

# Groton Daily Independent

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“A day without laughter is a day wasted.”

CHARLIE CHAPLIN

Chicken Soup  
for the Soul

## Sunday, May 1

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

Emmanuel: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Grace Alone, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

Methodist: Communion Sunday: Conde Worship at 9 a.m., Sunday school at 10 a.m., Groton worship at 11 a.m.

St. John's: Bible Study, 8 a.m.; Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Zion worship 11 a.m.; Sunday school, 10 a.m.

2 p.m.: High School Baseball at Castlewood (V/JV)

## Monday, May 2

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes/gravy, coleslaw, peaches, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Cheese sticks, marinara sauce, corn.

6:30 a.m.: Emmanuel Bible Study

3:30 p.m.: Junior High Track Meet at Aberdeen Rencalli (moved to Ipswich)

## Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

## Tuesday, May 3

Senior Menu: Baked fish, au gratin potatoes, 3-bean salad, fruit cobbler, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Hashbrowns, pizza.

School Lunch: Hamburgers, fries.

9:30 a.m.: Methodist Bible Study

1 p.m.: Track meet at Milbank

7 p.m.: Elementary Spring Concert

7 p.m.: City Council Meeting

## Wednesday, May 4

Senior Menu: Chicken Tetrazzini, peas, honey fruit salad, vanilla pudding, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake bites.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, tater tots.

Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Noon: Chamber Meeting at City Hall

5 p.m.: Emmanuel Sarah Circle

6 p.m.: Emmanuel Confirmation

## 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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## #531 in a series Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

At midday today, we're looking worse than last time we talked. The seven-day new-case average is up to 56,863, so we're back where we were a couple of months ago and rising. We passed 81 million identified cases Wednesday and are now at 81,237,868. Here's the history since the first of the year:

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  
January 29 – 74 million – 1 day  
February 1 – 75 million – 3 days  
February 4 – 76 million – 3 days  
February 9 – 77 million – 5 days  
February 16 – 78 million – 7 days  
March 3 – 79 million – 15 days  
March 31 – 80 million – 28 days  
April 27 – 81 million – 27 days

Hospitalizations are up to 16,668. Deaths are the one metric that has continued to decline. The seven-day average is now at 316 with a pandemic total of 991,921, ever closer that one-million mark. We're down to just five of the 56 states and territories we're tracking showing a decreasing number of new cases; nine states from Puerto Rico to Hawaii have more than doubled their case rates in the past two weeks. Over two-thirds of states and territories have experienced an increase in hospitalizations over two weeks; numbers are still low, but they're rising. This thing is completely going the wrong way.

The numbers I report here have been becoming less accurate and less up-to-the minute for some time; we've talked about that a few times already. Right now, about half of states report only once a week, and Florida reports only every two weeks. Only six states and Puerto Rico still report daily; those states are Texas, Arkansas, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. This is why we've been using seven-day averages over the past few months; these smooth out the bumps in a system that isn't doing much reporting. This does make it more difficult to sort out what a week-over-week increase means; it can be two or even three weeks before we can begin to spot a trend. We need to read a whole lot more tea leaves in order to figure out what's going on these days. When we do that, one indicator that gives me pause is the positivity rate, the percentage of tests done that come back positive. Nationwide, this number has risen from 5.3 to 6.7 percent in a week, which isn't great—again, wrong direction. Wastewater surveillance doesn't depend on testing or reporting frequency, so is a more unbiased indicator than those metrics; it has the additional advantage of showing a signal before people even feel sick. Those numbers have also been climbing over the past six weeks, which suggests a larger wave than we've seen from case counts (which have, you will recall, themselves been rising, even with the reporting deficiencies). Problem is this varies by region and misses most rural populations which do not use public sewage systems regularly; we've talked about those issues before in our conversations about wastewater testing. What we're not seeing in these difficult-to-sort-out metrics is a combined trend across multiple data sources. This can hamper efforts to get this thing over with; but honestly, most folks want to believe it's over now. As Michael Fraser, executive director of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, said in a panel discussion recently, "the only reason people are using the word 'endemic' is because it's got the word 'end' in it, and people just want an end to this." Lovely.

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More realistically, William Hanage, epidemiologist and associate professor at the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, told CNN, "Things are not stable right now. Even if I don't reckon we are going to see [another] large surge, weekly reporting means that if I am wrong, we would learn about it later and so be able to do less about it." That makes me nervous. What we probably should be doing is active surveillance, that is, testing representative samples of the population on a regular basis to produce results that are not biased by all of the factors we've just discussed. Done well, this can yield solid information about just what proportion of us are infected, about trends in that rate, and about which demographic and geographic groups are more or less infected. Absent this, we're left making decisions about what is safe and unsafe while pretty much flying blind, the best we can do being looking around at how many people we personally know who know they're infected and going from there. This isn't a great situation. Once again, as with most of the past two years, we should be doing better.

Interestingly, we're seeing an unusual pattern in the flu season. We are now at the end of what traditionally has been flu season when cases tend to taper off, and yet what we're seeing is an atypical little spike in case numbers. Some public health experts pin that on the decline in Covid-19 precautionary measures. Since influenza is spread pretty much the same way Covid-19 is, it would make sense that backing off those precautions is likely to result in a surge, even as the season draws to a close. To be clear, this is not some big crisis, but it is a good illustration of the effectiveness of the mitigation measures we've largely eschewed just lately.

The trend for the overwhelming majority of those dying from Covid-19 to be the unvaccinated is shifting as we see a return to higher rates of death in the elderly. Nearly two-thirds of those who have died this year are 75 and older, many of whom were vaccinated; but this is still a vaccination story. Turns out three-fourths of vaccinated elderly who died in January and February are folks who did not receive a booster dose; the boosters are quite protective even in very old people. Typically, the vaccinated-and-boosted people showing up in critical care units are those who've been immunosuppressed after organ transplants or because of other medications for autoimmune disorders and such. Bottom line hasn't changed: Get vaccinated. If you're vaccinated, get boosted. If you've had the first booster and qualify, get a second booster, especially if you're immunocompromised or older. This is nothing to mess with; far too many are discovering that on their deathbeds.

For the record, one segment of society which has rejected vaccination in larger numbers than others is police across the country. Between political leanings and a culture of toughness, vaccines have been a hard sell in that community; but it turns out toughness isn't much of a bulwark against a relentless virus. The leading cause of death among police officers for the past two years has been not criminal activity, but viral activity, Covid-19 to be precise—all of this while police unions have been acting to block vaccine mandates. Who says there's no right to die in the US?

Troy Anderson, retired Connecticut State Police sergeant and director of safety and wellness for the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, which tracks line-of-duty fatalities, says, "[Deaths from Covid-19 are] not just a little bit above firearm fatalities and traffic fatalities. It's heads and shoulders above. It's unthinkable that we're still in this place." Indeed, it is.

A week ago, I mentioned that Pfizer and BioNTech were preparing to ask the FDA to authorize booster shots for children from 5 to 11. Tuesday, the application was made accompanied by data for the trials in this age group. Boosters are currently authorized for those who are 12 and older. There is not universal agreement among experts that a booster is needed in these younger kids; but there are many who support this application. I don't know what uptake might be; but I guess I'm thinking that, if parents want

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their kids to receive the third dose, I'm not going to have a big problem with it. There is no evidence that additional dose is particularly risky in any way. I'm not sure yet whether the FDA will convene its Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee for the booster EUA, but the agency will likely make a decision relatively soon.

With all the talk of second boosters and new vaccines in development, we're in danger of forgetting those who are still not eligible for vaccination at all: those under the age of 5 years who account for some 18 million Americans. There are plenty of parents anxiously awaiting the opportunity to protect their small children. We do have some news here at long last, and so I thought I'd update so we know just where we are. Moderna submitted an application for emergency use authorization (EUA) to the FDA for a two-dose primary series in children under 6 years on Thursday; this would be a two-dose series at a dose one-fourth the adult dose. They say their data submission will be complete by May 9. What we know so far is that in the study which included close to 7000 children, two doses of vaccine elicited antibody titers equivalent to what has protected older children and adults.

It's interesting that they are asking for authorization to give this vaccine to the youngest children when it still has not been approved for older children. The company does have an application in already that covers administration to 6- to 11-year-olds and 12- to 17-year-olds. They said they will be submitting the rest of their data to support those applications in a couple of weeks. It appears the FDA may consider these Moderna applications covering all three age groups of children at the same time.

On Friday, the FDA announced meetings of its Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee for June 8, 21, and 22 to consider pediatric vaccines and also announced plans to hold additional sessions for other vaccine issues. The agendas for these meetings will be set based on the status of each review at the time; we do know June 8 is currently the earliest date to consider the under-5 data. There's been a lot of grumbling about why this is taking so long: Some folks have suggested the agency may be waiting for Pfizer/BioNTech's data on the under-5 population (which is coming soon—see below) so they can consider the two applications side-by-side. I think this is probably uninformed grumbling: Many experts have mentioned that's not really how the FDA does things, and Peter Marks, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, has also said the agency has no plans to delay vaccines while they wait for another application and he expects at least one of the two mRNA vaccines to become available in June as long as reviews indicate the vaccines are safe, effective, and of high quality. He said each application will be considered when data are ready. We should note here that it's going to take some time for FDA experts to review the masses of data that accompany requests like these, so even though review has begun with the data which have already been submitted, maybe it's not practical to plan a meeting before June anyhow. There has been some consternation expressed about making parents wait when precautions have been dropped and these very young children remain unprotected; but the agency can't act before it has complete applications and time to review them. I guess we'll see how this shakes out.

It's turned out to be trickier than anticipated to cover these littles. Pfizer and BioNTech's trial of a two-dose regimen at one-tenth the adult dose did not provide a sufficient immune response, so they've been held up while they extended that trial to third doses. This decision was made back in December, and with a two-month interval between second and third dose, we probably couldn't expect much in the way of results before this month. We do not yet have a report on this third dose, but it should be coming soon. The FDA review for this one may be less complex given this vaccine has a track record with pediatric doses and just one age group will be included. The companies are expected to file an application for EUA sometime next month, and the June advisory committee meetings are set.

I'll just mention one thing here about vaccine approvals at this point in the pandemic. We are now deal-



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ing with clinical trials in a population dealing with the Omicron variant, and we know the current vaccine formulations (all based on the original Wuhan wild-type virus) are not going to be as effective against that as they were against earlier variants. We must note that the 90%+ efficacy rates against infection seen in the original clinical trials over a year ago are a pipe dream with the vaccines' current antigenic composition although they do still offer very good protection against severe disease and hospitalization. As a result, I'd guess the estimates of vaccine effectiveness (VE)—estimates only because those trials are not large enough to compute VE more precisely—that will be reported in these pediatric trials are going to be well off that mark. I fully expect any vaccine submitted for EUA for use in the fall will be reformulated around more or different antigens, and I would hope the VE picture is different—better—at that point.

Additionally, the FDA plans an advisory committee meeting for June 7 to consider an EUA application for the Novavax vaccine for adults. This is a more traditional vaccine with a novel approach to a good old-fashioned protein-based platform, more in line with some older, more established vaccines. While this vaccine showed strong effectiveness last summer before some of the more recent variants began to complicate the picture, the company has had manufacturing problems which brought into question whether they could produce their vaccine reliably at scale and therefore delayed a request for EUA. It looks like they've been working this out.

This vaccine received its first EUA in Indonesia back in November and was then expected to have an EUA request in the US filed late last year to no avail. Meanwhile, it's been authorized by the WHO, Australia, Canada, the EU, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea, and the UK. In February, the company was finally ready to request EUA, and the FDA's ready to consider it at the scheduled meeting. This could be welcome news: This vaccine may be more acceptable to folks who've rejected the mRNA vaccines based on a belief they're too new or untried to be safe. I'm not holding my breath on this, but it is a possibility.

There is also a June 28 meeting scheduled for the advisory committee to discuss whether the vaccines currently in use need to be reformulated and, if so, which strains should be selected for use in the fall. This is a follow-up on their April 6 meeting where they began to discuss long-term strategies for vaccines. Because the window for getting a vaccine produced in sufficient quantity to support a fall vaccination campaign is closing fast, this is about as late as they dare to push a meeting.

In the meanwhile, the FDA just approved EUA for the use of Veklury, or remdesivir, to patients younger than 12 years and as young as 28 days who weigh at least 7 pounds and are hospitalized or at risk for severe disease; this is important coverage for children too young to be vaccinated and is the first approved antiviral for children under the age of 5 years.

You may have seen the news stores about how difficult Paxlovid, the most effective antiviral therapeutic available for Covid-19, has been to get. There have been distribution problems so that some sites have doses going unused while patients in other locations can't find it at all. Some physicians have been reluctant to prescribe it, wanting to reserve scarce doses for those most at risk. We're now in a situation where we have plenty of the drug around, and so steps are underway to make it more widely available. The federal government is increasing outreach to physicians to let them know they can prescribe it freely, and the drug will be delivered directly to pharmacies instead of relying only on state-run distribution channels. That should go a long way toward having Paxlovid available to pretty much anyone who needs it: folks at high risk for severe Covid-19 with a newly-diagnosed infection. I encourage you, if you are at least 12, fit into an at-risk group, and have a positive test, to get in touch with your physician and ask about confirmatory testing (which I suspect will be required) and availability. I'll note here that this drug is contraindicated for those with severe kidney or liver problems, but pretty much anyone else who fits the criteria is eligible. Be aware that the drug must be started within five days of first symptoms to be effective, so there really

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isn't time to dawdle and consider.

There's enough of the drug on hand right now to cover the next 20 million at-risk cases. Further supplies will depend on Congress allocating funding, but for now, there's enough to go around. As case numbers continue to rise, this could be life-saving. In a few weeks or months when the current supply runs out, we in the US may have some difficulty getting the drug at all because other countries with money in hand are locking in future production; but I don't think there's much we can do as individuals about that. Meanwhile, if you need it, don't hesitate to make arrangements to receive it.

The CDC has published data on antibodies in US residents. Based on an ongoing study of blood samples sent to commercial laboratories across the country, the new data show that since the beginning of December, rates of residents who show antibodies indicating they have been infected at some point with SARS-CoV-2 have risen from 34 percent to 58 percent of adults and 44 percent to 75 percent of children. It is possible to distinguish people with antibodies resulting only from vaccination from those who have been infected, so we know these antibodies resulted from infection. Since the antibodies being measured remain at measurable levels for two years, this should capture pretty much everyone who's been infected since this pandemic began. Here's the concern: These increases are going to be due almost entirely to the Omicron variant. We know that antibodies against older variants are not particularly protective against Omicron, and we're not clear how durable antibodies against Omicron are. This means a bunch of those folks are likely susceptible to future infections, some as soon as today and the rest maybe within three months of their infection. This is giving a whole lot of people heartburn as we contemplate our future.

I read a study published this week in *Mucosal Immunology* from a research group at the University of Toronto. They measured the levels of antibody to Spike/receptor binding domain (RBD) protein in the saliva and the serum of 107 long-term health care workers and 42 other adults after vaccination with either of the two available mRNA vaccines, comparing those to a negative control group who had neither been vaccinated nor infected and to a positive control group of people who had been infected but not vaccinated. They also took a look at prospective cohorts to see who became infected with SARS-CoV-2 during the term of the study.

There is a variety of classes of antibodies you might make in response to antigen exposure; of those, two were of particular interest in this study, immunoglobulin G (IgG) and immunoglobulin A (IgA). These are quite different in structure and function; the important difference for the purposes of this discussion is that IgG mostly circulates in your bloodstream and IgA is mostly secreted at mucosal surfaces. It probably makes sense to you then that IgG is found primarily in serum with a smaller amount seen on mucous membranes and that IgA is found primarily in saliva (so-called secretory component-associated anti-spike antibody) with less in serum. This team characterized the antibodies they were finding in these participants.

Findings were fairly complex, but when we clear away the brush, here's what we're left with. The researchers found anti-spike/RBD antibodies of both IgG and IgA classes in saliva in response to the first dose of vaccine. The second dose "boosted the IgG but not IgA response, with only 30% of participants remaining positive for IgA at this timepoint." But the interesting thing is that in those who still had IgA in their saliva at the time of the second dose, those levels were still stable at six months, whereas IgG levels had fallen off.

Then, when the team looked at prospective cohorts, they found those with breakthrough infections were the ones with lower levels of serum IgA two to four weeks post-dose 2 compared to those who did not become infected, whereas IgG levels were similar in the two groups. The bottom line is, if we can get a vaccine to elicit a durable IgA response, there's a pretty good chance that vaccine will reliably prevent

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infection. This would be a step up from the current vaccines which are not great at preventing infection as time goes on even though they remain protective against the worst outcomes. I have no idea at all how difficult it will be to produce such a vaccine, but I'm going to guess there are smart people working on the problem. We'll look for news in upcoming months.

Apparently the University of Toronto is a hotbed of Covid-19 research because I read another paper from a team at that august institution also published this week, this one in the Canadian Medical Association Journal. This group "constructed a simple susceptible-infectious-recovered compartmental model of a respiratory infectious disease with 2 connected subpopulations: people who were vaccinated and those who were unvaccinated" in order to study the impact of mixing these subpopulations on the risk of infection among the vaccinated. They simulated various degrees of mixing between the two groups—everything from complete assortativity (vaccinated mix only with vaccinated; unvaccinated mix only with unvaccinated) to random mixing in order to assess this impact. In other words, they sought to discover whether the unvaccinated posed some risk to the vaccinated when there is contact between the groups.

The short answer is yes: Yes, they do pose a risk. While the unvaccinated have the highest risk of all (which isn't exactly shocking news), findings were that unvaccinated people pose a disproportionate risk to the vaccinated, "with unvaccinated people contributing to infections among those who were vaccinated at a rate higher than would have been expected based on contact numbers alone." Additionally, vaccinated people protect the unvaccinated from infection, operating as buffers: As like-with-like mixing increased (to complete assortativity), attack rates increased among unvaccinated people from 62 percent to 79 percent. That's some free ride, isn't it? You do what you want, never mind that you're causing trouble for others, even while their decisions protect you from that same sort of trouble.

From their conclusion: "Although the decision not to receive vaccination is often framed in terms of the rights of individuals to opt out, such arguments neglect the potential harms to the wider community that derive from poor vaccine uptake. Nonvaccination is expected to result in amplification of disease transmission in unvaccinated subpopulations, but the communicable nature of infectious diseases means that this also heightens risk for vaccinated populations, when vaccines confer imperfect immunity," pointing out that "the normal functioning of society means that complete like-with-like mixing is not observed in reality," that these two groups are going to mix in the course of living, so these risks cannot be minimized as long as the unvaccinated remain unvaccinated and walk among us. One of the authors told Forbes, "Vaccinated individuals have a right not to have their efforts to protect themselves undermined," adding that the findings are "very supportive" of vaccine mandates for flying and train travel. I hope things are different in Canada; but that will never happen here. People will just go around dispensing virus to all and sundry, and the vaccinated can stay home if they don't like it because some people's rights count more than others, I guess.

And with that, we're finished for the day, the week, and the month. I live in hope of the day when we're just plain finished, but I can't see that far ahead just yet. Hang in there, and keep yourself safe. We'll talk again.



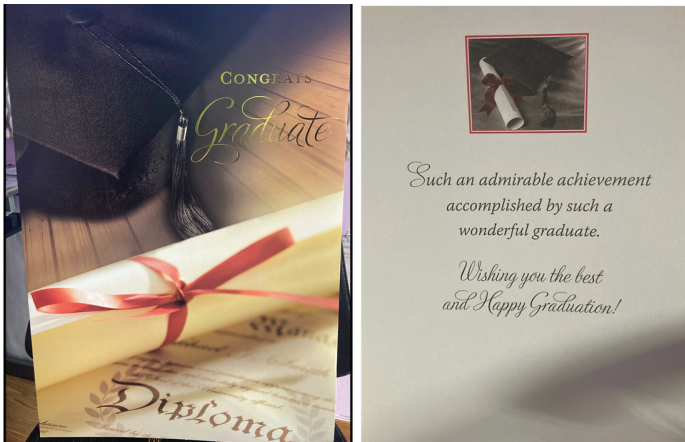
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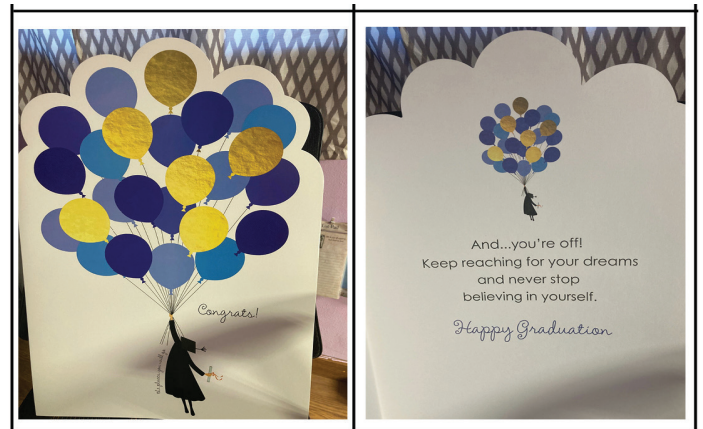
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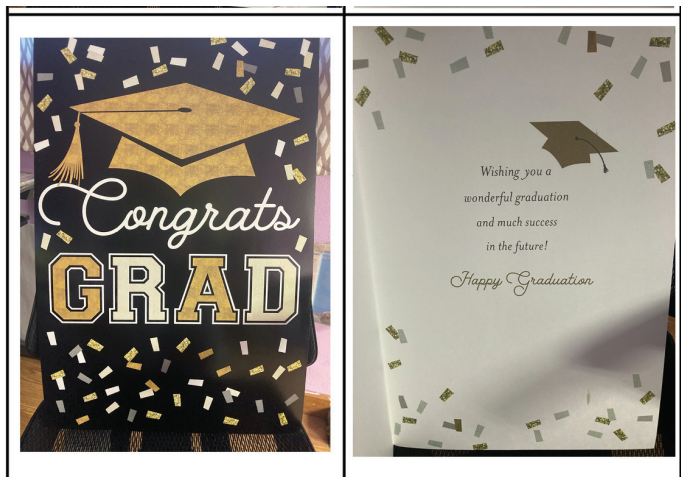
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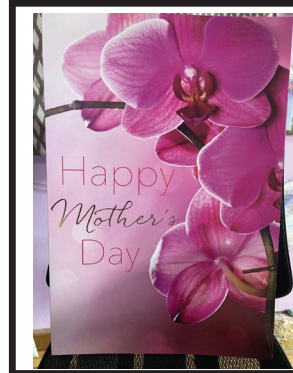
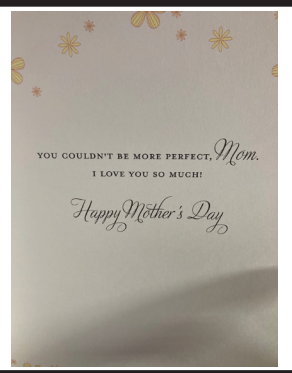
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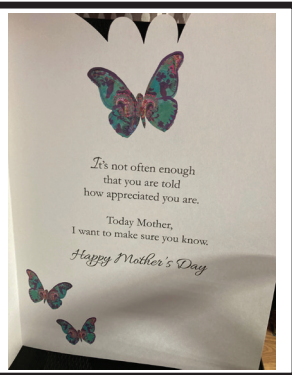
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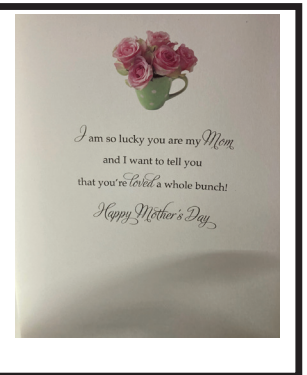
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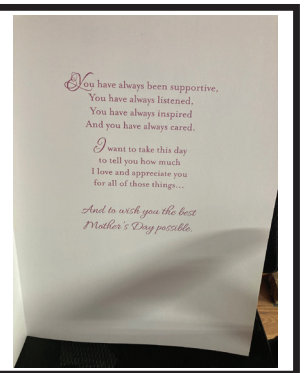
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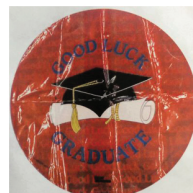
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## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

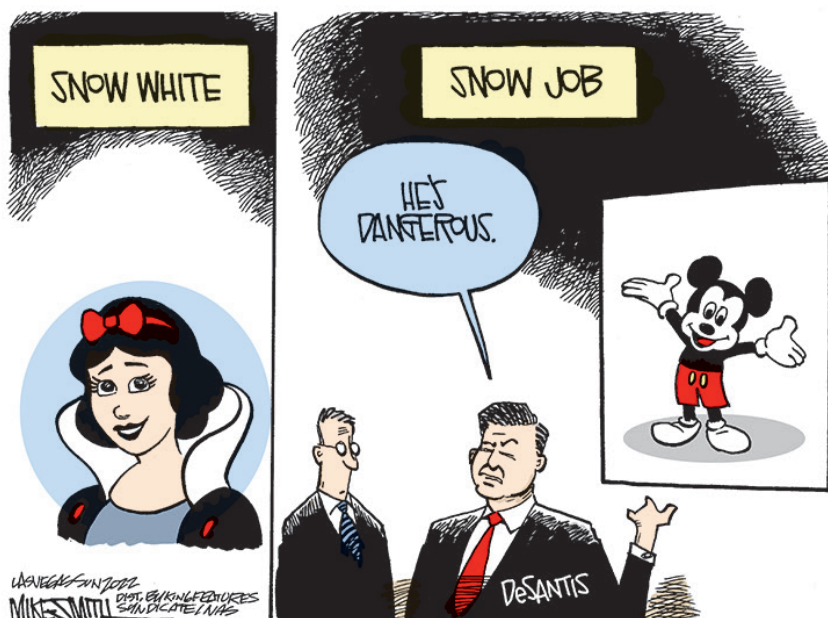


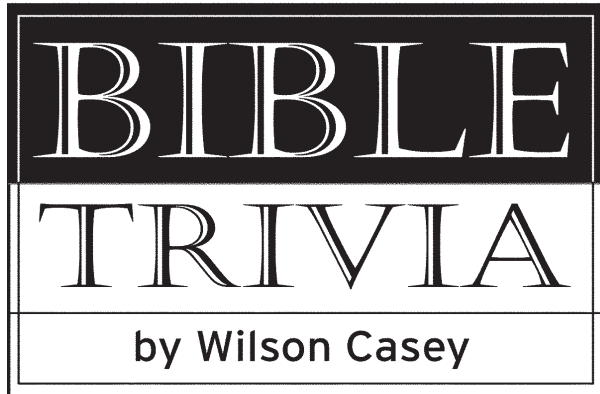
"As We Forgive Our Debtors"  
by Max Pechstein (1921)

*Be kind to one another,  
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other, just as God in Christ  
also has forgiven you.*

🌀 Ephesians 4:32 🌀

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by Healthy Exchanges

## Mozzarella Vegetable Salad

It's a well-known fact that vegetables are good for you. But just as important, this ultra-easy salad tastes good!

- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 1 cup chopped fresh broccoli
- 1 cup chopped fresh cauliflower
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 3/4 cup shredded reduced-fat mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup fat-free Italian dressing
- 2 tablespoons fat-free mayonnaise

1. In a large bowl, combine carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, mushrooms and mozzarella cheese. Add Italian dressing and mayonnaise. Mix gently just to combine.

2. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Gently stir again just before serving. Makes 4 (1 cup each) servings.

\* Each serving equals: 95 calories, 3g fat, 8g protein, 461mg sodium, 3g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 2 Vegetable, 1 Meat.

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

2. After being banished, which king had his hair grow as long as eagles' feathers? *Solomon, Herod, Asa, Nebuchadnezzar*

3. Along with all in the household, who was spared during the fall of Jericho? *Deborah, Miriam, Abigail, Rahab*

4. The River Nile was turned to blood on which of the 10 plagues of Egypt? *1st, 2nd, 5th, 10th*

5. Who made the infamous golden calf that the Israelites worshiped? *Aaron, Moses, Enoch, Abraham*

6. From 2 Kings 2:11, what took Elijah into heaven? *Arrow, Flood, Whirlwind, Boat*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) Nebuchadnezzar; 3) Rahab; 4) 1st; 5) Aaron; 6) Whirlwind

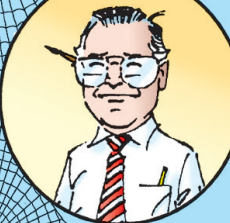
*Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson's Casey's book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online.*



# Groton Daily Independent


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**Artist Spotlight:**  
**JOHN ROMITA**



DURING HIS THREE-DECADE TENURE AT MARVEL COMICS, JOHN ROMITA WOULD BE A GUIDING FORCE - DRAWING AND/OR DESIGNING EVERY MAJOR CHARACTER.

A VETERAN OF THE SPIDER-MAN NEWSPAPER STRIP, HE LENDS HIS CONSIDERABLE TALENT TODAY TO FLASH GORDON.



SPIDER-MAN ©2008 MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. DISTRIBUTED BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

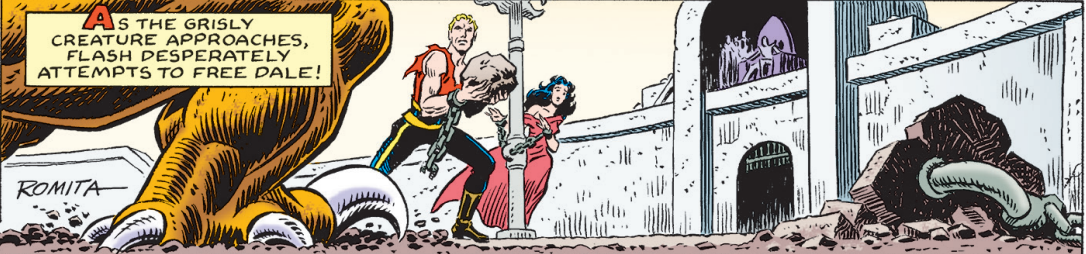
## FLASH GORDON

By JIM KEEFE

4-24

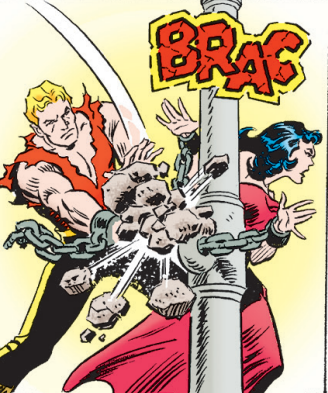
Artwork: JOHN ROMITA

**AS THE GRISLY CREATURE APPROACHES, FLASH DESPERATELY ATTEMPTS TO FREE DALE!**




ROMITA

**BRAC**

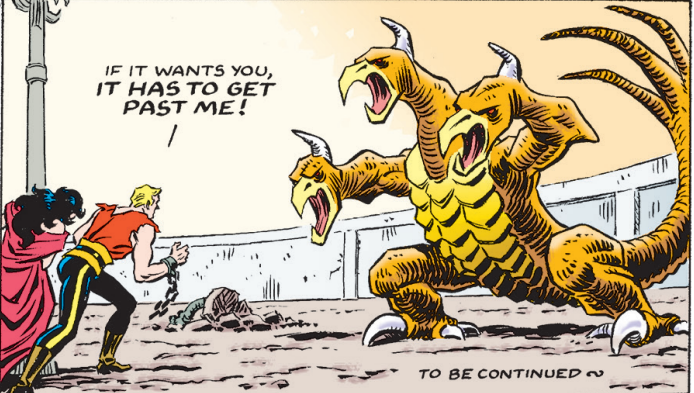


IT'S HOPELESS! PLEASE... RUN - SAVE YOURSELF...

