

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, Dec. 14

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with Sunday School Program, 10:30 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.; 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.; Christmas program at 5 p.m. with supper to follow.

7th Grade Soccer, 1 p.m.

4th Grade BB Practice, 2 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.



Monday, Dec. 15

Senior Menu: Cowboy/Calico casserole, fruit, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Chef salad.

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

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

Groton Senior Citizens meet at Community Center with potluck at noon.

Webster JH wrestling, 4:30 p.m.

1st Grade Boys Basketball Practice, 4:30 p.m.

Madison JV/MS Boys and Girls Wrestling Jambo-ree, 5 p.m.

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

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Pennington County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD Highway 240 and Big Foot Road, 11 miles south of Wall, SD

When: 6:45 p.m., Friday, December 12, 2025

Driver 1: 20-year-old male from Wall, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2018 Nissan Murano

Seat belt Used: No

Pennington County, S.D.- One man died in a single vehicle crash 11 miles south of Wall, SD.

The name of the person involved has not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2018 Nissan Murano was traveling southbound on SD 240, missed the curve and entered the ditch, coming to rest 50 feet down an embankment. The driver was ejected from the vehicle and sustained fatal injuries.

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

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

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**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



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



Northern State closes out December home slate with loss to Bemidji State

Aberdeen, S.D. – Saturday's NSIC contest slipped away from the Northern State University men's basketball team in the second half, as Bemidji State pulled out a 66-63 road victory to close the Wolves' December home schedule.

Northern carried a slim 30-28 advantage into halftime and built a lead as large as 12 points midway through the opening half, but Bemidji State found its rhythm after the break. The Beavers shot an efficient 54.6 percent from the floor in the second half, outscoring the Wolves 38-33 over the final 20 minutes to secure the three-point win.

The game featured 12 ties and 16 lead changes, with neither team able to gain lasting separation. Northern finished the night with 14 points off turnovers, 12 second-chance points and seven points from the bench, while adding 22 points in the paint. The Wolves shot 34.4 percent from the field, 26.7 percent from three-point range and 84.6 percent at the free-throw line.

Bemidji State countered with 36 points in the paint, 13 points off turnovers and 11 second-chance points. The Beavers shot 46.9 percent from the floor, 22.2 percent from beyond the arc and 80.0 percent from the foul line.

The teams finished even on the glass with 37 rebounds apiece. Northern recorded a game-high 12 assists, knocked down eight three-pointers and tallied six steals.

Joshua Book led the Wolves with 22 points, adding four rebounds, three assists and a steal. Simon Akena followed with 12 points on 55.6 percent shooting, while James Glenn added 10 points. Benjamin Bowen and Tobi Obiora each pulled down eight rebounds for Northern, scoring eight and seven points, respectively.

The loss drops Northern State to 2-8 overall and 2-3 in NSIC play, while Bemidji State improved to 5-5 overall and 2-3 in the league. Attendance for the contest was 1,606 at Wachs Arena.

Northern State returns to action on the road next week with a pair of NSIC North Division contests. The Wolves will face Minnesota State Moorhead at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 18, before traveling to Minnesota Crookston for a 1 p.m. tip on Saturday, December 20.

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Wolves earn North Division win over Beavers, 62-55

ABERDEEN, S.D. — The Northern State University women's basketball team picked up its sixth win of the season Saturday evening, pulling away in the second half for a 62-55 North Division victory over Bemidji State at Wachs Arena.

Northern finished the night with 62 points, 38 rebounds, six assists, nine steals and four blocks. The Wolves shot 36.5 percent from the field, 21.4 percent from three-point range and 63.6 percent at the free-throw line to improve to 6-4 overall and 2-3 in the NSIC. Bemidji State fell to 6-3 overall and 3-2 in league play.

The game was tightly contested through the opening half before Northern State seized momentum coming out of the locker room. The Wolves erupted for a game-high 25 points in the third quarter, creating separation that proved too much for the Beavers to overcome.

Northern's bench played a key role in the win, accounting for 22 points. Carli Kuyper led that effort with a career-high 10 points, shooting 60 percent from the floor and adding four points at the free-throw line.

Izzy Moore paced the Wolves offensively, finishing with 15 points, six rebounds and two blocks. Moore also connected on shots from beyond the arc and the free-throw line as Northern controlled the paint and the glass during key stretches of the game.

Megan Counts added nine points and six rebounds while recording a game-high three steals. Freshman Reagan Rus, a 5-foot-8 guard, led the Wolves on the boards with eight rebounds and chipped in five points, while Taylor Tool dished out a team-high two assists.

Northern State's defense was a difference-maker throughout the night, limiting Bemidji State to just 7.7 percent shooting from three-point range and forcing the Beavers into difficult possessions.

Bemidji State was led by Cassandra Caron, who scored 24 of the Beavers' 55 points while shooting 66.7 percent from the field. Aubrey Heyer grabbed a team-high five rebounds, with three other Beavers finishing with four boards apiece.

Northern State returns to action on Thursday, traveling to MSU Moorhead for a 7:30 p.m. tipoff.

What can \$20 get you?



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Senior Citizens

or anyone using physical therapy
a gym membership at

15 N Main - Ste. 101

Open 24/7

GDI Living Fitness

Call/Text Paul at 605/397-7460

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

...When they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

❧ MATTHEW 2:11 ❧



Detail from "The Three Magi" by Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (1917)

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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. Where did the angel Gabriel appear to Mary saying, "Blessed art thou among women"? *Nazareth, Tyre, Ninevah, Gazi*

3. With perhaps two different biblical answers, who was the father of Joseph? *Jacob/Heli, Gideon/Ishmael, Solomon/Nahum, Samuel/Pilate*

4. Which Old Testament prophet predicted Jesus would be born in Bethlehem? *Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum*

5. For the journey to Bethlehem, how did Mary and Joseph travel? *Bible not specific, Cart, Rode donkey, Small raft*

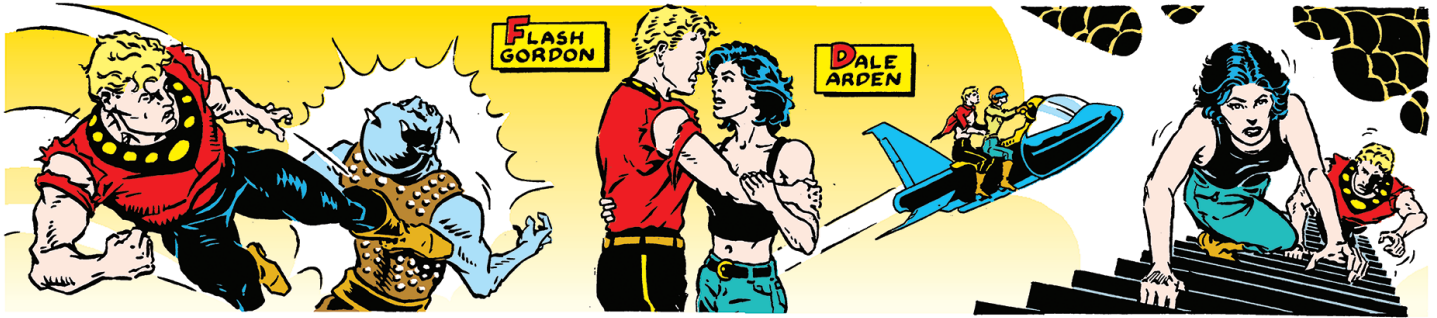
6. Which of these wasn't a gift from the wise men (Magi)? *Silver, Myrrh, Gold, Frankincense*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Nazareth, 3) Jacob/Heli, 4) Micah, 5) Bible not specific, 6) Silver

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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FLASH GORDON
BY JIM KEEFE 11-30

RENSHAW STANDS ACCUSED OF TAMPERING WITH THE TASK FORCE'S WEAPONS.

www.kingfeatures.com

START TALKING.
IT...IT MUST HAVE BEEN MY ASSISTANT!
AND YOU WEREN'T IN ON IT?

WHAT?! YOU ACTUALLY THINK I'D TAMPER WITH YOUR WEAPONS...THEN JOIN YOU ON YOUR MISSION?
HOW STUPID DO YOU THINK I AM?!

HE'S GOT A POINT THERE, FLASH.
BEEP-BEEP

WHAT'S YOUR SENSOR READING, DOC?
THE CREATURE...AND IT'S APPROACHING FAST!

FROM WHERE? THE CORRIDOR'S EMPTY!
THAT CAN'T BE...

...IT SHOULD BE RIGHT ON TOP OF US!
NEXT: THE CREATURE ATTACKS!

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

RECOGNIZE THAT, WHEN WRIGGLING DOWN WITH YOUR FEET TO SECURE YOUR STANCE IN A BUNKER, YOU ALSO PLACE YOUR HANDS CLOSER TO THE BALL.

TO AVOID DIGGING INTO THE SAND TOO DEEPLY, BE SURE TO CHOKE DOWN ON THE SHAFT SUFFICIENTLY TO ESTABLISH YOUR NORMAL ADDRESS POSTURE.



Discussing Sinus Node Dysfunction and Its Symptoms/Treatment

DEAR DR. ROACH: Last year at age 76, I was diagnosed with sinus node dysfunction after several episodes of what I'd call being "spaced out" (for lack of a better term). I couldn't explain these instances to myself, much less anyone else lest they think I was crazy, until I had one where I passed out. This scared me, and I told my husband, who immediately made a doctor's appointment.

The wise physician assistant sent me to a cardiologist who had me wear a heart monitor for two weeks. During this time, I had another episode that lasted for seven seconds, according to the very alarmed cardiologist. I was immediately scheduled for pacemaker surgery.

Could you please discuss sinus node dysfunction and enlighten me as to what caused it? -- G.W.T.

ANSWER: The sinus of your heart has nothing to do with your nose as you might guess; it's a structure in the right atrium where blood flows into the heart from the venae cavae. It contains a structure called the "sinus node" or "sinoatrial node" that serves as the natural pacemaker for the heart.

If the SA node makes an electrical impulse, but it is poorly conducted, this results in an SA block. The sinus node may be too slow (sinus bradycardia), or it may fail to make an impulse for a period of time or even permanently (sinus pauses and sinus arrest). All of these are included in the umbrella term of "sinus node dysfunction" (which used to be called "sick sinus syndrome" since it's accompanied by periods of a too-fast heart rate).

When the sinus node fails to provide an impulse, other pacemakers in the heart will usually provide an "escape" beat, which prevents the symptom of being "spaced out." Some people describe this as fatigue or lightheadedness. If there is no escape beat, then you will get a sinus pause as you did. When the sinus pause is very long, the person will often faint (which we term "syncope").

One of my fellow residents got a call from the attending cardiologist who was reading the heart monitor of a patient on the inpatient service and had found a sinus pause that lasted for 17 seconds. (I can still recall the cardiologist saying, "Good god, man! Is this patient still alive?" to the utter horror of my fellow resident, who literally ran to the patient's bedside. The patient was alive, fortunately.)

The placement of a permanent pacemaker is the definitive treatment for sinus node dysfunction, but not everyone needs this. It's also important to look for exacerbating factors (especially medicines but also thyroid disease, blockages of the heart arteries, liver disease, and low oxygen, among others) that can affect the sinus node.

These factors can make the disease of the sinus node become symptomatic due to fibrosis of the area around the SA node and its accompanying conduction tissue. Most of the time, no specific cause for sinus node dysfunction can be found, but systemic diseases like amyloidosis, sarcoidosis and hemochromatosis are rare causes of sinus node dysfunction.

DEAR DR. ROACH: When is a cough considered chronic? -- B.B.A.

ANSWER: We do have formal definitions. An acute cough is present for less than three weeks, and infections -- both viral (cold, flu, bronchitis) and bacterial (bronchitis, pneumonia) -- are the most common causes. A subacute cough is present for three to six weeks. Postinfectious irritability is a common cause, but asthma and chronic rhinitis are also common.

A chronic cough is present for longer than six weeks. There are many causes, but asthma, reflux disease (GERD), and postnasal drip are the most common. Medications (ACE inhibitors), eosinophilic bronchitis, and certain chronic infections (like pertussis or tuberculosis) should be considered as well.

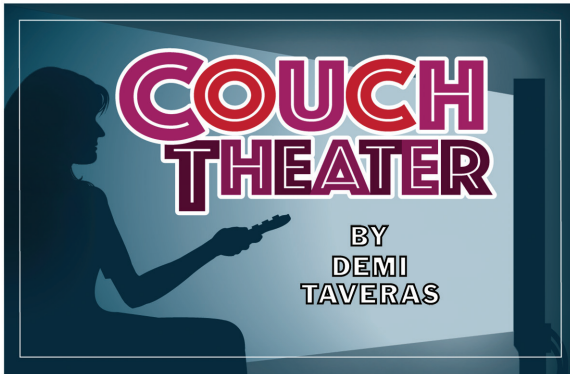
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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George Clooney, left, and Adam Sandler star in "Jay Kelly." (Courtesy of Netflix)

"Jay Kelly" (R) -- This comedy-drama film directed by Noah Baumbach ("Marriage Story") presents a very emotional and layered depiction of the life of a famous actor named Jay Kelly. George

Clooney ("Wolfs") stars as the world-renowned Jay -- a charismatic, suave man, the type of actor you see on screen and can't take your eyes off of. Of course, behind every heartthrob who can deliver lines well, there usually lies some convoluted personal life that's meant to be kept hidden from the world. And with Jay, it's no different. Even though he lives a spectacular life and has a team (comprised of Adam Sandler and Laura Dern) that scrambles to leap over every obstacle Jay creates for himself, a deep loneliness and sadness emanate from him. This leaves us to wonder, is the life of being a famous actor worth the price? Clooney and Sandler have already received Golden Globe nominations for their performances in the film, which is out now to stream! (Netflix)

"The Running Man" (R) -- If you've seen Edgar Wright's "Baby Driver," you know that Wright excels in creating action-packed blockbusters with a splash of comedy and incredulity. His latest release, starring Glen Powell ("Twisters"), is an adaptation of Stephen King's 1982 novel "The Running Man," and Wright does not hold back on the action! The film takes place in a near-future United States that is ruled by an authoritarian media network. The network's most popular TV program is called "The Running Man," where runners sign up to win \$1 billion if they can survive 30 days without getting killed by the network's hunters. (Think "Squid Games" or "The Hunger Games.") Powell plays a blue-collar man named Ben, who signs up with the purpose of buying medicine for his daughter. But once he's thrown into the game, he realizes his actual purpose in the game is much larger than just escaping a few cold-blooded murderers. Available to rent on Dec. 16. (Apple TV+)

"Little Disasters" (TV-MA) -- Diane Kruger, who's most notably known for her roles in "National Treasure" and "Inglourious Basterds," takes on a leading role in this new limited drama/thriller series out now to stream. This is the second novel of Sarah Vaughan's to get a miniseries adaptation, the first one being "Anatomy of a Scandal" in 2022. The little disasters commence at once in this six-episode series when mother Jess' (Kruger) life is thrown for a loop after her child suffers a concerning head injury. Her best friend, who is also the accident and emergency doctor treating the child, subsequently files a report to child social services following the incident. This results in major cracks within their friendship and even an unveiling of hidden secrets that Jess desperately tried to keep buried. Ben Bailey Smith ("Andor") and Jo Joyner ("Riptide") co-star. (Paramount+)

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1. Name the artist who released "If I Can't Have You."
2. Which male artist wrote and released "This Is It" in 1979.
3. Who had a No. 1 hit on the Adult Contemporary chart with "It Might Be You"?
4. Which group released "When I See You Smile"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Listen to me, baby, you got to understand, You're old enough to know the makings of a man."

Answers

1. Yvonne Elliman, on the soundtrack to "Saturday Night Fever" in 1977 and then her "Night Flight" album the following year. The song had been written by the Bee Gees, and they followed with their own version.
2. Kenny Loggins. The song only went to No. 11 but ended up with a Grammy for Best Male Pop Vocal in 1981. For two years it was used as the theme music for basketball tournaments.
3. Stephen Bishop, in 1982. In 1995 Roberta Flack's cover version was used in the film "Waiting to Exhale." The song was then used for the closing credits of "The Pretty One" in 2013.
4. Bad English, in 1989.
5. "Lightnin' Strikes," by Lou Christie, in 1965. The song topped the charts in both the U.S. and Canada. It was Christie's only No. 1 hit.

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GRIN *and* BEAR IT ^{Wagner}



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"Could you manage a little less bah-humbug and a little more ho-ho-ho?"

Just Like Cats & Dogs

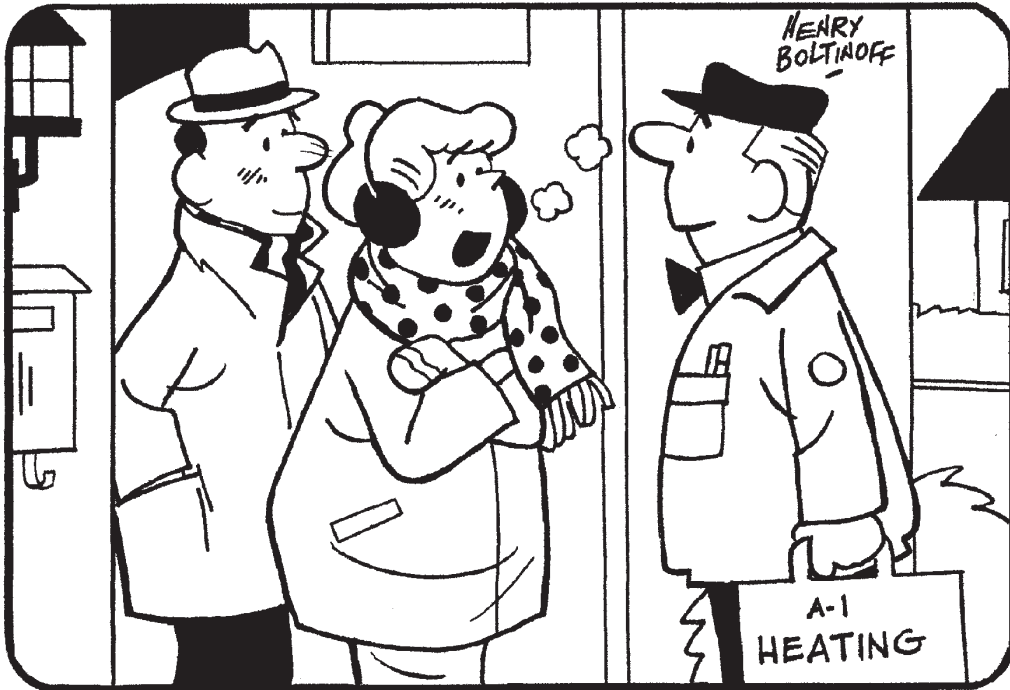
by Dave T. Phipps



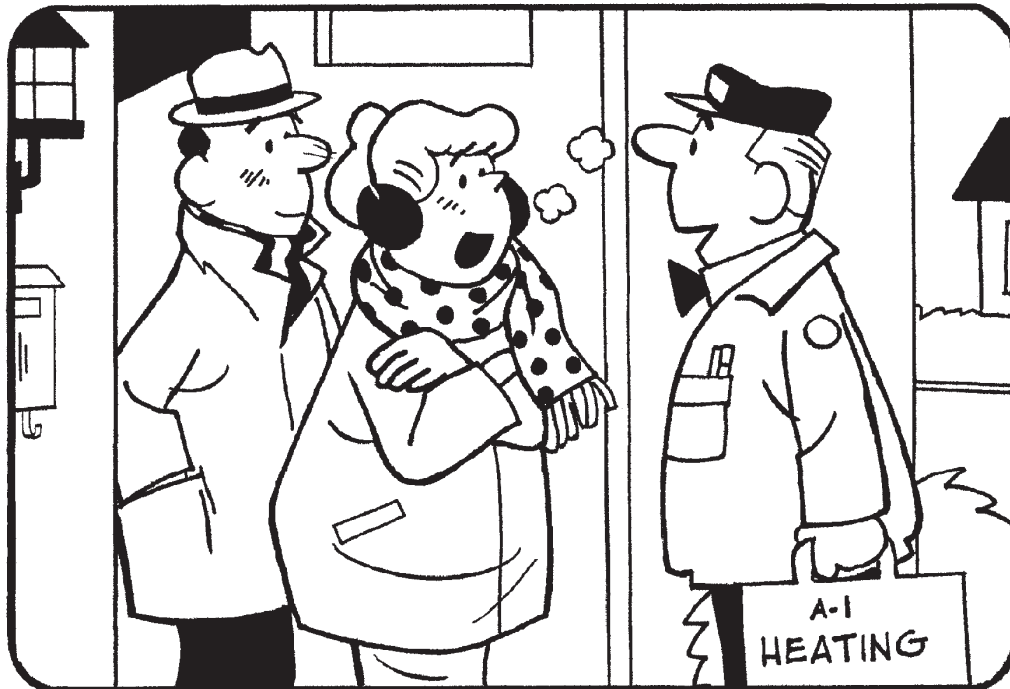
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Mailbox is smaller. 2. Patch on sleeve is higher. 3. Mouth is open. 4. Roof is open. 5. Cap is different. 6. Mitten is missing.

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* One of the best ways to eat less at a holiday party is to eat something small that is healthy and minorly filling before you head out. You'll make better decisions when you aren't starving, and save yourself a ton of calories. Here are more ways to keep holiday parties from blowing your calorie budget.

* "Going potluck? Bring your own healthy appetizer to the party. This way, you'll be certain to have at least one dish you can pig out on. Go with cut vegetables and dip rather than bringing chips or bread. You can use the veggies to pair with other dips to save more calories." -- A.R. in Texas

* Drinks are full of empty calories, whether they are cocktails or sugary sodas, so slow down and have water every other drink. When at the bar, ask for low-calorie mixers like soda

water, not sugary juices, to whip up your cocktail.

* "How much wine is in your pour? Extra-large cups and free-flowing bottles can mean super-sized servings of vino. A serving of wine is 5 ounces. Here's a tip: Set your wine glass on the table. It will be easier to see how much is in your glass." -- Y.O. in New York

* You might be packing it on, but you can also burn it off. Commit to dancing every other song. Get your workout out of the way early so you feel great in the evening.

