

# Groton Daily Independent

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## UpComing Events

### Monday, Dec. 13

4:30 p.m.: Junior High Wrestling at Webster  
Junior High GBB hosts Warner. (7th at 6 p.m. followed by 8th grade game)  
7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

### Thursday, Dec. 16

Basketball Double Header with Hamlin at Groton.  
Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 5 p.m., Girls Varsity at 6:15 p.m. followed by boys varsity.

### Friday, Dec. 17

Brookings Bell Debate

### Saturday, Dec. 18

Brookings Bell Debate  
10 a.m.: Wrestling at Sioux Valley High School  
Boys Basketball at Sioux Falls Lutheran. JV at 3 p.m. with varsity at 4 p.m.

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

## **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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## United Methodist Church

Groton and Conde

### Sunday, December 12, 2021

Conde Worship 9:00 AM  
Sunday School - Lesson and practice Christmas Program 10:00 AM  
Groton Worship 11:00 AM

### Monday, December 13, 2021

Pastor Brandon Christmas Study 7:00 PM

### Tuesday, December 14, 2021

Conde Advent Study 7:00 PM

### Wednesday, December 15, 2021

Community Coffee Hour 9:30 AM  
Confirmation Snack Time 3:30 PM  
Sunday School Christmas Program Practice 3:30 PM  
Confirmation 4:00 PM  
Dough Holy Night 6:00 PM  
UMYF assist with Dough Holy Night 6:00 PM

### Friday, December 17, 2021

Pastor Brandon Birthday

### Sunday, December 19, 2021

Conde Worship 9:00 AM  
Sunday School Christmas Program Practice 10:00 AM  
Groton Worship with SS Christmas Program during 11:00 AM

## Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

### Sunday, Dec. 12

9am Worship  
10:15 Sunday School  
10:15 Grace Alone Study  
7:00pm Choir practice

### Monday, Dec. 13

6:30am Bible Study

### Tuesday, Dec. 14

7:00 p.m.: Council Meeting

### Wednesday, Dec. 15

6:30pm Confirmation

7:00 p.m.: League

### Thursday, Dec. 16

WELCA to pack and deliver cookies

### Friday, Dec. 17

Newsletter Deadline  
Non-Financial Reports Due

### Saturday, Dec. 18

10 a.m.: Worship at Rosewood Court

### Sunday, Dec. 19

9am Worship/Communion/  
Sunday School Christmas program  
10:15 Grace Alone Study  
3pm Avantara (Choir to serve)  
7:00pm Choir practice

## St. Elizabeth Ann Seton &

## St. Joseph Catholic

Groton and Turton

### Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday 4:30pm Groton  
Sunday 8:30am Groton & 11:00am Turton

### Weekday

Tues 5:00pm Turton, W-F 8:30am Groton  
Sat 10am Newman Center

### Confessions:

Sat. 3:45-4:15pm & Sun. 7:45am to 8:15am (G)  
Sun. 10:30-10:45am (T)

## St. John's Lutheran Church

Groton

### Sunday, Dec. 12

8 a.m.: Bible Study  
9 a.m.: St. John's worship with communion  
10 a.m.: Sunday School  
11 a.m.: Zion worship with communion

### Wednesday, Dec. 15

3:45 p.m.: Confirmation  
7 p.m.: Advent Service

### Sunday, Dec. 19

8 a.m.: Bible Study  
9 a.m.: St. John's worship with communion  
10 a.m.: Sunday School  
11 a.m.: Zion worship with communion

To submit your monthly or weekly church calendar, email to  
[news@grotonsd.net](mailto:news@grotonsd.net)



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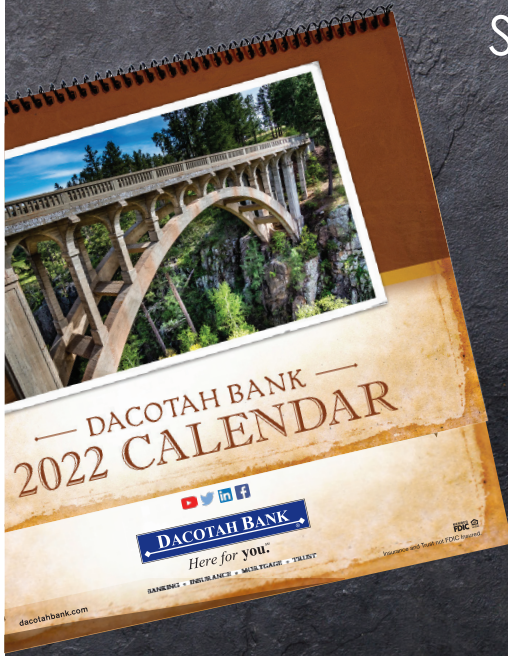
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## Three place second at LaMoure Wrestling Tourney

The Groton Area wrestling team traveled to LaMoure, N.D., on Saturday where Brevin Flihs, Christian Ehresmann and Lane Krueger all placed second place. Pierce Kettering placed third, Liza Krueger and Korbin Kucker placed fourth, Ryan Goldade fifth and Porter Johnson, Cameron Johnson and Cole Bisbee placed sixth.

### **100: Liza Krueger (0-3) placed 4th.**

Round 1 - Koltan Krumm (Linton) 1-2 won by fall over Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 0-3 (Fall 3:27)

Round 2 - Gerard Goldade (Linton) 3-0 won by fall over Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 0-3 (Fall 0:38)

Round 3 - John Loegering (LaMoure) 2-1 won by fall over Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 0-3 (Fall 0:50)

### **106JV: Walker Zoellner (3-3) placed 2nd.**

Round 2 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 3-3 won by fall over Garrett Huizenga (Linton) 0-4 (Fall 1:12)

Round 3 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 3-3 won by fall over Aidan Shea (Linton) 2-2 (Fall 4:35)

Round 4 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 3-3 won by fall over Ryan Olson (Lisbon JV) 1-3 (Fall 0:35)

Round 5 - Carson Henningsen (Ellendale/Edgeley/Kulm) 4-0 won by decision over Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 3-3 (Dec 3-2)

### **113: Porter Johnson (2-4) placed 6th and scored 4.0 team points.**

Quarterfinal - Brody Michaelsohn (South Border) 3-4 won by fall over Porter Johnson (Groton Area) 2-4 (Fall 1:16)

Cons. Round 1 - Porter Johnson (Groton Area) 2-4 received a bye ( ) (Bye)

Cons. Semi - Holter Bridwell (Linton) 6-1 won by fall over Porter Johnson (Groton Area) 2-4 (Fall 3:28)

5th Place Match - Liam Lepp (South Border) 2-2 won by forfeit over Porter Johnson (Groton Area) 2-4 (For.)

### **120: Ryan Goldade (0-4) placed 5th**

Round 1 - Jace Duffy (LaMoure) 2-2 won by fall over Ryan Goldade (Groton Area) 0-4 (Fall 0:28)

Round 2 - Ryker Vetter (South Border) 6-2 won by fall over Ryan Goldade (Groton Area) 0-4 (Fall 0:37)

Round 3 - Josiah Crandall (Central Cass) 4-0 won by fall over Ryan Goldade (Groton Area) 0-4 (Fall 0:27)

Round 5 - Tristin Schwab (Lisbon JV) 1-3 won by fall over Ryan Goldade (Groton Area) 0-4 (Fall 0:41)

### **126: Isaiah Sepaniak (1-4)**

Champ. Round 1 - Kadyn Reinke (Lisbon JV) 1-2 won by fall over Isaiah Sepaniak (Groton Area) 1-4 (Fall 2:27)

Cons. Round 1 - Fisher Johnson (Kindred) 2-4 won by fall over Isaiah Sepaniak (Groton Area) 1-4 (Fall 0:22)

### **132: Pierce Kettering (5-3) placed 3rd and scored 17.0 team points.**

Quarterfinal - Pierce Kettering (Groton Area) 5-3 won by fall over Cole Nitschke (South Border) 2-2 (Fall 2:49)

Semifinal - Tristan Lepp (South Border) 2-1 won by fall over Pierce Kettering (Groton Area) 5-3 (Fall 2:11)

Cons. Semi - Pierce Kettering (Groton Area) 5-3 won by fall over Dustin Ketterling (LaMoure) 0-3 (Fall 1:34)

3rd Place Match - Pierce Kettering (Groton Area) 5-3 won by major decision over Cole Nitschke (South Border) 2-2 (MD 11-0)

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## **138: Cameron Johnson (0-3) placed 6th.**

Quarterfinal - Brevin Fliehs (Groton Area) 4-2 won by fall over Cameron Johnson (Groton Area) 0-3 (Fall 2:22)

Cons. Round 1 - Cameron Johnson (Groton Area) 0-3 received a bye ( ) (Bye)

Cons. Semi - Drew Thorpe (Ellendale/Edgeley/Kulm) 5-4 won by fall over Cameron Johnson (Groton Area) 0-3 (Fall 0:30)

5th Place Match - Tyson Johnson (Kindred) 2-5 won by fall over Cameron Johnson (Groton Area) 0-3 (Fall 1:58)

## **138: Brevin Fliehs (4-2) placed 2nd and scored 16.0 team points.**

Quarterfinal - Brevin Fliehs (Groton Area) 4-2 won by fall over Cameron Johnson (Groton Area) 0-3 (Fall 2:22)

Semifinal - Brevin Fliehs (Groton Area) 4-2 won by decision over Carson Glaesman (South Border) 5-3 (Dec 10-5)

1st Place Match - Cade Olson-Tingelstad (Central Cass) 3-0 won by major decision over Brevin Fliehs (Groton Area) 4-2 (MD 13-2)

## **145 JV: Nick Morris (1-3) placed 2nd.**

Round 1 - Gavin Christoferson (LaMoure) 2-0 won by fall over Nick Morris (Groton Area) 1-3 (Fall 1:36)

Round 3 - Nick Morris (Groton Area) 1-3 won by fall over Jaydan Mann (South Border) 2-5 (Fall 0:41)

## **145: Christian Ehresmann (4-2) placed 2nd and scored 15.5 team points.**

Quarterfinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 4-2 won by tech fall over Lincoln Swenson (Kindred) 2-3 (TF-1.5 3:51 (19-4))

Semifinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 4-2 won by decision over Isaiah Carruth (Ellendale/Edgeley/Kulm) 5-2 (Dec 9-7)

1st Place Match - Marshall Lindgren (South Border) 7-0 won by fall over Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 4-2 (Fall 4:44)

## **152: Korbin Kucker (2-5) placed 4th and scored 3.0 team points.**

Round 1 - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 2-5 won by fall over Noah Alderin (Linton) 1-8 (Fall 3:57)

Round 2 - Jace Nitschke (South Border) 8-1 won by fall over Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 2-5 (Fall 0:34)

Round 3 - Cael Hebl (LaMoure) 2-2 won by fall over Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 2-5 (Fall 2:22)

Round 4 - Carl Tjernlund (Ellendale/Edgeley/Kulm) 6-3 won by fall over Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 2-5 (Fall 1:09)

## **170: Cole Bisbee (4-4) placed 6th and scored 6.0 team points.**

Quarterfinal - Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 4-4 won by decision over Marcus Biffert (Central Cass) 2-2 (Dec 3-1)

Semifinal - Garrett Hebl (LaMoure) 3-0 won by tech fall over Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 4-4 (TF-1.5 4:00 (19-3))

Cons. Semi - Herman Kauk (South Border) 5-5 won by fall over Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 4-4 (Fall 6:48)

5th Place Match - Marcus Biffert (Central Cass) 2-2 won by fall over Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 4-4 (Fall 4:26)

## **285: Lane Krueger (4-1) placed 2nd and scored 9.0 team points.**

Round 1 - Lane Krueger (Groton Area) 4-1 won by fall over Rhett Moch (Ellendale/Edgeley/Kulm) 0-5 (Fall 5:34)

Round 2 - Lane Krueger (Groton Area) 4-1 won in double overtime over Wyatt Weight (LaMoure) 1-2 (2-OT 8-7)

Round 3 - Shane Nitschke (South Border) 5-0 won by fall over Lane Krueger (Groton Area) 4-1 (Fall 3:32)

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## Groton boys open basketball season with win over Britton-Hecla

Groton Area's boys basketball team posted a 70-49 win over Britton-Hecla Saturday afternoon in Britton. The first quarter ended in a tie at 12, but then Groton Area took over and led 34-20 at half time and 51-33 at the end of the third quarter.

Jacob Zak led the Tigers with 13 points, six rebounds, two assists, four steals and one block. Lane Tietz added a dozen points, had four rebounds, two assists and two steals. Jayden Zak had eight points, four rebounds, one assist and two steals. Tate Larson had eight points, four rebounds, two steals and one assist. Wyatt Hearnen had eight points, six rebounds, one assist and one steal. Taylor Diegel had eight points, one rebound, one assist and three steals. Cole Simon had five points, four rebounds, three assists and two steals. Kaden Kurtz had four points, two rebounds, one assist and one steal. Cade Larson had two points. Logan Ringgenberg had one point. Holden Sippel had one point and one rebound. Dillon Abeln had one rebound and one assist.

Groton Area made 24 of 43 field goals for 56 percent, three of 19 three-pointers for 16 percent, was 13 of 19 from the line for 68 percent, had 33 rebounds, 13 turnovers, 13 assists, 19 steals and 17 team fouls.

Britton-Hecla was led by Aidan Fredrickson with 21 points followed by BoDell Davidson with 12, Gage Storley had seven, Ty Fagerland three, Luke Storley three, Dawson Treeby had two and William Schuller had one free throw. The Braves made 19 of 58 total field goals for 32 percent, was nine of 18 from the line for 50 percent, had 18 team fouls and 28 turnovers (19 of which were steals).

Groton Area won the junior varsity game, 41-22. Groton led at the quarterstops at 12-3, 20-7 and 31-12. Teylor Diegel led the Tigers with 17 points followed by Cole Simon and Colby Dunker with five apiece, Holden Sippel had four and Dillon Abeln, Turner Thompson and Logan Ringgenberg each had two points.

The varsity game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Bary Keith and Harr Motors, Allied Climate Professionals with Kevin Nehls, Groton Ford and the John Sieh Agency.



## Northern State Women Fall on the Road at Bemidji

Bemidji, Minn. – The Northern State women’s basketball team could not keep pace with hot shooting Bemidji State on Saturday night and dropped a 66-50 NSIC North division match-up.

### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 50, BSU 66

Records: NSU 6-4 (3-2 NSIC), BSU 5-4 (3-2 NSIC)

Attendance: 193

### HOW IT HAPPENED

- Just like last night’s victory at Minnesota Crookston, Northern State was able to get out to a quick 4-0 lead once again behind baskets by Rianna Fillipi and Laurie Rogers
- The Beavers shot 6-8 from 3-point range in the second quarter to bust the game open and take a 43-23 lead into halftime
- The Wolves used a 14-4 run in the fourth quarter to cut the game back to 16 points
- Northern State out-rebounded Bemidji State 50-31 in the game and held a 19-5 advantage in second chance points
- The Beavers took advantage of 17 NSU turnovers and out-scored the Wolves 26-14 in points off turnovers

### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Lexi Roe: 11 points, 11 rebounds, 2 assists, 2 steals

Jordyn Hilgemann: 9 points, 3 rebounds, 2 steals

Haley Johnson: 7 points, 6 rebounds

### UP NEXT

Northern State women’s basketball will return to Aberdeen for two home contests next weekend, as the Wolves welcome Minnesota Duluth and St. Cloud State. The Wolves and Bulldogs will tip-off at 7:30 p.m. on Friday night, and the Wolves and Huskies will tip-off at 6 p.m. on Saturday afternoon.

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## Wolves claim first NSIC road win in victory over Minnesota Crookston

Crookston, Minn. - The Northern State men's basketball program notched its first NSIC road win Friday evening with a 76-65 victory over Minnesota Crookston in Crookston, Minn. It was the Wolves' first league road win in three tries this season and kicks off a weekend road swing through Minnesota.

### QUICK HITS

Final score: Northern State 76, Minnesota Crookston 65

Records: Northern State 8-4, 2-2 NSIC; Minnesota Crookston 4-6, 1-3 NSIC

Attendance: 656

### HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern and the host Golden Eagles played see-saw basketball through the opening minutes of the night before Andrew Bergan's lone three points of the night put the Wolves ahead for good at the 10:07 mark of the half.

Still, the Wolves' lead stretched no more than two possessions until the second half when Northern opened with an 11-4 run to give itself some breathing room.

The lead stayed steady in the double-digit range for much of the remainder of the way, and the Golden Eagles could get no closer than 8 points late in the game.

Friday's win marked Northern's 19th straight over the Golden Eagles.

Sam Masten had a strong game in his return to the lineup, notching 18 points, seven rebounds, seven assists and a pair of steals to lead the way for Northern.

### STATISTICAL LEADERS

Sam Masten: 18 points, 7 rebounds, 7 assists, 2 steals

Jordan Belka: 13 points, 3 rebounds, 2 steals

Cole Bergan: 13 points, 9 rebounds, 4 assists

Jackson Moni: 13 points, 6 rebounds, 3-of-4 3-point FG



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## Wolves Down Golden Eagles 64-47

Crookston, Minn. – Besides one tie early in the first quarter, Northern State led the entire game in route to a 64-47 victory at Minnesota Crookston on Friday night. Kailee Oliverson once again led the charge for the Wolves with a game high 23 points on 9-15 shooting, hitting the 20 point mark for the third consecutive game and fourth time in the last five games.

### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 64, UMC 47

Records: NSU 6-3 (3-1 NSIC), UMC 1-9 (0-4 NSIC)

Attendance: 678

### HOW IT HAPPENED

- Two quick baskets in the paint by Kailee Oliverson and Laurie Rogers gave Northern State an early 4-0 lead to start the game
- After Minnesota Crookston tied the game at five with 6:51 remaining in the first quarter, Lexi Roe hit a 3-pointer to spark a 9-0 run and the Wolves would lead 14-6 after the first period
- The Golden Eagles cut the lead to four points at the 6:17 mark in the second quarter but Northern responded with a 13-2 run to end the half, taking a 31-16 lead into the break
- Crookston cut the lead back to single digits once again early in the third quarter after back-to-back 3-pointers by Mary Burke and Emma Carpenter sparked an 8-0 run
- Once again, the Wolves answered the UMC rally with another one of their own, this time an 11-2 run starting with an Oliverson layup and free throws
- With 3:14 remaining in the game, Roe knocked down two free throws to give NSU a 61-41 advantage and their largest lead of the game at 20 points
- A key factor in many of Northern State's wins this season, the Wolves held the advantage on the glass with 38-30 rebounding advantage and held a 32-18 lead in points in the paint

### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Kailee Oliverson: 23 points, 2 rebounds, 2 assists, 2 blocks

Lexi Roe: 12 points, 5 rebounds, 2 assists

Rianna Fillipi: 9 points, 7 rebounds, 7 assists, 5 steals

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## Northern men complete weekend sweep with win over Bemidji

Aberdeen, S.D. - Jacksen Moni hit seven treys and finished with 23 points and eight rebounds to propel the Northern State men's basketball program to an 83-68 win over Bemidji State Saturday afternoon in Bemidji, Minn. The victory capped a weekend road swing for the Wolves, their first full NSIC road weekend of the season. Northern has now won three straight and five of its last six games.

### QUICK HITS

Final score: Northern State 83, Bemidji State 68

Records: Northern State 9-4, 3-2 NSIC; Bemidji State 4-5, 1-4 NSIC

Attendance: 178

### HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern was nearly lights out from long range in Saturday's contest, as more than half of its made field goals came from beyond the arc. The Wolves were 16 of 39 from 3-point range and 30 of 62 overall from the floor.

Jacksen Moni was the ringleader of that effort, going 7 of 12 from long range. Augustin Reede hit 4 of 6 attempts and Kobe Busch was 2 of 5.

Conversely, the host Beavers were just 8 of 20 from long range, the bulk of which came from Travis Bianco and Tyler Behrendt, who combined for seven of those eight made 3-pointers.

Northern also forced Bemidji State into 20 total turnovers, converting them into 23 total points.

Bemidji State had eight offensive rebounds in the game, but just eight second-chance points, while Northern turned its six offensive boards into 10 points.

### STATISTICAL LEADERS

Jacksen Moni: 23 points, 8 rebounds, 3 assists, 1 block, 1 steal, 7-for-12 on 3-point FG

Sam Masten: 13 points, 4 rebounds, 5 assists, 1 steal

Augustin Reede: 12 points, 4-for-6 on 3-point FG

### UP NEXT

Northern is home next weekend to host Minnesota Duluth on Friday and St. Cloud State on Saturday.



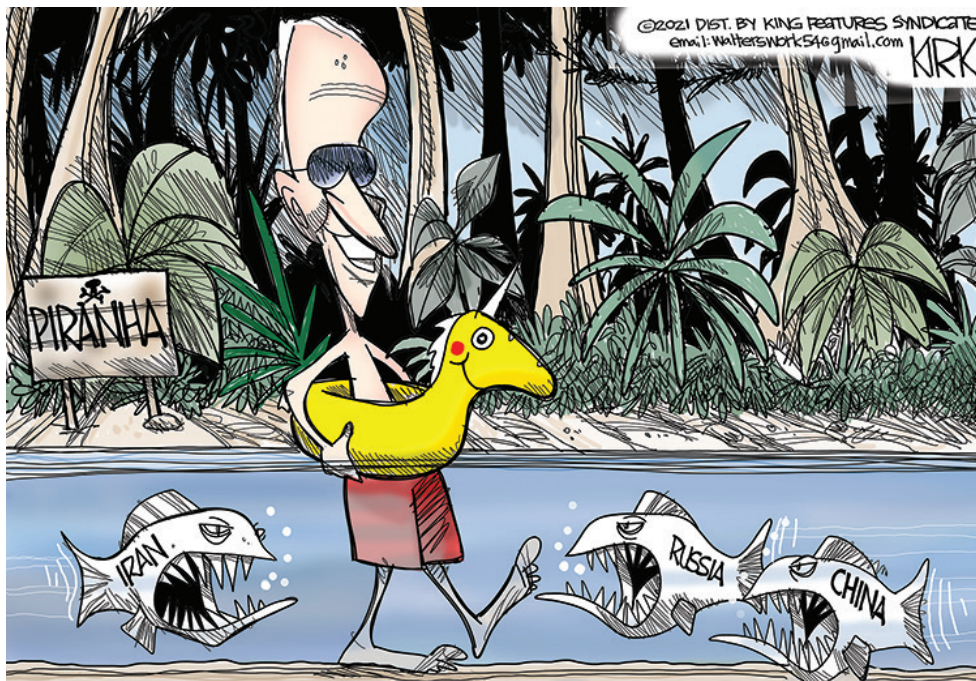
## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



*Biblische Geschichte, Germany (1859)*

Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. LUKE 2:4-7 📖

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## BIBLE TRIVIA by Wilson Casey

1. The main Christmas story about the birth of Jesus is paraphrased from what two New Testament books? *Mark/John, Acts/Romans, Matthew/Luke, Jude/Revelation*

2. Approximately how old was Jesus when the wise men (Magi) arrived with their gifts? *1 day, 2 weeks, 2 months, 2 years*

3. Where did the angel Gabriel appear to Mary, saying, "Blessed art thou among women"? *Nazareth, Tyre, Ninevah, Gazi*

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

5. In what city of Judaea was Jesus born? *Damascus, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Gezer*

6. Who plotted to kill the baby Jesus? *Archelaus, Herod, Pontius Pilot, Caesar Augustus*

ANSWERS: 1) Matthew/Luke; 2) 2 years; 3) Nazareth; 4) Zero; 5) Bethlehem; 6) Herod

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

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## Amaretto Macaroon Cheesecake

If you're hosting Christmas at your home this year, here's a very special, yet very festive and traditional recipe. Happy Healthy Holidays to you and your loved ones!

- 2 (8-ounce) packages fat-free cream cheese
- 1 (4-serving) package sugar-free instant vanilla pudding mix
- 2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 cup reduced-calorie whipped topping
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 teaspoon coconut extract
- 1 (6-ounce) purchased shortbread piecrust
- 1/4 cup flaked coconut
- 1/4 cup slivered almonds

1. In a large bowl, stir cream cheese with a spoon until soft. Add dry pudding mix, dry milk powder and water. Mix well using a wire whisk. Blend in whipped topping, almond extract and coconut extract. Spread mixture into piecrust.

2. In a small skillet sprayed with butter-flavored cooking spray, lightly toast coconut and almonds over medium heat. Sprinkle mixture evenly over top of filling. Refrigerate at least 1 hour. Makes 8 servings.

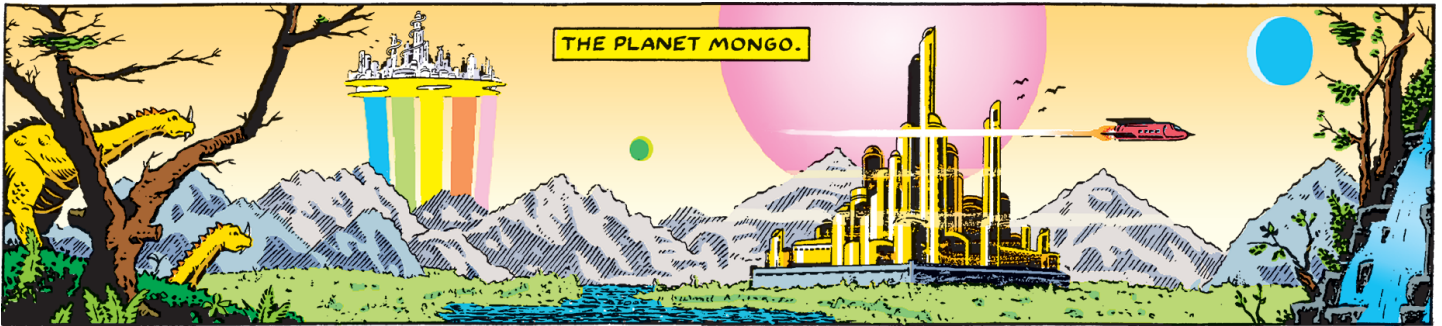
\* Each serving equals: 223 calories, 7g fat, 12g protein, 28g carb., 572mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 1/2 Starch, 1 Meat, 1 Fat.

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## FLASH GORDON

By JIM KEEFE

12-5

**K**ING RONAL LEADS FLASH THROUGH A LABYRINTH OF CONCEALED PASSAGeways THROUGHOUT THE CASTLE.



JUST BEFORE THE KRONATORS ATTACKED, CAPTAIN LONAK LED A RECONNAISSANCE MISSION INTO THEIR TERRITORY...



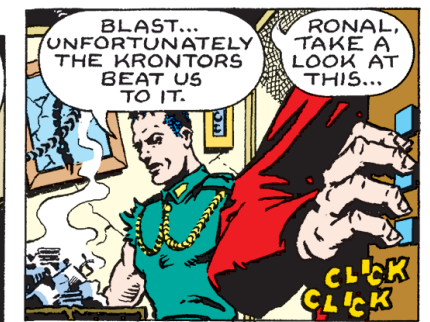
"...HE REPORTED BACK THAT THEIR NUMBERS HAD BEEN GROWING AND IT WAS IMPERATIVE WE THIN THE HERD BEFORE THEY BEGAN TO POSE A THREAT."

"BELIEVING THE KRONATORS TO BE INTELLIGENT CREATURES, I DISMISSED HIS RECOMMENDATION AS AKIN TO GENOCIDE... MUCH TO HIS CHAGRIN."



DO YOU THINK THEIR ATTACK HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THAT LAST RECONNAISSANCE MISSION?

WE'LL SOON SEE. THIS IS CAPTAIN LONAK'S QUARTERS. IT CONTAINS ALL HIS MISSION LOGS.



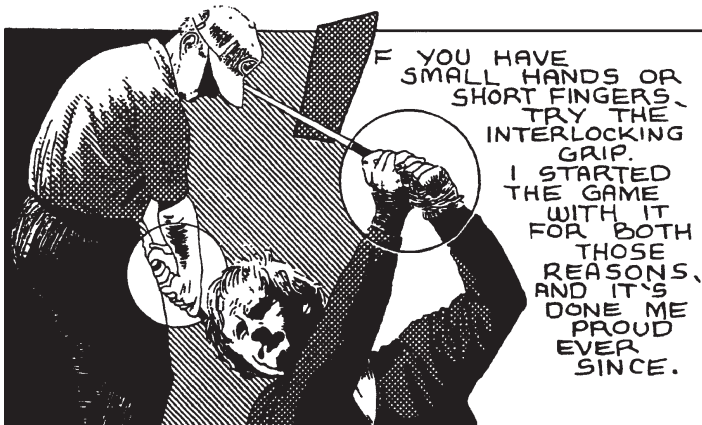
BLAST... UNFORTUNATELY THE KRONATORS BEAT US TO IT.

RONAL, TAKE A LOOK AT THIS...

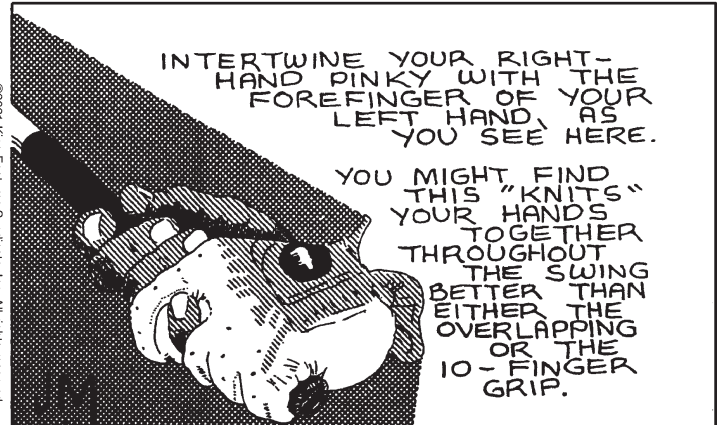


LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WITH AN AFFINITY FOR SECRET PASSAGeways.

## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

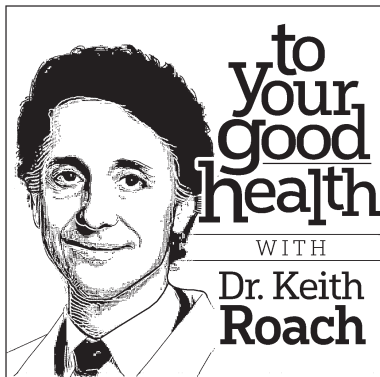


IF YOU HAVE SMALL HANDS OR SHORT FINGERS, TRY THE INTERLOCKING GRIP. I STARTED THE GAME WITH IT FOR BOTH THOSE REASONS, AND IT'S DONE ME PROUD EVER SINCE.



INTERTWINE YOUR RIGHT-HAND PINKY WITH THE FOREFINGER OF YOUR LEFT HAND, AS YOU SEE HERE.

YOU MIGHT FIND THIS "KNITS" YOUR HANDS TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE SWING BETTER THAN EITHER THE OVERLAPPING OR THE 10-FINGER GRIP.



## Dumping Syndrome and Obesity

---

DEAR DR. ROACH: A friend was given a test to see how long food stayed in her stomach after eating. She was told that it stayed only a short time before continuing its journey, a much shorter time than the average person. This was given as a reason for her obesity, that she experienced hunger sooner than most people.

Does this really happen, and is there a way for her to manage it so that she can lose weight? -- G.J.

ANSWER: A gastric emptying study is usually used to look for delayed gastric emptying, also called gastroparesis. It can be the result of several different types of nerve diseases, but especially diabetes. An abnormally rapid gastric emptying is also called dumping syndrome, and is often a problem after some types of gastric bypass surgeries.

I did find a paper from the 1980s suggesting that obese people have shorter gastric emptying times. This was confirmed in a trial from 2015 looking at the diabetes drug exenatide (Byetta), which is sometimes used to help people lose weight, even if they do not have diabetes. Interestingly, exenatide was more likely to cause people to lose weight if they had faster gastric emptying times.

I do not mean to suggest that fast gastric emptying is the only reason for your friend's (or anyone else's) weight problems. Obesity is a complex problem with no single cause or solution in most people. I am glad you wrote. I did not know about this research before, and it may be worth it for your friend to discuss a trial of exenatide with her doctor.

\*\*\*

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have thin skin on my arms and lower legs due to aging, sun damage and blood thinner (warfarin). My skin is constantly bruised and unattractive. Is there a body lotion you can recommend to help reduce the impact of trauma to my skin? The slightest "thump" leaves its trace. I'm very active, so I always look as if I've been in a wrestling match and lost! -- J.M.A.

ANSWER: Easy bruising is a common problem with many potential causes. Warfarin, which prevents the body from making some blood clotting proteins, is certainly a cause, but many older adults have this problem. Occasionally it can be a serious issue, so it is worth a discussion with your doctor, who may get some blood tests to help eliminate concern of leukemia and von Willebrand's disease, among other diagnoses. Fortunately, it's much more common for problems to be benign.

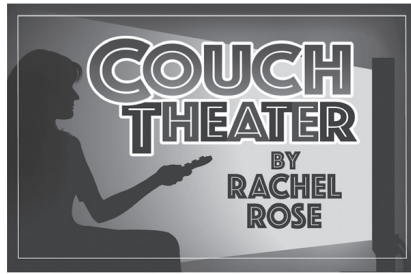
As people age, they do get drier, thinner skin, which can bruise more easily. If your bruises are found most often on the tops of your forearms, that's a common place for senile purpura. "Senile," in a medical context, just means older. The term "senile dementia," a nonspecific term formerly used to mean Alzheimer's disease, was sometimes shortened incorrectly to "senile." "Purpura" are dark, purple/brown marks on the skin.

If there is no specific cause for the bruising, and the appearance of the skin is consistent with senile purpura, then this advice may be helpful: Keeping the skin out of the sun can prevent future damage. Regular moisturizers can help with dry skin. An oral supplement of bioflavonoids was successful in one study. For more severe cases, some dermatologists use topical vitamin A derivatives to combat the skin atrophy (these are by prescription).

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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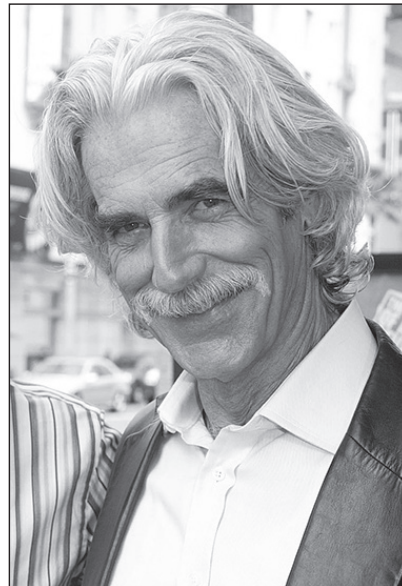
**1883** — Sam Elliott’s glorious mustache needed a new project, so it was cast in this prequel to the wildly popular “Yellowstone” series. A Paramount+ Original series, “1883” is the story of the Dutton family’s own attempt at manifest destiny as they traverse the Great Plains with hopes of a better life in Montana. The road west was a journey of adventure and wonder, and of danger, death and despair. With its grand, expansive scenery and movie-quality score, this show has a real “Dances With Wolves” feel. The main cast also includes Tim McGraw, Faith Hill, Billy Bob Thornton and Isabel May. (Paramount+)

**Selling Tampa** — Of all the cities in all the land, it is perplexing why the spinoff to the popular “Selling Sunset” series features The Lightning Capital of the World, the city with more strip clubs per capita than Publix supermarkets, the city with Florida’s worst beaches ... Tampa. Surely other contenders for the franchise offered more stunning vistas with loftier price tags. But what this Southern cast does offer is an all-female, all-Black real-estate agency, which is a nice change from the plastic blond bombshells lorded over by male owners of the LA cast. The eight episodes drop Dec. 15. (Netflix)

**Ron’s Gone Wrong** (PG) — Kids in the 1980s fantasized that their Teddy Ruxpin bear could actually come alive and be a real friend. Disney has modernized this fantasy with an animated story about B-Bots, which are cute, tic-tac-shaped, digitally connected best friends for kids. All the cool kids have one, so main character Barney begs his dad for a B-Bot of his own. But something is amiss with his bot, Ron (voiced by Zach Galifianakis), who doesn’t quite behave like the other bots. A series of hilarious personality malfunctions proves he requires very literal instruction on

everything from proper language to personal safety. Amid the cute mishaps and hijinks is an underlying message about social media dependence and the danger of toxic relationships. (Disney+)

**Finding Magic Mike** — A bunch of guys from across America who have lost their personal magic converge to learn the enchanting moves of Las Vegas’s hottest stage show. In other words, dudes with dad bods want to be strippers. This competition reality show from executive producer Channing Tatum attempts to find a “real” Magic Mike, who will earn a wad of cash along with that title. (HBOMax)



Paramount+

Sam Elliott

**My Dream Kitchen: Giada DeLaurentis and “My Dream Kitchen: Carla Hall”** — Two separate episodes drop Dec. 18, combining a healthy portion of house renovation with a pinch of cooking talk. The two celebrity chefs each tackle constructing their dream kitchens in their personal homes, DeLaurentis in her LA-area mid-century house, and Hall in her longtime D.C. home that she shares with her husband (though they don’t share the same kitchen vision). As per usual, unexpected delays and supply-chain snafus snarl each project, but the big reveals make everything worth the effort. (Discovery+)

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15 weeks on the Billboard Hot 100.

2. The Tymes, in 1975. The song was a hit in the U.K. while not getting much notice in the U.S. -- until it was discovered by Carolina beach shag dancers and became a popular staple.
3. None. "Down in the Boondocks," however, reached No. 1 in Canada.
4. The Go-Go's, the only female group to write their own material and play their own instruments.
5. "Doctor, My Eyes," by Jackson Browne in 1972. The song was written with a third verse that wasn't recorded but can be found on bootleg copies of the demo.

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1. Who first released "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me," and when?
2. Name the group that had a hit with "Ms. Grace."
3. How many Billy Joe Royal songs topped the charts in the U.S.?
4. Belinda Carlisle was the lead singer for which band?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Cause I have wandered through this world, And as each moment has unfurled, I've been waiting to awaken from these dreams."

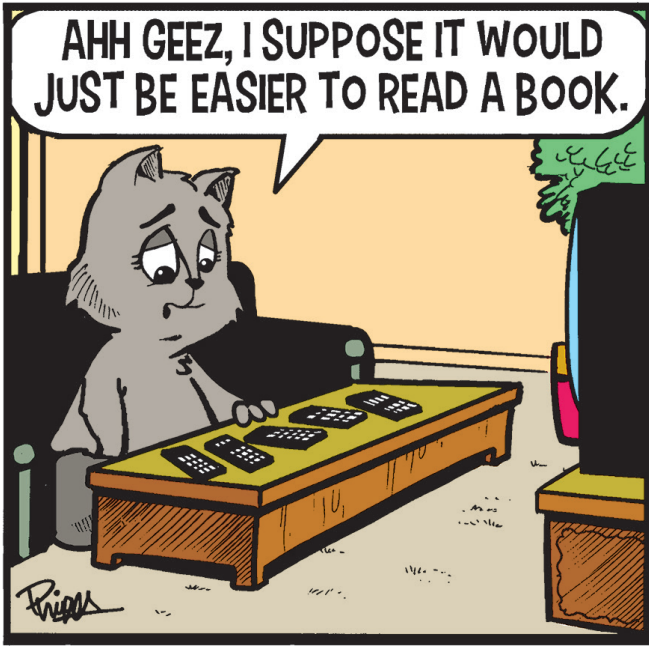
#### Answers

1. Karen Chandler, in 1952. However, it was Mel Carter's 1965 cover that topped the charts, spending

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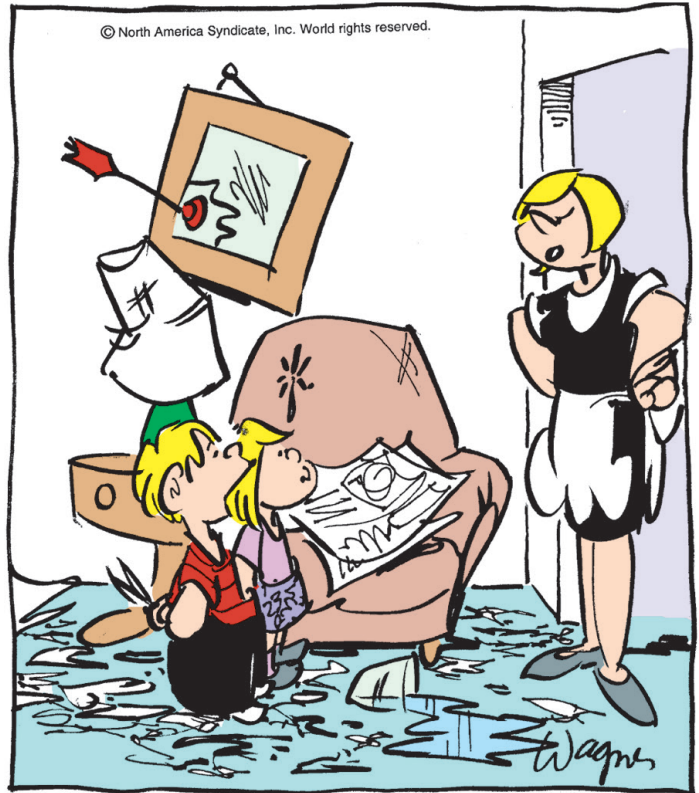
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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



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



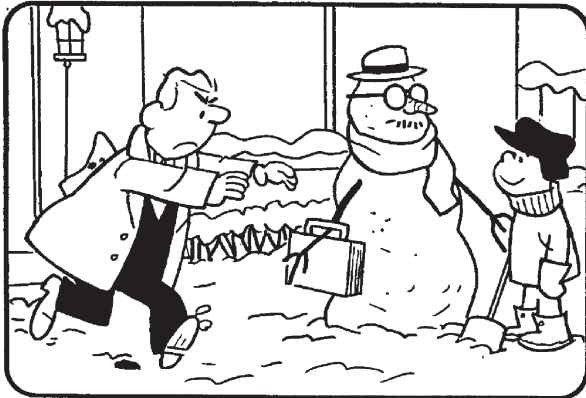
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Wagner

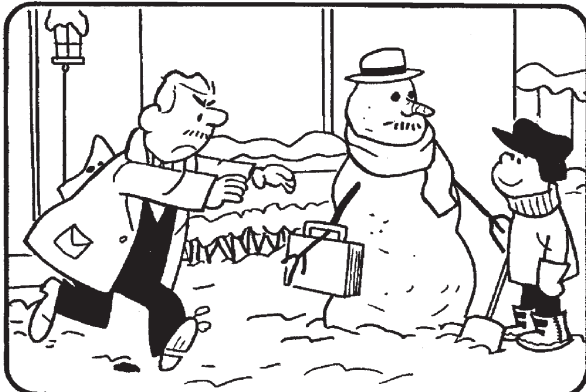
"Santa doesn't have to know about this, does he, Mom?"

### HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Mustache is added. 2. Glasses are removed. 3. Boots are different. 4. Pocket is added. 5. Pants are different. 6. Button is missing.

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- Save the peel on oranges and grapefruits. You can toss them on a fire for a nice smell.

- Fold and snip a coffee filter into a paper snowflake. Lay over an iced cookie or cake to sift a sugar design on top.

- “When planning to visit my hometown for the holidays, I set aside a few hours to take the kids to the park or a nice playground. I message all my old friends and classmates with kids (Facebook is great for this) a few weeks ahead of time and let them know when I’ll be there. It’s great to catch up while the kids play, and even if no one shows up, we still have a fun break.” — *F.L. in California*

- “When there are big family jobs to be done (like getting ready for the holidays), we write all the tasks down on slips of paper and put them in a hat. We take turns choosing tasks until all the paper is divvied out. Sometimes we trade, but we all get a fair chore

list.” — *V.O. in Oregon*

- Make a holiday cheese ball simply: Combine a package of cream cheese with a cup of finely shredded cheese (your choice) and 1/3 cup sour cream or plain Greek yogurt. Form into a ball, roll in coating of your choice (dried fruit pieces, chopped nuts, spices, etc.) and chill. Wrap in a pretty cellophane bag and bring with pita chips, crackers or pretzels as a hostess gift.

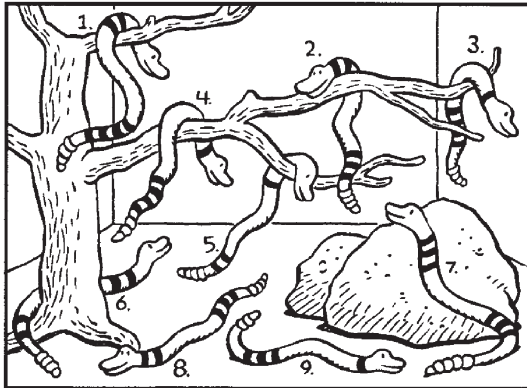
- “Wax drippings from candles can be scraped off of most hard surfaces with the side of a credit card.” — *T.E. in Kansas*

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

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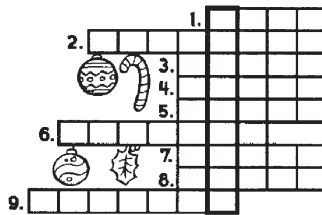
**SNAKES ALIVE!** Two of the above slinky serpents are exactly alike. Can you find them in 30 seconds?

Answer: Snakes 2 and 8.

## Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

THE BIG DAY IS ALMOST HERE!



Soon Santa will be racing the morning sun around the world. In our grid, we have room for nine words associated with Santa. The following hints should help:

1. Santa goes up the chimney when he lays his finger next to his ...?
2. Santa's other name.
3. Santa would never go to his house.
4. Santa's presents end up here.
5. Santa's physical description.
6. Santa's most important helper.
7. Santa's disposition.
8. Santa's associates.
9. Santa's other last name.

There is a dark frame around one of the columns in our grid. If you correctly solve the puzzle, the letters in the frame, top to bottom, will spell out Santa's last stop on Christmas Day.

Answers: 1. Nose. 2. Nicholas. 3. Grinch. 4. Stocking. 5. Chubby. 6. Rudolph. 7. Jolly. 8. Elves. 9. Kringle. The dark-framed column spells "North Pole."

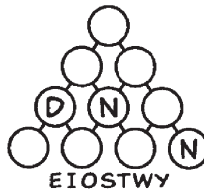
Illustrated by David Coulson

**SEE IF YOU CAN** make this math expression correct by rearranging the nine digits to the left of the equal sign. The two new numbers can include fractions.

$$1\ 2\ 3\ 4 + 5\ 6\ 7\ 8\ 9 = 100$$

Our answer is:  $47\ 3/6 + 52\ 9/18 = (47\ 1/2 + 52\ 1/2 = 100)$ .

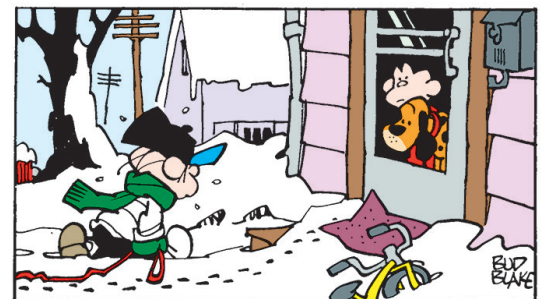
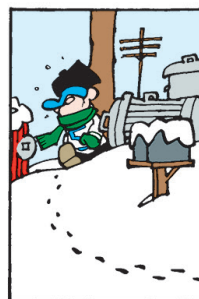
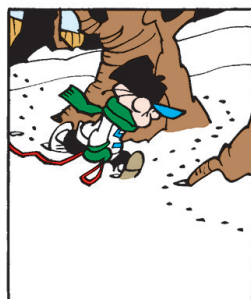
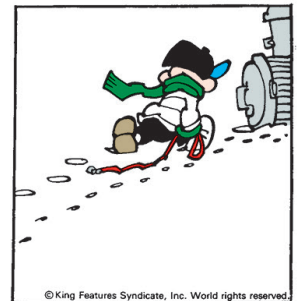
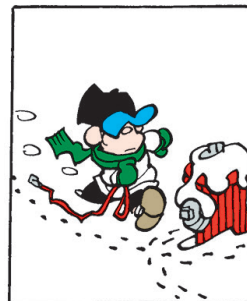
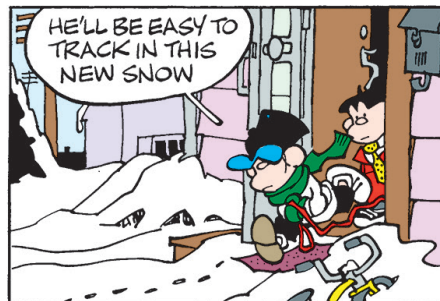
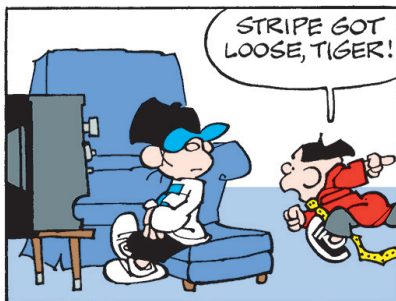
**CHAIN REACTION!** Take the seven letters printed below our diagram and place them in the circles so that eight four-letter words can be read, top to bottom, along the connecting lines. All the words will begin with the letter in the top circle.



Answers: top to bottom, left to right: tidy, tide, line, tins, tone, tons, towns.

## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



BUD BLAKE

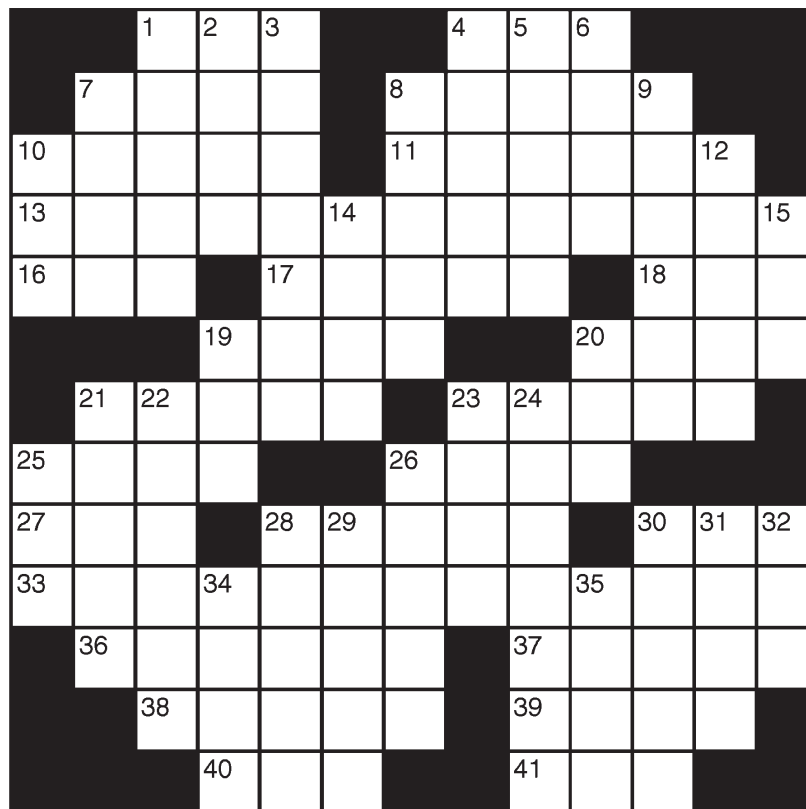
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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 PC port
- 4 Roast VIPs
- 7 — cheese dressing
- 8 Some tides
- 10 Coffee-break hr.
- 11 Mistakes in print
- 13 Mitch Hedberg and Margaret Cho, for two
- 16 Standard
- 17 Cyber-commerce
- 18 To and —
- 19 Greet
- 20 "Roots" author Haley
- 21 Racing shell
- 23 Red-tag events
- 25 Poker variety
- 26 \$ dispensers
- 27 1040 org.
- 28 Mideast pen-insula
- 30 Mimic
- 33 "Don't slouch!"
- 36 Spud
- 37 Thin nails
- 38 Brick worker
- 39 Used car sites
- 40 Med. plan option



- 25 Venus, to Serena
- 26 Playwright Chekhov
- 28 Tic
- 29 "Life — short ..."
- 30 Marble type
- 31 Profs' degrees
- 32 UFO crew
- 34 Hexagonal state
- 35 Press agent?

### DOWN

- 1 Of an arm bone
- 2 Writer O'Casey
- 3 Unfair treatment
- 4 "Thank you, Henri"
- 5 Yule tune
- 6 Pesky email
- 7 Alpha follower
- 8 Himalayan
- 9 Repress
- 10 Recipe abbr.
- 12 Farm units
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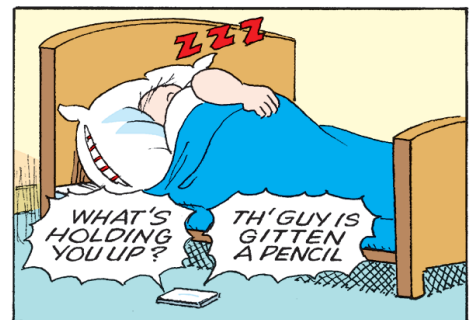
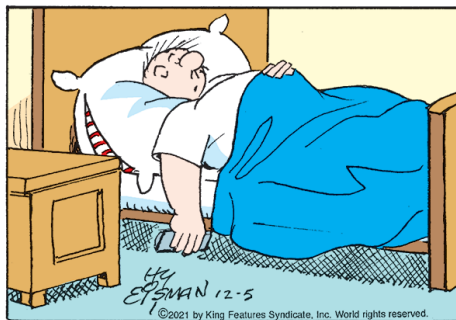
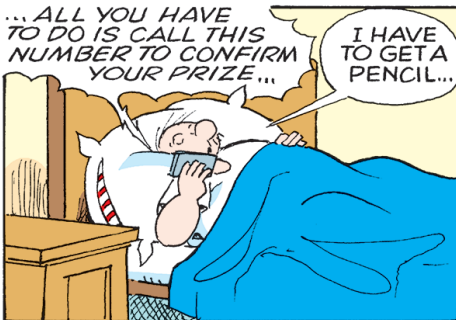
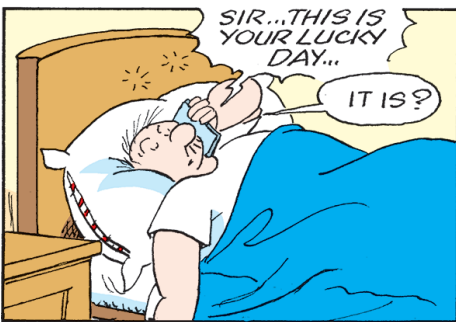
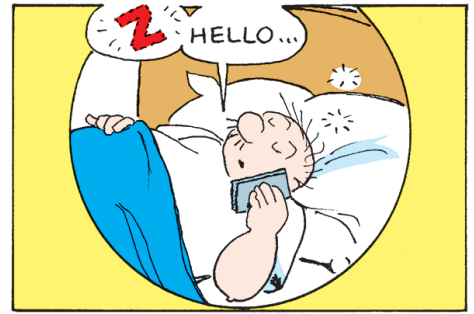
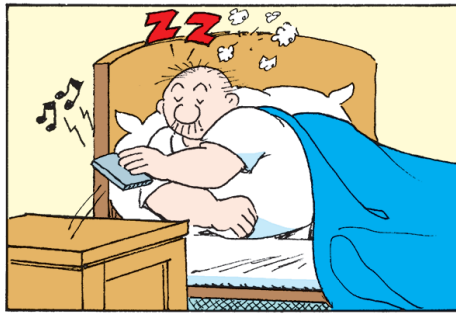
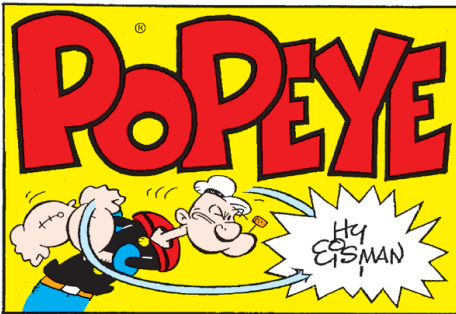
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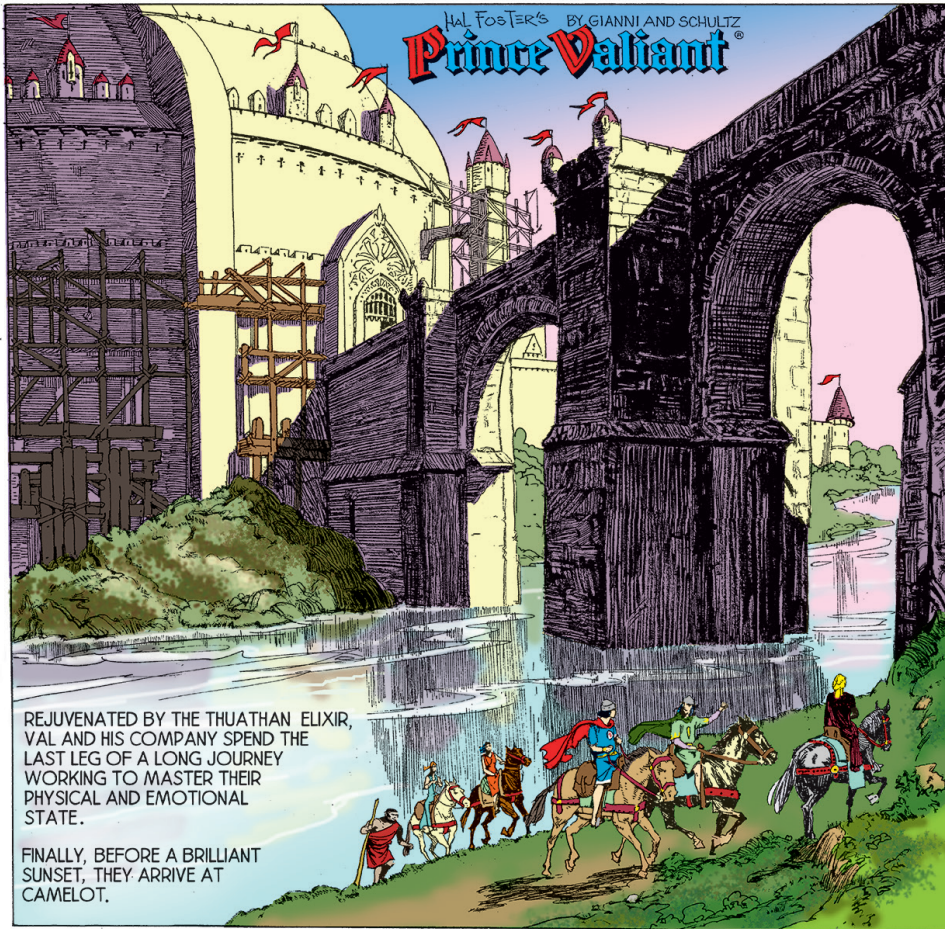
## R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



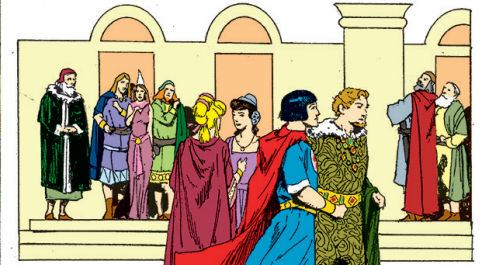
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REGENT ARN'S REACTION IS ONE OF UNBRIDLED JOY. HE FEARED HE WOULD NEVER SEE HIS MOTHER AGAIN.

