

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 1 of 83

1- Upcoming Events

2- We the People Column: King Charles Reminds Congress that Our President is Subject to Checks and Balances

3- Tiger Tracks of Faith

4- Tigers finish fifth at NEC Softball Tournament

5- Weber Landscaping Greenhouse Ad

6- Seventh-Inning Spurt Lead Groton Area Tigers Varsity Past Redfield Area Muskrats

6- Groton Area Tigers Varsity Falls To Rapid City Central Varsity Cobblers

7- Tietz shatters school record at Howard Wood Relays

8- SD News Watch: Rhoden: Johnson tried to keep me from entering governor's race

9- 605 Scoops coming to Weber Greenhouse Ad

10- EarthTalk: Microplastics

11- Sunday Extras

29- Gov. Rhoden's Weekly Column

30- Thune's Weekly Column

31- Weekly Round[s] Up

33- Rev. Snyder's Column

35- South Dakota Average Gas Prices

36- Drought Monitor

37- Weather Pages

41- Daily Devotional

42- Subscription Form

43- Lottery Numbers

44- News from the Associated Press

Sunday, May 3

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m. (Senior Sunday/Faith Forever Scholarships Awarded).

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

United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Groton Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.; Cody Swanson Piano Recital, 3 p.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, 1 p.m., Arena

Annie, the Musical, 4 p.m., GHS Gym

Monday, May 4

Senior Menu: Taco salad with chips, Mexican rice with beans, fruit, biscuit.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Oriental chicken, rice.

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

MS Track Meeting at Sisseton, 3:30 p.m.

Girls Fastpitch Softball in Groton vs. Clark/Willow Lake, varsity at 3 p.m. followed by JV (senior recognition between games)

High School Baseball at Groton vs. Clark Area Varsity at 6 p.m. followed by JV.

Pickleball, 5:30 p.m., Elementary Gym

FFA Banquet, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, May 5

Senior Menu: Hot turkey combination, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, fruit.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sliders.

School Lunch: Tater tot hot dish, mixed vegetables.

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

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

City Council meeting, 7 p.m.

Valley Queen Track Meet at Milbank, 1:30 p.m.

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

JVT Practice, 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m., Arena

GROTON AREA TIGERS SOFTBALL

MONDAY

Varsity Game AT 3:00 P.M.

★ **SENIOR RECOGNITION** TO FOLLOW VARSITY GAME

★ **JUNIOR VARSITY GAME** TO FOLLOW

GROTON AREA TIGERS VS. **CLARK/WILLOW LAKE CYCLONES**

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 2 of 83

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

King Charles Reminds Congress that Our President is Subject to Checks and Balances

The irony of the moment could not have been lost on members of Congress. Both chambers of lawmakers convened in a historic, joint session and heard an English King, on April 28, on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, invoke the majesty of Magna Carta as a stern and much-needed reminder for the nation's legislators that, in the long sweep of Anglo-American legal history, executive power has been subject to checks and balances, ever since King John, in 1215, accepted the demands of the Barons at Runnymede. For many, there is fear that the 800-year-old Magna Carta, justly viewed as the "Tree of Liberty" for Anglo-American rights and freedoms, a bulwark against executive tyranny, and what Sir Edward Coke described as "such a Fellow that he has no Sovereign," has disappeared into the mists of time. King Charles III, the second British monarch to address Congress, was seemingly reassuring Americans that that need not be the fate of checks and balances as a constitutional restraint on presidential power.

In his address to Congress, King Charles observed that the "U.S. Supreme Court Historical Society has calculated that Magna Carta is cited in at least 160 Supreme Court cases since 1789, not least as the foundation of the principle that executive power is subject to checks and balances." Magna Carta declared that all within the English kingdom, including the King himself, was subject to the law of the land and guaranteed due process of law, trial by jury and various fundamental rights. King Charles noted with pride that Magna Carta influenced the English Bill of Rights in 1689 which, in turn, influenced the U.S. Bill of Rights.

In 1776, the Continental Congress, filled with heart, edginess and courage, besieged King George III with a lengthy list of grievances in various letters and petitions and, ultimately, the Declaration of Independence. The many grievances against King George III included his failure to assent to the laws and constitution of England, his willful violation of colonists rights, his efforts to render the military independent of and superior to civil power and cutting off trade with foreign nations, as well as attempts to render judges dependent on his will alone and obstruction of justice, among other repeated usurpations and injuries. For America's founders, these grievances, among others, were sufficient to abandon diplomatic efforts at reconciliation with England and marked a turning point in the history of the British Empire and the nascent movement to create an American republic.

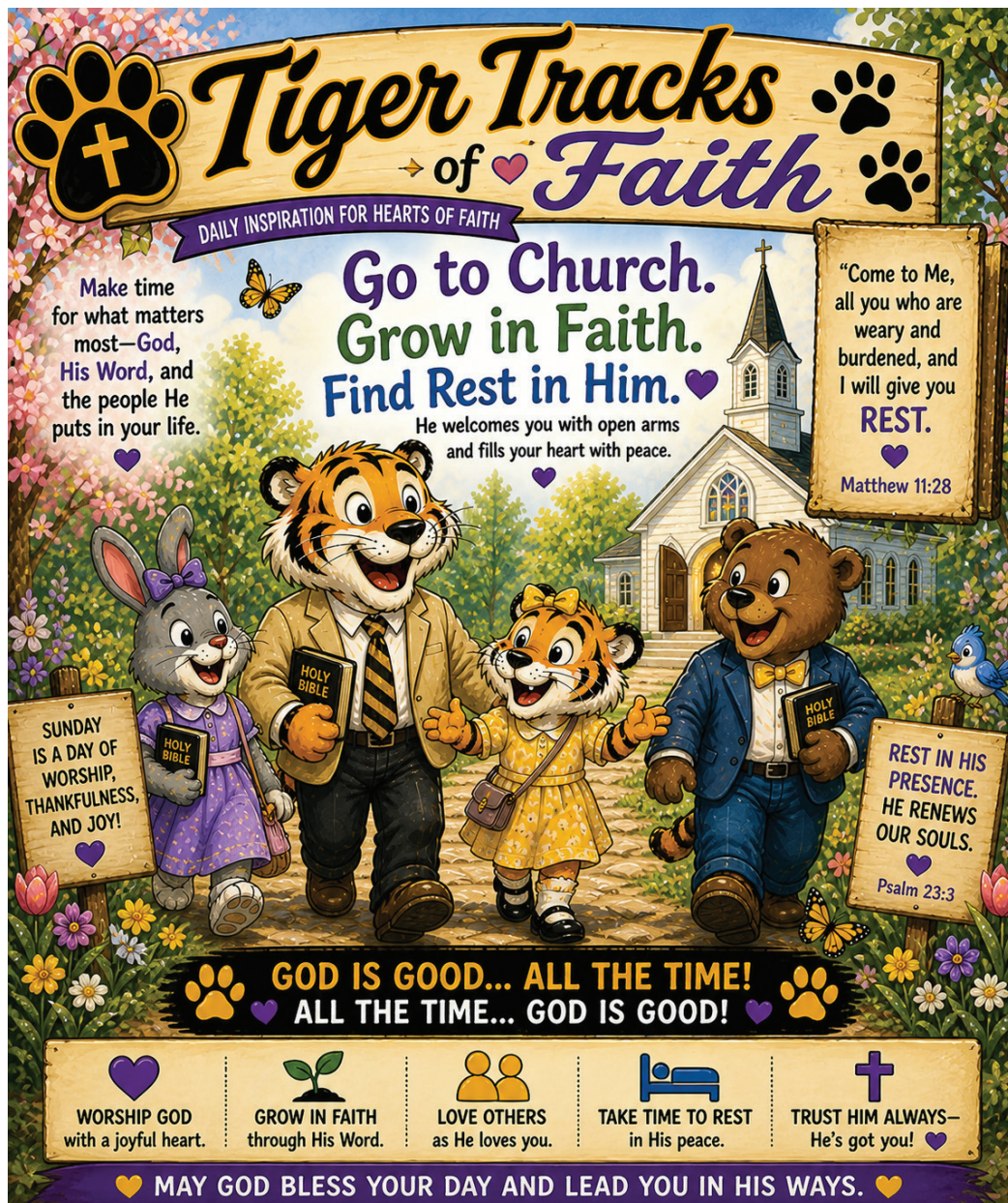
In one form or another, these grievances and others similar in tone, tenor and offense, have been advanced by Democratic officials, legal scholars, historians and millions of Americans against President Trump, whose steady usurpations of power reveal a contempt for the Constitution, the rule of law, the Bill of Rights and a penchant for authoritarian rule. The many injuries that he has inflicted on our constitutional democracy have been aided and abetted by the feckless Republican majority in both houses of Congress. The Republican majority has abdicated its constitutional duty to enforce checks and balances against President Trump, despite its obligation to defend the Constitution and the expectation, as James Madison wrote in Federalist No. 51, that legislative members would possess the personal and political "ambition" to fend

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 3 of 83

off presidential aggrandizement of its powers. The unwillingness of the Republican majority to defend the doctrines of enumeration of powers and separation of powers suggests it is oblivious to both the principle laid down 800 years ago in Magna Carta and the critical importance of checks and balances. Without restraints, President Trump has crushed constitutional boundaries and usurped congressional powers.

Lost in the mists of time, or in the memory of the majority in Congress, is Madison's explanation in Federalist 51 that, to prevent executive aggrandizement of power, Congress was granted "the necessary constitutional means, and personal motives, to resist encroachments of the others." As he explained, "ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interests of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place." At this juncture, congressional Republicans have lost the ambition to defend the Constitution, and, in the process, they have surrendered the institutional rights and powers that the founders believed distinguished the lawmaking branch. Perhaps King Charles's words will remind Congress that it has a duty to check the executive.



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 4 of 83

Tigers finish fifth at NEC Softball Tournament

REDFIELD — The Groton Area Tigers opened play against two strong opponents and couldn't quite find their footing early, but bounced back in a big way to close out Saturday's Northeast Conference Softball Tournament with a convincing win over Sisseton, securing a fifth-place finish on the day.

First Game: Deuel 16, Groton Area 0

A big second inning proved to be the difference as Deuel rolled past Groton Area 16-0 Saturday at Redfield. The Cardinals, the defending 2025 state champions, broke things open with 11 runs in the second inning after already plating four runs in the first. In that opening frame, Deuel used a wild pitch, a hit batter, an error, and a steal of home to build an early lead.

The second inning saw Deuel tally 11 runs on five hits. Rylynn Streich delivered a two-run single, while Graclyn Nielsen, Gracyn Gohring, Elle Holden, and Aubrey Lanners each drove in runs during the outburst. The Cardinals also capitalized on walks, hit batters, and another wild pitch to extend the lead.

Lanners earned the win, throwing three no-hit innings with nine strikeouts and no walks. Neely Althoff took the loss for Groton Area, allowing 16 runs on seven hits over two innings while striking out three and walking 10.

Streich led Deuel with two hits, while the Cardinals showed patience at the plate with 10 walks and aggressiveness on the bases with 26 stolen bases. Deuel also played clean defensively, committing no errors.

Second Game: Milbank 15, Groton Area 1

Groton Area dropped its second game of the day, falling to Milbank 15-1.

Milbank struck early in the first inning, scoring three runs on a single by Kennedy Saylor, a Groton error, and a steal of home. The Bulldogs added two more runs in the second and then broke the game open with five runs in the third inning behind RBI singles from Mueller, Ericson, Lamp, and Lester.

Ash Lamp picked up the win for Milbank, allowing one run on five hits over 4 2/3 innings while striking out six. Kinsley Rowen took the loss for Groton Area, giving up 10 runs (six earned) on 12 hits over 3 1/3 innings. Althoff started the game, allowing five runs over 1 2/3 innings.

Abby Fjeldheim drove in the Tigers' lone run, going 1-for-3. Fjeldheim, Rylen Ekern, Jaedyn Penning, Libby Cole each recorded a hit and Jerica Locke had a double for Groton Area.

Milbank finished with 14 hits, led by Ericson with three. Mueller and Lester each drove in two runs. The Bulldogs also showed patience at the plate with eight walks and were aggressive on the bases with 16 stolen bases. Like Deuel, Milbank played error-free defense.

Fifth Place Game: Groton Area 15, Sisseton 0

Groton Area rebounded in a big way in the fifth-place game, defeating Sisseton 15-0 behind a dominant second inning.

The Tigers scored four runs in the first inning on hits from Rylie Rose, Rylen Ekern, and Kinsley Rowen, along with a hit batter.

Groton Area then erupted for 10 runs in the second inning. Jaedyn Penning singled in two runs, Kaedy Bonn added a two-run single, Abby Fjeldheim tripled in a run, and several other runs came via hit batters, groundouts, and singles.

The Tigers added one more run in the third on a Rowen RBI single to complete the scoring.

Rowen earned the win, allowing just one hit over three shutout innings while striking out three. Sisseton's Braveball and Hortness combined to allow 15 runs.

Rowen and Rose each had two hits and drove in two runs to lead Groton Area offensively. The Tigers were aggressive on the basepaths with 22 stolen bases and also drew six walks. Defensively, Groton Area was flawless and turned a double play, with Penning making a catch and stepping on third for the out.

Groton Area finished the game without committing an error.

All three games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Today's Game Sponsors: Bierman Farm Service, BK Custom T's 'n More, Dacotah Bank, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Hanlon Brothers, John Sieh Agency, Locke Electric, Lori's Pharmacy, Malpert Insurance, the MeatHouse, Poet, S & S Lumber, Sun & Sea Travel Co. and Weber Landscaping Greenhouse.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 5 of 83

The Tigers return home Monday to host Clark/Willow Lake, with varsity action beginning at 3 p.m. Senior recognition will take place between games, followed by the junior varsity contest. Groton Area will also host Florence-Henry on Thursday for a varsity doubleheader as part of fan recognition night.

Bisbee: Tigers respond with aggressive mindset, look ahead to busy week at home

Groton Area head softball coach Amanda Bisbee was pleased with her team's performance following a strong showing in their latest game, pointing to a renewed focus and energy after a brief mid-day reset.

Bisbee noted the importance of the break between games, explaining that the team needed time to regroup mentally. That reset paid off, as the Tigers returned to the field with a noticeably different approach.

"We talked about the difference between just having fun and playing with aggressive fun," Bisbee said. "You've got to come out ready and be aggressive, and that's what they did this game."

The coach emphasized that while enjoying the game remains important, it must be paired with intensity and preparedness—something she felt the team executed well in the win.

Looking ahead, Groton Area faces a full schedule in the coming days. The Tigers will host a varsity-first matchup Monday at Nelson Field, with first pitch set for 3 p.m. The evening will also include a junior varsity contest and serve as senior night, making it a special occasion for players and fans alike.

The busy week continues Thursday with a varsity doubleheader against Florence/Henry, which will double as fan appreciation night. Bisbee said the event will include activities for younger fans, raffles, and other efforts to thank the community for its continued support.

With both the softball and baseball teams recognizing seniors on Monday, Bisbee encouraged the community to come out and support the athletes during an important stretch of the season.

"Come out and watch both games," she said.

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Seventh-Inning Spurt Lead Groton Area Tigers Varsity Past Redfield Area Muskrats

By GameChanger Media

Groton Area Tigers Varsity defeated Redfield Area Muskrats 12-2 on Saturday at Redfield thanks in part to 10 runs in the seventh inning. Gavin Englund singled, scoring two runs, Karsten Fliehs drew a walk, scoring one run, Jarrett Erdmann singled, scoring one run, Tristin McGannon singled, scoring one run, Nick Groeblichhoff singled, scoring three runs, a dropped third strike scored one run, and Fliehs drew a walk, scoring one run.

Redfield Area Muskrats opened the scoring in the bottom of the third thanks to two ground outs. Redfield Area Muskrats first got on the board when Aiden Frankenstein grounded out, scoring one run.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity scored on a wild pitch, which helped Groton Area Tigers Varsity tie the game at two in the top of the sixth.

Groeblichhoff earned the win for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. The righty surrendered one hit and zero runs over two innings, striking out three and walking none. Alex Abeln started the game for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. The righty surrendered two hits and two runs (one earned) over five innings, striking out seven and walking six. Chace Odland began the game for Redfield Area Muskrats. The starter allowed four hits and two runs over six innings, striking out 11 and walking one.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity accumulated nine hits in the game. Fliehs and Groeblichhoff each collected two hits for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. Fliehs led Groton Area Tigers Varsity with three runs batted in. The right-handed hitter went 2-for-3 on the day. Groton Area Tigers Varsity had a strong eye at the plate, tallying seven walks for the game. Fliehs, TC Schuster, and Case Reints led the team with two bases on balls each.

Frankenstein led the team with one run batted in. Noah Johnson led Redfield Area Muskrats with two hits in three at bats from the leadoff position. Odland led Redfield Area Muskrats with two walks. Overall, the team had a strong eye at the plate, collecting six walks for the game.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity Falls To Rapid City Central Varsity Cobblers

Groton Area Tigers Varsity could not keep pace with Rapid City Central Varsity Cobblers 12-7 on Saturday at Redfield.

Rapid City Central Varsity Cobblers jumped out to the lead in the top of the first inning after Benjamin Farnsworth doubled, scoring two runs, and a passed ball scored one run.

Rapid City Central Varsity Cobblers added two runs in the second after Steven Solano doubled to left field.

Brody Pourier earned the win for Rapid City Central Varsity Cobblers. The pitcher surrendered three hits and one run over one and two-thirds innings, striking out none and walking none. Karsten Fliehs took the loss for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. The starting pitcher went five and one-third innings, surrendering 11 runs (six earned) on eight hits, striking out five and walking three.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity collected 12 hits in the game. Kason Oswald led Groton Area Tigers Varsity with two runs batted in from the number nine spot in the lineup. The catcher went 1-for-3 on the day. TC Schuster, Case Reints, Alex Abeln, and Nick Groeblichhoff each collected two hits for Groton Area Tigers Varsity.

Rapid City Central Varsity Cobblers amassed 12 hits in the game. Solano went 4-for-5 at the plate and led the team with three runs batted in. Nathan Mailloux and Laken Uttecht each collected multiple hits for Rapid City Central Varsity Cobblers.

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

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 7 of 83

Tietz shatters school record at Howard Wood Relays

SIoux FALLS — It was a record-breaking weekend in every sense of the word for Groton Area junior McKenna Tietz.

After setting a new school record in the 300-meter hurdles earlier this season with a time of 47.25, Tietz raised the bar yet again at the prestigious Howard Wood Relays, held Friday and Saturday in Sioux Falls. And then, just when it seemed she had reached her peak, she went even higher.

Competing against one of the deepest and most talented fields in the region, Tietz clocked a remarkable 46.18 in the finals, breaking her own record by more than a full second and finishing 10th overall. The performance not only solidified her place in the Groton Area record books, but also marked one of the top efforts in Class A this season.

Tietz's impact wasn't limited to the hurdles, as she played a key role across multiple relay teams for the Tigers. She helped lead Groton to a seventh-place finish in the 4x200-meter relay alongside Taryn Traphagen, Kella Tracy, and Makenna Krause with a time of 1:47.59. The same quartet also placed 14th in the 4x100 relay in 51.93.

In the 4x400 relay, Tietz teamed with Traphagen, Ashlynn Warrington, and Tracy to place 15th in 4:13.81, while another Groton group of Krause, Traphagen, Tracy, and Ryelle Gilbert finished 11th in the sprint medley relay at 4:24.48.

Also contributing on the girls' side, senior Rylee Dunker placed 31st in the javelin with a throw of 95 feet, 3 inches.

On the boys' side, senior Keegen Tracy led the way for the Tigers with a strong all-around showing. Tracy advanced to the semifinals in the 100-meter dash, placing 23rd in 11.37 after running 11.08 in the prelims. He also turned in an 11th-place finish in the 400 meters with a time of 51.09.

Tracy was a central figure in Groton's relay efforts as well, joining Lincoln Krause, Jordan Schwan, and Ryder Schwan for a 19th-place finish in the 4x100 relay (45.48) and a 16th-place showing in the 4x200 relay (1:34.49).

In the distance events, Groton's 4x800 relay team of Jayden Schwan, Jace Johnson, Ethan Kroll, and Riley Shellenberger placed 20th in 8:50.06. The sprint medley relay team of Krause, JJ Muller, Jordan

Schwan, and Jayden Schwan added an 11th-place finish with a time of 3:47.01.

Facing elite competition from across South Dakota and beyond, the Tigers turned in a series of strong performances, highlighted by Tietz's historic run — one that continues to raise expectations as the postseason approaches.

Boy's Division

100 Meters High School- All - Semi-Finals:

23. Keegen Tracy, 11.37.

100 Meters High School- All - Prelims:

14. Keegen Tracy, 11.08.

400 Meters High School- All - Finals:

11. Keegen Tracy, 51.09.

4x100 Relay A - Finals: 19. Groton: (Lincoln Krause, Jordan Schwan, Ryder Schwan, Keegen Tracy), 45.48.

4x200 Relay A - Finals: 16. Groton: (Lincoln Krause, Jordan Schwan, Ryder Schwan, Keegen Tracy), 1:34.49.

4x800 Relay A - Finals: 20. Groton: (Jayden Schwan, Jace Johnson, Ethan Kroll, Riley Shellenberger), 8:50.06.

SMR 1600m - [200-200-400-800] A - Finals: 11. (Groton: (Lincoln Krause, JJ Muller, Jordan Schwan, Jayden Schwan), 3:47.01.

Girl's Division

300m Hurdles - 30" / 0.762m High School- All - Finals: 10. McKenna Tietz, 46.18.

4x100 Relay A - Finals: 14. Groton: (McKenna Tietz, Taryn Traphagen, Kella Tracy, Makenna Krause), 51.93.

4x200 Relay A - Finals: 7. Groton: (McKenna Tietz, Taryn Traphagen, Kella Tracy, Makenna Krause), 1:47.59.

4x400 Relay A - Finals: 15. Groton: (McKenna Tietz, Taryn Traphagen, Ashlynn Warrington, Kella Tracy), 4:13.81.

SMR 1600m - [200-200-400-800] A - Finals: 11. Groton: (Makenna Krause, Taryn Traphagen, Kella Tracy, Ryelle Gilbert), 4:24.48.

Javelin - 600g High School- All - Finals: 31. Rylee Dunker, 95-03.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 8 of 83



**SOUTH DAKOTA
NEWS WATCH**

Inform. Enlighten. Illuminate.

Rhoden: Johnson tried to keep me from entering governor's race

**By Alexander Rifaat
South Dakota News Watch**

DEADWOOD, S.D. – South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden told a gathering of journalists Friday that one of his challengers, U.S. House Rep. Dusty Johnson, attempted to blackmail him into not entering the gubernatorial race.

Rhoden spoke at the South Dakota NewsMedia Association conference in Deadwood. He didn't name Johnson directly during his comments but later confirmed to News Watch that's who he was talking about.

When responding to a question regarding concerns over a lack of civility in the race, Rhoden said that Johnson, through a mutual friend, tried to dissuade him from running for re-election by insinuating he would direct a large portion of his campaign war chest, including funds from super political action committees associated with him, against Rhoden if he ran.

"They let me know he had more than just the \$6 (million) or \$7 million in his personal fund. That he also had these dark money super PACs that he could maintain cover on. In fact, that's exactly what he did when he released the ads," Rhoden said. "In the interviews he did, he said 'No, that wasn't me, that was them.' Well, why did you tell me about it? That blows my mind."

In recent weeks, Johnson's supporters have launched an ad campaign accusing Rhoden of enacting the largest sales tax increase in state history. Rhoden enacted two major bills from the 2026 legislative session that, in some fashion, decrease property taxes in exchange for increasing sales taxes. Johnson has also hit out at a third bill that Rhoden signed that will allow municipalities to raise sales taxes to fund capital projects.

Johnson dismissed Rhoden's remarks.

"I did not approve the ad, but it's clear this PAC supports me and opposes the Governor's three sales tax increases. Every other candidate has a PAC supporting them and this is no different," Johnson said in an email to News Watch. "But let's be clear—I don't disagree with any of the facts in this ad."

Rhoden said some of Johnson's statements are outright lies.

Rhoden provided more details of the exchange to News Watch, explaining that a mutual friend of his and Johnson's called him shortly after last year's legislative session when he was debating whether to enter the race.

"He called one of them up and he said, 'Tell Larry, if he gets in the race, I will drop a million bucks on his head, drive his numbers down into the single digits, and I just don't want to have to do that,'" Rhoden told News Watch.

"He (Johnson) was presenting it like he was doing me a favor," Rhoden said. "It's blackmail, basically."

A scientific survey of 500 registered Republicans, conducted April 7-11 by Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy, found Johnson leading the four-way contest for governor with 34% of likely GOP primary voters supporting his candidacy.

The other three candidates were effectively tied for second due to the margin of error being plus-or-minus 4.5%. State House Speaker Jon Hansen, of Dell Rapids, had 18% support from GOP voters, and Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden and Rhoden both had 17%. Roughly 14% of those surveyed were undecided, according to the poll sponsored by South Dakota News Watch and Chiesman Center for Democracy.

The revelations come as the GOP gubernatorial race enters the final stretch, with a month left until the June 2 primary. If no candidate receives at least 35% of the vote, a runoff will be scheduled for July 28.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 9 of 83



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EARTHTALK

Microplastics & Cancer: New Links Emerging by Krisha Chhabra

Dear EarthTalk: Is there any evidence suggesting a link between exposure to microplastics and the development of various forms of cancer?

—Dave B., Atlanta, GA

Each year companies produce nearly 460 million metric tons of plastic, a number that is projected to reach 1.1 billion by 2050. Microplastics, defined as plastic particles smaller than five millimeters, or smaller than a grain of rice, have become ubiquitous in the environment. Major sources include plastic pellets, personal care products, paint and resins, synthetic textiles and the breakdown of larger plastics like bags and containers. Even driving contributes, as the tires and road wear release plastic fragments into the air.



Tracey Woodruff, a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of San Francisco who studied the impacts of microplastics, remarks, "Nothing surprises me about how many places plastic is in anymore, but it is sad and surprising in the fact that these things that are in our food...could be releasing microplastics." On average, a person consumes 39,000 to 52,000 microplastic particles annually. One recent study found that chewing gum can release hundreds to thousands of microplastics into the saliva. On average, 100 microplastics are released per gram of gum, with each piece of gum typically weighing two to six grams. Sanjay Mohanty, the project's principal investigator and an engineering professor at UCLA remarks that "chewing gum is the only food that is made up of plastics. Yet, most don't know."

Microplastics enter the human body through nasal, dermal and oral routes, contaminating multiple organs. Epidemiological studies link exposure to various diseases. In one review of 34 studies, researchers found increased risk of lung cancer tied to PVC microplastic dust. Chemicals found in microplastics, like BPA, phthalates and PFAS, can disrupt processes related to reproduction, growth and metabolism. Co-authors found that exposure to microplastics caused an acceleration of ovarian cancer tumor growth in mice, which could potentially cause similar patterns in humans. Also, the rising rates of colorectal cancer in people under 50 are suspected to be driven by environmental factors like microplastics. As microplastics pass through the gastrointestinal tract, they interact with the colon and rectum and potentially disrupt the protective colonic mucus layer which could increase the likelihood of colorectal cancer.

To reduce exposure, microplastic researchers recommend avoiding microwaving food in plastic, switching to glass or steel water bottles, eating more grains, fruits and vegetables, and reducing red meat consumption. Using natural cleaning products like baking soda or vinegar, or products approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Safer Choice program, can also help reduce contact with harmful chemicals.



