

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 1 of 63

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- We the People Column: The Birthright Citizenship Case and the Text of the 14th Amendment](#)
- [3- Balloon Ad](#)
- [4- Varsity baseball falls to Redfield](#)
- [5- JV baseball beats Redfield](#)
- [6- Governor Rhoden Declares Emergency for "79 Fire" in SW SD](#)
- [6- Priairie Mixed Bowling League](#)
- [7- EarthTalk: Food Desert](#)
- [8- Sunday Extras](#)
- [26- Gov. Rhoden's Weekly Column](#)
- [27- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column](#)
- [28- Rev. Snyder's Column](#)
- [30- South Dakota Average Gas Prices](#)
- [31- Drought Monitor](#)
- [32- SD SearchLight: A new gold rush: States stockpile bars, encourage gold-backed debit cards](#)
- [35- Weather Pages](#)
- [40- Daily Devotional](#)
- [41- Subscription Form](#)
- [42- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [43- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Sunday, April 12

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

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

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; 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.

JVT Practice, 6 p.m., Arena

## Monday, April 13

Senior Menu: Turkey chow mein, broccoli, fruit, bread sticks.

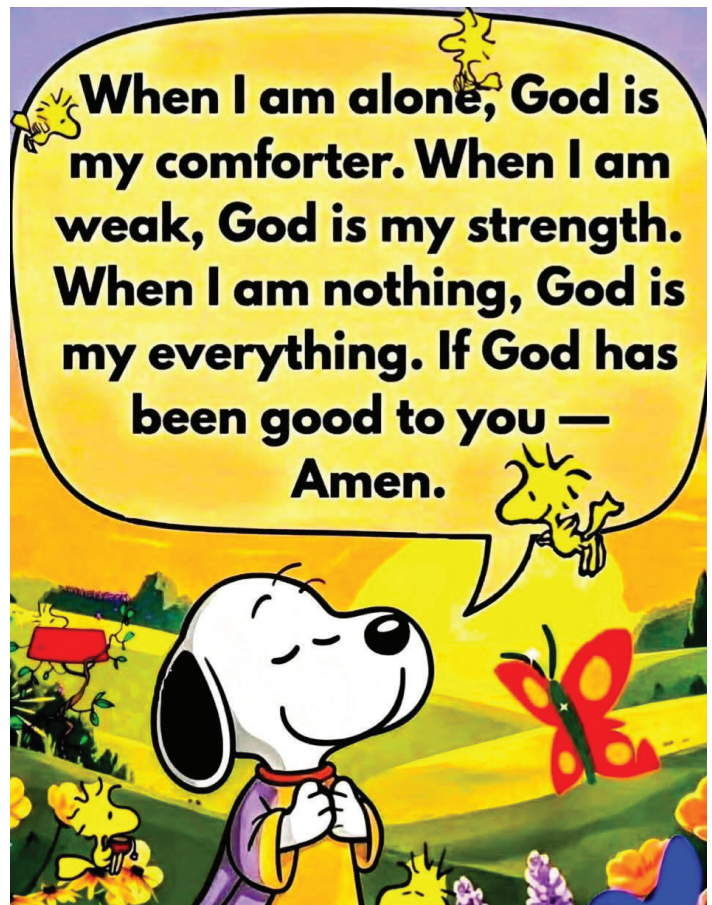
School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels

School Lunch: Corn dogs, baked beans

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

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

Grades 6-8 ELA & Math Testing



Pickleball, 5:30 p.m., Elementary Gym  
High School Baseball at Clark. Varsity at 6 p.m., JV to follow.

## Tuesday, April 14

Senior Menu: Goulash, green peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sliders.

School Lunch: Pizza burger, tater tots

Emmanuel Lutheran: Council, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Grades 6-8 ELA & Math Testing

Pork Chop Replays at Clear Lake, 2 p.m.

Milbank JH Track & Field, 3:45 p.m.

JVT Practice, 7 p.m., Arena

**Groton Daily Independent**  
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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 2 of 63

## We the People

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



By David Adler

### The Birthright Citizenship Case and the Text of the 14th Amendment

The text of Section One of the 14th Amendment declares: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." In the history of the U.S. Supreme Court, those words have meant what they say. Apart from a few narrow exceptions—children born to foreign ambassadors, children of soldiers actively occupying U.S. territory, and, until 1924, members of Native American tribes who owed direct allegiance to their tribes, rather than the United States-- the clause has been interpreted to confer "Birthright Citizenship" on virtually everyone born on American soil, or under the American flag.

However, on the first day of his second term of office, President Donald Trump issued on January 20, 2025, Executive Order 14160 that would limit "Birthright Citizenship" to the children of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents (green-card recipients). Trump's order was declared blatantly unconstitutional by various federal courts and has never been effectuated, anywhere. In *Trump v. Barbara*, the administration brought an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, which held oral argument last week. The Justices's questions, across the bench, reflected, at a minimum, deep skepticism of the government's argument, and indicated little, if any, support for Trump's order. Rightly so. The order, as a federal judge had written, flouted the constitutional text and principles, congressional intent and longstanding Supreme Court precedent.

The most conspicuous, historic purpose of the Citizenship Clause, ratified in 1868, was to confer upon former slaves and their children, the status of citizenship, thus overruling the Court's infamous *Dred Scott* decision, which held that Black people whose ancestors were seized and brought to this nation, and sold as slaves, were not entitled to any protection from federal courts because they were not, and never could become, U.S. citizens. Those who controlled the Reconstruction Congress--the Radical Republicans--however, revolutionized the nation and the Constitution through the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, which placed Blacks on par with whites in the eyes of the law.

The Citizenship Clause, emphatically, was not limited to the protection of the newly freedman. Senator Lyman Trumbull, one of the leading Radicals and the principal author of the provision, referred in the original bill that established birthright citizenship to people of "African descent." He later changed that language to "all persons born in the United States," which prompted Senator Edgar Cowan to ask Trumbull if the clause would make citizens of the "children of Chinese and Gypsies born in this country." Trumbull's reply says everything about the scope of the amendment. "Undoubtedly," he said, confirming the expansive scope of Birthright Citizenship, which is centered on soil, not blood.

The Cowan-Trumbull exchange, like the broader legislative history that illuminates the original understanding of the 39th Congress that wrote the 14th Amendment, represents a direct repudiation of President Donald Trump's claim that the citizenship clause was limited "to babies of slaves."

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 3 of 63

The strict limitations on birthright citizenship imposed by Trump's executive order, advanced by the administration in *Trump v. Barbara*, the case before the Supreme court challenging the order, finds no support in our legal history. In fact, the Court, in *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark* (1898), held that the 14th Amendment protections extend to babies born in the United States to parents of noncitizens. As Justice Horace Gray observed, the clause is not restricted by "color or race."

President Trump's executive order, and the administration's arguments in support of it, fly in the face of 150 years of historical understanding of the Citizenship Clause. Trump falsely claims that no other country has birthright citizenship. At least 30 other countries do. The government's argument that birthright citizenship does not include those who are temporarily in the nation, or those here illegally, and thus not "under the jurisdiction" of the United States, contradicts the reasoning of the Court's landmark opinion in *Plyler v. Doe* (1982). In *Doe*, Justice William Brennan wrote that undocumented children are "persons" under the jurisdiction of state law and the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.

Birthright citizenship speaks to who, and what, we are as a nation. The premise and promise of the 14th Amendment is that America is not defined by bloodlines, but by values, laws and rights that should be applied to all, equally, beginning at birth.

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



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## Groton Area Tigers Varsity Fall To PGDCWL Honkers After Surrendering Big First Inning

By GameChanger Media

PGDCWL (Platte-Geddes / Dakota Christian / White Lake) Honkers scored eight runs in the first inning, which helped them defeat Groton Area Tigers Varsity 14-1 on Saturday at Redfield. Groton Area High School Baseball is sanctioned by the South Dakota High School Baseball Association.

PGDCWL Honkers jumped out to the lead in the top of the first inning after Keaton Christensen singled, scoring one run, Isaac Leader drew a walk, scoring one run, Gavin Englund induced Hayes DeVries to hit into a fielder's choice, but one run scored, Bentley Veurink singled, scoring three runs, and Jye Bailey singled, scoring two runs.

PGDCWL Honkers scored five runs on two hits in the top of the second inning. Jameson Leader drew a walk, scoring one run, Maddux VanZee singled, scoring three runs, and Bailey singled, scoring one run.

Nick Groeblichhoff pitched three and two-thirds innings in relief for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. The reliever allowed four hits and three runs (zero earned) while, striking out two and walking two. Englund stepped on the mound first for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. The pitcher allowed five hits and 11 runs (nine earned) over one and one-third innings, striking out one and walking five. Christensen started the game for PGDCWL Honkers. The starting pitcher surrendered one hit and one run over five innings, striking out eight and walking four.

Karsten Flihs led the team with one run batted in. TC Schuster led Groton Area Tigers Varsity with one hit in one at bat.

PGDCWL Honkers piled up nine hits in the game. Bailey led PGDCWL Honkers with three runs batted in. The shortstop went 4-for-4 on the day. Christensen collected two hits for PGDCWL Honkers in four at bats. PGDCWL Honkers had patience at the plate, collecting seven walks for the game. Asher Kott led the team with two walks.

Next up for Groton Area Tigers Varsity is a game at Clark Area on Monday.

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## Pitching Impressive As Groton Area JV Beats Redfield Area JV

By GameChanger Media

Both teams were strong on the hill on Saturday, but Groton Area Tigers JV defeated Redfield Area JV 3-1. Ryder Schelle started the game for Groton Area Tigers JV and recorded 12 outs.

Groton Area Tigers JV were the first to get on the board in the first when Braden Flihs drew a walk, scoring one run.

Groton Area Tigers JV added one run in the second after Asher Zimmerman singled down the right field line.

Schelle earned the win for Groton Area Tigers JV. The hurler gave up two hits and one run over four innings, striking out eight and walking three. #15 took the loss for Redfield Area JV. The pitcher went one inning, surrendering one run (zero earned) on zero hits, striking out two and walking two.

Zimmerman went 1-for-2 at the plate and led the team with one run batted in. Noah Scepaniak, John Bisbee, and Zimmerman each collected one hit for Groton Area Tigers JV. Groton Area Tigers JV had a strong eye at the plate, collecting six walks for the game.

#12 and #8 each collected one hit for Redfield Area JV. #8 went 1-for-1 at the plate and led the team with one run batted in. Redfield Area JV didn't commit a single error in the field. #8 had the most chances in the field with six.

Next up for Groton Area Tigers JV is a game at Clark Area JV on Monday.

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 6 of 63

## Governor Rhoden Declares Emergency for "79 Fire" in SW SD

Fairburn, S.D.- Governor Larry Rhoden has declared a state of emergency for portions of southwest South Dakota affected by the 79 Fire.

The 79 Fire was reported around 11 am MDT. It is located just east of Highway 79 along East French Creek Road in eastern Custer County. The fire has burned approximately 5,000 acres. Numerous federal, state, and local firefighting assets, as well as aircraft, are working to suppress the fire.

"Keeping South Dakotans safe is my number one priority, and this emergency declaration will provide the resources firefighters need to get control of this fire," said Governor Rhoden. "I'm grateful for their dedication and bravery in keeping everyone safe."

The emergency declaration allows fire suppression costs to be covered by the state fire suppression fund in accordance with SDCL 41-20A-8.

Firefighters are making good progress on controlling the fire and will remain on scene overnight and into the coming days to control hot spots.

Additional information can be found on the Facebook incident page "79 Fire 2026" at <https://www.facebook.com/share/18Re9JN5uy/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

## Groton Prairie Mixed Bowling League Week #21 Results

**Team Standings:** Jackelopes 22, Foxes 18, Chipmunks 13, Coyotes 13, Cheetahs 10, Shihtzus 8

**Men's High Games:** Tony Waage 195 and 187, Brad Waage 189 and 180, John Sippel 183

**Women's High Games:** Suzie Easthouse 172, Dar Larson and Alexa Sperry 161, Michelle Johnson 157

**Men's High Series:** Tony Waage 530, Brad Waage 527, Brad Larson 503

**Women's High Series:** Suzie Easthouse 453, Michelle Johnson 452, Vicki Walter 398

Jackelopes are the winners of the 3rd third!

The Coyotes (1st third winners), The Cheetahs (2nd third winners), and The Jackelopes (3rd third winners) will be bowling off on Monday (4/13) at 7:00pm to determine the 2025-26 Groton Prairie Mixed League Champions.

Wednesday night (4/15) will be the end of the year party! Bowlers are asked to bring a dish, snack, appetizer, dessert, etc. to share. Season awards will be handed out and there will be playing 9-pin no tap.

## EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: What are some innovative ways to get more fresh food—fruits and veggies—to low income people?

-- Paul Towner, Boston, MA

Across the U.S., communities are facing a growing problem—a lack of healthy, fresh food. With the price of fruits and veggies shooting up 40 percent since 1980 and the price of processed foods going down 20-30 percent, many families find buying processed foods the only sensible economic decision. Now, with the Centers of Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) reporting that only one in 10 adults eats enough fruits and vegetables, expanding access to low-income communities is more important than ever before.

Voucher incentive programs, which provide coupons, vouchers and financial incentives to low-income individuals, offer a viable solution. The New York City Health Department, for example, introduced the \$2 NYC Health Bucks coupons in 2004, which gave SNAP recipients \$2 to purchase fresh produce for every \$5 they spend at a farmers market. By reducing the financial barrier to purchasing fresh produce, these programs allow consumers to choose healthier food options without sacrificing affordability.

Similarly, Produce Prescription programs expand accessible access to fresh foods through a health care pipeline: Health care workers like physicians and nurse practitioners can prescribe fruits and vegetables to patients with chronic diseases or a lack of access to nutritious food. Fresh Prescription, a Produce Prescription program implemented in Detroit, found significant decreases in hemoglobin H1c for its participants signifying a lower risk of diabetes complications and better heart health.

These programs have proved successful in improving both access to fresh food options and the quality of people's diets. According to Fresh Approach, an organization that provides Veggie Rx service—a Produce Prescription Program—in the San Francisco Bay Area, 89 percent of participants reported eating more vegetables since the program began. "With eight people in our family, I've had to really watch what I spend money on, so I do a lot of coupon clipping, but you don't find coupons for fruits and vegetables," reports Bethany Thompson, a VeggieRx client. "The VeggieRx program has been absolutely great because it helps me to actually afford the healthy food that I want to feed all my kids."

However, America's food and nutrition insecurity crisis is far from over. Organizations still face inconsistent funding, limiting the amount of people they can directly assist. Consumers can support these programs by donating to partner organizations and telling others how to get involved. Together, the community can help expand access to nutritious food for everyone, by everyone.

### Food Desert Fight: Getting Fruits & Veggies Into Low Income Communities by Audrey Li



**Getting healthier foods into low income communities is the focus of several new innovative food security initiatives.** Credit: Pexels.com.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 8 of 63



## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

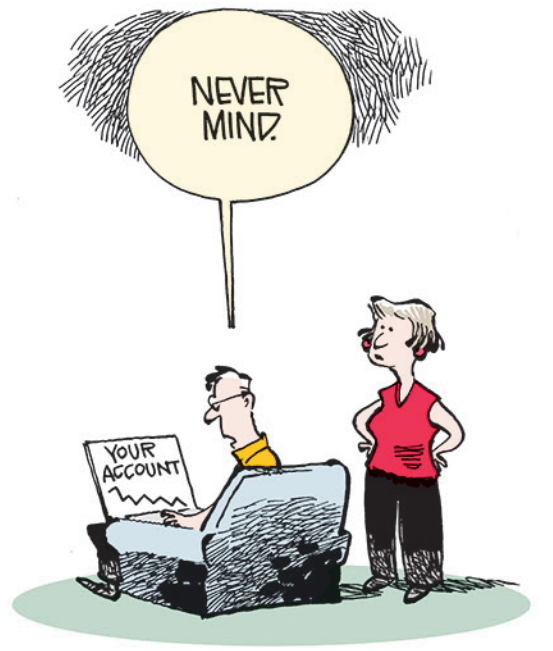
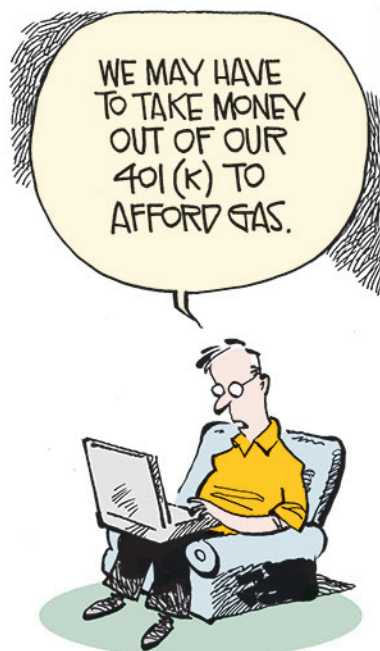
“Now acquaint yourself  
with Him, and be at peace;  
thereby good will  
come to you.  
Receive, please, instruction  
from His mouth, and lay up  
His words in your heart.”

🌀 Job 22:21-22 🌀

*Detail of “Jugend” cover art for April  
by Otto Eckmann (1896)*



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## BIBLE

## TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. From Matthew 9, after Jesus healed a paralyzed man, what did the man pick up and carry home? *Brother, Bed, Mother, Cart*

3. Which book begins, “And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai”? *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*

4. What is the largest number phrase specifically mentioned in the Bible? *7 x 70, Ten hundred, Hundred thousand, Thousands of ten thousands*

5. According to Acts 25, what title belonged to Agrippa? *Priest, Apostle, King, General*

6. In Exodus 7, what river was turned into blood? *Red, Galilee, Marah, Nile*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Bed, 3) Numbers, 4) Thousands of ten thousands, 5) King, 6) Nile

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 10 of 63



**FLASH GORDON**

BY JIM KEEFE 3-28

CONTINUING: THE WAY IT BEGAN!

FLASH GORDON, DALE ARDEN, AND DR. HANS ZARKOV CRASH-LAND ON AN ALIEN WORLD THREATENING EARTH'S EXISTENCE!

TAKEN CAPTIVE, THEY ARE BROUGHT BEFORE THE DESPOTIC RULER OF THIS HOSTILE WORLD.

SELF-PROCLAIMED EMPEROR OF THE UNIVERSE...

...MING THE MERCILESS!

ESCAPING MING'S CLUTCHES, THE MAROONED FUGITIVES' BRAVERY AND COURAGE RALLIES OTHERS.

UNITING UNDER FLASH'S LEADERSHIP, THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF MONGO RISE UP, BREAKING MING'S REIGN OF TERROR!

ELUDING JUSTICE, MING WAGES A NEVER-ENDING BATTLE TO REGAIN THE THRONE...

...AND EXACT REVENGE ON THE EARTHLINGS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS RUIN!

ORIGIN STORY DEDICATED TO FLASH'S CREATOR, ALEX RAYMOND

**NEXT: NEW ADVENTURE!**

## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

**T**HE MOST COMMON REASON FOR PUTTING SLUMPS ON TOUR IS DECELERATION OF THE CLUBHEAD THROUGH IMPACT. I BELIEVE IT'S ALSO THE CHIEF CAUSE OF POOR PUTTING AMONG LESS SKILLED GOLFERS.

PRACTICING STROKING PUTTS WITHOUT CONCERNING YOURSELF ABOUT WHERE THE BALL GOES WILL HELP YOU DEVELOP A FEELING OF ACCELERATING THE PUTTER HEAD. IF THAT DOESN'T WORK, TRY PRACTICING WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED - IT REALLY LETS YOU "FEEL" THE MOTION OF THE CLUBHEAD.



## Man With Low Kidney Function Chooses To Avoid Dialysis

DEAR DR. ROACH: A loved one of mine has had kidney problems for his whole life. He's now on the transplant list, and his kidney function is very low. But he continues to avoid dialysis, saying that he's not ready for it. Surprisingly, his heart health, cholesterol and blood pressure are always great when tested. He sometimes has swelling if he's on his feet for too long, but this can be reduced by going on medication for a few days.

He also has uncontrolled diabetes. At one point, his A1C level was over 11%, but now it is closer to 6% or 7%. In addition, he's on a biologic due to an autoimmune disease. How long can someone with a glomerular filtration rate (GFR) that is lower than 10 be expected to function without

starting dialysis or getting a transplant? How long can someone like him survive if he continues to avoid dialysis? -- Anon.

ANSWER: The answer is one to two years for a person with a GFR of 10 who doesn't receive kidney replacement therapy, like dialysis or a transplant. Some people will do well for even longer periods.

