

Groton Daily Independent

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UpComing Events

Tuesday, 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 Area vs. Platte-Geddes at 3:30

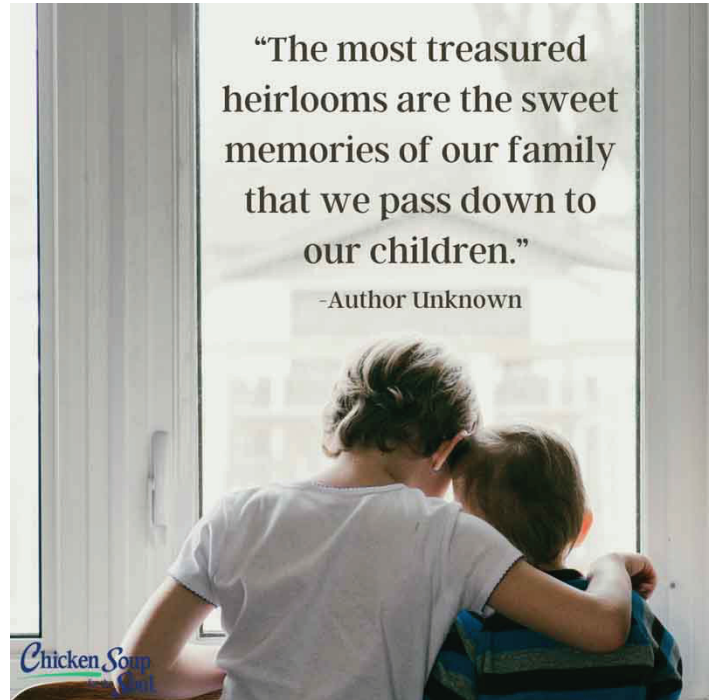
Monday, Jan. 10

Boys' Basketball hosts Webster Area. C game starts at 5 p.m. with JV and Varsity to follow.

7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 11

5 p.m.: 7th/8th grade basketball game with Wau-bay-Summit at Waubay. Single game so they may play extra quarters.



“The most treasured heirlooms are the sweet memories of our family that we pass down to our children.”

-Author Unknown

6 p.m.: Girls' Basketball hosts Aberdeen Christian. JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

Thursday, Jan. 13

Boys' Basketball at Aberdeen Roncalli. at Elementary Gym: 7th grade game at 4 p.m., 8th grade game at 5 p.m. at Roncalli High School: C game at 5 p.m. followed by junior varsity and varsity.

Friday, Jan. 14

Silver Bowl Debate at Sioux Falls

No School - Faculty In-Service at Warner School
6 p.m.: Girls' Basketball hosts Aberdeen Roncalli. JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

Saturday, Jan. 15

Silver Bowl Debate at Sioux Falls

Boys Basketball Classic at Redfield. Groton Area vs. Deubrook at 7:30

10 .m.: Junior High boys basketball jamboree in Groton with Aberdeen Christian, Tiospa Zina and Webster Area.

10 a.m.: Wrestling at Potter County (Gettysburg) Invitational.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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

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United Methodist Church

Groton and Conde

Sunday, January 2, 2022

Communion in Worship (white)

Conde Worship 9:00 AM

NO Sunday School

Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

Community Coffee Hour 9:30 AM

Confirmation Snack Time 3:30 PM

Confirmation 4:00 PM

Sunday, January 9, 2022

Conde Worship 9:00 AM

Sunday School 10:00 AM

Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, Jan. 2

9am Worship / Communion

NO Sunday School

7pm Choir practice

Monday, Jan. 3

6:30am Bible Study

Wednesday, Jan. 5

5pm Sarah Circle

6pm Confirmation

Thursday, Jan. 6

2pm Nigeria Circle

6:30pm Grace Alone

Saturday, Jan. 8

Financial reports are due

Sunday, Jan. 9

9am Worship

10:15am Sunday School

10:15 Grace Alone

7pm Choir practice

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton &

St. Joseph Catholic

Groton and Turton

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday 4:30pm Groton

Sunday 8:30am Groton & 11:00am Turton

Weekday

Tues 5:00pm Turton, W-F 8:30am Groton

Sat 10am Newman Center

Confessions:

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

Sun. 10:30-10:45am (T)

St. John's Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, Jan. 2

8 a.m.: Bible Study

9 a.m.: St. John's Worship w/communion

10 a.m.: Sunday School

11 a.m.: Zion Lutheran Worship w/communion

Tuesday, Jan. 4

1 p.m.: Ladies Aid LWML

Wednesday, Jan. 5

3:45 p.m.: Confirmation

Sunday, Jan. 9

8 a.m.: Bible Study

9 a.m.: St. John's Worship

10 a.m.: Sunday School

11 a.m.: Zion Lutheran Worship

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

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#501 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

I'll wish you a happy new year; I hope you rang it in safely last night and, if you're in my neck of the woods, you're staying warm. I don't know what happened to holiday weekends being slow news times, but we've had a lot of news since we last talked, so I didn't really want to wait another day or two to post this. As long as it is, it could've been worse: I've actually pushed some things back for another day. So let's get to it.

The numbers aren't great: For four consecutive days we've set records with our seven-day new-case average; at midday, we're at 378,516, which is 127,000 more than last winter's record. For three days running we've been right around a half-million new cases per day: That's almost 489,000 on Wednesday, over 582,000 on Thursday, and almost 447,000 on Friday. We're quite sure this is a vast undercount because we are so short of tests, because at-home test results don't typically get reported, and because holiday weekends mess with reporting—also because we think a substantial number of people with asymptomatic or very mild infections are not being identified at all. With numbers like this, it should be no surprise then to note that we've notched another million in our total pandemic cases in the US. We passed 54 million on Thursday—only two days after hitting 53 million—and are more than halfway to 55 million as of mid-day today with 54,686,438. Here you go:

April 28, 2020 – 1 million – 98 days
June 11 – 2 million – 44 days
July 8 – 3 million – 27 days
July 23 – 4 million – 15 days
August 9 – 5 million – 17 days
August 31 – 6 million – 22 days
September 24 – 7 million – 24 days
October 15 – 8 million – 21 days
October 29 – 9 million – 14 days
November 8 – 10 million – 10 days
November 15 – 11 million – 7 days
November 21 – 12 million – 6 days
November 27 – 13 million – 6 days
December 3 – 14 million – 6 days
December 7 – 15 million – 4 days
December 12 – 16 million – 5 days
December 17 – 17 million – 5 days
December 21 – 18 million – 4 days
December 26 – 19 million – 5 days
December 31 – 20 million – 5 days
January 5 – 21 million – 5 days
January 9 – 22 million – 4 days
January 13 – 23 million – 4 days
January 18 – 24 million – 5 days
January 23 – 25 million – 5 days
January 30 – 26 million – 7 days
February 7 – 27 million – 8 days
February 19 – 28 million – 12 days
March 7 – 29 million – 16 days
March 24 – 30 million – 17 days
April 8 – 31 million – 15 days
April 24 – 32 million – 16 days

May 18 – 33 million – 23 days
July 16 – 34 million – 59 days
July 31 – 35 million – 15 days
August 11 – 36 million – 11 days
August 17 – 37 million – 6 days
August 23 – 38 million – 6 days
August 30 – 39 million – 7 days
September 5 – 40 million – 6 days
September 12 – 41 million – 7 days
September 18 – 42 million – 6 days
September 27 – 43 million – 9 days
October 6 – 44 million – 9 days
October 18 – 45 million – 12 days
November 1 – 46 million – 14 days
November 13 – 47 million – 12 days
November 24 – 48 million – 11 days
December 4 – 49 million – 10 days
December 13 – 50 million – 9 days
December 20 – 51 million – 7 days
December 25 – 52 million – 5 days
December 28 – 53 million – 3 days
December 30 – 54 million – 2 days

For the record, we're not the only ones experiencing this surge. Most of Western Europe and Canada are also on fire. Countries other than the US that have set new records for new-case numbers since Christmas include Iceland, Denmark, the UK, Ireland, France, Spain, Greece, Italy, Malta, Switzerland, and Cyprus. Australia is experiencing a surge too.

Hospitalizations are increasing, not as fast as

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cases, but too fast for the capacity we have, and are now at 85,902. Hospitals are hollering for mercy. Dr. James Phillips, chief of disaster medicine at George Washington University Hospital, told CNN, "It's unlike anything we've ever seen, even at the peak of the prior surges of Covid. What we're experiencing right now is an absolute overwhelming of the emergency departments." We're setting case records across the country. In Georgia, six health systems have 100 to 200 percent increases in Covid-19 cases hospitalized. Community transmission is in the we're-on-fire category across almost the entire country.

Hospitalizations have tripled in Louisiana, and they're setting new-case records. Most of the hospitalized are unvaccinated, and many are sick, needing intubation. People who are vaccinated, but not boosted, and are medically fragile are coming in with serious illness too. Across the country 78 percent of ICU beds are occupied. Pediatric admissions are at all-time highs for this pandemic, eclipsing previous records. People who are unvaccinated are 17 times more likely to be hospitalized than the vaccinated-and-boosted according to Dr. Rochelle Walensky, CDC Director. They are 20 times more likely to die.

Deaths have not really been moving upward very fast. Part of this could be because they lag cases, but this increase in cases started long enough ago we should be seeing something in deaths by now; since case numbers began to soar, we've had maybe a 30 percent bump in deaths. Our current seven-day average is 1243. I expect this number to grow, but if I'm reading the tea leaves right, it's not going to catch up to cases at any point. The CDC's ensemble forecast for this week is projecting 44,000 additional deaths in the next four weeks, which would bring us to 866,000 for the pandemic. That would put us at 1800 per day, which is a substantial increase from where we are today. The increase is expected to occur yet this month and then taper off.

There is possibly good news here: In South Africa, just a month into this Omicron surge, they seem to have burned it out. This surge of Omicron cases broke out there just over a month ago; we heard the first of it on about November 26. Now that peak seems to have passed, and cases are on a sharp decline—30 percent in the last week. Hospital admissions are down too. What's more, they did not experience a surge in hospitalization or deaths that was in any way proportional to the increase in cases. I'm going to add the usual cautions that South Africa isn't the US, so we cannot necessarily expect things to look here the way they did there—it is summer in South Africa and they have a far younger population with a much different immunological profile; but the indications are that this thing comes in hot and burns through fast, at least in their circumstances. It also remains to be seen whether our communities or individuals within them will modify policy or behaviors sufficiently to inflect the curve. As a result, it is not clear that we're going to move along a similar trajectory to South Africa, and of course, there remains—always—the potential for yet another variant to upset our apple cart. In about a month we'll know whether our experience will parallel theirs. We can hope.

At the moment, Columbia University modelers are projecting a peak in the US around mid-month somewhere between 2.5 and 5.4 million cases per week. This huge range is a good indication just how uncertain several factors remain; no one's wanting to make the mistake of being overly precise in such a novel landscape. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington had, earlier this week, projected a peak at the end of the month, but they are rethinking that timing based on the events of the past couple of days. Ali Mokdad, an epidemiologist on their modeling team, told the New York Times, "We are realizing right now monitoring the data that the peak is going to come much faster. My guess is it will happen before mid-January." Some epidemiologists are saying we don't really need modeling at the moment; we can just watch fast-moving events develop in real time.

Places where the surge hit first are expected to peak and decline first; that, at least, is familiar territory. We are relying pretty much on the many indications this is a milder infection, whether that's because of some characteristic of the virus or characteristics of the population—namely more people with a level of immunity to the virus.

There is still great concern that hospitals are going to suffer under great strain as unprecedented numbers of cases stream in at a time when they were already stretched to the breaking point in many locales. The faster it burns out, the sooner things will get better; but there is still real potential to bring

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health systems to their knees. Dr. William Hanage, epidemiologist at the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, said, "The context for all of this is that hospitals are struggling. We don't have that much spare capacity. And of course, Omicron makes that worse." No doubt about that.

There is also another report on Friday from public health authorities in the UK on hospitalizations with Omicron. The news here is hopeful, and we'll note here that the UK is demographically and in terms of the season of the year more like the US than South Africa is, so its data are more likely to be applicable to our situation. We'll note here, however, that this particular data set, even though it includes all cases recorded during the term of the study, bears young because the Omicron wave in the UK began in young people; the data on older people is still a bit sparse. This results from study of a huge data set including 528,176 Omicron and 573,012 Delta cases between November 22 and December 26. A second study examined only symptomatic cases. In the second study, they're seeing 65 percent reduction in hospitalization with two doses of vaccine and 88 percent reduction with three doses when compared with the unvaccinated. This may help to offset to some degree the extreme infectiousness of this variant. Peter Openshaw, a member of the UK's New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group, told the New York Times on Friday, "Omicron is so infectious. We're lucky really that it wasn't this infectious when it first moved into human-to-human transmission. It almost needs just a whiff of infected breath and you could get infected." And therein lies the threat; one slip in precautions and you can find yourself testing positive. Vaccines will be key in protecting yourself from the worst outcomes.

To that point, a new study from a group at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and the Center for Global Infectious Disease Research at Seattle Children's Research Institute was posted as an accelerated preview (peer-reviewed, but not yet formatted and edited) on Friday in Nature. They performed neutralization assays in the lab of convalescent (recovered from infection), vaccinated twice and three times, and hybrid (both recovered and vaccinated-plus-boosted) individuals against active virus isolated from infections. The viral variants used were the original wild-type virus, Beta (as an example of the "most pronounced in vitro escape phenotype"), and Omicron. The team strove to replicate conditions as they would be in the host's body: "The neutralization assay used mimics physiological conditions, since it is performed with authentic SARS-CoV-2 in a multicycle replication setting in which serum/antibody is present at all times akin to the situation in a seropositive individual." They tested 85 samples of serum.

Takeaways: Of convalescent individuals, that is, those with prior infection but no vaccination history, nearly three-quarters (73.3 percent) had no measurable neutralizing activity for Omicron—not just diminished, but zero. This means if you've been counting on your history of infection to protect you, good luck—you're going to need it. People with two doses of mRNA vaccine showed a 23-fold (Pfizer/BioNTech) and 42-fold (Moderna) reduction in neutralizing antibody against Omicron. Many previous studies have hinted that the Moderna vaccine is marginally more effective than the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine; this study does not bear that out. It did indicate that while most vaccinated people had lowered antibody activity, it was still detectable. Individuals with three doses of mRNA vaccines showed 7.5-fold reduction (Pfizer/BioNTech) and 16.7-fold (Moderna) reductions in neutralizing antibody activity. We should note that these vaccinated-and-boosted individuals started out with higher antibody activity and then also showed lower-fold reductions so that they retain "considerable residual neutralizing activity." Convalescents who also received two doses of Pfizer/BioNTech, two doses of Moderna, or three doses of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines showed modest reductions in Omicron neutralization, and all "maintained relatively robust neutralization activity." They concluded that "convalescent individuals greatly benefit from vaccination." Of course, we knew that and have real-world data on infections that comport well with this work.

They also took a look at binding (not neutralizing) antibodies against various parts of the spike that have been highly mutated in Omicron, mentioning the potential role of these antibodies in protection. They also mention the anamnestic (memory) response of B cells and T-cell-based immunity and its potential role in protecting against severe disease. We'll want to remember that, while antibodies provide protection against initial infection, longer-lasting T-cell responses protect against severe disease. Their overall conclusion is that vaccination improves protection in those with prior infection and boosting improves

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protection in the vaccinated, as well as this: “[O]ur data add to the growing body of evidence suggesting that Omicron specific vaccines are urgently needed.” I haven’t been hearing many calls for this, so I’ll be interested to see who jumps (or doesn’t) on the bandwagon now.

On Thursday, Israel approved a fourth dose of vaccine for people with immune systems that don’t work so well. A panel of experts had also recommended a fourth dose for people over 60 and health workers, but the regulatory authorities declined to add those folks to the authorization. A new study began this week to test safety and efficacy of a fourth dose in medical personnel who’ve received a third dose at least three months ago. Because Israel was ahead of the rest of us in testing third doses, they’re able to stay ahead of us in evaluating fourth doses as well. Their hope is to stave off overload on hospitals already swaying under the burdens of seasonal infections and this Covid-19 surge. And our hope is that they will provide us with useful information before we need it.

Likewise, Ontario, Canada, has made a similar move, offering a fourth dose of vaccine to residents of long-term care facilities, retirement homes, Elder Care Lodges, and other congregate care settings. Public health authorities focus on risks to the most vulnerable when discussing this. I do not think we’re near that sort of decision in this country. Of course, I’ve been surprised before, so we’ll see how that develops.

We have two new CDC studies on vaccination in children. The first looked at Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS) reports on the approximately eight million doses of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine given to children, 5 to 11, since its October authorization for the age group, finding serious adverse events were rare in the age group. They noted adverse reactions are more common after a second dose than the first and that adverse reactions were less frequently reported than in older age groups.

Of children in this age group receiving those eight million doses, there were 4249 reports of adverse events; 4149, or 97.6 percent of these were for nonserious events; 100 were serious events. Most reactions were mild and did not interfere with normal daily activities; these were things like injection site pain, fatigue, and headache. Fever was reported by some as well, more so after dose #2. Around 5.1 percent of parents reported the child was unable to perform normal daily activities on the day after dose #1 and 7.4 percent on the day after dose #2. About one percent sought medical care in the week after vaccination, most in clinics. Fourteen children received hospital care; of those that were able to be followed up, reasons for hospitalization were appendicitis, vomiting and dehydration, respiratory infection, and retropharyngeal cellulitis. None of these were determined to be a vaccine-related condition. Things like administration issues—wrong dose or product preparation problems, for example—are also reported as adverse events, and 2757 of the 4149 events were related to administration, the most common reported nonserious events. Most of these reports mentioned they did not result in any adverse effects on the recipient.

Among the 100 reports of serious events, the most common were fever (29 cases), vomiting (21 cases), increased troponin (a protein found in heart tissue) (15 cases), and seizure (12 cases). Those 15 cases of increased troponins are preliminary warnings of possible myocarditis, 11 of which were verified and met the case definition for myocarditis. Of those 11, seven recovered and four were recovering at the time of the report. Myocarditis appears to be a rare adverse event in children in this age group and one that resolves without harm.

There were two deaths reported, both in children with complicated medical histories and fragile health before vaccination. There has been no causal association suggested between vaccination and these deaths. Translation: These children were very sick before they were vaccinated, and it looks very much like they died from their prior conditions and not from the vaccine. We’ve talked about this before: If you take any group of individuals, some with serious health problems, and track them for a period of time, some of those folks will die during the tracking period, even if you didn’t administer anything to them, because people sometimes die from all sorts of causes. So every time someone dies after vaccination (or breakfast, for that matter), we need to investigate before declaring vaccination—or breakfast—to be the cause. One event following the other is not proof of causation, and it doesn’t look like vaccination caused or contributed to either of these deaths.

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The other CDC study looked at 915 children hospitalized in July and August of this year in six hospitals in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Illinois, the District of Columbia, and Florida. Researchers found 77.9 percent of children in these six hospitals were hospitalized for acute Covid-19; another 19.3 percent had incidental positive Covid tests, but were not hospitalized for that reason; and 2.7 percent had multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), the inflammatory condition associated with Covid-19. About a third of them had a viral coinfection; about two-thirds had underlying conditions, most of those obesity; and just one child hospitalized for Covid-19 (0.4 percent of those who were eligible for vaccination) had been fully vaccinated.

Half of these kids received supplemental oxygen, almost 30 percent were admitted to ICUs, and 1.5 percent died. Of the ones needing respiratory support, almost 15 percent required mechanical ventilation. The authors concluded, "These data highlight the importance of COVID-19 vaccination for those aged [5 years or more] and other prevention strategies to protect children and adolescents from COVID-19, particularly those with obesity and other underlying health conditions." Looks that way to me too.

I expect we're going to hear something on pediatric boosters next week or so. There are hints traveling around Washington that a decision from the FDA is near. Once that's made, CDC action would also be required before boosters might be authorized. We'll keep an ear out for news.

Novavax will apply this month to the FDA for emergency use authorization (EUA) for its candidate, Nuvaxovid. This is a two-dose protein subunit vaccine, using lab-grown copies of the viral spike (S) protein and stores at room temperature. Details on the candidate can be found in my Update #407 posted April 5, 2021, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4593935953956108>. It has been viewed as an excellent candidate for boosting other vaccines. This one's been a long time coming, but the candidate does already have authorization from some other countries' regulatory agencies, the EU, and the WHO and has applications in with many others. I'll mention that we do not have data on its effectiveness against the Omicron variant; I presume that's in testing now. The company has announced they are working on an Omicron-specific version in case it is needed. Last I heard, in November, they had some 100 million doses ready to ship as the authorizations roll in; they could become an important contributor to the world's supply.

There are two new studies of the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine used as a booster. I am unable to access the studies—neither has been peer-reviewed or published yet—so I am working from summaries here. One, done in health care workers in South Africa with 69,000 participants found the booster reduced hospitalizations by 85 percent during the recent Omicron surge. Considering our doubts about vaccine efficacy against this variant, that is a remarkable result. The other study, conducted at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center found a second dose of Janssen/Johnson & Johnson gave better immune response in lab assays to the Omicron variant than a dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. So a second dose of this vaccine is likely to be as helpful or more so than a booster with an mRNA vaccine is. This is useful information for those who received this vaccine initially.

Air travel disruptions continued into Thursday when 1200 US flights were canceled and Friday when 1100 were. The issue continues to be personnel; airlines are having trouble putting together enough crews for their scheduled flights. That was complicated in the Northwest by heavy snow which also grounded some planes. Likewise, Amtrak is also canceling over 20 trains on the Northeast Corridor and some long-distance routes. These, like the flights, are being affected by Covid cases in employees and bad weather. Only 1.5 percent of trains are affected, but they seem to concentrate in the Northeast, which creates a disparate impact.

We'll wrap up here and see how long I can hold off with the next Update. Be well. We'll talk again.



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



*We finish our years like a sigh.
The days of our lives are seventy years;
and if by reason of strength they are
eighty years, yet their boast is only
labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off,
and we fly away.*

🌀 PSALM 90:9,10

Detail of "Praying Angel" woodcut
by Jose Francisco Borges (2002)

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2021:



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3021:



BIBLE TRIVIA by Wilson Casey

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

2. From 2 Chronicles 26, at what age did Uzziah become king of Jerusalem? *16, 30, 65, 99*

3. In Genesis 4, who did God ask, "Why is thy countenance fallen?" *Eve, Ahaz, Cain, Esau*

4. Which prophet saw the Lord's angel riding on a red horse? *Hosea, Nathan, Zechariah, Isaiah*

5. Who was the first person to build an altar unto the Lord? *Abraham, Noah, Artaxerxes, Levi*

6. From Exodus 33 who/what saw the back of God? *Adam, The serpent, Abraham, Moses*

ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) 16; 3) Cain; 4) Zechariah; 5) Noah; 6) Moses

Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey's subscriber site at www.patreon.com/triviaguy.

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Comfort foods Made fast and healthy by Healthy Exchanges Special Skillet Steaks

If you like Swiss steak, then you'll love this ultra-easy way to prepare it. Nothing could be easier, unless of course, your family likes it so much that they offer to help with the dishes!

4 (4-ounce) lean tenderized minute or cube steaks
1 (10 3/4-ounce) can reduced-fat cream of mushroom soup

1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes, undrained
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
2 teaspoons dried parsley flakes
1/8 teaspoon black pepper

1. In a large skillet sprayed with butter-flavored cooking spray, brown steaks for 3 to 4 minutes on each side.

2. In a large bowl, combine mushroom soup, undrained tomatoes and onion. Stir in parsley flakes and black pepper. Spoon mixture evenly over browned steaks.

