

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026

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

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



Groton Soccer Association Clinics, GHS Arena, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

4th Grade BBB Practice, 1 p.m.

6th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.

Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 12, 2026

School Breakfast: Eggs.

School Lunch: Buffalo Chicken bake, cooked broccoli.

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

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

1st Grade BBB Practice, 4:30 p.m.

Groton JV Wrestling Jamboree, 5 p.m.

Girls Basketball at Northwestern: (C at 5 p.m.; JV at 6 p.m.; Varsity to follow)

5th/6th Grade Volleyball Practice, 6 p.m.

Kindergarten BBB Practice, 6 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent
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Kjellsen praises defensive effort as Tigers rally past Lennox



Gage Sippel goes over Lennox's Drake Mikkelsen for this shot. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Keegen Tracy engages Lennox's Cole Spieler. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

LENNOX, S.D. — After a slow start Saturday night, the Groton Area Tigers delivered their best defensive performance of the season, rallying past Lennox 57–48 in a statement road victory.

Head coach Greg Kjellsen said the win was as much about mental toughness as execution.

"I'm proud as can be. The first three minutes of the game we weren't matching their intensity. They were getting offensive rebounds and put-backs, but the kids decided to pick it up — and that was the best four quarters of defense we've played," Kjellsen said.

Lennox jumped out to a 13–6 first-quarter lead and carried a 24–18 advantage into halftime. Midway through the third quarter, Groton still trailed 32–28 before flipping the game with an 11–0 run to take control. The Tigers led 39–33 entering the fourth quarter and sealed the win at the free-throw line, hitting 9-of-10 in the final period. Ryder Johnson knocked down two key three-pointers down the stretch, while Keegen Tracy added another triple.

Groton finished shooting 48% from the field (19-of-40), including 68% on two-point attempts and 35% from beyond the arc. The Tigers were also 13-of-15 at the free-throw line (87%) and committed just nine turnovers.

"Our kids were much more patient tonight. We didn't take a lot of bad shots. We valued the ball. We're too good of a basketball team to make silly mistakes — and tonight, we didn't," Kjellsen said.

Ryder Johnson led Groton Area with 18 points, going 8-for-8 at the free-throw line while adding five rebounds. Karson Zak scored 14 points — 10 in the first half — and finished with six rebounds, three assists, and two steals. Keegen Tracy added 10 points and two assists. Gage Sippel contributed seven points on 3-of-4 two-point shooting along with two rebounds and one assist. Easton Weber rounded out the scoring with six points, two rebounds, two steals, and an assist.

Lennox was led by Tate Gerdes with 18 points. Aiden Hanssen followed with 15 points. Cole Spiegler and Teagan Musser each scored six points, Drake Mikkelsen had two, and Eli Plank added one. The Orioles matched Groton's 48% field-goal shooting, going 24-of-50, but struggled at the free-throw line at 5-of-10.

Kjellsen said the victory was especially meaningful following a difficult stretch of games.

"Fourth game in eight days, third straight road game, coming off a tough loss at Clark — the kids had every reason to come out flat. Instead, they responded. It's huge for their confidence going forward," he said.

In junior varsity action, Lennox defeated Groton 51–22. Anthony Tracy scored seven points to lead the Tigers, followed by Asher Johnson with six. Ryder Schelle and Jordan Schwan each added three points, Jace Johnson scored two, and Connor Kroll finished with one.

In the C-game, Groton earned a 47–30 victory. Trey Tietz led the Tigers with 14 points, Major Dolan added 13, and Trayce Schelle scored 12. Ryder Schwan contributed four points, while Wesley Borg and Zach Flihs each finished with two.

With the victory, Groton Area improves to 6–3 on the season. The Tigers return home Thursday to host Tiospa Zina in a doubleheader at Groton.

"Six and three looks a lot better than five and four," Kjellsen said. "It was a good win. The kids played their butts off."

Orioles Stay Unbeaten as They Top Tigers in Lennox



McKenna Tietz dribbles past her defender. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

LENNOX, S.D. — The Groton Area Tigers ran into one of the state's top defensive teams Saturday, falling 46–22 to the undefeated Lennox Orioles in girls basketball action.

Groton showed early fight, tying the game at 2–2 and again at 4–4 before Lennox went on a 14-point run to build an 18–14 advantage. The Orioles carried a 25–11 lead into halftime and extended it to 38–20 after three quarters.

"I thought we guarded okay," said Groton head coach Matt Locke. "I just thought we were really passive on the offensive end."

Lennox frequently switched between man-to-man and zone defenses, disrupting the Tigers' rhythm.

"They played the zone way more tonight than they have in the past," Locke said.

"And honestly, I'd have played it all night too — we couldn't get much done against it."

Groton struggled shooting, finishing 9-of-26 on two-point attempts, 1-of-13 from three-point range, and 1-of-2 at the free-throw line. The Tigers totaled 25 rebounds, seven assists, three steals, and committed 23 turnovers.

Lennox's offense was balanced and efficient, as the Orioles shot 20-of-51 from the field for 39% and committed just eight turnovers in the game. Andy Peters led Lennox with 14 points, while Bergen Muser and Torrey Gerdes each scored nine. Olivia Niederbaumer added six points, and Tegan Sturm, Addie McVey, Libby Kranz, and Mia Hanisch each scored two.

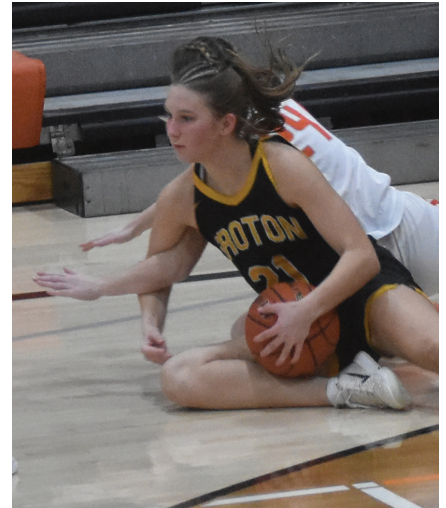
Jaedyn Penning led Groton with 13 points, nine rebounds, one assist, and one steal. Jerica Locke added three points, two rebounds, and three assists. Rylee Dunker scored two points and grabbed three rebounds. Taryn Traphagen finished with two points, one assist, and one steal. McKenna Tietz contributed two points, five rebounds, and one assist. Sydney Locke pulled down three rebounds with one assist and one steal. Kella Tracy, Talli Wright, and Makenna Krause each added a rebound.

Lennox improved to 9-0 on the season, while Groton Area fell to 5-4 and will travel to Northwestern on Monday.

"We've got to start stacking some wins or we're going to be in trouble," Locke said. "But I liked our effort tonight. We didn't back down."

Lennox took the junior varsity game 40–25. For Groton Area, Kella Tracy scored 16 points and Tevan Hanson added nine.

Lennox completed the sweep with a 49–27 win in the C game. Taylynn Traphagen led Groton Area with seven points, while Kinsley Rowen and Ryelle Gilbert each scored six. Brinley Dunker finished with four points, Teagan Hanten had three, and Avery Crank added two.



Taryn Traphagen scrambles for the ball. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Both varsity games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Avantara - Groton, Agtegra, Bierman Farm Service, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Heartland Energy and The MeatHouse in Andover. Rich Bosma and Mike Imrie did the commentary, Jeslyn Kosel ran the camera, did the stats and technology.

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Groton Area finishes second at Jesse James Invitational

GARRETSON, S.D. — The Groton Area Tigers delivered a strong all-around performance Saturday at the Jesse James Invitational, earning the second-place team trophy with 211.5 points in a 13-team field. Tri-Valley captured the team title with 266.0, followed by Groton Area, Flandreau (191.0) and Elk Point-Jefferson (174.0).

Three Tigers claimed individual championships. Wyatt Hagen powered through his bracket with three consecutive falls, pinning Colton Seeley in 1:01, Colt Evenson in 1:28, and closing the title match with a 3:21 fall over Garretson's Bence Bonte. Isaiah Scepaniak needed only one bout to secure gold, pinning Brody Johnson of Flandreau in 1:00. Heavyweight Gavin Englund opened with a forfeit, earned a 12-0 major decision over Elliot Powell, pinned Tanner Baatz in 3:25, and edged Luke Nehlich 2-0 in the championship match.

Several Groton wrestlers battled their way to runner-up finishes. Preston Hinkelman opened his day with a 16-0 technical fall over Ryker Johnson, pinned Everett Bemboom in 1:06, and posted a 12-9 semi-final decision over Chase King before finishing second after a fall loss to Legend Frederick. Kyson Kucker received a bye, pinned Chase Costello in 1:35, recorded a 10-0 major decision in the semifinals over CJ Peterson, and placed second after a 16-9 decision against Teague Bergjord. Ben Hoeft advanced with a forfeit victory, pinned Preston Meyer in 2:26, and earned runner-up honors after falling in the finals.

Third-place medals went to Bentley Ehresmann and Donavon Block. Ehresmann pinned Ryker Headrick and Sullivan Wheeldryer, dropped a semifinal match, then rebounded with a decision and a 41-second pin to take third. Block opened with a quick fall over Caleb Kirkholm, was stopped in the semifinals, then answered with three straight pins to secure third place.

Other Groton placers included Luke Gauer, who recorded three falls on his way to a fifth-place finish; Noah Scepaniak, who collected three pins and placed fourth; and Walker Zoellner, who added three falls before finishing fourth.

Additional Tigers rounded out the lineup and contributed valuable mat time. Parker Zoellner opened with a forfeit victory before dropping two contested bouts in the consolation rounds. Xavier Ellenbecker battled through the bracket and gained experience in two matches. Aiden Strom fought through the back side after an opening loss, while Grayson Flores picked up a first-round pin before being eliminated.

With podium finishes across nearly every division and full lineup participation, the Tigers left Garretson with a second-place team trophy and continued momentum heading deeper into the season.

Krueger dominates field, wins title at Mid-Dakota Monster

LYMAN, S.D. — Groton Area's Liza Krueger continued her outstanding season Saturday, capturing the championship at 105 pounds at the 2026 Mid-Dakota Bride of the Monster girls wrestling tournament at Lyman High School.

Krueger, now 24-2 on the season, powered through the bracket to claim first place and scored 29 team points for the Tigers. She opened the tournament with a quick fall in championship round one, pinning Laine Petersen of Viborg-Hurley/Irene-Wakonda in just 35 seconds.

In the quarterfinals, Krueger delivered a dominant technical fall victory over Keira Thorp of Custer, ending the match at the 3:12 mark with an 18-0 score. She advanced to the finals with another fall, pinning Paesyn Wilson of Bennett County in 1:33 during the semifinals.

In the championship match, Krueger capped her day in decisive fashion, earning a technical fall over Morgan Little of Spearfish at 5:29, again winning 18-0 to secure the tournament title.

At 110 pounds, Groton Area's Gracelynn Decker competed in a tough bracket but was unable to place. Decker dropped her opening championship-round match by fall to Aubrey Fischer of Pierre T.F. Riggs in 1:23. She then fell in the consolation round to Kara Kocmich of McCook Central/Montrose, who recorded a pin at 2:03.

Groton Area continues to see strong individual performances as the Tigers move deeper into the heart of the wrestling season, highlighted by Krueger's championship run in Lyman.

Name Released in Minnehaha County Fatal Crash

What: Two-vehicle fatal crash

Where: I-90 at mile marker 379, Humboldt, South Dakota

When: 2:13 a.m., Saturday, January 3, 2026

Driver 1: Patricia Dianne Archambeau, 64-year-old female from Mitchell, South Dakota, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2012 Chevrolet Traverse

Seat Belt Used: No

Driver 2: Unknown

Vehicle 1: 2018 to 2023 model year, red Freightliner Cascadia semi, missing the passenger side headlight.

Minnehaha County, S.D.- A Mitchell, South Dakota woman died Monday from injuries sustained during a January 3 hit and run crash near Humboldt, South Dakota.

Preliminary crash information indicates Patricia Dianne Archambeau, the driver of a 2012 Chevrolet Traverse, was traveling eastbound on I-90 when she attempted to pull off on the side of the road. At the same time, the Traverse was struck by an eastbound Semi pulling a trailer. The truck continued driving east after the crash and has yet to be located. Archambeau was transported to a Sioux Falls hospital. She died from her injuries January 5.

The investigation is ongoing. The Highway Patrol is seeking more information regarding a red 2018 to 2023 model year Freightliner Cascadia semi, missing its passenger side headlight. It was traveling eastbound from the Humboldt area on I-90. The semi may have traveled on I-90, I-29 or other surrounding roadways from the Sioux Falls area. Any information about this vehicle, video, or pictures from 2:13 AM to 3:00 AM along I-90 and I-29 is appreciated.

To report tips or footage, please contact the South Dakota Highway Patrol District 2 Office at 605-367-5700.

All information released is preliminary. The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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

Groton Prairie Mixed Bowling League Week #8 Results

Team Standings: Coyotes 4, Shihtzus 3, Jackelopes 2, Cheetahs 2, Foxes 1, Chipmunks 0

Men's High Games: Vern Meyers 212, Brad Larson 191, Dion Bahr 184

Women's High Games: Vicki Walter 189 & 163, Vicki Jorgensen 170, Suzie Easthouse 163

Men's High Series: Vern Meyers 501, Brad Larson 495, John Sippel 485

Women's High Series: Vicki Walter 509, Suzie Easthouse 452, Alexa Sperry 419

Week #8 Fun Game - Most 9 Spares – Coyotes with 25!

Northern State sweeps Augustana with explosive offensive performances

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. — It was a weekend of fireworks for Northern State basketball as both the Wolves women's and men's teams delivered high-powered victories over Augustana University, combining for 179 points in a pair of statement wins over the Vikings.

Women's basketball: Wolves set season-high in 88–47 rout

Northern State recorded its fourth NSIC victory of the season Saturday afternoon, rolling past Augustana 88–47 behind a season-best offensive performance. The Wolves improved to 9–7 overall and 4–6 in conference play, while the Vikings fell to 6–10 overall and 3–7 in the NSIC.

Northern wasted no time setting the tone, scoring 28 points in the first quarter and 24 more in the second while holding Augustana to just 21 total first-half points. The Wolves finished the night shooting an outstanding 52.6% from the field, 59.1% from three-point range, and 78.9% at the free-throw line.

Izzy Moore continued her dominant stretch, pouring in 26 points to go along with five rebounds, four assists and a steal. She shot 60% from the floor, 66.7% from long range and was perfect at the free-throw line.

Northern's balanced attack featured eight players with five or more points. Lily Klein added 12 points and four rebounds with efficient shooting, while Morgan Fiedler dished out six assists and shot 75% from the floor. Carli Kuyper led the team on the glass with six rebounds and chipped in seven points. Megan Counts and Makenzie Carrier each scored eight, Taylor Tool added seven, and Reagan Rus finished with six.

Augustana was led by Isabella Sanneh with 14 points and nine rebounds.

Men's basketball: Early surge lifts Wolves to 91–88 win

Later that evening, the Northern State men followed suit, using a strong first half to secure a 91–88 conference road win over the Vikings. The victory pushed the Wolves to 6–10 overall and 6–4 in NSIC play, while Augustana dropped to 8–7 overall and 6–4 in league action.

Northern built a 51–39 halftime lead and never trailed, finishing the game shooting 49.2% from the field, 47.2% from three-point range, and 82.4% at the free-throw line. The Wolves knocked down 17 three-pointers and controlled the flow with 18 team assists.

James Glenn led the way with 24 points on 8-of-13 shooting. Marshawn Smith delivered a big lift off the bench with 17 points and nine rebounds, while Tobi Obiora added 15 points and seven boards, shooting 75% from the floor. Simon Akena chipped in 14 points, and Joshua Book contributed six points and a team-high six assists. Ty Rogers scored nine with six rebounds.

Up next

Both Wolves teams now return to Wachs Arena for the first time in over a month. The women will host Winona State on Friday at 7:30 p.m. and Concordia–St. Paul on Saturday at 6 p.m. The men will face the same opponents, tipping off Friday at 5:30 p.m. against Winona State and Saturday at 4 p.m. versus Concordia–St. Paul.

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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!**



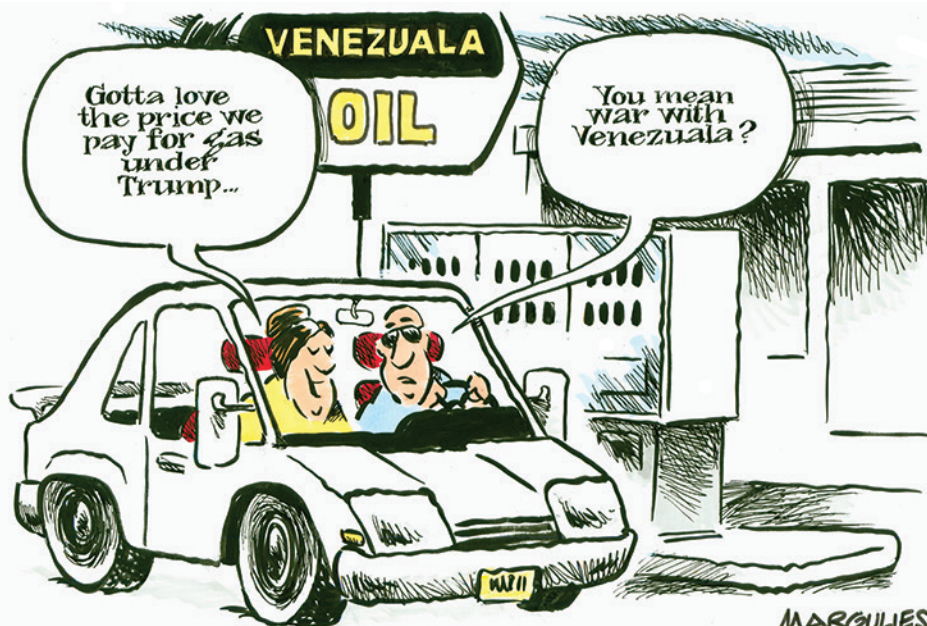
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him."

Genesis 21: 17,18



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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. Man and woman came into being on what day of creation? *First, Second, Third, Sixth*

3. How many windows were in Noah's Ark? *Zero, 1, 52, 100*

4. From Proverbs 15, what does a soft answer turneth away? *Wisdom, Scorn, Wrath, Fear*

5. Which apostle was shipwrecked three different times? *Paul, Peter, Philip, James*

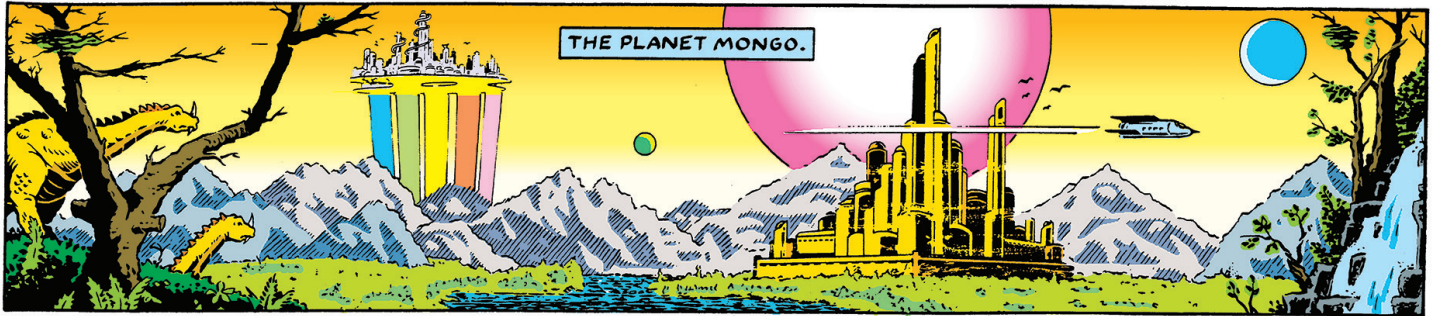
6. Who was the father of David? *Moses, Noah, Abraham, Jesse*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Sixth, 3) One, 4) Wrath, 5) Paul, 6) Jesse

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 12-28

HIS LIFE HANGING IN THE BALANCE, RENSHAW IS QUESTIONED BY GARAKAHN!

WHERE ISSS GORDON?

I...I DON'T KNOW. BUT I CAN FIND HIM.

L...LET ME GO... AND I'LL BRING HIM TO YOU!

NO! YOU WOULD FIND GORDON THEN BOTH ESCAPE.

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FLASH WOULD NEVER LEAVE... NOT AS LONG AS YOU HAVE DALE ARDEN AS A CAPTIVE!

RENSHAW, NO!

YOU ARE THE EARTHWOMAN?!

HA HA HA

I SPARE YOUR LIFE. IN RETURN YOU WILL TELL GORDON GARAKAHN HAS HIS MATE. AND TELL HIM MUST HURRY... FOR GARAKAHN GROWS HUNGRY!

NEXT: LEFT TO DIE!

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

GIVEN A GOOD LIE AND SHORT GRASS, PUTTING FROM THE FRINGE IS A HIGH PERCENTAGE PLAY - PARTICULARLY WHEN YOUR CONFIDENCE IN YOUR CHIPPING GAME IS LOW.

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USE YOUR NORMAL STROKE, BUT HIT THE BALL A LITTLE MORE FIRMLY THAN YOU WOULD FOR THE SAME DISTANCE ON THE GREEN ITSELF.

BECAUSE THERE'S A TENDENCY TO PEEK EARLIER WHEN YOU'RE STROKING HARDER THAN NORMAL, BE SURE TO KEEP YOUR HEAD STILL.

JM



How Red Blood Cells Can Impact a Person's A1C Level

DEAR DR. ROACH: I had an eye issue last year that led to blood tests resulting in an elevated A1C. I said that it wasn't my blood; I am plant-based, exercise regularly, and don't drink sodas or alcoholic beverages. Of course, they wanted to start me on medication for prediabetes, but I opted to see if I could fix it with dietary changes first.

I was told to limit bread, pasta and rice, among other things that vegans eat, and proceeded to lose a lot of weight. (I don't have much to spare.) During my recent blood test, my A1C was still high at 6.1%. Looking into it a bit further, my physician's assistant realized that low iron can impact A1C readings, and I have always had low iron. I take a supplement almost

daily with an orange.

Please tell your readers about this so as not to scare them into taking medicine that they might not need. There still may be something going on with me, and I will be getting more tests to be sure that this can be corrected. But I am somewhat relieved that it is not prediabetes. -- M.K.

ANSWER: The A1C level measures the amount of sugar that is found on red blood cells. For most people, it's an excellent indication of how high their blood sugar has been over the past few months. Half of red blood cells die after 60 days in most people, so the normal ranges of A1C are appropriate for people who have red blood cells that live a normal life.

Several conditions lead to red blood cells that live much shorter than this. Sickle cell disease, autoimmune hemolytic anemias, and severe heart valve disease are among the diseases that have markedly shortened the lifespan of red blood cells. This can cause a person's A1C level to be falsely low. A person with poorly controlled diabetes may have a normal A1C because the red blood cells don't live long enough to accumulate as many sugar molecules on them.

People with iron deficiency have slower red blood cell turnover or longer-lived red blood cells. This means that there is more time to accumulate sugar and a falsely elevated A1C level. Before we had the A1C test, we had blood sugar levels and glucose tolerance tests to make the diagnosis of prediabetes and diabetes. In people with abnormalities in their red blood cells, these are more reliable than the A1C level.

DEAR DR. ROACH: When I lay down, my toes tingle. This has been going on for several years. I've read that this is a sign of diabetes, but my annual physical shows that my sugar level is normal. -- B.Y.

ANSWER: Tingling toes are a common symptom of neuropathy, but there are many types of neuropathies. So, it isn't a diagnosis as much it is a description of a nerve problem. While diabetes is among the most common types of peripheral neuropathies, it isn't the only one.

Since both legs are affected, it is less likely due to the direct compression of the peripheral nerve, which normally occurs on one side. The fact that it only occurs when you are laying down does suggest that there may be compression higher up, possibly in your spinal cord.

Other neuropathies that normally affect both sides of the body include vitamin B12 deficiency and thyroid disease. Some medications can do it, but sometimes no cause is ever found. A neurologist is the ideal specialist to help diagnose this condition, especially one who specializes in neuropathy.

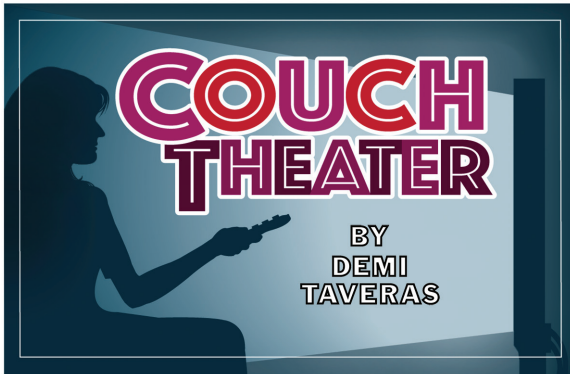
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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Emilia Clarke, left, and Haley Lu Richardson star in "Ponies." (Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

"83rd Golden Globe Awards" (TV-PG) -- Nikki Glaser is back to host another round of the Golden Globes, and the ceremony is already available to stream in its entirety. Leading the pack in the film category is "One Battle After Another," while "The White Lotus" inched past the rest with six total nominations to top the TV category. Dame Helen Mirren, who has extensive credits in film and television but won her Academy Award for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II in "The Queen," will be honored with the Cecil B. DeMille Award. Meanwhile, for the Carol Burnett Award, the recipient is none other than our Carrie Bradshaw, Sarah Jessica Parker ("Sex and the City"). If there's any award show that'll keep you watching this season, it's this one, so don't miss it! (Paramount+)

"Zootopia 2" (PG) -- The sequel to Walt Disney Animation Studios' "Zootopia" (2016) not only brought in more money at the box office than its predecessor, but it also became the highest-grossing film that the company has ever produced. Ginnifer Goodwin reprises her role as lovable bunny cop Judy Hopps, and the satisfyingly sarcastic Jason Bateman is back as fox Nick Wilde. Officially partners now at the Zootopia Police Department, Judy and Nick begin working on a case where they must pursue Gary De'Snake (Ke Huy Quan), a viper who is the first snake to appear in Zootopia in years. During their investigation, they get mixed up with the Lynxley family, a powerful pack of Canada lynxes, and must also prove their innocence to clear their names and avoid becoming fugitives. Out now to rent! (Amazon Prime Video)

"Ponies" (TV-MA) -- Emilia Clarke ("Game of Thrones") and Haley Lu Richardson ("The White Lotus") are the leading ladies of this new spy thriller series premiering on Jan. 15. Set in Moscow in 1977, Bea (Clarke) and Twila (Richardson) are two women working as secretaries at the American embassy, and both of their husbands are undercover CIA operatives. When they receive news that their husbands have died in a mysterious plane crash, both women are desperate for answers and agree to start working in intelligence. As the women are gently integrated into the world of espionage, they get closer to figuring out a large-scale conspiracy involving the Cold War. All eight episodes are out now to stream. (Peacock)

"People We Meet on Vacation" (PG-13) -- Scoot over, "The Kissing Booth" and "To All the Boys I've Loved Before"! I have a feeling this new rom-com that is out now to stream will be Netflix's next success in the genre. Based on the novel by Emily Henry, it follows best friends Poppy (Emily Bader) and Alex (Tom Blyth), who live far apart from each other but agree to go on one week of summer vacation together for a decade. Although the two couldn't be more different from each other, one always encourages the other to step out of their comfort zone, all while exploring different parts of the world together. But with the promise of vacations together for 10 years straight, will it be possible to keep the relationship platonic? Watch and see! (Netflix)

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1. Name the group that released "Heart of Glass."
2. Who released "The Boys Are Back in Town"?
3. Which group released "The Boy from New York City"?
4. Who were The T-Birds and The Pink Ladies?
5. Name the 1958 cover of the song that contains this lyric: "Evening shadows make me blue when each weary day is through, How I long to be with you."

Answers

1. Blondie, in 1979. It was their first No. 1 single. The song was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2015, and Rolling Stone ranked the song as No. 138 in their list of 500

greatest songs of all time in 2021.

2. Thin Lizzy, in 1976. With the group being Irish, it's not surprising that the song topped the chart in Ireland.

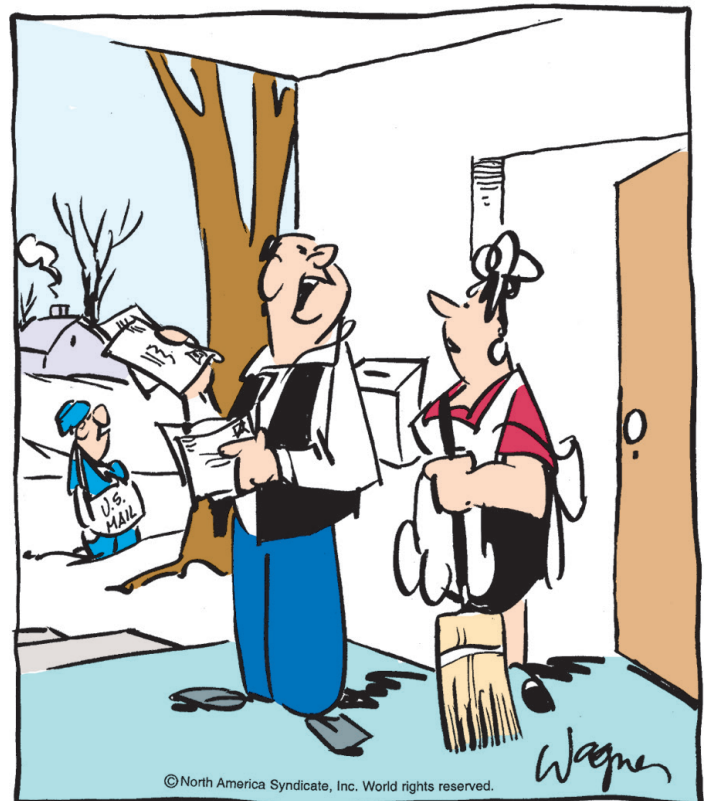
3. The Ad Libs, in 1964. A year later, the Beach Boys would release an answer song, "The Girl from New York City."

4. They were the boy and girl groups at Rydell High School in "Grease."

5. "My Happiness," by Connie Francis. Her 1958 cover of the 1948 original climbed the charts but didn't quite make it to the top. It would have been her first chart-topper.

