

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 1 of 62

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Tigers claim relay titles, post strong finishes at NSU indoor meet](#)
- [3- Secretary of State announces validation of second U.S. Senate petitions; candidates set for primary ballot](#)
- [3- Balloon Ad](#)
- [3- Priairie Mixed Bowling League](#)
- [4- Airport Fundraiser](#)
- [5- EarthTalk: Native Plants](#)
- [6- Sunday Extras](#)
- [24- Gov. Rhoden's Weekly Column](#)
- [25- Weekly Round\[s\] Up](#)
- [27- Rev. Snyder's Column](#)
- [29- South Dakota Average Gas Prices](#)
- [30- Drought Monitor](#)
- [31- Weather Pages](#)
- [35- Daily Devotional](#)
- [37- Subscription Form](#)
- [38- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [39- News from the Associated Press](#)

Sunday, April 5

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sunrise Service, 7 a.m.; Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m. (1st communion for fifth graders)

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

United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; No 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.

Monday, April 6

NO SCHOOL - Easter break

Senior Menu: Spanish rice with hamburger, broccoli, fruit, Vanilla pudding, whole wheat bread.

It's Sunday
It's Resurrection Day
Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for allowing us to see another Blessed & Holy Resurrection Sunday.

Thank You for raising Your Son up with all Power in His hands. Death could not hold Him down! He is the Risen King! Hallelujah!

My Prayer is that we will continue to Worship and Serve Him, and be more than Grateful for His sacrifice.

Thank You for Your many Blessings and for keeping us covered under the Blood of Jesus.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Amen
God's Spoken Ministries

Tuesday, April 7

Senior Menu: Bratwurst on bun, tri tater, sauerkraut, fruit.

Track at Ipswich, 2 p.m.

SD Honor Choir Auditions in Huron, 3:30 p.m.

Biogirls, 3:45 p.m., Elementary School

Pickleball, 6 p.m., Elementary Gym

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., City Hall

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1:30 p.m.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 2 of 62

Tigers claim relay titles, post strong finishes at NSU indoor meet

Groton Area's track and field teams turned in a strong showing at the indoor meet held March 31 at Northern State University in Aberdeen, highlighted by multiple event champions and a pair of relay victories.

The Tigers were led on the boys' side by a dominant performance in both the sprints and field events. Ethan Kroll claimed first place in the long jump with a leap of 5.90 meters and added a third-place finish in the triple jump at 11.75 meters. Kroll also played a key role on the winning 4x400-meter relay team, joining Jayden Schwan, Jordan Schwan and Jace Johnson to take first in 3:50.86.

In the distance events, Jayden Schwan placed second in the 800 meters with a time of 2:10.84, while Jace Johnson (10th, 2:19.28) and Riley Shellenberger (12th, 2:19.47) also finished among the top competitors. Shellenberger added a seventh-place finish in the 1600 meters at 5:18.42.

Jordan Schwan led Groton Area in the 55-meter dash, placing 11th in 7.14, followed by Lincoln Krause in sixth at 7.05. Wesley Borg and Tate Johnson contributed across multiple events, including the 200- and 400-meter races, where Borg finished 26th in the 400 (1:06.83) and Johnson was close behind in 28th (1:07.27).

On the girls' side, Groton Area also turned in several standout performances, including a pair of first-place finishes. McKenna Tietz captured the 55-meter hurdles title in 9.12 seconds and added a third-place finish in the 55-meter dash at 7.72. Taryn Traphagen placed third in the 400 meters with a time of 1:05.03 and anchored the Tigers' winning 4x400 relay team.

That relay squad—Traphagen, Tietz, Ashlynn Warrington and Kella Tracy—took first place in 4:23.08, capping one of the top performances of the meet for Groton Area.

Ryelle Gilbert led the Tigers in the distance events, finishing second in the 800 meters in 2:32.59 and sixth in the 1600 at 6:08.27. Warrington added a ninth-place finish in the 800 meters (2:46.13), while Suri Jetto competed in multiple events, including the 200, 400 and 800.

Ella Kettner placed sixth in the 55-meter hurdles (10.74) and also competed in the 55-meter dash, while Teagan Hanten added a 10th-place finish in the hurdles (11.66) along with top-15 finishes in both the long jump (13th, 3.75m) and triple jump (10th, 7.75m). Avery Crank rounded out the field events for the Tigers with a 19th-place finish in the shot put at 7.50 meters.

Boy's Division

55 Meter: 6. Lincoln Krause, 7.05; 11. Jordan Schwan, 7.14; 61. Tate Johnson, 7.95; 67. Wesley Borg, 8.09; 77. Sam Crank, 8.36

200 Meters: 57. Wesley Borg, 29.16; 62. Tate Johnson, 29.54; 78. Sam Crank, 31.67

400 Meters: 26. Wesley Borg, 1:06.83; 28. Tate Johnson, 1:07.27

800 Meters: 2. Jayden Schwan, 2:10.84; 10. Jace Johnson, 2:19.28; 12. Riley Shellenberger, 2:19.47

1600 Meters: 7. Riley Shellenberger, 5:18.42

4x400 Relay: 1. (Ethan Kroll, Jayden Schwan, Jordan Schwan, Jace Johnson), 3:50.86.

Long Jump: 1. Ethan Kroll, 5.90m

Triple Jump: 3. Ethan Kroll, 11.75m

Girl's Division

55 Meter: 3. McKenna Tietz, 7.72; 41. Ella Kettner, 8.93; 47. Suri Jetto, 9.54

200 Meters: 35. Suri Jetto, 37.72

400 Meters: 3. Taryn Traphagen, 1:05.03

800 Meters: 2. Ryelle Gilbert, 2:32.59; 9. Ashlynn Warrington, 2:46.13; 33. Suri Jetto, 3:22.61

1600 Meters: 6. Ryelle Gilbert, 6:08.27

55m Hurdles - 33": 1. McKenna Tietz, 9.12; 6. Ella Kettner, 10.74; 10. Teagan Hanten, 11.66

4x400 Relay: 1. (Taryn Traphagen, McKenna Tietz, Ashlynn Warrington, Kella Tracy), 4:23.08.

Shot Put - 4kg: 19. Avery Crank, 7.50m

Long Jump: 13. Teagan Hanten, 3.75m

Triple Jump: 10. Teagan Hanten, 7.75m

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 3 of 62

Secretary of State announces validation of second U.S. Senate petitions; candidates set for primary ballot

(Pierre, S.D.) – Secretary of State Monae L. Johnson has announced that Julian Beaudion will appear on the ballot as a Democratic candidate for the United States Senate in the Primary Election set for June 2, 2026.

To qualify for the ballot, a Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate must submit at least 1,232 valid petition signatures. In accordance with SDCL § 12-1-36, the Secretary of State's Office conducted a random sample of submitted signatures and determined that 90.32 percent were valid. Based on that sampling, a total of 1,750 signatures were certified as valid.

Beaudion joins incumbent Republican Mike Rounds, who has also qualified for the U.S. Senate race.

In other statewide and federal races, the following candidates have qualified for the 2026 primary ballot:

For United States Representative, Democratic candidate Nicole "Nikki" Gronli and Republican Marty Jackley have qualified.

In the race for governor, Democratic candidate Dan Ahlers will appear on the ballot, along with Republican candidates Dusty Johnson, Jon Hansen and incumbent Larry Rhoden.

Following the filing of a candidate petition, state law allows any interested party to challenge the validation under SDCL § 12-1-13. Challenges must be submitted as an original, signed affidavit detailing each specific deficiency and must be filed with the Secretary of State's Office within five business days of validation.

For this petition, the deadline to file a challenge is Friday, April 10, 2026, at 5 p.m. (CT).

Groton Prairie Mixed Bowling League Week #20 Results

Team Standings: Jackelopes 18, Foxes 18, Chipmunks 12, Coyotes 11, Cheetahs 8, Shihtzus 5

Men's High Games: Brad Waage 202, Austin Schuelke 187, Clay Wattier 184

Women's High Games: Michelle Johnson 182, Suzie Easthouse 153 & 148, Brenda Waage 148

Men's High Series: Brad Waage 537, Tony Waage 506, Austin Schuelke 496

Women's High Series: Michelle Johnson 495, Suzie Easthouse 437, Brenda Waage 428



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Delivery available in Groton.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 4 of 62



Airport Fundraiser
A large crowd was on hand Saturday evening for the Groton Airport fundraiser held at the Groton American Legion. The left photo features servers Jon Cutler and Brett Anderson. (Photos by Paul Kosel)

EARTHTALK

Native Plants: Adapt Or Perish As Climate Changes

by Bala Tella

Dear EarthTalk: How can we help native plant species survive in a warmer world where their terrain is heating up as a result of climate change?
-- Robert Billings, Seattle, WA

Native plants are very vulnerable to climate change. High temperatures mean they have to adjust to increased droughts and higher CO2 levels. Three options for native plants are available when presented with temperatures outside of their natural range of temperatures: they can adapt, migrate, or go extinct.

"We know that, because of climate, native species need to move," says Thomas Nuhlfer, a researcher in organic and evolutionary biology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Migration works slowly which means they won't be able to keep up with the rapid nature of climate change. Therefore,

it's necessary for human assistance in moving plants into suitable environments. Climate change also encourages the growth of invasive species, which is happening right now and causing the population to increase exponentially. An increase in invasive species can lead to a rapid decrease in native plants, reducing biodiversity and making environments more prone to natural disasters.

Managed relocation is the process of helping plants move into new areas with better climate conditions. Although the extent to which humans should intervene is debated, assisted migration is increasingly accepted as a necessary conservation strategy. Choosing which plants to relocate and where to move them involves several factors. Scientists have found there is an overlap between invasive traits and restoration. Therefore, choosing plants that have traits associated with invasive species is necessary as they often provide the tools necessary to create a plan for survival in a foreign environment. Apart from those, it's important to focus on traits that are helpful, such as high metabolic rate and large size.

Today, there are many types of ongoing conservation efforts. Seed banking includes gathering seeds from multiple plants to ensure the possibility of future reintroduction. Habitat protection involves preserving natural environments from destruction, helping to maintain biodiversity and providing a safe refuge for native species. Planting native species for enhances the durability of the ecosystem from natural disasters. Research and monitoring give us feedback about plants' response to climate change as well as new conservation efforts to use, which is important for policy feedback.

Every backyard can be a powerful tool for environmental change. Planting native species in yards supports pollinators and wildlife. Avoiding pesticides helps keep beneficial insects and soil organisms safe. Supporting reforestation contributes to habitat recovery. Encouraging nurseries to grow native plants creates sustainable options. These small actions can create a big impact.



Native plants are having a tough time adapting as the climate warms around the world, but some plants are better than others at it. Credit:

Roddy Scheer



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

Psalm 19: 13,14

Detail of "Sara" by Irving Amen (1970)



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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. To keep Adam and Eve away after the Fall, what did God place around the Tree of Life? *Smoking pits, Deep moat, Cherubim with flaming swords, Walking vipers*

3. In 2 Samuel 12, God gave Solomon what additional name? *David, Amos, Jedidiah, Joab*

4. What type of water did Jesus offer the Samaritan woman at the well? *Fresh, Cool, Living, Clean*

5. From John 10, to what type of animals are Christians compared? *Camels, Sheep, Lions, Serpents*

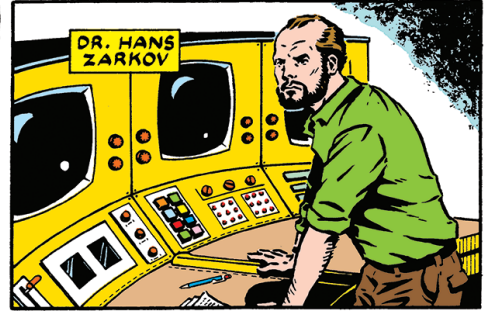
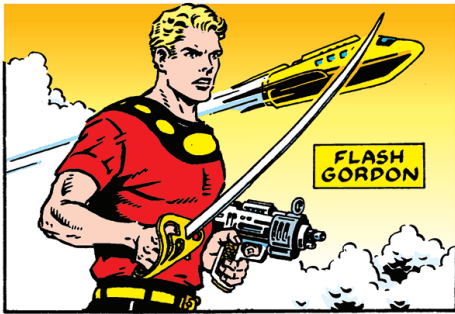
6. Which of these was a type of food? *Yoke, Manna, Prodigal, Mina*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Cherubim with flaming swords, 3) Jedidiah, 4) Living, 5) Sheep, 6) Manna

“Test Your Bible Knowledge,” a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 8 of 62



FLASH GORDON

3-21
BY JIM KEEFE

THE WAY IT BEGAN!

FLASH'S THOUGHTS RETURN TO THAT FATEFUL DAY LONG AGO...

...WHEN A NEWLY DISCOVERED PLANET HERALDED EARTH'S IMMINENT DESTRUCTION!

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NARROWLY ESCAPING FROM THEIR AIRCRAFT BEFORE IT'S TORN FROM THE SKY BY A METEOR SHOWER...

...FLASH GORDON AND FELLOW PASSENGER DALE ARDEN PARACHUTE TO SAFETY.

SETTING DOWN, THEY'RE CONFRONTED AT GUNPOINT BY A DISHEVELED FIGURE...

...DR. HANS ZARKOV!

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DRIVEN MAD BY THE INTENSITY OF HIS EFFORTS TO SAVE THE EARTH, HE TAKES THE YOUNG COUPLE CAPTIVE!

WITH A DEAFENING ROAR, THE TRIO TAKES OFF IN A ROCKET SHIP OF THE SCIENTIST'S DESIGN--THE FATE OF THE WORLD RESTING ON THEIR SHOULDERS!

UP THROUGH THE HEAVENS THEY SOAR, UNTIL, MIRACULOUSLY, THEY REACH THEIR OBJECTIVE...

...THE PLANET MONGO!

NEXT: MING THE MERCILESS!

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

MISS ANY TEE-TO-GREEN SHOT AND YOU CAN STILL RECOVER. MISS A SHORT PUTT AND IT'S A STROKE GONE FOREVER. THAT'S WHY THERE'S SUCH HEAVY PRESSURE ON THOSE SO-CALLED "GIMMIES."

JM

A POSITIVE ATTITUDE IS THE ONLY ANSWER, WHICH COMES FROM CONFIDENCE IN YOUR STROKE AND GREENS-READING ABILITY.

SO SPEND TIME ON THE PRACTICE PUTTING GREEN, AS WELL AS ON THE DRIVING RANGE. IF YOU ASPIRE TO BEING A COMPLETE GOLFER.

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Trigeminal Neuralgia Causes Shock Pains in Woman's Lower Jaw

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 73-year-old female who's in above average health. I have recently been diagnosed with trigeminal neuralgia after many trips to the dentist and finding out that my pain wasn't dental-related. I experienced electrical shock pains in my lower left jaw when I talked and ate, and sometimes when I brushed my teeth.

I am on 300 mg of gabapentin, and after a month, I can say that I'm about 95% better. I still feel some sharp sensations for a few seconds when starting to eat. In the previous year, I was on Fosamax for osteoporosis for one year. Since this didn't show an improvement, I was given one infusion of Reclast. I will be due for another in June.

I mentioned this diagnosis to my ophthalmologist recently, and she mentioned that these drugs for osteoporosis could possibly narrow the openings that the trigeminal nerves run through, therefore rubbing on the nerves themselves. Do I need to stop taking the osteoporosis treatment to stop the nerve pain? Your thoughts on this would be appreciated. -- D.K.V.

ANSWER: Trigeminal neuralgia is a neuropathy (a disease of the nerve) that, in this case, causes face pain. The pain is often described as an electric shock, but it can vary in different people. It also gets misdiagnosed as a dental condition. Gabapentin (Neurontin) is often tried, and a 95% reduction is a very good outcome in this disease, which can sometimes be frustrating to treat.

Bisphosphonate drugs like alendronate (Fosamax) or zoledronic acid (Reclast) do not directly cause trigeminal neuralgia. Most cases are thought to be caused by the compression of the nerve root that is deep inside the brain by an artery. Microdecompression of the nerve is sometimes used to treat trigeminal neuralgia, although the success rate isn't perfect and the pain relief isn't always permanent.

Bisphosphonates can occasionally cause a condition called osteonecrosis of the jaw. This condition can press on the trigeminal nerve, causing a facial pain syndrome. Your endocrinologist or primary care doctor who is prescribing the treatment should be aware of your facial pain and ensure that you do not have this complication.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am writing to seek advice regarding medical privacy for someone I know. Due to significant distress caused by social media, this individual is hesitant to seek medical care for fear of being recognized and is looking for a highly private or discreet health care option.

Could you please provide information on which steps one should take if they require a high level of anonymity when seeing a doctor? Are there specific resources or types of practices that specialize in this level of privacy? -- D.H.

ANSWER: I daresay that there are physicians who have many famous patients. Certainly, a physician who has a smaller practice and a private entrance would make sense for a person who doesn't want to be seen in public. I suspect that the best way to find out is by asking other famous people who live in the same area. I have known doctors who were "physicians to the stars."

On rare occasions when I have a similar situation, I come in early before anyone else has arrived (my practice is a busy academic group) so that the patient can be seen with as much privacy as possible.

I would also argue that privacy should be respected for all patients, but anonymity is probably unwise (and may be impossible for someone who is very well-known), as having a patient's correct medical history is important.

