

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Sunday, Feb. 22

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.  
United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Groton Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 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.  
Tuff Tigers Youth Wrestling Tournament, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m., HS Gym and Arena  
Groton Soccer Association Clinics, 11:30 a.m., elementary gym  
4th Grade BB Practice, 2 p.m., HG Gym  
Dance Team, 5 p.m., Arena  
6th Grade Boys Basketball, 6 p.m., Arena



## Monday, Feb. 23

Senior Menu: Goulash, corn, fruit, breadstick.  
School Breakfast: Eggs.  
School Lunch: Oriental chicken, rice.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.  
Senior Citizens meet at noon with potluck at Groton Community Center  
1st Grade Boys Basketball Practice, 1:30 p.m., Arena  
JH Boys Basketball at Clark (7th at 5 p.m., 8th at 6 p.m.)  
Kindergarten Boys Basketball, 6 p.m., elementary gym  
5th Grade BBB, 6 p.m., HS Gym  
5th/6th Volleyball Practice. 6 p.m. Arena

## Tuesday, Feb. 24

Senior Menu: Bean and ham soup, 1/2 chicken salad sandwich, fruit.  
School Breakfast: Scones.  
School Lunch: Tater tot hot dish, cooked carrots.  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.  
Biogirls, 3:45 p.m., Elementary gym  
Pickleball, 6 p.m., elementary gym  
Region 1A GBB

*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

## President's Day:

### Forgotten Lessons from the Framers of the Constitution

Confronted with the dangers of expansive executive power, our nation's founders sought to curb it at every turn. The authors of the Declaration of Independence produced a lengthy list of grievances against the tyrant, King George III, in service of the American Revolution. In the Constitutional Convention, the framers sharply limited the scope of authority vested in the newly minted presidency, above all, to fence off exercise of the crown's discretionary prerogative powers. The framers replaced the personalization of executive power with the institutionalization and constitutional confinement of presidential power. In their replacement of personal rule with the rule of law, the framers rejected the historical admiration of the executive and the cult of personality that had reigned since the Middle Ages. In the United States, presidential power would flow, not from the "blood and bone of the man," but rather from the Constitution.

Reflections on President's Day 2026-- the concentration of power in the hands of President Donald Trump, his sweeping and repeated acts of abuse and usurpation of power, and the failure of institutions to check it-- suggest Americans have forgotten vital lessons from the founding that ought to resonate across our nation.

The framers rejected a powerful presidency. James Wilson, second to James Madison as an architect of the Constitution, told his colleagues, "The prerogatives of the Crown are of no moment" in the creation of the republic. Madison swept away the pretense of unbridled executive authority: presidential power is "confined and defined." As students of history will recall, he stated that, "in a republic the legislature predominates."

To temper executive power, the drafters of the Constitution granted the lion's share of governmental power to Congress. Presidential powers, enumerated in Article II, were meager by comparison, only painstakingly granted and subject to numerous institutional checks. For a generation that lived in dread fear of discretionary executive power, there was no interest in recreating an embryonic monarchy on American soil.

The Constitution embodies a pattern of authority limited by division and hedged by restraints, a design that reflects the framers' enthusiastic commitment to enumeration of powers, separation of powers and checks and balances. Justice Louis Brandeis, the most scholarly of justices, wrote in 1926: "The doctrine of the separation of powers was adopted by the Convention of 1787, not to promote efficiency, but to preclude the exercise of arbitrary power." The purpose, he wrote, was "to save the people from autocracy."

Expansive executive power has long been the bane of American Constitutionalism. Today, it is the bane of our existence. The framers, to a man, were convinced of the need to protect against the concentration of power. It reflected their deep-seated belief that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. For the founders, power was a constant threat to liberty. Accordingly, it was not the object of trust, but rather, mistrust, which led Thomas Jefferson to write, "we bind government by the chains of the Constitution." Without vigilance, ambitious presidents can slip the chains of the Constitution. In 1952, Justice Felix Frankfurter observed: "The accretion of dangerous power does not come in a day. It does come, however slowly, from the generative force of unchecked disregard of the restrictions that fence in even the most disinterested assertion of authority." As things stand, the flow of power to the executive shows no signs of ebbing.

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Watergate, our first experience with a would-be autocrat, was more than the personal tragedy of Richard Nixon. Apart from Nixon's contempt for the rule of law, it was, taken as a whole, a function of the decline of separation of powers, checks and balances and institutional values. The claims of political expediency, rather than demands for adherence to constitutional principles, first in foreign affairs, and then domestic matters, purported to justify the concentration of power in the executive. In the aftermath of Watergate, remedies and devices were put in place to restrain the flow of power to the executive. Over time, however, those restraints have weakened and disappeared. As a result, on this President's Day, we note that the concentration of executive power in the hands of President Donald Trump is greater than it has ever been. Considering his predecessors, there is not even a close second.

History may not repeat itself, but as Mark Twain observed, "it rhymes." The question, in our time, is when will we heed vital lessons from the founding?

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## Wolves Close Regular Season with Road Wins at Minot State

MINOT, N.D. – It was a successful regular-season finale on the road for the Northern State University basketball programs, as both the men's and women's teams earned victories over Minot State University Saturday in Minot.

### Men: Northern 72, Minot State 62

The Wolves led from start to finish in a 72-62 victory over the Beavers, securing their first win in Minot since the 2019-20 season.

Northern built its advantage behind efficient shooting, finishing at 49.1% from the field, 40.7% from 3-point range and 75.0% at the free-throw line. Defensively, the Wolves clamped down on the perimeter, holding Minot State to just 9.1% shooting from beyond the arc.

NSU scored 36 points in the first half and added 36 more in the second, maintaining control throughout. The Wolves held a 35-32 edge on the boards, dished out 13 assists and knocked down 11 3-pointers, while adding five steals.

Joshua Book and Simon Akena paced the offense with 16 points apiece. Book added eight assists and five rebounds, while Akena shot 60% from the floor and grabbed four rebounds. Marshawn Smith provided a spark off the bench with 14 points on 5-of-6 shooting, including three 3-pointers. James Glenn contributed 11 points and seven rebounds, and Tobi Obiora narrowly missed a double-double with nine points and 10 rebounds.

The win moved Northern to 12-16 overall and 12-10 in NSIC play, qualifying the Wolves for the first round of the NSIC Tournament.

### Women: Northern 72, Minot State 63

The Northern women capped their regular season with a 72-63 comeback victory, fueled by a dominant performance from senior Izzy Moore.

After falling behind 25-11 at the end of the first quarter, the Wolves chipped away in the second before erupting in the third. Moore ignited the rally with a 3-pointer just seconds into the second half and went on to pour in 37 points, shooting 51.9% from the field and 60% from long range.

Northern outscored Minot State 23-17 in the third quarter and tightened up defensively in the fourth, allowing just four made field goals in the final 10 minutes.

Makenzie Carrier added 10 points, four rebounds and three assists, while Lily Klein controlled the glass with 13 rebounds. Megan Counts contributed six points, five rebounds and two steals.

The Wolves finished the contest shooting 43.6% from the field, 45.5% from 3-point range and 87.5% from the free-throw line.

Northern closed the regular season at 16-12 overall and 11-11 in conference play and will also compete in the opening round of the NSIC Tournament on Wednesday.

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## Groton Qualifies Five for State at Region 1B; Englund Claims Title

The Groton Area Tigers placed sixth as a team Saturday at the SDHSAA Region 1B Wrestling Tournament, finishing with 107 points in a tightly contested field.

Kingsbury County captured the team title with 181.5 points, followed by Sisseton (154), Clark/Willow Lake (153.5), Faulkton Area (130.5), Britton-Hecla (115.5) and Groton Area (107). Redfield (100.5), Webster Area (96.5), Sioux Valley (56), Gettysburg (46), Hamlin/Castlewood (27), Sully Buttes (27), Warner/Northwestern (25), Ipswich (10), Hoven (2) and Tiospa Zina (0) rounded out the standings.

The top four placers in each weight class advance to the state tournament, and Groton Area will send five wrestlers on to the next level.

### Englund Captures 285 Title

Senior heavyweight Gavin Englund (36-3) led the way, claiming the 285-pound championship and scoring 25 team points.

Englund opened with a first-round fall over Liam Paxton of Britton-Hecla in 1:22, then earned an 11-1 major decision against Tristen Baloun of Faulkton Area in the semifinals. He secured the regional crown by forfeit over Breyten Johnson of Kingsbury County in the finals.

### Kucker Third at 126

At 126 pounds, Kyson Kucker (34-9) placed third and scored 16 points to punch his ticket to state.

After a bye, Kucker edged Aykre Piotter of Sisseton 6-4 in the quarterfinals before falling to Kaden Wookey of Clark/Willow Lake in the semifinals. He rebounded with a 50-second fall over Gage Landmark of Deuel/Deubrook Area in the consolation semifinals, then defeated Piotter again in the third-place match, 4-3.

### Fourth-Place Finishers Advance

Groton had three fourth-place finishers who will also compete at state:

**Keegan Kucker** (10-4) at 113 pounds placed fourth with 14 team points. He recorded a fall in 45 seconds over John Ortmeier of Faulkton Area and a 9-4 decision over Triston Kurtenbach of Sioux Valley to reach the semifinals. After a loss to Maddon Odland of Redfield, Kucker won a 14-7 sudden victory over Remi St. Sauver of Kingsbury County before dropping the third-place match to Maverick Clausen of Clark/Willow Lake.

**Donavon Block** (23-14) at 157 pounds scored 15 points and placed fourth. Block pinned Colton Chapin of Britton-Hecla in 3:57 in the quarterfinals. Following a semifinal loss to Greyson Nielson of Kingsbury County, Block earned an 11-3 major decision over Rayin Mansfield of Warner/Northwestern in the consolation semifinals before falling in the third-place match to Zane Miller of Deuel/Deubrook Area.

**Walker Zoellner** (27-11) at 190 pounds finished fourth with 12 points. Zoellner opened with a 4:34 fall over Liam Gunnon of Kingsbury County, then dropped a tight 2-0 semifinal decision to Tucker Hardy of Britton-Hecla. He bounced back with an 8-1 decision over Jace Heath of Sully Buttes before falling to Gunnon in the third-place match.

**Layne Johnson** (23-9) at 215 pounds also placed fourth, scoring 12 points. After a quarterfinal loss to Kady Westergren of Sully Buttes, Johnson battled back with falls over Zach Bonin of Redfield (1:56) and a 6-5 decision over Harvey Hardt of Sioux Valley to reach the third-place match, where he again met Westergren.

### Hagen Takes Fifth

At 120 pounds, Wyatt Hagen (35-9) placed fifth and scored 10 team points. Hagen dropped his quarterfinal match before pinning Gavin Fryer of Sisseton in 4:39 in the consolation round. After another setback, he finished strong with a 1:57 fall over Easton Rausch of Gettysburg in the fifth-place match.

### Other Tiger Results

Noah Scepaniak (24-18) at 132 pounds dropped his opening match by technical fall and was eliminated in the consolation round.

Aiden Strom (13-19) at 138 pounds recorded a consolation fall over Cutler Davis of Kingsbury County before bowing out.

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Grayson Flores (14-22) at 144 pounds fell in the quarterfinals and later by technical fall in consolation action.

Kason Oswald (11-23) at 150 pounds was defeated in the opening round and consolation bracket.

At 165 pounds, Groton recorded forfeits in both the quarterfinal and consolation rounds.

Isaiah Scepaniak (21-19) at 175 pounds dropped matches in the championship and consolation brackets.

With five state qualifiers — Englund, Kyson Kucker, Keegan Kucker, Block and Zoellner, along with Johnson — Groton Area will now turn its focus to the state tournament, where the Tigers look to build on their strong regional showing. The Tigers will compete next at the SDHSAA State Wrestling Tournament, set for February 26–28 at the Denny Sanford PREMIER Center in Sioux Falls.

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## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

In the six-hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.

Genesis 7:11,12



Detail of "The Flood" by Clare Leighton (1952)



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LAGUEGAS SUN 2026  
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## BIBLE

## TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. Whose first chapter begins, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus"? *Matthew, Luke, John, Acts*

3. From Acts 9, where did Peter cure Aeneas? *Tyre, Neapolis, Lydda, Gibeon*

4. As found in Numbers 20, where did Aaron die? *Mount of Olives, Pisgah, Mount Hor, Gilboa*

5. From Acts 24, what was Felix's wife, Drusilla? *Pharisee, Gentile, Greek, Jewess*

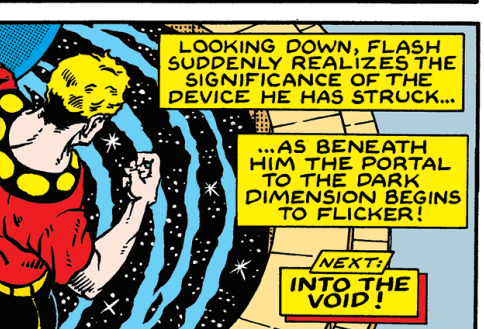
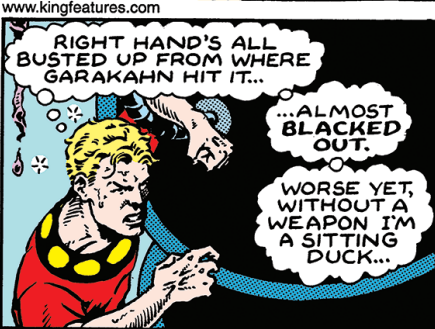
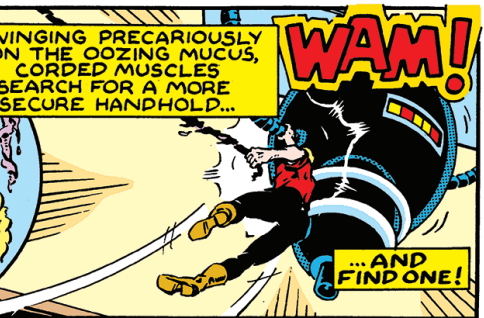
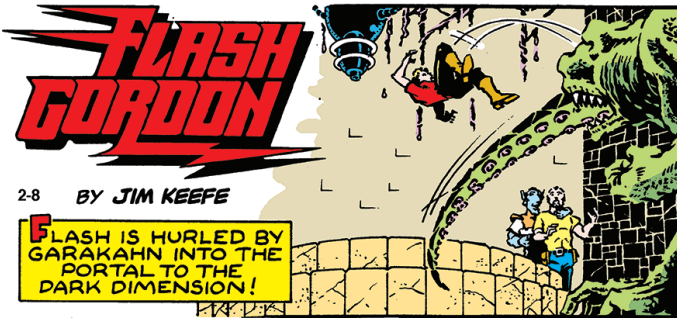
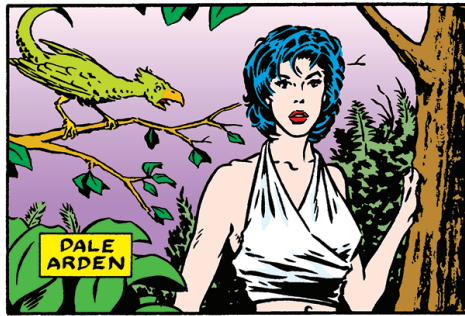
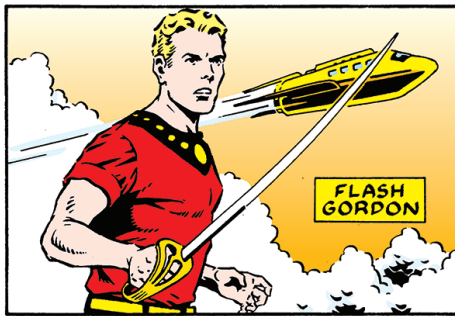
6. In II Kings 1, what Philistine city worshipped Baalzebub? *Ekron, Succoth, Gomorrah, Antipatris*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Acts, 3) Lydda, 4) Mount Hor, 5) Jewess, 6) Ekron

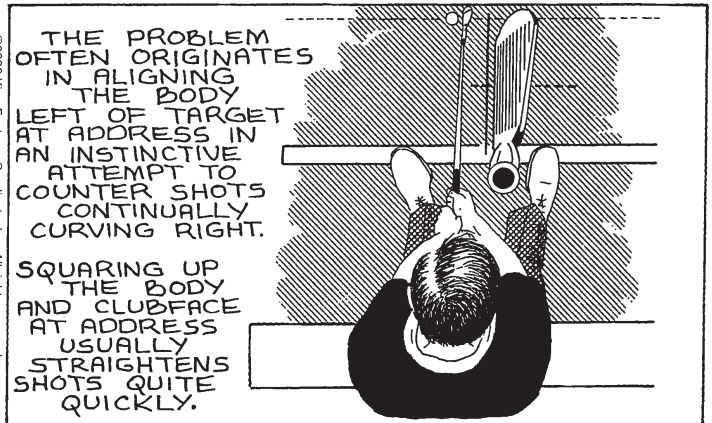
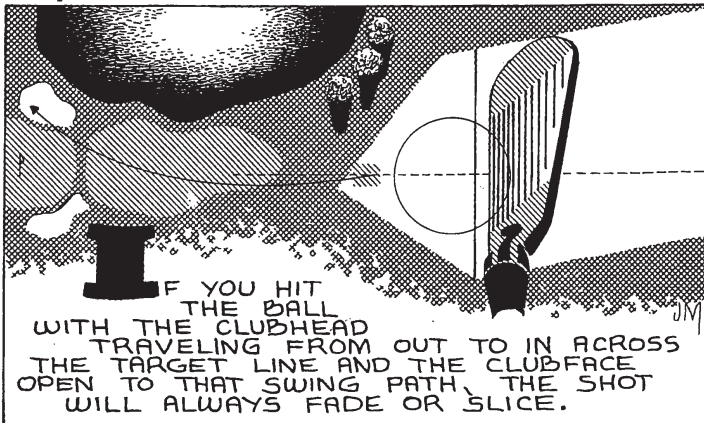
*Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online.*

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## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





## Understand the Relationship Between HRT and UTIs

DEAR DR. ROACH: In a recent column, you wrote that hormone replacement therapy (HRT) should be considered in elderly women to prevent urinary tract infections (UTIs) by stopping bacteria from getting into the bladder in the first place. How does this work? Which is better: pills or vaginal creams? Isn't HRT in postmenopausal women frowned upon these days?

I also wonder whether HRT in elderly men also helps prevent UTIs. (My husband, who died recently at 82, had a succession of UTIs during the final months of his life, which may have contributed to his death from pneumonia and sepsis.) -- J.H.

ANSWER: I'm glad that you wrote because I didn't make this point clear enough. I specifically meant topical estrogen that can be a cream, tablet or ring -- all of which deliver estrogen locally. The tissue lining of the vulva and vagina are estrogen-sensitive, and the low levels of estrogen that occur after menopause often cause them to atrophy.

Not only can this cause dryness and discomfort, the urethra sometimes doesn't seal properly. Bacteria can then get into the urine and make their way up into the bladder (and sometimes into the kidneys). Having a healthy lining reduces the risk of UTIs. Topical estrogen is not considered HRT.

While oral estrogen (which is considered HRT) also helps these tissues, there is an increased risk of heart disease if systemic estrogen (a pill or patch) is started at age 60 or more than 10 years after menopause, so topical estrogen is safer. Topical estrogen is not appreciably absorbed, so it does not have the potential for harm in the heart or the potential for blood clots.

People with estrogen-sensitive tumors should still discuss topical estrogen with their oncologists as small amounts are absorbed when the lining is atrophied.

HRT is not an effective treatment to prevent UTIs in men. Although there are several reasons that older men can get UTIs, the most important one is that the prostate gland enlarges, making it more difficult for the bladder to be drained. In men with enlarged prostate glands, the urine can become "stale" and a breeding ground for bacteria. Testosterone replacement has many potential benefits, but it does not shrink the prostate. (It's the reverse, unfortunately.)

Shrinking the prostate with medication or a surgical procedure is occasionally necessary in men with recurrent UTIs.

\*\*\*

DEAR DR. ROACH: For at least a decade, I've had CT scans that noted an incidental "small" liver cyst. The latest CT scan mentions that the liver cyst is 3 cm. Is a 3-cm liver cyst considered small? I am trying to understand if the actual measurement now means that it's no longer small. If this is the case, do I need to see a specialist?

Thank you for any assistance you can provide. (I'm now 60, but the cyst was first noted when I was in my late 40s.) -- K.B.

ANSWER: Incidental findings on CT scans or MRIs are common, and sometimes it's not clear what to do. But as we have gained more experience with liver (and kidney) cysts, there is now an accepted regimen. These cysts are common, with perhaps 10% to 20% of people having them appear in advanced imaging like a CT scan.

For a "simple" liver cyst (meaning that the cyst appears to be a single fluid-filled space with no walls and no enhancement with contrast) that is less than 4 cm, the risk is very small; no further testing is required for the cyst. The fact that yours is still small after at least a decade is further evidence that this is not one to worry about.

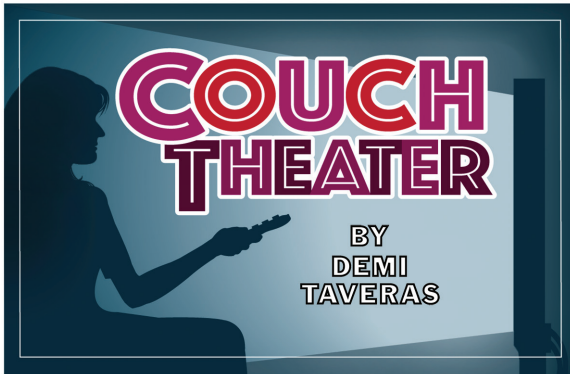
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).

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Priyanka Chopra Jonas stars in "The Bluff." (Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

"Song Sung Blue" (PG-13) -- This biographical musical-drama is based on the documentary film of the same name and stars Hugh Jackman ("Deadpool & Wolverine") and Kate Hudson ("Shell"). Jackman and Hudson respectively play Mike and Claire Sardina, who are performers in a Neil Diamond tribute band called Lightning & Thunder. You wouldn't imagine that there's much story to tell about a tribute band, but this one is different. The Sardinas had a tumultuous journey in life, not just with their band; heart attacks, psychotic episodes, and addiction are just some of what the couple and musical duo experienced. (Not to mention, a bad gig or two!) Hudson has received glowing reviews for her performance in the film, and she also received Oscar and Golden Globe noms for Best Actress. It is out now to stream. (Peacock)

"Kiss of the Spider Woman" (R) -- Hollywood producers must have thought that fans were desperate enough to fill seats for a new J.Lo movie, and boy, were they wrong! This musical drama film cost \$30 million to make, while only earning a mere \$2 million in theaters. It's a shame that it has an interesting premise! It is based on the 1992 stage musical of the same name, and besides Jennifer Lopez, it also stars Diego Luna ("Andor") and Tonatiuh ("Promised Land"). Set against a background of an Argentinian prison at the end of the Dirty War, the film tells the story of a gay window dresser named Luis (Tonatiuh), who shares the same cell as a political prisoner named Valentin (Luna). When daily life in prison becomes difficult, Valentin encourages Luis to tell him the plot of his favorite movie -- "The Kiss of the Spider Woman," starring Ingrid Luna (Lopez). Viewers get to see the movie themselves, right alongside Valentin, as Luis recounts the musical. Premieres Feb. 27. (Hulu)

"The Bluff" (R) -- If you see Priyanka Chopra Jonas' name in the billing of a movie, expect an action-packed, direct-to-streaming film with splashes of comedic lines that we've definitely heard before. (Until she decides to surprise us, of course!) In this film, she portrays a former Caribbean pirate during the 19th century. When buccaneers invade her island and look to apprehend her, she must revert to her former ways in order to save her family -- and herself -- from certain death. Karl Urban ("The Boys") plays the vicious Captain Connor, who doesn't mind losing all of his men if it means getting revenge, along with Temuera Morrison ("Moana") as his second-in-command. All jokes aside, Chopra Jonas' action choreography in this film is nuts! Check it out on Feb. 25. (Amazon Prime Video)

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1. Who wrote "Life's Been Good"?
2. Name the singer-songwriter who wrote "Our National Pastime."
3. Chaka Khan was the lead singer for which band?
4. Which artist released "Roses Are Red (My Love)"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "There's a girl I've been waiting to see, And I really get the feeling that she likes me."