I've had more than a few patients who were in similar situations -- some of whom had decided against dialysis, while others, like your loved one, were undecided. But the vast majority decided to take dialysis once they started feeling more unwell. As their kidney disease progresses, their ability to get rid of excess fluid, even with medication, decreases. They are also likely to have symptoms such as a loss of appetite, nausea, and "brain fog."

People with progressive kidney failure may suffer from medical emergencies such as critically high potassium levels or severe levels of acid in the blood, which usually require emergent dialysis. Eventually, medications will only provide temporary relief. Your loved one should be prepared to give an answer as to what they would do if this happens.

You may wonder why his diabetes is controlled when it wasn't before. One reason is that insulin lasts for longer in the body when the kidneys aren't working well. He might also not be eating as much.

\*\*\*

DEAR DR. ROACH: Are there health benefits that are associated with liver support products, which are found in a variety of options that are sold over the counter? I am a 60-year-old man who is in generally good health and imbibes occasionally (4-5 drinks per week). -- C.C.

ANSWER: A very good rule of thumb is that your liver doesn't need any kind of supplementation to keep it working well. It has remarkable self-regenerating abilities, but even these abilities can be overwhelmed when taking in substances that are harmful to the liver.

Alcohol is probably the most common liver toxin in North America, although 4-5 drinks per week isn't usually enough to cause liver damage (unless you are drinking them all on the same day). To keep your liver from being damaged, definitely keep your intake to below 2 drinks per day. (This is the guideline for men; the guideline for women is 1 drink per day.)

Ironically, supplements have been a fairly frequent cause of liver damage. Turmeric, green tea extract, echinacea, goldenseal, black cohosh, red yeast rice, and vitamin A can all cause liver damage, especially when taken in higher-than-recommended doses.

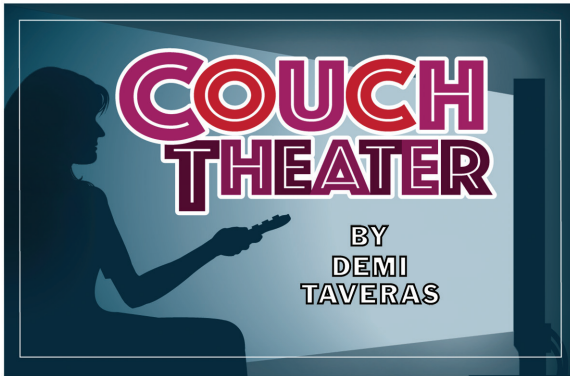
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 12 of 63



**Keanu Reeves stars in "Outcome."** (Courtesy of Apple TV+)

"Euphoria: Season Three" (TV-MA) -- After a four-year wait between seasons and a few dramatic shifts in the cast, the smash-hit series "Euphoria" is finally back on our screens with its third season. Premiering April 12, season three kicks off with a five-year time jump from when we last left off with Rue (Zendaya) and her high school classmates, who are now young adults taking their first steps in the "real world." Oscar nominee Jacob Elordi ("Frankenstein") is back as Nate Jacobs, who is now married to Sydney Sweeney's ("The Housemaid") Cassie. In addition, Hunter Schafer and Alexa Demie reprise their roles of Jules and Maddy, respectively. The late Eric Dane ("Grey's Anatomy") is also featured, in what was one of the 53-year-old actor's last roles before passing away from ALS. (HBO Max)

"Beef: Season Two" (TV-MA) -- This anthology series that premiered in 2023 went on to win eight Emmys for its first season, including acting wins for Steve Yeun ("Mickey 17") and Ali Wong ("Monsters at Work"). Its second season is now releasing on April 16 with a brand-new cast of characters who have beef - lots of it, served raw. This time around, we have two incredible dramatic actors, Oscar Isaac ("Frankenstein") and Carey Mulligan ("Maestro"), playing a married couple named Josh and Lindsay. When Josh's subordinate at work catches the couple in an intense fight, Josh and Lindsay get sucked into an odd dynamic full of blackmail and coercion. Cailee Spaeny ("Wake Up Dead Man") and Charles Melton ("May December") co-star. (Netflix)

"Five Nights at Freddy's 2" (PG-13) -- The sequel to the 2023 film adaptation of the video game "Five Nights at Freddy's" is out now to stream, and it couldn't have come to streaming at a better time. We've been lacking a bit of horror! The second film picks up a year and a half after the events of the first film, where Mike (Josh Hutcherson) and Vanessa (Elizabeth Lail) had to fend off deadly Chuck-E-Cheese-type animatronics to save Mike's little sister, Abby (Piper Rubio). Abby, who had a much different relationship to the animatronics than her brother, misses the comfort of the Freddy Fazbear restaurant and decides to travel back to its original location. In the process, Abby reopens a dark, hidden chapter of Freddy's history by letting out an animatronic that is possessed by the spirit of a murdered child. (Peacock)

"Outcome" (R) -- Jonah Hill ("You People") directs this black comedy, which he also wrote and stars in (although he's almost unrecognizable). However, Keanu Reeves ("Good Fortune") plays the lead role of Reef Hawk, an actor who suddenly finds himself in a crisis after living a clean, sober lifestyle for five years. Someone whom Reef wronged in the past holds a video over his head that could cause his 15 minutes of fame to dry up rather quickly. So, he decides to go on an apology tour to make amends to as many people as he can - and to also figure out who the blackmailer is. The tone of the movie is breezy and light, with colorful cinematography and lighting that make the hard parts of Reef's life easy to swallow. Look out for appearances from Cameron Diaz ("Back in Action"), director Martin Scorsese ("Killers of the Flower Moon"), and Drew Barrymore ("Smile 2"). Out now! (Apple TV+)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 13 of 63



1. Which group was the first to release "Greenfields"?
2. Who released "I'll Be There"?
3. Which song is considered Elvis Presley's biggest hit?
4. Name the Monkees' debut single.
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "You can have this dance with me, You can hold my hand and whisper in my ear sweet words that I love to hear."

Answers

1. The Brothers Four, in 1960. The clean-cut fraternity boys were tricked into going to a fake audition but ended up singing and were then hired at a club. The song went to No. 2

on the Hot 100 chart.

2. The Jackson 5, in 1970.
3. "It's Now or Never," released in 1960. The song, based on the Italian "O Sole Mio," stayed at the top of the chart for five weeks.
4. "Last Train to Clarksville," in 1966.
5. "Beechwood 4-5789," by the Marvelettes, in 1962. In the song, a girl is interested in a guy, so she gives him her phone number. Years ago phone numbers were identified by exchange names. This Beechwood phone number would have been written as BE 4-5789. The BE in Beechwood was a 2 and a 3 on the phone, so the number was actually 234-5789.

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



"I've been a model prisoner. ... I model for 'Prison Wear Daily'!"

## Just Like Cats & Dogs <sup>by Dave T. Phipps</sup>



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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 15 of 63



\* Putting in your spring garden? To keep your nails from developing a dirt problem, use this classic tip: Rake your nails over a bar of soap. It "seals" the gap underneath, and later when you wash your hands, the soap slips right out, no need to spend time scrubbing out the dirt!

\* Add these to the list of items to eliminate the odor of cooking cabbage: a heel of bread, a whole walnut or a pinch of baking soda.

\* Love beans but trying to save a little money? Don't be intimidated by dry beans. Just rinse them and chuck them in the slow cooker. Add water according to package directions and cook on low for up to eight hours. After they are cooled, you can bag them in zip-top bags and freeze them for easy use later.

\* If you keep a couple of crackers in your sugar jar, they will keep the sugar from caking.  
\* If you or your kids have trouble drifting off to sleep, try this aromatherapy trick: Spray sheets with a diluted lavender essential oil. Lavender is classic for sleeptime.

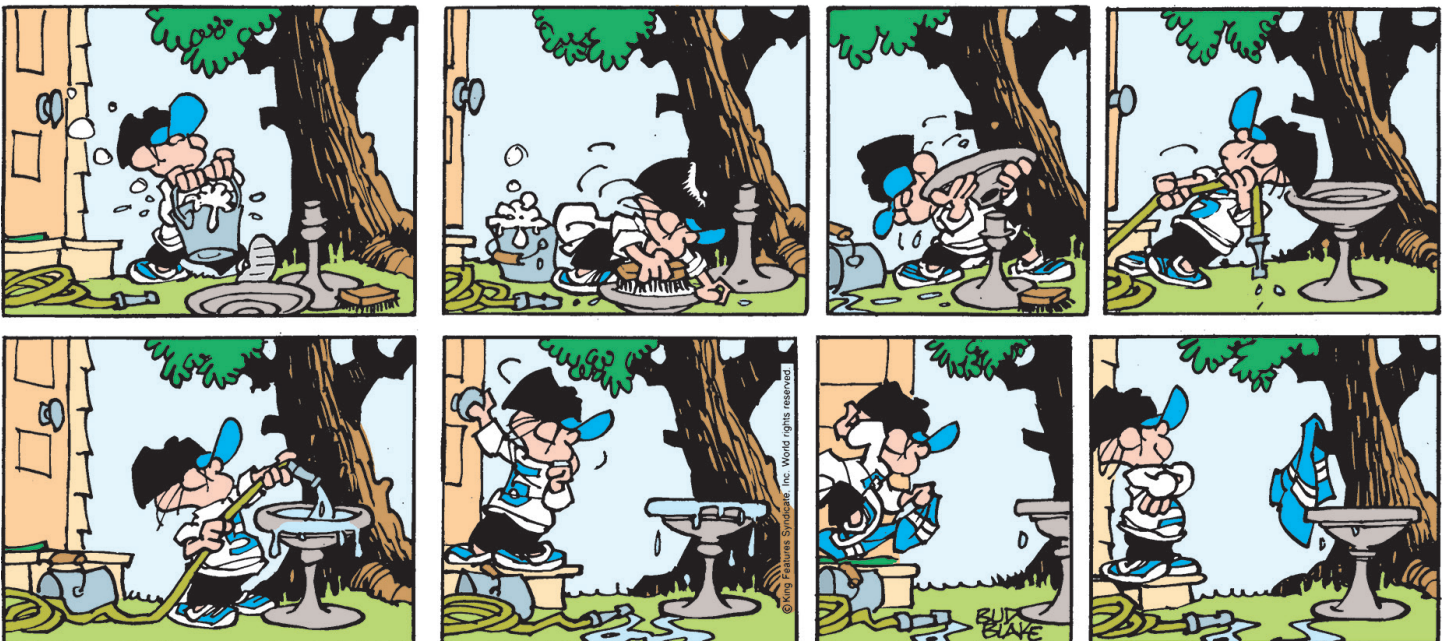
\* "To make the most handy long handled garden tool, do this right now: Lay the tool on the ground (it can be a hoe, rake, whatever you use most) and, using a tape measure, mark out feet and inches with a permanent marker right on the handle. Now, when you go to put plants in the ground, you can space them out perfectly by laying down your tool along the planting line." -- C.O. in Arkansas

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 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 16 of 63

## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Soak (up)
- 4 "Nova" channel
- 7 South Pacific nation
- 11 Grouch
- 13 Ump's call
- 14 Tehran's country
- 15 Rights org.
- 16 Peyton's brother
- 17 Dweeb
- 18 Spars
- 20 Boast
- 22 Prom outfit
- 24 TV detective Remington
- 28 Shirt parts
- 32 Flynn of film
- 33 Frankfurt fellow

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

- 34 Cleaning cloth
- 36 Fine cotton
- 37 "Shake —" (Taylor Swift hit)
- 39 "Be serious!"
- 41 More of a snoop
- 43 Hosp. scan
- 44 Inert gas
- 46 Accord
- 50 Pizzazz
- 53 Bro, maybe
- 55 Half a sextet
- 56 Actress Falco
- 57 — tizzy (worked up)

- 58 Lingerie fabric
  - 59 Beloved
  - 60 A gazillion years
  - 61 Park — -joon of "The Marvels"
- DOWN**
- 1 Con job
  - 2 Killer whale
  - 3 Buddies
  - 4 "The Raven" writer
  - 5 Future tulip
  - 6 Mixes up
  - 7 Crime-solving aids
  - 8 Rage

- 9 Pickle holder
- 10 Hoosier st.
- 12 Crunchy candy bar
- 19 Minivan alternative
- 21 Consumed
- 23 Gen- — (baby boomer's kid)
- 25 One of HOMES
- 26 — Linda, Calif.
- 27 Mideast airline
- 28 Tibia's place
- 29 Jared of "Panic Room"
- 30 Cupid's alias
- 31 Droop
- 35 Tiara jewel
- 38 Service charge
- 40 Capote nickname
- 42 Wartime riveter
- 45 Boy, in Barcelona
- 47 Showy flower
- 48 Scrabble piece
- 49 Singer Ono
- 50 Last letter in London
- 51 Chemical suffix
- 52 Actress Long
- 54 Prohibit

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 17 of 63

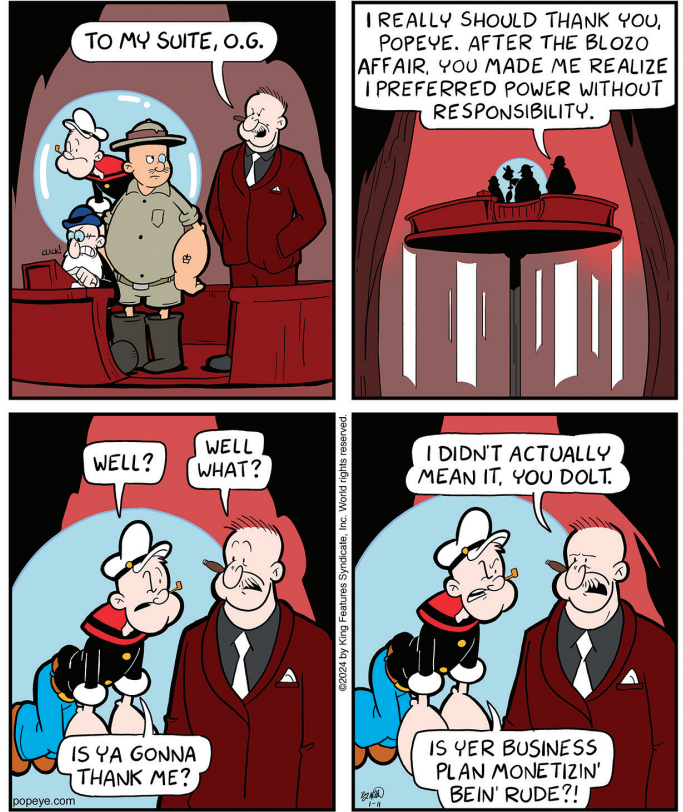
## King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

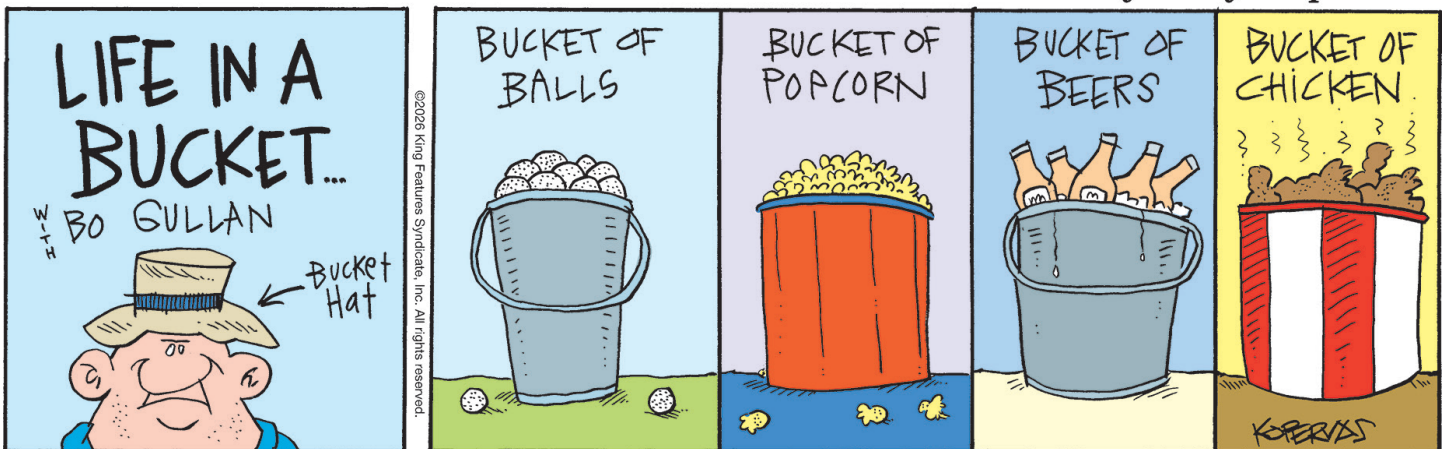
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M	A	S	T	S		B	R	A	G				
			T	U	X			S	T	E	E	L	E
S	L	E	E	V	E	S		E	R	R	O	L	
H	E	R	R		R	A	G		P	I	M	A	
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Z	I	N	G		S	I	B		T	R	I	O	
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D	E	A	R		E	O	N		S	E	O		

## Olive



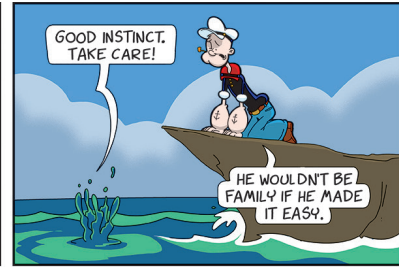
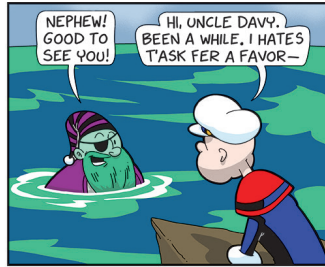
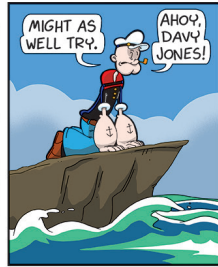
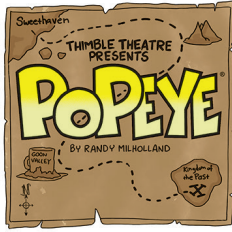
## Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



# Groton Daily Independent

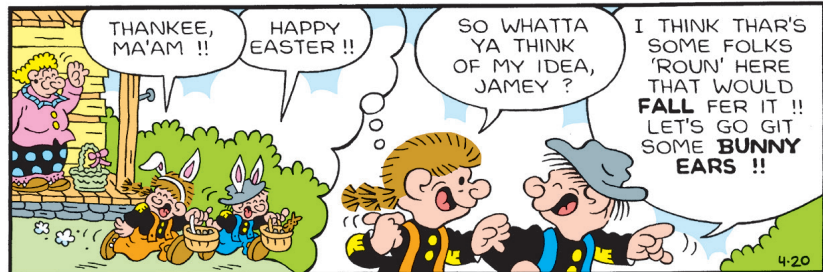
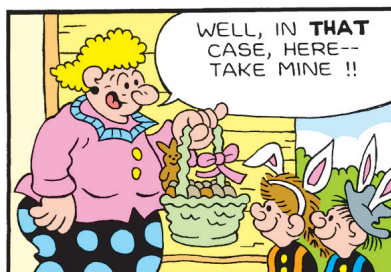
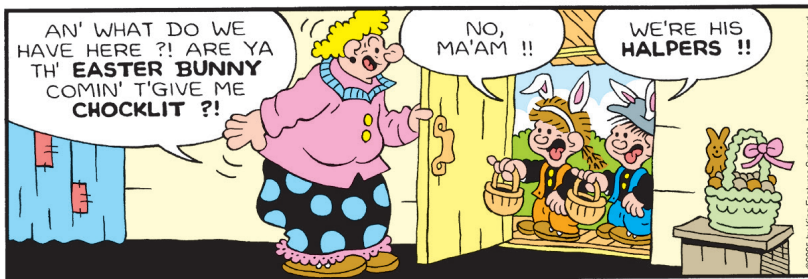
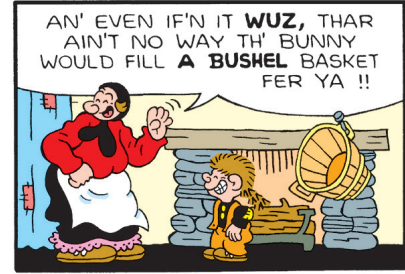
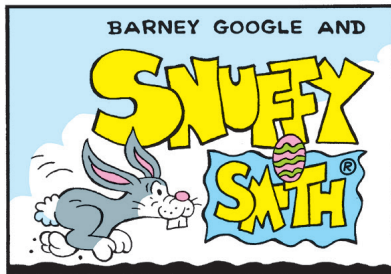
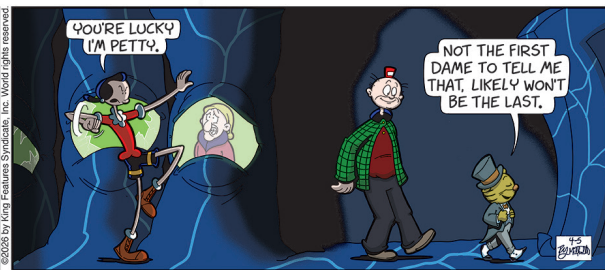
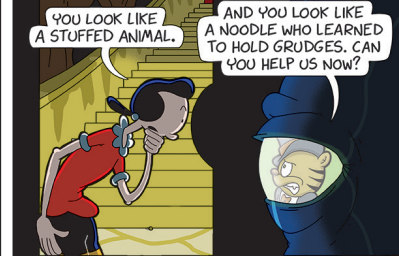
Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 18 of 63



WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!

