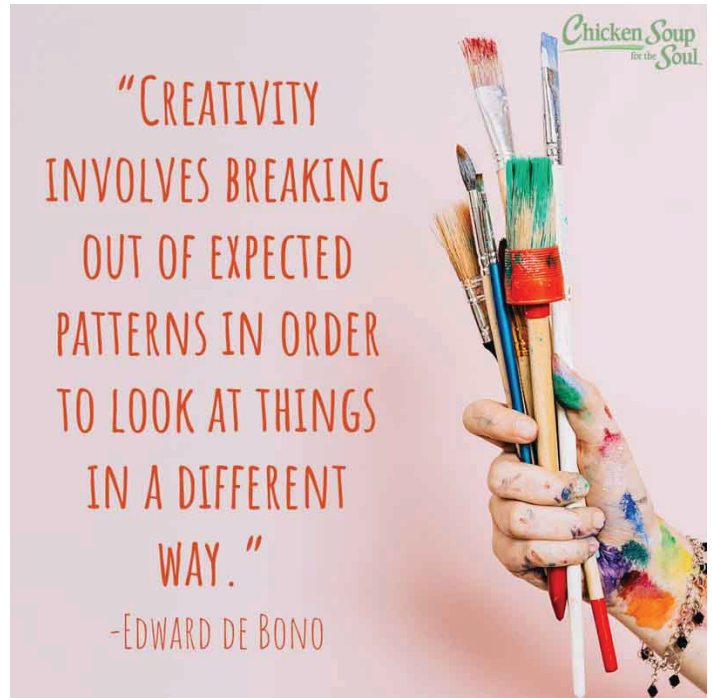


Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 1 of 73

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Weekly Church Calendar](#)
- [3- NSU Men Drop Road Contest to Augustana](#)
- [3- Women's Basketball at Augustana Cancelled per COVID Protocols](#)
- [4- Platte-Geddes defeats Groton Area in girls hoop action](#)
- [5- COVID Map](#)
- [6- Sunday Extras](#)
- [25- Rep. Johnson's Weekly Column](#)
- [26- Gov. Noem's Weekly Column](#)
- [28- Rep. Thune's Weekly Column](#)
- [30- Rev. Snyder's Column](#)
- [32- EarthTalk -Yellowstone Wolves](#)
- [33- COVID-19 Reports](#)
- [37- Weather Pages](#)
- [41- Daily Devotional](#)
- [42- 2021 Community Events](#)
- [43- Subscription Form](#)
- [44- News from the Associated Press](#)



UpComing Events

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.

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 a.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.

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

OPEN: **Recycling Trailer in Groton**
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

© 2022 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 2 of 73

United Methodist Church

Groton and Conde

Sunday, January 9, 2022

Conde Worship 9:00 AM
Sunday School 10:00 AM
Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Monday, January 10, 2022

PEO - outside group 7:30 PM

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

Missions Meeting 7:00 PM

Wednesday, January 12, 2022

Community Coffee Hour 9:30 AM
Confirmation Snack Time 3:30 PM
Confirmation 4:00 PM
UMYF 7:00 PM

Sunday, January 16, 2022

Human Relations Day
Conde Worship 9:00 AM
Sunday School 10:00 AM
Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, Jan. 9

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

Monday, Jan. 10

6:30am Bible Study

Tuesday, Jan. 11

6:00 Council potluck for new & outgoing members
w/ meeting to follow.

Wednesday, Jan. 12

6pm Confirmation
6:30pm Luther League

Thursday, Jan. 13

6:30pm Grace Alone

Saturday, Jan. 15

10am Rosewood

Sunday, Jan. 16

9am Worship / Communion
NO Sunday School
10:15 Grace Alone
3pm Avantara
Annual reports ready for p/u
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)

Weekday

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

St. John's Lutheran Church

Groton

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

Wednesday, Jan. 12

3:45 p.m.: Confirmation

Sunday, Jan. 16

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

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

NSU Men Drop Road Contest to Augustana

Sioux Falls, S.D. – The Northern State University men’s basketball team fell to Augustana University 67-50 on Saturday, dropping to 10-8 on the year. The two teams were tied at the half; however the Vikings took control of the game in the final 20 minutes.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 50, AU 67

Records: NSU 10-8 (4-6 NSIC), AU 12-2 (6-2 NSIC)

Attendance: 1868

HOW IT HAPPENED

- Northern struggled with efficiency in the game, shooting 38.0% from the floor, 31.8% from the 3-point line, and 71.4% from the foul line
- They tallied 18 points in the paint, 15 points off turnovers, and just nine points off the bench
- The Vikings out-rebounded the Wolves 40-29 and notched 16 offensive boards, leading to 16 second chance points
- The Wolves recorded eight assists, seven made 3-pointers, and five steals in the game
- Three players from both teams scored in double figures

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Augustin Reede: 11 points, 66.7 FG%
- Jordan Belka: 10 points, 8 rebounds
- Jacksen Moni: 10 points, 3 rebounds
- Kailleb Walton-Blanden: 9 points, 50.0 FG%, 4 rebounds

UP NEXT

Northern State returns to Wachs Arena next Friday and Saturday versus Southwest Minnesota State and Sioux Falls. The Wolves will tip-off against the Mustangs at 5:30 p.m. on Friday and the Cougars at 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Women’s Basketball at Augustana Cancelled per COVID Protocols

Sioux Falls, S.D. - Due to COVID-19 protocols within the Northern State Athletic Department, the women’s basketball contest at Augustana has been cancelled. The game is classified as a ‘no-contest’, per NCAA and NSIC procedures.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 4 of 73

Platte-Geddes defeats Groton Area in girls hoop action

A 12-point run in the third quarter spelled trouble for the Lady Tigers as Platte-Geddes defeated Groton Area, 43-27.

The Black Panthers of Platte-Geddes never allowed the Tigers to lead, but it was close in the first half. Platte-Geddes jumped out to a 6-0 lead and held an 11-5 lead at the end of the first quarter. Groton Area rallied with seven straight points in the second quarter and closed to within one, 13-12. Groton Area had chances to take the lead but could not convert and Platte-Geddes held a 15-14 lead at half time.

The Black Panthers scored 12 unanswered points in the third quarter as cold shooting by the Tigers put them in a 31-20 deficit by the end of the third quarter.

Gracie Traphagen had yet another double-double game for the Tigers. With the help of seven of 10 free throws, Traphagen finished with 15 points and grabbed 12 rebounds. Traphagen had 10 points and nine rebounds in the first half when the Tigers were keeping up with Platte-Geddes.

Brooke Gengerke had four points in the fourth quarter and had one rebound and one assist. Alyssa Thaler made a three-pointer in the first quarter and had four rebounds and two steals. Jerica Locke had three points, one rebound and one assist. Sydney Leicht had two points, three rebounds and one assist.

The Tigers made eight of 32 field goals for 25 percent, made one of 14 three-pointers for 7 percent, eight of 16 free throws for 50 percent off of the Black Panther's 11 team fouls, had 12 turnovers, six assists, three steals and 14 team fouls.

Karly VanDerWerff led the Black Panthers with 13 points while Baleigh Nachtigal and Regan Hoffman each had nine, Hadley Hanson had eight and Cadence Van Zee added four points. Platte-Geddes made 15 of 43 total field goals for 35 percent, was 12 of 17 from the line for 71 percent, had 11 turnovers and 11 team fouls.

Groton Area is now 4-4 on the season while Platte-Geddes goes to 4-3.

The game was played as part of the Redfield Holiday classic and was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Dacotah Bank, John Sieh Agency, Groton Ford, Allied Climate Professionals with Kevin Nehls and Bary Keith from Harr Motors.

- Paul Kosel

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 5 of 73

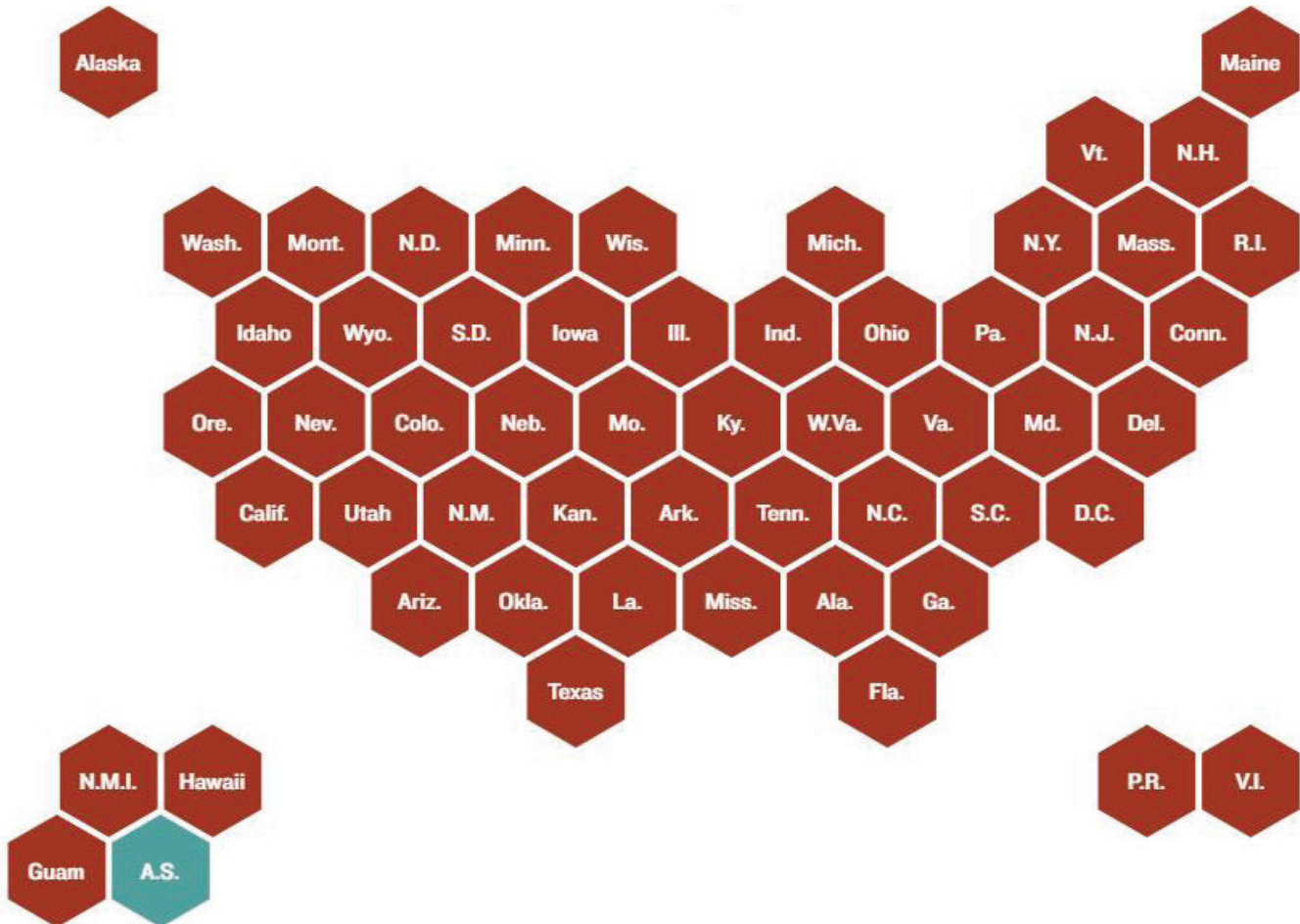
It's ugly out there!

by Marie Miller

We're almost perfect: just one hold-out territory. Fifty-five of our 56 states and territories we're tracking are in the red zone as Guam slipped from orange this week. This is the lowest point I've reported during the entire pandemic in terms of new case numbers.

Just 10 states and territories are below a 100% growth rate. Only 3 are below 50%. The country as a whole is at 176 average daily new cases per 100,000 residents when the cut score for unchecked transmission is 25. I don't think American Samoa's going to get into trouble (although I've been wrong before), and absent that, the only change this map can show is improvement. Don't expect that for some weeks. I won't check in until there's something to report.

Hang in there.



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 6 of 73

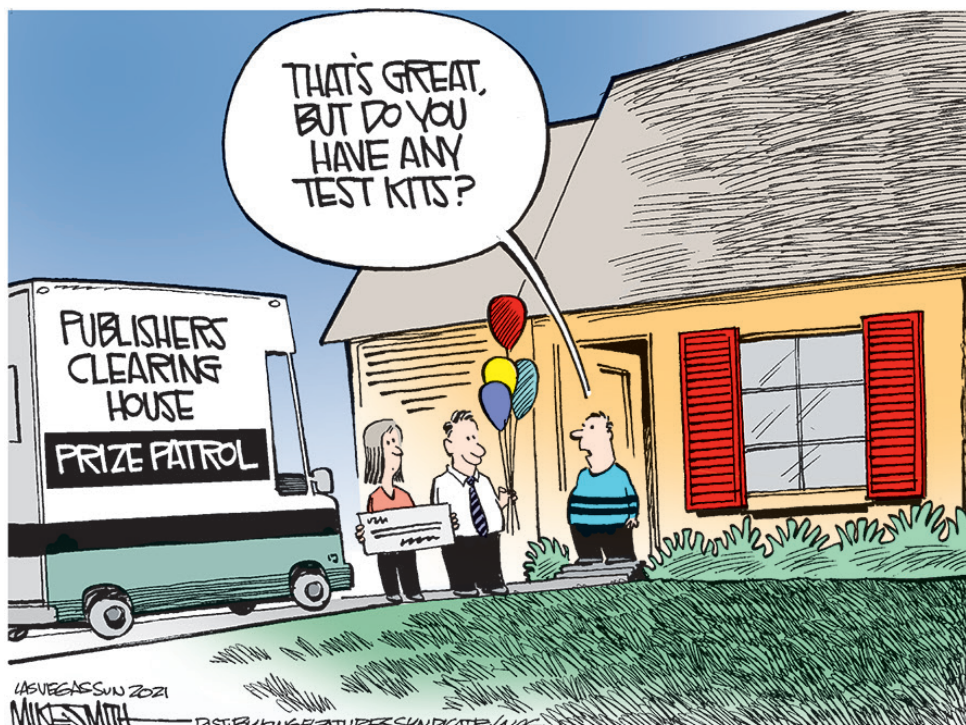


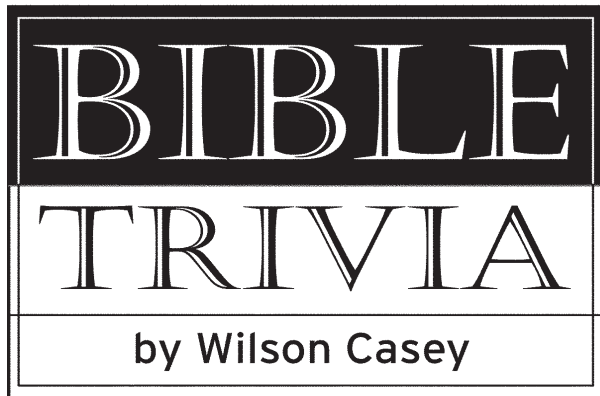
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. HEBREWS 6:10



© 2022 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.





Creamed Celery and Cheese

If your family usually gives vegetable dishes no respect, give this ultra-easy side dish a try.

- 1 1/2 cups finely chopped celery
- 1 (2-ounce) jar chopped pimiento, undrained
- 2 cups frozen peas, thawed
- 1/3 cup fat-free sour cream
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper

1. In a large skillet sprayed with butter-flavored cooking spray, saute celery for 6 to 8 minutes or just until tender. Stir in undrained pimiento and peas. Continue cooking for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring often. Add sour cream and parsley flakes. Mix well to combine.

2. Lower heat and simmer for 3 to 4 minutes or until mixture is heated through, stirring often. Makes 4 (3/4 cup each) servings.

* Each serving equals: 80 calories, 0 g fat, 5 g protein, 15 g carb., 148 mg sodium, 4 g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Starch, 1/2 Vegetable.

(c) 2022 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

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

2. From 1 Corinthians 14, who advised young Christians to stop thinking like children? *Luke, Paul, David, John*

3. For how many days did Goliath take his stand for a man to fight him? *2, 6, 10, 40*

4. In Genesis 18, whom did God ask, "Is anything too hard for the Lord"? *Moses, Adam, Noah, Abraham*

5. How many loaves of bread were used to feed the 5,000? *2, 3, 4, 5*

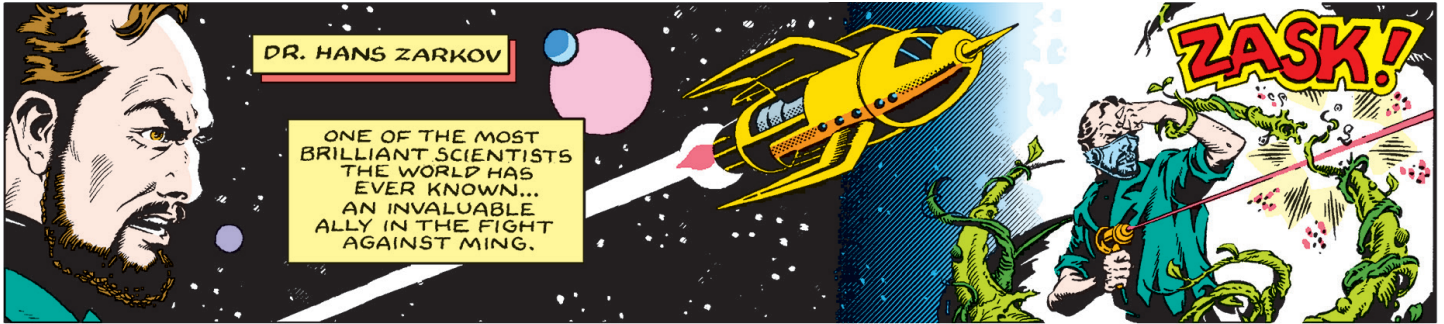
6. In Mark 12, whom did Jesus accuse of devouring widows' houses? *Sadducees, Midianites, Israelites, Pharisees*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) Paul; 3) 40; 4) Abraham; 5) 5; 6) Pharisees

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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 8 of 73



DR. HANS ZARKOV

ONE OF THE MOST BRILLIANT SCIENTISTS THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN... AN INVALUABLE ALLY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST MING.

FLASH GORDON

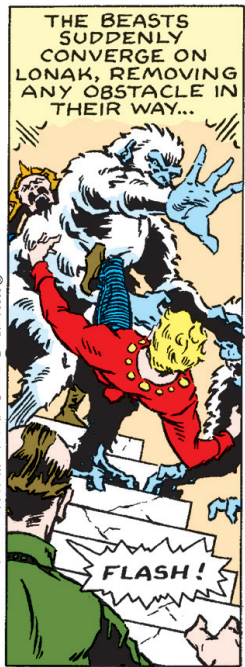
1-2 By JIM KEEFE



MOMENTS AFTER PLACING THE KRONTORS' CROWN ON HIS HEAD, LONAK SCREAMS IN AGONY!

GET IT OFF! IN TAO'S NAME, GET IT OFF!

I CAN'T! IT'S ATTACHING ITSELF!



THE BEASTS SUDDENLY CONVERGE ON LONAK, REMOVING ANY OBSTACLE IN THEIR WAY...

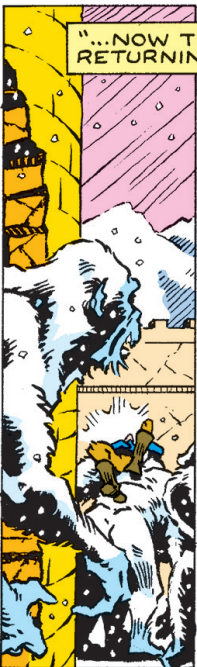
FLASH!



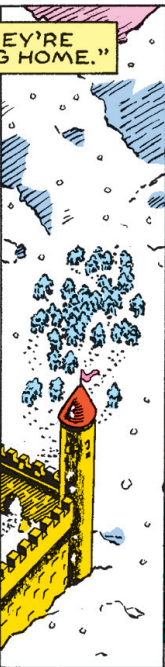
NOW THAT THEY HAVE LONAK, THE BEASTS ARE IGNORING US.

RONAL, WHAT'S GOING ON?

THE KRONTORS GOT WHAT THEY CAME FOR...



"...NOW THEY'RE RETURNING HOME."



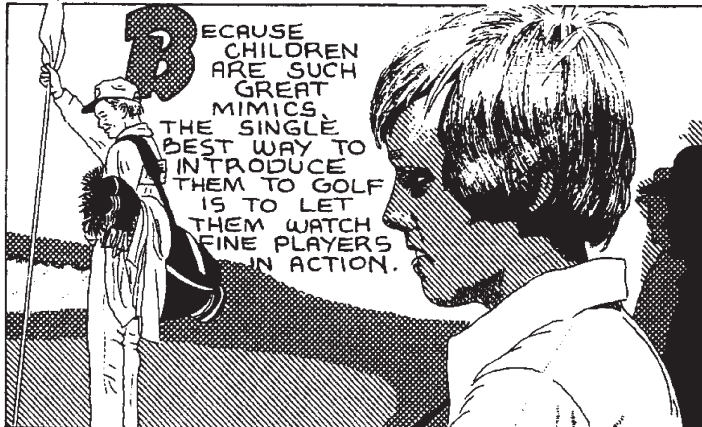
FRIGIA IS UNDER SIEGE NO MORE.

BUT... WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO LONAK?

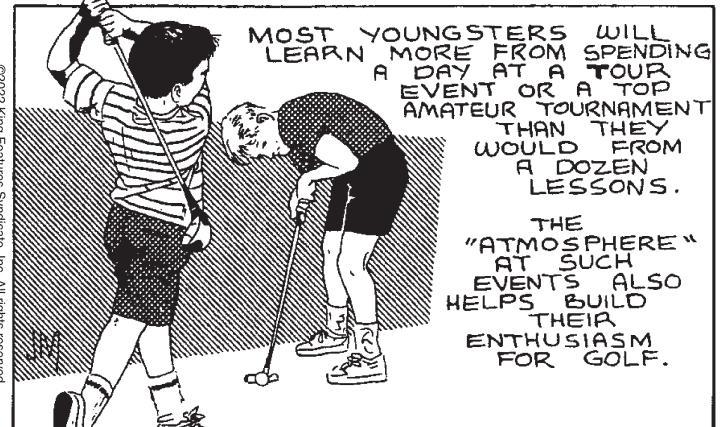


TO BE CONT'D

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



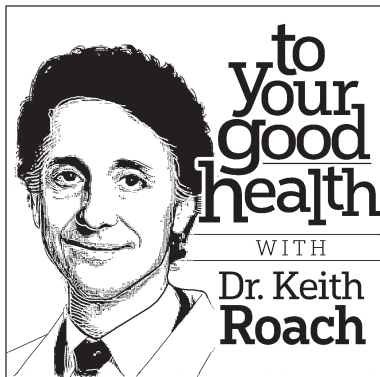
BECAUSE CHILDREN ARE SUCH GREAT MIMICS THE SINGLE BEST WAY TO INTRODUCE THEM TO GOLF IS TO LET THEM WATCH FINE PLAYERS IN ACTION.



MOST YOUNGSTERS WILL LEARN MORE FROM SPENDING A DAY AT A TOUR EVENT OR A TOP AMATEUR TOURNAMENT THAN THEY WOULD FROM A DOZEN LESSONS.

THE "ATMOSPHERE" AT SUCH EVENTS ALSO HELPS BUILD THEIR ENTHUSIASM FOR GOLF.

©2022 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.



Spleen Screens Bacteria and Spent Blood Cells From Body

DEAR DR. ROACH: I had an abdominal X-ray to check on my gallstones, and was surprised to find an enlarged spleen. I was told it might be leukemia or lymphoma! I was sent to an oncologist, who reassured me that did not have cancer and recommended I get checked again in six months. My doctor checked it after three, and my spleen had gone back down!

