

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 1 of 88

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Weekly Church Calendar](#)
- [3- Groton Area wins own wrestling tournament](#)
- [5- Lennox hands Groton Area boys first loss](#)
- [6- Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller](#)
- [11- Wolves Unable to Complete Upset at Minnesota State](#)
- [12- Northern State Falls in Road Battle with Minnesota State](#)
- [13- Groton Robotic Teams take first and second at Valley City](#)
- [16- Sunday Extras](#)
- [35- Rep. Johnson's Weekly Column](#)
- [36- Gov. Noem's Weekly Column](#)
- [38- Rep. Thune's Weekly Column](#)
- [39- Rev. Snyder's Column](#)
- [41- Groton Robotics Pancake Feed Ad](#)
- [42- EarthTalk -Eat Salads](#)
- [43- COVID-19 Reports](#)
- [47- Weather Pages](#)
- [51- Daily Devotional](#)
- [52- 2022 Community Events](#)
- [53- Subscription Form](#)
- [54- News from the Associated Press](#)

## UpComing Events

**Saturday, Jan. 29**

**Sunday, Jan. 30**

Groton Robotics Pancake Feed at Groton Community Center, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Carnival of Silver Skates, 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

**Monday, Jan. 31**

Junior High Boys Basketball with Redfield at Groton. 7th at 4 p.m. followed by 8th grade game

**Tuesday, Feb. 1**

Boys Basketball hosts Langford Area with JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

**Thursday, Feb. 3**

Basketball Doubleheader at Faulkton (5:15 p.m.: Girls JV in new gym, Boys JV in Competition Gym, Girls Varsity in Competition Gym at 6:20 p.m. followed by Boys Varsity.

5 p.m.: Junior High Wrestling Invitational in Groton



*“Time spent with family is worth every second.”*

AUTHOR UNKNOWN



**Friday, Feb. 4**

Wrestling triangular at Presho

**Saturday, Feb. 5**

Girls basketball at Madison

10 a.m.: Wrestling at Stanley County

Boys Basketball with Clark/Willow Lake at Groton (7th grade at 1 p.m. followed by 8th grade, JV and Varsity).

**Monday, Feb. 7**

Junior High Boys Basketball at Aberdeen Christian. 7th grade at 6 p.m. followed by 8th grade.

Girls Basketball hosts Aberdeen Roncalli. C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV and then Varsity.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

**Tuesday, Feb. 8**

Girls Basketball hosting Tiospa Zina with JV game at 6 p.m. followed by Varsity.

Boys Basketball vs. North Central at Edmunds Central with JV at 6:30 p.m. followed by Varsity.

**Wednesday, Feb. 9**

LifeTouch picture re-take day at Elementary School

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

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

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 2 of 88

## United Methodist Church

Groton and Conde

### Sunday, January 30, 2022

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

### Wednesday, February 2, 2022

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

### Sunday, February 6, 2022

Communion in Worship (white)  
Conde Worship 9:00 AM  
Sunday School 10:00 AM  
Groton Worship 11:00 AM

## Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

### Sunday, Jan. 30

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

### Monday, Jan. 31

6:30am Bible Study

### Wednesday, Feb. 2

5:00pm Sarah Circle  
6:00pm Confirmation

### Thursday, Feb. 3

2:00pm Nigeria Circle

### Sunday, Feb. 6

9am Worship/Communion  
10:15am Sunday School & Grace Alone BookStudy

## 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. 30

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

### Tuesday, Feb. 1

1 p.m.: LWML Ladies Aid

### Wednesday, Feb. 2

3:45 p.m.: Confirmation

### Sunday, Feb. 6

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](mailto:news@grotonsd.net)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 3 of 88

## Groton Area wins own invitational wrestling tournament

Five Groton Area grapplers took first place at the Groton Invitational Wrestling Tournament held Saturday. The first place finishes propelled the Tigers to a first place finish in the team standings, outdistancing runner-up, Watertown JV, by 20 points. Those who took first were Pierce Kettering, Christian Ehresmann, Korbin Kucker, Cole Bisbee and Lane Krueger. Brevin Flihs took second while Walker Zoellner was third and Porter Johnson was fourth.

### **106: Liza Krueger (1-6)**

Champ. Round 1 - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 1-6 received a bye ( ) (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Cooper Pommer (Clark/Willow Lake ) 25-15 won by fall over Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 1-6 (Fall 0:32)

Cons. Round 2 - Alec Pester (Huron JV` ) 4-15 won by fall over Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 1-6 (Fall 2:15)

### **106: Walker Zoellner (12-11) placed 3rd and scored 18.0 team points.**

Champ. Round 1 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 12-11 won by fall over Alec Pester (Huron JV` ) 4-15 (Fall 1:35)

Quarterfinal - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 12-11 won by fall over Logan Foster (Clark/Willow Lake ) 3-15 (Fall 3:43)

Semifinal - Keslar Swenson (Watertown JV) 6-7 won by fall over Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 12-11 (Fall 1:27)

Cons. Semi - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 12-11 won by fall over Alec Pester (Huron JV` ) 4-15 (Fall 3:24)

3rd Place Match - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 12-11 won in sudden victory - 1 over Robbie Sealey (Sioux Falls O`Gorman JV) 6-5 (SV-1 2-0)

### **113: Porter Johnson (15-17) placed 4th and scored 11.0 team points.**

Quarterfinal - Porter Johnson (Groton Area) 15-17 won by fall over Jonah Crow (Sioux Falls O`Gorman JV) 0-4 (Fall 1:47)

Semifinal - Brady Unser (Ipswich/Leola/Bowdle) 10-6 won by fall over Porter Johnson (Groton Area) 15-17 (Fall 1:22)

Cons. Semi - Porter Johnson (Groton Area) 15-17 won by fall over Slayton Swenson (Canton JV) 2-3 (Fall 0:31)

3rd Place Match - Cooper Kettwig (Watertown JV) 5-8 won by fall over Porter Johnson (Groton Area) 15-17 (Fall 1:49)

### **120: Isaiah Scepaniak (3-18)**

Quarterfinal - Yen Kyaw (Huron JV` ) 3-11 won by fall over Isaiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 3-18 (Fall 0:22)

Cons. Round 1 - Isaiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 3-18 received a bye ( ) (Bye)

Cons. Semi - Sam Anderson (Watertown JV) 3-1 won by fall over Isaiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 3-18 (Fall 0:28)

### **132: Cameron Johnson (0-7)**

Quarterfinal - Ben Suther (Britton/Hecla) 10-12 won by fall over Cameron Johnson (Groton Area) 0-7 (Fall 1:07)

Cons. Round 1 - Sam Crandall (Watertown JV) 2-6 won by fall over Cameron Johnson (Groton Area) 0-7 (Fall 4:15)

### **132: Pierce Kettering (27-14) placed 1st and scored 24.0 team points.**

Quarterfinal - Pierce Kettering (Groton Area) 27-14 won by fall over Isaac Ramirez (Sully Buttes) 1-14 (Fall 0:45)

Semifinal - Pierce Kettering (Groton Area) 27-14 won by fall over Blaise McGregor (Webster Area ) 7-18 (Fall 1:28)

1st Place Match - Pierce Kettering (Groton Area) 27-14 won by fall over Ben Suther (Britton/Hecla) 10-12 (Fall 3:21)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 4 of 88

## **138: Brevin Flihs (19-13) placed 2nd and scored 20.0 team points.**

Champ. Round 1 - Brevin Flihs (Groton Area) 19-13 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Brevin Flihs (Groton Area) 19-13 won by fall over Trace Genzler (Potter County) 3-13 (Fall 0:44)

Semifinal - Brevin Flihs (Groton Area) 19-13 won by fall over Nicholus Giese (Sioux Falls O`Gorman JV) 8-4 (Fall 2:36)

1st Place Match - Clayton Dulany (Warner/Northwestern) 20-8 won by decision over Brevin Flihs (Groton Area) 19-13 (Dec 6-2)

## **138: Nick Morris (1-9)**

Champ. Round 1 - Nick Morris (Groton Area) 1-9 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Nicholus Giese (Sioux Falls O`Gorman JV) 8-4 won by fall over Nick Morris (Groton Area) 1-9 (Fall 5:38)

Cons. Round 2 - Kieshon Smith (Canton JV) 6-6 won by fall over Nick Morris (Groton Area) 1-9 (Fall 0:40)

## **145: Christian Ehersmann (26-6) placed 1st and scored 24.0 team points.**

Champ. Round 1 - Christian Ehersmann (Groton Area) 26-6 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Christian Ehersmann (Groton Area) 26-6 won by fall over Chays Mansfield (Warner/Northwestern) 4-11 (Fall 0:59)

Semifinal - Christian Ehersmann (Groton Area) 26-6 won by fall over Gavin Witt (Webster Area ) 10-21 (Fall 2:51)

1st Place Match - Christian Ehersmann (Groton Area) 26-6 won by decision over Lucas Arcoren (Sully Buttes) 26-13 (Dec 7-4)

## **152: Korbin Kucker (22-16) placed 1st and scored 28.0 team points.**

Champ. Round 1 - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 22-16 won by fall over James Hooper (Watertown JV) 1-2 (Fall 1:31)

Quarterfinal - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 22-16 won by fall over Okay Htoo (Huron JV`) 1-10 (Fall 0:27)

Semifinal - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 22-16 won by fall over Tucker Urdahl (Watertown JV) 4-8 (Fall 3:03)

1st Place Match - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 22-16 won by fall over Carter Luikens (Potter County) 11-16 (Fall 3:44)

## **160: Cole Bisbee (27-9) placed 1st and scored 24.0 team points.**

Champ. Round 1 - Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 27-9 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 27-9 won by fall over Aiden Kenable (Sioux Falls O`Gorman JV) 4-1 (Fall 5:08)

Semifinal - Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 27-9 won by fall over Cole Shoemaker (Webster Area ) 9-23 (Fall 0:36)

1st Place Match - Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 27-9 won by decision over Gavin Neu (Canton JV) 11-6 (Dec 5-0)

## **285: Lane Krueger (20-7) placed 1st and scored 20.0 team points.**

Quarterfinal - Lane Krueger (Groton Area) 20-7 received a bye () (Bye)

Semifinal - Lane Krueger (Groton Area) 20-7 won by fall over Zach Carlson (Sioux Falls O`Gorman JV) 8-18 (Fall 3:26)

1st Place Match - Lane Krueger (Groton Area) 20-7 won by decision over Avery Nichols (Clark/Willow Lake ) 4-1 (Dec 4-1)

## Lennox hands Groton Area boys first loss

Groton Area's boys basketball team suffered its first loss of the season at the DAK XII -NEC Clash held Saturday in Madison. Groton Area took on Lennox and the Orioles pulled out a 62-52 win over the Tigers.

Lennox jumped out to an 8-0 but the Tigers rallied and closed to within one at the first quarter break, 12-11. Once again, the Orioles captured an eight-point lead early in the second quarter and again, Groton rallied to close to within two points, 19-17. Lennox would take a 24-17 lead at half time.

Groton Area found itself down by eight and then 10 points early in the third quarter. The Tigers battled back and closed to within three points, 34-31, but Lennox went on to take a 45-35 lead at the end of the third quarter. Lennox would open up a 14-point lead in the fourth quarter and would go on to win by 10.

Lane Tietz led the Tigers with 14 points, three rebounds, two assists and two steals. Tate Larson had 10 points, five rebounds, two assists and two steals. Jayden Zak had nine points, three rebounds and two assists. Jacob Zak had eight points, five rebounds, two assists and two steals. Wyatt Hearnen had six points, four rebounds and one steal. Kaden Kurtz had five points, one rebound, two assists and one steal. Cole Simon had one rebound, one assist and one steal.

Groton Area made 21 of 53 total field goals for 40 percent while Lennox made 20 of 35 for 57 percent. The Tigers were five of seven from the line off of Lennox's 12 team fouls and Lennox was 12 of 18 from the line off of Groton Area's 18 team fouls with Jacob Zak fouling out with 32 seconds left in the game. Lennox had more turnovers, 14-8. The Tigers had 17 rebounds.

Groton Area is now 9-1 on the season while Lennox is 12-2.

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

- Paul Kosel

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 6 of 88

#511 in a series

## Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Case numbers are plunging. The seven-day new-case average is down to 55,252, a decline of nearly one-third from the pandemic's highest peak which was just two weeks ago. To put this in perspective, this record was nearly 221 percent of the previous one last winter, and we remain at 114 percent of that old record today. We are up to 73,961,907, which means we've passed 73 million and will pass 74 million sometime today. So despite the slowdown in new cases, the numbers keep mounting; almost 30 percent of the pandemic total has been reported since Christmas.

January 2 – 55 million – 3 days  
January 3 – 56 million – 1 day  
January 4 – 57 million – 1 day  
January 6 – 58 million – 2 days  
January 7 – 59 million – 1 day  
January 9 – 60 million – 2 days  
January 10 – 61 million – 1 day  
January 11 – 62 million – 1 day  
January 12 – 63 million – 1 day  
January 13 – 64 million – 1 day  
January 14 – 65 million – 1 day  
January 17 – 66 million – 3 days  
January 18 – 67 million – 1 day  
January 19 – 68 million – 1 day  
January 20 – 69 million – 1 day  
January 21 – 70 million – 1 day  
January 24 – 71 million – 3 days  
January 25 – 72 million – 1 day  
January 27 – 73 million – 2 days

Thirty-nine states and territories now show declines in new cases over the past two weeks. Of the 20 states and territories with the largest declines, 15 were in the Northeast and along the East Coast. Of the 15 with the largest increases, 10 were in the Midwest, Mountain West, and Pacific Northwest. That establishes a fairly strong pattern, and we do still have every state and territory except American Samoa at unchecked transmission, so there's work left to do. The pandemic's not over yet.

Hospitalizations have taken a downward turn over the last few days, and I'm seeing a strong enough pattern to think it's real. We are now at 149,915, well off the peak of 159,509, but still far above anything seen in any previous wave. Our previous record was 137,516 last January 10, so just over a year ago; we've blown that out of the water and continue to do so. The good news there is that, as hospitalizations decline, a decline in deaths will follow, although that will take a while—they're still increasing now. The seven-day deaths average is up to 2529, and yesterday's count based on the latest data we have was up to 3769, which approaches our pandemic record. Total deaths sit at 881,584.

We talked a few days ago about a new permutation of the Omicron variant called BA.2. Turns out back when this variant was first characterized, three sub-lineages had actually been identified; these were named BA.1, BA.2, and BA.3. They're all highly similar, but each has its own mutations not shared with the others. I'm not enough of a viral geneticist to know whether we should be calling each one of these a separate variant or if sub-lineage (or something else) is a better name, and I haven't so far gotten any clarity on that from my reading, so we're going to pussy-foot around that whole issue until I do. At any

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 7 of 88

rate, the only one of the three to really take off (and boy-howdy, did it) was BA.1, our good buddy we're calling Omicron. That one is far more transmissible than anything that came before it, but seems to have lower virulence; and as we know, our immune responses are not a perfect match for it, but don't do too badly either. Those are the three characteristics of interest with each new variant: (1) transmissibility, (2) virulence, and (3) ability to evade immune responses.

So I've been hearing folks refer to this one, BA.2, as the "stealth" variant. This has been accompanied by dark warnings that it is proving difficult to detect, which leads one to wonder whether our diagnostic tests are going to work or we're back to square 1 there with virus running rampant undetected all across the country. It appears this fuss is something of a tempest in a teapot. Remember back a while when we talked about S-gene target failure (SGTF)? No? Here's the short version: BA.1 (what we've known as the Omicron variant to date) has a quirk in its spike protein that gives a unique signature on certain PCR tests which makes it fairly easily identifiable from many, not all, PCR tests without doing the slow and expensive genomic sequencing process we've had to use to identify every other variant so far. That means we've been able to do variant tracking on a lot more specimens than we otherwise could. (If you want the long version, check out my Update #507 posted January 19 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/5559265774089783/>.) Well, apparently BA.2 doesn't have the quirk—doesn't show SGTF that shows up on PCR tests, so we're back to doing the old slower, costlier genomic testing to spot it. That's sort of a bummer, but it looks like diagnostic tests are going to do every bit as well in identifying infected people as they ever did.

As for the three usual characteristics of concern, here's what we know.

(1) Transmissibility: There is evidence it's higher because it has managed to successfully compete with BA.1 in some places, Denmark, for example, where it accounts for around 40 percent of cases at the moment. (Could be Denmark just has a better sequencing program so they have a better estimate, or it could be they really have more cases than everyone else. We don't know yet.) Whichever, the only way that happens is if you have a very low level of infection when it shows up (Denmark didn't) or the new critter spreads better. Based on that, BA.2 appears to be slightly more transmissible than BA.1—like some folks are talking about one to three percent more. While we do care any time a new variant spreads better, I don't know that we're going to notice this too much if that estimate is, indeed, in the ballpark.

(2) Virulence (or lethality): Does it cause more severe disease, cause severe disease in more people, and/or kill more people? Doesn't appear to. Hospitalization rates are steady to falling in Denmark currently with no detected increase in severity, and with 40 percent representation I'm going to say if this one was bad, I think we'd have noticed by now. So far at least, it doesn't appear this is going to be a thing. We'll be watching this a while though before anyone's going to be sure.

(3) Immune escape: It's early times on this question too, but so far it doesn't appear to be a threat to escape. I saw some preliminary data in the UK's most recent surveillance report, published just Thursday, that vaccine effectiveness (VE) against BA.2 has been almost identical to VE against BA.1. So far, so good.

I'm going to make a mad guess this will not be the last time we talk about BA.2. There's some possibility it will get its own classification as a variant of interest or a variant of concern along with its own Greek letter. I think it will be a while before we see how all of that's going to work; but for now, we probably don't need to get too excited. That could change, but what we have at the moment says we don't need to lose our minds over this one.

Now that many of us will be receiving test kits in the mail, we should probably talk about something

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 8 of 88

that hasn't come up yet: how to store them. These can be damaged by extreme temperatures, so you will want to give some attention to where you keep them. Thing is, the kits' reagents contain proteins, and proteins can be temperature sensitive—not super-fragile, but sensitive to extremes. In general, the safe range is from 35 to 86oF; even short periods outside that range could be problematic, especially excessive warmth. You want to store them at room temperature in a dry location. The bathroom and kitchen are not great choices since both tend to become pretty humid as you cook and do dishes or shower and both can get fairly hot as well. You also don't want to keep them in an unheated (or un-air-conditioned) garage or porch.

Additionally, you should visually examine a kit before testing to make sure there are no substances leaking or pieces broken. If you observe that, you should not use the kit. These tests tend to be well-packaged, so it seems unlikely either of these things will be much of a problem. Still, it makes sense to check. The temperature range in which the reagents in the kit actually work is narrower than the storage temperature range; you should use the kit in temperatures between 65 and 86oF. That means you shouldn't use the test outdoors for much of the year. If it was stored at colder temperatures, then let it warm to room temperature before you run the test. And I will also remind you to read the directions all the way through before starting with the test. The last thing you need is to discover halfway through that there's something you need or should have done that you missed. No point wasting the money on a test if you're not going to run it correctly.

And, here's something new you most definitely should not do: pool your home Covid-19 tests. You may recall we talked about pooled lab testing way back in early June 2020 when tests were in even shorter supply than they are now, and then the FDA issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) for pooled PCR tests in July. You can have a look at my Update #178 posted August 19, 2020, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3884805034869207> if you want to read about that. The basic idea here is that you save tests by putting together specimens from a number of people and using just one test on that pooled specimen. If the result is negative, then you can move on to the next pool; knowing you saved a bunch of tests over testing each one of those folks individually; you need only test individuals when the pool tests positive. This was estimated to save about 50 percent of test kits.

Well, with tests hard to find again, folks are getting the idea it's a good plan to do that with home tests. It isn't. Bunch of reasons. (1) Because these tests come with just one swab and the little receptacle takes only one swab, you're going to have to sample everybody's nose with the same swab—and only one of those people gets to go first: Everyone else, well, doesn't. Large eww factor here. (2) If some of these people are infected and others are not, then you're going to transmit infection by reusing that swab—not just Covid-19, but colds and flu and who knows what else? (3) These test kits aren't designed to work with that large a dose of whatever's on that swab, and there's no guarantee your result will be accurate. There's potential for so much cell debris from all those people that will interfere with the test reagents, and there's a dilution factor when you collect from several noses and really saturate that swab. There is work underway on tests designed for pooled testing—where each person gets their own swab—but we're a ways off on that at the moment. For now, just don't do it.

The CDC posted a study on Thursday from a group of researchers at several institutions around the country; it looked at vaccine effectiveness (VE) against Covid-19 hospitalization for a third dose in 1077 adults with immunocompromising conditions. There was a comparison group of 1875 adults without immunocompromising conditions. VE against Covid-19 hospitalization among adults without immunocompromising conditions was 82 percent for two doses and 97 percent for three doses. VE against Covid-19 hospitalization among adults with immunocompromising conditions was 69 percent for two doses and 88 percent for three doses. The up-front conclusion is that "adults vaccinated with 2 or 3 doses of a COVID-19



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 9 of 88

mRNA vaccine were protected against COVID-19–associated hospitalization. Significantly higher VE was observed in adults who received a third mRNA vaccine dose either as part of a primary vaccine series (immunocompromised persons) or as a booster dose (immunocompetent persons) compared with those who had received 2 doses. These findings underscore the importance of immunocompromised adults obtaining a third mRNA vaccine dose  $\geq 28$  days after the second vaccine dose and of immunocompetent adults receiving a third (booster) dose currently recommended  $\geq 5$  months after the second dose.” We’ll note that this study was conducted while Delta was the predominant variant, and so these VEs are quite likely lower for the Omicron variant; fourth doses, now available to immunocompromised individuals who are at least five months out from that third dose, may well impact these VE numbers as well. That study remains to be done; we’ll need some time before it will be possible.

And if you find yourself at this point in need of a glimmer of hope, this next might be that glimmer. Like much else we’ve done here for the past couple of years, this isn’t definite, but it’s promising. The context here is our concern about the very low vaccination rates across almost all of Africa and how that threatens to provide a fertile breeding ground for the development of new variants; after all, when there’s a lot of community transmission, there’s a lot of replication, and that leads to a lot of mutation, the cradle of variant development. The troublesome variants we’ve dealt with so far have arisen in areas of unchecked transmission, so we have proof of concept here. Transmission is interrupted or at least reduced when you have a lot of people with antibodies to the virus, whether from natural infection or vaccination. While we are learning vaccination appears to be more effective in this regard than infection, both do some good.

So here’s the thing: With so few vaccinated in Africa, there is concern to understand how much immunity derived from natural infection might exist in the population to supplement the vaccine-derived immunity. Immunologists on the continent have been trying to define just how widespread recent surges have been and where that leaves the population in terms of protection from further surges. The work in Malawi is the first that popped up; in a country with a five percent vaccination rate, public health officials knew there had been more cases than had been reported. Even so, an immunologist at the Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme Kondwani Jambo did not expect the result he found when he tested samples in the national blood bank from over the course of the pandemic. “I was very shocked,” he told the New York Times, to discover that as many as 80 percent of the population had been infected by the beginning of the Delta variant wave back last summer; it’s likely higher now.

That was shocking because hospitalization and death rates have not been particularly high in the country—nothing like many western nations have seen. No one expected anything like 80 percent. They did expect that they’d escaped the worst effects of the virus because their population is exceptionally young with a median age of about 18 years. This means only half their population is over 18 and it also means those folks are far, far less likely to experience severe disease. That’s 20 years younger than the US, and with the strong association between bad outcomes and advancing age, it could explain a lot. What we have here is a situation where the vast majority of infections were asymptomatic and never showed up in the official numbers. What’s more, this same pattern is now showing up in other African countries that also have young populations; they had high prevalence of infection even before the Omicron variant was a thing.

While death rates in Africa have run low throughout, and Omicron produced only a fraction of the deaths numbers they’d seen in earlier waves. Apparently, in a young population multiple exposures—and maybe/likely(?) repeated infections—with all of the previous variants may have produced a strong degree of population protection against Omicron and a picture that looks as if the virus may be approaching endemicity. In South Africa, with its older population, they’ve had a whole lot more severe disease and lost a whole lot more people, especially during Delta, than Malawi or Kenya or Madagascar; but nonetheless,

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 10 of 88**

they seem to have reached a similar point.

If they're reading this right, then perhaps what's been a huge source of concern about unchecked transmission and mutation and variant emergence may be not as great a concern as we had anticipated. And maybe not too: After all, we still don't know how long this protection achieved by natural infection will last. There is reason to believe that repeated exposures, which have almost certainly occurred, have provided stronger and more durable protection than single exposures; and research is suggesting we may have a year's duration from this. As always, I'll caution us against getting too far ahead of ourselves, but I like the direction of things here. The thinking is that it would make sense in this population to target early vaccination efforts to people 50 and over to protect the most vulnerable until vaccine supplies become more abundant. We all know the young are not bulletproof, but if we can stretch the supply in the shorter term, we'll gain time to produce more, ship them, and get them into people. Time will tell, but those efforts need to ramp up. The task is looking more manageable, so it makes sense to push harder.

That's it for today. Keep yourself safe, and we'll talk in a few days.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 11 of 88

## Wolves Unable to Complete Upset at Minnesota State

Mankato, Minn. – After a strong first half, the Northern State women's basketball team was unable to keep pace with Minnesota State in the third quarter and dropped a 85-76 game on Saturday afternoon. The game closed the cross-divisional portion of the NSIC schedule with the Wolves going 4-3 against NSIC South competition.

### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 76, MSU 85

Records: NSU 10-10 (7-8 NSIC), MSU 15-4 (11-4 NSIC)

Attendance: 698

### HOW IT HAPPENED

Both teams started shooting lights out to start the game, with Northern State taking a 15-13 lead into the first media timeout while shooting the ball 7-10 from the field, compared to Minnesota State's 6-11 shooting from the field

Thanks to eight offensive rebounds, the Wolves scored six second chance points enroute to a 25-23 lead after the first quarter

The Wolves held the Mavericks scoreless for over six minutes of game time, stretching till the 4:24 mark in the second quarter; MSU's first field goal in the period did not come until the 2:45 mark in the period

Northern pushed their lead to as many as seven points in the first half; however, an 8-0 scoring run by Minnesota State at the end of the half gave the Mavericks a 37-36 lead at the break

After having the game tied at 44 midway through the third quarter, MSU used an 11-0 run to jump out to 55-44 lead

Northern State began to claw back into the game at the beginning of the fourth quarter with an 8-0 run of their own, cutting the lead back to 67-56

Rianna Fillipi knocked down a career high six 3-pointers, with five of them coming in the fourth quarter while trying to rally a comeback

Abbey Holmes set a career high with 10 points and tied a career high with six rebounds, Carly Mekash tied a career high with nine points and set a new career high with seven rebounds, and Laurie Rogers dished out a career high six assists

The Wolves shot 48.3 percent from the field, 55.6 percent from 3-point range, and 66.7 percent from the free throw line

Northern State out-rebound Minnesota State 45-35 in the game

### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Rianna Fillipi: 20 points, 2 rebounds, 2 assists, 6-9 3-pointers

Haley Johnson: 15 points, 8 rebounds, 4 assists

Kailee Oliverson: 14 points, 7 rebounds, 4 blocks

### UP NEXT

The Northern State women's basketball team will return to NSIC North Division play next weekend, when they travel to face division leaders St. Cloud State and Minnesota Duluth. The Wolves and Huskies are scheduled for a 5:30 p.m. tip-off on Friday night, and the Wolves and Bulldogs are set for a 3:30 p.m. tip-off on Saturday afternoon.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 12 of 88

## Northern State Falls in Road Battle with Minnesota State

Mankato, Minn. – The Northern State University men's basketball team fell to Minnesota State on Saturday evening in Mankato, 75-68. The Wolves trailed for most of the game, shooting just 37.1% from the floor and 16.7% from the 3-point line.

### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 68, MSU 75

Records: NSU 14-10 (8-8 NSIC), MSU 12-6 (6-6 NSIC)

Attendance: 1172

### HOW IT HAPPENED

- Northern tallied 28 points in the first half and out-scored Minnesota State in the second, 40-39, however it was not enough to overcome the deficit
- The Wolves were also out-rebounded in the contest 45-40, however did sit on top in offensive boards with 16
- NSU added a game high 14 assists, as well as six steals and six blocks
- Northern recorded 34 points in the paint, 14 points off the bench, ten second chance points, and five fast break points in the loss
- Four Wolves scored in double figures in the game, led by Jordan Belka with 15 points

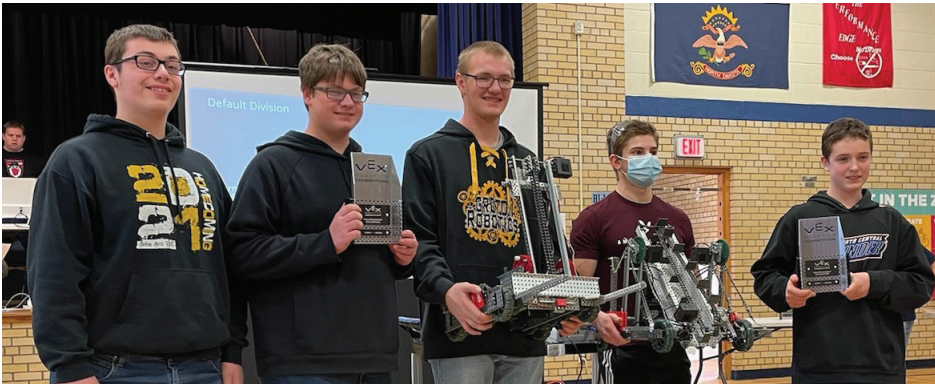
### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Jordan Belka: 15 points, 8 rebounds
- Augustin Reede: 13 points, 5 rebounds
- Sam Masten: 12 points, 2 assists
- Cole Bergan: 11 points, 7 assists, 3 rebounds

### UP NEXT

Northern State continues their road trip next Friday and Saturday at St. Cloud State and Minnesota Duluth. Tip-off is set for 7:30 p.m. on Friday in St. Cloud and 5:30 p.m. on Saturday in Duluth.