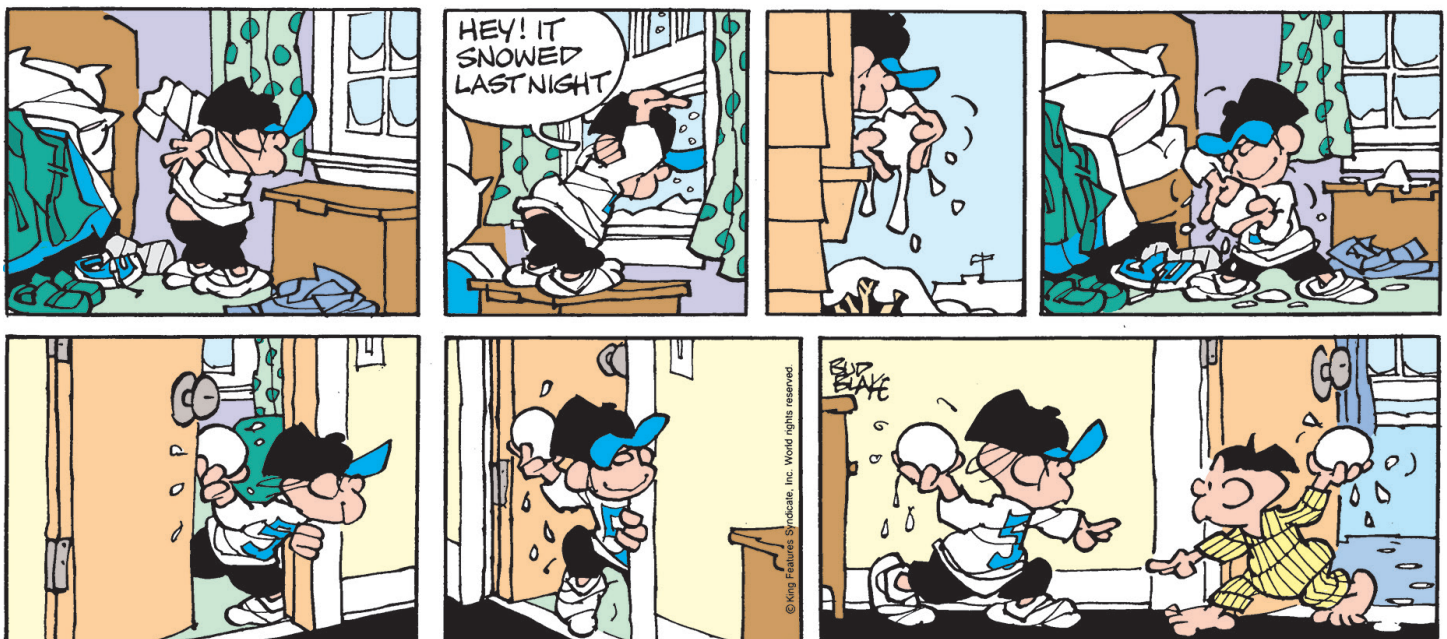
* "Walk away from the food table so you don't graze. Never sit at a table with bowls of anything parked in front of you. Work the room instead." -- A.A. in Florida

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

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TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



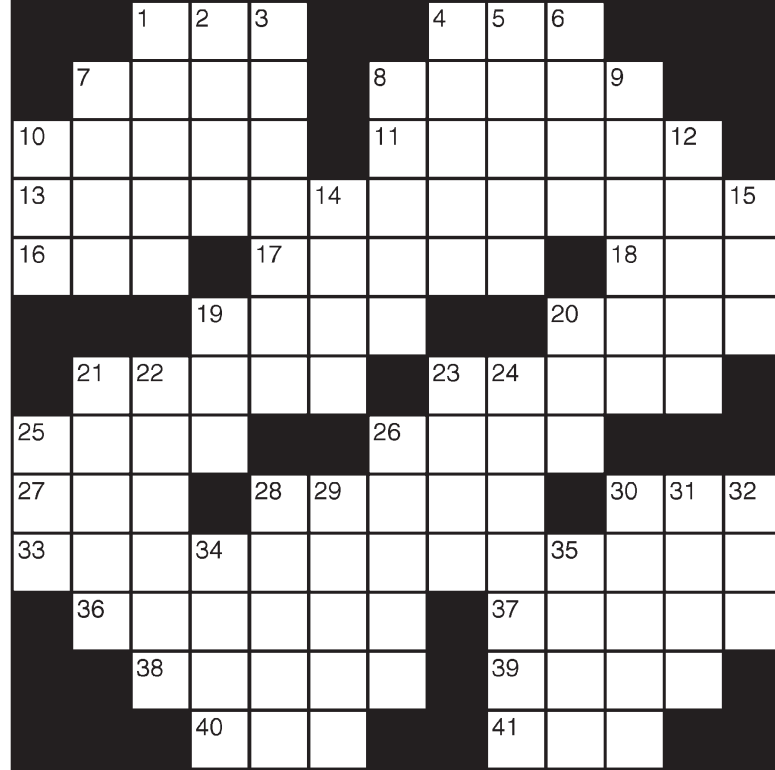
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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Train alternative
- 4 Tease
- 7 Former frosh
- 8 Wyoming's — Range
- 10 Valerie Harper sitcom
- 11 Eventually
- 13 Play dough?
- 16 Observe
- 17 Concepts
- 18 Sailor
- 19 Peevish fit
- 20 Hardy lass
- 21 Winner's gesture
- 23 Seaboard
- 25 Sneaky laughs
- 26 Mediocre
- 27 Actress
- 28 Flinch, say
- 30 Gratuity
- 33 Work week start, for many
- 36 Some Algonquians
- 37 Smidgens
- 38 Where the action is
- 39 Family
- 40 Chang's brother



- 41 Solo in space
- 9 City on the Loire
- 23 Couturier Chanel
- 24 African bird
- 25 Scene stealer
- 26 "The Metamorphosis" protagonist
- 28 Asian noodles
- 29 Gawking at
- 30 Giant
- 31 — uproar
- 32 Film ratings
- 34 Challenge
- 35 The Big Easy acronym

DOWN

- 1 Trailblazer Daniel
- 2 High hairstyle
- 3 Giving form to
- 4 Uganda neighbor
- 5 Things
- 6 Nitwit
- 7 Loafer, for one
- 8 Apartment sign

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King Crossword

Answers

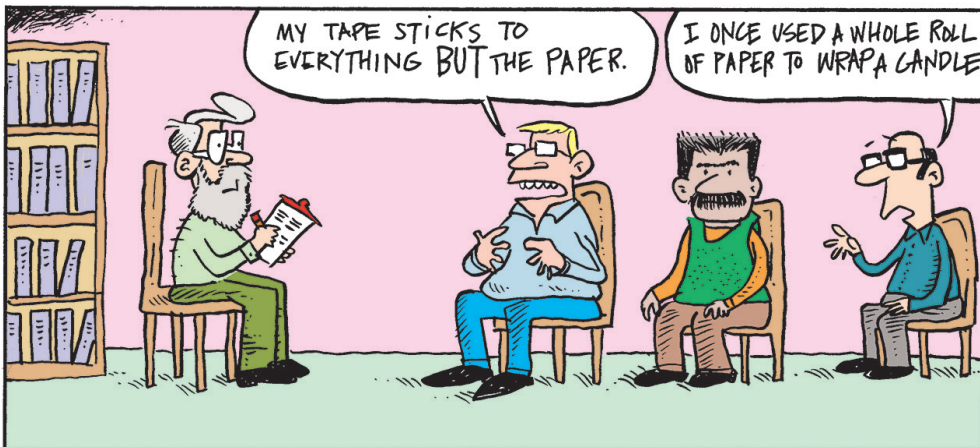
Solution time: 24 mins.

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



Out on a Limb

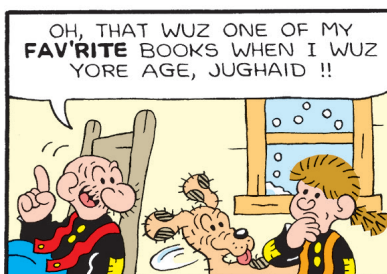
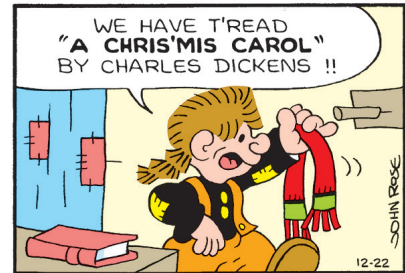
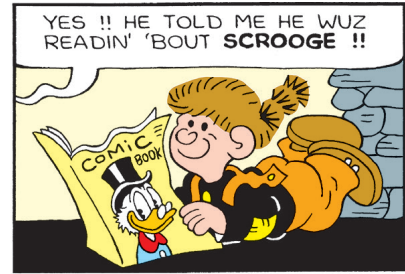
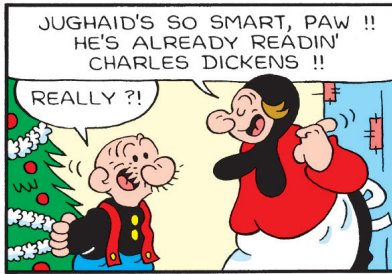
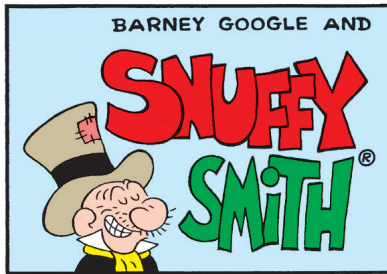
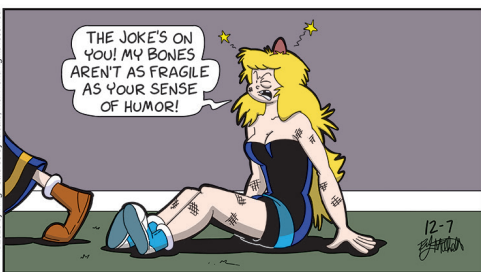
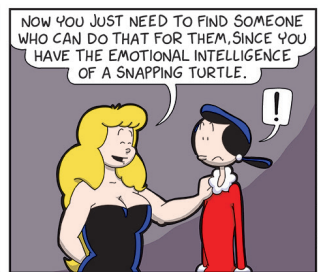
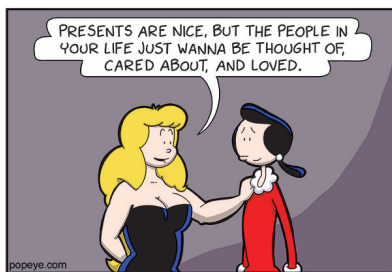
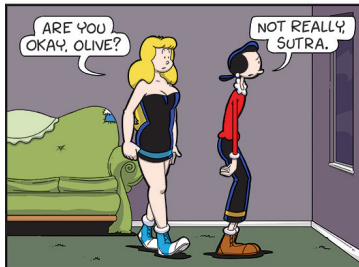
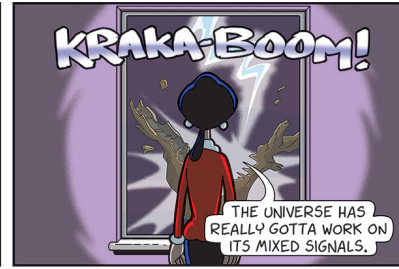


by Gary Kopervas



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... AND YOUR OFF-SHORE NORSE ALLIES CANNOT STAY ONCE THEIR WATER RUNS OUT. WE WILL NOT LET THEM LAND...



"... SO LET US BE SENSIBLE. IF YOU ALLOW US TO REPAIR OUR SHIP, WE WILL TAKE YOU OFF THIS DREADFUL PLACE. WE CAN DIVIDE UP THE WOMEN LATER." SO ENDS THE PALAVER, WITH VAL HARD-PRESSED TO RESTRAIN ZULFA.

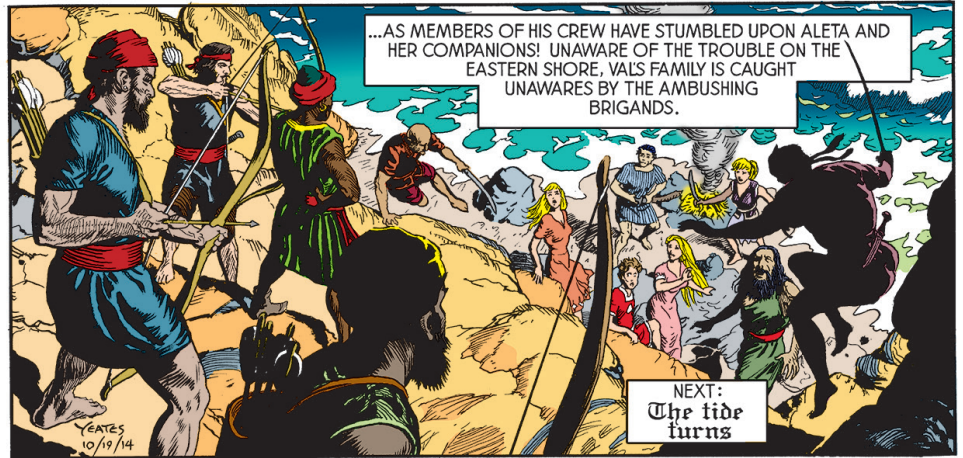
STRAKONUS THE PIRATE USES A PALAVER TO STALL FOR TIME: "KNIGHT, I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE A WAY OFF THIS ISLAND..."

4054



STRAKONUS CANNOT KNOW IT, BUT THE SAME TIME HIS DRAWN-OUT PALAVER HAS CONSUMED HAS BOUGHT A SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGE ON THE ISLAND'S FAR SHORE...

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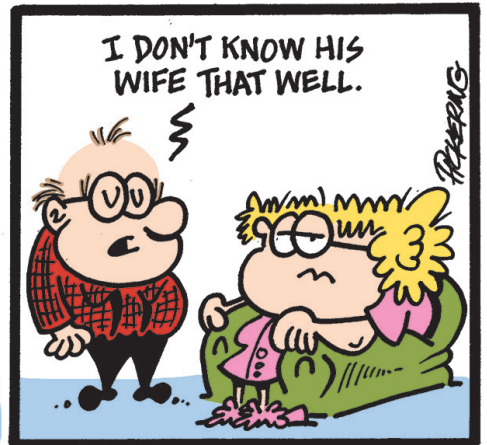
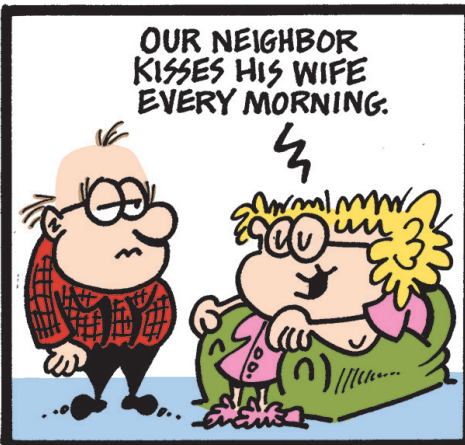


...AS MEMBERS OF HIS CREW HAVE STUMBLED UPON ALETA AND HER COMPANIONS! UNAWARE OF THE TROUBLE ON THE EASTERN SHORE, VALS FAMILY IS CAUGHT UNAWARES BY THE AMBUSHING BRIGANDS.

NEXT:
The tide turns

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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PICKERING

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Do we need vitamin supplements?

Many of us have made our list of resolutions for the New Year, and some of those resolutions involve health and fitness. We've decided to get healthy and believe that the answers lie in exercise, diet, social interaction for mental health -- and vitamin supplements.

Of those, the one that puts up red flags is the vitamin supplements. If we don't know what we're doing, however, we can cause problems because what we take might be unsafe.

National Institutes of Health (NIH) has explored the topic of supplements for seniors (www.nia.nih.gov/health/vitamins-and-supplements/dietary-supplements-older-adults) and the site is full of caveats and warnings.

To be considered:

-- If you're hunting for supplement information on the internet or by watching TV ads, be wary about who is behind it. Do they have a reason (such as profit) for promoting a certain supplement?

-- Remember that more is not necessarily better. Too much "more" of any supplement might be harmful to you.

Check the NIH dietary supplement database at dstd.od.nih.gov. They have over 200,000 supplements listed, and you can search by product, brand or ingredient.

Before you start taking supplements, talk to your doctor. You might be advised to make some adjustments to your diet instead, or they might know of a reason in your medical profile that indicates a certain supplement could cause problems for you.

The NIH also recommends looking at the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025, a free publication online at www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf. There is a whole section for older adults.

When it comes to our prescription drugs, we need to be aware there as well. To check for any interactions with drugs you are taking, go to drugs.com, click "Drugs Interaction Checker" and enter the drug name. You'll get a result that shows any interactions as well as warnings, side effects and uses of the drug.

Here's to a healthy 2026 -- with or without vitamin supplements!

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Living Heart Fitness Center

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Physical Therapy. **\$20 a month**

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1. Who became the first Japanese male player to win one of golf's major tournaments when he won the Masters in 2021?

2. At the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Eric Moussambani, a swimmer from Equatorial Guinea, won his heat in the 100-meter freestyle despite recording the slowest time in Olympic history. (His only two competitors were disqualified.) What nickname did the media give him?

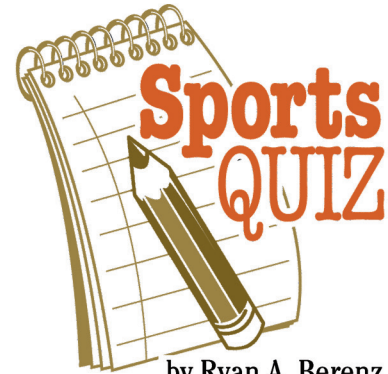
3. Baseball Hall of Famer Joe Cronin, a player, manager, executive and former president of the American League, has his No. 4 retired by what Major League team?

4. Hockey Hall of Famer Babe Siebert drowned in August 1939 at age 35, just weeks before he was to take over as the new head coach of what NHL team?

5. What stunt did actor Michael Sergio pull off during Game 6 of the 1986 World Series?

6. A bridge in West Virginia is named after what boxer and longtime Fayetteville police chief? (Hint: He was Muhammad Ali's first professional opponent.)

7. Thai billionaire Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha, who died in a helicopter crash in 2018, was the owner of which English Premier League football club?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. Hideki Matsuyama.

2. "Eric the Eel."

3. The Boston Red Sox.

4. The Montreal Canadiens.

5. He parachuted onto the field at the New York Mets' Shea Stadium.

6. Tunney Hunsaker.

7. Leicester City F.C.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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Great gifts for pets and owners

Do you have a friend who owns pets, or a pet of your own that you'd like to join in the holiday cheer this Christmas? There are more products than ever for pets -- the challenge is finding the perfect gift from the many choices available. Here are a few items that have impressed me recently, and may make a perfect gift for the dog, cat or pet owner in your life.

Heated dog/cat bed: For older dogs and cats, a heated pad or bed provides welcome comfort for their aching joints, especially in winter.

Sturdy chew toys: Kong ruled the "indestructible" chew toy market for quite a while, but sturdy, creative chew toys are available from other brands as well. Know the

size of the dog (toy, small, medium, large) before buying so you get the appropriate-sized toy for their jaws.

Scratch pads: Vertical or horizontal scratch pads for cats help them maintain their claws and relieve boredom -- without destroying furniture.

Cat tree: Help cats safely reach a higher plane of existence ... so they can stare out the window. Cat trees fight boredom and most include attached toys and scratch pads, creating an all-in-one activity center.

Window perch: Need to save space? Try a window perch or hammock instead of a cat tree. Most mount on the sill, so cats can lounge while staring at the fauna outside.

Gift cards: If you're not sure what a pet owner needs, then a gift card to an online or brick-and-mortar pet supply store is the way to go.

If you're short on cash but want to give a thoughtful gift: Offer to walk dogs or pet-sit. Help elderly pet owners care for their pets. Or, volunteer at a local shelter.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

* In 1945, Soviet children presented the U.S. ambassador in Moscow with a wooden Great Seal as a friendship gift. It just happened to include a hidden listening device, which spied on American diplomats for seven years before it was discovered.

* When humans blush, their stomach also turns red.

* The Brazilian free-tailed bat uses chirps, buzzes and trills to form unique syllables in a type of “love song” to attract females, as well as ward off male competition.

* On the California side of the U.S.-Mexican border is a city named Calexico. On the opposite side is a town called Mexicali.

* Parthenophobia is a fear of virgins.

* England’s Queen Victoria defied both the clergy and her personal physician to become the first monarch to use anesthesia (chloroform) during childbirth.

* Actor Liam Neeson trained to be a teacher but got fired after punching a student who pulled a knife on him.

* Women blink about two times less often than men.

* Professional chefs in wealthy 17th-century European households were primarily men, who often cooked in the nude or in their underwear due to kitchens’ intense heat.

* Deaf quarterback Paul Hubbard was the first to use the “round formation huddle” in football, to ensure that his teammates could interpret his hand gestures.

* Inventor A.J. Grafham tried to increase car travel safety with his 1930’s sponge rubber seat, which promised to protect pedestrians from injury if they were hit by a speeding automobile.

* In Japan, Ronald McDonald is known as Donald McDonald.

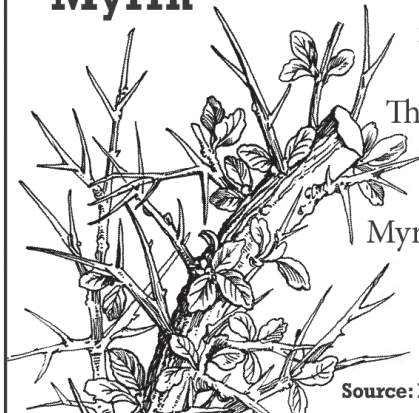
* Benedict Cumberbatch is the second cousin, 16 times removed, of King Richard III, whom he portrayed in the 2016 BBC miniseries “The Hollow Crown.”

Thought for the Day: “Although golf was originally restricted to wealthy, overweight Protestants, today it’s open to anybody who owns hideous clothing.” -- Dave Barry

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The Garden Bug

Myrrh



Myrrh trees grow in the very hot, very dry regions of the Arabian Peninsula, Somalia and Ethiopia. The resin of the myrrh tree has a long and ancient history as a valuable substance in

many cultures. To harvest it, the tree itself is wounded repeatedly to cause its resin to “bleed” out, then harden.

These secretions are then collected and used to make perfume, incense, flavoring for food and as medicine.

Myrrh can be grown in warm, arid parts of the U.S. such as southern California, Arizona, Texas, and Florida.

- Brenda Weaver

Source: healthyplants.com/Myrrh



by Freddy Groves

Saving lives with Buddy Check

One of the most valuable things you can do in the new year will be to check on your buddies, those you've served with and those in your area, and make a regular routine of it. It's called Buddy Check, and you could be saving a life.

A few stats:

-- Depending on the source you read, there are 17 to 22 veteran suicides per day. Yes, the numbers have decreased slightly over the years, but even one is too many.

-- The rate of male veteran suicides is 60% higher than for nonveterans. For women veterans, the numbers are even higher.

-- The reasons vary. Between needing to adjust to civilian life, homelessness, isolation, not wanting to ask for help and PTSD, many of our buddies are in trouble, especially if brain injury (even mild TBI) is part of the equation.

This is where you come in, with Buddy Check.

Go online to va.gov and search for "Veteran Buddy Checks." Click on the fact-packed 20-minute training video and learn how you can help. Become familiar with the S.A.V.E. acronym -- know the Signs, Ask the right questions, Value their life and Enlist help. Then take the pledge to check on 10 veteran buddies.

Your best source to locate other veterans is the Together We Served website (www.TogetherWeServed.com). To access the data base you'll need to enter your name, email address and branch of service. If you want, you can add a few details about yourself. Once on the site, you'll find a unit directory and over 2 million veterans who've signed up. You can start with their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/TogetherWeServed.

Look at the American Legion Buddy Check. Go to www.legion.org and search for "Buddy Check." Learn about their program and download the tool kit.

If you are the one who needs help, don't wait, don't hesitate. Help is only a phone call away, day or night, at the Veterans Crisis Line. Dial 988 and press 1. Or text to 838255. For confidential support for a family member or friend, see VeteransCrisisLine.net.

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Wishing Well®

3	4	8	6	5	2	5	8	6	7	6	8	7
A	A	L	T	C	A	O	I	A	W	K	N	A
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2	8	5	7	3	5	3	7	5	8	4	8	5
S	I	I	A	F	C	F	S	E	L	S	E	S

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

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1. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Who was the first left-handed president?
2. GEOGRAPHY: What country is home to the largest cave in the world?
3. MOVIES: Who is the voice of Buzz Lightyear in the "Toy Story" movies?
4. HISTORY: Who was the first emperor of Rome?
5. LITERATURE: In what city is James Joyce's novel "Ulysses" set?
6. TELEVISION: What is the name of Data's cat on "Star Trek: The Next Generation"?
7. ASTRONOMY: What is an exploding star called?
8. SCIENCE: What kind of cloud is associated with thunderstorms?
9. U.S. STATES: Which states have no sales tax?
10. ANATOMY: What is the function of the carotid arteries?

Answers

1. James Garfield.
2. Vietnam.
3. Tim Allen.
4. Augustus.
5. Dublin, Ireland.
6. Spot.
7. A supernova.
8. Cumulonimbus.
9. Five states have no sales tax: Alaska, Delaware, Montana, New Hampshire and Oregon.
10. They supply oxygen-rich blood to the face, neck and brain.

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South Dakota Governor



Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Bold – and Sustainable

An old pastor of mine used to give the advice, “Don’t wait for doors to open; check the doors, and see if they’re unlocked.” More often than not, South Dakota takes this advice. We don’t settle for the way things are – we always strive to do better and pursue opportunity.

Aberdeen is a community that is building on its momentum thanks to strong leadership and a vision for the future. Aberdeen’s job growth has climbed by 8% in recent years – that’s remarkable! They’ve attracted high-quality companies like Harris Machine Company and Smack Pet Food. But instead of saying “good enough,” they’ve looked for opportunities to build on that growth.

Success also brings responsibility, and Aberdeen is taking that responsibility seriously. Currently, Aberdeen has just one available investment property left, so the community got to work expanding its capacity. They aren’t waiting for doors to open; they’re checking the doors. They’re creating their own opportunity, and they have a plan to make it happen.

Aberdeen is developing two new business parks, and they’ve launched an ambitious capital campaign to get it done. They’ve already raised \$7 million from local leaders and private investors – that’s remarkable! And I’m supporting that momentum with a \$1 million grant from the Future Fund.

When vision turns to action, that’s how we keep our communities growing and thriving. That’s how we keep expanding local businesses. That’s how we keep recruiting new companies. That’s how we ensure strong career opportunities for our kids and our grandkids.

Ultimately, that’s what economic development is all about: opening more doors of opportunity for our kids and grandkids. We want them to be able to pursue the careers of their dreams without having to go somewhere else to do it. And we want our communities to prepare for the next wave of opportunity.

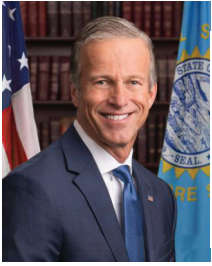
There are a number of tools in the economic development toolbox. I view the Future Fund as a tool that works best when it is supporting strategic, forward-looking investments. These investments support growth, strengthen communities, and ensure that South Dakota remains competitive.

As governor, I am going to prioritize investments that are bold, yet sustainable. They’re bold enough to seize opportunity – and they’re wise enough to prepare for the future in a responsible, sustainable way.

Our state has a lot to celebrate. Communities like Aberdeen are growing and thriving. South Dakota is moving forward! And for as long as I am your Governor, we will keep it that way.

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JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Delivering for South Dakota

It's been a busy year in the United States Senate. The new Republican majority is working hard to deliver on our promises to the American people, and while there's more to be done, there's a lot we've accomplished just this year. We've delivered permanent tax relief that puts more money in working families' pockets. We've provided certainty to small businesses, farms, and ranches with permanent tax relief and strengthened the farm safety net. And we've made significant investments to make America safer and stronger.

I know the top concern for many South Dakotans is higher costs – it's something I hear about when I travel across our state, whether it's from a small business owner in Isabel, a farmer at Dakotafest, or working parents. Affordability begins with having more money in your pocket, and that's exactly what Republicans have done with the Working Families Tax Cuts, which prevents a \$2,500 tax hike on a typical South Dakota family next year. When the new tax law takes effect in the new year, South Dakotans will begin to see benefits from permanent tax relief. The larger child tax credit, bigger standard deduction, and a bonus deduction for seniors will be available this tax season, and that means larger refunds come Tax Day.

South Dakota's farmers and ranchers are also at the top of my priority list. Agriculture producers will benefit from this permanent tax relief too, including from the 199A deduction and a higher death tax exemption threshold. Republicans also delivered updates to the farm safety net to support farmers and ranchers through the economic headwinds they continue to face. That includes increased reference prices for every covered commodity, making livestock programs more responsive to drought, and funding prevention of animal diseases that can devastate livestock.

