D1) were removed in response to improving conditions during the past 90-day period. For the week, some beneficial snowfall was observed across the northern Plains, with accumulations ranging from 1 to 14 inches. The highest accumulations were logged in areas of North Dakota. In terms of average temperatures, cooler-than-normal temperatures (5 to 20+ degrees F below normal) were observed across the region, with the greatest anomalies observed in the Dakotas. According to NWS NOHRSC, the Upper Midwest region is currently 94.4% covered by snow (area) with an average depth of 3.7 inches and a maximum depth of 22.2 inches.

## EARTHTALK

### RIP Jane Goodall As The World Celebrates Her Legacy

by Marium Zahra

Dear EarthTalk: Everyone knows Jane Goodall was a great conservationist, but what exactly did she accomplish in her lifetime and what will be her legacy?  
—Winnie Marcus, Wilmington, DE

Jane Goodall was an English anthropologist and primatologist. Around the world, she was most known for her 65-year-long study of wild chimpanzees. She pioneered the research on chimpanzees and completely transformed our view of the species. Before her passing in October 2025, she had dedicated her life to being a global advocate for human rights and environmental protection, even starting a youth empowerment program called "Roots and Shoots."

Ever since childhood, Goodall loved the outdoors, nature and animals. She was unable to afford college to pursue her passion, but a trip to Nairobi, Kenya to visit a friend allowed her to meet paleoanthropologist Louis Leakey. Eventually, this connection allowed her to get a job at a local museum and later as part of a research team that would travel to Gombe Stream to study wild chimpanzees in Tanzania.

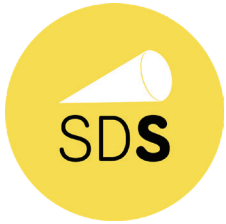
Many challenges, including disease and disagreements with fellow researchers, marked Goodall's time in this expedition. Still, her commitment to observation and ethical research led the team to realize many breakthroughs that challenged scientific ideals of the time. Her research revealed that chimpanzees are omnivores who hunt for meat, not herbivores as previously thought. She also discovered that chimps use and manufacture their own tools, a trait once thought to be exclusive to humans.

Goodall continued her research at Cambridge University, where many researchers disagreed with her naming the chimpanzees rather than assigning them traditional number designations. This conflict led her to write her recognized book "My Friends, the Wild Chimpanzees." "I thought chimps were so like us but nicer, but they have a dark and aggressive side, just like we do, and they're capable of violence, brutality, killing and a kind of primitive war," Goodall said. 'But also, just like us, they have a loving, compassionate and truly altruistic side, so that an adult male may adopt an orphan whose mother has died. There was this little infant, who was just three and a half, we thought he would die; there was nobody looking after him. And then, to our amazement, a 12-year-old male adopted him, carried him around, shared his food and his nest with him, and saved his life,' she added.

While this was Goodall's most well-known work, it was not her last. After receiving her Ph.d, Goodall continued to advocate for wildlife protection and conservation of endangered habitats. As a researcher, Goodall left her legacy on challenging the idea of human uniqueness. Her youth empowerment, reforestation and activism also inspired multiple generations to come together for conservation.



**Jane Goodall left her legacy on challenging the idea of human uniqueness, but her activism also inspired multiple generations to come.** Credit: Dean Calma / IAEA, FlickrCC.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **COMMENTARY**

## **State's 'rainy day' funds stay nice and dry during food emergency** by Dana Hess

Maybe there are lessons to be learned from the federal government shutdown. One of those lessons might be the way the sudden lack of federal funding shines a light on the hidden problems of society that we don't think about or don't want to think about. One of those problems is hunger.

As the shutdown progressed, the deadline approached for funding to run out for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The federal SNAP program offers food assistance to 42 million low-income Americans. In South Dakota, it provides food assistance to 75,000 citizens.

That 75,000 number may be hard to quantify. Think of it this way: The combined populations of three of South Dakota's largest communities totals about 75,000. If you live in Brookings, Aberdeen or Watertown, take a look around at your family, your neighbors, your co-workers. Now imagine them all hungry as the federal SNAP funds dry up. It's hard to believe so many people in South Dakota are dependent on the federal government for food.

Another lesson that emerged from the shutdown is the way that state government reacts to a problem. In the case of the SNAP fund, it was met with a shrug, excuses and an admonishment to be generous.

A cynic would say that politics played a role here. With President Donald Trump working overtime to make sure that SNAP funds were withheld from the people who need them, there was no sign that the state's Republican leadership was going to make waves. There's no telling that Trump is even aware that there's a Republican gubernatorial primary brewing for June of next year in South Dakota. Still, the safest precaution for candidates hoping for his endorsement is to follow the big man's lead for fear of incurring his wrath.

Gov. Larry Rhoden wrote a column about the impending SNAP crisis, blaming Democrats for the shutdown and asking South Dakotans to make donations to local food banks. He also repeated the oft-debunked claim that Democrats were holding government funding hostage in hopes of securing medical benefits for illegal immigrants.

SNAP benefits in South Dakota total \$15 million a month, Rhoden explained, bemoaning the logistics of finding a way to replace the federal funds. In an interview with South Dakota Searchlight, the governor said that any money the state invested in replacing SNAP funds wouldn't be reimbursed by the federal government.

The precedent for investing in an emergency without any hope of reimbursement was set by Rhoden's predecessor. The National Guard deployments that Kristi Noem ordered to the southern border were made with the full knowledge that Texas wasn't going to reimburse the state for costs that exceeded \$1 million.

Since the state's hands were tied, Rhoden used his column to encourage South Dakotans to be generous, dig deeper and give to their local food pantries. That's big talk from someone sitting on \$413 million in reserve funds.

The reserves are often referred to as money that the state has set aside for a rainy day. Yet with a veritable monsoon of hunger bearing down on 75,000 South Dakotans, the state's umbrellas and slickers remained safely tucked away.

The uncertainty of a federal government shutdown touches all citizens. Imagine how much better the state's SNAP recipients would have felt if they knew that their government was doing something, anything, to recognize their plight.

No one would expect the state to reinvent the federal SNAP infrastructure that puts funds on payment

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cards that recipients can use to buy food. However, it wouldn't take that much effort to pull together a loose coalition of state, local and tribal officials along with grocers and the people who run food pantries.

No one would expect the state to drop \$15 million a month to replace the federal funds. However, someone in the coalition may have a million-dollar idea that makes it easier for grocers to give extra food to their local food banks. With the prospect of the state investing some money, it may be easier for food banks to ease their restrictions on how often someone can go to them for food.

Fortunately, the shutdown ended and federal funds flowed to SNAP accounts once again. However, as so many South Dakotans faced an uncertain future about how they were going to feed their families, it would have been comforting to know that their state government was doing something more substantial than just asking them to rely on the kindness of strangers.

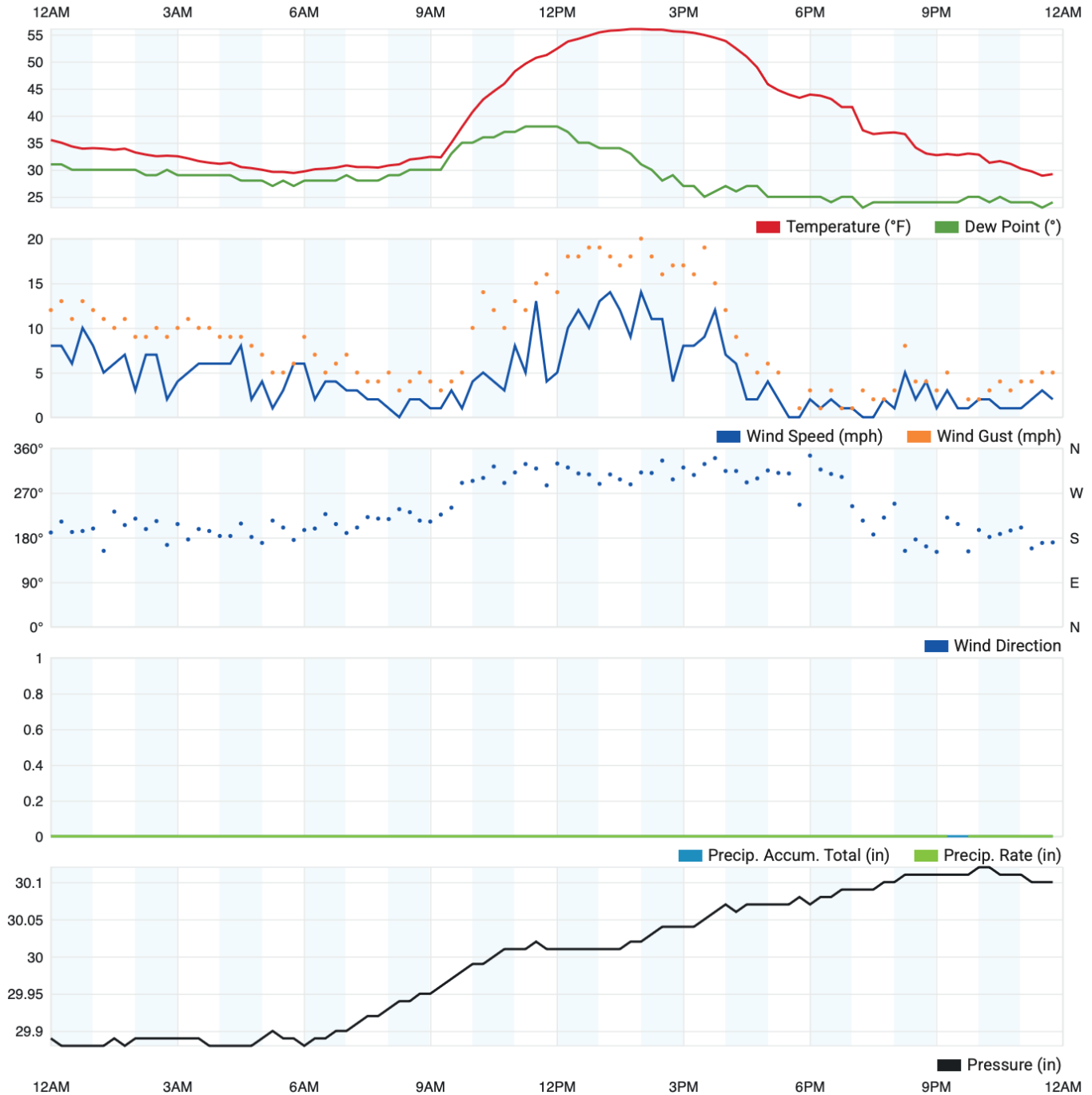
*Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

November 22, 2025



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Today



High: 53 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 31 °F

Partly Cloudy

Monday



High: 48 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Monday Night



Low: 31 °F

Cloudy then  
Chance Rain

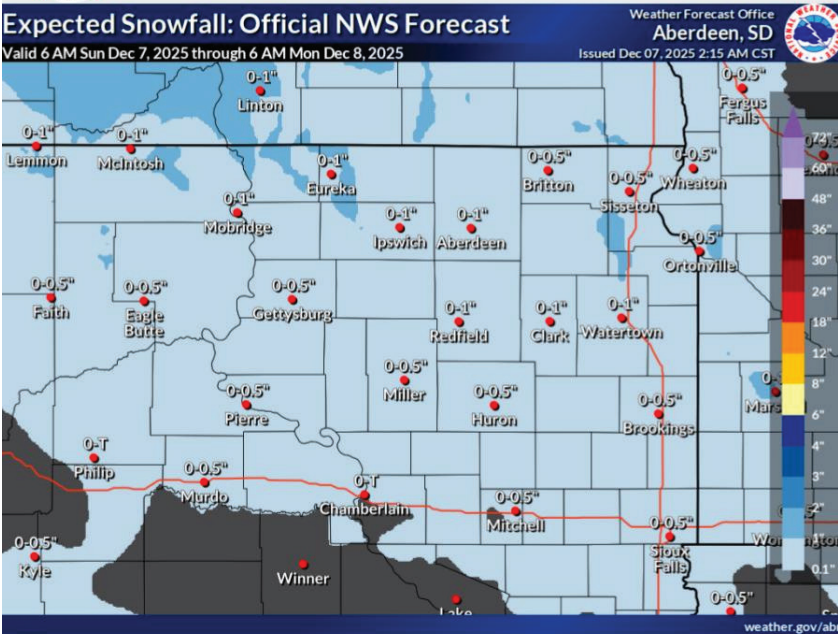
Tuesday



High: 36 °F

Rain/Snow  
Likely and  
Patchy  
Blowing Snow

## Snow Forecast For Sunday December 7, 2025 3:41 AM



### Key Messages

- A weak low pressure system will bring an area of light snow (40-80%) through the area, working from west to east, from this morning through this evening
  - **New snow accumulation around an inch or less**
- Be prepared for ongoing slippery roads and surfaces, especially bridges and overpasses
  - Slow down and use caution when driving or walking

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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Another storm system will track across the region today, bringing another round of light snow to the area. New snowfall accumulations around an inch or less is forecast with this system.

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## Early Week Warm Up / Late Week Cool Down

December 7, 2025  
3:46 AM

*Strong Winds Tuesday afternoon and night*

### Key Messages

- Temperatures will start warming Monday into Tuesday
  - Some areas could see high temperatures up into the 40s to 50s on Tuesday
- Cold air will move back in starting Tuesday evening, with the coldest readings forecast on Friday
- Wind chill values Friday morning could be lower than 30F below zero!