## Groton Robotic Teams take first and second at Valley City



**Gear Heads (Axel Warrington, Jack Dinger and Ethan Clark) with their alliance partners, Double Trouble from Eureka came home with a FIRST PLACE TROPHY-this is Gear Heads first time at winning a tournament!** (Courtesy Photo)

Gear Heads 9050B (Jack Dinger, Ethan Clark, Axel Warrington) Galaxy 9050E (Kiana Sanders, Corbin Weismantel, River Pardick and Isaac Higgins) and the Gladiators 9050F (Garrett Schultz, not present Bradyn Wienk).

The competition starts off with 36 qualifying matches, each team competing 8 times. At the end of the 36 qualifying matches G-Force ranked 4th, Gear Heads 7th, Gladiator's 10th and Galaxy 13th.

After the 36 qualifying matches 18 teams go into the tournament determined by an alliance selection. Each team chooses a tournament partner starting with the team that is ranked first and down the line.

Gladiators and Galaxy worked hard but faced very tough matchups in the quarter finals as they matched with G-Force and a Britton team that both ended up being the tournament runner-up. Robots are always a work in progress and it's fun to see the tweaks and improvements that take place between tournaments to help them advance as the year goes on!

G-Force, the 3rd seed in the tournament, advanced through the quarter and semi-finals with scores well above their opponents.

Gear Heads, the 5th seed, made it through the quarter finals, and met up with the #1 seed in the semi-finals, it was a close match with very close scores.

In the finals Gear Heads and their alliance partner from Eureka (Double Trouble) advanced further to face G-Force and their Britton alliance partner (Phil the Terrible).

The championship match was a grueling match that had us all on the edge of our seats. G-Force has a very impressive robot and has done extremely well. It's made some good moves by being able to stack the most mobile goals on their platform than any other team-

Groton Robotic Teams take home the 1st and 2nd Place Trophy's this Weekend in Valley City!

When most of the town is sleeping the Groton Robotics crew is hitting the road on chilly Saturday morning! On the road by 6:30 am, of which is late considering this is the closest tournament for the kids.

Groton Robotics sent 4 teams up north on Saturday, January 26th to participate in the VALLEY CITY FROZEN CLASSIC Vex Robotics Tournament competing against 18 teams from the tri-state area, 10 being from South Dakota. G-Force 9050A (Travis Townsend, Jace Kroll)



**G-Force (Jace Kroll and Travis Townsend) game back down to South Dakota with a SECOND PLACE TROPHY!** (Courtesy Photo)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 14 of 88



**Axel Warrington, Jack Dinger and Ethan Clark. The match that won the tournament for Gear Heads!** (Courtesy Photo)

this means LOTS of points! Some very jaw dropping moments! (see picture). Gear Heads had good offensive moves, in one match they were able to push their partner plus themselves and a mobile goal on the platform to balance to rack up some pretty good points (see picture). **FIRST PLACE TROPHY** goes to Gear Heads, **SECOND PLACE** to G-Force!

In the end it was 4 South Dakota teams that came out on top and competed for that 1st place trophy! Congratulations to all the robotists who participated! Groton's next tournament will be Saturday, February 12th as they head down to Sioux Falls. For more information check out the Vex VRC robotics website, download the VEX via app and follow Groton Tiger Robotics on Facebook. Thanks to all who support Groton Robotics!

Support all these teams by coming to the **GROTON ROBOTIC PANCAKE FEED**, 10-1, Sunday January 30th **FREE WILL OFFERING!** If you are unable to attend the Pancake Feed but would like to make a donation to support the Robotic Teams contact Neil Warrington or Weston Dinger.

Article submitted by Shane and Laura Clark

Picture credits: Kellie Townsend, Ari Dinger, Laura Clark, Jessica Kroll, Shane Clark



**River Pardick, Corbin Weismantel, Kiana Sanders and Isaac Higgins hanging out in the pits making some changes to their robot.** (Courtesy Photo)



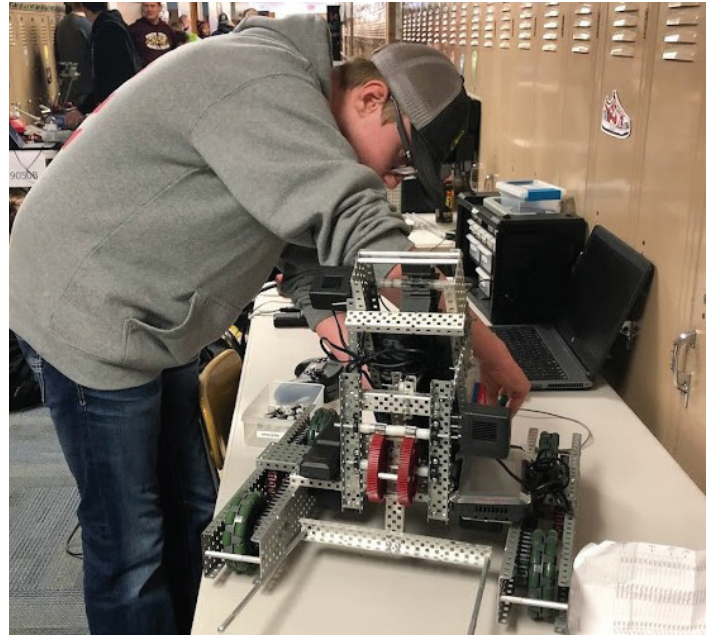
**Garrett Schultz navigating his robot to get some points during a qualifying match.** (Courtesy Photo)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 15 of 88



**Travis Townsend and Jace Kroll after getting 5 mobile goals stacked on their platform, BIG points in the robotics world!** (Courtesy Photo)



**Garrett Schultz working on his robot in the pits between matches.** (Courtesy Photo)



**River Pardick paired up with Garrett Schultz strategizing on making some points.** (Courtesy Photo)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 16 of 88



## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*Job further continued his discourse, and said, Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God watched over me; when His lamp shone upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness...* JOB 29:1-3

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 17 of 88



## Valentine's Sundae Dessert Bars

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

2. From Genesis 6:14, what was another name for the natural asphalt used to caulk Noah's Ark? *Gopher, Pitch, Chimera, Helios*

3. Who told Laban he had gone 20 years without a decent sleep? *Adam, Jacob, Moses, Noah*

4. In John 3, who said, "How can a man be born if he is old"? *Obadiah, Nicodemus, Joshua, Job*

5. From Acts 13, who was called "a man after thine own heart"? *David, John the Baptist, Gideon, Peter*

6. Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through ..."? *Prayer, Belief, Deeds, Christ*

ANSWERS: 1) New; 2) Pitch; 3) Jacob; 4) Nicodemus; 5) David; 6) Christ

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

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Show your sweetheart how much you care with this delectably decadent but surprisingly fun sundae-inspired dessert bar -- complete with whipped cream and a cherry on top.

- 18 (2 1/2-inch) chocolate graham crackers
- 4 cups sugar- and fat-free vanilla ice cream
- 1 (4-serving) package sugar-free chocolate cook-and-serve pudding mix
- 2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons reduced-calorie margarine
- 1/2 cup miniature marshmallows
- 3 tablespoons chopped pecans
- 1/2 cup reduced calorie whipped topping
- 4 maraschino cherries, halved

1. Arrange 9 graham crackers in a 9-by-9-inch cake pan. In large bowl, gently stir ice cream until slightly softened. Coarsely crush remaining 9 graham crackers and stir into softened ice cream. Spread mixture gently over graham crackers in cake pan. Cover and freeze while preparing topping.

2. In medium saucepan, combine dry pudding mix, dry milk powder and water. Cook over medium heat until mixture thickens and starts to boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla extract, margarine and marshmallows. Drizzle hot mixture evenly over ice-cream mixture. Sprinkle pecans evenly over top. Re-cover and continue to freeze for 2 hours or until firm.

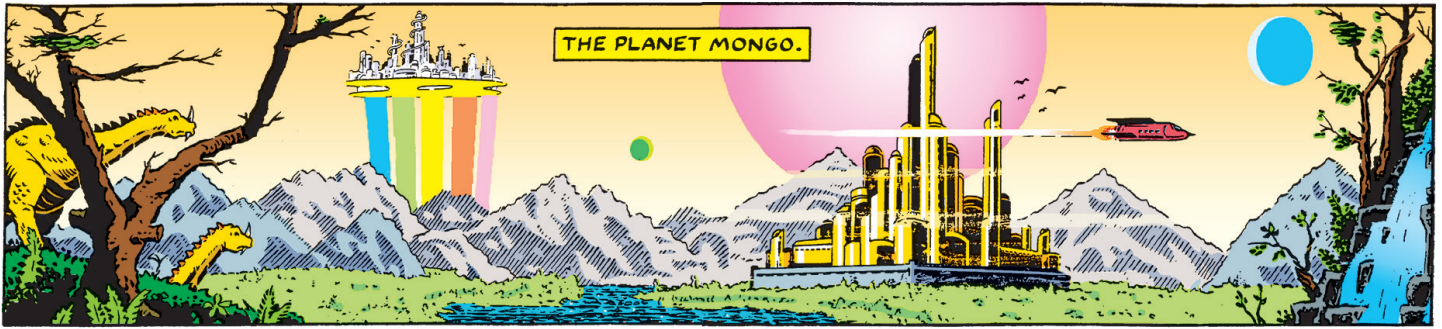
3. Let set at room temperature for 10 minutes. Cut into 8 servings. To serve, top each with 1 tablespoon whipped topping and a maraschino cherry half. Makes 8 servings.

\* Each serving equals: 191 calories, 3g fat, 7g protein, 34g carb., 199mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 2 Starch/Carb., 1/2 Fat.

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 18 of 88



**FLASH GORDON**

1-23  
By JIM KEEFE

**FLASH'S ROCKET SHIP IS ATTACKED!**

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WE'VE LOST THE HELM!

WHAT IN BLAZES..?!

WE'VE HIT GROUND...

WE'RE TRAPPED ON THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA!

## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

**C**HECK YOUR HEAD FOR EXCESSIVE MOTION ANY TIME YOU START CATCHING SHOTS FAT OR THIN.

A LITTLE LATERAL HEAD MOVEMENT IS FINE, BUT UP AND DOWN MOVEMENT IS HARD TO HANDLE.

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**1**

**2**

HITTING FAT INDICATES RAISING THE HEAD GOING BACK, THEN DROPPING IT IN COMING DOWN... (1). REVERSE — THE HEAD DROPPING, THEN RAISING... (2). KEEP YOUR HEAD IN THE SAME PLACE AND SUCH MISHITS WILL BE RARE.

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 19 of 88



## 'Brittle' Diabetes Is Hard to Control

---  
DEAR DR. ROACH: I am 74 years old and have been a brittle Type 1 diabetic for 50 years. I have no history of heart disease. My doctor of 40 years recently retired and had me control my hemoglobin A1C to a range of 5.9-6.2. My new doctor, who is in her mid-30s, wants me to elevate my hemoglobin A1C to 8.0. Is this the new way of controlling blood sugar? I am confused! Can you please explain the difference in opinion? -- E.S.

ANSWER: "Brittle" diabetes is when it is hard to control too-high and too-low blood sugars.

The A1C is a blood test that looks at average blood sugar over the past few months. A normal A1C is between 4% and 5.6%. People with normal A1C levels are at very low risk of complications from diabetes, especially of the kidneys (leading to dialysis), eyes (which ultimately leads to blindness) and nerves (diabetic neuropathy is painful and predisposes to injury).

On the other hand, low A1C levels put people at higher risk for low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), which can be very dangerous. People with Type 2 diabetes and blockages in blood vessels (or at very high risk) were shown to have higher risk of heart attack. For this reason, recent guidelines for older adults with Type 2 diabetes have had more relaxed goals, in the range of 7 to 8, although these do need to be individualized. For Type 1 diabetes, most guidelines still recommend an A1C goal of less than 7%. However, for a person with Type 1 diabetes who also has other medical problems that are likely to impact mortality, and for those at high risk for severe hypoglycemia, a more relaxed goal is not unreasonable.

Hypoglycemia is too-low blood sugar, with risk of confusion. This is a big problem in people with brittle diabetes.

A lower A1C is associated with a lower risk of damage to small blood vessels, which is what is responsible for nerve damage, eye disease and most diabetic kidney disease. If you have been able to keep your A1C in the range of 5.9 to 6.2, which is not an easy feat, and have not had any serious episodes of low blood sugar recently, I would wonder why your new doctor feels your blood sugar needs to be substantially higher than it is.

Finding the right balance between good control and freedom from hypoglycemia isn't always easy, but these are the risks and benefits your doctors have been considering.

\*\*\*

DEAR DR. ROACH: My husband required frequent antibiotics, which resulted in C. diff infections with diarrhea. I found that adding some dry powdered fiber in his drinks helped to prevent the diarrhea, or to treat it if caught early enough. I hope this will help someone else. -- M.M.

ANSWER: I appreciate you writing.

Clostridium difficile is a cause of antibiotic-associated diarrhea, which can occur with almost any antibiotic. As such, the best prevention is not taking antibiotics. Unfortunately, though, sometimes antibiotics are absolutely necessary.

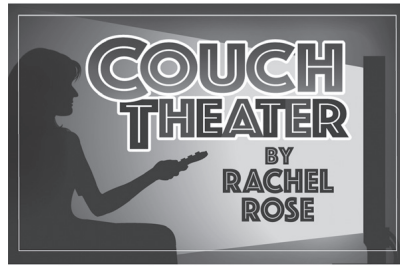
There are some data that fiber supplements, as you have kindly suggested, can help prevent C. diff. Although many have used probiotics for the same purpose, the data does not support their effectiveness.

Because lack of acid is a risk for development of C. diff, it's wise to temporarily hold off antacid therapy, such as omeprazole.

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 20 of 88



**Pam & Tommy** (TV-MA) — I know what you're thinking: "Why this? Why now?" It's been over 25 years since Pamela Anderson and Tommy Lee's private honeymoon love tape was stolen by a disgruntled house worker and thrust upon the world. We all know how the story panned out, how the couple turned the tables on the thief and ultimately regained ownership AND the profits from its distribution. But what is not as well-known is the chain of events from the perspective of the idiots who masterminded the heist. Seth Rogan and Nick Offerman star as those greedy fools, while Lily James and Sebastian Stan take on the title roles. (Hulu)

**The Legend of Vox Machina** (NR) — An animated, adult-oriented, high-fantasy series based off a popular livestream game on Twitch (a gamer content platform) called "Critical Role." The cast is made up of voice actors from various video games and other animation series, including Matthew Mercer and Ashley Johnson. This project, which originated with the voice actors playing "Dungeons & Dragons," was the highest-grossing Kickstarter for an animated series in history, so anticipation for its release is stellar. The show is campy, funny and violent, but still heavy with character development. Twelve episodes in Season 1, and a second season has already been greenlit. (Prime Video)

**Cheer** Season 2 (NR) — Currently trending is the return of the surprise hit of 2020 documenting the perennial national champion cheerleading squad from Navarro College. Coached by Monica Aldama (a "Dancing with the Stars" alum), the show takes an honest approach, addressing how the exposure and fame of Season 1 affected individual team members and the squad as a whole. Of unfortunate inclusion is the federal arrest of one team member on child pornography charges. Regrouping, Aldama

remains focused on maintaining her program's high standards while being relentlessly pursued by rival Trinity Valley. Both teams' ultimate goal: winning nationals in Daytona Beach, Florida. (Netflix)



Erin Simkin/Hulu

**Lily James plays the legendary Pamela Anderson in "Pam & Tommy."**

**Jackass Forever** (R) — This is exactly what you would expect from the "Jackass" franchise: exploding port-o-potties, vehicle jump stunts gone awry, failed attempts at bull riding and sucker punches to the gut (and worse), all perpetrated by dudes who are now pushing 50. And it's way funnier than it should be. Something about Johnny Knoxville's constant guffawing at his cohorts' pain is totally infectious, making this sequel fun to watch. Steve-O, Chris Pontius and Wee Man also return, as they still haven't learned to stay away from the pain. If you're gonna be dumb, you gotta be tough. (Paramount+)

**Suspicion** (NR) — A thriller centering on the kidnapping of a media mogul's son, "Suspicion" is an Apple original starring Uma Thurman as the grieving mother/mogul. Four British tourists, who seemingly have no connection to the teen or his mother, are arrested as prime suspects and must prove their innocence while simultaneously trying to deduce why they were targeted for arrest in the matter. With every conversation, suspicion of each other intensifies. (Apple TV+)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 21 of 88



1. "The Safety Dance" was a protest song against what?

2. Which group released "Look Away"?

3. Cheryl Lynn released "If This World Were Mine" with which male singer?

4. Name the instrumental made famous by the 1972 film "Deliverance."

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "I was talking with a friend of mine, said a woman had hurt his pride."

Answers:

1. Dance club bouncers, who would ban dancers from doing the new wave pogo, which was violent,

individual dancing and a danger to others. The song demanded freedom of expression.

2. Chicago, in 1988. In 2018, a UK man claimed he wrote the song in 1987, had submitted it to a song contest and that songwriter Diane Warren had access to it through the record company that sponsored the contest. Warren copyrighted the song eight months after the man sent in his song.

3. Luther Vandross, in 1982. Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell had released the same song in 1967.

4. "Dueling Banjos," written in 1954.

5. "Don't Do Me Like That," by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, in 1979. Petty wrote the song in 1974 and originally had considered giving it to another band.

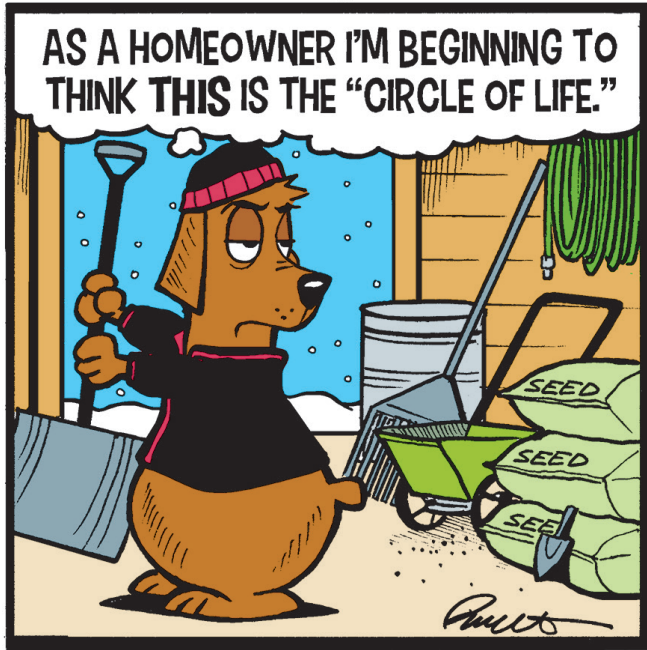
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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 22 of 88

## Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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## GRIN and BEAR IT

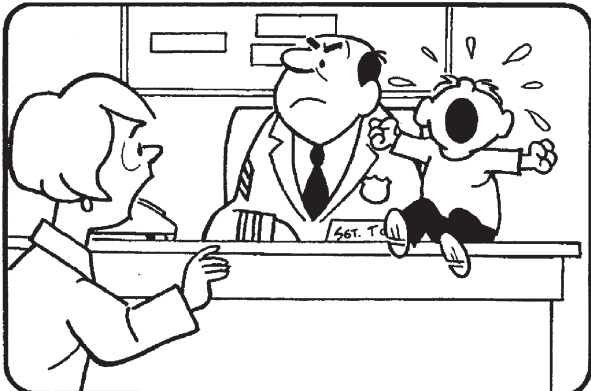
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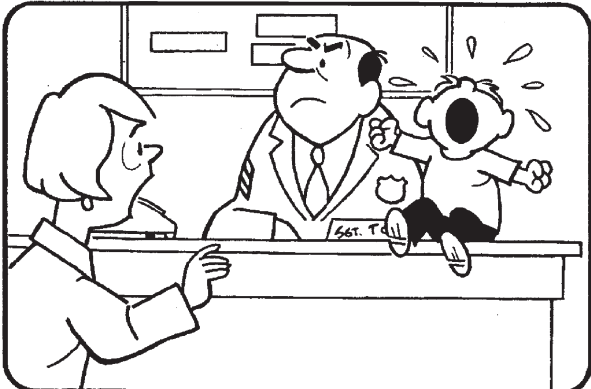
"Would you mind filling out this questionnaire about our service?"

## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Hair is different. 2. Chair is missing. 3. Cuff stripes are missing. 4. Tie is different. 5. Badge is moved. 6. Arm is moved.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 23 of 88



- If you store nail polish in the fridge, it will dry more quickly and last longer.

- “In cold winter months, keep your robe (and slippers or whatever else) under the covers with you when you sleep. Pull it next to or over you a few minutes before you get up. It’ll be toasty and will help make the transition into the cold a little less harsh.”  
— *G.G. in New York*

- As tax time draws ever closer, try taping a large manila envelope to the fridge, leaving the top open. Immediately place all tax-related forms and receipts in the envelope as they come in. This way, when you are ready to start your taxes, all items will be together and easy to find.

- “To help moisten really dry feet, slather on lotion, wrap feet in plastic wrap, then slip on some socks overnight — or for as long as you can stand it.” — *B.H. in Michigan*

- “My no-iron tip: I toss the wrinkly garment into the dryer for about five

to 10 minutes with a damp washcloth, and it steams most wrinkles out. It won’t look starched and pressed, but it’s good enough for casual wear or running-late mornings. I haven’t ironed in years.” — *E.W. in Florida*

- Don’t forget to clean your washing machine every so often by running it on the highest-temperature cycle empty after adding a gallon of vinegar. This will clean out the hoses and get rid of stuck-on detergents.

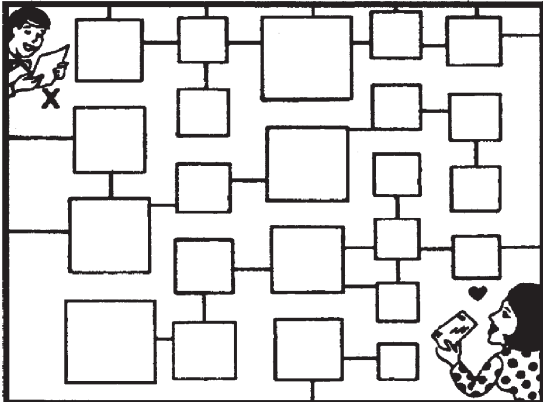
- To remove soot from your carpet, sprinkle it with salt, let sit and then vacuum. Repeat as many times as necessary to remove all traces.

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

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 24 of 88



**SEE-MAIL!** See how quickly you can eyeball a route that delivers letter from bottom right to top left.

## Junior Whirl

by Hal Kaufman

♥	1	2	3	4	5
1	H	E	A	R	T
2	E				
3	A				
4	R				
5	T				

### HEART-HEARTED WORD SQUARE

WORD No. 1—HEART—is in place in this word square exercise. You are asked to find four additional words that will read similarly across and down.

#### Definitions:

1. Valentine symbol (in place).
2. Promo mate of Elsie the cow.
3. Love, Italian-style.
4. TV listing word.
5. Go with the flow tendency.

How quickly can you fill in answers?

1. Heart, 2. Elmer, 3. Amore, 4. Return, 5. Trend.

**PIP SQUEAKER!** Pick a playing card from 1-10. Double its value, add 1, multiply by 5. Add 1 for hearts, 2 for spades, 3 for diamonds, 4 for clubs. Resulting amount reveals card and suit. How?

Card value appears at left; suit is 5 less than digit at right.

**CACHE 26!** Four numbers—5, 6, 7 and 8—shown in the diagram, at right, total 26. Indeed, blanks may be filled with missing numbers 1-12 so that a dozen or more foursomes totaling 26 appear.

Here's how: Place 4 and 11, left to right, at top; then, clockwise, 3, 10, 2, 9, 1, 12, in that order.

Now, just for fun, check out foursomes totaling 26, both across and down, in boxes and straight lines.

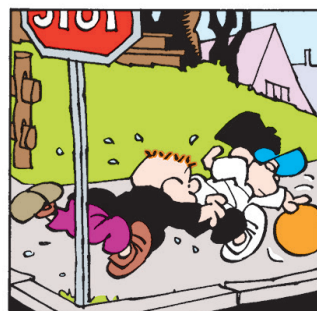
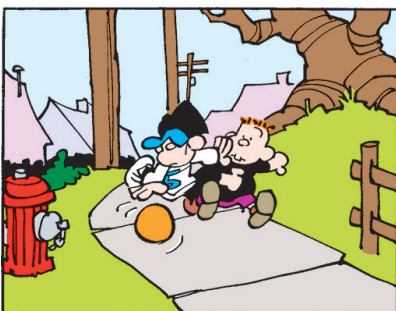
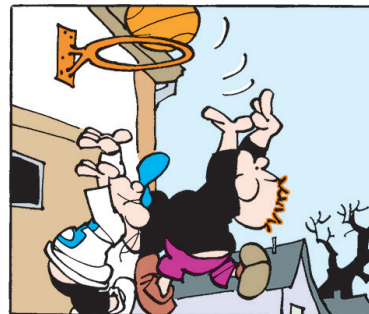
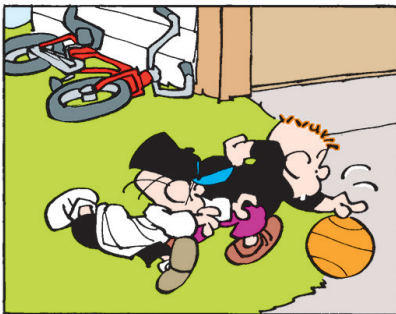
	5	6
	8	7

**S-CAPADE!** Adding S to a certain number will reduce that number by three. What number? (P.S.: It's tricky.)

Add S to IX; result is SIX.

## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE





# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 25 of 88

## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Kitten's cry  
 4 Opera set in Egypt  
 8 Garden intruder  
 12 Eggs  
 13 Some deer  
 14 — -bitty  
 15 Containers for laundering  
 17 Appease  
 18 "So there!"  
 19 Pittsburgh pro  
 21 Emphasize  
 24 Droop  
 25 Chop  
 26 Pirate's potation  
 28 Yokels  
 32 "I've Got — in Kalamazoo"  
 34 Pinnacle  
 36 "— come back now, hear?"  
 37 Trifled (with)  
 39 PC alternative  
 41 Roman 151  
 42 "— the season ..."  
 44 NASA vehicle  
 46 Critic's essays  
 50 Part of DJIA  
 51 Send forth  
 52 Give a faded look to, as jeans  
 56 Lettuce vari-

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- ety  
 7 Admin. aides  
 8 Know-it-all  
 9 And others (Lat.)  
 10 Diminutive suffix  
 11 Color worker  
 16 Dinner for Dobbin  
 20 Corn spike  
 21 Excellent, in slang  
 22 Toy block name  
 23 Place  
 27 May honoree  
 29 Aftermath  
 30 Vogue rival  
 31 Thin cut  
 33 Beatles classic  
 35 Standard  
 38 Conk out  
 40 Pamper  
 43 Sage  
 45 Farm female  
 46 Country's McEntire  
 47 Actor Jannings  
 48 Unspoken feeling  
 49 Gulf War missile  
 53 Unwell  
 54 Yon maiden  
 55 Sweetie

### DOWN

- 1 Trim the grass  
 2 Actress Longoria  
 3 Remove by cleaning  
 4 Tennis legend Ashe  
 5 Debtor's note  
 6 Society newbies

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 26 of 88

## — King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

## LAFF - A - DAY



"Don't even say hello to him, Evelyn—  
he's in no mood for it."

