

Groton Daily Independent

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UpComing Events

Monday, Dec. 27

6 p.m.: Boys Basketball at Jamestown College Classic (Harold Newman Arena), Groton Area vs. Kindred, N.D.

Thursday, Dec. 30

9:30 a.m.: Wrestling at Webster

Friday, Dec. 31

Girls Basketball at Webster. C game at 11 a.m. followed by JV and then varsity

Monday, Jan. 4

School resumes

Basketball Double Header at Warner. Girls JV at 4 p.m. followed by Boys JV, Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity.

5 p.m.: Junior High Wrestling Tournament at Groton.

Thursday, Jan. 6

6 p.m.: Wrestling Tri-angular at Groton with Redfield and Webster

Friday, Jan. 7

Penguin Classic Debate on-line

5 p.m.: Junior High Wrestling at Milbank

Girls Basketball hosts Sisseton with JV at 6 p.m. and varsity to follow

Saturday, Jan. 8

Groton Robotics Tournament, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Penguin Classic Debate on-line

Girls Basketball Classic at Redfield

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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The new city hall has been adorned with many Christmas Trees decorated by area businesses. This one was decorated by Love to Travel.

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The new city hall has been adorned with many Christmas Trees decorated by area businesses. This one was decorated by Lori's Pharmacy.

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United Methodist Church

Groton and Conde

Sunday, December 26, 2021

Newsletter Items Due

No In-Person Worship Today

Conde Worship Online with the Conference 9 AM

NO Sunday School

Groton Worship Online with the Conference 11:00

Wednesday, December 29, 2021

Community Coffee Hour 9:30 AM

Sunday, January 2, 2022

Communion in Worship (white)

Conde Worship 9:00 AM

NO Sunday School

Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, Dec. 26

9am Worship/Communion

Monday, Dec. 27

6:30am Bible Study

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. 26

8 a.m.: Bible Study

9 .m.: St. John's Worship

11 a.m.: Zion Lutheran Worship

To submit your monthly or weekly church calendar, email to
news@grotonsd.net

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

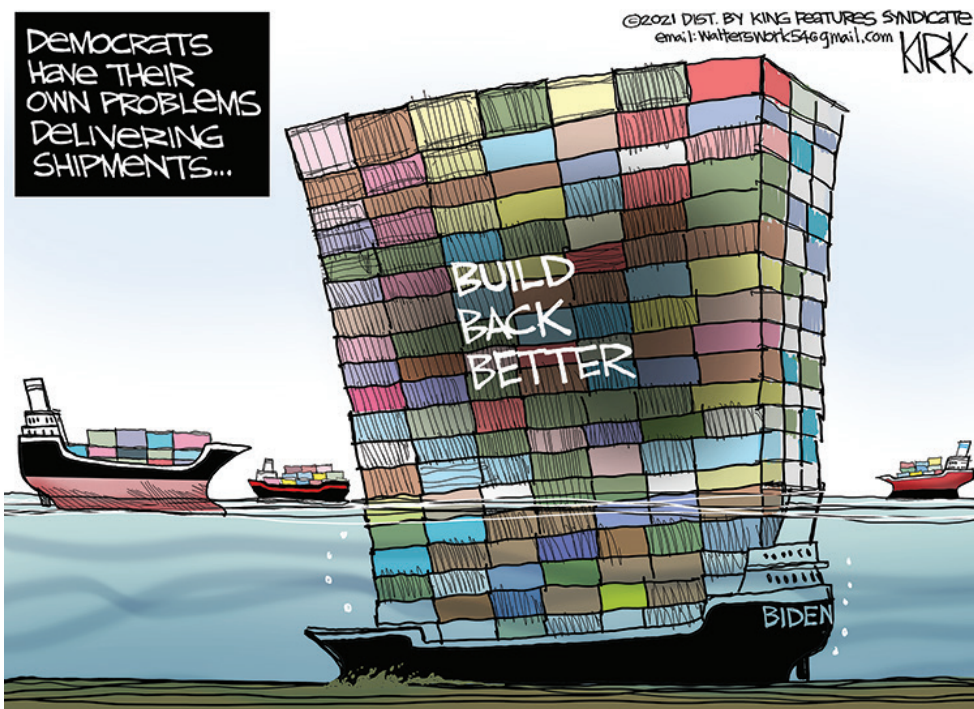


*Even in darkness
light dawns for the upright,
for those who are gracious
and compassionate
and righteous.*

🌀 PSALM 112:4 🌀

Detail of woodcut by Isaac Friedlander (1939)

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BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. For possible new year's resolutions, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; _____, and it shall be opened unto you." Pray, Knock, Sing, Tithe

2. Psalm 37:5 informs us to, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to _____." Nurture, Pass, Action, Light

3. In which book's chapter 12 did the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron about the first month of the year? *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*

4. Proverbs 16:3 instructs us to, "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be _____"? *Resolved, Established, Directed, Bountiful*

5. 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 2:20 are among the verses to focus on what in a new year? *Blessings, Moving forward, Grace, Church attendance*

6. From James 1:5, what may one lack and if they ask God, it shall be given? *Love, Wisdom, Truth, Goals*

ANSWERS: 1) Knock; 2) Pass; 3) Exodus; 4) Established; 5) Moving forward; 6) Wisdom

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



by Healthy Exchanges

Biscuit Breakfast Scramble

When my grandkids stay overnight, I like to serve them dishes like this. It doesn't take very long to prepare, but they think I've made a big fuss over them. Let them keep on thinking that!

- 6 eggs, beaten or equivalent in egg substitute
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon pepper
- 2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- 2/3 cup water
- 2 teaspoons prepared yellow mustard
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes
- 3/4 cup shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese
- 1 cup diced extra-lean ham
- 1 (7.5-ounce) can refrigerated buttermilk biscuits

1. Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray an 8-by-8-inch baking dish and a large skillet with butter-flavored cooking spray. In the skillet, combine eggs and lemon pepper. Cook over medium heat until eggs are set, stirring often. Set aside.

2. In a medium saucepan, combine dry milk powder and water. Stir in mustard and parsley flakes. Add Cheddar cheese. Mix well to combine. Cook over medium heat until cheese is melted, stirring constantly. Remove from heat.

3. Fold in ham and cooked eggs. Spread mixture into prepared baking dish. Separate biscuits and cut each into 4 pieces. Evenly sprinkle biscuit pieces over top of egg mixture. Lightly spray tops of biscuit pieces with butter-flavored cooking spray.

4. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until biscuits are golden brown. Place baking dish on a wire rack and let set for 5 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

* Each serving equals: 262 calories, 10g fat, 20g protein, 23g carb., 839mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 2 Meat, 1 1/2 Starch.

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FLASH GORDON

12-19
By JIM KEEFE

STEALING AWAY FROM THEIR FORTIFICATIONS, CAPTAIN LONAK'S STRIKE FORCE ATTEMPTS TO RECLAIM THEIR ARSENAL.

HOPEFULLY THIS DEVICE WILL GIVE YOU THE DISTRACTION YOU NEED.



IT'S WORKING! THE HOLOGRAM IS KEEPING THE BEASTS AT BAY!

TEAM ONE, OPEN THE GATE. TEAM TWO, RETRIEVE THE...



RAHR



THE HOLOGRAM GENERATOR!



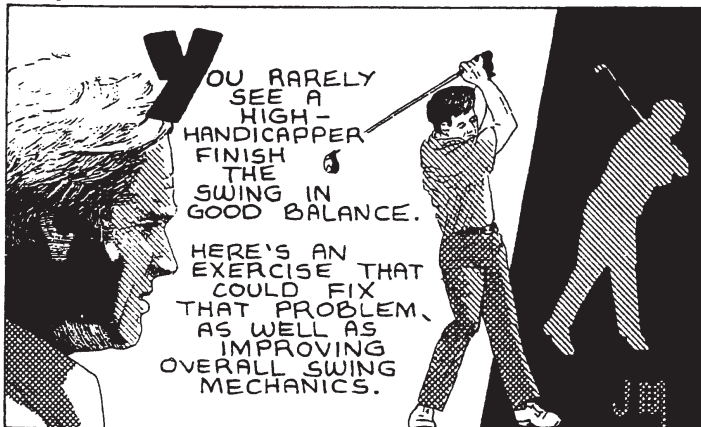
WE'RE AT THEIR MERCY! BRACE YOURSELVES, MEN...

WAIT...THEY'RE HESITATING. BUT WHY?

LOOK, BEHIND US...

TO BE CONT'D

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



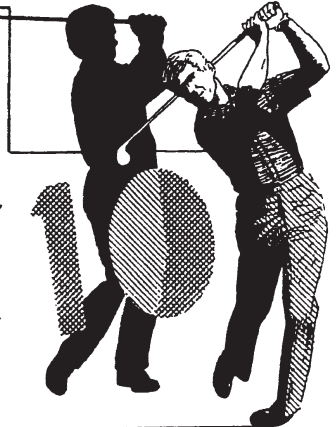
YOU RARELY SEE A HIGH-HANDICAPPER FINISH THE SWING IN GOOD BALANCE.

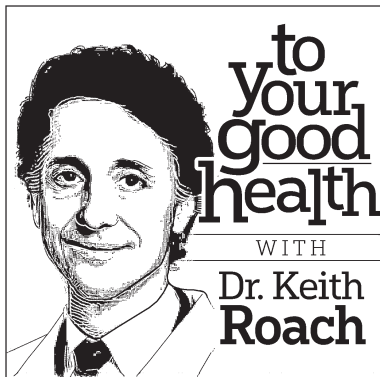
HERE'S AN EXERCISE THAT COULD FIX THAT PROBLEM, AS WELL AS IMPROVING OVERALL SWING MECHANICS.

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PRACTICE MAKING FULL SWINGS WITHOUT STRIKING A BALL, THEN HOLDING YOUR FINAL POSITION FOR AT LEAST 10 SECONDS.

YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO DO THAT IF YOU'RE BADLY OUT OF BALANCE, WHICH WILL FORCE YOU TO WORK ON ACHIEVING A BETTER FINISH - WHICH WILL PROMOTE BETTER OVERALL SWING MOTION.





Less Mercury in Flu Shot Than in Can of Tuna

DEAR DR. ROACH: How much mercury is safe? -- A.C.

ANSWER: The chemical element mercury exists in three forms: elemental mercury, which is the kind in thermometers; inorganic mercury, especially mercuric chloride; and organic mercury, including methyl and ethyl mercury. All of these have toxicities, but the types of toxicities are different for each, and the safe level depends on which type it is.

Elemental mercury is dangerous primarily when it is inhaled, which occurs mainly in occupational settings. Accidental swallowing of the small amount of mercury in a thermometer has very low toxicity, but I still don't

recommend it. Inorganic mercury is seldom a problem, as it is almost never used these days in the U.S. and Canada. Most products containing this form of mercury have been banned.

Methyl mercury is the major concern for consumers, as this is found in fish. It accumulates in the environment, and tends to be worst in larger fish, which eat the smaller fish and over their lifetime accumulate the methyl mercury, which was formerly used as a fungicide. The Environmental Protection Agency warns an average-size person not to exceed 70 mcg per day of methyl mercury: Below this dose, toxicity is unlikely. This translates to two to three servings of fish per week, but no more than one serving of highest-risk fish for methyl mercury per week. High-risk sources include most tuna, halibut and snapper.

Ethyl mercury is significantly less toxic than methyl mercury, as it is removed from the body more quickly. There is no EPA recommendation for ethyl mercury levels. Ethyl mercury has been used as a preservative in vaccines, but it has been removed from all childhood and most adult vaccines. It is still used in some flu vaccines -- the ones in multidose vials: Single-use vials do not need a preservative. The amount of ethyl mercury in a flu shot is less than the more dangerous methyl mercury found in a can of tuna.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have been experiencing spells of dizziness (not spinning), along with tiredness and feeling out of breath. I take tamoxifen to prevent breast cancer. When I started, my red blood cell count was normal at 3.95, but now it is low at 3.61. Could tamoxifen be causing the dizziness? -- J.Z.

ANSWER: Tamoxifen has both estrogen-like and anti-estrogen effects, and has been shown to reduce risk of breast cancer in high-risk women. However, it has many potential side effects, including hot flashes, blood clots, endometrial disease and coronary artery disease risk.

Two less-common side effects are dizziness and anemia. Dizziness can mean vertigo (often described as spinning), but also lightheadedness, which is what I think you mean.

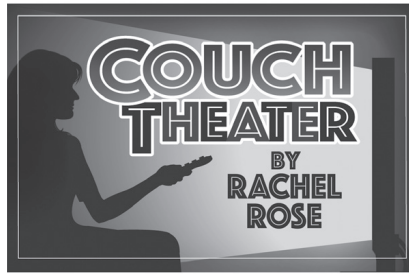
I suspect your case is due to the tamoxifen relaxing your blood vessels (called vasodilation), which leads to flushing and low blood pressure. However, about 5% of women taking tamoxifen will have anemia. (A low red blood cell count is a sign of anemia, although it is more common to follow hemoglobin level or hematocrit percentage.) The combination of vasodilation and anemia could certainly cause dizziness.

If continuing the tamoxifen is important to you in preventing breast cancer, you could try increasing your salt and water intake. Discuss this with your doctor ahead of time to be sure your blood pressure can handle that.

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

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Cobra Kai (TV-14) — One of the most popular binge-watch selections of the entire pandemic time arrives at its final season. When Season 3 left off, the students of dueling dojos Miyagi-Do, Eagle Fang and Cobra Kai had an epic group fight at the LaRusso house, with one of the biggest feuds being that between Sam LaRusso and instigator Tory. No doubt this ongoing animosity will elevate in Season 4. We also know Jon Kreese's old buddy Terry Silver (from *Karate Kid III*) shows up to lend a heavy hand toward Kreese's plot to raise Cobra Kai dojo back to champion level at the All-Valley Karate Tournament. What remains to be seen is whether Daniel and Johnny will finally work together to defeat Kreese once and for all. So pop a cold Coors Banquet and pick your team; this series will no doubt end with a bang. (Netflix)

Sergio Mendes in the Key of Joy (NR) — This documentary about Brazilian musical legend Sergio Mendes debuted at the 2020 Santa Barbara International Film Festival but bears another mention. Fellow musicians including John Legend and Quincy Jones honor Mendes' achievements and catalog of work over the past 60 years. The composer, vocalist and musical pioneer credited with bringing Brazilian music to the world is heralded and honored for his creative contributions and inspiration to musicians everywhere. (Peacock)

Lady of the Manor (R) — Starring Melanie Lynskey (who will always be to me the one who had "a baby ... in a bar" in "Sweet Home Alabama"), this movie is cleverly original. Lynskey plays Hannah, an unenthusiastic, costumed docent at a historical estate. When she begins seeing and conversing with the ghost of the woman whom she portrays on her tours, she gains a

new motivation to change her act. Judy Greer as the spirit Lady Wadsworth is both charming and snarky, ping-ponging between instructing Hannah on the proper history of the manor and being mystified by present-day technology. (Prime Video)



Netflix

Ralph Macchio is Daniel LaRusso in "Cobra Kai"

Head of the Class (TV-PG) — Of all the 1980s sitcoms I watched growing up, this was not one I ever wished would make a comeback, but here we are. In the reboot, Howard Hesseman has been replaced by Isabella Gomez as the unlikely new teacher of an ethnically and orientationally diverse class of gifted overachievers. The high school is now located in L.A. instead of Manhattan, but the basic plot remains the same: smart kids who need an adult friend to guide them through life's non-academic problems. Original cast member Robin Givens returns to reprise her role as Darlene, now the parent of a student in the class. (HBOMax)

The '80s: Top Ten — I don't even care what he's counting down; if Rob Lowe is hosting, I'm watching. In each of six episodes, Lowe will count down a different top 10 list about various 1980s pop culture topics, with input from celebrities of "the decade that we just can't quit," including Jon Lovitz and Joan Collins. After debuting Dec. 31 on Disney+, the series will switch over to NatGeo. (Disney+)

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1. Which Eagles song netted a Grammy for Record of the Year in 1978?

2. What did Bob Dylan, George Harrison, Jeff Lynne, Roy Orbison and Tom Petty have in common?

3. Which Neil Sedaka tune was released as both a slow ballad and a fast pop song?

4. Who released "Tighten Up"?

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Lonely rivers flow to the sea, to the sea, To the open arms of the sea."

Answers

1. "Hotel California." Rolling Stone magazine rated it at No. 49 on the list of "The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time."

2. They joined together in 1988 as the Traveling Wilburys and released two albums.

3. "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do," in 1962 and 1975. The "doo-be-doo" words at the beginning of the fast version were a place holder, before the lyrics were written. Sedaka decided to keep it as part of the finished song.

4. Archie Bell & the Drells, in 1968.

5. "Unchained Melody," most notably by the Righteous Brothers in 1965. The song was originally written as the theme song for the 1955 film "Unchained," about a prisoner who has to decide whether to escape ... or not.

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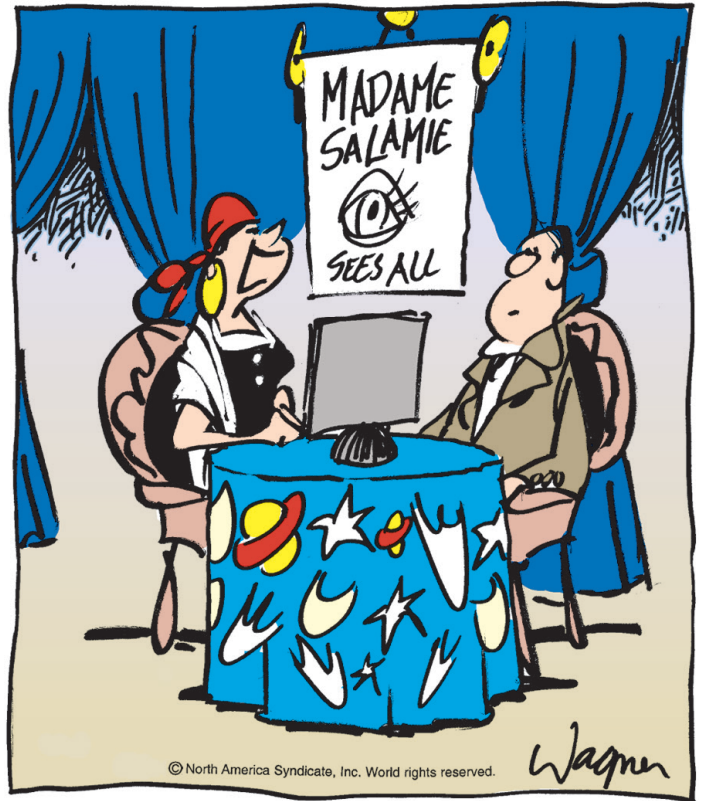
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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by} Wagner



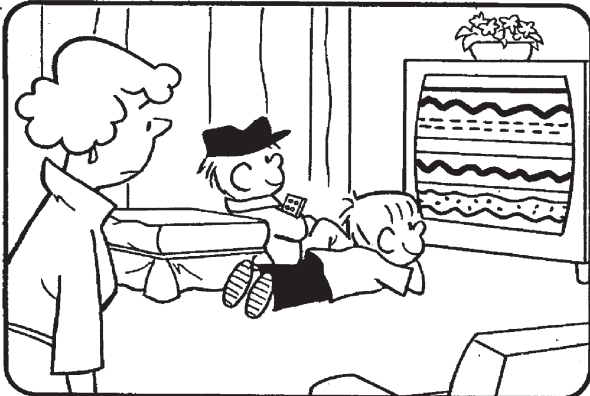
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Wagner

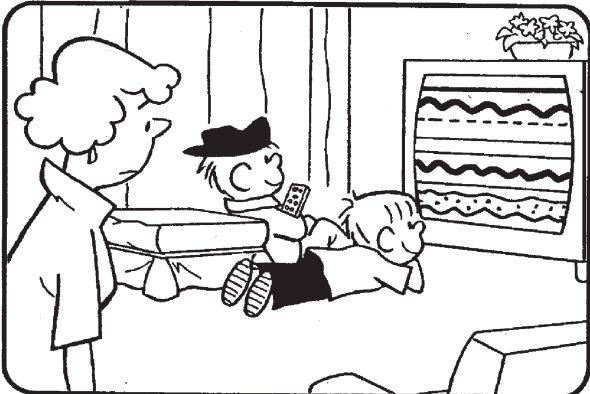
"It's the new flat-screen crystal ball."