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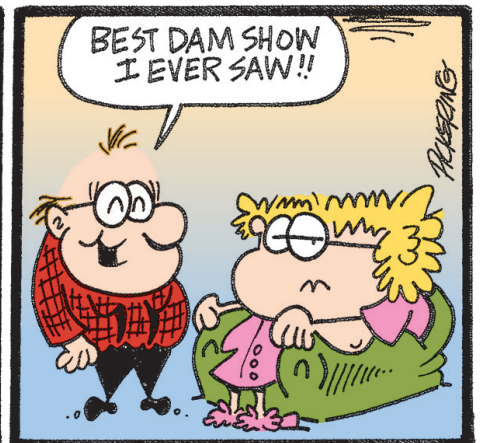
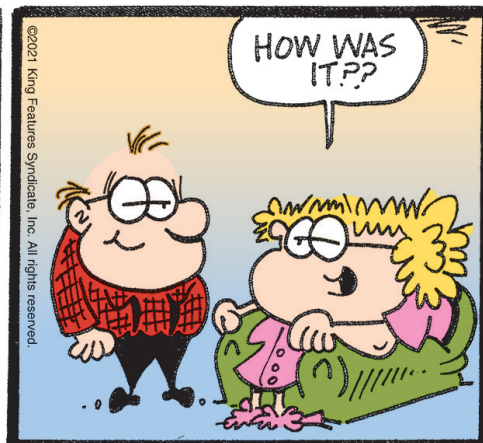
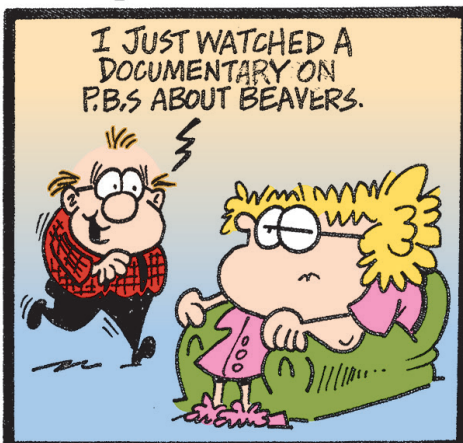


BUT HE HAS POINTED WORDS FOR HIS FATHER: "YOU ARE UNPOPULAR HERE, PERHAPS YOU SHOULD HAVE PROLONGED YOUR ABSENCE..."

NEXT:  
Ig's decision

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Christmas Dinner Happens on the Sly

The annual Christmas dinner at the senior center was a wonderful event, mostly because it didn't happen at all.

The original plan — seniors sitting in a cold parking lot outside the center to eat food that would stay hot for maybe one minute — was ditched by means of a petition to board members. That petition mentioned the absolute folly of the whole outdoor dining idea. The board's second plan was to host the dinner indoors, but for only one-third the number of guests, with clear Plexiglas shields on the tables, which would interfere with conversation.

There was a snap, an awakening, an audible collective click — and the seniors said NO.

The former recreation-center supervisor, who had quit after too many snarling meetings about yoga classes masked versus unmasked, was brought

back to open the rec center. He'd fled to his cabin in the woods, tossing the keys to others, to sit out the insanity, at which point the town changed the locks. Once brought back, he quickly jimmied open the rec center door and installed a new lock, smiling the whole time.

Organizers came together in secret with not a word said to senior-center board members (or the town council). Tables and chairs were borrowed. One of the town's finer restaurants (the owner himself a senior) was coaxed into providing finger foods and drinks and two bartenders. A half dozen seniors who were in a band years ago regrouped to provide the music and play songs we actually knew.

The annual Christmas dinner turned dance party was a major hit, and just what we needed after this long pandemic lockdown. We ate and we mingled and we drank and we laughed and we danced. And long after what should have been bedtime for most of us, we were still there dancing.

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1. In 1999, Ray Rhodes compiled a record of 8-8 in his only season as head coach of what NFL team?

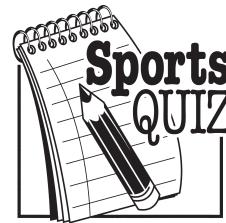
2. Name the NHL player from Sweden who served as captain of the Ottawa Senators from 1999-2013.

3. What punch — illegal in most combat sports — is a blow to the back of the head or neck, or the base of the skull?

4. Who scored 47 points to lead the Texas Tech Lady Raiders to an 84-82 win versus Ohio State in the 1993 NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament championship game?

5. What university's basketball arena has an unoccupied seat reserved in honor of coaching legend Henry Iba?

6. What is the name of the slow, high-arcing, off-speed pitch developed in the 1940s by Pittsburgh Pirates righthander Rip Sewell?



by Ryan A. Berenz

7. Name the Basketball Hall of Famer from Serbia who had his No. 21 jersey retired by the Sacramento Kings.

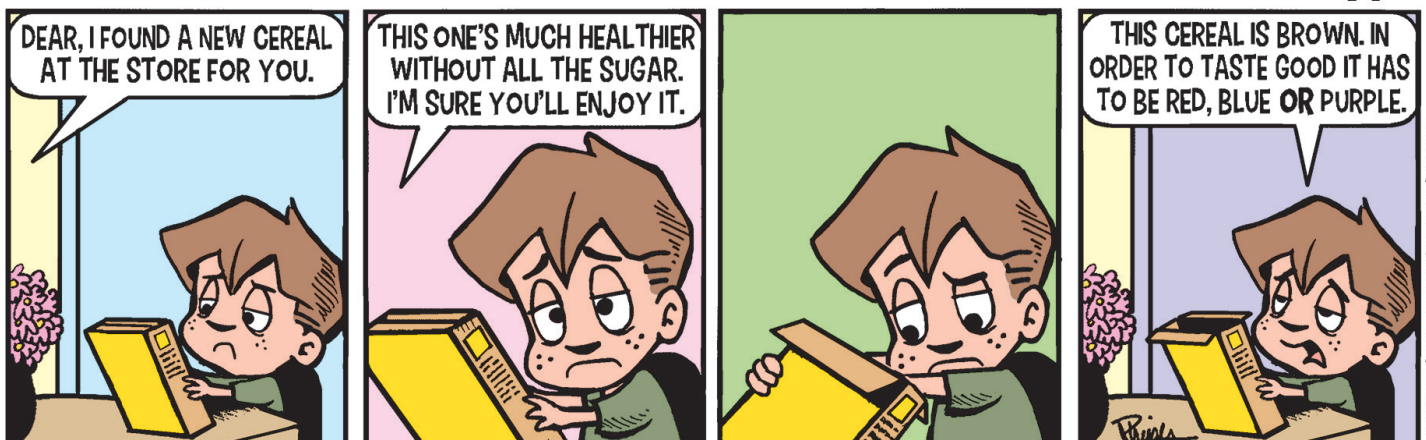
## Answers

1. The Green Bay Packers.
2. Daniel Alfredsson.
3. A rabbit punch.
4. Sheryl Swoopes.
5. Oklahoma State University.
6. The Eephus pitch.
7. Vlade Divac.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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## Visiting Yap Dog Ruins Holidays

**DEAR PAW'S CORNER:** My sister-in-law insists on bringing her yappy, ill-tempered lap dog, "Mitsi," to our house every Christmas through New Year's. Mitsi gets along with no one but her owner, frightens our two cats and barks at everyone in the house during dinner, nonstop. I love having my brother and his wife over, but Mitsi is making things hellish. How can I politely ask her to leave Mitsi in a kennel during visits? — Barked Out in Birmingham

**DEAR BARKED OUT:** I don't know that there's a way to tell your sister-in-law to leave her dog at home that would be taken well. Mitsi clearly is a full member of their family and travels with her.

Can a compromise be reached

instead? Ask her if Mitsi can be placed in a separate room during mealtimes while they are visiting. She'll probably still bark, but at least it won't be right in your ear.

You also need to discuss how Mitsi is stressing out the cats. Sometimes people think it's funny when a visiting dog chases the family pets around, but it's not fun for those pets. It's like having a schoolyard bully walk right into your home. Try to keep the discussion civil.

Ultimately, you'll have to decide what level of compromise to ask for in order to keep peace in your house, and you'll have to be firm. Your sister-in-law takes her relationship with her dog seriously; she should respect your concerns as well. That discussion probably won't be comfortable, but if Mitsi's barking and bullying are making the holidays a living hell, you need to speak up.

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

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## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

mates so they don't get eaten.

\* "Mbuki-mvuki" is a Bantu word for the irresistible urge to strip off your clothes while dancing.

\* In 2002, Saddam Hussein's campaign theme song for re-election was Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You."

\* For a single day in August 1998 and another in October 2018, Topeka, Kansas, renamed itself "ToPi-kachu" to mark the release of different Pokemon games.

\* Pule, the world's rarest cheese, is made from donkey milk, something that was widely believed impossible since the liquid doesn't coagulate. However, Serbian cheesemaker Slobodan Simic discovered a solution and now sells his cheese for over \$500 per pound.

\* The Saturday falling closest to April 1 is International Tom Hanks Day.

\* MLB pitcher Turk Wendell, "baseball's favorite oddball," would not only brush his teeth every inning, but at the start of same, would turn and wave to the center fielder and wait for him to wave back before proceeding.

\* There are more English speakers in China than in the United States.

\* In 1994, a man was arrested for dressing as the Grim Reaper and standing and staring into the windows of a home for the elderly.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "The best teacher in the world is someone who loves what he or she does, and just loves it in front of you." -- Fred Rogers

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\* In Germany, you are allowed to drive your car naked, but not get out of it naked.

\* A high-school principal once disciplined a student by making him sit in the basement while reading the U.S. Constitution. The punishment must have taken effect, because said student (who also memorized parts of the document) was Thurgood Marshall, who grew up to become the first Black Supreme Court justice.

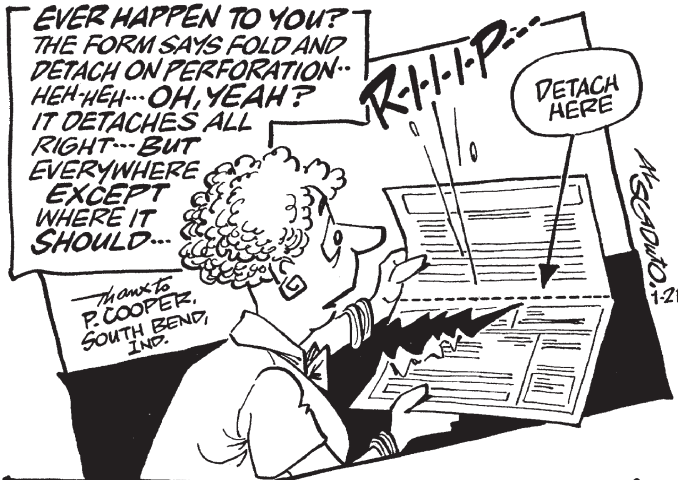
\* Male orb-weaver spiders give back rubs to their



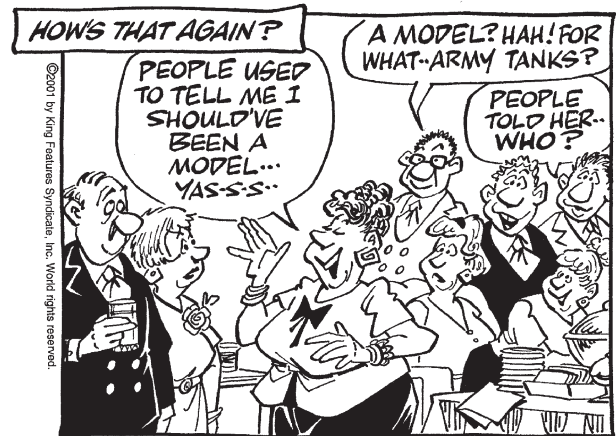
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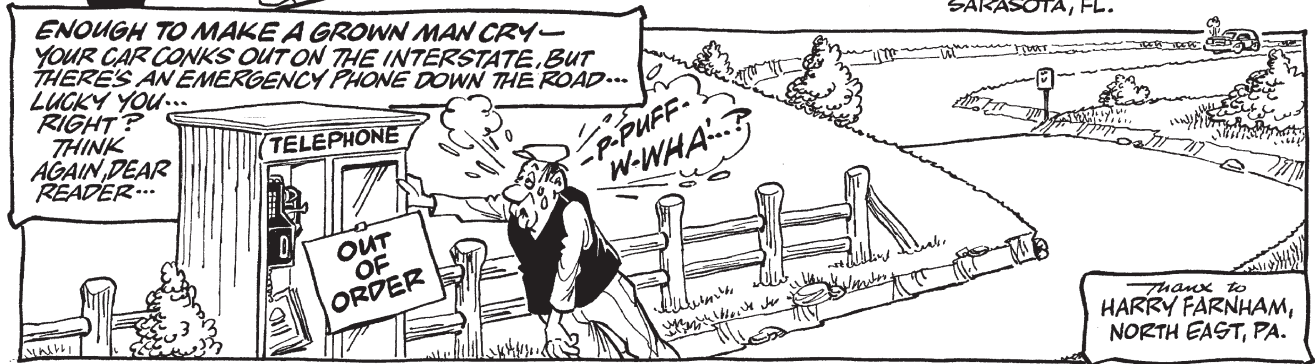
## THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME



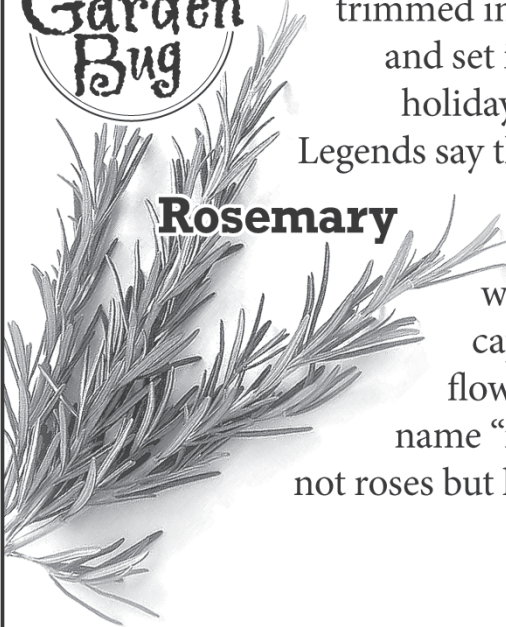
## BY AL SCADUTO



Thanks to DEL BIXLER, 716 W. LAKE CIRCLE, SARASOTA, FL.



The Garden Bug



### Rosemary

This herb has many uses and traditions. When trimmed into the shape of a tiny Christmas tree and set in a festive pot, it is very popular as a holiday table decoration, or to give as a gift.

Legends say that as Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt with the infant Jesus, they sheltered next to this plant. When Mary was washing her linens and threw her blue cape on the bush to dry, its small white flowers turned to blue; thus it gained the name "rose of Mary," though the flowers are not roses but like those of mint, to which this herb is related. - Brenda Weaver

Source: University of Vermont pss.uvm.edu

## VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

### Veterans Village Opens

We were all there the day Veterans Village officially opened: Sarge, the older veterans brought out in a van borrowed from the senior center, the dormitory crew and even the mayor came, along with a few members of the press and a photographer.

The gravel road had been smoothed, several lots had been cleared and two tiny homes had been installed, complete with a few shrubs and potted flowers next to the steps of both homes. A communal brick barbecue grill, surrounded by a concrete patio and lawn chairs, had been inaugurated into its first service to cook piles of burgers and hot dogs. Voluntary Services up at the Department of Veterans Affairs hospital had sent baskets of household stuff like dinnerware and detergent to get the two veterans started. And Sarge's granddaughter had skipped school to be there and to sing "America the Beautiful" as part of the opening ceremony.

opening ceremony.

And it was a ceremony. Short speeches were given by those who had never done any of the work, but David, the homeless veteran whose idea Veterans Village had been, gave the shortest speech of all. He merely turned to the two veterans who would now live there and said, "Welcome home."

With input from social services in town, a list of other interested veterans had quickly grown, leaving Sarge and David to wonder just how many homeless veterans there were in town.

"This could end up being pretty big, almost beyond my capabilities," David said later, looking around the acreage, his voice shaky until he felt Sarge's hand on his shoulder.

David took a deep breath and let it out. "OK, I guess I better hustle up a few more homes," he said, pulling a folded site plan out of his back pocket and a pencil from behind his ear.

Sarge smiled, patted David's shoulder and sauntered over to the grill to grab a burger before they were all gone.

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



## Getting It Done

There's a classic narrative that nothing gets accomplished in Washington. I'll admit there's a lot of disfunction in government, but this week that wasn't the case.

The end of the year is a busy time for most folks-- from college finals to end of year budgets, project deadlines and Christmas shopping – it's crunch time. It's similar in Congress. After months of work and collaboration, two of my bills passed the U.S. House this week.

The Ocean Shipping Reform Act (OSRA) that I led with Representative John Garamendi to hold foreign ocean shippers accountable passed the House 364-60. This bipartisan bill is the biggest overhaul of federal maritime policy in 30 years to address the ongoing supply chain crisis and will safeguard South Dakota agriculture exporters from unfair trade practices like we are seeing at U.S. ports today.

South Dakota businesses from Strider Bikes in Rapid City to Valley Queen Cheese in Milbank are experiencing port delays, equipment access issues, and declined bookings. These delays have a negative impact on our local economy. More than 2 million pounds of South Dakota lactose that's been sold and is ready to ship is sitting in Valley Queen's warehouse waiting for an empty container to become available. On top of that, the National Milk Producers Federation estimates that export supply chain challenges cost the U.S. dairy sector nearly \$1 billion in only six months.

My bill provides a solution to these problems, and I am confident it will get quick consideration in the Senate.

The Cattle Contract Library Act also passed the House on Wednesday. Currently, cattlemen are unaware of contract terms being offered by packers, leading to a decline in leverage for smaller producers during price negotiations.

Since I came to Congress, producers have made it clear they want transparency. The Cattle Contract Library provides just that and increases competition in an industry that desperately needs it. While no single piece of legislation can solve all problems, it can certainly help. Getting this bill across the finish line was a team effort, and I'm grateful to all of the producers that helped get this done.

I'm a policy guy, so I was encouraged to see a number of victories and real policies pass the House this week. Some might call it a Christmas miracle.

The work is not done though, but I will keep working to get both pieces of my legislation across the finish line in the Senate.

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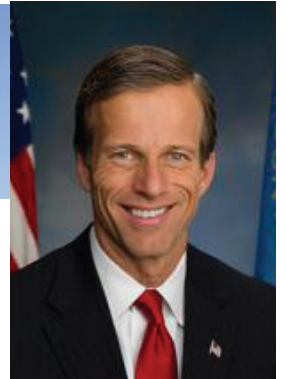


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## SALT in the Wound

I may be a little biased when I say this, but South Dakota is the best place in the country to live, work, and raise a family. We have great people who are hardworking and God-fearing. South Dakota boasts a strong economy with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. And we value personal freedom and fiscal responsibility. We want people to keep more of their hard-earned money and make their own decisions about how they use it. That's why South Dakota is one of the few states in the country that doesn't have a state income tax.

Unfortunately, Washington Democrats are trying to capitalize on states like South Dakota that practice fiscal responsibility by penalizing our taxpayers and rewarding those in other high-tax states. That's right, Democrats want to use your tax dollars to subsidize millionaires who live in states like New York and California. It sounds crazy, but this proposal is a key pillar in the Democrats' reckless tax-and-spending spree bill and the second most expensive item over the first five years of the bill's lifetime, should it be enacted.

It's called the "state and local tax deduction," or SALT deduction. It's a federal law that allows taxpayers in states that have a high state income tax to deduct a portion of that expense from their federal income tax. It forces federal taxpayers in all 50 states to offset the high taxes certain states have chosen to impose on their residents. It's unfair, and it has the potential to reward fiscal irresponsibility.

The Republican-led Tax Cuts and Jobs Act capped the SALT deduction at \$10,000 in order to protect the vast majority of affected middle-income taxpayers. Democrats, however, plan to lift the cap to \$80,000 without an income limit, tilting the benefit disproportionately to high-income individuals who mainly live in Democrat-led, high-tax states. Under the Democrats' proposal, approximately 70 percent of the tax benefit would go to the top 5 percent of households, and nearly one-third of the tax benefit would go to the top 1 percent of households. As for lower- and middle-income families, this benefit would do almost nothing. In other words, Democrats want folks in states like South Dakota to pay for a tax break that would be a windfall for some of the wealthiest individuals in our country who are living in high-tax states.

I believe that it is fundamentally wrong for the taxpayers of South Dakota to be subsidizing wealthy Americans because their states have decided to enact policies that require them to take more money from their citizens. I'm confident that South Dakota taxpayers don't want their money being used to make the rich richer. It's clear that Democrats in Washington could learn a thing or two from the way we do things in South Dakota – we aren't interested in being told how to live our lives by out-of-touch Washington bureaucrats, and we definitely aren't interested in bailing out costal elites in blue states.

For months, I have been sounding the alarm on many of the egregious items in the Democrats' reckless tax-and-spending spree. This is one of the worst, and I'm curious to hear how Democrats square their campaign slogan of wanting the "wealthy to pay their fair share" with their proposal to give the wealthy a massive tax break. The bottom line is that the Democrats' bill is full of radical and irresponsible policies that will hurt middle-income families and increase the role of the federal government in their lives. Folks in South Dakota hired me to be a good steward of their tax dollars, which is why I will continue to speak out and work to stop these damaging and irresponsible proposals.

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## Guest Column: Helping Veterans is the Right Thing to Do By Mike Bekaert

This guest column is written by Mike Bekaert. Mike is the Director of In-State Military and Veteran Affairs for U.S. Senator Mike Rounds. Mike served 30 years in the U.S. Army and Army National Guard. He graduated from the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy and retired from the South Dakota National Guard as the sixth State Command Sergeant Major.

I often tell people I am living the dream and I have one of the best jobs in the world. For 30 years I served in the military and now I spend my days trying to help the men and women who served beside me, the veterans I never met and the families of veterans who are unable to advocate for themselves.

I am humbled to be the boots on the ground for more than 72,000 veterans that call South Dakota home. And I am honored to work for a Senator who cares so deeply about our veterans.

In 2021, approximately 25 percent of the inquiries we received in our office were from veterans. Some needed help scheduling appointments through the VA, some needed help deciphering the medical bills they were receiving and others needed help retrieving their military records.

While on the surface these may sound like simple requests, for anyone who has had to wade through the bureaucracy of some federal agencies, you know that each request can bring its own set of challenges. Thankfully, I'm not alone. We have a team of constituent service representatives who serve the people of South Dakota. It's a tough job that requires a lot of persistence and compassion.

Let me give you a couple of examples of the challenges we face on a daily basis. Our office worked with one Korean War veteran who did not have a copy of his military medical records. During his time in service, he sustained injuries that put him in the hospital in Japan, Hawaii and Denver, yet he was unable to use VA services because his records were lost. This man had been injured defending his country – and all of us – but he was unable to get the medical care he needed.

Long story short, we were able to locate the records and not only did he receive the help he needed, he was also eligible for six years of retroactive pay for his full disability. It's a happy ending, but he shouldn't have had to fight for what was rightfully his.

Another example can be found in a veteran who contacted our office after a seven-year appeal to obtain the military benefits he earned. He was moving to hospice care due to terminal cancer and he wanted the benefits to make sure his family was taken care of. We were able to get the benefits in order the day before this man passed away. Surely someone who put his life on the line for us shouldn't have to spend his final days fighting the government for the money he was owed.

The bottom line is, our country needs to do better by our veterans. As any veteran knows, the concurrent receipt issue needs to be figured out so that our veterans don't have to lose their disability retirement income for their disability benefits. Veterans need more access to VA and VA approved doctors and health resources. And veterans need good health insurance from the day they enter the military until the day they die.

Senator Rounds continues to look for and promote legislation that will benefit our veterans because it's the right thing to do. And he continues to push his staff to serve those people that served us. We truly are making a difference – one veteran at a time.

John F. Kennedy summed it up best when he said this of our veterans – "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." Or as I like to tell people – we don't know them, but we owe them.



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South Dakota Governor

## Kristi Noem



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

### Budgeting for the future

This week, I outlined my budget recommendations for how we will run our state in the next fiscal year. The past year has brought historic challenges. South Dakota has taken those challenges in stride and has come out stronger.

Our state has the strongest economy in America. I want to make sure that we do not take that for granted, and that we also work to keep that momentum building. We are going to invest in our people and prepare for the future.

South Dakota is ranked in the Top 5 for fiscal stability. That is because for 133 years straight, we have passed balanced budgets and we hedge against potential downturns in the economy. This year, our state has seen tremendous growth in our revenue. That is why I am recommending a historic 14% — about \$300 million — for strategic reserves in case the negative indicators in the economy start to make their way into our state.

These include historic investments in workforce housing, to spur new development of single- and multi-family homes. This includes \$150 million from the state and \$50 million in federal funds. A partnership with local cities and developers will triple the total investment to \$600 million for new housing.

Through a partnership with local, state, and federal dollars, we can put \$1.5 billion in combined funding to address water projects. These would replace aging infrastructure and help develop new systems for wastewater and sewers.

For those who are already working here, our Department of Social Services will be using \$100 million in federal dollars to support existing daycares with one-time costs. These dollars can help expand availability at daycares, and also train more people to work at daycares.

And for those who are looking to switch careers or are getting ready to enter the workforce, I am recommending more than \$47 million to expand skilled workforce training capacity at our colleges and universities. These include strengthening programs focused on healthcare, cybersecurity, manufacturing, and farming, and ranching. These programs have the potential to make our schools a top draw for students around the world. They also will attract some of the most competitive companies in a variety of industries.

Of course, we also need to keep our people healthy and strong. That is why I am recommending several key investments in healthcare. In addition to expanding workforce training so we have more qualified nurses, I am recommending we invest in marketing and recruiting for the industries most affected by the pandemic. I am supporting funding to create regional Behavioral Health Centers to help individuals struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues.

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To improve access to care in our rural communities, I am recommending a combination of state and federal dollars to improve EMS services. These include funding for new technology to expand telehealth, upgrading life-saving equipment, and regionalizing services to improve response times.

I am recommending that the Department of Tourism use federal dollars to expand our successful marketing of both local and state attractions. South Dakota saw record tourism numbers this past year. We want to help these visitors explore more of our state by working with local cities and Native American tribes on marketing efforts to increase exposure.

I am also continuing my support of law enforcement by recommending several investments to our courts and to the Department of Corrections (DOC). These include targeted pay raises for the DOC to be competitive with other law enforcement agencies.

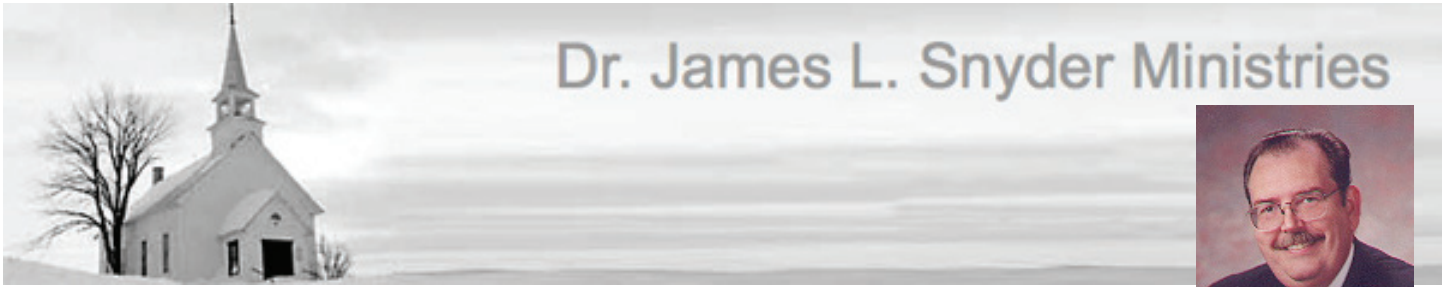
This week, I revealed that our DOC facility needs currently sit at about \$600 million. We will not spend all of that today, but I am recommending the legislature save money for these needs in the future. I am recommending \$28 million to build a Community Work Center for Women in Rapid City.

Last, but not least, I am recommending a historic 6% increase in funding for our state employees, educators, and healthcare providers. This increase is the largest in state history, and it is necessary because of dramatic inflation and to keep our salaries competitive.

Of course, this is not the complete budget recommendation. These are some of the highlights of solutions to priority issues facing South Dakota. To view my full budget proposal for the Fiscal Year 2023, go to <https://bfm.sd.gov/budget>.

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## I Love My Imperfections



Unlike most people, I love my imperfections; those imperfections of mine do not cause me much trouble.

I know most people like to focus on their perfections so that they can impress other people. But what about people like me who have no perfections to boast about? If I had one perfection, I would spend all my time talking about that. And, that would become rather boring in no time.

Some people are ashamed of their imperfections and try to hide them. They think for some reason their imperfections bring them down. Therefore, they do all they can to hide their imperfections from everybody, thinking that nobody will know anything about them.

For the longest time, I tried to do that myself. Then there came the day when I realized that most people could see past my façade and see my imperfections.

For every perfection somebody has, there are probably dozens of imperfections. However, as for me, I cannot think of any perfection that I might have, and therefore focusing on my imperfections is the most reasonable thing to do.

Yes, there was a time when I did not believe I had any imperfections. That is the attitude of bachelors. Once I got married, I was introduced to many imperfections I never knew I had. I had no reason to think I had any.

