

# Groton Daily Independent

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"ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS  
FORGIVE OURSELVES WHOLLY  
AND COMPLETELY FOR EVER  
THINKING THAT WE ARE NOT  
GOOD ENOUGH!"

-JODI AMAN



## Church Services

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church: Worship in the church at 8:30 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/215332349572015/>)

Groton Christian & Missinary Alliance Church: Worship in the church at 10:30 a.m.: (<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonCMA/>)

St. John's Lutheran Church: Worship in the church at 9 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsgroton/>)

Emmanuel Lutheran Church - Worship inside at 9 a.m.

(<https://www.facebook.com/Emmanuel-Lutheran-Church-GrotonSD-ELCA-636505039852208/>)

United Methodist Church: Worship online only at 11 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/grotonsdumc>)

Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden, 10:30 a.m. Worship inside or stay in vehicle and listen on the FM.

Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont has worship on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. in the basement.

Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont / Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden - will have a podcast posted. <https://anchor.fm/paul-irvin-kosel>



## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*To everything there is a season,  
A time for every purpose under heaven...*

*A time to keep silence,*

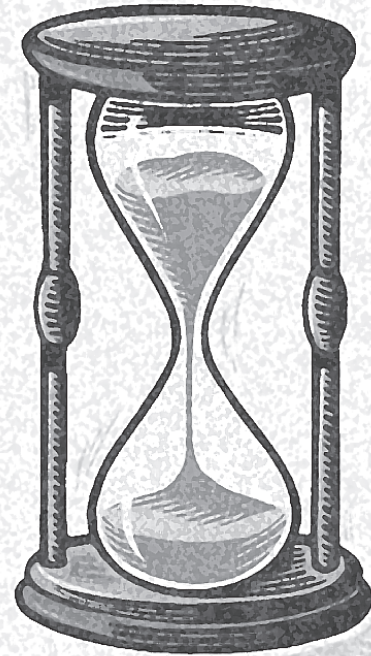
*And a time to speak;*

*A time to love,*

*And a time to hate;*

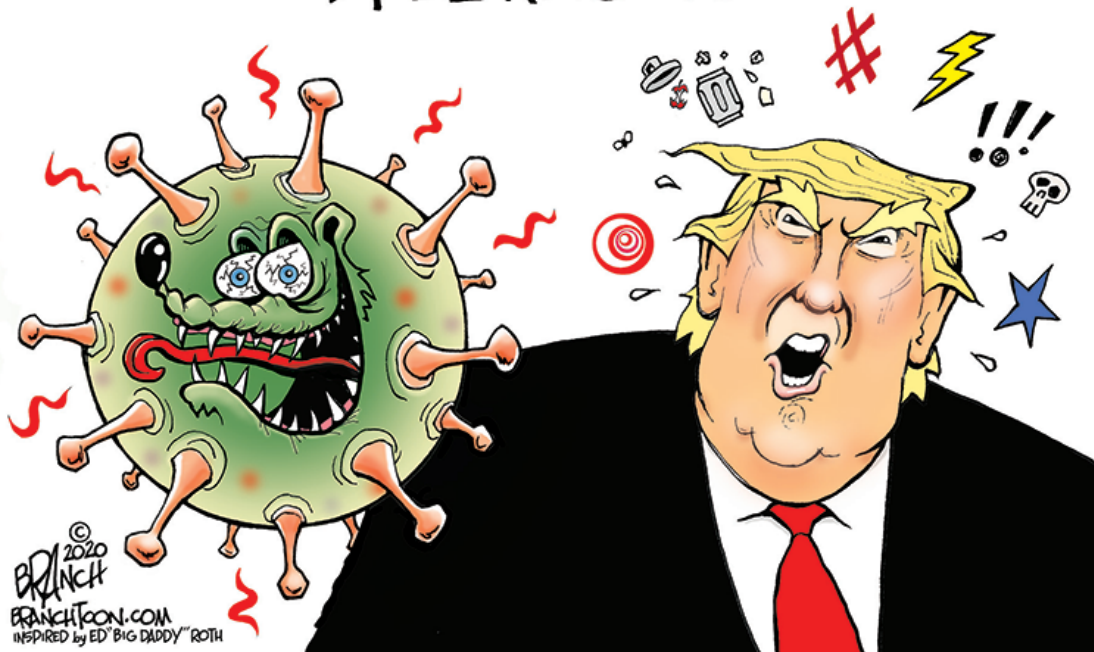
*A time of war, and a time of peace.*

ECCLESIASTES 3: 1, 7, 8



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### STILL RAGING...



## BIBLE

## TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Leviticus in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. For possible New Year's resolutions, Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be ..."? *Resolved, Established, Directed, Bountiful*

3. In Luke 2, what prophetess spoke of Jesus "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem"? *Anna, Jezebel, Damaris, Whore of Babylon*

4. In which month of the religious calendar did the new year begin in the Bible? *3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th*

5. From Matthew 2, to what country did Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus flee? *Jordan, Syria, Oman, Egypt*

6. Who told Joseph about the death of Herod? *Melchior, Angel (in a dream), Augustus Caesar, Phanuel*

ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) Established; 3) Anna; 4) 7th; 5) Egypt; 6) Angel (in a dream)

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

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## Comfort foods

Made fast  
and  
healthy



by Healthy Exchanges

### Almond Crunch Coffee Cake

Knowing this special breakfast treat is waiting makes it worth crawling out of a warm bed on a cold winter morn. Prepare it the night before and warm it up in the microwave, and it will be ready before your eyes are wide open!

1½ cups reduced-fat baking mix  
Sugar substitute to equal 1/4 cup, suitable for baking

2/3 cup fat-free milk

2 tablespoons fat-free sour cream

1 egg or equivalent in egg substitute

1 teaspoon almond extract

1/4 cup chopped almonds

1. Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray a 9-inch round cake pan with butter-flavored cooking spray.

2. In a large bowl, combine baking mix and sugar substitute. Add milk, sour cream, egg and almond extract. Mix gently just to combine. Spread batter in prepared cake pan. Evenly sprinkle almonds over top. Lightly spray top with butter-flavored cooking spray.

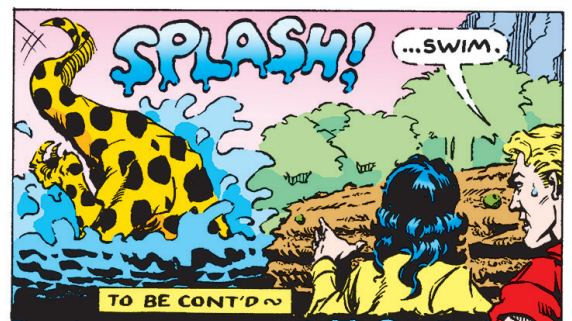
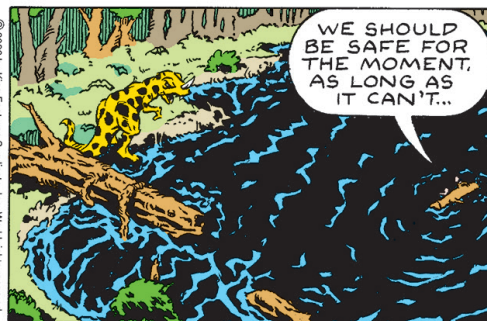
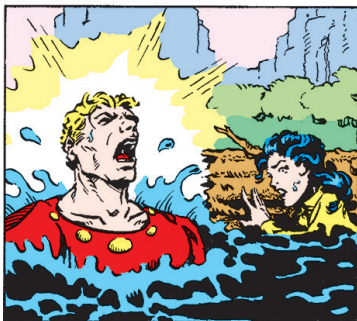
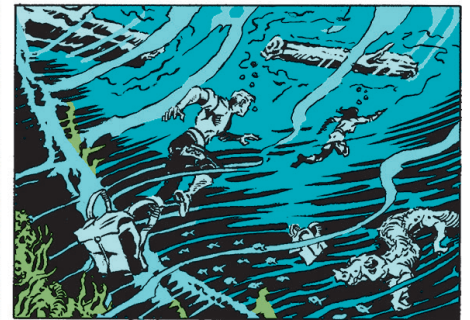
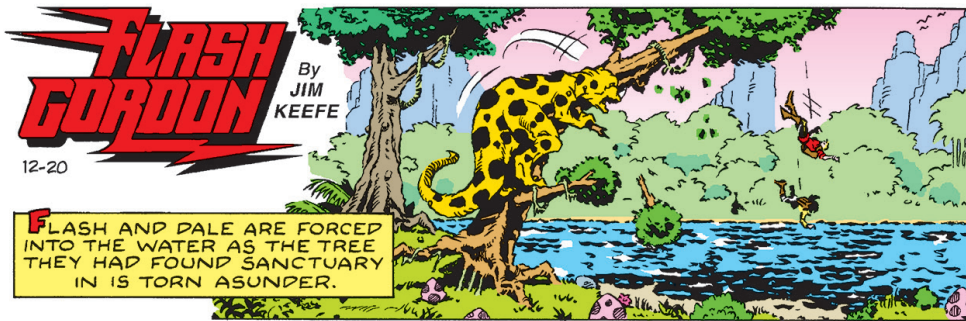
3. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Place cake pan on a wire rack and let set for at least 15 minutes. Cut into 8 wedges.

• Each serving equals: About 124 calories, 4g fat, 4g protein, 18g carb., 285mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Starch, 1/2 Fat.

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## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





## Proper Technique Is Key to Accurate BP Reading

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** I have always read that when you are having your blood pressure taken, your arm should be elevated above your heart. When mine is taken this way, it is normal, around 120/70. When I go to the doctor, my blood pressure is taken with my arm hanging at my side. I often get a much higher reading taken this way, say, 140/90. Is there a correct way to take it, and does it affect the reading? My doctor said the position doesn't matter and wants to prescribe medication. — *U.P.*

**ANSWER:** When taking the blood pressure, the goal is to approximate the blood pressure in the heart. That means that the blood pressure cuff should be at the level of the heart. If the blood pressure cuff is above the heart, then the blood pressure reading will be artificially low. If the blood pressure cuff is dangling below the level of the heart, the reading will be high.

For every 10 cm (about 4 inches) above the heart, the blood pressure will be about 7 mm of mercury too low. If I stretch out my arm as high as I can above my heart, I can get it about 30 cm higher than my heart, which would be enough to explain the difference between the 140/90 and 120/70 you have observed. However, for most people when sitting up straight, a properly placed cuff on the arm will approximate the same level as the heart. Although you are right the position matters, it sounds like the doctor's office is taking the reading correctly.

I should also note that the feet should be resting on the floor, not dangling, which can artificially raise the blood pressure. The arm should be supported while taking the blood pressure. I recommend taking the blood pressure three times and using the average.

Given how important blood pressure is, correct technique is essential in order to properly recommend who should get blood pressure treatment. Evidence is increasing that a 24-hour home blood pressure device is more accurate at determining who might need medication, especially in suspected white coat hypertension, where the readings are artificially high just because a person is in the office (even if they don't feel nervous).

\*\*\*

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** I recently had a cancer growth removed from my upper arm by a dermatologist. I was instructed to use Vaseline on the wound. I told them I use an antibiotic with pain reliever. I was told that because this is an antibiotic, I will become immune to the usage. Does the topical antibiotic have the same effect as a pill or shot? Because it is on the outside of my body, will I become immune as described, or is it safe to use as I have done for 40 years? — *W.B.*

**ANSWER:** I agree with your dermatologist. Petrolatum, such as Vaseline, is effective at keeping a wound moist, which promotes healing, and acts as a barrier to keep out dirt and bacteria.

Topical antibiotics may have additional usefulness in areas of skin infection or to reduce carriage of a dangerous bacteria like MRSA, but is no better than petrolatum for a clean surgical wound. Potential downsides to topical antibiotics include not only resistance, but also skin reactions. Accordingly, they should be used sparingly and only for clear indications.

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

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1. Which group was the first to release "Wildflower"?
2. Name the artist who released "Where Were You When I Was Falling in Love."
3. What was the first song Bobby Blue Bland ever released?
4. Who composed the music for the film "Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "I've been for a walk (I've been for a walk) on a winter's day (on a winter's day), If I didn't tell her (if I didn't tell her), I could leave today (I could leave today)."

### Answers

1. Skylark, in 1972. While not a one-hit wonder, Skylark didn't release many songs and "Wildflower" was the only one to top the charts.
2. Lobo, born Roland Kent LaVoie, in 1979. This was the last of his four No. 1 hits.
3. "Crying All Night Long" with a b-side "Dry Up Baby" in 1951. His first No. 1 came in 1957 with "Farther Up the Road."
4. Bob Dylan in 1973. Best known is "Knockin' on Heaven's Door." Dylan also appeared in the film.
5. "California Dreamin'," by the Mamas & the Papas in 1965. It was written by bandmembers John and Michelle Phillips.

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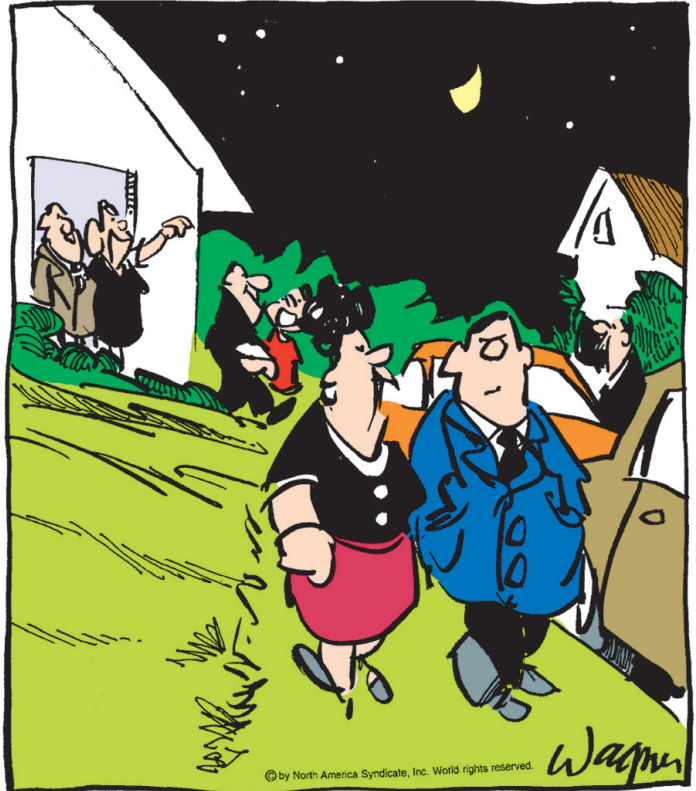
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## Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

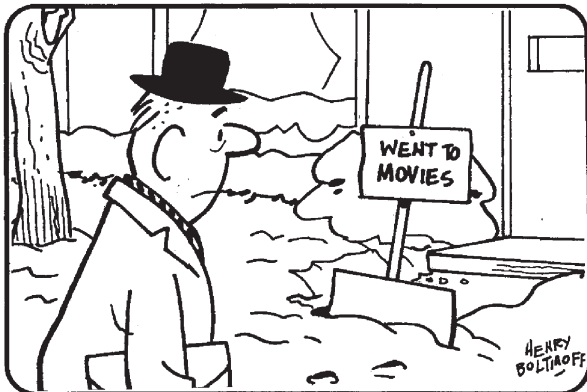


## GRIN and BEAR IT <sup>by Wagner</sup>

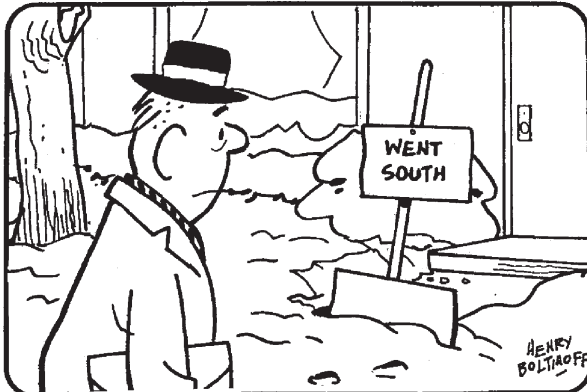


## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTAOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Sign on shovel is different. 2. Window on different. 3. Tree trunk is wider. 4. Man's nose is shorter. 5. Door knob is added. 6. Man's hat is different.

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- Apply lemon juice to the cut surface of an apple to prevent browning.

- For stubborn dry patches on hands, like knuckles and around fingernails, try rubbing in a bit of Chapstick. It does the trick to moisturize, and it doesn't wash off as easily.

- "To protect feet from getting soggy when out in snowy or rainy weather, cut a piece of plastic wrap about 3 inches longer than your foot on both sides, then step on it and fold it up on all sides before you put your foot in your shoe. It also keeps feet warm." — *M.S. in Colorado*

- "I use the old-fashioned round coffee filters to cover food in the microwave. Less expensive than paper plates and stays in place but doesn't stick to food." — *N.B. in Texas*

- D.R. in Illinois uses flip-flops for some unusual purposes, like covered with sandpaper as a sanding block, covered with a chamois for waxing

a car or even to apply paint. He says they can be found on clearance for less than a dollar. One thing you shouldn't do: "Don't ever weed eat your driveway while wearing! Personal injury."

- When making meatloaf, put strips of raw bacon on the bottom of the pan and place the meatloaf on top. It adds terrific flavor and will keep the meatloaf from sticking to the pan.

- "I purchased a dish drain pad approximately 9 inches by 17 inches, and I use it on the seat of my shower so it won't be slippery. It fits perfect — especially good for seniors! I am 86 years old, so I need all the help I can get." — *B. B. In Massachusetts*

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

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## RIDDLE CARD



1. What is the best thing to put into pies?
2. When is coffee like the earth?
3. What does H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O stand for?
4. Where do rivers sleep?
5. What plant stands for the number four?

Answers: 1. Your teeth. 2. When it is ground. 3. The formula for water, H to O. 4. In river beds. 5. Ivy (IV).

Illustrated by David Coulson

## Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

A	H	U	S	T	L	E	S	N	E	F	E	D	E
T	O	O	H	S	L	L	T	O	V	I	P	E	G
T	E	N	W	B	A	C	K	B	O	A	R	D	U
V	S	I	B	M	B	R	E	K	A	E	N	S	A
Q	S	I	D	W	R	E	K	A	F	L	C	P	R
H	R	U	S	T	I	N	R	E	B	O	U	N	D
D	N	V	S	S	A	P	R	J	R	P	O	O	H
K	C	O	L	B	A	L	A	E	T	S	W	U	F

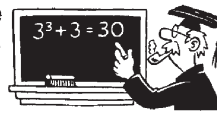


### HOOP, HOOP, HOORAY!

Hidden in the diagram above are 24 words associated with the game of basketball. They can be read up or down, forward or backward, or even diagonally. The items to look for are:

- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| AIR BALL  | HUSTLE    |
| ASSIST    | NET       |
| BACKBOARD | PASS      |
| BANK      | PIVOT     |
| BLOCK     | REBOUND   |
| DEFENSE   | REFEREE   |
| DRIBBLE   | SCORE     |
| DUNK      | SHOOT     |
| FAKE      | SLAM DUNK |
| FOUL      | SNEAKER   |
| GUARD     | STEAL     |
| HOOP      | SWISH     |

**A TOUGH ASSIGNMENT?** Professor Flunkum challenges you to write the number 30 using the same three digits. He knows five ways to do this. See if you can find the other four.



Answers: 33 - 3; 5 x 5 + 5; 6 x 6 - 6; XXX.

**THERE WILL BE** a great tintinnabulation if you get these right! In this puzzle, the words get progressively longer, and they all start with TIN. Definitions:

1. A container (given).
2. Part of fork.
3. A trace of color.
4. To fiddle with.
5. A protective wrapping.
6. Old-time photos.

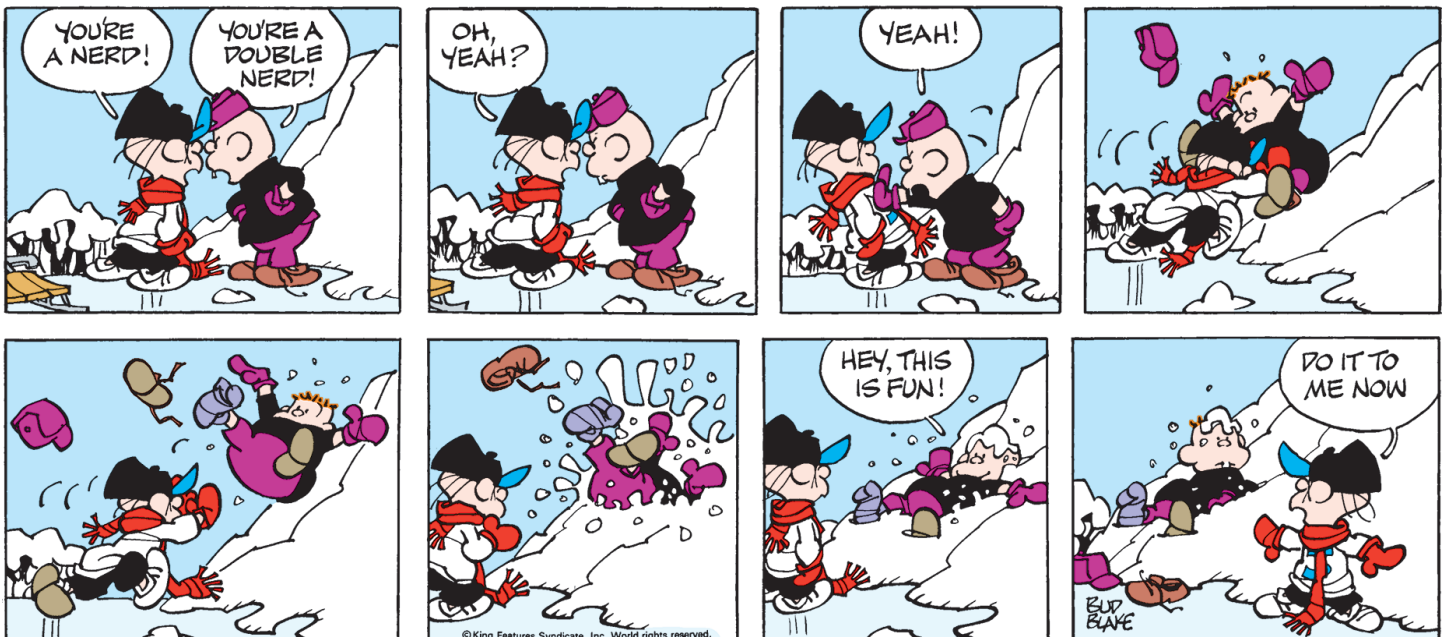
1. TIN
2. TIN \_
3. TIN \_ \_
4. TIN \_ \_ \_
5. TIN \_ \_ \_ \_
6. TIN \_ \_ \_ \_ \_



Answers: 1. Tin. 2. Tine. 3. Tinge. 4. Tinker. 5. Tintfoil. 6. Tintypes.

## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 "— Lang Syne"
- 5 Steed stopper
- 9 Plead
- 12 Dandling site
- 13 Reactions to pyrotechnics
- 14 Preceding
- 15 Mid-month date
- 16 Automaker Ransom Eli —
- 17 Have a bug
- 18 Small winning margin
- 19 Go blue?
- 20 Air for a pair
- 21 "How I Met Your Mother" net
- 23 Census stat
- 25 Off-course
- 28 Auction, often
- 32 Use crib notes
- 33 Rechargeable battery
- 34 Grow canines
- 36 Tourist attractions
- 37 Moray or conger
- 38 Coop occupant
- 39 Witty one
- 42 Clay, now
- 44 "Super-food" berry
- 48 Tramcar contents

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			

- 49 Teeny bit owl interjection
- 50 So 6 Sacred 30 Long. crosser
- 51 Meadow 7 "Heavens to 31 Mag. staffers
- 52 Expression Murgatroyd!" 35 Very happy
- 53 Deserve 8 Donkey 36 Vibrate abnormally
- 54 Spigot 9 Suitor 39 Filly's brother
- 55 Whirlpool 10 One of HOMES 40 Vicinity
- 56 "Phooey!" 11 Money 41 Harvest
- DOWN** 20 Like some drivers or hitters 43 Byron or Tennyson
- 1 Related 22 Wash 45 Burn somewhat
- 2 Loosen 24 Aladdin's ally 46 Atmosphere
- 3 Dregs 25 Performance 47 "— It Romantic?"
- 4 Treated with irreverence 26 The girl 49 Chowd down
- 5 "Give a hoot, don't pollute" 27 Shirt shape
- 29 Interlaken

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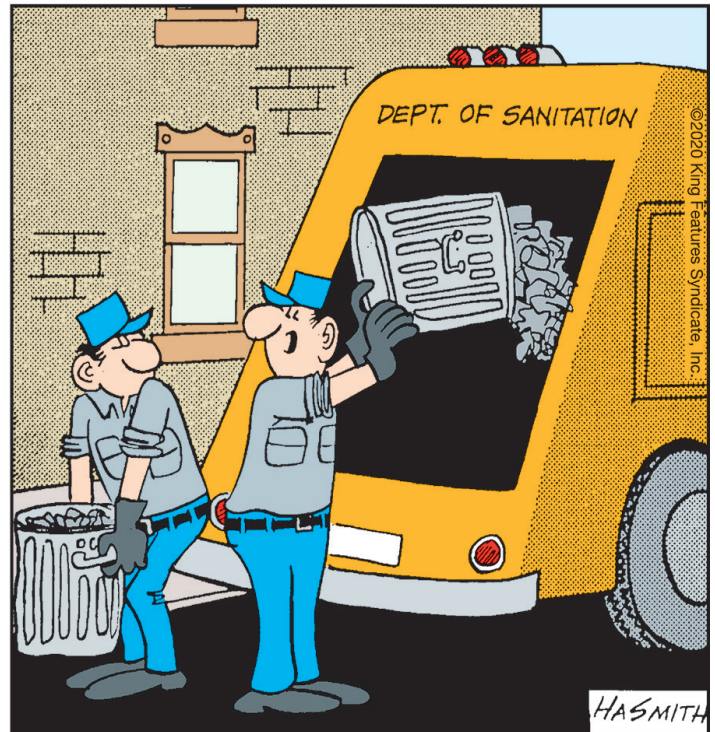
## — King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

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

## LAFF - A - DAY



"I answered this ad in a magazine which said, 'have an exciting outdoor career.'"

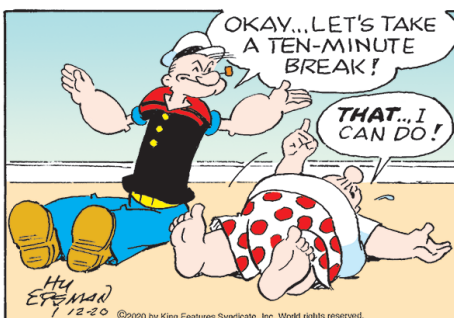
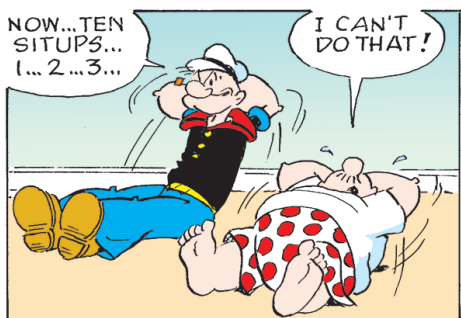
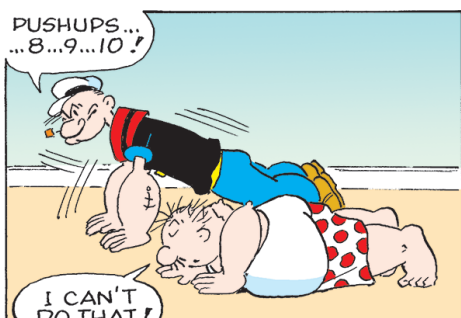
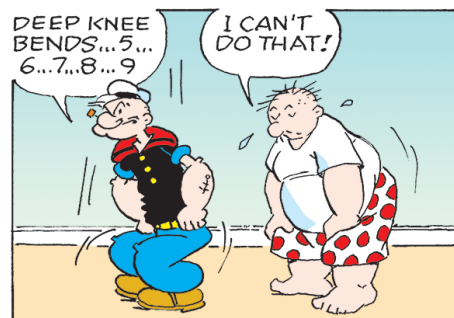
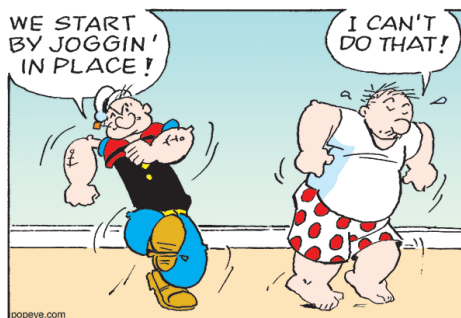
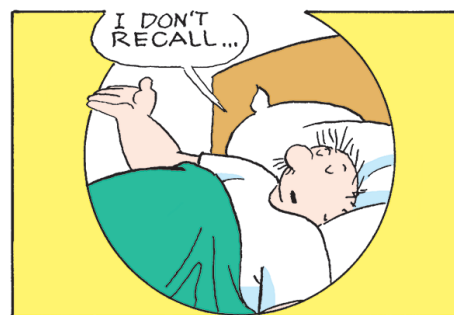
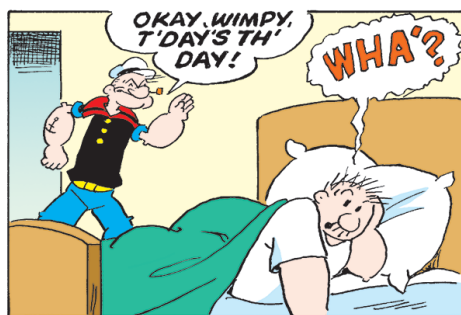
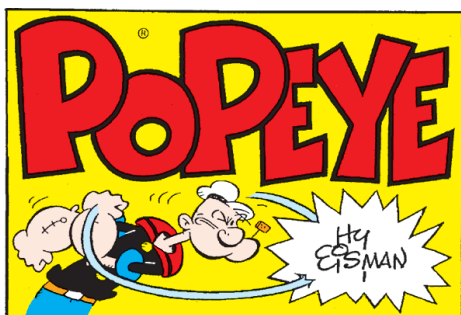
## Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



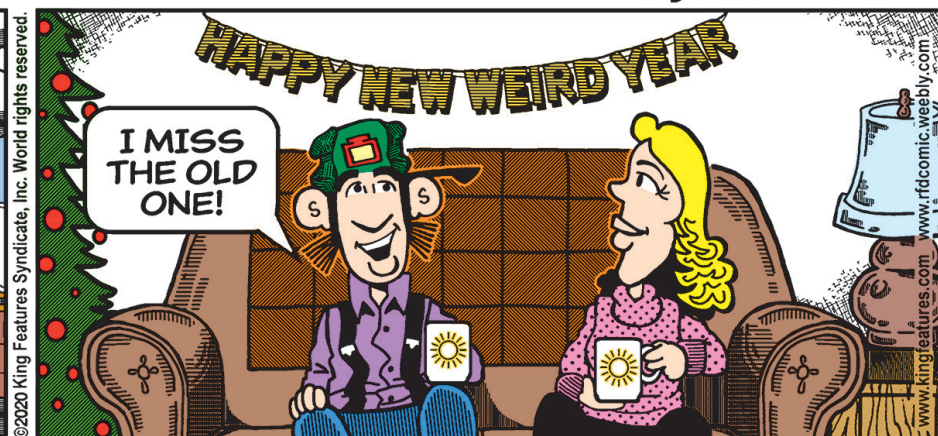
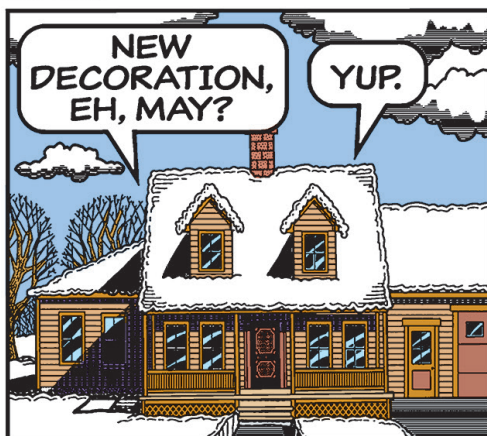
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## R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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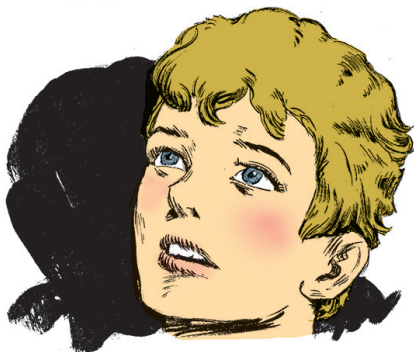
Hal Foster's  
**Prince Valiant**  
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ

Our Story: THE EVACUATION  
PROCEEDS ALL DAY.



VAL IS AT TETHER'S END, WHEN BEDROCK IS STRUCK, WHERE DID ALETA'S ABDUCTORS GO FROM HERE?

SUDDENLY, THERE IS A COMMOTION AND A HOWLING BEASTMAN JUMPS INTO THE PIT. "MY CHOSEN! WHERE IS MY CHOSEN?"



NATHAN EXPLAINS TO HIS FATHER: "PRUDENCE, ONE OF THE MAIDENS TAKEN WITH MOTHER, WAS A GIRL WHO CAUGHT IG'S FANCY."

MEANWHILE, THE BRUTE SNIFFS THE AIR AND WORKS HIS WAY TO THE CREVICE. "HER SCENT IS HERE! SHE AND THE QUEEN WERE TAKEN THIS WAY!"



VAL SLIDES INTO THE DARK RECESS AND EMERGES WITH A BROKEN FLOWER. "LOOK! IG'S NOSE TELLS TRUE!"

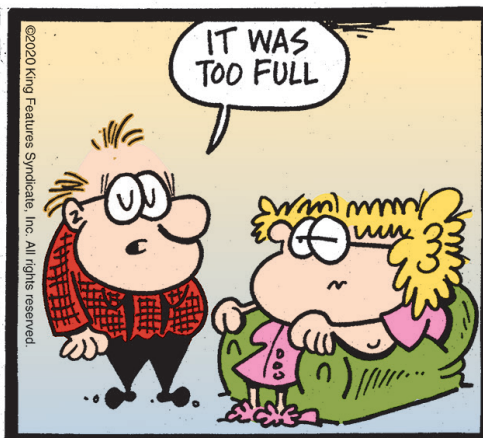
Gawain's  
NEXT: bright idea



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## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### The Best You Can Do

A show of hands, please. Is anybody else getting worn out by the current state of our lives? Is there anything we can do about it?

All I wanted was a package of socks. That shouldn't be hard. In the past, once a year or so, I'd stroll into the local big-box store, grab a package off the shelf (especially happy when I found a bonus pack with 2 extra pairs in it), pay for it and walk out.

And now? Now I can't find them anywhere. I don't dare walk into stores just to wander around, so I'm left to do my hunt on the internet. These particular socks are nowhere to be found ... except for the ones at three times the price on Amazon.

Then there was the phone call from a neighbor, in the middle of my hunt, describing a new family panic. A family member is undergoing serious medical treatment. They just learned that his nurse tested positive for COVID.

Is anyone else tired of the need for constant vigilance because of COVID? The inability to acquire basic goods and sometimes food? The constant sad sto-

ries of seniors who are in rehab centers who haven't had visitors in months?

That's probably what breaks my heart the most, all those lonely seniors in nursing homes or retirement centers.

I can't do anything about the state of the world, but I can do this: Over the next week I'm going to send individual notes and cards to the residents of a local nursing home. I got all their first names and last initials from the facility director, and I've ordered a big box of miscellaneous greeting cards. Each one will get a note and a cheery card from me. Maybe it will help brighten their day for a few minutes.

It's the best I can do.

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1. Which of the Houston Astros' "Killer B's" recorded his 3,000th career hit in June 2007?

2. What member of the 2005 North Carolina Tar Heels national championship basketball team was selected fifth overall by the Charlotte Bobcats in the 2005 NBA Draft?

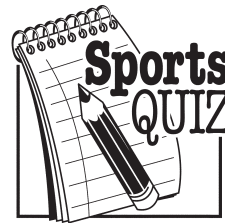
3. College football's John Mackey Award is presented annually to the most outstanding player at what position?

4. The Isobel Cup is awarded to the season champion of what ice hockey association?

5. The five heavy spherical objects that World's Strongest Man competitors lift and place on platforms are called what?

6. Who caught the lone touchdown for the New England Patriots in their 46-10 loss to the Chicago Bears in Super Bowl XX?

7. In 2012, what Texas Rangers



by Ryan A. Berenz

slugger missed five games due to ocular keratitis (dry eyes) and balance problems caused by consuming too much caffeine and energy drinks?

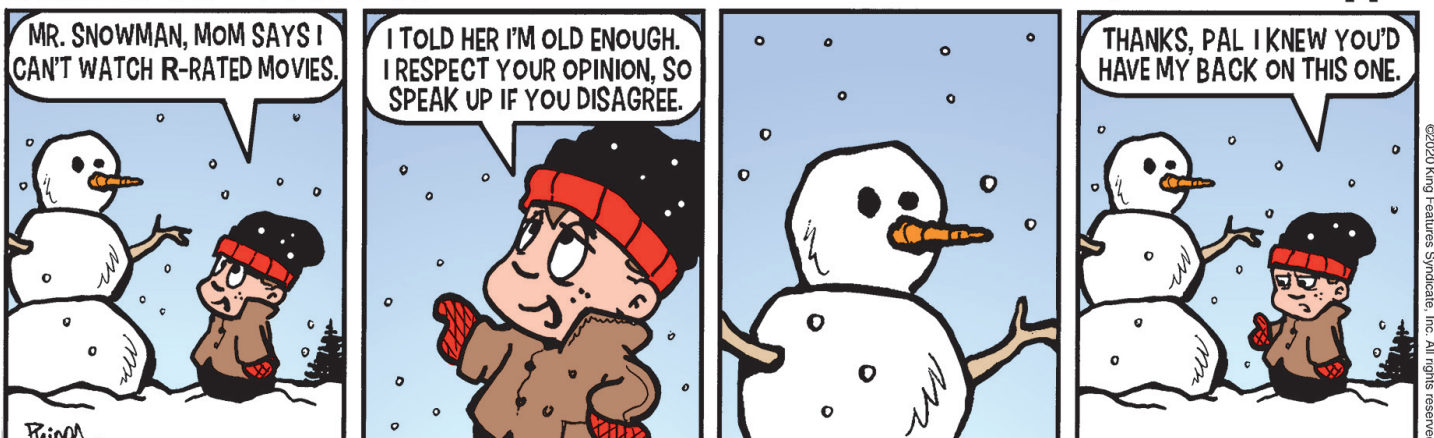
## Answers

1. Craig Biggio.
2. Raymond Felton.
3. Tight end.
4. The National Women's Hockey League.
5. Atlas Stones.
6. Irving Fryar.
7. Josh Hamilton.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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## New Year's Resolutions for Happy, Healthy Pets

**DEAR READERS:** As we close out one of the most tumultuous and stressful years of our lives, let's look back and remember how much peace and joy our pets gave to us. When nothing else in the world seemed certain, we could count on our pets to offer unconditional love.

That's why, as we look forward to a new year and new hopes, we must honor and protect our best friends. Let's resolve to:

1. Spend more time with our pets. Dogs and cats need regular attention and love. While we're spending more time at home, it's a perfect time to play with our pets, to add an extra training session and more walks into the routine.

2. Get pets the best care possible. Schedule that routine veterinary visit, and get your pets caught up on their

vaccinations. A physical can head off serious illnesses.

3. Include your pets in your will. We don't like to think about it, but end-of-life planning is important, and our pets need to be part of that planning.

4. Build lasting memories. Take as many photos with your pets as you can. Make scrapbooks that you can look through years from now to remember when your puppy was young, or to memorialize a beloved turtle, hamster, cat or dog.

5. Help other pet owners. So many people are silently struggling right now: either from job loss, ill health, grief or depression. They may not be able to take care of their pets as well as they can. Look out for your neighbors and offer to help if they ask for it. Donate money or supplies to local pet charities that offer assistance to pets and their owners.

I wish you and your pets a happy, healthy 2021.

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

## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

- On Earth you need heat to fuse metal, but in space, due to the lack of atmosphere, two pieces of the same kind of metal will fuse together with just a little pressure in a process called cold welding.

- The average person will grow 590 miles of hair in their lifetime. Nose hairs alone contribute 6.5 feet of that.

- Digging a hole to China is possible if you start in Argentina.

- While adult giraffes usually sleep standing up, their offspring get more comfortable by hunkering down on the ground and taking advantage of their extra-flexible necks, twisting around to plopp their heads on their own posteriors.

- The U.S. government gave Indiana University \$1 million to study memes.

- Caffeine, which is found in tea leaves, guarana berries, kola nuts and, of course, coffee beans, acts as a natural pesticide. It overloads the nervous

systems of insects that try to eat the plants containing it, paralyzing and even killing them before they can do too much damage.

- Liquids can boil and freeze at the same time.

- Can't get your kids to eat their carrots and broccoli? Perhaps they suffer from lachanophobia, otherwise known as the fear of vegetables.

- Hurricanes release the energy of 10,000 nuclear bombs.

- Harry Truman was the first president to celebrate Hanukkah in the White House. In 1951, he accepted a menorah from David Ben Gurion, the prime minister of Israel.

- Charles Dickens believed that sleeping facing north would improve his writing.

- Finland was the first nation to experiment with autonomous vehicles in urban conditions. The country's laws don't oblige drivers to be inside the vehicle.

\*\*\*

**Thought for the Day:** "When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world." — *George Washington Carver*



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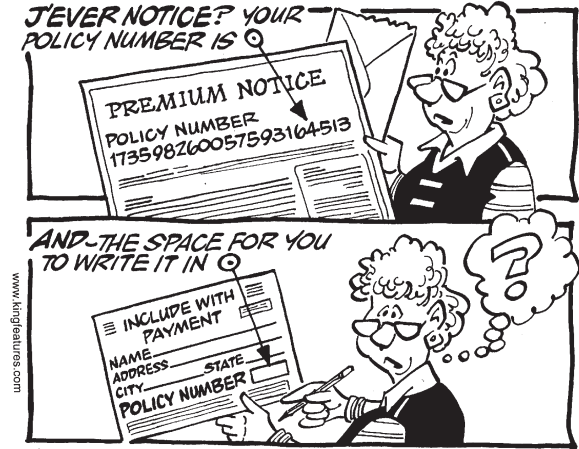
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## THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

LITTLE-KNOWN OFFICE FACTS—



## BY AL SCADUTO



Thank to BERNARD R. DE REMER, WEST LIBERTY, OHIO

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EVER HAPPEN TO YOU? YOU STOP AT A YARD SALE... NOT TO BUY ANYTHING, BUT MERELY TO BROWSE AND PASS THE TIME OF DAY...

OH YEAH! RI-I-I-I-GHT...

Thank L. ROSENFELD, to CHICAGO, ILL.



**Lucky bamboo** “looks” like bamboo but is actually a different kind of plant that is native to Africa.

Asian cultures, however, particularly appreciate this plant, believing that it brings good luck to the person receiving the plant as a gift. The tradition goes that if the lucky bamboo has 3 stems, it will bring one joy; if it has 5 stems, it brings good health; if it has 7 stems, it brings wealth; if it has 8 stems, that person will enjoy a long and prosperous life. - Brenda Weaver

Source: [www.nature-and-garden.com](http://www.nature-and-garden.com)

## VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

### At Ease: Sarge and the Coffee Shop Vets

There wasn't a single veteran on the sidewalk outside the coffee shop. I was saddened by this, believing they couldn't continue their morning meetings because of the cold weather. Still, I approached the carry-out window to order a hot drink — and saw that the whole bunch of them were inside, all seated 6 feet apart in their lawn chairs.

I poked my head through the door and was waved in.

“I have an announcement,” Sarge said from his perch on a stool at the counter. He rapped his COVID measuring stick on the floor. “We can't stay out in the cold all winter,” he said. “So, I bought this place. VA small-business loan. Welcome to our new clubhouse.”

The group exploded with questions, of course. He explained, “I bought it, but we're the only ones who will be allowed in here. To keep to all the virus rules, we'll sell coffee through the window, maybe make hot meals for homeless vets if anybody knows how to cook. But you all have to sign up as employees.”

That naturally got a huge reaction about government regulations, phony COVID stats and privacy. “We're limited in how many we can have in here,” he countered, “unless you're employees. In case somebody rats us out and sends the authorities around.”

Sarge was serious, and he had the paperwork to prove it. He waved a sheaf of documents and handed out a stack of W-4 forms. They all got busy writing in their names and Social Security numbers on documents that would never be sent to the IRS.

“You up for it, son?” He waved a form at me.

What the heck, right? I know how to cook, courtesy of the Army. So I took the form and filled it out. I knew I was officially admitted to the group, after all this time, when Sarge told me to bring a lawn chair.

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



## Sacrifice is an American Value

The Christmas season is a time of joy, thankfulness, and blessings. Families will gather together, give gifts, and drink libations. This year will look a little different though, and I was reminded as we sacrifice and keep our gatherings smaller this year, there are millions of Americans who have made that sacrifice willingly for generations – our servicemen and women.

Unlike us civilians, our servicemembers often don't get to choose how many people can attend their holiday gathering because they are stationed overseas. Recently, my Rapid City office brought on one of these individuals who spent a better portion of his life dedicated to our country's security.

Marco Padilla is a former Navy sailor and current Wounded Warrior Congressional Fellow. For eight years, he served on the USS Anzio, traveled the world's seas, completed multinational missions abroad, and was awarded Sailor of the Year. There were many times he didn't get to spend the holidays with his loved ones.

I'm grateful that the Wounded Warrior Congressional Fellowship partnered Marco with our office. If you haven't served, you can't fully understand what our veterans have experienced – Marco will bridge that gap for South Dakota's congressional office.

As a former Texan and Washingtonian, Marco was ready to join a community like South Dakota – he says he was drawn to our state because of our entrepreneurship, resilient spirit, and strong sense of community. If there's one thing we need in 2020, it's strong community and friendships.

During our interview, Marco told me most people join the military not only because of their deep sense of duty to their country and public service, but to be a part of something bigger than themselves and to join a community of brothers and sisters.

I'm grateful South Dakota can now be that community for individuals like Marco, and I hope you feel that sense of unity too. As we enter the holiday season, know you're not alone and we're all in this together. And if you can, thank a veteran for their many sacrifices.

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SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR  
**KRISTI NOEM**



## Challenges and Opportunities: A Look Back on 2020

2020 has been a year to remember, seemingly for all the wrong reasons. COVID-19 devastated families across our country. In other states, violent riots and looting tore communities apart. And it seems like political divisions are only increasing. But as I look back on 2020, I want to focus on South Dakota's opportunities. I want to highlight some of the tremendous things that we accomplished together this year.

South Dakota experienced a truly incredible year. Despite the pandemic forcing businesses to adjust their practices, we're wrapping up this year in perhaps the strongest economic position in the country. Our unemployment rate is back down to 3.5%. Our businesses cut the fewest hours and the fewest wages of any state in America, and they also had the lowest decrease in demand for their products and services. South Dakota's economy took a hit when COVID came, just like every state, but we've come roaring back stronger than ever before.

