

Groton Daily Independent

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“THE PEOPLE WHO GET AHEAD IN THIS WORLD ARE THE PEOPLE WHO GET UP AND LOOK FOR THE CIRCUMSTANCES THEY WANT, AND IF THEY CAN'T FIND THEM, MAKE THEM.”

-GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

Ho! Ho! Ho!
Merry Christmas!

Harry Implement
“Family Owned & Operated Since 1935!”
(605) 395-6421 ~ Ferney

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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Sunday Extras



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

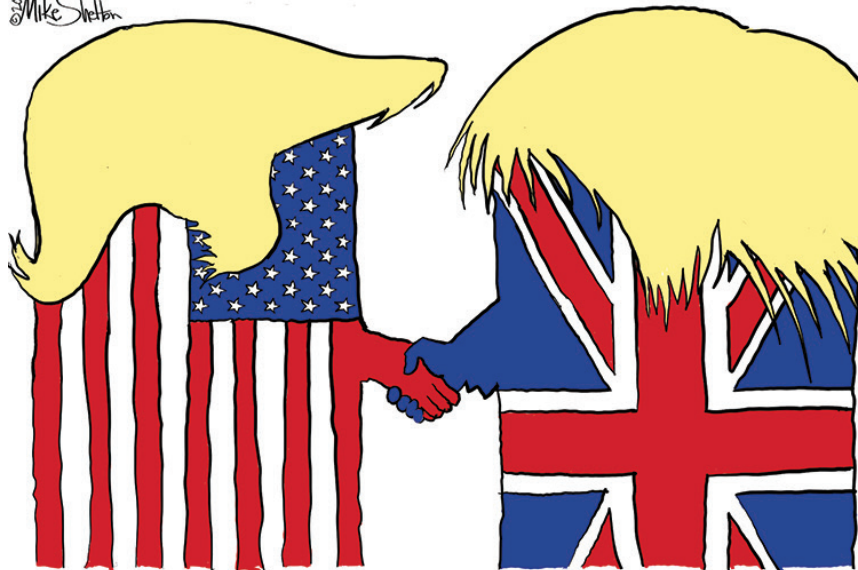


*And the whole
multitude sought
to touch Him,
for power went out
from Him and
healed them all.*

LUKE 6:19

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The "Special Relationship"

BIBLE TRIVIA by Wilson Casey

1) The main Christmas story is paraphrased from what two New Testament books? *Mark/John, Acts/Romans, Matthew/Luke, Jude/Revelation*

2) Who visited Jesus on the night of his birth and found Mary, Joseph and the babe lying in a manger? *Innkeeper, Shepherds, Herod, Magi*

3) Where was the young child when the Magi came to visit Him to present gifts? *Manger, Under the stars, House, Temple*

4) How many times does the word "Christmas" appear in the Bible (KJV)? *Zero, 1, 2, 7*

5) Who was King of Judaea at the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem? *Solomon, Herod, Balak, Belshazzar*

6) What animals were present at Jesus' birth? *Lions and bears, Sheep and goats, Cows and donkeys, No mention of animals*

ANSWERS: 1) Matthew/Luke; 2) Shepherds; 3) House; 4) Zero; 5) Herod; 6) No mention of animals

More Trivia? Comments? Gift ideas? Visit www.TriviaGuy.com



by Healthy Exchanges

Maple Apricot Bubble Loaf

Put this on the menu and watch everyone race to the breakfast table! It's sure to please kids from 2 to 92!

- 1 (7.5-ounce) can refrigerated buttermilk biscuits
- 6 tablespoons apricot spreadable fruit
- 2 tablespoons sugar-free maple syrup
- 3 tablespoons chopped pecans


1. Heat oven to 375 F. Spray an 8-inch round cake pan with butter-flavored cooking spray. Separate biscuits and cut each into 4 pieces. Drop biscuit pieces into prepared cake pan. Lightly spray biscuit tops with butter-flavored cooking spray.

2. In a medium bowl, combine fruit spread, maple syrup and pecans. Evenly spoon mixture over biscuit pieces. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. Place cake pan on a wire rack and let set for 5 minutes. Cut into 6 wedges. Serve warm.


• Each serving equals: 151 calories, 3g fat, 3g protein, 28g carb., 315mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Starch, 1 Fruit, 1/2 Fat.

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Character Profile:
Dale Arden



AN AIRPLANE IS TORN ASUNDER BY A FREAK METEOR SHOWER!

THAT FATEFUL FLIGHT BRINGS RAVEN-HAIRED BEAUTY DALE ARDEN INTO THE ARMS OF WORLD-RENOWNED ATHLETE FLASH GORDON.

SINCE THEN THEIR LIVES HAVE BEEN BOUND TOGETHER... FACING ADVENTURES UNDREAMED OF IN THE HOPES OF SAVING A WORLD ON THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION!

FLASH GORDON

12-15 BY JIM KEEFE

BACK ON EARTH:

STOPPED BY A GUARD WHILE TRYING TO ESCAPE, DALE ARDEN SWIFTLY SUBDUES HIM.

NICE SHOT. THOSE YEARS ON MONGO MUST HAVE GIVEN YOU SOME PRACTICE.

YES---AND THE SOONER YOU START TRUSTING ME, THE QUICKER WE GET OUT OF HERE.

YOU... BELIEVE ME ABOUT THE PLANET MONGO?

WHO...?

WE HAVE THREE MINUTES AT BEST BEFORE HER ABSENCE IS DISCOVERED AND THE BUILDING'S SEALED.

PUT THIS ON.

WHA...?

QUICK, JUST DO AS HE SAYS...

ENOUGH TALK-- THIS WAY!

TO BE CONT'D..!

AROOGA-AROOGA!

LIKE I SAID--AT BEST...

...AND WE MAY ACTUALLY MAKE IT OUT OF HERE ALIVE!

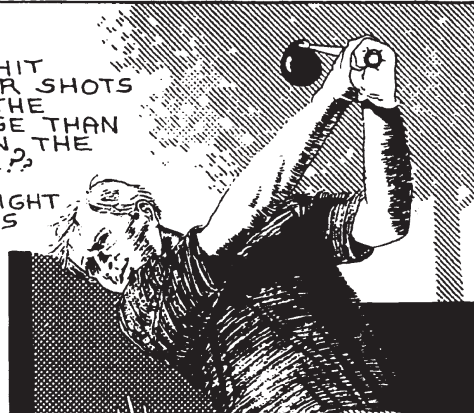
FSSSSSSSSSSSS!

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

DO YOU HIT BETTER SHOTS ON THE DRIVING RANGE THAN YOU DO ON THE COURSE??


THE REASON MIGHT BE CARELESS AIMING AND ALIGNING CAUSED BY PRACTICE AND WARMUP SHOTS "NOT COUNTING."



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THE ANSWER IS TO BE AS TARGET-CONSCIOUS WHEN PRACTICING AS WHEN PLAYING FOR REAL.

ALWAYS PICK A SPECIFIC TARGET FOR EVERY PRACTICE SHOT, THEN TAKE THE TIME AND CARE TO AIM AND ALIGN THE CLUB AND YOURSELF CORRECTLY.



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Eating Peanut Butter Cured Her Insomnia

DEAR DR. ROACH: Several years ago, I attended a presentation about insomnia. A registered nurse discussed how, in her career as a nursing home nurse, she had many residents with insomnia. She stated that she had amazing success with these residents. The snack they gave them was crackers and cheese or peanut butter crackers. I was skeptical at first, then one night at 2 a.m., on my fourth night of insomnia, I tried eating 2 teaspoons of peanut butter. Bingo! I slept. Whenever my insomnia occurs, I eat 2 teaspoons of peanut butter, and in less than 15 minutes I'm sleeping. I use a nothing-fancy store brand of peanut butter. Please pass this information on to other readers with an explanation. — *B.J.T.*

ANSWER: I appreciate your writing to give another option for this common problem. One reason that some people think this may work is that the protein content in peanut butter is a source of tryptophan, which increases serotonin levels to help one relax. I also have read that this effect is so small as to be clinically meaningless, and that any sleep effect is due to placebo. I suspect the truth is a combination.

Two tablespoons of peanut butter is almost 200 calories, so this is not a good choice for someone struggling with too much weight. I'm also not one for "fancy," but be sure to choose a peanut butter with no trans fats and no added sugars.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I recently

recovered from sigmoid colectomy surgery, and I would hate to repeat this, given that I am 75 years old. What are the possibilities of recurrence of diverticulitis for which the surgery was performed? It's nothing I'd care to undergo again if it can be avoided! — *C.K.*

ANSWER: Surgery for diverticulitis is generally reserved for people with multiple recurrences. The sigmoid colon tends to be the portion of the colon with the most diverticula (small pouches in the wall of the colon that may get inflamed or bleed). Surgery usually is curative, with only 15% of people developing new diverticula and only 2% to 11% needing further surgery.

It's not proven, but most authorities believe that reducing pressure in the colon with a high-fiber diet reduces risk of developing diverticula, either recurrent after surgery or in the first place.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have heard of people whose hair turned white overnight due to some traumatic event. Is there any truth to that? — *H.M.*

ANSWER: The sudden change of hair color is called canities subita. There was a review of literature published in 2013 with 44 well-documented cases of sudden color change, 21 of which were associated with an episode of emotional stress. Think Sir Thomas More or Marie Antoinette before their respective executions. However, while true, rapid, color change is certainly documented, it is exceedingly rare.

What probably is more common is the sudden loss of pigmented hair in someone who already has some gray hair. Sudden loss of pigmented hair, in a condition called alopecia areata diffusa, can lead to an apparent color change. Hair lost during chemotherapy or radiation sometimes can come back with a different color or texture.

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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1. Duo Kris Kristofferson and Rita Coolidge (1973), and then duo Dobie Gray and Elvis Presley (1974,) released the same song. What was it?

2. Where was Stealers Wheel from?

3. Which singers had hits with "How Am I Supposed to Live Without You"?

4. Name the singer-songwriter who released "Cupid."

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "So always make me wonder, Always make me guess, And even if I ask you, Darling, please don't confess."

Answers

1. "Loving Arms." In 1977, the song ended up in a Season 2 episode of "Starsky & Hutch."

2. Scotland. They're best known for "Stuck in the Middle with You," which shot to No. 6 in the U.S.

3. Michael Bolton co-wrote the song, which was recorded in 1983 by Laura Branigan. Bolton also had a hit with the song in 1989.

4. Sam Cooke, in 1961. As of 2017, other singers are still covering the song.

5. "I Really Don't Want to Know," originally by Les Paul and Mary Ford in 1953. Numerous others have covered the song over the years: Solomon Burke (1962), Elvis Presley (1970) and John Travolta in the 2004 film "A Love Song for Bobby Long."

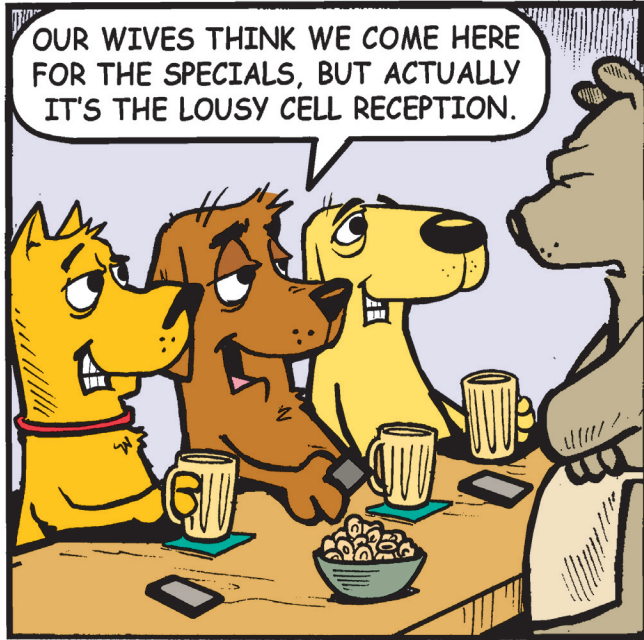
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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT

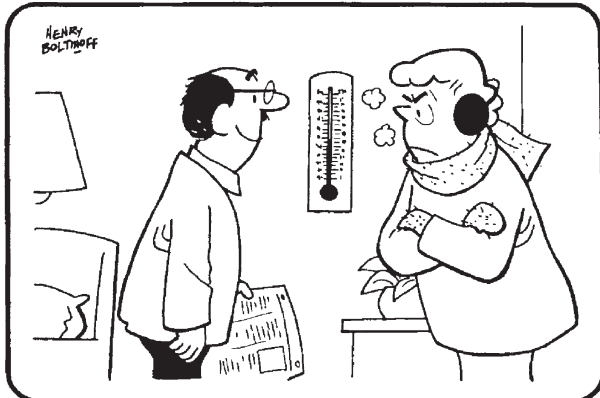


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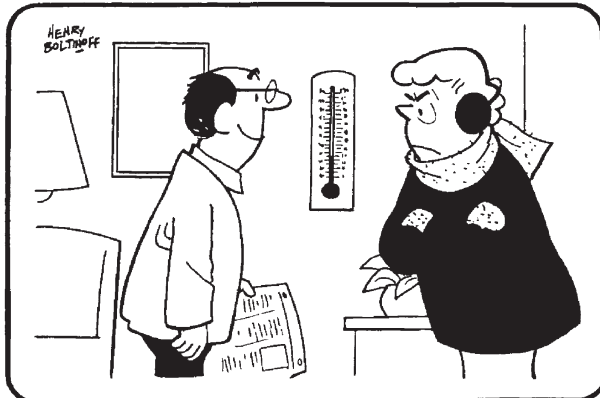
"If this diet works on you, I'm going to try it!"

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTHOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Blouse is black. 2. Breath "puffs" are gone. 3. Picture has been added. 4. Pillow is missing. 5. Temperature is lower. 6. Moustache is gone.



- “Cabbage leaves go limp in freezer, making them easier to roll. This is especially helpful if you are making a big batch of cabbage rolls!” — *V.W. in California*

- Clean and decorate a Pringles chip can to store a collection of colored pencils. Keep the lid on for portability. You can even roll up some plain paper to store inside for an on-the-go drawing kit.

- Need to heat up two plates of leftovers? Form the food into a ring (which is better for even heating anyway), then set a microwave-safe glass or mug on the center of the plate. Set the second plate of leftovers on top.

- If you can't paint your dorm or rental apartment walls, here's some ways to dress up your decor: Try removable stickers from home decor stores or online. Also you can hang a tapestry. It doesn't have to be elaborate, and if the material is light enough, you can use removable hooks, like Command strips. Or, try creating a pattern with washi tape, which also is removable.

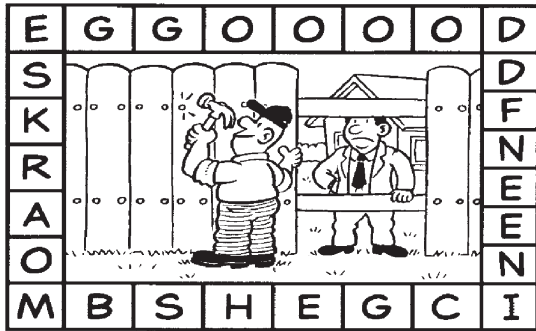
- “If you thread a Slinky-type toy onto the pole of your bird feeder, the squirrels can't get to it. You can usually find these at the dollar store in a plastic version, too.” — *C.D. in Ohio*

- Common substitutions: Recipe call for buttermilk? Add 1 teaspoon of lemon juice per cup of milk.