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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}



"Our Christmas newsletters have been returned!"

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

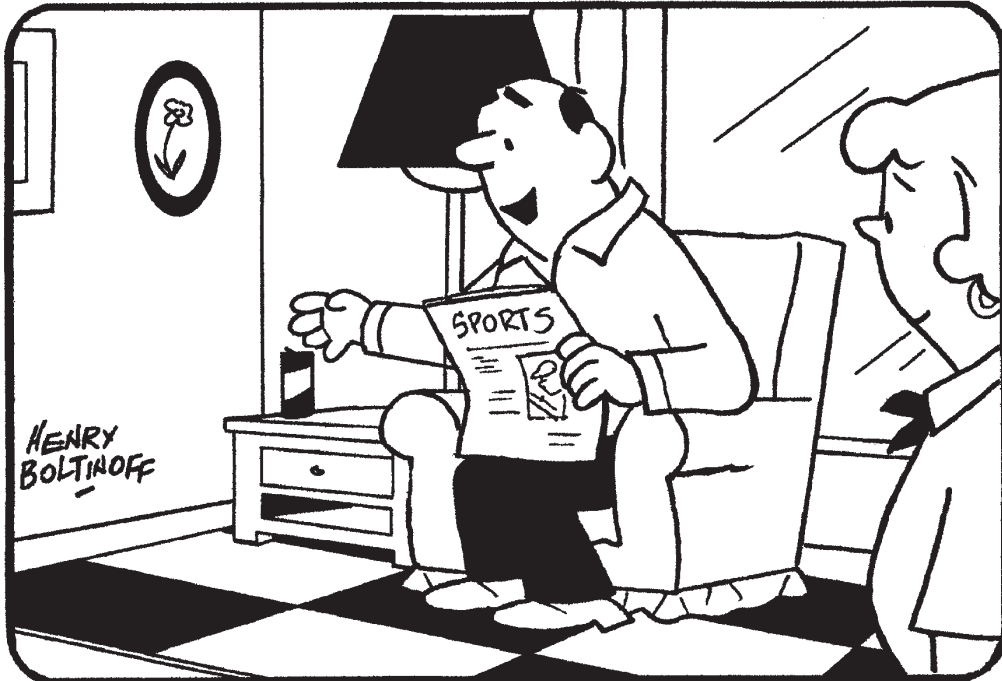


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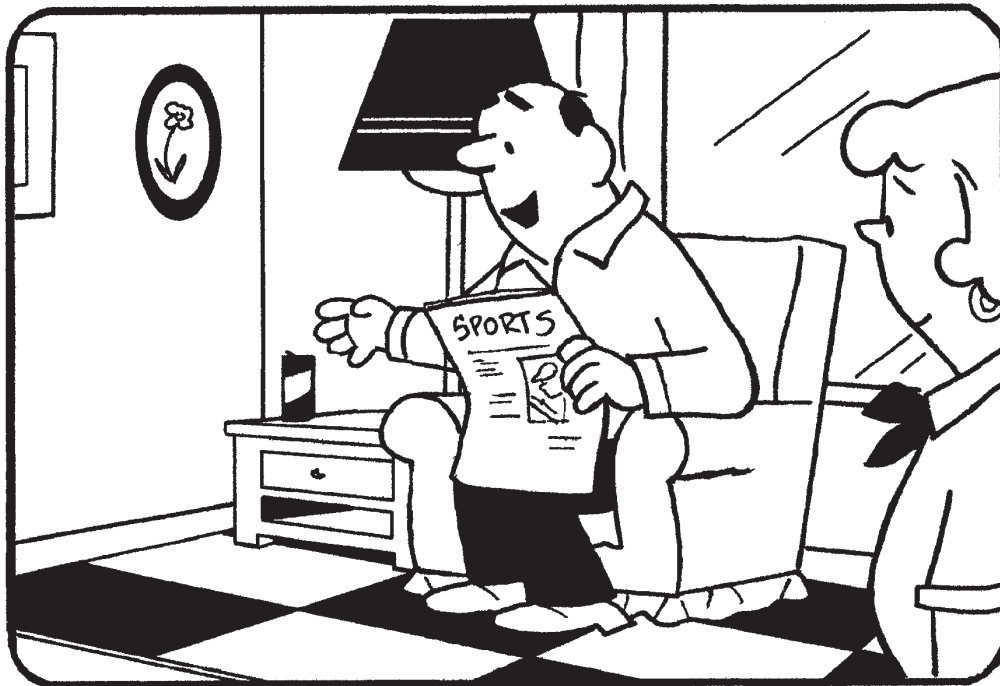
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

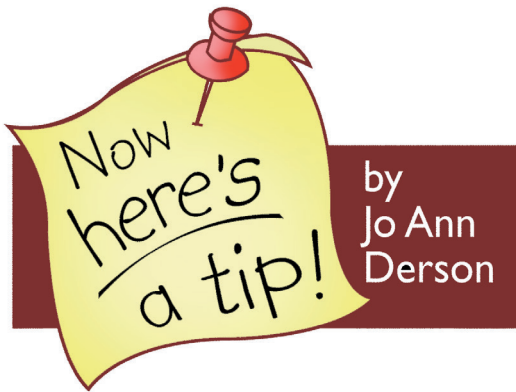


Differences: 1. Arm is shorter. 2. Windowsill is higher. 3. Bow is larger. 4. Paper is longer. 5. Lampshade is different. 6. Sleeve is different.

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* Making your own flavored yogurt is cheap and much better for you. You can avoid a lot of added sugar. Start with plain, unflavored yogurt and add: pureed fruits, toasted oats, honey, vanilla or almond extract, plumped-up raisins (add enough hot water to cover a tablespoon of raisins and let sit for a minute or two). Yummy.

* "My son was allergic to something in store-bought toothpaste, and the ones at the health-food and specialty stores seemed so expensive. I got a "recipe" to make toothpaste and it works so well that we all use it now. Just mix 1/2 cup of baking soda with a pinch of sea salt and some peppermint oil. A few drops at a time and stirred in. I keep it in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Shake a bit into a little cup and dip your toothbrush

into it. It scrubs off stains and is refreshing. The salty taste takes some getting used to, but it feels really clean for hours. Love it!" -- K.S. in Florida

* "A pinch of salt tossed in the coffee grounds will cut the bitterness in lower-quality coffee. This is especially useful if you get a good deal on a can of coffee that's not your normal brand." -- P.L. in New Jersey

* You can easily extend the amount of ground meat you have with lentils or oatmeal. They maintain a meaty texture and take up some of the flavor of the meat. There's a reason Grandma used oatmeal in her meatballs, too: It helps the meat retain moisture.

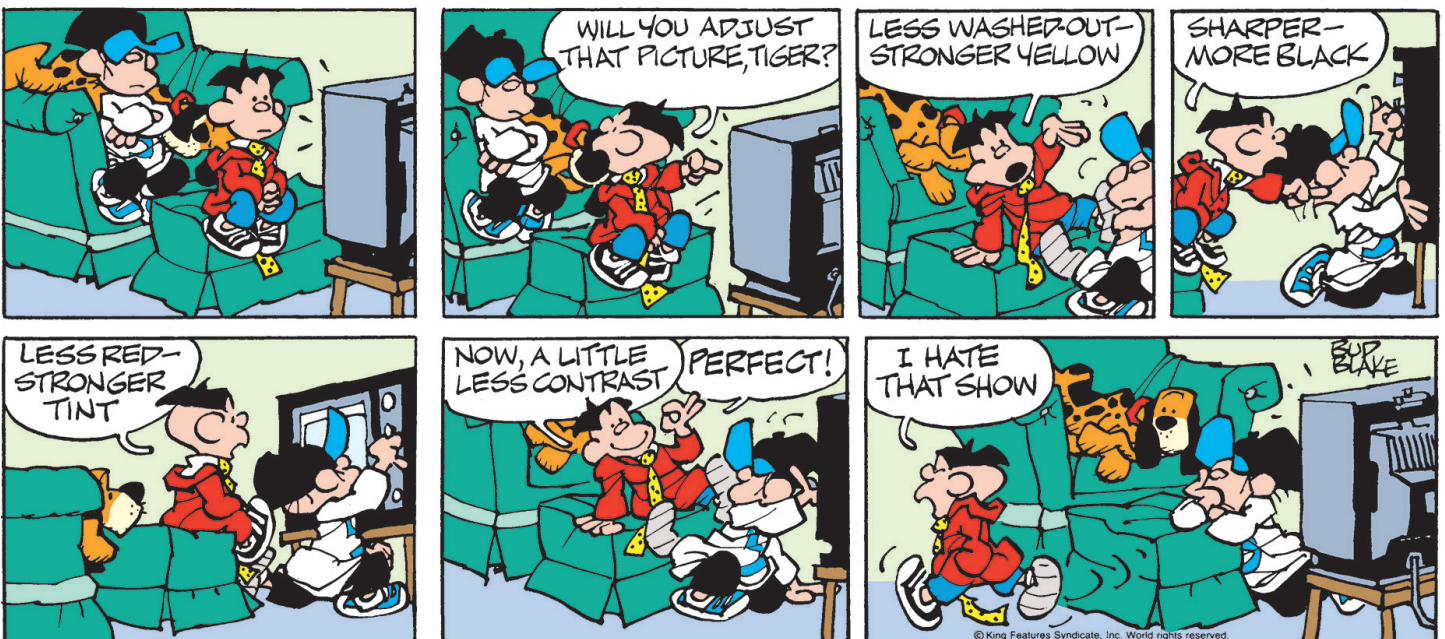
* "If you stick the end of your celery stalks in a cup of water and rocks (or in some very damp dirt), they will begin to regrow. This is a great way to have a never-ending supply of celery. You can also regrow scallions from the root end." -- Y.L.J. in Missouri

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 Post-WWII alliance
- 5 Life story
- 8 Quick kiss
- 12 Challenger's words
- 14 Oklahoma tribe
- 15 Misses an opportunity
- 16 Without acting
- 17 Prattle
- 18 Contacts, e.g.
- 20 Vowel group
- 23 " — Misbehavin' "
- 24 Japanese noodle
- 25 Anthology
- 28 Pvt.'s superior
- 29 To the third power
- 30 Green shade
- 32 Cruised in style
- 34 Furnace fuel
- 35 Region (Abbr.)
- 36 Natural talents
- 37 Nap
- 40 Extinct bird
- 41 "Hulk" star Bana
- 42 Distributes
- 47 "Smallville" girl
- 48 Coffee bar order

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
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41					42	43				44	45	46
47					48							
49					50					51		

- 49 Org.
- 9 LAX postings
- 33 MD's diagnostic order
- 50 Two, in Toledo
- 10 Natalie or Nat
- 34 Stopped
- 51 Campus VIP
- 11 Piano pieces?
- 36 Dutch word for "farmer"
- DOWN**
- 1 Zilch
- 19 Author Bagnold
- 37 Actress Ward
- 2 Hubbub
- 20 Ger. neighbor
- 38 401(k) relatives
- 3 Prof's aides
- 21 Jittery
- 39 Drei minus zwei
- 4 Salem's state
- 22 Speck
- 40 Star athletes, briefly
- 5 Invitation initials
- 23 Fossil resin
- 43 Equi-
- 6 Debtor's letters
- 25 Incensed
- 44 Sugary suffix
- 7 Summarized
- 26 Atop
- 45 Mex. neighbor
- 8 Unspecified travel destination
- 27 Bicycle part
- 46 Great weight
- 29 Guitarist Atkins
- 31 Gore and Pacino

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King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

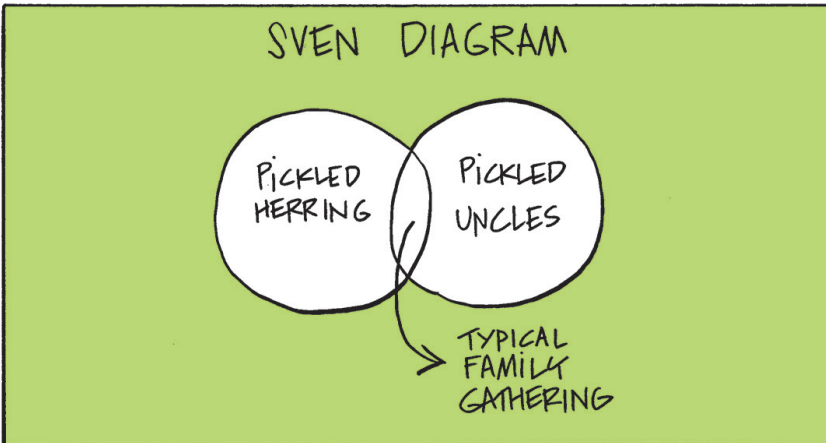
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			G	A	B		L	E	N	S	E	S		
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S	I	E	S	T	A		M	O	A					
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L	A	N	A		E	S	P	R	E	S	S	O		
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Olive



Out on a Limb

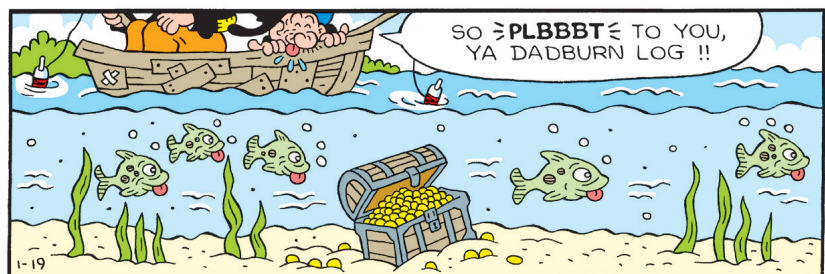
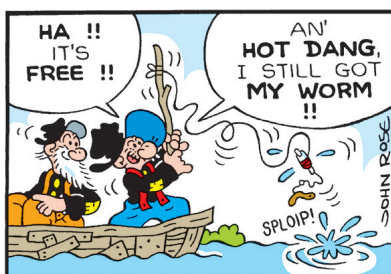
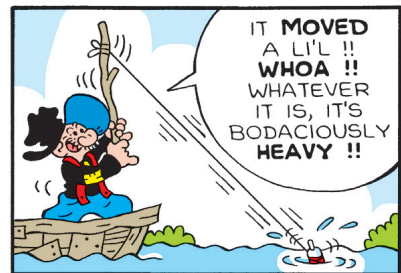
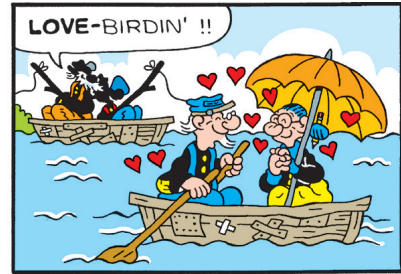
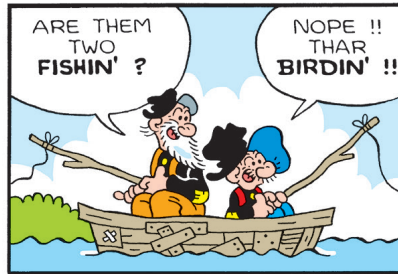
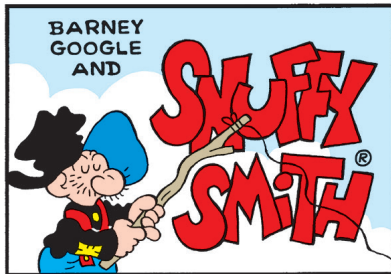
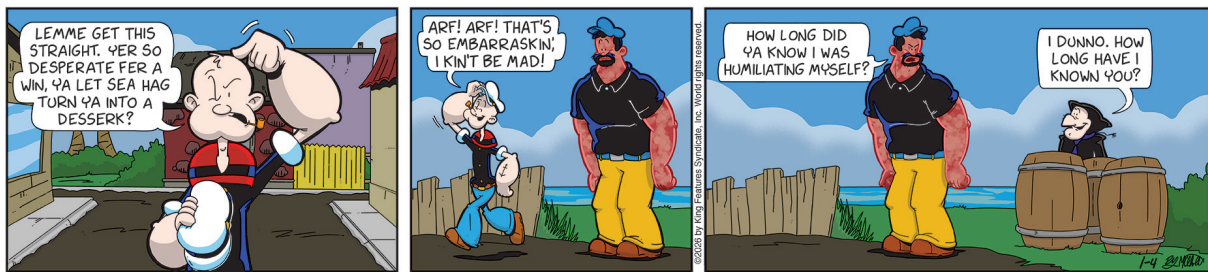
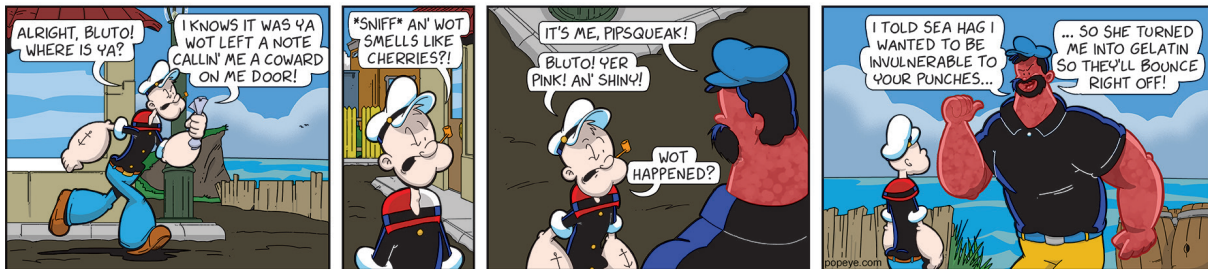
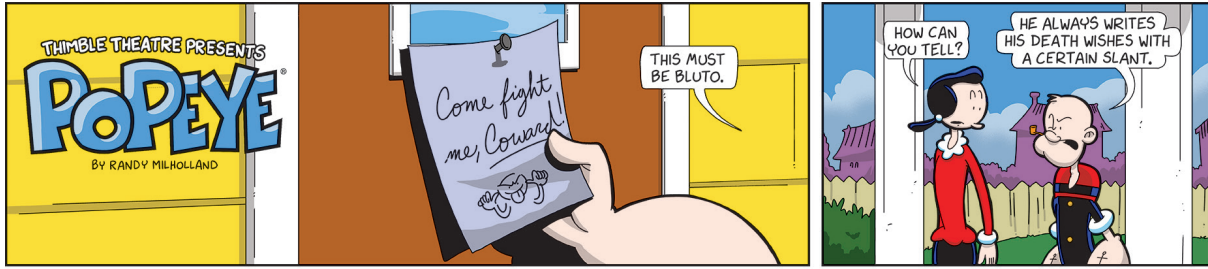
by Gary Kopervas



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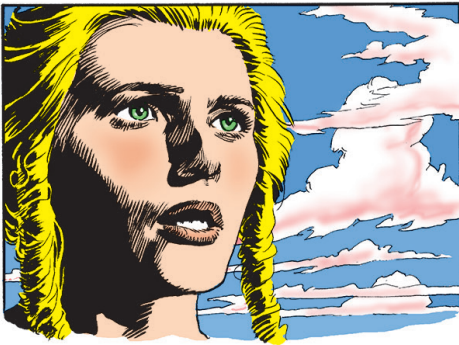
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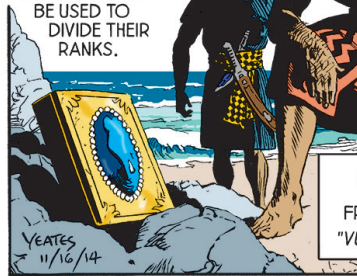
... WHILE ON THE ISLAND'S FAR SIDE, ALETA AND HER COMPANIONS WAIT, BOUND, FOR THEIR CAPTORS TO RECEIVE ORDERS FROM STRAKONUS.

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ALETA SILENTLY CURSES HER DECISION TO DELAY THEIR RETURN TO THE CAVE UNTIL MORNING. NOW THEY ARE SEPARATED FROM BOTH GUNDAR AND VAL, WITH NO UNDERSTANDING OF WHO THESE MARAUDERS ARE.

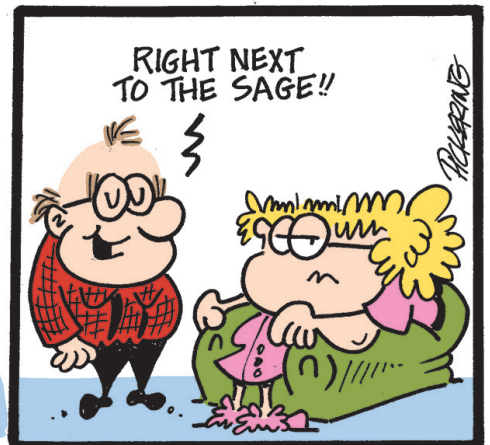
FORTUNATELY, THEIR CAPTORS SEEM EQUALLY IGNORANT OF THEM. AND, ALETA NOTES, THEIR UNSURPRISING FASCINATION WITH THE GOLD- AND JEWEL-ENCRUSTED ARTIFACT MIGHT BE USED TO DIVIDE THEIR RANKS.



AND WHAT OF GUNDAR HARL, IN THE CAVERN REFUGE? AT THIS VERY MOMENT, HE LOOKS UP FROM HIS DESIGNS FOR A BOAT BUILT FROM ISLAND MATERIALS, TO SEE STRANGE INTRUDERS, WATCHING HIM. "VULCAN!" THANAA MUTTERS. NEXT: *The will of a god*

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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PICKERING

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Avoiding the flu

There are some good tips out there for avoiding the flu this winter, and given the nature of the beast this time, it's to our benefit to pay attention.

If you've listened on the news, you know that the flu this year is worse than usual, arriving a month early and launching like a rocket. This one is an influenza A virus, but not the one they were predicting. The vaccine was created for H1N1, but surprise, surprise, what quickly emerged was the H3N2 mutation (also called subclade K), which the vaccine isn't geared up to tackle because it was created for H1N1. Hence the higher than expected number of cases. For the first time in years, the CDC is calling this a high severity for all age groups flu season. During December, in one week alone 19,000 people were admitted to the hospital.

Our job is to avoid the flu this year. Here is the advice from the CDC:

Get your flu shot. Even though the vaccine isn't aimed at the H3N2, it will still offer a bit of protection.

Wash your hands -- all the time. Scrub for 20+ seconds or use a hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol if there is no soap.

Wear a good mask if you go out.

Don't touch your face. If there are germs on your hands, that's how it will infect you.

Eat right, drink fluids, get enough sleep.

Get out those sanitizing wipes and disinfect the door knobs, kitchen cabinet handles and surfaces, everything that gets touched in your house.

Run your air cleaner, if you have one.

Stay away from sick people. Flu likely spreads via droplets in the air when sick people cough or sneeze or talk. On a scary note, people can have (and pass around) the flu a whole day before they even have symptoms.

Stay healthy!

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1. Which Hockey Hall of Famer and four-time Stanley Cup champion may be best known for the Canadian donut shop chain he cofounded in 1964?

2. Which NFL head coach compiled a 34-46 regular-season record with the Dallas Cowboys (1998-99) and Buffalo Bills (2010-12)?

3. What horse racing facility in Hallandale Beach, Florida, hosted the Breeders' Cup in 1989, 1992 and 1999?

4. What international agreement, signed in 1981, requires all member countries to protect the International Olympic Committee's five interlocking rings logo from unauthorized commercial use?

5. What university is known as "Sportscaster U." for its many alumni -- including Marv Albert, Mike Tirico, Dick Stockton, Sean McDonough and Ian Eagle -- with distinguished careers in sports media?

6. What two college football teams play for the Old Brass Spittoon rivalry trophy?

7. Name the Basketball Hall of Famer and Portland Trail Blazers head coach who was arrested in October 2025 as part of an investigation into rigged sports gambling and poker games.



Answers

1. Tim Horton.

2. Chan Gailey.

3. Gulfstream Park.

4. The Nairobi Treaty on the Protection of the Olympic Symbol.

5. Syracuse University.

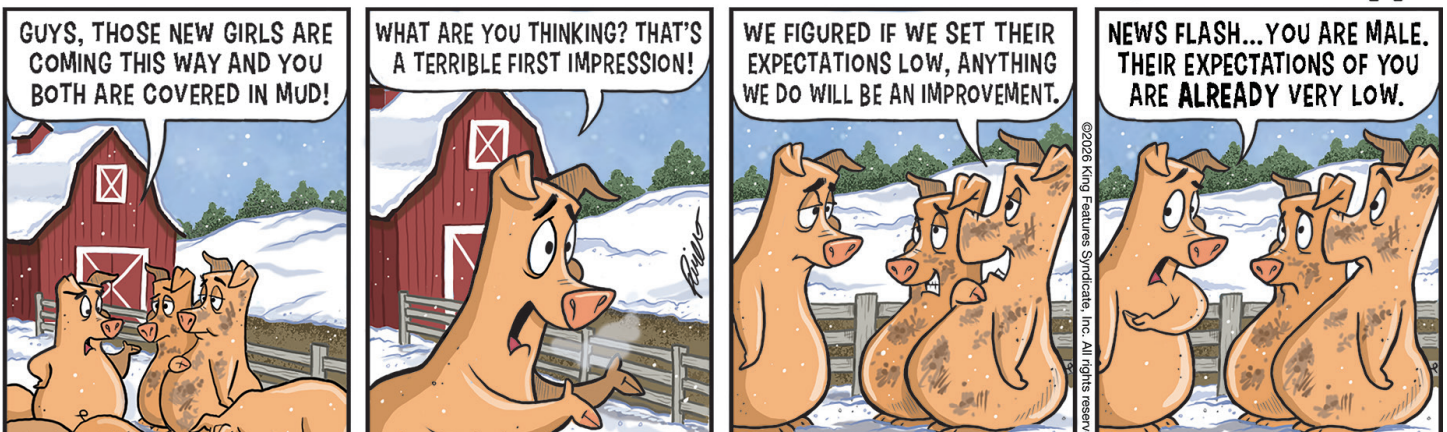
6. The Indiana Hoosiers and Michigan State Spartans.

7. Chauncey Billups.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Those Annoying Little Nips

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: We took our 2-year-old German shepherd to the vet last month to have a cyst removed. The surgery went fine; however, ever since Max came home he has been "playfully" biting and nipping at our hands and arms. We thought we trained him out of this behavior. Why has he resumed it? -- Mary G. in Greenville, S.C.

A: Ouch! A playful nip from a puppy can be annoying, but from a nearly adult dog -- especially a big German shepherd -- that nip can be downright painful.

Puppies first exert this behavior with their littermates. Light biting and nipping (mouthing) is a form of play, but like all play, it has a purpose: The puppies are testing

each other, trying to see who is the dominant pack member. If you've ever observed the mother of this litter, you know that the puppies rarely try this behavior with her -- because she's the pack leader. Those little nips are silenced by a low but meaningful growl from the parent.

Mouthing is not an acceptable behavior in your home, either, and active and playful dogs often go through months of consistent training and reinforcement to curb their urge to nip at family members. Max was trained not to do this, but now he has started up again.

Max may have reverted to this behavior because of the stressful event that just took place. Being stretched out on a table, knocked out and operated on can upset anyone, and in this case Max could feel that his place in the world has been upended.

However, just because your dog may be feeling insecure, it does not excuse his behavior. Reinforce his earlier training. Establish the fact that you are the "pack leaders" and will not tolerate playful bites. Keep to a consistent training (and feeding and sleeping) schedule, especially for the next couple of months. Getting Max into his regular routine and letting him know you are still in charge may be the reassurance he needs that everything is all right.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

* Giraffes have no vocal cords but can still communicate with low-frequency sounds.

* In 1926, Clyde Barrow, of Bonnie and Clyde fame, was arrested with his older brother Buck for possession of a truckload of stolen turkeys.

* The first recorded cookbook was written in cuneiform on tablets in ancient Babylon around 1700 B.C.

* Gioachino Rossini's aria "Di tanti palpiti" was known throughout Europe as "the rice aria," since it was composed

while he waited in a Venice restaurant for his risotto to cook.

* Sunsets on Mars are blue.

* Studies have suggested that the average human attention span is now about nine seconds -- shorter than that of a goldfish.

* In 1820, Missouri imposed a \$1 bachelor tax on unmarried men ages 21-50. The short-lived law was designed to encourage marriage, population growth and family establishment in the new state.

* A Russian safari park became famous after a tiger named Amur didn't eat a goat that had been placed in its enclosure as live food.

* Detachable heads were used on Roman statues.

* The first U.S. submarine was a hand-cranked, pedal-powered wooden craft from the Revolutionary War dubbed "the Turtle."

* Astronauts sent to space can experience a kind of motion sickness known as space adaptation syndrome, or space sickness, with the most notable case inflicting former senator Jake Garn, whose bout was so disabling that his name became used as an informal measurement for the illness.

* Great Sand Dunes National Park allows visitors to race down all its dunes on custom-made sand boards and sleds.

* Incas believed that sunflowers were the physical manifestation of their sun god, Inti, on Earth, adorning temples and priestesses with them.

Thought for the Day: "Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the wise. Seek what they sought." -- Matsuo Basho

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As snowflakes form in the clouds and fall to the earth, they collect nitrogen and other particulates like sulfur from the atmosphere. These nutrients will serve as natural fertilizers later on. As these flakes collect on the ground and form thick, mounded heaps of snow, this provides excellent insulation and shelter for the vulnerable garden beds beneath. The soil, the organisms in the soil and root systems are now protected from severe temperature fluctuations and icy winds. As the months become warmer, the melting snow gently releases moisture and nutrients into the soil. - Brenda Weaver

Sources: nsidc.org, www.almanac.com, mothernaturesapprentice.com



by Freddy Groves

Expansion of veterans cemeteries

The VA awarded \$77 million in grants for 20 veteran cemeteries across the country during fiscal year 2025. These grants will allow the establishment of the first state veterans cemetery in Alaska (to serve 12,000 veterans) and the expansion of 19 others.

Besides the establishment of a veterans cemetery in Alaska, the grants will allow expansions of existing veterans cemeteries in Arizona (2), Arkansas, Kansas, Kentucky (2), Massachusetts (2), Montana, New Mexico (2), North Carolina (3), Tennessee, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin.

In fiscal year 2025, more than 43,000 veterans were buried in grant funded cemeteries, with 124 cemeteries supported since the program began in 1980. Over the years, grants have provided over \$1 billion to these state cemeteries. The goal: to provide burial access within 75 miles of home to 94% of all veterans.