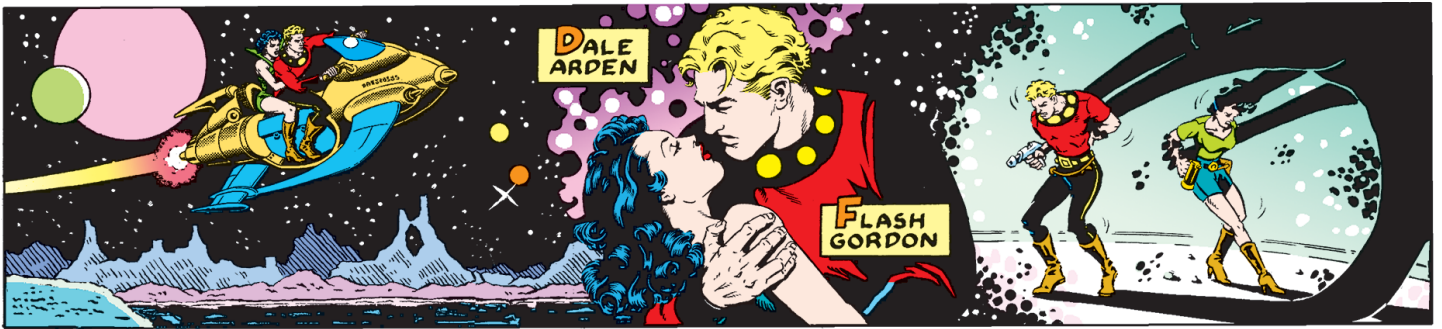
3. Lower heat, cover and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes. When serving, evenly spoon sauce over steaks. Makes 4 servings.

* Each serving equals: 222 calories, 6g fat, 29g protein, 13g carb., 520mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 3 Meat, 1 Vegetable, 1/2 Starch.

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FLASH GORDON By JIM KEEFE

12-26

FFLASH AND KING RONAL APPEAR, BEARING THE CROWN DISCOVERED IN LONAK'S CHAMBERS...

THE CROWN OF THE KRONTORS' DEAD RULER.

IT'S HAVING THE EFFECT YOU HAD HOPED FOR, FLASH.

THE CREATURES HAVE CEASED THEIR ATTACK!

THEY MUST RECOGNIZE WHOEVER HOLDS THE CROWN AS THEIR RULER.

UHHH...

KRAC

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SO... YOU FOUND MY TROPHY ROOM. NO MATTER.

IF ONLY I'D KNOWN THE POWER THIS CROWN POSSESSED...

LONAK, I COMMAND YOU... STOP!

YOU... COMMAND ME?!

NOT ANYMORE...

FOR WHOEVER CONTROLS THE BEASTS CONTROLS THE KINGDOM!

YOU POWER-MAD FOOL! TAKE OFF THE CROWN BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

NEVER! DO YOU HEAR ME?!

NEVE... AHHHH!

SHIK SNIC

TO BE CONTINUED

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

TO GET FULL BENEFIT FROM A GOLF LESSON, YOU HAVE TO TRULY COMPREHEND THE INSTRUCTION BEING OFFERED.

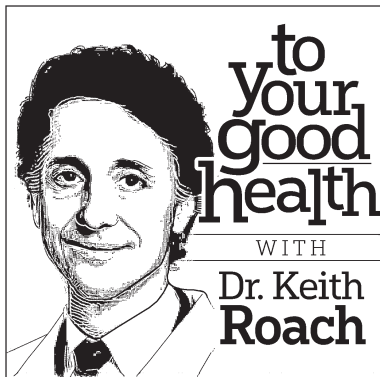
SO ASK QUESTIONS UNTIL EVERYTHING IS CRYSTAL CLEAR.

JM

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MAKING CHANGES THAT REQUIRE YOU TO BREAK DOWN LONG-INGRAINED BAD HABITS TAKES EFFORT, WILLPOWER, AND PATIENCE.

UNFORTUNATELY, BECAUSE THERE ARE NO SHORTCUTS TO THIS GAME, IT'S USUALLY THE ONLY WAY TO LASTING IMPROVEMENT.



Bipolar Disease Takes 4 Different Forms

DEAR DR. ROACH: Is it possible for a person to reach the age of 70 and just now be diagnosed with bipolar disorder? Are there degrees of impairment, like with autism -- some worse than others? -- C.S.

ANSWER: The hallmark of bipolar disease is mania. "Mania" has a specific meaning in psychiatry: It's a very elevated mood, associated with high amounts of energy and an inability to think clearly, especially to see the consequences of one's actions. Some common features of people in a manic episode include an inflated sense of self-worth, distractibility and racing ideas. People can be very talkative and feel little need to sleep. Dangerously, people in a manic phase can spend large amounts of money and have many sexual indiscretions.

All diseases have a spectrum of severity, and some are quite wide. With bipolar disease in particular, however, there are four distinct forms of the disease. Bipolar I is the classic form, once called "manic depressive illness," where people have episodes of mania, alternating with periods of normal behavior or depression. People with Bipolar II have depressive episodes and some "hypomanic" episodes: periods of high energy (and sometimes profound productivity), usually without the negative aspects of the "full" manic episode. Cyclothymia is a rapid cycling between hypomania and mild depression. There is a fourth type, "unspecified," where people have abnormal mood elevations but don't meet criteria for the other types.

Bipolar disease usually has its onset in early adulthood, but sometimes in teens or even childhood. However, I have rarely seen bipolar disease diagnosed in someone as old as 70. It isn't always clear whether the disease is just manifesting that late, or whether it has been around for many years, but compensated for by the person. Some people don't interact with a lot of family or friends, and manic or hypomanic episodes might be missed. It's possible the 70-year-old in question has a quite mild form.

Treatment for bipolar disorder can dramatically improve the quality of life of the person and of the family and friends affected by the illness.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have been diagnosed with vaginal atrophy. My primary doctor prescribed estrogen, which doesn't seem to be helping after a year. I have also seen a woman's doctor, who prescribed an antifungal, but this does not seem to be helping the symptoms. Do you have any suggestions as to what I should do? -- Anon.

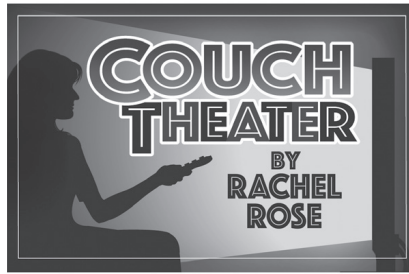
ANSWER: As a general rule, when appropriate therapy is not effective, it's time to reconsider whether the initial diagnosis was correct. In this case, I would be concerned that the diagnosis of vaginal atrophy might be wrong, or might not be the only issue. I have received letters from women who were treated for atrophic vaginitis for years before the diagnosis of lichen sclerosis was made. Appropriate therapy for that diagnosis relieved the symptoms. When you go back to the woman's doctor, I would ask about that diagnosis. A biopsy may be necessary to make that diagnosis. There are other less common causes as well.

Vaginal atrophy, when treated with estrogen, usually has noticeable improvement within a week or two. Fungal infection is possible (but should be apparent on exam), but it also gets better quickly. A year is too long to wait.

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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The Tender Bar (R) — Cute kid with deadbeat dad gains male guidance from good-hearted uncle, who lets him hang out in his neighborhood bar in 1970s Long Island. The story is the real-life memoir of Pulitzer Prize-winning writer J.R. Moehringer and stars Ben Affleck as Uncle Charlie. Young J.R. is played by Daniel Ranieri and older J.R. by Tye Sheridan. This George Clooney-directed film generates a nice mix of chortles and throat-tightening sobs from the sweet — if not slightly predictable — story. Extra love for Christopher Lloyd as Grandpa Moehringer. (Prime Video)

Hype House — First there was TikTok, which begat influencers, some of whom made a lot of money doing random things for 20 seconds at a time. Then a handful of the most popular influencers all moved into a big house in Los Angeles so they could create their content full-time. Netflix decided to film them 24/7 and make a reality series out of it. We have now arrived at the fifth circle of Dante's Hell (or is it the fifth circle of Hype?). Premieres Jan. 7. (Netflix)

Teenage Euthanasia — First, don't judge the series based on its title; "Euthanasia" is actually the first name of the teenaged main character (who goes by Annie for short). Annie was given up at birth by her mother, Fantasy Trophy, and raised by her grandparents at their funeral home in fictional Fort Gator, Florida. Upon Fantasy's death by overdose, her body arrives at that very funeral home, where Annie's tears combine with embalming fluid and a lightning bolt to magically bring her mother back to life. This animated, adult-oriented, dark comedy stars Maria Bamford as Fantasy and Jo Firestone as Annie, and includes a plethora of celebrity guest voices like Stephen Colbert, Patton Oswalt and Aidy Bryant. (HBOMax)

Amazing Race Season 33 — In what has been the longest season-in-progress in "Amazing Race" history, the perennial award-winning competition show returns Jan. 5. Eleven teams initially began filming in early 2020, only to be suspended



Prime Video

Daniel Ranieri, Christopher Lloyd in "The Tender Bar"

after just eight days due to the emerging pandemic in many of the planned locales. Eighteen months later, aboard its own chartered 757, the show recommenced filming, with an altered schedule to visit only countries with low COVID-19 rates (and down two teams who were unable to rejoin for other reasons). Teams this time around include internet personalities, teachers, radio hosts and police officers, all vying for the \$1 million grand prize. (Paramount+)

The Righteous Gemstones (TV-MA) — One of streaming TV's most underrated shows, the satirical comedy about a dysfunctional family of evangelical televangelists returns Jan. 9 for its second season. The star-packed cast includes John Goodman, Jason Schwartzman, Adam DeVine, Eric Roberts and Dermot Mulroney, just for starters, and is the brainchild of actor/producer/writer Danny McBride ("Pineapple Express," "Vice Principals"). While continuing their Texas-based ministry of self-promotion, the Gemstones are saving souls and padding bankrolls (though not necessarily in that order). (HBO Max)

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1. Who released the 1960 pop song "Where or When," which reached No. 3 on the Billboard chart?
2. Which band wrote and released "More Than a Feeling"?
3. What happened while "Smoke on the Water" was being recorded?
4. Who released "An Old Time Movie"?
5. Name the 1961 song that contains this lyric: "You're with me tonight, I'm captured by your charms, Oh pretty baby, won't you hold me in your arms?"

Answers

1. Dion & The Belmonts. The song originated in 1937 in the Broadway musical "Babes in Arms." It

has been widely covered, including by The Beach Boys and Carly Simon.

2. Boston, in 1976. It took the main composer, Tom Scholz, five years to complete.

3. Deep Purple was recording in a casino in Montreux, Switzerland, in late 1971 when someone shot a flare gun at the ceiling during a Frank Zappa concert. The entire complex burned to the ground. The group ended up recording in the halls and stairways of the nearby Grand Hotel.

4. Scott McKenzie, in 1967.

5. "A Thousand Stars," by Kathy Young and the Innocents. Young, who was just 15 at the time the song climbed charts, was inducted into the Doo-Wop Hall of Fame in 2014.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by} Wagner



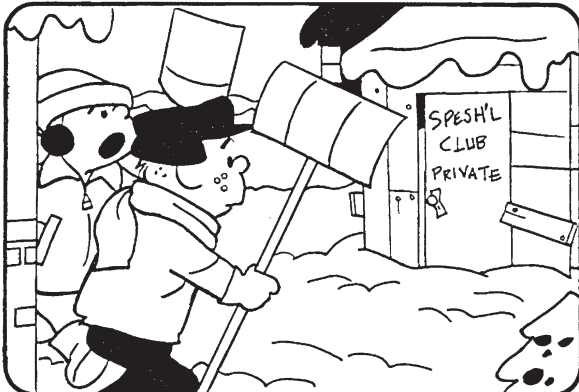
"Hold my calls 'til after the Super Bowl."

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Cap is different. 2. Scarf is shorter. 3. Glove is smaller. 4. Shovel is turned. 5. Doghouse is missing. 6. Sign is missing.

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- Generally, for every degree you lower your thermostat during heating season, you reduce your energy costs by 3%.

- Just in time for soup season (and my new year's resolutions), here's a great fat swap: Drain and rinse 2 cups of white beans and puree with a cup of no-sodium vegetable broth. You can use this as a thickener in place of heavy cream for soups and stews. —*JoAnn*

- To keep snow off your windshield, use a flannel-backed tablecloth stretched to cover both windshield and wipers. Put it flannel-side to the glass. Then you'll be able to lift it (and the snow) off your windshield to drive.

- Wondering what winter fruits and vegetables are in season? Here's a sampling: apples, dates and pears, as well as citrus, like grapefruit, oranges and tangerines. For vegetables, consider endive, bok choy, Brussels sprouts, kale, leeks, mushrooms, parsnips, radicchio, rutabagas, sweet pota-

toes, turnips, yams and winter squash.

- "Want to keep your pants from creasing on the hanger? Grab an empty paper-towel tube and slit it down the side. When you slip it over the bottom of the hanger, it creates a wide curve for the pants to lie across, and no more crease!" —*M.U. in Colorado*

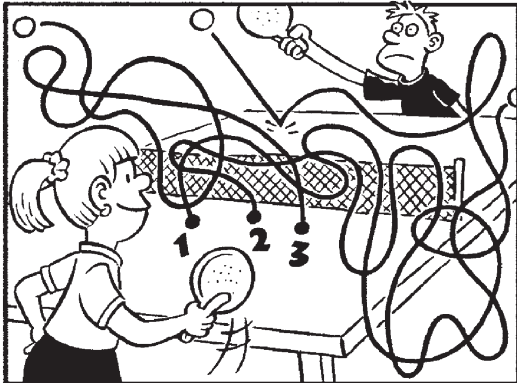
- Remember that as temperatures drop and layers of clothing increase, children in a car seat need special consideration. Remove heavy coats before strapping in a small child or baby. Winter wear can compress during an accident, and it interferes with the straps.

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

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CAN YOU SPOT Ping Pong Patty's winning shot?

Answer: No. 1 will put Freddy away.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



MIME
MILE
TILE
TALE
TALK

DON'T GET BOXED IN!

You have five minutes to get out of this challenge. In this type of problem you are given a word that must be changed into another word in a series of moves. During each move, you must change one letter in the previous word, so as to form a new word. In our example, we changed MIME to TALK in four moves. See if you can change the following words in four moves each.

1. LESS to MORE
2. OUST to REND
3. PEST to GONE
4. RUBE to GENT
5. SALT to LICK

CHANCE...CHA

FIG. 1

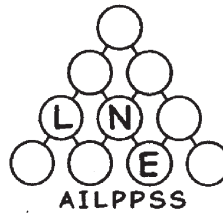
DOODLE PICS! The two pictures shown here are graphic presentations of familiar words, phrases or names. You have one minute to identify both.

FALL PRIDE

FIG. 2

Answers: 1. Last chance. 2. "Pride goeth before a fall."

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



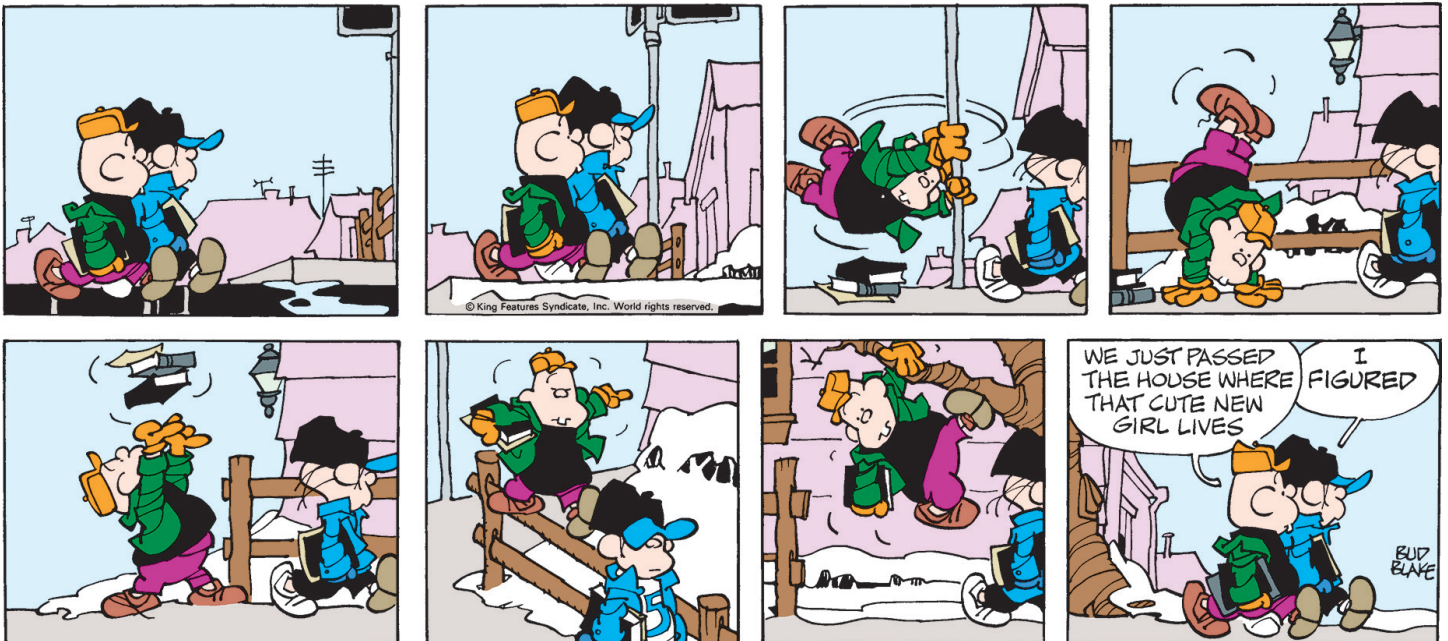
Illustrated by David Coulson

Answers: Top to bottom, left to right: Fall, pals, pans, pane, pins, pine, pipe, pips.

Answers:
1. LESS, LOSS, LOSE, LORE, MORE
2. OUST, RUST, REST, RENT, REND
3. PEST, PENT, GENT, GONE
4. RUBE, RUNE, RUNT, RENT, GENT
5. SALT, SILT, SILK, SICK, LICK

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



BUD BLAKE

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Biting remark
- 5 Spheres
- 9 Victory
- 12 Skin care brand
- 13 Joel or Ethan of Hollywood
- 14 Parisian pal
- 15 Hourly pay
- 16 Batman's hood
- 17 Beer container
- 18 Rebuff
- 19 Acting coach Hagen
- 20 Crazy
- 21 Actor Brynner
- 23 Old Olds
- 25 Mourn
- 28 Hit song by the Oak Ridge Boys
- 32 Grown-up
- 33 Snake poison
- 34 Autobiography
- 36 Herbal tea
- 37 Geese formation
- 38 Computer key
- 39 Lose color
- 42 TiVo precursor
- 44 Idle or Clapton
- 48 Khan title
- 49 Close

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

- 50 Handle
- 51 Dict. info
- 52 Adriatic port
- 53 Author Hunter
- 54 Bygone jet
- 55 Staff leader?
- 56 Faxed
- DOWN**
- 1 Fiddle sticks
- 2 Arkin of "Argo"
- 3 Prego rival
- 4 1957 Everly Brothers song
- 5 Supernatural
- 6 Cheer (for)
- 7 Caveat word
- 8 NBC sketch show
- 9 Texas city
- 10 Apple computer
- 11 Boy, in Barcelona
- 20 Features of romantic comedies
- 22 Loosen
- 24 Graceland idol
- 25 Felon's flight
- 26 Citric beverage
- 27 Silent
- 29 Pig-poke link
- 30 Director Howard
- 31 Soul, to Sartre
- 35 Disclose
- 36 "Fab!"
- 39 Crazes
- 40 Mellows
- 41 Loony
- 43 Give a darn
- 45 Carry on
- 46 One-named supermodel
- 47 Penny
- 49 "The Voice" network

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

B	A	R	B		O	R	B	S		W	I	N
O	L	A	Y		C	O	E	N		A	M	I
W	A	G	E		C	O	W	L		C	A	N
S	N	U	B		U	T	A			L	O	C
			Y	U	L			R	E	O		
L	A	M	E	N	T			E	L	V	I	R
A	D	U	L	T				V	E	N	O	M
M	E	M	O	I	R			T	I	S	A	N
			V	E	E			E	S	C		
F	A	D	E		V	C	R			E	R	I
A	G	A			N	E	A	R		N	A	M
D	E	F			B	A	R	I		E	V	A
S	S	T			C	L	E	F		S	E	N

LAFF - A - DAY



"Remember, if we do find a burglar, you flash the light on your face, and I'll hit him while he's in shock!"

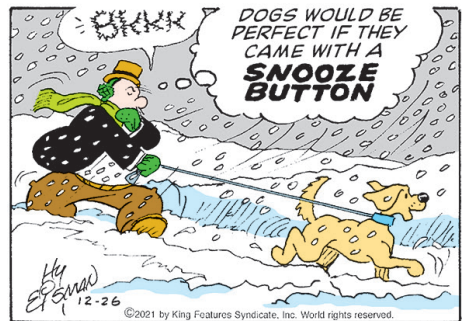
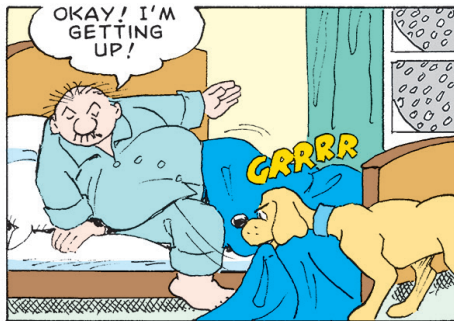
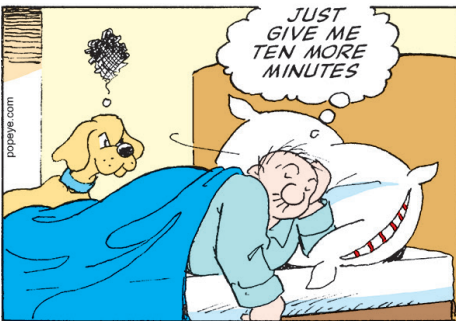
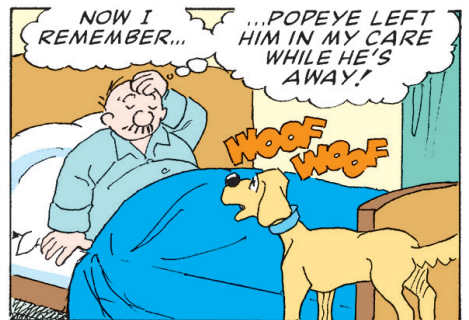
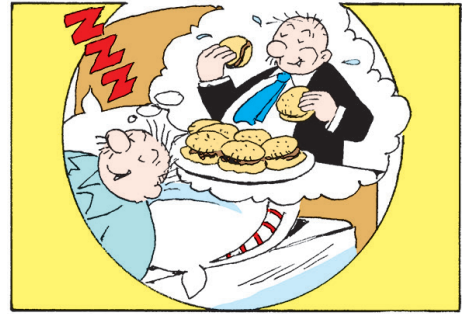
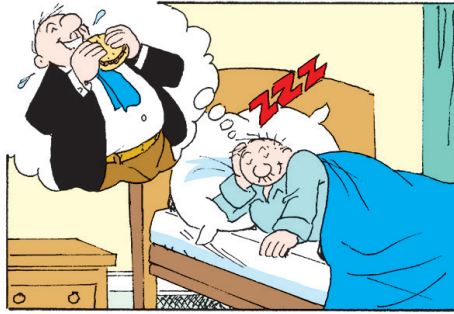
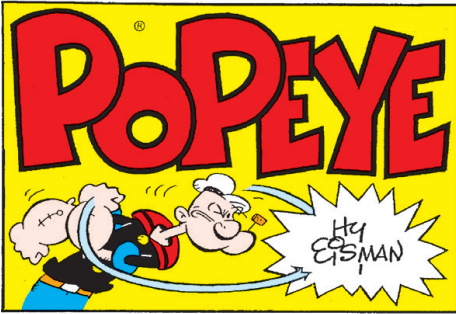
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

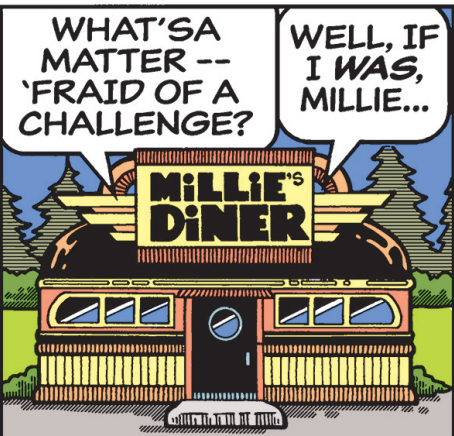


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R.F.D.



by Mike Marland



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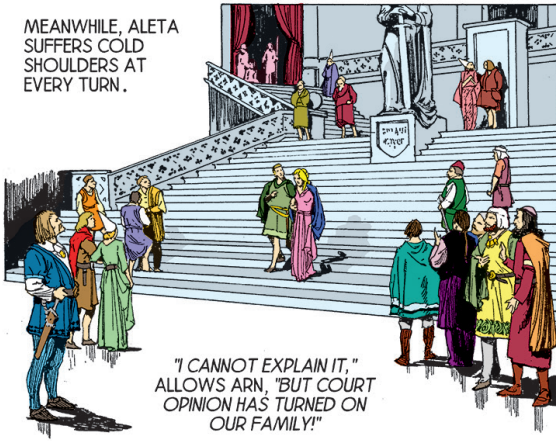
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Hal Foster's Gianni and Schultz Prince Valiant®

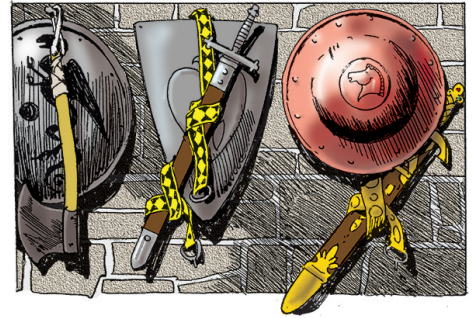
IG HAS GONE AND PRUDENCE, WHO DESPISED HIS ATTENTIONS, NOW FEELS A HOLE IN HER HEART.