Before I was married, I thought I was the perfect person with marvelous talent and abilities. From my perspective today, I sure was fooled about those nonexistent perfections I thought I had.

This is one of the significant advantages of getting married. When a person only thinks about the perfections they have in their life and does not know anything about any imperfections, they are headed for disaster. Therefore, I guess that is why I got married when I was young.

I have a cousin it was good looking and faithfully works at it but she is focused on her perfections. For example, she is very serious about her appearance, especially her skin. All I have to do is, when I meet her, is say, "Is that a new wrinkle on your face that I see?"

She will laugh, but I know she will soon disappear to try to work on that wrinkle in a few minutes. Her idea is that her face should be wrinkle-free. Well, I think to myself, how's that working?

She does not realize that wrinkles are a verification that you are making something out of your life and you are growing. Instead, she looks at it from a negative standpoint.

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As a young person, I believed I knew everything and was perfect in everything. I remember how boring that kind of a life was, not to mention arrogant.

If all I have in my life is perfection, how in the world can I improve myself?

When I am reminded of a certain imperfection that I have, it encourages me to get better. If perfect, I cannot get better, but I can if I am imperfect. So it took me a long time to understand that.

Now that I look back on my life, I can appreciate all those areas of imperfection that I survived. If imperfection is so bad, why have I had so many and have survived?

It was the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage that helped me understand my imperfections. I am sure she is not done with her task, but so far, she has found out many imperfections, and I have been working on some of them.

It is true what my father used to say, "Son, you can't fix everything." Knowing that gives me a great deal of relief from all of the imperfections that I have in my life.

Although my wife has been very faithful in helping me identify the areas of imperfection in my life, I have learned something very special. As a wife, that seems to be her job to help improve her husband. But, as a husband, that aspect of life is completely and absolutely off-limits.

You don't believe me? Okay, husbands, go tell your wife what is wrong with her and how she can fix it. Don't worry; I'll say something nice at your funeral.

Through the years, I have enjoyed my imperfections because I do not allow them to harass me or even to define me. If I fix everything that is wrong with me, what in the world would I do next? Start fixing my wife's imperfections?

I remember when my imperfections suddenly did not mean much to me. That was when little children began invading our home. Once they began arriving, everything about me in my imperfections flew out the window. Now, and I am so thankful for it, everything is about those little children. Nobody is looking at me, but everybody is looking at my children.

I think that is why God gives us children. It deflects the attention from us to those cute, perfect little pre-adults. God is so wise in what he does.

In thinking about perfection, I cannot help but go to a Scripture verse that talks about it. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

My idea of perfection is on the human level but that does not meet God's standards. My perfection has to be according to our "Father which is in heaven."

My imperfections are no challenge to God if I yield my heart completely to him.

## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Has anyone calculated the positive health and/or economic impacts of international efforts to protect the stratospheric ozone layer beginning in the late 1980s

-- C. Marin, St. Louis, MO

1987's Montreal Protocol, a landmark international agreement calling on the nations of the world to ban the production and distribution of man-made chemicals that deplete the stratospheric ozone layer, has been billed as one of the greatest examples of international cooperation to date. And while everyone party to the Montreal agreement agreed that the substance of the treaty—banning so-called chlorofluorocarbons and related ozone-stripping chemicals—was a big win for the environment and human health, we have had no idea how to quantify just how many lives have been saved or improved as a result.

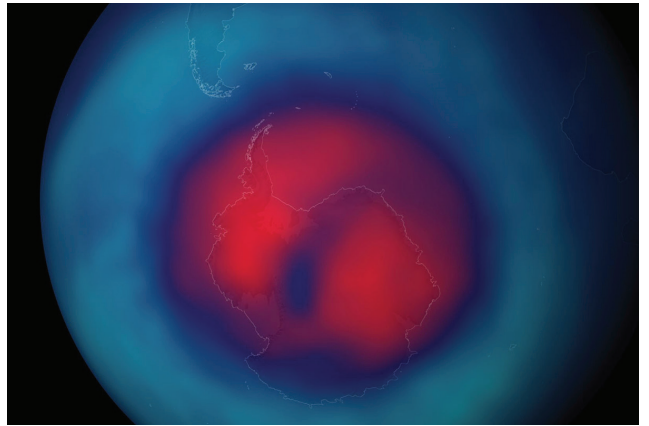
Until now, that is. Researchers from the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), ICF Consulting, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that the Montreal Protocol and its subsequent amendments will have prevented some 443 million cases of skin cancer and 63 million cases of cataracts in the U.S. alone by the end of the 21st century. They used computer models to plot how much ultraviolet (UV) radiation would have reached the Earth's surface through holes in the ozone layer without the ban on CFCs and other fluorocarbons, extrapolating from there.

"We peeled away from disaster," NCAR scientist Julia Lee-Taylor, a co-author of the study, told ScienceDaily. "What is eye popping is what would have happened by the end of this century if not for the Montreal Protocol." According to projections from the researchers' modeling, without the agreement, UV radiation would triple by 2080. "After that, our calculations for the health impacts start to break down because we're getting so far into conditions that have never been seen before."

"It's very encouraging," she added. "It shows that, given the will, the nations of the world can come together to solve global environmental problems."

Indeed, recent attempts to forge a global carbon drawdown have the potential for perhaps even bigger health impacts for the human race (and others) moving forward. The World Health Organization (WHO) considers global warming the greatest health threat ever facing humanity. This United Nations-backed international body charged with directing and monitoring global public health initiatives expects climate change to cause 250,000 additional deaths per year from a combination of factors including malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat stress. Additionally, global warming will end up tacking some \$2-\$4 billion per year onto our global health care bill. And sadly, but not surprisingly, lesser developed countries and regions will fare worse given their weaker health infrastructures.

Indeed, the success of the Montreal Protocol and the urgency of the climate crisis provide all the reasons we need to encourage the leaders of the United States and other nations around the world to forge ahead with the strongest possible international climate agreement with binding and meaningful emissions reduction targets. Our future may very well depend upon it.



**This visualization shows the hole in the ozone layer over the South Pole is getting smaller each year thanks to efforts by international negotiators back in the late 1980s.** Credit: Stuart Rankin, FlickrCC.

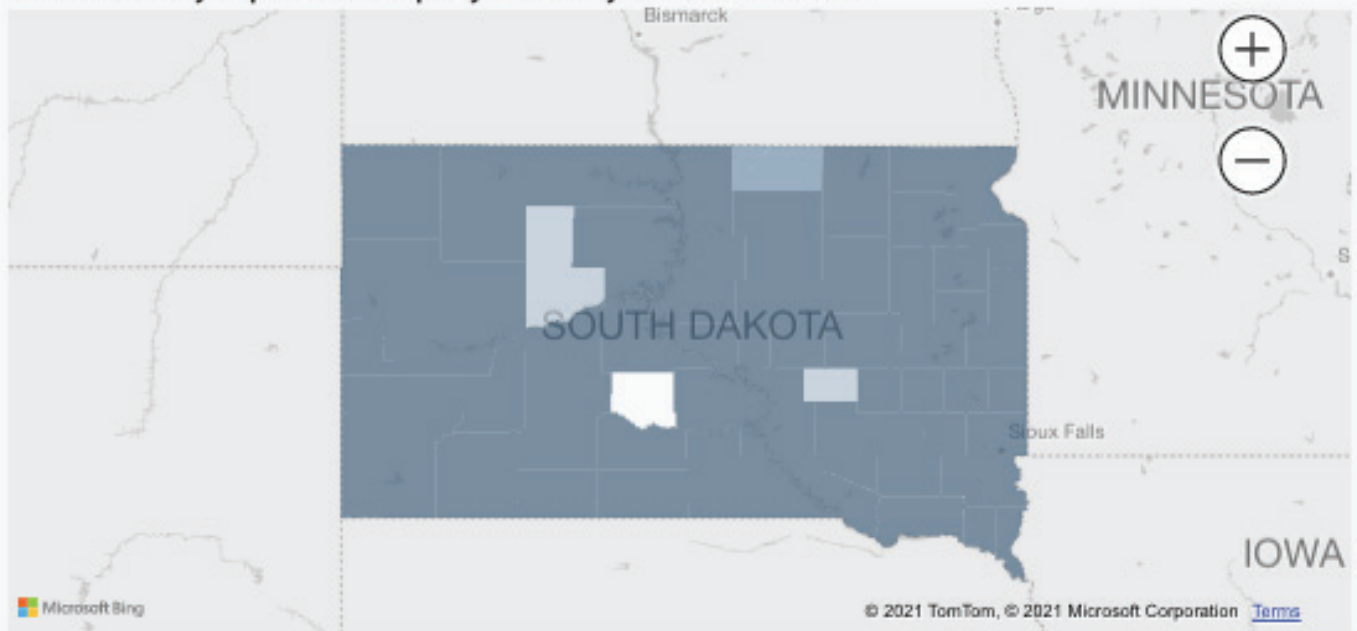
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## South Dakota COVID-19 Report

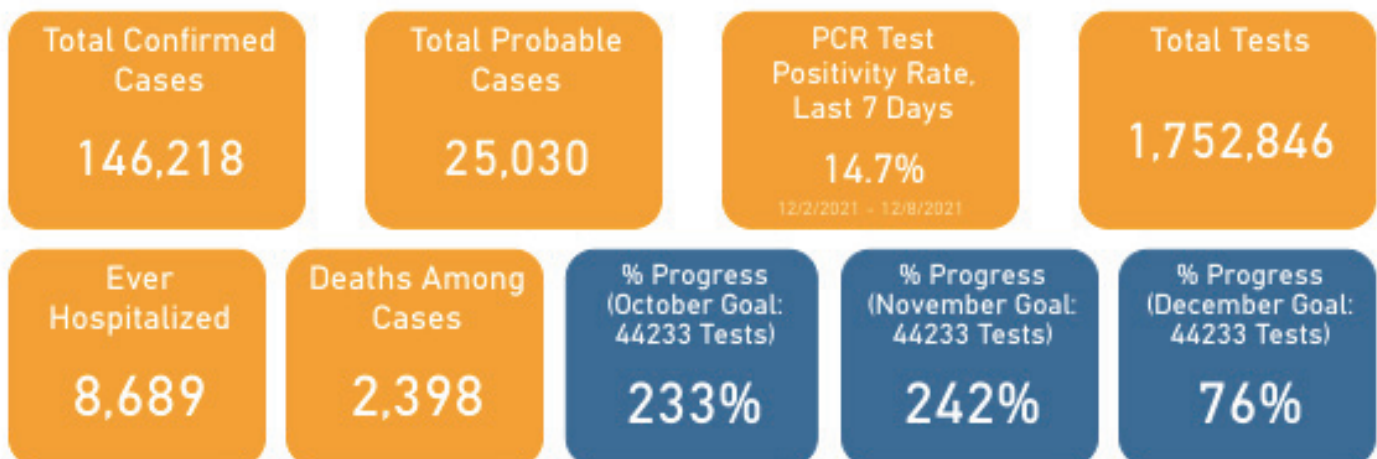


### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread Low Moderate Substantial High

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



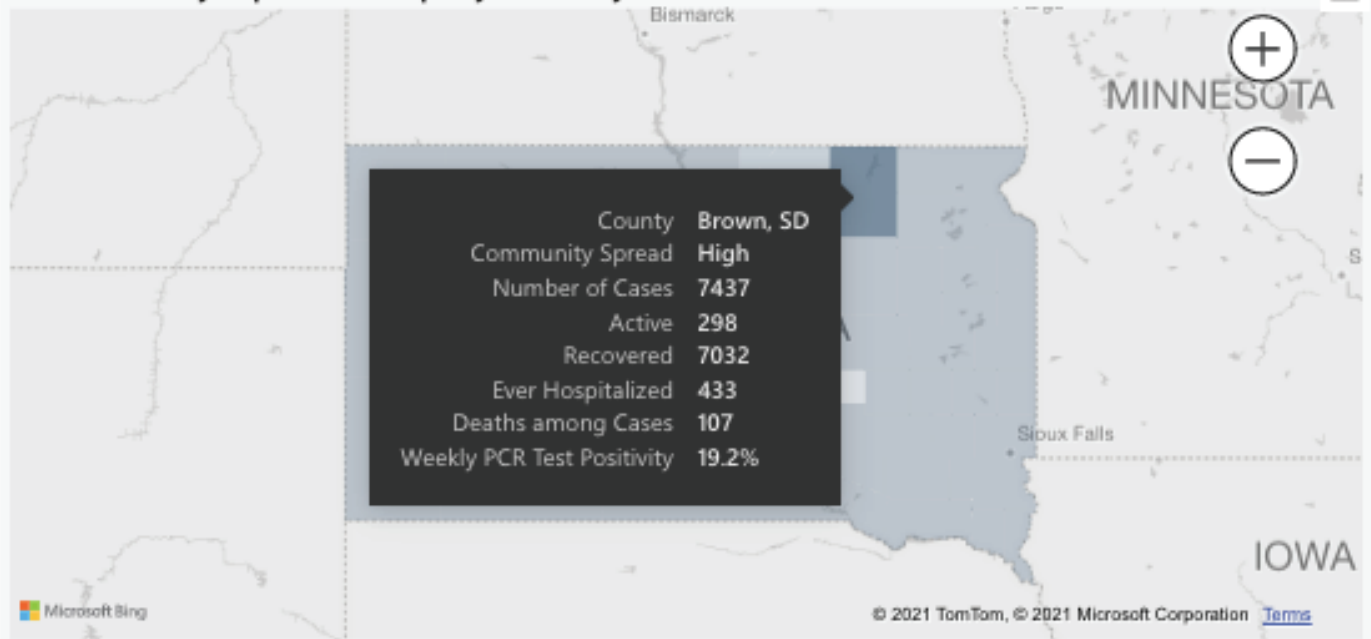
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## Brown County COVID-19 Report

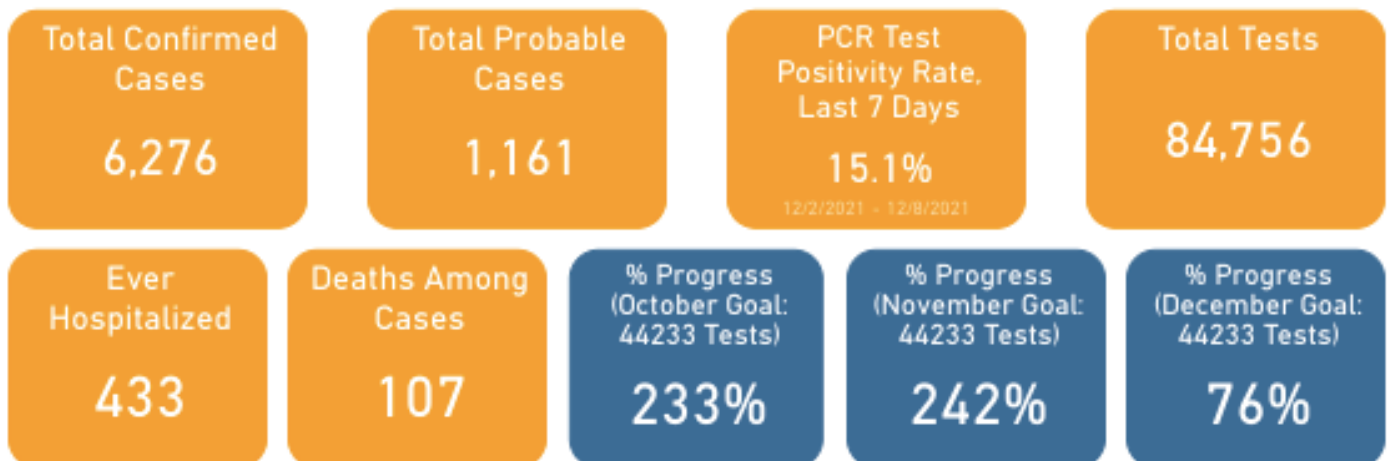


### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread Low Moderate Substantial High

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





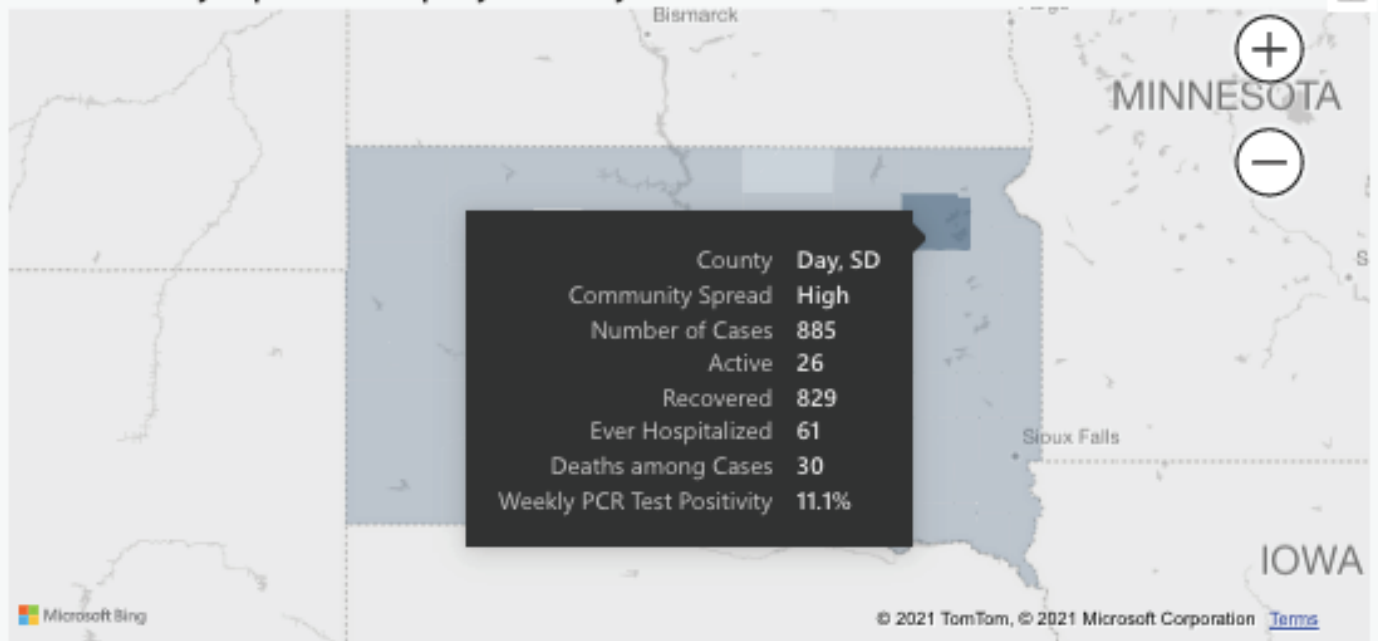
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## Day County COVID-19 Report

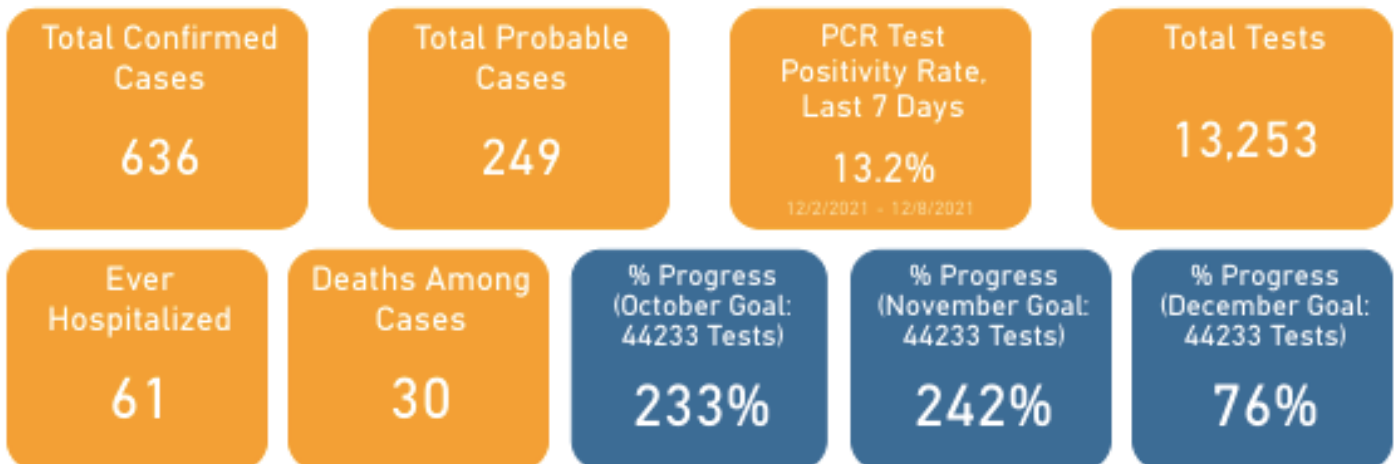


### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread ● Low ● Moderate ● Substantial ● High

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



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## COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Currently Hospitalized	<b>+14</b>	261
Deaths Among Cases	<b>+41</b>	2398
Active Cases		7692
Ever Hospitalized		8689
Recovered Cases		161158
Total Cases		171248

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	89534	1103
Male	81714	1295

## VARIANT CASES OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Variant	# of Cases
Delta (B.1.617.2 & AY lineages)	1097
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	176
Gamma (P.1)	3
Beta (B.1.351)	2

## AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	10178	0
10-19 years	20920	0
20-29 years	29141	11
30-39 years	28507	38
40-49 years	23899	61
50-59 years	22793	170
60-69 years	19104	354
70-79 years	10033	553
80+ years	6673	1211

## RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian / Pacific Islander	2234	1%
Black	4035	2%
Hispanic	6983	4%
Native American	20498	12%
Other	1749	1%
Unknown	4754	3%
White	130995	76%

Groton Area School District

Active COVID-19 Cases

Updated December 10, 2021; 8:54 AM

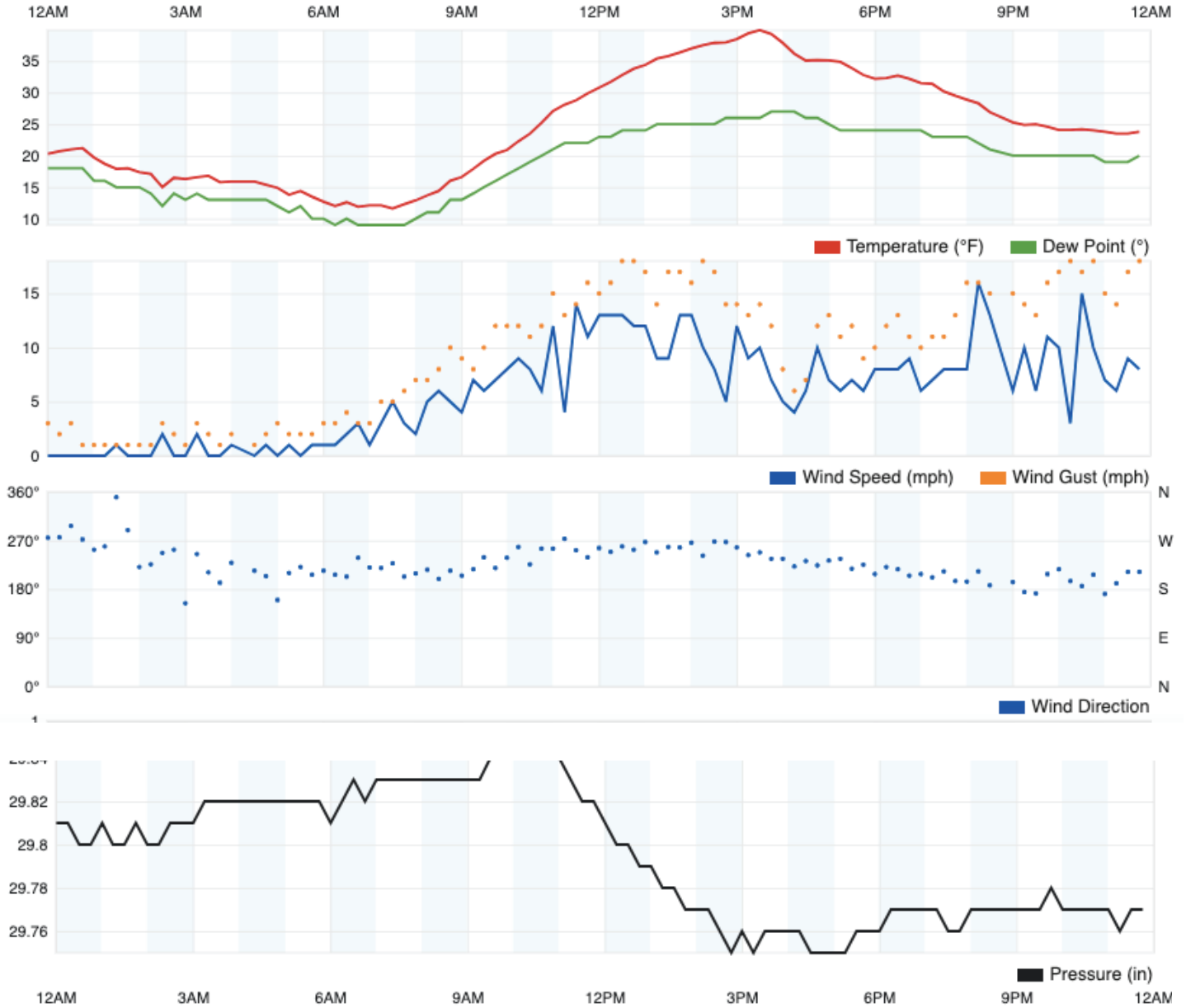
**No change in total from last week**

J	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	S	T
K	G										0	1	2	t	o
														a	t
														f	a
														f	i
0	0	0	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	0	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	0	0	0	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	0	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Sunny

High: 47 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 20 °F

Monday



Partly Sunny

High: 40 °F

Monday  
Night



Mostly Cloudy

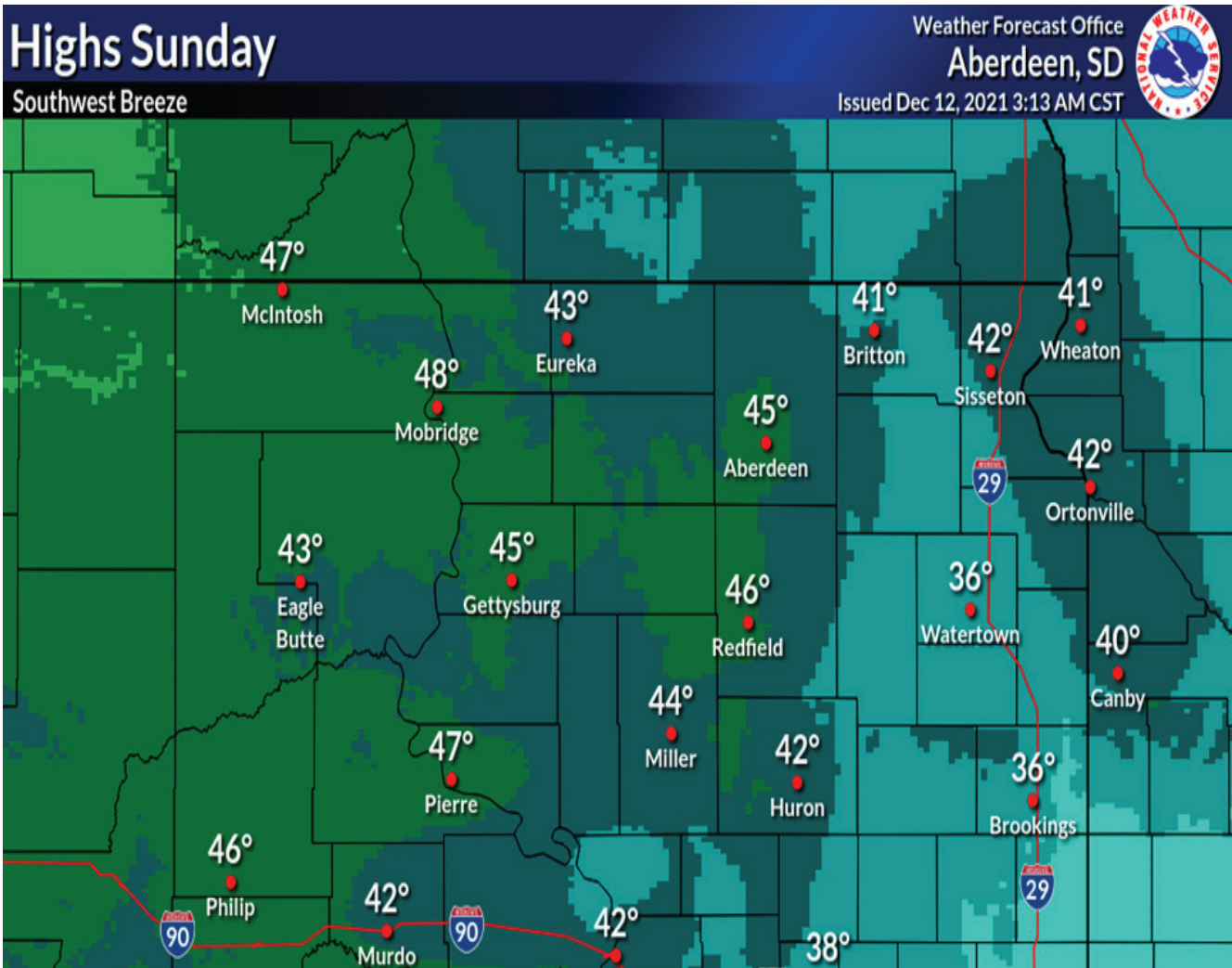
Low: 24 °F

Tuesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 42 °F



Temperatures still above average for today with a southwesterly breeze. Winds shift to southeasterly for Monday with a little cooler readings but still above normal. Dry conditions continue for the first half of the work week.