As an added benefit, veterans who are buried in VA grant cemeteries are also included on the Veterans Legacy Memorial site (www.vlm.cem.va.gov).

The VLM is an online memorial with the records of over 10 million veterans who are buried at VA National Cemeteries, VA grant funded cemeteries such as the ones receiving grants this year, U.S. Park Service National Cemeteries, and many others. The Legacy page for each veteran is a place for family members, friends and former military comrades to add their own memories of the veteran.

To find a veteran's page, do a search on the VLM website. You need the veteran's first and last name, but you can fine-tune your search by adding year of death, the cemetery you want to search, the branch of service and other information.

If you want to add details to your veteran's legacy page, first look around at other pages to get an idea of the possibilities. You can add awards and decorations, career details, a military timeline, a biography, PDF documents that can include newspaper clippings, photos and much more.

To learn more about the VA's burial and memorial benefits, go to www.cem.va.gov/burial-memorial-benefits.

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Wishing Well®

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

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. HISTORY: What is the Code of Hammurabi?
2. GAMES: Which letters in the English version of Scrabble are worth 10 points each?
3. MOVIES: What is the name of Dr. Evil's cat in "Austin Powers in Goldmember"?
4. MEDICAL TERMS: What is the common name for somnambulating?
5. TELEVISION: What is the name of the town where "Veronica Mars" is set?
6. THEATER: What is the first play written by an African American woman to be produced on Broadway?
7. LANGUAGE: What is the official language of Austria?
8. MATH: What is the smallest prime number?
9. GEOGRAPHY: What is the only U.S. state with a one-syllable name?
10. MYTHOLOGY: What is the home of the Norse gods?

Answers

1. One of the earliest and most complete written legal codes established by the Babylonian King Hammurabi.
2. Q and Z.
3. Mr. Bigglesworth.
4. Sleepwalking.
5. Neptune, California.
6. "A Raisin in the Sun," by Lorraine Hansberry, 1959.
7. German.
8. 2.
9. Maine.
10. Asgard.

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South Dakota Governor



Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

The People's Work

As I write this, we are just a few days from the convening of the 101st session of the South Dakota State Legislature. Before serving as Lieutenant Governor and now Governor, I was a legislator for 16 years, including in several leadership roles. When I was first elected House Majority leader, I oversaw a caucus of 52 members with a wide range of experience and wisdom – and many different ideas on how to solve problems.

That's the beauty of our citizen Legislature. 105 South Dakotans with a wide variety of backgrounds from across the state come to Pierre, serve for less than 40 days, then go home and live with the laws that they passed. Then, if anything needs to be fixed, they come back next year and do it again.

Our legislators might not agree on every issue, and they certainly won't all agree with me 100% of the time. But if we can wrangle all those many perspectives into solutions for the people of South Dakota, then we will be in great shape.

South Dakota is a pretty special place. Our strength lies in our people. Our work matters because of the people of South Dakota. After all, "Under God, the People Rule."

This session, I am committed to doing the people's work, and I trust that our legislators are, as well. So, in a few days when I help kick off legislative session with my State of the State Address, I will begin by recommitting to civility this session and encouraging my fellow public servants to do the same.

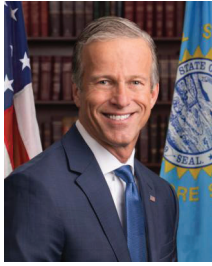
South Dakota has become a beacon to the rest of the nation. Our people have tremendous opportunities because we keep South Dakota strong, safe, and free. We've protected opportunity for all South Dakotans to live, work, raise their families, and do business.

My State of the State Address will celebrate the things that make South Dakota special, and it will paint a vision for ways that we can make South Dakota even stronger. We've got it pretty good here; we just need to do a few commonsense things to keep our state strong, safe, and free.

For as long as I have the honor to serve as your Governor, I will continue to make sure our people are blessed to live in the freest state in a nation founded on the principle of freedom. God bless you all!

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JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Republicans' Landmark Bill Gets to Work for South Dakotans

Last year, Republicans followed through on our promises to the American people by passing landmark legislation to support safer streets, put more money in hardworking Americans' pockets, and create new opportunities to get ahead. The Working Families Tax Cuts that Republicans passed last July contains a decade of legislating in a single bill, and it will make a generational impact that the American people will begin to feel this year.

First and foremost is that the Working Families Tax Cuts delivered permanent tax relief for hardworking Americans, preventing a \$2,500 tax hike on a typical South Dakota family beginning this year. As South Dakotans prepare to file their taxes, they can plan on taking advantage of a larger standard deduction, and seniors can claim an additional bonus deduction on top of that. We raised the child tax credit to \$2,200 per child, which working families will be able to claim on this year's tax return. Workers who earn tips and overtime pay won't have to pay federal taxes on that income either. And all of that adds up to bigger tax refunds for a lot of South Dakotans in April.

Republicans' landmark legislation also made a generational investment in rural health care. In the last two decades, more than 100 hospitals have closed across rural America. But thanks to the Working Families Tax Cuts, help is on the way. This bill created a \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation Program to address the rural health care crisis. Instead of a top-down approach centered in Washington, we gave states the resources and freedom to find solutions to their unique challenges. And in South Dakota, that funding will go toward creating regional hubs for emergency services, a major investment in telehealth, and to bolster our rural health care workforce, among other priorities.

This bill also made a significant investment in public safety and national security. It included funding for state and local law enforcement agencies, including efforts to combat violent crime and drug trafficking. It made a generational investment in border security, supporting the hiring of new enforcement agents, finishing the border wall, and deploying technology and resources to the southern border. And it supported much-needed efforts to modernize our military and ensure that America's men and women in uniform have the very best capabilities to defend our national security from whatever threats may arise.

The contents and impact of this legislation are significant, and there's much more I could say about it. I could talk about its sizeable investment in the programs that farmers and ranchers depend on; or tax policies that help small businesses grow; or its provisions addressing waste, fraud, and abuse in federal programs. This bill is filled with wins for the American people, and I can't wait for that story to unfold in South Dakota and in every corner of America.

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January - December 2025



Welcome to the 2025 Round[s] Up: A Year in Review! I hope you had a wonderful Christmas season surrounded by friends and family and that the new year has begun on a positive note. I was blessed to spend the holidays with family at my home in Fort Pierre. We had a great

time celebrating our holiday traditions and reflecting on the best moments from the past year. My team and I are incredibly grateful for the continued confidence and support from South Dakotans. We remain dedicated to serving the people of South Dakota throughout the new year. Here is a recap of just a few things we kept busy with during 2025:

South Dakotans I met with: I held 239 meetings in DC with folks from our great state.

Visited with South Dakotans from 148 different towns across the state—from Union Center to Bruce and everywhere in between.

Other meetings: I had 210 other meetings.

Votes taken: 655. That's more than any full year going back to at least 1989.

This year we worked hard to get President Trump's team in place confirming 417 civilian nominees.

Hearings: I attended 95 hearings throughout 2025 for my committee assignments: Appropriations; Armed Services; Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs; Indian Affairs; and the Select Committee on Intelligence.

Classified Briefings: I attended a total of 33 classified briefings. These mostly pertain to my work on the Senate Armed Service Committee and the Select Committee on Intelligence.

Legislation introduced: In 2025, I introduced 51 different pieces of legislation.

Results: We were successful in getting results for South Dakota this year. 46 of my provisions were signed into law through the National Defense Authorization Act. This included funding for construction projects at Ellsworth Air Force Base and funding for a facility for the Watertown Army National Guard.

Additionally, I was pleased that our Wounded Knee Massacre Memorial Sacred Site Act was signed into law by President Trump. The Wounded Knee Massacre Memorial and Sacred Site Act would place 40 acres of land at the site of the Wounded Knee Massacre into restricted fee status, making certain that the land is held by both the Oglala Sioux and Cheyenne River Sioux tribes for generations to come.

My staff in South Dakota held mobile office hours in 60 towns across the state.

Our office received 113,105 incoming messages from constituents in 2025. This year broke the record messages I have received in one year since taking office. This is actually more mail than I received during my entire eight years working as Governor.

Our office received 518 requests from South Dakotans for assistance with federal agencies, with the primary issues being the IRS, Veterans Affairs, and US Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Steps taken in 2025: 1,742,682 or 836 miles. That's about the same distance as walking across South Dakota from east to west almost three times!

As we head into a new year, I am excited to continue working on your behalf in Washington. If you need assistance with any federal agency or simply want to leave a comment or concern, please don't hesitate to send me a message or call one of my offices in Aberdeen, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls or Washington.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

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An Old Geezer Looking For New Tricks

Although the year is new, I'm still an old geezer. I think I know what geezer means, but I'm not sure what the definition of "old" is. One person's old is another person's youth. Believe me, I don't know the difference.

I do know that I am a geezer because occasionally, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage will look at me and say, "Are you acting like an old geezer?"

I stare at her for a moment and respond, "Oh, no my dear. I'm not acting."

She gives me one of her looks, then walks away. Of course, I may know that I am a geezer, but I'm really not quite sure what old really is. According to her, I am the poster child of an old geezer.

That may be true, and I will not question it in any degree. I just want to make sure I get everything out of being an old geezer. I do not want to miss anything.

With the New Year underway, I'm reflecting on my responsibilities as an old geezer. This year, I'm looking for some new tricks. None of my tricks up to this point has worked as planned. I need something new this year that's going to help me perfect my old geezerhood.

I reflected on some of the tricks I used this past year. Tricks like, "I just don't remember that." Or, "I was doing something else at the time."

There were others, but none of them seemed to work with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. She can see what I'm doing a week before I actually do it. I'm really not sure how she does that. It would be helpful to know how that works, but at this point, I don't know.

I need to learn some new tricks to address the situation at hand. I need an excuse for not doing what she wants me to do. Up to this point, she is not falling for "I can't remember."

One trick might work. "I was thinking about that, my dear, but I wanted to wait and get your advice on it." That might work. Because she loves giving me advice the most. So, I'm going to find ways in which I can insert this "new trick" into our conversation.

I need to come up with another trick. I thought of one. When she looks at me and asks me what I'm thinking, I could say, "I was just thinking about how lucky I am to have you in my life. What a blessing you are."

That should work in many regards. I think it might throw her off her game, which will put me a little ahead of time. That's certainly worth trying out for this New Year.

Another new trick came to mind. Occasionally, we go out to a diner for lunch or supper. Whenever she asks if I want to go out for lunch, I could say, "I was just thinking about that. Where do you want to go?"

That would shift the responsibility over to her. Wherever she wants to go is all right with me. The last thing I want to do is tell her where I want to go for lunch or dinner. I don't have the palate for cuisine that she has.

The purpose of these "new tricks" is to divert attention away from me and put it back on her. I'm going to spend a lot of time this year studying and learning as many new tricks as I can.

There is another trick I need to focus on: when she asks me what I want for supper. She usually asks me right after lunchtime, when I'm not really hungry. I'm trying to think of what to say to take the pressure off me.

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Maybe I could say, "Oh, my dear, anything you make would be pleasing to me. You're the best chef I know."

There was that one time when she slipped broccoli in, much to my disdain.

Not only is she good in the kitchen, but she is also good with clothing.

Sometimes, not often, she will come from the bedroom, stand before me, and ask, "I just bought this dress, what do you think of it?"

This is where I have a problem. I am at a loss when it comes to clothing. They all look the same to me. I can't even tell the difference between colors. One color matches mine.

I look back at her and give it some thought. The only thing that comes to mind is, "Oh, my dear, anything you wear looks amazing." And, I will smile my best smile. I don't know how many times I can get away with it, but I'll take it as far as I can go.

I couldn't help but think of a verse from the Bible that is relevant to this subject.

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

Sometimes we need to agree to disagree. We have differing opinions and tastes. But the secret of a good relationship is to find that area where we agree. That becomes the foundation of our relationship and can bring blessings in.

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: Is it true that wireless electricity distribution is a thing? And can we expect to see it implemented widely in our lifetime?

-- Paul Baron, Albany, NY

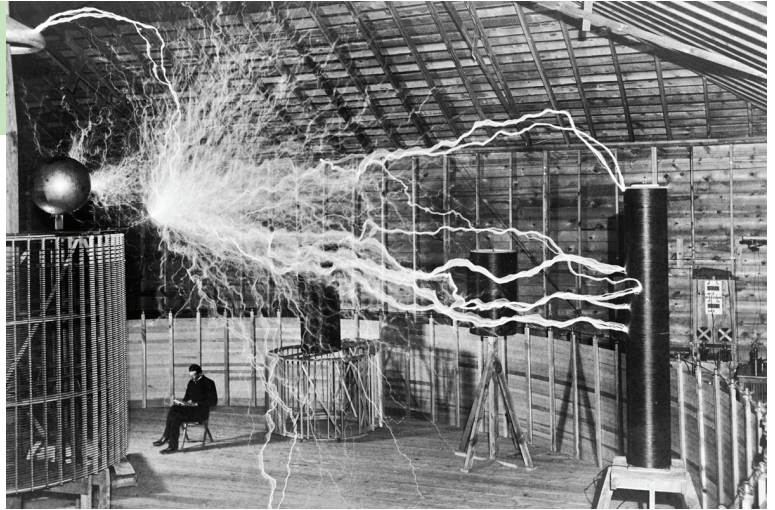
Wireless electricity distribution is the transmission of electrical energy without the use of wires or tangible physical links. Nikola Tesla, a Serbian-American inventor, visionary and an early adaptor of the idea, found success with initial experimentation with wireless electricity transfer. However, further study led to a string of faulty results, revealing that the science backing his infrastructure was largely flawed.

His experiments' diminishing successes led to a decline in investment, leaving an effective application unexplored at the time. Barriers lie primarily in the basic principles of physics. The inverse square law, for example, says that the further electricity travels, the more it weakens, meaning effective transport of electricity (without wires) over long-distances is not only inefficient, but difficult to achieve.

With the cost and scientific barriers to the use of wireless electricity distribution, it's unlikely to be widely implemented in our lifetime. Yet, significant progress has been made in technology related to the topic for small-scale and specific use. Indiana's INDOT project to build a road that wirelessly charges electric vehicles (EVs) as they drive has achieved success. Similarly, work by companies like WiTricity (EV field), and Ossia (in the infrastructure industry) present significant benefits for humanity as a whole. While its long-term efficacy and use aren't fully explored, the implications for such a project are immense. With its success, there could be the wide-spread adoption of similar motorways, advancing the practicality of EVs, in turn multiplying the decrease in carbon output from personal vehicles.

Additionally, wireless electricity distribution could be a sustainable solution to the devastation that follows a natural disaster. In a conversation with Wired, Dr. Chaouki Kasmi, a researcher at the Directed Energy Research Center in Abu Dhabi, contended, being able to "very quickly bring energy to impacted locations would be a game changer." If the technology needed for wireless energy distribution advanced to be viable for widespread use, not only would the after-effects of disaster be mitigated, but EVs and other sustainable options would become increasingly viable. Phones, laptops and other household items could go without the inconvenient clutter, leading to a new era of technology. The applications and benefits are not fully known, but the challenges currently seen are significant.

The principal physics issues associated with advancement are significant, so widespread adoption of the technology is not likely to occur anytime soon. Still, small-scale applications still have benefit, presenting a possible solution to many of the smaller convenience issues presented by sustainable



A multiple exposure picture of Nikola Tesla sitting next to his "magnifying transmitter" generating millions of volts. The 23-foot-long arcs were not part of the normal operation, but only produced for effect by rapidly cycling the power switch. Credit: Dickenson V. Alley, Public Domain.

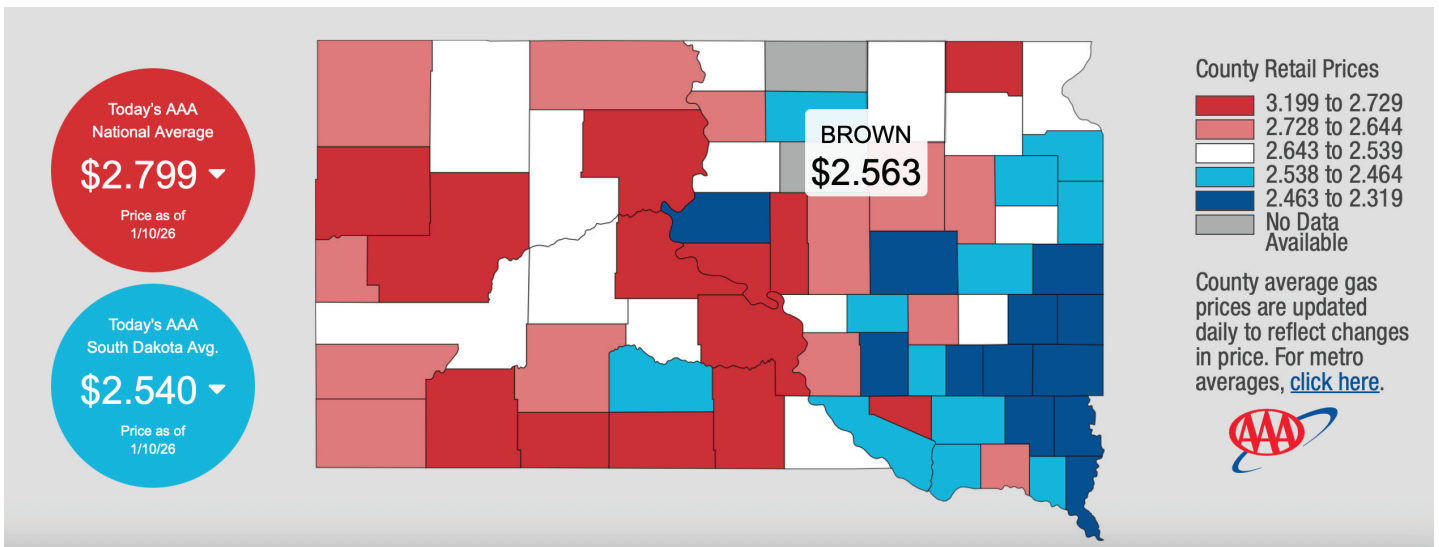
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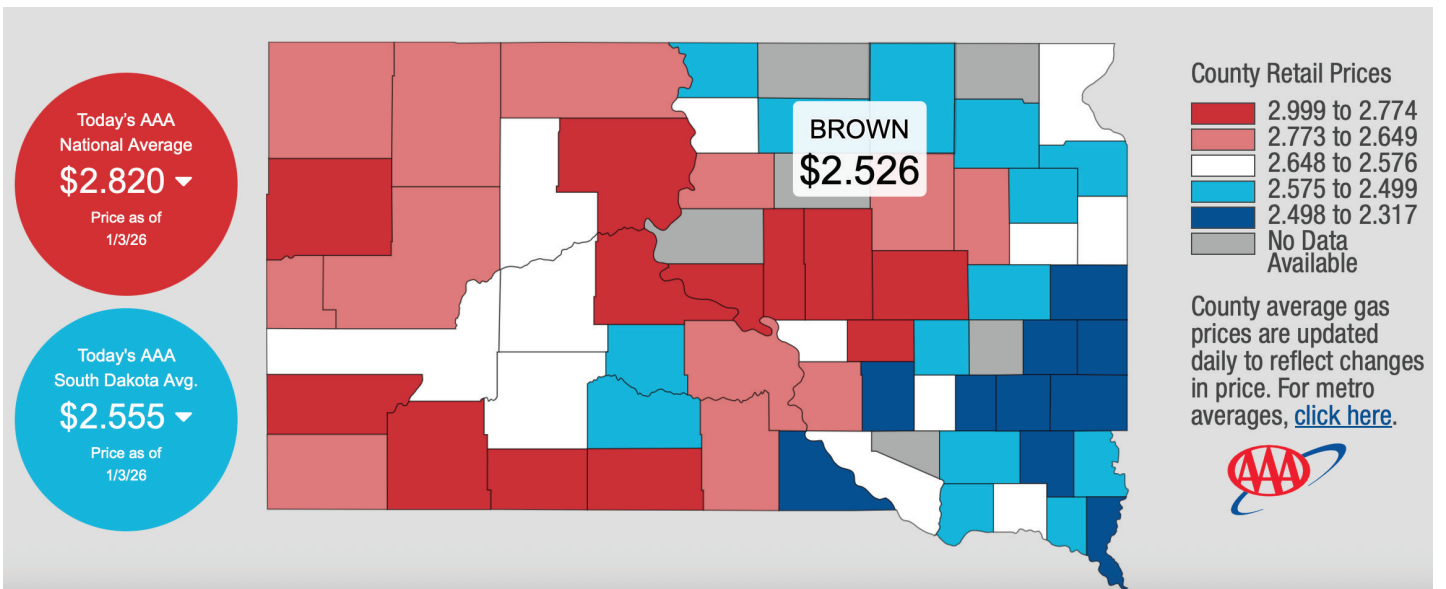
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$2.540	\$2.719	\$3.196	\$3.167
Yesterday Avg.	\$2.550	\$2.726	\$3.203	\$3.151
Week Ago Avg.	\$2.555	\$2.746	\$3.241	\$3.162
Month Ago Avg.	\$2.704	\$2.887	\$3.349	\$3.478
Year Ago Avg.	\$2.825	\$3.049	\$3.453	\$3.279

This Week



Last Week



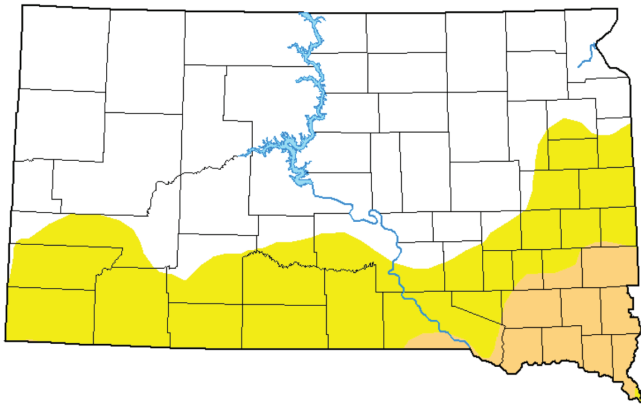
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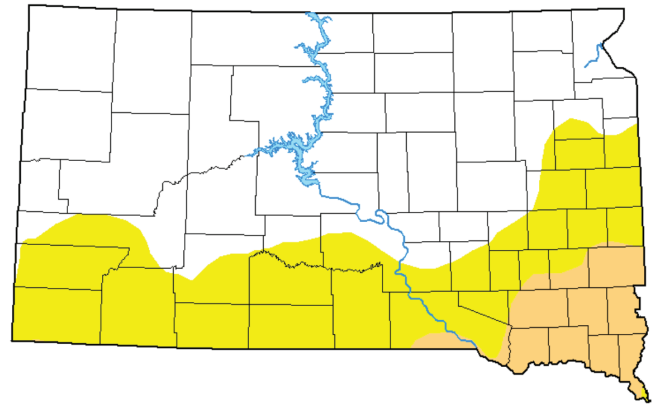
Drought Classification

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Drought Monitor



Jan. 6



Dec. 30

Warmer-than-normal temperatures dominated the region, with departures exceeding 15°F above normal across parts of western Nebraska, western Kansas, northeast Colorado, Wyoming, and southeast Montana. Precipitation was minimal, with the greatest totals confined to northeastern North Dakota.

The continued warm and dry winter has resulted in some areas experiencing their driest start to winter on record. Abnormally dry conditions expanded across southern Nebraska and northeast Kansas, as well as southeast Kansas, where moderate drought also increased. Moderate and severe drought expanded across southeast Wyoming, western Nebraska, northeast Colorado, and southeast Colorado.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

'Teaching us how to grow with our babies': How prisons allow mothers and infants to nest for months

Nine states, including SD, have prison nursery programs; others are considering opening them

BY: AMANDA WATFORD

VANDALIA, Mo. — Kathy Briggs slipped her arms through the thick straps of a brand-new baby carrier, tugging it over her beige shirt as two other women stood beside her, tightening buckles and adjusting the padded waistband.

The carrier was still stiff from its packaging, and Briggs shifted her feet as one of the women gently lifted then-6-month-old Melody into the front pouch.

Melody's gray-blue eyes tracked the women's hands, and her wispy blond hair — gathered into a tiny pink bow — bobbed slightly with the movement. She blinked up at the adults.

"Put your foot in there," one of the women said, guiding Melody's leg through the opening.

"She's just a little chunk," the other woman said.

Briggs' eyes widened, and she squealed, half laughing, as Melody settled against her chest. Across the room, a few women looked up from boxes of newly arrived donations — tiny onesies and hip carriers still wrapped in plastic.

Someone let out a soft "aww." Briggs, 29, bounced on her heels, testing the weight, her palms hovering protectively near Melody's back.

For a moment, the room felt like any early childhood nursery: adult chatter and baby babbles, women comparing baby gear and swapping soothing techniques.

Yet the jangling of keys and the watchful eyes of uniformed officers were a reminder that this colorful corner of the world existed not in a day care, but inside a women's prison in rural Missouri.

Programs like this one allow babies inside prisons — a rare and controversial approach that forces states to confront how punishment, public safety and early childhood development collide. As more women enter state prisons while pregnant, lawmakers and corrections officials are expanding prison nursery programs, betting that keeping mothers and infants together can reduce trauma and recidivism — even as critics question whether any prison can ever be an appropriate place for a child.

Missouri's program, which opened last February at the Women's Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center, is the ninth nursery program currently operating inside of a prison in the country. The program was adopted into state law in 2022.

Each year, thousands of pregnant offenders are admitted to local jails and state prisons — most for nonviolent crimes. In 2023, the latest year with data available, about 2% of women who were admitted to state prisons were pregnant, according to the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics.

The number of incarcerated women has climbed sharply over the past several decades, making them one of the fastest-growing segments of the prison population. Some experts say the trend has forced states to confront a basic reality: Most correctional facilities were never designed to accommodate new mothers.

"Routine aspects of prison operations just really don't consider the distinct needs of women, and particularly not of pregnant women," said Alycia Welch, the associate director of the Prison and Jail Innovation Lab at the University of Texas at Austin. Welch researches carceral conditions and oversight with a focus on women's experiences.

Federal reports and research have found that pregnant inmates face systemic barriers to timely care —

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from guards controlling access to medical treatment to logistical delays and medical fees. Shackling during pregnancy and childbirth persists despite restrictions in at least 42 states.

Prison nursery programs benefit relatively few women, and some criminal justice advocates say they reinforce the notion that incarceration — rather than community-based drug treatment or diversion — should remain the default response for pregnant women in the criminal legal system.

Some research suggests that prison nurseries can strengthen early bonding, improve maternal mental health and support the transition from incarceration back into the community after new mothers have time to parent their infants in a structured, supportive environment.

"This community just lifts us up," Briggs said.

Inside Missouri's nursery program

The room Kaley McDowell shares with her infant daughter, Kimber, is arranged for two mothers and two babies — twin beds on each wall, a pair of cribs nearby and space left open for feeding, rocking and play.

McDowell's rocking chair sits in the corner, draped with a warm, butter yellow blanket. She settled into the rocker with Kimber in her arms just as a soft, classical melody drifted from one of the crib-soother toys. Kimber curled tightly against her chest; her cheek pressed into her mother's shirt.

"She thinks she's gonna eat now," McDowell joked, shifting her baby upright on her thighs as the two rocked slowly back and forth. She then set Kimber down so the child could try standing.

Kimber steadied herself, then reached down toward her tiny toes as if surprised to find them there.

McDowell, 34, is a girl mom through and through. All four of her daughters — ages 13, 9, 2 and now-7-month-old Kimber — have "K" names, a small bit of continuity she's proud of.

Inside the nursery unit, she's the experienced mom, the one other women seek out for advice.

McDowell isn't set for release until August, which means Kimber will leave the nursery around 15 months old. In the meantime, McDowell is taking classes to get her GED diploma and hopes to earn her license as a certified nurse assistant.

Missouri's prison nursery program allows eligible women to live with their newborns for up to 18 months. Women must have no more than 18 months remaining on their sentence at the time of delivery, and those who have committed violent sexual offenses or crimes against children cannot participate.

Prison officials also review disciplinary history, physical and mental health, and engagement in programming before approving someone for one of the unit's seven bedrooms, which collectively can house up to 14 babies at a time.

About two dozen infants are expected to cycle through the nursery each year, and staff anticipate that number will climb — a sign of growing demand for the program.

"I have watched moms transform their lives," said Kim Perkins, the nursery's program manager.

Across the day, the nursery fills with the kinds of small, steady interactions that shape early childhood: Mothers reading baby books, caregivers rocking fussy infants, babies sprawled across play mats surrounded by stuffed animals. Correctional officers and nursery staff also often help, whether by holding a wiggly baby or fetching supplies.

"They like to come and steal the babies when they can," McDowell said. "They're like our in-house grandmas."

The unit's officers also are trained to expect round-the-clock movement, and the team includes male officers, so infants grow accustomed to hearing different voices.

"It's going to be a good thing for these women," said Lisa Unger, one of the unit's correctional officers. While she was initially apprehensive about the program, she said she has watched women genuinely change over time with the support they receive.

When mothers cook group meals — something that happens at least once a week — the unit feels briefly like a crowded family kitchen, with women passing plates, joking and handing off infants so someone else can finish stirring a pot.

Movement across the unit is tightly restricted, though. Babies are not allowed upstairs to the sleeping

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and living quarters of caregivers — incarcerated women trained for the role — and mothers go there only to “shop” in the storage room stocked with donated clothing. When the weather is nice and staffing allows, the mothers can take their babies outside to the play area. The babies do not enter other parts of the prison.

Turning point

For much of her life, Kathy Briggs did not imagine a future that included her. She was first incarcerated at 15, and has now been in and out of incarceration three times.

Addiction shaped nearly every corner of her adulthood — where she slept and whom she trusted. Some nights were spent in drug houses, others on the street. She lost two pregnancies.

At her lowest point, Briggs tattooed “DNR” — which stands for “do not resuscitate” — above her left eye.

When Briggs learned she was expecting again — this time while in county jail awaiting adjudication — she doubted her ability to stay sober, to find housing, to understand motherhood at all. When she learned she was carrying twins, her panic deepened and she considered placing them up for adoption.

Who would take them? Who would trust her with them?