Supporting rural communities is also an important priority of mine. Separate from the Working Families Tax Cuts, this year's annual agriculture funding bill puts federal dollars toward rural broadband expansion, and I've been working with the Trump administration to deliver internet access to unserved areas. Then there's health care, which can be challenging to access in rural areas, especially when a hospital or health center closes. So Republicans took action to support rural hospitals with the Rural Health Transformation Program, which South Dakota plans to use to bolster health care facilities and grow and retain our health care workforce in rural areas. And we repealed a Biden-era staffing mandate that threatened the viability of rural nursing homes in South Dakota.

There's a lot more that we've accomplished for South Dakota this year. There are the investments in Ellsworth Air Force Base – including full funding for the B-21 mission and supporting infrastructure. There's the support for local law enforcement in the One Big Beautiful Bill, and new border security resources to help stop illegal immigration and the flow of drugs across our southern border. We've repealed electric vehicle mandates that were simply not realistic for a state like ours, where long distances and cold weather are a fact of life. And we're even doing our part to support the pheasant population in our state.

I come to work every day to get results for South Dakota. I'm proud of what we've accomplished this year, and there's still more to come. So I'll be keeping my foot on the gas to continue delivering for South Dakotans.

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December 1 - 7, 2025

Welcome back to another edition of my Weekly Round[s] Up. It was another productive and fast-paced week in Washington as we move toward the end of the year. This past week, I announced my nominations to the U.S. Service Academies for the upcoming school year. Congratulations to all nominees for earning these highly competitive nominations

through their dedication, leadership and academic excellence. They have bright futures ahead of them. Read more about this process and a full list of my nominees here. More on the rest of my week in my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I visited with: Dr. José-Marie Griffiths, President of Dakota State University; South Dakota students with Jobs for America's Graduates; Justin Tupper from St. Onge, President of U.S. Cattlemen's Association; and Michael Pauley with South Dakota Catholic Conference.

Met with South Dakotans from: Madison, Martin, Mission, Presho, Sioux Falls and St. Onge.

Other meetings: Mike Gilday, Executive, Admiral (Retired), U.S. Navy and Josh Stiefel; Baju Bhatt, Founder and CEO of Aetherflux and Co-Founder of Robinhood; Moldovan Delegation; Jensen Huang, CEO of NVIDIA; and Bimal Patel, General Counsel at PayPal.

Briefings: I attended one Senate Armed Services Committee briefing, two closed Senate Select Committee on Intelligence briefings and one Central Intelligence Agency briefing.

Introduced Legislation: This week I introduced legislation called the Developing and Empowering Our Aspiring Leaders (DEAL) Act that would increase access to capital for America's innovators. The DEAL Act passed the House of Representatives unanimously this week. You can read more about it here.

Reagan National Defense Forum: This past weekend I attended the Reagan National Defense Forum in Simi Valley, California. On Saturday, I took part in a panel titled Forging Ahead with Speed: Transitioning to New Technologies at the Pentagon. It was a productive weekend reviewing ways to strengthen America's national defense and continuing to build partnerships between the military, industrial base and congress.

Senate Bible Study: On Tuesday, I hosted our weekly Senate Bible Study in my office. We discussed the verse John 14:16.

Votes taken: 11 – This past week I voted on nominees David Bragdon and Lindsey Freeman, of North Carolina, to be U.S. District Judges for the Middle District of North Carolina (Yea). We also voted on Susan Rodriguez and Matthew Orso, of North Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of North Carolina (Yea). I also voted on Senator Murkowski's Disapproval of Biden Coastal Plain Program ROD CRA (Yea).

My staff in South Dakota visited: Deadwood, Ft. Pierre and Lead.

Steps taken: 69,925 steps or 33.86 miles.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

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1-352-216-3025

When It Comes to Gifts, I'm Not Gifted

Christmas is my favorite holiday. A time of celebration and enjoying family time together.

It wasn't always my favorite holiday. There was a time when my birthday was my favorite holiday of the year. I enjoyed celebrating my birthday with presents and that amazing birthday cake that The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage always made.

That is, when I reached 50 years on my birthday, it came to an end. No more celebrating getting one year older. Every day on my birthday, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage would say, "Today you are one year older." And then she would laugh.

That was the last birthday I had, and I don't remember it anymore, or at least that's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

Now Christmas is my favorite holiday, and I enjoy just about every aspect of it. It's great to have my family together around the Christmas tree and sharing Christmas presents. That's a really fun time of the year.

I must confess that I do have a problem with the Christmas holiday.

I don't have any problem with gathering together and eating a marvelous Christmas dinner. The issue I have concerns the gifts. When it comes to something like gifts, I am absolutely not gifted.

Unlike The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, I really don't know how to shop. I don't know what gifts to buy for anybody in my family. Sometimes I give cash.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage starts her Christmas shopping right after the 4th of July. All summer long, she will be shopping for and storing those Christmas gifts in her craft room. Of course, I never go into her craft room because I would get lost and not know my way out. But she can figure out every gift every individual in our family deserves.

I can't sit down and name all of the family members, let alone know what they would like for Christmas.

When I was a kid, my parents would take me downtown to visit Santa Claus. I would sit on Santa Claus's lap and tell him what I really wanted for Christmas. Little did I know that my parents were right next to Santa, listening to all my Christmas wish lists?

It was amazing on Christmas Day to find out that Santa had come through with my Christmas gifts. It took me a long time to realize that Santa had nothing to do with my Christmas gifts, but they all came from my parents. My parents knew me better than I knew myself.

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That said, looking back on my life of Christmas gifts, I do not believe I could name my favorite. I'm not even sure what I got for Christmas last year.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I celebrate our 55th Christmas this year. She can sit around the Christmas tree and recall every gift we have ever received or given and to whom.

That makes Christmas a great challenge for me. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage has no problem with Christmas gift shopping. I must confess that most of the time I let her do the shopping for me, I have to pay for it.

One of the greatest disappointments in Christmas gifts is that I don't know who wants what.

Another problem I have with Christmas gifts is that I don't know what I want. I can't think of anything that I would want anybody in my family to buy me for Christmas. They always come around and bring me things that surprise me, and I appreciate it. But if I had to make a list of what I wanted for Christmas, that list would be blank even today.

My other big problem with Christmas gifts is for The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. I would never know what Christmas gift she would like from me. What does she need for Christmas? After all, she has me, so what else does she need?

If I'm going to do Christmas right, I'll need to ask The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage what I should get for each of the family members. When I asked her that question, she didn't need to think about it and came up with a long list of what I could get for each of my family members.

Oh boy, if I didn't have her, I wouldn't be able to celebrate Christmas as I do today.

In her craft room, she has a special place, I don't know where it is, where she stores all of her Christmas gifts for the coming year. She knows what she has and who it's for. I sometimes wonder whether Santa Claus might be part of their family heritage.

I'm looking forward to a wonderful Christmas. It is amazing to me to see the gifts people give each other. I can only assume that they get that trait from The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

Celebrating Christmas around the Christmas tree is a wonderful time to be with family.

Thinking along this line, a scripture came to mind. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Christmas is a great time to gather and give God the glory for all He has done for us. A time to remember all God has done for us during the year and looking forward to the New Year.

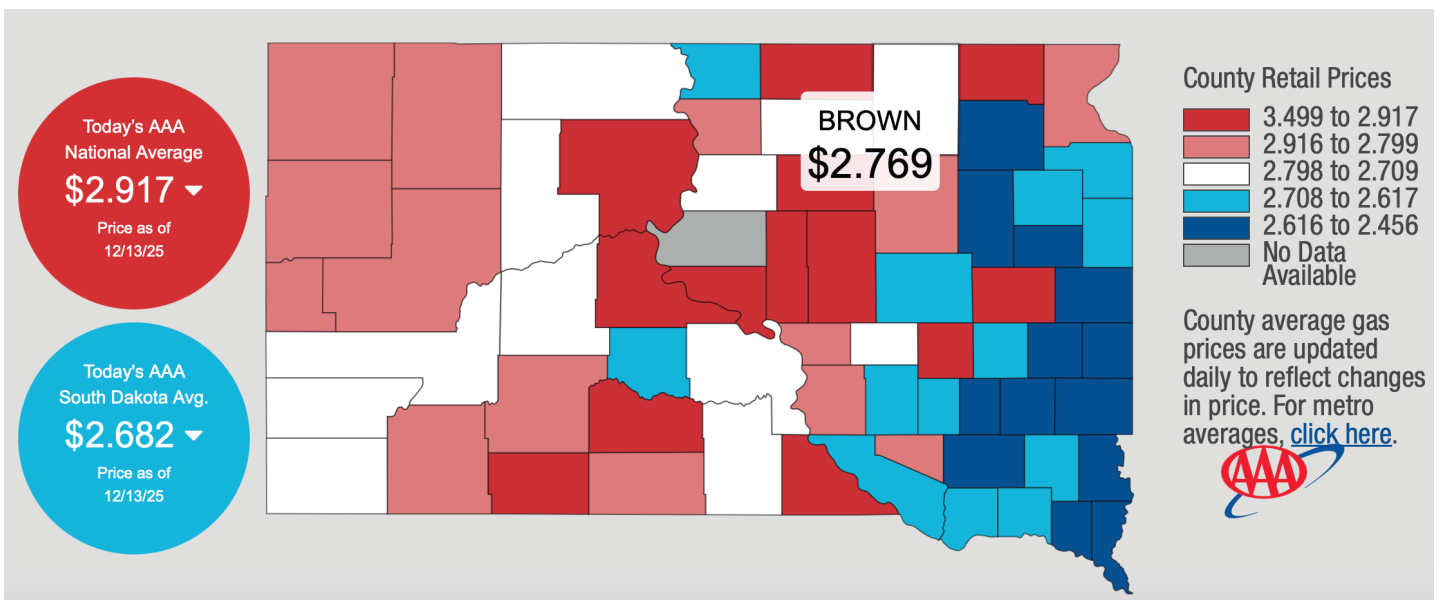
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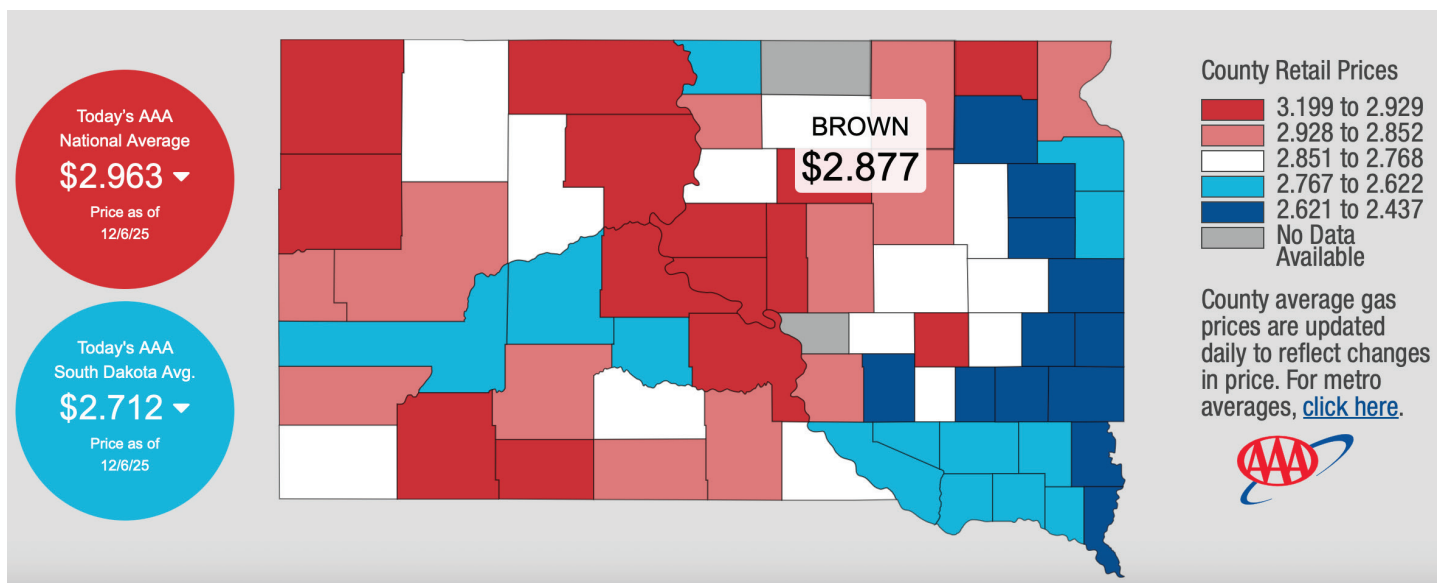
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$2.682	\$2.857	\$3.303	\$3.467
Yesterday Avg.	\$2.685	\$2.860	\$3.298	\$3.458
Week Ago Avg.	\$2.712	\$2.906	\$3.369	\$3.499
Month Ago Avg.	\$2.844	\$3.037	\$3.489	\$3.489
Year Ago Avg.	\$2.818	\$3.023	\$3.451	\$3.242

This Week



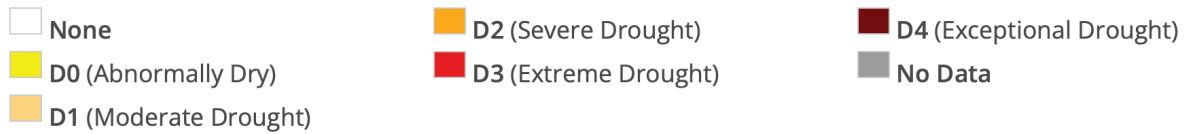
Last Week



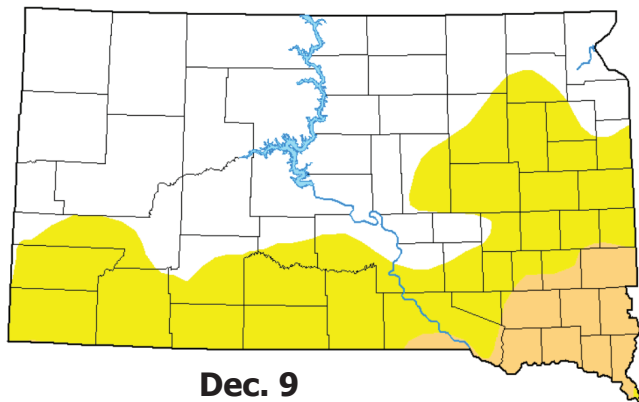
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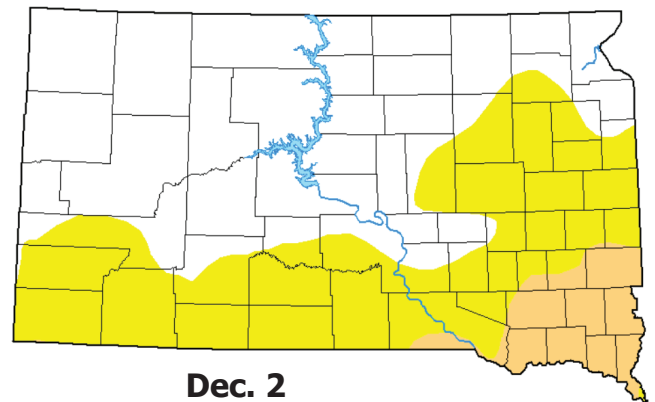
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



Dec. 9



Dec. 2

Conditions across the High Plains changed very little this week as much of the region received only light precipitation and remained colder than normal. The Dakotas saw little meaningful moisture, and Nebraska saw none, leaving drought conditions unchanged. In Kansas, a lack of precipitation combined with continued short-term dryness led to an expansion of abnormal dryness (D0) that stretched into northeastern Oklahoma.

In eastern Wyoming, dryness increased where precipitation was limited, resulting in some expansion of abnormal dryness. In eastern Colorado, light snowfall helped ease small pockets of abnormal dryness, though most areas saw little change.

EARTHTALK

AI Data Centers Erasing Energy Efficiency Gains

by Enhan Yuan

Dear EarthTalk: What's being done to make data centers more energy efficient today, given increased demand from the growth in Artificial Intelligence (AI)?
—Paul B., Reston, VA

The modern world hums with data, over 2.5 quintillion bytes generated every day, driving a growing network of data centers that consume one to two percent of global electricity. These centers operate around the clock, using tens of thousands of gigawatt-hours of power monthly. As AI expands, the energy demands of the digital economy will push tech companies to seek cleaner and more efficient solutions.

One advance comes from the University of Waterloo, where researchers developed ultra-efficient "code kernels" to speed internet traffic while cutting power. Data centers rely on the Linux operating system to

route information. Computer scientist Martin Karsten and Fastly engineer Joe Damato created roughly 30 lines of code that could cut energy use by as much as 30 percent. Karsten estimates that widespread adoption could save considerable electricity worldwide—affecting nearly every online service request.

Companies are also rethinking how data centers are powered. Wind and solar offer clean energy, but their intermittency complicates matters. Google and Microsoft are investing in nuclear energy as a steady, carbon-free power source. Despite high upfront costs and public concern, nuclear's reliability and low emissions make it an increasingly attractive option. Hardware efficiency is also improving. Nvidia's new "superchips" can train AI models more quickly using less electricity per task. But with over 400 billion transistors packed onto a single chip, these processors generate enormous heat—creating another environmental burden: Heat is a major byproduct of data centers, and removing it takes huge amounts of water. In 2022 alone, Google and Microsoft consumed a total of 32 billion liters, largely for cooling. To reduce water dependence, some companies are testing liquid cooling systems that circulate oil-based fluids directly over hot components, conserving water and use much less energy than air cooling.

AI amplifies all of pressures. A single chatbot query can require up to 10 times the power of a standard web search, and some estimates suggest models like GPT-3 can consume a liter of water for every 40–100 responses. Large AI models are especially energy-intensive. Shifting to smaller, more efficient models, companies can reduce both costs and environmental impacts.

So, what can people do? For one, use less data. Efficiency alone often boosts consumption rather than reducing it. Cutting screen time, limiting unnecessary AI queries, and prioritizing real-world interactions can all help slow demand. Instead of endless scrolling, the most powerful response may be stepping outside—before the energy sustaining our virtual habits overwhelms the landscapes we seek to protect..

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.



If we don't make data centers for artificial intelligence more efficient soon, the environmental consequences could be dire... Credit:

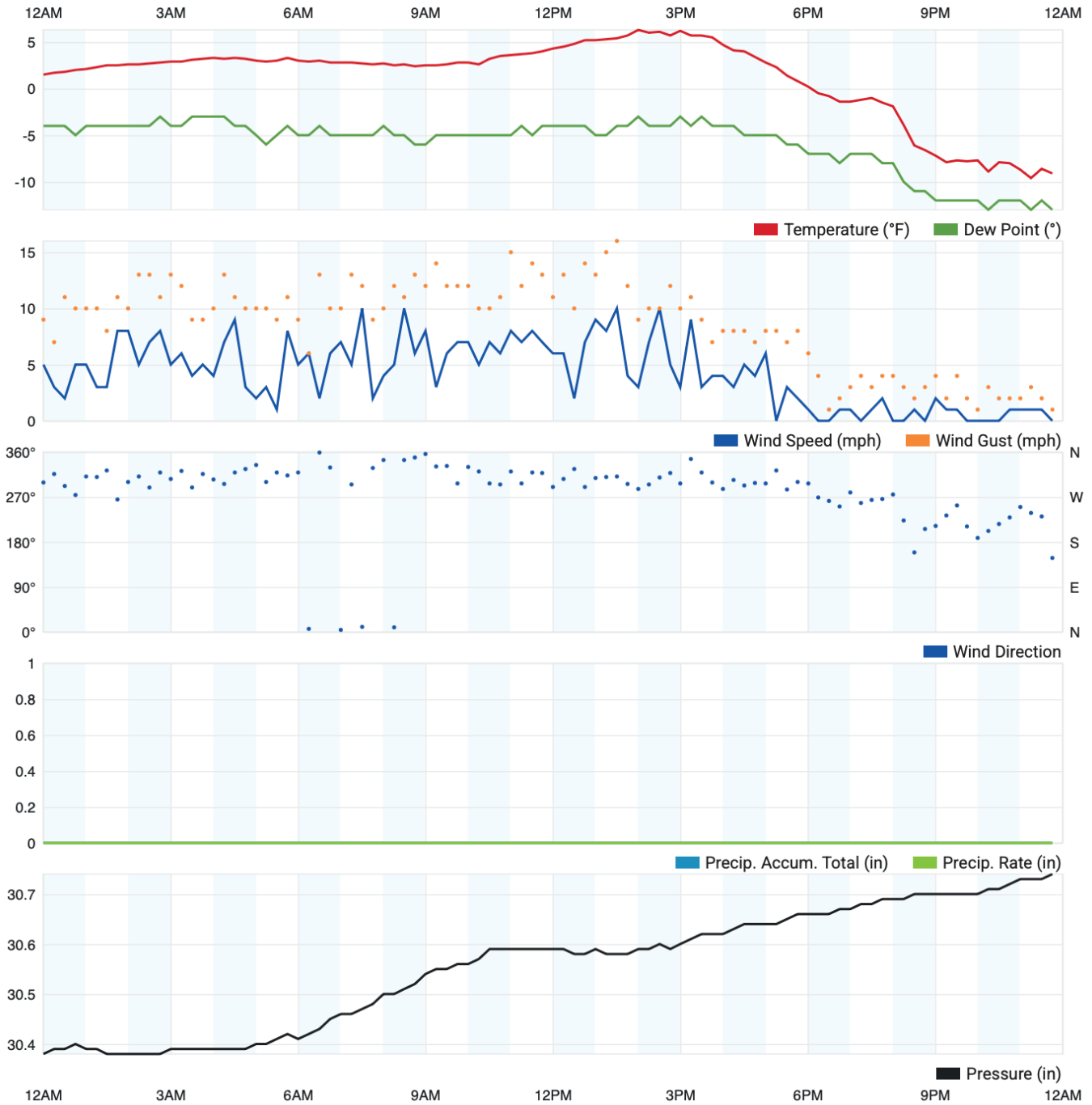
Pexels.com.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

December 13, 2025



Broton Daily Independent

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	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
					
	High: 18 °F	Low: 12 °F	High: 31 °F	Low: 21 °F	High: 42 °F
	Mostly Sunny then Patchy Blowing Snow and Breezy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny

Winds on the Increase Today December 14, 2025 3:33 AM

Key Messages

- Strong south winds on the increase today
 - Winds topping out 25 to 40 mph
 - Locally stronger winds for the Sisseton hills downslope areas this evening
 - Localized blowing/driftng
- Wind Chills early this morning could cause **frostbite in as little as 10 minutes**

	8am	9am	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	Maximum
Aberdeen	18↑	21↑	25↑	29↑	31↑	31↑	32↑	32↑	30↑	28↑	25↑	25↑	23↑	21↑	18↑	32
Britton	16↑	20↑	24↑	29↑	31↑	33↑	35↑	36↑	35↑	35↑	33↑	32↑	31↑	30↑	28↑	36
Chamberlain	20↑	23↑	25↑	28↑	30↑	30↑	30↑	28↑	28↑	25↑	22↑	21↑	17↑	16↑	14↑	30
Clark	17↑	21↑	25↑	29↑	32↑	36↑	36↑	38↑	37↑	37↑	36↑	35↑	33↑	31↑	29↑	38
Eagle Butte	26↑	26↑	26↑	26↑	25↑	24↑	22↑	21↑	18↑	15↑	13↑	14↑	16↑	18↑	21↑	26
Eureka	24↑	26↑	29↑	31↑	32↑	31↑	30↑	28↑	25↑	22↑	20↑	20↑	18↑	17↑	17↑	32
Gettysburg	25↑	29↑	30↑	32↑	32↑	31↑	29↑	28↑	25↑	22↑	20↑	18↑	17↑	16↑	16↑	32
McIntosh	29↑	31↑	32↑	32↑	31↑	31↑	29↑	28↑	25↑	22↑	20↑	20↑	21↑	21↑	22↑	32
Milbank	9↑	13↑	16↑	18↑	22↑	24↑	25↑	28↑	28↑	26↑	26↑	25↑	25↑	25↑	24↑	28
Miller	23↑	26↑	29↑	31↑	33↑	33↑	33↑	32↑	30↑	28↑	25↑	24↑	23↑	21↑	18↑	33
Mobridge	24↑	26↑	29↑	29↑	29↑	28↑	26↑	24↑	22↑	18↑	16↑	15↑	14↑	14↑	14↑	29
Murdo	22↑	23↑	23↑	23↑	25↑	23↑	21↑	20↑	18↑	17↑	16↑	16↑	15↑	15↑	14↑	25
Pierre	21↑	23↑	24↑	24↑	25↑	24↑	23↑	22↑	18↑	16↑	13↑	10↑	9↑	8↑	7↑	25
Redfield	21↑	25↑	29↑	32↑	35↑	36↑	36↑	36↑	33↑	30↑	28↑	25↑	23↑	20↑	17↑	36
Sisseton	12↑	15↑	17↑	21↑	24↑	28↑	29↑	30↑	30↑	31↑	31↑	31↑	31↑	31↑	32↑	32
Watertown	13↑	16↑	21↑	25↑	29↑	31↑	32↑	36↑	36↑	36↑	36↑	36↑	35↑	32↑	30↑	36
Webster	17↑	21↑	24↑	28↑	31↑	33↑	36↑	36↑	36↑	35↑	35↑	35↑	33↑	32↑	30↑	36
Wheaton	12↑	15↑	17↑	21↑	23↑	24↑	26↑	28↑	28↑	28↑	28↑	25↑	23↑	21↑	17↑	28



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Cold to start the morning, and wind chills will remain dangerous as winds increase. Locally stronger winds are expected for the Sisseton hills downslope favored areas later this afternoon/evening too. There could even be some blowing and drifting of snow as well.