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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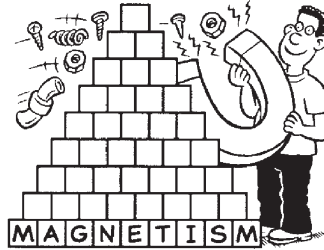


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Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

THE PYRAMID OF WORD POWER!



Starting with **MAGNETISM**, the given word at the bottom of our word pyramid, try dropping one letter at a time as you work your way up, so that the remaining letters at each level spell out a new word. The following helpful hints are in ascending order, beginning with **MAGNETISM**.

1. The power to attract (given).
2. To become very angry.
3. The act of making fun of.
4. Found in fairy tales.
5. Small, biting insects.
6. A pull or tear in fabric.
7. The Tower of Pisa, for example.
8. To the same extent or degree.
9. Highest quality.

Answers: (from the bottom up): Magnetism, steaming, teasing, giants, gnats, snag, sag, as, a.

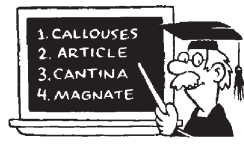
Illustrated by David Coulson

NOT NECESSARILY SO! Hidden in the above frame is a famous old saying. You can find it by reading every other letter as you go around it clockwise. The trick is finding the right first letter.

Answer: Starting with the first "G" in the top rail: "Good fences make good neighbors."

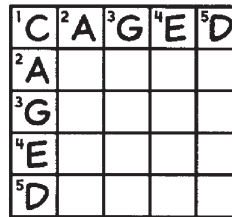
A "POP" QUIZ! Students, you have one minute to find out why these four words are like bad computer programs. The clock is running.

Answer: They're like bad computer programs because they all contain "BUGS." 1. Louse. 2. Tic. 3. Ant. 4. Gnat.



DON'T GET "WILD" TRYING TO SOLVE THIS ONE! At right is a word square. Can you find the four five-letter words that match the definitions below? All words used must read the same both across and down.

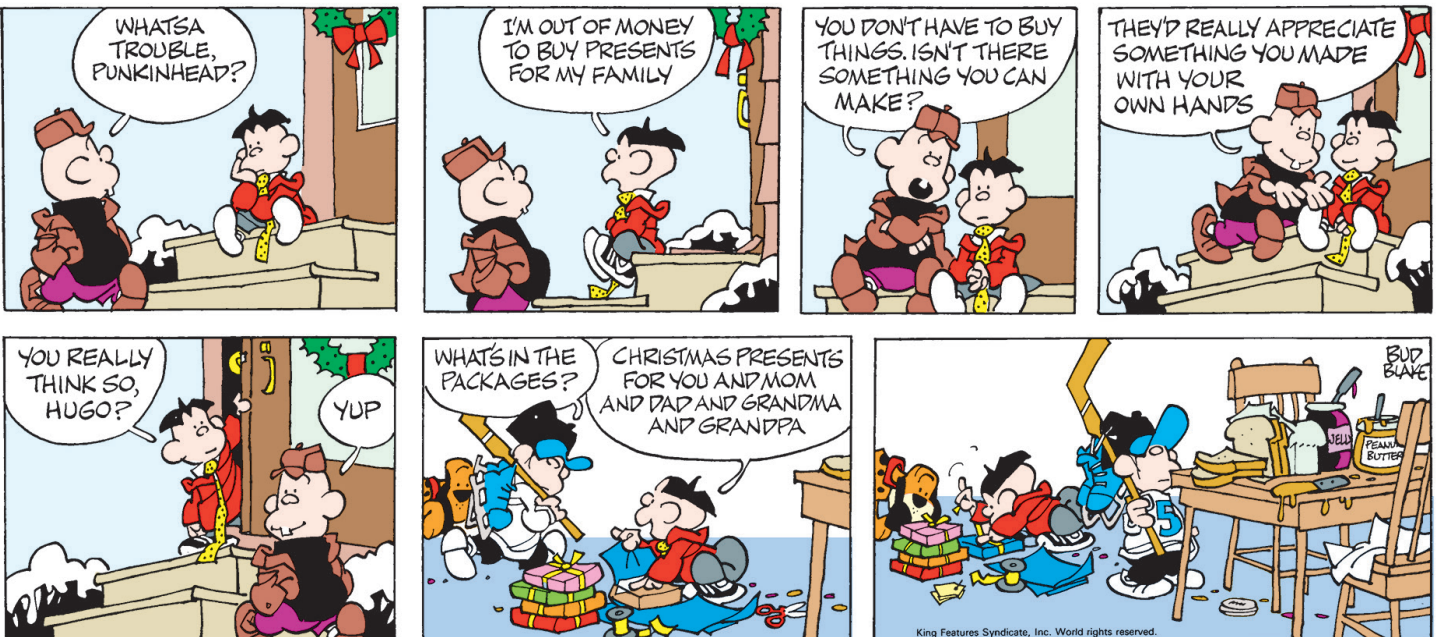
1. To be confined (in place).
2. A dwelling place.
3. To stuff with food.
4. A finished lawn.
5. Sealed documents.



Answers: 1. Caged. 2. Abode. 3. Gorge. 4. Edged. 5. Deeds.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Variety of lettuce
- 5 "Eureka!"
- 8 Book of prophecies
- 12 Lotion additive
- 13 Chaps
- 14 Toothpaste container
- 15 Anger
- 16 Conventional
- 18 One up?
- 20 Western occurrence
- 21 Leopold's codefendant
- 23 Four qts.
- 24 One of Monopoly's light-blue avenues
- 28 Speech impediment
- 31 Great noise
- 32 Disrobe
- 34 Female deer
- 35 Bird of peace
- 37 Decoration
- 39 Finish
- 41 Ireland
- 42 Secular
- 45 Servile
- 49 Form a union
- 51 Top
- 52 Isn't well
- 53 Calendar abbr.
- 54 Prolonged sleep

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

- 55 Run away
- 56 Automaton, for short
- 57 Slaughter of baseball
- DOWN**
- 1 Zinger
- 2 Pelvic bones
- 3 Nut partner
- 4 Pvt. Bailey
- 5 Cherub, in art
- 6 The girl
- 7 Picnic invaders
- 8 Musically keyless
- 9 Flood aftermath, perhaps
- 10 Reed instrument
- 11 Send a naughty message
- 17 Embrace
- 19 Billions of years
- 22 Wilkes- —, Pa.
- 24 Peculiar
- 25 Brazilian tourist mecca
- 26 Lure
- 27 Ache aid
- 29 Junior
- 30 Teacher's —
- 33 Rid of rind
- 36 Put in a box
- 38 Threaten
- 40 Novelist Brown
- 42 Unsliced bread
- 43 Seed coat
- 44 Owl's perch
- 46 PC picture
- 47 Magazine contents
- 48 Meadows
- 50 Menagerie

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

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

LAFF - A - DAY



"I love this time of year when our lawn looks as good as the Tuttlés'."

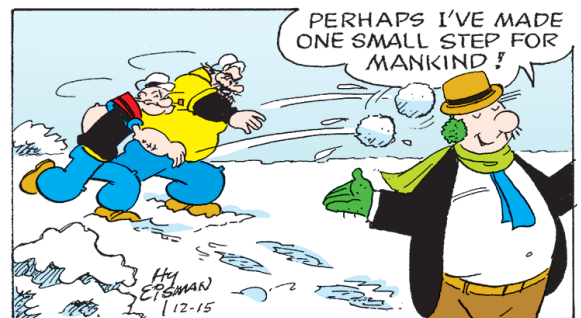
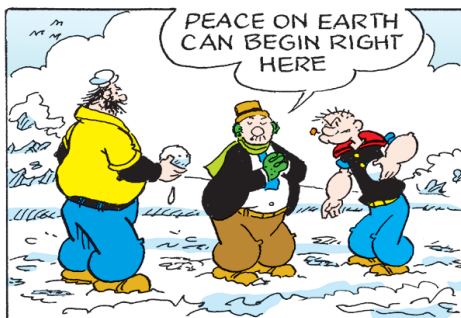
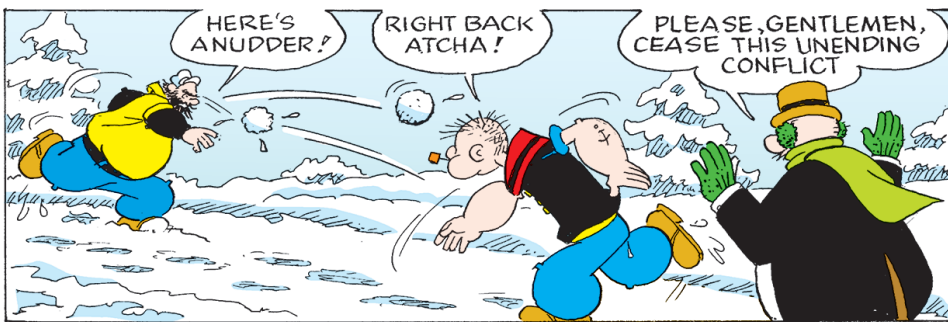
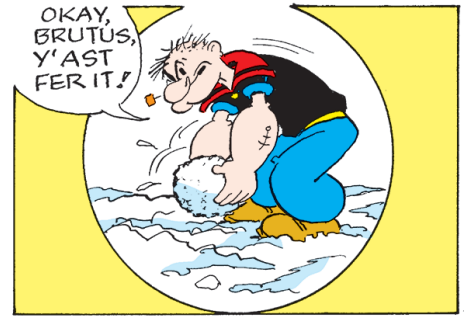
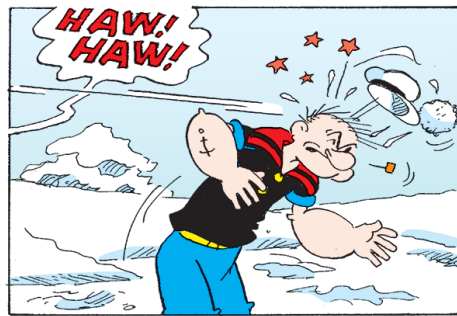
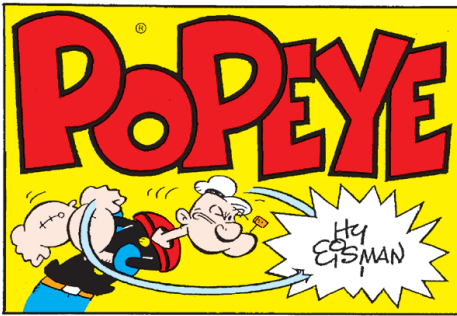
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



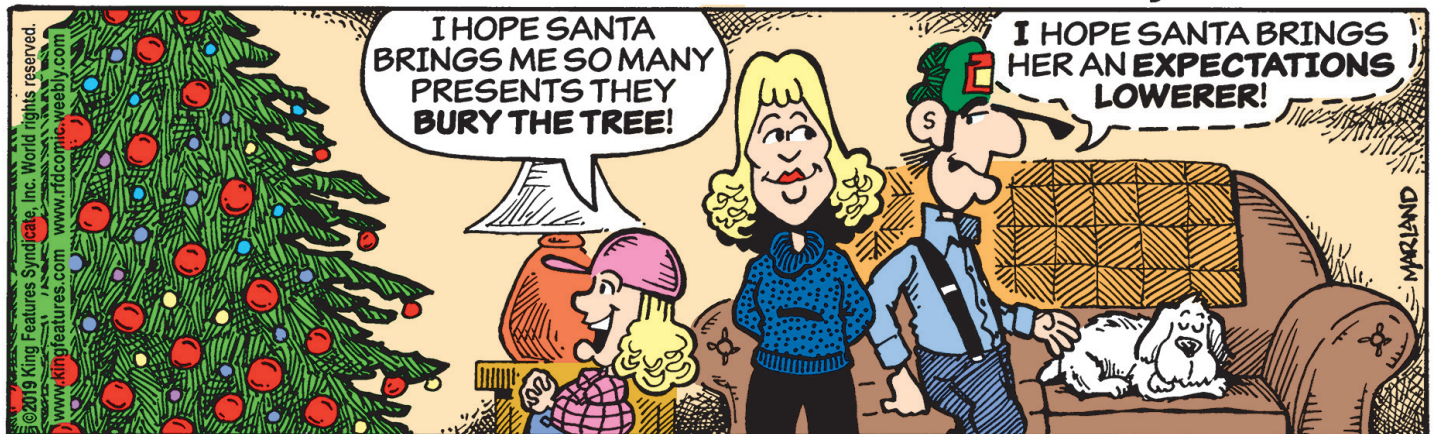
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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HAL FOSTER'S
Prince Valiant
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ

Our Story:
WHILE THE BRUTISH CAPTORS OF VAL'S COMPANY WORK THROUGH A NASTY INTERNAL DISAGREEMENT, BUKOTA CAUTIOUSLY EDGES TOWARD HIS SPEAR.

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BUT THE BEAST MEN ARE NOT OBLIVIOUS. WITH LIGHTNING REFLEXES, THEIR ATTENTION IS FOCUSED ON THE AB'SABAN...

...WHO RECEIVES A KICK TO THE RIBS. THE BRUTES MAY BEHAVE WITH JUVENILE ABANDON, BUT THEY ARE NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH!

THE ENRAGED BUKOTA LEAPS UP TO RETALIATE. "DON'T!" GROWLS VAL. "REMEMBER THE SEA BEAST - THEIR ARROWS ARE POISONED!"

AND SO BUKOTA DECIDES TO BIDE HIS TIME. THE FOUR VISITORS TO THIS BIZARRE SEA OF WEED ARE FORCED TO REMOUNT THEIR SKIDS AND ARE DRIVEN OUT TOWARD AN ISLAND LOOMING ON THE HORIZON.

THIS IS NOT HOW VAL IMAGINED HIS SEARCH FOR FRESH WATER ENDING.
NEXT:
Common ground

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

GRANDPA, WHAT IS HALF OF INFINITY?

RUB RUB RUB

NITY.

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Wired or Wireless?

Much of the time we want to embrace technology and whatever is the latest and greatest. When it comes to our electronic gadgets, sometimes the newest isn't necessarily the best.

I suspected I was in trouble when my cable provider insisted on installing a new, fancy modem. Within hours, my computer, hooked up via Wi-Fi (wireless fidelity), was dragging and cutting out. After multiple phone calls over several days, the cable provider sent a technician. His verdict: I have excellent speed for Wi-Fi (how nice), but it's the nature of Wi-Fi to do that: slow down at the most inopportune times. I cut to the heart of the problem and went to a big box electronics store where I picked up an ethernet cable, which I ran from the new, fancy modem directly to my computer. It now runs like a champ, at a consistent speed.

While going through this experience, I conducted a small poll of people to ask whether they prefer Wi-Fi or wired gadgets. The results were surprising. Seniors are more likely to say they like wireless. Their main reason? It's the more modern way to hook up computers, printers and so on. The ones who prefer the wired gadgets are the younger geeky guys who work in electronics stores and don't have time to fool with varying rates of speed created by Wi-Fi. Wired connections have more consistent speed, are more secure, are generally faster and aren't usually affected by the environment.

My printer, still running on Wi-Fi, has now begun to be a problem, no doubt thanks to the fancy, new modem. The solution will be a USB A to B cable running from the printer to the computer.

Researchers say that 73% of seniors are now on the Internet. It might as well be fast, right?