The turning point came with a sentence delivered calmly from the bench. Facing drug possession and firearm-related charges, Briggs expected another familiar outcome and that she’d be released shortly. Instead, the judge told her she would go to prison — and have her babies there.

Briggs protested — babies did not belong in prison. But the judge insisted. More importantly, he told her he believed in her. It was the first time, she said, anyone in a position of authority had made her feel like she could overcome her past.

She arrived at the prison nursery unit seven months pregnant. When her daughters were born, she nicknamed them “Little Lyric” and “Mighty Melody,” inspired by the music that always made her feel free.

The infants’ play space is awash in color: Rugs patterned with swirling motifs and florals; shelves crammed with books, dolls and stacking toys; rocking chairs with tufted pillows. A baby swing clicks rhythmically in one corner. Near a window overlooking an outdoor play area, a potted plant soaks up the morning sun.

Inside the nursery, Briggs’ daughters, whom she calls her “best friends,” thrive. Their father also is incarcerated, and the nursery staff are working to make sure he can receive regular updates and photos of the girls.

“Some of us didn’t grow up with good families or a lot of love,” Briggs said. “Here, they’re teaching us how to grow with our babies, and that is such a beautiful thing.”

Some of the program’s caregivers say the strength of the unit comes from the fact that no one is raising a baby in isolation — and that some caregivers bring their own lived experience as mothers to guide the others.

One morning, caregiver Tara Carroll sat on the floor, sorting a pile of donated baby clothes while several women gathered around her — some seated at a nearby table, others standing and talking among themselves.

She organized the outfits by size, slipping the clothes onto tiny colorful hangers. As she logged each item, a few of the women began matching tops and bottoms, holding them up for one another to weigh in.

“This one will fit her, and it’s got cute little pants and a snowflake,” Carroll told one mother.

“That’s cuuuuute,” another mom chimed in.

Carroll, 34, has been incarcerated for several years on property-related charges, and she remembers what it was like before the nursery existed.

In 2022, she delivered her now-3-year-old daughter, Dillon Rayee, at a nearby hospital and spent 48 hours with her before her husband took their newborn home.

“It was heart-wrenching, and I promised my daughter that I would do everything that I could to come home to her,” Carroll said. She hopes to use her experience in the prison to become a doula.

Until the nursery opened, her birth experience was the norm: a day or two with a newborn, then the baby went into foster care or with family and the mother returned to her cell. For Carroll, helping the

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women in the unit now — guiding them through feedings, showing them how to swaddle, offering advice during long nights — feels like a way of honoring her promise to her daughter.

Policies across the states

Across the country, fewer than a dozen states operate nursery programs that allow incarcerated mothers to live with their newborns.

New York operates the nation's oldest prison nursery, which opened in the early 1900s at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. The program allows up to 25 incarcerated mothers to live with their infants — typically until age 1 — under a system governed by state law and administered by a nonprofit provider, Hour Children.

Newer programs — in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, Ohio, Washington state and West Virginia — vary widely in size, eligibility and funding. Many rely heavily on nonprofit partners or donations to cover essentials such as diapers, cribs and parenting classes.

Nebraska's program, which launched in 1994, allows mothers to participate if their parole eligibility date or release date falls within 18 months of their child's birth.

Rosita Vizcarra, 29, said the program has been a "blessing," giving her the chance to bond with her now-9-month-old son, Liam, while also learning how to be a better parent to her two older daughters.

"He's crawling and starting to stand," Vizcarra wrote in a message to Stateline through the facility's messaging platform. "He's such a happy baby."

Miranda Messenger, 37, told Stateline in a message that the program has given her what she and her now 4-month-old son, Kyle, need to succeed and stay connected to her support system while separated from her three older children.

"It's gonna help Miranda tenfold," said Shannon Fune, Kyle's father, who has been able to visit the pair a few times. "I was a little bit jealous or disappointed that I wasn't gonna be there."

A 2018 study of Nebraska's program found participation was associated with a 28% reduction in recidivism within three years of the initial offense and a 39% reduction in returns to prison custody within 20 years over the 20-year period of the study. The author, Joseph R. Carlson, a former professor at the University of Nebraska, also estimated that the program saved the state more than \$6 million between 1994 and 2012.

A handful of states — Kansas, North Dakota, Virginia and Wisconsin — are considering or expanding nursery programs. Idaho and Wyoming explored nursery plans in recent years, but abandoned them due to space, budget and staffing issues, according to state corrections officials.

Many other states offer other programs they say benefit incarcerated mothers, such as doula programs during pregnancy or during labor and delivery, extended visitation for young children or mother-child facilities based in communities rather than a prison.

Although interest in programs for pregnant and postpartum women in the criminal legal system has grown, experts across the country say there is still not enough research to know how well these programs work — and even basic data on the number and experiences or outcomes of incarcerated pregnant people remains limited.

"It's, for me, really unfortunate that we are doing this without evidence to inform the policies we're putting in place," said Rebecca Shlafer, a child psychologist and associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Minnesota. Shlafer also evaluated the implementation of Minnesota's 2021 Healthy Start Act, which allows pregnant and postpartum women to participate in community-based alternatives.

'A real patchwork'

It's hard to know exactly how many pregnant people enter jails and prisons each year. The federal government does not require correctional systems to track pregnancy data, and reporting varies widely by state.

By the end of 2023, 305 pregnant women were housed in state prisons, according to the latest federal data, which was released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics in April. At least 75 women lived in prison nurseries or residential programs with their infants in 2023.

A 2019 study of incarcerated pregnant women — drawing from both state and federal facilities — esti-

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mated roughly 58,000 admissions to prisons and jails between 2016 and 2017. The study, conducted by the Advocacy and Research on Reproductive Wellness of Incarcerated People group and published in the peer-reviewed American Journal of Public Health, is considered the first national investigation into pregnancy frequency and outcomes in prisons.

There are no federal standards for prison nursery programs, and each state sets its own rules — who qualifies, how long mothers can stay, what staffing and safety protocols look like and what reentry support is offered.

Studies of long-running programs in Nebraska and New York found that mothers who participated were less likely to return to prison than similar women who weren't admitted. But those results, some experts say, may be shaped by the programs' strict eligibility rules: Nurseries typically accept people with lower-level offenses and short sentences.

A study published in April in the peer-reviewed Women & Criminal Justice journal found that the existence of prison nursery programs caused stress and anxiety for those who weren't eligible after giving birth, leaving them feeling like unfit mothers, and diverted resources from other ways to help incarcerated moms maintain bonds with their babies.

"We can think outside the prison walls for how to keep moms and babies together in ways that still maintain safety and accountability," said Dr. Carolyn Sufrin, a medical anthropologist and an obstetrician-gynecologist at Johns Hopkins University. Sufrin also leads the Advocacy and Research on Reproductive Wellness of Incarcerated People group.

Critics of prison nurseries argue that the correctional environment is fundamentally ill-suited to meet the health, developmental and emotional needs of pregnant or postpartum women and their infants.

Prisons are usually not staffed with maternal health experts or pediatricians, and medical care is often inconsistent. The environment itself limits babies' movement and ability to form relationships with other family members. The children can't go outdoors every day.

Financial stability also is a major concern. Some of the existing prison nursery programs nationwide primarily depend on donations or nonprofit support instead of consistent state funding. Critics argue that this makes nurseries a fragile, resource-heavy solution that helps only a small number of women while reinforcing the broader system of incarceration rather than providing a reliable, scalable alternative.

"It's a real patchwork out there, and every state is different, but again, just not ideal to have women and babies in these settings," said Erin McClain, a research associate and the assistant director of the University of North Carolina Collaborative for Maternal and Infant Health, a research center focusing on high-risk pregnancies and infants.

A path forward

Briggs is set to leave Missouri's Women's Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center for a halfway house, again with her babies, later this month. She has thought extensively about what she'll one day tell her daughters about their first few months of life — and about how far she has come from the days when her "DNR" tattoo reflected a very different outlook.

"I want to live life, and I want to show them that they can live a good life," Briggs said. "I want to be the light that makes them feel warm."

Inside the program, she learned how to care for her daughters and, just as critically, how to care for herself, she said. For someone who had grown up without much love or guidance, the nursery became a place where both were taught, deliberately and daily.

She hopes to return someday to help others navigate the early months of parenthood behind bars.

"More mothers in this situation deserve an opportunity to learn to be a better mother."

Stateline reporter Amanda Watford can be reached at ahernandez@stateline.org.

This story was originally produced by Stateline, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.

Amanda Watford (formerly Hernández) covers criminal justice for Stateline. She has reported for both national and local outlets, including ABC News, USA Today and NBC4 Washington.

COMMENTARY

A new session brings old issues back to the Legislature

by Dana Hess

Contrary to popular belief, the upcoming South Dakota legislative session will be more than just a slugfest over property tax relief. Some of the bills that have already been filed show that in addition to deciding the fate of property taxes, lawmakers will also be revisiting some old topics.

Listening to the sound of silencers

One of those familiar topics will be an attempt to find a new way to embrace the Second Amendment. A pre-filed bill from Sen. Casey Crabtree, a Madison Republican, would ensure that federal regulations on silencers wouldn't be enforced in South Dakota.

Senate Bill 2 seeks to take silencers off the "controlled weapons" list where it currently exists with the likes of machine guns and sawed-off shotguns. Despite the Second Amendment's popularity in South Dakota and the Legislature, this may be an uphill fight for Crabtree, because the portrayal of silencers in popular culture isn't good. We usually see someone in the movies or on TV using a silencer when they're committing a crime.

It may also be tough for Crabtree to explain why law-abiding citizens need to silence their weapons. Maybe, if you're trying to pick off wildlife or stray cats and dogs in your backyard, you don't want to alert authorities with gunshots. If you're using a weapon to defend your home, maybe you don't want to wake the neighbors when shots are fired.

Another attempt to add more limits to term limits

Since 1992, when voters in this state decided it was a good idea to limit the terms of legislators, there have been various attempts to limit them even more. Currently a lawmaker can serve no more than four terms or eight consecutive years in one chamber. Candidates got around that restriction by, after four terms, running for office in the other chamber.

Senate Joint Resolution 501 seeks to change that with a vote of the people. SJR 501, sponsored by Aberdeen Republican Michael Rohl, seeks a state constitutional amendment that would limit lawmakers to eight consecutive years in one chamber, then make them sit out two years before they could make a run at a seat in the other chamber, where they could only serve four consecutive terms.

Since 1992 when legislative terms were limited, lawmakers have been flipping and flopping from one chamber to the other every eight years. If approved by voters, Rohl's resolution would make sure that veteran lawmakers would have to sit on the bench for two years before they could seek a seat in the other chamber. Two years on the sidelines may not appeal to his colleagues. What term limit backers often forget is that voters have the ultimate say on who serves them. No matter what the law says about consecutive terms, voters control term limits.

Yet another attempt to call for a constitutional convention

Rohl is also the sponsor of Senate Joint Resolution 502, which calls for a national constitutional convention. The subject of the convention would be enshrining in the U.S. Constitution a limit on the number of Supreme Court justices.

The current court membership of nine is set by Congress, and Rohl wants to keep it that way. Rohl must be afraid that if Democrats were to somehow gain control of both houses of Congress and the White House, they could change the number to something that benefited them, upping the number of justices on the court who would then be appointed by a Democratic president and would be more likely to favor left-leaning issues.

Just about every year there are resolutions like Rohl's, though his has the advantage of calling for a unique change in the Constitution. Usually the resolutions are of a more generic nature, calling for a convention

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that would deal with fiscal restraints or limits to federal power or congressional term limits, or all three. The bad news for Rohl is that those attempts to call for a constitutional convention rarely succeed in this Legislature. In the past five sessions, the vast majority of resolutions calling for a constitutional convention have been killed in committee or failed in one chamber or the other. With a record of one win and 10 losses in the past five sessions, it's obvious that a majority of lawmakers recognize those resolutions as a waste of time.

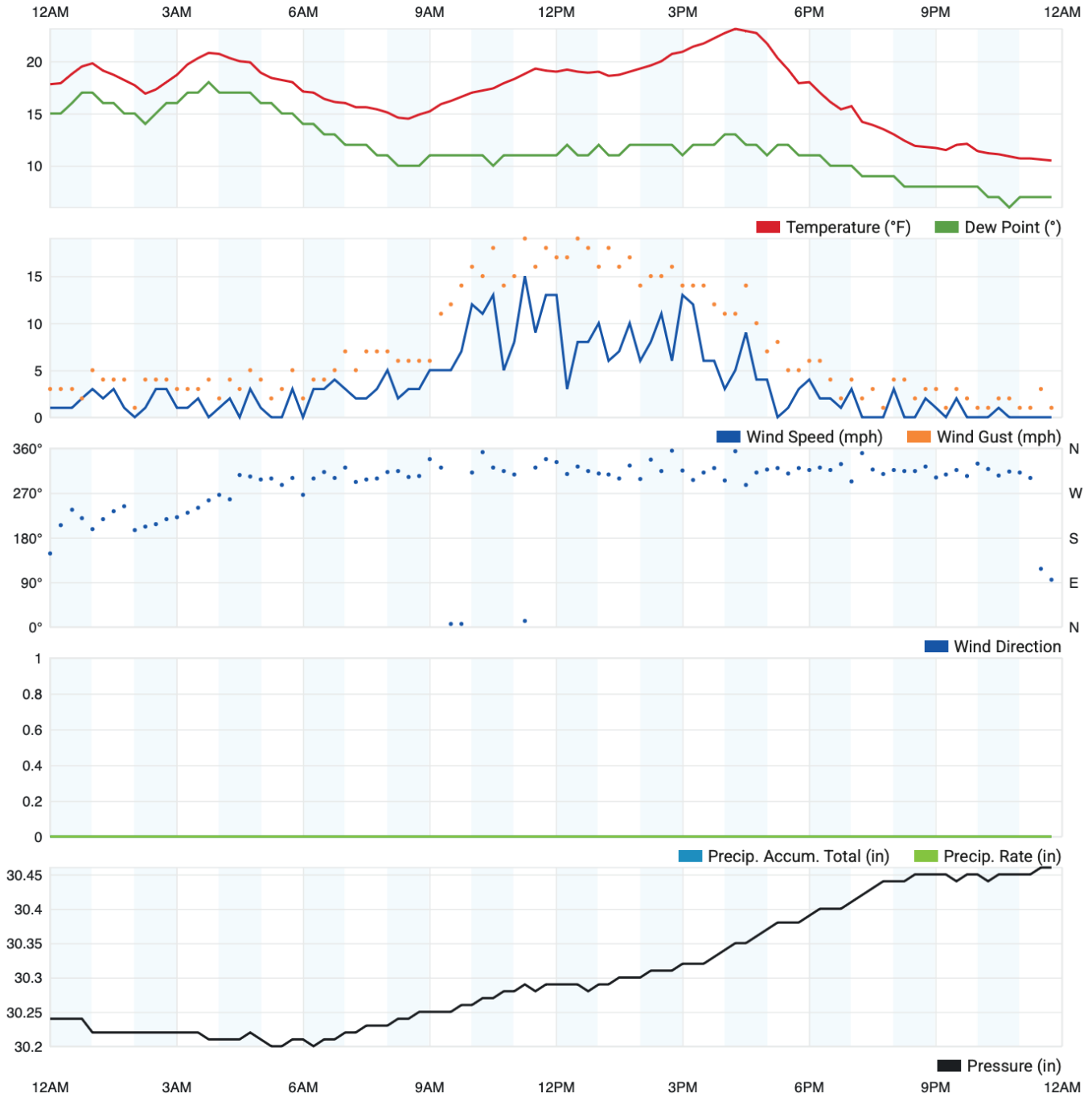
Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

January 10, 2026



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Today



High: 40 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 25 °F

Partly Cloudy

Monday



High: 44 °F

Mostly Sunny

Monday Night



Low: 35 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Tuesday



High: 44 °F

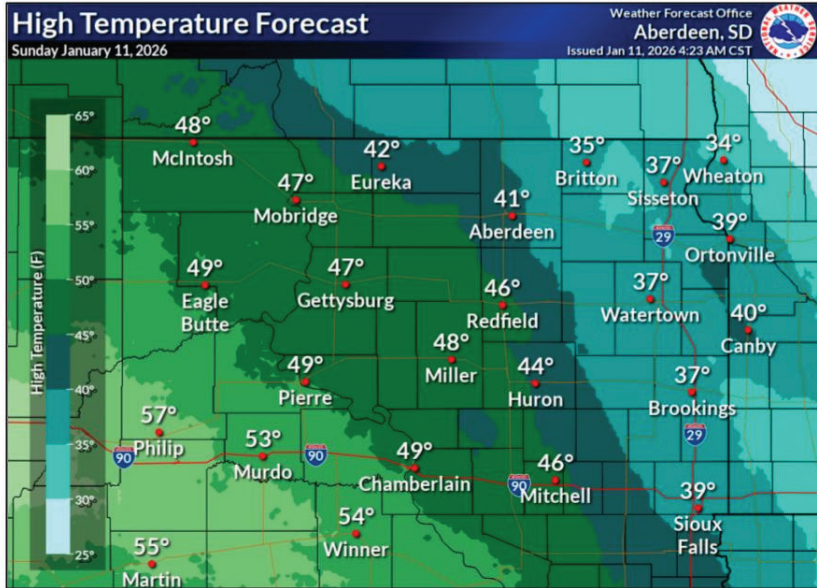
Mostly Sunny and Breezy



Temperature Outlook

January 11, 2026
4:39 AM CST

Warm today and continued mild over the next few days



	Maximum Temperature Forecast (°F)						
	1/11 Sun	1/12 Mon	1/13 Tue	1/14 Wed	1/15 Thu	1/16 Fri	1/17 Sat
Aberdeen	42	45	46	31	42	30	21
Britton	35	40	41	27	39	27	18
Chamberlain	49	53	54	39	49	33	27
Clark	38	43	44	33	39	28	18
Eagle Butte	49	52	51	40	44	32	29
Eureka	42	44	44	33	41	27	22
Gettysburg	47	49	49	35	44	31	23
McIntosh	48	50	49	41	43	31	29
Milbank	39	45	46	31	39	28	17
Miller	48	51	52	35	46	31	24
Mobridge	47	49	49	36	42	30	28
Murdo	53	55	54	41	48	31	31
Pierre	50	54	54	40	48	32	29
Redfield	46	50	51	33	44	30	23
Sisseton	37	44	44	27	39	32	17
Watertown	37	44	45	29	37	27	16
Webster	35	41	41	28	37	30	16
Wheaton	34	39	41	27	36	30	14



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Mild air moves back into the region today, warming temperatures back up into the 30s, 40s and 50s. And these much above normal temperatures look to stick around for a good portion of this week!

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Plenty Of Wind In The 7-Day Forecast

January 11, 2026

4:44 AM CST

Focus is on Tuesday night and then again Thursday night/Friday for the strongest wind gusts

- Lots of gusty winds expected during this 7-day stretch. The **Tuesday/Tuesday night** and **Thursday night/Friday** timeframes are being monitored right now for being the periods of potentially strongest wind gusts.
- During each of these periods of potentially strong wind gusts, light snow is possible, with the greatest probability of light accumulating snow Thursday night and Friday.
- There is currently a low probability of drifting/blowing snow and lowered visibility during these timeframes, especially Thursday night into Friday.

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast & Direction (mph)

	1/11 Sun	1/12 Mon	1/13 Tue	1/14 Wed	1/15 Thu	1/16 Fri	1/17 Sat
Aberdeen	24↗	23↗	36↘	25↘	39↘	43↘	24↘
Britton	31↗	23↗	36↘	28↘	38↘	43↘	28↘
Chamberlain	20↗	23↗	37↘	25↘	43↘	44↘	24↘
Clark	28↗	23↗	37↘	30↘	38↘	43↘	28↘
Eagle Butte	31↗	35↗	41↘	31↘	51↘	49↘	31↘
Eureka	25↗	30↗	39↘	29↘	46↘	45↘	28↘
Gettysburg	26↗	29↗	39↘	29↘	46↘	46↘	28↘
McIntosh	33↗	33↗	45↘	29↘	54↘	51↘	29↘
Milbank	26↗	23↗	35↘	29↘	31↘	38↘	24↘
Miller	28↗	30↗	39↘	28↘	44↘	45↘	28↘
Mobridge	26↗	28↗	36↘	26↘	44↘	44↘	26↘
Murdo	28↗	29↗	40↘	29↘	49↘	49↘	29↘
Pierre	24↗	25↗	35↘	24↘	44↘	44↘	24↘
Redfield	24↗	25↗	38↘	28↘	43↘	46↘	26↘
Sisseton	32↗	26↗	36↘	29↘	35↘	38↘	26↘
Watertown	28↗	25↗	37↘	30↘	36↘	40↘	28↘
Webster	29↗	25↗	36↘	29↘	37↘	41↘	26↘
Wheaton	21↗	21↗	32↘	30↘	29↘	36↘	25↘



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Lots of gusty winds expected during this 7-day stretch. The Tuesday/Tuesday night and Thursday night/Friday timeframes are being monitored right now for being the periods of potentially strongest wind gusts. During each of these periods of potentially strong wind gusts, light snow chances are in the forecast, meaning there is currently a low probability of drifting/blowing snow and lowered visibility during these timeframes.

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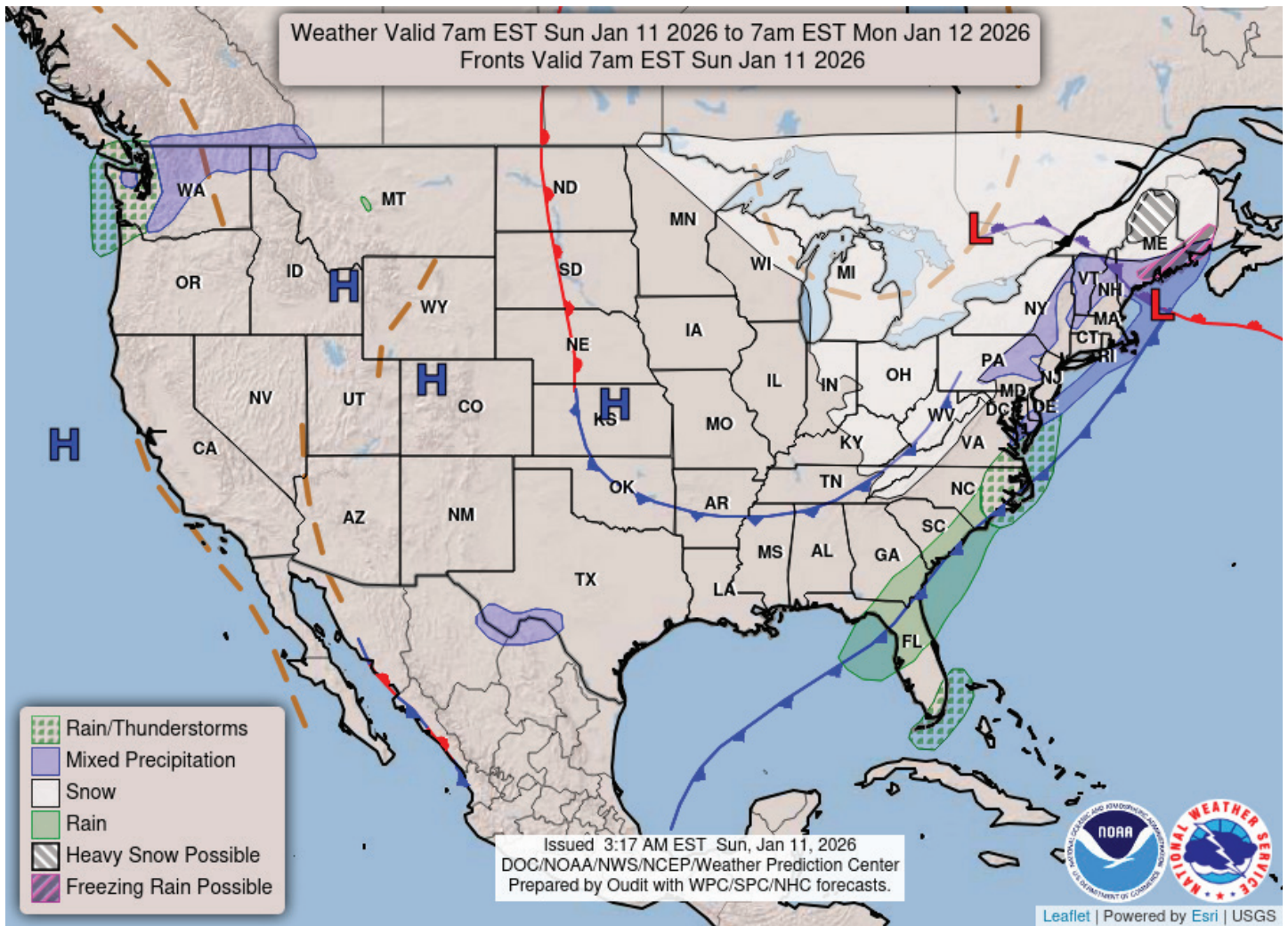
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 23 °F at 4:15 PM
Low Temp: 10 °F at 11:25 PM
Wind: 20 mph at 12:30 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 55 in 1987
Record Low: -31 in 1912
Average High: 23
Average Low: 2
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.23
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.23
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:09 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:08 am



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Today in Weather History

January 11, 1980: A strong area of low pressure resulted in strong winds of 35 to 45 mph with gusts to 70 mph across Minnesota on the 11th and 12th. Blowing and drifting snow made roads hazardous or impossible. The strong winds also caused some damage. There were areas in western Minnesota that had a lot of blowing dirt.

January 11, 1995: A combination of an ice storm, heavy frost accumulation, and strong winds for several days caused widespread damage to electrical systems resulting in power outages across central and north-central South Dakota. The first ice storm occurred on the 11th and the 12th. In the days following, widespread fog developed and resulted in additional heavy deposits of ice and frost on power lines and other surfaces. Much of the damage occurred when strong winds, mainly from the 16 through the 18th, caused the heavily weighted power lines and poles to collapse. Power outages lasted as long as eight days. Several electric cooperatives had never experienced damages of this magnitude. Some traffic accidents resulted from icing, and many vehicles slid off the roads. The property damage was estimated at 3.5 million dollars.

January 11, 2009: A vigorous but fast-moving winter storm system moved through the Dakotas last night and early today. Although snow accumulations from the storm only ranged from 1 to 4 inches, strong winds behind the system produced significant blowing and drifting snow and widespread blizzard conditions across the area. Reports from trained spotters and law enforcement indicated visibility dropped to below one-quarter mile for several hours and near-zero (white-out conditions) in many rural or unsheltered areas. Sustained north to northwest winds at many locations was 20 to 35 mph, with peak wind gusts as high as 60 to 65 mph. As the arctic airmass surged into the region, temperatures fell some 30 degrees from early this morning to mid-afternoon.

1898: An estimated F4 tornado struck the city of Fort Smith, Arkansas, just before midnight. The tornado, which touched down about 100 miles southwest of town, killed 55 people and injured 113 others along its track.

1918: A powerful area of low pressure brought snow and bitterly cold temperatures to Chattanooga, Little Rock, and Shreveport. Birmingham, Alabama, picked up an inch of snow. In far southeastern Alabama, an estimated F3 tornado virtually damaged every building in the town of Webb. The tornado leveled one rural school, killing one teacher and seven students. Please note, the date on the historical marker is an error. January 10th in 1918 was a Thursday.

1963: An F2 tornado was reported in Scott County, Indiana, north of Louisville, Kentucky. It was on the ground for 5 miles north of Scottsburg and damaged or destroyed several homes and barns.

1972: Downslope winds hit the eastern slopes of the Rockies in northern Colorado and southeastern Wyoming. Boulder CO reported wind gusts to 143 mph and twenty-five million dollars property damage.

1987 — A storm in the northeastern U.S. buried the mountains of central Vermont with up to 26 inches of snow, and snowfall totals in Maine ranged up to 27 inches at Telos Lake. Winds gusted to 45 mph at Newark NJ and Albany NY. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Snow and high winds in Utah resulted in a fifty car pile-up along Interstate 15. Winds in Wyoming gusted to 115 mph at Rendezvous Peak. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — A cold front which the previous day produced 21 inches of snow at Stampede Pass WA and wind gusts to 75 mph at Mammoth Lakes CA, spread snow across Colorado. Totals in Colorado ranged up to 17 inches at Steamboat Springs. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — Strong northwesterly winds associated with a deep low pressure system crossing the Upper Great Lakes Region ushered cold air into the central U.S. Winds gusted to 72 mph at Fort Dodge IA, and wind gusts reached 75 mph at Yankton SD. Snow and high winds created blizzard conditions in northwestern Minnesota. Squalls produced heavy snow in parts of Upper Michigan and northern Lower Michigan, with 16 inches reported at Wakefield. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2008 — Iraqis in Baghdad woke up to the novelty of falling snowflakes as the city experienced its first snowfall in about 100 years. (NCDC)

2010: Bitter cold temperatures gripped central and southern Florida with lows in the teens and 30s.

In Times of Weakness

When temptation comes, run to God for strength to make the right choice.

Judges 16:1-31: 1 Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.

2 When it was told to the Gazites, saying, "Samson has come here," they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. And they kept silent all night, saying, "Let us wait until the morning light, then we will kill him."

3 Now Samson lay until midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the city gate and the two posts and pulled them up along with the bars; then he put them on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of the mountain which is opposite Hebron.

4 After this it came about that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

5 The lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Entice him, and see where his great strength lies and how we may overpower him that we may bind him to afflict him. Then we will each give you eleven hundred pieces of silver."

6 So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound to afflict you."

7 Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh cords that have not been dried, then I will become weak and be like any other man."

8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh cords that had not been dried, and she bound him with them.

9 Now she had men lying in wait in an inner room. And she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he snapped the cords as a string of tow snaps when it touches fire. So his strength was not discovered.

10 Then Delilah said to Samson, "Behold, you have deceived me and told me lies; now please tell me how you may be bound."

11 He said to her, "If they bind me tightly with new ropes which have not been used, then I will become weak and be like any other man."

12 So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" For the men were lying in wait in the inner room. But he snapped the ropes from his arms like a thread.

13 Then Delilah said to Samson, "Up to now you have deceived me and told me lies; tell me how you may be bound." And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my hair with the web [and fasten it with a pin, then I will become weak and be like any other man."