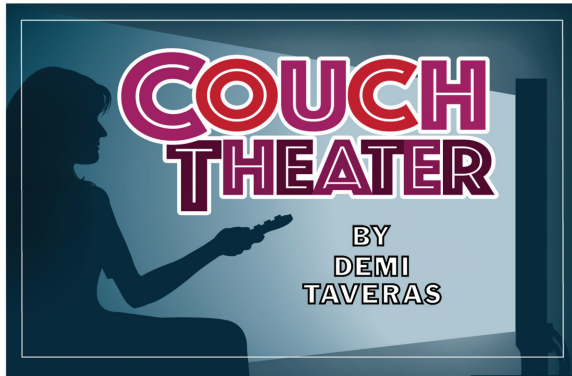
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 10 of 62



"Avatar: Fire and Ash" (PG-13) -- After an incredible run at the box office that earned 20th Century Studios \$1.487 billion, the third "Avatar" installment is out now to rent on video on demand. Picking up right where "The Way of Water" left off, "Fire and Ash" thrusts viewers immediately into action as Jake (Sam Worthington) and Neytiri's (Zoe Saldana) family embark on a trip to drop off Spider (Jack Champion) at the human scientist camp. Of course, nothing goes to plan as their ships get ambushed on their way there, leaving the family separated and susceptible to danger. Additionally, a new Na'vi tribe is featured, called the Mangkwan -- volcano-dwelling killer warriors who are led by a matriarch named Varang (Oona Chaplin). The world of Pandora is still as immersive and vibrant as ever! (YouTube)

Margot Robbie, left, and Jacob Elordi star in "Wuthering Heights." (Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

"The Bride!" (R) -- Director Maggie Gyllenhaal ("The Lost Daughter") and Oscar winner Jessie Buckley ("Hamnet") teamed up for the second time for this Gothic romance film about the Bride of Frankenstein. Buckley plays the titular character, who gets revived by Dr. Euphronius (Annette Bening) for Frankenstein (Christian Bale) to have as a companion. However, Frankenstein's eccentric bride had a previous life that was spent in the shadows, and even though she loses her memory when she's revived, her old life seeps into their current reality together. The pair also go on an accidental killing rampage, which keeps Detective Jake Wiles (Peter Sarsgaard) and his assistant, Myrna (Penelope Cruz), hot on their tails! Available on April 7 to rent. (Amazon Prime Video)

"Wuthering Heights" (R) -- This week brings us a ton of new movies that were awaiting their video-on-demand release dates! The next one up is director Emerald Fennell's ("Saltburn") reimagining of Emily Bronte's 1847 novel. She chose Margot Robbie ("A Big Bold Beautiful Journey") as her Cathy and Jacob Elordi ("Frankenstein") as her Heathcliff, which undoubtedly contributed to the film's \$236 million gross at the box office. Those who've read the novel or seen previous adaptations know that Cathy and Heathcliff's love story is one of tragedy, despair and longing. But set against Fennell's uniquely modern direction, their romance would make anyone swoon. Out now to rent. (Fandango at Home)

"Pillion" (R) -- Last but not least is this dark-comedy romantic drama led by Harry Melling ("The Devil All the Time") and Alexander Skarsgard ("Succession"). If you thought the hockey show "Heated Rivalry" was juicy, just wait until you rest your eyes on this film. It follows the intimacy journey of a shy gay man named Colin (Melling). Lonely and desperate to feel intimacy, Colin encounters local biker Ray (Skarsgard) and begins a BDSM relationship with him. At first, Colin enjoys their strict, no-nonsense dynamic, but after some time, he wonders whether his feelings for Ray (and perhaps Ray's feelings for him) can move their relationship into a more romantic light. Out now to rent. (Apple TV+)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 11 of 62



1. Name the singer-songwriter who first released "Reason to Believe."
2. Paul McCartney wrote the theme song for which James Bond film?
3. Who wrote and released "Stand By Me"?
4. What was REO Speedwagon's first big hit?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "When I think about those nights in Montreal, I get the sweet thoughts of you and me."

Answers

1. Tim Hardin, in 1965. Since then, the song has been widely covered, including by Rod Stewart, Bobby Darin and Marianne Faithfull. The song was included on the soundtrack for the film "Wonder Boys" in 2000.

2. "Live and Let Die," in 1973.

3. Ben E. King, in 1961. King's chart-topper has been covered at least 500 times. It was used in the soundtrack of the film of the same name in 1986 and was included in the list of 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.

4. "Keep on Loving You," in 1980.

5. "I Just Wanna Stop," by Gino Vannelli, in 1978. The song was Vannelli's biggest hit, topping the charts in Canada. He got his first break when he ran after Herb Alpert across an L.A. parking lot to give him a demo tape.

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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{Wagner}



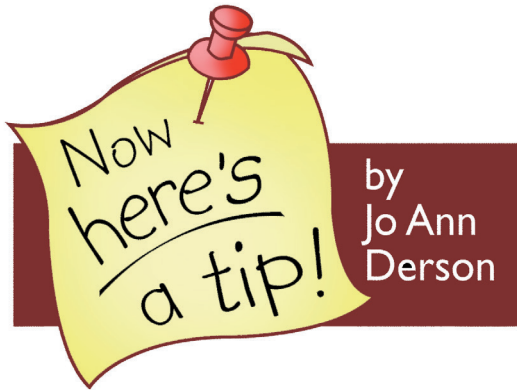
"We had a much bigger supply, but the Army bought most of it back."

Just Like Cats & Dogs ^{by Dave T. Phipps}



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 13 of 62



* When your cut up fruit is about to expire and you don't think you'll be able to eat it in time, just freeze it for smoothies. Lay it out in a single layer and pop it in the freezer. When it's frozen you can put it in a zip-top baggie for easy storage.

* If it's garage sale time, try this trick: Wrap a picture frame tightly with tulle. Then you can hang earrings from the tulle. Maybe someone will think it's so cute that you'll sell the frame!

* "Do you have a lot of coffee mugs? Maybe it's time you show them off! My granny has so many coffee mugs from trips and that she got as presents. My daddy put up five long shelves in one wall of her kitchen. They are the perfect place to line up and display all the mugs, and each one has a story, which is fun to hear." -- F.E. in North Carolina

* "My wife saw a picture of a narrow shelving unit on wheels that fits in the space between your fridge and the wall. It's really cool, and I made it for her. It's so handy that I made another one for my shop. I can store cans and small containers of shop supplies, and I repurposed her spice rack for my most-used hardware." -- J.C. in Florida

* "I have three girls and one bathroom, so there's no way anyone gets "ready" in front of the bathroom mirror at my house. Instead, all the girls have a hanging shoe rack on the back of their door for makeup and hair supplies, and a mirror on the wall." -- P.W. in Oregon

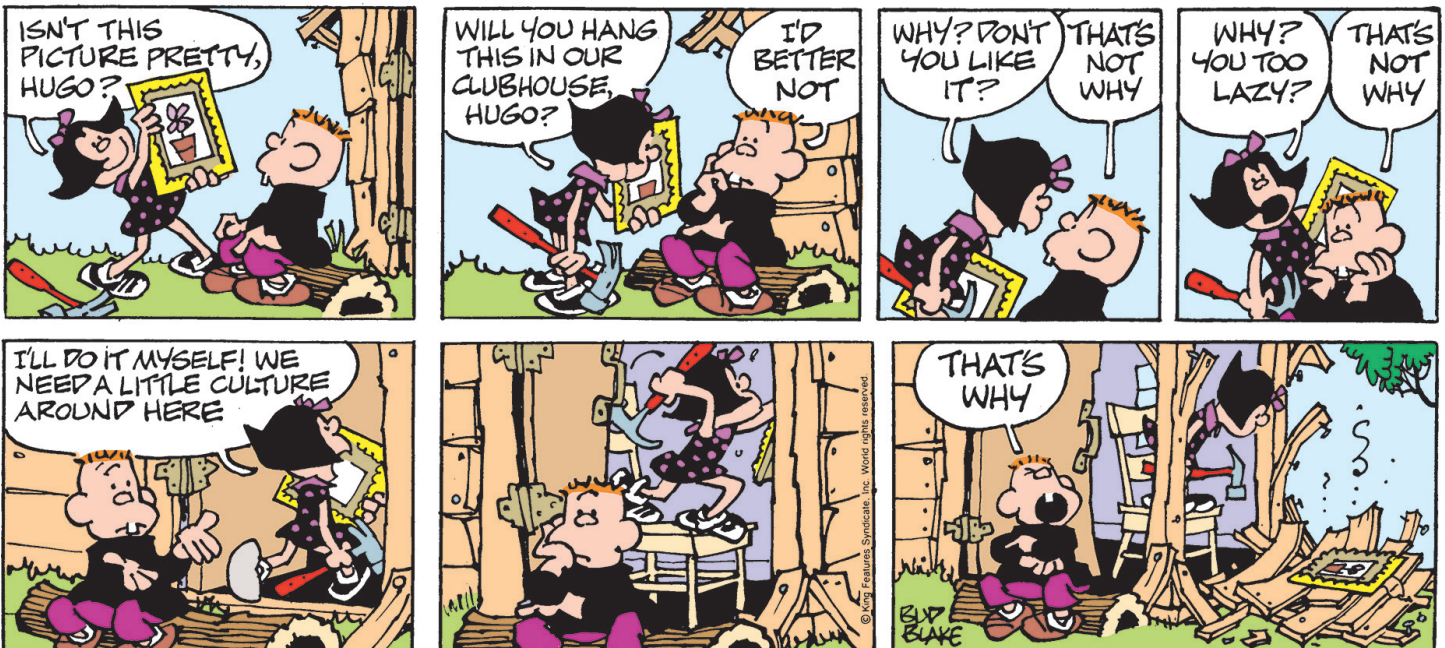
* Stubborn stains in the toilet? Try dropping in a few denture tablets in the evening before bed, then scrub and flush in the morning.

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

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 14 of 62

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 — Ark
- 6 Con games
- 11 French novelist
- 12 Heckler's weapon
- 14 "Delta Wedding" author Welty
- 15 Defeated in a footrace
- 16 Govt. stipend
- 17 Roly-poly
- 19 Roast VIPs
- 20 Golf pegs
- 22 Docs' org.
- 23 Lap dog, for short
- 24 Former First Daughter
- 26 Most sore
- 28 401(k) alternative
- 30 Med. plan
- 31 Popeye's veggie
- 35 Muslim legal expert
- 39 Centers
- 40 Possesses
- 42 Uttered
- 43 Before
- 44 "Graceland" singer Paul
- 46 The Browns, on scoreboards
- 47 Chew out
- 49 Tex-Mex treat

	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	
11												13
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47			48				49		50			
51							52					
	53						54					

- 51 "I, Robot" author
- 52 Leg joints
- 53 Hosiery shade
- 54 Repaired shoes
- 8 Invoice fig.
- 9 "Little Women" matriarch
- 10 Pancake towers
- 11 Defeats
- 13 Start
- 18 Hollywood's Thurman
- 21 Tibia settings
- 23 Reverent
- 25 Altar in the sky
- 27 "Let me think ..."
- 29 Reach
- 31 Biblical realm
- 32 Least spoiled
- 33 Portugal's place
- 34 Sandwich meat
- 36 Glib
- 37 Inclined
- 38 Concepts
- 41 Remote locations?
- 44 Halt
- 45 iPod model
- 48 Asia's — Darya river
- 50 Keypad trio

DOWN

- 1 Mal de mer
- 2 "Golden" tunes
- 3 Dye type
- 4 Angelic instrument
- 5 Milan's La —
- 6 Tolerate
- 7 Brilliant stroke

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 15 of 62

King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

	N	O	A	H	S		S	C	A	M	S	
B	A	L	Z	A	C		T	O	M	A	T	O
E	U	D	O	R	A		O	U	T	R	A	N
S	S	I		P	L	U	M	P		M	C	S
T	E	E	S		A	M	A		P	E	K	E
S	A	S	H	A		A	C	H	I	E	S	T
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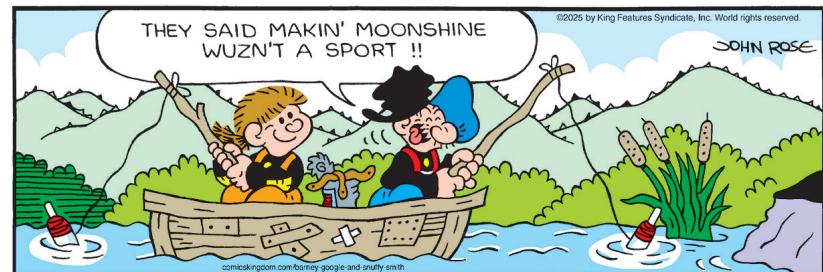
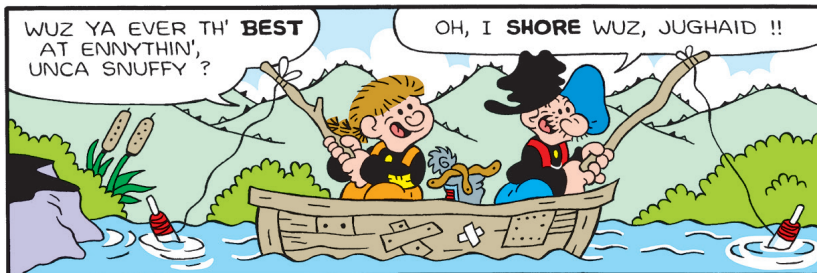
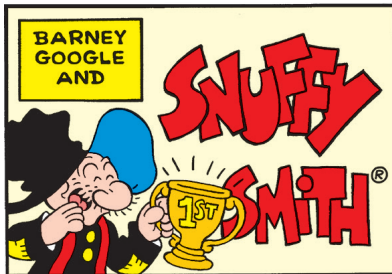
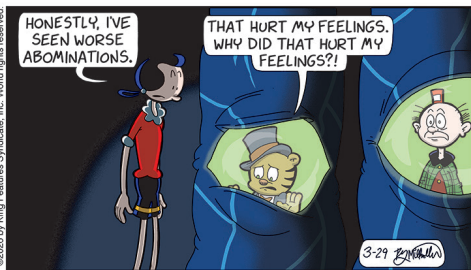
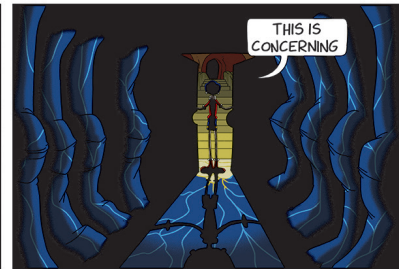
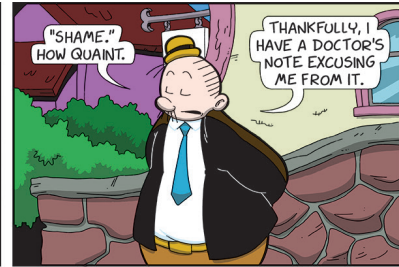
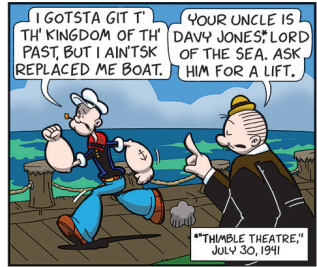
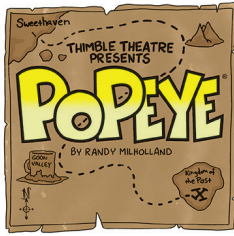
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 16 of 62



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 17 of 62

HAL FOSTER'S
BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

Prince Valiant

VAL RESTS, WEARY AND SICKENED, ON THE MECHANISM THAT HAS DESTROYED THE PIRATES. HE DOES NOT NOTICE AS THANAA SLIPS AWAY...

4070

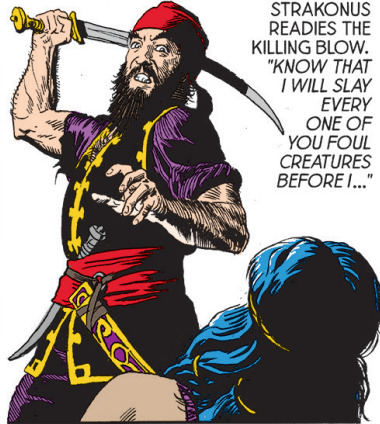
... AND ASCENDS THE STEPS BACK TO THE SURFACE.



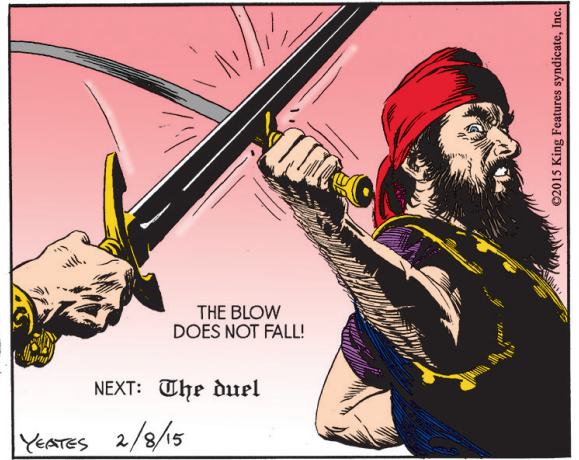
WHAT THE MYSTERIOUS IMAZIGHEN'S NEXT MOVE WOULD BE, WE WILL NEVER KNOW; FOR CRAZED, MURDEROUS EYES SEE HER FIRST.



"WITCH! DEMONESS! YOUR SISTERS LURED MY MEN TO THEIR DEATHS, BUT THEY DID NOT GET STRAKONUS!" THANAA BLOCKS THE SLAVER'S FIRST BLOW WITH HER FOREARM...

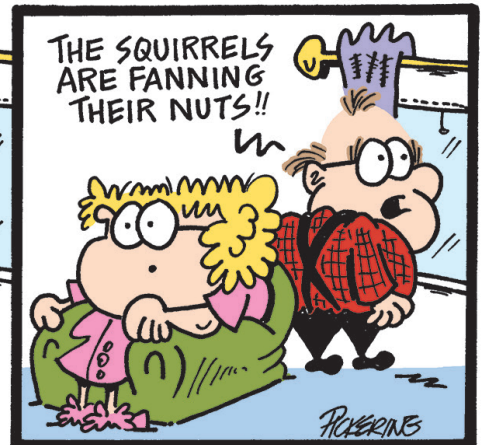
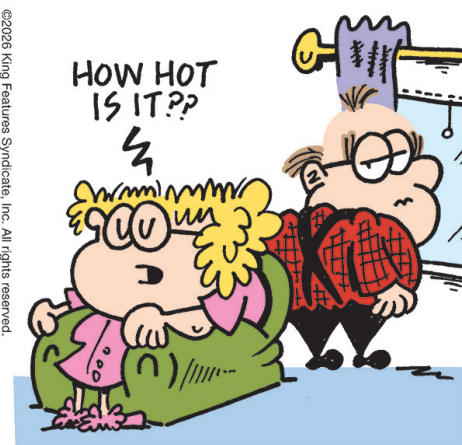
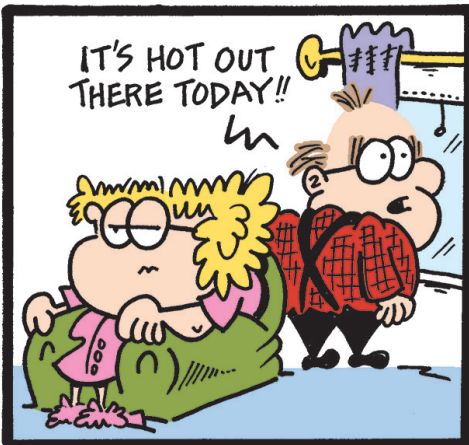


... AND FALLS! STRAKONUS READIES THE KILLING BLOW. "KNOW THAT I WILL SLAY EVERY ONE OF YOU FOUL CREATURES BEFORE I..."



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Exercising to avoid falls

If your weather is anything like mine right now, the promised end of winter hasn't happened yet, with storms continuing to roll in every few days right on schedule. The things that have not gone away yet, however, are Covid, flu and RSV.

Which means that getting outside on a schedule for exercise isn't possible, and neither is working out on the machines at the rec center among lots of other people.

Still, getting some kind of exercise is important. They say we need 150 minutes of exercise per week (aerobic and strength training combined), as well as balance exercise. And all of those things can be done at home.

The benefits certainly make it worthwhile: maintain muscle mass, improve our sleep, stay mobile, improve mental health, stay independent, reduce risk of high blood pressure.

And avoid falls. This may well be at the top of the list of reasons to exercise. A bad fall can lead to hospitalization, a need for surgery, loss of independence -- all those things we want to avoid.

