

Groton Daily Independent

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The Groton Wrestling Squad did not go to the LaMoure Tournament on Saturday.

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Groton Community Calendar

Sunday, Dec. 11

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.

St. John's Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.; Zion worship, 11 a.m.; Christian Lit. Circle, 9:45 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.

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.

Open Gym: Grade JK-8, 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.; Grades 6-12, 3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 12

Senior Menu: Hearty vegetable beef soup, chicken salad sandwich, Mandarin oranges, peanut butter

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

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



cookie.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, try taters.

Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

JHGBB at Warner. 7th grade at 5:30 p.m. followed by 8th grade

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the community center, 1 p.m.

The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Groton UMC Advent Bible Study, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 13

Senior Menu: Scalloped potato with ham, green peas, sunset salad, oatmeal raisin cookie, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Doughnuts.

School Lunch: Cheese burger bake, peas.

Emmanuel Lutheran council, 7 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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Northern State Offense Lights up Bemidji State

Aberdeen, S.D. – A season high for 3-pointers made and sharp shooting from across the floor led the Northern State University men's basketball team over Bemidji State on Saturday evening. The Wolves drained 17 long range buckets and shot at a 55.2% clip in the win.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 89, BSU 67

Records: NSU 8-3 (4-1 NSIC), BSU 5-5 (1-4 NSIC)

Attendance: 2534

HOW IT HAPPENED

- Northern scored 40-plus points in each half, holding a lead for a majority of the game
- The Wolves not only shot over 55.0% from the floor, but tallied a 56.7 3-point field goal percentage and 88.9 free throw percentage
- NSU recorded a game high 36 rebounds, 19 assists, 17 made 3-pointers, and five blocks
- They held Bemidji State to 8-of-27 from the 3-point line and forced 11 turnovers which resulted in 12 points
- The Wolves recorded 24 points off the bench led by Josh Dilling with 11, as well as 24 points in the paint and 17 second chance points
- Sam Masten led four Wolves in double figures notching 20 points and was one of five Wolves to shoot 50.0% or better from the floor

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Sam Masten: 20 points, 75.0 field goal%, 6 assists, 5 rebounds
- Augustin Reede: 17 points, 55.6 field goal %, 50.0 3-point field goal%, 2 assists
- Jordan Belka: 11 points, 55.6 field goal %, 7 rebounds, 2 blocks
- Josh Dilling: 11 points, 75.0 3-point field goal%, 5 assists, 2 steals (season high)

UP NEXT

Northern State travels to NSIC North Division foes Minnesota Duluth and St. Cloud State next Friday and Saturday. Tip-off times are set for 7:30 p.m. on Friday against the Bulldogs and 5:30 p.m. on Saturday versus the Huskies.



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Wolves Bounce Back with Double Digit Win Over Bemidji State

Aberdeen, S.D. – After seeing a pair of comeback attempts fall short in the past week, the Northern State women's basketball team battled their way back into the win column with a 62-48 victory over Bemidji State. The Wolves used a 17-6 third quarter advantage to take a control of the game after only leading by one at the halftime break.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 62, BSU 48

Records: NSU 7-4 (2-3 NSIC), BSU 3-6 (0-5 NSIC)

Attendance: 2,024

HOW IT HAPPENED

Each team led by as many as five points in the opening quarter, Laurie Rogers scored four consecutive points for the Wolves to cut the Beaver lead to one after ten minutes of play

The back-and-forth action continued in the second quarter as the teams exchanged leads throughout, but a layup by Madelyn Bragg put the Wolves up one going into the halftime break

Northern shot 3-5 from 3-point range in the second period, with Alayna Benike knocking down a pair of shots from beyond the arc

Northern State broke the game open in the third quarter, opening the period on an 11-0 scoring run and holding Bemidji State scoreless for over six minutes of play

The Wolves extended the lead to as many as 15 points on multiple occasions in the fourth quarter

Rogers tied season highs in points (18) and rebounds (13), recording her fourth double-double of the season which is tied for the most in the NSIC this season

NSU converted 16 BSU turnovers into 22 points off turnovers, and held a 30-20 advantage in points in the paint

The Wolves out-rebounded the Beavers 42-35

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Laurie Rogers: 18 points, 13 rebounds, 3 assists, 2 blocks

Morgan Fiedler: 10 points, 2 rebounds, 2 assists, 1 block, 1 steal

Madelyn Bragg: 9 points, 6 rebounds, 3 blocks

UP NEXT

Northern State will travel to Minnesota next weekend, facing a pair of road tests at NSIC North Division leaders Minnesota Duluth and St. Cloud State. The Wolves will face the Bulldogs at 5:30 p.m. on Friday in Romano Gymnasium in Duluth. The Wolves will conclude the road trip on Saturday afternoon with a 3:30 p.m. tip-off against St. Cloud State in Halenbeck Hall in St. Cloud.

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1st Place



From the Groton SD Community Facebook Page:

What a beautiful night to check out all the wonderful Christmas lights around Groton!

This year there was so many decorated houses it was hard to choose!