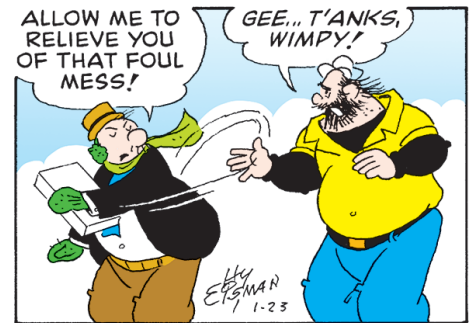
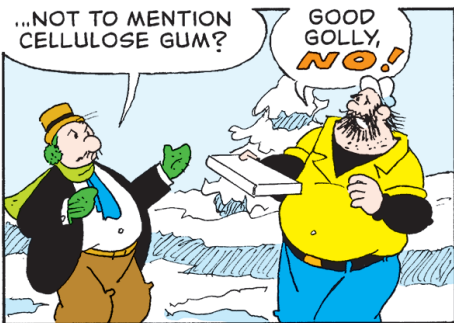
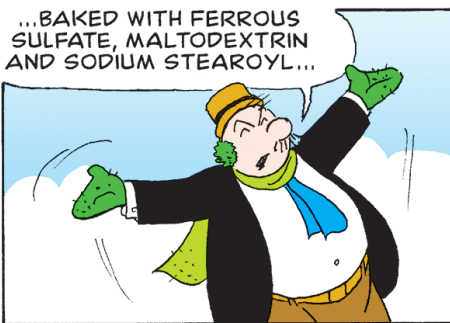
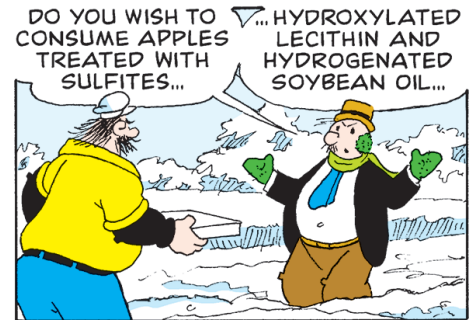
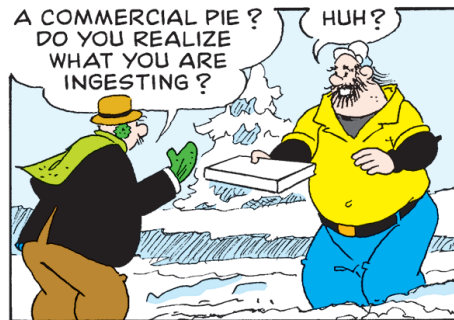
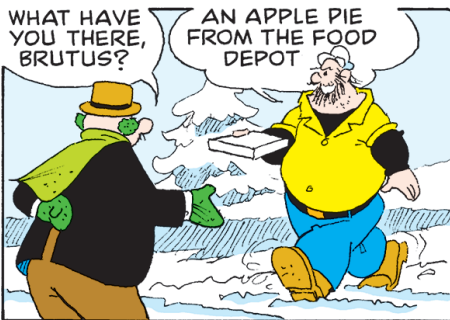
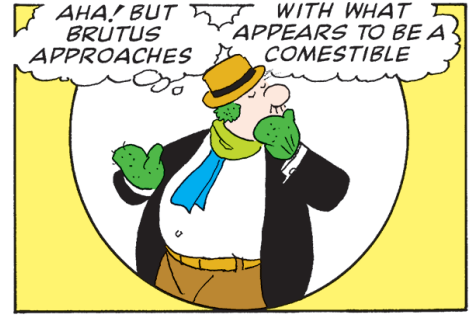
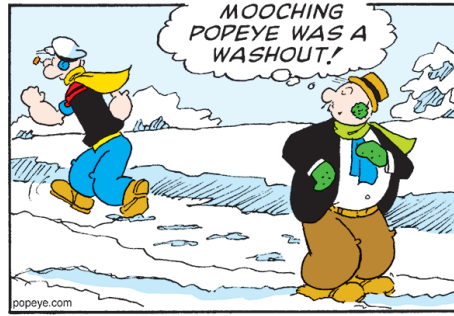
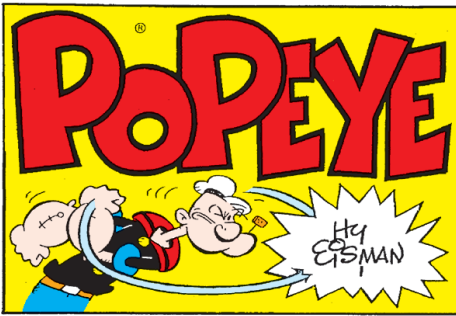
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



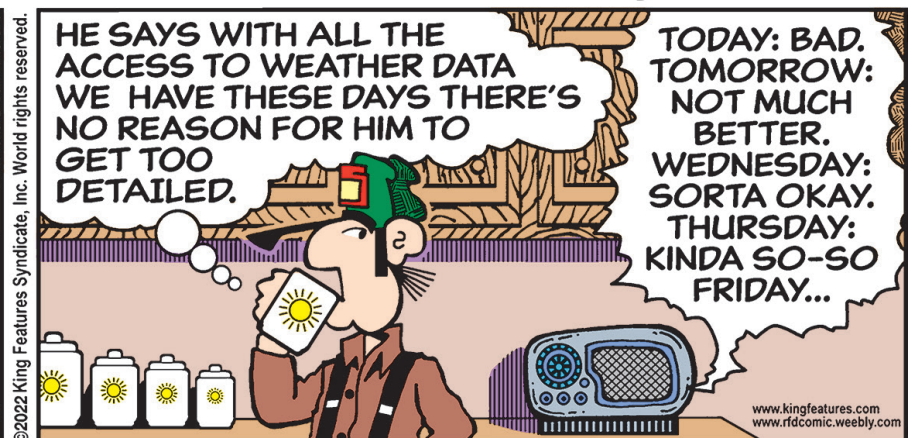
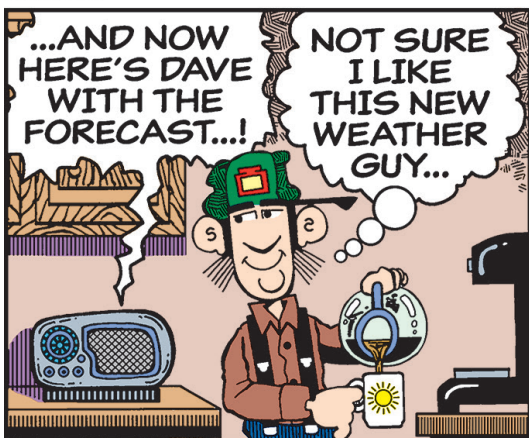
# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 27 of 88



## R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 28 of 88

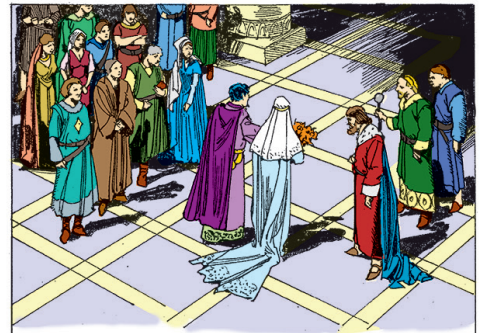
Walt Foster's GIANNI AND SCHULTZ  
**Prince Valiant**

GALAHAD TELLS OF DRACO'S RECENT HISTORY: "YOU KNOW WELL OF HIS JEALOUSY TOWARD YOU."

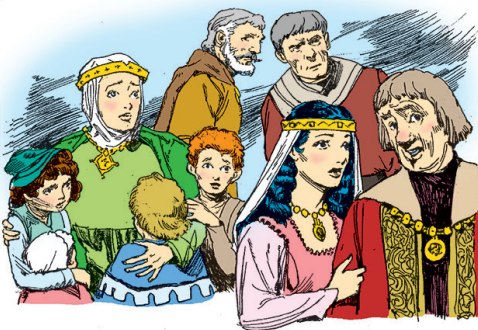


"DRACO WAS ALWAYS SUSPECTED OF TREACHEROUS DEEDS, BUT NEVER CHARGED. HE MARRIED NOT LONG AFTER YOU SCUTTLED HORRIDUS' FLEET."

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"THIS MYSTERIOUS BRIDE HAD REPORTEDLY COME FROM THE WESTERN HILLS. HER FAMILY HISTORY IS UNKNOWN IN CAMELOT, THUS SHE WAS AN ODD CHOICE FOR A STATUS-SEEKER SUCH AS DRACO."



"FURTHERMORE, THIS WIFE, CALLED MALDUBH, SEEMS TO CARRY THE CHILL OF WILD PLACES ABOUT HER. IT IS NOT UNFAIR TO SAY SHE UNNERVES PEOPLE."



"NONETHELESS, SINCE THEIR MARRIAGE DRACO HAS RISEN FROM MINOR COURT ADVISOR TO PROMINENCE IN ARN'S REGENCY. SOME CREDIT HIS PROGRESS TO HIS DARK WIFE."

"I CREDIT IT TO HIS BURNING HATRED FOR PRINCE VALIANT..."

NEXT:  
The sea cave

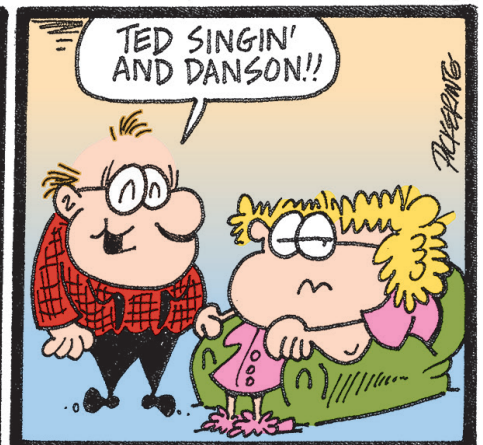
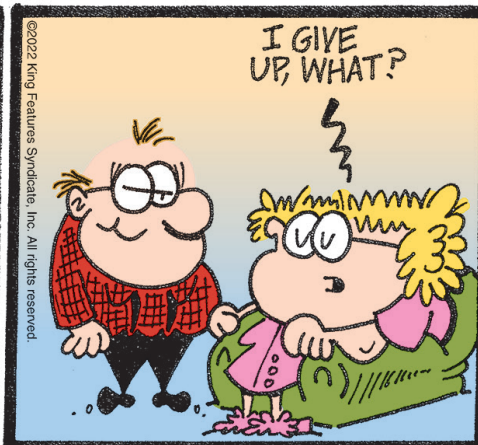
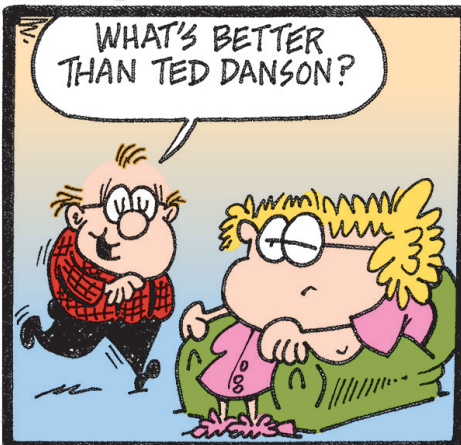


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## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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Pickering

## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Beware of the Cold

Administrators of the local senior center called it a tailgate party and envisioned many dozens of elderly gathered in the parking lot outside the center, drinking coffee and snacking on doughnuts from the bakery. They'd sent out notices and emails a week in advance.

No one showed up. Not a single senior was to be seen, while center management stood on the steps wringing their hands and wondering why.

The problem, we all know, is that the oldest of the senior center management team is less than half our average age, with their assistants barely out of college. Degrees galore, of course, in gerontology this and geriatric that, but framed documents hanging on the wall don't indicate a personal knowledge of what all seniors know for fact:

We get cold!

Not only do we get cold, but we have to be careful. Our circulation isn't what it used to be. We lose body heat faster and sometimes don't even know it's happening. When our core temperature drops too low, it can damage

our liver, kidney and heart. Hypothermia is a real risk and can be deadly.

It bears repeating that we need to beware of the cold. Here's what you can do to stay on top of your own body temperature:

— Don't skimp on the heat at home. Keep the thermostat at 68-70 F and wear a sweater inside. (If you visit an elderly person in the winter, go to the thermostat and see what the setting is.) If you must save money on heating, close off rooms you're not using.

— Ask someone to install clear plastic film insulation on your windows. You'll be surprised how much it cuts down on icy drafts.

— Keep a blanket or quilt on the sofa or recliner, and cover up when you sit down.

— If you have to go out, wear layers and a good hat, gloves and scarf. Don't let body heat escape out of your neckline.

And if your senior center hosts an outdoor parking-lot gathering, check the weather report.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 30 of 88

1. What city in Norway hosted the 1994 Winter Olympic Games?

2. At the 2006 Turin Winter Olympics, what U.S. snowboarder blew a three-second lead and settled for the silver medal in the snowboard cross final after a method grab caused her to fall?

3. East Germany's Ulrich Wehling won three consecutive Olympic gold medals from 1972-80 competing in what sport?

4. At the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, South Korean short track speed skater Kim Dong-Sung was disqualified in the men's 1,500-meter final. What U.S. Olympian won the gold medal as a result?

5. Name the Heisman Trophy winner who competed for the U.S. bobsled team at the 1992 Albertville Winter Olympics.



6. In 2000, NHL and U.S. Olympic hockey player Bret Hedican married what U.S. Olympic figure skating gold medalist?

7. As of the 2018 Winter Olympics, what country has won the most total medals in skeleton?

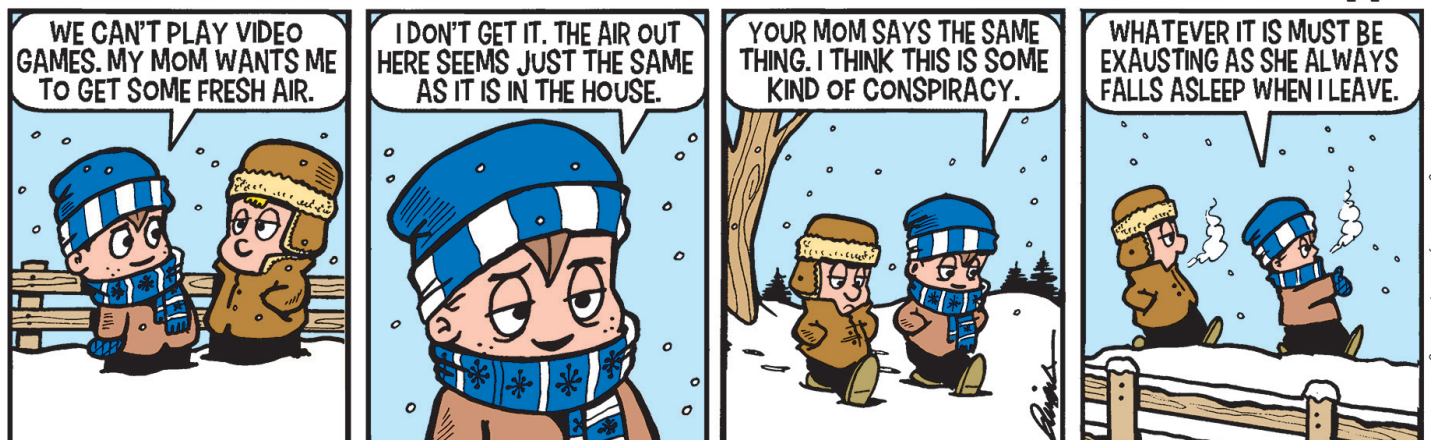
## Answers

1. Lillehammer.
2. Lindsey Jacobellis.
3. Nordic combined.
4. Apolo Ohno.
5. Herschel Walker.
6. Kristi Yamaguchi.
7. Great Britain, with nine.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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## Training Your Dog for Hiking Season

**DEAR PAW'S CORNER:** My 1-year-old puppy, Corky, is an energetic mutt who loves to be outside. I started hiking last year, before I adopted Corky, and I plan to do lots more hiking trips when the weather gets warmer. I want to bring Corky along, but I've read mixed advice about dogs on trails and at campsites. What's your take? — *Ellen in Boulder, Colorado*

**DEAR ELLEN:** You can definitely take Corky along! Preparation is key: You must prepare Corky for the hike, and you need to research the trails before departing to find out important information, including:

- Are dogs allowed on the trail?
- What are other rules about pets on the trail?
- How long is the hike you're plan-

ning?

— How far can Corky reasonably walk?

— Is water available along the trail, or will you need to carry extra for your dog?

— How good is Corky's behavior training — will he come to you as soon as you call?

When I'm on a hike, I follow Leave No Trace rules — which also apply to dogs, so be prepared to carry out his poop — and another set of rules I call "Annoy No Other Hikers." Included in this personal set of rules are a few dog-specific ones:

— Keep my dog on a leash during the hike, especially on popular trails.

— Clean up after my dog.

— Make sure to carry adequate water, food, first aid and safety gear (such as booties and vest).

— Keep my dog under control when greeting oncoming hikers. Not everyone is thrilled by dogs, and a jumping, out-of-control dog does the community no favors.

Find more training and hiking tips at the American Hiking Society ([americanhiking.org/resources/hiking-with-dogs/](http://americanhiking.org/resources/hiking-with-dogs/)). Pick up dog gear advice at Reckless Roaming ([recklessroaming.com/how-to-hike-with-your-dog/](http://recklessroaming.com/how-to-hike-with-your-dog/)). And Chewy has some good all-around tips as well.

See you on the trail!

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

## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

\* Leona Woods was the only woman physicist on the team that built the world's first nuclear reactor as part of the Manhattan Project. She became a mother during the project, but hid her pregnancy as not to miss work. Afterward, as a professor, she authored more than 200 papers in physics and astrophysics.

\* A 10-second French kiss spreads around 80 million bacteria between the two smoochers.

\* Director Michael Bay ("Transformers") traced his

interest in action films to when he attached firecrackers to a toy train and filmed the ensuing fiery disaster with his mother's 8 mm camera. The fire department was called, and Bay was grounded.

\* The African country of Zambia entered the Space Race in the 1960s with a plan to visit Mars and convert aliens to Christianity. The plan unraveled when one of the "Afronauts" got pregnant, another pulled out to join a local dance group and a third went missing.

\* Sharks can grow up to 50,000 teeth in their lifetime.

\* Libyan revolutionary Moammar Gadhafi had a serious obsession with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, showering her with over \$200,000 in gifts and having a famous local composer write a song for her called "Black Flower in the White House."

\* Ever notice that the word "phonetic" is not phonetic?

\* As if job interviews weren't stressful enough, some notably head-scratching questions asked by employers include "If Germans were the tallest people in the world, how would you prove it?" (Hewlett-Packard), "Why is a tennis ball fuzzy?" (Xerox), and "Are you exhaling warm air?" (Walker Marketing)

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "Few people know how to take a walk. The qualifications are endurance, plain clothes, old shoes, an eye for nature, good humor, vast curiosity, good speech, good silence and nothing too much." -- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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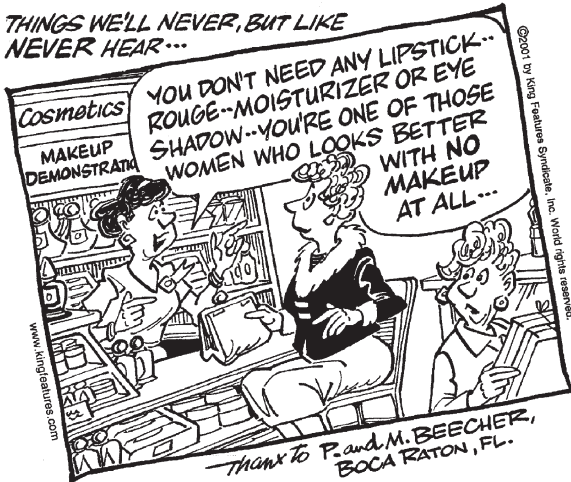


# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 33 of 88

## THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

THINGS WE'LL NEVER, BUT LIKE NEVER HEAR...



## BY AL SCADUTO

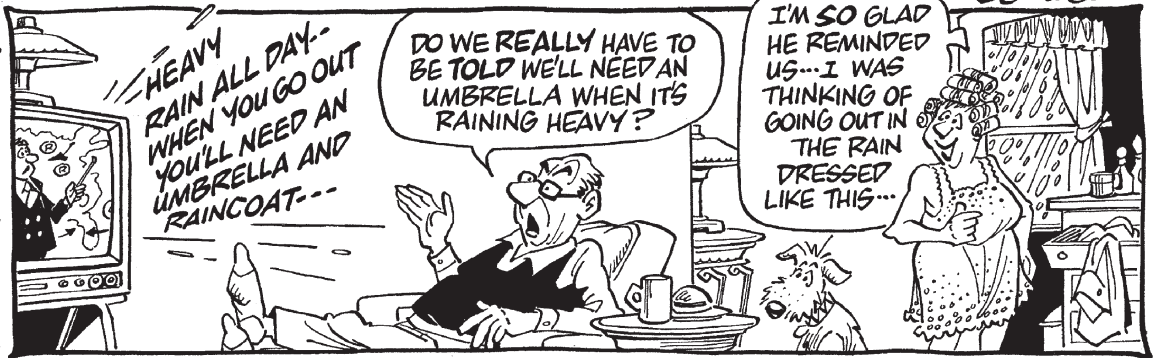
HOWCUM? IT'S ALWAYS A GUY LIKE MORTIMER MEEKLY, THE SOFT-SPOKEN MEMBER OF THE LODGE, WHO THINKS HE DOESN'T NEED A MIKE...



Thank To "RUBE" HORDOS, JERICHO, N.Y.

J'EVER NOTICE? THEY'LL SAY IT EVERY TIME... WEATHER REPORTERS, THAT IS...

Thank to B. CEROLA, CHICAGO, ILL.



## The Garden Bug

### Benefits of snow



The winter landscape can be brilliant. Trees and shrubs with ornamental bark, such as red twig dogwood or river birches, look striking against a blanket of snow, as do ornamental grasses and evergreens. While providing contrast for winter gardens, snow cover serves as insulation for the soil beneath it, protecting the root systems of trees, shrubs and plants within the soil from any severe surface temperature fluctuations, and also helps to conserve and replenish moisture within the soil through the winter months. - Brenda Weaver

Source: lancaster.unl.edu

## VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

### A Veteran Comes in From the Cold

The dormitory veterans had made their way down to the railroad tracks in the woods, battling buffeting winds and sleet. There, it was rumored, they'd find a young homeless veteran living in a tent.

The rumor was true. The veteran was given a choice: accept a basket of food and dry socks or come back to town and warm up until the snow stopped.

He accepted the offer of warmth and came back to the coffee shop to wait out the storm. Sarge watched as he was escorted in, parked at the counter and given hot coffee and sandwiches.

"Son," he said to the new arrival, "Did I see you limping?"

"Yes, sir, probably."

"Let's pull off those boots and take a look."

Turned out the veteran had a case of first-stage frostbite across all of his

toes. Sarge hooked a thumb toward the kitchen, where he warmed up a pan of water and had the veteran soak his feet.

Meanwhile they talked, the veteran and Sarge. He'd never gone home, the veteran said, after getting out. Was certain he wouldn't be welcome, being the first in a large family of "damn pacifists" to serve in the military. His parents' home was mere miles away, and sometimes he crept up to watch them through the window, he said, but no, he'd never even called them the whole time he was away.

An hour and several sandwiches later, the toes looked better and Sarge handed the young veteran a cellphone.

"I want you to call your mother," he said.

"I did the unforgivable," the veteran replied, shaking his head.

"Call. Tell your mother you have frostbite on your toes. She'll know exactly what to do."

The next morning, once the roads were plowed, Sarge drove the young veteran home, watching from a distance as 30 exuberant people came rushing out, scooped up their wayward boy in a hero's welcome, and carried him inside.

Sarge smiled.

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 35 of 88



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



## Not Just Another Rodeo

This weekend is the 64th annual Black Hills Stock Show and Rodeo in Rapid City. I am looking forward to attending along with over 330,000 others from across the country. I have gone to the Stock Show a dozen times, and it continues to be one of the best ways to hear from ranchers and producers in the state, catch up with old friends, and keep a pulse on South Dakota ag.

The Stock Show really is the event of the year. It all started in 1958 as the "Winter Show," and was much smaller, only showcasing three different breeds of cattle. Now, with more than 10 breeds of cattle sales, a 2-day horse sale, the Hutchison Western Stallion Row, rodeos, youth shows, and over 200 vendors and seminars to enjoy – there's something for everyone. Each year is bigger and better.

The Stock Show preserves the Western heritage and rural lifestyle as more people move from the countryside to cities. For those who didn't grow up on a ranch or around livestock, this is a small sample of that way of life – it's great exposure to the hard work that our nation's ranchers do every day.

Our cattle producers work hard – I'll continue to follow their lead throughout my work in the U.S. House. I'm looking forward to telling our producers about the wins South Dakota's congressional office brought home this year, from the Cattle Contract Library Act to the Butcher Block Act.

I am proud South Dakota is home to this event. Agriculture and the Western way of life is something I'm fighting to protect on the House Agriculture Committee in Washington, D.C. There aren't many members of congress who understand rural America – I'm proud to be one of them.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 36 of 88

South Dakota Governor

**Kristi Noem**



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

## Why Putting America First Matters to South Dakota

In his first hours in office just over one year ago, President Joe Biden canceled the Keystone XL pipeline and delivered a severe blow to South Dakota families and American energy independence. A few months later, President Biden opened the door for the construction of a Russian pipeline, delivering a costly gift to a dangerous adversary.

Today, we are seeing the high price of both decisions—and what happens when leaders in Washington do not put the American people first.

In South Dakota, we are heavily dependent on energy: We need heat in our cold winters, air conditioning in our hot summers, and gasoline to fuel our long drives to just about anywhere we go. But President Biden ignored the energy needs of South Dakota—and of every American—when he stopped Keystone XL in its tracks to appease anti-energy extremists, on top of banning drilling on federal land.

It did not take long for Americans to feel the consequences of those actions. President Biden's orders immediately terminated dozens of jobs in South Dakota—where the pipeline was being constructed—and destroyed the potential for thousands more. Small towns like Philip and Midland lost businesses at their hotels and gas stations—and lost potential property tax revenue that would have funded their budgets for decades. President Biden made it more expensive for every family across the country to fill their gas tanks and heat their homes. Then last year, as inflation skyrocketed due to Washington's trillions of dollars in spending, the price of gasoline went up right along with it.

Facing a crisis of his own making, President Biden blamed oil companies and released 50 million barrels of oil from the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve—a veritable drop in the bucket. To put that in context, Keystone XL was expected to carry 830,000 barrels of oil per day from Canada's Western tar sands to Nebraska.

When I drive across South Dakota, I am reminded of other decisions that a president can make that have tragic consequences at home. I saw the impact of those decisions first-hand as a member of the House Armed Services Committee. Through our "Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication" program, we honor our state's sons and daughters in the military who died while serving in combat. Each time I drive across one of those bridges, I think of the 3,000 South Dakotans who have made the ultimate sacrifice. I think of the families they left behind. And I think of the men and women serving us today.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 37 of 88**

I thought of those brave soldiers when I read some troubling news this week. Russia has 100,000 troops on the Ukrainian border and is threatening to invade. At the same time, China is increasing its aggression toward Taiwan. President Biden is considering deploying thousands of U.S. troops to Eastern European countries in response to Russia's actions, and the State Department ordered Americans to leave Ukraine on Sunday. The world is on edge as tensions rise, along with the threat of war.

The construction of another pipeline figures prominently in this geopolitical crisis, and one of President Biden's decisions is again front and center. In May of last year, he waived sanctions on Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which will deliver Russian natural gas to Germany. In doing so, he handed a massive amount of leverage to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Should the new pipeline be completed, Europe will grow more dependent on Russia for energy, Ukraine will be more vulnerable to Russian aggression, and the Russian government will add billions of dollars per year to its treasury.

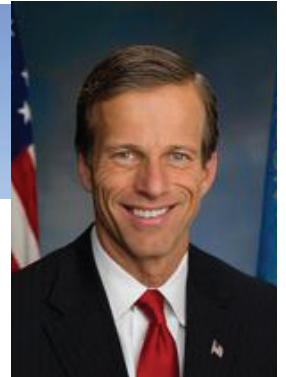
A stronger, emboldened Russia threatens Europe, our allies, and America's security. It is no wonder that President Donald Trump blocked this Russian pipeline and that Democrats and Republicans alike in Congress strongly opposed it as well. Together, they feared that Putin would leverage the pipeline to his own advantage and to America's detriment. With Putin's aggression toward Ukraine, we are seeing in real-time what a dangerous, emboldened Russia looks like. The consequences will be immeasurable. I pray that our leaders in Washington—including the president—recognize this threat and have the wisdom to protect our country, defend our freedom, and stand by our allies.

We know all too well what a fragile world we live in. In South Dakota, we are doing our part to build a brighter future and prepare for challenges ahead. We respect our armed forces and our veterans. In fact, our Army National Guard and Air Guard are both top-ranked units in the nation. We realize the consequences of leadership—the impact that our decisions have on the lives of the men and women who serve. I am proud to live in a state where wisdom like that is the rule, not the exception. We are setting an example for the nation. Let's call on Washington to follow our lead, put America first, and uphold the values that make us the greatest nation on earth.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 38 of 88

**John Thune**  
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



## Leadership Matters

I've always said that South Dakota's priorities are my priorities. Unfortunately, the president can't say the same thing. President Biden has been in office for a little more than one year – a year chock-full of Democrat-led crises. And at a time when families need it the most, the president has failed to step up and address these ongoing problems head-on.

When the president took office last January, inflation was well within an acceptable range. And it might have stayed there had Democrats not aggressively pursued the passage of a massive multi-trillion-dollar government spending spree under the guise of COVID relief just weeks after Congress had already passed a substantial bill that actually responded to the needs of the pandemic.

But the ink was barely dry on this bipartisan response to the pandemic before Democrats saw an opportunity to take advantage of the situation and ram through a hyper-partisan \$1.9 trillion piece of legislation packed with unnecessary government spending and payoffs to Democrat interest groups. That unnecessary government spending, of course, had serious consequences. The sting of inflation has been compounded by the supply chain crisis, with consumers paying more for everything from food to gas to home appliances and more.

At the same time, by weakening strong immigration policies, the president enabled a massive crisis at our southern border – a crisis that Democrats are apparently completely content to ignore. Illegal migration across our southern border picked up after the president took office, and it reached stratospheric levels over the course of 2021. The ongoing crisis shows no signs of stopping.

In December 2021, Customs and Border Protection encountered 178,840 people attempting to cross our southern border illegally. That's twice as many who tried to cross illegally in December 2020 and more than four times as many who attempted to cross in December 2019. Now, instead of addressing the real security and humanitarian crisis that this massive wave of illegal immigration represents, the president and his administration have doubled down, resisting court orders to reinstate the Remain in Mexico policy and conducting migrant relocation flights in the dead of night. This must end.