**NEVER!**



IF IT WANTS YOU, IT HAS TO GET PAST ME!




TO BE CONTINUED ~


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## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

**P**LAYING A SEVERE UPHILL LIE, IT'S HARD TO AVOID FALLING AWAY FROM THE TARGET AS YOU SWING DOWN AND THROUGH. SO MAKE RETAINING YOUR BALANCE YOUR TOP PRIORITY.



YOU'LL BEST DO SO BY SETTING YOURSELF AT ADDRESS AS PERPENDICULAR TO THE SLOPE AS POSSIBLE, THEN STAYING THAT WAY THROUGHOUT THE SWING. REDUCE YOUR BODY ACTION AND INCREASE YOUR ARM AND HAND ACTION TO FURTHER PROMOTE GOOD BALANCE.



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## Cause of Chronic Cough Has Doctors Stumped



---  
DEAR DR. ROACH: I picked up a cough while traveling in Europe more than two years ago. No other symptoms have ever presented. Since that time, I have received every test imaginable, including spirometry, multiple breathing tests, CT scans, X-rays and most recently a bronchoscopy. Nothing was discovered through any of these tests. Other than the cough, I am very healthy. The cough is driving me crazy, however. I have been prescribed every type of medication, and nothing helps. My doctors are at a standstill and have nothing further to offer. I don't know where to go from here, but I know I can't live my life with this cough. I avoid a lot of personal interaction because it is so disruptive to constantly be coughing. I would greatly appreciate your help with this, and any advice regarding what steps need to be taken next. -- P.M.

ANSWER: Chronic cough (lasting more than several months) is most frequently a result of acid reflux, asthma or postnasal drip, although there are many more causes, including infection, which would be a concern given that you have a clear idea of when it started.

Despite an extensive evaluation for cough, it is not that uncommon that people are left with no explanation but with a persistent cough. There are other, less-common treatments at this point, some of which your doctors might not have tried.

The first is the medication gabapentin (Neurontin). This is used for a condition called laryngeal neuropathy, and I have had a few spectacular cases where the cough disappears entirely. People have written saying that their doctor prescribed the medication for them after reading it in the column and they also had relief, even after decades of persistent coughing, so I think this condition may be more common than I have ever thought.

A second has been a cough suppressant. I am very cautious about using opiate drugs, and it is certainly not appropriate for some people, but cautious use of tramadol in selected patients has been successful in reducing, but not eliminating, cough.

Just yesterday in the clinic, one of the residents I supervise had a patient with chronic cough who had dramatic improvement through the use of speech therapy. Looking it up today, I find trials showing significant improvement, if modest, with this approach, as well as several ongoing trials. Given the potential side effects of gabapentin and tramadol, I think I will be making more referrals to my speech and language pathology colleagues, and suggest you speak with your doctors about some of these options.

\*\*\*

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a postmenopausal woman with osteoporosis. My physician has just prescribed Calcitonin Salmon nasal spray. Is this treatment very effective rebuilding bone mass, and how long does a patient use the drug? Also, are there any serious dangers using this drug? -- M.L.

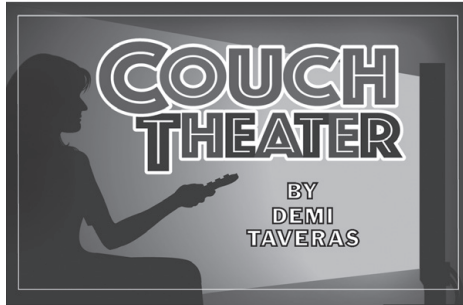
ANSWER: Calcitonin, usually derived from salmon, is not typically used long term for osteoporosis. Other drugs, such as those in the alendronate (Fosamax) class, are more effective. The Food and Drug Administration advisory panel has recommended its use be limited to less than six months due to concerns about possible increased cancer risks. It also can cause allergic-type reactions, including swelling of the lips and tongue. I seldom see it prescribed anymore outside of short-term use for pain relief in vertebral fractures due to osteoporosis.

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



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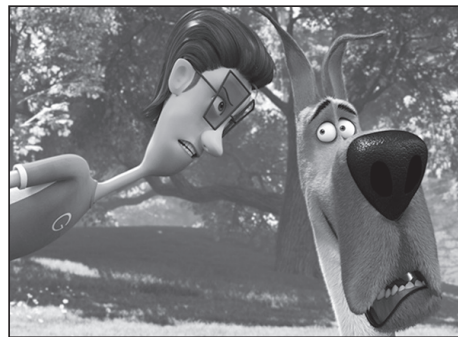


**The Offer** (TV-MA) — How do you know when a film has surpassed every level of success to reach a legendary status like none other? The answer is when Hollywood decides to create a 10-episode series about how the film even came to be. Of course, I'm talking about "The Godfather." In this new biographical miniseries, the filmmaking behind the classic 1972 crime movie gets explored, from how badly Paramount needed a hit at the time to how real-life mobsters were angered about the portrayal of Italians as gangsters. "The Offer" also dives into how Marlon Brando and Francis Ford Coppola became part of the project and helped to turn the film into a massive success that would be remembered for decades to come. Streaming now. (Paramount+)

**Marmaduke** (TV-Y7) — Based on the long-running comic strip, this CGI-animated film follows the goofy antics of a Great Dane dog named Marmaduke, whose escapades, while entertaining, usually cause accidents, damages or other types of turmoil. So, when a video of Marmaduke goes viral, infamous dog trainer Guy Hilton takes on the challenge of transforming this dog who's always up to no good into a championship-winning pet. The titular character is voiced by "Saturday Night Live's" Pete Davidson, while other voices include J.K. Simmons and David Koechner. A perfect movie night for the entire family. Premieres May 6. (Netflix)

**Shining Girls** (TV-MA) — Aspiring reporter Kirby Mazrachi was once

attacked by a mysterious man, and since her attack, her present constantly shifts in front of her. Kirby's appearance, her interactions with others, even her pets, can all change or morph, never staying the same for too long. After the body of a young woman is found with marks in the same place as Kirby's after her attack, she decides to join another reporter, Dan, in catching the killer and uncovering the truth before the list of victims grows further. This psychologically thrilling series is full of mind-bending twists, and with Elisabeth Moss ("The Handmaid's Tale") as the leading lady, there's no doubt that "Shining Girls" will be a hair-raising watch. (Apple TV+)



Netflix

## Scene from "Marmaduke"

**The Staircase** (TV-MA) — Not a lot of buzz has surrounded this star-studded true-crime miniseries, but "The Staircase" has the potential to be one of the best drama series released this year. Starring Colin Firth and Toni Collette as married couple Michael and Kathleen Peterson, "The Staircase" begins just before Kathleen's sudden death — at the bottom of a staircase in their home. All fingers immediately point to Michael as the perpetrator, so he enlists the help of a documentary crew in order to tell his side of the story and restore the dynamic of his family back to normal. Premieres May 5. (HBO Max)

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## FLASH BACK POP, ROCK & SOUL TRIVIA BY MICK HARPER

1. Which group released an album titled "Agents of Fortune"?
2. Who wrote and released "Sundown"?
3. Name the 1960s singer who was partially deaf as a result of having meningitis as a child.
4. What do The Chords, Bobby Hebb and Edison Lighthouse all have in common?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Jubilation, she loves me again, I fall on the floor and I'm laughing."

### Answers

1. Blue Oyster Cult, in 1976. The 2001 CD reissue had four additional songs, including the longer demo version of "(Don't Fear) The Reaper."
2. Gordon Lightfoot, in 1974. It was his only chart topper in the U.S. (He's Canadian.)
3. Mary Wells, of "My Guy" fame. She was singing in clubs by the age of 10.
4. They all made it to the list of One-Hit Wonders for the decades when their songs hit the charts: the '50s, '60s and '70s.
5. "Cecilia," by Simon & Garfunkel, in 1970. The song was partially created at a late-night party and recorded on a tape recorder. Simon later came back to it, deciding that it had the makings of a song. The title likely refers to St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music.

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

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



"We need a sound check, Senator. ... Could you give us a no-comment?"

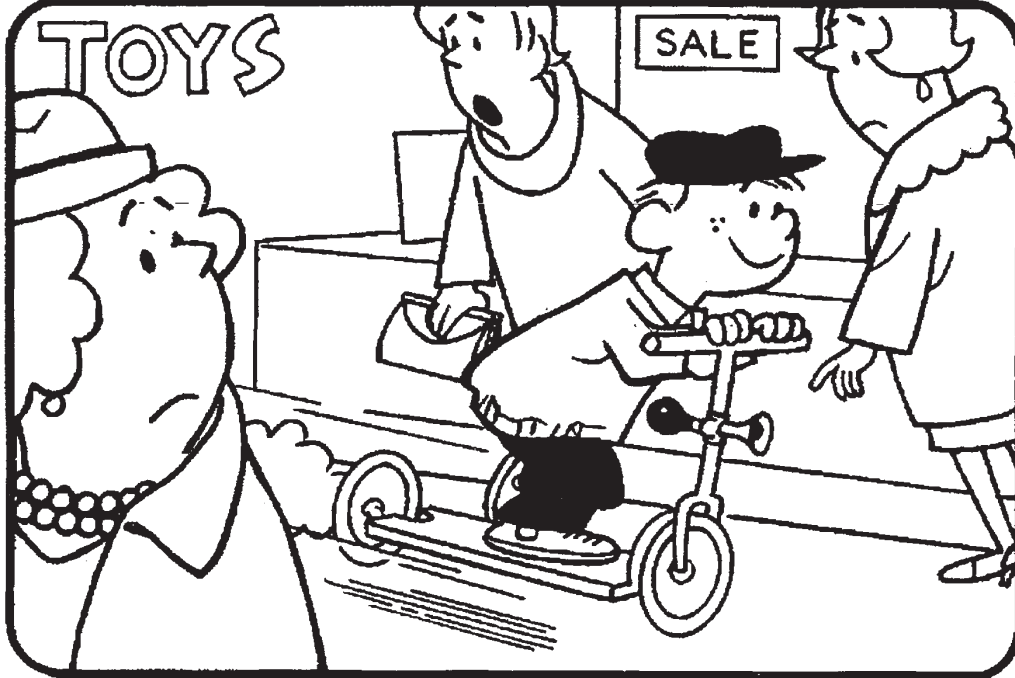


# Groton Daily Independent

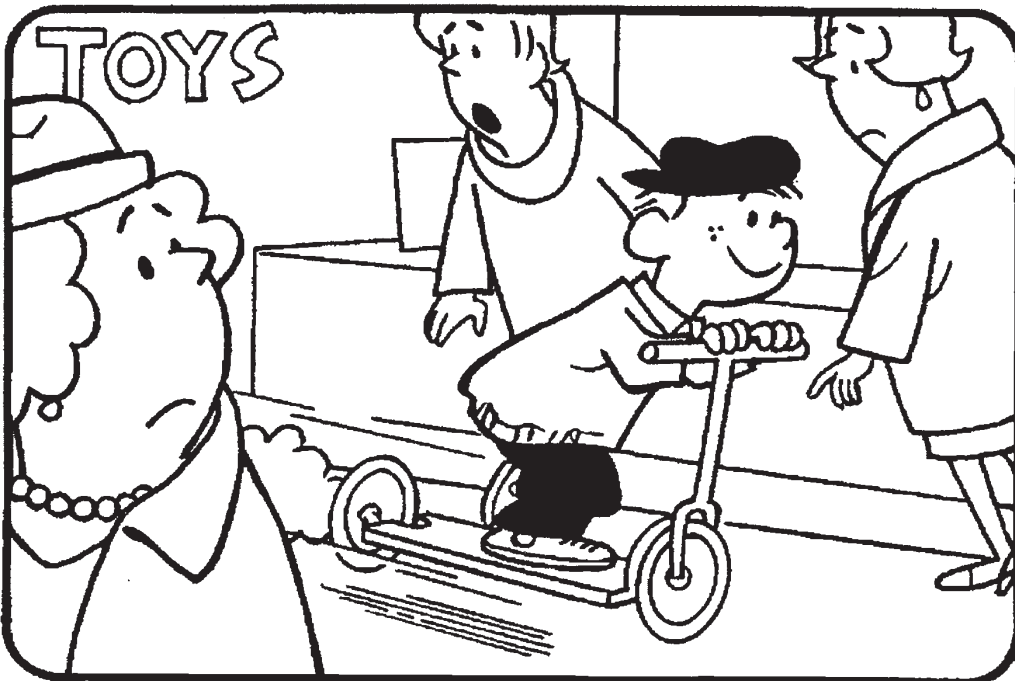
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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Beads are missing. 2. Purse is missing. 3. Sign is missing. 4. Cap is reversed. 5. Horn is missing. 6. Collar is different.

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• Earth Day got me thinking about how many plastic bottled beverages my family goes through. I have found six glass reusable bottles that can be run through the dishwasher, and I store them in the refrigerator in a cardboard six-pack holder. I still want the convenience of grabbing a bottle of water from the fridge, but I feel better knowing that I'm not contributing to a plastic problem." — *JoAnn*

• Using ice-cold sour cream instead of ice-cold water in your pie crust recipe will give you a flakier crust.

• "If you love to burn candles as much as I do, consider storing them in the refrigerator for a day or so before burning them. I swear, it makes them burn evenly. Someone told me this once, and I tried it and have been doing it ever since. No more crooked candles." — *J.L. in Tennessee*

• When traveling for more than a few days, stick your plants into the bath-

tub with a little bit of water. They'll soak it up, and you won't have to have someone come over and water your plants. This will only work for a week at most, though." — *J.M. in Louisiana*

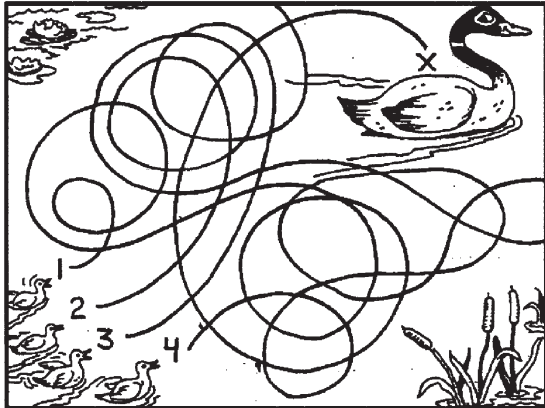
• Kitchen remodels can be expensive, but when your kitchen isn't usable, that's even more of an expense. Instead of opting for takeout food, set up an alternate kitchen to save money. A microwave, toaster oven, coffee pot and a small dorm-style fridge can take care of a lot of your needs in the short term.

• Planning on putting in some new plants or sprucing up your garden this spring? Check with your town's yard-waste recycling center about free mulch or compost. Many facilities offer these to their residents.

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

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**WAIT UP!** Hey, wait for us. Which family member is first to swim to its mother's side? Take a guess.

## Junior Whirl

by Hal Kaufman



### OUT OF THE HAT NUMBER PAIRS

TEN numbers — 1 through 10—are placed in a hat, whereupon they are withdrawn two at a time.

Pairs of numbers withdrawn in the process total 4, 7, 11, 16 and 17, respectively. You are asked to determine which two numbers drawn total each of these five amounts.

Remember, numbers in the hat are 1 through 10. Your task is to find five pairs of these numbers that total the stated amounts.

Hint: Only two of those in the hat can possibly total 4 — 1 and 3. Take it from there.

Pairings are: 1 and 3, 2 and 5, 4 and 7, 6 and 10, 8 and 9.

**ZOO'S WHO!** It is the size of a hefty cat, has a long, ugly prehensile tail, carries its young in a pouch. When frightened it may feign death. What animal is that?

.it's an odossu

**LINK-UPS!** Challenge: See how quickly you can turn these 10 one-syllable words, right, into five two-syllable words by linking those on the left with those on the right.

Use a pencil to draw lines from left to right in making link-up connections.

F.Y.I.: A plat, in case you're wondering, is a surveying term for a chart or map.

Time limit: Not more than 30 seconds.

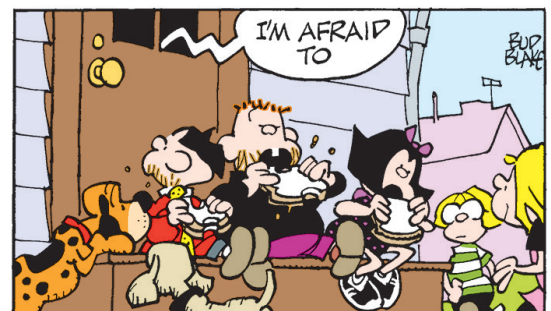
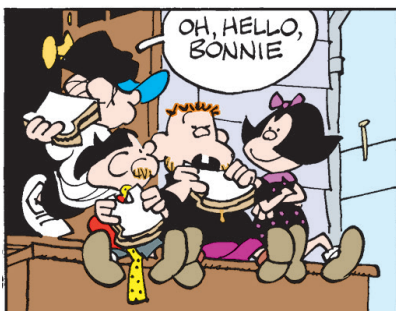
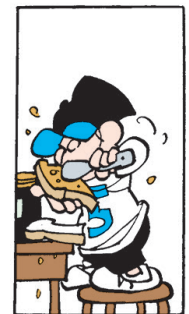
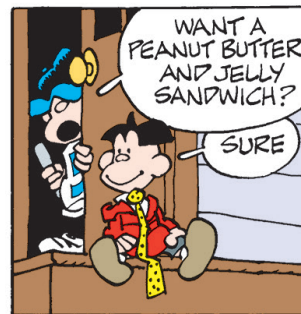
Answers are below, if you need them.

PLUM	ROSE
PRIM	BOIL
PAR	FORM
PLAT	MEAL
PIECE	MET

Plum, met—plummet; Prim, rose—primrose; Par, boil—parboil; Plat, form—platform; Piece, meal—piece-meal.

## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



BUD BLAKE

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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Knock
- 4 "The Thin Man" dog
- 8 Tabloid writing
- 12 Post-op area
- 13 Pace
- 14 Alike (Fr.)
- 15 Sushi fish
- 17 "Hi, sailor!"
- 18 "Burnt" crayon color
- 19 Melody
- 21 Ordinal suffix
- 22 Game fish
- 26 Looks intently
- 29 Chaps
- 30 Man-mouse link
- 31 Has bills
- 32 — de deux
- 33 Mythical birds
- 34 Capote nick-name
- 35 Stable diet?
- 36 Hill of "Moneyball"
- 37 Raw bar mollusk
- 39 Impose
- 40 Ms. Thurman
- 41 Tristan's love
- 45 Tibia's place
- 48 Saltwater fish
- 50 Mata —
- 51 Hotel chain
- 52 Hot tub
- 53 Rhyming tributes

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

- 54 Lake bird
- 55 Fixed
- 9 "This tastes awful!"
- 10 Asian language
- 11 Layer
- 16 Leg joints
- 20 Author
- 23 Earth orbiter
- 24 Killer whale
- 25 "One-L lama" poet
- 26 Attend
- 27 Wrong
- 28 Jupiter counterpart
- 29 Spring month
- 32 Sunshade
- 33 Copter blade
- 35 Skirt edge
- 36 Singer
- 37 Timberlake
- 38 North African capital
- 39 Steinway product
- 42 Privation
- 43 Hoodwink
- 44 Coup d' —
- 45 HBO rival
- 46 Possessed
- 47 Hot temper
- 49 Comic Philips

### DOWN

- 1 Eyeglass frames
- 2 Antioxidant berry
- 3 Brownish purple
- 4 Reps
- 5 Jazzy Vaughan
- 6 Dead heat
- 7 Country stores?
- 8 June birth-



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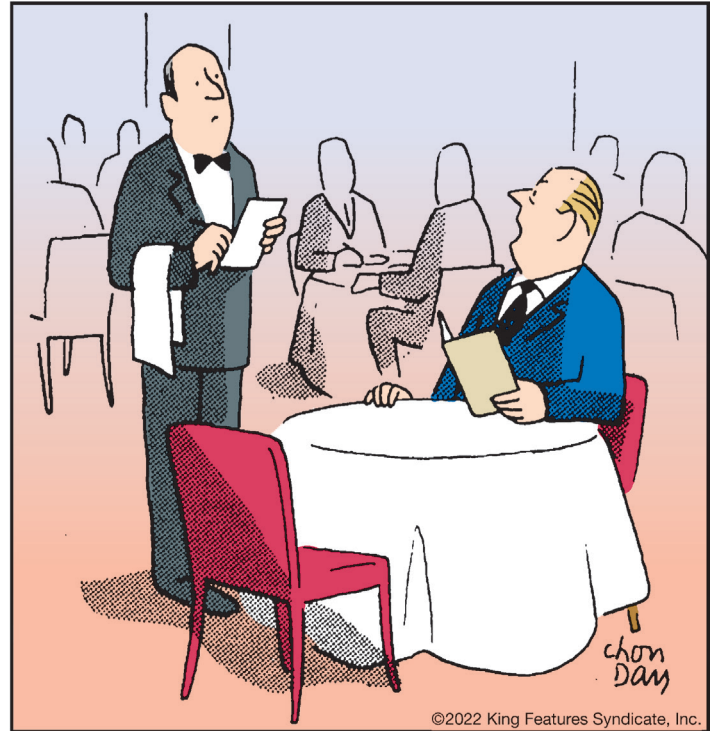
## — King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 26 mins.

R	A	P		A	S	T	A		P	U	L	P
I	C	U		G	A	I	T		E	G	A	L
M	A	C	K	E	R	E	L		A	H	O	Y
S	I	E	N	N	A		A	I	R			
			E	T	H		S	A	L	M	O	N
G	A	Z	E	S		M	E	N		O	R	A
O	W	E	S		P	A	S		R	O	C	S
T	R	U		H	A	Y		J	O	N	A	H
O	Y	S	T	E	R		P	U	T			
		U	M	A		I	S	O	L	D	E	
S	H	I	N		S	E	A	T	R	O	U	T
H	A	R	I		O	M	N	I		S	P	A
O	D	E	S		L	O	O	N		S	E	T

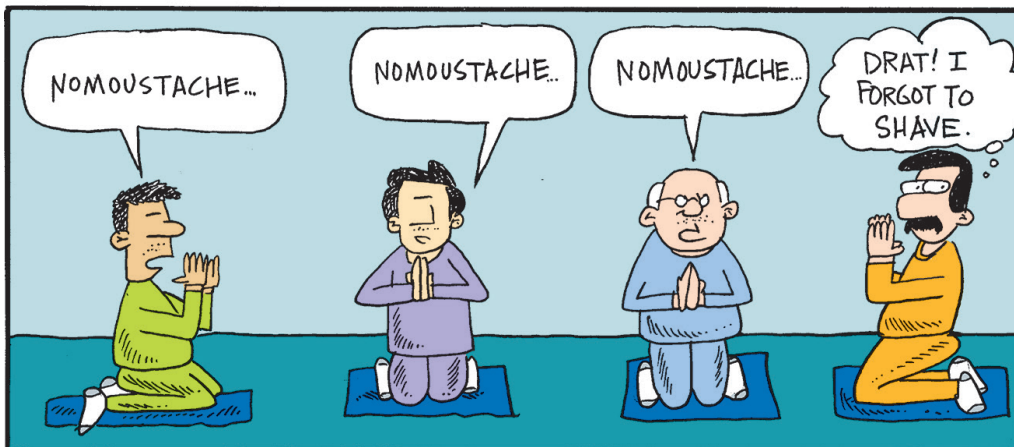
## LAFF - A - DAY



"I'd like to have it before the prices change."

## Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

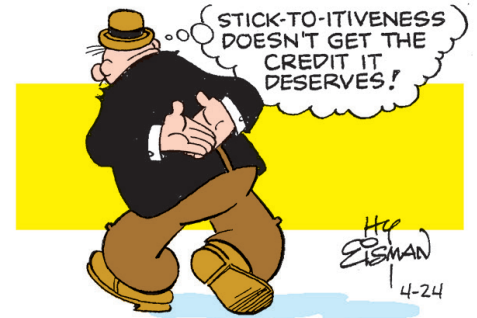
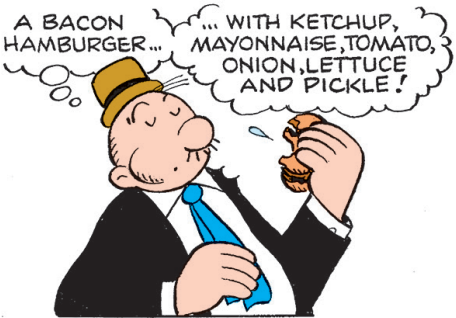
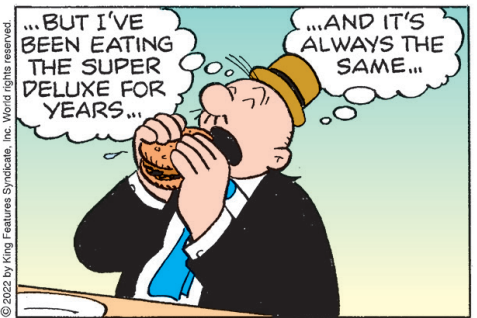
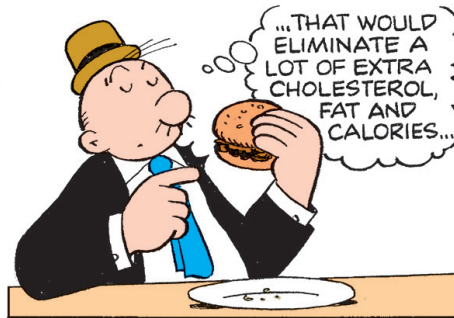
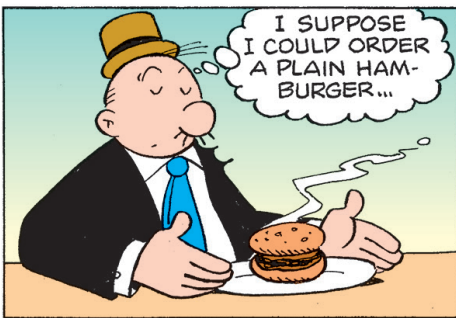
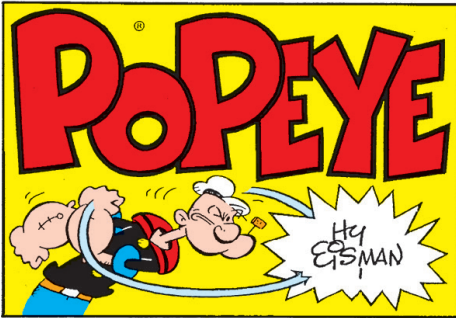


YOGA CLASS  
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KOPERVAS

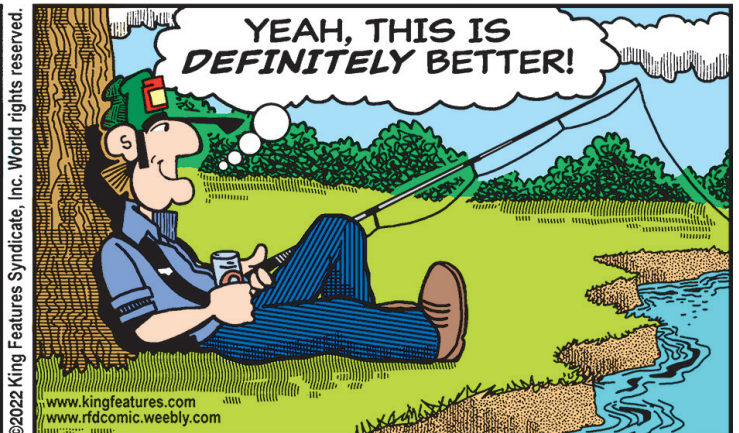
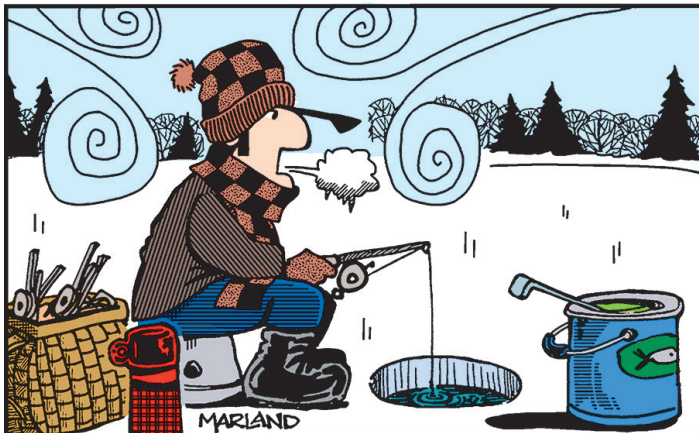
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## R.F.D.

by Mike Marland

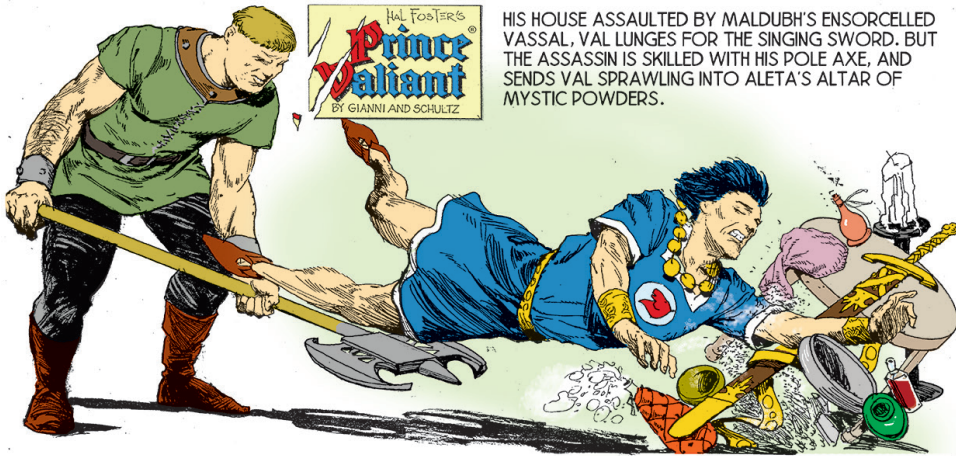


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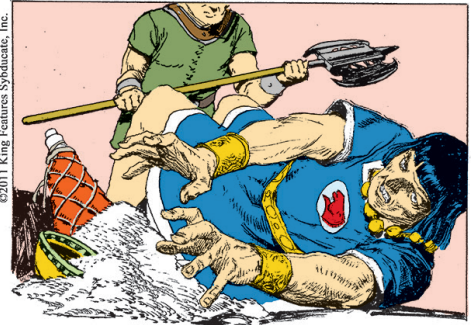
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Hal Foster's  
**Prince Valiant**  
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ

HIS HOUSE ASSAULTED BY MALDUBH'S ENSORCELLED VASSAL, VAL LUNGES FOR THE SINGING SWORD. BUT THE ASSASSIN IS SKILLED WITH HIS POLE AXE, AND SENDS VAL SPRAWLING INTO ALETA'S ALTAR OF MYSTIC POWDERS.