HOPEFULLY A RESCUE! I'M MR. JACK, AND MY FELLOW CAPTIVES ARE HAPPY HOOLIGAN AND HERR KATZENJAMMER!

THE WITCH IMPRISONED US FOR NONSENSICAL CRIMES. IF YOU COULD FREE US...



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 19 of 63

Hal Foster's

BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

## Prince Valiant®

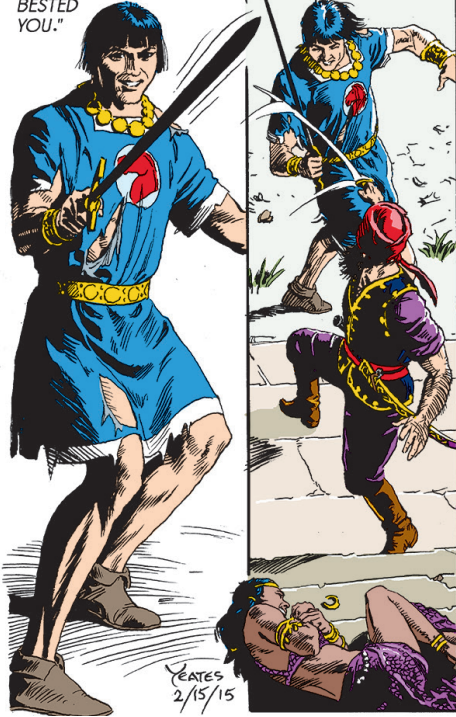
STRAKONUS HAS SURVIVED THANAAS DEATHTRAP AND IS ABOUT TO SLAY THE AMBUSHED WOMAN, WHEN: "SURRENDER, STRAKONUS. SHE HAS BESTED YOU."

"YOU FOOL," SPEWS THE RUINED SLAYER, "THESE WERE MY BROTHER'S WOMEN - NOW MY PROPERTY..."

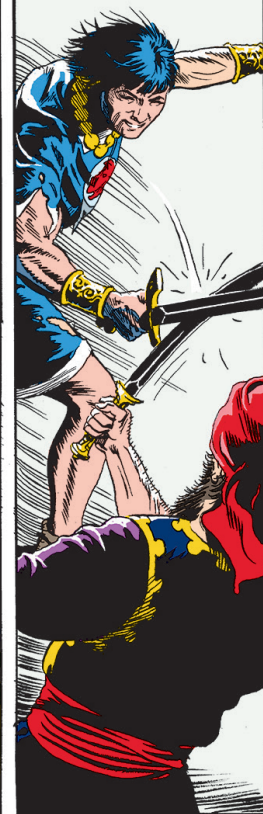
"... TO DO WITH AS I PLEASED! YOU HAD NO RIGHT TO INTERFERE!"

"THEY WOULD HAVE BROUGHT ME SUCH PROFIT! I WOULD HAVE SHARED THAT WITH YOU!"

"WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?! THEY ARE ONLY CHATTEL..." VAL ALLOWS THE PIRATE TO RANT UNINTERRUPTED, UNTIL HE CAN SPEAK NO MORE.



YEATES 2/15/15



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STRAKONUS IS A HAIR'S BREADTH FROM DEATH WHEN ALETA ARRIVES: "NO, VAL! THERE HAS BEEN ENOUGH KILLING!"

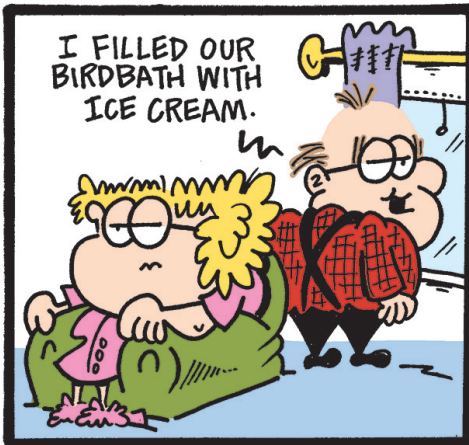
NEXT: Mopping up



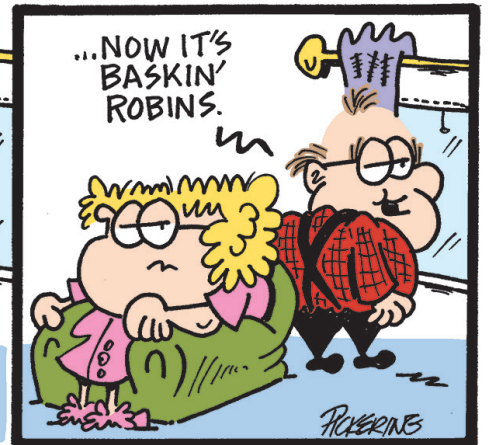
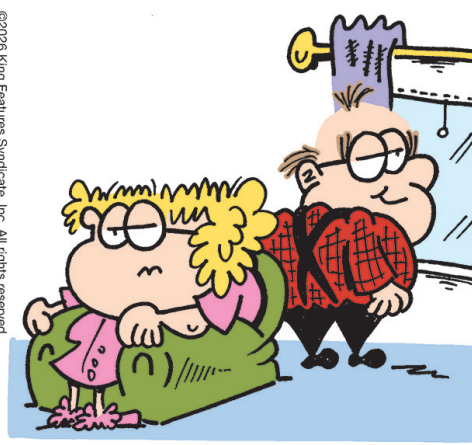
4071

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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PICKERING

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 20 of 63

## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Avoiding cognitive decline

Scroll around the internet to look for ideas about avoiding cognitive decline, and you'll find a wide variety of suggestions and studies. One thing many of them agree on, however, is the value of playing games.

UCLA has it narrowed down to four types in particular. Brain training games came in at the top of their list after they did a review of studies about improving cognitive function. Brain games were found to help with our ability to plan and focus, to remember information we hear, to recall information and to help with information processing speed. Crossword puzzles, next on the list, have value even if we only do them once a month. But more often has a greater impact.

Number puzzles, it is said, can have a powerful impact on memory, reasoning and attention. Again, the more often you do them, the greater the result.

Last on their list is three-dimensional video games (such as Super Mario). Memory improved after only playing for two weeks.

But the various universities and research groups don't all agree.

Columbia University concluded that crossword puzzles were better than computer video games for memory function. One study that went on for years determined that training for brain processing speed still had benefits decades later.

To be considered: Even if you don't have any signs of cognitive decline, starting early to keep ahead of it is no doubt valuable. And since the studies don't agree about which method is best, perhaps we should sample among all of them. A crossword puzzle per day, some time spent on computerized games, working on cognitive brain games for a few hours each week, joining others to work on a jigsaw puzzle, playing chess or mahjong or even solitaire ... surely it all adds up, right?

It's never too late to start.

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 21 of 63

1. Which Arizona Cardinals quarterback set a new NFL record for passes completed in a regular-season game with 47 versus the San Francisco 49ers in November 2025?

2. King Power Stadium, formerly known as Walkers Stadium, is the home field of which English Football League Championship team?

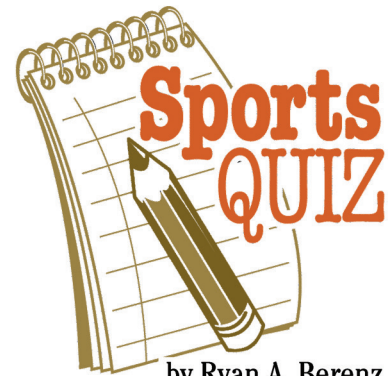
3. In November 1895, J. Frank Duryea won the first auto race in the United States -- a 54-mile race from Chicago to Evanston, Illinois, and back in heavy snow - with what average speed in miles per hour?

4. After being drafted into the U.S. Army, New York Giants outfielder Willie Mays played for what Virginia military baseball team from 1952 to 1953?

5. Soviets LEOnid Spirin, Antanas Mikenas and Bruno Junk swept the medals in what athletics event at the 1956 Melbourne Summer Olympics?

6. What multisport college coach and sports innovator was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1951 and the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in 1959?

7. In 1991, gambler Howard Spira was convicted of trying to extort \$110,000 from what Major League Baseball team owner?



by Ryan A. Berenz

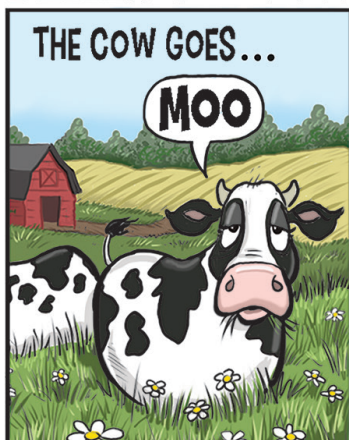
## Answers

1. Jacoby Brissett.
2. Leicester City Football Club.
3. Approximately 5.25 mph.
4. The Fort Eustis Wheels.
5. The men's 20-kilometer race walk.
6. Amos Alonzo Stagg.
7. George Steinbrenner, owner of the New York Yankees.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





## Pet first aid: Preparing before a dog or cat is in distress

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My dog "Alfie" was rushed to the vet with bloat. My friend who was visiting first noticed the symptoms and told me it was an emergency. He's recovering well, but I feel so guilty. How could I not recognize that he was suffering and could have died? Are resources out there for pet owners who want to know more about how to recognize serious health issues in their pets? -- Carl G. in San Francisco

DEAR CARL: I'm glad to hear Alfie is on the mend. To answer your question, yes, there are educational resources available to learn how to recognize illness or injury in pets and know what steps to take.

The American Red Cross now teaches a pet first aid course. It's a 35-minute online course, so you can sign up from anywhere and gain a good, basic foundation that will help you recognize and respond to pet health issues. Students learn to take pets' vital signs, do rescue breathing and respond to cardiac emergencies. First aid for injuries and bleeding is also covered, as is preventative care. Learn more at [redcross.org](http://redcross.org).

Your local library or community center may offer a similar course. Check their online calendar or call and ask what they offer.

The Animal Humane Society recommends creating a first aid kit just for your pet. It should have many of the items in a regular first aid kit -- gauze, non-stick pads, tape, saline wash, a thermometer, disposable gloves and antibiotic ointment. It should also include clean towels, a small flashlight, a muzzle, extra collar and leash, and a laminated card with the veterinarian's contact information and your pet's medications.

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

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 23 of 63

## Strange BUT TRUE

\* Most volcanoes spit out magma, ash and gas when they erupt, but a few rarer ones have been known to eject diamonds.

\* The longest recorded burp lasted one minute and 13 seconds.

\* Some German nursing homes use fake bus stops as a way to round up patients with Alzheimer's or dementia who seek to return home via public transportation. A staff member approaches and lets them know that the bus will be late, then

invites them inside to wait more comfortably. Within a short time, the incident is typically forgotten.

\* Bald himself, Hippocrates recommended a treatment consisting of pigeon droppings, opium, beetroot, horseradish and spices to cure hair loss. No, it wasn't successful.

\* The wood frog can hold its urine for up to eight months.

\* The Cannabis Cup is the largest marijuana festival in the world, featuring music, food and comedy, as well as awards for best new product, hash, glass, booth and seed company.

\* Due to their rare appearance, blood oranges were once considered an exclusive delicacy reserved for royalty.

\* Some libraries and museums loan out taxidermied animals as teaching aids.

\* For decades, Iceland maintained one of the strictest naming regimes in the world through the Icelandic Naming Committee, which reviewed applications to ensure personal names complied with Icelandic grammar and cultural tradition.

\* Folks with less nose hair have a higher risk of developing asthma.


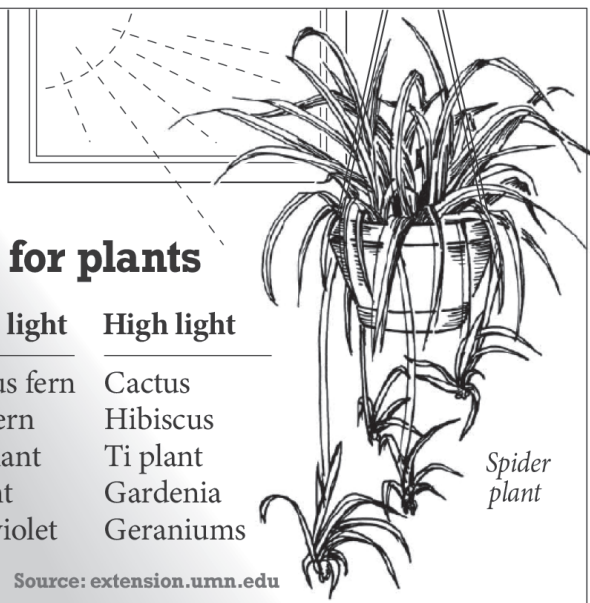
\* In 2018, six medical professionals each swallowed a LEGO minifigure head to determine whether it could pass without medical intervention, and how long it would take. (In case you're wondering, it was in an average of 1.7 days.)

\* Shaquille O'Neal missed 5,317 free throws over the course of his career.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts." -- Marcus Aurelius

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### Light needs for plants

Low light	Medium light	High light
Peace lily	Asparagus fern	Cactus
Snake plant	Boston fern	Hibiscus
Philodendron	Spider plant	Ti plant
English ivy	Jade plant	Gardenia
Diffenbachia	African violet	Geraniums

- Brenda Weaver Source: [extension.umn.edu](http://extension.umn.edu)



by Freddy Groves

## Additional education benefits

Have you been using your veterans educational benefits? Are you running out of time because you're coming to the end of the standard 36 months of benefits you received? Because of two new rulings, you might be one of a million veterans who are eligible for an additional 12 months.

The rulings in question (*Rudisill v. McDonough* and *Perkins v. Collins*) say that certain veterans could get more education benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Adding 12 months of benefits will bring you up to 48 months.

It started two years ago when the Supreme Court decided that, under one of the rulings, veterans who had more than one qualifying period of service (one for the Montgomery GI Bill and another for the Post-9/11 GI Bill) were eligible to combine them for 48 months of benefits. Then, last year, the appeals court decided that veterans with only one qualifying period of service could get benefits under both the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post-9/11 GI Bill programs.

Here is how it's going to work:

You no longer need to pick one program over the other and be limited to 36 months.

The VA is looking at eligibility under both of the rulings for any veteran who used benefits after August 2018 and who now has less than three months of benefits remaining or a veteran who was enrolled during the last six months.

Then, the VA is looking at veterans under one of the rulings to see if additional benefits are available. They're starting by automatically approving the standard 36 months of benefits. Those veterans who are eligible for the additional time will be told.

If you're new to filing for education benefits, download VA Form 22-1990 ([www.va.gov/forms/22-1990](http://www.va.gov/forms/22-1990)) to either apply or ask to change an existing benefit. Family members can scroll down to Form 22-1990e and use that form.

If you've previously filed for education benefits, download Form 22-1995 ([www.va.gov/forms/22-1995](http://www.va.gov/forms/22-1995)) to ask for any changes.

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 25 of 63

## Wishing Well®

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

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

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1. GEOGRAPHY: Which country is also known to residents as Hellas?
2. U.S. STATES: Which state is the least populated?
3. ENTERTAINERS: Which show launched the career of comedian/actor Jim Carrey?
4. MOVIES: What museum is featured in the movie "Night at the Museum"?
5. HISTORY: When was Earth Day first celebrated?
6. MUSIC: Which song begins with the lines, "Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy"?
7. TELEVISION: Who starred in the title role of the TV drama "Designated Survivor"?
8. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the only sport that has been played on the moon?
9. LITERATURE: What is the name of the language used in the novel "1984"?
10. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a group of giraffes called?

### Answers

1. Greece.
2. Wyoming.
3. "In Living Color."
4. The American Museum of Natural History in New York City.
5. April 22, 1970.
6. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen.
7. Kiefer Sutherland.
8. Golf.
9. Newspeak.
10. A tower.

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South Dakota Governor



## Larry Rhoden



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

### Driving Innovation in National Defense

South Dakota has never been a place that sits on the sidelines. When there's work to be done, we roll up our sleeves and get after it. The highest charge of government is to keep our people and their freedoms secure, so we're rolling up our sleeves and getting it done.

In my State of the State address, I proclaimed that national security would be South Dakota's "next big industry." That wasn't just a slogan. It was a recognition of what's already happening here – and of the opportunities in front of us.

National security starts with food security, and nobody does that better than South Dakota. A nation that can't feed itself is subject to the control of nations that control the food supply. Thankfully, South Dakota feeds the world. Our hardworking farmers and ranchers do incredible work to feed families across America and around the world. That's a responsibility we take seriously. And we're expanding that mission.

We're continuing to grow our value-added agriculture. In the last year, we moved forward with the first, second, and third largest economic development projects in South Dakota history with Smithfield, CJ Schwan's, and High Plains Processing in Mitchell. These three facilities will all play a big role in food production and value-added ag.

But our opportunities in national security stretch far beyond food security.

Ellsworth Air Force Base is getting ready for the B-21 bomber, which will play a major role in defending our nation for decades to come. Our cybersecurity sector is growing by leaps and bounds, driven by the strength of Dakota State University. Across our state, we've got businesses, workers, and leaders who are already contributing to this mission every single day.

South Dakota is already doing the mission. We have all the pieces. And now, we are bringing them together to seize this opportunity.

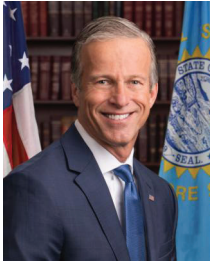
I'm proud to announce the creation of the South Dakota Defense Institute. This will be a central hub for our next big industry, a central point of contact for national defense contractors and contacts with the federal government, and a place where opportunities are identified, pursued, and followed through.

Our focus will be on understanding our strengths and where we have room to grow. We will build relationships with partners and agencies. The South Dakota Defense Institute will play a direct role in supporting businesses and strengthening collaboration between industry, education, and government.

We're investing \$6 million from the Future Fund to get it up and running over the next five years and investing in a building in Rapid City's Innovation District. Our students, researchers, and industry leaders can work side by side to make a real difference, not only in South Dakota, but across America.

South Dakota is strong, safe, and free – and with the South Dakota Defense Institute, we will help keep America strong, safe, and free.

We're not waiting around. We're rolling up our sleeves and building something that matters.



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

## Lower Tax Bills, Bigger Refunds

I don't know too many people who look forward to Tax Day, but thanks to Republicans' landmark Working Families Tax Cuts legislation more Americans received good news when they filed their taxes this year. Without action from Congress, the average South Dakota family would have seen a \$2,500 tax hike this year. Republicans were determined to not let that happen, and our landmark legislation not only prevented that tax hike but provided additional tax relief. And as a result, the American people are seeing lower tax bills, and the average tax refund is significantly higher than last year.

The centerpiece of the Working Families Tax Cuts is permanent tax relief for middle-income Americans. In 2017, Republicans lowered tax rates across the board. Last year, we made those lower rates permanent. We also increased the standard deduction, and we made it permanent too. And on top of that, seniors can now claim an extra \$6,000 deduction to further reduce their tax burden.

As its name implies, the Working Families Tax Cuts is also about providing much-needed tax relief to Americans raising a family. After Republicans doubled the child tax credit in 2017, this bill raised it even further and permanently linked it to inflation so that its value will keep pace with the actual cost of raising kids. This bill also created new investment accounts for parents to invest in their children's futures and expanded 529 education savings accounts to allow them to be used for a wider variety of education expenses like tutoring, homeschool materials, and vocational training.

The Working Families Tax Cuts is also a game-changer for certain Americans who earn tips and work overtime shifts. Republicans' landmark bill allows these hardworking people to deduct overtime and tip income and realize significant tax savings as a result. And they are already planning to put that money into their education, savings, toward groceries and rent, or to help raise their families.