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## Today in Weather History

December 12, 1968: An intense blizzard visited most of South Dakota and Minnesota on the 12th and 13th of December. The storm began in the western part of South Dakota on the morning of the 12th then spread into the eastern part of the state and west central Minnesota by that afternoon, where it continued into the morning of the 13th. Freezing rain preceded snow, and in west central Minnesota, with thunder and lightning as well. Winds of over 50 mph caused blowing and drifting snow, which occasionally reduced visibilities to near zero. Gusts reached 70 mph in many places. Temperatures were falling to near zero during the day also resulted in dangerously low wind chills, particularly in Minnesota. The eastern half of South Dakota into west central Minnesota experienced the most severe blizzard conditions. Many schools were closed, and most other activities were greatly curtailed.

Automobile accidents were numerous across the area. Multiple utility lines were downed, and power and telephone outages were numerous due to the high winds. Power outages from less than an hour up to 12 hours were common across Minnesota. Snowfall ranged from around one inch in western South Dakota, to five inches in eastern South Dakota, to five to ten inches in west central Minnesota. One death in South Dakota was attributed to the storm when a man died of exposure to the cold near Allen in southwest South Dakota. In Minnesota, one man was found frozen to death near his car after it had run into the ditch several miles northwest of Boyd in Lac Qui Parle County. Another man was killed by a train when his vehicle became stalled on a railroad crossing at Hancock. 5 inches of snow fell at Watertown, Sisseton, and Webster with 6 inches at Clear Lake.

December 12, 1967: From December 12th through the 20th, Flagstaff, Arizona, a series of snowstorms buries Flagstaff with nearly 85 inches of snow.

1882 - Portland, OR, was drenched with 7.66 inches of rain, a record 24 hour total for that location. (12th-13th) (The Weather Channel)

1960 - The first of three Middle Atlantic snowstorms produced a foot of snow at Baltimore MD. A pre-winter blizzard struck the northeastern U.S. producing wind gusts as high as 51 mph, along with 16 inches of snow at Nantucket MA, and 20 inches at Newark NJ. (David Ludlum)

1969 - The worst tornado of record for western Washington State tracked south of Seattle, traveling five miles, from Des Moines to Kent. The tornado, 50 to 200 yards in width, began as a waterspout over Puget Sound. One person was injured and the tornado caused half a million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - While a developing winter storm began to spread snow across New Mexico into Colorado, high winds ushered unseasonably cold air into the southwestern states. Winds in California gusted to 60 mph in the Sacramento River Delta, and in the San Bernardino Valley. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Cold arctic air spread from the Great Lakes Region to the Appalachian Region. Twenty-five cities, mostly in the northeastern U.S., reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 12 degrees below zero at Albany NY was their coldest reading of record for so early in the season. Saranac Lake NY was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 28 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - A winter storm produced snow from northern Mississippi to the Middle Atlantic Coast, with 10.5 inches reported at Powhatan VA. Heavy snow whitened the Black Hills of South Dakota, with 36 inches reported at Deer Mountain. Thirteen cities in the north central U.S., from Minnesota to Texas, reported record low temperatures for the date, including Duluth MN and Yankton SD with morning lows of 22 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1995 - A severe coastal storm is blamed for five deaths and loss of power to over one million people in Oregon and Washington. Winds at Sea Lion Caves near Florence topped out at 119 mph before problems developed with the anemometer. In Newport, a gust of 107 mph occurred downtown, while Astoria and Cape Blanco also had gusts of over 100 mph. Astoria's air pressure dropped as low as 28.53 inches, an all-time record (and comparable to the central pressure of a Category 2 hurricane!). Gusts in the Willamette Valley exceeded 60 mph.

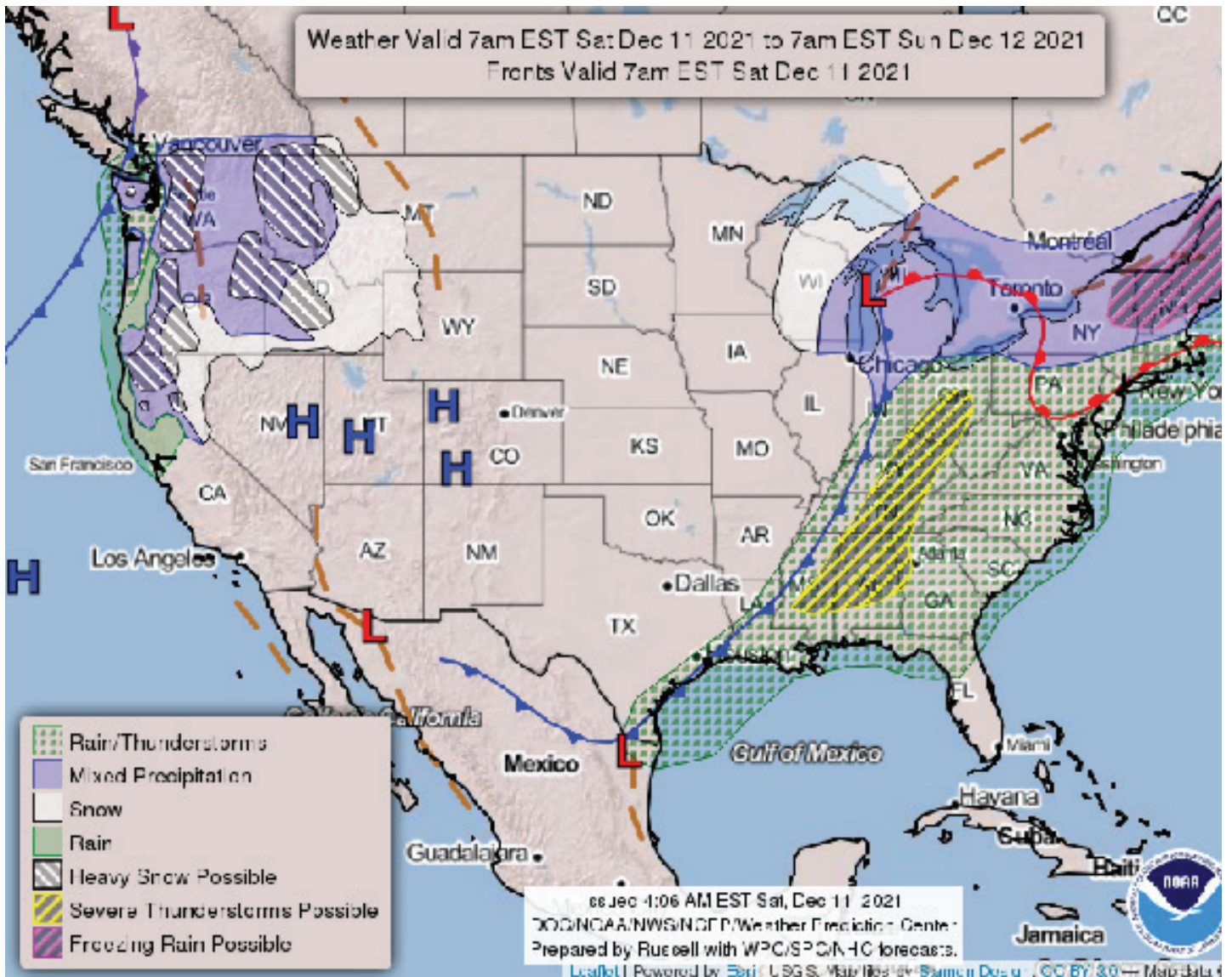
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 38.9 °F at 3:30 PM**  
**Low Temp: 11.6 °F at 7:30 AM**  
**Wind: 18 mph at 2:15 PM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

**Record High: 54° in 1924**  
**Record Low: -28° in 1893**  
**Average High: 30°F**  
**Average Low: 9°F**  
**Average Precip in Dec.: 0.23**  
**Precip to date in Dec.: 0.11**  
**Average Precip to date: 21.44**  
**Precip Year to Date: 19.97**  
**Sunset Tonight: 4:51:01 PM**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:02:26 AM**



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## WHAT KIND OF DAY WILL IT BE?

As you look forward to Christmas, what special memories will you take from the day that will remain with you after it's over? Will it be a "horrible day," a "holiday" or a "holy day?"

For some, it will be a "horrible" day. It will be a day when families gather and feuds erupt, unwanted gifts are exchanged, stomachs are stuffed, alcohol generated hangovers will dull minds and memories, and promises to "never do this again" are made. Not ever!

Or, will it be a holiday? Families traveling many miles to get together to share problems and pains that brought them closer together, share joyous memories of special events that united them in love and laughter, introducing a new-born child or one who will soon be the next in-law uniting two "love-birds."

Would it not be special, however, if we made it a "holy day?" A day of worship and praise, a day when we set aside time to share and emphasize the gift of our new birth through Christ?

Paul wrote some inspiring words about the gift of our new birth made possible because of the birth of Jesus. "You have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you."

This "new nature" means that it is possible for us to have a new life through His Son, our Savior, and the hope that one day we will be like Him and spend eternity with Him.

Prayer: We thank You, Lord, for the gift of Jesus Who gives us a new life and the promise of joy, peace, and presence that comes with the assurance of salvation. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Colossians 3:10 Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.

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## 2021 Community Events

- Cancelled** Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)  
03/27/2021 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)  
04/10/2021 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm  
04/24/2021 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)  
04/25/2021 Princess Prom (Sunday after GHS Prom)  
05/01/2021 Lions Club Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)  
05/31/2021 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)  
6/7-9/2021 St. John's Lutheran Church VBS  
06/17/2021 Groton Transit Fundraiser, 4-7 p.m.  
06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove  
06/19/2021 U8 Baseball Tournament  
06/19/2021 **Postponed to Aug. 28th:** Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon  
06/26/2021 U10 Baseball Tournament  
06/27/2021 U12 Baseball Tournament  
07/04/2021 Firecracker Golf Tournament at Olive Grove  
07/11/2021 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 10am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)  
07/22/2021 Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course  
07/30/2021-08/03/2021 State "B" American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton  
08/06/2021 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course  
08/13/2021 Groton Basketball Golf Tournament  
**Cancelled** Lions Club Crazy Golf Fest 9am Olive Grove Golf Course  
08/29/2021 Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day at GHS Parking Lot (4-5 p.m.)  
09/11/2021 Lions Club Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)  
09/12/2021 Sunflower Classic Golf Tournament at Olive Grove  
09/18-19 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport  
10/08/2021 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)  
10/09/2021 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm (Saturday before Columbus Day)  
10/29/2021 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm  
10/29/2021 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)  
11/13/2021 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)  
11/11/2021 Veteran's Day Program at the GHS Arena  
11/21/2021 Groton Area Snow Queen Contest  
11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)  
11/30/2021 James Valley Telecommunications Holiday Open House 10am-4pm  
12/04/2021 Olive Grove Tour of Homes  
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon



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## 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

05-22-24-26-27

(five, twenty-two, twenty-four, twenty-six, twenty-seven)

Estimated jackpot: \$20,000

Lotto America

08-10-17-26-41, Star Ball: 9, ASB: 4

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

Estimated jackpot: \$4.93 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$148 million

Powerball

03-25-44-53-64, Powerball: 10, Power Play: 2

(three, twenty-five, forty-four, fifty-three, sixty-four; Powerball: ten; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$307 million

### Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Christian 53, James Valley Christian 44

Alliance, Neb. 44, Hot Springs 34

Centerville 53, Estelline/Hendricks 30

Dupree 42, New Underwood 25

Ethan 54, Hanson 49

Garretson 67, Chester 54

Harding County 47, Lead-Deadwood 18

Jones County 47, Highmore-Harrold 31

Langford 41, Leola/Frederick 27

Lennox 59, Milbank 36

Miller 53, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 29

Newell 62, Bison 31

North Central Co-Op 49, McIntosh 17

Ponca, Neb. 57, Irene-Wakonda 50

Potter County 46, Lyman 43

Rapid City Central 74, Pierre 33

Rapid City Stevens 35, Aberdeen Central 29

Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 63, Sunshine Bible Academy 10

Viborg-Hurley 57, Freeman 37

Wall 53, Edgemont 41

Webster 54, Warner 39

White River 59, Stanley County 28

Gillette Early Bird Tournament=

St. Thomas More 46, Thunder Basin, Wyo. 28

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## BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Christian 57, James Valley Christian 42  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 58, Miller 46  
Corsica/Stickney 68, Colome 34  
Estelline/Hendricks 59, Centerville 38  
Garretson 50, Chester 48  
Groton Area 70, Britton-Hecla 49  
Harding County 60, Lead-Deadwood 24  
Highmore-Harrold 66, Jones County 51  
Irene-Wakonda 52, Ponca, Neb. 48  
Lennox 67, Milbank 50  
Madison 52, Elk Point-Jefferson 47  
McIntosh 58, North Central Co-Op 34  
Newell 44, Bison 35  
Pierre 61, Rapid City Central 32  
Rapid City Christian 59, Douglas 50  
Red Cloud 74, Hill City 42  
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 58, Sunshine Bible Academy 23  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 46, Brandon Valley 35  
Wall 63, Edgemont 37  
Warner 61, Webster 47  
Waubay/Summit 47, Ipswich 36  
West Central 85, Sioux Falls Christian 74  
Winner 72, Wagner 39  
Gillette Early Bird Tournament=  
St. Thomas More 66, Thunder Basin, Wyo. 56  
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=  
Lower Brule vs. Marty Indian, ppd.

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

## Fuller lifts South Dakota over N. Arizona 76-71 in OT

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Xavier Fuller had 20 points as South Dakota made 12 of 15 free throws in overtime and narrowly defeated Northern Arizona 76-71 on Saturday.

Mason Archambault had 18 points and 10 rebounds for South Dakota (6-4), which earned its fifth straight home victory. Tasos Kamateros added 10 points. Hunter Goodrick had 10 rebounds and five assists.

Jalen Cone scored a career-high 33 points for the Lumberjacks (4-6), including a 3-pointer from the right wing with 2.5 seconds left in regulation to force the overtime. Nik Mains added 13 points and eight rebounds. Carson Towt had 7 points, 18 rebounds and five assists.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-basketball> and [http://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](http://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

Elements of this story were generated by Automated Insights, <http://www.automatedinsights.com/ap>, using data from STATS LLC, <https://www.stats.com>

## Scheierman 3 lifts South Dakota St over Washington St 77-74

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Baylor Scheierman hit a step-back 3-pointer that dropped through the net as time expired, lifting South Dakota State to a 77-74 win over Washington State on Saturday.

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Scheierman's shot came on the final possession after the Cougars tied the game on a pair of TJ Bamba free throws with 23 seconds left. Michael Flowers pulled Washington State within 74-72 with a step-back shot of his own with 31.6 seconds to go and Noah Williams quickly stole the ball from Scheierman.

There were eight ties and eight lead changes in the game at the Spokane Arena, 90 miles from the WSU campus.

Noah Freidel led the Jackrabbis (9-3) with 23 points, Zeke Mayo added 17 and Scheierman 11 with eight rebounds, three assists and three steals.

Flowers, a transfer from South Alabama, scored 24 points, his most for Washington State (7-3) and Bamba added a career-high 19.

The game was full of runs in the second half, starting with Flowers scoring 10 points as the Cougars started 19-5 for a 50-44 lead after trailing 39-31 at the half. WSU made 7 of 12 shots during the run, including three 3-pointers, and the Jackrabbits were 2-of-7 shooting with four turnovers.

The Cougars promptly went 1-of-12 shooting with three turnovers as South Dakota State followed with a 20-4 run and led 64-54 with 6 1/2 minutes to play. The Jackrabbits hit five straight shots and 7 of 8.

WSU then went on a 10-2 run, setting up the frantic finish.

South Dakota State went 10 of 16 from 3-point range (52.5%) and shot 54% overall. Washington State was just 9 of 35 behind the arc (26%) and shot 37% overall. The Jackrabbits had 10 more turnovers (18-8) and the Cougars had a 15-8 rebounding advantage on the offensive end to keep the game close.

The Cougars play two more home games before meeting Boise State back in Spokane, where they are 18-18, on Dec. 22.

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For more AP college basketball coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-basketball> and [http://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](http://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## South Dakota State beats Villanova, advances to FCS semis

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Isaiah Davis ran for three touchdowns, Chris Oladokun and Jaxon Janke combined for two scores and South Dakota State used a big second half to defeat fifth-seeded Villanova 35-21 on Saturday in the FCS quarterfinals.

The Jackrabbits (11-3), the only unseeded team to reach the quarterfinals, will play the winner of top-seeded Sam Houston and eighth-seed Montana State in next week's semifinals.

Trailing 21-14 at halftime, the Jackrabbits tied the game on a 2-yard run by Davis to complete a 71-yard drive, then went ahead on Oladokun's 38-yard strike to Janke late in the third quarter. Davis covered 54 yards of a 67-yard drive that ended with his 1-yard plunge and a 34-21 lead with 8:13 remaining.

Michael Griffith made an interception with 4:43 left, the 21st for the Jackrabbits and the most for an FCS team this season.

Davis finished with 25 carries for 174 yards. Janke made six catches for 119 yards.

Villanova's Daniel Smith and Jaaron Hayek completed a 55-yard touchdown pass play after Hayek made a catch at the Jackrabbits 15 and dragged defenders into the end zone with 55 seconds remaining in the half for a 21-14 lead.

Earlier in the first half, the teams traded two touchdowns apiece on consecutive possessions, the Jackrabbits scoring on Davis' burst through the line for a 24-yard score and Oladokun throwing a 10-yard touchdown pass to Jaxon Janke. Villanova had a Smith TD pass of 37 yards to Rayjoun Pringle and Smith's 7-yard keeper that tied the game at 14-all.

Pringle made five catches for 119 yards.

The Jackrabbits are in their 10th straight postseason after having lost in the 2020-21 spring FCS title game to Sam Houston State.

The Wildcats (10-3) had a four-game win streak snapped.

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More AP college football: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-football> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25).

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Sign up for the AP's college football newsletter: <https://apnews.com/cfbtop25>

## State senator names House members who called special session

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota state senator defied the wishes of his counterpart in the House and released the names of House lawmakers on Saturday who had earlier called for a special legislative session to consider impeaching the state's attorney general.

Republican Sen. Lee Schoenbeck, who presides over the Senate as its pro tempore, received the names of the 49 House lawmakers who petitioned for the special session from the Legislative Research Council and made them public, KELO-TV reported. House Speaker Spencer Gosch had refused to release the names, even after several news media organizations threatened to sue him and the Legislature.

Those public records challenges remain unresolved and could determine whether the names of lawmakers who initiate a special session are open to the public under state law.

The Republican-dominated House convened Nov. 9 and voted to have a committee investigate whether Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg should be impeached for his conduct surrounding a fatal car crash. He pleaded no contest in August to a pair of misdemeanors in the crash that killed 55-year-old Joseph Boever.

Gosch had partially blamed the legal dispute over the public records for delays in the impeachment committee's work.

## Dell Rapids fire forces family from home

DELL RAPIDS, S.D. (AP) — A fire early Saturday caused heavy damage to a home in Dell Rapids.

Firefighters responded to the home just after 1 a.m. Saturday. The family evacuated the home and one person was treated at the scene for smoke inhalation, KELO-TV reported.

The Minnehaha County Sheriff's Department says the family is staying with relatives.

## Crews search for the missing after devastating tornadoes

By BRUCE SCHREINER and DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

MAYFIELD, Ky. (AP) — Rescuers combed through fields of wreckage after a tornado outbreak roared across the middle of the U.S., leaving dozens dead and communities in despair.

A twister carved a track that could rival the longest on record as the stormfront smashed apart a candle factory, crushed a nursing home and flattened an Amazon distribution center.

"I pray that there will be another rescue. I pray that there will be another one or two," Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said, as crews sifted through the wreckage of the candle factory in Mayfield, where 110 people were working overnight Friday when the storm hit. Forty of them were rescued.

"We had to, at times, crawl over casualties to get to live victims," said Jeremy Creason, the city's fire chief and EMS director.

In Kentucky alone, 22 were confirmed dead by late Saturday, including 11 in and around Bowling Green. But Beshear said upwards of 70 may have been killed when a twister touched down for more than 200 miles (320 kilometers) in his state and that the number of deaths could eventually exceed 100 across 10 or more counties.

The death toll of 36 across five states includes six people in Illinois, where an Amazon facility was hit; four in Tennessee; two in Arkansas, where a nursing home was destroyed; and two in Missouri.

If early reports are confirmed, the twister "will likely go down perhaps as one of the longest track violent tornadoes in United States history," said Victor Gensini, a researcher on extreme weather at Northern Illinois University.

The longest tornado on record, in March 1925, tracked for about 220 miles (355 kilometers) through Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. But Gensini said this twister may have touched down for nearly 250 miles (400 kilometers). The storm was all the more remarkable because it came in December, when normally colder weather limits tornadoes, he said.

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Debris from destroyed buildings and shredded trees covered the ground in Mayfield, a city of about 10,000 in western Kentucky. Twisted metal sheeting, downed power lines and wrecked vehicles lined the streets. Windows and roofs were blown off the buildings that were still standing.

The missing at the candle factory included Janine Denise Johnson Williams, a 50-year-old mother of four whose family members kept vigil at the site Saturday.

"It's Christmastime and she works at a place that's making candles for gifts," her brother, Darryl Williams, said. "To give up the gift of life to make a gift. We haven't heard anything, and I'm not presuming anything. But I'm expecting for the worst."

He said Johnson Williams called her husband overnight to report the weather was getting bad, the last time anyone heard from her.

Kyanna Parsons-Perez, an employee at the factory, was trapped under 5 feet (about 1.5 meters) of debris for at least two hours until rescuers managed to free her.

In an interview with NBC's "Today," she said it was "absolutely the most terrifying" event she had ever experienced. "I did not think I was going to make it at all."

Just before the tornado struck, the building's lights flickered. She felt a gust of wind, her ears started popping and then, "Boom. Everything came down on us." People started screaming, and she heard other workers praying.

Kentucky State Trooper Sarah Burgess said rescue crews were using heavy equipment to move rubble at the candle factory. Coroners were called to the scene and bodies were recovered, but she didn't know how many.

Rescue efforts were complicated because Mayfield's main fire station and emergency services hub were also hit by the tornado, Creason said.

After a wall at a nursing home in Mayfield collapsed, Vernon Evans said he rushed to help firefighters pull people out, only to find one resident lying dead in a few inches of water.

"All I could do is sit there and hold their head up," he said. "I never experienced nothing like this."

President Joe Biden approved an emergency disaster declaration for Kentucky on Saturday and pledged to support the affected states.

"I promise you, whatever is needed — whatever is needed — the federal government is going to find a way to provide it," Biden said.

Six people were killed in the collapse of the Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville, Illinois, with another injured worker airlifted to a hospital, fire Chief James Whiteford said.

Investigators searched the rubble throughout the day for additional victims and 45 people survived, Whiteford said. Authorities were uncertain Saturday evening whether anyone was still unaccounted because workers were in the midst of a shift change when it was struck by the tornado about 8:30 p.m. Friday.

"This is a devastating tragedy for our Amazon family and our focus is on supporting our employees and partners," Amazon spokesperson Richard Rocha said in a written statement.

The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, which has been trying to organize workers at an Amazon facility in Alabama, criticized the company for keeping the Illinois site open during a weather emergency.

Missouri Gov. Mike Parson's office said the storms killed at least two people in the state and initial assessments indicate they destroyed or did major damage to hundreds of homes and buildings.

Workers at a National Weather Service office had to take shelter as a tornado passed near their office in Weldon Spring, Missouri, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) west of St. Louis.

"This was an incredible storm that lasted a long time and covered a lot of territory," said Larry Vannozi, meteorologist in charge of the National Weather Service office covering the Nashville area.

Meteorologists haven't determined whether the storm spawned a single tornado or multiple tornadoes, he said.

In Arkansas, a tornado struck a nursing home in Monette, killing one and trapping 20 people inside as the building collapsed, Craighead County Judge Marvin Day told The Associated Press.

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Another person died when the storm hit a Dollar General store in nearby Leachville, Gov. Asa Hutchinson said.

"Probably the most remarkable thing is that there's not a greater loss of life," Hutchinson said after touring the wreckage of the nursing home. "It is catastrophic. It's a total destruction."

Four storm-related deaths were confirmed in northwestern Tennessee, the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency said.

"This is about the saddest thing I've ever seen," Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee said after touring the community of Dresden, which saw its downtown corridor ripped apart. "The whole town, the whole town."

An earlier version of this story misspelled the last name of the weather researcher. It is Gensini, not Genzini.

Jim Salter in O'Fallon, Missouri; Seth Borenstein in Washington, D.C.; Travis Loller in Nashville, Tennessee; Kimberlee Kruesi in Dresden, Tennessee; John Raby in Charleston, West Virginia; and Jeff McMurray in Chicago contributed to this report.

## New Caledonia voters reject independence from France

By CHARLOTTE ANTOINE-PERRON Associated Press

NOUMEA, New Caledonia (AP) — Voters in the French island territory of New Caledonia chose overwhelmingly Sunday to stay part of France, in a referendum boycotted by pro-independence forces and closely watched around the South Pacific.

Separatist activists had urged a delay in the vote because of the pandemic, and were angry over what they said were French government efforts to sway the campaign. So they called on their supporters to stay away from voting stations.

And they did. With three-quarters of the vote counted, 91% of those who took part chose to stay in France, according to regional officials. Overall turnout was just 41% — less than half the numbers who showed up in a previous independence referendum last year, where support for breaking away was 46.7%.

Keeping New Caledonia is important for French geopolitical ambitions in Indo-Pacific, and French President Emmanuel Macron was scheduled to give a national address later Sunday.

The vote was monitored by the U.N. and regional powers, amid global efforts toward decolonization and amid growing Chinese influence in the region. New Caledonia, colonized by Napoleon's nephew in the 19th century, is a vast archipelago of about 270,000 people east of Australia that is 10 time zones ahead of Paris — and hosts a French military base.

Sunday's vote was the third and last in a decades-long decolonization process that stemmed from violence in 1988, which led to the French government handing New Caledonia broad autonomy under the Noumea Agreement. The process was aimed at settling tensions between native Kanaks seeking independence and those who want the territory to remain part of France.

The process does not end with the last referendum. The state, separatists and non-separatists now have 18 months to negotiate a new status for the territory and its institutions within France.

A tropical storm warning also dampened enthusiasm for the vote. Lines snaked out of some polling stations, as winds whipped palm trees lining the streets of the regional capital Noumea. But turnout at others was barely a trickle.

The question put to people in the archipelago's 307 voting stations was: "Do you want New Caledonia to gain full sovereignty and become independent?" Masks and social distancing measures were required.

The campaign and voting day were unusually calm because of the boycott call.

"There are a lot less people" than during previous referendums, said Laura Vendegou, assessor at a polling station welcoming New Caledonians from the Loyalty Islands. "The opening was very calm."

But at the Noumea city hall, voters showed up at 6:30 a.m. to line up to vote.

In the first such referendum in 2018, 43.6% of voters supported independence, and 46.7% favored it

in a second vote held in 2020. While support for a “yes” vote seemed to be growing, the region’s first coronavirus outbreak in September threw the political debate into disarray. Until then, New Caledonia had been one of the few virus-free places left on the planet.

By November, the archipelago had reported 271 COVID-19 deaths, and the regional Senate decreed a year of traditional Kanak mourning. Independence activists felt they couldn’t campaign out of respect for their dead, and demanded that the referendum be postponed.

But pro-France groups insisted the vote should take place as scheduled to end uncertainty over New Caledonia’s future and to boost its economic prospects. Pro-independence activists announced they would refuse to take part, accusing the government in Paris of imposing the referendum date and violating neutrality by publishing a document seen as casting the consequences of independence in a negative light.

France is trying to cement its presence in the Indo-Pacific region after it lost a multibillion-dollar submarine contract because of a partnership Australia formed with the United States and the U.K. The secretly negotiated submarine project, announced in September and aimed at countering Chinese ambitions in the region, was a huge blow to France. New Caledonia hosts one of two French military bases in the Pacific.

The U.N. has supported New Caledonia’s decolonization process and sent electoral observers to monitor Sunday’s vote. The Pacific Islands Forum also sent a delegation to observe the vote.

## **At G7, UK warns Russia of ‘severe’ cost of Ukraine incursion**

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LIVERPOOL, England (AP) — British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said Sunday that “the world’s largest economies are united” in warning Russia that an invasion of Ukraine would have “massive” — though largely undisclosed — consequences.

Russia’s military buildup near the Ukrainian border has dominated talks among foreign ministers from the Group of Seven wealthy democracies in the English city of Liverpool.

The U.S. and its NATO and G-7 allies worry that the movement of Russian troops and weapons to the border region could be precursor to an invasion, and have vowed to inflict heavy sanctions on Russia’s economy if that happens.

Moscow denies having any plans to attack Ukraine and accuses Kyiv of its own allegedly aggressive designs.

Truss, who discussed the crisis with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and other G-7 diplomats, said the group was sending a “powerful signal to our adversaries and our allies.”

“We’ve been clear that any incursion by Russia into Ukraine would have massive consequences for which there would be a severe cost,” she said at a news conference on the final day of the weekend meeting.

Top diplomats from the G-7 nations — the U.K., the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan — are likely to deliver a stern warning to Moscow as part of their conclusions to the conference later Sunday. It’s less clear how much detail they will give about the measures they might take.

When it comes to economic sanctions, Truss said the G-7 was “considering all options.”

A senior U.S. official who participated in the G-7 discussions said the ministers were united in their “extreme concern” about developments on the Russia-Ukraine border and agreed on the need for strong measures that could be implemented “very, very fast” if Russia did not heed warnings to back down.

The U.S. and its allies have played down talk of a military response to defend Ukraine, with efforts focusing on tough sanctions that would hit the Russian economy, rather than just individuals.