### Maximum Temperature Forecast (°F)

	12/7 Sun	12/8 Mon	12/9 Tue	12/10 Wed	12/11 Thu	12/12 Fri	12/13 Sat
Aberdeen	14	35	41	22	12	1	4
Britton	12	30	38	20	10	0	3
Chamberlain	21	41	52	31	21	10	14
Clark	12	29	38	24	11	-2	2
Eagle Butte	17	40	48	26	20	4	9
Eureka	10	36	41	21	12	-1	2
Gettysburg	13	37	45	26	14	2	6
McIntosh	14	37	43	21	17	1	6
Milbank	9	32	40	25	11	1	2
Miller	15	37	44	29	16	5	6
Mobridge	13	39	44	21	14	3	7
Murdo	28	46	55	32	25	9	17
Pierre	22	45	53	31	20	9	14
Redfield	15	35	42	26	15	4	6
Sisseton	8	34	40	23	11	1	2
Watertown	11	31	38	24	11	-1	2
Webster	11	30	38	21	10	-2	1
Wheaton	7	31	38	22	10	1	1

### Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

	12/9 Tue					12/10 Wed			
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am
Aberdeen	17	24	33	38	38	36	30	26	21
Britton	20	26	33	37	37	36	33	31	25
Chamberlain	15	22	32	40	41	38	30	25	20
Clark	17	24	32	37	38	38	35	32	26
Eagle Butte	24	36	48	51	48	43	35	29	22
Eureka	21	30	41	45	45	43	35	31	24
Gettysburg	21	28	39	44	44	40	33	29	24
McIntosh	29	40	52	55	52	43	31	26	21
Milbank	18	20	28	33	35	35	33	31	25
Miller	22	26	36	40	40	38	32	29	25
Mobridge	20	30	40	45	45	40	31	26	21
Murdo	26	33	46	48	45	38	30	25	21
Pierre	17	25	39	46	45	38	30	24	17
Redfield	17	24	33	38	38	36	32	29	24
Sisseton	16	22	30	36	36	35	33	31	26
Watertown	17	24	32	38	39	38	35	33	28
Webster	20	26	33	38	38	38	35	32	26
Wheaton	17	18	24	29	32	32	32	31	26



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

This week consists of a warmup in temperatures to above average Monday and Tuesday and then a cool down to well below normal Wednesday through Friday, with the coldest air moving over the area by Friday morning. Strong northwest winds 30 to 45 mph with gusts in excess of 55 mph are also possible Tuesday afternoon through Tuesday night.

**Getting Traction**  
Tips for Traveling in Winter Weather

- Check the NWS forecast
- Check road conditions
- Stay mobile
- Winterize your vehicle
- Pack an emergency supply kit

weather.gov/winter



South Dakota  
<https://www.sd511.org/>

Minnesota  
<https://511mn.org/>

North Dakota  
<https://travel.dot.nd.gov/>

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 26 °F at 12:04 AM

Low Temp: 4 °F at 11:29 PM

Wind: 22 mph at 1:42 PM

Precip: : 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 60 in 1918

Record Low: -27 in 2013

Average High: 32

Average Low: 11

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.14

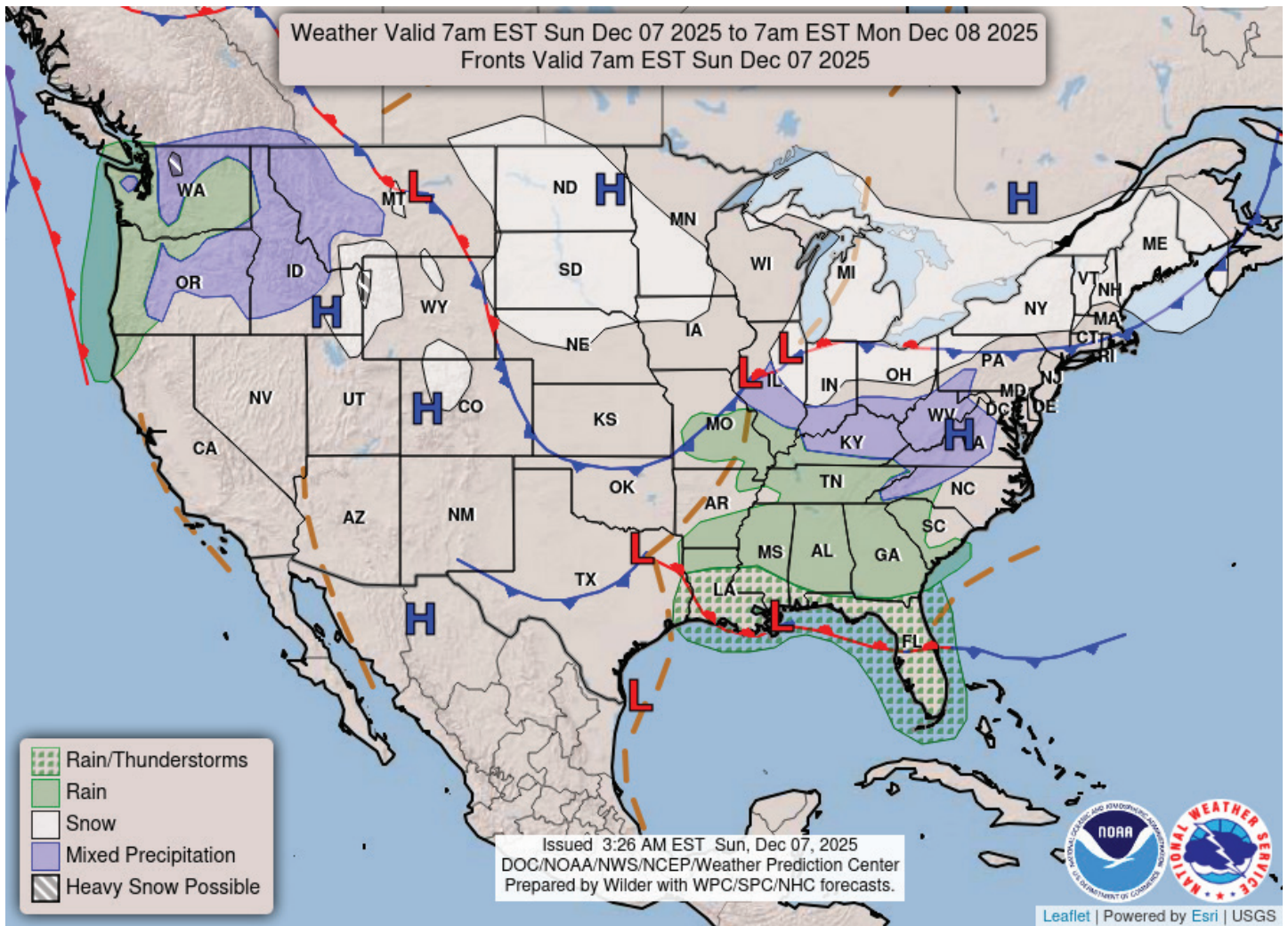
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.35

Precip Year to Date: 24.81

Sunset Tonight: 4:49 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:59 am



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## Today in Weather History

December 7, 1963: Winds of 50 to 60 mph resulted in blowing snow all day on the 7th, which reduced visibilities to near zero and produced snow drifts several feet deep in many areas. Snowfall in eastern South Dakota was generally from 3 to 7 inches with 1 to 2 inches in the western part of the state. Storm total snowfall included 8 inches at Sisseton, 5 inches at Watertown and Wheaton, 4 inches at Aberdeen, and 2 inches at Mobridge.

December 7, 1971: Heavy snow of 7 to 12 inches fell in north-central South Dakota on the 7th. Timber Lake and Eagle Butte each reported 12 inches of snow. Strong winds accompanied the snow and caused extensive drifting. Drifts up to 15 feet were reported in sheltered areas near Lemmon. Seven inches fell at Mobridge, and 11 inches fell at Selby. McIntosh received 4 inches.

December 7, 1740: By all accounts, the Merrimack River in New Hampshire flooded on this day. The flood is likely the first recorded in New Hampshire. "The snow melted, and a freshet occurred in the Merrimack River, nothing like it having been experienced there for seventy years. At Haverhill, the stream rose fifteen feet, and many houses were floated off." (Perley, Sidney, 1891, *Historic storms of New England* p. 49-51).

1935 - Severe flooding hit parts of the Houston, TX, area. Eight persons were killed as one hundred city blocks were inundated. Satsuma reported 16.49 inches of rain. The Buffalo and White Oak Bayous crested on the 9th. (6th-8th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Heavy rain fell across eastern Puerto Rico, with 19.41 inches reported at Las Piedras. Flooding caused five million dollars damage. Another in a series of storms hit the northwestern U.S., with wind gusts above 100 mph reported at Cape Blanco OR. While snow and gusty winds accompanied a cold front crossing the Rockies, strong westerly winds, gusting to 93 mph at Boulder CO, helped temperatures in western Kansas reach the 60s for the sixth day in a row. Freezing drizzle in northeastern slowed traffic to 5 mph on some roads in Morrow County. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - An outbreak of cold arctic air brought up to 18 inches of snow to the Colorado Rockies, with 14 inches at Boulder CO, and seven inches at Denver. Heavy snow blanketed New Mexico the following day, with 15 inches reported near Ruidoso. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - A storm moving out of the Central Rocky Mountain Region spread snow across Kansas and Oklahoma into Arkansas and Tennessee. Snowfall totals ranged up to 7.5 inches at Winfield KS. Freezing rain on trees and power lines cut off electricity to 24,000 homes in northeastern Arkansas, and 40,000 homes in the Nashville TN area were without electricity for several hours. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

December 7, 2006: A rare tornado tore through Kensal Rise in London. This T4 on the TORRO scale, equivalent to an F2 on the Fujita scale, injured six people and damaged 150 homes. According to the BBC, the last tornado which caused significant damage in London was in December 1954, in West London.



Daily Devotion

## **The Source of Peace**

**Nothing can take away the peace we have in Christ.**

Colossians 3:14-15: 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Jesus is our peace. Did you know God offers serenity of heart to all believers? The Holy Spirit, who lives inside every follower of Christ, can keep peace flowing like sap from a vine to its branches (John 15:1-5). But sadly, many Christians overlook this endless source of calm because of certain false assumptions.

Some wrongly think that peace is the result of ideal conditions, but this world is far from perfect. That means we will never achieve the exact life we want on this earth, and its circumstances cannot provide us serenity.

Others believe peace must be requested from God, who seems far away in the heavens. But the union between the Lord and His followers is intimate. Tranquility is available to us immediately from Christ because He lives within us.

The Living Bible paraphrase captures how our relationship with Jesus should look: "And now just as you trusted Christ to save you, trust him, too, for each day's problems; live in vital union with him. Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him" (Colossians 2:6-7).

Serenity is a direct result of a relationship with Jesus Christ. No outside situation can tamper with that connection—we partake of Jesus' abundant life through His Holy Spirit.

*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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## Upcoming Groton Events

- 11/15/2025 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving 11:30am-1:30pm Community Center (Thanksgiving)
- 11/30/2025 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.
- 12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
12.05.25

34 38 42 44 69 8

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$60,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
12.06.25

7 8 14 23 41 9

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$8,870,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
12.06.25

11 12 14 34 48 13

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 53 Mins 20 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
12.06.25

5 8 17 21 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$116,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
12.06.25

4 17 29 55 56 3

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

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
12.06.25

13 14 26 28 44 7

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$875,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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

### **GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL**

Flandreau Indian 83, Crazy Horse 36  
Sioux Falls Christian 75, Owensboro Catholic, Ky. 67  
St. Francis Indian 54, McLaughlin 51

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

### **Northern Colorado slips past South Dakota 89-87 in OT**

By The Associated Press undefined

GREELEY, Colo. (AP) — Egan Shields had 19 points and Ring Nyeri tipped in a missed shot with 1 second left in overtime to rally Northern Colorado past South Dakota 89-87 on Saturday night.

Shields also had five rebounds for the Bears (9-1), who have won six in a row. He made two free throws with 31 seconds left to force OT tied at 81. Zack Bloch hit five 3-pointers and scored 18. Ibu Yamakazi added 13 points on 5-for-8 shooting.

Isaac Bruns finished with 28 points, six rebounds and two steals to pace the Coyotes (5-5). Cameron Fens added 18 points and 11 rebounds, while Jordan Crawford scored 14.

### **Phillips rushes for 2 TDs, South Dakota picks off Mercer 4 times in 47-0 FCS playoff victory**

MACON, Ga. (AP) — L.J. Phillips Jr. rushed for a pair of touchdowns, Mikey Munn made two of South Dakota's four interceptions and the 11th-seeded Coyotes blanked sixth-seeded Mercer 47-0 in the second round of the FCS playoffs on Saturday.

The Coyotes (10-4), participating in their fifth FCS playoffs, will play at third-seeded Montana in next week's quarterfinals. The Griz defeated South Dakota State 50-29 on Saturday.

Phillips scored on 16- and 15-yard runs, both set up by interceptions, and South Dakota led 24-0 at halftime.

RJ Stewart and Gabriel Hardman also picked off passes and the defense had a safety.

Phillips finished with 160 yards rushing and Carson Fletcher had 107. Aidan Bouman passed for 241 yards and became the school's career yards passing leader with 9,047 and threw touchdowns to Tysen Boze, a 63-yarder, and Lorenzo Fenner, a 66-yarder. Fenner set a school record with 15 TD receptions this season.

Braden Atkinson threw the four interceptions and finished with 148 yards passing. CJ Miller rushed for 105 yards for the sixth-seeded Bears (9-3).

### **Keali'i Ah Yat leads Montana over South Dakota State 50-29 in 2nd round of FCS playoffs**

MISSOULA, Mont. (AP) — Sophomore Keali'i Ah Yat passed for a career-high 360 yards, throwing three of his four touchdown passes during a 30-point run by Montana and the third-seeded Grizzlies rallied to beat South Dakota State 50-29 on Saturday in the second round of the FCS playoffs.

Montana (12-1), which had a first-round bye, will host No. 11 seed South Dakota in the quarterfinals. The Coyotes beat No. 6 seed Mercer 47-0 at home to move on.

Chase Mason hit Gram Goering at the 20-yard line and Goering raced the final 80 yards for a 95-yard South Dakota State score and a 7-0 lead. Ah Yat answered with a 45-yard touchdown pass to Stevie Rocker Jr, but the Grizzlies trailed 7-6 after a missed extra-point kick.

Mason picked up his own fumble and ran 5 yards for a score and a 14-6 lead after one quarter. It was

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all Montana from there.

Jo Silver kicked a short field goal, Eli Gillman had a 5-yard touchdown run, and Ah Yat had a 5-yard scoring toss to Rocker with 6 seconds left for a 22-14 lead at halftime.

Ah Yat hit Drew Deck for a 29-yard third-quarter touchdown and connected with Michael Wortham for a 28-yard score and a 36-14 lead early in the fourth.

Ah Yat completed 29 of 37 passes for Montana. Gillman totaled 135 yards on 24 rushes and Wortham finished with eight catches for 113 yards. Gillman and Malae Fonoti had fourth-quarter touchdown runs.

Mason totaled 356 yards on 19-for-36 passing with a touchdown and two interceptions for the 14th-seeded Jackrabbits (9-5), who advanced with a 41-3 first-round victory over visiting New Hampshire.