In addition to the tax relief this bill provided for families, small businesses and family farms and ranches are seeing tax relief too. They benefit from lower tax rates, as well as the 20 percent 199A small business tax deduction, which is also now a permanent feature of the tax code. Then there are the investment incentives – like 100 percent bonus depreciation and the research and development tax credit – which are permanent and already helping South Dakota businesses invest in their employees. And this bill also protects a lot more family businesses, farms, and ranches from the death tax and the costly estate planning expenses that come along with it, ensuring those enterprises can stay strong and family-run for generations to come.

Thanks to Republicans' tax relief, Americans are keeping more of their hard-earned money, and because the Working Families Tax Cuts provides permanent tax relief to hardworking South Dakotans, you don't have to worry about a tax hike next year or in the years to come.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 28 of 63



Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

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## Does Anybody Ever Grow up?

In a few months, I will celebrate another birthday. Interestingly, these birthdays come every year. This year, if I've kept up to date, I will celebrate my 75th birthday. I never expected to get this far along in life. I always thought 75 was old.

If I believe one of my old uncles, my 75th birthday amounts to  $7+5 = 12$ . So I will be 12 years old in a few months. I can't imagine what it's going to be like to be 12 once again. I guess I don't know the difference between 75 and 12. There may not be much of a difference.

As a youngster, my mother would often say in a very sarcastic tone, "Are you ever going to grow up?" Sometimes she would say, "Just grow up."

At the time, I didn't quite understand what she was saying. By the time I reached 6 foot, I began to realize that wasn't what she meant by growing up. Of course, I really don't know what she meant by that.

Looking back over the years of my life, I'm not quite sure what it means to grow up. I can't see anywhere in my life where I have actually grown up. Sure, I've gotten older, but I haven't grown up.

I'm not sure I work hard enough throughout my life to grow up. Of course, not knowing what growing up means, how do I know if I got there?

I spent some time reflecting on my family and trying to figure out which one of them actually grew up. When I assumed one relative had grown up, they did something that completely destroyed the image I had of them.

What does growing up mean?

Getting older does not mean you're actually growing up. I know a lot of old people who certainly do not show any signs of having grown up. For example, look at some of the politicians at the White House. If they represent what grown up is, then I do not want to grow up in any regard.

Back when I was in my teenage glory, I thought I knew everything. I thought I was smarter than my teachers, and of course, I was smarter than my parents at the time. I assumed that I had grown up back then. But as my life unwound, I saw very clearly that I was nowhere near being grown up.

My resolution for my birthday this year will be to discover what it actually means to be grown up. After I study that subject, I may come to the conclusion that I really don't want to grow up.

Looking at the people around me and thinking they are grown-ups would make me want not to grow up, as far as that is concerned.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 29 of 63

The only person I know who has honestly grown up is The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. After all, that's why I married her. If she has grown up, then I don't have to be grown up, which is the case all through these years of marital bliss.

Every once in a while, when I do something really stupid, she will reply to me and say, "Oh, why don't you just grow up."

Of course, if I knew what she meant by "grow up," I might do a little bit about it. But I'm enjoying life too much to stop and try to figure out what it means to grow up. After all, one grown up in a marriage is all that is needed. Since she is a grown-up, I don't have to worry about that at all.

This year, we will celebrate our 55th wedding anniversary. Throughout that time, I had never noticed that I had achieved any "grow up" status. All of that weighs on the shoulders of The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. She's the grown-up in this relationship, and I'm very happy with that.

When you grow up, you lose a lot of fun times in your life. What is the purpose of that? I want to live life on the "Fun Train," and my understanding is that you can't ride it once you have grown up.

I have some friends that I've known for a very long time who think that they have grown up. According to what I see, because they have grown up, there are a lot of things that they can no longer do, things that are fun in life. They have sacrificed fun activities for the sake of being grown-ups.

Whatever somebody accuses me of doing something stupid, my excuse is, "I'm just not grown up yet." That has gotten me out of many difficult situations.

When I'm ready, I'll surrender to being grown up. Until then, I'm going to enjoy all of the fun things in life. When I run out of steam for enjoying these things, I will consider growing up.

As I was reflecting on this a Bible verse came to mind. 2 Peter 3:18, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

Honestly, I'm not sure what it means to "grow up", but my focus as a Christ is seen in this verse. I am to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The most important growth is my relationship with Christ.

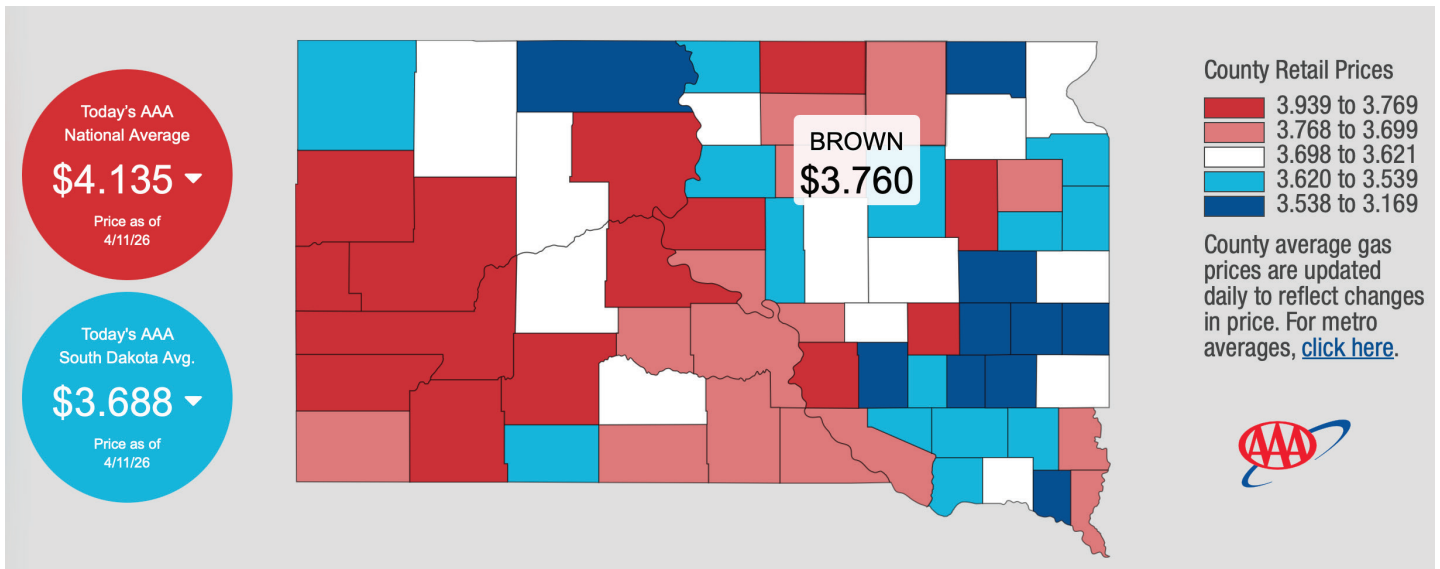
# Broton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 30 of 63

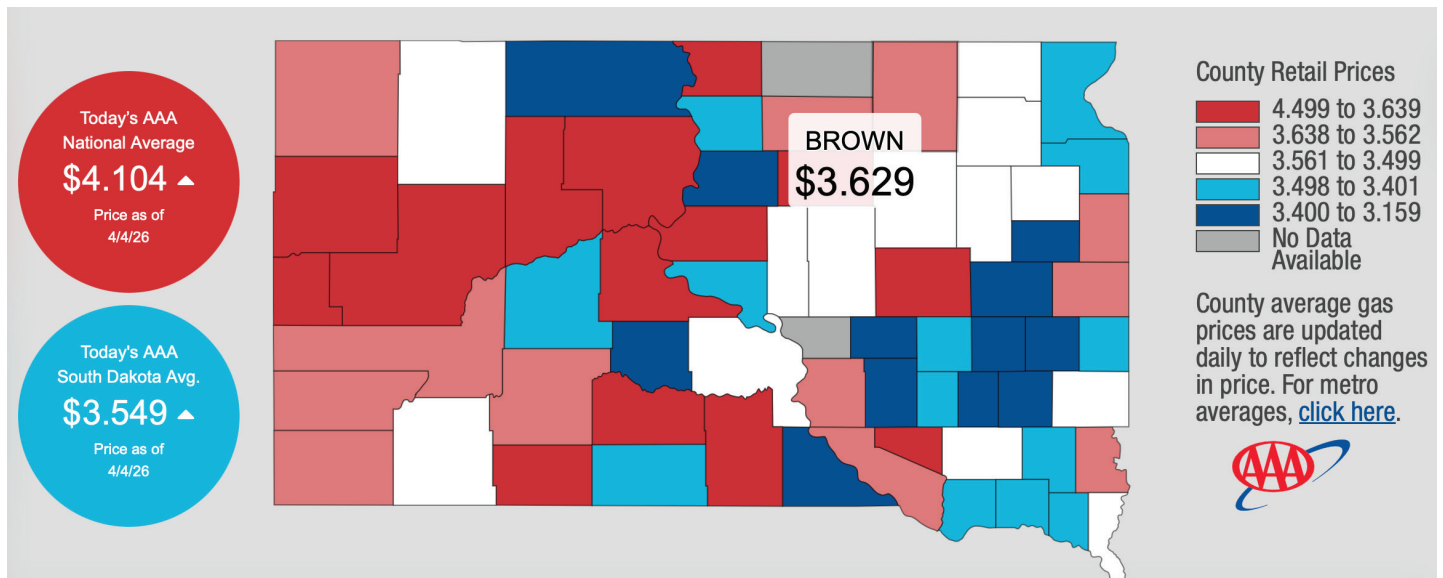
## South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.688	\$3.857	\$4.343	\$4.871
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.694	\$3.854	\$4.334	\$4.876
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.549	\$3.694	\$4.217	\$4.686
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.135	\$3.319	\$3.792	\$4.160
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.099	\$3.292	\$3.703	\$3.308

### This Week



### Last Week



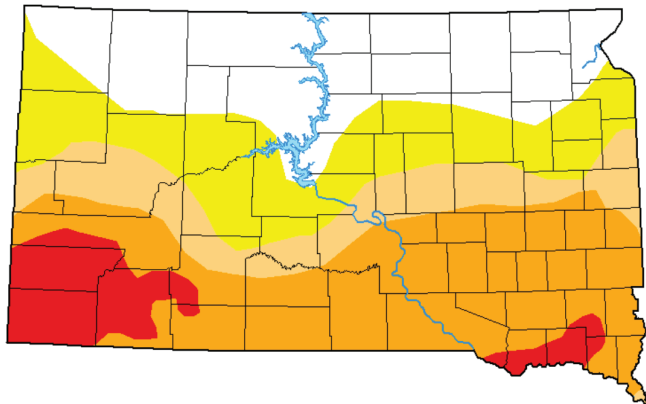
# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 31 of 63

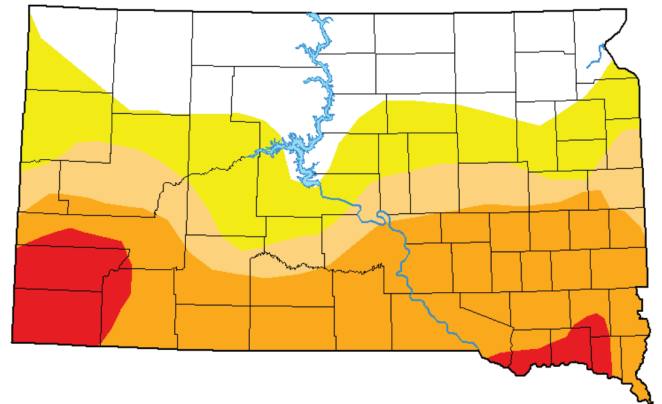
## Drought Classification

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

## Drought Monitor



April 7



March 31

On this week's map, rainfall (1 to 4 inches) during the past week led to targeted improvements in far eastern portions of Kansas and Nebraska. Meanwhile, conditions deteriorated on the map in areas of central and western Kansas, and southwestern South Dakota. For the week, average temperatures were 4 to 10+ °F below normal across much of the region with the greatest departures observed in the Dakotas. Looking at climatological rankings for the past 60-day period (March 7 to April 7), several locations ranked among their driest on record, including Dodge City, KS (driest on record; -1.51 inches); Goodland, KS (driest on record; -1.05); and Manhattan, KS (2nd driest; -1.81 inches). In terms of hydrologic conditions, the U.S. Geological Survey is reporting below to much below normal streamflows across southwestern South Dakota, southern Nebraska, and central/western Kansas.

## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

### **A new gold rush: States stockpile bars, encourage gold-backed debit cards**

**BY: KEVIN HARDY**

More states are piling up gold bars, or encouraging residents to use gold-backed debit cards, to hedge against inflation.

Several states, including Western ones with rich mining histories, have been stockpiling gold as part of their broader state savings. And more states are looking to follow the lead of Texas and Florida by passing so-called transactional gold laws that would invite consumers to save and spend gold through their own accounts.

Critics question the need for these bills and some have panned them as potentially market-disrupting measures that could ultimately provide tax havens for the wealthy. But proponents say they can help bring gold to the masses and provide ordinary consumers an important protection against the creep of inflation, since gold has generally increased in value over time.

"Inflation is the carbon monoxide that you can't see, taste or smell," said Georgia state Sen. Marty Harbin, a Republican who sponsored bipartisan legislation this year that would have established gold and silver as legal tender and created an electronic payment system.

The state Senate approved that bill but it didn't advance beyond a House committee. Harbin said he expects to reintroduce it next session.

Oklahoma lawmakers are considering a similar measure that would create an electronic payment system backed by gold. Lawmakers in several states, including Arizona, Iowa and Mississippi, considered such legislation this year.

After vetoing a similar bill last year, Utah Republican Gov. Spencer Cox allowed a gold measure to become law this year without his signature. He said the legislature appeared intent on passing the bill despite his misgivings.

"Many are concerned that this will result in unwelcome government involvement in the gold market," he wrote in a statement late last month.

As part of transactional gold legislation, proponents are pushing for tax exemptions for precious metals, namely gold and silver. While interest on savings accounts or earnings on stock investments can be subject to state and federal taxes, gold proponents say precious metals should be free of tax because of their history as legal currency.

Matthew Gardner, a senior fellow at the left-leaning Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, said there's no reason gold should be taxed differently from other investment holdings. Governments generally provide capital gains tax breaks in hopes of spurring activities that grow the economy or create jobs. But Gardner said holding gold or other collectibles does no such thing.

"This as an economic activity has virtually no social benefits whatsoever," Gardner said. "You're trading a Pokémon card, basically."

If rising costs are the main concern, Gardner said, lawmakers should tackle inflation directly.

"Most people don't have the luxury of investing anything in gold," he said. "It's hard to imagine a way of inflation-proofing people's lives that is less accessible to most Americans than doing it with gold."

#### **Gold for the masses**

The more Georgia Democratic state Sen. Sonya Halpern learned about transactional gold systems, the more appealing the idea became. While anyone can buy, hold or sell gold objects, she said emerging technology platforms allow consumers to own smaller shares of gold and spend it easily by swiping a card.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 33 of 63

"It really does give you that instant liquidity of whatever gold holdings that you have," she said.

A cosponsor of Harbin's legislation, Halpern said she hoped gold could buffer Georgians against the shrinking buying power of the dollar. But she said she doesn't see it as replacing traditional savings and spending methods.

"I personally think that most people would see it as a complement to whatever they've already got going for their savings," she said, "and so it's just a piece of their overall ability to save and protect the dollars that they're working so hard to earn."

In Georgia, proponents cited Glint, a British firm that has been pushing legislation across several states in recent years. The company makes gold spendable for consumers by issuing prepaid debit cards that are backed by physical holdings in Swiss vaults.

Customers use currency to fund their accounts in advance, and Glint says they then outright own the physical gold in their account. When they use their Glint card for a purchase, the equivalent amount of gold is sold on their behalf and converted to U.S. dollars, or another currency, that go to the merchant.

Harbin, the Republican sponsor in Georgia, held up his Glint card and described the ease of purchasing his lunch at Chick-fil-A.

"I saw that the proof of concept was there," he told Stateline.

The Sound Money Defense League, a group that advocates for restoring gold and silver as America's currency, has fought Harbin's proposal and similar measures.

Jp Cortez, the group's executive director, said the existing debit card system was actually evidence that the legislation was unnecessary.

"It's not enabling anything that isn't already legal," said Cortez, whose organization is owned by Money Metals Exchange, an online broker for precious metals. "On top of that, the way these bills are written, frankly, read to me to be self-serving or written by self-interested vendors."

Aside from boosting particular firms, Cortez said, legislation proposed in several states would create a new government program that would put off many gold owners, who tend to be suspicious of government. He said there's also little demand to spend gold, which owners often view as a long-term asset that will gain value over time.

"The mentality of a gold owner is not one that says, 'I want more government involvement in my gold,'" Cortez said.

In an email to Stateline, Glint COO Jason Ollivier said legislation is not necessary for consumers to use the platform, which has been operating in the United States for more than six years. But new state laws do help legitimize and scale the technology, he said.

"These laws aim to remove friction, particularly around legal tender status and regulatory clarity, and make gold more usable for everyday transactions across a broader population," Ollivier wrote.

Inflation is driving the current wave of legislator interest, he said. And products such as Glint can provide consumers access to small amounts of gold, which currently trades for nearly \$5,000 per ounce.

"Transactional gold allows consumers to accumulate small amounts over time, helping preserve purchasing power," Ollivier wrote. "Gold is a hedge and a store of value, not a high-yield investment; its role is stability, not speculation."

## States boosting gold

In Utah, the law enacted this year without the governor's signature requires the state to create a precious metals-backed electronic payment system to pay state vendors.

Utah State Treasurer Marlo Oaks said the system will be voluntary for state contractors, but officials hope it helps build out the emerging gold market.

"The idea, I think, is that if the state is involved in something like this, then it can add legitimacy to the idea," he said. "And can hopefully put proper guardrails around this sort of thing and advance the market in a way that is positive and helpful."

Oaks also said he hopes state involvement will help challenge federal tax policy.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 34 of 63**

In 1971, President Richard Nixon effectively ended the gold standard, which tied the value of the U.S. dollar to physical gold. After, the IRS began treating gold holdings like other collectibles, subject to income taxes upon sale.

"That's an important element, because suddenly if you're using (gold) like it used to be used, then we need to think about the treatment of taxes differently," Oaks said.

He led a 2024 workgroup of Utah officials studying how precious metals could "bolster long-term fiscal stability." In addition to inflation, the group examined how the ballooning federal debt consumes more tax revenues and could threaten state coffers.

A 2024 law allowed the treasurer to invest up to 10% of the state's reserve funds at the time in gold. Oaks said Utah currently has about \$1.4 billion in reserves, including about \$178 million worth of gold held in a privately operated vault.

It's among several states that are stockpiling gold. Created by 2015 legislation, the Texas Bullion Depository is the nation's first state-administered precious metals depository, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts says. In Wyoming, a private firm is now storing state-owned gold worth millions of dollars, following enactment of a law last year.

Chris Colson, who researches payments trends at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, said it's too early to tell how lasting the current gold rush will prove. He noted that new transactional gold laws do not require customers or merchants to use gold. But he said many details surrounding taxes, fees and oversight remain to be determined.

"With any good innovation, you don't necessarily want to clamp it down at the beginning, because then nothing happens, right?" he said. "So I think as people use it and things happen — positive and negative — it'll start to tighten up a little bit."

He likens the rise of gold-backed payment systems to that of Stablecoin, a type of cryptocurrency tied to existing currency like the U.S. dollar. That form of payment is still relatively rare, but it did gain traction with adoption from major credit card companies.

"I would imagine this will follow a similar route, meaning someone will make it available, and then the market will kind of bear who and how it's going to be used," he said. "I think we're just really at the starting line with this."