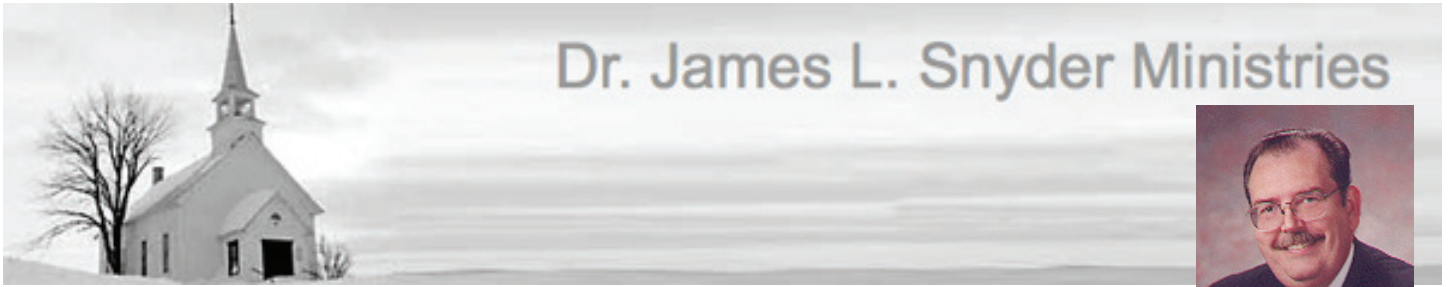
The crises don't stop there. There was also the president's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan. His arbitrary, chaotic withdrawal was a low point for our country that put our brave troops in an impossible situation. Thirteen of our military men and women died in a terrorist attack during the evacuation of Kabul. We abandoned thousands of individuals who had worked with us in Afghanistan and whom we had promised to protect. The president also left behind weapons and technology and hundreds of American citizens, yielding to the Taliban before the evacuation was complete.

Meanwhile, the president who said he would "restore" our standing on the world stage left our friends and allies wondering if his word – America's word – could be relied on again. Not only did the president's disastrous withdrawal leave Afghanistan on its way to once again becoming a terrorist safe haven, his flailing domestic agenda preoccupied him from confronting Russia's aggressive military build-up that now threatens Ukraine and is testing the resolve of the NATO alliance.

It's time for President Biden to get serious about inflation, address our border and supply chain crises, and strengthen our country's reputation on the world stage. Now more than ever, we need strong leaders who will move our country in the right direction. I am committed to holding the president accountable and doing everything in my power to help get our country back on the right track.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 39 of 88



Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



## Mr. Cold, Please Go Away

The older I get, the more allergic I am to cold. So whenever the temperature dips below my age number, that is too cold for me.

I know some people relish the cold; that person is not me.

There are some things that I enjoy being cold. I like my iced tea to be very cold, making it rather delicious. So whenever I drink any soda (please don't let the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage know), I like it very cold. The colder, the better as far as I'm concerned.

I will not mention any names that I like to give the cold shoulder to. And, from the other side of the situation, some people give me a very cold shoulder.

Lately, it's been rather cold in our neighborhood. I live in Florida, and the expectation is that it will never get cold. So I'm thinking of suing the governor of Florida because the government says that Florida is the sunshine state.

To walk out of my front door in the morning and start shivering is not my idea of the sunshine state. I want to bask in the heavenly delight of the sun shining on me. I'm getting too old to shiver very long.

Being cold is not something I enjoy. The older I get, the less I can tolerate cold weather. I believe it should be illegal for any cold weather to penetrate the sunshine state of Florida. Where are those politicians when we need them?

I know that cold weather does have its purpose, but I haven't found that purpose in my life yet. When I was younger, it wasn't so bad. I lived up north, where it snowed a lot, and as a young person, I loved playing in the snow. We did what was called snow angels, and I enjoyed that.

Today, however, there is nothing angelic to me about snow. I love snow cones, but that's an entirely different situation. I also love ice cold ice cream on my Apple pie.

Even here in Florida, the temperature sometimes dips below my comfort zone. But, as I said, shivering is not my favorite exercise. When the temperature goes down, I don't go out.

With the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage it is a different story. She is from the state of New York, where they invented freezing weather.

When the temperature goes up in our home, she is not happy. When the temperature goes down, I'm not happy. Fortunately, we can meet in the middle and be happy.

One of the friendly little arguments that we have in the parsonage is, "Will there be snow in heaven?"

She has this long argument proving that there will be snow in heaven because God created snow. "To me," she will argue, "snowflakes look like angels." I can't argue against that because I don't know what angels look like.

Then she will tell me about those "snow angels" that she and her siblings used to do when it snowed. So I can't argue against that.

I hate to admit it again, but she won that argument.

Then she threw a curveball at me and said, "Don't you know that the other place than heaven is hot?"

Okay. She got me; what else can I do or say?

I still am not too friendly with cold, and I want to do everything I can to invite Mr. Cold to go back to his home, wherever that might be.

I know there is nothing I can do about the cold weather. But that does not mean I don't try.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 40 of 88**

Every morning, during this cold season, I get up, go outside, shake my fist in the air and say as hot as I can, "Mr. Cold, go home and don't come back." Then I give him my infamous grimace and stick out my tongue.

So far, it hasn't worked, but it does give me the satisfaction that at least I'm trying to do something to get rid of all of this cold.

One morning when I came back into the house after growling at Mr. Cold, I came face-to-face with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

"What," she said with both hands on her hip, "do you think you are doing?"

"I'm getting rid of Mr. Cold," I said.

"Have you lost all your marbles, or are you hiding one?"

I did not know how to answer that question because I couldn't think of any marble I had left.

"Don't you know that there is nothing you can do about the cold?" She said, looking at me with one of those sarcastic stares that she's famous for.

"Yes," I said with a dreary look on my face. "But I gotta do something even if it's not the right thing to do to get rid of this, Mr. Cold."

There are many things in life that I try to control that I don't like, but I have no success in doing it. For some reason, there is a feeling of satisfaction in knowing that at least you're doing something even if it doesn't work.

There is a better plan. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Who knows, maybe someday somebody will figure out how to send Mr. Cold back to his home.



## Groton Robotics Pancake Feed

Sponsored by Groton Lions Club

Sunday, January 30, 2022

10:00am-1:00pm

Groton Community Center



Pancakes, Sausage, Coffee, Milk and Juice will be served!

Free will donation!

Proceeds will go to Groton Robotics.



*Carnival of Silver Skates performing at 2pm & 6:30pm!*

## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: I've recently been really into salads and have been wondering does my consumption of more salads and less meat help fight climate change? -- Penelope Marie, via e-mail

Prioritizing salads is indeed a step forward, as meat and animal products lead to pollution and the production of greenhouse gasses that trap heat in the atmosphere and lead to global warming. Methane emissions from cows is a significant source of greenhouse pollution, but livestock agriculture also contributes to global warming in other ways. In fact, the global meat industry would be the third largest polluter if it was a country after the United States and India.

Worse, 58 percent of food emissions come from animal products alone. Another contributing factor is improper storage methods leading to immediate declines in water quality when antibiotics and feces-borne diseases such as e. coli enter waterways. Several containment failures for pig feces in North Carolina in recent years highlight the severity of the problem.

Plant-based diets have the potential for reducing one's carbon footprint. A carbon footprint is how much each person contributes to climate change through their consumer behaviors, including their support of factory food production.

If you're one of the 89 percent of Americans who eat meat and other animal products, you're complicit with factory farming techniques. However, choosing to minimize your meat consumption—by eating salads—can help break this cycle. In fact, a recent study in the journal Food Policy finds that cutting meat consumption in half can reduce a typical American's carbon footprint by some 30 percent.

Some argue that so-called "ethical consumption" is less significant a factor than institutional action—and therefore individual actors don't have the capacity to shift global climate problems. But this line of reasoning fails to take into account the importance of citizen and consumer action in shifting societal behaviors. Indeed, consumers can work in tandem with governments and businesses. This could include boycotting meat, advocating for social change or volunteering with or donating to related nonprofit and/or political campaigns. Voting for candidates who take the climate crisis seriously is also an important way individuals can make a difference.

Finally, consider other ideas to reduce your carbon footprint even further. Salads are a great start, but staying mindful of what one puts into a salad is also important. Consider reducing quinoa and almond consumption. Quinoa degrades soil quality. Almonds siphon water away from people and animals, which contributes to drought conditions in California. Focusing on reducing meat consumption as much as possible may also be helpful, including switching to vegetarian proteins such as beans or reducing a reliance on proteins as the centerpiece of a meal.

Even if you've already done a great job reducing your carbon footprint in other ways, think about how much more you could be contributing by reducing or eliminating meat from your diet.



**Eating more salad and less (or no) animal products is one of the most impactful ways you can fight climate change and help the planet.** Credit: Roman Odintsov, Pexels.

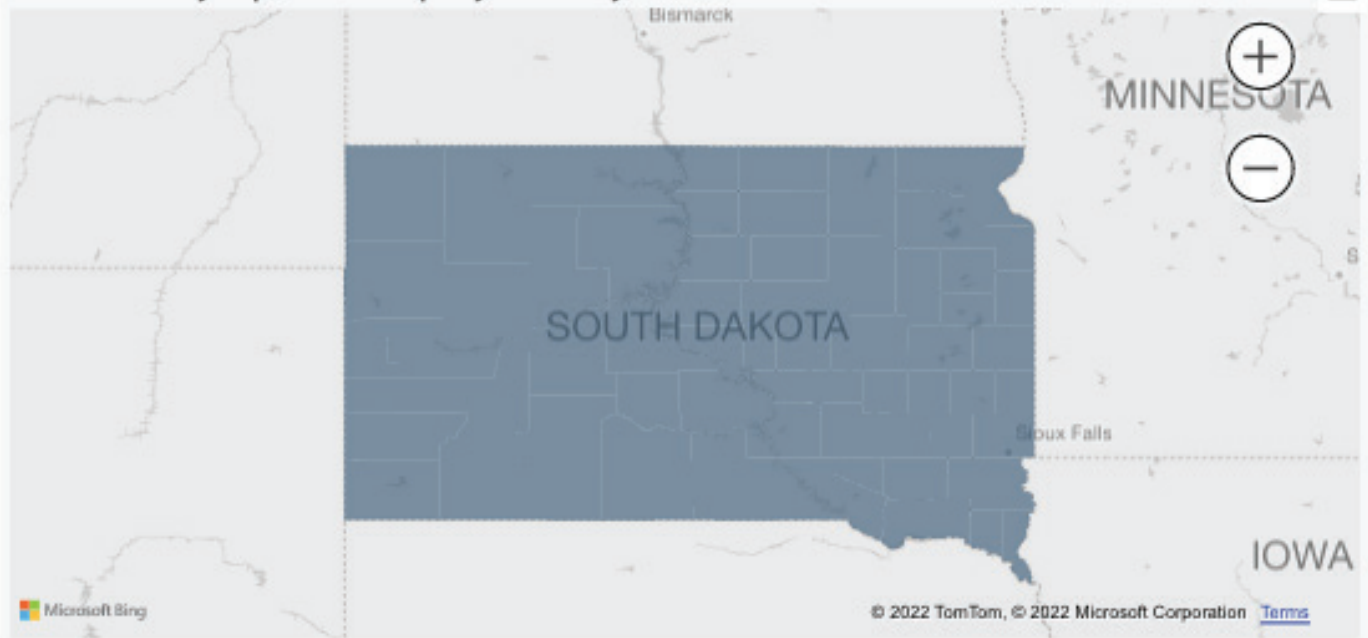
# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 43 of 88

## South Dakota COVID-19 Report

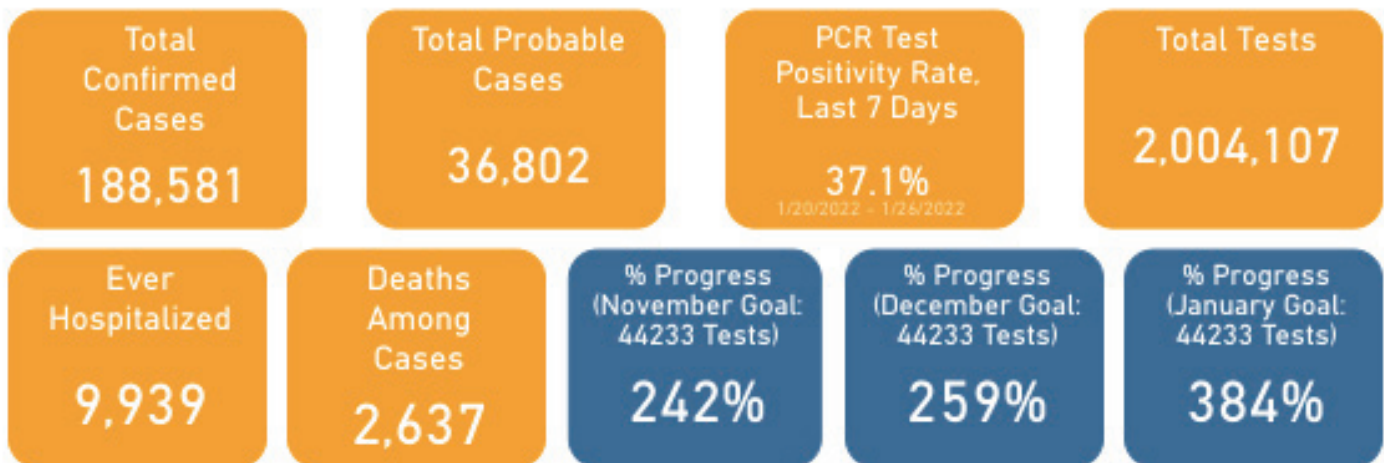


Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread Low Moderate Substantial High

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



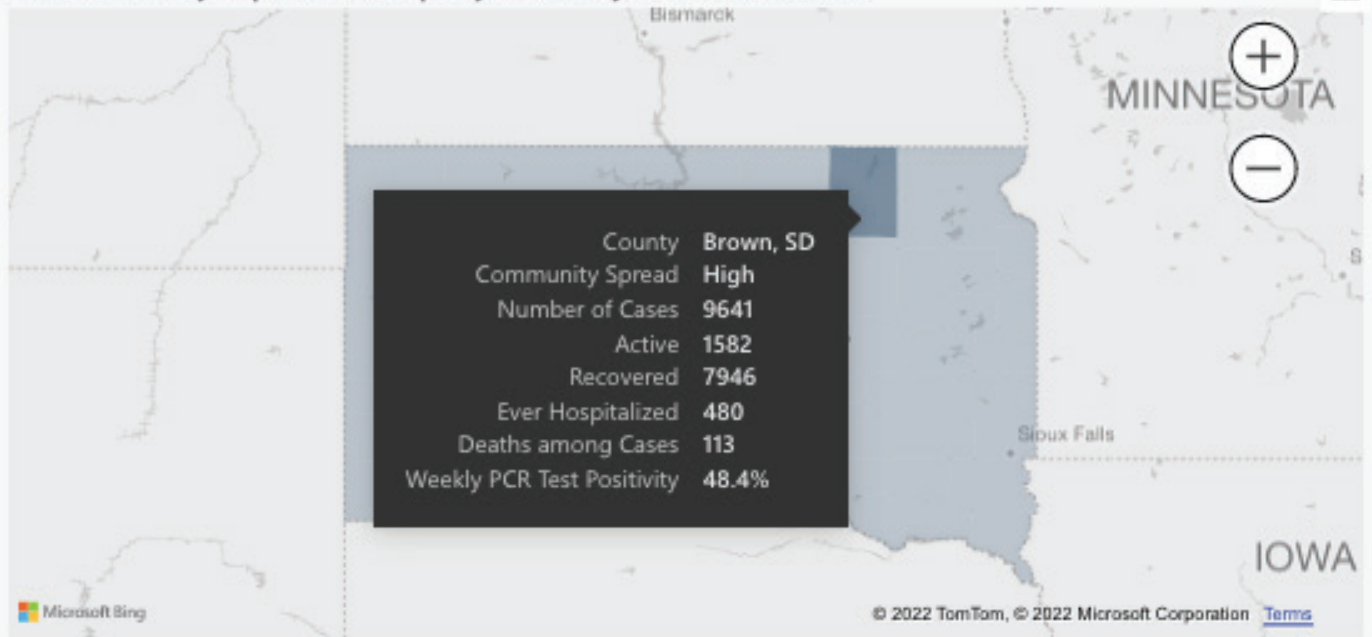
# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 44 of 88

## Brown County COVID-19 Report

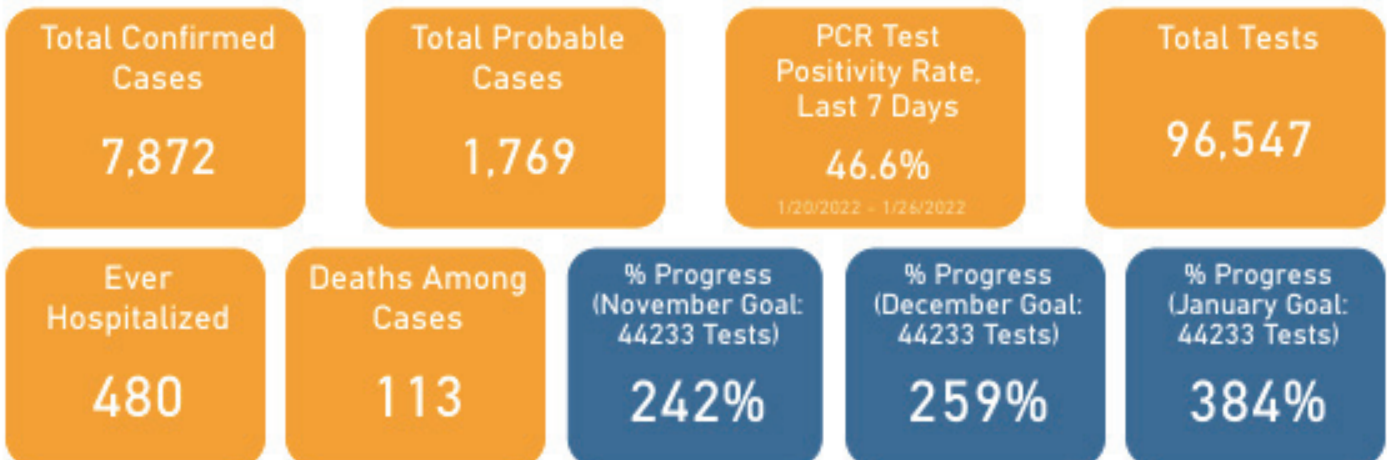


### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread Low Moderate Substantial High

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



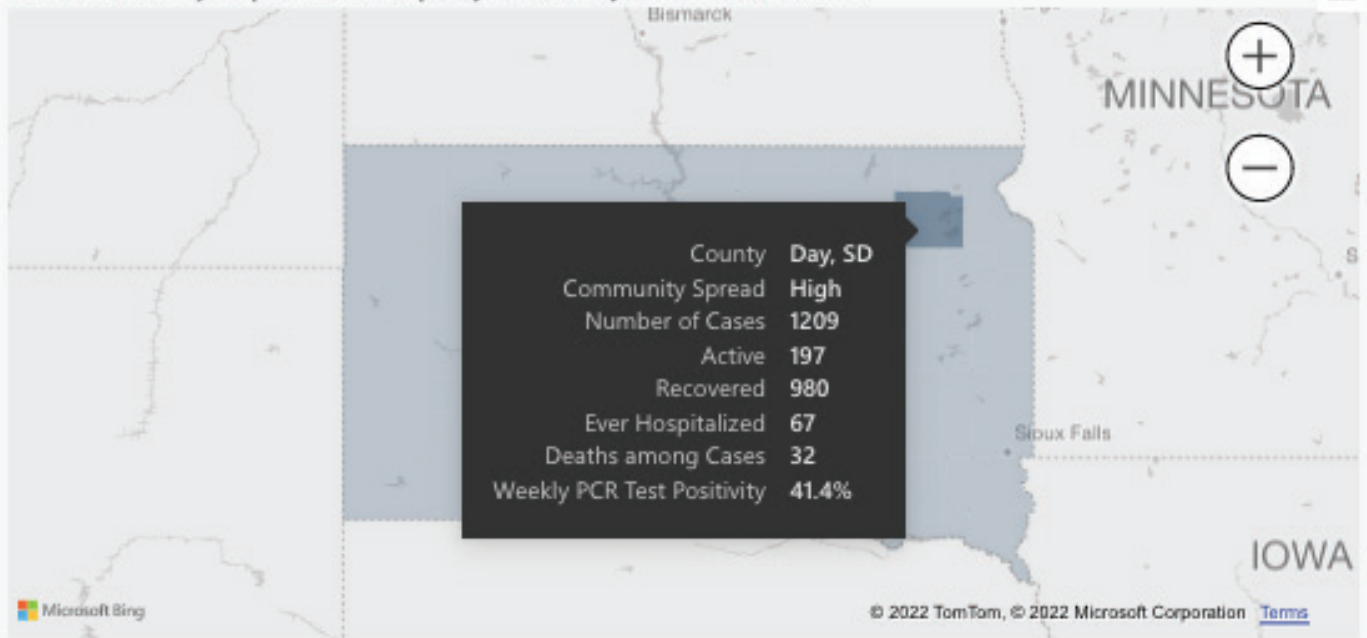
# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 45 of 88

## Day County COVID-19 Report

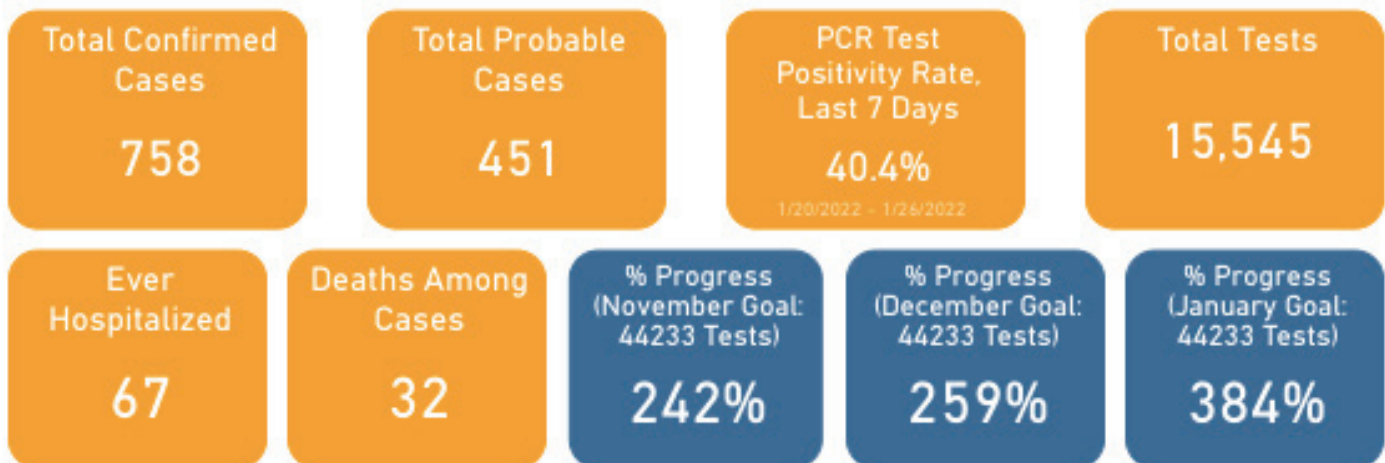


### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 46 of 88

## COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Currently Hospitalized	<b>+14</b>	411
Deaths Among Cases	<b>+36</b>	2637
Ever Hospitalized		9939
Active Cases		33647
Recovered Cases		189099
Total Cases		225383

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	118911	1206
Male	106472	1431

## VARIANT CASES OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Variant	# of Cases
Delta (B.1.617.2 & AY lineages)	1327
Omicron (B.1.1.529 & BA lineages)	264
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	176
Gamma (P.1)	4
Beta (B.1.351)	2

## AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	14657	2
10-19 years	27476	0
20-29 years	39836	11
30-39 years	38565	45
40-49 years	31777	69
50-59 years	29036	200
60-69 years	23816	422
70-79 years	12312	610
80+ years	7908	1278

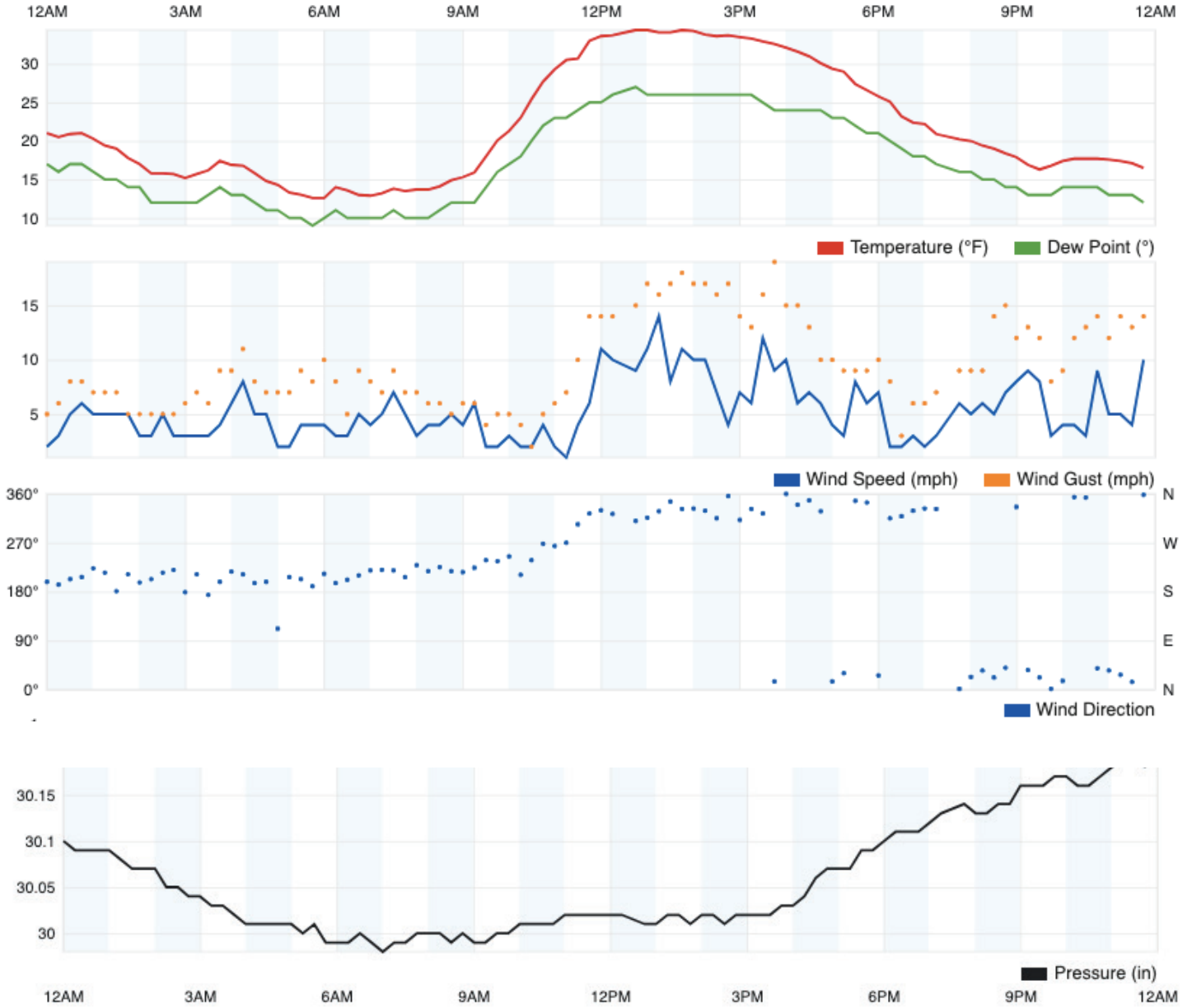
## RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian / Pacific Islander	3008	1%
Black	5553	2%
Hispanic	9528	4%
Native American	27250	12%
Other	2360	1%
Unknown	6198	3%
White	171486	76%

# Groton Daily Independent






Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 47 of 88

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 48 of 88

Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Slight Chance Rain/Snow and Blustery	Partly Sunny and Blustery
High: 32 °F	Low: 15 °F	High: 42 °F	Low: 11 °F	High: 17 °F

## Mild Through Monday



Highs: 25° to 55°

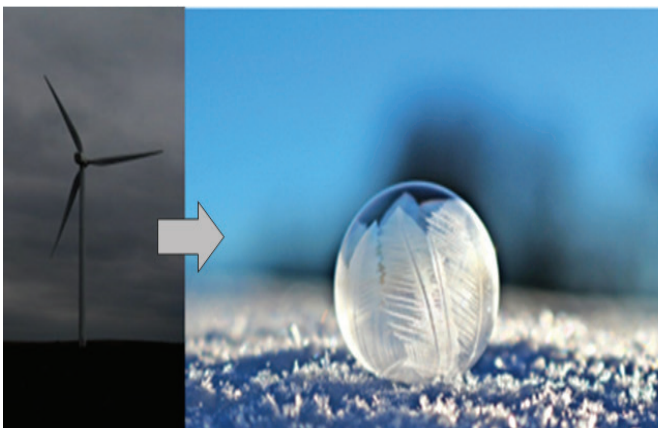
Warmest central SD, coolest west central MN

High to Very High Grassland Fire Danger across central SD



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

## CHANGES AHEAD



## Windy Mon Night, Arctic Chill Tue - Fri



High: -5° to 25°

Wind gusts of 45 to 55+ mph Mon evening - Tue AM, with bitterly to dangerously cold wind chills periodically thereafter



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 49 of 88

## Today in Weather History

January 30, 2001: Widespread freezing rain, accumulating from 1/8 to 1/2 inch, changed over to snow late in the evening of the 29th. The snow accumulated from 6 to 12 inches over much of central and northeast South Dakota and west-central Minnesota. The combination of ice and snow caused significant travel problems, school and flight cancellations and delays, business closings, and numerous vehicle accidents. Several highways were closed along with large portions of Interstates 29 and 90. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Murdo, 14 SSW Hayes, and 8 E of Eden, 7 inches at Castlewood and 5 NE of Pever, 8 inches at Miller, Gann Valley, Iona, Watertown, Ortonville, and 2 NW Stephan. Nine inches of snowfall accumulated 18 S of Harrold with 10 inches at Tulare and Kennebec, 11 inches at Clark, Clear Lake, and Wheaton, 12 inches at Carpenter, Willow Lake, Milbank, and Browns Valley, and 13 inches at Wilmot.

