

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Sunday, Feb. 1, 2026

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

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

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

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

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



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

Carnival of Silver Skates, 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

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

Soccer Open Gym at Elementary School, 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

4th Grade BBB Practice, 2 p.m.

6th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.

Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.

## Monday, Feb. 2, 2026

School Breakfast: Eggs.

School Lunch: Burrito bowl, Santa FE corn.

Senior Menu: Lasagna bake, broccoli, fruit, breadstick.

MS Boys Basketball at Milbank: 7th at 4 p.m.; 8th at 5 p.m.

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

Boys JV Wrestling at Britton-Hecla, 5 p.m.

Girls Basketball hosts Florence/Henry; C at 5 p.m.; JV at 6 p.m.; varsity to follow.

Kindergarten boys basketball practice, 6 p.m., elementary gym.

5th grade boys basketball practice, 6 p.m., gym

*We the People*

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



By David Adler

## Pam Bondi Attaches Strings to Restoration of Rule of Law in Minnesota

Hours after ICE agents gunned down—in execution style— a peaceful Minnesota resident, 37-year old Alex Pretti, in a graphic scene, witnessed, through the recording capacity of smart phones, by tens of millions of people across the world and one carved forever into human consciousness, U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi sent a letter to Governor Tim Walz, in which she wrote that "the rule of law can be restored," if you do the following things. In the letter, Bondi refers to the Trump Administration's aggressive deployment of immigration agents to Minneapolis— "Operation Metro Surge" — and asks Walz to surrender detailed information about the state's voters, including their dates of birth, driver's license numbers and partial Social Security numbers.

The staid, conservative editorial board of the Wall Street Journal declared that Bondi's letter "conditions" the rule of law. Minnesota officials agree: Bondi is trying to leverage immigration enforcement to obtain the state's voter lists. But they have rightly rejected the bullying tactics to coerce surrender of sensitive voter data that the Department of Justice is not entitled to have. While Congress has statutorily vested the federal government with sweeping authority to enforce immigration laws, it has retained for itself, in conjunction with Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution, primary authority over voting laws and policies. The GOP-controlled Congress, which has acquiesced in President Trump's aggrandizement of legislative powers, has yet to cede control over the fundamental right to vote, thus reaffirming the wisdom of the framers of the Constitution, who wisely fenced off the executive because of its self-interest in the outcome of elections.

U.S. District Judge Katherine Menedez is alive to this coercive connection. In a hearing involving Minnesota's lawsuit against the Trump Administration that centers on the surge and violent tactics of ICE agents, Judge Menendez asked a justice department attorney whether Bondi, in her letter, was trying to "achieve a goal through force, which it can't achieve through the courts." The government's attorney denied the connection, but the judge's question seems rhetorical.

The nature of the surge has raised a host of issues surrounding the First, Second, Fourth and Tenth Amendments. Minnesota contends that the enforcement activities of immigration agents have trampled its 10th Amendment rights and state sovereignty, including its police power authority.

Meanwhile, private litigation is underway against ICE for violating protestors' First Amendment rights of free speech, freedom of assembly and the right to observe and record the practice of ICE. Fourth Amendment litigation is spot on, as well, as ICE agents have barged into the homes of Minneapolis residents in violation of the protection against illegal search and seizure. ICE officials have entered homes without a judicial warrant.

The Second Amendment has been brought center stage because Mr. Pretti was carrying a firearm in his waistband, in conjunction with Minnesota law and Supreme Court rulings. Department of Homeland Secretary Kristi Noem, minutes after the shooting death of Mr. Pretti, falsely accused him of being a "domestic terrorist" and "brandishing" a firearm that put the lives of ICE agents in jeopardy. Numerous videos confirm that it was an ICE agent who removed the gun from Mr. Pretti's waistband. ICE agents were never threatened. A dozen republican members of Congress have called for a "fair and impartial investigation" of the shooting, predicated on the fact that Mr. Pretti was lawfully exercising his Second Amendment right.

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The threat to voting rights, reflected in the Trump Administration's months-long demand for the state's voting rolls, and Bondi's letter, is that once these lists are obtained, it will be relatively simply for those in possession of them to intimidate voters. The DOJ has sued about two dozen states for their voter rolls, but judges have yet to rule in most of these cases. However, a federal judge threw out a lawsuit against California, declaring that the DOJ is not entitled to that information.

Under the Constitution, states are responsible for running elections, although Congress is given supervisory authority. Congress, U.S. District Judge David O. Carter, ruled, has not given the administration the authority "to centralize the private information of all Americans within the Executive Branch." Judge Carter recognized that possession of the list in the hands of the DOJ "would inevitably lead to decreasing voter turnout as voters fear that their information is being used for some inappropriate or unlawful purpose."

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

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## Groton Prairie Mixed Bowling League Week #11 Results

Team Standings: Coyotes 12, Cheetahs 11, Shihtzus 11, Jackelopes 6, Foxes 5, Chipmunks 3

Men's High Games: Vern Meyers 208 & 187, Brad Larson 193, Tony Waage 182

Women's High Games: Vicki Jorgensen 189, Darci Spanier 167, Nancy Radke 158

Men's High Series: Vern Meyers 570, Brad Larson 511, John Sippel 496

Women's High Series: Vicki Walter 449, Nancy Radke 446, Vicki Jorgensen 435

Week 11 Fun Game: Most Spares - Coyotes with 46!

## Ace of Hearts

Bridget Flihs was the winner of \$115 at the Ace of Hearts drawing held Thursday at the Groton American Legion. Ticket sales for the week were \$1,165 with the jackpot at \$22,403. She picked card #23 which was the Jack of Hearts. The next drawing is Thursday. You can purchase your tickets from Paper Paul by 1 p.m. Thursday or at the Groton Legion by 5:30 p.m.

## Bon Homme County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: 407th Avenue and 303rd Street, one mile southeast of Avon, SD

When: 3:24 p.m., Friday, January 30, 2026

Driver 1: 50-year-old male from Brunswick, NE, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2006 Chevy Cobalt

Seat belt Used: No

Bon Homme County, S.D.- A Brunswick, NE man died in a single vehicle crash Friday afternoon, one mile southeast of Avon, SD.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2006 Chevy Cobalt was traveling northbound on 407th Avenue near 303rd Street. The driver lost control of the vehicle, entered the east ditch and rolled, coming to rest in a field. The driver was partially ejected from the vehicle and sustained fatal injuries.

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

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

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**Rounds Issues Statement Following Senate's Passage of Third FY26 Appropriations Package**

## **Rounds secured \$145.7 million in funding for projects in South Dakota**

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Mike Rounds (R-S.D.), a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, issued a statement following the Senate's passage of a package of five appropriations bills for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026.

The legislation included appropriations bills for Defense; Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS); Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies (T-HUD); Financial Services and General Government (FSGG); and National Security, Department of State and Related Programs. This legislation also includes a continuing resolution for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appropriations through February 13.

"The appropriations process is one way we work to deliver real results for South Dakota. After years of continuing resolutions that reflect a Biden budget under Democrat leadership, we've now passed 11 of the 12 appropriations bills that fund 96% of government programs with President Trump's priorities," said Rounds. "This batch of appropriations bills includes several million dollars for projects in South Dakota that aim to improve in our rural health care facilities, expand our regional airports and invest in affordable housing. The bill also provides partial funding for the construction of an elementary school in Box Elder to support the influx of families from the bed down of the B-21 Raider stealth bomber.

"I'm hopeful that we'll be able to pass the Homeland Security appropriations bill. DHS houses a number of agencies that are critical for operations in our nation, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). In addition, the men and women of Customs and Border Protection and Immigrations and Customs Enforcement continue to carry out the hard work of enforcing our immigration laws in this nation. I urge my colleagues to come to an agreement as soon as possible to prevent a lapse in funding for DHS operations."

Rounds has served on the Senate Committee on Appropriations since January 2025. He serves on six subcommittees, including LHHS. Read a list of Rounds' Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) wins in the appropriations bills below totaling over \$147 million for South Dakota. While the Defense Appropriations Act does not allow CDS, the legislation includes \$88.5 million for South Dakota equities secured by Rounds.

### **Defense:**

Includes \$88.5 million for South Dakota defense companies and universities working with the Department of Defense. This work will be done in South Dakota for programs to build and develop:

Product improvement programs for weapons and munitions

Cold regions advanced materials and manufacturing

Advanced materials and manufacturing for hypersonic weapons

Enhancing high-altitude surveillance and communications capabilities

Additive manufacturing rapid maintenance capabilities

Critical hybrid advanced materials processing

Air Force Global Strike additive manufacturing rapid maintenance facilities

Upgrades for the Army's M109 Paladin self-propelled howitzers

Cold spray multi-effect munitions

Refurbishment of the Mk41 vertical launching system lines for the Aegis Combat System

APEX Accelerators to assist South Dakota small businesses working with the Department

Support for South Dakota Civil Air Patrol

STARBASE: STEM education funding for South Dakotan children

Defense Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (DEPSCoR) to help fund universities doing research for the DOD outside of traditional large-market research hubs

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## **LHHS:**

Includes seven of Rounds' CDS requests, totaling \$20.21 million:  
\$10,175,000 for cancer care equipment for Avera Health  
\$2,953,000 for the South Dakota State University College of Nursing to expand nursing education in Rapid City and Sioux Falls  
\$2,551,000 for hospital expansion and renovation at Bennett County Hospital & Nursing Home  
\$2 million for Early Childhood Enrichment Collaborative at the Boys & Girls Club of the Northern Plains  
\$1,099,000 to replace and modernize the boiler and pump upgrade at the Coteau des Prairies Hospital in Sisseton  
\$750,000 for artificial intelligence integration at South Dakota State University  
\$683,000 to replace and modernize the chiller system at the Coteau des Prairies Hospital in Sisseton  
Increases discretionary funding for the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative  
Supports National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Library of Medicine  
Supports Impact Aid, Head Start and Special Olympics Health

## **T-HUD:**

Includes seven of Rounds' CDS requests, totaling \$124.8 million:  
\$42 million for a new elementary school in the Douglas School District to support the bed-down of the B-21 bomber  
\$30 million for expansions at the Sioux Falls Regional Airport  
\$25 million for reconstruction of the Platte/Winner bridge on SD Highway 44  
\$20 million to upgrade security, ticketing and baggage at the Rapid City Regional Airport  
\$4 million for Box Elder Regional Transportation Improvement Project Planning and Design  
\$3 million for the Crow Creek Housing Authority Development to construct ten new affordable housing units  
\$840,000 for the Magdalene Dakota rehab facility for women exiting the women's prison in Pierre  
Includes \$22.2 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) – including support for FAA efforts to hire 2500 more air traffic controllers.  
Supports Native American Housing programs at HUD

## **FSGG:**

Includes one of Rounds' CDS requests:  
\$750,000 for a sallyport at the Pierre Federal Building  
Includes \$324,000,000 for the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, including \$28 million for native initiatives.

## Vermillion Tanagers surge past Groton Area DAK12/NEC Clash

MADISON, S.D. — The Groton Area Tigers made the trip to Madison on Friday for the annual DAK-12 Northeast Conference clash, but it was Vermillion that set the tone early and never let go, handing Groton Area a 71–50 loss. According to Al Bierschbach, Madison assistant athletic director, NEC schools want to pull out of the annual clash. Bierschbach said, “All NEC teams will be invited next year, and the rest of the teams will be filled in with others from around the state.”

Vermillion controlled the opening tip and immediately put the Tigers on their heels, knocking down six three-pointers in the first quarter to build a commanding 25–10 advantage. The Tanagers extended that momentum into the second quarter with a 15-point run spanning the quarter break, pushing the lead to 27–10.

Groton Area responded late in the first half with a brief rally, trimming the deficit to 13 at the break, 39–26. After a cold opening quarter in which the Tigers shot just 4-of-13 (31%) from the field, Groton warmed up in the second, hitting 6-of-12 shots (55%), while Vermillion cooled slightly to 45% shooting in the period.

Any hopes of a comeback were short-lived, however, as Vermillion reasserted control in the third quarter, stretching the lead to 57–34 heading into the final frame.

Sophomore Karson Zac was a bright spot for Groton Area, scoring 25 points — exactly half of the Tigers’ total — while knocking down 5-of-9 from beyond the arc and 5-of-6 on two-point attempts. He also added two rebounds and three assists. Senior Gage Sippel recorded a double-double with 10 points and 12 rebounds, along with two assists, two steals, and a blocked shot.



**Gage Sippel had two dunks in the Vermillion game.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



**Sophomore Karson Zak made half of Groton Area’s points as he had a season high 25 points which included five three-pointers.** (Photo by

Jeslyn Kosel)

Additional contributions came from Becker Bosma with eight points and four rebounds, Ryder Johnson with three points, three rebounds, an assist, and two steals. Keegen Tracy had four points, four assists and two steals. Easton Weber pulled down four rebounds with an assist and a steal. Ethan Kroll added a steal, and Jayden Schwan finished with two rebounds.

As a team, Groton Area shot 17-of-32 (53%) on two-point attempts, but struggled from long range at 5-of-24 (21%), and went 1-of-4 at the free-throw line. The Tigers finished with 27 rebounds, 13 assists, nine steals, one block, and 13 turnovers.

Vermillion was led by Trey Hansen, who poured in 28 points. Luke Jensen added 14 points, while Gabe Larson chipped in nine, including three three-pointers. Trenton Thomas scored eight, with Cale Cleveland and Spencer Blanchette each finishing with six. The Tanagers shot an efficient 26-of-48 (54%) from the field and went 7-of-8 at the free-throw line, committing just nine turnovers.

After the game, Groton Area head coach Greg Kjellsen pointed to a lack of early intensity as the difference.

“From the time the tipoff went, we were just never in the ball game,” Kjellsen said. “We weren’t locked in defensively, and offensively it looked like one of the first couple games of the year where we just settled for threes right off the bat.”

Kjellsen noted that while Vermillion’s hot shooting wasn’t likely to last for-

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ever, Groton failed to respond on the defensive end.

"I told the boys they weren't going to shoot like that the whole game, but we've got to get out and play some defense," he said. "When your top two or three scorers have two points with two minutes to go in the game, it's going to be tough."

The Tigers' coach praised Zac's effort in an otherwise difficult night. "Karson kept us looking at least somewhat respectable," Kjellsen said. "He came to play."

Despite the loss, Kjellsen emphasized perspective and the importance of moving forward.

"It's a long season," he said. "The sun will shine tomorrow, God willing. We've got to take care of our own business and not let this one beat us twice."

With the setback, Groton Area falls to 9-4 on the season, while Vermillion improves to 9-4. The Tigers will look to bounce back Tuesday night as they return to action against Roncalli.



**Easton Weber dribbles the ball around the Tanager defense.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

## **Game 1 – Redfield 82 Canton 64**

Player of the game – Eloi Carnicero (Redfield)

## **Game 2 – Dakota Valley 60 Sisseton 50**

Player of the Game – Tatum Sorensen (Dakota Valley)

## **Game 3 – Deuel 58 Elk Point-Jefferson 48**

Player of the Game – Braxtin Winter (Deuel)

## **Game 4 – Lennox 66 Britton-Hecla 18**

Player of the game – Aiden Hanssen (Lennox)

## **Game 5 – Rapid City Christian 49 Madison 47**

Player of the game – Peyton Glenn (RC Christian)

## **Game 6 – Vermillion 71 Groton Area 50**

Player of the Game – Trey Hansen (Vermillion)

## **Game 7 – Tri-Valley 58 Milbank 50**

Player of the Game – Brady Jewett (Tri-Valley)

## **Game 8 – Sioux Falls Christian 72 Clark/Willow Lake 61**

Player of the Game – Brant Wassernar (SFC)

## **Game 9 – Dell Rapids 72 Mobridge-Pollock 62**

Player of the Game – Lincoln Anderson (DR)

## **Game 10 – West Central 69 Hamlin 48**

Player of the game – Connor Mebius (WC)



**Coach Greg Kjellsen talks to his team during a time out.** (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

## Groton Area dominates home mats, claims team title at Groton Wrestling Tournament

GROTON — Groton Area put together a complete performance Saturday on its home mats, rolling to the team championship at the Groton Wrestling Tournament with 255 points, well ahead of runner-up Britton/Hecla (182.5) and Gettysburg (120). The Tigers crowned seven individual champions, added multiple podium finishes, and received contributions from every wrestler in the lineup.

Groton Area's championship run began at 90–98 pounds, where Bentley Ehresmann (13-9) turned in a dominant day. Ehresmann opened with a pin over Tate Sjurson of Watertown JV, followed by technical falls against Will Finnegan of Sioux Falls O'Gorman JV and Lorin Schaller of Wessington Springs/Woonsocket/Wolsey/Wessington, before closing out the title with an 8-0 major decision over Cashton Rausch of Gettysburg.

At 106 pounds, Preston Hinkelman (19-13) placed fourth after recording three falls. Hinkelman pinned Westyn Hofer of Clark/Willow Lake and Emmett O'Leary of Timber Lake, while also earning a win before falling to Lincoln Kilker of Britton/Hecla in the semifinals and Leo Walraven of Watertown JV in the third-place match.

Luke Gauer (8-15) also finished fourth at 113 pounds. Gauer opened with a pin over Colt Nichols of Clark/Willow Lake, then added a consolation pin against Michael Pickrel of Watertown JV, before falling to Landry Weiss of Watertown JV and Axel DeYoung of Redfield in medal-round matches.

Groton crowned another champion at 120 pounds as Wyatt Hagen (25-6) claimed first place with pins over Ashyr Leddy and Tanner Urdahl of Watertown JV and Harley Valley of Webster Area, along with a decision win over Retro Benson of Lemmon. Teammates Parker Zoellner (1-4) and Xzander Lopan (0-2) also competed at the weight, with Zoellner facing Retro Benson of Lemmon and Wambli White Tail of McLaughlin, and Lopan wrestling Joseph O'Connor of Sioux Falls O'Gorman JV and Corey Roberts of Wessington Springs/Woonsocket/Wolsey/Wessington.

At 126 pounds, Kyson Kucker (23-7) dominated the bracket, pinning Ernest Walette of Huron JV, Blake Lei of Timber Lake, and Sutton Peterson of Lemmon to capture the championship. The Tigers followed with another title at 132 pounds as Noah Scepaniak (18-13) earned wins over Jax Le of Watertown JV and Stephen Martens of Huron JV, in addition to a forfeit win against Hanson, finishing with a major decision in the finals.

Aiden Strom (6-13) placed third at 138 pounds after rebounding from an early loss to Mason Severson of Clark/Willow Lake with wins over Izaya Velasquez of Gettysburg and Sidney Morgan of Timber Lake. At 144 pounds, Grayson Flores (9-16) finished fourth, earning a forfeit win against Hanson and a pin over Charles White Buffalo of McLaughlin, before losses to Luke Minor of Sioux Falls O'Gorman JV and Kaleb Ellingson of Lemmon.

At 150 pounds, Kason Oswald (8-16) competed against Maxwell Anderson of Lemmon and Tanner Johnsen of Wessington Springs/Woonsocket/Wolsey/Wessington but did not place.

Groton Area added another champion at 157 pounds, where Donavon Block (20-11) defeated Rayin Mansfield of Warner/Northwestern before pinning Chase Furuli of Gettysburg in the championship match. Ben Hoeft (14-14) placed sixth at 165 pounds, recording a pin over Rio Zaher of Wessington Springs/Woonsocket/Wolsey/Wessington, while also facing Ayden Forgey of Gettysburg and Austin Nash of Warner/Northwestern.

At 175 pounds, Isaiah Scepaniak (15-14) placed fourth after pinning Alex Lutter of Hoven and Behrett Ahrens of Clark/Willow Lake, with losses coming against Trace Genzler of Gettysburg and Nathan Hubsch of Webster Area. Walker Zoellner (18-7) delivered a strong runner-up finish at 190 pounds, advancing to the finals with quick pins over Trey Dahl of Watertown JV and Giovanni Rodriguez of Huron JV before falling to Tucker Hardy of Britton/Hecla.

Layne Johnson (14-3) battled through the consolation bracket to place third at 215 pounds, pinning Lane Brown of Warner/Northwestern, Liam Paxton of Britton/Hecla, and Kyle Gebhart of Lemmon, with his only loss coming to Quentin White Mountain of McLaughlin. Rounding out the Groton lineup, Gavin Englund (26-2) capped the tournament with a championship at 285 pounds, pinning Rollie Betten of Redfield in the finals.

Behind Groton Area and Britton/Hecla in the team standings were Gettysburg, Lemmon, Watertown JV, Huron JV, Clark/Willow Lake, Sully Buttes, Redfield, Warner/Northwestern, McLaughlin, Sioux Falls O'Gorman JV, Ipswich/Leola/Bowdle, Webster Area, Timber Lake, Wessington Springs/Woonsocket/Wolsey/Wessington, Hoven, Tiospa Zina, Hanson, and Ortonville.

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**Tina's Baskets**

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**Reese's cake with mini Reese's on top  
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**Mix candy cake with mini mix on top with  
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rero chocolate candy with a bear with it  
\$25.00**



**Bear sucker cake with life savers and dum  
dum suckers in it  
\$15.00**

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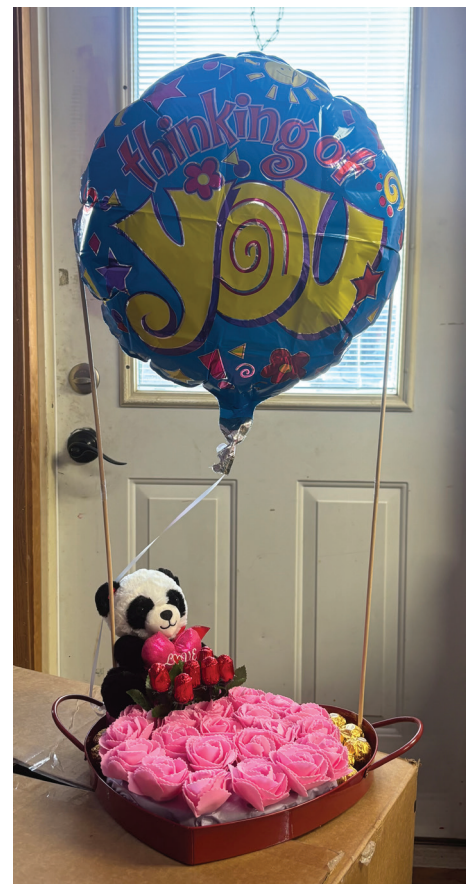
**Hersheys cake with strawberry drops and mini Hersheys on top  
\$40.00**



**Laffy Taffy Octopus cake  
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**Relax and Unwind basket with two wine bottles, blanket, adult coloring books and word finds with crayons and pens and some different chocolates as shown here  
\$50.00**



**Thinking of you balloon with bear, red chocolate roses with pink roses and Ferrero Rocher chocolate candy  
\$25.00**

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## Wolves Sweep Mustangs to Cap I Hate Winter Weekend

ABERDEEN, S.D. — It was a successful close to I Hate Winter Weekend 2026 for the Northern State University Wolves, as both the men's and women's basketball teams picked up hard-fought victories over Southwest Minnesota State Mustangs inside Wachs Arena.

### Men Rally Late for Key Conference Win

The Northern State men's basketball team erased a halftime deficit Saturday night, outscoring SMSU 36-26 in the second half to earn a 70-63 victory. The Wolves shot efficiently throughout the contest, finishing at 48.1 percent from the floor and 47.8 percent from three-point range while holding the Mustangs to just 3-of-13 shooting from beyond the arc.

Northern also controlled the glass with a 36-31 rebounding advantage and recorded 18 assists, 11 made three-pointers, and three blocks. The Wolves scored 26 points off the bench, added 24 points in the paint, and converted eight points off turnovers.

Marshawn Smith led all scorers with 27 points on 11-of-21 shooting, adding seven rebounds and two assists. Nelson Reynolds and James Glenn combined for 22 points off the bench, shooting a perfect 6-for-6 from three-point range. Tobi Obiora pulled down a team-high 12 rebounds and recorded two blocks, while Joshua Book dished out a career-high ten assists to go along with eight points and five rebounds.

The win moved Northern State to 8-14 overall and 8-8 in NSIC play, while Southwest Minnesota State fell to 14-7 overall and 12-4 in the conference.

### Women Hold Off Late Push to Secure Second Upset

Earlier in the day, the Northern State women's basketball team also defended its home floor, defeating SMSU 74-66 to secure its second upset victory of the weekend. Northern jumped out to a fast start, outscoring the Mustangs 21-10 in the opening quarter before SMSU responded with a strong second period to trail just 35-32 at halftime.

After surrendering the lead midway through the fourth quarter, Izzy Moore took control down the stretch, scoring ten of her game-high 26 points in the final six minutes. Moore finished with six rebounds, three assists, and two steals while shooting 50 percent from the field and from three-point range.