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GRASPING DESPERATELY FOR ANY WEAPON— A SPLIT SECOND FROM THE DEATHBLOW— THE PRINCE'S FINGERS CLOSE IN ON CRYSTALLINE PARTICLES...



...SALT! HE HURLS IT IN THE BERSERKER'S HOLLOW EYES...

...BUYING TIME FOR ALETA TO CONTRIBUTE A REAR-GUARD ACTION.



VAL IS UP LIKE LIGHTNING, MURDER IN HIS EYES. "HOLD!" CRIES ALETA. "HE IS BUT A DAWN— AND PERHAPS USEFUL."

NEXT:  
**Return to sender**



Gianni 3-6-11

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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PICKERING

## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### What Lured Us Back to the Senior Center?

The too-young staffers at the senior center finally figured out that we're not coming back until COVID is gone. And it's not gone. In some areas it's easing up a bit, but here it's still going strong. We're not willing to risk contagion by dashing in the door of the senior center and pretending things are back to normal.

At least once a week the center sends out emails and gets few replies in response. Come to the Ladies Lunch served indoors? No thanks. Experiment with still life photography in the meeting room, with vases, statuettes and fruit provided? No.

We held out, refusing as a group to be party to any potential COVID-spreading indoor activity.

Finally, the staff got it.

They went with videos. The art classes will be online. The book club will have an online discussion, with a link to how to log in to the meeting. And the exercise classes will be posted online so everyone can stretch and work out at home.

But it was the offer of free haircuts that broke our resolve. Some of us haven't been in a salon for two years.

The rules were specific. Stay in our car until we were handed an at-home COVID test, which we would take in the car. If it proved to be negative, we could proceed to the next step (one person at a time), which was to sit on a chair in the hall inside the right-side door of the center and wait for our turn. When the person ahead of us was finished (down the hall in the kitchen), she would be escorted out the left-side door to the parking lot.

It was glorious.

We each came out of the left-side door with a spring in our step, freshly relieved of two years of unruly hair.

Staff should have thought of this before.



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1. The Merseyside Derby is a rivalry match between what two English football clubs?

2. In 1979, New York Yankees manager Billy Martin was fired after getting into a bar fight with Joseph Cooper, a salesman of what confectionery?

3. What longtime NFL reporter and insider for ESPN was known as “The Professor”?

4. Wallace Wade Stadium is the home field of what university’s football team?

5. Name the athlete, amputee and cancer research advocate who attempted to run a “Marathon of Hope” across Canada in 1980.

6. Three pitchers in Major League Baseball history threw unofficial no-hitters, having pitched eight hitless innings in losing efforts on the road. Who are they?

7. In ice hockey, what is the name of the shaded area directly in front of



by Ryan A. Berenz

each team’s goal?

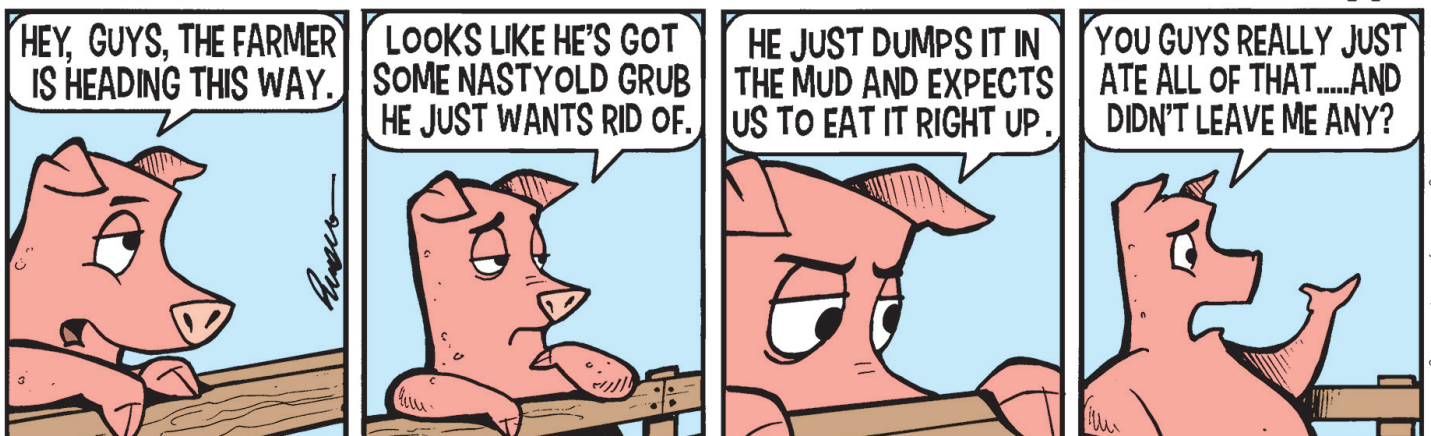
## Answers

1. Everton and Liverpool.
2. Marshmallows.
3. John Clayton.
4. Duke University.
5. Terry Fox.
6. Silver King (1890), Andy Hawkins (1990) and Matt Young (1992).
7. The crease.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





## Are Irresponsible Owners the Bane of Dog Parks?

**DEAR PAW'S CORNER:** When I first adopted my Collie mix "Sara," I went to the dog park near my apartment every morning. I thought it would be a great place for a year-old puppy to socialize with other dogs and humans. A year later, I no longer take her to the dog park if there are any other dogs there — which means taking pre-dawn walks or bypassing the park entirely.

I quickly learned that while many dog owners are responsible people who train and socialize their dogs, others don't train them at all, or train them inadequately. On Sara's first day, a huge dog ran up, snarling and barking at both of us. The dog's owner just sat on a bench, waving and yelling, "He's friendly," while

Sara covered behind my legs. A few days later, that same dog got in a vicious fight with two other dogs.

Because we continued to have negative experiences with other dogs (and their owners), making it impossible to train and socialize Sara, I've stopped going there. I don't think dog parks are a great idea anymore, even though I live in an urban area and green spaces are important for dogs. What's your take? — *Hannah J. in Boston*

**DEAR HANNAH:** I'm really sorry that happened to Sara and you, and you're doing the right thing by taking her at uncrowded times. Overcrowded parks, resource-guarding and aggressively playful dogs can make it a negative experience.

Dog parks are a community resource, and it's important for dog owners to work together to make the park work. Find out if there's a volunteer committee for your particular park. If not, and you want to keep using the dog park, consider forming a group to address behavior and other issues.

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

## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

recordings made from old X-rays with holes burned in the middle from cigarettes, used in the '50s and '60s to smuggle banned music into the Soviet Union.

\* A vending machine offering live crabs debuted in 2010 in Nanjing, China, with sales of around 200 per day and a promised refund of three live crabs for any dead one dispensed.

\* While enough was known about Halley's Comet in 1910 to predict its arrival, rumors about its dangers were so extensive that some people bought comet umbrellas and anti-comet pills in an attempt to protect themselves from it.

\* Between 2006 and 2007, Poland's prime minister and president were identical twin brothers, making them the first siblings in history to hold those titles simultaneously.

\* Ever wonder why sneezes frequently occur in threes? The first loosens the irritant. The second propels it to the front of your nose, and the third expels it. Problem solved!

\* Cats, dogs and even insects can all experience insomnia.

\* Stephen King, who has made a career out of scaring his readers, is scared of the number 13: While reading, he won't pause on a page with that number or a page whose number adds up to 13.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "Sometimes the steepest, most challenging and most rewarding paths in life are not meant to be walked, but crawled." -- Toni Sorenson

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\* "White noise" is named such because, just as the color white is a mixture of many different shades at different ratios, it's a combination of all sound frequencies at once.

\* Some of the first soccer balls were made of clothing filled with rubble.

\* A young Bangladeshi woman with two uteruses gave birth to twins less than a month after having a son.

\* "Jazz on bones" or "Ribs" were bootleg vinyl

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## THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

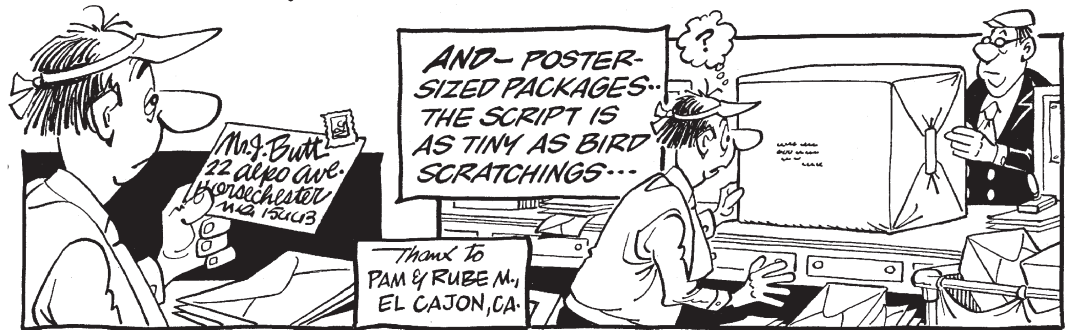
HAPPENS EVERY PROM TIME-TUX RENTAL DEPT.



## BY AL SCADUTO



ANY POSTAL WORKER WILL TELL YOU... A SMALL ENVELOPE IS ADDRESSED IN A HEAVY, LARGE HAND-WRITING...



The Garden Bug



Red Deer Tongue

## Heat-tolerant lettuce

The leaf lettuces are ideal for containers; pick the outer leaves and let the center continue to grow.

This is called "cut and come again" harvesting. Head lettuces like Romaine, Bibb and Crisphead need to grow about 50 days to harvest, so plan for those to grow in-ground.

**Bibb:** Buttercrunch, Speckles, Summer Bibb, Summer Bibb Blend

**Crisphead:** Michelle

**Leaf:** Black Seeded Simpson, Green Salad Bowl, Red Deer Tongue

**Romaine:** Little Gem, Parris Island Cos

— Brenda Weaver

Source: [www.groworganic.com](http://www.groworganic.com)



## VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

### Honor Flights Resume

Honor Flights are back. After sitting out the trips for the last two years due to the pandemic, Honor Flights are up and running again.

The Honor Flight Network consists of independent groups (hubs) that take veterans on all-expenses-paid trips to Washington, D.C., to visit the memorials and monuments. This involves free airfare and visits to the memorials with guardians and volunteers every step of the way while in the company of other veterans.

You only have to see the trip photos and videos to understand how much these trips are appreciated. In 2019 alone (the last year they had the trips before COVID shut things down), they flew over 23,000 veterans and 18,000 guardians. Since its beginning in 2005, Honor Flights has taken over 245,000 veterans on these trips.

At this point their focus is signing up veterans who served in World War II, as well as veterans who are severely ill or injured.

Would you like to go, either as a veteran, a guardian or a volunteer? Go online to Honor Flights at [www.honorflight.org](http://www.honorflight.org). Click the regional hubs for a map of states; click your state for contact info and the hub's website and schedule, as well as the applications for veterans, guardians and volunteers. My state, for example, has one flight planned every month through October. Scroll down the page for state-related info and videos. Call them at 937-521-2400 with your questions.

Honor Flights is non-profit and can use our dollars. (They rate 4 stars from Charity Navigator.) You can donate on their website ([www.honorflight.org/donate-online.html](http://www.honorflight.org/donate-online.html)), either to one of the regional hubs that covers your state or to the network as a whole. Or, if you'd rather send a check than make a donation online, you can send it to:

HonorFlight, Inc.

1405 South Fern Street No. 702  
Arlington, VA 22202

We haven't opened our wallets in quite a while. I think we should do so for this.

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



## Reducing Vulnerability

Between 85-90% of the beef processing in this country is done at just 30 plants – in fact, 12 plants do more than half of all the beef processing. Having such a large percentage of meat packing done at such a small number of plants is a vulnerability in our markets. We've experienced many "black swan" events in the past couple years—from the Holcomb fire, COVID-19, and weather, among others. This market concentration poses a significant risk to food security in our nation. This can mean shortages at the grocery store, skyrocketing prices for meat, nowhere for producers to sell their cattle, and further complications with the supply chain.

On Wednesday, I participated in the House Agriculture Committee hearing entitled "Price Discrepancies, Transparency, and Alleged Unfair Practices in Cattle Markets." The hearing focused on market share and practices of the "Big Four" meat packers — Cargill, JBS, National Beef Packing Company, and Tyson.

We were joined by two panels. The first panel consisted of three producers who expressed frustrations with the current state of the meat packing industry. The second panel was made up of the CEOs of each of the Big Four meat packers. We heard each panel talk about their role in the industry, where they think the problems lie, and what steps should be taken to improve cattle markets.

It was great to hear other Members and witnesses point to legislation I have introduced as solutions to address cattle markets. The Cattle Contract Library Act passed the House overwhelmingly in December 2021 and would increase price transparency for sellers. A lack of transparency is not good for the producer. Increasing our transparency will decrease our market vulnerability. The Butcher Block Act would assist small meat processors who are looking to expand operations or add shackle space. It is imperative to diversify the meat and poultry industry to allow smaller, independent processors more of the market share.

While we have been lucky to have not experienced a black swan event in about a year, we cannot be naïve that we won't have another. We may not know what the event will be, but we need to take steps to decrease vulnerabilities in our food security and supply chain. I've been urging Members and leadership for months to get my legislation signed into law. These bills are not just going to benefit producers, but will benefit consumers, packers, and grocers. Increasing food security is not just in America's best interests, but the world's.

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South Dakota Governor

**Kristi Noem**



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

## Go Big, Go South Dakota Tourism

There has never been a better time to talk about tourism in South Dakota. May 1-7 is National Travel and Tourism Week (NTTW) across the country. In South Dakota, we celebrate the Great Faces, Great Places that make our state the greatest vacation destination in America.

NTTW is all about celebration. This year's theme is #FutureOfTravel, but before I look ahead, we have a lot of folks to thank for getting us to this point. While other states were shutting down, the men and women in our tourism industry stayed open for business and open for visitors.

Despite a barrage of partisan criticism, our approach worked. A recent study from WalletHub just named South Dakota the second safest COVID-19 state in the nation, and we led the entire country in tourism growth. By working together, we have kept this state an ideal place for people to visit and enjoy the fresh air and open spaces at our scenic parks.

That is why we have so much to celebrate during this year's National Travel and Tourism Week. We celebrate the 13.5 million visitors that came to South Dakota last year, an increase of 30% from the previous year. We celebrate the record \$4.4 billion that visitors spent while they were here, the 54,208 jobs sustained by the tourism industry, and the \$980 in tax dollars saved by each South Dakota household because of the tourism industry. With a spirit of gratitude, let's come together and use NTTW as a time to show our appreciation for our travel industry. There are many ways we can do this:

Write a letter or social post thanking travel workers – including your favorite SoDak businesses – for everything they do to attract and entertain visitors.

- Share photos of your outdoor adventures in The Mount Rushmore State and tag the local town or park.
- Tag your messages with #NTTW22 and #FutureOfTravel to show the world how much you appreciate the many benefits that come from hard-working tourism folks.

This past legislative session, we passed reforms to allow for more agritourism. This allows farmers and ranchers to use their property to generate additional income from tourism without burdensome regulations. And to make sure the future of tourism is bright across the state, we are bolstering our marketing efforts to target smaller communities. We want to be sure the millions of visitors to our state do not miss the hidden gems.

We are also continuing our efforts to strengthen habitat and enhance the experience for our visiting hunters and anglers. We cut regulations to make it easier for hunters to take advantage of our open seasons. And we have worked with landowners and our conservation specialists to increase habitat and reduce nest predator populations.



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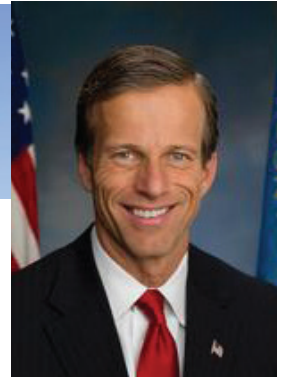
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Since 2019, there has been a \$27 million increase in direct spending by hunters. When you combine all outdoor activities — including boating, parks, snowmobiling, etc. — the overall estimated impact on our economy is more than \$1.3 billion total. The best part is that portions of those dollars spent on ammo, park fees, and other tools feed right back into our conservation and habitat efforts.

Whether you walk two blocks or drive across the state, I encourage you to take the time to treat yourself to some exploration. Even as Governor, I am consistently surprised with the sights and delights I continue to find across South Dakota.

The future of travel is strong in South Dakota. We have much to celebrate and even more to look forward to. That is the South Dakota way, and that is what National Travel and Tourism Week is all about. Someone once said, "Travel is the only thing you buy that makes you richer." I could not agree more. Together, let's make sure that South Dakota will continue to enrich the lives of every visitor that explores our great state.

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



## What Not to Do

When Democrats control the federal government, they consistently have three main priorities: grow government, spend more money, and raise taxes. Look no further than the last 16 months of Democrat control in Washington. America is facing record-high inflation, energy prices are soaring, and the southern border has turned into a full-blown humanitarian and security crisis. Meanwhile, rather than focusing on these issues that continue to affect families and small businesses across the nation, the Democrats, who control the White House, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives, remain focused on their far-left agenda and continue to pursue policies that would dump trillions of more unnecessary dollars into the economy. Out of touch is an understatement.

The textbook definition of inflation is too many dollars chasing too few goods. When President Biden took office, inflation was at 1.4 percent. In March 2022, a little more than one year later, inflation hit 8.5 percent, a 40-year high. The president likes to tout job creation and economic growth, even as the economy shrank for the first time since the pandemic began, but his claims mean little to families who are wondering how they'll be able to pay their soaring grocery bills or whether they can afford the gas they need for the rest of the month. From Sioux Falls to Rapid City, and everywhere in between, folks tell me about the tremendous toll these high costs have on their household budgets.

Farmers and ranchers are also feeling the pain at the pump as they plant their fields this spring, which is why I have been calling on the Biden administration – for more than a year – to leverage American bio-fuels as one way to offer consumers a lower-price option at the pump. The administration finally listened to my repeated requests and will extend E15 sales this summer, and I will continue to advocate for the permanent return of year-round E15.

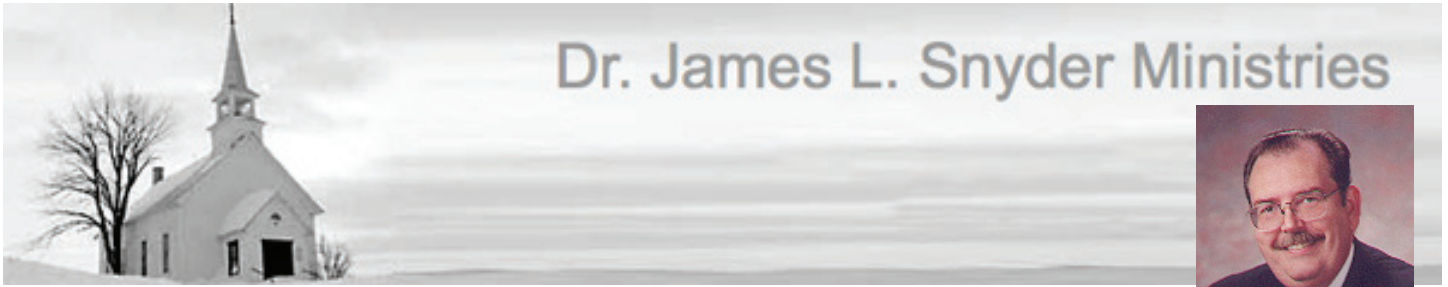
We are also facing a massive, unprecedented crisis at our southern border. From the day the president took office, we've seen a huge surge in the number of individuals attempting to illegally make their way into our country. In the first quarter of 2022, more than half a million individuals were apprehended while trying to get across our southern border. The administration can no longer ignore this catastrophe. Just this week, the secretary of Homeland Security testified to Congress that nearly 400,000 migrants evaded border agents in fiscal year 2021.

Instead of addressing the humanitarian crisis unfolding at the border, President Biden is on track to make it much worse by lifting Title 42 restrictions that have provided for the immediate deportation of individuals who have crossed the border illegally. Without Title 42 border restrictions, we could be seeing more than half a million attempted crossings each month. The bottom line is that Title 42 should not be lifted until the president has a robust plan in place for stopping illegal immigration, securing our border and preventing human trafficking and drug trafficking, and quickly deporting those who seek to illegally enter our country.

Democrat control has created an inflation crisis that is driving up costs for American families, an energy crisis with sky-high gas prices fueling pain at the pump, and a security and humanitarian crisis at our border. With no signs of taking steps to address these crises, President Biden has a lot of explaining to do to hardworking families all across the country. As the American people pay the price for the Democrats' radical policies, I will continue to do everything in my power to hold President Biden accountable and put a stop to his reckless and out-of-touch agenda.

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## Maybe We Should Go Back To Smoke Signal Communications



I must admit that communication is an essential part of my life today. The longer I live, the more sophisticated those communications become, and it's challenging to me.

Recently, I was working on my latest book using my latest computer and its programs. As I was working, I remembered that I did not always use a computer for writing. I used one of those archaic machines called the "typewriter." Does anybody today know what a typewriter is?

I still remember my first typewriter. My mother got it for me for Christmas one year and I couldn't have been happier with any Christmas gift than that one.

I hammered out many articles and even poems. I wished I had copies of those, but I'm glad I lost them. I'm sure those were the worst poems ever hammered out on a typewriter.

I got an electric typewriter after graduating from high school and thought I had died and gone to heaven. I've never been able to type faster than on that electric typewriter.

The problem I've had with those typewriters was, if I made a mistake, I had to throw out that page and start all over again. Yes, I had carbon copies, but I still had to start all over again. How frustrating that was in many regards.

While I was writing my first book, I thought maybe I should upgrade to a computer. I had to think long and hard about that because I loved my typewriter. Eventually, I succumbed to the times and bought a computer.

Those first computers did not have any internal hard drives and everything had to be done on a 5.5-inch floppy disk. When I got my computer and learned how to use it, I was ecstatic. I didn't mind putting in the floppy disk and taking it out and replacing it with another floppy disk. That seemed to be easy work at the time. I never had to throw away a sheet of paper and start over again.

Over the years, I kept climbing the ladder of technology and got the latest computer technology and was quite happy with it.

Now I can sit in front of my computer screen and dictate what I'm writing. There's a keyboard there, and I only use it when I have an emergency. But now, I can talk everything into my computer, which has become a great experience for me.

When I first used this dictating program, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was in the other room listening. Finally, she said, "Who are you talking to? There's no phone in your room."



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It took a while to explain to her that I was talking to my computer while writing an article. She never heard of that before, and I never did either. Finally, I was able to convince her that it was the computer I was talking to. Who else would listen to me?

Things have developed over the years that are beyond my imagination. In our home, we have the latest media service, TV, telephone, and Internet service.

I never knew how much I appreciated all of this service until one day this week.

I had just finished my latest book manuscript and was ready to email it to my publisher. My deadline was crunching down, and I used every minute to work on the book. I finally finished it, got to my deadline, and was now ready to email it.

Nothing is more satisfying than getting the project done and sending it to the publisher. As I set it up to email it, I suddenly realized that everything was down. So I could not send my manuscript out.

Just a half-hour before this, everything was closed: the TV, cell phone, and the Internet. So there is no way I could get this out on time.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage called the company and finally got through and was told it would be up and running by 7 p.m.

I can't explain how frustrated I was. I checked my temper, and it was boiling over with heat. Probably there was some steam coming out of my ears. I wanted to give them a piece of my mind, but there was no way I could get it to them. Everything was down.

It was then that I realized how important all of this modern technology is. I didn't know that I had built my life on technology, but, it seems like I have done just that.

Technology is wonderful when it works. When it doesn't work, it is the most annoying thing in the world.

I began thinking about the days when communication was done with smoke signals. I'm not sure how that worked, but they were able to convey their message across the country with smoke signals from one mountain to the next. But it got through, which was all that matters.

Maybe we should go back to the good old smoke signal communication days.

I had a few moments to think about this. When thinking about communication a certain verse of Scripture came to my mind.

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:6).

Sometimes it's very important to think before you speak and I have discovered if I do think, I sometimes don't speak.

## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What are the most recent projections about sea level rise around the world as a result of climate change? And is there any hope of turning back the tide if we rein in emissions as planned under the current iteration of the Paris agreement? -- M. Frey, Milford, CT

As temperatures rise around the world, frozen glaciers and sea ice in the poles are melting at unprecedented rates, inundating the world's oceans with more water. The result has been some sea level rise but watch out as more is still to come. In fact, the global mean sea level, defined as the average height of the entire ocean surface, has risen eight to nine inches since 1880. Most of that rise took place in the 150 years. At current rates of emissions, the global mean sea level could rise another 12 inches by 2050.

This amount of sea level rise could be catastrophic in low-lying coastal areas around the world. Bangladesh, and island nations like the Maldives and Kiribati are already facing the brunt of rising sea levels as flooding engulfs villages with little government funding to recover from repeated catastrophes.

Here in the U.S., Florida will likely be hardest hit by sea level rise, but the Gulf Coast and New York/New Jersey—where coastline industrial waste sites could be submerged and expose millions of people to decades worth of stored pollution—also face potentially catastrophic flooding. The Gowanus Canal Superfund site in Brooklyn, New York has already released some of its polluted contents in the latest series of storms. Hawaii and far-flung U.S. territories like Puerto Rico and Guam are also at risk.

All U.S. coastal areas will undoubtedly experience some loss of coastal land. Just how much property loss takes place is partly a function of how well prepared any given region is for what's inevitably coming.

World leaders have only recently resolved to face down sea level rise and climate-change-related threats through concerted action. In particular, the 2016 Paris Climate Agreement, nixed by Donald Trump and then revived by Joe Biden, held international governments accountable to lower emissions, collectively limiting global warming processes to 1.5 Celsius. However, the "locked in" sea level rises, which will occur regardless of whether or not temperatures rise above 1.5 Celsius, are estimated to be a quarter to a half meter of sea level rise. Yet, action is still necessary to avoid greater sea level rise.

We can all do our part by cutting back on our own emissions, especially by flying and driving less. Indeed, our dependence on fossil fuels has gained new poignancy recently with defiant Russia using its clout to threaten the rest of Europe with cutting off gas pipelines. Another to help is to take an active role in countering misinformation and pushing for scientifically driven solutions. Consider signing up for text banking at Greenpeace or spreading the word by distributing the documentary Paris to Pittsburgh, which highlights the importance of the accord, to educate your friends and neighbors.

The Paris Agreement and its promises are more vital than ever. While individual citizen actions may appear small in the face of such insurmountable odds, don't forget that it's committed and engaged fighters against climate change who motivate world leaders to act in the first place.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: [question@earthtalk.org](mailto:question@earthtalk.org).