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Plant is moved. 2. Remote is bigger. 3. Cap is reversed. 4. Belt is missing. 5. Screen is different. 6. Sleeve is shorter.

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- To save a pot of burning soup, remove from the burner and DO NOT stir. Pour the unburned contents into a new pot, while trying not to disturb the burned-on bottom of the pot.

- Experts say that those who keep track of their nutrition and exercise are more likely to keep it up. This can be as simple as a pencil and notebook paired with a calorie guidebook, or one of the many great apps for your smartphone. In any case, set yourself up for success this year. You deserve it!

- After-Christmas sales are a great time to buy not only gift wrap (look for solid colors that you can use all year long), holiday cards and decorations, but also next season's winter wear. Things like scarves and gloves can be great bargains. And even coats can go on sale. Take advantage — especially if you have kids — and buy up. — *A.K. in Tennessee*

- Want to include more produce in your diet? Sources say prep is the step

that makes it work. Clean, chop, slice and otherwise prepare all your produce choices for the week on the day you shop. When it's ready and waiting, you're less likely to skip it in favor of something more convenient (and likely less nutritious).

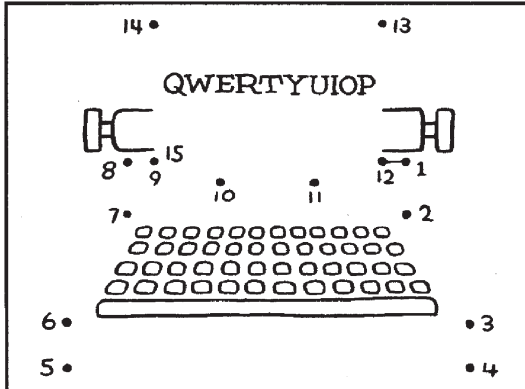
- “A pinch of salt tossed in the coffee grounds will cut the bitterness in lower-quality coffee. This is especially useful if you get a good deal on a can of coffee that's not your normal brand.” — *P.L. in New Jersey*

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

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USING ANY OF THE ABOVE 10 letters from the top row of a standard typewriter, see if you can create a 10-letter word. (You can repeat some letters.) Connect the dots to get the answer.

The word is typewriter.

A RHYMING RIDDLE!
 "What's in the church
 But not the steeple?
 The parson has it,
 But not the people."

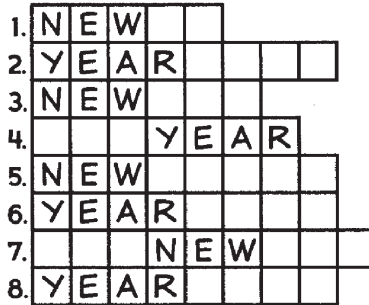


The letter R.



Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Let's ring in the new year with a dictionary quiz! To the left is a list of eight words, each of which contains either the word "new" or the word "year." Using the following hints, see if you can figure out what these words are:



DOUBLE TROUBLE! Below are six partially spelled words. Four letters are missing from each. In each case, you must find a two-letter word that can be used to fill in the missing letters. Below you'll find some hints.

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Spanish dance. | 1. F _ _ D _ _ G O |
| 2) Scottish shrub. | 2. _ _ A T _ _ R |
| 3) Slow mover. | 3. _ _ R _ _ I S E |
| 4) Sincere remorse. | 4. C _ _ T R I T I _ _ |
| 5) It's worn in winter. | 5. G R E _ _ C O _ _ |
| 6) A long hallway. | 6. C _ _ R I D _ _ |

1. (AN) Fandango. 2. (HE) Heather. 3. (TO) Tortoise. 4. (ON) Contrain. 5. (AT) Greatcoat. 6. (OR) Corridor.

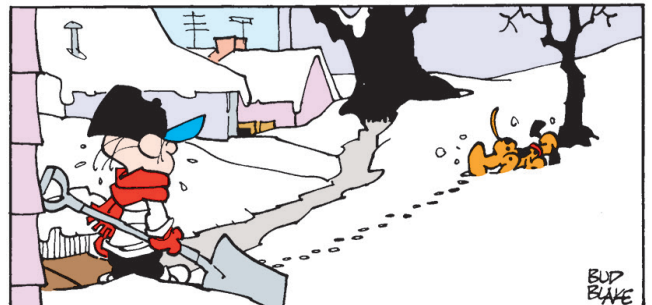
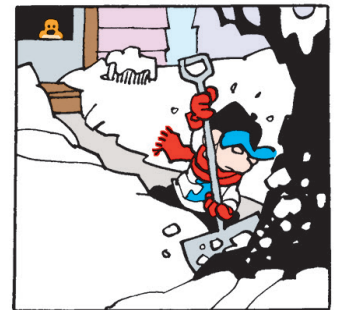
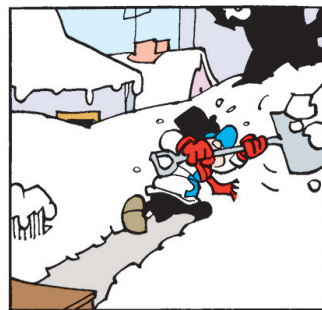
Illustrated by David Coulson

1. Staircase support.
2. Record of events.
3. He knew his apples.
4. July 2, 1999, for example.
5. Current-events movie.
6. Certain racehorse.
7. Obstruct.
8. A longing.

1. Newel. 2. Yearbook. 3. Newton (Isaac). 4. Midyear. 5. Newstreet. 6. Yearling. 7. Stonewall. 8. Yearning.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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BUD BLAKE

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Steal from
- 4 Highlander
- 8 Streamlet
- 12 Historic period
- 13 String
- 14 Tom Joad, for one
- 15 Bridgetown's island
- 17 "It's — real!"
- 18 Intends
- 19 Tropical fruit
- 20 Jazz genre
- 22 Piece of work
- 24 Priests' garments
- 25 "Excellent work!"
- 29 Espionage org.

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

- 30 Spectrum creator
- 31 Ms. Thurman
- 32 Wavering
- 34 Twain hero
- 35 Sharp tooth
- 36 Clearheaded
- 37 Cream-filled pastries
- 40 Arrive
- 41 Jai —
- 42 Chocolatey frozen treat
- 46 Give up
- 47 Carry on
- 48 Citrus drink
- 49 Crystal gazer
- 50 Eye part

51 U.K. fliers

DOWN

- 1 Civil War soldier
- 2 Man-mouse link
- 3 Whom Pilate pardoned
- 4 Rascal
- 5 Atlantic catches
- 6 Granada gold
- 7 QB stats
- 8 Hearty
- 9 Furniture brand
- 10 Actor

- Schreiber
- 11 Sultry Horne
- 16 Life stories
- 19 Site of Apra Harbor
- 20 "Coffee Cantata" composer
- 21 Writer Wiesel
- 22 Rubber gasket
- 23 Nuisance
- 25 Mom's mom
- 26 Place to get a fruit smoothie
- 27 Hotel chain
- 28 Combo
- 30 School orgs.

- 33 Not as certain
- 34 Seethe
- 36 Theater boxes
- 37 Campaign-funding gps.
- 38 Fonda's bee-keeper role
- 39 Lose color
- 40 406, in Roman numerals
- 42 Calendar abbr.
- 43 Eg. and Syr., once
- 44 Oklahoma city
- 45 Ump

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 26 mins.

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

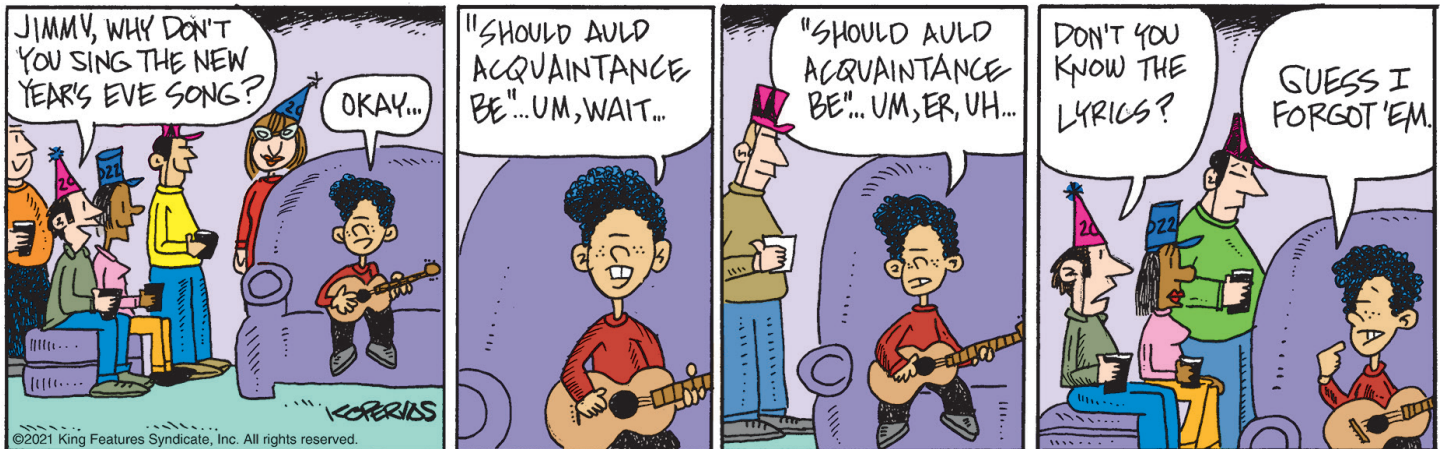
LAFF - A - DAY



"Don't pet either one. They both bite!"

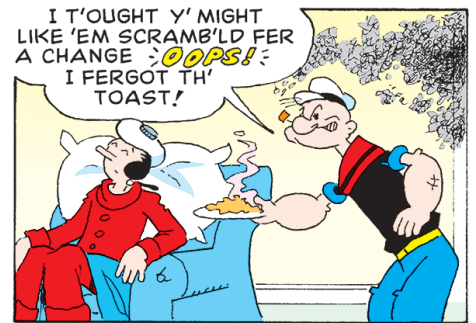
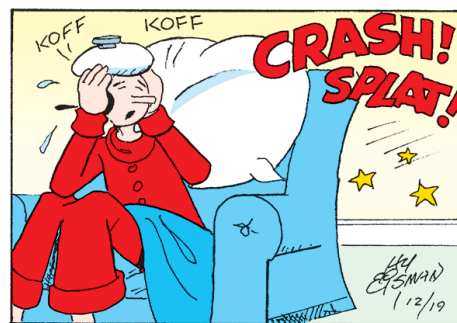
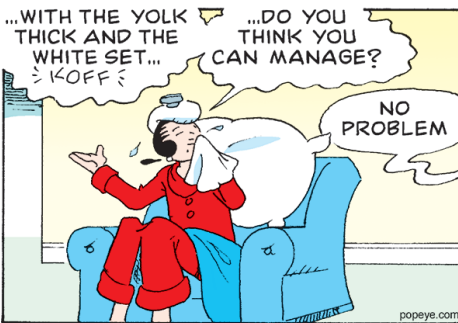
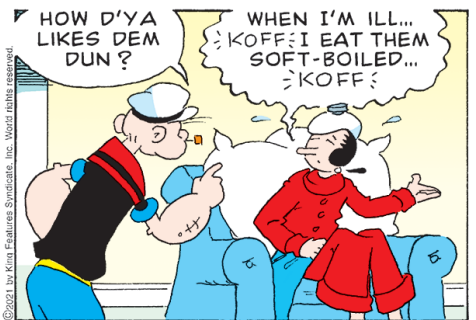
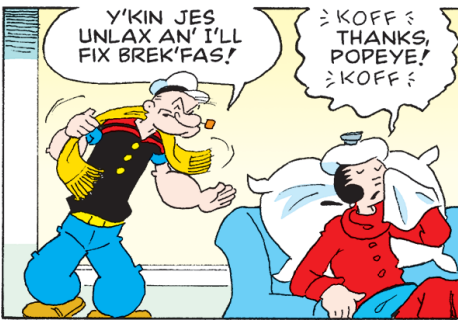
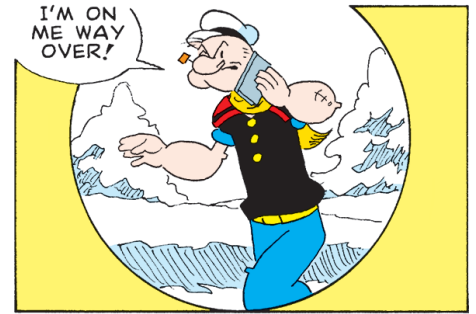
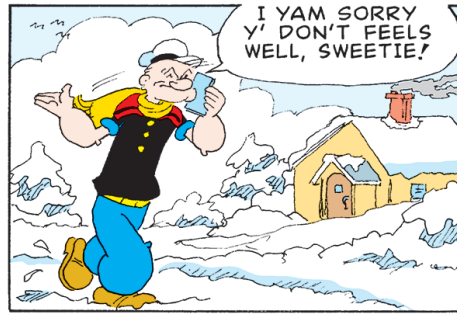
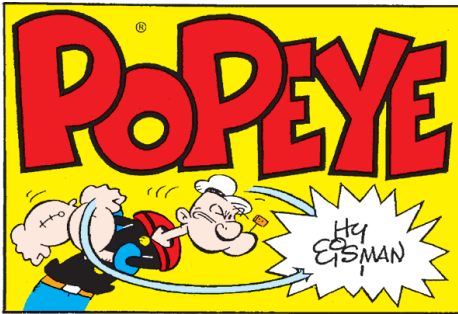
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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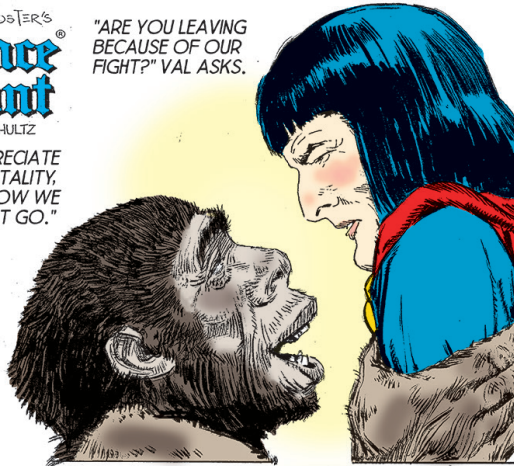
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THE CROWD FALLS SILENT AS IG GRABS VAL.

Hal Foster's
Prince Valiant
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ

"ARE YOU LEAVING BECAUSE OF OUR FIGHT?" VAL ASKS.

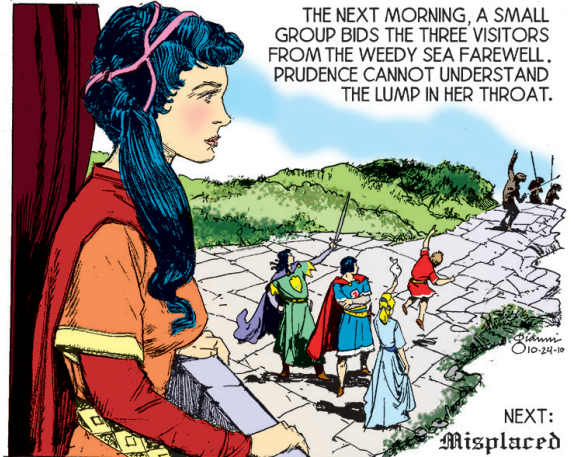
"WE APPRECIATE YOUR HOSPITALITY, BUT NOW WE MUST GO."



"DON'T BE SILLY!" SNORTS IG. "WE ALWAYS FIGHT WITH OUR FRIENDS. NO—WE HAD HOPED TO FIND MATES HERE, BUT YOUR WOMEN WANT ONLY WEAKLINGS AND PACK ANIMALS."



"AND SO WE TAKE OUR LEAVE." HE TURNS AND BOWS TO PRUDENCE, THE INDIFFERENT COURT MAIDEN HE HAD PURSUED SO DEVOTEDLY.



THE NEXT MORNING, A SMALL GROUP BIDS THE THREE VISITORS FROM THE WEEDY SEA FAREWELL. PRUDENCE CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE LUMP IN HER THROAT.

"I HAVE TOLD BUP AND NUDDER OF THE VAST UNDERWORLD. AS WE ARE NOT HUMAN, I THINK WE WILL BE WELCOME, AND OUR CHANCES WILL IMPROVE DOWN THERE."

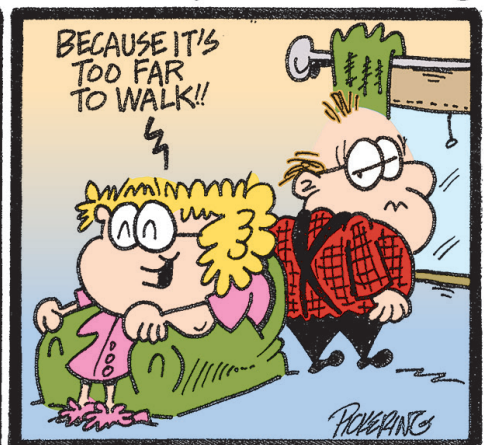
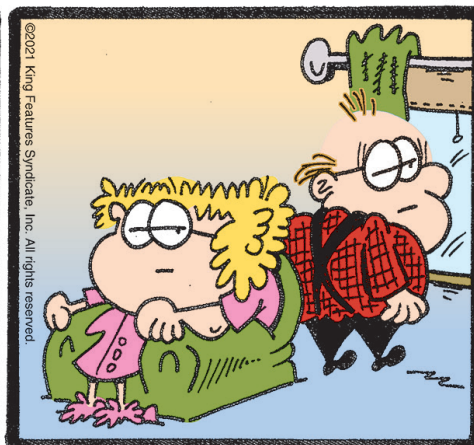
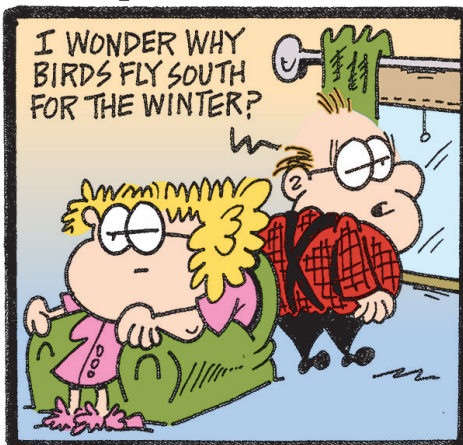
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NEXT:
Misplaced

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Lending a Helping Hand

I've been looking at 2022, hoping to find some value in my time and money in this chaotic world we find ourselves in, a chaos that doesn't show any sign of ending soon. Two new activities have found their way to my to-do list.

For several months I've been buying a food donation card each time I shop at a certain grocery store. It's not much, but I believe I can continue to do this. My goal is to make it through the year without missing one time. These cards are given to the local food bank, which can then use that money to buy food at a discounted rate. This has more financial benefit than if I purchased food at the regular store rate and delivered it to them. I know the food banks around here have been scrambling to keep supplies available, especially since they're serving more families than ever before. Maybe my humble donation will help just a little bit.