MEANWHILE, ALETA SUFFERS COLD SHOULDERS AT EVERY TURN.



"I CANNOT EXPLAIN IT," ALLOWS ARN, "BUT COURT OPINION HAS TURNED ON OUR FAMILY!"



VAL AND GAWAIN, RESTED AND RENEWED, HANG THEIR SHIELDS IN THE HALL OF CHAMPIONS, SYMBOLIZING THEIR READINESS TO ASSUME KNIGHTLY QUESTS.



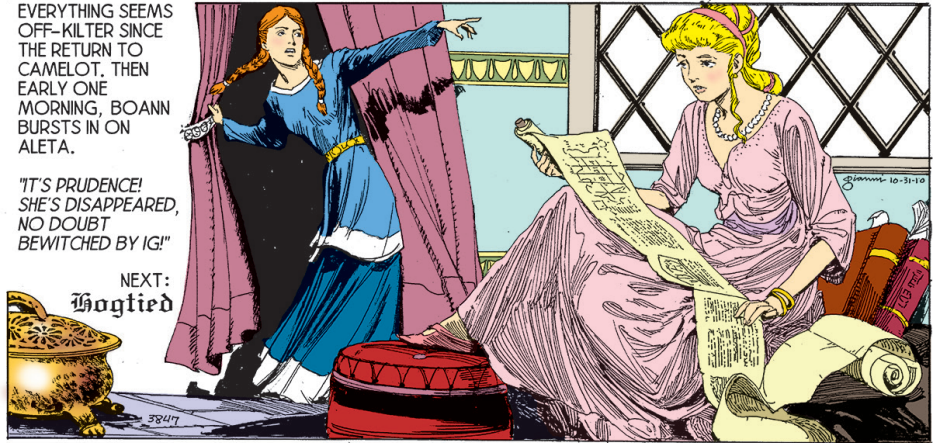
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ODDLY ENOUGH, THERE ARE NO REQUESTS FOR EITHER OF THE DUO'S SERVICES. IN FACT, THEY FEEL SHUNNED, AND TAKE REFUGE IN THE ALEHOUSE.

EVERYTHING SEEMS OFF-KILTER SINCE THE RETURN TO CAMELOT. THEN EARLY ONE MORNING, BOANN BURSTS IN ON ALETA.

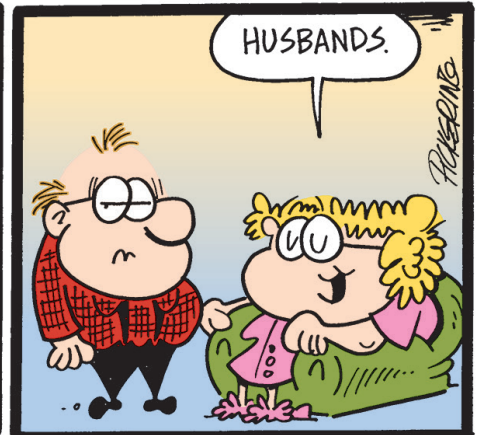
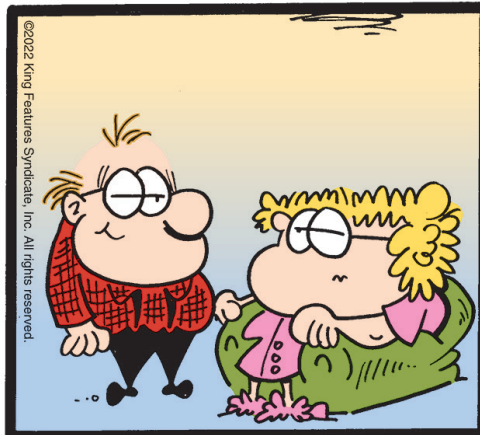
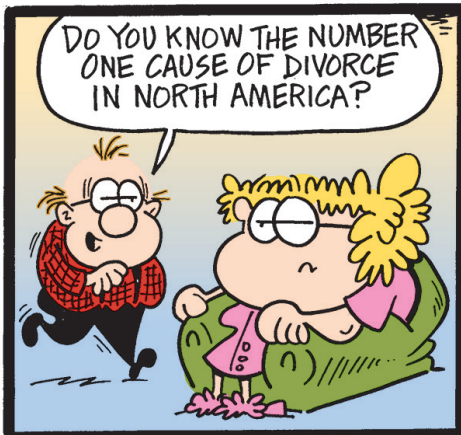
"IT'S PRUDENCE! SHE'S DISAPPEARED, NO DOUBT BEWITCHED BY IG!"

NEXT:
Hogtied



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Looking Out for No. 1

Depending on where you live, you might be required to delay surgery because the hospital is full of COVID patients. That's the news that's spreading around the country.

It gets worse. If you have an emergency, the ambulance might be a long time in coming because they don't have enough EMTs, or they might have to come from an adjacent town. Once you get to the hospital, you might be treated in a hallway because no exam rooms are open.

The biggest issues to keep us from needing medical attention are physical safety and health.

I've gone around my house to look at every inch of floor space to be sure there's nothing that I could possibly trip on. I moved the laundry basket to the closet instead of leaving it near a path where I walk. In the living room I changed one frequently used lamp

from a 50-75-100 watt bulb to one that brightens things up with 75-100-150 watts. I removed two small throw rugs ... just got rid of them.

Other things might seem small, but really aren't. I found a balance class on YouTube and I'm following along every other day. I also found several videos on improving flexibility and stretching.

When it comes to diet, I made a quick call to my doctor's office and inquired about vitamins. I was told that a low-dose vitamin C would be appropriate three times a week, and to add an orange to my diet the other days. Ask your doctor before you do this.

As much as I hate not being able to select my own items, I've gone back to picking up grocery orders at curbside to stay out of stores.

It's up to us to take care of ourselves. That's the bottom line when it comes to our health and safety.

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1. Name the nonprofit organization that promotes youth football and cheer/dance programs for some 325,000 participants worldwide.

2. What boxer defeated Felix Trinidad Jr. to claim the undisputed middleweight title in a 2001 bout at New York City's Madison Square Garden?

3. "Better to lose honorably in a British car than win in a foreign one" is a quote attributed to what motor-sports legend?

4. Cleveland's Major League Baseball team settled a lawsuit over its new Guardians nickname with another Cleveland team that played what sport?

5. What was the original name of the Extreme Football League (X League) women's tackle football association when it was founded in 2009?

6. What outdoor sports television



by Ryan A. Berenz

program, produced and hosted by Babe Winkelman, first hit the airwaves in 1980?

7. The Omloop Het Nieuwsblad is a road cycling race held annually in February in what country?

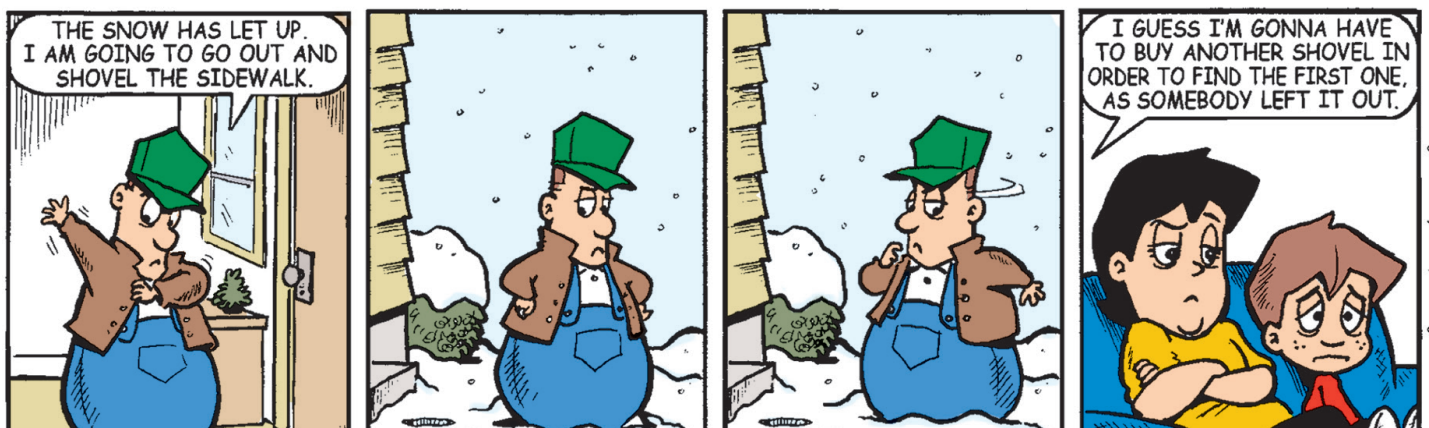
Answers

1. Pop Warner Little Scholars.
2. Bernard Hopkins.
3. Sir Stirling Moss.
4. Roller derby.
5. The Lingerie Football League.
6. "Good Fishing."
7. Belgium.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Dog Balks at Wheelchair

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My 9-year-old Shih Tzu "Mitzi" developed a hip problem due to an injury she suffered when much younger (she was a rescue). It's become almost impossible for her to walk, and her veterinarian recommended she start using a "wheelie" harness to get around. The problem: Mitzi will not use the harness. It's a struggle to get her into it, and then she just kind of lays there and whimpers once she's in it. How can I get her to adjust to the harness? — *Claude C., Atlanta*

DEAR CLAUDE: You'll need to try a couple of things: check the fit of the harness, and use some gentle encouragement (ahem, treats) to help Mitzi.

According to Eddie's Wheels, which designs wheelchairs and support devices for pets, dogs that still have feeling or some mobility in their hind legs sometimes have more trouble adjusting to wheelchairs than dogs whose hind legs are paralyzed. Also, a poorly fitted wheelchair can cause a dog to feel uncomfortable in the harness.

So, check the fit of the wheelchair based on the manufacturer's recommendations. If Mitzi's wheelie allows her back legs to touch the ground, make sure that she can do so. This may alleviate her anxiety. If her back seems hunched, make sure the straps are at the correct length so she's comfortable. If her back sags in the harness, she may need more support. And make sure her backside isn't lifted into the air; this can cause strain on her front legs.

Once the fit is OK, give Mitzi lots of encouragement as you help her into the harness each day. Then, as she progresses, give her a reward at each step: when she first stands up in the harness, when she takes her first step, and so on. Always make it a positive experience, until she gets the hang of her new wheels.

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

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* At the height of their fashion craze in the 1580s and '90s, neck ruffs could include up to 6 yards of starched-stiff material with up to 600 pleats, supported by a wire, wooden frame or board.

* In 2017, while on a plane, a woman used her sleeping husband's thumb to unlock his phone, thereby discovering he was cheating on her. She reportedly reacted with "such a ruckus" that the flight was forced to make an unscheduled landing in India.

* Starfish don't have blood. They circulate nutrients by using seawater in their vascular system.

* The first baseball caps were made from straw and worn by the New York Knickerbockers in 1849.

* After the Titanic sank in 1912, ships sent to recover the dead ran out of embalming supplies. It was decided to preserve only the bodies of first-class passengers, due to the need to visually identify wealthy men in order to resolve disputes over their estates.

* Between 1848 and 1850, the Gold Rush caused the population of San Francisco to grow from 900 to 35,000 people.

* A mother black lace-weaver spider will drum on her web to call her babies to come and eat her alive.

* In medieval times, fruit and vegetables were cooked because they were thought to cause disease, with a book from 1500 even warning consumers to "Beware of green salads and raw fruits, for they will make your master sick."

* Credito Emiliano, a bank in Italy, accepts Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese as collateral for small business loans, holding the cheese as insurance and aging it in climate-controlled vaults for the loan's duration.

* A man literally died laughing while watching the movie "A Fish Called Wanda."

Thought for the Day: "Not all paths offer a vista. But every path offers a lesson." -- Toni Sorenson

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THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

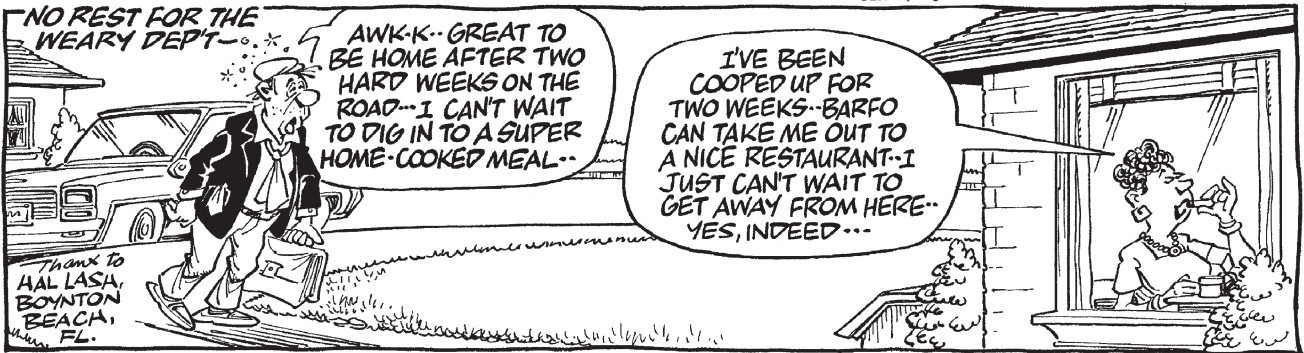
SIGN OF THE TIMES—IT HASN'T HAPPENED YET, BUT GIVE IT A WHILE...



BY AL SCADUTO



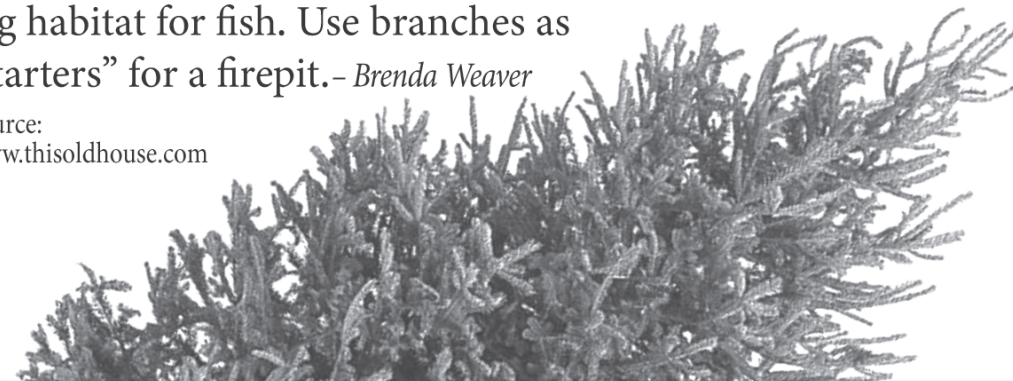
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Recycling Christmas trees

Pine needles dry quickly but decompose slowly, making excellent groundcover around foliage, especially creeping plants such as strawberries. If you live near a lake or pond and your tree is chemical-free, toss branches into the water to make sheltering habitat for fish. Use branches as “starters” for a firepit. - Brenda Weaver

Source:
www.thisoldhouse.com



VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

OIG Is VA's Crime Dog

Despite COVID and all the restrictions from it, the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General has been busy. Here are a few of the scams they've uncovered and pursued:

Two men in New Jersey pleaded guilty to paying and soliciting kickbacks and bribery. They roped in telemedicine doctors who faked orders for items such as braces and prescriptions. The thieves then billed Medicare, the Department of Veterans Affairs, TRICARE and other programs while hiding behind fake company owners. The tab to the government when they were caught was approximately \$50 million.

In Chicago, two VA prosthetics clerks took cash from vendors after sending business to them for medical equipment. Bribery, wire fraud, conspiracy — this case had it all. The thieves used government purchase cards to place those orders and rented the equipment instead of buying it as the VA doctors

had ordered. One of those companies was paid almost \$1.4 million.

In Florida, two men were nabbed for much the same thing — soliciting and paying for bribes, then getting kickbacks for ordering medical equipment such as braces that weren't actually medically necessary. Again, this involved telemedicine. And again, this involved compounded medication prescriptions. The hit to TRICARE, ChampVA and Medicare came to \$25 million.

But a final case at a rooming house tugs at the heartstrings. The thief grabbed Social Security and VA benefits that belonged to the mentally ill, disabled, veterans and elderly for their care and housing. There were 35 counts to the indictment, which included wire fraud, document tampering, making false statements, mail fraud and first-degree theft. The thief managed to get herself named as Representative Payee and spent the money on herself instead of on her tenants.

As always, a big thumbs-up to the OIG.

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



A Year in Review

As my third year in Congress comes to a close, I have been reflecting on all that has happened in the short span of a year. I started off the year being sworn in for my second term as South Dakota's lone representative and was appointed to two committees—the Agriculture Committee and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. These two committees are critical for the progress of South Dakota and played a vital role for our country as we have dealt with the impacts of a global pandemic, issues with the supply chain, and inflation.

Since January 3rd, 2021, Congress has been nothing short of eventful. Just days in, we witnessed an attack on the Capitol Building. This shifted the tone in Washington and created an even more difficult environment. I've spent the year identifying solutions to real problems facing our nation and building coalitions to support solid policies, even in a hyper-partisan atmosphere. I believe this attitude has allowed me to get bills across the finish line that would've been stalled otherwise.

In August, I was proud to be named the most transparent and accountable Republican Member of Congress by the Congressional Management Foundation, as well as the most effective on agriculture policy.

My main priority as your representative is South Dakota. I've taken several hundred meetings with South Dakotans while in Washington. In the last year, I've toured hundreds of local businesses, hosted dozens of townhalls, and met with hundreds of community leaders throughout our great state. A byproduct of long days and meetings with local business owners and officials are more than twenty pieces of legislation that I introduced, four of which have been passed by the House and are awaiting action in the Senate.

South Dakota experienced a lot of supply chain issues this year, as did most of the world. From backlogged ports to a shortage of truck drivers, high demand and low supply, prices skyrocketed and empty space on store shelves were a common sight. I've been working to combat the delays and price hikes with the Ocean Shipping Reform Act, the biggest overhaul of federal maritime policy since 1998, which would ease backlogs at ports in America. The Ocean Shipping Reform Act passed the House in December and is on track to be passed by the Senate in the new year. This legislation puts South Dakota consumers, small businesses, farmers, ranchers, and American manufacturers first and addresses anti-competitive and unfair practices on behalf of foreign flagged ocean carriers.

Additionally, supply chain issues have caused problems for many meat packers and butchers in South Dakota. This is why I introduced the Butcher Block Act, which would rebalance the cattle market by easing regulatory barriers and offering USDA-backed meat processing grants for small processors looking to expand or add shackle space.

While things started to get back to normal over the summer and the nation experienced job openings that remain unfilled despite high unemployment rates, I introduced the Get Americans Back to Work Act. This legislation would remove the additional federal unemployment benefit, incentivizing those who are unemployed to get back to work, benefiting local and national economies.

I'm tremendously proud of the work South Dakota's congressional office has accomplished this year, and I hope you are, too. I look forward to seeing how we can continue to serve you in 2022.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

New Year, No Fear

As we approach our third year of life during a pandemic, many Americans feel trapped on a merry-go-round of COVID variants and mandates. In contrast, South Dakotans should look forward with hope to the possibilities of the future.

I expect another year of steady growth in 2022 for our state. The past year saw our economy become the strongest in America as we led the nation in pandemic recovery and a host of other factors. Record tourism numbers drove revenues to historic levels as capacity crowds flooded businesses and communities. Meanwhile, unemployment rates plummeted below pre-pandemic levels.

Because of the measures our state took during the pandemic, South Dakota has become one of the Top 10 fastest-growing states in the country. Our population grew at a rate nine times faster than the nation's growth rate in the last year, based on U.S. Census Bureau data.

With businesses growing and new companies moving to the state, we have so many open jobs that it would take more than 28,000 people to fill them all. Nearly a quarter of those available spots are in high-paying, skilled healthcare jobs.

All of those available jobs have given workers new bargaining strength as they compete for higher wages and jobs that offer better opportunities for work-family balance. Many people have put themselves on the fast track for better career paths. A recent study found South Dakota is the No. 1 state in the nation for graduation rates in Associate Degree programs.

While other states faced economic collapse, we maintained our status as a business-friendly state by making resources available, keeping taxes low, and ensuring that South Dakota continues to make it easy for anyone to start a business. We remained focused on fiscal responsibility, using one-time dollars to support capital projects that will strengthen our state for decades into the future. We invested to finish connecting the entire state to high-speed internet. And we are taking action to address problems with workforce housing, childcare, and water infrastructure to set our state up for sustained growth.

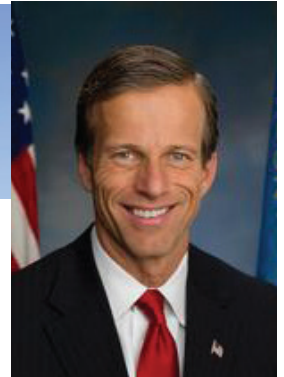
The country faces serious economic challenges in 2022. But because South Dakota fast-tracked solutions and took an extremely conservative path in funding those solutions, we can approach this new year with unbridled optimism.

Do not let the doom and gloom become your default in the new year. Choose to believe in the possibilities of success and let hope guide you to positive outcomes this coming year.