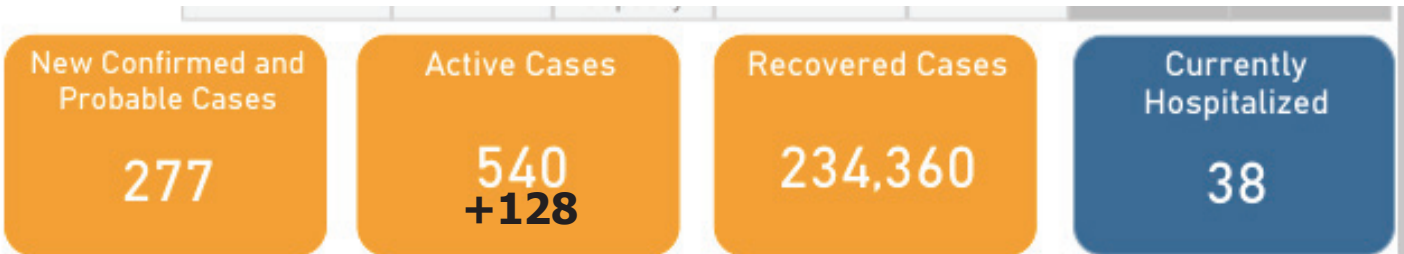


**The question is whether it's too late to do anything about potentially runaway sea level rise.** Credit: Roddy Scheer

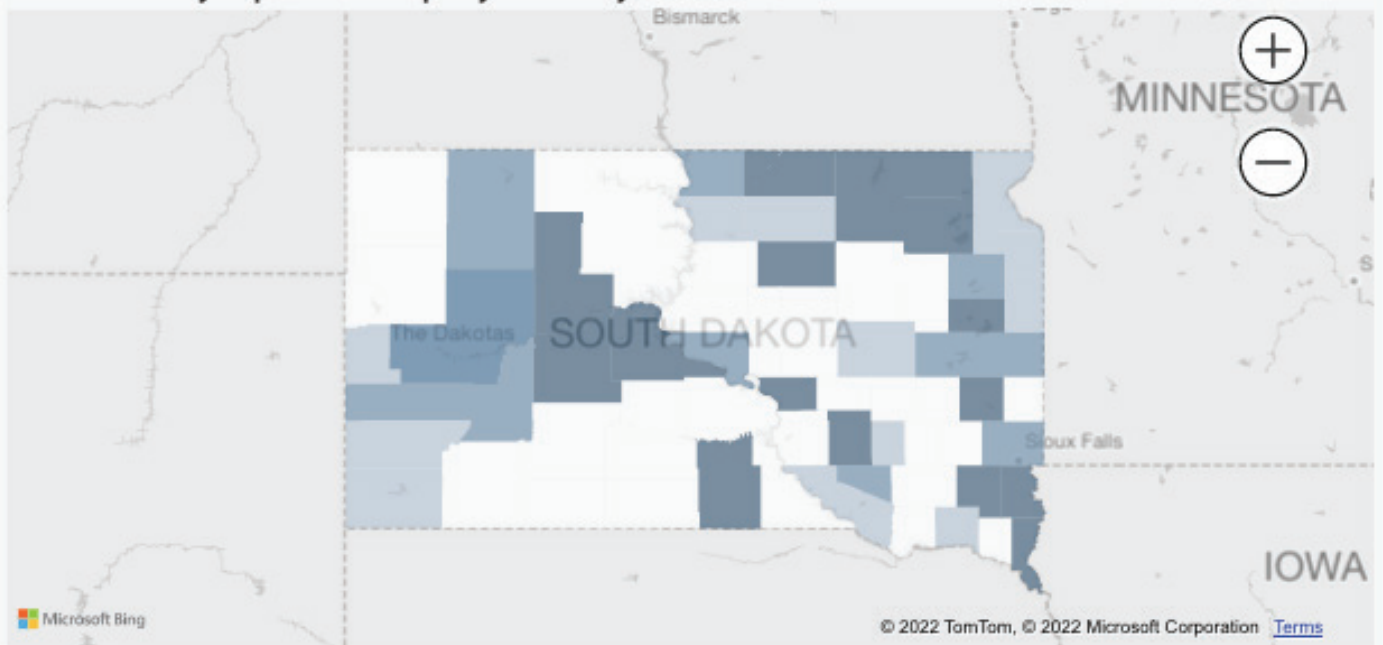
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## South Dakota COVID-19 Report

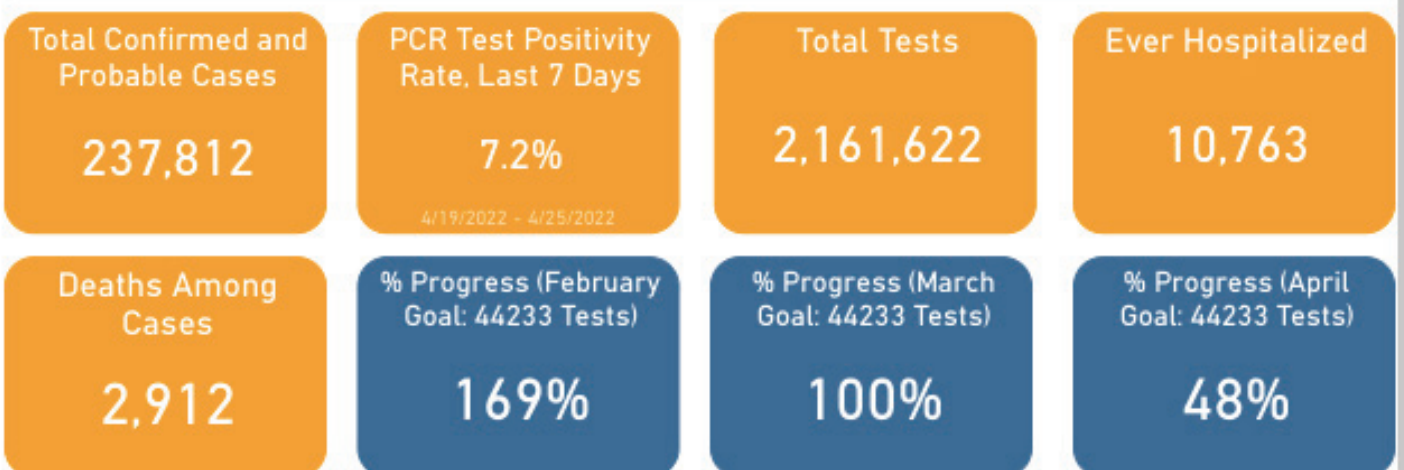


Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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

More information on U.S COVID-19 Community levels can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>





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## Brown County COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed and Probable Cases

17

Active Cases

27  
+1

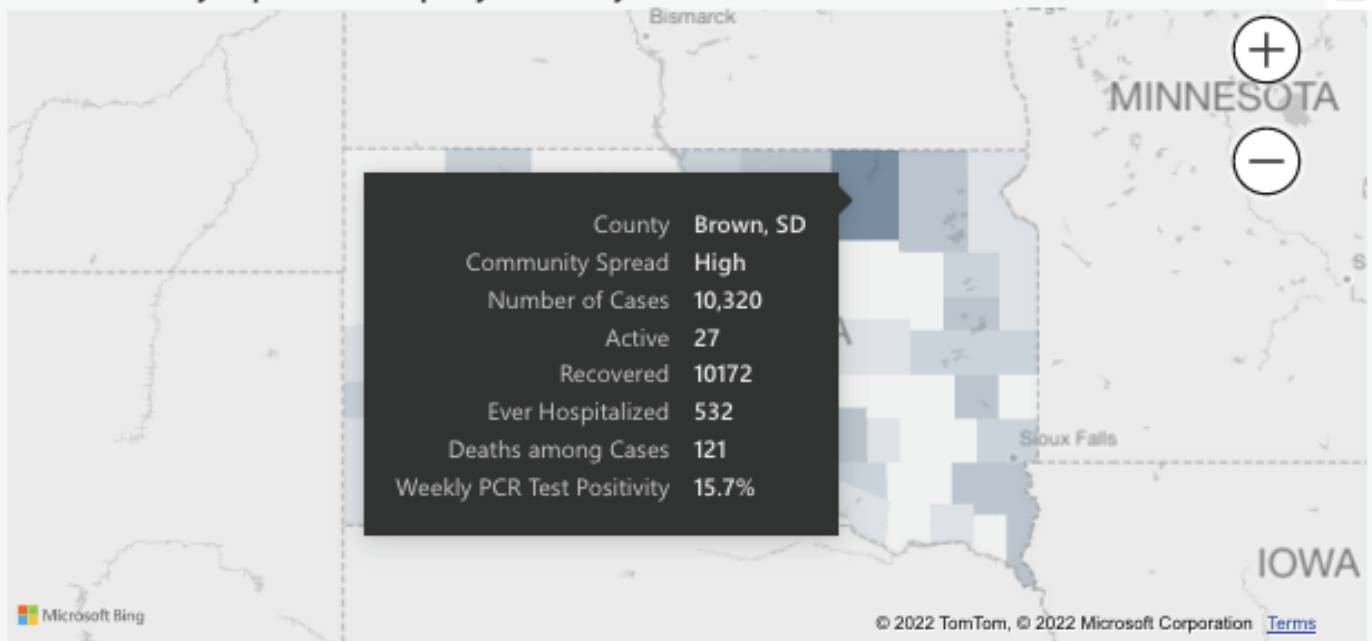
Recovered Cases

10,172

Currently Hospitalized

38

### 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.

More information on U.S COVID-19 Community levels can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

Total Confirmed and Probable Cases

10,320

PCR Test Positivity Rate, Last 7 Days

12.7%

4/19/2022 - 4/25/2022

Total Tests

103,894

Ever Hospitalized

532

Deaths Among Cases

121

% Progress (February Goal: 44233 Tests)

169%

% Progress (March Goal: 44233 Tests)

100%

% Progress (April Goal: 44233 Tests)

48%

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## Day County COVID-19 Report

New Confirmed and Probable Cases

3

Active Cases

12  
+2

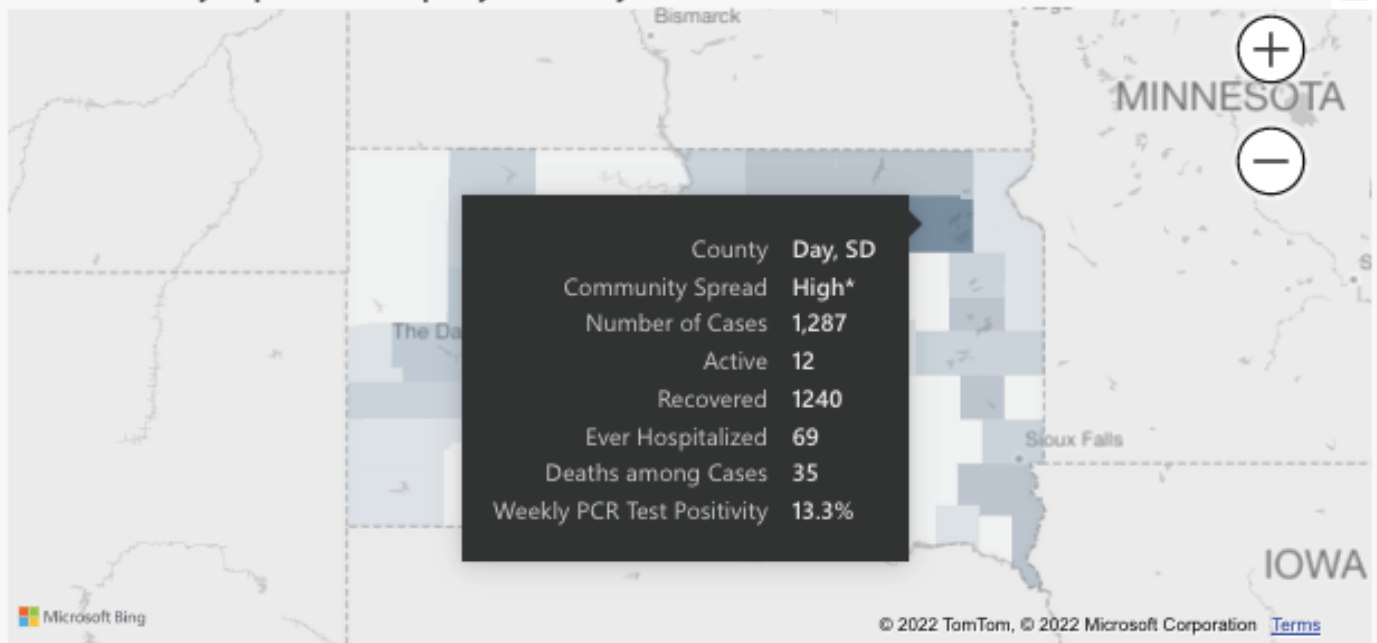
Recovered Cases

1,240

Currently Hospitalized

38

### 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.

More information on U.S COVID-19 Community levels can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

Total Confirmed and Probable Cases

1,287

PCR Test Positivity Rate, Last 7 Days

15.8%

4/19/2022 - 4/25/2022

Total Tests

17,033

Ever Hospitalized

69

Deaths Among Cases

35

% Progress (February Goal: 44233 Tests)

169%

% Progress (March Goal: 44233 Tests)

100%

% Progress (April Goal: 44233 Tests)

48%

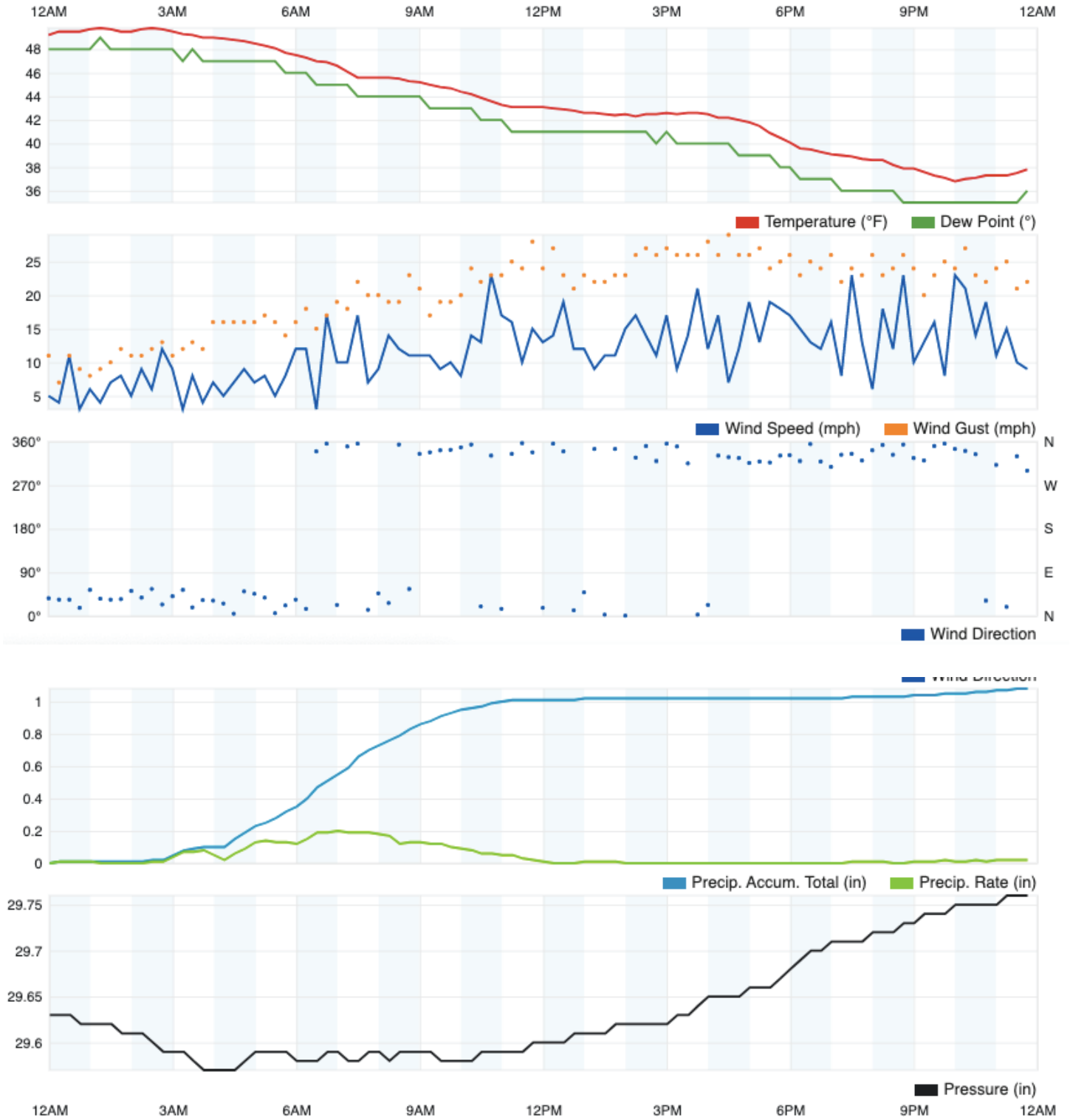




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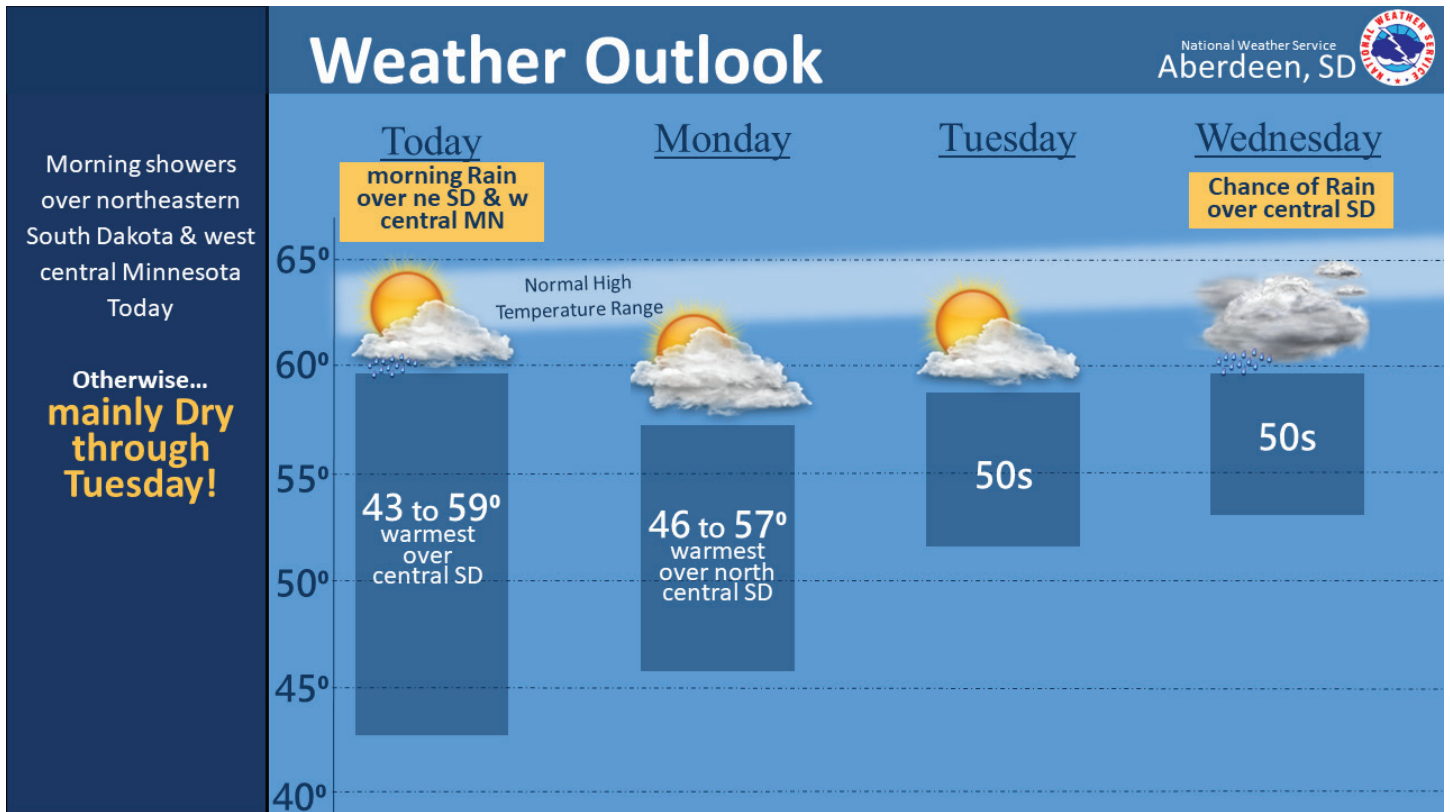
## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
Cloudy and Breezy	Mostly Cloudy	Decreasing Clouds	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 49 °F	Low: 31 °F	High: 51 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 55 °F



Light morning showers will linger over northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota today. Otherwise, mainly dry weather is expected through Tuesday! Temperatures will remain in 40s and 50s, just shy of the average highs for this time of year.

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## Feeling a little chilly lately?

Our last stretch of above average temperatures in Aberdeen was in mid March!  
There were only 5 days of above average temperatures in April.

### March 2022

Observed Maximum Temperature Departure from Normal (°F)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 32° -2° 34°	2 29° -5° 34°	3 25° -10° 35°	4 37° +2° 35°	5 30° -6° 36°
6 30° -6° 36°	7 38° +1° 37°	8 34° -3° 37°	9 22° -16° 38°	10 31° -7° 38°	11 14° -25° 39°	12 43° +4° 39°
13 45° +5° 40°	14 43° +2° 41°	15 66° +25° 41°	16 63° +21° 42°	17 55° +13° 42°	18 53° +10° 43°	19 59° +16° 43°
20 69° +25° 44°	21 48° +4° 44°	22 52° +7° 45°	23 45° 0° 45°	24 53° +7° 46°	25 51° +4° 47°	26 34° -13° 47°
27 38° -10° 48°	28 51° +3° 48°	29 49° 0° 49°	30 34° -15° 49°	31 37° -13° 50°		

NWS Aberdeen - Aberdeen Airport

### April 2022

Observed Maximum Temperature Departure from Normal (°F)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 42° -8° 50°	2 55° +4° 51°
3 36° -16° 52°	4 54° +2° 52°	5 53° 0° 53°	6 51° -2° 53°	7 46° -8° 54°	8 53° -1° 54°	9 63° +8° 55°
10 51° -4° 55°	11 54° -2° 56°	12 43° -13° 56°	13 38° -19° 57°	14 34° -23° 57°	15 34° -24° 58°	16 40° -18° 58°
17 50° -8° 58°	18 44° -15° 59°	19 45° -14° 59°	20 62° +2° 60°	21 54° -6° 60°	22 60° -1° 61°	23 74° +13° 61°
24 42° -20° 62°	25 47° -15° 62°	26 47° -16° 63°	27 52° -11° 63°	28 62° -1° 63°	29 52° -12° 64°	30 48° -16° 64°

NWS Aberdeen - Aberdeen Airport

Our last multi-day stretch of above average temperatures was in mid March! There were only 5 days of above average temperatures in April. We'll return to near or even above average temperatures for the latter half of the work week into the upcoming weekend!



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## Today in Weather History

April 24, 1948: A significant F2 tornado moved northeast from South of Castlewood to near Goodwin. Barns were destroyed on two farms. Also on this day, two other tornadoes were observed in South Dakota. One moved from Turner County on into Minnehaha County, injuring two people. The other touchdown 3 miles Southeast of Sioux Falls, destroying barns and other buildings on the west edge of Brandon.

1880: Several tornadoes affected parts of central and southwest Illinois. One tornado of F4 intensity touched down near Jerseyville and killed one person along the 18-mile path. Another F4 tornado passed just north of Carlinville and lifted near Atwater, destroying 50 buildings. Six people died in Christian County by an F5 tornado, which tracked from 9 miles southwest of Taylorville to near Sharpsburg.

1899 - Two women and one son lived to tell the story of being picked up by a tornado and carried more than a fourth of a mile, flying far above the church steeples, before being gently set down again. The young boy and one of the ladies said they had the pleasure of flying alongside a horse. The horse "kicked and struggled" as it flew high above, and was set down unharmed about a mile away. (The Weather Channel)

1908: Severe thunderstorms spawned eighteen tornadoes over across the Central Gulf Coast States claiming the lives of 310 persons. The state of Mississippi was hardest hit. A tornado near Hattiesburg, Mississippi killed 143 persons and caused more than half a million dollars damage. Four violent tornadoes accounted for 279 of the 310 deaths. The deadliest of the four tornadoes swelled to a width of 2.5 miles as it passed near Amite, Louisiana. The tornado also leveled most of Purvis Mississippi.

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. Up to seven inches of rain drenched Virginia in three days. Morgantown WV received 4.27 inches in 24 hours, and flooding was reported in south central West Virginia. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Low pressure produced high winds and severe thunderstorms in the Southern Plains Region. Strong thunderstorm winds destroyed two mobile homes at Whitt TX injuring two persons. Winds associated with the low pressure system gusted to 70 mph at Guadalupe Pass TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Twenty cities in the central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Russell KS was the hot spot in the nation with a reading of 101 degrees. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from Colorado to Wisconsin. Hail four and a half inches in diameter was reported at Sargeant NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Southern High Plains to north central Kansas. Thunderstorms spawned ten tornadoes, including one which injured four persons and caused 1.5 million dollars damage at Shattuck OK. Thunderstorms also produced softball size hail at Wheeler TX, wind gusts to 85 mph southwest of Arnett OK, and 13.45 inches of rain near Caldwell TX, which resulted in the worst flooding in recent memory for that area. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003: The temperature soared to a maximum of 70 degrees in Juneau, Alaska. This is the earliest record of 70-degree reading to occur in Juneau.

2010: April Tornado Outbreak- During a significant severe weather outbreak across the South on April 22-25, 142 tornadoes raked the region, including 77 on April 24 alone. Ten died from the long-track tornado that swept across Mississippi on April 24. A long-lived twister left a trail of destruction extending over 149 miles from Louisiana through Mississippi, resulting in 10 deaths and 75 injuries. This EF4 storm, which grew to a width of 1.75 miles, sported the fourth longest track in Mississippi history. This storm destroyed part of Yazoo City, Mississippi. The Swiss Reinsurance Company estimated insured damages with this outbreak at \$1.58 billion.

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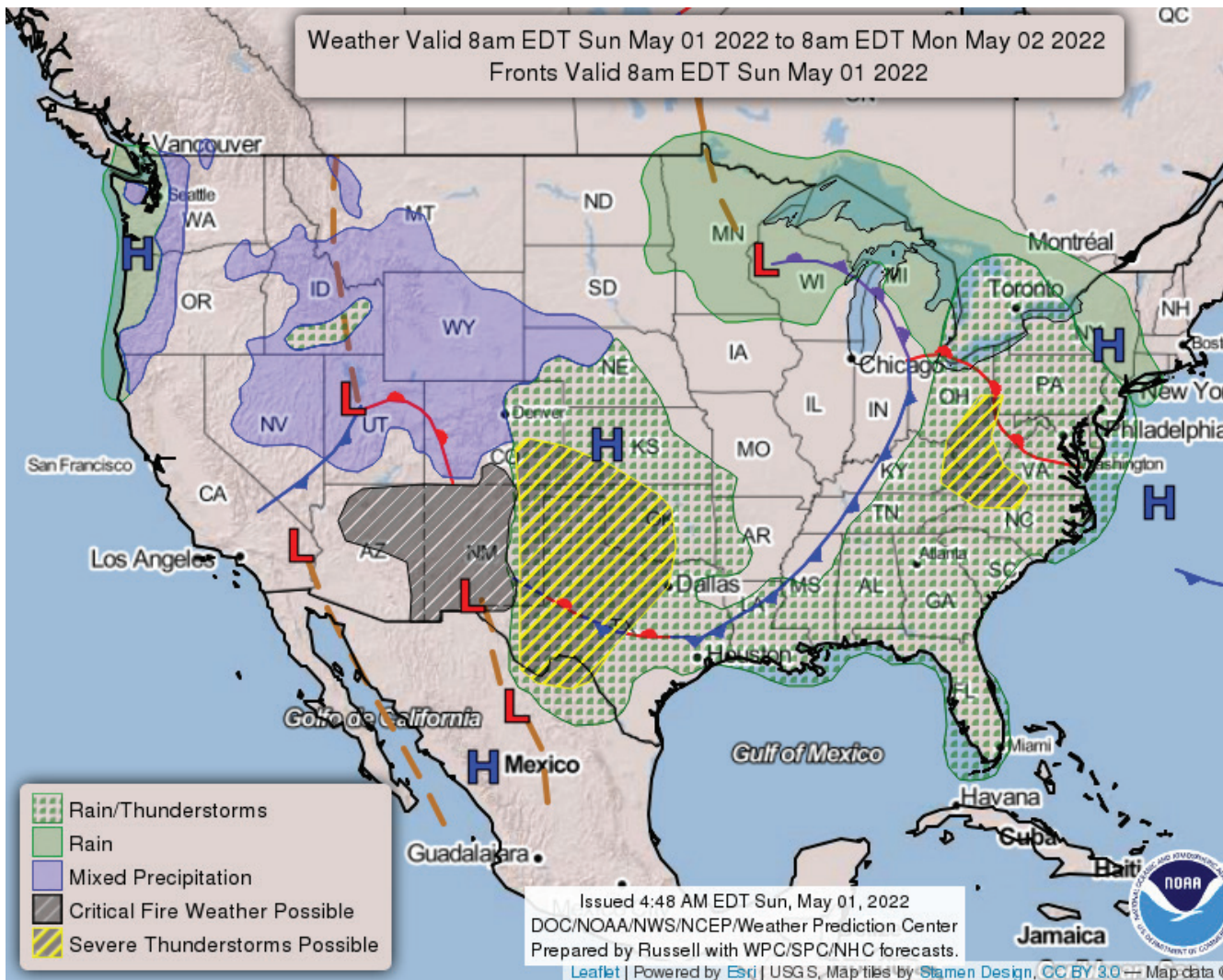
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 50 °F at 2:27 AM**  
**Low Temp: 37 °F at 9:55 PM**  
**Wind: 31 mph at 5:18 PM**  
**Precip: 1.09 (Total: 1.55)**

Day length: 14 hours, 22 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 102 in 1959  
Record Low: 19 in 1961  
Average High: 65°F  
Average Low: 38°F  
Average Precip in April.: 1.91  
Precip to date in April.: 4.70  
Average Precip to date: 3.97  
Precip Year to Date: 6.50  
Sunset Tonight: 8:40:30 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:16:55 AM



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## LOOK UP!

It was a bright summer day. The waves were stable, and the winds gentle. It was a perfect day for sailing. Rod decided to take his young son with him to enjoy a day on the ocean in his new sailboat. Not long after they left the dock, he heard Little Ben's voice screaming, "Dad, help me. Dad, I'm afraid. Dad, save me."

Looking around he could not see him anywhere on deck. Suddenly, he turned his eyes upward, and there was Little Ben at the top of the mast. "If you don't come to get me, I'm going to fall!" he shouted.

"Don't look down, Son. Whatever you do, don't look down. Look up. Hold the ladder steps tightly, look up toward the sky and take one step at a time beneath you until you reach the deck."

Little Ben did what he was told and returned safely to the arms of his dad. Ben looked up just as the Psalmist did: "I will lift up my eyes to You, to You who sit enthroned in heaven."

Do you need to "lift up your eyes to God?" Recall the story of Peter. He and the other disciples were fighting heavy seas and strong winds. Jesus came to them walking on water. They screamed in terror. So, He said to them, "Don't be afraid!"

Peter said, "If it's really You, tell me to come to You walking on water." Jesus said, "It's me. Come on." And he did.

Peter went over the side of the boat and began walking on water. But when he realized what he had done and the size of the waves, he got scared, and shouted, "Save me, Lord."

And Jesus did.

To look at circumstances always distress us. To look to our friends may disappoint us. To look at ourselves will discourage us. To look up to the Lord will bring us deliverance.

Prayer: Teach us to look up to You in trust, Lord, when the storms of life are raging. Help us to remember that You are always there to rescue us! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I will lift up my eyes to You, to You who sit enthroned in heaven. Psalm 123:1



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## 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,  
04/07/2022 Groton CDE  
04/09/2022 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)  
04/09/2022 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)  
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  
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  
01/29/2023 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)

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News from the  Associated Press

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

02-10-19-25-35

(two, ten, nineteen, twenty-five, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$20,000

Lotto America

07-14-30-44-45, Star Ball: 3, ASB: 2

(seven, fourteen, thirty, forty-four, forty-five; Star Ball: three; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$12.23 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$57 million

Powerball

14-21-37-44-63, Powerball: 1, Power Play: 3

(fourteen, twenty-one, thirty-seven, forty-four, sixty-three; Powerball: one; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$20 million

## Kyle Garlick homers twice, Twins roll past Rays 9-1

By DICK SCANLON Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Kyle Garlick hit two home runs off Tampa Bay starter Shane McClanahan and the Minnesota Twins beat the Rays 9-1 on Saturday.

The second homer, Garlick's third of the season, came with Carlos Correa on base in the sixth inning and broke a 1-1 tie.

Correa had three hits for the Twins, who have won eight of nine.

Cody Stashak (2-0) got the win in relief.

McClanahan (1-2) struck out a career-high 11 in five innings, giving up three runs on four hits, including Garlick's two homers. The left-hander leads the American League with 42 strikeouts.

"You know he's got potential to strike out a lot of guys," said Garlick, who had the first multi-homer game of his career. "It was nice to be able to put a couple good swings on him, put some runs on the board and then let everybody else kind of take it from there."

Garlick's first home run, a shot over the center field wall, came on McClanahan's seventh pitch of the game. The second homer came on McClanahan's 90th and final pitch. It was also the end of the game for Garlick, who was replaced for defensive purposes.

"That's kind of his specialty — hitting left-handed pitching. He did a nice job, got to Shane," Rays manager Kevin Cash said. "I thought Shane was just awesome again today. (There were) two pitches he'd like to have back, and when they leave the ballpark it can be frustrating."

Max Kepler, who took Garlick's spot in the batting order, had two hits, including a two-run homer in the ninth.

Twins starter Chris Archer gave up one run on two hits and three walks while striking out four in four innings.

Taylor Walls hit his first home run in the second inning off Archer, one of four hits for Tampa Bay, which had a three-game winning streak halted.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Twins: CF Byron Buxton, who was hit on the hand by a pitch Friday night, was a late scratch. ... 1B Miguel Sano was back in the lineup for the first time after injuring his knee in a walk-off celebration Tuesday



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night. ... RHP Bailey Ober (right groin strain) was placed on the 10-day injured list, retroactive to April 29.