In the U.S., reporters asked President Joe Biden on Saturday about the possibility of sending combat troops to Ukraine, and he said that idea was never considered. “Are you ready to send American troops into war and go into Ukraine to fight Russians on the battlefield?” he said.

Biden said he has made it clear to Putin that in the event of an invasion, “the economic consequences for his economy are going to be devastating. Devastating.”

China’s muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region and the ailing Iran nuclear deal were also on the agenda for the weekend meeting at the dockside Museum of Liverpool.



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Getting a unified response from the G-7, a group of countries with disparate interests, has often proved tough.

Germany plans on getting gas from Russia soon through the contentious Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which bypasses Ukraine. Britain, which is not dependent on Russian gas, generally takes a tougher line on the pipeline — but faces tough questions about London's financial district and property market, both hubs for Russian money.

U.K. bank and financial authorities have long been criticized for allegedly turning a blind eye to ill-gotten gains, but Truss insisted Britain has "very strong anti-corruption and anti-money laundering rules."

G-7 nations are also increasingly concerned about China's growing economic and technological dominance, especially in developing countries. The G-7 has launched a "Build Back Better World" initiative to offer developing nations funding for big infrastructure projects as an alternative to money from China that, the West argues, often comes with strings attached.

Truss said the G-7 was "concerned about the coercive economic policies of China."

"And what we want to do is build the investment, reach the economic trade reach of like-minded, freedom loving democracies," she said. "That is why we are stepping up our investment into low- and middle-income countries."

A unified stance towards China continues to prove elusive, however, with the U.S. and Britain generally more hawkish than other G-7 members.

AP Diplomatic Writer Matthew Lee contributed to this story.

## Austria ends lockdown restrictions for vaccinated people

EMILY SCHULTHEIS undefined

VIENNA (AP) — Austria ended lockdown restrictions for vaccinated people across most of the country on Sunday, three weeks after reimposing strict rules to combat a rising wave of coronavirus infections.

The rules, which vary by region within the country, largely allow for the reopening of theaters, museums and other cultural and entertainment venues on Sunday. Shops will follow on Monday.

Some regions are reopening restaurants and hotels on Sunday, while others will wait until later in the month. In all cases, there will be an 11 p.m. curfew for restaurants, and masks will still be required on public transportation and inside stores and public spaces.

Chancellor Karl Nehammer last week called the move an "opening with a seatbelt," giving each of Austria's nine regions the ability to loosen or tighten restrictions based on the local situation.

Unvaccinated people will still be subject to the lockdown restrictions and should remain at home for all but a handful of specific reasons, like buying groceries, going to the doctor or exercising.

Since the start of the lockdown, new case numbers have plummeted in the small Alpine country. On Friday, Austria reported 367.5 new infections per 100,000 inhabitants, down from 1,102.4 on the first day of the lockdown in November.

However, hospitalizations from the virus have not dropped as sharply as new case numbers. There are currently 567 coronavirus patients in intensive-care units across the country, only slightly down from 572 on the first day of the lockdown last month.

Austrian officials have stressed that high rates of vaccination are necessary to control the virus. Just 67.7% of the population is fully vaccinated, a relatively low rate for Western Europe, and the government has introduced measures to put increasing pressure on unvaccinated individuals to get the vaccine.

Among those measures are a nationwide vaccine mandate, which will go into effect in February for all residents age 14 and over. Those who do not comply will face fines of up to 3,600 euros (around \$4,000).

Tens of thousands have protested across the country in recent weeks, both against the lockdown restrictions and the coming vaccine mandate. Police said a Saturday demonstration in the capital city, Vienna, drew 44,000 people.

## PM to make first official visit by Israeli premier to UAE

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said he would travel to the United Arab Emirates on Sunday, the first visit by an Israeli premier, as part of a blitz of regional diplomacy against the backdrop of struggling nuclear talks with Iran.

Israel has watched with concern as Iran has pushed a hard line against negotiators meeting in Vienna, at once demanding sanctions relief while accelerating its nuclear program. In recent weeks, Israel has dispatched its top diplomat and its defense and spy chiefs to meet allies in Europe, the U.S. and the Middle East to push for a firmer approach to Iran.

Bennett's one-day trip to Abu Dhabi, where he will meet with Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed, is a milestone for both Israel and its new leader. Israel and the UAE last year signed a normalization deal brokered by the Trump administration under the so-called Abraham Accords, which saw similar agreements penned with Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco. Israel and the UAE have long shared common anxiety over Iran's nuclear program. The deal to establish ties between the countries only increased tensions with the Islamic Republic.

Bennett's office said he will be discussing "economic and regional issues that will contribute to prosperity, welfare and strengthening stability between the countries" during his meeting with bin Zayed.

Bennett's trip comes on the heels of a visit by the UAE's national security adviser Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan to Tehran, where he met with Iran's new hard-line president, Ebrahim Raisi in a bid to ease tensions. It was a major visit for the Gulf Arab federation that has long viewed Iran as its main regional threat. Several other regional political visits, by Syria's foreign minister and the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Turkey, have also taken place recently, all with an eye on the negotiations.

Israel, which is not a party to the talks in Vienna, has turned to its allies to work together and lobby negotiators seeking to rein in Iran's nuclear program. Foreign Minister Yair Lapid recently visited Europe and Egypt and Defense Minister Benny Gantz and Mossad chief David Barnea flew to the U.S. to discuss the talks with leaders there.

Earlier this year Lapid visited the UAE and inaugurated Israel's embassy there, a trip seen as further cementing bilateral ties.

Israel sees the UAE as a crucial part of that outreach. Under Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi's powerful crown prince and long the de facto ruler of the Emirates, the UAE has embarked on a rapid expansion of its military forces to counter what it sees as the threat posed by Iran. The Emirates also hosts U.S. and French forces and its Jebel Ali port is the U.S. Navy's busiest port of call outside of America.

The Vienna negotiations are working to revive the 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and six world powers. That agreement, launched by President Barack Obama, granted Iran relief from stifling sanctions in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

But three years later, President Donald Trump, with strong encouragement from then-Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, withdrew from the deal, causing it to unravel. Since then, the U.S. has reimposed sanctions and Iran has stepped up its nuclear activities -- amassing a stockpile of highly enriched uranium that goes well beyond the bounds of the accord. Prominent voices in Israel, including a former defense minister and former intelligence head, are now indicating the U.S. withdrawal, especially without a contingency plan for Iran's continuously developing nuclear plan, was mishandled.

Talks resumed earlier this month in Vienna after a five-month hiatus that came following Raisi's election. But negotiators ended the round disappointed, claiming Iran had backtracked on progress made in previous rounds and had dug in with new demands on sanctions relief. Iran also isn't slowing down advances in its atomic program, further raising the stakes in talks. In the midst of the negotiations, the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog confirmed that Iran had begun enriching uranium up to 20% purity at its underground facility at Fordo -- a site where enrichment is not permitted under the deal.

Israel considers Iran to be its greatest enemy and it strongly opposed the 2015 deal. It says it wants an

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improved deal that places tighter restrictions on Iran's nuclear program and addresses Iran's long-range missile program and its support for hostile proxies along Israel's borders. Israel also says that the negotiations must be accompanied by a "credible" military threat to ensure that Iran does not delay indefinitely.

Iran says its nuclear program is meant for peaceful purposes.

If successful, Bennett's visit to the UAE could give him a boost at home at a time when he is under fire for a recent trip by his family abroad amid COVID travel restrictions and when the legitimacy of his leadership is still being questioned by opposition lawmakers and the voters who support them.

Bennett, who leads a small nationalist party in parliament, rose to the prime minister post following a deal struck by a panoply of political factions working to oust Netanyahu, a long-serving leader who portrayed himself as the ultimate statesman and defender of Israel.

## Bosnian ski resorts benefit from lax anti-virus measures

By ELDAR EMRIC Associated Press

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — As most European nations impose new restrictions to curb the spread of the omicron variant, Bosnia is taking a relatively laissez-faire approach to soaring COVID-19 infections in the region, much to the delight of its winter tourism industry.

Last week, thousands of skiers from around the country, the Balkans and the European Union happily slalomed their way through fresh snow on Bosnia's mountain slopes following the official Dec. 4 kickoff for the season. Most ski resorts in the Balkans opened over the past week as well, but with much stricter pandemic-induced capacity and access limits.

On the Jahorina and Bjelasnica mountains near Sarajevo, hosts of the 1984 Winter Olympics, long, tightly packed queues formed at ski lifts while local and international guests gathered at cafes both indoors and outdoors, with some even taking in a nightly music concert.

Travelers coming into Bosnia from the European Union, apart from Croatia, are required to have a negative pre-departure PCR test and proof of recent vaccination or recovery from COVID-19 to enter the country. Citizens of Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro are exempt from that rule.

But once a person is in Bosnia, they are not required to present proof of vaccination, a recent recovery or a recent negative test to access the ski slopes, restaurants, bars or cultural venues. While indoor mask-wearing and social distancing mandates are in place, their enforcement remains haphazard.

"We feel very safe here. Conditions are generally good, despite the pandemic," said Sejla Ibric, who drove over 160 kilometers (100 miles) to Jahorina with her husband to enjoy the first ski weekend of the season.

The managers of the Jahorina and Bjelasnica ski resorts — which form the backbone of Bosnia's winter tourism sites — note that some precautions seek to slow the spread of COVID-19, including mandatory mask-wearing and reduced capacity in ski lifts. Additional steps have been taken to accommodate guests' specific pandemic-related needs.

"We have our own PCR testing laboratory and guests who require a negative test to return to their country can have their samples taken in their rooms," says Dejan Ljevanic, the general manager of Jahorina. The resort also guarantees refunds to ski-pass holders in case they get infected, he added.

Bosnia — which has fully vaccinated only just over 24% of its 3.3 million people — has been registering about 600 new cases and 30 COVID-19 deaths a day of late. It has seen over 12,900 COVID-19 deaths in the pandemic.

Most countries near Bosnia — all of which have notably higher vaccination rates — are seeing quickly rising daily infections and tighter restrictions on daily life. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the two EU members have recently been reporting record new infections a day and Slovakia is in a national lockdown. In Croatia and Slovenia, also EU members, mandatory COVID-19 passes were introduced last month to access most public spaces. In Serbia this fall, graveyard diggers in Belgrade had to work an extra day each week to keep up with COVID-19 deaths.

"Things are going downhill back home with regards to the virus, but here it feels as if it does not exist," said Mili Planincic of Croatia, who was getting ready to glide down a ski slope in Jahorina.

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"People are relaxed, but at the same time they are keeping within reasonable limits" to prevent the spread of the infection, he added.

Others, like Milomir Zele from Serbia, said it was up to visitors to take the necessary precautions.

"One has to be careful, to wear a mask, and get vaccinated beforehand. We did all that," he said.

Tine Salomon from Slovenia agreed: "If people act responsibly, there should be no problem. We are outdoors and the snow is good, idyllic."

Last winter, both the Bjelasnica and Jahorina ski resorts registered a record number of visitors, due to Bosnia's relatively low virus transmission rates compared with the rest of the region and its laid-back approach to anti-virus restrictions. However, Bosnia's peak ski season was followed last March by a major virus surge and a spike in COVID-19 deaths in the country.

"This year, we expect the ski season to last between 4 and 4 1/2 months. It would be spectacular if we had a repeat of the last season," said Jasmin Mehic, general manager of the Bjelasnica ski resort.

"We expect that (antivirus) restrictions will not get too harsh, although we will also respect harsher restrictions if (health authorities) decide to introduce them," he added.

Sabina Niksic contributed to this story from Sarajevo.

Follow all AP stories on the pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>.

## 76ers delay Curry's 3-point record bid, beat Warriors 102-93

By DAN GELSTON AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Stephen Curry had one 3-point shot swatted away out of nowhere by Matisse Thybulle and the Philadelphia defender got him again on a block that sent the ball flying.

That left Curry with the rarest of stat lines: 3-pointers, three; shots blocked, two. Stifled by Thybulle, Curry's chase for the NBA 3-point mark goes on.

"I try to keep it out of my head and just play basketball," Curry said.

Joel Embiid had 26 points and nine rebounds and the Philadelphia 76ers delayed Curry's bid to break Ray Allen's career 3-point record in a 102-93 victory over the Golden State Warriors on Saturday night.

"That was not happening on my court," Embiid said. "That was not happening in Philly."

Golden State dropped to 21-5, falling a half-game behind Phoenix for the NBA lead.

Curry was largely shut down over 36 minutes by Thybulle, who made just his sixth start of the season, strictly to blanket the guard. Curry was 6 of 20 from the floor and the Warriors were held under 100 points for the second time this season.

"Just having guys willing to let me take on that 1-on-1 matchup and play the rest of the team 4 on 4 ... allowed me to stay close to the body and not let Steph get anything easy," Thybulle said.

Curry scored 18 points and shot 3 of 14 from 3-point range to move within six of matching Allen's record. Curry's next shot at the record is Monday night at Indiana in the second game of a five-game trip. He needed nine 3s against the Sixers to tie Allen's mark of 2,973 regular-season 3s from 1996-2014.

Thybulle was the first player to block multiple 3-point attempts by Curry in a single game in his NBA career.

"I give Thybulle credit. He's a rare combination of length and athleticism and brains," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "He did as good a job on Steph as anybody I've seen in a long time."

Sixers and Warriors fans both rooted for Curry to set the mark in Philadelphia. Fans held signs asking for the record — one read, "To 2,974 and Beyond" — and they mobbed him for autographs after warmups on his way back to the locker room. Curry obliged and signed jerseys and cards, as one fan yelled, "Break the record, tonight, baby!"

Not in Embiid's house.

Curry made only two 3s in the first half and one in the fourth quarter.

"I understand the opposition is not going to want that happen on their home floor," Curry said. "They defended accordingly."

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Curry would have loved to set the record at home. He needed 16 to set the record Wednesday against Portland Trail Blazers but hit six.

"The record's going to happen at some point soon. No reason to force anything," Kerr said.

Embiid heard "MVP! MVP!" chants and made all 11 free throws as he rallied the Sixers past the Warriors. The Sixers outscored the Warriors 32-20 in the fourth quarter. Tobias Harris scored 16 points.

The Warriors — just 12 of 48 from 3-point range — are ready for Curry to set the record and move on from the hype surrounding his pursuit of Allen's mark.

"I think it's hanging over the world. We all want to see it," Warriors star Draymond Green said.

Nobody has made more 3-pointers for one team, or in one season, or in one postseason. He already has passed Allen for the most 3s when including playoffs.

Curry's best in one game is 13. He holds the NBA season mark with 402 in 2015-16 and has topped 300 four times in a career that dates to 2009 when he was drafted out of Davidson. He has played in 787 games, while Allen hit 2,973 over 1,300 games when he retired in 2014.

TIP-INS

Warriors: G Klay Thompson and C James Wiseman were assigned to the team's G League affiliate, the Santa Cruz Warriors. Thompson missed the last two seasons with a torn left ACL and a torn right Achilles. ... Jordan Poole scored 23 points.

76ers: Curry played against his brother, 76ers guard Seth Curry. Seth Curry scored 10 points and had the basket that made it 93-83.

UP NEXT

76ers: At Memphis on Monday night.

Warriors: At Indiana on Monday night and then at New York on Tuesday.

At 33 years old and playing with a heavy workload, Kerr may rest Curry against the Pacers.

"I always want to play, but it's also understanding the big picture and re-assessing how your body feels after every game," Curry said. "I don't want to give too much away, but you have things you're doing regular maintenance on." \_\_\_\_\_

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

## San Francisco's vaunted tolerance dims amid brazen crimes

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ and JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Caitlin Foster fell in love with San Francisco's people and beauty and moved to the city a dozen years ago. But after repeatedly clearing away used needles, other drug paraphernalia and human feces outside the bar she manages, and too many encounters with armed people in crisis, her affection for the city has soured.

"It was a goal to live here, but now I'm here and I'm like, 'Where am I going to move to now?' I'm over it," said Foster, who manages Noir Lounge in the trendy Hayes Valley neighborhood.

A series of headline-grabbing crime stories — mobs of people smashing windows and grabbing luxury purses in the downtown Union Square shopping district and daytime shootings in the touristy Haight-Ashbury — has only exacerbated a general feeling of vulnerability. Residents wake up to news of attacks on Asian American seniors, burglarized restaurants, and boarded-up storefronts in the city's once-vibrant downtown.

San Franciscans take pride in their liberal political bent and generously approve tax measures for schools and the homeless. They accept that trashy streets, tent encampments and petty crime are the price to pay to live in an urban wonderland.

But the frustration felt by Foster, who moved from Seattle in search of more sunshine, is growing among residents who now see a city in decline. There are signs that the city famous for its tolerance is losing patience.

The pandemic emptied parts of San Francisco and highlighted some of its drawbacks: human and dog feces smeared across sidewalks, home and vehicle break-ins, overflowing trash cans, and a laissez-faire

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approach by officials to brazen drug dealing. Parents despaired as public schools stayed closed for most of last year as nearby districts welcomed children back to the classroom.

Meanwhile, residents and visitors scurry past scenes of lawlessness and squalor. Just steps from the Opera House and Symphony Hall, drug dealers carry translucent bags filled with crystal-like rocks or stand outside the public library's main branch, flashing wads of cash while peddling heroin and methamphetamine.

"There's a widespread sense that things are on the wrong track in San Francisco," said Patrick Wolff, 53, a retired professional chess player from the Boston area who has lived in the city since 2005.

In a sign of civic frustration, San Franciscans will vote in June on whether to recall District Attorney Chesa Boudin, a former public defender elected in 2019 whose critics say he's too lenient on crime. His supporters say there's no crime surge, and that corporate wage theft is a more pressing issue than cases like that of a San Francisco woman finally arrested after stealing more than \$40,000 in goods from a Target over 120 visits. She was released by a judge and arrested again on suspicion of shoplifting after she failed to show up to get her court-ordered ankle monitor.

"Where's the progress? If you say you're progressive, let's get the homeless off the street, and let's get them mental health care," said Brian Cassanego, a San Francisco native who owns the lounge where Foster works. He moved to wine country five months ago, tired of seeing dealers sell drugs with impunity and worrying about his wife being alone outside at night.

The day before he moved, Cassanego stepped out to walk his dogs and saw a man who "looked like a zombie," with his pants down to his knees and bleeding from where a syringe was stuck on his hip. A woman cried out nearby in shock.

"I went upstairs, and I told my wife, 'We're leaving now! This city is done!'" he said.

Reports of larceny theft — shoplifting from a person or business — are up nearly 17% to more than 28,000 from the same time last year. They remain lower than the more than 40,000 larceny theft cases reported in 2019. Requests to clean dirty streets and sidewalks are the majority of calls to 311, the city's services line.

Overall, though, crime has been trending down for years. More than 45,000 incidents have been reported so far this year, up from last year when most people were shut indoors, but below the roughly 60,000 complaints in previous years.

San Francisco's well-publicized problems have served as fodder for conservative media outlets. Former President Donald Trump jumped in again recently, releasing a statement saying the National Guard should be sent to San Francisco to deter smash-and-grab robberies.

Elected officials say they're grappling with deep societal pains common to any large U.S. city.

A high percentage of an estimated 8,000 homeless people in San Francisco are struggling with chronic addiction or severe mental illness, usually both. Some people rant in the streets, nude and in need of medical help. Last year, 712 people died of drug overdoses, compared with 257 people who died of COVID-19.

LeAnn Corpus, an administrative assistant who enjoys figure skating, avoids the downtown rinks and won't take her 8-year-old son there after dark because of all the open drug use. Still, the city's urban ills have crept into her Portola neighborhood far from downtown.

A homeless man set up a makeshift tent outside her home using a bike and a bed sheet, and relieved himself on the sidewalk. She called the police, who came after two hours and cleared him out, but at her aunt's home, a homeless person camped out against the backyard for six months despite attempts to get authorities to remove him.

"This city just doesn't feel the same anymore," said Corpus, a third-generation native.

San Francisco residents who are generally uncomfortable with government surveillance have installed security cameras and deadbolts to prevent break-ins, and they have started eyeing outsiders with suspicion.

The other night, Joya Pramanik's husband spotted someone wearing a ski mask on what was an otherwise warm evening on their quiet street. She worried the masked man was up to no good — and it pains her to say that, since what she loves about San Francisco is its easy embrace of all types of characters.

Pramanik, a project manager who moved to the U.S. from India in her teens, cheered Trump's failed

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reelection bid but says she realized too late that Democratic activists have hijacked her city.

"If I say I want laws enforced, I'm racist," she said. "I'm like, 'No, I'm not racist. There's a reason I live in San Francisco.'"

Last year, Wolff, the retired chess player, helped launch a new political organization that aims to elect local officials focused on solving pressing problems. Families for San Francisco will elect Democrats, but it's organized outside the city's powerful Democratic Party establishment, he said.

Wolff hopes to change a civic mindset that no longer expects much in the way of basic public services.

In hip Hayes Valley, for example, business owners tired of seeing garbage strewn about and the city not doing anything to address the issue banded together to lease enclosed trash cans from a private company, said Jennifer Laska, president of the neighborhood association. After the lease expired, the association managed to get the city to agree to buy and install new public garbage cans designed to keep trash in and pilferers out.

That was four months ago.

"We're still struggling just to get the trash cans actually purchased," Laska said.

In the Marina, a wealthy neighborhood with stunning views of the bay and Golden Gate Bridge, dozens of residents recently hired private security after an increase in auto burglaries.

Lloyd Silverstein, a San Francisco native and president of the Hayes Valley Merchants Association, said businesses are considering hiring security guards and installing high-definition security cameras. He rejects the idea that any one city official is to blame for the situation, and he's optimistic the city will recover.

"We have been through big earthquakes and depressions and lots of stuff, but we have a pretty good bounce-back attitude. We've got some problems, but we'll fix them," he said. "It may just take some time."

## Major multi-day storm headed toward Northern California

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A major storm is headed toward Northern California, promising to drop up to 10 feet (3 meters) of snow on Sierra Nevada mountain peaks and bring much-needed rain throughout the region.

Rain was expected in the Bay Area, with snowfall in the Sierras starting Sunday before getting heavier between Monday and Tuesday, according to forecasters. There could even be a dusting of snow on Bay Area mountaintops.

"If you live in the Sierra, today is the final day to prepare for a multi-day winter storm that will likely be remembered for years to come," the National Weather Service warned in a forecast issued Saturday.

Another storm system predicted to hit California midweek could deliver almost continuous snow, said Scott McGuire, a meteorologist with the weather service's Reno office, which monitors an area straddling the Nevada state line. Downed trees and white-out conditions could endanger motorists; meanwhile the Sierra Avalanche Center warned heavy snow and strong winds on top of a weak snowpack could cause large and destructive avalanches.

"If you are traveling through the Sierra, either get ahead of the storm before snowfall begins or wait until it's over to get up there. It will be increasingly treacherous," he said.

A low-pressure system from the Pacific Northwest was on track to hit coastal areas north of San Francisco Saturday night and drop light rain.

In the Pacific Northwest, a winter storm warning was in place in an area including the ski resort where an avalanche Saturday killed a 60-year-old man and temporarily buried five others.

The heaviest rainfall near San Francisco was expected to come Sunday night into Monday morning as the storm spreads to the east and south, said Sarah McCorkle, a meteorologist with the weather service's Bay Area office.

Rainfall totals across the north could range between 2-6 inches (5-15 centimeters), and the greatest amount was expected in the Santa Cruz and Santa Lucia mountain ranges, where winds could exceed 50 miles per hour (80 kilometers per hour). The rain could cause minor flooding and rockslides, particularly in areas where wildfires have burned recently, according to the forecast.

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Pacific Gas & Electric said the storm may cause power outages in the Bay Area. The utility said in a news release that its workers were clearing vegetation away from power lines to reduce the chance of outages.

The amount of rain is typical for this time of year, McCorkle said, even though the last couple of years have been unusually dry. The storm should help relieve dry conditions, but won't mark an end to the drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

The megadrought fueled by climate change has enveloped much of the West. As California heads into what traditionally is its wettest time of the year, 80% of the state is classified as in extreme or exceptional drought, the two worst categories.

## **EXPLAINER: Was tornado outbreak related to climate change?**

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The calendar said December but the warm moist air screamed of springtime. Add an eastbound storm front guided by a La Nina weather pattern into that mismatch and it spawned tornadoes that killed dozens over five U.S. states.

Tornadoes in December are unusual, but not unheard of. But the ferocity and path length of Friday night's tornadoes likely put them in a category of their own, meteorologists say. One of the twisters — if it is confirmed to have been just one — likely broke a nearly 100-year-old record for how long a tornado stayed on the ground in a path of destruction, experts said.

"One word: remarkable; unbelievable would be another," said Northern Illinois University meteorology professor Victor Gensini. "It was really a late spring type of setup in in the middle of December."

Warm weather was a crucial ingredient in this tornado outbreak, but whether climate change is a factor is not quite as clear, meteorologists say.

Scientists say figuring out how climate change is affecting the frequency of tornadoes is complicated and their understanding is still evolving. But they do say the atmospheric conditions that give rise to such outbreaks are intensifying in the winter as the planet warms. And tornado alley is shifting farther east away from the Kansas-Oklahoma area and into states where Friday's killers hit.

Here's a look at what's known about Friday's tornado outbreak and the role of climate change in such weather events.

### **WHAT CAUSES A TORNADO?**

Tornadoes are whirling, vertical air columns that form from thunderstorms and stretch to the ground. They travel with ferocious speed and lay waste to everything in their path.

Thunderstorms occur when denser, drier cold air is pushed over warmer, humid air, conditions scientists call atmospheric instability. As that happens, an updraft is created when the warm air rises. When winds vary in speed or direction at different altitudes — a condition known as wind shear — the updraft will start to spin.

These changes in winds produce the spin necessary for a tornado. For especially strong tornadoes, changes are needed in both the wind's speed and direction.

"When considerable variation in wind is found over the lowest few thousand feet of the atmosphere, tornado-producing 'supercell thunderstorms' are possible," said Paul Markowski, professor of meteorology at Pennsylvania State University. "That's what we had yesterday."

There's usually a lot of wind shear in the winter because of the big difference in temperature and air pressure between the equator and the Arctic, Gensini said.

But usually, there's not a lot of instability in the winter that's needed for tornadoes because the air isn't as warm and humid, Gensini said. This time there was.

### **WHAT CONDITIONS LED TO STORMS OF THIS SCALE?**

A few factors, which meteorologists will continue to study.

Spring-like temperatures across much of the Midwest and South in December helped bring the warm, moist air that helped form thunderstorms. Some of this is due to La Nina, which generally brings warmer than normal winter temperatures to the Southern U.S. But scientists also expect atypical, warm weather



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in the winter to become more common as the planet warms.

"The worst-case scenario happened. Warm air in the cold season, middle of the night," said John Gordon, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Louisville, Kentucky.

Once the storm formed, exceptionally strong wind shear appears to have prevented the tornadoes from dissipating, experts say. Tornadoes are thought to die off when thunderstorm updrafts lose energy.

Tornadoes typically lose energy in a matter of minutes, but in this case it was hours, Gensini said. That's partly the reason for the exceptionally long path of Friday's storm, going more than 200 miles (322 kilometers) or so, he said. The record was 219 miles (352 kilometers) and was set by a tornado that struck four states in 1925. Gensini thinks this one will surpass it once meteorologists finish analyzing it.

"In order to get a really long path length, you have to have a really fast moving storm. This storm was moving well over 50 miles (80 kilometers) per hour for a majority of its life," Gensini said. That's not the speed of the winds, but of the overall storm movement.

"You're talking about highway-speed storm motions," Gensini said.

HOW RELATED IS CLIMATE CHANGE TO TORNADO OUTBREAKS?

It's complicated. Scientists are still trying to sort out the many conflicting factors about whether human-caused climate change is making tornadoes more common — or even more intense. About 1,200 twisters hit the U.S. each year — though that figure can vary — according to the NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory. No other country sees as many.

Attributing a specific storm like Friday's to the effects of climate change remains very challenging. Less than 10% of severe thunderstorms produce tornadoes, which makes drawing conclusions about climate change and the processes leading up to them tricky, said Harold Brooks, a tornado scientist at the National Severe Storms Laboratory.

Scientists have observed changes taking place to the basic ingredients of a thunderstorm, however, as the planet warms. Gensini says in the aggregate, extreme storms are "becoming more common because we have a lot warmer air masses in the cool season that can support these types of severe weather outbreaks."

The U.S. is likely to see more tornadoes occur in the winter, Brooks said, as national temperatures rise above the long-term average. Fewer events will take place in the summer, he said.

Furtado of the University of Oklahoma said tornado alley, a term used to describe where many twisters hit the U.S., has shifted eastward into the Mississippi River Valley. That shift is because of increases in temperature, moisture and shear.

"Bottom line: The people in the Mississippi River Valley and Ohio River Valley are becoming increasingly vulnerable to more tornadic activity with time," he said.

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Follow Suman Naishadham on Twitter @sumannaishadham and Seth Borenstein at @borenbears

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## Back-to-back: Young gives Alabama consecutive Heisman wins

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Bryce Young didn't just meet the standard set by the star quarterbacks who preceded him at Alabama, he exceeded it and gave the Crimson Tide a rare Heisman back-to-back.

Young became the first Tide quarterback to win the Heisman Trophy on Saturday night, making Alabama the fifth school with consecutive winners of college football's most prestigious player of the year award.

"This is amazing," said Young, dressed in all black with a sparkling diamond chain around his neck, as he started his acceptance speech.

He thanked his father, Craig, for being his "best friend," his mother, Julie, for "always having my back,"

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and his offensive line for "protecting me."

Young received 684 first-place votes and 2,311 points to easily outdistance Michigan defensive end Aidan Hutchinson (78, 954), who became the third defensive player to be Heisman runner-up and first since Notre Dame linebacker Manti Te'o in 2012.