What is all this with the spleen? People have it removed after injuries, like accidents. It seems to be insignificant, but can it be an omen for cancer?
-- M.K.

ANSWER: The spleen is an underappreciated abdominal organ. Its major job is to filter and remove old or damaged red blood cells, but it also removes bacteria. In addition, the spleen acts as a very large lymph node, allowing infection-fighting white blood cells to gather and activate. Removal of the spleen leaves people at a higher risk of some kinds of bacterial infections.

Enlargement of the spleen has many potential causes. Both liver and heart disease can cause passive congestion of the spleen with blood. Cancer, especially lymphoma, is a common cause, but infection is one cause to consider in a person in whom the spleen enlarges and then returns to normal. There are many less-common causes as well.

If the spleen is removed or is nonfunctional (this is almost universal in adults with sickle cell disease, for example), then infections are common, and vaccinations have a different and more intensive schedule, ideally given when the spleen is still in place and working.

It is probably worth it for your doctor to continue to keep an eye on.

DEAR DR. ROACH: An acquaintance has recently (within the past two years) been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. She is now using a "cell membrane stabilizing" diet. Is this likely to help her? Is there any evidence that it works? -- S.P.M.

ANSWER: Although I wasn't able to find anything about a specific diet with that name, I reviewed the literature on the effects of diet on Parkinson's disease, and the data are still preliminary. For most of the recommendations I have, there are conflicting reports.

Of the dietary factors with the best data, I found that fruits and vegetables are likely to be helpful and to protect against damage to the part of the brain affected by PD. Omega-3 fatty acids were found to be helpful in animal models of PD. Products high in soy protein and caffeine (especially from tea) may have some benefit. Again, these data are not strong, so I am not recommending a dramatic change in the diet solely to protect against PD. However, fruits and vegetables are certainly of benefit for multiple systems, and I am comfortable recommending a diet high in those.

Milk and other dairy products have been shown in some, but not all, studies to have a detrimental effect on PD.

Diet is of importance in many areas of health, but the role in PD seems to be modest, based on current literature. As always, a visit with a registered dietitian nutritionist is worthwhile to get specific and personalized information.

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.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 10 of 73



Betty White Goes Wild! (PG) — Everyone's favorite nonagenarian comedic actress would have reached 100 years old this month, and Disney+ had already planned to re-release her 2013 NatGeo documentary in celebration of the milestone. Now it's being shown in tribute to a life well lived. In the special, Betty visits two California wild animal parks and spends time learning about all the varieties of big cats. One particularly unexpected and beautiful scene captures her remarkable ability to establish a calm rapport with a roaring lion that had the rest of her crew ducking out for safety. The lifelong animal lover and advocate was truly in her element in this show, and the joy the animals brought her is what makes watching it so pleasurable. (Disney+)

Somebody, Somewhere (NR) — This is one of those shows that when you watch the trailer and you just know it's going to be your jam. Comedian/writer/cabaret performer Bridget Everett plays Sam, a no-nonsense 40-something woman who returns to live in her childhood hometown in Kansas. Experiencing the grief of losing her sister — and sorting through all her sister's stuff — is just one of the weights bringing her down. By chance she gets acquainted with a former high-school classmate (played by Jeff Hiller) who introduces her to a rogue show choir full of misfits. There she finds a place to fit in and a much-needed reawakening of a dormant passion and talent. (HBO Max)

Wolf Like Me (NR) — Need a new series to get into but really don't want a huge commitment? Try "Wolf Like Me" this week. The new romantic comedy is just six 30-minute episodes, all available on January 13. In it, Josh Gad ("Book of Mormon," "Frozen") and Isla Fisher ("Confessions of a Shopaholic," "The Great Gatsby")

play Gary and Mary, a very newly acquainted couple who meet each other in the aftermath of a car crash. As tends to happen, both bring their own emotional baggage to the relationship; Gary is a widowed single dad, and Mary has some huge secret that is not immediately revealed but promises to be a big deal. Show creator Abe Forsythe has kept plot twists closely held secrets to maintain the element of surprise and promises a cliffhanger ending for every episode. (Peacock)



Disney+

National treasure Betty White's work to be re-released as a tribute on Disney+

Brazen (TV-MA) — Alyssa Milano is seriously the hardest working woman in Hollywood, barely taking a break between projects, and she's not slowing down yet. Her latest movie has her portraying Grace McCabe, a mystery writer and crime expert. When her newly divorced-and-struggling-through-a-custody-battle sister is murdered, Grace goes against a detective's warnings and involves herself in the death investigation (very "Murder She Wrote," right?). Things get really dicey when it's discovered that her sister had a secret second life as a webcam performer, which may or may not lead to a suspect. The film is based on the 1988 novel "Brazen Virtue" by Nora Roberts, with a few 21st-century updates. (Netflix)

© 2022 King Features Synd., Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 11 of 73



1. Who released "Daddy Don't You Walk So Fast"?
2. Where did the name of "disco" music and dance come from?
3. Who released "To Sir With Love"?
4. Which singer released "Private Dancer"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "I run a comb through my hair and step out in the street."

Answers

1. Wayne Newton, in 1972. The song climbed the charts around the world and was even translated into other languages.

2. France. During the 1940s when the Nazis were occupying Paris, "discotheque" was a type of nightclub where patrons danced to phonographic records.

Disco became popular in the U.S. in early '70s, emerging out of an urban subculture.

3. Lulu, born Marie McDonald McLaughlin Lawrie, in the 1967 film of the same name, starring Sidney Poitier. It was the best-selling single of the year, after staying at No. 1 for five weeks.

4. Tina Turner, on her album of the same name, in 1984.

5. "Make Me Lose Control," by Eric Carmen, in 1988. The song was a single that was never on an album and stayed at the top of the adult contemporary chart for three weeks. It came out shortly after Carmen's "Hungry Eyes" in the film "Dirty Dancing."

(c) 2022 King Features Syndicate

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 12 of 73

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



©2022 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.

GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by} Wagner



© by North America Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

Wagner

"I've been on time-out ever since the kids left home."

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Fence is shorter. 2. Scarf is shorter. 3. Cap is different. 4. Collar is different. 5. Arm is moved. 6. Window is smaller.

©2022 King Features Syndicate, Inc.



- Freshen stuffed animals by securing a few in a pillowcase and adding a fabric softener sheet. Put in the dryer on low heat for 20 minutes, then remove and brush out the fur, if necessary, while still warm.

- “Keep a quart container in the freezer and whenever you have a small amount of leftovers, chop them up and add it to your container. When it’s full, thaw it. Add some of your favorite soup beans, pizza sauce, milk and cheese, and you have a unique and delicious soup.” — M. from Pennsylvania

- If you’ve been decluttering as a part of your New Year’s resolutions, and you came across old pairs of eyeglasses, know that you can donate them to any Lion’s Club in your area. They redistribute the glasses to those who cannot afford them. You don’t have to know the prescription, and they take reading glasses, too!

- How can you keep snow and ice off your windshield? Some say a solu-

tion of three parts vinegar to one-part water sprayed on the windshield each night can cut your ice-scraping time in half or better. (Use caution to avoid your paint job.) Also, try covering your wipers with an old pair of long socks so they don’t freeze to the glass!

- “For pastry cooking, try grating frozen butter into the flour. It cuts in better and will stay cool longer. This helps when I’m making shortbread, as the flour and butter need to be combined. I don’t end up having to put it in the fridge to cool it back down.” — C.S. in South Carolina

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

© 2022 King Features Synd., Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 14 of 73



CATS & MICE! Cats outnumber mice by three to one (wonder why?) above. How many of each do you see? Our artist says there are seven mice, 21 cats.

Junior Whirl

by Hal Kaufman

1	W	A	M	A	
2	P	R	V	E	L
3	Y	U	T	E	K
4	W	E	S		
5	S	U	G	E	R
6	T	A	N	I	M
7	C	E	R	N	
8	C	O	R	O	D
9	L	E	P	E	R

FEATHER-BRAINED NAME SCRAMBLE

THIS test is for the birds, says our parrot friend, at left. And he's right.

Scrambled names of nine birds, each missing a letter, appear in rows across.

When letters are added, and names unscrambled, a tenth bird's name will appear in present blanks reading downward.

This mystery bird is an expert diver and has a voracious appetite.

Birds whose names are scrambled (in random order) are crane, condor, martin, petrel, turkey, smew, plover, macaw, grouse.

How quickly can you name the mystery bird?

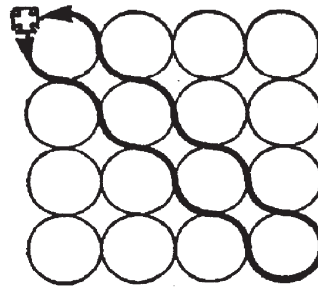
Hidden bird is the cormorant. Bird order: Macaw, plover, turkey, smew, grouse, martin, crane, condor, petrel.

D-MAIL! Find a U.S. city whose name begins with D in each sentence: 1. Each day tons of junk mail arrive. 2. Send all as soon as possible. 3. The sender's identity was hidden very discreetly. Time: One minute.

1. Dayton. 2. Dallas. 3. Denver.

ROUND TRIPPER! This is an old, puzzling stunt that is always entertaining. It seems that if you start at any point on any circle in this cluster of 16, and proceed alternately circle by circle, counterclockwise and then clockwise, as shown here (or vice versa), your path invariably should take you back to where you started.

Give it a try starting at various places with different-colored pencils.



TIGER

by BUD BLAKE

Panel 1: "THIS IS A SCARY HILL, HUGO"

Panel 2: "WE JUST FOLLOW OLD SLED MARKS"

Panel 3: "DON'T WORRY—IT'S CLEARLY MARKED"

Panel 4: "WE GOTTA STOP, HUGO!"

Panel 5: "WE WILL"

Panel 6: "I TOLD YOU IT WAS CLEARLY MARKED"

Panel 7: "STOP"

© King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 15 of 73

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Even
- 5 Apply cream
- 8 "The Good Earth" heroine
- 12 "Please go ahead"
- 14 Fork prong
- 15 The National Pastime
- 16 Circus structure
- 17 Cacophony
- 18 Scalawags
- 20 Basilica areas
- 23 Diving duck
- 24 Soccer leg-end
- 25 Brewing gizmo
- 28 Greek letter
- 29 Not — out of place
- 30 Scull need
- 32 Kook
- 34 Ordered
- 35 Skin breakout
- 36 Notorious
- 37 Port city of Poland
- 40 Former Mideast org.
- 41 Pealed
- 42 Pitcher's tactic
- 47 "American —"
- 48 Consume too little
- 49 Lion's pride?
- 50 Meadow
- 51 Sciences'

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			

- partner 10 Green Gables basics
- girl 31 Flushed
- 11 Tennis barriers 33 Hang loose?
- 13 Baseball stats 34 Diva
- 19 Cornhusker's st. 36 Kismet
- 20 iPhone down-load 37 Bleak
- 21 Mexican money 38 Baby's father
- 22 Lost traction 39 Unsigned (Abbr.)
- 23 Black Panthers leader Bobby 40 Fed. food inspector
- 25 Appreciative 43 Chemical suffix
- 26 Rich soil 44 — Lingus
- 27 Stow cargo 45 Back muscle, briefly
- 29 Grade-school 46 USN officers

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 16 of 73

— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

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

LAFF - A - DAY



“Just once I’d like to have a job that wasn’t harder to do when he was a boy.”

Out on a Limb



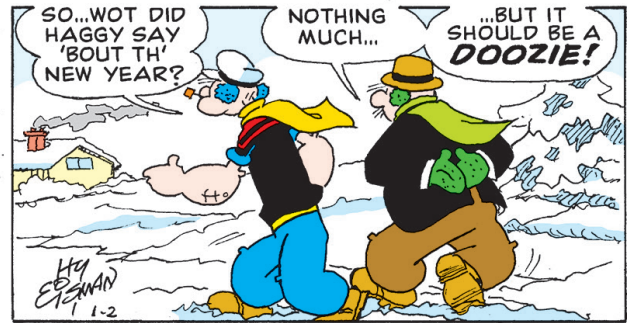
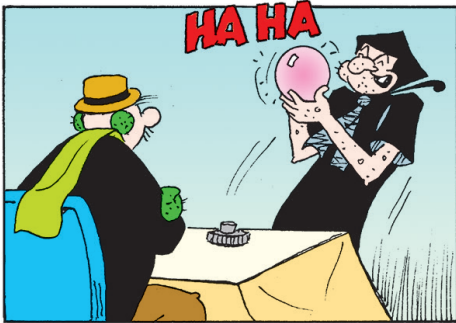
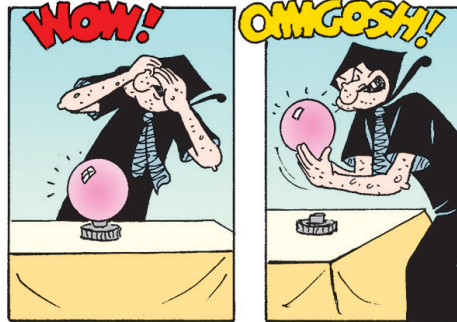
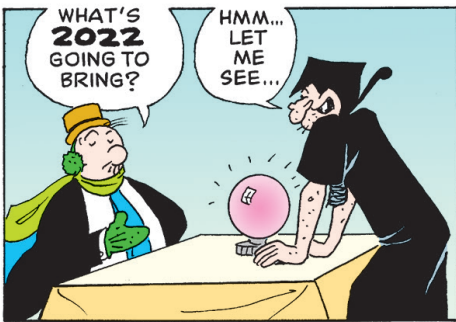
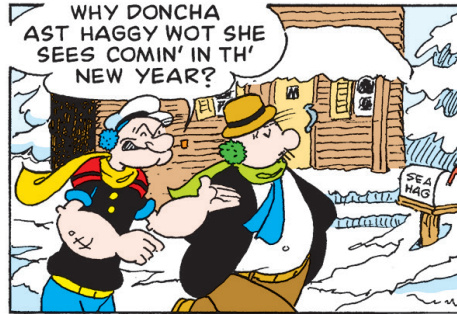
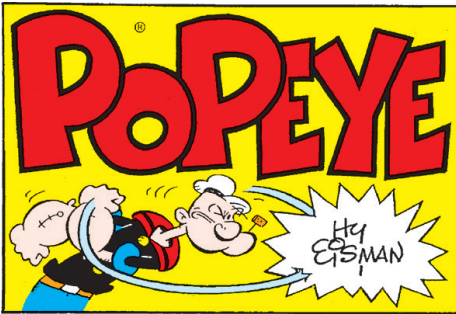
by Gary Kopervas

KING FICUS
(EVERYTHING HE
TOUCHES TURNS TO
SHRUBS)

KOPERVAS

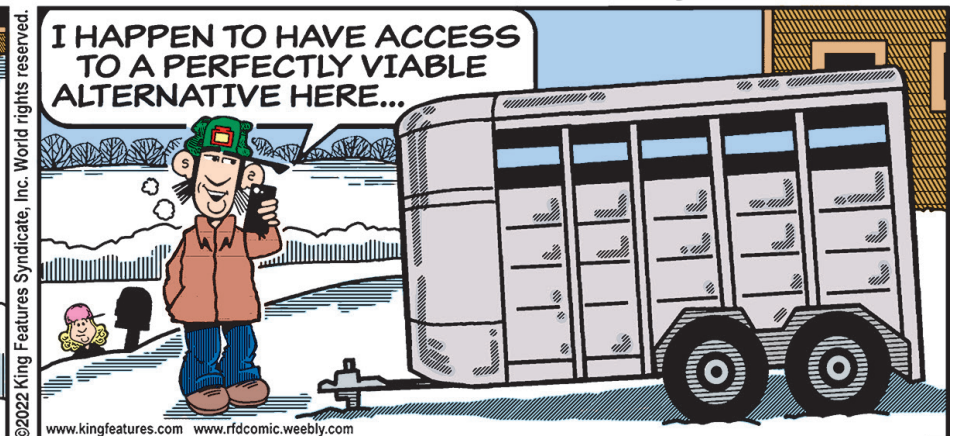
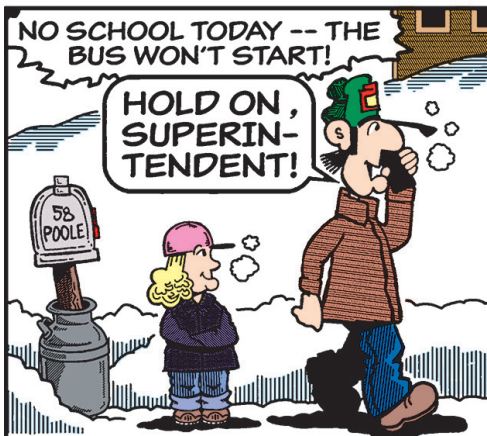
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 17 of 73



R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



©2022 King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

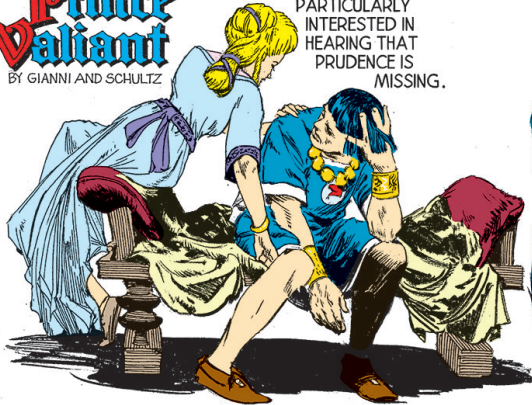
www.kingfeatures.com www.rfdcomic.weebly.com

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 18 of 73

HAL FOSTER'S
Prince Valiant
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ

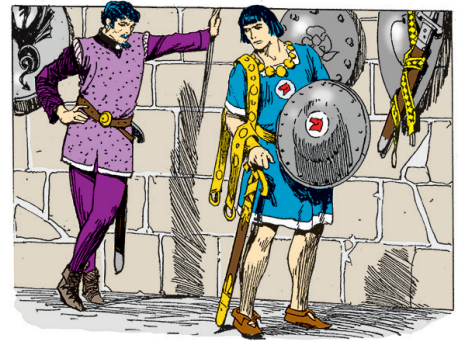
AFTER MIXING SELF-PITY WITH ALE, VAL IS NOT PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN HEARING THAT PRUDENCE IS MISSING.



ALETA IS PREDICTABLY PERSISTENT.



AND SO VAL DRAGS HIMSELF TO THE HALL OF CHAMPIONS TO RETRIEVE HIS SHIELD.



"WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING, VALIANT? PRUDENCE'S DISAPPEARANCE IS CAMELOT'S BUSINESS, AND I NOW ADMINISTER ALL APPOINTMENTS TO QUESTS." THE VOICE GRATES ON VAL...



...IT BELONGS TO SIR DRACO, WHO HAS LONG BEEN A TREACHEROUS THORN IN VAL'S SIDE. "THAT IS BY ORDER OF YOUR SON, THE REGENT. WOULD YOU UNDERMINE HIS AUTHORITY?"



IF ONLY VAL KNEW THAT IT WAS DRACO WHO ONCE HARBORED THE TERRORIST HORRIDUS! HE TURNS FROM DRACO AND STALKS TO THE TRAINING FIELD.

WOE TO THE MANY YOUNG WARRIORS UPON WHOM HE WILL VENT HIS RAGE!

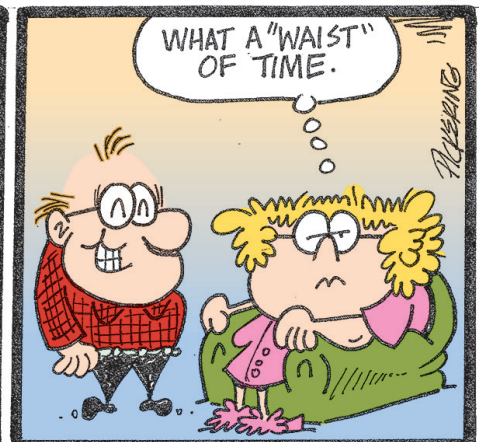
3848

NEXT: Cursed luck

©2010 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



©2022 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.

PICKERING

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Is Telehealth All It's Cracked Up to Be

Medicare started paying for telehealth medical visits last year and will continue through the end of 2023. With telehealth, we sit in our homes and talk to our doctor on a screen, and Medicare pays for it. In the beginning, the number of telehealth visits skyrocketed — and then fell dramatically. Is that because we learned the hard way just what the limitations of telehealth really are?

There are people on both sides of the “should seniors use telehealth” debate. They both say they offer solid evidence for their opinion.

Those who claim it's a great thing for us to consult with our doctors via a little screen say it's helpful because it keeps us out of the doctor's office. We don't have to go in among all the germs, and we don't need to worry about transportation.

On the other hand, those who are against telehealth appointments for seniors argue that many of us can't even afford the very devices we would need for telehealth. Even if we have a cell-phone, the screen is so small as to be worthless, especially if we have a vision or hearing problem. Then there are the plan fees needed for that device. And what of privacy when we need someone at hand to help navigate the software for us? Do we really want our grandchildren sitting there when we discuss a personal issue with our doctor?

Even if we have a computer, one with a large monitor, how is that going to work when we need the doctor to look at a rash on our back? Or if we really ought to have a stethoscope pressed to our chest because of that ragged cough we've had for days?

Note: If you have original Medicare, you'll pay the same amount for the telehealth appointment as you would if you got the services in person.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 20 of 73

1. What U.S. track and field star, a winner of nine Olympic gold medals, recorded songs “Break It Up” and “Lovers Don’t Talk” for his 1987 album “Modern Man”?

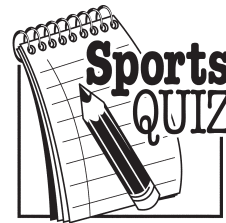
2. Name the Baseball Hall of Famer who in 1984 became the first manager to win the World Series in both the AL and the NL.

3. What member of the World Golf Hall of Fame is No. 1 on the LPGA Tour career wins list with 88?

4. A January 2018 high-speed car crash in Los Angeles claimed the life of what 2002 NBA Draft pick from La Salle University?

5. The KFC Yum! Center is a college basketball arena located in what U.S. city?

6. The Ashes is the name of a Test cricket series contested between what



by Ryan A. Berenz

two countries?

7. An anthropomorphic pepper named Cayenne was the unofficial mascot of what Sun Belt Conference university’s athletic teams from 2000-2010?

Answers

1. Carl Lewis.
2. Sparky Anderson (1975-6 Cincinnati Reds, 1984 Detroit Tigers).
3. Kathy Whitworth.
4. Rasual Butler.
5. Louisville, Kentucky.
6. England and Australia.
7. The Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns.

© 2022 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Off-Leash Dogs Bane of His Walks in Woods

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My dog "Hatch" and I frequently walk the trails of a state park near my house. A leash is required in the park, but many dog owners ignore this rule and allow their dogs to bound ahead. Not all of these dogs are well-socialized, and we've faced aggressive, unleashed dogs on the trails. I carry a walking stick in case I need to fend off an attacking dog — something that hasn't happened yet, though it's come close once or twice. Please help me make other dog owners aware that off-leash dogs can make other dogs, and humans, quite nervous. Keeping dogs on leash will help avoid a confrontation, fight or injury. — *Doug S., Stoneham, Massachusetts*

DEAR DOUG: You're absolutely right! Dog owners, always review the rules regarding pets on park lands. Even though forested trails seem remote and safer for dogs to run free without a leash, you never know if another dog is just around the bend. Further, even a leashed dog needs to follow basic commands like sit, stay and heel, and to come back immediately when called if the leash is accidentally dropped.

Rules are typically posted at trailheads, as well as on park websites. There's no reason to not be familiar with leash rules before going for a hike.