Unlike much of the country, South Dakota is seeing increasing tax revenues. In fact, we ended the 2020 fiscal year with a budget surplus and are able to look ahead to 2021 from a position of strength, which allows us to find ways to strengthen our state even further.

Much of this is a result of the unique approach that South Dakota took to this virus. We didn't order businesses to close. I didn't demand that you all shelter-in-place. I didn't even define what an essential business was; I don't have the authority to do that. Instead, I gave you the science, facts, and data, and the people of our great state overwhelmingly responded. Thank you for validating my trust in you.

In 2020, we strengthened families in South Dakota. We implemented paid family leave for all state employees so that they can invest in their families by taking the necessary time to develop stronger bonds with newborn and adopted children. When there were doubts about returning to classrooms in the fall, we worked together to make sure that we could get our students back to school in as safe a manner as possible so that they can be in the very best learning environment. And we'll continue working to strengthen South Dakota families in 2021.

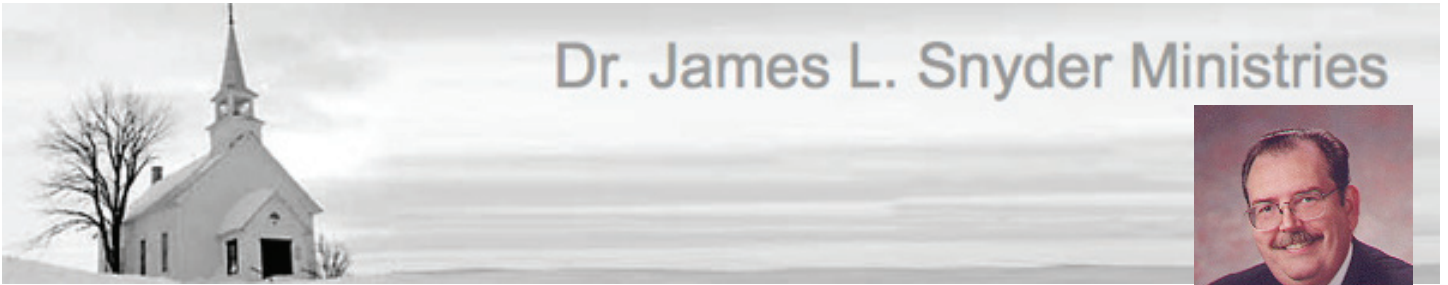
2020 was a great year for South Dakota's outdoors. We had a record number of visitors to our state parks. In fact, Custer State Park eclipsed 2 million visitations for the first time in its history. Hunting and fishing participation increased, reversing a long trend. Both resident and non-resident hunting licenses went up, and I'm particularly excited that we had a record number of licenses sold for youth mentored hunting.

South Dakota had a tremendous opportunity to showcase its outdoor beauty in 2020 when we brought fireworks back to Mount Rushmore for the first time in more than a decade. We welcomed President Trump to our shrine to democracy. It was a celebration our country sorely needed, and it was a terrific reminder of the freedoms that make America the most special country the world has ever seen.

In retrospect, 2020 was a great year because of its challenges. Challenges give us the opportunity to adapt; to become stronger; to learn and grow as individuals and as a state. 2020 challenged me as a leader, but I'm grateful for that. In South Dakota, we emerged from challenges stronger than ever before. I'm so excited for what we'll do together in 2021.

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## Another Christmas Tree in the Bag



It's hard to believe, but another Christmas has come and gone. It comes so slow but leaves so fast. I guess I'll never understand that. This Christmas was probably the most unusual that I have ever experienced.

When I was young, I remember those first Christmases; they were so slow in getting here. I think for the week leading up to Christmas, every day gained at least 10 new hours. By the time Christmas Eve arrived, I was so worn out waiting that I didn't know what to do.

I can't remember my first Christmas because I was only five months old at the time. I have a hard time remembering those early Christmases, but I'm sure they were times of fun and merriment. There were no cell phones at that time and so I have no selfies to show.

The day after Christmas, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I were sitting around the Christmas tree drinking our morning cup of coffee. Looking at the tree brought back a lot of memories for both of us. My memories are vaguer than hers, but after all, it's the memory that counts.

At our stage in life, we are at what's called the empty nest stage, and the house is so quiet. Reflecting on this, I couldn't help but remember some of those Christmases were so loud and so much energy, I didn't think that Christmas Day would ever get over.

Leading up to Christmas in our house was quite interesting. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage puts everything together, and she has a plan for everything.

I remember one year trying to help her, and I just got in her way. Not only that, but I dropped a couple of Christmas tree ornaments, and they broke. To this day, I've never made up for that one.

As we were sitting around the Christmas tree, I remembered a Christmas when I was rather young. This would have been hundreds of years ago, I'm sure. That Christmas, my father got me a Daisy Red Ryder BB gun for my present. Those were the days when such a thing as that happened.

I was never so happy with a Christmas present in all my life. I can't be sure how many boxes of BBs I went through that first month of having it. Nothing was more exciting to me than going outside and shooting my BB gun at anything and everything.

I certainly long for those good old days when you could be a man no matter how old or young you were. A BB gun was a great asset at that time.

I must confess that I had my BB gun confiscated during the first couple of days after Christmas. For

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some reason, I'm still not sure about it today, I was not supposed to shoot any windows in the house. I think, if I remember correctly, there were three windows I shot during that episode.

Not only did I have my BB gun confiscated, but there was a Christmas spanking that went along with that. I can almost feel the spanking today.

When I got my BB gun for Christmas, nobody told me that there were certain things I wasn't supposed to shoot. It wasn't my fault that I shot a window. It was my parent's fault for not telling me not to shoot a window. However, they were not interested in why I shot the window, only that I shot the window.

In a couple of weeks, I did get it back and was very careful what I shot from that moment on. I remember I had a great time with it. I only wished I had that BB gun now. I often wondered what happened to that BB gun.

I chuckled as I told my wife the story of my BB gun.

As much as I tried, I never got a similar story from my wife. I know there were several, but I could never get her to own up to that truth. Of course, she knows if I had that kind of information that I could use it to my advantage.

What I have discovered about wives is that they talk a lot but know when not to talk. As far as husbands are concerned, they don't talk that much, but they never know when not to talk.

Admiring our Christmas tree for this year was a very special time. In a week or so, that tree would be taken down, the ornaments packed away, and the tree put back up into the attic where we stored it. While it was up, though, it was wonderful to think about all of the activities that happened around that tree.

Of course, down through the years, we have replaced that tree several times. But it's the thought that really matters. All the wonderful stories that come from that tree certainly bring cheer to our hearts. We spent some time talking about the gifts we gave and the gifts we got.

As we were reminiscing, I remembered a verse of Scripture that has encouraged me.

"I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

It's not what you get that really matters, but what you give and the reason behind that giving.

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## Service Notice: Darrel Haskell

Private family services for Darrel Haskell of Watertown and formerly of Conde will be 1:00 p.m., Monday, December 28th at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Rev. Eldon Reich will officiate. Burial with military honors will follow in the Conde City Cemetery. Services will also be live streamed at GDILIVE.COM

Visitation will be held for one hour prior to services.

Darrel passed away December 23, 2020 at Avantara Watertown.

[www.paetznick-garness.com](http://www.paetznick-garness.com)



The service of  
*Darrel Haskell*  
Monday, Dec. 28, 1:00 p.m.  
Paetznick-Garness  
Funeral Chapel

**GDILIVE.COM**  
**GDIRADIO Locally 89.3FM**

The image features a black background with three lit yellow candles on the left and a portrait of an elderly man with white hair on the right. The text is centered in white, with the name 'Darrel Haskell' in a cursive font. At the bottom, there are two lines of red text: 'GDILIVE.COM' and 'GDIRADIO Locally 89.3FM'.

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**SOUTH DAKOTA  
NEWS WATCH**

Inform. Enlighten. Illuminate.

## Outdoor recreation in S.D. sees big boost during pandemic

By: Nick Lowrey December 22, 2020



**Bird-watching has grown in popularity during the pandemic as people looked for low-cost, easily accessible outdoor activities to compensate for the suspension of many indoor activities.** Photo: Bart

Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

several hundred percent since the pandemic began, membership requests a day."

Similarly, the Sioux Empire Paddlers, one of the state's largest canoeing and kayaking organizations, grew to 280 members, a record number. The lakes around Sioux Falls often were crowded with people paddling canoes and kayaks, said Sioux Empire Paddlers member Jessica Taylor.

"I definitely noticed a large increase in the number of people not only paddling with us but also just out at the lakes fishing or swimming. I took up whitewater kayaking this year and did a lot of skills practice out at Lake Alvin," Taylor said. "My boyfriend and I were there nearly every weekday evening in April, May and June. Sometimes parking was limited because there were so many people."

Meanwhile, classes on everything from archery to plant identification have been filling up quickly when staff at the Game, Fish & Parks Department Outdoor Campus in Sioux Falls post them online, said campus director David Parker.

"There just seemed to be a large interest in getting outside," Parker said.

Increased participation in outdoor recreation likely is good news for the South Dakota economy. The most recent state estimates the overall economic value of outdoor recreation at more than \$1.9 billion annually. Outdoor enthusiasts are a significant driver of the state's environmental conservation efforts.

South Dakota's billion-dollar outdoor recreation economy boomed in 2020, providing a much-needed economic boost in several business sectors while giving hope to wildlife management agencies that they can reverse a long-term decline in the number of licensed hunters and anglers.

As movie theaters closed, concerts were canceled, stores shut down and other indoor activities were curtailed by efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19, tens of thousands of South Dakotans turned to the outdoors for stress relief and entertainment in 2020. State park visitation reached near-record levels; online birding groups saw membership skyrocket; campgrounds struggled to keep up with demand and the sale of hunting and fishing licenses boomed.

Despite waiving entry fees and not collecting visitor information for almost two months at the start of the pandemic, state park visitation in 2020 has been roughly 31% higher than it was in 2019, said Al Nedved, deputy director of the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Department's parks division.

"It was pretty evident early on that the outdoors were going to be a place where people could exercise or just relax or whatever they like to do and do it safely," Nedved said.

The South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, which runs the state's premier bird-watching webpage and social media accounts, has seen a big jump in activity and membership requests, said president Kent Jensen.

"I would say activity on our Facebook page has increased began," Jensen said. "I'm probably getting two or three



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**David Parker (right) is director of the South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Department Outdoor Campus East. Parker took up hunting in 2020 with help from his brother-in-law, Ryan Clay (left).** Photo: Submitted

For example, hunters and anglers fund most state wildlife and habitat conservation efforts by buying licenses and paying excise taxes on equipment.

While it isn't surprising that more people headed outdoors during the pandemic, what has been surprising nationally and in South Dakota is a sharp rise in the number of people who gave hunting and fishing a try.

For the first time in several years, hunting and fishing license sales to state residents increased in South Dakota. Together, resident hunting and fishing license sales rose 6.7%, and roughly one-quarter of 2020 licenses were sold to hunters or anglers who had not bought a license since at least 2017. New and returning hunters and anglers were a critical part of a \$2.6 million increase in license sales revenue for the GFP.

"This year was huge," said Taniya Bethke, the education and recruitment, reactivation and retention coordinator for the Game, Fish and Parks wildlife division. She is responsible for the departmental efforts to recruit new hunters.

Before 2020, there had been a decades-long,

nationwide decline in the number of licensed hunters and anglers, a population that has historically been dominated by white, male Baby Boomers. Younger generations have not been recruited into hunting or fishing fast enough to replace aging and dying boomers, which created a looming crisis for conservation funding.

Hunters and anglers provide the vast majority of funding for the state wildlife agencies responsible for most wildlife management and conservation work in the U.S.

In South Dakota, more than 96% of the GFP Wildlife Division's \$58.5 million budget consists of either license sales revenue or federal grants derived from excise taxes levied on guns, ammunition and fishing equipment.

State wildlife managers have tried everything from simplifying regulations to providing beginner hunting

classes to reverse the decline of hunting and fishing participation in the U.S., Bethke said. South Dakota has also created loaner equipment programs, and staff are working to include more images of women and people of color in marketing materials. One of the biggest barriers to hunter and angler recruitment has been the stereotypical image of a hunter being an older, white male, Bethke said.

"I didn't hunt for years because I thought I did not belong in that population of people. I found nothing in common with the people that hunted until I moved here, and I saw people that share value sets, and I saw women and young mothers hunting," Bethke said. "Removing that stereotype barrier can be really powerful."

The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have given hundreds of thousands of Americans an excuse or just enough time to give hunting or fishing a try. Michigan, for example, saw a 67% increase in the number of first-time buyers of hunting licenses. Nevada saw a 50% increase in its hunting license sales.



**Taniya Bethke**

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In South Dakota, the sale of fishing licenses in 2020 outstripped the state's three-year average of license sales by more than 33,000. In all, South Dakotans bought more than 170,000 fishing licenses during 2020; the three-year average for resident fishing license sales was 137,012.

## South Dakota resident fishing license sales through Nov. 2020

Annual fishing ●	129,403
Senior fishing ▲	25,106
Junior combination ●	8,748
One-day resident ●	7,082
Total ●	170,289
Three-year Avg. ■	137,012

● Includes both combination license sales and resident annual fishing license sales.  
 ▲ Includes both senior combination license sales and resident senior fishing license sales.  
 ■ The three-year average of the total of all resident fishing licenses sold.



## South Dakota resident small-game hunting license through Nov. 2020

Small game ●	63,007
Youth small game ▲	12,612
Senior small game ●	10,560
One-day small game ●	1,140
Total ●	87,319
Three-year Avg. ■	82,597

● Includes both combination license sales and resident small game hunting license sales.  
 ▲ Includes both youth combination license sales and resident youth small game hunting license sales.  
 ■ The three-year average total of all small-game hunting licenses sold.



Meanwhile, resident small-game hunting license sales beat the three-year average by more than 4,700 for a total of 87,319 licenses sold in 2020. The three-year average for resident small-game hunting license sales was 82,597. The number of deer hunting licenses South Dakota issues is preset based on deer populations and does not fluctuate due to hunter demand.

Lacy Elrod was one of the thousands of new and returning hunters in South Dakota in 2020. She spent



**Lacy Elrod returned to hunting after a long absence to take advantage of the social-distancing provided by outdoor activities during the pandemic.** Photo: Submitted

several unusually warm November afternoons in the Black Hills National Forest hunting for a white-tailed deer to feed her family.

"I'm very passionate about conservation, so this is a really great way for me to participate in conservation as well as to help manage populations," said Elrod, director of the GFP Outdoor Campus West in Rapid City.

Elrod had hunted deer a few times with her father while growing up but quit hunting in high school. She returned to hunting in 2020 thanks, in part, to a GFP program called Hunting 101. The program helps novice hunters learn basics such as finding places to hunt, hunting regulations and species identification as well as safety. New hunters also are paired up with a mentor to help get them through their first hunt.

Eventually, Elrod was able to kill a whitetail doe. "Learning how to field-dress my deer for the first time was a great experience from the get-go. Then getting it back to where we could butcher it gave me a sense of pride that I had provided for my family," Elrod said.

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**#307 in a series**

## **Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller**

We have today's numbers, equally as uninterpretable as yesterday's. This will continue into the new year. New cases have rebounded to numbers I would expect to see in the current circumstances; there were 225,800 new cases reported today. And we broke the 19 million mark with 19,023,700 cases, 1.2% more than yesterday. Here's the sorry history:

April 28 – 1 million – 98 days  
June 11 – 2 million – 44 days  
July 8 – 3 million – 27 days  
July 23 – 4 million – 15 days  
August 9 – 5 million – 17 days  
August 31 – 6 million – 22 days  
September 24 – 7 million – 24 days  
October 15 – 8 million – 21 days  
October 29 – 9 million – 14 days  
November 8 – 10 million – 10 days  
November 15 – 11 million – 7 days  
November 21 – 12 million – 6 days  
November 27 – 13 million – 6 days  
December 3 – 14 million – 6 days  
December 7 – 15 million – 4 days  
December 12 – 16 million – 5 days  
December 17 – 17 million – 5 days  
December 21 – 18 million – 4 days  
December 26 – 19 million – 5 days

Hospitalizations are somewhat lower than yesterday's record at 117,344. And the number of deaths is lowish for what we've been seeing at 1679. There have been 332,011 deaths, 0.5% more than yesterday.

I'm still on break, but I thought you'd want to know that I've seen some expert analysis of this new variant of the coronavirus, now dubbed B.1.1.7, which has been poking its head up here and there around the world. There appears to be another one from South Africa as well which has showed up a couple of times in Britain. The first thing to get clear is that we don't have a bunch of hard evidence about these yet as to just what they can and cannot do that might be different from the variants already circulating; it's early days yet for that. Some coronavirus experts think this is, as Susan Weiss, a virologist at the University of Pennsylvania, says, "a tempest in a teapot."

Others see some signs that these do appear to be more transmissible; one indication is that they are spreading rapidly in more than one location, which seems to predicate against a conclusion the variant is just landing in a lucky spot to spread. And some of the individual mutations we're seeing are what experts like William Hanage, epidemiologist at the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health "can be categorized as looking suspicious."

The ways in which a variant might be more transmissible are several. One would be if this mutation in the spike protein does help the virus bind; this could mean fewer virus particles would be required to establish an infection. Or it may be that each viral replication in the host cell leads to higher viral loads so that the host sheds more virus, which would increase transmission. Or the virus might linger longer in a host, increasing the infectious period. It is important to remember that the variants we're dealing with now spread very easily; it's not like these new variants have devised some new means for spreading. And none of these possible scenarios (a) changes the kinds of precautions we take to decrease transmission or (b) makes the virus more harmful, or virulent. So we want to keep the scale of the threat in perspective.

In fact, there is no evidence at all that these variants are more virulent, and experts say there is no reason to expect this to happen. They point out it is just as likely a mutation would render the virus less damaging as more. So the overblown claims I've been seeing that a "deadly new virus" has emerged are way over the top. We need to step back and take a deep breath. Angela Rasmussen, virologist at the Georgetown

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Center for Global Health Science and Security, explains it this way: This virus is not “suddenly able to seek you out like a heat-seeking missile. It’s just probability. It’s not an X-Man. It can’t magically melt through a mask if it has eight mutations in the spike protein, or even if it has 50 mutations in the spike protein.”

There is consensus among the experts that the new vaccines are well able to handle these new variants. It is important to recognize that we produce a mixture of antibodies in response to an antigenic stimulus like a vaccine. The antibodies have various shapes and functions across the entire spike protein, so one or two—even 10 or more—mutations still leave areas to which you’re making antibodies. The immune system overproduces antibodies, and this is a good thing because it tends to overwhelm something like a spike protein.

Now, it is possible for a virus to mutate sufficiently to evade our responses; we talked about that possibility a few days ago. But it will likely take years, not months, to accomplish this. We do need to make a bigger investment in genomic surveillance, a topic I mentioned a few days ago too, so that we spot the moment where there is a real problem—better yet, to predict that moment before it arrives. The good news is that these new mRNA vaccines can be modified very quickly, likely within days. It seems unlikely the FDA would require full-scale clinical trials on an antigenically-tweaked version of basically the same vaccine, so by the time production was ramped up, we’d probably need a couple of months to respond to an emerging threat from a possible immune escape.

Bottom line: While new variants need monitoring, they are not our biggest problem. Getting this pandemic under control is our biggest problem, and we haven’t done a stellar job of that thus far.

Short story: Frank Pichel’s a guy living in Richmond, Virginia. He knows about this small Episcopal school in his city that seeks to serve the poor by providing first-rate education. Every child in the school is on full scholarship; the school supports itself with fundraising, which hasn’t been going so well during the pandemic. Now Pichel doesn’t have any kids at this school or anything, but he likes to help, so he got the idea to harvest some of the pine trees growing wild on a piece of land he owns and use them to raise money. Now, these are not the beautifully-shaped firs and such you see on Christmas tree lots; these are the Charlie Brown kind of trees. Apparently the Virginia pine isn’t particularly photogenic; even his best-looking ones were pretty rough. But he hauled a bunch to town, set them up on a lot and let his customers set their own prices. The darned things flew off the lot for three weekends, and the school is now \$5500 richer. Lots of generosity going around these days—Pichel, the guy who rented him a lot for \$1, the woman who volunteered to play Christmas music for customers during the hours when the lot was open, and the customers who voluntarily paid up to \$50 each for these scraggly trees. I like that.

Stay safe. I’ll be back.

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## December 25-26 COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

South Dakota: Community Spread for week of Dec. 21:

**Substantial:** Stanley upgraded from Moderate to Substantial.

**Moderate:** Bennett, Buffalo, Faulk, Hanson, Mellette, Miner, Potter, Sanborn all downgraded from substantial to moderate.

**Minimal:** Harding, Sully downgraded from moderate to minimal.

**None:** Jones downgraded from minimal to none.

Positive: +417 (96,963 total) Positivity Rate: 7.6%

Total Tests: 5504 (743,260 total)

Hospitalized: +30 (5533 total). 289 currently hospitalized (-23)

Avera St. Luke's: 9 (-1) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 2 (0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 1 (0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Sanford Aberdeen: 7 (+1) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 0 (0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Deaths: +16 (1446 total)

Females: 7, Males: 9

40s=1, 50s=1, 60s=3, 70s=4, 80+=7

Counties: Brown-3, Butte-1, Fall River-1, Grant-3, Hutchinson-2, Hyde-First death, Lake-2, Minnehaha-2,

Pennington-1, Todd-1, Yankton-1.