14 So while he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his hair and wove them into the web. And she fastened it with the pin and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep and pulled out the pin of the loom and the web.

15 Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart is not with me? You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength is."

16 It came about when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, that his soul was annoyed to death.

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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17 So he told her all that was in his heart and said to her, "A razor has never come on my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will leave me and I will become weak and be like any other man."

18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all that was in his heart, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all that is in his heart." Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hands.

19 She made him sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his hair. Then she began to afflict him, and his strength left him.

20 She said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" And he awoke from his sleep and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself free." But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him.

21 Then the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze chains, and he was a grinder in the prison.

22 However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it was shaved off.

23 Now the lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice, for they said, "Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hands."

24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, for they said, "Our god has given our enemy into our hands, Even the destroyer of our country, Who has slain many of us."

25 It so happened when they were in high spirits, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may amuse us." So they called for Samson from the prison, and he entertained them. And they made him stand between the pillars.

26 Then Samson said to the boy who was holding his hand, "Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them."

27 Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there. And about 3,000 men and women were on the roof looking on while Samson was amusing them.

28 Then Samson called to the LORD and said, "O Lord GOD, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes."

29 Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and braced himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left.

30 And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life.

31 Then his brothers and all his father's household came down, took him, brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. Thus he had judged Israel twenty years.

Unless weaknesses are addressed, they have potential to cause trouble in our life. Vulnerabilities can either drive us closer to God or blind us to His love, as two Old Testament stories demonstrate.

Joseph and Samson faced similar temptations but responded differently. Day after day, Potiphar's wife tried to entice Joseph, yet he rejected her advances (Genesis 39:7-9). He endured hardship for his choice, but in the end, God's servant received immeasurable blessings. Samson, on the other hand, willingly gave in to Delilah (Judg. 16:15-17) and experienced something very different.

Samson had been consecrated to God, and the Holy Spirit was moving in his life (Judges 13:24-25). Nevertheless, he chose the path of self-indulgence. Because Samson rationalized his weakness, it soon began to dominate his life. He exchanged God's blessing and supernatural strength for earthly pleasures.

When we face temptation, we can respond as Joseph did, or we can pursue a course similar to Samson's. The choice is up to us. In times of weakness, it is essential for us to depend on God, obey Him, and seek the strength to make good decisions—ones that honor God and draw us closer to Him.

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The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.09.26

12 30 36 42 47 16

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$215,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.10.26

6 15 20 22 25 10

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$12,510,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.10.26

17 24 36 38 43 17

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 49 Mins 33 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.10.26

1 8 23 24 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$188,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.10.26

10 19 39 47 67 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.10.26

5 19 21 28 64 14

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$137,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 60, Sioux Falls Jefferson 38
Bennett County 62, Wall 33
Castlewood 58, Deuel 32
Chester 56, Alcester-Hudson 41
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 52, Chamberlain 21
Clark-Willow Lake 58, Webster 34
Corsica/Stickney 60, Scotland/Menno 30
Douglas 38, Belle Fourche 35
Faulkton 52, North Central 36
Freeman 68, Tripp-Delmont-Armour 27
Gettysburg 44, Timber Lake 40
Gregory 41, Wolsey-Wessington 38
Harding County 66, Faith 44
Harrisburg 49, Huron 35
Lakota Tech 81, Alliance, Neb. 53
Langford 45, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 33
Lead-Deadwood 62, Oelrichs 50
Lennox 46, Groton 22
Leola-Frederick High School 54, Waverly-South Shore 27
Mahpiya Luta Red Cloud 78, Todd County 31
Marty 93, Wakpala 21
McLaughlin 48, Crow Creek Tribal School 37
Miller 50, Ipswich 37
New Underwood 52, Bison 26
Rapid City Central 46, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 43
Rapid City Stevens 74, Sioux Falls Lincoln 17
Redfield 36, Sully Buttes 30
Sioux Center, Iowa 58, Dakota Valley 42
Sioux Falls Lutheran 35, Sunshine Bible Academy 26
Sioux Falls Washington 54, T F Riggs High School 22
Sisseton 66, Oakes, N.D. 17
St Michael-Albertville, Minn. 48, Sioux Falls Christian 42
St. Francis Indian 58, Walthill, Neb. 48
Waubay/Summit 58, Aberdeen Christian 25
Sanford Pentagon Classic=
West Fargo Horace, N.D. 70, Tea 41

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

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 75, Waubay/Summit 48
Castlewood 71, Deuel 63, OT
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 60, Chamberlain 51
Clark-Willow Lake 68, Webster 36
Dell Rapids 69, Mobridge-Pollock 65, OT

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Douglas 64, Belle Fourche 53
Freeman 53, Tripp-Delmont-Armour 33
Groton 57, Lennox 48
Harding County 78, Faith 47
Harrisburg 72, Huron 69
Leola-Frederick High School 59, Waverly-South Shore 8
Mahpiya Luta Red Cloud 73, Todd County 54
McLaughlin 71, Crow Creek Tribal School 42
Milbank 64, Hillsboro-Central Valley, N.D. 61
New Underwood 54, Bison 47
North Central 45, Faulkton 43
Scotland/Menno 71, Corsica/Stickney 47
Sioux Falls Lincoln 89, Rapid City Stevens 45
Sioux Falls Lutheran 70, Sunshine Bible Academy 37
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 78, Rapid City Central 36
Sioux Falls Washington 77, T F Riggs High School 57
Sioux Valley 70, Sully Buttes 58
Tea 54, Sioux Center, Iowa 52
Wall 93, Bennett County 39
Western Christian, Iowa 76, Dakota Valley 56

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

South Dakota knocks off Denver 82-72

By The Associated Press undefined

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Cameron Fens scored 23 points as South Dakota beat Denver 82-72 on Saturday. Fens also contributed 12 rebounds and four blocks for the Coyotes (9-9, 1-2 Summit League). Isaac Bruns scored 20 points while going 8 of 12 and 3 of 4 from the free-throw line and added six rebounds. Jordan Crawford went 5 of 11 from the field (3 for 7 from 3-point range) to finish with 13 points.

Gabe Oldham led the Pioneers (8-11, 1-3) in scoring, finishing with 24 points, 13 rebounds and two steals. Denver also got 19 points from Zane Nelson. Carson Johnson also put up 11 points and six assists.

Iran warns it will target US troops and Israel if America strikes over protests

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's parliament speaker warned Sunday that the U.S. military and Israel would be "legitimate targets" if America strikes the Islamic Republic over the ongoing protests roiling the country, as threatened by President Donald Trump.

Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf made the threat after nationwide protests challenging Iran's theocracy saw protesters flood the streets in the country's capital and its second-largest city into Sunday morning, crossing the two-week mark as violence surrounding the demonstrations has killed at least 116 people, activists said.

With the internet down in Iran and phone lines cut off, gauging the demonstrations from abroad has grown more difficult. But the death toll in the protests has grown, while 2,600 others have been detained, according to the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency.

Those abroad fear the information blackout will embolden hard-liners within Iran's security services to launch a bloody crackdown, despite warnings from Trump he's willing to strike Iran to protect peaceful demonstrators.

Trump offered support for the protesters, saying on social media that "Iran is looking at FREEDOM,

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perhaps like never before. The USA stands ready to help!!!" The New York Times and Wall Street Journal, citing anonymous U.S. officials, said on Saturday night that Trump had been given military options for a strike on Iran, but hadn't made a final decision.

The State Department separately warned: "Do not play games with President Trump. When he says he'll do something, he means it."

Parliament rallies

Iranian state television broadcast the parliament session live. Qalibaf, a hard-liner who has run for the presidency in the past, gave a speech applauding police and Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, particularly its all-volunteer Basij, for having "stood firm" during the protests.

He went on to directly threaten Israel, "the occupied territory" as he referred to it, and the U.S. military, possibly with a preemptive strike.

"In the event of an attack on Iran, both the occupied territory and all American military centers, bases and ships in the region will be our legitimate targets," Qalibaf said. "We do not consider ourselves limited to reacting after the action and will act based on any objective signs of a threat."

Lawmakers rushed the dais in the Iranian parliament, shouting: "Death to America!"

It remains unclear just how serious Iran is about launching a strike, particularly after seeing its air defenses destroyed during the 12-day war in June with Israel. Any decision to go to war would rest with Iran's 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The U.S. military has said in the Mideast it is "postured with forces that span the full range of combat capability to defend our forces, our partners and allies and U.S. interests." Iran targeted U.S. forces at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar back in June, while the U.S. Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet is stationed in the island kingdom of Bahrain.

Israel, meanwhile, is "watching closely" the situation between the U.S. and Iran, said an Israeli official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to not being authorized to speak to journalists. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio overnight on topics including Iran, the official added.

Protests in Tehran and Mashhad

Online videos sent out of Iran, likely using Starlink satellite transmitters, purportedly showed demonstrators gathering in northern Tehran's Punak neighborhood. There, it appeared authorities shut off streets, with protesters waving their lit mobile phones. Others banged metal while fireworks went off.

Other footage purportedly showed demonstrators peacefully marching down a street and others honking their car horns on the street.

"The pattern of protests in the capital has largely taken the form of scattered, short-lived, and fluid gatherings, an approach shaped in response to the heavy presence of security forces and increased field pressure," the Human Rights Activists News Agency said. "Reports were received of surveillance drones flying overhead and movements by security forces around protest locations, indicating ongoing monitoring and security control."

In Mashhad, Iran's second-largest city some 725 kilometers (450 miles) northeast of Tehran, footage purported to show protesters confronting security forces. Flaming debris and dumpsters could be seen in the street, blocking the road. Mashhad is home to the Imam Reza shrine, the holiest in Shiite Islam.

Protests also appeared to happen in Kerman, 800 kilometers (500 miles) southeast of Tehran.

Iranian state television on Sunday morning had their correspondents appear on the streets in several cities to show calm areas with a date stamp shown on screen. Tehran and Mashhad were not included. They also showed pro-government demonstrations in Qom and Qazvin.

Ali Larijani, a top security official, went on state TV to accuse some demonstrators of "killing people or burning some people, which is very similar to what ISIS does," referring to the Islamic State group by an acronym. State TV aired funerals of slain security force members while reporting another six had been killed in Kermanshah. It also showed a pickup truck full of bodies in body bags and later a morgue.

Even Iran's reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian, who had been trying to ease anger before the dem-

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onstrations exploded in recent days, offered a hardening tone in an interview aired Sunday.

"People have concerns, we should sit with them and if it is our duty, we should resolve their concerns," Pezeshkian said. "But the higher duty is not to allow a group of rioters to come and destroy the entire society."

More demonstrations planned Sunday

Iran's exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi asked in his latest message for demonstrators to take to the streets Sunday.

Pahlavi's support of and from Israel has drawn criticism in the past, particularly after the 12-day war. Demonstrators have shouted in support of the shah in some protests, but it isn't clear whether that's support for Pahlavi himself or a desire to return to a time before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The demonstrations began Dec. 28 over the collapse of the Iranian rial currency, which trades at over 1.4 million to \$1, as the country's economy is squeezed by international sanctions in part levied over its nuclear program. The protests intensified and grew into calls directly challenging Iran's theocracy.

Slow-moving prisoner releases in Venezuela enter 3rd day after government announces goodwill effort

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO DE YARE, Venezuela (AP) — As Diógenes Angulo was freed Saturday from a Venezuelan prison after a year and five months, he, his mother and his aunt trembled and struggled for words. Nearby, at least a dozen other families hoped for similar reunions.

Angulo's release came on the third day that families had gathered outside prisons in the capital, Caracas, and other communities hoping to see loved ones walk out after Venezuela's government pledged to free what it described as a significant number of prisoners. Members of Venezuela's political opposition, activists, journalists and soldiers were among the detainees that families hoped would be released.

Angulo was detained two days before the 2024 presidential election after he posted a video of an opposition demonstration in Barinas, the home state of the late President Hugo Chávez. He was 17 at the time.

"Thank God, I'm going to enjoy my family again," he told The Associated Press, adding that others still detained "are well" and have high hopes of being released soon. His faith, he said, gave him the strength to keep going during his detention.

Minutes after he was freed, the now 19-year-old learned former President Nicolás Maduro had been captured by U.S. forces Jan. 3 in a nighttime raid in Caracas.

Venezuela's government on Thursday pledged to free a significant number of prisoners in what it described as a gesture to "seek peace." Officials have not identified or given a number of prisoners being considered for release, leaving rights groups scouring for hints of information and families to watch the hours tick by with no word.

U.S. President Donald Trump said the release of people detained for political reasons came at Washington's request.

"Venezuela has started the process, in a BIG WAY, of releasing their political prisoners," Trump wrote Saturday on his Truth Social platform. "Thank you! I hope those prisoners will remember how lucky they got that the USA came along and did what had to be done."

Trump added that should prisoners forget, "it will not be good for them."

As of Saturday night, only 16 people imprisoned for political reasons had been released, according to Foro Penal, a Venezuelan advocacy group for prisoners. Eight hundred and four remained imprisoned, the group said.

A brother of human rights attorney Rocío San Miguel, one of the first to be released and who immediately relocated to Spain, said in a statement that her release "is not full freedom, but rather a precautionary measure substituting deprivation of liberty." The conditions of her release ban her from speaking to the media.

"This situation does not constitute exile, nor a waiver of her rights, but is part of the humanitarian and

diplomatic agreements reached to facilitate her release," José Manuel San Miguel said of his sister's move to Spain.

Among the prominent members of the country's political opposition who were detained after the 2024 presidential elections and remain in prison are former lawmaker Freddy Superlano and Perkins Rocha, lawyer for opposition leader María Corina Machado. Juan Pablo Guanipa, a former governor and one of Machado's closest allies, and Rafael Tudares, the son-in-law of opposition presidential candidate Edmundo González, also remain imprisoned.

One week after the U.S. military intervention in Caracas, Venezuelans aligned with the government marched in several cities across the country demanding the return of Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores. The pair were captured and transferred to the U.S., where they face charges including conspiracy to commit narco-terrorism. Both pleaded not guilty.

In Caracas, many demonstrators waved Venezuelan flags and chanted, "Maduro, keep on going, the people are rising."

Acting president Delcy Rodríguez, speaking at a public social-sector event in Caracas, again condemned the U.S. military action on Saturday.

"There is a government, that of President Nicolás Maduro, and I have the responsibility to take charge while his kidnapping lasts ... We will not stop condemning the criminal aggression," she said, referring to Maduro's ousting.

After the shocking military action that overthrew Maduro, Trump stated the U.S. would "run" the South American country and demanded access to oil resources, which he promised to use "to benefit the people" of both nations.

"I love the Venezuelan people and I am already making Venezuela prosperous and safe again," Trump said in his Saturday post.

The U.S. and Venezuelan governments on Friday announced they are evaluating the restoration of diplomatic relations, broken since 2019, and the reopening of their respective diplomatic missions. A U.S. delegation visited Venezuela for several hours Friday.

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yván Gil responded to Pope Leo XIV's statement Friday calling for maintaining peace and "respecting the will of the Venezuelan people."

"With respect for the Holy Father and his spiritual authority, Venezuela reaffirms that it is a country that builds, works, and defends its sovereignty with peace and dignity," Gil said in a social media post, inviting the pontiff "to get to know this reality more closely."

Ukrainian drone attack in Russia kills 1 following Moscow's intense bombardment

By The Associated Press undefined

A Ukrainian drone strike killed one person and wounded three others in the Russian city of Voronezh, local officials said Sunday.

A young woman died overnight in a hospital intensive care unit after debris from a drone fell on a house during the attack on Saturday, regional Gov. Alexander Gusev said on Telegram.

Three other people were wounded and more than 10 apartment buildings, private houses and a high school were damaged, he said, adding that air defenses shot down 17 drones over Voronezh. The city is home to just over 1 million people and lies some 250 kilometers (155 miles) from the Ukrainian border.

The attack came after Russia bombarded Ukraine with hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles overnight into Friday, killing at least four people in the capital Kyiv, according to Ukrainian officials. For only the second time in the nearly four-year war, Russia used a powerful new hypersonic missile that struck western Ukraine in a clear warning to Kyiv and NATO.

Ukraine's largest private energy supplier, DTEK, said Sunday that 30,000 people in Kyiv were still without power following the attack. Mayor Vitali Klitschko said around half the apartment buildings — nearly

6,000 — in snowy Kyiv were left without heat in daytime temperatures of about minus 8 degrees Celsius (17.6 Fahrenheit).

The intense barrage and the launch of the nuclear-capable Oreshnik missile followed reports of major progress in talks between Ukraine and its allies on how to defend the country from further aggression by Moscow if a U.S.-led peace deal is struck.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Saturday in his nightly address that Ukrainian negotiators “continue to communicate with the American side.”

Chief negotiator Rustem Umerov was in contact with U.S. partners on Saturday, he said.

Separately, Ukraine’s General Staff said Russia targeted Ukraine with 154 drones overnight into Sunday and 125 were shot down.

The Ukrainian Defense Ministry’s main intelligence directorate said Sunday that Russia this month deployed the new jet-powered “Geran-5” strike drone against Ukraine for the first time. The Geran is a Russian variant of the Iranian-designed Shahed.

According to the directorate, the drone can carry a 90-kilogram (200-pound) warhead and has a range of nearly 1,000 kilometers (620 miles).

Kenyan women lost their husbands and then their land. But some are fighting back

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

SIAYA, Kenya (AP) — Rebecca Anyango stood outside the house she has called home for 26 years, wondering how long it will remain hers.

As a widow, she’s been threatened with eviction for years by her late husband’s family, who claim she has no inheritance rights. This year they filed a lawsuit, and the 70-year-old Anyango has no legal representation.

She pointed out where her husband is buried, a few steps from the door.

“Where do I take the grave?” she asked softly.

Anyango is among thousands of widows in western Kenya who face losing everything after their husbands die. They are often in rural areas and with little education, unaware of their rights.

Violating Kenya’s constitution

In the Luo, Luhya, and Kisii ethnic groups, widowhood can come with certain cultural expectations that can be considered illegal. One is “sexual cleansing,” in which a widow is made to have sex with another man, often a brother of her late husband, in the belief that the “dark cloud” of widowhood will lift.

Another is “wife inheritance,” in which a widow is taken in as a wife by her late husband’s brother.

Those who refuse, like Anyango and others who spoke with The Associated Press, are often isolated and stripped of their land, a violation of Kenya’s constitutional guarantee of the right to land ownership for all citizens.

“If the woman is not aware of what protects her, then she will be disinherited,” said Simiyu Waddimba, who teaches anthropology at the University of Nairobi and authored a paper on wife inheritance.

But in November, the local assembly in Siaya County, where Anyango lives, unanimously passed a Widows Protection Bill. If signed by the governor, it will criminalize forced disinheritance or forced remarriage.

The legislation was championed by county legislator Scholastica Madowo, herself a widow and one of four elected women in the 42-member local assembly. She said the “atrocities that the women go through” inspired her to act.

“Those cultural practices are actually a violation of their rights unless the woman does it willingly,” she said.

While Madowo wasn’t forcibly disinherited or remarried, she faced opponents’ insinuations about her widowhood during her campaign for office, including allegations that she had killed her husband.

Her bill would establish welfare committees to help widows access legal aid to challenge disinheritance.

Efforts made elsewhere

In neighboring Kisii County, Anne Bonareri was stripped of her home and her commercial property, which

had been in her late husband's name.

Within hours of her husband's death in 1997, her in-laws also took his possessions, including photos and clothes. Bonareri was left with three young children and another on the way.

"They took everything, and I was left with one photo of the father," the 60-year-old recalled, her voice catching.

The day after the burial, she said, her husband's elder brother came to claim her as a wife. When she refused, armed men were sent to attack her.

Bonareri said she later worked three jobs to buy a small piece of land and build a new house.

Her daughter, Emma Mong'ute, founded the Amandla MEK Foundation in 2019 to help women in such circumstances by offering legal advice and connecting them to pro bono lawyers. She said they have had some success in helping women retain land.

Banned like her mother from their land, and unable to visit her father's grave there, Mong'ute said the disinheritance of widows creates a cycle of poverty for hundreds of thousands of children in Kenya. She said her organization would consider pushing for a bill like the one in Siaya County.

Some widows elsewhere in Africa face similar pressures. In southern Africa, there is tension between general and customary law, which dominates inheritance cases.

"While the general law protects the inheritance rights of surviving spouses and children, customary practices still allow different ethnic groups to administer estates according to their traditions, often to the detriment of widows," said Misheck Dube, a former associate professor at the University of Limpopo in South Africa who has researched widowhood.

Fighting back

Most widows are disinherited because they don't understand Kenya's land succession laws, which recognize widows and children as the true inheritors, said Easter Okech with the Kenya Female Advisory Organization in Kisumu County.

She now offers legal training for women so they can represent themselves, and some are doing so in ongoing cases. She also encourages people to write wills — many people in rural areas don't make one — and have a neutral executor.

Some widows in western Kenya have fought back on their own.

Marie Owino, a 87-year-old former teacher, said she knew her rights under the law. She said her confidence and financial independence meant her in-laws "didn't dare" to disinherit her after her husband died 33 years ago.

She still lives in the brick house she and her husband shared on their 100 acres, its manicured gardens a symbol of the boundaries she laid down long ago.

"Once you have established yourself that you can, then I'm telling you all those people will give you respect," she said.

US launches new retaliatory strikes against IS in Syria after deadly ambush

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. has launched another round of retaliatory strikes against the Islamic State group in Syria following last month's ambush that killed two U.S. soldiers and one American civilian interpreter in the country.

The large-scale strikes, conducted by the U.S. alongside partner forces, occurred around 12:30 p.m. ET (1730 GMT) Saturday, according to the U.S. Central Command. The strikes hit multiple IS targets across Syria.

The Jordanian military later announced it had taken part in the strikes.

Saturday's strikes are part of a broader operation that is part of President Donald Trump's response to the deadly IS attack that killed Sgt. Edgar Brian Torres-Tovar, Sgt. William Nathaniel Howard, and Ayad Mansoor Sakat, the civilian interpreter, in Palmyra last month.

"Our message remains strong: if you harm our warfighters, we will find you and kill you anywhere in the

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world, no matter how hard you try to evade justice," U.S. Central Command said in a statement Saturday. A day earlier, Syrian officials said their security forces had arrested the military leader of IS operations in the Levant.

The U.S. military said Saturday's strikes were carried out alongside partner forces without specifying which forces had taken part.

The Trump administration is calling the response to the Palmyra attacks Operation Hawkeye Strike. Both Torres-Tovar and Howard were members of the Iowa National Guard.

It launched Dec. 19 with another large-scale strike that hit 70 targets across central Syria that had IS infrastructure and weapons.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces has for years been the U.S.'s main partner in the fight against IS in Syria, but since the ouster of former Syrian President Bashar Assad in December 2024, Washington has increasingly been coordinating with the central government in Damascus.

Syria recently joined the global coalition against the IS.

How Olympians think about success and failure and what we can learn from them

By STEPHEN WADE Associated Press

If winning gold medals were the only standard, almost all Olympic athletes would be considered failures.

A clinical psychologist with the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, Emily Clark's job when the Winter Games open in Italy on Feb. 6 is to help athletes interpret what it means to be successful.

Should gold medals be the only measure?

Part of a 15-member staff providing psychological services, Clark nurtures athletes accustomed to triumph but who invariably risk failure.

The staff deals with matters termed "mental health and mental performance." They include topics such as motivation, anger management, anxiety, eating disorders, family issues, trauma, depression, sleep, handling pressure, travel and so forth.

Clark's area includes stress management, the importance of sleep and getting high achievers to perform at their best and avoid the temptation of looking only at results.

"A lot of athletes these days are aware of the mental health component of, not just sport, but of life," Clark said in an interview with The Associated Press. "This is an area where athletes can develop skills that can extend a career, or make it more enjoyable."

Redefining success

The United States is expected to take about 235 athletes to the Winter Olympics, and about 70 more to the Paralympics. But here's the truth.

"Most of the athletes who come through Team USA will not win a gold medal," Clark said. "That's the reality of elite sport."

Here are the numbers. The United States won gold medals in nine events in the last Winter Games in Beijing in 2022. According to Dr. Bill Mallon, an esteemed shoulder surgeon and Olympic historian, 70.8% of Winter and Summer Olympic athletes go to only one Olympics.

Few are famous and successful like swimmer Michael Phelps, or skiers Mikaela Shiffrin or Lindsey Vonn.

Clark said she often delivers the following message to Olympians and Paralympians: This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance. Focus on the process. Savor the moment.

"Your job is not to win a gold medal, your job is to do the thing and the gold medal is what happens when you do your job," she said.

"Some of this might be realigning what success looks like," she added. "And some of this is developing resilience in the face of setbacks and failure."

Clark preaches staying on task under pressure and improving through defeat.

"We get stronger by pushing ourselves to a limit where we're at our maximum capacity — and then recovering," she said. "When we get stressed, it impacts our attention. Staying on task or staying in line

with what's important is what we try to train for."

A few testimonials

Kendall Gretsich has won four gold medals at the Summer and Winter Paralympics. She credits some of her success to the USOPC's mental health services, and she described the value this way.

"We have a sports psychologist who travels with us for most our season," she said. "Just being able to touch base with them ... and getting that reminder of why are you here. What is that experience you're looking for?"

American figure skater Alysa Liu is the 2025 world champion and was sixth in the 2022 Olympics. She's a big believer in sports psychology and should be among the favorites in Italy.

"I work with a sport psychologist," she said without giving a name. "She's incredible — like the MVP."

Of course, MVP stands — not for Most Valuable Person or Most Valuable Player — for "Most Valuable Psychologist."

"I mean, she's very helpful," Liu added.

Vonn: "I just did it myself"

American downhill skier Vonn will race in Italy in her sixth Olympics. At 41, she's coming off nearly six years in retirement and will be racing on a knee made of titanium.

Two-time Olympic champion Michaela Dorfmeister has suggested in jest that Vonn "should see a psychologist" for attempting such a thing in a very dangerous sport where downhill skiers reach speeds of 80 mph (130 kph).

Vonn shrugged off the comments and joked a few months ago that she didn't grow up using a sport psychologist. She said her counseling came from taping messages on the tips of her skis that read: "stay forward or hands up."

"I just did it myself," she said. "I do a lot of self-talk in the starting gate."

On sleep

"Sleep is an area where athletes tend to struggle for a number of reasons," Clark said, listing issues such as travel schedules, late practices, injuries and life-related stress.

"We have a lot of athletes who are parents, and lot of sleep is going to be disrupted in the early stages of parenting," she said. "We approach sleep as a real part of performance. But it can be something that gets de-prioritized when days get busy."

Clark suggests the following for her athletes — and the rest of us: no caffeine after 3 p.m., mitigate stress before bedtime, schedule sleep at about the same time daily, sleep in a dark room and get 7-9 hours.

Dani Aravich is a two-time Paralympian — she's been in both the Summer and Winter Games — will be skiing in the upcoming Paralympics. She said in a recent interview that she avails herself of many psychological services provided by the USOPC.

"I've started tracking my sleep," she said, naming Clark as a counselor. "Especially being an athlete who has multiple jobs, sleep is going to be your No. 1 savior at all times. It's the thing that — you know — helps mental clarity."

Ditto Clark.

"Sleep is the cornerstone of healthy performance," she added.

Greenland's harsh environment and lack of infrastructure have prevented rare earth mining

By JOSH FUNK and SUMAN NAISHADHAM Associated Press

Greenland's harsh environment, lack of key infrastructure and difficult geology have so far prevented anyone from building a mine to extract the sought-after rare earth elements that many high-tech products require. Even if President Donald Trump prevails in his effort to take control of the Arctic island, those challenges won't go away.

Trump has prioritized breaking China's stranglehold on the global supply of rare earths ever since the

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world's number two economy sharply restricted who could buy them after the United States imposed widespread tariffs last spring. The Trump administration has invested hundreds of millions of dollars and even taken stakes in several companies. Now the president is again pitching the idea that wresting control of Greenland away from Denmark could solve the problem.

"We are going to do something on Greenland whether they like it or not," Trump said Friday.

But Greenland may not be able to produce rare earths for years — if ever. Some companies are trying anyway, but their efforts to unearth some of the 1.5 million tons of rare earths encased in rock in Greenland generally haven't advanced beyond the exploratory stage. Trump's fascination with the island nation may be more about countering Russian and Chinese influence in the Arctic than securing any of the hard-to-pronounce elements like neodymium and terbium that are used to produce the high-powered magnets needed in electric vehicles, wind turbines, robots and fighter jets among other products.

"The fixation on Greenland has always been more about geopolitical posturing — a military-strategic interest and stock-promotion narrative — than a realistic supply solution for the tech sector," said Tracy Hughes, founder and executive director of the Critical Minerals Institute. "The hype far outstrips the hard science and economics behind these critical minerals."

Trump confirmed those geopolitical concerns at the White House Friday.

"We don't want Russia or China going to Greenland, which if we don't take Greenland, you can have Russia or China as your next door neighbor. That's not going to happen," Trump said

A difficult place to build a mine

The main challenge to mine in Greenland is, "of course, the remoteness. Even in the south where it's populated, there are few roads and no railways, so any mining venture would have to create these accessibilities," said Diogo Rosa, an economic geology researcher at the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland. Power would also have to be generated locally, and expert manpower would have to be brought in.

Another concern is the prospect of mining rare earths in the fragile Arctic environment just as Greenland tries to build a thriving tourism industry, said Patrick Schröder, a senior fellow in the Environment and Society program at the Chatham House think-tank in London.

"Toxic chemicals needed to separate the minerals out from the rock, so that can be highly polluting and further downstream as well, the processing," Schröder said. Plus, rare earths are often found alongside radioactive uranium.

Besides the unforgiving climate that encases much of Greenland under layers of ice and freezes the northern fjords for much of the year, the rare earths found there tend to be encased in a complex type of rock called eudialyte, and no one has ever developed a profitable process to extract rare earths from that type of rock. Elsewhere, these elements are normally found in different rock formation called carbonatites, and there are proven methods to work with that.

"If we're in a race for resources — for critical minerals — then we should be focusing on the resources that are most easily able to get to market," said David Abraham, a rare earths expert who has followed the industry for decades and wrote the book "The Elements of Power."

This week, Critical Metals' stock price more than doubled after it said it plans to build a pilot plant in Greenland this year. But that company and more than a dozen others exploring deposits on the island remain far away from actually building a mine and would still need to raise at least hundreds of millions of dollars.