If you encounter an off-leash dog while on a trail, remain calm. Shorten your dog's leash so that he walks next to you. Stay calm and relaxed with the owner when they finally appear, too. Ask if they're aware that there's a leash rule on the trail, but don't start a confrontation. The more awareness you can build of your park's rules, the fewer off-leash meetings you'll face.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 22 of 73

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

a New Year's resolution to quit smoking, but the largest increase in new smokers actually occurs in the summer.

- * There's a national pillow-fighting tournament in Japan.
- * A 43,000-square-foot room beneath the Lincoln Memorial that was forgotten about until 1974 is filled with concrete columns and has its own plant life and ecosystem, as well as graffiti from the original workers.
- * Humans are comprised of about 30 of the 118 elements on the periodic table. Their iPhones, however, are made up of about 75 elements.
- * Intelligent people have more traces of copper and zinc in their hair.
- * The manchineel tree is one of the most toxic trees in the world. Its sap causes blisters, eating its apples can be potentially fatal, and the smoke from a burning manchineel can cause blindness.
- * Pythagoras, of Pythagorean Theorem fame, ran a commune that was forbidden to wear wool, forced to put their right sandal on before their left, and believed that beans could contain the souls of the dead, so even crushing a bean was considered murder.
- * Every day, around 18 acres of pizza are eaten in America.
- * At the U.S. Open and other U.S.-based tennis tournaments, the men play with the slower, heavy-duty felt balls while the women play with the faster, regular-duty felt version.

Thought for the Day: "Everyone knows something I do not; therefore, everyone is my teacher." -- Unknown

(c) 2022 King Features Synd., Inc.

* Pinball was banned in most major cities from the early 1940s to the mid-1970s because it was considered a game of chance and, therefore, gambling.

* Oysters can change genders back and forth.

* The Zildjian Company was founded in 1623 by Avedis Zildjian, an Armenian alchemist who ended up making a cymbal instead.

* Tobacco companies spend the most money on advertising in January, when many people make

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 23 of 73

THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

LIVING ON THE EDGE -
LOGIC DEPT -



BY AL SCADUTO

FIRST THING BRUNO THE BARBER DOES IS HAND HIS CUSTOMER THE LATEST MAGAZINE TO VIEW...



THEN HE TAKES AWAY HIS GLASSES, LEAVING HIM SQUINT-EYED...



Thank to "LOU & FRANK", HEMPSTEAD, N.Y.

SIGN OF THE TIMES - BARFO SPENDS BIG BUCKS HOOKING UP TO A SATELLITE DISH AND A BIG 52-INCH-SCREEN STEREO TV... WHAT'S HIS WIFE, CATASTRA, THINK OF THIS HOME-THEATER TREAT?



www.britannica.com

Pepper plants are perennials, propagated by seeding directly in the soil or by transplanting seedlings started in greenhouses. Pepper fruits come in many shapes and sizes. Traces of them have been found in prehistoric ruins in Peru and Mexico, and the plants were widely grown in Central and South America by pre-Columbian civilizations. Its seeds were carried to Spain in 1493, and spread rapidly throughout Europe.

- Brenda Weaver

VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

Mail Delays Prompt VA to Extend Deadlines

The Department of Veterans Affairs ran into a big snag with a printing vendor and a lot of notification letters to veterans were delayed. But fear not — the VA is extending your response time.

The Government Printing Office, which provides printing services via contracted vendors, couldn't get out the notification letters dated from July 13, 2021 and Dec. 31, 2021. Some of those letters, which required a response from veterans, could have dealt with required exams for compensation and pension, or for making an election about services or benefits, or more.

Typically, there are problems if you don't respond in time. However, at this point, because of the delayed mailings, the VA isn't going to terminate, reduce or deny services and benefits unless you've been contacted and there's documentation about your

right to respond; or the information it asked you for has been received; or the response period has ended.

If you haven't received an expected communication from the VA, call 800-827-1000 to ask about the status of any letters you should have received. Be certain they have current cellphone, home phone, email and address info for you.

If you've filed an appeal, the Board of Veterans' Appeals also is experiencing significant delays in getting information to you about hearings and decisions. As of last month, the board is figuring up a workaround to get information to you and your representatives. If you're waiting on a notice about a hearing, they'll try any number of methods to reach you. If you have to postpone, call them ASAP. If you're waiting on a decision, ask your rep to access Caseflow to see if your decision information has been included yet.

For more information, including ways to get additional assistance, check www.bva.va.gov/docs/Delayed_notifications_fact_sheet.pdf

© 2022 King Features Synd., Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 25 of 73



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



Don't Just Put Lipstick on a Pig

Earlier this week, the White House held a roundtable to discuss the meat and poultry supply chain. Farmers, ranchers, and independent processors from across the country shared their experience and expertise with this Administration. I hope their firsthand account isn't used to score political points – the White House has the opportunity to take what they heard and implement a real fix.

Unfortunately, the White House is attempting to put lipstick on a pig. South Dakotans already know that over the last few decades, a handful of packers have controlled the market for beef, poultry, and pork, which has left us with a system with less competition for producers and increased vulnerabilities for consumer disruption.

Despite this well-known fact, the Administration is using political spin to say this packer concentration is the reason for inflation. They are totally ignoring the trillions of dollars they spent that's wreaking havoc on our economy and instead, blaming private businesses. While we can acknowledge the structural challenges to the meat industry, placing complete blame on the industry for higher prices is an oversimplification.

I want to give credit where credit is due – I do agree with the White House that the meat and poultry industry is far too concentrated, and it's a good first step to bring attention to the industries concentration. That's the reason I have been focused on legislation to achieve those goals like the Cattle Contract Library Act that passed the House in December, the PRICE Act, Butcher Block Act, and Small Processor Overtime Fee Relief Act. In fact, the implementation of the Small Processor Overtime Fee Relief Act was highlighted as part of the White House announcement this week.

Some shared goals and concepts in the plan that I have previous included in my legislation include:

- Increasing competition and creating more options for producers and consumers by starting small independent processing projects through grants.
- Strengthening the financing systems for independent processors by increasing the amount of capital available to them for credit.
- Supporting workers by building a pipeline of well-trained workers and supporting fair wages.
- Promoting innovation and lowering barriers to entry through publicly accessible expert contract knowledge.
- Increasing price transparency.

While all of this sounds good, the devil will be in the details and this White House announcement lacked enough details to set me at ease. I'm cautiously optimistic but with these market investments there will be a huge need for congressional oversight. In my role as Republican Leader on the Livestock Subcommittee, I remain committed to leading and supporting legislation that will benefit producers, consumers, independent packers, and processors. Press releases and attention to the issue is fine if there is follow-through – we must remain committed to pragmatic, long-term solutions that foster competition, transparency, and fairness throughout the industry to improve the market for Americans.

South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

God bless the 235th MPC

On January 5th, I joined several state and local officials for a deployment ceremony honoring the 235th Military Policy Company. The unit from the South Dakota National Guard is heading to Guantanamo Bay for a challenging operational mission.

The war in Afghanistan may be over, but the War on Terror still carries on. Our state's brave soldiers are stepping up to continue keeping our streets safe from international terrorism. During my speech, I highlighted half a dozen soldiers who were going on their fourth deployment since joining the National Guard.

These amazing troops have answered the call to serve and have been sent into action again and again. Still, they continue coming back and proudly serve with the best National Guard in the nation.

During his speech on Wednesday, Captain Patrick Moran, Commander of the 235th, highlighted some of the recent missions his troops have prepared for in recent years. He also spoke about his soldiers understanding their core mission, regardless of the venue.

"When I first took command of the 235th, I knew this, and I told the Soldiers that the professional that we want is the one that is willing to do the job – the job that others are not willing to do. I asked the unit for a motto, they came up with 'Guardians over Glory,'" Captain Moran recalled in his speech.

"In a way that represents the 235th and what the history of the 235th Soldiers have done. They are the ones that don't need the eye candy. They have always been the ones to step up and do whatever job asked of them."

And they have been asked to do a lot in recent years. In June of 2020, the 235th was put on standby with less than 24 hours to prepare to be deployed to the riots in Minneapolis. That deployment was stayed, and instead the 235th successfully kept the streets peaceful in Pierre, Sioux Falls, and Rapid City.

They worked with local law enforcement and the Air National Guard Security Forces during President Donald Trump's Fourth of July visit to Mount Rushmore. For most of 2020, members of the 235th were serving on Medical Transport Teams. In November 2020, they transitioned to vaccine mission teams. Throughout 2020 and 2021, their soldiers also served in Call Centers.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 27 of 73

And then, in January 2021, they were deployed to Washington, D.C. Two weeks later, they were back in South Dakota training 800 National Guard soldiers on minimizing civil disturbances.

Over the last 16 months, while most of these other calls to action were happening, 113 members of the 235th Military Police Company have been training for this mission to Guantanamo Bay. Captain Moran was very clear about how unique this mission is to his Company.

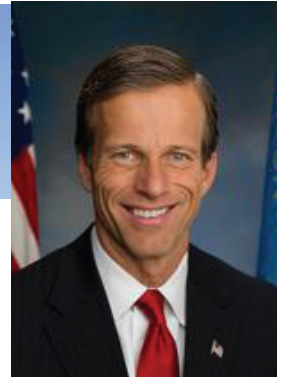
“We won’t be dodging bullets across a battlefield,” Cpt. Moran explained, adding “we will have to battle complacency, mental health challenges, and strive for keen attention to detail and awareness on a daily basis.”

“GTMO has some of the world’s most dangerous and uniquely challenging prisoners and the 235th will be the Soldiers that will be hands on — in close contact with them on a day-to-day basis. If anyone knows about corrections or detainee operations, they know that this usually is not the most desired job that Soldiers want. This is the difficult task. No battle glory, no combat badges, this is the job that normally doesn’t come with a plethora of awards or recognition.”

I know our soldiers are ready for this mission because they have a clear vision for why they are serving in the first place: Guardians over Glory.

Thank you to Commander Moran for your inspiring words and strong leadership. I speak for all of South Dakota when I say we are praying for your safe return from this important mission. Godspeed.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Razor-Thin Democrat Majority Wants to Change the Rules in the Middle of the Game

Our Founders recognized that it wasn't just kings who could be tyrants. They knew majorities could be tyrants too, and that the majority party – if unchecked – could trample the rights of the minority party. And so the Founders combined majority rule with both representation and constitutional protections for the minority. They established safeguards – checks and balances – throughout our government to keep the government in check and ensure that the rights of the minority party were protected. One of those safeguards was the Senate.

The Founders made the Senate smaller than the House of Representatives and senators' terms of office longer, with the intention of creating a more stable, more thoughtful, and more deliberative legislative body to check ill-considered or intemperate legislation and attempts to curtail minority party rights. And as time has gone on, the Senate's legislative filibuster has become perhaps the key way the Senate protects those rights.

The filibuster ensures that the minority party – and the Americans it represents – has a voice in the Senate. It forces compromise. It forces bipartisanship. It encourages a greater level of stability and predictability. Even in the rare case when a majority party has a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate, the filibuster still forces the majority party to take into account the views of its more moderate or middle-of-the-road members, thus ensuring that more Americans are represented in legislation. Removing the filibuster would erase this protection and allow the majority – including an incredibly narrow or merely technical majority, as Democrats have now – to trample minority party rights.

In the words of one former senator, "We should make no mistake. ... It is a fundamental power grab by the majority party ... Folks who want to see this change want to eliminate one of the procedural mechanisms designed for the express purpose of guaranteeing individual rights, and they also have a consequence, and would undermine the protections of a minority point of view in the heat of majority excess." That former senator of course was Joe Biden – one of the many Democrats who has opposed abolishing the filibuster.

Because, of course, Democrats were singing a different tune on the filibuster just a couple of years ago. When President Trump urged Republican senators to abolish the legislative filibuster – dozens of times – Democrats were strongly opposed. In 2017, 32 Democrat senators – including now-Vice President Harris and a majority of the current Democrat caucus – signed a letter urging that the legislative filibuster be preserved. Republicans agreed and refused to abolish the legislative filibuster despite the former president's repeated urging.

Now, however, many Democrats who not only supported but actively and repeatedly used the filibuster during the previous administration to block major coronavirus relief legislation and police reform legislation have apparently decided that rules protecting the minority should only apply when Democrats are in the minority. Apparently Democrat minorities deserve representation, but Republican minorities do not.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 29 of 73

I urge my Democrat colleagues to think about what abolishing the filibuster would mean for ordinary Americans. Of course it would mean decreased representation for any American whose party was in the minority. But it would also mean highly unstable government policy (and a resulting lack of confidence in government) as well as a sharp increase in partisanship – which I venture to say is not what we need right now.

Abolish the filibuster, and policy will shift sharply with it. Social policy – on abortion, religious freedom, and other issues. Regulatory policy. Tax policy. Foreign policy. The list goes on. And such incessant changes of national policy would unquestionably heighten partisanship in this country. As the laws became more extreme, the tension between Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, would only heighten. Here in Congress, yes, but most importantly throughout the country.

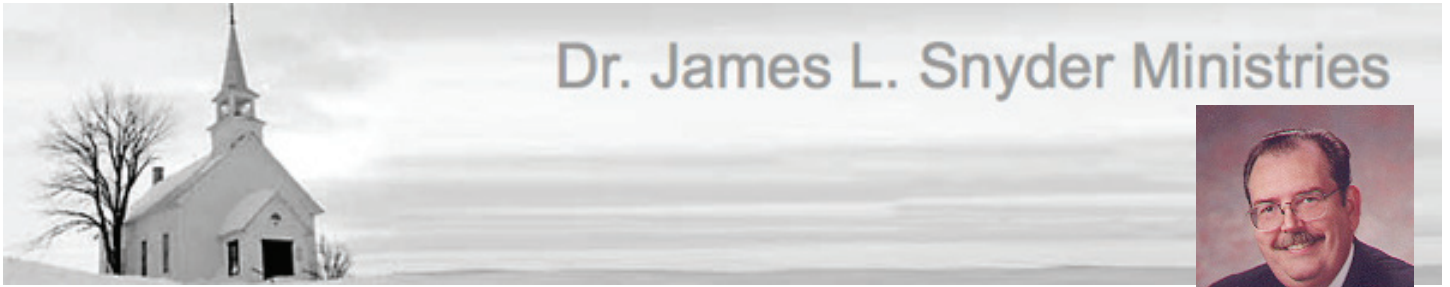
When Republicans were repeatedly faced with the prospect of abolishing the legislative filibuster during the previous administration, we said “no.” Not because there wasn’t important legislation we wanted to pass, but because we knew that the best thing for our country – and for our future representation in the Senate – was to preserve this essential protection for the minority party. I urge my Democrat colleagues to think of their future and our country and make the same decision.

“South Dakota is the best state in the nation in which to live, work, and raise a family, and I’ve been continually humbled by the support and trust its people have afforded me over the years. Each time I’ve asked South Dakotans for the opportunity to represent them in Congress, I’ve done so because of a fundamental desire to do whatever I could to make their lives – and our way of life – safer, stronger, and more prosperous. I’ve always promised that I would do the work, even when it was hard, uncomfortable, or unpopular. That work continues, which is why after careful consideration and prayer, and with the support of my family, I’m asking South Dakotans for the opportunity to continue serving them in the U.S. Senate. South Dakota deserves a strong and effective senator who can deliver the results they expect. I am uniquely positioned to get that job done, and I look forward to earning the support of all South Dakotans in the 2022 election for U.S. Senate.”

JOHN THUNE
• U.S. SENATE •

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 30 of 73



Splish Splash, I Forgot to Take A Bath

If you had the opportunity to speak to the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, she would probably tell you that one of my strengths is forgetting. I'm not sure how far into the subject she would get.

When it comes to forgetting, I am outstanding on the back lawn, and my expertise in this area is beyond description.

There is nothing I cannot forget. Also, I can forget things that never happened. So please don't ask me how because I have forgotten.

Unfortunately, this aspect of my personality is not very favorable with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. She, contrary to me, never forgets anything, and if she happens to forget something, it never happened.

Forgetting is not a matter of age, because I could forget many things when I was in first grade, like my homework. I told the teacher several times that my dog ate my homework, but I had forgotten that I did not have a dog at the time.

I'm not sure what I have missed out in life by forgetting this or that. It might be good not to know what I have forgotten.

One day this past week, I had been working hard all day, sweating like a pig and was worn out. It was towards the end of the afternoon, and the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came in, looked at me and said, "Are you ready to go?"

That question caught me off guard because I had no idea what she was talking about. I thought she was joking, so I replied to her by saying, "I'm sorry, I'm already gone." Then I laughed.

She looked at me and was not laughing, so I put two and two together and came up with the solution that I was in trouble. This is the one thing that I have not forgotten in our relationship. I always know when I'm in trouble. But for the life of me, and it was my life on the line, I couldn't figure out what she was talking about.

"Don't you remember we have an appointment this afternoon with some friends?"

I responded by saying, "I guess I have forgotten."

Looking at me, she scowled and said, "Hurry up; we have to leave in five minutes."

Another idea invaded my tiny gray cells, and that was, I had forgotten to take a bath after my workload this afternoon.

"But," I tried to explain to my wife, "I haven't taken a bath yet."

"I know," she said sarcastically, "I can smell it from here."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 31 of 73

In my condition, it would take me over a half hour to shower. Then, another half hour to get dressed for the occasion. On my way to the bathroom, I realized I was in grave trouble.

Forgetting is not that serious. It's what you forget that makes the difference.

I forgot to take a bath that afternoon after my work session, and therefore I put my wife and myself in serious trouble with our friends.

We made up for it and worked everything out, thankfully.

There are other things that I forget that get me into trouble.

If I forget to brush my teeth some morning, it makes no difference. If I forget to shave one morning, that in itself doesn't make much of a difference. There are many things that I can forget that make no difference at all.

Looking back, I remember the first time I forgot our wedding anniversary. That is something that does make a difference. It was an expensive experience that I have never forgotten.

I found out that wives always remember anniversaries and special dates.

I can't forget her birthday because it is two days after my birthday. If she gets me a birthday card on my birthday and maybe a present, I have two days to get her birthday card and a present. That has worked out very well throughout the years.

The problem is, there is no reminder to me of our wedding anniversary. Yes, I do know when we were married, how in the world could I ever forget that? But, throughout the years, time goes by so fast that I forget it's our anniversary coming up.

Then there is the subject of our family's birthdays. I'm not sure, but I think someone in our family has a birthday every month, and I have no idea whose it is. I can't even remember our children's birthday.

The day they were born was a very special day, but I can't remember when it comes up after all these years.

Several years ago, I worked out a solution to this. I don't have to know whose birthday it is on any given month. My wife knows it exactly. She knows the day and the hour that all her relatives were born.

What I do at the beginning of each month is casually float a question to her, "Whose birthday is it this month?" Then I smile a very infection smile in her direction.

One time she smiled back at me and said, "This month is your birthday."

I thought about one of my favorite verses of Scripture. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:" (Psalm 103:2).

I may forget many things, but I work hard at not forgetting God's benefits in my life. God's benefits are the richest blessings I have in this life.

EARTHTALK ™



Yellowstone's gray wolves, reintroduced to the region in the 1990s, are now at risk from hunting outside of park borders. Credit: Patrice Schoefolt, Pexels.com.

Dear EarthTalk: Is the recent lifting of quota restrictions on wolf hunting in Montana north of Yellowstone National Park a threat to the reintroduced wolf population there?

—J. W., Bend, OR

When the last gray wolf in Yellowstone National Park was gunned down in 1926, park managers and ranchers on neighboring lands alike rejoiced together that the dark predator of the range would no longer torment them. Wolves were blamed for poaching livestock as well as wreaking havoc on populations of traditional "game" animals like elk and deer. But a funny thing happened once the wolves were gone. Elk numbers started to skyrocket. In essence, without the wolf around to keep its population numbers in check, the elk were eating everything in sight, including the new young shoots of willow, aspen and other trees key to keeping Yellowstone's ecosystems in balance.

By the 1990s biologists managed to convince the federal government that these predators are essential to the health of the ecosystem, and gray wolves were famously reintroduced back into Yellowstone. The results have been nothing short of amazing with regard to ecosystem recovery and the return of various species of wildlife that used to be common there a century ago.

But ranchers on the periphery of the park (Wyoming, Idaho and Montana all border Yellowstone) have maintained their antipathy toward wolves given the primal canids' predilection for killing domesticated cows outside of the park for a quick and easy meal. Such situations are rare given that there is plenty of wild game for the wolves to hunt within their home base inside of Yellowstone's borders. Nevertheless, anti-environmentalists and otherwise conservative pundits have joined forces with ranchers to politicize the wolf reintroduction issue. No doubt, there is a lot of political pressure from those who make their living outside of the national park to lift all hunting restrictions on wolves that stray onto state lands.

So, it comes as no surprise that Montana would lift quotas limiting hunters and trappers to just two gray wolf kills each in regions bordering Yellowstone. A similar move in Idaho months earlier means Yellowstone's wolves are now getting it from all angles.

And, indeed, with more than 15 wolf kills in the Montana borderlands alone so far this winter, it remains to be seen whether or not the easing of the state's wolf hunting restrictions is such a good idea after all. Back in 1995-1997, 42 gray wolves were relocated from Western Canada and northwestern Montana to Yellowstone; today 123 gray wolves spread themselves across nine different packs free-roaming within the national park. While the population has grown nicely and remained stable for the last decade or so, increased hunting could send these packs into dangerous territory when it comes to their ability to reproduce themselves.