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

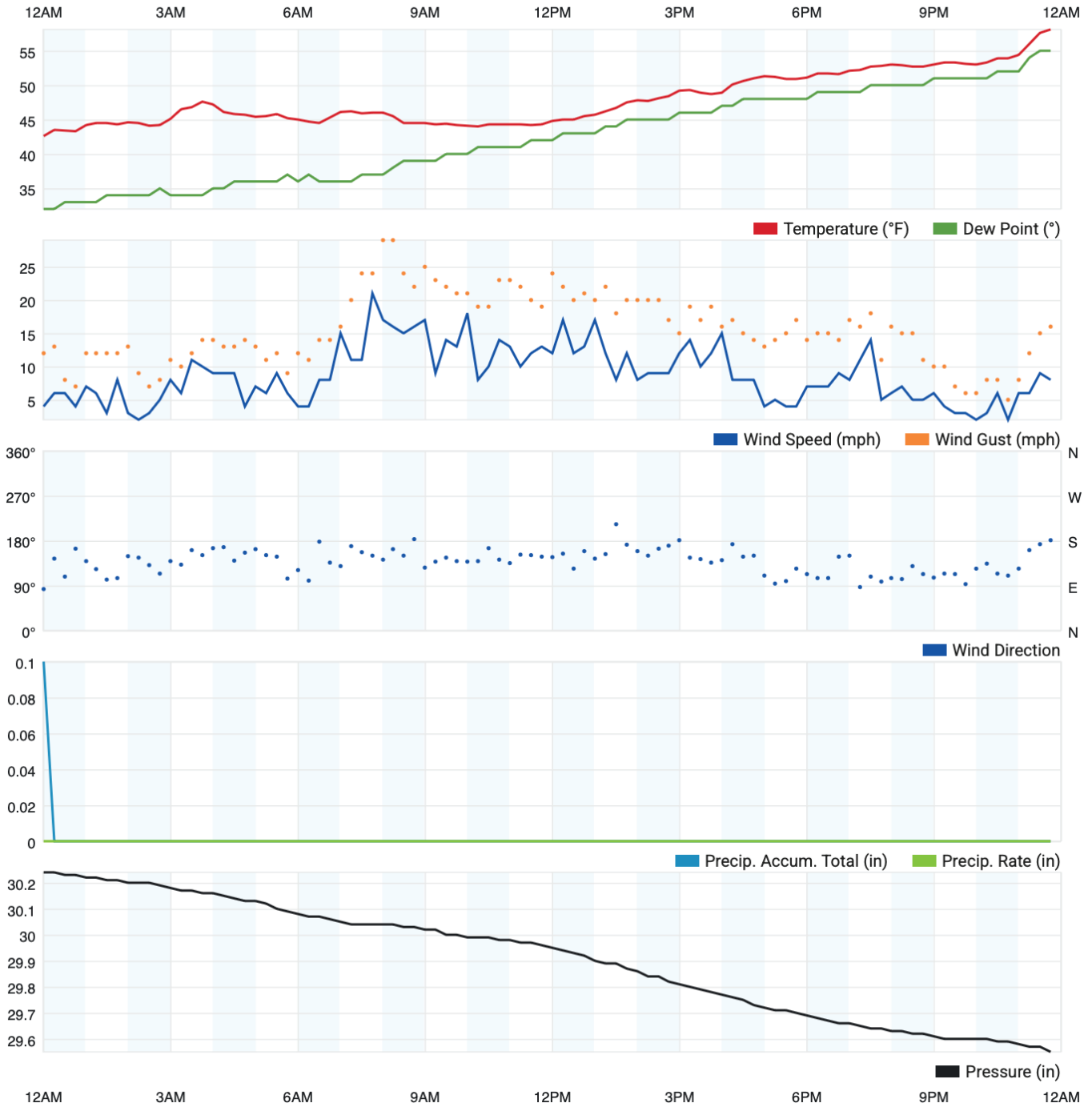
*Kevin Hardy covers business, labor and rural issues for Stateline from the Midwest.*

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 35 of 63

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

April 11, 2026



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 36 of 63

Sunday

Sunday Night

Monday

Monday Night

Tuesday



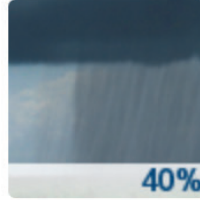
High: 79 °F

Slight Chance  
T-storms then  
Sunny and  
Breezy



Low: 44 °F

Increasing  
Clouds



High: 64 °F

Chance  
Showers



Low: 39 °F

Slight Chance  
Showers



High: 62 °F

Partly Sunny

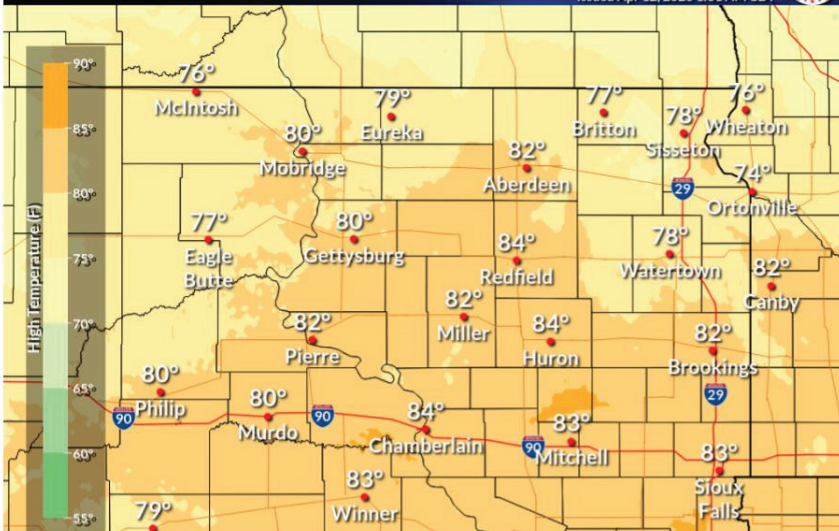


## Warm & Dry Today

April 12, 2026  
2:08 AM CDT

### Record to Near-Record Highs Today

Weather Forecast Office  
Aberdeen, SD  
Issued Apr 12, 2026 1:31 AM CDT



### Highs in the upper 70s & 80s

- Winds out of the west gusting 25 to 35 mph
- Dry grasses, warm & dry conditions to combine and create **High to Very High Grassland Fire Danger**

Warmest & driest conditions across portions of central and southern South Dakota



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Temperatures today will top out in the upper 70s and 80s. Winds will be out of the west gusting 25 to 35 mph. The strong winds, dry grasses and other fuels, and relative humidity falling to 15 to 30 percent will result in High to Very High Grassland Fire Danger. A Red Flag Warning is in effect this afternoon for portions of central South Dakota.

# Broton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 37 of 63



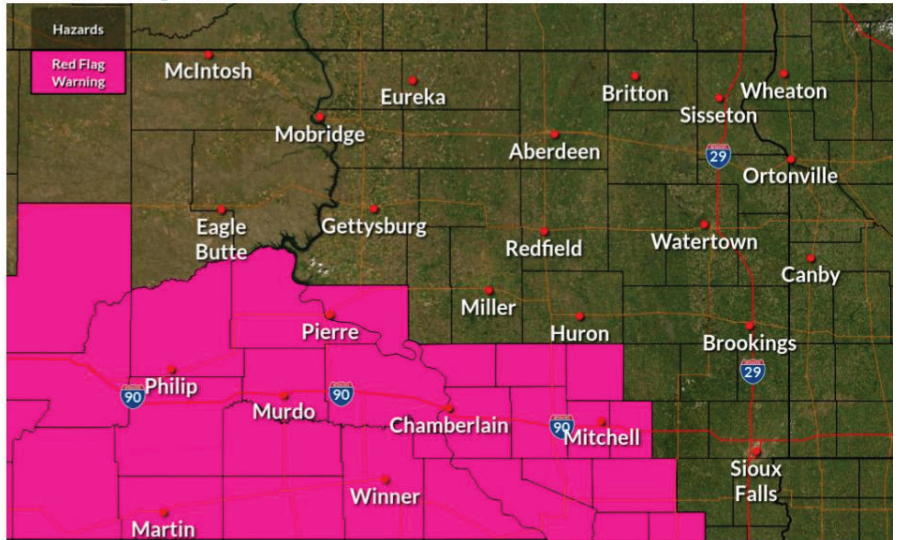
## Red Flag Warning this Afternoon

April 12, 2026  
2:23 AM CDT

Very Warm, dry, and breezy today

- Winds out of the west **gusting 25 to 35 mph** with near record high temperatures in the upper 70s & 80s
- Relative Humidity 15 to 30% this afternoon, lowest over central South Dakota
- Dry grasses, warm & dry conditions to combine and create **High to Very High Grassland Fire Danger**. Fires may spread quickly and be difficult to control

## Red Flag Warning this Afternoon for portions of central South Dakota



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

### THREAT ASSESSMENT

#### HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:  
SCATTERED severe storms possible

#### TIMING

1 PM - 7 PM

#### PRIMARY THREATS



LARGE HAIL



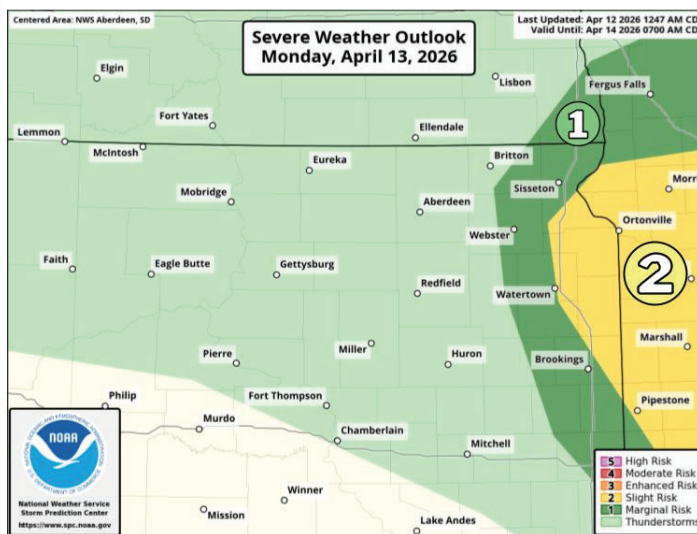
DAMAGING WIND

#### SECONDARY THREATS



HEAVY RAIN

## Scattered SEVERE STORMS Possible Monday



### What To Expect

- 50% chance for storms Monday afternoon
- Slight risk of severe storms with large hail of 1" or winds over 60 mph

### What To Do?

- Stay Weather Aware!
- Be ready to take shelter indoors when storms approach
- Have multiple ways to receive warnings



INDOOR SHELTER

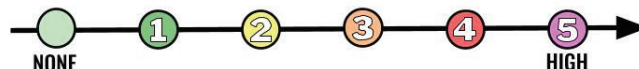


OUTDOOR PLANS?  
STAY WEATHER AWARE



MULTIPLE WAYS TO  
RECEIVE WARNINGS

#### SEVERE THUNDERSTORM RISK



# Groton Daily Independent

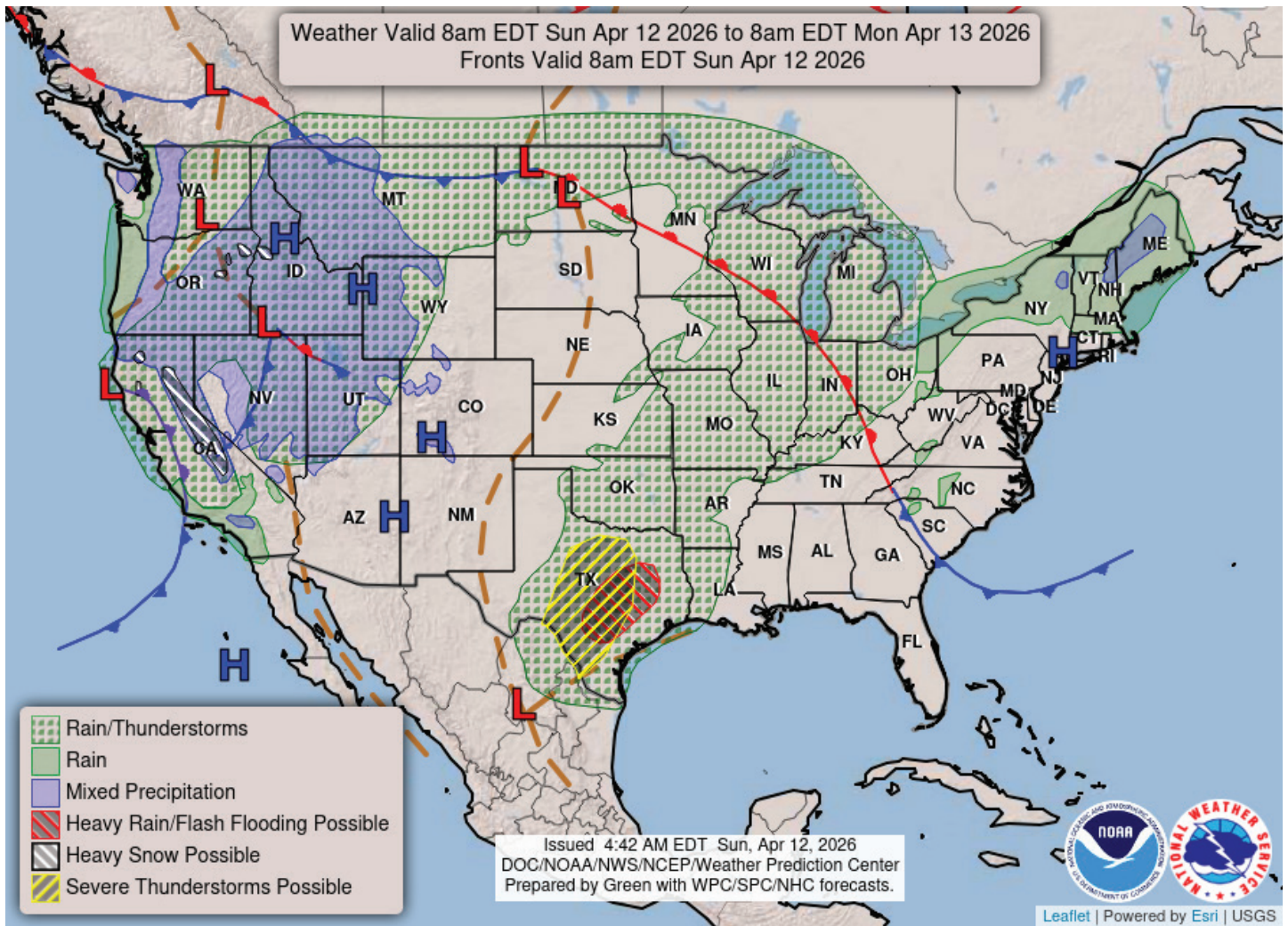
Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 38 of 63

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 58 °F at 11:29 PM**  
**Low Temp: 42 °F at 12:00 AM**  
**Wind: 29 mph at 7:55 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

## Today's Info

Record High: 85 in 1931  
Record Low: 9 in 1961  
Average High: 56  
Average Low: 30  
Average Precip in April.: 0.56  
Precip to date in April.: 0.95  
Average Precip to date: 2.62  
Precip Year to Date: 2.57  
Sunset Tonight: 8:13 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:50 am



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 39 of 63

## Today in Weather History

April 12th, 1970: A strong spring storm affected the northern and western two-thirds of South Dakota. Heavy snow fell throughout the morning, dumping over a foot of snow over a large area of the state. Winds whipped the snow into 2 to 4-foot drifts across much of northern South Dakota. The Aberdeen area was the hardest hit, with around 17 inches reported. While southeast South Dakota, southwest Minnesota, and northwest Iowa did not feel the storm's effects, east-central South Dakota was not as fortunate. Freezing drizzle and freezing rain resulted in heavy icing in east central South Dakota, causing extensive damage. The ice storm caused power outages to 20 to 80% of the rural electric service in the area.

1927 — A tornado wiped out the town of Rock Springs, TX, killing 72 persons and causing 1.2 million dollars damage. The tornado, more than one mile in width, destroyed 235 of 247 buildings, leaving no trace of lumber or contents in many cases. Many survivors were bruised by large hail which fell after the passage of the tornado. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1934 — Winds atop Mount Washington, NH, averaged 186 mph for five minutes, with a peak gust of 231 mph, the highest wind speed ever clocked in the world. (David Ludlum)

1987 — A cold front crossing the central U.S. produced heavy snow in the Central Rockies, and severe thunderstorms over Kansas and Oklahoma. Snowfall totals ranged up to 16 inches at Red Mountain Pass CO. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 87 mph at Ponca City OK. Winds associated with the cold front itself gusted to 69 mph at Tucumcari NM. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Snow blanketed the Southern Appalachians. Totals in North Carolina ranged up to 17 inches at Mitchell. Winds at Flat Top Mountain gusted to 80 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Twenty-two cities in the south central and eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Elkins WV with a low of 15 degrees, and Baton Rouge LA with a reading of 37 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 — Arctic air invaded the central U.S. Lincoln, NE, reported a record low of 17 degrees. Thunderstorms developing along the arctic cold front produced heavy snow in north central Kansas, wind gusts to 61 mph at Midland TX, and wind gusts to 69 mph at Rawlins WY. Warm weather prevailed in the southwestern U.S. Las Vegas NV reported a record high of 91 degrees, and on the 13th, Sacramento CA reported a record high of 95 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2010 — One-inch diameter hail falls in Fresno, CA. Two condominiums are destroyed by thunderstorms in California's San Joaquin Valley. Up to three funnel clouds were also seen in the region.

## Learning in Troubled Waters

**Hardship produces spiritual growth when we respond with a committed, teachable, and surrendered heart.**

Psalms 34:1-7: 1 I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.  
2 My soul will make its boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice.  
3 O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together.  
4 I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears.  
5 They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces will never be ashamed.  
6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him And saved him out of all his troubles.  
7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them.

God promises that when we face challenging times, He will be with us. He wants to be our teacher and guide, but we must position ourselves to respond to Him. We need to ...

Have a longing to follow God's way. Scripture compares such yearning to a deer panting for water (Psalm 42:1). The same should be true of us each time we wait for God's direction instead of acting on our own.

Be willing to be taught by the Lord. When we look to Him for guidance, He will transform our adversities into times of learning. Such was the case with Hannah as she pleaded for a child (1 Samuel 1:1-28; 1 Samuel 2:1-10). It was also true for Mary and Martha when their brother Lazarus died (John 11:17-27). We need willing spirits if we are to learn what God wants to teach us.

Yield to His will. Before we know God's solution, He asks us to commit ourselves to His way. The Lord calls us to walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7) and to acknowledge that we are helpless without Him (John 15:5). To declare commitment to His way is always best.

Troubles are an unwelcome fact of life, but they can have value. God will see us through them all. He asks only that we have a tender heart, a teachable spirit, and a yielded will.

*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 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 41 of 63

## The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 42 of 63



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.11.26

15 19 24 38 55 5

TOP PRIZE:

**\$1,000,000/year**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 48 Mins 56 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.10.26

3 18 36 42 49 6

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$120,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.11.26

1 21 26 29 32 6

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$21,720,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.11.26

4 11 13 19 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$52,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.11.26

1 4 22 36 48 17

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.11.26

6 47 49 53 60 6

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$45,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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

### **Trump approves disaster requests for at least 7 states. Others await aid decisions**

By GABRIELA AOUN ANGUEIRA Associated Press

The Trump administration approved major disaster declaration requests for at least seven states this week, according to information released Saturday by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, allowing affected communities to access federal support. About 15 requests for assistance from others states and tribes for extreme weather events this year and last seem to be pending, along with three appeals of previous denials.

Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota and Washington were granted major disaster declarations, which can unlock federal support and funding for recovery needs such as public infrastructure repairs and aid for survivors.

The announcement, in a FEMA daily briefing document, comes weeks into Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin's tenure overseeing the disaster relief agency and is the latest signal that the former Republican senator from Oklahoma could ease some of the turmoil from the leadership of his predecessor, Kristi Noem, who was fired by President Donald Trump in March.

Nonetheless, FEMA's work could be undermined by the ongoing DHS shutdown, now eight weeks long. While disaster response and recovery can continue through a shutdown because FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund does not lapse, that money is running low as the funding impasse drags on. The DHS appropriations bill would replenish the fund with more than \$26 billion.

Mullin said Tuesday that he planned to brief Trump that day on the pending declaration requests, affirming his intention to speed up work on past disasters in the run-up to Atlantic hurricane season, which begins June 1.

"We're trying to push this stuff forward as fast as possible," Mullin said after surveying Hurricane Helene recovery work in North Carolina on his first official visit as DHS secretary, acknowledging that "disasters are happening constantly."

White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said Saturday that Trump responds to such requests "with great care and consideration, ensuring American tax dollars are used appropriately and efficiently by the states to supplement — not substitute — their obligation to respond to and recover from disasters." She said an administration goal is having state and local governments "invest in their own resilience before disaster strikes, making response less urgent and recovery less prolonged."

While Mullin assured fellow senators during his confirmation hearing that he believed in FEMA's mission, the agency's future is uncertain. Trump has expressed a desire to push more responsibility for disasters down to states. The FEMA Review Council he appointed last year has not released a recommendation report expected to include sweeping changes to how the federal government supports disaster resilience, response and recovery.

It was not immediately clear whether other states or tribes had also been told of approvals or denials that were not yet announced publicly. Hawaii Governor Josh Green, a Democrat, said Wednesday said his state had received a disaster declaration for devastating March flooding.

Trump also amended past disaster declarations for Tennessee and Mississippi, adding more counties for individual assistance after a severe winter storm in January.

Some communities have experienced unprecedented long waits for answers on their disaster requests during Trump's second term. An analysis by The Associated Press in September found approvals were taking more than a month on average.