Answers

1. Joe Walsh, in 1978. The song was used on the soundtrack for the film "FM." The original version was nearly nine minutes

long and was released on Walsh's "But Seriously Folks" album.

2. Rupert Holmes, in 1974, on his first album, "Widescreen." This odd, funny little song is about a man trying to pick up a girl at a baseball game, complete with their dialogue, and is to the tune of the national anthem.

3. Rufus, known for their "Tell Me Something Good." Kahn (born Yvette Marie Stevens) has won 11 Grammys, as well as the Lifetime Achievement Award.

4. Bobby Vinton, in 1962.

5. "She Wants to Dance With Me," by singer-songwriter Rick Astley in 1988. The song did well internationally, especially in Ecuador, Canada, Belgium, Finland and South Africa. It was the first song that Astley wrote that was released.

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

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"We've translated that signal from outer space. ... Someone's wife wants him to pick up a loaf of bread on the way home from Mars."

## Just Like Cats & Dogs

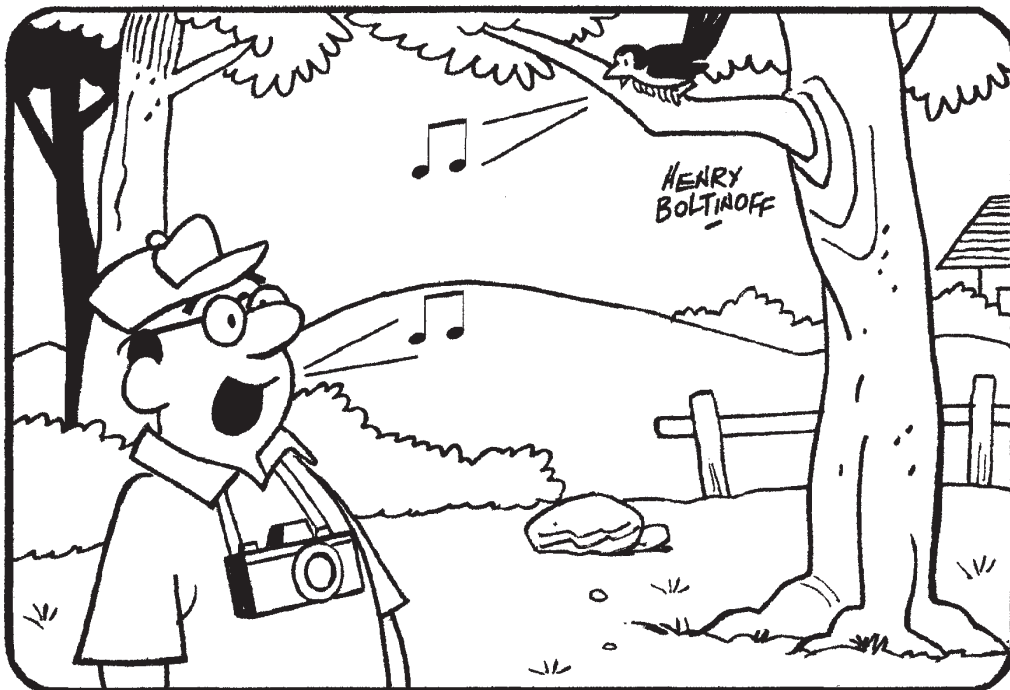
by Dave T. Phipps



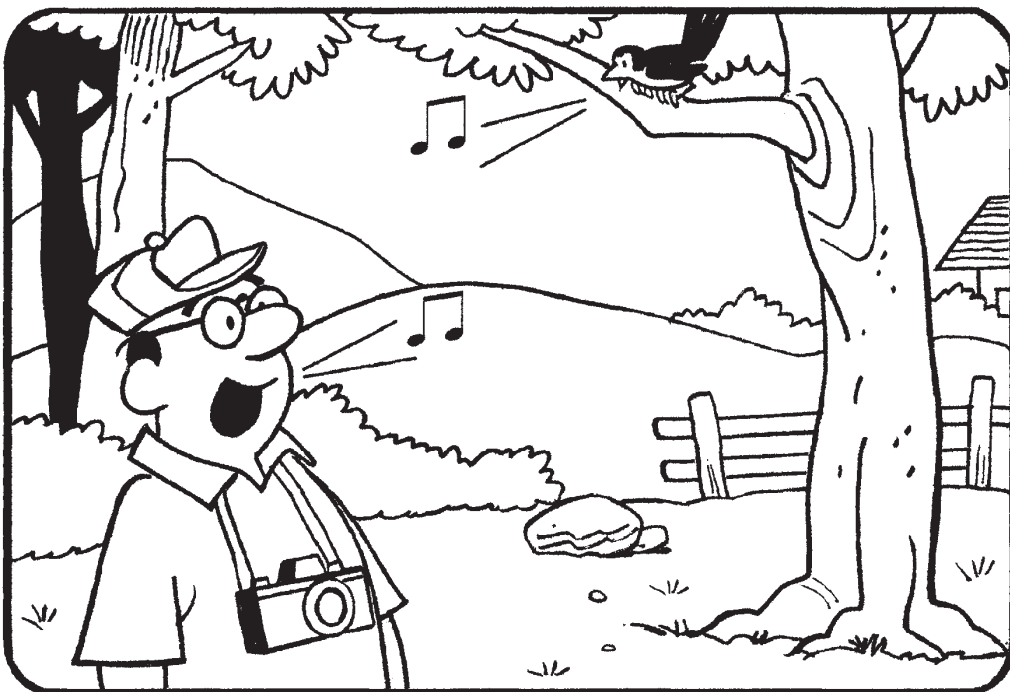
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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Camera is lower. 2. Music note is higher. 3. Rail is added to fence. 4. Cap is different. 5. Hill is added. 6. Tree trunk is thicker.

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\* Do you have a screw loose (in your eyeglasses)? This is an easy fix. Paint the screw with a dab of clear nail polish and quickly re-screw. It works like glue. Dab the top of the screw for a little extra insurance.

\* "Snow will better slide off a shovel that has been sprayed with furniture polish." -- T.L. in Minnesota

\* Here's an old tip but a good one: Before going away on vacation, put a couple ice cubes in a plastic baggie, set at the front of the freezer. When you return, if there is any evidence of melting, you will know you've lost power while you were gone. If the bag is one big, flat cube, you lost power long enough to suspect all your refrigerator items of being spoiled.

\* To temporarily get a winter frost effect on a window, use this fun recipe. Dissolve 4-6 tablespoons of Epsom salts in a beer. When the salt is dissolved, dip a clean rag in the mixture and wipe it on your window pane. As it dries, crystals will form, creating a frost effect. This is a great solution for a window you don't want to be clear but also don't want to permanently alter. The effect washes off with soap and water.

\* "If you get a residue inside your coffee cups when they go through the dishwasher, it might be time to give your machine a once-over, but in the meantime, spray the insides of the coffee cups with a bleach-based cleaner like 409 just before you turn it on. That should help." -- E.T. in Michigan

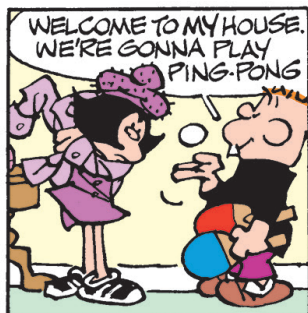
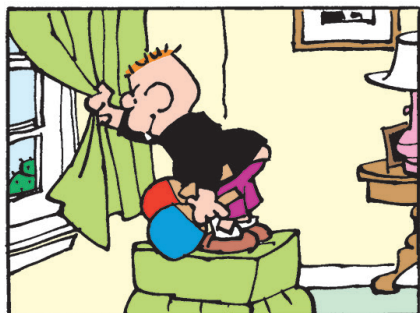
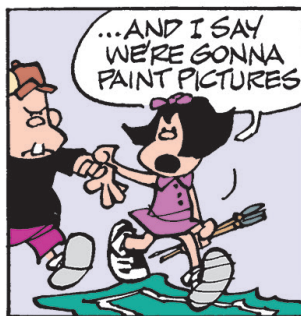
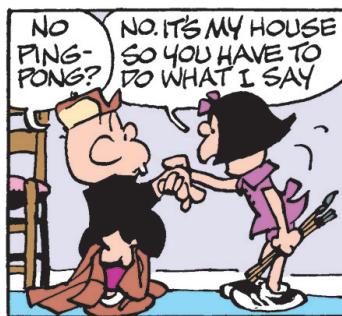
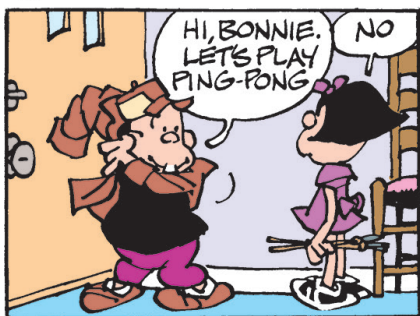
\* Cut your kitchen sponge in half or even thirds. You can clean just as well with a smaller sponge, and you will extend its life, saving you money. A smaller sponge dries out more quickly.

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



# Groton Daily Independent

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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Golfer Ernie
- 4 Gullet
- 8 Engine noise
- 12 Horror star Chaney
- 13 Costa —
- 14 Inter —
- 15 Past
- 16 Novelist Jennifer
- 17 Pealed
- 18 Fresh starts
- 21 Boom times
- 22 Small batteries
- 23 Humorist Dave
- 26 Flow out
- 27 Depot vehicle
- 30 "Iliad" setting
- 31 Shade

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			
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			36				37					
38	39	40				41				42	43	44
45					46					47		
48					49					50		
51					52					53		

- 32 Spring honorees
- 33 — Salvador
- 34 Supporting
- 35 Rolled-up sandwiches
- 36 Evergreen tree
- 37 Hindu honorific
- 38 Age-old knowledge
- 45 Soccer leg-end
- 46 Spring flower
- 47 Plastic — Band
- 48 Verbal
- 49 Quitter's word

- 50 Neighbor of Leb.
- 51 Duck's hang-out
- 52 Checks out
- 53 Tel. number add-on

### DOWN

- 1 Flair
- 2 Theater section
- 3 Winter fall
- 4 Eerie
- 5 Bobby who lost to Billie Jean King
- 6 Smoothie berry

- 7 Hopeful
- 8 Seine city
- 9 — Bator
- 10 Saturn feature
- 11 Cleaning cloths
- 19 Conceal, in a way
- 20 Arrest
- 23 "Dynamite" band
- 24 Notre Dame coach
- 25 Harry Potter pal
- 26 Where Ger. is
- 27 Large snake
- 28 Ref

- 29 Radiator sound
- 31 "That's wonderful!"
- 32 Hosp. scans
- 34 Charge
- 35 Places for bracelets
- 36 Relinquish
- 37 Pigs
- 38 Per person
- 39 Roman emperor
- 40 Family
- 41 Tea carrier
- 42 Rx amount
- 43 Cameo stone
- 44 Humorist Sahl

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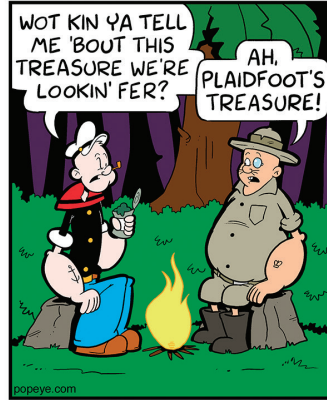
## King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

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L	O	N		R	I	C	A		A	L	I	A
A	G	O		E	G	A	N		R	A	N	G
N	E	W	B	E	G	I	N	N	I	N	G	S
			U	P	S		A	A	S			
B	A	R	R	Y		E	B	B		B	B	S
T	R	O	Y		H	U	E		M	O	M	S
S	A	N		F	O	R			W	R	A	P
			Y	E	W		S	R	I			
A	N	C	I	E	N	T	W	I	S	D	O	M
P	E	L	E		I	R	I	S		O	N	O
O	R	A	L		C	A	N	T		S	Y	R
P	O	N	D		E	Y	E	S		E	X	T

## Olive



## Out on a Limb



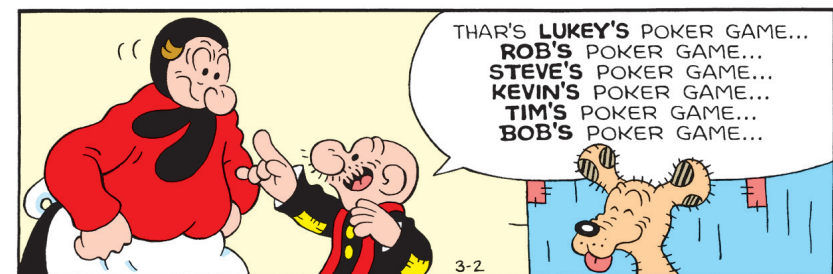
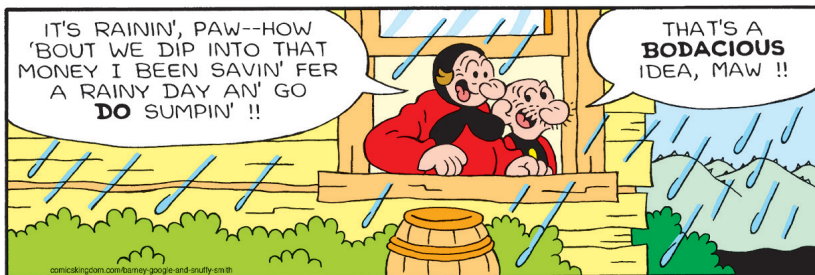
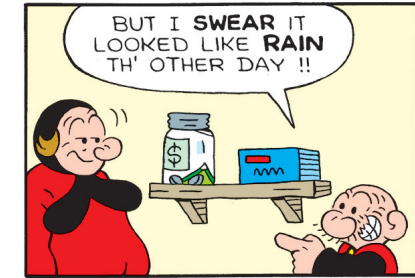
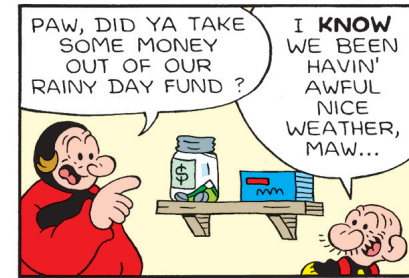
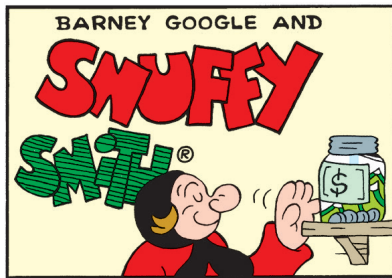
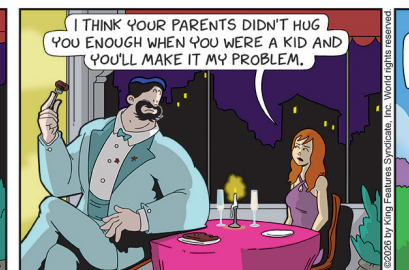
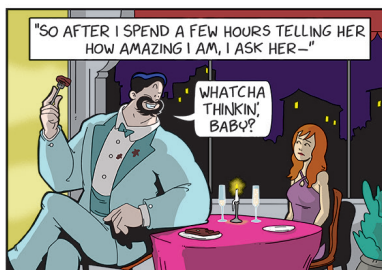
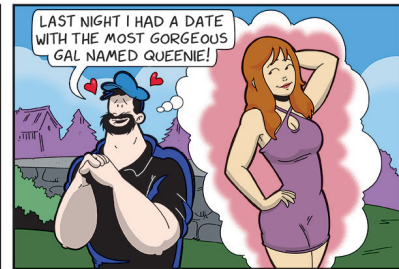
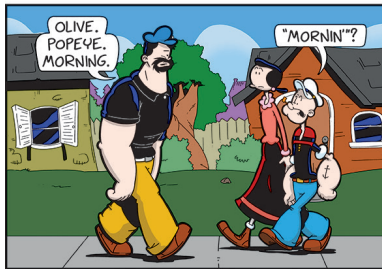
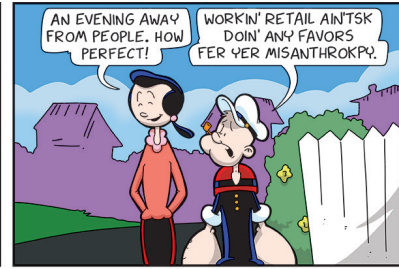
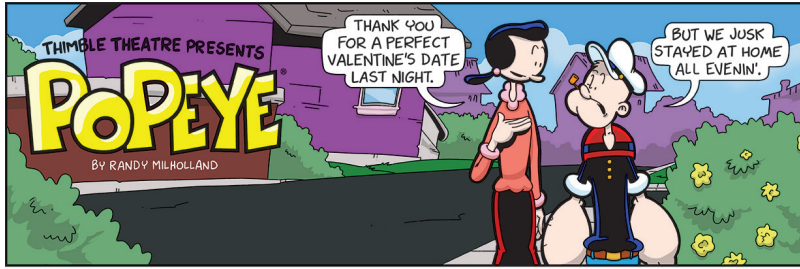
by Gary Kopervas



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# Groton Daily Independent

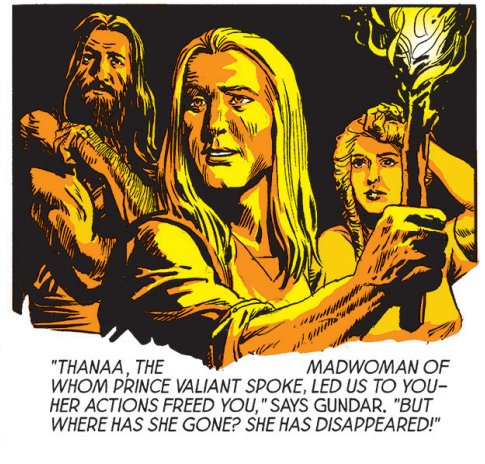
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JOHN ROSE

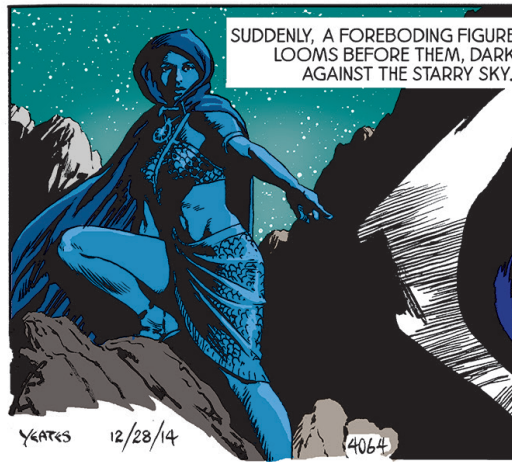
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MEANWHILE, WITH THE IMAZIGHEN FLED INTO THE HILLS AND STRAKONUS' PIRATES WAITING FOR DAWN, NATHAN LEADS VAL AND BUKOTA TOWARD THE PLACE WHERE HE LAST SAW ALETA.

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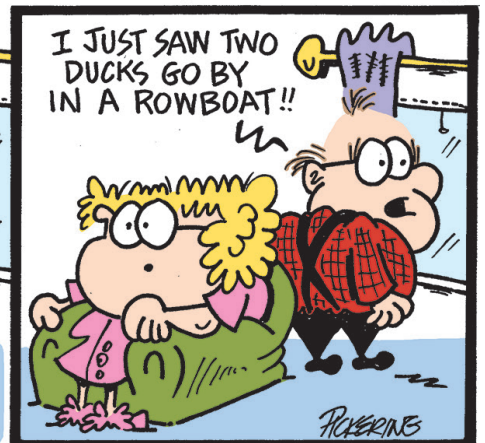
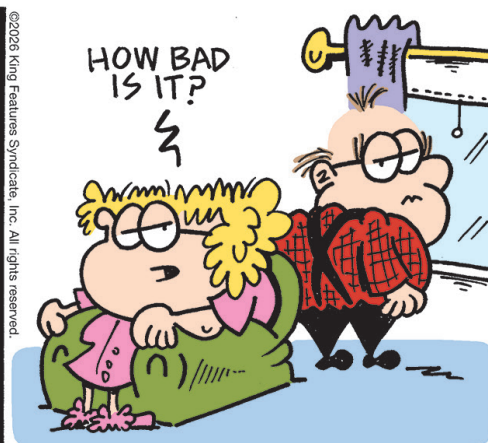
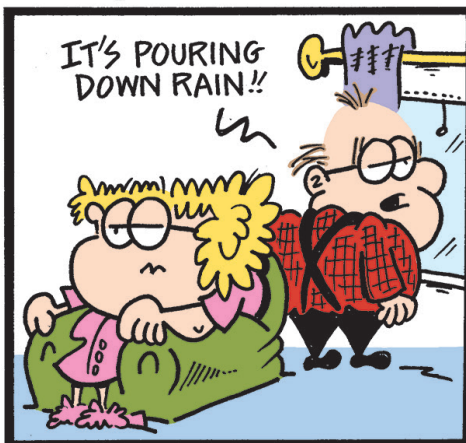


THANA SPEAKS: "FORGET YOUR FAMILY, YOU WHOM I THOUGHT WAS ULYSSES, THEY ARE SAFE. COME WITH ME IF YOU WOULD LEARN HOW TO DESTROY THE TRUE EVIL THAT TRAFFICS IN KIDNAPPED WOMEN AND GIRLS."

NEXT:  
**The Sirens return**

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Nursing home vs. assisted living

Nobody wants to think about it, but the day might come when we need the services of a nursing home to heal from an illness or injury. Or we might get to the point where we start thinking about getting some help, or even moving to a place where the help is already there.

One thing is certain: It's less stressful if we plan in advance for the day those situations might arise. The first step is to understand the differences between the two: nursing home versus assisted living.

A nursing home has 24/7 medical staff if you need constant care. You'll get food, baths, therapy if necessary, rehabilitation, medical treatment and more.

Medicare may or may not pay for some of the services you receive in a nursing home. The same for Medicaid, depending on your financial situation.

Assisted living can be quite different, the biggest being that you live in your own home within the facility. You'll have that private accommodation but also meals, recreational activities, visits from doctors and nurses, housekeeping and laundry services, and daily help with tasks you can't do by yourself.

Many facilities offer both, with the option to move from assisted living to their nursing home if your health takes a downturn. A continuing care retirement community (CCRC) can offer the peace of mind of knowing that whatever level of care you need, it can be found in the same location.

Medicare probably won't pay for much of the cost.

And therein lies the huge concern for anyone needing to learn about nursing homes and assisted living facilities: the cost. Do your homework and ask a lot of questions about who pays for what. Here are a few places to start.

Look at the eldercare locator ([eldercare.acl.gov/home](http://eldercare.acl.gov/home)) or call them at 800-677-1116 to find resources.

Compare local facilities at [tinyurl.com/4ayaubhb](http://tinyurl.com/4ayaubhb).

Also see the government's long-term care website at [acl.gov/ltc](http://acl.gov/ltc).

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15 N Main St. - Ste. 101  
Downtown Groton

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



**Living Heart Fitness Center**

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

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1. Name the third baseman for the Atlanta Braves who led the National League in hits and batting average and won NL MVP honors in 1991.

2. What brand of athletic footwear and apparel, established in New York in 1972, sponsored the likes of Pele, Dan Marino, Lawrence Taylor, Muhammad Ali, Reggie Jackson, Spud Webb and others in the 1970s and 1980s?