Groton Daily Independent

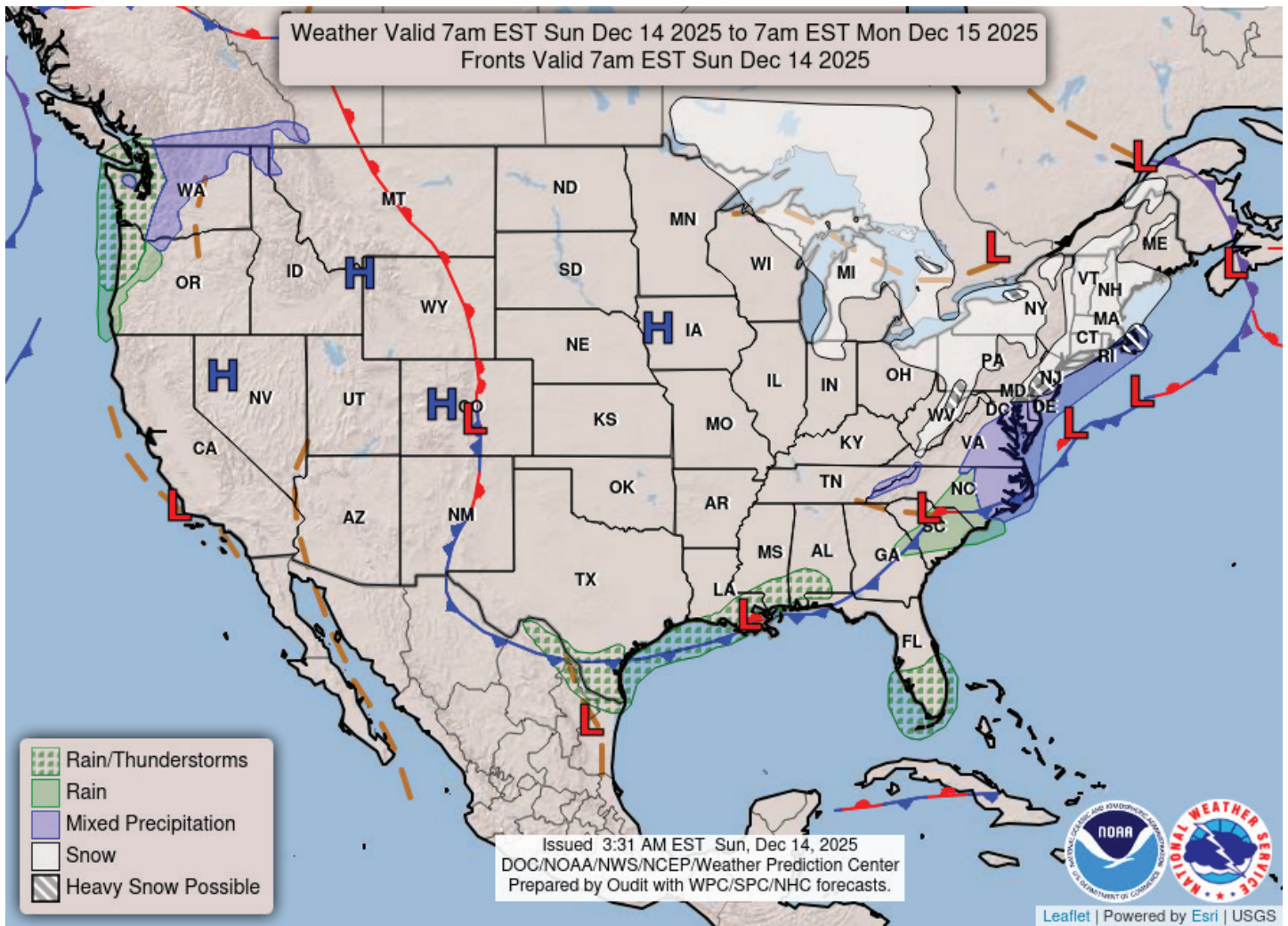
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 6 °F at 2:04 PM
Low Temp: -10 °F at 11:18 PM
Wind: 16 mph at 1:23 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 55 in 1998
Record Low: -30 in 1917
Average High: 29
Average Low: 8
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.27
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.60
Average Precip to date: 21.48
Precip Year to Date: 25.41
Sunset Tonight: 4:49 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:05 am



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Today in Weather History

December 14, 1994: Snow accumulated over all of South Dakota on the 14th but was heavy in the central part of the state and at a few places in the northwest. The greatest accumulations were 11 inches at Murdo and 10 inches at the Lake Sharpe project and near Stephan. The storm caused numerous accidents, but no fatalities or injuries were reported. Eight inches of snow fell at McLaughlin and Miller, with 7 inches at Faulkton and McIntosh, 6 inches at Eagle Butte and Timber Lake, and 5 inches at Mobridge, Kennebec, and near Highmore.

December 14, 1996: Heavy snow of 6 to 20 inches fell across most of central, north central, and part of northeast South Dakota during the late evening of the 14th. Strong north winds of 20 to 35 mph created near-blizzard conditions and heavy drifting across the area. Travel was tough if not impossible, with several cars going into the ditch. A two-car accident between Blunt and Pierre left several people injured. Many activities were postponed or canceled. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Fort Pierre, Ipswich, Kennebec, Aberdeen, and Pollock; 7 inches at Mobridge; 8 inches at Lake Sharpe, Clark, and Mellette; 9 inches at Roscoe, Gettysburg, and McIntosh; 10 inches at Highmore, Eagle Butte, 22 miles SSW of Keldron, and at West Whitlock; 11 inches at Blunt and Miller; 12 inches at Ree Heights, McLaughlin, and Onida; 13 inches at Highmore; 14 inches at Redfield; 15 inches at Timber Lake; 18 inches at Faulkton; and 20 inches at Hoven.

December 14, 1287: A powerful storm affected the Netherlands and Northern Germany on this day. Called the St. Lucia's flood, which was the day before, this storm broke a dike, flooding much of the land in what is now the Waddenzee and IJsselmeer. A significant percentage of the country's population perished in this disaster and had been rated as one of the most destructive floods in recorded history. The death toll from this storm was between 50,000 to 80,000 people. Also, 180 residents of Hickling village, which is 137 miles north-east of London was impacted by this storm. The storm surge rose a foot above the high altar in the church. From British-History.ac.uk, "Hickling was one of the townships that suffered most severely from the tremendous storm of December, 1287, no fewer than nine score persons being drowned there. In the priory the water rose more than a foot above the high altar, and all the canons fled away except two, who stayed behind and managed to save the horses and other property by bringing them up into the dormitory over the vaulted undercroft."

December 14, 1952: Trace of snow or sleet at or near Pensacola, Crestview, DeFuniak Springs, Quincy, Carrabelle, Tallahassee, St. Marks, Monticello, Madison, Mayo, Live Oak, Lake City, Glen St. Mary, and Hilliard in Florida. Frozen precipitation occurred before noon at most points, but happened in the afternoon at Mayo and Lake City and near Hilliard. Temperatures were above freezing and snow or sleet melted as it fell.

1924 — The temperature at Helena, MT, plunged 79 degrees in 24 hours, and 88 degrees in 34 hours. The mercury plummeted from 63 above to 25 below zero. At Fairfield MT the temperature plunged 84 degrees in just 12 hours, from 63 at Noon to 21 below zero at midnight. (David Ludlum)

1952 — Trace of snow or sleet at or near Pensacola, Crestview, DeFuniak Springs, Quincy, Carrabelle, Tallahassee, St. Marks, Monticello, Madison, Mayo, Live Oak, Lake City, Glen St. Mary, and Hilliard in Florida. Frozen precipitation occurred before noon at most points, but happened in the afternoon at Mayo and Lake City and near Hilliard. Temperatures were above freezing and snow or sleet melted as it fell.

1997 — Central Mississippi and western Alabama saw significant snowfall of 4 to 8 inches on this day. In Mississippi, this was one of the heavier snowfalls to occur since 1929. The weight of the snow caused limbs of trees to break, which knocked down power lines.

2006 — The Hanukkah Eve Wind Storm of 2006 caused storm to hurricane-force wind gusts and heavy rainfall hit the Pacific Northwest and southern British Columbia. Damage estimates in Washington and Oregon totaled \$220 million. Over 1.8 million residences and businesses without power. 18 people were killed, most of whom died of carbon monoxide poisoning in the days following the storm because of improper use of barbecue cookers and generators indoors.

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 In Touch Ministries

Daily Devotion

Who is Christ?

Jesus loves us and has freed us from the penalty and power of our past mistakes.

Revelation 1:4-8: 4

John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

7 "Look, he is coming with the clouds,"

and "every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him";

and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of him."

So shall it be! Amen.

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

In today's passage, John gives us a powerful yet simple description of the Lord. Verse 5 condenses the wondrous nature of Jesus Christ to the beautiful essentials of who He is:

Jesus is the faithful witness. He came to earth to more fully reveal the character and ways of His Father (John 14:9). Jesus' miracles proved His claim to be the Son of God.

Jesus is the firstborn from the dead. The Savior bore our sins, died on the cross, was buried, and rose again on the third day. His resurrection proved that eternal life is possible for us, too, which is what Jesus taught when He said, "He who believes in Me will live even if he dies" (John 11:25).

Jesus is the ruler of the kings of earth. The Lord raises men to power, and it is also He who removes them (Daniel 2:21).

Jesus loves us and, by His blood, freed us from our sins. Note the change of tense in Revelation 1:5 (NIV). The Lord's love is ever-present, but He has freed believers from their past. Sin's penalty and power have both been broken by His sacrifice.

In just a few sentences, John describes Christ's character, divinity, and authority. This Christmas season, may appreciation of who Jesus is fill us with joy and gratitude.

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

12.12.25

10 50 55 58 59 5

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$80,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

12.13.25

20 26 27 32 46 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$9,540,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

12.13.25

12 18 19 24 35 17

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 51 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

12.13.25

2 11 20 23 25

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$127,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

12.13.25

7 11 20 52 60 24

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

12.13.25

1 28 31 57 58 16

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$1,100,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Alcester-Hudson 63, Scotland/Menno 45
Alexander, N.D. 60, Lemmon High School 45
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 54, Miller 52
Clark-Willow Lake 67, Sioux Valley 50
Estelline-Hendricks 65, Sioux Falls Lutheran 46
Garretson 74, Chester 65
Ipswich 56, Hitchcock-Tulare 51, OT
Jones County 48, Highmore-Harrold 46
Kadoka 62, Faith 27
Lakota Tech 58, St. Francis Indian 54
Lead-Deadwood 75, Harding County 66
Leola-Frederick High School 63, Langford 33
Lyman 82, Gettysburg 62
Madison 62, Elk Point-Jefferson 40
Milbank 74, Dell Rapids 72, 2OT
Parker/Marion 64, McCook Central-Montrose 39
Rapid City Central 63, T F Riggs High School 60
Rapid City Christian 61, Douglas 25
Rapid City Stevens 55, Aberdeen Central 35
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 72, Sunshine Bible Academy 27
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 70, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 68
Sisseton 50, Mobridge-Pollock 47
St. Joseph Michigan Lutheran, Mich. 68, Great Plains Lutheran 51
Warner 64, Webster 42
REMAX Early Bird Tournament=
Thunder Basin, Wyo. 71, Pine Ridge 47

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

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 56, Rapid City Stevens 44
Alliance, Neb. 44, Hot Springs 21
Chester 45, Garretson 16
Elk Point-Jefferson 69, Madison 40
Great Plains Lutheran 56, Nebraska Lutheran, Neb. 43
Highmore-Harrold 47, Jones County 42
Ipswich 64, Hitchcock-Tulare 56
Kadoka 47, Faith 17
Lakota Tech 81, Bennett County 70
Langford 45, Leola-Frederick High School 40
Lyman 65, Gettysburg 36
Mahpiya Lúta Red Cloud 59, Hill City 35
McCook Central-Montrose 49, Parker/Marion 30
Milbank 58, Dell Rapids 52
Miller 62, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 52

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Mobridge-Pollock 60, Sisseton 51
New Underwood 49, Dupree 0
Rapid City Christian 61, Douglas 25
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 56, Sunshine Bible Academy 18
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 62, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 37
Sioux Valley 57, Clark-Willow Lake 26
T F Riggs High School 61, Rapid City Central 51
Warner 61, Webster 47
White River 50, Stanley County 49
REMAX Early Bird Tournament=
St Thomas More 57, Buffalo, Wyo. 27

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

Cats-Griz II: Montana routs South Dakota 52-22 to set up FCS semifinal against Montana State

MISSOULA, Mont. (AP) — Michael Wortham had 244 all-purpose yards and three touchdowns, Keali'i Ah Yat threw for 305 yards and three scores and Montana routed South Dakota 52-22 on Saturday to set up a rematch against Montana State in the FCS semifinals.

Third-seeded Montana (13-1) advanced to the semifinals for the 12th time. Montana State will host the game Saturday after beating the Grizzlies 31-28 in Missoula on Nov. 28 to win the Big Sky title and secure the second seed. The Bobcats beat Stephen F. Austin 44-28 on Friday night.

Wortham had 201 yards receiving on 11 catches and 43 yards rushing on three carries to break the Montana record for all-purpose yards in a season.

Montana dominated from the start, driving 75 yards on the opening possession. Ah Yat's 1-yard touchdown pass to Drew Deck gave the Grizzlies a 7-0 lead and Ah Yat's 53-yard touchdown pass to Wortham made it 24-0 in the second quarter.

The Coyotes (10-5) made it 24-7 heading to halftime when L.J. Phillips Jr. scored on a 23-yard run.

Deck's FCS playoff-record 93-yard punt return touchdown early in the third quarter made it 31-7 and Ah Yat and Wortham connected on a 51-yard touchdown to make it 38-7.

South Dakota rallied on two touchdown passes by Aidan Bouman — 69 yards to Jack Martens and 20 yards to Tysen Boze to make it 38-22 with 8:42 remaining.

The Grizzlies responded with an 82-yard drive, highlighted by a unique trick-play in which Wortham caught a pass on a short slant then threw a backward pass across the field to Eli Gillman who took it for a 20-yard gain to the South Dakota 29-yard line. Wortham finished the drive with an 11-yard touchdown run and a 45-22 lead with 2:40 remaining.

Hashim Jones capped the scoring with a 20-yard run in the final minute.

Bouman had 231 yards passing and Martens had 93 yards receiving for the Coyotes (10-5).

Bruns' 29 help South Dakota down Prairie View A&M 97-85

By The Associated Press undefined

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Isaac Bruns scored 29 points as South Dakota beat Prairie View A&M 97-85 on Saturday.

Bruns also had eight rebounds for the Coyotes (6-6). Cameron Fens scored 22 points while going 10 of 13 and 2 of 3 from the free-throw line and added 14 rebounds and three blocks. Uziah Buntyn had 14 points and shot 3 of 8 from the field and 8 of 8 from the free-throw line.

The Panthers (4-6) were led in scoring by Dontae Horne, who finished with 20 points. Prairie View A&M also got 15 points and two steals from Tai'Reon Joseph. Joey Madimba had 12 points.

Up next
South Dakota plays Wednesday against Dakota State at home, and Prairie View A&M hosts Paul Quinn on Saturday.

Fear grips Brown University after shooter kills 2 and wounds 9 as police search for shooter

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI and JENNIFER McDERMOTT Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Hundreds of police officers were scouring the Brown University campus along with nearby neighborhoods and poring over video in the hunt for a shooter who opened fire in a classroom, killing two people and wounding nine others.

The search stretched late into the night, well after the shooting erupted Saturday afternoon in the engineering building of the Ivy League school in Providence, Rhode Island, during final exams.

Surveillance video released by police shows the suspect, dressed in black, calmly walking away from the scene. His face is not visible and investigators said it wasn't clear whether the suspect is a student.

The suspect was last seen leaving the engineering building and some witnesses told police the suspect, who could be in his 30s, may have been wearing a camouflage mask, Providence Police Deputy Chief Timothy O'Hara said.

University President Christina Paxson said she was told 10 people who were shot were students. Another person was injured by fragments from the shooting but it was not clear if the victim was a student, she said.

The search for the shooter paralyzed the campus, the nearby neighborhoods filled with stately brick homes and the downtown in Rhode Island's capital city. Streets normally bustling with activity on weekends were eerily quiet.

Students sheltered in place for hours into the night. Officers in tactical gear led students out of some campus buildings and into a fitness center where they waited. Others arrived at the shelter on buses without jackets or any belongings.

Mayor advised people to stay home

Investigators were not immediately sure how the shooter got inside the first-floor classroom. Outer doors of the building were unlocked but rooms being used for final exams required badge access, Providence Mayor Brett Smiley said.

He encouraged people living near the campus to stay inside or not return home until a shelter-in-place order was lifted.

"The Brown community's heart is breaking and Providence's heart is breaking along with it," Smiley said.

Authorities believe the shooter used a handgun, according to a law enforcement official who was not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Democratic Gov. Dan McKee vowed that all resources were being deployed to catch the suspect. Rhode Island has some of the strictest gun laws in the U.S.

Nine people with gunshot wounds were taken to Rhode Island Hospital, where one was in critical condition. Six required intensive care but were not getting worse and two were stable, hospital spokesperson Kelly Brennan said.

Exams were underway during shooting

Engineering design exams were underway when the shooting occurred in the Barus & Holley building, a seven-story complex that houses the School of Engineering and physics department. The building includes more than 100 laboratories, dozens of classrooms and offices, according to the university's website.

Emma Ferraro, a chemical engineering student, was in the building's lobby working on a final project when she heard loud pops coming from the east side. Once she realized they were gunshots, she darted for the door and ran to a nearby building where she sheltered for several hours.

Former 'Survivor' contestant just left the building

Eva Erickson, a doctoral candidate who was the runner-up earlier this year on the CBS reality competition show "Survivor," said she left her lab in the engineering building 15 minutes before shots rang out.

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The engineering and thermal science student shared candid moments on "Survivor" as the show's first openly autistic contestant. She was locked down in the campus gym following the shooting and shared on social media that the only other member of her lab who was present was safely evacuated.

Brown senior biochemistry student Alex Bruce was working on a final research project in his dorm directly across the street from the building when he heard sirens outside.

"I'm just in here shaking," he said, watching through the window as armed officers surrounded his dorm. Students hid under desks

Students in a nearby lab turned off the lights and hid under desks after receiving an alert about the shooting, said Chiangheng Chien, a doctoral student in engineering who was about a block away from the scene.

Mari Camara, 20, a junior from New York City, was coming out of the library and rushed inside a taqueria to seek shelter. She spent more than three hours there, texting friends while police searched the campus.

"Everyone is the same as me, shocked and terrified that something like this happened," she said.

Brown, the seventh oldest higher education institution in the U.S., is one of the nation's most prestigious colleges with roughly 7,300 undergraduates and more than 3,000 graduate students. Tuition, housing and other fees run to nearly \$100,000 per year, according to the university.

Anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies intensify across Europe

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — In the past year, tens of thousands hostile to immigrants marched through London, chanting "send them home!" A British lawmaker complained of seeing too many non-white faces on TV. And senior politicians advocated the deportation of longtime U.K. residents born abroad.

The overt demonization of immigrants and those with immigrant roots is intensifying in the U.K. — and across Europe — as migration shoots up the political agenda and right-wing parties gain popularity.

In several European countries, political parties that favor mass deportations and depict immigration as a threat to national identity come at or near the top of opinion polls: Reform U.K., the AfD, or Alternative for Germany and France's National Rally.

President Donald Trump, who recently called Somali immigrants in the U.S. "garbage" and whose national security strategy depicts European countries as threatened by immigration, appears to be endorsing and emboldening Europe's coarse, anti-immigrant sentiments.

Amid the rising tensions, Europe's mainstream parties are taking a harder line on migration and at times using divisive language about race.

"What were once dismissed as being at the far extreme end of far-right politics has now become a central part of the political debate," said Kieran Connell, a lecturer in British history at Queen's University Belfast.

Europe experiencing a growing sense of division

Immigration has risen dramatically over the past decade in some European countries, driven in part by millions of asylum-seekers who have come to Europe fleeing conflicts in Africa, the Middle East and Ukraine.

Asylum-seekers account for a small percentage of total immigration, however, and experts say antipathy toward diversity and migration stems from a mix of factors. Economic stagnation in the years since the 2008 global financial crisis, the rise of charismatic nationalist politicians and the polarizing influence of social media all play a role, experts say.

In Britain, there is "a frightening increase in the sense of national division and decline" and that tends to push people toward political extremes, said Bobby Duffy, director of the Policy Unit at King's College London. It took root after the financial crisis, was reinforced by Britain's debate about Brexit and deepened during the COVID-19 pandemic, Duffy said.

Social media has exacerbated the mood, notably on X, whose algorithm promotes divisive content and whose owner, Elon Musk, approvingly retweets far-right posts.

Across Europe, ethnonationalism has been promoted by right-wing parties such as Germany's AfD, France's National Rally and the Fidesz party of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

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Now it appears to have the stamp of approval from the Trump administration, whose new national security strategy depicts Europe as a collection of countries facing "economic decline" and "civilizational erasure" because of immigration and loss of national identities.

The hostile language alarmed many European politicians, but also echoed what they hear from their countries' far-right parties.

National Rally leader Jordan Bardella told the BBC he largely agreed with the Trump administration's concern that mass immigration was "shaking the balance of European countries."

Racist rhetoric and hate crimes on the rise

Policies once considered extreme are now firmly on the political agenda. Reform UK, the hard-right party that consistently leads opinion polls, says if it wins power it will strip immigrants of permanent-resident status even if they have lived in the U.K. for decades. The center-right opposition Conservatives say they will deport British citizens with dual nationality who commit crimes.

A Reform UK lawmaker complained in October that advertisements were "full of Black people, full of Asian people." Conservative justice spokesman Robert Jenrick remarked with concern that he "didn't see another white face" in an area of Birmingham, Britain's second-largest city. Neither politician had to resign.

Many proponents of reduced immigration say they are concerned about integration and community cohesion, not race. But that's not how it feels to those on the receiving end of racial abuse.

"There is no doubt it has worsened," said Dawn Butler, a Black British lawmaker who says the vitriol she receives on social media "is increasing drastically, and has escalated into death threats."

U.K. government statistics show police in England and Wales recorded more than 115,000 hate crimes in the year to March 2025, a 2% increase over the previous 12 months.

In July 2024, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim violence erupted on Britain's streets after three girls were stabbed to death at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class. Authorities said online misinformation wrongly identifying the U.K.-born teenage attacker as a Muslim migrant played a part.

In Ireland and in the Netherlands, protesters often demonstrate outside municipal meetings in communities where a new asylum center is proposed. Some protests have turned violent, with opponents of asylum-seekers throwing fireworks at riot police.

Across Europe, the main focus of protests has been hotels and other housing for asylum-seekers, which some say become magnets for crime and bad behavior. But the agenda of protest organizers is often much wider.

In September, more than 100,000 people chanting "We want our country back" marched through London in a protest organized by a far-right activist and convicted fraudster Tommy Robinson. Among the speakers was French far-right politician Eric Zemmour, who told the crowd that France and the U.K. both faced "the great replacement of our European people by peoples coming from the south and of Muslim culture."

Outflanking the right

Mainstream European politicians condemn the "great replacement" conspiracy theory. Britain's center-left Labour Party government has denounced racism and says migration is an important part of Britain's national story.

At the same time, it is taking a tougher line on immigration, announcing policies to make it harder for migrants to settle permanently. The government says it is inspired by Denmark, which has seen asylum applications plummet since it started giving refugees only short-term residence.

Denmark and Britain are among a group of European countries pushing to weaken legal protections for migrants and make deportations easier.

Human rights advocates argue that attempts to appease the right just lead to ever-more-extreme policies.

"For every inch yielded, there's going to be another inch demanded," Council of Europe human rights commissioner Michael O'Flaherty told The Guardian. "Where does it stop? For example, the focus right now is on migrants, in large part. But who is it going to be about next time around?"

Calls for calmer rhetoric

Politicians of the political center also have been criticized for adopting the language of the far right. Brit-

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ish Prime Minister Keir Starmer said in May that Britain risked becoming an "island of strangers," a phrase that echoed a notorious 1968 anti-immigration speech by the politician Enoch Powell. Starmer later said he had been unaware of the echo and regretted using the phrase.

Germany's center-right Chancellor Friedrich Merz has hardened his language on migrants as the Alternative for Germany has grown more powerful. Merz caused an uproar in October by saying Germany had a problem with its "Stadtbild," a word that translates as "city image" or cityscape. Critics felt Merz was implying that people who don't look German don't truly belong.

Merz later stressed that "we need immigration," without which certain sectors of the economy, including health care, would cease to function.

Duffy said politicians should be responsible and consider how their rhetoric shapes public attitudes — though he added that's "quite a forlorn hope."

"The perception that this divisiveness works has taken hold," he said.

Girls and women fleeing Mali describe sexual violence by Russian forces

By MONIKA PRONCZUK and CAITLIN KELLY Associated Press

DOUANKARA, Mauritania (AP) — The girl lay in a makeshift health clinic, her eyes glazed over and her mouth open, flies resting on her lips. Her chest barely moved. Drops of fevered sweat trickled down her forehead as medical workers hurried around her, attaching an IV drip.

It was the last moment to save her life, said Bethsabée Djoman Elidje, the women's health manager, who led the clinic's effort as the heart monitor beeped rapidly. The girl had an infection after a sexual assault, Elidje said, and had been in shock, untreated, for days.