It took less than two weeks on average for a governor's disaster declaration request to be granted by presidents in the 1990s and early 2000s. That rose to about three weeks during the past decade under presidents from both major parties.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 44 of 63

Arizona has been waiting nearly three months for an answer to its appeal after being denied support for severe storms and flooding that occurred in September.

Some Democrat-led states have complained about being denied disaster declarations despite proving need. Maryland Gov. Wes Moore called Trump's decision "deeply frustrating" after the president twice denied the state's request for support for May 2025 flooding despite a FEMA assessment showing over \$33 million in damages.

While FEMA assesses damage and uses a specific formula to analyze the possible impact on states and local jurisdictions, disaster declarations are ultimately at the president's discretion.

None of the approvals made this week includes hazard mitigation funding, a once-typical add on to disaster declaration support that helped communities build back with more resilience. Trump has not approved a hazard mitigation request for more than a year.

## **US and Iran end 21-hour ceasefire talks without agreement before Vance departs Pakistan**

By MUNIR AHMED, E. EDUARDO CASTILLO, BEN FINLEY and COLLIN BINKLEY Associated Press ISLAMABAD (AP) — The United States and Iran ended a historic round of face-to-face talks early Sunday without reaching an agreement and the fate of the fragile, two-week ceasefire still unclear.

Vice President JD Vance, who led the U.S. delegation during the 21 hours of talks in Pakistan's capital Islamabad, said negotiations finished without a deal after the Iranians refused to accept American terms to refrain from developing a nuclear weapon.

There was no immediate comment from the Iranian delegation, but Pakistani mediators called on both countries to maintain the ceasefire.

"It is imperative that the parties continue to uphold their commitment to ceasefire," Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said, adding that his country will try to facilitate a new dialogue between Iran and the U.S. in the coming days.

The discussions in Islamabad began Saturday, a few days after a fragile ceasefire was announced as the war that has killed thousands of people and shaken global markets entered its seventh week.

Vance said he remained in constant communication with U.S. President Donald Trump and others in the administration during the negotiations.

"But the simple fact is that we need to see an affirmative commitment that they will not seek a nuclear weapon, and they will not seek the tools that would enable them to quickly achieve a nuclear weapon," Vance told reporters. "That is the core goal of the president of the United States. And that's what we've tried to achieve through these negotiations."

The vice president said he spoke with Trump "a half dozen times, a dozen times, over the past 21 hours" and also spoke with Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Adm. Brad Cooper, head of the United States Central Command.

"We were constantly in communication with the team because we were negotiating in good faith," Vance said, speaking at a podium in front of a pair of American flags with special envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to his side. "And we leave here, and we leave here with a very simple proposal, a method of understanding that is our final and best offer. We'll see if the Iranians accept it."

Two Pakistani officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the press, said a third round of discussions between the delegation heads had finished and the talks would resume after a break.

Then the U.S. vice president addressed the press, announced there was no agreement and went to the airport to leave Pakistan.

Trump had said he would suspend attacks against Iran for two weeks. Vance's comments did not indicate what will happen after that time period expires or if the ceasefire will remain in place.

US says its destroyers moved through the Strait of Hormuz

The U.S. military said two destroyers transited the Iran-gripped Strait of Hormuz ahead of mine-clearing

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 45 of 63

work, a first since the war began. Iran's state media, however, said the joint military command denied that. "We're sweeping the strait. Whether we make a deal or not makes no difference to me," Trump told journalists as talks continued and the time approached 2 a.m. in Islamabad. He called negotiations "very deep." Iranian state TV noted what it called "serious" differences.

The U.S. delegation led by Vance and the Iranian one led by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf discussed with Pakistan how to advance the ceasefire already threatened by deep disagreements and Israel's continued attacks against the Iranian-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon, whose health ministry said the death toll has surpassed 2,000.

Since the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, the most direct U.S. contact had been in 2013 when President Barack Obama called newly elected President Hassan Rouhani to discuss Iran's nuclear program. Obama's secretary of state, John Kerry, and counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif later met during negotiations toward the 2015 Iran nuclear deal — a process that lasted well over a year.

Now the far broader talks featured Vance, a reluctant defender of the war who has little diplomatic experience and warned Iran not to "try and play us," and Qalibaf, a former commander with Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard who has issued some of Iran's most fiery statements since fighting began.

Iran sets 'red lines' including compensation for strikes

Iran's state-run news agency said the three-party talks began after Iranian preconditions, including a reduction in Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon, were met.

Iran's delegation told state television it had presented "red lines" in meetings with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, including compensation for damage caused by U.S.-Israeli strikes that launched the war on Feb. 28 and releasing Iran's frozen assets.

The war has killed at least 3,000 people in Iran, 2,020 in Lebanon, 23 in Israel and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states, and caused lasting damage to infrastructure in half a dozen Middle Eastern countries. Iran's grip on the Strait of Hormuz has largely cut off the Persian Gulf and its oil and gas exports from the global economy, sending energy prices soaring.

US sending forces to help mine-clearing on the strait

Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz has proved its biggest strategic advantage in the war. Around a fifth of the world's traded oil had typically passed through on over 100 ships a day. Only 12 have been recorded transiting since the ceasefire.

On Saturday, Trump said on social media that the U.S. had begun "clearing out" the strait.

"Today, we began the process of establishing a new passage and we will share this safe pathway with the maritime industry soon," U.S. Central Command commander Adm. Brad Cooper later said. The U.S. statement about the destroyers added: "Additional U.S. forces, including underwater drones, will join the clearance effort in the coming days."

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi had said Tehran was entering negotiations with "deep distrust" after strikes on Iran during previous talks. Araghchi, part of Iran's delegation in Pakistan, said Saturday that his country was prepared to retaliate if attacked again.

Iran's 10-point proposal ahead of the talks called for a guaranteed end to the war and sought control over the Strait of Hormuz. It included ending fighting against Iran's "regional allies," explicitly calling for a halt to Israeli strikes on Hezbollah.

The United States' 15-point proposal includes restricting Iran's nuclear program and reopening the strait.

Israel and Lebanon will have direct negotiations

Israel pressed ahead with strikes in Lebanon after saying there is no ceasefire there. Iran and Pakistan have disagreed.

Negotiations between Israel and Lebanon are expected to begin Tuesday in Washington, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun's office has said, after Israel's surprise announcement authorizing talks despite the countries lack of official relations.

But as thousands in Lebanon protested the planned negotiations on Saturday, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said he had postponed a planned trip to Washington "in light of the current internal circumstances."

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 46 of 63

His absence should not affect talks as the first round is expected to be at the ambassadorial level.

Israel wants Lebanon's government to assume responsibility for disarming Hezbollah, much like was envisaged in a November 2024 ceasefire. But the militant group has survived efforts to curb its strength for decades.

Hezbollah joined the war in support of Iran in the opening days. Israel followed with airstrikes and a ground invasion.

The day the Iran ceasefire deal was announced, Israel pounded Beirut with airstrikes, killing more than 300 people in the deadliest day in Lebanon since the war began, according to the country's Health Ministry.

## Rory McIlroy stumbles at the Masters and now shares the lead with Cameron Young

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — That one-man show at the Masters gave way to a wide-open chase for the green jacket with a stunning turn of events that forced Rory McIlroy to remind himself where he was at the end of Saturday instead of where he started.

The six-shot lead was gone in 11 holes. Instead of only two players within six shots of him, there were nine players within six shots of McIlroy and co-leader Cameron Young by the end of the day.

"There's a lot of guys in with a chance tomorrow. I'm still tied for the best score going into tomorrow, so I can't forget that," McIlroy said. "But I do know I'm going to have to be better if I want to have a chance to win."

It felt like the coronation had started when McIlroy put himself in the Masters record book with the largest 36-hole lead in history, even though the defending champion had cautioned, "I know what can happen around here, good and bad."

The good belonged to Young, that mixture of power and calm carrying him to a 7-under 65, and to Scottie Scheffler, the world's No. 1 player and two-time Masters champion whose 65 took him from 12 shots behind to suddenly in the mix just four back.

The bad?

McIlroy was in the trees, in the water, in all sorts of places he would rather not be, including sharing space atop the leaderboard. He finished with a 73, surprising only because it was the lowest scoring average (70.63) ever for a third round at Augusta National.

"Didn't quite have it today," McIlroy said before going off to the range to figure out what went wrong. He is last in the field in driving accuracy among the 54 players who made the cut.

Young set his own Masters record, the first player to have at least a share of the 54-hole lead when starting eight shots behind.

But he was steady and brilliant, chipping in for birdie on the par-3 fourth, converting a huge break when his tee shot on the par-5 13th crashed out of the tree and into the fairway, even salvaging a bogey with a bold wedge from the same spot where he had just come up short and into the water on the par-5 15th. He briefly took the lead with a 20-foot birdie on the 16th.

"You just are constantly aware of the fact that this place can bite you," Young said. "So to me, it's just a really, really clear mandate that an easy par is never bad. And if you're playing that well, you're going to back your way into some birdies at some point."

They were at 11-under 205, one ahead of Sam Burns who played bogey-free for a 68. Shane Lowry, who made a hole-in-one on the par-3 sixth hole to become the first player to have a pair of aces in the Masters, had a 69 and was two shots behind.

And suddenly very much in the picture was Scheffler, who had his lowest round ever at the Masters with a 65 despite not making birdie on the par 5s on the back nine for the third straight day.

"We'll see what happens this afternoon. I don't feel like I'm out of the tournament," Scheffler said.

What happened? Just about everything.

McIlroy was plodding along with pars when he stuffed his shot on the 10th for a birdie. But then his

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 47 of 63

journey through Amen Corner might have left him wanting to say a few choice words.

His shot into the 11th went left and rolled into the water, he missed a 5-foot putt and made his first double bogey of the tournament. He pulled his wedge on the par-3 12th over the green and chipped poorly, missing a 15-foot par attempt. His drive on the par-5 13th sailed into the trees to the right for the third straight day, his wedge went long and he had to scramble for par.

"There's certainly no lead that's safe out there," Young said. "But at the same time, Rory loves it here. I don't think anyone would have been surprised if he went out and shot 65. But if he does open the door, you have to take advantage."

McIlroy at least steadied himself after losing the lead. He holed a 20-foot birdie putt across the 14th green to tie Young, and then hit a beauty into the 15th to set up a two-putt birdie. But he was in the trees again on the 17th left of the fairway, punched out with a shot that ran over the green and fell back into a tie.

The top eight on the leaderboard, separated by four shots, include five major champions and four players who have been No. 1 in the world.

Among those within five shots of the lead are former Masters champion Patrick Reed, despite having to settle for a 72, and Patrick Cantlay, who opened the Masters with a 77 and became the first player in seven years to play bogey-free two straight days with rounds of 67-66.

McIlroy still has a good chance to join Tiger Woods, Nick Faldo and Jack Nicklaus as back-to-back winners at Augusta National. Young is trying to make it three straight years the winner of The Players Championship went on to win the Masters.

"I'm owed nothing. My past results don't dictate what I do tomorrow," Young said. "I've got to go earn whatever I get out of tomorrow, and the best way that I know to do that is kind of try to attack the day like I have the last three."

It was the second time a career Grand Slam champion lost a big lead on Saturday at the Masters. Jack Nicklaus led by five shots in 1975 when he shot 73 and fell one shot behind, only to win in what is regarded as one of the most exciting Sundays in Augusta National lore.

Perhaps another chapter is in store Sunday. There's no shortage of contenders.

## Artemis II's moon-traveling astronauts return home to cheers after a record-breaking trip

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Still marveling over their moon mission, the Artemis II astronauts received a thunderous welcome home Saturday from hundreds who took part in NASA's lunar comeback that set a record for deep space travel.

The crew of four arrived at Ellington Field near NASA's Johnson Space Center and Mission Control, flying in from San Diego, where they splashed down just offshore the evening before.

After a quick reunion with their spouses and children, commander Reid Wiseman, pilot Victor Glover, Christina Koch and Canada's Jeremy Hansen took the hangar stage, surrounded by space center workers and other invited guests. They were introduced by NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman, among the first to greet them aboard the recovery ship Friday.

"Ladies and gentlemen, your Artemis II crew," Isaacman said to a standing ovation.

The jubilant crowd included flight directors and the launch director, Orion capsule and exploration system managers, high-ranking military officers, members of Congress, the space agency's entire blue-suited astronaut corps and even retired ones, and more.

Their homecoming was poignant: They returned to NASA's Houston base on the 56th anniversary of the launch of Apollo 13, whose "Houston, we've had a problem" refrain turned a near-disaster into triumph.

"This was not easy," an emotional Wiseman said. "Before you launch, it feels like it's the greatest dream on Earth. And when you're out there, you just want to get back to your families and your friends. It's a special thing to be a human, and it's a special thing to be on planet Earth."

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 48 of 63

Added Glover: "I have not processed what we just did and I'm afraid to start even trying."

Hansen said the four of them embodied love "and extracting joy out of that" as the four joined together to stand in a row, embracing one another. "When you look up here, you're not looking at us. We are a mirror reflecting you. And if you like what you see, then just look a little deeper. This is you."

During Artemis II's nearly 10-day mission, the astronauts voyaged deeper into space than the moon explorers of decades past and captured views of the lunar far side never witnessed before by human eyes. A total solar eclipse added to the cosmic wonder.

On their record-breaking flyby, the astronauts reached a maximum 252,756 miles (406,771 kilometers) from Earth before hanging a U-turn behind the moon, eclipsing Apollo's 13 distance record.

The mission also revealed a new side of our planet with an Earthset photo, showing our Blue Marble setting behind the gray, pockmarked moon. The image echoed the famous Earthrise shot from 1968 taken by the world's first lunar visitors, Apollo 8.

"Honestly, what struck me wasn't necessarily just Earth, it was all the blackness around it. Earth was just this lifeboat hanging undisturbedly in the universe," Koch said. "Planet Earth you are a crew."

Despite the accomplishments, Artemis II astronauts had to contend with a more mundane problem — a malfunctioning space toilet. NASA promised a design fix before longer moon-landing missions.

Wiseman, Glover, Koch and Hansen were the first humans to fly to the moon since Apollo 17 closed out NASA's first exploration era in 1972. Twenty-four astronauts flew to the moon during Apollo, including 12 moonwalkers.

Apollo 13 commander Jim Lovell — who also flew on Apollo 8 — cheered the Artemis II crew on in a wake-up message recorded before he died last summer.

It was crucial for NASA that Artemis II go well. The space agency is already preparing for next year's Artemis III, which will see a new crew practice docking its capsule with a lunar lander in orbit around Earth. That will set the stage for the all-important Artemis IV moon landing in 2028, when two astronauts attempt a touchdown near the lunar south pole.

"The long wait is over. After a brief 53-year intermission, the show goes on," Isaacman said.

## **New York subway stabbings leave 3 hurt as police shoot and kill knife-wielding man, officials say**

By JULIE WALKER and GARY D. ROBERTSON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A man with a machete who attacked three people randomly at a major New York City subway station Saturday morning was shot and killed by police, authorities said.

Officers responding to a 9:40 a.m. report of stabbings at the 42nd Street-Grand Central station encountered the man. He was behaving erratically, claiming he was "Lucifer," Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch said at an afternoon news conference. Tisch said he was ordered to drop his weapon at least 20 times but refused to comply.

She said ultimately an officer shot him twice when he advanced toward the officers with the knife extended.

"Our officers were confronted with an armed individual who had already injured multiple people and was continuing to pose a threat," Tisch said. "They gave clear commands. They attempted to de-escalate. And when that threat did not stop, they took decisive action to stop it and to protect New Yorkers on one of the busiest train platforms in the city."

Tisch identified the suspect as Anthony Griffin, 44, and said he had three prior unsealed arrests. He was pronounced dead at Bellevue Hospital.

The three stabbing victims — an 84 year-old male, 65-year-old male and 70-year-old female — sustained injuries that were not thought to be life-threatening, Tisch said. One man sustained "significant lacerations to the head and face," the other man had similar injuries and an open skull fracture and the third victim had a laceration to the shoulder.

Tisch said the suspect slashed one person on a platform at the Grand Central station before going up-

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 49 of 63

stairs and slashing the other victims on another platform.

Chief of Transit Joseph Gulotta said the attacks appear to be random acts.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said on social media that she was "grateful to our brave officers who acted quickly to stop the suspect. We're working closely with the NYPD as the investigation unfolds."

The police department, posting on the social platform X, advised travelers in the morning to avoid the area due to a police investigation and to expect delays and heavy traffic. Subway trains resumed stopping at the station in the afternoon after bypassing it for hours, according to the Metropolitan Transit Authority's website.

Beau Lardner said he was just swiping in at Grand Central when bangs rang out "loud enough to hear through headphones," he told the AP in a message. The 34-year-old moved from Manhattan to Long Island a few weeks ago, but he's been taking the same train from Grand Central for years.

"I know that platform like the back of my hand," he said.

Lardner described a "wall of people" rushing toward him to get through the turnstiles, and he sprinted back up the stairs. He said he had "never seen a crowd move like that."

## Tribal gas stations offer a reprieve from high prices during Iran war

By MEAD GRUVER Associated Press

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (AP) — Junelle Lewis was on the hunt for a reprieve from Seattle-area gas prices driven high by the Iran war when an app on her phone gave her the answer: the Tulalip Reservation north of the city, almost half an hour from her home.

She didn't hesitate.

"I purposely drove here just for the gas," Lewis said while filling up her Chevrolet Suburban at the Tulalip Market this week for \$4.84 a gallon (3.8 liters) — about 75 cents less than prices near home. "Gas is ridiculous. But I have found, honestly, over the years, this gas station specifically is cheaper than a lot around here. Probably the cheapest."

Lewis isn't the only driver who has discovered that some of the cheapest fuel can be found on Native American reservations.

Especially in California, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma and Washington state — places with dozens of tribally owned stations, including some in busy travel corridors — tribes exempt from state fuel taxes can sell for much less than competing stations nearby.

Gas prices push the drive to find bargains

Apps such as Gas Buddy make finding the cheapest gas easier than ever.

Nationwide, gasoline prices have risen by well over \$1 since the Iran war began Feb. 28, reaching an average of \$4.15 a gallon, according to AAA.

Prices have been higher, topping \$5 during the summer of 2022, but economists believe they will continue heading up and contribute to inflation in the weeks ahead as geopolitical tension persists.

Deals are to be found, though, at many of the almost 500 tribally owned convenience stores with gas stations across the U.S.

Fifty-five are in California. At the Chukchansi Crossing Fuel Station & Travel Center between Fresno and Yosemite National Park, the \$5.09 gas was 60 cents less than nearby stations.

New Mexico resident Jamie Cross usually finds savings on the Mescalero Apache Reservation, where gas was as low as \$3.79 this week.

"I hope we don't go any higher," Cross said Thursday.

In eastern New York state, on Cattaraugus Indian Territory between Buffalo and Erie, Pennsylvania, the cheapest gas was about \$3.65 at more than half a dozen stations — 50 cents less than in towns nearby.

Tribal lands find a fuel tax escape

So how do tribes do it? Two words: Tax exemptions.

Generally tribes must pay the federal fuel tax of 18.4 cents per gallon for gasoline and 24.3 cents per

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 50 of 63

gallon for diesel, and pass that cost along to drivers. State fuel taxes are a different matter.

For well over a century, U.S. courts have found that states don't have authority to collect taxes from Native Americans on their land, said Dan Lewerenz, a University of North Dakota assistant law professor who specializes in Native American law.

"The Supreme Court consistently held to this view and it's one of the most enduring principles in federal Indian law," Lewerenz said.

Federally recognized Native American tribes are in 35 states with state gasoline taxes ranging from 9 cents per gallon in Alaska to 71 cents in California.

From there, things get complicated based on where the fuel is taxed — at fuel terminals, say, or when distributors buy or sell fuel — and depending on various agreements between states and tribes.

Court rulings come into play. In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that off-reservation distributors in Kansas may charge state tax on sales to tribes for on-reservation fuel sales. But in 2019, the Supreme Court held that an 1855 treaty between the U.S. and the Yakama Nation that ensured the free travel of tribal members on roads with their goods prohibited state fuel taxes on tribal lands in Washington state.

"This is a little bit different than the principle that Indians aren't taxed within Indian Country because this particular treaty reserved certain off-reservation rights for the Indians as well," Lewerenz said.

Gas is just one way stores make money

Convenience store gas sales are not as profitable as bringing people inside from the pumps.

Selling snacks adds profit. But tribal businesses are increasingly offering groceries in what otherwise would be "food deserts" far from grocery stores.

"Sometimes these gas stations and convenience stores are the nearest, best place to purchase affordable food or household supplies," said Matthew Klas, with the Minneapolis-based consultant Klas Robinson Q.E.D.