January 30, 2011: Heavy snow of 6 to 9 inches fell across part of northeast South Dakota from the afternoon of the 30th to the 31st. Travel was disrupted, especially along Interstate-90. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Webster, Summit, and Clear Lake; 7 inches at Watertown and Milbank; 8 inches at Wilmot and Sisseton; and 9 inches at Bryant, Waubay, and Andover.

1607: The Bristol Channel floods in England resulted in the drowning of many people and the destruction of a large amount of farmland and livestock. Recent research has suggested that the cause may have been a tsunami. Cardiff was one of the most badly affected towns, with the foundations of St. Mary's Church destroyed.

1936 - Birmingham, AL, established a single storm record and 24 hour record with 11 inches of snow. (29th-30th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1954: A tornado touched down near White Point Beach, Nova Scotia. A great deal of hail and lightning was reported along the coast near Liverpool, Nova Scotia.

1966: The Blizzard of 1966 impacted New York and paralyzed the region. The train service was disrupted. Numerous highways, the New York State Thruway from Albany to the Pennsylvania state line, and the Buffalo Airport and other airports throughout western and central New York were closed. The Syracuse-Oswego area's hardest hit, where Bob Sykes, a meteorology professor at the State University of New York at Oswego, reported a whopping 102.4 inches! Some schools in Orleans County were closed for the entire week following the blizzard. Economic loss from the storm was estimated at \$35 million. Winds gusting to 60 mph and temperatures in the teens, and heavy and blowing snow created severe blizzard conditions.

1977 - The great "Buffalo Blizzard" finally abated after three days. The storm added a foot of new snow to 33 inches already on the ground. Winds gusting to 75 mph reduced visibilities to near zero, produced snow drifts twenty-five feet high, and kept wind chill readings 50 degrees below zero. The blizzard paralyzed the city, and caused 250 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A winter storm brought more heavy snow to the North Atlantic Coast Region, with 13.6 inches reported at Hiram ME. January proved to be the snowiest of record for much of Massachusetts. Worcester MA reported an all-time monthly record of 46.8 inches of snow. (National Weather Summary)

1988 - Strong southerly winds, gusting to 53 mph at Kansas City MO, spread warm air into the central U.S. Nineteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date. Snow and strong northwest winds ushered cold arctic air into the north central states. The temperature at Cutbank plunged from 54 degrees to a morning low of 7 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary)

1989 - The temperature at McGrath, AK, dipped to 62 degrees below zero, and Fairbanks reported a reading of 51 degrees below zero, with unofficial readings in the area as cold as 75 degrees below zero. The massive dome of bitterly cold air began to slide down western Canada toward the north central U.S. Strong southwest winds ahead of the arctic front pushed the temperature at Great Falls MT to 62 degrees, and gusted to 124 mph at Choteau MT, overturning trucks and mobile homes, and a dozen empty railroad cars. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2002: One of the driest Januarys on record in Iowa was broken up by a winter storm that produced snowfall across the state from January 30-31. The snow was heaviest across southern and southeastern Iowa, where storm total accumulations ranged between 11 and 13 inches along and south of Chariton's line through Ottumwa to Wapello and Burlington. The highest reported totals were 13.2 inches at Leon and 13.0 inches at Bloomfield and Fairfield.

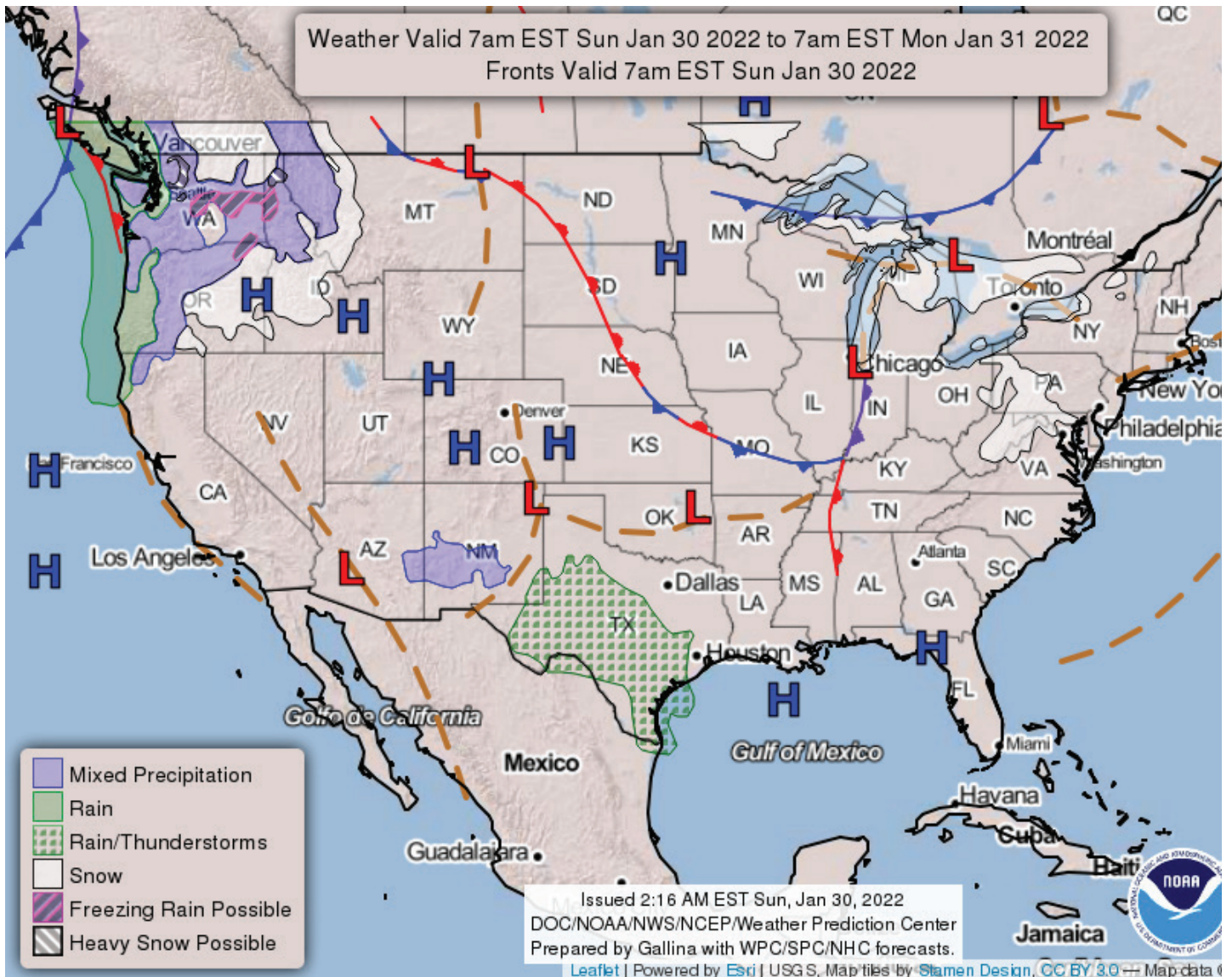
# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 50 of 88

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 35 °F at 1:50 PM**  
**Low Temp: 12 °F at 5:50 AM**  
**Wind: 19 mph at 1:34 PM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

**Record High: 55 in 1931**  
**Record Low: -37 in 2019**  
**Average High: 25°F**  
**Average Low: 2°F**  
**Average Precip in Jan.: 0.53**  
**Precip to date in Jan.: 0.59**  
**Average Precip to date: 0.53**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.59**  
**Sunset Tonight: 5:37:53 PM**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:52:22 AM**



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 51 of 88



## MAKE ME GOOD, DADDY

Recently a new diagnosis was introduced to explain the "out-of-control" behavior of a high school student. While under the influence of alcohol, he killed four people with his automobile. Rather than charging him with vehicular manslaughter and sentencing him to spend time in a correctional facility, he was given probation for "influenza," an entirely new mental disorder.

Many were curious about the cause of this "disease" until a psychiatrist explained its source: it came from parents who gave their child everything he wanted, held him accountable for nothing and as a result he never learned right from wrong.

However, this is not the way our Heavenly Father "educates" us. One of His "children" provided us with an insightful detail into His method of child-rearing: "The Lord has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death."

The word "chasten" means to "punish, restrain or moderate" someone's behavior. So, when God "chastens" us, He is in fact confronting our un-Christ-like behavior and urging us to repent. We are instructed in God's Word to "let God train you, for He is doing what any loving father does for his children. For whoever heard of a son who was never corrected."

One day a father found it necessary to chastise his son. After the punishment he looked at his Dad and said, "I understand, Dad. I did wrong and you were trying to make me good. I know you love me, Dad, and I love you."

Prayer: Father, keep us focused on living as Your Son, our Savior lived, and correct us swiftly when we go astray. Your correction shows us Your love. Thank You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: – The Lord has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death. Psalm 118:18

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 52 of 88

## 2022 Community Events

- 01/30/2022 84th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)  
01/30/2022 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am – 1pm, Groton Community Center, 109 N 3rd St, Groton,  
04/09/2022 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)  
Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm  
04/23/2022 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)  
04/24/2022 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)  
05/07/2022 Lions Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)  
St John's Lutheran Church VBS 9-11am  
05/30/2022 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)  
Transit Fundraiser at the Community Center 4-7pm (Thursday Mid-June)  
06/17/2022 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm Start  
06/18/2022 Groton Triathlon  
Ladies Invitational at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration 10am Start  
07/04/2022 Firecracker Couples Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start  
(4th of July)  
07/10/2022 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)  
Dacotah Bank Back To School Supply Drive  
Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar 11am-1pm at the Groton Legion  
Baseball Tourney  
07/21/2022 Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course  
Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start  
How can we... "Love Groton"? United Methodist Church 9:30am  
Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20  
Golf Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course 11a-1pm  
JVT School Supply Drive  
08/05/2022 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm  
08/12/2022 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament  
United Methodist Church VBS 5-8pm  
Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day 4-5pm GHS Parking Lot  
09/10/2022 Lions Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)  
6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3:30-5pm  
09/11/2022 Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm  
Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport  
10/14/2022 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am (2nd Friday in October)  
10/01/2022 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm  
10/31/2022 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)  
10/31/2022 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm  
11/12/2022 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)  
11/24/2022 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)  
12/03/2022 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party at Olive Grove Golf Course  
Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 53 of 88

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 54 of 88

## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

01-06-18-30-31

(one, six, eighteen, thirty, thirty-one)

Estimated jackpot: \$73,000

Lotto America

05-19-23-30-31, Star Ball: 3, ASB: 3

(five, nineteen, twenty-three, thirty, thirty-one; Star Ball: three; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$6.83 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$20 million

Powerball

02-15-38-54-65, Powerball: 11, Power Play: 4

(two, fifteen, thirty-eight, fifty-four, sixty-five; Powerball: eleven; Power Play: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$104 million

### Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Castlewood 56, Deubrook 45

Dakota Valley 75, Lakota Tech 57

Dell Rapids St. Mary 67, Viborg-Hurley 57

Harding County 69, New Underwood 39

Hemingford, Neb. 61, Edgemont 25

Herreid/Selby Area 43, Lemmon 35

Ipswich 50, Highmore-Harrold 37

Leola/Frederick 61, South Border, N.D. 55

Mitchell 66, Sioux Falls Lincoln 60, OT

Philip 60, Newell 37

Pierre 65, Harrisburg 47

Rapid City Stevens 67, Rapid City Central 49

Sioux Valley 69, McCook Central/Montrose 59

Stanley County 39, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 31

Yankton 88, Douglas 54

Dakota Oyate Challenge=

Championship=

Lower Brule 65, Tiospa Zina Tribal 57

Fifth Place=

Omaha Nation, Neb. 84, Crow Creek 53

Seventh Place=

Tiospaye Topa 64, Takini 45

Third Place=

Marty Indian 99, Flandreau Indian 35

Dakota XII NEC Clash=

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 55 of 88

Canton 80, Webster 47  
Dell Rapids 63, Aberdeen Roncalli 46  
Dakota Valley 75, Lakota Tech 57  
Elk Point-Jefferson 72, Hamlin 58  
Lennox 62, Groton Area 52  
Madison 74, Redfield 47  
Sioux Falls Christian 86, Deuel 55  
Sisseton 47, Tri-Valley 36  
Tea Area 79, Clark/Willow Lake 51  
Vermillion 59, Milbank 49  
West Central 83, Parkston 35  
DSU Classic=  
Arlington 74, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 43  
Baltic 59, Mitchell Christian 38  
Canistota 62, Little Wound 53  
Howard 70, Wakpala 29  
Langford 63, Freeman 45  
Menno 41, St. Francis Indian 40

## GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Arlington 50, Aberdeen Christian 40  
Avon 39, Kimball/White Lake 25  
Belle Fourche 52, Watertown 39  
Brandon Valley 50, Harrisburg 37  
Britton-Hecla 73, Wyndmere-Lidgerwood, N.D. 36  
Castlewood 53, Deubrook 51  
Dakota Valley 51, Mt. Vernon 43  
Faulkton 47, Hitchcock-Tulare 24  
Great Plains Lutheran 53, North Central Co-Op 44  
Hemingford, Neb. 61, Edgemont 25  
Herreid/Selby Area 43, Lemmon 35  
Hill City 56, Kadoka Area 47  
James Valley Christian 58, Lake Preston 23  
Lakota Tech 71, Little Wound 41  
Leola/Frederick 56, South Border, N.D. 31  
New Underwood 34, Harding County 20  
Philip 37, Newell 34  
St. Thomas More 61, Lead-Deadwood 9  
Stanley County 39, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 31  
Wagner 45, Luverne, Minn. 40  
Yankton 46, Douglas 27  
Big East Conference Tournament=  
Baltic 49, Parker 41  
Sioux Valley 59, Beresford 47  
Dakota Oyate Challenge=  
Championship=  
Lower Brule 62, Crow Creek 40  
Fifth Place=  
Marty Indian 66, Tiospaye Topa 33  
Seventh Place=

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 56 of 88

Flandreau Indian 49, Takini 36  
Third Place=  
Tiospa Zina Tribal 51, Omaha Nation, Neb. 40

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

## **Kamateros leads South Dakota over North Dakota 71-58**

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Tasos Kamateros had a season-high 21 points plus 12 rebounds as South Dakota beat North Dakota 71-58 on Saturday.

Mason Archambault had 12 points for South Dakota (13-8, 6-4 Summit League). Kruz Perrott-Hunt added 12 points. Erik Oliver had 11 points.

North Dakota totaled 18 first-half points, a season low for the team.

Bentiu Panoam had 19 points for the Fighting Hawks (4-18, 0-9), who have now lost 10 games in a row. Paul Bruns added 17 points. Brady Danielson had eight rebounds.

South Dakota also defeated North Dakota 75-68 on Jan. 10.

## **Scheierman lifts South Dakota St. past North Dakota St.**

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Baylor Scheierman had 23 points as South Dakota State won its 10th straight game, narrowly beating North Dakota State 80-76 on Saturday.

Douglas Wilson had 18 points for South Dakota State (19-4, 10-0 Summit League). Luke Appel added 14 points and eight rebounds.

The Jackrabbits led by nine with 21 seconds remaining before North Dakota State made a three-point play and a 3-pointer to close the gap.

Rocky Kreuser had 25 points and eight rebounds for the Bison (14-8, 6-4). Tyree Eady added 13 points and six rebounds. Boden Skunberg had 12 points.

The Jackrabbits improve to 2-0 against the Bison this season. South Dakota State defeated North Dakota State 90-86 on Dec. 30.

## **1 dead, 2 arrested following shooting in Custer County**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — One person is dead and two people are in custody following a shooting in Custer County, authorities say.

The Argus Leader reports the shooting happened Thursday near Red Shirt Table in eastern Custer County.

The state Division of Criminal Investigation said the shooting was related to a separate incident on the Pine Ridge Reservation involving an Oglala Sioux Tribe Department of Safety officer. The officer was unharmed.

No other information about the victim or people in custody has been released.

## **After the blizzard, the big chill as East Coast digs out**

By MARK PRATT and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Gusty winds and falling temperatures have plunged the East Coast into a deep freeze as people dig out after a powerful nor'easter dumped mounds of snow, flooded coastlines and knocked out power to tens of thousands.

Dangerous wind chills have fallen below zero in many locations across the region on Sunday after the storm dumped snow from Virginia to Maine. Philadelphia and New York had plenty of snow, but Massachusetts bore the brunt of the storm, with the town of Sharon getting more than 30 inches (76 centimeters) of snow before the storm moved out.

The wind continued raging as over 100,000 lost power, mostly in Massachusetts, hampering crews' ability to work on overhead lines. No other states reported widespread outages.

Winds gusted as high as 83 mph (134 kph) on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. It scoured the ground bare



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 57 of 88

in some spots and piled the snow into huge drifts in others. Coastal towns flooded, with wind and waves battering North Weymouth, south of Boston, flooding streets with a slurry of frigid water, according to video posted on social media. Other videos showed a street underwater on Nantucket and waves crashing against the windows of a building in Plymouth.

Forecasters watched closely for new snowfall records, especially in Boston. The Boston area's modern snowfall record for a winter storm is 27.6 inches (70 centimeters), set in 2003.

The city tied its record for biggest single-day snowfall on Saturday, with 23.6 inches (60 centimeters), the National Weather Service said.

Boston resident Jesse Ledin owns a home-goods rental business startup. He was out walking his dog in the storm, wearing ski goggles Saturday as he navigated gingerly through huge snow drifts and painful wind gusts.

"It's pretty intense with the winds getting up to 70 miles (112 kilometers) an hour. As for the depth, it's pretty deep in spots with the wind and the snow drifts, but it's pretty nasty out and I definitely wouldn't want to be driving. So it's nice to be able to walk through these huge snowdrifts and in pretty tough conditions," Ledin said.

Climate change, particularly the warming ocean, probably influenced the strength of the storm, atmospheric researchers said.

Much warmer ocean waters "are certainly playing a role in the strengthening of the storm system and increased moisture available for the storm," said University of Oklahoma meteorology professor Jason Furtado. "But it isn't the only thing."

The storm had two saving graces: Dry snow less capable of snapping trees and tearing down power lines, and its timing on a weekend, when schools were closed and few people were commuting.

Parts of 10 states were under blizzard warnings at some point: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey, along with much of the Delmarva Peninsula in Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.

The National Weather Service considers a storm a blizzard if it has snowfall or blowing snow, as well as winds of at least 35 mph (56 kph) that reduce visibility to a quarter-mile or less for at least three hours. In many areas, Saturday's storm met those criteria.

Rhode Island, all of which was under a blizzard warning, banned all nonemergency road travel.

Hardy New Englanders took the storm in stride.

Dave McGillivray, race director for the Boston Marathon, jokingly invited the public to his suburban Boston home on Saturday for a free snow-shoveling clinic.

"I will provide the driveway and multiple walkways to ensure your training is conducted in the most life-like situation," he said.

Washington and Baltimore got some snow but were largely spared. The worst of the nor'easter was expected to blow by Sunday morning into Canada, where several provinces were under warnings.

## French left runs divided, weakened in presidential race

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The French left runs divided and weakened in the presidential race as at least five main candidates rejected any alliance with each other — and an online vote meant to pick a leader Sunday appears doomed to fail.

The so-called Popular Primary has been organized by left-wing supporters as an initiative meant to unite their ranks before the election scheduled in two rounds on April 10 and 24.

More than 460,000 people registered for the primary. Results of the four-day online vote are expected on Sunday evening. But the move already appears bound to fail: key contenders said they wouldn't respect the outcome because they don't respect the process.

At least five main figures from the left and the far-left are running for president, in addition to smaller candidates. At the moment, none of them appears in a position to reach the runoff in April's election.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 58 of 88

Centrist President Emmanuel Macron, who doesn't hide his intention to run for reelection, is considered the front-runner. Conservative candidate Valérie Pécresse and two far-right figures, Marine le Pen and Eric Zemmour, are the main challengers according to polls, placing far-left candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon in fifth position.

Melenchon — a political firebrand with a notorious temper — refuses to form a united front with other left-wing candidates. The 70-year-old politician, who heads the "Rebel France" party, promised to guarantee jobs for everyone, raise the minimum wage, lower the retirement age to 60 and hike taxes on multinationals and rich households.

The Greens' contender, Yannick Jadot, 54, and the Socialist candidate, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, 62, also rejected the idea to run together despite a formerly traditional alliance between their parties. Another candidate, Fabien Roussel, 52, is running for the Communist Party.

Hidalgo's campaign so far failed to prompt enthusiasm from leftist voters. Her once-powerful party remains weakened after the election in 2017 of Macron — when Socialist President Francois Hollande decided not to run for reelection amid unprecedented popularity.

Jadot unveiled on Saturday his electoral platform during a rally in Lyon, saying climate change is the "biggest challenge" to face.

"Tomorrow's France must get out of energies of the past," he said. He promised not to build any new nuclear reactor in France and to progressively replace the old ones by renewable energy, which he said could take up to 25 years. France is relying on nuclear power for 70% of its energy.

Jadot also vowed to combat social injustice via ensuring a minimum revenue of 920 euros (\$1,026) financed by the state to all adults living in poverty.

Earlier this month, another well-known figure of the left, former justice minister Christiane Taubira, joined the race in the hope of convincing others to join forces behind her candidacy.

So far, it hasn't worked. Critics and rivals said her candidacy is further splintering the left.

Taubira, 69, is a staunch feminist and a champion of minorities. She is revered for championing a same-sex marriage bill into French law in 2013. She last ran for president in 2002, the first Black woman to do so in France, and she garnered 2.3% of the vote.

She agreed to take part in the "Popular Primary" along with some smaller candidates.

"It's embracing democracy and democracy offers no guarantees. The outcome is unpredictable. It's a risk, but it's a risk we have chosen to take together," she told her supporters this week in the southwestern city of Bordeaux.

But Jadot, Hidalgo and Melenchon said they won't comply with the result of the vote.

## North Korea tests longest-range missile since 2017

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea on Sunday fired what appeared to be the most powerful missile it has tested since President Joe Biden took office, as it revives its old playbook in brinkmanship to wrest concessions from Washington and neighbors amid a prolonged stalemate in diplomacy.

The Japanese and South Korean militaries said the missile was launched on a lofted trajectory, apparently to avoid the territorial spaces of neighbors, and reached a maximum altitude of 2,000 kilometers (1,242 miles) and traveled 800 kilometers (497 miles) before landing in the sea.

The flight details suggest the North tested its longest-range ballistic missile since 2017, when it twice flew intermediate-range ballistic missiles over Japan and, separately, three intercontinental ballistic missiles that demonstrated the potential to reach deep into the American homeland.

Sunday's test was North Korea's seventh round of launches this month. The unusually fast pace of tests indicates its intent to pressure the Biden administration over long-stalled nuclear negotiations as pandemic-related difficulties put further stress on an economy broken by decades of mismanagement and crippling U.S.-led sanctions over its nuclear weapons program.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in called an emergency National Security Council meeting where he

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 59 of 88

described the test as a possible "mid-range ballistic missile launch" that brought North Korea to the brink of breaking its 2018 self-imposed moratorium on the testing of nuclear devices and longer-range missiles.

Japanese Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi also told reporters that the missile was the longest-range the North has tested since its Hwasong-15 ICBM in November 2017.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un chaired a ruling party meeting on Jan. 20, where senior party members made a veiled threat to lift the moratorium, citing what they perceived as U.S. hostility and threats.

The latest launch suggests Kim's moratorium is already broken, said Lee Choon Geun, a missile expert and honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute.

In his strongest comments toward the North in years, Moon said the situation around the Korean Peninsula is beginning to resemble 2017, when North Korea's provocative run in nuclear and long-range missile testing resulted in an exchange of war threats between Kim and Trump.

Moon said the North's latest moves violated U.N. Security Council resolutions and were a "challenge toward the international community's efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, stabilize peace and find a diplomatic solution" to the nuclear standoff.

The North "should stop its actions that create tensions and pressure and respond to the dialogue offers by the international community including South Korea and the United States," Moon said, according to his office.

Moon had ambitiously pushed for inter-Korean engagement and held three summits with Kim in 2018 while also lobbying to set up Kim's first summit with Trump in 2018, where they issued vague aspirations for a nuclear-free peninsula.

But the diplomacy derailed after the collapse of the second Kim-Trump meeting in 2019, when the Americans rejected North Korea's demand for major sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of its nuclear capabilities.

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said Sunday's missile flew for around 30 minutes and landed in waters outside Japan's exclusive economic zone. There were no immediate reports of damage to boats or aircraft.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the United States condemned North Korea's testing activity and called on Pyongyang to refrain from further destabilizing acts. It said the latest launch did not "pose an immediate threat to U.S. personnel, territory, or that of our allies."

Takehiro Funakoshi, director-general for Asian and Oceanian Affairs at Japan's Foreign Ministry, discussed the launch in separate phone calls with Sung Kim, Biden's special envoy for North Korea, and Noh Kyu-duk, South Korea's nuclear envoy. The officials shared an understanding that Sunday's missile was of enhanced destructive power and reaffirmed trilateral cooperation in the face of the North Korean threat, Japan's Foreign Ministry said.

Experts say the North could halt its testing spree after the start of the Beijing Winter Olympics next week out of respect for China, its major ally and economic lifeline. But there's also expectation that it could significantly up the ante in weapons demonstrations once the Olympics end in February to grab the attention of the Biden administration, which has been focusing more on confronting China and Russia over its conflict with Ukraine.

"North Korea is launching a frenzy of missiles before the start of the Beijing Olympics, mostly as military modernization efforts. Pyongyang also wants to boost national pride as it gears up to celebrate political anniversaries in the context of economic struggles," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

"It wants to remind Washington and Seoul that trying to topple it would be too costly. By threatening stability in Asia while global resources are stretched thin elsewhere, Pyongyang is demanding the world compensate it to act like a 'responsible nuclear power,'" Easley added.

North Korea has justified its testing activity as an exercise of its rights to self-defense and threatened stronger action after the Biden administration imposed fresh sanctions following two tests of a purported hypersonic missile earlier this month.

While desperate for outside relief, Kim has showed no willingness to surrender the nuclear weapons and

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 60 of 88

missiles he sees as his strongest guarantee of survival. Analysts say Kim's pressure campaign is aimed at forcing Washington to accept the North as a nuclear power and convert their nuclear disarmament-for-aid diplomacy into negotiations for mutual arms-reduction.

Kim last year announced a new five-year plan for developing weapons and issued an ambitious wish list that included hypersonic weapons, spy satellites, solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched nuclear missiles.

State media said Friday that Kim visited an unspecified munitions factory producing a "major weapons system," and that the workers pledged loyalty to their leader who "smashes with his bold pluck the challenges of U.S. imperialists and their vassal forces."

## Death, danger, despair: A year in Myanmar under the military

By VICTORIA MILKO Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — An elderly woman forced to flee bombings. A former peace negotiator leaving his job to fight Myanmar security forces. A woman's husband shot during a peaceful protest, leaving her alone to care for their two children.

Since Myanmar's military dismissed the results of the country's democratic election and seized power on Feb. 1, 2021, peaceful nationwide protests and violent crackdowns by security forces have spiraled into a nationwide humanitarian crisis.

The Associated Press spoke to people in Myanmar about how their lives have changed in the year since the military took power. They spoke on condition their names are not disclosed for fear of reprisal.

### THE WIDOW: "HE SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED"

Before his death, Khine's husband earned enough money making door gates that her family lived a comfortable life in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city. She was able to stay home to care for the couple's two young daughters while the husband worked.

On Feb. 1, Khine's husband got a phone call from a friend, telling him about the military takeover.

"He looked really sad, angry and couldn't talk much," Khine told the AP by phone.

In the weeks that followed, protests calling for the military to restore democracy and free imprisoned politicians rippled through the country. Khine and her husband joined the crowds.

In late March, as security forces began using lethal force to crack down on protests, Khine was babysitting when demonstrators came to her home to tell her that her husband had been shot. They took him to two clinics but both refused to treat him. He died when they reached a hospital.

"He suddenly disappeared," she said. "Before the coup, I had never imagined that our family life would fall apart like this."

Her husband is one of at least 1,490 people killed by the military since the takeover, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a group that monitors verified arrests and deaths in Myanmar. Over 11,775 have been arrested, according to the group.

Since her husband's death, Khine has started working at a garment factory, earning \$3 a day. Unable to afford their old apartment after the loss of her husband's income, the family has moved into a small room. She worries about being able to provide for her children and their mental health.

"My eldest daughter is becoming traumatized," said Khine. "She often says, 'My friends have their fathers, but I don't.'"

### THE DISPLACED: "FLEEING THE WAR IS EXHAUSTING"

Bomb blasts, gunfire and artillery shelling have followed 63-year-old Mee at every shelter she's been forced to flee to over the past year.

She first had to flee to a camp for the displaced after fighting broke out near her village in eastern Myanmar. A month later, the camp was no longer safe, and the medicine she needed for her heart disease and hypertension wasn't available. With nowhere else to go, Mee moved to a relative's house.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 61 of 88

"While we were there, gunfire was heard," Mee told the AP by phone "We decided not to run away, even if we died, because fleeing the war is exhausting."