Reagan Rus recorded her seventh double-figure scoring effort of the season with 12 points, adding four rebounds, two assists, and two steals in a season-high 28 minutes. Morgan Fiedler knocked down a pair of three-pointers on her way to eight points, while Lily Klein contributed six points and a team-high eight rebounds. Carli Kuyper and Taylor Tool chipped in six points apiece.

Northern State limited its mistakes throughout the contest, committing just six turnovers — its lowest total of the season — while shooting 43.1 percent from the floor and 42.9 percent from long range. The Wolves improved to 12-10 overall and 7-9 in NSIC play, while SMSU dropped to 13-8 overall and 11-5 in the conference.

### Up Next

Both Northern State squads remain at home next week. The women will host a rematch with Minnesota Crookston on Thursday at 5:30 p.m., while the men tip off against the Golden Eagles at 7:30 p.m. before hosting MSU Moorhead on Saturday night.



## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

Rise up, my love, my fair one,  
and come away!  
O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,  
in the secret places of the cliff,  
let me see your face,  
let me hear your voice;  
for your voice is sweet,  
and your face is lovely.

🌀 Song of Solomon 2: 13,14 🌀



*"Blue Nude 2" by Henri Matisse (1952)*

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## BIBLE

## TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. From Revelation 2, what city was said by John to have “Satan’s seat”? *Pergamos, Miletus, Patara, Sodom*

3. Whose first chapter begins, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners”? *Mark, Galatians, Hebrews, Jude*

4. From Acts 13, where were Paul and Barnabas deserted by Mark? *Jericho, Perga, Athens, Damascus*

5. What were Gihon, Pishon, Tigris and Euphrates as connected with the Garden of Eden? *Cities, Kings, Rivers, Caves*

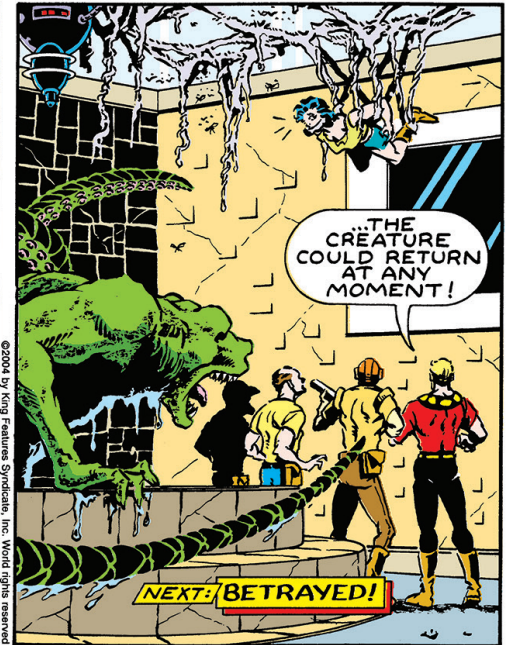
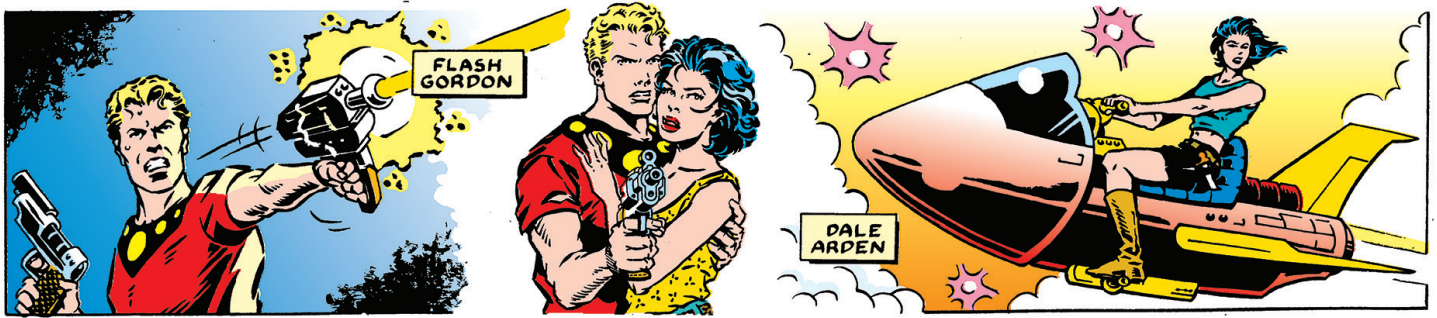
6. From 1 Kings, who is given credit for writing 1,005 songs? *Jacob, Solomon, Philip, David*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Pergamos, 3) Hebrews, 4) Perga, 5) Rivers, 6) Solomon

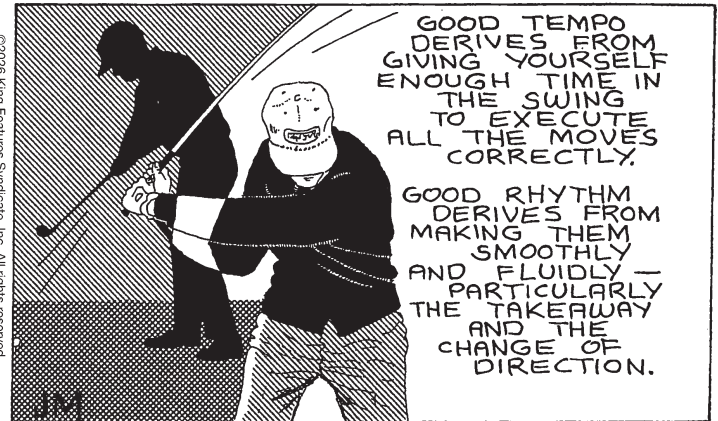
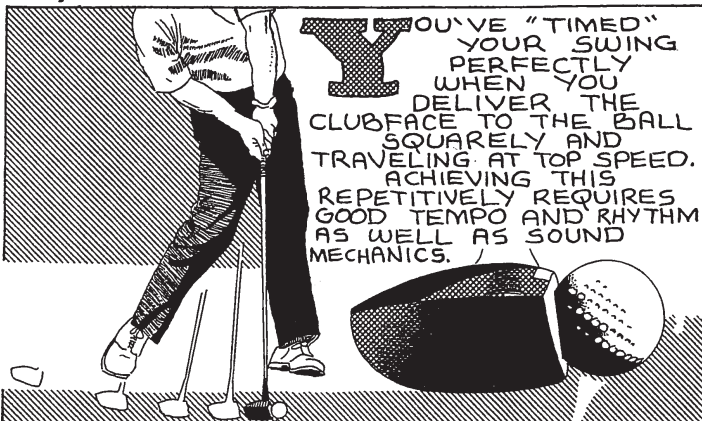
*Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey’s subscribersite at [www.patreon.com/triviaguy](http://www.patreon.com/triviaguy).*

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## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





## Getting Vaccines in the Same Day or Arm Is up to Preference

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have notes from friends at home who are getting their COVID vaccines and high-dose flu shots on the same day in the same arm. They talk about being completely wiped out and the cons of having two sore arms. Does it matter if you get the shots in one arm or the other? I suspect that it's fine to do them both in one arm, and there's no advantage to dividing it over time or by arm. -- N.W.

ANSWER: Recent studies seem to suggest that getting the COVID-19 vaccine in the same arm as previous vaccines leads to higher short-term vaccine effectiveness; however, another recent study shows that getting a subsequent COVID-19 vaccine in the opposite arm leads to higher antibody

levels, which are also longer-lasting.

I suspect that there is no major difference whether you consistently get the vaccine in the same arm or not. Personally, I always get my COVID vaccine in my nondominant arm, but I have colleagues who prefer the vaccine in their dominant arm (as they are convinced that moving more means a faster resolution to a sore arm, which is very common after any vaccine).

Getting both your COVID and flu vaccines at the same time is convenient for people who have trouble getting to their provider or when there is no pharmacy near them that provides the vaccine. It's most efficient to get both done at the same time, but when I have done so, I get one in one arm and one in the other. Again, it's a personal preference.

\*\*\*

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have high blood pressure and a chronic heart condition that is treated with rosuvastatin and clopidogrel. I do not have high cholesterol. Even so, my cardiologist strongly recommends that I continue rosuvastatin as a precautionary measure. Does this make sense? -- T.L.

ANSWER: The goal of rosuvastatin and other statin drugs is to reduce the risk of heart disease complications, including heart attacks, strokes and death. Not everybody who gets these complications will have high cholesterol.

They might have other risk factors such as the high blood pressure you have, or they might have diabetes or less-common lipid issues like a high Lp(a). A high Lp(a) is a risk factor that is not always looked for, but it is important in a person with known heart disease or in those who have a strong family history despite having no traditional risk factors.

In a person who is at a higher risk despite normal or even desirable cholesterol levels (especially a person with known blockages in their arteries), the benefits of treatment outweigh the risks for nearly everyone. There are several calculators your doctor can go over with you to estimate your risk -- with and without medicines like rosuvastatin.

It's critical to remember that statin drugs (and other medications that we traditionally call "cholesterol medicines") are effective in people who are at a high risk even if their cholesterol levels are normal.

You are on clopidogrel (Plavix), which is given to people to prevent blood clots, especially people who are at a high risk such as those with a stent or a history of a stroke. This suggests to me that your doctor thinks you are at a high risk, so the use of a potent statin like rosuvastatin is appropriate in this case.

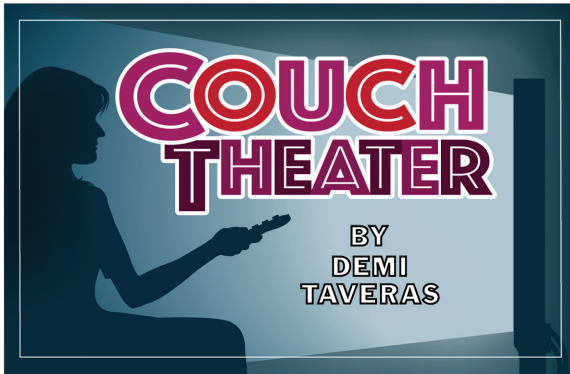
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).

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**Timothee Chalamet stars in "Marty Supreme."**

(Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

"Marty Supreme" (R) -- A24 scored another success, both critically and financially, with this sports comedy-drama film led by Timothee Chalamet ("A Complete Unknown"). Loosely based on table tennis player Marty Reisman's 1974 memoir, the film picks up in 1952 when a young Marty Mauser (Chalamet) is working as a shoe salesman while competing in table tennis professionally. Marty is determined to be great and make his dream of winning the British Open come true, even if he has to cut a few corners and step on some toes to get there. Meanwhile, Marty's a messy romantic whose eyes bounce between retired actress Kay Stone (Gwyneth Paltrow) and his married childhood friend Rachel Mizler (Odessa A'zion). So far, "Marty Supreme" has earned Chalamet a Golden Globe and a Critics' Choice Award for Best Actor; his sights are now on nabbing that Oscar statuette. Out to rent on Feb. 3. (Apple TV+)

"The Housemaid" (R) -- After Sydney Sweeney's silly ad about jeans started to tank her career and cost her "Christy" film to bomb, she was forced to apologize and get it together ahead of the premiere of her erotic psychological thriller. (Which ended up being somewhat of a success!) Co-starring the lovely Amanda Seyfried ("The Testament of Ann Lee") and Brandon Sklenar ("Drop"), the film follows a young woman named Millie (Sweeney) who has a criminal past and becomes a live-in housekeeper for the wealthy Winchesters. Millie soon learns that Nina (Seyfried), the mother and wife of the family, is mentally unwell and quickly begins to suffer the consequences of being her housemaid. It is only when Millie is pushed to the brink that she realizes why she was hired for the Winchesters and who this family really is. Out to rent on Feb. 3. (Amazon Prime Video)

"The 68th Annual Grammy Awards" (TV-PG) -- CBS just won't let go of Trevor Noah as the host for the Grammys, making it the sixth consecutive time that the comedian has hosted. (They just don't make hosts like they used to ...) But this is the final year that CBS will be broadcasting the ceremony, as the show has plans to move to ABC and Disney platforms after this year. Performers include Sabrina Carpenter, Pharrell Williams, and a medley that features all eight nominees for Best New Artists (including girl band Katseye and pop singer Addison Rae). Meanwhile, musicians like Bad Bunny, Kendrick Lamar, Justin Bieber, Lady Gaga and Billie Eilish are duking it out in the major categories of "Song of the Year," "Album of the Year," and "Record of the Year." Stream it now to skip all the pesky commercials and just get to the good parts. (Paramount+)

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1. Which artist had his first No. 1 chart-topper with "Mandy"?
2. Who was the first to release "Got My Mind Set on You"?
3. Name the artist who was born Charles Edwin Hatcher.  
Hint: "Contact" and "War."
4. Who released "Mad About You" in 1986?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Risn' up, back on the street, Took my time, took my chances, Went the distance."

Answers

1. Barry Manilow, in 1974. Scott English wrote and originally released the song in 1971, calling it "Brandy." Manilow changed the song to "Mandy" so it wouldn't be confused with Looking Glass' "Brandy (You're a Fine Girl)."
2. James Ray, in 1962. George Harrison followed with a cover in 1987 both as a single and on his "Cloud Nine" album.
3. Edwin Starr. "Contact" and "War" were Starr's only No. 1 hits.
4. Belinda Carlisle after she left The Go-Go's.
5. "Eye of the Tiger," by Survivor, in 1982. The song was at the top of the chart for 15 weeks and was used as the theme song for "Rocky III" the same year. It then won a Grammy for Best Rock Performance by Duo or Group with Vocal.

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## GRIN and BEAR IT <sup>by Wagner</sup>



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"You've got to stop putting your foot in your mouth, Senator!"

## Just Like Cats & Dogs

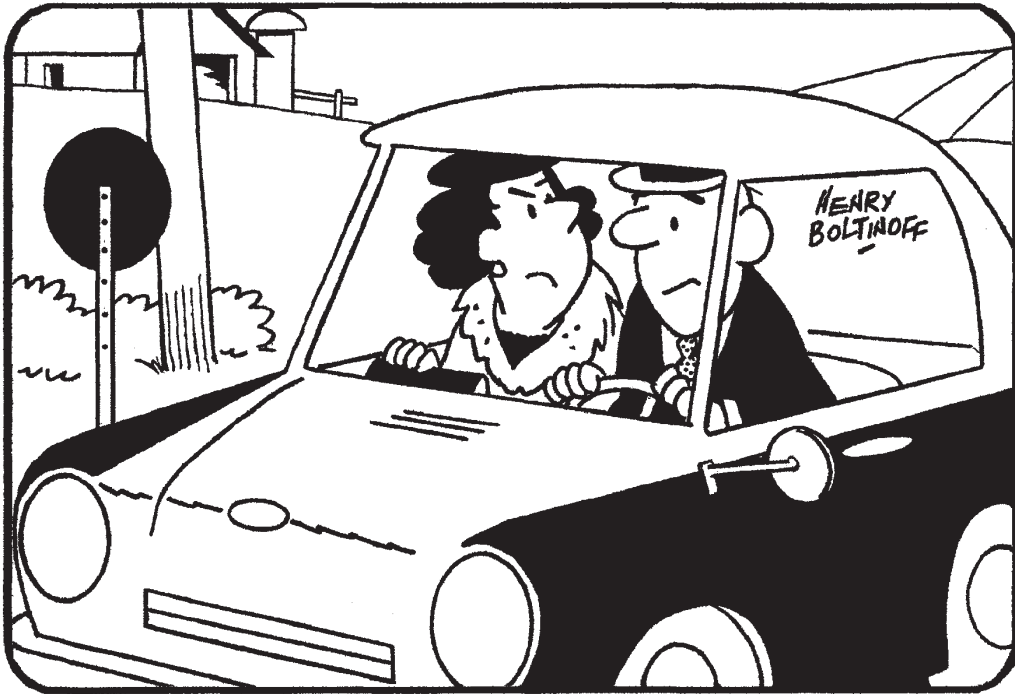
by Dave T. Phipps



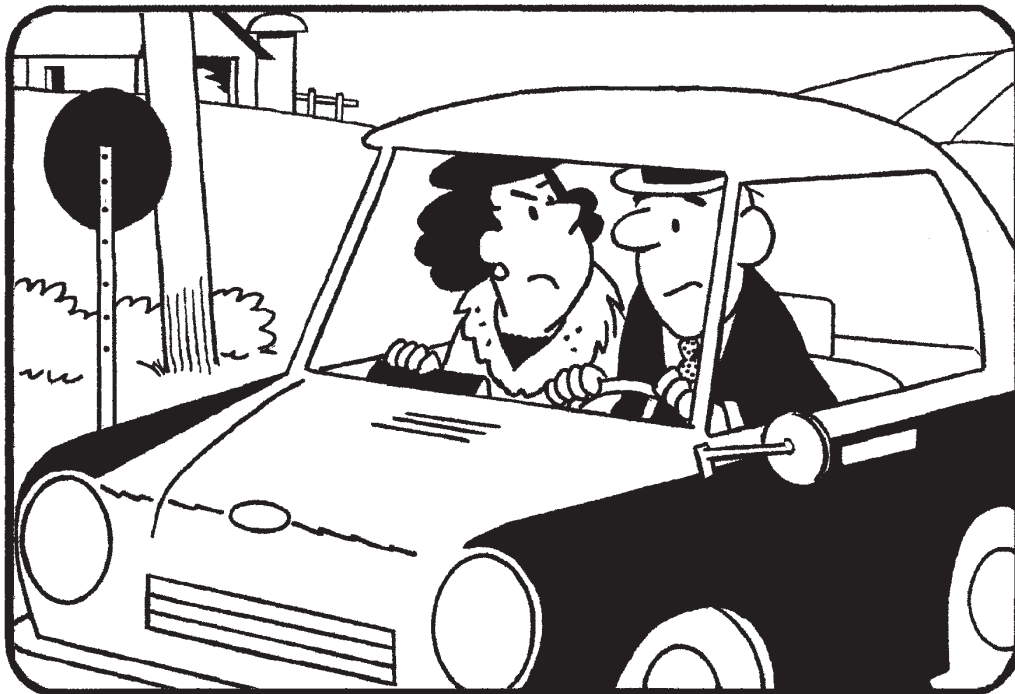
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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Side mirror is moved. 2. Grille is different. 3. Sign is taller. 4. Door handle is different. 5. Fence is different. 6. Headrest is added.

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\* "Keep cats indoors during very cold weather. They are particularly vulnerable to freezing. If you can leave the curtains drawn on a window where Kitty can look outside and sunbathe, she probably will be happy." -- M.R. in Washington

\* This is some good advice given to me by my grandmother if you have lots of outdoor or feral cats in your area: Start your car with a bang -- on the hood, that is. When the overnight temperature dips, cats know to find someplace that is wind-shielded and off the ground, and sometimes, that means they will climb up into your engine area to hunker down. If your car starts, they can be hurt or even killed. Give the hood a knock to let a cat know to get out quick.

\* Pet paws need extra care in the cold months, especially dogs that must be walked in icy and snowy conditions. Here's a great tip from Y.L. in New York: "I keep a small towel with me on my daily dog walks, but I also wash off my dog's paws with a warm washcloth when we return. Another thing I do is to rub petroleum jelly into her pads once a day. They really take a beating having to go out three times a day in salty, muddy, cold conditions. She won't wear doggie booties, so this works best for us."

\* If you keep birds, a reminder: Never preheat pans on high heat, especially nonstick pans. They can let off a chemical that you or I cannot even detect, but can be a health hazard for your bird friend that is in the kitchen area. Don't keep birds in the kitchen when cooking.

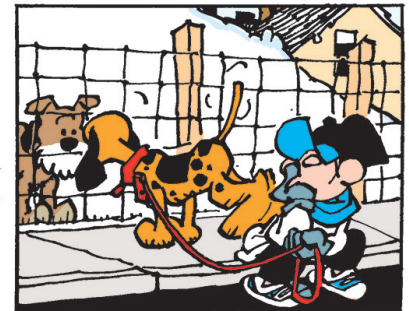
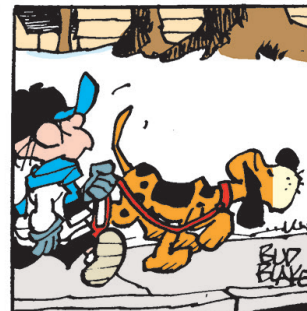
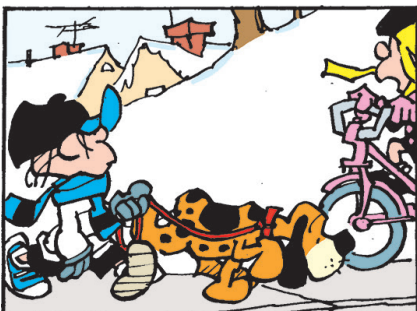
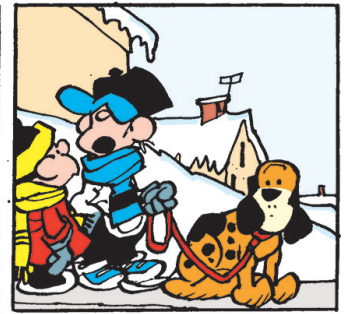
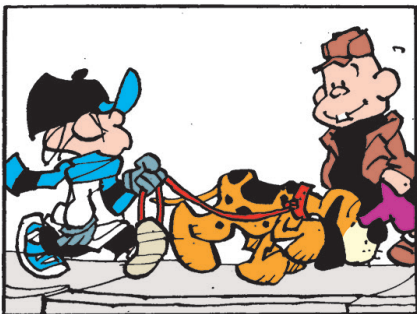
\* Spread a teaspoon of peanut butter thinly on a paper plate, then when the dog is busy with his treat, you can trim his nails. Or sometimes just having it nearby as a promised treat can do the trick to distract your pet. Good luck!

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 1800 Pembroke Dr., Suite 300, Orlando, FL 32810.