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1. Dale Murphy is one of four outfielders in major-league history to win back-to-back regular-season MVP awards. Name two of the other three.
2. Who holds the Texas Rangers' record for most hits in a season?
3. How many Division I football teams has Dennis Erickson coached during his 19-year college career?
4. In 2018, the Golden State Warriors set an NBA record for most consecutive home postseason victories (16). Who had held the mark?
5. The New Jersey Devils have had the No. 1 overall pick in the NHL Entry Draft twice. Name either player selected.
6. Simone Biles set a record in 2019 for most career medals by any gymnast at the world championships (25). Who had held the mark?
7. In 2019, Brooke Henderson set a record for most wins by a Canadian on the LPGA Tour. Who had held the record at eight?

Answers

1. Barry Bonds, Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris.
2. Michael Young had 221 hits (and a .331 batting average) for the Rangers in 2005.
3. Six: Wyoming, Washington State, Miami, Fla., Oregon State, Idaho and Arizona State.
4. The Chicago Bulls, with 15 consecutive wins in 1990-91.
5. Nico Hischier (2017) and Jack Hughes (2019).
6. Vitaly Scherbo of Belarus, with 23.
7. Sandra Post.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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CONGRESSMAN
DUSTY JOHNSON
Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



Dear Santa

Dear Santa,

This year, we finalized a trade agreement with Mexico and Canada, gave our troops a pay raise, and in what can only be called a Christmas Miracle – Congress passed a budget. We got a lot done this year, but I wanted to make sure you got my Christmas list just in case there was a little more room in the sleigh.

All I want for Christmas is...

A bipartisan agreement on lowering the cost of prescription drugs.

Funding for border security. I do have to say thanks for getting \$1.3 billion secured this week.

A strengthened Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) rule or passage of my bill, the RFS Integrity Act.

A functional budget process.

A finalized trade deal with China.

Good weather for our farmers and producers.

Passage of the Ben Reifel Post Office bill and the Tribal School Federal Insurance Parity Act.

More access to broadband in rural South Dakota.

And last, but not least, to see the Anti-Robocall TRACED Act signed into law by the president. Nobody wants to deal with pesky robocalls during the holidays.

Now Santa, I know these are some big ideas and there are only a few days left in the year. But I hope you can help us get a few more wishes checked off our Christmas list.

Thanks,
Dusty Johnson

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SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR
KRISTI NOEM



Merry Christmas!

When this time of year rolls around, I'm always surprised, somehow. It's not as if I didn't know it was coming. It just seems like the years go a bit too fast these days and, all of a sudden, Christmas is here once again.

There's no doubt people are starting to prepare for the holidays earlier. More and more we find ourselves rushing through the days and never really stopping to enjoy what is going on around us. I have to remind myself that this is a time to slow down, spend time with family and friends, reflect on the Reason for our celebration, and remember all that we are thankful for.

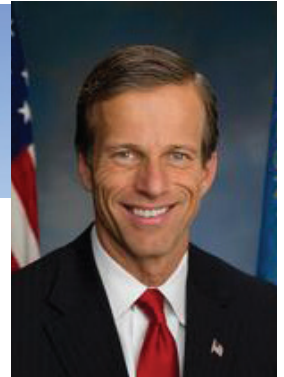
For my family, we often do this around table games. Recently, our go-to has been Yahtzee. Who would have thought that five dice could bring so much entertainment? I have no idea how Bryon does it.... It's amazing how many times that man can get a large straight!

Whatever it is that brings your family together, I hope you remember this: Christmas is special. It is about being thankful for what we have and the country we are blessed to live in... A country that is secured by our heroes who may not get to be home with their families this season. Christmas is about peace – disconnecting from your daily chaos to prioritize the people who are dearest to you. And most importantly, Christmas is about celebrating the story of Jesus – our invitation for a reunion with God.

This Christmas season, hold the people you love tightly. Reflect on the year gone by and the areas you've grown. Give thanks regardless of your circumstance. Set goals for the new year. And maybe play some Yahtzee too.

Merry Christmas!

John Thune U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Happy 100th Birthday, Dad

In 1906, two brothers, Nikolai and Matthew Gjelsvik, arrived at Ellis Island from Norway. The only English they knew were the words apple pie and coffee, which they learned on the boat on the way over. The immigration officials at Ellis Island asked them to change their last name because they thought it would be too difficult for people in this country to spell and pronounce. So the two brothers picked a new name. They chose the name of the farm they worked at near Bergen, Norway – which was called the Thune farm. So Nikolai Gjelsvik became Nick Thune – my grandfather.

The two brothers worked on the railroad as they built it west across South Dakota, learned English, and saved up enough money to start a small merchandising company, and then later a hardware store, in Mitchell, South Dakota.

To this day there is a Thune Hardware in Mitchell, although the family sold it many years ago. In 1916, Nick Thune married an Iowa girl who had moved to South Dakota to teach school, and they had three sons. Their middle son, Harold, will turn 100 on December 28. That middle son is my dad.

My dad is a World War II veteran, a member of the Greatest Generation, and he shares the qualities of so many in that generation – humility, patriotism, quiet service. Dad was a Navy pilot who flew Hellcats off the USS Intrepid. And he was an excellent pilot. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross for shooting down four enemy planes in one engagement (that commendation was issued by Admiral John McCain, Sen. John McCain's grandfather.)

But my dad didn't – and still doesn't – talk about his own exploits. In fact, without my mom, I'm not sure I'd ever have known about my dad's record in World War II. I interviewed Dad for the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project a few years back, and he shared a lot of wonderful details about his service. But as usual, his focus was never on his own achievements, but on those of his fellow pilots.

I'd also probably never have learned what an outstanding athlete my dad was if it hadn't been for my mom. My dad grew up in the small town of Murdo, South Dakota, during the Great Depression. They didn't have a lot, but there were a lot of basketball hoops around Murdo – on barns, poles, garages – and my dad learned to play. In fact, he learned to play so well that he took his high school basketball team to the state championship game – where, although they lost narrowly, he was named the tournament's most valuable player.

My dad had hoped to attend college in South Dakota, but a doctor in Murdo named Joseph Murphy thought my dad was good enough to play at the University of Minnesota and used his contacts to get my dad up to Hibbing Junior College in hopes that the Minnesota Gophers would notice him. They did, and he went down to the Twin Cities on a scholarship and played three seasons for the Gophers. He was the team's most valuable player in his junior year. In fact, he was high point man in Madison Square Garden on his birthday, December 28, 1940.

While at the University of Minnesota, Dad met a girl who served sodas at a drugstore just off campus. They were married within a couple of years, while my Dad was in flight training for the Navy, and spent the next 69 years together.

After the war, they came back to South Dakota.

My dad had been thinking about a career in the Navy, but his dad asked him to come back and run the family hardware store. My dad said that his heart sank, but he knew what he had to do. So he came home and went to work for his dad.

The hardware store struggled, so dad eventually went back to school to get a teaching degree. All parents

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are teachers for their kids, but my parents were my teachers several times over. Kids usually get a break from their parents when they're at school, but my dad was a teacher at my high school. He was also a coach. And the athletic director. And he drove the bus. And my mom was the school librarian. So it's safe to say my brothers and sister and I were pretty much always under the watchful eye of my parents. I never had my dad for a class, but my brother Rich did. Rich was the valedictorian of his high school class, and the only B he got in high school was from my dad. That was Dad for you.

He never showed any preference or gave any of his kids better treatment than anybody else. In fact, some of us might argue that he gave us a harder time because we were his kids! He believed very firmly that you had to earn your achievements. As a coach, my dad taught us about being a team player. He made it clear that being on a team was not about building your personal statistics but about making the players around you better. It's a lesson I've carried throughout my life, and one I try to live by every day.

A few years ago, the Jones County School District named the auditorium in Murdo after my dad in recognition of his service and achievements at the school. It was particularly special since my dad was one of the volunteers who originally built the auditorium. My dad told me that he was more scared up on the scaffolding of that building than he'd ever been flying off a carrier during World War II.

You might think that with my dad as a coach and athletic director, sports were the main focus around our house, and they certainly were a big part of our lives. But my mom was determined that we would grow up to be well-rounded people, and my dad always supported her in that. They worked hard to ensure that we grew up with a perspective on life that went beyond just the latest sporting event. Mom made us study piano and, during the summers, come in from outside and read for an hour every day. We complained at the time, but I know that all of us today are grateful to her and my father for that.

Mom and Dad made a good team – Mom was an optimist and Dad was a pessimist – or, as he'd put it, a realist – and they really balanced each other. We didn't have material riches growing up, but we were beyond rich in those things that money can't buy but that lend purpose, joy, and meaning to life. All of us Thune kids are very grateful for that heritage.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention something that was life-changing for my parents, and that was their strong faith in Christ. My dad has always had real discernment and wisdom – in no small part because of his daily dependence upon God in his life. He's always prayed for wisdom, and God has blessed him with it.

Dad, thank you for the example of faith, integrity, character, and humility you've given to me and Bob and Rich and Karen and Tim. Thank you for faithfully serving God's purpose for your generation, and happy 100th birthday.

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The Magic of Christmas

As we celebrate the holidays with our loved ones, we are reminded of the true reason for the season: the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. His teachings remind us to be kind to others, share our gratitude for all the good things in our lives and give back to those less fortunate. Through these acts, we can experience the real magic of Christmas.

You may be surprised to hear that Christmas magic is alive and well even in the most unlikely of places—the United States Capitol. Despite what you too often see in the news, we don't always disagree and bicker. We certainly have our differences, but I have made many friends in Washington on both sides of the aisle. The camaraderie we share as legislators seeking to improve the lives of all Americans is amplified during the Christmas season, and we enjoy taking time out of our busy days to celebrate.

Since joining the Senate, I've been a regular member at weekly prayer breakfast meetings. Our group is made up of both Republicans and Democrats—we leave our politics at the door and focus on what we have in common, which is our shared faith. At a recent prayer breakfast, we celebrated Christmas by singing some of our favorite carols. I have made good friends through our prayer breakfasts—men and women I may not have gotten to know on a personal level otherwise.

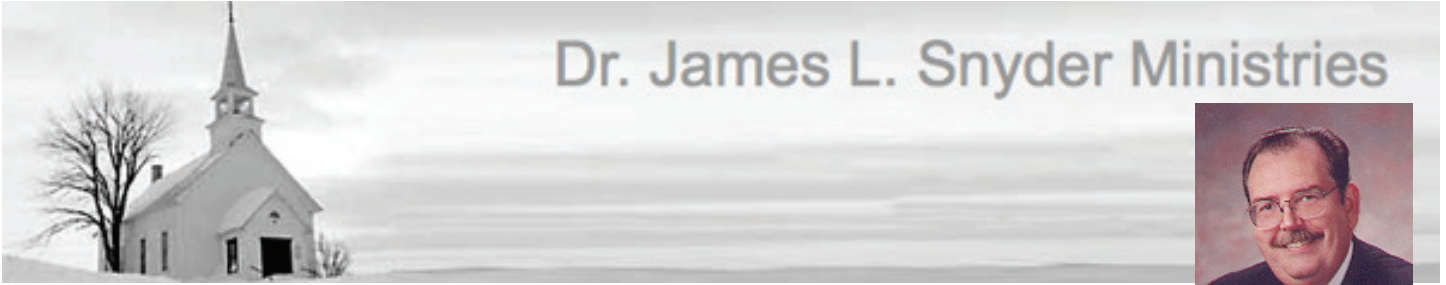
The annual bipartisan Secret Santa gift exchange is another holiday tradition we celebrate on Capitol Hill. Each of us is given the name of a senator from the other party, and we all get together for a reception to exchange small gifts. This year, I was able to wrap up some of my favorite chocolates from Deadwood's Chubby Chipmunk to give to Senator Jacky Rosen of Nevada. Senator Tom Carper of Delaware gave me a baseball cap commemorating USS Delaware SSN 791, a nuclear attack submarine that was commissioned shortly after USS South Dakota SSN 790.

Of course, none of us would be able to celebrate the holidays freely if not for our men and women in uniform. This time of year we are reminded of those who are spending the holidays away from home as they fight to protect our freedom. Our servicemembers deserve our eternal gratitude for the sacrifices they make on behalf of our country. I spent some time this month writing holiday cards to our troops stationed overseas thanks to the American Red Cross's Holidays for Heroes event. They set up tables in the Capitol each year for members of congress and our staffs to send warm wishes to our armed forces.

This year, our family is grateful for God's many gifts, including our ten wonderful grandchildren who all live in the Pierre/Fort Pierre area near our home. We're also grateful for Jean's team of hardworking doctors and nurses who have given us hope that she will beat her cancer diagnosis. Thank you to everyone who has said a prayer for her this year. We wish all South Dakotans a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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Is This a Christmas Present or What?

One great blessing of Christmas is presents. Of course, at my age, I am not too interested in what I am getting but rather what I am giving.

I cannot think of one thing I really would want. I got everything I need even though some of it may be old and outdated. As long as it works, I'm happy with that.

Therefore, it is not what I am receiving that is important to me. I love to see the smile on the grandchildren's face as they open up a present. I am just as delighted as they are opening their gifts because I did not buy it. I paid for it, but it is the job of the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage to do all of the shopping, gift buying, wrapping, and everything that goes with it.

If it were up to me, nothing would really get done, which would be sad.

As I say, I am not looking for much for Christmas this year, just to enjoy the family and celebration.

Then something happened this past week that changed that attitude of mine.

In the mailbox this week, I received a letter from the state traffic department. I was a little nervous opening it because I've never received such a letter before. Why were they sending me a letter? What kind of trouble am I in?

When I opened it, I noticed it was a traffic violation notice. Upon further notice, I saw it was not for me. Can you guess who this traffic violation was for? Two guesses, and it's not me.

I'm not too much into dancing, but I must admit, I did a little happy dance as I read this letter.

Accordingly, my wife had a traffic violation, and a camera recorded it.

Looking at the picture, it did not look anything like my wife. The whole picture was blacked out so you could not see anything. Oh well, it did have her name on it, what more do I need?

Walking into the house, I was cheerfully whistling and maybe some dancing.

"What are you so happy about?"

Looking at my wife, I said, "I'm sorry. What did you say?" I heard her, but I wanted to hear her repeat it.

"You heard me. What are you so happy about?"

I was going to ask her to repeat it, but I thought otherwise.

Handing her the letter, I said with the biggest grin on my face I have ever had, "You have a traffic violation ticket."

There are times in life to celebrate, and, as far as I was concerned, this was one of those times. I do not very often if ever, get one over on the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. This was the first time, and I did not quite know how to handle myself. How much happiness is too much happiness?

"This cannot be my ticket," she said with a very disgusting growl.

"I think it is. It has your name and your license plate number on it. Who else's is it?"

She went outside to her van and checked the license plate number. It was not the right number.

"It is not the right license plate number, so it cannot be mine."

At this point, my happiness peaked. I was not expecting something like this. I was expecting a traffic violation. The total was \$2.35. It did not seem like much, but there it was. I would be able to enjoy this moment for the rest of my life. Oh, how sweet life can be, especially at Christmas.

She handed the letter back to me and said, "Look, this violation was last week in Miami. I was not in Miami last week. This cannot be right."

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My happiness was on a downward spiral. I looked the letter over several times only to discover she was right. She is always right, and here was new proof. I advised her to take it over to the sheriff department and see what they think.

It was not long before she came back and into the house happily whistling but no dancing.

"What are you so happy about?"

She looked at me with a smile and a Merry Christmas twinkle in her eye and said, "The sheriff department told me this was a fraud. It is not my ticket. They advised me to destroy it and forget about it."

Looking at me smiling, she said, "Aren't you happy for me?"

All I could do was look back, smile, and say, "Yes, dear."

Of all the tickets I have received, I could enjoy one for my wife.