The other item on my new to-do list is probably the more valuable. I'll be collecting groceries weekly for three very elderly people in the neighborhood. I learned that two of them had been ordering groceries for curbside pickup — and taking taxis to go get them because they don't drive. The third ordered her groceries for curbside, but has had them delivered.

So, instead of the extra expense of taxi or delivery, I'll pick up their orders myself. I did a test run with one to be certain there was no problem with me using someone else's credit card to pay for the curbside pickup. The bonus is that these three neighbors, who had never met, now know each other and talk frequently. I understand that there has already been a bit of coupon swapping and recipe sharing.

Maybe 2022 will be a good year after all.

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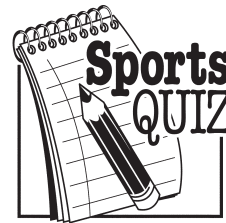
1. How many points did Ernie Nevers score in the Chicago Cardinals' 40-6 victory over the Chicago Bears in November 1929?

2. After refusing a trade to the Philadelphia Phillies, what St. Louis Cardinals outfielder filed a lawsuit against Major League Baseball that was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1972?

3. What Hockey Hall of Fame goaltender, who won two Stanley Cups for the Montreal Canadiens from 1910-25, had his career — and eventually his life — cut short by tuberculosis?

4. What West German tennis player stunned Martina Navratilova in the 1982 Avon Championships WTA finals match at New York City's Madison Square Garden?

5. In 1985, Lynette Woodard became the first female player in the history of



by Ryan A. Berenz

what famous basketball team?

6. In how many consecutive matches did Leicester City striker Jamie Vardy score to set the English Premier League record during the 2015-16 season?

7. A football trick play in which the quarterback fakes a pass while handing the ball off to a runner is named after what national landmark?

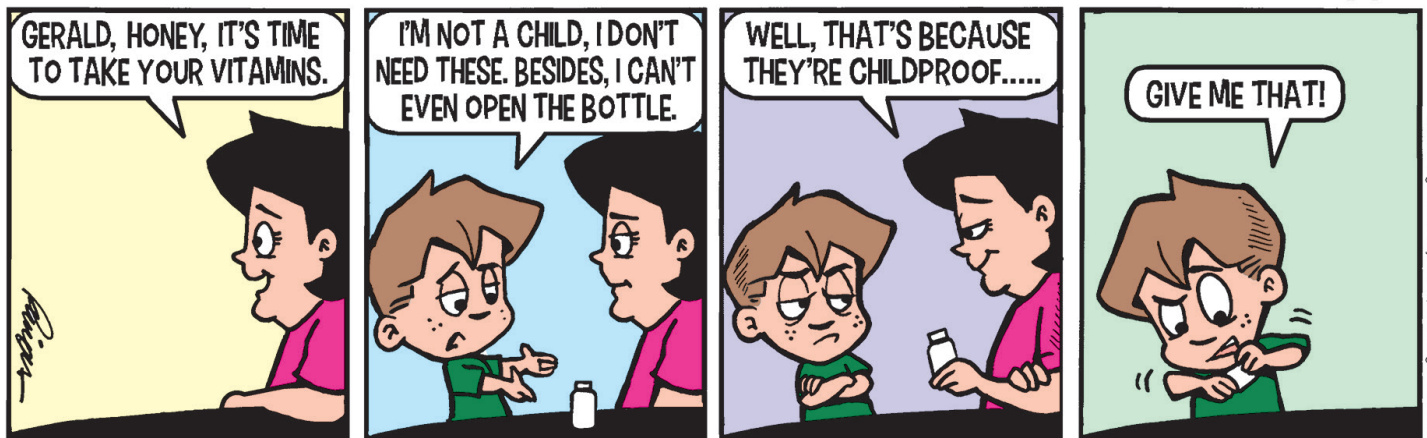
Answers

1. 40.
2. Curt Flood.
3. Georges Vezina.
4. Sylvia Hanika.
5. The Harlem Globetrotters.
6. 11.
7. The Statue of Liberty.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Cat Voices Displeasure With Zoom Meeting Ban

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: During the pandemic, my cat “Rusty” would jump into my lap or roam across my keyboard during Zoom meetings with the rest of my team. Everyone thought it was funny. Last month I was hired to work remotely for a new company. My supervisor told me the cat cannot appear on screen. If I put Rusty into the bathroom during video calls (I have a studio apartment), he yowls loudly until I let him out. What can I do? I need to keep this job. — *Jake V., Alexandria, Virginia*

DEAR JAKE: Pets can be a lot of fun to introduce in casual business meetings, but they can't always be present, especially if your boss has forbidden it. Here are some things you can try:

— Here are some things you can try:

— Create a “go to work” routine. We tend to follow the same format every morning (wake up, drink coffee, get dressed, sit at our computer), so add two things to the routine: attention time with Rusty, and leaving for work. Give Rusty 10-15 minutes of undivided attention somewhere between coffee and getting dressed. Once you're dressed, say “I'm going to work!” loudly, and ignore Rusty for several minutes.

— Make Rusty more comfortable when separated from you. Put his favorite cat bed, toys and drinking water into the bathroom when he's sequestered.

— Teach “go away” signals. Make a hissing noise or snap your fingers when Rusty tries to jump up.

— Set up physical barriers around the desk, like sticky-side-up duct tape.

— Wear headphones during calls if Rusty continues to meow.

— Incorporate “attention breaks” during the day where Rusty gets your undivided attention, away from the desk.

The more structure you can build into a remote workday, the better. If Rusty can count on a comfortable, sequestered space during meetings, plus regular attention breaks from you, he may settle down — and save your job.

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

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

first female mayor.

* Olympic medalist Mark Spitz was famed for his large mustache in an era when swimmers shaved their bodies to become more hydrodynamic. He once joked to the Russian team's coach that his mustache helped him swim faster by deflecting water from his mouth and making him more bullet-shaped. The following year, a mustache was sported by every member of the male Russian team.

* Despite their humps, camels have straight spines.

* The first use of the word "Superbowl," credited to a Chinese writer named Lom Ba Di, dates to the third century.

* In 2008, Chile minted 1.5 million 50-peso coins with a spelling error, only noticing a year later they'd spelled "CHIIE" instead of "CHILE."

* Honeybee venom has been found to destroy some types of cancer cells.

* There's a Google map for Mercury, Venus, Earth's moon, Mars, Pluto, three out of four of Jupiter's moons, and all but one of the round Saturnian moons.

* Juan Ponce de Leon brought cattle when he landed at Charlotte Harbor in 1521, his second trip to La Florida. When he came under attack, four of his heifers and a bull fled into the scrub, thus introducing cows to America.

Thought for the Day: "What matters most is how well you walk through the fire." -- Charles Bukowski

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* If all the stars in the Milky Way were grains of salt, they'd fill an Olympic-size swimming pool.

* The Louvre museum in Paris was originally built as a fortress to repel Vikings.

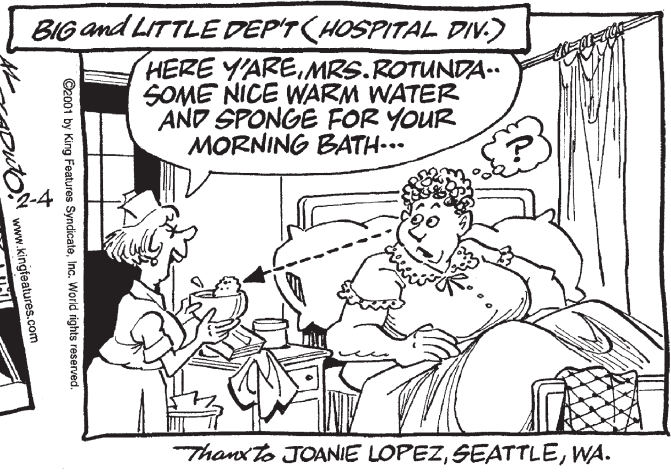
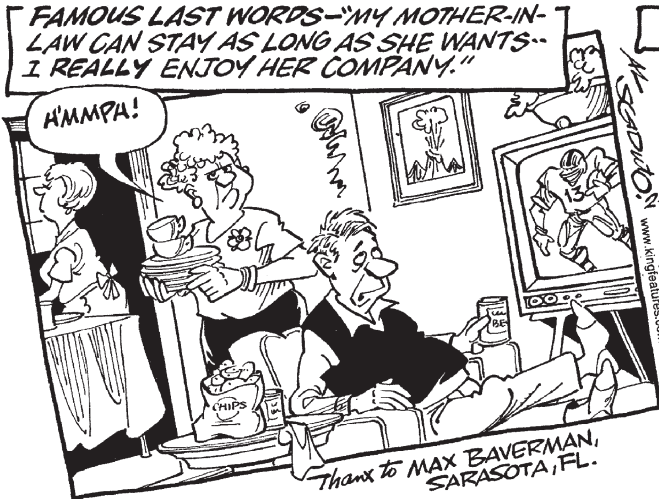
* In 1887, a group of men added Susanna Madora Salter of Argonia, Kansas, to a mayoral ballot as a prank intended to embarrass and curtail the influence of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, of which she was an officer. Instead, she won over 60% of the vote and became America's

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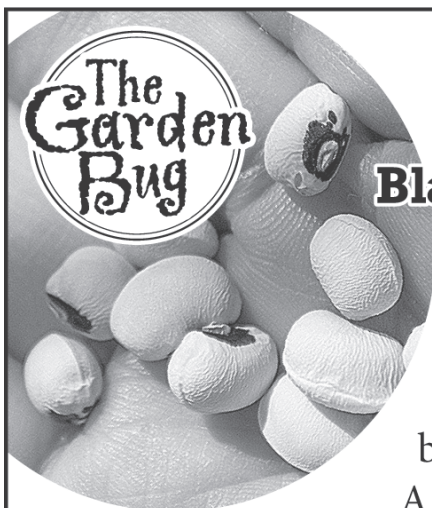
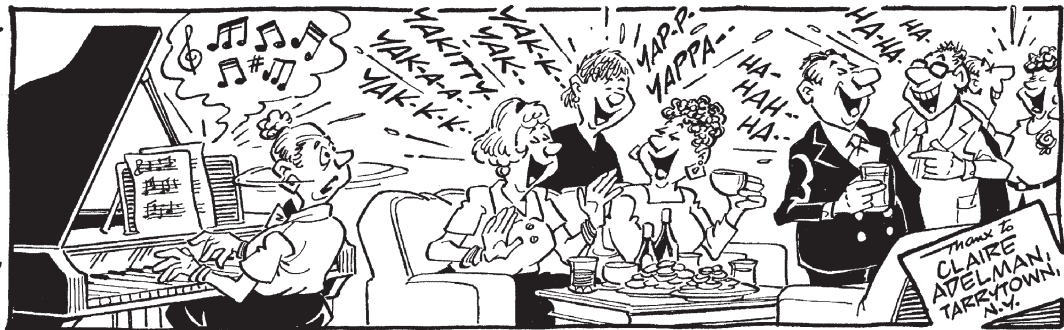
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THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

BY AL SCADUTO



PUZZLE PICTURE-FIND THE GAL WHO WAS ASKED BY THE PARTY'S HOSTESS TO PLAY THE PIANO BECAUSE SHE AND EVERYONE ELSE WOULD LISTEN AND ENJOY HER SKILL... OH YEAH! RIGHT!



Planted in spring, these plants require a sunny location that is sheltered from strong winds. If the soil is rich and well-drained, fertilizing will not be needed. Heat and dry weather are tolerated very well; soggy conditions and poor airflow between plants will cause fungus and rot.

Black-eyed peas A layer of mulch around young plants will inhibit weeds. Some varieties grow as bushes; a vining type will need stakes or a trellis. When the plants are about five inches tall, gently train them on to the supports. - Brenda Weaver

Source: gardenerspath.com



by Freddy Groves

Buddy Check 22

Buddy Check 22 is an American Legion program that reaches out to possibly at-risk veterans. The “22” in the name is most significant: it is the average number of veteran suicides per day. On the 22nd of each month, veterans in Buddy Check will call (or text or email or drop by) another veteran to let them know they’re not alone. Whether it’s PTSD, suicidal thoughts, difficulty coping or anything else, BC22 veterans will be there to help.

Do you have a Buddy Check program in your area? Do you participate in either the national or a local group? Some local groups go beyond the phone calls and host monthly meetings and events. By providing a venue for making social connections and getting suicide prevention information, veterans come to know they’re not alone. To look for groups in your area, search for: “Buddy Check 22” veterans and your state.

To go to the source, the American Legion, check: www.legion.org/buddycheck. If you especially want to start a BC22 in your area, this is the place to begin.

Not affiliated with the American Legion is a nightly Zoom Buddy Check. Get there through the WarriorNOW Nightly Buddy Check at warrior-now.org/buddy-check. WarriorNOW is a nonprofit committed to veteran mental health and suicide prevention.

If you or someone you know is struggling, call Veteran’s Crisis Line 1-800-273-8255 and press 1.

Recently the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a bipartisan bill to designate one week per year as “Buddy Check Week.” During that week, veteran mentors will learn how to do buddy checks and to access the support their buddies need. The bill would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to pitch in with education and materials for mentors to help their buddies. The House of Representatives, however, went home for the year without addressing the Buddy Check bill. They referred it to a subcommittee, where it now sits.

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



Guest Column: Cherishing Christmas

By David Forsythe, Wounded Warrior Fellow w/ Rep. Dusty Johnson's Office

At this time three years ago, I was deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan with the 82nd Airborne Division. Averaging two missions a day with rocket attacks becoming a normal nighttime activity, it was common to lose sight of holidays and dates of significance. However, if there was any down time, our attention would automatically shift to back home – especially around the holidays.

Contacting family members and opening care packages were ways to help temporarily fade the distance between us and home. However, one of the toughest feelings as a deployed service member is the potential of what you are missing out on. For some it could be the Christmas lights or decorating trees, but to me, the thing I missed the most about the holidays was bringing everyone together. Physically being with family and loved ones is something many take for granted. The experiences of someone sharing their progress in a new job or adding a new family member is something that can't be replaced or replicated over the phone. Forfeiting these moments for America is part of the job and something I do not regret, but an emotion I felt deeply this time of year.

Now that I am back, I cherish these holidays that I have with my family more than I did before. Knowing that two soldiers in my platoon made the ultimate sacrifice, I am grateful for each second that I get to spend back home. The perspective of their loss makes most problems I have disappear and amplifies what I have now. I recently moved to South Dakota and get to serve other veterans and help them realize that they always have support in their corner. I am glad to be on a team dedicated to serving our state and its many heroes.

I was reminded of South Dakota's appreciation for its service members at a Vietnam veteran commemoration ceremony in Sturgis this week. Much to my surprise, my own father was honored posthumously for his service in Vietnam. That moment of thanks means more to those who served than many can understand. I wake up every day excited to honor this legacy. This holiday season, I hope you'll join me in remembering those who sacrificed it all so we can enjoy this season together.



Rep. Dusty Johnson presents David Forsythe a Vietnam Veteran Commemorative pin posthumously honoring David's father, John Henry Howard Forsythe, Jr.

South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

The Best Gift Ever

I had a couple of free hours last Saturday and decided to run some errands and try to find a few last-minute Christmas gifts for my family. Walking into a local small business, I immediately spotted a tiny baby outfit that said, "Best Gift Ever!" written across the front. I was so sad to see that they did not have a six-month-old size, as that would have been perfect for my brand-new little granddaughter Adeline West Peters, who I call "Miss Addie."

She has truly been the best gift EVER for this new grandma and has dramatically changed our lives. I find myself constantly amazed by the miracle she is – her tiny toes, her long dark hair, her spitfire personality. Listen, when Miss Addie is hungry, she is hungry NOW!

I tend to lose track of time when I have her in my arms. I'm constantly telling our kids, "Look at her! She is so much more aware than you kids were! She is so smart! Look at how advanced she is!" I am sure they are all rolling their eyes behind my back as I go on and on about all the adventures we are going to have together in the future.

Miss Addie brings me joy, cheers me up on hard days, and reminds me constantly of something we all need: Hope.

This world is desperate for hope right now. We have been through incredibly challenging times in the last couple of years. Unpredictable events left this country reeling and unsteady in its approach to taking care of people. Fear and anger were used to manipulate people's actions in unprecedented ways. We can all spend our time focusing on division and disagreement and continue to perpetuate that fear, or we can choose something else: Hope.

Bryon and I attended the Christmas at the Cathedral production this past weekend at Saint Joseph Cathedral in Sioux Falls. Bishop Donald DeGrood opened the evening asking those in attendance to think about the evening's theme "Be Born in Me" in a different way.

Christmas is a time for telling the story of Jesus's birth. The bishop encouraged us to truly let Christ live in us and to personalize the story in a way that brings newness and life. He reminded us that faith must be lived. Christ's presence must be in us in order to be what God truly intended for us. God sent his son to endure incredible hardships so that we may be redeemed and have hope.

The actress who portrayed Mary, Apolonia Davalos, said these words that evening that are so powerful. She said, "The opposite of fear is not courage. The opposite of fear is trust." Mary trusted in her Lord, and He used her to bring salvation to the world. That trust is the basis for the Christian faith upon which this country was founded.

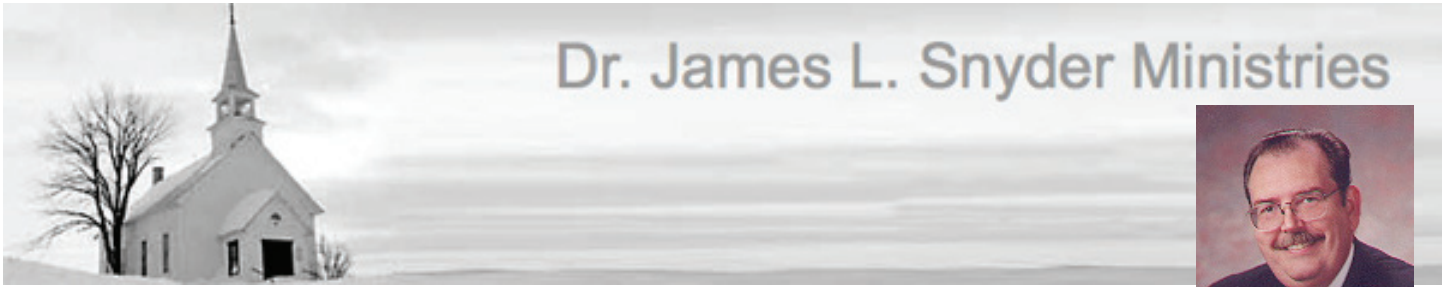
Now, not all of us living here today share the Christian faith, and that diversity of faith and acceptance by all is what makes America special. Everyone living here in this country enjoys freedom of religion and it is a precious right we must still protect. However, I do believe we all can garner some wisdom from the lessons of Christmas and the season we enjoy.

While Miss Addie is truly an amazing blessing in my life, the best gift ever is Jesus. And while we could focus on the darkness, hardships, and trials of his arrival, let us all reflect on and embrace what his birth meant to all of us: Hope.

Merry Christmas from the Noem family!

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I Was Naughty and Didn't Know It



Everybody has their own definition of what naughty is. So my great concern is why we allow this man called Santa Claus from the North Pole to determine who is naughty or nice?

For some reason, I got on Santa's naughty list this year. You might ask, "How do you know that you're on his naughty list?"

The answer to that is very simple, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said to me this past week, "I think you're on Santa's naughty list this year."

I don't know how she knew that, but I never question what she knows or doesn't know. So if she says I'm on Santa's naughty list, I am for sure on Santa's naughty list.

The problem is that she has a different definition of naughty than I do.

Her definition of naughty is eating apple fritters.

My definition of naughty is eating broccoli.

Right here, the Twain shall never come together.

The only way that Santa could know that I have been naughty this past year is if he got the information from The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. That in itself seems to me to be quite naughty. But you didn't hear it from me.