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

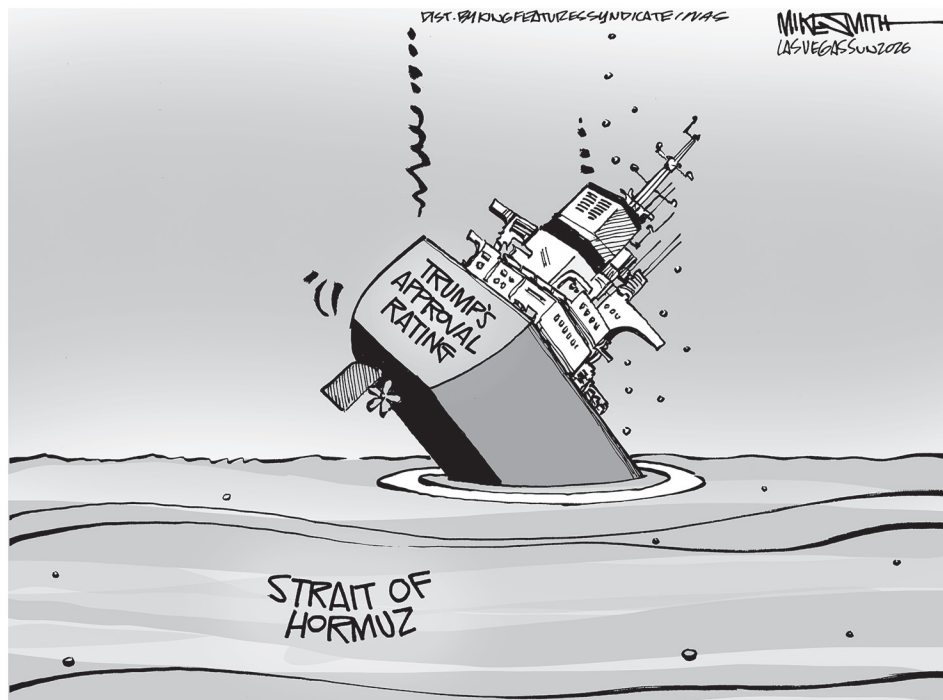
Religion that God
our Father accepts
as pure and faultless
is this: to look after
orphans and widows
in their distress and
to keep oneself from
being polluted
by the world.

 JAMES 1:27



Detail of "Mothers" by Kathe Kollwitz (1919)

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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Eve (KJV), first mother on Earth, in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. To save her son's life, what mother waterproofed a basket and placed the young Moses in it among the reeds of the River Nile? *Lois, Jochebed, Eunice, Hagar*

3. What evil mother instructed her daughter to ask for John the Baptist's head? *Salome, Herodias, Athaliah, Rebekah*

4. Who brought a new little coat to her son, Samuel, every year at Shiloh? *Hannah, Elizabeth, Priscilla, Martha*

5. Which mother bore six sons and one daughter to Jacob? *Sarah, Miriam, Leah, Ruth*

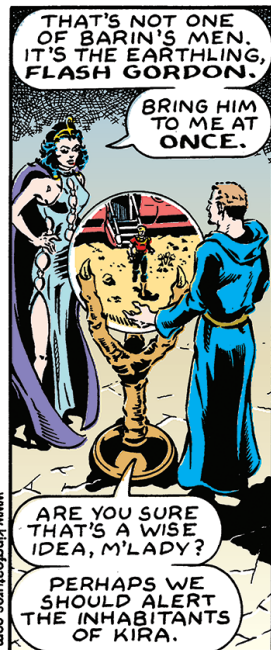
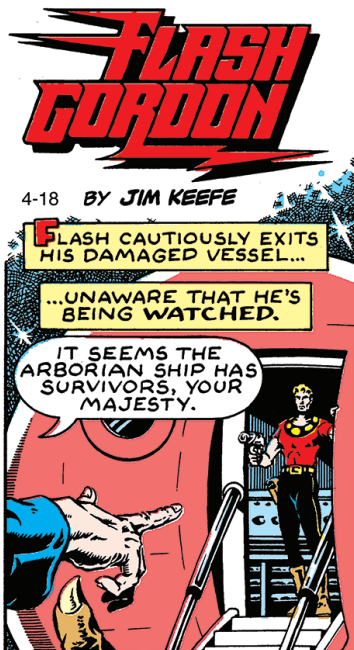
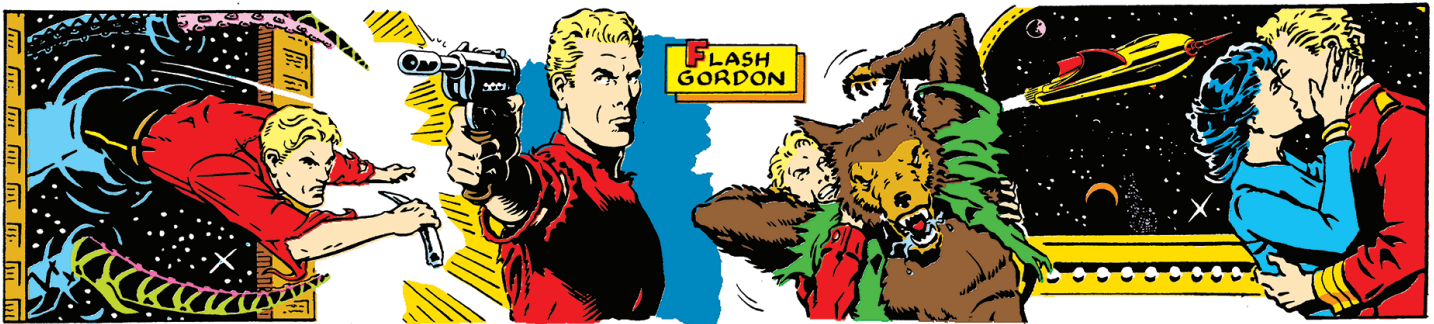
6. From Judges 5:7, who arose herself as a mother in Israel? *Esther, Naomi, Jezebel, Deborah*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Jochebed, 3) Herodias, 4) Hannah, 5) Leah, 6) Deborah

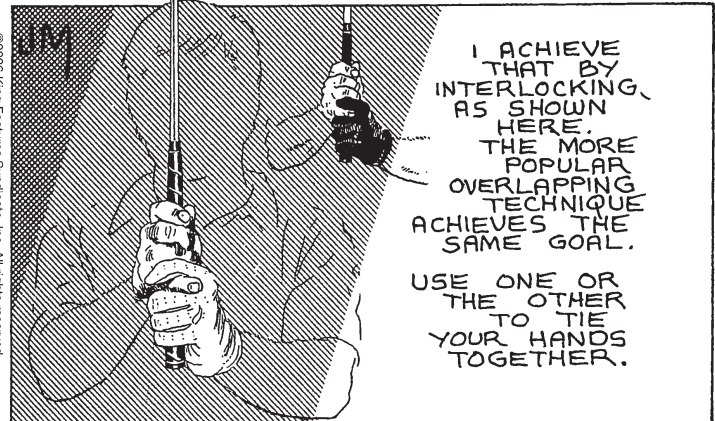
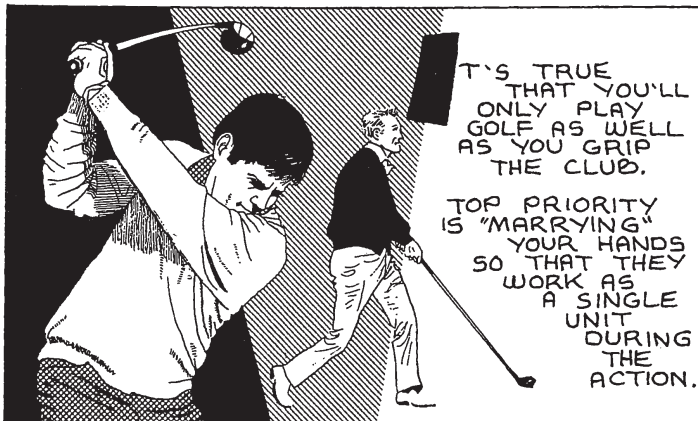
Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 13 of 83



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Remove Triggers for Migraines by Leading A Healthy Lifestyle

DEAR DR. ROACH: I read your recent column about migraines and strokes. About 40 years ago, I began having occasional visual interference episodes with zigzags, blurry central vision, and more that lasted for about 30 minutes. My doctor described them as ocular migraines.

When I read about migraines, the first possible cause that was listed were preservatives, so I started reading labels. My episodes only occurred after eating food with added nitrites and sulfates. It was very consistent, so now I read labels and avoid them. And thanks to the fact that more foods are now being made without them, at 85, I haven't had an episode in many years. It has made me a more careful and healthy eater.

Would I still be more likely to have a stroke? Is this a common cause of these auras, or do causes vary in people? I would hope that others would find a sure cause and solution like I did. -- D.W.

ANSWER: Food additives, especially nitrites but also sulfites and sulfates, are known triggers of migraines in people who are susceptible. Finding and eliminating the triggers for migraines can be helpful, but not everyone is able to identify their triggers.

Red wine (which contains trace amounts of sulfites, even if more aren't added) is one of the most common food triggers, but caffeine (and caffeine withdrawal) are another common cause. Poor sleep, excess stress and hormonal changes (especially in menstruating women) are also commonly reported.

Some perceived triggers may actually be an early part of a headache. Chocolate cravings can be part of the prodrome of a headache, so people may think that chocolate caused a headache when, in fact, the headache was already on its way.

Headache with aura can be confused with a stroke. My column from this past January tried to point out that positive findings like zigzag lines make a migraine with aura very likely, while transient ischemic attacks and strokes are exceedingly unlikely.

However, there is an increased risk of stroke in people who have migraines with aura. This is particularly the case in younger women. I suspect but cannot prove that having fewer migraines after removing the triggers (as you have) probably does mitigate the small increased stroke risk.

Still, it is important for all people with migraines to do what they can to reduce their stroke risk through a healthy lifestyle. Elevated blood pressure and cholesterol might be worth treating, even if they're fairly mild. Diabetes should be as well-controlled as possible. Finally, with strong evidence showing that the shingles vaccine reduces stroke risk, I'd recommend that you make sure you've had the two-dose shingles vaccine.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm a 75-year-old female who's hoping to keep her hair from falling out. I currently use minoxidil, but I'm not seeing any improvement. What else would you suggest? -- G.E.

ANSWER: Most women in their 70s lose some of their hair. The most typical pattern is a general thinning that is somewhat worse on the crown. I recommend seeing a doctor about this to be sure of the diagnosis. There are other patterns of hair loss, some of which are related to thyroid disease and -- less frequently -- serious systemic diseases.

If the diagnosis is confirmed as female pattern hair loss, then in addition to minoxidil (which can be used either topically or as a low-dose oral pill), spironolactone (or another antiandrogen) would be the other first-line treatment. Some physicians use prostate medicines like dutasteride, and ketoconazole shampoo can be helpful. These drugs are usually used in combination with each other.

Finally, laser or low-level light therapy, microneedling, and platelet-rich plasma have some benefit, although these are much more expensive options. A dermatologist is the expert when it comes to diseases of the hair and scalp.

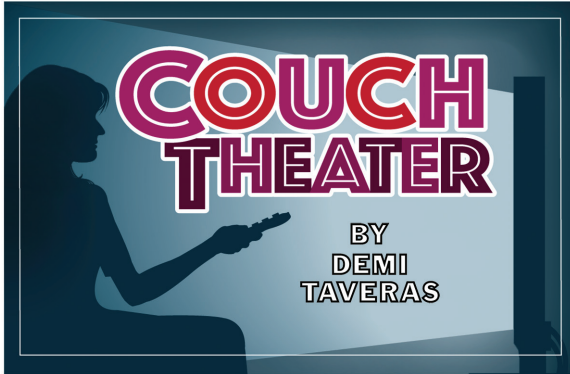
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 15 of 83



Robert Pattinson, left, and Zendaya star in "The Drama." (Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

"The Drama" (R) -- Who says we don't have movie stars nowadays when Zendaya ("Euphoria") and Robert Pattinson ("Die My Love") not only exist but continue to feed the souls of millennials and Gen Z with projects like this film! With a budget of \$28 million, this romantic black comedy film grossed \$104 million due to the charisma of its two leads. (Not to mention, audiences still itch for new romantic dramas that represent the current times.) In the film, Zendaya and Pattinson play an engaged couple who are set to be married within the week; however, a shocking revelation from the bride causes the couple to spiral and tests their relationship right before they're supposed to don their gowns and hit the altar. While the revelation itself has been subject to online controversy from viewers, the performances of the cast, including supporting actress Alana Haim ("One Battle After Another"), were praised. Available to rent on May 5. (Amazon Prime Video)

"The Super Mario Galaxy Movie" (PG) -- The highest-grossing film of 2026 so far is now available to rent from the comfort of our own homes, which feels right for adaptations based on video games that we used to play at home all the time. Chris Pratt, Anya Taylor-Joy, Charlie Day and Jack Black reprise their roles from the first film, which became the second-highest-grossing film of 2023. (Props to them for getting so close to the cultural reset that was "Barbie.") This time around, Bowser Jr. is the Koopa that's wreaking havoc in honor of his father, Bowser (Black), by kidnapping Princess Rosalina (voiced by new addition Brie Larson) in order to steal her power away. Other new additions in the film include Donald Glover ("Atlanta") as the iconic dinosaur Yoshi, as well as Glen Powell ("How to Make a Killing") as Fox McCloud. (YouTube)

"Hoppers" (PG) -- It's a good week for a family movie marathon at home! This sci-fi comedy from Pixar Animation Studios stars Piper Curda ("May December") and Bobby Moynihan ("Saturday Night Live"), and it didn't do half-bad at the box office -- pulling in about \$375 million against its \$150 million budget. Curda voices a 19-year-old student named Mabel, who has had a passion for animals since her childhood, when she bonded with her grandmother over nature and its magnificent creatures. As certain creatures' habitats start to get threatened by incoming infrastructure, Mabel has the bright idea to use her colleagues' new Hoppers technology to literally "hop into" a robotic animal and lure the animals back to their natural habitats. What could go wrong?! The film is out now to rent. (Apple TV+)

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 16 of 83



1. Which piano duo had a hit instrumental version of the theme song for the film "Exodus"?
2. Who was the first to release "The Night Has a Thousand Eyes"?
3. Which group had a hit with "Cry Like a Baby"?
4. Who released "Paradise City"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "You'd hear the patter of his feet as he came toddling down the street, His smile would cheer a lonely heart, you see."

Answers

1. Ferrante and Teicher, in 1961. They also had hit versions of theme songs from "The Apartment" and "Midnight Cowboy."
2. Bobby Vee, in 1962. The hit was on the charts for 14 weeks before being covered by several others, including the Carpenters and Gary Lewis & the Playboys.
3. The Box Tops, in 1968. Originally calling themselves The Devilles, they had to change their name because of another group called The DeVilles.
4. Guns N' Roses, in 1989.
5. "The Old Lamplighter," by the Browns, in 1960. Originally written in 1946 and released by Sammy Kaye, it was the Browns' version that was best known. The lamplighter was the man who used to light all the street lamps in a town and then extinguish them at dawn.

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GRIN and BEAR IT *Wagner*



"Take a letter, Flo! Heck, take the whole alphabet!"

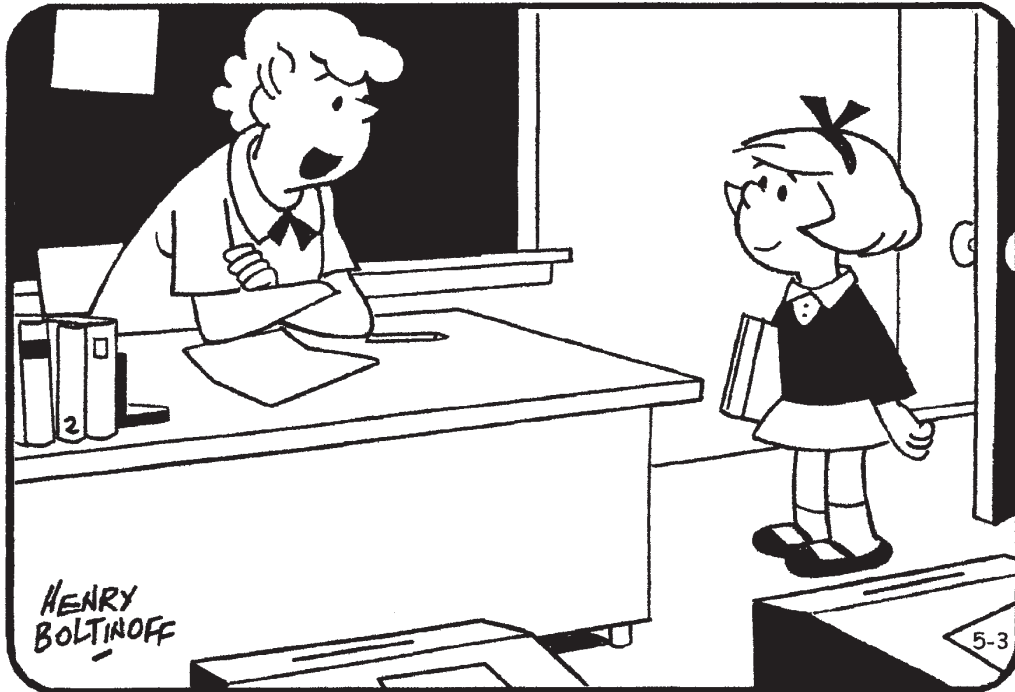
Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

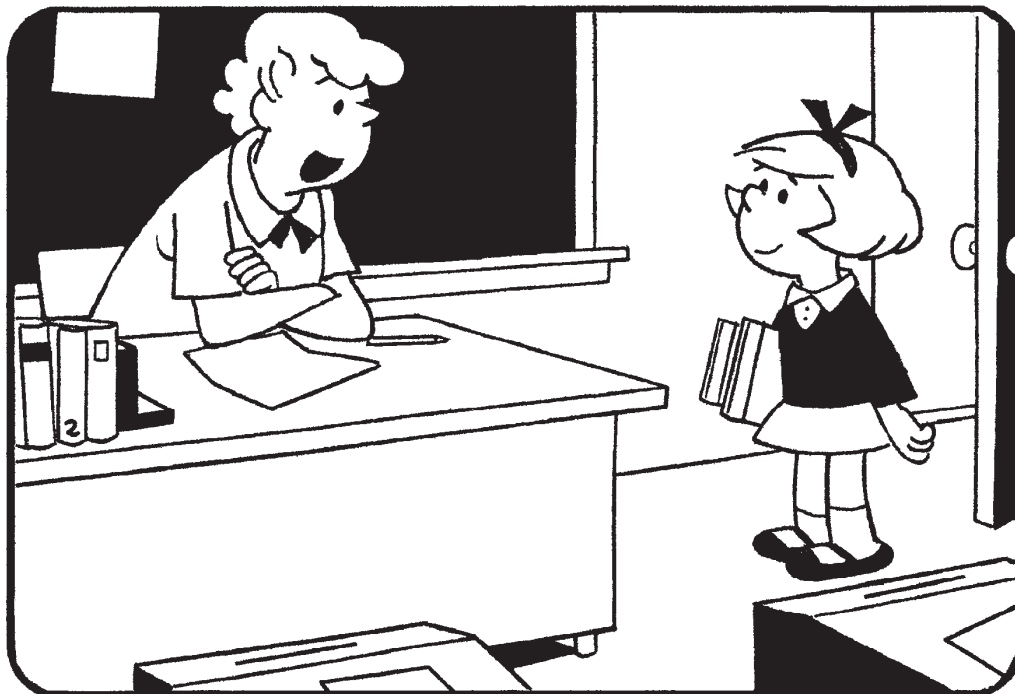


HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Teacher's desk is not as wide. 2. Student desk is moved. 3. Bookend is larger. 4. Blackboard is wider. 5. Girl is holding two books. 6. Door opening is wider.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 18 of 83



* Last month's Earth Day got me thinking about how many plastic bottled beverages my family goes through. I have found six glass reusable bottles that can be run through the dishwasher, and I store them in the fridge in a cardboard six-pack holder. I still want the convenience of grabbing a bottle of water from the fridge, but I feel better that I'm not contributing to a plastic problem.

* Using ice-cold sour cream instead of ice-cold water in your pie crust recipe will give you a flakier crust.

* "If you love to burn candles as much as I do, consider storing them in the fridge for a day or so before you burn them. I swear, it makes them burn evenly. Someone told me this once, and I tried it and have been doing it ever since. No more

crooked candles." -- J.L. in Tennessee

* "When traveling for more than a few days, stick your plants into the bathtub with a little bit of water. They soak it up, and you don't have to have someone come over and water your plants. This will only work for a week or less, though." -- J.M. in Louisiana

* Kitchen remodels can be expensive, but when your kitchen isn't usable, that's even more of an expense. Plan by setting up an alternate kitchen to save money instead of opting for takeout food. Microwave, toaster oven, coffee pot and a small dorm-style fridge can take care of a lot of your needs in the short term.

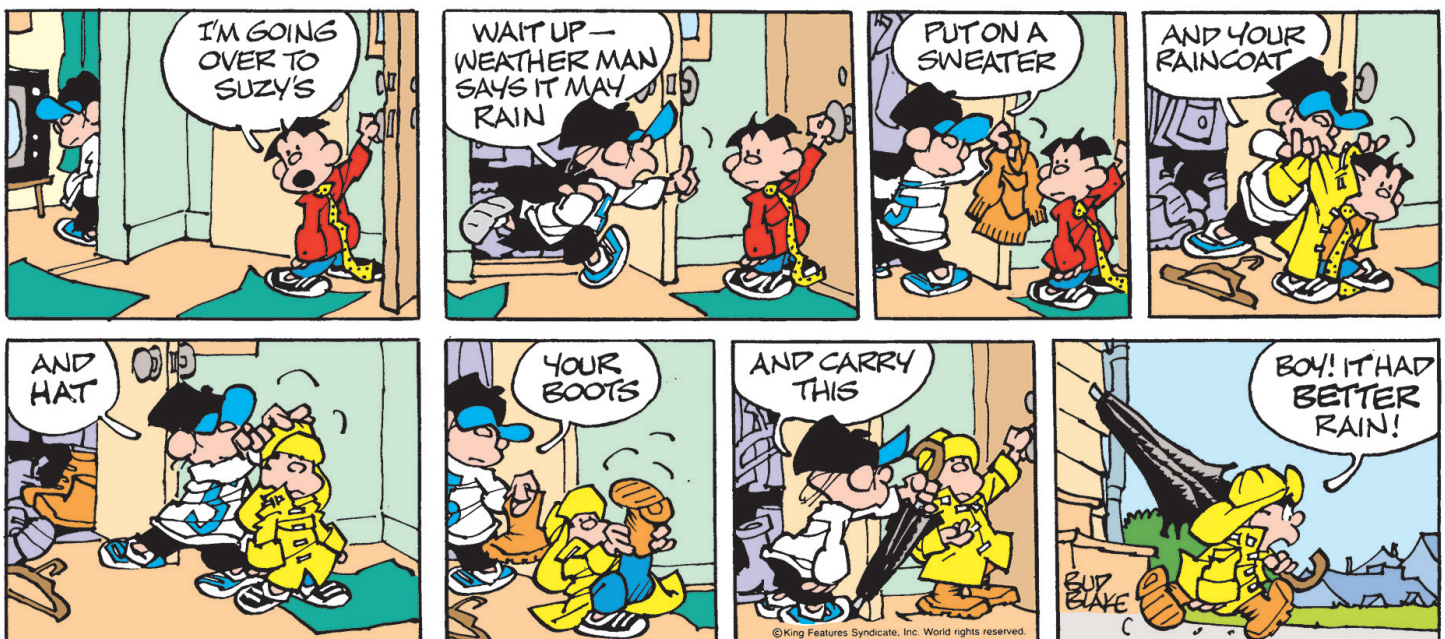
* If you are planning on putting in some new plants or sprucing up your garden, check with your town's yard waste recycling center for free mulch or compost details. Many facilities offer these to their residents.

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, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 19 of 83

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Supergirl's first name
5 Platter
9 Author Tolstoy
12 Lay — the line
13 Cold War initials
14 Days of yore
15 Citrus producer
17 Avril follower
18 At hand
19 Unmanned plane
21 Apt. cooler
22 Rid of wool
24 Coconut juice
27 "Nova" subj.
28 Feed the piggy bank
31 Hearty quaff
32 Klutz
33 Actor Patel
34 Mater lead-in
36 Roman 1051
37 Big party
38 Chose
40 Undergrad deg.
41 Ford or Hudson
43 Parlor piece
47 PC key
48 Tangy, custard-like spread
51 Employ

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
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18								19	20			
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41	42						43			44	45	46
47					48	49	50					
51					52					53		
54					55					56		

- 52 "Zounds!"
53 Novelist Bronte
54 Grazing tract
55 Activist Parks
56 Adolescent
8 Words to live by
9 Picnic drink
10 Panache
11 Garfield's pal
16 "The Wall" network
20 B&O and others (Abbr.)
22 Burn with steam
23 LP player
24 Goat's cry
25 Under the weather
26 Throat-soothing drink
27 Not all
29 Bird doc
30 Cain's mom
35 Earth Day mo.
37 Nabob
39 10th U.S. president
40 "Gandhi" star Kingsley
41 Move, as freight
42 Otherwise
43 Pop
44 Melody
45 Sea eagle
46 Paradise
49 Id counterpart
50 Pas' mates

DOWN

- 1 Pottery oven
2 Suit to —
3 Capital of Italia
4 Parka
5 Obligation
6 Medit. nation
7 Away from NNW

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 20 of 83

— King Crossword — Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

K	A	R	A		D	I	S	C		L	E	O	
I	T	O	N		U	S	S	R		E	L	D	
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Olive



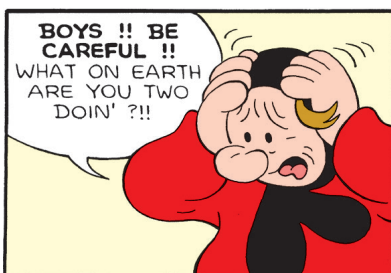
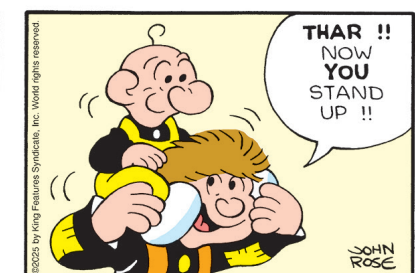
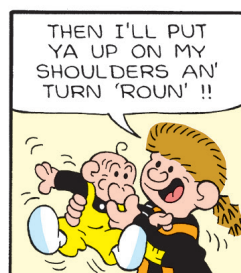
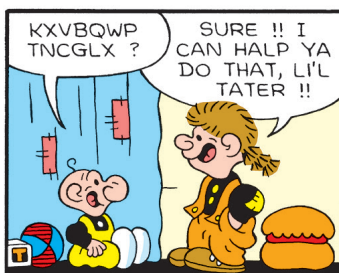
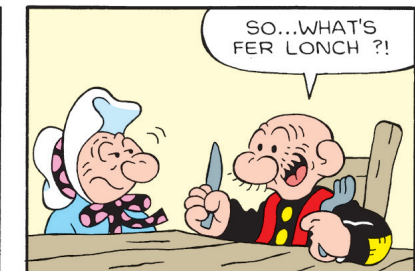
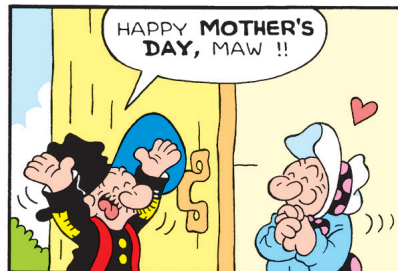
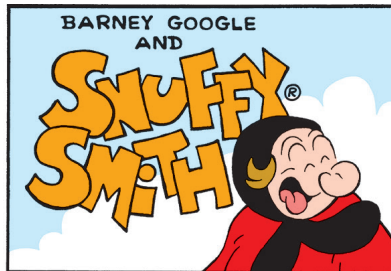
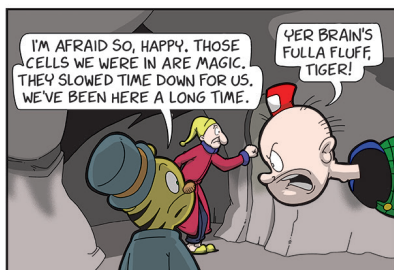
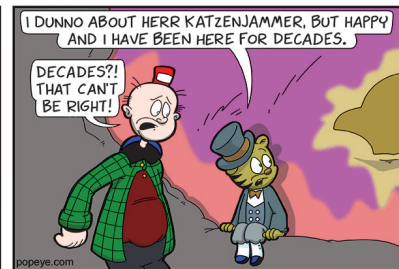
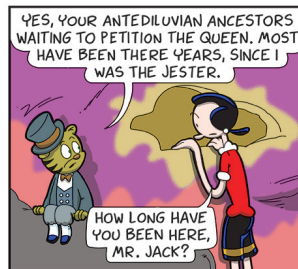
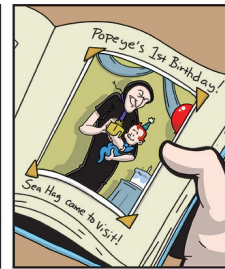
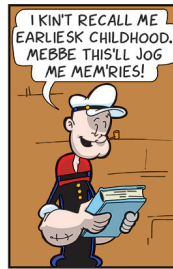
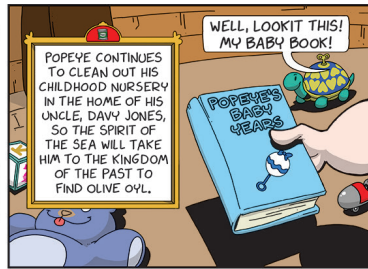
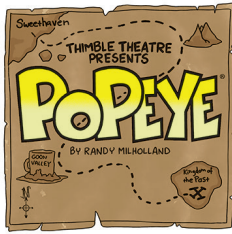
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