It was not a very serious issue, but I could have gotten a lot of mileage from this. Now it is gone. Just when you think you got something, it turns out to be nothing.

I am glad that the ticket was a fraud. I was thinking of what the apostle Paul said. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).

It is that time of the year when we think about all the things to be thankful. I am not sure how many blessings I have because some of the more important ones are ones I do not see. If I rest in God, he will take care of all the blessings I need in life.



Christmas will always be as long as we stand heart to heart and hand in hand. Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection. From everyone at the Groton Vet Clinic, Merry Christmas!

GROTON VET CLINIC

1503 N Broadway, Groton. 605/397-8145





A LOOK INSIDE A CAFO: S.D. farmers share stories of a life in livestock

By: Bart Pfankuch

PART 2 OF A 2-WEEK SERIES: South Dakota livestock production is undergoing a major transition with the expansion of concentrated animal feeding operations, or CAFOs, in which thousands and even millions of animals are raised in a confined space. The large livestock operations are efficient and profitable, but they can also harm human health and damage the environment. As opposition rises, state government is offering financial incentives to counties that approve new projects. Along the way, the farms are sowing heated division in many rural communities and stoking fears South Dakota may end up like CAFO-heavy Iowa, which has seen fish kills and waterway pollution.

The expansion of concentrated animal feeding operations, or CAFOs, in South Dakota is without a doubt one of the most controversial topics in agriculture.

CAFOs are large livestock farms that generally house 1,000 or more animals in a confined, indoor space at any one time.

Supporters say the CAFOs are mainly well-run, efficient operations typically owned by families that raise animals humanely and manage wastes in line with state regulations.

Opponents, meanwhile, decry what they see as mistreatment of animals and are concerned over potential human health risks and the potential for environmental damage.

South Dakota is now home to 452 CAFOs that are legally allowed to house about 9.6 million animals in all, mainly cattle, hogs, chickens and turkeys.

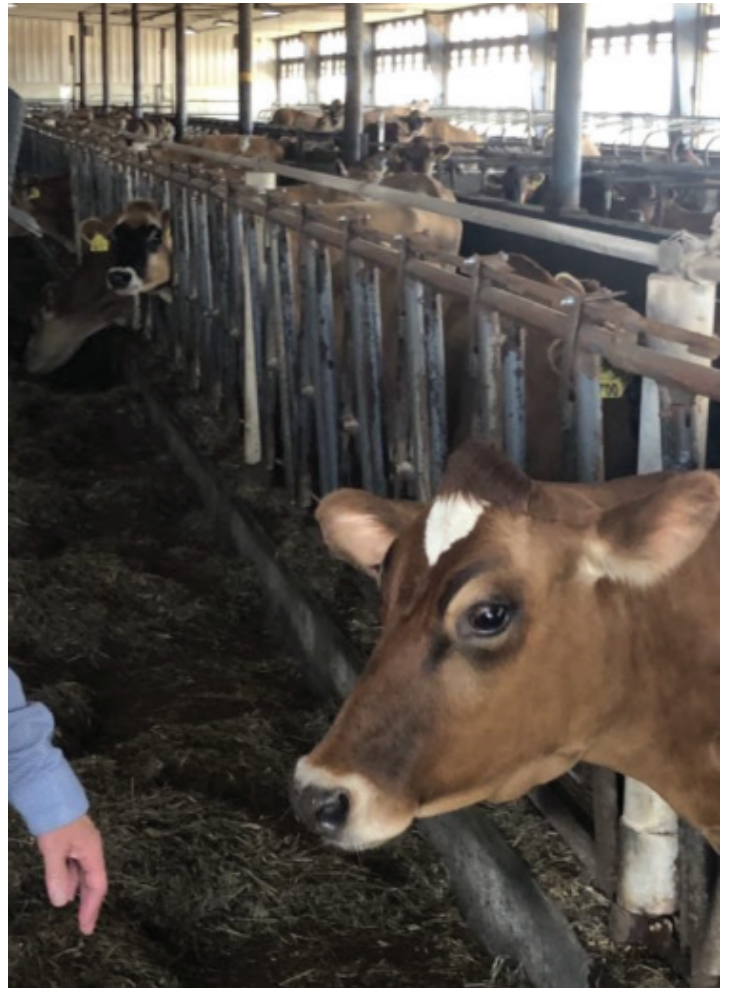
As part of its special report on CAFOs, South Dakota News Watch visited three CAFOs in South Dakota to get an up-close look at the operations and the operators. Here is a report on those visits.

Hog farmer tries to set an industry example

Matt Moeller grew up on a small farm in Hand County, but as a young adult he felt underutilized on the family farm and decided to seek opportunities in the big city of Sioux Falls.

He spent a couple of years welding fire trucks and flatbed trailers, but the call to agriculture was strong and he spent his final three years in Sioux Falls working in a dairy.

One day, Moeller's uncle told him that the pork-production company Murphy Brown, now a subsidiary of



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Chinese-owned Smithfield Foods, was looking for people in South Dakota who might be interested in raising hogs.

In his late 20s at the time, Moeller jumped at the chance, and in 1998, he and his uncle built three hog barns on a small slice of land not far from his childhood home.

Now, more than 20 years on, Moeller owns the operation outright and has a state CAFO permit that allows him and his wife, Karen, to house 7,700 hogs at any one time.

"You know that saying, 'You can take the boy out of the farm but not the farm out of the boy, or something like that?'" said Moeller, 47. "I just really wanted to come back to farming."

By all accounts, Moeller has an outstanding reputation in the agricultural industry — and even among opponents of CAFOs — as a good person and a good operator.

His farm consists of two sites that total about 60 acres just east of St. Lawrence on U.S. 14 in Hand County.

His modest home sits directly between his two sets of hog barns — three 50-foot by 200-foot barns that each house 1,100 hogs at a time, and two 50-foot by 400-foot barns that each house 2,200 hogs at a time. The larger barns, added in 2008, are each about half the size of a football field.

A 1.5-million-gallon metal tank that rises 20 feet high holds the manure collected daily from the barns and lies within sight of his home.

The entrance to his farm and the barns is remarkably clean for an operation that raises thousands of pigs each year. In a five-month process, piglets weighing 15 to 18 pounds are fed and raised to a finishing weight of 280 to 300 pounds each.

Cleanliness helps reduce mortality; any visitor allowed in must don a blue protective suit and footies.

The pigs are segregated into groups of about 65 in pens within the barn that are 20 feet by 22 feet, each with about 12 feet of solid concrete floor, and 10 feet of concrete floor with slats that allow wastes to fall below. Moeller said the pigs try hard to keep themselves clean, spending time on the sawdust-covered hard concrete when eating and milling about and moving to the slats only when they need to expel wastes.

Underneath the barns lies a shallow, foot-deep concrete waste-collection area that is scraped by an automatic system each day to force wastes through a pipe and into the slurry tank. The worst job on the farm is when the scraper system needs maintenance and must be tended to by hand, Moeller said.

Moeller works closely with Smithfield, which provides him with the hogs and technical assistance. He is mainly responsible for feeding and caring for the pigs and properly handling wastes. Twice a year, typically in spring and fall, depending on the weather, Moeller engages a pumping and piping system that allows him to spread the liquid manure onto neighboring farm fields as fertilizer.

Upon reaching finishing weight, the hogs Moeller grows are picked up and transported by Smithfield to slaughterhouses in Sioux Falls or Crete, Nebraska.

In 2018, Moeller raised his hogs as RWA, or raised without antibiotics, a more expensive process that enabled pork from his farm to serve a growing consumer base seeking foods raised with fewer additives. Mortality is higher during the RWA process, he said, and it takes more work because when an antibiotic-



Matt Moeller and his wife, Karen, run a hog farm east of Miller in Hand County that houses 7,700 hogs in five separate large barns. Moeller said they take great pride in running a clean, efficient, profitable farm that focuses on treating animals humanely and following all state guidelines for handling wastes. Photo: Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

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free animal gets sick, it requires medical treatment and must be segregated and sold separately in order to maintain the integrity of the larger RWA herd.

This year, however, Moeller said consumer demand shifted back to a desire for less-expensive pork, so he returned to production of "commodity" pigs that can be provided with antibiotic-infused feed that keeps more of them alive but cannot carry special labeling.

"Anytime it takes more time and mortality is higher, it costs more money, and the consumer has to pay that," he said.

His animals, Moeller said, are kept in a climate-controlled environment where the temperature is always 65 degrees, even when it is below zero or near 100 degrees outside.

Moeller said he has a great relationship with his neighbors, mostly farmers themselves, whom he helps with chores on occasion. He said he alerts them when he is about to spread manure — the smelliest time of the year — and he once put off spreading so a neighbor could have an outdoor graduation party.

Moeller said the odors from his operation are less intense than some other CAFOs because his shallow-pit operation requires daily cleaning and does not hold manure beneath the animals for up to a year, like other CAFOs. The shallow pit also allows him to avoid using fans that blow odors and gasses out into the air around deep-pit CAFOs.

Still, depending on the day, the odors from Moeller's farm can be smelled readily upon approach to his operation on U.S. 14 and may linger on the clothes of a visitor who spends some time at the farm.



During spreading operations, farmer Matt Moeller checks a pump that is part of a mechanical system that stirs the manure and then pumps it into a pipe that will carry it to nearby farm fields.



At Matt Moeller's hog CAFO in Hand County, pigs arrive weighing about 15 to 18 pounds and grow to 280 to 300 pounds after five months. About 65 pigs are held inside 440 square-foot pens within each of five large barns. These pigs are closer to their arrival weight than their finishing weight. Photo: Bart

Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

Raising hogs has provided a good living, said Moeller, who takes trips with his wife in their camper and enjoys rodeo and racing cars. He has one full-time farmhand and sometimes also employs part-timers.

"The hardest part is just washing the barns and getting them ready for the little pigs, and you have to be here every day and make sure they have feed and water," he said. "It's like any job. If you enjoy it, it's not hard work, and if you don't, it's miserable."

Moeller is aware of the opposition to existing large livestock operations and the expansion of CAFOs in South Dakota, but he said opponents are often misinformed about local ownership, health risks, manure management and especially animal treatment.

"These pigs, they got it made," he said. "They have all the feed they want in front of them, they have all the water they need, and they're at 65 degrees all day," Moeller said. "It's a felony to abuse your animals, and pork producers are in favor of those laws."

Moeller said increased economies of scale have occurred in many industries, including agriculture.

"I don't know any farm anymore run by a husband and wife with just a couple cows and chickens and hogs," he said.

His true measure of success, he said, is operating a farm that he and his wife can be proud of. That starts with keeping the farm and barns tidy and ends with forging good relationships with neighbors and treating animals humanely.

"It goes a long way when somebody drives up and sees your place clean and mowed as opposed to junk all over the place and weeds growing over," Moeller said. "I take a lot of pride in my facilities and my farm and in trying to do the right thing."

Part-time cattleman upholds family history

Brian Alderson and a visitor stand on a wooden platform 10 feet above the floor of his cattle barn as about 600 half-ton animals mill about below.

About 15 minutes into a conversation, Alderson asks, "You tell me, does it stink in here?"

Surprisingly, despite the fact that a few animals had defecated and flatulated, and that the platform hovers over a 1.2-million-gallon underground manure pit, the odors are minimal.

Alderson insists his deep-pit cattle barn that sits north of Highway 42 about 12 miles west of Sioux Falls has led to a major improvement on the environment and on the lives of his neighbors when compared to the open-air feedlot he used to operate.

"While there is a faint odor in here, I only had 200 steers outside and it smelled way worse than in here, especially when it rained and the odor of ammonia came up," Alderson said. "It's a night-and-day difference."

Alderson, 37, is a former standout football lineman who brushed up against an NFL career and who was enshrined in 2019 into the University of South Dakota Coyote Sports Hall of Fame.

Alderson is now a part-time cattleman who has a full-time job as a cropland insurance adjuster. He and his wife, Erin, have sons ages 5 and 3.

His lone 14,400-square-foot barn can produce about 750 Holstein cattle each year, and is a fairly low-intensity operation in terms of manpower. The cattle barn allows him to keep his hand in farming and maintain a family tradition on his land that stretches back to 1876.

"I can do this in two or three hours a day, about 20 hours a week," Alderson said. "I can hang out with my kids and do it 300 yards from my home. My boys play down here and they like hanging out with their dad."

Alderson obtained a conditional-use permit from Minnehaha County in 2017 that allows him to raise up to 950 head of cattle. Though his operation is under the 1,000 animal threshold that would trigger the need for a state concentrated animal feeding operation permit, Alderson operates his farm much like CAFOs that house a few hundred or even thousands more cattle.

He has an arrangement with JBS Beef, a Brazilian-owned firm that provides meat to Walmart, among other sellers.

About every nine months, Alderson receives a shipment of roughly 600 cattle that weigh about 500 to 600 pounds each; they are held within four separate pens within the larger barn.



Brian Alderson produces beef cattle at his property west of Sioux Falls in a barn that houses about 600 head at any one time. Alderson said his attempt to get a conditional-use permit from Minnehaha County faced opposition by some neighbors, but he said his indoor operation produces less odors and allows for better control of wastes than his previous open feedlot. Photo and video by Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

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These cattle are housed inside a modern barn on the farm of Brian Alderson of Minnehaha County, who raises about 600 head about every nine months. Alderson said the cattle are protected from the elements, and that negative effects from the farm in terms of wastes and odors are reduced compared to when he kept the animals in a field. Photo:

Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

think they notice it. Their day-to-day life hasn't been affected at all, and in fact, I think it has improved."

Alderson said South Dakota producers have increasingly specialized in one type of animal or crop in order to improve efficiency and profitability. Ultimately, the changes in agriculture are being driven by consumers who buy the meat and other goods farmers produce — and much of that demand is pushed a desire for low prices.

"If all you want to see is grass and a few cattle out your door when you look out, the next time you go to a barbecue, instead of picking up a six-pack of beer and a pound of hamburger, go ahead and spend that whole 12 bucks on the pound of hamburger," Alderson said, noting that free-range or organic foods often cost significantly more. "It's demand, and you tell us what you want us to do when you go to the grocery store."

He feeds and cares for them until they reach their roughly 1,200-pound finishing weight.

During each cycle, Alderson said he spends about \$700 in feed on each animal, generating roughly a half-million-dollar impact on the local feed market each year.

As the animals grow, their wastes fall into the underground pit, which is 12 feet deep and has a 12-inch concrete liner with a double layer of rebar. Additives are mixed into the pit wastes to break down bacteria and reduce odors and gasses, Alderson said.

Typically once a year — like all CAFO operators — Alderson pumps the liquid wastes from the pit onto area farm fields as fertilizer. He said that 36-hour period is the one time per year the smells at his farm become intense. Alderson spent about \$20,000 in engineering costs to make sure his barn was efficient and safe.

The operation allows him to control the flow of wastes, and accompanying odors, far better than when his cattle were allowed to stroll around and do their business in pastures, he said.

Alderson bristles when discussing the opposition that invariably arises when any new CAFO is proposed in South Dakota. He, like other livestock farmers, said many opponents are ill-informed about farming in general and especially about how animals are treated and wastes are managed at large livestock operations. About 50 people showed up to his conditional-use hearing and he eventually endured six appeals to his permit.

"There was a lot of fear about what this was going to turn into; they saw cattle and they said, 'That doesn't look very good,'" he said. "But now I don't



Brian Alderson built this 14,400-square-foot cattle barn in western Minnehaha County to raise about 750 head per year, with about 600 head housed and fed in the barn at any one time. Alderson said enclosing the animals protects them from the elements, and that consolidating them indoors enables him to remain a part-time farmer while also holding down a full-time job off the farm. Photo: Bart Pfankuch

A colony of families and farms

The Oaklane Colony in Hanson County is a fully functioning town, with a school, housing and a handful of varied farm operations.