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John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Sticking Up For South Dakotans

In December, the Democrats' effort to ram their reckless tax-and-spending spree through Congress during the holiday season was fortunately derailed. Halting their radical, partisan spending package, hopefully permanently, would prevent raising taxes on middle-income families, giving some of the wealthiest individuals in our country a massive tax break, and prioritizing Green New Deal-style policies – just to name a few. It would be a huge win for South Dakota families, farmers and ranchers, and small businesses. I'm confident that as folks continue to learn more about the many egregious and heavy-handed policies that define this bill, Americans will reject it. Rest assured, I'm doing everything in my power to make sure the Democrats' radical bill will never see the light of day.

As a longtime member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, advocating for meaningful policies that will directly benefit South Dakota farmers and ranchers is a top priority for me. Sometimes helping our agriculture community means stopping bad policies from going into effect. This year, Republicans were able to stop the Democrats' proposed double death tax, which would have hit generationally owned enterprises hard, particularly in rural communities, and could force families to sell off part of the farm or business just to pay the new tax. This is profoundly unfair to hardworking farmers and ranchers, and it should go without saying that the government should not be in the business of shuttering family farms and businesses. As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, I have fought against the death tax – in any form – for many, many years, and I will continue to do everything I can to protect our nation's agriculture producers.

As the former chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the current top Republican on the Subcommittee on Communications, Media, and Broadband, I have long worked to expand access to rural broadband and make South Dakota a leader to which the rest of the country can look. It is crucial that rural communities across South Dakota have access to fast and reliable broadband services, and I continue to use my committee seniority to fight for predictable and efficient support for broadband providers to help enable the continued deployment of these services throughout our communities.

Last year, Senate Republicans used the Congressional Review Act, a legislative tool that allows Congress to weigh in on rules and regulations issued by federal agencies, to push back against the Biden administration's federal vaccine mandate. To be clear, the federal government has no business implementing sweeping mandates like this one, and I'm glad a bipartisan majority of the Senate agreed. I continue to hear from South Dakotans in every corner of the state about the devastating impact this mandate would have on an already stretched and strapped workforce. Getting vaccinated is a personal choice, and Washington bureaucrats need to stay out of it.

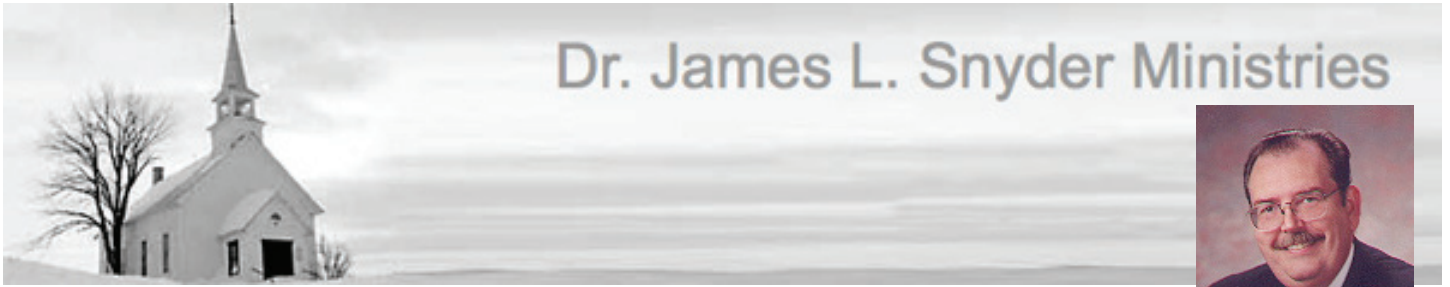
Even if the resolution to block the vaccine mandate passes the House, President Biden is still expected to veto it and continue with his heavy-handed, government-knows-best strategy. Fortunately, the Supreme Court is expected to eventually decide the matter.

The Senate approved the National Defense Authorization Act in December, which authorizes critical funding to continue essential preparation for the B-21 mission at Ellsworth Air Force Base. I am incredibly proud that South Dakota and Ellsworth were chosen to serve as the first operating base for the B-21, and I am committed to ensuring that it has everything it needs to continue serving as one of our nation's essential military assets for decades to come.

These are just a few examples of the work we've done in the last year. As always, fighting for South Dakota is my number-one priority. I'm focused on the same principles and priorities that have always guided me: working hard, fighting for what matters, and listening to my top advisers – you, the people of South Dakota. It's a privilege to give our state a seat at the leadership table in Washington and make sure the voices of South Dakotans are being heard. It is an honor of a lifetime to serve you in the U.S. Senate, and I look forward to delivering more wins for the great state of South Dakota in the new year.

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The nightmare after Christmas

Technically, Christmas is over... all over our living room floor, that is. Piles of wrapping paper in this corner and empty boxes in that corner, and colorful ribbons from here to there, all evidence that Christmas must have been a success this year.

I was reclining in my chair, sipping a nice cup of hot chocolate while the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was cleaning up the kitchen. In our own little world, both of us were reveling over the past Christmas holiday. For us, it is such a nice time of the year when families get together and just enjoy the season.

My wife and I have come through various phases when it comes to Christmas.

Phase one; we spent our first Christmas in our own little apartment. Married only six months, all we had was each other. I must confess this was the cheapest Christmas we ever had. All I had to do was buy one Christmas present for my new bride.

Phase two; it was not long until the sound of little feet pattering down the hallway changed our Christmas forever. We had approximately three children; I say approximately because they ate like a herd of elephants. I know, I had to pay the grocery bill. But Christmas at that time was a wonderful event of excitement and surprises. So Christmas was now becoming a more expensive item in our family budget.

Phase three; is where we are at now. The children are all grown up and have children of their own. Now it is time for the grandchildren to come storming through the front door and be amazed by all of the gifts underneath the Christmas tree. It is almost like reliving your childhood.

Christmas gets more expensive as we get older. I am looking forward to that phase of senility when I do not know what is happening or how much things are costing.

I must say that I enjoyed each phase at the time. Each phase seemed to get better and better.

Those who opposed the Christmas season must not have enjoyed the Christmases such as my wife and I have enjoyed. Having wiggly, squiggly, and giggly grandchildren all over the living room floor opening up their gifts and making a mess is an experience no one should miss.

As I was pondering our past Christmas, I thought about how much goes in preparing for Christmas. There is the shopping... the parties... the wrapping of presents. Reflecting on the past Christmas, it came to my mind that we often spend too much, eat too much and laugh too much on our way to Christmas day. So much is put into getting ready for Christmas that there is a great let down the day after Christmas.

There is no silence quite as loud as the silence that dominates the house the day following Christmas.

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I used to think that good old St. Nick had the most difficult job in the world. I often wondered how he ever accomplished all that he did on Christmas. After all, he has to make the stuff, pack the stuff, ship the stuff and then stuff himself down a chimney. Not to mention that he usually stuffs himself with Christmas cookies. So the difference between Christmas cookies and other cookies is that Christmas cookies have no calories.

But I got to thinking. Santa Claus has the easiest job in the world. He does not have to stick around the day after Christmas. He does not have to worry if people like what they got for Christmas. Nor does he have to contend with returning gifts. I never know what to get anybody.

Then my mind traveled in the direction of my purchases this past Christmas. What was the condition of my credit card? This Christmas, I used it so much that it was at the brink of a meltdown. So I pulled it out of my wallet, and unless my mind was playing tricks on me, it did feel a little warm.

I had a little frightening thought. Did I write down all my purchases in my checkbook? I must confess that my shopping is usually a receipt-challenged experience. I have no idea what happens to my receipts once I purchase an item. What if somebody wanted to return one of my gifts? How would they do it without a receipt?

Then I revisited my thoughts about good old St. Nick. Perhaps he was wiser than I gave him credit for at the time. His job was simply to bring Christmas into the home. He did not worry about if he got the right present for the right person or not. Sure, he had a list, but he only checked it twice. Then he forgot about it.

Christmas is not for fretting and worrying about if you got the right present for the right person. Rather, Christmas is to enjoy the experience of simply giving. Not so much what you give, as it is the act of giving itself.

It was God who set a standard for Christmas. The Bible tells us, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Setting back in my easy chair with my hot chocolate, I exchanged the nightmare for the satisfaction I felt in giving to people I loved.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Do wealthy people generate more pollution and/or carbon emissions than the less fortunate?

-- George P., Greenwich, CT

In a word, yes. The richest 10 percent of humanity was responsible for 52 percent of global emissions between 1990 and 2015, according to a 2020 Oxfam report. The richest one percent alone produced 15 percent of global emissions during that time, more than double that of the entire poorest half of humanity. This phenomenon is called emissions inequality: Wealthier nations and individuals emit excessively large amounts of greenhouse gases, while poorer nations and individuals suffer the bulk of the consequences.

The result is that pollution is harming those least responsible—and least equipped to combat its effects—more severely than those who are most to blame. In the United States, this is partially a result of systemic racism. Factories and power plants that emit toxic pollution have overwhelmingly been built near non-white and poor communities, which often lack adequate resources to resist powerful fossil fuel companies. The most famous example of this power imbalance is “Cancer Alley,” a region of Louisiana where the predominantly Black residents face some of the worst air quality in the nation and suffer from chronic health issues as a result.

Global income data tracks closely with emissions data: The World Inequality Lab’s 2022 report found that the wealthiest 10 percent earn 52 percent of all income, while the poorest half of all people earn just 8.5 percent. Why does wealth correlate so closely to emissions? On an individual level, people with more wealth are more likely to own cars, travel by airplane and own big homes that consume lots of energy.

Wealthy people are also more likely to invest in the stock market, a significant but harder to measure source of emissions: By giving a company money, investors tacitly greenlight the company’s business practices. And because those investors expect a positive return on their investment, profitable companies tend to avoid potential risks like reorganizing their supply chain to be more environmentally friendly, since there might not be an immediate financial payoff for doing so.

Though corporations seem huge and impossible to change, individuals still have the power to influence them. If you invest in the stock market, you can ensure that the companies you put money into don’t contribute to the oil industry or deforestation, and you can consider pulling your investments from those that do. The website Good with Money is a helpful place to start.

Still, the blame for greenhouse gas emissions falls squarely on the shoulders of corporations and governments, not individuals. While many companies have taken modest steps to reduce pollution, overall emissions are still increasing and will likely stay that way until the governments of major polluters like the U.S., China and the European Union force companies to transition away from fossil fuels. Until then, the wealth gap will continue to grow, and emissions inequality will grow along with it.



The richest 1% of humanity produces 15% of total carbon emissions, while the richest 10% is responsible for more than half. Credit: Pexels.com.

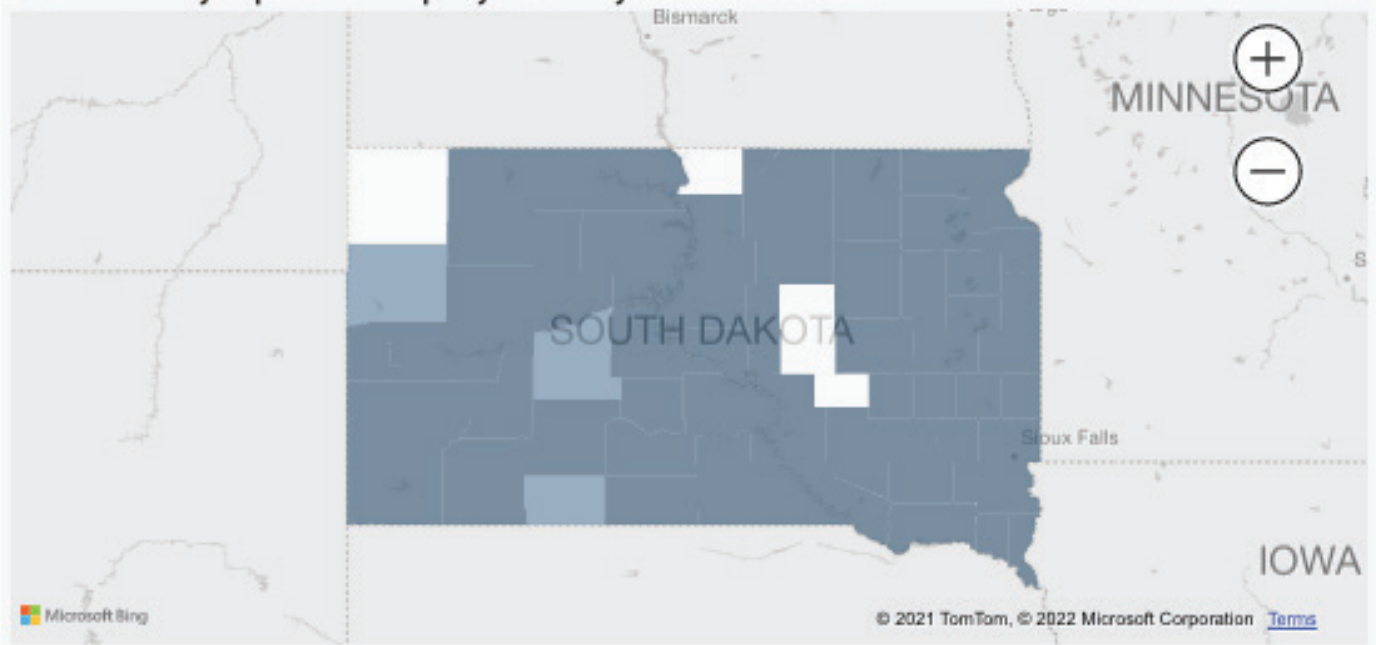
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South Dakota COVID-19 Report

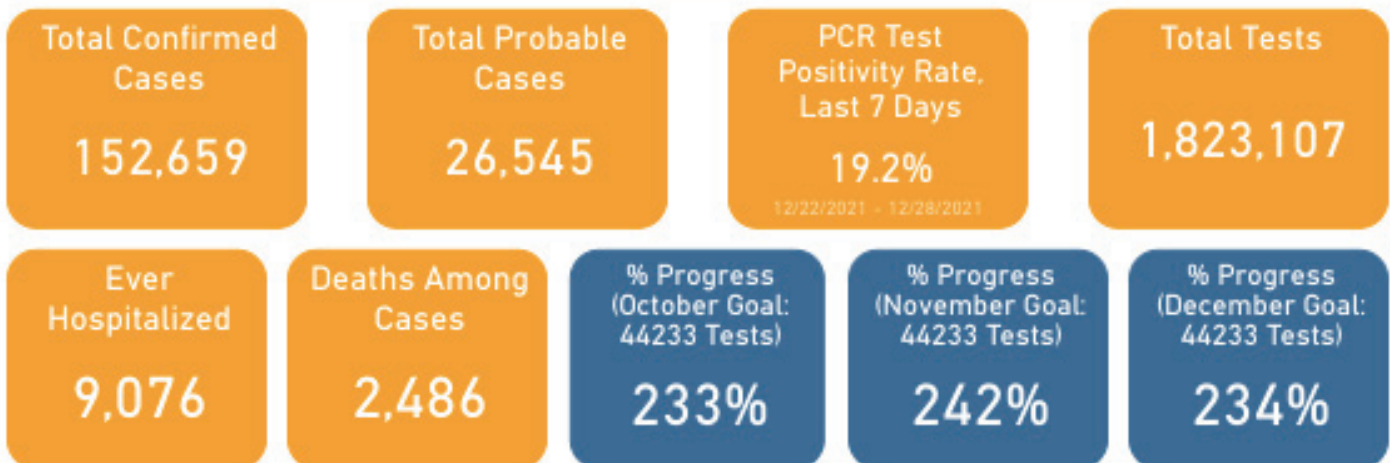


Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread Low Moderate Substantial High

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



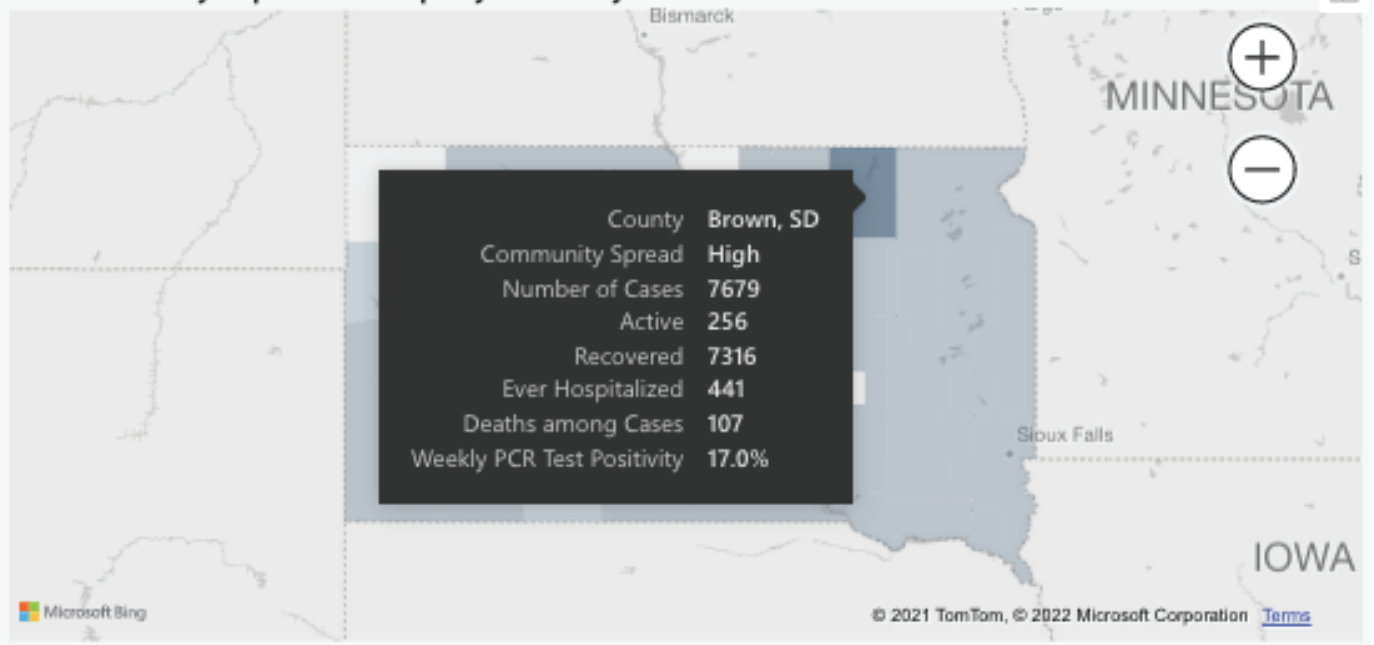
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Brown County COVID-19 Report

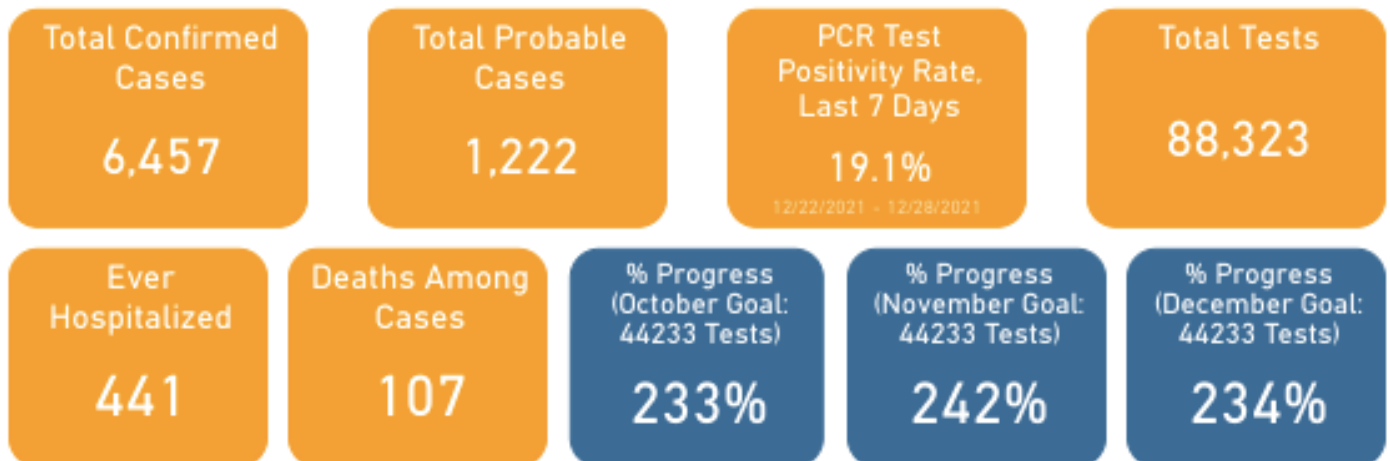


Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread Low Moderate Substantial High

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



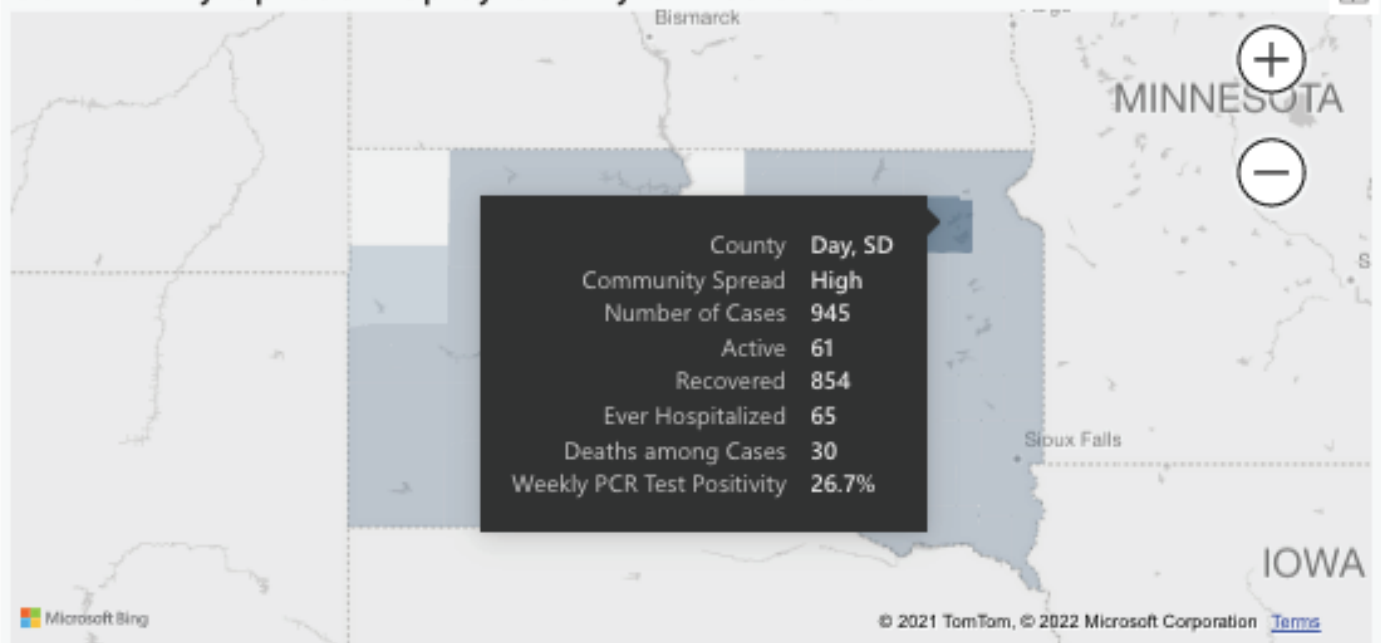
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Day County COVID-19 Report