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**TIGER**

by **BUD BLAKE**



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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Table support
- 4 Mosque leader
- 8 Island near Java
- 12 Terre Haute sch.
- 13 Terse denial
- 14 Poetic tributes
- 15 Ecol. watchdog
- 16 Faints
- 18 Word list, for short
- 20 Japanese pond carp
- 21 Sty chow
- 24 Rebuffs
- 28 Review in detail

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  |    | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |    | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 |
| 12 |    |    |    | 13 |    |    |    |    | 14 |    |    |    |
| 15 |    |    |    | 16 |    |    |    | 17 |    |    |    |    |
| 18 |    |    | 19 |    |    |    | 20 |    |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    | 21 |    | 22 | 23 |    | 24 |    | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 |    |    |    |    | 31 |    | 32 |    |    |    |
| 33 |    |    |    | 34 |    |    |    | 35 |    | 36 |    |    |
| 37 |    |    | 38 |    | 39 |    |    |    | 40 |    |    |    |
| 41 |    |    |    | 42 |    | 43 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    | 44 |    | 45 |    |    | 46 |    | 47 | 48 | 49 |
| 50 | 51 | 52 |    |    |    | 53 | 54 |    |    | 55 |    |    |
| 56 |    |    |    |    | 57 |    |    |    |    | 58 |    |    |
| 59 |    |    |    |    | 60 |    |    |    |    | 61 |    |    |

- 32 Pesky insect
- 33 Friendly leader?
- 34 Albacore and yellowfin
- 36 Playwright Levin
- 37 Finn's floater
- 39 Revamp
- 41 Vampire, by nature
- 43 Nobelist Walesa
- 44 Bar bill
- 46 Savory taste
- 50 Begin anew, as on January 1
- 55 — Angeles
- 56 California valley
- 57 Egyptian river
- 58 Book-spine abbr.
- 59 Afternoon affairs
- 60 Darkens
- 61 Oklahoma city
- DOWN**
- 1 Schreiber of "Ray Donovan"
- 2 Hockey legend Phil, to fans
- 3 Avocado dip, for short
- 4 Rorschach pattern
- 5 Curly's brother
- 6 Devoured
- 7 Moo juice
- 8 Fan disapproval
- 9 Pt. of speech
- 10 Author Harper
- 11 Leb. neighbor
- 17 "Mayday!"
- 19 Bat wood
- 22 Egg
- 23 Prison-related
- 25 Rice or Auburn (Abbr.)
- 26 Naked
- 27 Rating unit
- 28 Basil or thyme
- 29 Smoothie
- 30 Cushy
- 31 Yard tool
- 35 Locks down
- 38 Block-dropping video game
- 40 Resistance unit
- 42 Scoundrel
- 45 Connection
- 47 Edison's middle name
- 48 Disposition
- 49 Actress Fisher
- 50 Retired jet
- 51 Dead heat
- 52 "I — Rock"
- 53 Half of XIV
- 54 Shade tree

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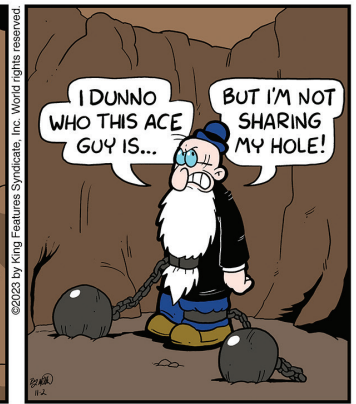
## King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

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

## Olive



## Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas

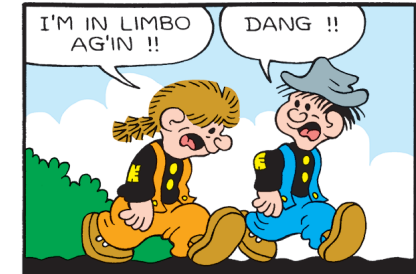
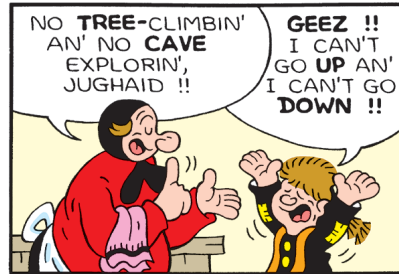
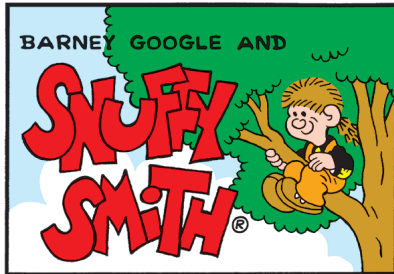
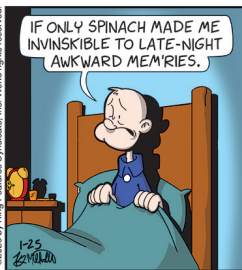
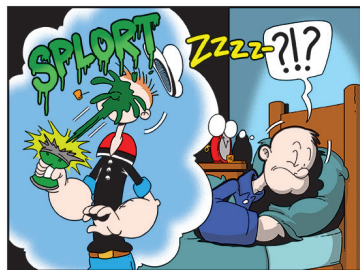
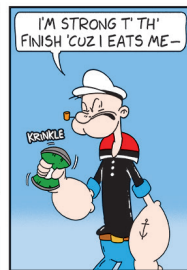
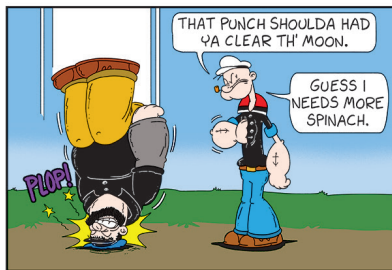
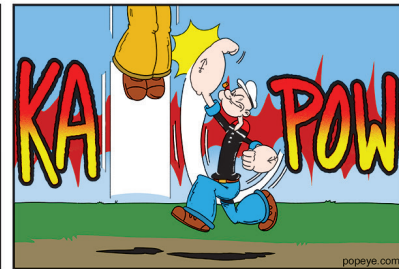
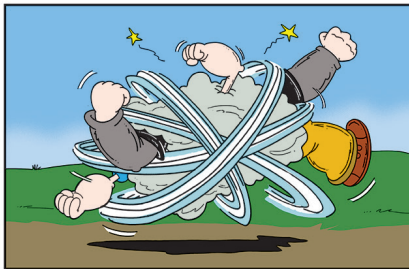
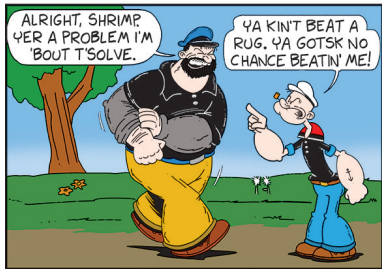
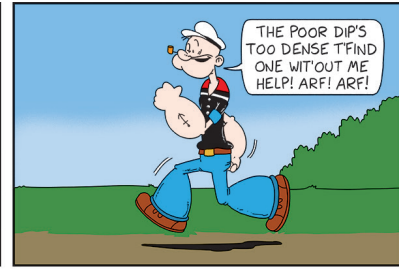
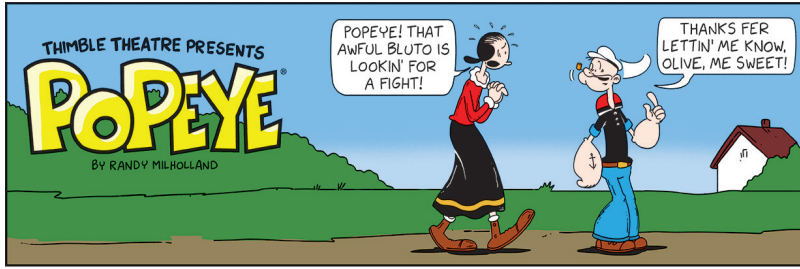
IF FUNXSUTAWNEY PAUL SEES HIS AMEX BILL FROM DECEMBER. IT'S ANOTHER SIX WEEKS OF RAMEN NOODLES FOR DINNER

KOPERVAS

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com.scribblenation.com/characters/barney-google-and-snuffy-smith

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HAL FOSTER'S  
**Prince Valiant**  
BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

MUCH TO GUNDAR HARL'S HORROR, THANAA TAKES THE CAPTIVES' LIVES INTO HER OWN HANDS: "YOU ARE DOOMED!" SHE SCREAMS AT THE PIRATES...

AND, TO THE CHILDLIKE JOGTHURA: "POLYPHEMUS - AWAKEN!"

4061

THE DOCILE GIANT IS INSTANTLY TRANSFORMED INTO HER MYTHICAL MONSTER!

BEFORE THE PIRATES CAN OVERCOME THEIR SUPERSTITIOUS DREAD, THE GIANT MOVES WITH ELECTRIC QUICKNESS, ATTACKING THE CLOSEST TWO...

... HE SENDS THEM TO A TERRIBLE DOOM, SO QUICKLY THAT GUNDAR CANNOT DECIDE IF THANAA IS JUST IMPETUOUS, OR HAS PLAYED HIM FOR A FOOL! REGARDLESS, THE BATTLE FOR THE CAPTIVES HAS BEGUN!

MEANWHILE, ON THE FAR END OF THE ISLAND, THE MAIN BODY OF PIRATES, LED BY STRAKONUS, FORCE VAL AND HIS WARRIORS INEVITABLY BACK. "THEY WILL SOON HAVE MEN OVER THE ROCKS AND BEHIND US," VAL TELLS HIS COMPANIONS. "WE WILL BE SURROUNDED."

NEXT: Into the hills

YEATES 12/7/14

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

THE WEATHER IS WEIRD TODAY.

WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?

THE SUN HAS ON A FUNNY NOSE AND GLASSES!

PICKERING

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## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Courses on AARP

Are you a member of AARP? Even with the recent price increase (from \$15 to \$20 per year), there is still a lot to recommend it.

The AARP Skills Builder for Work section is a valuable benefit, even if we're not still working, because the skills can be helpful to us now for our cognitive health, memory and task focusing. To develop the courses, AARP has partnered with MindEdge Learning, an online company that provides professional development and higher education classes. MindEdge was created by Harvard and MIT for interactive, self-paced learning. There are even credits and certificates for completion.

It was the Communication section of the MindEdge website that caught my eye, and I zeroed in on Advanced Grammar. The MindEdge Studio section looks fun as well, with an introduction to drawing course. Start by looking at AARP's Skills Builder page ([www.aarp.org/work/skills-builder](http://www.aarp.org/work/skills-builder)), or see [mindedge.com/course-catalog](http://mindedge.com/course-catalog) for the available courses.

There's more to AARP's course offerings, however. Put "courses" in the search box of the main site ([www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)). Right at the top of the page are courses for defensive driving for older drivers and the online smart driver course. (Ask your insurance agent if this course could get you a discount on your insurance premium.) Use the dropdown menu to narrow your selections.

If what you really want is online games, AARP has those, too. Remember FreeCell Solitaire, the game that came installed on the first computer we ever owned? It's on the AARP games page. (There is also Classic Solitaire for the purists among us.)

The Games Center has arcade games, daily crossword, word games and a special section for members only. If you want a real mind-stretcher, look for the 10 x 10 game.

To save on the cost of an AARP membership, consider signing up for three years for \$55, which saves you a few dollars.

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15 N Main St. - Ste. 101  
Downtown Groton

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

Open 24/7

**GDI**

**Living Heart Fitness Center**

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

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1. What Chicago White Sox player's 1990 Topps rookie card became coveted by collectors after an error led to a small number of cards being issued without his name printed on the front?

2. What British boxer knocked out Jake Paul, the social media influencer turned prizefighter, in the sixth round of a December 2025 bout in Miami, Florida?

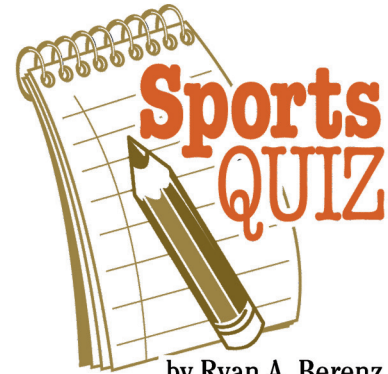
3. William Walter "Pudge" Heffelfinger, considered the first professional football player, was paid how much to compete for the Allegheny Athletic Association in a November 1892 game vs. the Pittsburgh Athletic Club?

4. Name the Basketball Hall of Famer, a member of the 1978 NBA champion Washington Bullets, who recorded exactly 50,000 NBA minutes played in a career spanning 1968-84.

5. What U.S. city has a drawbridge named after Japanese Baseball Hall of Famer and Pacific Coast League legend Lefty O'Doul?

6. What team finished the 2025 regular season with a 10-2 record but declined to play in any bowl game after not being selected to the College Football Playoff field?

7. Name the seven-time Formula 1 World Drivers' Championship winner who suffered severe brain trauma in a 2013 skiing accident in the French Alps.



by Ryan A. Berenz

## Answers

1. Frank Thomas.
2. Anthony Joshua.
3. \$500.
4. Elvin Hayes.
5. San Francisco.
6. The Notre Dame Fighting Irish.
7. Michael Schumacher.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





## Trouble finding a pet-friendly apartment? You're not alone

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I've been struggling to find an apartment that will accept pets. I have a parakeet named "Bert" and a big mutt of a dog named "Georgie," and while some landlords are OK with a bird, they all draw the line at dogs. My current lease is not being renewed, and I only have a few weeks left to find a place. Why do so many landlords not allow pets? I'm so frustrated. -- Cary in Waltham, Massachusetts

DEAR CARY: Trying to find a rental property in or near a major city that accepts pets is a tough slog. Why has it become so? A number of factors are at play, but they all add up to the same thing: Landlords don't want the liability and maintenance issues that they assume pets

cause in rental properties.

This attitude caused pet deposits to skyrocket -- \$300 to \$500 per pet in some cases -- and "pet rent" (additional fees each month from \$35 to over \$100) to become a thing at many properties. Other landlords simply banned pets altogether, making an exception only for service animals. For renters who aren't able to come up with the extra fees, the choices they have are stark: Either try to find another place, or give up their pets in order to find housing. This has hit elderly renters especially hard, and their beloved pets frequently end up in shelters.

What solutions are there? Short term, not many. There are still some deluded folks who ask, "Why don't pet owners just buy their own house?" But most of us know the answer to that. In Massachusetts, the MSPCA (Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) is supporting two pet-friendly housing bills, but any change will be slow to arrive.

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

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## Strange BUT TRUE

\* Actor Paul Newman once said he was tired of people asking him to remove his sunglasses so they could see his famous blue eyes, confessing that his stock response was, "I would take off my sunglasses, madam, but my pants would fall down."

\* Six million pounds of space dust settle on Earth every year.

\* The Bahamas once boasted an undersea post office, Sea Floor Bahamas, established in 1939, which allowed mail to be posted with a unique "Sea Floor" postmark, which became

a hit with stamp collectors until the office closed in 1942.

\* Many birds' feathers weigh more than their bones.

\* A hill in New Zealand is named Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotamateapokaiwhenuakitanatahu.

\* Astronauts on Mars won't just make plans based on temperature, but will also need to consider tau, the level of particulate matter in the atmosphere. High tau levels will block sunlight to solar-powered rovers.

\* A coyote can hear a mouse moving under a foot of snow.

\* Since 1971, Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, has issued permits to unicorn hunters.

\* The 1967 Outer Space Treaty forbids any nation from trying to own the moon.

\* Pelé is the only soccer player to ever be a part of three different World Cup winning teams.

\* "Beauty and the Beast" was the first animated film to be nominated for Best Picture. It lost to "The Silence of the Lambs."

\* Wisconsin is known as the Badger State because the area's lead miners used to spend winters in tunnels burrowed into hills -- like badgers.

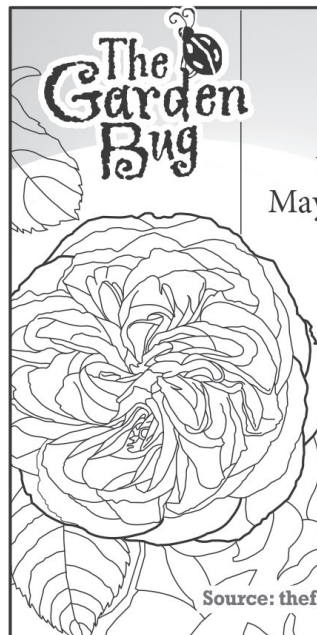
\* Honey hunters in Mozambique use special calls to recruit the services of birds known as honeyguides, which lead the hunters to bees' nests.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "Imperfection is beauty, madness is genius, and it's better to be absolutely ridiculous than absolutely boring." -- Marilyn Monroe

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The rose variety "**Gertrude Jekyll**" was named "World's Favourite Rose" by the World Federation of Rose Societies at its May 2025 convention held in Fukuyama, Japan. Rose enthusiasts all over the world love its vibrant pink color, its elegant shape, large blooms loaded with petals from late spring through fall, and its exquisite perfume. A Gertrude Jekyll rose needs a minimum of 4 hours of sunlight per day during the growing season, well-draining soil and adequate air circulation around it.

— Brenda Weaver

Source: [theflorajournal.international](http://theflorajournal.international), [www.bhg.com](http://www.bhg.com), [www.worldrose.org](http://www.worldrose.org)



by Freddy Groves

## Using your GI Bill education benefits

GI Bill education benefits come with several forms of help, including a monthly housing allowance (MHA). To be eligible for a full-time allowance, you need to be enrolled in a full-time slate of classes that equal 12 credits. But it's not quite that simple.

The actual amount of money you receive for the MHA depends partially on where you live (more if the area has a high cost of living) and partially on how you attend those classes. If you're

taking all of your full-time classes online, did you know that you can increase your housing allowance by taking at least one in-person class? That one class changes your MHA category to in-person, getting you more benefit money, nearly double the rate you would get for only attending classes online. If all of your classes are online, your monthly housing allowance will be approximately half of the national average, which is quite a deduction.

To find a school that qualifies for you to receive benefits, go to [www.va.gov/education/gi-bill-comparison-tool](http://www.va.gov/education/gi-bill-comparison-tool). Be certain your school qualifies; the January 2026 file of GI Bill Quick Facts indicates there are over 600 suspended institutions. Ask at the school about what they call "hybrid" classes, the combination of online and in-person classes, and if they're allowed.

Many of your questions about your education benefits can be answered at [www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/how-to-use-benefits](http://www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/how-to-use-benefits). When it's time to apply, you can do that online at [www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply](http://www.va.gov/education/how-to-apply). Start at the top of the page with the eligibility information. Note the service periods: 90 days of active duty after Sept. 10, 2001, or 30 days of continuous service after that date, or if you received a Purple Heart after that date.

Be sure to look at the details for the Yellow Ribbon Program. It covers several expenses the GI Bill doesn't, such as out-of-state or graduate school tuition.

Where there is a desire for education, there is usually a way to make it happen. Call the VA Education Call Center at 888-442-4551 for help.

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## Wishing Well®

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
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| V | V | T | U | C | I | S | E | O | R | M | T | E |
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| E | N | O | D | I | E | U | E | U | S | R | L | E |
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| D | E | L | R | U | D | N | S | S | C | T | E | D |

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. GAMES: What color is Sonic the Hedgehog in the video game?
2. GEOGRAPHY: What is the former name of the U.S. Virgin Islands?
3. MOVIES: What are the colors of the striped sweater Freddy Krueger wears in "A Nightmare on Elm Street"?
4. MEDICAL TERMS: What is a more common name for pneumothorax?
5. HISTORY: By which name is Martha Jane Canary more commonly known?
6. TELEVISION: What is Hawk-eye Pierce's real first name in the "M\*A\*S\*H" series?
7. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a group of larks called?
8. AD SLOGANS: Which car company uses the ad slogan "Driven by passion"?
9. MYTHOLOGY: What is the head of the Egyptian god of death, Anubis?
10. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the currency of Japan?

### Answers

1. Blue.
2. The Danish West Indies.
3. Red and green.
4. Collapsed lung.
5. Calamity Jane, a sharpshooter in Western history.
6. Benjamin.
7. An exaltation.
8. Fiat Automobiles.
9. A jackal.
10. The yen.

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South Dakota Governor



**Larry Rhoden**



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

## Healthy Rural Communities

The 2026 Legislative Session is off to a strong start. I signed my first bill of the session: HB 1044, which appropriates funding for the Rural Health Transformation Plan in South Dakota. This will be a game changer for healthcare quality and availability in our rural communities. In my State of the State Address, I asked the Legislature to make this the first bill that reaches my desk – and they pulled through!

Access to healthcare is an important building block of every community. In many communities, healthcare is also one of the largest employers. I am proud that South Dakota has some of the best healthcare in the nation. But we also have plenty of wide-open spaces. I grew up in Union Center, so I understand exactly how challenging access to healthcare can be in rural areas.

This is a big year for rural healthcare in South Dakota. We turned the challenge of rural healthcare access into an opportunity. Our state was recently awarded \$189 million in federal funding for our Rural Health Transformation Plan. This is the first year of a five-year investment to strengthen healthcare access across our state.

Our plan didn't commit to policy changes or programs that don't make sense for South Dakota. We focused on what our communities actually need. Our plan modernizes healthcare by bringing more services to rural and remote areas. We also focused on bolstering technology, which can often have expensive upfront costs.

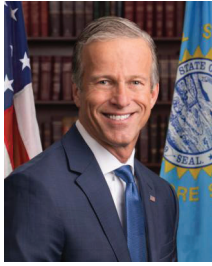
But ultimately, healthcare is about people, and we need the best people to provide the best healthcare, so this plan strengthens our healthcare workforce. We will attract and retain health professionals, expand community health workers, integrate behavioral health into primary care, improve chronic disease management, and support rural facilities.

We will also establish Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics statewide and create regional EMS hubs – all of these actions will expand the types of healthcare available in our most rural areas.

This plan was built with extensive input from rural communities, the Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board, and healthcare providers and other stakeholders across the state. They told us what they need, and this plan delivers it.

Legislative leadership worked well with my Departments of Health and Social Services, as well as our healthcare providers, to prioritize getting this passed quickly. South Dakota is competing with every other state, and in future years, the federal government will reward states that move quickly. So, it's great news that we got this done by the end of the third week of session!

This is the first of hopefully many great accomplishments for the people of South Dakota. This legislative session, we are focused on keeping South Dakota strong, safe, and free. The session is off to a great start, and I'm optimistic for how the rest of it will play out. Our state is in great shape – we just need to do a few commonsense things to make South Dakota even stronger.



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

## The Pro-Life Movement Marches Forward

Every January, tens of thousands of Americans come to Washington, D.C., to participate in the March for Life. They come from every background and every corner of our country to testify to the truth that every human being – no matter how small or vulnerable – has infinite value, is created in the image and likeness of God, and is endowed with the right to life.

The March for Life is an occasion for hope and a powerful reminder that babies in the womb have many defenders. Of course, the march is just one small facet – one day – of the pro-life movement’s extensive work providing help and hope to moms in need. As an example, in 2024, pregnancy resource centers provided \$452 million in medical care and support for moms and babies. And we can’t begin to quantify the value of pro-life Americans who take steps big and small every day to protect life and support moms.

We also have a role to play in Congress, and I am proud that last year we passed the first pro-life law in decades. Thanks to Republicans’ Working Families Tax Cuts legislation, this year some of the nation’s largest abortion providers – including Planned Parenthood – are prohibited from receiving federal Medicaid funding. Organizations that have turned the killing of babies into a business are cut off, and it’s already having an impact.

Recently, Republicans brought up another pro-life bill: the Pregnant Students’ Rights Act. No student should have to feel she has to choose between keeping her baby and completing her education. So this bill would help ensure that pregnant college students are aware of the support available to them in their local communities and on their campuses both while they are pregnant and after giving birth. Sadly, even this bill to support moms and babies was too much for pro-abortion Democrats who blocked the bill.

For many years, pro-life Americans have persevered through an uphill battle. Our strength – our hope – is that we have the truth on our side. We know the science, we have ultrasounds and sonograms, we can see a baby in the womb waving her hands and sucking her thumb. At the core of our being, every one of us knows that an unborn baby is a human being, and every human being deserves to be protected. Abortion requires us to suppress our natural instincts and ignore our eyes. But sooner or later, the truth will win, and life will prevail.

I’m proud to be a defender of life, and I will continue working to protect the unborn, support moms and babies, and create a culture of life in our country. I’m grateful to the South Dakotans who, over the years, have joined the March for Life and who have been both witnesses and instruments in defense of the dignity of the unborn. We have the truth on our side, and I have every confidence that this truth will march on.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

## Punxsutawney Phil Is No Politician, or Is He?

Growing up in Pennsylvania, one of my yearly attractions was Punxsutawney Phil. According to the legend, Punxsutawney Phil could predict the future. If he sees his shadow and returns to his hole, it means he has predicted six more weeks of winter-like weather. If Phil doesn't see his shadow, he has predicted an early spring.

I don't know who came up with this story, but it started on February 2, 1887. It's hard to believe people would get advice from some animal. But then again, we often take advice from politicians.

Punxsutawney Phil changes his prediction every year, just like politicians do, making it hard to trust either one consistently.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage grew up in northern New York. She had no experience with Punxsutawney Phil, so I filled her in on what it was all about. When I explained to her that Punxsutawney Phil can predict the weather, she looked at me with one of 'those looks', clearly skeptical about the weather-predicting groundhog.

She cleared her throat and said, "You don't really believe that nonsense, do you?" That put me into a predicament. If I say I did, she's going to think that I don't know what I'm talking about. So, I just replied by saying, "I'm just saying what other people are saying. I don't have any clear proof."

I paused and said, "According to the statistics, Punxsutawney Phil has been right almost 60% of the time."

"Well," she replied firmly, "this Punxsutawney Phil you talk about has been right more times than you have. Is that really true?"

There are times in life when you should respond to someone, and times when you should not. I had to decide whether to respond. You can guess which one I chose this time, and you can guess why.

Someone once told me, "You can tell when a politician is lying by their lips moving." I'm not going to comment on that, but it might have some element of truth to it.

Thinking along these lines, I wondered how nice it would be if the politicians did what Punxsutawney Phil did. They could make a declaration, and then go back into their hole. I'm not very political, but I just can't understand how politicians can do what they do. How can they say one thing one year and in two years say something exactly the opposite? But they never go into a hole.

When Punxsutawney Phil sees his shadow, he makes a prediction and goes back into his hole.

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I should learn from that. Everything that Punxsutawney Phil says is based on a shadow. I think that's rather interesting. He sees a shadow and then makes a declaration. I'm not quite sure what his shadow has to do with predicting the future, but it's interesting.

After supper, my wife said, "Do you think Punxsutawney Phil will see his shadow? How much are you willing to bet on it?"

There's no way that I'm going to bet against The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Later, as I thought about it, it did seem like an interesting proposition. Because what if I win? That one win would last for the rest of my life. Imagine beating her on some bet.

Although it was tempting, I declined for several personal reasons.

While researching Punxsutawney Phil, I realized how much influence we give to animals and politicians, often trusting what they say without question.

In giving this some thought, I realized how vital honesty is. Without it, most people would have little to say, and that thought makes me value sincerity more. As a high school student, I put a lot of trust in him. I assumed that what they said about Punxsutawney Phil was absolutely correct. Why would people lie about something like this?

I realized how important lying is for some people. If it weren't for lying, most people wouldn't have anything at all to say.

I know I have been caught up in some lies. Some of them are unintentional, but there's also a side of lying that helps you get out of trouble. At least I think it will.

I have tried Punxsutawney Phil's strategy on The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Although he can get away with lying, I have yet to get away with lying. Lying to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage opens the door for some unfortunate times. She does not like lying and usually does something to the person who is lying... Me.

I'll take a cue from Punxsutawney Phil and hide in a hole before I say anything, because sometimes, silence is the best way to avoid trouble and keep things right.

I was reminded of what the Apostle Peter said along this line.

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it" (1 Peter 3:10-11).

As a Christian, I have a serious responsibility to "refrain his tongue from evil." I am the only one who can control my tongue. If it's out of control, I will suffer tremendously, and I have only myself to blame.