Her family said the 14-year-old had been raped by Russian fighters who burst into their tent in Mali two weeks earlier. The Russians were members of Africa Corps, a new military unit under Russia's defense ministry that replaced the Wagner mercenary group six months ago.

Men, women and children have been sexually assaulted by all sides during Mali's decade-long conflict, the U.N. and aid workers say, with reports of gang rape and sexual slavery. But the real toll is hidden by a veil of shame that makes it difficult for women from conservative, patriarchal societies to seek help.

The silence that nearly killed the 14-year-old also hurts efforts to hold perpetrators accountable.

The AP learned of the alleged rape and four other alleged cases of sexual violence blamed on Africa Corps fighters, commonly described by Malians as the "white men," while interviewing dozens of refugees at the border about other abuses such as beheadings and abductions.

Other combatants in Mali have been blamed for sexual assaults. The head of a women's health clinic in the Mopti area told the AP it had treated 28 women in the last six months who said they had been assaulted by militants with the al-Qaida affiliated JNIM, the most powerful armed group in Mali.

The silence among Malian refugees has been striking.

In eastern Congo, which for decades has faced violence from dozens of armed groups, "we didn't have to look for people," said Mirjam Molenaar, the medical team leader in the border area for Doctors Without Borders, or MSF, who was stationed there last year. The women "came in huge numbers."

It's different here, she said: "People undergo these things and they live with it, and it shows in post-traumatic stress."

Speechless after an assault

The aunt of the 14-year-old girl said the Africa Corps fighters marched everyone outside at gunpoint. The family couldn't understand what they wanted. The men made them watch as they tied up the girl's uncle and cut off his head.

Then two of the men took the 14-year-old into the tent as she tried to defend herself, and raped her. The family waited outside, unable to move.

"We were so scared that we were not even able to scream anymore," the aunt recalled, as her mother sobbed quietly next to her. She, like other women, spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation,

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and the AP does not name victims of rape unless they agree to be named.

The girl emerged over a half-hour later, looking terrified. Then she saw her uncle's body and screamed. She fainted. When she woke up, she had the eyes of someone "who was no longer there," the aunt said.

The next morning, JNIM militants came and ordered the family to leave. They piled onto a donkey cart and set off toward the border. At any sound, they hid in the bushes, holding their breath.

The girl's condition deteriorated during the three-day journey. When they arrived in Mauritania, she collapsed.

The AP came across her lying on the ground in the courtyard of a local family. Her family said they had not taken her to a clinic because they had no money.

"If you have nothing, how can you bring someone to a doctor?" the girl's grandmother said between sobs. The AP took the family to a free clinic run by MSF. A doctor said the girl had signs of being raped.

The clinic had been functioning for barely a month and had seen three survivors of sexual violence, manager Elidje said.

"We are convinced that there are many cases like this," she said. "But so far, very few patients come forward to seek treatment because it's still a taboo subject here. It really takes time and patience for these women to open up and confide in someone so they can receive care. They only come when things have already become complicated, like the case we saw today."

As Elidje tried to save the girl's life, she asked the family to describe the incident. She did not speak Arabic and asked the local nurse to find out how many men carried out the assault. But the nurse was too ashamed to ask.

Scratch marks are part of story she could not tell

Thousands of new refugees from Mali, mostly women and children, have settled just inside Mauritania in recent weeks, in shelters made of fabric and branches. The nearest refugee camp is full, complicating efforts to treat and report sexual assaults.

Two recently arrived women discreetly pulled AP journalists aside, adjusting scarves over their faces. They said they had arrived a week ago after armed white men came to their village.

"They took everything from us. They burned our houses. They killed our husbands," one said. "But that's not all they did. They tried to rape us."

The men entered the house where she was by herself and undressed her, she said, adding that she defended herself "by the grace of Allah."

As she spoke, the second woman started crying and trembling. She had scratch marks on her neck. She was not capable of telling her story.

"We are still terrified by what we went through," she said.

Separately, a third woman said that what the white men did to her in Mali last month when she was alone at home "stays between God and me."

A fourth said she watched several armed white men drag her 18-year-old daughter into their house. She fled and has not seen her daughter again.

The women declined the suggestion to speak with aid workers, some of whom are locals. They said they were not ready to talk about it with anyone else.

Russia's Defense Ministry did not respond to questions, but an information agency that the U.S. State Department has called part of the "Kremlin's disinformation campaign" called the AP's investigation into Africa Corps fake news.

Wagner has a legacy of sexual abuse

Allegations of rapes and other sexual assaults were already occurring before Wagner transformed into Africa Corps.

One refugee told the AP she witnessed a mass rape in her village in March 2024.

"The Wagner group burned seven men alive in front of us with gasoline," she said. Then they gathered the women and raped them, she said, including her 70-year-old mother.

"After my mother was raped, she couldn't bear to live," she said. Her mother died a month later.

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In the worst-known case of sexual assault involving Russian fighters in Africa, the U.N. in a 2023 report said at least 58 women and girls had been raped or sexually assaulted in an attack on Moura village by Malian troops and others that witnesses described as "armed white men."

In response, Mali's government expelled the U.N. peacekeeping mission. Since then, gathering accurate data on the ground about conflict-related sexual violence has become nearly impossible.

The AP interviewed five of the women from Moura, who now stay in a displacement camp. They said they had been blindfolded and raped for hours by several men.

Three of the women said they hadn't spoken about it to anyone apart from aid workers. The other two dared to tell their husbands, months later.

"I kept silent with my family for fear of being rejected or looked at differently. It's shameful," one said.

The 14-year-old whose family fled to Mauritania is recovering. She said she cannot remember anything since the attack. Her family and MSF said she is speaking to a psychiatrist — one of just six working in the country.

Aid workers are worried about others who never say a thing.

"It seems that conflict over the years gets worse and worse and worse. There is less regard for human life, whether it's men, women or children," said MSF's Molenaar, and broke into tears. "It's a battle."

Wembanyama's return lifts Spurs to NBA Cup final, handing Thunder just 2nd loss

By MARK ANDERSON AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Victor Wembanyama returned from a 12-game absence with 22 points and nine rebounds, giving San Antonio a surge and the Oklahoma City Thunder just its second loss with the 111-109 victory Saturday night putting the Spurs in the NBA Cup final.

The Spurs play the New York Knicks in Tuesday night's final.

Oklahoma City's last defeat was Nov. 5 at Portland, and the Thunder carried a 16-game winning streak into this game. They now are 24-2, the second-best start behind only the 25-1 record by Golden State in 2015-16.

This is the Thunder's second loss in a row in Las Vegas. They also lost last year's final to Milwaukee 97-81.

Wembanyama, who received "M-V-P" chants from the pro-Spurs crowd, had a plus-21 rating in 21 minutes. Teammate Devin Vassell scored 23 points and De'Aaron Fox and Stephon Castle each scored 22.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the Thunder with 29 points, Chet Holmgren and Jalen Williams each totaled 17.

Wembanyama had been out because of a strained left calf, though the Spurs went 9-3 in his absence. He was placed on a minutes restriction against the Thunder, but that didn't limit his impact.

Wembanyama, who entered the game averaging 26.2 points and 12.9 rebounds, gave the Spurs an immediate boost and sent a surge into the crowd. Fans began to roar when he removed his sweatpants before the second quarter, and Wembanyama had a plus-20 rating in just seven minutes even with his team trailing by three points at halftime.

But San Antonio ended the first half with a 13-point run to make it a contest. The Spurs used a 10-point run in the third quarter to go up 62-56 and set the stage for a tense fourth period.

Up next

Spurs: Play the Knicks on Tuesday night in the NBA Cup final.

Thunder: Host the Los Angeles Clippers on Wednesday.

Takeaways from AP report on sexual violence in Mali

By MONIKA PRONCZUK Associated Press

DOUANKARA, Mauritania (AP) — Multiple women have told The Associated Press they survived or witnessed alleged rapes and other sexual assaults committed by a new Russian military unit in Mali, where it is assisting the military in hunting down extremists.

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Men, women and children have been sexually assaulted by all sides during the conflict, the U.N. and aid workers say, with reports of gang rape and sexual slavery. But few cases are reported. Aid workers and others cite a veil of shame that makes it difficult for women from conservative, patriarchal societies to seek help.

That silence also hurts efforts to hold perpetrators accountable.

The AP obtained rare access to the border with Mauritania where thousands of Malians have fled. Refugees also alleged other abuses including indiscriminate killings and beheadings.

Africa Corps earlier this year replaced the Wagner mercenary group, and refugees said it has taken up Wagner's tactics. Legal experts say Russian authorities are directly responsible for the fighters' actions since they report to the defense ministry. Russia's defense ministry did not respond to questions.

Here are takeaways from the AP report.

Allegations of assaults

One victim was a 14-year-old who contracted a severe infection related to sexual assault, according to a doctor who treated her. Her family said she was raped by Russian soldiers. They and others spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

The AP learned of four other alleged cases of sexual violence, including what women described as attempted rape by Africa Corps fighters, who were widely described as the "white men."

One woman said she defended herself "by the grace of Allah" after armed men entered her home and undressed her. Another started crying and could not stop trembling. She had scratch marks on her neck. She was not capable of telling her story.

"We are still terrified by what we went through," she said.

A third woman said that what the men did to her in Mali when she was alone in the house "stays between God and me." A fourth said she had watched several armed men drag her 18-year-old daughter into their house. She fled and has not seen her daughter again.

The AP does not name victims of rape unless they agree to be named.

Abuses by all sides

Other combatants in Mali have been blamed for sexual assaults.

The head of a women's health clinic in the Mopti area told the AP it had treated 28 women in the last six months who said they had been assaulted by militants with the al-Qaida affiliated JNIM, the most powerful armed group in Mali.

Abuses are under-reported because of fear of reprisals and limited access to care in addition to the shame around sexual assault, according to the U.N. and aid workers.

"People undergo these things and they live with it, and it shows in post-traumatic stress," said Mirjam Molenaar, a medical team leader in the border area with Doctors Without Borders, or MSF.

Previous accusations against Wagner

Allegations of rapes and other sexual assaults occurred when Wagner mercenaries were in Mali. One refugee said she witnessed a mass rape in her village in March 2024.

"The Wagner group burned seven men alive in front of us with gasoline," she said. Then they gathered all women and raped them, she said, including her 70-year-old mother.

In the worst-known case of sexual assault involving Russian fighters in Africa, the U.N. in a 2023 report said at least 58 women and girls had been raped or sexually assaulted in an attack on Moura village by Malian troops and others that witnesses described as "armed white men."

In response, Mali's government expelled the U.N. peacekeeping mission. Since then, gathering accurate data on the ground about conflict-related sexual violence has become nearly impossible.

Difficulties in accessing help

It can be difficult for refugees to know help is available. The refugee camp on the Mauritanian border is full, with over 150,000 people. Another 3,000 have crossed the border in the past month as fighting in Mali intensifies.

The new arrivals settle far from the camp in fragile shelters of fabric and branches. MSF opened a free

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clinic nearby in recent weeks. It has seen three survivors of sexual violence.

Aid workers worry about the many women who never say a thing.

"We know from the stories shared that there is a huge need," MSF's Molenaar said.

PHOTO ESSAY: Refugees flee Mali as region is the world's deadliest for extremism

By CAITLIN KELLY Associated Press

DOUANKARA, Mauritania (AP) — A makeshift village in the Mauritanian desert shelters thousands of refugees who have fled Mali in recent weeks as fighting intensifies against militants linked to al-Qaida.

Strips of fabric tied between sticks serve as homes. Tree branches double as storage. Many people fled without their livestock, the source of their livelihoods. There is little protection from the Sahel's punishing heat and wind. Still, refugees say it is safer than Mali.

The Associated Press obtained rare access to the border area, where refugees said they were caught between combatants in what has become the world's deadliest region for extremist violence, according to the Global Terrorism Index.

Some refugees described alleged abuses by the newest actor in the conflict, a Russian military unit named Africa Corps that replaced the Wagner mercenary group six months ago. They said they witnessed beheadings, burnings and other abuses by the unit that is under Moscow's direct command.

The military governments of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have turned to Russia for counterterrorism support after pushing away traditional allies including the United States and France.

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

But the danger isn't just from Africa Corps. Refugees, aid workers and analysts say Mali's army and militants also commit abuses against civilians. The world sees little of this as access to the country becomes more difficult for journalists, watchdogs and others.

In a clinic near the border, the family of a 14-year-old girl described her rape by the "white men" in an attack that left her so near death and traumatized that she remembers nothing of it. Like others, they spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

A woman in one tent held a photo of her late daughter. Armed men had stormed their village, killing men, looting homes and shooting at those trying to flee. At the sound of gunshots, the 18-year-old daughter had a seizure.

What happened next, the woman said, "stays between God and me."

When the attackers withdrew, she found her son shot dead. Her daughter died on the journey to Mauritania. The photo is all that remains.

Chile holds an election that could deliver its most right-wing president since dictatorship

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — As Chileans head to vote on Sunday, even detractors of ultra-conservative former lawmaker José Antonio Kast say the candidate whose radical ideas lost him the past two elections is now almost certain to become Chile's next leader.

Kast's meaningful lead in the polls over his rival in the presidential runoff, communist Jeannette Jara, shows how the hard-liner agitating for mass deportations of immigrants has seized the mantle of the traditional right in a country that once defined its post-dictatorship democratic revival with a vow to contain such political forces.

Many voters are frustrated with the options

But much is also up for grabs about Chile's political direction.

Kast's claim to a popular mandate depends on his margin of victory on Sunday over Jara, the center-left governing party candidate who narrowly beat him in the first round of elections last month.

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Although various right-wing parties won around 70% of the vote in that election, substantial support for a populist center-right candidate who described himself as an alternative to Kast's "fascism" revealed that, between the contrasting ideologies of the front-runners, sit hundreds of thousands of centrist voters with no real representation.

"Both are too extreme for me," said Juan Carlos Pileo, 44, who plans to cast a blank ballot Sunday, as voting is now mandatory in Chile's elections. "I can't trust someone who says she's a communist to be moderate. And I can't trust someone who exaggerates the amount of crime we have in this country and blames immigrants to be fair and respectful."

Kast raises expectations but reality is a different story

It remains a question whether Kast, an admirer of U.S. President Donald Trump, can implement his more grandiose promises.

They include slashing \$6 billion in public spending over just 18 months without eliminating social benefits, deporting over 300,000 immigrants in Chile with no legal status and expanding the powers of the army to fight organized crime in a country still haunted by Gen. Augusto Pinochet's bloody military dictatorship from 1973 to 1990.

For one, Kast's far-right Republican Party lacks a majority in Congress, meaning that he'll need to negotiate with moderate right-wing forces that could bristle at those proposals, significantly shaping policy and his own legacy.

Political compromises could temper Kast's radicalism, but also jeopardize his position with voters who expect him to deliver quickly on his law-and-order campaign promises.

At each campaign event, Kast has taken to ticking off the number of days remaining until Chile's March 11 presidential inauguration, warning they should get out before they'll "have to leave with just the clothes on their backs."

Jorge Rubio, 63, a Chilean banker in downtown Santiago, the capital, said he's "also counting down the days."

"That's why we're voting for Kast," he said.

Boric's left-wing government is under fire

As the pandemic shuttered borders, transnational criminal organizations like Tren de Aragua seized illegal migration routes to gain a foothold in Chile, long considered among Latin America's safest countries. Homicides hit a record high in 2022, the first year of President Gabriel Boric's tenure.

Kast insists that Boric's government is too soft on immigration and crime, which the far-right leader argues are connected although the data does not necessarily support his narrative. Boric's approval rating has plummeted, standing now at just 30%.

Yet many say the firebrand former student protester who came to power in 2021 pledging to transform Chile's market-led economy, has risen to the occasion. Boric went from criticizing the use of police force on the campaign trail to pouring money into the security forces. He sent the military to reinforce Chile's northern border, stiffened penalties for organized crime and created the country's first public security ministry.

Chile's homicide rate is now falling, about on par with the rate in the United States. That has done nothing to change Chileans' feelings of profound insecurity.

In Libya, where fractious militias jostle for political power, over 70% of people feel safe walking alone at night, according to a recent Gallup survey of 144 countries.

In Chile, just 39% of people do, around the same as in Ecuador, which is now in the midst of a violent, drug-driven crime wave.

Crime and migration overshadow all other concerns

As Boric's former minister of labor, Jara became popular for passing some of the administration's most important welfare measures.

That matters little now. Voters' concerns have forced her to switch gears. She has vowed to toughen border security, register undocumented migrants, tackle money laundering and step up police raids.

But promises to restore law and order are more persuasive coming from an insurgent outsider who has

made security a key part of his agenda for years.

"Kast has been smart and strategic in focusing on migration and security," said Lucía Dammert, a sociologist and Boric's first chief of staff. "It has been very difficult for the Jara campaign to move him away from those issues."

Learning from his previous two failed presidential runs, Kast has avoided topics that fire up his critics — such as his German-born father's Nazi past, his nostalgia for Pinochet's dictatorship and his opposition to same-sex marriage and abortion.

When asked, Kast says only that his values remain the same. His supporters, including voters who previously spurned him over his social conservatism, now say that abstract human rights concerns come after their need for safety on the streets.

"It's not very nice to hear that he's going to separate immigrant children from their parents, it's sad, that's going to be a problem for me," said Natacha Feliz, a 27-year-old immigrant from the Dominican Republic referring to a recent interview in which Kast said immigrant parents without legal status who didn't self-deport would be obliged to hand their kids over to the state.

"But this is happening everywhere, not just in Chile. Let's just hope that our security situation improves."

Jalen Brunson's season-high 40 points lead Knicks past Magic to NBA Cup final

By MARK ANDERSON AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Jalen Brunson scored at least 30 points for the fourth consecutive game, his season-high 40 leading the Knicks past the Orlando Magic 132-120 on Saturday and putting New York in the NBA Cup final.

The Knicks, who have won five in a row and nine of 10, will play San Antonio on Tuesday night for the championship.

Brunson also had eight assists and made 16 of 27 shots, including a 3-pointer in the third quarter after Orlando's Anthony Black fell backward onto the floor. Karl-Anthony Towns had 29 points and OG Anunoby scored 24 for the Knicks.

Jalen Suggs scored 25 of his 26 points in the first half for the Magic before leaving in the fourth quarter because of a sore left hip. Paolo Banchero added 25 points and Desmond Bane scored 18.

This game had a playoff feel with both teams playing physically and taking seemingly every opportunity to push the pace. The Knicks shot 60.7% and outscored the Magic 70-62 in the lane.

The game was back and forth with 11 lead changes and 10 ties before the Knicks went on a 10-point run late in the third quarter to take a 102-92 lead.

It appeared a little NBA history could be made when at halftime Brunson and Suggs each scored 25 points. No regular-season game has produced a 50-point scorer from each team since 2000.

But Suggs scored just a point in the second half, and he clearly was hobbled. He went to the locker room early in the fourth quarter.

The Magic played without Franz Wagner, who is out several weeks with a high ankle sprain.

Up next

Knicks: Play the Spurs on Tuesday night in the NBA Cup final.

Magic: Visit Denver on Thursday.

Police search Brown University after shooter kills 2 and wounds 9 on campus

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI, JENNIFER McDERMOTT, HANNAH SCHOENBAUM and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER
Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — A shooter dressed in black killed at least two people and wounded nine others at Brown University on Saturday during final exams on the Ivy League campus, authorities said, and

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police were searching for the suspect.

University President Christina Paxson said she was told that 10 people who were shot were students. Another person was injured by fragments from the shooting, but it was not clear if that victim was a student, she said.

Officers scattered across the campus and into an affluent neighborhood filled with historic and stately brick homes, searching academic buildings, backyards and porches late into the night after the shooting erupted in the afternoon.

The suspect was a man in dark clothing who was last seen leaving the engineering building where the attack happened, said Timothy O'Hara, deputy chief of Providence police.

Security footage showed the suspect walking away from the building, but his face was not visible. Some witnesses reported that the man, who could be in his 30s, may have been wearing a camouflage mask, O'Hara said.

Investigators were not yet sure how the shooter got inside the first-floor classroom where he opened fire. Outer doors of the building were unlocked, but rooms being used for final exams required badge access, Providence's mayor said.

Hunt for suspect quiets city streets

Authorities believe the shooter used a handgun, according to a law enforcement official who was not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

"The unthinkable has happened," said Democratic Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee, who vowed that all resources were being deployed to catch the suspect.

Mayor Brett Smiley said a shelter-in-place remained in effect and encouraged people living near the campus to stay inside or not return home until it is lifted. Streets that normally bustle with activity on weekends were eerily quiet.

"The Brown community's heart is breaking, and Providence's heart is breaking along with it," Smiley said.

Emma Ferraro, a chemical engineering student, was in the building's lobby working on a final project when she heard loud pops coming from the east side. Once she realized they were gunshots, she darted for the door and ran to a nearby building where she sheltered for several hours.

Nine people with gunshot wounds were taken to Rhode Island Hospital, where one was in critical condition, said Kelly Brennan, a spokesperson for the hospital. Six required intensive care but were not getting worse, and two were stable, she said.

Police evacuated buildings

University officials initially told students and staff that a suspect was in custody, but later said that was not the case. The mayor said a person preliminarily thought to be involved was detained but was later determined to have no involvement.

Nearly five hours after the shooting, officers in tactical gear led students out of some campus buildings and into a fitness center.

The shooting occurred in the Barus & Holley building, a seven-story complex that houses the School of Engineering and physics department. According to the university's website, the building includes more than 100 laboratories, dozens of classrooms and offices.

Engineering design exams were underway there when the shooting occurred.

Former 'Survivor' contestant had just left the building

Eva Erickson, a doctoral candidate who was a finalist earlier this year on the CBS reality competition show "Survivor," said she left her lab in the engineering building 15 minutes before shots rang out.

The engineering and thermal science student shared candid moments on "Survivor" as the show's first openly autistic contestant. She was locked down in the campus gym following the shooting and shared on social media that the only other member of her lab who was present was safely evacuated.

Biochemistry student Alex Bruce was working on a final research project in his dorm directly across the street from the building when he heard sirens and received a text about an active shooter shortly after 4 p.m.

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"I'm just in here shaking," he said, watching through the window as a half-dozen armed officers in tactical gear surrounded his dorm.

Students hid under desks and inside stores

Students in a nearby lab hid under desks and turned off the lights after receiving an alert about the shooting, said Chiangheng Chien, a doctoral student in engineering who was about a block away from the scene.

Mari Camara, a junior from New York City, was coming out of the library and rushed inside a taqueria to seek shelter. She spent more than three hours there, texting friends while police searched the campus.

"Everyone is the same as me, shocked and terrified that something like this happened," she said.

Brown, the seventh oldest higher education institution in the U.S., is one of the nation's most prestigious colleges, with roughly 7,300 undergraduates and more than 3,000 graduate students. Tuition, housing and other fees run to nearly \$100,000 per year, according to the university.

President Donald Trump told reporters that he had been briefed and "all we can do right now is pray for the victims."

Rhode Island has some of the strictest gun laws in the U.S. Last spring the Democratic-controlled Legislature passed an assault weapon ban that will prohibit the sale and manufacturing of certain high-powered firearms, but not their possession, starting next July.

Trump pledges retaliation after 3 Americans are killed in Syria attack that the US blames on IS

By SAMAR KASSABALI, BASSEM MROUE and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — President Donald Trump said Saturday that "there will be very serious retaliation" after two U.S. service members and one American civilian were killed in an attack in Syria that the United States blames on the Islamic State group.

"This was an ISIS attack against the U.S., and Syria, in a very dangerous part of Syria, that is not fully controlled by them," he said in a social media post.

The American president told reporters at the White House that Syria's president, Ahmed al-Sharaa, was "devastated by what happened" and stressed that Syria was fighting alongside U.S. troops. Trump, in his post, said al-Sharaa was "extremely angry and disturbed by this attack."

Republican Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa said the soldiers were members of the Iowa National Guard -- where she, too, once served. "Our Iowa National Guard family is hurting as we mourn the loss of two of our own and pray for the recovery of the three soldiers wounded," she said.

U.S. Central Command said three service members were also wounded in the ambush Saturday by a lone IS member in central Syria. Trump said the three "seem to be doing pretty well." The U.S. military said the gunman was killed in the attack. Syrian officials said the attack wounded members of Syria's security forces as well.

The attack on U.S. troops in Syria was the first with fatalities since the fall of President Bashar Assad a year ago.

"There will be very serious retaliation," Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

The Pentagon's chief spokesman, Sean Parnell, said the civilian killed was a U.S. interpreter. Parnell said the attack targeted soldiers involved in the ongoing counter-terrorism operations in the region and is under active investigation.

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds said in a statement that the names of the deceased soldiers are being withheld until 24 hours after next-of-kin notifications are complete. "Our hearts are heavy today, and our prayers and deepest condolences are with the families and loved ones of our soldiers killed in action," she said.

The shooting took place near historic Palmyra, according to the state-run SANA news agency, which earlier said two members of Syria's security force and several U.S. service members had been wounded. The casualties were taken by helicopter to the al-Tanf garrison near the border with Iraq and Jordan.

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Syria's Interior Ministry spokesman Nour al-Din al-Baba said a gunman linked to IS opened fire at the gate of a military post. He added that Syrian authorities are looking into whether the gunman was an IS member or only carried its extreme ideology.

Later al-Baba said that the attacker was a member of the Internal Security force in the desert adding that he "did not have any command post" within the forces nor was he a bodyguard for the force commander.