The head of the agricultural side of the system is John Wipf, 64, who oversees the raising of turkeys, hogs and dairy cattle at the Hutterite colony that houses 28 families a few miles west of Bridgewater. The farm also grows corn, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa and hay, mostly as feed for its animals.

The Oaklane Hutterian Brethren is one of 68 Hutterite Anabaptist colonies in the state; more than half of the colonies are part-owners of the Dakota Provisions turkey plant in Huron. Numerous colonies hold state permits to run CAFOs.

"I think the colonies raise every turkey produced in the state," Wipf said.

Turkeys are one of several types of livestock animals raised at Oaklane, which holds a multi-species CAFO permit from the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The colony produces about 70,000 turkeys a year in three large barns.

The turkeys arrive in groups of about 7,500 from a cage-free birthing facility near Claremont, and weigh about three pounds after five weeks.



Farmer John Wipf checks mortality records in an office attached to a turkey barn at the Oaklane Colony in Hanson County. Detailed records are kept to ensure efficiency but also because some elements of the operation -- particularly regarding waste handling -- are subject to inspection by state regulators. Wipf said he receives notice of an upcoming state inspection before it takes place, which is about once every three years.

Photo: Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch



Farmer John Wipf oversees agricultural operations at the Oaklane Hutterite Colony in Hanson County. The colony holds a multi-species CAFO permit from the state of South Dakota because turkeys, hogs and dairy cattle are raised there. Photo: Bart

Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

after five weeks. The turkeys are raised at Oaklane without antibiotics and fed and watered for another 20 weeks to a finishing weight of about 45 to 50 pounds. At that point, they are shipped to the plant in Huron for processing, Wipf said.

Fans keep the turkeys cool in the summer and boilers keep them warm in winter. "If you had to be a turkey, this would be a pretty good way to live," Wipf said.

The turkey wastes, known as litter, can build to about six inches per flock, he said. The litter is collected and brought to a composting barn on the entrance road to the colony.

The colony also has a dairy cattle operation with jersey cows, and a large farrow-to-finish hog operation, which includes 1,500 sows and produces about 40,000 head per year. The hogs are raised in an antibiotic-free program and finish at a weight of about 280 pounds in barns in a field a short drive from the main colony. Their wastes are collected and piped to a storage pond about a mile away; the hog barns produce about 9 million gallons of waste per year, Wipf said. Pit additives are used to break down solids and reduce odors from the lagoon.

The colony follows its state permit in terms of when, where and at what level to spread its wastes on farm fields as fertilizer, he said.

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The colony also operates a 300-head dairy operation with Jersey cows. The cows are housed in a confined barn with open that allow more air flow. The wastes from those animals are washed with water and flow down a slightly descending concrete floor to an underground waste area and then to a lagoon. The water from the process is recycled and reused the same way, Wipf said.

Wipf said the colony remains active in the use of numerous new technologies to constantly improve the efficiency and stability of its farm operations. Early in 2019, Wipf was honored for outstanding farm management and civic engagement by the South Dakota Pork Producers Council, which presented him with its Dedicated and Distinguished Service Award.

ABOUT BART PFANKUCH



Bart Pfankuch, Rapid City, S.D., is the content director for South Dakota News Watch. A Wisconsin native, he is a former editor of the Rapid City Journal and also worked at newspapers in Florida. Bart has spent more than 30 years as a reporter, editor and writing coach.

Sending Our Best At The Holidays

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of glad tidings to your home.*

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Mindy Vander Vorst
Postmaster



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Dragr, Knutson placed sixth at Madison

There was a field of 20 teams that participated in the Madison Invitational wrestling tournament held Saturday. Dragr Monson and Adrian Knutson both came home with sixth place finishes.

120: Dragr Monson (6-4) placed 6th and scored 7.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Dragr Monson (Groton Area) 6-4 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Connor Eimers (Tea Area) 12-5 won by decision over Dragr Monson (Groton Area) 6-4 (Dec 11-6)

Cons. Round 2 - Dragr Monson (Groton Area) 6-4 won by fall over Dominic Santiago (Chamberlain) 6-6 (Fall 3:00)

Cons. Round 3 - Dragr Monson (Groton Area) 6-4 won by decision over Brayden Siemonsma (West Central) 10-5 (Dec 8-5)

Cons. Semi - Sam Olson (Madison) 13-2 won by fall over Dragr Monson (Groton Area) 6-4 (Fall 0:20)

5th Place Match - Connor Eimers (Tea Area) 12-5 won by decision over Dragr Monson (Groton Area) 6-4 (Dec 4-2)

160: Thomas Cranford (6-5) scored 3.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Wren Jacobs (Sturgis Brown) 17-3 won by fall over Thomas Cranford (Groton Area) 6-5 (Fall 1:53)

Cons. Round 1 - Thomas Cranford (Groton Area) 6-5 won by fall over Ethan Schroeder (Lennox) 0-7 (Fall 1:52)

Cons. Round 2 - Brayden Gee (Dell Rapids) 8-5 won by fall over Thomas Cranford (Groton Area) 6-5 (Fall 0:34)

182: Lane Krueger (5-5) scored 5.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Lane Krueger (Groton Area) 5-5 won in sudden victory - 1 over Bryce Kwiecinski (Sioux Falls Lincoln) 9-8 (SV-1 4-2)

Quarterfinal - Luke Rasmussen (Brookings) 7-0 won by tech fall over Lane Krueger (Groton Area) 5-5 (TF-1.5 2:36 (17-2))

Cons. Round 2 - Lane Krueger (Groton Area) 5-5 won by forfeit over Forfeit Forfeit (Rapid City Stevens) 6-9 (For.)

Cons. Round 3 - Ben Zarr (Lennox) 10-7 won by fall over Lane Krueger (Groton Area) 5-5 (Fall 2:56)

195: Grady O`Neill (5-5) scored 7.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Grady O`Neill (Groton Area) 5-5 won by fall over Grayson Janssen (Rapid City Stevens) 7-9 (Fall 2:34)

Quarterfinal - Isaac Feldhaus (Howard) 12-2 won by fall over Grady O`Neill (Groton Area) 5-5 (Fall 3:33)

Cons. Round 2 - Grady O`Neill (Groton Area) 5-5 won by fall over Zaul Moniz-DeLeon (Omaha Central) 1-3 (Fall 0:59)

Cons. Round 3 - Sam Loecker (Sioux Falls O`Gorman) 12-5 won by fall over Grady O`Neill (Groton Area) 5-5 (Fall 2:08)

285: Adrian Knutson (6-6) placed 6th and scored 13.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Adrian Knutson (Groton Area) 6-6 won by fall over Elliott Renville (Sioux Falls Lincoln) 3-10 (Fall 2:51)

Quarterfinal - Nash Hutmacher (Chamberlain) 14-0 won by fall over Adrian Knutson (Groton Area) 6-6 (Fall 0:35)

Cons. Round 2 - Adrian Knutson (Groton Area) 6-6 won by fall over Ethan Skarnagel (Sisseton) 0-6 (Fall 2:07)

Cons. Round 3 - Adrian Knutson (Groton Area) 6-6 won by fall over Hayden Herlyn (Lennox) 5-4 (Fall 1:16)

Cons. Semi - Braden Peters (Flandreau) 5-2 won by fall over Adrian Knutson (Groton Area) 6-6 (Fall 3:22)

5th Place Match - Jake Scheafer (Sioux Falls O`Gorman) 8-5 won by fall over Adrian Knutson (Groton Area) 6-6 (Fall 0:50)

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Today



Partly Sunny

High: 38 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 21 °F

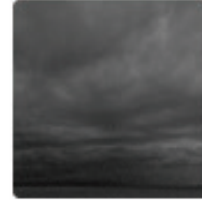
Monday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 31 °F

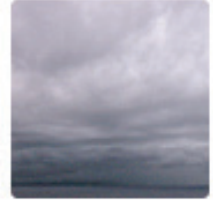
Monday
Night



Cloudy

Low: 20 °F

Tuesday

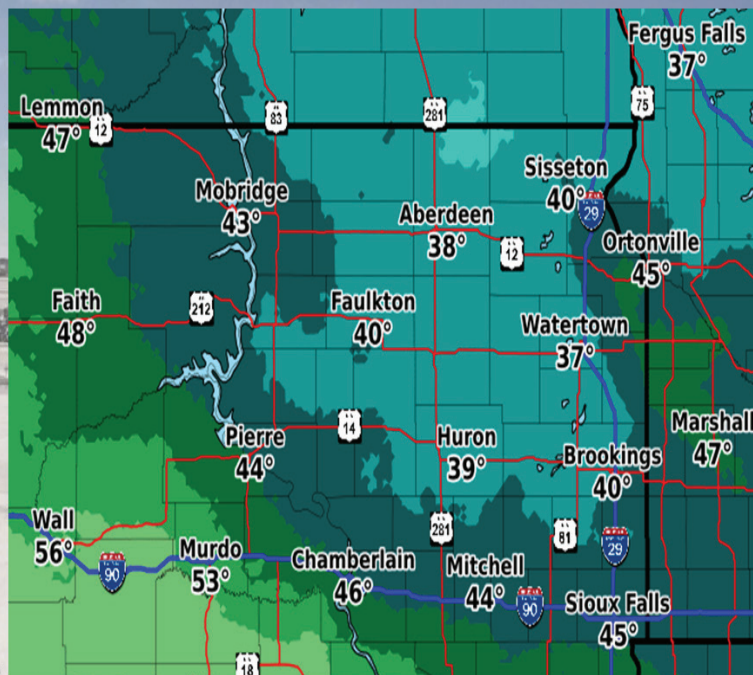


Cloudy

High: 29 °F



Mild Again Today – More Seasonal Temps This Week



NWS Aberdeen, SD

Updated: 12/22/2019 4:31 AM Central

We're looking at another mild day. A weak front pushes through late - resulting in closer to normal temperatures for this week.

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Today in Weather History

December 22, 1990: Strong northwest winds, combined with air temperatures below zero, created wind chills from -40 to -65 degrees over west-central Minnesota early in the day on the 22nd. Air temperatures were generally in the -20 to -25 degree range, with afternoon highs around 15 below zero.

December 22, 1990: Strong northwest winds gusted to 35 miles per hour and caused near-whiteout conditions over a wide area of southwest and west-central Minnesota during the late afternoon on the 21st into the early morning of the 22nd. Several car accidents ensued. A 30-year old man was killed when he lost control of his truck and slid into a ditch in the near-blizzard conditions.

1989: The most significant cold spell of the century for the Deep South occurred from the 22 to the 26. New Orleans experienced 64 consecutive hours at or below 32 degrees Fahrenheit and a total of 81 out of 82 hours below freezing. A total of 15 hours was below 15 degrees with the lowest reading of 11 degrees on the morning of the 23rd. A low temperature of 8 degrees was recorded at Baton Rouge. Snow and sleet paralyzed transportation systems where as much as two to four inches of snow accumulated in Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes. Snow and ice-covered the ground in New Orleans. The most significant impact was the breaking of water pipes in homes and businesses. Over 100 fires resulted in the New Orleans area within 24 hours due to a loss of water pressure and improperly utilized heating sources. Ice formed over shallow lakes and waterways where commercial fishing took heavy losses. Five weather-related deaths occurred in the service area during this rare Arctic outbreak.

1989: Between December 22 and December 24, 1989, deepening low pressure pulled a frigid arctic air mass into the southeastern United States. This sequence of events produced a historic snowstorm and a rare white Christmas across the region. At Charleston, South Carolina, the storm deposited 8 inches of snow – the greatest snowfall in modern history. At Savannah, Georgia, the storm total accumulation of 3.6 inches tied the greatest snowfall in modern history.

2002: Heavy rains prompted flooding in the mountain city of Teresopolis, located about 90 km north of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. A mudslide was responsible for 9 deaths and 50 injuries.

2004: Tremendous snows occurred in the Ohio Valley. The following cities set new records for their most significant snowstorm ever: Evansville, Indiana 22.3 inches, Dayton, Ohio 16.4 inches, and Paducah, Kentucky 14.2 inches. Other big snowfall totals were 31 inches at Liberty, Indiana, 28 inches at Buena Vista, Indiana, 24 inches at Greenville, Ohio, and 23 inches at Mansfield, Ohio.

1839 - The second of triple December storms hit the northeastern U.S. The storm produced 25 inches of snow at Gettysburg, PA, and gales in New England, but only produced light snow along the coast. (David Ludlum)

1961 - Holiday travel was paralyzed over extreme northeastern Kansas, and adjacent parts of Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska. The storm produced 5 to 15 inches of snow, with drifts up to ten feet high. (22nd-23rd) (The Weather Channel)

1983 - On the first day of winter 75 cities reported record low temperatures for the date, with twelve of those cities reporting record low temperatures for the month as a whole. The mercury plunged to 51 degrees below zero at Wisdom MT, and Waco TX set an all-time record low a reading of 12 above zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1987 - The first day of winter was a relatively tranquil one for much of the nation, but heralded a winter storm in the Central Rockies. The storm produced 40 inches of snow at the top of the Pomerelle Ski Resort, south of Burley ID, the heaviest snow of record for that location. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Strong winds prevailed in the foothills of Wyoming and Colorado. Winds gusted to 123 mph southwest of Fort Collins CO, and reached 141 mph at the summit of Mount Evans. An ice storm paralyzed parts of Upper Michigan during the day. The freezing rain left roads around Marquette MI blocked by cars and semi- trucks. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

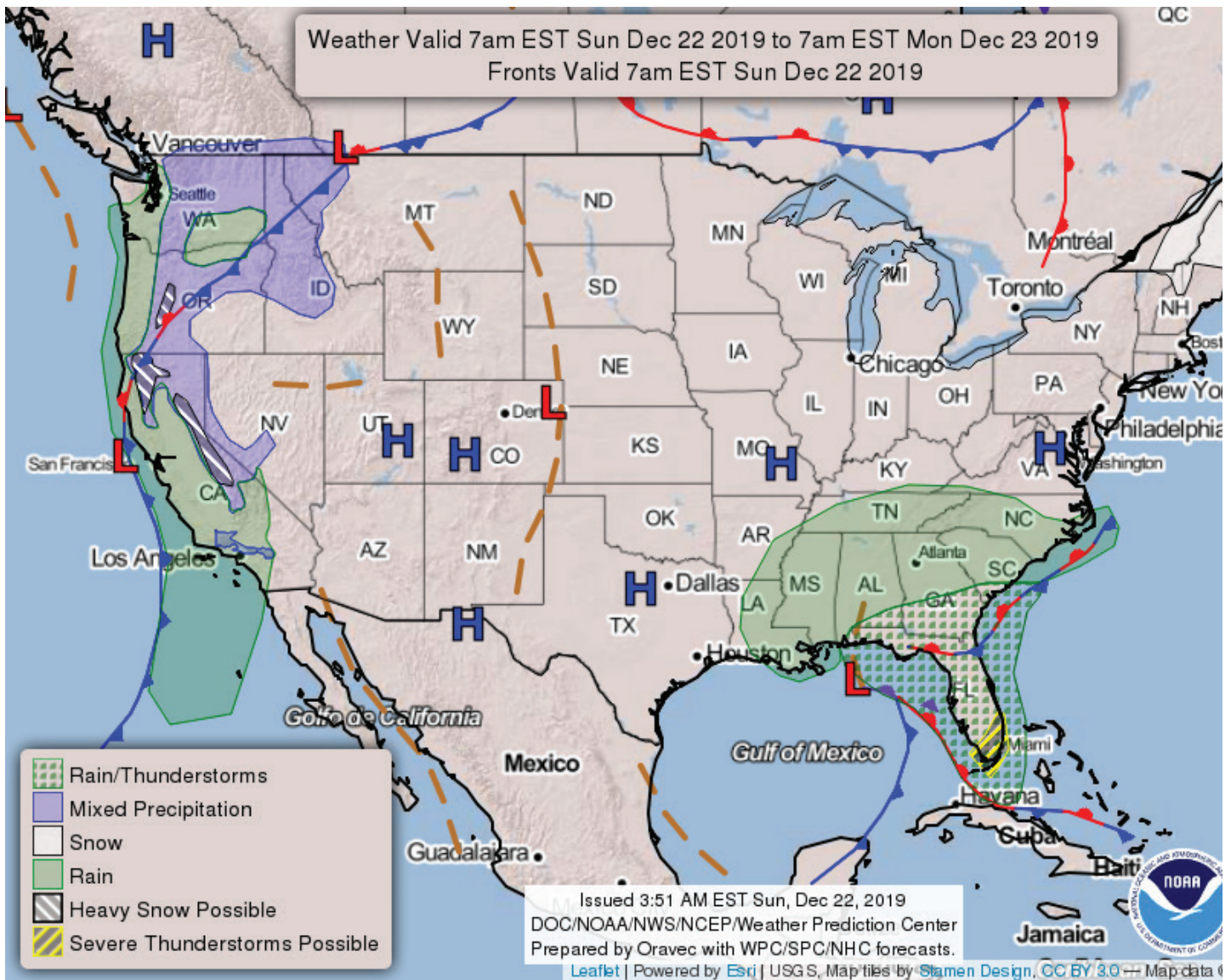
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 36 °F at 2:49 PM
Low Temp: 23 °F at 12:24 AM
Wind: 16 mph at 1:54 AM
Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 59° in 1893
Record Low: -28° in 1990
Average High: 24°F
Average Low: 4°F
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.34
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.11
Average Precip to date: 21.54
Precip Year to Date: 28.06
Sunset Tonight: 4:54 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:11 a.m.