Not only will my tongue create evil for me, but also those people around me. I must be aware of the damage I can do to family and friends.



## Groundwater Depletion At Crisis Levels Across American West by Kristy Chan

Dear EarthTalk: Given the multi-year droughts facing the American West, how are groundwater levels there holding up?

-- Charles Talarico, via email

Groundwater levels are the level of the water table below underground aquifers and are crucial to water security. In dry states like California, 40 percent of water is from groundwater; during droughts, this rises to around 60 percent. Due to this dependence and the declining water levels of surface reservoirs, such as Lake Mead (currently at 19 percent capacity), groundwater in the American West is being overexploited, particularly in regions like the San Joaquin Valley in California's Central Valley and the Ogallala Aquifer beneath the Great Plains in the Midwest.

Groundwater recharge is slow already, and drastically worsens during drought. Aquifers recharge even in non-drought years at the rate of

just inches per day, so years of overuse and additional reliance will deplete them very quickly. In addition to the multi-year-long drought, several other factors contribute to the depletion of groundwater levels.

Agriculture needs water to irrigate; but drought has reduced irrigation to just 20 percent of normal levels in California, and farmers have had to overuse underground aquifers. And due to global warming, snowpack, which provides up to 80 percent of California's water, melts sooner and faster. Late January levels hover at 25 percent of the usual level, reducing the critical transfer to the underground aquifers.

The good news is that 2023 marked the end of a four-year drought in California, and underground aquifers in the San Joaquin Valley were recharged 7.6 million acre-feet, marking a 17 percent increase compared to 2017's recharge levels. Governor Gavin Newsom acknowledged this in his 2022 Water Supply Strategy, stating, "increase average recharge by half a million acre-feet a year." With increasing attention to groundwater levels by policymakers, it's essential to acknowledge that an additional 3.5 million acre-feet of water could have been stored in the underground aquifers of the San Joaquin Valley if it had been captured through catchments or dams.

Climatic conditions between 2020 and 2022 were very arid, and almost no recharge of California's aquifers occurred during this period. Despite Newsom's 2022 Water Supply Strategy aiming to foster sustainable and reliable water usage and the end of the multi-year drought in 2023, there remains a need to intensify efforts and research into American West groundwater levels for water security and to understand the impact of climate change. Readers can help address groundwater shortages by advocating for smarter water management policies, volunteering with local groups that educate the public on water usage, and engaging with reputable water education networks that advise on global water governance.



**Groundwater levels across the American West are at crisis levels thanks to the multi-year drought and climate change.** Credit: Pexels.com.

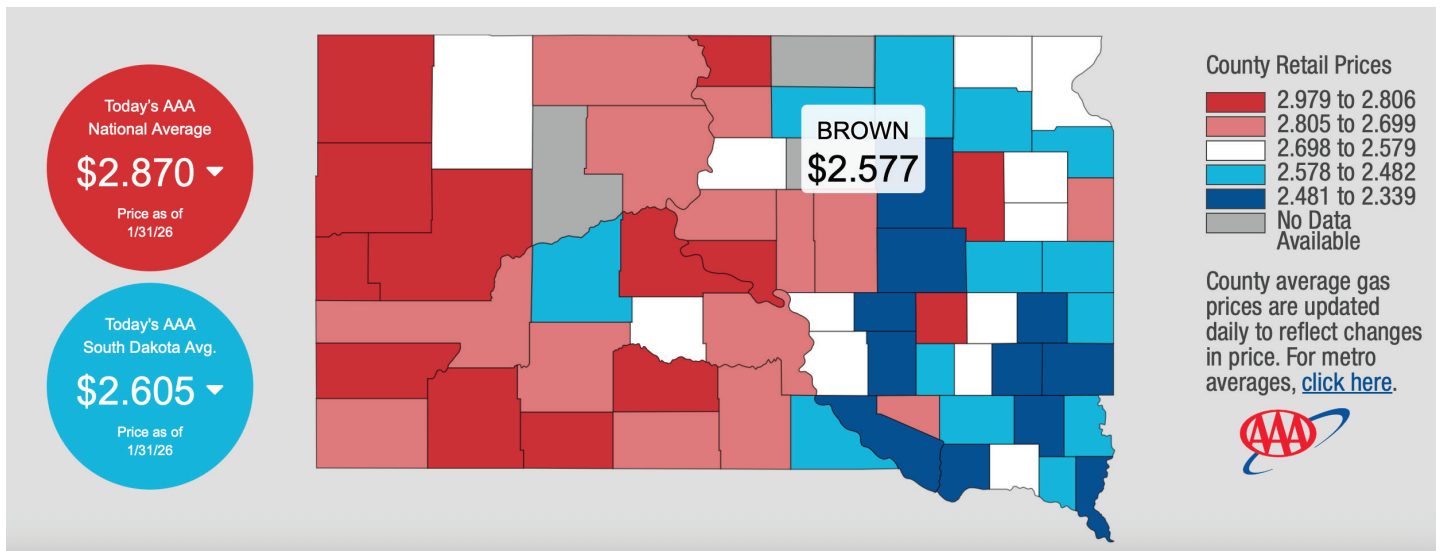
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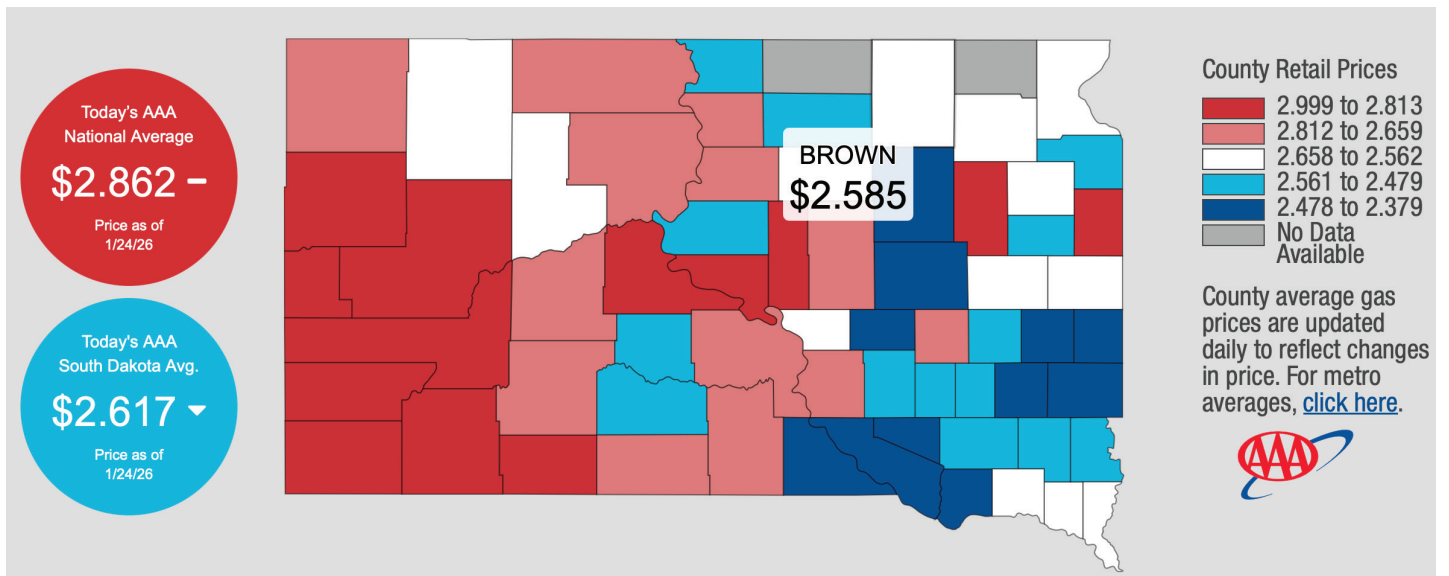
## South Dakota Average Gas Prices

|                | Regular | Mid-Grade | Premium | Diesel  |
|----------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|
| Current Avg.   | \$2.605 | \$2.771   | \$3.268 | \$3.376 |
| Yesterday Avg. | \$2.606 | \$2.784   | \$3.253 | \$3.383 |
| Week Ago Avg.  | \$2.617 | \$2.788   | \$3.260 | \$3.378 |
| Month Ago Avg. | \$2.602 | \$2.776   | \$3.228 | \$3.195 |
| Year Ago Avg.  | \$2.974 | \$3.147   | \$3.595 | \$3.378 |

### This Week



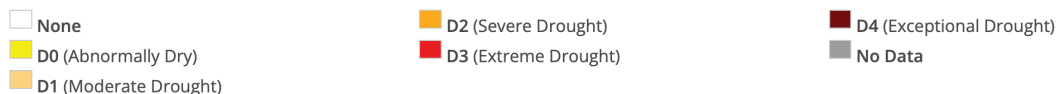
### Last Week



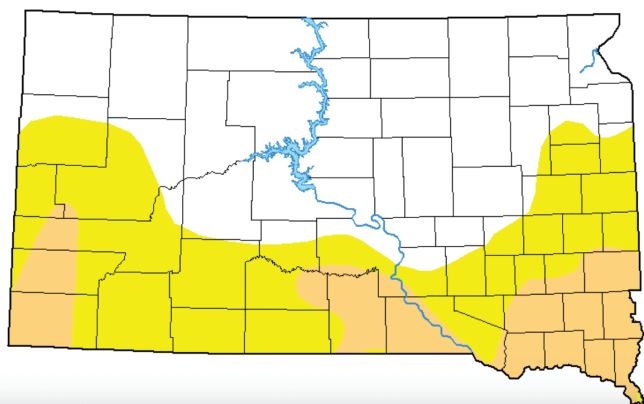
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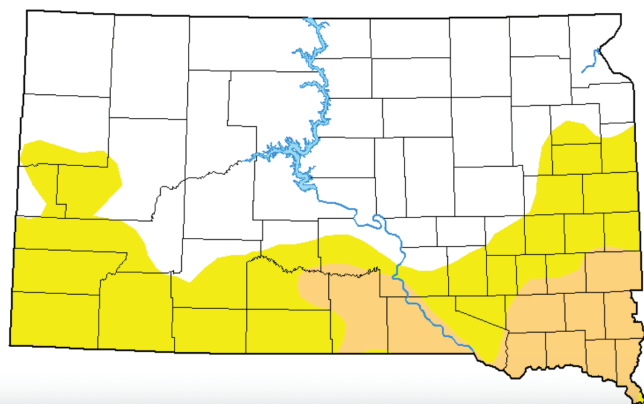
## Drought Classification



## Drought Monitor



Jan. 27



Jan. 20

Patchy expansion of dryness and drought was noted, mainly across Nebraska, Wyoming, and southern South Dakota. Due to periods of warm, windy weather, Nebraska reported that statewide topsoil moisture was rated 68% very short to short in early January, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Similarly, Wyoming's topsoil moisture was rated 55% very short to short.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Partial federal government shutdown begins, amid hopes it won't last long**

**BY: JENNIFER SHUTT AND ARIANA FIGUEROA**

WASHINGTON — The federal government began a partial shutdown early Saturday, even though Senate Democrats and President Donald Trump reached a deal that allows lawmakers more time to negotiate new constraints on immigration enforcement.

The Senate voted 71-29 on Friday evening to pass the reworked government funding package before a midnight deadline. But the earliest the House could clear it for Trump's signature is Monday evening, when members return from a recess.

The scheduling problem guarantees the current spending law, which Congress approved in November at the end of the last shutdown, will expire without a replacement.

However, the effects on the nation are not expected to be as dramatic as those during the historic 43-day shutdown last year. Since Congress has already passed half of the dozen annual appropriations bills, this shutdown will only affect part of the government, and possibly with moderate impacts since it may only last a few days until the House acts.

The unexpected hitch in progress toward passing the \$1.2 trillion package came about after immigration agents killed a second person in Minneapolis and Senate Democrats demanded reforms be included in the Department of Homeland Security spending bill. Trump has agreed to two weeks of negotiations on the DHS bill, which includes funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection and other immigration enforcement agencies.

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine, said the full-year measures are "fiscally responsible bills that reflect months of hard work and deliberation from members from both parties and both sides of the Capitol."

"The package also continues funding for the Department of Homeland Security for two weeks to allow us additional time to evaluate further changes in ICE procedures beyond those that we have already included in this bill," she said.

Once the package becomes law, she said, 96% of government will be funded for the fiscal year that began back on Oct. 1.

Washington Democratic Sen. Patty Murray, ranking member on the Appropriations Committee, said approving the five full-year bills and a stopgap for the Homeland Security Department represented "a simple, commonsense path forward."

"It is good news we have a deal to fund these key programs families count on while work continues on serious DHS accountability over the next two weeks," Murray said. "It could not be more clear that ICE and CBP are out of control and that we cannot just wait for the same president who caused this mess to address it."

### **Senators from North Carolina, South Carolina tangle**

South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham said in a floor speech several hours before voting began that he would hold up quick consideration of the funding package until leaders agreed to schedule floor votes on two separate proposals.

The first would establish some sort of criminal penalty for local or state officials who do not cooperate with federal immigration enforcement agents, often called sanctuary cities. The second would clear the

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way for conservative organizations to file lawsuits against former Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith for his investigation into efforts to overturn the 2020 election results.

"What is the right answer when a state or a mayor says, 'I don't like this federal law, I'm not going to do it because there's good politics for me.' I think you risk going to jail," Graham said. "We cannot live in a country this way, where you get to pick and choose the laws you don't like."

A spokesperson for Graham later confirmed to States Newsroom that the senator didn't want the votes Friday but "just sometime down the road." Graham released a statement later in the afternoon that Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., had agreed to schedule floor votes "at a time to be determined."

North Carolina Republican Sen. Thom Tillis spoke directly after Graham and rebuked him for delaying the entire funding package.

Tillis called on senators from both political parties to start negotiations about "common sense sorts of ways to lower the temperature" on immigration enforcement.

He said officials should "hold people accountable when they're harming ICE agents, and hold ICE agents accountable if they reacted in a way that's not consistent with their law enforcement training."

Tillis argued that Graham's approach to pushing for amendment votes that are unlikely to succeed wouldn't have any tangible, real-world impacts.

"One senator has a lot of power. And if you use it judiciously, you can be productive and make a difference," Tillis said. "But if you use it in the heat of the moment, you can make a point that not a damn person is going to remember a month later."

## **Some departments, judiciary affected**

The departments of Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, State, Transportation and Treasury will all experience the funding lapse. The Executive Office of the President, Supreme Court and judicial branch will also be affected.

All other federal programs will continue uninterrupted, since their spending bills have become law, including those at the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Energy, Interior, Justice and Veterans Affairs, as well as military construction projects and funding for Congress.

A spokesperson for the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts wrote in a statement earlier this week that "operations would continue using court fees and other available balances through Wednesday, February 4.

"The following day, on February 5, the Judiciary would begin operating under the terms of the Anti-Deficiency Act. Federal courts would continue operating, but would be limited to activities needed to support the exercise of the Judiciary's constitutional functions and to address emergency circumstances."

## **House Democrats demand changes in DHS bill**

A spokesperson for the White House budget office said the departments and agencies affected by the funding lapse can use their contingency plans from the last shutdown unless they had "big changes."

Those documents detail how many employees continue working without pay during a shutdown and how many are furloughed.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries said Democrats wouldn't support the spending bill unless major reforms are made in the way immigration officers conduct enforcement.

"We're going to have to evaluate what the real opportunity is to get dramatic changes at the Department of Homeland Security. It has to be bold," he said during a morning press conference. "The Senate has to do its thing before we have anything to evaluate."

*Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.*

*Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include immigration, congressional policy and legal challenges with a focus on how those policies impact the lives of immigrants and migrants coming to the U.S.*

## COMMENTARY

### **Book excerpt: Black Hills Case No. 1 inaugurated era of government timber regulation**

**'On the Narrow Gauge and Beyond' is third volume of Black Hills History Tours  
by David Wolff**

The following excerpt is reprinted with permission from the new book "On the Narrow Gauge and Beyond: The Homestake and Northern Black Hills," which is the third volume of the Black Hills History Tours series written by historian David A. Wolff and published by the South Dakota Historical Society Press.

By the time the Homestake built the BH&FTP Railroad to Nemo and Este to tap the region's vast timber reserves, local and national attitudes toward logging had changed. Conservation and preservation had become the buzzwords, and many people wanted to end excessive timber harvests. Congress responded to these concerns with the Forest Reserve Act of 1891, authorizing the president of the United States to create forest reserves out of timbered public lands, to be protected and managed by the Department of the Interior.

A handful of reserves were created in the years after Congress passed the act, but the Black Hills remained unaffected until 1896, when a presidential commission surveyed western forest lands to identify possible reserves and found the Black Hills forest to be nearly overwhelmed by fires and illegal cutting. With their report in hand, President Grover Cleveland created the Black Hills Forest Reserve, along with several others, on 22 February 1897.

Congress, however, had yet to pass a law outlining how Interior was to manage a forest reserve. In effect, once a forest became a reserve, no logging could occur. The Homestake saw this as unworkable, and its managers pressured South Dakota's congressional delegation to do something.

Senator Richard F. Pettigrew took the most decisive action; he got the forest reserve designation delayed while he helped pass the Forest Management Act, also known as the Organic Act of 1897. This law allowed Interior to establish a plan for timber sales based on the philosophy that a reserve needs to provide a continuous supply of logs over the long term. In other words, forest management needed to strike a balance between use and preservation.

Thomas Grier, manager of the Homestake Mine, also realized that depleting the forest was unsustainable. He well knew that the Homestake had been violating federal laws. In fact, the federal government had occasionally taken the Homestake to court. In an 1894 case, in which the Homestake was charged with illegally cutting trees under eight inches in diameter, the government sought nearly \$700,000 in damages. The company was eventually fined \$75,000. Despite this setback, the Homestake continued to take timber in violation of the law, even after the Black Hills became a forest reserve, and generally avoided punishment. Grier, nonetheless, knew that this needed to change.

The Black Hills officially became a forest reserve on 1 March 1898. Grier looked to Interior for a timber harvesting agreement, but the department did not have any trained foresters who could create a plan. In fact, apart from Gifford Pinchot, the nation's most prestigious forester, there were few qualified foresters in the country.

Luckily, Pinchot worked in the Department of Agriculture, and he willingly stepped forward to develop a plan. Pinchot felt that the Black Hills desperately needed management; if done correctly, it could serve as a model for other reserves. Together with Grier, he outlined a system for timber sales. Grier submitted the proposal to the secretary of the interior on 8 April 1898, but it was delayed. The local forest supervisor needed to be involved, and the first Black Hills supervisor, H. G. Hamaker, would not be appointed until August. It took from then until October 1899 for the Homestake and Hamaker to settle on the sale's details.

The final plan, known as Timber Case No. 1, allowed the Homestake to harvest eight sections of trees, primarily along the tracks of the company's railroad. A forest ranger began marking cuttable trees in November 1899. By the time Case No. 1 ended in 1908, the Homestake had harvested 15 million board feet of live and dead timber (a board foot measures one foot wide by one foot long by one inch thick).

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The Homestake paid the government \$14,967.32, a price one author describes as "an inconsequential sum for one of America's largest mining companies." Nevertheless, as historian Richmond L. Clow writes, "Timber Case No. 1 inaugurated an era of government regulation over tree harvests on the public lands." Once completed, the Homestake leased other nearby government sections. The transfer of the forest reserves from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture in 1905 and the reserves' transition to National Forest status did not alter the understanding.

*David A. Wolff is professor emeritus of history at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, where he specialized in South Dakota and the Black Hills. He is the author of three books on Black Hills and mining history. His honors include BHSU's Distinguished Faculty Member Award.*

**GT** on **Carnival of Silver Skates**  
Sunday, Feb. 1, 2026  
2 p.m.

Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD

**GDILIVE**  
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**GT** on **Carnival of Silver Skates**  
Sunday, Feb. 1, 2026  
6 p.m.

Groton Area Tigers Groton, SD

**GDILIVE**  
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A production of the **Groton Daily Independent**

For more info: [GDILIVE.COM](http://GDILIVE.COM)

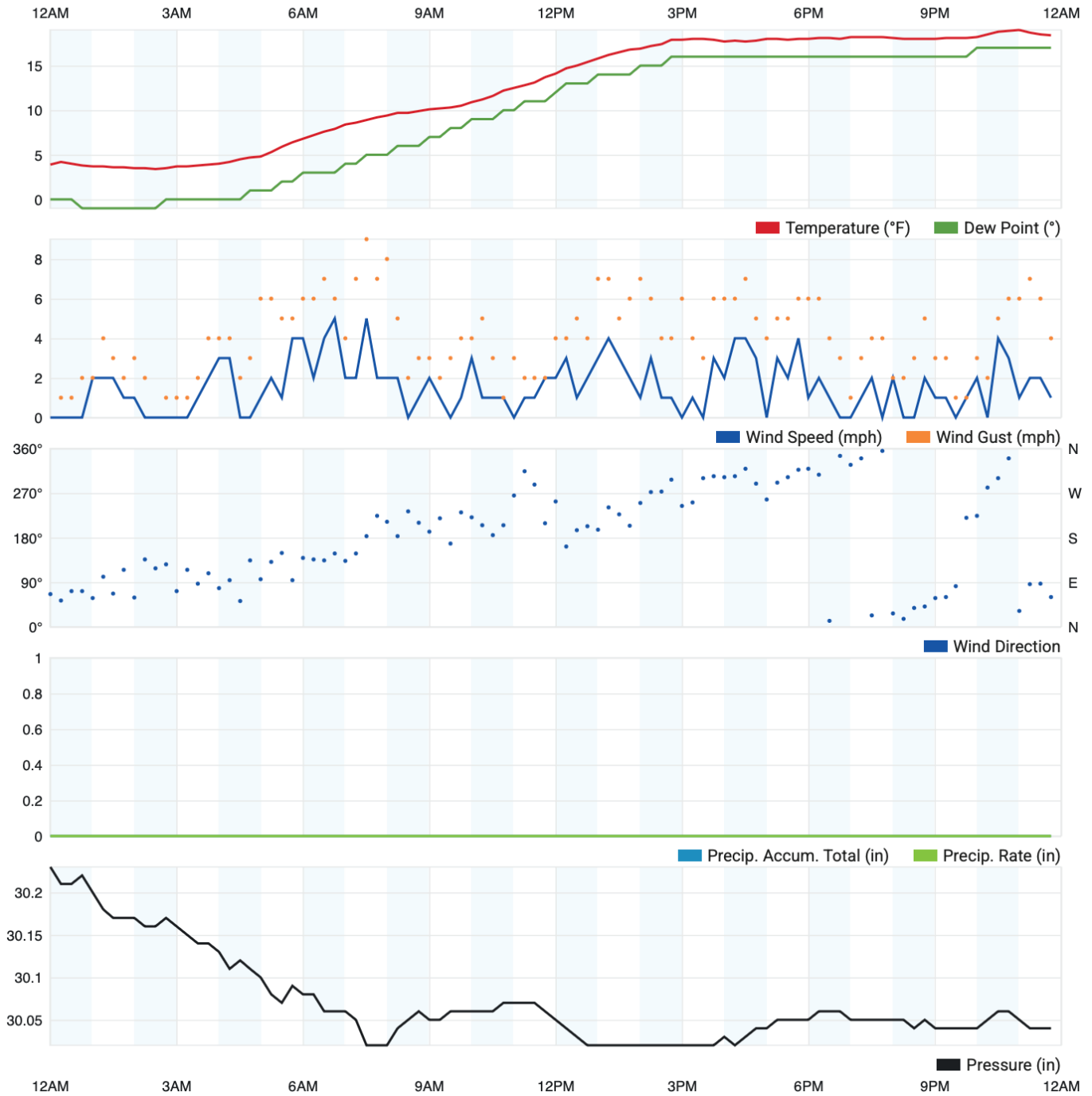


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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

January 1, 2026



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Today

Tonight

Monday

Monday Night

Tuesday



High: 35 °F↓

Low: 11 °F

High: 21 °F

Low: 7 °F

High: 24 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Mostly Cloudy

Mostly Cloudy  
then Chance  
Snow

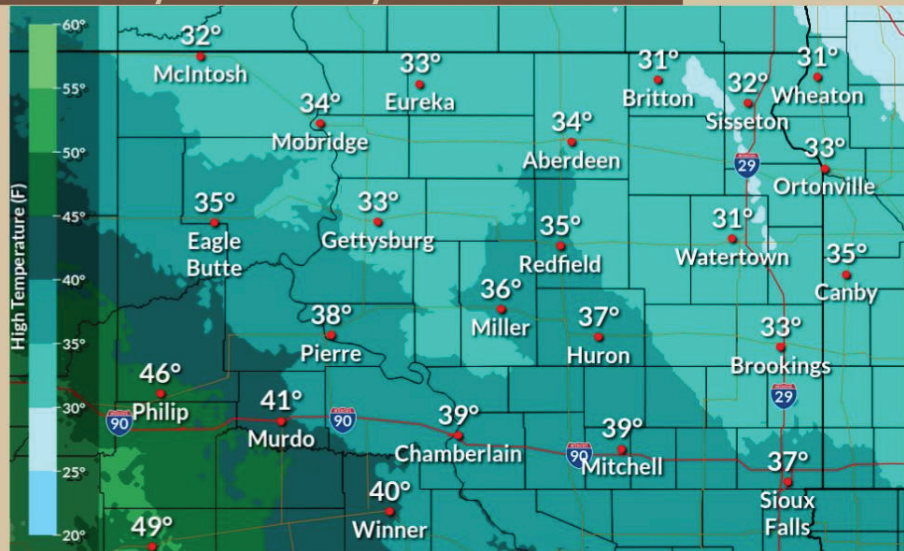
Chance Snow  
then Slight  
Chance Snow

Partly Sunny  
then Slight  
Chance Snow

## Highs Today: mainly in the 30s



**Light Snow** ending over far northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota this morning. *Little to no accumulation.*