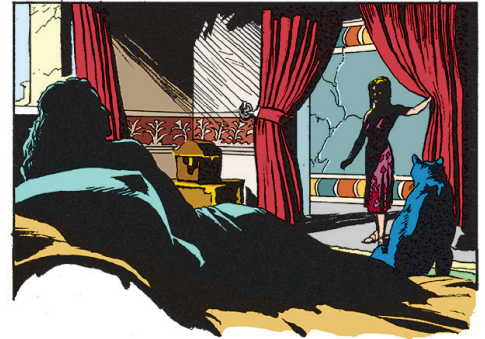
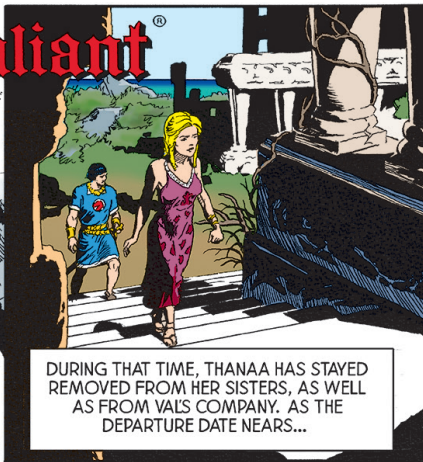
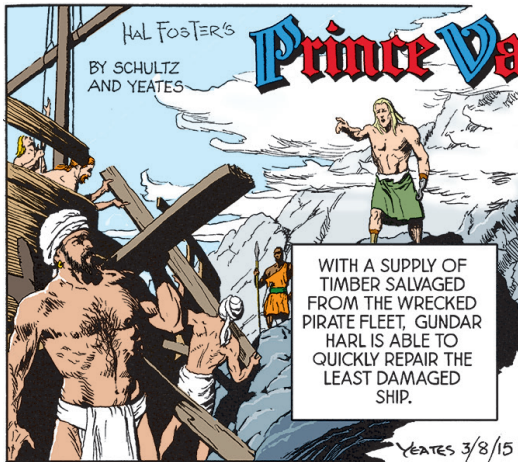
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 21 of 83

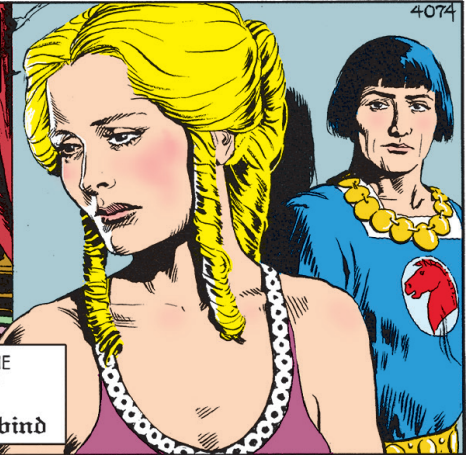
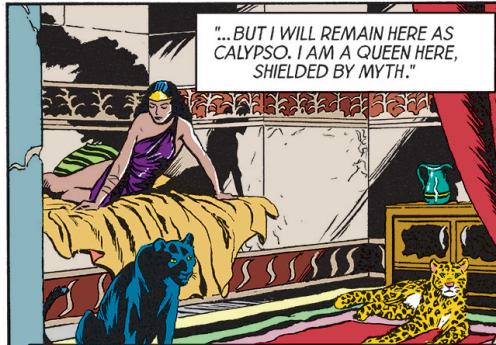


Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 22 of 83



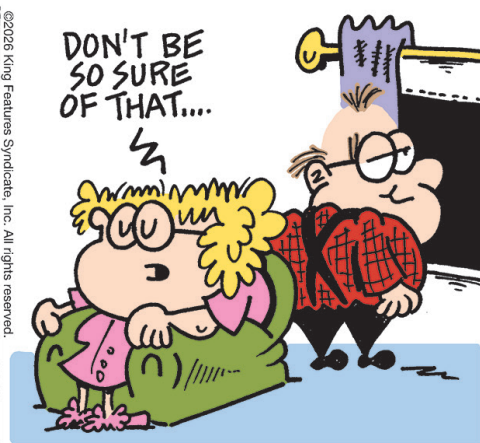
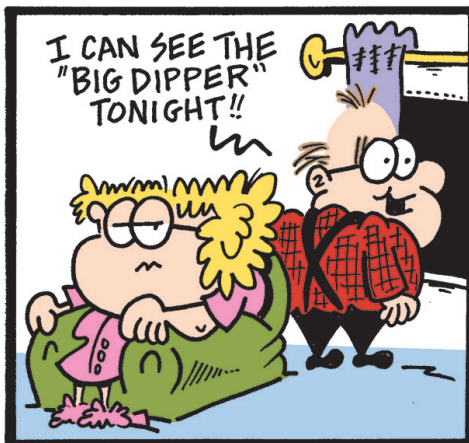
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NEXT: Ties that bind

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 23 of 83

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Two minutes of exercise

For years we've heard that getting 150 minutes of exercise per week was necessary for health, and many of us didn't even try. Working out (or walking, dancing, doing anything moderately aerobic) was beyond us and we felt like failures.

Then there was the added confusion caused by differing opinions about just how long and how many daily steps ... not to mention the mammoth study that concluded the best health benefits were to be had with 700 minutes of exercise per week. (That's over 11 hours!)

But, how do you feel about two minutes? It turns out that two little minutes of exercise can actually have an impact and help us live longer.

There was the study that showed reduced risk of cancer and heart disease was possible by just moving for two minutes three times a day, and the study that showed two minutes of walking after meals can prevent spikes in blood sugar, and so on.

There are many easy, small ways to be more active:

Take the stairs when they're available. If you're feeling especially strong, go up and down a few times.

Do some strength training exercises (push-ups, squats, knee lifts) that target the major muscle groups, 30 seconds each of several types.

Aim for short, intense movement: Walk briskly to the mailbox (this will also release endorphins). Cycle quickly on your exercise bike for one minute. Jog or walk in place during a TV commercial.

And what happens when we shoot for two minutes of exercise instead of a half hour that we know we can't do? We often decide that yes, we can do a few minutes more, and suddenly that two minutes turns into five or 10.

To quote a professor of cardiology medicine, "It turns out that anything is better than nothing."

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 24 of 83

1. Which member of the U.S. Men's National Soccer Team suffered a skull fracture after being elbowed in the head by Brazil defender LEOnardo in the 1994 FIFA World Cup?

2. Which NASCAR driver made history in 2026 by becoming the first driver to win the first three points races of the Cup Series season?

3. Pro Football Hall of Fame wide receiver Don Hutson has his No. 14 jersey retired by what NFL franchise?

4. What piece of catcher's equipment, primarily used by the Baltimore Orioles, was banned by Major League Baseball beginning with the 1965 season?

5. What forced the CFL's 50th Grey Cup championship game in Toronto in 1962 to be suspended in the fourth quarter and completed the following day?

6. What was the name of the 1969 Broadway musical that starred Muhammad Ali (billed as Cassius Clay) as a militant political activist?

7. In 1979, track athlete Steve Scott became the founder of what sport when he played 18 holes of golf in under 30 minutes?



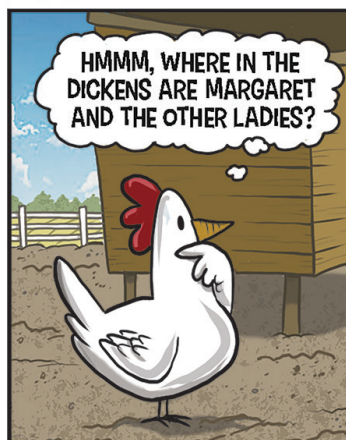
by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. Tab Ramos.
2. Tyler Reddick.
3. The Green Bay Packers.
4. The oversized catcher's mitt.
5. Dense fog.
6. "Buck White."
7. Speedgolf.

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Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps



Can pet cancer be prevented? What owners should know

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My 11-year-old dog "Jethro" is being treated for cancer. At first, I didn't pay attention to the little lumps that appeared on his skin, and he seemed healthy otherwise. But at his annual checkup, the vet said the lumps were suspicious. After some tests, Jethro got radiation and then surgery to remove the biggest lumps, and they're monitoring the others. I just wonder if there was any way I could have prevented this from happening. Could I have noticed something sooner? -- Gerald V., Wytheville, Virginia

DEAR GERALD: Don't beat yourself up too much. You did all the right things for your dog: regular checkups, prompt treatment and continuing support. I'm very glad

to hear that Jethro is on the mend and being monitored.

A cancer diagnosis in a pet is always stressful for the owners. Skin lumps (soft tissue sarcomas) are just one type of cancer. Certain cancers are more prevalent in specific breeds, and no pet is completely free of risk.

Owners often beat themselves up after a diagnosis, wondering if their pet's food, level of exercise or weight contributed to them developing cancer. According to the Animal CANCER Foundation, (acfoundation.org) there are no proven diets that prevent cancer in pets.

However, studies have shown that nutritionally supportive diets can help pets already diagnosed with cancer. Many veterinarians recommend a diet higher in protein and healthy fats and lower in carbohydrates to support overall pet health. Avoid raw diets, as bacteria in raw foods can weaken an already compromised immune system.

Continue to keep a close eye on Jethro and work with the veterinarian to spot fast-growing lumps on his skin. Focus on giving him a great quality of life with exercise, a healthy diet and lots of love.

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

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 26 of 83

Strange BUT TRUE

* More than 80% of the white sand around tropical coral reefs is actually the byproduct of parrotfish excretion.

* Regball, or rugball, is a tough Russian sport combining basketball, wrestling and rugby. As in basketball, players try to shoot a ball through a hoop, but there are no free throws and no need for dribbling. In addition, wrestling and takedowns are part of the action; in fact, there's relatively little that's not allowed.

* In the 15th and 16th centuries, jewelers purposely left cavities in some rings so wearers could fill them with aromatic substances to block offensive odors.

* The Dog Bark Park in Cottonwood, Idaho, which until 2024 offered guests the usual hotel amenities in a giant, dog-shaped building painted to look like a beagle dubbed "Sweet Willy," is now a popular roadside attraction, free museum and gift shop.

* Though Luxembourg has one of the smallest populations in Europe (approximately 500,000), the country's divorce rate is the world's highest at 87%.

* A 2015 paper in the Journal of Behavioral Addictions documented the study of a woman named Helen who was addicted to fortune tellers.

* One billion hours of video are watched on YouTube every day.

* The corpse lily blooms so infrequently that when that event finally occurs, it often makes local and even global headlines.

* Netflix is responsible for 15% of the world's internet traffic.

* Catalan mechanic Enric Marco was a prominent public face of Spanish Holocaust survivors, until his story was discovered to be pure invention at the height of his fame in 2005.

* In four of America's five largest cities, it's cheaper to rely on Uber than own a car.

Thought for the Day: "A computer once beat me at chess, but it was no match for me at kick boxing."

-- Emo Philips

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Anaxyrus americanus like dense vegetation, so they can stay under cover as they hunt for food.

They also need access to water for their early development. With these needs met, American toads can live in many places. They are commonly found in gardens and agricultural fields, and prefer dark spaces beneath

The American toad

porches, decks, flat stones, logs, lumber, clay pots and similar areas. When cold weather comes, toads dig backwards into their lairs and hibernate.

— Brenda Weaver

Source: animaldiversity.org





by Freddy Groves

Abusing the loan program

It sounds like there was a lot of money to be made from Covid, at least according to investigation reports from the VA's Office of Inspector General. Unfortunately for certain thieves, however, the OIG was all over them when the scams were revealed.

The head thief in one case was a part-time pastor who was nailed on four counts of wire fraud for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) scams. He devised a scheme to apply for loans that were supposed to be used for payroll and business expenses during the Covid downturns. Not only that, but he approached and then coached church members (one of them a VA employee) on how to apply for the "free money" funds, including pretending they had actual businesses to run.

He then taught them how to apply for loan forgiveness (which was a bonus of the program if funds were actually used to pay employees) so they wouldn't have to pay the money back. All they had to do, it seems, was to follow his instructions. It helped that he worked for a Small Business Administration-approved lender ... and split the money with him.

Part of their downfall came from inflating income figures from a real tax return -- which did not indicate that there was any kind of business income at all, not realizing that it would be a simple matter for one government agency to speak to another agency to verify facts. Another mistake was leaving a paper trail of emails wherein he instructed one of his church members on the steps to take to apply for the loans.

When sentenced, the pastor could get 20 years for each count of wire fraud. One coconspirator (who did not own a business) could get 60 years -- 20 for each of three counts. The other (who also did not own a business but had a great paper trail of how-to instruction emails for applying for the fraudulent loans) is cooperating and likely won't see any jail time.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 28 of 83

Wishing Well®

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

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. MOVIES: What is the name of the blue diamond necklace in "Titanic"?
2. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president once said, "Speak softly and carry a big stick"?
3. GEOGRAPHY: What is New Zealand's national bird?
4. MATH: How many sides does a tridecagon have?
5. BIBLE: What is the first book in the Bible called?
6. SPACE: How long does it take the International Space Station to orbit the Earth?
7. MYTHOLOGY: Who is the Greek god of the sun?
8. ANATOMY: Where are the carpus and metacarpus located in the human body?
9. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the largest hydroelectric power plant in the world?
10. LITERATURE: Who wrote the dystopian novel titled "The Testaments"?

Answers

1. "Heart of the Ocean."
2. Theodore Roosevelt.
3. The kiwi.
4. 13.
5. Genesis.
6. 90-93 minutes.
7. Helios.
8. The hand.
9. Three Gorges Dam, China.
10. Margaret Atwood.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 29 of 83

South Dakota Governor



Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

A Safer Parole System

South Dakota is a safe place, and, thanks to the work of our law enforcement, we have decreased crime in double-digit percentages in several categories. But we never settle – and we are not satisfied. Just like life on the ranch, there is always work to be done.

It took everyone working together to achieve the largest single investment in public safety: building a new men's prison. Because of that success, we are now able to expand opportunities for rehabilitative programming. Soon, we will be past the overcrowding of our current gothic prison. It is time to move on to the next public safety challenge: designing a safer parole system.

Parole reform has always been a topic of conversation, even more so since the prison plan took shape. My team has been working with experts and stakeholders to peel back the layers of the issue and target them with solutions, one at a time. I recently announced some serious reforms at the Department of Corrections (DOC) to tackle these issues.

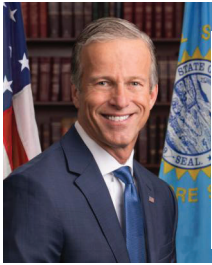
Parolees committing new crimes is a problem. Most folks think parolees would never commit any crimes so long as they are supervised by their parole agent – if only it were so simple. Parolees were in prison because they committed a crime, and despite our best efforts, some of them will fall into their old ways when they get out. Agents can't be with parolees 24/7, so no parole system will prevent all crime, but there are ways to improve. I have formed a new team of specialized parole agents. This will include more check-ins, especially evenings and weekends, for the most intensive parolees. If they aren't following the laws, they will go back to prison.

When an inmate is released on parole, the inmate promises to follow nine standard conditions. When a violation occurs, parole agents do their best to balance accountability with the opportunity for rehabilitation. The stories I have heard about parolees receiving too many second chances are frustrating and wrong, so we have changed this process. I have directed the DOC to take a tougher stance on DUIs, drug use, simple assault, and weapons violations that are a danger to others.

In just the first week since changing this policy, DOC nearly doubled the average number of revocations. These policies and others will continue to be reviewed by DOC as they plan the "Smarter Supervision Initiative," which they announced last month.

I'm committed to working with law enforcement, judges, and other elected officials on additional changes. Parole is one component of the criminal justice system. When the blame for a "broken" parole system is placed on one agency, remember: the Legislature makes the law, the executive implements it, and the judiciary applies it. If inmates display good behavior in prison, state law requires DOC to release them at their initial parole eligibility date. There is no discretion to hold them past that date, or DOC would be breaking the law. As legislators participate in the Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force and consider how to enhance rehabilitation, this may be an area to consider legislative changes.

Make no mistake, we are not done yet. This will take time. And just like work on the ranch, the work will never truly be done. I am thankful to all our law enforcement leaders for working together to keep South Dakota safe. If you have concerns and ideas, I would love to hear them. I am committed to working on legislation to further reform our parole laws.



JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Small Business, Big Impact

During the first week of May, we celebrate Small Business Week. This time of year, the impact that small businesses have in our communities is especially evident. We might notice the Little League team has the name of its local business sponsor on the back of its jerseys. High schoolers might be applying for summer jobs at a restaurant on Main Street. And a little outside of town, we can see planting season is underway on family farms across South Dakota.

Small businesses aren't just a big part of our economy, they're also pillars of our communities. Nearly half of private sector jobs in America are at small businesses, and most of our nation's job growth comes from smaller enterprises. And one of my top priorities is strengthening our small businesses, farms, and ranches so they can continue to be engines of growth and opportunity in our country.

That's exactly what Republicans did last year with the Working Families Tax Cuts. In addition to permanent tax relief for hardworking South Dakotans, this bill included permanent, pro-growth tax policy to help South Dakota small businesses, farms, and ranches. It made permanent the lower small business tax rates that Republicans enacted in 2017. It also made permanent full expensing for new equipment, which allows small businesses to deduct the full cost of a new piece of equipment the year they start using it, which makes it a lot easier for a farmer to buy a new tractor or a factory to get a new machine online.

This bill also made permanent the 199A small business deduction, which enables South Dakota small businesses to reduce their tax burden and free up money to invest in their operations and their employees. In fact, one agricultural cooperative in our state estimates the impact of this deduction at over \$100 million since it was first enacted in 2017, and another South Dakota business credits it with allowing them to build a large addition and hire additional employees.

Here in South Dakota, a lot of our small businesses are also family businesses, and the Working Families Tax Cuts helps ensure more of these enterprises stay in the family for generations to come. I'm proud to have worked to increase the exemption threshold for the death tax in this bill, which protects a lot more family businesses, farms, and ranches from a possibly devastating tax bill when they pass the business on to the next generation, not to mention the costly estate planning expenses that many families incur because of this unfair tax.

As much as this bill helps their businesses, when I talk to small business owners in South Dakota, they are often most excited about what the Working Families Tax Cuts does for their employees and customers. This bill puts more money in their customers' pockets, and policies like no tax on tips and no tax on overtime deliver significant tax savings for their employees.

Like a lot of South Dakotans, I got my start working at a small business when I was in high school, taking shifts at the Star Family Restaurant in Murdo. I know there's nothing small about the impact these businesses have in their communities, and I'm proud to be working to strengthen our small businesses so they can continue to be engines for the American Dream.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 31 of 83



April 20-26, 2026

Welcome back to another Weekly Round[s] Up, where we're in the thick of appropriations season! I attended four hearings focused on President Trump's budget and had the opportunity to question several key officials, including Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert Kennedy, Secretary of Agriculture

Brooke Rollins, Secretary of Energy Chris Wright and Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum. I also questioned Federal Reserve Chairman nominee Kevin Warsh in his confirmation hearing in front of the Senate Banking Committee. We expect to vote on his nomination in our committee this coming week, and I look forward to supporting him.

This past Wednesday evening, the Senate passed a budget resolution which sets the stage for a reconciliation bill to fund Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Border Patrol (BP) until the end of the Trump presidency. As you may recall, Democrats have continued to block full funding for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Instead, we passed legislation in the Senate to fund DHS with the exception of ICE and BP through the end of this year. This legislation is still awaiting passage by the House. By using the budget reconciliation process, we are able to pass funding for ICE and BP with a simple majority vote. While it's not our preference to fund these agencies this way, we've been forced to use this mechanism by Senate Democrats who refuse to fund homeland security through the regular appropriations process. After 17 votes from about 9:00 p.m. until 3:00 a.m. on Wednesday night, the reconciliation bill passed the Senate 50-48. It now heads to the House of Representatives, where leaders are hoping to move it forward this week. If all goes according to plan, we expect to get these important departments funded by the end of May.

Additionally, I visited Dakota State University (DSU) in Madison this past Friday with some of the Pentagon's top leaders in cybersecurity. I also was in Sioux Falls for an event at the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Department of South Dakota headquarters. More on these stops below in my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I visited with: Tura Synhorst, Executive Vice President of Corporate Affairs of Coca-Cola Bottling Company High Country in Rapid City; South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations; South Dakotans with the American Physical Therapy Association; South Dakota Beer Distributors; South Dakota Snowmobile Association; South Dakotans with the National Association of Trailer Manufacturers; leadership from Daktronics in Brookings; South Dakotans with NeighborWorks Dakota Coalition; South Dakota Cattlemen's Association; Independent Insurance Agents of South Dakota; South Dakota Head Start Association; Goodwill of the Great Plains; and Cory Clasemann, President of Southeast Technical College.

As I mentioned earlier, this past Friday, I visited Madison Cyber Lab at DSU in Madison to participate in meetings with Katie Sutton, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Cyber Policy, Brandon Pugh, Principal Cyber Advisor to the Secretary of the Army and DSU President Jose-Marie Griffiths. I was grateful these top Pentagon officials accepted my invitation to make the trip to South Dakota to see all of the great work the students and faculty at DSU are doing to advance our national security. We all know that South Dakota is a great place to live, work and raise a family. Our goal in helping to develop these federal-state partnerships is to provide another opportunity for kids to stay in South Dakota after graduation.

I also visited the DAV Department of South Dakota headquarters to speak during the 86th Annual DAV

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 32 of 83

Department Convention and 74th Annual State Auxiliary Convention. During the event, one of my staff members Bob DeJong was recognized for his Excellence in Constituent Services helping veterans navigate the VA. I'm grateful to have Bob on my team and for all of the work he does for veterans.

Met with South Dakotans from: Aberdeen, Arlington, Brookings, De Smet, Fort Pierre, Gettysburg, Huron, Kyle, Mellette, Mitchell, Mobridge, Pierre, Rapid City, Salem, Sioux Falls, Sisseton, Tulare, Watertown, Wessington Springs and Whitewood

Hearings: This past week, I attended eight hearings, including two classified Select Committee on Intelligence briefings, a Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) hearing and a SASC Strategic Forces Subcommittee hearing. During a Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs nomination hearing, I questioned Kevin Warsh on his nomination to serve as a Member and Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

As I mentioned, appropriations subcommittee hearings for FY27 also kicked off this week:

Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing where I questioned Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. on lab-grown "meat" products.

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing where we heard from Secretary Doug Burgum on tribal radio and other priorities.

Energy and Water Development Subcommittee hearing with Secretary of Energy Chris Wright, where I invited him to visit the Sanford Underground Research Facility near Lead.

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee hearing with Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins where I asked about concerns surrounding lab-grown meat posing as real meat.

Votes taken: 20. At the beginning of the week, I voted to confirm Andrew B. Davis, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Texas. I also voted no at the Democrats' attempt to take our military out of the ongoing conflict in Iran, again.

As I mentioned earlier, I cast 17 votes on amendments to the budget resolution to fund ICE and CBP. The budget resolution passed the Senate 50-48, with only Republican support. This resolution is now with the House of Representatives for further consideration. You can read more in detail about the votes I've taken here.

Steps taken: 57,682 steps or 26.4 miles.

My Staff in South Dakota Visited: Aberdeen, Brookings, Chamberlain, De Smet, Fort Pierre, Flandreau, Kennebec, Madison, Pierre, Rosebud, St. Francis and Sturgis.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 33 of 83



Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

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1-352-216-3025

The Fine Art of Compromise

After being married for over 50 years, I have concluded the secret of a happy marriage is a happy wife. What it takes to make her happy is worth all the effort.

Today, most marriages don't work. Divorce is on the rise in our country.

A great philosopher, Groucho Marx, once said, "Marriage is the chief cause of divorce."

There are all kinds of ideas along this line, and many of them are fighting for the crazy award.

This year The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and her adoring husband will celebrate their 55th anniversary. After so many years of being married, I think I have come to some conclusions about how to have a happy marriage. After all, everybody wants to be happy.

I've looked into many aspects along these lines, but the one that really pays off is the idea of compromise. If you can't compromise, you won't get along. It's just that simple.

Over the years, I have struggled with this idea of compromise, trying to figure out what it was and how two people can compromise. I'm not sure I have figured it all out; after all, I'm the husband.

But in a marriage, compromise is not how they compromise in politics. Have you ever watched politicians compromise on some subject? If that is a compromise, then I have to start all over again. Thankfully, marriage has nothing to do with political compromise.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I have had our differences for years. After all, we are human and have our own ideas about certain things.

The biggest difference we've had throughout the years is the "Broccoli and Apple Fritter". These two things never intermingle. Fortunately, we have compromised: She gets the broccoli, and I get the Apple Fritter. There is just no way to mix the two.

There are other areas of our lives where we've had to compromise. Over the years, I have learned how to use compromise effectively to get things accomplished.

If The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage believes she's getting her way, then everybody's happy. I need to set it up so she believes she won, and, when she wins, so do I.

It took me a while to realize that if I win, then nobody's happy. What good is it to win and not really enjoy the winnings? But when she wins, she's happy, and when she's happy, so am I.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 34 of 83

After understanding how this works, my life began to take on a great deal of sunshine and happiness. When I was younger, I was only happy when I got things my way. But as I got older, I realized that a level of compromise can help me get things my way.

For example, when we want to go out to a restaurant to enjoy a meal together, we have to decide which restaurant. For me, it doesn't really matter which restaurant we go to as long as they have food and coffee. But for The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, there is a different restaurant for a different kind of celebration.

This is where I learned what compromise is all about and how to use it to my advantage.

I asked her, "My Dear, which restaurant do you think we ought to go to tonight for our celebration?"

Looking at me, she said, "I would like to go to the Southern Pig and Cattle restaurant."

From my perspective, it didn't matter. I've been there several times, and I know they have food and coffee. That's all that really matters to me.

So now I need to work on my compromise scheme. "Well," I said to her rather seriously, "I was thinking we ought to go to IHOP. I really love their food."

That got her thinking a little bit, and she replied, "I'd like IHOP to, but for our dinner tonight, I would like to go to Southern Pig and Cattle restaurant."

I tried to stretch it out as long as possible and replied, "Well, I'm not into that restaurant as much as you are. I really would like to go to IHOP tonight." I paused a little bit and then said, "Well, if that is what you prefer tonight I'm willing to let you choose the restaurant."

I never see her smile as much as she does when something like that happens. What she doesn't know is that I won the compromise and not her. That gives me a little bit of leverage down the road when we are facing another compromise situation.

I always begin by saying, "Do you remember when you wanted to go to the Southern Pig and Cattle restaurant and I wanted to go to IHOP? And I finally gave into your request."

She looked at me, and there was a great deal of reluctance in her voice, saying, "Yeah, I remember. So, I'll let you have it this time."

There is nothing quite like winning both times and not getting caught.

Thinking about this, one of my favorite Bible verses came to mind. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

I'm sure there are many applications to this Bible verse. It applies to all parts of our lives. Being "agreed" is one of the most important aspects of humanity. When applied to marriage, it is a wonderful expectation. Walking together is the blessing of our Christian experience.