Al-Baba added in an interview with state TV that some 5,000 members have joined Internal Security forces in the desert and they get evaluated on weekly basis. He added that three days ago, an evaluation was made for the attacker that concluded he might have extreme ideology and a decision was expected to be issued regarding his case on Sunday but "the attack occurred on a Saturday which is a day off for state institutions."

U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth posted on X: "Let it be known, if you target Americans — anywhere in the world — you will spend the rest of your brief, anxious life knowing the United States will hunt you, find you, and ruthlessly kill you."

U.S. officials made no reference in their statements to the gunman being a member of the Syrian security forces. When asked about the matter, a Pentagon official did not directly respond to the question but said, "This attack took place in an area where the Syrian President does not have control."

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military issues.

The U.S. has hundreds of troops deployed in eastern Syria as part of a coalition fighting IS.

The U.S. had no diplomatic relations with Syria under Assad, but ties have warmed since the fall of the five-decade Assad family rule. Al-Sharaa, made a historic visit to Washington last month where he held talks with Trump. It was the first White House visit by a Syrian head of state since the Middle Eastern country gained independence from France in 1946 and came after the U.S. lifted sanctions imposed on Syria during the Assads' rule.

Al-Sharaa led the rebel forces that toppled Bashar Assad in December 2024 and was named the country's interim leader in January. Al-Sharaa once had ties to al-Qaida and had a \$10 million U.S. bounty on his head.

Last month, Syria joined the international coalition fighting against the IS as Damascus improves its relations with Western countries following the ouster of Assad when insurgents captured his seat of power in Damascus.

IS was defeated on the battlefield in Syria in 2019 but the group's sleeper cells still carry out deadly attacks in the country. The United Nations says the group still has between 5,000 and 7,000 fighters in Syria and Iraq.

U.S. troops have maintained a presence in different parts of Syria — including Al-Tanf garrison in the southeast — to train other forces as part of a broad campaign against IS, and have been targeted in the past. One of the deadliest attacks occurred in 2019 in the northern town of Manbij when a blast killed two U.S. service members and two American civilians as well as others from Syria while conducting a patrol.

Arctic air sweeps south as residents of the Pacific Northwest remain on guard after severe flooding

By MARTHA BELLISLE Associated Press

MONROE, Wash. (AP) — A blast of arctic air swept south from Canada and spread into parts of the northern U.S. on Saturday, while residents of the Pacific Northwest braced for possible mudslides and levee failures from floodwaters that are expected to be slow to recede.

The catastrophic flooding forced thousands of people to evacuate, including Eddie Wicks and his wife, who live amid sunflowers and Christmas trees on a Washington state farm next to the Snoqualmie River. As they moved their two donkeys to higher ground and their eight goats to their outdoor kitchen, the water began to rise much quicker than anything they had experienced before.

As the water engulfed their home Thursday afternoon, deputies from the King County Sheriff's Office marine rescue dive unit were able to rescue them and their dog, taking them on a boat the half-mile (800 meters) across their field, which had been transformed into a lake. The rescue was captured on video.

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The danger is not over in the Pacific Northwest

Another round of rain and wind is in store for the region as early as late Sunday, forecasters said.

"Bottom line at this point in time is we're not done despite the sunny conditions that we have across western Washington at this point," said Reid Wolcott, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Seattle.

"There is yet more still to come in terms of in terms of wind, in terms of rain, in terms in terms of flooding," he said. "And Washingtonians need to be prepared for additional impacts, additional flooding, tree damage, power outages, etc."

High winds expected at the end of the weekend and into the first part of week are a concern because the ground is extremely saturated, putting trees at risk of toppling, he said.

Resident 'starting over' after home is flooded

In Burlington, a farming community about an hour north of Seattle, the receding floodwaters allowed residents to assess damage and clean up their homes.

Friends and relatives helped empty Argentina Dominguez's home, filling trailers with soaked furniture, ripping carpet and mopping muddy floors.

"I know it's materialistic stuff, but they were our stuff. It's really hard. But we're gonna try our best to like get through it all," Dominguez said. "We're just trying to get everything off the floor so we can start over."

Flood cleanup to be challenging and costly, governor says

In Snohomish County, Washington, north of Seattle, emergency officials on Saturday led federal, state and local officials on a tour of the devastation.

"It's obvious that thousands and thousands of Washingtonians and communities all across our state are in the process of digging out, and that's going to be a challenging process," Gov. Bob Ferguson said.

"It's going to be expensive," he said. "It's going to be time consuming, and it's going to be potentially dangerous at times. So I think we're seeing here in Monroe is what we're going to be seeing all across the state, and that's what's got our focus right now."

Big cities like Chicago, Minneapolis hit by arctic air

As the Pacific Northwest begins to recover from the deluge, a separate weather system already brought dangerous wind-chill values — the combination of cold air temperatures and wind — to parts of the Upper Midwest.

Shortly before noon Saturday, it was minus 12 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 24 degrees Celsius) in Grand Forks, North Dakota, where the wind-chill value meant that it felt like minus 33 F (minus 36 C), the National Weather Service said.

For big cities like Minneapolis and Chicago, the coldest temperatures were expected late Saturday night into Sunday morning. In the Minneapolis area, low temperatures were expected to drop to around minus 15 F (minus 26 C), by early Sunday morning. Lows in the Chicago area are projected to be around 1 F (minus 17 C) by early Sunday, the weather service said.

The Arctic air mass was expected to continue pushing south and east over the weekend, expanding into Southern states by Sunday.

The National Weather Service on Saturday issued cold weather advisories that stretched as far south as the Alabama state capital city of Montgomery, where temperatures late Sunday night into Monday morning were expected to plummet to around 22 F (minus 6 C). To the east, lows in Savannah, Georgia, were expected to drop to around 24 F (minus 4 C) during the same time period.

Mudslides, levee failures threaten the Pacific Northwest

The cold weather freezing much of the country came as residents in the Pacific Northwest endure more misery after several days of flooding. Thousands of people have been forced to evacuate towns in the region as an unusually strong atmospheric river dumped a foot (30 centimeters) or more of rain in parts of western and central Washington over several days and swelled rivers, inundating communities and prompting dramatic rescues from rooftops and vehicles.

Many animals were also evacuated as waters raged over horse pastures, barns and farmland. At the peak of evacuations, roughly 170 horses, 140 chickens and 90 goats saved from the floodwaters were

being cared for at a county park north of Seattle, said Kara Underwood, division manager of Snohomish County Parks. Most of those animals were still at the park on Saturday, she said.

The record floodwaters slowly receded, but authorities warned that waters will remain high for days, and that there was still danger from potential levee failures or mudslides. There was also the threat of more rain forecast for Sunday. Officials conducted dozens of water rescues as debris and mudslides closed highways and raging torrents washed out roads and bridges.

Jimmy Lai, former pro-democracy newspaper founder, to hear verdict in national security case

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — A Hong Kong court will deliver its verdict on Monday in the trial of former pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai, who's charged with conspiracies to commit sedition and collusion with foreign forces in a case that marks how much the semi-autonomous Chinese city has changed since Beijing began a wide-ranging crackdown on dissent five years ago.

Lai, 78, was arrested in 2020 under a national security law imposed by Chinese authorities to quell the massive anti-government protests that rocked the city in 2019.

Lai's 156-day trial is being closely watched by foreign governments and political observers as a test of the judicial independence and media freedom in the former British colony, which was promised it could maintain its Western-style civil liberties for 50 years after returning to Chinese rule in 1997.

Here's what to know about the landmark trial:

Lai was arrested as China tightened its grip on Hong Kong

Hong Kong was long known for its vibrant press scene and protest culture in Asia. But following months of anti-government protests that brought hundreds of thousands of people into the streets, Beijing began a sweeping crackdown that has chilled most open dissent in the city.

Lai was one of the first prominent figures charged under the National Security Law, which has also been used to prosecute other leading activists and opposition politicians. Beijing deemed the law crucial for the city's stability.

Dozens of civil society groups have closed, as tens of thousands of young professionals and middle-class families emigrated to destinations like Britain, Canada, Taiwan, Australia and the United States.

Lai's newspaper was known for its fierce pro-democracy stand

Lai, a rags-to-riches tycoon who formerly owned clothing chain Giordano, entered the media world after the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown.

He described himself as driven by the belief that delivering information is equal to delivering freedom. His newspaper drew a strong following with tabloid-style coverage of politics and celebrities, as well as a strong pro-democracy stance. It often urged its readers to join protests.

Lai took to the streets himself, too, including in the 2019 protests.

Lai was arrested under the security law in August 2020 as about 200 police officers raided Apple Daily's building. He has been in custody since December 2020.

Within a year, authorities used the same law to arrest senior executives of Apple Daily, raided its offices again and froze \$2.3 million of its assets, effectively forcing the newspaper to shut down. The paper's final edition sold out in hours, with readers scooping up all 1 million copies.

Authorities accused Lai of seeking to get sanctions imposed on China

The most serious accusation against Lai was that he and other people had invited the U.S. and other foreign powers to act against China with sanctions or other measures "under the guise of fighting for freedom and democracy."

One major issue was whether Lai made such calls after the security law went into effect. Lai did not deny that he'd called for sanctions earlier, but insisted that he stopped once the law came in.

Prosecutors argued that even though Lai didn't make direct requests for sanctions after the law took effect, he had tried to "create a false impression" of China to justify foreign countries to impose punish-

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ment, pointing to articles and his comments in online broadcasts critical of Hong Kong and China.

Lai's lawyer Robert Pang said his remarks were just armchair punditry, akin to chatter "over the dim sum table."

Lai said he wrote "without any sense of hostility or intention to be seditious." Pang also pressed the court to consider freedom of expression and accused the prosecution of treating human rights as a foreign concept, leading to testy exchanges.

"It's not wrong to support freedom of expression. It's not wrong to support human rights," he said. "Nor is it wrong not to love a particular administration or even the country."

Judge Esther Toh responded that "It's not wrong not to love the government, but if you do that by certain nefarious means, then it's wrong."

Lai's foreign contacts came under attack

Prosecutors also dwelled on Lai's foreign contacts, including meetings he had with former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and then-Vice President Mike Pence at the height of the 2019 protests.

Prosecutor Anthony Chau said Lai's foreign connections showed his "unwavering intent to solicit" sanctions, blockades or other hostile activities against China and Hong Kong.

The prosecution also alleged Lai had conspired with fellow Apple Daily senior executives, members of an advocacy group called "Fight for Freedom Stand with Hong Kong" and the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China to call for foreign actions.

Six Apple Daily senior executives involved in the case pleaded guilty in 2022 and some of them served as prosecution witnesses.

Two other alleged co-conspirators linked to "Stand with Hong Kong" group also testified against Lai, but legal team called one of them "a serial liar" and argued that even if accepted his testimony didn't show that Lai had agreed to work with them as alleged.

Outside the courtroom, the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, an international political group critical of China, said in a statement that it rejected "false claims" regarding Lai's involvement with its network.

Foreign governments are watching the case

Lai, a British citizen, has drawn concerns from foreign governments, including the U.S. and the U.K. — both have called for his release. U.S. President Donald Trump said he has raised the case with China, and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer has said his government has made it a priority to secure the release of Lai.

But Beijing has called Lai "an agent and pawn of anti-China foreign forces," describing him as the main planner behind disruptive activities in the city.

Controversy arose even before his trial started. Lai's trial, originally scheduled to start in December 2022, was postponed to 2023 as authorities barred a British lawyer from representing Lai, citing that it would likely pose national security risks.

Lai says his health is deteriorating, but he could face life in prison

In August, Pang said Lai had experienced heart palpitations and was given a heart monitor. His children raised concerns over his deteriorating health. The government said a medical examination of Lai found no abnormalities following his heart problems and that the medical care he received in custody was adequate.

The security law authorizes a range of sentences depending on the seriousness of the offense and the defendant's role in it, from three years for the less serious to 10 years to life for people convicted of "grave" offenses.

If Lai is convicted, sentencing is expected on a later day. He can appeal the outcome.

After centuries of conflict, Chile's Indigenous Mapuches fear a far-right political turn

By VICTOR CAIVANO and ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

PEDRO CAYUQUEO, Chile (AP) — The Mapuches, Chile's biggest Indigenous group, have endured centuries of battle.

They resisted conquest first by the ancient Incas, then by the Spanish. They fought as the nascent

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Chilean state annexed their territories and as military dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet devastated their communities by terminating collective property, allowing for the confiscation and sale of their lands to forestry companies.

Now the Mapuches, who make up roughly 12% of Chile's 19 million people, fear a more violent chapter in their history is yet to come as the country prepares to elect its next president on Sunday in a contest expected to empower the far-right.

"It will get much worse with a far-right government," Mapuche political scientist Karen Rivas Catalán, 37, told The Associated Press from her lush plot of land where chickens roam. "Our prisons will hold more Mapuches."

The favorite to win Sunday is José Antonio Kast, an ultra-conservative former lawmaker who vows deport hundreds of thousands of immigrants without legal status and grant emergency crime-fighting powers to the military and police.

His rival, communist Jeannette Jara, who represents the governing coalition, also has adopted a law-and-order platform to woo voters.

Mapuches are in the crosshairs of a planned crackdown

A turning point for the Mapuches seemed to come in the 2019 social uprising, when Chilean protesters demanding change to the country's market-led economy adopted the Mapuche flag and breathed new life into their cause. Left-wing President Gabriel Boric came to power vowing to remove troops from their land and replace the dictatorship-era constitution with one enshrining their rights.

But Boric soon redeployed the military. Armed Mapuche groups attacked security forces. The government extended a state of emergency. Voters rejected the proposed constitution that would have ushered in radical social change.

The Mapuche conflict simmering in the rolling hills and verdant forests of the southern region of Araucanía is one of the more delicate issues facing the next president of Chile.

But unlike in past presidential elections, possible solutions to the unrest have barely been mentioned in a campaign focused on voters' fears about organized crime and illegal migration to the exclusion of almost everything else.

When the Mapuches have come up, it has been in the context of plans for a harsh security crackdown.

The latest version of Kast's platform promised that his government would "use all constitutional, legal and administrative tools; all intelligence and technology; all force and resources to eradicate terrorism in the region."

Kast closed his campaign Thursday in Temuco, a southern city widely considered the capital of the Mapuche people. In a fiery speech delivered from behind bulletproof glass, Kast said the Araucanía region around Temuco was "battered by fear, by terror, by vandalism."

"They are cowards who attack at night with their faces covered and forgive nothing, respect no one's rights," Kast said of Mapuche militants who have carried out sabotage attacks against soldiers and forestry companies that they see as invading their ancestral lands.

"We are going to shut down that group," he added, receiving whoops and cheers.

For years, the region has been under the control of Chile's militarized police, which Mapuches accuse of using excessive force.

The group's mistrust toward the state has deepened in recent years with scandals including security forces killings civilians, such as the 2018 shooting of a young, unarmed Mapuche farmer.

In one dramatic case, a police intelligence unit came under investigation in connection with a scheme to fabricate evidence to falsely implicate Mapuches in terrorist activities in 2017. The trial against accused police officers is ongoing.

Indigenous group fears a return to dictatorship-era conflict

To Angelina Cayuqueo, 58, a Mapuche language teacher, this election feels existential.

She is consumed by a "terrible fear" that under a Kast government, her community could relive the traumas of the brutal Pinochet dictatorship.

"We're already afraid that things could happen as they did under Pinochet, because that's what they

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intend," she said, picking cherries on her land.

During Kast's two previous presidential bids, he repeatedly expressed a desire to change a land restitution law installed after Chile's 1990 return to democracy that allows Mapuches to recover ancestral lands seized under the dictatorship.

At his latest rally, Kast criticized the program as a way "of expropriating land to give it to whoever's squatting on it."

Although hundreds of thousands of hectares that had been turned over to non-Mapuche farmers and forestry companies during the dictatorship were returned to the Mapuche in the past decades, the program has done little to change the group's marginalization and endemic poverty.

"To them it isn't fair that we as Mapuche recover our lands," Cayuqueo said. "They wish the Mapuche people didn't exist in history."

Fernando Mendoza wins the Heisman Trophy as college football's top player

By EVERETT MERRILL Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Fernando Mendoza, the enthusiastic quarterback of No. 1 Indiana, won the Heisman Trophy on Saturday night, becoming the first Hoosier to win college football's most prestigious award since its inception in 1935.

Mendoza claimed 2,362 points, including 643 first-place votes. He beat Vanderbilt quarterback Diego Pavia (1,435 points), Notre Dame running back Jeremiyah Love (719 points) and Ohio State quarterback Julian Sayin (432 points).

Mendoza's Heisman win was emphatic. He finished first in all six Heisman regions, the first to do so since Caleb Williams in 2022. He was named on 95.16% of all ballots, tying him with Marcus Mariota in 2014 for the second highest in the award's history and he received 84.6% of total possible points, which is the seventh highest in Heisman history.

"I haven't seen the numbers yet," said Mendoza, "but it's such an honor to be mentioned with these guys (Pavia, Love and Sayin). It's really a credit to our team. It's a team award."

Mendoza guided the Hoosiers to their first No. 1 ranking and the top seed in the 12-team College Football bracket, throwing for 2,980 yards and a national-best 33 touchdown passes while also running for six scores. Indiana, the last unbeaten team in major college football, will play a College Football Playoff quarterfinal game in the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1.

Mendoza, the Hoosiers' first-year starter after transferring from California, is the triggerman for an offense that surpassed program records for touchdowns and points set during last season's surprise run to the CFP.

A redshirt junior, the once lightly recruited Miami native is the second Heisman finalist in school history, joining 1989 runner-up Anthony Thompson. Mendoza is the seventh Indiana player to earn a top-10 finish in Heisman balloting and it marks another first in program history — having back-to-back players in the top 10. Hoosiers quarterback Kurtis Rourke was ninth last year.

With his teammates chanting "HeismanDoza" as he addressed the media, he said there felt like a realistic chance of winning the Heisman when the Hoosiers routed then No. 19 Illinois 63-10 on Sept. 20.

"At that point my boys (teammates) said we might make it to New York (for the award ceremony)," he said. "It was lighthearted at the time, but that's when it started. "

Quarterbacks have won the Heisman four of the last five years, with two-way player Travis Hunter of Colorado ending the run last season.

Mendoza is the 43rd quarterback to win the Heisman and the second winner of Latin American descent to claim the trophy. Stanford's Jim Plunkett was the first in 1970.

"Although I grew up in America, my four grandparents are all from Cuba," he said. "I had the opportunity to go there and that was important to me. I credit the love to my grandparents and the Hispanic community."

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The Heisman Trophy presentation came after a number of accolades were already awarded. Mendoza was named The Associated Press player of the year earlier this week and picked up the Maxwell and Davey O'Brien awards Friday night while Love won the Doak Walker Award.

Mendoza and Pavia clearly exemplify the changing landscape of using the transfer portal in college football. Mendoza is the seventh transfer to win the award in the last nine years. Vanderbilt is Pavia's third school. Confident Commodore

Pavia finished second with 189 first-place votes. He threw for a school-record 3,192 yards and 27 touchdowns for the Commodores, who were pushing for a CFP berth all the way to the bracket announcement. He is the first Heisman finalist in Vanderbilt history.

Generously listed as 6 feet tall, Pavia led Vanderbilt to its first 10-win season along with six wins against Southeastern Conference foes. That includes four wins over ranked programs as Vandy reached No. 9, its highest ranking in The Associated Press Top 25 since 1937.

Pavia went from being unrecruited out of high school to junior college, New Mexico State and finally Vanderbilt in 2024 through the transfer portal.

Vandy next plays in the ReliaQuest Bowl against Iowa on Dec. 31.

Irish Love

The last running back to win the Heisman was Alabama's Derrick Henry in 2015. Love put himself in the mix with an outstanding season for Notre Dame. He finished with 46 first-place votes.

The junior from St. Louis was fourth in the Bowl Subdivision in yards rushing (1,372), fifth in per-game average (114.3) and third with 18 rushing touchdowns for the Fighting Irish, who missed out on a CFP bid and opted not to play in a bowl game.

He was the first player in Notre Dame's storied history to produce multiple TD runs of 90 or more yards, a 98-yarder against Indiana in the first round of last year's playoffs and a 94-yarder against Boston College earlier this season.

Buckeyes' leader

Sayin led the Buckeyes to a No. 1 ranking for most of the season, throwing for 3,329 yards while tying for second in the country with 31 TD passes ahead of their CFP quarterfinal at the Cotton Bowl on Dec. 31.

The sophomore from Carlsbad, California, arrived at Ohio State after initially committing to Alabama and entering the transfer portal following a coaching change. He played four games last season before winning the starting job. He led the Buckeyes to a 14-7 win in the opener against preseason No. 1 Texas and kept the team atop the AP Top 25 for 13 straight weeks, tying its second-longest run.

Sayin follows a strong lineage of Ohio State quarterbacks since coach Ryan Day arrived in 2017. Dwayne Haskins (2018), Justin Fields (2019), C.J. Stroud (2021), and Kyle McCord (2023) averaged 3,927 passing yards, 40 TDs, and six interceptions, along with a 68.9% completion rate during their first seasons.

High-end car sales sink in China as its economy slows, taking a toll on European automakers

By CHAN HO-HIM AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — Chinese demand for foreign luxury cars is waning as customers opt for more affordable Chinese brand models, often sold at big discounts, catering to their taste for fancy electronics and comfort.

That is bad news for European carmakers like Porsche, Aston Martin, Mercedes-Benz and BMW that have long dominated the upper reaches of the world's largest auto market.

A slowing economy hits the luxury market

A prolonged property downturn in China has left many consumers with little appetite for big purchases. Meanwhile, the well-to-do are becoming increasingly shy about publicly displaying their wealth, said Paul Gong, UBS head of China Automotive Industry Research.

Many car buyers have been swayed by a 20,000 yuan (\$2,830) trade-in subsidy offered by the Chinese government for purchasing electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. People tended to purchase cheaper, entry-

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level cars where the discount will count more and those cars are mostly Chinese made, Gong said.

"Slowing economic growth is one key driver behind weaker demand for premium cars," said Claire Yuan, director of corporate ratings for China autos at S&P Global Ratings, referring to a segment that typically counts car brands such as Mercedes-Benz and BMW.

The market share of premium car sales in China, usually priced above 300,000 yuan (\$42,400), more than doubled between 2017 and 2023 to about 15% of total sales, S&P said.

That trend is now reversing. The share of premium cars sales fell to 14% in 2024 and to 13% in the first nine months of 2025, S&P said.

Chinese automakers take a bigger bite

While luxury auto sales have slowed, Chinese manufacturers, including electric vehicle maker BYD, have become more aggressive than many Western brands in technological innovation, frequently rolling out new electric vehicles and hybrids at cheaper prices, including premium vehicles, analysts said.

"Their (Chinese carmakers') products are more competitive and more affordable even in the premium segment," Yuan said. "That's why these foreign brands are gradually losing momentum."

The Chinese brands' share of passenger car sales climbed to almost 70% in the first 11 months of this year, according to China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. It reported Thursday that German brands held a 12% share, Japanese brands around 10% and U.S. brands nearly 6%.

BYD already has overtaken Volkswagen as the biggest car seller in China in recent years. BYD is so far the best selling car brand this year in China for "new energy vehicles," which include electric vehicles and hybrids, according to the China Passenger Car Association. BYD had cut prices of its electric and plug-in hybrid models by up to 34%, putting pressure on major rivals like Geely and Leapmotor.

Mercedes-Benz's sales by units in China fell 27% from a year earlier in the July-September quarter, according to its latest earning report. The number of BMWs and its subsidiary-brand Minis sold in China dropped 11.2% year-on-year in the first nine months of 2025. Porsche and Aston Martin also cited pressure from weaker demand in China.

Italian luxury carmaker Ferrari reported a 13% year-on-year drop in car shipments to mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan in January-September. It was the only region where sales declined during that time.

Ola Källenius, CEO of Mercedes-Benz, told investors in late October that "hyper-competition in China is not going away anytime soon."

The "market situation in the premium and luxury segment in China remained tense," the carmaker said.

Used luxury cars going for cheaper

The downturn in interest in luxury vehicles is hitting dealerships hard.

Li Yi, a salesperson in charge of second-hand cars at a Beijing Porsche center, said a 2024 Panamera 2.9T with a mileage of about 20,000 kilometers (12,400 miles) was priced at 950,000 yuan (\$134,300). The previous owner bought it for about 1.4 million yuan (\$198,454).

"It's mainly due to the sluggish economic situation," Li said. "(It's) not only Porsche. Benz, BMW, Bentley and Rolls-Royce all face the same situation." Porsche and Bentley are part of the Volkswagen group.

At a used-car market in Beijing, four other car dealership representatives who spoke to The Associated Press described a similarly grim situation, with premium cars selling at significantly lower prices over the past year.

China's monthly auto production in November surpassed a record of 3.5 million units for the first time, the CAAM reported Thursday, but domestic auto sales dropped 4% year-on-year under fading demand as some trade-in subsidies were halted in some regions.

"Who still has money these days? People's pockets are cleaner than their faces," joked one used car salesperson who identified herself as Hao.

Prices have been sliding for two years and she offers bigger discounts, said the salesperson, who did not give her full name as she was not authorized by her company to speak to the media.

"Now they think hard before they spend," she said.

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A list of deadly shootings on college campuses in the US

Associated Press undefined

A shooting Saturday at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, left two people dead and at least eight other critically injured. Authorities were still searching for a suspect in the hours afterward.

The shooting occurred on a Saturday afternoon in a campus building with final exams underway. The suspect was dressed in black and left the building on foot, officials said.

The violence prompted a shelter-in-place order for the larger university area. Providence Mayor Brett Smiley said "we have all available resources" to find the suspect.