Not long after, the area near her relative's house was bombed, and she had to move once more. For now, Mee shares a small barn with 15 other people, all of them displaced. She has enough medicine only for two months and is concerned about the future of her family and the country.

As of Jan. 17, the U.N. refugee agency estimates the number of the displaced since the army takeover at 405,700. Another 32,000 have fled to neighboring countries.

"I am worried and tired every day," Mee said. "For now, my hope is that I just want to see peace and calm. Then, I want to go back to my house."

## THE SURGEON: "LIVES HAVE TO BE SACRIFICED"

Before the military seized power, the 28 year-old assistant surgeon was studying for his exams to become a specialist. He lived with his family and would take pride in treating patients at the hospital he worked at in a major city.

On the morning of the takeover, he went to work, seeing military vehicles on the roads and helicopters overhead. The phones and internet were cut. Stepping into the hospital, he learned the military had detained the country's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi.

The next day, he and other health care workers in state-run hospitals quit, sparking what would become known as the Civil Disobedience Movement.

"After the military coup, we no longer wanted to work under them. We believed all the health sectors will have no progress under the military," he told the AP by phone.

Myanmar has become one of the most dangerous places in the world for health care workers, according to Physicians for Human Rights. It said 30 health workers were killed and 286 arrested between the takeover and Jan. 10.

Seeing his colleagues getting arrested, the surgeon fled to an area controlled by an armed opposition group. He has worked in makeshift clinics made of tents in camps for four months, treating people with general illnesses and those wounded by military shelling and land mines.

Medicine is hard to find, with security forces arresting anyone transporting medication.

"We have to carry medicine secretly. That's why it takes about a month for medicine to arrive," he said. "Even if cars are carrying paracetamol or something like that, they're arrested."

The surgeon still dreams of being able to return home to take the exams for a specialist.

"But dreams and reality are different," he said. "The people are suffering from the oppression of the military council. Lives have to be sacrificed for the revolution."

## THE JOURNALIST: "WE DARE NOT TAKE OUT OUR CAMERAS"

The videographer knew journalists had to show the world what was happening in Myanmar. Setting aside their anger and sadness about the military takeover, they went to the streets to document protests and brutal crackdowns with their phones day after day.

"We dare not take out our cameras" for fear of arrest, the videographer told the AP by phone. "Things are getting worse."

Facing increasing threats, many of the videographer's colleagues fled to the jungle to join armed resistance groups. Others have been arrested. By Dec. 1, more journalists were arrested in Myanmar than every country in the world except China, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. At least two journalists have been killed and others tortured while in detention, the group said.

Yet the videographer continues to work, realizing that any report could be the last one.

"I'm working like an underground journalist," the videographer said. "In case of an emergency, I have prepared a bag if I need to run."

Despite the threats, the journalist has no intention of leaving the country.

"The international community only knows about the military's atrocities through the media," the videographer said. "But I will continue to do this work until I can't do it. If the security forces chase and catch

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 62 of 88

me — let them.”

**THE FIGHTER: “I DECIDED I WOULD TAKE UP ARMS”**

After watching fellow peaceful protesters get shot in the head by military forces, the 47 year-old made a decision.

“I decided I would take up arms, and I started looking for options to actually do so,” he said.

His protests had started peacefully. After the military takeover, he began organizing rallies in Yangon. But as the weeks passed, he knew his safety was in jeopardy.

“I stopped living in my apartment,” he said. “I also had to ask my family to leave that apartment to a secret location so that (the military) could not harm them.”

But when the protests turned deadly, he realized he wanted to take a step further.

“I never thought I would find myself involved in a struggle,” he told the AP by phone.

The man is just one of thousands of people in Myanmar who have joined loose-knit guerilla groups called People’s Defense Forces. Some have forged alliances with armed ethnic groups that have been at war with Myanmar military for decades, while others have pledged allegiance to the opposition National Unity Government, a parallel administration that declared a “defensive war” against the military in September.

Before the takeover, the man enjoyed going to restaurants with his family, shopping trips to the mall and spending time with his children in their home when he wasn’t working at a nongovernment organization involved in the decades-long peace process.

His days are now spent on missions he is hesitant to speak about for security reasons. He lives in an area of a jungle controlled by an armed ethnic group, carrying multiple weapons wherever he goes. He and his comrades forage for whatever they can to survive and sleep in hammocks strung between trees.

“The life I enjoyed is no longer available,” he said.

The man said he is frustrated by the international community’s lack of response, and that the people of Myanmar have had to take matters into their own hands.

“We have the right to use violence to defend ourselves while the international community stands by.”

## **Islamic State strikes from shadows in vulnerable Syria, Iraq**

By ZEINA KARAM and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — With a spectacular jail break in Syria and a deadly attack on an army barracks in Iraq, the Islamic State group was back in the headlines the past week, a reminder of a war that formally ended three years ago but continues to be fought mostly away from view.

The attacks were some of the boldest since the extremist group lost its last sliver of territory in 2019 with the help of a U.S.-led international coalition, following a years-long war that left much of Iraq and Syria in ruins.

Residents in both countries say the recent high-profile IS operations only confirmed what they’ve known and feared for months: Economic collapse, lack of governance and growing ethnic tensions in the impoverished region are reversing counter-IS gains, allowing the group to threaten parts of its former so-called caliphate once again.

One Syrian man said that over the past few years, militants repeatedly carried out attacks in his town of Shuheil, a former IS stronghold in eastern Syria’s Deir el-Zour province. They hit members of the Kurdish-led security force or the local administration — then vanished.

“We would think it is over and they’re not coming back. Then suddenly, everything turns upside down again,” he said.

They are “everywhere,” he said, striking quickly and mostly in the dark, creating the aura of a stealth omnipresent force. He spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear for his safety.

IS lost its last patch of territory near Baghouz in eastern Syria in March 2019. Since that time, it largely went underground and waged a low-level insurgency, including roadside bombings, assassinations and

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 63 of 88

hit-and-run attacks mostly targeting security forces. In eastern Syria, the militants carried out some 342 operations over the last year, many of them attacks on Kurdish-led forces, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The Jan. 20 prison break in Syria's Hassakeh region was its most sophisticated operation yet.

The militants stormed the prison aiming to break out thousands of comrades, some of whom simultaneously rioted inside. The attackers allowed some inmates to escape, took hostages, including child detainees, and battled the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces for a week. It was not clear how many militants managed to escape, and some remain holed up in the prison.

The fighting killed dozens and drew in the U.S.-led coalition, which carried out airstrikes and deployed American personnel in Bradley Fighting Vehicles to the scene. The battle also drove thousands of neighboring civilians from their homes.

It harkened back to a series of jail breaks that fueled IS's surge more than eight years ago, when they overwhelmed territory in Iraq and Syria.

Hours after the prison attack began, IS gunmen in Iraq broke into a barracks in mountains north of Baghdad, killed a guard and shot dead 11 soldiers as they slept. It was part of a recent uptick in attacks that have stoked fears the group is also gaining momentum in Iraq.

An Iraqi intelligence source said IS does not have the same sources of financing as in the past and is incapable of holding ground. "They are working as a very decentralized organization," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss security information.

The group's biggest operations are conducted by 7-10 militants, said Iraqi military spokesman Maj. Gen. Yehia Rasool. He said he believes it is currently impossible for IS to take over a village, let alone a city. In the summer of 2014, Iraqi forces collapsed and retreated when the militants overran vast swathes of northern Iraq.

On its online channel, Aamaq, IS has been putting out videos from the prison attack and glorifying its other operations in an intensified propaganda campaign. The aim is to recruit new members and "reactivate quasi-dormant networks throughout the region," according to an analysis by the Soufan Group security consultancy.

On both sides of the Syria-Iraq border, IS benefits from ethnic and sectarian resentments and from deteriorating economies. In Iraq, the rivalry between the Baghdad-based central government and the autonomous Kurdish region in the north of the country has opened up cracks through which IS has crept back. Sunni Arab disenchantment with Shiite politicians helps the group attract young men.

In Afghanistan, IS militants have stepped up attacks on the country's new rulers, the Taliban, as well as religious and ethnic minorities.

In eastern Syria, the tensions are between the Kurdish-led administration and Arab population. IS feeds off Arab discontent with the Kurds' domination of power and employment at a time when Syria's currency is collapsing.

Kurdish authorities have carried out crackdowns against the Arab population on suspicion of IS sympathies, especially after a wave of protests against living conditions. At the same time, to reduce tensions, Kurdish authorities released detained Arabs and encouraged members of Arab tribes to join the ranks of the SDF. But those steps have raised concerns over infiltration or charges of corruption, adding to the challenges.

The militants have cells extending from Baghouz in the east to rural Manbij in Aleppo province to the west, according to Rami Abdurrahman, the head of the Syrian Observatory.

"They are trying to reaffirm their presence," he said.

East Syria is also fractured among several competing forces. The Kurdish-led administration runs most of the territory east of the Euphrates, supported by hundreds of U.S. troops. The Syrian government, with its Russian and Iranian allies, is west of the river. Turkey and its allied Syria fighters, who view the Kurds as existential enemies, hold a belt along the countries' border.

Dareen Khalifa, a senior Syria analyst for the International Crisis Group, said the SDF's dependence on an "unpredictable U.S. presence" in fighting the militants is one of its biggest challenges.

She said the SDF is viewed as a lame duck that makes local residents reluctant to cooperate with anti-IS

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 64 of 88

raids or provide intelligence on IS cells, particularly after the group threatened or killed many suspected collaborators in the past.

Moreover, the Kurdish authorities' claim to be able to govern and provide services to the region and its mixed population "has taken a blow in 2021 as the economic conditions in the area deteriorated," Khalifa said.

Residents say the Islamic State group is not collecting taxes or actively recruiting people, indicating they are not seeking to seize and control territory like they did in 2014, when they became de-facto rulers of an area that stretched across nearly a third of both Syria and Iraq. Instead, they exploit the security vacuum and lack of governance and resort to intimidation and kidnappings.

The resident of Shuheil in Deir el-Zour said they mostly operate at night, in flash attacks on military posts or targeted killings carried out from speeding motorcycles.

"It is always hit and run," he said.

He described the area as constantly on edge, under an invisible threat from militants who blend into the population. The fear is so great, no one talks openly about them, whether good or bad, he said.

"Everyone is afraid of assassinations," he said. "They have prestige, they have a reputation. They will never go away."

## **EXPLAINER: Why US sanctions may target individual Russians**

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House and U.S. officials have threatened Russia with financial sanctions carrying "severe consequences" if it invades Ukraine, but so far plenty of people have been prime targets for Western pain.

Experts say it's unlikely the U.S. and its allies would agree to something as sweeping as a complete ban on trade with Russia or an embargo. Rather, industries and individuals probably will continue to bear the brunt of sanctions as the crisis deepens.

The Kremlin has shrugged off the sanctions against Russian officials and business leaders imposed by the U.S. and its allies. Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said this past week that members of Congress seem to fail to notice that Russian law bans officials from having any foreign assets.

The U.S. maintains that those targeted lose substantial revenue and asset value from financial penalties that could curb, for instance, an oligarch's shopping sprees and investments.

Geopolitics, European dependence on Russian natural gas and the sheer size of Russia are some of the reasons keeping the U.S. from subjecting Moscow to a more comprehensive embargo similar to what is seen in Cuba, North Korea and Iran.

A look at how and why the West might opt to target sanctions at specific people or industries in Russia rather than going bigger:

### **WHY GO AFTER INDIVIDUALS RATHER THAN ORGANIZATIONS?**

Sometimes the more narrow jab is meant to avoid inflicting unintended pain on ordinary people or causing action that will boomerang back on Western interests.

A recent Congressional Research Service report said the U.S. and European Union aim to impose sanctions "in a way that could get Russia to change its behavior while minimizing collateral damage to the Russian people and to the economic interests of the countries imposing sanctions."

Germany's leaders have promised that the future of the new Nord Stream 2 pipeline would be "on the table" if Russia moves against Ukraine. The pipeline was built to move Russia's natural gas directly to Germany, bypassing Ukraine. Blocking it would hit Russia's gas exports in a crucial market.

### **WHO ARE THE PEOPLE WHO GET TARGETED?**

According to the CRS, several politically connected Russian billionaires and their companies are targets for sanctions. The Treasury Department's foreign assets enforcement arm has cited at least 445 people and businesses as "specially designated nationals and blocked persons." These are largely related to the destabilization of Ukraine, misappropriation of assets and operations in Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 65 of 88

that Russia seized from Ukraine.

Among the targets are government officials and heads of state-owned companies, including Russia's interior minister, the directors of foreign intelligence and the federal penitentiary service, and the chairs of both houses of parliament. The CEOs of state-owned oil and gas companies Rosneft and Gazprom, defense company Rostec and several banks could also expect sanctions.

**WHAT KIND OF SANCTIONS HAS THE US IMPOSED ON RUSSIANS IN THE PAST?**

Western sanctions issued when Russia invaded and annexed Crimea in 2014 included limits on trade, the blocking of assets under American jurisdiction and limits on access to the U.S. financial system, which are maintained to this day on at least 735 individuals, entities and vessels, according to the Office of Foreign Assets Control.

In the past year, the U.S. has layered on additional sanctions.

This month, the U.S. Treasury sanctioned four people — two of them are members of the Ukrainian parliament — alleged to be engaged in Russian government-directed activities meant to destabilize Ukraine. Last April, 16 individuals and entities were sanctioned for what Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen called "the start of a new U.S. campaign against Russian malign behavior."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki recently warned that Russian President Vladimir Putin and his top officials could incur personal penalties "far beyond what was done in 2014" because of Crimea.

**HOW EFFECTIVE ARE SANCTIONS ON INDIVIDUALS?**

Personal sanctions are not nearly as effective as those on industries, which the administration is also considering. But they can inflict psychological pain and make targets international pariahs. For instance, some Republicans in Congress want the U.S. to consider sanctioning Alina Kabaeva, an Olympic gold medalist in rhythmic gymnastics reported to be Putin's girlfriend.

Assets owned by Putin himself are difficult to target.

"His wealth is hidden all over the world and tracking that stuff is not easy. But it will make his life more difficult," said Scheherazade Rehman, professor of international business and international affairs at George Washington University.

Asked this past week about Biden keeping the door open for personal sanctions against Putin if Russia invades Ukraine, Peskov warned that such a move would be "politically destructive" for Russia's ties with the U.S.

U.S. sanctions on Russia can have broad economic effects if they are applied to economically significant targets — and some programs do that by targeting both particular people and businesses as well as prohibiting certain types of transactions.

**WHAT OTHER KINDS OF PENALTIES ARE IN THE US TOOLKIT?**

Several federal agencies can also play a part in enforcing sanctions or limiting commercial activity. The State Department can restrict visas and foreign aid, and the Commerce Department can restrict licenses for commercial exports. The Defense Department can restrict arms sales and the Justice Department can prosecute those who violate export laws. Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security and FBI can review visas issued for travel to the United States.

## Trump dangles prospect of pardons for Jan. 6 defendants

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

CONROE, Texas (AP) — Former President Donald Trump is dangling the prospect of pardons for supporters who participated in the deadly Jan. 6 storming of the U.S. Capitol if he returns to the White House.

"If I run and if I win, we will treat those people from January 6th fairly," Trump said Saturday night during a rally in Conroe, Texas. "And if it requires pardons, we will give them pardons because they are being treated so unfairly."

The offer represents an attempt by Trump to further minimize the most significant attack on the seat of government since the War of 1812. Participants smashed through windows, assaulted police officers and sent lawmakers and congressional staff fleeing for their lives while trying to halt the peaceful transition

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 66 of 88

of power and the certification of rival Joe Biden's victory.

More than 700 people have been arrested and charged with federal crimes in connection with the riot, marking the largest investigation in the Justice Department's history. The tally includes more than 150 people charged with assaulting police officers, more than 50 charged with conspiracy, and charges of seditious conspiracy against the founder and leader of the far-right Oath Keepers militia group, and 10 other members or associates.

More than 100 police officers were injured, some critically, after Trump supporters stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, following a "Stop the Steal" rally by Trump near the White House in which he falsely claimed Biden had won election through massive voter fraud.

As president Trump used his pardon power to pardon or commute the sentences of numerous political allies, friends and associates, including his former chief strategist, Steve Bannon; his former campaign chair, Paul Manafort; his former national security adviser, Michael Flynn; and a longtime friend and political ally, Roger Stone.

Trump has criticized the Democrat-led House for its ongoing investigation of the riot.

While his supporters overran the Capitol on Jan. 6, Trump ignored desperate pleas from allies to forcefully disavow the attack and has repeatedly praised those who participated in the protest.

"It was a lot of love there," he said recently of those who attended the rally in an interview on Fox News. "Believe me, there was a lot of love and a lot of friendship and people that love our country."

Trump, who was impeached by the House for his role in inciting the insurrection but acquitted by the Senate, has been teasing a third run for the White House in 2024.

## Trump facing legal, political headwinds as he eyes comeback

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

CONROE, Texas (AP) — As he prepared to tee off at one of his Florida golf courses, a fellow player introduced Donald Trump as the "45th president of the United States."

"45th and 47th," Trump responded matter-of-factly, before hitting his drive.

The quip — a moment of levity on the links captured on shaky cellphone video — was a reminder that the former president often has another presidential run on his mind. But the declaration belied the growing challenges he's confronting as a series of complex legal investigations ensnare Trump, his family and many associates.

The probes, which are unfolding in multiple jurisdictions and consider everything from potential fraud and election interference to the role he played in the Jan. 6 insurrection, represent the most serious legal threat Trump has faced in decades of an often litigious public life. They're intensifying as a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found Trump's iron grip on the GOP may be starting to loosen.

His popularity among Republicans is declining somewhat, with 71% saying they have a favorable opinion of Trump compared with 78% in a September 2020 AP-NORC/USAFacts poll. But the new poll shows only a narrow majority of Republicans — 56% — want him to run for president in 2024. The poll found that 44% of Republicans do not want Trump to run.

Despite the legal and political headwinds, those around Trump describe him as looking to the future and emboldened by a sense of invincibility that has allowed him to recover from devastating turns, including two impeachments, that would have ended the careers of other politicians. Instead of receding from the spotlight, he's teasing a comeback run for president as he escalates his attacks against those investigating him and his company.

"He's in great spirits," said Darrell Scott, an Ohio pastor and Trump ally who met with the former president this week.

Trump huddled with top aides in Florida this week as he plots a midterm strategy that could serve as a springboard for future efforts. And he held another campaign-style rally in Texas on Saturday evening ahead of the state's March 1 elections that formally kick off the midterm primary season.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 67 of 88

Speaking at county fairgrounds outside of Houston, Trump sketched out the beginnings of a 2024 campaign agenda, saying he would ban critical race theory — it views American history through the lens of racism — from classrooms, the military and government on “the first day, first hour, if I decide to run and if we win.” And he said he would make sure those charged in connection with the deadly Jan 6. riot at the U.S. Capitol were treated “fairly.”

“And if it requires pardons, we will give them pardons,” he said of his supporters, who stormed the building in an effort to block the certification of President Joe Biden’s win.

But even as he projects a sense of inevitability that the nomination would be his if he wants it, his effort to freeze the field of Republicans eyeing the 2024 field has been uneven. Some, including former Vice President Mike Pence and former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have so far refused to demur, making speeches and traveling to key states that suggest they are strongly considering campaigns. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is also seen as another contender for the nomination and drew attention recently when he said that one of his biggest regrets as governor was not pushing back when Trump urged Americans to stay home in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic to stop the virus’s spread.

As Trump tries to move forward, so do the legal cases against him.

On Monday, judges in Georgia approved a request for a special grand jury by the Fulton County prosecutor who has been investigating whether Trump and others broke the law by trying to pressure Georgia officials to throw out President Joe Biden’s victory in the 2020 election. Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis has said her office received information “indicating a reasonable probability” that the election had been “subject to possible criminal disruptions.”

In New York, state Attorney General Letitia James claimed in a court filing last week that her office uncovered evidence that Trump’s company used “fraudulent or misleading” valuations of its golf clubs, skyscrapers and other property to secure loans and tax benefits. While her lawyers said they hadn’t decided whether to bring a lawsuit in connection with the allegations, they revealed the company overstated the value of land donations made in New York and California on paperwork submitted to the IRS and misreported the size of Trump’s Manhattan penthouse, among other misleading valuations.

The Manhattan District Attorney’s Office has also been working with James’ office on a parallel criminal investigation, which resulted in charges last summer against Trump’s company, the Trump Organization, and its longtime finance chief, Allen Weisselberg.

Meanwhile, in Washington, the Jan. 6 committee investigating the violent insurrection has interviewed hundreds of witnesses, issued dozens of subpoenas and obtained tens of thousands of pages of records, including texts, emails and phone records from people close to Trump, as well as thousands of pages of White House records that Trump fought to shield from public view. Among them: a draft executive order that proposed using Defense Department assets to seize voting machines, the committee’s chairman, Rep. Bennie Thompson, has said.

A top Justice Department official said this week that prosecutors are investigating fake certificates sent to the National Archives with made-up slates of electors who wrongly declared Trump the winner in seven states he lost as part of a desperate campaign to subvert the voters’ will. Attorney General Merrick Garland has said the Justice Department remains committed to “holding all January 6th perpetrators, at any level, accountable under law, whether they were present that day or were otherwise criminally responsible for the assault on our democracy.”

As president, Trump was largely shielded from legal consequence. But no longer.

David Weinstein, a former federal prosecutor in Miami, said that, until now, Trump’s legal problems have largely been relegated to “money things,” with various lawsuits seeking payouts. But he described what Trump is facing now, particularly in Georgia and Washington, as “more significant, because with those comes the potential exposure to criminal punishment.”

“If they can prove intention, knowledge, involvement in an ongoing conspiracy,” he said, “that’s potential criminal exposure, something he’s never faced before.”

But those who have worked with Trump said he and those around him are likely to continue to brush off the probes as nothing more than politically motivated “witch hunts” aimed at damaging his future political

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 68 of 88

prospects. After spending so many years jumping from one crisis to the next, from the Russia investigation to inquiries about everything from his Washington hotel lease to payoffs to a former porn star, being under investigation in TrumpWorld is the norm.

For many in his circle, "It's a badge of honor to be subpoenaed," said Stephanie Grisham, the former White House press secretary who quit on Jan. 6 and has since penned an anti-Trump book.

"It's easy to say 'It's just another witch hunt' because that's what we said about everything," she said. "People are doubling down. That's what we do in TrumpWorld, we double down. And you just claim it's a witch hunt, you claim it's political theater. And that's how you get your supporters to continue to donate money and to continue to believe they're on the good side."

Indeed, on Saturday night, Trump railed against the investigators and insisted, "There's never been a witch hunt or a fishing expedition like this."

"This has been going on as long as you've known me. It will continue as long as I'm leading in the polls like I am," he said, adding: "In reality, they're not after me, they're after you."

And, after being accused of inciting the Capitol riot, he issued a request. "If these radical, vicious, racist prosecutors do anything wrong or illegal, I hope we are going to have in this country the biggest protest we have ever had in Washington, D.C, in New York, in Atlanta and elsewhere."

## Thousands in Ottawa protest COVID mandates, many rebuked

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — Thousands of protesters gathered in Canada's capital on Saturday to protest vaccine mandates, masks and lockdowns.

Some parked on the grounds of the National War Memorial and danced on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, others carried signs and flags with swastikas and some used the statue of Canadian hero Terry Fox to display an anti-vaccine statement, sparking widespread condemnation.

"I am sickened to see protesters dance on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and desecrate the National War Memorial. Generations of Canadians have fought and died for our rights, including free speech, but not this. Those involved should hang their heads in shame," tweeted Gen. Wayne Eyre, Canada's Defense Staff chief.

Protestors compared vaccine mandates to fascism, one truck carried a Confederate flag and many carried expletive-laden signs targeting Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

The statue of Fox, a national hero who lost a leg to bone cancer as a youngster, then set off in 1980 on a fundraising trek across Canada, was draped with a upside down Canadian flag with a sign that said "mandate freedom."

Trudeau retweeted a statement from The Terry Fox Foundation that said "Terry believed in science and gave his life to help others."

Eric Simmons, from Oshawa, Ontario, said all vaccine mandates should be ended.

"They're not effective, they're not working. It's not changing anything. We can't keep living like this. People are losing their jobs because they don't want to get the vaccine," Simmons said.

The convoy of truckers and others prompted police to prepare for the possibility of violence and warn residents to avoid downtown. A top Parliament security official advised lawmakers to lock their doors amid reports their private homes may be targeted.

Trudeau has said Canadians are not represented by this "very troubling, small but very vocal minority of Canadians who are lashing out at science, at government, at society, at mandates and public health advice."

The prime minister's itinerary for the day usually says he is in Ottawa if he's at home, but on Saturday it said "National Capital Region" amid a report he's been moved to an undisclosed location. One of Trudeau's kids has COVID-19 and the prime minister has been isolating and working remotely.

Canada has one of the highest vaccination rates in the world and the premier of the province of Quebec who is proposing to tax the unvaccinated is popular.

Some are, in part, protesting a new rule that took effect Jan. 15 requiring truckers entering Canada be fully immunized against the coronavirus. The United States has imposed the same requirement on truck-

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 69 of 88

ers entering that country.

The Canadian Trucking Alliance said a great number of the protesters have no connection to the trucking industry, adding they have a separate agenda to push. The alliance notes the vast majority of drivers are vaccinated.

The organizers of the protest have called for the forceful elimination of all COVID-19 restrictions and vaccine mandates and some called for the removal of Trudeau.

The Shepherds of Good Hope, which has a soup kitchen for the homeless in Ottawa, reported staff and volunteers "experienced harassment from convoy protestors seeking meals from our soup kitchen. The individuals were given means to defuse the conflict."

Some opposition Canadian Conservative lawmakers served coffee to the protesters. Conservative party leader Erin O'Toole met with some truckers. The protest has also attracted support from former U.S. President Donald Trump and some Fox News personalities.

"We want those great Canadian truckers to know that we are with them all the way," Trump said at a rally in Conroe, Texas. "They are doing more to defend American freedom than our leaders by far."

Former U.S. Ambassador to Canada Bruce Heyman said the threat against democracy isn't only happening in America.

"Both the use of the swastika and the confederate flag are symbols of hate. So very sad to see these symbols anywhere and especially in Canada," said Heyman, who was the U.S. envoy under former President Barack Obama.

The Parliamentary Protective Service expects as many as 10,000 protesters as part of a weekend-long rally.

"I'm locked into my own country right now," said Tom Pappin, an unvaccinated man who came from just outside Ottawa. "I can't go on a holiday. I can't go to a restaurant, I can't go bowling. I can't go to a movie. You know, these are things that it's just gotten out of control."

The 52-year-old said attendees are likely to stay parked by Parliament until vaccine mandates are lifted.

## Blizzard buffets East Coast with deep snow, winds, flooding

By MARK PRATT and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A nor'easter with hurricane-force wind gusts battered much of the East Coast on Saturday, flinging heavy snow that made travel treacherous or impossible, flooding coastlines, and threatening to leave bitter cold in its wake.

The storm thrashed parts of 10 states, with blizzard warnings that stretched from Virginia to Maine. Philadelphia and New York saw plenty of wind and snow, but Boston was in the crosshairs. The city tied its record for biggest single-day snowfall, with 23.6 inches (60 centimeters), the National Weather Service said.

Winds gusted as high as 83 mph (134 kph) on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Southwest of Boston, the town of Sharon, Massachusetts, had received more than 30 inches (76 centimeters) of snow by Saturday night, while Islip, New York, and Warren, Rhode Island, both saw more than 24 inches (61 centimeters).

The wind scoured the ground bare in some spots and piled the snow into huge drifts in others.

Forecasters watched closely for new snowfall records, especially in Boston. The Boston area's modern snowfall record for a winter storm is 27.6 inches (70 centimeters), set in 2003.

New York City and Philadelphia were far from setting all-time records but still saw significant snowfall, with at least 7.5 inches (19 centimeters) in New York's Central Park and at the Philadelphia airport.

Many flights at airports serving New York, Boston and Philadelphia were canceled Saturday, according to FlightAware. More than 4,500 flights were canceled across the U.S., though airports in the Northeast didn't report evidence of mass strandings, given that the storm was anticipated and many airlines called off flights in advance.

Amtrak canceled all its high-speed Acela trains on the busy Boston-to-Washington corridor and canceled or limited other service.

In Boston, Dominic Torre was out driving his snow dump truck since the storm began overnight, pick-

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 70 of 88

ing up loads of plowed snow from the streets of and dumping it in unused parking lots known as "snow farms." It was about time for such a big storm, he said.

"You know, we were overdue," he said. "It's pretty hairy, you know, a lot of snow. A lot of snow, a lot of trips, a lot of loads. And it ain't over yet. It ain't done yet."

Videos on social media showed wind and waves battering North Weymouth, south of Boston, flooding streets with a slurry of frigid water. Other videos showed a street underwater on Nantucket and waves crashing against the windows of a building in Plymouth.

Over 120,000 homes and businesses lost power in Massachusetts, with failures mounting. No other states reported widespread outages.

Climate change, particularly the warming ocean, probably influenced the strength of the storm, atmospheric researchers said.

Much warmer ocean waters "are certainly playing a role in the strengthening of the storm system and increased moisture available for the storm," said University of Oklahoma meteorology professor Jason Furtado. "But it isn't the only thing."

The storm had two saving graces: Dry snow less capable of snapping trees and tearing down power lines, and its timing on a weekend, when schools were closed and few people were commuting.

Parts of 10 states were under blizzard warnings at some point: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey, along with much of the Delmarva Peninsula in Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.

The National Weather Service considers a storm a blizzard if it has snowfall or blowing snow, as well as winds of at least 35 mph (56 kph) that reduce visibility to a quarter-mile or less for at least three hours. In many areas, Saturday's storm met those criteria.