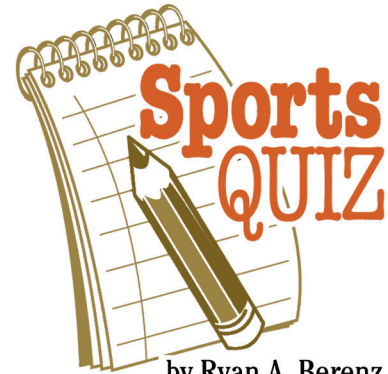
3. What driver did Kevin Harvick beat by one point to win the 2014 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series championship?

4. Name the Detroit Lions offensive lineman who suffered a spinal cord injury in a 1991 game and went on to found an organization dedicated to curing paralysis?

5. In 1940, what NFL team became the first to travel to a road game by airplane when they flew from Chicago to New York?

6. He's an author ("Stan Musial: An American Life") and longtime sports columnist for The New York Times. His younger brother was a longtime NBA insider for the New York Post, NBC and TNT. Who are they?

7. What NBA team selected Jackson State's Purvis Short with the fifth overall pick in the 1978 NBA Draft?



by Ryan A. Berenz

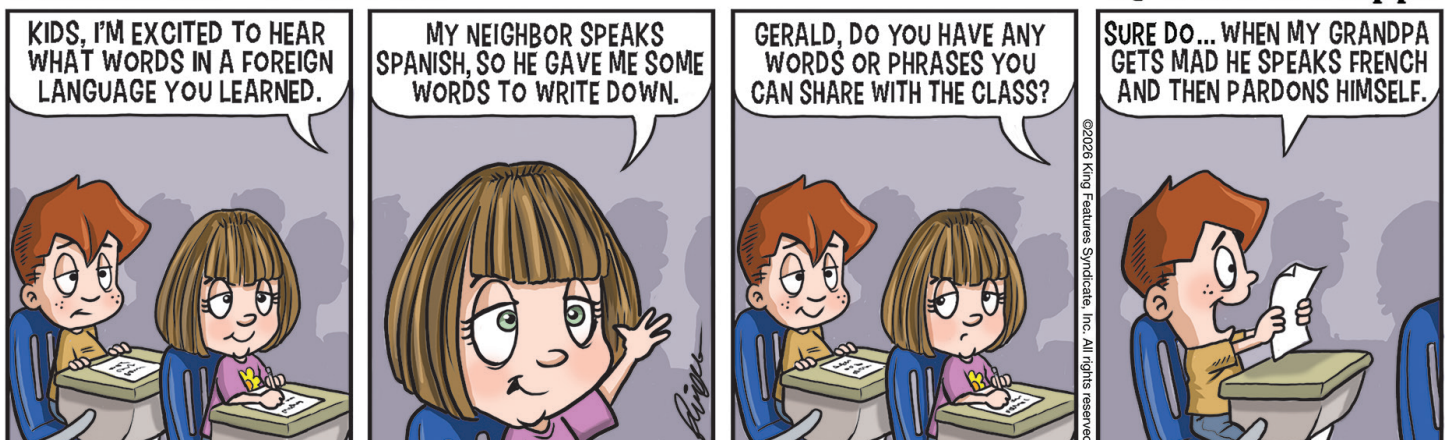
## Answers

1. Terry Pendleton.
2. PONY.
3. Ryan Newman.
4. Mike Utlej.
5. The Green Bay Packers.
6. George and Peter Vecsey.
7. The Golden State Warriors.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





## Brushing pets' teeth: A chore with lifelong benefits

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My vet said at their last checkup that both my dog "Petey" and cat "Storm" need their teeth brushed every day. I've never heard of this. How do I brush their teeth? Do I just use a regular toothbrush? -- Jerry in Yellow Springs, Ohio

DEAR JERRY: Brushing your pets' teeth is really a thing. Not just dogs and cats, but any mammalian pet can suffer from plaque, tartar and tooth decay, just like us. And poor teeth results in poor health -- difficulty eating, which makes it tough to get enough nutrients, and potentially more serious diseases.

Daily brushing is recommended for both dogs and cats, but if you're able to get it done three or four times per week, that's way better than nothing at all. Often, you have to do it daily because your pet may not sit still long enough to clean all of their teeth at once.

Here's how to brush both your pets' teeth with minimal trauma:

- Never use human toothpaste: It may contain xylitol, which is poisonous to pets. Instead, buy a toothpaste for dogs (peanut butter flavor is popular) and one for cats.
- Special pet toothbrushes that fit over your finger are the easiest to use.
- Introduce brushing gradually. Give your pet a little toothpaste on the tip of your finger. Then use your finger to gently swipe their teeth, starting at the gums and swiping downward.
- Use gauze wrapped around your finger at first, and transition to the pet toothbrush as they get more comfortable.
- If your pet won't hold still long enough to do all their teeth, that's OK. Do another section of teeth the next day.

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

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## Strange BUT TRUE

\* In ancient Greece, lipstick was seen as scandalous by most women and worn predominantly by sex workers.

\* The record for the longest tire skid was set in 1964 at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah.

\* Ornithologists often use Cheetos to study behavior in crows. Along with being easy to spot because of their bright orange color, they're also one of a crow's favorite treats.

\* Apollo 17 astronaut Harrison Schmitt is allergic to moon dust.

\* Michigan still has a 1931 law on the books stating that "any man who shall seduce and debauch any unmarried woman shall be guilty of a felony." If convicted, the man can be punished with up to five years in state prison or a fine of up to \$2,500.

\* Pentheraphobia is the intense and disproportionate fear of your mother-in-law.

\* Thumbs have their own pulse.

\* A 2015 study of black garden ants found that the insects might occasionally feel self-doubt.

\* Some throat singers are able to produce four tones simultaneously.

\* The first Hershey's chocolate bars with almonds were produced in 1908 because they were cheap to make. The nuts took the place of some of the more expensive milk chocolate, which meant Hershey's could keep the price of the candy at a nickel.

\* Eggplants are berries.

\* William Hogarth had a pug called Trump, who famously features in several of his paintings. Louis-Francois Roubiliac created a sculpture of Trump in terracotta to accompany a bust of Hogarth in 1741.

\* In the U.S. alone, up to 500 million drinking straws are used every day.

\* Venus rotates backward and has days longer than its years.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "I love being married. It's so great to find that one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life." -- Rita Rudner

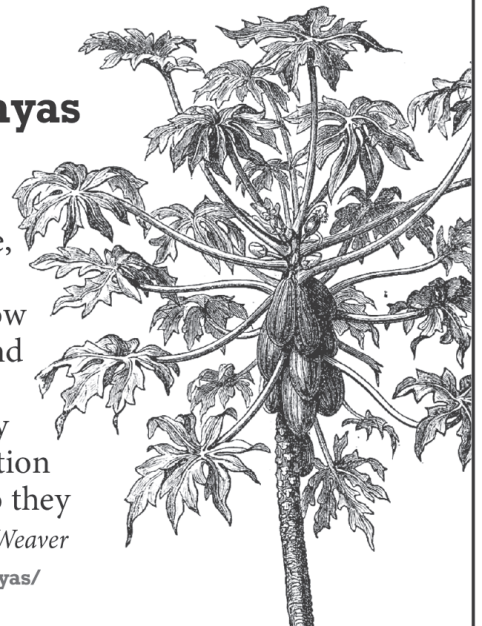
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### The Garden Bug

### Papayas

Botanically, papaya "trees" aren't really trees; they are large, herbaceous plants. When fully grown, they have a single, hollow trunk, with a crown of stalks and leaves thrusting outward at the top, similar to a palm tree. They tend to drop off in fruit production after the third or fourth year, so they may need replacement. - Brenda Weaver

Source: [morningchores.com/growing-papayas/](http://morningchores.com/growing-papayas/)





by Freddy Groves

## Top scores for VA cemetery services

It comes as a big surprise, given the seriousness of burying a loved one, but the VA's National Cemetery Administration (NCA) just earned an extremely high score on satisfaction with its services. As measured by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) of over 100 government services and agencies for 2025, the NCA ranked 98 out of 100, the highest score ever. The NCA twice earned a score of 97, while the average of other government agencies was 70.4.

Last year the NCA buried over 130,000 veterans and their family members at the 157 national cemeteries in 44 states. Burial and memorial benefits include a gravesite, perpetual care of the site, a Presidential Memorial Certificate, a marker or medallion, a burial flag given at the funeral and military funeral honors that include the playing of "Taps."

If you're a veteran, have you made your final plans yet? Are they in writing? When the time comes, it will be easier on your family if arrangements have already been concluded. You can do this by having a pre-need determination done (VA Form 40-100007) to determine your eligibility and approval for burial.

Start with [va.gov/burials-memorials](http://va.gov/burials-memorials) and click "Eligibility." Have your DD-214 in hand. If you need help, call them at 800-535-1117.

To learn more about your burial and memorial benefits, see [www.cem.va.gov/burial-memorial-benefits](http://www.cem.va.gov/burial-memorial-benefits).

As part of advance planning, consider the Veterans Legacy Memorial website ([www.vlm.cem.va.gov](http://www.vlm.cem.va.gov)). Each veteran buried at a VA national cemetery has a webpage listing name, dates of birth and death, war period served, decorations, rank and more. Family members can later add photos and documents if they wish. Your advanced planning might include a handful of photos and information you'd like to see added later. Include the phone number 866-245-1490 in your information in case your family needs help with uploading files when the time comes.

Be sure your family knows where you're keeping your pre-need approval and Veterans Legacy Memorial documents.

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## Wishing Well®

2	7	3	2	5	6	7	5	2	8	5	6	4
E	G	A	X	O	F	O	F	P	E	F	A	B
2	7	8	7	5	6	8	5	8	5	2	7	8
E	A	N	L	E	I	E	R	R	C	C	S	G
5	6	8	4	3	5	4	3	2	4	5	6	8
O	T	Y	I	M	M	D	E	T	E	F	H	I
4	6	4	8	3	7	4	6	8	3	6	2	6
Y	F	O	S	S	A	U	U	R	S	L	A	I
4	2	5	2	8	6	4	6	8	2	8	6	8
R	T	O	I	E	N	T	L	N	O	E	O	W
5	7	3	5	4	6	4	6	8	2	7	4	3
R	R	C	T	I	V	M	E	E	N	E	E	L
2	7	3	8	2	7	2	7	2	3	2	3	3
S	S	E	D	G	E	R	T	O	A	W	R	S

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

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1. LANGUAGE: What does the Latin phrase "carpe noctem" mean in English?

2. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president was a lifeguard in his earlier life and saved 77 people from drowning over a seven-year period?

3. MOVIES: Who is the primary nemesis of Professor X in "X-Men"?

4. GEOGRAPHY: English is the official language in which Central American country?

5. LITERATURE: Which English novel features characters such as Pip, Miss Havisham and Estella?

6. MUSIC: How many strings does a standard guitar have?

7. TELEVISION: Which TV sitcom stars a character named Eleanor Shellstrop?

8. HISTORY: Which European ruler is known as the Sun King?

9. U.S. STATES: Which state is home to Mount St. Helens?

10. ANATOMY: Which human organ produces insulin?

### Answers

1. Seize the night.
2. Ronald Reagan.
3. Magneto.
4. Belize.
5. "Great Expectations."
6. Six.
7. "The Good Place."
8. Louis XIV of France.
9. Washington.
10. The pancreas.

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South Dakota Governor



## Larry Rhoden



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

### **Smithfield: A Quadruple Win for South Dakota**

South Dakota is Open for Opportunity, and we had a chance to prove that in a big way recently! Smithfield announced plans to build a new, state-of-the-art processing facility on the outskirts of Sioux Falls. This will be the largest business investment in South Dakota's history, and it represents confidence in our people, our producers, and our future.

My administration has worked closely with local leaders for the past year to help make this opportunity happen. I've been calling this announcement a "quadruple win," because it truly is a win in four different ways.

First, it's a win for agriculture.

Ag is king in South Dakota. When agriculture succeeds, our entire economy succeeds. South Dakota already has the largest share of producer-owned pork production of any state – by far. This new facility will expand processing capacity and strengthen market opportunities for pork producers across our state and region. That means more demand for livestock raised by South Dakota farmers and ranchers. And that will lead to more economic activity in our rural communities.

Second, it's a win for Sioux Falls.

Smithfield's decision to relocate from downtown opens the door to generational change along the eastern side of the riverfront. If you had told me just a year ago that we would have both the prison project moving forward and a new Smithfield facility in the works, I would have been pretty surprised, but here we are! This transition creates tremendous opportunity for redevelopment and growth in the heart of our largest city. The area that will become available for redevelopment is nearly as large as the current downtown!

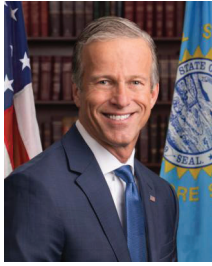
Third, it's a win for the company.

Businesses choose where to invest carefully. They look for stability, common-sense regulations, and a competitive tax climate. South Dakota delivers on all three. We are the freest state in a nation founded on the principle of freedom, and Smithfield is choosing to do business in the greatest, freest state in America. After more than 100 years of first John Morrell, and now Smithfield, producing pork products in Sioux Falls, we are glad that the company saw the value of continuing to do business in South Dakota.

Finally, this project is a win for the entire state.

Our state continues to build one of the strongest economies in America. We have the lowest unemployment rate in America, the second fastest growing GDP, and the third fastest growing incomes. Keep in mind – that's during a time of economic strength nationally! This announcement builds on that momentum and shows that we are not slowing down anytime soon.

In South Dakota, we don't settle for the way things are. We look for ways to grow, improve, and create opportunity for the next generation – and this new facility does exactly that. That's what it means to be Open for Opportunity. I was honored to be part of the celebration of this generational opportunity, but once again, we aren't going to settle. I'm going to get back to work on the next economic opportunity for South Dakota!



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

## South Dakotans Are Seeing Tax Relief

Who couldn't use a little more money in their pocket? Thanks to the Working Families Tax Cuts, there's a good chance you'll be seeing more money in your pocket when you file your taxes this year. Thanks to Republicans' landmark bill, hardworking South Dakotans will see smaller tax bills and bigger refunds, and small business owners, farmers, and ranchers will also have more money to invest in their workers and operations.

Since we passed this major tax bill last year, it's been great to hear firsthand how it's benefiting South Dakota. Just recently, I joined a roundtable with business owners from across the state at Montgomery's in Sioux Falls. One of the takeaways from that conversation is how this bill's permanent tax relief provided much-needed certainty to local businesses. Permanent pro-growth provisions like the 199A small business deduction, 100 percent bonus depreciation, and lower tax rates give these businesses the certainty they need to invest in their operations, expand, and create jobs. One participant credited the bonus depreciation provision for helping his business build an addition and hire 10 employees this year.

The Working Families Tax Cuts also provided a major boost to American manufacturing. Bonus depreciation helps manufacturers invest in new equipment. Expensing for research and development helps drive innovation. And the full expensing provision for new factories and factory improvements helps grow our manufacturing sector. And these pro-manufacturing policies are at work in South Dakota. I recently visited Pivotal Health Solutions' factory in Watertown and heard about how tax relief is helping their operations. And in Rapid City, I talked with employees at C-Lock's manufacturing facility about the innovation happening there that supports agriculture in South Dakota and around the world.

While I was in Rapid City, I also had the opportunity to talk with auditors and accountants at Casey Peterson about how hardworking South Dakotans are benefitting from the Working Families Tax Cuts with lower tax bills and bigger refunds this year. Business owners I talk to throughout the state consistently mention that the biggest benefit from this bill for them is that their customers will have more money in their pockets. And one retiree in Sioux Falls wrote my office to share that he got more money back on his taxes this year than last year, and he's hardly the only one. Thanks to Republicans' landmark bill, a lot of Americans are seeing lower tax bills this year.

The Working Families Tax Cuts puts more money in Americans' pockets. It helps to grow our economy, create jobs, and grow paychecks. It's a recipe for a growing economy that benefits everyone, and I'm so glad to see it having a big impact right here in South Dakota.

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**February 9-15, 2026**

Welcome back to the Weekly Round[s] Up. It was another great week in DC because our office was full of South Dakotans again. I always appreciate it when folks make the trip to D.C. to share their perspectives on the issues that matter most to our state. In addition to these meetings, I attended several

briefings, participated in a hearing and voted on President Trump's nominees, a resolution to overturn a DC tax provision and a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding bill.

While we'd hoped to pass funding for DHS through the end of the fiscal year, Senate Democrats rejected it, opting to instead shut down the entire department. This means that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Coast Guard and other critical national security operations will go without funding until a DHS funding bill is signed into law. More on this and the rest of my week in the Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I visited with: Kevin Robling, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks; Ryman LeBeau, Chairman of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe; President Frank Star Comes Out of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and Kathleen Wooden Knife, Chairwoman of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe; South Dakotans with Alliance for Headache Disorders Advocacy; South Dakota Principals with National School Leadership; South Dakota representatives and athletes with the Special Olympics; Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas; South Dakota Education Association; South Dakotans with the American Institute of Architects; and representatives from the Indian Gaming Association.

Met with South Dakotans from: Beresford, Brandon, Harrisburg, Martin, Pierre, Sioux Falls and Spearfish.

Other meetings: Alzheimer's Association; enCore Energy; and a Banking Member Meeting with Dario Amodei, CEO of Anthropic.

Additionally, this week I received a 100% Action Award from the Family Research Council in recognition for defending South Dakota family values and supporting commonsense legislation to protect life at all stages.

Hearings: On Thursday I attended a Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee hearing on "Oversight of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission." You can watch me question Paul Atkins, Chairman of U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, [here](#).

Briefings: I attended two classified briefings with the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence as well as two classified briefings with the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Senate Bible Study: On Tuesday this week, I attended Senate Bible Study hosted by Senator Tedd Budd from North Carolina. Our Bible study was on the topic of evangelism and the important call to share the gospel with those around us.

Votes taken: 6 – This week I voted on multiple different items. To begin, I voted Yea for Daniel E. Burrows, of Colorado, to be an Assistant Attorney General. Then I voted Nay on IRS Notice on Corporate AMT CRA and Yea for the D.C. Tax Disapproval Resolution. Additionally, funding for the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2026 was on the table. I voted Yea on the legislation to fund critical agencies like FEMA, TSA, the Coast Guard and cyber defenses. Without support from Senate Democrats, this legislation did not pass and has now put us in a partial government shutdown. While Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) falls under DHS, they were provided with funding through the reconciliation bill that passed this summer to continue enforcing our immigration laws. Due to the nature of DHS operations, approximately 92 percent of the workforce is classified as essential. As a result, under this DHS appropriations lapse forced by Congressional Democrats, frontline personnel will once again be required to report to duty without pay for the second time this fiscal year.

My Staff in South Dakota visited: Hot Springs.

Steps taken: 60,453 steps or 28.6 miles.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

## Nobody Is Perfect, At Least That's What I'm Told

People often say nobody is perfect. I've said that at least 100 times, but there are times when I am not quite sure that it applies to me.

There are some situations when I think I am perfect. I do not say it aloud because I do not want to step on anybody's toes. But I believe I am perfect, I keep believing it, and then reality hits like a pie in my face.

When I think I am perfect, I reach a stage so imperfect that I am ashamed. I work hard at trying to be perfect. My goal I have in life is to do things perfectly. Up until now, I have not reached my goal, but I've come close.

I like to be around people who think they are perfect. It is easy to trip them up in what they believe about themselves.

To be truthful, the only person I know who is perfect is The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. I have known her for over 55 years, and if she is not perfect, she has put up a good face for all those years.

She knows how to fix anything and everything.

I will never forget when the front bumper of my truck broke. I was going to take it to the garage to have them fix it, but as I was looking at the bumper, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came out of the house and said, "What's the problem with your truck?"

Really, I didn't want to tell her, but what's a husband to do? I looked at her and said, "The front bumper of my truck is broken and I'm going to have to take it into the garage to get fixed."

"No," she said, "let me look at it before you take it to the garage. Maybe it's something I can fix."

I chuckled because that was a big job to fix.

She looked at it for a moment and then said, "Okay, I see what's wrong and I think I can fix this. Let me go to my craft room and get something I think might work."

She went into the house and, within a few moments, came out with several of those large paperclips. She went over to the bumper and began working on it, and within a few moments, she said, "Okay, I think I fixed the bumper, you don't have to spend any of your money taking it to the garage."

Looking at me with one of her smiles, she said, "You're welcome." Then she walked back into the house.

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I didn't quite get what she said, but I looked, and there were a bunch of those large paperclips holding the bumper to the truck. To this day, I do not know how she came up with that idea.

That was about five years ago, and those paperclips are still holding my bumper to the truck. Who would have guessed?

She does have a flair for fixing anything and everything. If you could see in her craft room, you would see what I'm talking about. If it is broken, she can fix it. If she can't fix it, it's not broken.

With that in mind, I have concluded, after all these years, that she is as close to being perfect as anyone I know.

The only difference is that she likes broccoli and I hate broccoli, and I like Apple Fritters, and she hates Apple Fritters. All those years, this has been the only problem we have.

Occasionally, she will cook broccoli for supper, but makes sure it does not come anywhere near my plate. I know when she's cooking broccoli because I can smell it, and I do not like that smell.

The other night at suppertime, she brought me my supper plate, then went out and got one for herself, and came back. We sat in the room and enjoyed our supper together while watching TV.

I saw something on my plate that puzzled me. It was something green. I did not pay too much attention because the rest of the plate was very delicious. However, I could not help but look at that little green thing. It looked like a leaf of some sort, but it was so small.

As I looked at it, sighed very deeply and said to myself, "Oh, no, it is not that!"

I looked at it, picked it up with my fork, and it was exactly what I thought it was. I called the attention of The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, showed it to her, and said, "Can you explain this for me?"

She gasped for a moment, looked at the little green thing on my fork, and sighed very deeply, "Oh, no, it isn't." She looked at it a little more and said, "I'm so sorry, it is a piece of broccoli."

I could not believe it, but as I looked at it, I had to agree with her. This is the one time that I can remember when she was not perfect.

Thinking along this line, I remembered a Bible verse about this. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

I cannot be perfect from the human standpoint, but I can achieve perfection in the spiritual realm. The pattern of my perfection is not anything in this world, but according to God's aspiration for me.

## EARTHTALK

### Regressive Evolution: Losing Unnecessary Traits by Kristy Chan

Dear EarthTalk: Are any plants and animals evolving backwards by incorporating traits that they lost long ago?

-- Joseph R., New Bedford, MA

Regressive evolution, in simple terms, refers to the loss of previously evolved traits. It occurs because specific characteristics are no longer beneficial to the organism's survival due to changes in lifestyle or the environment. Gene preservation and decay depend on the level of pleiotropy (the frequency at which a gene influences more than one trait). However, regressive evolution remains somewhat speculative due to the limited research on the molecular level regarding the re-emergence of genes. According to University of Bologna researcher Giobbe Forni, further understanding will "be possible only if we dedicate more effort to observing and analyzing the amazing diversity of organisms."

Over the past 50 million years, whales and dolphins (cetaceans) have evolved in remarkable ways as they transitioned from land-dwelling mammals back to life in the ocean. Unlike early vertebrates that first moved from water to land over 350 million years ago, cetaceans represent a secondary return to aquatic environments. During this transition, they developed specialized adaptations such as streamlined bodies, flippers, tail flukes, and in some species, echolocation. At the same time, they experienced regressive evolutionary changes, including the reduction of hind limbs and loss of most body hair. One explanation for this shift is that aquatic environments offered abundant food resources and reduced competition, so natural selection favored traits that improved survival and reproduction in marine habitats.

Another example is cave fish that undergo regressive evolution in their eyes, which are not needed in pitch-blackness. Cave fish don't return to a primordial ancestor without eyes; biological processes to produce eyes stop, leaving the eye underdeveloped, covered by skin. Regressive evolution is like the evolutionary process that creates more complex. This is best said by William R. Jeffery, a biologist at the University of Maryland: "But the eye didn't go in reverse. It just stopped going forward."