## Idaho defeats South Dakota State 84-81

By The Associated Press undefined

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Kolton Mitchell had 22 points in Idaho's 84-81 victory against South Dakota State on Saturday.

Mitchell shot 5 of 13 from the field, including 4 for 9 from 3-point range, and went 8 for 8 from the line for the Vandals (6-3). Jackson Rasmussen scored 15 points while shooting 5 for 10 (2 for 5 from 3-point range) and 3 of 5 from the free-throw line. Jack Payne shot 5 for 10 (1 for 4 from 3-point range) and 3 of 6 from the free-throw line to finish with 14 points.

Jaden Jackson led the Jackrabbits (5-5) in scoring, finishing with 21 points. Damon Wilkinson added 16 points and seven rebounds for South Dakota State. Joe Saylor finished with 12 points.

## A fire at a popular nightclub in India's Goa state kills 25

NEW DELHI (AP) — A fire ripped through a popular nightclub in India's Goa state, killing 25 people, including tourists, the state's chief minister said Sunday.

The blaze occurred just past midnight in Arpora village in North Goa, a party hub, some 25 kilometers (15-miles) from the state capital, Panaji.

Goa's Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said most of the dead were the club's kitchen workers, as well as three to four tourists. Six people were injured and are in stable condition, he said. All the bodies have been recovered.

The fire was caused by a gas cylinder blast and has been extinguished, the Press Trust of India news agency reported, quoting local police. However, witnesses told the agency that the fire began on the club's first floor, where nearly 100 tourists were on the dance floor. Several rushed to the kitchen below in the chaos and got trapped along with staff, it said.

Fatima Shaikh said the commotion began as flames erupted, according to the news agency. "We rushed out of the club only to see that the entire structure was up in flames," she said.

The nightclub, located along the Arpora River backwaters, had a narrow entry and exit that forced the firefighters to park their tankers about 400 meters (1,300 feet) away, delaying the efforts, the news agency said.

Sawant said the club had violated fire safety regulations. The state government ordered an inquiry to determine the exact cause of the fire and responsibility, he said, adding that authorities would act against the club management and officials who allowed it to operate despite the violations.

Local village council official Roshan Redkar told the news agency that authorities had earlier issued a demolition notice for the club, which didn't have construction permit from the government. But higher officials rolled back the order, he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a social media post called the fire "deeply saddening" and said he spoke with Sawant. Modi said the government "is providing all possible assistance" while offering condolences to the victims' families.

Accidents, particularly involving gas cylinders and electric short circuits, aren't uncommon in India and often result in casualties, underlining the need for authorities to implement stringent safety protocols.

"This is not just an accident; it is a criminal failure of safety and governance," Rahul Gandhi, a top leader of India's main opposition Congress party, wrote in a social media post. He called for a transparent probe to "fix accountability and ensure such preventable tragedies don't occur again."

The western coastal state of Goa is one of India's most popular tourist destinations, known for its sandy beaches.

## Japan and Australia urge calm after Chinese radar locks on Japanese jets

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan and Australia urged calm on Sunday after Chinese military aircraft locked radar on Japanese fighter jets, a month after the Japanese leader's recent remarks on Taiwan that stirred tensions between Tokyo and Beijing.

Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said Japan formally protested the incident, calling it "an extremely regrettable" act and "a dangerous" one that "exceeded the scope necessary for safe aircraft operations."

"We have lodged a strong protest with the Chinese side and demanded strict preventive measures," Koizumi said.

Japan's Defense Ministry said China's military aircraft J-15 took off from the Chinese carrier Liaoning near the southern island of Okinawa on Saturday and "intermittently" latched its radar on Japanese F-15 fighter jets on two occasions Saturday, for about three minutes in the late afternoon and for about 30 minutes in the evening. It was not made clear whether the radar lock incident involved the same Chinese J-15 both times.

Japanese fighter jets had been scrambled to pursue Chinese ones that were conducting aircraft takeoff and landing exercises in the Pacific. They were pursuing the Chinese aircraft at a safe distance and did not take actions that could be interpreted as provocation, Kyodo News agency said, quoting defense officials, when the radar lock happened. There was no breach of Japanese airspace, and no injury or damage was reported from the incident.

Senior Colonel Wang Xueming, spokesperson for the Chinese navy, defended China's flight training near the island of Miyako Saturday, saying Beijing announced the exercises beforehand and accused Japanese aircraft of "harassment."

"We solemnly asked the Japanese side to immediately stop slandering and smearing, and strictly restrain its frontline actions. The Chinese Navy will take necessary measures in accordance with the law to resolutely safeguard its own security and legitimate rights and interests," Wang said in a statement posted Sunday on the Chinese Ministry of Defense website.

Relations between Japan and China have worsened after Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said in early November its military could get involved if China were to take action against Taiwan, the self-governing island that Beijing claims as its own.

Takaichi later Sunday called the radar lock-in "extremely disappointing."

"We will act calmly and resolutely," she said, vowing to do the utmost in carrying out surveillance operations around Japanese waters and airspace, while closely watching Chinese military activity around Japan.

Japan and Australia, whose defense ministers held their scheduled talks in Tokyo on Sunday, expressed worry over the development.

"We are deeply concerned by the actions of China in the last 24 hours," Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles told a joint news conference Sunday after holding talks with Koizumi. "We expect those interactions to be safe and professional."

Australia does "not want to see any change to the status quo across the Taiwan Straits," Marles said, adding that China is his country's largest trade partner and he wants to have productive relations with Beijing.

"We continue to advocate to China about these issues again, in a very calm, sensible and moderate way," he said.

Japan and Australia, during Sunday talks, agreed to bolster military ties to lead the region's multilateral

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defense cooperation. The two ministers agreed to form a comprehensive "framework for strategic defense coordination" and discuss further details.

Tokyo has been accelerating its military buildup while expanding its defense ties beyond its only treaty ally, the United States. It now considers Australia to be a semi-ally.

Marles also visited a Mitsubishi Heavy Industries shipyard in Nagasaki on Saturday to observe production of the upgraded Mogami-class frigate that his country chose in September as a replacement for its aging fleet.

Saturday's radar lock is believed to be the first involving Japanese and Chinese military aircraft. In 2013, a Chinese warship targeted a radar on a Japanese destroyer, Kyodo said.

Fighter jets use radars for search operations or fire control ahead of a missile launch.

Elsewhere in the Pacific, the Philippine coast guard said China fired three flares toward a fisheries bureau plane on patrol in the South China Sea on Saturday. Chinese forces fire flares to warn planes to move away from what they consider their airspace over the disputed waters.

## Duke beats No. 16 Virginia 27-20 in overtime for first outright ACC championship since 1962

By STEVE REED AP Sports Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Duke has its first outright Atlantic Coast Conference football championship since 1962.

Now it wants a little more.

Blue Devils coach Manny Diaz wasted little time Saturday night advocating for his team to make the 12-team College Football Playoff after Duke beat No. 16 Virginia 27-20 in overtime on Saturday night.

"The ACC champion should go to the College Football Playoff this year and every year," Diaz said.

Duke threw the CFP selection process into chaos when Darian Mensah connected with Jeremiah Hasley for a 1-yard touchdown on a fourth-down play in overtime and Luke Mergott sealed the game with an interception.

But winning the first overtime game in ACC championship history isn't expected to be enough to get Duke and its 8-5 record into the CFP. The Blue Devils' victory opens the door for a second Group of Five team — likely James Madison — to make it.

Diaz doesn't get it.

He pointed out Duke's superior strength of schedule, with seven wins over power-conference teams — all ACC foes — while James Madison lost to its only Power Four opponent, Louisville.

"You can't compare going through the Sun Belt this year — it has been a really good conference in years past — but most of their top teams are just having down years," Diaz said. "So they (James Madison) probably are not challenged the way they would going through a normal Sun Belt season."

Duke last won a share of the ACC regular-season title in 1989, sharing it with Virginia in Steve Spurrier's final season as the Blue Devils' coach. The conference championship game was created in 2005, and Duke got there this year by winning a five-way tiebreaker.

Virginia (10-3), the ACC regular-season champion, would have reached the CFP for the first time in school history with a victory but fell short when Chandler Morris was intercepted by Mergott on the Cavaliers' first offensive play of OT.

Coach Tony Elliott described his team as having "the heart of a champion."

"Obviously disappointed, and it hurts," Elliott said. "There is nothing I can say to them to take away the pain. But I also told the guys how proud I am of the team that was picked to finish 14th out of 17 teams and earned the right to be here. ... When you're trying to climb that mountain, the air is thin and the margin for error is very, very small."

Mensah threw for 196 yards and two scores — both to Hasley — while Nate Sheppard ran for 97 yards and a score for Duke.

Virginia trailed by 10 with 5:02 left in regulation, but got a field goal from Will Bettridge before Morris

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capped a 10-play, 96-yard drive with an 18-yard strike to Eli Wood in the left corner of the end zone with 22 seconds left to tie it at 20-all.

In the extra period, Sheppard got the Blue Devils to the Virginia 2 with three runs. Duke was stuffed on two straight plays before Mensah rolled out and found Hasley for the go-ahead score. Virginia was flagged for roughing passer on the throw, meaning it had to start its overtime possession at the 40 instead of the 25.

Elliott said that put his team in position to try to get a "chunk play."

It didn't work. Morris took a throwback pass from a running back, fired downfield and was picked off by Mergott, setting off a raucous Duke celebration.

"To bring a championship to this school, which is primarily known for basketball, is a statement that me and the seniors on this team have been trying to make," Mensah said.

Morris, who finished 21 of 40 for 216 yards with two TDs and two interceptions, was in tears after the game. J'Mari Taylor, the ACC's leading rusher, was limited to 65 yards on 15 carries and scored on an 11-yard reception.

Duke established control of the line of scrimmage early.

The Blue Devils controlled the clock in the first half, putting together the two longest drives in ACC championship game history — 9:38 and 8:02 — culminating with a 12-yard touchdown catch by Hasley and a 16-yard run by Sheppard to take a 14-7 lead into halftime.

Diaz, who ran a fake field goal that led to the Blue Devils' dramatic win over rival North Carolina, called a fake punt on Duke's go-ahead drive in the second quarter. It worked, with Kevin O'Connor taking the direct snap and running up the middle for 6 yards.

The takeaway

Duke: The Blue Devils' punt team was big. Along with the fake punt, Duke pulled Virginia offside on a hard count on fourth-and-7, and then Diaz sent the offense back on the field to get the first down on fourth-and-2. Duke punter Kade Reynoldson also pinned Virginia at the 1, leading to Morris' interception three plays later.

Virginia: Taylor fumbled on the Virginia's first play from scrimmage — it was negated by a penalty — and could never get on track against the Duke defense, which played its best game in recent weeks.

## Takeaways from AP's investigation into Russia's Africa Corps in Mali

By MONIKA PRONCZUK Associated Press

DAKAR. Senegal (AP) — Dozens of people who have fled Mali tell The Associated Press that a new Russian military unit that replaced the Wagner mercenary group this year is carrying out abuses, including rapes and beheadings, as it teams up with Mali's military to hunt down extremists.

The refugees said the Africa Corps, which reports to Russia's Defense Ministry, is using the same tactics as Wagner. Their accounts, collected during rare access to the Mauritanian border, have not been reported by international media until now.

West Africa's vast Sahel region has become the deadliest place in the world for extremism. The military governments of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger in recent years have turned from Western allies to Russia for help combating the fighters affiliated with al-Qaida or the Islamic State group.

The Africa Corps replaced Wagner six months ago. That sparked hope for less brutality among weary civilians who the United Nations says have been abused by all sides. But refugees described a new reign of terror by the "white men" in the vast and largely lawless territory. The AP spoke to 34 refugees. Most spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

Here are takeaways from the AP investigation.

A 'scorched-earth policy'

Two refugees showed videos of villages they said were burned by Africa Corps. Two others said they found bodies of loved ones with liver and kidneys missing. Previous AP reporting has tracked social media

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channels, likely administered by Wagner members, that shared images of men in military uniform butchering corpses of what appear to be Malian civilians, hacking out organs and posing with severed limbs.

"It's a scorched-earth policy," said a Malian village chief who fled to Mauritania last month for the second time. "The soldiers speak to no one. Anyone they see, they shoot. No questions, no warning. People don't even know why they are being killed."

He added: "There is no difference between Wagner and Africa Corps."

Malian authorities never publicly acknowledged Wagner's presence, and have not acknowledged Africa Corps. But Russian state media in recent weeks have published reports from Mali praising Africa Corps for defending the country from "terrorists," and Russia's Foreign Ministry has confirmed that the unit is active "at the request of the Malian authorities," providing ground escorts, search-and-rescue operations and other work.

Russia's Defense Ministry did not respond to AP questions.

Questions around Africa Corps

Reported abuses against civilians intensified when Wagner teamed up with the underfunded Malian army in 2021. According to private security analysts, Mali paid Russia about \$10 million a month for Wagner's assistance. While the group was never officially under the Kremlin's command, it had close ties to Russia's intelligence and military.

Moscow began developing the Africa Corps as a rival to Wagner after its leader Yevgeny Prigozhin was killed in a plane crash in 2023 following his brief armed rebellion in Russia that challenged the rule of President Vladimir Putin.

It is unclear whether Mali's agreement remains the same for Africa Corps. Much is unknown about the unit's operations, including the number of fighters, which analysts estimate at around 2,000.

Not all Africa Corps fighters are Russian. Several refugees told the AP they saw Black men speaking foreign languages. The European Council on Foreign Relations in a recent report said the unit recruits from Russia, Belarus and African states.

Civilians are 'between a rock and a hard place'

The hunt by Africa Corps and Malian forces for militants intensified in September, when JNIM fighters imposed an unprecedented blockade on fuel into Mali from neighboring countries.

Experts say it's impossible to know how many people are being killed and assaulted in Mali, especially in remote areas, while journalists and aid workers have limited access to the country.

"There is a lot of people raped, attacked, killed. Families are separated, there is no doubt about that," said Sukru Cansizoglu, the representative in Mauritania for the U.N. refugee agency. But "it is sometimes difficult to really pinpoint who are the perpetrators."

Civilians, under pressure from both the militants and the Africa Corps and Malian fighters, are "between a rock and a hard place," said Heni Nsaibia from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project.

As one refugee put it: "If you don't tell the army you saw jihadists, the army will kill you. But if you tell them, the jihadists will find you and kill you."

Direct accountability of the Russian state

Legal experts said the shift from Wagner to Africa Corps makes the Russian government directly accountable for its military unit's actions.