Recovered: +410 (88,428 total)

Active Cases: -9 (7089)

Percent Recovered: 91.2%

Beadle (34) +4 positive, +8 recovered (89 active cases)

Brookings (28) +6 positive, +4 recovered (213 active cases)

Brown (57): +12 positive, +12 recovered (250 active cases)

Clark (2): +5 positive, +2 recovered (20 active cases)

Clay (11): +5 positive, +2 recovered (116 active cases)

Codington (68): +20 positive, +13 recovered (296 active cases)

Davison (52): +7 positive, +12 recovered (110 active cases)

Day (20): +1 positive, +2 recovered (44 active cases)

Edmunds (4): +4 positive, +2 recovered (51 active cases)

Faulk (11): +0 positive, +0 recovered (15 active cases)

Grant (28): +5 positive, +5 recovered (51 active cases)

Hanson (3): +1 positive, +1 recovered (15 active cases)

Hughes (25): +18 positive, +5 recovered (150 active cases)

Lawrence (28): +12 positive, +12 recovered (155

active cases)

Lincoln (63): +41 positive, +28 recovered (553 active cases)

Marshall (4): +0 positive, +2 recovered (27 active cases)

McCook (21): +4 positive, +3 recovered (43 active cases)

McPherson (1): +0 positive, +0 recovery (15 active case)

Minnehaha (259): +106 positive, +113 recovered (1747 active cases)

Pennington (128): +60 positive, +56 recovered (988 active cases)

Potter (2): +0 positive, +0 recovered (10 active cases)

Roberts (31): +5 positive, +9 recovered (96 active cases)

Spink (24): +5 positive, +2 recovered (58 active cases)

Walworth (14): +0 positive, +2 recovered (48 active cases)

### NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Dec. 26:

- 4.9% rolling 14-day positivity
- 133 new positives
- 2,823 susceptible test encounters
- 111 currently hospitalized (-7)
- 2,389 active cases (-50)
- 1,204 total deaths (-60)

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased Among Cases	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	406	377	765	8	Substantial	27.59%
Beadle	2480	2357	5118	34	Substantial	7.63%
Bennett	351	330	1079	8	Moderate	8.22%
Bon Homme	1463	1399	1866	23	Substantial	13.89%
Brookings	2881	2639	9888	29	Substantial	7.36%
Brown	4298	3991	10980	57	Substantial	19.47%
Brule	625	600	1677	6	Substantial	19.35%
Buffalo	410	392	852	10	Moderate	13.33%
Butte	850	775	2822	18	Substantial	15.91%
Campbell	111	104	205	4	Minimal	15.38%
Charles Mix	1088	1001	3519	11	Substantial	14.81%
Clark	307	285	845	2	Substantial	5.26%
Clay	1597	1470	4465	11	Substantial	21.05%
Codington	3365	3001	8287	68	Substantial	17.47%
Corson	446	418	887	10	Substantial	41.67%
Custer	666	611	2376	9	Substantial	22.22%
Davison	2678	2516	5653	52	Substantial	15.99%
Day	517	453	1517	20	Substantial	16.05%
Deuel	402	361	985	6	Substantial	29.85%
Dewey	1253	1108	3485	12	Substantial	12.50%
Douglas	374	333	817	7	Substantial	36.00%
Edmunds	345	290	873	4	Substantial	13.13%
Fall River	437	390	2271	12	Substantial	20.80%
Faulk	310	284	590	11	Moderate	6.25%
Grant	814	735	1906	28	Substantial	30.60%
Gregory	481	432	1075	26	Substantial	26.09%
Haakon	226	182	467	7	Substantial	28.57%
Hamlin	593	516	1490	32	Substantial	13.60%
Hand	312	295	697	2	Moderate	10.34%
Hanson	307	289	600	3	Moderate	26.53%
Harding	89	82	153	1	Minimal	16.67%
Hughes	1970	1795	5513	25	Substantial	4.90%
Hutchinson	690	626	2027	16	Substantial	16.19%

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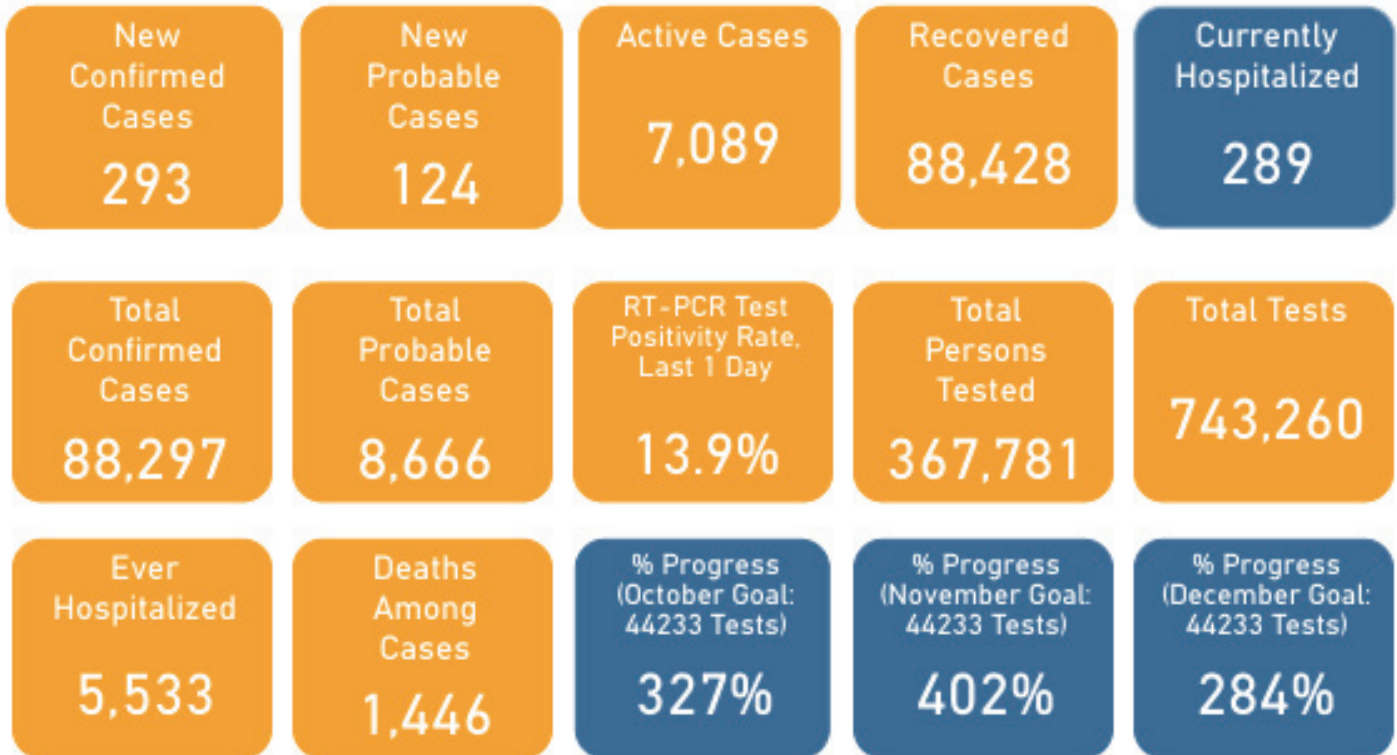
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Hyde	131	129	362	1	Minimal	15.38%
Jackson	260	224	854	8	Substantial	14.71%
Jerauld	258	230	488	15	Moderate	18.18%
Jones	65	63	181	0	None	0.00%
Kingsbury	532	467	1399	13	Substantial	16.85%
Lake	1006	926	2746	16	Substantial	21.74%
Lawrence	2477	2294	7521	28	Substantial	19.06%
Lincoln	6629	6013	17198	63	Substantial	20.67%
Lyman	511	487	1699	9	Substantial	11.59%
Marshall	256	225	988	4	Substantial	20.83%
McCook	669	605	1394	21	Substantial	24.00%
McPherson	178	162	495	1	Moderate	0.75%
Meade	2172	1980	6635	24	Substantial	20.20%
Mellette	214	200	647	2	Moderate	23.53%
Miner	222	196	495	6	Moderate	26.32%
Minnehaha	24483	22477	67077	259	Substantial	15.75%
Moody	526	470	1575	14	Substantial	28.57%
Oglala Lakota	1896	1729	6163	34	Substantial	22.40%
Pennington	10862	9746	33488	128	Substantial	23.06%
Perkins	279	227	660	11	Substantial	26.15%
Potter	298	286	710	2	Moderate	4.44%
Roberts	945	818	3713	31	Substantial	21.60%
Sanborn	303	293	608	3	Moderate	4.00%
Spink	694	612	1848	24	Substantial	12.64%
Stanley	264	247	761	2	Substantial	6.67%
Sully	107	97	246	3	Minimal	0.00%
Todd	1138	1065	3758	19	Substantial	25.00%
Tripp	617	572	1312	11	Substantial	10.71%
Turner	944	831	2361	47	Substantial	18.75%
Union	1566	1386	5322	30	Substantial	18.30%
Walworth	607	545	1607	14	Substantial	25.33%
Yankton	2424	2145	8152	24	Substantial	14.39%
Ziebach	288	244	693	7	Substantial	13.33%
Unassigned	0	0	1912	0		

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## South Dakota



### AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	3603	0
10-19 years	10685	0
20-29 years	17714	4
30-39 years	16059	12
40-49 years	13875	24
50-59 years	13777	74
60-69 years	10997	182
70-79 years	5773	309
80+ years	4480	841

### SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	50678	699
Male	46285	747



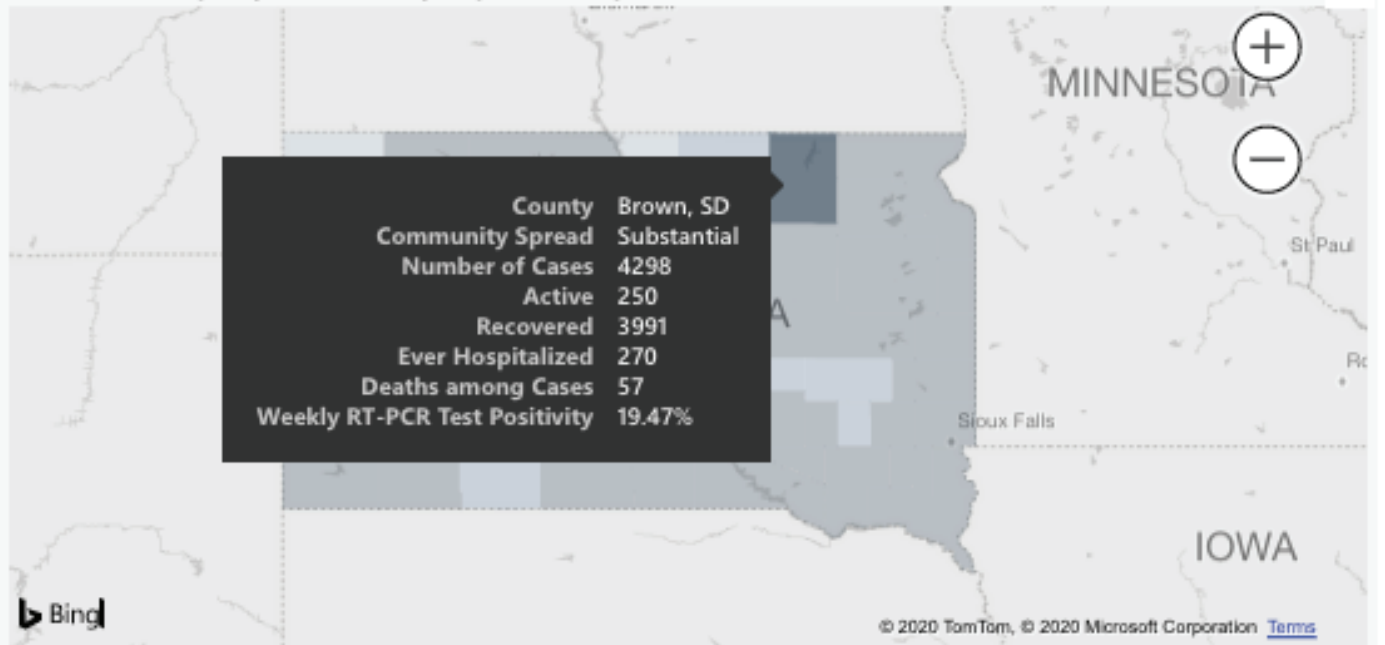
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## Brown County



### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread: None (white), Minimal (light blue), Moderate (medium blue), Substantial (dark blue)

Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



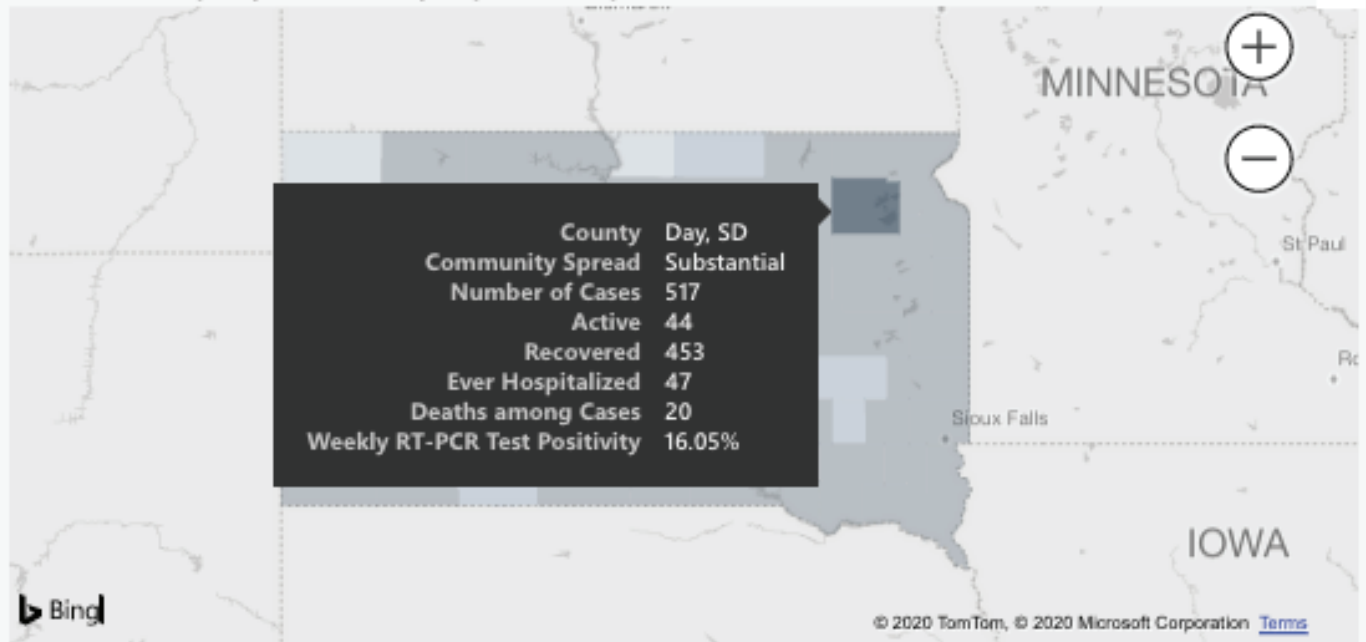
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## Day County

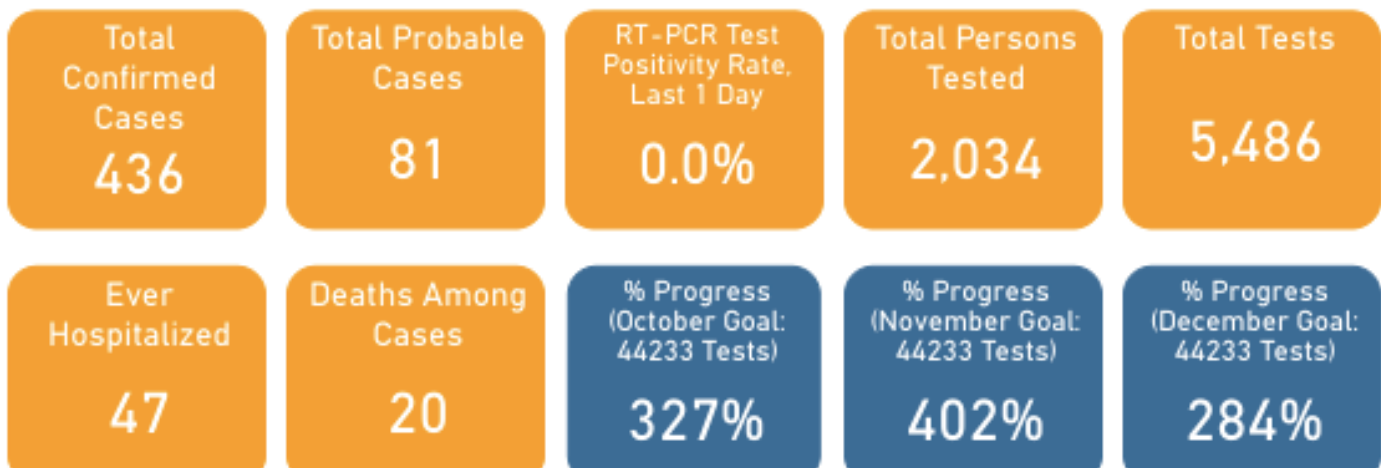


### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread: None (white), Minimal (light blue), Moderate (medium blue), Substantial (dark blue)

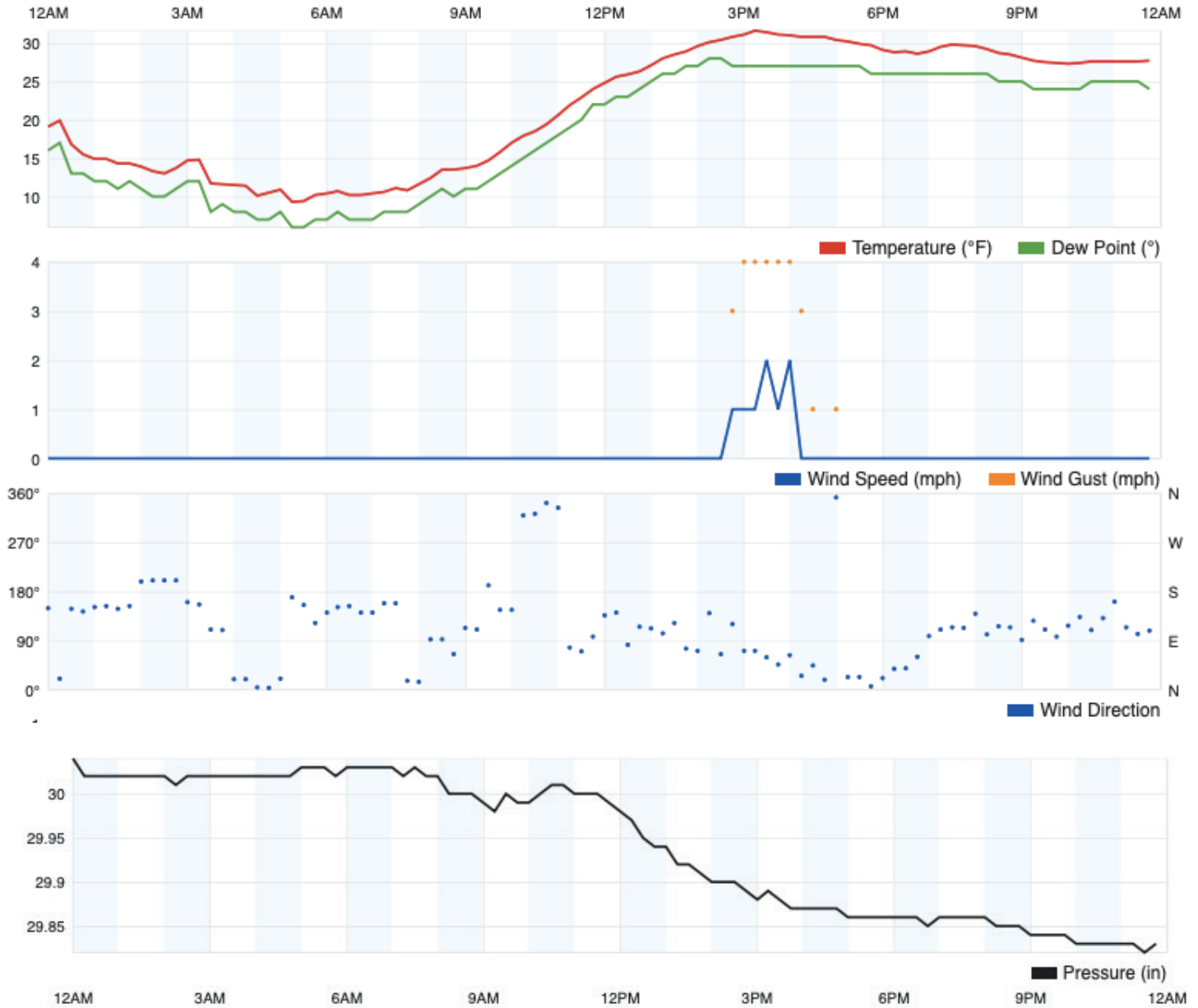
Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



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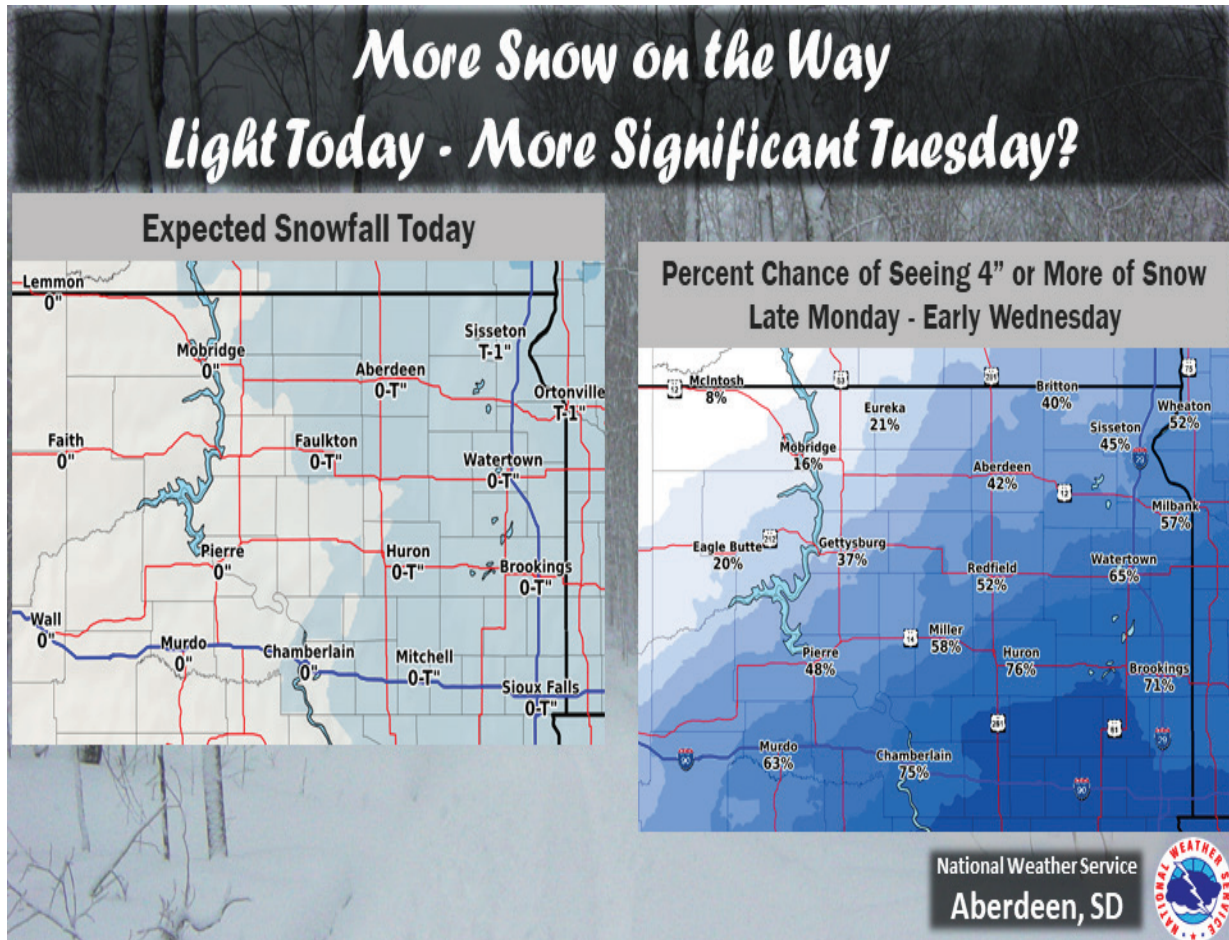
## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
70% → 20%				70%
Blustery. Snow Likely then Slight Chance Snow	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Snow Likely
High: 26 °F ↓	Low: 4 °F	High: 22 °F	Low: 5 °F	High: 27 °F



A clipper system will move through the region today leading to occasional light snowfall through the afternoon hours. Accumulations will be minimal and generally under an inch for most locales. North winds will increase by midday and afternoon gusting up around 30 mph in some spots. This could lead to some blowing snow and temporarily reduced visibilities. This system will depart the region tonight as a new storm system takes shape across the western part of the country. This looks to be a more significant winter system that has the potential to deliver accumulating snowfall to parts of the area late Monday through early Wednesday. Check out <https://www.weather.gov/abr/> for additional details.

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## Today in Weather History

December 27, 1959: Precipitation began as freezing rain on the morning of the 27th throughout the eastern half of South Dakota, changing to snow mixed with occasional sleet late on the 27th, then continued as mostly snow through the late afternoon of the 28th. Glaze caused extensive breakage of tree limbs and power and telephone lines in southeast sections of the state and in scattered communities in the northeast counties. More than 40 communities were without telephone service for more than 24 hours. Highway travel was very dangerous; one man was killed when a tractor skidded on an icy highway and overturned on him in Kingsbury County. Strong winds averaging 20 to 25 mph both dates increased breakage of ice-laded utility wires and caused drifting and blocking of highways by the 3 to 6 inch snowfall. Damage and repair costs to utility lines were estimated at \$400,000.