This year's winners are:

1st Place: Paul & Tina Kosel

2nd Place: Nathan & Brandy Flajole

3rd Place: Bryce & Hope Dargatz

Winners will receive credits on their utility bills!

2nd Place



Congrats to our winners & thank you to our wonderful judges and the Groton Community Transit and bus driver, Pam!

Groton Holiday Lighting Contest

Photos from Groton SD Community FB page



3rd Place

GDILIVE.COM

School Board Meeting
Monday, Dec. 12, 2022, 7 p.m.

Boys' Basketball
Thursday, Dec. 15, 2022
Sisseton at Groton Area


Junior Varsity Game starts at 6 p.m.
Sponsored by Hefty Seed

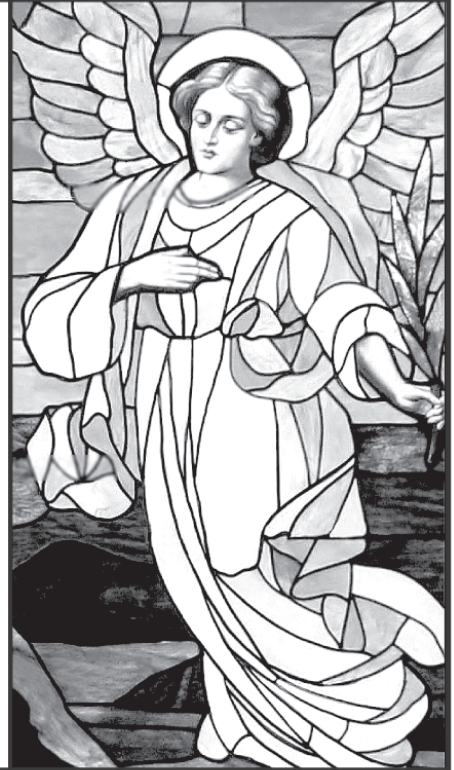
followed by Varsity Game
Sponsored by
Bary Keith at Harr Motors
Bierman Farm Service
Blocker Construction
Dacotah Bank
Groton Chamber of Commerce
Groton Ford
John Sieh Agency
Locke Electric
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking
Bahr Spray Foam
Thunder Seed with John Wheeting

Anyone wanting to sponsor a JV game, Call/Text Paul at 605-397-7460



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

...There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people." LUKE 2: 8-10 



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BIBBLE
TRIVIA
by Wilson Casey

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

2. Which Old Testament prophet said the most about the birth of Christ? *Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah*

3. From Matthew 1:18, when Mary became pregnant, she and Joseph were ...? *Married, Engaged, Just friends, Strangers*

4. In Luke 2:8-11, how did the shepherds learn of Christ's birth? *Magi informed, Joseph announcement, Mighty wind, Angel appearance*

5. Where did the wise men go first when they arrived in the Holy Land? *Nazareth, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron*

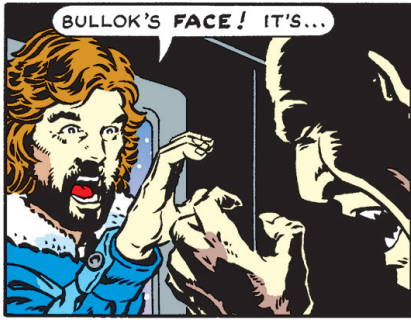
6. What does the Bible record as to when Jesus was born? *Late September, Dec. 25, March 17, Does not*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Isaiah, 3) Engaged, 4) Angel appearance, 5) Jerusalem, 6) Does not

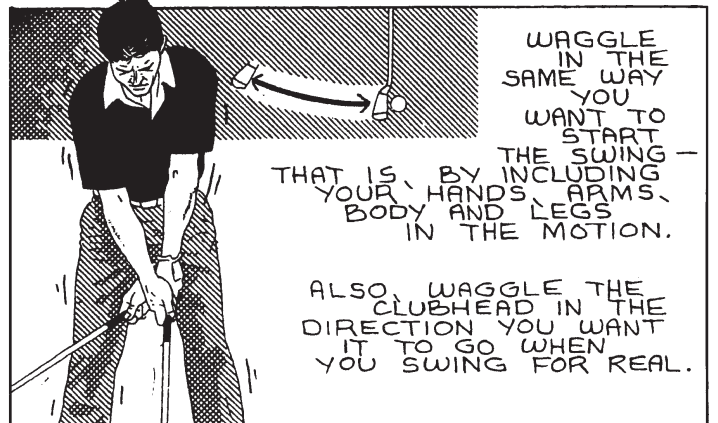
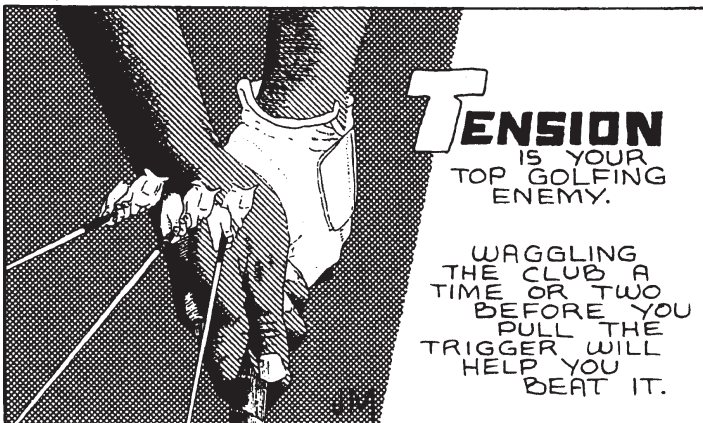
Comments? More Trivia? Gift ideas? Visit www.TriviaGuy.com.