NWS Aberdeen, SD



**30-50% chance of precipitation Monday afternoon into Tuesday morning** across South Dakota. Snow will be the main weather type, with a wintry mix of rain, light freezing rain, and snow over central South Dakota. *Snow around 1" or less.*

Temperatures will top out mainly in the 30s today. Light Snow will end over far northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota this morning. Little to no snow accumulation is expected. Looking ahead, there is a 30-50% chance of precipitation Monday afternoon into Tuesday morning across South Dakota. Snow will be the main weather type, with a wintry mix of rain, light freezing rain, and snow over central South Dakota. Snow around 1" or less is expected.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 22 °F at 11:05 PM

Low Temp: -6 °F at 12:51 AM

Wind: 32 mph at 2:39 PM

Precip: : 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 58 in 1931

Record Low: -42 in 1893

Average High: 25

Average Low: 2

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.02

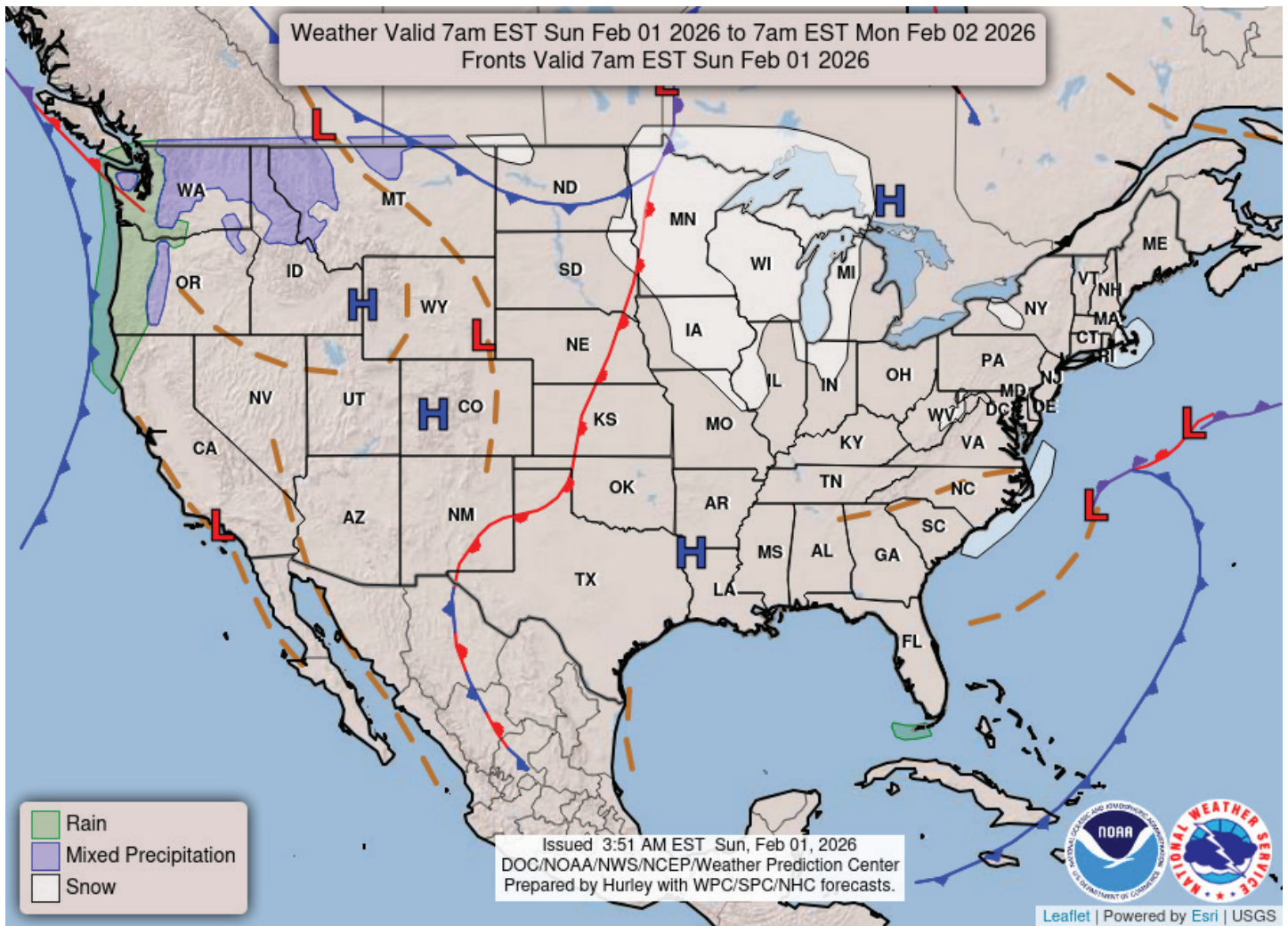
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.57

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:38 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:52 am



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## Today in Weather History

February 1, 1969: Across central and eastern South Dakota, February 1969 contained a variety of winter weather causing many difficulties. Glazing due to dense fog and drizzle periodically formed on utility lines creating numerous broken power lines. Strong winds caused widespread blowing and drifting snow resulting in many closed roads. Snowplows would open the streets, and often drifting snow would close the roads again. Frequent uses of pusher-type snowplows piled banks of snow 20 to 30 feet along the roads, and it became impractical to open routes with this type of snowplow. Several rotary snowplows were flown in from military airbases outside the state to open some of the roads in the eastern part of the state. Many school closings occurred during the month due to snow blocked roads.

February 1, 1989: Four to eight inches of snow fell across western and northern South Dakota. Winds of 25 mph and subzero temperature produced wind chills in the 50 to 80 below zero range. Several schools were closed across the area due to the dangerous wind chills. The storm continued into the 2nd.

1893 — Thunder and lightning accompanied sleet and snow at Saint Louis MO during the evening hours, even though the temperature was just 13 degrees above zero. (The Weather Channel)

1916: Seattle, Washington, was buried under 21.5 inches of snow, their most significant 24-hour snowfall. A total of 32.5 inches of wet snow accumulated over three days. The Seattle cathedral dome collapsed under the snow's weight.

1947: January 30th through February 8th, a great blizzard occurred in Saskatchewan, Canada. All highways into Regina were blocked. Railway officials declared the worst conditions in Canadian rail history. One train was buried in a snowdrift over a half-mile long and 36.7 feet deep.

1951 — The greatest ice storm of record in the U.S. produced glaze up to four inches thick from Texas to Pennsylvania causing twenty-five deaths, 500 serious injuries, and 100 million dollars damage. Tennessee was hardest hit by the storm. Communications and utilities were interrupted for a week to ten days. (David Ludlum)

1951 — The temperature at Taylor Park Dam plunged to 60 degrees below zero, a record for the state of Colorado. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1955: Seen first as a "well-defined cone-shaped funnel" over the Mississippi River, this F3 tornado cut a path from Commerce Landing to Clark in northeastern Mississippi. This tornado killed 20 and injured at least 141 individuals. Most of the deaths were in a plantation school. The following is from Thomas Grazulis, "Significant Tornadoes 1680-1991" book: "Despite the fact that a funnel was seen, that heavy objects were thrown long distances, and that the tornado was in a forecast box, the event was not officially called a tornado. A survey team state that since all debris was thrown in one direction, the event should not be listed as a tornado."

1985 — Snow, sleet and ice glazed southern Tennessee and northern sections of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. The winter storm produced up to eleven inches of sleet and ice in Lauderdale County AL, one of the worst storms of record for the state. All streets in Florence AL were closed for the first time of record. (1st-2nd) (The Weather Channel)

1989 — While arctic cold continued to invade the central U.S., fifty-four cities in the south central and eastern U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date. Russell KS, the hot spot in the nation with a high of 84 degrees the previous day, reported a morning low of 12 above. Tioga ND reported a wind chill reading of 90 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 — Thunderstorms associated with an upper level weather disturbance produced severe weather across the eastern half of Texas during the late afternoon and evening. Four persons were injured at Waco TX where thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 80 mph. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 97 mph at Cotulla TX injuring two other persons. Golf ball size hail was reported at Whitney and northeast of Whitsett. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2011 — One of the most significant events of the 2010-2011 winter season affected a widespread region from Texas to the Midwest and Northeast from February 1st to 3rd 2011. The system produced widespread heavy snow with blizzard conditions and significant freezing rain and sleet to other locations. Snowfall amounts of 10 to 20 inches were common from northeast Oklahoma to lower Michigan. The storm produced 20.2 inches at Chicago, the third heaviest snowfall in the city since their records began in 1886, along with a peak wind of 61 mph. Kansas City received just under 9 inches of snow. The high temp was 17 degrees.

## Abraham's Lesson on Obedience

**If we trust our sovereign Lord and wait for His timing, we will see His faithfulness revealed.**

Genesis 16:1-16: 1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar.  
2 So Sarai said to Abram, "Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.

3 After Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife.

4 He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight.

5 And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms, but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the LORD judge between you and me."

6 But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight." So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.

7 Now the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.

8 He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?" And she said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."

9 Then the angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority."

10 Moreover, the angel of the LORD said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count."

11 The angel of the LORD said to her further, "Behold, you are with child, And you will bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, Because the LORD has given heed to your affliction.

12 "He will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers."

13 Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God who sees"; for she said, "Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?"

14 Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

15 So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.

16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.

The Old Testament gives us the account of Abraham's life. He had a special relationship with God, but his faith was not perfect. Over the years, he came to understand the cost of disobedience, learning the hard way that manipulating circumstances can bring heartache.

For example, God promised that Abraham and Sarah would have a child, but they were still waiting for that blessing when they were elderly. Already in her 70s, Sarah suggested that Abraham produce an heir by having a child with her servant Hagar. The result was jealousy, family strife, and conflict with long-lasting repercussions.

Obedience will bring the Lord's best, but it sometimes requires waiting on Him. Abraham was an old man when God promised him descendants as numerous as the stars (Genesis 15:5). This would not be fulfilled until he was 100 and Sarah was well past childbearing age, which meant that the glory for Isaac's miraculous conception and birth was the Lord's alone (Genesis 21:1-7).

One reason the Father has given us His Word is so that we might learn from the saints. Abraham's life teaches us that obedience is essential. When we choose to trust our sovereign God and yield to His timing, we discover firsthand how faithful He is.

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

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.30.26

11 34 36 43 63 13

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$323,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.31.26

7 21 47 48 49 3

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$14,450,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.31.26

9 13 25 30 43 18

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 29 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.31.26

16 19 20 34 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$242,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.31.26

14 18 19 31 59 13

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.31.26

2 8 14 40 63 23

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$65,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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

### **GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL**

Bennett County 70, Jones County 30  
Dell Rapids 63, Lakota Tech 60, OT  
Dupree 47, Crow Creek Tribal School 38  
Elk Point-Jefferson 56, Pine Ridge 22  
Elkton-Lake Benton 49, Great Plains Lutheran 40  
Flandreau 56, Vermillion 18  
Harding County 50, New Underwood 10  
Hemingford, Neb. 53, Edgemont 32  
Herreid-Selby 54, Lemmon High School 40  
Howard 40, Garretson 33  
Iroquois-Lake Preston 37, James Valley Christian School 28  
Leola-Frederick High School 48, South Border, N.D. 13  
Lyman 63, Wall 42  
Milbank 50, Gayville-Volin High School 36  
Millard North, Neb. 47, Harrisburg 28  
North Central 50, Timber Lake 33  
Rapid City Central 53, Watertown 40  
Rapid City Christian 42, West Central 40  
Rapid City Stevens 66, Brookings 32  
Sioux Falls Christian 55, Sioux Valley 46  
Sioux Falls Jefferson 57, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 25  
Spearfish 62, Douglas 22  
St Thomas More 57, Custer 20  
Tri-Valley 51, Tripp-Delmont-Armour 38  
Warner 49, Sully Buttes 21  
Waubay/Summit 80, Wilmot 23

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

### **BOYS PREP BASKETBALL**

Bennett County 79, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 67  
Brookings 64, Rapid City Stevens 53  
Dakota Valley 60, Sisseton 50  
Dell Rapids 72, Mobridge-Pollock 62  
Deuel 58, Elk Point-Jefferson 48  
Dupree 61, Crow Creek Tribal School 39  
Elkton-Lake Benton 54, Great Plains Lutheran 17  
Harding County 69, New Underwood 59  
Hemingford, Neb. 66, Edgemont 13  
Herried-Selby 48, Lemmon High School 32  
Howard 64, Lakota Tech 24  
Ipswich 49, Highmore-Harrold 21  
James Valley Christian School 63, Iroquois-Lake Preston 57  
Lead-Deadwood 57, Hot Springs 41  
Lennox 66, Britton-Hecla 18

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Leola-Frederick High School 65, South Border, N.D. 30  
Lower Brule 69, Wakpala 38  
Milbank 60, Tri-Valley 59  
Northwestern 61, Aberdeen Roncalli 54  
Platte-Geddes 46, Alcester-Hudson 43  
Rapid City Christian 49, Madison 47  
Redfield 82, Canton 64  
Sioux Falls Christian 71, Clark-Willow Lake 60  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 62, Tea 60  
Sioux Falls Lutheran 39, Tripp-Delmont-Armour 32  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 58, T F Riggs High School 49  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 78, Sioux Falls Jefferson 65  
Spearfish 60, Douglas 49  
Timber Lake 52, North Central 50  
Vermillion 71, Groton 50  
Viborg-Hurley 58, Marty 47  
Wall 74, Lyman 47  
Warner 66, Sully Buttes 60  
Watertown 74, Rapid City Central 48  
Waubay/Summit 71, Wilmot 42  
West Central 69, Hamlin 48  
Western Christian, Iowa 70, Parker/Marion 28

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

## **Fedderson, Stefonowicz help North Dakota State top South Dakota 89-84 in OT for 9th straight victory**

By The Associated Press undefined

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Noah Feddersen had 20 points and Andy Stefonowicz added a double-double to lead North Dakota State to an 89-84 overtime victory over South Dakota on Saturday, upping the Bison's winning streak to nine.

Feddersen also had nine rebounds for the Bison (19-5, 9-0 Summit League). Stefonowicz totaled 15 points, 10 assists and six rebounds. Markhi Strickland hit 7 of 8 shots and also scored 15.

The Coyotes (12-12, 4-5) were led by Jordan Crawford with 33 points. Uzziah Buntyn added 25 points, six rebounds, four assists and four steals. Cameron Fens finished with 16 points, eight rebounds and two blocks.

Tay Smith made a go-ahead 3-pointer with 2:12 left in OT and the Bison never trailed from there. Crawford's layup with 20 seconds left forced the extra period tied at 74-all.

## **Sayler, Jackson score 24 each as South Dakota State downs Oral Roberts 95-72**

By The Associated Press undefined

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Joe Sayler and Jaden Jackson scored 24 points apiece in South Dakota State's 95-72 win over Oral Roberts on Saturday.

Sayler added eight rebounds for the Jackrabbits (11-12, 4-4 Summit League). Jackson shot 9 of 18 from the floor, including 5 for 11 from 3-point range, and also had five rebounds, five assists, and five steals. Kalen Garry went 5 of 12 from the field (3 for 5 from 3-point range) to finish with 14 points.

Ty Harper finished with 26 points for the Golden Eagles (5-19, 0-9). Cal Furnish added 12 points for Oral

Roberts. Luke Gray finished with 10 points, seven rebounds and two blocks. The loss was the Golden Eagles' 12th straight.

## Former Prince Andrew can't escape Epstein's shadow as new documents reveal details about friendship

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's royal family is facing a fresh round of embarrassment after the latest release of documents from the U.S. investigation into Jeffrey Epstein revealed unsavory details about the relationship between the convicted sex offender and a correspondent who appears to be the man formerly known as Prince Andrew.

Emails released by the U.S. Justice Department include an invitation for Epstein to dine at Buckingham Palace, Epstein's offer to introduce his correspondent to a 26-year-old Russian woman, and photos that appear to show Andrew kneeling over an unidentified person who is lying on the floor.

The revelations come three months after King Charles III stripped Andrew of his royal titles, including the right to be called a prince, as he tried to insulate the monarchy from a steady stream of stories about his younger brother's relationship with Epstein that has tarnished the royal family for more than a decade. The former prince is now known simply as Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor.

A tarnished figure

As a result of that move, the damage from the latest emails is likely to be limited to Mountbatten-Windsor, said Craig Prescott, an expert on constitutional law and the monarchy at Royal Holloway, University of London.

The documents show that "they had to do something to separate Andrew from the rest of the family, and the nuclear option was the clearest way of doing it," Prescott said. "And as more comes out, then you do feel that they have been justified."

The documents raise serious questions about Andrew's judgment, while offering a rare look at how some of the world's super elite behave behind closed doors, Prescott said.

"It's sort of the things they do behind some of the most gilded doors in New York or London or wherever," he said. "It's the sort of things that on some occasions seem to be going on. And I think most people just think, wow, that's all very extraordinary."

The disclosures have revived questions about whether Mountbatten-Windsor should cooperate with U.S. authorities investigating Epstein and his links to powerful individuals around the world.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Saturday suggested Mountbatten-Windsor should tell American investigators whatever he knows about Epstein's activities.

"In terms of testifying, I've always said anybody who's got information should be prepared to share that information in whatever form they're asked to do that, because you can't be victim-centered if you're not prepared to do that," Starmer said as he arrived in Japan to meet with the country's leaders.

Mountbatten-Windsor said in late 2019 that he was willing to help any appropriate law enforcement agency with its investigation into Epstein. However, previous documents released by the Justice Department show that in 10 months of emails and conference calls, Mountbatten-Windsor's lawyers rejected proposals for their client to be directly interviewed by federal prosecutors either in person or by video.

Instead, his lawyers asked that he be allowed to answer questions in writing, something they said would be permitted in British courts. Finally, on Sept. 23, 2020, prosecutors gave up on securing a voluntary interview and said they planned to ask the British courts to compel Andrew's testimony. There is no indication that Mountbatten-Windsor has ever provided such testimony.

The House Oversight Committee, which is investigating Epstein, in November asked Andrew to sit for a transcribed interview.

A relationship under fire

Mountbatten-Windsor has been dogged by his relationship with Epstein ever since 2008, when the wealthy financier pleaded guilty to soliciting a minor for prostitution. In 2011, the late Virginia Giuffre alleged that

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she had been trafficked by Epstein and forced to have sex with Andrew when she was 17.

He tried to stifle the controversy in a 2019 interview with the BBC, but the appearance only fueled the scandal when he was criticized for offering unbelievable explanations of his behavior and failing to show empathy for Epstein's victims.

The former prince has repeatedly denied committing any crimes and has rejected Giuffre's allegations. An email seeking comment on the latest document release was not answered. The presence of anyone's name or images in the investigative files isn't proof of wrongdoing.

The emails released on Friday include an August 2010 exchange between Epstein and an account labeled "The Duke" that occurred soon after the financier was released from home detention following his earlier conviction. Before he was barred from using the title, Mountbatten-Windsor was the Duke of York.

"I have a friend who I think you might enjoy having dinner with," Epstein writes.

"The Duke" replies: "Of course. I am in Geneva until the morning of 22nd but would be delighted to see her. Will she be bringing a message from you? Please give her my contact details to get in touch."

The email is signed "A."

In response to a redacted email, "The Duke" then writes, "Great. Any other information you might know about her that might be useful to know? Like what have you told her about me and have you given her my email as well?"

Epstein, whose emails often contain typographical errors, responds: "She 26, russian, clevere beautiful, trustworthy and yes she has your email."

"That was quick!" The Duke replies. "How are you? Good to be free?"

"Great to be free of many things," Epstein says.

The exchange elicited shock from former BBC royal correspondent Jennie Bond, who pointed out that it would be highly unusual for a royal to meet with someone they knew so little about.

"I mean, what was he thinking?" Bond told the BBC. "What was he thinking when Epstein offered him a 26-year-old Russian very beautiful lady to have dinner with? I mean, was there no red light saying, 'Oh my goodness, you know, is this a security risk? Could she be a spy? Should I do this?' Nah. He says, 'That would be absolutely lovely.'"

Damaging emails

In another exchange in September 2010, Epstein said he was in London.

"I am just departing Scotland should be down by 1800," "The Duke" replied in an email signed with the initial A. "I'll ring you when I get down if you can give me a number to ring.

"Alternatively we could have dinner at Buckingham Palace and lots of privacy."

"bp please," Epstein responds.

Also included in the release are three photographs that show someone who looks like Mountbatten-Windsor kneeling over an unidentified person whose face is redacted.

In one photo the man, wearing blue jeans and a polo shirt, looks into the camera. In the others he appears to be talking to the unidentified person with his hand on their abdomen. There is no caption and no indication of when or where the photos were taken.

As unseemly as the revelations are, there isn't much else the palace can do to sanction him, Prescott said.

"In terms of Andrew's reputation, that has totally gone," he said.

## Trump says feds won't intervene during protests in Democratic-led cities unless asked to do so

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE (AP) — President Donald Trump said Saturday that he has instructed Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem not to intervene in protests occurring in cities led by Democrats unless local authorities ask for federal help amid mounting criticism of his administration's immigration crackdown.

On his social media site, Trump posted that "under no circumstances are we going to participate in various poorly run Democrat Cities with regard to their Protests and/or Riots unless, and until, they ask us for help."

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He provided no further details on how his order would affect operations by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and DHS personnel, or other federal agencies, but added: "We will, however, guard, and very powerfully so, any and all Federal Buildings that are being attacked by these highly paid Lunatics, Agitators, and Insurrectionists."

Trump said that in addition to his instructions to Noem he had directed "ICE and/or Border Patrol to be very forceful in this protection of Federal Government Property."

Later Saturday night, Trump said to reporters as he flew to Florida for the weekend that he felt Democratic cities are "always complaining."

"If they want help, they have to ask for it. Because if we go in, all they do is complain," Trump said.

He predicted that those cities would need help, but said if the leaders of those cities seek it from the federal government, "They have to say, 'Please.'"

The Trump administration has already deployed the National Guard, or federal law enforcement officials, in a number of Democratic areas, including Washington, Los Angeles, Chicago and Portland, Oregon. But Saturday's order comes as opposition to such tactics has grown, particularly in Minnesota's Twin Cities region.

Trump said Saturday night that protesters who "do anything bad" to immigration officers and other federal law enforcement, "will have to suffer" and "will get taken care of in at least an equal way."

"You see it, the way they treat our people. And I said, you're allowed, if somebody does that, you can do something back. You're not going to stand there and take it if somebody spits in your face," Trump said.

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison and the mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul have challenged a federal immigration enforcement surge in those cities, arguing that DHS is violating constitutional protections.

A federal judge says she won't halt enforcement operations as the lawsuit proceeds. State and local officials had sought a quick order to halt the enforcement action or limit its scope. Justice Department lawyers have called the lawsuit "legally frivolous."

The state, particularly Minneapolis, has been on edge after federal officers fatally shot two people in the city: Renee Good on Jan. 7 and Alex Pretti on Jan. 24. Thousands of people have taken to the streets to protest the federal action in Minnesota and across the country.

Trump's border czar, Tom Homan, has suggested the administration could reduce the number of immigration enforcement officers in Minnesota — but only if state and local officials cooperate. Trump sent Homan to Minneapolis following the killings of Good and Pretti, seeming to signal a willingness to ease tensions in Minnesota.

The president on Saturday night said he intended to speak to Homan and Noem on Sunday and he seemed to endorse the idea of immigration agents wearing body cameras or having their interactions filmed.

Trump was asked by a reporter if he thought it was a good thing having lots of cameras capturing incidents with law enforcement.

"I think it would help law enforcement but I'd have to talk to them," Trump said.

He went on and added: "That works both ways. But overall, I think it's 80% in favor of law enforcement."

## **NBA suspends Philadelphia 76ers' Paul George 25 games for violating anti-drug policy**

By DAN GELSTON and TIM REYNOLDS AP Sports Writers

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Paul George of the Philadelphia 76ers was suspended 25 games for violating the terms of the NBA's anti-drug program, the league announced Saturday.