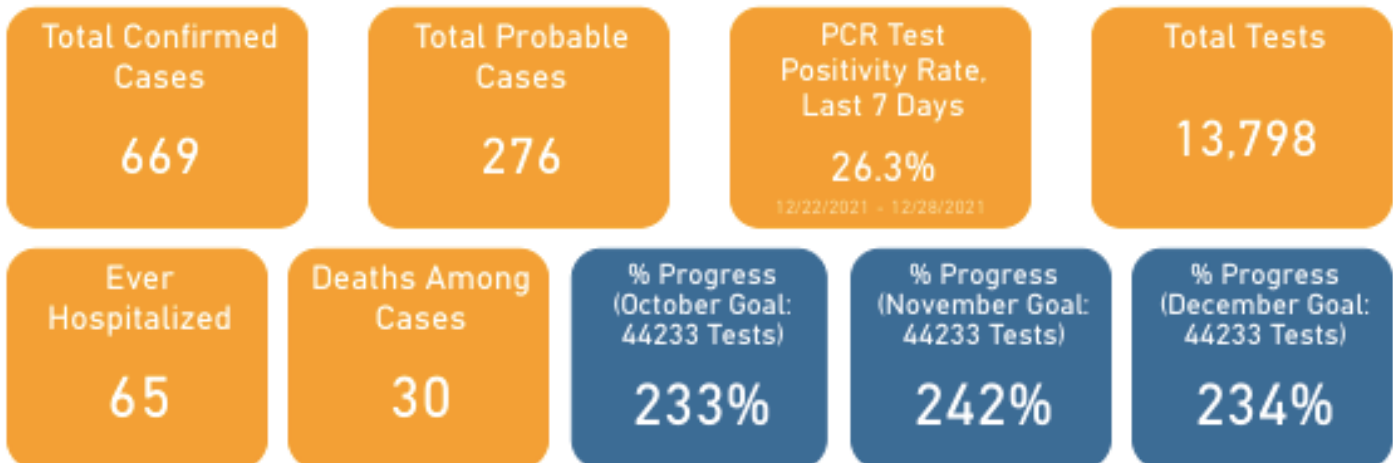


Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread: Low Moderate Substantial High

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



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COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Currently Hospitalized	+3	240
Deaths Among Cases	+30	2486
Active Cases		8323
Ever Hospitalized		9076
Recovered Cases		168395
Total Cases		179204

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	93726	1145
Male	85478	1341

VARIANT CASES OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Variant	# of Cases
Delta (B.1.617.2 & AY lineages)	1251
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	176
Gamma (P.1)	4
Beta (B.1.351)	2
Omicron (B.1.1.529)	1

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	10876	0
10-19 years	21748	0
20-29 years	30567	11
30-39 years	30001	41
40-49 years	25069	62
50-59 years	23759	185
60-69 years	19941	378
70-79 years	10363	577
80+ years	6880	1232

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian / Pacific Islander	2341	1%
Black	4248	2%
Hispanic	7412	4%
Native American	21423	12%
Other	1667	1%
Unknown	4164	2%
White	137949	77%

Groton Area School District

Active COVID-19 Cases

Updated December 23, 2021; 7:09 AM

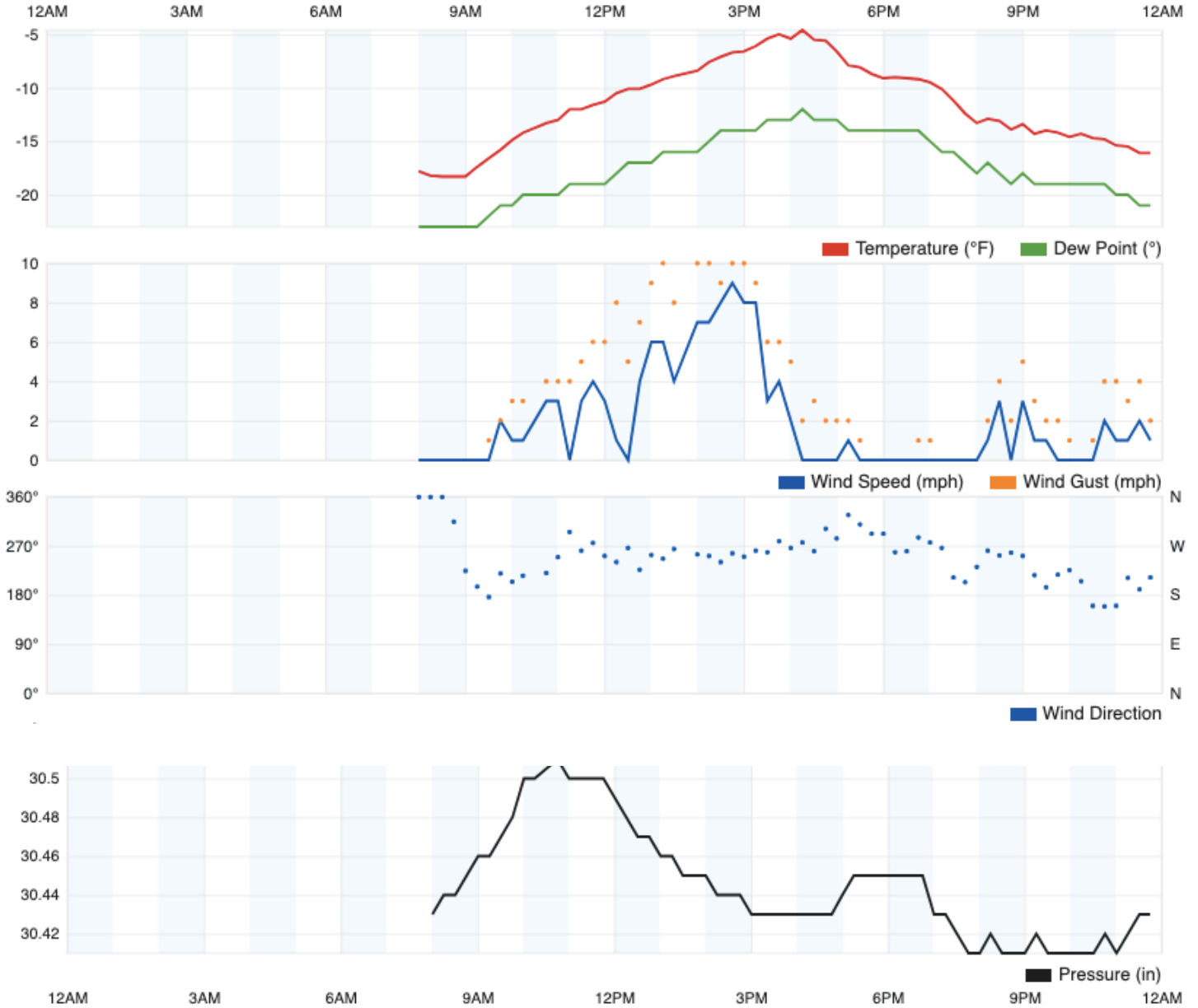
No Update as there was no school

J	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	S	T
K	G										0	1	2	t	o
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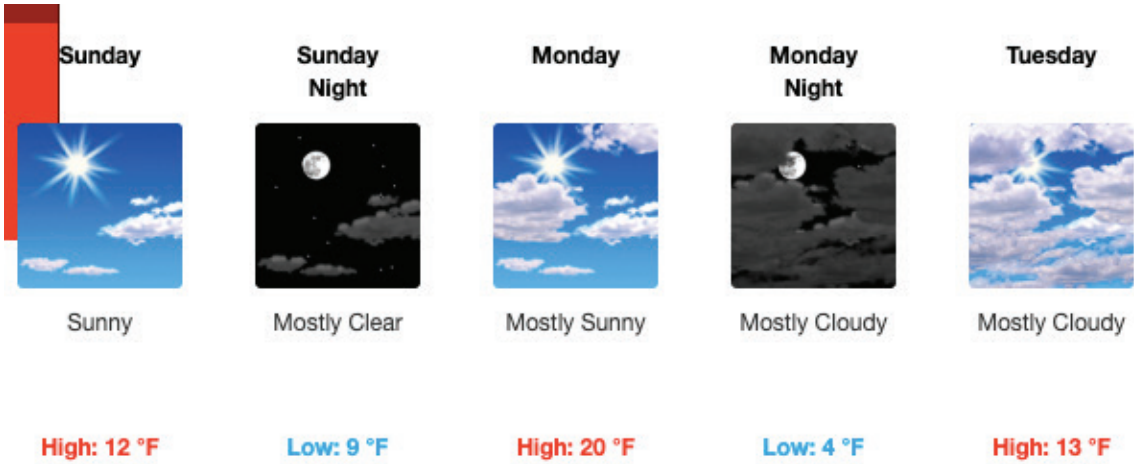
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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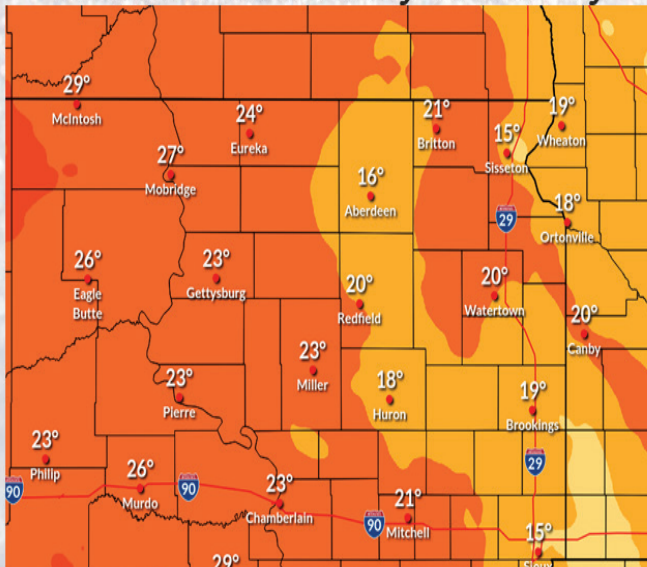
Turning the Corner Today

with warming temperatures. And Monday will be warmer yet with highs in the 20s and 30s.

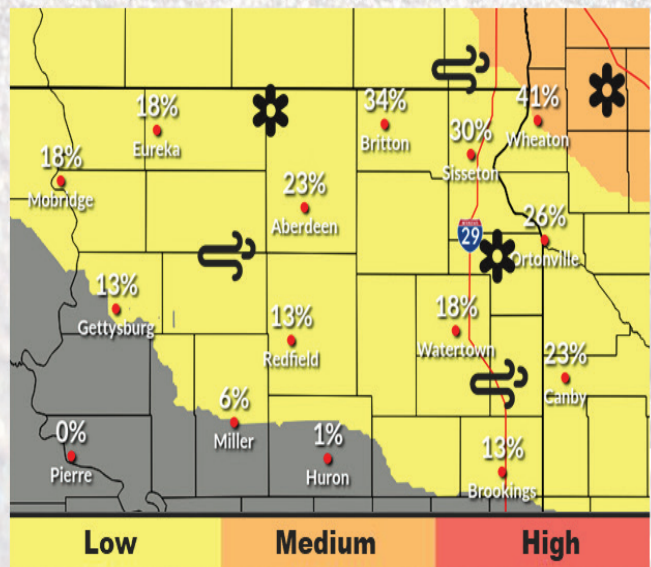
But it'll be a short-lived reprieve...

Wind & some snow possible Tue - Wed, followed by another Arctic blast.

How much warmer today VS Saturday



Potential for 1.0" + of snow noon Tue - 6am Wed



Visit www.weather.gov/abr for a detailed local forecast

Updated: 1/2/2022 5:19 AM CT

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Dangerous morning wind chills will give way to warming temperatures and continued sunshine this afternoon... still cold but a definite improvement over yesterday. Monday should improve further (5-10 degrees above average highs). However, another Arctic blast is expected for Wednesday and Thursday, following a system that will bring wind and possibly a bit of snow. Stay tuned!

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Today in Weather History

January 2, 1999: Heavy snow of 6 to 8 inches fell across part of northeast South Dakota from the late afternoon hours of the 1st to the early morning hours of the 2nd. Strong north winds of 15 to 30 mph combined with temperatures in the single digits generated wind chills from 25 to 40 below and visibilities below 1/4 of a mile at times. Holiday travel along Interstate-29 and Highway 12 was most affected by this winter storm. There were some travel delays and some stranded motorists as a result. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Kidder, Victor, Sisseton, Webster, Waubay, Wilmot, and 8 inches at Britton and near Peever.

1839: It is believed Louis Daguerre took the first daguerreotype of the moon. Unfortunately, in March of that same year, his entire laboratory burnt to the ground, destroying all his written records and much of his early experimental work—and that historical image of the moon. A year later, John William Draper, an American doctor, and chemist took his own daguerreotype of the moon.

1897: Tornadoes in January? Two tornadoes touched down on this day. The first tornado touched down in Mooringsport, Louisiana, killing five people and injuring 21 others. The second tornado occurred at Benton, Arkansas. Although this tornado was more destructive in regards to property damage, it caused one death.

1949: A blizzard raged and brought heavy snow, strong winds, and cold temperatures to South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska.

1955: Hurricane Alice passed through the Islands of Saint Martin and Saba in the Caribbean Sea on this day. Alice, which developed on December 30, 1954, is the only known Atlantic hurricane to span two calendar years.

1999: A powerful winter storm developed over the Texas panhandle and moved northeast through the Missouri bootheel and then north northeast through eastern Illinois and into Michigan. Snow began accumulating in east-central Illinois and areas south of Chicago during the early evening hours of New Year's Day and overspread the city and north suburbs by midnight. Snow continued through the night and much of the day Saturday, January 2. The heaviest snow fell during the daytime hours Saturday and tapered off by late afternoon or early evening and ended by late evening. Northeast winds were 20 to 30 mph with a few higher gusts during the day Saturday. Winds gusted to over 50 mph along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The strong wind coming off the lake enhanced snowfall totals within about 10 miles of the lake. Snowfall was generally 9 to 15 inches over north central and east central Illinois and in the Chicago suburbs. Snowfall in Chicago and the north suburbs in Lake County was 18 to 22 inches. Winds subsided Saturday evening as the storm center passed over southern Lake Michigan. Then strong northwest winds developed Sunday, causing considerable blowing and drifting and hampering clean-up efforts.

The 21.6 inches at O'hare, the official observing site for Chicago, was the second greatest storm total snowfall. The record was 23.0 inches January 26-27, 1967. Of the 21.6 inches, 18.6 fell on January 2, setting a record for the most snowfall on a calendar day. Other snowfall amounts included; Algonquin 14.0, Aurora 14.4, Barrington 18.0, Brookfield 15.1, Bourbonnais 14.0, Channahon 13.0, Chatsworth 17.0, Coal City 13.0, Compton 9.7, Crestwood 14.2, DeKalb 12.4, Dixon 16.4, Earlville 11.3, Fairbury 13.0, Geneva 13.0, Glenwood 16.0, Harvard 9.0, Lake Villa 17.9, LaGrange Park 15.0, Midway Airport 20.6, Mundelein 10.0, Naperville 11.0, Olympia Fields 15.8, Orland Park 13.8, Rochelle 9.6, Rockford 9.0, Streamwood 14.0, Willow Springs 12.0. The heavy snow and blowing snow caused hazardous travel. Lake Shore Drive was closed down for the first time ever. State, county, and local road crews worked around the clock. The City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation spent 12 million dollars on snow removal efforts. Three hundred flights were canceled at O'Hare and Midway airports.

2006: Six tornadoes impacted central and northern Georgia. The tornadoes were rated from F0 to F3.

2017: 36 confirmed tornadoes impacted the Deep South from Louisiana to Georgia. Many of the tornadoes came from line segments of storms known as quasi-linear convective systems. A larger convective system also created numerous wind damage reports, and in Alabama, four people died from straight-line winds.

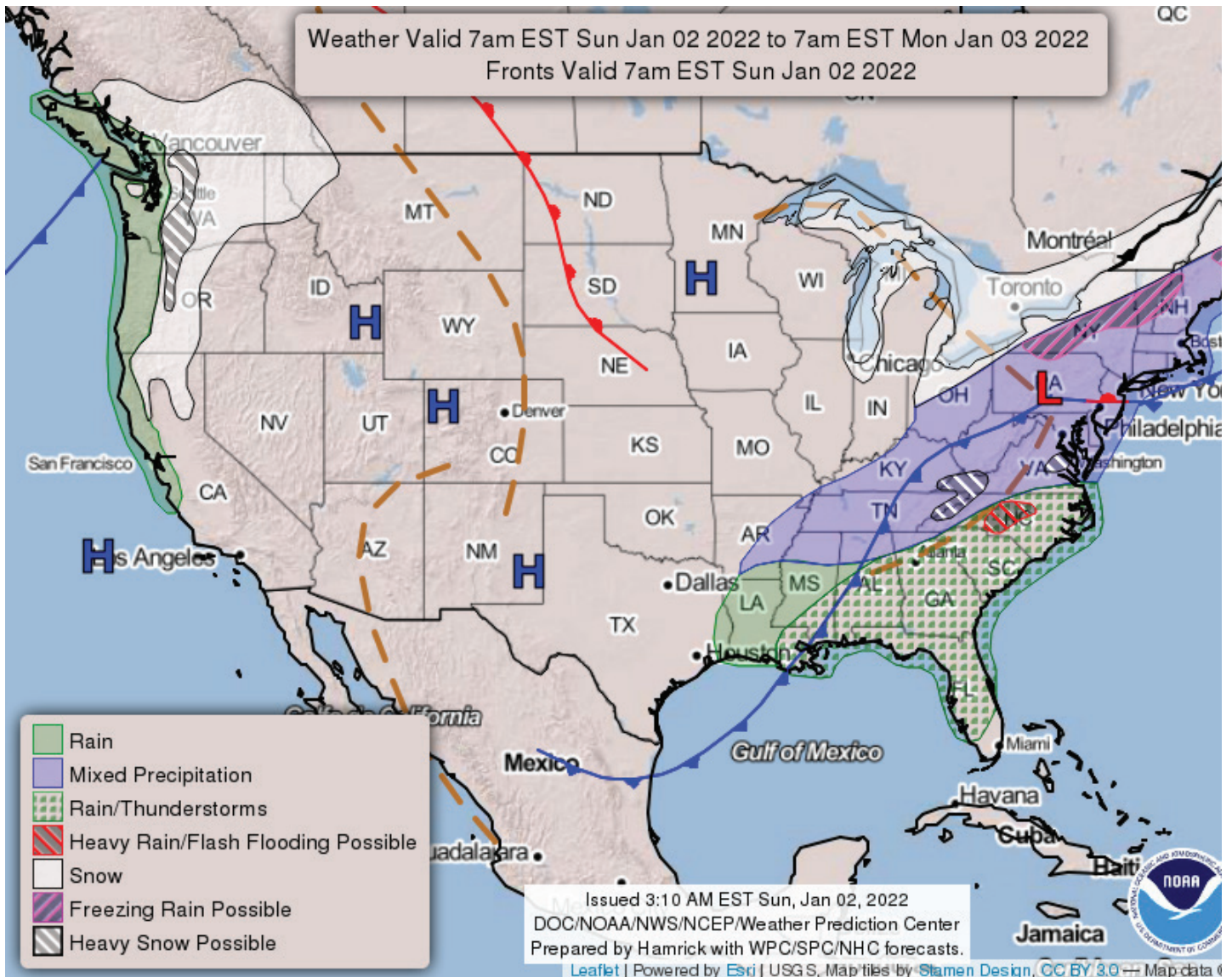
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: -5 °F at 4:14 PM
Low Temp: -18 °F at 8:52 AM
Wind: 10 mph at 1:13 PM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 50° in 1963
Record Low: -30° in 2010
Average High: 24°F
Average Low: 3°F
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.04
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.04
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:02:37 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:10:26 AM



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From Rebellion To Restoration

Going against God's will comes naturally. Our wants and God's needs seem to be at odds with one another. It's part of our sinful nature that needs our constant attention and never-ending vigilance.

Psalm 107 describes the outcome when we become careless or lax or when we do not struggle to stay close to God. It presents a picture of those who have strayed from God as "sitting in darkness," "in the shadow of death" and being "bound in affliction and in irons." Here, this "darkness" is what life is like without the Light of God in a person's life. And we also know that when God is not present and active in our lives, death looms large!

This struggle to be obedient and close to and with God is nothing new. Rebellion and self-centeredness began in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. They rejected God's requirement for them to be obedient and faithful. And when they disobeyed Him, the battle against sin and any desire that anyone would ever have to do what was right in the eyes of God began. But the battle to be righteous, and the desire to please God are certainly possible.

Notice this reminder from the Psalmist: "They cried to the Lord in their trouble and He saved them from their distress." Any "trouble" we may have had, are having now or will have in the future is included when anyone at any time from anyplace cries out to God for His deliverance.

Our loving, gracious, merciful, and faithful God will never desert us no matter how far we have strayed or how sinful our lives may be. "Call on me and I will answer!"

Prayer: Father, as we enter this year cleanse, forgive and deliver us from all of our sins and restore our joy. We do need Your help! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: – "LORD, help!" they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. Psalm 107:13

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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

02-10-16-25-29

(two, ten, sixteen, twenty-five, twenty-nine)

Estimated jackpot: \$37,000

Lotto America

03-23-33-50-51, Star Ball: 4, ASB: 2

(three, twenty-three, thirty-three, fifty, fifty-one; Star Ball: four; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$5.66 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$244 million

Powerball

06-12-39-48-50, Powerball: 7, Power Play: 2

(six, twelve, thirty-nine, forty-eight, fifty; Powerball: seven; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$500 million

Judge blocks COVID vaccine mandate for Head Start program

MONROE, La. (AP) — President Joe Biden cannot require teachers in the Head Start early education program to be vaccinated against COVID-19, a Louisiana federal judge ruled Saturday, handing a victory to 24 states that had sued the federal government.

U.S. District Judge Terry Doughty wrote that the Biden administration unlawfully bypassed Congress when ordering that workers in Head Start programs be vaccinated by Jan. 31 and that students 2 years or older be masked when indoors or when in close contact outdoors.

Head Start is a federally funded program that promotes education for children under the age of 6 who are from low-income families.

Doughty, an appointee of then-President Donald Trump, wrote that the separation of powers is crucial to the country's founding and quoted former President Ronald Reagan, who said "the nine most terrifying words in the English language are, 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help.'"

"If the Executive branch is allowed to usurp the power of the Legislative branch to make laws, then this country is no longer a democracy — it is a monarchy," Doughty wrote.

Republican attorneys general who were among the 24 states involved in the lawsuit praised Doughty's decision.

"This victory will help ensure that numerous Head Start programs will continue to operate rather than have to fire teachers and cut back services to children," Alabama Attorney General Marshall said in a news release. "And this win will forestall the nonsensical and damaging practice of forcing masks on two-year-olds."

It was not immediately clear whether the federal government would appeal the decision to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

Doughty's ruling is similar to a Friday ruling in which a federal judge also blocked the Head Start mandate in Texas.

Saturday's ruling affects Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Wyoming and West Virginia.

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Fire ravages Cape Town seat of South Africa's Parliament

By ANDREW MELDRUM and GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Firefighters battled a major blaze at South Africa's Parliament complex on Sunday that sent a dark plume of smoke and flames into the air above the center of Cape Town and caused some ceilings of the building that houses the national legislature to collapse.

The fire started on the third floor of an old building that houses offices and spread to the National Assembly building, where South Africa's Parliament now sits, Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Patricia de Lille said.

"The fire is currently in the National Assembly chambers," De Lille told reporters at the scene. "This is a very sad day for democracy for Parliament is the home of our democracy."

City of Cape Town Fire and Rescue Service spokesman Jermaine Carelse said no injuries were reported. Parliament was closed for the holidays.

Security guards first reported the fire at around 6 a.m., Carelse said, and 35 firefighters were on the scene. Some of them were lifted into the Cape Town skyline on a crane to spray water on the blaze from above.

They were still fighting the fire more than six hours later.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa was briefed on the fire, De Lille said, but it was too early to speculate on a cause. She said authorities were reviewing video camera footage.