Sadly, for the wolves (and for us), a false dichotomy persists that we can't have successful livestock agriculture and preserve the ecological integrity of the world's first national park at the same time. But the fact remains that we can, especially with programs to reimburse ranchers for their rarely occurring losses to wolf predation. In the meantime, the states are likely to make it easier and easier to shoot or trap wolves that unwittingly cross over into state lands, and politics will continue to be behind it all.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 33 of 73

South Dakota COVID-19 Report

New
Confirmed
Cases

1578

New
Probable
Cases

366

Active Cases

15,927
+7,604

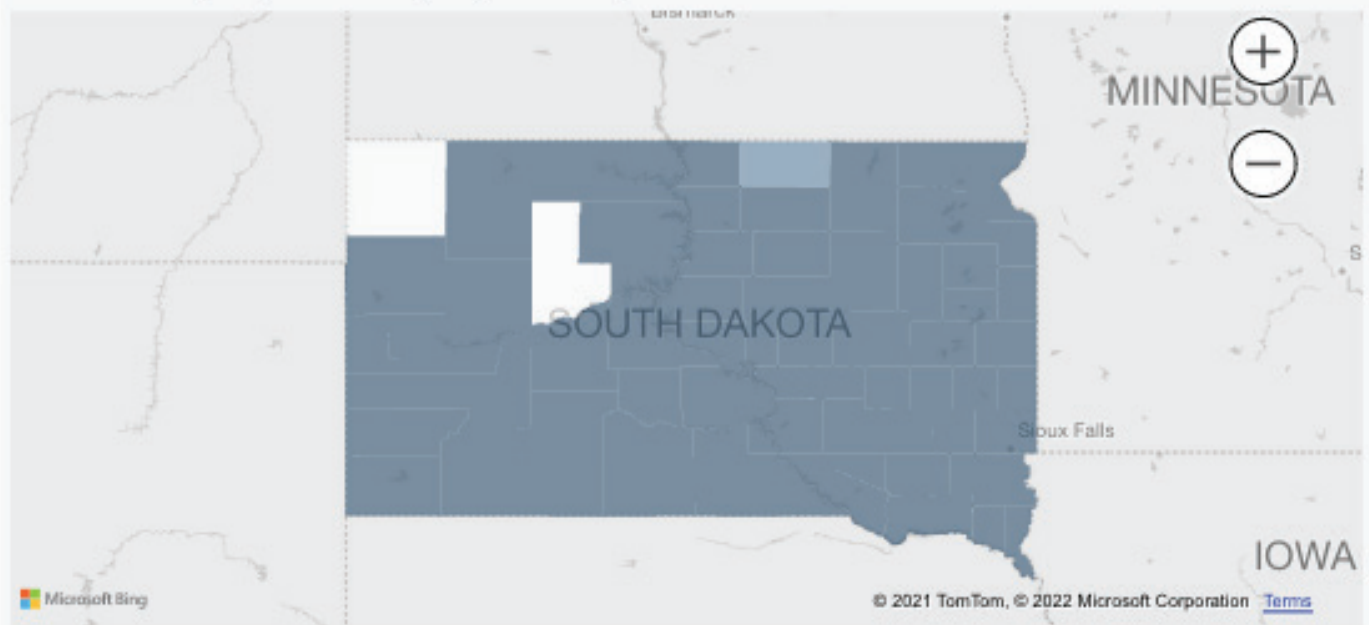
Recovered
Cases

170,962

Currently
Hospitalized

301

Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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

Total
Confirmed
Cases

161,092

Total Probable
Cases

28,319

PCR Test
Positivity Rate,
Last 7 Days

30.1%

12/30/2021 - 1/5/2022

Total Tests

1,870,473

Ever
Hospitalized

9,228

Deaths
Among
Cases

2,522

% Progress
(November Goal:
44233 Tests)

242%

% Progress
(December Goal:
44233 Tests)

258%

% Progress
(January Goal:
44233 Tests)

83%

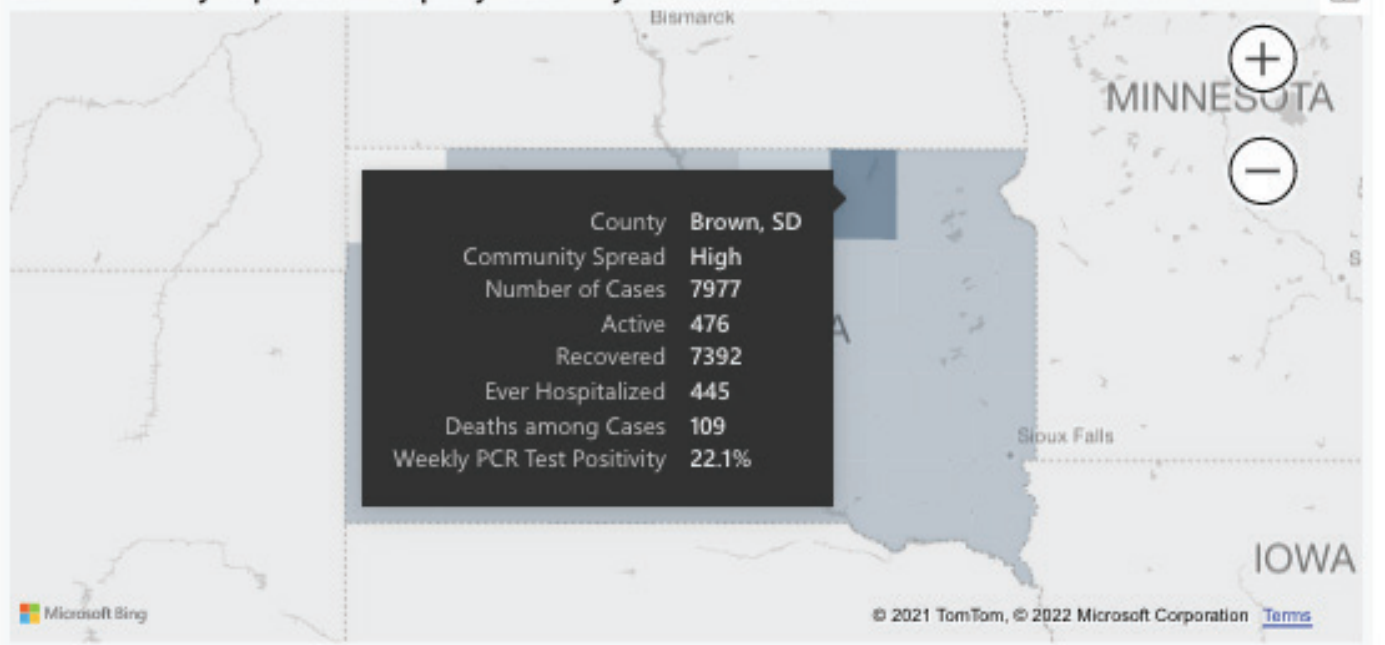
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 34 of 73

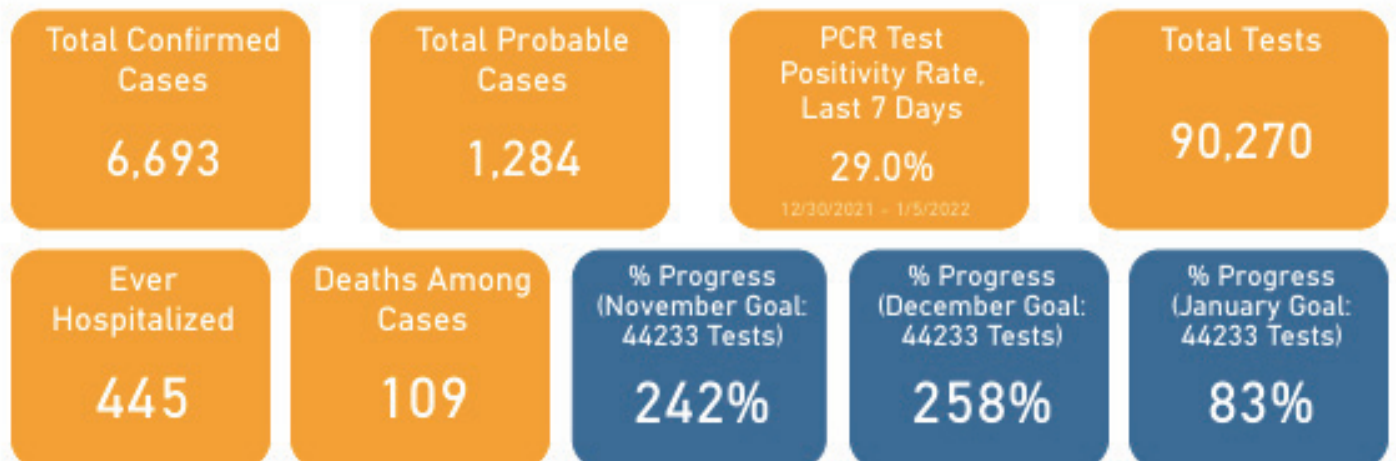
Brown County COVID-19 Report



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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



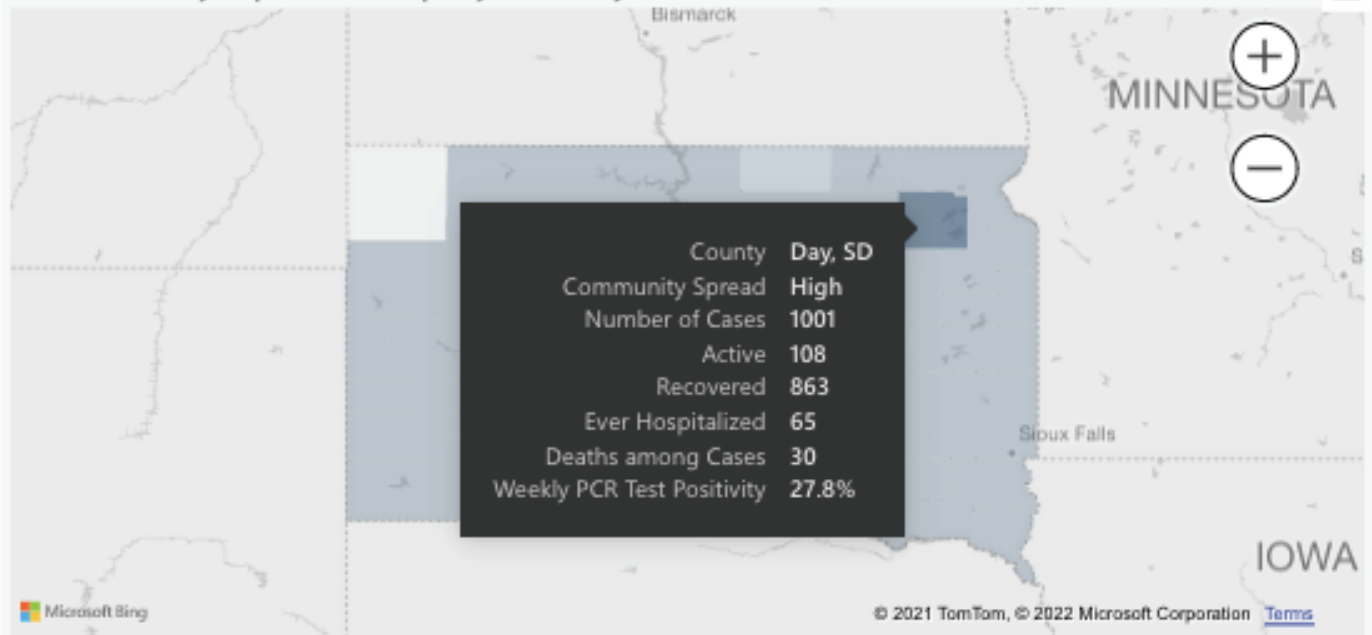
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 35 of 73

Day County COVID-19 Report

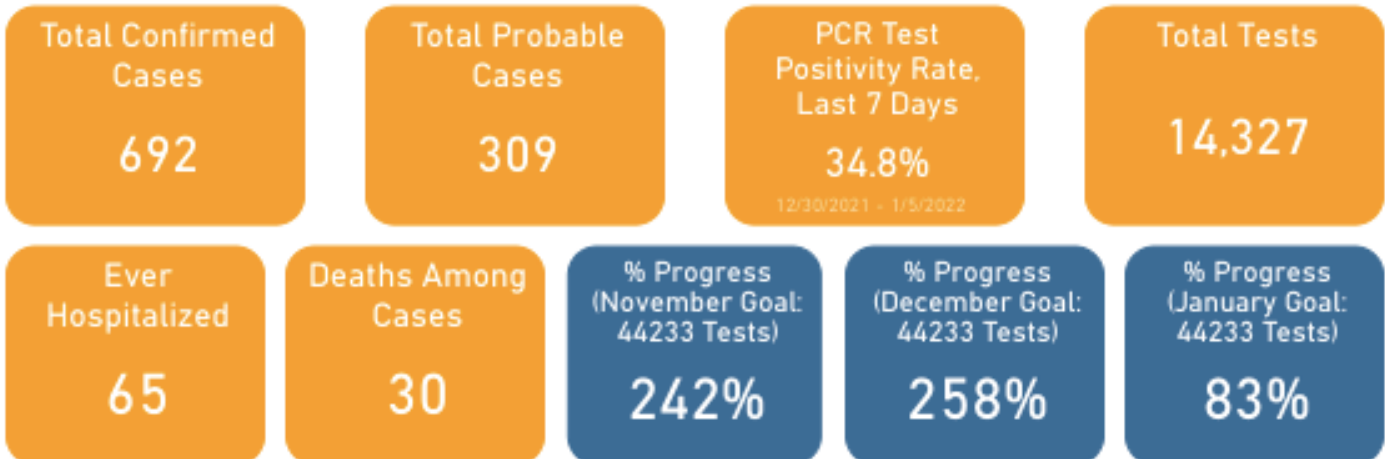


Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread: Low Moderate Substantial High

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



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 36 of 73

COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Currently Hospitalized	+61	301
Deaths Among Cases	+36	2522
Ever Hospitalized		9228
Active Cases		15927
Recovered Cases		170962
Total Cases		189411

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	99348	1159
Male	90063	1363

VARIANT CASES OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Variant	# of Cases
Delta (B.1.617.2 & AY lineages)	1281
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	176
Omicron (B.1.1.529)	22
Gamma (P.1)	4
Beta (B.1.351)	2

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	11557	0
10-19 years	22860	0
20-29 years	33038	11
30-39 years	31980	43
40-49 years	26538	67
50-59 years	24906	188
60-69 years	20723	386
70-79 years	10758	583
80+ years	7051	1244

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian / Pacific Islander	2502	1%
Black	4617	2%
Hispanic	7878	4%
Native American	22811	12%
Other	1798	1%
Unknown	4460	2%
White	145345	77%

Groton Area School District
 Active COVID-19 Cases
 Updated January 7, 2022; 10:10 AM

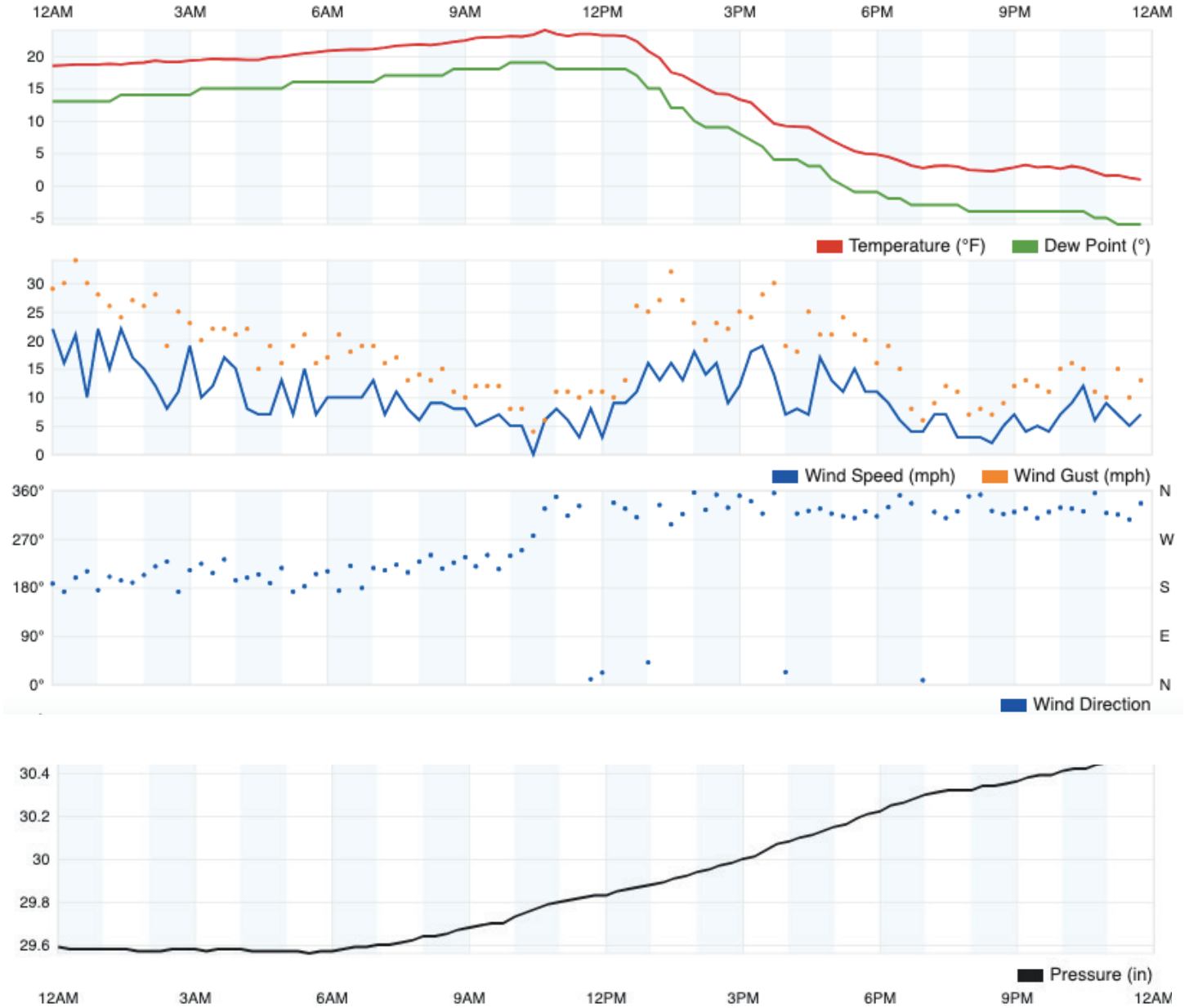
Increase of 1 from two weeks ago

J	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	S	T
K	G										0	1	2	t	o
														a	t
														f	a
														f	l
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	5

Groton Daily Independent

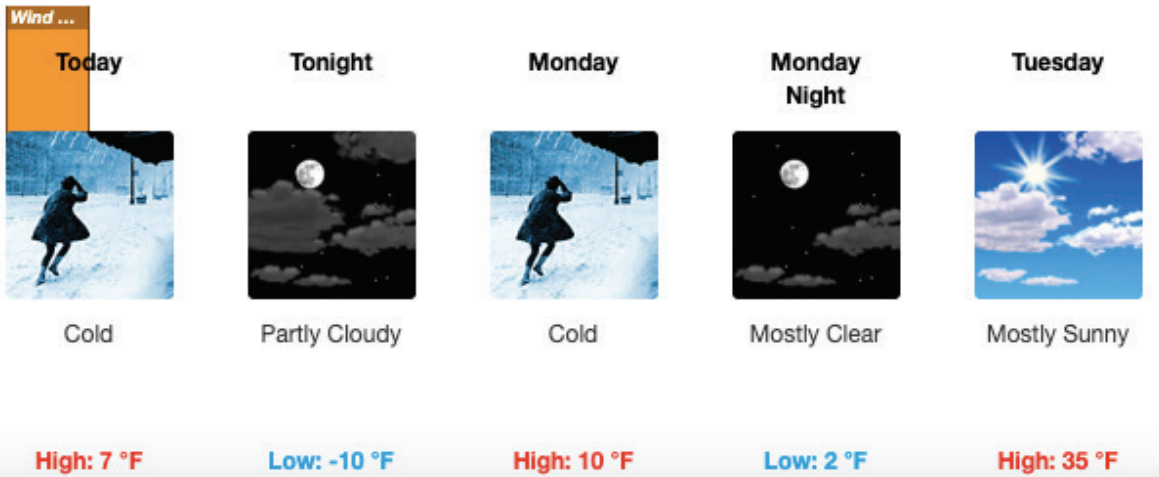
Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 37 of 73

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 38 of 73



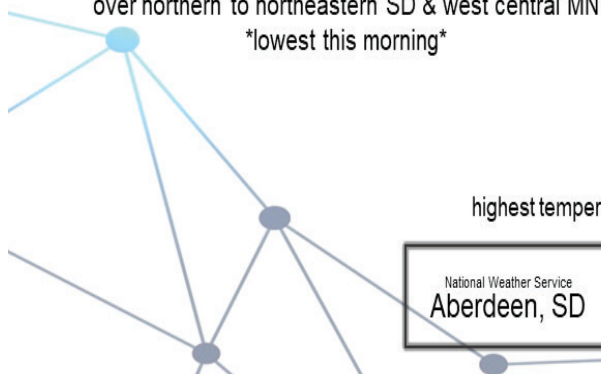
Today & Monday

COLD

HIGHS: 4 to 34°

Morning Wind Chills of -20 to -35

over northern to northeastern SD & west central MN
lowest this morning



highest temperatures over south central SD

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/abr

Tuesday through Thursday

WARMER

HIGHS: 32 to 50°

Dry and cold high pressure will dominate our weather through Monday, with temperatures ranging from the single digits over far northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota, to the 20s and low 30s over portions of central South Dakota. A January thaw is then expected Tuesday through at least Thursday.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 39 of 73

Today in Weather History

January 9, 1982: Winds of 20 to 40 mph accompanied by 1 to 3 inches of snow created ground blizzard conditions and extreme wind chills from the 9th through mid-afternoon on the 12th. There were two deaths from the exposure attributed to the storm, including a 69-year old Scotland woman and a woman from Veblen in Marshall County. Both tried to walk after their vehicles stalled. Near zero visibilities and snowdrifts to 5 feet high forced closures of numerous highways. Also, minor power outages were reported.

January 9, 1997: A powerful Alberta Clipper and a deep Arctic High brought widespread and prolonged blizzard conditions, heavy drifting snow, and dangerous wind chills of 40 to 80 below to central and north-east South Dakota and west-central Minnesota. North winds were from 30 to 50 mph gusting to 60 mph. The clipper dropped from 2 to 7 inches of snowfall on top of an already solid 2 to the 5-foot snowpack. As with previous storms, most roads again became blocked by huge snowdrifts. As a result of the blockage and the blizzard conditions, both Interstates 29 and 90 closed along with all state highways leaving hundreds of people stranded to wait out the storm. This winter has been the worst for road closings. Many people became stuck in snowdrifts or went off the road because of low visibility and had to be rescued. One dramatic rescue near Webster, involving tens of rescue workers, occurred after a woman was stranded in her vehicle for nearly 40 hours. A couple with a one-year-old was rescued after spending a night in their car, and they were unharmed. A Wakpala woman died from carbon monoxide poisoning in her stalled pickup on Highway 1806 near Wakpala. Emergency personnel had a tough time responding to emergencies. Some emergencies took up to several hours to go short distances. A rural Leola man died when emergency workers could not get to him in time. In McLaughlin, seven people had to be taken by air ambulance because there was no way out.

All area schools were closed on the 9th and 10th, with most schools at this point in the winter season missing over 7 days. A state record was set when Faulkton School had closed for its 13th day. Mail was delayed, and area airports had flight delays or were closed. Many businesses were also closed and were suffering from economic losses due to this storm and previous storms because customers could not get to them. Many grocery stores ran low or out of bread, milk, and other food necessities. There were some power outages across the area, but they were not widespread. The power was out at Isabel, Timber Lake, and Firesteel for as much as 8 hours. The power outage in Isabel resulted in extensive water pipe breaks at the Isabel School. Willow Lake was without power for over 2 days. Some homes across the area were also without heat for several days in the bitter cold. The majority of ranchers were unable to access feed for cattle, sheep, and hogs. As a result of the extreme conditions and lack of food, over fifty thousand livestock died. Also, many livestock suffered frostbite and were significantly weakened. There was also a lot of wildlife and pheasants killed. As a result, the Emergency Feed Grain Donation Program was activated for the ranchers. One rancher said that he had been ranching in this area for 34 years and had never lost cattle before. Also, some dairy farmers had to dump their milk because trucks could not get them in time.

Some people were trapped in their homes for up to several days as snowdrifts buried their homes and blocked the roads, with some people having to crawl out their windows. In Wilmot, a 12-foot drift covered the community home, where residents had to turn the lights on during the day. As a result of snow removal budget depletions and other storm damages, President Clinton declared all of the counties a disaster area. Snowplows from Iowa, Nebraska, and plows and workforce from the South Dakota National Guard helped break through hundreds of roads. The snowdrifts in some places were packed so hard and were measured at 300 pounds per square inch. Some longtime residents said this had been the worst winter they had seen in their lifetimes. The total damage estimate for this January blizzard and the previous January winter storm is 50 million dollars. This includes the added snow removal costs, livestock losses, building damages, and other economic losses.

1880: A rapidly deepening low-pressure system produced powerful winds along the Pacific Northwest coast. While wind measurements were limited, there were widespread reports of wind damage.