All it takes is doing a few exercises to build our leg strength, tighten our core and improve our balance. Here are a few places online to get more information about exercising for seniors:

Go to the Johns Hopkins website (www.hopkinsmedicine.org) and search for "Balance and Strength Exercises for Older Adults," which includes two exercise videos that can be done at home.

Check the Mayo Clinic website (mayoclinic.org). Search for balance exercises.

Go to the CDC website (cdc.gov) and search for "What Counts as Physical Activity for Older Adults."

Click the link to their free publication "Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans" and scroll to Chapter 5, Active Older Adults. The 118-page publication is very well done.

As always, check in with your health care provider to ask about any new exercise before you start.

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

Open 24/7

GDI

Living Heart Fitness Center

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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 19 of 62

1. Introduced in 1990, the PGA Tour Player of the Year award trophy is named in honor of what golf great?

2. The Balmy Beach Beachers, winners of Grey Cup championships in 1927 and 1930, were a Canadian rugby football team located in what city?

3. In the original Trivial Pursuit board game, what color was used to represent the Sports & Leisure category of questions?

4. The phrase "get through to tea" - meaning persevere until the afternoon break - originated in what sport?

5. What Ohio stadium was home to the University of Akron Zips football team from 1940 to 2008?

6. Who scored the gold medal-winning goal for the U.S. Men's Hockey Team in their 2-1 overtime victory over Canada at the 2026 Milan Cortina Winter Olympics?

7. What member of the Los Angeles Lakers, nicknamed "Swaggy P," had his look of bewilderment inspire an internet meme in 2014?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. Jack Nicklaus.

2. Toronto.

3. Orange.

4. Cricket.

5. The Rubber Bowl.

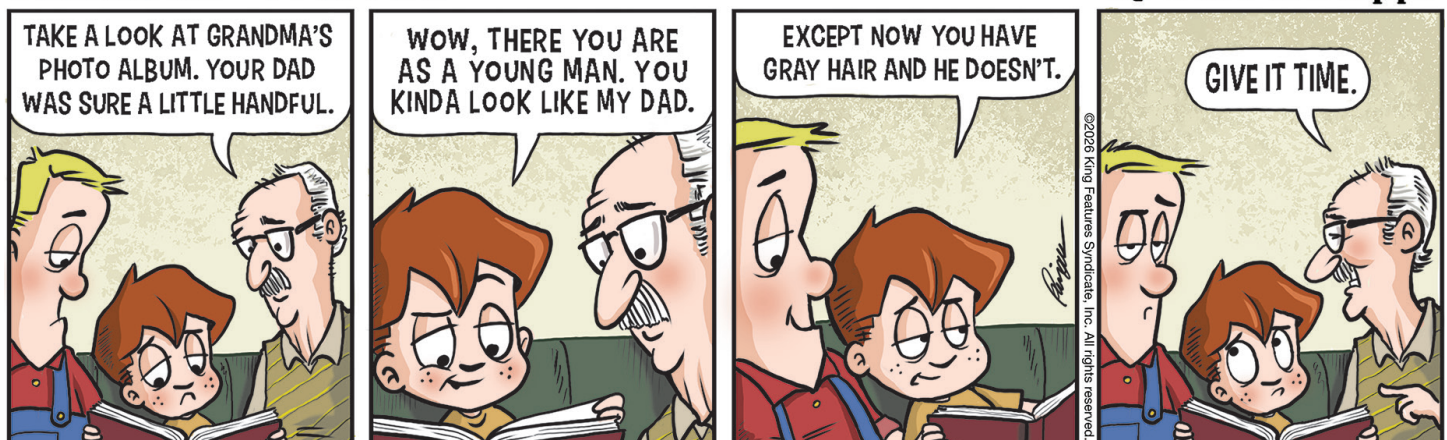
6. Jack Hughes.

7. Nick Young.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





A pet's end of life: When is it time to let go?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: A couple of months ago, I had to put my dog "Spacey" to sleep. He fought cancer for several months, but when he could no longer eat or stand up, I decided, after talking to the vet, that it was time. I still feel very guilty about the decision and am second-guessing myself. Would he have passed peacefully at home? Was there anything more I could have done? I just couldn't see him suffer any longer. How do you know when it's time to let go of a pet? -- Julie in Gainesville, Florida

DEAR JULIE: I'm so sorry about the loss of Spacey. It's clear from your letter that you loved him and didn't want him to suffer.

The thoughts you're having are part of the grieving process. Was there anything more you could have done to heal your dog? I think you know the answer.

The decision on when to say goodbye to a pet is a tough one. You did the right thing by talking with the vet. Together, you assessed his quality of life and determined that your dog was only going to get worse, not better. And you didn't want to see Spacey suffer any longer.

Please, be kind to yourself. You were there for your dog, every day. You cared for him, fed him, got his regular checkups. When Spacey got sick, you worked with the vet to get the best treatment for him. And when he was too weak and in too much pain to go on without great and unnecessary suffering, you held him while he left this world.

The American Veterinary Medical Association offers guidance on dealing with the loss of a pet that I think will be a great help: www.avma.org/resources-tools/pet-owners/petcare/coping-loss-pet.

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

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 21 of 62

Strange BUT TRUE

* Australia is wider than the moon.

* The Cowardly Lion's costume in 1939's "The Wizard of Oz" was made from actual lion skins and fur, and weighed roughly 60 pounds.

* Nobody knows who invented the fire hydrant -- its patent was lost in a fire!

* When 300,000 people walked across San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge in observance of its 50th anniversary on May 24, 1987, the iconic structure sagged seven feet.

* A single orange tree can have over 60,000 flowers, but less than 1% will turn into fruit.

* The Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, is mentioned more times in the Quran than in the Bible, and is also the only woman mentioned by name in the Quran.

* Japanese runner Shizo Kanakuri "finished" the 1912 Olympic marathon in 1967 with an unforgettable end time of 54 years, 8 months, 6 days, 5 hours, 32 minutes and 20.3 seconds.

* After the story of a California prison inmate who gave his paycheck of \$17.74 for more than 130 hours of labor to relief work in Gaza went viral, donors raised over \$100,000 for him.

* Sleeping through summer is known as estivation.

* Cicadas have been known to confuse the roar of power tools for mating calls and sometimes even swarm people using lawn mowers.

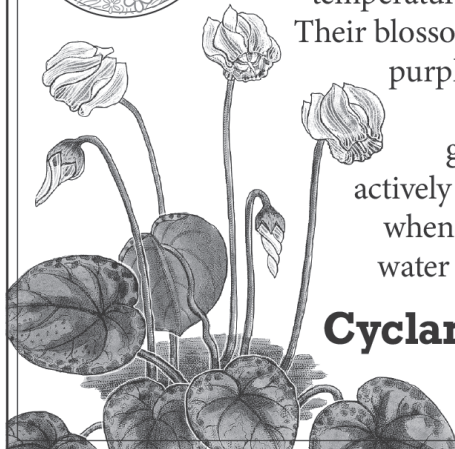
* Hay-on-Wye in Wales is home to the famous Honesty Bookshop, an outdoor book market with a collection box instead of a cashier.

* Marshmallows are about 50% air.

* Prisoners are more likely to be granted parole if their hearing is held first thing in the morning rather than at the end of the day.

Thought for the Day: "The beautiful thing about setbacks is they introduce us to our strengths." -- Robin Sharma

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Cyclamen are most popular as houseplants, although there are landscaping types. They bloom only in the cooler months; warm temperatures cause them to go into dormancy. Their blossoms come in showy colors like pink, purple, red and white, on delicate stems.

When their striking heart-shaped green leaves are present, the plant is actively growing. During this period, water whenever the soil feels dry. Avoid getting water on the leaves or crown of the plant, which can cause it to rot.

Cyclamen

– Brenda Weaver

Source: www.thespruce.com



by Freddy Groves

Veteran suicide prevention grants

Across the country, state and local governments, nonprofits, certain tribes and other community organizations are going to share in a \$112 million grant program for their work in veterans suicide prevention.

The Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program (also known as SSG Fox SPGP) promotes outreach to identify veterans at risk, clinical services for emergency treatment, case management, baseline screening, education, peer support, help with connecting with benefits and more. Help can also be in the form of temporary income support, legal services, child care, financial counseling and fiduciary help.

And it works: Over 90% of veterans who got these services reported improvements in their mental health and well-being.

The grant organizations will work with local VA medical centers to verify that the individual is a veteran, has some risk factors (such as traumatic brain injury, recent loss, homelessness or history of abuse) and has been assessed as to the degree of risk of suicide.

Veteran suicide stats are, as they always have been, grim to consider. The national suicide report for 2025 says that the number of suicides have decreased (for 2023, the last year numbers were available). Specifically, 2023 had 44 fewer veteran suicides than in 2022. The report calls that an "encouraging" result -- even though the number for 2023 was a whopping 6,398 veterans.

In an analysis of the stats, 61% of those veterans were not getting VA health care. The group most affected were veterans ages 18 to 34 with risk factors of homelessness, health problems and pain, with pain being the biggest risk factor.

To learn all the details about the SSG Fox SPGP grant program, see www.mentalhealth.va.gov/ssgfox-grants/docs/SSG-Fox-SPGP-Program-Guide-508.pdf.

If you (or a veteran you know) are at risk for suicide, call the VA crisis hotline at 988, then press 1. That's all you need to dial. Or text to 838255. Or go online to chat at www.veteranscrisisline.net. Somebody is there 24/7. It's free and confidential, and you don't have to be enrolled in VA health care or benefits.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 23 of 62

Wishing Well®

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R	O	E	E	A	K	B	N	L	E	E	S	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. GEOGRAPHY: The famous Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, are believed to have been in what modern-day country?

2. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the name of the six-point blue star on emergency medical vehicles?

3. MOVIES: What is the nickname of the "vicious" dog in "The Sandlot"?

4. HISTORY: What was the name of the United States' first space shuttle?

5. LITERATURE: In what language was "The Odyssey" originally written?

6. TELEVISION: Where is the 1990s sitcom "Northern Exposure" set?

7. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a group of kangaroos called?

8. SCIENCE: What is the process called when a lizard loses and regenerates a tail?

9. U.S. STATES: Which state borders two oceans?

10. MUSIC: What was Taylor Swift's first song to make Billboard's Hot 100?

Answers

1. Iraq.
2. The Star of Life.
3. "The Beast" to the kids and Hercules to his owner.
4. Columbia.
5. Homeric Greek.
6. Cicely, Alaska.
7. A mob.
8. Autotomy.
9. Alaska: Pacific and Arctic Oceans
10. "Tim McGraw."

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South Dakota Governor



Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Renewal and Hope

Easter is a meaningful day for many Americans. Here in South Dakota and across America, families will gather for church services, share meals together, and spend time with loved ones. Kids will hunt for Easter eggs, and, of course, eat lots of candy! But beyond the traditions and celebrations, Easter reminds us of the greatest promise ever given: the resurrection of our Savior.

More than 2,000 years ago, God sent His Son to serve as a sacrifice for our sins. When Jesus rose from the grave, death was defeated, and the promise of salvation became real for all who believed. The resurrection reminds us that no darkness lasts forever. God is greater than any challenge we face, and because He lives, we can have hope – even in the hardest seasons of life.

In South Dakota, we see reminders of that hope all around us. Each spring, the snow melts, our rolling hills turn green again, and God's creation comes back to life. Ranchers get their pastures ready, farmers begin planting for a new season, and families spend more time outdoors enjoying this great land we call home. The change from winter to spring reminds us that every challenging season springs into growth and opportunity.

Those moments reflect the same promise we celebrate at Easter: after hardship comes renewal, and after sacrifice comes victory. Whether it's the first sprouts in the field, the birth of new calves, or the sound of children playing outside, we see God's work in the daily rhythms of our land.

As Governor, I am grateful every day for the opportunity to serve the people of this great state. And I am especially grateful to live in a state where faith, family, and freedom are at the heart of who we are. The values that built our state – strong communities, hard work, and freedom – continue to guide us today.

Our American freedom is powerful and something to be proud of. But the truth is, it's still only temporary. True, lasting freedom comes only through Christ. One day, this earth will fade away – but the Kingdom of God will reign forever. That promise is what makes Easter so important.

This Easter, as you gather Easter eggs and spend time with family and friends, I encourage you to reflect on the true meaning of this day. Take a moment to recognize the blessings in your life, remember the sacrifice Christ made, and celebrate the miracle of the empty tomb.

May the message of Easter fill your hearts with hope. May it remind you that even in the most difficult seasons, God is at work and offering the promise of new beginnings. Happy Easter, may God bless you, and may God continue to bless the great state of South Dakota.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 25 of 62

March 23-29, 2026



Welcome back to another edition of the Weekly Round[s] Up. It was an eventful week in the D.C. office with many South Dakotans stopping by. In just four days, I met with 17 different groups of South Dakotans visiting DC to advocate for issues

that are important to them. It's always good to see these groups out here! Beyond that, we took a number of votes on the Senate floor to address various topics including voter ID, government funding and the conflict in Iran. More on these and the rest of my week in the Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I visited with: Major General Mark Morrell with the South Dakota National Guard; South Dakota Dentists with the American Dental Association; South Dakota Doctors for America FDA Task Force; the University of South Dakota's Center for Disabilities, Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities; Barry Dunn, President and Daniel Scholl, VP for Research & Economic Development at South Dakota State University and Dr. Stephen Gent; South Dakotans with the Association for Career and Technical Education; Kevin Nyberg and Erik Nyberg with Nyberg's Ace and Dakota Workwear; South Dakota Agricultural & Rural Leadership; South Dakota Science and Technology Authority; Bret Afdahl, Director of the Banking Division at the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation; Lemmon High School students; Jennifer Beving, State Director, South Dakota Americans for Prosperity; South Dakota Trucking Association; Brianna Mount, Associate Professor at Black Hills State University; South Dakotans with the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians; and Dr. Tim Ridgway with the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Met with South Dakotans from: Aberdeen, Arlington, Aurora, Brookings, Chamberlain, Claremont, Deadwood, Gettysburg, Lead, Lemmon, Leola, Nemo, New Underwood, Philip, Pierre, Rapid City, Redfield, Reliance, Rosebud, Sherman, Sioux Falls, Tabor, Vermillion, Volga, Walker, Watertown, White River and Winner.

Other meetings: Robert Kadlec, Assistant Secretary of War for Nuclear Deterrence, Chemical, and Biological Defense, Policy and Programs; Tim Teter, Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary, NVIDIA; Admiral Rich Correll, Commander, U.S. Strategic Command; and Michael Smith, Senior Executive, Ares.

This past week I spoke on a panel at the 2026 Hill & Valley Forum with Sean Cairncross, National Cyber Director and Joe Lin, Co-Founder of Twenty.

I also attended our weekly Senate Prayer Breakfast on Wednesday hosted by Senator Tim Kaine from Virginia.

Hearings: This past week, I attended four hearings. I chaired a Cybersecurity Subcommittee Hearing. You can watch my opening remarks here. In another hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, we heard from the U.S. Space Command and the U.S. Strategic Command as we prepare for the 2027 National Defense Authorization Act. You can watch my questions here. Lastly the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs committee held a hearing titled "Export-Import Bank Reauthorization" with John Jovanovic, President and Chairman of Export-Import Bank. Watch my questions here.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 26 of 62

Briefings: I chaired one Cyber Education & Briefing Seminar and attended one Senate Armed Services Committee briefing.

Votes taken: 12 – This past week I voted to confirm Markwayne Mullin to be Secretary of Homeland Security. I am confident he will do a great job in continuing to secure our border and keep our homeland safe.

In addition, early Friday morning the Senate passed legislation to fund the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This package would fund operations and personnel for critical programs housed under DHS, including the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the United States Coast Guard. Opposition from Democrats means that ICE and Border Patrol are left unfunded through this package, but their operations will still be funded through the reconciliation package passed last summer. It's our goal to continue this funding to protect our borders and secure our homeland through a second reconciliation package this summer. I look forward to working with the House of Representatives to fund DHS and end this government shutdown.

I also cast several procedural votes this past week, including legislation related to the SAVE America Act, a resolution to fund DHS, a resolution submitted by the Department of Veterans Affairs relating to "Reproductive Health Services," a Congressional Review Act resolution and a War Powers Act resolution.

Lastly I voted for Colin McDonald to be an Assistant Attorney General, James Hurtt and Kelli Knight to be the Coast Guard's permanent commissioned teaching staff.

You can read more details about the votes I took on my website here.

Steps taken: 62,942 steps or 28.62 miles.

My Staff in South Dakota Visited: Martin and Mitchell.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 27 of 62



Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

My Addiction to Happiness

One of the most important elements of life is happiness. When I look around the world, I notice how scarce happiness seems, which makes me reflect on its true value.

I have come to the conclusion that happiness is a choice. I can be happy or sad. The choice is mine.

Whenever things aren't going the way I want, and it seems very chaotic around me, I stop, think a little bit, and actively choose happiness over my worrying, which helps me regain perspective.

Not too long ago, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage looked at me and said, "Why are you so happy?"

I looked at her smiling and said, "As long as you're in my life, I will be happy."

She looked at me, smiled, and then walked away. I'm not sure if she understood exactly what I was saying, but I meant it from the bottom of my heart.

I once told her that I had a PhD in happiness.

"What does that mean?" She asked.

"A PhD is a 'Perpetual Happiness Demeanor'". And I have earned that degree.

Throughout the years, I have had this degree challenged on many levels. When things seem at their worst, I need to step back, smile, and be happy.

If you watch the news on TV, there are a million reasons not to be happy. If I believed everything on TV, it would be hard to be happy. The purpose of television news is to depress people, and they are very successful at it.

No matter how bad a situation looks, I can be happy. For every bad thing in the world, I can always find something good to be happy about.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not one of those possibility thinkers who think all I have to do is think it and I can achieve it. I don't believe that at all. But I do believe in happiness in itself.

The other day The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was looking very sad. I approached her and said, "What's wrong? Why are you looking so sad?"

Then she explained to me in detail why she was so sad. Based on what she said, she has every good reason to be sad. She had both thumbs injured, and they were not quite movable, which hindered her from doing some of the work she does.

"I just am tired of my thumbs not working yet."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 28 of 62

It reminded me of a time in my life when I was hit with shingles on my right side. My right arm was limited in what I could do with it. It really may be quite sad.

One day, I went to Wendy's, and a man came out of the store without a right arm. From the top of his shoulders down, his arm was missing.

As I watched him walk to his truck, I got to thinking. That man will never be able to use his arm because it's gone. I, on the other hand, will be able to use my arm again one day because it's just a temporary setback.

So, I told my wife, "Don't get discouraged. That will soon go away and you will have full access to both of your thumbs." I smiled at her, hoping she would catch the happiness bug.

I don't think happiness comes automatically. It's a matter of choice. In the midst of some very negative situations, I can either suffer through them or choose to be happy. I'm not happy about my situation, but happiness is my choice in life.

When my schedule is full, it is an opportunity for something to go wrong. I've lived long enough to realize that something going wrong is always an option. When I think I've got everything in line and I'm ready to take the next step, something blows up in my face.