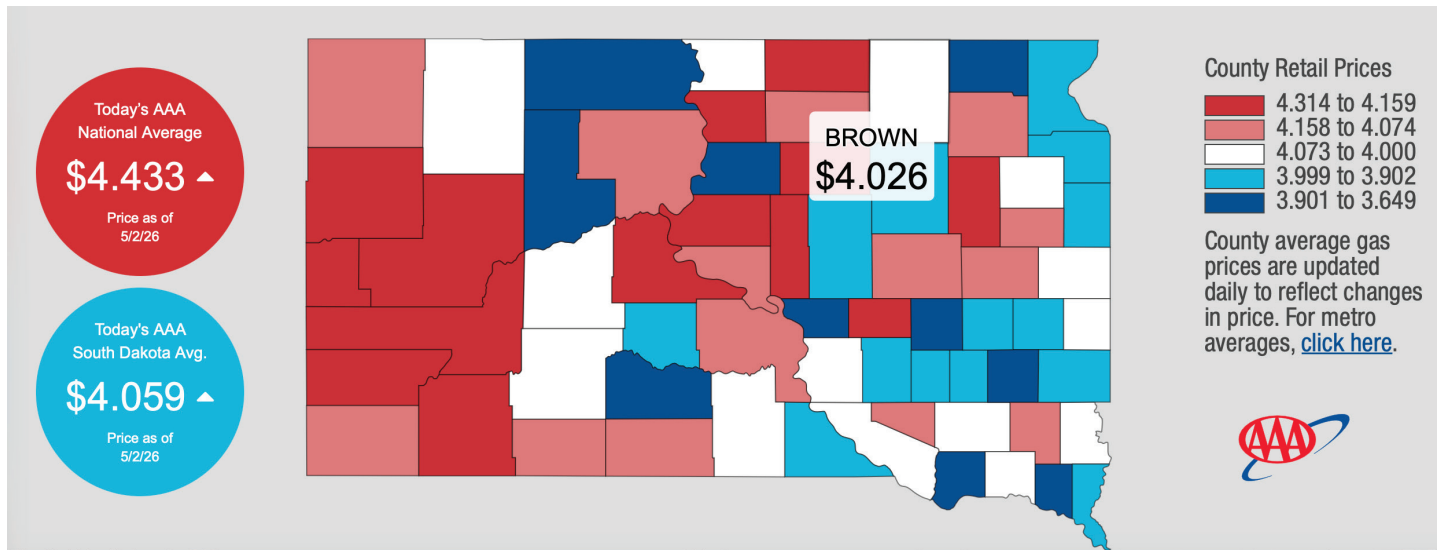
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 35 of 83

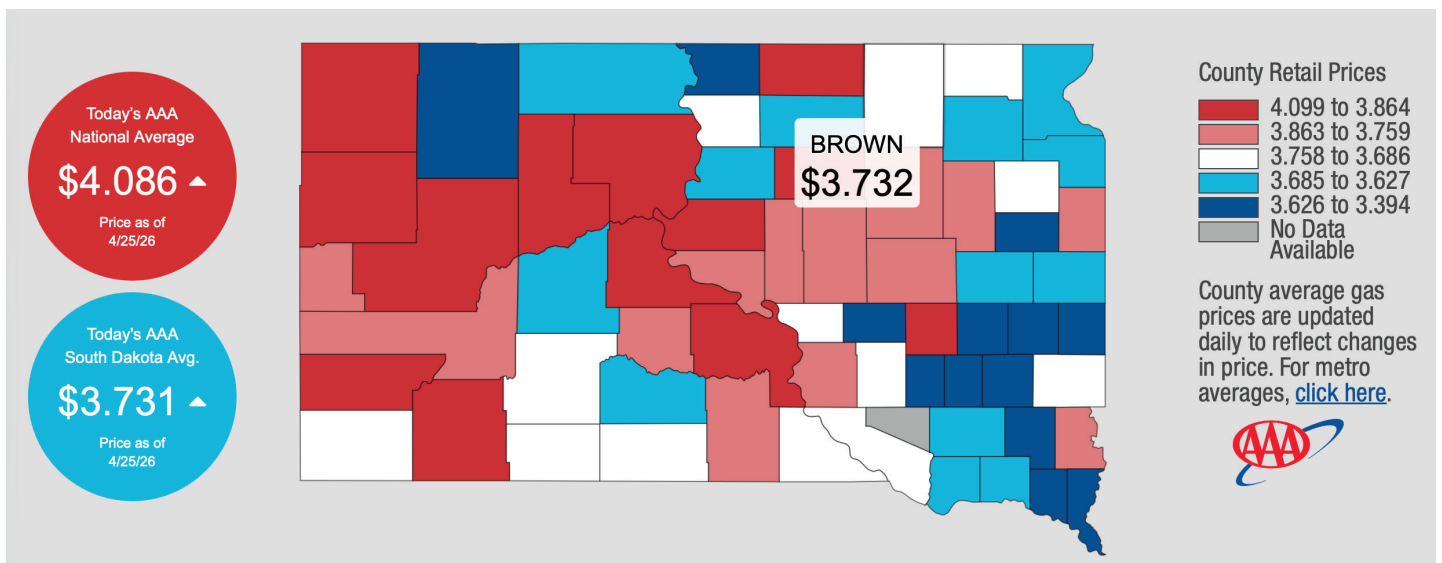
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$4.059	\$4.225	\$4.692	\$5.099
Yesterday Avg.	\$4.019	\$4.165	\$4.651	\$4.969
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.731	\$3.893	\$4.400	\$4.797
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.524	\$3.646	\$4.158	\$4.606
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.064	\$3.245	\$3.678	\$3.252

This Week



Last Week



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 36 of 83

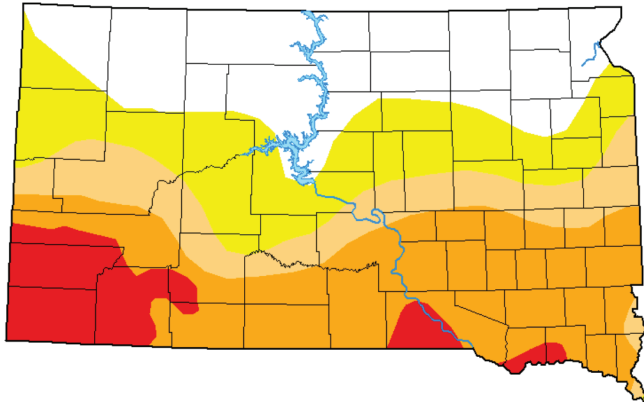
Drought Classification

None
D0 (Abnormally Dry)
D1 (Moderate Drought)

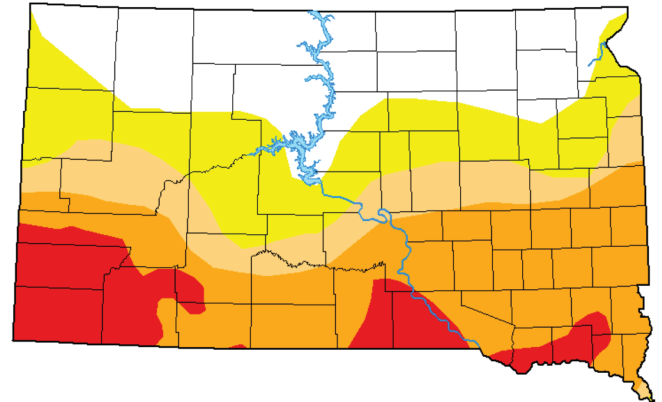
D2 (Severe Drought)
D3 (Extreme Drought)

D4 (Exceptional Drought)
No Data

Drought Monitor



April 28



April 21

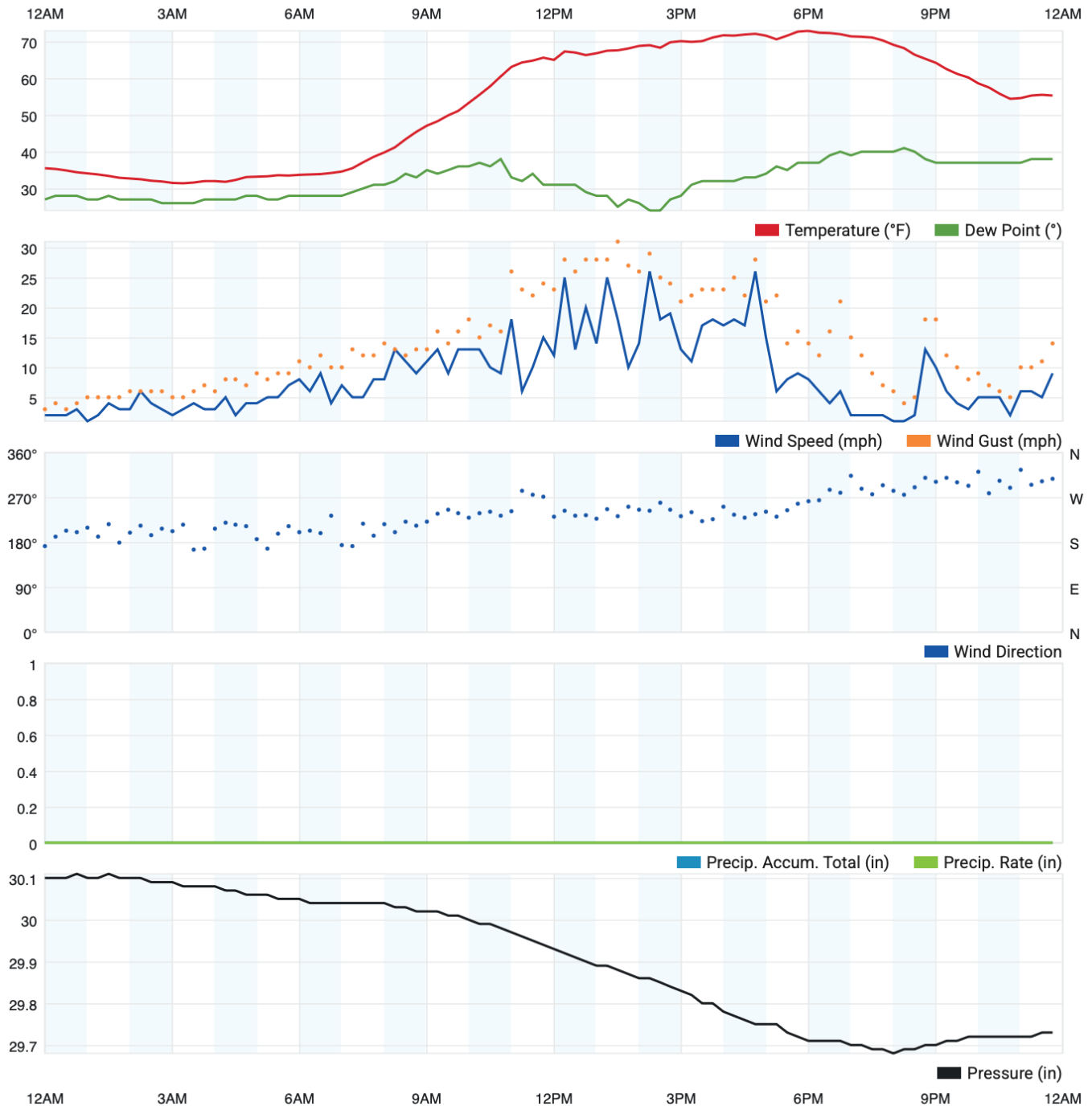
Precipitation delivered drought relief to some areas, including parts of southern South Dakota and eastern sections of Nebraska and Kansas. Still, by April 26, topsoil moisture—as reported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture—was rated at least 40% very short to short in all the region’s states, except North Dakota, and led by Colorado (95%). Winter wheat continued to struggle due to drought and recent freezes, with 65% of Nebraska’s crop rated in very poor to poor condition on April 26, along with 54% in Colorado and 41% in Kansas. Drought continued to generally worsen in eastern Colorado and western sections of Kansas and Nebraska.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 37 of 83

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

May 2, 2026



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 38 of 83

Today



High: 72 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 47 °F

Increasing
Clouds

Monday



High: 58 °F

Mostly Cloudy
and Breezy

Monday Night



Low: 32 °F

Partly Cloudy

Tuesday



High: 50 °F

Mostly Sunny

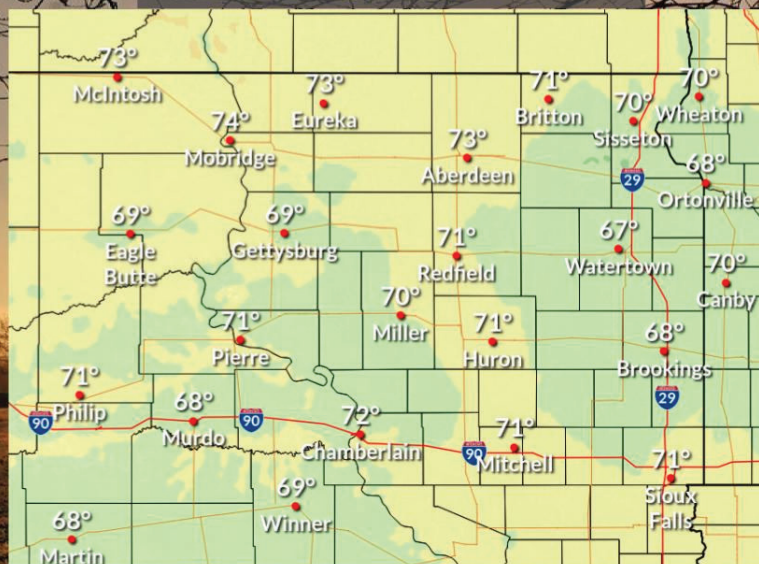


Above Normal Temps Today To Near/Below Normal Early/Mid Week

May 3, 2026
3:25 AM CDT

Isolated Coverage Of Precip Early In The Week

Today's High Temperatures



Forecast

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday



- 15-20% chance for showers Monday
- Gusty NW winds of 30-40+ mph Monday
- Moderate-High Grassland Fire Danger Today/Monday
- Cooler, Below Normal Temps Tue/Wed
- A Few Sprinkles Possible Wednesday



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

High pressure will maintain control of the weather trends today. Dry conditions are expected as north-west winds become gusty at times this afternoon. Temperatures will remain above normal one more day before cooler air returns by Tuesday and Wednesday. A cold front will sweep through early Monday and could lead to a couple of showers. Strong northwest winds will develop on Monday which will help to drive in cooler temperatures by Tuesday into Wednesday.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 39 of 83

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 73 °F at 5:55 PM

Low Temp: 31 °F at 3:18 AM

Wind: 32 mph at 1:24 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 90 in 1952

Record Low: 13 in 2005

Average High: 65

Average Low: 39

Average Precip in May.: .33

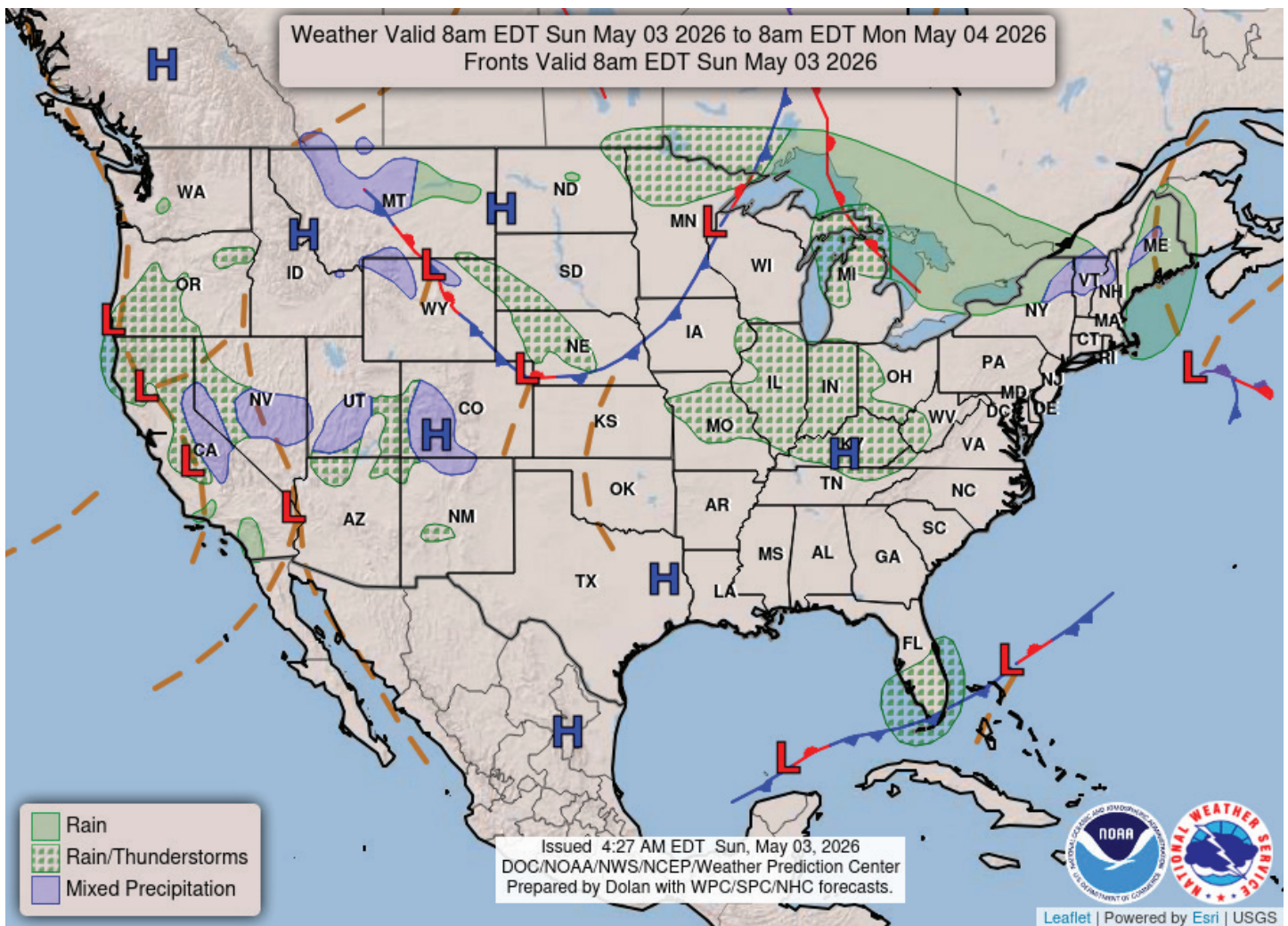
Precip to date in May.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 4.30

Precip Year to Date: 3.12

Sunset Tonight: 8:40 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:16 am



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 40 of 83

Today in Weather History

May 3rd, 1895: A tornado moved northeast from 3 miles northwest of Redfield through Ashton. It was estimated to be on the ground for about 5 miles. Several homes were unroofed, and barns were destroyed. Tornadoes were also spotted in Minnehaha and Bon Homme Counties in South Dakota.

May 3rd, 1907: The low temperature at Watertown fell to 16 degrees, making this the coldest May temperature ever recorded in Watertown.

May 3rd, 1960: Late-season snowfall of 3 to 7 inches covered Perkins, Corson, and Campbell Counties. Lemmon reported 7 inches, and 6 miles SE of McIntosh had 6.5 inches. Main roads were very slippery, and some rural roads were impassable for about one day.

May 3rd, 1999: Two to four inches of rain fell across southeastern Dewey County, causing flash flooding south of La Plant, mainly on Willow Creek. As a result of the flash flooding, several roads were underwater. Highway 212, south of La Plant, was flooded for a few hours along with Highway 8, 15 miles south of La Plant. The flash flooding resulted in some road and bridge damage.

May 3rd, 2002: With low humidity, dry vegetation, and increasing South winds, embers from a day-old controlled burn initiated a large grassland fire in the early afternoon west of Claremont. South winds of 30 to 40 mph gusting to 50 mph caused the fire to spread quickly. The fire extended to 4 miles wide and spread 4 miles north before it was contained late in the evening. Many trees and a mobile home, an abandoned house, and an old barn burned. Seven miles of road had to be closed due to poor visibility from smoke. Eleven fire departments with nearly 150 firefighters extinguished the fire. The fire was completely put out during the afternoon hours of the 4th. This fire was one of the largest grassland fires in Brown County history.

1978 — Persistent thunderstorms caused widespread flooding in southeastern Louisiana and extreme southeastern Mississippi. Rainfall totals of ten to thirteen and a half inches were reported around New Orleans causing the worst flooding in thirty years. The water depth reached three to four feet in several hundred homes, and total property damage was estimated at one hundred million dollars. (David Ludlum)

1987 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. Softball size hail was reported at Center Point TX, and a tornado caused three million dollars damage near Satanta KS. Heavy snow blanketed the foothills of eastern Colorado, with 18 inches reported at Divide. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Thunderstorms brought much needed rains to the drought- stricken central U.S. Evening thunderstorms produced large hail in North Carolina. Baseball size hail was reported west of Mooresville NC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Southern and Central Plains Region. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 72 mph at Graford TX, and baseball size hail was reported at Graham TX and Lake Kemp TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — A stubborn late season storm slowly crawled across southern Colorado the first three days of the month producing heavy snow from the San Juan Mountains to the southeast plains. The storm produced up to three feet of snow in the higher elevations of southern Colorado, and 18 to 22 inches of snow along the eastern slopes of the Central Mountains of New Mexico. Pueblo CO reported a record 10.6 inches of snow for the month as a result of the storm, and a record total for the winter season of 69.6 inches. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1999 — On May 3, 1999, an unusual confluence of atmospheric conditions in Oklahoma spawned dozens of tornadoes that swept across the state in an hours-long parade of destruction. Thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed, and 19 counties became disaster areas. The worst toll was in human lives: 44 dead, including three children. Hundreds more were injured.(<http://newsok.com/may3>)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 41 of 83



Daily Devotion

Fellowship With Jesus

To spend time with our Lord, we may have to leave some things undone.

Luke 10:38-42: 38 Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.

39 She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word.

40 But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."

41 But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things;

42 but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

When Jesus arrived at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, Mary turned her attention to the Lord. Meanwhile, Martha was distracted by the preparations (Luke 10:40) and became agitated that her sister wasn't helping. We may be thinking Martha was right—if there was still work to be done, her sister should not have been sitting down. But Jesus lovingly reoriented Martha's priorities and pointed her toward the truth (v. 42).

There are some important lessons to be learned from this story. To have fellowship with Jesus, we may have to leave some things undone. The Lord knew how hard the women had been working, but their greatest need was to spend time with Him. If we don't continually choose to make that a priority in our life, we may miss something essential He wants to teach us. Jesus invites Martha (and us) to put aside temporary concerns and choose what matters most.

Establishing a habit of communing with the Lord is essential to spiritual health, and we can learn to maintain an awareness of Him even while doing our daily work. Connecting with Jesus regularly will sharpen our focus on God's priorities and help us distinguish what is good from what is truly His best. May we choose the better way, as Mary did.

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, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 42 of 83

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.02.26

6 17 31 42 50 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 36 Mins 19 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.01.26

16 21 27 41 61 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$195,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.02.26

4 18 35 43 50 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$24,390,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.02.26

6 11 21 22 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$79,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.02.26

5 13 35 53 54 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.02.26

25 37 42 52 65 14

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

A Serbian bird-watching group uses crowdfunding to buy and preserve a woodland habitat

By JOVANA GEC Associated Press

PLANDISTE, Serbia (AP) — The merry chirping of birds echoed through towering trees in a small woodland in northeastern Serbia. Down on the ground, animal tracks could be seen imprinted in the moist grass and moss.

The 5-acre (2-hectare) piece of land, dubbed the Nightingale's Forest, is a rare patch of thick greenery in the flat, farming region of Serbia. The Balkan country's Bird Protection and Study Society bought the land last year through crowdfunding to preserve the forest and set an example in environmental protection.

"This woodland was privately owned, and we saw it was put up for sale," society representative Uros Stojiljkovic told The Associated Press, adding that the trees probably would have been cut down if someone else had bought the land.

"The value of timber was higher than its (land) price," Stojiljkovic said. "We protected it this way."

The success of the crowdfunding initiative is seen as a sign of growing interest in nature protection among people in Serbia as the country faces environmental problems from air and river pollution and waste management to profit-driven construction threatening green areas, particularly in big cities.

Authorities have pledged to boost environmental care as part of the country's European Union membership bid, but protection groups have warned little has been done in reality.

The Nightingale's Forest is home to a variety of bird and animal species who thrive on its moist habitat, Stojiljkovic explained. The new owners now plan to list the plants and animals there while preserving the woodland as it is.

The purchase price of 8,000 euros (\$9,500) was collected in less than a month and hundreds of people have continued to donate funds that will be used for field work or additional land purchases, said Natasa Jancic, who was involved in the campaign.

"Individually, we can't do much, but as an active and stable community, we can achieve a lot," Jancic said.

Launched some 30 years ago as a small, expert-only group, the Bird Protection and Study Society has grown into a community of nature lovers, which is more proof of a mounting interest in the environment, Jancic said.

"We have many families who are members, many nature lovers who may not be that active in the field but they want to contribute somehow," Jancic added.

Just 5 acres under protection won't change much on a larger scale, but it's a good first step, Stojiljkovic said.

"Every village or town should have a Nightingale's Forest of its own for a cumulative effect," he said. "It is important to start somewhere."

Trump keeps us up in the air with his hints of what's coming in a new batch of UFO files

By COLLIN BINKLEY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump says the Pentagon is preparing to release some "very interesting" UFO files uncovered by his administration, generating a mix of buzz and skepticism as he hints at new revelations around questions of alien life.

Trump started stoking interest in the extraterrestrial in February, directing federal agencies to release their records related to extraterrestrial life and UFOs. Since then, he has built suspense with tantalizing updates, teasing an imminent release of documents never before shared by the U.S. government.

"We're going to be releasing a lot of things that we haven't," Trump said Wednesday at a White House

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 45 of 83

event celebrating NASA astronauts. "I think some of it's going to be very interesting to people."

Trump has relished in portraying himself as the president who spills the secrets. In the first week returning to office, he ordered the release of records related to the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. The disclosures revealed little beyond what was already known.

In the buildup to that release, Trump said "the American people deserve transparency and truth." Now, as he turns to the sky, the president has struck a similar tone, suggesting answers to decades-old questions may be on the way. His February directive on social media called for transparency around "alien and extraterrestrial life, unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP), and unidentified flying objects (UFOs)."

"The first releases will begin very, very soon," he told supporters in April at a Turning Point USA event in Phoenix. "So you can go out and see if that phenomena is correct. You'll figure it out."

An expert cautions against raising expectations

Even before Trump's directive, the Pentagon was years into a process to declassify and release government documents related to UFOs, now often referred to as unexplained anomalous phenomena, or UAP.

Citing concerns over national security, Congress created an office in 2022 to investigate UAP and declassify as much material as possible. The office's 2024 debut report revealed hundreds of new UAP incidents but found no evidence that the U.S. government had ever confirmed a sighting of alien technology. A second report covering more recent sightings is expected to come soon.

That agency, the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office, is now working with the White House to release "never-before-seen UAP information," according to a Pentagon statement.

The office's previous director, however, said Trump's promises were bluster, a "shiny object" to distract Americans from the war with Iran. Sean Kirkpatrick, a physicist and former career intelligence officer who led the office until 2023, said he has seen the government's records and believes there are no bombshell revelations to be found.

"Readers should not get their hopes up that there's going to be some document with photos, interviewing the aliens when they came down," he said. "Because that just doesn't exist."

Videos purporting to show alien technology tend to have mundane explanations, he said. Modern infrared cameras used by the U.S. military often capture jet engines and other hot objects in a long thermal bloom, which, Kirkpatrick said, explains viral videos of speedy, pill-shaped objects.

Pentagon not forthcoming on UAP reports, GOP-led panel says

On Capitol Hill, those types of videos have caught the attention of a small group of Trump-aligned Republicans who insist the Pentagon is holding back secrets.

The Task Force on the Declassification of Federal Secrets has been conducting its own investigation into reports of mysterious aircraft near U.S. military installations, which the panel says pose a threat to national security and the armed forces.

Last fall, the task force heard testimony from current and former service members who described UAP encounters. In one case, a senior Navy officer said he was off the coast of California in 2023 when he saw a glowing "Tic Tac" shaped object emerge from the ocean and link up with three similar objects. They sped away in an instant, he said.

Trump's interest in the subject has energized congressional Republicans, including Florida Rep. Anna Paulina Luna, an Air Force veteran who co-chairs the task force. Luna has criticized what she calls "less than adequate" transparency from the Pentagon.

In a March letter to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, Luna demanded dozens of UAP videos identified by whistleblowers and labeled with names such as "Spherical UAP in clouds." Her deadline for Hegseth came and went, and no videos were produced.

Trump's entry to the UFO fray drew applause from Luna, who last year told podcaster Joe Rogan that she has seen evidence of "interdimensional beings." The Pentagon "can't hide from our docs request anymore!" Luna said on social media after Trump's directive.

Vance professes to be 'obsessed' with UFO files

Trump appears skeptical about the existence of extraterrestrial life. Addressing the Turning Point USA

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 46 of 83

crowd in Phoenix, he said, "I figured this was a good crowd because I know you people, you're really into that. I don't know if I am."

Why he made the revelation at that event, held at a megachurch, is unclear. A day earlier, Trump had spoken in Las Vegas, not far from Area 51, a top-secret Cold War test site that has fueled UFO conspiracy theories.

Vice President JD Vance has described himself as "obsessed" with UFO files. In March, he said he has been trying to find time to investigate Area 51 since he took office.

"I've still got three more years as vice president," Vance told conservative podcaster Benny Johnson. "I will get to the bottom of the UFO files." Invoking his Christian faith, Vance said he believes sightings reported to be aliens are actually the work of spiritual demons.