"Despite the rebranding, there is striking continuity in personnel, commanders, tactics and even insignia between Wagner and Africa Corps," said Lindsay Freeman, senior director of international accountability at the UC Berkeley School of Law's Human Rights Center, which has monitored the conflict in Mali.

Because Africa Corps is embedded in Russia's Ministry of Defense, it can be treated as an organ of the Russian state under international law, Freeman said. "That means any war crimes committed by Africa Corps in Mali are, in principle, attributable to the Russian government under the rules on state responsibility."

## Soon no Pearl Harbor survivors will be alive. People turn to other ways to learn about the bombing

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Survivors of the 1941 Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor have long been the center of a remembrance ceremony held each year on the military base's waterfront.

But today only 12 are still alive — all centenarians — and this year none is able to make the pilgrimage to Hawaii to mark the event, scheduled for Sunday.

That means no one attending will have firsthand memories of serving during the attack, which killed more than 2,300 troops and catapulted the U.S. into World War 2. The development is not a surprise and is an evolution of an ongoing trend. As survivors fade, their descendants and the public are increasingly turning to other ways of learning about the bombing.

"The idea of not having a survivor there for the first time — I just, I don't know — it hurt my heart in a way I can't describe," said Kimberlee Heinrichs, whose 105-year-old father Ira "Ike" Schab had to cancel plans to fly in from Oregon after falling ill.

Survivors have been present every year in recent memory except for 2020, when the Navy and the National Park Service closed the observance to the general public because of coronavirus pandemic health risks.

"I can still see what was happening."

The ceremony begins with a moment of silence at 7:55 a.m., the same time the attack began on Dec. 7, 1941. Solemn rituals follow.

Fighter jets fly overhead in "missing man formation," in which one jet peels off to symbolize those lost. Survivors present wreaths to honor the dead, though active duty troops have assumed this job in recent years. Survivors rise to salute active duty sailors who themselves salute as their ship passes the USS Arizona Memorial, which sits above submerged hull of the battleship sunk in the attack.

About 2,000 survivors attended the 50th anniversary event in 1991. A few dozen have showed in recent decades. Last year, only two made it. That is out of an estimated 87,000 troops stationed on Oahu that day.

Many survivors were jovial despite the occasion, happy to catch up with old friends and pose for photographs. Even so, harrowing recollections were seldom far from their minds.

In 2023, Harry Chandler gazed across the water while telling an Associated Press reporter how he was raising the flag at a mobile hospital in the hills above the base when he saw Japanese planes fly in and drop bombs. Chandler and his fellow Navy hospital corpsmen jumped in trucks to help the injured.

He spoke of seeing the Arizona explode, and of hearing sailors trapped on the capsized USS Oklahoma desperately tapping on their ship's hull to summon rescue. He helped care for Oklahoma sailors after crews cut holes in the battleship.

"I can still see what was happening," Chandler said. He died the next year at a senior living center in Tequesta, Florida.

Lessons from the past

The bombing has long held different meanings for different people, the historian Emily S. Rosenberg wrote in her book "A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory."

Some say it highlights the need for a well-prepared military and a vigilant foreign policy. To some it evokes then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt administration's "ineptitude or deceit" and the unfair scapegoating of the military. Others focus on the "treachery" of Japan or the heroic acts of individual troops, she wrote.

Asked what he wanted Americans to know about Pearl Harbor, Chandler said: "Be prepared."

"We should have known that was going to happen. The intelligence has to be better," he said.

Lou Conter, who was the Arizona's last living survivor when he died last year at 102, told the AP in 2019 he liked to attend to remember those who lost their lives.

"It's always good to come back and pay respect to them and give them the top honors that they deserve," Conter said.

Heinrichs' father has been six times since 2016. The former tuba player on the USS Dobbin likes to go not only to remember those killed but also in place of his late band mates; his three brothers who fought

in World War II; and the now-deceased Pearl Harbor survivors he has met.

Recording the remembrances before the survivors are gone

Retired National Park Service Pearl Harbor historian Daniel Martinez said the circumstances resemble the early 20th century when Civil War veterans were dying in increasing numbers. Awareness grew that soon they wouldn't be able to share their stories of Gettysburg and other battles, he said.

Martinez knew something similar could happen with Pearl Harbor survivors and recorded their oral histories. During a 1998 convention, he conducted interviews 12 hours a day for three days. The Park Service today has nearly 800 interviews, most on video.

"They remain as a part of the national memory of a day that changed America and changed the world," Martinez said.

The Park Service shows some in its Pearl Harbor museum and aims to include more after renovations, said David Kilton, the agency's Pearl Harbor interpretation, education and visitor services lead.

The Library of Congress has collections from 535 Pearl Harbor survivors, including interviews, letters, photos and diaries. Over 80% are online. They are part of the library's Veterans History Project of first-hand recollections of veterans who served in World War I onward. Many were recorded by relatives, Eagle Scouts and other amateurs interested in documenting history.

The Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors gives presentations in schools and marches in parades to share the stories of their families. The California chapter has added six new members this year, including two great-grandchildren of survivors.

"When they're all gone, we're still going to be here," said Deidre Kelley, the group's president. "And it's our intent to keep the memory alive as long as we're alive."

## **As Russia's Africa Corps fights in Mali, witnesses describe atrocities from beheadings to rapes**

By MONIKA PRONCZUK and CAITLIN KELLY Associated Press

DOUANKARA, Mauritania (AP) — A new Russian military unit that replaced the Wagner mercenary group is carrying out abuses including rapes and beheadings as it teams up with Mali's military to hunt down extremists, dozens of civilians who fled the fighting have told The Associated Press.

The Africa Corps is using the same tactics as Wagner, the refugees said, in accounts not reported by international media until now. Two refugees showed videos of villages burned by the "white men." Two others said they found bodies of loved ones with liver and kidneys missing, an abuse the AP previously reported around Wagner.

"It's a scorched-earth policy," said a Malian village chief who fled. "The soldiers speak to no one. Anyone they see, they shoot. No questions, no warning. People don't even know why they are being killed."

West Africa's vast Sahel region has become the deadliest place in the world for extremism, with thousands of people killed. The military governments of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have turned from Western allies to Russia for help combating the fighters affiliated with al-Qaida or the Islamic State group.

When the Africa Corps replaced Wagner six months ago, weary civilians hoped for less brutality. The United Nations says they have been abused by all sides in the conflict.

But refugees described a new reign of terror by Africa Corps in the vast and largely lawless territory, and legal analysts said Moscow is directly responsible.

The AP gained rare access to the Mauritanian border, where thousands of Malians have fled in recent months as fighting intensified. It spoke with 34 refugees who described indiscriminate killings, abductions and sexual abuse. Most spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

"They are the same men, paid by the government, and continue the massacres. There is no difference between Wagner and Africa Corps," said the village chief.

Malian authorities have never publicly acknowledged the presence of Wagner or Africa Corps. But Russian state media in recent weeks have published reports from Mali, praising Africa Corps for defending the country from "terrorists," and Russia's Foreign Ministry has confirmed that the unit is active "at the

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request of the Malian authorities," providing ground escorts, search-and-rescue operations and other work. Russia's Defense Ministry did not respond to AP questions.

Calling locals 'dogs' in Russian

It was early morning and Mougaloa was preparing sweet black tea when she heard gunshots. Seconds later, two cars pulled up in front of her tent, filled with masked white men shouting in a foreign language.

A herder from northern Mali, she has witnessed her share of horrors over the last decade of violence — but she said no one had been as ferocious as these men.

Armed men had come before, Mougaloa said. Usually the family would flee when they heard them coming. But three months ago, they were caught.

She said the men arrived with Malian soldiers and grabbed her 20-year-old son, Koubadi. The Malians asked him whether he had seen militants. When he said no, they beat him until he fainted.

Then the men slit his throat as Mougaloa watched, powerless.

She said the family fled but the armed men found them again in late October.

This time, they didn't ask questions. They wore masks and military uniforms. They took everything the family had, from animals to jewelry.

And they kept repeating one word, "pes" — a derogatory term for dog in Russian.

They dragged Mougaloa's 16-year-old daughter, Akhadya, as she tried to resist. Then they spotted Mougaloa's older daughter, Fatma, and lost interest in Akhadya.

They took Fatma into her tent. Without thinking, Mougaloa took Akhadya's hand and started running, leaving Fatma behind. They have not heard from her since.

"We were so scared," Mougaloa said, trembling. "We are hoping she will get here at some point."

Experts say it's impossible to know how many people are being killed and assaulted in Mali, especially in remote areas, while journalists and aid workers have increasingly limited access to the country.

"There is a lot of people raped, attacked, killed. Families are separated, there is no doubt about that," said Sukru Cansizoglu, the representative in Mauritania for the U.N. refugee agency. But "it is sometimes difficult to really pinpoint who are the perpetrators."

Civilians, under pressure from both the militants and the Africa Corps and Malian fighters, are "between a rock and a hard place," said Heni Nsaibia from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, or ACLED.

If people don't follow JNIM evacuation orders, they face reprisals, Nsaibia said. But if they flee, Mali's army and Africa Corps consider them JNIM accomplices.

Mougaloa's family experienced it firsthand.

"If you don't tell the army you saw jihadists, the army will kill you," she said. "But if you do tell them, the jihadists will find you and kill you."

Questions around the Africa Corps

Reported abuses against civilians intensified when Wagner joined the underfunded Malian army in 2021. According to private security analysts, Mali paid Russia about \$10 million a month for Wagner's assistance. While the group was never officially under the Kremlin's command, it had close ties to Russia's intelligence and military.

Moscow began developing the Africa Corps as a rival to Wagner after its leader Yevgeny Prigozhin was killed in a plane crash in 2023 following his brief armed rebellion in Russia that challenged the rule of President Vladimir Putin.

It is unclear whether the terms of Mali's agreement remain the same for Africa Corps. Much is unknown about its operations, including the number of fighters, which analysts estimate at around 2,000.

Not all Africa Corps fighters are Russian. Several refugees told the AP they saw Black men speaking foreign languages. The European Council on Foreign Relations in a recent report said the unit recruits from Russia, Belarus and African states.

Africa Corps and Malian forces have increased their joint offensives in northern Mali, home to substantial gold reserves, according to the Critical Threats project by the American Enterprise Institute.

While civilian deaths blamed on the Russians have dropped this year — 447 so far compared with 911

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last year — the numbers might not reflect the full scale, Nsaibia said: "People are more scared to report, in order to avoid putting their own safety on the line."

Fewer outsiders are watching. A U.N. peacekeeping mission withdrew from Mali in 2023 under government pressure. Mali's withdrawal this year from the International Criminal Court has further complicated efforts to track abuses. The ICC has been investigating serious crimes committed in Mali since 2012, when fighting with armed groups began.

Eduardo Gonzalez Cueva, a U.N. independent expert on human rights in Mali, told the AP he asked the country's military authorities twice this year for permission to visit, and sent them a questionnaire. They did not respond.

Mali's government considers investigations into alleged abuses "inconvenient and harmful to the morale of the troops," Cueva said in his latest report to the U.N. Human Rights Council in March, noting that "the escalation of serious human rights violations and abuses by all actors is accelerating due to impunity."

'Only the name has changed'

When Wagner announced its departure from Mali, some refugees decided to return home. Many found that nothing had changed.

"It was the same thing," said one, Bocar, who spoke with resignation as he cradled his youngest son. He said he had seen bodies with organs missing.

He said he had counted all the men killed or abducted by Wagner and Mali's army in his hometown of Lere before he first fled in 2023. He said the list reached 214 people.

"Only the name was changed," he said of Africa Corps. "The clothes, the vehicles, the people stayed the same. The methods stayed the same, and even became worse. So we left home again."

Other refugees described being so terrified of the Russians that at any noise resembling an engine, they would run or climb the nearest tree.

One woman said she was so frantic to flee Wagner fighters that she once left her 3-month-old baby at home. When she returned hours later, her daughter was laying in front of the house, her tiny hands clenched into fists.

"I was so scared, I forgot I had a baby," the woman said, clutching her daughter.

Legal experts said the shift from Wagner to Africa Corps makes the Russian government directly accountable for fighters' actions.

"Despite the rebranding, there is striking continuity in personnel, commanders, tactics and even insignia between Wagner and Africa Corps," said Lindsay Freeman, senior director of international accountability at the UC Berkeley School of Law's Human Rights Center, which has monitored the conflict in Mali.

Because Africa Corps is directly embedded in Russia's Ministry of Defense, it can be treated as an organ of the Russian state under international law, Freeman said. "That means any war crimes committed by Africa Corps in Mali are, in principle, attributable to the Russian government under the rules on state responsibility."

'Life has lost its meaning'

When white men came to the village of Kurmare less than a month ago, Fatma said everyone fled but her. At the sound of gunshots, her 18-year-old daughter had a seizure and fell, unconscious. Fatma stayed with her as the men looted the village and shot at people running away.

The men went from house to house, taking women's jewelry and killing men. When they entered Fatma's house, they thought her daughter was dead and left her alone.

Fatma did not want to talk about what the white men did to her.

It "stays between God and me," she muttered, trembling.

When they left her village hours later, she found the body of her son, who was shot at his shop. Then she found her injured brother. As she set off for Mauritania, her daughter, who continued having seizures, died as well.

"Before the conflict erupted, I had strength, I had courage," Fatma said faintly. Now, "life has lost its meaning."

Her family is with the Fulani ethnic group, which Mali's government accuses of being affiliated with the

militants. Some Fulani, long neglected by the central government, have joined the fighters. Civilians are often targeted by both sides.

But Fatma said no one killed or injured in her village belonged to any armed group. "I don't know what we did to deserve it," she said.

Now, in Mauritania, the memories haunt her. She has trouble sleeping and breathing, and clutched repeatedly at her chest. She spends her time looking at the only photograph she has of her daughter.

"I am just someone who is alive and appears as a person that I was — but is not, in fact, living," she said.

## Trump awards medals to the Kennedy Center honorees in an Oval Office ceremony

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Saturday presented the 2025 Kennedy Center honorees with their medals during a ceremony in the Oval Office, hailing the slate of artists he was deeply involved in choosing as "perhaps the most accomplished and renowned class" ever assembled.

This year's recipients are actor Sylvester Stallone, singers Gloria Gaynor and George Strait, the rock band Kiss and actor-singer Michael Crawford.