Rays: C Francisco Mejia missed his eighth game on the COVID-related IL, but is now symptom-free and through the protocols. The Rays face a decision on whether to bring him on their their West Coast trip.

## FOUR RAYS COACHES SIDELINED BY COVID

Another COVID-19 outbreak hit the Rays coaching staff Saturday, taking pitching coach Kyle Snyder, field coordinator Paul Hoover, bench coach Matt Quatraro and bullpen coach Stan Boroski away from the team until further notice. None of them will be on the plane Sunday night when the Rays fly to Oakland for the start of a nine-game trip.

"When something like this snowballs like it did today. ... I mean, we've been dealing, dealing, dealing trying to contain it, and then the last day or two it's hit us pretty hard," Cash said.

## TWINS STAYING CAUTIOUS

"I hope as the weather continues to warm up that we deal with it less and less but I don't think it's something that is going to be completely absent as we go on," said Twins manager Rocco Baldeli said of COVID-19. "Obviously there's a lot going on the other side of the field right now. We would like to avoid what the other team is dealing with. I've got a lot of friends on the other side I'd like to spend some time with and give a hug to and all that, but I think they understand. I think everyone understands what we're up against right now and hopefully it's just a blip and something that we get past and that they get past too."

## UP NEXT

RHP Chris Paddack (0-2) will pitch for the Twins in Sunday's series finale against Rays LHP Josh Fleming (2-2, 4.50).

## Rapid City police: Altercation over debt turns deadly

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — An altercation over a debt has turned deadly in Rapid City, according to police. Officers responded to an alley about 8:30 p.m. Friday where they found a man with a gun shot wound. Medical units arrived and administered aid, but the man died at the scene.

Officers and detectives from the Rapid City Police Department and the Pennington County Sheriff's Office investigated throughout the night by watching surveillance video and interviewing witnesses.

A 26-year-old Rapid City man was arrested on a possible charge of possession of a firearm as a felon.

According to police, the man who was arrested was being beaten with a blunt instrument when he shot the other man.

The man who died has not been identified.

## China's 'zero-COVID' restrictions curb May 1 holiday travel

By KEN MORITSUGU and EMILY WANG Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Only a few people strolled the pedestrian-only streets Sunday in central Beijing's historic Qianmen district, normally an area that would be bustling with tourists on what was a national holiday and a sunny spring day.

Many Chinese marked a quiet May Day this year as the government's "zero-COVID" approach restricts travel and enforces lockdowns in multiple cities. Millions remain restricted to their buildings or compounds in Shanghai, China's largest city, under a lockdown that has only slightly eased.

Under an order announced the previous afternoon, all Beijing restaurants were closed to dine-in customers Sunday and can offer only takeout and delivery through the end of the national holiday on Wednesday. Parks and tourist attractions in the Chinese capital are limited to half capacity. The Universal Studios theme park, which opened last year, said it had shut down temporarily.

In Qianmen, the touristy neighborhood around the street that leads to the imposing gates of the former imperial palace, some people bought food from stalls and ate on outdoor benches. Wang Liying said sales at her noodle and stir-fry restaurant have plunged 98% during the holiday compared to last year.

"The remaining 2% is very little for us," she said. "There is not much we can do with the pandemic."

The virus situation varies across the vast nation of 1.4 billion people, but the Transport Ministry said last

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week that it expected 100 million trips to be taken from Saturday to Wednesday, which would be down 60% from last year. Many of those who are traveling are staying within their province as local governments discourage or restrict cross-border travel to try to keep out new infections.

China is sticking to a strict "zero-COVID" policy even as many other countries are easing restrictions and seeing if they can live with the virus. Much of Shanghai — a finance, manufacturing and shipping hub — remains locked down, disrupting people's lives and dealing a blow to the economy.

The major outbreak in Shanghai, where the death toll has topped 400, appears to be easing. The city recorded about 7,200 new locally transmitted cases on Saturday, down from a peak of 27,605 on April 13. Outside of Shanghai, only 364 new cases were found in the rest of mainland China.

Beijing, which has tallied 350 cases in the past nine days, is restricting activity to try to prevent a large outbreak and avoid a citywide lockdown similar to Shanghai. Individual buildings and housing complexes with coronavirus cases have been sealed off. Gyms and theaters have been closed for the holiday period. Visitors to many office buildings and tourist sites such as the Great Wall must show proof of a negative COVID-19 test within the previous 48 hours.

Epidemic prevention and control are at the most critical juncture in Beijing, said Pang Xinghuo, deputy head of the city's disease prevention center. While most of the new cases are among people under quarantine, some have been found in the broader community, Peng said. Beijing is conducting repeated rounds of mass testing to find and isolate any infected people.

Online booking agency Ctrip said last week that people were booking travel to cities that were mostly free of the virus, such as Chengdu in Sichuan province and nearby Chongqing. Other popular destinations included Wuhan, where the world's first major outbreak of COVID-19 occurred in early 2020. About half the orders on the Ctrip platform were for travel within a province.

## **Some evacuated from Mariupol; US lawmaker Pelosi visits Kyiv**

By CARA ANNA and YESICA FISCH Associated Press

ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine (AP) — Some women and children have been evacuated from a steel plant that is the last defensive stronghold in the bombed-out ruins of the Ukrainian city of Mariupol, while U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Ukraine's president in the country's capital in a show of American support.

Russia's high-stakes offensive in coastal southern Ukraine and the country's eastern industrial heartland has Ukrainian forces fighting village by village and more civilians fleeing airstrikes and artillery shelling as the war draws near their doorsteps.

The United Nations was working to evacuate residents from blockaded Mariupol. As many as 100,000 people are believed to still be in the port city, included up to civilians who were hunkered down with an estimated 2,000 Ukrainian fighters beneath a sprawling Soviet-era steel plant that is the only part of the city not occupied by the Russians.

Pelosi, who is second in line to succeed the president, is the most senior American lawmaker to visit Ukraine since the war erupted. Her Saturday trip with a congressional delegation was a sign of unflinching U.S. support and came just days after Russia launched rockets at the capital during a visit by U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres.

During a Sunday news conference in the Polish city of Rzeszow, Pelosi said she and other members of the delegation applauded the courage of the Ukrainian people and brought Zelenskyy "a message of appreciation from the American people for his leadership."

Russian forces have embarked on a major military operation to seize significant parts of southern and eastern Ukraine following their failure to capture the capital, Kyiv. Mariupol is a major target because of its strategic location near the Crimea Peninsula, which Russia seized from Ukraine in 2014.

Details about the scope of Saturday's evacuations and the possibility of more to come Sunday were unclear given the number of parties involved in the negotiations and the volatile situation on the ground.

Russia's RIA Novosti news agency said Saturday that 19 adults and six children were transported out of the city but gave no further details. A top official with the Azov Regiment, the Ukrainian unit defend-

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ing the Azovstal steelworks, said 20 civilians were evacuated Saturday, though it was not clear if he was referring to the same group.

In a video posted on the regiment's Telegram channel, regiment Deputy Commander Sviatoslav Palamar called for the evacuation of wounded Ukrainian fighters as well as civilians. "We don't know why they are not taken away and their evacuation to the territory controlled by Ukraine is not being discussed," he said.

The U.N. has not confirmed that people were able to leave Mariupol on Saturday. An Associated Press journalist saw women and children arriving in Bezimenne, a village which is under the control of Moscow-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine.

A Red Cross representative there said 20 civilians were evacuated from the Azovstal steel plant amid a temporary cease-fire observed by Ukrainian and Russian forces. Ukraine has blamed the failure of numerous previous evacuation attempts on continued Russian shelling.

The Russian Defense Ministry said a total of 46 people, groups of 25 and 21, were evacuated from areas near the plant.

Elsewhere in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region, about 20 older adults and children clutching bags along with their dogs and cats boarded a minivan Saturday in the town of Lyman, where at least half the population has fled Russian shelling. The van, marked with a sign reading "evacuation of children" in Ukrainian, sped off toward the city of Dnipro as explosions were heard in the distance.

"The liberators have come and have freed us from what? Our lives?" said Nina Mihaylenko, a professor of Russian language and literature, referring to the Russian forces.

Undeterred by air raid sirens and warnings to shelter at home, people in the southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia visited cemeteries Sunday, when Ukrainians observed the Orthodox Christian day of the dead.

"If our dead could rise and see this, they would say, 'It's not possible, they're worse than the Germans,'" Hennadiy Bondarenko, 61, said while marking the day with his family at a picnic table among the graves. "All our dead would join the fighting, including the Cossacks."

In his nightly video address late Saturday, Zelenskyy warned that Russia was "gathering additional forces for new attacks against our military in the east of the country." He urged Russian troops not to fight in Ukraine, saying even their generals expect that thousands more of them will die.

"But why do the Russian soldiers need this? Why do their families need this?" Zelenskyy said in Russian.

Getting a full picture of the unfolding battle in eastern Ukraine has been difficult because airstrikes and artillery barrages have made it extremely dangerous for reporters to move around. Also, both Ukraine and Moscow-backed rebels have introduced tight restrictions on reporting from the combat zone.

But Western military analysts have suggested that the offensive in the Donbas region, which includes Mariupol, was going much slower than planned. So far, Russian troops and the separatists appeared to have made only minor gains in the month since Moscow said it would focus its military strength in the east.

Video and images from inside the Mariupol steel plant, shared with The Associated Press by two Ukrainian women who said their husbands are among the fighters refusing to surrender there, showed unidentified men with stained bandages; others had open wounds or amputated limbs.

A skeleton medical staff was treating at least 600 wounded people, said the women, who identified their husbands as members of the Azov Regiment of Ukraine's National Guard. Some of the wounds were rotting with gangrene, they said.

The AP could not independently verify the date and location of the video, which the women said was taken in the last week in the maze of corridors and bunkers beneath the plant.

Numerically, Russia's military manpower vastly exceeds Ukraine's. In the days before the war began, Western intelligence estimated Russia had positioned near the border as many as 190,000 troops; Ukraine's standing military totals about 200,000, spread throughout the country.

With plenty of firepower still in reserve, Russia's offensive still could intensify and overrun the Ukrainians. Overall the Russian army has an estimated 900,000 active-duty personnel. Russia also has a much larger air force and navy.

Hundreds of millions of dollars in military assistance has flowed into Ukraine since the war began, but



Russia's vast armories mean Ukraine will continue to require huge amounts of support.

## **Pelosi visits Kyiv, meets with Ukraine president**

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has led a congressional delegation to Kyiv to meet with Ukraine's president before heading to Poland for talks with officials there on Sunday.

Pelosi, a California Democrat who is second in line to the presidency after the vice president, is the most senior American lawmaker to visit Ukraine since Russia's war began more than two months ago. Her visit to Kyiv on Saturday marks a major show of continuing support for the country's struggle against Moscow.

"Our delegation traveled to Kyiv to send an unmistakable and resounding message to the entire world: America stands firmly with Ukraine," Pelosi said in a statement released Sunday.

Footage released by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office showed Pelosi and other U.S. legislators in Kyiv. In video later released by Pelosi's office, the speaker and Zelenskyy both thanked each other for their support in the war.

"We'll win and we'll win together," Zelenskyy said.

Pelosi added: "We are here until victory is won."

The full congressional delegation included Democratic Reps. Gregory Meeks of New York who chairs the House Foreign Affairs Committee; Adam Schiff, of California who chairs the House Intelligence Committee; Jim McGovern of Massachusetts who chairs the House Rules Committee; Jason Crow of Colorado; Barbara Lee of California; and Bill Keating of Massachusetts.

"You all are welcome," Zelenskyy told the delegation.

Pelosi told Zelenskyy: "We believe that we are visiting you to say thank you for your fight for freedom."

"We are on a frontier of freedom and your fight is a fight for everyone. Our commitment is to be there for you until the fight is done," Pelosi added.

The visit wasn't previously announced.

The delegation continued its trip in southeast Poland, and Pelosi said they would later visit the capital, Warsaw, to meet with President Andrzej Duda and other senior officials. Poland has received more than 3 million refugees from Ukraine since Russia launched its war on Feb. 24.

"We look forward to thanking our Polish allies for their dedication and humanitarian efforts," she said.

In a news conference in Poland, Pelosi said she and others in the delegation applauded the courage of the Ukrainian people. She added that the delegation brought Zelenskyy "a message of appreciation from the American people for his leadership."

Schiff said the U.S. lawmakers had a three-hour meeting with Zelenskyy and his administration, talking about sanctions, weapons and aid assistance. Schiff promised that intelligence sharing would continue between Ukraine and the U.S.

"This is a struggle of freedom against tyranny," Schiff said. "And in that struggle, Ukraine is on the front lines."

McGovern said Russia's war had repercussions far beyond Ukraine, saying it was exacerbating a food crisis that would be disastrous for poor people across the globe.

"Putin's brutal war is no longer only a war against the people of Ukraine," McGovern said. "It's also a war against the world's most vulnerable."

He added that Ukraine is a "breadbasket of the world."

"I don't think that Putin cares if he starves the world," McGovern said.

## **Ukrainians in Romania help new refugee arrivals**

By CHISATO TANAKA Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Elena Trofimchuk fled Ukraine to Romania more than a month ago. She now sees Bucharest's North Railway Station as a second home.

She doesn't live there, but it's where she spends most of her day welcoming fellow Ukrainian refugees

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escaping from Russia's war and helping them sort out tickets, accommodation and onward destinations. The 26-year-old said that keeping herself busy and useful keeps her from dwelling on Russia's shelling of her hometown, Odesa, where many of her friends remain.

"If you sit and do nothing, you can just become crazy because you're always searching for news. It's very hard. So here I can help people buy tickets and find accommodations. I even help Romanians in the kitchen," Trofimchuk said.

Before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, she worked as a photographer.

Trofimchuk is just one of many orange-vested Ukrainian volunteers working at the station.

Ukrainian volunteer Vitalii Ivanchuk flew all the way from Sri Lanka where he lived with his Ukrainian girlfriend to help refugees coming into Romania.

The 29-year-old IT developer said that many Ukrainians have a tough time communicating with Romanians, and volunteers who can speak both Ukrainian and English are in high demand.

His girlfriend, Anastasiia Haiduk, quit her investment job shortly after the war started and decided to volunteer at the station until the war ends and she can be reunited with her family in Ukraine.

The Romanian government is currently giving away free train tickets to Ukrainian refugees arriving in Romania that they can use to travel on to Hungary, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia and Bulgaria.

Trofimchuk said she was moved by the warm welcome and the Romanians' show of solidarity with Ukraine.

"Every Romanian person wants to help. They're very friendly. And I was shocked about this. I'm so happy that everyone wants to help," Trofimchuk said.

Nearly 5.5 million people have fled Ukraine since the start of Russia's war on Feb. 24, according to data from the U.N. refugee agency.

Most have entered countries on Ukraine's western border: more than 3 million people have fled to Poland, while more than 817,000 others have fled to Romania and around 520,000 have crossed into Hungary, UNHCR statistics show.

For some Ukrainian volunteers, their Saturday evening ritual is to join a weekly demonstration at the Russian Embassy in Bucharest along with Ukrainian residents and Romanians.

Station volunteers in Bucharest say they are now seeing an increasing number of arrivals from Odesa following Russian missile attacks on the southern Ukrainian port city on the Black Sea coast.

But Trofimchuk skipped a recent protest, saying she expected people to arrive from her hometown.

"I will stay at the station as late as I can because there might be people who need my help," Trofimchuk said.

## Firefighters battling New Mexico blaze brace for wind

By PAUL DAVENPORT Associated Press

Over 1,000 firefighters backed by bulldozers and aircraft battled the largest active wildfire in the U.S., after strong winds had pushed it across some containment lines and closer to a small city in northern New Mexico.

Calmer winds on Saturday aided the firefighting effort after gusts accelerated the fire's advance to a point on Friday when "we were watching the fire march about a mile every hour," said Jayson Coil, a fire operations official.

Ash carried 7 miles (11 kilometers) through the air had fallen on Las Vegas, population about 13,000, and firefighters were trying to prevent the fire from getting closer, said Mike Johnson, a spokesperson with the fire management team.

But fire managers warned of windy conditions expected in the coming days, as well as impacts from smoke, and officials urged residents to remain vigilant for further possible evacuation orders.

Stewart Turner, a fire behavior analyst with the fire management team, warned Saturday of a "very serious week" ahead with the forecasted winds.

More extreme fire danger was forecast for Sunday for parts of New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada and Colorado, according to the National Weather Service.

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Mapping imagery indicated the fire that has burned at least 166 homes grew in size from 103 square miles (266 square kilometers) on Friday to 152 square miles (393 square kilometers) by early Saturday, officials said. The fire was described as 30% contained during a briefing Saturday evening.

Winds in northern New Mexico gusted up to 65 mph (105 kph) Friday before subsiding as nightfall approached. By Saturday, aircraft that dump fire retardant and water could resume flights to aid ground crews and bulldozers.

The fire's rapid growth Friday forced crews to repeatedly change positions because of threatening conditions but they managed to immediately re-engage without being forced to retreat, Coil said. No injuries were reported.

The fire started April 6 when a prescribed burn set by firefighters to clear out small trees and brush that can fuel fires was declared out of control. That fire then merged with another wildfire a week ago.

With the fire's recent growth, estimates of people forced to evacuate largely rural areas plus a subdivision near Las Vegas doubled from 1,500 to 2,000 people to between 3,000 and 4,000, said Jesus Romero, the assistant manager for San Miguel County.

Officials have said the fire has destroyed 277 structures, including at least 166 homes. No updated damage assessments were available on Saturday, Romero said.

Wildfires were also burning elsewhere in New Mexico and in Arizona. The fires are burning unusually hot and fast for this time of year, especially in the Southwest, where experts said some timber in the region is drier than kiln-dried wood.

Wildfires have become a year-round threat in the West given changing conditions that include earlier snowmelt and rain coming later in the fall, scientist have said. The problems have been exacerbated by decades of fire suppression and poor management along with a more than 20-year megadrought that studies link to human-caused climate change.

In northern Arizona, firefighters neared full containment of a 30 square-mile (77 square-kilometer) blaze that destroyed at least 30 homes near Flagstaff and forced hundreds to evacuate. A top-level national wildfire management team turned oversight of fighting the blaze back to local firefighting forces on Friday.

National forests across Arizona announced they would impose fire restrictions starting next Thursday that limit campfires to developed recreation sites and restrict smoking to inside vehicles, other enclosed spaces and to the recreation sites.

## **Biden roasts Trump, GOP, himself at correspondents' dinner**

By FARNOUSH AMIRI and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House press corps' annual gala returned Saturday night along with the roasting of Washington, the journalists who cover it and the man at the helm: President Joe Biden.

The White House Correspondents' Association dinner, sidelined by the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, featured Biden as the first president in six years to accept an invitation. Donald Trump shunned the event while in office.

"Just imagine if my predecessor came to this dinner this year," Biden told an audience of 2,600, among them journalists, government officials and celebrities. "Now that would really have been a real coup."

The president took the opportunity to test out his comedic chops, making light of the criticism he has faced in his 15 months in office while taking aim at his predecessor, the Republican Party and the members of the press.

"I'm really excited to be here tonight with the only group of Americans with a lower approval rating than I have," Biden said to the Hilton ballroom filled with members of the media.

Biden also made light of the "Let's Go Brandon" slogan, which has become the right's stand-in for swearing at the president.

"Republicans seem to support one fella, some guy named Brandon," Biden said, causing an uproar of laughter among the crowd. "He's having a really good year. I'm happy for him."

As far as roasting the GOP, he said, "There's nothing I can say about the GOP that Kevin McCarthy hasn't



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already put on tape.”

He also took a jab at Fox News. “I know there are a lot of questions about whether we should gather here tonight because of COVID. Well, we’re here to show the country that we’re getting through this pandemic. Plus, everyone has to prove they are fully vaccinated and boosted,” Biden said. “Just contact your favorite Fox News reporter. They’re all here. Vaccinated and boosted.”

In addition to speeches from Biden and comedian Trevor Noah, the hourslong event had taped skits from talk-show host James Corden, comedian Bill Eichner and even Biden himself.

“Thank you for having me here,” Noah said to Biden. “And I was a little confused on why me, but then I was told that you get your highest approval ratings when a biracial African guy is standing next to you.”

While the majority of the speech was filled with cutting jabs, Biden did make note of the important role journalism plays in American democracy, especially in the last decade.

“I mean this from the bottom of my heart, that you, the free press, matter more than you ever did in the last century,” he said. “You are the guardians of the truth.”

The dinner had other serious moments, with tributes to pioneer journalists of color, aspiring student reporters as well as a dedication to the journalists detained, injured or killed during the coverage of the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The premier event for news media in Washington, the correspondents’ dinner mixed Washington journalists like CNN’s Jake Tapper and MSNBC’s Joy-Ann Reid with celebrities Kim Kardashian, Pete Davidson, Brooke Shields, Caitlyn Jenner, Drew Barrymore and Martha Stewart. Among the large swath of government officials and other prominent figures was Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Accompanied by the first lady, the president came to the event while trying to strike a careful balance with the nation fatigued by the pandemic yet facing an uptick in infections. The ongoing national threat has struck closer to home for the president: Vice President Kamala Harris tested positive this past week and Dr. Anthony Fauci skipped the dinner for health precautions.

The U.S. was experiencing a COVID-19 case spike from a highly contagious subvariant of omicron, with confirmed infections rising to about 44,000 per day, up from 26,000 a month ago. Still, virus deaths and hospitalizations were near, or at, pandemic lows, with the BA.2 variant proving less severe than earlier virus strains.

In the wake of the recent Gridiron Club press dinner in Washington, dozens of attendees, including members of Congress and of Biden’s Cabinet and journalists, tested positive for COVID-19. The White House Correspondents’ Association said it was requiring same-day antigen testing for its dinner attendees even before the Gridiron outbreak, then added a vaccination requirement.

Biden, 79, decided to pass up the meal but turn up later for the program. While he planned to be masked when not speaking, a maskless president greeted award winners on the dais and could be seen smiling broadly during the dinner program.

The correspondents’ dinner debuted in 1921. Three years later, Calvin Coolidge became the first president to attend and all have since, except Trump. Jimmy Carter and Richard Nixon opted not to attend every year of their presidencies, however, and Reagan, then recovering from an assassination attempt, missed the 1981 installment — but called in from Camp David.

“The thing I think this shows is the restoration to the health of the relationship,” Harold Holzer, author of the book “The Presidents vs. The Press” and the director of the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College in New York, said ahead of the dinner. “It’s still barbed, there are still tense moments. But that’s OK.”

## **ESSAY: For a gay country boy, Naomi Judd did build a bridge**

By JEFF McMILLAN Associated Press

Somewhere in Michigan in the early 1990s, a teenage farm boy clings to a chain-link fence at the edge of the county fairgrounds. He is angling for a distant, and free, glimpse of Naomi and Wynonna Judd.

They step into view briefly, gliding on high heels to the edge of the grandstand stage. From this distance,

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illuminated by a spotlight, they are a blur of sparkling sequins and red hair. Naomi, the mother of the duo and the de facto emcee, says something, but even amplified, her words float away in the hot August night.

Soon, though, a gentle strumming and Wynonna's throaty voice carry to him: "I would whisper love so loudly, every heart could understand that love and only love can join the tribes of man."

Then, his mother calls to him: "Jeff, get in the car! It's time to go."

I'm not sure what it was, but for me and for most people, the chemistry between Naomi and Wynonna and the feelings they stirred inside the listener were almost tangible. My first (and only) sighting of them is forever etched in my mind.

After word Saturday of Naomi's death, I'm now realizing how much I've been through with them.

When I was a preteen beginning to reckon with my sexuality and dealing with bullies, and the Judds sang "Mama He's Crazy," I understood the narrator's insecurities -- why would anyone want me?

After my grandfather died, I listened to "Grandpa" over and over, crying that he would no longer be able to tell me about the good old days, which he actually used to do. (The song has since lost its luster for me a bit — the good old days weren't really that good. But I still always think of my grandpa.)

And after my father died, I wanted to be at that breakfast table they sang about in "Love Is Alive," soaking up all the love that sat there.

Those voices. That hair. Those gowns. For a lonely gay boy in the rural Midwest, they were a calling card, and a lifeline of sorts.

Wynonna was clearly the bigger voice of the duo. But without Naomi's harmonies and stage presence, I doubt her daughter ever would have become the one-name star she is. And would Ashley have made it in Hollywood without her mother's support?

As I grew older, the story of the Judds impressed me, and I saw bits of it in my own life. Naomi's single motherhood, a nurse trying to score a recording contract, clicked with my view of my newly widowed mother, another country woman, trying to keep it together while still raising children.

If Naomi could do it, so could she. And so could I.

When cancer visited one of my leg bones after my senior year in high school, I thought of Naomi and her hepatitis diagnosis. Eventually she triumphed over it. So did I.

I went off to college, got married (well, committed -- same-sex marriage wasn't yet legal in those days) and ended up in New York. Like Naomi, I had persevered and made it out.

There, I cultivated a new circle of friends, many of them also from Michigan. One night a Judds song came on, I forget which one, and one of my new friends began singing along. It turned out we all loved the Judds. I had to go to all the way to New York City to find my country people.

Soon we two couples became inseparable, taking camping trips together several times a summer. When my husband and I moved to Philadelphia and they stayed in New York, we continued our campground reunions, and there was never a camping trip without a Judds singalong around the fire, under the starlit Pennsylvania sky.

Both couples have since divorced, and I have remarried — making sure to impress an appreciation of the Judds upon my new husband — but we all remain close and in touch. The lack of animosity between us reminds me of that line in "Love Can Build a Bridge," perhaps Naomi's crowning achievement as a songwriter: "Love and only love can join the tribes of man."

I once sang that song at a piano bar, and a man in the audience approached me afterward, impressed by the song (probably not by my performance). It was so beautiful and artful, he thought it was a Broadway song. No, I said, just an old country song. He was shocked.

In this world, at this time, can love really join the tribes of man? It was not a question when the Judds asked, "Don't you think it's time?" Naomi knew the answer all along.

## Ukrainians plead for Mariupol rescue; Russian advance crawls

By MSTYSLAV CHERNOV and YESICA FISCH Associated Press

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KHARKIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian forces fought village by village Saturday to hold back a Russian advance through the country's east, while the United Nations worked to broker a civilian evacuation from the last defensive stronghold in the bombed-out ruins of the port city of Mariupol.

An estimated 100,000 civilians remain in the city, and up to 1,000 are living beneath a sprawling Soviet-era steel plant, according to Ukrainian officials. Ukraine has not said how many fighters are also in the plant, the only part of Mariupol not occupied by Russian forces, but Russia put the number at about 2,000.

Russian state media outlets reported Saturday that 25 civilians had been evacuated from the Azovstal steelworks, though there was no confirmation from the U.N. Russia's RIA Novosti news agency said 19 adults and six children were brought out, but gave no further details.

A top official with the Azov Regiment, the Ukrainian unit defending the plant, said 20 civilians were evacuated during a cease-fire, though it was not clear if he was referring to the same group as the Russian news reports.

"These are women and children," Sviatoslav Palamar said in a video posted on the regiment's Telegram channel. He also called for the evacuation of the wounded: "We don't know why they are not taken away and their evacuation to the territory controlled by Ukraine is not being discussed."

Video and images from inside the plant, shared with The Associated Press by two Ukrainian women who said their husbands are among the fighters refusing to surrender there, showed unidentified men with stained bandages; others had open wounds or amputated limbs.

A skeleton medical staff was treating at least 600 wounded people, said the women, who identified their husbands as members of the Azov Regiment of Ukraine's National Guard. Some of the wounds were rotting with gangrene, they said.

In the video the men said that they eat just once daily and share as little as 1.5 liters (50 ounces) of water a day among four people, and that supplies inside the besieged facility are depleted.

One shirtless man appeared to be in pain as he described his wounds: two broken ribs, a punctured lung and a dislocated arm that "was hanging on the flesh."

"I want to tell everyone who sees this: If you will not stop this here, in Ukraine, it will go further, to Europe," he said.

AP could not independently verify the date and location of the video, which the women said was taken in the last week in the maze of corridors and bunkers beneath the plant.

The women urged that Ukrainian fighters also be evacuated alongside civilians, warning they could be tortured and executed if captured. "The lives of soldiers matter too," Yuliia Fedusiuk told AP in Rome.

In his nightly video address late Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy switched into Russian to urge Russian troops not to fight in Ukraine, saying even their generals expect that thousands more of them will die.

The president accused Moscow of recruiting new soldiers "with little motivation and little combat experience" so that units gutted early in the war can be thrown back into battle.

"Every Russian soldier can still save his own life," Zelenskyy said. "It's better for you to survive in Russia than to perish on our land."

In other developments:

— Ukrainian Deputy Agriculture Minister Taras Vysotsky said in televised remarks that Russian forces have seized hundreds of thousands of tons of grain in territory under their control. Ukraine is a major grain producer, and the invasion has pushed up world prices and raised concerns about shortages.

— A Russian rocket attack destroyed the airport runway in Odesa, Ukraine's third-most populous city and a key Black Sea port, the Ukrainian army said.

— The bodies of three men were found buried in a forest near the Kyiv suburb of Bucha, the head of Kyiv's regional police force said. The men, whose bodies were found Friday, had been tortured before they were shot in the head, Andriy Nebytov wrote on Facebook. Ukrainian officials have alleged that retreating Russian troops carried out mass killings of civilians in Bucha.

— Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview that Russian and Ukrainian negotiators talk "almost every day." However, he told Chinese state news agency Xinhua, "progress has not been easy."



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— Two buses sent to evacuate residents from the eastern town of Popasna were fired upon, and contact with the organizers was lost, Mayor Nikolai Khanatov said: “We know that (the buses) reached the town and then came under fire from an enemy sabotage and reconnaissance group.”

Getting a full picture of the unfolding battle in eastern Ukraine has been difficult because airstrikes and artillery barrages have made it extremely dangerous for reporters to move around. Also, both Ukraine and Moscow-backed rebels have introduced tight restrictions on reporting from the combat zone.

But Western military analysts suggested that the offensive in the Donbas region, which includes Mariupol, was going much slower than planned. So far, Russian troops and the separatists appeared to have made only minor gains in the month since Moscow said it would focus its military strength in the east.

Numerically, Russia’s military manpower vastly exceeds Ukraine’s. In the days before the war began, Western intelligence estimated Russia had positioned near the border as many as 190,000 troops; Ukraine’s standing military totals about 200,000, spread throughout the country.

Yet, in part because of the tenacity of the Ukrainian resistance, the U.S. believes the Russians are “at least several days behind where they wanted to be” as they try to encircle Ukrainian troops in the east, said a senior U.S. defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the American military’s assessment.

With plenty of firepower still in reserve, Russia’s offensive still could intensify and overrun the Ukrainians. Overall the Russian army has an estimated 900,000 active-duty personnel. Russia also has a much larger air force and navy.

Hundreds of millions of dollars in military assistance has flowed into Ukraine since the war began, but Russia’s vast armories mean Ukraine’s needs are nearly inexhaustible.