Lastly, tomato plants on the western islands of the Galápagos have reverted to an ancestral chemical defense, producing alkaloids that are unnatural to modern-day tomatoes but identical to those of their eggplant relatives, which date back millions of years. Researchers found that four amino acid changes in an enzyme led to regressive evolution due to harsher conditions on the western islands, specifically in areas with barren land and poor soil, which revived ancient defensive traits in tomato plants.

It may not be possible to completely revert to a past ancestor, as mimicking the extinct environment and lifestyle is nearly impossible due to the impact of anthropogenic influences. Regressive evolution is a fascinating process that is accessible to learn more about. Steps to gain a better understanding of this include reading about evolution, which is driven by the same principles; taking free online courses and receiving academic credit; and visiting local or online museums and attending public lectures.



**Dolphins' ancient ancestors developed streamlined bodies and other adaptations when they transitioned from land to water 50 million years ago.** Credit: Pexels.com.

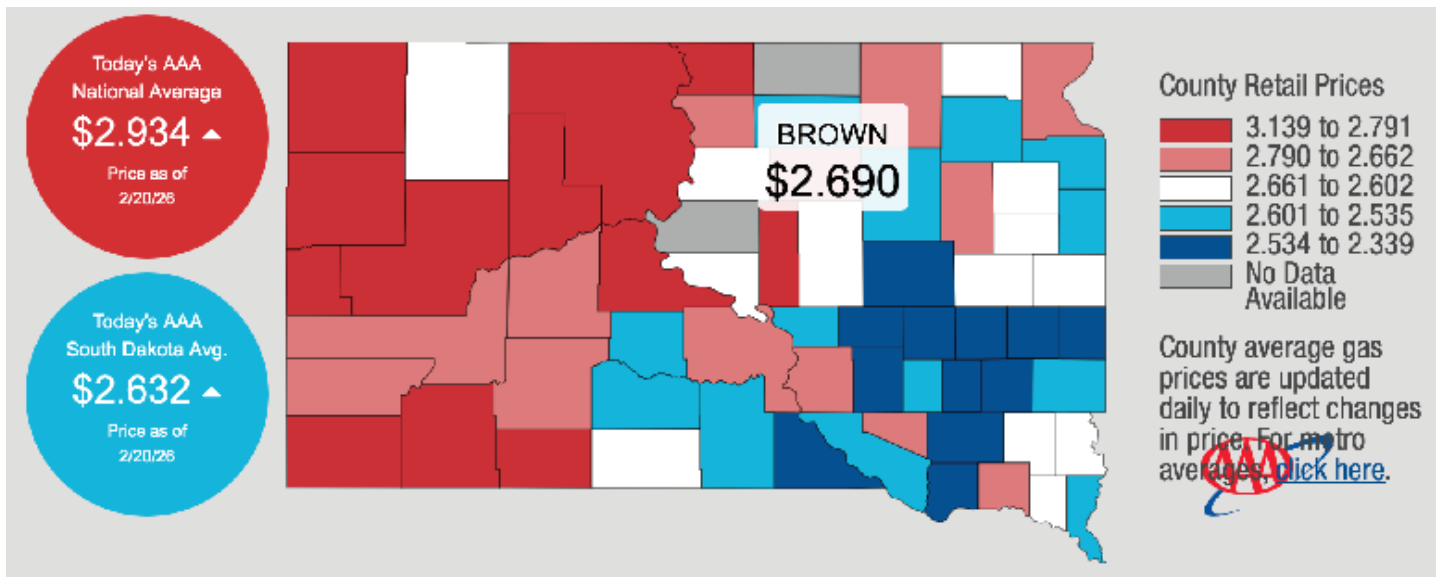
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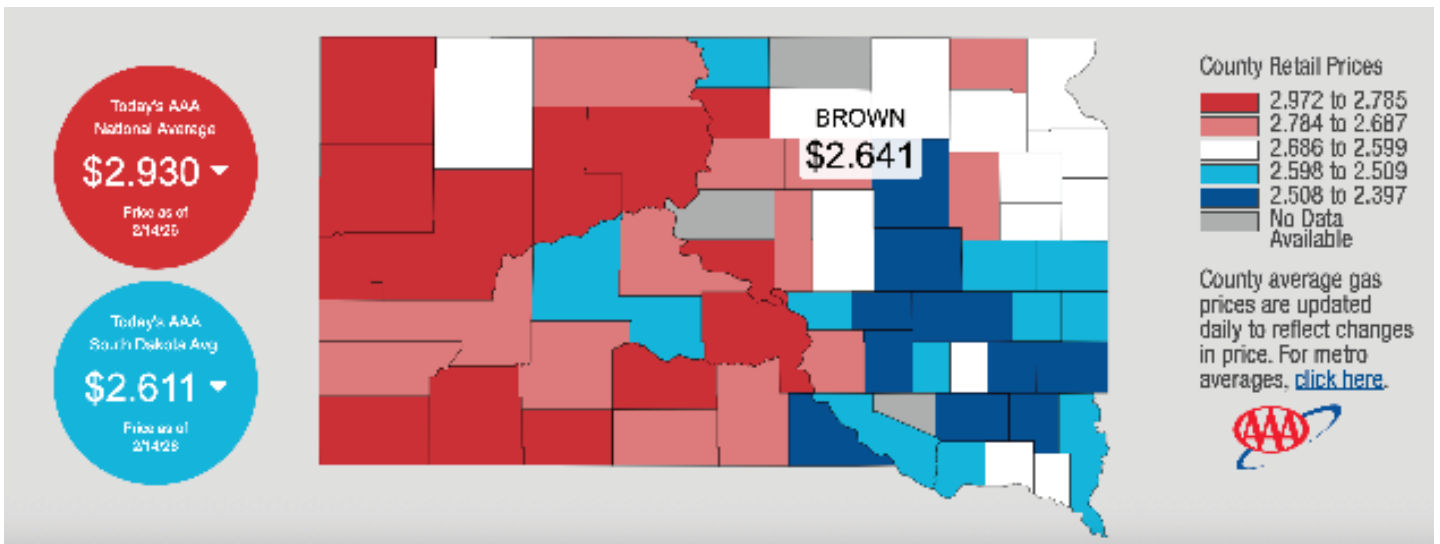
## South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$2.632	\$2.779	\$3.286	\$3.413
Yesterday Avg.	\$2.601	\$2.758	\$3.253	\$3.388
Week Ago Avg.	\$2.613	\$2.766	\$3.268	\$3.358
Month Ago Avg.	\$2.620	\$2.790	\$3.292	\$3.200
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.015	\$3.179	\$3.603	\$3.432

### This Week



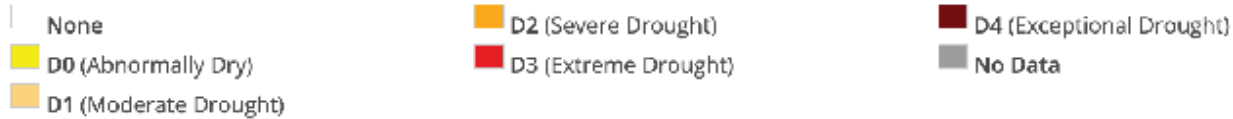
### Last Week



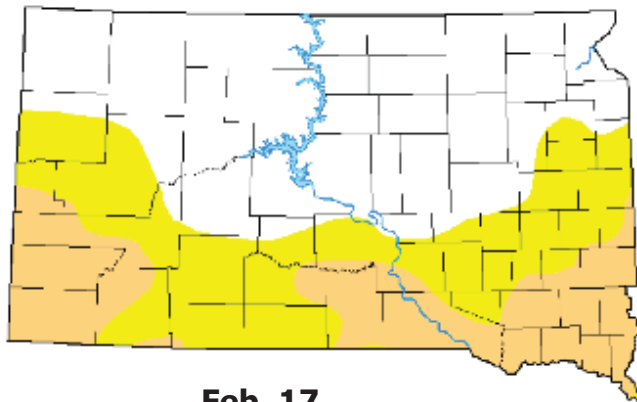
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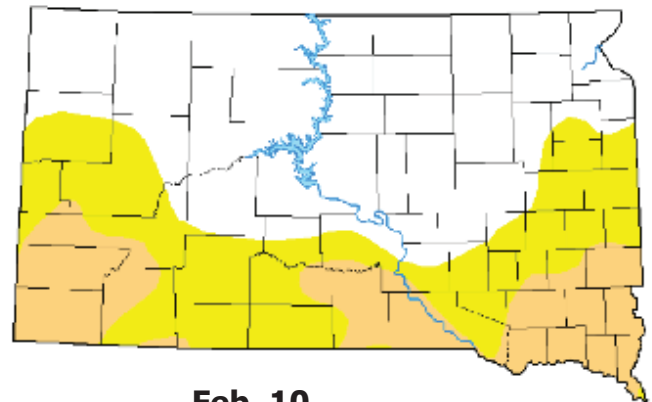
## Drought Classification



## Drought Monitor



Feb. 17



Feb. 10

Moderate to locally heavy precipitation fell on part of eastern Kansas, and scattered light to moderate amounts fell on the rest of the southern tier of the Region. Farther north, however, scant precipitation led to large areas of degradation across a large proportion of Wyoming and central through eastern Montana, with more limited deterioration introduced across parts of Nebraska and South Dakota. This resulted in moderate drought or worse covering a swath across most of Nebraska and adjacent areas westward through most of Wyoming and the northern, central, and western sections of Colorado. Severe drought (D2) or worse is widespread from western Nebraska across the southern tier of Wyoming through northern and central parts of Colorado.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **COMMENTARY**

## **South Dakota's attorney shortfall persists, but new legislation could help**

### **Bill proposes opening apprenticeship program to law school graduates**

**by Roger Baron**

State Rep. Mary Fitzgerald, R-Saint Onge, wants to enhance the delivery of legal services in South Dakota. She has filed legislation, House Bill 1270, designed to expand the state Supreme Court's new apprenticeship program, adopted in February 2025.

The new program provides an opportunity to third-year (senior) law students. HB 1270 would extend the apprenticeship opportunity to existing graduates of the University of South Dakota's Knudson School of Law. Her bipartisan proposal is cosponsored by Sen. Amber Hulse, R-Hot Springs, and Reps. Eric Emery, D-Rosebud, Tim Goodwin, R-Rapid City, and Rebecca Reimer, R-Chamberlain.

Although there are over 3,000 attorneys licensed in South Dakota, only about 1,800 are "active in-state members." Many of these 1,800 attorneys are serving as judges, prosecutors and government lawyers. This leaves a shortage of attorneys who can directly serve South Dakota citizens, especially in rural areas.

South Dakota has 2.2 lawyers per 1,000 residents, a per capita ratio that is the second lowest in the nation. We have "legal deserts" — 35 counties have fewer than one attorney per 1,000 residents, and six counties have no attorneys at all.

In 2013, the South Dakota Supreme Court attempted to address the shortage with a Rural Attorney Recruitment Program, offering financial incentives. This initiative received national attention and was noble in spirit. Sadly, it failed.

Historically, attorneys became licensed in South Dakota through the "diploma privilege," which was bestowed on law school graduates without the need to pass a bar examination. This licensing mechanism was in place for 64 years, a duration that exceeds any mechanisms used in this state. It was terminated in 1983, however, causing untoward results.

Eventually, the bar exam became the norm, and the drafting of the South Dakota bar exam was outsourced to out-of-state entities. These entities drafted questions that were designed to be administered nationwide, and therefore based on general principles of law, unrelated to the peculiarities of South Dakota law.

Additionally, multiple choice questions evolved as standardized testing, a method which has come under intense scrutiny as an inappropriate measure of legal competency. Currently, we are seeing these standardized tests being abandoned nationwide.

In the meantime, many qualified graduates from the USD law school have been denied licensure. Research conducted by the South Dakota Legislative Research Council revealed that the licensure rate in South Dakota for graduates of USD's law school fell to 50% in 2015, 39% in 2017 and 41% for 2018.

The Supreme Court's apprenticeship program is a step in the right direction. It assures "something more" than graduation from law school by creating an alternative route to bar licensure through legal education and practical experience. Law school students selected for the program must complete a minimum of two years of full-time public service employment, such as in the office of a state's attorney or public defender, upon admission to practice law in the state.

But why limit the program's usage to current students? Given the problematic history with the bar exam's standardized testing, there is no reason to deny apprenticeship opportunities to other, prior law school

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graduates.

HB 1270 is scheduled for a hearing in the House Judiciary Committee on Monday. Sadly, this legislation will (if treated as similar measures in the past) likely be opposed by many attorney legislators and attorney lobby groups. One can't help but wonder if the self-interest of existing attorneys (and their organizations) isn't a conflict of interest. The availability of legal services is essential to providing access to justice to all aspects of South Dakota — rural, urban, poor and rich. HB 1270, if passed into law, could make great strides in expanding those services to where they are needed most.

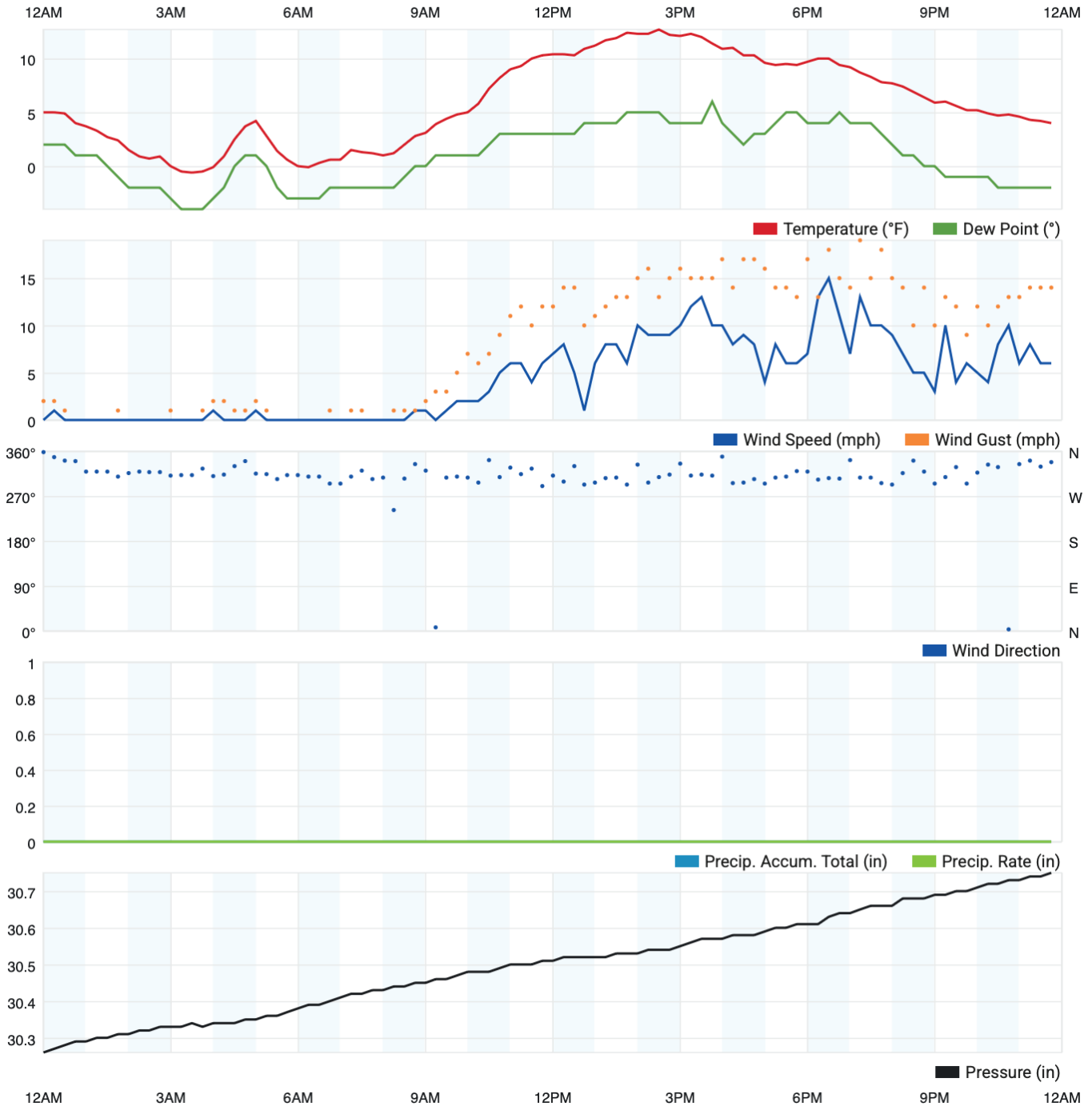
*Roger Baron is a professor emeritus at the University of South Dakota School of Law. He writes frequently about the opinions of the South Dakota Supreme Court and the 8th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. He also maintains and operates USDLAW, an email discussion group for the legal community in South Dakota.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

February 21, 2026



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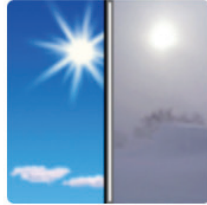
Today

Tonight

Monday

Monday Night

Tuesday



High: 13 °F

Low: -4 °F

High: 29 °F

Low: 20 °F

High: 39 °F

Sunny

Partly Cloudy

Sunny then  
Patchy  
Blowing Snow

Partly Cloudy

Slight Chance  
Snow then  
Mostly Sunny



## 4-Day Outlook

February 22, 2026  
2:57 AM



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

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

Chilly conditions will begin the week with below normal temperatures today. Sub-zero readings will be possible the next couple of mornings. A warming trend begins Monday as southerly winds turn breezy. A weak disturbance moving through the region Tuesday morning will bring in a slight chance for light snow north and east. A potentially more organized system arrives the middle of the week with a better chance for rain and/or snow.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 13 °F at 2:26 PM

Low Temp: -1 °F at 3:26 AM

Wind: 19 mph at 7:12 PM

Precip: : 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 60 in 2021

Record Low: -24 in 1918

Average High: 31

Average Low: 9

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.47

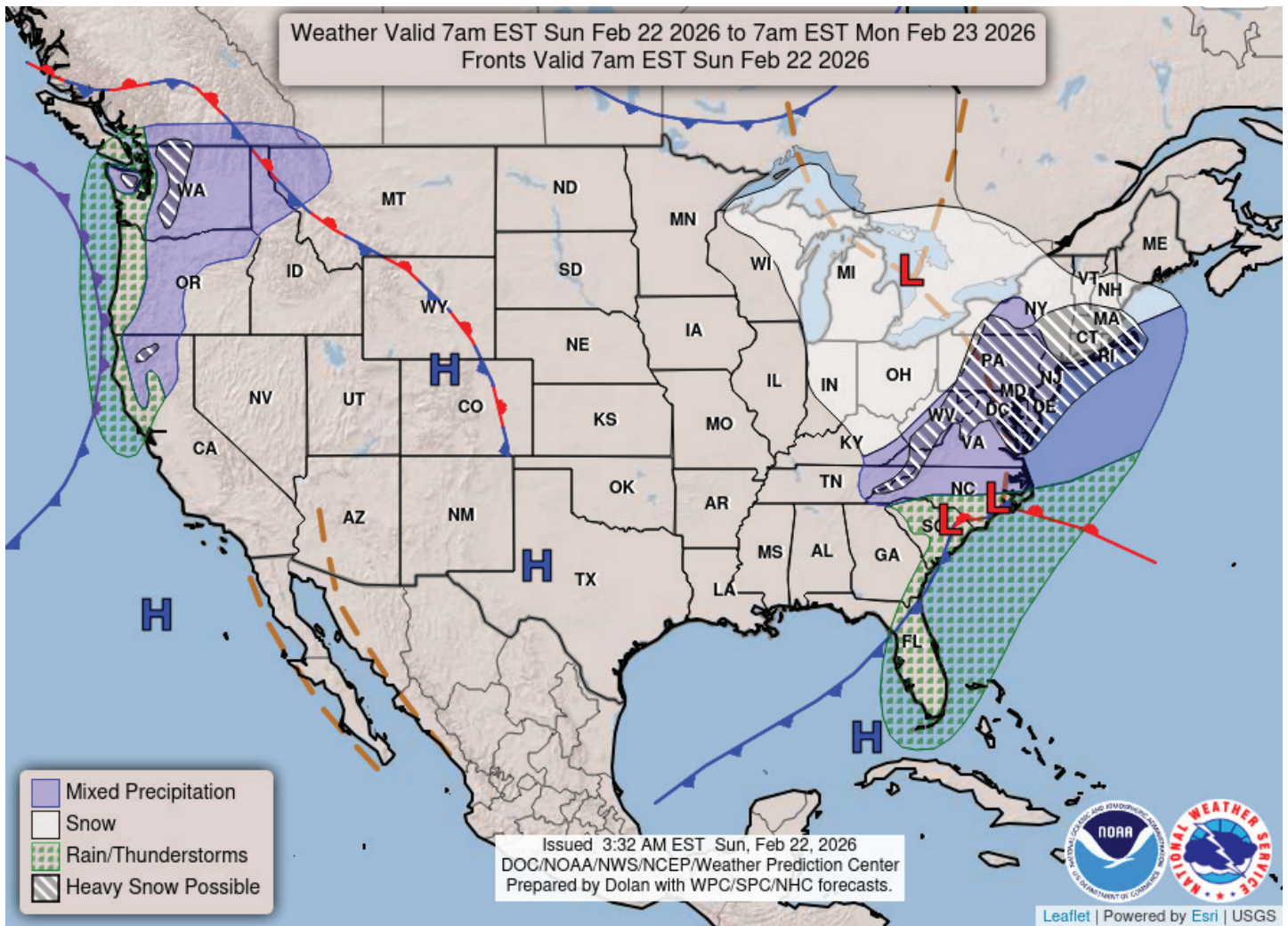
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.96

Average Precip to date: 1.02

Precip Year to Date: 0.96

Sunset Tonight: 6.09 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:21 am



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## Today in Weather History

February 22, 1914: Heavy snow fell across parts of central and north-central South Dakota with 6 to 12 inches of accumulations. Snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Timber Lake and Onida, 7 inches at Kennebec, and 12 inches at Murdo.

February 22, 2000: High temperatures across central and northeast South Dakota were in the 50s and 60s. Record highs occurred at Watertown, Pierre, and Kennebec. Watertown rose to 65 degrees, Pierre rose to 69 degrees, and Kennebec warmed to 71 degrees late in the afternoon. Other high temperatures include; 55 degrees at Sisseton, 59 degrees at Aberdeen, and 64 degrees at Timber Lake.

1773: According to David Ludlum, "The memorable Cold Sabbath in New England history" took place on February 22, 1773. "Many persons froze extremities while going to church."

1936 — Although heat and dust prevailed in the spring and summer, early 1936 brought record cold to parts of the U.S. Sioux Center IA reported 42 inches of snow on the ground, a state record. (20th-22nd) (The Weather Channel)

1971: One of the worst snowstorms in Oklahoma history dumped up to 3 feet of snow on northwest Oklahoma from February 20nd to February 22. By the time the snow ended on the 22nd, the city of Buffalo had 36 inches of snow on the ground, setting the state record for storm-total snowfall. Winds of 30 to 50 mph caused snowdrifts up to 20 feet high. Follett, Texas, picked up 26 inches while Amarillo recorded 14 inches.