The NBA did not disclose the nature of the violation or the substance that was involved, and George released a statement to ESPN saying he took something that was "improper."

"Over the past few years, I've discussed the importance of mental health, and in the course of recently seeking treatment for an issue of my own, I made the mistake of taking an improper medication," George

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said in the statement released to the network.

He apologized to the team and its fans, saying he takes "full responsibility for my actions."

The 25-game suspension, by terms of the agreement between the NBA and the National Basketball Players Association, indicates that this was a first violation by George. He will begin serving the suspension Saturday when Philadelphia hosts New Orleans.

The suspension will cost George — a nine-time All-Star — roughly \$11.7 million of his \$51.7 million salary, or about \$469,692 for each of the 25 games missed. Some of that forfeited money will turn into a credit and put Philadelphia closer to getting out of the luxury tax; the 76ers would be about \$1.3 million over that line when factoring in the money George isn't getting.

George is expected to be eligible to return on March 25, when Philadelphia plays host to Chicago. The 76ers will have 10 games remaining in the regular season at that point.

Philadelphia entered Saturday at 26-21, sixth in the Eastern Conference. The 76ers are 16-11 when George plays, 10-10 when he does not.

Without George, the Sixers beat New Orleans 124-114 on Saturday night.

Two-time NBA scoring champion Joel Embiid said it would be "impossible" to replace George as the Sixers prepare to make a playoff push without one of their key starters.

"I know people have mixed feelings about what he brings to the table," Embiid said. "You can't replace it. (He) does everything for us. Defensively, probably our best perimeter defender. Offensively, can play so many roles. Knock down shots. Post up. Creation. Playmaking."

Sixers coach Nick Nurse declined to discuss details of the conversation he had with George after the suspension was announced. Nurse said he hadn't noticed any personal issues with George, even as mental health concerns were addressed in the statement.

"I think he's been fine," Nurse said. "Really fun to coach. Really good teammate. His teammates really like him. Showing some great leadership."

George has averaged 16 points in 27 games this season for the Sixers, with that scoring average third-highest on the team behind Tyrese Maxey (29.4) and Joel Embiid (25.7). He had one of his best games of the season earlier this week, a 32-point outburst fueled by nine 3-pointers in a win over Milwaukee on Tuesday.

The 35-year-old George signed a \$212 million, four-year contract in free agency ahead of the 2024 season. But his first year in Philly was marred by knee and adductor injuries that resulted in the forward having one of the worst years of his NBA career.

George averaged 16.2 points in just 41 games, easily his lowest scoring average in a full season since he averaged 12.1 points for Indiana in his second NBA season.

"I think there's been a lot of circumstances that have been really unfortunate," Nurse said. "I also feel like he's played pretty well this year. Borderline very well, considering he's played such a critical role for us. Kind of slotted in like a really good role player on this particular team. I think he's done what we've need him to do."

Last season was so miserable that George called his first year in Philly "rock bottom" over the course of his career.

It's certainly not any better now.

"As with all our players, dealing with this kind of stuff, you care about them," Nurse said. "We're to help him. The organization is in any way possible. And try to get past it as soon as we can, get through it the best way we can, and then go from there."

George had surgery in July on his left knee after he was injured during a workout and missed the first 12 games of this season.

George and two-time NBA scoring champion Joel Embiid had been healthy enough this season to keep the Sixers in the thick of the Eastern Conference playoff race. Maxey blossomed into an All-Star starter and a strong rookie season from No. 3 overall draft pick VJ Edgecombe had the Sixers hopeful they could make some noise in the playoffs.

With the Feb. 5 trade deadline approaching, George's suspension could have a profound impact on what

the Sixers do as they make a playoff push.

The 76ers will go through the deadline while on a five-game road trip that starts Monday at the Los Angeles Clippers.

"You get the punch to the gut, but listen, me, I've got to lead the charge here," Nurse said. "We've got to get fighting and we've got to get to work."

## **Epstein files lead to resignation in Slovakia and calls in Britain for former prince to cooperate**

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, DANICA KIRKA and BEN FINLEY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Newly disclosed U.S. government files on Jeffrey Epstein have prompted the resignation of a top official in Slovakia and revived calls in Britain for a former prince to share what he knows with authorities about Epstein's links to powerful individuals around the world.

The fallout comes just a day after the Justice Department began releasing a massive trove of files that offers more details about Epstein's interactions with the rich and famous after he served time for sex crimes in Florida.

The prime minister of Slovakia accepted the resignation on Saturday of an official, Miroslav Lajcak, who once had a yearlong term as president of the U.N. General Assembly. Lajcak wasn't accused of wrongdoing but left his position after photos and emails revealed he had met with Epstein in the years after Epstein was released from jail.

The disclosures also have revived questions about whether long-time Epstein friend Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, formerly known as Prince Andrew, should cooperate with U.S. authorities investigating Epstein.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Saturday suggested Mountbatten-Windsor should tell American investigators whatever he knows about Epstein's activities. The former prince has so far ignored a request from members of the U.S. House Oversight Committee for a "transcribed interview" about his "long-standing friendship" with Epstein.

President Donald Trump's Justice Department said it would be releasing more than 3 million pages of documents along with more than 2,000 videos and 180,000 images under a law intended to reveal most of the material it collected during two decades of investigations involving the wealthy financier.

Making his first public comments about the release, Trump cast the documents as a vindication of his actions.

"I didn't see it myself but I was told by some very important people that not only does it absolve me, it's the opposite of what people were hoping, you know, the radical left," he told reporters Saturday night as he flew to Florida.

The files, posted to the department's website, included documents involving Epstein's friendship with Mountbatten-Windsor, and Epstein's email correspondence with onetime Trump adviser Steve Bannon, New York Giants co-owner Steve Tisch and other prominent contacts with people in political, business and philanthropic circles, such as billionaires Bill Gates and Elon Musk.

Other documents offered a window into various investigations, including ones that led to sex trafficking charges against Epstein in 2019 and his longtime confidant Ghislaine Maxwell in 2021, and an earlier inquiry that found evidence of Epstein abusing underage girls but never led to federal charges.

**Slovakian official resigns**

Robert Fico, Slovakia's prime minister, said Saturday that he had accepted the resignation of Lajcak, his national security adviser.

Lajcak, a former Slovak foreign minister, hasn't been accused of any wrongdoing, but emails showed that Epstein had invited him to dinner and other meetings in 2018.

The records also include a March 2018 email from Epstein's office to former Obama White House general counsel Kathy Ruemmler, inviting her to a get-together with Epstein, Lajcak and Bannon, the conservative activist who served as Trump's White House strategist in 2017.

Lajcak said his contacts with Epstein were part of his diplomatic duties. Pressure mounted for his ouster

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from opposition parties and a nationalist partner in Fico's governing coalition.

Draft indictment detailed Epstein's abuse

The FBI started investigating Epstein in July 2006 and agents expected him to be indicted in May 2007, according to the newly records released. A prosecutor wrote up a proposed indictment after multiple underage girls told police and the FBI that they had been paid to give Epstein sexualized massages.

The draft indicated prosecutors were preparing to charge not just Epstein but also three people who worked for him as personal assistants.

According to interview notes released Friday, an employee at Epstein's Florida estate told the FBI in 2007 that Epstein once had him buy flowers and deliver them to a student at Royal Palm Beach High School to commemorate her performance in a school play.

The employee, whose name was blacked out, said some of his duties were fanning \$100 bills on a table near Epstein's bed, placing a gun between the mattresses in his bedroom and cleaning up after Epstein's frequent massages with young girls, including disposing of used condoms.

Ultimately, the U.S. attorney in Miami at the time, Alexander Acosta, signed off on a deal that let Epstein avoid federal prosecution. Epstein pleaded guilty instead to a state charge of soliciting prostitution from someone under age 18 and got an 18-month jail sentence. Acosta was Trump's first labor secretary in his earlier term.

Epstein offers to set Andrew up on a date

The records have thousands of references to Trump, including emails in which Epstein and others shared news articles, commented on his policies, or gossiped about him and his family.

Mountbatten-Windsor's name appears at least several hundred times, including in Epstein's private emails. In a 2010 exchange, Epstein appeared to set him up for a date.

"I have a friend who I think you might enjoy having dinner with," Epstein wrote.

Mountbatten-Windsor replied that he "would be delighted to see her."

Epstein, whose emails often contain typographical errors, wrote later in the exchange: "She 26, russian, clevere beautiful, trustworthy and yes she has your email."

Concerns over how Justice Department handled records

The Justice Department is facing criticism over how it handled the latest disclosure.

One group of Epstein accusers said in a statement that the new documents made it too easy to identify those he abused but not those who might have been involved in Epstein's criminal activity.

"As survivors, we should never be the ones named, scrutinized, and retraumatized while Epstein's enablers continue to benefit from secrecy," it said.

Meanwhile, Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin, the top Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, pressed the department to let lawmakers review unredacted versions of the files as soon as Sunday. He said in a statement that Congress must assess whether the redactions were lawful or improperly shielded people from scrutiny.

Department officials have acknowledged that many records in its files are duplicates, and it was clear from the documents that reviewers took different degrees of care or exercised different standards while blacking out names and other identifying information.

There were multiple documents where a name was left exposed in one copy, but redacted in another.

Epstein's ties to powerful on display

The released records reinforced the Epstein was, at least before he ran into legal trouble, friendly with Trump and former President Bill Clinton. None of Epstein's victims who have gone public has accused Trump, a Republican, or Clinton, a Democrat, of wrongdoing. Both men said they had no knowledge Epstein was abusing underage girls.

Epstein killed himself in a New York jail in August 2019, a month after being indicted.

In 2021, a federal jury in New York convicted Maxwell, a British socialite, of sex trafficking for helping recruit some of his underage victims. She is serving a 20-year prison sentence.

U.S. prosecutors never charged anyone else in connection with Epstein's abuse. One victim, Virginia Roberts Giuffre, sued Mountbatten-Windsor, saying she had sexual encounters with him starting at age

17. The now-former prince denied having sex with Giuffre but settled her lawsuit for an undisclosed sum. Giuffre died by suicide last year at age 41.

## **Snow hits the Carolinas as low temps compound power outage woes elsewhere from last weekend's ice**

By TRÂN NGUYỄN Associated Press

Blizzardlike conditions stemming from a "bomb cyclone" hammered parts of the Carolinas on Saturday and ushered in frigid temperatures to much of the East Coast, and tens of thousands of homes and businesses in Tennessee and Mississippi remained without power after being hit by a different icy storm last week.

Charlotte, North Carolina, saw one of its heaviest snowfalls in years, with roughly a foot (30 centimeters) or more in parts of the region.

That caused an hourslong mess on Interstate 85 northeast of the city, after a noninjury crash left dozens of semis and other vehicles backed up into the evening, according to the State Highway Patrol. The agency said it counted at least 750 traffic collisions, but no fatalities.

As snow came down steadily throughout the day, some people went out sledding with their families and dogs. Others stayed cozy at home to avoid treacherous traveling conditions.

Temperatures were expected to dip into the teens and single digits late Saturday and overnight.

About 240 million people were under cold weather advisories and winter storm warnings, said Bob Oravec, lead meteorologist for the National Weather Service in College Park, Maryland. A low of minus 27 Fahrenheit (minus 33 Celsius) was recorded in West Virginia, and the frigid cold was expected to plunge as far south as Florida.

Some areas unaccustomed to snow braced for several inches to fall by Sunday.

Hundreds of flights were canceled or delayed at airports in Atlanta, Charlotte and Raleigh, North Carolina, according to FlightAware, a flight tracking and data company.

Heavy snow hits the Carolinas

Snow blanketed the neighborhood of Lee Harrison, an insurance agent in a town outside of Greenville, North Carolina, and he planned to take his three daughters sledding in the backyard.

"We're not gonna drive anywhere," Harrison said. "It's thick enough that I would not feel comfortable driving with our family."

Subfreezing weather and heavy snow were forecast in the Carolinas, Virginia and northeast Georgia continuing into Sunday. Snow was also said to be possible from Maryland to Maine.

Cindy Symonds, a teacher who lives near Columbia, South Carolina, said her husband stocked up "every snack known to mankind" in preparation. Storms in the area typically drop just an inch or two (a few centimeters), so the plan now was to stay off the roads.

"This is a complete, you know, aberration for us to have this kind of snow, where it's coming down consistently for hours on end," Symonds said.

In Myrtle Beach, South Carolina — whose official seal is the sun, palm trees and a seagull — snow started to accumulate in the evening, with up to 8 inches (20 centimeters) possible overnight.

With no snow-removal equipment of its own, the city was working with county and state officials, Mayor Mark Kruea said.

Many homes and businesses still in the dark

More than 197,000 customers were without electricity, mostly in Mississippi and Tennessee, according to the outage tracking website [poweroutage.us](http://poweroutage.us).

Amanda Linton, a resident of Holly Springs, Mississippi, near the Tennessee border, and her family of five have tried to keep busy and stay positive during the weeklong outage. They have been stuck in the house for days with their dogs, chickens and ducks, with roads outside coated by inches (centimeters) of ice.

Linton said they managed to buy a generator ahead of the storms.

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"Just lots of games and reading and really just trying to keep mine and my husband's spirits up so that we're staying positive for our kids," Linton said.

Some 48,000 customers in and around Nashville, Tennessee, were still waiting for power to return. Nashville Electric Service estimated that 90% will have it back by Tuesday but it could take until next weekend — two weeks after the ice storm — for some.

Gov. Bill Lee said he shared "strong concerns" with leadership of the utility, which has defended its response and said the storm was unprecedented.

Mississippi officials said that was the state's worst winter storm since 1994. About 80 warming centers were opened, and National Guard troops delivered supplies by truck and helicopter.

Dangerous cold

In Georgia, 65-year-old Dolla Johnson, who is homeless, slept in a warming center.

"If I hadn't have been here, I would be sleeping outside," Johnson, said. "There's nowhere else to go. The bridges are not safe. Everything's freezing over."

Experts warned of the risk of hypothermia and frostbite.

More than 100 people have died from Texas to New Jersey, roughly half of them in Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana. Some deaths have been attributed to hypothermia, while others are suspected to be related to carbon monoxide exposure. Officials have not released specific details about some deaths.

Officials closed a nearly 13-mile (21-kilometer) stretch of a main road in North Carolina's Outer Banks, citing deteriorating conditions and poor visibility. Through social media the state Department of Transportation warned of likely "ocean overwash" and urged people to stay home.

## **New Epstein files include emails between LA Olympics leader Wasserman and Ghislaine Maxwell**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The latest collection of government files released on Jeffrey Epstein include emails from 2003 between Casey Wasserman, the head of the Los Angeles Olympics organizing committee, and Epstein's one-time girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell.

Among the exchanges included Wasserman telling Maxwell "I think of you all the time. So, what do I have to do to see you in a tight leather outfit?"

There is also an email exchange about massages and one in which Maxwell asks whether it will be foggy enough during an upcoming visit "so that you can float naked down the beach and no one can see you unless they are close up?"

Wasserman responds, "or something like that."

In a statement released Saturday, Wasserman said "I deeply regret my correspondence with Ghislaine Maxwell," which he said occurred "long before her horrific crimes came to light."

"I never had a personal or business relationship with Jeffrey Epstein. As is well documented, I went on a humanitarian trip as part of a delegation with the Clinton Foundation in 2002 on the Epstein plane. I am terribly sorry for having any association with either of them," he said.

In 2021, Maxwell was convicted on five counts of sex trafficking and abuse of minors. She is serving a 20-year prison sentence.

The documents were disclosed as mandated by a law passed requiring the government to open its files on the late financier and his confidant and onetime girlfriend, Maxwell. Epstein killed himself in a New York jail cell in August 2019, a month after being indicted on federal sex-trafficking charges.

Wasserman built a sports and talent agency that represents top players in football, basketball and baseball, along with big-name actors such as Adam Sandler and Brad Pitt.

He has grabbed more headlines recently as the frontman for the LA Olympic effort; his lobbying played a big role in bringing the Summer Olympics back to the U.S. in 2028. Los Angeles previously hosted in 1984 and this will be the first Summer Games in the United States since Atlanta in 1996.

In 2021, Wasserman divorced his wife of 20 years, Laura Ziffren Wasserman.

## Judge orders 5-year-old Liam Conejo Ramos and his dad released from ICE detention

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

A 5-year-old boy and his father must be released by Tuesday from the Texas center where they've been held after being detained by immigration officers in Minnesota, a federal judge ordered Saturday in a ruling that harshly criticized the Trump administration's approach to enforcement.

Images of Liam Conejo Ramos, wearing a bunny hat and Spider-Man backpack, being surrounded by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers sparked even more outcry about the administration's immigration crackdown in Minnesota.

U.S. District Judge Fred Biery, who sits in San Antonio and was appointed by former Democratic President Bill Clinton, said in his ruling that "the case has its genesis in the ill-conceived and incompetently-implemented government pursuit of daily deportation quotas, apparently even if it requires traumatizing children."

Biery had previously ruled that the boy and his father could not be removed from the U.S., at least for now.

Liam and his father, Adrian Conejo Arias, who is originally from Ecuador, were detained in the Minneapolis suburb of Columbia Heights on Jan. 20. They were taken to a detention facility in Dilley, Texas.

Neighbors and school officials say that federal immigration officers used the preschooler as "bait" by telling him to knock on the door to his house so that his mother would answer. The Department of Homeland Security has called that description of events an "abject lie." It said the father fled on foot and left the boy in a running vehicle in their driveway.

The government says Arias entered the U.S. illegally from Ecuador in December 2024. The family's lawyer says he has a pending asylum claim that allows him to remain in the country.

Their detention led to a protest at the Texas family detention center and a visit by two Texas Democratic members of Congress.

In his order Saturday, Biery said: "apparent also is the government's ignorance of an American historical document called the Declaration of Independence," suggesting the Trump administration's actions echo those that then-author and future President Thomas Jefferson enumerated as grievances against England's King George.

Among them: "He has sent hither Swarms of Officers to harass our People" and "He has excited domestic Insurrection among us."

Biery included in his ruling a photo of Liam and references to two lines in the Bible: "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these,'" and "Jesus wept."

He's not the only federal judge who has been tough on ICE recently. A Minnesota-based judge with a conservative pedigree described the agency as a serial violator of court orders related to the crackdown.

Stephen Miller, the White House chief of staff for policy, has said there's a target of 3,000 immigration arrests a day. It's that figure which the judge seemed to refer to as a "quota."

Spokespersons from the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Homeland Security did not immediately reply to requests for comment.

The Law Firm of Jennifer Scarborough, which is representing the boy and his family, said in a statement that it was working "to ensure a safe and timely reunion."

"We are pleased that the family will now be able to focus on being together and finding some peace after this traumatic ordeal," they said.

During Wednesday's visit by Texas Reps. Joaquin Castro and Jasmine Crockett, the boy slept in the arms of his father, who said Liam was frequently tired and not eating well at the detention facility that houses about 1,100 people, according to Castro.

Detained families report poor conditions like worms in food, fighting for clean water and poor medical

care at the detention center since its reopening last year. In December, a report filed by ICE acknowledged they held about 400 children longer than the recommended limit of 20 days.

## Judge says she won't halt the immigration enforcement surge in Minnesota as a lawsuit proceeds

By MARGERY A. BECK and JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A federal judge says she won't halt the immigration enforcement surge in Minnesota and the Twin Cities as a lawsuit over it proceeds.

Judge Katherine M. Menendez on Saturday denied a preliminary injunction sought in a lawsuit filed this month by state Attorney General Keith Ellison and the mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

It argues that the Department of Homeland Security is violating constitutional protections. State and local officials sought a quick order to halt the enforcement action or limit its scope. Lawyers with the U.S. Department of Justice have called the lawsuit "legally frivolous."

Ruling looks at chances of lawsuit succeeding

The ruling on the injunction focused on the argument by Minnesota officials that the federal government is violating the Constitution's 10th Amendment, which limits the federal government's powers to infringe on the sovereignty of states. In her ruling, the judge relied heavily on whether that argument was likely to ultimately succeed in court.

The federal government argued that the surge, dubbed Operation Metro Surge, is necessary in its effort to take criminal immigrants off the streets and because federal efforts have been hindered by state and local "sanctuary laws and policies."

State and local officials argued that the surge amounts to retaliation after the federal government's initial attempts to withhold federal funding to try to force immigration cooperation failed. They also maintain that the surge has amounted to an unconstitutional drain on state and local resources, noting that schools and businesses have been shuttered in the wake of what local officials say are aggressive, poorly trained and armed federal officers.

"Because there is evidence supporting both sides' arguments as to motivation and the relative merits of each side's competing positions are unclear, the Court is reluctant to find that the likelihood-of-success factor weighs sufficiently in favor of granting a preliminary injunction," the judge said in the ruling.

Judge has harsh words for federal agencies

The judge also said she was influenced by the government's victory last week at the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The appeals court set aside her decision putting limits on the use of force by immigration officers against peaceful Minnesota protesters.

"If that injunction went too far, then the one at issue here — halting the entire operation — certainly would," Menendez said.

Despite the denial of an injunction, Menendez said the lawsuit makes a strong showing that the surge is having a "profound and even heartbreaking" effect on the people of Minnesota, noting multiple shootings of state residents by federal agents.

"Additionally, there is evidence that ICE and CBP agents have engaged in racial profiling, excessive use of force, and other harmful actions," she wrote.

Reactions to injunction decision

U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi lauded the ruling, calling it "another HUGE" legal win for the Justice Department on the social platform X.

At an unrelated news conference Saturday in Miami, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said her agency is "grateful when a court sees that the right thing has been done," and said DHS will try to work with local law enforcement and state leadership on its effort.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said in a statement that he was disappointed.

"This decision doesn't change what people here have lived through — fear, disruption, and harm caused by a federal operation that never belonged in Minneapolis in the first place," Frey said. "This operation

has not brought public safety. It's brought the opposite and has detracted from the order we need for a working city. It's an invasion, and it needs to stop."

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison said the case is still in its infancy and his office will push forward with the lawsuit.

"We know that these 3,000 immigration agents are here to intimidate Minnesota and bend the state to the federal government's will," Ellison said in a statement. "That is unconstitutional under the Tenth Amendment and the principle of equal sovereignty. We're not letting up in defending our state's constitutional powers."

Protests continue in Minnesota

The state, particularly Minneapolis, has been on edge after federal officers fatally shot two people in the city: Renee Good on Jan. 7 and Alex Pretti on Jan. 24. Thousands of people have taken to the streets to protest the federal action in Minnesota and across the country.

On Saturday in a Minneapolis park, demonstrators voiced a mix of concern and resignation over the ruling.

"It's not surprising, but it's awful," said Tucker Johnson, a 27-year-old middle school teacher, adding that he has seen a significant drop in attendance since the operation began. "Our students can't get an education, because they and their families are too scared to go to school. That's wrong, no matter what the court says."

Carrie Schmitt-Jost, a 54-year-old nurse, agreed.

"Shame on the judge," she said. "But it won't stop us."

## Israeli strikes kill 30 Palestinians, including children, as Gaza ceasefire inches forward

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and SAM METZ Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Hospitals in Gaza said Israeli strikes killed at least 30 Palestinians including several children on Saturday, one of the highest tolls since the October ceasefire, a day after Israel accused Hamas of new truce violations.

The strikes hit locations throughout Gaza, including an apartment building in Gaza City and a tent camp in Khan Younis, said officials at hospitals that received the bodies. The casualties included two women and six children from two different families. Another airstrike hit a police station in Gaza City, killing at least 14 and wounding others, Shifa Hospital director Mohamed Abu Selmiya said.

The strikes came a day before the Rafah crossing along the border with Egypt is set to open in Gaza's southernmost city. All of the territory's border crossings — the rest are with Israel — have been closed throughout almost the entire war. Palestinians see Rafah as a lifeline for tens of thousands needing treatment outside the territory, where the majority of medical infrastructure has been destroyed.

The crossing's opening, limited at first, will occur as the U.S.-brokered Israel-Hamas ceasefire plan moves into its second phase. Other challenging issues include demilitarizing the strip after nearly two decades of Hamas rule and installing a new government to oversee reconstruction.

Egypt, one of the ceasefire mediators, in a statement condemned the Israeli strikes in the "strongest terms" and warned that they represent "a direct threat to the political course" of the truce. Qatar, another mediator, in a statement called Israel's strikes a "dangerous escalation" and said continuing them poses a "direct threat" to the political process.

'We don't know if we're at war or peace'

Nasser Hospital said the strike on the tent camp in Khan Younis caused a fire, killing seven, including a father, his three children and three grandchildren.

Atallah Abu Hadaiyed said he had just finished praying when the explosion struck. "We came running and found my cousins lying here and there, with fire raging. We don't know if we're at war or at peace, or what. Where is the truce? Where is the ceasefire they talked about?" he said, as people inspected ruins including a bloodied mattress.

Shifa Hospital said the Gaza City apartment building strike killed three children, their aunt and grandmother.