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PROPHESIES FROM ISAIAH

“Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel – God with us!

“The people who walk in darkness

Will see a great light;

Those who live in a dark land,

The light will come to them.

For a child will be born to us, a

son given to us;

And the government will rest on

His shoulders!

And His name will be called:

Wonderful!

Counselor!

Mighty God!

Eternal Father!

Prince of Peace!

There will be no end to the increase

of His government or of His peace.

“The spirit of the LORD will rest on Him,

The spirit of wisdom and understanding.

The spirit of counsel and strength,

The spirit of knowledge and

the fear of the Lord.”

Prayer: Thank You, God, for keeping Your word! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:2, 6-7; Isaiah 11:2-3

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

12/19/2019 – Christmas Open House 10am-4pm, Wells Fargo Bank

12/20/2019 – Holiday Bake Sale & Open House 9am-4pm, Groton Community Transit

- Bingo: every Wednesday at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/26/2020 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m. Sharp (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/26/2020 Father/Daughter dance.
- 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/14/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Saturday:

Dakota Cash

06-15-19-25-29

(six, fifteen, nineteen, twenty-five, twenty-nine)

Estimated jackpot: \$420,000

Lotto America

04-17-29-40-51, Star Ball: 8, ASB: 3

(four, seventeen, twenty-nine, forty, fifty-one; Star Ball: eight; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$6.26 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$45 million

Powerball

19-31-35-50-67, Powerball: 14, Power Play: 2

(nineteen, thirty-one, thirty-five, fifty, sixty-seven; Powerball: fourteen; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$171 million

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 66, Sturgis Brown 53

Aberdeen Christian 39, Lemmon 23

Burke 40, Stuart, Neb. 30

Canistota-Freeman 70, Bridgewater-Emery 61

Chamberlain 68, Stanley County 53

Colome 58, Cody-Kilgore, Neb. 47

Crow Creek 76, Red Cloud 62

Dakota Valley 67, Woodbury Central, Merville, Iowa 43

Freeman Academy/Marion 62, Ethan 55

Gregory 78, North Central, Neb. 63

Highmore-Harrold 66, Kimball/White Lake 37

Hot Springs 37, Hill City 22

Huron 75, Rapid City Central 57

Iroquois 60, Centerville 46

Langford 56, Hitchcock-Tulare 27

Lyman 71, Bennett County 39

Marty Indian 53, Little Wound 47

McCook Central/Montrose 54, Bon Homme 45

Rapid City Stevens 41, Mitchell 34

Richland, N.D. 56, Aberdeen Roncalli 51

Sioux Falls O'Gorman 57, Sioux Falls Christian 45

Sully Buttes 45, Winner 39

Warner 48, Potter County 39

Webster 71, Ipswich 66

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Wessington Springs 61, Mitchell Christian 22

Mobridge Invitational=

Leola/Frederick 56, Timber Lake 44

Strasburg-Zeeland, N.D. 72, McIntosh 55

State Line Shootout=

Newcastle, Wyo. 64, Lead-Deadwood 44

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 45, Sturgis Brown 24

Andes Central/Dakota Christian 37, Scotland 36

Arlington 49, Baltic 29

Castlewood 68, Madison 41

Centerville 55, Iroquois 32

Chester 23, Lake Preston 12

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 63, Little Wound 61

Cody-Kilgore, Neb. 47, Colome 44

Colman-Egan 54, Sioux Valley 47

Crow Creek 64, Red Cloud 57

Custer 49, Todd County 38

Dakota Valley 67, Woodbury Central, Merville, Iowa 43

Deubrook 49, Milbank 20

Deuel 55, Dell Rapids St. Mary 42

Elkton-Lake Benton 46, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 17

Ethan 66, Freeman Academy/Marion 4

Faith 56, New Underwood 46

Faulkton 52, Highmore-Harrold 47

Flandreau 59, Hamlin 51

Freeman 46, Platte-Geddes 30

Huron 52, Rapid City Central 38

Ipswich 62, Webster 51

Kimball/White Lake 52, Chamberlain 39

Langford 49, Hitchcock-Tulare 30

Lemmon 60, Aberdeen Christian 27

Lower Brule 37, St. Francis Indian 36

Marty Indian 67, Crazy Horse 37

Mitchell Christian 41, Wessington Springs 31

Moorhead, Minn. 71, Sioux Falls Washington 47

Philip 58, Kadoka Area 54

Pierre 57, Spearfish 8

Potter County 62, Warner 44

Rapid City Stevens 79, Mitchell 30

Sioux Falls O'Gorman 63, Sioux Falls Lincoln 44

St. Thomas More 54, Watertown 29

Stuart, Neb. 52, Burke 36

Wakpala 75, Strasburg-Zeeland, N.D. 65

Wall 54, Harding County 34

Winner 68, Sully Buttes 36

Mobridge Invitational=

Herreid/Selby Area 62, Mobridge-Pollock 41

Timber Lake 70, Leola/Frederick 20

State Line Shootout=

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Belle Fourche 50, Sundance, Wyo. 26
Lead-Deadwood 37, Newcastle, Wyo. 33

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

Huron police looking for man accused of shooting at officer

HURON, S.D. (AP) — Authorities are looking for a 20-year-old man accused of opening fire on a police officer during an attempted traffic stop in Huron.

The incident happened Friday night after an officer activated his emergency lights in an attempt to stop the vehicle, according to a release from the Huron Police Department.

Police said one of the passengers fired numerous shots from a handgun before the vehicle fled the scene. A short pursuit ended when the suspect vehicle crashed into a snowbank and the occupants ran away.

The juvenile driver was later apprehended. The other passengers, including the shooter, remain at large.

Huron Police Chief Kevin Van Diepen said he believes this incident was directed specifically toward law enforcement and there does not appear to be any danger to the public.

Pine Ridge homicide suspect arrested after 4 days on run

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man suspected in a fatal shooting in South Dakota was arrested in a Rapid City neighborhood Friday night after a brief standoff with law enforcement, authorities said.

Colton Bagola, 26, walked out of a house about 5:50 p.m. Friday and surrendered to police, according to the Rapid City Journal. Bagola was arrested on a federal warrant for the killing of Sloan Bull Bear earlier this week in Pine Ridge, an Oglala police spokesman said.

Bagola had been on the run for four days. Rapid City police said Bagola came out of the house with his hands up shortly after talking over the phone with a special response team officer.

Misty Corbine, the mother of Bull Bear's son, told the newspaper that Bull Bear had been living in Minnesota and recently returned to the area. Corbine said their son had just learned to drive and was looking forward to giving his dad a ride.

"I'm hurt because my son will never get to bond with his dad ever, he'll never get to drive him," Corbine said. "He won't even get to see his dad, get to talk to his dad, anything."

It wasn't clear if Bagola had an attorney or when he would make his first court appearance.

South Dakota State cruises past Idaho 85-57

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Douglas Wilson scored 18 points and Matt Dentlinger notched a double-double to propel South Dakota State to an 85-57 victory over Idaho on Saturday, the Jackrabbits' eighth consecutive home victory.

Wilson knocked down 8 of 13 shots from the floor for the Jackrabbits (9-6), who picked up their eighth straight win at home. Dentlinger finished with 12 points and 10 rebounds for his third double-double of the season. Alex Arians pitched in with 15 points, nine rebounds and five steals. David Wingett had 12 points and seven rebounds.

South Dakota State posted a season-high 20 assists.

Trevon Allen tied a career high with 29 points and had six rebounds for the Vandals (4-7). Damen Thacker added 10 points and three assists off the bench.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and http://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Elements of this story were generated by Automated Insights, <http://www.automatedinsights.com/ap>,

using data from STATS LLC, <https://www.stats.com>

India's prime minister addresses rally as protests continue

By EMILY SCHMALL Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Clashes continued Sunday between Indian police and protesters angered by a new citizenship law that excludes Muslims, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi used a rally for his Hindu nationalist party to defend the legislation, accusing the opposition of pushing the country into a "fear psychosis."

Twenty-three people have been killed nationwide since the law was passed in Parliament earlier this month in protests that represent the first major roadblock for Modi's Hindu nationalist agenda since his party's landslide re-election last spring.

Most of the deaths have occurred in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, where 20% of the state's 200 million people are Muslim. Police, who deny any wrongdoing, said that among the 15 people killed in the state was an 8-year-old boy who died in a stampede in the city of Varanasi, the heart of Modi's parliamentary constituency. Since last week, police in Uttar Pradesh have taken nearly 900 people into custody for engaging in violence.

Authorities across the country have scrambled to contain the situation, banning public gatherings and blocking internet access. India's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued an advisory Friday night asking broadcasters across the country to refrain from using content that could inflame further violence.

Modi took the stage at a rally in the capital launching his Bharatiya Janata Party's campaign for New Delhi legislative assembly elections in February, and quickly turned to the contentious new law.

"People who are trying to spread lies and fear, look at my work. If you see any trace of divisiveness in my work, show it to the world," he said.

Modi accused the main opposition Congress party of conspiring "to push not only New Delhi but other parts of the country into a fear psychosis."

"They are trying every tactic to push me out of power," he said, urging protesters to desist from attacks on police and other violence.

The new law allows Hindus, Christians and other religious minorities who are in India illegally to become citizens if they can show they were persecuted because of their religion in Muslim-majority Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It does not apply to Muslims.

Critics have slammed the legislation as a violation of India's secular constitution and have called it the latest effort by Modi's government to marginalize the country's 200 million Muslims.

Protests against the law come amid an ongoing crackdown in Muslim-majority Kashmir, the restive Himalayan region stripped of its semi-autonomous status and demoted from a state into a federal territory in August.

The demonstrations also follow a contentious process in the northeastern state of Assam meant to weed out foreigners living in the country illegally. Nearly 2 million people, about half Hindu and half Muslim, were excluded from an official list of citizens — called the National Register of Citizens, or NRC — and have been asked to prove their citizenship or else be considered foreign.

India is building a detention center for some of the tens of thousands of people who the courts are expected to ultimately determine have entered illegally. Modi's interior minister, Amit Shah, has pledged to roll out the process nationwide.

"First, we will bring the Citizenship Amendment Bill and will give citizenship to the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain and Christian refugees, the religious minorities from the neighboring nations. Then, we will implement NRC to flush out the infiltrators from our country," Shah said in an election speech last April.

On Sunday, Modi denied the existence of a detention center, accusing the Congress party of spreading fear that Indian Muslims would be jailed there. He also said that his opponents resented him for his work strengthening India's ties to Iran, Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries.

A small band of supporters of Modi's party marched in New Delhi on Sunday. Activists from India's northeast, a mainly tribal area where people fear an influx of migrants will dilute their culture and political

sway, also held a rally in the capital.

The protests against the law began in Assam, the center of a decades-old movement against migrants, before spreading to predominantly Muslim universities and then nationwide.

"They understood what it was all about, and they have been very clear from the beginning that theirs was not an issue of Hindu versus Muslim or any religious identity," said historian Mridula Mukherjee.

"They could see through this maneuver very quickly, and that's why the mass upsurge started over there," she said.

Associated Press writers Rishabh Jain in New Delhi and Biswajeet Banerjee in Lucknow, India, contributed to this report.

Australia's leader apologizes for vacation amid wildfires

SYDNEY (AP) — Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison apologized Sunday for taking a family vacation in Hawaii as deadly bushfires raged across several states, destroying homes and claiming the lives of two volunteer firefighters.

Morrison cut short a vacation with his wife and adult children amid public anger at his absence during a national crisis, and arrived home Saturday night. He spoke to reporters Sunday morning while visiting the headquarters of the Rural Fire Service in Sydney.

"If you had your time over again and you had the benefit of hindsight, we would have made different decisions," Morrison said. "I am sure Australians are fair-minded and understand that when you make a promise to your kids you try and keep it."

"But as prime minister, you have other responsibilities, and I accept that and I accept the criticism," he added.

Morrison said this was not a time for political point-scoring, but a "time to be kind to each other." He said that while he is not a trained firefighter, "I'm comforted by the fact that Australians would like me to be here just simply so I can be here, alongside them, as they are going through this terrible time."

Morrison also answered critics who say his government has not done enough to fight climate change, which has been cited as a major factor in the spate of fires burning across the states of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. He said there were also "many other factors" responsible for the unprecedented number of fires during a record-breaking heat wave.

"There is no argument ... about the links between broader issues of global climate change and weather events around the world," he said. "But I'm sure people equally would acknowledge that the direct connection to any single fire event — it's not a credible suggestion to make that link."

Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons described Saturday as an "awful day" for firefighters as strong southerly winds fanned more than 100 fires in New South Wales alone.

Dozens of homes have been lost since Thursday in massive wildfires, including the Gospers Mountain blaze, which covered more than 460,000 hectares (1.1 million acres).

Thirty firefighters from Canada and nine from the United States were among fresh crews set to join the battle against the fires on Sunday.

Associated Press writer Steve McMorran in Wellington, New Zealand, contributed to this report.

6 killed, 13 injured in Las Vegas apartment building fire

By MICHELLE L. PRICE, PAUL DAVENPORT and MARC LEVY Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A fire in a three-story apartment building in downtown Las Vegas where residents were apparently using their stoves for heat killed six people and forced some residents to jump from upper-floor windows to escape the heavy smoke before dawn Saturday, authorities said.