The deputy minister of state security was also at the Parliament complex. Parliament speaker Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula cautioned against speculation that it was a deliberate attack.

"Until such a time that a report has been furnished that there was arson, we have to be careful not to make suggestions that there was an attack," she said.

President Ramaphosa and many of South Africa's high-ranking politicians were in Cape Town for the funeral service of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, which took place on Saturday at the city's St. George's Cathedral, about a block away from the Parliament precinct.

The precinct has three main sections, the original Parliament building completed in the late 1800s and two newer parts built in the 20th century.

The fire initially was concentrated at the old Parliament building, which is located behind the National Assembly, De Lille told reporters in front of the Parliament complex gates. During that briefing, she said firefighters "have the situation under control," but the fire spread soon after and tore through the current Parliament building.

Authorities feared that others parts of the buildings in the precinct might collapse because of the heat while historical artefacts inside were likely to be damaged or destroyed. The top part of the bright white National Assembly building had been burned black as smoke billowed out its roof.

"The bitumen on the roof is even melting, an indication of the intense heat. There have been reports of some walls showing cracks, which could indicate a collapse," News24 website quoted Carelse as saying.

Police cordoned off the complex and closed roads. Some of the blocked-off areas were near where people had left flowers and other tributes to Tutu.

A huge wildfire on the slopes Cape Town's famed Table Mountain last year spread to buildings below and destroyed part of a historic library at the University of Cape Town.

S Korea: Unidentified person crosses border into North Korea

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea's military said Sunday that an unidentified person crossed the heavily fortified border into North Korea.

South Korea had earlier spotted the person with surveillance equipment at the eastern portion of the border and sent troops to capture him or her on Saturday night. But the troops failed to find the person and the surveillance equipment detected the person crossing over the border, Joint Chiefs of Staff officers said.

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South Korea sent a message to North Korea on Sunday morning to ensure the safety of the person, but the North hasn't responded, the officers said requesting anonymity citing department rules.

It was unclear if this was a rare case of a South Korean hoping to defect to the North, or it could be a North Korean who briefly entered the South Korean territory for some reason before returning to the North.

In September 2020, North Korea fatally shot a South Korean fisheries official found floating in its waters along a poorly marked sea boundary. South Korea said that North Korea troops were under orders to shoot anyone illegally crossing the border to protect against the coronavirus pandemic.

Earlier in 2020, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un placed a border city under total lockdown after a North Korean defector with COVID-19-like symptoms sneaked back home. The fate of that defector, who had lived in South Korea, is not known.

On Saturday, North Korea announced it had decided to place top priority on strict virus restrictions at a high-profile ruling party meeting last week.

The two Koreas are split along the world's most heavily armed border, called the Demilitarized Zone. An estimated 2 million mines are peppered inside and near the 248-kilometer (155-mile) -long, 4-kilometer (2.5-mile) -wide DMZ, which is also guarded by barbed wire fences, tank traps and combat troops on both sides.

Defecting via the DMZ is rare. At the height of their Cold War rivalry, both Koreas sent agents and spies to each other's territory through the DMZ, but no such incidents have been reported in recent years.

About 34,000 North Koreans have defected to South Korea since the late 1990s to avoid poverty or political oppression, but a vast majority of them have come via China and Southeast Asian countries.

North Korea has yet to report any cases of the coronavirus while experts have questioned its claim of a perfect record.

No. 7 Ohio State outlasts No. 10 Utah 48-45 in Rose Bowl

By The Associated Press undefined

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — C.J. Stroud capped his record-setting offensive day by leading a 56-yard drive ending in Noah Ruggles' 19-yard field goal with nine seconds to play, and No. 7 Ohio State beat No. 10 Utah 48-45 on Saturday night in the wild 108th edition of the Rose Bowl.

Stroud passed for a school-record 573 yards and a record-tying six touchdowns for the Buckeyes (11-2), who won the Granddaddy of Them All for the second time in four years with an offensive performance that shattered multiple long-standing offensive marks. Stroud's yards passing and touchdowns both are Rose Bowl records, and he finished 3 yards shy of the record for yards passing in any bowl game.

Ohio State still had to rally from 10 points down late in the third quarter to get past the Pac-12 champion Utes (10-4), who got off to an electrifying start and stayed competitive even after star quarterback Cameron Rising went down with an injury with 9:56 to play in Utah's first trip to the Rose Bowl.

Jaxon Smith-Njigba set the record for any FBS bowl game with 347 yards receiving while catching a school-record 15 passes and scoring three touchdowns. Marvin Harrison Jr. also caught three TD passes for the Buckeyes, who set a Rose Bowl record with 683 total yards.

Ohio State trailed 38-31 entering the fourth quarter despite the pyrotechnics of its passing game, but the Buckeyes immediately stopped Utah on downs at the Ohio State 31, and tied it on Harrison's 5-yard TD catch with 10:12 left. Rising was injured moments later while getting sacked, the Utes had to turn to Bryson Barnes, who had never thrown a collegiate pass.

Smith-Njigba then made a 30-yard, over-the-shoulder catch for his third touchdown with 4:22 to play, but Barnes improbably led the Utes on a tying drive capped by a 15-yard TD pass to Dalton Kincaid with 1:54 left.

But Stroud coolly led the Buckeyes back downfield in the waning seconds, and Ruggles hit his easy field goal. Ohio State kicked off to Britain Covey, who already had a 97-yard kickoff return for a touchdown earlier, but the Buckeyes smothered his cutback as time ran out.

Rising passed for 214 yards and two touchdowns and rushed for 92 yards and a score, but he left the

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game with an apparent head injury after getting sacked.

FIESTA BOWL

NO. 9 OKLAHOMA STATE 36, NO. 5 NOTRE DAME 35

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Spencer Sanders accounted for 496 yards and threw three of his four touchdown passes to Tay Martin, and Oklahoma State overcame a 21-point deficit to beat Notre Dame 37-35 in the Fiesta Bowl.

Oklahoma State (12-2, No. 9 CFP) came up inches short of securing a College Football Playoff spot in a loss to No. 6 Baylor at the Big 12 title game and fell into 21-point, first-half hole against Notre Dame (11-2, No. 5 CFP).

Jack Coan led Notre Dame's early charge while throwing for a Fiesta Bowl-record 509 yards and five touchdowns.

Sanders, who had a 9-yard touchdown pass to Jaden Bray in the first quarter, cut Notre Dame's lead to 28-14 with a 9-yard scoring pass to Martin with 37 seconds left in the first half. The pair connected for two more touchdowns, from 5 and 8 yards, to tie the game, and the Cowboys went up 34-28 on three field goals by Tanner Brown.

Coan threw a 25-yard TD pass to Austin with 1:05 left to pull Notre Dame within two, but Oklahoma State recovered the onside kick to keep the Irish winless in major bowl games since the 1993 Cotton Bowl under Lou Holtz.

Sanders threw for 371 yards on 34-of-51 passing and ran for 125 yards.

The Irish appeared to be headed toward a rousing start to the Marcus Freeman era, building a 28-7 lead behind Coan. Notre Dame's senior quarterback threw for 342 yards and four touchdowns in the first half, including two to tight end Michael Mayer. Coan finished 38 for 68.

SUGAR BOWL

NO. 6 BAYLOR 21, NO. 8 MISSISSIPPI 7

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Al Walcott set a Sugar Bowl record with a 96-yard interception return, Monaray Baldwin raced 48 yards for the go-ahead score on an end around, and Baylor beat Mississippi as injured Rebels quarterback Matt Corral watched from the sideline on crutches.

Abram Smith ran for 172 yards to finish with a single-season record 1,601 yards rushing for Big 12 champion Baylor (12-2), which won 12 games in a season for the first time. The defense did the rest, finishing with 10 sacks — two by game MVP Terrel Bernard — and three interceptions.

Corral, a dual-threat star QB and projected high-round NFL draft choice, became one of the big stories of the Sugar Bowl because of his decision to play, rather than opt out and minimize injury risks in advance of turning pro. His hopes of going out with a flourish faded on Ole Miss' third series, when he was sacked from behind by Cole Maxwell amid a cluster of players. Corral didn't put weight on his right foot.

Mississippi finished 10-3.

OUTBACK BOWL

NO. 22 ARKANSAS 24, PENN STATE 10

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — KJ Jefferson picked up 104 of his 110 rushing yards in the second half and threw for 90 more to lead Arkansas past Penn State in the Outback Bowl.

Raheim Sanders had 79 yards and two touchdowns on 13 rushing attempts and Dominique Johnson added 85 yards on 11 carries. The Razorbacks finished with 361 rushing yards.

Arkansas (9-4), coming off four consecutive seasons of four or fewer wins, got its first nine-win year since going 11-2 in 2011. The Razorbacks also played in their first bowl game since the 2016 Belk Bowl.

Jefferson ran 20 times while completing 14 of 19 passes. The 6-foot-3, 245-pound sophomore was sacked five times and limited to 6 yards rushing on 11 carries during the first half.

Sean Clifford went 14 of 32 or 195 yards for Penn State (7-6). He gained 47 yards on the ground on 11 attempts.

CITRUS BOWL

NO. 25 KENTUCKY 20, NO. 17 IOWA 17

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ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Chris Rodriguez scored on a 6-yard touchdown with 1:48 to play and Kentucky rallied in the fourth quarter to beat Iowa in the Citrus Bowl.

Kentucky (10-3) was forced to rally after blowing a 10-point lead in the second half. Wan'Dale Robinson set up the winning score when he caught a 52-yard pass from Will Levis to get to the 1. Robinson finished with 10 catches for 170 yards, and Levis completed 17 of 28 passes for 233 yards and a touchdown.

DeAndre Square intercepted Spencer Petras' pass with 48 seconds to seal it.

Iowa finished 10-4.

Officials probe cause of massive Colorado fire; 3 missing

By BRITTANY PETERSON and EUGENE GARCIA Associated Press

SUPERIOR, Colo. (AP) — Investigators are still trying to determine what sparked a massive fire in a suburban area near Denver that burned neighborhoods to the ground and destroyed nearly 1,000 homes and other buildings.

Three people are missing following the inferno that broke out Thursday.

Boulder County Sheriff Joe Pelle said Saturday authorities were pursuing a number of tips and had executed a search warrant at "one particular location." He declined to give details.

A sheriff's official who declined to provide his name confirmed one property was under investigation in Boulder County's Marshall Mesa area, a region of open grassland about 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) west of Superior. A National Guard Humvee blocked access to the property, which was only one of several under investigation, the official said.

Utility officials found no downed power lines around where the fire broke out in the area located between Denver and Boulder. The wildfire came unusually late in the year, following an extremely dry fall and amid a winter nearly devoid of snow, conditions experts say certainly helped the fire spread.

At least 991 homes and other buildings were destroyed, Pelle said: 553 in Louisville, 332 in Superior and 106 in unincorporated parts of the county. Hundreds more were damaged. Pelle cautioned that the tally from the wind-whipped wildfire is not final.

The totals include destroyed barns, outbuildings and other structures, but the vast majority were homes, Boulder County spokesperson Jennifer Churchill said late Saturday.

Authorities had said earlier no one was missing. But Churchill said that was due to confusion inherent when agencies are scrambling to manage an emergency.

Pelle said officials were organizing cadaver teams to search for the missing in the Superior area and in unincorporated Boulder County. The task is complicated by debris from destroyed structures, covered by 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow dumped by a storm overnight, he said.

At least seven people were injured in the wildfire that erupted in and around Louisville and Superior, the neighboring towns about 20 miles (32 kilometers) northwest of Denver with a combined population of 34,000.

The blaze, which burned at least 9.4 square miles (24 square kilometers), was no longer considered an immediate threat — especially with the overnight dumping of snow and frigid temperatures Saturday.

The snow and temperatures in the single digits cast an eerie scene amid still-smoldering remains of homes. Despite the shocking change in weather, the smell of smoke still permeated empty streets blocked off by National Guard troops in Humvees.

The conditions compounded the misery of residents who started off the new year trying to salvage what remained of their homes.

Utility crews struggled to restore electricity and gas service to homes that survived, and dozens of people lined up to get donated space heaters, bottled water and blankets at Red Cross shelters. Xcel Energy urged other residents to use fireplaces and wood stoves to stay warm and keep their pipes at home from freezing.

Families filled a long line of cars waiting to pick up space heaters and bottled water at a Salvation Army distribution center at the YMCA in Lafayette, just north of Superior.

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Monarch High School seniors Noah Sarasin and his twin brother Gavin had been volunteering at that location for two days, directing traffic and distributing donations.

"We have a house, no heat but we still have a house," Noah Sarasin said. "I just want to make sure that everyone else has heat on this very cold day."

Hilary and Patrick Wallace picked up two heaters, then ordered two hot chocolate mochas at a nearby cafe. The Superior couple couldn't find a hotel and were contemplating hiking 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) back to their home; their neighborhood was still blocked off to traffic. The family slept in one room on New Year's Eve.

Both teared up when a man entered the shop and joked aloud that he'd lost his coffee mugs — and everything else — in the fire. The man was in good spirits, laughing at the irony of the situation.

"I have a space heater and a house to put it in. I don't even know what to say to them," Hilary said, wiping away a tear.

Superior resident Jeff Markley arrived in his truck to pick up a heater. He said he felt lucky to be "just displaced" since his home is intact.

"We're making do, staying with friends, and upbeat for the new year. Gotta be better than this last one," Markley said.

Not everyone felt as positive.

"It's bittersweet because we have our house, but our friends don't. And our neighbors don't," said Louisville resident Judy Givens as she picked up a heater with her husband. "We thought 2022 might be better. And then we had omicron. And now we have this, and it's not starting out very well."

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Climate change, new construction mean more ruinous fires

By MARTHA BELLISLE Associated Press

The winter grassland fire that blew up along Colorado's Front Range was rare, experts say, but similar events will be more common in the coming years as climate change warms the planet — sucking the moisture out of plants — suburbs grow in fire-prone areas and people continue to spark destructive blazes.

"These fires are different from most of the fires we've been seeing across the West, in the sense that they're grass fires and they're occurring in the winter," said Jonathan Overpeck, a professor in the School for Environment and Sustainability at the University of Michigan. "Ultimately, things are going to continue to get worse unless we stop climate change."

Flames swept over drought-stricken grassy fields and neighborhoods northwest of Denver on Thursday with alarming speed, propelled by gusts up to 105 mph (169 kph). Tens of thousands were ordered to flee with little notice.

"I came out of Whole Foods, which is about a half mile from ground zero, and felt like I had to jump in my car and make a dash for my life as the smoke and wind and nearby flames were engulfing the area," Susie Pringle of Lafayette said in an email. "It was scary!"

Three people were missing as of Saturday and at least seven were injured but no deaths were reported. Officials estimated nearly 1,000 homes and other buildings were destroyed.

Many whose homes were spared remained without power while temperatures dropped to the single digits. The blaze burned at least 9.4 square miles (24 square kilometers).

The cause of the blaze is still under investigation, but experts say it's clear what allowed it to spread so fast.

"With any snow on the ground, this absolutely would not have happened in the way that it did," said Keith Musselman, a snow hydrologist in Boulder. "It was really the grass and the dry landscape that allowed this fire to jump long distances in a short period of time."

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Three ingredients were needed to start this fire — fuels, a warm climate and an ignition source, said Jennifer Balch, a fire scientist with the University of Colorado, Boulder. “And then you add a fourth ingredient, wind, and that’s when it became a disaster.”

Temperatures in Colorado between June and December were the warmest on record, Balch said. The grasses grew thick because they had a wet spring, but saw no moisture until snow flurries arrived Friday night.

“All of Colorado is flammable, our grasses are flammable, our shrubs are flammable, our trees are flammable,” Balch said. “This is a dry landscape that is flammable for good chunks of the year, and those chunks of time are getting longer with climate change.”

The lesson learned throughout this event is that the “wildland-urban interface is way bigger than we thought it was,” Balch said. That means a wider area is under threat of wildfire.

That border area — where structures built by people meet undeveloped wildland prone to fire — has always been the foothills, she said. Fire-fighters in Boulder consider the interface west of Broadway — a busy road that passes through the center of town. But Thursday’s fire sparked east of that line, next to thousands of houses that have sprouted up on the east side of the Rockies since the 1990s, Balch said.

“There were stretches between Denver and Fort Collins that had no development, but now it’s just like one long continuous development track,” Balch said. “And those homes are built with materials that are very flammable — wood siding, asphalt roofing.”

“We need to completely rethink how we’re building homes.”

The other important change is understanding how these fires start in the first place, she said.

“There’s no natural source of ignition at this time of year. There’s no lightning,” she said. “It’s either going to be infrastructure-related or it’s going to be human caused.”

“The way we live in the landscape and our daily activities make us vulnerable,” she said.

Over the last two decades, 97% of wildfires were started by people, according to a recent study by the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Causes have ranged from accidents at construction sites, to a car with a hot tailpipe, to tossed cigarettes.

“I like to say, we need Smokey Bear in the suburbs,” she said. “We need to be thinking about how our daily activities can contribute ignitions or sparks that start wildfires.”

Unless people stop climate change by cutting back on fossil fuels, wildfires will threaten communities, Overpeck said.

“There’s little doubt in my mind that the conditions conducive to really bad wildfire, whether it’s grass or forest, are only going to get worse,” he said.

As more people move to areas where wildfires occur, the threat goes up.

“We’re building towns and cities and infrastructure and so it’s just a matter of time before we have whole towns burning down like we had in California and events like this in Colorado.”

Associated Press reporter Brittany Peterson contributed to this report.

Follow Martha Bellisle on Twitter @marthabellisle

No. 7 Ohio State beats No. 10 Utah 48-45 in wild Rose Bowl

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — C.J. Stroud and Jaxon Smith-Njigba put on a passing performance that obliterated a multitude of records during one of the biggest offensive days in Ohio State’s storied history.

The Buckeyes still barely did enough to hold off resilient Utah and its backup quarterback in one spectacular Rose Bowl.

Stroud capped his record-setting offensive day by leading a 56-yard drive ending in Noah Ruggles’ 19-yard field goal with nine seconds to play, and No. 7 Ohio State beat No. 10 Utah 48-45 on Saturday night in the wild 108th edition of the Rose Bowl.

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Stroud passed for a school-record 573 yards and a record-tying six touchdowns for the Buckeyes (11-2), who won the Granddaddy of Them All for the second time in four years while toppling one long-standing offensive record after another. Stroud's yards passing and touchdowns both are Rose Bowl records, and he finished 3 yards shy of the record for yards passing in any bowl game.

"It's emotional for me," said Stroud, from nearby Rancho Cucamonga. "It's like I'm dreaming right now. I was able to come home and win the Rose Bowl like this. ... This is the Rose Bowl, man. This is where the legendary games are being played."

Ohio State created a few more legends on this trip.

Smith-Njigba set the record for any FBS bowl game with 347 yards receiving while catching a school-record 15 passes and scoring three touchdowns. Marvin Harrison Jr. also caught three TD passes for the Buckeyes, who set a Rose Bowl and school bowl record with 683 total yards.

Yet the Buckeyes were the ones playing from behind for nearly all of the first three-plus quarters in Arroyo Seco until they summoned the will for three fourth-quarter scoring drives.

"Our team is built on fighting," Smith-Njigba said. "It doesn't matter if we're up, down. We were down the first half, but we just had to stay level headed and keep fighting."

Ohio State had to rally from 10 points down late in the third quarter to get past the Pac-12 champion Utes (10-4), who got off to an electrifying 35-point first half in their first school's first trip to the Rose Bowl. They even stayed competitive after star quarterback Cameron Rising went down with an injury while getting sacked with 9:56 to play.

The Utes had to turn to backup Bryson Barnes, who grew up on a pig farm in central Utah and had never thrown a collegiate pass. He led them on a tying drive, capped by a 15-yard TD pass to Dalton Kincaid with 1:54 left.

Stroud coolly drove the Buckeyes back downfield in the waning seconds, and Ruggles hit his easy field goal. Ohio State kicked off to Britain Covey, who already had a 97-yard kickoff return for a touchdown earlier, but the Buckeyes smothered his cutback as time ran out.

"All we needed was 30 more seconds, if that," Barnes said. "Get down the field, tie it and head to OT. But we didn't get enough time. ... A lot of dudes are sad, but there's not a lot to hang our heads on. We've been through the lowest of lows and highest of highs, but we made Utah football history today."

In front of a raucous crowd dominated by Utah fans in the venerable stadium that opened in October 1922, the schools matched the 2012 Oregon-Wisconsin matchup for the highest-scoring first half in Rose Bowl history, combining for 42 points and 443 yards in the second quarter alone.

Ohio State trailed 38-31 entering the fourth quarter despite the pyrotechnics of its passing game, but the Buckeyes immediately stopped Utah on downs at the Ohio State 31, and tied it on Harrison's 5-yard TD catch with 10:12 left. After Rising's injury, Smith-Njigba made a 30-yard, over-the-shoulder catch for his third touchdown with 4:22 to play.

"To come out in the second half and play the way we did says a lot about this team," said Ohio State coach Ryan Day, who earned his second bowl victory. "We were short-handed, and for us to respond the way we did at halftime says a lot about the character of this team."

Rising passed for 214 yards and two touchdowns and rushed for 92 yards and a score while leading the Utes to a 35-21 halftime lead, but he left the game with an apparent head injury. Utah played without three of its top four cornerbacks, even forcing running back Micah Bernard to play defensive back for the first time since high school.

"At some point, we have to play defense," Utah coach Kyle Whittingham said. "We didn't play very well all night long on defense. It wasn't our usual. Not sure we'd be able to get a stop."

JAXON DRIVE

With two top Buckeyes receivers opting out, Smith-Njigba had a landmark day that included TD receptions of 50 and 52 yards made 30 seconds apart — albeit with Covey's TD return in between.

He broke Cris Carter's 1985 school record of 172 yards receiving in a bowl game in the first half alone. He snapped Keyshawn Johnson's 1996 Rose Bowl record of 216 yards receiving and then Terry Glenn's 1995 single-game school record of 253 yards after halftime. Smith-Njigba finished his season with 1,606

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yards, blowing past David Boston's 1998 school record.

OLD MAN STRENGTH

The 24-year-old Covey's sensational 97-yard romp through the Buckeyes' coverage unit was the first kickoff return for a touchdown in Utah's entire bowl history. Covey, who also caught a 19-yard TD pass for the Utes' first points, arrived at the school in 2015.

DOWN STATE

The Buckeyes' loss to Michigan in November knocked them out of the national title picture, four key starters opted out to preserve their health for the NFL draft: Receivers Chris Olave and Garrett Wilson, starting left tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere and defensive tackle Haskell Garrett.

THE TAKEAWAY

Ohio State: A win in Pasadena is always never taken for granted by a Big Ten power. The Buckeyes overcame the instinct to relax after their national title dreams died, and they put on a performance that showed Day's program has tenacity.

Utah: The Utes were agonizingly close to their third New Year's Six victory during their two-decade transformation from a mid-major overachiever to an elite Power 5 program. Despite the loss, the impressiveness of their fight and the size of their traveling fan base confirms Utah has arrived.

More AP college football: <https://apnews.com/hub/college-football> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Officials: Nearly 1K structures destroyed in Colorado fire

By BRITTANY PETERSON and EUGENE GARCIA Associated Press

SUPERIOR, Colo. (AP) — A Colorado official says nearly 1,000 homes and other structures were destroyed, hundreds more were damaged, and three people are missing after a wildfire charred numerous neighborhoods in a suburban area at the base of the Rocky Mountains.

Boulder County Sheriff Joe Pelle also said Saturday that investigators are still trying to find the cause of the wind-whipped blaze that erupted Thursday and blackened entire neighborhoods in the area located between Denver and Boulder.