If being naughty is eating an apple fritter, then I shall be naughty till the day I die. After all, any Apple fritter is worth it.

That being settled, it is very clear that I know how to be naughty. The Apple fritter is just one aspect of my naughtiness. So what I need to investigate is how in the world can I get on Santa's nice list?

What can I do this coming year to guarantee a spot on that infamous list?

To be sure, I will not be asking The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage because then she will tell me, and I will be in deep trouble. I can almost hear what she would say in this regard.

But I need to figure out for myself what it really means to be nice. I thought I was a nice person, but what I think doesn't really matter. What can I do to be nice to the people around me?

And if I am nice to the people around me, will Santa notice? What can I do to get his attention?

After all, this infamous character supposedly lives in the North Pole, so how would he know what I'm doing way down here?

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I spent some time the other day thinking about this and trying to come up with a list of things I could do to reveal the nice quality of myself to people around me. After a couple of hours of such meditation, I did not come up with a single thing I could do to reveal my niceness.

My first focus was, how can I be nice to my wife? After all, she's nice to me, so how can I reciprocate?

After living with her for so long, I have come to the conclusion that anything I do, she can do much better. Everything I break, she can fix.

Then a thought did a Christmas dance in my head. Then, whenever she fixes anything, she is very happy because she can fix it. So what makes her happy is fixing things.

So, if I'm going to make her happy this coming year, I need to concentrate on breaking things. Everything I break will make her happy because then she can fix something. So why didn't I think of this before?

I can think of so many things I can break that I didn't know exactly where to start. It's going to be important to start at the right place so that I can build on that throughout the year. After all, if something can be broken, I'm your man.

This was a great challenge for me because everything I break is an accident. To do this right, I will have to master having accidents.

A couple of years ago, I broke the front bumper of my truck. My wife was able to fix it using several paperclips.

Well, guess what my first accident was? You got it.

I pulled into a parking lot for some reason, went too far, and unintentionally broke the front bumper again. Actually, I didn't know I had broken it; I just heard a sound and didn't think too much about it.

Later that evening my wife happened to go outside where my truck was parked and when she came in, she said with a smile all over her face, "Did you notice that your front bumper is broken again?"

At first, of course, I thought she was joking and laughed at her and said, "Is that right?"

She disappeared and, in a moment, came back with several paperclips and went back outside and fixed my truck.

I leaned back in my chair, smiled, and said to myself, "This is your first act of niceness for the year. What's next?"

I was reminded of the words of Jesus when he said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7).

This coming year I certainly will exercise when Jesus says here and look forward to ways I can be nice, especially to my wife. Then, I might be able to loop over to being nice to other people. So I have a great year ahead of me.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Has anyone figured out how to build wind farms that don't negatively impact birds, bats and other wildlife? Does building them off-shore help?

-- Mary B, Hyannis, MA

As the U.S. tackles the issues of climate change, the Biden administration is investing in wind power as a key strategy for sustainably meeting the country's energy needs. Federal officials estimate that the U.S. coastline could host 30,000 megawatts of wind energy by 2030, which would be enough energy to power as many as 10 million American homes.

Wind power is a necessary tool for fighting climate change, but it can be a threat to birds. A 2013 study by the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute found wind turbines to be responsible for killing up to 328,000 birds annually in the U.S. alone. Bats, another species playing a vital role in ecosystems, are also seeing negative impacts by wind farms. Research has shown that larger, migratory bats are at the greatest risk. In response to these problems, the federal government has allocated \$13.5 million specifically earmarked to addressing the impact of windfarms on birds, bats and marine species.

Scientists are focusing their efforts on site analysis, species monitoring and wildlife deterrents. Large birds of prey are the bird species most at risk. In response, some wind farm developments are incorporating new technology that can recognize eagles, hawks and other raptors as they approach in enough time to pause any turbines in the flight path. This tool, called Identiflight, can detect 5.62 times more bird flights than human observers alone, and with an accuracy rate of 94 percent.

Developing the best strategies for protecting bats is a bit more of a challenge, but the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is investigating migratory bat behavior with an interdisciplinary approach that will analyze migratory movements, mating and feeding behaviors to determine if they can find patterns that play a role in turbine collisions.

Locating wind farms offshore has been identified as a potential solution to species loss caused by on-land wind turbines. But as with any man-made structure, it is important to subject this potential solution to environmental impact assessments to have a clear understanding of the risks and possible benefits. One study in the United Kingdom found evidence that offshore wind farms could actually increase biodiversity if siting and timing of construction are chosen carefully. The study describes the structures acting as artificial reefs, mimicking natural habitat that can then be colonized by a diverse set of species.

Indeed, as we move towards utilizing more renewable energy, efforts to mitigate impacts on wildlife and surrounding ecosystems will take on increased importance to optimize the overall benefit to humanity and the environment we depend upon to sustain us.



Generating clean, renewable wind power is all well and good except for the killing of birds and bats — but new technologies to mitigate wildlife strikes are giving hope to clean power advocates.

Credit: Soumit, FlickrCC.

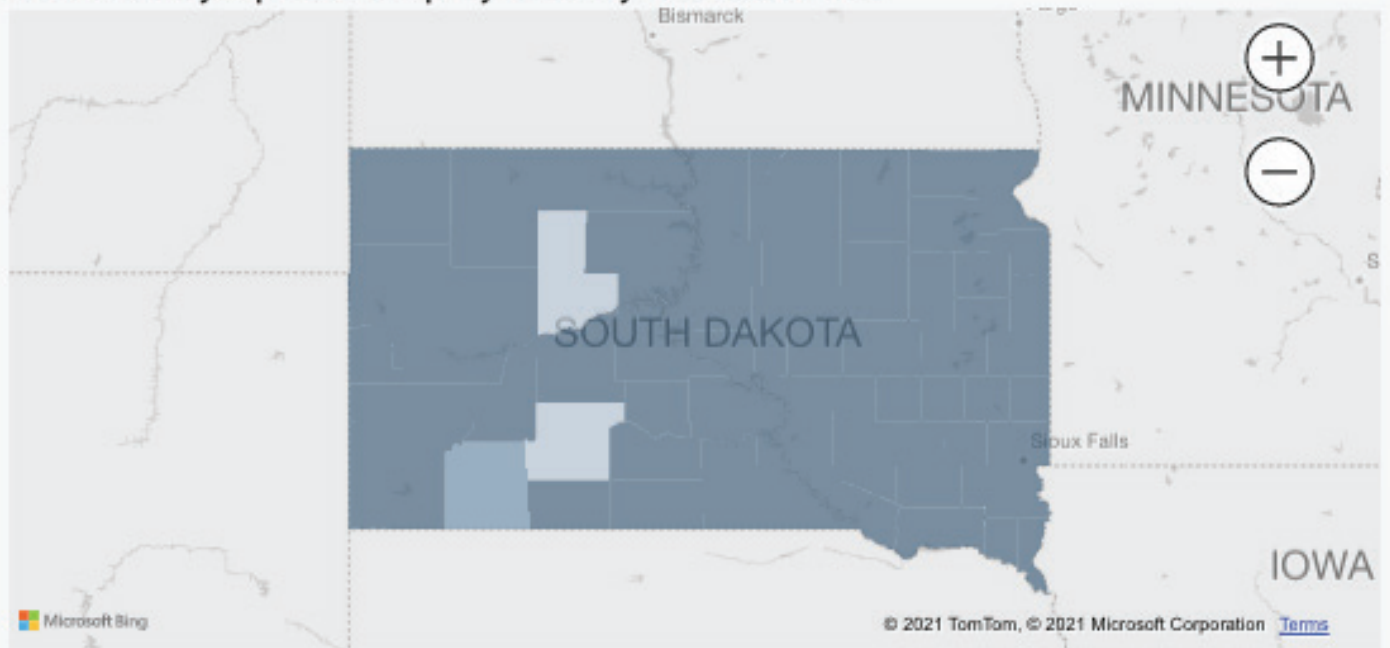
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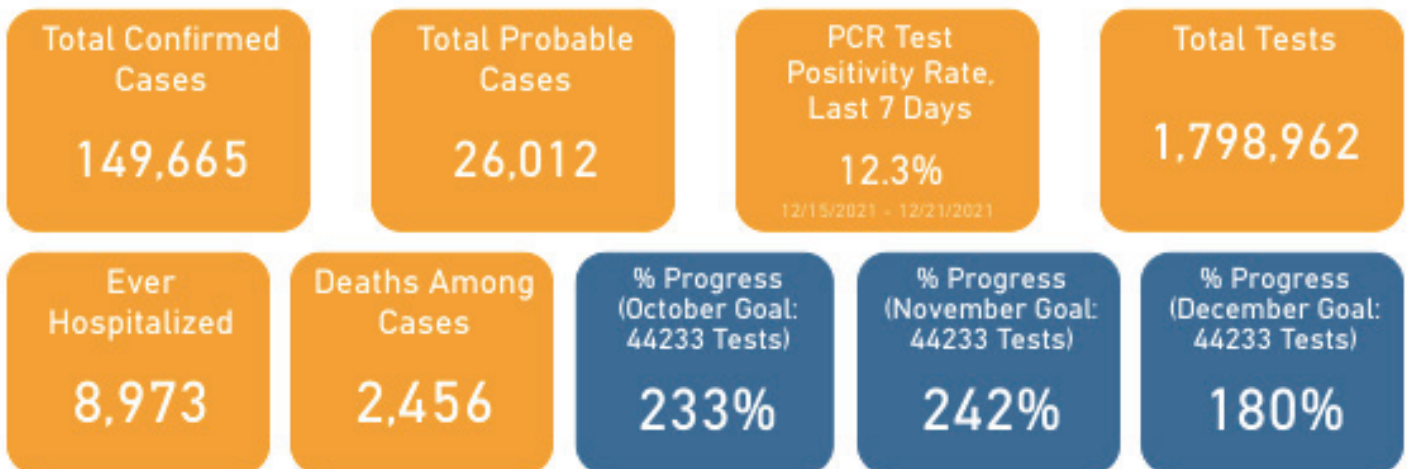
South Dakota COVID-19 Report



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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



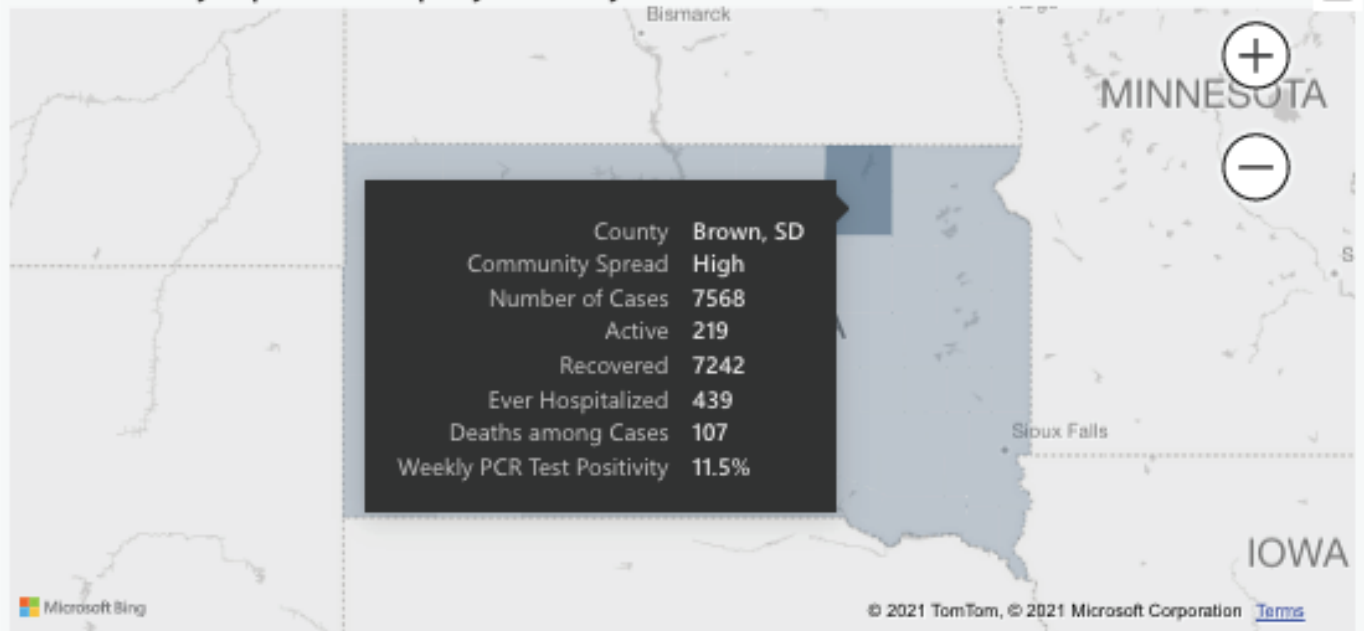
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Brown County COVID-19 Report

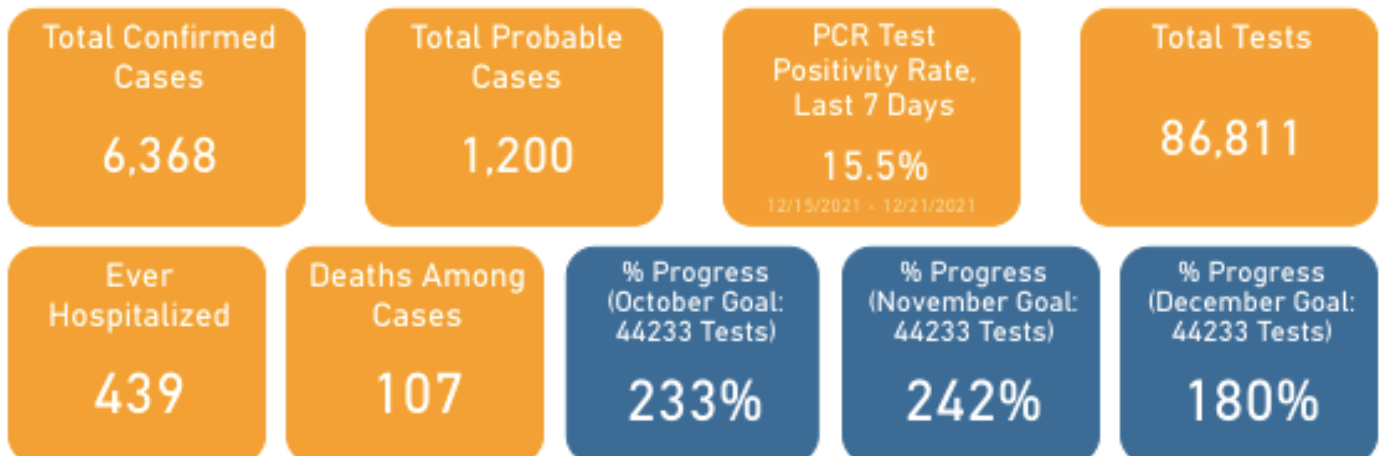


Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread Low Moderate Substantial High

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



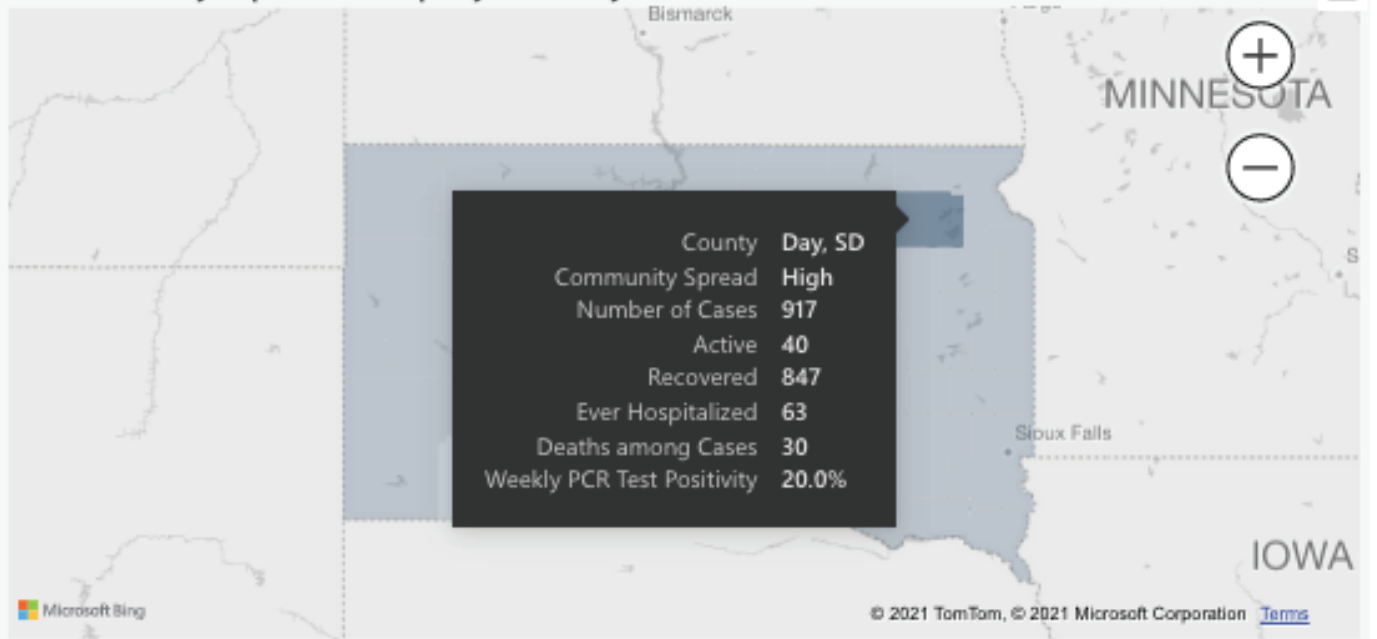
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Day County COVID-19 Report

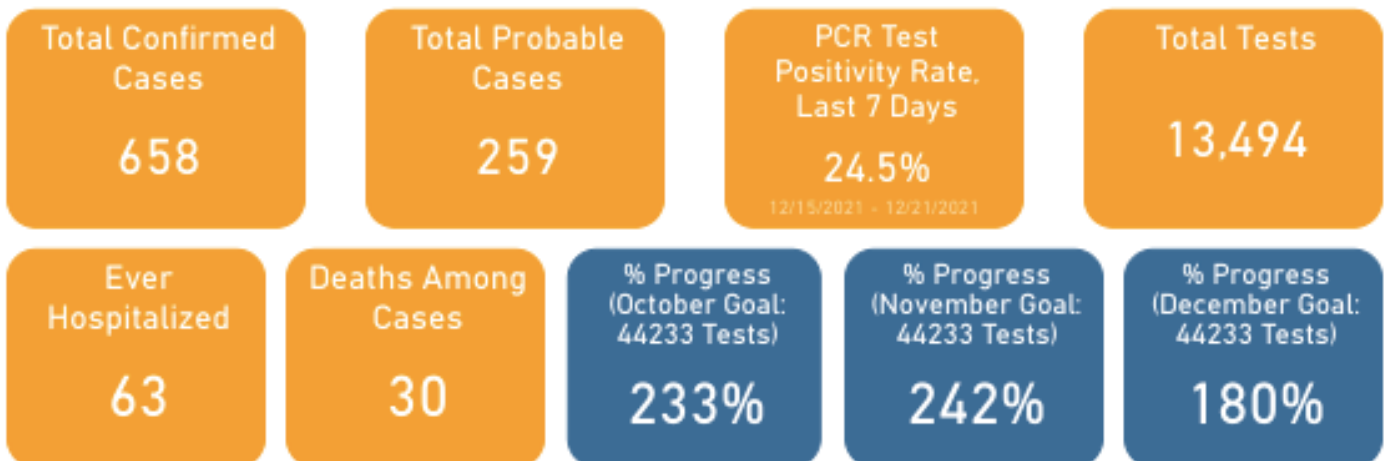


Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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	-17	237
Deaths Among Cases	+23	2456
Active Cases		7090
Ever Hospitalized		8973
Recovered Cases		166131
Total Cases		175677