Producing rare earths is a tough business

Even the most promising projects can struggle to turn a profit, particularly when China resorts to dumping extra materials onto the market to depress prices and drive competitors out of business as it has done many times in the past. And currently most critical minerals have to be processed in China.

The U.S. is scrambling to expand the supply of rare earths outside of China during the one-year reprieve from even tougher restrictions that Trump said Xi Jinping agreed to in October. A number of companies around the world are already producing rare earths or magnets and can deliver more quickly than anything in Greenland, which Trump has threatened to seize with military power if Denmark doesn't agree to sell it.

"Everybody's just been running to get to this endpoint. And if you go to Greenland, it's like you're going back to the beginning," said Ian Lange, an economics professor who focuses on rare earths at the Colorado School of Mines.

Focusing on more promising projects elsewhere

Many in the industry, too, think America should focus on helping proven companies instead of trying to build new rare earth mines in Greenland, Ukraine, Africa or elsewhere. A number of other mining projects in the U.S. and friendly nations like Australia are farther along and in much more accessible locations.

The U.S. government has invested directly in the company that runs the only rare earths mine in the U.S., MP Materials, and a lithium miner and a company that recycles batteries and other products with rare earths.

Scott Dunn, CEO of Noveon Magnetics, said those investments should do more to reduce China's leverage, but it's hard to change the math quickly when more than 90% of the world's rare earths come from China.

"There are very few folks that can rely on a track record for delivering anything in each of these instances, and that obviously should be where we start, and especially in my view if you're the U.S. government," said Dunn, whose company is already producing more than 2,000 metric tons of magnets each year at a plant in Texas from elements it gets outside of China.

Milan's Catholic archdiocese brings Olympic values into parish life

By MARÍA TERESA HERNÁNDEZ Associated Press

Milan's Catholic leaders faced a choice when the city was selected to host the 2026 Winter Olympics.

They could passively wait for the event to unfold or immediately bring the Olympic spirit into their pastoral work. They chose the latter.

"We believe that the Olympics represent a great educational opportunity in the meanings they will carry," wrote Milan's Archbishop Mario Delpini in a letter following the launch of a program aimed at promoting Olympic values among young people.

The Ora Sport on Fire Tour has been underway since late 2022, with new activities led by the archdiocese planned during the Games.

"The city as an Olympic village is a metaphor to say that relationships are shaped by competing in mutual esteem," Delpini added.

In Italy, a country shaped by Catholic tradition, the Ora Sport on Fire Tour operates in parish youth centers and schools. It was developed by the Milan archdiocese's sports and youth outreach offices, in collaboration with its school pastoral services.

According to the Rev. Stefano Guidi, who heads the archdiocese's Service for Oratories and Sport, both the program and the activities that will run during the Games aim to make a specific contribution by highlighting the inclusive and social aspects of sport.

"We hope that these values will help young people in our city grow," he said.

Turning Olympic values into action

The first step in shaping the Ora Sport on Fire Tour was studying the Olympic Charter, the founding document of the Olympic movement.

Faith leaders in Milan then rooted their project in the cultural values of the event. Through sporting events, contests and workshops, themes such as human rights and peace have been promoted.

These are hosted in Christian-inspired schools and oratories, parish spaces that are turned over to afterschool activities for young people, including sports and Catholic catechism classes.

Among its activities ahead of the Winter Olympics, the archdiocese has also hosted encounters between religious leaders, athletes and young people.

During one of the early events tied to the program's rollout, Paralympic swimmer Arianna Talamona shared how being an athlete is both an honor and a responsibility.

"One thing I often feel like saying when I go into schools and meet students is to be patient and to have very clear ideas about their passions," said Talamona during the encounter, which was streamed on the

archdiocese's channels. "And if they have dreams and passions, it's important to cultivate them."

A traveling torch

The Ora Sport On Fire Tour has its own Olympic torch. It's a symbolic path to bring the Games' spirit to participating institutions.

The torch has traveled throughout the territories of the diocese, visiting two pastoral zones per year. As each deanery welcomed it, gatherings, prayer and talks on Olympic values were held.

Oratories in towns such as Tradate, in northern Italy, posted on social media how children and adolescents transported the torch and reflected on its meaning.

In other cities, such as Gallarate, sports activities were focused on inclusion. They taught youths how to recognize and respect differences and diverse abilities.

The approach has been a constant of the program since its beginnings. To mark the launch of the third year of the Ora Sport On Fire Tour, Paralympic swimmer Alberto Amodeo appeared as a guest at a diocesan sports gathering in Abbiategrosso.

He recalled his achievements in both the Tokyo and Paris Paralympics, underlining how the Games bring together athletes of different ethnicities.

"These are beautiful results that will remain forever in my heart," Amodeo said.

A broader mission

The initiatives implemented during the Ora Sport On Fire Tour changed from one deanery to another. Some hosted sports-themed plays overseen by a professional theater company. Others organized film forums or large-scale sports activities.

All remain tied to the upcoming Olympics. Yet sports have long been key to the archdiocese's pastoral outreach to youths even before Italy was chosen to host the Winter Games.

According to Guidi, there are about 1,000 oratories in Milan's diocese. Practically all of them have a sports club that carries out activities. "Some even reach 100 years of history," he said. "For many kids, adolescents and families, this is their only possibility to practice sports."

He added that most activities are offered at low cost, mainly thanks to volunteer work.

Throughout the diocese's sport-related programs, three aspects remain key: conveying how sport helps develop the physical abilities of each person, how it supports socialization and how it develops respect for one's opponent.

"It therefore proposes a kind of growth that has the meaning of constant training of oneself and of one's relationships," Guidi said. "And the possibility of learning from one's mistakes."

Myanmar holds second round of voting in first general election since military takeover

YANGON (AP) — Myanmar began a second round of voting Sunday in the country's first general election since a takeover that installed a military government five years ago.

Voting expanded to additional townships including some areas affected by the civil war between the military government and its armed opponents.

Polling stations opened at 6 a.m. local time in 100 townships across the country, including parts of Sagaing, Magway, Mandalay, Bago and Tanintharyi regions, as well as Mon, Shan, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states. Many of those areas have seen clashes in recent months or remain under heightened security, underscoring the risks surrounding the vote.

The election is being held in three phases due to armed conflicts. The first round took place Dec. 28 in 102 of the country's total 330 townships. A final round is scheduled for Jan. 25, though 65 townships will not take part because of fighting.

Myanmar has a two-house national legislature, totaling 664 seats. The party with a combined parliamentary majority can select the new president, who can name a Cabinet and form a new government. The military automatically receives 25% of seats in each house under the constitution.

Critics say the polls organized by the military government are neither free nor fair and are an effort by

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the military to legitimize its rule after seizing power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021.

Polls see mixed turnout

On Sunday, people in Yangon, the country's largest city, and Mandalay, the second-largest, were casting their ballots at high schools, government buildings and religious buildings.

At more than 10 polling stations visited by Associated Press journalists in Yangon and Mandalay, voter numbers ranged from about 150 at the busiest site to just a few at others, appearing lower than during the 2020 election when long lines were common.

The military government said there were more than 24 million eligible voters in the election, about 35% fewer than the 2020 election. The government called the turnout a success, claiming ballots were cast by more than 6 million people, about 52% of the more than 11 million eligible voters in the election's first phase.

Myo Aung, a chief minister of the Mandalay region, said more people turned out Sunday to vote than in the first phase.

"The weaknesses from Dec. 28 vote have been addressed, so I believe the January 11 election to be well organized and successful," Myo Aung said.

Maung Maung Naing, who voted at a polling station in Mandalay's Mahar Aung Myay township, said he wanted a government that will benefit the people.

"I only like a government that can make everything better for livelihoods and social welfare," he said.

Sandar Min, an independent candidate from Yangon's Latha township, said she decided to contest the election despite criticism because she wants to work with the government for the good of the country. She hopes the vote will bring change that reduces suffering.

"We want the country to be nonviolent. We do not accept violence as part of the change of the country," Sandar Min said after casting a vote. "We care deeply about the people of this country. We want to make a change that does not cause harm for the people."

Military-backed party favored

While more than 4,800 candidates from 57 parties are competing for seats in national and regional legislatures, only six parties are competing nationwide with the possibility of gaining political clout in parliament.

The first phase left the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party, or USDP, in a dominant position, winning nearly 90% of those contested seats in that phase in Pyithu Hluttaw, the lower house of parliament. It also won a majority of seats in regional legislatures.

Suu Kyi, Myanmar's 80-year-old former leader, and her party aren't participating in the polls. She is serving a 27-year prison term on charges widely viewed as spurious and politically motivated. Her party, the National League for Democracy, was dissolved in 2023 after refusing to register under new military rules.

Other parties also refused to register or declined to run under conditions they deem unfair, while opposition groups have called for a voter boycott.

Vote labeled as a sham

Tom Andrews, a special rapporteur working with the U.N. human rights office, urged the international community Thursday to reject what he called a "sham election," saying the first round exposed coercion, violence and political exclusion.

"You cannot have a free, fair or credible election when thousands of political prisoners are behind bars, credible opposition parties have been dissolved, journalists are muzzled, and fundamental freedoms are crushed," Andrews said.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which keeps detailed tallies of arrests and casualties linked to the nation's political conflicts, more than 22,000 people are detained for political offenses, and more than 7,600 civilians have been killed by security forces since 2021.

The army's takeover triggered widespread peaceful protests that soon erupted into armed resistance, and the country slipped into a civil war.

A new Election Protection Law imposes harsh penalties and restrictions for virtually all public criticism

of the polls. The authorities have charged more than 330 people under new electoral law for leafleting or online activity over the past few months.

There were no reports of major interference with the polls on Sunday, though opposition organizations and armed resistance groups had vowed to disrupt the electoral process. During the first phase, attacks were reported in 11 of the 102 townships holding polls, according to the military government.

Caleb Williams rallies Bears from 18 points down for 31-27 playoff win over rival Packers

By ANDREW SELIGMAN AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Caleb Williams dropped back, pump-faked and found DJ Moore wide open down the sideline for the go-ahead touchdown.

His latest clutch throw propelled the Chicago Bears to yet another improbable comeback win and kept their breakout season going for at least another round of the postseason.

Williams came through in his playoff debut, throwing a 25-yard touchdown pass to Moore with 1:43 remaining, and the Chicago Bears rallied from an 18-point deficit to beat the rival Green Bay Packers 31-27 in a wild-card game on Saturday night.

The NFC North champion Bears (12-6) extended their resurgent first season under coach Ben Johnson with their seventh fourth-quarter comeback victory. They split two down-to-the-wire games with Green Bay in the regular season, and this one turned out to be a thriller when it looked like it would be a breeze for the Packers (9-8-1).

Chicago trailed 21-3 at halftime and 21-6 through three quarters, only to outscore Green Bay 25-6 in the fourth on the way to its first playoff win in 15 years.

"True belief," Williams said. "Belief. That's all you need. You got belief in the coaches that they're gonna call the right play at the right time. You got belief in the players on the field that you're gonna make the right play at the right time."

After Williams connected with Moore to give the Bears their first lead since it was 3-0, Jordan Love led Green Bay into Chicago territory. But on third down at the 28, he dropped the snap, scrambled and heaved a pass to the end zone with no time left. Jaquan Brisker deflected the ball, setting off a wild celebration — and a curt handshake between Johnson and Packers coach Matt LaFleur.

The Bears will host a divisional-round game next weekend.

"We just keep plugging along," Johnson said. "We keep fighting. We've been proving that this year. That's who we are, that's what we do."

Chicago pulled within 21-16 on D'Andre Swift's 5-yard run early in the fourth quarter. The Packers responded, with rookie Matthew Golden breaking three tackles and leapfrogging a fourth defender on a 23-yard catch-and-run for his first career touchdown, making it 27-16. Brandon McManus missed the extra point wide left.

The Bears went 76 yards, with Williams throwing an 8-yard touchdown pass to Olamide Zaccheaus and hitting rookie Colston Loveland for the 2-point conversion to make it 27-24 with 4:18 remaining.

The Packers then drove to the Chicago 21, only to come away with nothing when McManus missed wide right on a 44-yard field goal attempt. The Bears responded with the go-ahead touchdown drive and hung on for their first playoff win since the 2010 team beat Seattle in the divisional round at Soldier Field. They had lost three straight in the postseason, starting with a loss to Aaron Rodgers and the Packers in the NFC championship game that season.

Green Bay dominated Chicago for years. But the momentum in the NFL's longest-running rivalry seems to be turning, with the Bears beating the Packers for the third time in the past five games.

"We're here and I'm going to be here for a while, is my plan," Williams said. "Be in a bunch of games, be in these moments and come out victorious. That's the mindset for right now this year. That's also the mindset for the future."

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The Bears envisioned nights like this when they drafted Williams No. 1 overall last year, and when they hired Johnson in the offseason. Williams delivered after a shaky start, throwing for 361 yards and the two late touchdowns. He completed 24 of 48 passes and was intercepted twice.

Loveland caught eight passes for a career-high 137 yards for the Bears, who had closed the regular season with tight losses to San Francisco and Detroit.

The Packers dropped their final five games. That certainly was not what they envisioned when they acquired star pass rusher Micah Parsons from Dallas in late August and sent expectations soaring. The two-time All-Pro suffered a season-ending knee injury in a Week 15 loss at Denver, and the defense struggled without him.

"I know we fought through a lot of adversity this year," coach Matt LaFleur said. "Unfortunately we didn't do enough to overcome that adversity. That's all of us collectively. We've got to do more."

Love threw for 323 yards and four touchdowns after missing the final two regular-season games. He hadn't played since a helmet-to-helmet hit from Chicago's Austin Booker in the second quarter of a Week 16 loss at Soldier Field.

Romeo Doubs, Christian Watson and Jayden Reed each had TD catches in the first half. Ty'Ron Hopper stopped a threat in the third quarter when he intercepted a backpedaling Williams near the goal line.

"I don't think it's we don't have the composure, I think it's just the situation we put ourselves in," Love said. "Jumping out to a lead and doing what we wanted in the first half and then the second half kind of a completely different story. I think for any team that's going to be frustrating, and you've got to find ways to be able to overcome that and get back to it. I think we did, but it was just a little too late."

Injuries

Packers: RT Zach Tom (knee) was inactive after missing the Packers' final three regular-season games. ... Backup OL Jacob Monk (biceps) left the game in the first half.

Bears: Johnson said LB T.J. Edwards (broken left fibula) is out for the remainder of the season, and LT Ozzy Trapilo (knee) likely is, too. Edwards was carted off the field in the second quarter after his left foot got caught up with the leg of Watson and bent awkwardly. He was fitted with an air cast before he was taken away. Trapilo was hurt blocking on a pass play on the go-ahead drive. ... CB Kyler Gordon (groin) was activated from injured reserve after being sidelined since Week 13.

Up next

Packers: Start the offseason.

Bears: Host a divisional-round game against either the Los Angeles Rams or Philadelphia. The Eagles play San Francisco on Sunday, and the Rams knocked out Carolina on Saturday.

Millions of Venezuelans scattered across Latin America cautiously watch what comes next

By FRANKLIN BRICEÑO, MARÍA VERZA and NAYARA BATSCHKE Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Almost immediately after U.S. forces deposed Venezuela's president, officials from Washington to Lima, Peru, began encouraging some of the 8 million Venezuelans who have scattered themselves across the Americas over more than a decade to go home. But that idea had not even crossed the mind of Yanelis Torres.

The 22-year-old graphic designer was too busy printing T-shirts with images of captured former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro overlaid with phrases like "Game Over." Her clients in Lima's largest textile market were snatching them up within hours of the news of Maduro's downfall.

Settled or undocumented, many of the millions of Venezuelans spread across Latin America received news of Maduro's capture with joy but also caution, especially after hearing U.S. President Donald Trump say that he would work with Maduro's vice president, now interim President Delcy Rodríguez, rather than the opposition.

Despite leaders in Peru and Chile echoing U.S. suggestions to return to Venezuela, the diaspora does not appear ready to do so. Venezuela's economy remains a shambles and with the exception of Maduro

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and his wife, the government remains in place.

"I have a lot of things here," Torres said from her shop in a bustling Lima neighborhood, adding it would take time for things to change in Venezuela. "You've got to keep an eye on it, know what's going on, but not lose hope."

Crisis scatters a people

There are nearly 7 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Latin America. Colombia tops the list with 2.8 million, followed by Peru with 1.5 million. A further estimated 1 million are in the United States, according to the most recent data from R4V, a network tracking the diaspora and coordinated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration.

They were driven out by compounding political and economic crises. An estimated 8 in 10 people in Venezuela live in poverty in a country that was once one of Latin America's wealthiest, with the world's largest proven oil reserves.

Some have found work or started small businesses, while others tried to reach the U.S. or bounced from country to country. Over the past year, thousands have been deported to Venezuela or third countries and many more could be near the end of their protected status in the U.S.

Eduardo Constante, 36, left Venezuela in 2017 in the middle of a "hunger crisis."

Speaking from a migrant shelter in the northern Mexican city of Monterrey, he recalled his journey. He had spent three months in Colombia, a country overwhelmed by the numbers of arriving Venezuelans; three years in Peru, which he left during the pandemic because they wouldn't give him the vaccine; and then three more years in Chile, where he was unable to legalize his status.

Finally he made the long trek through South America, the Darien jungle and up to the U.S. border just in time for Trump to close it to asylum seekers.

"I had plans in Europe, but if things settle down in Venezuela, I'm going to Venezuela," he said. His joy at Maduro's ouster was moderated by the worries of the family he still has there over food scarcity and security forces that search people's cellphones for signs of opposition, he said.

Maureen Meyer, vice president for programs at WOLA, a Washington-based human rights organization focused on Latin America, said "we're nowhere near where we're going to have a country where people that fled ... feel that they could be comfortable returning."

And if Venezuelans are forced to leave the countries where they are now, either under pressure or via deportation, they will be even more vulnerable to organized crime groups in the region seeking to exploit them now that the business of smuggling them north has dropped off.

Yohanisleska de Nazareth Márquez, a 22-year-old Venezuelan, heard of Maduro's capture while riding across Mexico on a bus with her 3-year-old.

They had left Venezuela in February 2024 and turned themselves in to U.S. Border Patrol that June. She was picked up by U.S. immigration agents in Pennsylvania last year and deported to Mexico with her son on Jan. 1.

They were headed with other deportees to the southern state of Tabasco when she heard about Maduro. "We all shouted with joy ... it was what we all wanted," she said.

Still getting her bearings, Márquez planned to apply for asylum in Mexico and try to find work but she is worried. She doesn't know how long they will be allowed to stay in the shelter and she heard about kidnappings in the area.

"I'm afraid of being out on the street with my son alone. It's a bit dangerous here," she said.

Meyer said forces were building to create a "perfect storm" for Venezuelans like Márquez who found themselves outside their country and without legal status.

Turning political tide

Their prospects are not looking good.

In Chile, ultra-conservative President-elect José Antonio Kast, who will take office in March, made deporting hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants central to his campaign. This week, Kast said "they have 63 days left to leave our country and to have the possibility of returning with all of their papers in order."

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Peru and Colombia are also scheduled to elect new presidents this year, and immigration will be a focus. This week, Kast met with Peru's interim President José Jerí, and among the ideas that both men have mentioned is creating some sort of humanitarian corridor passing through Chile, Peru and Ecuador to make it easier for Venezuelans to return home.

"Some of these big host countries, how they decide to respond to the population that are already in their countries and those that may come will be key," Meyer said.

In Santiago, in the eight-block "little Caracas," initial celebrations with car horns, shouts and reggaeton music, had calmed.

Alexander Leal, 66, who arrived with his wife in 2018, expressed hope as he sold homemade ice cream in the southern hemisphere summer. His family is scattered across the globe, some in the United States, others in Europe and four siblings still in Venezuela. He dreams of returning one day.

"It won't be this year, but maybe it will be next year," he said. "That is everyone's aspiration, that the country is fixed." He said Trump's help would be necessary.

Yessica Mendoza, a 27-year-old Uber driver and mother, knows that she is one of the thousands of undocumented immigrants in Kast's sights, but she plans stick it out. "Returning is not an option."

Moderating hope

Venezuela's neighbor, Colombia, has received more Venezuelans than any other country and has largely been applauded for its efforts to help them settle, like an offer of 10-year residency permits.

A close security ally of the United States, Colombia is navigating a tense moment in its relationship with the U.S. under President Gustavo Petro, who has sparred with Trump and at times been the target of his ire.

Ángel Bruges, a 54-year-old Venezuelan who has lived in Bogota for six years with his wife and daughter and runs an empanada business there, expressed gratitude for Colombia's hospitality. He said he did not celebrate Maduro's capture and is well aware of the fear his relatives still in Venezuela live with. "Returning would be crazy," he said.

Back in Peru, Torres, the graphic designer, was measuring her expectations.

It has been four years since she left Venezuela. She hoped for the possibility of returning for long visits with her family there some day. But for now, she talks of how "marvelous" Peru is as she fields orders for more T-shirts featuring her country's deposed president, telling people that if she does not have what they want, she will make it.

The Golden Globes are tonight. Here's what to look for and how to watch and stream the show

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

The Golden Globes bill themselves as Hollywood's booziest bash. This year, is anyone ready to party?

Political tension and industrywide uncertainty are the prevailing moods heading into Sunday night's 83rd Golden Globes. Hollywood is coming off a disappointing box-office year and now anxiously awaits the fate of one of its most storied studios, Warner Bros.

A celebratory mood might be even more elusive given that the wide majority of the performers and filmmakers congregating at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California, oppose the policies of President Donald Trump. Likely to be on the minds of many attendees: the recent U.S. involvement in Venezuela and the fatal shooting of 37-year-old mother Renee Good in Minneapolis by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

But through their ups and downs, the Globes have always tried to put pomp over politics. Host Nikki Glaser has vowed as much.

"You'd be surprised that half the room had no clue why I was saying 'Venezuela,'" Glaser told The Associated Press earlier in the week, referring to her comedy-club warm-ups. "People aren't getting the news like we all are."

Glaser, a comic known for her roast appearances, has promised to go after A-listers in her second time hosting.

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"We're going to hit Leo," Glaser said. "The icebergs are coming."

Here's what to look for at this year's Globes:

How to watch and stream the Globes and red carpet

The Golden Globes kick off at 8 p.m. EST on CBS while streaming live for Paramount+ premium subscribers. E!'s red carpet coverage begins at 6 p.m. EST.

The Associated Press will have a livestream show beginning at 4:30 p.m. Eastern with a mix of stars' arrivals, fashion shots and celebrity interviews. It will be available on YouTube and APNews.

Could Warner Bros. own the night if not itself?

The overwhelming Oscar favorite "One Battle After Another" comes in with a leading nine nominations. It's competing in the Globes' musical or comedy category, which means the drama side might be more competitive. There, Ryan Coogler's "Sinners," Chloé Zhao's "Hamnet" and Joachim Trier's "Sentimental Value" are all in the mix.

But thus far, "One Battle After Another" has cleaned up just about everywhere. Much of Paul Thomas Anderson's cast is nominated, including DiCaprio, Teyana Taylor, Sean Penn, Chase Infiniti and Benicio Del Toro.

If it and "Sinners" take home the two biggest prizes, it will be a banner night for Warner Bros. even as its future hangs in the balance. The studio has agreed to be acquired by Netflix in a deal worth \$82.7 billion. Movie theaters have warned such a result would be "a direct and irreversible negative impact on movie theaters around the world."

The merger awaits regulatory approval, while Paramount Skydance is still trying to convince Warner shareholders to accept its rival offer.

How might the top acting awards go?

After an audacious promotional tour for "Marty Supreme," Timothée Chalamet is poised to win his first Globe in five nominations. In best actor, comedy or musical, he'll have to beat DiCaprio, a three-time Globe winner, and Ethan Hawke ("Blue Moon").

In best actress, comedy or musical, Rose Byrne is the favorite for her performance in the not especially funny A24 indie "If I Had Legs I'd Kick You." One prominent nominee in the category, Cynthia Erivo ("Wicked: For Good"), won't be attending due to her schedule in the West End production "Dracula."

Jessie Buckley ("Hamnet") is the clear front-runner in best actress, drama. In the star-studded best actor, drama, category, the Brazilian actor Wagner Moura ("The Secret Agent") may win over Michael B. Jordan ("Sinners") and Joel Edgerton ("Train Dreams").

In the supporting categories, Teyana Taylor and Stellan Skarsgård come in the favorites.

Who'll give the most memorable speech?

The Globes, formerly presented by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, have no overlap or direct correlation with the Academy Awards. After being sold in 2023 to Todd Boehly's Eldridge Industries and Dick Clark Productions, a part of Penske Media, the Globes are voted on by around 400 people. The Oscars are voted on by more than 10,500 professionals.

But in the fluctuating undulations of awards season, a good speech at the Globes can really boost an Oscar campaign. Last year, that seemed to be the case for Demi Moore, who won for "The Substance" and gave the night's most emotional speech. Mikey Madison ("Anora"), however, scored the upset win at the Oscars.

A few potentially good moments this year went instead in a Golden Eve ceremony earlier this week. There, the Cecil B. DeMille and Carol Burnett honorees, Helen Mirren and Sarah Jessica Parker, accepted their awards.

One to watch, if he wins, will be the Iranian director Jafar Panahi. His revenge drama "It Was Just an Accident" is up for four awards. Panahi has spent most of his career making films clandestinely, without approval of authorities, and was until recently banned from leaving the country. Last month, he was sentenced to a year in prison, which would be only his latest stint behind bars if Panahi returns home to serve it. This week, protests over Iran's ailing economy have spread throughout the country in a new test to Iran's leaders.

What to look for in the TV and podcast categories

For the first time, the Globes are trotting out a new podcast category. The nominees are: "Armchair Expert," "Call Her Daddy," "Good Hang With Amy Poehler," "The Mel Robbins Podcast," "SmartLess" and "Up First."

In TV, HBO Max's "The White Lotus" — another potential big winner for Warner Bros. — leads with six nominations. Netflix's "Adolescence" comes in with five nods.

But the most closely watched nominee might be "The Studio." The first season of Seth Rogen's Hollywood satire memorably included an episode devoted to drama around a night at the Globes. (Sample line: "I remember when the red carpet of the Golden Globes actually stood for something.") "The Studio" is up for three awards, giving three chances for life to imitate art.

Stafford's late TD pass to Parkinson lifts the Rams past the Panthers 34-31 in tense playoff opener

By STEVE REED AP Sports Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Puka Nacua stepped into the huddle with the Los Angeles Rams trailing by four with 2:38 left, the home crowd roaring and his team's season on the line.

He never thought twice about losing.

"Never a doubt — No. 9 is with us," Nacua said with a wide smile in reference to the team's 37-year-old All-Pro quarterback, Matthew Stafford.

Stafford calmly led the Rams 71 yards by completing 6 of 7 passes — the only incompleteness coming on a drop by Davante Adams — before capping it with a perfectly-placed 19-yard touchdown pass to Colby Parkinson with 38 seconds left, lifting the Rams to a dramatic, come-from-behind 34-31 win over the Carolina Panthers in the opening game of the NFL playoffs on Saturday.

Stafford finished 24 of 42 for 304 yards with three touchdown passes and an interception, while Nacua had 10 receptions for 111 yards and two total touchdowns as the Rams (13-5), who were 10 1/2-point favorites, advanced to the divisional round.

"You see him out there, he just has the best composure of anyone I have ever seen," Parkinson said. "He knows that we are going to go make it happen and we completely trust him. ... I knew he was going to have to throw a back-shoulder ball — and that was a perfect ball. Like perfect. It couldn't have been placed any better."

Stafford credited his calmness to his 17 years of NFL experience.

"I have been in that spot a lot in my life — and I love that spot," Stafford said. "I would rather be me having to go out there with our offense and do it then watch from the sideline. You can make it stressful or you can make it calm and collected, and think the latter is what we were today."

Bryce Young threw for 264 yards and a touchdown and ran for another score for Carolina (8-10), which finished its second season under coach Dave Canales by losing four of its final five games.

Jalen Coker had career highs with nine receptions for 134 yards with a touchdown and Chuba Hubbard ran for 46 yards and two touchdowns as the Panthers lost in their first playoff appearance since the 2017 season.

"There is such a mix of emotions right now in the locker room, from guys being proud of what we accomplished and where we got, to being sick about the opportunity that was right there in front of us," Canales said. "And that is going to sting."

The Panthers, who beat the Rams 31-28 on this same field six weeks ago, fell behind 14-0 early but stormed back to take a 24-20 lead on Hubbard's second touchdown of the run game early in the fourth quarter.

Stafford, who was selected as an All-Pro earlier in the day, led the Rams back down on the field and found Kyren Williams for a 13-yard touchdown to regain the lead.

Los Angeles appeared to be in charge after getting a stop on defense, giving Stafford the ball back.

But a holding penalty put the Rams behind the sticks and forced a punt, which Isaiah Simmons blocked

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to set the Panthers up the Rams 30.

Four plays later, Young found Coker in the left corner of the end zone for a 7-yard touchdown to give Carolina a 31-27 lead with 2:39 left, sending the crowd into a frenzy.

But the celebrations quickly turned to silence after Stafford gave the Rams the lead again.

Carolina's last attempt to move into field-goal range ended when Jimmy Horn dropped a fourth-down pass from Young.

"Yeah, total team effort," said Stafford, a leading candidate for league MVP after leading the league in yards passing and touchdowns. "Obviously had some mistakes along the way. I turned it over, we had a punt blocked, didn't score before the half when we probably should have. So, a lot to clean up, but found a way to win it late."

Carolina was hoping the return of former quarterback Cam Newton to Bank of America Stadium to hit the "Keep Pounding" drum before the game would give the Panthers a little extra mojo early, but things didn't start well.

After the Rams' defense came up with a stop on fourth down at midfield on Carolina's opening drive, Stafford quickly moved the offense downfield and found Nacua for a 14-yard touchdown over the middle for a 7-0 lead.

Nacua made it 14-0 on a 5-yard run following Young's interception.

Carolina cut the lead 17-14 at halftime after a 1-yard touchdown run by Hubbard and a 16-yard scramble by Young, the second-longest TD run of his career.

The Rams had a chance to build on the lead, but Nacua dropped a potential third TD on a pass down the right sideline from Stafford just before halftime.