Klas does market research and consults for tribal businesses and tracks the 245 tribes nationwide that, as of 2025, operated 496 convenience stores with gas stations.

Oklahoma, California, Washington, Arizona, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Michigan and New York have the most. Some tribes, including the Choctaw Nation in Oklahoma and Oneida Indian Nation in New York, have their own store chains.

Drive-through smoke shops, car washes and truck stop amenities also bring in revenue. Then there are the casinos: 205 tribally owned gas stations are located at or near casinos.

Some tribal casinos are resorts with gas stations. Some tribal gas stations are casinos of a sort called "gasinos," which only have a small number of gambling machines.

Tribally owned businesses are a major revenue generator for Native American reservations. On the Seattle area's Tulalip Reservation, rising gas sales were being reinvested in the community, helping to cover the cost of roads, police, health care, education, housing and other needs, Tulalip Tribes Federal Corporation CEO Tanya Burns said in a statement.

"Like any government, we provide critical services to our people," Burns said.

It's not just about savings

"It's terrible," Todd Hall of Paden, Oklahoma, said of diesel prices as he spent about \$90 to fill up his tow truck at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation gas station about 30 miles (48 kilometers) west of Oklahoma City.

But, he added: "They're cheaper here than anywhere else."

Hall paid \$4.57 per gallon for diesel, and said the price is over \$5 at many locations in the area.

Mark Foster said he saves about \$5 a week buying fuel at the tribally owned gas station. But he's a faithful customer because the tribe is a good community partner, he said.

"I like the way the tribe operates," he said. "And the price is good too."

At the Tulalip Market north of Seattle, Jared Blankenship was griping not about prices but that he was having to pay for gas at all.

"Yeah, well, my electric car just got totaled," Blankenship said. "So this sucks. This is new. It's either Costco or looking wherever's cheap, like the rez. So here we are."

## Allies yank support for Swalwell's California governor run after sexual assault allegations

By TRÂN NGUYỄN and MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Democratic Rep. Eric Swalwell has so far denied calls for him to exit the California governor's race following allegations that he sexually assaulted a woman twice, including when she worked for him. After prominent supporters withdrew their backing, Swalwell said in a video on social media that he would spend the weekend with family and friends and share an update "very soon."

"These allegations of sexual assault are flat false. They're absolutely false. They did not happen, they have never happened, and I will fight them with everything that I have," the congressman said Friday.

Swalwell was among the leading Democrats in the race to replace outgoing Gov. Gavin Newsom. But in just hours, he saw his most prominent supporters — including U.S. Sen. Adam Schiff and powerful labor unions — drop their endorsements and call for his exit from the race.

Newsom, a likely 2028 presidential candidate who has avoided engaging in the contest to replace him, said in a statement: "As we continue to learn more, these allegations from multiple sources are deeply troubling and must be taken seriously."

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who hasn't endorsed in the race, said the "serious allegations" must be investigated and that she spoke to Swalwell and suggested that be done "outside of a gubernatorial campaign."

The allegations surfaced at a critical stage of the wide-open campaign to lead the nation's most populous state. Voters will receive mail ballots next month in advance of the June 2 election.

The San Francisco Chronicle reported Friday that a woman said Swalwell sexually assaulted her in 2019 and 2024. The newspaper reviewed text messages about the alleged 2024 assault and spoke to people whom she had told about it. She told the newspaper she did not go to police because she was afraid she would not be believed.

The woman worked for Swalwell in 2019, when the first alleged assault occurred, and the 2024 assault allegedly occurred after a charity gala, the newspaper reported. She said in both cases she was too intoxicated to consent to sex.

The paper didn't name the woman, and The Associated Press has not been able to independently verify her account and identity. Her lawyer declined to comment.

The alleged 2024 incident occurred in New York, and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office said Saturday that it was investigating. The DA's office urged anyone with knowledge to contact its special victims division.

Swift backlash from prominent Democrats

Schiff said in a social media post he's "deeply distressed" by the allegations, calling for Swalwell to end his gubernatorial bid.

Democratic Rep. Jimmy Gomez, who helped run Swalwell's campaign, said he's immediately ending his role.

"The congressman should leave the race now so there can be full accountability without doubt, distraction, or delay," Gomez said on social media.

The powerful California Service Employees International Union said Saturday it was formally rescinding its endorsement and urged Swalwell to withdraw from the race immediately. The California Teachers Association said it was suspending its support. And the California Federation of Labor Unions said it was "acting urgently" on next steps.

A spokesperson for House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said the allegations require a "serious and thorough investigation."

Growing calls for Swalwell to drop out

Swalwell is among a handful of prominent candidates in the crowded race to succeed Newsom, and he immediately came under pressure from all other Democratic rivals to withdraw from the race. The party

has been mired in a messy primary season with some leaders fearing the crowded field could cost them spot in the November general election. The state's top-two primary system sends the two highest vote-getters on to the general election regardless of party.

Swalwell on Tuesday kicked off a planned series of campaign events in Sacramento, where he told reporters he's never had a sexual relationship with a staff member or intern. He canceled the next scheduled event in Palm Springs on Thursday.

Uncorroborated and nonspecific rumors that Swalwell behaved inappropriately with female staffers have circulated on social media for weeks, but the Chronicle's story is the first reported account of someone making a direct accusation. CNN also published a story that appeared to feature the same woman's allegations, though she was not named, as well as allegations from several women that Swalwell sent them inappropriate sexual messages.

He's suggested the allegations were part of an attack due to his campaign's momentum.

Swalwell was elected in 2012 and represents a House district east of San Francisco. He launched a presidential run in April 2019 but shuttered it a few months later after failing to catch on with voters. Swalwell, who is married and has three children, is perhaps best known nationally as a House manager in President Donald Trump's second impeachment trial during his first term in early 2021.

## **Judge told to reconsider national security implications of halting Trump's White House ballroom**

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and BEN FINLEY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge must reconsider the possible national security implications of halting construction of President Donald Trump's \$400 million White House ballroom, an appeals court ruled on Saturday.

A three-judge panel from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit said it did not have enough information to decide how much of the project can be suspended without jeopardizing the safety of the president, his family or the White House staff.

The case was returned to the trial judge who, in a March 31 ruling, barred work from proceeding without congressional approval, but suspended enforcement of that order for 14 days. The appeals court extended that for three days, to April 17, to allow the Trump administration to seek Supreme Court review.

The panel instructed U.S. District Judge Richard Leon to clarify whether — and how — his injunction interferes with the administration's plans for safety and security.

Government lawyers had argued that the project includes critical security features to guard against a range of possible threats, such as drones, ballistic missiles and biohazards and that holding up construction "would imperil the President and others who live and work in the White House."

Leon, in issuing the temporary pause, concluded that the preservationist group behind the legal challenge was likely to succeed because the president lacks the authority to build the ballroom without approval from Congress.

Leon exempted any construction work necessary to ensure the safety and security of the White House, but said he reviewed material the government privately submitted before determining that a halt would not jeopardize national security.

The Republican administration's appeal cited materials that would be installed to make a "heavily fortified" facility and said construction included bomb shelters, military installations and a medical facility underneath the ballroom.

The appeals panel noted that much of the government's concerns focused on that below-ground security work, which the White House argued was "distinct from construction of the ballroom itself and could proceed independently."

Now, however, the White House seems to suggest those security upgrades are "inseparable" from the project as whole, the appeals court said, making it unclear "whether and to what extent" moving forward with certain aspects of the ballroom is necessary for the safety and security of those upgrades.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 53 of 63

Carol Quillen, president and CEO of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, said in a statement that the organization awaited further clarification from the district court. She said the group was committed "to honoring the historic significance of the White House, advocating for our collective role as stewards, and demonstrating how broad consultation, including with the American people, results in a better overall outcome."

The organization sued in December, a week after the White House finished demolishing the East Wing for a 90,000-square-foot (8,400-square-meter) ballroom that Trump said would fit 999 people. The administration said aboveground construction on the ballroom would begin in April.

Leon concluded last month that the lawsuit was likely to succeed because "no statute comes close to giving the President the authority he claims to have."

"The President of the United States is the steward of the White House for future generations of First Families. He is not, however, the owner!" wrote Leon, who was nominated by President George W. Bush, a Republican.

Two days after Leon's ruling, the ballroom project won final approval from a key agency that Trump had stocked with allies. Another oversight entity constituted with Trump loyalists had approved the project earlier this year. But the president had proceeded with the biggest structural change to the White House in more than 70 years before seeking input from the commissions.

Trump says the project is funded by private donations, although public money is paying for construction of underground bunkers and security upgrades.

The three-judge appeals court panel was made up of Patricia Millett, Neomi Rao and Bradley Garcia. Millett was nominated by President Barack Obama, a Democrat. Rao was nominated by Trump. Garcia was nominated by President Joe Biden, a Democrat.

Rao wrote a dissenting opinion, which cited a statute that allows the president to undertake improvements to the White House.

"Importantly, the government has presented credible evidence of ongoing security vulnerabilities at the White House that would be prolonged by halting construction," Rao wrote, adding that such concerns outweigh the "generalized aesthetic harms" presented in the lawsuit.

## Hungarian election rivals Orbán and Magyar make final push for votes on eve of poll

By JUSTIN SPIKE and SAM McNEIL Associated Press

DEBRECEN, Hungary (AP) — The leaders of Hungary's two biggest parties held their final election rallies on Saturday to close a turbulent campaign that will reach its apex in Sunday's election.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is facing the biggest political test of his career as his challenger Péter Magyar's center-right Tisza party has charted a meteoric rise and is leading by double digits in most independent polls.

If Tisza wins, it will bring Orbán's 16-year grip on power to a dramatic end.

Yet many observers expect the result to be closer than polls are predicting, and that Orbán's Fidesz party can successfully mobilize its significant base of support in the countryside.

Magyar, a 45-year-old lawyer and former member of Fidesz's political elite, has toured Hungary relentlessly for two years, visiting hundreds of cities, towns and villages in an effort to win over some of Orbán's rural support.

He appeared before thousands of supporters on Saturday on University Square in Debrecen, Hungary's second-largest city and traditionally a Fidesz stronghold.

Magyar struck a confident tone, saying the election would "enter Hungarian history books as the day of resurrection, the renewal of the Hungarian nation, and of the real change of regime."

He also gestured toward supporters of Orbán, saying his camp would begin the "reunification" of Hungary after election day, something he called a "national reconciliation."

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 54 of 63

"As the winner of the election, we will have to extend a hand to our fellow countrymen," he said.

Orbán, who ended his campaign on Budapest's opulent Castle Hill, has campaigned primarily by sounding the alarm on myriad external dangers he says are threatening Hungarians — particularly the war in neighboring Ukraine.

Orbán doubled down on that message, telling thousands of supporters that "we are in an age of danger."

"Hungary is facing serious challenges," he said. "We need to say no to major power groups in the world in order to defend ourselves, and this requires knowledge, experience and routine."

He added: "Now is not the time to take risks, to change, to renew and to adventure. Now we need to protect and secure what we have."

Orbán's campaign has been plagued by Hungary's poor economic performance, revelations of the government's increasingly close connections to Russia and corruption allegations.

He has sought to boost his appeal with voters by emphasizing his close relationship with U.S. President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly endorsed the Hungarian leader. Vice President JD Vance made a two-day visit to Budapest earlier this week to push for Orbán's reelection, even appearing at a taxpayer-funded campaign rally alongside the prime minister.

Meanwhile, Magyar has focused his campaign on issues that affect ordinary Hungarians like inflation, costs of living and the deteriorating state of public health care and transportation.

He has also spoken forcefully about what he describes as endemic governmental corruption that enriches a narrow segment of political elites — charges Orbán denies — and promised to reverse the prime minister's drift away from the European Union in favor of ever closer ties with Moscow.

As his supporters waved national flags and chanted "Európa! Európa!" in University Square, Magyar said that "many millions" of voters would show on Sunday that "Hungary's place was, is, and will be in Europe."

Magyar earlier visited several smaller communities in eastern Hungary including Balmazújváros, a town of around 17,000 residents.

One local Tisza activist, farmer Annamária Matkovics, said she had joined Magyar's party when it was first launched in 2024. While her region has historically been a Fidesz stronghold, Matkovics, 50, said she believes that Tisza has given people the courage to express their dissent, even if could come with consequences.

"When we're campaigning on the street, people tell us that they're worried that they'll lose their jobs if they don't vote for Fidesz, and they're still planning to vote for Tisza," she said. "They've had enough of the division."

## **Pope Leo XIV denounces the 'delusion of omnipotence' he says fuels the US-Israeli war in Iran**

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — In his strongest words yet, Pope Leo XIV on Saturday denounced the "delusion of omnipotence" that is fueling the U.S.-Israel war in Iran and demanded political leaders stop and negotiate peace.

Leo presided over an evening prayer service in St. Peter's Basilica on the same day the United States and Iran began face-to-face negotiations in Pakistan and as a fragile ceasefire held.

History's first U.S.-born pope didn't mention the United States or President Donald Trump in his prayer, which was planned before the talks were announced. But Leo's tone and message appeared directed at Trump and U.S. officials, who have boasted of U.S. military superiority and justified the war in religious terms.

"Enough of the idolatry of self and money!" Leo said. "Enough of the display of power! Enough of war!"

In the basilica pews was the archbishop of Tehran, Belgian Cardinal Dominique Joseph Mathieu. The U.S. was represented in the diplomatic corps by its deputy chief of mission, Laura Hochla, the U.S. Embassy said.

In the first weeks of the war, the Chicago-born Leo was initially reluctant to publicly condemn the violence and limited his comments to muted appeals for peace and dialogue. But Leo stepped up his criticism starting on Palm Sunday. And this week, he said Trump's threat to annihilate Iranian civilization was "truly unacceptable" and called for dialogue to prevail.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 55 of 63

On Saturday, Leo called for all people of good will to pray for peace and demand an end to war from their political leaders. The evening vigil in Rome, which featured Scripture readings and meditative recitation of the Rosary prayers, was taking place as simultaneous local prayer services were being held in the U.S. and beyond.

Praying for peace, Leo said, was a way to “break the demonic cycle of evil” to build instead the Kingdom of God where there are no swords, drones or “unjust profit.”

“It is here that we find a bulwark against that delusion of omnipotence that surrounds us and is becoming increasingly unpredictable and aggressive,” he said. “Even the holy Name of God, the God of life, is being dragged into discourses of death.”

Leaders have used religion to justify their actions in the war. U.S. officials and especially Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth have invoked their Christian faith to cast the U.S. as a Christian nation trying to vanquish its foes.

Leo has said God doesn’t bless any war, and certainly not those who drop bombs.

Leo presided over the service sitting off to the side of the altar on a white throne, wearing his formal red cape and liturgical stole and praying with a Rosary in his hands. Many of the priests and nuns in the pews fingered Rosary beads as the “Our Father” and “Hail Mary” prayers were recited.

The Vatican is particularly concerned about the spillover of Israel’s war against Hezbollah in Lebanon, given the plight of Christian communities in the south.

## Buyers fret as the average cost of a new car nears \$50K

By ALEXA ST. JOHN Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — After a few years of sharing a 2019 Chevrolet Trax, Dana Eble and Tyler Marcus are finally looking for a second car. But as they jump into the market, the young married couple isn’t sure what they can afford.

“I just keep seeing a lot of different aspects of life getting more expensive, and it’s harder,” said Eble, an account manager for a public relations agency.

Car ownership has long been integral to the American dream. But as automakers slash the production of inexpensive models to cater to customers who can afford oversized pickups and sport utility vehicles, buyers find themselves facing sticker shock at the same time they are already frustrated by the lingering effects of high inflation.

Consumer prices rose 3.3% in March, the biggest yearly increase since May 2024, while new car prices were up 12.6% from a year ago, the Labor Department reported Friday.

New vehicles now sell for an average of nearly \$50,000, up 30% in six years, and average monthly payments — based on 10% down and a 6-year note — recently hit \$775. Looking for something on the cheap end? The share of vehicles listing for less than \$30,000 is about 13% — down from 40% five years ago, per the car review site CarGurus.

To cope, buyers are spreading their payments out longer. Consumers choosing 7-year loans make up more than 12% of all sales, up from nearly 8% a year ago, according to auto buying resource J.D. Power. Such contracts wind up costing more in the long run because of interest payments.

“The ability to buy transportation is still out there. The question is just, what do you get for your money?” Charlie Chesbrough, a senior economist at Cox Automotive, said.

The rising cost of cars is contributing to increased concerns about affordability throughout American life. Consumers, especially young people, say they feel like everyday needs like housing, food, utilities and child care are getting costlier and wages aren’t keeping up.

It is a vulnerable position for Republicans ahead of this year’s midterm elections, especially as the Iran war has pumped up gas prices that makes getting behind the wheel even more expensive.

Size, technology and ‘must-have’ features add to costs

Sticker prices have been rising since automakers discovered Americans are willing to pay more for bigger, more expensive SUVs and pickup trucks that bring the companies more profit from each sale. They

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 56 of 63

have largely phased out smaller, cheaper sedans.

That is especially true for domestic carmakers; the average selling prices for many vehicles from Ford Motor Co., General Motors and Jeep-maker Stellantis have generally trended higher than those for Asian companies Honda, Hyundai, Mazda and Subaru.

Car companies are also savvy about placing desired options in more expensive trim levels that can lure consumers into a vehicle that costs more than they planned, said David Undercoffler, the head of consumer insights at CarGurus.

Advanced safety technology — lane-keep assist, automatic emergency braking, blind-spot monitoring, collision warnings and more — all add to the cost of a vehicle. Automakers are required by federal industry rules to add some features, such as rear-view cameras.

The COVID-19 pandemic pushed up auto prices because production fell, affecting both the new and used markets. Though production recovered, other supply chain disruptions and tariffs have affected prices. Meanwhile, government data shows that car insurance prices have soared 55% compared with six years ago, or just before the pandemic, driving up the number of Americans going without. Car repairs, on average, are 48% more expensive.

The share of new car buyers earning below \$100,000 fell to 37% last year, down from 50% in 2020, according to Cox Automotive.

Some carmakers have acknowledged affordability concerns. In February, Ford said it would have several vehicles prices under \$40,000 by the end of the decade. GM has pointed to vehicles from Buick and Chevrolet, including the Trax, as cheaper options.

Looking to used market for relief

Chesbrough thinks consumers are sometimes unrealistic in their wants.

"There are vehicles out there for less than \$30,000. What everybody wants is the mid-sized SUV with leather seats and the sunroof for \$25,000, and that's not available," Chesbrough said.

Those buyers, he said, are being pushed into the used market.

But as those buyers shift to used, they are finding fewer affordable options there, too. The share of used vehicles priced less than \$30,000 fell from 78% in 2021 to 69% in February, according to CarGurus. The average used vehicle sold for about \$25,000 in February, and the average used monthly payments hit \$560.

The inventory of used cars is being hit by a couple of trends. One is that consumers keen to avoid a big expense are hanging on to their cars longer — nearly 13 years on average now, 18 months longer than a decade ago, according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. And a downturn in the popularity of leasing means fewer two- and three-year-old cars hitting the market after leases expire.

J.D. Power estimates that consumers might spend up to \$140 less on a lease payment than the average finance commitment, a good option especially for drivers whose annual mileage is predictable. But experts say there is still an affordability challenge.

What buyers can do

Sam Dykhuis, 27, of Chicago, needed to buy her first car recently when she started a new job as a scheduler for United Airlines. She searched for something used under \$20,000, and eventually paid a little more than that for a 2021 Mazda CX-5. To hold down the cost, she tapped savings to buy the car outright. She pays insurance six months at a time to save a few bucks, too.

Still, "My paycheck went down and my expenses went up," Dykhuis said. "Certainly, I have to be more just on top of it than I was previously."

Eble, 30, and Marcus, 31, say they appreciate cool vehicles but don't consider themselves "car people" and are hoping their search is easier as a result. Still, finding something in their \$20,000 to \$30,000 budget might not be as easy as it once was.

They are considering cars such as a newer Trax, a Mazda or maybe an electric vehicle. New EVs generally cost more upfront, but consumers can save in the long run. The used EV market will also soon be flooded with two- or three-year-old EVs that were leased at the time federal credits were generous.

Like Dykhuis, they say they also might buy their new ride outright to avoid a new monthly payment.

"It feels like if anything happens out of our control ... it just seems so much more difficult to figure out how to orient our finances," Eble said.

## **A 9-year-old was found locked in a van since 2024, malnourished and unable to walk**

PARIS (AP) — A 9-year-old boy has been rescued after living locked in his father's utility van in eastern France since 2024, according to the local prosecutor. The child has been hospitalized, and his father detained.