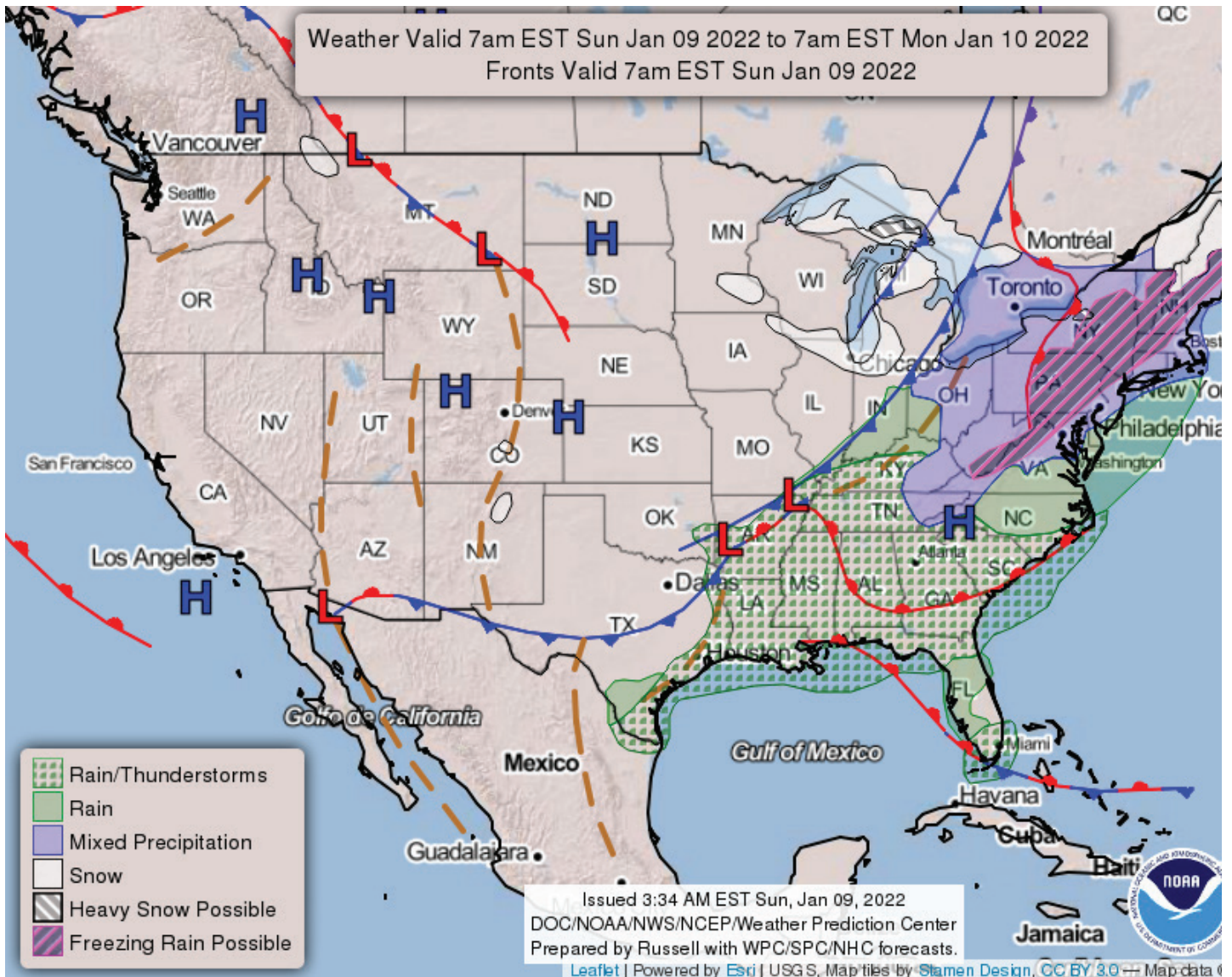
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 40 of 73

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 24 °F at 10:46 AM
Low Temp: 1 °F at 11:55 PM
Wind: 34 mph at 12:22 AM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 53 in 2012
Record Low: -31° in 2010
Average High: 23°F
Average Low: 2°F
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.19
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.19
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:09:59 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:08:54 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 41 of 73



PRAYER: FORCE OR FOOLISHNESS

Prayer, for some, is a force that enables them to approach God in worship and wonder or in times of need for the necessities of life. For others, prayer is utter and complete foolishness because they believe it is foolish and a waste of time.

In the life of David, it was a dominant force. Whenever harmful words hurt him, or he received a wound from a battle or had a need that was beyond his limitations, he turned to God in prayer. Listen carefully to his words: "I am a man of prayer."

It is always interesting to listen carefully to someone introduce themselves: "I am a doctor...I am the CEO of...I am a sales representative at...I work for...I am the one who...I set a record by...I am the owner of." We seem to want others to recognize us for what we are doing, what we have done, and not who we are.

But with all his power and prestige, wealth and wisdom, David wanted others to recognize him as someone who was entirely dependent on God: "I am a man of prayer."

Prayer was a force in the life of David. As we read his prayer in the Psalms, we discover that he had no definite time of prayer, no specific place to pray, no particular position he assumed when he prayed, and it seems as though most of the time when he prayed, he was alone.

David realized that prayer was a force in his life. It brought forgiveness when he sinned, peace when he was anxious, victory when he was embattled and constant joy.

Prayer: Father, help us see the need for prayer in our lives when we look at the results of prayer in the life of others. We need You, and we do need prayer. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today:— Give us aid against the enemy, for the help of man is worthless. Psalm 108:12

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 42 of 73

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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 43 of 73

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White \$41.54/year
- Colored \$74.55/year
- Colored \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly* \$21.30/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- 1 Month \$15.98
- 3 Months \$21.30
- 6 Months \$26.63
- 9 Months \$31.95
- 12 Months \$42.60

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 44 of 73

News from the Associated Press

Agenda in Pierre: Marijuana, federal windfall, social issues

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's rapid-fire legislative session kicks off Tuesday with lawmakers prepared to debate legalizing marijuana, how to spend nearly \$1 billion in federal coronavirus relief and what to do with a spate of bills touching on some of the nation's most incendiary social issues.

The heightened tensions of an election year, a bitter spat between House and Senate Republicans and one of the shortest legislative sessions in the country ensure that politics in Pierre will be lively this year. And as if those issues won't keep lawmakers busy enough during the nine-week session, a House impeachment investigation is gaining steam as it probes Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg's conduct in a fatal car crash in 2020.

Here are four things to know about the session:

A HOUSE DIVIDED

Republicans have seen their numbers swell to historic numbers in the Statehouse, but that does not mean all is well for the party. A growing divide between mainstream Republicans and a right wing of the party is embodied in two of the most powerful GOP lawmakers: Sen. Lee Schoenbeck, who presides over the Senate, and House Speaker Spencer Gosch.

Schoenbeck, who represents the party's old guard, describes some House members as "crazies" for their right-wing stances and undermined Gosch's attempt to keep secret the names of House lawmakers who petitioned for a special session last year. Gosch accused the senator of employing "DC political tactics" during redistricting.

Their beef didn't end with redistricting — a process that left Republicans openly fuming in the halls of the Capitol in November. The two lawmakers have traded jabs during committee meetings leading up to the session and will be trying to outmaneuver each other as they guide bills through their respective chambers this year.

The divide during redistricting left Democrats in a rare position of power in Pierre. With House Republicans split on whether to approve a political map that originated in the Senate, Democrats were able to gain some key concessions and cast deciding votes.

House Democratic leader Rep. Jamie Smith said he'll be looking for opportunities to do that again.

"It's not a secret at all that the Republican caucus is a divided caucus," Smith said. "I believe that our eight votes will be very important at certain times during our legislative session. It would be a mistake for people to overlook the Democratic Party in Pierre."

However, Republican caucus leaders, particularly Sen. Gary Cammack and Rep. Kent Peterson, will be looking to smooth tensions to ensure they keep control.

"Redistricting was really hard," Peterson said, acknowledging a tense three days of negotiations. But he called the new year "a reset point."

Republican leaders have scheduled regular sitdowns to discuss legislation, Cammack said, "so we're talking to each other and not talking at each other."

POT LEGALIZATION

Lawmakers spent the last year figuring out what to do with two voter-approved measures to legalize both medical and recreational marijuana. While a medical program has been implemented, recreational pot remains illegal after the state Supreme Court ruled that the ballot measure violated the state constitution. And some lawmakers want to change the status of both.

A legislative committee has crafted a pair of bills to legalize and then tax recreational marijuana for adults. Also, dozens of bills propose more regulations on the current medical marijuana law, including putting a three-plant maximum on medical users who grow cannabis at home or disallowing home growing altogether.

But lawmakers will be taking up an issue that's politically fraught for Gov. Kristi Noem. She opposed

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 45 of 73

marijuana legalization, tried to slow implementation of the medical marijuana law last year and launched a lawsuit that killed recreational pot legalization. She has struck a softer tone recently on legalization.

Sen. Michael Rohl, who has pushed for legalization, said Noem told lawmakers on a recent call that "we were driving the bus" on marijuana legislation.

It's not clear whether Noem would veto recreational marijuana if a bill legalizing it reaches her desk. Rohl said he wants to "put it on her desk and find out."

Many lawmakers see pot legalization as inevitable — either through their action, federal legislation or another ballot measure in November.

"Some of the folks believe that we're either going to do it or have it done to us," Cammack said.

FEDERAL CORONAVIRUS RELIEF

The Legislature is flush with funds, largely thanks to federal pandemic relief. And Noem has proposed over \$1 billion in projects that address child care, housing needs and water access.

"This appropriations committee is going to be dealing with more spending than any appropriations committee in the history of South Dakota," said Schoenbeck.

The committee, which irons out the budget, was already at work last week, trying to get a head start on the session. But the budget is perennially the final item settled in Pierre.

"Any time you're talking about money, it's contentious," Peterson said.

Lawmakers will come up with their own proposals on spending the federal money but will have to stay within federal guidelines. Republicans also want to make sure the federal money is spent on one-time projects that will last long into the future.

The state has also seen soaring tax revenues, and the governor has proposed a historic raise of 6% for state employees, teachers and government-funded medical providers -- a massive leap for an allocation that has perennially been a budget squeeze in the Capitol. Democrats say it should be even more.

The Senate Democratic leader, Sen. Troy Heinert, said the raise proposal was "good, but that doesn't even meet the rate of inflation."

He pointed out that South Dakota has one of the lowest rates of average teacher pay in the nation.

SOCIAL ISSUES

It's an election year, and lawmakers will be hitting on plenty of hot-button social issues that fire up conservative voters.

Noem, who is running for reelection while also positioning herself for a possible 2024 White House bid, has already previewed legislation addressing abortion, transgender athletes, the country's history on race and prayer in schools.

Some conservative lawmakers don't want to stop with Noem's proposals. They have brought their own ban on transgender women and girl athletes with a sharper enforcement mechanism, as well as proposals that would ban transgender students from using bathrooms that match their gender identity and their access to gender-confirming hormone therapies and operations.

"I think this session is going to be quite brutal," said Susan Williams, who leads an organization that advocates for transgender youth called The Transformation Project.

In the past, Noem has sounded notes of caution on legislation that singles out transgender youth, but she faced political fallout from social conservatives when she partially vetoed a bill that addressed transgender athletes last year. With her support of a ban on transgender women and girl athletes from leagues matching their gender identity, the legislation appears bound to succeed. But some top Republicans said that doesn't mean every bill affecting transgender people will get their nod.

"Some instances we might find a way to craft legislation that makes sense," Schoenbeck said. "For other ones, we've got to get them to go away."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 46 of 73

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

05-15-27-28-32

(five, fifteen, twenty-seven, twenty-eight, thirty-two)

Estimated jackpot: \$47,000

Lotto America

05-06-34-37-50, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 2

(five, six, thirty-four, thirty-seven, fifty; Star Ball: five; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$6 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$300 million

Powerball

20-21-36-60-65, Powerball: 13, Power Play: 10

(twenty, twenty-one, thirty-six, sixty, sixty-five; Powerball: thirteen; Power Play: ten)

Estimated jackpot: \$20 million

Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Castlewood 66, Deuel 33

Chamberlain 78, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 18

Edgemont 35, Sioux County, Neb. 33

Faith 41, Harding County 34

Faulkton 63, North Central Co-Op 16

Harrisburg 53, Huron 49

Jones County 42, Bison 25

Kadoka Area 63, Colome 18

Mobridge-Pollock 68, Tiospa Zina Tribal 23

Philip 63, Oelrichs 22

Potter County 60, Strasburg-Zeeland, N.D. 22

Rapid City Central 56, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 47

Rapid City Stevens 48, Sioux Falls Jefferson 27

Sioux Falls Lincoln 55, Aberdeen Central 40

Sioux Falls Washington 65, Pierre 58

St. Thomas More 41, Bridgewater-Emery 38

Unity Christian, Iowa 65, Sioux Falls Christian 62

Wagner 51, Corsica/Stickney 38

Wall 54, Bennett County 24

Winner 54, Gregory 33

DSU Classic=

Canistota 59, Flandreau Indian 13

Crofton, Neb. 43, Hamlin 42

Deubrook 58, Rapid City Christian 34

Hill City 59, Elkton-Lake Benton 34

Howard 49, Scotland 48

Irene-Wakonda 46, Lemmon 28

Lakota Tech 74, Garretson 66

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 47 of 73

St. Francis Indian 55, Freeman 19
Redfield Holiday Classic=
Aberdeen Roncalli 68, Wolsey-Wessington 54
Estelline/Hendricks 49, Stanley County 28
Florence/Henry 49, Sully Buttes 39
Langford 59, Little Wound 41
Platte-Geddes 43, Groton Area 27
Redfield 54, Dupree 48
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 62, Northwestern 42
Sacred Hoops Classic=
Custer 55, Crow Creek 47
Lower Brule 53, Kimball/White Lake 51
Madison 45, Pine Ridge 41
West Central 59, White River 34
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=
Waverly-South Shore vs. Leola/Frederick, ccd.

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Central 64, Sioux Falls Lincoln 63
Aberdeen Christian 78, Oakes, N.D. 50
Castlewood 60, Deuel 51
Corsica/Stickney 76, Wagner 51
Edgemont 34, Sioux County, Neb. 18
Faulkton 52, North Central Co-Op 16
Harding County 54, Faith 52
Harrisburg 67, Huron 53
Ipswich 55, Northwestern 41
Kadoka Area 63, Colome 57
Little Wound 92, Lakota Tech 89
Mobridge-Pollock 45, Tiospa Zina Tribal 44
Philip 57, Oelrichs 47
Potter County 77, Strasburg-Zeeland, N.D. 31
Sioux Falls Christian 56, Unity Christian, Iowa 54
Sioux Falls Jefferson 64, Rapid City Stevens 52
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 76, Rapid City Central 30
Sioux Falls Washington 65, Pierre 58
St. Thomas More 53, Sturgis Brown 15
Tea Area 70, Crofton, Neb. 40
Wakpala 65, St. Francis Indian 57
Big East Conference Tournament=
Beresford 60, Baltic 32
Flandreau 70, Sioux Valley 40
Garretson 42, Chester 38
Sacred Hoops Classic=
Crow Creek 57, Kimball/White Lake 51
Custer 53, Parkston 48, OT
Lennox 95, Pine Ridge 33
Lower Brule 67, West Central 59
Shiloh, N.D. 53, Rapid City Christian 52

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 48 of 73

Winner 48, Madison 45

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

Mayo carries South Dakota St. past South Dakota 84-65

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Zeke Mayo had a season-high 21 points, making 5 of 6 3-pointers, as South Dakota State beat South Dakota 84-65 on Saturday night.

Baylor Scheierman had 19 points, seven rebounds and six assists for South Dakota State (13-4, 4-0 Summit League), which won its fourth consecutive game. Luke Appel added 13 points. Douglas Wilson had 10 points.

Mason Archambault had 16 points for the Coyotes (7-7, 0-3). Hunter Goodrick added 15 points. Kruz Perrott-Hunt had 10 points.

GOP Sen. John Thune of South Dakota says he'll seek 4th term

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — U.S. Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the second-ranking Republican leader in the Senate, announced Saturday he is seeking reelection to a fourth term in 2022.

Thune, who turned 61 on Friday, has mulled retiring from the Senate for months. But he has a clear path to reelection in reliably-red South Dakota even after he drew the ire of then-President Donald Trump late in 2020 for speaking out against his attempt to overturn the results of the presidential election. Since then, Thune has offered restrained criticism of Trump's political imitators at times, but mostly focused on scuttling the Democrats' plans.

"I've always promised that I would do the work, even when it was hard, uncomfortable, or unpopular," Thune said in a statement on Twitter. "That work continues, which is why after careful consideration and prayer, and with the support of my family, I'm asking South Dakotans for the opportunity to continue serving them in the U.S. Senate."

Both parties are fighting for control of a closely divided Senate in 2022.

Thune is a likely successor to Sen. Mitch McConnell as the leader of the GOP's Senate caucus. As Thune considered retiring, powerful Republicans, from McConnell to Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, urged him to seek another six-year term.

Graham said Saturday on Twitter that Thune's decision is "good news for all those who appreciate practical and strong conservative leadership."

Thune in 2016 carried South Dakota by nearly 72% of the vote, but Trump's suggestion in 2020 that he should face a primary challenger emboldened some Republicans who argued he had not shown enough loyalty to the former president. A handful of little-known Republicans have said they would challenge Thune.

Thune's choice signals a willingness to defy Trump, whose clout has often forced other previously politically secure Republicans to leave Congress. Elected Republicans who have previously crossed Trump and subsequently retired include former Republican Sens. Jeff Flake of Arizona and Bob Corker of Tennessee.

Two of the 10 current House Republicans who voted last January to impeach Trump after he goaded supporters to attack the Capitol have also decided to leave office: Reps. Anthony Gonzalez of Ohio and Adam Kinzinger of Illinois. In addition, Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney was removed from her House GOP leadership job and at least two others face Trump-backed primary challengers.

Should Thune prevail in a primary or if Trump fails to find a credible rival to oppose him, Trump risks being seen as having diminished sway within the party.

Thune, who is South Dakota's elder GOP statesman, has served in Congress for 22 years and ushered in a period of Republican dominance over state politics. However, he had openly expressed hesitation about running for another term, calling it a "family decision" as he mulled it over in recent months.

Democrats seized on Thune's hesitation, pointing out that Brian Bengs, a military veteran and lawyer

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 49 of 73

from Aberdeen, had already jumped into the race in November.

"South Dakotans deserve a U.S. Senator who actually wants the job and will deliver on important issues like healthcare, education, and good-paying jobs, and that's why it is so important to elect a Democrat," Randy Seiler, the state Democratic Party's chair, said in a statement.

Thune has \$14.8 million in campaign cash, according to the most recent federal report.

Man sentenced in 2020 Sioux Falls fatal shooting

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 22-year-old man has been sentenced to 50 years in prison in the shooting death of a man in Sioux Falls.

The Argus Leader reports Josue Emmanuel Hernandez of Sioux Falls was sentenced Friday in the Dec. 30, 2020 homicide of Mitchell Houchins, 30, of Sioux Falls. Hernandez was initially charged with first degree murder before taking a plea deal on Nov. 5 that saw his possible sentencing capped at 80 years after pleading guilty to manslaughter.

A judge sentenced him to 80 with 30 years suspended and credit for nearly a year served.

Due to prior felony convictions, Hernandez is required to serve 75% of his sentence before being eligible for parole.

Seedlings help Louisiana park replace destroyed trees

MANDEVILLE, La. (AP) — Donated seedlings and volunteer labor have let a Louisiana state park replace more than 400 of the cypress trees destroyed by hurricanes over the past two years.

Volunteers planted the trees Wednesday at Fontainebleau State Park in Mandeville, Louisiana State Parks said in a news release.

The park lost many trees to Hurricane Zeta in 2020 and Hurricane Ida in 2021.

"While our Louisiana State Parks staff has made substantial progress in clearing debris and rebuilding our state parks that were hit hard by storms the past two years, there is still much work needed to bring back our parks," said Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser.

Twelve students from the University of South Dakota, brought to Louisiana through a group called Common Ground Relief, were among volunteers from several organizations.

Also participating were St. Tammany Master Gardener Association, the Sierra Club's Delta Chapter/Honey Island Group, the Louisiana Master Naturalists of Greater New Orleans, Louisiana Iris Conservation Initiative, and the Rotary Club of Mandeville.

The department did not identify the trees' donor.

Kazakhstan says 164 killed in week of protests

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Kazakhstan's health ministry said Sunday that 164 people have been killed in protests that have rocked the country over the past week.

The figures reported on the state news channel Khabar-24 are a significant rise from previous tallies. It is not clear if the deaths refer only to civilians or if law-enforcement deaths are included. Kazakh authorities said earlier Sunday that 16 police or national guard had been killed. Authorities previously gave the civilian death toll as 26.

Most of the deaths — 103 — were in Almaty, the country's largest city, where demonstrators seized government buildings and set some afire, according to the ministry. The country's ombudswoman for children's rights said that three of those killed were minors, including a 4-year-old girl.

The ministry earlier reported more than 2,200 people sought treatment for injuries from the protests, and the Interior Ministry said about 1,300 security officers were injured.

The office of Kazakhstan's president said that about 5,800 people were detained by police during the protests that developed into violence last week and prompted a Russia-led military alliance to send troops

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 50 of 73

to the country.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's office said Sunday that order has stabilized in the country and that authorities have regained control of administrative buildings that were occupied by protesters, some of which were set on fire.

The Russian TV station Mir-24 said sporadic gunfire was heard in Almaty on Sunday but it was unclear whether they were warning shots by law enforcement. Tokayev on Friday said he had authorized police and the military to shoot to kill to restore order.

Almaty's airport, which had been taken by protesters last week, remained closed but was expected to resume operating on Monday.

Protests over a sharp rise in prices of LPG fuel began in the country's west on Jan. 2 and spread throughout the country, apparently reflecting discontent extending beyond the fuel prices.

The same party has ruled Kazakhstan since independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Any figures aspiring to oppose the government have either been repressed, sidelined, or co-opted and financial hardship is widespread despite Kazakhstan's enormous reserves of oil, natural gas, uranium and minerals.

Tokayev contends the demonstrations were ignited by "terrorists" with foreign backing, although the protests have shown no obvious leaders or organization. The statement from his office on Sunday said the detentions included "a sizable number of foreign nationals," but gave no details.

It was unclear how many of those detained remained in custody on Sunday.

The former head of Kazakhstan's counterintelligence and anti-terror agency has been arrested on charges of attempted government overthrow. The arrest of Karim Masimov, which was announced Saturday, came just days after he was removed as head of the National Security Committee by Tokayev.

No details were given about what Masimov was alleged to have done that would constitute an attempted government overthrow. The National Security Committee, a successor to the Soviet-era KGB, is responsible for counterintelligence, the border guards service and anti-terror activities.

Authorities say security forces killed 26 demonstrators in this week's unrest and that 16 law-enforcement officers died.

At Tokayev's request, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Russia-led military alliance of six former Soviet states, authorized sending about 2,500 mostly Russian troops to Kazakhstan as peacekeepers.

Some of the force is guarding government facilities in the capital, Nur-Sultan, which "made it possible to release part of the forces of Kazakhstani law enforcement agencies and redeploy them to Almaty to participate in the counter-terrorist operation," according to a statement from Tokayev's office.

In a sign that the demonstrations were more deeply rooted than just the fuel price rise, many demonstrators shouted "Old man out," a reference to Nursultan Nazarbayev, who was president from Kazakhstan's independence until he resigned in 2019 and anointed Tokayev as his successor.

Nazarbayev retained substantial power as head of the National Security Council. But Tokayev replaced him as council head amid this week's unrest, possibly aiming at a concession to mollify protesters. However, Nazarbayev's adviser Aido Ukibay said Sunday that it was done at Nazarbayev's initiative, according to the Kazakh news agency KazTag.

Snow cleared after deaths of 22 people at Pakistani resort

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Roads at a popular Pakistani resort were cleared Sunday after the deaths of 22 people who were stuck in their cars during a heavy snowstorm as temperatures plummeted, officials said.

More than 4 feet (1 meter) of snow fell in the area of the Murree Hills resort in the town of Murree near the capital Islamabad on Friday night and early Saturday. The heavy snow caused hundreds of vehicles to become buried or otherwise stuck.