Rams coach Sean McVay admitted it wasn't his team's best effort and there is plenty to clean up this week.

"We are going to need to be able to play better if we expected to advance," McVay said.

But Rams defensive lineman Kobie Turner said rectifying those mistakes is something that can be addressed on Sunday.

"There are no style points in the playoffs," Turner said. "It's all about survive and advance."

Stafford sets Rams mark

Stafford surpassed Kurt Warner for the most postseason passing yards and completions in Rams history.

Up next

Rams: Await their opponent in the divisional round.

Panthers: Season over.

Grateful Dead founding member Bob Weir dies at 78

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Bob Weir, the guitarist and singer who as an essential member of the Grateful Dead helped found the sound of the San Francisco counterculture of the 1960s and kept it alive through decades of endless tours and marathon jams, has died. He was 78.

Weir's death was announced Saturday in a statement on his Instagram page.

"It is with profound sadness that we share the passing of Bobby Weir," a statement on his Instagram posted Saturday said. "He transitioned peacefully, surrounded by loved ones, after courageously beating cancer as only Bobby could. Unfortunately, he succumbed to underlying lung issues."

The statement did not say where or when Weir died, but he lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for most of his life.

Weir joined the Grateful Dead — originally the Warlocks — in 1965 in San Francisco at just 17 years old. He would spend the next 30 years playing on endless tours with the Grateful Dead alongside fellow singer and guitarist Jerry Garcia, who died in 1995.

Weir wrote or co-wrote and sang lead vocals on Dead classics including "Sugar Magnolia," "One More Saturday Night" and "Mexicali Blues."

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After Garcia's death, he would be the Dead's most recognizable face. In the decades since, he kept playing with other projects that kept alive the band's music and legendary fan base, including Dead & Company.

"For over sixty years, Bobby took to the road," the Instagram statement said. "A guitarist, vocalist, storyteller, and founding member of the Grateful Dead. Bobby will forever be a guiding force whose unique artistry reshaped American music."

Weir's death leaves drummer Bill Kreutzmann as the only surviving original member. Founding bassist Phil Lesh died in 2024. The band's other drummer, Mickey Hart, practically an original member since joining in 1967, is also alive at 82. The fifth founding member, Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, died in 1973.

Dead and Company played a series of concerts for the Grateful Dead's 60th anniversary in July at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, drawing some 60,000 fans a day for three days.

Born in San Francisco and raised in nearby Atherton, Weir was the Dead's youngest member and looked like a fresh-faced high-schooler in its early years. He was generally less shaggy than the rest of the band, but he had a long beard like Garcia's in later years.

The band would survive long past the hippie moment of its birth, with its ultra-devoted fans known as Deadheads often following them on the road in a virtually non-stop tour that persisted despite decades of music and culture shifting around them.

"Longevity was never a major concern of ours," Weir said when the Dead got the Grammys' MusiCares Person of the Year honor last year. "Spreading joy through the music was all we ever really had in mind, and we got plenty of that done."

Ubiquitous bumper stickers and T-shirts showed the band's skull logo, the dancing, colored bears that served as their other symbol, and signature phrases like "ain't no time to hate" and "not all who wander are lost."

The Dead won few actual Grammys during their career — they were always a little too esoteric — getting only a lifetime achievement award in 2007 and the best music film award in 2018.

Just as rare were hit pop singles. "Touch of Grey," the 1987 song that brought a big surge in the aging band's popularity, was their only Billboard Top 10 hit.

But in 2024, they set a record for all artists with their 59th album in Billboard's Top 40. Forty-one of those came since 2012, thanks to the popularity of the series of archival albums compiled by David Lemieux.

Their music — called acid rock at its inception — would pull in blues, jazz, country, folk and psychedelia in long improvisational jams at their concerts.

"I venture to say they are the great American band," TV personality and devoted Deadhead Andy Cohen said as host of the MusiCares event. "What a wonder they are."

Death toll in violence surrounding protests challenging Iran's theocracy reaches 116, activists say

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Nationwide protests challenging Iran's theocracy reached the two-week mark Sunday, as the death toll in violence surrounding the demonstrations reached at least 116 people killed, activists said.

With the internet down in Iran and phone lines cut off, gauging the demonstrations from abroad has grown more difficult. But the death toll in the protests has grown to at least 116 and over 2,600 others detained, according to the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency. The agency has been accurate in multiple rounds of previous unrest in Iran.

Iranian state TV is reporting on security force casualties while portraying control over the nation, without discussing dead demonstrators, whom it increasingly refers to as "terrorists." However, it also acknowledged protests went on into Sunday morning, with demonstrations in Tehran and in the holy city of Mashhad to the northeast.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has signaled a coming clampdown, despite U.S. warnings. Tehran escalated its threats Saturday, with the Iran's attorney general, Mohammad Movahedi Azad, warning

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that anyone taking part in protests will be considered an "enemy of God," a death-penalty charge. The statement carried by Iranian state television said even those who "helped rioters" would face the charge.

"Prosecutors must carefully and without delay, by issuing indictments, prepare the grounds for the trial and decisive confrontation with those who, by betraying the nation and creating insecurity, seek foreign domination over the country," the statement read. "Proceedings must be conducted without leniency, compassion or indulgence."

U.S. President Donald Trump offered support for the protesters, saying on social media that "Iran is looking at FREEDOM, perhaps like never before. The USA stands ready to help!!!" The New York Times and Wall Street Journal, reporting citing anonymous U.S. officials, said on Saturday night that Trump had been given military options for a strike on Iran, but hadn't made a final decision.

The State Department separately warned: "Do not play games with President Trump. When he says he'll do something, he means it."

State TV split-screen highlights Iran's challenge

Saturday marked the start of the work week in Iran, but many schools and universities reportedly held online classes, Iranian state TV reported. Internal Iranian government websites are believed to be functioning.

State TV repeatedly played a driving, martial orchestral arrangement from the "Epic of Khorramshahr" by Iranian composer Majid Entezami, while showing pro-government demonstrations. The song, aired repeatedly during the 12-day war launched by Israel, honors Iran's 1982 liberation of the city of Khorramshahr during the Iran-Iraq war. It has been used in videos of protesting women cutting away their hair to protest the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini as well.

It also repeatedly aired video of purported protesters shooting at security forces with firearms.

In one online video verified by The Associated Press, protesters demonstrated Friday in northern Tehran's Saadat Abad area, with what appeared to be thousands on the street.

"Death to Khamenei!" a man chanted.

The semiofficial Fars news agency, believed to be close to Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and one of the few media outlets able to publish to the outside world, released surveillance camera footage of what it said came from demonstrations in Isfahan. In it, a protester appeared to fire a long gun, while others set fires and threw gasoline bombs at what appeared to be a government compound.

The Young Journalists' Club, associated with state TV, reported that protesters killed three members of the Guard's all-volunteer Basij force in the city of Gachsaran. It also reported a security official was stabbed to death in Hamadan province, a police officer killed in the port city of Bandar Abbas and another in Gilan, as well as one person slain in Mashhad.

The semiofficial Tasnim news agency, also close to the Guard, claimed authorities detained nearly 200 people belonging to what it described as "operational terrorist teams." It alleged those arrested had weapons including firearms, grenades and gasoline bombs.

State television also aired footage of a funeral service attended by hundreds in Qom, a Shiite seminary city just south of Tehran.

More weekend demonstrations planned

Iran's theocracy cut off the nation from the internet and international telephone calls on Thursday, though it allowed some state-owned and semiofficial media to publish. Qatar's state-funded Al Jazeera news network reported live from Iran, but they appeared to be the only major foreign outlet able to work.

Iran's exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, who called for protests Thursday and Friday, asked in his latest message for demonstrators to take to the streets Saturday and Sunday. He urged protesters to carry Iran's old lion-and-sun flag and other national symbols used during the time of the shah to "claim public spaces as your own."

Pahlavi's support of and from Israel has drawn criticism in the past — particularly after the 12-day war. Demonstrators have shouted in support of the shah in some protests, but it isn't clear whether that's support for Pahlavi himself or a desire to return to a time before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

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Online video purported to show protests ongoing Saturday night as well.

The demonstrations began Dec. 28 over the collapse of the Iranian rial currency, which trades at over 1.4 million to \$1, as the country's economy is squeezed by international sanctions in part levied over its nuclear program. The protests intensified and grew into calls directly challenging Iran's theocracy.

Airlines have canceled some flights into Iran over the demonstrations. Austrian Airlines said Saturday it had decided to suspend its flights to Iran "as a precautionary measure" through Monday. Turkish Airlines earlier announced the cancellation of 17 flights to three cities in Iran.

Meanwhile, concern is growing that the internet shutdown will allow Iran's security forces to go on a bloody crackdown, as they have in other rounds of demonstrations. Ali Rahmani, the son of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi who is imprisoned in Iran, noted that security forces killed hundreds in a 2019 protest "so we can only fear the worst."

"They are fighting, and losing their lives, against a dictatorial regime," Rahmani said.

Anti-ICE protesters assemble across the US after shootings in Minneapolis and Portland, Oregon

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Thousands of people marched in Minneapolis on Saturday to protest the fatal shooting of a woman by a federal immigration officer there and the shooting of two people in Portland, Oregon. Minnesota leaders urged demonstrators to remain peaceful.

The protest was one of hundreds planned for towns and cities across the country over the weekend. It came in a city on edge since the killing of Renee Good on Wednesday by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer.

"We're all living in fear right now," said Meghan Moore, a mother of two from Minneapolis who joined the protest. "ICE is creating an environment where nobody feels safe and that's unacceptable."

On Friday night, a protest outside a Minneapolis hotel that attracted about 1,000 people turned violent as demonstrators threw ice, snow and rocks at officers, Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O'Hara said. One officer suffered minor injuries after being struck with a piece of ice, O'Hara said. Twenty-nine people were cited and released, he said.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey stressed that while most protests have been peaceful, those who cause damage to property or put others in danger will be arrested. He faulted "agitators that are trying to rile up large crowds."

"This is what Donald Trump wants," Frey said of the president who has demanded massive immigration enforcement efforts in several U.S. cities. "He wants us to take the bait."

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz echoed the call for peace.

"Trump sent thousands of armed federal officers into our state, and it took just one day for them to kill someone," Walz said on social media. "Now he wants nothing more than to see chaos distract from that horrific action. Don't give him what he wants."

"We will fight with peaceful expression, in court, through public debate, and at the ballot box. Keep the peace. And keep the faith," Walz said later in another post.

Communities unite in frustration

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security says its deployment of immigration officers in the Twin Cities is its biggest ever immigration enforcement operation. Trump's administration has said both shootings were acts of self-defense against drivers who "weaponized" their vehicles to attack officers.

Connor Maloney said he was attending the Minneapolis protest to support his community and because he's frustrated with the immigration crackdown.

"Almost daily I see them harassing people," he said. "It's just sickening that it's happening in our community around us."

He and other protesters, including children, braved subfreezing temperatures and a light dusting of snow, carrying handmade signs saying declaring, "De-ICE Minnesota!" and "ICE melts in Minnesota."

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They marched down a street that is home to restaurants and stores where various nationalities and cultures are celebrated in colorful murals.

Steven Eubanks, 51, said he felt compelled to attend a protest in Durham, North Carolina, because of the "horrifying" killing in Minneapolis.

"We can't allow it," Eubanks said. "We have to stand up."

Indivisible, a social movement organization that formed to resist the Trump administration, said hundreds of protests were scheduled in Texas, Kansas, New Mexico, Ohio, Florida and other states.

ICE activity across Minneapolis

In Minneapolis, a coalition of migrant rights groups organized the demonstration that began in a park about half a mile from the residential neighborhood where the 37-year-old Good was shot on Wednesday.

But the large protest apparently did not deter federal officers from operating in the city.

A couple of miles away, just as the demonstration began, an Associated Press photographer witnessed heavily armed officers — at least one in Border Patrol uniform — approach a person who had been following them. Two of the agents had long guns out when they ordered the person to stop following them, telling him it was his "first and final warning."

The agents eventually drove onto the interstate without detaining the driver.

In Richfield, a suburb of Minneapolis, federal agents with their faces covered pointed their fingers at journalists and warned them to stay away as they detained a man outside a home improvement store.

Protests held in the neighborhood have been largely peaceful, and in general there has been minimal law enforcement presence, in contrast to the violence that hit Minneapolis in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd in 2020. Near the airport, some confrontations erupted on Thursday and Friday between smaller groups of protesters and officers guarding the federal building used as a base for the Twin Cities crackdown.

O'Hara said city police officers have responded to calls about cars abandoned because their drivers have been apprehended by immigration enforcement. In one case, a car was left in park and a dog was left inside another.

He said immigration enforcement activities are happening "all over the city" and that 911 callers have been alerting authorities to ICE activity, arrests and abandoned vehicles.

The Trump administration has deployed thousands of federal officers to Minnesota under a sweeping new crackdown tied in part to allegations of fraud involving Somali residents. More than 2,000 officers were taking part.

Lawmakers snubbed

Three congresswomen from Minnesota attempted to tour the ICE facility in the Minneapolis federal building on in the morning and were initially allowed to enter but then told they had to leave about 10 minutes later.

U.S. Reps. Ilhan Omar, Kelly Morrison and Angie Craig accused ICE agents of obstructing members of Congress from fulfilling their duty to oversee operations there.

A federal judge last month temporarily blocked the Trump administration from enforcing policies that limit congressional visits to immigration facilities. The ruling stems from a lawsuit filed by 12 members of Congress who sued in Washington, D.C. to challenge ICE's amended visitor policies after they were denied entry to detention facilities.

6 people killed in Mississippi rampage, including 7-year-old girl. Suspect charged with murder

WEST POINT, Miss. (AP) — A 24-year-old Mississippi man killed six people — his father, brother, uncle, 7-year-old cousin, a church pastor and the pastor's brother — at three locations during a Friday night rampage in a rural area, authorities said.

Daricka M. Moore was arrested at a police roadblock in Cedarbluff just before midnight after dozens of local, state and federal officers flooded the northeast Mississippi area.

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Moore was being held without bail Saturday at the Clay County jail in West Point on murder charges and ahead of an expected initial appearance Monday before a judge.

Clay County District Attorney Scott Colom, who said he expects to pursue the death penalty, told The Associated Press that Moore would likely be appointed a public defender at that time.

If charges are upgraded to capital murder before then, Moore will be ineligible for bail under state law.

Clay County Sheriff Eddie Scott said at a Saturday news conference that evidence and witnesses indicate that Moore was the only shooter and no other injuries have been reported.

Investigators were continuing to interview Moore but do not currently know what may have motivated him, he added.

"A situation like this, you've got a family member attacking their own family," Scott said. "Whatever the reason is, we're hoping that we'll find out."

The shootings unfolded in an area of fields, woods and mostly modest homes about 125 miles (200 kilometers) northeast of Jackson.

Investigators believe Moore first killed his father, 67-year-old Glenn Moore, his brother, 33-year-old Quinton Moore and his uncle, 55-year-old Willie Ed Guines, at the family's mobile home on a dirt road in western Clay County.

The sheriff said Moore then stole his brother's truck and drove a few miles to a cousin's house, where he forced his way in and attempted to commit sexual battery. Scott said Moore then put a gun to the head of a 7-year-old girl, whom he declined to identify, and fatally shot her.

"I don't know what kind of motive you could have to kill a 7-year-old," he said.

Scott said that according to witnesses, Moore then placed a gun against a younger child's head, but she was not shot. It was not clear whether he did not pull the trigger or the gun misfired.

"That's how violent it was," Scott said.

The mother and a third child were also present, the sheriff said.

Moore then allegedly drove to a small white frame church, the Apostolic Church of The Lord Jesus. There, Scott said, he broke into a residence, killed the pastor and his brother and stole one of their vehicles.

Scott said the last two victims, the Rev. Barry Bradley and Samuel Bradley, lived most of the time in nearby Columbus but spent weekends on church grounds. Some Moore family members attend the church, Scott said.

Moore was caught at a roadblock at 11:24 p.m. near where the second shooting occurred, Scott said, four-and-a-half hours after the first call came in. Colom said Moore had a rifle and a handgun. Scott said officers are investigating where Moore obtained the guns.

The state medical examiner is performing autopsies on the victims.

Scott said Moore's surviving relatives are overwhelmed with grief.

"It was really hard to have conversations other than prayers with everybody out there," he said, adding, "this has really shaken our community."

Colom, a Democrat who is seeking his party's nomination this year to run against Republican U.S. Sen. Cindy Hyde Smith, said he is confident that his office has the resources to prosecute Moore and pursuing the death penalty is the right thing to do.

"Six people, one night, several different scenes, it's about as bad as it gets," Colom said.

Daniel Walker Howe, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, dead at 88

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Daniel Walker Howe, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian whose "What Hath God Wrought" became a widely acclaimed chronicle of the vast technological and social changes in the U.S. in the first half of the 19th century, has died at age 88.

Walker died on Dec. 25, according to a spokesman for the University of California, Los Angeles, where he was a professor emeritus. Additional details were not immediately available.

Awarded the Pulitzer in 2008, "What Hath God Wrought" was part of the Oxford University Press' ambi-

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tious and decades-long series on American history, with other works including such Pulitzer winners as David M. Kennedy's book on the Great Depression and World War II, "Freedom from Fear," and James M. McPherson's Civil War epic "The Battle Cry of Freedom."

Howe's 900-page book covered 1815-1848, from the end of the War of 1812 to the dawn of organized feminism in the U.S. — the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. Howe traced the steady expansion west of a young country abiding by the doctrine of "Manifest Destiny." He documented the rise of Andrew Jackson and modern political parties, the overturning of the elite order that had controlled the presidency since George Washington, and the ongoing debate over slavery that would lead to armed conflict.

The country was facing changes familiar to 21st century Americans. In the years leading up to the Civil War, the U.S. became more industrialized, more entwined and more divided. Information was traveling faster; the title "What Hath God Wrought" was taken from the biblical phrase used for the first telegraph message, sent in 1844. Newspapers and books were proliferating thanks to cheaper printing and to more efficient mail service, and the infrastructure was being modernized through roads, bridges, canals and other public works projects.

At the same time, the more technology advanced, the more resistance arose in the South, where leading politicians opposed the new projects — "internal improvements" — for fear they would undermine slavery.

"Internal improvements could be opposed for reasons that had nothing to do with their economic effects. There were those who felt their stake in the status quo threatened by any innovation, especially intervention sponsored by the federal government," Howe wrote.

A publisher's backup book

Reviewing the book for *The New Yorker* in 2007, historian Jill Lepore praised it as "a heroic attempt at synthesizing a century and a half of historical writing." She also noted that "What God Hath Wrought" was not the first choice for Oxford editor C. Vann Woodward, the prize-winning Southern historian.

"What God Hath Wrought" was, in part, a response to another acclaimed work: Charles Sellers' landmark "The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846." Woodward had asked Sellers to contribute to the Oxford series but turned down "The Market Revolution" because he found it too negative. Released by Oxford as a separate volume in 1991, Sellers' book contended that advances in technology uprooted rural communities and livelihoods and portrayed Jackson as an opposing force who stood — in vain — for working people against the industrial powers.

Howe had studied under Sellers at the University of California, Berkeley in the 1960s, but he formed a different view of the country's past. He found that innovation served less as a destroyer of old ties than as a force for democracy. He dedicated "What God Hath Wrought" to the patrician John Quincy Adams, Jackson's bitter rival in presidential elections and his opposite in personal background.

"Before I wrote this book I had never really grasped how often improvements in material terms fostered improvements in moral terms," Howe told the *National Review* in 2007. "The people who encouraged economic diversification and development in many cases also supported more humane laws, wider access to education, a halt to the expansion of slavery, even, sometimes, greater equality for women."

Howe's other books included "The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy 1805-1861," "The Political Culture of the American Whigs" and "Making the American Self: Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln." He taught at several schools, starting with Yale University in 1966 and continuing at UCLA from 1973-93 and Oxford University from 1993-2002. He married Sandra Fay Shumway in 1961 and had three children: Christopher, Rebecca and Stephen.

A fascination with the past

Born in Ogden, Utah, and raised in Denver, he recalled loving history since age 6 when his father told him about "Hannibal crossing the Alps with elephants to fight the Romans," as he told *The Harvard Crimson* in 2009. He majored in history and literature at Harvard University and received his doctorate in history from Berkeley in 1966.

Howe has said that being asked to write "What Hath God Wrought" appealed to him for the chance to write for general readers, and not just historians. His intention was to craft an old-fashioned narrative while drawing upon more recent scholarship on social movements, presenting the country's history as an ongo-

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ing debate over whether success was defined by military and economic power or by moral achievements.

"In 1848, it seemed that the greatness of the American people had been shown in their extensive recent conquest across the continent. Later, that greatness could seem affirmed by the preservation of the Union, industrial might, commercial influence, scientific research, and victories over global enemies," he wrote.

"Later still, perhaps that greatness might be seen in the extent to which the dreams of the 1848 feminists and abolitionists have at length been realized. History works on a long time scale, and at any given moment we can perceive directions but imperfectly."

Nicaragua's government says it's freeing detainees after pressure from the US

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Nicaragua's Interior Ministry said Saturday the country would release dozens of prisoners, as the United States ramped up pressure on leftist President Daniel Ortega a week after it ousted former Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro.

On Friday, the U.S. Embassy in Nicaragua said Venezuela had taken an important step toward peace by releasing what it described as "political prisoners." But it lamented that in Nicaragua, "more than 60 people remain unjustly detained or disappeared, including pastors, religious workers, the sick, and the elderly."

On Saturday, the Interior Ministry said in a statement that "dozens of people who were in the National Penitentiary System are returning to their homes and families."

It wasn't immediately clear who was freed and under what conditions. Nicaragua's government did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The government has been carrying out an ongoing crackdown since mass social protests in 2018, that were violently repressed.

Nicaragua's government has imprisoned adversaries, religious leaders, journalists and more, then exiled them, stripping hundreds of their Nicaraguan citizenship and possessions. Since 2018, it has shuttered more than 5,000 organizations, largely religious, and forced thousands to flee the country. Nicaragua's government often accused critics and opponents of plotting against the government.

In recent years, the government has released hundreds of imprisoned political opponents, critics and activists. It stripped them of Nicaraguan citizenship and sent them to other countries like the U.S. and Guatemala. Observers have called it an effort to wash its hands of its opposition and offset international human rights criticism. Many of those Nicaraguans were forced into a situation of "statelessness."

Saturday on X, the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs again slammed Nicaragua's government. "Nicaraguans voted for a president in 2006, not for an illegitimate lifelong dynasty," it said. "Rewriting the Constitution and crushing dissent will not erase the Nicaraguans' aspirations to live free from tyranny."

Danny Ramírez-Ayéndiz, executive-secretary of the Nicaraguan human rights organization CADILH, said he had mixed feelings about the releases announced Saturday.

"On the one hand, I'm glad. All political prisoners suffer some form of torture. But on the other hand, I know these people will continue to be harassed, surveilled and monitored by the police, and so will their families."

Ramírez-Ayéndiz said the liberation of the prisoners is a response to pressure exerted by the United States. "There is surely a great deal of fear within the regime that the U.S. might completely dismantle it," he said.

Virginia man pleads not guilty to charges in DC pipe bomb case

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Virginia man has pleaded not guilty to charges accusing him of planting two pipe bombs outside the headquarters of the Democratic and Republican national parties on the eve of the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021.

Brian J. Cole Jr., of Woodbridge, Virginia, entered the plea at a brief hearing on Friday. He is facing two counts of transporting and attempting to use explosives.

Justice Department prosecutors have said that Cole confessed to placing pipe bombs outside the Republican National Committee and the Democratic National Committee headquarters only hours before a mob of President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the Capitol. Cole said he hoped the explosives would detonate and "hoped there would be news about it," prosecutors wrote in court documents.

After his arrest last month, Cole told investigators that he believed someone needed to "speak up" for people who believed the 2020 election, which Democrat Joe Biden won, was stolen and that he wanted to target the country's political parties because they were "in charge," according to prosecutors.

If convicted of both charges against him, Cole faces up to 10 years of imprisonment on one charge and up to 20 years of imprisonment on a second charge that also carries a five-year mandatory minimum prison sentence.

Trump pushes a 1-year, 10% cap on credit card interest rates and banks balk

By KEN SWEET and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Reviving a campaign pledge, President Donald Trump wants a one-year, 10% cap on credit card interest rates, a move that could save Americans tens of billions of dollars but drew immediate opposition from an industry that has been in his corner.

Trump was not clear in his social media post Friday night whether a cap might take effect through executive action or legislation, though one Republican senator said he had spoken with the president and would work on a bill with his "full support." Trump said he hoped it would be in place Jan. 20, one year after he took office.

Strong opposition is certain from Wall Street in addition to the credit card companies, which donated heavily to his 2024 campaign and have supported Trump's second-term agenda. Banks are making the argument that such a plan would most hurt poor people, at a time of economic concern, by curtailing or eliminating credit lines, driving them to high-cost alternatives like payday loans or pawnshops.

"We will no longer let the American Public be ripped off by Credit Card Companies that are charging Interest Rates of 20 to 30%," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

Researchers who studied Trump's campaign pledge after it was first announced found that Americans would save roughly \$100 billion in interest a year if credit card rates were capped at 10%. The same researchers found that while the credit card industry would take a major hit, it would still be profitable, although credit card rewards and other perks might be scaled back.

About 195 million people in the United States had credit cards in 2024 and were assessed \$160 billion in interest charges, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau says. Americans are now carrying more credit card debt than ever, to the tune of about \$1.23 trillion, according to figures from the New York Federal Reserve for the third quarter last year.

Further, Americans are paying, on average, between 19.65% and 21.5% in interest on credit cards according to the Federal Reserve and other industry tracking sources. That has come down in the past year as the central bank lowered benchmark rates, but is near the highs since federal regulators started tracking credit card rates in the mid-1990s. That's significantly higher than a decade ago, when the average credit card interest rate was roughly 12%.

The Republican administration has proved particularly friendly until now to the credit card industry.

Capital One got little resistance from the White House when it finalized its purchase and merger with Discover Financial in early 2025, a deal that created the nation's largest credit card company. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which is largely tasked with going after credit card companies for alleged wrongdoing, has been largely nonfunctional since Trump took office.

In a joint statement, the banking industry was opposed to Trump's proposal.

"If enacted, this cap would only drive consumers toward less regulated, more costly alternatives," the American Bankers Association and allied groups said.

Bank lobbyists have long argued that lowering interest rates on their credit card products would require

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the banks to lend less to high-risk borrowers. When Congress enacted a cap on the fee that stores pay large banks when customers use a debit card, banks responded by removing all rewards and perks from those cards. Debit card rewards only recently have trickled back into consumers' hands. For example, United Airlines now has a debit card that gives miles with purchases.

The U.S. already places interest rate caps on some financial products and for some demographics. The Military Lending Act makes it illegal to charge active-duty service members more than 36% for any financial product. The national regulator for credit unions has capped interest rates on credit union credit cards at 18%.

Credit card companies earn three streams of revenue from their products: fees charged to merchants, fees charged to customers and the interest charged on balances. The argument from some researchers and left-leaning policymakers is that the banks earn enough revenue from merchants to keep them profitable if interest rates were capped.

"A 10% credit card interest cap would save Americans \$100 billion a year without causing massive account closures, as banks claim. That's because the few large banks that dominate the credit card market are making absolutely massive profits on customers at all income levels," said Brian Shearer, director of competition and regulatory policy at the Vanderbilt Policy Accelerator, who wrote the research on the industry's impact of Trump's proposal last year.

There are some historic examples that interest rate caps do cut off the less creditworthy to financial products because banks are not able to price risk correctly. Arkansas has a strictly enforced interest rate cap of 17% and evidence points to the poor and less creditworthy being cut out of consumer credit markets in the state. Shearer's research showed that an interest rate cap of 10% would likely result in banks lending less to those with credit scores below 600.

The White House did not respond to questions about how the president seeks to cap the rate or whether he has spoken with credit card companies about the idea.

Sen. Roger Marshall, R-Kan., who said he talked with Trump on Friday night, said the effort is meant to "lower costs for American families and to reign in greedy credit card companies who have been ripping off hardworking Americans for too long."

Legislation in both the House and the Senate would do what Trump is seeking.

Sens. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Josh Hawley, R-Mo., released a plan in February that would immediately cap interest rates at 10% for five years, hoping to use Trump's campaign promise to build momentum for their measure.

Hours before Trump's post, Sanders said that the president, rather than working to cap interest rates, had taken steps to deregulate big banks that allowed them to charge much higher credit card fees.

Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., and Anna Paulina Luna, R-Fla., have proposed similar legislation. Ocasio-Cortez is a frequent political target of Trump, while Luna is a close ally of the president.

US intercepts fifth sanctioned tanker as it exerts control over Venezuelan oil distribution

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN, AAMER MADHANI and MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. forces boarded another oil tanker in the Caribbean Sea on Friday, the U.S. military said, as the Trump administration targets sanctioned tankers traveling to and from Venezuela as part of a broader effort to take control of the South American country's oil.

The predawn raid was carried out by Marines and Navy sailors launched from the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford, part of the extensive force the U.S. has built up in the Caribbean in recent months, according to U.S. Southern Command, which declared "there is no safe haven for criminals" as it announced the seizure of the tanker called the Olina. The Coast Guard then took control of the vessel, officials said.

Southern Command and Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem both posted unclassified footage on social media Friday morning of a U.S. helicopter landing on the vessel and U.S. personnel conducting a search of the deck and tossing what appeared to be an explosive device in front of a door leading to

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inside the ship.

In her post, Noem said the ship was "another 'ghost fleet' tanker ship suspected of carrying embargoed oil" and it had departed Venezuela "attempting to evade U.S. forces."

The Olina is the fifth tanker that has been seized by U.S. forces as part of the effort by President Donald Trump's administration to control the production, refining and global distribution of Venezuela's oil products, and the third since the U.S. ouster of Venezuela President Nicolás Maduro in a surprise nighttime raid.

In a post on his social media network later in the day, Trump said the seizure was conducted "in coordination with the Interim Authorities of Venezuela" but offered no elaboration.

The White House did not immediately respond to requests for more details.

Venezuela's government acknowledged in a statement that it was working with U.S. authorities to return the tanker, "which set sail without payment or authorization from the Venezuelan authorities," to the South American nation.