Mariupol officials have described dire shortages of food, water and medicine. U.N. humanitarian spokesman Saviano Abreu said the world organization was negotiating with authorities in Moscow and Kyiv, but he could not provide details of the ongoing evacuation effort “because of the complexity and fluidity of the operation.”

“There is, right now, ongoing, high-level engagements with all the governments, Russia and Ukraine, to make sure that you can save civilians and support the evacuation of civilians from the plant,” Abreu told AP. He would not confirm video posted on social media purportedly showing U.N.-marked vehicles in Mariupol.

Ukraine has blamed the failure of numerous previous evacuation attempts on continued Russian shelling.

## Motorcycles rumble through Canadian capital under police eye

OTTAWA (AP) — Motorcycles rumbled through the streets of Canada’s capital city Saturday while a strong police presence kept a close eye on a couple of rallies during the “Rolling Thunder” protest.

Many of the protesters involved in a morning service at the National War Memorial and a later rally on Parliament Hill were also involved in the “Freedom Convoy” that shuttered downtown Ottawa for weeks in February.

Police made a handful of arrests Saturday, including a driver who allegedly tried to jump onto a sidewalk to get around officers. Police arrested the person for dangerous driving and found them in breach of their bail conditions related to the previous protest, when they were ordered not to return to Ottawa.

Ottawa By-law and Regulatory Services said more than 560 tickets have been handed out for parking violations, smoking, noise and encumbering a highway, and 39 vehicles have been towed since Friday morning.

Hundreds of demonstrators gathered at the National War Memorial which was a focal point during the early days of the February protests.

Supporters watched retired Afghanistan veteran Christopher Deering lay a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in a quasi-remembrance ceremony.

Other speakers expressed their opposition to vaccine mandates, COVID-19 restrictions and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government. Supporters were asked to remove slogans with expletives aimed at the prime minister for the event.

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A small group of counter-protesters gathered across the street from the memorial chanting "go home" at the protesters.

Police formed a line in between the two groups to keep the peace.

At the end of the service, the crowd marched down Elgin Street to greet a convoy of around 150 motorcycles traveling on a route outlined by police.

Police stopped the motorcycle convoy two blocks from the National War Memorial, and had the motorcyclists travel back out of the core on a designated route.

Later, protesters gathered on Parliament Hill. Some danced on the street in front of parliament shouting "freedom!"

The protest in February lasted three weeks, as big-rigs and other trucks embedded themselves in front of Parliament Hill and set up encampments that blocked traffic. The federal government invoked the Emergencies Act in an effort to dislodge them and similar protesters who blockaded border crossings.

This weekend Ottawa police called in more than 800 reinforcements from RCMP and other police services who blocked off highway exits and every street into the core to prevent a new encampment from forming.

Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson said police took "a strong stance" to prevent the kind of prolonged demonstration that gripped Ottawa in February.

Saturday's events were relatively peaceful compared to an altercation between police and protesters Friday evening, when officers arrested seven people and faced off with what they described as an "aggressive crowd" just outside the parliamentary precinct.

## Naomi Judd, of Grammy-winning duo The Judds, dies at 76

By KRISTIN M. HALL AP Entertainment Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Naomi Judd, whose family harmonies with daughter Wynonna turned them into the Grammy-winning country stars The Judds, has died. She was 76.

Her daughters, Wynonna and Ashley, announced her death on Saturday in a statement provided to The Associated Press.

"Today we sisters experienced a tragedy. We lost our beautiful mother to the disease of mental illness," the statement said. "We are shattered. We are navigating profound grief and know that as we loved her, she was loved by her public. We are in unknown territory."

Naomi Judd died near Nashville, Tennessee, said a statement on behalf of her husband and fellow singer, Larry Strickland. It said no further details about her death would be released and asked for privacy as the family grieves.

The Country Music Hall of Fame will continue with a planned induction ceremony for The Judds on Sunday.

"Naomi overcame incredible adversity on her way to a significant place in music history. Her triumphant life story overshadows today's tragic news," said Hall of Fame CEO Kyle Young in a statement. "Her family has asked that we continue with The Judds' official Hall of Fame induction on Sunday. We will do so, with heavy hearts and weighted minds. Naomi and daughter Wynonna's music will endure."

They had also just announced an arena tour to begin in the fall, their first tour together in over a decade.

The mother-daughter performers scored 14 No. 1 songs in a career that spanned nearly three decades. The red-headed duo combined the traditional Appalachian sounds of bluegrass with polished pop stylings, scoring hit after hit in the 1980s. Wynonna led the duo with her powerful vocals, while Naomi provided harmonies and stylish looks on stage.

They also made a return to awards shows when they performed at the CMT Music Awards earlier this month.

"Honored to have witnessed "Love Can Build a Bridge" just a few short weeks ago," singer Maren Morris posted on Twitter on Saturday.

"This is heartbreaking news! Naomi Judd was one of the sweetest people I've ever known," singer Travis Tritt posted on Twitter, noting that he had worked with Judd several times on screen and during performances.

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"Country music lost a true legend...sing with the angels, Naomi!!! We're all sending up prayers for the Judd family today," singer Carrie Underwood wrote on Twitter.

After rising to the top of country music, they called it quits in 1991 after doctors diagnosed Naomi Judd with hepatitis C. Wynonna continued her solo career.

The Judds' hits included "Love Can Build a Bridge" in 1990, "Mama He's Crazy" in 1984, "Why Not Me" in 1984, "Turn It Loose" in 1988, "Girls Night Out" in 1985, "Rockin' With the Rhythm of the Rain" in 1986 and "Grandpa" in 1986.

Born Diana Ellen Judd in Ashland, Kentucky, Naomi was working as a single mother and nurse in Nashville, when she and Wynonna started singing together professionally. Their unique harmonies, together with elements of acoustic music, bluegrass and blues, made them stand out in the genre at the time.

"We had a such a stamp of originality on what we were trying to do," Naomi Judd told The AP after it was announced that they would be joining the Country Music Hall of Fame.

In an interview with the AP in March, Naomi Judd said she was already deep into preparation for the upcoming tour and was looking forward to the Hall of Fame induction.

"To have all the incredible opportunities that I've had, being reminded of all that just makes me very humbled and I just want to bask in the moment," Judd said.

Wynonna Judd remarked that throughout their lives, their music had kept them together.

"Music is the bridge between mom and me, and it it bonds us together," she told the AP. "Even in the not easy times."

The Judds released six studio albums and an EP between 1984 and 1991 and won nine Country Music Association Awards and seven from the Academy of Country Music. They earned a total of five Grammy Awards together on hits like "Why Not Me" and "Give A Little Love," and Naomi earned a sixth Grammy for writing "Love Can Build a Bridge."

The Judds also performed at the halftime of the 1994 Super Bowl, along with Travis Tritt, Clint Black and Tanya Tucker.

The Judds sang about family, the belief in marriage and the virtue of fidelity. Because Naomi was so young looking, the two were mistaken for sisters early in their career. She was also known to prefer flashy stage outfits, full of sparkles and rhinestones, over casual boots and cowboy style clothing.

They first got attention singing on Ralph Emery's morning show in early 1980, where the host named them the "Soap Sisters" because Naomi said she used to make her own soap.

After the success of "Mama He's Crazy," they won the Horizon Award at the 1984 CMA Awards. Naomi started her speech by saying "Slap the dog and spit in the fire!"

Naomi Judd was open about her health struggles, as well as severe depression and anxiety. In her memoir, "River of Time," she described her diagnosis of hepatitis C, which she said she unknowingly contracted during her time as a nurse. She said that by 1995, her doctors had told her she was completely free of the virus.

In the memoir, she described feeling like she had lost her identity when she returned home after a 2010 reunion tour, isolating herself at her home and dealing with crippling panic attacks. She also said that she had been dealing with trauma from childhood sexual abuse. She was admitted to a psychiatric ward at a hospital and spent time in an outpatient treatment program.

Daughter Ashley Judd is an actor and humanitarian known for her roles in such movies as "Kiss the Girls," "Double Jeopardy" and "Heat."

Strickland, who was a backup singer for Elvis Presley, was married to Naomi Judd for 32 years.

## Draft Day 3: Kickers and running backs take NFL spotlight

By BARRY WILNER AP Pro Football Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — In Las Vegas, which bills itself as the "Entertainment Capital of the World," an NFL draft bereft of star quarterback prospects wouldn't seem a fit.

It didn't matter, though, because as personnel people throughout the league predicted, the 2022 crop



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was so deep that even in the final four rounds, there were plenty of highlights.

They didn't include the passers very much, but such was the quality of QBs.

Running backs and kickers — kickers? — were more of a focus for much of Day 3 on Saturday.

Indeed, two punters and a placekicker went as the final day of selections began before any more quarterbacks were taken. Maybe it shouldn't be surprising that LSU placekicker Cade York went to Cleveland at No. 124 overall, followed by Penn State punter Jordan Stout six spots later to Baltimore. At No. 133 to Tampa Bay it was punter Jake Camarda of Georgia — four spots before the fifth quarterback in total, Western Kentucky's Bailey Zappe, headed to New England.

Of course, it can't be ignored that the Patriots once had some luck with a late-round QB. What was his name?

"With the draft, it's always a tossup, but I did have a good idea that I was going to be a Raven," said Stout, who will compete with veteran Sam Koch. "I'm extremely excited about it."

"One big thing for me is that I know special teams is always very successful with the Ravens."

True. Justin Tucker has been the most accurate placekicker in NFL history, and Koch has been a mainstay in Baltimore since 2006.

Cleveland saw in York exactly what every team wants in a kicker with a game on the line: utter confidence.

"I believe that I am the best kicker in this draft because I have been able to make big kicks in big situations," he said. "I have been put out for a lot of long field goals in tough situations, and I still brought out good results in it. I think that is what makes me the best."

Many scouts considered Camarda the best punter in the nation. He was the 11th player selected from the national champs.

"I think it has certainly prepared me for the next level, playing at Georgia for four years, playing in every single biggest game you can possibly imagine," Camarda noted. "The Bucs certainly are a team that's looking to make a big run. I definitely think that's something with my history, playing in those big games and big moments, I certainly think it's going to help play being with the Bucs."

Another punter, San Diego State's left-footed Matt Araiza, was the opening pick of the sixth round, by Buffalo. He'll go from kicking in the pristine conditions of San Diego to the often-frigid Western New York.

"I'm kind of excited for that challenge," said Araiza, who would someday like to punt, placekick and hold in the NFL. "I love it. I think the biggest job in the NFL is to out-punt the player across from you. As long as I can bring better field position to my team than the team we're playing against, that's kind of my goal."

"I think leg strength and athleticism are two things that help a lot in the conditions. Those are two things I pride myself in and two things I'll continue to work on. So I'm excited and I'm confident I'll be able to do well in these conditions."

And yet another punter, Trenton Gill of North Carolina State, was the 255th selection by Chicago.

The philosophy of taking running backs deeper into proceedings is nothing new, and several highly accomplished ball carriers were taken in Round 4. After Tampa Bay made tight end Cade Otton of Washington the leadoff pick — Rob Gronkowski has not publicly committed to return — Houston grabbed RB Dameon Pierce of Florida. From there, the likes of Zamir White of Georgia, Isaiah Spiller of Texas A&M, Pierre Strong, a standout from South Dakota State of the FCS and Hassan Haskins of Michigan went off the board.

The fifth round, however, got started with Washington grabbing North Carolina QB Sam Howell, who was projected as a much higher selection just a year ago, but didn't have an outstanding final season for the Tar Heels.

Howell called it "a little stressful" to sit through four rounds.

"I was just hanging out and just waiting for a call, and I'm so glad it was Washington that called," Howell said. "This is a perfect spot for me. It's a team I wanted to play for all along."

Zappe wasn't hearing from any comparisons to New England's 2000 sixth-rounder at No. 199, Tom Brady.

"I am continuing to be myself," he said. "I am not trying to be anybody else. I am going to come to work every day and get 1% better. That is how I look at it. I do not worry too much about the naysayers and critics. The Patriots believe in me, and those coaches, players, and organization believed in me, and

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those are the people I'm going to try to prove right, that this pick was the right one."

One feel-good story came from Pittsburgh, which added Michigan State's versatile tight end/H back/running back Connor Heyward. The Steelers already have star defensive lineman Cam Heyward, and their father, the late Craig "Ironhead" Heyward played 11 pro seasons.

Cam Heyward compared the Steelers to a family. After, naturally, telling Connor his first job was to carry around older brother's shoulder pads.

Perhaps fittingly the final choice, Mr. Irrelevant, went to San Francisco, which took Brock Purdy of Iowa State.

A quarterback.

No surprise that the national champion Georgia Bulldogs dominated these proceedings overall. They set a record through six rounds by having 15 selected: eight on defense, six on offense, and punter Camarda, which is the number they finished with. And Cincinnati had more draftees (nine) than Ohio State (five).

At the other end, Texas didn't have a player drafted for just the second time since the 1970 merger. The other was in 2014, the last class for coach Mack Brown, who led the Longhorns to the 2005 national championship.

Texas, on its third coach since Brown, wasn't the only Big 12 school from the football-crazed Lone Star State to get shut out. TCU went without a pick for the first time since 2008 after the Horned Frogs and 20-year coach Gary Patterson agreed to part ways midseason last year.

## Tornado rips through Kansas; 3 students killed in crash

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — A tornado that barreled through parts of Kansas destroyed or damaged hundreds of homes and buildings, injured several people and left more than 15,000 people without power, officials said Saturday.

In addition to wreckage from the tornado itself, three University of Oklahoma meteorology students traveling back from storm chasing in Kansas were also killed in a crash Friday evening, according to officials.

Nicholas Nair, 20, of Denton, Texas; Gavin Short, 19, of Grayslake, Illinois; and Drake Brooks, 22, of Evansville, Indiana, died in the crash shortly before 11:30 p.m. Friday, according to an Oklahoma Highway Patrol report.

The three were in a vehicle being driven by Nair southbound on Interstate 35 when the vehicle hydroplaned and was struck by a tractor-trailer rig in Tonkawa, about 85 miles (137 kilometers) north of Oklahoma City, the report said.

A statement released by OU said: "The university is devastated to learn of the tragic passing of three students. Each were valued and loved members of our community."

More than 1,000 buildings were affected when a strong twister swept through Andover on Friday evening, according to authorities. In the daylight Saturday, emergency crews found a more widespread path of destruction than was earlier estimated.

"We now know that our damage path extended approximately 3 1/2 to 4 miles (5.6 to 6.4 kilometers) to the north of where we believed it to have ended last night," Andover Deputy Fire Chief Mike Roosevelt said at a briefing.

There were no reported fatalities or critical injuries from the tornado itself, despite the widespread destruction. Officials said only a few injuries had been reported. In Sedgwick County, three people were injured, including one woman who sustained serious injuries.

Search and rescue operations continued Saturday with more than 200 emergency responders from 30 agencies. Officials kept volunteers away from the damage until a secondary search of debris is done.

Andover Fire Chief Chad Russell said earlier that some neighborhood homes "were completely blown away."

There are homes knocked completely off their foundations and entire neighborhoods wiped out, Russell said.

City Hall, the Andover YMCA and Prairie Creek Elementary School were among buildings heavily damaged.

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Field crews from the National Weather Service worked Saturday to determine the extent and strength of the twister, said meteorologist Kevin Darmofal at the Wichita office.

Flor and Aldo Delgado said they prayed in the basement of their Andover home as a tornado passed right above them, destroying their home and cars.

The couple looked out of the window Friday night and saw the tornado beginning to form, so they headed to the basement.

"The lights started flickering and eventually went out, and within a minute from that the whole house started shaking and it was so loud. We started feeling water hitting our faces, and there was just dust everywhere. It lasted for what felt like a minute that it was right above us," Aldo Delgado said.

Flor Delgado said she could hear their home being torn apart as they prayed for their safety, the Wichita Eagle reported.

"In the moment I realized there is absolutely nothing we could do. I knew my husband felt it too because he was calm and comforting me, but at one point he just starts losing it and crying. I could hear his voice cracking as he's praying," she said.

Once the tornado passed, the couple made it out of the debris with only the clothes on their backs. Their home, cars and personal items are gone.

"We didn't even have our wedding rings on at the time," Flor Delgado added.

Gov. Laura Kelly declared a State of Disaster Emergency for the hardest-hit areas. The declaration makes state resources available to help local jurisdictions with response and recovery efforts in areas impacted statewide.

Evergy said about 15,000 customers lost power during the tornado and that work continued to restore electricity. Any broken gas and water lines were shut off and by noon there were no known active leaks.

In addition to the tornadoes, large hail was reported in several towns across the Plains. Hail the size of softballs was spotted near Holbrook, Nebraska, and Enterprise, Kansas, according to the National Weather Service and storm spotters.

## Bill Murray says his behavior led to complaint, film's pause

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

Bill Murray on Saturday acknowledged that his behavior on set led to a complaint from a woman and the suspension of filming on his latest movie.

The actor and comedian, in his first comments about the shutdown of "Being Mortal," described the incident as a "difference of opinion" but declined to provide specifics on what transpired, or who it involved.

"I did something I thought was funny and it wasn't taken that way," he told CNBC during an interview at the annual shareholders meeting for Berkshire Hathaway. "The movie studio wanted to do the right thing so they wanted to check it all out, investigate it and so they stopped the production."

Murray said he and the unnamed woman are talking it through and "trying to make peace with each other." He didn't say when or if production would resume and whether he'd continue to take part in the film.

"We're both professionals," Murray said of the woman. "We like each other's work. We like each other I think and if you can't really get along and trust each other, there's no point in going further working together or making a movie as well."

The 71-year-old "Ghostbusters" and "Caddyshack" comedian suggested the changing nature of what's considered appropriate humor was a factor.

"It's been quite an education for me," he said. "The world is different than it was when I was a little kid. What I always thought was funny as a little kid isn't necessarily the same as what's funny now. Things change and the times change so it's important for me to figure it out."

Murray added: "I think it's a sad dog that can't learn anymore. I don't want to be that sad dog and I have no intention of it."

Searchlight Pictures has confirmed production was suspended but has so far declined to elaborate, citing the ongoing inquiry. The entertainment website Deadline reports the complaint against Murray was filed



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earlier this month and production was halted last week.

"Being Mortal" stars Murray, Seth Rogen, Keke Palmer and Aziz Ansari, who is writing, directing and producing the movie.

Production started in Los Angeles in March and the film was slated to be released in theaters next year. The film is based on surgeon and author Dr. Atul Gawande's 2014 non-fiction book on end-of-life care, "Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End."

## Warren Buffett tells shareholders about spending \$51 billion

By JOSH FUNK AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Warren Buffett gave Berkshire Hathaway investors a few details Saturday about how he spent more than \$50 billion earlier this year and again reassured them that the company he built will endure long after the 91-year-old billionaire is gone.

Tens of thousands of investors packed an Omaha arena Saturday to listen to Buffett and Berkshire's vice chairmen answer questions at Berkshire's annual meeting that was back in person for the first time since the pandemic began, but the turnout was likely smaller than when it used to regularly attract more than 40,000.

Berkshire revealed in its earnings report Saturday morning that its mountain of cash shrank to \$106 billion in the first quarter from \$147 billion at the beginning of the year as Buffett invested \$51 billion in stocks and repurchased \$3.2 billion of its own shares.

Buffett told shareholders that right after he told them in his annual letter on Feb. 26 that he was having trouble finding anything to buy at attractive prices, Berkshire spent more than \$40 billion on stocks over the next three weeks.

Buffett didn't reveal everything he bought but did mention several highlights, including boosting Berkshire's stake in oil giant Chevron to \$26 billion, up from \$4.5 billion at the beginning of the year to make it one of the conglomerate's four biggest investments. Berkshire also spent billions buying up 14% of Occidental Petroleum's shares in the first half of March, and added to its already massive investment in Apple stock.

Edward Jones analyst Jim Shanahan said that with the Chevron and Occidental investments combined Berkshire now has more than \$40 billion invested in the oil sector.

Even before Saturday, it was clear Buffett was on the hunt because he agreed to buy the Allegheny insurance conglomerate for \$11.6 billion and made another multibillion-dollar investment in HP Inc. Buffett said Saturday that he also bought three German stocks but didn't name them.

Buffett said Berkshire was able to take advantage of the fact that Wall Street is largely run like a "gambling parlor" with many people speculating wildly on stocks.

"Occasionally, Berkshire gets a chance to do something, and it's not because we're smart. It's because we're sane," Buffett said.

Buffett revealed Saturday that he has made a big bet on Microsoft's planned acquisition of Activision Blizzard. He said a couple months after one of Berkshire's other investment managers bought roughly 15 million Activision shares, he increased that stake to roughly 9.5% of the company — or about 74 million shares — after Microsoft announced the deal in January because Activision stock was selling for less than the \$95 per share deal price.

Both Buffett and his investing partner, Charlie Munger, reiterated their past criticisms of cryptocurrencies like bitcoin because they don't produce anything. Munger said cryptocurrencies are "stupid because they're likely to go to zero" and "evil because they undermine the Federal Reserve." Plus he said they make American leaders seem foolish for not banning them like China did.

Even though Berkshire is led by Buffett and the 98-year-old Munger, investors didn't ask much about succession planning perhaps because Buffett said a year ago that Vice Chairman Greg Abel, who oversees all of the company's non-insurance businesses now, will eventually replace him as CEO. Berkshire also has two other investment managers who will take over the company's portfolio.

Buffett said he thinks Berkshire's decentralized culture that relies heavily on trusting people to do the right

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thing and avoiding huge risks will help the company thrive well into the future and many of the companies it owns like BNSF railroad and its major utilities will remain stalwarts of the economy.

"Berkshire is built to forever. There is no finish point," Buffett said. "The new management — and the management after them and after them — are just custodians of a culture that's embedded."

Investor Harris Kupperman, who leads the Praetorian Capital hedge fund, said he's not especially worried about the Berkshire's future because the eclectic conglomerate has a solid foundation.

"He built it as well as he could build it. Nobody is ever going to be him. That's obvious," Kupperman said.

He said perhaps Buffett's eventual successor will be able to reevaluate some long-term Berkshire investments that Buffett has held for decades and decide whether it still makes sense to hang onto things like the company's huge Coca-Cola stake.

But Buffett's and Munger's ages are always in the back of Berkshire investors' minds because there may not be too many more meetings with both of them. Munger sat in a wheelchair during Saturday's meeting.

"Actuarially, I don't know how much longer they'll be able to do this," said Josu Elejabarrieta, 43, of Miami, who was attending his first meeting.

In response to concerns about the current high inflation, Buffett told investors that the best thing they could do is invest in themselves so that someone will always want to pay them for their services regardless of how much a dollar is worth. He said all of Berkshire's companies are paying extraordinarily higher prices for raw materials and products, but inflation should have been expected after all the money the government sent out during the pandemic.

Buffett said he thinks the country has become more polarized than it has been at any time since the 1930s when public opinion split sharply about President Franklin Roosevelt.

"I don't think it's a good development for society generally when people get tribal," he said.

After the question-and answer-period, Berkshire shareholders rejected several proposals backed by large pension funds, including one that would have required Buffett to give up his chairman role and ones that would have required the company to issue reports on the financial risks it faces related to climate change and on its diversity efforts. Berkshire and Buffett, who controls 32% of the vote, opposed all the proposals partly because the company is so decentralized that it requires few centralized reports.

Earlier Saturday, Berkshire said its first quarter earnings fell more than 53% on a large swing in the paper value of its investments. Berkshire said it earned \$5.46 billion, or \$3.702 per Class A share, during the quarter. That's down from \$11.7 billion, or \$7.638 per Class A share, a year ago.

Buffett says that Berkshire's operating earnings are a better measure of the company's performance because they exclude investment gains and losses. By that measure, Berkshire's earnings remained steady at \$7.04 billion, or \$4,773.84 per Class A share, up from \$7.018 billion, or \$4,577.10 per Class A share, a year ago.

The four analysts surveyed by FactSet expected Berkshire to report operating earnings of \$4,277.66 per Class A share.

In addition to investments, Berkshire Hathaway owns more than 90 business outright, including BNSF railroad, several major utilities, Geico insurance and an assortment of manufacturing and retail companies.

Janet Dalton of Overland Park, Kansas, said she has been attending the meetings for decades. Her family has an even longer association with the company because her dad bought stock in the Berkshire Hathaway textile company even before Buffett took it over in 1965 and began to convert it into the conglomerate it is today. They never sold the shares, which now sell for nearly \$500,000 apiece.

Dalton said she misses the more detailed business answers that Buffett used to give at the earlier meetings she attended.

"When I first came to the meetings, it was like getting a mini-MBA. Now it has become more general," Dalton said. But part of what keeps her coming back year after year is the chance to reconnect with friends and fellow investors she's met at past meetings.

**Angelina Jolie makes surprise Ukraine visit, meets children**

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LVIV, Ukraine (AP) — Hollywood actress and U.N. humanitarian Angelina Jolie made a surprise visit to the western Ukrainian city of Lviv on Saturday, the Lviv regional governor said on Telegram.

According to Maksym Kozytskyy, Jolie — who has been a UNHCR Special Envoy for Refugees since 2011 — had come to speak with displaced people who have found refuge in Lviv, including children undergoing treatment for injuries sustained in the missile strike on the Kramatorsk railway station in early April.

The attack in the eastern Ukrainian city appeared to deliberately target a crowd of mostly women and children trying to flee a looming Russian offensive, killing at least 52 and wounding dozens more.

“She was very moved by (the children’s) stories,” Kozytskyy wrote. “One girl was even able to privately tell Ms. Jolie about a dream she’d had.”

He said Jolie also visited a boarding school, talk with students and took photos with them, adding “she promised she would come again.”

According to Kozytskyy, Jolie also met with evacuees arriving at Lviv’s central railway station, as well as with Ukrainian volunteers providing the new arrivals with medical help and counseling,

“The visit was a surprise to us all,” he wrote. “Plenty of people who saw Ms. Jolie in the Lviv region could not believe that it was really her. But since Feb. 24, Ukraine has shown the entire world that there are plenty of incredible things here.”

## Vegas water intake now visible at drought-stricken Lake Mead

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A massive drought-starved reservoir on the Colorado River has become so depleted that Las Vegas now is pumping water from deeper within Lake Mead where other states downstream don’t have access.

The Southern Nevada Water Authority announced this week that its Low Lake Level Pumping Station is operational, and released photos of the uppermost intake visible at 1,050 feet (320 meters) above sea level at the lake behind Hoover Dam.

“While this emphasizes the seriousness of the drought conditions, we have been preparing for this for more than a decade,” said Bronson Mack, water authority spokesman. The low-level intake allows Las Vegas “to maintain access to its primary water supply in Lake Mead, even if water levels continue to decline due to ongoing drought and climate change conditions,” he said.

The move to begin using what had been seen as an in-case-we-need-it hedge against taps running dry comes as water managers in several states that rely on the Colorado River take new steps to conserve water amid what has become perpetual drought.

“We don’t have enough water supplies right now to meet normal demand. The water is not there,” Metropolitan Water District of Southern California spokesperson Rebecca Kimitich said this week. The agency told some 6 million people in sprawling Los Angeles, Ventura and San Bernardino counties to cut their outdoor watering to one day a week, effective June 1, or face stiff fines.

The surface level of another massive Colorado River reservoir, Lake Powell, dipped below a critical threshold in March — raising concerns about whether Glen Canyon Dam can continue generating power for some 5 million customers across the U.S. West.

Lake Mead and Lake Powell upstream are the largest human-made reservoirs in the U.S., part of a system that provides water to more than 40 million people, tribes, agriculture and industry in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and across the southern border in Mexico.

In Arizona, falling Colorado River levels have prompted an emphasis on conservation and raised fears of reduced water deliveries to desert areas that include metro Phoenix, Tucson, tribal lands and farms.

At Lake Mead, the new pumps are fed by an intake drilled nearer to the bottom of the lake and completed in 2020 to ensure the ability to continue to draw water for Las Vegas, its casinos, suburbs and 2.4 million residents and 40 million tourists per year.

The “third straw” draws drinking water at 895 feet (272.8 meters) above sea level — below a point at which water would not be released downstream from Hoover Dam.

Together, the pipeline and pump projects cost more than \$1.3 billion. Drilling began in 2014, amid pro-

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jections that the lake level would continue to fall due to drought. Increasingly dry conditions in the region are now attributed to long-term climate change.

Lake Mead, between Nevada and Arizona, reached its high-water mark in July 1983, at 1,225 feet (373.4 meters) above sea level. On Friday, the level was 1,055 feet (321.6 meters) — about 30% full. Some of the steepest cliffs bordering the lake show 170 feet (51.8 meters) of white mineral “bathtub ring.”

“Without the third intake, Southern Nevada would be shutting its doors,” said Pat Mulroy, former longtime chief of the Las Vegas-based water authority, who is now a consultant. “That’s pretty obvious, since the first straw is out of the water.”

A mid-level pipeline also can draw water from 1,000 feet (304.8 meters).

The authority maintains that the Las Vegas water supply is not immediately threatened. It points to water conservation efforts that it says since 2002 have cut regional consumption of Colorado River water by 26% while the area population has increased 49%.

## Meadows says 1/6 panel has sought to publicly ‘vilify’ him

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Trump White House chief of staff Mark Meadows accused the congressional committee investigating last year’s attack on the U.S. Capitol of leaking all of the text messages he provided to the panel in what he says was an effort to vilify him publicly.

The argument was made in a filing Friday in Washington’s federal court, where Meadows sued in December to invalidate subpoenas issued to him for his testimony and to Verizon for his cell phone records.

In the latest filing, lawyers for Meadows asked a judge to reject the committee’s request for a court ruling in its favor that could force Meadows to comply with the subpoenas. The committee requested an expedited briefing schedule Wednesday after filing its motion the previous week.

The lawyers say Meadows deserves a chance through the fact-gathering process known as discovery to gather information about questions that are still in dispute, such as the committee’s claims that former President Donald Trump did not properly invoke executive privilege over the items subpoenaed by the panel because he did not communicate that position directly to the committee.

“Mr. Meadows cannot possibly know whether that unsupported contention is true without discovery — or whether the Select Committee had awareness of former President Trump’s assertions,” the motion states. It adds that Meadows must have the ability to obtain any communications between the committee and Trump and possibly to take depositions of people familiar with those discussions.

The House voted in December to hold Meadows in criminal contempt after he ceased cooperating, referring the matter to the Justice Department, which has not said whether it will take action. Meadows’ legal team has said he provided extensive cooperation but that the committee refused to respect Trump’s assertion of executive privilege.

The motion by Meadows also accuses the committee of waging a “sustained media campaign” against him. Though it does not provide evidence, it says the committee has leaked all of the text messages Meadows has produced to the committee.

“The Congressional Defendants, under the auspices of a legitimate subpoena, induced Mr. Meadows to produce thousands of his private communications only to use them in a concerted and ongoing effort to vilify him publicly through the media,” Meadows’ attorney, George Terwilliger, wrote in the motion.