That is enough to make me sad and even angry. I see a lot of angry people in this world. I can choose to be angry or to be happy. The choice is all mine.

It's taken me almost a lifetime to understand that and to choose happiness under every circumstance.

The other day I had a doctor's appointment across town. Just a checkup that the doctors like to do. I went out, got in my truck, and it would not start. I did everything I could possibly think of, but nothing got that truck running.

That was a real recipe for some anger in my situation. I finally had to call AAA to have them come and start up my truck. When he came, he discovered that it was the battery.

It took him about an hour to fix my truck and get it running. In the meantime, I had to cancel my doctor's appointment and reschedule it.

I was a little bit agitated. When I walked into the house, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage greeted me and said, "Are you happy now?"

She caught me with pie in my face. I looked at her, smiled very gently, and said, "I am now!"

I found some scripture that supports my happiness.

Proverbs 3:13, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding."

My happiness is not found in the world, but in my personal relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

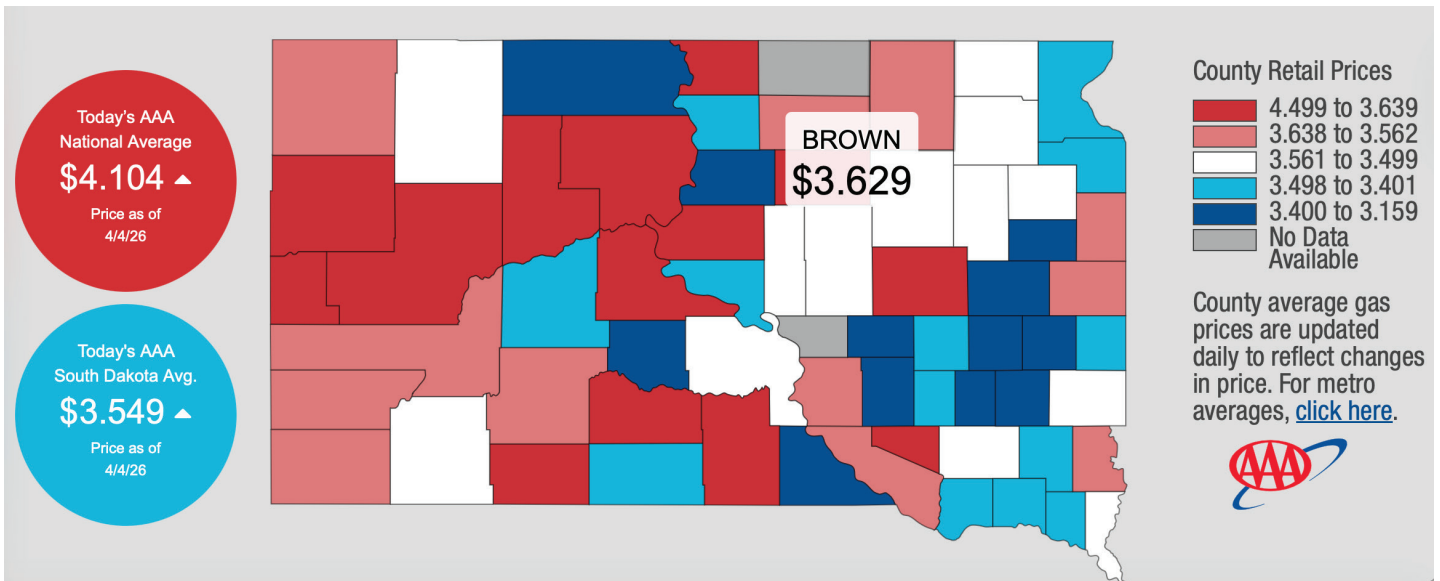
Broton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 29 of 62

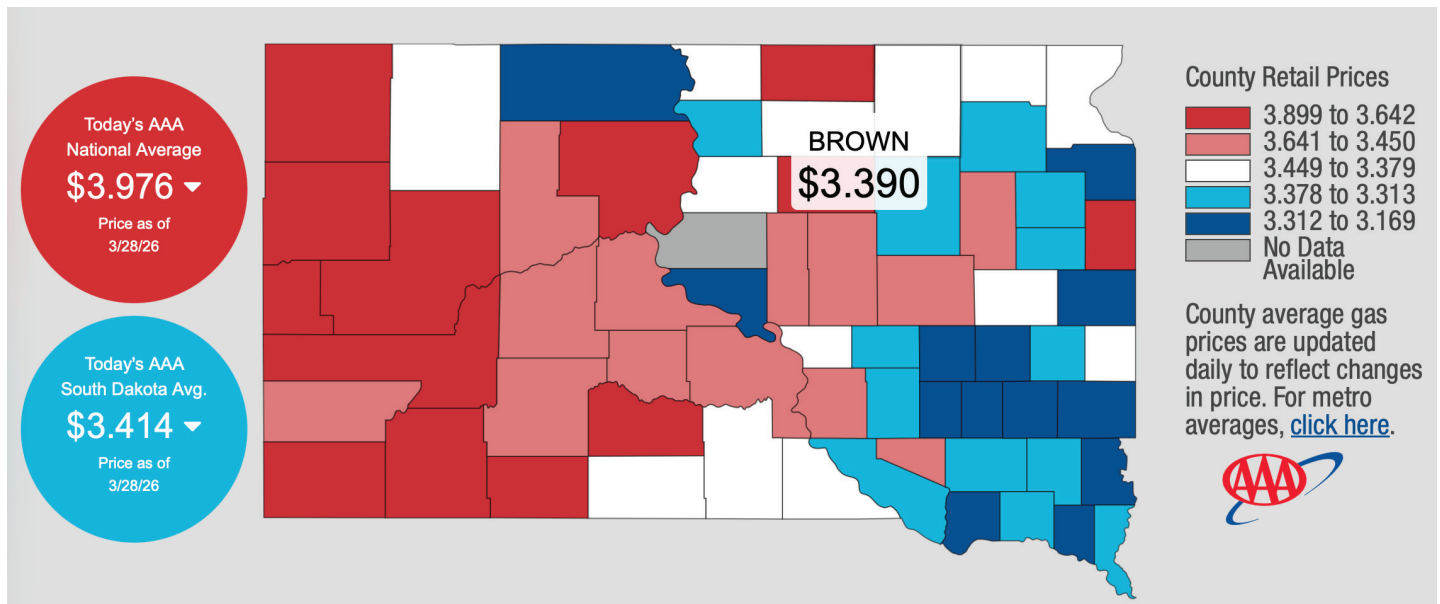
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.549	\$3.694	\$4.217	\$4.686
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.539	\$3.655	\$4.186	\$4.617
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.414	\$3.598	\$4.066	\$4.601
Month Ago Avg.	\$2.944	\$3.084	\$3.584	\$3.689
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.130	\$3.326	\$3.769	\$3.339

This Week



Last Week



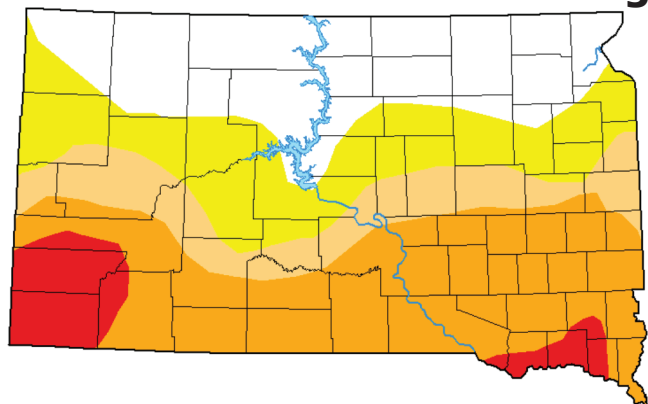
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 30 of 62

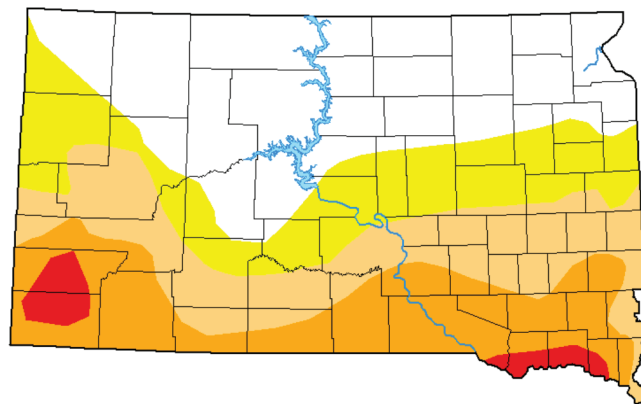
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



March 31



March 24

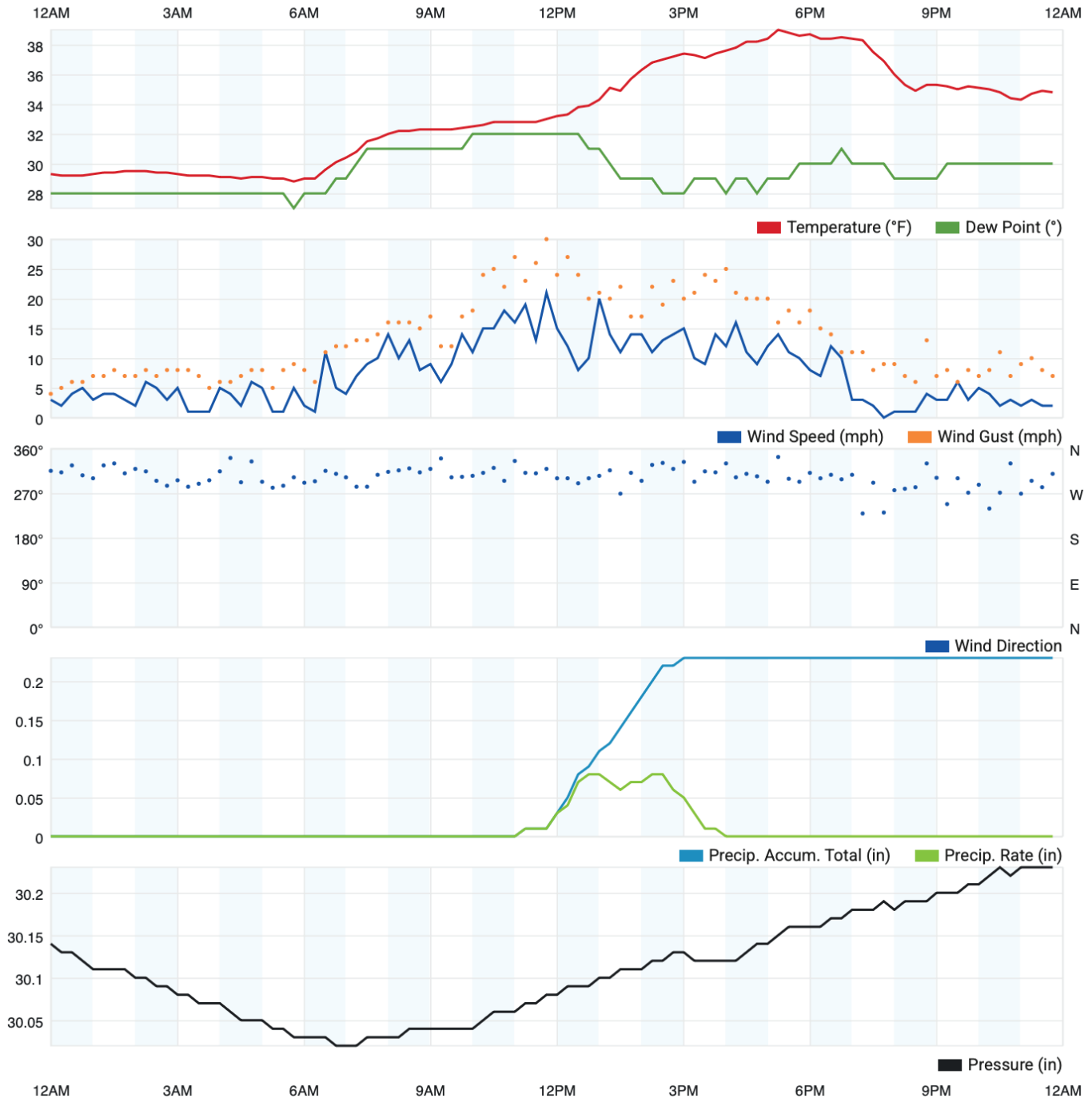
On this week's map, widespread changes were made across the region in response to below-normal precipitation (time scales from 1 to 6 months), declining soil moisture, scattered low streamflows, elevated evapotranspiration rates, and associated anomalously warm temperatures—not only in recent weeks, but moving through the entire cool season. In South Dakota, record to near-record low streamflows have been observed during the last 120-day period as well as below-normal soil moisture levels observed at the South Dakota Mesonet monitoring stations. Additionally, the NDMC's CMOR map shows numerous ag-related impact reports from the Black Hills region in southwestern South Dakota. For the week, the region was very dry with warmer-than-normal temperatures (3 to 15+ °F above normal) observed across much of the region, with the greatest anomalies observed in Nebraska and Kansas. Looking at climatological rankings for the past 90-day period (January 1 to April 1), several locations ranked among their warmest on record, including Grand Island, NE (warmest on record; +9 °F departure from normal); North Platte, NE (warmest on record; +10 °F); Rapid City, SD (warmest on record; +9 °F departure from normal); Goodland, KS (warmest on record; +11 °F departure from normal); and Dodge City, KS (warmest on record; +8 °F departure from normal).

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 31 of 62

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

April 4, 2026



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 32 of 62

Today



High: 40 °F

Patchy Fog
then Mostly
Sunny

Tonight



Low: 20 °F

Partly Cloudy

Monday



High: 28 °F

Mostly Sunny

Monday Night



Low: 16 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Tuesday



High: 39 °F

Mostly Cloudy
and Breezy



Chilly Week Ahead

April 5, 2026
3:00 AM

Today



Highs:
38 - 56

Patchy
Morning Fog

Monday



Highs:
25 - 40

Tuesday



Highs:
36 - 53

Breezy,
Warmest west
river

Wednesday



Highs:
43 - 56

Breezy

Thursday



Highs:
38 - 47

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A couple of cold fronts move through this week keeping temperatures below normal for the first half of April. Warmest temperatures will remain across central SD. The front on Thursday will bring some light snow to the region before temperatures climb above freezing.

Groton Daily Independent

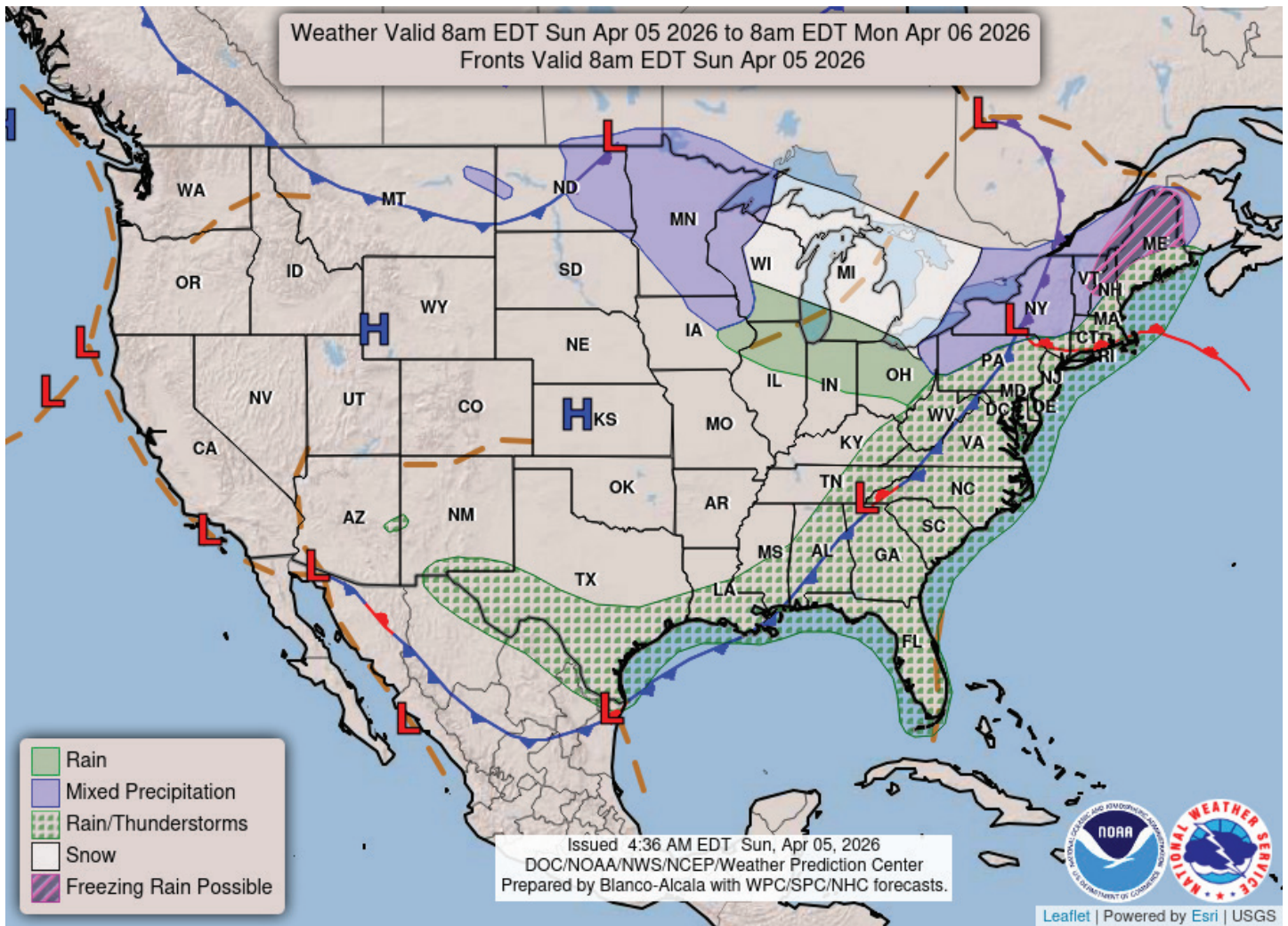
Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 33 of 62

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 39 °F at 5:14 PM
Low Temp: 29 °F at 5:44 AM
Wind: 31 mph at 11:38 AM
Precip: : 0.61

Today's Info

Record High: 86 in 1991
Record Low: 6 in 2007
Average High: 53
Average Low: 28
Average Precip in April.: 0.21
Precip to date in April.: 0.75
Average Precip to date: 2.27
Precip Year to Date: 2.37
Sunset Tonight: 8:04 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:03 am



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 34 of 62

Today in Weather History

April 5th, 2000: High winds of 35 to 50 mph, gusting to around 70 mph, blew across central and north-central South Dakota from the late morning to the late afternoon hours. As a result, several trees and many tree branches were downed, many structures, roofs, billboards, and road signs were damaged, a few mobile homes were overturned, and some power outages occurred. The high winds made driving challenging, stirring up dirt at some locations and causing visibilities to drop to near zero. Some detours and traffic collisions resulted from low visibility in blowing dirt. Airborne objects broke some windows across the area. One house had all of the windows on the front porch blown out. Also, a few semi-trailers were tipped over by the high winds. Wind gusts included 60 mph at Pierre, 63 mph at Kennebec, 64 mph at Mobridge, 65 mph at Pollock, and 71 mph at McLaughlin. The high winds and arid conditions combined with downed and arcing electrical lines, out-of-control burns, and smoldering embers from previous fires resulted in several grassfires across central and north central South Dakota. Several thousand acres of grassland, hundreds of hay bales and haystacks, and some trees and fences were burned. Also, the smoke from some of these fires created low visibility and difficult road driving conditions.