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	91804	1131
Male	83873	1325

VARIANT CASES OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Variant	# of Cases
Delta (B.1.617.2 & AY lineages)	1240
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	176
Gamma (P.1)	4
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	10613	0
10-19 years	21392	0
20-29 years	29860	11
30-39 years	29318	39
40-49 years	24525	63
50-59 years	23342	179
60-69 years	19603	371
70-79 years	10237	568
80+ years	6787	1225

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian / Pacific Islander	2305	1%
Black	4148	2%
Hispanic	7265	4%
Native American	21046	12%
Other	1643	1%
Unknown	4320	2%
White	134950	77%

Groton Area School District

Active COVID-19 Cases

Updated December 23, 2021; 7:09 AM

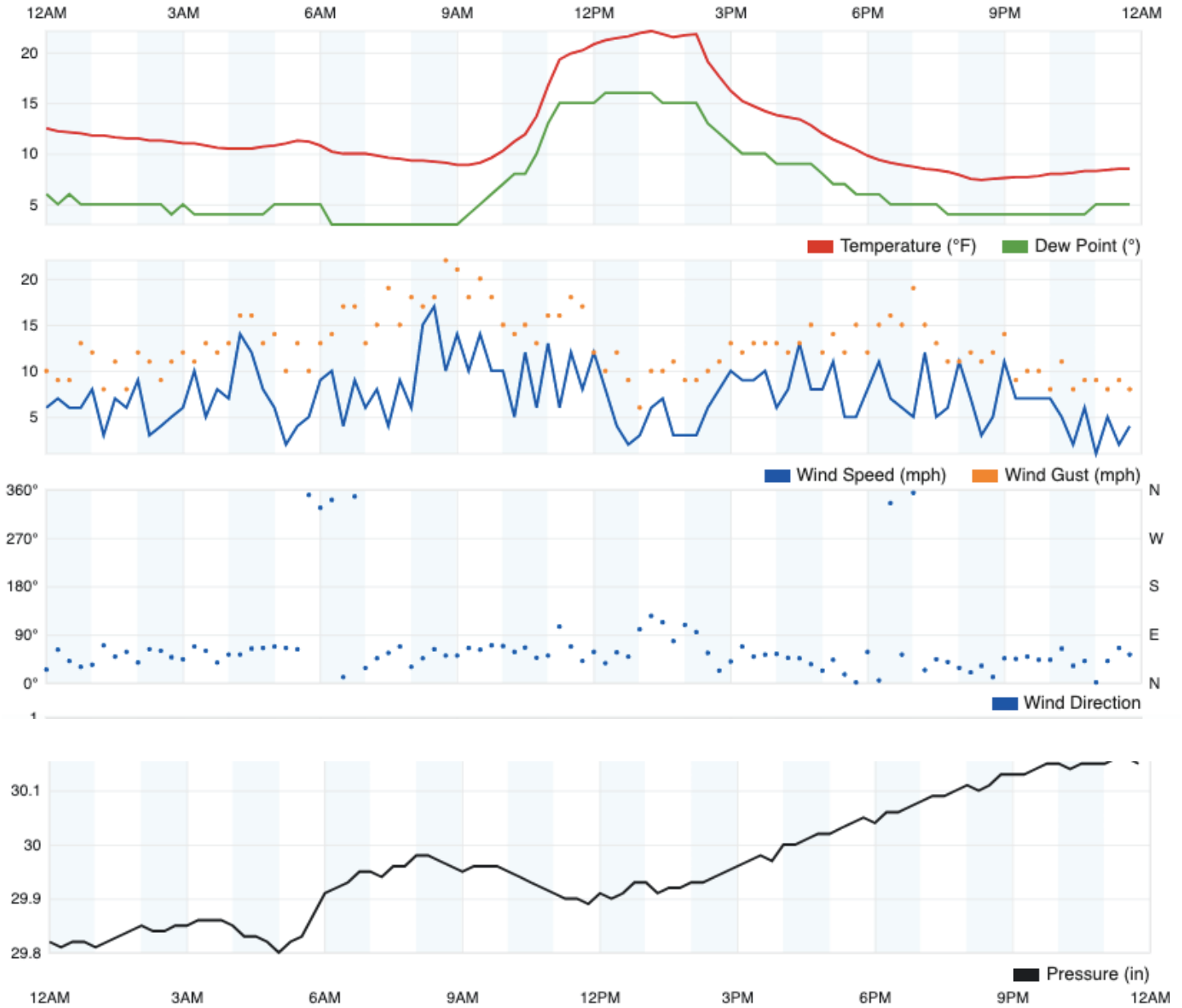
**Decrease of 2
from last week**

J	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	S	T
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0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4

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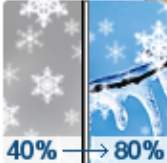




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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



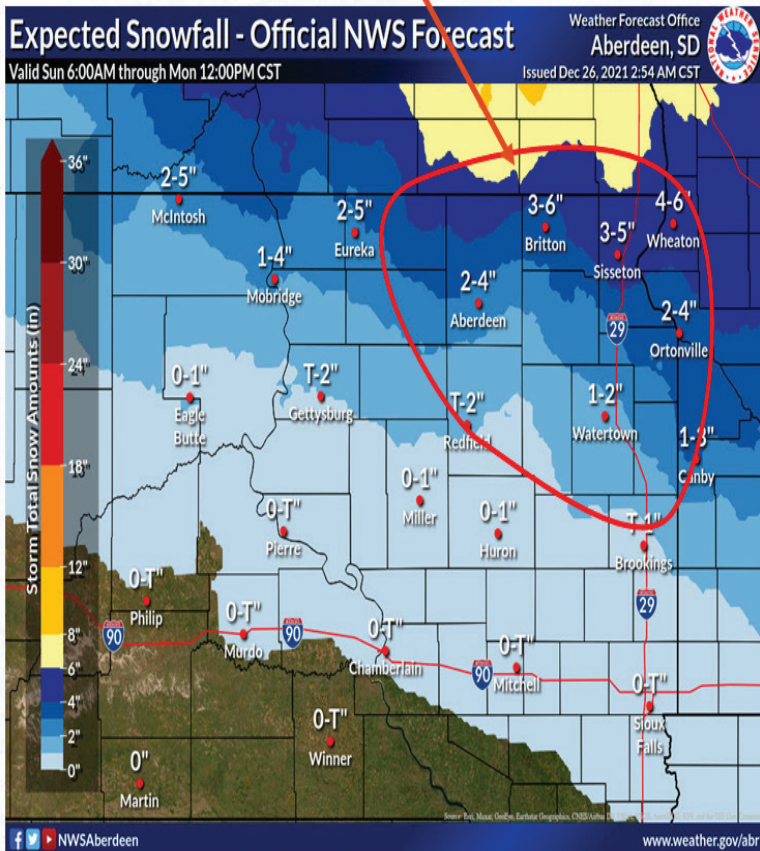
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Sunday	Winter Weather Advisory Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
40% → 80%	60%			50%
Chance Snow then Wintry Mix	Wintry Mix Likely and Patchy Blowing Snow	Patchy Blowing Snow and Breezy	Mostly Cloudy	Chance Snow
High: 26 °F	Low: 6 °F	High: 15 °F	Low: -10 °F	High: 2 °F

Winter System Today/Tonight

Area where a light glaze of **Freezing drizzle** is most likely to accumulate Sunday night & early Monday



What

A system is expected to bring **snow**, **freezing drizzle**, and **patchy blowing snow**

Where

North Central - Northeast South Dakota & Western Minnesota

When

This Afternoon: Snow with local areas of blowing snow.

This Evening/Overnight: Pockets of freezing drizzle. Patchy blowing snow may continue.

Early Monday: Snow & drizzle dissipate, winds shift to west. Local areas of blowing snow may continue.

Impacts

Reduced visibility, winds, snow and ice will make for **poor travel conditions**. Give yourself extra time!

A system will bring snow to the region today, with a shift to a period of freezing drizzle this evening and overnight. Winds will also pick up with blowing and drifting snow. Improving conditions will develop during the day Monday with colder air moving in.



Winter Weather Threats Timeline

Winds, snow & blowing snow, and freezing drizzle represent the threats associated with the system that crosses the area later today and tonight.

	6am Sun	noon Sun	6pm Sun	midnight	6am Mon	noon Mon
Mobridge & surrounding area		Snow, Blowing Snow		Snow & Freezing Drizzle		Blowing Snow
Pierre & surrounding area		Light Snow (No Accumulations)				
Miller & surrounding area		Light Snow (No Accumulations)		Freezing Drizzle (Little if any accum)		
Aberdeen & surrounding area		Snow, Blowing Snow		Snow & Freezing Drizzle		Blowing Snow
Sisseton & surrounding area		Snow, Blowing Snow		Snow & Freezing Drizzle		Blowing Snow
Watertown & surrounding area		Snow, Blowing Snow		Snow & Freezing Drizzle		Blowing Snow

Visit www.weather.gov/abr for a detailed forecast for your specific location Updated: 12/26/2021 4:08 AM CT NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Travel will be impacted by a winter system today into early Monday with snow and blowing snow changing to freezing drizzle for a period with some light ice accumulations. Winds shift to west as arctic air moves in Monday marking when precipitation will likely end.

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Today in Weather History

December 26, 1988: Moderate to heavy snow fell across western and northern South Dakota, as well as across most of Minnesota, from the evening of the 25th through the morning of the 27th. Much of the northern one-half to two-thirds of Minnesota and the western and northern sections of South Dakota were blanketed with 6-12 inches of new snow. Numerous accidents and minor injuries were indirectly related to the snowy conditions. Several snowfall amounts in South Dakota included 12 inches at Timber Lake; 10 to 12 inches at Seneca and Hoven; 11 inches at Aberdeen; 8 inches at Pierre, Eureka and Blunt; 7 inches at Chelsea, Redfield, Cottonwood, and Rapid City; and 6 inches at Ferney, Huron, and Eden. In Minnesota, 8 inches fell in Browns Valley, 6 inches fell at Wheaton, and 5 inches accumulated at Artichoke Lake.

December 26, 1776: George Washington crossed the ice-clogged Delaware River. He marched on Trenton in the midst of snow and sleet thus surprising and captured many of the British garrisons.

1947 - New York City received a record 26.4 inches of snow in 24 hours, with as much as 32 inches reported in the suburbs. The heavy snow brought traffic to a standstill, and snow removal cost eight million dollars. Thirty thousand persons were called upon to remove the 100 million tons of snow. The storm claimed 27 lives. (26th-27th) (David Ludlum)

1983 - Miami, FL, established a December record with a morning low of 33 degrees. Just three days earlier, and again three days later, record warm temperatures were reported in Florida, with daytime highs in the 80s. (The National Weather Summary)

1987 - Freezing rain plagued parts of the south central U.S., from northwest Texas to southwestern Missouri. Southwestern Missouri was turned into a huge skating rink as roads became sheets of ice. Damage to tree limbs and power lines compared to a hundred tornadoes, and half of the city of Springfield was left without electricity for 24 hours. Snow, sleet and ice covered the northwest two thirds of Oklahoma. 75,000 homes were left without electricity as ice accumulated one to two inches in a 40-mile band from Duncan to Norman to Tulsa to Miami. 25,000 of those homes were still without power a week later. The storm claimed the lives of seven persons. (24th-27th) (The Weather Channel) (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Low pressure produced heavy snow from North Dakota to western sections of the Great Lakes Region, with up to fourteen inches reported in the Chicago area. Cold arctic air hovered over the Plateau Region. Temperatures in the Big Smokey Valley of Nevada plunged to 31 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Strong northerly winds behind an arctic cold front produced snow squalls in the Great Lakes Region and dangerous wind chill temperatures in the northeastern U.S. Wind chill readings as cold as 40 degrees below zero were reported in New York State. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003 - A major snow storm in Utah caused several fatalities due to avalanches. As much as 2 ft of snow fell in parts of the state, particularly south of Salt Lake City. Three people that were seen snowboarding in the Aspen Grove recreational area have been presumed dead, all others managed to escape or be rescued (Reuters).

2004: A magnitude 9.1 earthquake near Sumatra, Indonesia generated a tsunami that caused tremendous devastation throughout the Indian Ocean. The quake, which is the third largest in the world since 1900, caused severe damage and casualties in northern Sumatra, Indonesia, and in the Nicobar Islands, India. The tsunami that followed killed more people than any other tsunami in recorded history, with 227,898 dead or missing. The total estimated material losses in the Indian Ocean region were \$10 billion, and insured losses were \$2 billion.

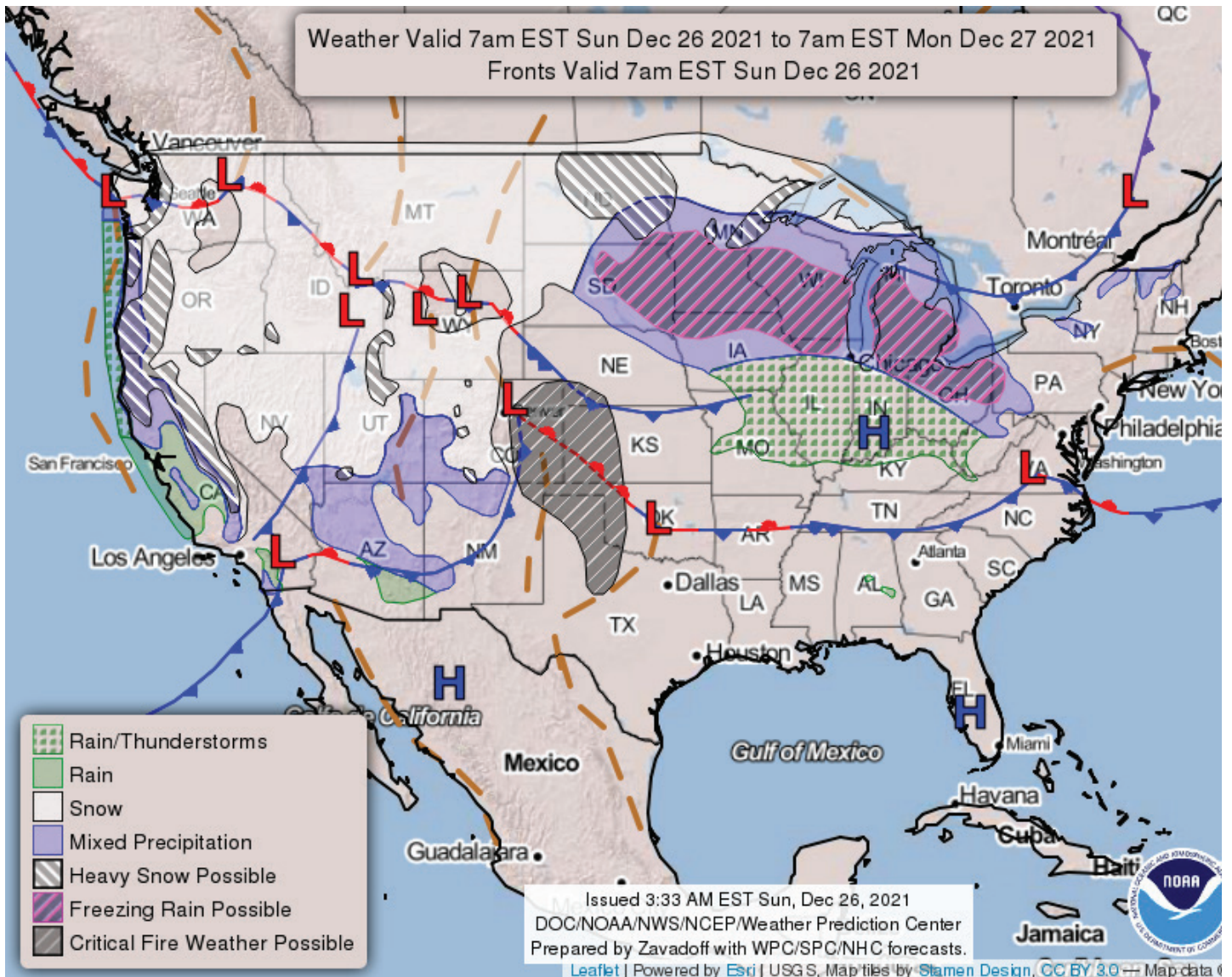
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 22.1 °F at 1:15 PM
Low Temp: 7.4 °F at 8:30 PM
Wind: 22 mph at 8:45 AM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 53° in 2011
Record Low: -29° in 1990
Average High: 25°F
Average Low: 5°F
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.50
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.47
Average Precip to date: 21.71
Precip Year to Date: 20.03
Sunset Tonight: 4:56:49 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09:49 AM



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WHY MOTHERS MATTER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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

13-16-25-32-33

(thirteen, sixteen, twenty-five, thirty-two, thirty-three)

Estimated jackpot: \$28,000

Lotto America

17-27-34-36-38, Star Ball: 3, ASB: 4

(seventeen, twenty-seven, thirty-four, thirty-six, thirty-eight; Star Ball: three; ASB: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$5.37 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$201 million

Powerball

27-29-45-55-58, Powerball: 2, Power Play: 3

(twenty-seven, twenty-nine, forty-five, fifty-five, fifty-eight; Powerball: two; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$400 million

Pope's 3 key words for a marriage: 'Please, thanks, sorry'

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis is seeking to encourage married couples, acknowledging that the pandemic has aggravated some family problems but urging couples to seek help and always remember three key words in a marriage: "Please, thanks and sorry."

Francis penned a letter to married couples that was released Sunday, a Catholic feast day commemorating Jesus' family. It came halfway through a yearlong celebration of the family announced by Francis that is due to conclude in June with a big rally in Rome.

In the letter, Francis said lockdowns and quarantines had forced families to spend more time together. But he noted that such enforced togetherness at times tested the patience of parents and siblings alike and in some cases led to difficulties.

"Pre-existing problems were aggravated, creating conflicts that in some cases became almost unbearable. Many even experienced the breakup of a relationship," Francis wrote.

He offered his closeness to those families and reminded parents that the breakup of a marriage is particularly hard on children, who look to their parents as a constant source of stability, love, trust and strength.

"The breakdown of a marriage causes immense suffering, since many hopes are dashed, and misunderstandings can lead to arguments and hurts not easily healed," he said. "Children end up having to suffer the pain of seeing their parents no longer together."

He urged parents to keep seeking help to try to overcome conflicts, including through prayer. "Remember also that forgiveness heals every wound," he said.

He repeated a refrain he has often used when meeting with families and married couples, listing the three most important words in a marriage: "Please, thanks and sorry."

"After every argument, don't let the day end without making peace," he said.

Desmond Tutu, South African equality activist, dies at 90

By ANDREW MELDRUM Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Desmond Tutu, South Africa's Nobel Peace Prize-winning activist for racial justice

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and LGBT rights and retired Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, has died, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced Sunday. He was 90.

An uncompromising foe of apartheid — South Africa's brutal regime of oppression against the Black majority — Tutu worked tirelessly, though non-violently, for its downfall.

The buoyant, blunt-spoken clergyman used his pulpit as the first Black bishop of Johannesburg and later Archbishop of Cape Town as well as frequent public demonstrations to galvanize public opinion against racial inequity both at home and globally.

Tutu's death on Sunday "is another chapter of bereavement in our nation's farewell to a generation of outstanding South Africans who have bequeathed us a liberated South Africa," Ramaphosa said in a statement.

"From the pavements of resistance in South Africa to the pulpits of the world's great cathedrals and places of worship, and the prestigious setting of the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, the Arch distinguished himself as a non-sectarian, inclusive champion of universal human rights."