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"The three girls are gone, may God have mercy on them. They were asleep, we found them in the street," said a relative, Samir Al-Atbash, adding that the family were civilians with no connection to Hamas. Names were written on body bags lined up at the foot of a wall.

Shifa Hospital said the strike on the police station killed at least 14 including four policewomen, civilians and inmates. The hospital also said a man was killed in a strike on the eastern side of Jabaliya refugee camp.

Hamas called Saturday's strikes "a renewed flagrant violation" and urged the United States and other mediating countries to push Israel to stop them.

"All available indicators suggest that we are dealing with a 'Board of War,' not a 'Board of Peace,'" senior Hamas official Bassem Naim said on X, questioning the legitimacy of the Trump administration-proposed international body meant to govern Gaza.

Israel's military, which has struck targets on both sides of the ceasefire's dividing line, said its attacks since October have been responses to violations of the agreement. It said Saturday's strikes followed what it described as two separate ceasefire violations a day earlier, in which Israeli forces killed three militants who emerged from a tunnel in an Israeli-controlled area of Rafah and four who approached troops near the dividing line.

The number reported killed Saturday was several times higher than the daily average since the ceasefire began. As of Friday, Gaza's Health Ministry had recorded at least 520 Palestinians killed by Israeli fire since the start of the ceasefire. The ministry, part of the Hamas-led government, maintains detailed casualty records that are seen as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and independent experts.

The war began with the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel that killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 251 people hostage. The remains of the final hostage in Gaza were recovered early this week.

## **The Carolinas emerge as new population boom states. Affordability and lifestyle drive growth**

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Move over Florida and Texas. The United States has new hot spots for growth, and they both have Carolina in their name.

North Carolina last year attracted more new residents, 84,000 people, from other parts of the country than any other state, a title held by Texas in 2024 and Florida in the two years before that. South Carolina had the highest overall growth rate last year at 1.5%, a distinction among states held by Florida in 2024, according to U.S. Census Bureau figures released this past week.

Domestic migration, or people moving within the U.S., slowed in Texas. The 67,300 domestic migrants heading to the second most populous state year over year barely squeaked by South Carolina, which had the third highest number of domestic migrants at 66,600.

The appeal of Florida, the nation's third most populous state, dimmed. It dropped to No. 8 for state-to-state migration, as more U.S. residents preferred to move elsewhere, including Alabama.

Sabrina Morley and Steven Devereaux sold their Tampa-area house last year, moved out of Florida and landed outside Valencia, Spain. Growing up in the 1990s, they both enjoyed Florida's diversity and being able to run around freely outdoors. But in recent years, as they planned to have children, they had grown wary of the state's costs, regular threats of mass shootings at schools, the quality of education and political divisiveness. They are expecting a daughter in the spring.

"I had a pretty good childhood, but I don't think we'd be able to give our child the same quality of life because of the cost of living, food quality, and guns have become more prevalent," Devereaux said. "We think where we are now, it's the best decision we could make to give any future children the best quality of life."

Younger folks and nice areas

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North Carolina state demographer Michael Cline credited the state's growth to high-paying jobs in banking and tech, the topographical diversity and having smaller big-cities than Florida and Texas.

"North Carolina is attracting younger folks because we have so many nice areas in North Carolina — the mountains and beaches and lakes in between — that we're benefiting from younger people who decided they can work from anywhere and would rather be in a nice area," Cline said. "One of the things about North Carolina, our cities are not huge, and that may be attractive to folks, too."

Last year's changes among the states were significant because population growth brings more taxpayers, economic dynamism and demand for goods and services. It also signals potential changes in the nation's political landscape after the next census in 2030, with certain states gaining or losing clout in Congress and the Electoral College.

In the next few years, domestic migration is going to play a larger role in states' growth or population decline. That is because the Trump administration's immigration crackdown has contributed to a significant reduction in migration from abroad, which had been the prime driver of growth in most states for the first half of this decade.

Without immigration growth, the U.S. population will start shrinking in five years as deaths outpace births, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Pandemic boom peters out

Despite the comparative year-over-year slowdown in domestic migration, Texas' overall growth of 391,000 people and Florida's overall growth of 196,000 people were still the two highest in the U.S. last year.

In Florida, it was driven by international migration, and in Texas by international migration as well as births outpacing deaths. Both states boomed during the early part of the decade, when pandemic-era lockdowns and remote work encouraged residents from other states to move to Florida and Texas, where coronavirus restrictions were more lax.

"The sharp domestic migrations they observed during the pandemic have now petered out, especially for Florida, at the same time that immigration is being diminished," said Brookings demographer William Frey.

Demographers in Florida and Texas said they were not entirely sold on the accuracy of the Census Bureau's migration numbers, which are the hardest variables to pin down because they fluctuate the most year to year, although they did not question the rigor of the bureau's work. The bureau uses data from the IRS and its American Community Survey to calculate migration, although the ACS data lags by a year and requires statisticians to project the data forward.

The Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Florida uses a method different from the Census Bureau's to calculate growth — electrical customer data, said research demographer Richard Doty.

There are no definitive explanations for why domestic migration to Florida went from almost 319,000 people in 2022 to 22,500 people in 2025. Doty said some factors might include the state no longer being the bargain it once was, a series of hurricanes and return-to-office employer mandates.

"The cost of housing, in particular, is driving young people and retirees to other states," he said. "Also, insurance is higher in Florida than most other states."

When asked about the decline, Gov. Ron DeSantis' press secretary, Molly Best, noted in an email that Florida had a significant influx of new residents during the pandemic. It remains a top-ranked placed to live, she said.

The Texas economy has been growing, but that is not the only thing that influences the inflow of potential migrants. Conditions outside the state also do, Texas state demographer Lloyd Potter said in an email.

"If jobs are plentiful, living is affordable, and the overall quality of life is good, they will be less likely to move for an opportunity outside that community," Potter said.

## Power outages hit Ukraine and Moldova as Kyiv struggles against the winter cold

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Emergency power cuts swept across several Ukrainian cities as well as neighboring Moldova on Saturday, officials said, amid a commitment from the Kremlin to U.S. President Donald Trump to pause strikes on Kyiv as Ukraine battles one of its bleakest winters in years.

Ukraine's Energy Minister Denys Shmyhal said that the outages had been caused by a technical malfunction affecting power lines linking Ukraine and Moldova.

The failure "caused a cascading outage in Ukraine's power grid," triggering automatic protection systems, he said.

Blackouts were reported in Kyiv, as well as Zhytomyr and Kharkiv regions, in the center and northeast of the country respectively. The outage cut water supplies to the Ukrainian capital, officials said, while the city's subway system was temporarily suspended because of low voltage on the network.

Moldova also experienced major power outages, including in the capital Chisinau, officials said.

"Due to the loss of power lines on the territory of Ukraine, the automatic protection system was triggered, which disconnected the electricity supply," Moldova's Energy Minister Dorin Junghietu said in a post on Facebook. "I encourage the population to stay calm until electricity is restored."

### Weaponizing winter

The large-scale outage followed weeks of Russian strikes against Ukraine's already struggling energy grid, which have triggered long stretches of severe power shortages.

Moscow has sought to deny Ukrainian civilians heat, light and running water over the course of the war, in a strategy that Ukrainian officials describe as "weaponizing winter."

While Russia has used similar tactics throughout the course of its almost four-year invasion of Ukraine, temperatures throughout this winter have fallen further than usual, bringing widespread hardship to civilians.

Forecasters say Ukraine will experience a brutally cold period stretching into next week. Temperatures in some areas will drop to minus 30 degrees Celsius (minus 22 Fahrenheit), Ukraine's State Emergency Service said.

Trump said late Thursday that President Vladimir Putin had agreed to a temporary pause in targeting Kyiv and other Ukrainian towns amid the extreme weather.

"I personally asked President Putin not to fire on Kyiv and the cities and towns for a week during this ... extraordinary cold," Trump said during a Cabinet meeting at the White House. Putin has "agreed to that," he said, without elaborating on when the request to the Russian leader was made.

The White House didn't immediately respond to a query seeking clarity about the scope and timing of any limited pause.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov confirmed Friday that Trump "made a personal request" to Putin to stop targeting Kyiv until Sunday "in order to create favorable conditions for negotiations."

Talks are expected to take place between U.S., Russian and Ukrainian officials on Feb. 1 in Abu Dhabi. The teams previously met in late January in the first known time that officials from the Trump administration simultaneously met with negotiators from both Ukraine and Russia. However, it's unclear how many obstacles to peace remain. Disagreement over what happens to occupied Ukrainian territory, and Moscow's demand for possession of territory it hasn't captured, are a key issue holding up a peace deal, Zelenskyy said Thursday.

Russian presidential envoy Kirill Dmitriev said on social media Saturday that he was in Miami, where talks between Russian and U.S. negotiators have previously taken place. Russian state news agencies later reported that he was meeting with an "American delegation" but did not provide further details.

### A pause in strikes

Russia struck Ukrainian energy assets in several regions on Thursday but there were no strikes on those facilities overnight, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Friday.

In a post on social media, Zelenskyy also noted that Russia has turned its attention to targeting Ukrai-

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nian logistics networks, and that Russian drones and missiles hit residential areas of Ukraine overnight, as they have most nights during the war.

Trump has framed Putin's acceptance of the pause in strikes as a concession. But Zelenskyy was skeptical as Russia's invasion approaches its fourth anniversary on Feb. 24 with no sign that Moscow is willing to reach a peace settlement despite a U.S.-led push to end the fighting.

"I do not believe that Russia wants to end the war. There is a great deal of evidence to the contrary," Zelenskyy said Thursday.

In the streets of Kyiv Saturday, many Ukrainians shared Zelenskyy's skepticism.

On the banks of the Dnipro River in the northern part of the city, several hundred people gathered to unwind and enjoy a DJ set. The river is frozen solid enough for people to run, dance and ride sleds across its surface. Some have brought their dogs, while others have set up picnics and lit grills. At the same time, their homes remain cold, often without water or electricity.

Speaking with The Associated Press, Serhii Kupov, 57, said he did not believe peace could be achieved through negotiations as Russia was "putting forward unrealistic demands." Gathered around a small camping table, Kupov and his friends raised glasses of alcohol and said they were ready to endure the temporary lack of heating in their homes.

Albina Sokur, 35, has also been without heating for nearly three weeks. She is the mother of six-year-old Tymur and is originally from Donetsk, a city Russia occupied in 2014 at the start of its military aggression against Ukraine. She says that despite the constant instability, she still tried to live life "to the fullest."

Sokur said that she hoped peace could be achieved through negotiations, but said she did not believe that she would ever be able to return home.

"I think there could just be a freezing of the front line, like it was before 2022 ... It would only give the other side time to build up strength. This needs to be finished once and for all," she said.

## What to know about the partial government shutdown and its impact

By MEG KINNARD and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The partial government shutdown that started Saturday is vastly different from the record closure in the fall.

That is mostly because the shutdown may not last long.

The House will try to pass funding legislation quickly when lawmakers return Monday, and that would end the shutdown. Congress already has passed half this year's funding bills, ensuring that several important federal agencies and programs continue to operate through September. Nutrition assistance programs, for example, should be unaffected.

Funding will lapse, at least temporarily, for the Pentagon and agencies such as the departments of Homeland Security and Transportation. Essential functions will continue, but workers could go without pay if the impasse drags on. Some could be furloughed.

Why is there another shutdown?

The government funding process had been going smoothly, with key lawmakers in the House and Senate finding bipartisan agreement. But the shooting deaths this month of two U.S. citizens, Alex Pretti and Renée Good, by federal agents in Minneapolis, changed the dynamic.

Democrats were incensed after Pretti's killing and demanded that one of the six remaining funding bills, for DHS and its associated agencies, be stripped from the package passed by the House. They said the bill must include changes to immigration enforcement, including a code of conduct for federal agents and a requirement that officers show identification.

Eager to avoid another shutdown, President Donald Trump's White House struck a deal with Democrats to temporarily fund DHS at current levels for two weeks while the negotiations play out.

The Senate passed the five-bill funding package Friday, but it must pass the House again before becoming law. The House is not returning until Monday, ensuring funding will lapse for parts of the government,

at least temporarily.

Have there been previous brief or weekend shutdowns?

Yes, and typically the effects were not very visible to anyone hoping to use government services.

There were a couple of these in Trump's first administration.

In January 2018, a dispute over immigration protections resulted in a weekend shutdown. Some federal workers were furloughed or worked without pay. Benefits such as Social Security and Medicare were uninterrupted, many people did not notice the shutdown and federal offices reopened the following Monday after a deal was in place.

In February 2018, the shortest shutdown in U.S. history lasted about nine hours, overnight, and most people did not notice any impact. While agencies technically shut down after funding lapsed, it was so brief that furlough notices were not all sent out, and nothing was closed during business hours.

What funding is impacted?

The funding lapse affects the Pentagon and agencies such as the Transportation Department and DHS, which includes the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Experts have said FEMA should have enough money to respond to the massive winter storm still affecting large swaths of the country. FEMA would have about \$7 billion to \$8 billion in a fund for disaster response and recovery efforts and the staff who work on them. An extended shutdown could put more pressure on that fund, especially if FEMA must respond to new disasters.

Other FEMA operations, such as the ability to write or renew National Flood Insurance Program policies, would pause, as they did during last year's 43-day shutdown.

That shutdown took a toll on the traveling public as delays and cancellations mounted, and there is now a risk of air travel disruptions again: One of the spending bills awaiting House passage covers the Department of Transportation, which is responsible for the air traffic control system and its workforce.

Air traffic controllers would still report for duty, but would be doing so without pay until a funding bill is passed.

At the State Department, the shutdown will not have a significant effect for the general public, in the United States or abroad.

Department employees were sent a 73-page memo late Friday that said passport and visa services and processing will continue and that embassies and consulates will remain open. Some functions, including nonemergency consular notifications and website updates, may be affected. But the memo said that 18,946 of the department's 27,206 direct hire American employees are exempted from potential furloughs if the shutdown continues.

Will SNAP and other food assistance programs be affected?

No. That is a major change from the fall shutdown, when many people had to do with little-to-no assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program during the final weeks of the government closure. The bill to end that shutdown funded the Department of Agriculture and the programs that it administers through the remainder of the budget year, which ends Sept. 30.

That means full SNAP benefits will continue now. The federal food program serves about 42 million people, about 1 in 8 Americans, in lower-income households. They receive an average of around \$190 monthly per person.

Another key program fully funded for the year is the federal supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children, known as WIC. It provides pregnant women and young children with healthy food and nutrition counseling.

## **ICE claim that a man shattered his skull running into wall triggers tension at a Minnesota hospital**

By JACK BROOK, JIM MUSTIAN and MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Intensive care nurses immediately doubted the word of federal immigration officers when they arrived at a Minneapolis hospital with a Mexican immigrant who had broken bones in his

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face and skull.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents initially claimed Alberto Castañeda Mondragón had tried to flee while handcuffed and "purposefully ran headfirst into a brick wall," according to court documents filed by a lawyer seeking his release.

But staff members at Hennepin County Medical Center determined that could not possibly account for the fractures and bleeding throughout the 31-year-old's brain, said three nurses familiar with the case.

"It was laughable, if there was something to laugh about," said one of the nurses, who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss patient care. "There was no way this person ran headfirst into a wall."

The explanation from ICE is an example of recent run-ins between immigration officers and health care workers that have contributed to mounting friction at Minneapolis hospitals. Workers at the Hennepin County facility say ICE officers have restrained patients in defiance of hospital rules and stayed at their sides for days. The agents have also lingered around the campus and pressed people for proof of citizenship.

Since the start of Operation Metro Surge, President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown in Minnesota, ICE officers have become such a fixture at the hospital that administrators issued new protocols for how employees should engage with them. Some employees complain that they have been intimidated to the point that they avoid crossing paths with agents while at work and use encrypted communications to guard against any electronic eavesdropping.

Similar operations have been carried out by federal agents in Los Angeles, Chicago and other cities, where opponents have criticized what they say are overly aggressive tactics. It's not clear how many people have required hospital care while in detention.

Injuries appeared inconsistent with ICE account

The AP interviewed a doctor and five nurses who work at HCMC, who spoke on condition of anonymity to talk about Castañeda Mondragón's case and conditions inside the hospital. The AP also consulted with an outside physician who affirmed his injuries were inconsistent with an accidental fall or running into a wall.

ICE's account of how he was hurt evolved during the time that federal officers were at his bedside. At least one ICE officer told caregivers that Castañeda Mondragón "got his (expletive) rocked" after his Jan. 8 arrest near a St. Paul shopping center, the court filings and a hospital staff member said. His arrest happened a day after the first of two fatal shootings in Minneapolis by immigration officers.

The situation reached a head when ICE insisted on using handcuffs to shackle his ankles to the bed, prompting a heated encounter with hospital staff, according to the court records and the hospital employees familiar with the incident.

At the time, Castañeda Mondragón was so disoriented he did not know what year it was and could not recall how he was injured, one of the nurses said. ICE officers believed he was attempting to escape after he got up and took a few steps.

"We were basically trying to explain to ICE that this is how someone with a traumatic brain injury is — they're impulsive," the nurse said. "We didn't think he was making a run for the door."

Security responded to the scene, followed by the hospital's CEO and attorney, who huddled in a doctor's office to discuss options for dealing with ICE, the nurse said.

"We eventually agreed with ICE that we would have a nursing assistant sit with the patient to prevent him from leaving," the nurse said. "They agreed a little while later to take the shackles off."

The Department of Homeland Security, which includes ICE, did not respond to repeated requests for comment on Castañeda Mondragón's injuries. A deportation officer skirted the issue in the court documents, saying that during the intake process at an ICE detention center, it was determined he "had a head injury that required emergency medical treatment."

Gregorio Castañeda Mondragón said his older brother is from Veracruz, Mexico, and worked as a roofer. He has a 10-year-old daughter living in his hometown he helps support.

According to his lawyers, Alberto Castañeda Mondragón entered the U.S. in 2022 with valid immigration documents. Minnesota incorporation filings show he founded a company called Castañeda Construction the following year with an address listed in St. Paul.

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He appears to have no criminal record. His lawyers told a court that Castañeda Mondragón was racially profiled during the crackdown, and that officers determined only after his arrest that he had overstayed his visa.

"He was a brown-skinned, Latino Spanish speaker at a location immigration agents arbitrarily decided to target," his lawyers wrote in a petition seeking his release from ICE custody.

Hours after arrest, immigrant has eight skull fractures

Castañeda Mondragón was initially taken to an ICE processing center at the edge of Minneapolis. Court records include an arrest warrant signed upon his arrival by an ICE officer, not an immigration judge.

About four hours after his arrest, he was taken to a hospital emergency room in suburban Edina with swelling and bruising around his right eye and bleeding. A CT scan revealed at least eight skull fractures and life-threatening hemorrhages in at least five areas of his brain, according to court documents. He was then transferred to HCMC.

Castañeda Mondragón was alert and speaking, telling staff he was "dragged and mistreated by federal agents," though his condition quickly deteriorated, the documents show.

The following week, a Jan. 16 court filing described his condition as minimally responsive and communicative, disoriented and heavily sedated.

AP shared the details of Castañeda Mondragón's injuries with Dr. Lindsey C. Thomas, a board-certified forensic pathologist who worked as a medical examiner in Minnesota for more than 30 years. She agreed with the assessment of hospital staff.

"I am pretty sure a person could not get these kinds of extensive injuries from running into a wall," Thomas said, adding that she would need to see the CT scans to make a more definitive finding.

"I almost think one doesn't have to be a physician to conclude that a person can't get skull fractures on both the right and left sides of their head and from front to back by running themselves into a wall," she said.

ICE officers stay with hospitalized detainees for days

ICE officers have entered the hospital with seriously injured detainees and stayed at their bedside day after day, staffers said. The crackdown has been unsettling to hospital employees, who said ICE agents have been seen loitering on hospital grounds and asking patients and employees for proof of citizenship.

Hospital staff members said they were uncomfortable with the presence of armed agents they did not trust and who appeared to be untrained.

The nurses interviewed by AP said they felt intimidated by ICE's presence in the critical care unit and had even been told to avoid a certain bathroom to minimize encounters with officers. They said staff members are using an encrypted messaging app to compare notes and share information out of fear that the government might be monitoring their communications.

The hospital reminded employees that ICE officers are not permitted to access patients or protected information without a warrant or court order.

"Patients under federal custody are first and foremost patients," hospital officials wrote in a bulletin outlining new protocols. The hospital's written policy also states that no shackles or other restraints should be used unless medically necessary.

"We have our policies, but ICE personnel as federal officers don't necessarily comply with those, and that introduces tension," said a doctor who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment for the hospital.

Hospital spokeswoman Alisa Harris said ICE agents "have not entered our facilities looking for individuals."

On Saturday, more than two weeks after Castañeda Mondragón was arrested, a U.S. District Court judge ordered him released from ICE custody.

"We are encouraged by the court's order, which affirms that the rule of law applies to all people, in every corner of our country, including federal officers," said Jeanette Boerner, director of Hennepin County Adult Representation Services, which filed the lawsuit on Castañeda Mondragón's behalf.

To the surprise of some who treated him, Castañeda Mondragón was discharged from the hospital

Tuesday. A hospital spokeswoman said she had no information about him.

The Justice Department filed court documents this week affirming Castañeda Mondragón is no longer in custody. Prosecutors did not respond to a request for comment on the man's injuries.

Castañeda Mondragón has no family in Minnesota and coworkers have taken him in, the man's brother said. He has significant memory loss and a long recovery ahead. He won't be able to work for the foreseeable future, and his friends and family worry about paying for his care.

"He still doesn't remember things that happened. I think (he remembers) 20% of the 100% he had," said Gregorio Castañeda Mondragón, who lives in Mexico. "It's sad that instead of having good memories of the United States, you're left with a bad taste in your mouth about that country because they're treating them like animals."

## Justice Department releases largest batch yet of Epstein documents, says it totals 3 million pages

By ERIC TUCKER, MICHAEL R. SISAK and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The Justice Department on Friday released many more records from its investigative files on Jeffrey Epstein, resuming disclosures under a law intended to reveal what the government knew about the millionaire financier's sexual abuse of young girls and his interactions with rich and powerful people such as Donald Trump and Bill Clinton.

Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said the department would be releasing more than 3 million pages of documents along with more than 2,000 videos and 180,000 images. The files, posted to the department's website, include some of the several million pages of records that officials said were withheld from an initial release in December.

Included were documents concerning some of Epstein's famous associates, including Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, formerly known as Britain's Prince Andrew, and email correspondence between Epstein and Elon Musk and other prominent contacts from across the political spectrum.

The documents were disclosed under the Epstein Files Transparency Act, the law enacted after months of public and political pressure that requires the government to open its files on the late financier and his confidant and onetime girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell. Lawmakers complained when the Justice Department made only a limited release last month, but officials said more time was needed to review additional documents that were discovered and to ensure no sensitive information about victims was released.

Friday's disclosure represents the largest document dump to date about a saga the Trump administration has struggled to shake because of the president's previous association with Epstein. Criminal investigations into the financier have long animated online sleuths, conspiracy theorists and others who have suspected government cover-ups and clamored for a full accounting, demands that Blanche acknowledged might not be satisfied by the latest release.

"There's a hunger, or a thirst, for information that I don't think will be satisfied by the review of these documents," he said.

After missing a Dec. 19 deadline set by Congress to release all the files, the Justice Department said it tasked hundreds of lawyers with reviewing the records to determine what needed to be redacted, or blacked out. It denied any effort to shield Trump, who says he cut ties with Epstein years ago after an earlier friendship, from potential embarrassment.

Epstein's famous friends

The latest batch includes correspondence either with or about some of Epstein's friends.

The records have thousands of references to Trump, including emails in which Epstein and others shared news articles about him, commented on his policies or politics, or gossiped about him and his family. Also included was a spreadsheet created last August summarizing calls to the FBI's National Threat Operation Center or to a hotline established by prosecutors from people claiming without corroboration to have some knowledge of wrongdoing by Trump.

Mountbatten-Windsor's name appears at least several hundred times in the documents, sometimes in

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news clippings, sometimes in Epstein's private email correspondence and in guest lists for dinners organized by Epstein. Some records document an attempt by prosecutors in New York to get the former prince to agree to be interviewed as part of their Epstein sex trafficking probe.

The records also show Musk, the billionaire Tesla founder, reached out to Epstein on at least two occasions to plan visits to the Caribbean island where many of the allegations of sexual abuse purportedly occurred.

In a 2012 exchange, Epstein asked how many people Musk would like flown by helicopter to the island he owned.

"Probably just Talulah and me," Musk responded, referencing his then-partner, actress Talulah Riley. "What day/night will be the wildest party on our island?"

Musk messaged Epstein again ahead of a planned Caribbean trip in 2013. "Will be in the BVI/St Bart's area over the holidays," he wrote. "Is there a good time to visit?" Epstein extended an invite for after the New Year holiday.