1945 — The temperature at Eagles Nest, NM, plunged to 45 degrees below zero to establish an April record for the United States. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1955 — The Northern Rockies and the Northern High Plains were in the midst of a four day storm which produced 52 inches of snow at Lead, located in the Black Hills of western South Dakota. (David Ludlum)

1972 — A tornado, 500 yards wide at times, touched down at a marina on the Oregon side of the Columbia River, and then tore through Vancouver WA killing six persons, injuring 300 others, and causing more than five million dollars damage. It was the deadliest tornado of the year, and the worst of record for Washington. (The Weather Channel)

1982 — An unprecedented April blizzard began in the northeastern U.S. One to two feet of snow fell across Massachusetts and Connecticut, and up to 26 inches was reported in Maine. New York City received a foot of snow. Winds reached 70 to 80 mph during the storm, and the storm also produced numerous thunderstorms, which contributed to the heavy snow. (Storm Data)

1987 — A storm produced unprecedented April snows in the central Appalachians. Mount Mitchell NC received 35 inches of snow, and up to 60 inches (six feet) of snow was reported in the mountains along the border of North Carolina and Tennessee. The total of 25 inches at Charleston WV easily surpassed their previous record for the entire month of April of 5.9 inches. The 20.6 inch total at Akron OH established an all-time record for that location. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Thirty-nine cities across the eastern half of the country reported record high temperatures for the date, including Saint Louis MO with a reading of 91 degrees. Laredo TX was the hot spot in the nation with an afternoon high of 100 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Unseasonably hot weather prevailed in the southwestern U.S. Afternoon highs of 100 degrees at Santa Maria CA and 105 degrees in Downtown Los Angeles established records for the month of April. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 — Afternoon and evening thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather in southern Oklahoma, southern Arkansas, and north central and northeastern Texas. Thunderstorms spawned a dozen tornadoes in Texas, including one at Fort Worth which caused a million dollars damage. There were nearly one hundred reports of large hail and damaging winds. Thunderstorms in Texas produced hail three and a half inches in diameter west of Fort Worth, and produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Cross Plains. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Our Glorious Hope

A glorious future awaits us—but nothing will compare to finally seeing Jesus face-to-face.

1 Corinthians 15:35-58: 35 But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?”

36 You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies;

37 and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

38 But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish.

40 There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body;

43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

45 So also it is written, “The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.

47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.

49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.

55 “O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?”

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 36 of 62

When we hear the word resurrection, most of us instantly think about Jesus rising from the dead. But His victory over the grave shows what's going to happen to us as well (1 John 3:2). One day every believer who has died will experience a bodily resurrection like His, and those who are alive when Christ returns will be changed from mortal to immortal in the twinkling of an eye.

One of the first questions people ask is, What am I going to look like? These humble earthly bodies will be transformed into glorious bodies like His—minus the divinity, of course. In today's passage, the apostle Paul provides some hints about their characteristics: They will be imperishable, glorious, powerful, and spiritual. We'll never again experience sin, sickness, pain, suffering, weakness, exhaustion, or death.

Another common question is, Will we know our loved ones? Consider this: How could such powerful, glorious bodies be limited in any way? Our senses and mental abilities will be completed, not diminished.

A glorious future lies ahead of us, but the joy of a new body and a reunion with loved ones will be surpassed by the thrill of seeing Jesus face-to-face. He is the One who made all this possible. Out of gratitude, let's faithfully love and serve Him.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 37 of 62

The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 38 of 62



WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.04.26

20 30 31 38 49 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 44 Mins 30 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.03.26

31 45 62 63 68 15

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$100,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.04.26

6 31 35 36 40 10

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$21,100,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.04.26

6 15 23 25 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$43,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.04.26

20 38 45 58 63 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.04.26

3 6 13 41 65 1

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$231,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

US aviator missing after Iran shot down fighter jet has been rescued

By MATTHEW LEE, KONSTANTIN TOROPIN, SAM METZ and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States said Sunday it rescued a service member missing behind enemy lines since Iran downed a fighter jet, as President Donald Trump escalated pressure on Tehran with a new looming deadline to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran showed no signs of backing down, striking new economic and infrastructure targets in neighboring Gulf Arab countries.

The airman's extraction followed a frantic U.S. search-and-rescue operation after the Friday crash of the F-15E Strike Eagle, as Iran also promised a reward for anyone who turned in an "enemy pilot." Trump said he was injured but in stable condition.

"This brave Warrior was behind enemy lines in the treacherous mountains of Iran, being hunted down by our enemies, who were getting closer and closer by the hour," Trump wrote on social media.

A second crew member was rescued earlier.

The fighter jet was the first American aircraft to have crashed in Iranian territory since the U.S. and Israel launched the war, striking Iran on Feb. 28. It has since killed thousands, shaken global markets, cut off key shipping routes and spiked fuel prices. Both sides have threatened and hit civilian targets, bringing warnings of possible war crimes.

Trump said last week that the U.S. had "decimated" Iran and would finish the war "very fast." Two days later, Iran shot down two U.S. military planes, showing the ongoing perils of the bombing campaign and the ability of a degraded Iranian military to continue to hit back.

As Iran continues to exert control over the Strait of Hormuz, Trump, in a weekend social media post, threatened to unleash "all Hell" if it isn't opened by Monday. He has issued such threats before and extended them when mediators have claimed progress toward ending the war on agreeable terms.

The other jet to go down was a U.S. A-10 attack aircraft. Neither the status of the crew nor exactly where it crashed was immediately known.

On Sunday, Iran's state TV aired a video showing thick black smoke rising into the air, claiming that they had shot down an American transport plane and two helicopters that were part of the rescue operation. However, a regional intelligence official briefed on the mission told The Associated Press that the U.S. military blew up two transport planes due to a technical malfunction, forcing it to bring in additional aircraft to complete the rescue.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the covert mission.

Drones hit Gulf energy infrastructure

In Kuwait, an Iranian drone attack caused significant damage to two power plants and put a water desalination station out of service, according to the Ministry of Electricity. No injuries were reported from the attack, the ministry said.

In Bahrain, the national oil company said that a drone attack caused a fire at one of its storage facilities, which was extinguished. It said the damage was still being assessed and no injuries had been reported.

In the United Arab Emirates, authorities responded to multiple fires at the Borouge petrochemicals plant, a joint venture of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. and Borealis of Austria. They say the fires were caused by falling debris following successful interceptions by air defense systems, but production at the plant in Ruwais, near the UAE's western border with Saudi Arabia, has halted.

The strike came a day after Israel struck a petrochemical plant in Iran that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said generated revenue that it had used to fund the war.

Trump renews threat

Trump renewed his threats for Iran to open up the Strait of Hormuz by Monday or face devastating

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 40 of 62

consequences, writing Saturday in a social media post: "Remember when I gave Iran ten days to MAKE A DEAL or OPEN UP THE HORMUZ STRAIT. Time is running out — 48 hours before all Hell will reign down on them."

The waterway is a critical chokepoint for global energy shipments, especially oil and gas moving from the Persian Gulf to Europe and Asia. Disruptions there have injected volatility into the market and pushed oil and gas-importing countries to seek alternative sources.

"The doors of hell will be opened to you" if Iran's infrastructure is attacked, Gen. Ali Abdollahi Aliabadi with the country's joint military command said late Saturday in response to Trump's renewed threat, state media reported. In turn, the general threatened all infrastructure used by the U.S. military in the region.

But Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Tahir Andrabi, told the AP that his government's efforts to broker a ceasefire are "right on track" after Islamabad last week said that it would soon host talks between the U.S. and Iran.

Mediators from Pakistan, Turkey and Egypt were working to bring the U.S. and Iran to the negotiating table, according to two regional officials.

The proposed compromise includes a cessation of hostilities to allow a diplomatic settlement, according to a regional official involved in the efforts and a Gulf diplomat briefed on the matter. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss closed-door diplomacy.

Iran threatens to disrupt traffic in a second key strait

Iran's parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, issued a veiled threat late Friday to disrupt traffic through a second strategic waterway in the region, the Bab el-Mandeb.

The strait, 32 kilometers (20 miles) wide, links the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. More than a tenth of seaborne global oil and a quarter of container ships pass through it.

"Which countries and companies account for the highest transit volumes through the strait?" Qalibaf wrote.

More than 1,900 people have been killed in Iran since the war began.

In Gulf Arab states and the occupied West Bank, more than two dozen people have died, while 19 have been reported dead in Israel and 13 U.S. service members have been killed. In Lebanon, more than 1,400 people have been killed and more than 1 million people have been displaced. Ten Israeli soldiers have died there.

A long Mideast war could take away from support for Ukraine, Zelenskyy tells the AP

By SERRA YEDIKARDES and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed concern that a prolonged U.S.-Israeli war on Iran could further erode America's support for Ukraine as Washington's global priorities shift and Kyiv braces for reduced deliveries of critically needed Patriot air defense missiles.

Ukraine desperately needs more U.S.-made Patriot air defense systems to help it counter Russia's daily barrages, Zelenskyy said, speaking to The Associated Press in an exclusive interview late Saturday in Istanbul.

Russia's relentless pounding of urban areas behind the front line following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than four years ago has killed thousands of civilians. It has also targeted Ukraine's energy supply to disrupt industrial production of Ukraine's newly developed drones and missiles, while also denying civilians heat and running water in winter.

"We have to recognize that we are not the priority for today," Zelenskyy said. "That's why I am afraid a long (Iran) war will give us less support."

A loss of focus on Ukraine

The latest U.S.-brokered talks between envoys from Moscow and Kyiv ended in February with no sign of a breakthrough. Zelenskyy, who has accused Russia of "trying to drag out negotiations" while it presses on with its invasion, said Ukraine remains in contact with U.S. negotiators about a potential deal to end the war and has continued to press for stronger security guarantees.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 41 of 62

But, he said, even those discussions reflect a broader loss of focus from Ukraine.

His most immediate concern, Zelenskyy said, are the Patriots — essential for intercepting Russian ballistic missiles — as Ukraine still lacks an effective alternative.

These U.S. systems were never delivered in sufficient quantities to begin with, Zelenskyy said, and if the Iran war doesn't end soon, "the package — which is not very big for us — I think will be smaller and smaller day by day."

"That's why, of course, we are afraid," he said.

Interlinked wars

Zelenskyy had been counting on European partners to help make the Patriot purchases despite tight supply and limited U.S. production capacity.

But the Iran war, now in its sixth week, has sent shock waves through the global economy and pulled in much of the wider Middle East region, further straining these already limited resources, diverting stockpiles and leaving Ukrainian cities more exposed to ballistic strikes.

For Kyiv, a key objective is to weaken Moscow's economy and make the war prohibitively costly. Surging oil prices driven by Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz are undermining that strategy by boosting the Kremlin's oil revenues and strengthening Moscow's capacity to sustain its war effort.

In his interview with the AP, Zelenskyy said Russia draws economic benefits from the Mideast war, citing the limited easing of American sanctions on Russian oil.

"Russia gets additional money because of this, so yes, they have benefits," he said.

Russian officials said Sunday a fire broke out at a major oil refinery in the Nizhny Novgorod region after a drone attack, while another drone damaged a pipeline at the Russian Baltic Sea port of Primorsk, home to a major oil export terminal. No casualties were reported.

Russia could reap a windfall from a surge in oil prices and the U.S. temporary waiver on Russian oil sanctions designed to ease supply shortages as the Iran war continues. Russia is one of the world's main oil exporters, and Asian nations are increasingly competing for Russian crude oil as an energy crisis mounts.

In response, Ukraine has intensified its long-range drone attacks on Russian oil facilities, which have rattled Moscow.

A renewed diplomatic push

To keep Ukraine on the international agenda, Zelenskyy has offered to share Ukraine's hard-earned battlefield expertise with the United States and allies to develop effective countermeasures against Iranian attacks.

Ukraine has met Russia's evolving use of Iranian-made Shahed drones with growing sophistication, technological ingenuity and low cost.

Moscow significantly modified the original Shahed-136, rebranded as the Geran-2, enhancing its ability to evade air defenses and be mass produced. Ukraine responded with quick innovation of its own, including low-cost interceptor drones designed to track and destroy incoming drones.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine is ready to share with Gulf Arab countries targeted by Iran its experience and technology, including interceptor drones and sea drones, which Ukraine produces — more than are used up — with funding from Americans and its European partners.

In return, these countries could help Ukraine "with anti-ballistic missiles," Zelenskyy said.

In late March, as the Iran war escalated, Zelenskyy visited Gulf Arab states to promote Ukraine's singular experience in countering Iranian-made Shahed drones, leading to new defense cooperation agreements.

Zelenskyy has also positioned Ukraine as a potential partner in safeguarding global trade routes, offering assistance in reopening the Strait of Hormuz by sharing Ukraine's experiences securing maritime corridors in the Black Sea.

Zelenskyy was in Istanbul for talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a day after the Turkish leader spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Zelenskyy said they discussed peace talks and a possible meeting of leaders in Istanbul. He also said there could be new defense deals signed between the two countries soon.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 42 of 62

Russia steps up its spring offensive

Each year as the weather improves, Russia moves its grinding war of attrition up a notch. However, it has been unable to capture Ukrainian cities and has made only incremental gains across rural areas. Russia occupies about 20% of Ukraine, including the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia seized in 2014.

On the roughly 1,250-kilometer (750-mile) front line stretching across eastern and southern parts of Ukraine, short-handed Ukrainian defenders are getting ready for a new offensive by Russia's larger army.

The commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces, Gen. Oleksandr Syrskiy, said Russian troops have in recent days made simultaneous attempts to break through defense lines in several strategic areas.

One thing Zelenskyy says he has insisted on and will continue to do so — a territorial compromise and giving up land will not be on Ukraine's agenda.

UConn and Hurley muscle their way to 3rd national title game in 4 seasons, beating Illinois 71-62

By MICHAEL MAROT AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Dan Hurley had UConn ready for another Final Four fight night. Once again, his Huskies scored a knockout.

Fabulous freshman Braylon Mullins made another last-minute 3-pointer — his only basket of the second half — and the Huskies muscled their way past Illinois 71-62 on Saturday to reach their third national championship game in four years.

Tarris Reed Jr. had 17 points and 11 rebounds and Mullins finished with 15 points as the Huskies (34-5) rode strong inside play and tough defense to their 19th straight victory in the Sweet 16 or later rounds of the NCAA Tournament.

They'll face Michigan with a chance to win their seventh national title, all since 1999, as Hurley tries to become the only active coach with more than two championships.

"We're a tough program, we're a group of fighters," said Hurley, who won it all in 2023 and 2024. "We've got incredible will. We go into these games, we're ready for battle. For us, it's not a game that we're just kind of running around in uniforms throwing the ball around, hoping it goes in. That's not what we're doing out there. We're fighting. It's a life-and-death struggle for us to get to Monday night for the opportunity to win a championship."

Mullins sent the Huskies past Duke, the top overall seed, in the Elite Eight last weekend with the shot of the tourney — a 35-foot 3-pointer with 0.4 seconds left. He was equally effective this time, a short drive from his hometown of Greenfield, Indiana.

After Silas Demary Jr. secured an offensive rebound, Mullins hit a catch-and-shoot 3 with 52 seconds left that gave UConn a 66-59 and thwarted Illinois' late charge.

"The set was going to be run for anybody on the team. You've just got to shoot with confidence," Mullins said. "Just trying to find the best look on the floor, and I know our point guards are going to get us the ball, so I think that was the biggest shot I hit tonight."

UConn needed it on a night star forward Alex Karaban struggled with his shot. He had nine points on 1-of-8 shooting while adding four rebounds and four assists as he tied Hurley's brother, Bobby, for second in career March Madness victories by a player with 18. A win Monday also would make him the first player since John Wooden's dominant UCLA teams in the 1960s and 1970s to finish as a three-time champion.

Thanks in part to Karaban, the Huskies haven't lost a tournament game played past the opening weekend since 2009, when they fell in the national semifinals to Michigan State. With one more victory, they would break a tie with North Carolina and move into third place alone in national titles, trailing only UCLA (11) and Kentucky (eight).

Freshman guard Keaton Wagler had 20 points and eight rebounds to lead the Fighting Illini (28-9), who reached their first Final Four since losing the championship game to UNC in 2005.

Wagler and Mullins became the first pair of freshmen to top 15 points in a Final Four game since Michael Jordan and Patrick Ewing in 1982.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 43 of 62

"It's margins, they're so small," said Illinois' Brad Underwood, a 62-year-old coaching lifer who reached his first Final Four. "Getting here is really hard. Winning is really hard. It's why I have so much appreciation for Alex Karaban. He's been to three of them. That's freaky. It's a rebound, it's a loose ball, it's a ball rolling in, it's a banked 3."

Tomislav Ivisic had 16 points and seven rebounds for the Illini, who couldn't replicate the blueprint that carried them to double-digit victories over Penn, VCU, Houston and Iowa. Illinois made just 3 of 14 3-pointers in the first half and finished 6 of 26 beyond the arc.

UConn took full advantage even though the Huskies had two long scoring droughts — nearly six minutes in the first half and more than six minutes in the second. The latter allowed Illinois to charge back from its biggest deficit of the season, 57-43 with 9:43 to play, to get within 57-53 with 5:03 remaining.

But the Huskies answered and closed it out at the free-throw line for their fifth straight win in the series. UConn beat Illinois 74-61 on Nov. 28 in Madison Square Garden, and now the Huskies have held the Illini to their two lowest scoring totals and shooting percentages of the season. UConn also beat Illinois 77-52 in the Elite Eight two years ago.

"We held them to 35 percent (shooting)," Underwood said. "They just made more 3s than we did."

And finished with a little more punch.

"The year hasn't been a joy ride," Hurley said. "We haven't been a machine of destruction. We've been a team that's had to grind out games like this."

Southern California wildfire mostly contained as officials lift many evacuation orders

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (AP) — A smoky wildfire in southern California that broke out a day earlier and prompted evacuation orders was mostly under control Saturday afternoon, fire officials said.

Encompassing roughly 6.3 square miles (about 16 square kilometers) in Riverside County, about 64 miles (103 kilometers) east of Los Angeles, the Springs Fire was no longer growing and at least 75% percent contained Saturday, said Terra Fernandez, public safety information specialist for the Riverside County Fire Department. It was 25% contained on Friday.