Most of the victims suffered hypothermia as temperatures fell to minus 8 degrees Celsius (17.6 Fahrenheit). A rescue physician said some died of carbon monoxide poisoning from running their car heaters while their mufflers were choked by snow.

Punjab police said in a statement that all roads in and around the resort had been cleared but that in-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 51 of 73

coming traffic to the resort was still not allowed. Police said some 700 vehicles were pulled from the snow and the remaining stranded tourists were taken to safety Saturday night. Most were taken to one of five military-run relief camps and provided with medication and hot meals.

The government of Prime Minister Imran Khan came under heavy criticism for not being prepared for the situation and for acting too late, causing the heavy loss of human lives. Opposition politicians Bilawal Zardari and Mariyam Nawaz were among critics of the government's performance.

Khan acknowledged in a tweet that the administration was caught unprepared by the heavy snow and huge number of tourists traveling to the resort. Traditionally many Pakistanis, regardless of the weather forecast, flock to Murree Hills at the first report of snowfall.

Located 28 miles (46 kilometers) north of the capital of Islamabad, Murree is a popular winter resort town that attracts well over a million tourists annually. Streets leading into the town are often blocked by snow in winter.

Among the dead were an Islamabad police officer and seven members of his family, a couple with two sons and two daughters from the garrison city of Rawalpindi and four friends from the northwestern city of Mardan. Their funerals took place Sunday in their native towns.

The Islamabad officer, Naveed Iqbal, died along with his sister, three nephews and three of his children. Local media reported that in his last telephone call to his only surviving son he said: "We are just going to turn on the heat and go to sleep."

US, Japan agree to keep troops on base to curb COVID spread

By YURI KAGEYAMA Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The U.S. and Japan on Sunday agreed to keep American troops within their bases as worries grew about a sharp rise in coronavirus cases in the country.

The restrictions starting Monday will last 14 days, confining U.S. military personnel to base facilities except for "essential activities," a statement from the U.S. Forces in Japan said. The Japanese Foreign Ministry released the same statement.

The allies will share information and cooperate on coronavirus measures, "given the extraordinary virulence of the omicron variant spreading throughout Japan," the statement said.

U.S. military members will wear masks, both on and off base, when outside their homes, and will continue to carry out strict testing before leaving for and after arrival in Japan, it said.

New COVID-19 cases have surged in Japan, jumping above 8,000 on Saturday, a four-month record. The spike has been most pronounced in areas near U.S. bases. Last week, Japan asked the U.S. for cooperation in keeping its military personnel on base.

Okinawa, a southwestern group of islands that houses most of the 55,000 U.S. troops in Japan, is among the three prefectures where separate government restrictions kicked in Sunday. The measures, which last through the end of the month, include the early closing hours for restaurants, at 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. Some restaurants also must stop serving alcohol.

The restrictions also went into effect in Yamaguchi prefecture, where Iwakuni base is located, and nearby Hiroshima. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, which documents the U.S. atomic bombing of Japan at the end of World War II, and Hiroshima Castle are both closed to visitors.

Other regions may see similar restrictions if cases keep rising.

People have been warned to stay home and avoid travel. Until recently, bars, shrines and shopping districts have been jam-packed with year-end shoppers and New Year's holiday travelers.

In Tokyo, confirmed daily cases have exceeded 1,200 for the past two days, 14 times the previous week.

Throughout the pandemic, Japan has never imposed a lockdown but has implemented varying levels of restrictions, including school closures and event cancellations.

About 80% of the population have received their second vaccine shots. Boosters have barely started, with fewer than 1% receiving them despite repeated promises by the government to speed up their rollout.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 52 of 73

Japan has set up stringent border controls, barring most incoming travel except for returning residents and citizens.

Japan has reported about 18,300 COVID-19-related deaths so far. On recent days, there have been just one or two deaths, and on some days, none at all.

China's Tianjin testing all residents after omicron found

BEIJING (AP) — The numbers are small, but the major port of Tianjin may be facing China's first outbreak of omicron of any size, less than four weeks before the Winter Olympics open in nearby Beijing.

The city began mass testing of its 14 million residents on Sunday after a cluster of 20 children and adults tested positive for COVID-19, including at least two with the omicron variant. Officials said the virus has been circulating so the number of cases could grow.

China has stepped up its strict zero tolerance strategy in the run-up to the Olympics, which open Feb. 4. The Chinese capital is 115 kilometers (70 miles) northwest of Tianjin and many people regularly travel back and forth by car or on a high-speed rail link that takes less than one hour.

Elsewhere, millions of people are being confined to their homes in Xi'an and Yuzhou, two cities that are farther away but have larger outbreaks. Both have been traced to the delta variant. The outbreak in Yuzhou is also affecting Zhengzhou, the Henan provincial capital 70 kilometers (40 miles) to the north. Zhengzhou has been conducting mass testing and is closing schools starting Monday.

The first two cases confirmed in Tianjin were a 10-year-old girl and a 29-year-old woman working at the after-school center. Both were infected by the omicron variant. In subsequent testing of close contacts, 18 others tested positive and 767 tested negative as of Saturday night.

Those infected include 15 students from 8 to 13 years old, the after-school center staff member and four parents. The citywide testing is to be completed over two days. Tianjin has also closed some subway stations on two lines to try to prevent further spread.

China had reported about a dozen omicron cases previously, most among people who had arrived from abroad and were isolated. In one case in mid-December, the infection was not detected until after the person had completed two weeks of quarantine, and it spread to a few close contacts in the southern city of Guangzhou.

Will he stay or will he go? Djokovic's hearing looms large

By DENNIS PASSA AP Sports Writer

After four nights in an Australian immigration detention hotel, Novak Djokovic will get his day in court Monday in a deportation case that has polarized opinions and elicited heartfelt support for the top-ranked tennis star in his native Serbia.

Djokovic had his visa canceled after arriving at Melbourne airport last week when Australian border officials ruled that he didn't meet the criteria for an exemption to an entry requirement that all non-citizens be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

His lawyers have since filed court papers in his challenge against deportation from Australia that show Djokovic tested positive for COVID-19 last month and recovered. He used that as grounds in applying for a medical exemption to Australia's strict vaccination rules.

The case is scheduled for a virtual hearing to appeal the visa cancellation. It will take place at 10 a.m. local time in Melbourne (2300 GMT Sunday) in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia.

On Sunday, Australian media reported that a federal government bid for extra time to prepare its case against Djokovic was denied. The application, made on behalf of Home Affairs Minister Karen Andrews during the weekend, sought to adjourn the final hearing by two days — just five days from the start of the Australian Open.

Federal Circuit Court Judge Anthony Kelly refused the application and the case will resume on Monday as planned.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 53 of 73

In Serbia on Saturday, Djokovic's family held a rally in support of him in Belgrade for the third successive day, and Prime Minister Ana Brnabic assured him of her government's support over his visa battle to ensure he can enter Australia and defend his Australian Open title. The tournament begins Jan. 17 — just a week from his court date.

"We've managed to make sure gluten-free food is delivered to him, as well as exercising tools, a laptop and a SIM card so that he is able to be in contact with his family," Brnabic said. It comes as Australian media reported that immigration officials denied a request to have Djokovic's personal chef cook meals for him in the immigration hotel.

Djokovic is nine-time Australian Open champion. He has 20 Grand Slam singles title, a men's record he shares with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

In Djokovic's perfect world, he would have been eating food cooked by that personal chef, worked out at a gym and trained every day on-court since his arrival, mingling with his support group and friends along the way.

Instead, he's been confined to his room in a modest immigration hotel in downtown Melbourne, with guards in the corridor.

The case has become a complex one.

Djokovic was given a medical exemption backed by the Victoria state government and Australian Open organizers on Jan. 1, based on information he supplied to two independent medical panels. He was approved for a visa electronically.

But it has since emerged that the Victoria state medical exemption, allowed for people who tested positive for the coronavirus within the last six months, was deemed invalid by the federal border authorities.

It would have been valid to enter the tournament, but it wasn't enough to satisfy the Australian Border Force.

Australian media have reported details of the court documents expected to be entered into testimony on Monday. It showed Djokovic received a letter from Tennis Australia's chief medical officer on Dec. 30 "recording that he had been provided with a 'medical exemption from COVID vaccination' on the grounds that he had recently recovered from COVID."

It said Djokovic's first positive test was Dec. 16 and, on the date of issue, the exemption said the 34-year-old player "had not had a fever or respiratory symptoms in the past 72 hours."

Djokovic attended a Dec. 17 event in Belgrade honoring young tennis players. The event was covered by local media, and parents posted photos on social media showing Djokovic and the children not wearing masks. It's not clear if Djokovic knew the results of his test at the time.

On Dec. 14, Djokovic had attended a Euroleague basketball game between Red Star and Barcelona in a packed sports hall in Belgrade. He was photographed hugging several players of both teams, including some who soon later tested positive.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who said "rules are rules" and that incoming passengers were responsible for meeting border regulations, has been accused of taking advantage of Djokovic's case to improve his battered standings in popularity polls ahead of a looming election.

Djokovic's plight has prompted claims from Serbia that Djokovic is being treated like a prisoner. The player himself appears to have become a standard-bearer for anti-vaccine groups, including some people who've gathered outside for support outside his immigration hotel.

Australian Open organizers have been taking some heat over the Djokovic situation, and with apparent good reason.

Tennis Australia, which runs the tournament and organizes the logistics for more than 2,000 incoming players, staff and officials, reportedly gave incorrect interpretations to players about the acceptable grounds for an exemption. That included the interpretation that having had a coronavirus infection within the previous six months would qualify. Organizers have blamed the federal government for its mixed messages on the policy.

Tournament director Craig Tiley has continued working in the background with Djokovic, or so it seems. Tiley's video message to Australian Open staff about the tournament's "difficult time in the public arena"

was published in News Corp. newspapers Saturday.

"There's been a circumstance that relates to a couple of players, Novak particularly . . . in a situation that is very difficult," Tiley said in the video. "We're a player-first event. We're working closely with Novak and his team, and others and their team, that are in this situation."

Djokovic was one of two players put into detention in the hotel that also houses refugees and asylum seekers. A third person, reported to be an official, left the country voluntarily after border force investigations.

The other player was 38-year-old doubles specialist Renata Voráčová, who had already been in Australia for a week before an investigation by the border officials. The Czech foreign ministry said Voráčová voluntarily left Australia after deciding not to appeal the decision.

The court hearing on Monday will determine whether Djokovic is not far behind her.

China foreign minister in Sri Lanka to discuss Belt and Road

By KRISHAN FRANCIS Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi was in Sri Lanka on Sunday seeking to advance Beijing's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative as the island nation tries to rescue itself from a foreign currency and debt crisis, partly due to infrastructure built with Chinese loans that don't generate revenue.

Wang arrived in Sri Lanka on Saturday from the Maldives on the last leg of a multi-city trip that also took him to Eritrea, Kenya and Comoros in Africa.

In Sri Lanka, Wang met with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. Later, Wang and the prime minister were expected to speak at Colombo's Port City, a reclaimed island developed with Chinese investment.

The visit comes as Sri Lanka faces one of its worst economic crises, with foreign reserves down to around \$1.6 billion, barely enough for a few weeks of imports. It also has foreign debt obligations exceeding \$7 billion in 2022, including repayment of bonds worth \$500 million in January and \$1 billion in July.

China loaned money to build a seaport and airport in the southern Hambantota district, in addition to a wide network of roads. But the projects have failed to make money.

Central Bank figures show that current Chinese loans to Sri Lanka total around \$3.38 billion not including loans to state-owned businesses, which are accounted for separately.

"Technically we can claim we are bankrupt now," said Muttukrishna Sarvananthan, principal researcher at the Point Pedro Institute of Development. "When you have foreign reserves in the red, that means you are technically bankrupt."

The situation has left households facing severe shortages. People wait in long lines to buy essential goods like milk powder, cooking gas and kerosene. Prices have increased sharply and the Central Bank says the inflation rate rose to 12.1% by the end of December from 9.9% in November. Food inflation increased to over 22% in the same period.

Because of a currency shortage, importers are unable to clear their cargo containing essentials and manufactures are not able to buy raw materials from overseas.

Expatriate remittances have also fallen after the government ordered the mandatory conversion of foreign currency and controls over exchange rates.

Rating agency downgrades have resulted in Sri Lanka losing much of its borrowing power. In December, Fitch Ratings noted an increased probability of credit default.

The Central Bank has added a currency swap in Chinese currency worth \$1.5 billion to the reserves but economists disagree whether it can be part of foreign reserves or not.

Wang's visit also has regional significance, as both China and India, Sri Lanka's closest neighbor, vie for influence in the island.

"We can see Sri Lanka being saddled between India and China for a potential bailout package," said political analyst Ranga Kalansooriya. "India is dragging its feet for some time while China is trying to manipulate the situation to the maximum."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 55 of 73

India has been wary of China's increased investments and loans in Sri Lanka since a civil war ended in 2009. India considers Sri Lanka part of its territory of influence. China considers Sri Lanka to be a critical link in its Belt and Road global infrastructure initiative.

Kalansooriya said Wang may also be looking to iron out relations with Sri Lanka after they were recently strained over a shipment of fertilizer that allegedly contained harmful bacteria and business agreements that were inked with China's rivals, the United States and India.

But he said that China is unlikely to bail Sri Lanka out of its economic crisis.

"They will look for more business opportunities, fishing in the troubled waters of economic doldrums in the country," he said.

This will be South Sudan's hungriest year ever, experts say

By SAM MEDNICK and DENG MACHOL Associated Press

OLD FANGAK, South Sudan (AP) — Nyayiar Kuol cradled her severely malnourished 1-year-old daughter as they traveled for 16 hours on a crowded barge to the nearest hospital to their home in rural South Sudan. For months she had been feeding her four children just once a day, unable to cultivate because of disastrous flooding and without enough food assistance from the government or aid groups. She worries her daughter might die.

"I don't want to think about what could happen," she said.

Seated on her hospital bed in Old Fangak town in hard-hit Jonglei state, the 36-year-old Kuol tried to calm her daughter while blaming the government for not doing more. Nearly two years have passed since South Sudan formed a coalition government as part of a fragile peace deal to end a five-year civil war that plunged pockets of the country into famine, and yet Kuol said nothing has changed.

"If this country was really at peace, there wouldn't be hunger like there is now," she said.

More people will face hunger this year in South Sudan than ever, said aid groups. That's because of the worst floods in 60 years, as well as conflict and the sluggish implementation of the peace agreement that has denied much of the country basic services.

"2021 was the worst year since independence in the 10 years of the life of this country and 2022 will be worse. Food insecurity is at horrific levels," said Matthew Hollingworth, country representative for the World Food Program in South Sudan.

While the latest food security report by aid groups and the government has yet to be released, several aid officials familiar with the situation said preliminary data show that nearly 8.5 million people — out of the country's 12 million — will face severe hunger, an 8% increase from last year. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to the media.

Aid officials say worst affected Fangak county is now as bad as Pibor county was this time last year, when global food security experts said some 30,000 Pibor residents were likely in famine.

During trips to three South Sudan states in December, some civilians and government officials expressed concern to The Associated Press that people were beginning to starve to death.

In October, a mother and her child died in Pulpham village because they didn't have food, said Jeremiah Gatmai, the humanitarian representative for the government in Old Fangak.

Nearly 1 million people across South Sudan have been affected by the floods, according to the United Nations, which last year had to reduce food aid by half in most places because of funding constraints, affecting some 3 million people.

Two years of floods have prevented people from farming and killed more than 250,000 livestock in Jonglei state alone, according to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization.

Some displaced families in Old Fangak said ground-up water lilies were their only daily meal. "We eat once a day in the morning and then sleep without food," said Nyaluak Chuol. The 20-year-old like some others lost her fishing net in the floods. When she has enough money, she pays a boy to fish for her.

Many residents from Jonglei have fled to neighboring states for food and shelter but have found little respite. In Malakal town, some 3,000 displaced people were crammed into abandoned buildings or shel-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 56 of 73

tered under trees with nothing to eat.

"We're eating leaves and look like skeletons," Tut Jaknyang told the AP. The 60-year-old has received food assistance just once since fleeing floods in Jonglei in July, he said. He and others said a sack of donated rice had to be shared among 20 people.

North of Malakal in the town of Wau Shilluk, health workers said the number of malnourished children coming into the medical center rose from 10 between January and July to 26 between August and December, according to Christina Dak, a health worker with the International Medical Corps.

While flooding is the main driver of hunger, it's compounded by government deadlock as the country's two main political parties try to share power.

Local officials in Malakal aligned with the opposition accused members of longtime President Salva Kiir's party of undermining them by blocking political appointees and not letting them fire corrupt staff, making it hard to govern and provide services.

"We're not working as one team. No one's looking out for the people," said Byinj Erngst, the health minister in Upper Nile state.

Adding to the political tensions is ongoing fighting between government and opposition-aligned militias in the country's breadbasket in the southwest.

Government spokesman Michael Makuei said some relief such as medical services continues but there is only so much help that national authorities can give. "The floods have destroyed crops, what can the government do in that case?" he said.

Observers' frustration is growing. In a speech to the U.N. Security Council in December, the head of the U.N. mission in South Sudan, Nicholas Haysom, warned of a collapse in the country's peace deal if all parties didn't renew their political will.

Jill Seaman, who works in Old Fangak with the South Sudan Medical Relief and has more than 30 years of local experience, concluded: "There are no resources, no harvest, and no cows, there's no place to look for food."

Prospects dim as US, Russia prepare to meet over Ukraine

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — With the fate of Ukraine and potentially broader post-Cold War European stability at stake, the United States and Russia are holding critical strategic talks that could shape the future of not only their relationship but the relationship between the U.S. and its NATO allies. Prospects are bleak.

Though the immediacy of the threat of a Russian invasion of Ukraine will top the agenda in a series of high-level meetings that get underway on Monday, there is a litany of festering but largely unrelated disputes, ranging from arms control to cybercrime and diplomatic issues, for Washington and Moscow to overcome if tensions are to ease. And the recent deployment of Russian troops to Kazakhstan may cast a shadow over the entire exercise.

With much at risk and both warning of dire consequences of failure, the two sides have been positioning themselves for what will be a nearly unprecedented flurry of activity in Europe this week. Yet the wide divergence in their opening positions bodes ill for any type of speedy resolution, and levels of distrust appear higher than at any point since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

U.S. officials on Saturday unveiled some details of the administration's stance, which seem to fall well short of Russian demands. The officials said the U.S. is open to discussions on curtailing possible future deployments of offensive missiles in Ukraine and putting limits on American and NATO military exercises in Eastern Europe if Russia is willing to back off on Ukraine.

But they also said Russia will be hit hard with economic sanctions should it intervene in Ukraine. In addition to direct sanctions on Russian entities, those penalties could include significant restrictions on products exported from the U.S. to Russia and potentially foreign-made products subject to U.S. jurisdiction.

Russia wants the talks initially to produce formally binding security guarantees for itself with a pledge that NATO will not further expand eastward and the removal of U.S. troops and weapons from parts of

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 57 of 73

Europe. But the U.S. and its allies say those are non-starters intentionally designed by Moscow to distract and divide. They insist that any Russian military intervention in Ukraine will prompt "massive consequences" that will dramatically disrupt Russia's economy even if they have global ripple effects.

In a bid to forestall efforts by Russia to sow discord in the West, the Biden administration has gone out of its way to stress that neither Ukraine nor Europe more broadly will be excluded from any discussion of Ukraine's or Europe's security.

Biden administration officials allow that neither topic can be entirely ignored when senior American and Russian diplomats sit down in Geneva in Monday ahead of larger, more inclusive meetings in Brussels and Vienna on Wednesday and Thursday that will explore those issues in perhaps more depth.

Still, the mantras "nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine" and "nothing about Europe without Europe" have become almost cliché in Washington in recent weeks, and senior U.S. officials have gone so far as to say they expect Russia to lie about the content of Monday's meeting to try to stoke divisions.

"We fully expect that the Russian side will make public comments following the meeting on Monday that will not reflect the true nature of the discussions that took place," said one senior U.S. official who will participate in the talks. The official was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

That official and others have urged allies to view with "extreme skepticism" anything Moscow says about the so-called Strategic Stability Talks and wait until they are briefed by the American participants to form opinions.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken accused Russia of "gaslighting" and mounting a full-scale disinformation campaign designed to blame Ukraine, NATO and particularly the United States for the current tensions and undercut Western unity. He said Russian President Vladimir Putin is engaged in an all-out war on the truth that ignores Russia's own provocative and destabilizing actions over the course of the past decade.

"Russia seeks to challenge the international system itself and to unravel our trans-Atlantic alliance, erode our unity, pressure democracies into failure," Blinken said on Friday, going through a list of offending Russian activity ranging from military intervention in Ukraine and Georgia to chemical weapons attacks on Putin critics to election interference in the U.S. and elsewhere, cybercrime and support for dictators.

Despite several conversations between President Joe Biden and Putin, including an in-person meeting last summer, Blinken said such behavior continues, at increasing risk to the post-World War II global order.

Thus, the intensified U.S. and allied effort to forge common positions on both the warnings and the "severe costs" to Russia if it moves against Ukraine. While expressions of unity have been forthcoming, Blinken was not optimistic about prospects for success in the talks.

"To the extent that there is progress to be made — and we hope that there is — actual progress is going to be very difficult to make, if not impossible, in an environment of escalation by Russia," he said.

Russia, meanwhile, has spun a narrative that it is a threatened victim of Western aggression and wants quick results from the meetings despite what appear insurmountable differences.

Putin has repeatedly warned that Moscow will have to take unspecified "military-technical measures" if the West stonewalls Russia's demands, and affirmed that NATO membership for Ukraine or the deployment of alliance weapons there is a red line for Moscow that it wouldn't allow the West to cross.

"We have nowhere to retreat," Putin said last month, adding that NATO could deploy missiles in Ukraine that would take just four or five minutes to reach Moscow. "They have pushed us to a line that we can't cross. They have taken it to the point where we simply must tell them; 'Stop!'"

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, who will lead Russia's delegation at the Geneva talks across from U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, said last week that it will quickly become clear whether the talks could be productive.

"It will become clear after the next week's events whether it's possible to achieve quick progress, to quickly advance on issues that are of interest to us," he said in an interview with the daily Izvestia.

"So far, we have heard some pretty abstract comment from the U.S., NATO and others about some things being acceptable and some not and an emphasis on dialogue and the importance for Russia to de-escalate. There are very few rational elements in that approach due to the unstoppable and quite intensive military and geopolitical developments of the territories near Russian borders by NATO, the emergence of

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 58 of 73

weapons systems there, activation of drills.”

On Sunday evening, Ryabkov and Sherman will meet over a working dinner to discuss topics for the next day's talks, a U.S. official said.

Watershed moment in NYC: New law allows noncitizens to vote

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — More than 800,000 noncitizens and so-called “Dreamers” in New York City will have access to the ballot box — and could vote in municipal elections as early as next year — after Mayor Eric Adams allowed legislation approved by the City Council a month ago to automatically become law on Sunday.

Opponents have vowed to challenge the new law. Unless a judge halts its implementation, New York City is now the most populous city in the United States to grant voting rights to noncitizens.

More than a dozen communities across the U.S. already allow noncitizens to cast ballots in local elections, including 11 towns in Maryland and two in Vermont.

The Board of Elections must now begin drawing an implementation plan by July, including voter registration rules and provisions that would create separate ballots for municipal races to prevent noncitizens from casting ballots in federal and state contests.

It's a watershed moment for a city where legally documented, voting-age noncitizens comprise nearly one in nine of the city's 7 million voting-age inhabitants. The movement to win voting rights for noncitizens prevailed after numerous setbacks.

The measure would allow noncitizens who have been lawful permanent residents of the city for at least 30 days, as well as those authorized to work in the U.S., including so-called “Dreamers,” to help select the city's mayor, city council members, borough presidents, comptroller and public advocate.