December 27, 1987: A winter storm gave some freezing rain and snow to southern and eastern South Dakota and southwest and west central Minnesota on the 27th and 28th. In Minnesota, freezing rain began Sunday morning the 27th before changing to heavy snow, which extended into the 28th. The heaviest snowfall was across the high terrain of southwest Minnesota. In southern and eastern South Dakota, six to twelve inches of snow fell. Strong northwest winds of 20-40 mph hampered travel and snow removal. Snow drifts up to 6 feet deep were common. Across many areas of southern Minnesota, visibilities were reduced to zero due to blowing snow. Snowfall amounts in South Dakota included 12 inches in DeSmet; 10 inches in Wessington Springs and Madison; 9 inches in Huron; 8 inches in Pierre, Brookings, Mission and McCook County; 7 inches in Sioux Falls, Kadoka, Pine Ridge, and Martin. 8 inches also fell in Watertown and Highmore, with 7 inches at Bryant and 6 inches in Clear Lake.

December 27, 1987: Today marks the end of the infamous 2-day ice storm which began as freezing rain and sleet before sunrise on Christmas Day in Oklahoma. This ice storm left parts of Oklahoma without power for over a week. Sleet prevailed across the western and northern parts of Oklahoma City, while freezing rain devastated southern and eastern parts of the metro area. Despite heavy sleet and ice accumulations of up to 2 inches, total snowfall was only a trace.

December 27, 2001: Typhoon Vamei forms in the South China Sea, about 100 miles north of the Equator. Vamei is the first recorded tropical cyclone to develop within 1.5 degrees of latitude about 104 miles of the equator.

1869 - A post Christmas storm in New York and Vermont produced record storm totals of 30 inches at Burlington, VT, and 39 inches at Montpelier VT. A public emergency was declared in Vermont. (David Ludlum)

1892 - An Atlantic coast storm produced a record 18.6 inches of snow at Norfolk, VA, including 17.7 inches in 24 hours. The storm also produced 9.5 inches of snow at Raleigh NC, and brought snow to northern Florida for the first time in 35 years. (26th- 28th) (The Weather Channel)

1982 - The worst Louisiana rainstorm in more than 100 years came to an end. More than 18 inches fell at Vinton, LA, during the three day storm. Flooding was widespread, and property damage was estimated at 100 to 200 million dollars. President Reagan visited the state and declared ten parishes in northeastern Louisiana disaster areas. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A winter storm produced snow and high winds in Wyoming, Colorado and Nebraska. Denver CO experienced its worst snowstorm since December 1983 as high winds gusting to 46 mph created near blizzard conditions, whipping the fifteen inch snow into drifts five feet high, and closing Stapleton Airport. Snowfall totals in the foothills southwest of Denver ranged up to 42 inches, at Intercanyon. Blizzard conditions raged across southeastern Wyoming through the day, stranding 300 holiday travelers in the tiny town of Chugwater. Heavier snowfall totals included 19 inches at La Grange WY, and 22 inches at Elsmere NE. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Severe thunderstorms developing along a cold front in the south central U.S. spawned a dozen tornadoes in Mississippi between early afternoon and sunrise the following day. A tornado at Harpersville destroyed five chicken homes killing thousands of chickens. Strong thunderstorm winds gusted to 80 mph at Rolling Fork MS. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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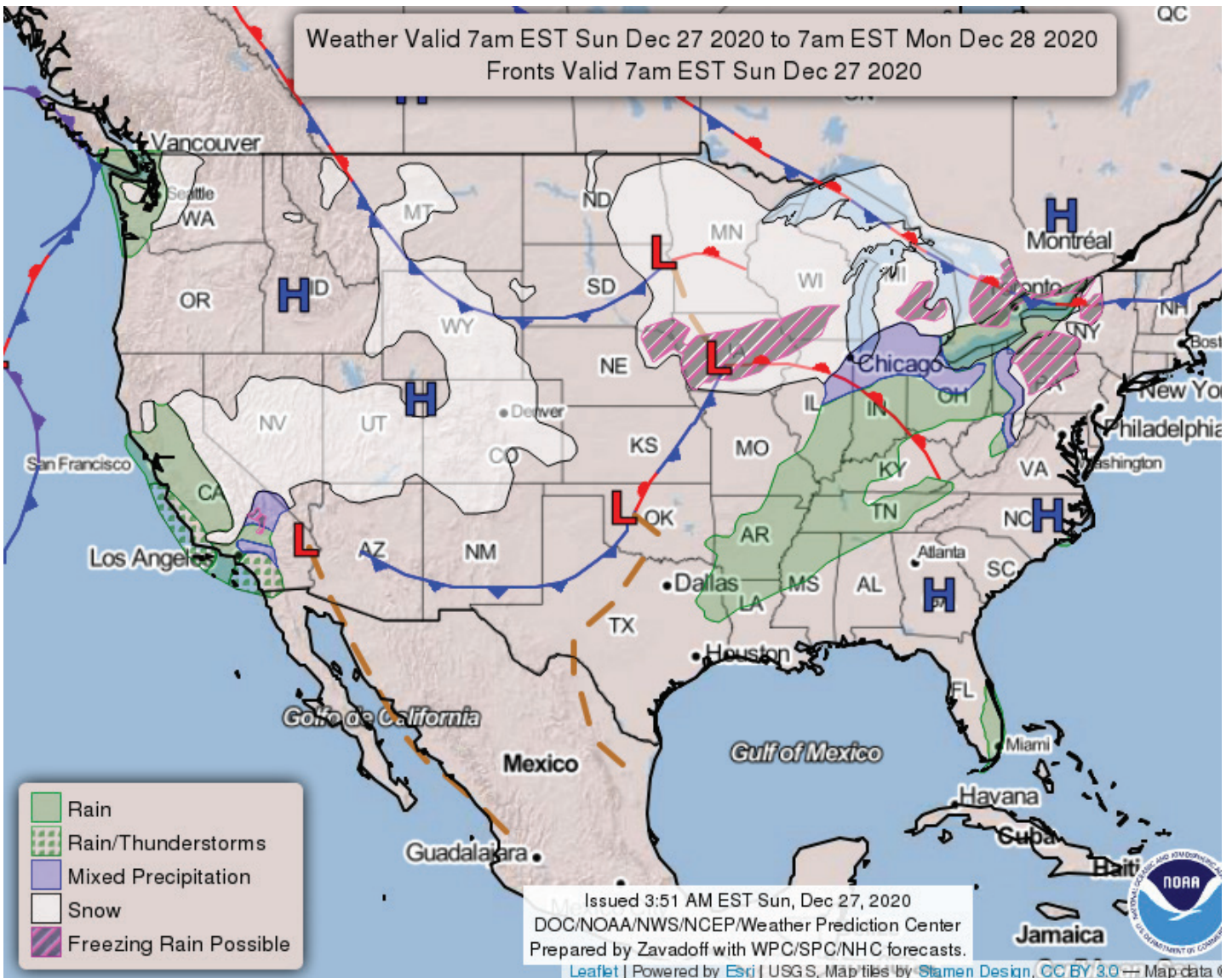
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 32 °F at 3:13 PM**  
**Low Temp: 9 °F at 5:18 AM**  
**Wind: 5 mph at 3:18 PM**  
**Precip: .00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 54° in 1907, 1928**  
**Record Low: -29° in 1914**  
**Average High: 23°F**  
**Average Low: 3°F**  
**Average Precip in Dec.: 0.43**  
**Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 21.63**  
**Precip Year to Date: 16.52**  
**Sunset Tonight: 4:57 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:13 a.m.**



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## WHY MOTHERS MATTER

One of the most beautiful passages in Scripture is found in Luke's Gospel. It is called "The Magnificat." We have Mary proclaiming, "My soul magnifies the Lord." The word "soul" is a special word and in Hebrew is used to reveal or describe a person's entire identity. It is the very essence – or being or character or the "sum total" – of a person. In this one word,

Mary reveals that all of her is committed to the Lord. The sum and substance of her life was to worship God in all of His Majesty!

If we want to study the smallest particle of God's creation we put it under a microscope to magnify it. This enlarges, or expands, every detail of the particle so we can discover its intricacies, its subtleties, and its structure. Mary was determined to put God under her "microscope" so she could understand Him personally, intimately, and completely.

In her "song" she magnified her Lord – not her Son. Often we become overly concerned about the way our children look rather than what they look at. Not so with Mary. She recognized her responsibility as a mother and knew that if God were first in her life, He would be first in her child's life. She had her priorities right.

God entrusted Mary with the Messiah because He was at the center of her life and knew that her Son would be nurtured in what matters most in the life of a child: knowing, understanding and following His will.

Prayer: We ask, Lord, that all mothers everywhere will recognize the importance of being a mother and the trust You place in them to raise children to know You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Luke 1:46-55 "My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

10-20-22-32-34

(ten, twenty, twenty-two, thirty-two, thirty-four)

Estimated jackpot: \$52,000

Lotto America

03-13-15-41-49, Star Ball: 2, ASB: 2

(three, thirteen, fifteen, forty-one, forty-nine; Star Ball: two; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.25 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$376 million

Powerball

10-24-27-35-53, Powerball: 18, Power Play: 2

(ten, twenty-four, twenty-seven, thirty-five, fifty-three; Powerball: eighteen; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$341 million

### Man convicted of murders asks for retrial based on DNA test

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City man convicted of murdering his wife and mother-in-law in 1983 will argue before a South Dakota judge that he should be granted a new criminal trial based on DNA testing.

The Rapid City Journal reports that George Luna, 71, has maintained that he is innocent of killing his wife, Lynn Luna, and mother-in-law, Helen Thomas. They were both beaten to death in Rapid City. George Luna is serving two life sentences after a Pennington County jury found him guilty of murdering them.

George Luna has been granted a civil habeas corpus trial, where his lawyers will argue that DNA testing performed by the Minnesota Innocence Project in 2016 shows hairs found in Lynn Luna's hand could have belonged to another suspect in the case, but not George Luna. If the judge decides that the new evidence changes the case so much that original jurors would not have convicted Luna, he will be given a new criminal trial.

South Dakota has not exonerated anyone based on DNA evidence, according to The National Registry of Exonerations. The three-day trial is expected to begin in March.

### Sioux Falls fire destroys home on Christmas day

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A fire destroyed a home in Sioux Falls on Friday, killing a dog.

The Argus Leader reported firefighters performed CPR on the dog, attempting unsuccessfully to revive it. The fire department reported the Christmas-day blaze started in the home's kitchen.

### South Dakota reports 16 deaths, 417 new cases over 2 days

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota on Saturday reported 16 deaths from COVID-19, along with 417 new cases, from a two-day span that included the Christmas holiday.

The state has seen a sustained drop in new cases in recent weeks, with the average number of cases reported each day decreasing by 47% in the last two weeks. The Department of Health has reported an average of 396 new cases each day over the last week.

The state has also seen the number of people hospitalized by the virus to 289 statewide. But high numbers of deaths have continued through December because death reports have lagged behind the spike in



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November. A total of 1,446 people have died after contracting COVID-19, causing it to record the nation's sixth-highest rate of death per capita in the country.

The state continued to make progress in vaccination medical workers, with 12,910 people receiving their first dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

## **"Believe in science:" EU kicks off COVID-19 vaccine campaign**

By NICOLE WINFIELD and VANESSA GERA Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Doctors, nurses and the elderly rolled up their sleeves across the European Union to receive the first doses of the coronavirus vaccine Sunday in a symbolic show of unity and moment of hope for a continent confronting its worst health care crisis in a century.

Even though a few countries started giving doses a day early, the coordinated rollout for a bloc of 27 nations and nearly 450 million people aimed at projecting a unified message that the vaccine was safe and was Europe's best chance to emerge from the pandemic and the economic devastation caused by months of lockdown.

For health care workers who have been battling the virus with only masks and shields to protect them, the vaccines represented an emotional relief as well as a very public chance to urge people to protect themselves and others.

"Today I'm here as a citizen, but most of all as a nurse, to represent my category and all the health workers who choose to believe in science," said Claudia Alivernini, a 29-year-old nurse who was the first of five doctors and nurses at the Spallanzani infectious disease hospital in Rome to receive the vaccine.

Italian virus czar Domenico Arcuri said it was significant that Italy's first doses were administered at Spallanzani, where a Chinese couple visiting from Wuhan tested positive in January and became Italy's first confirmed cases.

Within weeks, northern Lombardy would become the epicenter of the outbreak in Europe and a cautionary tale of what happens when even wealthy countries find themselves unprepared for a pandemic. Lombardy still accounts for around a third of the dead in Italy, which has the continent's worst confirmed virus toll at nearly 72,000 dead.

"Today is a beautiful, symbolic day: All the citizens of Europe together are starting to get their vaccinations, the first ray of light after a long night," Arcuri told reporters outside the hospital.

But he cautioned: "We all have to continue to be prudent, cautious and responsible. We still have a long road ahead, but finally we see a bit of light."

The vaccines, developed by Germany's BioNTech and American drugmaker Pfizer, started arriving in super-cold containers at EU hospitals on Friday from a factory in Belgium. Each country was only getting a fraction of the doses needed — fewer than 10,000 in the first batches — with the bigger rollout expected in January when more vaccines become available.

In the Los Olmos nursing home in the Spanish city of Guadalajara, northeast of Madrid, 96-year-old resident Araceli Hidalgo and a caregiver were the first Spaniards to receive the vaccine. Like Italy, Spain has been one of the hardest-hit countries in Europe, with nursing homes a major source of infection.

"Let's see if we can all behave and make this virus go away," Hidalgo said after receiving her injection.

The Los Olmos home suffered two confirmed COVID-19 deaths and another 11 deaths among residents with symptoms who were never tested during the chaotic initial months.

"What we want is for as many people as possible to get vaccinated," said Mónica Tapias, the 48-year-old worker at the home. "We have lost some residents here to COVID, and that has been very sad. Let's see if this can finally finish with this."

The Czech Republic was spared the worst of the pandemic in the spring only to see its health care system near collapse in the fall. In Prague, Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis received his shot at dawn Sunday and asserted: "There's nothing to worry about." Sitting next to him was World War II veteran Emilie Repikova, who also received the shot.

Altogether, the EU's 27 nations have recorded at least 16 million coronavirus infections and more than

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336,000 deaths — huge numbers that experts say still understate the true toll of the pandemic due to missed cases and limited testing.

All those getting shots will have to come back in three weeks for a second dose.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen released a video Saturday celebrating the vaccine rollout, calling it “a touching moment of unity.” The vaccination campaign should ease frustrations that were building up, especially in Germany, as Britain, Canada and the United States kicked off their inoculation programs with the same vaccine weeks earlier.

As it turned out, some EU immunizations began a day early in Germany, Hungary and Slovakia. The operator of a German nursing home where dozens of people were vaccinated Saturday, including a 101-year-old woman, said “every day that we wait is one day too many.”

Each EU country decided on its own who will get the first shots, with most vowing to put health care workers and nursing home residents first.

EU leaders are counting on the vaccine rollout to help the bloc project a sense of unity in a complex lifesaving mission after it faced a year of difficulties in negotiating a post-Brexit trade deal with Britain.

Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz called the vaccines — which were developed in record time — a “game-changer.”

“We know that today is not the end of the pandemic, but it is the beginning of the victory,” he said.

Among the politicians who got shots Sunday to promote a wider acceptance of vaccinations was Bulgarian Health Minister Kostadin Angelov.

“I can’t wait to see my 70-year-old father without fear that I could infect him,” Angelov said.

Meanwhile, a new virus variant that has been spreading rapidly around London and southern England has now been detected France, Spain, Canada and Japan. The new variant, which British authorities said is much more easily transmitted, has caused many countries to put new restrictions on those coming from Britain.

Japan announced it would temporarily ban all non-resident foreigners from entering through Jan. 31 as a precaution against the U.K.’s new variant.

Germany’s BioNTech has said it’s confident that its vaccine works against the new U.K. variant, but added that further studies are needed to be completely certain.

The European Medicines Agency on Jan. 6 will consider approving another coronavirus vaccine made by Moderna, which is already being used in the United States.

Andreas Raouna, 84, said he was honored to be among the first to get the shot in Cyprus and criticized vaccine skeptics of being “in league with a murderer.”

While there may be some side-effects, he said, “if the coronavirus hits you, it’ll be the end of you.”

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Gera reported from Warsaw, Poland. AP reporters from around Europe contributed.

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## The Latest: Health workers cheer as EU starts vaccinations

By The Associated Press undefined

ROME — European Union nations kicked off a coordinated effort Sunday to give COVID-19 vaccinations to the most vulnerable among the bloc’s nearly 450 million people, marking a moment of hope in the continent’s battle against the worst public health crisis in a century.

Health care workers, the elderly and leading politicians got some of the first shots across the 27-nation bloc to reassure the public that the vaccinations are safe and represent the best chance to emerge from the pandemic.

“It didn’t hurt at all,” said Mihaela Anghel, a nurse at the Matei Bals Institute in Bucharest who was the first person to get the vaccine in Romania. “Open your eyes and take the vaccine.”

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In Rome, five doctors and nurses wearing white scrubs sat in a semi-circle at the Spallanzani infectious diseases hospital to receive their doses.

"The message is one of hope, trust and an invitation to share this choice," said one of the recipients, Dr. Maria Rosaria Capobianchi, who heads the virology laboratory at Spallanzani and was part of the team that isolated the virus in early February. "There is no reason to be concerned."

Altogether, the EU's 27 nations have recorded at least 16 million coronavirus infections and more than 336,000 deaths

## THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- Unemployment benefits expire for millions in the U.S. as Trump rages
- EU launches huge vaccine rollout, bringing hope to the continent's nearly 450 million people
- Millions face new UK virus restrictions; border chaos eases
- COVID-19 has engulfed prisons in Belarus that are packed with people in custody for demonstrating against the nation's authoritarian president.
- Thailand says two new coronavirus clusters appear linked to a major outbreak among migrant workers
- A Black doctor who died battling COVID-19 complained of racist medical care on social media, prompting an Indiana hospital system to promise a "full external review."

Follow AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>, <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Unemployment benefits for millions of Americans struggling to make ends meet lapsed overnight as President Donald Trump refused to sign an end-of-year COVID relief and spending bill that had been considered a done deal before his sudden objections.

The fate of the bipartisan package remained in limbo Sunday as Trump continued to demand larger COVID relief checks and complained about "pork" spending. Without the widespread funding provided by the massive measure, a government shutdown would occur when money runs out at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday.

"It's a chess game and we are pawns," said Lanetris Haines, a self-employed single mother of three in South Bend, Indiana, who stood to lose her \$129 weekly jobless benefit unless Trump signed the package into law or succeeded in his improbable quest for changes.

Washington has been reeling since Trump turned on the deal after it had won sweeping approval in both houses of Congress and after the White House had assured Republican leaders that Trump would support it.

Instead, he assailed the bill's plan to provide \$600 COVID relief checks to most Americans — insisting it should be \$2,000. House Republicans swiftly rejected that idea during a rare Christmas Eve session. But Trump has not been swayed in spite of the nation being in the grip of a pandemic.

WARSAW, Poland — A nurse at the main coronavirus hospital in Warsaw has gotten the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, the first person to be vaccinated in Poland as part of a European Union rollout on Sunday.

Alicja Jakubowska, the head nurse at the Interior Ministry hospital in Warsaw, got a shot, followed by doctors and other health workers. Vaccinations in dozens of other hospitals were scheduled to begin across the country on Sunday.

"This is a historic moment for me," Jakubowska said. "The hospital management chose me. A nurse is the first to be vaccinated, a nod to hard-working nurses and midwives."

Jakubowska said getting the shot is an important step "in the return to normality." Afterwards, she said it did not hurt at all.

ZAGREB, Croatia — A 81-year-old care home resident on Sunday became the first person to receive COVID-19 vaccine in Croatia.

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Top officials attended as Branka Anicic received the vaccine before cameras. She says it felt great to be the first in Croatia to receive the vaccine and urged others to do the same.

Croatia's Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic says the vaccines first will go to those who are the most vulnerable and exposed to the virus. He expressed hope most people will agree to vaccination.

Croatian media have reported that many among Croatia's 4.2 million people remain skeptical regarding the vaccines, even among doctors. Authorities have launched a campaign to encourage people to get vaccinated.

**MADRID**— Two women, a 96-year-old resident and a worker at a nursing home, became the first Spaniards to receive the coronavirus vaccine on Sunday morning.

The Los Olmos nursing home is located in Guadalajara near the distribution hub that vaccine maker Pfizer has in central Spain 70 kilometers (43 miles) northeast of Madrid.

"Let's see if we can all behave and make this virus go away," said Araceli Hidalgo, the elderly resident, after receiving her injection.

"I am proud (to receive the vaccine)," said Mónica Tapias, the 48-year-old worker. "What we want is for as many people as possible to get vaccinated. We have lost some residents here to COVID, and that has been very sad. Let's see if this can finally finish with this."

Army trucks escorted by police cars left the company warehouse before sunrise to distribute loads of the vaccine to all the regions of mainland Spain. Military airplanes or helicopters flew crates of doses to Spain's Canary Islands, Balearic Islands, and its north African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.

Spain plans to receive over 4.5 million doses of the vaccine over the next three months, enough it says to immunize just over 2.2 million people.

Nearly 50,000 people have been confirmed to have died from COVID-19 in Spain. Many more are estimated to have died before a test could confirm the infection.

**PRAGUE** — Prime Minister Andrej Babis has kicked off the coronavirus vaccination in the Czech Republic. Babis became the first Czech to receive a shot of the vaccine in Prague's military hospital during the Czech public television's live broadcast on Sunday morning.

"There's nothing to worry about," Babis told reporters before a ceremonious start of the vaccination program. "Everything's fine," he added after getting a shot.

World War II veteran, the 95-year-old Emilie Repikova, sitting next to the prime minister, was the second.

The medical personnel in four hospitals in Prague and two in the second largest city of Brno will get vaccinated by the first batch of almost 10,000 vaccines by Germany's BioNTech and American drugmaker Pfizer in three days. The second batch of 19,500 vaccines expected to arrive next week will be distributed in all regions across the country.

The Czech Republic had 670,599 confirmed cases of coronavirus with 11,044 deaths.

**SEOUL**, South Korea — South Korea has decided not to immediately enforce its toughest distancing rules in the greater Seoul area despite a surge in fresh infections.

The Seoul area, which has been the heart of a recent viral resurgence, is currently under the second highest distancing rules. There have been calls for raising the restrictions to the highest level as the current curbs haven't showed much significant effects. But the government was reluctant to do so because of worries about the economy.

Health Minister Kwon Deok-cheol said Sunday the government will maintain the current level restrictions in the Seoul area until Jan. 3 and that it'll see how the outbreak develops this week before determining whether to adjust the curbs. He says the third highest level of distancing rules imposed in other regions will also remain in place until Jan 3.

Kwon says South Korea has logged an average of 999 new cases each day last week, 690 of them in the Seoul area.

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Earlier Sunday, South Korea reported 970 new cases, bringing the total to 56,872, with 808 deaths.

**DUBAI**, United Arab Emirates — The Persian Gulf state of Oman has launched its COVID-19 inoculation campaign, with the sultanate's health minister receiving the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

State-run media reported that the first batch of 15,600 doses was flown in industrial freezers to Muscat International Airport last week to vaccinate a priority group of older adults, health care workers and those with underlying health conditions starting on Sunday.

Another 28,000 doses of the vaccine by American drugmaker Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech are expected to arrive next month.

Oman says it aims to vaccinate 60% of its roughly 5 million people.

The virus outbreak in Oman has infected over 128,000 people and killed more than 1,400.

**TOKYO** — Japan is barring entry of all non-resident foreign nationals as a precaution against a new and potentially more contagious coronavirus variant that has spread across Britain.

The Foreign Ministry says the entry ban will start Monday and last through Jan. 31.

Last week, Japan banned non-resident foreigners coming from Britain and South Africa after confirming the new variant in seven people over the last two days — five from Britain who tested positive at airports and two others in Tokyo.