1986 — A twelve day siege of heavy rain and snow, which produced widespread flooding and mudslides across northern and central California, finally came to an end. The storm caused more than 400 million dollars property damage. Bucks Lake, located in the Sierra Nevada Range, received 49.6 inches of rain during the twelve day period. (Storm Data)

1987 — A storm moving northeastward out of the Gulf of Mexico began to spread heavy snow across the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. Thunderstorms in northern Florida produced wind gusts to 65 mph in Alachua County. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Dry weather prevailed across the nation, with windy conditions from the Central Rockies to northern New England. Winds gusted to 58 mph at Cleveland OH, and reached 63 mph at Erie PA. Winds in the Central Rockies gusted to 120 mph at Mines Peak CO and Rendezvous Peak WY. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Strong northwesterly winds ushering cold arctic air into the north central U.S. produced snow squalls in the Great Lakes Region, with heavy snow near Lake Michigan. Totals in northwest Indiana ranged up to 24 inches at Gary, and up to 16 inches buried northeastern Illinois. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — Thunderstorms developing along and ahead of a cold front produced severe weather from southern Mississippi to North Carolina. One thunderstorm spawned a tornado just prior to dawn which touched down near Opp AL injuring ten persons and causing half a million dollars damage. Thunderstorm winds injured four persons south of Troy AL, and five people at Columbus GA. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 76 mph at Dothan AL. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1998: Seven tornadoes struck east-central Florida late on this day and early on the 23rd. Three of the tornadoes were rated F3 on the Fujita scale. Twenty-four people were killed in Kissimmee alone. A total of 42 people were killed, 265 injured, and the total damage was \$106 million.

## God in Three Persons

**The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have unique roles while remaining one in essence and purpose.**

Matthew 28:18-20: 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

There are people—including some long-standing Christians—who regard the Trinity as a hierarchy, but that isn't biblical. Scripture shows all three members of the Trinity are fully God:

Father—There are many places in the Gospels where Jesus refers to God as His Father (Mark 14:36; John 5:17-18).

Son—John 1:1 identifies Jesus as divine. And while Christ never specifically called Himself "God," His Father did apply the title to Him (Hebrews 1:8). In addition, Jesus claimed oneness with the Father (John 10:30) and acknowledged having unlimited authority—an attribute of the divine Creator (Matt. 28:18). He also accepted worship (John 9:38).

Holy Spirit—As with God the Father, Scripture presents the Holy Spirit as omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:11) and omnipresent (Psalm 139:7). The idea of the Spirit's divinity was reinforced when Jesus commanded the disciples to baptize new believers in the name of all three members of the Godhead (Matt. 28:19).

The Bible confirms that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equally God. They function as a single unit—no one is more important or less essential than the others. All three are focused upon their plan for mankind: salvation, transformation, and glory for God.

*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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## The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.22.26

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$1,000,000/year**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 4 Mins 11  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.20.26

15 40 48 58 63 2

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$438,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.21.26

5 14 21 24 34 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$16,070,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.20.26

10 24 30 36 42 11

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 19 Mins 10  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.21.26

8 12 22 25 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$20,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.21.26

3 17 21 24 35 9

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

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.21.26

27 28 36 48 49 21

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$203,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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

### BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 60, Mobridge-Pollock 52  
Aberdeen Roncalli 63, Langford 43  
Alcester-Hudson 71, Marty 60  
Avon 58, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 49  
Bison 62, Takini 36  
Brandon Valley 73, Douglas 44  
Burke 51, Mitchell Christian 31  
Centerville 52, Irene-Wakonda 32  
Dakota Valley 59, Tri-Valley 43  
Gayville-Volin High School 54, Corsica/Stickney 41  
Harrisburg 50, Spearfish 39  
Miller 71, Kimball-White Lake 36  
North Central 72, McLaughlin 65  
Rapid City Christian 57, Rapid City Stevens 46  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 64, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 49  
St Thomas More 63, Hill City 41  
Tripp-Delmont-Armour 51, Scotland/Menno 45

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

### GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Brandon Valley 64, Douglas 24  
Harrisburg 43, Spearfish 33  
T F Riggs High School 48, Sioux Falls Lincoln 22

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

### Harper's 29 lead Oral Roberts past South Dakota 67-62

By The Associated Press undefined

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — Ty Harper scored 29 points as Oral Roberts beat South Dakota 67-62 on Saturday. Harper shot 8 for 22 (1 for 7 from 3-point range) and 12 of 12 from the free-throw line for the Golden Eagles (7-22, 2-12 Summit League). Ofri Naveh scored 13 points and added six rebounds. Connor Dow shot 3 for 6, including 1 for 4 from beyond the arc to finish with eight points.

Cameron Fens led the Coyotes (14-15, 6-8) with 25 points, 13 rebounds and two blocks. Uziah Buntyn added 14 points and two steals for South Dakota. Jordan Crawford also had nine points.

The Associated Press created this story using technology provided by Data Skrive and data from Sportradar.

## Sayler scores 23 as South Dakota State takes down North Dakota 91-83

By The Associated Press undefined  
BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Joe Sayler scored 23 points as South Dakota State beat North Dakota 91-83 on Saturday.

Sayler also added eight rebounds for the Jackrabbits (13-16, 6-8 Summit League). Matthew Mors added 18 points while going 7 of 10 (2 for 3 from 3-point range) while they also had seven rebounds. Damon Wilkinson finished with 15 points.

Greyson Uelmen led the Fightin' Hawks (16-15, 10-5) in scoring, finishing with 19 points. Garrett Anderson added 18 points and seven rebounds for North Dakota. Eli King finished with 14 points and two blocks.

The Associated Press created this story using technology provided by Data Skrive and data from Spor-tradar.

## New Mexico launches investigation of forced sterilization of Native American women

By SAVANNAH PETERS Associated Press

EDGEWOOD, N.M. (AP) — In the 1970s, the U.S. agency that provides health care to Native Americans sterilized thousands of women without their full and informed consent, depriving them of the opportunity to start or grow families.

Decades later, the state of New Mexico is set to investigate that troubling history and its lasting harm.

New Mexico legislators approved a measure this week to have the state Indian Affairs Department and the Commission on the Status of Women examine the history, scope and continuing impact of forced and coerced sterilizations of women of color by the Indian Health Service and other providers. The findings are expected to be reported to the governor by the end of 2027.

"It's important for New Mexico to understand the atrocities that took place within the borders of our state," said state Sen. Linda Lopez, one of the legislation's sponsors.

It's not the first state to confront its past. In 2023, Vermont launched a truth and reconciliation commission to study forced sterilization of marginalized groups including Native Americans. In 2024, California began paying reparations to people who had been sterilized without their consent in state-run prisons and hospitals.

The New Mexico Legislature also laid the groundwork to create a separate healing commission and for a formal acknowledgment of a little known piece of history that haunts Native families

Sarah Deer, a professor at the University of Kansas School of Law, said it's long overdue.

"The women in these communities carry these stories," she said.

Outside of a 1976 U.S. Government Accountability Office report, the federal government has never acknowledged what Deer calls a campaign of "systemic" sterilizations in Native American communities.

The Indian Health Service and its parent agency, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, did not respond to multiple emails requesting comment on New Mexico's investigation.

A troubling history

In 1972, Jean Whitehorse was admitted to an Indian Health Service hospital in Gallup, New Mexico, with a ruptured appendix. Just 22 and a new mother, Whitehorse said she remembers experiencing "extreme pain" as providers presented her with a flurry of consent forms before rushing her into emergency surgery.

"The nurse held the pen in my hand. I just signed on the line," said Whitehorse, a Navajo Nation citizen.

A few years later when she was struggling to conceive a second child, Whitehorse said she returned to the hospital and learned she had received a tubal ligation. The news devastated Whitehorse, contributed to the breakdown of her relationship and sent her spiraling into alcoholism, she said.

Advocates already were sounding the alarm about women like Whitehorse who were entering IHS clinics

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and hospitals to give birth or for other procedures and later finding themselves unable to conceive. The activist group Women of All Red Nations, or WARN — an offshoot of the American Indian Movement — was formed in part to expose the practice.

In 1974, Choctaw and Cherokee physician Connie Redbird Uri reviewed IHS records and alleged that the federal agency had sterilized as many as 25% of its female patients of childbearing age. Some of the women Uri interviewed were unaware they had been sterilized. Others said they were bullied into consenting or misled to believe the procedure was reversible.

Uri's allegations helped prompt the GAO audit, which found that the Indian Health Service sterilized 3,406 women in four of the agency's 12 service areas between 1973 and 1976, including in Albuquerque. The agency found that some patients were under the age of 21 and most had signed forms that didn't comply with federal regulations meant to ensure informed consent.

GAO researchers determined that interviewing women who had undergone sterilizations "would not be productive," citing a single study of cardiac surgical patients in New York who struggled to recall past conversations with doctors. Because of the lack of patient interviews and the narrow purview of the GAO's audit, advocates say the full scope and impact remains unaccounted for.

A venue to tell their stories

Whitehorse didn't share her experience for nearly 40 years, she said. First, she told her daughter. Then, other family.

"Each time I tell my story, it relieves the shame, the guilt," Whitehorse said. "Now I think, why should I be ashamed? It's the government that should be ashamed of what they did to us."

Whitehorse now advocates publicly for victims of forced sterilization. In 2025, she testified about the practice to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and called for the United States to formally apologize.

Whitehorse hopes New Mexico's investigation will offer more victims a venue to tell their stories. But advocates like Rachael Lorenzo, executive director of the Albuquerque-based sexual and reproductive health organization Indigenous Women Rising, say the commission must be careful to avoid re-traumatizing survivors across generations.

"It's such a taboo topic. There's a lot of support that needs to happen when we tell these traumatic stories," said Lorenzo.

In a New Mexico legislative hearing earlier this month, retired Indian Health Service physician Dr. Donald Clark testified that he has seen patients in their 20s and 30s "seeking contraception but not trusting that they will not be irreversibly sterilized" because of stories quietly passed down by their grandmothers, mothers and aunts.

"It's still an issue that is affecting women's choice of birth control today," Clark said.

A pattern of disenfranchisement

A 1927 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Buck v. Bell* upheld states' rights to sterilize people it considered "unfit" to reproduce, paving the way for the forced sterilization of immigrants, people of color, disabled people and other disenfranchised groups throughout the 20th century.

According to Lorenzo and Deer, the sterilization of Native American women fits into a pattern of federal policies meant to disrupt Native people's reproductive autonomy, from the systemic removal of Indigenous children into government boarding schools and non-Native foster homes to the 1976 Hyde Amendment, which prevents tribal clinics and hospitals that receive federal funding from performing abortions in almost all cases.

In Canada, doctors have been sanctioned as recently as 2023 for sterilizing Indigenous women without their consent.

Deer said New Mexico's investigation could pave the way for accountability. But without cooperation from the federal government, Deer said the commission's fact-finding abilities would be limited.

## Homeland Security suspends TSA PreCheck and Global Entry airport security programs

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is suspending the TSA PreCheck and Global Entry airport security programs as a partial government shutdown continues.

The programs are designed to help speed registered travelers through security lines. Suspending them could cause headaches for fliers.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said in a statement that “shutdowns have serious real world consequences.” She also said that “TSA and CBP are prioritizing the general traveling population at our airports and ports of entry and suspending courtesy and special privilege escorts.”

The partial government shutdown began Feb. 14 after Democrats and the White House were unable to reach a deal on legislation to fund the Department of Homeland Security. Democrats have been demanding changes to immigration operations that are core to President Donald Trump’s deportation campaign.

Democrats on the House Committee on Homeland Security criticized the decision about airport security.

They said on social media that the administration was “kneecapping the programs that make travel smoother and secure” and accused them of “ruining your travel on purpose.”

Airlines for America, a trade group representing major carriers, said “it’s past time for Congress to get to the table and get a deal done.”

The organization said it’s “deeply concerned” that “the traveling public will be, once again, used as a political football amid another government shutdown.” It also criticized the announcement on Saturday evening, saying it was “issued with extremely short notice to travelers, giving them little time to plan accordingly.”

## Russian missile and drone barrage hits Kyiv suburbs, killing 1

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia attacked Ukraine with a barrage of missiles and drones, killing one person in the Kyiv region, Ukraine’s Emergency Service said on Sunday.

Another eight people, including a child, were rescued from under the rubble of destroyed buildings, the service said.

The attack caused damage and fires to erupt in five districts in the suburbs of Kyiv. In the village of Putrivka in the Fastiv district, emergency first responders worked on saving people buried under debris.

Russia also struck energy infrastructure in Ukraine’s southern Odesa region, resulting in significant fires, which were later extinguished, the emergency service said.

During the four years since Russia launched an all-out war on its neighbor, and despite a new push over the past year in U.S.-led peace efforts, Ukrainian civilians have endured constant aerial attacks. Russia has also ramped up attacks targeting the country’s energy grid, leaving Ukrainian civilians without electricity and heating amid harsh winter conditions.

Ukraine’s Air Force said Sunday that Russia’s overnight barrage had included 297 drones and 50 missiles of various types, of which 274 drones and 33 missiles were shot down or neutralized. Of those remaining, 14 missiles and 23 drones struck 14 locations, it said. Three missiles were unaccounted for.

Separately, an explosion in Ukraine’s western city of Lviv killed one person and injured 25, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a Telegram post on Sunday. One person has been arrested over the incident, which is unrelated to Russia’s aerial attack on Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Russian air defenses destroyed 86 Ukrainian drones overnight, Russia’s Ministry of Defense said Sunday.

A security guard was injured and a fuel tank set alight when two Ukrainian drones hit an oil depot in the Russian-occupied Ukrainian city of Luhansk, Moscow-installed leader Leonid Pasechnik said.

## Crews recover bodies of 9 backcountry skiers days after California avalanche

By GODOFREDO VASQUEZ and SAFIYAH RIDDLE Associated Press

TRUCKEE, Calif. (AP) — Crews recovered the bodies of nine backcountry skiers who were killed by an avalanche in California's Sierra Nevada, authorities said Saturday, concluding a harrowing operation that was hindered by intense snowfall.

A search team reached the bodies of eight victims and found one other who had been missing and presumed dead since Tuesday's avalanche on Castle Peak near Lake Tahoe. The ninth person who was missing was found "relatively close" to the other victims, according to Nevada County Sheriff's Lt. Dennis Hack, but was impossible to see due to whiteout conditions at that time.

At a news conference, Sheriff Shannon Moon praised the collective efforts of the numerous agencies that helped recover the bodies — from the California Highway Patrol to the National Guard to the Pacific Gas & Electric utility company — and 42 volunteers who helped on the last day of the operation.

"We are fortunate in this mountain community that we are very tight-knit, and our community shows up in times of tragedy," Moon said.

### Victims named

The sheriff named for the first time the three guides from Blackbird Mountain Company who died: Andrew Alissandratos, 34, Nicole Choo, 42, and Michael Henry, 30.

According to biographies on the company's website, Alissandratos was originally from Tampa, Florida, and moved to Tahoe roughly a decade ago. He enjoyed a wide array of adventure activities, from backcountry exploration to rock climbing.

Henry moved to Colorado in 2016 and then to Truckee three years later. He was described as "laid back" and devoted to sharing his knowledge and love of the mountains with others.

There was no bio for Choo on the website.

"This was an enormous tragedy, and the saddest event our team has ever experienced," Blackbird Mountain founder Zeb Blais said Wednesday in a statement.

"We are doing what we can to support the families who lost so much," he said, "and the members of our team who lost treasured friends and colleagues."

The six other fatal victims were women who were part of a close-knit group of friends who were experienced backcountry skiers and knew how to navigate the Sierra Nevada wilderness, their families said this week.

They were identified as Carrie Atkin, Liz Clabaugh, Danielle Keatley, Kate Morse, Caroline Sekar and Kate Vitt, all in their 40s. They lived in the San Francisco Bay Area, Idaho and the Lake Tahoe area.

"We are devastated beyond words," the families said in a statement. "Our focus right now is supporting our children through this incredible tragedy and honoring the lives of these extraordinary women. They were all mothers, wives and friends, all of whom connected through the love of the outdoors."

The families asked for privacy while they grieve and added that they "have many unanswered questions."

Two of the friends got out alive and were rescued along with four others, including one guide, after Tuesday's avalanche. Their names have not been released.

### Stuck on the mountain for hours

The avalanche struck on the last day of the 15 skiers' three-day tour, when the group decided to end the trip early to avoid the impending snowstorm. Officials have said the path they took is a "normally traveled route" but declined to specify what that meant.

At around 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, the six survivors called for help, describing a sudden and terrifying slide that was approximately the length of a football field. In the aftermath they discovered the bodies of three fellow skiers, according to Hack.

Rescuers were not able to reach them until roughly six hours after the initial call for help, Hack said, and took two separate paths to arrive. They found five other bodies, leaving only one person unaccounted for.

But it was immediately clear to rescuers that it was too dangerous to extract the bodies at that time

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due to the heavy snowfall and threat of more avalanches. Those conditions persisted on Wednesday and Thursday.

A breakthrough on Friday

Authorities used two California Highway Patrol helicopters, with the help of Pacific Gas & Electric Company, to break up the snow and intentionally release unstable snowpack to reduce the avalanche risk.

Crews were then able to recover five victims that evening before it got too dark to access the last three.

Rescuers used helicopters and ropes to hoist the last four bodies from the mountain the following morning, fighting through severe winds that forced them to make multiple trips. The bodies were then taken to snowcats — trucks that are outfitted to drive on snow — for further transport.

"We cannot say enough how tremendously sorry we are for the families that have been affected by this avalanche," Moon said.

Initial reports indicated that at least two of the surviving skiers were not swept away by the avalanche, Hack said. The others were standing separately and relatively close together and were hit.

Hack declined to offer information about what might have set off the avalanche.

Authorities close the area

The terrain will be off-limits to visitors until mid-March, said Chris Feutrier, forest supervisor for the Tahoe National Forest. Officials intended to restore public access once the investigation is complete.

"This is the public's land, and they love to recreate on it," Feutrier said. "The Forest Service doesn't close public land for every hazard or every obstacle. We trust the American people to use their best judgment when recreating."

## JPMorgan concedes it closed Trump's accounts after Jan. 6 attack

By KEN SWEET AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — JPMorgan Chase acknowledged for the first time that it closed the bank accounts of President Donald Trump and several of his businesses in the political and legal aftermath of the Jan. 6, 2021 attacks on the U.S. Capitol, the latest development in a legal saga between the president and the nation's biggest bank over the issue known as "debanking."

The acknowledgment came in a court filing submitted this week in Trump's lawsuit against the bank and its leader, Jamie Dimon. The president sued for \$5 billion, alleging that his accounts were closed for political reasons, disrupting his business operations.

"In February 2021, JPMorgan informed Plaintiffs that certain accounts maintained with JPMorgan's CB and PB would be closed," JPMorgan's former chief administrative officer Dan Wilkening wrote in the court filing. The "PB" and "CB" stands for JPMorgan's private bank and commercial bank.

Until now, JPMorgan has never admitted it closed the president's accounts in writing after Jan. 6. The bank would only speak hypothetically about when the bank closes accounts and its reasons for closing accounts, citing bank privacy laws.

A spokeswoman for the bank declined to comment beyond what the bank said in its legal filings.

Trump originally sued JPMorgan in Florida state court, where Trump's primary residence is now located. The filings this week are part of an effort by JPMorgan Chase to have the case both moved from state to federal court and to have the jurisdiction of the case moved to New York, which is where the bank accounts were located and where Trump kept much of his business operations until recently.

Trump originally accused the bank of trade libel and violating state and federal unfair and deceptive trade practices.

In the original lawsuit, Trump said he tried to raise the issue personally with Dimon after the bank sent him notices that JPMorgan would close his accounts, and that Dimon assured Trump he would figure out what was happening. The lawsuit alleges Dimon failed to follow up with Trump.

Further, Trump's lawyers allege that JPMorgan placed the president and his companies on a reputational "blacklist" that both JPMorgan and other banks use to keep clients from opening accounts with them in the future. The blacklist has yet to be defined by the president's lawyers.

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"If and when Plaintiffs explain what they mean by this "blacklist," JPMorgan will respond accordingly," the bank's lawyers said in a filing.

JPMorgan has previously said that while it regrets that Trump felt the need to sue the bank, the lawsuit has no merit.

The issue of debanking is at the center of the case. Debanking occurs when a bank closes the accounts of a customer or refuses to do business with a customer in the form of loans or other services. Once a relatively obscure issue in finance, debanking has become a politically charged issue in recent years, with conservative politicians arguing that banks have discriminated against them and their affiliated interests.

"In a devastating concession that proves President Trump's entire claim, JPMorgan Chase admitted to unlawfully and intentionally de-banking President Trump, his family, and his businesses, causing overwhelming financial harm," the president's lawyers said in a statement. "President Trump is standing up for all those wrongly debanked by JPMorgan Chase and its cohorts, and will see this case to a just and proper conclusion."

Debanking first became a national issue when conservatives accused the Obama administration of pressuring banks to stop extending services to gun stores and payday lenders under "Operation Choke Point."

Trump and other conservative figures have alleged that banks cut them off from their accounts under the umbrella term of "reputational risk" after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. Since Trump came back into office, the president's banking regulators have moved to stop any banks from using "reputational risk" as a reason for denying service to customers.

This is not the first lawsuit Trump has filed against a big bank alleging that he was debanked. The Trump Organization sued credit card giant Capital One in March 2025 for similar reasons and allegations. The case is ongoing.

## Blizzard warnings issued from Delaware to Massachusetts as storm threatens East Coast

By ADAM GELLER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A rapidly intensifying storm triggered blizzard warnings Saturday for New York City, New Jersey and Boston as communities along the East Coast prepared for the Sunday arrival of heavy snow and damaging winds.

The National Weather Service increased its assessment of the potential severity of a storm that was projected to be much milder only days earlier.

The weather service said 1 to 2 feet (about 30 to 61 centimeters) of snow was possible in many areas as it issued blizzard warnings for New York City and Long Island, Boston and coastal communities in New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Flooding was also possible in parts of New York and New Jersey, it said.

"While we do get plenty of these nor'easters that produce heavy snow and strong impacts, it's been several years since we saw one of this magnitude across this large of a region in this very populated part of the country," said Cody Snell, a meteorologist at the service's Weather Prediction Center.

Snell said the storm would arrive Sunday morning in areas around Washington before stretching toward Philadelphia and New York City and reaching Boston in the evening.

The weather service said the storm could begin as rainfall in some places before worsening, with the heaviest snowfall expected at night and as much as 2 inches (5 centimeters) of snow per hour at times in some areas, before tapering off by Monday afternoon.

The weather service warned that the storm, with steady winds of 25 to 35 mph (40 to 56 kph) would "make travel dangerous, if not impossible. Scattered downed tree limbs and power outages possible due to snow load and strong winds."

Officials scrambled to prepare for a storm that forecasters days ago believed would have a much more limited impact.

New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani said the city would expand on efforts it used to deal with a major

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snowfall weeks ago. But officials held off on deciding whether to open schools Monday for the time being. "We saw on Friday there was expectation that the likelihood was that we were going to face maybe 3 to 4 inches of snow. Quickly that then changed," Mamdani said. "So we want to make sure that we make a decision based on up-to-date and accurate information."

New York brought in additional snow clearing equipment from outside the city and planned to increase use of geocoding to keep track of bus stops and crosswalks that need clearing, he said.

With the storm zeroing in, John Berlingieri scrapped plans for a family trip to Puerto Rico to prepare his company, Berrington Snow Management, for what could well be a mammoth task: Clearing snow from millions of square feet of asphalt surrounding shopping malls and industrial parks across Long Island.

Employees spent the last few days recharging batteries on the company's 40 front-end loaders and replacing windshield wipers on snow removal vehicles, before resting up Saturday.

"I'm anticipating at least one week of work around the clock," Berlingieri said. "We're going to work 24 to 36 hours straight, sleep for a few hours and then go back."

The storm approached just as the icy remains of a snowstorm that struck the region weeks earlier were finally melting away.

Officials in Atlantic City, New Jersey, urged residents and casino visitors to stay off the streets, especially in low-lying neighborhoods prone to flooding.

"I could go on and on probably with a good two dozen streets where we know we will get water and there will be snow on top of that," said Scott Evans, the city's fire chief and emergency management coordinator. "So you won't be able to see it until it's too late, so therefore please stay at home."

Many churches canceled Sunday services and other activities. To compensate, St. Veronica Parish in Howell, New Jersey, added an extra Mass on Saturday evening.

"Please stay safe, avoid unnecessary travel, and keep one another in prayer during the storm," the Rev. Peter James Alindogan posted online.