Pittsburgh quarterback Kenny Pickett (28, 631) finished third and Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud (12, 399) was fourth. Alabama linebacker Will Anderson Jr. (31, 325) was fifth, putting two defensive players in the top five for the first time since 1962.

A year after former teammate DeVonta Smith won the Heisman, Young received 83% of total points available, the seventh highest among 87 winners. He was named on 90% of all ballots, also the seventh highest in Heisman history.

Young has passed for 4,322 yards and 43 touchdowns this season, leading No 1 Alabama to a Southeastern Conference title and a spot in the College Football Playoff. The defending national champion Crimson Tide will play No. 4 Cincinnati on Dec. 31 in the Cotton Bowl.

Young is Alabama's fourth Heisman winner, all in the last 13 years under coach Nick Saban. Only four schools have won more: Notre Dame, Ohio State, Oklahoma and Southern California each have won seven.

The other schools to have Heisman winners in consecutive years are Yale (1936-37), Army (1945-46), Southern California (2004-05) — though Reggie Bush's 2005 victory was later vacated — and Oklahoma (2017-18).

Running backs Mark Ingram (2009) and Derrick Henry (2015) were Alabama's first two Heisman winners and Smith, a receiver, was No. 3 last year.

It seemed only a matter of time before a Tide quarterback took one home. Saban's Alabama dynasty has evolved into QB U.

Young, a sophomore, stepped into the starting role held by Mac Jones last year and Tua Tagovailoa the two seasons prior. Both are starting in the NFL after being selected in the first round of the draft.

"It was big for me understanding the quarterback tradition and the standard that was being a quarterback at the University of Alabama," Young said. "It was important for me to live up to that, to meet that standard."

Tagovailoa was the Heisman runner-up to Oklahoma's Kyler Murray in 2018 and then finished 10th in the voting in 2019, a season cut short by injury.

Jones put up even better numbers than Tagovailoa in 2020, but settled for third in the Heisman voting behind his favorite receiver, Smith, and Clemson quarterback Trevor Lawrence.

Then came Young, the five-star recruit from Southern California, who was Jones' lightly used back-up last year.

Leading an inexperienced offense that was replacing a mountain of NFL talent, Young wasn't afforded the luxury of growing into the job.

"A lot of the other teams that we've had have been older, with lots of really good players and the quarterback didn't need to be the focal point that Bryce had to be on this team this year," Saban said.

Young showed immediately he was up to the task. He threw for 344 yards and four touchdowns in his starting debut against Miami to begin the season, but it was the way he finished that won him the Heisman.

The race appeared mostly up for grabs heading into November. Michigan State's Kenneth Walker, who finished sixth, Stroud and even Young's teammate, Anderson, all briefly surged to the top of the leader boards.

Young led Alabama on a 97-yard, game-tying touchdown drive in an overtime victory against Auburn on Thanksgiving weekend, shaking off what was overall one of his poorest games of the season to deliver when it mattered most.

"In some ways you could say I was more nervous today (than before the drive against Auburn), because so much of this is out of your control," he said.

Even-keeled confidence might be Young's strongest trait.

"That's just always been there," his father, Craig Young, said earlier this week. "It's just been the ability to stay calm within chaos and not perceive it as chaos."

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Bryce Young followed up that clutch performance in the Iron Bowl with a masterpiece from start to finish. Young passed for an SEC championship game record 421 yards and the Crimson Tide tore up Georgia's vaunted defense in a 41-24 victory.

"He was fantastic down the stretch," Saban said.

The Heisman race went from wide open to done deal as Young helped Alabama pass yet another milestone with the greatest season ever for Tide quarterback.

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## Capitol rioters' social media posts influencing sentencings

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

For many rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, self-incriminating messages, photos and videos that they broadcast on social media before, during and after the insurrection are influencing even their criminal sentences.

Earlier this month, U.S. District Judge Amy Jackson read aloud some of Russell Peterson's posts about the riot before she sentenced the Pennsylvania man to 30 days imprisonment. "Overall I had fun lol," Peterson posted on Facebook.

The judge told Peterson that his posts made it "extraordinarily difficult" for her to show him leniency.

"The 'lol' particularly stuck in my craw because, as I hope you've come to understand, nothing about January 6th was funny," Jackson added. "No one locked in a room, cowering under a table for hours, was laughing."

Among the biggest takeaways so far from the Justice Department's prosecution of the insurrection is how large a role social media has played, with much of the most damning evidence coming from rioters' own words and videos.

FBI agents have identified scores of rioters from public posts and records subpoenaed from social media platforms. Prosecutors use the posts to build cases. Judge now are citing defendants' words and images as factors weighing in favor of tougher sentences.

As of Friday, more than 50 people have been sentenced for federal crimes related to the insurrection. In at least 28 of those cases, prosecutors factored a defendant's social media posts into their requests for stricter sentences, according to an Associated Press review of court records.

Many rioters used social media to celebrate the violence or spew hateful rhetoric. Others used it to spread misinformation, promote baseless conspiracy theories or play down their actions. Prosecutors also have accused a few defendants of trying to destroy evidence by deleting posts.

Approximately 700 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the riot. About 150 of them have pleaded guilty. More than 20 defendants have been sentenced to jail or prison terms or to time already served behind bars. Over a dozen others received home confinement sentences.

Rioters' statements, in person or on social media, aren't the only consideration for prosecutors or judges. Justice Department sentencing memos say defendants also should be judged by whether they engaged in any violence or damaged property, whether they destroyed evidence, how long they spent inside the Capitol, where they went inside the building and whether they have shown sincere remorse.

Prosecutors recommended probation for Indiana hair salon owner Dona Sue Bissey, but Judge Tanya Chutkan sentenced her to two weeks in jail for her participation in the riot. The judge noted that Bissey posted a screenshot of a Twitter post that read, "This is the First time the U.S. Capitol had been breached since it was attacked by the British in 1814."

"When Ms. Bissey got home, she was not struck with remorse or regret for what she had done," Chutkan said. "She is celebrating and bragging about her participation in what amounted to an attempted

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overthrow of the government.”

FBI agents obtained a search warrant for Andrew Ryan Bennett’s Facebook account after getting a tip that the Maryland man live-streamed video from inside the Capitol. Two days before the riot, Bennett posted a Facebook message that said, “You better be ready chaos is coming and I will be in DC on 1/6/2021 fighting for my freedom!”

Judge James Boasberg singled out that post as an “aggravating” factor weighing in favor of house arrest instead of a fully probationary sentence.

“The cornerstone of our democratic republic is the peaceful transfer of power after elections,” the judge told Bennett. “What you and others did on January 6th was nothing less than an attempt to undermine that system of government.”

Senior Judge Reggie Walton noted that Lori Ann Vinson publicly expressed pride in her actions at the Capitol during television news interviews and on Facebook.

“I understand that sometimes emotions get in the way and people do and say stupid things, because it was ridiculous what was said. But does that justify me giving a prison sentence or a jail sentence? That’s a hard question for me to ask,” Walton said.

Prosecutors asked for a one-month jail sentence for Vinson, but the judge sentenced the Kentucky nurse to five years of probation and ordered her to pay a \$5,000 fine and perform 120 hours of community service.

In the case of Felipe Marquez, the judge found social media posts belied serious mental health issues that needed treatment rather than incarceration. Marquez recorded cellphone videos of himself with other rioters inside the office of Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore. Back at home in Florida, Marquez posted a YouTube video in which he rapped about his riot experience to the tune of Shaggy’s “It Wasn’t Me.” with lyrics that included, “We even fist-bumped police,” and “We were taking selfies.”

In the video, Marquez wore a T-shirt that said, “Property of FBI.”

Prosecutors had recommended a four-month jail sentence, but U.S. District Judge Rudolph Contreras sentenced him instead to three months of home confinement with mental-health treatment, followed by probation. “I do think you have some serious issues you need to address. That played a large role in my sentencing decision,” he said.

Judge Jackson gave Andrew Wrigley a history lesson before she sentenced the Pennsylvania man to 18 months of probation. Wrigley posted a photo on social media of him holding a 1776 flag during the riot. The judge said the gesture didn’t honor the nation’s founders.

“The point of 1776 was to let the people decide who would rule them. But the point of the attack on the Capitol was to stop that from happening,” Jackson said. “The point of the attack on the Capitol was to subvert democracy, to substitute the will of the people with the will of the mob.”

Videos captured New Jersey gym owner Scott Fairlamb punching a police officer outside the Capitol. His Facebook and Instagram posts showed he was prepared to commit violence in Washington, D.C., and had no remorse for his actions, prosecutors said.

Senior Judge Royce Lamberth said other rioters in Fairlamb’s position would be “well advised” to join him in pleading guilty.

“You couldn’t have beat this if you went to trial on the evidence that I saw,” Lamberth said before sentencing Fairlamb to 41 months in prison.

But it worked to the advantage of one. Virginia charter boat captain Jacob Hiles likely avoided a stricter sentence by posting videos and photos of him and his cousin at the Capitol. A day after the riot, Hiles received a private Facebook message from a Capitol police officer who said he agreed with Hiles’ “political stance” and encouraged him to delete his incriminating posts, according to prosecutors.

The officer, Michael Angelo Riley, deleted his communications with Hiles, but investigators recovered the messages from Hiles’ Facebook account, prosecutors said. Riley was indicted in October on obstruction charges.

On Monday, Jackson sentenced Hiles to two years of probation. Prosecutors said the case against Riley may have been impossible without Hiles’ cooperation.

Associated Press writer Lindsay Whitehurst in Salt Lake City contributed to this report.

## Kentucky hardest hit as storms leave dozens dead in 5 states

By BRUCE SCHREINER and JIM SALTER Associated Press

MAYFIELD, Ky. (AP) — A monstrous tornado, carving a track that could rival the longest on record, ripped across the middle of the U.S. in a stormfront that killed dozens and tore apart a candle factory, crushed a nursing home, derailed a train and smashed an Amazon warehouse.

"I pray that there will be another rescue. I pray that there will be another one or two," Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said, as crews sifted through the wreckage of the candle factory in Mayfield, where 110 people were working overnight Friday when the storm hit. Forty of them were rescued.

"We had to, at times, crawl over casualties to get to live victims," said Jeremy Creason, the city's fire chief and EMS director.

In Kentucky alone, 22 were confirmed dead by Saturday afternoon, including 11 in and around Bowling Green. But Beshear said upwards of 70 may have been killed when a twister touched down for more than 200 miles (320 kilometers) in his state and that the number of deaths could eventually exceed 100 across 10 or more counties.

The death toll of 36 across five states includes six people in Illinois, where an Amazon facility was hit; four in Tennessee; two in Arkansas, where a nursing home was destroyed; and two in Missouri.

If early reports are confirmed, the twister "will likely go down perhaps as one of the longest track violent tornadoes in United States history," said Victor Genzini, a researcher on extreme weather at Northern Illinois University.

The longest tornado on record, in March 1925, tracked for about 220 miles (355 kilometers) through Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. But Genzini said this twister may have touched down for nearly 250 miles (400 kilometers). The storm was all the more remarkable because it came in December, when normally colder weather limits tornadoes, he said.

Debris from destroyed buildings and shredded trees covered the ground in Mayfield, a city of about 10,000 in western Kentucky. Twisted metal sheeting, downed power lines and wrecked vehicles lined the streets. Windows and roofs were blown off the buildings that were still standing.

The missing at the candle factory included Janine Denise Johnson Williams, a 50-year-old mother of four whose family members kept vigil at the site Saturday.

"It's Christmastime and she works at a place that's making candles for gifts," her brother, Darryl Williams, said. "To give up the gift of life to make a gift. We haven't heard anything, and I'm not presuming anything. But I'm expecting for the worst."

He said Johnson Williams called her husband overnight to report the weather was getting bad, the last time anyone heard from her.

Kyanna Parsons-Perez, an employee at the factory, was trapped under 5 feet (about 1.5 meters) of debris for at least two hours until rescuers managed to free her.

In an interview with NBC's "Today," she said it was "absolutely the most terrifying" event she had ever experienced. "I did not think I was going to make it at all."

Just before the tornado struck, the building's lights flickered. She felt a gust of wind, her ears started popping and then, "Boom. Everything came down on us." People started screaming, and she heard other workers praying.

Kentucky State Trooper Sarah Burgess said rescue crews were using heavy equipment to move rubble at the candle factory. Coroners were called to the scene and bodies were recovered, but she didn't know how many. She said it could take a day and potentially longer to remove all of the rubble.

Rescue efforts were complicated because Mayfield's main fire station and emergency services hub were also hit by the tornado, Creason said.

After a wall at a nursing home in Mayfield collapsed, Vernon Evans said he rushed to help firefighters

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pull people out, only to find one resident lying dead in a few inches of water.

"All I could do is sit there and hold their head up," he said. "I never experienced nothing like this."

President Joe Biden approved an emergency disaster declaration for Kentucky on Saturday and pledged to support the affected states.

"I promise you, whatever is needed — whatever is needed — the federal government is going to find a way to provide it," Biden said.

Six people were killed in the collapse of the Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville, Illinois, with another injured worker airlifted to a hospital, fire Chief James Whiteford said.

Investigators searched the rubble throughout the day for additional victims and 45 people survived, Whiteford said. Authorities were uncertain Saturday evening whether anyone was still unaccounted because workers were in the midst of a shift change when it was struck by the tornado about 8:30 p.m. Friday.

"This is a devastating tragedy for our Amazon family and our focus is on supporting our employees and partners," Amazon spokesperson Richard Rocha said in a written statement.

The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, which has been trying to organize workers at an Amazon facility in Alabama, criticized the company for keeping the Illinois site open during a weather emergency.

Missouri Gov. Mike Parson's office said the storms killed at least two people in the state and initial assessments indicate they destroyed or did major damage to hundreds of homes and buildings.

Workers at a National Weather Service office had to take shelter as a tornado passed near their office in Weldon Spring, Missouri, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) west of St. Louis.

"This was an incredible storm that lasted a long time and covered a lot of territory," said Larry Vannozzi, meteorologist in charge of the National Weather Service office covering the Nashville area.

Meteorologists haven't determined whether the storm spawned a single tornado or multiple tornadoes, he said.

In Arkansas, a tornado struck a nursing home in Monette, killing one and trapping 20 people inside as the building collapsed, Craighead County Judge Marvin Day told The Associated Press.

Another person died when the storm hit a Dollar General store in nearby Leachville, Gov. Asa Hutchinson said.

"Probably the most remarkable thing is that there's not a greater loss of life," Hutchinson said after touring the wreckage of the nursing home. "It is catastrophic. It's a total destruction."

Gov. Bill Lee on Saturday toured tornado-torn parts of western Tennessee in which four people had been killed.

Lee traveled to Tiptonville and then Dresden, a small town of about 3,000 that saw its downtown corridor ripped to shreds.

"This is about the saddest thing I've ever seen," said Lee, who has had three fatal tornadoes rip through the state during his first term in office. "The whole town, the whole town."

Dylan Lovan in Mayfield, Seth Borenstein in Washington, D.C.; Travis Loller in Nashville, Tennessee; Kimberlee Kruesi in Dresden, Tennessee; John Raby in Charleston, West Virginia; and Jeff McMurray in Chicago contributed to this report. Salter reported from O'Fallon, Missouri.

## In storm's aftermath, Kentucky residents struggle with loss

By BRUCE SCHREINER Associated Press

MAYFIELD, Ky. (AP) — Jarred Holmes was supposed to have been working inside a candle factory when it was ripped apart by a monstrous tornado that killed an untold number of employees and trapped many others under mounds of debris.

But Holmes' fiancée had insisted he stay home Friday night because of the looming weather.

"She told me she had a bad feeling," Holmes, 20, said Saturday outside the factory, where he awaited word on his coworkers. "I was going to go to work, but she basically demanded me to stay home."

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Kentucky residents affected by the twister grappled with its force and destruction and shared harrowing stories of survival even as some rushed out to help with rescue efforts. Gov. Andy Beshear said upwards of 70 people may have died when the tornado touched down for more than 200 miles (320 kilometers) in his state, but the number of deaths could exceed 100 across 10 or more counties.

Vernon Evans sifted through debris at one of the many residential houses that were torn to bits near Mayfield's downtown center. Earlier Saturday, he said he helped firefighters evacuate people from under a brick wall that collapsed at a nursing home. He recalled finding one resident dead and lying facedown in a few inches of water.

"All I could do is sit there and hold their head up," he said. "I never experienced nothing like this."

In Mayfield, heaps of debris from destroyed buildings and shredded trees covered the ground. Twisted metal sheeting, downed power lines and wrecked vehicles lined the streets. Windows and roofs were blown off the buildings that were still standing.

Bob Waldridge, pastor of Yahweh Baptist Church, loaded chairs, pews and sound equipment from the damaged 100-year-old church building into a trailer. He arrived at the church to find water everywhere.

"The wind came through, and everything that was in the foyer ended up in the back of the church," he said. "And it blew the back wall of the church out, and it took the roof off the church."

He said church members intend to have a prayer service Sunday, and several other local churches had reached out to offer their space. One family that attends church was in their home when it was leveled by the storm, and two members of that family were flown by helicopter to a hospital in Nashville, Tennessee, he said.

"It's just a building, but I'm more worried about the people. There are a lot of folks that are hurt right now," he said.

Graves County Circuit Judge Kevin Bishop, who lives just outside Mayfield, said his family rode out the storm in a bathroom.

"We hunkered down with as many pillows and blankets over everybody's heads and prayed," he said.

His home suffered minor damage, but the storm tore off the roof of the courthouse where he works. He said it will take a while for Mayfield to recover.

"We're strong, we'll work together, but it's going to be a long time," he said.

Courtney Saxton, 38, and five of her children got into a bathtub to try to stay safe when the twister struck. When she emerged, the roof of her Mayfield home was gone. Saxton's family sought shelter Saturday night at the St. Jerome Parish Hall in nearby Fancy Farm.

Her kids, ranging in age from 3 to 13, were adjusting to their new surroundings. A TV played kids' movies and a table was arrayed with coloring books, crayons and games. The children were not injured, but she recalled their terror.

"They were scared, screaming, crying," she said. "It was awful. I was trying to calm them down, but the whole time I'm praying. I knew that God would see us through."

Her husband, Mark, was working at the candle factory and got trapped under debris for hours before he was rescued. He had cuts and scrapes but was otherwise OK.

"He was calling us hollering and screaming and crying because he was stuck," she said. "It was scary for me because I'm thinking, 'Oh my God, is he going to make it? So I prayed with him over the phone, too. I just kept talking to him, kept telling him that God will work it out, be strong, don't give up, keep fighting.'"

## Watchdog: Federal anti-terror unit investigated journalists

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A special Customs and Border Protection unit used sensitive government databases intended to track terrorists to investigate as many as 20 U.S.-based journalists, including a Pulitzer Prize-winning Associated Press reporter, according to a federal watchdog.

Yahoo News, which published an extensive report on the investigation, also found that the unit, the Counter Network Division, queried records of congressional staffers and perhaps members of Congress.

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Jeffrey Rambo, an agent who acknowledged running checks on journalists in 2017, told federal investigators the practice is routine. "When a name comes across your desk you run it through every system you have access too, that's just status quo, that's what everyone does," Rambo was quoted by Yahoo News as saying.

The AP obtained a redacted copy of a more than 500-page report by the Homeland Security Department's inspector general that included the same statement, but with the speaker's name blacked out. The border protection agency is part of Homeland Security.

The revelations raised alarm in news organizations and prompted a demand for a full explanation.

"We are deeply concerned about this apparent abuse of power," Lauren Easton, AP's director of media relations, said in a statement. "This appears to be an example of journalists being targeted for simply doing their jobs, which is a violation of the First Amendment."

In its own statement, Customs and Border Protection did not specifically address the investigation, but said, "CBP vetting and investigatory operations, including those conducted by the Counter Network Division, are strictly governed by well-established protocols and best practices. CBP does not investigate individuals without a legitimate and legal basis to do so."

An employee at Storymakers Coffee Roasters, a small storefront shop Rambo owns in San Diego's Barrio Logan neighborhood, said Saturday that Rambo was not immediately available to comment. He lives in San Diego.

The new disclosures are just the latest examples of federal agencies using their power to examine the contacts of journalists and others.

Earlier this year Attorney General Merrick Garland formally prohibited prosecutors from seizing the records of journalists in leak investigations, with limited exceptions, reversing years of department policy. That action came after an outcry over revelations that the Trump Justice Department had obtained records belonging to journalists, as well as Democratic members of Congress and their aides and a former White House counsel, Don McGahn.

During the Obama administration, federal investigators secretly seized phone records for some reporters and editors at the AP. Those seizures involved office and home lines as well as cellphones.

Rambo's and the unit's use of the databases was more extensive than previously known. The inspector general referred possible criminal charges for misusing government databases and lying to investigators, but the Justice Department declined to prosecute Rambo and two other Homeland Security employees.

Rambo complained to Yahoo News that Customs and Border Protection has not stood by him and that he has been unfairly portrayed in news reports.

"What none of these articles identify me as, is a law enforcement officer who was cleared of wrongdoing, who actually had a true purpose to be doing what I was doing," he said, "and CBP refuses to acknowledge that, refuses to admit that, refuses to make that wrong right."

Rambo had previously been identified as the agent who accessed the travel records of reporter Ali Watkins, then working for Politico, and questioned her about confidential sources. Watkins now writes for The New York Times.

Rambo was assigned to the border agency unit, part of the National Targeting Center in Sterling, Virginia, in 2017. He told investigators he initially approached Watkins as part of a broader effort to get reporters to write about forced labor around the world as a national security issue.

He also described similar efforts with AP reporter Martha Mendoza, according to an unredacted summary obtained by Yahoo News. Rambo's unit "was able to vet MENDOZA as a reputable reporter," the summary said, before trying to establish a relationship with her because of her expertise in writing about forced labor. Mendoza won her second Pulitzer Prize in 2016 as part of a team that reported on slave labor in the fishing industry in Southeast Asia.

Dan White, Rambo's supervisor in Washington, told investigators that his unit ran Mendoza through multiple databases, and "CBP discovered that one of the phone numbers on Mendoza's phone was connected with a terrorist," Yahoo News reported. White's case also was referred for prosecution and declined.



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In response, AP's Easton said, "The Associated Press demands an immediate explanation from U.S. Customs and Border Protection as to why journalists including AP investigative reporter Martha Mendoza were run through databases used to track terrorists and identified as potential confidential informant recruits."

It was Rambo's outreach to Watkins that led to the inspector general's investigation. While he ostensibly sought her out to further his work on forced labor, Rambo quickly turned the focus to a leak investigation. Rambo even gave it a name, "Operation Whistle Pig," for the brand of whiskey he drank when he met Watkins at a Washington, D.C., bar in June 2017.

The only person charged and convicted stemming from Rambo's efforts is James Wolfe, a former security director for the Senate Intelligence Committee who had a personal relationship with Watkins. Wolfe pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his contacts with reporters.

In the course of conversations with FBI agents, Rambo was questioned extensively about his interest in Watkins. He used the travel records to confront her about her relationship with Wolfe, asserting that Wolfe was her source for stories. Watkins acknowledged the relationship, but insisted Wolfe did not provide information for her stories.

Rambo said Watkins was not the only reporter whose records he researched through government databases, though he maintained in his interviews with the FBI that he was looking only at whether Wolfe was providing classified information. Rambo said he "conducted CBP record checks" on "15 to 20 national security reporters," according to a FBI summary of the questioning that was contained in the inspector general's report.

New York Times spokeswoman Danielle Rhoades-Ha said new details about the investigation of Watkins raised fresh concerns.

"We are deeply troubled to learn how U.S. Customs and Border Protection ran this investigation into a journalist's sources. As the attorney general has said clearly, the government needs to stop using leak investigations as an excuse to interfere with journalism. It is time for Customs and Border Protection to make public a full record of what happened in this investigation so this sort of improper conduct is not repeated."

Watkins said she, too, was "deeply troubled at the lengths CBP and DHS personnel apparently went to try and identify journalistic sources and dig into my personal life. It was chilling then, and it remains chilling now."

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Associated Press writer Elliot Spagat in San Diego contributed to this report.

## **Anxiety high in Guatemala over victims of Mexico truck crash**

By SONIA PEREZ D. and MANUEL DE LA CRUZ Associated Press

CHEPOL, Guatemala (AP) — Anxiety was high Saturday in Guatemala amid uncertainty about loved ones who might have been on the tractor-trailer that crashed in southern Mexico while jammed with smuggled migrants, killing 55 people and injuring more than 100.

Most of those on the truck are believed to have been from Guatemala, according to authorities, who are working to identify the dead from Thursday's disaster in Mexico's Chiapas state.

Victor Manuel Mateo Tiniguar, who lives in an Indigenous area of the northern Guatemalan department of Quiché, said Saturday that he is convinced his brother was among the victims.

"My brother was in the accident," Mateo Tiniguar said, adding that he is sure one of the men shown in photographs from the accident scene was his brother, Elias. "Yes, it was him. He was lying down, but we don't know if he was gravely injured or dead."

Mateo Tiniguar and his family live in a house in the lower part of a ravine in the poor village of Chepol. With no work and little money, they scratched to buy any time for a cellphone so they could search the internet for information. They clung to the hope that Elias Salvador was alive and that he was one of the three injured migrants who are still unidentified.

But two days after the tragedy, they live in anguish because they cannot shake the fear that he is among the dead.

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The bodies of the 55 migrants who lost their lives are scattered in three morgues while Mexican and Guatemalan officials work on identifications.

A forensic service worker, who insisted on speaking anonymously because he was not authorized to give statements to the press, told The Associated Press in the Chiapas capital of Tuxtla Gutierrez that the morgue there had to ask for help because it did not have enough capacity.

The process is being complicated and slow because many of the bodies did not have identifications and others are in poor condition, said a Chiapas state official, who also agreed to discuss the matter only if not quoted by name because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

Although some of the injured reported they were accompanied by relatives or friends, many are still not well enough to see if they can identify any of the dead, the official added.

Guatemalan authorities have made several phones available to citizens, and Mexican officials say relatives of six victims have already come to Mexico.

But in Quiché and other poor areas of Guatemala, answers are lacking.

Mateo Tiniguar said his brother Elias had left home Wednesday with a change of clothes in an old backpack. The would-be migrant did not pay for his trip, but went into debt for about \$12,000 that he had to pay if he managed to enter the United States, the brother said.

He said Elias didn't tell anyone else he was leaving. He said his brother felt they had to do something to get out of their poverty, especially since their father had a stroke and needs medicine.

"My young kid left to be able to buy my husband's medicine," said Dominga Tiniguar, mother of the missing man.

Hundreds of people are estimated to migrate from Guatemala each day, driven out by the Central American country's extreme poverty. The nearly 3 million Guatemalans living in the United States have sustained their homeland during the pandemic, sending back \$11 billion, which is a little more than 14% of the country's economy, the central bank says.

Mateo Tiniguar said none of his nine brothers learned to read and write. Their father, who shined shoes in Guatemala City, couldn't earn enough to send them to school. He said his brother felt he had an opportunity when a migrant smuggler offered to help him find a job in Chicago that would pay more than the \$5 he could earn daily on farming tasks in his community.

A neighbor, Martín Méndez, was another migrant from Chepol who was in the doomed trailer, but suffered only minor injuries and was recovering Saturday at a hospital in Chiapas.

Many of those who died were glued to the walls of the shattered trailer. Those who were in the center were saved, protected by the bodies of their companions.

"My face is swollen but the wounds are healing, I'm no longer in pain," Mendez said by phone from a hospital corridor where mats have been down on the floor for the less seriously injured.

The 25-year-old is in constant contact with his family in Chepol and counts down the hours to be allowed to leave the hospital. "I want to go home," he said.

Knowing his neighbors are worried about Elías Salvador Mateo Tiniguar, Mendez said he has asked officials about the missing man but they have not been able to give him information. He said he last saw Elias lying seriously wounded and unable to speak.

Mendez's brother Pedro has been working with Elias' brother to search various online media for information about Elias. Pedro said the two have considered going to Mexico to look for information.

Mexican and Guatemalan officials say they are investigating the network of traffickers that operated the trailer, one of the routes through which thousands of migrants cross Mexico daily to the border with the United States despite attempts by governments in the region to contain the flows.

Authorities also are working to expedite aid to the injured and provide help with identification papers. Mexico also has offered humanitarian visas to survivors who want to stay in Mexico.

For relatives, the urgent thing is to learn the fate of their loved ones.

"I want you to please help me look for him, whether he is alive or dead," said Mateo Tiniguar.

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Associated Press writer Sonia Perez D. reported this story in Chepol, Guatemala, and AP writer Manuel

de la Cruz reported from Tuxtla Gutierrez, Mexico.

## **Aid groups mobilize to help victims of Midwest tornadoes**

The Associated Press undefined

Disaster-aid and humanitarian groups are mobilizing to help tornado victims and setting up dedicated fund for donations to support their efforts.

Here's a look at some of the relief being provided and ways to donate.

The American Red Cross is making it easy to send a quick \$10 donation simply by texting "REDCROSS" addressed to the number, 90999. Other donations can be made by calling 800-733-2767 or visiting redcross.org online. Other information, including suggestions on how to find someone affected by the storm, can be found here.

The Salvation Army has set up a disaster relief fund for the tornado victims. Donations can made here or by calling 800-725-2769. It is also preparing to dispatch mobile kitchens that can serve 500 to 1,500 meals per day to the survivors and first responders in the affected areas.

World Vision, a Christian humanitarian group, plans to begin shipping relief supplies to churches in Kentucky beginning Sunday. Besides food and emergency kits, the supplies will include heaters, blankets, solar lights and mini-refrigerators. Donations to help support those efforts can be made here.