Police were alerted by a neighbor to the "sounds of a child" coming from a van on Monday in the village of Hagenbach, near the borders with Switzerland and Germany, according to a statement on Saturday from prosecutor Nicolas Heitz.

After forcing the van open, officers found the child "lying in a fetal position, naked, covered by a blanket on top of a mound of trash and near excrement," Heitz said. The boy was clearly malnourished and could no longer walk after being in a seated position for so long, according to the statement.

The boy's father told investigators that he put the child in the truck in November 2024 "to protect him" because his partner wanted to send the then 7-year-old to a psychiatric hospital, the prosecutor said.

Heitz said there was no medical record that the boy had any psychiatric problems before he disappeared and that he had had good grades in school.

The boy told investigators that he had "big difficulties" with his father's partner and thought his father "had no choice" but to lock him up, according to the prosecutor. He said he hadn't showered since 2024.

The father was handed preliminary kidnapping and other charges and kept in custody. His partner denied knowledge that the boy was in the van, according to the prosecutor. She was handed preliminary charges, including for failure to help a minor in danger, and released under judicial supervision.

The boy's 12-year-old sister and the 10-year-old daughter of his father's partner were placed in the care of social services.

The prosecutor's office is investigating whether others were aware of the boy's detention.

Friends and family told investigators they thought the boy was in a psychiatric institution. His teachers were told he had transferred to a different school, according to the prosecutor's office.

The authorities have not released the names of the victim or his relatives.

Hagenbach residents contacted by The Associated Press expressed shock on Saturday over the cases and said they were unaware of the boy's whereabouts, but didn't want to discuss details.

The prosecutor declined to comment further to AP pending further investigation.

## **Masters winner is set to make \$4.5 million out of a majors-record \$22.5 million prize purse**

By STEVE REED AP Sports Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — If Rory McIlroy is able to hang on and win his second consecutive Masters on Sunday, he'll walk away with \$4.5 million.

That's up from the \$4.2 million he won last year.

The Masters on Saturday announced its prize purse for this year's championship at \$22.5 million overall — the highest payout of golf's four majors. The Masters' prize payout was \$21 million last year.

The other three major tournaments have not announced prize funds for this year. In 2025, the PGA Championship's was \$19 million, the British Open's was \$17 million and the U.S. Open's was \$21.5 million.

Last month Cameron Young won \$4.5 for capturing the Players Championship, which featured a \$25 million overall prize purse.

McIlroy entered the third round of the Masters on Saturday with a six-stroke lead over Patrick Reed and Sam Burns. He is seeking to become only the fourth player to win back-to-back championships at Augusta National and the first since Tiger Woods nearly 25 years ago (2001-02).

The top four finishers at the Masters will each make at least \$1 million.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 58 of 63

The runner-up is set to take home \$2.43 million, while the third-place finisher will receive \$1.53 million and fourth place gets \$1.08 million.

All professionals who did not make the cut at the Masters will get \$25,000.

## Orthodox Easter truce falters as Ukraine says Russia continues drone strikes

By DEREK GATOPOULOS, DMYTRO ZHYHINAS and ELISE MORTON Associated Press  
KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia continued to strike Ukrainian positions with drones after a Kremlin-declared Easter ceasefire took effect on Saturday, a Ukrainian military officer told The Associated Press.

"The ceasefire is not being observed by the Russian side," said Serhii Kolesnychenko, a communications officer for the 148th Separate Artillery Brigade.

He said that while artillery fire had paused in the sector where his brigade was working, at the junction of the Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, and Zaporizhzhia regions, Russian forces continued to use drones to strike Ukrainian positions.

Ukrainian forces were responding with "silence to silence and fire to fire," Kolesnychenko said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday declared a 32-hour ceasefire over the Orthodox Easter weekend, ordering Russian forces to halt hostilities from 4 p.m. on Saturday until the end of Sunday.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy promised to abide by the ceasefire, describing it as an opportunity to build on peace initiatives. But he warned there would be a swift military response to any violations.

"Easter should be a time of silence and safety. A ceasefire (at) Easter could also become the beginning of real movement toward peace," Zelenskyy wrote in an online post on Saturday.

But he added: "We all understand who we are dealing with. Ukraine will adhere to the ceasefire and respond strictly in kind."

Ukraine earlier proposed to Russia a pause in attacks on each other's energy infrastructure over the Orthodox Easter holiday.

Previous ceasefire attempts have had little impact, with both sides accusing each other of violations.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Friday described Putin's move as a "humanitarian" gesture, but said Moscow remains focused on a comprehensive settlement based on its longstanding demands — a key sticking point that has prevented the two sides from reaching an agreement.

Deaths in Odesa and Kherson ahead of ceasefire

Hours before the ceasefire was due to begin, Russian drone strikes overnight killed at least two people in the Ukrainian city of Odesa, local authorities reported.

A further two people were wounded in the attack on the Black Sea port city, when drones hit a residential area, damaging apartment buildings, houses and a kindergarten.

The driver of a public trolley bus was killed after the vehicle was struck by a drone in the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson, less than an hour before the start of the ceasefire, Kherson regional head Oleksandr Prokudin wrote on Telegram.

According to the Ukrainian Air Force, Russia targeted Ukraine with 160 drones overnight, of which 133 were shot down or intercepted, hours before a proposed Easter ceasefire was due to come into force.

Russia's Defense Ministry said 99 Ukrainian drones were shot down overnight across Russia and occupied Crimea.

Prisoners exchanged

Russia's Defense Ministry said that a prisoner swap Saturday brought home 175 of its soldiers. Zelenskyy confirmed Saturday's exchange, saying that 175 service members and seven civilians were returned. "Most had been held in captivity since 2022. And finally, they are home," he wrote on X.

Hundreds of relatives, clutching photos of missing soldiers, crowded around ambulances and buses carrying returned prisoners of war in northern Ukraine. Many called out names and brigade numbers in hopes of finding loved ones faster.

The crowd, many draped in blue and yellow flags, chanted "We welcome you!" as the weary returnees

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 59 of 63

in blue jackets reached through windows to shake hands and embrace well-wishers. Family also members held up portraits of others still-missing, asking the freed prisoners whether they recognized anyone.

Svitlana Pohosyan was waiting for her son's return. Asked about the ceasefire, she said: "I want to believe it. God willing, may it be so. We will believe and hope that everything will be fine, that a ceasefire will come on such a holy day, and that there will be peace — peace in Ukraine and peace in the whole world."

"My celebration will come when my son returns," she added. "I will hold him in my arms — and that will be the greatest celebration for me. And for every mother, every family."

Periodic prisoner exchanges have been one of the few positive outcomes of otherwise fruitless monthslong U.S.-brokered negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv. The talks have delivered no progress on key issues preventing an end to Russia's invasion of its neighbor, now in its fifth year.

Separately, seven residents of Russia's Kursk region returned from Ukraine on Saturday after they were captured by the Ukrainian army, Russian state media reported. They were greeted at the Belarusian-Ukrainian border by Russia's human rights ombudswoman, Tatyana Moskalkova.

According to Moskalkova, the returnees were the last of those who were taken to Ukraine from the Kursk region after the Ukrainian army took control of parts of the region in 2024.

Ukrainian forces made a surprise incursion into Kursk in August 2024 in one of their biggest battlefield successes in the war. The incursion was the first time Russian territory was occupied by an invader since World War II and dealt a humiliating blow to the Kremlin.

## Unsettled and uncertain: What the Iran war means around the world as US and Iran enter talks

By The Associated Press undefined

The long-term fallout of the war in Iran is only beginning to take shape, but this much is clear: The conflict has left the Middle East unsettled, alliances strained and the world facing uncertain shifts in the balance of economic and military power.

Iran's theocracy is tattered but alive, with new economic leverage. The United States and Israel will hold elections this year, their leaders potentially facing voters having fallen short of their war aims. The NATO alliance, already strained, is under even more pressure. The Gulf Arab states face an emboldened Iran in their backyard.

With the U.S. and Iran beginning face-to-face talks Saturday in Pakistan, Associated Press journalists in the Middle East and Washington share their assessments on how the war is reverberating across the world during the tenuous ceasefire:

Israel's ambitious goals not yet fully met

If Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were to be graded for the war, he would get an "incomplete."

Netanyahu set some ambitious goals at the outset of the fighting on Feb. 28, saying he wanted to remove the threats posed by Iran's missile and nuclear programs and its support for hostile proxy groups. He pledged to create the conditions for a popular uprising against the Iranian government. None of these goals has been fully achieved.

In a televised address after the ceasefire, Netanyahu acknowledged "we still have goals to complete." But he nonetheless claimed "immense achievements."

"Iran is weaker than ever, and Israel is stronger than ever. This is the bottom line of this campaign," he said.

With elections later this year, the question for Netanyahu is whether the Israeli public agrees with his assessment.

Israelis overwhelmingly supported the war against archenemy Iran, especially in the early days of the campaign. But as the war dragged on, Israelis also grew tired as nonstop air-raid sirens disrupted daily life and sent people scrambling into bomb shelters around the clock.

Netanyahu is now hoping that in the coming ceasefire talks the U.S. will shore up the battlefield gains into a permanent agreement that guards Israel's interests. He also must ensure that his relationship with

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 60 of 63

President Donald Trump remains strong after an inconclusive war that was deeply unpopular in the U.S. Otherwise, Netanyahu could find himself struggling for his job when his war-weary nation heads to the polls.

— Josef Federman, deputy news director for the Middle East

Depleted Iran finds leverage

Iran, battered by nationwide protests in January and heavy airstrikes in the war, suddenly finds itself in a position of power.

Just the threat of sea mines and possible attacks from Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard has ships staying away from the Strait of Hormuz, in effect keeping the waterway crucial for international energy shipments closed.

Even hard-liners have spun the killing of 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei into the idea of replacing him with a younger, more hard-line version of himself in his son, Mojtaba.

The government has put forward its own maximalist demands ahead of the Islamabad talks — including continuing to enrich uranium in its nuclear program, one of the chief reasons Trump gave for going to war.

Yet Iran's military sites now sit in ruins, its missile arsenal broadly depleted, and the threat of more protests by its people still looms in the future. That unrest could be spurred on by the sheer level of destruction in Iran's oil and gas industry, as well as attacks targeting steel mills and other economic sites.

— Jon Gambrell, news director for the Gulf and Iran

Gulf Arab states in the middle

After insisting and pleading with Iran to leave them out of the conflict, the Gulf Arab states still found themselves targeted by Iran, which rained down drone and missile fire on airports, energy sites, military bases and civilian targets across the region.

Many had to close refineries or declare themselves unable to meet their promised oil output due to the war. Even with a ceasefire in place, Iran's new control of the Strait of Hormuz through threats alone means Gulf states still aren't able to get their energy shipments out to market.

They aren't a monolith though, with opinions ranging from Oman's efforts at diplomacy to the United Arab Emirates denouncing Iranian aggression and insisting the status quo cannot stand.

— Jon Gambrell, news director for the Gulf and Iran

Ceasefire uncertainty in Lebanon

In Lebanon, the regional war has taken a devastating toll and the prospect of a ceasefire now leaves more questions than answers.

The U.S. and Israel are at odds with Iran over whether or not their ceasefire extends to the war between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Iran says it does; the U.S. and Israel say it does not.

In the meantime, Lebanese and Israeli officials have agreed to enter into direct negotiations, which Lebanon hopes will lead to a ceasefire and Israel hopes will lead to disarmament of Hezbollah. Netanyahu said the negotiations would also include talks about a potential peace agreement between the two countries, which do not have diplomatic relations.

While the talks represent a significant step, reaching an agreement will not be easy. Lebanon wants a halt to Israeli strikes before the talks start, a condition that Israel is unlikely to agree to.

In practice, most analysts say Lebanon does not have the capacity to disarm Hezbollah by force or to enforce any ceasefire agreement that Hezbollah does not agree to.

For now, the Israel-Hezbollah war that has displaced more than a million people and killed nearly 1,900 continues.

— Abby Sewell, news director for Lebanon, Syria and Iraq

Strained NATO relations pushed to the brink

Trump has repeatedly tested the 32-member alliance.

He cut off direct U.S. military assistance to Ukraine, threatened to take the Arctic territory of Greenland from NATO ally Denmark, and cajoled members to spend more on defense.

Now, his differences with NATO allies over Iran are raising new questions about whether the alliance, created as a curative to post World War II instability, can survive.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 61 of 63

Since launching the war, Trump has derided allies as “cowards,” slammed NATO as “a paper tiger” and compared U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer to Neville Chamberlain, the former premier known for a policy of appeasement toward Nazi Germany.

Trump is angry at member countries ignoring his call to help as Iran effectively shut the Strait of Hormuz, and at alliance members Spain and France restricting the use of their airspace or joint military facilities by U.S. forces supporting the operations in Iran.

Trump says the moment is “a mark on NATO that will never disappear.”

— Amer Madhani, White House reporter, Washington

United States faces economic woes

Trump won back the White House promising to curb inflation, bring down prices many Americans saw as too high and trigger a jobs boom. The war in Iran has done exactly the opposite, raising gas prices, leaving stock markets reeling and sending shock waves through the rest of the economy as the labor market weakens and inflation begins rising anew.

With November’s midterms looming, none of that is good for Republicans trying to keep control of Congress. Trump initially tried to calm economic fears by visiting swing states. But he first scoffed at affordability worries as a hoax, then stopped those trips altogether as the war consumed his administration.

Making a ceasefire stick might eventually stabilize oil prices and financial markets, but reversing economic pain around the globe may take far longer, potentially affecting voters closer to Election Day.

Polling also shows that most Americans believe U.S. military action in Iran went too far. And the war has even caused a rift within Trump’s once seemingly unflappable MAGA base.

— Will Weissert, White House reporter, Washington

Energy prices and markets

The conflict has largely shut down the flow of ships through the Strait of Hormuz, through which about one-fifth of the world’s oil travels, and has damaged oil and gas production facilities across the Middle East.

In response, oil prices have shot higher all over the world. Brent crude oil, the international standard, has gone from roughly \$70 per barrel before the war in late February to more than \$119 at times. Brent rose 0.7% to \$96.58 Friday.

Prices at the pump have jumped as well, reaching about \$4.15 a gallon in the U.S., up from just under \$3 before the conflict began. Higher gas costs can sap Americans’ ability to spend on other goods and services, slowing the economy and threatening to worsen unemployment.

U.S. consumer prices rose 3.3% in March from a year earlier, up sharply from just 2.4% in February and the biggest yearly increase since May 2024. The surge in gas prices will stretch the budgets of lower- and middle-income households.

## **A Syrian man buries his wife and 4 children killed in Israeli strikes on Beirut**

By GHAITH ALSAYED and SALLY ABOU ALJOURD Associated Press

DEIR EL-ZOUR, Syria (AP) — A Syrian man on Saturday buried his wife and four of his five children, killed in the massive wave of Israeli strikes that pounded Beirut earlier this week, laying them to rest in Deir el-Zour province in northeastern Syria.

It was not the homecoming they had anticipated when they fled to Lebanon six years ago.

The bodies, along with that of his six-month pregnant daughter-in-law, arrived in wooden coffins on a bus from Lebanon, their names scribbled on the sides. Men stood beside the bus crying before the burial procession in al-Sour town, as mourners gathered to offer condolences.

The remains of one of his two daughters were still missing, believed to be trapped under rubble, as search operations concluded Saturday, three days after the attacks.

The strike was one of roughly 100 carried out by Israel on Wednesday without warning, targeting what the Israeli military said were Hezbollah-linked sites across Beirut and other parts of Lebanon. More than 350 people were killed that day, a third being women and children, making it the deadliest day in nearly

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 62 of 63

six weeks of war.

Many of the strikes hit commercial streets and densely populated neighborhoods in central Beirut, far from conflict zones, where repeated Israeli evacuation warnings have been issued since March 2, when the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah fired missiles into Israel in retaliation for the U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran.

A father's grief

The father, Hamad al-Jalib, survived because he was away fetching a gas canister while working as the building's concierge. When he heard that a strike had hit the Ain Mreisseh neighborhood, where he lives, he rushed back, only to see a plume of smoke rising from a building behind a mosque across from Beirut's famous seaside promenade — usually crowded with people walking and exercising.

"The Israeli attack killed my girls, they are innocent, just sitting at home," al-Jalib said. "They were having lunch."

He said it took rescue teams three days to extract the bodies of his family from under the rubble. "And I still have a daughter missing, her name is Fatima Hamad al-Jalib." She is 10 years old. His other daughter was 12 while his sons were 17, 14 and 13 years old.

Three other Syrian relatives were also killed in the Ain Mreisseh strike and were buried on Saturday in the town of al-Shuhail in Deir el-Zour, after the family split upon returning to Syria.

Al-Jalib said his family had been displaced from their area and moved to Lebanon in 2020, as local tensions grew involving tribal groups and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

Syrian refugees among the dead and wounded

The casualties from Wednesday's strikes and others across the country have pushed the death toll in more than a month of Israel's war with Hezbollah to over 1,950 killed and more than 6,300 wounded, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. The toll includes at least 315 Syrians killed and wounded.

It remains unclear how many of those killed on Wednesday were non-Lebanese, as the Health Ministry did not provide a breakdown by nationality. Officials have reported that at least 39 Syrians were among the dead.

Dalal Harb, a spokesperson for the U.N. refugee agency, said the family killed in Ain Mreisseh was not registered with the UNHCR. There are about 530,000 Syrians refugees registered with UNHCR in Lebanon, with hundreds of thousands more believed to be unregistered.

While hundreds of thousands of Syrians have returned from Lebanon since the ouster of former Syrian President Bashar Assad in December 2024, many others remain reluctant to go back because of the lack of jobs and ongoing violence.

Al-Jalib's brother, Jomaa, who also lived in Lebanon, said he was about 150 meters (500 feet) away at work when the first blast hit. "We ran and we ran, then the second strike happened." He said he was arriving at the building as it began to collapse. "It was too late to get anyone out. We yelled for them, but no one answered."

He said ambulances later recovered the bodies, which he identified at a hospital.

Following the burial on Saturday, men stood shoulder to shoulder in prayer over the fresh graves.

## Today in History: April 12

### Yuri Gagarin becomes first human in space

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, April 12, the 102nd day of 2026. There are 263 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On April 12, 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human in space, orbiting the earth once before landing safely via parachute after a planned ejection from his space capsule.

Also on this date:

In 1861, the U.S. Civil War began as Confederate forces opened fire on Fort Sumter in South Carolina.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, April 12, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 311 ~ 63 of 63**

In 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt died of a cerebral hemorrhage in Warm Springs, Georgia, at age 63; he was succeeded by Vice President Harry S. Truman.

In 1954, Bill Haley and His Comets recorded "Rock Around the Clock," a song often cited as bringing rock 'n' roll music into the mainstream when it was popularized in the film "The Blackboard Jungle" the next year.

In 1955, the polio vaccine developed by Jonas Salk was declared safe and effective following nearly a year of field trials undertaken by about 1.8 million American child volunteers dubbed "polio pioneers."

In 1963, civil rights leader the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was arrested and jailed in Birmingham, Alabama, charged with contempt of court and parading without a permit. (During his time behind bars, King wrote his "Letter from Birmingham Jail.")

In 1981, the NASA Space Shuttle program began as Space Shuttle Columbia, the world's first reusable spacecraft, lifted off from the Kennedy Space Center.

In 1985, Space Shuttle Discovery rocketed into orbit, carrying the first elected official into space. The shuttle was carrying Republican Sen. Jake Garn of Utah, chairman of the Senate panel that oversees NASA's budget.

In 1992, Euro Disney, now called Disneyland Paris, officially opened in France with a parade, fireworks and Mickey Mouse opening the castle doors to the theme park.

In 2015, former first lady and ex-U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced her campaign to seek the 2016 Democratic nomination for president. (She would be defeated in the November 2016 presidential election by Republican Donald Trump).

In 2022, a man opened fire in a New York City subway car during rush hour, wounding 10 people. (Frank James was arrested a day later, eventually pleading guilty to terrorism charges and was sentenced to life in prison.)

Today's Birthdays: Musician Herbie Hancock is 86. Musician John Kay (Steppenwolf) is 82. Actor Ed O'Neill is 80. TV host David Letterman is 79. Author Scott Turow is 77. Actor Andy Garcia is 70. Movie director Walter Salles (SAL'-ihs) is 70. Country musician Vince Gill is 69. Actor-comedian Retta is 56. Actor Claire Danes is 47. Actor Jennifer Morrison is 47. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard is 45. Model-actor Brooklyn Decker is 39. Actor-comedian Ilana Glazer is 39. Actor Saoirse (SUR'-shuh) Ronan is 32. Former elite gymnast Katelyn Ohashi is 29.