## White House dinner closes a turbulent week for governors in Washington

By STEVEN SLOAN, JOEY CAPPELLETTI and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The annual dinner with governors at the White House is typically a chance for leaders from both parties to come together, socialize and spend a low-key evening with the president. But like many traditions during President Donald Trump's second term, Saturday's dinner has proven unusually controversial.

Ahead of this week's gathering of the National Governors Association, Trump ridiculed the bipartisan group's leadership, Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt of Oklahoma and Democratic Gov. Wes Moore of Maryland. He refused to invite Moore, along with Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, to a working event at the White House on Friday — only to relent at the last minute.

Then the event ended shortly after Trump learned of the Supreme Court's decision to strike down his sweeping tariff policy.

Dozens of Democrats had threatened to boycott Saturday's dinner if members of their party were blocked from Friday's meeting. But even after Moore's attendance, some said they still wouldn't show up.

"President Trump has made this whole thing a farce," Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey said in a statement.

When the dinner finally rolled around, no Democrats were spotted in the room. Enjoying the black-tie affair, with tall candles arranged on tables, were just top administration officials and Republican governors.

In brief remarks, Trump joked that state leaders "look in that mirror and say, I should be president, not him."

The president didn't criticize any Democrats by name, but he blamed two states led by Democratic governors when he mentioned a sewage spill in the Potomac River near Washington.

"We have to clean up some mess that Maryland and Virginia have left us," Trump said, adding that "it's

unbelievable what they can do with incompetence.”

The ruptured pipe is part of a Washington-based utility that’s federally regulated and under the oversight of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Vice President JD Vance praised the governors for having to make tough decisions. When you’re in his position, Vance said, “nobody blames you when anything goes wrong.”

Those who have attended previous dinners said they offered a rare and helpful opportunity for governors to connect with the president and members of his Cabinet away from the pressure of daily governing. Some also said the dinner was a chance to connect with fellow governors from other parties whom they might not see very often.

Asa Hutchinson, the former Republican governor of Arkansas who briefly challenged Trump for the 2024 GOP presidential nomination, recalled being assigned to a table one year with then-Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo and getting to know her family.

“It’s a glowing evening in the White House,” Hutchinson, who once chaired the NGA, said in an interview.

The final day of the conference on Saturday focused on issues including affordability and political civility. During a conversation about immigration, Moore and Stitt said that both parties have failed over decades to address the issue.

Stitt said that states should be empowered to issue workforce permits and warned that both parties are making false political assumptions.

“People think ‘OK, all the Democrats want open borders,’” he said, “and ‘all Republicans hate immigrants.’”

But Stitt noted that “rural Oklahoma Trump voters” have privately approached him, saying they couldn’t operate their businesses without people who were trying to obtain work authorization.

For all the turmoil surrounding this week’s meeting, Moore said the conference was a success.

“There were a lot of things that were put in our way to try to distract us from our mission, to try to divide us as individual governors, to try to make the mission of this organization where a bipartisan group of governors can come together and solve problems on behalf of our people, to try to make our work irrelevant,” he said. “To all the people who tried to make that happen, you failed.”

## **Ski guides in spotlight as investigators probe deadly California avalanche**

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

An investigation to determine if backcountry guides were criminally negligent during a California ski trip that ended with eight people killed in an avalanche and another presumed dead has surprised legal experts, who said the probe has scant precedent.

Backcountry tour clients typically sign waivers of liability that shield guides and their companies from potential lawsuits. And skiing is recognized by courts in California as involving certain dangers, attorney Andrew McDevitt said.

That means recreational skiers assume certain risks, such as potential collisions with rocks or trees and changing snow conditions.

McDevitt and other attorneys in California, Colorado and Utah who handle civil cases resulting from skiing accidents said they had not previously heard of a fatal avalanche during a guided trip that sparked a criminal investigation.

But this week’s avalanche is drawing a closer look likely because of its scale and the decision to proceed despite forecasts indicating potential avalanches, McDevitt said. The slide was the deadliest in the U.S. since 1981, when 11 climbers were killed on Mount Rainier in Washington state.

Utah ski injury attorney Rob Miner points out that the waivers signed by backcountry tour clients don’t absolve the guide companies of responsibility if they don’t follow appropriate safety protocols or fail to fully inform their clients of the risks they face.

“They’re guides. It is presumed they will not guide you into an experience that may kill you, or that cre-

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ates an unreasonable risk of death," Miner said.

The large avalanche hit the group as they skied out of the remote Sierra Nevada wilderness on Tuesday. The victims included three of the four guides from Blackbird Mountain Guides leading the trip. Six people survived.

Pivotal moments for investigators may include the guides' choice to embark on the three-day backcountry trip with 11 clients at a time of heightened avalanche risk, followed by the decision to ski out Tuesday after avalanche conditions had worsened because of a severe storm.

The Nevada County Sheriff's Office declined to share more information when it announced the investigation Friday. A state agency that regulates workplace safety also said it opened an investigation into the tragedy.

The guides' decisions — and how they were communicated with their clients — also could shape the outcome of any lawsuits filed over the deaths, attorneys said. It's not yet known what access the guides had to the latest weather reports when the group started to ski out.

"There's a lot of speculation," said attorney Ravn Whittington, who specializes in ski injury and wrongful death cases in Truckee, California, near where the avalanche happened. "What investigators know at Nevada County Search and Rescue, the Nevada County Sheriff's Office and the Nevada County District Attorney's Office are just not known to the public."

Blackbird Mountain Guides said in a statement that the four guides were certified in backcountry skiing and were avalanche education instructors. The company said its guides stay in touch with senior employees at Blackbird's base during trips to go over conditions and potential routes.

"There is still a lot that we're learning about what happened. It's too soon to draw conclusions, but investigations are underway," the company said.

The 15 skiers began their trip Sunday, just as warnings about the storm were intensifying. By early Tuesday, officials cautioned that avalanches were expected. Safety experts say it is not uncommon for backcountry skiers to go out when there is an avalanche watch or even a more serious avalanche warning.

The families of the six Blackbird clients who were killed said that the trip was well organized in advance and the victims were equipped with avalanche safety equipment. "They were trained and prepared for backcountry travel and trusted their professional guides on this trip," the families said in a Thursday statement.

## Willie Colón, architect of urban salsa music, dies at 75

By The Associated Press undefined

Willie Colón, the Grammy-nominated architect of urban salsa music and social activist, died Saturday. He was 75.

Over his decades-long career, the trombonist, composer, arranger and singer produced more than 40 albums that sold more than 30 million copies worldwide. He collaborated with a wide range of artists, including the Fania All Stars, David Byrne and Celia Cruz.

His celebrated collaboration with Rubén Blades, "Siembra," became one of the bestselling salsa albums of all time, and the pair were known for addressing social issues through the genre.

Colón's family and manager confirmed his death through social media posts.

"Willie didn't just change salsa; he expanded it, politicized it, clothed it in urban chronicles, and took it to stages where it hadn't been heard before," manager Pietro Carlos wrote. "His trombone was the voice of the people, an echo of the Caribbean in New York, a bridge between two cultures."

Colón, who was nominated for 10 Grammys and one Latin Grammy, made famous songs such as "El gran varón," "Sin poderte hablar," "Casanova," "Amor verdad" and "Oh, qué será."

Blades said on the social platform X that he confirmed "what I was reluctant to believe" and offered his condolences to Colón's family.

The path to the trombone — and fame

Born in New York's Bronx borough, Colón was raised by his grandmother and aunt, who from a young age nurtured him with traditional Puerto Rican music and the typical rhythms of the Latin American rep-

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ertoire, including Cuban son and tango.

At age 11 he ventured into the world of music, first with flute, then bugle, trumpet and finally trombone, with which he stood out in the then-nascent genre of salsa.

His interest in trombone arose after hearing Barry Rogers playing it on "Dolores," Mon Rivera's song with Joe Cotto.

"It sounded like an elephant, a lion ... an animal. Something so different that, as soon as I heard it, I said to myself: 'I want to play that instrument,'" he recalled in an interview published in the Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo* in 2011.

At 17 he joined the group of artists that formed the famous record label Fania Records, led and created by Jerry Masucci and Johnny Pacheco. Fania was largely responsible for the new sound that was produced in the Latin world of New York and would later be called "salsa."

Colón's main characteristic as a musician was the fusion of rhythms, as he harmonized jazz, rock, funk, soul and R&B with the old Latin school of Cuban son, cha-cha-cha, mambo and guaracha, adding the nostalgia of the traditional Puerto Rican sound that encompasses jíbara, bomba and plena music.

In 2004 the Latin Recording Academy awarded Colón a special Grammy for his career and contributions to music.

Community leader and activist

As a community leader, Colón fought for civil rights, mostly in the United States. He was part of the Hispanic Arts Association, the Latino Commission on AIDS, the Arthur Schomburg Coalition for a Better New York and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, among others.

In 1991 he was honored with the Chubb fellowship from Yale University, a public service recognition also awarded to the likes of John F. Kennedy, Moshe Dayan, the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Ronald Reagan, among others.

In the political arena, he served as special assistant to David Dinkins, New York's first Black mayor, and was later appointed special assistant and adviser to Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Colón had little luck running for public office himself, however. He failed in a challenge to then-U.S. Rep. Eliot Engel in the 1994 Democratic primary, and in 2001 came in third in the Democratic primary for New York's public advocate.

He backed Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign in 2008, but he told the *Observer* that he voted for Donald Trump in 2016.

Colón had public clashes with artists and politicians. His friendship with Blades ruptured after Colón sued for breach of contract over the 2003 concert "Siembra ... 25 years later," held in Puerto Rico. He also sparked a controversy when he called the then-president of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, "rotten" on a social network.

Colón acted in films such as "Vigilante," "The Last Fight" and "It Could Happen to You," and on TV in "Miami Vice" and "Demasiado Corazón." More recently he appeared in Bad Bunny's music video for "NuevaYol." He is survived by his wife and four sons.

## What to watch on final day of Milan Cortina Games: US-Canada hockey final, Gu chases 1st gold

MILAN (AP) — The final day of the Milan Cortina Olympics ends with one of its most anticipated events, when the United States and Canada face off for the gold medal in men's hockey.

Freestyle Eileen Gu is chasing her first gold of the 2026 Games, while there are also medals to be awarded in cross-country skiing, curling and bobsled before the closing ceremony Sunday night. That starts at 8:30 p.m. local time (1930 GMT, 2:30 p.m. ET).

Here is a guide of what to look out for Sunday:

How to watch the Milan Cortina Olympics

Viewers around the world can watch on official broadcasters, including NBC and streaming on Peacock

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and NBC Olympics platforms.

US, Canada meet for men's hockey gold

It's the final everyone expected.

The matchup of two powerful rivals caps the NHL's return to the Games following a 12-year absence. The Americans and Canadians are undefeated and both teams are stacked with some of the best players in the world.

Canada will have a slight edge when the puck drops at 2:10 p.m. in Milan, 8:10 a.m. Eastern Time and 5:10 a.m. Pacific.

The last U.S. men's squad to win it all at the Olympics was the "Miracle on Ice" team in Lake Placid, New York, in 1980. The only other gold was 1960.

The U.S. last reached the final in 2010 in Vancouver, losing to Canada on Crosby's golden goal in overtime. Canada has won Olympic gold a record nine times, including three in the first five Games with NHL players.

The final is a repeat of the women's gold medal match, during which the U.S. beat Canada in a thrilling overtime encounter Thursday.

Eileen Gu tries to defend her Olympic halfpipe title

Eileen Gu of China shook off a fall to advance to the final in freeski halfpipe. She won gold in the discipline four years ago in Beijing.

The 22-year-old Gu, who was born in the United States, took silver in slopestyle and big air earlier at the Milan Cortina Games.

The final had to be postponed a day because of heavy snow in the Italian Alps. It is now scheduled to begin at 10:40 a.m. local time (0940 GMT, 4:40 a.m. ET).

Diggins' last Olympics race

American cross-country skiing star Jessie Diggins will be hoping for a medal in what will be her last race in the Olympics. But she will have a tough battle against a stellar Swedish team.

The first ever women's 50-kilometer mass start classic is at 10 a.m. local time (0900 GMT, 4 a.m. ET).

Diggins, who's racing in her final season, battled through injury to claim bronze Thursday in the women's 10-kilometer interval start.

The 34-year-old was behind a Swedish one-two, with Frida Karlsson, who picked up her second gold medal of the Games.

Sweden has claimed nine of the 15 medals awarded so far in women's cross-country.

Diggins has had a disappointing Olympics experience. She came into the Games as the leader in the World Cup standings, but an early fall in a race set her back.

This will be the first time a women's 50 kilometer, of any style, is contested at the Olympics. The distance replaces the women's 30 kilometer, contested previously.

Sweden goes for curling gold

After beating top-ranked Canada in the semifinals, Sweden will face Switzerland in the final of the women's curling.

Sweden has won the women's competition three times since curling returned to the Olympic program in 1998 and claimed bronze in Beijing four years ago.

Switzerland will be aiming for its first women's curling gold at the Olympics but took silver behind Canada at the last two world championships after four straight golds in the biggest curling competition outside of the Games.

Germany's big advantage

Germany's Johannes Lochner is the leader midway through the four-man bobsled race and he's well on his way to ending his career with double Olympic gold.

After Saturday's two runs, Lochner and his team were 0.43 seconds faster than the time posted by four-time Olympic champion and fellow German Francesco Friedrich.

Germany, which also swept the medals in two-man, holds all three medal spots at the midpoint.

## **NASA delays astronaut moon mission again after new rocket problem**

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — In the latest setback to return astronauts to the moon, NASA delayed the highly anticipated flight yet again after a new problem cropped up with the rocket Saturday.

April is now the earliest that the four Artemis II astronauts could fly to the moon.

NASA revealed the latest problem just one day after targeting March 6 for Artemis II, humanity's first flight to the moon in more than half a century. Overnight, the flow of helium to the rocket's upper stage was interrupted, officials said. Solid helium flow is essential for purging the engines and pressurizing the fuel tanks.

This helium issue has nothing to do with the hydrogen fuel leaks that marred a countdown dress rehearsal of the Space Launch System rocket earlier this month and forced a repeat test.

NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman said a bad filter, valve or connection plate could be to blame for the stalled helium flow. Regardless of the cause, he said, the only way to access the area and fix the problem is to return the 322-foot (98-meter) rocket to its hangar for repairs.

"We will begin preparations for rollback, and this will take the March launch window out of consideration," Isaacman said via X. NASA's next opportunities would be at the beginning or end of April.

"I understand people are disappointed by this development," he added. "That disappointment is felt most by the team at NASA, who have been working tirelessly to prepare for this great endeavor."

Earlier in the day, NASA said it was preparing to move the rocket back to the Vehicle Assembly Building at Kennedy Space Center while raising the possibility of the work being done at the pad.

The situation is dynamic, said spokeswoman Cheryl Warner. Whether the fixes are at the pad or in the hangar, the rollback preparations alone rule out any chance of making a March launch, she said.

Hydrogen fuel leaks had already delayed the Artemis II lunar fly-around by a month. A second fueling test on Thursday revealed hardly any leaks, giving managers the confidence to aim for a March liftoff. The four astronauts went into their two-week quarantine Friday evening, mandatory for avoiding germs.

Everything worked fine with the rocket's helium system during both dress rehearsals, Isaacman said. The "unexpected development" cropped up later in routine testing that kept engineers up all night assessing the situation.

The interrupted helium flow is confined to the SLS rocket's interim cryogenic propulsion stage. This upper stage is essential for placing the Orion crew capsule into the proper high-altitude orbit around Earth for checkout, following liftoff. After that, it's supposed to separate from Orion and serve as a target for the astronauts inside the capsule, allowing them to practice docking techniques for future moon missions.

During NASA's Apollo program, 24 astronauts flew to the moon from 1968 through 1972. The new Artemis program has completed only one flight so far, a lunar-orbiting mission without a crew in 2022. That first test flight was also plagued by hydrogen fuel leaks before blasting off, as well as a helium issue similar to the one that arose Saturday. The first moon landing with a crew under Artemis is still at least a few years away.

## **Hundreds march in Lyon to protest far-right activist's killing as Macron urges calm**

By NICOLAS VAUX-MONTAGNY Associated Press

LYON, France (AP) — About 3,000 people joined a march organized by far-right groups on Saturday after a nationalist activist died from a beating in the French city of Lyon, in an incident that highlighted a climate of deep political tensions ahead of next year's presidential vote.

French President Emmanuel Macron called for calm ahead of the tribute to Quentin Deranque, 23, who died of brain injuries in a hospital last week. The demonstrations took place under heavy police scrutiny, with no major incidents reported.

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"This is a moment of remembrance and respect for this young compatriot who was killed, for his family and loved ones. That must come first. And then it is a moment of firmness and responsibility," Macron said.

Seven people have been handed preliminary charges. The Lyon public prosecutor's office requested that each of them be charged with intentional homicide, aggravated violence and criminal conspiracy. Six of the accused were charged on all three counts. The seventh was charged with complicity in intentional homicide, aggravated violence and criminal conspiracy.

Deranque was attacked during a fight that erupted between far-left and far-right supporters on the margins of a student meeting where a far-left lawmaker, Rima Hassan, was a keynote speaker.

Macron said he will hold a meeting with ministers next week to carry out a comprehensive review of all violent activist groups that have links to political parties. He hinted that some groups could be dismantled.

"In the republic, no violence is legitimate," he said. "There is no place for militias, wherever they come from. We must be absolutely uncompromising."

### Lyon emerges as a battleground

The main tribute to Deranque took place in Lyon, where clashes between far-right activists and far-left groups have become frequent. Their fighting often takes the form of organized street battles in the city, sometimes involving groups of several dozen people.

Lyon's far-left-leaning militant groups are more recent and were created in reaction to the many far-right groups that have been present for several decades. The city is seen by intelligence services as the cradle of far-right activism in France.

Deranque's parents also called for calm and did not take part in the tribute, which was not banned by French authorities.

Deranque's death triggered a storm of recriminations, mostly blaming the far-left France Unbowed party and its leader, Jean-Luc Mélenchon. Among the suspects is the parliamentary aide of a France Unbowed lawmaker who set up the anti-fascist group The Young Guard.

There was a minute's silence before the start of the march. Some demonstrators held white tulips and displayed stickers bearing the slogan: "Quentin, killed by Mélenchon's militia."

Many men dressed in black, some with their faces partially covered, joined the march. Christian Petiteau, 70, who traveled from the neighboring Isère region, said Deranque was "cowardly murdered" and that he came to honor his memory.

### Far-left in focus

France Unbowed's opponents accuse it of fomenting violence and tensions with its combative far-left politics. Mélenchon has condemned the violence and insisted that his party bore no blame for the tragedy.

Mélenchon stood for the presidency in 2012, 2017 and 2022, but failed to advance to the decisive runoff round. He is preparing for another expected run next year, when Macron's second and last term ends.

France is holding municipal elections next month and right-wing political forces have been using the incident to demonize France Unbowed. Far-right National Rally leader Jordan Bardella has called for a common front against Mélenchon's party.

Criticism also came from prominent figures on the left, including former French President François Hollande. He said the mainstream left, including his Socialist Party, must not team up again with Mélenchon's party for the upcoming elections, as they did in the past.

## **Ghislaine Maxwell fights release of more Epstein documents, calling disclosure law unconstitutional**

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Lawyers for imprisoned British socialite Ghislaine Maxwell are fighting the requested release of 90,000 pages related to disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein and Maxwell, saying a law used to force the public release of millions of documents is unconstitutional.

The lawyers filed papers late Friday in Manhattan federal court to try to block the release of documents

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from a since-settled civil defamation lawsuit brought a decade ago by the late Epstein victim Virginia Giuffre against Maxwell. The Justice Department recently asked a judge to lift secrecy requirements on the files.

Maxwell's attorneys said the Justice Department obtained the documents — otherwise subject to secrecy orders — improperly during its criminal probe of Maxwell. They said the documents include transcripts of over 30 depositions and private information regarding financial and sexual matters related to Maxwell and others.

Some records from the year-long exchange of evidence in the lawsuit battle were already released publicly in response to a federal appeals court order.

Maxwell's lawyers say a law Congress passed in December to force the release of millions of Epstein-related documents violates the Constitution's separation of powers doctrine.

"Congress cannot, by statute, strip this Court of the power or relieve it of the responsibility to protect its files from misuse. To do so violates the separation of powers," wrote the lawyers, Laura Menninger and Jeffrey Pagliuca about the Epstein Files Transparency Act.

"Under the Constitution's separation of powers, neither Congress nor the Executive Branch may intrude on the judicial power. That power includes the power to definitively and finally resolve cases and disputes," the lawyers added.

The release of Epstein-related documents from criminal probes that began weeks ago has resulted in new revelations about Epstein's decades-long sexual abuse of women and teenage girls. Some victims have complained that their names and personal information were revealed in documents while the names of their abusers were blacked out.

Members of Congress have complained that only about half of existing documents, many with redactions, have been made public even as Justice Department officials have said everything has been released, except for some files that can't be made public until a judge gives the go-ahead.

Giuffre said Epstein had trafficked her to other men, including the former Prince Andrew, now known as Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor. She sued Mountbatten-Windsor in 2021, claiming that they had sex when she was 17.

He denied her claims and the two settled the lawsuit in 2022. Days ago, he was arrested and held in custody for nearly 11 hours on suspicion of misconduct in having shared confidential trade information with Epstein.

In a memoir published after she killed herself last year, Giuffre wrote that prosecutors told her they didn't include her in the sex trafficking prosecution of Maxwell because they didn't want her allegations to distract the jury.

Maxwell, 64, was convicted in December 2021 and sentenced to 20 years in prison. Epstein took his own life in a federal lockup in August 2019 as he awaited trial on sex trafficking charges. Maxwell was moved from a federal prison in Florida to a low-security prison camp in Texas last summer after she participated in two days of interviews with Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche.

Two weeks ago, she declined to answer questions from House Oversight Committee lawmakers in a deposition conducted in a video call to her federal prison camp, though she indicated through a statement from her lawyer that she was "prepared to speak fully and honestly" if granted clemency.

The Justice Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Saturday.

## Trump says he'll raise tariffs to 15 percent after Supreme Court ruling

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Saturday that he wants a global tariff of 15%, up from 10% he had announced a day earlier after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down many of the far-reaching taxes on imports that he had imposed over the last year.

Trump's announcement on social media was the latest sign that despite the court's check on his powers, the Republican president still intends to ratchet up tariffs in an unpredictable way. Tariffs have been his

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favorite tool for rewriting the rules of global commerce and applying international pressure.

The court's decision on Friday struck down tariffs that Trump had imposed on nearly every country using an emergency powers law. Trump now said he will use a different, albeit more limited, legal authority.

He's already signed an executive order enabling him to bypass Congress and impose a 10% tax on imports from around the world, starting on Tuesday, the same day as his State of the Union speech. However, those tariffs are limited to 150 days unless they are extended legislatively.

The White House did not immediately respond to a message inquiring when the president would sign an updated order to peg the tariffs at 15%.

He wrote on social media that he was making the announcement "based on a thorough, detailed, and complete review of the ridiculous, poorly written, and extraordinarily anti-American decision on Tariffs issued yesterday."

By a 6-3 vote, the justices ruled that it was unconstitutional for Trump to unilaterally set and change tariffs because the power to tax lies with Congress.

In addition to the temporary tariffs that Trump wants to set at 15%, the president said Friday that he was also pursuing tariffs through other sections of federal law which require an investigation by the Commerce Department.

He wrote on Saturday that "during the next short number of months, the Trump Administration will determine and issue the new and legally permissible Tariffs, which will continue our extraordinarily successful process of Making America Great Again."

After the Supreme Court decision, Trump made an unusually personal attack on the justices who ruled against him in a 6-3 vote, including two of those he appointed during his first term, Justices Neil Gorsuch and Amy Coney Barrett. Trump, at a news conference on Friday, said that the situation is "an embarrassment to their families."