Investigators reported that the fire started around a first-floor unit's stove and that residents had told

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them that there was no heat in the building, which sits a few blocks from downtown Las Vegas' touristy Fremont Street District.

Residents reported awakening to pounding on doors around 4 a.m.

By the time Matthew Sykes got his clothes on to flee, one end of his second-floor hallway was choked with thick black smoke, as was a stairwell, making it impassable for he and his wife.

"The whole place was like one big black cloud of smoke — couldn't get down the stairs," Sykes told The Associated Press.

Firefighters arriving at the scene began treating injured and using ladders to rescue numerous people already jumping or hanging from windows, fire department spokesman Tim Szymanski said. "The first thing that you think of is: We've got to rescue those people. A fall of 16 feet (4.9 meters) or higher can be fatal."

Thirteen people were injured, mostly from smoke inhalation, but victims also had fractures, Szymanski said.

The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported that a pregnant woman in her first trimester fell after her hands slipped on a rope of bed sheets while descending from her third-floor apartment, leaving her with multiple fractures. Her husband told the newspaper that medical personnel told him the fetus' heartbeat appeared strong.

Three people were found dead in the apartment where the fire started, Szymanski said.

It wasn't immediately clear if anyone died after falling or jumping from windows, Szymanski said. No firefighters were injured.

The cause of the fire appeared to be accidental, and the fire was largely contained to the first-floor unit where it started in the stove area, Szymanski said. Firefighters found the burners on, Szymanski said.

Residents told investigators and reporters that some had been using their apartment's stoves for warmth because the building lacked heat. Temperatures overnight have been dipping into the high 30s, according to the National Weather Service. Meteorologist Chris Outler said the low was 40 degrees (4.4 Celsius) early Sunday.

A woman answering the phone at the office of the entity listed as the building's owner, Las Vegas Dragon Hotel LLC in Las Vegas, told the AP she was told not to comment. She said she would leave a message for Adolfo Orozco, the man listed in state incorporation records as the business' managing member.

A woman identifying herself as a co-owner of the apartment building, Malinda Mier, told news organizations that she was saddened, but did not say in a statement whether the building had heat.

Szymanski said firefighters reported hearing smoke alarms going off, but not fire alarms. The State Fire Marshal's Office will investigate for code violations, including any involving fire alarms, he said.

The city's code enforcement office did not immediately return telephone messages Saturday. State law requires landlords to provide heat, but it also leaves it up to residents to notify the landlord.

Saturday's fire was possibly the deadliest in the Las Vegas area since 1980, when 87 people died and more than 700 were injured in a fire at the MGM Grand Hotel.

Fire officials said around 50 people were displaced and the Southern Nevada Red Cross said it sent personnel to provide assistance. County records list the building as having 41 units.

Because of the soot throughout the building, residents will not be able to go back into the building, Szymanski said.

Police had taped off the building, the front of which was blackened by smoke.

When he got out, Sykes saw one apartment on the first floor "was literally just fire and smoke coming out of the windows," he said.

He and his wife eventually got out of the building by making their way to a neighbor's apartment. There, they joined other residents in climbing one-by-one out of a bedroom window onto an air conditioning unit before dropping about 15 feet (4.57 meters) down to the ground below, Sykes said.

He and his wife helped four adults and four children escape, handing the children down to adults, he said.

Sykes said he heard a smoke alarm go off only after he and his wife were already out in the hallway contending with the smoke.

"I'm telling you, that place is totally not fit for anybody to live," he said.

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Sykes, who said he'd lived there about six months, said there had been a small fire in the same building about six months ago.

The fire department warned the owner then that smoke detectors had to be installed, and they were put in about a month later, he said.

"But after that, this is what happens," he said. "Now my wife and I, we need to find a place to live. We're homeless for the time being."

The fire caused an estimated \$475,000 in damage, Szymanski told the Review-Journal.

Sal Moreno, who lives in the apartment building next door, said police banged on his door around 4:30 a.m. and he fled into a street lit up with police cars, ambulances and fire trucks.

"They made us leave," Moreno said. "There was people running out with their cats and their dog. ... It was hectic. It was hectic. It was crazy."

He said the building that burned was low-rent, and he'd heard some of the residents were using their ovens to stay warm because they didn't have heat.

"It's kind of a rough little neighborhood," he said.

Davenport reported from Phoenix. Associated Press reporter Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, contributed to this report.

Notre Dame fire wakes the world up to dangers of lead dust

By THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — It took a blaze that nearly destroyed Paris' most famous cathedral to reveal a gap in global safety regulations for lead, a toxic building material found across many historic cities.

After the Notre Dame fire in April spewed dozens of tons of toxic lead-dust into the atmosphere in just a few hours, Paris authorities discovered a problem with the city's public safety regulations: There was no threshold for them to gauge how dangerous the potentially-deadly pollution was from the dust that settled on the ground.

Since then, The Associated Press has found this regulatory gap extends far beyond France. Officials in other historic European capitals such as Rome and London, as well as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the World Health Organization also have no such outdoor lead dust hazard guidelines.

The reason, they say, is that although there are lead regulations, no one contemplated a conflagration on a lead-laden building the scale of Notre Dame — whose spire towered nearly 100 meters (330 feet) high.

Poisoning from lead dust can cause permanent loss to cognitive ability, seizures, coma, or death — and exposure is of greatest risk to pregnant mothers and to young children, who can easily transfer toxic dust into their mouths.

After 250 tons of lead on Notre Dame's spire and roof was engulfed in flames in central Paris on April 15 and authorities alerted Parisians to an environmental health risk, they were forced to cobble together disparate and incomplete research to set a makeshift safety level in an attempt reassure the public.

"When the Notre Dame fire happened, we didn't have any threshold for what represented dangerous lead levels outdoors," Anne Souyris, the Paris City Hall deputy mayor in charge of public health, told the AP. "It was a wake-up call ... the amount of lead that was burned in Notre Dame was unprecedented."

Officials were surprised to discover that while safety guidelines exist in France for lead levels inside buildings and schools, as well as in paint, soil and air pollution, there were zero hazard guidelines for lead accumulations in public spaces, such as dust on the ground.

The inherent danger and the regulatory gap for lead dust became impossible to ignore for French officials as it collected as a toxic film on the cobblestones of Paris' Ile-de-la-Cite following the fire.

"The authorities basically tried to create safety guidelines after the fire by piecing together a mixture of old fragments of data and reports," Souyris said. "But there was really nothing official ... we simply didn't realize that lead outside might be a problem."

On July 18 — three months after the inferno — Paris' Regional Health Agency (ARS) said it designated

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5,000 micrograms per square meter (4,180 mg per square yard) as a concerning level for lead dust in public spaces. It also acknowledged there was an "absence of regulatory thresholds ... regarding the presence of lead in dust deposited on roads."

AP learned from health officials that this figure was compiled by using incomplete data, including a French Culture Ministry report assessing lead levels in Paris monuments.

Some media outlets reported that registered levels of lead contamination in locations surrounding the fire-damaged cathedral ranged between 500 and 800 times the official safe levels.

But health officials told the AP that Paris still does not have any official regulatory threshold.

The World Health Organization told AP it also has no outdoor safety guidelines for lead dust and has no "immediate" intention to create any.

New legislation for hazard safety in Britain following the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire also did not cover lead-dust hazards. The U.K. Environment Ministry told AP it doesn't "have a specific threshold for unsafe lead dust levels in the U.K. in public places." It said the hazard focus after Grenfell, an apartment building constructed in the 1970s, "was more on asbestos than lead due to the age of the building."

In the U.S., where many buildings were constructed after lead hazards were widely recognized, the Environmental Protection Agency has no lead dust hazard standards for outdoor public spaces.

Lead is ubiquitous in Paris' 19th-century architecture — in roofs, gilded balconies, floors and terraces — and not just in its most famous cathedral. In 1853, Napoleon III chose Baron Haussmann to carry out a near-total renovation of Parisian boulevards and parks in an era that used lead prolifically — designs that still dominate the city.

French officials say there are so few guidelines on lead dust levels because it was not a problem they had to confront until the unprecedented Notre Dame fire.

It took four months for the city to complete a deep-clean operation of the sidewalks even as tourists, residents and merchants walked streets around the cathedral daily.

Paris City Hall issued a new action plan this fall to address lead — including cleaning and testing in places that host children, increased monitoring of children with high levels of lead in their blood and an independent epidemiological study of lead health impacts in a city that has used the toxic element since the Middle Ages.

"Paris is a beautifully preserved city," Souyris said. "But we realize we have also beautifully preserved its lead."

Experts say Paris' rare status as a highly conserved historic city makes it a particular danger spot for lead.

"Preservation does make Paris unusual," said Neil M. Donahue, a chemistry professor at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. "Incineration of one of the most famous roofs in the world may be especially dramatic, but there is no alchemy in this world. Lead will remain lead forever."

The fire in Paris' spiritual heart increased awareness among authorities and the public to the dangers of lead.

In June, Paris' Regional Health Agency advised that all pregnant women and children under 7 years old living near the site take a test for lead levels.

The agency said 12 children in the surrounding areas tested positive for elevated lead levels in their blood since the fire. None have been hospitalized or prescribed medication, but officials said it was impossible to predict the long-term health consequences of the fire.

One child's lead exposure came from a source other than the cathedral: the lead balcony of his family's apartment. But it illustrates how the fire awakened Parisians to the dangers of lead. It's unlikely the child would have been tested at all without the catastrophe.

Despite the lead fallout from the fire, experts say tourists should not alter travel plans to one of the most visited cities in the world.

But toxic lead dust remains a problem inside the burned-out cathedral, after tons of molten and airborne lead contaminated its interior. The inside clean-up is a delicate and painstaking process, complicated by French President Emmanuel Macron's five-year timeline for the restoration to be completed — a deadline many experts say is unrealistic.

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Aline Magnien, director of the Historic Monuments Research Laboratory, recently dispatched her team of scientists to figure out how to remove the toxic lead from inside the 855-year-old UNESCO world heritage site without damaging it.

"It's a race against the clock," she said. "The lead is a real problem. The cathedral is exceptionally precious. And we don't have the luxury of time."

Follow Thomas Adamson on Twitter: @ThomasAdamson_K

Associated Press writers Giada Zampano in Rome, David Caruso in New York and Daria Litvinova in Moscow contributed to this report

Patriots, Texans clinch division titles with wins

By The Associated Press undefined

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP) — Tom Brady passed for 271 yards and a touchdown, sneaked for a third-down conversion to set up another score and threw a downfield block on another scoring drive to help the New England Patriots clinch their 11th AFC East title in a row by beating Buffalo 24-17 on Saturday.

With Bills visiting for a rare late-season matchup while the division was still at stake, Sony Michel ran for 96 yards and Rex Burkhead rebounded for an opening-drive fumble to catch four passes for 77 yards and run for 20 more. Both teams had already clinched playoff berths; the Patriots (12-3) remain in contention for a first-round bye or even the No. 1 seed in the AFC.

Josh Allen completed 13 of 26 passes for 208 yards and ran for 43 more, including a first down on fourth-and-1 from the Patriots 30 with about three minutes left. After driving to the New England 8, Allen over threw Dawson Knox in the end zone and then was sacked by Adam Butler. Facing fourth-and-goal from the 15 with just over one minute left, he was forced out of the pocket and had to throw the ball up for grabs in the end zone, where it was knocked down by J.C. Jackson.

Cole Beasley caught seven passes for 108 yards, and John Brown had a 53-yard touchdown reception for the Bills (10-5), who have qualified for the playoffs for the second time since 1999. They have not won a playoff game since 1995, following their last division title, when Marv Levy's team beat Don Shula's Miami Dolphins in the wild-card round.

Brady, who is 42 and nursing a right elbow injury, improved to 32-3 against the Bills, and Buffalo hasn't beaten the Patriots in six games under coach Sean McDermott. This one was clinched when Burkhead ran it in from 1 yard with 5:11 left; Brady found Julian Edelman for the 2-point conversion to make it a seven-point game.

49ERS 34, RAMS 31

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) — Jimmy Garoppolo converted a pair of conversions on third-and-16 to set up Robbie Gould's game-winning 33-yard field goal with no time left and San Francisco eliminated defending NFC champion Los Angeles from playoff contention with a victory.

Garoppolo made up for a mostly pedestrian game for the 49ers (12-3) by delivering two big throws on the final drive after taking his fifth and sixth sacks.

He found Kendrick Bourne on an 18-yard pass over the middle to convert the first long third down and then hit Emmanuel Sanders behind a blown coverage for 46 yards to set up the winning kick.

The Niners then ran out on the field to celebrate while the Rams (8-7) were eliminated with the loss. Minnesota became the fifth team to clinch a berth in the NFC with Dallas and Philadelphia battling for the final spot.

The victory kept the Niners in control in the race for the NFC's top seed and home-field advantage throughout. They still need to win next week at Seattle to win the NFC West, otherwise they will be relegated to wild-card status.

Garoppolo finished 16 for 27 for 248 yards with one touchdown and two interceptions.

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Jared Goff connected on a 22-yard TD pass to Cooper Kupp in the third quarter to put the Rams ahead 28-24.

TEXANS 23, BUCCANEERS 20

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Bradley Roby returned one of Jameis Winston's four interceptions for a touchdown and Ka'imi Fairburn snapped a fourth-quarter tie with his third field goal, lifting Houston over Tampa Bay and its fourth AFC South title in five years.

Roby raced 27 yards up the right sideline after picking off Winston's first pass of the game, the sixth pick-6 the Bucs quarterback has thrown this season. Jahleel Addae's interception with 1:27 remaining, ended any realistic chance the Bucs had of fully overcoming Winston's mistakes.

The Texans (10-5) won despite not getting an especially sharp performance from Deshaun Watson, who completed 19 of 32 passes for 184 yards and one interception. The Bucs (7-8) sacked him five times and held Houston to one offensive TD on Carlos Hyde's 1-yard run in the second quarter.

The Texans ended Tampa Bay's four-game winning streak and are AFC South champions for the second straight year. They join the Patriots and Chiefs as the only teams with four division titles since 2015.

A week after becoming the first player in NFL history to throw for more than 450 yards in consecutive games, Winston was 25 of 48 for 335 yards and one touchdown. He tossed an interception on Tampa Bay's opening drive for the fifth time in seven games, and nearly watched Houston go up 14-0 when Justin Reid intercepted him on the Bucs' next possession.

Instead, the Texans settled for a field goal after a penalty for a blindside block negated what also would have been a 27-yard return for a TD. Hyde's TD, set up by Peyton Barber's fumble, put the Texans up 17-3.

A resilient Winston rallied the Bucs with a pair of touchdowns in the last two minutes of the opening half to make it 17-17. The teams traded third-quarter field goals, setting the stage for Watson to move the Texans into position for the go-ahead points, Fairburn's 37-yard field goal with 7:11 remaining.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Slain Barnard College student mourned at private memorial

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) — A Barnard College freshman who was fatally stabbed in a New York City park earlier this month was remembered by friends and classmates Saturday at a private memorial service at her high school alma mater in Virginia.

Those who knew Tessa Majors gathered at St. Anne's-Belfield School in Charlottesville, Virginia, local media outlets reported. Music figured prominently in the gathering, along with poetry readings and personal testimonies by those close to her.

Majors had played in a rock band in New York and had told an editor from a newspaper internship in high school that she planned to take journalism classes in college. She was attacked Dec. 11 in a park near the school's campus in New York City.

More than 25 young musicians and Majors' friends performed many of her favorite songs on a stage, leading off with Paul Simon's "Graceland" and closing with "Prom Queen," a song she wrote for her band, The Daily Progress newspaper reported.