Even before Trump tackled the topic, alien buzz was already in the air.

It's back in Hollywood with an upcoming Steven Spielberg movie, "Disclosure Day." Former President Barack Obama made a splash in February when he declared on a podcast that aliens are real. He later clarified that he had seen no evidence but that "the odds are good there's life out there."

Trump is hardly the first president drawn to UFO mysteries. President Bill Clinton has said he once ordered a review of the Roswell Incident — something had crashed in 1947 at a New Mexico ranch and officials later said the debris was the remnants of a high-altitude weather balloon — around its 50th anniversary in 1997. Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan claimed to have seen UFOs before their time in the White House.

The U.S. government has been investigating UFO reports since the 1940s, in part to determine if they represent advanced technology from competing nations or "evidence of off-world technology," according to the Defense Department's 2024 report.

In online communities devoted to UFOs, some see Trump's promise as a step in the right direction; others believe it will come to nothing. For people who follow the topic closely, promises of big revelations have never lived up to the hype, said Greg Eghigian, a Pennsylvania State University professor who wrote a book on the history of UFO sightings.

"There is almost no satisfaction that is possible for many of the really die-hard folks," he said. "So in a sense, I think disappointment can almost be guaranteed to be expected no matter what comes out of this."

How a weaker dollar is quietly making life more expensive

By MATT SEDENSKY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A hidden force is quietly pushing up costs for everything from your summer vacation to your weekly grocery bills: a weaker U.S. dollar.

The dollar has fallen about 10% against other major currencies since President Donald Trump returned to the White House, a pullback potentially playing a role in Americans' concerns about affordability.

"It's kind of a hidden tax," says economist Thomas Savidge of the conservative-leaning American Institute for Economic Research. "What your dollar is going to be able to buy is going to shrink."

A look at where the dollar stands and what it means for you:

Historic dollar decline

The U.S. Dollar Index, which measures the greenback against other major currencies, logged its steepest six-month drop in more than 50 years in the first half of 2025. Though the decline hasn't deepened, the dollar index is still about 10% lower than the start of Trump's term.

A strong dollar makes imports cheaper and can help keep inflation in check. A weak one can increase prices on foreign goods but boost American exports.

U.S. presidents have long voiced support for a strong dollar even as they pursued policies that, at times, pushed the currency lower. Trump has suggested a strong dollar puts the U.S. at a disadvantage and that a weak dollar helps American industry. And as with most things with Trump, he's been blunter in his messaging.

"You make a hell of a lot more money with a weaker dollar," he said last year, one of a number of public

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 47 of 83

statements showing his preference for seeing the dollar decline.

Big multinationals benefit

Trump isn't alone in seeing benefits of a weaker buck.

In recent months, corporate earnings calls have been peppered with talk of how a weaker dollar has helped companies from Philip Morris to Coca-Cola, with executives pulling out C-suite phrases like "favorable currency impact" to note how the dip brought tailwinds outside the U.S. that added to bottom lines.

"In many cases, we've got a weaker dollar, which is not unhelpful," Elie Maalouf, the CEO of InterContinental Hotels, said on a February call as the company announced higher profits and revenues.

For big multinational companies that do business overseas, a weaker dollar can spur sales for products that suddenly become cheaper. But the vast majority of U.S. businesses are not operating beyond the border. For those catering to domestic customers, it's a different story, particularly if they are reliant on importing goods.

Travis Madeira, a fourth-generation lobsterman who founded the lobster-shipping business LobsterBoys with his brother, makes about 80% of his sales to Americans, unlike some competitors who primarily export.

"The exporters are gonna have the advantage when it comes to the dollar weakening," says Madeira, who is paying more to import bait and buy Canadian lobsters. "These guys are gonna have a little bit of a lever on us."

Smaller companies hurt

Even among companies that do have a presence outside the U.S., the dollar's fall can have an impact. While many big companies hedge currency to try and insulate themselves or push more sales overseas, smaller businesses are often more susceptible to the turbulence.

David Navazio, CEO of Pennsylvania-based Gentell, which makes bandages and other medical supplies, operates plants in Brazil, Paraguay, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. In each location, the dollar has fallen, increasing Gentell's costs.

Gentell has had to raise some prices to reflect the currency fluctuation, which stacks on top of other challenges, including tariffs and war-related spikes to fuel costs.

"A year ago, none of these were concerns," he says. "And it always hurts the consumer."

Other currencies rise

For the American consumer, the reality of a declining dollar is most obvious during foreign travel or when making a purchase directly from an international seller.

Cross the border into Mexico, the top foreign destination of Americans, and your dollar is about 16% weaker versus the peso compared with early 2025. Declines of about 10% to 17% have been recorded elsewhere, including against the Swiss franc, South African rand, Danish krone, Swedish krona and the Euro.

As for goods imported to the U.S., there is an impact, but it's harder to gauge. Many economists estimate that, in advanced countries like the U.S., only about 5% to 10% of a currency dip is passed on to consumers.

But they are an added stress when prices are already affected by other factors.

Take coffee, one of the grocery items that has seen the biggest price hike in the past year. Brazil is the biggest source of coffee for the U.S. and the dollar has fallen around 13% versus its real. Currency fluctuations can hit harder in developing economies and, while only a fraction of the change may feed into coffee's ballooning price, every bit can pile up. Coffee prices are up nearly 19% in the U.S. in the past year, according to government data.

Expect more movement

Currency values are constantly moving and, while the dollar's recent fall is notable, it has reached lower levels at points in the presidencies of each of Trump's predecessors, back through the creation of the Dollar Index in 1973, when Richard Nixon was at the helm.

Kenneth Rogoff, a Harvard University economist and former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund, says while "a lot of policies that Trump is doing are something of a cancer for the dollar," he believes that it was destined to fall no matter who was in charge.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 48 of 83

"The dollar had been on a 15-year bull run," he said. "I would argue the dollar is still wildly overvalued, and over the next maybe five or six years, it might fall 15%."

What does that mean for American consumers? Rogoff says commodity prices are likely to rise, particularly with the impact of the Iran war on fuel prices.

"They're just going to go up," he says, "no matter what the dollar's at."

76ers eyeing much more as they move on to second round after Game 7 win over Celtics

By KYLE HIGHTOWER AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — The Philadelphia 76ers didn't know how many games, if any, they could count on from Joel Embiid in their first-round playoff series against the Boston Celtics.

It turned out to be just enough.

After debuting in Game 4 following appendectomy surgery last month, the former MVP played some of the best playoff basketball of his career over the final four games of the series to lead the 76ers to a 109-100 Game 7 victory over a Celtics team that had looked like a potential NBA title contender.

The No. 7 seed's reward is an Eastern Conference semifinals matchup with the No. 3 seed New York Knicks that begins Monday.

In leading Philadelphia to just its second road Game 7 victory ever and first since 1982 against Boston, Embiid finished with 34 points, 12 rebounds and six assists to become the first player in NBA history to score 100 points in a playoff series despite missing the first three games.

"Sometimes I've been in those positions where I've come up short," Embiid said. "I've always said it, you can't win alone. You need a team. ... The way we're playing right now, we're so in sync, offensively, defensively."

He and Tyrese Maxey (30 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists) also became the third duo in league history to each have 25 points, 10 rebounds and five assists in a Game 7.

Maxey said this series demonstrated how he now knows when to be assertive and when to defer to Embiid.

"It's a growth, because I had to learn when to be aggressive, when not to be aggressive," Maxey said. "It got a little bit difficult in the middle of this season. I was basically being first option every single night. Then he comes back and I've got to find a way to do both. And he does a really good job of just keeping me engaged and keeping me confident and keep me like, 'Hey I need you to do what you do.'"

The 76ers will need everything Embiid gave and more to compete with a Knicks team that plays a much more physical game than Boston.

Nurse said he believes Embiid is up for the challenge. He was limping at times in Game 7 but then got extra treatment while on the bench just to be able to contribute late.

He had reason to be fatigued because even though nine 76ers players touched the floor in Game 7, only six logged double-digit minutes. Embiid played 39 minutes, tying his series high.

"He was doing everything he could to stay in the game," Nurse said. "Obviously, we ran a lot of things through him and we did just enough."

Nurse said being able to come out the hostile environment of TD Garden with a victory will serve his team well going forward.

"It's really good for us to go through that and respond to it," Nurse said. "It's going to be like that in the playoffs. You're going to be in tight games and it's going to be super loud. ... And you just have to play through it."

Nurse said he believes the difference was making Boston play halfcourt sets over the final three minutes after the Celtics were able to play in transition for about 12 straight minutes in the third and fourth quarters.

That's a lesson he hopes can be applied to New York.

"In the last two (games) and portions of this one, we just guarded really well," Nurse said.

While there was satisfaction in beating Boston, Embiid said they have loftier goals.

"One series. Got more to go," he said.

Ukraine hits key Russian oil-loading port and 2 'shadow fleet' tankers

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine on Sunday launched a wave of strikes against Russia's oil export infrastructure, hitting a key loading port on the Baltic Sea and two tankers that Ukraine alleges were illegally used to transport Russian crude.

A nighttime drone strike sparked a blaze at Russia's largest oil exporting port on the Baltic Sea, according to Russian regional Gov. Alexander Drozdenko.

The port of Primorsk, operated by Russia's state oil firm Transneft, is capable of handling hundreds of thousands of barrels per day. The port, which was targeted multiple times in March, lies over 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from Ukraine, between the Russian-Finnish border and Russia's second-largest city of St. Petersburg.

Local Gov. Drozdenko said that the drone strike did not cause an oil spill, but gave no immediate further comment regarding casualties or damage.

Ukraine did not immediately comment on the attack on Primorsk.

But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday that Ukrainian forces had hit two Russian tankers near the entrance of the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk.

"These tankers were actively used to transport oil. Now they won't," he said. He said the operation was led by the chief of Ukraine's general staff, Andrii Hnatov.

Zelenskyy alleged that the tankers belonged to Russia's so-called shadow oil fleet, used to evade Western sanctions and price caps on Russian energy exports. Moscow did not immediately acknowledge his claims.

Kyiv has recently stepped up its attacks on Russia's oil export infrastructure. Ukrainian officials argue that oil revenue directly funds Moscow's full-scale invasion of the country, now in its fifth year.

Drone strikes kill civilians near Odesa and Moscow

Elsewhere, two people were killed and three others wounded as Russian drones struck Ukraine's southern Odesa region overnight into Sunday, Ukraine's Emergency Service reported. It said the attack damaged three residential buildings.

The drones also hit port infrastructure, causing a fire that was later extinguished by emergency teams, the emergency service reported.

Nighttime Russian strikes also wounded six people in the Dnipropetrovsk region in central Ukraine, the agency said. A passenger bus transporting 40 children was damaged, but no one inside was injured, it added.

In Russia, a Ukrainian drone strike west of Moscow killed a 77-year-old man, local Gov. Andrei Vorobyov reported on the Telegram messenger app. He said the fatal attack occurred near the town of Volokolamsk, some 120 kilometers (75 miles) from central Moscow.

Vorobyov added that six drones were shot down in the Moscow region, which surrounds but does not include the Russian capital. At least five more drones were downed on the approach to Moscow itself, according to mayor Sergei Sobyenin.

Russia's Defense Ministry reported on Sunday that a total of 334 Ukrainian UAVs were downed overnight over Russia and occupied Crimea.

Also overnight into Sunday, Russia attacked Ukraine with 269 drones and ballistic missiles, according to the Ukrainian Air Force. Ukrainian forces shot down and repelled 249 drones, while hits from ballistic missiles and 19 drones were recorded in 15 locations, the air force said in a Facebook update.

2 dead and 16 injured in attempted channel crossing from France to UK

PARIS (AP) — A small boat carrying migrants trying to cross the English Channel ran aground on a beach in northern France, leaving two dead and 16 people injured, including three with serious burns, authorities said Sunday.

The vessel, carrying 82 people, set out overnight from Hardelot beach, a few kilometers (miles) south of the port of Boulogne-sur-Mer, but the engine failed and it began to drift, Christophe Marx, secretary-general of the Pas-de-Calais prefecture, told reporters.

A French maritime gendarmerie vessel rescued 17 people and brought them to Boulogne-sur-Mer, while the makeshift boat ran aground with 65 others still on board.

Two women were found dead, most likely from suffocation, Marx said. They are believed to have been “crushed or asphyxiated, as unfortunately often happens on boats ... where too many people are packed in,” he said.

The women were believed to be in their 20s and to have come from Sudan, he said, adding that an investigation was underway. Three of the injured were in very serious condition with burns caused by fuel at the bottom of the boat, he added.

It was the third deadly incident involving migrants trying make the perilous crossing to the U.K. in just over a month.

Last month, two men and two women died as they were trying to board an inflatable boat off the coast of northern France. British authorities arrested a man from Sudan on suspicion of endangering life in that case. The week before, two other people died in similar circumstances off the coast north of Calais.

The U.K. and French governments signed last month a new multimillion-euro deal aimed at reducing the number of migrants crossing the English Channel, with increased police patrols and enhanced surveillance in northern France.

So far this year, more than 6,000 migrants have reached the U.K. after crossing the channel, down 36% from the same period last year, a drop that may partly reflect more unsettled weather.

Before Sunday's deaths, migrant aid group Utopia 56 said that at least 172 people have died at the French-U.K. border over the past three years, including 123 at sea.

Austrian police detain suspect in case of rat poison found in baby food jars on supermarket shelves

VIENNA (AP) — Police in eastern Austria say a 39-year-old suspect has been arrested after rat poison turned up in some HiPP baby food jars on supermarket shelves in central Europe.

HiPP, which recalled some of its baby food jars in Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic after the case came to light last month, said in a statement Saturday it was “greatly relieved” by the arrest, and would provide a further updates as verified details come in.

The Burgenland State Criminal Police Office, under the direction of prosecutors, said a probe was launched after poison turned up in a baby food jar purchased at a supermarket in the city of Eisenstadt on April 18.

It said the suspect was being questioned, and that no further details would be immediately provided. The Burgenland public prosecutor's office has announced an investigation into suspected “intentional endangerment of the public.”

The Austrian Press Agency reported that an expert report on the toxicity of the poison was pending. A total of five tampered baby food jars were seized before they could be consumed, APA reported.

Authorities said previously they believe the tampering occurred in 190-gram (6.7-ounce) jars of baby food made with carrots and potatoes for 5-month-olds that were sold from SPAR supermarkets in Austria.

HiPP responded by recalling all of its baby food jars sold at SPAR supermarkets — which include SPAR, EUROSPAR, INTERSPAR and Maximarkt stores — in Austria as a precaution. Vendors in Slovakia and the Czech Republic also removed all of the brand's baby jars from sale.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 51 of 83

The company said the recall was not due to any product or quality defect on its part, and said the jars left its facility in "perfect condition."

Police said a customer at the time of the discovery had reported that a jar appeared to have been tampered with, but no one had consumed the baby food.

Pfaffenhofen, Germany-based HiPP said it has been a "victim of extortion," adding that an unspecified "blackmailer" sent a message to a shared mailbox in the case, prompting it to immediately inform police.

Shakira thrills a crowd of 2 million with free concert on Brazil's Copacabana beach

By ELÉONORE HUGHES Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Colombian superstar Shakira gave a free concert on Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro on Saturday night, an event that the city's mayor said drew 2 million people to one of the world's most iconic waterfronts.

The performance followed similar shows by Madonna in 2024 and Lady Gaga last year, which also were attended by huge crowds that danced on the sprawling sands. For Shakira, it was part of her "Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran," or "Women No Longer Cry," world tour named after her 2024 album.

Shakira's set kicked off around 11 p.m., more than an hour after the scheduled slot, to her fans screaming with excitement and frantic applause as skywriting drones flew overhead, spelling out in the sky, "I love you Brazil" in Portuguese.

The megastar spoke fondly about the first time she came to Brazil, some three decades ago.

"I arrived here when I was 18 years old, dreaming about singing for you," Shakira told the crowd shortly after coming on stage. "And now look at this. Life is magical."

The much-loved pop star sang fan favorites such as "Hips Don't Lie," "La Tortura" and "La Bicicleta." She ended with "BZRP Music Sessions #53/66," which followed her separation from Spanish soccer player Gerard Piqué.

She also took the time to celebrate women's resilience during the show. "Us women, every time we fall we get up a little wiser," she said.

One of the first places where Shakira became successful

Rio Mayor Eduardo Cavaliere said on X that 2 million people attended the performance. "The She-Wolf made history in Rio," he posted, referring to Shakira's 2009 hit.

When Shakira first performed in Brazil in the 1990s, she established an amazing connection with the Brazilian public, according to Felipe Maia, an ethnomusicologist pursuing a doctoral degree in popular music and digital technologies at Paris Nanterre University.

That success in Brazil "has a lot to do with the fact that she comes from Colombia, a country whose culture has many similarities with Brazil," Maia said, adding that Saturday's performance "crowns the relationship she has had with Brazil for a very long time."

Erica Monteiro, a 38-year-old accountant, said she has listened to Shakira since childhood.

"For me she represents the strength of our Latino community," Monteiro said ahead of the concert. "We're treated as if we were inferior but in fact we have much more strength."

Heading home after Saturday's show, Hellem Souza da Silva said Shakira's performance, like Bad Bunny's concerts in Sao Paulo in February, helped consolidate Brazil's Latino identity.

These artists "are making it clear that Brazil, Puerto Rico, Colombia and other countries are part of Latin America. And that America is not the United States," she said.

Crowds started piling onto the beach Saturday morning to nab a good spot for the show. Street vendors sold sweet corn and other Brazilian snacks, bottled water and caipirinhas, the popular Brazilian cocktail, but also toilet paper, deodorant and even bags of sand for concertgoers to stand on to get a better view of the stage set up opposite Copacabana Palace, a historic luxury hotel.

Street vendor Simone Paula da Cunha arrived on the beach on Friday evening, hoping to sell all the beer and water bottles she had bought ahead of the show and make about \$100 in all.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 52 of 83

Despite being tired, da Cunha was excited at the prospect of seeing Shakira live. "I remember her from when she still had black hair," she said. "I'm a huge fan of hers."

An effort to boost the city's post-Carnival economy

The free concerts are part of City Hall's attempt to boost economic activity after Carnival and New Year's Eve festivities and before the monthlong Saint John's Day celebrations in June.

"For us, parties are serious business. Because parties generate jobs, income, development, and identity for the city," Cavaliere, the mayor, said on Wednesday as he presented the city's operational plan for the event. "Our investment in this show will give us a financial return 40 times greater," he said.

Shakira's performance could generate around 777 million reais (around \$155 million), according to a study by City Hall and Riotur, the municipality's tourism company, thanks to the influx of tourists and cash spent in restaurants, hotels and shops.

More tourists headed to Rio in the month of May in the years with shows — 2024 and 2025 — compared to 2023, according to City Hall data. In 2024, the growth was 34.2% on May 1, just ahead of the concerts, compared to the previous year. In 2025, the increase was 90.5% compared to 2023.

Ahead of Shakira's performance, Airbnb said in an April 22 statement that it was seeing an increase in guests expected to travel from different parts of Brazil, Latin America and even European capitals such as Paris and London.

Wanderson Andrade, a 30-year-old architect, said he flew in especially for the show from the city of Goiana in central Brazil on Saturday and planned to fly back the following day.

"I tried to get tickets to see her in Brazil last year but I didn't succeed," said Andrade, whose first tattoo is a wolf in honor of Shakira. "Today is a dream come true."

Paramilitary forces drone strike kills 5 near Sudan capital, rights group says

CAIRO (AP) — Sudan's paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) killed at least five people in a drone attack that hit a civilian vehicle on the outskirts of Khartoum, a local Sudanese rights group said.

The attack on Saturday morning hit a vehicle that was traveling from the White Nile province to Omdurman, the sister city of the capital, Emergency Lawyers, a rights group tracking violence against civilians, said in a statement. It added that the attack reflects continued targeting of civilians on public roads and in populated areas.

Khartoum has largely been spared attacks by the RSF since it was recaptured by the Sudanese Armed Forces last year, but the capital has recently seen sporadic strikes.

The Rapid Support Forces, which have been at war with the Sudanese Army for over three years, did not immediately claim the attack.

Emergency Lawyers condemned the attack and held the RSF responsible. "What happened was a brazen violation of international humanitarian law," it said.

At least 59,000 people have been killed in the war that broke out in April 2023, according to Armed Conflict Location & Event Data, an independent conflict-monitoring body. Aid groups, however, say the true toll could be much higher, as access to areas of fighting across the vast country remains limited.

Benavidez KOs Ramirez in the 6th to win the WBA and WBO cruiserweight titles

By MARK ANDERSON AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — David Benavidez hasn't given up the dream of facing Canelo Alvarez — and now he might have leverage.

Benavidez put on a show with Alvarez sitting ringside on Saturday night, moving up 25 pounds in weight and dominating former sparring partner Gilberto "Zurdo" Ramirez.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 53 of 83

He twice sent Ramirez to the canvas, including knocking him out at 2:59 of the sixth round to win the WBA and WBO cruiserweight titles and become the first boxer to win championships at 168, 175 and 200 pounds.

Benavidez (32-0, 26 knockouts) not only remained undefeated, but showed why he was a -600 favorite over Ramirez (48-2, 30 KOs).

Ramirez was taken to a hospital to receive a head scan, according to Jane Murcia, communications director for Golden Boy Promotions.

"He's in good spirits and has a swollen eye," Murcia said. "There's no determination of a fracture at this point."

In the co-main event, WBA super middleweight championship fight, Jaime Munguía (46-2, 35 KOs) upset title holder Armando Reséndiz (16-3, 11 KOs) by winning a resounding unanimous decision. Reséndiz was a -200 favorite, but Munguía — the former WBO junior middleweight champ — was the aggressor from the start and won by scores of 117-111, 119-109 and 120-108.

"It feels great to have this championship belt with me, but this is just the beginning," Munguía said. "I'm excited for what comes next. We are ready for big challenges and great fights."

Benavidez has chased Canelo with hopes of setting up a showdown, but Alvarez never agreed to it and it has been looking unlikely to happen.

Maybe now it's different, and Benavidez didn't waste the opportunity to make the case yet again.

"I see Canelo in the building. Let me just ask the fans this. Do you guys want to see Canelo versus David Benavidez?" the man known as "The Mexican Monster" asked, drawing a roar from the crowd.

"Enough said. That means we can't leave that fight on the table. I have respect for Canelo. He's a great champion. I'm a great champion, too. Let's do it."

Benavidez said he would be willing go back down in weight to make it happen.

"I'm still champion at 175," Benavidez said. "I'm champion at 175 and 200. So if they want to come get it at 175, let's get it at 175."

Boxing fans, or least those who support Benavidez, haven't forgotten how Canelo has yet to take on the match. Alvarez, wearing a black Munguía T-shirt, was booed all three times he was shown on the large video board. Benavidez, who was born in Phoenix and lives in Miami, later was cheered while shown going through preflight preparations.

He then gave his fans plenty more to cheer about and they reciprocated by regularly chanting his nickname "Monstruo" in the Cinco de Mayo weekend showcase fight.

Benavidez, even when being backed down by Ramirez, delivered his signature rapid-fire combinations, usually pelting his opponent's head. A right hand to Ramirez's head in the fourth staggered him, and Benavidez went for the knockout but settled for the knockdown at the end of the round when Zurdo went down to his left knee.

Then two rounds later, Ramirez again went to a knee. This time, the fight was over.

"We came up together," Benavidez said. "We came up sparring together. I got him ready for his world championship fights. He got me ready for my world championship fights. I just want to say I love Zurdo Ramirez, but, you know, it is what it is in here. There's only one 'Monster.'"

And now the 29-year-old Benavidez can make a credible argument after dominating the 34-year-old Mexican that he one of the sport's best pound-for-pound boxers if not right at the top.

The statistics underscored how much Benavidez owned the fight.

According to Compubox, he landed 151 punches at a 46.2% to 89 for Ramirez, who reached his target on 19.8% of attempts. The power punches were 137-64 and the percentage 56.8-27.7.

"I knew I wasn't going to be able to overpower him because it was my first time coming up to 200 pounds," Benavidez said. "So I knew I had to use the gifts that God gave me: speed, power, movement, punch selection and IQ. That's exactly what I did."

Cubans struggle to survive on pocket-size government ration books as products dwindle

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — José Luis Amate López hasn't had a customer in almost two weeks, not counting the scrawny brown kitten that slinks around the bodega where he works in central Havana.

The shelves once laden with goods during his childhood sat nearly empty in late April, with barely anything to offer the 5,000 clients who depend on the state-run store for subsidized food.

Government ration books that once provided for a healthy diet and kept families fully fed for a month are now shrinking.

As the economy collapses and prices soar, a growing number of Cubans find themselves unable to afford alternatives to state-run stores and struggle to subsist on meager salaries in a socialist country of nearly 10 million where basic goods increasingly are sold in U.S. dollars.

"No Cuban can truly survive on the products from the ration book anymore," Amate López said.

'Living off air'

Revolutionary leader Fidel Castro established the ration book — "la libreta"— in the early 1960s. It offered heavily subsidized goods ranging from milk to fish and even cigarettes. Cubans knew their assigned bodega would be stocked with everything they needed by the first of the month.

The ration book shrank during the "Special Period," when Soviet aid plummeted in the 1990s and deprivation hit Cuba. During that time, Cubans lost an average of 5% to 25% of their body weight, according to one study published in a medical journal, with goods including bread, milk, eggs and chicken in scarce quantities.

Even so, many Cubans who lived through that period say the current situation is worse.

Amate López recalled that his assigned bodega was so full decades ago "you could barely walk."

It's now an empty room with dusty old posters detailing the prices and amounts of nearly two dozen goods no longer available, including yogurt, pasta and bars of soap. Two industrial freezers once packed with meat and chicken serve only to keep Amate López's water bottle cold. In April, the only items he had available to sell were rice, sugar and split chickpeas.

Cuban teens turning 15, a landmark birthday in Latin America, used to receive cake and several cases of beer. Now they only get 3 kilograms (6.6 pounds) of ground beef. The government recently opted to celebrate those turning 65 by awarding them sardines, a bar of soap and a package of toilet paper. But Amate López said he doesn't have those items.

Havana resident Ana Enamorado, 68, said she only was able to buy split chickpeas and 2 pounds (1 kilogram) of sugar at her assigned bodega in April.

She struggles to buy the remaining basic goods at small, privately owned stores known as "mipymes" with her salary and pension totaling some 8,000 Cuban pesos (\$16) a month.

A carton of 30 eggs costs roughly 3,000 pesos (\$125), 2 pounds of meat hash are nearly 900 pesos (\$37) and 1 pound of cornmeal is roughly 200 pesos (\$8).

"There's hardly anything in the ration book," she said. "We're practically living off air."

Her lunches and dinners are a rotation of rice, seasoned ground meat and cornmeal, or sometimes nothing at all. She recalled once upon a time being able to eat pork, lamb, fricassee, fried plantain slices and red beans and rice.

"Now we have to cut back, have one meal a day and live on memories," Enamorado said.

Subsidizing people in need instead of goods

Cuba imports up to 80% of the food it consumes, including goods offered at state stores that are increasingly unavailable given a lack of government resources.

"They just don't have the money to do it anymore," William LeoGrande, a professor at American University who has tracked Cuba for years, said about the government running out of funds. "Things come in an ad hoc way."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 55 of 83

LeoGrande said the government “bungled” the 2021 merging of two Cuban currencies and the resulting inflation has persisted because the state spends far more money than it takes in.

The government has to stop printing money and balance its budget without drastically cutting social services, a challenge since the bulk of state funds is spent on health, education, social welfare and food imports, he said.

“Any major cuts in state spending are going to have a profound social impact, which is why they haven’t done it,” LeoGrande said, adding that the government’s investment in tourism is “way higher” than the demand for tourism, which has plummeted.

In recent years, Cuba’s government has talked about subsidizing people in need instead of goods. That would free up money to import fuel, medicine and other items, LeoGrande said.

But many Cubans still depend on their ration books while the island’s crises deepen as severe power outages, petroleum shortages and a U.S. energy blockade persist.

Cuban comedians have spoofed the ration book, creating a character named “Pánfilo” who sings a rhyming chorus in a recent video posted online: “Place the notebook in a cemetery, because it’s ready to be buried.”

Struggling to buy basic goods

On a recent sunny afternoon, Lázaro Cuesta, 56, stood in line to receive a daily allowance of two small bread rolls for him and his wife.

“Before it was 80 grams and cost 5 (Cuban) cents. Now it’s 40 grams and costs 75 cents,” he said. “And the quality is worse.”