Trump said they are a group of "incredible people" who represent the "very best in American arts and culture" and that, "I know most of them and I've been a fan of all of them."

"This is a group of icons whose work and accomplishments have inspired, uplifted and unified millions and millions of Americans," said a tuxedo-clad Trump. "This is perhaps the most accomplished and renowned class of Kennedy Center Honorees ever assembled."

Trump's takeover of the Kennedy Center

Trump ignored the Kennedy Center and its premier awards program during his first term as president. But the Republican has instituted a series of changes since returning to office in January, most notably ousting its board of trustees and replacing them with GOP supporters who voted him in as chairman of the board.

Trump also has criticized the center's programming and its physical appearance, and has vowed to overhaul both.

The president placed around each honoree's neck a new medal that was designed, created and donated by jeweler Tiffany & Co., according to the Kennedy Center and Trump.

It's a gold disc etched on one side with the Kennedy Center's image and rainbow colors. The honoree's name appears on the reverse side with the date of the ceremony. The medallion hangs from a navy blue ribbon and replaces a large rainbow ribbon decorated with three gold plates that rested on the honoree's shoulders and chest and had been used since the first honors program in 1978.

Trump honors the honorees

Strait, wearing a cowboy hat, was first to receive his medal. When the country singer started to take off the hat, Trump said, "If you want to leave it on, you can. I think we can get it through." But Strait took it off.

The president said Crawford was a "great star of Broadway" for his lead role in the long-running "Phantom of the Opera." Of Gaynor, he said, "We have the disco queen, and she was indeed, and nobody did it like Gloria Gaynor."

Trump was effusive about his friend Stallone, calling him a "wonderful" and "spectacular" person and "one of the true, great movie stars" and "one of the great legends."

Kiss is an "incredible rock band," he said.

Songs by honorees Gaynor and Kiss played in the Rose Garden just outside the Oval Office as members of the White House press corps waited nearby for Trump to begin the ceremony.

The president said in August that he was "about 98% involved" in choosing the 2025 honorees when he personally announced them at the Kennedy Center, the first slate chosen under his leadership. The honorees traditionally had been announced by press release.

It was unclear how they were chosen. Before Trump, it fell to a bipartisan selection committee.

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"These are among the greatest artists, actors and performers of their generation. The greatest that we've seen," Trump said. "We can hardly imagine the country music phenomena without its king of country, or American disco without its first lady, or Broadway without its phantom — and that was a phantom, let me tell you — or rock and roll without its hottest band in the world, and that's what they are, or Hollywood without one of its greatest visionaries."

"Each of you has made an indelible mark on American life and together you have defined entire genres and set new standards for the performing arts," Trump said.

Trump also attended an annual State Department dinner for the honorees on Saturday. In years past, the honorees received their medallions there but Trump moved that to the White House.

Trump said during pre-dinner remarks that the honorees are more than celebrities.

"It gives me tremendous pleasure to congratulate them once again and say thank you for your incredible career," he said. "Thank you for gracing us with this wisdom and just genius that you have."

Trump to host the Kennedy Center Honors

Meanwhile, the glitzy Kennedy Center Honors program and its series of tribute speeches and performances for each recipient is set to be taped on Sunday at the performing arts center for broadcast later in December on CBS and Paramount+. Trump is to attend the program for the first time as president, accompanied by his wife, first lady Melania Trump.

The president said in August that he had agreed to host the show. At dinner Saturday, he said he was doing so "at the request of a certain television network." Trump predicted that the broadcast would garner its highest ratings ever as a result. No president has ever been the host.

At the White House, Trump said he looked forward to Sunday's celebration.

"It's going to be something that I believe, and I'm going to make a prediction: This will be the highest-rated show that they've ever done and they've gotten some pretty good ratings, but there's nothing like what's going to happen tomorrow night," Trump said.

The president also swiped at late-night TV show host Jimmy Kimmel, whose program was briefly suspended earlier this year by ABC following criticism of his comments related to the killing of conservative activist Charlie Kirk in September.

Kimmel and Trump are sharp critics of each other, with the president regularly deriding Kimmel's talent as a host. Kimmel has hosted the Primetime Emmy Awards and the Academy Award multiple times.

Trump said he should be able to outdo Kimmel.

"I've watched some of the people that host. Jimmy Kimmel was horrible," Trump said. "If I can't beat out Jimmy Kimmel in terms of talent, then I don't think I should be president."

## San Diego considers \$30 million settlement in police-involved shooting death of Black teen

By The Associated Press undefined

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The San Diego city attorney's office has agreed to pay \$30 million to the family of a 16-year-old youth who was fatally shot by police last January in what would be one of the largest settlements of a police-involved killing case in U.S. history.

A resolution authorizing the proposed settlement with the family of Konoa Wilson has been added to the city council's agenda for Tuesday morning.

"What happened to Konoa was a catastrophic failure of policing," family attorney Nick Rowley said in a statement e-mailed to The Associated Press on Saturday. "A 16-year-old boy was running for his life. He was not a threat and not a suspect, yet he was shot in the back by a police officer who only saw him for one second before deciding to pull the trigger."

If approved, the settlement would exceed the \$27 million the city of Minneapolis agreed to pay the family of George Floyd, whose May 2020 murder by a police officer who knelt on his neck sparked a nationwide racial reckoning.

Surveillance and body-worn camera footage from Jan. 28 showed Wilson running away from someone

who pulled a gun and fired at him in a downtown train station. As he exited the station, Wilson encountered San Diego Police Officer Daniel Gold.

In a lawsuit against the city and Gold, the family alleged the officer "instantly, without any warning," fired two shots at Wilson as he ran by, striking him in the upper body. The lawsuit identified Wilson as Black.

"Only after shooting DECEDENT and watching him fall to the ground did Defendant GOLD finally announce 'San Diego Police,'" said the lawsuit, which was filed in June. "Defendants committed acts of racial violence against DECEDENT, a teenager, by shooting him in his back as he ran past Defendant GOLD, in an attempt to get to a place of safety."

Wilson was pronounced dead at UC San Diego Health Medical Center less than an hour later.

An agenda item posted Friday said the settlement would be paid from the Public Liability Fund.

Lt. Chris Tivanian, a spokesman for the San Diego Police Department, told The New York Times that Gold remained on an administrative assignment pending the results of a case review by the city attorney.

"He was a rookie, and he shot before he even announced who he was," Rowley said of Gold during a Zoom call with reporters. "I don't think he's a bad man. But he did a very, very bad, reckless thing."

## **Hegseth defends strikes on alleged cartel boats, says Trump can order use of force 'as he sees fit'**

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth defended strikes on alleged drug cartel boats during remarks Saturday at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, saying President Donald Trump has the power to take military action "as he sees fit" to defend the nation.

Hegseth dismissed criticism of the strikes, which have killed more than 80 people and now face intense scrutiny over concerns that they violated international law. Saying the strikes are justified to protect Americans, Hegseth likened the fight to the war on terror following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

"If you're working for a designated terrorist organization and you bring drugs to this country in a boat, we will find you and we will sink you. Let there be no doubt about it," Hegseth said during his keynote address at the Reagan National Defense Forum. "President Trump can and will take decisive military action as he sees fit to defend our nation's interests. Let no country on earth doubt that for a moment."

The most recent strike brings the death toll of the campaign to at least 87 people. Lawmakers have sought more answers about the attacks and their legal justification, and whether U.S. forces were ordered to launch a follow-up strike following a September attack even after the Pentagon knew of survivors.

Though Hegseth compared the alleged drug smugglers to Al-Qaida terrorists, experts have noted significant differences between the two foes and the efforts to combat them.

Hegseth's remarks came after the Trump administration released its new national security strategy, one that paints European allies as weak and aims to reassert America's dominance in the Western Hemisphere.

During the speech, Hegseth also discussed the need to check China's rise through strength instead of conflict. He repeated Trump's vow to resume nuclear testing on an equal basis as China and Russia — a goal that has alarmed many nuclear arms experts. China and Russia haven't conducted explosive tests in decades, though the Kremlin said it would follow the U.S. if Trump restarted tests.

The speech was delivered at the Reagan National Defense Forum at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute in California, an event which brings together top national security experts from around the country. Hegseth used the visit to argue that Trump is Reagan's "true and rightful heir" when it comes to muscular foreign policy.

By contrast, Hegseth criticized Republican leaders in the years since Reagan for supporting wars in the Middle East and democracy-building efforts that didn't work. He also blasted those who have argued that climate change poses serious challenges to military readiness.

"The war department will not be distracted by democracy building, interventionism, undefined wars, regime change, climate change, woke moralizing and feckless nation building," he said.

## Judge rejects Trump administration's bid to toss lawsuit challenging Guantánamo migrant detentions

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge has rejected a request from the Trump administration to toss a lawsuit challenging the detention of migrants at the U.S. Navy base at Guantánamo Bay.

In a ruling Friday, U.S. District Court Judge Sparkle L. Sooknunan denied the federal government's motion to dismiss the case and has set a hearing for next week for the parties to discuss next steps in this case.

President Donald Trump in January announced his administration would use a detention center at Guantánamo to hold tens of thousands of the "worst criminal aliens," as part of his wider immigration crackdown.

Between February and June, the federal government held around 500 immigrants at Guantánamo, according to Sooknunan, as authorities used the base as a way station for immigrants with final removal orders.

American Civil Liberties Union attorney Lee Gelernt, who argued the case, said in a statement Saturday that he hopes the ruling "will put an end to the Trump administration's unlawful policy of sending immigrants to military bases in the middle of nowhere solely for the theatric value."

The ACLU and other advocacy groups have argued that transporting immigrants to Guantánamo is unlawful. The Trump administration has said it has broad authority to hold immigrants with final deportation orders at the facility.

In a statement, Tricia McLaughlin, an assistant secretary at the Department of Homeland Security, said, "We look forward to a higher court's vindication of our use of this facility to keep criminals off American streets."

The base, often referred to as "Gitmo," is best known for the suspects brought there after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

## Mass shooting at a South African bar leaves 12 dead, including 3 children

By GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — A mass shooting carried out Saturday by multiple suspects in an unlicensed bar near the South African capital left at least 12 people dead, police said. The victims included three children aged 3, 12 and 16.

Another 13 people were wounded and being treated in the hospital. Police didn't give details of the ages of those who were injured or their conditions.

Police adjusted the death toll after they said a 12th victim died in the hospital.

The shooting happened at a bar inside a hostel in the Saulsville township west of the administrative capital of Pretoria in the early hours of Saturday. Ten of the victims died at the scene and two others died at the hospital, police said.

The children killed were a 3-year-old boy, a 12-year-old boy and a 16-year-old girl. Police said they were searching for three male suspects.

"We are told that at least three unknown gunmen entered this hostel where a group of people were drinking and they started randomly shooting," police spokesperson Brig. Athlenda Mathe told national broadcaster SABC. She said the motive for the killings was not clear. The shootings happened at around 4.15 a.m., she said, but police were only alerted at 6 a.m.

South Africa has one of the highest homicide rates in the world and recorded more than 26,000 homicides in 2024 — an average of more than 70 a day. Firearms are by far the leading cause of death in homicides.

The country of 62 million people has relatively strict gun ownership laws, but many killings are committed with illegal guns, authorities say.

There have been several mass shootings at bars — sometimes called shebeens or taverns in South Africa — in recent years, including one that killed 16 people in the Johannesburg township of Soweto in

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2022. On the same day, four people were killed in a mass shooting at a bar in another province.

Mathe said that mass shootings at unlicensed bars were becoming a serious problem and police had shut down more than 11,000 illegal taverns between April and September this year and arrested more than 18,000 people for involvement in illegal liquor sales.

Recent mass killings in South Africa have not been confined to bars, however. Police said 18 people were killed, 15 of them women, in mass shootings minutes apart at two houses on the same road in a rural part of Eastern Cape province in September last year.

Seven men were arrested for those shootings and face multiple charges of murder, while police recovered three AK-style assault rifles they believe were used in the shootings.

## Threats pile up as Indiana Republicans confront pressure from Trump on redistricting

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and ISABELLA VOLMERT Associated Press

Spencer Deery's son was getting ready for school when someone tried to provoke police into swarming his home by reporting a fake emergency.

Linda Rogers said there were threats at her home and the golf course that her family has run for generations.

Jean Leising faced a pipe bomb scare that was emailed to local law enforcement.

The three are among roughly a dozen Republicans in the Indiana Senate who have seen their lives turned upside down while President Donald Trump pushes to redraw the state's congressional map to expand the party's power in the 2026 midterm elections.

It's a bewildering and frightening experience for lawmakers who consider themselves loyal party members and never imagined they would be doing their jobs under the same shadow of violence that has darkened American political life in recent years. Leising described it as "a very dangerous and intimidating process."

Redistricting is normally done once a decade after a new national census. Trump wants to accelerate the process in hopes of protecting the Republicans' thin majority in the U.S. House next year. His allies in Texas, Missouri, Ohio and North Carolina have already gone along with his plans for new political lines.

Now Trump's campaign faces its greatest test yet in a stubborn pocket of Midwestern conservatism. Although Indiana Gov. Mike Braun and the House of Representatives are on board, the proposal may fall short with senators who value their civic traditions and independence over what they fear would be short-term partisan gain.

"When you have the president of the United States and your governor sending signals, you want to listen to them," said Rogers, who has not declared her position on the redistricting push. "But it doesn't mean you'll compromise your values."

On Friday, Trump posted a list of senators who "need encouragement to make the right decision," and he took to social media Saturday to say that if legislators "stupidly say no, vote them out of Office - They are not worthy - And I will be there to help!" Meanwhile, the conservative campaign organization Turning Point Action said it would spend heavily to unseat anyone who voted "no."

Senators are scheduled to convene Monday to consider the proposal after months of turmoil. Resistance could signal the limits of Trump's otherwise undisputed dominance of the Republican Party.

Threats shadow redistricting session

Deery considers himself lucky. The police in his hometown of West Lafayette knew the senator was a potential target for "swatting," a dangerous type of hoax when someone reports a fake emergency to provoke an aggressive response from law enforcement.

So when Deery was targeted last month while his son and others were waiting for their daily bus ride to school, officers did not rush to the scene.

"You could have had SWAT teams driving in with guns out while there were kids in the area," he said.

Deery was one of the first senators to publicly oppose the mid-decade redistricting, arguing it interferes with voters' right to hold lawmakers accountable through elections.