Pelle said utility officials found no downed power lines around where the fire broke out. He said authorities were pursuing a number of tips and had executed a search warrant at "one particular location." He declined to give details.

A sheriff's official who declined to provide his name confirmed that one property was under investigation in Boulder County's Marshall Mesa area, a region of open grassland about 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) west of the hard-hit town of Superior. A National Guard Humvee blocked access to the property, which was only one of several under investigation, the official said.

The totals given by Pelle include destroyed barns, outbuildings and other structures, but the vast majority were homes, Boulder County spokesperson Jennifer Churchill said late Saturday.

Officials had previously estimated that at least 500 homes — and possibly 1,000 — were destroyed in the fire, which by Friday was no longer a threat. Residents have slowly started returning to see the scale of the devastation.

Authorities had said earlier no one was missing. But Churchill said that was due to confusion inherent when agencies are scrambling to manage an emergency.

Pelle said officials were organizing cadaver teams to search for the missing in the Superior area and in unincorporated Boulder County. The task is complicated by debris from destroyed structures covered by 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow dumped by a storm overnight, he said.

At least 991 homes and other buildings were destroyed, Pelle said: 553 in Louisville, 332 in Superior and 106 in unincorporated parts of the county. Pelle cautioned that the tally was not final.

At least seven people were injured in the wildfire that erupted in and around Louisville and Superior, neighboring towns about 20 miles (32 kilometers) northwest of Denver with a combined population of

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34,000. It burned at least 9.4 square miles (24 square kilometers).

The snow and temperatures in the single digits cast an eerie scene amid still-smoldering remains of homes. Despite the shocking change in weather, the smell of smoke still permeated empty streets blocked off by National Guard troops in Humvees.

The conditions compounded the misery of residents who started off the new year trying to salvage what remained of their homes.

Utility crews struggled to restore electricity and gas service to homes that survived, and dozens of people lined up to get donated space heaters, bottled water and blankets at Red Cross shelters. Xcel Energy urged other residents to use fireplaces and wood stoves to stay warm and keep their pipes at home from freezing.

Families filled a long line of cars waiting to pick up space heaters and bottled water at a Salvation Army distribution center at the YMCA in Lafayette, just north of Superior.

Monarch High School seniors Noah Sarasin and his twin brother Gavin had been volunteering at that location for two days, directing traffic and distributing donations.

"We have a house, no heat but we still have a house," Noah Sarasin said. "I just want to make sure that everyone else has heat on this very cold day."

Hilary and Patrick Wallace picked up two heaters, then ordered two hot chocolate mochas at a nearby cafe. The Superior couple couldn't find a hotel and were contemplating hiking 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) back to their home; their neighborhood was still blocked off to traffic. The family slept in one room on New Year's Eve.

Both teared up when a man entered the shop and joked aloud that he'd lost his coffee mugs — and everything else — in the fire. The man was in good spirits, laughing at the irony of the situation.

"I have a space heater and a house to put it in. I don't even know what to say to them," Hilary said, wiping away a tear.

Superior resident Jeff Markley arrived in his truck to pick up a heater. He said he felt lucky to be "just displaced" since his home is intact.

"We're making do, staying with friends, and upbeat for the new year. Gotta be better than this last one," Markley said.

Not everyone felt as positive.

"It's bittersweet because we have our house, but our friends don't. And our neighbors don't," said Louisville resident Judy Givens as she picked up a heater with her husband. "We thought 2022 might be better. And then we had omicron. And now we have this, and it's not starting out very well."

Dozens trudged through the snow to determine the condition of their homes and take belongings.

Viliam Klein bent over in grief when he saw the ruins of his 100-year-old home in Superior for the first time Saturday. Smoke rose through the snow-covered ashes; a few neighbors walked past, carrying what they could from their own destroyed homes.

"At this point I'm just honestly overwhelmed and I can't feel much anymore," Klein said. He sifted pieces of ash with his hands; wisps of smoke rose from his glove-covered palms. He surveyed what remained of the neighborhood.

"You know the kids' playground is just down the street over there. And I can buy new books. I can buy new furniture. But it's really hard to build back a community and friends and a social network like that," Klein said. "'I'm sad for my kids that they're gonna lose all this. I'm sad for everybody else's kids.'"

Donna O'Brien bundled up with her son Robert to make the 1.5-mile (2.4-kilometer) trek to check on their home. "I think we're still in kind of shock," she said. "This is our neighborhood and it happens everywhere else, but it's not supposed to happen where you live."

The wildfire broke out unusually late in the year, following an extremely dry fall and amid a winter nearly devoid of snow until the overnight snowfall. High winds pushed flames that fed on bone-dry grasses and vegetation on farmland and open spaces interspersed with suburban subdivisions.

Scientists say climate change is making weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.

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Ninety percent of Boulder County is in severe or extreme drought, and it hadn't seen substantial rainfall since mid-summer. Denver set a record for consecutive days without snow before it got a small storm on Dec. 10, its last snowfall before the wildfires broke out.

"It didn't snow all winter of 2021. No wonder this all went up like kindling," Klein said.

The Associated Press receives support from the Walton Family Foundation for coverage of water and environmental policy. The AP is solely responsible for all content. For all of AP's environmental coverage, visit <https://apnews.com/hub/environment>.

Judge: Prince Andrew can't halt lawsuit with domicile claim

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Prince Andrew's effort to immediately block the progression of a lawsuit by a woman who says he sexually assaulted her when she was 17 — on the grounds that she no longer lives in the U.S. — was rejected by a federal judge as oral arguments were set to proceed Monday on the prince's request to dismiss the lawsuit.

Judge Lewis A. Kaplan, in a written order Friday, told the prince's lawyers they must turn over documents on the schedule that has been set in the lawsuit brought in August by Virginia Giuffre. Giuffre says she was abused by the prince on multiple occasions in 2001 while she was being sexually abused by financier Jeffrey Epstein. The prince's attorney, Andrew Brettler, has called the lawsuit "baseless."

The order was filed three days before the scheduled public release Monday of a 2009 settlement agreement between Epstein and Giuffre. Lawyers for Andrew say that the agreement protects the prince from claims like those brought by Giuffre and will be sufficient grounds for the lawsuit's dismissal.

The prince's lawyers had claimed that the evidence was so strong that Giuffre does not reside in the United States that it was pointless to exchange evidence until that question is resolved because it could result in the lawsuit's dismissal.

They argued that Giuffre has lived in Australia all but two of the past 19 years, has an Australian driver's license and lives in a \$1.9 million home in Perth, Western Australia, where she has been raising three children with her husband, who is Australian.

In a statement, Giuffre attorney Sigrid McCawley called the request to halt the case "just another in a series of tired attempts by Prince Andrew to duck and dodge the legal merits of the case Virginia Giuffre has brought against him. All parties in litigation are subject to discovery and Prince Andrew is no exception."

Kaplan, in a one-page order, noted that the prince's lawyers have requested that "extensive" materials be turned over by Giuffre by Jan. 14, including documents related to where she has lived. And he said the prince's attorneys have not yet formally raised the defense that the lawsuit cannot proceed on the grounds that Giuffre has been living in Australia rather than Colorado, where her lawyers say she is a resident.

In the cover page of a lawsuit in September 2015, Giuffre listed her address as Penrose, Colorado. In the cover letter of an April 2019 lawsuit, she listed her address as Palm Cove, Australia, and marked a box as "citizen or subject of a foreign country." But in her lawsuit against the prince, she listed her address as Ocean Reef, Western Australia, but checked a box that said "citizen of another state."

Kaplan's order expressed no opinion on the merits of the prince's claims that Giuffre should be disqualified from suing because she lives in Australia.

Oral arguments via a video teleconference on the prince's request to dismiss the case are scheduled for Monday morning.

In October, the prince's lawyers attacked the lawsuit on multiple grounds, saying Giuffre had made false claims against Andrew because he "never sexually abused or assaulted" her.

"Giuffre has initiated this baseless lawsuit against Prince Andrew to achieve another payday at his expense and at the expense of those closest to him. Epstein's abuse of Giuffre does not justify her public campaign against Prince Andrew," the written arguments said.

Epstein killed himself in a Manhattan federal jail in August 2019 as he awaited trial on sex trafficking

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charges.

His former girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell, 60, was convicted Wednesday of charges including sex trafficking and conspiracy after a month-long trial.

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault unless they choose to come forward publicly, as Giuffre has.

Israeli jets hit militant targets in Gaza after rocket fire

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's military said early Sunday it launched strikes against militant targets in the Gaza Strip, a day after rockets were fired from the Hamas-ruled territory.

Video filmed in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, showed three huge explosions and fighter jets could be heard flying overhead. There was no immediate confirmation on possible casualties.

The Israeli military said the attacks targeted a rocket manufacturing facility and a military post for Hamas. It also blamed the militant Islamic group for any violence emanating from the territory it controls.

The airstrikes come as retaliation for two rockets fired from Gaza on Saturday which landed in the Mediterranean Sea off central Israel.

It was not clear whether the rockets were meant to hit Israel, but Gaza-based militant groups often test-fire missiles toward the sea. There were no reports of casualties from Saturday's rocket launches.

Apart from a single incident in September, there has been no cross-border rocket fire since a cease-fire ended an 11-day war between Israel and Hamas in May.

The cease-fire, brokered by Egypt and other mediators, has been fragile. The militant Hamas group says Israel did not take serious steps to ease the blockade it imposed on Gaza with Egypt's help when the Islamic movement seized control of the coastal enclave in 2007.

Tension are also high as other groups like the smaller but more hardline Islamic Jihad threaten military escalation if Israel doesn't end the administrative detention of a Palestinian prisoner who has been on a hunger strike for over 130 days.

On Wednesday, Palestinian militants in Gaza shot and lightly wounded an Israeli civilian near the security fence and Israel responded with tank fire targeting multiple Hamas sites in the first exchange of fire in months.

No. 9 Oklahoma State beats No. 5 Notre Dame 37-35 in Fiesta

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Sports Writer

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Oklahoma State was a step slow in the first half, appearing to be stuck in the desert sand while Notre Dame raced around the field.

A quick scoring drive just before halftime gave the No. 9 Cowboys a spark and they rode it one of the biggest victories in school history.

Led by Spencer Sanders, Oklahoma State pulled off the biggest comeback in Fiesta Bowl history, overcoming a 21-point deficit to beat No. 5 Notre Dame 37-35 on Saturday.

Sanders accounted for 496 yards and threw three of his four touchdown passes to Tay Martin, including a 9-yarder to cap a four-play, 75-yard drive just before halftime.

"Us going down and scoring quickly just before the half, that gave us hope," Oklahoma State Mike Gundy said. "That gave us a chance as coaches to say, 'Guys, we're fine.'"

Oklahoma State (12-2, No. 9 CFP) came up inches short of securing a College Football Playoff spot in a loss to No. 6 Baylor at the Big 12 title game and fell into 21-point, first-half hole against Notre Dame (11-2, No. 5 CFP).

Jack Coan led Notre Dame's early charge while throwing for a Fiesta Bowl-record 509 yards and five touchdowns.

Sanders and Martin brought the Cowboys back.

Sanders, who had a 9-yard touchdown pass to Jaden Bray in the first quarter, cut Notre Dame's lead

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to 28-14 with a 9-yard scoring pass to Martin with 37 seconds left in the first half. The pair connected for two more touchdowns, from 5 and 8 yards, to tie the game, and the Cowboys went up 34-28 on three field goals by Tanner Brown.

Sanders threw for 371 yards on 34-of-51 passing and ran for 125 yards after throwing four interceptions in the Big 12 title game. He's the second player in FBS history with 350 yards passing, 100 rushing yards and four passing touchdowns in a bowl game, joining Clemson's Tajh Boyd in the 2014 Orange Bowl.

"One the game down to on, it was anybody's game and we just decided to pull a little harder," Sanders said.

Notre Dame still had a chance.

The Irish forced two fumbles deep in their own end, but turned the ball over on downs at the 15 and Brown kicked a 25-yard field goal

Coan threw a 25-yard TD pass to Kevin Austin with 1:05 left to pull Notre Dame within two, but Oklahoma State recovered the onside kick to keep the Irish winless in major bowl games since the 1993 Cotton Bowl under Lou Holtz.

"In the first half, we scored 28 points, we're moving the ball, we're protecting the quarterback and obviously things didn't go that way in the second half," Notre Dame coach Marcus Freeman said after his head coaching debut. "We have to go back a see what the defense did schematically to give us some issues and try find a way to make sure that never happens again."

The Irish appeared to be headed toward a rousing start to the Freeman era, building a 28-7 lead behind Coan. Notre Dame's senior quarterback threw for 342 yards and four touchdowns in the first half, including two to tight end Michael Mayer.

All the momentum came to a thudding halt in the second half.

Oklahoma State ramped up the pressure on Coan and shut down Notre Dame's offense while its offense was revving up.

Notre Dame finally got something going midway through the fourth quarter, but Malcolm Rodriguez stepped in front of Austin for an interception at the Cowboys' 18-yard line.

"It was a lot of yards, but all I really care about at the end of the day is winning," said Coan, who finished 38 for 68. "I wish I could have done more to help the team."

THE TAKEAWAY

Notre Dame's latest loss in a major bowl is going to sting for a while. The Irish looked like their argument to have been in the CFP was valid in a dominating first half, only to fall flat in the second.

A monster turnaround after a flat start gave Oklahoma State its first major bowl win since the 2011 Fiesta Bowl.

UP NEXT

Notre Dame: The Irish will have to replace Coan and Williams on offense, but Mayer, their leading receiver, is a sophomore. DT Kurt Hinish is out of eligibility and pass rushing specialist Isaiah Foskey is planning decided whether to leave for the NFL by Jan. 17.

Oklahoma State: Sanders still has eligibility left, but the Cowboys will have to replace Warren, Martin, RB Dezmon Jackson and OL Josh Sills.

More AP college football: <https://apnews.com/Collegefootball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25.

New year brings more canceled flights for air travelers

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

For air travelers, the new year picked up where the old one left off – with lots of frustration.

By late Saturday afternoon on the East Coast, more than 2,600 U.S. flights and nearly 4,600 worldwide had been canceled, according to tracking service FlightAware.

That is the highest single-day U.S. toll yet since just before Christmas, when airlines began blaming staffing shortages on increasing COVID-19 infections among crews. More than 12,000 U.S. flights have

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been canceled since Dec. 24.

Saturday's disruptions weren't just due to the virus, however. Wintry weather made Chicago — where forecasts called for 9 inches (23 centimeters) of snow — the worst place in the country for travelers. More than 800 flights were scrubbed at O'Hare Airport and more than 250 at Midway Airport.

Southwest Airlines suspended operations at both Chicago airports because of the forecast, according to an airline spokeswoman. She said Southwest knows from years of operating at Midway that high winds and blowing snow make it hard to get planes back in the air quickly.

Southwest canceled more than 450 flights nationwide, or 13% of its schedule. American Airlines and Delta Air Lines scrubbed more than 200 flights each, and United Airlines canceled more than 150.

SkyWest, a regional carrier that operates flights under the names American Eagle, Delta Connection and United Express, grounded 480 flights, one-fourth of its schedule. A spokesperson blamed weather in Chicago, Denver and Detroit and COVID-19 illnesses.

Among international carriers, China Eastern scrubbed more than 500 flights, or about one-fourth of its total, and Air China canceled more than 200 flights, one-fifth of its schedule, according to FlightAware.

Sunday, when many travelers plan to return home from holiday trips, is shaping up to be difficult, too. More than 1,900 flights, including more than 1,000 in the U.S., had been canceled by late Saturday. A winter storm with heavy snow is expected to march toward the Northeast as a new storm hits the Pacific Northwest, according to the National Weather Service.

Airlines say they are taking steps to reduce cancellations. United is offering to pay pilots triple or more of their usual wages for picking up open flights through most of January. Spirit Airlines reached a deal with the Association of Flight Attendants for double pay for cabin crews through Tuesday, said a union spokeswoman.

When winter weather hit the Pacific Northwest earlier this week, Alaska Airlines urged customers to delay any "non-essential" trips that were planned through this weekend. With full flights over the New Year's holiday, the airline said it wasn't sure it could rebook stranded passengers for at least three days.

Airlines hope that extra pay and reduced schedules get them through the holiday crush and into the heart of January, when travel demand usually drops off. The seasonal decline could be sharper than normal this year because most business travelers are still grounded.

Travelers who stuck to the roads instead of the skies faced challenges, too. Transportation officials in the Midwest warned motorists that a mix of rain and snow could make roads slippery and reduce visibility, leading to hazardous driving conditions.

On busy 1st day, NYC mayor urges resiliency against pandemic

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City's new mayor, Eric Adams, pledged Saturday to steer the nation's largest city out of the pandemic by drawing on the resiliency of its people and promising a government that works better, even if it's not radically different.

Hours after being sworn into office in Times Square as the city rang in the new year, Adams used his inaugural address to promise more efficiency, invoke New Yorkers' reputation for toughness, and urge the city's nearly 9 million residents to make a New Year's resolution that their lives not be controlled by the pandemic.

"Getting vaccinated is not letting the crisis control you," Adams said at City Hall. "Enjoying a Broadway show. Sending your kids to school. Going back to the office. These are declarations of confidence that our city is our own."

Adams, 61, faces the immense challenge of pulling the city out of the pandemic, taking office as the city is grappling with record numbers of COVID-19 cases driven by the omicron variant.

The city has also been facing a rise in violent crime, particularly in shootings and killings, that is part of part of a national trend in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adams, a former New York City police captain, kicked off his first day as mayor by calling 911 to report

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two men fighting, and later in the day promised to aggressively go after violent crime while holding a news conference about a police officer who was shot and injured hours earlier.

While the new mayor has pledged to keep the city open and stave off any return to shutdowns, he is taking the helm of a city that has seen subway lines, restaurants and even urgent care centers temporarily close because of staffing shortages driven by the virus.

Adams said this week that he plans to keep in place many of the policies of outgoing Mayor Bill de Blasio, including vaccine mandates that are among the strictest in the nation.

In his Saturday address, Adams also said he would take a "radically practical" approach to improving the city's government that involves not just "grand plans and proposals," but also "weeding out waste and eliminating the inefficiencies."

Adams and his new police commissioner, Keechant Sewel, held an afternoon news conference outside a hospital after a police officer was shot Saturday while sleeping in his vehicle in a precinct parking lot between shifts. The officer is expected to fully recover.

Adams declared that New York is "not going to be a city of violence."

"I am clear on my mission to aggressively go after those who are carrying violent weapons in our city," he said.

Adams rode the subway from his Brooklyn brownstone to City Hall for his first day on the job. Adams chatted with New Yorkers and a throng of reporters following him. While waiting for the train, he called 911 to report a fight after witnessing two men tussling near the subway station.

Hours earlier, as confetti continued to drift across Times Square, Adams recited his oath of office. Associate Justice Sylvia O. Hinds-Radix of the state Supreme Court's appellate division swore Adams in as he placed one hand on a family Bible and his other held a photograph of his mother, Dorothy, who died in 2020.

After canceling initial plans to be sworn into office at a Brooklyn theater, Adams said Saturday that he chose to hold his inauguration ceremony at the scene of the New Year's Eve ball drop to show that the city was open and alive and "that New York can and should be the center of the universe again."

The pandemic had put the city through "two years of continuous crisis," Adams said, "and that insults our very nature as New Yorkers."

"There's one thing that everyone knows about New Yorkers: We don't like anyone telling us what to do," he said.

The city's municipal workforce is required to be vaccinated, as is anyone trying to dine indoors, see a show, work out at a gym or attend a conference. But New York City has also newly required employees in the private sector to get their shots, the most sweeping mandate of any state or big city and a policy Adams said he will preserve.

Even without a mandated shutdown, the city is grappling with de facto closures because of widespread COVID-19 infections.

Several subway lines were suspended because positive test results among transit workers left too few staffers to run regular trains. Some entertainment performances have been canceled, and restaurants and bars are crunched as workers test positive.

Adams said he and advisers are studying whether to expand vaccine mandates and plan to distribute face masks and rapid tests, as well as introduce a color-coded system alerting New Yorkers to the current threat level.

While promising to be a man of action in the mayor's office, Adams is at times an unconventional politician who is expected to put his own stamp on the role.

Adams, the former Brooklyn borough president, has struck a more business-friendly, moderate stance than his predecessor but describes himself as a practical and progressive mayor who will "get stuff done." He's the city's second Black mayor, after David Dinkins, who served from 1990 to 1993, and the 110th mayor of New York City.

He held his first cabinet meeting Saturday morning. Later that afternoon, he sought to send a power-

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ful symbol of his own resiliency by visiting a police precinct in Queens where he was beaten by officers when he was a teenager.

"Today is an important moment for me as I finally leave the demon right here on these streets, no longer living the trauma I experienced in this precinct, but back as the mayor in charge of the entire police department," he said.

Adams said he and his new police commissioner will show officers they have their backs but will hold them to a high standard and not allow abusive officers to remain above the ranks.

Associated Press journalists Bobby Caina Calvan and Seth Wenig contributed to this report.

Former Broncos, Falcons, Giants coach Dan Reeves dies at 77

By PAUL NEWBERRY AP Sports Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Dan Reeves' talents off the field were recognized early on by Tom Landry.

Reeves was still suiting up for the Dallas Cowboys when Landry made him a player-coach.

At 37, Reeves landed his first head coaching job, pulled off a trade to acquire John Elway, and built the Denver Broncos into a powerhouse that reached the Super Bowl three times in a four-year span.

At the final stop of nearly four uninterrupted decades in the NFL, Reeves guided the Atlanta Falcons to their first Super Bowl.

The only blemish on his record: four blowout losses in the big game.

Reeves, who did win a ring as a player with the Cowboys but will be remembered mostly for a long, largely successful coaching career marred by those four defeats, died Saturday of complications from dementia. He was 77.

A statement released by his family through former Falcons media relations director Aaron Salkin said Reeves died "peacefully and surrounded by his loving family at his home in Atlanta."

Reeves was a versatile running back who played a key role in the Cowboys becoming an NFL powerhouse in the 1960s under Landry. But his own coaching career — stretching over three teams and 23 seasons — is where he truly left his mark on the league.

Including a stint with the New York Giants, Reeves totaled 190 regular-season coaching victories — ninth most in NFL history. But he joined Marv Levy and Bud Grant as the only coaches to go 0-4 in the Super Bowl, with all of Reeves' losses by at least 15 points.

Even so, Elway called him "a winner" — words even more striking coming from a Hall of Famer whose bitter falling out with Reeves over offensive philosophy led to the coach being fired by the Broncos.

"The football world lost a heckuva coach and man," said Elway, who now runs the football operations in Denver. "I owe a lot to him — he was instrumental in my career and growth as a quarterback. We were able to win a lot of football games together."

After taking over as Broncos coach in 1981, Reeves worked out a blockbuster trade to acquire Elway. The quarterback would become the centerpiece of a team that won three AFC titles, five AFC West crowns and earned six trips to the playoffs over the coach's 12-year tenure.

But Denver never won it all under Reeves, losing 39-20 to the Giants in the 1987 Super Bowl, 42-10 to Washington in 1988, and 55-10 to the San Francisco 49ers in 1990 — still the most lopsided loss in the game's history.

Despite those defeats and a bitter parting after the 1992 season, Reeves is remembered fondly in Denver, where the Broncos inducted him into their Ring of Honor in 2014.

"Coach Reeves set the foundation for the Broncos' decade of dominance in the 1980s and championship tradition for years to come," the team said in a statement.

Reeves' relationship with Elway deteriorated over the quarterback's desire to open up the offense. Believing that Elway and then-offensive coordinator Mike Shanahan were working together to undermine his authority, Reeves fired Shanahan for insubordination after the 1991 season.