Cuesta works in food preparation and earns 6,000 Cuban pesos (\$250) a month. His wife, a retired nurse, receives 4,800 pesos in monthly pension. They also receive \$200 a month from her brother and daughter who live abroad.

The remittances allow them to eat avocados, eggs and red beans and rice, Cuesta said.

“If not for the remittances,” he said as he grabbed his neck with his right hand, “hang yourself.”

Roughly 60% of Cubans on the island receive remittances, but Rosa Rodríguez, 54, of Havana is not one of them.

“Everything is scarce here — everything — even that wretched bread they give us,” Rodríguez said. She earns 4,000 Cuban pesos (\$8) a month, which she said isn’t a bad salary for Cuba, but “no matter how hard you work, it’s simply not enough.”

Rodríguez said the only product she obtained at her assigned bodega in April was a donation of 4 pounds (1.8 kilograms) of rice, while she struggles to buy other basic goods.

“If you buy beans, then you can’t buy sugar,” she said, noting that most of her salary is spent on a large carton of eggs. “If I retire, I die.”

Joel Embiid leads 76ers to 109-100 Game 7 win over Celtics to complete comeback from 3-1 deficit

By KYLE HIGHTOWER AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Joel Embiid and the Philadelphia 76ers advanced to the Eastern Conference semifinals, beating the Jayson Tatum-less Boston Celtics 109-100 on Saturday night to complete the NBA’s 14th comeback from a 3-1 deficit.

Embiid finished with 34 points, 12 rebounds and six assists. Tyrese Maxey added 30 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists. VJ Edgecombe scored 23 points and Paul George had 13.

Philadelphia, the No. 7 seed, will visit No. 3 New York on Monday night in Game 1 of the second round.

The Sixers franchise, including its time as Syracuse Nationals, improved to 2-10 in road Game 7s. Its only other win came in 1982 at the Boston Garden. It’s a small measure of revenge after Boston blew out Philadelphia in Game 7 in the second round of the 2023 playoffs.

“We had a chance to beat them three years ago, didn’t do it. We came in and got it done,” Maxey said.

Embiid, who debuted in Game 4 after recovering from appendectomy surgery, is the first player in NBA history to score 100 points in a playoff series despite missing the first three games. He and Maxey also

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 56 of 83

became the third duo in league history to each have 25 points, 10 rebounds and five assists in a Game 7. Jaylen Brown led Boston with 33 points and nine rebounds. Derrick White had 26 points, including five 3-pointers. Neemias Queta finished with 17 points and 12 rebounds. The Celtics struggled from the 3-point line for the third straight game, finishing 13 of 49.

Brown said Embiid changed tenor of the series.

"He put a lot of pressure on us," Brown said. "We didn't really have the answers for him."

Boston coach Joe Mazzulla shrugged off any notion that his team was too dependent on 3s in the series.

"I love the looks that we got. I love the process that we had.. But I hate the result," Mazzulla said.

The second-seeded Celtics made their earliest exit from the playoffs since the 2020-21 season. Boston fell to 32-1 when leading a series 3-1.

The Celtics played without Tatum after he was ruled out about 90 minutes before tipoff with left knee stiffness. Brown said he didn't find out until about 45 minutes before the game.

"Nobody told me anything. But my mindset was the same," Brown said.

Philadelphia led for all but 31 seconds in the game, increasing a five-point halftime edge to 18 points in the third quarter. It was down to 13 at the start of the fourth and Boston opened the period on a 16-4 run to pull within 92-91.

The 76ers were leading 101-98 when Maxey got free for a layup with 1:15 remaining. Boston missed its next four shots and Philadelphia pushed it to 105-98 on a pair of free throws by Maxey.

Mazzulla said Tatum came to the team facility Saturday with knee discomfort, and the medical team decided for him not to play. Tatum briefly left Game 6 in the third quarter for unspecified treatment to his left calf. Mazzulla downplayed the significance, saying initially Tatum would play in Game 7.

With Tatum out, Mazzulla made radical changes to the starting lineup, opting to start Baylor Scheierman, Luka Garza and Ron Harper Jr. alongside Brown and White.

It was the first time that group started together this season and the Celtics quickly fell into a 9-0 hole. Philadelphia led by 15 in the first quarter and 32-19 when it ended.

Unlike in their losses in Games 5 and 6, the Celtics weren't as quick to fire up 3s, instead opting to attack the interior of Philadelphia's defense to get easier looks.

Boston started the second on an 18-4 run to take its first lead of the night, 37-36, on a 3-pointer by Payton Pritchard. The 76ers led 55-50 at halftime.

Iranian Nobel laureate Narges Mohammadi hospitalized after a health crisis in prison

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Iran's imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi has been urgently transferred from prison to a hospital in northwestern Iran after a "catastrophic deterioration" of her health, her foundation said Friday.

The Narges Mohammadi Foundation said the Nobel Prize laureate had two episodes of complete loss of consciousness and a severe cardiac crisis.

Earlier Friday, Mohammadi had fainted twice in prison in Zanjan in northwestern Iran, according to the foundation. She was believed to have suffered a heart attack in late March, according to her lawyers who visited her a few days after the incident. At the time, she appeared pale, underweight and needed a nurse to help her walk.

The hospital transfer comes "after 140 days of systematic medical neglect," since her arrest on Dec. 12, the foundation said.

"This transfer was done as an unavoidable necessity after prison doctors determined her condition could not be managed on-site, despite standing medical recommendations that she be treated by her specialized team in Tehran," the foundation said.

Help may be little too late, family says

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 57 of 83

Mohammadi's family had advocated for her transfer to adequate medical facilities for weeks.

The foundation, quoting her family, said her transfer Friday to a hospital in Zanjan was "a desperate, 'last-minute' action that may be too late to address her critical needs."

Mohammadi's brother Hamidreza Mohammadi, who lives in Oslo, Norway, said in an audio message shared with The Associated Press by the foundation that her family is "fighting for her life."

"My family in Iran is doing everything they can. But the prosecutors in Zanjan are blocking everything," he said.

On March 24, Narges Mohammadi's fellow inmates found her unconscious, her lawyers said she told them during the visit a few days later. Upon later examination at the prison's clinic, a doctor told her that she probably had had a heart attack. She had chest pain and breathing difficulties since.

Her legal representative in France, Chirinne Ardakani, said at the time that Mohammadi had been denied transfer to the hospital or to visit her cardiologist. A prison official was present throughout the brief visit by Mohammadi's lawyers.

Won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2023

Mohammadi, 53, a rights lawyer who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2023 while in prison, was arrested in December during a visit to the eastern Iranian city of Mashhad and sentenced to seven more years in prison.

Her family said in February that her health was worsening in prison, in part because of a beating she endured during her arrest in December. He said multiple men hit and kicked her in her side, head and neck. The Nobel committee condemned the "ongoing life-threatening mistreatment" of Mohammadi in a statement in February.

"In recent days, her blood pressure has experienced severe fluctuations, going very high and low, and today she suddenly fainted due to a sudden drop in blood pressure," her lawyer Mostafa Nili posted on X.

At first, the prison doctor injected Mohammadi with drugs but she refused to be transferred to a hospital, demanding to see her cardiologist. A few hours later, Mohammadi fainted again. This time a neurologist ordered her immediate transfer to a hospital, the lawyer added.

Mohammadi was urgently transferred to the hospital and admitted to the cardiac care unit, "but her blood pressure continues to fluctuate severely," Nili wrote. He said a medical official in Zanjan recommended a one-month suspension of her sentence for treatment, but the public prosecutor in Zanjan referred the matter to his counterpart in Tehran.

Prior to her arrest Dec. 12, Mohammadi had already been serving a sentence of 13 years and nine months on charges of collusion against state security and propaganda against Iran's government, but had been released on furlough since late 2024 over medical concerns.

Continued her activism on furlough

During that furlough, Mohammadi kept up her activism with public protests and international media appearances, including demonstrating in front of Tehran's notorious Evin Prison, where she had been held.

In February, a Revolutionary Court in Mashhad sentenced Mohammadi to an additional seven years. Such courts typically issue verdicts with little or no opportunity for defendants to contest their charges.

Mohammadi suffered multiple heart attacks while imprisoned before undergoing emergency surgery in 2022, her supporters say.

In 2023, Mohammadi became the fifth laureate to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize while in prison, further amplifying her voice in support of widespread protests that swept Iran after the death the year before of Mahsa Amini, who was arrested by the country's morality police for not properly wearing the mandatory headscarf.

Her selection enraged Iran's hard-line Shiite theocracy, which increased her prison time and later sent guards to rough her up along with other prisoners who were protesting inside Evin Prison.

Yet Mohammadi remained defiant, even issuing boycott calls for the 2024 election that President Masoud Pezeshkian won. She maintained that one day Iran's government would change due to popular pressure.

Golden Tempo takes the Kentucky Derby as Cherie DeVaux becomes the 1st woman to train its winner

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — After being asked all week about the possibility of becoming the first woman to train a Kentucky Derby winner, Cherie DeVaux was nearly speechless when Golden Tempo charged from the back of the pack Saturday to make history for her.

"I'm just glad I don't have to answer that question anymore," DeVaux said to a rousing round of applause.

DeVaux joined Jena Antonucci, with Arcangelo in the 2023 Belmont, as the only women to train the winner of a Triple Crown race. She was just the 18th woman to saddle a horse in the Derby in its 152-year history, and the gravity of the situation came into focus for her days earlier when she saw a young girl on the backstretch and realized the impact she is making.

"It really is an honor to be able to be that person for other women or other little girls to look up to," DeVaux said. "You can dream big, and you can pivot. You can come from one place and make yourself a part of history."

DeVaux credits growing up with seven brothers and two sisters for her toughness. After winning the Derby on her first try eight years after starting her own stable, she thanked her husband for inspiring her to give it a chance.

"I didn't believe," DeVaux said. "I started my career here 22 years ago as a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed exercise rider. And I would not believe that I would be sitting up here today. Never in my life did I think I would."

It came with a lot of hard work. DeVaux fielded questions this week about Golden Tempo's cracked heels, and she downplayed concerns. She put a lot of time into getting the colt into form, trying blinkers and other things to get the son of Curlin to focus.

Jockey Jose Ortiz even described Golden Tempo as lazy. But Ortiz showed what he and the horse could do Saturday, winning the Derby for the first time in his 11th try — and doing so in impressive fashion.

Ortiz navigated past 17 other horses around the final turn and made a hard charge down the stretch. With a crowd of more than 100,000 watching and roaring at Churchill Downs, Golden Tempo passed morning line favorite Renegade — ridden by brother Irad — just before the wire to win the 1 1/4-mile race in 2:02.27 at odds of 23-1.

Their parents were there to witness it.

"I get to ride it almost every year, but to get to win it, it's just special," said Ortiz, who also won the Kentucky Oaks on Friday aboard Always a Runner. "I just wish my grandpa was here, but I know he's looking from heaven. Just very happy that I get my goal, my life dream goal achieved."

Golden Tempo paid \$48.24 to win, \$19.14 to place and \$11.90 to show. Renegade paid \$7.14 to place and \$5.46 to show. Ocelli — who didn't get into the field until Thursday when Brad Cox's Fulleffort was ruled out — paid \$36.34 to show after going off at 70-1.

"He gave me a really good run and proud of his effort," Ocelli jockey Tyler Gaffalione said. "We were just not able to get the job done but hats off to the winner and runner-up. They ran huge races."

The 152nd Kentucky Derby went on with just 18 horses following a scary incident before the race. Great White was a late scratch by track veterinarians after flipping and throwing his jockey.

Great White's trainer, John Ennis, confirmed to The Associated Press that the big gray gelding and jockey Alex Achard were fine.

Great White became the fifth horse scratched this week and the second Saturday. Silent Tactic was ruled out Wednesday, Fulleffort on Thursday and Right to Party on Friday, with Great White, Ocelli and Robusta getting in. The Puma was out, less than 12 hours before post time, because of a swollen leg from a skin infection, but it was too late to replace him.

Following Golden Tempo's victory in the \$5 million Run for the Roses, the immediate question was whether he would run back in two weeks in the Preakness Stakes on May 16. After two of the previous four Derby winners did not participate in the Preakness, DeVaux said it would be determined in the coming days.

"We're going to let him decide that," DeVaux said. "We're going to have to allow him to tell us, because the horse is first. We're not here for ourselves. We're not here for our egos. We're here for the horse."

Trump says US will reduce number of troops in Germany 'a lot further' than withdrawal of 5,000

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER, EMMA BURROWS and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump said on Saturday that the U.S. will significantly reduce its troop presence in Germany, escalating a dispute with Chancellor Friedrich Merz as he seeks to scale back America's commitment to European security.

The Pentagon on Friday had initially announced it would pull some 5,000 troops out of Germany, but when asked Saturday about the reason for the move, Trump didn't offer an explanation and said an even bigger reduction was coming.

"We're going to cut way down. And we're cutting a lot further than 5,000," Trump told reporters in Florida.

Earlier on Saturday, Germany's defense minister appeared to take in stride the news that 5,000 U.S. troops would be leaving his country.

Boris Pistorius said the drawdown, which Trump has threatened for years, was expected, and he said European nations needed to take on more responsibility for their own defense. But he also emphasized that security cooperation benefited both sides of the trans-Atlantic partnership.

"The presence of American soldiers in Europe, and especially in Germany, is in our interest and in the interest of the U.S.," Pistorius told the German news agency dpa.

The plan faces bipartisan resistance

The planned withdrawal faced bipartisan resistance in Washington, with swift criticism from Democrats and concern from Republicans that it would send the "wrong signal" to Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose full-scale invasion of Ukraine recently entered its fifth year.

Trump's decision comes as he seethes at European allies over their unwillingness to join his campaign with Israel against Iran. He has lashed out at leaders like Merz, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Merz last week criticized the war in Iran, saying the U.S. is being "humiliated" by the Iranian leadership and calling out Washington's lack of strategy.

In another sign of friction, Trump accused the European Union of not complying with its U.S. trade deal and announced plans to increase tariffs next week on cars and trucks produced in the bloc to 25%, a move that would be particularly damaging to Germany, a major automobile manufacturer.

At least one EU lawmaker called the tariff hike "unacceptable" and accused Trump of breaking yet another U.S. commitment on trade.

US increased troops after Russian invasion of Ukraine

A pullout of 5,000 soldiers from Germany would amount to about one-seventh of the 36,000 American service members stationed in the country. The Pentagon offered few details about which troops or operations would be affected. When contacted after Trump's announcement of more cuts on Saturday, the Pentagon did not offer any additional details and referred back to its earlier statement.

The withdrawal of the 5,000 troops is scheduled to take place over the next six to 12 months, according to the Pentagon. Trump previously said he would pull 9,500 troops from Germany during his first term, but he didn't start the process and Democratic President Joe Biden formally stopped the planned withdrawal soon after taking office in 2021.

More broadly, around 80,000-100,000 U.S. personnel are usually stationed in Europe — depending on operations, exercises and troop rotations. The U.S. increased its European deployment after Russia launched its full-scale war on Ukraine in February 2022. NATO allies like Germany have expected for over a year that these troops would be the first to leave.

Pistorius, in his comments to dpa, said, "We Europeans must take on more responsibility for our security," while stressing recent efforts by Germany to boost its armed forces, accelerate procurement and

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 60 of 83

develop infrastructure.

NATO spokesperson Allison Hart, in a post Saturday on X, said the trans-Atlantic alliance was “working with the U.S. to understand the details of their decision on force posture in Germany.”

“This adjustment underscores the need for Europe to continue to invest more in defense and take on a greater share of the responsibility for our shared security,” she added, noting “progress” toward a target among NATO allies to each invest 5% of their economic output to defense.

A ‘thorough review’ prompted drawdown decision

Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell said in a statement that the “decision follows a thorough review of the Department’s force posture in Europe and is in recognition of theater requirements and conditions on the ground.”

A U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters, said the branches of the U.S. military didn’t have prior knowledge of the decision to draw down the 5,000 troops and learned about it “in real time.”

In response, the Defense Department reiterated that it conducted a thorough review of its force posture in Europe.

“The decision to withdraw troops in Germany follows a comprehensive, multilayered process that incorporates perspectives from key leaders in EUCOM and across the chain of command,” acting Pentagon press secretary Joel Valdez wrote in an email, using the abbreviation for U.S. European Command.

Most U.S. troops in Germany come from the Army and Air Force.

Germany hosts several American military facilities, including the headquarters of the U.S. European and Africa commands, Ramstein Air Base and a medical center in Landstuhl, where casualties from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were treated. U.S. nuclear missiles are also stationed in the country.

Withdrawal of 5,000 troops — the size of a brigade combat team — from Germany would likely have limited impact on combat power, but “in terms of messaging of U.S. commitment though, it’s very different,” another U.S. defense official said.

The only permanent brigade combat team in Germany is the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, alongside an aviation brigade and other assets, which is considered to have an important role in America’s — and NATO’s — ability to deter threats.

GOP lawmakers voice concern about withdrawal plan

After swift pushback from Democrats on Friday, Republican leaders of both armed services committees in Congress said Saturday they were “very concerned” about the troop withdrawal.

Sen. Roger Wicker of Mississippi and Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama said the decision risked “undermining deterrence and sending the wrong signal to Vladimir Putin.”

They also said the Pentagon had decided to cancel the planned deployment of the Army’s Long-Range Fires Battalion. Parnell’s statement made no mention of that.

Wicker and Rogers said any significant change to the U.S. force posture in Europe warrants review and coordination with Congress.

“We expect the Department to engage with its oversight committees in the days and weeks ahead on this decision and its implications for U.S. deterrence and trans-Atlantic security,” they said in a joint statement.

They also noted that Germany has heeded Trump’s call to shoulder more of the burden of defense spending in Europe, while giving U.S. forces access to its bases and airspace in the war against Iran.

The Supreme Court is being asked to restore access to an abortion pill by mail. Here’s what to know

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM and GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

Two makers of the widely used abortion pill mifepristone asked the Supreme Court on Saturday to block an appellate court ruling that cut off mail-order access to the drug just a day earlier, in what was the biggest jolt to abortion policy in the U.S. since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

Danco Laboratories asked the high court for an emergency pause on the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 61 of 83

decision, saying the appellate ruling "injects immediate confusion and upheaval into highly time-sensitive medical decisions." GenBioPro, which makes a generic version of mifepristone, made a similar request.

The New Orleans-based appeals court's unanimous ruling Friday marked a substantial victory for abortion opponents seeking to stem the flow of abortion pills prescribed online, which they view as subverting state bans on the procedure. It requires that mifepristone be distributed only in person and at clinics, overruling regulations set by the federal Food and Drug Administration.

"We're now going to see, I think in a way we haven't before, what the nation will look like when abortion bans are actually in effect," said Mary Ziegler, an expert on abortion law and a professor at University of California at Davis School of Law.

Here's what to know:

Impact extends beyond states with abortion bans

Frustrated with a lack of federal action against medicated abortions, Louisiana Attorney General Liz Murrill sued the FDA last year, saying its rules allowing mifepristone to be dispensed through the mail undermined the state's ban on abortions at all stages of pregnancy.

Friday's ruling is in effect while the case works its way through the courts. It affects patients in all states, even those without abortion restrictions.

"This is a huge access issue for patients that haven't got providers close by, or providers close by who are willing to prescribe," said Josh Thorburn, owner of Eddie's Pharmacy in Los Angeles.

There is little precedent for a federal court overruling the scientific regulations of the FDA, and it remains to be seen how the decision could impact abortion access long-term.

Murrill, a Republican, celebrated the ruling as a "victory for life" while other anti-abortion advocates cheered the reversal of rules finalized under President Joe Biden that ended a longstanding requirement that the pills be obtained at an in-person doctor's visit.

Representatives for the FDA and the U.S. Department of Justice did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Mifepristone long considered safe and effective

Mifepristone was approved in 2000 as a safe and effective way to end early pregnancies. It is typically used in combination with a second drug, misoprostol, which is not affected by the ruling but is less effective on its own.

Surveys have found that the majority of abortions in the U.S. are administered using pills and that about one in four abortions nationally are prescribed via telehealth. Providers have suggested that its availability through telehealth is a reason why the number of abortions in the U.S. has not fallen since Roe was overturned in 2022.

As a result, abortion pills and those who prescribe them out of state have become key targets of abortion opponents.

Some Democratic-led states have adopted laws that aim to protect providers who prescribe via telehealth and mail the pills to states with bans. Those so-called shield laws are being tested through civil and criminal cases in Louisiana and Texas.

One telehealth provider in a state with a shield law, Dr. Angel Foster, was working with legal experts to understand how the ruling would impact her organization, The Massachusetts Medication Abortion Project.

"We will do everything in our power to continue providing care to people in all 50 states," she said.

Mini Timmaraju, president and CEO of Reproductive Freedom for All, said providers are "in limbo" as they await further court decisions but can pivot to using just misoprostol for abortion care.

"It's got a chilling effect on providers across the country, and it's going to have a chilling effect on patients, who are already having a hard time navigating the law state by state, and what they can get and how they can get care," she said.

Abortion policy could come into play in the midterms

The case could again make abortion a key issue in the midterm elections as Democrats aim to take back control of the House and Republicans fight to hold on to a narrow majority.

"This is going to be a pretty significant change in terms of how people experience abortion access,

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 62 of 83

probably as significant as anything we've seen since Roe was overturned," Ziegler said. "So another big question mark is going to be the extent to which voters feel that before they go to the polls."

Recent electoral results suggest that voters seeking to maintain abortion access have the political momentum. Since Roe was overturned, abortion has been on the ballot directly in 17 states. Voters have sided with the abortion-rights side in 14 of those questions.

Abortion-rights supporter Fatima Goss Graves, president and CEO of the National Women's Law Center, said the ruling is "deeply out of step with both the public and fact-based science."

Ziegler said the case also "sort of puts the president in the position of having to get off the sidelines on this issue in a way we haven't seen before."

Trump received criticism after the ruling from some anti-abortion advocates who expressed frustration that he did not take action himself to block distribution of the pill.

The FDA under Trump approved another generic version of mifepristone last year, which peeved some allies of the Republican president.

"It's shameful that the Trump administration's inaction has forced pro-life states to take their battle to the federal courts," said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, who also applauded the appellate ruling.

President Trump says he is reviewing a new Iranian proposal to end the war

By AAMER MADHANI, SARAH EL DEEB and CARA ANNA Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump said on Saturday that he was reviewing a new Iranian proposal to end the war but also expressed skepticism it would lead to a deal.

"I'll let you know about it later," he said before boarding Air Force One, adding that "they're going to give me the exact wording now."

Shortly after speaking to reporters, Trump posted on social media about the new proposal, saying he "can't imagine that it would be acceptable in that they have not yet paid a big enough price for what they have done to Humanity, and the World, over the last 47 years."

Two semiofficial Iranian news outlets, Tasnim and Fars, believed to be close to Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, said Iran has sent a 14-point proposal via Pakistan in response to a nine-point U.S. proposal. Iran's state-run media have not reported on the new proposal. Pakistan has hosted previous negotiations between Iran and the United States.

Trump rejected a previous Iranian proposal this week. However, conversations have continued, and the three-week ceasefire appears to be holding.

The U.S. president also has floated a new plan to reopen the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, where about a fifth of the world's trade in oil and natural gas typically passes.

Imprisoned Iranian activist's health worsens

The health of imprisoned Iranian rights lawyer Narges Mohammadi was at "very high risk," her foundation and family said Saturday, adding that Iran's Intelligence Ministry was opposing her transfer to Tehran, Iran's capital, for treatment by her own doctors.

Mohammadi, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate in her early 50s, was urgently transferred to a hospital in Zanzan in Iran's northwest on Friday after a cardiac crisis and fainting. Her family has said her health had been worsening in part from a beating she received during her December arrest.

Medical teams in Zanzan have requested her records before performing any treatment, while recommending that she be transferred to Tehran, her foundation said.

But her Paris-based husband, Taghi Rahmani, said the Intelligence Ministry opposed the transfer for angiography, or imaging of the blood vessels. He spoke in a voice message shared with The Associated Press by the foundation.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee in a statement urged Iranian authorities to immediately transfer Mohammadi to her medical team, saying her life is in their hands.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 63 of 83

"She has the mental resilience for imprisonment, but her body does not have the readiness. The Ministry of Intelligence wouldn't even mind if (she) died," her husband told Sky News.

He added that their children hadn't seen Mohammadi for over a decade, since 2015.

Before her arrest on Dec. 12, Mohammadi already had been serving a sentence of 13 years and nine months on charges of collusion against state security and propaganda against Iran's government, but had been released on furlough since late 2024 over medical concerns.

Her legal team is pursuing the matter with the General Prosecutor's office, the foundation said.

The US warns shipping companies about possible sanctions

The U.S. has warned shipping companies they could face sanctions for paying Iran to pass safely through the Strait of Hormuz, adding pressure in the standoff over control of it.

Iran effectively closed the strait by attacking and threatening ships after the U.S. and Israel launched a war on Feb. 28. Tehran later offered some ships safe passage via routes closer to its shore, charging fees at times.

The U.S. on Friday warned against transfers not only in cash but also in "digital assets, offsets, informal swaps, or other in-kind payments," including charitable donations and payments at Iranian embassies.

The U.S. has responded with a naval blockade of Iranian ports since April 13, depriving Tehran of oil revenue it needs to shore up its ailing economy. The U.S. Central Command on Saturday said 48 commercial ships have been told to turn back.

Iran hangs two men convicted of spying for Israel

Iran on Saturday said it hanged two men convicted of spying for Israel.

The judiciary's news outlet, Mizanonline, said Yaghoub Karimpour was accused of sending "sensitive information" to an officer in Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, while Nasser Bekrzadeh allegedly sent details about government and religious leaders as well as information about Natanz. The city is home to a nuclear enrichment facility bombed by Israel and the U.S. last year.

Iran has hanged more than a dozen people over alleged espionage and terrorist activities in recent weeks. Rights groups say Iran routinely holds closed-door trials in which defendants are unable to challenge the accusations they face.

Padres announce agreement to sell team to investor group led by Kwanza Jones and José E. Feliciano

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

The San Diego Padres have reached an agreement to sell control of the team to an investor group led by Kwanza Jones and José E. Feliciano.

The family of late owner Peter Seidler formally announced the deal Saturday. The sale must still be approved by Major League Baseball.

The deal with private equity billionaire Feliciano and his wife took shape last month at an MLB-record valuation of \$3.9 billion. The Padres' announcement of the deal didn't give specifics on the members of the investor group or the purchase price.

"The Padres are more than a baseball team; they are a unifying force in San Diego, rooted in community, connection and belonging," Jones and Feliciano said in a joint statement. "As life and business partners, and as a family, we are honored to lead this next chapter together. We have worked hard for everything we have achieved, and we have built it together. We see that same spirit in this team and its fans, and we know what it takes to win. We are committed to showing up, listening and earning the trust of this community while building on the strong foundation established by the Seidler family.

"This is about more than baseball — it's about boosting the pride, energy, and connection that define the Padres, investing in community, deepening belonging and ensuring this team remains accessible and endures for generations. We are all in — with the goal of bringing a World Series championship to San Diego."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 64 of 83

Seidler's family began to explore a sale of the Padres last November, two years after the death of the popular Peter Seidler, who became the Padres' primary owner in 2020. His brother, John Seidler, has served as the Padres' chairman since his death.

"When I became control person, my goal was to continue building on our recent success in pursuit of a World Series championship for the city of San Diego and our faithful fans," John Seidler said in a statement. "As I pass the baton to Kwanza and José, I do so with full confidence that they share that vision as well as the Padres' deep commitment to San Diego. It's what the team, our fans and the community deserve. Our family loves this team."

Peter Seidler joined the Padres' ownership group in 2012 when John Moores sold the team for \$800 million to a group headed by Ron Fowler. Seidler took over and immediately endeared himself to San Diego's fans with his aggressive financial backing of general manager A.J. Preller, who built a team that has reached the playoffs in four of the past six years.

The Padres have been a hot ticket for several years as San Diego's only team in the four biggest North American sports leagues, ranking second in the majors in attendance last season. Preller's roster is off to another strong start this season, sitting second in the NL West at 19-12 heading into a home game against the Chicago White Sox on Saturday night.

Jones and Feliciano already got a start on their new endeavor last month when they traveled to Mexico City to watch the Padres' international series against the Arizona Diamondbacks. The couple was spotted sitting with Padres CEO Erik Greupner.

Feliciano will become the second Latino owner in baseball, joining Los Angeles Angels owner Arte Moreno. Latino and Hispanic players comprise roughly 30% of major league rosters.