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"The country would be an uglier place for it," he said just days after Vice President JD Vance visited the state in August, the first of two trips to talk with lawmakers about approving new maps.

Republican leaders in the Indiana Senate said in mid-November that they would not hold a vote on the matter because there was not enough support for it. Trump lashed out on social media, calling the senators weak and pathetic.

"Any Republican that votes against this important redistricting, potentially having an impact on America itself, should be PRIMARIED," he wrote.

The threats against senators began shortly after that.

Sen. Sue Glick, a Republican who was first elected in 2010 and previously served as a local prosecutor, said she has never seen "this kind of rancor" in politics in her lifetime. She opposes redistricting, saying "it has the taint of cheating."

Not even the plan's supporters are immune to threats.

Republican Sen. Andy Zay said his vehicle-leasing business was targeted with a pipe bomb scare on the same day he learned that he would face a primary challenger who accuses Zay of being insufficiently conservative.

Zay, who has spent a decade in the Senate, believes the threat was related to his criticism of Trump's effort to pressure lawmakers. But the White House has not heeded his suggestions to build public support for redistricting through a media campaign.

"When you push us around and into a corner, we're not going to change because you hound us and threaten us," Zay said. "For those who have made a decision to stand up for history and tradition, the tactics of persuasion do not embolden them to change their viewpoint."

The White House did not respond to messages seeking a reaction to Zay's comments.

Trump sees mixed support from Indiana

Trump easily won Indiana in all his presidential campaigns, and its leaders are unquestionably conservative. For example, the state was the first to restrict abortion after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

But Indiana's political culture never became saturated with the sensibilities of Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement. Some 21% of Republican voters backed Nikki Haley over Trump in last year's presidential primary, even though the former South Carolina governor had already suspended her campaign two months earlier.

Trump also holds a grudge against Indiana's Mike Pence, who served the state as a congressman and governor before becoming Trump's first vice president. A devout evangelical, Pence loyally accommodated Trump's indiscretions and scandals but refused to go along with Trump's attempt on Jan. 6, 2021, to overturn Democrat Joe Biden's victory.

"Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what was necessary," Trump posted online after an angry crowd of his supporters breached the U.S. Capitol.

Pence has not taken a public stance on his home state's redistricting effort. But the governor before him, Republican Mitch Daniels, recently said it was "clearly wrong."

The proposed map, which was released Monday and approved by the state House on Friday, attempts to dilute the influence of Democratic voters in Indianapolis by splitting up the city. Parts of the capital would be grafted onto four different Republican-leaning districts, one of which would stretch all the way south to the border with Kentucky.

Rogers, the senator whose family owns the golf course, declined to discuss her feelings about the redistricting. A soft-spoken business leader from the suburbs of South Bend, she said she was "very disappointed" about the threats.

On Monday, Rogers will be front and center as a member of the Senate Elections Committee, the first one in that chamber to consider the redistricting bill.

"We need to do things in a civil manner and have polite discourse," she said.

## Trump administration plays up pipe bomb suspect's arrest. Jan. 6 violence goes unmentioned

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After the arrest of a man charged with placing two pipe bombs outside the headquarters of the Republican and Democratic national parties on Jan. 5, 2021, the warning from the Trump administration was clear: If you come to the nation's capital to attack citizens and institutions of democracy, you will be held accountable.

Yet Justice Department leaders who announced the arrest were silent about the violence that had taken place when supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol and clashed with police one day after those bombs were placed.

It was the latest example of the Trump's administration's efforts to rewrite the history of the riot, through pardons and the firings of lawyers who prosecuted the participants of the siege, and of the disconnect for a government that prides itself for cracking down on violent crime and supporting law enforcement but has papered over the brutality of the Jan. 6 attacks on police officers.

"The administration has ignored and attempted to whitewash the violence committed by rioters on Jan. 6 because they were the president's supporters. They were trying to install him a second time against the will of the voters in 2020," said Michael Romano, who prosecuted the rioters before leaving the Justice Department this year. "And it feels like the effort to ignore that is purely transactional."

The White House referred comment to the Justice Department, which referred comment to the FBI. The bureau did not immediately respond to an email from The Associated Press on Friday.

Bongino once suggested pipe bomb incident was 'inside job'

FBI Director Kash Patel, as a conservative podcast host during the Biden administration, had called the Jan. 6 rioters "political prisoners" and offered to represent them for free. But on Thursday, he said the arrest of the pipe bomb suspect, 30-year-old Brian Cole Jr., was in keeping with Trump's commitment to "secure our nation's capital."

"When you attack American citizens, when you attack our institutions of legislation, when you attack the nation's capital, you attack the very being of our way of life," Patel said. "And this FBI and this Department of Justice stand here to tell you that we will always combat it."

Patel's deputy, Dan Bongino, had suggested before joining the FBI that federal law enforcement had wasted time investigating Jan. 6 rioters and anti-abortion activists.

"These are threats to the United States?" he once said on a podcast. "Grandma is in the gulag for a trespassing charge on January 6th."

Bongino speculated last year that the pipe bomb incident was an "inside job" that involved a "massive cover-up." After joining the FBI, Bongino repeatedly described the investigation as a top priority that was receiving significant resources and attention.

"We were going to track this person to the end of the earth. There was no way he was getting away," he said Thursday.

No public link has emerged between the pipe bombs and the riot, and Cole's arrest was a significant development in its own right given that the nearly 5-year investigation had confounded authorities, who are now assembling a portrait of Cole.

People familiar with the matter told The Associated Press that among the statements Cole made to investigators is that he believed conspiracy theories about the 2020 election, which Trump has insisted was stolen from him in favor of Democrat Joe Biden. The people were not authorized to discuss ongoing investigation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

There was no widespread fraud in that election, which a range of election officials across the country, including Trump's former attorney general, William Barr, have confirmed. Republican governors in key states crucial to Biden's victory have also vouched for the integrity of the elections in their states. Nearly all the legal challenges from Trump and his allies were dismissed by the courts.

Administration has played down Jan. 6 and aftermath

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The tough-on-crime words heard during Thursday's announcement about Cole's arrest were at odds with the Republican administration's repeated efforts to play down the violence of Jan. 6, absolve those charged in the insurrection and target those who investigated and prosecuted the rioters.

Trump's clemency action on his first day back in the White House in January applied to all 1,500-plus people charged with participating in the attack on the foundations of American democracy. That included defendants seen on camera violently attacking police with makeshift weapons such as flagpoles, a crutch and a hockey stick. More than 100 police officers were injured, including some who have described being scared for their lives as they were dragged into the crowd and beaten.

Earlier this year, the Justice Department asked the FBI for the names of agents who participated in Jan. 6 investigations, a demand feared within the bureau for as a possible precursor to mass firings. In August, Patel fired Brian Driscoll, who as the FBI's acting director in the early days of the Trump administration resisted handing over those names.

Trump's administration, meanwhile, has fired or demoted numerous prosecutors who worked on Jan. 6 cases, including more than two dozen lawyers who had been hired for temporary assignments to support the investigation but were moved into permanent roles after Trump won the 2024 election.

In October, two federal prosecutors were locked out of their government devices and told they were being put on leave after filing court papers that described those who attacked the Capitol as a "mob of rioters." The Justice Department later submitted a new court filing that stripped mentions of the Jan. 6 riot.

One man whose case was dismissed because of Trump's pardons was accused of hurling an explosive device and a large piece of wood at a group of officers who trying to defend an entrance to the Capitol. Some officers later said they had "believed they were going to die," prosecutors wrote in court papers, and several reported suffering temporary hearing loss.

## **Russia unleashes massive drone and missile attack on Ukraine as diplomatic talks continue**

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia unleashed a major missile and drone barrage on Ukraine overnight into Saturday, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he had a "substantive phone call" with American officials engaged in talks with a Ukrainian delegation in Florida, aimed at ending the nearly 4-year war.

Russia used 653 drones and 51 missiles in the wide-reaching overnight attack on Ukraine, which triggered air raid alerts across the country and came as Ukraine marked Armed Forces Day, the country's air force said Saturday morning.

Ukrainian forces shot down and neutralized 585 drones and 30 missiles, the air force said, adding that 29 locations were struck.

At least eight people were wounded in the attacks, Ukrainian Minister of Internal Affairs Ihor Klymenko said.

Among these, at least three people were wounded in the Kyiv region, according to local officials. Drone sightings were reported as far west as Ukraine's Lviv region.

Nuclear plant temporarily cut off from power

Russia carried out a "massive missile-drone attack" on power stations and other energy infrastructure in several Ukrainian regions, Ukraine's national energy operator, Ukrenergo, wrote on Telegram.

Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant temporarily lost all off-site power overnight, the International Atomic Energy Agency said Saturday, citing its Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi.

The plant is in an area that has been under Russian control since early in Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and is not in service, but it needs reliable power to cool its six shutdown reactors and spent fuel, to avoid any catastrophic nuclear incidents.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that energy facilities were the main targets of the attacks, also noting that a drone strike had "burned down" the train station in the city of Fastiv, located in the Kyiv region.

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Russia's Ministry of Defense said its air defenses had shot down 116 Ukrainian drones over Russian territory overnight into Saturday.

Russian Telegram news channel Astra said Ukraine struck Russia's Ryazan Oil Refinery, sharing footage appearing to show a fire breaking out and plumes of smoke rising above the refinery. The Associated Press could not independently verify the video.

The General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces later said Ukrainian forces had struck the refinery. Ryazan regional Gov. Pavel Malkov said a residential building had been damaged in a drone attack and that drone debris had fallen on the grounds of an "industrial facility," but did not mention the refinery.

Months of Ukrainian long-range drone strikes on Russian refineries have aimed to deprive Moscow of the oil export revenue it needs to pursue the war. Meanwhile, Kyiv and its Western allies say Russia is trying to cripple the Ukrainian power grid and deny civilians access to heat, light and running water for a fourth consecutive winter, in what Ukrainian officials call "weaponizing" the cold.

Slow progress on agreeing security framework

The latest round of attacks came as U.S. President Donald Trump's advisers and Ukrainian officials said they'll meet for a third day of talks on Saturday in Florida, after making progress on finding agreement on a security framework for postwar Ukraine.

Zelenskyy said Saturday that he had been given an update over the phone by U.S. and Ukrainian officials at the talks.

"Ukraine is determined to keep working in good faith with the American side to genuinely achieve peace," Zelenskyy wrote on social media.

Following Friday's talks, the two sides had also offered the sober assessment that any "real progress toward any agreement" ultimately will depend "on Russia's readiness to show serious commitment to long-term peace."

The statement from U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner as well as Ukrainian negotiators Rustem Umerov and Andriy Hnatov came after they met for a second day on Friday. They offered only broad brushstrokes about the progress they say has been made as Trump pushes Kyiv and Moscow to agree to a U.S.-mediated proposal to end nearly four years of war.

Separately, officials said the leaders of the United Kingdom, France and Germany would participate in a meeting with Zelenskyy in London on Monday.

## Sheriff hunting for the last of 3 inmates who escaped from a Louisiana jail

OPELOUSAS, La. (AP) — Authorities hunted Saturday for the last of three inmates who escaped from a Louisiana jail after removing concrete blocks from a deteriorating wall.

"We would prefer that he surrender himself peaceably," St. Landry Parish Sheriff Bobby J. Guidroz said in a statement, "but we will not rest until he is captured."

Detectives and SWAT officers were following leads Saturday in pursuit of 24-year-old Keith Eli, who remained at large three days after he and two other inmates escaped the parish jail in southwestern Louisiana, said Maj. Mark LeBlanc, a spokesman for the sheriff. Eli had been jailed on a charge of second-degree murder.

One of the escapees, 24-year-old Johnathan Jevon Joseph, was captured Friday following a brief chase. LeBlanc said investigators following a tip found Joseph, who was jailed on charges of rape and other crimes, hiding out at a home. Joseph ran to a nearby storage shed, where he surrendered after being cornered, LeBlanc said.

The third escapee, 26-year-old Joseph Allen Harrington, killed himself with a hunting rifle Thursday after police found him at a home and used a loudspeaker to urge him to come out, said Port Barre Police Chief Deon Boudreaux. Before his escape, Harrington had faced several felony charges, including home invasion.

It wasn't the first bold jail escape in Louisiana this year. In May, 10 inmates broke out of a New Orleans jail after crawling through a hole behind a toilet and leaving a message that read "To Easy LoL." Authorities

searched across multiple states for the escapees as local officials pointed fingers over who was to blame for the jailbreak. It took five months before all 10 inmates were recaptured.

As sheriff, Guidroz oversees the St. Landry Parish jail in Opelousas, about 130 miles (209 kilometers) northwest of New Orleans. He has said the inmates escaped after discovering "a degrading part of an upper wall area" and over time managed to remove the mortar holding the wall's concrete blocks together. That enabled them to remove enough blocks to slip through the wall.

The inmates then used sheets to scale the jail's outer wall, drop onto a first-floor roof and lower themselves to the ground, Guidroz said in a news release Wednesday.

The sheriff said the breakout will be investigated internally.

## California officials warn against foraging wild mushrooms after deadly poisoning outbreak

Associated Press undefined

California officials are warning foragers after an outbreak of poisoning linked to wild mushrooms that has killed one adult and caused severe liver damage in several patients, including children.

The state poison control system has identified 21 cases of amatoxin poisoning, likely caused by death cap mushrooms, the health department said Friday. The toxic wild mushrooms are often mistaken for edible ones because of their appearance and taste.

"Death cap mushrooms contain potentially deadly toxins that can lead to liver failure," Erica Pan, director of the California Department of Public Health, said in a statement. "Because the death cap can easily be mistaken for edible safe mushrooms, we advise the public not to forage for wild mushrooms at all during this high-risk season."

One adult has died and several patients have required intensive care, including at least one who might need a liver transplant.

Officials advise against wild mushroom foraging

Wet weather fuels the growth of death cap mushrooms, and officials warn against any wild mushroom foraging to avoid confusion. Residents in central California's Monterey County became ill after eating mushrooms found in a local park, according to county health officials. Another cluster of cases were in the San Francisco Bay Area, but state health officials warned that the risk is everywhere.

There were more than 4,500 cases of exposure to unidentified mushrooms logged at America's Poison Centers in 2023, according to their National Poison Data System annual report. Roughly half were in young children, who experts warn may pick and eat a mushroom while playing outside.