"Sadly, today is a day that the city of Providence and the state of Rhode Island prayed would never come," the mayor said. "We've heard about horrific acts of gun violence and active shooter situations in other places, but not here."

Brown is a private institution with roughly 7,300 undergraduate students and more than 3,000 graduate students.

Here is a look at other deadly shootings on U.S. college campuses in recent decades:

KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY: December 2025, 1 dead

A shooting at a residence hall at the public historically Black university left one student dead and another critically injured. The suspect, who is a parent of a student, faces murder and assault charges.

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY: September 2025, 1 dead

Conservative activist Charlie Kirk was shot and killed while speaking on campus during one of his political events, sending hundreds of people running. A 22-year-old suspect faces aggravated murder in connection with Kirk's death. Prosecutors plan to seek the death penalty.

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY: April 2025, 2 dead

Two died and six were wounded in a shooting at Florida State University in Tallahassee. A 21-year-old man has been charged with two counts of first-degree murder and seven counts of attempted first-degree murder in connection with the shooting.

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS: December 2023, 3 dead

A 67-year-old former business professor, whose applications to teach at UNLV had been rejected, opened fire in the building housing the university's business school, killing three professors and badly wounding a fourth. The gunman was killed in a shootout with police outside the building.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY: February 2023, 3 dead

A 43-year-old gunman fired inside an academic building and the student union, killing three students and injuring five others. He later killed himself miles away from the campus in East Lansing while being confronted by police.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA: November 2022, 3 dead

A student and former member of the school's football team fatally shot three current players aboard a charter bus as they returned from a field trip, setting off panic and a 12-hour lockdown of the campus until the suspect was captured. Two other students were also wounded on the campus. The shooter has pleaded guilty to first-degree murder and other charges and is awaiting sentencing.

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY: October 2015, 1 dead

Just weeks into his freshman year, a student walked onto the campus in Flagstaff and opened fire. One student was killed and three others were wounded in the first deadly shooting since the university was founded in 1899. The shooter later pleaded guilty to manslaughter and aggravated assault and was sentenced to six years in prison.

UMPQUA COMMUNITY COLLEGE: October 2015, 9 dead

A 26-year-old man opened fire on his writing class, killing his instructor and eight other people at the school in rural Roseburg, Oregon. Nine more people were also wounded. The shooter then killed himself.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA: May 2014, 6 dead

A 22-year-old college student frustrated over sexual rejections fatally stabbed or shot six students near the school in Isla Vista, California, and injured several others before he killed himself.

SANTA MONICA COLLEGE: June 2013, 6 dead

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A deadly act of domestic violence at home turned public when a 23-year-old man left after killing his father and older brother, carjacked a woman and shot at other vehicles. He then entered the campus where he had previously been enrolled as a student and opened fire, killing four more people before he was fatally shot by police in the school's library.

OIKOS UNIVERSITY: April 2012, 7 dead

A former nursing student fatally shot seven people at the small private college in East Oakland, California. He was given seven consecutive life sentences and died in prison in 2019.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY: February 2008, 5 dead

A 27-year-old former student shot and killed five people and wounded more than 20 others at the school in DeKalb, Illinois, before killing himself.

VIRGINIA TECH: April 2007, 32 dead

In the deadliest shooting at a U.S. college, a 23-year-old student killed 32 people on the campus in Blacksburg, Virginia. More than two dozen others were wounded. The gunman then killed himself.

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA: November 1991, 5 dead

A former graduate student upset that his doctoral dissertation wasn't nominated for an academic award fatally shot himself after killing five people and injuring one other person in a shooting spree on the campus in Iowa City.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS: August 1966, 13 dead

A Marine-trained sniper opened fire from atop the 27-story clock tower in the heart of the university's flagship Austin campus in one of the nation's first mass shootings. He killed 13 people and wounded more than 30 others before authorities shot and killed him.

Michigan expands investigation after firing Sherrone Moore, AP source says

By LARRY LAGE AP Sports Writer

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — The law firm hired by the University of Michigan to investigate former football coach Sherrone Moore's relationship with a staffer will continue its probe of the program and is prepared to expand its inquiry throughout the athletic department, according to two people familiar with the situation.

The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the details.

Michigan fired Moore on Wednesday, when the school said an investigation uncovered his inappropriate relationship with a staffer. He is married with three daughters.

The 39-year-old Moore was charged with three crimes after prosecutors said on Friday he "barged his way" into the apartment of a woman he'd been having an affair with and threatened to kill himself.

Athletic director Warde Manuel told the school's board during the season that he asked Moore and the woman if they were in a relationship and both denied it, according to the people familiar with the situation. They said Manuel told the board that he reviewed hundreds of text messages and emails between Moore and the woman on their school-issued cellphones and computers and did not discover anything inappropriate.

The school later hired a law firm to investigate the matter further and it began working on campus on Monday, when the woman did not show up to work, according to the two people. They said her attorney met with the firm on Tuesday and she provided evidence of her relationship with Moore on Wednesday, when Manuel fired Moore without human resources or campus police present.

Well before Manuel's inquiry and the law firm's investigation, a social media influencer outside the state contacted the school to express concerns about Moore's behavior, two people familiar with the situation said.

Moore faces charges including felony home invasion and stalking.

He and the woman had been having an affair "for a number of years" before she ended the relationship Monday, said Kati Rezmierski, a Washtenaw County prosecutor. Moore repeatedly called the woman and

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texted her, but she refused to respond, Rezmierski said.

Shortly after losing his job, Moore stormed into the woman's apartment, "then proceeded to a kitchen drawer, grabbed several butter knives and a pair of kitchen scissors. And began to threaten his own life," Rezmierski said.

The prosecutor quoted Moore as telling the woman: "I'm going to kill myself. I'm going to make you watch. My blood is on your hands. You've ruined my life."

A plea of not guilty was entered on Moore's behalf and he was released from jail after meeting the \$25,000 bond. Moore said very little in court besides acknowledging that he must have no contact with the woman, among other conditions.

Defense attorney Joe Simon said Moore would "absolutely comply" with the judge's order for an additional evaluation. Moore must wear a GPS tracking device, stay in Michigan and abstain from alcohol. The next court hearing was set for Jan. 22.

Moore signed a five-year contract with a base annual salary of \$5.5 million last year. According to the terms of his deal, the university will not have to buy out the remaining years of his contract because he was fired for cause.

No. 18 Michigan is set to play No. 14 Texas on Dec. 31 in the Citrus Bowl. Biff Poggi, who filled in for Moore when he was suspended earlier this season in relation to a Jim Harbaugh-era sign-stealing scandal, will serve as interim coach.

The school is searching for a coach and hopes to make a hire this month to help it retain recruits and give players enough confidence in the program to stay out of the transfer portal next month.

Russia and Ukraine trade attacks as US and European officials prepare for peace talks

By The Associated Press undefined

Moscow pounded Ukrainian power infrastructure with drone and missile strikes on Saturday and Kyiv launched a deadly strike of its own on southwestern Russia, a day before talks involving senior European and U.S. officials aimed at ending the war were set to resume.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukrainian, U.S. and European officials will hold a series of meetings in Berlin in the coming days, adding that he will personally meet with U.S. President Donald Trump's envoys.

"Most importantly, I will be meeting with envoys of President Trump, and there will also be meetings with our European partners, with many leaders, concerning the foundation of peace — a political agreement to end the war," Zelenskyy said in an address to the nation late Saturday.

Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and his son-in-law Jared Kushner are traveling to Berlin for the talks, according to a White House official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

American officials have tried for months to navigate the demands of each side as Trump presses for a swift end to Russia's war and grows increasingly exasperated by delays. The search for possible compromises has run into major obstacles, including which combatant will get control of Ukraine's eastern Donbas region, which is mostly occupied by Russian forces.

"The chance is considerable at this moment, and it matters for our every city, for our every Ukrainian community," Zelenskyy said. "We are working to ensure that peace for Ukraine is dignified, and to secure a guarantee — a guarantee, above all — that Russia will not return to Ukraine for a third invasion."

As diplomats push for peace, the war grinds on.

Russia attacked five Ukrainian regions overnight, targeting the country's energy and port infrastructure. Zelenskyy said the attacks involved more than 450 drones and 30 missiles. And with temperatures hovering around freezing, Ukraine's interior minister, Ihor Klymenko, said more than a million people were without electricity.

An attack on Odesa caused grain silos to catch fire at the coastal city's port, Ukrainian deputy prime minister and reconstruction minister Oleksiy Kuleba said. Two people were wounded in attacks on the

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wider Odesa region, according to regional head Oleh Kiper.

Kyiv and its 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.

The drone attack in Russia's Saratov region damaged a residential building and killed two people, said the regional governor, Roman Busargin, who didn't offer further details. Busargin said the attack also shattered windows at a kindergarten and clinic. Russia's Defense Ministry said it shot down 41 Ukrainian drones over Russian territory overnight.

On the front lines, Ukrainian forces said Saturday that the northern part of Pokrovsk was under Ukrainian control, despite Russia's claims this month that it had taken full control of the critical city. The Associated Press was not able to independently verify the claims.

The latest attacks came after Kremlin foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov reaffirmed Friday that Moscow will give its blessing to a ceasefire only after Ukraine's forces have withdrawn from parts of the Donetsk region that they still control.

Ukraine has consistently refused to cede the remaining part of the region to Russia.

Ushakov told the business daily Kommersant that Russian police and national guard troops would stay in parts of eastern Ukraine's Donbas even if they become a demilitarized zone under a prospective peace plan — a demand likely to be rejected by Ukraine as U.S.-led negotiations drag on.

Ushakov warned that a search for compromise could take a long time, noting that the U.S. proposals that took into account Russian demands had been "worsened" by alterations proposed by Ukraine and its European allies.

"We don't know what changes they are making, but clearly they aren't for the better," Ushakov said, adding: "We will strongly insist on our considerations."

In other developments, about 480 people were evacuated Saturday from a train traveling between the Polish city of Przemysl and Kyiv after police received a call concerning a threat on the train, Karolina Kowalik, a spokesperson for the Przemysl police, told The Associated Press. Nobody was hurt and she didn't elaborate on the threat.

Polish authorities are on high alert since multiple attempts to disrupt trains on the line linking Warsaw to the Ukrainian border, including the use of explosives in November, with Polish authorities saying they have evidence Russia was behind it.

Belarus frees Nobel Prize laureate Bialiatski, opposition figure Kolesnikova as US lifts sanctions

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — Belarus freed Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski, key opposition figure Maria Kolesnikova and dozens of other political prisoners on Saturday, capping two days of talks with Washington aimed at improving ties and getting crippling U.S. sanctions lifted on a key Belarusian agricultural export.

President Alexander Lukashenko pardoned 123 prisoners, Belarus' state news agency, Belta, reported. In exchange, the U.S. said it was lifting sanctions on the Eastern European country's potash sector.

A close ally of Russia, Minsk has faced Western isolation and sanctions for years. Lukashenko has ruled the nation of 9.5 million with an iron fist for more than three decades, and the country has been repeatedly sanctioned by the West for its crackdown on human rights and for allowing Moscow to use its territory during the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

John Coale, the U.S. special envoy for Belarus who met with Lukashenko in Minsk on Friday and Saturday, described the talks to reporters as "very productive" and said normalizing relations between the two countries was "our goal," Belta reported.

"We're lifting sanctions, releasing prisoners. We're constantly talking to each other," Coale said, adding that the relationship between the U.S. and Belarus was moving from "baby steps to more confident steps"

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as they increased dialogue, the Belarusian news agency reported.

Belarus has released hundreds of prisoners since July 2024. Among the 123 freed Saturday were a U.S. citizen, six citizens of U.S. allied countries, and five Ukrainian citizens, a U.S. official told The Associated Press in an email. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private diplomatic negotiations, described the release as "a significant milestone in U.S.-Belarus engagement" and "yet another diplomatic victory" for U.S. President Donald Trump.

The official said Trump's engagement so far "has led to the release of over 200 political prisoners in Belarus, including six unjustly detained U.S. citizens and over 60 citizens of U.S. Allies and partners."

Who are some of the more prominent freed prisoners?

Pavel Sapelka, an advocate with the Viasna rights group, confirmed to the AP that Bialiatski and Kolesnikova were among those released.

Bialiatski, a human rights advocate who founded Viasna, was in jail when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022 along with the prominent Russian rights group Memorial and Ukraine's Center for Civil Liberties. He was later convicted of smuggling and financing actions that violated public order — charges that were widely denounced as politically motivated — and sentenced to 10 years in 2023.

Bialiatski told the AP by phone Saturday that his release after 1,613 days behind bars came as a surprise — in the morning, he was still in an overcrowded prison cell.

"It feels like I jumped out of icy water into a normal, warm room, so I have to adapt. After isolation, I need to get information about what's going on," said Bialiatski, who seemed energetic but pale and emaciated in post-release videos and photos.

He vowed to continue his work, stressing that "more than a thousand political prisoners in Belarus remain behind bars simply because they chose freedom. And, of course, I am their voice."

Kolesnikova, meanwhile, was a key figure in the mass protests that rocked Belarus in 2020 and is a close ally of an opposition leader in exile, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya.

Known for her close-cropped hair and trademark gesture of forming a heart with her hands, Kolesnikova became an even greater symbol of resistance when Belarusian authorities tried to deport her in September 2020. Driven to the Ukrainian border, she briefly broke away from security forces at the frontier, tore up her passport and walked back into Belarus.

The 43-year-old professional flutist was convicted in 2021 on charges including conspiracy to seize power and sentenced to 11 years in prison.

Others who were freed

Among the others who were released, according to Viasna, was Viktor Babaryka — an opposition figure who had sought to challenge Lukashenko in the 2020 presidential election, widely seen as rigged, before being convicted and sentenced to 14 years in prison on charges he rejected as political.

Viasna reported that the group's imprisoned advocates, Valiantsin Stefanovic and Uladzimir Labkovich, and prominent opposition figure Maxim Znak were also freed. But it later said it was clarifying its report about Stefanovic's release, and Bialiatski told the AP that Stefanovic had not been freed, though he hopes he will be soon.

Most of the freed prisoners were sent to Ukraine, Franak Viachorka, Tsikhanouskaya's senior adviser, told the AP. Eight or nine others, including Bialiatski, were being sent to Lithuania on Saturday, and more prisoners will be taken to the Baltic country in the next few days, Viachorka said.

Ukrainian authorities confirmed that Belarus had handed over 114 civilians, including five Ukrainian nationals. Freed Belarusian nationals "at their request" and "after being given necessary medical treatment" will be taken to Poland and Lithuania, they said.

Lukashenko's press secretary, Natalya Eismont, said those released were sent to Ukraine because Kyiv was to free several imprisoned Belarusian and Russian nationals as part of the deal, although Ukrainian officials haven't confirmed the claim yet.

Lukashenko wants rapprochement with the West

When U.S. officials last met with Lukashenko in September, Washington eased some of the sanctions

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on Belarus while Minsk released more than 50 political prisoners.

"The freeing of political prisoners means that Lukashenko understands the pain of Western sanctions and is seeking to ease them," Tsikhanouskaya, the opposition leader in exile, told the AP on Saturday.

She added: "But let's not be naive: Lukashenko hasn't changed his policies, his crackdown continues and he keeps on supporting Russia's war against Ukraine. That's why we need to be extremely cautious with any talk of sanctions relief, so that we don't reinforce Russia's war machine and encourage continued repressions."

Sanctions have hit the key export hard

Belarus, which previously accounted for about 20% of global potash fertilizer exports, has been forced to sharply cut them after Western sanctions targeted state producer Belaruskali and cut off transit through Lithuania's port in Klaipeda, the country's main export route.

"Sanctions by the U.S., EU and their allies have significantly weakened Belarus's potash industry, depriving the country of a key source of foreign exchange earnings and access to key markets," Anastasiya Luzgina, an analyst at the Belarusian Economic Research Center BEROCC, told the AP, noting that Minsk likely hopes this paves the way for easing the more painful European sanctions.

The latest round of U.S.-Belarus talks also touched on Venezuela, as well as Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, Belta reported.

Coale told reporters that Lukashenko had given "good advice" on how to address the war, saying that Lukashenko and Russian President Vladimir Putin were "longtime friends" with "the necessary level of relationship to discuss such issues."

The U.S. official told the AP that "continued progress in U.S.-Belarus relations" also requires steps to resolve tensions between Belarus and neighboring Lithuania, which is a member of the EU and NATO.

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda welcomed the prisoners' release, praising their "remarkable courage" in a post on X and adding that "Lithuania stands with them and all who strive for freedom."

The Lithuanian government this week declared a national emergency over security risks posed by meteorological balloons sent from Belarus. The balloons forced Lithuania to repeatedly shut down its main airport, stranding thousands of people.

UN chief says 6 peacekeepers killed in drone strike on a UN facility in Sudan

BY SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — A drone strike hit a United Nations facility in war-torn Sudan on Saturday, killing six peacekeepers, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said.

The strike hit the peacekeeping logistics base in the city of Kadugli, in the central region of Kordofan, Guterres said in a statement.

Eight other peacekeepers were wounded in the strike. All the victims are Bangladeshi nationals, serving in the U.N. Interim Security Force for Abyei, UNISFA.

"Attacks targeting United Nations peacekeepers may constitute war crimes under international law," said Guterres, who called for those responsible for the "unjustifiable" attack to be held accountable.

The Sudanese military blamed the attack on the Rapid Support Forces, RSF, a notorious paramilitary group at war with the army for the control of the country for more than two years. There was no immediate comment from the RSF.

The attack "clearly reveals the subversive approach of the rebel militia and those behind it," the military said in a statement. The military posted a video on social media showing plumes of dense black smoke over what it said was the U.N. facility.

The oil-rich Abyei is a disputed region between Sudan and South Sudan, and the U.N. mission has been deployed there since 2011 when South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan.

Guterres also called for an immediate ceasefire in Sudan to allow "a comprehensive, inclusive and Sudanese-owned political process" to settle the conflict in the northeast African country.

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Sudan was plunged into chaos in April 2023 when a power struggle between the military and the RSF exploded into open fighting in the capital, Khartoum, and elsewhere in the country. The conflict has killed over 40,000 people — a figure rights groups consider a significant undercount.

The fighting has recently centered on Kodrofan, particularly since the RSF took control of el-Fasher, the military's last stronghold in the western region of Darfur.

The war has wrecked urban areas and has been marked by atrocities, including mass rape and ethnically motivated killings which the U.N. and rights groups have said amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, especially in the western region of Darfur.

The war has also created the world's worst humanitarian crisis and pushed parts of the country into famine.

Affable comedy acting legend Dick Van Dyke turns 100 years old

By The Associated Press undefined

Comedy icon Dick Van Dyke celebrated his 100th birthday on Saturday, hitting the century mark some six decades after he sang and danced with Julie Andrews in "Mary Poppins" and starred in his self-titled sitcom.

"The funniest thing is, it's not enough," Van Dyke said in an interview with ABC News at his Malibu, California home. "A hundred years is not enough. You want to live more, which I plan to."

As part of the celebration of Van Dyke's birthday this weekend, theaters around the country are showing a new documentary about his life, "Dick Van Dyke: 100th Celebration."

Van Dyke became one of the biggest actors of his era with "The Dick Van Dyke Show," which ran from 1961-66 on CBS; appeared with Andrews as a chimney sweep with a Cockney accent in the 1964 Disney classic "Mary Poppins" and, in his 70s, played a physician-sleuth on "Diagnosis: Murder."

Also a Broadway star, Van Dyke won a Tony Award for "Bye Bye Birdie" to go with a Grammy and four Primetime Emmys. In 1963, he starred in the film version of "Bye Bye Birdie."

Just last year, he became the oldest winner of a Daytime Emmy, for a guest role on the soap "Days of Our Lives."

In the 1970s, he found sobriety after battling alcoholism, and spoke out about it at a time when that was uncommon to do.

Now that he has hit triple digits, Van Dyke said he's gotten some perspective on how he used to play older characters.

"You know, I played old men a lot, and I always played them as angry and cantankerous," he told ABC News. "It's not really that way. I don't know any other 100-year-olds, but I can speak for myself."

He recently imparted wisdom about reaching the century mark in his book, "100 Rules for Living to 100: An Optimist's Guide to a Happy Life." He credited his wife, 54-year-old makeup artist and producer Arlene Silver, with keeping him young.

"She gives me energy. She gives me humor, and all kinds of support," he told ABC News.

Van Dyke was born in West Plains, Missouri, in 1925, and grew up "the class clown" in Danville, Illinois, while admiring and imitating the silent film comedians.

He told ABC News he started acting when he was about 4 or 5 years old in a Christmas pageant. He said he was the baby Jesus.

"I made some kind of crack, I don't know what I said, but it broke the congregation up," he said. "And I liked the sound of that laughter."

And what's hard about being 100?

"I miss movement," he told ABC News. "I've got one game leg from I don't know what."

"I still try to dance," he said with a laugh.

Fighting rages on Thai-Cambodian border despite Trump's ceasefire claim

By JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI and GRANT PECK Associated Press

SURIN, Thailand (AP) — Fighting raged Saturday morning along the border of Thailand and Cambodia, even after U.S. President Donald Trump, acting as a mediator, declared that he had won agreement from both countries for a new ceasefire.

Thai officials said they did not agree to a ceasefire. Cambodia has not commented directly on Trump's claim, but its defense ministry said Thai jets carried out airstrikes Saturday morning.

Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow said Saturday that some of Trump's remarks didn't "reflect an accurate understanding of the situation."

He said Trump's characterization of a land mine explosion that wounded Thai soldiers as a "roadside accident" was inaccurate, and did not reflect Thailand's position that it was a deliberate act of aggression.

Sihasak said that Trump's willingness to credit what may be "information from sources that deliberately distorted the facts" instead of believing Thailand hurt the feelings of the Thai people "because we consider ourselves — we are proud, in fact — to be the oldest treaty ally of the United States in the region."

The latest large-scale fighting was set off by a skirmish on Dec. 7 that wounded two Thai soldiers and derailed a ceasefire promoted by Trump that ended five days of earlier combat in July over longstanding territorial disputes.

The July ceasefire was brokered by Malaysia and pushed through by pressure from Trump, who threatened to withhold trade privileges unless Thailand and Cambodia agreed. It was formalized in more detail in October at a regional meeting in Malaysia that Trump attended.

Number of displaced from fighting tops half a million

More than two dozen people on both sides of the border have officially been reported killed in this past week's fighting, while more than half a million have been displaced.

The Thai military acknowledged 15 of its troops died during the fighting, and estimated earlier this week that there have been 165 fatalities among Cambodian soldiers. Cambodia has not announced military casualties, but has said at least 11 civilians have been killed and more than six dozen wounded.

Trump, after speaking to Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, announced on Friday an agreement to restart the ceasefire.

"They have agreed to CEASE all shooting effective this evening, and go back to the original Peace Accord made with me, and them, with the help of the Great Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim," Trump wrote in his Truth Social post.

Trump's claim came after midnight in Bangkok. Thai Prime Minister Anutin had, after his call with Trump, said he had explained Thailand's reasons for fighting and said peace would depend on Cambodia ceasing its attacks first.

The Thai foreign ministry later explicitly disputed Trump's claim that a ceasefire had been reached. Anutin's busy day on Friday included dissolving Parliament, so new elections could be held early next year.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, in comments posted early Saturday morning, also made no mention of a ceasefire.

Leaders held Friday night phone talks with Trump

Hun Manet said he held phone conversations on Friday night with Trump, and a night earlier with Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, and thanked both "for their continuous efforts to achieve a long-lasting peace between Cambodia and Thailand."

"Cambodia is ready to cooperate in any way that is needed," Hun Manet wrote.

Anwar later posted on social media that he was urging the two sides to implement a ceasefire on Saturday night. Cambodia's prime minister, also posting online, endorsed the initiative, which included having Malaysia and the United States help monitor it. However, Thai Prime Minister Anutin denied that his country was even in negotiations over the proposal.

Thailand has been carrying out airstrikes on what it says are strictly military targets, while Cambodia has

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been firing thousands of medium-range BM-21 rockets that have caused havoc but relatively few casualties. BM-21 rocket launchers can fire up to 40 rockets at a time with a range of 30-40 kilometers (19-25 miles). These rockets cannot be precisely targeted and have landed largely in areas from where most people have already been evacuated.

However, the Thai army announced Saturday that BM-21 rockets had hit a civilian area in Sisaket province, seriously injuring two civilians who had heard warning sirens and had been running toward a bunker for safety.

Thailand's navy was also reported by both sides' militaries to have joined the fighting on Saturday morning, with a warship in the Gulf of Thailand shelling Cambodia's southwestern province of Koh Kong. Each side said the other opened fire first.

What to know about King Charles III's cancer treatment and his message to the public

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — King Charles III has been "deeply touched" by the response to his update on his cancer treatment, Buckingham Palace said Saturday, adding that the monarch is pleased to have highlighted the value of screening programs for the disease.

Medics and health charities have praised the king for his openness, saying his statement on Friday had already prompted people to seek information about cancer.

In a strikingly personal video statement, the British monarch acknowledged that a cancer diagnosis can feel "overwhelming," but said catching the disease early brings "the precious gift of hope."

Here's what to know about the king's condition and his message.

A royal health update

The 77-year-old king said in a statement broadcast Friday that his treatment schedule will be reduced in the new year, "thanks to early diagnosis, effective intervention and adherence to 'doctors' orders.'"

He encouraged others to take advantage of screening programs such as those for breast, bowel and cervical cancer offered by Britain's public health service.

"Early diagnosis quite simply saves lives," the king said in the statement aired during a "Stand Up to Cancer" telethon on TV station Channel 4. He said catching the disease early had allowed him "to continue leading a full and active life even while undergoing treatment."