He was still seething Friday night, posting on social media complaining about Gorsuch, Coney Barrett and Chief Justice John Roberts, who ruled with the majority and wrote the majority opinion. On Saturday morning, Trump issued another post declaring that his "new hero" was Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who wrote a 63-page dissent. He also praised Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito, who were in the minority, and said of the three dissenting justices: "There is no doubt in anyone's mind that they want to, MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

Tariffs have been central to Trump's economic policies, which he has said address a host of ills, from reviving trade imbalances and reviving U.S. manufacturing to forcing other nations to action, whether it be stepping up efforts to combat drug trafficking or ceasing hostilities with each other.

He also regularly claimed despite evidence to the contrary that foreign governments would pay the tariffs—not American consumers and businesses.

Federal data shows the Treasury had collected more than \$133 billion from the import taxes the president has imposed under the emergency powers law as of December, and Trump has made many promises about what that money might go toward, such as paying down the national debt and sending dividend checks to taxpayers. The Supreme Court decision did not address what happens to the funds that have already been collected from tariffs.

Democrats spoke out quickly on Trump's new tariff threat. Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee accused Trump of "pickpocketing the American people" with his newly announced higher tariff.

"A little over 24 hours after his tariffs were ruled illegal, he's doing anything he can to make sure he can still jack up your costs," they wrote on social media.

California Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Trump nemesis, added that "he does not care about you."

## Baseball Hall of Famer Bill Mazeroski, known for walk-off home run in 1960 World Series, dies at 89

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

Bill Mazeroski, the Hall of Fame second baseman who won eight Gold Glove awards for his steady work in the field and the hearts of countless Pittsburgh Pirates fans for his historic walk-off home run in Game 7 of the 1960 World Series, has died at the age of 89.

Pirates owner Bob Nutting said "Maz was one of a kind, a true Pirates legend. ... His name will always be tied to the biggest home run in baseball history and the 1960 World Series championship, but I will remember him most for the person he was: humble, gracious and proud to be a Pirate."

Mazeroski died Friday in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, the Pirates said. No cause of death was given.

'Defensive wizard'

Elected to the Hall by the Veterans Committee in 2001, he was, by some measures, no superstar. Mazeroski had the lowest batting average, on-base percentage and stolen base total of any second baseman in Cooperstown. He hit just .260 lifetime, with 138 homers and 27 stolen bases in 17 years, and had an on-base percentage of .299. He never batted .300, never approached 100 runs batted or 100 runs scored and only once finished in the top 10 for Most Valuable Player.

His best qualities were both tangible and beyond the box score. His Hall of Fame plaque praises him as a "defensive wizard" with "hard-nosed hustle" and a "quiet work ethic." A 10-time All-Star, he turned a major league record 1,706 double plays, earning the nickname "No Hands" for how quickly he fielded grounders and relayed them. He led the National League nine times in assists for second basemen and has been cited by statistician Bill James as the game's greatest defensive player at his position — by far.

"I think defense belongs in the Hall of Fame," Mazeroski said, defensively, during his Hall of Fame induction speech. "Defense deserves as much credit as pitching and I'm proud to be going in as a defensive player."

A home run for the ages

But Mazeroski's signature moment took place in the batter's box, as the square-jawed, tobacco-chewing second baseman, a coal miner's son from West Virginia, lived out the dream of so many kids who thought of playing professional ball.

The Pirates had not reached the World Series since 1927, when they were swept by the New York Yankees, and again faced the Yankees in 1960. While New York was led by Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris, Pittsburgh had few prominent names beyond a young Roberto Clemente. They relied on hitters ranging from shortstop Dick Groat to outfielder Bob Skinner, and the starting pitchers Vernon Law and Bob Friend. Mazeroski, who turned 24 that September, finished the season with a .273 average and usually batted eighth.

The series told one story in the runs column and another in wins and losses. The Yankees outscored the Pirates 55-27, and 38-3 in the three games they won. Mazeroski's counterpart on New York, Bobby Richardson, drove in a record 12 runs and was named the series' MVP — even though he was on the losing team. Whitey Ford shut out the Pirates twice, on his way to a then-record 33 2/3 straight scoreless World Series innings for the Yankees ace.

The Pirates' first three wins weren't nearly so spectacular, but they were wins — and Mazeroski helped. He hit a 2-run homer in the fourth inning off the Yankees' Jim Coates in Game 1, a 6-4 Pirate victory, and a 2-run double in the second inning off Art Ditmar in Game 5, a 5-2 Pittsburgh win. In Game 7, he saved his big hit for the end.

Some 36,000 fans at Pittsburgh's Forbes Field, and many more tuning in on radio and television, agonized through one of the Fall Classic's wildest and most emotional conclusions. The lead changed back and forth as Pittsburgh scored the game's first four runs, only to fall behind as the Yankees rallied in the middle innings and went ahead 7-4 in the top of the eighth. Pittsburgh retook the lead with five runs in the bottom of the eighth, helped in part by a seeming double-play grounder that took a bad hop and struck Yankees shortstop Tony Kubek in the throat. But the Yankees came right back and tied the score at 9 in the top of the ninth.

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The bottom of the ninth has been relived, not always by choice, by the two teams and by generations of fans. The New York pitcher was Ralph Terry, a right hander whom manager Casey Stengel had brought in during the previous inning and would later acknowledge that he had a tired arm. The right-handed hitting Mazeroski, who had grounded into a double play in his previous appearance, was up first.

Terry started with a fastball, called high for a ball. After conferring briefly with catcher Johnny Blanchard, who reminded him to keep his pitches down, he threw what Mazeroski would call a slider that didn't slide. Mazeroski got under it and belted it to left, the ball rising and rising as it cleared the high, ivy-covered brick wall, with Yankees left fielder Yogi Berra circling under it, then turning away in defeat. The whole city seemed to erupt, as if all had swung the bat with him, as if he were every underdog who longed to beat the hated Yankees. Mazeroski dashed around the bases, grinning and waving his cap, joined by celebrants from the stands who had rushed onto the field and followed him to home plate, where his teammates embraced him.

"I was just looking to get on base," he told The New York Times in 1985. "Nothing fancy, just looking for a fastball until he got a strike on me. I thought it would be off the wall, and I wanted to make third if the ball ricocheted away from Berra. But when I got around first and was digging for second, I saw the umpire waving circles above his head and I knew it was over."

It was the first time a World Series had ended on a homer, leading to enduring waves of celebration and despair. Pirates followers memorized the date, Thursday, Oct. 13, 1960, and the local time of Mazeroski's hit, 3:36 p.m. Forbes Field was torn down in the 1970s, but a decade later fans began gathering every Oct. 13 at the park's lone remnant, the center field wall, and listened to the original broadcast.

Meanwhile, Mantle would sob on the plane ride home in 1960, insisting the better team had lost. Ford would for years remain angry at Stengel — fired five days after the Series — for using him in Games 3 and 6 and making him unavailable to start a third time. The late singer Bing Crosby, a former co-owner of the Pirates, was so afraid he'd jinx his team that he listened to the game with friends across the Atlantic Ocean, in Paris.

"We were in this beautiful apartment, listening on shortwave, and when it got close Bing opened a bottle of Scotch and was tapping it against the mantel," his widow, Kathryn Crosby, told the Times in 2010. "When Mazeroski hit the home run, he tapped it hard; the Scotch flew into the fireplace and started a conflagration."

A team player

Mazeroski was a Pirate for his entire time in the majors and was a team man off the field. His wife, Milene Nicholson, was a front office employee whom he met through Pittsburgh manager Danny Murtaugh. They were married in 1958, had two sons and remained together until her death in 2024.

William Stanley Mazeroski was born in Wheeling, West Virginia, during the Great Depression, grew up in eastern Ohio, and lived for a time in a one-room house without electricity or indoor plumbing. His father, Louis Mazeroski, had hoped himself to be a ballplayer and encouraged his son's love for sports, even practicing with him by having his son field tennis balls thrown against a brick wall.

Although a star in basketball and football, he favored baseball and was good enough to be drafted by the Pirates at age 17 in 1954. Mazeroski was a shortstop for a team with numerous prospects at that position, and had switched to second by his rookie year, 1956. Even as a part-time player at the end of his career, he was a leader and steady presence on the 1971 team that featured Clemente and Willie Stargell and defeated the Baltimore Orioles in the World Series.

After his final season, 1972, Mazeroski coached briefly for the Pirates and the Seattle Mariners and was an infield instructor for Pittsburgh during spring training. In 1987, the Pirates retired his uniform, No. 9. The 50th anniversary of his Game 7 heroics was marked in 2010 by the unveiling — on Bill Mazeroski Way — of a 14-foot, 2,000-pound statue of one of Pittsburgh's greats, rounding the bases, on top of the world.

## US military airlifts small reactor as Trump pushes to quickly deploy nuclear power

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

HILL AIR FORCE BASE, Utah (AP) — The Pentagon and the Energy Department for the first time airlifted a small nuclear reactor from California to Utah, demonstrating what they say is the U.S. potential to quickly deploy nuclear power for military and civilian use.

The nearly 700-mile flight last weekend — which transported a 5-megawatt microreactor without nuclear fuel — highlights the Trump administration's drive to promote nuclear energy to help meet skyrocketing demand for power from artificial intelligence and data centers, as well as for use by the military.

Energy Secretary Chris Wright and Undersecretary of Defense Michael Duffey, who traveled with the privately built reactor, hailed the Feb. 15 trip on a C-17 military aircraft as a breakthrough for U.S. efforts to fast-track commercial licensing for the microreactors, part of a broader effort by the Trump administration to reshape the country's energy landscape.

A new emphasis on nuclear energy

President Donald Trump supports nuclear power — a carbon-free source of electricity — as a reliable energy source, even as he has been broadly hostile to renewable energy and prioritizes coal and other fossil fuels to produce electricity.

Skeptics warn that nuclear energy poses risks and say microreactors may not be safe or feasible and have not proved they can meet demand for a reasonable price.

Wright brushed those concerns aside as he touted progress on Trump's push for a quick escalation of nuclear power. Trump signed a series of executive orders last year that allow Wright to approve some advanced reactor designs and projects, taking authority away from the independent Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which has regulated the U.S. nuclear industry for five decades.

"Today is history. A multi-megawatt, next-generation nuclear power plant is loaded in the C-17 behind us," Wright said before the two-hour flight from March Air Reserve Base in California to Hill Air Force Base in Utah.

The minivan-sized reactor transported by the military is one of at least three that will reach "criticality" — when a nuclear reaction can sustain an ongoing series of reactions — by July 4, as Trump has promised, Wright said.

"That's speed, that's innovation, that's the start of a nuclear renaissance," he said.

Microreactors would be for civilian and military use

Currently, there are 94 operable nuclear reactors in the U.S. that generate about 19% of the country's electricity, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. That's down from 104 reactors in 2013 and includes two new commercial reactors in Georgia that were the nation's first large reactors built from scratch in a generation.

Recognizing delays inherent to deployment of new, full-scale reactors, the industry and government have focused in recent years on more efficient designs, including a small modular reactor proposed by the nation's largest public power company, the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Microreactors, designed to be portable, can "accelerate the delivery of resilient power to where it's needed," Duffey said. Eventually, the mobile reactors could provide energy security on a military base without the civilian grid, he and other officials said.

The demonstration flight "gets us closer to deploy nuclear power when and where it is needed to give our nation's warfighters the tools to win in battle," Duffey said.

The reactor transported to Utah will be able to generate up to 5 megawatts of electricity, enough to power 5,000 homes, said Isaiah Taylor, CEO of Valar Atomics, the California startup that produced the reactor. The company hopes to start selling power on a test basis next year and become fully commercial in 2028.

Some safety concerns haven't been addressed, experts say

Edwin Lyman, director of nuclear power safety at the Union of Concerned Scientists, said the transport flight — which included a throng of reporters, photographers and TV news crews — was little more than "a

dog-and-pony show” that merely demonstrated the Pentagon’s ability to ship a piece of heavy equipment. The flight “doesn’t answer any questions about whether the project is feasible, economic, workable or safe — for the military and the public,” Lyman said in an interview.

The Trump administration “hasn’t made the safety case” for how microreactors, once loaded with nuclear fuel, can be transported securely to data centers or military bases, Lyman said.

Officials also have not resolved how nuclear waste will be disposed of, although Wright said the Energy Department is in talks with Utah and other states to host sites that could reprocess fuel or handle permanent disposal.

The microreactor flown to Utah will be sent to the Utah San Rafael Energy Lab for testing and evaluation, Wright said. Fuel will be provided by the Nevada National Security site, Taylor said.

“The answer to energy is always more,” Wright said. After four years of restrictions on fossil fuels and other polluting energy under the Biden administration, he said, “Now we’re trying to set everything free. And nuclear will be flying soon.”

## **Life is harsh and dangerous in Russian-run parts of Ukraine, activists and former residents say**

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — Even now, safely in her new home of Estonia, Inna Vnukova says she can’t purge the terrifying memory of living under Russian occupation in eastern Ukraine early in the war and her family’s harrowing escape.

They hid in a damp basement for days in their village of Kudriashivka after Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022. In the streets, soldiers waving machine guns bullied residents, set up checkpoints and looted homes. There was constant shelling.

“Everyone was very scared and afraid to go outside,” Vnukova told The Associated Press, with troops seeking out Ukrainian sympathizers and civil servants like her and her husband, Oleksii Vnukov.

In mid-March, she decided that she and her 16-year-old son, Zhenya, would flee the village with her brother’s family, even though it meant leaving her husband behind temporarily. They took a risky trip by car to nearby Starobilsk, waving a white sheet amid mortar fire.

“We had already said our goodbyes to life, cursing this Russian world,” said Vnukova, 42. “I’ve been trying to forget this nightmare for four years, but I can’t.”

Many Ukrainians like Vnukova fled the invading forces. Those who stayed risked being detained — or worse — as Russian forces eventually took control of about 20% of the country and its estimated 3 million to 5 million people.

A new, Russian life in the seized regions

After four years of war, life in shattered cities like Mariupol and villages like Kudriashivka remains difficult, with residents facing problems with housing, water, power, heat and health care. Even President Vladimir Putin has acknowledged they have “many truly pressing, urgent problems.”

In the illegally annexed regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, Russian citizenship, language and culture is forced on residents, including in school lessons and textbooks. By spring 2025, some 3.5 million people in the four regions had been given Russian passports — a requirement to receive vital services like health care.

Some in the regions say they live in fear of being accused of sympathizing with Ukraine. Many have been imprisoned, beaten and killed, according to human rights activists.

Oleksii Vnukov, a court security officer, stayed behind in the village for nearly two weeks. Russian soldiers twice threatened to kill him, including an instance where he and a friend were dragged off the street by soldiers. But he survived and soon also escaped the village.

The family traveled through Russia before making it to Estonia, where Inna works in a printing house and Oleksii, 43, is an electrician.

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"All life is leaving the occupied territories," Vnukov said. "The people there aren't living, they're just surviving."

Mykhailo Savva of the Center for Civil Liberties in Ukraine said the Russian military's practice of wielding "systemic and total control" in the regions continues today.

"Even though a significant number of socially active people have already been detained, Russian special services continue to identify disloyal Ukrainians, extract confessions, and continue to detain people," Savva said. "Residents face such practices as document checks, mass searches, and denunciations on a daily basis."

Human rights groups say Russian authorities used "filtration camps" to identify potentially disloyal individuals, as well as anyone who worked for the government, helped the Ukrainian army or had relatives in the military, along with journalists, teachers, scientists and politicians.

Stanislav Shkuta, 25, who lived in occupied Nova Kakhovka in the Kherson region, said he narrowly escaped arrest several times before reaching Ukrainian-controlled territory in 2023. He recalled being on a bus that was stopped by Russian soldiers.

"It was horrific. Men and women were asked to strip to the waist to see if they had Ukrainian tattoos," said Shkuta, who now lives in Estonia. "I turned white with fear, wondering if I'd cleared everything on my phone."

He said his friends who stayed in Nova Kakhovka say life has worsened, with suspected Ukrainian sympathizers stopped on the street or in surprise door-to-door inspections.

"Today, my friends complain that life there has become impossible," he said.

Russia established a "vast network of secret and official detention centers where tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians" are held indefinitely without charge, said Oleksandra Matviichuk, head of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Center for Civil Liberties.

"Everyone knows that if you end up in the basement, your life is worth nothing," she said.

Russian officials have refused to comment on past allegations by U.N. human rights officials that it tortures civilians and prisoners of war.

About 16,000 civilians have been detained illegally, but that number could be much higher because many are held incommunicado, said Ukrainian Human Rights Ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets.

A U.N. report released last summer said that between July 2024 and June 2025, it spoke to 57 civilians who were detained in the occupied regions, and that 52 of them told of severe beatings, electric shocks, sexual violence, degradation and threats of violence.

One particularly famous case is that of Ukrainian journalist Victoria Roshchyna, 27, who disappeared in 2023 while reporting near the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant and died in Russian custody. When her body was handed over to Ukraine in 2025, it bore signs of torture, with some of her organs removed, a prosecutor said.

"Russia uses terror in the occupied territories to physically eliminate active people working in certain fields: teachers, children's writers, musicians, mayors, journalists, environmentalists. It also intimidates the passive majority," Matviichuk says.

## Destruction in Mariupol

At the start of the war, Russian forces besieged Mariupol before the port city fell in May 2022. The Russian bombing of the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theater on March 16 of that year killed close to 600 people in and around the building, an AP investigation found, in the single deadliest known attack against civilians in the war.

Most of the city's population of about a half-million fled but many hid in basements, said a former actor who huddled for months with his parents, saying they were nearly killed by the Russian bombing.

The former actor, now in Estonia, spoke on condition of anonymity to not endanger his 76-year-old parents, still in Mariupol. They had to take Russian citizenship to get medical care, as well as a one-time payment equivalent to \$1,300 per person as compensation for their destroyed home, he said.

As in other occupied cities, Russification is taking place in Mariupol, changing street names, teaching

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Moscow-approved curriculum in schools, using Russian phone and TV networks and putting the city in Moscow's time zone.

"But even today, the threat of death has not gone away. Only those who have Russian passports can survive," the former actor said, adding that his parents have asked him not to send postcards in Ukrainian because "it could be dangerous."

Putin "openly states that there is no Ukrainian language, no Ukrainian culture, no Ukrainian nation. And in the occupied territories, these words are turning into terrible practice," Matviichuk said.

But not everyone opposes the Russian takeover in Mariupol. The former actor says half of the members of his old troupe now support the Kremlin and believe Kyiv "provoked the war."

Housing is a sore point in Mariupol, where the population is about half of what it was before 2022. New apartment blocks rose from the ruins, but rather than going to those who lost their homes, they are sold to Russian newcomers.

Some who lost their homes have made video appeals to Putin. "You said we 'don't abandon our own.' Do we not count as your own?" said one resident at a mass rally.

At least 12,191 apartments in Mariupol were added to a list of purportedly "ownerless" and abandoned flats to be expropriated in the first half of 2025. Thousands more are being seized elsewhere.

Moscow is encouraging Russian citizens to move to the occupied regions, offering a range of benefits. Teachers, doctors and cultural workers are promised salary supplements if they commit to living there for five years.

Crumbling infrastructure and a shortage of doctors

Years of war and neglect have saddled many occupied cities in eastern Ukraine with serious problems in supplying heat, electricity and water.

The northeastern city of Sievierodonetsk suffered significant destruction before falling to Russia in June 2022. Once home to 140,000 people, only 45,000 remain, mostly elderly or disabled.

Only one ambulance crew serves the whole city, and doctors and other health workers rotate in from Russian regions like Perm to work at its hospital, said a 67-year-old former engineer who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution.

But she still supports "the great work Putin is doing," because she was born and raised in the former Soviet Union.

In Alchevsk, a city in the Luhansk region, over half the homes have been without heat for two bitterly cold months. Five warming stations have been set up and utility companies said over 60% of municipal heating networks are in poor shape, without funds for repairs.

Even a pro-Moscow politician, Oleg Tsaryov, has accused authorities of freezing "an entire city." When the heating system failed in 2006, he noted on social media that Ukrainian authorities "and the entire country stepped in to help and completely replaced the faulty equipment." But after the Russian takeover, officials had "contrived to repeat this Armageddon scenario all over again," he added.

In the Donetsk region, water trucks fill barrels outside apartment blocks — but they freeze solid in winter, said a resident who spoke on condition of anonymity because she feared repercussions.

"There's constant squabbling over water," she said, adding that lines to get the precious resource are "insane," and people who are away at work often miss the trucks' arrival.

Donetsk residents wrote an appeal for Putin to intervene in what has become "a humanitarian and environmental catastrophe."

Putin last year acknowledged the plight in the four regions.

"I know how difficult it is now for the residents of the liberated cities and towns. There are many truly pressing, urgent problems," he said, marking the third anniversary of incorporating those areas into Russia. He cited the need for reliable water supplies and access to health care, among other issues, and said he has launched a "large-scale socioeconomic development program" for the regions.

Meanwhile, Inna Vnukova is building a new life in Estonia: She and Oleksii now have a 1-year-old daughter, Alisa. Their son is now 20.

Only about 150 people — including the couple's parents — remain in the village that once was home to 800, Vnukova said, adding that she would like to show her daughter the family's native Luhansk region someday.

"We've been dreaming of returning for four years, but we increasingly wonder — what will we see there?" she asked.

## **ICE's purchases for big detention centers are marked by secrecy, frustrating towns**

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and MORGAN LEE Associated Press

SOCORRO, Texas (AP) — In a Texas town at the edge of the Rio Grande and a tall metal border wall, rumors swirled that federal immigration officials wanted to purchase three hulking warehouses to transform into a detention center.

As local officials scrambled to find out what was happening, a deed was filed showing the Department of Homeland Security had already inked a \$122.8 million deal for the 826,000-square-foot (76,738-square-meter) warehouses in Socorro, a bedroom community of 40,000 people outside El Paso.

"Nobody from the federal government bothered to pick up the phone or even send us any type of correspondence letting us know what's about to take place," said Rudy Cruz Jr., the mayor of the predominantly Hispanic town of low-slung ranch homes and trailer parks, where orchards and irrigation ditches share the landscape with strip malls, truck stops, recycling plants and distribution warehouses.

Socorro is among at least 20 communities with large warehouses across the U.S. that have become stealth targets for Immigration and Customs Enforcement's \$45-billion expansion of detention centers.

As public support for the agency and President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown sags, communities are objecting to mass detentions and raising concerns that the facilities could strain water supplies and other services while reducing local tax revenue. In many cases, mayors, county commissioners, governors and members of Congress learned about ICE's ambitions only after the agency bought or leased space for detainees, leading to shock and frustration even in areas that have backed Trump.

"I just feel," said Cruz, whose wife was born in Mexico, "that they do these things in silence so that they don't get opposition."

Communities scramble for information

ICE, which is part of DHS, has purchased at least seven warehouses in Arizona, Georgia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Texas, signed deeds show. Other deals have been announced but not yet finalized, though buyers scuttled sales in eight locations.

DHS objected to calling the sites warehouses, stressing in a statement that they would be "very well structured detention facilities meeting our regular detention standards."

The process has been chaotic at times. ICE this past week acknowledged it made a "mistake" when it announced warehouse purchases in Chester, New York, and Roxbury, New Jersey. Roxbury then announced Friday that the sale there had closed.

DHS has confirmed it is looking for more detention space but hasn't disclosed individual sites ahead of acquisitions. Some cities learned that ICE was scouting warehouses through reporters. Others were tipped off by a spreadsheet circulating online among activists whose source is unclear.

It wasn't until Feb. 13 that the scope of the warehouse project was confirmed, when the governor's office in New Hampshire, where there is backlash to a planned 500-bed processing center, released a document from ICE showing the agency plans to spend \$38.3 billion to boost detention capacity to 92,000 beds.

Since Trump took office, the number of people detained by ICE has increased to 75,000 from 40,000, spread across more than 225 sites.