Fire officials also lifted evacuation orders for a large swath of neighborhoods Saturday morning. Fernandez said she expected the rest will be lifted by the end of the day.

"It's pretty much under control," Fernandez said.

The fire was fueled by strong Santa Ana winds with gusts predicted to get up to 45 mph (72 kph) on Saturday. But winds had "dissipated a bit" since Friday, helping the efforts of fire crews, Fernandez said. Natural equestrian trails around the area also helped firefighters make access to the fire and build effective containment lines around its perimeter, she said.

So far, no structures have been damaged or destroyed.

Crews began early Saturday dropping water and retardant all around the fire by air. About 260 personnel are battling the blaze, including crews from around the region who are building and strengthening the containment lines and laying hose, she said.

A handful of zones in the county remained under mandatory evacuation orders. It was not immediately known how many households were affected by the orders.

The fire is located in a populated unincorporated part of Riverside County that is a recreational area near the city of Moreno Valley, which has a population of roughly 200,000.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Artemis II toilet acts up again as astronauts speed toward the moon to break Apollo 13's record

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Now more than halfway to the moon, the Artemis II astronauts prepared for their historic lunar fly-around to push deeper into space than even the Apollo astronauts.

On the downside, their toilet is on the blink again.

The three Americans and one Canadian are set to reach their destination Monday, photographing the mysterious lunar far side as they zoom around. It is the first moon-bound crew in more than 53 years, picking up where NASA's Apollo program left off.

"The Earth is quite small, and the moon is definitely getting bigger," pilot Victor Glover reported.

Until the Orion capsule's bathroom is fixed, Mission Control has instructed the astronauts to break out more of the backup urine collection bags. The so-called lunar loo malfunctioned following Wednesday's liftoff and has been hit-and-miss ever since. A version of the Artemis II toilet was tested on the International Space Station several years ago.

Engineers suspect ice may be blocking the line that is preventing urine from completely flushing overboard. The toilet is still open for No. 2 business.

Debbie Korth, NASA's Orion program deputy manager, said the astronauts have also reported a smell coming from the bathroom, which is buried in the floor of the capsule with a door and curtain for privacy.

"Space toilets and bathrooms are something everybody can really understand .. it's always a challenge," she said, noting that the space shuttle toilet was also often on the fritz.

John Honeycutt, chair of the mission management team, said it is human nature to be interested in the space commode, and even though it is "in a good state right now," he'd like it to be working at 100%.

"They're OK," he said of the astronauts. "They trained to manage through the situation."

Artemis II is poised to set a distance record for humans, traveling more than 252,000 miles (400,000 kilometers) from Earth before hanging a U-turn behind the moon and heading home without stopping or entering lunar orbit. The record is currently held by Apollo 13.

The Canadian Space Agency celebrated the country's role in the mission, speaking from Quebec with astronaut Jeremy Hansen as he headed toward his lunar rendezvous. Hansen is the first non-U.S. citizen to fly to the moon.

"Today he is making history for Canada," Canadian Space Agency President Lisa Campbell said. "As we watch him taking this bold step into the unknown, let his journey remind us that Canada's future is written by those who dare to reach for more."

In the live televised linkup, Hansen said he has already witnessed "extraordinary" views from NASA's Orion capsule.

Hansen, Glover, Reid Wiseman and Christina Koch are the world's first lunar astronauts since Apollo 17's crew of three in 1972. Koch and Glover are the first female and first Black astronauts to the moon, respectively.

Their nearly 10-day mission — ending with a Pacific splashdown on April 10 — is the first step in NASA's bold plans for a sustainable moon base. The space agency is aiming for a landing by two astronauts near the lunar south pole in 2028.

Trump gives Iran 48 hours to open Strait of Hormuz as search continues for missing US pilot

By SAM MEDNICK, SAMY MAGDY and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump warned Iran to open the crucial Strait of Hormuz by his Monday deadline and Tehran called his threat "unbalanced and foolish." The search for a missing U.S. military pilot continued Saturday in a remote part of the Islamic Republic.

Trump has called Tehran "beaten and completely decimated" in the war, now in its sixth week, but the

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 45 of 62

downing of two U.S. warplanes on Friday and Iran's call to find the "enemy pilot" have again raised the stakes.

"The doors of hell will be opened to you" if Iran's infrastructure is attacked, Gen. Ali Abdollahi Aliabadi with the country's joint military command said late Saturday in response to Trump's renewed threat, state media reported. In turn, the general threatened all infrastructure used by the U.S. military in the region.

The war began with joint U.S.-Israel strikes on Feb. 28 and has killed thousands, shaken global markets, cut off key shipping routes and spiked fuel prices. Both sides have threatened, and hit, civilian targets, bringing warnings of possible war crimes.

"We will continue to crush them," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, and confirmed that Israel's military struck a petrochemical complex in Mahshahr that he said helps to fund the war. Five people were killed and 170 injured, Iranian state media reported, citing a provincial security official.

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran said that an airstrike hit near its Bushehr nuclear facility, killing a security guard and damaging a support building. The head of Russia's state nuclear corporation, Rosatom, said that 198 workers were being evacuated. It was the fourth time the facility was targeted.

Hopes for talks

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Tahir Andrabi, told The Associated Press that his government's efforts to broker a ceasefire are "right on track" after Islamabad last week said that it would soon host talks between the U.S. and Iran.

Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, said that Iranian officials "have never refused to go to Islamabad."

Mediators from Pakistan, Turkey and Egypt were working to bring the U.S. and Iran to the negotiating table, according to two regional officials.

The proposed compromise includes a cessation of hostilities to allow a diplomatic settlement, according to a regional official involved in the efforts and a Gulf diplomat briefed on the matter. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss closed-door diplomacy.

Trump reminded Iran of his deadline in a social media post: "Remember when I gave Iran ten days to MAKE A DEAL or OPEN UP THE HORMUZ STRAIT. Time is running out — 48 hours before all Hell will reign down on them."

A missing US pilot

The U.S. warplane, identified by Iran as a F-15E Strike Eagle, was one of two attacked on Friday. Iran's joint military command on Saturday said that it also struck two U.S. Black Hawk helicopters, but the AP couldn't independently verify that.

The search for the U.S. pilot focused on a mountainous region in Iran's southwestern province of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad. An anchor on a channel affiliated with Iranian state television urged residents to hand over any "enemy pilot" to police.

In an email from the Pentagon, obtained by the AP, the military said that it received notification of "an aircraft being shot down" in the Middle East. A U.S. crew member was rescued. The Pentagon notified the U.S. House Armed Services Committee that the status of a second service member wasn't known.

Trump told NBC News that what happened wouldn't affect negotiations with Iran.

Iranian state media reported that airstrikes in southwestern Iran on Saturday killed at least three people and wounded others — in the same area where the missing American crew member is believed to be.

A second U.S. Air Force combat aircraft went down in the Middle East on Friday, according to a U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive military situation. It wasn't clear if the aircraft crashed or was shot down, or whether Iran was involved.

Iranian state media said a U.S. A-10 attack aircraft crashed in the Persian Gulf after being struck by Iran's defense forces.

Oracle's Dubai headquarters struck

The Dubai offices of tech company Oracle was hit after Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard threatened the firm. Footage verified by the AP outside the UAE showed a large hole in the building's southwestern corner.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 46 of 62

The sheikhdom's Dubai Media Office, which speaks for its government, noted a "minor incident caused by debris from an aerial interception that fell on the facade," saying there were no injuries. Oracle Corp., based in Texas, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Guard has accused some large U.S. tech companies of being involved in "terrorist espionage" operations against the Islamic Republic and called them legitimate targets. Amazon Web Services facilities in the UAE and Bahrain were hit in earlier drone strikes.

The Bab el-Mandeb Strait

Iran's parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, issued a veiled threat late Friday to disrupt traffic through a second strategic waterway in the region, the Bab el-Mandeb.

The strait, 32 kilometers (20 miles) wide, links the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. More than a tenth of seaborne global oil and a quarter of container ships pass through it.

"Which countries and companies account for the highest transit volumes through the strait?" Qalibaf wrote.

More than 1,900 people have been killed in Iran since the war began.

In Gulf Arab states and the occupied West Bank, more than two dozen people have died, while 19 have been reported dead in Israel and 13 U.S. service members have been killed. In Lebanon, more than 1,400 people have been killed and there have been more than 1 million displaced people. Ten Israeli soldiers have died there.

Trump administration asks appeals court to pause order halting White House ballroom construction

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is arguing that a judge's order to halt construction of a \$400 million ballroom creates a security risk for President Donald Trump as it asks a federal appeals court to pause the ruling.

In a motion filed Friday, National Park Service lawyers say that the federal judge's order to suspend construction of the new facility is "threatening grave national-security harms to the White House, the President and his family, and the President's staff."

"Time is of the essence!" the lawyers write, citing materials that will be installed to make a "heavily fortified" facility. The ballroom construction also includes bomb shelters, military installations and a medical facility, according to the filing. The ballroom is part of President Donald Trump's plans to quickly remake Washington.

U.S. District Judge Richard Leon in Washington on Tuesday ordered the temporary pause of the construction project that has included demolishing the East Wing of the White House. He concluded that unless Congress approves the project, the preservationist group suing to stop it is likely to succeed on the merits of its claims because "no statute comes close to giving the President the authority he claims to have."

The judge suspended enforcement of his order for 14 days acknowledging that the administration would appeal his decision.

Leon's ruling and the appeal come the same week a key agency tasked with approving construction on federal property in the Washington region gave final approval to the project.

In his ruling Leon, who was nominated by Republican President George W. Bush, suspended enforcement of his order recognizing that "halting an ongoing construction project may raise logistical issues."

Leon also addressed national security in his ruling, saying that he reviewed information that the government privately submitted to him and concluded that halting construction wouldn't jeopardize national security. He exempted any construction work that is necessary for the safety and security of the White House from the scope of the injunction.

Trump lashed out at the ruling, but also noted that it would allow work on underground bunkers and other security measures around the White House grounds to continue — even though those will be paid for by taxpayers. Trump has pledged that he, along with private donors, will cover the costs for the ballroom construction.

But the National Park Service argues in its motion that the president has “complete authority to renovate the White House” and the current state of the grounds, which is an open construction site, make it harder to protect the White House.

“Canvas tents, which are necessary without a ballroom, are significantly more vulnerable to missiles, drones, and other threats than a hardened national security facility,” the motion says.

The Trump administration is asking the appeals court to make a decision on its request by Friday. It also asked that the 14-day suspension of Leon’s order be extended by another two weeks so that the case can be taken to the Supreme Court.

Judge halts Trump effort requiring colleges to show they aren’t considering race in admissions

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A federal judge has halted efforts by the Trump administration to collect data that proves higher education institutions aren’t considering race in admissions.

The ruling from U.S. District Court Judge F. Dennis Saylor IV in Boston on Friday granting the preliminary injunction follows a lawsuit filed last month by a coalition of 17 Democratic state attorneys general. It will only apply to public universities in plaintiffs.

The federal judge said the federal government likely has the authority to collect the data, but the demand was rolled out to universities in a “rushed and chaotic” manner.

“The 120-day deadline imposed by the President led directly to the failure of NCEES (National Center for Education Statistics) to engage meaningfully with the institutions during the notice-and-comment process to address the multitude of problems presented by the new requirements,” Saylor wrote.

President Donald Trump ordered the data collection in August after he raised concerns that colleges and universities were using personal statements and other proxies to consider race, which he views as illegal discrimination.

In 2023, the Supreme Court ruled against the use of affirmative action in admissions but said colleges could still consider how race has shaped students’ lives if applicants share that information in their admissions essays.

The states argue the data collection risks invading student privacy and leading to baseless investigations of colleges and universities. They also argued that universities have not been given enough time to collect the data.

“The data has been sought in such a hasty and irresponsible way that it will create problems for universities,” a lawyer for the plaintiffs, Michelle Pascucci, told the court, adding that the effort seem was aimed at uncovering unlawful practices.

The Education Department has defended the effort, arguing taxpayers deserve transparency on how money is spent at institutions that receive federal funding.

The administration’s policy echoes settlement agreements the government negotiated with Brown University and Columbia University, restoring their federal research money. The universities agreed to give the government data on the race, grade-point average and standardized test scores of applicants, admitted students and enrolled students. The schools also agreed to be audited by the government and to release admissions statistics to the public.

The National Center for Education Statistics is to collect the new data, including the race and sex of colleges’ applicants, admitted students and enrolled students. Education Secretary Linda McMahon has said the data, which was originally due by March 18, must be disaggregated by race and sex and retroactively reported for the past seven years.

If colleges fail to submit timely, complete and accurate data, the administration has said McMahon can take action under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which outlines requirements for colleges receiving federal financial aid for students.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 48 of 62

The Trump administration separately has sued Harvard University over similar data, saying it refused to provide admissions records the Justice Department demanded to ensure the school stopped using affirmative action. Harvard has said the university has been responding to the government's requests and is in compliance with the high court ruling against affirmative action. On Monday, the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights directed Harvard to comply with the data requests within 20 days for face referral to the U.S. Justice Department.

A fire at a gas lighter factory near Bangladesh's capital kills 5 people

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — A fire broke out at a factory manufacturing gas lighters near Bangladesh's capital on Saturday afternoon, leaving at least five people dead, authorities said.

The blaze broke out in the Kadamtali area of Keraniganj near Dhaka, according to the fire service and civil defense.

Seven firefighting units were deployed to extinguish the blaze, which started in the afternoon, the fire department said. It took several hours to bring it under control.

Firefighters recovered five bodies by the evening and they couldn't immediately be identified.

The cause of the fire was under investigation.

US revokes green cards and visas of several Iranian nationals connected to Tehran government

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration has revoked the green cards or U.S. visas of at least four Iranian nationals connected to the current or former Iranian government, including two who have been detained by immigration authorities and are to be deported.

The latest actions were taken just this week when Secretary of State Marco Rubio determined they were no longer eligible for either lawful permanent resident status, or to enter the United States. The steps follow a move late last year in which the visas of several diplomats and staffers at Iran's mission to the United Nations were also revoked.

In a statement on Saturday, the State Department said the niece and grand-niece of former Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps chief Qassem Soleimani, who was killed in a U.S. airstrike near the Baghdad airport in 2020, had been arrested late Friday by immigration agents after Rubio revoked their green cards.

"Hamideh Soleimani Afshar and her daughter are now in the custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement," the statement said, adding that Afshar's husband has also been banned from entering the United States.

Afshar and her daughter had been living a "lavish lifestyle" in Los Angeles for many years while publicly supporting the Iranian government and anti-American attacks, according to the statement.

She is "an outspoken supporter of the Iranian regime who celebrated attacks on Americans and referred to our country as the "Great Satan," Rubio said in a post on X. "The Trump administration will not allow our country to become a home for foreign nationals who support anti-American terrorist regimes."

The Iranian mission to the U.N. had no comment Saturday.

Afshar and her daughter are just the latest Iranians to have their legal status in the U.S. rescinded by Rubio, who recently revoked the visas of Fatemeh Ardeshtir-Larijani, an academic and the daughter of Iran's former national security adviser Ali Larijani who was killed in a U.S.-Israel airstrike last month. Her husband, Seyed Kalantar Motamedi, also had his visa revoked, the State Department said. Neither are still in the U.S.

In early December, well before the surge of anti-government protests in Iran and the start of the war, the State Department revoked or declined to renew visas of several Iranian diplomats, including the deputy ambassador, and staffers at Iran's mission to the United Nations.

The department said Friday that action had been taken on Dec. 4 but declined to comment further "for privacy and security reasons" except to note that it was unrelated to either the protests or the war.

In rural Virginia, excitement and dread grows over Democrats' redistricting referendum

By OLIVIA DIAZ Associated Press/Report for America

LOUISA, Va. (AP) — Michael Shull never imagined that a Democrat from the wealthy suburbs of Washington would represent his community in Congress. His corner of Virginia, with its sprawling farms and winding country roads, has been electing Republicans for more than three decades.

Then came an unusual nationwide redistricting battle, with Democrats and Republicans redrawing congressional lines to boost their chances in November's midterm elections. Virginia could be next as voters consider a new map that would pair conservative rural areas with liberal suburbs, diluting Republicans' electoral clout.

"Politicians should be elected to be their people's voice," said Shull, a Republican member of Augusta County's board of supervisors. "Not their party's voice."

The vote on the constitutional amendment is on April 21, and early balloting has begun. If voters pass the referendum and it survives a court challenge, Shull's area within the county would be split between the 7th and 9th Congressional Districts. While the 9th District would be the state's lone Republican stronghold, the 7th District would resemble a lobster with the long tail beginning in Democrat-dominated Arlington and two claws reaching south into rural communities.

Congressional districts are usually redrawn once a decade, but President Donald Trump started a chain reaction last year by encouraging Texas Republicans to devise a new map to help the party in November. After a cascade of redistricting efforts, Republicans believe they can win a combined nine more U.S. House seats in Texas, Missouri, North Carolina and Ohio, while Democrats think they can win a total of six more seats in California and Utah. Virginia could give Democrats an extra four seats — enough to overturn the GOP's slim majority, at least as things stand now.

"It's about making sure that we fight back to what Trump's done," said U.S. Rep. Don Beyer, D-Va., He said the party needs to persuade voters that the referendum is "not about embracing gerrymandering."

"I feel optimistic, but it's close," he said.

A rural-urban divide

The referendum comes at a moment when Virginia Democrats have tried to make up ground in rural areas. Last year, Democrat Abigail Spanberger campaigned for governor in oyster towns and agrarian hamlets to engage with more conservative voters. Before that winning campaign, she had represented a congressional district that mixed city suburbs, exurbs and adjacent rural communities.

"Anyone who's doing their job will be responsive to the communities that they seek to represent," Spanberger said.

But her results were mixed. In counties where fewer people lived in rural areas, she outperformed Democrat Kamala Harris' Virginia showing in the 2024 presidential race by an average of 6 percentage points or 7 percentage points. In more rural counties, Spanberger gained about 2 percentage points to 4 percentage points.

Democrat Anthony Flaccavento, former congressional candidate and co-founder of the nonprofit Rural Urban Bridge Initiative, is torn over the referendum.

"At some level, it feels like kicking the can down the road — which is something that my party has done for a long time — when it comes to winning back rural and working-class voters," Flaccavento said.

A welcome change for some

Democrats in rural areas who are tired of being outnumbered by their Republican neighbors are embracing the redistricting plan.

"Fight Back, Vote Yes," said a sign at a No Kings protest in Louisa County. A second said, "Vote Yes.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 50 of 62

Stop ICE. No Kings.”

State Del. Dan Helmer, who helped spearhead the redistricting effort, greeted protesters and spoke to the cheering crowd. Helmer is now one of at least four Democrats running in the 7th District.

Helmer said Republicans “think that in red areas like Louisa and in rural areas, that people don’t know what’s going on. But I’m looking around right now, I see strong, proud patriots who know exactly what is going on, who know that we have an aspiring dictator who is trying to take away our democracy.”