Tutu died peacefully at the Oasis Frail Care Center in Cape Town, the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Trust said in a statement Sunday.

Tutu had been hospitalized several times since 2015, after being diagnosed with prostate cancer in 1997.

"Typically he turned his own misfortune into a teaching opportunity to raise awareness and reduce the suffering of others," said the Tutu trust's statement. "He wanted the world to know that he had prostate cancer, and that the sooner it is detected the better the chance of managing it."

In recent years he and his wife, Leah, lived in a retirement community outside Cape Town.

Throughout the 1980s — when South Africa was gripped by anti-apartheid violence and a state of emergency giving police and the military sweeping powers — Tutu was one of the most prominent Blacks able to speak out against abuses.

A lively wit lightened Tutu's hard-hitting messages and warmed otherwise grim protests, funerals and marches. Short, plucky, tenacious, he was a formidable force, and apartheid leaders learned not to discount his canny talent for quoting apt scriptures to harness righteous support for change.

The Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 highlighted his stature as one of the world's most effective champions for human rights, a responsibility he took seriously for the rest of his life.

With the end of apartheid and South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, Tutu celebrated the country's multi-racial society, calling it a "rainbow nation," a phrase that captured the heady optimism of the moment.

Nicknamed "the Arch," Tutu was diminutive, with an impish sense of humor, but became a towering figure in his nation's history, comparable to fellow Nobel laureate Nelson Mandela, a prisoner during white rule who became South Africa's first Black president. Tutu and Mandela shared a commitment to building a better, more equal South Africa.

In 1990, after 27 years in prison, Mandela spent his first night of freedom at Tutu's residence in Cape Town. Later, Mandela called Tutu "the people's archbishop."

Upon becoming president in 1994, Mandela appointed Tutu to be chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which uncovered the abuses of the apartheid system.

Tutu campaigned internationally for human rights, especially LGBT rights and same-sex marriage.

"I would not worship a God who is homophobic and that is how deeply I feel about this," he said in 2013, launching a campaign for LGBT rights in Cape Town. "I would refuse to go to a homophobic heaven. No, I would say, 'Sorry, I would much rather go to the other place.'"

Tutu said he was "as passionate about this campaign (for LGBT rights) as I ever was about apartheid. For me, it is at the same level." He was one of the most prominent religious leaders to advocate LGBT rights. Tutu's very public stance for LGBT rights put him at odds with many in South Africa and across the continent as well as within the Anglican church.

South Africa, Tutu said, was a "rainbow" nation of promise for racial reconciliation and equality, even though he grew disillusioned with the African National Congress, the anti-apartheid movement that became the ruling party in 1994 elections. His outspoken remarks long after apartheid sometimes angered

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partisans who accused him of being biased or out of touch.

Tutu was particularly incensed by the South African government's refusal to grant a visa to the Dalai Lama, preventing the Tibetan spiritual leader from attending Tutu's 80th birthday celebration as well as a planned gathering of Nobel laureates in Cape Town. South Africa rejected Tutu's accusations that it was bowing to pressure from China, a major trading partner.

Early in 2016, Tutu defended the reconciliation policy that ended white minority rule amid increasing frustration among some South Africans who felt they had not seen the expected economic opportunities and other benefits since apartheid ended. Tutu had chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that investigated atrocities under apartheid and granted amnesty to some perpetrators, but some people believe more former white officials should have been prosecuted.

Desmond Mpilo Tutu was born Oct. 7, 1931, in Klerksdorp, west of Johannesburg, and became a teacher before entering St. Peter's Theological College in Rosetenville in 1958 for training as a priest. He was ordained in 1961 and six years later became chaplain at the University of Fort Hare. Moves to the tiny southern African kingdom of Lesotho and to Britain followed, with Tutu returning home in 1975. He became bishop of Lesotho, chairman of the South African Council of Churches and, in 1985 the first Black Anglican bishop of Johannesburg and then in 1986, the first Black archbishop of Cape Town. He ordained women priests and promoted gay priests.

Tutu was arrested in 1980 for taking part in a protest and later had his passport confiscated for the first time. He got it back for trips to the United States and Europe, where he held talks with the U.N. secretary-general, the pope and other church leaders.

Tutu called for international sanctions against South Africa and talks to end the conflict.

Tutu often conducted funeral services after the massacres that marked the negotiating period of 1990-1994. He railed against black-on-black political violence, asking crowds, "Why are we doing this to ourselves?" In one powerful moment, Tutu defused the rage of thousands of mourners in a township soccer stadium after the Boipatong massacre of 42 people in 1992, leading the crowd in chants proclaiming their love of God and themselves.

After Mandela became president in 1994, he asked Tutu to head the truth commission to promote racial reconciliation. The panel listened to harrowing testimony about torture, killings and other atrocities during apartheid. At some hearings, Tutu wept openly.

"Without forgiveness, there is no future," he said at the time. The commission's 1998 report lay most of the blame on the forces of apartheid, but also found the African National Congress guilty of human rights violations. The ANC sued to block the document's release, earning a rebuke from Tutu. "I didn't struggle in order to remove one set of those who thought they were tin gods to replace them with others who are tempted to think they are," Tutu said.

In July 2015, Tutu renewed his 1955 wedding vows with wife Leah. The Tutus' four children and other relatives surrounded the elderly couple in a church ceremony. "You can see that we followed the biblical injunction: We multiplied and we're fruitful," Tutu told the congregation. "But all of us here want to say thank you ... We knew that without you, we are nothing."

Tutu is survived by his wife of 66 years and their four children.

Asked once how he wanted to be remembered, he told The Associated Press: "He loved. He laughed. He cried. He was forgiven. He forgave. Greatly privileged."

AP journalist Christopher Torchia contributed to this report.

Australian state sees record cases, lab sends false results

SYDNEY (AP) — Australia's most populous state reported a record number of new COVID-19 cases on Sunday and a sharp jump in hospitalizations while thousands of people were isolating at home after contracting the virus or coming into contact with someone who has.

A major laboratory in Sydney, which is located in New South Wales, said that 400 people who had been

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informed a day earlier they had tested negative for COVID-19 had in fact tested positive. The lab's medical director said those people were being contacted and informed of the error.

"An emergency response team is now investigating the cause of this mistake, which is believed to be due to human error. We sincerely apologize," said SydPath medical director Anthony Dodds.

Doctors and pharmacists in New South Wales have said they are running short of vaccine doses amid a rush for shots spurred by concern over the omicron variant.

New South Wales reported 6,394 new infections, up from 6,288 a day earlier. Case numbers in the state have surged over the past two weeks but hospitalizations have lagged behind new infections.

More than 70% of cases in some Australian states are the omicron variant of the coronavirus but New South Wales does not routinely carry out genome testing to identify the variant. State Health Minister Brad Hazzard indicated Sunday that omicron is widespread.

"We would expect that pretty well everybody in New South Wales at some point will get omicron," Hazzard said. "If we're all going to get omicron, the best way to face it is when we have full vaccinations including our booster."

Health officials reported 458 active cases in hospitals across the state, up sharply from 388 the day before. There were 52 people in intensive care in New South Wales.

Victoria, the country's second most populous state, reported 1,608 new COVID-19 cases and two deaths on Sunday, with 374 people in hospitals, including 77 in intensive care.

More than 30,000 people in Victoria spent Christmas isolating at home, unable to celebrate with family or friends. Of those, about half were reported to be active cases who contracted the virus in the days leading up to Christmas.

Flight cancellations snarl holiday plans for thousands

By TALI ARBÉL AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Airlines continued to cancel hundreds of flights Saturday because of staffing issues tied to COVID-19, disrupting holiday celebrations during one of the busiest travel times of the year.

FlightAware, a flight-tracking website, noted nearly 1,000 canceled flights entering, leaving or inside the U.S. Saturday, up from 690 flights scrapped on Friday. Over 250 more flights were already canceled for Sunday. FlightAware does not say why flights are canceled.

Delta, United and JetBlue had all said Friday that the omicron variant was causing staffing problems leading to flight cancellations. United spokesperson Maddie King said staffing shortages were still causing cancellations and it was unclear when normal operations would return. "This was unexpected," she said of omicron's impact on staffing. Delta and JetBlue did not respond to questions Saturday.

According to FlightAware, the three airlines canceled more than 10% of their scheduled Saturday flights. American Airlines also canceled more than 90 flights Saturday, about 3% of its schedule, according to FlightAware. American spokesperson Derek Walls said the cancellations stemmed from "COVID-related sick calls." European and Australian airlines have also canceled holiday-season flights because of staffing problems tied to COVID-19.

For travelers, that meant time away from loved ones, chaos at the airport and the stress of spending hours standing in line and on the phone trying to rebook flights. Peter Bockman, a retired actor, and his daughter Malaika, a college student, were supposed to be in Senegal on Saturday celebrating with relatives they hadn't seen in a decade. But their 7:30 p.m. flight Friday from New York to Dakar was canceled, which they found out only when they got to the airport. They were there until 2 a.m. trying to rebook a flight.

"Nobody was organizing, trying to sort things out," he said, faulting Delta for a lack of customer service. "Nobody explained anything. Not even, 'Oh we're so sorry, this is what we can do to help you.'"

Their new flight, for Monday evening, has a layover in Paris, and they are worried there will be issues with that one as well. They have already missed a big family get-together that was scheduled for Saturday.

FlightAware's data shows airlines scrapped more than 6,000 flights globally for Friday, Saturday and Sunday combined as of Saturday evening, with almost one-third of affected flights to, from or within

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the United States. Chinese airlines made up many of the canceled flights, and Chinese airports topped FlightAware's lists of those with most cancellations. It wasn't clear why. China has strict pandemic control measures, including frequent lockdowns, and the government set one on Xi'an, a city of 13 million people, earlier this week.

Employees who answered the phone Sunday at customer hotlines for Air China and China Eastern airlines said they had received no notice of cancellations of flights to or from the United States.

Air China usually flies between New York City and Shanghai twice a week. China Eastern has two weekly flights to Los Angeles, one from Beijing and the other from the southern city of Shenzhen. Another Chinese airline, Hainan Airlines, suspended flights to the United States early in the pandemic.

The Civil Aviation Administration of China's flight schedule through the end of March shows a total of 408 international flights planned per week. That is down 21% from a year earlier.

Flight delays and cancellations tied to staffing shortages have been a regular problem for the U.S. airline industry this year. Airlines encouraged workers to quit in 2020, when air travel collapsed, and were caught short-staffed this year as travel recovered.

To ease staffing shortages, countries including Spain and the U.K. have reduced the length of COVID-19 quarantines by letting people return to work sooner after testing positive or being exposed to the virus.

Delta CEO Ed Bastian was among those who have called on the Biden administration to take similar steps or risk further disruptions in air travel. On Thursday, the U.S. shortened COVID-19 isolation rules for health care workers only.

Joe McDonald in Beijing contributed to this report.

'He-Man' artist and toy designer T. Mark Taylor dies at 80

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — T. Mark Taylor, artist and toy designer for the He-Man and the Masters of the Universe franchise as well as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, died Thursday at his Southern California home. He was 80.

The cause was congestive heart failure, Taylor's family said in an email to The Associated Press on Saturday.

He-Man was the muscled frontman for toy manufacturer Mattel's Masters of the Universe franchise, which would later spawn an animated series that became a staple for children. Kids squeezed in homework between scenes featuring the strapping cartoon hero as he battled sorcerers and other villains.

He-Man might have been known as a hulking superhero warrior but also became an icon within the LGBTQ community, who saw parallels in the secret life of Prince Adam, He-Man's alter ego.

As in the case of many creative endeavors, many hands shaped the franchise. Taylor has said the prototypes date back to his own childhood as he fantasized about being "the next hero." He said he based the concept of He-Man on his vision of Cro-Magnon men, as well as Vikings.

Mattel sold more than 70 million action figures from its Masters of the Universe collection within 30 months after it hit stores nearly 40 years ago, according to The New York Times.

Taylor began his career with El Segundo-based Mattel in 1976 as a packaging designer, his family said.

Mattel did not respond to a request for comment Saturday.

The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles franchise — featuring pizza-loving Michelangelo, Donatello, Raphael and Leonardo — launched a long-running animated series, live-action movies and a catchphrase: cowabunga!

While Taylor did not create any of the characters, his work as a designer helped propel them into iconic childhood images for many around the world, including action figures and costumes that flew off stores' shelves.

Terrell Mark Taylor — who went by his middle name, Mark — was born on June 5, 1941, according to California voter registration records. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, designer Rebecca Salari-Taylor of Ranchos Palos Verdes.

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"I felt him say goodbye to this world as I held him in my arms for one final loving kiss," Salari-Taylor wrote in a Facebook post.

Taylor's family said his father-in-law, Tony Salari, told the artist, "If you can draw well, everything will be okay."

Taylor took pinstriping commissions for "hot rod" cars as a teen in Redondo Beach in the early 1950s, his family said. He later attended the ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena.

Taylor went on to work for the U.S. Department of Defense in Pasadena and contributed to projects for submarines, biological and technical sonar technology and seafloor mapping, his family said.

Taylor's toy work was featured in documentaries, including "Power of Grayskull" and "The Toys That Made Us."

"If I was going to do a hero for today, it would be a female hero — because it's the time, because the heroes of our time are women. ... Us men had our day," Taylor told fans during an appearance at a He-Man festival in 2015.

Calvan reported from New York.

Rodgers sets team record as Packers hold off Browns 24-22

By STEVE MEGARGEE AP Sports Writer

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — Rasul Douglas and the Green Bay Packers' pass defense didn't let the Cleveland Browns spoil Aaron Rodgers' milestone day.

Rodgers surpassed Brett Favre to become Green Bay's all-time leader in touchdown passes, and the Packers intercepted Baker Mayfield four times in a 24-22 victory over the Cleveland Browns on Saturday. Cleveland nearly came all the way back from a 12-point second-half deficit before Douglas' second interception of the day sealed the game with 43 seconds left.

"We've got to do a better job of closing games out," Rodgers said. "Our defense has closed out a lot of games, the last two weeks stopping that 2-point conversion (in a 31-30 victory at Baltimore) and Rasul coming up with that big pick. It's nerve racking, but winning is difficult in this league."

Rodgers went 24 of 34 for 202 yards with three touchdown passes to increase his career total to 445. Favre threw 508 touchdown passes during his Hall of Fame career, 442 of them with Green Bay.

But it was Green Bay's defense that clinched this victory by sacking Mayfield five times and forcing him into his first career four-interception performance. All three touchdowns by the Packers (12-3) came after Mayfield interceptions.

"It was just missed throws," Mayfield said. "Uncharacteristic, and I hurt this team. That's the most frustrating thing for me, because I thought our defense played tremendous against a really, really good offense. But when you turn the ball over on your own territory, in the red zone and around midfield and give them extra opportunities, they're going to take advantage of it."

Mayfield was 21 of 36 for 222 yards with two touchdowns as well as those four picks in his return from the reserve/COVID-19 list, which caused him to miss a 16-14 loss to the Las Vegas Raiders on Monday.

Nick Chubb ran for 126 yards and a touchdown to lead the Browns' 219-yard rushing effort that kept them in the game.

The Browns (7-8) trailed 24-22 and had third-and-10 at the 50 when Douglas picked off Mayfield's pass intended for Donovan Peoples-Jones at the 40.

Since getting signed off the Arizona Cardinals' practice squad in early October, Douglas has a team-high five interceptions. He had a game-clinching interception in the final minute of a victory at Arizona earlier this season.

"Coaches told me as long as I keep catching them, they'll keep coming," Douglas said. "I'm just trying to catch them when they come."

Darnell Savage and Chandon Sullivan also had interceptions. Rashan Gary had two of the Packers' five sacks against the Browns, whose offensive line was decimated with left tackle Jedrick Wills and center JC

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Tretter both on the COVID-19 list.

Until the Browns produced their second-half threat, the day belonged to Rodgers, who broke Favre's record by throwing an 11-yard TD pass to Allen Lazard in the first quarter.

"Aaron breaks so many records," Lazard said. "Literally every week it's almost like I get on Instagram Monday morning and someone's always posting some new record that Aaron's breaking. For us, in a sense, it's another day at the office. Obviously this one's a bigger milestone in that sense."

Rodgers spent his first three NFL seasons backing up Favre before taking over in 2008. Favre sent a message to Rodgers in a video that aired on the Lambeau Field scoreboard after the record-breaking touchdown pass.

"Hey, 12, congratulations, man, on passing my touchdown record," Favre said. "I have one request. Go get us another Super Bowl. Congrats."

"Definitely got me a little teary-eyed on the bench," said Rodgers, who saluted the Lambeau Field crowd that gave him a hearty ovation. "A moment I'll never forget, for sure. I'm thankful for Favre's message, for the response from the guys and the crowd obviously was really special."

Rodgers later threw two touchdown passes to Davante Adams, who had 10 catches for 114 yards. Adams has caught at least 10 passes for 100 yards and two touchdowns in eight career games, the most of anyone in NFL history.

Adams has caught 67 touchdown passes from Rodgers, giving them the franchise record for touchdown pass combinations. Rodgers threw 65 touchdown passes to former Packers receiver Jordy Nelson.

"When you start stacking up the numbers for Davante, it's mind blowing," Rodgers said. "I really feel like he's the best player that I've played with."

The Packers already have clinched the NFC North title and are seeking the conference's top playoff seed as they chase their first Super Bowl berth since their 2010 championship season. They have lost in the NFC championship game each of the last two seasons.

INJURED

Rodgers went to the locker room late in the first half after aggravating his toe injury but didn't miss a down. Rodgers has been playing with a fractured left pinky toe. ... Packers DL Tyler Lancaster left in the fourth quarter.

UP NEXT

Browns: visit the Pittsburgh Steelers on Jan. 3.

Packers: host the Minnesota Vikings on Jan. 2 in their regular-season home finale.

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

Save the Children says staff missing after Myanmar massacre

By TASSANEE VEJPONGSA Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Two members of the international humanitarian group Save the Children were missing Saturday after Myanmar government troops rounded up villagers, some believed to be women and children, fatally shot more than 30 and burned the bodies, according to a witness and other reports.

Purported photos of the aftermath of the Christmas Eve massacre in eastern Mo So village, just outside Hpruso township in Kayah state where refugees were sheltering from an army offensive, spread on social media in the country, fueling outrage against the military that took power in February.

The accounts could not be independently verified. The photos showed the charred bodies of over 30 people in three burned-out vehicles.

A villager who said he went to the scene told The Associated Press that the victims had fled the fighting between armed resistance groups and Myanmar's army near Koi Ngan village, which is just beside Mo So, on Friday. He said they were killed after they were arrested by troops while heading to refugee camps in the western part of the township.

Save the Children said that two of its staff who were traveling home for the holidays after conducting

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humanitarian response work in a nearby community were "caught up in the incident and remain missing." "We have confirmation that their private vehicle was attacked and burned out," the group added in a statement. "The military reportedly forced people from their cars, arrested some, killed others and burned their bodies."

The government has not commented on the allegations, but a report in the state-run Myanmar Alinn daily newspaper on Saturday said that the fighting near Mo So broke out on Friday when members of ethnic guerrilla forces, known as the Karenni National Progressive Party, and those opposed to the military drove in "suspicious" vehicles and attacked security forces after refusing to stop.

The newspaper report said they included new members who were going to attend training to fight the army, and that the seven vehicles they were traveling in were destroyed in a fire. It gave no further details about the killings.

The witness who spoke to the AP said the remains were burned beyond recognition, and children's and women's clothes were found together with medical supplies and food.

"The bodies were tied with ropes before being set on fire," said the witness, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he feared for his safety.

He did not see the moment they were killed, but said he believed some of them were Mo So villagers who reportedly got arrested by troops on Friday. He denied that those captured were members of locally organized militia groups.