"Thanks to this first successful joint operation, the ship is sailing back to Venezuelan waters for its protection and relevant actions," according to the statement.

Samir Madani, co-founder of TankerTrackers.com, said his organization used satellite imagery and surface-level photos to document that at least 16 tankers left the Venezuelan coast in contravention of the quarantine U.S. forces have set up to block sanctioned ships from conducting trade. The Olina was among that flotilla.

U.S. government records show that the Olina was sanctioned for moving Russian oil under its prior name, Minerva M, and flagged in Panama.

While records show the Olina is now flying the flag of Timor-Leste, it is listed in the international shipping registry as having a false flag, meaning the registration it is claiming is not valid. In July, the owner and manager of the ship on its registration was changed to a company in Hong Kong.

According to ship tracking databases, the Olina last transmitted its location in November in the Caribbean, north of the Venezuelan coast. Since then, however, the ship has been running dark with its location beacon turned off.

While Noem and the military framed the seizure as part of an effort to enforce the law, other officials in the Trump administration have made clear they see it as a way to generate cash as they seek to rebuild Venezuela's battered oil industry and restore its economy.

In an early morning social media post, Trump said the U.S. and Venezuela "are working well together, especially as it pertains to rebuilding, in a much bigger, better, and more modern form, their oil and gas infrastructure."

The administration said it expects to sell 30 million to 50 million barrels of sanctioned Venezuelan oil, with the proceeds to go to both the U.S. and Venezuelan people. But the president expects the arrangement to continue indefinitely. He met Friday with executives from oil companies to discuss his goal of investing \$100 billion in Venezuela to repair and upgrade its oil production and distribution.

Vice President JD Vance told Fox News this week that the U.S. can "control" Venezuela's "purse strings" by dictating where its oil can be sold.

Madani estimated that the Olina is loaded with 707,000 barrels of oil, which at the current market price of about \$60 a barrel would be worth more than \$42 million.

Supporters press for a DC memorial to Thomas Paine, whose writings helped fuel the Revolutionary War

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Some 250 years after "Common Sense" helped inspire the 13 colonies to declare independence, Thomas Paine might receive a long-anticipated tribute from his adopted country.

A Paine memorial in Washington, D.C., authorized by a 2022 law, awaits approval from the U.S. Department of Interior. It would be the first landmark in the nation's capital to be dedicated to one of the American Revolution's most stirring, popular and quotable advocates — who also was one of the most

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intensely debated men of his time.

"He was a critical and singular voice," said U.S. Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., a sponsor of the bill that backed the memorial. He said Paine has long been "underrecognized and overlooked."

Saturday marks the 250th anniversary of the publication of Paine's "Common Sense," among the first major milestones of a yearlong commemoration of the country's founding and the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Paine supporters have waited decades for a memorial in the District of Columbia, and success is still not ensured: Federal memorials are initiated by Congress but usually built through private donations. In 1992, President George H.W. Bush signed bipartisan legislation for such a memorial, but the project was delayed, failed to attract adequate funding and was essentially forgotten by the mid-2000s.

The fate of the current legislation depends not just on financial support, but on President Donald Trump's interior secretary, Doug Burgum.

In September 2024, the memorial was recommended by the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission for placement on the National Mall. Burgum needs to endorse the plan, which would be sent back to Congress for final enactment. If approved, the memorial would have a 2030 deadline for completion.

A spokesperson for the department declined comment when asked about the timing for a decision.

"We are staying optimistic because we feel that Thomas Paine is such an important figure in the founding of the United States of America," said Margaret Downey, president of the Thomas Paine Memorial Association, which has a mission to establish a memorial in Washington.

A contentious legacy

Scholars note that well into the 20th century, federal honors for Paine would have been nearly impossible. While Paine first made his name through "Common Sense," the latter part of his life was defined by another pamphlet, "The Age of Reason."

Published in installments starting in 1794, it was a fierce attack against organized religion. Paine believed in God and a divinely created universe but accepted no single faith. He scorned what he described as the Bible's "paltry stories" and said Christianity was "too absurd for belief, too impossible to convince, and too inconsistent for practice."

By the time of his death, in New York in 1809, he was estranged from friends and many of the surviving founders; only a handful of mourners attended his funeral. He has since been championed by everyone from labor leaders and communists to Thomas Edison, but presidents before Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930s rarely quoted him. Theodore Roosevelt referred to him as a "filthy little atheist."

There are Paine landmarks around the country, including a monument and museum in New Rochelle, New York, and statue in Morristown, New Jersey. But other communities have resisted. In 1955, Mayor Walter H. Reynolds of Providence, Rhode Island, rejected a proposed Paine statue, saying "he was and remains so controversial a character."

Harvey J. Kaye, author of "Thomas Paine and the Promise of America," cites the election of Ronald Reagan as president in 1980 as a surprising turning point. Reagan's victory was widely seen as a triumph for the modern conservative movement, but Reagan alarmed some Republicans and pleased Paine admirers during his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention when he quoted Paine's famous call to action: "We have it in our power to begin the world over again."

Reagan helped make Paine palatable to both parties, Kaye said. When Congress approved a memorial in 1992, supporters ranged from a liberal giant, Democratic Sen. Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts, to a right-wing hero, Republican Sen. Jesse Helms of North Carolina.

"Reagan opened the door," Kaye said.

An immigrant who stoked the fire of revolution

Paine's story is very much American. He was a self-educated immigrant from Britain who departed for the colonies with little money but with hopes for a better life.

He was born Thomas Pain in Thetford in 1737, some 90 miles outside of London (he added the "e" to his last name after arriving in America). Paine was on the move for much of his early life. He spent just a few years in school before leaving at age 13 to work as an apprentice for his father, a corset maker. He

would change jobs often, from teaching at a private academy to working as a government excise officer to running a tobacco shop.

By the time he sailed to the New World in 1774, he was struggling with debt, had been married twice and had failed or made himself unwelcome in virtually every profession he entered. But Paine also had absorbed enough of London's intellectual life to form radical ideas about government and religion and to meet Benjamin Franklin, who provided him a letter of introduction that helped him find work in Philadelphia as a contributor to *The Pennsylvania Magazine*.

The Revolutionary War began in April 1775 and pamphlets helped frame the arguments, much as social media posts do today. The Philadelphia-based statesman and physician Benjamin Rush was impressed enough with Paine to suggest that he put forth his own thoughts. Paine had wanted to call his pamphlet "Plain Truth," but agreed to Rush's idea: "Common Sense."

Paine's brief tract was credited to "an Englishman" and released on Jan. 10, 1776. Later expanded to 47 pages, it was a popular sensation. Historians differ over how many copies were sold, but "Common Sense" was widely shared, talked about and read aloud.

Paine's urgent, accessible prose was credited for helping to shift public opinion from simply opposing British aggression to calling for a full break. His vision was radical, even compared to some of his fellow revolutionaries. In taking on the British and King George III, he did not just attack the actions of an individual king, but the very idea of hereditary rule and monarchy. He denounced both as "evil" and "exceedingly ridiculous."

"Of more worth is one honest man to society and in the sight of God, than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived," he stated.

A message that continues to resonate

Historian Eric Foner would write that Paine's appeal lasted through "his impatience with the past, his critical stance toward existing institutions, his belief that men can shape their own destiny." But "Common Sense" was despised by British loyalists and challenged by some American leaders.

John Adams would refer to Paine as a "star of disaster," while Franklin worried about his "rude way of writing." Meanwhile, George Washington valued "Common Sense" for its "sound doctrine" and "unanswerable reasoning," and Thomas Jefferson, soon to be the principal author of the Declaration of Independence, befriended Paine and later invited him to the White House when he was president.

Paine's message continues to be invoked by those on both sides of the political divide.

In his 2025 year-end report on the federal judiciary, Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts began by citing the anniversary of "Common Sense" and praising Paine for "shunning legalese" as he articulated that "government's purpose is to serve the people." Last year, passages from "Common Sense" appeared often during the nationwide "No Kings" rallies against Trump's policies.

One demonstrator's sign in Boston said, "No King! No Tyranny! It's Common Sense."

Filipino rescuers detect 'signs of life' in garbage avalanche that killed 4 and left dozens missing

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Rescuers detected signs of life in an avalanche of garbage that killed at least four workers and left more than 30 others missing Thursday in a central Philippines landfill and plan to intensify search efforts, an official said Saturday.

Twelve workers have been rescued with injuries from the huge mound of garbage that collapsed among the low-slung buildings of a waste management facility in the village of Binaliw in Cebu City, authorities said.

Dozens of rescuers including police, firefighters and disaster-response personnel have raced against time to find more survivors in dangerous conditions in the rubble of twisted tin roofs, iron bars and combustible heaps of garbage and debris.

"Authorities confirmed the presence of detected signs of life in specific areas, requiring continued careful

excavation and the deployment of a more advanced 50-ton crane, which is enroute with police escort," Cebu City Mayor Nestor Archival said in a statement.

"Safety of responders remains paramount due to hazards such as unstable debris and acetylene risks, prompting adjustments to the security perimeter and controlled access," Archival said.

The four dead, including an engineer and a female office worker, were all employees of the landfill and waste management facility with a staff of 110, according to the mayor and police.

The initial list of victims on Friday included two dead and 36 missing, which increased Saturday to four dead, according to Archival, who did not provide an updated number of people missing.

The cause of the collapse of the mountain of garbage remains unclear, but a survivor told The Associated Press on Friday that it happened in an instant without any warning despite fairly good weather at the time.

Jaylord Antigua, a 31-year-old office worker at the landfill, said the wall of garbage cascaded down and destroyed the administrative office he was in. He extricated himself with bruises on his face and arms by crawling in darkness in the rubble and debris.

"I saw a light and crawled toward it in a hurry, because I feared there will be more landslides," Antigua said. "It was traumatic. I feared that it was my end, so this is my second life."

It is unclear how the accident would affect garbage disposal in the landfill in Cebu, a bustling port city of nearly a million people that serves as a regional hub for trade, commerce and tourism.

Preparations "are also underway to manage the looming garbage collection issue," Archival said in his statement without further details.

Such landfills and open dumpsites have long been a source of safety and health concerns throughout the Philippines, especially in areas close to poor communities where many residents scavenge for junk and leftover food in the garbage heaps.

In July 2000, a huge garbage mound in a shantytown in suburban Quezon City, part of metropolitan Manila, collapsed and ignited a fire after days of stormy weather.

The disaster left more than 200 people dead and many more missing, damaged scores of shanties and prompted a law requiring the closure of illegal dump sites nationwide, as well as improved and more sustainable waste management by authorities.

Ukrainian drones set fire to Russian oil depot after Moscow launches new hypersonic missile

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A Ukrainian drone strike sparked a fire at an oil depot in Russia's southern Volgograd region, officials said Saturday, after Russia launched a powerful hypersonic missile along with drones and other weapons that disrupted Kyiv's power supply and heating.

There were no immediate reports of casualties, Volgograd Gov. Andrei Bocharov was quoted as saying in a Telegram post published on the channel of the local administration. The post did not specify the damage, but said that people living near the depot may have to be evacuated.

Ukraine's General Staff said Saturday it had struck the Zhutovskaya oil depot overnight. In a statement on Telegram, it said the depot is supplying fuel to Russian forces, adding that damage was being assessed.

Ukraine's long-range drone strikes on Russian energy sites aim to deprive Moscow of the oil export revenue it needs to pursue its full-scale invasion. Russia wants to cripple the Ukrainian power grid, seeking to deny civilians access to heat, light and running water in what Kyiv officials say is an attempt to "weaponize winter."

Saturday's attack came the day after Russia bombarded Ukraine with hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles overnight into Friday, according to Ukrainian officials, killing at least four people in the capital. For only the second time in the nearly 4-year-old war, it used a powerful new hypersonic missile that struck western Ukraine in a clear warning to Kyiv's NATO allies.

The intense barrage and the launch of the nuclear-capable Oreshnik missile followed reports of major progress in talks between Ukraine and its allies on how to defend the country from further Moscow ag-

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gression if a U.S.-led peace deal is struck.

Stéphane Dujarric, spokesman for the U.N. secretary-general, said Friday's attacks "have resulted in significant civilian casualties and deprived millions of Ukrainians of essential services, including electricity, heating and water at a time of acute humanitarian need."

Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said heat supply would be fully restored in Kyiv by the end of Saturday.

She said areas on the right bank of the Dnieper River would gradually lift emergency blackouts and return to scheduled outages. But resuming power supply on the left bank, where Russian attacks were concentrated, is more complicated due to significant damage to the power grid, she added.

Russia's Defense Ministry said Saturday that its forces used aviation, drones, missiles and artillery to strike Ukrainian energy facilities and fuel-storage depots.

Russia struck Ukraine with 121 drones and one Iskander-M ballistic missile, according to the Ukrainian air force. It said 94 drones were shot down.

Separately, the Russian Defense Ministry said 59 Ukrainian drones were neutralized overnight over Russia and occupied Crimea.

Ukraine's military said that besides the oil depot in Volgograd, it had struck a drone storage facility belonging to a unit of Russia's 19th Motor Rifle Division in Zaporizhzhia, southern Ukraine, as well as a drone command and control point near the eastern city of Pokrovsk.

Greenland's party leaders firmly reject Trump's push for US control of the island

NUUK, Greenland (AP) — Greenland's party leaders have rejected President Donald Trump's repeated calls for the U.S. to take control of the island, saying that Greenland's future must be decided by its people.

"We don't want to be Americans, we don't want to be Danes, we want to be Greenlanders," Greenland Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen and four party leaders said in a statement Friday night.

Trump said again on Friday that he would like to make a deal to acquire Greenland, a semiautonomous region that's part of NATO ally Denmark, "the easy way." He said that if the U.S. doesn't own it, then Russia or China will take it over, and the U.S. does not want them as neighbors.

"If we don't do it the easy way, we're going to do it the hard way," Trump said, without explaining what that entailed. The White House said it is considering a range of options, including using military force, to acquire the island.

Greenland's party leaders reiterated that "Greenland's future must be decided by the Greenlandic people."

"As Greenlandic party leaders, we would like to emphasize once again our wish that the United States' contempt for our country ends," the statement said.

Officials from Denmark, Greenland and the United States met Thursday in Washington and will meet again next week to discuss the renewed push by the White House for the control of the island.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has warned that an American takeover of Greenland would mark the end of NATO.

The party leaders' statement said that "the work on Greenland's future takes place in dialogue with the Greenlandic people and is prepared on the basis of international laws."

"No other country can interfere in this," they said. "We must decide the future of our country ourselves, without pressure for quick decision, delay or interference from other countries."

The statement was signed by Nielsen, Pele Broberg, Múte B. Egede, Aleqa Hammond and Aqqalu C. Jerimiassen.

While Greenland is the largest island in the world, it has a population of around 57,000 and doesn't have its own military. Defense is provided by Denmark, whose military is dwarfed by that of the U.S.

It's unclear how the remaining NATO members would respond if the U.S. decided to forcibly take control of the island or if they would come to Denmark's aid.

Stafford gets first nod for AP All-Pro. Garrett, Nacua and Smith-Njigba are unanimous choices

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

Matthew Stafford beat out Drake Maye, while Myles Garrett, Puka Nacua and Jaxon Smith-Njigba were unanimous choices for the 2025 Associated Press NFL All-Pro Team.

Bijan Robinson is the running back while Christian McCaffrey earned the All-Purpose spot. Ja'Marr Chase is the third wide receiver and tight end Trey McBride got 49 of 50 first-place votes.

Will Anderson Jr. and Micah Parsons joined Garrett at edge rusher. Jeffery Simmons and Zach Allen were selected as interior defensive linemen.

"That's great. Needed that for real," said Parsons, who had surgery to repair a torn ACL and won't be playing in the playoffs for the Packers. "Look forward to trying to get back to that same status this offseason."

The 37-year-old Stafford received 31 first-place votes to Maye's 18 to earn All-Pro honors for the first time in his 17-year career. Josh Allen got the other vote. Stafford was first in the NFL with 4,707 yards and 46 touchdowns. His passer rating of 109.2 was second only to Maye, who finished at 113.5. Maye had 4,394 yards passing and 31 TDs.

Last year, Lamar Jackson was the first-team All-Pro quarterback and Allen was the AP NFL MVP.

"That's amazing," Stafford said when he heard the news. "I did not see that coming. Played a lot of years. A lot of respect for this game. A lot of respect for the other guys who do what I do. It's not an easy thing to do. It means a lot."

Stafford is the second player ever to be named a first-team All-Pro for the first time in his 17th season or later, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. Kicker Gary Anderson also made it for the first time in his 17th season, in 1998. Before Stafford, the longest wait for a quarterback was Fran Tarkenton, who was an All-Pro for the first time in his 15th season, in 1975.

The Denver Broncos, the AFC's No. 1 seed, had four first-team players and two second. Allen, left tackle Garrett Boles, left guard Quinn Meinerz and special teamer Devon Key made the first team. Cornerback Patrick Surtain II, the reigning NFL Defensive Player of the Year, and safety Talanoa Hufanga made the second team.

Eagles cornerback Quinyon Mitchell and slot cornerback Cooper DeJean made the roster in their second seasons. Houston's Derek Stingley Jr. got 41 first-place votes to lead the voting at cornerback.

Chiefs center Creed Humphrey, Bears left guard Joe Thuney and Lions right tackle Penei Sewell along with Meinerz are repeat selections.

Garrett, who broke the NFL's single-season sack record with 23, is a five-time All-Pro. Parsons is a three-time first-teamer and once made the second team.

"That's crazy," Anderson said about joining Garrett and Parsons. "It means a lot. It's such a blessing. I have to give credit to my guys. I wouldn't be here without them."

Baltimore's Kyle Hamilton and Chicago's Kevin Byard are the safeties. Detroit's Jack Campbell and Miami's Jordyn Brooks are the linebackers.

San Francisco fullback Kyle Juszczyk rounds out the offense.

Eighteen players are first-timers, including five on special teams.

Key, Vikings kicker Will Reichard, Ravens punter Jordan Stout, Bills kick returner Ray Davis and Titans rookie punt returner Chimere Dike are the first-timers. Jaguars long snapper Ross Maticcik made it for the second time.

Dike is the fourth rookie since 2020 to make the team.

"That's awesome," Dike said. "Everyone wants to be All-Pro one day and that's one of the goals I set at the beginning of the season for my career and to be able to do that in my first year, I'm just thankful (special teams) coach (John Fassel) and my teammates had belief in me."

This was the fourth year for the AP's new voting system. Voters chose a first team and a second team. First-team votes are worth 3 points, second-team votes are worth 1.

Votes were tabulated by the accounting firm of Lutz and Carr.

Congress is debating the possible consequences for ICE and even Noem after Renee Good's killing

By MATT BROWN and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The killing of a Minnesota woman by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer is reverberating across Capitol Hill where Democrats, and certain Republicans, are vowing an assertive response as President Donald Trump's aggressive deportation operations spark protests nationwide.

Lawmakers are demanding a range of actions, from a full investigation into Renee Good's shooting death and policy changes over law enforcement raids to the defunding of ICE operations and the impeachment of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, in what is fast becoming an inflection point.

"The situation that took place in Minnesota is a complete and total disgrace," House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York said as details emerged. "And in the next few days, we will be having conversations about a strong and forceful and appropriate response by House Democrats."

Yet there is almost no consensus among the political parties in the aftermath of the death of Good, who was behind the wheel of an SUV after dropping off her 6-year-old at school when she was shot and killed by an ICE officer.

The killing immediately drew dueling narratives. Trump and Noem said the ICE officer acted in self-defense, while Democratic officials said the Trump administration was lying and they urged the public to see the viral videos of the shooting for themselves.

Vice President JD Vance blamed Good, calling it "a tragedy of her own making," and said the ICE officer may have been "sensitive" from having been injured during an unrelated altercation last year.

But Good's killing, at least the fifth known death since the administration launched its mass deportation campaign, could change the political dynamic.

"The videos I've seen from Minneapolis yesterday are deeply disturbing," said Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, in a statement.

"As we mourn this loss of life, we need a thorough and objective investigation into how and why this happened," she said. As part of the investigation, she said she is calling for policy changes, saying the situation "was devastating, and cannot happen again."

Homeland Security funding is up for debate

The push in Congress for more oversight and accountability of the administration's immigration operations comes as lawmakers are in the midst of the annual appropriations process to fund agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, to prevent another federal government shutdown when money expires at the end of January.

As anti-ICE demonstrations erupt in cities in the aftermath of Good's death, Democrats have pledged to use any available legislative lever to apply pressure on the administration to change the conduct of ICE officers.

"We've been warning about this for an entire year," said Rep. Maxwell Frost, D-Fla.

The ICE officer "needs to be held accountable," Frost said, "but not just them, but ICE as a whole, the president and this entire administration."

Congressional Democrats saw Good's killing as a sign of the need for aggressive action to restrain the administration's tactics.

Several Democrats joined calls to impeach Noem, who has been under fire from both parties for her lack of transparency at the department, though that step is highly unlikely with Republicans in control of Congress.

Other Democrats want to restrict the funding for her department, whose budget was vastly increased as part of Republicans' sweeping tax and spending bill passed last summer.

Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, the top Democrat on the subcommittee that handles Homeland Security funding, plans to introduce legislation to rein in the agency with constraints on federal agents' authority, including a requirement that the Border Patrol stick to the border and that DHS enforcement officers be

unmasked.

"More Democrats are saying today the thing that a number of us have been saying since April and May: Kristi Noem is dangerous. She should not be in office, and she should be impeached," said Democratic Rep. Delia Ramirez, who represents parts of Chicago where ICE launched an enhanced immigration enforcement action last year that resulted in two deaths.

Immigration debates have long divided Congress and the parties. Democrats splinter between more liberal and stricter attitudes toward newcomers to the United States. Republicans have embraced Trump's hard-line approach to portray Democrats as radicals.

The Republican administration had launched the enforcement operation in Minnesota in response to an investigation of the nonprofit Feeding Our Future. Prosecutors said the organization was at the center of the country's largest COVID-19-related fraud scams, when defendants exploited a state-run, federally funded program intended to provide food for children.

Heading into the November midterm election, which Democrats believe will hinge on issues such as affordability and health care, national outcry over ICE's conduct has pressured lawmakers to speak out.

"I'm not completely against deportations, but the way they're handling it is a real disgrace," said Rep. Vicente Gonzalez, D-Texas, who represents a district along the U.S.-Mexico border

"Right now, you're seeing humans treated like animals," he said.

Other ICE shootings have rattled lawmakers

In September, a federal immigration enforcement agent in Chicago fatally shot Silverio Villegas Gonzalez during a brief altercation after Gonzalez had dropped off his children at school.

In October, a Customs and Border Protection agent also in Chicago shot Marimar Martinez, a teacher and U.S. citizen, five times during a dispute with officers. The charges against Martinez brought by the administration were dismissed by a federal judge.

To Rep. Chuy Garcia, D-Ill., Good's death "brought back heart-wrenching memories of those two shootings in my district."

"It looks like the fact that a US citizen, who is a white woman, may be opening the eyes of the American public, certainly of members of Congress, that what's going on is out of control," he said, "that this isn't about apprehending or pursuing the most dangerous immigrants."

Republicans expressed some concern at the shooting but stood by the administration's policy, defended the officer's actions and largely blamed Good for the standoff.

"Nobody wants to see people get shot," said Rep. Rich McCormick, R-Ga.

"Let's do the right thing and just be reasonable. And the reasonable thing is not to obstruct ICE officers and then accelerate while they're standing in front of your car," he said. "She made a mistake. I'm sure she didn't mean for that to happen, nor did he mean for that to happen."

Doctors say changes to US vaccine recommendations are confusing parents and could harm kids

By LAURA UNGAR AP Medical Writer

Dr. Molly O'Shea has noticed growing skepticism about vaccines at both of her Michigan pediatric offices and says this week's unprecedented and confusing changes to federal vaccine guidance will only make things worse.

One of her offices is in a Democratic area, where more of the parents she sees are opting for alternative schedules that spread out shots. The other is in a Republican area, where some parents have stopped immunizing their children altogether.

She and other doctors fear the new recommendations and the terminology around them will stoke vaccine hesitancy even more, pose challenges for pediatricians and parents that make it harder for kids to get shots, and ultimately lead to more illness and death.

The biggest change was to stop blanket recommendations for protection against six diseases and recommend those vaccines only for at-risk children or through something called "shared clinical decision-making"

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with a health care provider.

The phrase, experts say, is confusing and dangerous: "It sends a message to a parent that actually there's only a rarefied group of people who really need the vaccine," O'Shea said. "It's creating an environment that puts a sense of uncertainty about the value and necessity or importance of the vaccines in that category."

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who helped lead the anti-vaccine movement for years, said in announcing the changes that they better align the U.S. with peer nations "while strengthening transparency and informed consent."

But doctors say they are sowing doubt — the vaccines have been extensively studied and proven to be safe and effective at shielding kids from nasty diseases — at a time when childhood vaccination rates are already falling and some of those infectious diseases are spreading.

On Friday, the American Academy of Pediatrics and more than 200 medical, public health and patient advocacy groups sent a letter to Congress about the new childhood immunization schedule.

"We urge you to investigate why the schedule was changed, why credible scientific evidence was ignored, and why the committee charged with advising the HHS Secretary on immunizations did not discuss the schedule changes as a part of their public meeting process," they wrote.

Many don't know what 'shared decision-making' means

O'Shea said she and other pediatricians discuss vaccines with parents at every visit where they are given. But that's not necessarily "shared clinical decision-making," which has a particular definition.

On its website, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices says: "Unlike routine, catch-up, and risk-based recommendations, shared clinical decision-making vaccinations are not recommended for everyone in a particular age group or everyone in an identifiable risk group. Rather, shared clinical decision-making recommendations are individually based and informed by a decision process between the health care provider and the patient or parent/guardian."

In this context, health care providers include primary care physicians, specialists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses and pharmacists.

A pair of surveys conducted last year by the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania suggested that many people don't fully understand the concept, which came up last year when the federal government changed recommendations around COVID-19 vaccinations.

Only about 2 in 10 U.S. adults knew that one meaning behind shared decision-making is that "taking the vaccine may not be a good idea for everyone but would benefit some." And only about one-third realized pharmacists count as health care providers to talk with during the process, even though they frequently administer vaccines.

As of this week, vaccines that protect against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, rotavirus, RSV, flu and meningococcal disease are no longer universally recommended for kids. RSV, hepatitis A, hepatitis B and meningococcal vaccines are recommended for certain high-risk populations; flu, rotavirus, hepatitis A, hepatitis B and meningococcal vaccines are recommended through shared decision-making — as is the COVID-19 vaccine, although that change was made last year.

Shortly after the federal announcement Monday, Dr. Steven Abelowitz heard from half a dozen parents. "It's causing concern for us, but more importantly, concern for parents with kids, especially young kids, and confusion," said Abelowitz, founder of Ocean Pediatrics in Orange County, California.

Though federal recommendations are not mandates — states have the authority to require vaccinations for schoolchildren — they can affect how easy it is for kids to get shots if doctors choose to follow them.

Under the new guidelines, O'Shea said, parents seeking shots in the shared decision-making category might no longer bring their kids in for a quick, vaccine-only appointment with staff. They'd sit down with a health care provider and discuss the vaccine. And it could be tougher to have a flu clinic, where parents drive up and kids get shots without seeing a doctor.

Staying the course as challenges mount

Still, doctors say they won't let the changes stop them from helping children get the vaccines they need. Leading medical groups are sticking with prior vaccine recommendations. Many parents are, too.

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Megan Landry, whose 4-year-old son Zackary is one of O'Shea's patients, is among them. "It's my responsibility as a parent to protect my child's health and well-being," she said. "Vaccines are a really effective and well-studied way to do that."

She plans to keep having the same conversations she's always had with O'Shea before getting vaccines for Zackary.

"Relying on evidence and trusted medical guidance really helps me to make those decisions," she said. "And for me, it's not just a personal choice for my own son but a way to contribute to the health of everybody."

But for other families, confidence about vaccines is waning as trust in science erodes. O'Shea lamented that parents are getting the message that they can't trust medical experts.

"If I take my car to the mechanic, I don't go do my own research ahead of time," she said. "I go to a person I trust and I trust them to tell me what's going on."

Abelowitz, the California doctor, likened the latest federal move to pouring gasoline on a fire of mistrust that was already burning.

"We're worried the fire's out of control," he said. "Already we've seen that with measles and pertussis, there are increased hospitalizations and even increasing deaths. So the way that I look at it — and my colleagues look at it — we're basically regressing decades."

Today in History: January 11, Theodore Roosevelt makes the Grand Canyon a national monument

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Jan. 11, the 11th day of 2026. There are 354 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 11, 1908, the Grand Canyon was established as a national monument by President Theodore Roosevelt. The move protected it from mining and other activities until it became a national park in 1919.

Also on this date:

In 1861, Alabama became the fourth state to declare its secession from the Union.

In 1935, aviator Amelia Earhart began what would be the first solo flight from Hawaii to California, completing the 2,400-mile flight across the Pacific to Oakland in just under 19 hours.

In 1964, U.S. Surgeon General Luther Terry issued "Smoking and Health," a report that concluded that "cigarette smoking contributes substantially to mortality from certain specific diseases and to the overall death rate."

In 2002, the first al-Qaida prisoners from Afghanistan arrived at the U.S. military's Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba.

In 2010, Mark McGwire admitted to The Associated Press that he'd used steroids and human growth hormone when he broke baseball's home run record in 1998.

In 2021, House Democrats introduced an article of impeachment against President Donald Trump, charging him with "incitement of insurrection" after the attack on the U.S. Capitol building five days earlier.

In 2024, U.S. and British forces bombed more than dozen sites used by the Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen, in a massive retaliatory strike for the militant group's attacks on international cargo ships and other targets in the Red Sea.

Today's birthdays: Filmmaker Alfonso Arau is 94. Golf Hall of Famer Ben Crenshaw is 74. Jazz guitarist Lee Ritenour is 74. Olympic swimming gold medalist Tracy Caulkins is 63. Filmmaker Malcolm D. Lee is 56. Singer Mary J. Blige is 55. Actor Amanda Peet is 54. Actor Devin Ratray is 49. Actor Aja Naomi King is 41. Singer and former competitive swimmer Cody Simpson is 29.