Jennifer Lee, who has lived in Louisa for 33 years, said she was eager to support the new district lines. Lee said she felt Republicans were perpetuating a double standard, falsely claiming the 2020 presidential election won by Democrat Joe Biden was stolen from Trump but accepting his push to eliminate Democratic seats through gerrymandering.

“That’s their slogan, right? ‘Stop the steal,’” Lee said. “But they started ‘the steal.’ They’re stealing the seats now in all these districts.”

Democrats see a fight for survival

At a town hall hosted by Democrats at a rural Goochland County recreation center, voters nibbled on finger foods and passed around bottled water as they debated whether redistricting violated some kind of moral code.

“I’m sorry, morality just goes out the door right now. We have to do what it takes for us to survive,” said Bruce Silverman, a local nephrologist. He was voting “yes.”

At one point, Roberta Thacker-Oliver stood up to talk. She votes in the rural 9th District, which would become even more Republican with the new map.

“In the redistricting, the 9th is going to become bigger and redder,” she said, adding, “I need to know what to tell my community about why they need to take one for the team.”

“What do we tell them?” she said.

US military jets hit in Iran war are the first shot down by enemy fire in over 20 years

By BEN FINLEY and JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Iran shooting down two American military jets marks an exceedingly rare assault for the U.S. that has not happened in more than 20 years and shows the Islamic Republic’s continued ability to hit back despite President Donald Trump asserting it has been “completely decimated.”

The attacks came five weeks after U.S. and Israeli strikes first pounded Iran, with Trump saying earlier this week that Tehran’s “ability to launch missiles and drones is dramatically curtailed.”

Iran shot down a U.S. F15-E Strike Eagle fighter jet Friday, with one service member getting rescued and the search still underway for a second, U.S. officials say. Iranian state media also said a U.S. A-10 attack aircraft crashed after being hit by Iranian defense forces.

The last time a U.S. warplane was shot down by enemy fire in combat was an A-10 Thunderbolt II during the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, said retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Houston Cantwell, a former F-16 fighter pilot.

But, he said, that’s because the U.S. had largely been fighting insurgents who didn’t have the same anti-aircraft capabilities. The fact that there have not been more fighter jets lost in Iran, Cantwell said, is a testament to the capabilities of U.S. forces.

“The fact that this hasn’t happened until now is an absolute miracle,” said Cantwell, who served four combat tours and is now a senior resident fellow at the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies. “We’re flying combat missions here, they are being shot at every day.”

Shoulder-fired missile likely used, experts say

U.S. Central Command said in a statement Wednesday that American forces have flown more than 13,000 missions in the Iran war while striking more than 12,300 targets.

After more than a month of punishing U.S.-Israeli airstrikes, a degraded Iranian military nonetheless remains a stubborn foe. Its steady stream of strikes against Israel and Gulf Arab neighbors have been causing regional upheaval and global economic shock.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 51 of 62

When it comes to American dominance over Iran's airspace, there's still a distinction between air superiority and air supremacy, said Behnam Ben Taleblu, Iran program senior director at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a hawkish Washington think tank.

"A disabled air defense system is not a destroyed air defense system," he said. "We shouldn't be shocked that they're still fighting."

American planes have been flying missions at lower altitudes, which makes them more vulnerable to Iran's missiles, Taleblu said. It's possible that Iran fired at the F-15 with a surface-to-air missile, but it's more likely that a portable, shoulder-fired missile was used, he said. Those are much harder to detect and reflect how Iran is "weak but still lethal."

"This is a regime that is fighting for its life," he said.

Mark Cancian, a retired Marine colonel and a senior defense adviser with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, agreed that a shoulder-fired missile was likely used against the fighter jet.

Nonetheless, the American air war against Iran has been a "tremendous success" so far, he said.

To put things in perspective, he said the loss rate for American warplanes flying over Germany during World War II was 3% at one point, which would equal about 350 warplanes in the U.S. war against Iran.

"But then there's the political side — you have a American public that is accustomed to fighting bloodless wars," Cancian said. "Then a large part of the country doesn't support the war. So to them, any loss is unacceptable."

Pilots are trained on what to do if their plane is hit

The last U.S. jet shot down in combat was struck by an Iraqi surface-to-air missile over Baghdad on April 8, 2003. The pilot safely ejected and was rescued, according to the Air Force.

In high-threat environments like missions over Iran, Cantwell, the retired general, said an aviator's blood pressure goes up and they become highly alert to incoming missiles. Those are typically either infrared- or radar-guided missiles, he said, requiring different evasive tactics.

If they are hit and need to eject from their aircraft, they are trained on what to do next, he said.

Pilots learn to check for wounds after a violent ejection and the shock of a missile explosion and, most crucially, how they are going to communicate their location so rescuers can find them.

At the same time, he said, the enemy is likely working to intercept the communications or even spoof the location.

Helicopters are more at risk than other aircraft

The planes that went down Friday were not the first crewed American aircraft to be lost overall in Iran.

A military helicopter and airplane exploded in 1980 during an aborted mission to rescue several dozen American hostages at the U.S. embassy in Tehran, according to the Air Force Historical Support Division.

After a series of setbacks, including severe dust storms and mechanical failures, the mission was called off. As the aircraft took off, the rotor blades of one of the RH-53 helicopters collided with an EC-130 aircraft full of fuel and both exploded, killing eight.

More U.S. helicopters have been shot down in recent decades, including a MH-47 Army Chinook helicopter that was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade in Afghanistan in 2005, killing 16. Helicopters are more dangerous because "the lower and the slower, the more susceptible you are," Cantwell said.

That's why those who went out on this week's rescue missions, likely in helicopters, he said, did "such a brave and honorable act."

As Trump orders UFO data released, a question hangs: If aliens exist, what would they think of us?

By COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

For generations, human beings have wondered: What would alien life from another planet be like? But we rarely ask the opposite: What would they think of us?

It's a question that can produce some, well, uncomfortable answers if you happen to be an earthling.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 52 of 62

"If I were looking at Earth from a distance, I would be pretty disappointed," theoretical physicist Avi Loeb says. "Most of our investing is dealing with conflicts to prevent other people from killing us or us killing others. Look at the Ukraine war over a little bit of territory. That is not a sign of intelligence."

The debate on whether little green men or UFOs are among us escalated in February when former President Barack Obama, responding to a podcaster's question, said aliens are "real," but he "hasn't seen them" and "they're not being kept at Area 51." President Donald Trump later announced on social media that he was directing release of government files because of "tremendous interest."

Stepped-up interest in UFOs also is swirling as the United States heads back toward the moon with Wednesday's launch of NASA's Artemis II mission. The four astronauts aboard will do a fly-around of the moon before returning to Earth.

In a world riven by war, civil unrest, climate change and divisiveness, it's easy to wonder what newcomers to Planet Earth might make of us and our struggles. Whatever the case, well over a majority of Americans echo the sentiment of the slogan from "The X-Files": "The truth is out there."

A 2021 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center showed about two-thirds of Americans said their best guess is that intelligent life exists on other planets. About half of U.S. adults said UFOs reported by people in the military are "definitely" or "probably" evidence of intelligent life outside Earth.

"We don't want to think this is the only place in this extraordinarily and incomprehensibly large universe where life and intelligence and even technology have emerged," says Bill Diamond, president and chief executive of the SETI Institute in Mountain View, California.

"It sort of says about humans, 'We don't want to be alone.'"

Something is up there. But what?

Americans have been fascinated by the thought of life outside this planet following the recovery of debris in 1947 near Roswell, New Mexico. The military initially said the material was from a flying disc, only to reverse course and tell the public it was from a weather balloon.

Hollywood ran with it. Flying saucers, little green men and eventually humanoid gray aliens became part of popular culture. April 5 even is celebrated annually throughout the iconic "Star Trek" franchise as "First Contact Day" to mark the date in 2063 when humankind, in "Trek" canon, first made contact with Vulcans.

Much in the popular culture suggests any aliens might be aggressive. Priscilla Wald, who teaches about science fiction at Duke University, has a theory as to why.

"It seems to me it's a reflection on who we are, that we're projecting onto aliens the way we treat each other," Wald says. "So the aliens are coming down, they want to conquer us, they're violent. Who does that sound like? It sounds like us."

In 2024, the Pentagon released hundreds of reports of unidentified and unexplained aerial phenomena. However, that review gave no indications that their origins were extraterrestrial.

On two separate occasions, Debbie Dmytro saw things in the sky over Michigan's southern Oakland County. The greenish object Dmytro says she saw March 1 in the sky over Royal Oak, Michigan, looked like neither plane nor helicopter. Dmytro, a 56-year-old medical professional, acknowledges that it could have been some type of commercial or delivery drone.

What she saw in 2023 in the same general area north of Detroit is not so easily explained.

"Four yellow lights, yellowish golden lights and they were all flying very, very low," Dmytro remembers. She says the lights were about 100 feet (30 meters) up at their nearest.

"I've never seen anything so low without any noise and flying in complete uniformity," she says. "Is it something man-made? Is it something that's not manmade? Who knows?"

Who knows indeed? UFOs, the term for unidentified flying objects, has in recent years given way to UAP — unidentified aerial phenomena or unidentified anomalous phenomena.

"Absolutely, there are such things" as UAPs and UFOs, says Diamond, whose SETI — Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence — seeks to explore, search and understand the nature of life and intelligence in the universe.

"People observe things in the sky that they can't immediately identify or recognize as either human

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 53 of 62

engineering such as planes or drones or helicopters, or animals, such as birds, and therefore they don't know what they are," Diamond says.

Time for the truth

Like so many, Dmytro wants to know what the government knows. "I think there's more information out there. I'm open to learning more," she says. "I have an open mind. It's always about scientific proof."

Retired Rear Adm. Timothy Gallaudet says evidence clearly shows there are UAP zipping around the airspace and in the oceans.

"The nonhuman intelligence that operates them or controls them are absolutely real," Gallaudet says. "We've recovered crashed craft. We don't know if they're extraterrestrial in origin."

Gallaudet worked as acting administrator for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He participated in a 2024 congressional hearing on UAP disclosure and says the release of government files promised by Trump is something people find of interest. He just hopes the president follows through.

There are billions of galaxies in the universe and each has billions of stars, so the likelihood life developed elsewhere is fairly high, according to University of Michigan Astronomy Professor Edwin Bergin, who teaches about looking for life elsewhere. He believes that if intelligent beings navigated vast distances to reach Earth they would make themselves known — despite humanity's penchant for creating chaos.

"I would think that they would look at us like we were crazy ... but they would come out," he says. "I mean, why come here otherwise unless you're going to sit and observe."

Loeb, director of the Institute for Theory & Computation at Harvard and head of the university's Galileo Project for the Systematic Scientific Search for Evidence of Extraterrestrial Technological Artifacts, believes in the likely existence of extraterrestrials.

"They might be laughing at us," he says. "They might be watching us ... to make sure we will not become predators, that we will not become dangerous to them."

In the interest of national security

Much of the government's secrecy around UFOs and UAP is tied to national security concerns, according to Diamond.

"We have pretty advanced technologies, satellite, ground-based that are for various purposes mostly national security and defense that are pointing at the sky or things on board aircraft," Diamond says. "Sometimes these pick up objects. The technology behind it is sensitive and protected."

Government data, including a "trove" of UAP video the Navy is sitting on, should be shared with scientists for research and a better understanding of the characteristics of the objects, says Gallaudet, who spent 32 years in the Navy and viewed classified UAP video.

"When you look at these things in our airspace having near collisions with our aircraft, that's a real valid concern," he says. "We are just not sure of what they are and what they intend to do with their interaction with humanity. That could be a national security threat, or not."

"When has ignorance ever been a good national strategy?" Gallaudet asks. "Whether it be scary, harmful or not, or a mix, I think seeking the truth is in our best interest."

Meanwhile, Diamond doesn't think any "true alien encounter could be kept secret."

"If any civilization has mastered interstellar travel, they have technology and capabilities beyond our wildest comprehension," he says. "If they want to interact, they will; if they don't, they won't. If they want to be seen, they will be, and if not, they won't be!"

Death toll from Afghan quake rises, including 8 members of refugee family returned from Iran

By ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

ITTEFAQ, Afghanistan (AP) — For several minutes after the earthquake struck, he could hear their screams. Then there was silence.

Mohibullah Niazi, a neighbor who helped in the rescue efforts, said Saturday that the eight people killed on the outskirts of Kabul after a 5.8 magnitude earthquake struck northern Afghanistan the previous night

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 54 of 62

were a refugee family recently returned from neighboring Iran.

There was only one survivor: a boy of around 3 years old, who was injured and has been hospitalized in Kabul.

Afghanistan's deputy government spokesman Hamdullah Fitrat on Saturday increased the overall death toll from the quake to 12, with another four people injured. Fitrat said five homes were destroyed and another 33 significantly damaged, affecting 40 families in the provinces of Kabul, Panjshir, Logar, Nangarhar, Laghman and Nuristan.

The Afghanistan Disaster Management Authority put the overall death toll at nine. The reason for the discrepancy was not immediately clear.

The family near Kabul was among the millions of Afghan refugees who have recently returned from Iran and Pakistan, after both countries launched crackdowns in 2023 on foreigners — particularly Afghans — living in their countries.

They had arrived 15 days ago and were living in a tent on land next to Niazi's home. The family head, Najibullah, who was about 50 years old, "had no other shelter," Niazi said. "He was a very poor person."

'We tried our best'

The family had set their tent up next to a wall separating the plot of land from Niazi's home, which stood on higher ground, in the village of Ittefaq on the eastern outskirts of the Afghan capital.

Heavy rains over the past several days, which have led to deadly floods in many parts of Afghanistan, had left the ground sodden and soft. When the earthquake struck, the wall collapsed on the family.

"My daughter shouted to me that a wall had fallen on them. The whole family ran, but there were so many big rocks," Niazi recounted Saturday as he stood at the scene. "We tried our best."

On Saturday morning, piles of bricks and mud were all that were left, along with blankets, cooking utensils and other personal belongings salvaged from the rubble and set into a pile.

"For about three minutes, I could hear the voices of these people," Niazi said. "But we couldn't do anything. There were two or three of us, but this was not the work of three people."

Neighbors soon rushed to help, digging through the mud and rubble with spades and their hands. They alerted the local Taliban police checkpoint, which sent rescuers and ambulances.

The young boy, Aarash, was pulled out alive but injured, and rushed to the hospital. Health Ministry spokesperson Sharafat Zaman, who visited the boy Saturday, said he was being treated for a severe head injury.

For the rest of the family — the father and mother, four daughters aged between 12 and 23, and two sons — it was too late. The rescuers could only recover their bodies.

Niazi said he had hosted the family in his own home one night. On Friday, just half an hour before the earthquake struck, he had renewed the offer, telling the family they could spend the night in his own guest room to shelter from the cold and rain. "But they did not come with me," he said.

A string of deadly quakes

Friday night's quake had an epicenter in the Hindu Kush mountain range, about 150 kilometers (90 miles) east of the northern city of Kunduz, according to the Euro-Mediterranean Seismological Center and the U.S. Geological Survey. The area is roughly 290 kilometers (180 miles) northeast of Kabul.

Afghanistan lies in a highly seismically active part of the world, and quakes have caused thousands of deaths in recent years.

Last August, a 6.0 earthquake that struck a remote, mountainous part of eastern Afghanistan killed more than 2,200 people. Most casualties were in Kunar province, where people typically live in wood and mud-brick houses along steep valleys.

In November, a 6.3 earthquake struck Samangan province in northern Afghanistan, killing at last 27 people and injuring more than 950. It also damaged historical sites, including Afghanistan's famed Blue Mosque in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif, and the Bagh-e-Jahan Nama Palace in Khulm.

On Oct. 7, 2023, a 6.3 quake followed by strong aftershocks in western Afghanistan killed thousands of people.

Floods, landslides triggered by heavy rain in Afghanistan leave 77 dead in 10 days, authorities say

By ABDUL QAHAR AFGHAN Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Widespread flooding, landslides and lightning strikes triggered by heavy rain and storms across Afghanistan have left 77 people dead and 137 injured over the past 10 days, the country's Disaster Management Authority said Saturday.

More rain has been forecast for the coming days throughout Afghanistan, and the authority warned the public to stay away from river banks and areas prone to flooding.

So far this year, dozens of people have died due to extreme weather in Afghanistan, an impoverished country that is highly vulnerable to extreme weather events. Earlier this year, heavy snowfall and flash floods left dozens of people dead across the country.

The recent toll includes 26 people killed over the past 48 hours, the disaster authority said. Overall, 793 homes have been completely destroyed and a further 2,673 have been damaged, while floods and landslides have destroyed 337 kilometers (about 210 miles) of roads, it said.

Businesses, agricultural land, water wells and irrigation canals have also been damaged, with more than 5,800 families affected overall, the authority said.

Several highways connecting the country's capital to the provinces have also been damaged by floods and landslides, forcing travelers to take long, circuitous routes to reach Kabul, Public Works Ministry spokesman Ashraf Haqshinas said Saturday.

They include the Kabul to Jalalabad highway, which is the main route linking the capital to the Pakistani border and eastern Afghan provinces. A landslide and rockfalls, as well as flooding, shut the highway on Thursday morning, and Haqshinas said crews were working to re-open the road.

The Public Works Ministry warned travelers to be cautious when using roads in affected areas.

Flooding has also shut the Salang Pass, a high mountain pass in the Hindu Kush mountain range that connects Kabul to the country's north, including the major cities of Kunduz and Mazar-e-Sharif.

Snow and heavy rain often trigger flash floods that kill scores, or even hundreds, of people at a time in Afghanistan. In 2024, more than 300 people died in springtime flash floods.

Russia and Ukraine trade deadly strikes as Zelenskyy travels to Istanbul for talks with Erdogan

By VOLODYMYR YURCHUK Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia and Ukraine traded deadly strikes overnight and on Saturday morning, killing 10 people and wounding several dozen more, officials on both sides said Saturday.

The attacks came as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy traveled to Istanbul for talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He will also meet with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of Eastern Orthodox Christians.

"We are working to strengthen our partnership to ensure the real protection of lives, advance stability, and guarantee security in Europe and the Middle East. Joint efforts always yield the best results," Zelenskyy said in a post on the messaging app Telegram after arriving in Istanbul.

Russia fired 286 drones at Ukraine overnight, 260 of which were downed, the Ukrainian Air Force said in an online statement.

Five people — three women and two men — were killed in the city of Nikopol in the Dnipropetrovsk region, and 19 others were wounded, the head of the regional military administration Oleksandr Hanzha said. The attack damaged market stalls and a shop.

In the city of Sumy, not far from the border with Russia, a strike wounded 11 people, the National Police said. Residential areas were hit, and houses, cars and utility networks were damaged in the attack.

In the capital, Kyiv, a drone strike caused a fire on the first floor of a three-story office and warehouse building, Ukraine's State Emergency Service said. No casualties were reported.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 56 of 62

In the partially occupied Donetsk region, a Russian drone strike hit a civilian car on the Kostyantynivka–Druzhkivka road on Saturday morning, killing one woman and wounding another, according to the head of the Kostyantynivka City Military Administration, Serhiy Horbunov.