Pickleball players killed in Texas plane crash included a school tennis star, trauma counselor

By HALLIE GOLDEN and TERRY TANG Associated Press

Five members of a pickleball club who died after the small plane carrying them crashed in Texas are being mourned by a tight-knit community of fellow players.

The Texas Department of Public Safety confirmed Saturday that Justin Appling, Hayden Dillard, Brooke Skypala, Stacy Hedrick and Seren Wilson were on board the Cessna 421C that crashed Thursday night in Texas Hill Country. Appling was the pilot.

The aircraft had departed from Amarillo and was heading to New Braunfels National Airport. It crash-landed in Wimberley, a city about 40 miles (64 kilometers) southwest of Austin, the Texas Department of Public Safety said.

The Amarillo Pickleball Club posted on its social media that the victims were members on their way to a pickleball tournament in New Braunfels.

Teammates who became more like family

Dillard and Appling, who went by the nickname Glen, were the owners of a manufactured home dealer in Amarillo. The business announced early Friday that it would be closed until Monday.

Sarah Lister got to know Dillard and Appling during pickleball tournaments and described them as both genuine people. She said Appling was always making them laugh and Dillard was an amazing businesswoman and mother.

She said Dillard has two daughters, one of whom was about to start college. Dillard and Appling had played mixed doubles for a long time together, and Skypala was Dillard's women's doubles partner, Lister said.

"The pickleball world is super, super small, even though it's huge at the same time," said Lister. "And when one of us has a tragedy like this, it's like it's the whole community that gets hit."

Leroy Clifford, a club member who had traveled to the tournament on another plane, considered all of them family, even though he'd only recently met Wilson. They had traveled to Pro Pickleball Association-sanctioned tournaments all over the country together, from Dallas to Las Vegas. They bonded over being on the higher-end competitions of pickleball, but they also didn't take themselves too seriously.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 65 of 83

"One thing I can say about this group is this group, you wanted to be around this group. They were fun, carefree, not uptight, just relaxed, loved to joke with each other, make fun of each other," Clifford said. "You couldn't ask for better friends, honestly."

He played the most with Skypala, who he described as quick-witted and a natural athlete.

"She was very witty, super sweet and very funny," Clifford said.

Skypala, who was married with children, had just celebrated a professional milestone. Last month, she announced on her Facebook that she had just started accepting clients as a counselor, fulfilling a decade-old goal. Skypala, who has a master's of education from West Texas A&M University, said in her post that she works with those "navigating anxiety, trauma, relationship challenges, and life transitions."

Last summer, Skypala helped host a pickleball camp for dozens of children from the nonprofit Amarillo Children's Home.

Hedrick was someone who loved to laugh, carried a positive outlook and "had a big heart." She also was a fierce player who earned the nickname "Rippy" from Appling, Clifford said. Everyone else started calling her that.

"She was a very good tennis player. In pickleball, you have to be able to do drop shots," Clifford said. "We gave her that nickname because all she did was rip. All she did was smash the ball or forehand it really hard."

Wilson, the youngest, was an accomplished tennis player. In 2022, she was University Interscholastic League team tennis state champion, according to the tennis booster club at Amarillo High School, where she graduated from.

A family member of Wilson's declined to comment when reached by phone Saturday.

The pickleball club posted on Facebook that "Seren loved big and her presence, encouragement, and spirit will be deeply missed by so many."

Amarillo pickleball community mourns together

Federal authorities are leading the investigation into what caused the crash.

Recorded audio indicates another pilot in the area confirmed the troubled plane's locator emergency device had emitted a distress signal. An air traffic controller then called 911.

It was mostly cloudy in the New Braunfels area shortly before the crash, and there was a thunderstorm two hours later, the National Weather Service said.

The pickleball tournament the players were supposed to compete in at the Cranky Pickle in New Braunfels, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) northeast of San Antonio, canceled Friday's events, said Martin Robertson, head pro at the venue.

"We're very heavy-hearted, heartbroken from this," he said. "Everybody knows everybody."

Clifford said the Amarillo club's focus now is on those closest to the five and to "lift these families up in prayer."

"It's going to be a long road ahead. But there's a lot of love and support from everyone that knew these people," Clifford said.

Mexican governor and mayor indicted by US for drug trafficking step down

By FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ and ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Two members of Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum's party in the northwestern Sinaloa state said they would temporarily step down from their posts after the United States charged them and eight other politicians and security officers with drug trafficking.

The bombshell indictment against the 10 has shaken Mexico's political establishment.

In a short video announcement at midnight on Friday, Gov. Rubén Rocha Moya, the highest-ranking official named in the indictment, denied accusations that he protected the Sinaloa cartel and helped it smuggle vast quantities of drugs into the U.S. in exchange for political support and millions of dollars in bribes.

"My conscience is clear," said Rocha, 76, a longtime ally of influential former President Andrés Manuel

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 66 of 83

López Obrador. "To my people and to my family, I can look you in the eye because I have never betrayed you, and I never will."

But he said he would take a temporary leave of absence from the position he has held for six years to defend himself against what he called the "false and malicious" allegations and cooperate with the Mexican government's investigation.

Juan de Dios Gámez Mendivil, the mayor of the Sinaloa state capital of Culiacán named in the indictment, also said he would take leave and denied the charges. Another defendant and member of the ruling Morena party, Sen. Enrique Inzunza, said he would continue serving in the Senate while defending himself from the accusations.

In a special vote Saturday, the state's local congress appointed as interim governor Yeraldine Bonilla Valverde, an ally of Rocha who previously served as the state's secretary of government. It approved Rocha's leave of absence for a period of 30 days.

As serving governor and mayor, Rocha and Gámez Mendivil had enjoyed immunity from criminal prosecution. But in leaving their posts even temporarily, the officials lost their blanket protection from prosecution, Arturo Zaldívar, a former Mexican Supreme Court justice who now advises Sheinbaum, posted on X.

"They can be detained like any person," he wrote.

The president wants the trials held in Mexico

Sheinbaum has struggled to strike a balance between the interests of her progressive Morena party and pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump to step up the fight against cartels.

In a nod to her party's vow to stamp out corruption, Sheinbaum said she wouldn't defend anyone found to have committed a crime.

But she vigorously defended Mexico's sovereignty, saying that if federal authorities uncovered "irrefutable" evidence linking the 10 indicted officials to cartel crime, the accused would be tried in Mexico, not the U.S. — a move that risks backlash from an American administration that has threatened military action against cartels on Mexican soil.

"We will never subordinate ourselves because this is a matter of the dignity of the Mexican people," she said Friday.

Many Mexicans living cartel violence almost daily in Sinaloa said on Saturday that they welcomed news of the U.S. indictment and their governor's resignation as a step toward accountability.

"We are in an ungovernable state where the same party and the same governor essentially gave free rein to what has become a violent situation," said Raquel Campos, a 35-year-old doctor in Culiacán. "Unfortunately it was another country that had to take action."

No arrests till the investigation is over

Pending investigation, the Mexican attorney general's office said it would not arrest Rocha or the other accused officials, as requested by the U.S.

Rocha, a point person for the hands-off "hugs not bullets" approach to dealing with organized crime that López Obrador pioneered and Sheinbaum has since ditched, insisted in the video that the indictment represents a political attack on Morena.

"I will not allow myself to be used to harm the movement to which I belong — one that has improved the lives of millions of Mexican men and women," he said.

Born in the same town as the notorious Mexican drug kingpin "El Chapo," Rocha has found himself embroiled in similar scandals before. In 2024, he was named in a published letter written by a then-Sinaloa cartel capo who was kidnapped by leaders of a rival faction and handed over to U.S. law enforcement. In the letter, the capo said that he was on his way to meet Rocha when he was abducted.

"It's an open secret," Sergio Estrella, 42, a shopkeeper in Culiacán, said of the alleged collusion between drug kingpins and senior officials. "The government needs to take a different tack, to recognize how deeply drug trafficking is embedded in politics."

Trump flexes executive power with unprecedented flouting of lower court rulings

By SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

When a federal judge shot down a Trump administration policy of holding immigrants without bond last December, it seemed like a serious blow to the president's mass deportation effort.

Instead, a top Justice Department official insisted the ruling wasn't binding, and the administration continued denying detainees around the country a chance for release.

By February, the district court judge, Sunshine Sykes, was fed up. Sykes, a nominee of President Joe Biden, accused Trump officials in a ruling that month of seeking "to erode any semblance of separation of powers," adding that they could "only do so in a world where the Constitution does not exist."

Hardly isolated, the case illustrates a broader pattern of defiance of lower court decisions in President Donald Trump's second term.

The failure of Trump officials to follow court orders has been highlighted most notably in individual immigration cases. But a review of hundreds of pages of court records by The Associated Press also shows an extraordinary record of violations in lawsuits over policy changes and other moves.

In the second Trump administration's first 15 months in office, district court judges ruled it was violating an order in at least 31 lawsuits over a wide range of issues, including mass layoffs, deportations, spending cuts and immigration practices, the AP's review of court records found. That's about one out of every eight lawsuits in which courts have at least temporarily blocked the administration's actions.

The Republican administration's power struggle with federal courts — which is testing basic tenets of U.S. democracy — reflects an expansive view of executive authority that has also challenged the independence of federal agencies, a president's ethical obligations, and the U.S.'s role in the international order.

Judges find widespread noncompliance

The violations in the 31 lawsuits are in addition to more than 250 instances of noncompliance judges have recently highlighted in individual immigration petitions — from failing to return property to keeping immigrants locked up past court-ordered release dates.

Legal scholars and former federal judges said they could recall at most a few violations of court rulings over the full four-year terms of other recent presidential administrations, including Trump's first time in office. They also noted previous administrations were generally apologetic when confronted by judges; the Trump administration's Justice Department has been outright combative in some cases.

"What the court system is experiencing in the last year and a half is just qualitatively completely different from anything that's preceded it," said Ryan Goodman, a law professor at New York University who studies federal courts and is tracking litigation against the Trump administration.

Though Trump officials eventually backed down in about a third of the 31 lawsuits, legal experts say their treatment of court orders poses serious dangers.

"The federal government should be the institution most devoted to the rule of law in this country," said David Super, a constitutional law scholar at Georgetown University. "When it ceases to feel itself bound, respect for the rule of law is likely to break down across the country."

The White House's aggressive policy moves have prompted a barrage of lawsuits — more than 700 and counting.

The administration has gotten a boost from higher courts

The AP's review also found that higher courts, including the Supreme Court, overruled the district courts and sided with the White House in nearly half of the 31 cases. Critics say those decisions are emboldening the administration to ignore judges' orders.

White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said the higher courts had overturned "unlawful district court rulings." The administration will "continue to comply with lawful court rulings," she added in a written statement.

"President Trump's entire Administration is lawfully implementing the America First agenda he was elected to enact," the statement said.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 68 of 83

Among other instances of noncompliance, judges found the White House defied rulings when it deported scores of accused gang members to a notorious prison in El Salvador, withheld billions of dollars in foreign aid and failed to restore programming at the Voice of America. The three cases date to the first few months of the new administration, but judges have continued to find violations since then, including in two cases in April.

"The danger is that this gets normalized," said JoAnna Suriani, counsel at the nonpartisan group Protect Democracy, which is tracking noncompliance cases. The group is also involved in litigation against the administration.

'Ham-handed.' 'Hallucinating.' Judges have also been scathing

In October, U.S. District Judge William Smith took little time to conclude Homeland Security officials were flouting one of his orders. Smith, a nominee of George W. Bush, had blocked them from making billions of dollars in disaster relief funding to states contingent on cooperation with the president's immigration priorities.

DHS responded by keeping the immigration requirement on some grants, but making it contingent on a higher court overriding Smith's injunction. The judge called the move "ham-handed" and said DHS was trying to "bully the states."

In a case over the suspension of refugee admissions, U.S. District Judge Jamal Whitehead, a Biden nominee, accused the Justice Department last May of "hallucinating new text" in an appellate court order and "rewriting" it to achieve the government's preferred outcome.

In four additional cases the AP reviewed, judges stopped short of a clear written finding of noncompliance but still criticized the administration's response to their orders.

Of the judges who have confirmed violations, 22 were appointed by Democratic presidents and 7 by Republican presidents.

Former federal judges Jeremy Fogel and Liam O'Grady said judges are losing trust in the integrity of the Department of Justice.

That's making them "more aggressive in accusing the government of bad faith," said O'Grady, who along with Fogel is now part of the nonpartisan democracy group, Keep Our Republic.

Fogel said judges are also getting frustrated.

"They make orders and the orders don't get complied with and then they have to inquire why the orders are not being complied with, and that's where it gets very mushy and very political," he said.

Plaintiffs in an education case raise alarms

In Eureka, California, school administrator Lisa Claussen is worried about the impact on her students' mental health if a judge does not find the Education Department in violation of a court order on federal grants.

Grant money allowed the school district in the poor coastal community in Northern California to hire more than a dozen psychologists and social workers to help students struggling with drug use and suicidal thoughts.

Education officials in the Trump administration told schools in California and other states last year that it was discontinuing the grants; the administration opposed diversity considerations in the grant process.

U.S. District Judge Kymberly Evanson blocked the move permanently in December, but California and 15 other states now say the administration is making an end run around her injunction by imposing new rules, including an initial limit of six months of funding.

Attorneys for the Education Department said they wanted to see whether schools were making progress on performance goals before releasing additional funds. The judge's order did not block the six-month limit, they added in a court filing.

Evanson, a Biden nominee, has yet to rule.

In the absence of a one-year funding guarantee, Eureka City Schools and other districts say they have already issued layoff notices to mental health providers or eliminated positions.

"We have many kids who don't trust adults for very good reason and to be able to just swipe this grant

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 69 of 83

like they're doing ..." Claussen said in a phone interview, her voice trailing off. "We didn't do anything wrong."

Justice Department pushes back

In court filings, Justice Department attorneys have generally disputed accusations the government was not complying. They have argued over the meaning of words, cited favorable appellate court rulings and said they were acting outside the scope of the court's order, among other legal maneuvering.

Outside of court, Trump and White House officials have railed against federal judges. Vice President JD Vance has even suggested the president could ignore court orders.

Will Chamberlain, senior counsel with the conservative legal advocacy group The Article III Project, said many of the judges who have found violations are ignoring laws that clearly prohibit their rulings.

Trump officials are "generally complying, appealing and winning," he said. "If they were defying orders left and right, they'd be losing them."

Critics say the higher courts are excusing noncompliance

In March, a federal appeals court ruled Sykes, the judge in California, had likely exceeded her authority in requiring bond hearings nationwide and blocked her February decision.

The outcome was not unusual.

In 15 of the 31 lawsuits the AP reviewed, an appellate court or the Supreme Court either allowed the administration's underlying policy, limited the district court's efforts to correct or punish the noncompliance, or both.

Supreme Court Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor criticized her fellow justices after one such ruling.

"This is not the first time the Court closes its eyes to noncompliance, nor, I fear, will it be the last," she wrote in June in a dissent joined by the court's two other liberal justices. "Yet each time this Court rewards noncompliance with discretionary relief, it further erodes respect for courts and for the rule of law."

Spirit Airlines shutdown: What to do to get home and get refunds

By SALLY HO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEATTLE (AP) — The collapse of the U.S.-based Spirit Airlines may mark the end of an era for travelers with a certain financial sensibility.

But if you've been snagged in their now-defunct flight schedule, here are some things to know on how to get home, and get whole.

"Rescue fares," reduced prices for new flights

Many airlines that used to compete with Spirit are now parachuting in with deals to save their travelers. Airlines including American Airlines, United Airlines, Delta Air Lines, JetBlue Airways, Frontier Airlines and Southwest Airlines are capping or reducing ticket prices for people to book new flights.

There is a limited window for this deal, which prioritizes now-stranded travelers who need to find a new way to their next destination.

For example, Southwest's offer is only available in person at an airport ticket counter through Wednesday, May 6, according to industry trade group, Airlines for America and the U.S. Department of Transportation. United, meanwhile, is allowing such bookings for up to two weeks, which can be accessed online.

For those who were planning to fly Spirit and now need to find an alternative to the ultra low cost carrier, American, Allegiant, Frontier and Delta advertised reduced fares on the same routes Spirit once flew.

Many company announcements include maps showing where its routes overlapped with Spirits, which can help narrow the search to find a comparable flight.

"Spirit Airlines played an important role in expanding access to affordable travel and bringing more low fares to more people," said Bobby Schroeter, Frontier's chief commercial officer. "We recognize this is a difficult time for their customers and team members.

Get your money back in refunds

Spirit Airlines said they were prepared for an "orderly wind-down" of its operations, and that it will automatically process refunds for any flights booked on a credit or debit card.

Travelers who booked through third-party travel agencies should direct refund requests to those agents.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 70 of 83

Anyone else who got their reservation through vouchers, credit or points will have to wait and see through Spirit's bankruptcy process.

If there are questions about whether your money will make a safe landing back to your wallet, there are other ways to try to claw back your cash for the Spirit flight not taken.

The DOT suggests contacting your credit card company and exercising your rights under the Fair Credit Billing Act, by requesting a "chargeback" for services not rendered.

If you purchased travel insurance or it is included in your credit card's policy and perks, call them to see if they cover "insolvency" or "service cessation."

The last resort would be filing a bankruptcy claim but officials warn this route eats up time and money, and ultimately may only result in a partial refund.

The National Consumers League warned travelers to keep all documentation to prove they were booked for Spirit flights, including receipts, booking confirmations, cancellation notices, and any correspondence with the airline. The nonprofit watchdog organization also urged those affected to act immediately as credit card and insurance companies may have strict deadlines that can be time-sensitive.

"Not all Spirit customers should assume a refund will automatically appear," said John Breyault, the league's vice president of public policy, telecommunications, and fraud. "When an airline shuts down this suddenly, it's up to travelers to take proactive steps to have the best chance of getting their money back."

Expanding capacity and perks

American and United both said it is trying to adjust its fleet so it can help more stranded passengers. American said it is looking into tapping larger planes and United said it is potentially adding additional flights on routes where they overlapped with Spirit.

"We are reviewing opportunities to add additional capacity, including utilizing larger aircraft on critical routes — to support as many affected passengers as possible," American said via an Airlines for America statement.

Southwest also said it will offer a status-match, by honoring Spirit's Silver and Gold status members with its own A-List program.

The car rental company Hertz is also advertising deals for alternative transportation, offering one-way vehicles and up to 25% off for those find "the road might be the fastest way home in scenarios like this one."

I'm an employee. Get me out of here.

Spirit crew members who are stuck at their destination should be granted airline travel benefits, including spare jump seats where available on most major carriers.

American said: "We will provide transportation for Spirit team members who have been displaced on a work trip," according to an Airlines for America statement.

The DOT also said the other companies are offering preferential interviews to help expedite the job search for former Spirit pilots, flight attendants and other employees. American said it will be setting up recruiting events for those former employees.

Crowd shrinks as Berkshire Hathaway's new CEO leads the annual meeting for the first time Saturday

By JOSH FUNK AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The folksy wisdom and jokes that were a staple of the Berkshire Hathaway annual meeting for decades when Warren Buffett led the show was mostly replaced Saturday with detailed business discussions led by new CEO Greg Abel.

Attendance is down significantly this year with the arena only a little over half full, but still no other corporate meeting can come close to matching the crowds at Berkshire's Woodstock for Capitalists. For years, more than 40,000 attended to listen to the 95-year-old Buffett and — before his death in 2023, Buffett's longtime partner Charlie Munger was always part of the fun. Buffett gave up the CEO title in January, but he remains chairman and did make a few comments during the meeting.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 71 of 83

Berkshire's businesses were the focus, but timely topics like the Iran war and the risks and benefits of artificial intelligence also came up.

Vice Chairman Ajit Jain said Berkshire would be willing to insure ships crossing the Strait of Hormuz if the price was right and the U.S. Navy escorted those ships.

Jain said he believes there is enough capacity across the insurance industry to take on that risk and there is definitely a need for it because that waterway is the path for so much of the world's oil supply.

"The short answer is it depends on the price," Jain said.

Abel said the war in the Middle East is definitely creating challenges for Berkshire's businesses because oil is such a fundamental input, but he's confident that the managers will find a way to deal with that.

"We very quickly move to what is the best solution for our customers," Abel said.

Honoring Buffett's contributions

Saturday's meeting began with a video tribute to Buffett beginning with a clip showing the standing ovation Buffett received last year after he surprised shareholders by announcing that he would step down.

Abel then announced the symbolic move of retiring jerseys with Buffett's and Munger's names on them that will hang in the rafters of the arena.

Buffett again praised Abel and said he's glad that he made the decision to promote him now.

"He's very, very smart about businesses," Buffett said during a live interview that aired during the meeting. And Abel is close to earning his American citizenship after growing up in Canada. He has been with Berkshire more than 25 years.

Buffett complained that too many people treat the stock market like a casino and gamble with their investments. He said the world would work better if more people treated each other well.

"If the whole world lived by the golden rule then it would be such a more wonderful society," Buffett said.

Easing the transition to Abel

Signs of the transition were peppered throughout the 200,000-square-foot exhibit hall where Berkshire companies sold their products. A caricature of Abel playing his favorite sport of hockey is front and center on commemorative boxes of See's Candy. At the Pilot Travel Center booth, pictures of Abel and Buffett are plastered on a semitrailer truck windshield, but Abel is in the driver's seat. And shareholders lined up to buy a Squishmallow version of Abel to go with the latest versions of the popular Buffett and Munger stuffed dolls.

"Sadly we miss Warren and Charlie and that show which was fun, but it's a business meeting for a lot of us and hearing what the businesses are doing is what it's all about," investor Chris Bloomstran, who is president of Semper Augustus Investments Group said.

Also, many people travel to Omaha primarily to meet up with like-minded value investors, who practice the approach that Buffett employed, and attend some of the investment conferences and meetings that are scheduled around Berkshire's shareholder meeting.

"That's why I'm really here, really here is to network with other people," said Bob Robotti, who runs his own investment company.

Focusing on Berkshire's businesses

Abel opened the meeting with a detailed discussion of how Berkshire's biggest businesses are performing. He gave a granular explanation about the performance of Berkshire's insurers, its BNSF railroad, utilities and manufacturers. He talked about how Berkshire is using artificial intelligence "to solve problems at our companies."

But Abel also used a deepfake video of Buffett asking a question about Berkshire's long-term prospects at the start of the Q-and-A session to highlight some of the cyber challenges and risks AI presents.

"It's scary," Buffett said later in the meeting. For example, AI could easily create an extremely convincing fake version of the leader of a country with nuclear weapons, he said.

Abel stressed over and over that Berkshire's basic approach that trusts CEOs to manage the day-to-day operations of their companies will not change, and he won't feel pressured to spend the company's nearly \$400 billion in cash prematurely.

"One of our greatest strengths at Berkshire is patience and being disciplined at allocating our capital,"

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 72 of 83

Abel said. "We're not anxious to deploy capital into subpar opportunities."

Enduring culture at Berkshire

The CEOs of Dairy Queen, See's Candy, Jazwares and Brooks Running all said very little has changed since Abel was promoted other than they now report to NetJets CEO Adam Johnson who is overseeing 32 retail and service businesses.

"I think this is a very deeply rooted culture that Warren has created, and I believe the transition to Greg is going to be rooted in those values that Warren has for 60 years instituted and will continue," Brooks CEO Dan Sheridan said.

For years Buffett always said he was having too much fun running Berkshire to ever retire, but once the shock of his announcement in the final minutes of last year's meeting wore off, the company's executives quickly agreed this plan for the transition was better because Buffett can still be around to advise Abel.

"That's the greatest combination right now, to be able to have that transition in leadership where Greg and Warren can still work together," DQ CEO Troy Bader said as his staff sold Dilly Bars to shareholders.

Striving to improve

Abel is known to be a more demanding and hands-on boss than Buffett ever was, but he does that by challenging Berkshire's CEOs to strengthen their competitive advantages while taking care of their customers. Abel asks tough questions and offers advice that his CEOs appreciate, but he doesn't tell them exactly what to do.

And with Buffett remaining Berkshire's chairman and its largest shareholder it's unlikely that Abel will make any drastic changes.

Robotti said the performance of Berkshire's businesses should be much more important to shareholders than the entertainment value of the annual meetings.

"My hope and expectation are they're picking people who have competency in running a business and not necessarily public speakers and presenters," Robotti said.

Berkshire said Saturday morning that its profits more than doubled in the first-quarter to \$10.1 billion, or \$7,027 per Class A share, as the value of its investments grew and most of its businesses improved.

Berkshire's massive cash pile continues to grow, and it hit \$397.4 billion at the end of the first quarter.

Most of Berkshire's varied businesses reported better operating earnings this year. The insurance unit that includes Geico reported an underwriting profit of \$1.7 billion, up from \$1.34 billion last year. Profits also grew somewhat at BNSF railroad and Berkshire's utility and manufacturing companies.

But Abel acknowledged there is more improvement needed — especially at BNSF, which lags behind most of the other major freight railroads.

Alex Zanardi, auto racing champ who won Paralympic golds between life-altering accidents, dies at 59

By ANDREW DAMPF AP Sports Writer

ROME (AP) — Alex Zanardi, the Italian auto racing champion-turned-Paralympic gold medalist whose career was marked by two life-altering accidents, has died. He was 59.

Zanardi's family announced his death on Saturday, saying that he passed away on Friday night.

"Alex died peacefully, surrounded by the affection of those closest to him," the family said in a statement without providing a cause of death.

In 2020, Zanardi was seriously injured in a handbike accident after crashing into an oncoming truck during a relay event in Tuscany. Zanardi suffered serious facial and cranial trauma in the crash and was put in a medically induced coma.

Nearly 20 years earlier, Zanardi lost both of his legs in an auto racing crash.

"Italy loses a great champion and an extraordinary man, capable of turning every challenge of life into a lesson in courage, strength, and dignity," Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni said on X.

"Alex Zanardi knew how to bounce back every time, facing even the toughest challenges with determination, clarity, and a strength of spirit that was truly exceptional," Meloni added. "He gave all of us much more

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 73 of 83

than a victory: he gave hope, pride, and the strength to never give up. ... Thank you for everything, Alex."

Zanardi won two championships in CART — 1997 and 1998 — in the United States before a brief return to Formula One. He returned to America and was racing in Germany in a CART event in 2001 when both of his legs were severed in a horrific accident the weekend after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. CART raced only because the series was already in Germany at the time of the attacks and could not return to the U.S.

After the 2001 crash, Zanardi was in a coma for three days and his heart stopped at least once.

NASCAR driver Max Papis, who knew Zanardi from childhood in Italy, recalled visiting his friend in the hospital, where Zanardi glanced at Papis' new shoes.

"He said, 'Look at the positive side of this. For a long time I will not have to spend money buying those,'" Papis said.

During his recovery, Zanardi designed his own prosthetics — he joked that he made himself taller — and learned to walk again. He then turned his attention to hand cycling and developed into one of the most accomplished athletes in the world. He won four gold medals and two silvers at the 2012 and 2016 Paralympics, competed in the New York City Marathon and set an Ironman record.

When he won a Paralympic race in 2012 at Britain's Brands Hatch circuit where he had competed as a young driver, Zanardi celebrated the full-circle moment by holding his bike aloft one-handed as he sat on the track.

"Probably a lot of people watching me doing (this) to some degree against all odds maybe they are going to say, 'Bloody hell, if Zanardi did this, I can try. I can try,'" he told The Associated Press at the time. "A good attempt always brings a result."

His spirit, will, and determination gave the beloved Italian a larger-than-life persona. When he returned to the U.S. in 2019 to compete for BMW at the Rolex 24 of Daytona without his prosthetics, he was the most revered driver in a field that included F1 champion Fernando Alonso.

Drivers from around the world sought out Zanardi for photographs and were transfixed as he told elaborate tales of his adventures in the nearly two decades since many had seen him.

Zanardi used specially adapted cars with hand controls for gas and brake to take up racing again after the 2001 accident — and well enough to win races in various series.

Stefano Domenicali, the president and CEO of F1, said he was "deeply saddened by the passing of my dear friend," calling Zanardi "truly an inspirational person, as a human and as an athlete."

"He faced challenges that would have stopped anyone, yet he continued to look forward, always with a smile and a stubborn determination that inspired us all," Domenicali added. "While his loss is profoundly felt, his legacy remains strong."

Zanardi's death came on the same day — May 1 — that fellow driver Ayrton Senna died in a crash during an F1 race in Imola in 1994.

The International Automobile Federation (FIA) said on X that Zanardi's racing career and "journey from life-changing accident to Paralympics gold medalist made him one of sport's most admired competitors and an enduring symbol of courage and determination."