“Dreamers” are young immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children who benefit from the DREAM Act or DACA — Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals — which allows them to remain in the country if they meet certain criteria.

The first elections in which noncitizens would be allowed to vote won't be until 2023.

“We build a stronger democracy when we include the voices of immigrants,” said former City Council member Ydanis Rodriguez, who led the charge to win approval for the legislation.

Rodriguez, who Adams appointed as his transportation commissioner, thanked the mayor for his support and expects a vigorous defense against any legal challenges.

Noncitizens still wouldn't be able to vote for president or members of Congress in federal races, or in the state elections that pick the governor, judges and legislators.

Adams recently cast uncertainty over the legislation when he raised concern about the monthlong residency standard, but later said those concerns did not mean he would veto the bill.

While there was some question whether Adams could stop the bill from becoming law, the 30-day time limit for the mayor to take action expired at the stroke of midnight.

Adams said he looked forward to the law bringing millions more into the democratic process.

“I believe that New Yorkers should have a say in their government, which is why I have and will continue to support this important legislation,” Adams said in a statement released Saturday night. He added that his earlier concerns were put at ease after what he called productive dialogue with colleagues.

Former Mayor Bill de Blasio had similar concerns but did not move to veto the measure before vacating City Hall at the end of the year.

A legal challenge is likely. Opponents say the council lacks the authority on its own to grant voting rights to noncitizens and should have first sought action by state lawmakers.

Some states including Alabama, Arizona, Colorado and Florida have adopted rules that would preempt any attempts to pass laws like the one in New York City.

Bolton's fumble return sparks Chiefs' 28-24 win over Broncos

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 59 of 73

By ARNIE STAPLETON AP Pro Football Writer

DENVER (AP) — Nearly stumbling heading into the playoffs, Nick Bolton and the Kansas City Chiefs gathered themselves just in time to thunder into the postseason with an AFC-best 12 wins.

They'll learn Sunday if that's enough to get them a first-round bye.

"We're ready to go wherever and against whomever," Patrick Mahomes said after the Chiefs rallied for a 28-24 win Saturday over the Denver Broncos, a victory powered by Bolton's 86-yard fumble return mid-way through the fourth quarter.

To secure the pole position in the AFC playoffs, the Chiefs (12-5) need Houston to upset the Tennessee on Sunday. If not, Kansas City hosts a wild-card game next weekend in its quest to reach a third consecutive Super Bowl.

The Broncos were ahead 21-20 and driving for another score when Melvin Ingram III blitzed, speeding past tight end Noah Fant untouched and blowing up the play just as Drew Lock handed the ball to Melvin Gordon on second-and-2 from the 9.

Bolton, a rookie linebacker who checks in at 237 pounds, scooped up the loose ball and rumbled down the Chiefs' euphoric sideline, nearly falling down at midfield before regaining his balance and outracing Lock, whom he played with at Missouri, to the end zone.

"I was hoping that he wouldn't stumble," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said after his 250th NFL coaching victory, including playoffs. "Those guys don't get much of a chance to run that far that fast very often and he ran like a stallion. He took off and looked like a running back there."

Like many of the other victories in the Chiefs' 13-game winning streak against Denver, this one was no cakewalk. The Broncos (7-10) led for much of the afternoon despite having nothing to play for but pride.

"My main emotion is really proud of our payers," Broncos coach Vic Fangio said. "That's a team that may win it all. They've obviously won a lot of games the last four or five years since Mahomes has taken over. We had a chance to win that game. But not winning it is the bottom line and we didn't get it done."

The Broncos' last win over Kansas City came on Sept. 17, 2015.

"I love the way our defense buckled down," Reid said. "All in all, a good win and an important win for the Kansas City Chiefs and we'll see what we have by tomorrow night, who we're playing. We sure look forward to bringing back a playoff game back to Arrowhead in front of our fans."

Wide receiver Tyreek Hill could surely use the week off that goes to the top seed in each conference. He injured a heel in pregame warmups and was held to one catch for 2 yards. With Hill hurting, Mecole Hardman stepped up with eight catches for 103 yards.

"No one is Tyreek. He's a special player that has never been seen in this league," Mahomes said. "But Mecole is pretty close. ... He was prepared for this moment."

After Mahomes scored a 2-point conversion following Bolton's touchdown to give the Chiefs a seven-point lead, the Broncos quickly drove downfield again but settled for Brandon McManus' chip shot field goal rather than going for it on fourth-and-9 from the 13.

The crowd booed the decision, but Fangio explained that even though the field goal left them needing a touchdown, at least it kept their hopes alive.

All they had to do was stop Mahomes, something they'd managed to do twice in Kansas City's six drives excluding the final possession of the first half when the Chiefs got the ball at their 15 with 23 seconds remaining.

The Chiefs, however, chewed up the final 4:37 and lined up in victory formation after the 2-minute warning as the crowd of 61,441 — there were nearly 15,000 empty seats — streamed for the exits, a fifth straight losing season in the books and the Broncos' playoff drought now stretched to six years.

CHANNELING TEBOW

Lock completed just 4 of 10 passes for 27 yards in the first half but the Broncos took a 14-10 halftime lead thanks to Lock's touchdown scrambles of 5 and 23 yards, which made him the first Broncos quarterback with two touchdown runs in a game since Tim Tebow in 2011.

"Definitely not designed runs," said Lock, who lost all three of his starts after Teddy Bridgewater sus-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 60 of 73

tained a concussion against Cincinnati on Dec. 19.

HOME UNDERDOGS

The Chiefs were 11-point favorites according to FanDuel SportsBook marking just the third time in the last 42 years that the Broncos were double-digit home underdogs.

FANGIO'S FUTURE

Fangio got emotional in his postgame news conference but said he hadn't heard if he'd be back for the fourth year on his contract.

"You saw it out there tonight, a bunch of fighters and competitors" Fangio said after the Broncos' fourth straight loss dropped his record to 19-30. "And I think you saw it all year. And that's what these guys are. I'm proud to be associated with them. I'm not proud of our record. I know it's not good enough. I get it. But I'm proud to be associated with our players."

INJURIES

Chiefs RB Darrel Williams (toe) left early in the fourth quarter. Broncos RT Bobby Massie was added to the injury report Saturday with a concussion and was ruled out.

UP NEXT

After this close call, the Chiefs get to cheer on the Texans.

The Broncos head into an offseason sure to include big changes.

Australia's New South Wales sees deadliest day of pandemic

SYDNEY (AP) — Australia's New South Wales state reported 16 deaths on Sunday in its deadliest day of the pandemic, even as it relaxed rules to allow some essential workers in isolation to return to work if they are asymptomatic.

Just over 30,000 new cases were reported in Australia's most populous state, forcing those people to join more than 200,000 others in isolation.

No statistics are kept to determine how many of those are essential workers in the food and manufacturing sectors. But some employers say up to half of their workers have been furloughed after coming into contact with a positive case.

Shoppers have reported empty shelves in many supermarkets because of the omicron outbreak's impact on food processing and supply chains.

"Critical workers in the food logistics and manufacturing sectors furloughed as close contacts will be permitted to leave self-isolation to attend work if they have no symptoms of COVID-19, to ensure the state has continued access to essential goods," New South Wales Health said in a statement on Sunday.

The workers can only leave self-isolation if their employer decides their absence poses a high risk of disruption to the delivery of critical services and if they are not able to work from home.

Returning workers will have to wear masks and comply with risk-management strategies required by their employers, including daily rapid antigen tests. If they test positive, they will have to return to isolation.

The rule change applies in agriculture to bio-security and food safety personnel undertaking critical duties; in manufacturing to the production of food, beverages, groceries, cleaning and sanitary products; and in transport to food logistics and delivery.

The 16 people who died Sunday included eight women and eight men aged in their 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s, NSW Health said. The figure tops the previous record of 15 deaths, which has been reached twice, on Sept. 29 and Oct. 1 last year.

There were 1,927 people in hospitals, including 151 people in intensive care.

Victoria state reported 44,155 new cases on Sunday, including 22,051 from rapid antigen tests and 22,104 from PCR tests. Of those cases, 9,000 were from rapid antigen tests conducted on Saturday while more than 13,000 were done on previous days and reported Sunday.

The numbers do not necessarily reflect the true spread of the virus as they only count the number of recorded cases.

Screening carried out by health authorities showed that around 80% of new cases were the omicron

variant.

Victoria recorded eight deaths on Sunday, but Australia Health Minister Greg Hunt said cases of severe illness are relatively low amid the spread of omicron.

US hones warnings, offers to Russia over Ukraine

BY MATTHEW LEE and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration on Saturday issued new, forceful warnings to Russia on penalties it may face if it goes ahead with threats to invade Ukraine.

U.S. officials raised the possibility of incremental shifts in decisions about America's future strategic posture in Europe. But they also said Russia would be hit with debilitating sanctions should it intervene in Ukraine.

The officials said the administration would be open to discussions with Russia on curtailing possible future deployments of offensive missiles in Ukraine and putting limits on U.S. and NATO military exercises in Eastern Europe.

Yet, they said Russia will be hit hard with economic sanctions should it intervene in Ukraine. In addition to direct sanctions on Russian entities, those penalties could include significant restrictions on products exported from the U.S. to Russia and potentially foreign-made products subject to U.S. jurisdiction.

The comments came as senior U.S. and Russian officials prepare to meet in Switzerland on Monday amid heightened tensions over Ukraine.

The officials said the U.S. is willing to discuss certain, limited aspects of its European security posture in those talks. But they stressed that any agreements would be contingent on Russia removing threats to Ukraine and that no decisions would be made without the consent of Ukraine or NATO.

And, they said there is no chance the U.S. will reduce its military presence or arsenal in Eastern Europe as Russia has demanded.

While those comments, made to reporters on condition of anonymity in a White House-organized telephone conference call, were the first to suggest a willingness to compromise on issues tangential to Ukraine, they were accompanied by threats for Russian inaction on U.S. demands to step back.

In the event of a Russian invasion of Ukraine, "we – in coordination with our allies and partners – would immediately impose severe and overwhelming costs on Russia's economy, including its financial system and sectors deemed critical to the Kremlin," another official said.

In addition to sanctions on energy and consumer goods, the U.S. and its allies are considering bans on the export to Russia of advanced electronic components, software and related technology that uses American equipment. Russia could be added to the most restrictive group of countries for export control purposes, together with Cuba, Iran, North Korea and Syria, officials said.

That would mean that Russia's ability to obtain integrated circuits, and products containing integrated circuits, would be severely restricted, because of the global dominance of U.S. software, technology and equipment in this sector. The impact could extend to aircraft avionics, machine tools, smartphones, game consoles, tablets and televisions.

Such sanctions could also target critical Russian industry, including its defense and civil aviation sectors, which would hit Russia's high-tech ambitions, whether in artificial intelligence or quantum computing.

U.S. officials have been careful not to issue ultimatums to Russia, while at the same time demanding that threats to Ukraine cease. But they have also flatly rejected Russian demands that NATO will not further expand eastward and that the U.S. will remove troops and weapons from Eastern Europe.

Despite that stance, the U.S. and NATO have signaled a willingness to explore compromises on related issues.

"We think we can at least explore the possibility of making progress with the Russians," one official said Saturday, ahead of Monday's Strategic and Security Dialogue between the U.S. and Russia in Geneva. He added, though, that "there will be no firm commitments made in these talks."

Monday's meeting will be followed by discussions between Russia and NATO members on Wednesday and with a broader European audience on Thursday.

Duchess of Cambridge, the reliable royal, turns 40

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — At least there's Kate.

The Duchess of Cambridge, who turns 40 on Sunday, has emerged as Britain's reliable royal.

After Prince Harry and Meghan's stormy departure to California in 2020, the death of Prince Philip last year, and now sex abuse allegations against Prince Andrew, the former Kate Middleton remains in the public eye as the smiling mother of three who can comfort grieving parents at a children's hospice or wow the nation by playing piano during a televised Christmas concert.

"This is the woman who was the commoner who married into the royal family and who has not tripped up, not caused any embarrassment," Katie Nicholl, author of "Kate: The Future Queen." "It's not been an easy year, and yet somehow Kate seems to be a bit of a beacon in all of this."

At a moment when the House of Windsor is facing more than its share of controversy, Prince William's spouse has won accolades for her commitment to early education, art and music. The charities she supports gush about her willingness to get personally involved in their causes.

Olivia Marks-Woldman was touched by the care Kate put into photographing Holocaust survivors Steven Frank and Yvonne Bernstein for an exhibition sponsored by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. Before the shoot, the duchess spent time learning her subjects' stories and used the knowledge to compose the photos, said Marks-Woldman, the trust's CEO.

"It was a really involved, thoughtful participation," she recalled. "But even after those photographs had been taken, the duchess supported the project and supported Steven and Yvonne and took an interest in them and sent them Christmas cards, invited them to the carol service in Westminster Abbey recently and has just been wonderful."

Tracy Rennie, deputy chief executive of East Anglia's Children's Hospices, has a similar account from the day Kate visited one of the organization's facilities in 2019. The duchess agreed to talk with the parents and other relatives of a child who had recently died because they wanted to meet her, even though their pain was still raw.

"It was a really supportive conversation actually, to the point we were having a laugh and a joke together as a family before we left — you wouldn't imagine that in such a difficult situation," Rennie said. "They absolutely felt honored that she'd taken the time out and were overwhelmed by the fact that she was a 'normal person' — their words, not mine. They felt she really cared."

Kate is a royal by choice, not birth.

The daughter of a flight attendant and a flight dispatcher, Catherine Elizabeth Middleton was born in Reading, England, on Jan. 9, 1982, and grew up with a younger sister, Pippa, and a younger brother, James.

The Middletons, from a well-to-do area of Berkshire, west of London, moved to Jordan when Kate was 2 years old because of her father's work. They returned to England in 1986, and Kate attended the exclusive Marlborough College, where she was active in sports including hockey, tennis and netball.

It was at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland that Kate first met Prince William, the elder son of the late Princess Diana and second in line to inherit the British throne after his father, Prince Charles.

First friends and then housemates along with two other students, William and Kate became romantically linked around 2004, when they were pictured together on a skiing trip in Switzerland. Kate graduated in 2005 with a degree in art history and a budding relationship with the prince.

William complained about press intrusion, and Kate's lawyers asked newspaper editors to leave her alone. Even so, the British media followed every twist in their relationship, including a brief split in 2007. William later acknowledged that the couple's romance wobbled for several months, saying they were both young and trying to find their way.

The tabloids dubbed her "Waity Katie" for her patience during their courtship. The couple eventually married at Westminster Abbey in 2011. They have three children.

During 11 years under the royal microscope, Kate has largely avoided criticism by adopting the royal

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 63 of 73

maxim "never complain, never explain."

This was apparent last year when Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, alleged in an interview with Oprah Winfrey that Kate had made her cry during a disagreement over flower girl dresses in the run-up to Meghan and Harry's 2019 wedding. Kate and the palace responded with silence.

Yet Kate still has the ability to surprise.

For a Christmas Eve carol concert at Westminster Abbey, she sat down at a piano and accompanied Scottish singer Tom Walker on "For Those Who Can't Be Here," a song inspired by loss and separation during the pandemic.

While it wasn't a secret that Kate had studied the instrument, the pre-recorded performance during a nationally televised concert was something new altogether. Walker said he didn't know what to expect when the palace suggested the duchess might accompany him in performing the new song at the event.

"It was essentially, for the duchess, a giant gamble," Walker told the AP. "It really is jumping in at the deep end and just hoping you can swim. Because I would have my own reservations about rocking up to a venue to play with somebody else's band on a song that I hadn't written and pull it off with absolute grace. It's not an easy thing, so it must have been quite a challenge."

Biographer Nicholl, who has watched Kate for years, said the performance offers an insight into Kate's character, describing her as gutsy and self-assured - a person aware of her strengths.

With Queen Elizabeth II preparing to celebrate 70 years on the throne later this year and the focus squarely on the longevity of the monarchy, Kate's place as the wife of a future king and the mother of another will loom even larger.

"I think the monarchy is in safe hands," Nicholl said.

Chicago mayor, teachers still at odds over COVID protocols

By KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Negotiations resumed Saturday to resolve a standoff between Chicago school officials and the city's teachers union over COVID-19 precautions that canceled three days of classes, but the public war-of-words between union leaders and Chicago's mayor showed little sign of easing.

In a statement, Mayor Lori Lightfoot flatly rejected the union's latest proposal that its leaders described as a solution. The union softened its prior demand for broad mandatory testing but maintained that teachers and kids shouldn't return to classrooms until mid-January.

"CTU leadership, you're not listening," Lightfoot said. "The best, safest place for kids to be is in school. Students need to be back in person as soon as possible. That's what parents want. That's what the science supports. We will not relent."

The blunt response came less than an hour after leaders of the Chicago Teachers Union unveiled what they deemed a compromise seeking to resume remote instruction Wednesday and in-person instruction on Jan. 18. The union also backed a random screening program that students could opt out of, rather than its initial preference for mandatory testing.

CTU President Jesse Sharkey said Lightfoot's repeated opposition to using remote learning district wide and to any testing program that requires students to opt out rather than volunteering "doesn't compute."

Teachers agree that in-person instruction is better for their students, but everyone is forced to make difficult decisions during a pandemic, Sharkey said.

"As educators, we're trying to use all the tools we have to make our community safe and to educate children," he said, blasting anyone who suggests union members are showing a lack of concern for kids. "It's hard to believe that the mayor really believes that. You know the way teachers see that? We see it as bullying."

The union, which voted this week to revert to online instruction, told teachers not to show up to schools starting Wednesday while talks took place. The move just two days after students returned from winter break prompted district officials to cancel classes in the roughly 350,000-student district for three days, and many principals have warned parents they are unlikely to be able to hold classes on Monday.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 64 of 73

Both Chicago Public Schools CEO Pedro Martinez and Lightfoot have maintained that moving the entire district to remote instruction is a nonstarter, preferring to reserve that step in response to infections within an individual school.

The union's proposal maintained a trigger to end in-person instruction if COVID-19 rates within the city increase at certain levels.

Lightfoot also favors an opt-in testing program contrary to the union's stance, saying parents should be the ones making that decision for their children. Other sticking points include metrics to trigger individual school closures.

School districts nationwide have confronted the same issues, with most opting to stay open while ramping up virus testing and tweaking protocols in response to the shifting pandemic. But a growing number of U.S. districts, including some large school systems, have gone back to remote learning as infections soar and sideline staff members.

The union has blasted the district for not doing enough, like botching a testing program and maintaining unreliable data on infections in schools. They've sought demands similar to a safety agreement put in place last year after a fierce debate. However, the district says the pandemic is different now and requires a different response, particularly since 91% of school staff is vaccinated.

Attendance was low in schools earlier this week, with thousands of students in quarantine or opting to stay home to avoid exposure. Teachers widely reported being unable to access remote-learning tools from their homes this week.

Still, many parents had to scramble anew to make last-minute arrangements for their children. Others said being out of school was riskier for their kids than being in classrooms where masks and social distancing are used.

Space telescope's 'golden eye' opens, last major hurdle

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA's new space telescope opened its huge, gold-plated, flower-shaped mirror Saturday, the final step in the observatory's dramatic unfurling.

The last portion of the 21-foot (6.5-meter) mirror swung into place at flight controllers' command, completing the unfolding of the James Webb Space Telescope.

"I'm emotional about it. What an amazing milestone. We see that beautiful pattern out there in the sky now," said Thomas Zurbuchen, chief of NASA's science missions.

More powerful than the Hubble Space Telescope, the \$10 billion Webb will scan the cosmos for light streaming from the first stars and galaxies formed 13.7 billion years ago. To accomplish this, NASA had to outfit Webb with the largest and most sensitive mirror ever launched — its "golden eye," as scientists call it.

Webb is so big that it had to be folded origami-style to fit in the rocket that soared from South America two weeks ago. The riskiest operation occurred earlier in the week, when the tennis court-size sunshield unfurled, providing subzero shade for the mirror and infrared detectors.

Flight controllers in Baltimore began opening the primary mirror Friday, unfolding the left side like a drop-leaf table. The mood was even more upbeat Saturday, with peppy music filling the control room as the right side snapped into place. After applauding, the controllers immediately got back to work, latching everything down. They jumped to their feet, exchanged high-fives and cheered from behind masks when the operation was finally complete 2 1/2 hours later, doing their best to remain socially distant because of the global surge in COVID-19 cases.

"We have a deployed telescope on orbit, a magnificent telescope the likes of which the world has never seen," Zurbuchen said, congratulating the team. "So how does it feel to make history, everybody? You just did it."

His counterpart at the European Space Agency, astronomer Antonella Nota, noted that after years of preparation, the team made everything look "so amazingly easy."

"This is the moment we have been waiting for, for so long," she said.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 65 of 73

Webb's main mirror is made of beryllium, a lightweight yet sturdy and cold-resistant metal. Each of its 18 segments is coated with an ultra thin layer of gold, highly reflective of infrared light. The hexagonal, coffee table-size segments must be adjusted in the weeks ahead so they can focus as one on stars, galaxies and alien worlds that might hold atmospheric signs of life.

"It's like we have 18 mirrors that are right now little prima donnas all doing their own thing, singing their own tune in whatever key they're in, and we have to make them work like a chorus and that is a methodical, laborious process," operations project scientist Jane Rigby told reporters.

Webb should reach its destination 1 million miles (1.6 million kilometers) away in another two weeks; it's already more than 667,000 miles (1 million kilometers) from Earth since its Christmas Day launch. If all continues to go well, science observations will begin this summer. Astronomers hope to peer back to within 100 million years of the universe-forming Big Bang, closer than Hubble has achieved.

Project manager Bill Ochs stressed the team isn't letting its guard down, despite the unprecedented successes of the past two weeks.

"It's not downhill from here. It's all kind of a level playing field," he said.

Cold kills 22 stuck in cars in heavy snow at Pakistan resort

By ZARAR KHAN Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — At least 22 people, including 10 children, died in a popular mountain resort town in Pakistan after being stuck in their vehicles overnight during a heavy snowstorm as temperatures plummeted, officials said Saturday.

Most of the victims died of hypothermia, officials said. Among them was an Islamabad police officer and seven other members of his family, fellow police officer Atiq Ahmed said.

More than 4 feet (1 meter) of snow fell in the area of the Murree Hills resort overnight Friday and early Saturday, trapping thousands of cars on roadways, said Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed. The snow was so severe that heavy equipment brought in to clear it initially got stuck during the night, said Umar Maqbool, assistant commissioner for the town of Murree. Temperatures fell to minus 8 degrees Celsius (17.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

Officials called in paramilitary troops and a special military mountain unit to help. By late Saturday, thousands of vehicles had been pulled from the snow but more than a thousand were still stuck, Ahmed said.

Most roads leading to the area's resorts were largely cleared of snow by late Saturday, and military troops were working to clear the rest, Maqbool said. The military also converted army-run schools into relief camps where they provided shelter and food for the tourists who had been rescued.

Emergency officials distributed food and blankets to people while they were trapped in their snowed-in vehicles, but many died of hypothermia. Others may have died from carbon monoxide poisoning after running their car heaters for long periods of time, said rescue services physician Abdur Rehman. As of late Saturday, the death toll included 10 men, 10 children and two women, Rehman said.

In one instance, a husband and wife and their two children all died in their car. In another, four young friends died together, he said.

Located 28 miles (46 kilometers) north of the capital of Islamabad, Murree is a popular winter resort town that attracts well over a million tourists annually. Streets leading into the town are often blocked by snow in winter.