The Russian Defense Ministry claimed Saturday that its forces fired “long-range air- and ground-based precision weapons, as well as strike drones” at unspecified “military-industrial and energy facilities used by the Ukrainian Armed Forces.”

Meanwhile, the Russian-installed head of the occupied Luhansk region, Leonid Pasechnik, said Ukrainian forces hit railroad infrastructure in the region and private houses, killing a family of three — a couple and their 8-year-old child.

The Security Service of Ukraine, also known as the SBU, claimed it used drone strikes to halt production at a metallurgical plant in the Russian-occupied city of Alchevsk in the Luhansk region, most of which is controlled by the Russian forces.

The SBU said on its Facebook page that drone strikes damaged blast furnaces, key production workshops, distillation columns, gas pipelines and electrical substations that power the plant, which supplies Russia’s state tank and railroad car plant, Uralvagonzavod.

There was no immediate comment from Russian officials.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that the Russian military overnight shot down 85 Ukrainian drones over nine Russian regions, the annexed Crimea region and the Black Sea.

In Russia’s Rostov region, on the border with Ukraine, one person was killed and four sustained injuries, according to the region’s governor, Yuri Slyusar. The attack sparked a fire at a warehouse facility of an unspecified logistics company, and another fire on a dry-cargo vessel flying a foreign flag several kilometers from the shore, Slyusar said.

In the Samara region’s city of Tolyatti, one person was wounded, Gov. Vyacheslav Fedorishchev said. The roof of a residential building was damaged and windows were shattered in several apartments, he said.

Trump’s go-it-alone certainty confronts the uncertainties of war

By STEVEN SLOAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump did not equivocate in his first live address to Americans about the war in Iran.

“We’ve beaten and completely decimated Iran,” he said in a prime-time speech from the White House on Wednesday. “They are decimated both militarily and economically and in every other way.”

He added: “Their radar is 100% annihilated. We are unstoppable as a military force.”

His certitude is now colliding with the uncertainty of war.

The American fighter jet that was shot down in Iran on Friday was a searing reminder of the dangers associated with war, prompting a search operation that resulted in the rescue of one crew member. Another U.S. aircraft was hit by Iranian air defenses, Iranian state media reported, days after Trump said Iran had “no anti-aircraft equipment.”

For the Republican president, who did not appear in public Friday, the developments were the latest example of his triumphal characterization of the war appearing misplaced.

He has expressed surprise at Iran’s moves to strike its Gulf neighbors. He has struggled to respond to Iran’s move largely shuttering the Strait of Hormuz, disrupting global oil supplies and sending pump prices soaring in the United States. His overtures to world leaders to help him reopen the vital waterway have been rebuffed, with some allies waiting for the fighting to end before addressing that situation and others openly critical of a war that Trump chose to initiate.

Trump has long relied on unyielding self-confidence to propel him through the worlds of business and politics, boasting during the 2016 campaign that “I alone can fix it.” That has often translated into a go-it-alone approach where only Trump has the answers in a chaotic world and dysfunctional Washington. This view of the presidency has justified his executive orders at home and tariffs that affect the global economy.

But the war with Iran, which he undertook alongside Israel and without consulting other allies or Congress, has provided a test like almost nothing before. For Trump, it is no longer “America First” but America

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 57 of 62

alone, and he is the principal.

"You can be the most assertive, aggressive president in the world but you don't control what happens overseas," said Julian Zelizer, a history professor at Princeton University.

Some traditional allies speak out

As the war enters its sixth week, that reality is becoming more apparent. Trump spent most of the first year of his second term using trade penalties as a weapon that would force other countries to bend to his will. Today, in a time of war, some traditional American allies are becoming more outspoken.

French President Emmanuel Macron said this week that the United States "can hardly complain afterward that they are not being supported in an operation they chose to undertake alone."

"This is not our operation," he said.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has not budged from his refusal to be drawn into the war despite fierce criticism by Trump. France and the United Kingdom are leading efforts to reopen the strait once the fighting ends.

At home, even some of Trump's fellow Republicans are reinforcing the need to maintain strong international relationships. After the president threatened to withdraw from NATO this week, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said there were not enough votes in the Senate to support that.

"We got an awful lot of people who think that NATO is a very critical, incredibly successful post-World War II alliance," Thune said of past conversations among Republicans about the move. "I think in the world today, you need allies."

Trump made no mention of leaving NATO during his White House address.

John Bolton, a first-term Trump national security adviser who has since become an adversary, said the current administration made a "serious mistake" by not consulting allies before going to war.

"If you don't build your coalition before the war, it's pretty tough to do it while you're in it," said Bolton, who pleaded not guilty last fall to federal charges accusing him of emailing classified information to family members and keeping top secret documents at his Maryland home.

But he also cautioned European leaders against reflexively opposing Trump out of frustration with his lack of consultation. That, Bolton said, would be "juvenile and petulant."

Trump on his own terms

Trump's penchant to work on his own terms is not limited to the war.

Just this week, he said congressional approval of a ballroom he wants to build at the White House is "not necessary" despite a judge's ruling. He signed an executive order to create a nationwide list of verified eligible voters and to restrict mail-in voting.

In a first for a sitting president, he appeared in the courtroom of the Supreme Court as his administration tried to defend an executive order restricting birthright citizenship.

But as with the war, Trump's go-it-alone strategy at home is also confronting limits.

The Supreme Court struck down his far-reaching tariff program. Democrats quickly challenged his voting executive order in court and, despite his courtroom presence, the justices seemed skeptical of his bid to dismantle the Constitution's provisions providing birthright citizenship.

Then there is the uncertainty about the ballroom.

During private comments at an Easter lunch at the White House this week, Trump — ever the builder — seemed to lament the constraints on his job.

"I'm such a king I can't get a ballroom approved," he said to laughter from an audience that included Cabinet members and religious leaders. "I'm doing a lot. But I could be doing a lot more if I was a king."

Can Kennedy lineage and hype over 'Love Story' help send JFK's grandson to Congress?

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As a Kennedy scion, Jack Schlossberg got outsized attention when he launched his congressional campaign in New York City late last year.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 58 of 62

He was already a social media star — in part through his relentless attacks on his cousin, Trump administration health secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. — and had been bouncing around the national Democratic scene very much looking the part of a Kennedy heir.

Now, among a crowded field hoping to win a prized House seat in Manhattan, Schlossberg has another potential advantage no other candidate could dream of: a hit TV show about his family that's renewed Kennedy clan fervor.

But even with the familial connections and the excitement over the show, "Love Story: John F. Kennedy Jr. & Carolyn Bessette," the 33-year-old grandson of former President John F. Kennedy insists the buzz is all organic.

"They don't just like me because I'm a Kennedy. Ask them how they feel about RFK Jr.," he said. "They like me because of my experience, my ideas and they trust me because they see what's going on with their very own eyes."

So far, one of the big criticisms of Schlossberg is that he's never held public office, though he's tried to spin that in his favor, casting himself an energetic, outsider candidate whose big online following proves that he can excite young voters and bring fresh ideas to Washington.

Despite Schlossberg's thin political resume, his candidacy has received both attention and financial support, along with the endorsement of Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, long a Kennedy backer.

No love for 'Love Story'

Schlossberg, whose full name is John Bouvier Kennedy Schlossberg, is no fan of the "Love Story" series, previously criticizing it as a cash grab at the expense of his famous family.

"I don't watch much TV," he said.

Nevertheless, lots of people did tune in and the series became a hit, stoking the enduring mystique of the Kennedy family, especially among a younger generation of new fans.

Spots where Schlossberg's aunt and uncle dined and hung out have attracted viewers of the TV show, with leather-jacket-wearing women and button-down-and-tie guys lining up to get in. Not too long ago a crowd gathered in Washington Square Park for a JFK Jr. look-alike contest where young men donned suits, backward hats or rollerblades, attempting to mimic his style.

Also recreating JFK Jr.'s style is Schlossberg himself, copying one of his uncle's best known looks — riding a bike in suit and tie and a backward cap and a heavy chain bicycle lock around his waist — in a photo on his campaign website, which was posted before the show's debut.

But does the Kennedy family still have the juice to sway an election? George Arzt, a longtime Democratic political consultant in the city, isn't too sure.

"I don't think that gets you votes," he said. "People will say 'Who's Schlossberg?' And they'll go 'He's the grandson of JFK.' So? What's that going to do for me?"

Schlossberg maintains people on the street are less interested in his family ties than his policies, including one that, if passed, would allow rent payments to be tax deductible.

He batted away criticism over his scant professional experience, noting a stint at the State Department's environmental bureau, his joint law and business degree from Harvard and a handful of political opinion pieces he wrote for Vogue. He also cited his social media presence, which has at times been zany. In August, for example, he posted a video of himself in a blonde wig reading a letter that first lady Melania Trump wrote to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"I'm the only one who has engaged millions of people on a progressive and aggressive political message," he said. "I'm not just an influencer who's hawking products. I make informative videos."

A crowded field

Schlossberg faces solid opposition in the June primary, which is usually the deciding contest in the safely Democratic district.

The district's current representative, U.S. Rep. Jerry Nadler, who is retiring, endorsed his former aide Micah Lasher, a state Assemblymember who's spent his career working in New York politics and casts himself as a seasoned, serious candidate.

"The voters of this district are highly informed voters. They do their homework before they make their decisions," he said.

State Assemblymember Alex Bores is also running and has racked up local endorsements, including support from former U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney, who represented parts of the district for decades before it was redrawn and she lost her seat to Nadler.

George Conway, who was once married to former Trump adviser Kellyanne Conway before turning into a vocal antagonist of the president, hopped in the race earlier this year as a Democrat.

Conway, a lawyer who helped create the anti-Trump Lincoln Project, said he does think Schlossberg has a big advantage because of his family name and excitement around "Love Story." But he believes voters will ultimately opt for someone who has more experience.

"There's something very appealing about a young, fresh face and I think he's very smart to play that up," Conway said. "But I also think there's something to be said for an older, experienced fresh face and that's what I'm trying to be."

European ministers call for profit caps on energy companies as Iran war drives price surge

By DEREK GATOPOULOS Associated Press

The finance ministers of Spain and four other European countries are urging the European Union to impose a bloc-wide windfall tax on energy companies, concerned that surging oil and gas prices driven by the war in Iran will fuel inflation and strain households.

Spanish Economy Minister Carlos Cuerdo said Saturday that his counterparts from Germany, Italy, Portugal and Austria had signed a letter to the European Commission citing "market distortions" caused by the price spike.

"The conflict in the Middle East has caused oil prices to rise, placing a significant burden on the European economy and on European citizens," the letter, dated Friday and made public by Cuerdo in an online post, said.

"It is important to ensure that this burden is distributed fairly," it added.

Europe is largely dependent on imported oil and gas, leaving it vulnerable to external shocks. In 2022, turmoil in energy markets following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine pushed inflation into double digits in many European countries.

At the time, the EU imposed a "solidarity contribution" that included caps on excess energy profits.

"Given the current market distortions and fiscal constraints, the European Commission should swiftly develop a similar EU-wide contribution instrument," the letter said. "It would also send a clear message that those who profit from the consequences of the war must do their part to ease the burden on the general public."

Driven largely by higher oil prices, the annual inflation rate in the 21 countries that use the euro rose to 2.5% in March, from 1.9% in February.

Iran has blocked most tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz — a chokepoint for about 20% of global oil and gas — in a move that threatens to stress fuel markets for months.

European Union Energy Commissioner Dan Jorgensen warned this week that disruption caused by the closure means fuel prices are unlikely to "go back to normal in a foreseeable future."

Outspoken Iranians overseas say their loved ones are being detained back home

By AMIR-HUSSEIN RADJY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Iran's government is detaining family members and threatening to seize property of Iranian opposition figures in exile, some tell The Associated Press, in the latest crackdown on dissenting voices as the war rages on.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 60 of 62

Activists overseas play a key role in tracking the crackdown, which is complicated by the internet shutdown imposed earlier this year during massive nationwide protests against the Islamic theocracy. Watchdogs say security forces shot and killed thousands of people.

The war with the United States and Israel has intensified authorities' threats against anyone speaking to outside media or activists. Now that pressure appears to be expanding to intimidate activists in exile.

Iran 'took my mother away to make me be quiet'

Intelligence agents in Tehran on March 15 detained the brother of Hossein Razzagh, a former political prisoner who fled last year to Europe, Razzagh told the AP.

"My own brother isn't at all political and doesn't do any kind of political activity. It's to put me under pressure," he said.

His brother, Ali, was taken from his home in Tehran and was able to phone his wife that night "for a few seconds" from a detention center run by Iran's Intelligence Ministry, Razzagh said.

Since then, the family and his lawyer have been unable to contact him. But the intelligence ministry told them it was reviewing his contact with his brother, Razzagh said.

Another activist who fled, Behnam Chegini, said his 20-year-old niece was detained on March 10 for a week. The niece was taken from her parents' house in the city of Arak soon after she returned from Tehran, where her university had closed because of the war.

She was later released on bail and put under a travel ban.

Chegini, who is now based in France, said the detention was at least in part "because she is my niece and they know that."

Sareh Sedighi, an activist who fled after her 2021 death sentence was overturned, said her mother was detained from her home last month in the western town of Urmia.

"The Islamic Republic took my mother away to make me be quiet," she said. Her mother suffers from health problems and requires daily insulin doses, she added.

And Mahshid Nazemi, a former political prisoner and activist who now lives in France, said at least one friend was detained and questioned about contact with her.

Authorities target the property of outspoken exiles

Iran's judiciary has begun seizing the property of public figures critical of the country's rulers, under an anti-espionage law approved during last year's 12-day war with Israel that punishes media and cultural activities deemed to support Iran's enemies.

A judiciary spokesman on March 31 said on state TV that more than 200 indictments for confiscations have been or are being issued.

Borzou Arjmand, an Iranian actor living in California, found out from news reports that his assets in Iran had been confiscated. After his outspoken support for protests in 2022, Arjmand was unable to return to Iran. Since then, authorities have blocked his bank accounts.

Arjmand has expressed support on social media for Reza Pahlavi, the son of Iran's last shah who has organized an opposition movement abroad and supported U.S.-Israeli strikes.

Pressuring exiled figures is meant "so the Iranian people's voice doesn't reach the world," Arjmand said.

At least three other figures living outside Iran — star soccer player Sardar Azmoun, musician Mohsen Yeghaneh and university professor Ali Sharifi Zarchi — have been on lists of confiscations, according to two semiofficial news agencies in Iran. Yeghaneh and Zarchi have expressed support for anti-government protesters on social media.

Rights groups say conditions are worsening

Iranian security and judicial officials have warned that any new anti-government protests will be met with lethal force.

State media regularly report arrests around the country, describing people as "mercenaries" or "agents" of Israel and the United States, "royalist thugs" or "traitorous elements."

Reports have alleged that some sent information to "hostile networks."

Iran Human Rights, a Norway-based group, has tracked several hundred detentions since the war began

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 61 of 62

on Feb. 28, using its networks in the country and state media reports, said its director, Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam. He said the full number is likely far higher.

Among those detained is human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh, taken by intelligence agents from her house in Tehran, said her daughter Mehraveh Khandan, who lives in Amsterdam. The 64-year-old Sotoudeh had been out on bail for health reasons following an earlier detention.

Little is known about how trials are functioning, as Israeli airstrikes have targeted buildings connected to the judicial system. "It's like they are half-closed. A lot of judges are staying home," said Musa Barzin, a lawyer with Dadban, a group of rights lawyers based abroad.

Some report deteriorating conditions inside crowded prisons. Speaking from Tehran, the wife of a political prisoner held at Iran's Evin Prison worried it could be struck as it was during last year's war.

"Explosions and smoke can be heard and seen from everywhere in the city. Every time we hear a sound, we get scared," she said, speaking on condition of anonymity for her family's safety.

Iranian opposition tries to organize overseas

The situation has led to new attempts to organize the highly fragmented Iranian opposition abroad.

Shortly before the war, Razzagh and others began planning an opposition conference in London, the Iran Freedom Congress, to bring together pro-democracy groups. Razzagh represented a group of Iran-based opposition figures including Sotoudeh and imprisoned Nobel laureate Narges Mohammadi.

He called the conference a first step toward forming a coalition to push for a "political transition" in Iran.

For decades, Iran's rulers have quashed organized political opposition. Some activists in the diaspora say the war is worsening that pressure.

"Israel and America are saying, well, if the Islamic Republic doesn't kill you, let us bomb you. They've been taken hostage from both sides," Nazemi said of Iranians back home.

Today in History: April 5

FDR establishes Civilian Conservation Corps

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, April 5, the 95th day of 2026. There are 270 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On April 5, 1933, as part of his New Deal programs, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a Depression-era work relief program for single men aged 18-25; the program employed more than 2.5 million men for federal conservation and safety projects over its nine-year history.

Also on this date:

In 1614, Pocahontas, the daughter of Tsenacommacah chief Powhatan, married Englishman John Rolfe, a widower, in the Virginia Colony.

In 1764, the British Parliament passed the American Revenue Act of 1764, also known as the Sugar Act; it provided for strong enforcement of duties on refined sugar and molasses imported into the American colonies from non-British Caribbean sources.

In 1887, in Tuscumbia, Alabama, teacher Anne Sullivan achieved a breakthrough as her 6-year-old deaf-blind pupil, Helen Keller, learned the meaning of the word "water" as spelled out in the Manual Alphabet.

In 1951, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were sentenced to death following their conviction in New York on charges of conspiring to commit espionage for the Soviet Union. (They were executed in June 1953.)

In 1986, two American servicemen and a Turkish woman were killed in the bombing of a West Berlin discotheque, an incident that prompted a U.S. air raid on Libya nine days later.

In 1991, former Sen. John Tower, R-Texas, his daughter Marian and 21 other people were killed in a commuter plane crash near Brunswick, Georgia.

In 1994, Nirvana lead singer Kurt Cobain died by suicide in his Seattle, Washington, home at age 27.

In 2010, a massive coal dust explosion ripped through underground corridors of the Upper Big Branch mine near Charleston, West Virginia, killing 29 workers in the worst U.S. coal mining disaster in 40 years.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 05, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 304 ~ 62 of 62

In 2024, an earthquake centered between New York City and Philadelphia shook skyscrapers and suburbs across the northeastern U.S., causing no major damage but startling millions in a region unaccustomed to such temblors. The 4.8 magnitude quake was one of the strongest along the East Coast in decades.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Michael Moriarty is 85. Actor Max Gail is 83. Singer Agnetha Fältskog (ABBA) is 76. Rapper-actor Christopher "Kid" Reid (Kid 'n Play) is 61. Rock musician Mike McCready (Pearl Jam) is 60. Country musician Pat Green is 54. Musician-producer Pharrell Williams is 53. Rapper-producer Juicy J is 51. Actor Sterling K. Brown is 50. Actor Hayley Atwell is 44. Actor Lily James is 37. Singer Bryant Myers is 28.