Court filings by the committee have shown how Meadows was in regular contact before Jan. 6, 2021, with Republican allies who advanced false claims of election fraud and supported overturning the results of the race won by President Joe Biden. A filing a week ago cited testimony from a White House aide who said Meadows had been advised beforehand that there could be violence on Jan. 6.

The committee declined through a spokesperson to comment Saturday about Meadows’ accusations against the panel.



## Despite payment, investors brace for Russia to default

By KEN SWEET AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Prices for Russian credit default swaps — insurance contracts that protect an investor against a default — plunged sharply overnight after Moscow used its precious foreign currency reserves to make a last minute debt payment on Friday.

The cost for a five-year credit default swap on Russian debt was \$5.84 million to protect \$10 million in debt. That price was nearly half the one on Thursday, which at roughly \$11 million for \$10 million in debt protection was a signal that investors were certain of a eventual Russian default.

Russia used its foreign currency reserves sitting outside of the country to make the payment, backing down from the Kremlin's earlier threats that it would use rubles to pay these obligations. In a statement, the Russia Finance Ministry did not say whether future payments would be made in rubles.

Despite the insurance contract plunge, investors remain largely convinced that Russia will eventually default on its debts for the first time since 1917. The major ratings agencies Standard & Poor's and Moody's have declared Russia is in "selective default" on its obligations.

Russia has been hit with extensive sanctions by the United States, the European Union and others in response to its Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine and its continuing military operation to take over Ukrainian territory.

The Credit Default Determination Committee — an industry group of 14 banks and investors that determines whether or not to pay on these swaps — said Friday that they "continue to monitor the situation" after Russia's payment. Their next meeting is on May 3.

At the beginning of April, Russia's finance ministry said it tried to make a \$649 million payment due April 6 toward two bonds to an unnamed U.S. bank — previously reported as JPMorgan Chase.

At that time, tightened sanctions imposed for Russia's invasion of Ukraine prevented the payment from being accepted, so Moscow attempted to make the debt payment in rubles. The Kremlin, which repeatedly said it was financially able and willing to continue to pay on its debts, had argued that extraordinary events gave them the legal footing to pay in rubles, instead of dollars or euros.

Investors and rating agencies, however, disagreed and did not expect Russia to be able to convert the rubles into dollars before a 30-day grace period expired next week.

## Teacher under fire for cotton, cuffs in class on slavery

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP) — Rochester school officials are investigating allegations that a white teacher told his class of mostly Black students to pick seeds out of cotton and put on handcuffs during lessons on slavery in a seventh-grade social studies class.

"It made me feel bad to be a Black person," student Jahmiere O'Neal told news outlets.

The teacher has been put on leave while the school system investigates the allegations. They came to light after an appalled parent posted on Facebook that her daughter was confronted with the cotton-picking lesson Tuesday.

"He made a mockery out of slavery," the mother, Precious Tross, who also goes by Precious Morris, told news outlets later.

"I don't have a problem with you teaching our kids about slavery and what our ancestors went through and how they had to pick cotton," she said. "Our teachers back in the day told us that, but they don't bring in cotton and make you pick cotton seeds out of cotton."

School officials haven't identified the teacher. Teachers union President Adam Urbanski told WXXI-AM that "if someone departs from what they should be doing, they should suffer the consequences, but due process has to be allowed first."

Tross and Vialma Ramos-O'Neal, who is Jahmiere's mother, said the teacher let white children refuse to take part in the cotton-picking while not letting kids of color opt out.

"I immediately was like, 'Oh, I'm not doing that,'" said Morris' daughter, Ja'Nasia Brown. "And then he was like, 'Do it. It's for a good grade.'"

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On another occasion, the teacher brought in handcuffs and shackles, according to the students. Tross said that when her daughter balked at putting them on, the teacher threatened to send her to the principal's office or the school counselor.

The parents are calling for the teacher's firing and for his teaching license to be revoked.

School Principal Kelly Nicastro told parents in a letter that school leaders "take these allegations very seriously," and a statement from the school board called them "extremely troubling."

"In a district of Black and brown students, it is important to be sensitive of the historical framework by which our students are engaging and learning," board President Cynthia Elliott said. About half the School of the Arts' students are Black.

## Alabama prison official missing after escorting inmate

FLORENCE, Ala. (AP) — A prison official from Alabama is missing after escorting an inmate to a courthouse for a hearing.

The Lauderdale County Sheriff's Office said in a Facebook post Saturday that Assistant Director of Corrections Vicky White disappeared while escorting an inmate being held on capital murder charges. The inmate is also missing.

On Saturday morning, Sheriff Rick Singleton confirmed the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, FBI, and U.S. Marshals are assisting in the investigation.

White, 56, who's been with the department for 16 years, left the detention center with inmate Casey White on Friday morning and neither has been seen since. The pair are not related. The vehicle they were traveling in when they left the detention center was discovered at a nearby shopping center parking lot, according to the sheriff's office.

White, 38, was being held on capital murder charges in the 2015 death of Connie Ridgeway. He confessed to the slaying in 2020 while in state prison for other crimes, WHNT-TV reported.

At a news conference Friday, Singleton said Vicky White, armed with a 9mm, left the detention center with the inmate around 9:41 a.m. headed to the courthouse for what she said was a mental health evaluation for Casey. She was alone with the inmate, which the sheriff said was in direct violation of department policy.

"Our policy is for any inmate with those kinds of charges to have two sworn deputies escort them. And that did not happen," Singleton said.

Singleton also said there was no mental health evaluation for the inmate scheduled at the courthouse.

White also told co-workers she had a doctor's appointment scheduled, which was confirmed but the office said the deputy never showed.

Officials said no one realized the two were missing until 3:30 p.m. on Friday. Deputies tried to contact Vicky White but her phone repeatedly went to voicemail.

Singleton said his department was "aggressively investigating" the incident and would be looking into previous interaction between the two to "see if something else was going on."

Singleton said his department was "shocked" and that it was obviously a possibility that the corrections officer helped him escape. Singleton told news outlets that Vicky White had turned in her retirement papers the day before she went missing.

Regardless of her involvement, the sheriff acknowledged she could very well be in danger.

## Black Catholic nuns: A compelling, long-overlooked history

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

Even as a young adult, Shannen Dee Williams – who grew up Black and Catholic in Memphis, Tennessee – knew of only one Black nun, and a fake one at that: Sister Mary Clarence, as played by Whoopi Goldberg in the comic film "Sister Act."

After 14 years of tenacious research, Williams – a history professor at the University of Dayton -- arguably now knows more about America's Black nuns than anyone in the world. Her comprehensive and compelling history of them, "Subversive Habits," will be published May 17.

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Williams found that many Black nuns were modest about their achievements and reticent about sharing details of bad experiences, such as encountering racism and discrimination. Some acknowledged wrenching events only after Williams confronted them with details gleaned from other sources.

"For me, it was about recognizing the ways in which trauma silences people in ways they may not even be aware of," she said.

The story is told chronologically, yet always in the context of a theme Williams forcefully outlines in her preface: that the nearly 200-year history of these nuns in the U.S. has been overlooked or suppressed by those who resented or disrespected them.

"For far too long, scholars of the American, Catholic, and Black pasts have unconsciously or consciously declared -- by virtue of misrepresentation, marginalization, and outright erasure -- that the history of Black Catholic nuns does not matter," Williams writes, depicting her book as proof that their history "has always mattered."

The book arrives as numerous American institutions, including religious groups, grapple with their racist pasts and shine a spotlight on their communities' overlooked Black pioneers.

Williams begins her narrative in the pre-Civil War era when some Black women – even in slave-holding states – found their way into Catholic sisterhood. Some entered previously whites-only orders, often in subservient roles, while a few trailblazing women succeeded in forming orders for Black nuns in Baltimore and New Orleans.

Even as the number of American nuns – of all races – shrinks relentlessly, that Baltimore order founded in 1829 remains intact, continuing its mission to educate Black youths. Some current members of the Oblate Sisters of Providence help run Saint Frances Academy, a high school serving low-income Black neighborhoods.

Some of the most detailed passages in "Subversive Habits" recount the Jim Crow era, extending from the 1870s through the 1950s, when Black nuns were not spared from the segregation and discrimination endured by many other African Americans.

In the 1960s, Williams writes, Black nuns were often discouraged or blocked by their white superiors from engaging in the civil rights struggle.

Yet one of them, Sister Mary Antona Ebo, was on the front lines of marchers who gathered in Selma, Alabama, in 1965 in support of Black voting rights and in protest of the violence of Bloody Sunday when white state troopers brutally dispersed peaceful Black demonstrators. An Associated Press photo of Ebo and other nuns in the march on March 10 — three days after Bloody Sunday — ran on the front pages of many newspapers.

During two decades before Selma, Ebo faced repeated struggles to break down racial barriers. At one point she was denied admittance to Catholic nursing schools because of her race, and later endured segregation policies at the white-led order of sisters she joined in St. Louis in 1946, according to Williams.

The idea for "Subversive Habits" took shape in 2007, when Williams – then a graduate student at Rutgers University – was desperately seeking a compelling topic for a paper due in a seminar on African American history.

At the library, she searched through microfilm editions of Black-owned newspapers and came across a 1968 article in the Pittsburgh Courier about a group of Catholic nuns forming the National Black Sisters' Conference.

The accompanying photo, of four smiling Black nuns, "literally stopped me in my tracks," she said. "I was raised Catholic ... How did I not know that Black nuns existed?"

Mesmerized by her discovery, she began devouring "everything I could that had been published about Black Catholic history," while setting out to interview the founding members of the National Black Sisters' Conference.

Among the women Williams interviewed extensively was Patricia Grey, who was a nun in the Sisters of Mercy and a founder of the NBSC before leaving religious life in 1974.

Grey shared with The Associated Press some painful memories from 1960, when – as an aspiring nurse

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– she was rejected for membership in a Catholic order because she was Black.

“I was so hurt and disappointed, I couldn’t believe it,” she said about reading that rejection letter. “I remember crumbling it up and I didn’t even want to look at it again or think about it again.”

Grey initially was reluctant to assist with “Subversive Habits,” but eventually shared her own story and her personal archives after urging Williams to write about “the mostly unsung and under-researched history” of America’s Black nuns.

“If you can, try to tell all of our stories,” Grey told her.

Williams set out to do just that – scouring overlooked archives, previously sealed church records and out-of-print books, while conducting more than 100 interviews.

“I bore witness to a profoundly unfamiliar history that disrupts and revises much of what has been said and written about the U.S. Catholic Church and the place of Black people within it,” Williams writes. “Because it is impossible to narrate Black sisters’ journey in the United States -- accurately and honestly -- without confronting the Church’s largely unacknowledged and unreconciled histories of colonialism, slavery, and segregation.”

Historians have been unable to identify the nation’s first Black Catholic nun, but Williams recounts some of the earliest moves to bring Black women into Catholic religious orders – in some cases on the expectation they would function as servants.

One of the oldest Black sisterhoods, the Sisters of the Holy Family, formed in New Orleans in 1842 because white sisterhoods in Louisiana, including the slave-holding Ursuline order, refused to accept African Americans.

The principal founder of that New Orleans order — Henriette Delille — and Oblate Sisters of Providence founder Mary Lange are among three Black nuns from the U.S. designated by Catholic officials as worthy of consideration for sainthood. The other is Sister Thea Bowman, a beloved educator, evangelist and singer who died in Mississippi in 1990 and is buried in Williams’s hometown of Memphis.

Researching less prominent nuns, Williams faced many challenges – for example tracking down Catholic sisters who were known to their contemporaries by their religious names but were listed in archives by their secular names.

Among the many pioneers is Sister Cora Marie Billings, who as a 17-year-old in 1956 became the first Black person admitted into the Sisters of Mercy in Philadelphia. Later, she was the first Black nun to teach in a Catholic high school in Philadelphia and was a co-founder of the National Black Sisters’ Conference.

In 1990, Billings became the first Black woman in the U.S. to manage a Catholic parish when she was named pastoral coordinator for St. Elizabeth Catholic Church in Richmond, Virginia.

“I’ve gone through many situations of racism and oppression throughout my life,” Billings told The Associated Press. “But somehow or other, I’ve just dealt with it and then kept on going.”

According to recent figures from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, there are about 400 African American religious sisters, out of a total of roughly 40,000 nuns.

That overall figure is only one-fourth of the 160,000 nuns in 1970, according to statistics compiled by Catholic researchers at Georgetown University. Whatever their races, many of the remaining nuns are elderly, and the influx of youthful novices is sparse.

The Baltimore-based Oblate Sisters of Providence used to have more than 300 members, according to its superior general, Sister Rita Michelle Proctor, and now has less than 50 – most of them living at the motherhouse in Baltimore’s outskirts.

“Though we’re small, we are still about serving God and God’s people,” Proctor said. “Most of us are elderly, but we still want to do so for as long as God is calling us to.”

Even with diminished ranks, the Oblate Sisters continue to operate Saint Frances Academy – founded in Baltimore by Mary Lange in 1828. The coed school is the country’s oldest continually operating Black Catholic educational facility, with a mission prioritizing help for “the poor and the neglected.”

Williams, in an interview with the AP, said she was considering leaving the Catholic church – due partly to its handling of racial issues – at the time she started researching Black nuns. Hearing their histories, in their own voices, revitalized her faith, she said.



"As these women were telling me their stories, they were also preaching to me in a such a beautiful way," Williams said. "It wasn't done in a way that reflected any anger -- they had already made their peace with it, despite the unholy discrimination they had faced."

What keeps her in the church now, Williams said, is a commitment to these women who chose to share their stories.

"It took a lot for them to get it out," she said. "I remain in awe of these women, of their faithfulness."

## Autopsy backlog plagues Mississippi, with worst delays in US

By LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press/Report for America

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — After Truitt Pace admitted to law enforcement that he beat and shot his wife, her family expected a swift conviction. The 34-year-old mother of three's tiny frame was so bruised and traumatized that the funeral home suggested a closed casket. But as months went by, state prosecutors told Marsha Harbour's family they were waiting on a key piece of evidence: the medical examiner's autopsy report.

National standards recommend most autopsy reports be completed within 60 days. Prosecutors in Harbour's case waited for a year.

Across Mississippi, many families wait even longer. An Associated Press analysis based on state data and documents, as well as dozens of interviews with officials and residents, found that Mississippi's system has long operated in violation of national standards for death investigations, accruing a severe backlog of autopsies and reports.

Autopsies that should take days take weeks. Autopsy reports that should take months take a year or longer, as in Harbour's case. Too few pathologists are doing too many autopsies. Some cases are transferred hundreds of miles to neighboring states for reports without their family's knowledge.

The Mississippi State Medical Examiner's Office was waiting for about 1,300 reports from as far back as 2011, records sent to AP in early April show. Around 800 of those involve homicides — meaning criminal cases are incomplete.

District attorneys have resigned themselves to long waits: "We're at a point now where we're happy if it's only a year," said Luke Williamson, who's been a prosecutor for 14 years in northern Mississippi.

The National Association of Medical Examiners, the office that accredits U.S. death investigations offices, dictates that 90% of autopsy reports should be returned within 60 to 90 days.

Mississippi's office has never been accredited. The majority of U.S. medical examiner agencies, which are chronically underfunded and face a shortage of forensic pathologists, are unaccredited. States such as Georgia have raised the alarm about autopsy report delays of up to six months. But nowhere is the issue more severe than in Mississippi.

Mississippi's delays are an "emergency-level" concern, said Dr. James Gill, the association's 2021 president and a leader in the College of American Pathologists. "That's a disaster situation where you need to do something drastic."

Public Safety Commissioner Sean Tindell is a former Mississippi Court of Appeals judge who stepped into his role — overseeing the state medical examiner's office, the highway patrol and other agencies — in May 2020. He called the backlog "unacceptable" and said he's made eliminating it the top priority of his administration. He said working as a judge, he saw how trials were delayed while prosecutors awaited reports.

"I knew it was bad," he told the AP. "I didn't know it was this bad."

"Families deserve better. I'm sorry that they've had to experience delays in laying to rest loved ones, to getting closure in these cases, but we're going to fix the problem."

Tindell said he's instituted a policy that all reports must be back within 90 days. Using contractor pathologists in other states, the office began working to whittle down the backlog. Tindell said around 500 cases have been completed since summer.

But Tindell — who has hired two new pathologists, started university recruiting efforts and streamlined staff duties — said it's been a challenge trying to fix old problems while facing new ones: the pandemic and an unprecedented increase in violent crime.

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Mississippi saw 597 homicides in 2021 and 578 in 2020 — record numbers for the state of 3 million. That's compared with 434 in 2019 and 382 in 2018.

Arkansas, with a similar population, had 347 homicides in 2021 and 386 in 2020.

From 2020 to April 2022, Arkansas has employed five to seven pathologists performing autopsies. Mississippi has employed two to three, as people left jobs.

Tindell said both the forensics laboratory and medical examiner's office haven't been a state priority for funding or staffing in over a decade. The forensic laboratory's budget has essentially remained unchanged since 2008.

But during Mississippi's 2022 legislative session, lawmakers approved \$4 million that must be used to address backlogged cases.

Like most states, Mississippi does not perform an autopsy — a post-mortem surgical procedure by a forensic pathologist to determine cause of death — for all people. Autopsies are reserved for homicides, suicides, deaths of children and those in correctional facilities, and other unexpected cases. Forensic pathologists are responsible for performing autopsies at Mississippi's two medical examiner offices — one in the Jackson metro area, one on the coast.

After the autopsy, pathologists complete a report explaining their findings and results, including an official cause of death. Reports can help determine whether a death was an accident, a suicide or a homicide. They shed light on child deaths, or show whether a person accused of murder acted in self-defense.

In 2017, 93-year-old World War II veteran Durley Bratton died after two employees of a Mississippi veterans home dropped him and put him back in bed without telling anyone. Police began an investigation after a tip from the hospital where Bratton was taken.

Arrests didn't come until 15 months later, after the autopsy report was returned, concluding the veteran died of blunt-force trauma.

In the Harbour case, the autopsy report was the critical piece of evidence after Pace claimed self-defense for shooting his wife.

At the December 2021 trial where Pace was sentenced to life in prison, a medical examiner said Harbour suffered from blunt force trauma wounds consistent with being beaten before she was shot.

Harbour, who helped deliver babies as a surgical technician at a local hospital, had endured months of abuse. She once went to a domestic violence shelter. But she worried for her children's safety and never went to the police.

Because Pace had no criminal record, he was released on bond days after his arrest.

Harbour's stepmother, Denise Spears, said she and her family felt dejected as they went to the mailbox month after month to find notices that the trial was being pushed back. Once the report came in, the trial was delayed further because of the pandemic. Pace didn't stand trial until more than three years after killing his wife.

One of the worst parts was explaining to her grandchildren why the man who killed their mother was able to live free for years, Spears said. More than once, they came to her, afraid they'd run into him.

"They couldn't understand it," Spears said. "It was hard for me to explain to them, because I couldn't understand it either."

Ben Creekmore, a district attorney in northern Mississippi, said conversations with families about delays are always difficult. He worries about the impact the postponements have on trust in the criminal justice system.

"Those things dramatically impact our relationship with people who have suffered loss," he said. "It undermines your credibility on everything else."

Beyond effects on criminal cases, the lack of an autopsy report and official death certificate can prevent families from collecting benefits.

Mississippi Lt. Gov. Delbert Hosemann said he's been contacted by families who can't get insurance payouts without a certificate.

"One that contacted us was a mom and two children whose husband died unexpectedly," he said during

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a fall budget hearing. "They couldn't get their life insurance benefits, and that's the only money they had."

More than money, families can also find closure. Rebecca Brown lost her brother unexpectedly in 2018. It wasn't until last June — three years after his death — that his report was completed.

Her brother, in his early 40s, had a history of drug addiction but was in recovery. He lived with his mother, who worried he'd started using again and had died of an overdose. When they finally learned the cause of death was a heart attack, Brown said she felt no relief — just anger that it had taken so long. When she showed her mother a photo of the death certificate, she cried.

"In my mind, what they did is they called for my mother to grieve harder for three years than she could have," Brown said.

Tindell said the problems won't be fixed until the state is able to hire more pathologists. The National Medical Examiners Association standards recommend that pathologists perform no more than 250 autopsies a year. If pathologists perform more than 325 a year, the office risks losing accreditation.

In 2021, two Mississippi pathologists performed 461 and 421 autopsies. Arkansas's six pathologists completed an average of approximately 282 each.

During most of the 1990s and 2000s, Mississippi had no state medical examiner, instead contracting with a private physician, Dr. Steven Hayne, who performed 80% of autopsies in the state. He completed as many as 1,700 autopsies a year.

Hayne's work was repeatedly attacked in court as sloppy and scientifically unsound. Verdicts in multiple murder cases in which Hayne testified were overturned by the Mississippi Supreme Court.

In 2011, the state hired Pathologist Dr. Mark LeVaughn as its first chief medical examiner since 1995. During his tenure, LeVaughn spoke publicly repeatedly about a lack of resources, calling his office a critically understaffed public health risk.

Tindell said a substantial number of autopsy reports that are pending are LeVaughn's. Because of the department's staff turnover rate, LeVaughn was the only forensic pathologist handling all the autopsies in the state at times and fell behind on paperwork.

"He was put in the impossible situation of trying to do all the autopsies for the entire state, and just unfortunately, he was not able to get it all done," Tindell said.

LeVaughn resigned as chief medical examiner in January 2021. He has since been rehired as a pathologist finishing outstanding reports and testifying on them in trials.

Tindell said the office expects an additional pathologist to start late next month, and that he's recruiting to hire another as soon as possible.

In the meantime, to meet demand, the Mississippi Medical Examiner's Office has been forced to send bodies to neighboring states such as Arkansas. In 2021, 284 autopsies were completed by contractor pathologists.

The National Medical Examiner's Association recommends autopsies be completed within 72 hours. The turnaround time in Mississippi has exceeded three weeks in some cases. The problem is especially severe in north Mississippi, where there is no medical examiner's office.

One family in Tupelo waited 24 days. After he was shot and killed in May of last year, Lorenzin Brown's body was first brought almost 200 miles (322 kilometers) away for an autopsy at the Mississippi State Crime Lab in Pearl, the closest state facility that could do it.

Brown lay for two weeks in the morgue before pathologists determined they couldn't get to his case fast enough. They decided he should be transferred to Little Rock — more than 260 miles (418 kilometers) away — for an autopsy by a contractor.

His family wasn't notified that he was being transferred or told when he'd be returned. Without updates, they struggled to make funeral arrangements. His father wondered if he'd be able to see him before he was buried.

"To get a call saying that he's been murdered, it was already a tragic enough situation," said Brown's uncle, Tim Butler, a pastor who organized the funeral. "The grieving process is always bad. Under these circumstances, it's made everything that much worse."

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His mother, Geisha, said she couldn't work while she waited for his body to be returned and to hold his service. It wasn't until a month and a day after he died that they were able to bury her son.

Clayton Cobler — coroner in Lauderdale County, where Harbour was killed — said families try calling the medical examiner's office for answers about the status of autopsies and reports, and they often don't hear back. Each of Mississippi's 82 counties has an elected coroner who's responsible for collecting and transporting bodies to the medical examiner's office. They end up acting as liaisons with families and answering desperate calls month after month, Cobler said.

"I've got a grandmother that her grandson died in 2017, and she wants to know why," he said. "It just breaks my heart every time she calls, because I can't tell her."

Cobler, who has worked in death investigations for decades, said he recently made the difficult decision not to run for reelection.

"More and more coroners or long-term coroners are saying, 'I'm done. I'm not going to run again, because it's just too frustrating, and it's too heartbreaking,'" he said.

Rocky Kennedy, the Lafayette County coroner, said many people who work with families feel the same fatigue.

"It's a waiting game, and I think everybody's patience ran out a long time ago," he said. "Words without results mean nothing."

## **Wives of Mariupol defenders appeal for soldiers' evacuation**

By TRISHA THOMAS Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Two Ukrainian women whose husbands are defending a besieged steel plant in the southern city of Mariupol are calling for any evacuation of civilians to also include soldiers, saying they fear the troops will be tortured and killed if left behind and captured by Russian forces.

"The lives of soldiers matter too. We can't only talk about civilians," said Yuliia Fedusiuk, 29, the wife of Arseniy Fedusiuk, a member of the Azov Regiment in Mariupol.

She and Kateryna Prokopenko, whose husband, Denys Prokopenko, is the Azov commander, made their appeal in Rome on Friday for international assistance to evacuate the Azovstal plant, the last stronghold of Ukrainian resistance in the strategic and now bombed-out port city.

An estimated 2,000 Ukrainian defenders and 1,000 civilians are holed up in the plant's vast underground network of bunkers, which are able to withstand airstrikes. But conditions there have grown more dire, with food, water and medicine running out, after Russian forces dropped "bunker busters" and other munitions in recent days.

The United Nations has said Secretary-General António Guterres and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed on arranging evacuations from the plant during a meeting this week in Moscow, with the U.N. and International Committee of the Red Cross involved. But the discussions as reported by the U.N. concerned civilians, not combatants.

Speaking in English, Prokopenko, 27, called for a Dunkirk-style mission, a reference to the 1940 World War II maritime operation in which hundreds of boats were launched to rescue over 330,000 British and Allied troops surrounded by German forces on the beaches of northern France.

"We can do this extraction operation ... which will save our soldiers, our civilians, our kids," she said. "We need to do this right now, because people — every hour, every second — are dying."

The women said 600 of the soldiers are wounded, with some suffering from gangrene. Video and images they shared with The Associated Press showed wounded men with stained bandages in need of changing; others had open wounds or amputated limbs.

The women said the images were taken sometime in the past week. The AP could not independently verify the date and location of the footage.

The men, who are not identified, say they eat just once a day and share as little as 1.5 liters (50 ounces) of water a day among four. Supplies inside the blockaded plant are depleting, they say.

One shirtless man spoke in obvious pain as he described his wounds: two broken ribs, a punctured



lung and a dislocated arm that "was hanging on the flesh." Another said he stepped on a mine that was dropped from a helicopter, leaving him with an open fracture in his leg.

A military doctor who appears on the video identified herself as an anesthesiologist treating the wounded at the Azovstal plant. She said she was working with a small team of doctors "in extremely hard conditions, under constant bombardment."

"Our resources are extremely limited. Guys are literally dying before our eyes because we don't have any possibility to evacuate them. There is no way to treat them properly," she said.

She appealed for the evacuation of the wounded soldiers, along with the trapped civilians. "We just ask, we beg, to give at least the slightest chance to save the life of these fighters. They deserve it," she said.

The Azov Regiment has its roots in the Azov Battalion, which was formed in 2014 by far-right activists at the start of the conflict in the east between Ukraine and Moscow-backed separatists, and which has elicited criticism for its tactics.

Fedusiuk said she and Prokopenko were seeking help from Europe, the United States and international organizations to find a diplomatic resolution to the Azovstal standoff.

And she said the troops would never surrender to Russian capture.

"We don't know any Azov soldier who came (back) alive from Russian soldiers, from 2014, so they will be tortured and killed," Fedusiuk said. "We know that definitely, so it is not an option for them."

## Experts: Lawmaker rape case illustrates survivors' trauma

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — When a legislative intern came forward with rape allegations against an Idaho state lawmaker last year, she was subjected to months of online harassment and abuse.

She later testified about the attack at an ethics hearing, and some of the lawmaker's supporters filmed her and chased her through the Statehouse.

This week, the young woman took the stand to testify in his criminal trial and became so distraught she fled the courtroom.

Aaron von Ehlinger's rape conviction Friday was a rare victory for prosecutors in a criminal justice system that can be fraught with trauma for sexual assault survivors, experts say.

Only about a third of sexual assaults are reported to police, according to RAINN, the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, and only about 5% of assaults result in an arrest. Convictions are even rarer, with only about 2.8% of sexual assaults resulting in felony convictions.

Put another way, about 972 of every 1,000 perpetrators of sexual assault will never face a conviction, according to the organization.

"It really means that we are not very good at prosecuting it and that the survivors very rarely get the desired results," said Elizabeth Jeglic, a professor of psychology at John Jay College with the City University of New York and an expert in sexual assault prevention and public policy. "We have to really focus on prevention. I think that's where we're going to see the largest change."

Von Ehlinger, a former Republican state lawmaker, was found guilty of rape and faces anywhere from a year to life in prison when he is sentenced this summer. The jury acquitted the 39-year-old on a second count of sexual penetration with a foreign object.

Von Ehlinger maintained during the trial that the two had consensual sex. His attorney Jon Cox did not respond to a request for comment.

The verdict came after a dramatic trial in which the young woman fled the witness stand during testimony, saying "I can't do this."

Fourth District Judge Michael Reardon instructed the jury to disregard her statements since the defense couldn't cross-examine her. He then asked the defense if they wanted to request a mistrial — a step that would have forced a do-over for the entire trial — but Cox declined. Cox hasn't said if von Ehlinger intends to appeal.

The Associated Press generally does not identify people who say they have been sexually assaulted,

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and has referred to the woman in this case as "Jane Doe" at her request.

Doe was 19 and interning at the Idaho Statehouse when she met von Ehlinger and agreed to go to dinner with him.

But the night of March 9, 2021, was not the networking opportunity she expected, she later told investigators. Instead, she said, von Ehlinger brought her back to his apartment under false pretenses, overpowered her and forced her to perform oral sex while he straddled her chest, pinning her arms with his knees.

Doe reported the assault to her supervisor at the Statehouse on March 11, followed by police. She underwent a sexual assault examination, which revealed DNA that matched von Ehlinger.

Survivors must weigh the risk of not being understood or believed when they report, Jeglic said, as well as the intrusiveness of the investigation process.

"While most of the SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) nurses are well-trained, having someone touch you and look at your private parts and ask you intimate questions immediately after can feel like another violation," Jeglic said.

For von Ehlinger, the assault report triggered a legislative ethics investigation, and a legislative committee required Doe to testify during the hearing. A black fabric screen protected her from view during her testimony in the packed public hearing, but as she tried to leave the Statehouse some of von Ehlinger's supporters chased her, filming her as she sunk to the floor, distraught.

The ethics committee recommended von Ehlinger be banned from the Statehouse, and he resigned.

For Doe, the report triggered an avalanche of additional trauma and harassment. Supporters of von Ehlinger doxxed her by releasing her name, photo and personal details about her life in far-right blogs and social media posts. One person even wore mocking costumes to political events with a sash emblazoned with her name. While some lawmakers lauded her courage in coming forward, others questioned her integrity or called her names like "honey trap."

"The constant attack on her really prevented her from starting the healing process," said Ada County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Katelyn Farley, who argued the case against von Ehlinger. "Hopefully it doesn't happen again to future victims, but it is something that happens all the time at this point."

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics shows that as many as one-fifth of sexual violence survivors who chose not to report their crimes to police cited the fear of retaliation as a primary reason.