Samaritan's Purse, another humanitarian group, said it sent disaster response teams on Saturday to Mayfield, Kentucky, and Monette, Arkansas, while other teams started to head to the devastation in Tennessee and Illinois. A tractor-trailer stocked with tools and equipment departed from Texas, according to the group, with more help on the way from North Carolina when weather allows. Donations can be made here.

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear announced the creation of a tornado relief fund for the western part of the state and also called on people to donate blood, which has been running in short supply during the pandemic.

"There are going to be a lot of deaths," Beshear said. "There are also going to be a lot of injuries."

The governor also said people in the affected areas can help by staying off the roads, whenever possible.

## **UK seeks unity at G7 meeting over Russia's 'malign behavior'**

By JILL LAWLESS and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

LIVERPOOL, England (AP) — Top diplomats from the Group of Seven industrialized nations met Saturday in Liverpool for talks dominated by Russia's buildup of troops near Ukraine's border and what host country Britain called Moscow's "malign behavior" around the world.

The U.K. called for "a show of unity against global aggressors" as it welcomed U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and other G-7 foreign ministers amid the Russia-Ukraine crisis and tensions with China and Iran.

"We need to defend ourselves against the growing threats from hostile actors," British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said as she opened the meeting of foreign ministers from the U.K., the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. "And we need to come together strongly to stand up to aggressors who are seeking to limit the bounds of freedom and democracy."

The U.S. and its NATO allies are concerned that the movement of Russian troops and weapons to the border region with Ukraine may be a prelude to an invasion and have said they would inflict heavy sanctions on Russia's economy if that happens.

Moscow denies having any plans to attack Ukraine and accuses Kyiv of its own allegedly aggressive designs.

A senior U.S. official who participated in Saturday's discussions said the G-7 ministers were united in their "extreme concern" about developments on the Russia-Ukraine border. The official said the ministers agreed that any Russian invasion of Ukraine would be met with a response that would bring "massive con-

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sequences and severe costs" from the G-7.

The official would not elaborate on what those consequences might be but said they would be implemented "very, very fast" if Russia did not heed warnings to back down.

The U.S. and its allies have played down talk of a military response to defend Ukraine, with efforts focusing on tough sanctions that would hit the Russian economy, rather than just individuals.

In the U.S., reporters asked President Joe Biden on Saturday about the possibility of sending combat troops to Ukraine, and he said that idea was never considered. "Are you ready to send American troops into war and go into Ukraine to fight Russians on the battlefield," he said.

Biden said he has made it clear to Putin that in the event of an invasion, "the economic consequences for his economy are going to be devastating. Devastating."

European Union foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell, who is also attending the two-day conference, said the ministers were determined "to make Russia understand that anything that could represent an attack to Ukraine would have a high price."

Getting a unified response from the G-7, a group of countries with disparate interests, has often proved tough. Germany plans on getting gas from Russia soon through the contentious Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which bypasses Ukraine. Britain, which is not dependent on Russian gas, generally takes a tougher line on the pipeline — but faces tough questions about London's financial district and property market, both hubs for Russian money.

Truss said she wanted to work with other countries "to make sure that free democratic nations are able to have an alternative to Russian gas supplies." She met on the sidelines of the gathering with Germany's new foreign minister, Annalena Baerbock, a politician from the environmentalist Greens who previously opposed Nord Stream 2.

Alongside efforts to agree on tough sanctions should Russia invade, efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the Russia-Ukraine crisis appear to be accelerating. The State Department announced Saturday that the top American diplomat for Europe, Karen Donfried, will visit both Kyiv and Moscow next week "to reinforce the United States' commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity" and to seek a resolution. Donfried will go later to Brussels to talk with NATO and European Union allies.

China's muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region and the ailing Iran nuclear deal were also on the agenda for the weekend meeting at the dockside Museum of Liverpool.

The gathering is taking place as negotiators meet in Vienna to try to revive an international deal to limit Iran's nuclear ambitions. Blinken met German, French and British diplomats in Liverpool to discuss next steps over Iran, and the Biden administration's special envoy on Iran, Robert Malley, also stopped in the city on his way to Vienna.

Truss warned this week that the Vienna talks are "the last chance for Iran to sign up" again to the deal, which was meant to rein in Tehran's nuclear program in return for loosened economic sanctions.

Truss also invited ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to the Liverpool meeting, though many were joining remotely because of the pandemic. Delegates and journalists face daily virus tests and mask mandates at the conference, as Britain records more cases of the omicron virus variant, which scientists say will become the dominant strain in the U.K. in the next week or so.

Britain is keen to work more closely with Asian nations as part of an "Indo-Pacific tilt" following the U.K.'s departure from the 27-nation European Union last year — both to boost U.K. trade and as a counterweight to China's dominance.

Truss told her G-7 counterparts that democracies needed to fight "economic coercion" and "win the battle of technology" — both pointed references to Beijing's growing influence around the globe. The G-7 has launched a "Build Back Better World" initiative to offer developing nations funding for big infrastructure projects as an alternative to money from China that, the West argues, often comes with strings attached.

A unified stance towards China continues to prove elusive, however, with the U.S. and Britain generally more hawkish than other G-7 members.

The U.K. chose a setting steeped in British history and culture for final meeting of its year as G-7 presi-

dent. Liverpool's docklands, once a symbol of Britain's global reach and economic might, came to represent the country's post-industrial decline, but now the area along the River Mersey is a prime example of 21st century urban renewal.

A museum dedicated to the city's most famous sons, the Beatles Story Museum, was the setting for the G-7 ministers' dinner on Saturday night. Delegates were serenaded by a Fab Four cover band before eating a locally sourced meal in a recreation of Liverpool's famous Cavern Club, where the band played many of its early gigs.

## Pharrell to college grads: 'We are the emerging majority'

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — Grammy-winning musician Pharrell Williams on Saturday told the newest graduates of a historically Black university in Virginia to act like "the emerging majority" and help develop the area's businesses and culture.

Williams gave the fall commencement speech at Norfolk State University, not far from where the producer and rapper grew up in adjoining Virginia Beach.

"I didn't attend Norfolk State, but I was always present," Williams said. "I am honored to have made this part of my work, my story and still today, I can't wait to see how far you amazing, impressive graduates of Norfolk State ... how far you'll go."

Williams received an honorary doctorate from the school and was also named an honorary member of Norfolk State's marching band — which brought him to tears, The Virginian-Pilot of Norfolk reported.

Before the presentation, Williams said he remembered the band as a child and wondered why the band at his Virginia Beach high school lacked the same "cadence" as Norfolk State.

"I wanted to be able to make people feel the way Norfolk State's band made me feel," he said.

Williams said the city of Norfolk will thrive because it recognizes how important it is to acknowledge past and local heroes: "Norfolk will not be the city that limits its peoples' own potential, but instead, it will feed it."

He told listeners to do their part by spending money at local businesses that care, and by changing outdated language, like the word "minorities."

"We are the emerging majority," he said. "Don't wait until Election Day. Vote with your wallets today, tomorrow and the next day."

Williams has had a fraught relationship with the city of Virginia Beach recently. He criticized the city months ago for its response to the death of his cousin, who was shot by a police officer in March at the city's oceanfront. Two weeks ago, it was announced that a grand jury determined the officer was justified in the fatal shooting.

Williams wrote city officials last month saying he won't bring his Something in the Water music festival back to the city's oceanfront, partly because of how the city handled the investigation.

## Man killed in shooting involving police near UK royal palace

LONDON (AP) — British police say a man was shot dead during a confrontation with firearms officers on Saturday near the Kensington Palace royal residence in London.

The Metropolitan Police force said officers were called to reports that a man with a firearm had entered a bank and bookmakers in the Kensington area of west London.

He fled in a vehicle, which was stopped by officers nearby in a wealthy area that is home to several embassies and the palace, which is the official London residence of Prince William, his wife Kate and their three children. It is also home to several other members of the royal family.

The force said "shots were fired and a man sustained gunshot wounds." He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Police say the incident is not being treated as terrorism.

The force said the police standards body has been called in, as is usual for shootings involving the police.

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## Judge OKs regulators' subpoena for 'Rust' assistant director

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — The assistant director who handed Alec Baldwin a prop gun that killed a cinematographer on a New Mexico film set must make himself available for an interview with state workplace safety regulators, a judge has decided.

District Judge Bryan Biedscheid on Friday granted a request by the Occupational Health and Safety Bureau of the state Environment Department to issue a subpoena to Dave Halls, assistant director for the movie "Rust," local news outlets reported.

Cinematographer Halyna Hutchins was killed and director Joel Souza was wounded in the Oct. 21 shooting on the Bonanza Creek Ranch film set near Santa Fe.

Safety officials tried twice since Nov. 2 to interview Halls for their investigation but he declined both times through his attorney and said he wouldn't agree to an interview until a criminal investigation into the shooting is complete, a compliance officer wrote Wednesday in an affidavit in support of the subpoena request.

The interview with Halls is needed because he had responsibilities for set safety, knew who was present during the shooting and had handled the gun, the application said.

Rebecca Roose, deputy cabinet secretary of the Environment Department, told the Santa Fe New Mexican that the department proposed a Tuesday interview but that the judge could set another date or Halls' attorney could fight the subpoena.

Halls' attorney, Lisa Torracco, on Saturday did not immediately respond to a voicemail left by The Associated Press seeking comment.

However, KOB-TV reported that Torracco told the station that Halls will cooperate with state investigators.

Baldwin has said he didn't know the gun contained a live round and that investigators must find out who put it in the weapon.

## French conservative candidate vows to end Macron's centrism

By BARBARA SURK and CHRISTOPHE ENA Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — In her first address as a presidential candidate for France's main conservative party, Valérie Pécresse vowed Saturday to break with President Emmanuel Macron's centrist policies and to defeat the extremism of the far-right candidates in the race.

France is holding its presidential race on April 10, with a runoff if needed on April 24. Pécresse, head of the Paris region and a former conservative minister, is first woman chosen to run as The Republicans' presidential candidate.

Since the announcement last week, Pécresse has been gaining in popularity and some polls even have her in a runoff with Macron in the second round of voting. The French president is expected to seek a second term although he has not yet officially declared his candidacy.

Speaking at a conference hall in a Paris hotel, Pécresse assured party members that she will first beat her rivals on the far-right in order to end The Republicans' streak of presidential defeats.

"We are back on the battlefield to win and the voters know it," she said. "It will be Emmanuel Macron or us!"

Two far-right contenders — Marine Le Pen, the head of the National Rally party who lost to Macron in the 2017 runoff, and former TV pundit Eric Zemmour — are campaigning on anti-Islam, anti-migrant themes.

On the left, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo is the presidential candidate for the Socialist party and the Greens chose European lawmaker Yannick Jadot, a former Greenpeace activist. The far-left leader of the Rebel France party, Jean-Luc Melenchon, is seeking the presidency for the third time.

An experienced politician, Pécresse, 54, has been the minister for higher education, for the budget and was a government spokesperson under former President Nicolas Sarkozy from 2007 to 2012. Pécresse left The Republicans in 2019 amid leadership divisions after the party had a poor showing in EU elections. She rejoined the party this year.

Known as a pro-European, Pécresse in recent months has hardened her positions on immigration and security. She vowed to crack down on illegal immigration but also to step up the integration of immigrants.

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and break down the barriers faced by the immigrant “ghettos” around France’s urban centers.

She also warned against the rise of what she called “Islamism” in France.

“I am determined to stop the rise of Islamism,” she said. “In France, women are free and the laws of the Republic are respected.”

If elected president, Péresse said she would end France’s 35-hour workweek so employees work and earn more.

And internationally, she told the audience of about 1,000 party members and supporters, “I want a strong France.”

“I want us to play a leading role in the world, not as vassals of the United States ... and not as subordinates of China and not playing second fiddle in Europe,” she said.

Surk reported from Nice, France.

## **EXPLAINER: What’s behind ‘sordid’ evidence at Potter trial?**

By STEVE KARNOWSKI and AMY FORLITI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — After prosecutors spent nearly a day reconstructing the moments after a suburban Minneapolis police officer shot and killed Daunte Wright, one of her attorneys had heard enough. Paul Engh asked for a mistrial, decrying the “sordid pictures” that he said were irrelevant and were shown repeatedly to inflame the jury’s sympathies.

But those details and the testimony of secondary witnesses, which may not directly affect whether the jury finds former Brooklyn Center Officer Kim Potter guilty or acquits her, are part of a bigger-picture prosecution strategy to not only convict her of manslaughter, but to send her to prison for a longer term than she could get otherwise.

Minnesota judges must follow state sentencing guidelines with a range that offers little leeway without having to explain their reasons. If prosecutors want to get a sentence longer than the range allows, they have to persuade a judge that aggravating factors warrant a tougher sentence. And that’s what prosecutor Matthew Frank said he was doing.

Frank and his fellow prosecutors on Thursday presented a stream of officers, emergency medical workers and civilians who gave extensive details — accompanied by sometimes graphic videos and photos — about what happened in the minutes between Potter shooting Wright and paramedics declaring him dead at the scene where Potter and other officers tried to arrest the 20-year-old during a traffic stop.

Potter and the officer she was training, Anthony Luckey, stopped Wright the afternoon of April 11 for expired license tags and an air freshener hanging from his mirror. Testimony and video evidence shows that Wright got out of the car but tried to break away and get back in when the officers told him there was a warrant for his arrest on a gross misdemeanor weapons possession violation.

Potter and her attorneys have said she meant to use her Taser to stop him but accidentally grabbed her gun before she shot Wright in the chest.

Much of Thursday’s testimony focused on what happened after Potter shot Wright and he then drove off and crashed into an oncoming car about a block away. The defense objected multiple times, arguing that the testimony and some of the images shown were needlessly repetitive and inflammatory.

Engh told Judge Regina Chu that the issue at hand was Potter’s thought process in the moment that she yelled “Taser, Taser, Taser” and pulled the trigger of her gun.

But Engh said the state had spent “an inordinate amount of time presenting prejudicial evidence” about the crash, which he said was caused by the gravely wounded Wright’s excessive speed. “I didn’t see any evidence directed towards the proof of guilt today, but rather evidence of sordid pictures and prejudicial impact that had little relevance,” he said.

Frank countered that because the state is seeking a lengthier sentence, the evidence was relevant to show that Potter’s actions recklessly created a danger to others. He said she shot Wright when he was still in a position to operate his car, and that she violated her position of trust as an officer. He blamed

her for the crash, in which Wright's girlfriend and an elderly passenger in the oncoming car were seriously injured. The state also contends that Potter's actions endangered Luckey and another officer who was assisting in the arrest.

The driver, who was in the car Wright struck but wasn't seriously injured, testified that the crash accelerated her husband's declining health. Her daughter's testimony backed that up. Wright's girlfriend said she still suffers from the effects of her broken jaw. Jurors saw a photo of her bleeding from the mouth.

The testimony of officers who rushed to the crash scene, and videos, suggested that Potter's actions might have put them at risk and delayed attempts to save Wright's life. They told the jury they didn't know at first that Wright had been shot and they weren't sure what they were dealing with at the crash scene. They said that because of the possibility that Wright was armed — he wasn't — they held back with guns drawn for about 8 1/2 minutes before pulling him from his car and trying to resuscitate him.

The first-degree manslaughter count requires prosecutors to prove that Potter acted recklessly. The second-degree manslaughter count requires them to prove culpable negligence. Neither charge requires proof that she intended to kill. The sentencing guidelines call for seven years and two months in prison on the first charge and four years on the other.

Prosecutors must prove aggravating circumstances — known as "Blakely factors" under a 2004 Minnesota Supreme Court decision — to get a sentence of more than eight years and seven months. The statutory maximum is 15 years on the most serious count. They haven't said how much extra prison time they'll seek if Potter is convicted.

A similar process happened in the trial this year of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, who was convicted of second-degree murder in the death of George Floyd. Frank and other prosecutors in that case asked Judge Peter Cahill for a longer sentence than the 12 1/2 years recommended under the sentencing guidelines. The judge sentenced Chauvin to 22 1/2 years, saying prosecutors established that Chauvin abused his position of authority and treated Floyd with particular cruelty, that several children witnessed the crime live, and that Chauvin knew that kneeling on Floyd's neck was dangerous.

Find the AP's full coverage of the Daunte Wright case: <https://apnews.com/hub/death-of-daunte-wright>

This story has been updated to correct details about the people who were in the car that was struck by Daunte Wright.

## **Pandamania: Twin cubs in French zoo take 1st steps in public**

PARIS (AP) — First, a steady crawl. Then a short clumsy slide across the slick stone floor at their home at the Beauval Zoo near Paris. Then finally the big show as the twin giant panda cubs took their first steps in public on Saturday.

The female twins were born in August. Their mother, Huan Huan, and father, Yuan Zi, are at the Beauval Zoo, south of Paris, on a 10-year loan from China aimed at highlighting good ties with France. The twin cubs, named Huanlili and Yuandudu, are their second and third cubs after the first panda ever born in France, Yuan Meng, in 2017.

In a video, released by the zoo on Saturday, the twin cubs are seen clumsily making their way around the territory. At some point both attempt to climb nearby rocks as a caretaker looks on and films them with a smartphone.

The cubs will spend a few years in France before being sent to China.

France's soccer star Kylian Mbappe and the Chinese Olympic champion in diving, Zhang Jiaqi, are the twins' godparents after the athletes announced the female cubs' names during a ceremony in November.

There are about 1,800 pandas living in the wild in China and about 500 in captivity worldwide.

China for decades gifted friendly nations with its unofficial national mascot in what was known as "panda diplomacy." More recently the country has loaned pandas to zoos on commercial terms.



## **Banksy creates T-shirt to help statue-toppling defendants**

LONDON (AP) — Hundreds of people lined up Saturday in the English city of Bristol to get the latest work by elusive street artist Banksy — a T-shirt created to help four defendants charged over the toppling of a local statue of a slave trader.

The gray shirt features the word Bristol above the empty plinth on which the statue of 17th-century slave merchant Edward Colston long stood, with a rope hanging from it and debris scattered around.

Anti-racism demonstrators pulled down the statue and dumped it in Bristol harbor in June 2020 amid global protests sparked by the police killing of a Black American man, George Floyd.

Four people have been charged with criminal damage over the statue's felling and are going on trial next week.

"I've made some souvenir shirts to mark the occasion," Banksy said on social media Friday. "Available from various outlets in the city from tomorrow. All proceeds to the defendants so they can go for a pint."

Banksy said the T-shirts cost 25 pounds (\$33) and are limited to one per customer.

Banksy's identity has never been confirmed, but he began his career spray-painting walls and bridges in Bristol, a port city in southwest England. Some of his works have sold for millions of dollars at auction.

Colston made a fortune transporting enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to the Americas on Bristol-based ships. He was a major benefactor to Bristol, with streets and institutions named for him — some of which have been renamed since the statue-felling sparked a debate about racism and historical commemoration.

City authorities fished the Colston statue out of the harbor and say it will be placed in a museum, along with placards from the Black Lives Matter demonstration.

Follow all AP stories about racial injustice at <https://apnews.com/hub/Racialinjustice>.

## **4 women met Maxwell as teens. They're accusing her as adults**

By TOM HAYS and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — One was an aspiring musician looking for her big break in show business. Another was a model striving for a leg up in British society. A third was a struggling middle school dropout. The last was an impressionable high school student.

All were drawn into Jeffrey Epstein's orbit as teenagers and now have also testified as key accusers in the sex-abuse trial of British socialite Ghislaine Maxwell.

The women's testimony in federal court in Manhattan, at times emotional, offered sordid details about allegations Maxwell groomed them to participate in sexual massages with Epstein. The defense says Maxwell is being made to take the fall for Epstein, who died by suicide awaiting his own sex-abuse trial in 2019.

The first three women testified as Jane, Kate and Carolyn — first names or pseudonyms intended to protect their privacy. The last was Annie Farmer, who took the witness stand using her real name.

Here is what they said during two weeks of testimony for the government, which rested its case Friday. The defense is set to begin its own case next week:

JANE

Jane spelled out an alleged pattern of deception by Maxwell that would be echoed by the others. She said she was 14 when she met Maxwell and Epstein at a music camp where Epstein was a benefactor.

Maxwell showered her with attention in a way that left her vulnerable the moment she was first instructed to follow Epstein into his pool house in his Palm Beach, Florida estate in 1994, she said.

When he began to sexually abuse her, "I was frozen in fear," she said. "I'd never seen a penis before."

Prosecutors wanted evidence that Maxwell was a direct participant. Jane gave it to them by claiming Maxwell and Epstein fondled her together.

When a prosecutor asked her why, as the defense pointed out, she didn't initially reveal everything about her experiences with Epstein in initial interviews with law enforcement, she said fighting back tears: "Because it was too difficult — too difficult emotionally, too difficult on every level."

KATE

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Like the others, Kate recalled Maxwell praising and encouraging her, before Epstein sexually abused her during interactions that started in the early 1990s when she was 17.

The British woman described being intrigued by Maxwell, the daughter of a media mogul, and wanting to be her friend. She also testified about seeing Epstein naked for the first time after Maxwell stood next to him and asked her to massage him — and about feeling ashamed when it was over.

But there was a twist to her testimony when the judge ruled in favor of defense arguments that she shouldn't be allowed to testify about details of any sexual contact with Epstein.

U.S. District Judge Alison Nathan set that limit on her testimony because she was 17 when she first interacted with Epstein in Maxwell's London home — the minimum age of consent in Britain. The same applied to later visits to Epstein's Florida home when she was 18.

Kate still may have struck a blow for the government with her account of an interaction with Maxwell after a sexual massage with Epstein.

Maxwell "asked me if I had fun" and told her: "You are such a good girl."

CAROLYN

A key role for Carolyn was to provide testimony about what prosecutors called "a pyramid of abuse," allegedly encouraged by Maxwell.

While 14, she was one of several underprivileged teens who lived near Epstein's Florida home in the early 2000s. Word spread that he was offering \$100 bills for massages.

When an older schoolmate offered an introduction, Carolyn said she took the bait. She testified she made her age known, but that didn't dissuade Maxwell and Epstein, she said.

Epstein, she said, masturbated and fondled her "every time" they got together. He also wanted her to bring along "any friends that were my age or younger," she said.

She said found a friend for a threesome with Epstein. When it was over, "I was paid \$600 and my friend was paid \$300." Why? "Because I brought her."

She would learn that she hit her expiration at age 18 when Epstein, rather than hire her for massages, asked her to bring younger girls.

"And that's when I realized I was too old," she said.

ANNIE FARMER

Farmer, now 42, is a psychologist who had told her story publicly before the trial through civil litigation against Epstein and in media interviews. She repeated how Epstein and Maxwell led her to believe they could be mentors, only to betray her trust.

On the stand, she walked the jury through her history with Epstein while 16 and in high school in 1996. She described how she was creeped out when Epstein held her hand at the movies in New York; when Maxwell touched her breasts while giving her a massage at Epstein's New Mexico ranch; and when Epstein unexpectedly crawled into bed with her and pressed himself against her.

Feeling helpless, she made an excuse to go to the bathroom and hid there, thinking she "wanted to be in there long enough that this situation would be over," she said.

The defense tried to rattle Farmer by suggesting she exaggerated her allegations in a \$1.5 million claim awarded by a compensation fund set up for victims of Epstein by saying Maxwell had "groped" her and that Epstein had rubbed his genitals against her.

Farmer pushed back. Her goal all along, she said, was to see Maxwell "held accountable for the harm she's caused."

## UK scientists urge more restrictions to fight omicron surge

LONDON (AP) — The British government may need to introduce tougher restrictions to slow the growth of the omicron variant and prevent a new surge in COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths, British scientists said Saturday.

U.K. health officials say omicron is spreading much more quickly than the delta strain and is likely to replace it and become the dominant variant in Britain within days. The U.K. recorded 58,194 coronavirus

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cases on Friday, the highest number since January, though what portion were the omicron variant is unclear.

Concerns about the new variant led Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government to reintroduce restrictions that were lifted almost six months ago. Masks must be worn in most indoor settings, vaccine certificates must be shown to enter nightclubs and people are being urged to work from home if possible.

Many scientists say that's unlikely to be enough.

Modeling released Saturday by scientists at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine suggested omicron is likely to cause a large wave of infections by January, and could cause between 25,000 and 75,000 deaths in England in the next five months if no other measures are taken.

The most pessimistic scenario foresees half a million people hospitalized with the virus by the end of April and says daily hospital admissions could be double the previous peak in January 2021. The study by the scientists, who help advise the British government, has not been peer reviewed.

The number of infections will depend on how much the variant escapes protection from vaccines, and how effective booster shots are at bolstering immunity, both of which remain unclear.

Scientists in South Africa, where omicron was first identified, say they see signs it may cause less severe disease than delta, but caution that it is too soon to be certain.

"In our most optimistic scenario, the impact of omicron in the early part of 2022 would be reduced with mild control measures such as working from home," said Rosanna Barnard of the school's Center for the Mathematical Modelling of Infectious Diseases. "However, our most pessimistic scenario suggests that we may have to endure more stringent restrictions to ensure the (health service) is not overwhelmed."

Johnson's government says it is not considering tougher measures, but aims to offer everyone 18 and over a booster shot of vaccine by the end of January.

The U.K. Health Security Agency said Friday that both the AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines appear less effective in preventing symptomatic infections in people exposed to omicron, though preliminary data show that effectiveness appears to rise to between 70% and 75% after a third vaccine dose.

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

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Dec. 12, the 346th day of 2021. There are 19 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 12, 2015, nearly 200 nations meeting in Paris adopted the first global pact to fight climate change, calling on the world to collectively cut and then eliminate greenhouse gas pollution but imposing no sanctions on countries that didn't do so.

On this date:

In 1870, Joseph H. Rainey of South Carolina became the first Black lawmaker sworn into the U.S. House of Representatives.

In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt nominated Oscar Straus to be Secretary of Commerce and Labor; Straus became the first Jewish Cabinet member.

In 1913, authorities in Florence, Italy, announced that the "Mona Lisa," stolen from the Louvre Museum in Paris in 1911, had been recovered.

In 1915, singer-actor Frank Sinatra was born Francis Albert Sinatra in Hoboken, New Jersey.

In 1917, during World War I, a train carrying some 1,000 French troops from the Italian front derailed while descending a steep hill in Modane (moh-DAN'); at least half of the soldiers were killed in France's greatest rail disaster. Father Edward Flanagan founded Boys Town outside Omaha, Nebraska.

In 1939, swashbuckling actor Douglas Fairbanks died in Santa Monica, California, at age 56.

In 1977, the dance movie "Saturday Night Fever," starring John Travolta, premiered in New York.

In 1985, 248 American soldiers and eight crew members were killed when an Arrow Air charter crashed

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after takeoff from Gander, Newfoundland.

In 1995, by three votes, the Senate killed a constitutional amendment giving Congress authority to outlaw flag burning and other forms of desecration against Old Glory.

In 1997, Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, the international terrorist known as "Carlos the Jackal," went on trial in Paris on charges of killing two French investigators and a Lebanese national. (Ramirez was convicted and is serving a life prison sentence.)

In 2000, George W. Bush became president-elect as a divided U.S. Supreme Court reversed a state court decision for recounts in Florida's contested election. The Marine Corps grounded all eight of its high-tech MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft following a fiery crash in North Carolina that killed four Marines. (The Osprey program was revived by the Pentagon in 2005.)

In 2010, the inflatable roof of the Minneapolis Metrodome collapsed following a snowstorm that had dumped 17 inches on the city. (The NFL was forced to shift an already rescheduled game between the Minnesota Vikings and New York Giants to Detroit's Ford Field.)

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama met at the White House with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki; afterward, the president declared that U.S. troops were leaving Iraq "with honor and with their heads held high."

Five years ago: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan endorsed investigations into the CIA's belief that Russia had meddled in the November election to help Donald Trump win, a claim the president-elect called "ridiculous."

One year ago: Thousands of supporters of President Donald Trump gathered in Washington for rallies to back his desperate efforts to subvert the election that he lost to Joe Biden; sporadic fights broke out between pro-Trump and anti-Trump demonstrators after sundown, and four people were taken to the hospital with stab wounds. A federal judge in Wisconsin who'd been appointed by Trump dismissed Trump's lawsuit asking that the Republican-controlled Legislature name Trump the winner in the state; the judge said Trump's arguments "fail as a matter of law and fact." Charley Pride, the son of sharecroppers in Mississippi who became one of country music's biggest stars and the first Black member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, died in Dallas at 86 from what a spokesman said were complications from COVID-19. John le Carre, the former spy whose novels defined the Cold War espionage thriller, died in England at the age of 89.

Today's Birthdays: Former TV host Bob Barker is 98. Basketball Hall of Famer Bob Pettit is 89. Singer Connie Francis is 84. Singer Dionne Warwick is 81. Rock singer-musician Dickey Betts is 78. Hall of Fame race car driver Emerson Fittipaldi is 75. Actor Wings Hauser is 74. Actor Bill Nighy (ny) is 72. Actor Duane Chase (Film: "The Sound of Music") is 71. Country singer LaCosta is 71. Gymnast-turned-actor Cathy Rigby is 69. Author Lorna Landvik is 67. Singer-musician Sheila E. is 64. Actor Sheree J. Wilson is 63. Pop singer Daniel O'Donnell is 60. International Tennis Hall of Famer Tracy Austin is 59. Rock musician Eric Schenkman (Spin Doctors) is 58. Author Sophie Kinsella is 52. News anchor Maggie Rodriguez is 52. Actor Jennifer Connelly is 51. Actor Madchen Amick is 51. Actor Regina Hall is 51. Country singer Hank Williams III is 49. Actor Mayim Bialik is 46. Model Bridget Hall is 44. Actor Lucas Hedges is 25. Actor Sky Katz is 17.