Japan is also suspending the exemption of a 14-day quarantine for Japanese nationals and resident foreigners that began in November. The entrants now must carry proof of a negative test 72 hours prior to departure and self-isolate for two weeks after arrival.

Japan is struggling with surging cases since November. It has confirmed a total of 217,312 cases including 3,213 deaths, up 3,700 from the previous 24-hour period. Tokyo alone reported 949 cases, setting a new record, despite calls by experts for people to spend a "quiet" holiday season.

**TORONTO** — Officials in Canada's most populous province have confirmed the first two known Canadian cases of a more contagious variant of COVID-19 that was first identified in the United Kingdom.

The province's associate chief medical officer says that the cases are a couple from Durham Region, just east of Toronto, with no known travel history, exposure or high-risk contacts.

The new variant is believed to spread more easily and faster than the original version of the disease but is not believed to be more deadly.

The provincial government said in a news release that is no evidence to suggest that the vaccines approved by Health Canada will be any less effective against the new variant.

**ST. LOUIS** — Missouri set a new record for patients hospitalized with COVID-19 on Christmas Day as the pandemic surges.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reports that there were 2,862 patients hospitalized statewide, eclipsing the previous record of 2,851 on Nov. 18.

Meanwhile, the seven-day average for new cases is 2,213 each day.

"It is here, it is spread in the community, and we've got to make sure that that spread slows," said St. Clair County Board Chairman Mark Kern. "Our fates are in our own hands, and really, it's not difficult to wear that mask."

**SANTA FE**, N.M. — New Mexico will begin providing COVID-19 vaccinations to 15,000 people who work or live at long-term care facilities, state officials announced Saturday.

Beginning Sunday, the CVS and Walgreens pharmacy chains and Vida Pharmacy in Albuquerque will administer doses of the Moderna vaccine at nursing homes and assisted living facilities across the state, officials said.

"Sunday marks a monumental day in our fight with this deadly pandemic. It signifies a step towards protecting our seniors and securing their safety," said Katrina Hotrum-Lopez, cabinet secretary of the Ag-

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ing and Long-Term Services Department.

The statement noted that people receiving vaccinations will need two doses from the same manufacturer administered several weeks apart.

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois — The number of COVID-19 cases worldwide has topped 80 million.

Data compiled by Johns Hopkins University reported the mark Saturday morning after 472,000 cases were recorded Christmas Day. The number of deaths related to the coronavirus pandemic across the globe stands at 1.75 million.

The U.S. is by far the leader among nations in cases of coronavirus illness, reporting nearly 18.8 million Saturday. India follows with 10.2 million; Brazil has counted 7.45 million. There have been more than 330,000 deaths in the U.S., 190,000 in Brazil and 147,000 in India.

There have likely been many more cases of the coronavirus that have not been counted for a variety of reasons, including under-reporting, asymptomatic infections and lack of cooperation with contact tracers.

PHOENIX — Arizona has reported more than 5,000 additional known COVID-19 cases for the 10th straight day, as the surge put a pandemic-high number of virus patients in intensive care beds across the state.

The state Department of Health Services reported 6,106 additional known cases and 15 more deaths, increasing the state's totals to 493,041 cases and 8,424 deaths.

Arizona has the third-worst COVID-19 diagnosis rate in the United States over the past week, behind California and Tennessee.

## Asia Today: Japan halts all foreign arrivals over UK variant

TOKYO (AP) — Japan is barring entry of all nonresident foreign nationals as a precaution against a new and potentially more contagious coronavirus variant that has spread across Britain.

The Foreign Ministry says the entry ban will start Monday and last through Jan. 31.

Last week, Japan banned nonresident foreigners coming from Britain and South Africa after confirming the new variant in seven people over the last two days — five from Britain who tested positive at airports and two others in Tokyo.

Japan is also suspending the exemption of a 14-day quarantine for Japanese nationals and resident foreigners in a short-track program that began in November. The entrants now must carry proof of a negative test 72 hours prior to departure for Japan and self-isolate for two weeks after arrival.

Japan is struggling with surging cases since November. It has confirmed a total of 217,312 cases including 3,213 deaths, up 3,700 from the previous 24-hour period. Tokyo alone reported 949 cases, setting a new record, despite calls by experts and government officials for people to spend a "quiet" holiday season.

Elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region:

— South Korea has decided not to immediately enforce its toughest distancing rules in the greater Seoul area despite a surge in coronavirus cases there. The area is currently under the second-highest distancing rules. There have been calls for raising the restrictions to the highest level, but the government is reluctant to do so because of worries about the economy. Health Minister Kwon Deok-cheol said Sunday the government will maintain the current restrictions in the Seoul area until Jan. 3. He said the third-highest level of distancing rules imposed in other regions will also remain in place until Jan 3. Kwon said South Korea logged an average of 999 new cases per day last week, with 690 of them in the Seoul area. Under the current rules, nightclubs, karaoke rooms, fitness centers, gyms and cram schools in the Seoul area have suspended operations. As additional steps, authorities last week banned social gatherings of more than five people and ordered the shutdowns of ski resorts and other tourists spots. The toughest restrictions would shut down hundreds of thousands of more businesses and order companies to have all nonessential employees work from home. South Korea has reported 56,872 cases overall, including 808 deaths.

— Beijing officials reported five new locally transmitted coronavirus cases as authorities rushed to mass-test residents. The five cases, linked to earlier infections, lived in the city's Shunyi district, which has

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since activated an emergency response plan including mass testing, source tracing and disinfection. As of Saturday noon, over 120,000 had been tested for the coronavirus. Authorities plan to test 800,000 people in the district. Separately, officials reported four locally transmitted cases in the northeastern port city of Dalia, where over 4.75 million people were tested following more than 20 confirmed cases this month. China reported 22 new cases in the last 24 hours, including 10 imported and 12 domestic. China has so far reported a total of 86,955 cases, with 4,634 deaths.

Follow AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>, <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## Nashville explosion investigation prompts FBI to search home

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI, MICHAEL BALSAMO and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Federal agents converged Saturday on the home of a possible person of interest in the explosion that rocked downtown Nashville as investigators scoured hundreds of tips and leads in the blast that damaged dozens of buildings on Christmas morning.

More than 24 hours after the explosion, a motive remained elusive as investigators worked round-the-clock to resolve unanswered questions about a recreational vehicle that blew up on a mostly deserted street on a sleepy holiday morning and was prefaced by a recorded warning advising those nearby to evacuate. The attack, which damaged an AT&T building, continued to wreak havoc Saturday on cellphone service and police and hospital communications in several Southern states.

Investigators from multiple federal and local law enforcement agencies were at a home in Antioch, in suburban Nashville, after receiving information relevant to the investigation, said FBI Special Agent Jason Pack. Another law enforcement official, who was not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, said investigators regard a person associated with the property as a person of interest.

Federal agents could be seen looking around the property, searching the home and the backyard. A Google Maps image had shown a similar recreational vehicle parked in the backyard when the photo was captured in May 2019; an AP reporter at the scene did not see the vehicle at the property in the late afternoon Saturday.

There were other signs of progress in the investigation, as the FBI revealed that it was looking at a number of individuals who may be connected to it. Officials also said no additional explosive devices have been found — indicating no active threat to the area. Investigators have received around 500 tips and leads.

"It's just going to take us some time," Douglas Korneski, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Memphis field office, said at a Saturday afternoon news conference. "Our investigative team is turning over every stone" to understand who did this and why.

Beyond that, the only known casualties were three injured people. The infrastructure damage, meanwhile, was broadly felt, due to an AT&T central office being affected by the blast. Police emergency systems in Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama, as well as Nashville's COVID-19 community hotline and a handful of hospital systems, remained out of service.

The building contained a telephone exchange, with network equipment in it — but the company has declined to say exactly how many people have been impacted.

Asked whether the AT&T building could have been a possible target, Korneski said, "We're looking at every possible motive that could be involved."

Investigators shut down the heart of downtown Nashville's tourist scene — an area packed with honky-tonks, restaurants and shops — as they shuffled through broken glass and damaged buildings to learn more about the explosion.

Mayor John Cooper has enforced a curfew in the downtown area until Sunday via executive order to limit public access to the area. More than 40 buildings were affected.

AT&T said restoration efforts are facing several challenges, which include a fire that "reignited overnight

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and led to the evacuation of the building." This has forced their teams to work with safety and structural engineers and drilling access holes into the building in order to reconnect power.

"Our teams continue to work around the clock on recovery efforts from yesterday morning's explosion in Nashville," the company said in a Saturday statement. "We have two portable cell sites operating in downtown Nashville with numerous additional portable sites being deployed in the Nashville area and in the region."

Ray Neville, president of technology at T-Mobile, said on Twitter that service disruptions affected Louisville, Nashville, Knoxville, Birmingham and Atlanta. "We continue to see service interruptions in these areas following yesterday's explosion. Restoration efforts continue around the clock & we will keep you updated on progress," he said in a tweet Saturday.

The outages had even briefly grounded flights at the Nashville International Airport, but service was continuing normally as of Saturday. The Federal Aviation Association has since issued a temporary flight restriction around the airport, requiring pilots to follow strict procedures until Dec. 30.

According to Metro Nashville Police Chief John Drake, police officers responded on Friday to a report of shots fired when they encountered the RV blaring a recorded warning that a bomb would detonate in 15 minutes. Police evacuated nearby buildings and called in the bomb squad. The RV exploded shortly afterward.

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Associated Press photographer Mark Humphrey in Nashville and writer John Raby in Charleston, West Virginia, contributed to this report.

## **Wars, instability pose vaccine challenges in poor nations**

By KATHY GANNON, ANDREW MELDRUM and LEE KEATH Associated Press

DAR MANGI, Pakistan (AP) — Arifullah Khan had just administered another polio vaccine when the gunfire blasted from the nearby hills.

"It happened so suddenly. There was so much gunfire it felt like an explosion," he said, recalling details of the attack five years ago in Pakistan's Bajaur tribal region near the Afghan border.

A bullet shattered his thigh and he fell to the ground. His childhood friend and partner in the vaccination campaign, Ruhollah, lay bleeding on the ground in front of him.

"I couldn't move," Khan said. "I watched him lying right in front of me as he took his last breath."

In Pakistan, delivering vaccines can be deadly. Militants and radical religious groups spread claims that the polio vaccine is a Western ploy to sterilize Muslim children or turn them away from religion. More than 100 health workers, vaccinators and security officials involved in polio vaccination have been killed since 2012.

The violence is an extreme example of the difficulties many poor and developing countries across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America face as they tackle the monumental task of vaccinating their populations against COVID-19.

It's not just the problem of affording vaccines or being at the back of the line behind wealthy countries in receiving them.

Poor infrastructure often means roads are treacherous and electricity is sporadic for the refrigerators vital to preserving vaccines. Wars and insurgencies endanger vaccinators. Corruption can siphon away funds, and vaccination campaign planners must sometimes navigate through multiple armed factions.

"The most challenging areas ... are conflict settings, where outbreaks of violence hinder vaccinations, and areas where misinformation is circulating, which discourages community participation, said UNICEF's deputy chief of global immunization, Benjamin Schreiber.

Many nations are relying on COVAX, an international system aimed at ensuring equitable access to vaccines, though it is already short on funding.

UNICEF, which runs immunization programs worldwide, is gearing up to help procure and administer COVID-19 vaccines, Schreiber told The Associated Press. It has stockpiled half a billion syringes and aims



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to provide 70,000 refrigerators, mostly solar powered, he said.

The agency aims to transport 850 tons of COVID-19 vaccines a month next year, double its usual annual monthly rate for other vaccines, UNICEF's executive director Henrietta Fore said in a statement.

The situation can vary widely from country to country.

Mexico is expected to start immunizations soon. The military will handle distribution, and the government has promised free vaccines for Mexico's nearly 130 million inhabitants by the end of 2021.

Meanwhile, Haiti, the Western Hemisphere's poorest country, has yet to announce any vaccination plans. Health experts worry that widespread rumors could set back vaccinations — including claims that hospitals will give fatal injections to inflate COVID-19 death figures and receive more foreign aid.

The African Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is leading a continent-wide effort to vaccinate Africa's 1.3 billion people in 54 countries. The agency is coordinating efforts to obtain doses and seeking World Bank help in funding — estimating it will take \$10 billion to acquire, distribute and administer the vaccines.

The aim is to vaccinate 60% of Africa's population within two years — some 700 million people — more than the continent has done in the past, said John Nkengasong, director of the African CDC.

"The time for action is now," said Nkengasong. "The West cannot defeat COVID-19 alone. It must be defeated by all over the world, and that includes Africa."

Congo underscores the obstacles the campaign faces.

The country has overcome Ebola outbreaks with vaccination campaigns. But it struggled in eastern Congo, where Allied Democratic Forces rebels stage frequent attacks and other armed groups vie for control of mineral riches.

Rough terrain and insecurity meant vaccinators had trouble getting to all areas. Some came under attack.

Rumors flew about the Ebola vaccines, including the idea they were meant to kill people, said Dr. Maurice Kakule, an Ebola survivor who worked in vaccination campaigns. Education programs overcame much of the resistance, but similar suspicions are spreading about the COVID-19 vaccine, he said.

In Beni, the area's main city, Danny Momoti, a trader, said he would take the vaccine because of his work. "I need this Covid-19 vaccination card to be accepted in Dubai and elsewhere where I go to buy the goods for Beni," he said.

Civil wars present perhaps the greatest obstacles.

In Yemen, the health system has collapsed under six years of war between Houthi rebels who control the north and government-allied factions in the south.

Yemen saw its first outbreak of polio in 15 years this summer, centered in the northern province of Saada. Vaccinators haven't been able to work there the past two years, in part because of security fears, UNICEF said. Agencies rushed to give new inoculations in parts of the north and south in November and December.

Cholera and diphtheria have been rampant, and once again, Yemen faces a new surge in hunger. U.N. officials have warned of potential famine in 2021.

No plans for COVID-19 vaccinations have been announced yet, whether by the Houthis, southern authorities or WHO and UNICEF.

Only half of Yemen's health facilities remain functional. Roads, power networks and other infrastructure have been devastated. The Houthis have hampered some programs, trying to wrest concessions from U.N. agencies, including blocking a shipment of cholera vaccines amid a 2017 outbreak.

"Even the mildest and normally preventable diseases can prove fatal due to a lack of health care access in a conflict setting," said Wasim Bahja, the Yemen country director for International Medical Corps.

In Pakistan, public distrust was fueled when the CIA in 2011 used a scam vaccination program to identify the hideout of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, leading to the special forces raid that killed him.

Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria are the only countries in the world where polio is still endemic. There have been 82 new polio cases this year alone, largely because vaccinations were suspended due to the pandemic, said Dr. Rana Safdar, who coordinates the polio vaccination campaigns.

The Bajaur region, where Khan was shot, remains one of the more dangerous areas, Safdar said.

Khan tried to explain the deep mistrust in his region. Deeply conservative tribal elders "believe the vac-

cine is the reason the young people who were given it as children are disrespectful and show little concern for Islamic traditions and values.”

“Everyone is scared” of COVID-19, he said. “But they are suspicious of Western things.”

Khan said he signed up to administer polio vaccines because he was paid the equivalent of \$56 for just a few days’ work. “I needed to feed my family.”

He will likely sign up to deliver COVID-19 vaccines as well.

“But first I would check if there is any danger there,” he said.

Meldrum reported from Johannesburg, Keath from Cairo. Associated Press writers Samy Magdy in Cairo, Maria Verza in Mexico City, Sonia Pérez D. in Guatemala City and Evens Sanon in Port-au-Prince, Haiti and Al-Hadji Kudra Maliro in Beni, Congo contributed to this report.

## Unemployment benefits expire for millions as Trump rages

By ALEXANDRA OLSON and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Unemployment benefits for millions of Americans struggling to make ends meet lapsed overnight as President Donald Trump refused to signed an end-of-year COVID relief and spending bill that had been considered a done deal before his sudden objections.

The fate of the bipartisan package remained in limbo Sunday as Trump continued to demand larger COVID relief checks and complained about “pork” spending. Without the widespread funding provided by the massive measure, a government shutdown would occur when money runs out at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday.

“It’s a chess game and we are pawns,” said Lanetris Haines, a self-employed single mother of three in South Bend, Indiana, who stood to lose her \$129 weekly jobless benefit unless Trump signed the package into law or succeeded in his improbable quest for changes.

Washington has been reeling since Trump turned on the deal after it had won sweeping approval in both houses of Congress and after the White House had assured Republican leaders that Trump would support it.

Instead, he assailed the bill’s plan to provide \$600 COVID relief checks to most Americans — insisting it should be \$2,000. House Republicans swiftly rejected that idea during a rare Christmas Eve session. But Trump has not been swayed in spite of the nation being in the grip of a pandemic.

“I simply want to get our great people \$2000, rather than the measly \$600 that is now in the bill,” Trump tweeted Saturday from Palm Beach, Florida, where he is spending the holiday. “Also, stop the billions of dollars in ‘pork.’”

President-elect Joe Biden called on Trump to sign the bill immediately as the midnight Saturday deadline neared for two federal programs providing unemployment aid.

“It is the day after Christmas, and millions of families don’t know if they’ll be able to make ends meet because of President Donald Trump’s refusal to sign an economic relief bill approved by Congress with an overwhelming and bipartisan majority,” Biden said in a statement. He accused Trump of an “abdication of responsibility” that has “devastating consequences.”

“I’ve been talking to people who are scared they’re going to be kicked out from their homes, during the Christmas holidays, and still might be if we don’t sign this bill,” said Rep. Debbie Dingell, a Michigan Democrat.

Lauren Bauer, a fellow in economic studies at the Brookings Institution, has calculated that 11 million people would lose aid from the programs immediately without additional relief; millions more would exhaust other unemployment benefits within weeks.

Andrew Stettner, an unemployment insurance expert and senior fellow at the Century Foundation think tank, said the number may be closer to 14 million because joblessness has spiked since Thanksgiving.

“All these folks and their families will suffer if Trump doesn’t sign the damn bill,” Heidi Shierholz, director of policy at the liberal Economic Policy Institute, tweeted Wednesday.

How and when people would be affected by the lapse depended on the state they lived in, the program they were relying on and when they applied for benefits. In some states, people on regular unemployment

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insurance would continue to receive payments under a program that extends benefits when the jobless rate surpassed a certain threshold, Stettner said.

About 9.5 million people, however, had been relying on the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program that expired altogether Saturday. That program made unemployment insurance available to freelancers, gig workers and others who were normally not eligible. After receiving their last checks, those recipients would not be able to file for more aid, Stettner said.

While payments could be received retroactively, any gap would mean more hardship and uncertainty for Americans who had already grappled with bureaucratic delays, often depleting much of their savings to stay afloat while waiting for payments to kick in.

They were people like Earl McCarthy, a father of four who lives in South Fulton, Georgia, and had been relying on unemployment since losing his job as a sales representative for a luxury senior living community. He said he would be left with no income by the second week of January if Trump refused to sign the bill.

McCarthy said he already burned through much of his savings as he waited five months to begin receiving about \$350 a week in unemployment benefits.

"The entire experience was horrifying," said McCarthy. "I shudder to think if I had not saved anything or had an emergency fund through those five months, where would we have been?"

He added, "It's going to be difficult if the president doesn't sign this bill."

The bill, which was in Florida awaiting Trump's signature, would also activate a weekly \$300 federal supplement to unemployment payments.

Sharon Shelton Corpening had been hoping the extra help would allow her 83-year-old mother, with whom she lives, to stop eating into her social security payments to make their \$1,138 rent.

Corpening, who lives in the Atlanta area, had launched a freelance content strategy business that was just taking off before the pandemic hit, prompting several of her contracts to fall through. She was receiving about \$125 a week under the pandemic unemployment program and says she would be unable to pay her bills in about a month. This, despite her temporary work for the U.S. Census and as an elections poll worker.

"We on the brink," said Corpening, who lobbies for Unemployment Action, a project launched by the Center for Popular Democracy to fight for relief. "One more month, if that. Then, I run out of everything."

In addition to the unemployment benefits that have already lapsed, Trump's continued refusal to sign the bill would lead to the expiration of eviction protections and put on hold a new round of subsidies for hard-hit businesses, restaurants and theaters, as well as money for cash-starved transit systems and for vaccine distribution.

The relief was also attached to a \$1.4 trillion government funding bill to keep the federal government operating through September, which would mean that failing to sign it by midnight Tuesday would trigger a federal shutdown.

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Olson reported from New York.

## Shooting at Illinois bowling alley leaves 3 dead, 3 injured

ROCKFORD, Ill. (AP) — A gunman opened fire inside an Illinois bowling alley, killing three people and injuring three others Saturday night in what authorities believe was a random attack.

A 37-year-old male suspect was in custody after the shooting at Don Carter Lanes, Rockford police said in a social media post.

Two of those who were shot were teenagers, police Chief Dan O'Shea said during a news conference.

O'Shea did not immediately release additional information about the victims. He described the scene as contained and said he did not think any officers fired their weapons while apprehending the suspected gunman.

Rockford is about 80 miles (130 kilometers) northwest of Chicago.

Mayor Tom McNamara released a statement saying he was "angered and saddened" about the shooting.

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"My thoughts are with the families of those who lost loved ones," McNamara said. "I'm also thinking of those who were injured and my hopes are with them for a quick and full recovery."

The Rockford Register Star reported that 2020 has been the city's deadliest year for homicides, according to records that date back to 1965. Thirty-five people have been killed in the city this year, breaking the previous record of 31 in 1996.

## FBI at home of possible person of interest in Nashville bomb

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI, MICHAEL BALSAMO and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Federal agents converged Saturday on the home of a possible person of interest in the explosion that rocked downtown Nashville as investigators scoured hundreds of tips and leads in the blast that damaged dozens of buildings on Christmas morning.

More than 24 hours after the explosion, a motive remained elusive as investigators worked round-the-clock to resolve unanswered questions about a recreational vehicle that blew up on a mostly deserted street on a sleepy holiday morning and was prefaced by a recorded warning advising those nearby to evacuate. The attack, which damaged an AT&T building, continued to wreak havoc Saturday on cellphone service and police and hospital communications in several Southern states.

Investigators from multiple federal and local law enforcement agencies were at a home in Antioch, in suburban Nashville, after receiving information relevant to the investigation, said FBI Special Agent Jason Pack. Another law enforcement official, who was not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, said investigators regard a person associated with the property as a person of interest.

Federal agents could be seen looking around the property, searching the home and the backyard. A Google Maps image had shown a similar recreational vehicle parked in the backyard when the photo was captured in May 2019; an AP reporter at the scene did not see the vehicle at the property in the late afternoon Saturday.

There were other signs of progress in the investigation, as the FBI revealed that it was looking at a number of individuals who may be connected to it. Officials also said no additional explosive devices have been found — indicating no active threat to the area. Investigators have received around 500 tips and leads.

"It's just going to take us some time," Douglas Korneski, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Memphis field office, said at a Saturday afternoon news conference. "Our investigative team is turning over every stone" to understand who did this and why.

Beyond that, the only known casualties were three injured people. The infrastructure damage, meanwhile, was broadly felt, due to an AT&T central office being affected by the blast. Police emergency systems in Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama, as well as Nashville's COVID-19 community hotline and a handful of hospital systems, remained out of service.

The building contained a telephone exchange, with network equipment in it — but the company has declined to say exactly how many people have been impacted.

Asked whether the AT&T building could have been a possible target, Korneski said, "We're looking at every possible motive that could be involved."

Investigators shut down the heart of downtown Nashville's tourist scene — an area packed with honky-tonks, restaurants and shops — as they shuffled through broken glass and damaged buildings to learn more about the explosion.

Mayor John Cooper has enforced a curfew in the downtown area until Sunday via executive order to limit public access to the area. More than 40 buildings were affected.