Rhode Island, all of which was under a blizzard warning, banned all nonemergency road travel.

In West Hartford, Connecticut, a tractor-trailer jackknifed on Interstate 84, closing several lanes. Massachusetts banned heavy trucks from interstate highways.

Ocean City, Maryland, recorded at least a foot (30 centimeters) of snow. Maryland State Police tweeted that troopers had received more than 670 calls for service and responded to over 90 crashes by midmorning.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul advised people to stay home and warned of below-zero windchills after the storm passes. The state had declared a state of emergency Friday evening.

"This is a very serious storm, very serious. We've been preparing for this. This could be life-threatening," Hochul said. "It's high winds, heavy snow, blizzard conditions — all the elements of a classic nor'easter."

Police on Long Island said they had to help motorists stuck in the snow, and an elderly man shoveling snow died after falling into a swimming pool. In Philadelphia, few drivers ventured onto streets covered in knee-high drifts.

Hardy New Englanders took the storm in stride.

Dave McGillivray, race director for the Boston Marathon, jokingly invited the public to his suburban Boston home on Saturday for a free snow-shoveling clinic.

"I will provide the driveway and multiple walkways to ensure your training is conducted in the most life-like situation," he said.

Washington and Baltimore got some snow but were largely spared. The worst of the nor'easter was expected to blow by Sunday morning into Canada, where several provinces were under warnings.

## **Barty wins drought-breaking Australian Open women's title**

By JOHN PYE AP Sports Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Ash Barty really didn't know how to react to this drought-breaking triumph. The usually so reserved and understated champion just let it all out, yelling "yes ... yes."

A quick walk to the net to congratulate the Australian Open runner-up, 28-year-old American Danielle Collins. Yes, that restored some sense of order. Acknowledge the umpire with a handshake. Yes, that's another important task for the women's top-ranked tennis player.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 71 of 88

Then back onto Rod Laver Arena to scream out again: "yes ... yes."

Yes, it had been 44 years since an Australian won a singles title at the Australian Open, quite an anomaly for a country with such a long list of Grand Slam champions. So no need to keep a lid on the celebrations. An almost full house at Rod Laver Arena, despite ticket restrictions imposed for the COVID-19 pandemic, was rocking.

Barty knew what to do when she saw who was presenting the trophy. Her mentor, the Indigenous and Australian tennis icon Evonne Goolagong Cawley, had flown in secretly from Queensland state to hand it over to the next generation star with Indigenous heritage.

Instinct kicked in for Barty. It was a big, loving hug.

Barty will no longer be weighed down by the 1970s.

She recovered from 5-1 down in the second set to beat Collins 6-3, 7-6 (2) in the final on Saturday night, becoming the first Australian to win the Australian Open women's singles championship since Chris O'Neil in 1978.

The pressure is off the 25-year-old Aussie, who has made a remarkable career comeback after taking time off — missing every Grand Slam tournament in 2015 and '16 — and briefly flirting with a professional cricket career.

"It was a little bit surreal," Barty said. "I didn't quite know what to do or what to feel — just being able to let out a little bit of emotion, which is a little bit unusual for me, and being able to celebrate with everyone who was there in the crowd, the energy was incredible."

Barty now has Grand Slam singles titles on three surfaces, adding the hard courts of Melbourne Park to her titles on grass at Wimbledon last year and on clay at the 2019 French Open. Serena Williams is the only other active player on the women's tour with majors on all three surfaces.

"This is just a dream come true for me," Barty said. "I'm just so proud to be an Aussie."

Goolagong Cawley was a trailblazer. She won four of her seven Grand Slam singles titles at the Australian Open from 1974-77, after winning the French Open at the age of 19. She won Wimbledon in 1971 and, after having a baby, in 1980. She reached 11 other major finals, including four in a row at the U.S. Open.

And she spotted Barty's talent at a young age.

"Very lucky to be able to give her a hug in some of the biggest moments in my life," Barty said. "To be able to experience that together on such a big occasion, on such a beautiful court, and in a tournament that means so much to both of us — it was really nice to have her there just as someone to lean on when I wasn't really sure what to do."

O'Neil was involved in the night, too, ushering the trophy into the stadium.

Barty had only conceded one service game through six matches leading into the final.

And Collins was the fourth American in as many rounds to take her on, with Barty beating Amanda Anisimova, Jessica Pegula and 2017 U.S. Open runner-up Madison Keys in straight sets.

Collins, meanwhile, had to rally from a set and break down to beat Danish teenager Clara Tauson in the third round. She was hampered by a sore back, which prevented her from sitting down in changeovers.

Barty took the first set after saving a break point in the fifth game and then breaking in the next.

Collins hit back, relying on her high-power, high-intensity game to break Barty's serve in the second and sixth games.

She twice served for the second set, and got within two points of taking her first Grand Slam final to a third.

But she lost momentum when Barty jumped into a second serve and sent a return winner down the line in the seventh game.

Collins went to talk to the chair umpire when she faced a break point, and got booed by the crowd. When she lost the game, Collins got another chorus of boos.

Revived by that kind of energy, Barty won five of the last six games and dominated the tiebreaker.

"This crowd is one of the most fun I've ever played in front of," Barty said. "You relaxed me, forced me to play my best tennis."

Until Saturday, Barty's best run in Australia had ended in a semifinal loss to eventual champion Sofia

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 72 of 88

Kenin in 2020.

Australian flags and the red, black and yellow Aboriginal flag were waved around in the crowd. Cathy Freeman, who carried both flags to celebrate her gold medal in the 400 meters at the Sydney 2000 Olympics — one of the defining images of those Games — was there for support, too.

Collins, whose previous best run at a major was a semifinal loss here in 2019, paid tribute to her longtime mentor Marty Schneider and her boyfriend Joe Vollen.

"Thank you for believing in me," she said, crying. "I haven't had a ton of people believing me in my career."

Collins, who doesn't have a permanent coach, said: "I was pushed to the max, and I gave myself a chance."

"So it was a great event for me. Accomplished some new things. Learned a lot of new things."

The home country's drought in Australian Open men's singles dates back to Mark Edmondson's victory in 1976, but the men's doubles title is back with a homegrown team for the first time since 1997.

Wild-card entrants Nick Kyrgios and Thanasi Kokkinakis — the so-called Special Ks — finished off a fairly wild men's doubles campaign by beating Matt Ebden and Max Purcell 7-5, 6-4.

## AP sources: Despite reports, Tom Brady hasn't made up mind

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Only Tom Brady could turn a retirement decision into must-see drama.

Despite reports that he is retiring, Brady has told the Tampa Bay Buccaneers he hasn't made up his mind, two people familiar with the details told The Associated Press.

It's unknown when he'll make an announcement, leaving his team guessing and fans hoping for one more run that seems unlikely considering his age and family situation.

A week after leading the Buccaneers back from a 27-3 deficit against the Rams only to watch from the sideline as the defense allowed a game-winning drive, Brady's future took over the NFL landscape one day before a pair of conference championship games.

ESPN first reported Brady's retirement on Saturday, citing unidentified sources. Brady's company posted a tweet indicating he's retiring, and reaction came from around the world congratulating Brady on his career. Even the NFL's Twitter account posted a series of congratulatory messages.

But TB12sports deleted its tweet, and Brady's agent, Don Yee, said the 44-year-old quarterback would be the only person to accurately express his future.

Brady informed Buccaneers general manager Jason Licht he has not made a decision, according to two people who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because of the private nature of the conversations.

Brady's father, Tom Brady, Sr., told multiple reporters that his son hasn't made a firm decision yet.

A seven-time Super Bowl champion and the NFL's career leader in numerous passing categories, Brady is under contract for 2022, but he has cited a desire to spend more time with his wife, supermodel Gisele Bundchen, and three children.

Brady may be waiting to make an official announcement on his or his brands' social media channels or his SiriusXM podcast.

After ESPN's report, TB12sports' Twitter account posted: "7 Super Bowl Rings. 5 Super Bowl MVPs. 3 League MVP Awards. 22 Incredible Seasons. Thank you for it all, @TomBrady"

That post was removed, and Yee released this statement: "I understand the advance speculation about Tom's future. Without getting into the accuracy or inaccuracy of what's being reported, Tom will be the only person to express his plans with complete accuracy. He knows the realities of the football business and planning calendar as well as anybody, so that should be soon."

Brady led the NFL in yards passing (5,316), touchdowns (43), completions (485) and attempts (719), but the Buccaneers lost at home to the Rams last Sunday in the divisional round.

Brady won six Super Bowls with the New England Patriots in 20 seasons playing for coach Bill Belichick. He joined the Buccaneers in 2020 and led them to the second Super Bowl title in franchise history.

Brady would leave the sport as the career leader in yards passing (84,520) and TDs (624). He's the only player to win more than five Super Bowls and was MVP of the game five times.



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 73 of 88

Widely considered the greatest quarterback to play the game, Brady has won three NFL MVP awards, was a first-team All-Pro three times and was selected to the Pro Bowl 15 times. He is 243-73 in his career in the regular season and 35-12 in the playoffs.

Overlooked by every team coming out of Michigan, Brady was eventually selected by the Patriots in the sixth round of the 2000 NFL draft. He replaced an injured Drew Bledsoe as the starter in 2001 and led New England to a Super Bowl victory over the heavily favored Rams that season.

Brady went on to lead the Patriots to Super Bowl victories over the Panthers following the 2003 season and Eagles after the 2004 season. No team has since repeated as champions.

But New England wouldn't win another one for a decade, twice losing to the New York Giants in the Super Bowl, including a 17-14 defeat on Feb. 3, 2008, that prevented the Patriots from completing a perfect season.

Brady earned his fourth ring when the Patriots held off Seattle thanks to Malcolm Butler's interception at the goal line in the Super Bowl after the 2014 season.

Two years later, in the biggest Super Bowl comeback, he led the Patriots out of a 28-3 deficit in the third quarter against Atlanta to win in overtime.

After losing to the Eagles and backup quarterback Nick Foles the following year, Brady got his sixth championship when New England shut down the Rams following the 2018 season.

He joined the Buccaneers in 2020 amid a pandemic, instilling a winning culture for a franchise that hadn't won a playoff game in 18 years. With his old friend Rob Gronkowski joining him in Tampa, Brady helped the Buccaneers become the first team to play in a Super Bowl in its stadium. Naturally, Brady won again.

In the 20 seasons he has finished as starter, Brady reached the playoffs 19 times, won 18 division titles, went 10-4 in conference championships and 7-3 in Super Bowls.

Since starting his first game on Sept. 30, 2001, Brady was under center for every game except when he suffered a season-ending knee injury in Week 1 in 2008 and the first four games in 2016 when he sat out a suspension because of the deflated footballs scandal.

Known for his work ethic, intense exercise regimen and strict diet, Brady found a funny way to congratulate Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger on his retirement earlier this week.

Brady wrote: "Ben defied the TB12 Method in favor of the "Throw Some Ice On It" method his whole career, and ended up an all-time-great with 6 Pro-Bowls and 2 Super Bowls. There's more than one way to bake a cake!"

## Investigators vow to put collapsed bridge under 'microscope'

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Federal investigators on Saturday vowed to put a collapsed bridge in a Pittsburgh park "under a microscope" as they examine evidence, including video from a municipal bus that plummeted along the span, prompting rescuers to rappel down a ravine and form a human chain to reach a few occupants.

Five vehicles were on the bridge along with the bus at the time of Friday's predawn collapse in Frick Park. City officials said 10 people, including some first responders, were evaluated and treated for minor injuries, and three people were taken to local hospitals with injuries that were not life-threatening. The collapse ruptured gas lines that ran along the bridge, causing a large gas leak and the subsequent evacuation of several families from their homes.

Jennifer Homendy, chair of the National Transportation Safety Board, said Saturday evening that investigators over the coming weeks would "put this bridge under a microscope," looking at its "entire history" from design and construction, to maintenance and repair and all work up until the day of the collapse.

A crash reconstructionist on Saturday used a drone to map the scene and investigators made an initial inspection of the structure and the legs under the deck of the bridge, looking for signs of corrosion and fatigue cracking and also wanting to see how the structure came to rest. Investigators were also trying to identify areas for closer inspection and may want to take pieces back for laboratory analysis, she said.

Dennis Collins, investigator in charge, said structural engineers will be looking at every component of

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 74 of 88

the bridge in methodical fashion, from supports to truss work to joints to the road structure itself.

Investigators have been told that the bus has nine cameras that were facing numerous directions. "We don't know the quality of that video or what is available at this time but we'll want to look at that," Homendy said.

Investigators would look at inspection frequency and quality, federal and state procedures, and also at loads on the bridge and how those loads have changed over the half-century life of the span. In addition, the impact of weather and road treatments would be examined.

"When I look at the bus, and the position of the bus and the position of the vehicles, I'm really thankful that no one lost their lives," Homendy said.

"And then when you're next to the structure, and you're underneath the structure, I mean, the damage is massive, massive," she said, adding that the sight "certainly takes your breath away when you're there."

Homendy, however, also cautioned people to stay away from the park, which remains closed, citing the danger from the structure as well as from vehicles at the scene.

The collapse came hours before President Joe Biden arrived in the city to promote his \$1 trillion infrastructure law, which has earmarked about \$1.6 billion for Pennsylvania bridge maintenance. As Biden toured the scene Friday, an officer told him a person who was running by helped first responders get people out of cars. He called it a miracle.

The bridge is an important artery that leads to the Squirrel Hill and Oakland neighborhoods and is a popular route toward downtown Pittsburgh. Ralph Sicuro, president of Pittsburgh Firefighters Local 1, told KDKA-TV that at least three stations must come up with different response routes in the absence of the main artery they would normally use. Gov. Tom Wolf signed a proclamation of disaster emergency aimed at speeding reconstruction of the bridge.

Homendy said a preliminary report in 10 days would include only factual investigation; a final report could take 12 to 18 months. Removing the bus and cars and parts of the structure would have to wait until diesel and cameras are removed from the bus, she said. Moving the bus safely is "quite an operation" that would take time, and during that process inspectors might want to examine areas newly revealed, she said.

## No peace in Myanmar 1 year after military takeover

By GRANT PECK Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — The army takeover in Myanmar a year ago that ousted Aung San Suu Kyi not only unexpectedly aborted the country's fledgling return to democracy. It also brought a surprising level of popular resistance, which has blossomed into a low-level but persistent insurgency.

Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the commander of Myanmar's military — known as the Tatmadaw — seized power on the morning of Feb. 1, 2021, arresting Suu Kyi and top members of her government and ruling National League for Democracy party, which won a landslide election victory in November 2020.

The military's use of deadly force to hold on to power has escalated conflict with its civilian opponents to the point that some experts describe the country as being in a state of civil war.

The costs have been high, with some 1,500 people killed by the security forces, almost 8,800 detained, an unknown number tortured and disappeared, and more than 300,000 displaced as the military razes villages to root out resistance.

Other consequences are also significant. Civil disobedience hampered transport, banking services and government agencies, slowing an economy already reeling from the coronavirus pandemic. The public health system collapsed, leaving the fight against COVID-19 abandoned for months. Higher education stalled as faculty and students sympathetic to the revolt boycotted school, or were arrested.

The military-installed government was not at all anticipating the level of resistance that arose, Thomas Kean, an analyst of Myanmar affairs consulting for the International Crisis Group think tank, told The Associated Press.

"We saw in the first days after the coup, they tried to adopt a sort of business-as-usual approach," with the generals denying they were implementing any significant change, but only removing Suu Kyi from

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 75 of 88

power, he said.

"And of course, you know, that unleashed these huge protests that were brutally crushed, which resulted in people turning to armed struggle."

The army has dealt with the revolt by employing the same brutal tactics in the country's rural heartland that it has long unleashed against ethnic minorities in border areas, which critics have charged amount to crimes against humanity and genocide.

Its violence has generated newfound empathy for ethnic minorities such as the Karen, the Kachin and the Rohingya, longtime targets of army abuses with whom members of the Burman majority now are making common anti-military cause.

People opposed the army takeover because they had come to enjoy representative government and liberalization after years of military rule, said David Steinberg, a senior scholar of Asian Studies at Georgetown University.

Youth turned out in droves to protest despite the risks, he said, because they had neither families nor careers to lose, but saw their futures at risk.

They also enjoyed tactical advantages that previous generations of protesters lacked, he noted. Myanmar had caught up with the rest of the world in technology, and people were able to organize strikes and demonstrations using cellphones and the internet, despite efforts to limit communications.

A driving force was the Civil Disobedience Movement, founded by health care workers, which encouraged actions such as boycotts of military products and people not paying electricity bills or buying lottery tickets.

Kept in detention by the military, Suu Kyi has played no active part in these developments.

The ruling generals, who have said they will probably hold a new election by 2023, have tied her up with a variety of criminal charges widely seen as trumped-up to keep her from returning to political life. The 76-year-old Suu Kyi has already been sentenced to six years' imprisonment, with the prospect of many more being added.

But in the days after the army's takeover, her party's elected members of parliament laid the groundwork for sustained resistance. Prevented by the army from taking their seats, they convened on their own, and in April established the National Unity Government, or NUG, which stakes a claim to being the country's legitimate administrative body and has won the loyalty of many citizens.

The NUG has also sought to coordinate armed resistance, helping organize "People's Defense Forces," or PDFs, homegrown militias formed at the local and neighborhood levels. The military deems the NUG and the PDFs "terrorist" organizations.

With urban demonstrations mostly reduced to flash mobs to avoid crackdowns, the battle against military rule has largely passed to the countryside, where the badly outgunned local militias carry out guerrilla warfare.

The army's "Four Cuts" strategy aims to eradicate the militias' threat by cutting off their access to food, funds, information and recruitment. Civilians suffer collateral damage as soldiers block essential supplies, take away suspected militia supporters and raze whole villages.

When the military enters a village, "they'll burn down some houses, maybe shoot some people, take prisoners and torture them — the sort of horrific abuses that we're seeing on a regular basis," said analyst Kean.

"But when the soldiers leave, they lose control of that area. They don't have enough manpower to maintain control when 80% to 90% of the population is against them."

Some ethnic minority groups with decades of experience fighting the Myanmar military offer critical support to the PDF militia movement, including supplying training and some weapons, while also providing safe havens for opposition activists and others fleeing the army.

"We never accept a coup at all for whatever reason. The position of our organization is clear," Padoh Saw Taw Nee, the chief of the Karen National Union's foreign affairs department, told the AP. "We oppose any military dictatorship. Therefore, the automatic response is that we must work with those who oppose the military."

He said his group began preparing immediately after the takeover to receive people fleeing from military

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 76 of 88

persecution and noted that it played a similar role in 1988 after a failed popular uprising.

There is a quid pro quo — the NUG says it will honor the minority ethnic groups' demands for greater autonomy when it takes power.

The military, meanwhile, keeps the pressure on the Karen with periodic attacks, including by air, that send villagers fleeing for safety across a river that forms the border with Thailand.

The support of the ethnic groups is seen as key to sustaining the resistance, the thought being that as long as they can engage the army, its forces will be too stretched to finish off the PDFs.

No other factors are seen as capable of tilting the balance in favor of the military or the resistance.

Sanctions on the ruling generals can make them uncomfortable — U.S. actions, especially, have caused financial distress — but Russia and China have been reliable allies, especially willing to sell arms. The U.N. and organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations are seen as toothless at best.

"I see the stage sort of set for a prolonged conflict. Neither side seems willing to back down or sees it as in their interest or a necessity to back down or to make concessions in any way to the other," said analyst Kean.

"And so it's just very difficult to see how the conflict will diminish, will reduce in the near term, even over a period of several years. It's just very difficult to see peace returning to many areas of Myanmar."

## Russia moves naval exercise that rattled EU member Ireland

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia says it will relocate naval exercises off the coast of Ireland after Dublin raised concerns about them amid a tense dispute with the West over expansion of the NATO alliance and fears that Russia is preparing to invade Ukraine.

The Feb. 3-8 exercises were to be held 240 kilometers (150 miles) off southwestern Ireland — in international waters but within Ireland's exclusive economic zone. Ireland is a member of the 27-nation European Union but not a member of NATO.

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney this week objected to the war games, saying "This isn't a time to increase military activity and tension in the context of what's happening with and in Ukraine. The fact that they are choosing to do it on the western borders, if you like, of the EU, off the Irish coast, is something that in our view is simply not welcome."

Russia's embassy in Ireland on Saturday posted a letter on Facebook from Ambassador Yuriy Filatov saying the exercises would be relocated outside of the Irish economic zone "with the aim not to hinder fishing activities."

The decision was a rare concession amid the escalating tensions surrounding Russia's massing of an estimated 100,000 troops near the border with Ukraine and its demands that NATO promise never to allow Ukraine to join the alliance, stop the deployment of NATO weapons near Russian borders and roll back its forces from Eastern Europe.

The U.S. and NATO formally rejected those demands this week, although Washington outlined areas where discussions are possible, offering hope that there could be a way to avoid war.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has made no public remarks about the Western response. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said it leaves little chance for reaching agreement, though he also says Russia does not want war.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Friday that Putin could use any portion of his force to seize Ukrainian cities and "significant territories" or to carry out "coercive acts or provocative political acts" like the recognition of breakaway territories inside Ukraine.

Two territories in eastern Ukraine have been under the control of Russia-backed rebels since 2014, after Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine.

A Russian lawmaker is encouraging residents of those areas of Ukraine to join the Russian army, a sign that Moscow is continuing to try to integrate those territories as much as possible. Viktor Vodolatsky said Saturday that residents in rebels-held areas in eastern Ukraine fear assaults by Ukrainian forces and that

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 77 of 88

those who hold Russian passports would be welcomed in the Russian military.

"If Russian citizens residing in the (territories) want to join the Russian Armed Forces, the Rostov regional military commissariat will register and draft them," Vodolatsky, deputy chairman of parliament committee on relations with neighbors, told the state news agency Tass.

Russia has granted passports to more than 500,000 people in the rebel-held territories. Vodolatsky said the recruits would serve in Russia — but that leaves open the option that they could join any future invasion force.

A senior official in President Joe Biden's administration said the U.S. welcomed Lavrov's comments that Russia does not want war, "but this needs to be backed up with action. We need to see Russia pulling some of the troops that they have deployed away from the Ukrainian border and taking other de-escalatory steps." The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk publicly.

Lavrov has said the U.S. suggested the two sides could talk about limits on the deployment of intermediate-range missiles, restrictions on military drills and rules to prevent accidents between warships and aircraft. He said the Russians proposed discussing those issues years ago, but Washington and its allies never took them up on it.

He also said those issues are secondary to Russia's main concerns about NATO. He said international agreements say the security of one nation must not come at the expense of others, and said he would send letters to his Western counterparts asking them to explain their failure to respect that pledge.

Washington has warned Moscow of devastating sanctions if it invades Ukraine, including penalties targeting top Russian officials and key economic sectors. Lavrov said Moscow had warned Washington that sanctions would amount to a complete severing of ties.

NATO, meanwhile, said it was bolstering its deterrence in the Baltic Sea region.

Russia has launched military drills involving motorized infantry and artillery units in southwestern Russia, warplanes in Kaliningrad on the Baltic Sea, and dozens of warships in the Black Sea and the Arctic. Russian troops are also in Belarus for joint drills, raising Western fears that Moscow could stage an attack on Ukraine from the north from Belarus. The Ukrainian capital is only 75 kilometers (46 miles) from the border with Belarus.

## Italy's president, 80, is recruited to stay on for 2nd term

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italian President Sergio Mattarella was pulled away from his impending retirement and reelected Saturday to a second seven-year term as the country's head of state, ending days of political impasse by party leaders that risked eroding the nation's credibility.

Earlier on Saturday, lawmakers entreated Mattarella, 80, who had said repeatedly he didn't want a second mandate, to change his mind after lawmakers in Parliament and regional delegates voted fruitlessly for days, trying to reach a consensus on other possible candidates.

Mattarella won in the eighth round of voting when he clinched the minimum of 505 votes needed from the eligible 1,009 Grand Electors. Applause broke out in Parliament, prompting the Chamber of Deputies president to interrupt his reading of the ballots. The count then resumed, with Mattarella going on to win 759 votes.

In a brief, televised statement from the Quirinal presidential palace, Mattarella told the nation he couldn't let his personal desires prevail over a "sense of responsibility" during the "grave health, economic and social emergency" Italy was enduring in the COVID-19 pandemic. He added his commitment "to interpret the expectations and hopes of our fellow citizens."

Mattarella's first term ends on Thursday. Ahead of the presidential election this week, Mattarella had even rented an apartment in Rome to prepare for his move from the presidential palace.

But after a seventh round of balloting in six days in Parliament failed to yield any consensus on a presidential candidate, party whips and regional governors visited Mattarella at the presidential palace Saturday to reenlist him.

Rai state TV said Premier Mario Draghi, the former European Central Bank chief who is leading a pandemic

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 78 of 88

unity government, telephoned party leaders to encourage the lobbying. Draghi had previously indicted he would be willing to move into the president's role, but some party leaders feared that would prompt an early election and more political instability for Italy.

Draghi hailed Mattarella's re-election as "splendid news for Italians."

"I am grateful to the president for his choice in accommodating the very strong will of Parliament to re-elect him to a second mandate," the premier said.

"You don't change a winning team," former Premier Matteo Renzi told reporters ahead of the final vote..

Former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who heads the center-right Forza Italia party he founded and who a week earlier dropped his own bid to be president, said that unity "today can only be found around" the figure of Mattarella.

The head of the populist 5-Star Movement, Parliament's largest force, former Premier Giuseppe Conte, also praised Mattarella as "the guarantor of everybody, impartial, authoritative."

Conte's praise for Mattarella was all the more remarkable considering how, when Conte was trying to form Italy's first populist-led government in 2018, Mattarella vetoed his pick of a euro-skeptic economist for the post of finance minister, an appointment likely to have shaken financial markets' faith in Italy.

Also lobbying for Mattarella was right-wing League party leader Matteo Salvini, whose candidates failed to take off in the early rounds. In 2019, Salvini suffered the humiliation of seeing Mattarella turn to Conte to form a government, this time without the League, after Salvini yanked his support in a failed bid to grab the premiership for himself.

But analysts noted the possible fallout from the spectacle of the nation's top political leaders squabbling for days.

"There is a tangible risk that within the ruling majority infighting will become more pronounced in the months ahead as the fruitless and chaotic efforts to replace Mattarella have left deep scars on the parties and their leaders," said Wolfango Piccoli of Teneo, a consulting and advisory firm.

Going into the election, Conte and some other leaders said a woman should finally become Italy's head of state. But those efforts quickly fizzled. Among the disappointed woman's advocates in Italy was Linda Laura Sabbadini, a statistician for the government's statistics bureau who pioneered using data on gender to understand women's progress in Italy.

"Politics cut a terrible figure in these days," Sabbadini said on state TV.

Italy's presidency is a largely ceremonial role but the president can send legislation back to Parliament for changes and tap party leaders to try to form a government if a coalition fails.

During the pandemic, Mattarella staunchly backed the nation's vaccination campaign — one of the more successful ones in Europe — as critical to Italy's economic recovery.

Pope Francis in a congratulatory telegram said Saturday that Mattarella was showing a "spirit of generosity" in pandemic times marked by "widespread discomfort and uncertainty."

A Palermo native, Sergio Mattarella began his career in Parliament in 1983. He was active in the Catholic social movement faction of the Christian Democrats, then the dominant post-war party in Italy. Mattarella had served as a judge on the nation's constitutional court from 2011 until his first election as head of state on Jan. 31, 2015.

Mattarella's brother, Piersanti Mattarella, was assassinated by the Sicilian Mafia in 1980 while serving as that island's governor.

## Russian roar on Ukraine rings hollow to Latin America allies

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press Writer

MIAMI (AP) — It was a classic Russian power play with echoes of Cold War gamesmanship.

Shortly after entering into service in 2019, Russia's most advanced warship made a goodwill tour of the Caribbean, armed with cruise missiles, air defense systems and other weapons.

But when the Admiral Gorshkov sailed into the port of Havana, it was closely tailed by a Russian rescue tugboat — a sign to many that Moscow doubted the vessel's reliability and the visit was nothing more than a feeble effort to project power.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 79 of 88

Russia is once again rattling its saber amid rising tensions over Ukraine, hinting that the U.S. refusal to heed its demands could spur closer military cooperation with allies in Latin America. In recent days, several senior Russian officials have warned Moscow could deploy troops or military assets to Cuba and Venezuela if the U.S. and NATO insist on meddling on Russia's doorstep.

U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan quickly dismissed Russia's tit-for-tat threats. On the heels of its massive troop buildup on its border with Ukraine, Russia's ability to mobilize troops in the Western Hemisphere, thousands of miles away, is limited at best, experts contend.

"This is pure misdirection and it's not fooling anyone," said Kevin Whitaker, a former U.S. ambassador to Colombia who also served as a diplomat in Venezuela, Nicaragua and as head of the Office of Cuban Affairs in Washington. "It's not real power projection. It's a showpiece and nothing more."

But even if talk of troop deployments is mostly bluster, Russia's strategic buildup in Latin America is real, posing national security threats in what generations of U.S. policy makers have referred to as "Washington's backyard."

In the past decade, as the U.S. influence in the region has waned, Moscow — and to a lesser extent other far-flung adversaries like China and Iran — have quietly cemented ties with authoritarian governments in Nicaragua, Cuba and Venezuela through a mix of weapons sales, financing deals and intense diplomatic engagement.

Moscow helped Venezuela design a cryptocurrency, forgave a \$35 billion Cuba debt and runs a high-tech anti-narcotics compound in Nicaragua that many believe is a covert beachhead for spying across the region.