ICE could use the warehouses to consolidate and to increase capacity. The document describes a project that includes eight large-scale detention centers, capable of housing 7,000 to 10,000 detainees each, and 16 smaller regional processing centers. The document also refers to the acquisition of 10 existing "turnkey" facilities.

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The project is funded through the big tax and spending cuts bill passed by Congress last year that nearly doubled DHS' budget. To build the detention centers, the Trump administration is using military contracts.

Those contracts allow a lot of secrecy and for DHS to move quickly without following the usual processes and safeguards, said Charles Tiefer, a professor emeritus of law at the University of Baltimore Law School. Socorro facility could be among the largest

In Socorro, the ICE-owned warehouses are so large that 4 1/2 Walmart Supercenters could fit inside, standing in contrast to the remnants of the austere Spanish colonial and mission architecture that defines the town.

At a recent City Council meeting, public comments stretched for hours. "I think a lot of innocent people are getting caught up in their dragnet," said Jorge Mendoza, an El Paso County retiree whose grandparents immigrated from Mexico.

Many speakers invoked concerns about three recent deaths at an ICE detention facility at the nearby Fort Bliss Army base.

Communities fear a financial hit

Even communities that backed Trump in 2024 have been caught off guard by ICE's plans and have raised concerns.

In rural Pennsylvania's Berks County, commissioner Christian Leinbach called the district attorney, the sheriff, the jail warden and the county's head of emergency services when he first heard ICE might buy a warehouse in Upper Bern Township, 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) from his home.

No one knew anything.

A few days later, a local official in charge of land records informed him that ICE had bought the building — promoted by developers as a "state-of-the art logistics center" — for \$87.4 million.

"There was absolutely no warning," Leinbach said during a meeting in which he raised concerns that turning the warehouse into a federal facility means a loss of more than \$800,000 in local tax dollars.

ICE has touted the income taxes its workers would pay, though the facilities themselves will be exempt from property taxes.

A Georgia detention center could house twice the population of the city where it's located

In Social Circle, Georgia, which also strongly supported Trump in 2024, officials were stunned by ICE's plans for a facility that could hold 7,500 to 10,000 people after first learning about it through a reporter.

The city, which has a population of just 5,000 and worries about the infrastructure needs for such a detention center, only heard from DHS after the \$128.6 million sale of a 1 million-square-foot (92,900-square-meter) warehouse was completed. Like Socorro and Berks County, Social Circle questioned whether the water and sewage system could keep up.

ICE has said it did due diligence to ensure the sites don't overwhelm city utilities. But Social Circle said the agency's analysis relied on a yet-to-be built sewer treatment plant.

"To be clear, the City has repeatedly communicated that it does not have the capacity or resources to accommodate this demand, and no proposal presented to date has demonstrated otherwise," the city said in a statement.

And in the Phoenix suburb of Surprise, officials sent a scathing letter to Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem after ICE without warning bought a massive warehouse in a residential area about a mile from a high school. Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes, a Democrat, raised the prospect of going to court to have the site declared a public nuisance.

Crowds wait to speak in Socorro

Back in Socorro, people waiting to speak against the ICE facility spilled out of the City Council chambers, some standing beside murals paying tribute to the World War II-era Braceros Program that allowed Mexican farmworkers to be guest workers in the U.S. The program stoked Socorro's economy and population before President Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration in the 1950s began mass deportations aimed at people who had crossed the border illegally.

Eduardo Castillo, formerly an attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice, told city officials it is intimidat-

ing but “not impossible” to challenge the federal government.

“If you don’t at least try,” he said, “you will end up with another inhumane detention facility built in your jurisdiction and under your watch.”

## Ukraine strikes a key industrial site deep inside Russia

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian forces struck an industrial site deep inside Russia on Saturday, which Ukraine and unofficial Russian news channels say was a key state-owned missile factory.

The attack in Russia’s Udmurt Republic left 11 people wounded, three of whom were hospitalized, according to a Telegram post by Sergei Bagin, the local health minister.

“One of the republic’s facilities was attacked by drones” launched by Ukraine, regional head Alexander Brechalov said in another Telegram post. He added that the strike caused injuries and damage, but did not identify the site or give further details.

Hours later, Ukraine’s General Staff said its forces struck a key missile plant near the city of Votkinsk, using Ukrainian-made FP-5 “Fleming” cruise missiles rather than drones.

“A military-industrial complex enterprise, the ‘Votkinsk Plant’ ... was hit. A fire was recorded on the facility’s premises. The results are being clarified,” the General Staff said in a Facebook post.

An unofficial Russian news channel on Telegram, Astra, likewise said earlier on Saturday that the strike targeted the Votkinsk Machine Building Plant, a major state defense enterprise. Astra said its claim was based on an analysis of footage from residents.

The Votkinsk factory, more than 1,400 kilometers (870 miles) from Ukraine, produces Iskander ballistic missiles, often used in strikes against Ukraine, as well as nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missiles, missiles for submarines and air-launched Kinzhal missiles.

Another unofficial Russian Telegram channel, SHOT, which often quotes contacts in the security services, said residents of Votkinsk reported hearing at least three blasts during the night, as well as what they thought was the humming of drones.

The Udmurt Republic’s main passenger airport, in the city of Izhevsk, and airports in nearby regions suspended operations early on Saturday, according to Russia’s civil aviation authority, Rosaviatsiya.

In other overnight attacks, Ukraine’s General Staff said its forces had also targeted a gas processing plant in Russia’s Samara region. Earlier Saturday, Russian military blogs reported that an attack caused a fire at the Samara plant. There was no immediate comment from Russian officials.

Russia’s Defense Ministry on Saturday said its forces had damaged launching sites for Ukraine’s “Fleming” cruise missiles over the previous day, among other military targets. The ministry’s statement did not make reference to the Votkinsk missile plant or any Ukrainian strikes in the area.

No progress in peace talks

The strike came days after the latest U.S.-brokered talks between envoys from Moscow and Kyiv over Russia’s all-out invasion of Ukraine ended Wednesday with no sign of a breakthrough, as the war’s fourth anniversary approaches next week.

The negotiations in Switzerland were the third round of direct talks organized by Washington, after meetings earlier this year in Abu Dhabi that officials described as constructive but which also made no major headway. Expectations for significant progress in Geneva were low.

Russia attacked Ukraine with 120 drones and one ballistic missile overnight into Saturday, Ukraine’s air force said. Ukrainian forces shot down 106 drones, while the missile and 13 drones struck targets in 11 locations in the country, the statement said.

Oleh Kiper, the head of Ukraine’s Odesa region on the Black Sea, said drones damaged civilian and energy infrastructure facilities in the region, including a secondary school and an energy company’s warehouses. Two people were also injured, he said in a statement on Telegram.

The southern port city of Odesa and surrounding region have been frequent targets for Russian attacks. Earlier this week, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said tens of thousands of Odesa’s residents were left without heating and running water.

In remarks published on social media on Monday evening, Zelenskyy said Moscow should be "held accountable" for the relentless strikes, which he said undermine the U.S. push for peace.

Russia's FSB says Telegram use endangers front-line troops

Elsewhere, Russia's Federal Security Service, known by its acronym FSB, claimed that Ukraine has been able to harvest data from Telegram and use it for military purposes. The app is hugely popular among Russians, including soldiers at the front.

The FSB was quoted by Russian state media as saying it had obtained "numerous reliable reports" that the use of Telegram "has repeatedly resulted in threats to the life of service members over the past three months." The reports did not cite any examples or evidence.

Separately, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday signed a law requiring mobile operators in Russia to block cellular and landline internet services at the request of the FSB, the latest move in the ongoing Kremlin effort to tighten control over the internet.

Earlier this month, Russian communications watchdog Roskomnadzor said it will impose new restrictions on Telegram, after accusing it of refusing to observe Russian law. The move triggered widespread criticism from Russian military bloggers, who warned that Telegram was widely used by troops fighting in Ukraine and its throttling would derail military communications.

Last week, Russia attempted to fully block WhatsApp in the country, the company said. Russian authorities have already blocked major social media like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, throttled YouTube, and methodically ramped up restrictions against other popular platforms since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

## **Murky outlook for businesses after tariff ruling prompts countermeasures by Trump**

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Businesses face a new wave of uncertainty after the Supreme Court struck down tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump under an emergency powers law and Trump vowed to work around the ruling to keep his tariffs in place.

The Trump administration says its tariffs help boost American manufacturers and reduce the trade gap. But many U.S. businesses have had to raise prices and adjust in other ways to offset higher costs spurred by the tariffs.

It remains to be seen how much relief businesses and consumers will actually get from Friday's ruling. Within hours of the court's decision, Trump pledged to use a different law to impose a 10% tariff on all imports that would last 150 days, and to explore other ways to impose additional tariffs on countries he says engage in unfair trade practices.

"Any boost to the economy from lowering tariffs in the near-term is likely to be partly offset by a prolonged period of uncertainty," said Michael Pearce, an economist at Oxford Economics. "With the administration likely to rebuild tariffs through other, more durable, means, the overall tariffs rate may yet end up settling close to current levels."

Efforts to claw back the estimated \$133 billion to \$175 billion of previously collected tariffs now deemed illegal are bound to be complicated, and will likely favor larger companies with more resources. Consumers hoping for a refund are unlikely to be compensated.

The fight against tariffs continues

With Trump's unyielding position on tariffs, many businesses are braced for years of court battles.

Basic Fun, a Florida-based maker of toys such as Lincoln Logs and Tonka trucks, last week joined a slew of other businesses in a lawsuit seeking to claw back tariffs paid to the government.

While company CEO Jay Foreman is concerned about any new tariffs Trump may impose, he doesn't think they will affect toys. Still, he said, "I do worry about some type of perpetual fight over this, at least for the next three years."

The new 10% tariff Trump announced Friday immediately raised questions for Daniel Posner, the owner

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of Grapes The Wine Co., in White Plains, New York. Since wine shipments take about two weeks to cross the Atlantic, he wonders if he had a shipment arriving Monday, would it be subject to a 10% tariff?

"We're reactive to what's become a very unstable situation," Posner said.

Ron Kurnik owns Superior Coffee Roasting Co. in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, across the border from Canada. In addition to U.S. tariffs, Kurnik faced retaliatory tariffs from Canada for much of last year when he exported his coffee.

"It's like a nightmare we just want to wake up from," said Kurnik, whose company has raised prices by 6% twice since the tariffs went into effect. While he's pleased with the Supreme Court's ruling, he doesn't think he will ever see a refund.

Industries pine for more stability

A wide array of industries, including retail, tech and the agricultural sector, used the Supreme Court ruling as an opportunity to remind Trump of how his trade policies have affected their businesses.

The Business Roundtable, a group that lobbies on behalf of more than 200 U.S. companies, released a statement encouraging the administration to limit the focus of tariffs going forward to specific unfair trade practices and national security concerns.

In the retail industry, stores of all stripes have embraced different ways to offset the effects of tariffs — from absorbing some of the costs themselves, to cutting expenses and diversifying their supply network. Still, they have had to pass on some price increases at a time when shoppers have been particularly sensitive to inflationary pressures.

Dave French, executive vice president of government relations for The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail industry trade group, said he hoped lower courts would ensure "a seamless process" to refund tariffs. That issue wasn't addressed in Friday's ruling.

For the technology sector, Trump's tariffs caused major headaches. Many of its products are either built overseas or depend on imports of key components. The Computer & Communications Industry Association, which represents a spectrum of technology companies employing more than 1.6 million people, expressed hope that the decision will ease the trade tensions.

"With this decision behind us, we look forward to bringing more stability to trade policy," said Jonathan McHale, the association's vice president for digital trade.

Farmers, who have been stung by higher prices for equipment and fertilizer since the tariffs went into effect, and reduced demand for their exports, also spoke out.

"We strongly encourage the president to avoid using any other available authorities to impose tariffs on agricultural inputs that would further increase costs," said American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall.

Industries that aren't feeling any relief

The Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act did not give the president authority to tax imports, a power that belongs to Congress. But the decision only affects tariffs imposed under that law, so some industries will see no relief at all.

The decision leaves in effect tariffs on steel, upholstered furniture, kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities, according to the Home Furnishings Association, which represents 15,000 furniture stores in North America.

At Revolution Brewing in Chicago, the aluminum they use for cans costs as much as the ingredients that go inside them because of tariffs Trump has placed on metals that are not affected by the Supreme Court ruling. While the cans are made in Chicago, the aluminum comes from Canada, said Josh Deth, managing partner at the brewery.

Tariffs have been just one challenge for his business, which is also affected by volatile barley prices and a slowdown in demand for craft beer.

"Everything kind of adds up," he said. "The beverage industry needs relief here. We're getting crushed by the prices of aluminum."

Reaction overseas

Italian winemakers hard-hit by the tariffs greeted the Supreme Court decision with skepticism, warning

that the decision may just deepen uncertainty around trade with the U.S.

The U.S. is Italy's largest wine market, with sales having tripled in value over the past 20 years. New tariffs on the EU, which the Trump administration initially threatened would be 200%, had sent fear throughout the industry, which remained even after the U.S. reduced, delayed and negotiated down.

"There is a more than likely risk that tariffs will be reimposed through alternative legal channels, compounded by the uncertainty this ruling may generate in commercial relations between Europe and the United States," said Lamberto Frescobaldi, president of UIV, a trade association that represents more than 800 winemakers.

Elsewhere in Europe, initial reaction focused on renewed upheaval and confusion regarding costs facing businesses exporting to the US.

Trump's tariffs could hit pharmaceuticals, chemicals and auto parts, said Carsten Brzeski, an economist at ING bank. "Europe should not be mistaken, this ruling will not bring relief," he said. "The legal authority may be different, but the economic impact could be identical or worse."

## **The Supreme Court struck down Trump's tariffs. Now comes the hard work of issuing refunds**

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Friday struck down President Donald Trump's biggest and boldest tariffs. But the justices left a \$133 billion question unanswered: What's going to happen to the money the government has already collected in import taxes now declared unlawful?

Companies have been lining up for refunds. But the way forward could prove chaotic.

When the smoke clears, trade lawyers say, importers are likely to get money back — eventually. "It's going to be a bumpy ride for awhile," said trade lawyer Joyce Adetutu, a partner at the Vinson & Elkins law firm.

The refund process is likely to be hashed out by a mix of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency, the specialized Court of International Trade in New York and other lower courts, according to a note to clients by lawyers at the legal firm Clark Hill.

"The amount of money is substantial," Adetutu said. "The courts are going to have a hard time. Importers are going to have a hard time."

Still, she added, "it's going to be really difficult not to have some sort of refund option" given how decisively the Supreme Court repudiated Trump's tariffs.

In its 6-3 opinion on Friday, the court ruled Trump's attempt to use an emergency powers law to enact the levies was not valid. Two of the three justices appointed by Trump joined the majority in striking down the first major piece of his second-term agenda to come before them.

At issue are double-digit tariffs Trump imposed on almost every country in the world last year by invoking the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). The Supreme Court ruled that the law did not give the president authority to tax imports, a power that belongs to Congress.

The U.S. customs agency has already collected \$133 billion in IEEPA tariffs as of mid-December. But consumers hoping for a refund are unlikely to be compensated for the higher prices they paid when companies passed along the cost of the tariffs; that's more likely to go to the companies themselves.

In a dissenting opinion, Justice Brett Kavanaugh dinged his colleagues for dodging the refund issue: "The Court says nothing today about whether, and if so how, the Government should go about returning the billions of dollars that it has collected from importers."

Borrowing a word that Justice Amy Coney Barrett — who sided with the majority — used during the court's November hearing on the case, Kavanaugh warned that "the refund process is likely to be a 'mess.'"

"I guess it has to get litigated for the next two years," Trump told reporters at a press conference Friday, in which he decried the court's decision and said he was "absolutely ashamed" of some justices who ruled against his tariffs. "We'll end up being in court for the next five years."

The end of the IEEPA tariffs could help the economy by easing inflationary pressures. The tariff refunds

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— like other tax refunds — could stimulate spending and growth. But the impacts are likely to be modest. Most countries still face steep tariffs from the U.S. on specific sectors, and Trump intends to replace the IEEPA levies using other options. The refunds that do get issued will take time to roll out — 12 to 18 months, estimates TD Securities.

The U.S. customs agency does have a process for refunding duties when importers can show there's been some kind of error. The agency might try to build on the existing system to refund Trump's IEEPA tariffs, said trade lawyer Dave Townsend, a partner with the law firm Dorsey & Whitney.

And there has been a precedent for courts making arrangements to give companies their money back in trade cases. In the 1990s, the courts struck down as unconstitutional a harbor maintenance fee on exports and set up a system for exporters to apply for refunds.

But the courts and U.S. customs have never had to deal with anything like this — thousands of importers and tens of billions of dollars at once.

"Just because the process is difficult to administer doesn't mean the government has the right to hold on to fees that were collected unlawfully," said trade lawyer Alexis Early, partner at the law firm Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner.

Ryan Majerus, a partner at King & Spalding and a former U.S. trade official, said it's hard to know how the government will deal with the massive demand for refunds. It might try to streamline the process, perhaps setting up a special website where importers can claim their refunds.

But Adetutu warns that "the government is well-positioned to make this as difficult as possible for importers. I can see a world where they push as much responsibility as possible onto the importer" — maybe forcing them to go to court to seek the refunds.

Many companies, including Costco, Revlon and canned seafood and chicken producer Bumble Bee Foods, filed lawsuits claiming refunds even before the Supreme Court ruled, essentially seeking to be at the head of line if the tariffs were struck down.

There are likely to be more legal battles ahead. Manufacturers might, for example, sue for a share of any refunds given to suppliers that jacked up the price of raw materials to cover the tariffs.

"We may see years of ongoing litigation in multiple jurisdictions," Early said.

Consumers, though, are unlikely to enjoy a refund windfall. The higher prices they've had to pay would likely be hard to attribute to a specific tariff. Should they pursue refunds anyway? Early wouldn't advise wasting money on legal fees, but said: "In America, we have the ability to file a lawsuit for anything we want."

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, a Democrat and Trump antagonist, is demanding a refund on behalf of his state's 5.11 million households. In a letter addressed to Trump and released by Pritzker's gubernatorial campaign, the governor said the tariffs had cost each Illinois household \$1,700 — or \$8.7 billion. Pritzker said failure to pay will elicit "further action."

Nevada Treasurer Zach Conine submitted a payment request to the federal government for \$2.1 billion to recoup the costs of the tariffs, his office announced Friday.

"As Nevada's chief investment officer, I have a responsibility to try to recoup every single dollar that the Trump Administration takes from Nevada families," Conine said in a statement.

## Israeli airstrikes in eastern Lebanon kill 8 Hezbollah members, officials say

By FADI TAWIL and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

RAYAK, Lebanon (AP) — Israeli airstrikes on eastern Lebanon have killed eight members of the militant Hezbollah group, including several local officials, two officials with the group said Saturday.

The Lebanese Health Ministry put the death toll at 10, but did not distinguish between militants and civilians.

The Hezbollah officials told The Associated Press that the eight militants were killed in strikes near the village of Rayak in northeast Lebanon late Friday. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they

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were not authorized to speak to the media about such details.

An Associated Press team that visited the scene of the strike Saturday morning saw that the top floor of a three-story building was knocked out.

The Israeli military said Saturday that several members of Hezbollah's missile unit, in three different command centers in the Baalbek area in Lebanon, were "eliminated."

The Israeli army added that the Hezbollah members killed were identified "as operating to accelerate readiness and force build-up processes, while planning fire attacks toward Israel."

One of the Hezbollah officials said that three of the dead were local commanders and identified them as Ali al-Moussawi, Mohammed al-Moussawi and Hussein Yaghi.

Yaghi was the son of prominent Hezbollah official and one of its founders, Mohammed Yaghi, who died in 2023. Mohammed Yaghi was also a close aide to late Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in September 2024.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said Saturday that Israeli strikes on eastern Lebanon killed 10 people and wounded 24, including three children.

Ali Abdullah, executive director of Rayak Hospital, told the AP that the strike occurred after sunset, adding that they have received 10 bodies and 21 wounded. He added that the dead included two non-Lebanese — a Syrian man and an Ethiopian woman. The wounded included five Syrians and three Ethiopians.

Ethiopians often come to Lebanon as migrant domestic workers.

A funeral was held Saturday afternoon in the eastern village of Nabi Chit for two Hezbollah members who were killed in the strikes.

After the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led attack on Israel triggered war in Gaza, Hezbollah began firing rockets from Lebanon into Israel in support of Hamas and the Palestinians.

Israel responded with airstrikes and shelling. The low-level conflict escalated into full-scale war in September 2024, later reined in but not fully stopped by a U.S.-brokered ceasefire two months later.

Since then, Israel has accused Hezbollah of trying to rebuild and has carried out near-daily strikes in Lebanon that it says target Hezbollah militants and facilities. Hezbollah has claimed one strike against Israel since the ceasefire.

The death toll from Friday's strikes was unusually high and comes at a moment of intensified tensions in the region as the United States has threatened to strike Iran — a backer of both Hezbollah and Hamas — if negotiations over Tehran's nuclear program fail to produce a deal.

## Today in History: February 22, US hockey team beats USSR in 'Miracle on Ice'

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Feb. 22, the 53rd day of 2026. There are 312 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Feb. 22, 1980, the "Miracle on Ice" took place at the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York, as the U.S. Olympic hockey team upset the Soviet Union, 4-3. (The U.S. team went on to win the gold medal two days later, 4-2, over Finland.)

Also on this date:

In 1732, the first president of the United States, George Washington, was born in Westmoreland County in the Virginia Colony.

In 1784, a U.S. merchant ship, the Empress of China, left New York for the first trade voyage of an American ship to China.

In 1819, a weakened Spain, facing revolutions in Latin America, signed a treaty ceding Florida to the United States.

In 1862, Jefferson Davis was inaugurated to a full six-year term as president of the Confederate States of America after his election the previous November. He previously served as the Confederacy's provisional president.

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In 1959, the inaugural Daytona 500 race was held; although Johnny Beauchamp was initially declared the winner, the victory was later awarded to Lee Petty.

In 1967, more than 25,000 U.S. and South Vietnamese troops launched Operation Junction City, aimed at smashing a Viet Cong stronghold near the Cambodian border.

In 1997, scientists in Scotland announced they had successfully cloned an adult mammal for the first time, a sheep they named "Dolly."

In 2010, Najibullah Zazi, accused of buying products from beauty supply stores to make bombs for an attack on New York City subways, pleaded guilty to charges including conspiring to use weapons of mass destruction. (He spent nearly a decade after his arrest helping the U.S. identify and prosecute terrorists and was given a 10-year sentence.)

In 2020, pioneering Black mathematician Katherine Johnson, who calculated rocket trajectories and Earth orbits for NASA's early space missions and was later portrayed in the 2016 film "Hidden Figures," died at the age of 101.

In 2022, three white men were convicted of federal hate crimes in the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, who was jogging through their neighborhood near Brunswick, Georgia, when he was attacked in 2020. (The men are serving life sentences after being convicted of murder in state court.)

In 2024, a private lander built by Intuitive Machines made the first U.S. touchdown on the moon in more than 50 years, but the spacecraft only managed a weak signal and spotty communications with flight controllers.

Today's birthdays: Actor Paul Dooley is 98. Actor James Hong is 97. Actor Julie Walters is 76. Basketball Hall of Famer Julius Erving is 76. Golf Hall of Famer Amy Alcott is 70. Actor Kyle MacLachlan is 67. Golf Hall of Famer Vijay Singh is 63. Hockey Hall of Famer Pat LaFontaine is 61. Actor Paul Lieberstein (TV: "The Office") is 59. Actor Jeri Ryan is 58. Actor-singer Lea Salonga is 55. Tennis Hall of Famer Michael Chang is 54. Singer James Blunt is 52. Actor Drew Barrymore is 51. Comedian Iliza Shlesinger is 43. Dancer and singer Geneya Walton is 27. Rapper Molly Brazy is 27.