AT&T said restoration efforts are facing several challenges, which include a fire that "reignited overnight and led to the evacuation of the building." This has forced their teams to work with safety and structural engineers and drilling access holes into the building in order to reconnect power.

"Our teams continue to work around the clock on recovery efforts from yesterday morning's explosion in Nashville," the company said in a Saturday statement. "We have two portable cell sites operating in

downtown Nashville with numerous additional portable sites being deployed in the Nashville area and in the region.”

Ray Neville, president of technology at T-Mobile, said on Twitter that service disruptions affected Louisville, Nashville, Knoxville, Birmingham and Atlanta. “We continue to see service interruptions in these areas following yesterday’s explosion. Restoration efforts continue around the clock & we will keep you updated on progress,” he said in a tweet Saturday.

The outages had even briefly grounded flights at the Nashville International Airport, but service was continuing normally as of Saturday. The Federal Aviation Association has since issued a temporary flight restriction around the airport, requiring pilots to follow strict procedures until Dec. 30.

According to Metro Nashville Police Chief John Drake, police officers responded on Friday to a report of shots fired when they encountered the RV blaring a recorded warning that a bomb would detonate in 15 minutes. Police evacuated nearby buildings and called in the bomb squad. The RV exploded shortly afterward.

Associated Press photographer Mark Humphrey in Nashville and writer John Raby in Charleston, West Virginia, contributed to this report.

## Girl Scouts rebuke Boy Scouts in escalating recruitment war

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The Girl Scouts are in a “highly damaging” recruitment war with the Boy Scouts after the latter opened its core services to girls, leading to marketplace confusion and some girls unwittingly joining the Boy Scouts, lawyers for the century-old Girl Scouts organization claim in court papers.

The competition, more conjecture than reality two years ago, has intensified as the Boy Scouts of America organization — which insists recruits pledge to be “trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous and kind” — has unfairly recruited girls lately, according to claims in legal briefs filed on behalf of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America.

The lawyers filed papers in Manhattan federal court Thursday to repel an effort by the Boy Scouts to toss out before trial a trademark infringement lawsuit the Girl Scouts filed in 2018.

Last month, lawyers for the Boy Scouts asked a judge to reject claims that the Boy Scouts cannot use “scouts” and “scouting” in its recruitment of girls without infringing trademarks.

They called the lawsuit “utterly meritless.”

The Boy Scouts on Saturday pointed to legal arguments in which it blames the Girl Scouts for reacting to its expansion plans with “anger and alarm” and said the Girl Scouts launched a “ground war” to spoil plans by the Boy Scouts to include more girls.

In a statement, the Boy Scouts said it expanded program offerings for girls “after years of requests from families” who wanted their boys and girls both participating in its character and leadership programs or for other reasons, including a desire to become an Eagle Scout.

“We applaud every organization that builds character and leadership in children, including the Girl Scouts of the USA, and believe that all families and communities benefit from the opportunity to select the programs that best fit their needs,” the statement said.

In its filing, the Girl Scouts said the Boy Scouts’ marketing of expanded services for girls was “extraordinary and highly damaging to Girl Scouts” and had set off an “explosion of confusion.”

“As a result of Boy Scouts’ infringement, parents have mistakenly enrolled their daughters in Boy Scouts thinking it was Girl Scouts,” the lawyers said, adding that this never occurred before 2018.

The Girl Scouts said they can prove there are “rampant instances of confusion and mistaken instances of association between Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts” after the Boy Scouts targeted girls and their parents with marketing and recruiting communications in ways it never has before.

In its statement, though, the Boy Scouts said: “To imply that confusion is a prevailing reason for their choice is not only inaccurate — with no legally admissible instance of this offered to date in the case — but

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it is also dismissive of the decisions of more than 120,000 girls and young women who have joined Cub Scouts or Scouts BSA since the programs became available to them."

"The parties' programs, which have many similarities, are now directly competitive," the Girls Scouts maintained.

The organization cited proof from a narrow subset of documents turned over by 19 of 250 local Boy Scout councils, including evidence that registration fees sometimes were returned to parents who mistakenly thought they registered girls for the Girl Scouts.

It said repeated instances of confusion and interference at the local level by the Boy Scouts was a tiny fraction of what was occurring nationwide.

Each of dozens of times the Girl Scouts complained about unfair marketing, the Boy Scouts responded by blaming individuals, churches or others for what they said was an isolated incident, the lawyers said.

"According to Boy Scouts, blame for the rampant marketplace confusion lies at everyone's feet but its own," they wrote.

Both the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, like other major youth organizations, have seen declines in membership in recent years as competition grew pre-pandemic from sports leagues and busy family schedules.

In spring 2018, the Boy Scouts program for 11- to 17-year-olds announced it would change its name to Scouts BSA in early 2019. The parent organization, the Boy Scouts of America, and the Cub Scouts, a program serving children from kindergarten through fifth grade, kept their names.

The organization started admitting girls into the Cub Scouts in August 2018, and Scouts BSA began accepting girls in February, 2019, lawyers said.

Afterward, Boy Scouts councils and volunteers began using Girl Scouts' intellectual property to recruit girls, employing targeted advertising utilizing terms such as "Scout, Scouts, Scouting, Scout Me In and Scouts BSA," the lawyers wrote.

The Boy Scouts contend, though, that "undisputed evidence" proves that the Boy Scouts have used "Scout" alone for more than 100 years and in connection with the marketing of some co-ed youth services for nearly 50 years.

It said hundreds of thousands of pages of documents produced in the court case and more than 40 depositions of witnesses prove the Boy Scouts never engaged in trademark infringement or created consumer confusion.

The lawyers for Girl Scouts said Boy Scouts councils in Illinois acknowledged improperly using the Girl Scouts' slogan in Cub Scout recruiting materials and pictures of Girl Scouts to promote a Boy Scouts "Scouts Sign-Up Night!"

They said a western Massachusetts Boy Scouts council posted a recruiting flyer on Facebook including a photograph of a girl depicted in her Girl Scouts Brownie uniform.

Meanwhile, Ohio Boy Scouts used the Girl Scouts trademark to try to get a local newspaper to write an article, suggesting a storyline entitled "Boy and Girl Scouts Looking for Members" even though the recruitment involved only the Boy Scouts, the lawyers said.

In Seattle, a Boy Scouts council used the Girl Scouts trademark in social media recruiting materials, the lawyers said.

They said confusion has skyrocketed among children, parents, schools and religious organizations and they cited examples in other states, including Florida, Minnesota, Arkansas, Michigan, North Carolina and Hawaii.

## Despite smooth election, GOP leaders seek vote restrictions

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE and CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Changes to the way millions of Americans voted this year contributed to record turnout, but that's no guarantee the measures making it easier to cast ballots will stick around for future elections.

Republicans in key states that voted for President-elect Joe Biden already are pushing for new restrictions, especially to absentee voting. It's an option many states expanded amid the coronavirus outbreak

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that proved hugely popular and helped ensure one of the smoothest election days in recent years.

President Donald Trump has been unrelenting in his attacks on mail voting as he continues to challenge the legitimacy of an election he lost. Despite a lack of evidence and dozens of losses in the courts, his claims of widespread voter fraud have gained traction with some Republican elected officials.

They are vowing to crack down on mail ballots and threatening to roll back other steps that have made it easier for people to vote.

"This myth could not justify throwing out the results of the election, nor can it justify imposing additional burdens on voters that will disenfranchise many Americans," said Wendy Weiser, head of the democracy program at the Brennan Center for Justice at the NYU School of Law.

An estimated 108 million people voted before Election Day, either through early in-person voting or by mailing or dropping off absentee ballots. That represented nearly 70% of all votes cast, after states took steps to make it easier to avoid crowded polling places during the pandemic.

A few states sent ballots to every registered voter while others dropped requirements that voters needed a specific excuse to cast an absentee ballot. Many states added drop boxes and expanded early voting options.

The changes were popular with voters and did not lead to widespread fraud. A group of election officials including representatives of the federal cybersecurity agency called the 2020 presidential election the "most secure" election in U.S. history, and U.S. Attorney General William Barr told The Associated Press there had been no evidence of fraud that would change the outcome of the election.

Nevertheless, Republicans in Georgia have proposed adding a photo ID requirement when voting absentee, a ban on drop boxes and possibly a return to requiring an excuse for mail voting, such as illness or traveling for work on Election Day.

Early supporters of the ID requirement include Gov. Brian Kemp and Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, Republicans who were criticized relentlessly by Trump for failing to back his fraud claims after losing in Georgia. A top deputy for Raffensperger has said the ID requirement would boost public confidence and refute any future claims of fraud.

The state's two U.S. Senate runoffs next month will take place under current law, which requires local election officials to verify signatures on absentee ballots.

In Pennsylvania, Republican lawmakers have been writing legislation to address what they claim are problems with the 2020 election and mail voting in particular, even though courts and elections officials have found no evidence of widespread problems.

"We'd like to tighten it up as soon as we can," said Pennsylvania Senate Majority Leader Kim Ward.

Republicans hold majorities in both legislative chambers, and their support was instrumental in a year-old state law that expanded mail voting to all registered voters. One bill being discussed would go so far as to repeal that law and force voters to state an excuse to receive a ballot in the mail.

Previous elections have shown that voters appreciate mail voting, no matter their party affiliation. Republican candidates down the ballot did very well this year, even as a record 81.2 million voters cast their ballot for the Democrat in the presidential race.

In Michigan, Republicans held every congressional seat and kept control of the legislature despite Trump losing the state. Yet Republicans still held a legislative hearing in which Trump's lawyers argued there were widespread irregularities without explaining how these somehow affected only the presidential race but not other contests.

"Just like we have seen a lot of legislators making ill-advised decisions to hold hearings that ended up being more political theater than policy debates, we can similarly expect legislators to further this hyper-partisan agenda to restrict the vote," said Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat.

Benson said lawmakers should instead look to the high turnout for the presidential election as a guide to improving what worked and then make changes sought by elections officials, such as providing more time for clerks to process mail ballots. Michigan does not allow that work to begin until the day before Election Day.

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Lisa Schaefer, executive director of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, said her organization also would like to see lawmakers focus on reducing the strain facing local election officials.

"The more time that we spend in debating other issues, the less time that we have to do something good with changes to the election code," Schaefer said.

Democrats and voting rights groups have already begun pushing back, saying Republicans should be focused on protecting voter access to the polls and not feeding into conspiracy theories launched by Trump and his allies to undermine the Nov. 3 election.

They say ID requirements accomplish little, but have a high cost.

"It's a solution in search of a problem," said California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, a Democrat who was recently tapped to fill the U.S. Senate seat of Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. "It will undoubtedly have the net effect of disenfranchising a lot of people without necessarily improving election security."

Padilla supports sending registered voters a ballot in the mail.

Voter fraud does happen, but studies have shown it's exceedingly rare. Numerous safeguards are built into voting systems to ensure that only eligible voters cast a ballot. Election officials say when fraud does happen, people are caught and prosecuted.

Not all Republicans are seeking to add restrictions.

In Ohio, Secretary of State Frank LaRose said his legislative priorities are to expand early voting locations, increase oversight of election vendors, add an online option for requesting absentee ballots and address confusion over drop boxes.

"Ohio's got a good thing going, but we don't want to rest on our laurels," said LaRose, who wants his priorities approved by the Republican-dominated legislature.

Kentucky Secretary of State Michael Adams said the pandemic forced the state to implement early voting, which proved popular among voters of both major parties. The Republican said he thinks it's likely state lawmakers will create an early voting policy for subsequent elections and has heard of no opposition to that in the GOP-controlled legislature.

"It just makes voting easier," he said.

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Izaguirre reported from Lindenhurst, New York. Associated Press writers Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Ben Nadler in Atlanta; and Julie Carr Smyth in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this report.

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## Gingerbread monolith delights San Francisco on Christmas Day

Associated Press undefined

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — In true pop-up art fashion, a nearly 7-foot-tall monolith made of gingerbread mysteriously appeared on a San Francisco hilltop on Christmas Day and collapsed the next day.

The three-sided tower, held together by icing and decorated with a few gumdrops, delighted the city on Friday when word spread about its existence.

During his morning run, Ananda Sharma told KQED-FM he climbed to Corona Heights Park to see the sunrise when he spotted what he thought was a big post. He said he smelled the scent of gingerbread before realizing what it was.

"It made me smile. I wonder who did it, and when they put it there," he said.

People trekked to the park throughout the day, even as light rain fell on the ephemeral, edible art object. In one video posted online, someone took a bite of the gingerbread.

Phil Ginsburg, head of city's Recreation and Parks Department, told KQED the site "looks like a great spot to get baked" and confirmed his staff will not remove the monument "until the cookie crumbles."

It did by Saturday morning, a fitting end to what was surely an homage to the discovery and swift disappearance of a shining metal monolith in Utah's red-rock desert last month. It became a subject of



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fascination around the world as it evoked the movie "2001: A Space Odyssey" and drew speculation about its otherworldly origins.

The still-anonymous creator of the Utah monument did not secure permission to plant the hollow, stainless steel object on public land.

A similar metal structure was found and quickly disappeared on a hill in northern Romania. Days later, another monolith was discovered at the pinnacle of a trail in Atascadero, California, but it was later dismantled by a group of young men, city officials said.

## Trump's impact on courts likely to last long beyond his term

By MARK SHERMAN, KEVIN FREKING and MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — On this, even President Donald Trump's most fevered critics agree: He has left a deep imprint on the federal courts that will outlast his one term in office for decades to come.

He used the promise of conservative judicial appointments to win over Republican skeptics as a candidate. Then as president, he relied on outside conservative legal organizations and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to employ an assembly line-like precision to install more than 230 judges on the federal bench, including the three newest justices of the Supreme Court. Trump never tired of boasting about it.

Indeed, undeterred by Democratic criticism, the Senate was still confirming judges more than a month after Trump lost his reelection bid to Joe Biden.

"Trump has basically done more than any president has done in a single term since (President Jimmy) Carter to put his stamp on the judiciary," said Jonathan Adler, a law professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Law in Cleveland. Congress created about 150 new judgeships during Carter's presidency, he said.

The impact will be enduring. Among the Trump-appointed judges, who hold lifetime positions, several are still in their 30s. The three Supreme Court picks could still be on the court at the 21st century's midpoint, 30 years from now.

Beyond the Supreme Court, 30% of the judges on the nation's court of appeals, where all but a handful of cases reach their end, were appointed by Trump.

But numbers don't tell the entire story. The real measure of what Trump has been able to do will be revealed in countless court decisions in the years to come on abortion, guns, religious rights and a host of other culture wars issues.

When it came to the president's own legal challenges of the election results, however, judges who have him to thank for their position rebuffed his claims. But in many other important ways, his success with judicial appointments already is paying dividends for conservatives.

When the Supreme Court blocked New York from enforcing certain limits on attendance at churches and synagogues in areas designated as hard hit by COVID-19, Justice Amy Coney Barrett, the newest member of the court, cast the decisive fifth vote. Previously, the court had allowed restrictions on religious services over the dissent of four justices, including the other two Trump nominees, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh.

Five Trump appointees were in the majority of the 6-4 decision by the full 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in September that made it harder for felons in Florida to regain the right to vote. The Atlanta-based court had a majority of Democratic-appointed judges when Trump took office.

Last month, Judges Britt Grant and Barbara Lagoa, both named by Trump, formed the majority on a three-judge 11th circuit panel that struck down local Florida bans on therapy that seeks to change the sexual orientation of LGBTQ minors. Other appeals courts around the country have upheld the conversion therapy bans.

In one early look at Trump's appointees to federal trial courts, political science professors Kenneth Manning, Robert Carp and Lisa Holmes compared their decisions with more than 117,000 opinions published dating to 1932.

"Trump has appointed judges who exhibit a distinct decision-making pattern that is, on the whole,

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significantly more conservative than previous presidents," the political scientists concluded in a working paper in October.

The one constant of the past four years — through impeachment, the coronavirus pandemic and Trump's election loss — has been his nomination of and Senate confirmation of judges.

The president has had several partners in the judicial effort, but none more important than McConnell, who takes particular pride in reshaping the Supreme Court.

"I think it's far and away the most consequential thing I've ever been involved in," the 78-year-old McConnell said in an interview. "And it's the most long-lasting accomplishment of the current administration, by far."

They might not have called it a partnership at the time, but their mutually reinforcing work began even before Trump's election in 2016.

Trump used the issue of the federal judiciary to win trust with voters who might have questions about the conservative credentials of a billionaire real estate developer who had once supported abortion rights and did not have a track record in politics.

He put in writing a list of potential nominees, provided by the conservative Federalist Society and Heritage Foundation, he would select from in filling a Supreme Court vacancy.

Kellyanne Conway, who served as his campaign manager in 2016, said it was a move that people who had been in office for years and wanted to ascend to the presidency "didn't have the courage to do, which is name names."

As it happens, there was a high court opening at the time, following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February.

Enter McConnell. The Republican blocked President Barack Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland, refusing so much as a hearing for the respected appeals court judge whom Republicans had previously identified as a high court nominee they could support.

It was a gamble at a time when Trump's electoral prospects seemed dim, but it paid off with his stunning victory over Hillary Clinton.

And the high court seat wasn't the only one waiting to be filled when Trump took office in January 2017. Altogether, 104 judgeships were open after Republicans used their Senate majority to grind the nomination process to a near halt in Obama's final two years in office. Only 28.6% of his nominees were confirmed in that stretch.

The pace quickened almost immediately. Republicans moved with an urgency on confirmations that hasn't let up. In Trump's first two years, they pushed through 30 appellate court judges and 53 district court nominees. It was the highest number of appellate court confirmations in a two-year period since Ronald Reagan and nearly double the number that Obama secured in his first two years.

McConnell and top Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee eliminated rules that had allowed the opposition party to delay confirmations, most notably requiring just a simple majority, instead of 60 votes, to move Supreme Court nominees. Democrats, bitter over the stalled Garland nomination, otherwise would have blocked Gorsuch's confirmation in April 2017.

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island, a Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee and a sharp Trump critic, said Trump's judicial legacy "is a lot less about what he's done than what he's allowed others to do in his name."

Whitehouse said Trump essentially "outsourced" judicial nominations to McConnell and the Federalist Society, specifically the group's leader Leonard Leo and former White House counsel Don McGahn, a Federalist Society member who made judicial nominations a top priority.

At the same time, the Federalist Society and other conservative groups, including the Judicial Crisis Network and Americans for Prosperity, have taken millions of dollars in anonymous donations and waged public and behind-the-scenes campaigns for right-wing judges, Whitehouse said.

Trump "opened the channel for special-interest interference in judicial selection," Whitehouse said. "That, I think, is very novel and obviously lends itself to corruption." He said: "Right wing forces have for decades

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sought the kind of influence in judicial nominations that the Trump administration outright gave them.”

McConnell scoffed at the criticism. “The reason a lot of them belong to the Federalist Society is because that is sort of the core mission of the Federalist Society — to get the courts back to doing what they’re supposed to do and not legislate from the bench,” he said.

On the campaign trail and at White House events, Trump would often cite his record on judicial appointments as an example of accomplishment, while ignoring the obstructions that occurred during the Obama years.

“You know, when I got in, we had over 100 federal judges that weren’t appointed,” he said. “Now, I don’t know why Obama left that. It was like a big, beautiful present to all of us. Why the hell did he leave that? Maybe he got complacent.” Trump omitted the essential fact that McConnell had blocked Obama’s nominees.

The high court vacancy at the start of Trump’s term was, in essence, a gift from McConnell. Justice Anthony Kennedy’s decision to retire in 2018 allowed Trump to replace the court’s swing justice with the more conservative Kavanaugh, who survived his own bruising confirmation hearings that included allegations he sexually assaulted a woman when they were both in high school decades ago. Kavanaugh denied the claims.

Less than two months before the 2020 election, Trump was handed another opening with the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Trump and Senate Republicans didn’t hesitate. He nominated Barrett even before Ginsburg was buried at Arlington National Cemetery and McConnell ensured the confirmation was done before the election.

The Senate has continued confirming Trump nominees even after his defeat for reelection, breaking a norm that has stood since 1900 with one exception, said Russell Wheeler, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution. Federal prosecutor Thomas Kirsch was confirmed as Barrett’s replacement on the federal appeals court based in Chicago on Dec. 15, on a mostly party-line vote.

The exception was the Senate’s bipartisan acceptance in 1980 of a former Senate staff member as a federal appeals court judge. That nominee was Stephen Breyer, now a Supreme Court justice.

Along with the question of legacy is whether Trump’s record on judges spurs major changes to the judiciary.

Wheeler, at Brookings, said one of the most striking features of the teamwork of Trump and McConnell is that they acted as though they had the support of most Americans. They did not, he said.

“My main beef with this current group is that there’s just no mandate to turn the judiciary so far to the right,” Wheeler said. “Trump lost the popular vote massively in 2016, but nevertheless has behaved as if he had a mandate to reshape the federal judiciary at the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals level and I think that’s just unfounded.”

Liberal groups already have been pushing for changes at the highest level, including expansion of the Supreme Court and term limits for justices. The political prospects for both ideas are uncertain, at best.

But there’s less doubt from any vantage point about what Trump has wrought.

The U.S. “will be living with the legacy of Donald Trump for decades to come as a result of his judicial appointments,” said Brian Fallon, executive director of Demand Justice, a liberal advocacy group. People who accepted judicial appointments from Trump will “wear the moniker of ‘Trump judge’ for the rest of their lives.”

Not so, in Conway’s view. “It will be one of the most lasting pieces of his legacy, distinguished and durable,” she said.

## University: Utah star freshman running back Ty Jordan dead

DALLAS (AP) — Ty Jordan, a star freshman running back for the University of Utah who grew up in the Dallas area, has died, school officials announced Saturday.

Authorities in Texas and Utah have not released details about the circumstances of the Jordan’s death. A day earlier, the 19 year old was named Pac-12’s newcomer of the year.

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"Words cannot express the devastation and heartache that our team is feeling right now upon learning of the tragic death of our teammate and brother, Ty Jordan," Utah coach Kyle Whittingham said in a statement.

Jordan, a speedy 5-foot-7, 200-pound player, emerged from a crowded Utah backfield to become the focal point of the team's offense. He finished the season with 597 yards rushing, 11 catches for 126 yards and six touchdowns.

Jordan came up as a tailback playing in Mesquite, a Dallas suburb, and was a highly touted recruit. He made a seamless transition to the college game, including three straight 100-yard rushing performances to close out the season.

Utah was one of nearly two dozen major college football teams to decline an opportunity to play a postseason bowl game, instead allowing players who had been in strict COVID-19 protocols for months begin their off-seasons.

## Germany, Hungary give 1st vaccine shots ahead of EU rollout

By VANESSA GERA and DAVID McHUGH Associated Press

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Germany, Hungary and Slovakia began giving out their first coronavirus vaccine shots on Saturday only hours after receiving their first shipments, upsetting the European Union's plans for a coordinated rollout Sunday across the bloc's 27 nations.

"Every day that we wait is one day too many," said Tobias Krueger, operator of a nursing home where immunizations began in Halberstadt, in the northeast German region of Saxony-Anhalt.

The first person at the home to be immunized with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was 101-year-old Edith Kwoizalla, the dpa news agency reported.

Krueger said 40 of the home's 59 residents wanted the immunization shot along with 10 of around 40 workers. He was among those immunized but added, "I also understand the concerns."

In Hungary, health care workers were vaccinated at the Southern Pest Central Hospital in Budapest, while in Slovakia, the first person to receive a jab was a 60-year-old top expert on infectious diseases, Vladimir Krcmery. He was vaccinated along with doctors at the University Hospital in the city of Nitra, in what Health Minister Marek Krajci called a "historic moment."

The first shipments of the vaccine arrived at hospitals across the EU in super-cold containers late Friday and early Saturday after being sent from a manufacturing center in Belgium before Christmas.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen released a video celebrating the vaccine rollout for the bloc of nearly 450 million people, calling it "a touching moment of unity."