It's not immediately clear if the island visits took place. Spokespeople for Musk's companies, Tesla and X, didn't respond to emails seeking comment.

Musk has said he repeatedly rebuffed Epstein's overtures.

"Epstein tried to get me to go to his island and I REFUSED," he posted on X in 2025 when House Democrats released an Epstein calendar with an entry mentioning a potential Musk visit.

Epstein also appears to have tried to connect New York Giants co-owner Steve Tisch with women, according to emails. In one exchange, Tisch told Epstein he had had lunch with one of Epstein's assistant's friends. He described her as a "very sweet girl," and asked if Epstein knew anything about her.

"no, but i will ask," said Epstein, before inquiring if Tisch had contacted another woman, crudely describing her physical features.

Tisch said in a statement that he had a "brief association" with Epstein where they emailed about adult women and other topics. He said he "never went to his island" and that he "deeply regrets" the association.

The documents show that Steve Bannon, a conservative activist who served as Trump's White House strategist earlier in the president's first term, bantered over politics with the financier, discussed get-togethers with him over breakfast, lunch or dinner and, on March 29, 2019, asked Epstein if he could supply his plane to pick him up in Rome.

Epstein told him his pilot and crew "are doing their best" to arrange that flight but if Bannon could find a charter flight instead, "I'm happy to pay." Apparently in France at the time, Epstein sent a text message saying: "My guys can pick you up. Come for dinner." The exchange did not show how that played out.

In December 2012, Epstein invited Howard Lutnick, now Trump's commerce secretary, to his private island for lunch, the records show. Lutnick's wife accepted the invitation and said they would arrive on a yacht with their children. On another occasion in 2011, the two men had drinks, according to a schedule shared with Epstein.

Lutnick has said he cut ties with Epstein long ago. A Commerce Department spokesman said Lutnick had "limited interactions with Mr. Epstein in the presence of his wife and has never been accused of wrongdoing."

Another Epstein contact surfacing in the records is former Obama White House general counsel Kathy Ruemmler. In one of several exchanges, Epstein emailed Ruemmler to advise that Democrats should stop demonizing Trump as a Mafia-type figure even as he derided the president as a "maniac."

A spokesperson for Goldman Sachs, where Ruemmler is general counsel and chief legal officer, said in a statement that Ruemmler "had a professional association with Jeffrey Epstein when she was a lawyer in private practice" and "regrets ever knowing him."

Building on the earlier release

The tens of thousands of pages released last month included previously released flight logs showing Trump flew on Epstein's private jet in the 1990s, before their falling-out, and several photographs of Clinton. None of Epstein's victims who have gone public with their stories have publicly accused Trump, a Republican, nor Clinton, a Democrat, of wrongdoing. Both have said they had no knowledge he was abusing underage girls.

Epstein killed himself in a New York jail cell in August 2019, a month after being indicted on federal sex trafficking charges.

In 2008 and 2009, Epstein served jail time in Florida after pleading guilty to soliciting prostitution from someone under the age of 18. At the time, investigators had gathered evidence that Epstein had sexually abused underage girls at his Palm Beach home. The U.S. attorney's office agreed not to prosecute him in exchange for his guilty plea to lesser state charges.

A draft indictment from that period released Friday shows prosecutors contemplated federal charges against not just Epstein but three others who were his personal assistants and were suspected of participating in a conspiracy to recruit underage girls to perform lewd acts with Epstein.

In 2021, a federal jury in New York convicted Maxwell, a British socialite, of sex trafficking for helping recruit some of his underage victims. She is serving a 20-year prison sentence.

U.S. prosecutors never charged anyone else in connection with Epstein's abuse of girls. One victim, Virginia Roberts Giuffre, accused him in lawsuits of having arranged for her to have sexual encounters at age 17 and 18 with numerous politicians, business titans, academics and others. They all denied her allegations.

Among those accused was Britain's Prince Andrew, who was stripped of his royal titles amid the scandal. Andrew denied having sex with Giuffre but settled her lawsuit for an undisclosed sum.

Giuffre died by suicide last year at age 41.

## Satellite photos show activity at Iran nuclear sites as tensions rise over protest crackdown

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — As tensions soar over Iran's bloody crackdown on nationwide protests, satellite images show activity at two Iranian nuclear sites bombed last year by Israel and the United States that may be a sign of Tehran trying to obscure efforts to salvage any materials remaining there.

The images from Planet Labs PBC show roofs have been built over two damaged buildings at the Isfahan and Natanz facilities, the first major activity noticeable by satellite at any of the country's stricken nuclear sites since Israel's 12-day war with Iran in June.

Those coverings block satellites from seeing what's happening on the ground — right now the only way for inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency to monitor the sites as Iran has prevented access.

Iran has not publicly discussed the activity at the two sites. The IAEA, a watchdog agency of the United Nations, did not respond to requests for comment.

U.S. President Donald Trump repeatedly has demanded Iran negotiate a deal over its nuclear program to avert threatened American military strikes over the country's crackdown on protesters. The U.S. has moved the USS Abraham Lincoln and several guided-missile destroyers into the Middle East, but it remains unclear whether Trump will decide to use force.

The new roofs do not appear to be a sign of reconstruction starting at the heavily damaged facilities, experts who examined the sites said. Instead, they are likely part of Iran's efforts "to assess whether key assets — such as limited stocks of highly enriched uranium — survived the strikes," said Andrea Stricker, who studies Iran for the Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies, which has been sanctioned by Tehran.

"They want to be able to get at any recovered assets they can get to without Israel or the United States seeing what survived," she said.

Isfahan and Natanz are 2 key Iran sites

Prior to Israel launching a 12-day war with Iran in June, the Islamic Republic had three major nuclear sites associated with its program. Iran long has insisted its nuclear program is peaceful. However, Iranian officials in recent years have increasingly threatened to pursue the bomb. The West and the IAEA say Iran had an organized nuclear weapons program up until 2003.

The Natanz site, some 220 kilometers (135 miles) south of the capital, is a mix of above- and below-

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ground laboratories that did the majority of Iran's uranium enrichment.

Before the war, the IAEA said Iran used advanced centrifuges there to enrich uranium up to 60%, a short, technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90%. Some of the material is presumed to have been onsite for when the entire complex was attacked.

The facility outside the city of Isfahan was mainly known for producing the uranium gas that is fed into centrifuges to be spun and purified.

A third site, Fordo, some 95 kilometers (60 miles) southwest of the capital, housed a hardened enrichment site under a mountain.

During last year's war, Israel targeted the sites first, followed by U.S. strikes using bunker-busting bombs and Tomahawk cruise missiles. The U.S. strikes "significantly degraded Iran's nuclear program," the White House's National Security Strategy published in November said, though specifics on the damage have been hard to come by publicly.

Iran has not allowed IAEA inspectors to visit the sites since the attacks.

Roofs seen in Isfahan and Natanz

The main above-ground enrichment building at Natanz was known as the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant. Israel hit the building June 13, leaving it "functionally destroyed," and "seriously damaging" underground halls holding cascades of centrifuges, the IAEA's director-general, Rafael Mariano Grossi, said at the time. A U.S. follow-up attack on June 22 hit Natanz's underground facilities with bunker-busting bombs, likely decimating what remained.

Planet Labs PBC images show Iran began in December to build a roof over the damaged plant. It completed work on the roof by the end of the month. Iran has not provided any public acknowledgment of that work. Natanz's electrical system appears to still be destroyed.

Iran also appears to be continuing digging work that it began in 2023 at Kūh-e Kolang Gaz Lā, or "Pickaxe Mountain," a few hundred meters (yards) south of the Natanz complex's perimeter fence. Satellite images show piles of dirt from the excavation growing in size. It is believed to be building a new underground nuclear facility there.

At Isfahan, Iran began building a similar roof over a structure near the facility's northeast corner, finishing the work in early January. The exact function of that building isn't publicly known, although the Israeli military at the time said its strikes at Isfahan targeted sites there associated with centrifuge manufacturing. The Israeli military did not respond to requests for comment over the construction.

Meanwhile, imagery shows that two tunnels into a mountain near the Isfahan facility have been packed with dirt, a measure against missile strikes that Iran also did just before the June war. A third tunnel appears to have been cleared of dirt, with a new set of walls built near the entrance as an apparent security measure.

Sarah Burkhard, a senior research associate for the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security, which long has watched Iran's nuclear sites, said the roofs appear to be part of an operation to "recover any sort of remaining assets or rubble without letting us know what they are getting out of there."

Sean O'Connor, an expert at the open-source intelligence firm Janes, concurred that the aim was likely "to obscure activity rather than to, say, repair or rebuild a structure for use."

Other work continues in Iran

Since the end of the war, Iran has worked to reconstitute its ballistic missile program, rebuilding sites associated with the program, earlier AP reporting showed. That's included work at a military complex known as Parchin, just to the southeast of Tehran.

In recent weeks, Iran has been working to rebuild a site at Parchin identified by the Institute for Science and International Security as "Taleghan 2." Israel destroyed the site in an airstrike in October 2024.

It has said an archive of Iranian nuclear data earlier seized by Israel identified the building as housing an explosive chamber and a special X-ray system to study explosive tests. Such tests could be used in research toward compressing a core of uranium with explosives — something that's needed for an

implosion-style nuclear weapon.

Satellite photos show construction being done at "Taleghan 2" in recent months. The open-source intelligence firm Janes similarly noted the construction, as did the institute.

"This has been reconstituted very rapidly," said Lewis Smart, a Janes analyst who studies Iran's nuclear program. "It's being expanded to potentially make it more resistant to penetration attacks and bombings. ... A rather large containment vessel is being put into the facility, which could be used for high explosive testing."

## **Trump moved fast to cut a funding deal. It's a striking change from the last shutdown fight**

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump moved quickly this week to negotiate with Democrats to try and avert a lengthy government shutdown over Department of Homeland Security funding, a sharp departure from last year's record standoff, when he refused to budge for weeks.

Some Republicans are frustrated with the deal, raising the possibility of a prolonged shutdown fight when the House returns Monday to vote on the funding package. But Trump's sway over the GOP remains considerable, and he has made his position clear at a moment of mounting political strain.

"The only thing that can slow our country down is another long and damaging government shutdown," Trump wrote on social media late Thursday.

The urgency marked a clear shift from Trump's posture during the 43-day shutdown late last year, when he publicly antagonized Democratic leaders and his team mocked them on social media. This time, with anger rising over shootings in Minneapolis and the GOP's midterm messaging on tax cuts drowned out by controversy, Trump acted quickly to make a deal with Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York.

"Trump and the Republicans know that this is an issue where they're on the wrong side of the American people and it really matters," Schumer told reporters Friday after Senate passage of the government funding deal.

The crisis caused by Minneapolis killings

Senators returned to work this week dealing with the fallout from the fatal shooting of ICU nurse Alex Pretti in Minneapolis by federal immigration officers, as well as the killing of Renee Good in the city weeks earlier.

Republicans were far from unified in their response. A few called for the firing of top administration officials such as Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Stephen Miller, the White House chief of staff for policy. Most GOP senators tried to strike a balance, calling for a thorough investigation into Pretti's killing while backing the hard-line immigration approach that is central to Trump's presidency.

But many agreed that the shootings threatened public support for Trump's immigration agenda.

"I've never seen a political party take its best issue and turn it into its worst issue in the period of time that it has happened in the last few weeks," said Sen. John Kennedy, R-La. "Some things have to change."

Democrats quickly coalesced around their key demands.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., said there "was unanimity" around core principles of enforcing a code of conduct for immigration officers and agents, ending "roving patrols" for immigration enforcement actions and coordinating with local law enforcement on immigration arrests.

It helped that Trump himself was looking for ways to de-escalate in Minneapolis.

"The world has seen the videos of those horrible abuses by DHS and rogue operations catching up innocent people, and there's a revulsion about it," said Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va.

"The White House is asking for a ladder off the ledge," he added.

Avoiding the painful politics of a shutdown

Republicans are also trying to promote their accomplishments in office as they ready for the November elections and the difficult task of retaining control of both chambers of Congress.

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But the prospect of a prolonged shutdown shifted attention away from their \$4.5 trillion tax and spending cuts law, the centerpiece of their agenda. Republicans had hoped the beginning of this year's tax season on Monday would provide a political boost as voters begin to see larger tax refunds.

Republicans are also mindful of the political damage from last year's shutdown, when they took a slightly larger portion of the blame from Americans than Democrats, according to polling from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

"The shutdown was a big factor, negative for the Republicans," Trump told Republican senators at the White House in November.

On a practical level, this funding standoff threatened to destroy months of bipartisan work, including long hours over the holiday break, to craft the 12 spending bills that fund the government and many priorities back home.

"We saw what happened in the last government shutdown in regards to how it hurt real, hardworking Americans," said Sen. Katie Britt, R-Ala., a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. "I don't want that to happen again."

A two-week funding battle begins

The agreement reached this week, if passed by the House, would avoid a prolonged shutdown and fund nearly every federal department through the end of the budget year in September. But it would not resolve one of the most difficult issues for Congress and the White House: DHS funding.

Instead of a full-year deal, funding for the department was extended for just two weeks, giving lawmakers little time to bridge the deep divides over immigration enforcement.

Democrats are pressing for changes they say are necessary to prevent future abuses, including requiring immigration agents to wear body cameras, carry clear identification, end roving patrols in cities and coordinate more closely with local law enforcement when making arrests. Many Democrats also want tighter rules around warrants and accountability mechanisms for officers in the field.

Those demands have met stiff resistance from Republicans. Some are opposed to negotiating with Democrats at all.

"Republicans control the White House, Senate and House. Why are we giving an inch to Democrats?" Sen. Tommy Tuberville, R-Ala., wrote on social media.

Republican senators said they would take the fight to Democrats by introducing their own bills, including restrictions on "sanctuary cities," to show their support for Trump's policies. That term is generally applied to state and local governments that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

"We've let the issue get away. We're not leading. We're trying to avoid losing rather than winning," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who held up the spending bills until Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., agreed to give him a vote on his sanctuary cities bill at a later date.

Thune acknowledged the difficulty of the next two weeks, saying there are "some pretty significant views and feelings."

"We'll stay hopeful," Thune told reporters about the upcoming DHS fight. "But there are some pretty significant differences of opinion."

## Elena Rybakina wins Australian Open by beating No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka for her 2nd Grand Slam title

By JOHN PYE AP Sports Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Elena Rybakina finally won her second Grand Slam title with a victory over top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka at the Australian Open on Saturday, and it was something of a testament to quiet achievers.

After some tumult at the start of 2025, including the suspension of her coach, Rybakina finished off last year with a title at the WTA Finals in November. And now she has started the new year with a major championship.

Her low-key celebration was symbolic of her understated run through the tournament: a small fist pump,

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a quick embrace with Sabalenka, a handshake with the chair umpire, a smile, and a few hand claps on the strings of her racket and a wave to acknowledge the crowd.

It happened quickly after Rybakina closed with an ace to cap a third-set comeback and a 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 win over a regular rival who beat her in the final here in 2023.

"The heart rate was definitely beating too fast. Even maybe (my) face didn't show, but inside it was a lot of emotions," the 26-year-old Rybakina, who was born in Moscow but represents Kazakhstan, said of her calm and clinical finish.

She knew she had to capitalize quickly this time, after she admitted getting tight and needing almost a half-hour from her first match point to her match-winning point in a semifinal win over Jessica Pegula.

Three years ago, Rybakina won the first set of the Australian final but lost it in three.

This time, after breaking in the first game and taking the first set, she rallied after losing the second set and going down 3-0 in the third. She won five straight games to regain control.

"It gives me a kind of relief," she said, "also, a lot of confidence for sure for the rest of the season."

It was a second major title for fifth-seeded Rybakina, who won Wimbledon in 2022 and entered that Australian final three years ago as the only major winner in the contest.

While Sabalenka went on to win another three majors, including back-to-back triumphs in Australia and the 2024 and '25 victories at the U.S. Open, Rybakina's results dipped and she didn't reach another major final until this tournament.

## Career change

A win over Sabalenka at the season-ending WTA Finals has changed her career trajectory. She has the most match wins on tour since Wimbledon, and is now on a roll of 20 wins from 21 matches.

"Last year I didn't start so well," she said. "I qualified for the (WTA) Finals late. I just hope I can carry this momentum. Do a good job with the team and continue this way."

Rybakina is 10-0 in her last 10 matches against Top 10 players, and she'll return to No. 3 in the rankings.

Kazakhstan's flag was unfurled on the court at Rod Laver Arena after Rybakina had paraded the trophy around and posed for photos with her team.

## Coaching team

She paid tribute to her coach, Stefano Vukov, who spent time under suspension last year by the women's tour. Vukov received a silver plate from the tournament organizers for being the champion's coach.

"Of course I would like to thank my team," she said. "Without you it wouldn't have been possible. Really. We had a lot of things going on (last year). Thank you to all of you, and hopefully we can keep on going strong this year.

"It's a win for all the team, all the people who support me," she said. "I just hope that I can carry this moment throughout the whole season and keep on improving."

She said she'd been working Vukov since 2019 and she finds it helpful to hear the constant stream of technical and tactical advice he conveys from his seat beside the court. The more, the better, she said, because eventually she listens.

"We won many titles together," Rybakina said. "And even last year in Ningbo, WTA Finals, and now this trophy I felt just, again, proud and thankful to my team for the work."

## Win some. Lose some

For Sabalenka, it's back-to-back losses in the final in Australia after going down in an upset last year to Madison Keys.

"Of course, I have regrets. When you lead 3-Love and then it felt like in few seconds it was 3-4, and I was down with a break — it was very fast," she said. "Great tennis from her. Maybe not so smart for me.

"But as I say, today I'm a loser, maybe tomorrow I'm a winner. Hopefully I'll be more of a winner this season than a loser. Hoping right now and praying."

Rybakina went on the attack from the start and her serve was strong, with six aces and — apart from the two breaks at the end of the second set and the start of the third — she fended off six of the break-point chances she faced.

While Sabalenka's emotions intensified, Rybakina maintained a determined quietness throughout. In the end, she let her tennis do the talking.

## **Pet sounds: Why some dog owners share music with their 4-legged friends**

By CHEYANNE MUMPHREY Associated Press

People use music to set moods, create a desired atmosphere and evoke memories of family and friends. The right song at the right time can have similar effects for some dogs.

Pet owners, trainers and animal shelter workers sometimes use music as a training tool, a distraction from triggers and to create a relaxing environment for dogs kept in kennels or left alone at home. But researchers say music is context-dependent, meaning the effects vary based on dogs' temperament, the setting, the type of tune and the volume at which it's played.

Social media videos of dogs howling to music, relaxing to the sounds of specialty playlists or TV channels while their owners are at work, appearing to clam down while boarded, and getting exposed to the same song to assist with crate training show some of the ways music is integrated into pets' lives.

While some trainers consider music to be a helpful, many animal behaviorists, who study animal psychology and understand complex behaviors, suggest additional research is needed to prove how much of an effect music has on dogs and in what situations. Here is how experts suggest making music a potentially paw-sitive experience:

**Music as a support strategy**

Many factors cause dogs to experience stress and anxiety, and there are as many behavioral responses. Dog behavior specialists and veterinarians say separation anxiety, noise phobias and other fears are common sources of stress and can exacerbate negative behaviors like aggression, submissive peeing or barking, or medical conditions that may a professional diagnosis or medication.

"Music may promote more relaxation for dogs, but it would not be the first thing I turn to if I want to reduce stress in dogs," said Seana Dowling-Guyer, a lecturer at Tufts University's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine and associate director of a research program aimed at improving the lives of dogs in shelters or at risk of being given up by their owners.

Prior to her work at Tufts, Dowling-Guyer worked with shelter animals. The goal was to find them homes, but she noticed that dogs barking, jumping or getting excited in their enclosures sometimes "put off potential adopters." The shelter staff tried to create a calmer environment playing music. Worker debates over the type of music to play is what led Dowling-Guyer to further research on the subject.

"I was interested in the practical application, not just for owners, but for veterinary offices, groomers or other situations where dogs were sometimes stressed or mildly uncomfortable," she said, adding that music is not meant to be or should be considered a cure for anxious behaviors or conditions or be considered a replacement for more formalized training.

**Not all dogs like all music**

High Country Humane, an animal shelter in Flagstaff, Arizona, plays classical and instrumental music on the kennel floors.

"It's really stressful here, and the classical music seems to help calm the dogs down," shelter manager Megan Boyer said. "Everybody is a little bit less amped up. It's a stress reliever for the dogs."

Dog music compilations typically include elements of the music that's designed to help humans relax or sleep but takes into account biological differences in how dogs hear and process sound.

"Dog-calming music is simplified classical music. It's slow, repetitive, has a predictable structure and gentle notes. In an unpredictable environment, any kind of predictability using sounds could be soothing to an animal," said Aniruddh Patel, a Tufts University psychology professor who studies music cognition in humans and other species.

But not all dogs like classical music or exhibit the same behaviors when exposed to similar genres, experts say. Lori Kogan, a Colorado State University professor who studies human-animal interactions, says

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"dogs tend to habituate to what they are used to" as opposed to innately preferring some types of music over others.

Citing similar human curiosity about the musical preferences of cows, Kogan said, "I don't think cows are born liking country music. What's happened is that the people they interact with play country music, and the animals have come to associate that music with positive things."

How to know if music will help your dog

Many pet owners leave a TV on or music playing when they go out to stimulate or distract their dogs while they're gone, Dowling-Guyer said. She recommends switching up the playlist or programming so pets do not get bored or come to associate a negative event, like their owners leaving, with a specific song.

Tawny Keiser, a 46-year-old family practice manager in the San Diego area, says a dog television channel on YouTube has become a fun diversion for Margarita, her 10-year-old pug who suffers from separation anxiety.

"She recognizes the television and will sit and watch it. She's engaged, and often gets really excited and jumps off the couch to sniff the screen," Keiser said, adding that Margarita also loves dog cartoons that feature background music.

Paying attention to how a family pet reacts when you turn on home speakers can provide useful information. It's important to watch for signs of discomfort, like lip-licking or panting, to determine if a dog doesn't like the sounds, Dowling-Guyer said.

Otherwise, there is no harm in playing music for a pet, experts said. Don't be discouraged if your dog doesn't seem to engage with it, Dowling-Guyer said.

She also wants dog owners to be wary of trainers who say music is a solution for behavior concerns, saying "that is usually a red flag."

The American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, a certifying board for specialist veterinarians, says pet owners may encounter services or advice that can inflict lasting physical and emotional damage on pets if certain training techniques are improperly applied. Experts suggest seeking trainers with the proper licensing, advanced degrees such as a doctor of veterinary medicine, or certification to address animal behavior, which can come from recognized organizations like the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists or the Animal Behavior Society.

## Today in History: February 1 Space shuttle Columbia destroyed during re-entry

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Feb. 1, the 32nd day of 2026. There are 333 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Feb. 1, 2003, the space shuttle Columbia broke apart as it re-entered the Earth's atmosphere, killing all seven crew members: commander Rick Husband; pilot William McCool; payload commander Michael Anderson; mission specialists Kalpana Chawla, David Brown and Laurel Clark; and payload specialist Ilan Ramon.

Also on this date:

In 1865, abolitionist John S. Rock became the first Black lawyer admitted to the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1943, during World War II, one of America's most highly decorated military units, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, made up almost exclusively of Japanese Americans, was activated.

In 1960, four Black college students began a sit-in protest at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, where they had been refused service.

In 1979, Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (hoh-MAY'-nee) was welcomed home by millions in Tehran as he ended nearly 15 years of exile.

In 1991, an arriving USAir jetliner crashed atop a commuter plane on a runway at Los Angeles International Airport, resulting in 35 deaths.

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In 1994, Jeff Gillooly, Tonya Harding's ex-husband, pleaded guilty in Portland, Oregon, to racketeering for his part in the attack on figure skater Nancy Kerrigan in exchange for a 24-month sentence and a \$100,000 fine.

In 2002, Wall Street Journal journalist Daniel Pearl was killed by Islamist militants in Pakistan after being kidnapped nine days earlier.

In 2016, the World Health Organization declared a global emergency over the explosive spread of the Zika virus, which was linked to birth defects in the Americas.

In 2021, the army in Myanmar overthrew the elected government of the Southeast Asian country. (Armed resistance arose after the army used lethal force to crush nonviolent protests against its takeover, and an ensuing civil war left more than 3.6 million people displaced in the country, according to the U.N.)

Today's birthdays: Actor Garrett Morris is 89. Political commentator Fred Barnes is 83. Princess Stephanie of Monaco is 61. Actor Sherilyn Fenn is 61. U.S. Soccer Hall of Famer Michelle Akers is 60. Comedian-actor Pauly Shore is 58. Actor Michael C. Hall is 55. Rapper Big Boi (Outkast) is 51. Singer-songwriter Jason Isbell is 47. TV personality Lauren Conrad is 40. Mixed martial artist Ronda Rousey is 39. Actor Julia Garner is 32. Singer-actor Harry Styles is 32. Singer Jessica Baio is 24.