"Essentially, Tess had a really big band and I was a part of it. You all are too," friend Nahlij Corbin told those present, according to the paper.

The ceremony also included poetry readings and other remarks by friends and classmates. It was not open to the general public or the media.

St. Anne's Head of School David Lourie said that the diverse crowd spoke to the influence Majors had on people.

"Each and every one of us can share stories about Tess and how our time with her at school, in camp, in the music studio, on the stage, over a cup of coffee, left us feeling better, left us feeling more optimistic about the future," he said, according to The Daily Progress.

The paper reported that a video of Majors recorded during her time at St. Anne's was played. In it, she

described how she found an outlet to express and understand her own feelings in songwriting and encouraged others to share their feelings and embrace their vulnerability.

"The world will benefit from hearing your unique perspective much more than it will from your silence," she said in the video shot last May.

Majors' death, in a park in proximity to the Barnard campus, has troubled many in New York City because of its apparent randomness.

Police have said as many as three youths confronted the 18-year-old. So far, only one 13-year-old has been arrested. He is charged as a juvenile with felony murder and other counts. Police said the youth acknowledged that he was with the group that confronted Majors, but said he did not stab her.

Guatemala bus crash kills at least 20 people

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — A trailer truck collided with a passenger bus in eastern Guatemala early Saturday, killing at least 20 people and leaving a dozen wounded, according to the national disaster agency. It said nine of the dead were minors.

Volunteer firefighters told reporters the truck appeared to have collided with the bus from behind in the municipality of Gualan, roughly 150 kilometers (95 miles) east of Guatemala City.

Photos of the scene showed the truck toppled onto its side along a curve on the two-lane highway, with the bus a little further ahead, its rear section destroyed.

The national disaster agency said the bus had been headed from the northeastern Peten region to the capital.

It said the injured were taken to several hospitals in the region.

AP Exclusive: Computer plate umpers allowed in new labor deal

By **BEN WALKER** and **RONALD BLUM** AP Baseball Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Computer plate umpires could be called up to the major leagues at some point during the next five seasons.

Umpires agreed to cooperate with Major League Baseball in the development and testing of an automated ball-strike system as part of a five-year labor contract announced Saturday, two people familiar with the deal told The Associated Press. The Major League Baseball Umpires Association also agreed to cooperate and assist if Commissioner Rob Manfred decides to utilize the system at the major league level. The people spoke on condition of anonymity because those details of the deal, which is subject to ratification by both sides, had not been announced.

The independent Atlantic League became the first American professional league to let a computer call balls and strikes at its All-Star Game on July 10. Plate umpire Brian deBrauwere wore an earpiece connected to an iPhone in his pocket and relayed the call upon receiving it from a TrackMan computer system that uses Doppler radar.

The Atlantic League experimented with the computer system during the second half of its season, and the Arizona Fall League of top prospects used it for a few dozen games this year at Salt River Fields.

MLB has discussed installing the system at the Class A Florida State League for 2020. If that test goes well, the computer umpers could be used at Triple-A in 2021 as bugs are dealt with prior to a big league callup.

"It would change the game for the good. It would continue the effort to eliminate human deficiency," Hall of Famer Mike Schmidt wrote in a story for The Associated Press in October. "We have replay everywhere else in the game. Like it or not, replay gets the call right."

It is not clear whether the Major League Baseball Players Association would need to approve computerized ball and strikes.

"We are aware the umpires and MLB are in negotiations over a new CBA," said players' union head Tony Clark, a former All-Star first baseman. "MLB will have their negotiation with them, and they will need to discuss with us."

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Several AFL prospects praised the TrackMan system for calls on the inside and outside corners but said it struggled with breaking balls low or high around the strike zone.

"This idea has been around for a long time and it's the first time it's been brought to life in a comprehensive way," Morgan Sword, MLB's senior vice president of economics and operations, said on the night the Atlantic League experiment started.

Humans still will be needed to determine checked swings and to make sure TrackMan doesn't call a strike on a pitch that bounces and goes through the strike zone.

"I think it's a little naive to think that simply letting computers generate strike or ball," Houston manager AJ Hinch said during the World Series. "It's incredibly naive to think that there's not going to be pitfalls in that scenario, as well."

Humans will make safe/out calls — subject to video review back in the New York control room, a system that started on home run calls in 2008 and extended in 2014 to many umpire decisions.

There were 1,356 video reviews during the 2019 regular season, taking an average of 1 minute, 16 seconds. MLB said 597 calls or 44% were overturned, 277 or 20% confirmed and 463 or 34% allowed to stand because there was not enough evidence to confirm or overturned. The remaining 19 calls were for rules checks or record keeping.

As part of the labor contract, the sides agreed to raises in compensation and retirement benefits along with provisions to allow earlier retirement.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Trump slams 'unfair' Pelosi delay, rallies conservatives

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump complained Saturday about House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's delayed transmission of the articles of impeachment to the Senate, which may delay a trial in the GOP-controlled chamber.

"It's so unfair," Trump said, days after he was impeached by the House, as he spoke at a conservative student conference organized by the group Turning Point USA. "They are violating the Constitution," he added.

Pelosi has refused so far to send the articles of impeachment to the Senate, in part to provide more leverage to Democrats in that chamber as they seek to negotiate the rules for the trial proceedings. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Democratic leader Chuck Schumer remain at an impasse over whether there will be new witnesses and testimony in the trial.

Still, Trump is expected to be acquitted of both charges in the Senate, where Republicans have the majority, in what will be only the third presidential impeachment trial in U.S. history. Proceedings are expected to begin in January.

Trump lashed out at the Democrats who supported impeachment, accusing them of trying to "overthrow" the 2016 election.

"They call themselves Democrats, but they really don't believe in democracy," he said.

Trump lauded House Republicans for remaining in lockstep against impeachment as a few Democrats crossed the aisle to oppose it.

"We have to say it was a bipartisan vote," Trump said. "No Republican went to their side."

Speaking to thousands of enthusiastic supporters, many wearing his campaign paraphernalia, Trump encouraged young conservatives to stand up to the "radical left," as he sought to harness the nation's cultural and divisions for political gain.

"The Democrat Party is trying to shred our Constitution, tear down our history and erase the nation's borders," Trump said.

"Each of you are on the front lines of defending our way of life," he added. "The radical left doesn't stand a chance against young conservatives who put America first."

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Trump spoke on the first day of his more than two-week winter vacation at his private club in Palm Beach. Trump was introduced by conservative talk radio host Rush Limbaugh, who encouraged the high school students in attendance not to believe in climate change and for conservatives to attack Trump's critics, not spend time defending him.

"The people that need to be defending themselves are the people attacking him and the people attacking us," Limbaugh said. "The president doesn't need to be defended. He needs to be supported."

San Quentin marathon offers inmates a sense of freedom

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Once a year, the running club at San Quentin Prison gets a chance to race in pursuit of glory.

The San Francisco Chronicle reports that 30 inmates took part in the annual San Quentin Prison Marathon, held on Nov. 22.

The 26.2-mile (42.2-kilometer) run loops 105 times around the outdoor track of California's oldest prison. Aged 22 to 72, the competitors are all members of the maximum-security prison's 1,000 Mile Club and include inmates incarcerated for rape, attempted murder and other charges.

"Running takes you out of this place," said Mark Alan Jarosik, this year's winner, who finished at 3:16:38. Fidelio Marin finished second at 3:18:24, despite rolling his ankle on one of the final laps.

Jarosik, a former architect, was convicted of raping and attempting to murder his ex-girlfriend in 2012. Marin was convicted of murdering his estranged wife in 2011. Both are lifers, like most of the inmates at the prison at the northern edge of San Francisco Bay.

Markelle "The Gazelle" Taylor, who won last year's marathon, holds the prison record of 3:10:42. After 18 years behind bars on a second-degree murder conviction, Taylor was released on parole in March. A month later, he ran the Boston Marathon in 3:03:52, a personal best.

Catalog retailers see reason for optimism after declines

By DAVID SHARP Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Catalogs, those glossy paper-and-ink offerings of outdoor apparel, kitchenware and fruit baskets, are not yet headed for the recycling bin of history.

Until recently, the future appeared grim for the mailbox-stuffers. A one-two punch of postal rate increases and the Great Recession had sharply cut their numbers. Common wisdom had everything retail-related moving online.

But a catalog-industry rebound appears in the works, fueled in part by what might seem an unlikely group: younger shoppers who find it's sometimes easier, more satisfying and even nostalgic, flipping pages rather than clicking links.

Industry experts say that all those catalogs crammed into mailboxes this holiday season are a sign that mailings have stabilized — and may be growing — after a decline of about 40% since the Great Recession.

New companies are mailing catalogs. And even died-in-the-wool online retailers like Amazon and Bonobos are getting into the act.

"They're tapping out on what they're able to do digitally," said Tim Curtis, president of CohereOne, a direct marketing agency in California. "They've got to find some new way to drive traffic to their websites."

Catalog retailers slashed mailings, and some abandoned catalogs altogether, after a major U.S. Postal Service rate increase and the start of the recession in late 2007. Catalog numbers dropped from about 19 billion in 2016 to an estimated 11.5 billion in 2018, according to the American Catalog Mailers Association.

The industry still faces challenges, but there's reason for some optimism, said Hamilton Davison, president of the mailers association.

Millennials who are nostalgic for vinyl records and all things vintage are thumbing through catalogs and dog-eared the pages. It's a new demographic roughly from 22 to 38 that's helping to breathe some new life into the sector, industry officials say.

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In fact, millennials are more likely than baby boomers to visit a store based on mailings, according to the U.S. Postal Service inspector general.

Sarah Johnson says she loves flipping through catalogs at her convenience — but gets her hackles up when retailers fill her email inbox.

“Promotion emails drive me crazy,” said Johnson, 29, of Vernal, Utah. “When there’s a catalog lying on the table, it feels like it’s my choice to pick it up and flip through it. When it arrives in my inbox it feels like it’s imposing on me,” she said.

Angela Hamann, another millennial, says she prefers catalogs because it’s easier than scrolling through webpages to evaluate a retailer’s offering.

“It’s a great way to assess what a company has to offer without making a bunch of clicks,” said Hamann, 37, of New Gloucester, Maine.

During the downturn, catalog retailers reduced the size of the catalogs, slashed the number of pages and became selective about their mailings, said Jim Gibbs from The Dingley Press, in Lisbon, Maine, which prints and mails about 330 million catalogs a year.

But catalogs never died off, as some began predicting during the dot-com bubble. Catalog naysayers didn’t understand that a webpage is useless unless shoppers know about it, and catalogs are an important tool for driving customers online, Gibbs said.

These days, retailers like Amazon, Wayfair and Walmart are boosting their mailings, helping to offset companies that abandoned catalogs, and dozens of smaller companies are also getting into the act, Davison said. There’s also a trend toward postcard fliers being mailed by companies like Shutterfly, Curtis added.

The tactile feel of catalogs creates a more meaningful connection, Curtis said. Consumers, meanwhile, routinely delete emails or skim over online promotions without a second thought, he said.

For some, there’s no escaping the sentimental aspect.

In Austin, Texas, tech company worker Mike Trimborn described himself as a “nearly 100% online shopper” who sees catalogs as an “exercise in futility.” But he waxed nostalgic when he received a toy catalog from Amazon in the mail this holiday season.

Trimborn, 42, said his sons, ages 9 and 11, marked up the Amazon catalog just like he marked up the big Sears catalog as a kid.

“It was such a fun experience when I was a kid. To be able to give that to my kids was a surprise,” he said.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Dec. 22, the 356th day of 2019. There are nine days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Dec. 22, 2010, President Barack Obama signed a law allowing gays for the first time in history to serve openly in America’s military, repealing the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy.

On this date:

In 1808, Ludwig van Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68, and Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58, had their world premieres in Vienna, Austria.

In 1894, French army officer Alfred Dreyfus was convicted of treason in a court-martial that triggered worldwide charges of anti-Semitism. (Dreyfus was eventually vindicated.)

In 1941, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill arrived in Washington for a wartime conference with President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1944, during the World War II Battle of the Bulge, U.S. Brig. Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe rejected a German demand for surrender, writing “Nuts!” in his official reply.

In 1968, Julie Nixon married David Eisenhower in a private ceremony in New York.

In 1984, New York City resident Bernhard Goetz (bur-NAHRD’ gehts) shot and wounded four youths on

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a Manhattan subway, claiming they were about to rob him.

In 1989, Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu (chow-SHES'-koo), the last of Eastern Europe's hard-line Communist rulers, was toppled from power in a popular uprising. Playwright Samuel Beckett died in Paris at age 83.

In 1991, the body of Marine Lt. Col. William R. Higgins, an American hostage slain by his terrorist captors, was recovered after it had been dumped along a highway in Lebanon.

In 1992, a Libyan Boeing 727 jetliner crashed after a midair collision with a MiG fighter, killing all 157 aboard the jetliner, and both crew members of the fighter jet.

In 2001, Richard C. Reid, a passenger on an American Airlines flight from Paris to Miami, tried to ignite explosives in his shoes, but was subdued by flight attendants and fellow passengers. (Reid is serving a life sentence in federal prison.) Hamid Karzai (HAH'-mihd KAH'R'-zeye) was sworn in as prime minister of Afghanistan's interim government.

In 2008, five Muslim immigrants accused of scheming to massacre U.S. soldiers at Fort Dix were convicted of conspiracy in Camden, N.J. (Four were later sentenced to life in prison; one received a 33-year sentence.)

In 2017, iPhone owners from several states sued Apple for not disclosing sooner that it issued software updates deliberately slowing older-model phones so aging batteries would last longer.

Ten years ago: Assailants gunned down the mother, aunt and siblings of a Mexican marine who was killed in a raid that took out one of Mexico's most powerful cartel leaders. Nebraska's Ndamukong Suh (ehn-DAHM'-uh-kehn soo) became the first defensive player voted The Associated Press College Football Player of the Year.

Five years ago: North Korea experienced sweeping Internet outages for hours before coming back online; the White House and the State Department refused to say whether the U.S. government was responsible. Singer Joe Cocker, 70, died in Crawford, Colorado. Actress Christine Cavanaugh, the voice of "Babe" the pig, died in Cedar City, Utah, at age 51.

One year ago: Indonesia's Anak Krakatau volcano island erupted and collapsed, triggering a tsunami that killed more than 420 people and displaced 40,000.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Hector Elizondo is 83. Country singer Red Steagall is 81. Former World Bank Group President Paul Wolfowitz is 76. Baseball Hall of Famer Steve Carlton is 75. Former ABC News anchor Diane Sawyer is 74. Rock singer-musician Rick Nielsen (Cheap Trick) is 71. Rock singer-musician Michael Bacon is 71. Baseball All-Star Steve Garvey is 71. Golfer Jan Stephenson is 68. Actress BernNadette Stanis is 66. Rapper Luther "Luke" Campbell is 59. Country singer-musician Chuck Mead is 59. Actor Ralph Fiennes (rayf fynz) is 57. Actress Lauralee Bell is 51. Country singer Lori McKenna is 51. Actress Dina Meyer is 51. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, is 49. Actress Heather Donahue is 46. Actor Chris Carmack is 39. Actor Harry Ford is 37. Actor Greg Finley is 35. Actor Logan Huffman is 30. Rhythm-and-blues singer Jordin Sparks is 30. Pop singer Meghan Trainor is 26.

Thought for Today: "Winter is not a season, it's an occupation." — Sinclair Lewis, American author (1885-1951).

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