"Today, we start turning the page on a difficult year. The COVID-19 vaccine has been delivered to all EU countries. Vaccination will begin tomorrow across the EU," she said.

The rollout marks a moment of hope for a region that includes some of the world's earliest and worst-hit virus hot spots — Italy and Spain — and others like the Czech Republic, which were spared early on only to see their health care systems near their breaking point in the fall.

In all, EU nations have recorded at least 16 million coronavirus infections and more than 336,000 deaths — huge numbers that experts agree still understate the true toll of the pandemic due to missed cases and limited testing.

Still, the vaccine rollout helps the bloc project a sense of unity in a complex lifesaving mission after it faced a year of difficulties in negotiating a post-Brexit trade deal with Britain. It also brings a sigh of relief for EU politicians who were frustrated after Britain, Canada and the United States began their vaccination programs earlier this month with the same German-developed shot.

"It's here, the good news at Christmas," German Health Minister Jens Spahn told a news conference Saturday. "This vaccine is the decisive key to end this pandemic ... it is the key to getting our lives back."

The first shipments were limited to just under 10,000 doses in most countries, with the EU's mass vaccination programs expected to begin only in January. Each country is deciding on its own who will get the first shots — but they are all putting the most vulnerable first.

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In Hungary, the first shipment of 9,750 doses — enough to vaccinate 4,875 people, since two doses are needed per person — arrived by truck early Saturday and were taken to the South Pest Central Hospital in Budapest. The government said four other hospitals, two in Budapest and two others in the eastern cities of Debrecen and Nyíregyháza, would also receive vaccines from the initial shipment.

French authorities said they will prioritize the elderly and the French medical safety agency will monitor the vaccine rollout for any potential problems. Germany, where the pandemic has cost more than 30,000 lives, was beginning with those over 80 and people who take care of vulnerable groups.

Spanish authorities said the first batch of the vaccine arrived in the central city of Guadalajara, where the first shots will be administered Sunday morning at a nursing home.

In Italy, which has Europe's worst virus toll at over 71,000 dead, a nurse in Rome's Spallanzani Hospital, the main infectious diseases facility in the capital, will be the first in the country to receive the vaccine, followed by other health care personnel.

In Poland, the first two people to be vaccinated Sunday will be a nurse and a doctor at the Interior Ministry hospital in Warsaw, followed by medical personnel in dozens of other hospitals. Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said it was the patriotic duty of Poles to get vaccinated — a message directed at a society where there's a high degree of vaccine hesitancy born from a distrust of authorities.

In Bulgaria, where fears about vaccines also run high, the first person to get the shot will be Health Minister Kostadin Angelov, who has promised an aggressive campaign to promote the benefits of vaccines.

In Croatia, a nursing home resident in Zagreb, the capital, will be the first to receive the vaccine on Sunday morning, according to state HRT TV. Authorities also planned to involve celebrities and other public figures in a pro-vaccination campaign.

"We have been waiting for this for a year now," Romanian Prime Minister Florin Cătuș said Saturday after the first vaccines arrived at a military-run storage facility.

The vaccinations began as the first cases of a new virus variant that has been spreading in the U.K. have been detected in France and Spain. The new variant, which British authorities said is much more easily transmitted, has caused European countries, the United States and China to put new restrictions on travel for people from Britain.

A French man living in England arrived in France on Dec. 19 and tested positive for the new variant Friday, the French health agency said. He has no symptoms and is isolating at home in the central city of Tours.

Health authorities in Madrid confirmed the U.K. variant in four people, all of whom are in good health. Regional health chief Enrique Ruiz Escudero said the new strain had arrived when an infected person flew into Madrid's airport.

The German pharmaceutical company BioNTech is confident that its coronavirus vaccine works against the new U.K. variant, but said further studies are needed to be completely certain.

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Gera reported from Warsaw, Poland. Associated Press writers Lorne Cook in Brussels, Angela Charlton in Paris, Joseph Wilson in Barcelona, Spain, Frances D'Emilio in Rome, Jovana Gec in Belgrade, Serbia, Karel Janicek in Prague, and Veselin Toshkov in Sofia, Bulgaria, contributed to this report.

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## Hundreds of migrants freezing in heavy snow in Bosnia camp

BIHAC, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Hundreds of migrants were stranded Saturday in a squalid, burnt-out tent camp in Bosnia as heavy snow fell in the country and winter temperatures suddenly dropped.

Migrants at the Lipa camp in northwest Bosnia wrapped themselves in blankets and sleeping bags to protect against the biting winds in the region, which borders European Union member Croatia.

A fire earlier this week destroyed much of the camp near the town of Bihac that already was harshly criticized by international officials and aid groups as being inadequate for housing refugees and migrants.

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Despite the fire, Bosnian authorities have failed to find new accommodations for the migrants at Lipa, leaving around 1,000 people stuck in the cold, with no facilities or heat, eating only meager food parcels provided by aid groups.

"Snow has fallen, sub-zero temperatures, no heating, nothing," the International Organization for Migration's chief of mission in Bosnia, Peter Van Der Auweraert, tweeted. "This is not how anyone should live. We need political bravery and action now."

Bosnia has become a bottleneck for thousands of migrants hoping to reach Western Europe. Most are stuck in Bosnia's northwest Krajina region as other areas in the ethnically divided nation have refused to accept them. The EU has warned Bosnia that thousands of migrants face a freezing winter without shelter, and it has urged the country's bickering politicians to set aside their differences and take action.

On Saturday, migrants crowded at the camp to receive water and food provided by Bosnia's Red Cross as police sought to maintain order. Some migrants wore face shields to protect them from coronavirus.

"We are living like animals. Even animals are living better than us!" said a man from Pakistan who identified himself only by his first name, Kasim. "If they not help us, we will die, so please help us."

Plans to relocate the migrants temporarily to a closed facility in central Bihac have prompted protests by residents.

Left without a solution, migrants put down cardboard on the floor and set up improvised barriers for privacy inside the only standing tent at the Lipa camp. Some people held their wet feet above the small fires that migrants lit outside to warm up, while others wrapped up tight in blankets for warmth. Many migrants were wearing sneakers despite the snow.

To get to Croatia, migrants often use illegal routes over a mountainous area along the border. Many have complained of violence and pushbacks by the Croatian police.

## Mallard to go? Dig of Pompeii fast-food place reveals tastes

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — A fast-food eatery at Pompeii has been excavated, helping to reveal dishes that were popular for the citizens of the ancient Roman city who were partial to eating out.

Pompeii Archaeological Park's longtime chief, Massimo Osanna said Saturday that while some 80 such fast-foods have been found at Pompeii, it is the first time such a hot-food-drink eatery — known as a thermopolium — was completely unearthed.

A segment of the fast-food counter was partially dug up in 2019 during work to shore up Pompeii's oft-crumbling ruins. Since then, archaeologists kept digging, revealing a multi-sided-counter, with typical wide holes inserted into its top. The countertop held deep vessels for hot foods, not unlike soup containers nestled into modern-day salad bars.

Plant and animal specialists are still analyzing remains from the site, with its counter frescoed with a figure of an undersea nymph astride a horse. Images of two upside-down mallards and a rooster, whose plumage was painted with the typical vivid color known as Pompeian red, also brightened the eatery and likely served to advertise the menu.

Another fresco depicted a dog on a leash, perhaps not unlike modern reminders to leash pets. Vulgar graffiti were inscribed on the painting's frame.

Valeria Amoretti, a Pompeii staff anthropologist, said "initial analyses confirm how the painted images represent, at least in part, the foods and beverages effectively sold inside." Her statement noted that duck bone fragment was found in one of the containers, along with remains from goats, pigs, fish and snails. At the bottom of a wine container were traces of ground fava beans, which in ancient times were added to wine for flavor and to lighten its color, Amoretti said.

"We know what they were eating that day," said Osanna, referring to the day of Pompeii's destruction in 79 A.D. The food remains indicated "what's popular with the common folk," Osanna told Rai state TV, noting that street-food places weren't frequented by the Roman elite.

One surprise find was the complete skeleton of a dog. The discovery intrigued the excavators, since it

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wasn't a "large, muscular dog like that painted on the counter but of an extremely small example" of an adult dog, whose height at shoulder level was 20-to-25 centimeters (8-to-10 inches), Amoretti said. It's rather rare, Amoretti said, to find remains from ancient times of such small dogs, discoveries that "attest to selective breeding in the Roman epoch to obtain this result."

Also unearthed were a bronze ladle, nine amphorae, which were popular food containers in Roman times, a couple of flasks and a ceramic oil container.

Successful restaurateurs know that a good location can be crucial, and the operator of this ancient fast-food seemed to have found a good spot. Osanna noted that right outside the eatery was a small square with a fountain, with another thermopolium in the vicinity.

Pompeii was destroyed by the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which is near present-day Naples. Much of the ancient city still lies unexcavated. The site is one of Italy's most popular tourist attractions.

Human remains were also discovered in the excavation of the eatery.

Those bones were apparently disturbed in the 17th century during clandestine excavations by thieves looking for valuables, Pompeii authorities said. Some of the bones belonged to a man, who, when the Vesuvius volcano erupted, appeared to have been lying on a bed or a cot, since nails and pieces of wood were found under his body, authorities said. Other human remains were found inside one of the counter's vessels, possibly placed there by those excavators centuries ago.

## Still The King: James wins AP Male Athlete of Year award

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

LeBron James told the world in 2020 that Black Lives Matter. He helped convince many who had never voted to finally head to the polls. He found more ways to continue elevating the lives of people in his hometown.

If that weren't enough, he won another NBA championship.

James' on-court performance this year was spectacular again. A fourth NBA title and fourth NBA Finals MVP trophy were his, as he lifted the Los Angeles Lakers back atop the basketball world. And after a year where he was brilliant, on the court and off, James was announced Saturday as the winner of The Associated Press' Male Athlete of the Year award for a record-tying fourth time.

"I still know what I do on the floor and obviously, I give everything to the game," James told AP. "But I can make a greater impact off the floor right now, more than I can on the floor. And I want to continue to inspire people with the way I play the game of basketball. But there's so many more things that I can do off the floor to help cultivate people, inspire people, bring people together, empower them."

The AP award was first given out in 1931. James' fourth win matched Lance Armstrong and Tiger Woods for the most by men. Three women have won the AP award at least four times; Babe Didrikson was a six-time winner, Serena Williams has won five and Chris Evert four.

The AP's Female Athlete of the Year will be announced Sunday.

No NBA player scored more points or had more assists in 2020 than James. The only other player in his lifetime to lead the league in points and assists in the same calendar year? Himself, in 2018.

James also became the first player to be NBA Finals MVP for three franchises. He moved past Kobe Bryant for No. 3 on the all-time scoring list, doing so one day before Bryant died last January in a helicopter crash; the last tweet Bryant sent was a congratulatory message to James.

"He's the greatest player the basketball universe has ever seen," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said of James in October. "And if you think you know, you don't know until you're around him every day, you're coaching him, you're seeing his mind, you're seeing his adjustments, seeing the way he leads the group. You think you know. You don't know."

James finished with 78 points in voting by a panel of 35 AP customers and editors. Kansas City quarterback and reigning Super Bowl MVP Patrick Mahomes was a narrow second with 71 points. Formula One seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton was a distant third with 14 points.

James — also the AP's male athlete of this past decade — also won the yearly AP award in 2013, 2016 and 2018. Michael Jordan, a three-time winner, is the only other basketball player to win the AP award

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more than once.

"He's one of the greatest leaders in sports," Lakers guard Kyle Kuzma said of James.

That applies on and off the court.

James' More Than A Vote organization drew more than 42,000 volunteers to work at polling stations for the November election, helped some earn back their voting rights and pushed for turnout among Black and young voters.

Black voters made up 11% of the national electorate, and 9 in 10 of them supported President-elect Joe Biden, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 110,000 voters nationwide. When compared to Hillary Clinton in 2016, Biden drew more voters in critical areas with large Black populations — such as NBA cities like Detroit, Milwaukee and Atlanta. That proved massive.

"The tragic death of George Floyd, everyone getting a chance to see that, and also hearing the story of Breonna Taylor, her tragic story, and Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia ... my people have had enough and I have had enough," James said. "That's why I called for action and with my platform, I believed I could get people to join me."

He also focused, as always, on his hometown of Akron, Ohio.

The I PROMISE School he opened in 2018 now has over 450 students in third through sixth grades. When the pandemic shut down then school, James and his team ensured students got hot meals delivered to their homes — even complete Thanksgiving meals. An affordable housing project for 50 families broke ground this year. And this month, plans for House Three Thirty (a nod to Akron's area code) were announced, detailing how James is going to offer things like accessible family financial health programming, job training and a community gathering space.

"The pandemic has been rough on all of us," James said. "No matter your situation, no matter where you are in life, it's been rough. And the first thing I thought about, besides the stoppage of the season, when the pandemic hit was 'What am I going to do for my kids back in my back in my school?'"

He is already eyeing 2021. The Lakers expect to be contenders again. His remake of "Space Jam" is expected to be released this summer. And James, who turns 36 Wednesday, hasn't ruled out playing again for USA Basketball in the Tokyo Olympics on the team that will be coached by Gregg Popovich.

"It's still possible," James said. "It's not a 0% percent chance, I will say that. I love Coach Pop."

But, as 2020 wound down, James allowed himself a moment to reflect on a year like none other.

"It's a tribute to the people that I work with, to the people at my foundation, to the sponsors that continue to support us and what we do and what we strive for," James said. "It's unbelievable. I can't sit here and say that at the time we stopped in March that I thought all this would happen and we would be at this point in December."

Yet here he is, again.

More AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/NBA> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Millions face new UK virus restrictions; border chaos eases

LONDON (AP) — Millions of people in the U.K. faced tough new coronavirus restrictions Saturday, with Scotland and Northern Ireland demanding tighter measures to try to halt a new variant of the virus that is believed to spread more quickly.

Northern Ireland went into a six-week lockdown and in Wales, restrictions that were relaxed for Christmas Day were also re-imposed.

The number of people under England's top level of restrictions — Tier 4 — increased by 6 million on Saturday to 24 million people overall, around 43% of England's population. The region included London and many of its surrounding areas.

No indoor mixing of households is allowed, and only essential travel permitted. Gyms, pools, hairdressers and stores selling nonessential goods have been ordered to close and pubs and restaurants can only do takeout. Business groups say the restrictions will be economically devastating to their members.

Another 570 daily deaths from COVID-19 were reported, bringing Britain's total death toll to 70,195, the



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second-worst death toll in Europe after Italy. Britain also reported more than 32,700 new cases of the disease on Christmas Day.

Fears about the U.K.'s new variant have sparked a week of border chaos. Around 1,000 British soldiers spent Christmas Day trying to clear a huge backlog of trucks stranded in southeast England after France briefly closed its border to the U.K. and demanded coronavirus tests from all drivers.

But Britain's Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said Saturday that more than 15,000 drivers had been tested and that the backlog at a testing site at Manston Airport was cleared by Sunday morning. Only 36 positive tests had been reported, he said on Twitter.

"A massive THANK YOU to everyone who's worked tirelessly over the past few days to reduce the huge disruption caused by the sudden French border closure," Shapps tweeted.

The first cases of the U.K.'s new variant have now been detected in France and Spain. A French man living in England arrived in France on Dec. 19 and tested positive for the new variant Friday, the French public health agency said. He has no symptoms and is isolating at his home in the central city of Tours.

Meanwhile, health authorities in the Madrid region said they had confirmed the U.K. variant in four people, all of whom are in good health. Regional health chief Enrique Ruiz Escudero said the new strain had arrived when an infected person flew into Madrid's airport.

In her annual Christmas address, Queen Elizabeth II, who has spent much of the year isolating at Windsor Castle with her husband Prince Philip, delivered a heartfelt message of hope praising the "indomitable spirit" of those who have risen "magnificently" to the challenges of the pandemic.

The 94-year-old queen and her 99-year-old husband Prince Philip were setting an example by not visiting relatives as usual over Christmas.

Follow AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>, <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## British double agent George Blake dies in Russia at 98

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — George Blake, a former British intelligence officer who worked as a double agent for the Soviet Union and passed some of the most coveted Western secrets to Moscow, has died in Russia. He was 98.

Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service, known as SVR, announced his death Saturday in a statement, which didn't give any details. Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his condolences, hailing Blake as a "brilliant professional" and a man of "remarkable courage."

As a double agent, Blake exposed a Western plan to eavesdrop on Soviet communications from an underground tunnel into East Berlin. He also unmasked scores of British agents in Soviet bloc countries in Eastern Europe, some of whom were executed. Blake has lived in Russia since his daring escape from a British prison in 1966 and was given the rank of Russian intelligence colonel.

Britain considered Blake to be a traitor, but the man himself never agreed with that assessment and said that he had never actually "felt" British.

"To betray, you first have to belong. I never belonged," he said.

The British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office declined to comment Saturday on Blake's death.

Born in the Netherlands, Blake joined British intelligence during World War II. He was posted to Korea when the war there erupted in 1950 and was detained by the Communist north. He said he volunteered to work for the Soviet Union after witnessing the relentless U.S. bombing of North Korea.

In a statement issued in 2017 through the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, Blake emphasized that he decided to switch sides after seeing civilians massacred by the "American military machine."

"I realized back then that such conflicts are deadly dangerous for the entire humankind and made the most important decision in my life — to cooperate with Soviet intelligence voluntarily and for free to help

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protect peace in the world," Blake said.

In a 2012 interview with the Russian government daily Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Blake shared some details of his cloak-and-dagger adventures, including meetings with a Soviet liaison in East Berlin. He said that once a month he would take a train to East Berlin, make sure that he wasn't being followed, and go by car to a secret apartment where he and his contact would have a talk accompanied by a glass of Soviet-made sparkling wine.

A Polish defector exposed Blake as a Soviet spy in 1961. He was convicted on spying charges in Britain and sentenced to 42 years in prison. In October 1966, he made a bold escape with help from several people he met while in custody.

Blake spent two months hiding at his assistant's place and was then driven across Europe to East Berlin inside a wooden box attached under a car.

His British wife, whom he left behind along with their three children, divorced him, and he married a Soviet woman and they had a son. He was feted as a hero, decorated with top medals, and given a country house outside Moscow.

In the Soviet Union, Blake maintained contacts with other British double agents. He said he met regularly with Donald Maclean and Kim Philby, members of the so-called Cambridge Five, and he said he and Maclean were particularly close.

Blake said he adapted well to life in Russia and once joked at a meeting with Russian intelligence officers that he's like a "foreign-made car that adapted well to Russian roads."

"He made a truly invaluable contribution to ensuring strategic parity and preserving peace," Putin said in his telegram of condolences.

Blake noted in his 2017 statement that Russia has become his "second motherland," and thanked SVR officers for their friendship and understanding. He said that Russian intelligence officers have a mission to "save the world in a situation when the danger of nuclear war and the resulting self-destruction of humankind again have been put on the agenda by irresponsible politicians."

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Lorne Cook in Brussels contributed to this report.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Dec. 27, the 362nd day of 2020. There are four days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 27, 1979, Soviet forces seized control of Afghanistan. President Hafizullah Amin (hah-FEE'-zoo-lah ah-MEEN'), who was overthrown and executed, was replaced by Babrak Karmal.

On this date:

In 1822, scientist Louis Pasteur was born in Dole, France.

In 1831, naturalist Charles Darwin set out on a round-the-world voyage aboard the HMS Beagle.

In 1945, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were formally established.

In 1958, American physicist James Van Allen reported the discovery of a second radiation belt around Earth, in addition to one found earlier in the year.

In 1968, Apollo 8 and its three astronauts made a safe, nighttime splashdown in the Pacific.

In 1985, Palestinian guerrillas opened fire inside the Rome and Vienna airports; 19 victims were killed, plus four attackers who were slain by police and security personnel. American naturalist Dian Fossey, 53, who had studied gorillas in the wild in Rwanda, was found hacked to death.

In 1995, Israeli jeeps sped out of the West Bank town of Ramallah, capping a seven-week pullout giving Yasser Arafat control over 90 percent of the West Bank's 1 million Palestinian residents and one-third of its land.

In 1999, Space shuttle Discovery and its seven-member crew returned to Earth after fixing the Hubble

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Space Telescope.

In 2000, President Bill Clinton put the first Black judge on the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals serving several Southern states. (The nomination of Roger Gregory had been stalled in the Senate, but Clinton used a recess appointment to put him on the bench.)

In 2001, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld announced that Taliban and al-Qaida prisoners would be held at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In 2002, a defiant North Korea ordered U.N. nuclear inspectors to leave the country and said it would restart a laboratory capable of producing plutonium for nuclear weapons; the U.N. nuclear watchdog said its inspectors were "staying put" for the time being.

In 2016, actor Carrie Fisher died in a hospital four days after suffering a medical emergency aboard a flight to Los Angeles; she was 60.

Ten years ago: A Russian court found imprisoned oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky (khoh-dohr-KAHV'-skee) guilty of stealing nearly \$30 billion in oil from his company, Yukos. (His supporters charged that Khodorkovsky's prosecution was politically motivated; he was pardoned by Russian President Vladimir Putin in Dec. 2013.) Economist and former government official Alfred E. Kahn, known as "the father of airline deregulation," died in Ithaca, New York, at age 93.

Five years ago: British Prime Minister David Cameron sent hundreds more troops into northern England to help exhausted residents and emergency workers fight back rising river waters that had inundated towns and cities after weeks of heavy rain. Death claimed Harlem Globetrotter Meadowlark Lemon at age 83; baseball player Dave Henderson at age 57; cinematographer Haskell Wexler at age 93; painter-sculptor Ellsworth Kelly at age 92.

One year ago: Radio personality Don Imus died in Texas at the age of 79; he had risen to fame with a caustic persona, but his career took a plunge after a nationally-broadcast racial slur. Kawhi Leonard of the NBA's Los Angeles Clippers was named the Associated Press' male athlete of the year. Breakthrough singer-rapper Lizzo was named Entertainer of the Year by The Associated Press.

Today's Birthdays: Actor John Amos is 81. Rock musician Mick Jones (Foreigner) is 76. Singer Tracy Nelson is 76. Actor Gerard Depardieu is 72. Jazz singer-musician T.S. Monk is 71. Singer-songwriter Karla Bonoff is 69. Rock musician David Knopfler (Dire Straits) is 68. Actor Tovah Feldshuh is 67. Journalist-turned-politician Arthur Kent is 67. Actor Maryam D'Abo is 60. Actor Ian Gomez is 56. Actor Theresa Randle is 56. Actor Eva LaRue is 54. Wrestler and actor Bill Goldberg is 54. Bluegrass singer-musician Darrin Vincent (Dailey & Vincent) is 51. Rock musician Guthrie Govan is 49. Musician Matt Slocum is 48. Actor Wilson Cruz is 47. Singer Olu is 47. Actor Masi Oka is 46. Actor Aaron Stanford is 44. Actor Emilie de Ravin is 39. Actor Jay Ellis is 39. Christian rock musician James Mead (Kutless) is 38. Rock singer Hayley Williams (Paramore) is 32. Country singer Shay Mooney (Dan & Shay) is 29. Actor Timothee Chalamet is 25.



## Reflections off the water

The Christmas lights from the Joe Schwan house reflect off the water that was put on the skating rink. Now before everyone gets excited about the skating rink, there are a lot of things that can go wrong, especially with the weather not being cold. The one thing that could happen is that the water could all soak away because the ground has been dry; thus, not creating much frost. Another thing that could happen is that the top could freeze while the water under the ice soaks away, creating air pockets in the ice. A third thing that could happen is that it could snow, leaving an insulated blanket on the rink preventing the ice from freezing very fast. Now if the water does soak away and the weather turns very cold, then the chances of making ice on the rink will improve greatly as the frost will go into the ground. Time will tell of the verdict of the ice rink for this season. (Photo by Paul Kosel)