California's poison control system sees hundreds of cases of wild mushroom poisonings each year. The death cap mushroom and the "destroying angel" mushroom look and taste similar to edible mushrooms, so experts warn that a mushroom's color is not a reliable way of detecting its toxicity. And whether it is eaten raw or cooked does not matter.

Symptom improvement is not an all-clear

People can have stomach cramping, nausea, diarrhea or vomiting within 24 hours after ingesting a toxic mushroom. Though gastrointestinal symptoms may improve, health officials warn that patients can still develop serious complications, including liver damage, that surface later.

People looking for guidance on diagnosing or treating mushroom poisoning can contact the poison control hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

## Qatari leader says the Gaza ceasefire is at a critical moment

By SAMY MAGDY and JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Qatar's prime minister on Saturday said the Gaza ceasefire has reached a "critical moment" as its first phase winds down, with the remains of one Israeli hostage still to be handed over by militants.

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Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani told a conference in the Qatari capital that international mediators, led by the U.S., are working "to force the way forward" to the second phase to cement the deal.

"What we have just done is a pause," he told the Doha Forum. "We cannot consider it yet a ceasefire."

He added: "A ceasefire cannot be completed unless there is a full withdrawal of Israeli forces, there is stability back in Gaza, people can go in and out, which is not the case today."

While the ceasefire halted the heavy fighting of the two-year war, Gaza health officials say that over 360 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since the truce took effect on Oct. 10.

In new violence, two Palestinians were killed in an Israeli airstrike northwest of Gaza City, Shifa Hospital said.

Israel's army said it wasn't aware of an airstrike in that location. However, it said that Israeli soldiers on Saturday killed three militants who crossed the "yellow line" into Israeli-controlled northern part of Gaza and "posed an immediate threat."

The Israeli army has said it has carried out a number of attacks on Palestinians crossing the ceasefire line.

### Second phase hasn't begun

Under the first phase of U.S. President Donald Trump's 20-point peace plan, the fighting stopped and dozens of hostages held in Gaza were exchanged for hundreds of Palestinians held in Israeli prison. Israel sent a delegation last week to Egypt for talks on returning the remains of the last hostage.

The next phase has not begun. It includes the deployment of an international security force in Gaza, formation of a new technocratic government for the territory, disarmament of Hamas and an eventual withdrawal of Israeli forces.

Arab and Western officials told The Associated Press on Friday that an international body overseeing the ceasefire, to be led by Trump himself, is expected to be appointed by the end of the year. In the long term, the plan also calls for a possible "pathway" to Palestinian independence.

Qatar's prime minister said that even the upcoming phase should be "temporary" and that peace in the region could only take place with the eventual establishment of a Palestinian state — something that is opposed by Israel's hard-line government.

"If we are just resolving what happened in Gaza, the catastrophe that happened in the last two years, it's not enough," he said. "There is a root for this conflict. And this conflict is not only about Gaza."

He added: "It's about Gaza. It's about the West Bank. It's about the rights of the Palestinians for their state. We are hoping that we can work together with the U.S. administration to achieve this vision at the end of the day."

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said there is a "big question" over the formation of an international security force for Gaza. Speaking at the conference, he said it's unclear which countries will join, what the command structure would look like and what its "first mission" will be.

Turkey is one of the guarantors of the ceasefire, but Israel, which has rocky relations with the Ankara government, has rejected any Turkish participation in the force.

"Thousands of details, questions are in place," Fidan said. "I think once we deploy ISF, the rest will come."

### UN agency seeks a clear role in Gaza

A day after an overwhelming international endorsement, the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees said its future role in Gaza is unclear.

Throughout the war, Israel and the United States have sidelined UNRWA, accusing it cooperating with Hamas, a charge UNRWA denies.

Tamara Alrifai, UNRWA's director of external relations and communications, said the agency continues to offer humanitarian and educational services in Gaza. But she said UNRWA has been excluded from U.S.-led talks on the ceasefire's second phase.

Alrifai said that UNRWA serves as the de facto "public sector" in Gaza. And with 12,000 employees, she said it will be nearly impossible for the international community to duplicate the agency's network of services.

"If you squeeze UNRWA out, what other agency can fill that void?" she said on the sidelines of the Doha Forum.

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The U.S., formerly the largest donor to UNRWA, halted funding to the agency in early 2024. On Friday, the U.N. General Assembly renewed UNRWA's mandate through 2029. But Alrifai said the cash crisis continues. "Votes are great. Cash is better," Alrifai said.

Over 70,000 killed in Gaza

The war erupted on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas-led militants entered Israel, killing some 1,200 people and taking over 250 people hostage. Israel responded with an offensive that has killed over 70,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and combatants, but says that nearly half the dead have been women and children. The ministry is part of Gaza's Hamas government and its numbers are considered reliable by the U.N. and other international bodies.

## Detroit reflects on Mike Duggan's tenure as his final days in the mayoral office near

By COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — When Mayor Mike Duggan announced his plan to run for Michigan governor, he did so from a tower in the iconic but aging Renaissance Center overlooking Detroit.

It's not the same city that Duggan inherited in January 2014.

No longer defined by blocks of vacant houses, empty downtown storefronts, rampant crime and scores of broken streetlights, many believe Detroit is finally experiencing its renaissance.

"I wish he would stay," 40-year-old plumber Thomas Millender said of Duggan, who will step down in January after serving three terms as mayor.

"Duggan did a good job from what the city was to how it has been revamped," Millender said from his father's porch in a neighborhood where many homes are dilapidated. Private renovation crews buzzed in and out of once-vacant houses, preparing them for sale.

"There is not any neighborhood in this city that hasn't had blight reduced, that hasn't had street lights on, that hasn't had parks renovated," Duggan told The Associated Press.

"We have it going in the right direction, but the next mayor's gonna have to go build on what I do and the following mayor is gonna have to build on that mayor," Duggan said. "It's going to take decades to bring the city all the way back."

A once broken city

Duggan, a former prosecutor and health center chief, ran for mayor in 2013, when Detroit was broke and saddled with billions of dollars in long-term debt.

It was tough to keep basic services running. City employees were forced to work fewer hours and take pay cuts. More than a third of Detroit residents lived in poverty.

"We've hit bottom," then-Mayor Dave Bing said flatly.

Bing, a successful business owner and basketball Hall of Famer, was elected in 2009 after a scandal involving once-popular Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick roiled City Hall and forced Detroit's financial straits into the spotlight.

By early 2013, the state had taken over city finances and installed an emergency manager who filed for bankruptcy that summer. Because of the depths of the city's debt, there was no way "to get any relief on that without bankruptcy," Bing said.

He didn't seek reelection and the city, looking for new leadership, found it in Duggan.

Rebuilding Detroit after bankruptcy

Detroit exited bankruptcy in December 2014, after wiping away \$7 billion in long-term debt. For several years after, a state review team monitored the city's finances and made sure its bills were paid.

Detroit has since recorded more than a decade of consecutive balanced budgets.

Violent crime, including murders, is trending down.

There were more than 40,000 vacant houses and other empty buildings in Detroit when Duggan took office. Using mostly federal funds, his administration spearheaded the demolition of more than 24,000.

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Thousands of others that were teetering and unlivable have been saved.

"Some neighborhoods are in better shape than others," said Wayne State University Urban Studies and Planning Professor Jeff Horner. "There are still blocks of terrible destitution and poverty."

But the biggest hurdle overcome during Duggan's tenure is the city's massive population loss. Detroit's population reached 1.8 million people in the 1950s. By 2010, it had plunged below 700,000.

"The city lost a million people since 1957," Duggan said. "That is a lot of years of decline. It's going to take decades of growth to get all the way back."

A census estimate placed Detroit's population at 645,705 in 2024, showing an increase of about 12,000 people since 2021, according to the city.

"When he ran in 2012-13, he said, 'Judge me by one thing and one thing only: whether Detroit can gain population,'" Horner said of Duggan. "He kept that promise."

Focusing on the entire city

Jay Williams, 36, acknowledges there is less blight, but he would like to see alternatives to tearing down houses and leaving lots vacant.

"There is a lot of open space," he said. "You can do new developments. A majority of the money is focused downtown."

Detroit megachurch pastor the Rev. Solomon Kinloch argued during his unsuccessful mayoral campaign this year that every neighborhood should share in Detroit's revival.

"You can't make all of the investments downtown," Kinloch said. "It has to reach the whole town."

City Council President Mary Sheffield, who was elected this month to succeed Duggan and will take office in January, says she will build on his success and ensure "Detroit's progress reaches every block and every family."

Any mayor's first responsibility is to attend to the "entirety of the civic fabric," said Rip Rapson, chief executive of the private Kresge Foundation, which provides grants and invests in cities nationwide.

"It's not like you can just fix roads or improve police response time or build 25 units of affordable housing," Rapson said. "As mayor, you have to attend to the need for complete vitality of neighborhoods ... making sure neighborhoods have adequate housing, safe housing stock, small business cultures, educational opportunities that anchor a neighborhood."

"People will have quarrels with bits and pieces, but he's done all of those things," Rapson said of Duggan. "He leaves quite a powerful and positive legacy."

## Young adults are waiting in line to worship at this fast-growing Atlanta church

By CHARLOTTE KRAMON Associated Press/Report for America

ATLANTA (AP) — After Atlanta pastor Philip Anthony Mitchell stopped dwelling on growing his congregation about three years ago, its attendance surged. Now, lines packed with young adults snake outside 2819 Church, some arriving as early as 5:30 a.m. to secure a spot for Sunday worship.

Christian rap and contemporary music blast like a block party as volunteers cheer into megaphones for around 6,000 weekly churchgoers — up from less than 200 in 2023, the church reports. Inside the sanctuary, the atmosphere turns serious. Many drawn to 2819's riveting worship are hungry for Mitchell's animated intensity and signature preaching: No sugarcoating the Bible.

After spirited prayers and songs leave many crying, Mitchell ambles onstage in his all-black uniform, sometimes in quiet contemplation or tears, before launching into a fiery sermon. His messages, unpolished and laden with challenges to revere God and live better, often spread quickly online. A recent prayer event drew far more people than State Farm Arena could handle, with many flying in.

Crying, shouting, storming across the platform and punching the air, Mitchell preaches with his whole body — and an urgency to bring people to faith before they die or what he calls Jesus' impending return to Earth.

"It is life or death for me," Mitchell told The Associated Press, comparing preaching to the front lines of

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war. "There are souls that are hanging in the balance. ... I think about the fact that in that room somebody might hear the Gospel, and that might be their last opportunity."

The church — whose name references Matthew 28:19, a Bible verse commanding believers to go "make disciples of all the nations" — is nondenominational and theologically conservative, with beliefs opposing abortion and in support of marriage only between a man and a woman.

The congregation's growth has attracted people of many races and ages, but it's predominantly young Black adults. Their youth is notable since Americans ages 18 to 24 are less likely than older adults to identify as Christian or attend religious services regularly, according to Pew Research Center.

Sharp sermons and moving worship

Warren Bird, an expert on fast-growing churches, believes the right leader is key to a church's growth — along with God's help — and described Mitchell as "speaking a language" that connects with young people who other pastors haven't reached.

Churchgoers say Mitchell's message resonates because he carefully walks them through scripture and talks candidly about his spiritual transformation, including his past dealing drugs, paying for abortions and attempting suicide.

"I'm still a little rough around the edges, right? I still got a little hood in me," said Mitchell, who still speaks with a regional New York accent.

Many at 2819 want more than motivational speeches and say Mitchell's sermons are counterweights to the feel-good American preaching he criticizes.

"I'm preaching without watering that down, without filtering out things that we think might be too controversial," said Mitchell, who wants people to mature spiritually and insists they can't deal with sin and its consequences without Jesus.

"I think that there is a generation that is gravitating towards that authenticity and truth," he said. "As a result of that, we are seeing lives being radically transformed."

Christian podcaster Megan Ashley said she brought a friend to 2819 who had stepped away from her faith, and Mitchell had an impact. The friend told Ashley, "When he speaks, I believe him."

The tougher messages might hurt some people's feelings, said Donovan Logan, 23.

"But that's what it's supposed to do. If you don't come to church and want to change, then that's not the church you're supposed to be going to," Logan said.

Elijah McCord, 22, said Mitchell's sermons about sin touch on what's happening around him in Atlanta, and Mitchell's story shows that "there's life in what God has commanded." He also values Mitchell's pleadings to wait until marriage to have sex.

"He biblically talks about sin and repentance and how there's actually hope in the Gospel," McCord said.

Churchgoers say 2819's draw goes beyond Mitchell. It's the entire worship experience.

Passing the dancing greeters, the Sunday crowd enters the dark auditorium. It's permeated with prayer and bold instrumental music before the service, which 2819 calls a gathering, officially begins, with hands already lifted amid shouts of praise. Tissue boxes sit at the end of aisles, ready to aid those moved to tears.

"The worship is crazy. The Holy Spirit is just there. Like, tangible presence. You feel it!" said Desirae Dominguez, 24.

Mitchell feels 'ill-equipped' to lead 2819

Mitchell spent 10 years preaching, racking up unfruitful notes from church growth conferences, and eventually started struggling with depression. During that time, he took a transformative trip to Israel where he said encounters with God and other Christians changed him. Then, in 2023, he changed the church's name to 2819.

Mitchell, who has spent three years preaching just from the Book of Matthew alone, said God told him to preach without bringing prepared notes onstage. Although he attended Bible college, he sometimes doubts himself because of his past.

"I shed a lot of tears because I feel often ill-equipped, undeserving," said Mitchell. "I would not have called me if I was God to steward something like this, and sometimes I don't know why my preaching is

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reaching (people). ... I'm still shocked myself."

When preparing to preach, "I'm thinking about the brokenness of the people in the room, the troubled marriages, the one who is suicidal. I'm thinking about the young lady who's battling crippling insecurities and don't know that she has a father up there that loves her more than any man she's going to find down here."

When not preaching, Mitchell's demeanor is quieter. He and his staff are "here to serve," he often says.

His large online platform exposes him and sometimes his family to public critique, pushback, and even threats. Some accuse him of self-righteousness or say he's too harsh. He also issued a public apology earlier this year for comments in a sermon about obeying authority that were seen as dismissive of police brutality.

At times, he says he is deeply affected by criticism and said he repents for some of what critics decried. But Mitchell also finds solace in better understanding Jesus by enduring it.

Staff constantly adjusts for growth

The church recently moved into its own building, having outgrown the charter school where they held the services, and added a third one. On the first two Sundays at the new location, they added an impromptu fourth gathering because so many people came.