Time and again, Russia has shown a willingness to leverage its sizable military whenever it has felt threatened by the U.S.

In 2008, Moscow sent a pair of Tu-160 nuclear-capable bombers to Venezuela amid tensions with the U.S. over Russia's brief war with Georgia, a deployment followed that year by the arrival of the "Peter the Great" warship.

Russia sent more Tu-160s in 2018 as relations with the West plunged to post-Cold War lows over Ukraine, and the military even hinted it was considering setting up an air base on tiny La Orchilla Island, so small that landing military aircraft there would have been nearly impossible.

Even in countries friendlier to the U.S., like Mexico and Colombia, Russia has been accused of spying or engaging in disinformation campaigns to shape elections. A senior Colombian military official recently traveled to Washington to brief U.S. officials on Russian attempts to penetrate the communications of the country's top military command, a person familiar with the visit told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive issue.

On social media, the Spanish-language arm of the Russian state-controlled RT television network has more than 18 million followers on Facebook, 10 times as many as the Spanish-language affiliate of Voice of America, according to the Alliance for Securing Democracy, a think tank that tracks the rise of authoritarianism around the world. It also outperforms most other Spanish-language media on the platform, though it's still dwarfed by CNN en Espanol.

It's all a far cry from the height of the Cold War, when Nikita Khrushchev in 1962 briefly placed nuclear missiles in Cuba, the Kremlin maintained a listening post less than 100 miles from Florida and the Sandinista government that was fighting a U.S.-backed right-wing insurgency in Nicaragua was building an air base to accommodate Soviet fighter jets.

Nicaragua's Punta Huete airfield is today semi-abandoned and President Vladimir Putin closed the spy station in Cuba two decades ago. With the collapse of its communist sponsor in the early 1990s, Cuba spiraled into a depression marked by widespread hunger known as the "Special Period."

But Russia's more limited support has bought it friends. Recently Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega named a consul in the Crimean peninsula Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014. It's also allowed Putin to restore some of Russia's former glory in a region that has long resented Washington's far longer history of meddling.

As Putin now looks to repel NATO from what he calls Russia's "near abroad" in Ukraine, he's likely to

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 80 of 88

take at least a symbolic poke at the U.S. in its own sphere of influence, said Evan Ellis, a researcher at the U.S. Army War College who specializes in Russian and Chinese influence in Latin America.

"I'm sure Putin will do something to project toughness on the cheap as he always does," Ellis said. "But he's not going to do anything that costs him a lot of money or get him into deeper trouble down the line like deploying nukes. He knows there are limits."

Russia's closest ally is Venezuela, which has spent billions over the past two decades of socialist rule building up its air defense with Russia's help — everything from Sukhoi fighter jets and attack helicopters to sophisticated radar and shoulder-mounted rocket launchers.

Such an arsenal gives Nicolás Maduro an ability to inflict serious damage in the event of any conflict with neighboring Colombia, the top U.S. ally in the region, said Gen. Manuel Cristopher Figuera, who was the Venezuelan president's spy chief until fleeing to the U.S. in 2019 after a failed putsch against his former boss.

"It's not an ideological relationship. It's a commercial one, but it provides Maduro with a certain amount of protection," said Figuera, who received training in Cuba and from Putin ally Belarus.

As the U.S. and its allies have taken steps to isolate the governments of Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela — what Donald Trump's former national security adviser John Bolton called the "troika of tyranny"— Putin has tried to fill the void.

In recent days, he's spoken to Maduro, Ortega and Cuba's Miguel Díaz Canel to explore ways to deepen strategic cooperation. He's also sent a planeload of medical supplies to Cuba to help it fight the coronavirus pandemic.

But the leaders, although expressing gratitude for Russia's continued aid, have so far remained silent on Ukraine — a sign they may be reluctant to be drawn into another geopolitical tussle.

"One of the fundamental legacies for Latin America from the Cold War is that they don't want to be treated as a pawn in someone else's game," said Whitaker, the former ambassador to Colombia. "What Russia is doing shows enormous disrespect for the sovereignty of governments that are supposedly their allies."

It's something even Putin loyalists are starting to acknowledge.

"Cuba and Venezuela are the countries that are close to us, they are our partners," Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia's Security Council, said in an interview with Russian media.

"But we can't just deploy things there," added Medvedev, who served as Russian president in 2008-2012 when Putin had to shift into the premier's post because of term limits. "There can't be any talk about setting up a base there as happened during the Soviet times."

## Feds: Kansas woman led all-female Islamic State battalion

By MATTHEW BARAKAT Associated Press

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (AP) — A woman who once lived in Kansas has been arrested after federal prosecutors charged her with joining the Islamic State group and leading an all-female battalion of AK-47 wielding militants.

The U.S. Attorney in Alexandria, Virginia, announced Saturday that Allison Fluke-Ekren, 42, has been charged with providing material support to a terrorist organization.

The criminal complaint was filed under seal back in 2019 but made public Saturday after Fluke-Ekren was brought back to the U.S. Friday to face charges. Her alleged participation in the Islamic State had not been publicly known before Saturday's announcement.

Prosecutors say Fluke-Ekren wanted to recruit operatives to attack a college campus in the U.S. and discussed a terrorist attack on a shopping mall. She told one witness that "she considered any attack that did not kill a large number of individuals to be a waste of resources," according to an FBI affidavit.

That affidavit from FBI Special Agent David Robins also alleges that Fluke-Ekren became leader of an Islamic State unit called "Khatiba Nusaybah" in the Syrian city of Raqqa in late 2016. The all-female unit was trained in the use of AK-47 rifles, grenades and suicide belts.

In all, the affidavit cites observations from six different witnesses, including some who have been charged



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 81 of 88

with terrorism offenses and some who were held at prison camps for former Islamic state members.

A detention memo filed Friday by First Assistant U.S. Attorney Raj Parekh states that Fluke-Ekren even trained children how to use assault rifles, and that at least one witness saw one of Fluke-Ekren's children, approximately 5 or 6 years old, holding a machine gun in the family's home in Syria.

"Fluke-Ekren has been a fervent believer in the radical terrorist ideology of ISIS for many years, having traveled to Syria to commit or support violent jihad. Fluke-Ekren translated her extremist beliefs into action by serving as the appointed leader and organizer of an ISIS military battalion, directly training women and children in the use of AK-47 assault rifles, grenades, and suicide belts to support the Islamic State's murderous aims," Parekh wrote.

According to court papers, Fluke-Ekren moved to Egypt in 2008 and traveled frequently between Egypt and the U.S. over the next three years. She has not been in the U.S. since 2011.

Prosecutors believe she moved to Syria around 2012. In early 2016, her husband was killed in the Syrian city of Tell Abyad while trying to carry out a terrorist attack, prosecutors said. Later that year, prosecutors say she married a Bangladeshi ISIS member who specialized in drones, but he died in late 2016 or early 2017.

Four months after that man's death, she again remarried a prominent Islamic state leader who was responsible for the Islamic State group's defense of Raqqa.

She told one witness in 2018 that she instructed a person in Syria to tell Fluke-Ekren's Family she was dead so the U.S. government would not try to find her, according to Parekh's memo.

Photos from a family blog called 4KansasKids show her and her children in the years they traveled between Kansas and Egypt, posing at the base of the pyramids in Egypt and playing in the snow in the U.S.

A 2004 article about homeschooling in the Lawrence Journal-World featured Fluke-Ekren and her children. She told the paper she pulled her kids from public school because she was dissatisfied with how her children were performing in public and private schools. Homeschooling allowed her to teach Arabic to her kids.

Court papers do not indicate how she was captured, or how long she was in custody before being turned over to the FBI Friday.

She is scheduled to make an initial appearance at U.S. District Court in Alexandria on Monday, at which time she would likely be appointed an attorney.

## Historic city churches find new life as neighborhood centers

By GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The pews were rocking at Holy Trinity on a recent Sunday as worshipers from the Minnesota Swahili Christian Congregation sang and danced beneath the lofty, dark-wood-trimmed ceilings and lively stained-glass windows.

Established in the 1920s, the magnificent house of worship once hosted one of the largest Lutheran congregations in the country but has dwindled to just 200 regular Sunday worshippers today. To remain vibrant, the founding congregation has increasingly opened its historic doors to serve a variety of community needs, from the Swahili-language services to functioning as a makeshift emergency medical center during protests after the 2020 police killing of George Floyd.

"In the last two years, it's become even clearer to me that the Spirit has been guiding us in places where we never imagined going on our own," said Ingrid Rasmussen, Holy Trinity's lead pastor.

Across the U.S., historic urban churches built decades ago to accommodate hundreds or thousands of worshippers and bulging Sunday school classes have struggled with shrinking flocks and rising preservation costs. Many are finding new ways to use their buildings that let them keep those sacred places viable while serving the neighborhoods they've anchored for decades.

In Minneapolis, landmark churches have hosted everything from food pantries and Finnish language classes to tai-chi practices and group discussions on reparations. Elsewhere in the country, they've rented space for events or programs like preschools, bringing in much-needed revenue, and also made their build-

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 82 of 88

ings available for free to community group gatherings as diverse as nutrition clinics and arts workshops.

Historic religious buildings are not just civic and cultural landmarks but crucial social centers, with non-congregants making up an estimated 90% of the people they serve, according to Bob Jaeger, president of Partners for Sacred Places. The nonprofit helps religious institutions nationwide make plans and raise money to repurpose their spaces for a different era, and Jaeger sees plenty of room for more to be done in that area.

"Congregations have enormous civic value but are often underused," he said.

Surveys show the United States keeps growing more secular, with overall membership and churchgoing on the decline. Fewer souls in the pews means less money coming in to pay for staffing, upkeep and programs, forcing many smaller congregations to sell their buildings.

The coronavirus pandemic has only exacerbated those problems by further shrinking attendance. It has also heightened the need for food, housing, job and educational ministries among both the faithful and broader society.

That's especially relevant for lower-income and minority neighborhoods where faith-based informal networks are often more trusted than government authorities.

The century-old Church of the Incarnation, a predominantly Spanish-speaking Catholic parish in Minneapolis, renovated its garage to host a sort of community minimarket where the 1,600 households who rely on the church for food can get free groceries and other vital goods. On a frigid Sunday, a steady stream of families came to pick up donated coats and sweaters, as well as 10-lb. bags of chicken that stayed frozen despite sitting in the direct sun for hours by the steps outside the sanctuary.

Incarnation has remodeled the basement and used it to host COVID-19 vaccination clinics that drew "tons" of people, according to Victor Guillen, a church member of three decades who oversees maintenance and volunteered on the renovation.

"People come here because we're a center of the Latino community," Guillen said.

Like with other churches, launching such service programs has had the benefit of increasing volunteerism and attracting more donations, allowing Incarnation to undertake a \$1 million roof restoration that's nearly finished.

Religious buildings with surplus space are also providing cash-strapped community groups with a place to hold their own gatherings, something that's particularly important in cities where property values and rents are high.

Neighborhood Church in Atlanta's leafy Candler Park neighborhood was born in the mid-2010s out of the merger of two United Methodist congregations. Proceeds from the sale of the larger church building went to finance a renovation of the smaller one, a structure from the 1930s, redesigned to minimize Christian imagery so it would better serve the diverse neighborhood, co-pastors Andy and Anjie Woodworth said.

Today it hosts not only the congregation but two voting precincts and, when the pandemic permits, the activities of more than a dozen groups that share the church's inclusive values, from scouting troops to advocates for the rights of transgender people of color.

"We are creating a space for welcoming," Andy Woodworth said. "Opening the church like this puts us in contact with many more people."

The small, aging congregation of Coppin Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Church on Chicago's South Side is another that has increasingly turned outward to the community. Membership has shrunk to about one-tenth of what it was in the 1960s, so Coppin has been struggling to pay for needed upkeep to the nearly century-old building and its artwork, including two murals in the sanctuary.

Through the Coppin Community Center, which provides food and family outreach programs in its adjacent youth center, the congregation has succeeded in attracting grants and growing its service ministry, said Frankye Parham, who directs Coppin's Christian education and its community center.

The church is working on developing a new teen ministry at the request of neighborhood youth who sought Coppin out as a "safe haven" from violence and other social ills.

"The traditional ways don't work today. We need to talk about different things that the community deals

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 83 of 88

with," said Robert Parham, Frankye's husband, who first attended Coppin more than 50 years ago and is now a trustee.

Similar challenges have confronted the congregation at Christ Church Lutheran, a mid-20th-century National Historical Landmark designed by famed architects Eliel and Eero Saarinen: Membership plummeted so low that everyone started "wondering if we could keep the doors open," said Mary Bode, a member for three decades and volunteer at the Minneapolis church.

With the help of Partners for Sacred Places, the church created a preservation committee to safeguard its pale-brick and blond-wood building, nestled in a tree-lined neighborhood of bungalow houses. It has since branched out into different community uses for it and the connected education building, ranging from Montessori preschool classes to basketball leagues.

Like others in the city, Christ Church Lutheran has sought to foster healing in the wake of Floyd's killing. In May 2021, on the anniversary of his death, community members gathered in its Modernist open courtyard where Miriam Samuelson-Roberts, the lead pastor, had left a laminated guide for reflection and prayer.

"People came and sat who might never have come into the church," she said. "It's essential for neighbors to have a space to meet."

In some cities, using religious buildings for non-worship purposes like homeless shelters has run up against zoning rules and brought conflict with municipal authorities. But faith leaders have often been successful in arguing that such ministries are essential to their mission and community.

"Each faith has texts that compel why to do this," said Randi Roth, executive director of Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul, Minnesota, where the group has been working with the city planner on zoning code amendments. "But for all, it brings to life the words they read in prayer."

## What does poor rating for collapsed bridge mean for others?

By CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

A 50-year-old bridge that collapsed in Pittsburgh had been rated as poor on a recent inspection report, but transportation officials and engineering experts cautioned that doesn't necessarily signal imminent danger for the thousands of other U.S. bridges with the same designation.

Investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Highway Administration have been combing through rubble from the collapse early Friday of the Forbes Avenue Bridge, looking for what caused it.

President Joe Biden, who was in Pittsburgh on Friday to promote a \$1 trillion infrastructure law, said it was miraculous that there were no fatalities and that only a few people were injured.

A September 2019 inspection showed the bridge's deck and superstructure were rated 4 and in what inspectors said was poor condition. City officials said the most recent inspection report of the city-owned steel bridge from September wasn't available Friday, so it was unclear if the number rating had been updated.

Infrastructure spending advocates noted there are thousands of bridges across the country with the same poor designation but few instances of collapse. Many said funding has not kept up with the need for repairs and replacements.

### HOW DO BRIDGE INSPECTIONS WORK?

The Federal Highway Administration's bridge inspection program was developed after the 1967 Silver Bridge collapse in West Virginia, which killed 46 people. It has expanded over the years to include state- and municipally owned bridges, not just those in the federal highway system, and to include rules for underwater inspections and regulations for qualifications of inspectors.

Generally, bridges are inspected every two years, with some older or lower-rated bridges inspected more often.

The municipal or state entities that own and maintain the bridges submit those inspection reports to state departments of transportation, which are required to provide them to the Federal Highway Administration.

### WHAT DOES A POOR DESIGNATION MEAN?

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 84 of 88

Inspectors, who are trained engineers, largely perform detailed visual inspections of the three major structures of a bridge — the deck on which vehicles drive, the structure that carries the deck, and the substructure or culverts that hold up that superstructure. Other inspection methods are used underwater or when needed to determine whether corrosion has affected the weight a bridge can carry.

If any of the three structures of a bridge is rated 4 or below on a 9-point scale, the bridge is rated as poor, said Andy Herrmann, past president of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

"A poor rating doesn't mean bridges are unsafe, it just means one of those components are rated at that level," Herrmann said. "It's a rigorous system, and frankly the federal system is what gives me confidence in the safety of our bridge infrastructure."

New bridges are rated 9, and bridges with minimal or no wear are rated 7 or 8. Bridges considered in what the federal program deems fair or satisfactory condition — some signs of deterioration or minor loss or cracking — are rated 5 or 6.

When a bridge reaches a 4 rating, it means there is advanced deterioration or section loss, but the primary structural components are still sound. A 3 rating means those structural components are starting to see deterioration, and a 2 or 1 rating means there are critical issues or an imminent failure of the structure is possible.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A BRIDGE IS RATED POOR?

One of the inspection program's goals was to create a system that could identify deterioration that could be repaired before a bridge needed replacement.

Sometimes the deterioration is minor enough that the bridge will be put in the queue for repair and the frequency of inspections will increase, said Jerome Hajjar, professor and department chair at Northeastern University's College of Engineering.

"When a bridge is added to the queue, it can be years before there's funding to take care of those repairs, even if it's added to the top of a state's queue," Hajjar said. "The engineers have been working to repair as much as they can. Safety and keeping safe bridges open is the goal, but the struggle is related to the insufficient funding that goes into repairing the aging infrastructure in this country, including bridges."

If more serious deterioration is found, authorities will limit the amount of weight the bridge carries by restricting heavy vehicles or traffic. In dire situations when the structure is affected, a bridge could be immediately closed for repairs.

The Interstate 40 bridge connecting Arkansas and Tennessee over the Mississippi River was shut down in May after inspectors found a crack in one of two 900-foot (275-meter) horizontal steel beams critical for the bridge's structural integrity, forcing thousands of trucks and cars to detour until the bridge reopened at the end of July after repairs.

## HOW MANY BRIDGES ARE RATED POOR?

The American Road & Transportation Builders Association, which advocates for transportation infrastructure investment, issues an annual report on the state of U.S. bridges based on inspection reports. The most recent report using 2021 data showed more than 43,500 of the country's roughly 615,000 bridges were rated poor.

That number is about 4,000 less than those reported to be in poor condition nationally in 2017. Advocates at the association say that it's a glacial pace for repairs and that dedicated funding is critical to catch up.

In Pennsylvania, the association's report showed almost 3,200 bridges with a poor rating— a drop from five years ago of nearly 1,000 bridges. But more than 2,100 of those bridges have reached a level of deterioration requiring weight or traffic limits.

## Russia's daily COVID-19 count soars above 110,000

MOSCOW (AP) — The daily count of new coronavirus infections in Russia spiked above 110,000 on Saturday as the highly contagious omicron variant races through the vast country.

The state coronavirus task force reported 113,122 new infections over the past 24 hours — an all-time high and a sevenfold increase from early in the month, when daily case counts were about 15,000. The

task force said 668 people died of COVID-19 in the past day, bring Russia's total fatality count for the pandemic to 330,111, by far the deadliest toll in Europe.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Friday that "it is obvious that this number is higher and possibly much higher," because "many people don't get tested" or have no symptoms.

The Kremlin spokesman also admitted that a lot of people in the presidential administration have gotten infected with the virus. "The vast majority continue to work from home after having isolated themselves," Peskov said. "This explosive contagiousness of the omicron, it demonstrates itself in full."

Despite the surging infections, authorities have avoided imposing any major restrictions to stem the surge, saying the health system has been coping with the influx of patients.

Earlier this month, parliament indefinitely postponed introducing restrictions on the unvaccinated that would have proven unpopular among vaccine-hesitant Russians. And this week health officials cut the required isolation period for those who came in contact with COVID-19 patients from 14 days to seven without offering any explanation for the move.

Russia has had only one national lockdown, in 2020, although many Russians were ordered to stay off work for a week last October amid a jump in reported cases and deaths.

Russia's state statistics agency, which uses broader counting criteria than the task force, puts the country's pandemic death toll much higher, saying the number of virus-linked deaths between April 2020 and October 2021 was over 625,000.

Just about half of Russia's 146 million people have been fully vaccinated, even though Russia boasted about being the first country in the world to approve and roll out a domestically developed coronavirus vaccine.

## Thousands displaced in Congo's east amid rebel, army clashes

By JUSTIN KABUMBA Associated Press

KIBUMBA, Congo (AP) — Thousands of people in Congo have been displaced after they fled ongoing clashes between the Congolese army and rebel fighters this week.

On Tuesday, a fresh attack carried out by the March 23 Movement, or M23, targeted a Congolese army position in the territory of Rutshuru, just north of the city of Goma in eastern Congo. While authorities confirmed the attack, they did not provide details about it. Residents told The Associated Press that they saw gunfights and dead bodies.

Since the beginning of this week, inhabitants from six villages in the country's east have fled the violence. At least 2,000 people are now living in improvised shelters, in churches, schools or with host families.

On Friday, the AP interviewed several eyewitnesses who fled to Kibumba and found shelter in a local church.

"The attack began in Nyesisi, Ngungu, Kanombe. When we were in the field on Wednesday, we heard bullets over the hills and we fled," Baseme Mashukano, a resident of Nyesisi, one of the six villages caught in the crossfire, said. "We abandoned everything and now we are here in Kibumba. We spend the night in the church while others sleep outside, we have nothing to eat, no food, no water or medicine."

Another person displaced by the conflict, Sarah Kasigwa, said she lost her three children and husband amid the chaos.

"We saw several dead people" she said. "We are sleeping here, in this school, on the ground. There is just cement, no blanket, we suffer a lot."

Tumaini Anouarite, a 32-year-old mother of five, said that she saw soldiers firing bullets in the nearby hills, and gunfights between the army and M23 fighters.

On Friday, U.N. forces deployed in the area.

The M23, which also calls itself the "Revolutionary Army of Congo", is a former rebel group of Congolese backed by Rwanda and Uganda that was defeated in 2013. Since November, the movement has been accused of being behind several attacks against the army.

The attacks took place in the vicinity of Virunga National Park, a UNESCO world heritage site, renowned

for its large gorilla population.

## Virginia Republicans push for changes in marijuana law

By DENISE LAVOIE Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Newly empowered Republican lawmakers in Virginia who opposed legalizing simple possession of marijuana say they don't want to scrap the law, but they do want to make significant changes.

Those changes could include moving up the start date for retail sales and getting rid of a provision that would give licensing preference to people who have been convicted of marijuana crimes.

Republicans have filed at least eight bills that call for amendments to the 2021 law that legalized adult possession of up to an ounce of marijuana and laid the ground work for retail sales to begin in 2024.

"The overriding top-tier concern is that we have to have a regulatory structure in place for retail sales that does not encourage the black market," said Garren Shipley, a spokesperson for House Speaker Todd Gilbert.

The law was passed along strict party lines, with Democrats supporting legalization and Republicans voting against it. At the time, Democrats controlled both the House and Senate. Republicans took control of the House in the November election, winning a 52-48 majority over Democrats. Democrats still hold a slight 21-19 majority in the Senate.

A reenactment clause in the law requires the legislature to vote again this year on a complex regulatory structure for retail sales, leaving open the possibility Republicans could push through changes in how the licensing process will work, who will be given an advantage when applying for licenses and how tax revenue from marijuana sales will be spent by the state.

Democrats who supported legalization and advocates for people convicted of marijuana crimes are concerned the changes proposed by Republicans will strip the law of "social equity" provisions designed to help people who have been hurt by old marijuana laws.

"A lot of people have been overly penalized and overly policed and overly suffered because of our misguided policies of the past, and it's time they stop suffering, and in fact have a chance to make up some lost ground in ways that their lives have been impacted," said Democratic Sen. Adam Ebbin, a chief sponsor of the 2021 legalization legislation.

Republican Del. Michael Webert is sponsoring a multipronged bill that would make several significant changes, including redirecting the 30% of tax revenues from marijuana sales currently earmarked for a Cannabis Equity Reinvestment Fund to a fund that would be used to rebuild crumbling school buildings around the state.

"We are trying to ensure that the money goes to where it's most needed," Webert said. "To be in a good school environment, to provide a good, safe school building and an atmosphere in which a child can learn will be a great asset for that person's future."

A separate bill filed by Sen. Tommy Norment would funnel 30% of the revenue from marijuana sales into the state's general fund instead of the reinvestment fund, which was included in the 2021 law as a way to reinvest in communities disproportionately affected by stringent drug laws, particularly communities of color. Both proposals are drawing criticism from social justice advocates.

"I'm really struck by this attempt to defund equity and reinvestment when we have committed to legalizing in a way to bring some kind of benefit to people impacted by the war on drugs," said Chelsea Higgs Wise, executive director of Marijuana Justice.

Webert's bill also would eliminate a provision that calls for giving special consideration to social equity license applicants, including people who have been convicted of marijuana crimes or members of their immediate families. It leaves in 2021 provisions that would give preference to people who live in economically distressed areas and for people who attended a historically black college or university in Virginia.

"I believe that if you commit a crime and serve your time, you should have a seat at the table, but it shouldn't put you at the front of the line," Webert said.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 87 of 88

Webert's bill would also slash the overall tax rate on marijuana sales from 21% to 10%, a step he said he believes is necessary to encourage people to buy from the legal market instead of the black market.

Several Republican-sponsored bills propose moving up the date for retail sales to begin in 2023 instead of 2024 by selling through existing medical marijuana operators. Other GOP bills call for giving preference for marijuana cultivation facility licenses to farmers who have legally grown hemp in Virginia and farmers from economically distressed areas of the state.

Republican Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin, who took office Jan. 15, has said that while he will not try to repeal personal possession, he does have serious concerns about pieces of the bill that establish the commercial market.

"It includes forced unionization, is concerning to law enforcement, and establishes an unstable market that includes anti-competitive business provisions that set Virginia up to fail," said Youngkin spokesperson Macaulay Porter. "He's ready to work in good faith to address these and other issues in concert with the General Assembly."

JM Pedini, executive director of the Virginia chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, said many advocates believe the legislature must take action this year to move up the date for retail sales.

"Continuing to cede control of the cannabis market to untaxed illicit operators is not tenable," Pedini said.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Jan. 30, the 30th day of 2022. There are 335 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany.

On this date:

In 1649, England's King Charles I was executed for high treason.

In 1911, James White, an intellectually disabled Black man who'd been convicted of rape for having sex with a 14-year-old white girl when he was 16, was publicly hanged in Bell County, Kentucky.

In 1945, during World War II, a Soviet submarine torpedoed the German ship MV Wilhelm Gustloff in the Baltic Sea with the loss of more than 9,000 lives, most of them war refugees; roughly 1,000 people survived.

In 1948, Indian political and spiritual leader Mohandas K. Gandhi, 78, was shot and killed in New Delhi by Nathuram Godse (neh-too-RAHM' gahd-SAY'), a Hindu extremist. (Godse and a co-conspirator were later executed.)

In 1968, the Tet Offensive began during the Vietnam War as Communist forces launched surprise attacks against South Vietnamese towns and cities; although the Communists were beaten back, the offensive was seen as a major setback for the U.S. and its allies.

In 1969, The Beatles staged an impromptu concert atop Apple headquarters in London; it was the group's last public performance.

In 1972, 13 Roman Catholic civil rights marchers were shot to death by British soldiers in Northern Ireland on what became known as "Bloody Sunday."

In 1981, an estimated 2 million New Yorkers turned out for a ticker tape parade honoring the American hostages freed from Iran.

In 1993, Los Angeles inaugurated its Metro Red Line, the city's first modern subway.

In 2005, Iraqis voted in their country's first free election in a half-century; President George W. Bush called the balloting a resounding success.

In 2006, Coretta Scott King, widow of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., died in Rosarito Beach, Mexico, at age 78.

In 2020, health officials reported the first known case in which the new coronavirus was spread from

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, Jan. 30, 2022 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 207 ~ 88 of 88**

one person to another in the United States. The World Health Organization declared the virus outbreak, which had reached more than a dozen countries, to be a global emergency. Russia ordered the closure of its 2,600-mile-long land border with China in an effort to limit the spread of the virus. President Donald Trump described the handful of U.S. cases of the virus as a "very little problem" and said those people were "recuperating successfully." The State Department advised U.S. citizens against traveling to China.

Ten years ago: All European Union countries except Britain and the Czech Republic agreed to sign a new treaty designed to stop overspending in the eurozone and put an end to the bloc's crippling debt crisis. A reactor at a northern Illinois nuclear plant shut down after an electrical insulator failed. (The Unit 2 reactor at the Byron Generating Station resumed operating a week later.)

Five years ago: President Donald Trump fired Acting U.S. Attorney General Sally Yates after she publicly questioned the constitutionality of his controversial refugee and immigration ban and refused to defend it in court. It became legal in Maine to possess and grow marijuana.

One year ago: California's coronavirus death toll passed 40,000 as the state's steepest surge of cases begins to taper. Members of a World Health Organization team investigating the origins of the coronavirus pandemic visited a second hospital in the Chinese city of Wuhan that had treated early COVID-19 patients.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Gene Hackman is 92. Actor Vanessa Redgrave is 85. Country singer Jeanne Pruett is 85. Chess grandmaster Boris Spassky is 85. Country singer Norma Jean is 84. Former Vice President Dick Cheney is 81. R&B musician William King (The Commodores) is 73. Singer Phil Collins is 71. Actor Charles S. Dutton is 71. World Golf Hall of Famer Curtis Strange is 67. Actor Ann Dowd is 66. Actor-comedian Brett Butler is 64. Singer Jody Watley is 63. Actor-filmmaker Dexter Scott King is 61. The King of Jordan, Abdullah II, is 60. Actor Wayne Wilderson (TV: "Veep") is 56. Actor Norbert Leo Butz is 55. The King of Spain, Felipe VI, is 54. Country singer Tammy Cochran is 50. Actor Christian Bale is 48. Rock musician Carl Broemel (My Morning Jacket) is 48. Actor Olivia Colman is 48. Actor-singer Lena Hall is 42. Pop-country singer-songwriter Josh Kelley is 42. Actor Wilmer Valderrama is 42. Actor Mary Hollis Inboden is 36. Actor Kylie Bunbury is 33. Actor Jake Thomas is 32. Actor Danielle Campbell is 27.