Myanmar's independent media reported on Friday that 10 Mo So villagers including children were arrested by the army and four members of the local paramilitary Border Guard Forces who went to negotiate for their release were reportedly tied up and shot in the head by the military.

The witness said the villagers and anti-government militia groups left the bodies as military troops arrived near Mo So while the bodies were being prepared for cremation. The fighting was still intense near the village.

"It's a heinous crime and the worst incident during Christmas. We strongly condemn that massacre as a crime against humanity," said Banyar Khun Aung, director of the Karenni Human Rights Group.

Earlier this month, government troops were also accused of rounding up villagers, some believed to be children, tying them up and slaughtering them. An opposition leader, Dr. Sasa, who uses only one name, said the civilians were burned alive.

A video of the aftermath of the Dec. 7 assault — apparently retaliation for an attack on a military convoy — showed the charred bodies of 11 people lying in a circle amid what appeared to be the remains of a hut.

Fighting meanwhile resumed Saturday in a neighboring state on the border with Thailand, where thousands of people have fled to seek shelter. Local officials said Myanmar's military unleashed airstrikes and heavy artillery on Lay Kay Kaw, a small town controlled by ethnic Karen guerrillas, since Friday.

The military's action prompted multiple Western governments including the U.S. Embassy to issue a joint statement condemning "serious human rights violations committed by the military regime across the country."

"We call on the regime to immediately cease its indiscriminate attacks in Karen state and throughout the country, and to ensure the safety of all civilians in line with international law," the joint statement said.

Parts of California get a White Christmas after snowfall

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Parts of California are getting a White Christmas after all, with snowfall pounding mountains across the state.

Other areas of California, however, saw a wet and rainy Christmas as storms continue to drench the state, causing flash flooding and evacuations in some areas over the holiday period.

A 70-mile (113-kilometer) stretch of interstate over the top of the Sierra Nevada was closed Saturday when a storm that dropped nearly 2 feet (60 centimeters) of snow on some ski resorts around Lake Tahoe overnight got a second wind.

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Interstate 80 connecting Reno, Nevada, to Sacramento, California, over the Sierra was closed in both directions due to poor visibility from the Nevada-California state line to Colfax, California.

"The worst part of the storm is here so expect long delays," the California Highway Patrol in Truckee tweeted Saturday afternoon.

Friday night into Saturday, 20 inches (50 centimeters) of snow fell at Homewood on Tahoe's west shore. About a foot (30 centimeters) was reported at Northstar near Truckee, California and 10 inches (25 centimeters) at the Mount Rose ski resort on the southwest edge of Reno.

At Donner Pass in the Sierra, which is along the closed interstate, officials with the University of California, Berkeley's Central Sierra Snow Laboratory wondered on Twitter if the recent snowfall could break the snowiest December record of 179 inches (4.6 meters) set in 1970.

There's been at least 119 inches (3 meters) recorded so far this month, according to The Mercury News, with more expected over the next 72 hours.

The snowpack in the Sierra was at dangerously low levels after recent weeks of dry weather but the state Department of Water Resources reported on Christmas Eve that the snowpack was between 114% and 137% of normal across the range with more snow expected.

In the San Bernardino National Forest, crews are working on a \$4.2 million emergency project to repair a section of State Route 18 that washed down a hillside late Thursday after heavy rain, according to The San Bernardino Sun.

The roadway is a major route to Big Bear Lake and the closure near Panorama Point could be "several days if not weeks," the newspaper reported.

The Los Angeles area is likely to see rain and mountain snow for the next week, according to the National Weather Service, with temperatures significantly below normal through the middle of the week.

The San Diego region should see scattered showers, with heavy snow in the San Bernardino and Riverside County mountains, with precipitation possibly going into Thursday.

Meanwhile, the San Francisco Bay Area is predicted to have rain showers through Monday before cold and drier conditions arrive through the middle of next week, the weather service said.

The storms across the West, which could drop rain and snow over much of the region into next week and plunge the Pacific Northwest into a lengthy cold snap, follow a now-departed atmospheric river that delivered copious amounts of precipitation earlier this week.

The National Weather Service says the Seattle-Tacoma area is likely to see up to 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) of snow over the weekend. By early next week, the Seattle area will dip as low as 18 degrees Fahrenheit (-7.7 degrees Celsius), the lowest in several years. Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, will drop to -5 F (-20 C) by Wednesday and Portland will drop to the low 20s and high teens.

Rain and snow records broke in Nevada and state officials in Oregon declared an emergency ahead of the freezing temperatures, snow and ice.

Recent forecasts show at least an inch of snow is likely to fall Sunday in the Seattle and Portland regions, which don't typically see snow.

But forecasters and state officials say the main concern is cold temperatures in the region, with daytime highs next week struggling to reach above freezing, that are likely to impact people experiencing homelessness and those without adequate access to heating.

In Arizona, a winter weather advisory remained in effect Saturday through the weekend in the upper elevations of the mountains north of the Grand Canyon near the Colorado line. But the wet weather that dumped record-breaking rain on Phoenix and Flagstaff on Friday was moving out of the area.

The 1.67 inches (4.2 centimeters) of rain that fell at the airport in Flagstaff on Friday shattered the old record of 0.87 inches (2.2 centimeters) set in 2019. The inch (2.5 centimeters) that was recorded in Phoenix Friday broke the old record of 0.93 of an inch (2.4 centimeters) in 1944.

It also was the wettest day for the city since Feb. 22, 2020, when just over an inch fell.

AP writer Scott Sonner in Reno, Nevada, contributed to this report.

3 members of K-pop sensation BTS diagnosed with COVID-19

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Three members of the K-pop superstar group BTS have been infected with the coronavirus after returning from abroad, their management agency said.

RM and Jin were diagnosed with COVID-19 on Saturday evening, the Big Hit Music agency said in a statement. It earlier said another member, Suga, tested positive for the virus on Friday.

All three took their second jabs in August, the agency said.

BTS is a seven-member boyband. The four other members are J-Hope, Jungkook, V and Jimin.

According to the agency, RM has exhibited no particular symptoms while Jin is showing mild symptoms including light fever and is undergoing self-treatment at home. The agency said Friday that Suga wasn't exhibiting symptoms and was administering self-care at home in accordance with the guidelines of the health authorities.

RM had tested negative after returning from the United States earlier this month following his personal schedule there. But he was later diagnosed with the virus ahead of his scheduled release from self-quarantine, the agency said.

After returning to South Korea this month, Jin underwent PCR tests twice — upon arrival and later before his release from self-quarantine — and tested negative both times. But he had flu-like symptoms on Saturday afternoon before he took another PCR test that came back positive, the agency said. Media reports said he also had traveled to the U.S.

Suga, who has had a number of personal engagements in the United States during the band's official time off, was diagnosed with COVID-19 during quarantine after returning from the U.S., the agency said.

The agency said it'll continue to provide support for the three members for their speedy recovery. It said it will cooperate with the requests and guidelines of the South Korean health authorities.

Since their debut in 2013, BTS has garnered global recognition for their self-produced music and activism, which includes giving a speech at the United Nations and publicly calling out anti-Asian racism.

BTS was named artist of the year and favorite pop duo or group, and also won the favorite pop song award for "Butter" at the American Music Awards in November. In October, the group's collaboration with British rock band Coldplay, "My Universe," hit No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100. It was BTS' sixth Hot 100 No. 1.

Bidens mark Christmas with holiday calls to service members

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden marked his first Christmas in office by making calls to military service members stationed around the world, offering them holiday wishes and gratitude for their service and sacrifice for the nation.

Joined by his wife, Jill, and their new puppy, Commander, the president on Saturday spoke via video to service members representing the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and Coast Guard, stationed at bases in Qatar, Romania, Bahrain and the U.S.

"As your commander in chief, I wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you, thank you, thank you," he told the service members. "We're grateful for your courage, your sacrifice, not only your sacrifice but your family's sacrifice."

Speaking from a studio set up at the White House, Biden told them they're "the solid steel spine of the nation," and emphasized the "truly sacred obligation" the nation has to care for soldiers and their families.

Jill Biden expressed empathy for the difficulties their families experience spending the holidays away from their loved ones, noting that the Bidens experienced the same when their son Beau, who served as a major in the Delaware Army National Guard, was deployed to Iraq.

The Bidens planned a relatively quiet Christmas at the White House with family. On Friday night the president and the first lady participated in Holy Trinity's Christmas Eve Mass virtually in the East Room,

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according to the White House, and held a pasta dinner and sleepover with their children and grandchildren, a Biden family tradition.

As the coronavirus pandemic surges anew, driven by the highly infectious omicron variant, the Bidens sought with their public appearances and statements to offer a sense of unity and normalcy in an otherwise challenging season for many.

In a Christmas statement, the Bidens praised the "enormous courage, character, resilience, and resolve" of the American people in the face of the pandemic, and offered prayers that the nation would find "light in the darkness" during a difficult season.

"During this season of joy, we are inspired by the countless Americans who are a reminder that the things we hold sacred unite us and transcend distance, time, and even the constraints of a pandemic," the Bidens said in their statement.

And the call to soldiers was just the latest Christmas tradition the two participated in, after spending Christmas eve spreading holiday cheer around Washington. On Friday morning, they visited Children's National Hospital to offer holiday greetings to young patients and their families. The president showed off photos of their new puppy and Jill read a children's book to patients.

Later, the two stopped by a Jill Biden-themed Christmas tree in the Dupont Circle neighborhood. The president hung the 2021 White House Christmas ornament amid branches decked out with photos of his wife's face, apples and small chalkboards, in homage to her teaching career.

Both answered calls to the North American Aerospace Defense Command's Santa-tracking service, speaking to parents and children about their Christmas wishlists.

Another COVID Christmas brings anxiety, but also optimism

By NICOLE WINFIELD, MICHAEL TARM and PETER SMITH Associated Press

Christmas arrived around the world Saturday amid a surge in COVID-19 infections that kept many families apart, overwhelmed hospitals and curbed religious observances as the pandemic was poised to stretch into a third year.

Yet, there were homilies of hope, as vaccines and other treatments become more available.

Pope Francis used his Christmas address to pray for more vaccines to reach the poorest countries. While wealthy countries have inoculated as much as 90% of their adult populations, 8.9% of Africa's people are fully jabbed, making it the world's least-vaccinated continent.

Only a few thousand well-wishers turned out for his noontime address and blessing, but even that was better than last year, when Italy's Christmas lockdown forced Francis indoors for the annual "Urbi et Orbi" ("To the city and the world") speech.

"Grant health to the infirm and inspire all men and women of goodwill to seek the best ways possible to overcome the current health crisis and its effects," Francis said from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica. "Open hearts to ensure that necessary medical care — and vaccines in particular — are provided to those peoples who need them most."

In the United States, many churches canceled in-person services, but for those that did have in-person worship, clerics reported smaller but significant attendance.

"Our hopes for a normal Christmas have been tempered by omicron this year ... still filled with uncertainties and threats that overshadow us," the Rev. Ken Boller told his parishioners during midnight Mass at the Church of St. Francis Xavier in New York City. "Breakthrough used to be a happy word for us, until it was associated with COVID. And in the midst of it all, we celebrate Christmas."

The Rev. Alex Karloutsos, of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary Church of the Hamptons in Southampton, New York, said attendance at the Christmas Eve liturgy was a third less than last year's, with "the reality of the omicron virus diminishing the crowd, but not the fervor of the faithful present."

St. Patrick's Church in Hubbard, Ohio, held Mass on Christmas Eve in a nearby high school because of a church fire this year. The Mass drew about 550 people, said Youngstown Bishop David Bonnar, who presided.

In Britain, Queen Elizabeth II noted another year of pain — particularly personal after losing her husband,

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Prince Philip, in April — and urged people to celebrate with friends and family.

"Although it's a time of great happiness and good cheer for many, Christmas can be hard for those who have lost loved ones," the queen said in the prerecorded message broadcast when many British families were enjoying their traditional Christmas dinner. "This year, especially, I understand why."

Thousands of people across Britain got a vaccine booster shot for Christmas as new cases hit another daily record of 122,186. The Good Health Pharmacy in north London was one of dozens of sites that stayed open Saturday to administer "jingle jabs" amid a government push to offer booster shots to all adults by the end of the year.

The head of intensive care at a hospital in Marseille, France, said most COVID-19 patients over Christmas were unvaccinated, while his staff are exhausted or can't work because they are infected.

"We're sick of this," said Dr. Julien Carvelli, the ICU chief at La Timone Hospital, as his team spent another Christmas Eve tending to COVID-19 patients on breathing machines. "We're afraid we won't have enough space."

On the other side of the globe, hundreds of thousands of people in the Philippines, Asia's largest Roman Catholic nation, spent Christmas without homes, electricity, or adequate food and water after a powerful typhoon left at least 375 people dead last week and devastated mostly central island provinces.

Gov. Arthur Yap of hard-hit Bohol province, where more than 100 people died in the typhoon and about 150,000 houses were damaged or destroyed, appealed for help. He was happy many Filipinos could celebrate Christmas more safely after COVID-19 cases dropped, but he pleaded: "Please don't forget us."

At least one American Christmas tradition was revived after the pandemic drove it online last year: the annual reenactment of George Washington's daring crossing of the Delaware River in 1776. Reenactors in three boats completed the crossing in about an hour Saturday. Crowds were in the hundreds, down from the usual thousands.

COVID-19 testing continued unimpeded in some places, while other sites closed for the day.

Lines that in previous days wrapped around the block at a small testing center in Chicago's Lincoln Square neighborhood shrank considerably Saturday, when the only customers inside were Shayna Prihoda and Michael Boundy, whose negative tests freed them to visit Boundy's parents in Michigan.

"We would have stayed home and quarantined," Boundy said.

Swelling numbers of cases in Florida made tests almost as popular as Christmas ham. Florida hit a new case record for the second day in a row.

Hours before a testing site opened at Tropical Park in Miami, dozens of cars lined up. To alleviate demand, county workers had distributed 12,500 at-home test kits Friday at libraries.

Most of New York City's 120 testing sites were closed Saturday, a day after police were summoned to a Brooklyn neighborhood to quell an angry crowd that had been expecting to receive free at-home testing kits, only to have the supply run out.

Chairs went empty at some dinner tables after airlines around the world canceled hundreds of flights as the omicron variant jumbled schedules and reduced staffing.

Airlines scrapped nearly 6,000 flights globally that had been scheduled to take off Friday, Saturday or Sunday, with nearly a third involving U.S. flights, according to FlightAware, a flight-tracking website.

At a reception center for asylum-seekers in Cyprus, Patricia Etoh, a Catholic from Cameroon, said she did not have any special plans because it just did not feel like Christmas without her 6-year-old child, whom she had to leave behind.

But she added: "We're grateful, we're alive, and when we're alive, there's hope."

Winfield reported from Rome, Tarm from Chicago and Smith from Pittsburgh. Contributing to this report were Associated Press writers Bobby Caina Calvin and Larry Neumeister in New York, Michael Schneider in Miami, Ron Todt in Philadelphia, Danica Kirka in London, Jim Gomez in Manila and Daniel Cole in Marseille, France.

Suicide bomber attacks bar in eastern Congo, killing 6

By AL-HADJI KUDRA MALIRO Associated Press

BENI, Congo (AP) — A suicide bomber attacked a restaurant and bar Saturday as patrons gathered on Christmas Day, killing at least six others in an eastern Congolese town where Islamic extremists are known to be active.

Heavy gunfire rang out shortly after the bomb went off, with panicked crowds fleeing the town's center.

Saturday's attack marked the first known time that a suicide bomber has killed victims in eastern Congo, where an Islamic State group affiliate earlier this year took responsibility for a suicide bombing near another bar in Beni who had caused no other casualties.

The latest violence only deepens fear that religious extremism has taken hold in a region already plagued for years by rebels.

Gen. Sylvain Ekenge, spokesperson for the governor of North Kivu, said that security guards had blocked the bomber from entering the crowded bar and so the person instead detonated the explosives at the entrance.

"We call on people to remain vigilant and to avoid crowded areas during the holiday season," he said in a statement. "In the city and territory of Beni, it is difficult, in these times to know who is who."

Rachel Magali had been at the restaurant-bar for about three hours with her sister-in-law and several others when she heard a loud noise outside.

"Suddenly we saw black smoke surrounding the bar and people started to cry," she told The Associated Press. "We rushed to the exit where I saw people lying down. There were green plastic chairs scattered everywhere and I also saw heads and arms no longer attached. It was really horrible."

Among the dead were two children, according to Mayor Narcisse Muteba, who is also a police colonel. At least 13 other people were wounded and taken to a local hospital.

"Investigations are underway to find the perpetrators of this terrorist attack," he told The Associated Press.

The town has long been targeted by rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces, or ADF, a group that traces its origins to neighboring Uganda. But in June the Islamic State group's Central Africa Province said it was behind the suicide bomber and another explosion that same day at a Catholic church that wounded two people.

Residents of the town have repeatedly expressed anger over the ongoing insecurity despite an army offensive and the presence of U.N. peacekeepers in Beni. From 2018 to 2020, the town also suffered through an Ebola epidemic that became the second deadliest in history. More than 2,200 people died in eastern Congo as vaccination efforts were at times thwarted by insecurity in the area.

Associated Press writer Krista Larson in Dakar, Senegal, contributed to this report.

Ghislaine Maxwell turns 60 behind bars as verdict looms

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Ghislaine Maxwell reached her 60th birthday behind bars Saturday as she awaited the outcome of her sex trafficking trial.

The British socialite is scheduled to return to a Manhattan courthouse Monday to await word from a jury entering its third full day of talks after hearing over two dozen witnesses and viewing dozens of exhibits over three weeks.

Messages sent to her lawyer and a website where items expressing support for Maxwell are regularly posted were not returned Saturday.

Prosecutors said in their closing arguments last Monday that the crucial evidence was the testimony of four women who say they were sexually abused as teenagers by financier Jeffrey Epstein with help from Maxwell when she was his girlfriend, and later when she morphed into his close confidante and an employee valued highly enough that he gave her over \$20 million.

Prosecutors called her the "lady of the house" from 1994 to 2004, saying she recruited and groomed

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teenagers as young as 14 to meet Epstein's seemingly insatiable need to be touched by vulnerable girls who came from impoverished and despairing backgrounds or who counted on his claims of wealth and connections to aid their quests for success and fame in the performance arts.

Defense lawyers, though, say she was a U.S. government scapegoat after Epstein killed himself in the Manhattan federal jail cell where he was awaiting his own sex trafficking trial in August 2019. They said the memories of her accusers were corrupted by the passage of time and the influence of lawyers steering them toward multimillion-dollar payouts from a fund set up to compensate Epstein victims.

The jury already has asked to review the testimony of the four women, along with former Epstein housekeeper Juan Patricio Alessi, but they have given little hint of their overall progress on six charges, including a sex trafficking count that carries a potential penalty of up to 40 years in prison.

Alessi testified that when he worked at Epstein's sprawling Florida home from 1990 to 2002, he saw "many, many, many" female visitors, appearing to be in their late 20s, often lounging topless by the pool. He also testified that two accusers, underage teens at the time, were repeat visitors to the Epstein mansion.

Each day of deliberations without a verdict seems to boost the defense team, which is aware that fast verdicts almost always go in the government's favor and that deliberations that stretch out can sometimes indicate dissension or confusion among jurors.

On Wednesday, two defense lawyers gave each other a high-five.

The deliberations are happening as a wave of coronavirus infections fueled by the omicron variant sweeps through New York state, particularly severe where jurors live. The anxiety over the spread was evident when U.S. District Judge Alison J. Nathan asked jurors to deliberate Thursday. They declined.

When she sent them away Wednesday for the long holiday weekend, she told them there would be new courthouse protocols Monday to fight the coronavirus, including a requirement that the most protective masks be worn. And she offered to give them the masks to protect themselves and others through the weekend.