The staff faced similar conundrums at Access, the church's October prayer event that drew an estimated 40,000 people. State Farm Arena was filled to capacity, as was an overflow space in a nearby convention center, leaving thousands outside, the church reported.

"We're constantly tinkering. We're constantly fixing things," said Tatjuana Phillips, 2819's ministries director.

Logistical challenges, such as packed parking lots and swamped staff, are common at fast-growing churches, said Bird, the church growth expert.

Despite its size, the church encourages community through its small groups, called "squads," that give about 1,700 people a place to discuss sermons and support each other's personal growth. Staff also engage with about 75,000 people weekly who watch gatherings online.

The long lines also yield friendships. Ashley Grimes, 35, said that's where she's "met so many brothers and sisters in Christ that I now get to do life with."

Many of those new friends can be found shuffling into the church's auditorium on Sundays while volunteers, called servant leaders, pray over each seat before Mitchell preaches.

On a recent Sunday, Mitchell told the crowd that they can turn to Jesus regardless of what they've done. It worked for him. God, he said, "used failure to transform my life."

## Released 911 calls reveal desperate pleas and tragic outcomes during Texas Hill Country flood

By JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

KERRVILLE, Texas (AP) — Many of the voices were frantic and desperate. A few were steady and calm amid mounting, frightening danger, and in some cases, inescapable doom.

They came from families huddled on rooftops to escape rising, swirling waters, mothers panicked for the wellbeing of their children and onlookers who heard people yell for help through the dark as they clung to treetops.

One man, stuck high in a tree as it began to break under the pressure of the floodwaters, asked emergency dispatchers for a helicopter rescue that never came.

Their pleas were among more than 400 calls for help across Kerr County last summer when devastating floods hit during the overnight hours on the July Fourth holiday. The recordings of the 911 calls were released Friday.

The sheer volume of calls would overwhelm two county emergency dispatchers on duty in the Texas Hill Country as catastrophic flooding inundated cabins and youth camps along the Guadalupe River.

"There's water filling up super fast, we can't get out of our cabin," a camp counselor told a dispatcher above the screams of campers in the background. "We can't get out of our cabin, so how do we get to

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the boats?"

Amazingly, everyone in the cabin and the rest of campers at Camp La Junta were rescued.

The flooding killed at least 136 people statewide during the holiday weekend, including at least 117 in Kerr County alone. Most were from Texas, but others came from Alabama, California and Florida, according to a list released by county officials.

One woman called for help as the water closed in on her house near Camp Mystic, a century-old summer camp for girls, where 25 campers and two teenage counselors died.

"We're OK, but we live a mile down the road from Camp Mystic and we had two little girls come down the river. And we've gotten to them, but I'm not sure how many others are out there," she said in a shaky voice.

A spokesperson for the parents of the children and counselors who died at Camp Mystic declined to comment on the release of the recordings.

Calls came from people on rooftops and in trees

Many residents in the hard-hit Texas Hill Country have said they were caught off guard and didn't receive any warning when the floods overtopped the Guadalupe River. Kerr County leaders have faced scrutiny about whether they did enough right away. Two officials told Texas legislators this summer that they were asleep during the initial hours of the flooding, and a third was out of town.

Using recordings of first responder communications, weather service warnings, survivor videos and official testimony, The Associated Press assembled a chronology of the chaotic rescue effort. The AP was one of the media outlets that filed public information requests for recordings of the 911 calls to be released.

Many people were rescued by boats and emergency vehicles. A few desperate pleas came from people floating away in RVs. Some survivors were found in trees and on rooftops.

But some of the calls released Friday came from people who did not survive, said Kerrville Police Chief Chris McCall, who warned that the audio is unsettling.

"The tree I'm in is starting to lean and it's going to fall. Is there a helicopter close?" Bradley Perry, a firefighter, calmly told a dispatcher, adding that he saw his wife, Tina, and their RV wash away.

"I've probably got maybe five minutes left," he said.

Bradley Perry did not survive. His wife was later found clinging to a tree, still alive.

Moving higher and higher to survive

In another heartbreaking call, a woman staying in a community of riverside cabins told a dispatcher the water was inundating their building

"We are flooding, and we have people in cabins we can't get to," she said. "We are flooding almost all the way to the top."

The caller speaks slowly and deliberately. The faint voices of what sounds like children can be heard in the background.

Some people called back multiple times, climbing higher and higher in houses to let rescuers know where they were and that their situations were getting more dire. Families called from second floors, then attics, then roofs sometimes in the course of 30 or 40 minutes, revealing how fast and how high the waters rose.

As daylight began to break, the call volume increased, with people reporting survivors in trees or stuck on roofs, or cars floating down the river.

Britt Eastland, the co-director of Camp Mystic, asked for search and rescue and the National Guard to be called, saying as many as 40 people there were missing. "We're out of power. We hardly have any cell service," he said.

The 911 recordings show that relatives and friends outside of the unfolding disaster and those who had made it to safety had called to get help for loved ones trapped in the flooding.

One woman said a friend, an elderly man, was trapped in his home with water up to his head. She had realized his phone cut out as she was trying to relay instructions from a 911 operator.

Dispatchers gave advice and comfort

Overwhelmed by the endless calls, dispatchers tried to comfort the panic-stricken callers yet were forced to move on to the next one. They advised many of those who were trapped to get to their rooftops or

run to higher ground. In some calls, children could be heard screaming in the background.

"There is water everywhere, we cannot move. We are upstairs in a room and the water is rising," said a woman who called from Camp Mystic.

The same woman called back later.

"How do we get to the roof if the water is so high?" she asked. "Can you already send someone here? With the boats?"

She asked the dispatcher when help would arrive.

"I don't know," the dispatcher said. "I don't know."

## The Supreme Court weighs another step in favor of broad presidential power sought by Trump

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Chief Justice John Roberts has led the Supreme Court's conservative majority on a steady march of increasing the power of the presidency, starting well before Donald Trump's time in the White House.

The justices could take the next step in a case being argued Monday that calls for a unanimous 90-year-old decision limiting executive authority to be overturned.

The court's conservatives, liberal Justice Elena Kagan noted in September, seem to be "raring to take that action."

They already have allowed Trump, in the opening months of the Republican's second term, to fire almost everyone he has wanted, despite the court's 1935 decision in *Humphrey's Executor* that prohibits the president from removing the heads of independent agencies without cause.

The officials include Rebecca Slaughter, whose firing from the Federal Trade Commission is at issue in the current case, as well as officials from the National Labor Relations Board, the Merit Systems Protection Board and the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The only officials who have so far survived efforts to remove them are Lisa Cook, a Federal Reserve governor, and Shira Perlmutter, a copyright official with the Library of Congress. The court already has suggested that it will view the Fed differently from other independent agencies, and Trump has said he wants her out because of allegations of mortgage fraud. Cook says she did nothing wrong.

*Humphrey's Executor* has long been a target of the conservative legal movement that has embraced an expansive view of presidential power known as the unitary executive.

The case before the high court involves the same agency, the FTC, that was at issue in 1935. The justices established that presidents — Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt at the time — could not fire the appointed leaders of the alphabet soup of federal agencies without cause.

The decision ushered in an era of powerful independent federal agencies charged with regulating labor relations, employment discrimination, the air waves and much else.

Proponents of the unitary executive theory have said the modern administrative state gets the Constitution all wrong: Federal agencies that are part of the executive branch answer to the president, and that includes the ability to fire their leaders at will.

As Justice Antonin Scalia wrote in a 1988 dissent that has taken on mythical status among conservatives, "this does not mean some of the executive power, but all of the executive power."

Since 2010 and under Roberts' leadership, the Supreme Court has steadily whittled away at laws restricting the president's ability to fire people.

In 2020, Roberts wrote for the court that "the President's removal power is the rule, not the exception" in a decision upholding Trump's firing of the head of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau despite job protections similar to those upheld in *Humphrey's* case.

In the 2024 immunity decision that spared Trump from being prosecuted for his efforts to overturn the 2020 election results, Roberts included the power to fire among the president's "conclusive and preclusive" powers that Congress lacks the authority to restrict.

But according to legal historians and even a prominent proponent of the originalism approach to interpreting the Constitution that is favored by conservatives, Roberts may be wrong about the history underpinning the unitary executive.

"Both the text and the history of Article II are far more equivocal than the current Court has been suggesting," wrote Caleb Nelson, a University of Virginia law professor who once served as a law clerk to Justice Clarence Thomas.

Jane Manners, a Fordham University law professor, said she and other historians filed briefs with the court to provide history and context about the removal power in the country's early years that also could lead the court to revise its views. "I'm not holding my breath," she said.

Slaughter's lawyers embrace the historians' arguments, telling the court that limits on Trump's power are consistent with the Constitution and U.S. history.

The Justice Department argues Trump can fire board members for any reason as he works to carry out his agenda and that the precedent should be tossed aside.

"Humphrey's Executor was always egregiously wrong," Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote.

A second question in the case could affect Cook, the Fed governor. Even if a firing turns out to be illegal, the court wants to decide whether judges have the power to reinstate someone.

Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote earlier this year that fired employees who win in court can likely get back pay, but not reinstatement.

That might affect Cook's ability to remain in her job. The justices have seemed wary about the economic uncertainty that might result if Trump can fire the leaders of the central bank. The court will hear separate arguments in January about whether Cook can remain in her job as her court case challenging her firing proceeds.

## **Overnight exchange of fire along the Afghan-Pakistan border kills 5 and wounds 8, officials say**

By ABDUL QAHAR AFGHAN and MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

JALALABAD, Afghanistan (AP) — An overnight exchange of fire between Afghan forces and Pakistani troops along the two countries' tense border killed five Afghan civilians and wounded five others, while three civilians were also wounded on the Pakistani side, officials from the two countries said Saturday.

Each side has blamed the other for triggering the clash in violation of a tenuous two-month ceasefire.

Those killed in the border area near the Afghan city of Spin Boldak, in southern Afghanistan's Kandahar province, included three children and one woman, said Ali Mohammad Haqmal, the head of information of Spin Boldak District.

Pakistani police and a hospital official in the Pakistani city of Chaman, Mohammad Awais, said three people, including a woman, were wounded in the shooting and shelling that came from the Afghan side. The clashes lasted until dawn Saturday, police said.

Tension between the two countries has been high since October, when deadly border clashes killed dozens of soldiers, civilians and suspected militants, and wounded hundreds on both sides. The violence erupted after explosions in Kabul, the Afghan capital, on Oct. 9 that the Taliban government blamed on Pakistan and vowed to avenge.

The fighting has been the worst between the neighbors in recent years. A Qatar-mediated ceasefire began in October and has largely held, but peace talks have so far failed to produce an agreement.

Pakistan has suffered several militant attacks inside its country, and has blamed most of them on the Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP. Though separate from the Afghan Taliban, the TTP is closely allied with it, and many of its fighters are believed to have taken refuge in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized power there in 2021, further straining relations.

Pakistan and Afghanistan have both blamed each other for the cross-border exchange of fire that broke out Friday night.

Haqmal said the Afghan side didn't respond for 10-15 minutes after Pakistani forces began shooting,

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and that once the Afghan side responded, it stopped firing "within an hour." The shooting by the Pakistani side continued until Saturday morning, he said.

However, Mohammad Sadiq, a local Pakistani police official, claimed the shooting started from the Afghan side and that Pakistani troops returned fire near the Chaman border crossing, a key transit route.

The exchange came a day after Pakistan said it would allow the United Nations to send relief supplies into Afghanistan through the Chaman and Torkham border crossings, which have been mostly closed for nearly two months amid escalating tensions.

Abidullah Farooqi, a spokesman for the Afghan border police, said Friday night that Pakistani forces first threw a hand grenade into the Spin Boldak border area on the Afghan side, prompting a response. He said Afghanistan remains committed to the ceasefire.

Mosharraf Zaidi, a spokesman for Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, said on X that earlier in the evening, the "Afghan Taliban regime resorted to unprovoked firing along the Chaman border." He added that Pakistani forces remain fully alert and committed to ensuring the country's territorial integrity and the safety of its citizens.

Separately, Pakistan's military said Saturday that its security forces had killed nine Pakistani Taliban militants during two intelligence-based operations Friday in Pakistan's northwestern districts of Tank and Lakki Marwat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which borders Afghanistan.

## Today in History: December 7, Japan attacks Pearl Harbor

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Dec. 7, the 341st day of 2025. There are 24 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Dec. 7, 1941, the Empire of Japan launched an air raid on the U.S. Navy base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, killing more than 2,300 Americans. The United States declared war against Japan the following day.

Also on this date:

In 1787, Delaware became the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1972, America's last crewed moon mission to date was launched as Apollo 17 blasted off from Cape Canaveral.

In 1982, convicted murderer Charlie Brooks Jr. became the first U.S. prisoner to be executed by lethal injection, at a prison in Huntsville, Texas.

In 1988, a major earthquake in the Soviet Union devastated northern Armenia, killing at least 25,000 people.

In 1993, six people were killed and 19 wounded in a mass shooting aboard a Long Island Rail Road train in New York.

In 2004, Hamid Karzai (HAH'-mihd KAHR'-zeyeh) was sworn in as Afghanistan's first popularly elected president.

In 2018, James Alex Fields Jr., who drove his car into a crowd of counterdemonstrators at a 2017 white nationalist rally in Virginia, was convicted of first-degree murder in the death of Heather Heyer, an anti-racism activist. He was later sentenced on that and other convictions to life in prison plus 419 years.

In 2024, the newly-restored Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris was reopened to the public after a devastating blaze nearly destroyed the beloved Gothic masterpiece in 2019. World leaders attended the reopening ceremony amid great fanfare and celebration.

Today's Birthdays: Linguist and political philosopher Noam Chomsky is 97. Actor Ellen Burstyn is 93. Baseball Hall of Famer Johnny Bench is 78. Singer-songwriter Tom Waits is 76. Republican Sen. Susan M. Collins of Maine is 73. Basketball Hall of Famer Larry Bird is 69. Actor Jeffrey Wright is 60. Actor C. Thomas Howell is 59. Football Hall of Famer Terrell Owens is 52. Football Hall of Famer Alan Faneca is 49. Actor Shiri Appleby is 47. Singer-songwriter Sara Bareilles (bah-REHL'-es) is 46. Actor Nicholas Hoult is 36. MLB All-Star Pete Alonso is 31. Olympic swimming gold medalist Torri Huske is 23.