That only worsened the relationship with Elway, leading to Reeves' firing a year later.

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"We may not have always seen eye to eye, but the bottom line is we won a lot of games together." Elway said in his statement. "Looking back, what I appreciate about Dan is how he gradually brought me along to help me reach my potential."

Reeves' supporters have pushed for him to be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Marty Schottenheimer is the only non-Hall of Fame coach with more wins than Reeves (200), but he never reached the Super Bowl.

Grant (158) and Levy (143) never won a Super Bowl and had fewer wins than Reeves, but both have been inducted in Canton.

In all, Reeves participated in a total of nine Super Bowls — two as a player, three as an assistant coach (including another victory), and four as a head coach.

"When you look at all Dan did in this league with all the success, all the Super Bowls and all the wins, I don't think there is any question he belongs in the Pro Football Hall of Fame." Elway said.

Reeves took over the Giants in 1993 and led the team to the playoffs in his first season, his only post-season appearance in New York. He was fired after four seasons, but Giants co-owner and CEO John Mara remembered Reeves as "one of the finest men I have ever been around in this business."

Reeves moved on to the Falcons, a homecoming of sorts for the Georgia native.

He brought a sense of professionalism to a team that had experienced little success through most of its history. It paid off in his second season when Reeves guided a rollicking team known as the "Dirty Birds" to a 14-2 record and their first trip to the Super Bowl.

After Reeves recovered from emergency heart surgery late in the season, the Falcons beat the heavily favored Minnesota Vikings in an overtime thriller at the Metrodome to claim the NFC championship, prompting the coach to attempt the arm-flapping dance star running back Jamal Anderson and other players had made the team's trademark.

"My guy!" Anderson wrote on Twitter. "I am going to miss DR, a first class human, and a most excellent coach. My thoughts and prayers are with (his wife) Pam, his family. A family man first. Respect & love, RIP Coach Reeves!"

Reeves again came up short of a championship, losing to Elway and the Broncos — now coached by Shanahan — in the Super Bowl, 34-19.

Reeves engineered another huge trade that brought Michael Vick to the Falcons, and made his final playoff appearance in 2002. Atlanta became the first road team to win a playoff game in Green Bay. But Vick was injured during the 2003 preseason, and Reeves was fired after the team won just three of its first 13 games.

He ended his coaching career — and 39 uninterrupted years in the NFL — with a record of 190-165-2. Counting his nine playoff appearances, his record was 201-174-2.

"I'm saddened to hear about the passing of my beloved Coach Dan Reeves," Vick wrote on Twitter. "He was a great husband, father and mentor to so many. I loved him like a father and he will truly be missed."

Reeves remained in Atlanta after his retirement, most notably serving as an adviser to Georgia State when it launched a football program that now plays in the Sun Belt Conference.

Former Giants running back Rodney Hampton praised Reeves for the way he was treated during their four years together in New York.

"He taught us how to be men," Hampton said in a story on the team's website. "When I first got there, we used to always stay at hotels (the night before home games). He told us, 'You're grown men, you should know what to do to take care of yourself.' So when he got there, we stayed at our own place, our own house."

Hampton rushed for 4,161 yards with Reeves as coach, even though the running back endured persistent knee issues.

"He took care of me," Hampton said. "He would understand that I can't lift all the weights and I can't do all that running in practice. He would always say, 'Hey, you do what you got to do on Sundays, and I'll take care of you during the week.'"

Daniel Edward Reeves was born in Rome, Georgia, but grew up in the Americus, in the southwestern

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part of the state. He attended college at South Carolina, where he was a three-year starter at quarterback from 1962-64 and also played baseball.

Better known as a runner than a passer, Reeves was not drafted. He signed with the Cowboys, who initially wanted him to play safety but wound up moving him to running back.

Reeves emerged as one of the team's key players just as the Cowboys were establishing themselves as what became known as "America's Team."

He started all 14 games at halfback in 1966, leading the Cowboys in rushing with 757 yards and eight touchdowns. Dallas made its first playoff appearance but lost to the Packers in a 34-27 shootout for the NFL championship, missing a chance to play in the first Super Bowl.

The following season, Reeves rushed for 603 yards and five TDs, again starting every game, as the Cowboys made another run to the playoffs. Again, they were thwarted by Green Bay one win shy of the Super Bowl, losing to the Packers on a touchdown in the closing seconds of the famed "Ice Bowl" at frigid Lambeau Field.

A knee injury in 1968 forced Reeves into a more limited role the rest of his career. Landry recognized his abilities off the field, asking Reeves to serve as a player-coach while runners such as Duane Thomas and Calvin Hill rose to prominence.

The Cowboys made their first Super Bowl during the 1970 season, losing to the Baltimore Colts. Dallas finally won the championship the following year with a 24-3 victory over the Miami Dolphins.

Reeves retired as a player after the 1972 season, becoming a full-time assistant on Landry's staff. Before heading to Denver, he took part in three more Super Bowls with the Cowboys, who won another title during the 1977 season.

As a head coach, Reeves was known for his gruff, no-nonsense approach and an offensive philosophy that favored a physical running game. But he had plenty of success with two of the game's most dynamic offensive players, Vick and Elway, defying those who labeled him as old-fashioned and out of touch.

With his distinctive Southern drawl, Reeves could be honest to a fault, such as when he spoke openly of the rift that led to his departure in Denver — and opened up a lot of old wounds — during the lead-up to the Falcons facing the Broncos in the 1999 Super Bowl.

"There's still a lot of hurt that won't ever go away," Reeves said. "You never will forget those things."

But Reeves rarely held grudges, even with members of the media that he had clashed with. In his later years, he would gladly take phone calls to discuss the issues of the day, once joking when a reporter identified himself, "OK, what did I do wrong now?"

Reeves is survived by wife Pam, his high school sweetheart; children Dana, Lee and Laura; as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Funeral arrangements have yet to be announced.

Follow Paul Newberry on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/pnewberry1963>

AP Pro Football Writer Arnie Stapleton and Sports Writer Tom Canavan contributed to this report.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/hub/nfl> and <https://apnews.com/hub/pro-32> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Live updates: France demands masks for 11- to 6-year-olds

By The Associated Press undefined

PARIS - French authorities announced Saturday that children six and older will have to wear masks in indoor places open to the public as new cases of the highly contagious omicron variant surge past 200,000 for the fourth consecutive day.

By lowering the age of children obligated to wear masks from 11 to 6, the government is hoping to avoid shutting down schools after the holiday break. Classes resume Monday and young children will have to wear masks in public transport, in sports complexes and places of worship. The mask mandate extends

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to outdoor spaces in cities such as Paris and Lyon that have recently re-introduced mask wearing outside.

On the first day of the new year, France registered 219,126 new infections, down only slightly from the daily record of 232,200 noted on the last day of 2021.

French government is betting that fifth wave of the pandemic driven by the fast-spreading omicron variant can be tamed without returning to economically damaging lockdowns or curfews and without hospitals collapsing under growing numbers of gravely sick.

France has lost 123,000 people to COVID-19.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TODAY ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC:

- Dozens of U.S. colleges move classes online temporarily to counter surge of infections
- Over 2,400 U.S. flights canceled on New Year's Day as omicron rages on
- UK estimates 1 in 15 had virus in London before Christmas amid omicron surge
- New COVID-19 cases in US soar to highest levels on record

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING TODAY:

PHOENIX — Arizona on Saturday reported the largest number of additional confirmed COVID-19 cases since last January for the second day in a row and 125 more virus deaths.

The state reported additional 8,220 cases as Arizona's pandemic totals increased to 1,389,708 cases and 24,354 deaths, according to the Department of Health Services' coronavirus dashboard. Arizona on Friday reported 7,720 additional cases.

The state reported over 8,000 additional cases on 13 days last January.

COVID-19-related hospitalizations dropped slightly for the second straight day, with 2,283 virus patients occupying inpatient beds statewide Friday, the dashboard reported.

According to Johns Hopkins University data, Arizona's seven-day rolling average of daily new cases in Arizona rose over the past two weeks, increasing from 3,058.6 on Dec. 16 to 4,325 on Thursday. The rolling average of daily deaths dropped from 77.1 to 52.8 during the same period.

DALLAS — For air travelers, the new year picked up where the old one left off -- with lots of frustration.

By late morning Saturday on the East Coast, more than 2,400 U.S. flights and nearly 4,200 worldwide had been canceled, according to tracking service FlightAware.

That is the highest single-day toll yet since just before Christmas, when airlines began blaming staffing shortages on increasing COVID-19 infections among crews. More than 12,000 U.S. flights have been canceled since Dec. 24.

Saturday's disruptions weren't just due to the virus, however. Wintry weather made Chicago the worst place in the country for travelers, with 800 flights scrubbed at O'Hare Airport and more than 250 at Midway Airport. Forecasts called for nine inches of snow. Denver, Detroit and Newark, New Jersey, were hit with at least 100 cancellations each.

Southwest Airlines, which has major operations at Chicago Midway and Denver, canceled more than 450 flights nationwide, or 13% of its schedule, by midmorning. American, Delta, United and JetBlue scrubbed more than 100 flights apiece.

LOS ANGELES — A year after New Year's Day passed without a Rose Parade due to the coronavirus pandemic, the floral spectacle celebrating the arrival of 2022 proceeded Saturday despite a new surge of infections due to the omicron variant.

The 133rd edition of the Pasadena, California, tradition featured actor LeVar Burton as grand marshal, 20 marching bands, 18 equestrian units and dozens of floats reflecting the theme of "Dream. Believe. Achieve."

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After days of record-smashing rains, there were sunny skies for the 8 a.m. start of the parade, which has an uncanny history of postcard weather.

LeAnn Rimes kicked off the event with a performance of "Throw My Arms Around the World" followed by a military flyover of a B-2 bomber. Also on the performance list were "American Idol" winner Laine Hardy aboard Louisiana's "Feed Your Soul" float and country singer-songwriter Jimmie Allen.

The parade and the afternoon Rose Bowl football game between the Ohio State Buckeyes and the Utah Utes remained on track despite an explosion of COVID-19 infections in Los Angeles County, where daily new cases topped 27,000 on Friday.

The county Department of Public Health said it was the highest number of new cases.

LISBON, Portugal — A cruise ship carrying over 4,000 people has been held in the Portuguese capital of Lisbon after a COVID-19 outbreak infected crew members, the German news agency dpa reported Saturday.

German company Aida Cruises told dpa that it discovered the positive coronavirus cases during routine health checks and has accommodated those infected ashore in coordination with Portuguese authorities in Lisbon.

Portuguese media reported that 52 members of the crew of over 1,000 workers tested positive. None of the nearly 3,000 passengers had tested positive. All on board had passed a screening test and were vaccinated with two doses before the ship set sail from Germany.

The ship is waiting for the arrival of new crew members to continue its journey to Spain's Canary Islands, dpa said.

BOSTON — With COVID-19 cases surging just as students are about to return from winter break, dozens of U.S. colleges are moving classes online again for at least the first week or so of the semester — and some warn it could stretch longer if the wave of infection doesn't subside soon.

Harvard is moving classes online for the first three weeks of the new year, with a return to campus scheduled for late January, "conditions permitting." The University of Chicago is delaying the beginning of its new term and holding the first two weeks online. Some others are inviting students back to campus but starting classes online, including Michigan State University.

Many colleges hope that an extra week or two will get them past the peak of the nationwide spike driven by the highly contagious omicron variant. Still, the surge is casting uncertainty over a semester many had hoped would be the closest to normal since the start of the pandemic.

For some U.S. students, starting the term remotely is becoming routine — many colleges used the strategy last year. But some fear the latest shift could extend well beyond a week or two.

Jake Maynard, a student at George Washington University in the nation's capital, said he is fine with a week of online classes, but beyond that, he hopes officials trust in the booster shots and provide a traditional college experience.

TOKYO — Japan's Emperor Naruhito offered prayers for those who died during the pandemic, taking to video for the second straight year for his New Year's greeting on Saturday, having canceled public palace gatherings to curb coronavirus infections.

Sitting before a bonsai tree with his wife Masako, Naruhito praised and thanked doctors and other health care workers, and expressed concern for countries lacking access to vaccines and adequate hospital systems.

"By treasuring more than ever the connections among people, sharing our pain and supporting each other, I hope from the bottom of my heart that we will overcome these hard times," he said.

Japan has recorded more than 18,000 COVID-19-related deaths, but the pace of deaths has fallen in recent months. Naruhito also voiced worries about the fast-spreading omicron variant.

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LAS VEGAS — The annual CES gadget convention will be three days instead of four amid a jump in COVID-19 cases and the withdrawal of some of its best-known tech presenters.

Convention organizer The Consumer Technology Association announced Friday that CES will run from Jan. 5-7, one day shorter than planned. The event still has over 2,200 exhibitors confirmed to show off their products at the Las Vegas convention, spokeswoman Jeanne Abella said.

The announcement follows the withdrawal of tech giants from CES last week citing health risks of the omicron variant, including cellphone carriers like T-Mobile, whose CEO had been slated to deliver a keynote speech.

Computer maker Lenovo and social media companies like Twitter and Facebook parent company Meta also canceled plans to attend. News outlets including CNN said they would cancel or reduce coverage.

CES was held entirely virtually last year. It will be a hybrid of online and in-person this year, with organizers offering digital registration allowing access to around 40 livestreamed events, Abella said.

TAMPA, Fla. — The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Friday reported more than 75,900 new cases of COVID-19 in Florida.

That tally raises the 7-day average daily to 42,600, which is twice as high as it was at the peak of this summer's surge when the delta variant fueled a surge of infections in the state.

Friday's report marks a single-day record for the number of new cases in Florida. It breaks the record set a day earlier when more than 58,000 cases were reported in the state. The omicron variant of the coronavirus has spiked in Florida and across the nation over the past few weeks.

Soaring numbers during the holiday season have sent tens of thousands of people to COVID-19 testing centers across Florida, resulting in long lines in many areas.

Three people collapsed while waiting in line at a Tampa testing site on Friday morning.

CARSON CITY, Nev. — Hundreds of unvaccinated employees who work at public colleges and universities in Nevada were being fired Friday, a day after the state Board of Regents voted to keep a staff vaccine mandate in effect.

The Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents on Thursday deadlocked 6-6 on a measure to repeal the staff vaccine mandate and then rejected a measure to push the effective termination date back two weeks. Without majority support for a repeal, the mandate — which Gov. Steve Sisolak and the Nevada Faculty Alliance support — remained in effect.

Higher education officials said on Friday that 379 employees were being terminated, 188 attribution employees ended their contracts and 18 more voluntarily resigned. Employees who are fired can seek reinstatement if they show proof of vaccination in January, regents said.

PARIS — Describing himself as "resolutely optimistic," French President Emmanuel Macron has used the last New Year's address of his current term to express the hope that, with vaccinations, 2022 will see the end of the coronavirus pandemic.

Macron stopped short of saying that he will stand for re-election in April. He said only that he intends to continue serving the French "whatever my place and the circumstances."

The president appealed to the 5 million unvaccinated but eligible people in France to get coronavirus jabs, saying: "All of France is counting on you."

France has lost 123,000 people to COVID-19 and new cases are at unprecedented levels, surging with the highly contagious omicron variant. France reported a record 232,200 new cases on Friday, its third day running above the 200,000 mark.

ROME — Italy's president, Sergio Mattarella, has used the last New Year's Eve speech of his term to task those who "waste" opportunities to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, calling that choice an "offense" to all those who haven't been able to receive the injection.

In a televised speech to the nation Friday night, Mattarella, who is head of state, noted that he was

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serving in the final days of his seven-year term, with Parliament to elect his successor in the first weeks of 2022. Referring to recent COVID-19 surges in Italy and many other countries driven by virus variants, Mattarella noted a "sense of frustration" over the setbacks.

ALBANY, N.Y. — Federal ambulance teams and additional National Guard members are headed for New York City, and western New York hospitals are getting more federal help as coronavirus cases and hospitalizations keep rising.

State officials announced the new deployments Friday.

Gov. Kathy Hochul also said students at state universities and the City University of New York will have to get coronavirus vaccine booster shots to be on campus in the spring semester and must test negative before returning from the holiday break.

New confirmed case counts have been breaking records by the day in the state, topping 76,500 on Thursday, Hochul said at a news briefing.

An average of 53,000 New Yorkers a day tested positive in the week that ended Thursday, compared to 13,000 per day two weeks earlier. Over 7,900 people with COVID-19 are hospitalized statewide, up 67% in a week.

ROME — Italian health officials are warning that the rate of occupation by COVID-19 patients of hospital beds both in intensive care units and in regular wards has surpassed the "critical level" nationally.

A top Health Ministry official, Gianni Rezza, also said on Friday evening that the incidence of cases is growing, with 783 confirmed COVID-19 infections per every 100,000 residents in Italy. The country hit another high for daily new caseloads — 144,243 confirmed cases in the last 24 hours.

Nearly 12% of some 1.234 million swab tests conducted since Thursday resulted positive, according to the ministry, which urged vaccinated persons to get a booster shot if they are eligible.

With the nation slammed by a surge of infections largely driven by the omicron variant, the government banned public New Year's Eve celebrations.

2021 ends as Chicago's deadliest year in a quarter century

CHICAGO (AP) — The year of 2021 ended as one of the most violent on record in Chicago, as a rise in the number of shootings left more people dead than in any single year in a quarter century, according to statistics released by the police department on Saturday.

According to the department, 2021 ended with 797 homicides. That is 25 more than were recorded 2020, 299 more than in 2019 and the most since 1996. And there were 3,561 shooting incidents in 2021, which is just over 300 more than were recorded in 2020 and a staggering 1,415 more shooting incidents than were recorded in the city in 2019.

Other cities have also seen an increase in the number of homicides. But Chicago, as it has in previous years, ended 2021 with more homicides than any other city in the United States, including New York and Los Angeles, both of which had recorded at least 300 fewer homicides than Chicago for the year as of late December, according to police data from those cities.

"We all know this has been a challenging year here in the city of Chicago," Police Superintendent David Brown told reporters at a news conference earlier this week. "Too many families are reeling from the loss of (loved) ones due to senseless gun violence."

Brown said the bulk of the homicides are the result of conflicts between rival gangs.

He has tried to highlight some positive statistics when discussing the monthly crime figures and he continued to do so with the release of the end-of-the-year statistics.

He said, for example, that the department cleared 400 homicides — a total that was higher than in any year in nearly two decades. Saturday's news release did not specify how many of those cleared homicides were committed in previous years but reported that the clearance rate for the killings was just under 50%.

The department, which says it takes more illegal weapons off the street than any other local police force

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in the United States, said that it took a record 12,088 guns off the street in 2021. That total coincided with the creation of a Gun Investigations Team that has focused on interrupting the flow of illegal guns into the city.

Brown, who came under scrutiny by some members of the City Council and others as the death toll mounted, said that he hopes to increase the number of detectives investigating violent crimes from 1,100 to 1,300 during the first few months of this year. And he said his goal is to reduce the caseload for detectives from about five to three cases per detective.

He also said the department hopes to recruit more new officers this year, and said, "There will be more officers on the street, not just in patrol cars or behind desks, to interact with all Chicagoans."

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Jan. 2, the second day of 2022. There are 363 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 2, 1960, Sen. John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts launched his successful bid for the presidency.

On this date:

In 1900, U.S. Secretary of State John Hay announced the "Open Door Policy" to facilitate trade with China.

In 1788, Georgia became the fourth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1811, Sen. Timothy Pickering, a Federalist from Massachusetts, became the first member of the U.S. Senate to be censured after he'd improperly revealed the contents of an executive document.

In 1929, the United States and Canada reached agreement on joint action to preserve Niagara Falls.

In 1942, the Philippine capital of Manila was captured by Japanese forces during World War II.

In 1967, Republican Ronald Reagan took the oath of office as the new governor of California in a ceremony that took place in Sacramento shortly just after midnight.

In 1971, 66 people were killed in a pileup of spectators leaving a soccer match at Ibrox (EYE'-brox) Stadium in Glasgow, Scotland.

In 1974, President Richard Nixon signed legislation requiring states to limit highway speeds to 55 miles an hour as a way of conserving gasoline in the face of an OPEC oil embargo. (The 55 mph limit was effectively phased out in 1987; federal speed limits were abolished in 1995.)

In 2007, the state funeral for former President Gerald R. Ford began with an elaborate service at Washington National Cathedral, then moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In 2015, California began issuing driver's licenses to immigrants who were in the country illegally. Little Jimmy Dickens, a diminutive singer-songwriter who was the oldest cast member of the Grand Ole Opry, died at age 94.

In 2016, a heavily armed group led by Ammon and Ryan Bundy seized the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, beginning a 41-day standoff to protest the imprisonment of two ranchers convicted of setting fires on public land and to demand the federal government turn over public lands to local control.

In 2018, Sen. Al Franken formally resigned from the Senate a month after the Minnesota Democrat announced his plan to leave Congress amid a series of sexual misconduct allegations. NBC News announced that Hoda Kotb (HOH'-duh KAHT'-bee) would be the co-anchor of the first two hours of the "Today" show, replacing Matt Lauer following his firing due to sexual misconduct allegations.

Ten years ago: Gordon Hirabayashi, a Japanese-American sociologist who spent 90 days in jail for refusing to be interned during World War II, died in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada at age 93. (Hirabayashi's conviction was overturned in 1987 by a U.S. court which concluded that the U.S. government's internment policies had been based on political expediency, and not on any risk to national security.)

Five years ago: A suicide bomber driving a pickup loaded with explosives struck a bustling market in Baghdad, killing at least 36 people in an attack claimed by the Islamic State group hours after French President Francois Hollande (frahN-SWAH' oh-LAWND') arrived in the Iraqi capital.

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One year ago: President Donald Trump, in a phone call with Georgia's Republican secretary of state, pressured Brad Raffensperger to "find" enough votes to overturn Joe Biden's win in the state, repeatedly citing disproven claims of fraud; in a recording of the conversation, Trump was heard raising the prospect of a "criminal offense" if officials did not change the vote count. Joining Trump's effort to overturn the election, eleven Republican senators and senators-elect said they would vote against certain state electors on Jan. 6 unless Congress appointed a commission to audit the results. International inspectors said Iran planned to enrich uranium up to 20% at an underground nuclear facility; Iran's program would then be a technical step away from weapons-grade levels. Paul Westphal, a Hall of Fame basketball player who won a championship with the Boston Celtics in 1974 and later coached in the league and in college, died in Arizona at the age of 70.

Today's Birthdays: Former House Speaker Dennis Hastert is 80. TV host Jack Hanna is 75. Actor Wendy Phillips is 70. Actor Cynthia Sikes is 68. Actor Gabrielle Carteris is 61. Movie director Todd Haynes is 61. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher David Cone is 59. Baseball Hall of Famer Edgar Martinez is 59. Actor Tia Carrere is 55. Actor Cuba Gooding Jr. is 54. Model Christy Turlington is 53. Actor Taye Diggs is 51. Actor Renée Elise Goldsberry is 51. Rock singer Doug Robb (Hoobastank) is 47. Actor Dax Shepard is 47. Actor Paz Vega is 46. Ballroom dancer Karina Smirnoff (TV: "Dancing with the Stars") is 44. Rock musician Jerry DePizzo Jr. (O.A.R.) is 43. R&B singer Kelton Kessee (IMX) is 41. Pop singer-musician Ryan Merchant (Capital Cities) is 41. Actor Kate Bosworth is 39. Actor Anthony Carrigan is 39. Actor Peter Gadiot is 37. Jazz singer-musician Trombone Shorty is 36. Singer-songwriter Mandy Harvey (TV: "America's Got Talent") is 34. R&B singer-rapper Bryson Tiller is 29. San Diego Padres shortstop Fernando Tatis Jr. is 23.