"Please stay safe over the long weekend. Obviously we've got the variant, and I need all of you here and healthy on Monday," Nathan said. "So please take good care and take cautions."

Washington crossing the Delaware: Reenactment is revived

WASHINGTON CROSSING, Pa. (AP) — Hundreds gathered on both sides of the Delaware River to watch an annual Christmas Day reenactment of George Washington's 1776 crossing, a year after pandemic restrictions forced viewers to watch it online.

Reenactors in three boats completed the crossing in about an hour Saturday afternoon under overcast skies but in fairly mild temperatures, a spokesperson for Washington Crossing Historic Park said.

Earlier in the month, about 5,000 people attended a dress rehearsal of the Revolutionary War reenactment amid good weather and good water conditions, volunteer Tom Maddock of the Friends of Washington Crossing Park said, calling it "a great day."

In 2020, after crowd-size restrictions barred holding the traditional in-person event, park officials posted a video of a reenactment filmed earlier in the month providing what they called a "close-up view." This year, people entering the visitor center were asked to wear masks, and workers were also masked, officials said.

In years past, thousands have often gathered every Christmas morning on the banks of the river in Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania, and Titusville, New Jersey, to watch historical reenactors set out in boats to retrace the daring 1776 voyage of Washington and his troops.

In 2019, the crossing was completed for the first time in three years with what the Friends of Washington Crossing Park said was probably a record crowd of 4,500 to 5,000 people looking on. The crossing had been scuttled during the previous two years, first by high winds and then by high water.

Other activities at the annual event include reenactments of Washington's address to his troops, historical speeches and processions, and staffers in period clothing providing public interpretation.

In the original crossing, boats ferried 2,400 soldiers, 200 horses and 18 cannons across the river. Washington's troops marched 8 miles (13 kilometers) downriver before battling Hessian mercenaries in the

streets of Trenton. Thirty Hessians were killed, and two Continental soldiers froze to death on the march.

Queen recalls 'familiar laugh missing' in Christmas speech

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II in her Christmas Day message shared the pain she felt after the death of her husband as she encouraged people everywhere to celebrate with friends and family, despite the grief caused by the ongoing pandemic.

Saying she understood the difficulty of spending the holiday season "with one familiar laugh missing," the monarch delivered her address beside a framed photograph of her arm-in-arm with Prince Philip, who died in April at age 99. On her right shoulder was the same sapphire chrysanthemum brooch she wore in the photo — a glittering statement pin that she also wore as a newlywed.

"Although it's a time of great happiness and good cheer for many, Christmas can be hard for those who have lost loved ones," the queen said in the prerecorded message broadcast when many British families were enjoying their traditional Christmas dinner. "This year, especially, I understand why."

This festive season is the first since the monarch said goodbye to her husband of more than 70 years in a service in St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle. Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time meant that the queen sat alone — a poignant reminder of how she would spend her life going forward.

Despite her own loss, the queen said her family was a "source of great happiness, noting that she had welcomed four great-grandchildren this year.

"While COVID again means we can't celebrate quite as we may have wished, we can still enjoy the many happy traditions, be it the singing of carols — as long as the tune is well known — decorating the tree, giving and receiving presents or watching a favorite film where we already know the ending," she said. "It's no surprise that families so often treasure their Christmas routines."

As the highly transmissible omicron coronavirus variant spreads rapidly across the U.K., the 95-year-old queen has decided not to spend Christmas at Sandringham, the royal estate in eastern England where she traditionally spends the festive season with family. The palace said Monday that the queen would spend the holidays at Windsor Castle, west of London, where she has remained throughout most of the pandemic.

She will be joined by some members of her family, including Prince Charles and his wife, the Duchess of Cornwall.

The annual Christmas message to the people of the U.K. and the Commonwealth marks the end of a busy and sometimes difficult year for the queen.

Philip died in April, just two months shy of his 100th birthday, after spending weeks in the hospital. Buckingham Palace announced this week that she had agreed to stage a service of thanksgiving for his life in the spring.

The monarch has had health issues of her own, cutting down on travel and work since spending a night in the hospital in October and being told to rest by her doctors. Since then, she has undertaken light duties including virtual audiences with diplomats and weekly conversations with the prime minister.

In June, she made an appearance at the Group of Seven summit in Cornwall, and in November she gave a recorded address to the U.N. Climate Talks in Glasgow.

In closing her Christmas message, the queen noted that the holiday is often seen as a time for children. But, she said, this is "only half the story."

"Perhaps it's truer to say that Christmas can speak to the child within us all. Adults, when weighed down with worries, sometimes fail to see the joy in simple things where children do not. And for me and my family, even with one familiar laugh missing this year, there will be joy in Christmas."

UK police arrest armed intruder on Windsor Castle grounds

LONDON (AP) — British police arrested a man armed with a weapon on the grounds of Windsor Castle on Saturday.

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Thames Valley police said the security breach took place at 8:30 a.m. on Christmas Day. The 19-year-old from Southampton is in custody.

"The man has been arrested on suspicion of breach or trespass of a protected site and possession of an offensive weapon. He remains in custody at this time," Thames Valley Police Superintendent Rebecca Mears said. "We can confirm security processes were triggered within moments of the man entering the grounds and he did not enter any buildings."

Members of the royal family have been informed.

Queen Elizabeth II is spending the Christmas holidays at Windsor, having decided not to stay at Sandringham, the royal estate in eastern England where she traditionally spends the festive season with family.

Space telescope launched on daring quest to behold 1st stars

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

The world's largest and most powerful space telescope rocketed away Saturday on a high-stakes quest to behold light from the first stars and galaxies and scour the universe for hints of life.

NASA's James Webb Space Telescope soared from French Guiana on South America's northeastern coast, riding a European Ariane rocket into the Christmas morning sky.

"What an amazing Christmas present," said Thomas Zurbuchen, NASA's science mission chief.

The \$10 billion observatory hurtled toward its destination 1 million miles (1.6 million kilometers) away, or more than four times beyond the moon. It will take a month to get there and another five months before its infrared eyes are ready to start scanning the cosmos.

First, the telescope's enormous mirror and sunshield need to unfurl; they were folded origami-style to fit into the rocket's nose cone. Otherwise, the observatory won't be able to peer back in time 13.7 billion years as anticipated, within a mere 100 million years of the universe-forming Big Bang.

NASA Administrator Bill Nelson called Webb a time machine that will provide "a better understanding of our universe and our place in it: who we are, what we are, the search that's eternal."

"We are going to discover incredible things that we never imagined," Nelson said following liftoff, speaking from Florida's Kennedy Space Center. But he cautioned: "There are still innumerable things that have to work and they have to work perfectly ... we know that in great reward there is great risk."

Intended as a successor to the aging Hubble Space Telescope, the long-delayed James Webb is named after NASA's administrator during the 1960s. NASA partnered with the European and Canadian space agencies to build and launch the new 7-ton telescope, with thousands of people from 29 countries working on it since the 1990s.

With the launch falling on Christmas and a global surge in COVID-19 cases, there were fewer spectators at the French Guiana launch site than expected. Nelson bowed out along with a congressional delegation and many contractors who worked on the telescope.

Around the world, astronomers and countless others tuned in, anxious to see Webb finally taking flight after years of setbacks. Last-minute technical snags bumped the launch nearly a week, then gusty wind pushed it to Christmas. A few of the launch controllers wore Santa caps in celebration.

"We have delivered a Christmas gift today for humanity," said European Space Agency director general Josef Aschbacher. He described it as a special moment, but added: "It's very nerve-racking. I couldn't do launches every single day. This would not be good for my life expectancy."

Cheers and applause erupted in and outside Launch Control following Webb's flawless launch, with jubilant scientists embracing one another amid shouts of "Go Webb!" and signs that read: "Bon Voyage Webb."

Cameras on the rocket's upper stage provided one last glimpse of the shimmering telescope against a backdrop of Earth, before it sped away. "That picture will be burned into my mind forever," Zurbuchen told journalists.

The telescope's showpiece: a gold-plated mirror more than 21 feet (6.5 meters) across.

Protecting the observatory is a wispy, five-layered sunshield, vital for keeping the light-gathering mirror and heat-sensing infrared detectors at subzero temperatures. At 70 feet by 46 feet (21 meters by 14

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meters), it's the size of a tennis court.

If all goes well, the sunshield will be opened three days after liftoff, taking at least five days to unfold and lock into place. Next, the mirror segments should open up like the leaves of a drop-leaf table, 12 days or so into the flight.

In all, hundreds of release mechanisms need to work — perfectly — in order for the telescope to succeed. Such a complex series of actions is unprecedented — “like nothing we've done before,” noted NASA program director Greg Robinson.

“Now it's our job to start from here and keep going,” said Massimo Stiavelli, an astronomer who heads the Webb mission office at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore. The institute serves as the control hub for Hubble and, now, Webb.

The Hubble Space Telescope will be a tough act to follow, according to Stiavelli and retired astronaut-astronomer Steven Hawley, even though Webb is 100 times more powerful.

Hawley, in fact, is more stressed over Webb than he was for Hubble, which he released into orbit from space shuttle Discovery in 1990. That's because Webb will be too far away for rescuing, as was necessary when Hubble turned out to have blurry vision from a defective mirror.

Spacewalking repairs by astronauts transformed Hubble into a beloved marvel that has revolutionized humanity's understanding of the universe, casting its eyes as far back as 13.4 billion years. It's now up to Webb to draw even closer to the Big Bang 13.8 billion years ago, its infrared vision keener and more far-reaching than Hubble's is in the shorter visible and ultraviolet wavelengths.

NASA is shooting for 10 years of operational life from Webb. Engineers deliberately left the fuel tank accessible for a top-off by visiting spacecraft, if and when such technology becomes available.

“Hubble is like the perfect story. It starts badly, then the cavalry fixes it, then it's a major success. It's almost a Christmas movie in a way,” Stiavelli said following Webb's liftoff. “It's a high bar, but hopefully the science contributions of Webb will be up there.”

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Spanish eruption's end brings 'emotional relief,' rebuilding

MADRID (AP) — Authorities on one of Spain's Canary Islands declared a volcanic eruption that started in September officially finished Saturday following 10 days of no lava flows, seismic activity or significant sulfur dioxide emissions.

But the emergency in La Palma, the most northwest island in the Atlantic Ocean archipelago, is not over due to the widespread damage the eruption caused, the director of the Canaries' volcanic emergency committee said in announcing the much-anticipated milestone.

“It's not joy or satisfaction - how we can define what we feel? It's an emotional relief. And hope,” Pevolca director Julio Pérez said. “Because now, we can apply ourselves and focus completely on the reconstruction work.”

Fiery molten rock flowing down toward the sea destroyed around 3,000 buildings, entombed banana plantations and vineyards, ruined irrigation systems and cut off roads. But no injuries or deaths were directly linked to the eruption.

Pérez, who is also the region's minister of public administration, justice and security, said the archipelago's government valued the loss of buildings and infrastructure at more than 900 million euros (\$1 billion).

Volcanologists said they needed to certify that three key variables - gas, lava and tremors - had subsided in the Cumbre Vieja ridge for 10 days in order to declare the volcano's apparent exhaustion. Since the eruption started on Sept. 19, previous periods of reduced activity were followed by reignitions.

On the eve of Dec. 14, the volcano fell silent after flaring for 85 days and 8 hours, making it La Palma's longest eruption on record.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez called the eruption's end “the best Christmas present.”

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"We will continue working together, all institutions, to relaunch the marvelous island of La Palma and repair the damage," he tweeted.

Farming and tourism are the main industries on the Canary Islands, a popular destination for many European vacationers due to their mild climate.

Follow AP stories on volcanic eruptions at <https://apnews.com/hub/volcanic-eruptions>.

At West Virginia vaccine clinic, pandemic fatigue sets in

By JOHN RABY Associated Press

SPENCER, W.Va. (AP) — Chania Batten has as much reason as anybody to feel pandemic fatigue.

As a nurse staffing a drive-thru clinic at the only hospital in rural Roane County, West Virginia, she has spent months patiently answering questions, dispelling misinformation and reassuring the skeptical that COVID-19 shots are the key to beating back the coronavirus.

Batten shudders at the thought of the pandemic entering another calendar year.

"It is frustrating," said the mother of two young children. "We all want to get back to our lives."

Soon after the first vaccines were approved for use a year ago, West Virginia briefly led the nation in getting people the shots, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But the state quickly hit a wall of resistance and its ranking began to slip. It's unclear how far it fell because of discrepancies between state and federal figures, but the struggle in Roane County suggests there is plenty of room for improvement.

Only about 45% of the county's population is fully vaccinated against the coronavirus. Nearly one-third of the state's 55 counties are under 50%, according to the CDC.

Reasons vary for residents' struggles to embrace the vaccine. And Batten, one of the people on the front lines of a long, uphill battle to persuade the often unpersuadable, has probably heard most of them.

"There's still, honestly, a lot of questions about the vaccine and what's in it," she said. "There's a lot of people who are still scared because there's not enough information out there for them. You have all that paranoia."

But now, with the omicron strain of the virus suddenly raging through the U.S. population, the urgency of getting people to embrace the only effective known method of mitigating the virus has been ramped up.

State hospitals continue to be stressed, warning that patient numbers are growing and staffing levels are shrinking. Projections show that the number of people hospitalized for the virus during the holiday season will approach the record of more than 1,000 set in September.

Roane General Hospital operates the main COVID-19 vaccination clinic for Roane County, an hour north of the state capital, Charleston. It's perched on a hillside in Spencer, population 2,000, where Bing Crosby's "White Christmas" and other holiday songs blare out of speakers throughout the town square. The 484 square mile (1,250 square kilometer) county has 14,000 residents.

In addition to her regular shift inside the hospital, there have been times when Batten was the only nurse staffing the drive-thru, sometimes with as many as a dozen vehicles in line.

"It can become overwhelming," Batten said, holding a clipboard in the chilly December air. "But it's my job."

Batten said she still likes the work, and if she had to she'd go door to door trying to convince people to get the shots. But in this part of West Virginia, not much seems to get through.

Republican Gov. Jim Justice has tried giveaways and appearing with a dour-faced bulldog named Babydog to try to convince people to get the shots. He has given away hundreds of thousands of state dollars through drawings to vaccinated residents. Last month he presented a \$50,000 check to a Roane County middle school to encourage students and faculty to get vaccinated.

The hospital's marketing campaign on the importance of COVID-19 shots includes daily messages on social media, radio advertising and physician testimonials. But hospital CEO Doug Bentz said he's not sure how those messages are interpreted.

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"In fact, I think sometimes the media hurts things because people are so dug in politically," Bentz said in his office recently. "Instead of making a rational decision, they feel like they've got to stand on some principle. There's a lot of misinformation out there. And unfortunately I think there's just not the trust that we have in our government, in the media, for people to believe it."

The wear and tear on the nursing profession is obvious. In 2020 alone, 1,700 nurses opted not to renew their licenses in West Virginia.

Batten, who recently recovered from a bout with the virus herself, doesn't expect to join those who stop trying.

"You're still coming out here and working and doing your job, but then there's still people not wanting to come and get vaccinated," Batten said. "Or they don't see what other people are going through, especially people who have lost loved ones in the hospital."

Despite the effort to spread the word, a lot of people don't even know the outdoor clinic is available. Batten says people ask her about the vaccine when she's working inside the hospital. Others face different obstacles, either because of their age or transportation challenges.

But then there are the voices of resistance. Whether on moral, personal or political grounds, some people say they have no intention of being vaccinated.

Roane General, a nonprofit hospital, has just 25 acute-care beds to serve the whole county. In November the hospital dedicated an expansion of its facilities that cost more than \$28 million.

Still, the new strain of the virus threatens to overwhelm them.

"I don't think the general public understands what's going on inside the walls of the hospitals, inside the emergency rooms and inside the inpatient care floors," Bentz said. "It's a different world. At Roane, we have limited resources. We have limited specialists. Yet we are being forced to provide ICU level-type care, high acuity, with the resources that we have. It's not always ideal. But we have no choice."

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Dec. 26, the 360th day of 2021. There are five days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 26, 1799, former President George Washington was eulogized by Col. Henry Lee as "first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

On this date:

In 1908, Jack Johnson became the first African-American boxer to win the world heavyweight championship as he defeated Canadian Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia.

In 1917, during World War I, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation authorizing the government to take over operation of the nation's railroads.

In 1941, during World War II, Winston Churchill became the first British prime minister to address a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress.

In 1966, Kwanzaa was first celebrated.

In 1974, comedian Jack Benny died in Los Angeles at age 80.

In 1980, Iranian television footage was broadcast in the United States showing a dozen of the American hostages sending messages to their families.

In 1994, French commandos stormed a hijacked Air France jetliner on the ground in Marseille, killing four Algerian hijackers and freeing 170 hostages.

In 1996, six-year-old beauty queen JonBenet Ramsey was found beaten and strangled in the basement of her family's home in Boulder, Colorado. (To date, the slaying remains unsolved.)

In 2003, an earthquake struck the historic Iranian city of Bam, killing at least 26,000 people.

In 2004, more than 230,000 people, mostly in southern Asia, were killed by a 100-foot-high tsunami triggered by a 9.1-magnitude earthquake beneath the Indian Ocean.

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In 2006, former President Gerald R. Ford died in Rancho Mirage, California, at age 93.

In 2012, Toyota Motor Corp. said it had reached a settlement worth more than \$1 billion in a case involving unintended acceleration problems in its vehicles.

Ten years ago: A heart surgeon and a technician from a Mayo Clinic in Florida, flying across the northern corner of the state to retrieve a heart for transplant, were killed along with the pilot when their helicopter crashed. Drew Brees set the NFL record for yards passing in a season and the New Orleans Saints clinched the NFC South title with a 45-16 victory over the Atlanta Falcons. (The passing record would be broken two years later by Denver's Peyton Manning.)

Five years ago: President-elect Donald Trump and President Barack Obama traded competing claims about who would have won had the presidential election been a contest between the two of them; Obama suggested in a podcast he still held enough sway over the coalition of voters that elected him twice to get them to vote for him once again while Trump tweeted: "He should say that but I say NO WAY!"

One year ago: A California woman, Miya Ponsetto, wrongly accused a Black teen of taking her phone at a New York City hotel and grabbed at him as he tried to leave; she would later be charged with a hate crime. (The teen's family has sued the woman and the hotel, alleging racial profiling.) Baseball Hall of Famer Phil Niekro, who pitched well into his 40s with a knuckleball that baffled big league hitters, died after a long fight with cancer; he was 81. LeBron James was voted Male Athlete of the Year by the AP after winning his fourth NBA title, putting the Lakers on top of the basketball world again and taking a stand for social justice and voting rights.

Today's Birthdays: R&B singer Abdul "Duke" Fakir (The Four Tops) is 86. "America's Most Wanted" host John Walsh is 76. Country musician Bob Carpenter (The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band) is 75. Funk musician George Porter Jr. (The Meters) is 74. Baseball Hall of Fame catcher Carlton Fisk is 74. Retired MLB All-Star Chris Chambliss is 73. Baseball Hall of Famer Ozzie Smith is 67. Former Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind., is 66. Humorist David Sedaris is 65. Rock musician James Kottak (The Scorpions) is 59. Rock musician Lars Ulrich (Metallica) is 58. Actor Nadia Dajani is 56. Rock musician J is 54. Rock singer James Mercer (The Shins; Flake) is 51. Actor-singer Jared Leto is 50. Actor Kendra C. Johnson is 45. Rock singer Chris Daughtry is 42. Actor Beth Behrs is 36. Actor Kit Harington is 35. Actor Eden Sher is 30. Pop singer Jade Thirlwall (Little Mix Actor) is 29. Actor Zach Mills is 26.