Noted for his infectious smile and fanciful storytelling, Zanardi was praised by Pope Francis after his 2020 crash as an example of strength amid adversity. Francis penned a handwritten letter of encouragement assuring Zanardi and his family of his prayers.

Zanardi's family added that it "thanks everyone who is sharing their support right now and asks for respect during this time of mourning."

The funeral will be held Tuesday in Padua.

A moment of silence was observed in Zanardi's honor before Saturday's F1 sprint race in Miami Gardens, Florida. Also, the Italian Olympic Committee called for a minute of silence to be observed at all sports events in Italy over the weekend.

Zanardi, who was born in Bologna, is survived by his wife, Daniela, and son, Niccolò.

In the PR battle for AI data centers, tech giants got a blue-collar ally

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Building trades unions — long fashioned as the voice of the American worker — are now intertwined with the richest companies in the world as they create America's artificial intelligence economy.

Unionized workers are employed on a huge number of massive data center projects and scrambling to recruit new apprentices to feed the explosive demand.

They've also become an ally of tech giants and tech-friendly government officials, echoing the talking point that the United States is in a critical national security race with China for AI superiority.

Unions are a visible force in helping counter fierce opposition in communities and hostile legislation in Congress and legislatures, often aligning with traditional Republican pro-business constituencies and forcing Democrats to choose between them and progressives who want to take a harder line.

Unions have aggressively answered complaints about data centers in ways that executives at tech giants and the development firms rarely do, unafraid to bluntly confront concerns about energy and water shortages, rising electric and water bills, or noise and quality-of-life objections.

"When people say, you know, 'data centers are the root of all evil,' we're just saying, 'look, they do create a hell of a lot of construction jobs, which we live and work in your communities,'" said Rob Bair, president of the Pennsylvania Building and Construction Trades Council.

Instead of "being just a blunt 'no,'" Bair said, communities should figure out what they need and ask the tech companies for it — such as improvements to the project's plans or millions of dollars for local schools. "If you don't ask, you're never gonna get," he said.

Data centers a boon for unions

With data center construction accelerating, unions are expanding training centers and seeing their ranks grow faster than many union leaders have ever seen.

Unions in a number of states are reporting skyrocketing man hours, apprentice classes doubling in size and training centers undergoing expansions in anticipation of more work coming.

Data centers consume at least 40% of work hours done by members of the Columbus-Central Ohio Building and Construction Trades Council, a top official, Dorsey Hager, estimated. It's at least 50% for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 26 in metropolitan Washington, D.C., spokesperson Don Slaiman said.

The umbrella North America's Building Trades Unions said it hit a record number of members and apprentices in 2025.

The organization's president, Sean McGarvey, compared it to the build trades' expansion in the 1950s. He attributes today's growth to data centers, power plants and legislation under former President Joe Biden that subsidized the construction of semiconductor and electric vehicle battery factories, energy efficiency projects and grid transmission improvements.

Data centers' voracious energy needs are setting off a power plant construction boom and delivering a one-two punch of new life to unions whose members also build and maintain boilers, ductwork, pipelines and other power infrastructure.

The Boilermakers Local 154, whose members have watched power plants shut down in southwestern Pennsylvania, went from recruiting zero apprentices for four years to now assembling a class of over 200 — and they need more, union official Shawn Steffee said.

For their part, tech giants say they need to train hundreds of thousands more workers in skilled trades. They are spending tens of millions of dollars on training programs, including partnerships with unions that they hire to build their multibillion-dollar projects.

"Across the country, highly skilled union construction workers are laying the foundation for the AI economy," Sam Altman, co-founder and CEO of OpenAI, said in a joint statement in March with McGarvey's organization.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 75 of 83

Google said the majority of labor used to build its data centers is unionized, and pointed to a \$10 million grant to a union-backed electricians training program that it said would help expand the electrician workforce pipeline by 70%.

'The data centers would still be getting built'

Mark McManus, the general president of the United Association of Union Plumbers and Pipefitters, whose members work on pipelines, data centers and power plants, acknowledged criticism that organized labor is getting in bed with the richest, most powerful companies in the world.

But he rejected it as unrealistic.

"If we chose as a union to have a moratorium on building the data centers because we didn't believe it was right for America, the data centers would still be getting built," McManus said. "They're not stopping because of organized labor."

His union has a strong relationship with tech companies, is hitting all-time highs in membership and, based on an internal survey, has members working on over 90% of the data center projects in the United States.

"That's a market share that we don't have in a lot of other industries," McManus said. "So it's pretty near and dear to us."

It's difficult to pin down exactly how many data center projects involve union labor. An Associated General Contractors of America survey late last year suggested that the labor composition of data center construction likely mirrors the makeup of commercial construction, which is roughly one-third union, an AGC spokesperson said.

Showing up in towns and statehouses

National unions have negotiated labor agreements on major projects, including an Oracle and OpenAI Stargate campus in Michigan and the "Project Blue" data center campus in Arizona, with more in the works.

When Gov. Josh Shapiro stood with Amazon executives to announce that the tech giant would spend \$20 billion on two data center projects in eastern Pennsylvania, Bair stood with them.

"This is really unique, what we're building here in this commonwealth. People coming together with common purpose to get stuff done," Shapiro said.

In statehouses, unions have worked against Maine's since-vetoed proposal for a statewide data center moratorium; standards proposed in Illinois, including requiring data centers to supply their own energy; and an end to Virginia's sales tax exemption that helped make it the world's biggest data center destination.

Pennsylvania state Sen. Katie Muth said it has been difficult to collect support from fellow Democrats for her legislation to regulate data centers when it is competing with union-backed legislation that she views as weaker.

"The unions don't want to promote anything that would impede data center development," Muth said.

Union representatives have made their presence felt at packed council meetings in municipal buildings from St. Louis to Spring City, Pennsylvania.

Sometimes it's not in a good way.

Speaking to the City Council in Joliet, Illinois, Alicia Morales complained that union members — who sat in the front row holding "vote yes for union jobs" signs — had been disrespectful and "bullied a lot of people" entering the meeting.

Sometimes, union representatives are the only people in a packed municipal meeting room to speak in favor of a project.

"I just want to commend you guys, thanks for being the adults in the room," Chuck Curry, the president of Ironworkers Local 395, told City Council members in Hobart, Indiana, at a January meeting on an Amazon data center. "Knowing the tax structure, knowing business, that most of the people here don't know."

The long shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic creeps into the race for Ohio governor

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Dr. Amy Acton, a Democrat running unopposed in her party's primary for Ohio governor, faces some steep challenges in the coming general election.

She is trying to be the first Democrat in 20 years to win the office in a state that has become dominated by Republicans. Her presumed opponent, Republican Vivek Ramaswamy, has national name recognition and a personal fortune that he is plowing into his campaign.

But Acton's most formidable obstacle may be a ghost from her recent past: the COVID-19 pandemic.

Acton, a physician, was Ohio's public health director when the coronavirus hit the United States in early 2020, causing a wave of deaths, anxiety and social disruption. As the government took aggressive action to combat it, Acton became a household name throughout Ohio.

Six years later, the orders Acton signed at the urging of Republican Gov. Mike DeWine to battle the virus — closing schools, shuttering businesses, restricting sporting events and suspending voting in the 2020 primary — are drawing fresh attention as she runs for the state's top office and have become a central line of criticism from Republicans.

During campaign rallies, Ramaswamy has accused Acton of spreading dangerous "COVID ideology." Her campaign said it does not think voters will buy it.

"Dr. Acton is proud of the work she did alongside Governor DeWine to put public health over politics, save lives and keep Ohioans safe," her campaign spokesperson, Addie Bullock, said in a statement. "It is unfortunate that Vivek Ramaswamy wants to play politics on this issue."

Choosing 'liberty' or 'lockdowns'

Wearing a white medical coat, Acton was a fixture at daily COVID-19 briefings with DeWine that were highly anticipated events watched in households across the state. Day after day, she calmly explained the virus' trajectory, the grim march of hospitalizations and deaths, and reassuringly provided tips on how Ohioans should handle themselves.

"Ohio, don the mask, don your cape," Acton said at the time, asking ordinary people to act like superheroes.

In Ohio and elsewhere, the social trauma from the pandemic has yet to fully heal. It has changed how millions of people in the United States view vaccines, how deeply government should interfere in daily life and even whether people can trust government health officers.

The below-the-surface skepticism, which continues even as concerns over contracting the virus have faded, has emerged as an unusual storyline in the race for governor.

Ramaswamy, the front-running Republican, is airing ads capitalizing on lingering anger over the election order that Acton issued for DeWine. At Republican events around the state, mention of Acton's name elicits loud boos.

"Are we choosing freedom or are we choosing Fauci?" asked Zac Haines, a Republican campaigning for the state Senate, in a reference to former national infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci as the candidate warmed up a recent Ramaswamy fundraising crowd. "Are we choosing liberty or are we choosing lockdowns?"

A hero to some, a villain to others

At Democratic events, Acton carries the air of the cult hero who, back in 2020, inspired a Dr. Amy Acton Fan Club with its own yard signs, a bobblehead doll and a proposal to honor her with a state holiday.

Campaigning this year, she seems to tread cautiously when discussing her time as Ohio's health chief, sometimes avoiding use of the words COVID-19 or coronavirus.

"I had the honor and the privilege, the privilege, of serving in a very tough moment," she told a Democratic crowd in southwest Ohio in March. "I'm proud of Ohioans, because together we flattened that curve, we saved a lot of lives."

Ohio ranked 22nd among the states in its per capita death rate from the virus during the pandemic's

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 77 of 83

first year, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Acton, who left the job halfway through 2020, does not dwell on what happened after the government imposed restrictions: the mutiny against DeWine over business closures and health mandates, the legislation by Republicans to limit the governor's powers and the protesters, some of them armed, outside her house.

At a recent States Forum symposium in Columbus, where people from across the political spectrum were brought together to try to find common ground within the "Make America Healthy Again" movement, Acton said she had worked for or advised five different governors.

"So I'll work with anyone who wants to solve a problem rather than make one," she said, "which is what Ohioans are longing for."

While he has endorsed Ramaswamy, DeWine denounced the campaign's ad against Acton for suspending the 2020 primary.

"I told her to issue the health order," the governor said. "The decision was mine."

Ramaswamy is dodging his own pandemic ghosts

Ramaswamy and another prominent Republican running in this year's midterm elections have their own ties to Ohio's pandemic response.

As CEO of Roivant Sciences, the biotechnology research company he founded in 2014, Ramaswamy "worked with the lieutenant governor as an adviser on COVID-19" during 2020, he wrote in a 2021 op-ed. The lieutenant governor at the time, Republican Jon Husted, is now a U.S. senator running for reelection. He was a regular participant alongside Acton and DeWine at Ohio's daily virus briefings.

A Roivant subsidiary, Genevant Sciences, also played a "fundamental role" in the global pandemic response, according to a March news release. The statement announced a \$2.2 billion settlement with Moderna over its unauthorized use of Genevant's and Arbutus Biopharma's patents in its COVID vaccines.

During the pandemic, Ramaswamy, whose wife is a physician, supported vaccines. He received one himself and advocated mask-wearing, although he said he never supported governments mandating either.

One of Ramaswamy's companies, Datavant, even pushed for a national COVID registry that would be used to allow the small segment of the population that was gradually gaining natural COVID-19 immunity to "get back to normal life" while facilitating the rest continuing to be "segregated."

Yet since he entered politics for the 2024 presidential race, Ramaswamy has taken steps to distance himself from those days. In early 2023, he stepped down from the Roivant board and paid an editor to scrub a reference to his service on Ohio's "COVID-19 Response Team" from his Wikipedia page. He called it a simple correction, saying the panel never met.

His campaign referred questions about his time at Roivant to the company, which did not respond to an email seeking comment.

In an interview, Ramaswamy said both his support for a COVID registry and his talks with Husted involved "getting the economy going again." While calling his position on the virus "nuanced," he said he intends to hold Acton accountable for the decisions to shutter Ohio businesses and schools and to suspend voting in the 2020 primary, which eventually was conducted by mail balloting.

"As a decision maker, you have to weigh the costs and benefits of your actions," he said. "You can't be unmoored from the data."

Black Americans face a new fight for racial representation after justices' Voting Rights Act ruling

By LEAH WILLINGHAM, JACK BROOK, SOPHIE BATES and JEFF AMY Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — At 16, Edward Blackmon Jr. was arrested during a protest for voting rights in his Mississippi hometown. He was loaded with schoolmates into a truck once used to haul chickens and was left in the summer heat before spending three nights in an overcrowded jail cell without a bed.

It was a moment that set him on a path to become a civil rights lawyer and one of the first Black lawmakers elected in the state since Reconstruction.

Blackmon was part of a generation of Black Americans across the South who fought in courtrooms and

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 78 of 83

in the streets to dismantle barriers to voting and achieve political representation in a region scarred by the legacy of slavery and its aftermath.

One of the crown jewels of that struggle, the Voting Rights Act, was hollowed out this week by the U.S. Supreme Court. The court's conservative majority said states should not rely on racial demographics when drawing congressional districts, a ruling that opened the door to transforming how political power is distributed and making it harder for minorities to get elected.

The majority opinion described racism as a problem of the past. Others saw the decision as another example of its resurgence — “a defibrillator to the heart of Jim Crow,” as one Louisiana politician put it.

Blackmon's son, Bradford, a 37-year-old state senator in Mississippi, said how the political lines are drawn “shapes who has a real chance before anyone ever votes.”

“It's just sad that we made progress and then they are always trying to roll it back when it shows that minorities are making more progress than I would guess that those in charge think that they're allowed to make,” he said.

The elder Blackmon, now 78, said he was resigned to the reality that the fight of his youth is not over.

“It's just another cycle — an ongoing struggle without a foreseeable ending,” he said.

A legacy at risk

The case, involving a challenge to Louisiana's congressional map, clarified how the Voting Rights Act can be used to contest district lines that may weaken the voting power of Black residents.

For many Black Americans, the decision was a death knell for a cherished pillar of the Civil Rights Movement. Before the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Black voters in the Deep South had no guarantee of equal access to the ballot. Within a year of its passage, more than 250,000 Black Americans had gained the right to vote. By 2024, nearly 22 million Black voters were registered nationwide, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The United States is now witnessing the unraveling of nearly a century of organizing, civil disobedience and personal sacrifice by ordinary people who helped build Black political power to heights unseen since Reconstruction. Veterans of the voting rights movement — people who bled with John Lewis on the 1965 march in Selma, Alabama, that became known as Bloody Sunday or marched with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. — are seeing those hard-won victories stripped away from their descendants.

“I'm the first generation of Americans born with equal rights,” said Jonathan Jackson, a Democratic congressman from Illinois who is the 60-year-old son of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the late civil rights leader. Jonathan Jackson said the idea that his children could grow up with fewer protections was “surreal and devastating.”

For Charles Mauldin, who was beaten by law enforcement as a teenager on Bloody Sunday, the ruling reflects a skirmish that was never as settled as some hoped.

“I'm disappointed but not surprised,” said Mauldin, 78, of Birmingham, Alabama. “They've been chipping away at the 1965 Voting Rights Act for the last 60 years.”

Who holds power now

In Louisiana, younger Black politicians say the high court's ruling could reshape not just who wins elections, but whether candidates can compete at all, particularly in down-ballot races that often serve as steppingstones to higher office.

Davante Lewis, a 34-year-old Democrat who serves on the state's utility regulatory board, said he expects districts could be redrawn in ways that make it harder for candidates like him to win.

“They can target my communities ... to ensure that I can't get to an elected office,” said Lewis, who one of several plaintiffs in the original Louisiana gerrymandering case that went to the Supreme Court.

Jamie Davis, a Black farmer in northeast Louisiana and a Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, said the decision risks discouraging voters already skeptical that their voices matter.

“I want to be optimistic, but how can you be optimistic when voter turnout in the past election cycles has been really low,” Davis said.

Tennessee is among the states bracing for new redistricting efforts. State Rep. Justin Pearson, who rep-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 79 of 83

resents Memphis and is running for Congress, said people who struggled to pass the Voting Rights Act are "shocked and devastated that they're having to relitigate the same fights that they fought 60 years ago."

But he also predicted that efforts to reduce Black representation could "reinvigorate a civil rights movement in the South that demands equal representation, that demands fairness, that demands justice and equality."

Supporters of the Supreme Court ruling said it reinforces a race-neutral approach to redistricting and they say political lines should not be drawn primarily based on race.

Mississippi state Rep. Bryant Clark said that view ignores how race and party align in the state. In Mississippi, where most Black voters are Democrats and most white voters are Republicans, he said the two are often indistinguishable.

"It's just a roundabout way to basically legalize racially discriminatory redistricting in the state," Clark said.

In 1967, his father, Robert Clark Jr., became the first Black lawmaker elected to the Mississippi Legislature since Reconstruction.

With Black residents making up about 38% of Mississippi's population, Edward Blackmon Jr. said the current maps allow Black voters to elect candidates in some districts while keeping Republican majorities intact across much of the state.

He said lawmakers have little incentive to change that balance because moving Black voters into more districts would make those seats less reliably conservative and force candidates to compete for a broader electorate.

"Where do you think the population goes? They don't just disappear," Blackmon said. "What incumbent wants that type of district right now?"

Fight continues

Blackmon was raised in Canton, "when Jim Crow was in full bloom."

Black children attended separate schools, and during cotton-picking season, classes let out early as rickety trucks with wooden sides arrived to take students to the fields, where they spent hours working.

At home, he watched those inequalities play out in quieter ways.

His father, a World War II veteran who left the sharecropping farm where Blackmon's grandfather had worked, struggled to find steady work in Mississippi after returning from military service and becoming involved in civil rights organizing. He eventually left for New York to make a living — part of a generation of Black veterans who faced barriers to jobs and opportunities their white counterparts received.

Blackmon remembers sitting nearby as his father and other community leaders gathered on the porch, talking late into the night about forming a local NAACP chapter.

"It was embedded in my memory and experience that it was worth the struggle," he said.

When the Voting Rights Act passed, it did not immediately change those realities. In places like Canton, federal officials set up registration tables on downtown streets so Black residents could sign up to vote without facing harassment or intimidation from local authorities.

In the years that followed, Blackmon and other lawyers used the law to challenge at-large election systems that prevented Black communities from electing candidates of their choice. Cities and counties were forced to redraw maps into single-member districts.

When those districts still diluted Black voting strength, activists returned to court.

"Without the Voting Rights Act, Mississippi would look so much different than it looks now," Blackmon said.

Trump likes the idea of the government owning some US companies but took a pass on Spirit Airlines

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump had no qualms about a government takeover of Spirit Airlines, so long as the terms could be portrayed as a financial victory in what would have been the latest addition to a taxpayer-backed conglomerate of business interests.

But the budget carrier ceased operations on Saturday after reaching an impasse with an administration

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 80 of 83

that increasingly sees the government as an activist investor that will shape the path of the U.S. economy.

While Trump has long railed against Democrats and other opponents as communists — the antithesis of the free market ethos that helped America grow into a superpower — he has taken a shine to the government owning some of the means of production since he has been back in the Oval Office.

Trump sees opportunities in preserving legacy brand companies such as Intel and possibly making a tidy profit for Uncle Sam. The Republican president views the investments as critical for economic security and emblematic of his own dealmaking skills, overturning what had been GOP dogma that government should avoid picking winners and losers.

In the case of Spirit, a cash-strapped budget airline that faced surging fuel costs caused by the Iran war, Trump told reporters on Friday that the government would buy a stake in the company “only if it’s a good deal.” His objection to a bailout was not ideological as much as it was about the upside.

“If we can help them, we will,” Trump said. “But we have to come first.” Trump did not immediately address the shutdown of the carrier.

He had compared the potential acquisition to an earlier move to buy a stake in Intel. Trump has watched the computer chip manufacturer’s stock closely. “I’m very proud of that Company in that I am responsible for making the United States of America over 30 Billion Dollars in the last 90 days on that stock alone,” Trump posted on social media this week.

Committed to government stakes in companies

Communism wields big influence in countries such as China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba, where governments play a central role in providing goods and services. The ideology has morphed over its history from the premise that government should own all property to a system in which the government might own or control major companies.

In the United States, major government interventions in the private sector have been unusual outside of a recession. Trump aides say his interventions are necessary to compete against China’s industrial heft, yet the president has frequently tethered corporate America to his administration.

He has used his tariffs to solicit foreign investments and claimed that he controls how the money is being spent. The government has a “golden share” to limit what Japan’s Nippon Steel can do after buying U.S. Steel. His administration brokered an agreement to take a cut of computer chip sales to China by Nvidia and AMD.

Under Trump, the government has invested in rare earths company MP Materials to break China’s control of the metallic elements needed for smartphones, autos and other technologies. Add to that agreements for stakes in Lithium America, Trilogy Metals and Vulcan Elements as well as preferential financing for Westinghouse and ReElement Technologies.

The administration backed off ending the government conservatorship of the mortgage companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Trump says they are worth more now because he held on instead of privatizing the companies in his first term. “If I would have sold it, I would have felt like a schmuck,” he said Friday.

He is accessible to CEOs, speaking regularly on the telephone with them, yet he also can be demanding of them to support his agenda. He has told Walmart to not raise prices because of his tariffs and suggested he would favorably “remember” companies that decline to seek refunds after the Supreme Court ruled his tariffs were illegal.

Logic and ego seen in Trump’s moves

To critics, Trump’s desire to fund and hold ownership stakes in private business is a byproduct of an id in overdrive.

“This is entirely a reflection of a transactional-minded president who wants unilateral control of the economy,” said Tad DeHaven, a policy analyst at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank. “At the end of the day, it is about power, it is about leverage and it is about control.”

Others see some logic in competing against Chinese manufacturers that can churn away without regard to profits, undercutting factories in other industrialized nations and putting America’s preeminence as a military power and technological innovator at risk.

The investment in Intel was “a strategic move, necessitated by the growth of China as an economic

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 81 of 83

peer and rival," said Sujai Shivakumar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank.

"The key point is that we should not sacrifice our national economic and industrial framework in the name of 'free markets' or other ideologies," he said. "Pragmatism, in various forms of industrial and innovation policy, have always been a feature of our economic system since the very beginning of our republic."

Republicans traditionally shunned picking winners and losers

During the 2024 campaign, Trump portrayed the administration of Democrat Joe Biden as communist and socialist.

"We will cast out the communists," Trump said at an April 13, 2024, speech in Pennsylvania. "We will liberate our country from these tyrants and villains once and for all."

Biden often stressed his belief in the power of free markets to help the middle class and he believed his efforts to raise corporate tax rates would help achieve that. "I'm a capitalist," he said in his last State of the Union address, saying he was not opposed to companies making profits. "That's great — just pay your fair share in taxes," he said.

The Biden administration extended loans and grants to chipmakers and sought to leverage the government's role as a customer of American businesses. But a key difference was that the investments were based on laws passed by Congress.

Trump's unilateral approach is more nimble, his White House argues, saying that funding for his investments come from sources previously approved by Congress.

Trump specifically took loans and grants from Biden's 2022 CHIPS and Science Act and converted them into a \$11.1 billion purchase of Intel stock. In his 2025 address to Congress, Trump called the CHIPS Act a "horrible, horrible thing" and suggested the Republican majorities claw back funding to pay down the budget deficit.

With Spirit Airlines in Chapter 11 bankruptcy, his administration had been weighing a \$500 million deal that would have given the government a stake in the Florida-based discount airline. Other budget carriers have been interested in similar packages.

That possibility drew objections from Republicans such as Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas and Tom Cotton of Arkansas. Trump had told reporters in the Oval Office that he wanted to save the jobs at Spirit Airlines and that "when the prices of oil goes down, we'll sell it for a profit."

Government investment can help to even the playing field for American companies competing against subsidized foreign businesses, said Monica Gorman, a managing director at Crowell Global Advisors who helped lead manufacturing and industrial policy in the Biden White House.

But Gorman said that it was unclear whether the Trump administration had fully grasped the risks of "making some bad bets." She stressed the importance of formalizing the process through legislation instead of relying on Trump's whims.

"Congress really needs to step in and design a legislative framework for U.S. industrial policy that governs equity stakes as well as other mechanisms such as loans and grants," she said. "All of these are important tools in the U.S. industrial policy toolkit, but we need more guidance on when and how to use them."

A bright moon may dim the Eta Aquarid meteor shower made up of Halley's comet debris

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Eta Aquarid meteor shower soon will light the sky with debris from Halley's comet. But a bright moon will spoil the fun this year, making the display harder to glimpse.

The shower will peak Tuesday night into Wednesday morning. Viewers from the Southern Hemisphere typically see 50 meteors per hour during the peak, but the interfering moon could cut that number by half. In the north, skywatchers will likely see fewer than 10 per hour.

"For us in the Northern Hemisphere, it's not going to be as impressive," said Teri Gee, manager of the Barlow Planetarium in Wisconsin. "The farther south you are, the better you'll see it."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 82 of 83

Meteor showers happen when the Earth charges through trails of debris left behind from comets or asteroids. Those bits collide with Earth's atmosphere at extremely high speeds, producing streaks of light that are also known as shooting stars.

On any given night, a handful of stray meteors are visible under dark skies. Meteor showers yield a more exciting show and happen at predictable times every year.

Most meteor showers are caused by leftovers from comets, and the Eta Aquarids feature debris from one of the most well-known. Halley's comet passes by Earth about every 76 years on its trip around the sun. It'll next swing by in 2061.

To glimpse these meteors, it's best to go outside just before dawn. Venture away from city lights and tall buildings to get a clear view of the sky. In this case, it might also help to find a spot that blocks the luminous waning gibbous moon, which will be 84% full.

Bring blankets and lawn chairs. Avoid looking at your phone and give your eyes time to get used to the darkness. Look to the east in the vicinity of constellation Aquarius and bright star Eta Aquarii.

"You're looking for bright streaks that appear in the corner of your eye for a fraction of a second," said astrophysicist Nico Adams with SSP International, a nonprofit that promotes STEM education.

There's no better way to enjoy the show than to experience it firsthand, Gee said.

"It almost feels like you're discovering it yourself," she said.

Today in History: May 3, Oklahoma City struck by historic tornado

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, May 3, the 123rd day of 2026. There are 242 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 3, 1999, the Bridge Creek–Moore tornado struck the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, causing 41 deaths and nearly 600 injuries; the tornado's top wind speed of 321 mph (517 kph) was the highest ever recorded on Earth.

Also on this date:

In 1802, Washington, D.C., was incorporated as a city.

In 1937, Margaret Mitchell won the Pulitzer Prize for her novel, "Gone with the Wind."

In 1948, the Supreme Court, in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, ruled that covenants prohibiting the sale of real estate to Blacks or members of other racial groups were legally unenforceable.

In 1979, the Conservative Party ousted the incumbent Labour government in British parliamentary elections; Conservative leader Margaret Thatcher would become the first female U.K. prime minister the following day.

In 1986, riding the long shot Ferdinand, Bill Shoemaker became the oldest jockey to win the Kentucky Derby at age 54.

In 2003, the "Old Man of the Mountain," a 40-foot (12-meter) -tall granite outcropping in Franconia, New Hampshire that bore the resemblance of a human face in profile, collapsed despite decades of preservation efforts.

In 2015, two gunmen were killed by a SWAT team in Garland, Texas, after they opened fire outside a purposely provocative contest for cartoon depictions of the Prophet Muhammad.

In 2016, in a stunning triumph for a political outsider, Donald Trump all but clinched the Republican presidential nomination with a resounding victory in the Indiana primary. (Trump would defeat Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton in November 2016 for his first presidential term.)

In 2021, an elevated overpass on a Mexico City metro line collapsed onto a road, killing 26 people and injuring dozens just as a subway train was crossing over the section. At least one car was trapped beneath the rubble.

In 2023, a 13-year-old student shot dead nine children and a school guard at a school in Belgrade, Serbia. The shooter was too young to face trial under Serbian law, but his parents, charged for failing to keep the weapons out of reach of their son, were convicted of child neglect (the boy's father also was convicted of "grave acts against public safety.")

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, May 3, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 332 ~ 83 of 83

Today's Birthdays: Singer Frankie Valli is 92. Singer Christopher Cross is 75. Actor Amy Ryan is 58. Actor Bobby Cannavale (ka-nuh-VAL'-ee) is 56. Music executive-entrepreneur Damon Dash is 55. Actor Christina Hendricks is 51. Actor Dule (doo-LAY') Hill is 51. Country musician Eric Church is 49. Golfer Brooks Koepka is 36. Country singer Ella Langley is 27. Actor Rachel Zegler is 25. Soccer player Florian Wirtz is 23. Actor Maxwell Jenkins is 21.