Kazakhstan adds uncertainty to talks with Russia on Ukraine

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russia's decision to send paratroopers into Kazakhstan, where a crackdown on violent anti-government protests has left dozens dead, injects additional uncertainty into upcoming talks over a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The question is whether the unrest in Kazakhstan has changed the calculations of Russian President Vladimir Putin as he weighs his options in Ukraine. Some say Putin may not want to engage in two conflicts

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 66 of 73

at the same time, while others say Russia has the military capacity to do both and he will decide separately on whether to attack Ukraine. The instability in Kazakhstan may even add new urgency to Putin's desire to shore up Russia's power in the region.

Both Kazakhstan and Ukraine are former Soviet republics that Putin has sought to keep under Moscow's influence, but so far with vastly different results. Ukraine, an aspiring democracy that has turned decisively toward the West, has been locked in deadly conflict with Russia since Putin seized Crimea in 2014 and backed an insurgency in the eastern Donbas region. Kazakhstan, meanwhile, has been ruled in the three decades since the Soviet collapse by autocrats who have maintained close security and political ties with Russia.

Russian troops entered Kazakhstan on Thursday after Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev invoked the help of a Russia-led military alliance. The following day, with Russian troops helping to restore control over the airport and guarding government buildings, he ordered his forces to shoot to kill any protesters who don't surrender.

That led to Washington and Moscow exchanging new barbs on the eve of a week of meetings over Ukraine that begins with talks between senior U.S. and Russian officials in Geneva on Monday.

Asked about Kazakhstan and Ukraine on Friday, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he would not "conflate these situations."

"There are very particular drivers of what's happening in Kazakhstan right now, as I said, that go to economic and political matters," Blinken said. "What's happening in there is different from what's happening on Ukraine's borders.

"Having said that, I think one lesson of recent history is that once Russians are in your house, it's sometimes very difficult to get them to leave," he added.

The Russian Foreign Ministry fired back with a statement that referenced past U.S. wars and interventions in other countries. "If Antony Blinken is so into history lessons, here's one that comes to mind: When Americans are in your house, it can be difficult to stay alive, not being robbed or raped," the statement said.

The U.S. has for weeks warned that Putin has stationed troops near Ukraine with the possible intent to stage a new invasion. Putin is not believed to have moved significantly more troops toward Ukraine in the last several weeks, according to two people familiar with the latest assessments who were not authorized to speak publicly. But at least 100,000 Russian troops remain in positions where they could possibly strike parts of Ukraine, the people said.

In response, Washington and Kyiv have ramped up their cooperation on intelligence and security matters, the people said.

In exchange for easing tensions with Ukraine, Putin wants NATO to halt membership plans for all countries, including Ukraine. The U.S. and NATO have rejected that demand.

Lawmakers and longtime observers of Russia disagree on how the Kazakhstan situation may affect Ukraine.

Fiona Hill, former senior director for Russia and Europe at the U.S. National Security Council, said she believed the violence in Kazakhstan "is probably going to accelerate Putin's desire to do something" in Ukraine.

She said Putin may want to reassert dominance across the region by both shoring up the president in Kazakhstan and undermining Ukraine's democratically elected leader, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"The Russian circle around Putin, they really do want to teach the Ukrainians a lesson," Hill said. "And they don't shy away from killing lots of people or seeing lots of people get killed."

She noted that while Kazakhstan is in Central Asia, the northern part of the country was settled by Russians and Ukrainians in Soviet times as part of the Virgin Lands campaign, and Russians see it "very much as part of their land and not just a kind of sphere of influence."

"And so northern Kazakhstan ... is being seen as an extension of Russia, just like Ukraine, Donbas and Belarus and all that industrial and agricultural complex," said Hill, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

In recent years, Russia has entered conflicts in other neighboring former Soviet countries to seize territory

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 67 of 73

or bolster Moscow-friendly governments. In 2020, when protests broke out in Belarus over the reelection of longtime strongman Alexander Lukashenko, Russia stood by him during a brutal crackdown and offered to send troops. In 2008, Russia invaded Georgia and seized control of two separatist regions.

In Belarus and now Kazakhstan, Hill noted, there is growing frustration with Russian-backed elites and inequality, together with a growing sense of nationalism. Those factors are also present in Ukraine, while discontent is growing in Russia as well.

"This is deeply troubling for Putin because it shows that protests can get out of hand over social issues," she said. "And that even if you marginalize the opposition and you look like you're in charge, one day suddenly, you're not."

Some see Kazakhstan as also presenting an opportunity for Russia to consolidate its power regionally.

Fyodor Lukyanov, a leading Moscow-based foreign policy expert, said by stepping in with military force Moscow has made itself the "guarantor upon whose position further events depend." He said the situation was similar to Armenia in 2020, when Russia sent peacekeeping troops after a war with Azerbaijan over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh territory.

"This is not a final situation or a solution, but it provides an effective set of tools for the period ahead," he wrote in a piece published Thursday.

With this happening on the eve of the talks with the U.S., "Russia has sent a reminder of its ability to make quick and unconventional military-political decisions to influence what is happening in parts of the world that are important for it," Lukyanov said.

U.S. Rep. Mark Green, a Tennessee Republican who serves on the House Armed Services and Foreign Affairs committees, is among those who see the uprising in Kazakhstan as deterring Russia in Ukraine.

"I don't see Russia with the capability of handling two crises simultaneously," Green said. "I think it will deter their ability to wage a major conflict in Ukraine."

A fierce critic of the Biden administration, Green said he supported Blinken's public statements in support of Ukraine and his push for a diplomatic solution.

"If Blinken's actions are matching his rhetoric, then they're doing OK here," he said.

As spending bill stalls, Biden climate goals remain elusive

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden faces a steep path to achieve his ambitious goal of slashing planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030, amid legislative gridlock that has stalled a \$2 trillion package of social and environmental initiatives.

Biden's Build Back Better plan, which contains \$550 billion in spending and tax credits aimed at promoting clean energy, was sidetracked by Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, who said just before Christmas that he could not support the legislation as written.

Democrats insist they are moving forward on the sweeping package, which also would bolster family services, health care and other programs. Manchin signaled in recent days that climate-related provisions were unlikely to be a deal-breaker, but the bill has taken a back seat to voting rights legislation and other Democratic priorities.

Even without the legislation, Biden can pursue his climate agenda through rules and regulations. But those can be undone by subsequent presidents, as demonstrated by Biden reversing Trump administration rules that rolled back protections put into place under Barack Obama.

Experts cite Biden's executive authority to regulate tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks, as well as restrict emissions from power plants and other industrial sources, and the federal government's vast power to approve renewable energy projects on federal lands and waters.

Indeed, the Environmental Protection Agency announced new tailpipe rules for cars and trucks the day after Manchin's bombshell announcement Dec. 19. The next day, the Interior Department announced approval of two large-scale solar projects in California and moved to open up public lands in other Western states to solar development as part of the administration's efforts to counter climate change by shifting from fossil fuels.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 68 of 73

The administration also has access to tens of billions of dollars under the bipartisan infrastructure law approved in November, including \$7.5 billion to create a national network of electric vehicle chargers; \$5 billion to deliver thousands of electric school buses nationwide; and \$65 billion to upgrade the power grid to reduce outages and facilitate expansion of renewable energy such as wind and solar power.

"I think the U.S. has a lot of tools and a lot of options to make gains on climate in the next decade," said John Larsen, an energy systems expert and partner at the Rhodium Group, an independent research firm.

"Build Back Better is helpful" to meet Biden's goals, "but if you don't have Build Back Better, that doesn't mean nothing happens," Larsen said. "It just makes the task ahead a bit more challenging."

Larsen is co-author of a Rhodium Group study last fall that found that passage of the Build Back Better package, along with the bipartisan infrastructure law and regulations by key federal agencies and states, could cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 45% to 51% below 2005 levels in 2030.

The Biden bill offers incentives for electric car purchases, development of technology to capture and store carbon emissions, and construction of wind and solar farms, among other provisions.

Global leaders made progress at a November climate summit in Scotland, "but there needs to be much more" action taken, said Penn State climate scientist Michael Mann. "And for the U.S. to be able to do its part, we need the climate provisions of Build Back Better to pass Congress as soon as possible."

Jesse Jenkins, an energy systems engineer at Princeton University who has led an effort to model the Build Back Better bill's effect on U.S. emissions, said there is "a yawning gap" between where U.S. emissions are today "and where we need to be to hit President Biden's climate targets."

Such a gap "is unlikely to be bridged by executive action or state policy alone," Jenkins said in an email. The Princeton model estimates that the United States will fall 1.3 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent short of Biden's 2030 climate commitment without the Build Back Better law.

Carbon dioxide equivalent is a standard measurement for the range of so-called greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, that are generated from the burning of coal and petroleum and from other industrial uses and agriculture, and trap heat in the atmosphere.

Still, Jenkins remains optimistic about U.S. climate action.

"I do not accept the premise that the Build Back Better package is dead," he wrote, adding that he thinks "there is still a very good chance that Congress passes the climate provisions and some combination of social policies" being pushed by Democrats.

"The consequences of failure are untenable, and the climate clock only moves in one direction," Jenkins said.

Sen. Tina Smith, D-Minn., said she's confident Biden and his administration will make good use of their current regulatory authority, as well as billions of dollars in new spending in the bipartisan infrastructure law. But on their own, those tools are not enough to meet Biden's climate goals, she said. Rules imposed by one administration can be undone by the next, as Biden and former President Donald Trump have both demonstrated repeatedly.

Trump withdrew the U.S. from the global Paris climate accord and rolled back dozens of regulations imposed by his Democratic predecessor, Obama. Biden, in turn, has moved to reverse Trump on a range of actions, from rejoining the Paris agreement to canceling the Keystone XL oil pipeline and pausing new oil and gas leasing on federal lands and waters.

Biden has elevated the issue of climate change across the U.S. government, signing an executive order to make the government carbon-neutral by 2050 and converting to an all-electric fleet of car and trucks by 2035.

Even so, Biden's efforts can only go so far without an assist from Congress.

"Regulatory authority is no substitute for congressional action," Smith said. "That's why it's so important that we pass the strongest bill possible, and that's what we're focusing on doing."

Enacting clean-energy investments in the Build Back Better Act would cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by a cumulative 5 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2030, Jenkins said, an amount that would "put the U.S. within easy reach" of Biden's commitment to cut emissions to half of 2005 levels by 2030.

Manchin, who chairs the Senate Energy Committee and whose state's economy relies heavily on energy

production, suggested he could back many of the climate provisions in the bill, including some tax credits. He also wants to include money to promote nuclear power and capture emissions from industrial facilities that pump out greenhouse gases.

"I think the climate thing is one that we probably can come to an agreement on much easier than anything else," Manchin told reporters on Tuesday.

Democrats would need all their votes in the 50-50 Senate to advance the measure over unanimous Republican opposition.

Former anti-terror chief arrested over Kazakhstan protests

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — The former head of Kazakhstan's counterintelligence and anti-terror agency has been arrested on charges of attempted government overthrow in the wake of violent protests that the president has blamed on foreign-backed terrorists.

The arrest of Karim Masimov was announced Saturday by the National Security Committee, which Masimov headed until he was removed this week by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

Authorities say security forces killed 26 demonstrators in this week's unrest and that 18 law-enforcement officers died. More than 4,400 people have been arrested, the Interior Ministry said Saturday.

The protests in the Central Asian nation were the most widespread since Kazakhstan's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

The unrest began in the country's far west as protests against a sharp rise in prices for liquefied petroleum gas that is widely used as vehicle fuel. The protests spread to the country's largest city, Almaty, where demonstrators seized and burned government buildings.

At Tokayev's request, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Russia-led military alliance of six former Soviet states, authorized sending about 2,500 mostly Russian troops to Kazakhstan as peacekeepers.

Some of the force is guarding government facilities in the capital, Nur-Sultan, which "made it possible to release part of the forces of Kazakhstani law enforcement agencies and redeploy them to Almaty to participate in the counter-terrorist operation," according to a statement from Tokayev's office.

Tokayev said Friday that he had authorized security forces to shoot to kill those participating in unrest. On Saturday, there were no immediate reports of trouble in Almaty. Police dispersed a demonstration and detained people in the city of Aktau, while sporadic gunfire was heard in Kyzylorda, Russian news agency Sputnik said.

Sputnik later reported a clash outside Almaty on the main highway leading to Kyrgyzstan, but its size and intensity were unclear. The Russian internet broadcaster Dozhd said police fired weapons into the air and at the ground outside the city morgue.

No details were given about what Masimov, the former security agency head, was alleged to have done that would constitute an attempted government overthrow. The National Security Committee, a successor to the Soviet-era KGB, is responsible for counterintelligence, the border guards service and anti-terror activities.

Although the protests began as denunciations of the near-doubling of LPG prices at the start of the year, their spread and intense violence indicate they reflected widespread dissatisfaction in the former Soviet republic run by the same party for more than 30 years.

Many demonstrators shouted "Old man out," a reference to Nursultan Nazarbayev, who was president from Kazakhstan's independence until he resigned in 2019 and anointed Tokayev as his successor.

Nazarbayev, who was given the title "elbasy," or leader of the nation, retained substantial power as head of the National Security Council. But Tokayev removed him as council head amid this week's unrest, possibly aiming at a concession to mollify protesters.

Nazarbayev remained invisible during the chaos, but on Saturday his spokesman said Nazarbayev was in the capital and "calls on everyone to rally around the president of Kazakhstan to overcome current challenges and ensure the integrity of our country."

Omicron explosion spurs nationwide breakdown of services

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER and TERRY TANG Associated Press

Ambulances in Kansas speed toward hospitals then suddenly change direction because hospitals are full. Employee shortages in New York City cause delays in trash and subway services and diminish the ranks of firefighters and emergency workers. Airport officials shut down security checkpoints at the biggest terminal in Phoenix and schools across the nation struggle to find teachers for their classrooms.

The current explosion of omicron-fueled coronavirus infections in the U.S. is causing a breakdown in basic functions and services — the latest illustration of how COVID-19 keeps upending life more than two years into the pandemic.

"This really does, I think, remind everyone of when COVID-19 first appeared and there were such major disruptions across every part of our normal life," said Tom Cotter, director of emergency response and preparedness at the global health nonprofit Project HOPE. "And the unfortunate reality is, there's no way of predicting what will happen next until we get our vaccination numbers — globally — up."

First responders, hospitals, schools and government agencies have employed an all-hands-on-deck approach to keep the public safe, but they are worried how much longer they can keep it up.

In Kansas' Johnson County, paramedics are working 80 hours a week. Ambulances have frequently been forced to alter their course when the hospitals they're heading to tell them they're too overwhelmed to help, confusing the patients' already anxious family members driving behind them. When the ambulances arrive at hospitals, some of their emergency patients end up in waiting rooms because there are no beds.

Dr. Steve Stites, chief medical officer for the University of Kansas Hospital, said when the leader of a rural hospital had no place to send its dialysis patients this week, the hospital's staff consulted a textbook and "tried to put in some catheters and figure out how to do it."

Medical facilities have been hit by a "double whammy," he said. The number of COVID-19 patients at the University of Kansas Hospital rose from 40 on Dec. 1 to 139 on Friday. At the same time, more than 900 employees have been sickened with COVID-19 or are awaiting test results — 7% of the hospital's 13,500-person workforce.

"What my hope is and what we're going to cross our fingers around is that as it peaks ... maybe it'll have the same rapid fall we saw in South Africa," Stites said, referring to the swiftness with which the number of cases fell in that country. "We don't know that. That's just hope."

The omicron variant spreads even more easily than other coronavirus strains, and has already become dominant in many countries. It also more readily infects those who have been vaccinated or had previously been infected by prior versions of the virus. However, early studies show omicron is less likely to cause severe illness than the previous delta variant, and vaccination and a booster still offer strong protection from serious illness, hospitalization and death.

Still, its easy transmissibility has led to skyrocketing cases in the U.S., which is affecting businesses, government offices and public services alike.

In downtown Boise, Idaho, customers were queued up outside a pharmacy before it opened Friday morning and before long, the line wound throughout the large drugstore. Pharmacies have been slammed by staffing shortages, either because employees are out sick or have left altogether.

Pharmacy technician Anecia Mascorro said that prior to the pandemic, the Sav-On Pharmacy where she works always had prescriptions ready for the next day. Now, it's taking a lot longer to fill the hundreds of orders that are pouring in.

"The demand is crazy — everybody's not getting their scripts fast enough so they keep transferring to us," Mascorro said.

In Los Angeles, more than 800 police and fire personnel were sidelined because of the virus as of Thursday, causing slightly longer ambulance and fire response times.

In New York City, officials have had to delay or scale back trash and subway services because of a virus-fueled staffing hemorrhage. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority said about one-fifth of subway

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 71 of 73

operators and conductors — 1,300 people — have been absent in recent days. Almost one-fourth of the city sanitation department's workers were out sick Thursday, Sanitation Commissioner Edward Grayson said.

"Everybody's working 'round the clock, 12-hour shifts," Grayson said.

The city's fire department also has adjusted for higher absences. Officials said Thursday that 28% of EMS workers were out sick, compared with about 8% to 10% on a normal day. Twice as many firefighters as usual were also absent.

In contrast, the police department saw its sick rate fall over the past week, officials said.

At Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, two checkpoints at the airport's busiest terminal were shut down because not enough Transportation Security Administration agents showed up for work, according to statements from airport and TSA officials.

Meanwhile, schools from coast to coast tried to maintain in-person instruction despite massive teacher absences. In Chicago, a tense standoff between the school district and teachers union over remote learning and COVID-19 safety protocols led to classes being canceled over the past three days. In San Francisco, nearly 900 educators and aides called in sick Thursday.

In Hawaii, where public schools are under one statewide district, 1,600 teachers and staff were absent Wednesday because of illness or pre-arranged vacation or leave. The state's teachers union criticized education officials for not better preparing for the ensuing void. Osa Tui Jr., head of the Hawaii State Teachers Association, said counselors and security guards were being pulled to go "babysit a classroom."

"That is very inappropriate," Tui said at a news conference. "To have this model where there are so many teachers out and for the department to say, 'Send your kid' to a classroom that doesn't have a teacher, what's the point of that?"

In New Haven, Connecticut, where hundreds of teachers have been out each day this week, administrators have helped to cover classrooms. Some teachers say they appreciate that, but that it can be confusing for students, adding to the physical and mental stress they're already feeling because of the pandemic.

"We've already been tested so much. How much can the rubber band stretch here?" asked Leslie Blatteau, president of the New Haven Federation of Teachers.

Turkmenistan's leader wants 'Gates of Hell' fire put out

ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan (AP) — The president of Turkmenistan is calling for an end to one of the country's most notable but infernal sights — the blazing natural gas crater widely referred to as the "Gates of Hell."

The desert crater located about 260 kilometers (160 miles) north of the capital, Ashgabat, has burned for decades and is a popular sight for the small number of tourists who come to Turkmenistan, a country which is difficult to enter.

The Turkmen news site Turkmenportal said a 1971 gas-drilling collapse formed the crater, which is about 60 meters (190 feet) in diameter and 20 meters (70 feet) deep. To prevent the spread of gas, geologists set a fire, expecting the gas to burn off in a few weeks.

The spectacular if unwelcome fire that has burned ever since is so renowned that state TV showed President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov speeding around it in an off-road truck in 2019.

But Berdymukhamedov has ordered his government to look for ways to put the fire out because it is causing ecological damage and affecting the health of people living in the area, state newspaper Neitralny Turkmenistan reported Saturday.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Jan. 9, the ninth day of 2022. There are 356 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 9, 2015, French security forces shot and killed two al-Qaida-linked brothers suspected of carry-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 72 of 73

ing out the rampage at the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo that had claimed 12 lives, the same day a gunman killed four people at a Paris kosher grocery store before being killed by police.

On this date:

In 1788, Connecticut became the fifth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1793, Frenchman Jean Pierre Blanchard, using a hot-air balloon, flew from Philadelphia to Woodbury, New Jersey.

In 1861, Mississippi became the second state to secede from the Union, the same day the Star of the West, a merchant vessel bringing reinforcements and supplies to Federal troops at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, retreated because of artillery fire.

In 1914, the County of Los Angeles opened the country's first public defender's office.

In 1916, the World War I Battle of Gallipoli ended after eight months with an Ottoman Empire victory as Allied forces withdrew.

In 1945, during World War II, American forces began landing on the shores of Lingayen Gulf in the Philippines as the Battle of Luzon got underway, resulting in an Allied victory over Imperial Japanese forces.

In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, in his State of the Union address to Congress, warned of the threat of Communist imperialism.

In 1972, reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes, speaking by telephone from the Bahamas to reporters in Hollywood, said a purported autobiography of him by Clifford Irving was a fake.

In 1987, the White House released a January 1986 memorandum prepared for President Ronald Reagan by Lt. Col. Oliver L. North showing a link between U.S. arms sales to Iran and the release of American hostages in Lebanon.

In 2003, U.N. weapons inspectors said there was no "smoking gun" to prove Iraq had nuclear, chemical or biological weapons but they demanded that Baghdad provide private access to scientists and fresh evidence to back its claim that it had destroyed its weapons of mass destruction.

In 2005, Mahmoud Abbas, the No. 2 man in the Palestinian hierarchy during Yasser Arafat's rule, was elected president of the Palestinian Authority by a landslide.

In 2020, Chinese state media said a preliminary investigation into recent cases of viral pneumonia had identified the probable cause as a new type of coronavirus.

Ten years ago: Iranian state radio reported that a court had convicted former U.S. Marine Amir Mirzaei Hekmati of working for the CIA and sentenced him to death. (The Obama administration and his family denied Hekmati was a CIA spy; Hekmati was released in January 2016 as part of a prisoner swap.) Cincinnati Reds shortstop Barry Larkin was elected to baseball's Hall of Fame. No. 2 Alabama beat No. 1 LSU 21-0 for the first shutout in BCS title game history.

Five years ago: President-elect Donald Trump appointed his influential son-in-law Jared Kushner as a White House senior adviser. The outgoing Obama administration blacklisted five Russians as the feud over U.S. election hacking escalated. In college football's first national championship rematch, No. 3 Clemson took down top-ranked Alabama 35-31.

One year ago: Police charged more people in the Jan. 6 Capitol riots as more graphic details of the mob's violence and brutality emerged. Jacob Anthony Chansley, an Arizona man seen in photos and video with a painted face and wearing a horned, fur hat, was arrested and charged. An Indonesian jetliner nosedived into the Java Sea after taking off from Jakarta, killing all 62 people on board. A California woman, Miya Ponsetto, who wrongly accused a Black teenager of stealing her phone and grabbed at him as he tried to leave a New York hotel, was charged with attempted robbery and other crimes when she returned to New York following her arrest in California.

Today's Birthdays: Actor K Callan is 86. Folk singer Joan Baez is 81. Rock musician Jimmy Page (Led Zeppelin) is 78. Actor John Doman is 77. Singer David Johansen (aka Buster Poindexter) is 72. Singer Crystal Gayle is 71. Actor J.K. Simmons is 67. Actor Imelda Staunton is 66. Nobel Peace laureate Rigoberta Menchú is 63. Rock musician Eric Erlandson is 59. Actor Joely Richardson is 57. Rock musician Carl Bell (Fuel) is 55. Actor David Costabile is 55. Rock singer Steve Harwell (Smash Mouth) is 55. Rock singer-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 09, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 186 ~ 73 of 73

musician Dave Matthews is 55. Actor-director Joey Lauren Adams is 54. Comedian/actor Deon Cole is 51. Actor Angela Bettis is 49. Actor Omari Hardwick is 48. Roots singer-songwriter Hayes Carll is 46. Singer A.J. McLean (Backstreet Boys) is 44. Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, is 40. Pop-rock musician Drew Brown (OneRepublic) is 38. Rock-soul singer Paolo Nutini is 35. Actor Nina Dobrev is 33. Actor Basil Eidenbenz is 29. Actor Kerris Dorsey is 24. Actor Tyree Brown is 18.