Charles has received outpatient treatment for almost two years. Buckingham Palace did not say the king is in remission, but that his treatment is moving to a "precautionary phase" and his condition will be monitored to ensure his continued recovery.

"I know from my own experience that a cancer diagnosis can feel overwhelming," the king said in his video statement. "Yet I also know that early detection is the key that can transform treatment journeys, giving invaluable time to medical teams – and, to their patients, the precious gift of hope."

Diagnosed in 2024

Charles announced in February 2024 that he had been diagnosed with cancer, and, in a break from centuries of secrecy about royal health, he has since spoken about the illness, using his story to promote cancer awareness and treatment.

The openness has limits, though. The king has not disclosed what type of cancer he has or what kind of treatment he is receiving. The palace said it was an intentional decision designed to ensure his message reaches the widest possible audience.

The king's cancer was discovered after treatment for an enlarged prostate. While doctors ruled out prostate cancer, tests revealed "a separate issue of concern," palace officials said last year.

Charles suspended his public appearances for about two months after his diagnosis. Since returning to the public eye, he has visited cancer treatment centers across the country and shared stories with fellow patients.

Setting an example

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Buckingham Palace said Charles "will be greatly encouraged and deeply touched by the very positive reaction" his message has generated. "He will be particularly pleased at the way it has helped to shine a light on the benefits of cancer screening programs," it added.

British cancer charities said the number of people seeking information about cancer jumped after the king revealed he was undergoing treatment last year.

Cancer Research U.K. said about 100,000 people have visited its Screening Checker website since it was launched on Dec. 5, most of them since the king's statement on Friday.

The charity's Chief Executive Michelle Mitchell said: "When public figures speak openly about their cancer diagnosis, it can prompt others to check in on their health."

Broadcaster Jonathan Dimbleby, the king's authorized biographer, said the statement was "a remarkable thing for a monarch to do."

"It takes guts, and the fact that he came out and did that will save lives," Dimbleby said.

The Princess of Wales, who announced her own cancer diagnosis six weeks after her father-in-law, has also given updates on her treatment. Kate announced in January that her cancer is in remission.

Israel says it has killed a top Hamas commander in Gaza

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel on Saturday said it killed a top Hamas commander in Gaza after an explosive device detonated and wounded two soldiers in the territory's south.

Hamas in a statement did not confirm the death of Raed Saad. It said a civilian vehicle had been struck outside Gaza City and asserted it was a violation of the ceasefire that took effect on Oct. 10.

Saad served as the Hamas official in charge of manufacturing and previously led the militant group's operations division. The Israeli statement described him as one of the architects of the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that sparked the war, and said that he had been "engaged in rebuilding the terrorist organization" in a violation of the ceasefire.

The Israeli strike west of Gaza City killed four people, according to an Associated Press journalist who saw their bodies arrive at Shifa Hospital. Another three were wounded, according to Al-Awda hospital.

Israel and Hamas have repeatedly accused each other of truce violations.

Israeli airstrikes and shootings in Gaza have killed at least 386 Palestinians since the ceasefire took hold, according to Palestinian health officials. Israel has said recent strikes are in retaliation for militant attacks against its soldiers, and that troops have fired on Palestinians who approached the "Yellow Line" between the Israeli-controlled majority of Gaza and the rest of the territory.

Israel has demanded that Palestinian militants return the remains of the final hostage, Ran Gvili, from Gaza and called it a condition of moving to the second and more complicated phase of the ceasefire. That lays out a vision for ending Hamas' rule and seeing the rebuilding of a demilitarized Gaza under international supervision.

The initial Hamas-led 2023 attack on southern Israel killed around 1,200 people and took 251 hostages. Almost all hostages or their remains have been returned in ceasefires or other deals.

Israel's two-year campaign in Gaza has killed more than 70,650 Palestinians, roughly half of them women and children, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between militants and civilians in its count. The ministry, which operates under the Hamas-run government, is staffed by medical professionals and maintains detailed records viewed as generally reliable by the international community.

Much of Gaza has been destroyed and most of the population of over 2 million has been displaced. Humanitarian aid entry into the territory continues to be below the level set by ceasefire terms, and Palestinians who lost limbs in the war face a shortage of prosthetic limbs and long delays in medical evacuations.

Higher cost, worse coverage: Affordable Care Act enrollees say expiring subsidies will hit them hard

By ALI SWENSON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For one Wisconsin couple, the loss of government-sponsored health subsidies next year means choosing a lower-quality insurance plan with a higher deductible. For a Michigan family, it means going without insurance altogether.

For a single mom in Nevada, the spiking costs mean fewer Christmas gifts this year. She is stretching her budget already while she waits to see if Congress will act.

Less than three weeks remain until the expiration of COVID-era enhanced tax credits that have helped millions of Americans pay their monthly fees for Affordable Care Act coverage for the past four years.

The Senate on Thursday rejected two proposals to address the problem and an emerging health care package from House Republicans does not include an extension, all but guaranteeing that many Americans will see much higher insurance costs in 2026.

Here are a few of their stories.

From a gold plan to a bronze plan, a couple spends more on less

Chad Bruns comes from a family of savers. That came in handy when the 58-year-old military veteran had to leave his firefighting career early because of arm and back injuries he incurred on the job.

He and his wife, Kelley, 60, both retirees, cut their own firewood to reduce their electricity costs in their home in Sawyer County, Wisconsin. They rarely eat out and hardly ever buy groceries unless they are on sale.

But to the extent that they have always been frugal, they will be forced to be even more so now, Bruns said. That is because their coverage under the health law enacted under former President Barack Obama is getting more expensive — and for worse coverage.

This year, the Brunses were paying \$2 per month for a top-tier gold-level plan with less than a \$4,000 deductible. Their income was low enough to help them qualify for a lot of financial assistance.

But in 2026, that same plan is rising to an unattainable \$1,600 per month, forcing them to downgrade to a bronze plan with a \$15,000 deductible.

Kelley Bruns said she is concerned that if something happens to their health in the next year, they could go bankrupt. While their monthly fees are low at about \$25, their new out-of-pocket maximum at \$21,000 amounts to nearly half their joint income.

“We have to pray that we don’t have to have surgery or don’t have to have some medical procedure done that we’re not aware of,” she said. “It would be very devastating.”

Family facing higher costs prepares to go without insurance

Dave Roof’s family of four has been on ACA insurance since the program started in 2014. Back then, the accessibility of insurance on the marketplace helped him feel comfortable taking the leap to start a small music production and performance company in his hometown of Grand Blanc, Michigan. His wife, Kristin, is also self-employed as a top seller on Etsy.

The coverage has worked for them so far, even when emergencies come up, such as an ATV accident their 21-year-old daughter had last year.

But now, with the expiration of subsidies that kept their premiums down, the 53-year-old Roof said their \$500 per month insurance plan is jumping to at least \$700 a month, along with spiking deductibles and out-of-pocket costs.

With their joint income of about \$75,000 a year, that increase is not manageable, he said. So, they are planning to go without health insurance next year, paying cash for prescriptions, checkups and anything else that arises.

Roof said his family is already living cheaply and has not taken a vacation together since 2021. As it is, they do not save money or add it to their retirement accounts. So even though forgoing insurance is stressful, it is what they must do.

“The fear and anxiety that it’s going to put on my wife and I is really hard to measure,” Roof said. “But

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we can't pay for what we can't pay for."

Single mom strains her January budget in hopes Congress acts soon

If you ask Katelin Provost, the American middle class has gone from experiencing a squeeze to a "full suffocation."

The 37-year-old social worker in Henderson, Nevada, counts herself in that category. As a single mom, she already keeps a tight budget to cover housing, groceries and day care for her 4-year-old daughter.

Next year, that is going to be even tougher.

The monthly fee on her plan is going up from \$85 to nearly \$750. She decided she is going to pay that higher cost for January and reevaluate afterward, depending on whether lawmakers extend the subsidies, which as of now appears unlikely. She hopes they will.

If Congress does not act, she will drop herself off the health insurance and keep it only for her daughter because she cannot afford the higher fee for the two of them over the long term.

The strain of one month alone is enough to have an impact.

"I'm going to have to reprioritize the next couple of months to rebalance that budget," Provost said. "Christmas will be much smaller."

Grassley built a reputation for government oversight. Has he abandoned it under Trump?

By JOSHUA GOODMAN, JIM MUSTIAN AND ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As President Donald Trump's top law enforcement officials were firing and forcing out waves of Justice Department veterans, Sen. Chuck Grassley denounced a "political infection" that had poisoned FBI leadership.

The Iowa Republican was not criticizing FBI Director Kash Patel or Attorney General Pam Bondi. In a July statement, he directed his ire at the FBI's "extreme lack of effort" in investigating Democrat Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server as secretary of state a decade ago.

Trump loyalists have roiled the Justice Department, shattering norms and leading to a mass exodus of veteran officials, but the 92-year-old chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee has remained focused on the past.

Critics say Grassley's reluctance to challenge the Trump administration has even extended to a defining issue: His support for whistleblowers making claims of fraud, waste and abuse.

In an interview, Grassley insisted he has not abandoned his oversight role. He said he has felt compelled to investigate issues under earlier presidents to avoid a repeat of what he described as politically motivated prosecutions carried out against Trump and his allies.

"Political weaponization is being brought to the surface and being made more transparent because this administration is the most cooperative of any administration — Republican or Democrat," Grassley said.

Grassley has acknowledged that Congress has ceded a great deal of power to the current administration, a concession he says makes his own oversight more crucial.

"It's going to enhance the necessity for it," he said.

Grassley is known for his focus on oversight

Grassley, upon entering Congress in 1975, quickly developed a reputation for exposing corruption and waste. He once drove to the Pentagon in his orange Chevy Chevette to demand answers from officials about their purchase of \$450 hammers and \$7,600 coffee pots.

He was among the chief proponents in Congress of laws to shield employees who revealed such waste and sponsored the landmark 1989 Whistleblower Protection Act. He also has played a key role in empowering inspectors general, internal watchdogs tasked with rooting out misconduct.

"He has been the conscience of the Senate on whistleblower protection rights for decades," said Tom Devine, legal director for the Government Accountability Project. In the current Congress, he has co-sponsored legislation boosting protections for whistleblowers in the FBI and CIA.

"No one is close to having his impact," Devine said. "That hardly means that we always agree with his

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judgment calls about policy.”

Criticized for not taking on Trump administration

Trump and Grassley are not always in alignment. This past week, for example, they tussled over the pace of confirmation of administration nominees.

Even so, Democrats and good government advocates say Grassley has been conspicuously silent as the administration has investigated Trump’s perceived enemies, fired agents who worked on politically sensitive cases and upended the Justice Department’s longstanding post-Watergate independence.

Some whistleblowers have been loath to trust him with revelations that might harm the administration, according to interviews with more than a dozen current and former U.S. officials, or their attorneys, several of whom spoke on condition of anonymity because they feared retaliation.

“There are a lot of people concerned he’s not the same old Chuck Grassley,” said Eric Woolson, author of a 1995 biography of Grassley who once served as a Grassley campaign spokesman.

Grassley rejected that criticism, saying whistleblowers call him regardless of who is in the White House. His office’s online portal has received more than 5,300 complaints in 2025, about the same level as past years, staffers reported.

“His entire career, he’s the guy people will trust,” said Jason Foster, a former chief investigative counsel to Grassley who founded Empower Oversight, a group that has advocated on behalf of FBI agents disciplined under the Biden administration.

Staunch Trump ally

Many of Grassley’s recent actions, however, suggest he has evolved from being a fiercely independent moderate eager to sniff out fraud to being a stalwart Trump ally, according to Democrats and whistleblower advocates.

Some were particularly alarmed at Grassley’s dismissal of witnesses who raised concerns about the June nomination of Emil Bove, a high-ranking Justice Department official and former Trump lawyer, to a lifetime federal appeals court seat.

Among several officials who came forward was Justice Department lawyer Erez Reuveni, who said he was fired for refusing to go along with Bove’s plans to defy court orders and withhold information from judges to advance the administration’s aggressive deportation goals.

Grassley said his staff tried to investigate some of the claims but that lawyers for one whistleblower would not give his staff all the materials they requested in time. Instead of delaying the hearing to dig further, Grassley circled the wagons behind Trump’s nominee.

The “vicious rhetoric, unfair accusations and abuse directed at Mr. Bove,” Grassley said in a speech, have “crossed the line.”

Stacey Young, a former Justice Department lawyer who founded Justice Connection, a network of department alumni mobilized to uphold the department’s traditionally apolitical workforce, said she was disappointed Grassley has not used his influence to condemn firings at the department.

“How is the congressional majority not screaming bloody murder? We are watching the near decimation of DOJ in real-time, and Congress is sitting by doing nothing,” she said. “Does Sen. Grassley think it’s OK that people get fired for doing their jobs?”

At a September oversight hearing, Grassley passed up a chance to grill Patel on a series of terminations of line agents and high-level supervisors, including five whose abrupt and still-unexplained dismissals had generated headlines weeks earlier.

When Democrats pressed Patel about his use of the bureau’s plane for personal reasons, Grassley chided Senate colleagues for their disinterest in the travel practices of previous directors.

Grassley has also been an eager conduit for an FBI leadership seeking to expose what it insists was misconduct and overreach in an investigation during the Biden administration into Trump’s efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

He has released batches of sensitive documents from that investigation, known as “Arctic Frost,” that he says have been furnished by FBI whistleblowers or that have been labeled as “Produced by FBI Director

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Kash Patel." The records are not the type of documents federal law enforcement would typically make public on its own.

Advocates dismayed over Grassley response to IG firings

Whistleblower advocates said they were dismayed when Grassley failed to take a robust stance when Trump, within days of taking office, fired without cause some inspectors general.

Even some Republican-appointed inspectors general accused Trump of violating a law requiring the White House to provide 30-day notice and rationale to Congress. If any Republican were going to stand up for them, some of the fired inspectors general said, they expected it to be Grassley.

"He has been uncharacteristically silent," said Mark Greenblatt, a Trump appointee at the Interior Department who was among those fired. "It is unimaginable that the Grassley of a few years ago, the man who held nominees and fired off blistering threats at the smallest provocation to protect inspectors general, would be so silent in the face of these assaults."

Grassley responded to the purge by sending Trump a letter requesting officials "immediately" spell out their case-by-case specific reasons for the dismissals.

It took the White House eight months to respond. In a two-page letter, it reasserted presidential authority to fire inspectors general at will and made no attempt to explain its rationale other than to cite "changed priorities."

Expert tips to ease financial pressure and avoid holiday overspending

By ADRIANA MORGA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Are you feeling overwhelmed by the pressure to spend money on gifts, parties, and travel this holiday season?

The job market is tough, student loan and credit card debt are rising, and prices for many items remain high due to inflation. If you're feeling financially strained, know that you're not the only one feeling that way, said Lindsay Bryan-Podvin, a financial therapist and host of the Mind Money Balance podcast.

To avoid putting additional pressure on your finances, use the the holidays as a time to be extra-mindful of how you spend. Remember that spending money isn't the only way to show your love to your friends and family.

"We add on all of the years of nostalgia and pressure that we put on the holidays to meet some sort of picture-perfect version," Bryan-Podvin said.

From setting a budget to creating your own traditions, here are expert recommendations to avoid financial stress this holiday season:

Start with a budget

What is marketed as "the most wonderful time of the year" can quickly become stressful, Jennifer Seitz, director of education at family finance app Greenlight, said. Setting a budget can help you avoid overspending on gifts, decorations, or any other holiday expenses.

"Be sure to include your travel, your shipping, your seasonal tipping, knowing what you plan to spend in each category and then having a cap in place can make it easier to avoid debt in January," Seitz said.

While having a budget is the first step, sticking to it is equally essential.

Bryan-Podvin also recommended that you include your regular debt payments in your holiday budget. That way, you avoid falling behind or acquiring more debt.

Shop around for the best deals

When you're doing your holiday gift shopping, look for sales, coupons or other holiday discounts so you can reduce your overall costs, said Trae Bodge, a shopping expert.

"I'm always looking for maybe a coupon code so I can save a certain percentage off, or I can earn cash back, or I can get a free shipping offer. I really believe in those tools and use them every single time I shop," Bodge said.

Bodge also recommends you try finding deals with browser extensions such as PayPal Honey and Rakuten.

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Decide what matters most to you

The holidays are the season of giving, but spending too much money and energy can have adverse effects on your mental health. Deciding what you care about most can help you avoid financial stress.

Bryan-Podvin recommends that you write down your holiday expenses: travel, celebrations, gifts, etc. Then ask yourself if buying or participating in all of those activities and costs feels good.

"That helps you prioritize what are the things that are most important to you this holiday season," she said.

While many people equate how much they spend on gifts or how many events they attend with how much they care for their loved ones, that is not the best way to approach the holiday season if you're financially strained.

Don't be afraid to say no

Between work parties, family functions and gatherings with friends, the holiday season can quickly become overwhelming both emotionally and financially. If you're feeling stressed, don't be afraid to place a boundary and say no to an event or a gift exchange.

"Most people who you say a boundary to are going to understand and (some) are going to be relieved," Bryan-Podvin said.

Being open about your money can be difficult, but sharing if you are struggling with debt or other financial issues can help family and friends understand that they should prioritize low-cost gifts or activities.

Create your own traditions

In recent years, Seitz has noticed a shift away from spending money on goods and more of a focus on creating meaningful experiences with family.

"I think it's really important for families to create alternative forms of joy that aren't necessarily tied to buying. Kids often remember those memories and those traditions, most of all," Seitz said.

New ways of celebrating don't have to include a greater expense, they can be as simple as organizing a pancake-making morning with the entire family, playing a new board game, or doing a homemade gift exchange.

Gaza amputees struggle to rebuild lives as the enclave faces shortages of prosthetic limbs

By ABDEL KAREEM HANA and FATMA KHALED Associated Press

NUSEIRAT, Gaza Strip (AP) — Sitting in her wheelchair, Haneen al-Mabhohu dreams of rebuilding her family, of cradling a new baby. She dreams of walking again. But with her leg gone, her life in Gaza is on hold, she says, as she waits to go abroad for further treatment.

An Israeli airstrike in July 2024 smashed her home in central Gaza as she and her family slept. All four of her daughters were killed, including her 5-month-old baby. Her husband was severely burned. Al-Mabhohu's legs were crushed under the rubble, and doctors had to amputate her right leg above the knee.

"For the past year and a half, I have been unable to move around, to live like others. For the past year and a half, I have been without children," she said, speaking at her parents' home.

The 2-month-old ceasefire in Gaza has been slow to bring help for thousands of Palestinians who suffered amputations from Israeli bombardment over the past two years. The World Health Organization estimates there are some 5,000 to 6,000 amputees from the war, 25% of them children.

Those who lost limbs are struggling to adapt, faced with a shortage of prosthetic limbs and long delays in medical evacuations out of Gaza.

The WHO said a shipment of essential prosthetic supplies recently made it into Gaza. That appears to be the first significant shipment for the past two years.

Previously, Israel had let in almost no ready-made prosthetic limbs or material to manufacture limbs since the war began, according to Loay Abu Saif, the head of the disability program at Medical Aid for Palestinians, or MAP, and Nevin Al Ghussein, acting director of the Artificial Limbs and Polio Center in Gaza City.

The Israeli military body in charge of coordinating aid, known as COGAT, did not respond when asked how many prosthetic supplies had entered during the war or about its policies on such supplies.

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'My future is paralyzed'

Al-Mabhough was asleep with her baby girl in her arms when the strike hit their home in Nuseirat, she said. For several weeks while recovering in the hospital, al-Mabhough had no idea her children had been killed.

She underwent multiple surgeries. Her hand still has difficulty moving. Her remaining leg remains shattered, held together with rods. She needs a bone graft and other treatments that are only available outside of Gaza.

She was put on the list for medical evacuation 10 months ago but still hasn't gotten permission to leave Gaza.

Waiting for her chance to go, she lives at her parents' house. She needs help changing clothes and can't even hold a pen, and remains crushed by grief over her daughters. "I never got to hear her say 'mama,' see her first tooth or watch her take her first steps," she said of her baby.

She dreams of having a new child but can't until she gets treatment.

"It's my right to live, to have another child, to regain what I lost, to walk, just to walk again," she said. "Now my future is paralyzed. They destroyed my dreams."

Medical evacuations remain slow

The ceasefire has hardly brought any increase in medical evacuations for the 16,500 Palestinians the U.N. says are waiting to get vital treatment abroad — not just amputees, but patients suffering many kinds of chronic conditions or wounds.

As of Dec. 1, 235 patients have been evacuated since the ceasefire began in October, just under five a day. In the months before that, the average was about three a day.

Israel last week said it was ready to allow patients and other Palestinians to leave Gaza via the Israeli-held Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt. But it's unsure that will happen because Egypt, which controls the crossing's other side, demands Rafah also be opened for Palestinians to enter Gaza as called for under the ceasefire deal.

Dr. Richard Peepkorn, the WHO's representative in the occupied Palestinian territory, told The Associated Press that the backlog is caused by the lack of countries to host the evacuated patients. He said new medevac routes need to be opened, especially to the Israeli-occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem, where hospitals are ready to receive patients.

For those waiting, life grinds to a standstill

Yassin Marouf lies in a tent in central Gaza, his left foot amputated, his right leg barely held together with rods.

The 23-year-old and his brother were hit by Israeli shelling in May as they returned from visiting their home in northern Gaza that their family had been forced to flee. His brother was killed. Marouf lay bleeding on the ground, as a stray dog attacked his mangled left leg.

Doctors say his right leg will also need to be amputated, unless he can travel abroad for operations that might save it. Marouf said he can't afford painkillers and can't go to the hospital regularly to have his bandages changed as they're supposed to.

"If I want to go to the bathroom, I need two or three people to carry me," he said.

Mohamed al-Naggar had been pursuing an IT degree at the University of Palestine before the war.

Seven months ago, shrapnel pierced his left leg during strikes on the house where his family was sheltering. Doctors amputated his leg above the knee. His right leg was also badly injured and shrapnel remains in parts of his body.

Despite four surgeries and physical therapy, the 21-year-old al-Naggar can't move around.

"I'd like to travel abroad and put on a prosthetic and graduate from college and be normal like young people outside Gaza," he said.

Gaza faces prosthetic limb shortage

Some 42,000 Palestinians have suffered life-changing injuries in the war, including amputations, brain trauma, spinal cord injuries and major burns, the WHO said in an October report.

The situation has "improved slightly" for those with assistance needs but "there is still a huge overall shortage of assistive products," such as wheelchairs, walkers and crutches. Gaza has only eight prosthetists

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able to manufacture and fit artificial limbs, the WHO said in a statement to the AP.

The Artificial Limbs and Polio Center in Gaza City, one of two prosthetics centers still operating in the territory, received a shipment of material to manufacture limbs just before the war began in 2023, said its director, Al Ghussein. Another small shipment entered in December 2024, but nothing since.

The center has been able to provide artificial limbs for 250 cases over the course of the war, but supplies are running out, Al Ghussein said.

No pre-made prosthetic legs or arms have entered, according to Abu Saif of MAP, who said Israel does not ban them, but its procedures cause delays and "in the end they ignore it."

Ibrahim Khalif wants a prosthetic right leg so he can get a job doing manual labor or cleaning houses to support his pregnant wife and children.

In January, he lost his leg when an Israeli airstrike hit Gaza City while he was out getting food.

"I used to be the provider for my kids, but now I'm sitting here," Khalif said. "I think of how I was and what I've become."

Today in History: December 14, The Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Dec. 14, the 348th day of 2025. There are 17 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Dec. 14, 2012, a gunman with a semiautomatic rifle killed 20 first-graders and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, then took his own life as police arrived; the 20-year-old fatally shot his mother at their home before the school attack.

Also on this date:

In 1799, the first president of the United States, George Washington, died at his Mount Vernon, Virginia, home at age 67.

In 1819, Alabama was admitted to the Union as the 22nd U.S. state.

In 1903, Wilbur Wright made the first attempt to fly the Wright Flyer but climbed steeply, stalled the aircraft and dove into the sand on North Carolina's Outer Banks. Three days later on Dec. 17, his brother Orville would make history with the first successful controlled, powered flight.

In 1911, Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen (ROH'-ahl AH'-mun-suhn) and his team became the first men to reach the South Pole, beating out a British expedition led by Robert F. Scott by 33 days.

In 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States, ruled Congress was within its authority to enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1964 against racial discrimination by private businesses (in this case, a motel that refused to cater to Blacks).

In 1995, the Dayton Accords were formally signed in Paris, ending the Bosnian war that had claimed over 200,000 lives and forced 2 million people from their homes over three years.

In 2020, the largest vaccination campaign in U.S. history began with health workers getting shots on the same day the nation's COVID-19 death toll hit 300,000.

In 2021, Stephen Curry set a new NBA career 3-point record; the Golden State Warriors guard made his 2,974th 3-point shot against the New York Knicks at Madison Square Garden.

In 2024, South Korea's parliament impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol over his stunning and short-lived martial law decree, ending days of political paralysis as jubilant crowds celebrated the pro-democratic move.

Today's Birthdays: Tennis Hall of Famer Stan Smith is 79. Actor Dee Wallace is 77. Rock musician Cliff Williams (AC/DC) is 76. Baseball Hall of Famer Craig Biggio is 60. Actor and comedian Miranda Hart is 53. Actor Natascha McElhone is 54. Actor Jackson Rathbone is 41. Actor Vanessa Hudgens is 37. Rapper Offset is 34. Singer Tori Kelly is 33. NFL wide receiver DK Metcalf is 28.