"This was a very public case, so people got to see kind of a real-time view into why people don't report sexual assaults: What a tough journey it is, and the scrutiny they face, and the ongoing trauma of having to retell your story and have people attack you constantly," said Annie Hightower, director of law and policy with the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence. The organization helps survivors navigate criminal justice system and provides civil legal services, and is representing Jane Doe.

That trauma was evident when Doe took the stand on the second day of the trial. She struggled to stay focused on the prosecutor, her gaze shifting between the exit doors, the packed gallery and the defense table where von Ehlinger sat. She haltingly described the first moments of the assault before abruptly standing up, saying "I can't do this," and rushing out of the courtroom.

It's not uncommon for survivors to experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder when recounting an assault, said Jeglic, with symptoms like increased heart rate and sweating.

"If the trauma is overwhelming you might see symptoms of dissociation — where they look like they space out. They might feel jittery or have difficulty concentrating. The fight or flight reflex is activated at that point, because it feels like they might be back in that situation," Jeglic said.

Watching Doe leave the trial was "heart-wrenching," Farley said. But deputy prosecutor Whitney Welsh, who worked with Farley on the case, noted that it was also a sign of Doe's agency.

"I think it's important that she decided to walk in the room, and she also decided to walk out — those were her choices," Welsh said.

Successful prosecutions in cases like von Ehlinger can help the public better understand the dynamics of power and control in sexual assault cases, Jeglic said.

"I think one of the issues that we face as a society is the understanding of consent, what a rape looks

like, and how power differentials come into play," she said. "The more success we have in prosecutions, and the more we can prevent these things from happening to begin with, the better."

The conviction was a bittersweet moment in the midst of a tough journey, said Hightower.

"The focus should be on my client and her healing — what happened today doesn't heal her, right? But the team brought some little form of justice today," Hightower said. "I hope this will help survivors — other survivors who maybe didn't come forward, or are thinking of coming forward — to help them know that people believe them."

## **Biden order to boost mining may not have quick payoff**

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is turning to a Cold War-era law to boost production of lithium and other minerals used to power electric vehicles, but experts say the move by itself is unlikely to ensure the robust domestic mining Biden seeks as he promotes cleaner energy sources.

Biden's action, part of his efforts to find alternatives to fossil fuels and combat climate change, does not waive or suspend existing environmental and labor standards, the White House said. Nor does it address the chief hurdle to increased domestic extraction of so-called critical minerals: the years-long process needed to obtain a federal permit for a new mine.

Even so, the mining industry and supporters in Congress cheered Biden's use of the 1950 Defense Production Act to increase U.S. supplies of lithium, nickel and other minerals needed for electric-vehicles batteries and other clean-energy technology.

His March 31 executive order is a historic step by the White House to "recognize the critical importance of minerals and push to electrify the car industry," said Rich Nolan, president and CEO of the National Mining Association.

But "unless we continue to build on this action" and approve new hardrock mines, Nolan added, "we risk feeding the minerals dominance of geopolitical rivals" such as China and Russia.

"We have abundant mineral resources here," he said. "What we need is policy to ensure we can produce them and build the secure, reliable supply chains we know we must have."

Environmentalists, meanwhile, worry that Biden is activating a war-time tool to boost mineral extraction that can contaminate groundwater and harm ranching and wildlife.

"The clean energy transition cannot be built on dirty mining," said Lauren Pagel, policy director of Earthworks, an environmental group that has pushed for stronger restrictions on hardrock mining.

Biden's order directs the Defense Department to consider at least five metals — lithium, cobalt, graphite, nickel and manganese — as essential to national security and authorizes steps to bolster domestic supplies. Biden and former President Donald Trump both used the defense production law previously to speed the U.S. response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On minerals, Biden wants to ensure the U.S. has enough lithium and other materials needed for EV batteries, heat pumps and large-capacity batteries for the electric grid. A majority of global lithium production comes from China, Australia, Argentina and Chile, while Russia dominates the global nickel market and the Democratic Republic of Congo is the world's largest cobalt producer.

"We need to end our long-term reliance on China and other countries for inputs that will power the future," Biden said, vowing to "use every tool I have to make that happen."

Although lithium reserves are distributed widely across the globe, the U.S. is home to just one active lithium mine, in Nevada. New and potential lithium mining and extracting projects are in various stages of development in Nevada, Maine, North Carolina and California. Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has labeled California the "Saudi Arabia of lithium," and two projects there could produce lithium by 2024.

Under Biden's order, the Pentagon is authorized to spend millions of dollars to support a range of activities, including feasibility studies to determine economic viability of a proposed mine and develop mineral-waste recycling programs. Money also could help existing mines and other industrial sites produce valuable materials, the Pentagon said. For example, a copper mine could also produce nickel.

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It's unclear how much money will be available for mining, but the Defense Department is authorized to keep up to \$750 million on hand for its strategic and critical material stockpile.

Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev., called Biden's order "a good first step toward expanding our electric vehicle battery manufacturing and infrastructure." But she and other lawmakers said the U.S. needs a long-term strategy to improve the domestic supply chain of critical minerals.

"Unless the president streamlines permitting, we should not expect to see any meaningful increase in American mineral production," said Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, the top Republican on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. At a recent committee hearing, Barrasso urged Biden to "stand up to mining opponents in his own party."

Arizona Rep. Raul Grijalva, a Democrat who chairs the House Natural Resources Committee, called Biden's order misguided. "Fast-tracking mining under antiquated standards that put our public health, wilderness and sacred sites at risk of permanent damage just isn't the answer," he said.

Grijalva and Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., introduced legislation to modernize the 1872 law that governs hardrock mining in the U.S.

(asterisk)Our current mining law was put in place before we even knew what a car was, much less an electric one," Grijalva said. "Modernizing this relic of a law isn't extreme or anti-industry — it's just common sense."

Mining companies have extracted hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of gold, silver, copper and other minerals from federal lands over the past 150 years "without paying a cent in federal royalties," Grijalva and Heinrich said in a statement. The House bill would establish a 12.5% royalty on new mining operations and an 8% royalty on existing operations.

The bill also would set up a Hardrock Minerals Reclamation Fund to make the industry pay for cleanup of abandoned mine sites.

About 40% of watersheds in the western U.S. are contaminated by hardrock mine drainage, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Many nickel, copper, lithium and cobalt reserves are located within 35 miles or 56 kilometers of tribal lands.

Indigenous people living near a proposed lithium mine in Nevada assailed Biden's order.

"I believe this is going to be the second coming of environmental destruction," said Day Hinkey, a member of the Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone tribe and an organizer with People of Red Mountain, a group that opposes the vast Thacker Pass lithium mine in northern Nevada.

Another Nevada lithium mine is planned near a desert ridge where a rare wildflower has been proposed for listing as an endangered species. The mine's developer, Australia-based Ioneer, said the expected habitat protections for the rare Tiehm's buckwheat would not affect its mining activities, and company operations would not jeopardize conservation of the species.

Opponents dispute that. Hinkey said the first environmental crisis was caused by the fossil fuel industry "and I believe this next one will be lithium mining."

## UK lawmaker resigns after viewing porn in House of Commons

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A British lawmaker from the governing Conservative Party has resigned after admitting he watched pornography on his phone in the House of Commons chamber.

Neil Parish, a member of Parliament since 2010, announced his decision Saturday after pressure from members of his own party who sought to defuse sleaze allegations before Britain holds its local elections on May 5. The ballot is seen as pivotal for Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who is already facing a voter backlash over lockdown-breaking parties in government offices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Neil Parish, 65, stepped down after what he described as a moment of "madness." Parish, chairman of the house's Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, said he was trying to look at a tractor website, but stumbled into a porn site with a similar name and watched it for "a bit."

"My biggest crime is that on another occasion I went in a second time," he told the BBC. "And that was



deliberate.”

Reports that a lawmaker had watched porn amid the historic green benches of the House of Commons triggered a flood of complaints from women in Parliament about the misogyny and sexual harassment they have faced while doing their jobs.

Long known for its boozy, macho culture, Parliament is now a more diverse place, with women holding almost 40% of the seats in the House of Commons. But lawmakers and staff say harassment and inappropriate behavior are still rampant under a system that largely allows members to police themselves.

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said Parish’s resignation should be a moment for people across the U.K. to say “enough is enough.”

“I don’t think there could really be any other outcome to what has come to light about this particular MP over the last few days,” she said while campaigning in Fife, Scotland. “Watching porn on a mobile phone in the House of Commons when you’re there representing constituents is just unacceptable.”

Parish rejected the notion that he meant to intimidate anyone.

“For all my rights and wrongs, I was not proud of what I was doing,” he said. “And the one thing I wasn’t doing, and which I will take to my grave as being true, is I was not actually making sure people could see it. In fact, I was trying to do quite the opposite.”

The scandal comes at a precarious moment for Johnson, who will face pressure to resign if the Conservatives do poorly in the local elections.

## Serbia displays Chinese missiles amid concerns in Balkans

By DUSAN STOJANOVIC Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — Serbia on Saturday publicly displayed a recently delivered Chinese anti-aircraft missile system, raising concerns in the West and among some of Serbia’s neighbors that an arms buildup in the Balkans could threaten fragile peace in the region.

The sophisticated HQ-22 surface-to-air system was delivered last month by a dozen Chinese Air Force Y-20 transport planes in what was believed to be the largest-ever airlift delivery of Chinese arms to Europe.

Although Serbia officially seeks membership in the European Union, it has been arming itself mostly with Russian and Chinese weapons, including T-72 battle tanks, MiG-29 fighter jets, Mi-35 attack helicopters and drones.

Back in 2020, U.S. officials warned Belgrade against purchasing HQ-22 missile systems, whose export version is known as FK-3. They said that if Serbia really wants to join the EU and other Western alliances, it must align its military equipment with Western standards.

The Chinese missile system has been widely compared to the American Patriot and the Russian S-300 surface-to-air missile systems although it has a shorter range than more advanced S-300s. Serbia is the first operator of the Chinese missiles in Europe.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said at the end of the arms display at a military airport near Belgrade that the Chinese missiles, as well as other recently delivered military hardware, are not a threat to anyone and only represent a “powerful deterrent” against potential attackers.

“We will no longer allow to be a punching bag for anyone,” Vucic said, apparently referring to NATO’s 78-day bombardment of Serbia for its bloody crackdown against Kosovo Albanian separatists in 1999.

Serbia, which was at war with its neighbors in the 1990s, does not recognize Kosovo’s independence declared in 2008. It still has frosty relations with NATO-members Croatia and Montenegro as well as Bosnia, whose separatist Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik attended the military drill on Saturday.

Vucic said Serbia is also negotiating a purchase of French multi-purpose Dassault Rafale jets, as well as British Eurofighter Typhoon fighters. He said that only “political hurdles” could prevent the purchase of the Western aircraft.

There are widespread concerns that Russia could push its ally Serbia into an armed conflict with its neighbors to try at least partly to shift public attention from the war in Ukraine.

Although Serbia has voted in favor of U.N. resolutions that condemn the bloody Russian attacks in Ukraine,

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it has refused to join international sanctions against its allies in Moscow or outright criticize the apparent atrocities committed by the Russian troops in Ukraine.

## Louisville mayor's race plays out amid lingering tensions

By PIPER HUDSPETH BLACKBURN Associated Press/Report for America

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Louisville mayoral candidate Craig Greenberg had a bounce in his step as he made his way from house to house in search of voters on a cold spring afternoon. But when people recognized him, it wasn't for reasons he'd anticipated when he announced his run last year.

Some had seen news reports from Feb. 14, when a man showed up at Greenberg's campaign headquarters and fired multiple rounds at the candidate and his staff, who barricaded the door with tables and chairs. No one was hit, but a bullet grazed Greenberg's sweater. A local social justice activist was charged in the attempted shooting.

Now Greenberg has resumed his campaign in a city roiled by racial tension, a spike in gun violence and deep misgivings many harbor about the Louisville police department.

Two years ago, this city of roughly 600,000 was known primarily as the home of the Kentucky Derby, bourbon whiskey and Muhammad Ali. Then a botched police raid in March 2020 left Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old Black woman, dead in her own apartment at the hands of white police officers.

Her name was plastered on T-shirts and magazines. It swept across social media and resounded in city streets as thousands marched nationwide, demanding justice. And her death still reverberates in local politics.

Not long after the attempt on Greenberg's life, the only officer criminally charged for his actions in the Taylor raid was acquitted by a Kentucky jury, leaving many with a sense that the justice system had fallen short.

The suspect in Greenberg's shooting, Quintez Brown, 21, was also on the May 17 ballot, a candidate for metro council. Now he's in federal custody, charged with state and federal crimes that could put him away for the rest of his life. He has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Brown, who is Black, was released two days after the shooting when the Louisville Community Bail Fund paid his \$100,000 bond. Republican minority leader Sen. Mitch McConnell took to the floor of the U.S. Senate almost immediately, calling Brown's release "jaw-dropping" and suggesting that it reflected badly on his political rivals on the left.

But the blowback from Brown's release crossed partisan lines. Charles Booker, a Louisville Democrat running for the U.S. Senate seat held by Republican Rand Paul, insisted that "anyone who has been arrested for attempted murder — and is feared to be a harm to themselves and others — should be in custody."

Now finding himself at the center of that uproar, Greenberg speaks cautiously about the attempt on his life but doesn't hesitate to draw connections to his campaign.

"I believe it's made me a stronger person who can hopefully work with others more effectively to make Louisville safer," he explained.

He's back to normal campaign activities, but with added security. He also vows to address the concerns of Black voters by increasing transparency and accountability if elected.

"I share their frustrations," he said. "I'm not interested in any more studies. We all know what the problems are here in Louisville."

One of Greenberg's opponents, Shameka Parrish-Wright, has her own connection to Louisville's troubled recent past. She trails Greenberg in fundraising, but as she makes her way around Louisville's predominantly Black West End, some residents recognize her, too.

After Taylor's shooting, Parrish-Wright joined monthslong protests in downtown Jefferson Square Park, where she became a voice for protesters.

"I want to be the change I seek," she said of her mayoral bid.

Many of the Black voters she's talked to doubt that any mayor can deliver on their promises. They also resent that no one has been charged for Taylor's death, while the white men who killed Ahmaud Arbery

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and George Floyd have been convicted of murder.

Parrish-Wright worries that some voters might conflate her actions as an activist with Brown's or the group that funded his release. She said she didn't know Brown very well but hopes he gets the mental health resources he needs.

If elected, Parrish-Wright would join a growing group of Black female mayors in cities like New Orleans, San Francisco, Chicago and Washington, D.C.

Representation in the mayor's seat, she said, could restore faith in a city where nearly half of Kentucky's Black population lives. The state legislature is dominated by white Republicans, and while there's a Democratic governor, the city often finds itself at odds with the Capitol in Frankfort.

Greenberg and Parrish-Wright are among eight Democratic candidates on the primary ballot. The contenders have plied voters with plans for economic development and other matters, but public safety and policing are never far from the conversation.

The primary winner will be heavily favored in the general election come November, because Democrats outnumber Republicans by a wide margin.

The next mayor will be called on to lead the city through a complicated period, and leaving the past behind won't be easy. Louisville's police department remains under federal investigation, and many activists want to be heard. The two-year lockdown during the pandemic has left empty storefronts and office buildings downtown.

"There are lots of people who feel discouraged because we have had two of the worst years, for many of us, in our lifetime. We're exhausted," said Sadiqa Reynolds, president and CEO of the Louisville Urban League.

Reynolds, who endorsed another Black candidate for mayor, the Rev. Tim Findley Jr., said the task facing the winner will be formidable — and patience is wearing thin.

"It's not enough to create good programs; you actually have to be able and have a desire to change the structures," she said. "The current system we have — it's just not working fast enough."

## Beijing shuts dine-in services for holidays to stem outbreak

BEIJING (AP) — Restaurants in Beijing have been ordered to close dine-in services over the May holidays as the Chinese capital grapples with a COVID-19 outbreak.

Authorities said at a news conference Saturday that dining in restaurants has become an infection risk, citing virus transmissions between diners and staff.

Restaurants have been ordered to only provide takeout services from Sunday to Wednesday, during China's Labor Day holidays.

Beijing began mass testing millions of residents earlier this week as it scrambled to stamp out a growing COVID-19 outbreak.

The political stakes are high as the ruling Communist Party prepares for a major congress this fall at which President Xi Jinping is seeking a third five-year term to reassert his position as China's unquestioned leader.

Beijing authorities reported 67 new infections on Saturday, taking the city's total to nearly 300 since April 22.

Authorities have also ordered parks, scenic areas and entertainment venue to operate at half capacity during the holiday period. Schools have also been ordered closed.

Several communities in the city's most populous Chaoyang district have been designated high-risk areas and will be subjected to mass testing on Sunday and Tuesday.

Beijing is trying to prevent a massive outbreak that could trigger a citywide lockdown like the one that has paralyzed Shanghai for more than three weeks. Millions of residents there have been under lockdown and food has run low at times, prompting heavy criticism despite government efforts to censor it.

## GOP election-deniers elevate races for secretary of state

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

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ATLANTA (AP) — Add one more group of contests to the white-hot races for Congress and governor that will dominate this year's midterm elections: secretaries of state.

Former President Donald Trump's attempts to reverse the results of the 2020 election and his subsequent endorsements of candidates for state election offices who are sympathetic to his view have elevated those races to top-tier status. At stake, say Democrats and others concerned about fair elections, is nothing less than American democracy.

"If they win the general election, we've got real problems on our hands," said former New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, a Republican who has pushed back against the false claims made by Trump and his allies about widespread fraud in the 2020 presidential election. "This is an effort to replace the people who oversee these races — to change the rules to make the results come out the way they want them to."

The primary season begins in force in the coming week with elections in Ohio and Indiana. Ohio voters will decide which candidate will emerge from the Republican primary for secretary of state, with the winner favored to eventually win the office in the GOP-dominated state.

Primaries for the top election offices will follow over the next few weeks in Nebraska, Idaho, Alabama and the presidential battleground of Georgia. While Indiana also holds a primary Tuesday, nominees for secretary of state and some other offices won't be decided until party conventions in June.

In all, voters in about two dozen states will be deciding who will be their state's next chief election official this year. In three politically important states — Florida, Pennsylvania and Texas — the position will be filled by whoever wins the governor's race. In New Hampshire, the decision will be made by the state Legislature — currently controlled by Republicans.

States United Action, a nonpartisan advocacy organization co-founded by Whitman, has been tracking secretary of state races and identified nearly two dozen Republican candidates who deny the results of the 2020 presidential election.

That includes John Adams, a former state lawmaker challenging Ohio's incumbent secretary of state, Frank LaRose, in Tuesday's GOP primary. Adams has said "there's no way that Trump lost" and said LaRose wasn't any different than Stacey Abrams, a Democrat and national voting rights advocate who is running for governor in Georgia.

LaRose hasn't talked much about the 2020 election in the campaign other than to say it was secure in Ohio and to tout his office's pursuit of voter fraud cases. This marked a departure following the 2020 vote in which he praised the work of bipartisan election officials in running a smooth election, promoted voter access and presented statistics showing how rare voter fraud is.

Earlier this year, LaRose brushed aside questions about his shifting rhetoric.

"Unfortunately, some people want to make a political issue out of this," he said. "Of course, it's right to be concerned about election integrity."

The pivot was enough to earn him an endorsement from Trump, who is considering another run for president in 2024 and said LaRose was "dedicated to Secure Elections." LaRose has been touting the endorsement.

Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat, said it was important for Republican secretaries of state, in particular, to speak the truth about the 2020 election.

"Those secretaries who are accepting the support of election-deniers or accepting the support of a former president who openly interfered with the results of a free and fair election are abdicating their role and responsibility to stand as nonpartisan guardians and choosing to put their own partisan agendas ahead of democracy," Benson said in an interview.

This year, the most high-profile races will unfold in four of the six states where Trump disputed his 2020 loss to President Joe Biden: Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and Michigan. Trump has endorsed secretary of state candidates in all but one, backing those who support his false claims.

There is no proof of widespread fraud or wrongdoing. Judges, including ones appointed by Trump, dismissed dozens of lawsuits filed by the former president and his allies after the 2020 election.

Last year, an Associated Press review of every potential 2020 voter fraud case in the six states disputed by Trump found nowhere near enough cases to change the outcome.



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Kristina Karamo, Trump's pick in Michigan, is the first to advance to the November election after state Republicans nominated her at the party's April 23 convention. A community college professor, Karamo gained prominence after the 2020 election claiming she had seen irregularities in the processing of mail ballots while serving as an election observer in Detroit.

At a rally with Trump before the convention, she accused the media of trying to demonize her, adding "corruption in our elections systems is a national security threat." She will face Benson, a former law school dean seeking her second term.

"All one has to imagine is what it would be like or what it would have been like if Brad Raffensperger had said, 'Yes, I will find you those votes and deliver Georgia for you,'" Benson said. "That's what could happen if you have an election denier serving as secretary of state."

Raffensperger is the Republican secretary of state in Georgia who withstood enormous pressure to uphold the results of the presidential race there, won by Biden. At one point after the election, Trump called Raffensperger and asked him to "find" nearly 12,000 votes to overturn Biden's win.

Of the 25 secretary of state races on the ballot this year, nine Republican and seven Democratic incumbents are running to keep their seats. While only one of the Democratic incumbents has drawn a challenger, seven Republican secretaries will be facing at least one GOP opponent who either denies Biden won or makes unsubstantiated claims that elections are not secure.

This includes Raffensperger, who rebuffed Trump's demands and has drawn three primary challengers. Among them is one endorsed by Trump, U.S. Rep. Jody Hice, who objected to Georgia's electoral votes being counted for Biden.

In nine states, incumbents have opted against seeking reelection, are running for higher office or are term-limited, leaving open contests. This includes Arizona and Nevada, which hold primaries in the coming months.

Both races feature Republican candidates -- Arizona's Mark Finchem and Nevada's Jim Marchant -- who have questioned the outcome of the 2020 election.

Another high-profile race is unfolding in Colorado, where a Republican county clerk under indictment for a security breach of voting systems is running to challenge Secretary of State Jena Griswold, a Democrat seeking a second term.

Mesa County Clerk Tina Peters has denied the charges, calling them politically motivated. She has been a frequent guest on conservative media and appeared at various events with Mike Lindell, the MyPillow CEO and Trump ally who has sought to prove voting machines were somehow manipulated in 2020.

In an interview earlier this year, Peters said she was committed to finding the truth of what happened in 2020 and hoped "the powers that be — instead of taking time to attack me — would solve violent crime, would look into election irregularities and find the truth."

Colorado Republicans will be deciding who their nominee will be in late June.

"Americans are going to have a very simple choice — do we want people overseeing elections who believe in upholding the will of the voter regardless of how they voted?" said Griswold. "Or do we want extremist politicians who will do anything it takes to tilt elections in their favor and claim victory regardless of how the American people cast their ballot?"

## 'A huge demand': Ukrainian women train to clear landmines

By FLORENT BAJRAMI Associated Press

PEJA, Kosovo (AP) — Learning to identify and defuse explosives is something Anastasiia Minchukova never thought she would have to do as an English teacher in Ukraine. Yet there she was wearing a face shield, armed with a landmine detector and venturing into a field dotted with danger warnings.

Russia's war in Ukraine took Minchukova, 20, and five other women to Kosovo, where they are attending a hands-on course in clearing landmines and other dangers that may remain hidden across their country once combat ends.

"There is a huge demand on people who know how to do demining because the war will be over soon," Minchukova said. "We believe there is so much work to be done."

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The 18-day training camp takes place at a range in the western town of Peja where a Malta-based company regularly offers courses for job-seekers, firms working in former war zones, humanitarian organizations and government agencies.

Kosovo was the site of a devastating 1998-99 armed conflict between ethnic Albanian separatists and Serbian forces that killed about 13,000 people and left thousands of unexploded mines in need of clearing. Praedium Consulting Malta's range includes bombed and derelict buildings as well as expanses of vegetation.

Instructor Artur Tigani, who tailored the curriculum to reflect Ukraine's environment, said he was glad to share his small Balkan nation's experience with the Ukrainian women. Though 23 years have passed, "it's still fresh in our memories, the difficulties we met when we started clearance in Kosovo," Tigani said.

Tigani is a highly trained and experienced mine operations officer who served as an engineer in the former Yugoslav army during the 1980s. He has been deployed in his native Kosovo, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Congo, Rwanda and Kenya, and conducted training missions in Syria and Iraq.

During a class last week, he took his trainees through a makeshift minefield before moving to an improvised outdoor classroom featuring a huge board with various samples of explosives and mines.

While it is impossible to assess how littered with mines and unexploded ordnance Ukraine is at the moment, the aftermaths of other conflicts suggest the problem will be huge.

"In many parts of the world, explosive remnants of war continue to kill and maim thousands of civilians each year during and long after active hostilities have ended. The majority of victims are children," the International Committee of the Red Cross testified at a December U.N. conference.

"Locating (unexploded ordnance) in the midst of rubble and picking them out from among a wide array of everyday objects, many of which are made of similar material is a dangerous, onerous and often extremely time-consuming task," the Red Cross said.

Mine Action Review, a Norwegian organization that monitors clearance efforts worldwide, reported that 56 countries were contaminated with unexploded ordnance as of October, with Afghanistan, Cambodia and Iraq carrying the heaviest burdens, followed by Angola, Bosnia, Thailand, Turkey and Yemen.

Thousands of civilians are believed to have died in Ukraine since Russia invaded on Feb. 24. Russian forces have bombed cities and towns across the country, reducing many to rubble.

Military analysts say it appears Russian forces have employed anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, while Ukraine has used anti-tank mines to try to prevent the Russians from gaining ground.

With Ukrainian men from 18 to 60 years old prohibited from leaving their country and most engaged in defending it, the women wanted to help any way they could despite the risks involved in mine clearing.

"It's dangerous all over Ukraine, even if you are in a relatively safe region," said Minchukova, who is from central Ukraine.

Another Ukrainian student, Yuliia Katelik, 38, took her three children to safety in Poland early in the war. She went back to Ukraine and then joined the demining training to help make sure it's safe for her children when they return home to the eastern city of Kramatorsk, where a rocket attack on a crowded train station killed more than 50 people this month.

Katelik said her only wish is to reunite with her family and see "the end of this nightmare." Knowing how to spot booby-traps that could shatter their lives again is a necessary skill, she said.

"Acutely, probably as a mother, I do understand that there is a problem and it's quite serious, especially for the children," Katelik said.

Minchukova, wearing military-style clothes, said she was doubtful that normal life, as they all knew it before the war, will ever fully return.

"What am I missing? Peace," she said. "I'm dreaming about peace, about sleeping in my bed not worried about going to bomb shelters all the time. I miss the people I lost."

The Kosovo training center plans to work with more groups of Ukrainian women, both in Peja and in Ukraine.

"We're planning as well to go to Ukraine very soon and start with delivery of courses there, on the theater" of war, Tigani said.

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## Today in History: May 1, Americans hear of bin Laden's death

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, May 1, the 121st day of 2022. There are 244 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 1, 2011, President Barack Obama announced the death of Osama bin Laden during a U.S. commando operation. (Because of the time difference, it was early May 2 in Pakistan, where the al-Qaida leader met his end.)

On this date:

In 1707, the Kingdom of Great Britain was created as a treaty merging England and Scotland took effect.

In 1866, three days of race-related rioting erupted in Memphis, Tennessee, as white mobs targeted Blacks, 46 of whom were killed, along with two whites. (The violence spurred passage of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution defining American citizenship and equal protection under the law.)

In 1960, the Soviet Union shot down an American U-2 reconnaissance plane over Sverdlovsk and captured its pilot, Francis Gary Powers.

In 1963, James W. Whittaker became the first American to conquer Mount Everest as he and Sherpa guide Nawang Gombu reached the summit.

In 1964, the computer programming language BASIC (Beginner's All-Purpose Symbolic Instruction Code) was created by Dartmouth College professors John G. Kemeny and Thomas E. Kurtz.

In 1971, the intercity passenger rail service Amtrak went into operation.

In 1991, Nolan Ryan of the Texas Rangers threw his seventh no-hitter at age 44, shutting out the Toronto Blue Jays 3-0.

In 1992, on the third day of the Los Angeles riots, a visibly shaken Rodney King appeared in public to appeal for calm, pleading, "Can we all get along?"

In 2009, Supreme Court Justice David Souter announced his retirement effective at the end of the court's term in late June. (President Barack Obama chose federal judge Sonia Sotomayor to succeed him.)

In 2011, Pope Benedict XVI beatified Pope John Paul II, moving his predecessor a step closer to sainthood in a Vatican Mass attended by some 1.5 million pilgrims.

In 2015, Baltimore's top prosecutor charged six police officers with felonies ranging from assault to murder in the death of Freddie Gray, a Black man who'd suffered a spinal injury while riding in a police van. (None of the officers would be convicted.)

In 2020, U.S. regulators allowed emergency use of remdesivir, the first drug that appeared to help some COVID-19 patients recover faster.

Ten years ago: In a swift and secretive trip to the Afghan war zone, President Barack Obama signed an agreement vowing long-term ties with Afghanistan after America's combat forces returned home.

Five years ago: Erasing the threat of a disruptive government shutdown, the White House and top lawmakers endorsed a \$1.1 trillion spending bill to carry the nation through September 2017. Ryan Seacrest made his debut as the new co-host of the morning chat show "Live" with Kelly Ripa.

One year ago: The final phase of ending the U.S. military role in Afghanistan formally began; President Joe Biden had set May 1 as the official start of the withdrawal of the remaining U.S. and NATO troops. Utah Republicans narrowly rejected an effort to censure Sen. Mitt Romney for his votes against President Donald Trump at his impeachment trials. Olympia Dukakis, a veteran stage and screen actor who won an Oscar as Cher's mother in the romantic comedy "Moonstruck," died at her New York home at 89. Medina Spirit, trained by Bob Baffert, won the Kentucky Derby by a half-length over Mandaloun. (A post-race drug test was positive for a banned steroid, which would lead to the horse's disqualification and Baffert's suspension. Medina Spirit collapsed and died in December 2021 after a workout.)

Today's Birthdays: Singer Judy Collins is 83. Actor Stephen Macht is 80. Singer Rita Coolidge is 77. Pop singer Nick Fortuna (The Buckingham) is 76. Actor-director Douglas Barr is 73. Actor Dann Florek is 71.

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Singer-songwriter Ray Parker Jr. is 68. Actor Byron Stewart is 66. Hall of Fame jockey Steve Cauthen is 62. Actor Maia Morgenstern is 60. Actor Scott Coffey is 58. Country singer Wayne Hancock is 57. Actor Charlie Schlatter is 56. Country singer Tim McGraw is 55. Rock musician Johnny Colt is 54. Rock musician D'Arcy Wretzky is 54. Movie director Wes Anderson is 53. Actor Julie Benz is 50. Actor Bailey Chase is 50. Country singer Cory Morrow is 50. Gospel/R&B singer Tina Campbell (Mary Mary) is 48. Actor Darius McCrary is 46. Actor Jamie Dornan is 40. Actor Kerry Bishe is 38. TV personality Abby Huntsman is 36. Actor Lizzy Greene is 19.