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Follow-up Colonoscopy Necessary After Result of Eight Polyps

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 73-year-old male. This year, I had a colonoscopy. They found some small polyps and one larger polyp. All polyps tested negative for cancer. I have had two previous colonoscopies in the past 10 years. Polyps were found in each one. My gastroenterologist said I should have another colonoscopy in one year. There has been no colon cancer in my family.

As you age, is it safe to continue with a colonoscopy? I don't feel safe having one every year. At what age should seniors stop having a colonoscopy? My previous gastroenterologist told me to have one in five years. I do a stool test yearly, given by my primary doctor. — *F.Q.*

ANSWER: I read your reports, which showed a total of nine polyps, all "sessile" (flat, which is higher risk for development into cancer than those with a stalk), the largest being 8 mm. The pathology report confirmed these as tubular adenomas, none of which had the worrisome finding of high-grade dysplasia.

The official guidelines of the American College of Gastroenterology recommend a follow-up colonoscopy in three years. I definitely agree with that in people who are otherwise healthy. Colon cancer does definitely run in families, but at least 80% of colon cancer occurs in people with no known family history, meaning you can't be complacent even if there isn't any his-

There is no absolute age cut-off for screening colonoscopies: Age 75 might be reasonable in someone who really doesn't want to have another and whose previous results have all been normal, but I would be unlikely to recommend a screening exam in a person older than 85. People who have serious medical conditions outside the intestinal tract get less benefit from screening.

Age 73 is not so old that I would recommend against screening in otherwise healthy people, and given that you have had eight polyps, I definitely recommend a three-year follow-up. I don't know why the gastroenterologist said one year, based on the reports you sent me.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm 59 and have a pea-sized osteoma near the top-middle section of my forehead. My grandmother had one in the same place and never got it removed. It grew to be the size of an egg! I want to have mine removed before it gets any larger (it's doubled in size over the past three years). What do you recommend? — *J.K.*

ANSWER: An osteoid osteoma is a common benign tumor of the bone. They often occur in the thigh or leg, but the forehead is not unusual and, of course, is cosmetically important. Most do not grow and, in fact, more commonly shrink over time.

I've not seen an osteoma get as big as your grandmother's, and I can understand why you would be concerned. It is very reasonable to get an evaluation. An orthopedic surgeon with special expertise in bone tumors is a good person to see, and some plastic surgeons also have expertise in removing bone tumors in such a way as to provide the best cosmetic result.

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

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"Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio" (PG) -- Academy-Award-winning director Guillermo del Toro first announced his reimagining of the children's fantasy story "Pinocchio" back in 2008. After a long-winding road leading up to its 2022 release, the film, starring Ewan McGregor, Finn Wolfhard, Cate Blanchett and more, is now out on streaming. For his reimagining, del Toro uses stop-motion animation, which gives the characters a much more fantastical look, unlike the soft, cartoony animation of Disney's "Pinocchio." So far, the critics have given positive reviews, no doubt due to the emotional, character-based storytelling that accompanies del Toro's films ("The Shape of Water" and "Pan's Labyrinth") and makes them so profound. (Netflix)



The story of Pinocchio is reimagined in "Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio." Courtesy of Netflix

"Something From Tiffany's" (PG) -- Could the iconic rom-com era (not looking at you, Netflix) make a comeback? This new Prime Original movie produced by Reese Witherspoon has a taste of classic rom-coms like "The Holiday" (2006) that we've all come to know and love over the years. Zoey Deutch plays Rachel Meyer, a woman who receives a Tiffany's engagement ring from her boyfriend, Gary (Ray Nicholson). Gary, who in reality just purchased earrings for her, realizes his gift was swapped with another man's. In the process of swapping the gifts back with Ethan, the rightful owner of the ring, the accidental gift-swapping coincidentally leads to a fated attraction between Rachel and Ethan. Out now. (Prime Video)

"Ticket to Paradise" (PG-13) -- A new rom-com starring George Clooney, Julia Roberts and Kaitlyn Dever just hit streaming platforms after its theatrical release. This is not Clooney and Roberts' first rodeo, as the pair have co-starred in the "Ocean's" trilogy and even a thriller called "Money Monster" (2016). They play David and Georgia Cotton, respectively, who were formerly married and cannot stand the sight of each other. But the Cottons reunite when they find out their daughter, Lily, is potentially marrying a man she just met. Afraid that Lily is only going to repeat the same mistakes that led to their demise, the Cottons are determined to sabotage the wedding. (Peacock)

"The Banshees of Inisherin" (R) -- Taking place in 1923 near the end of the Irish Civil War, two friends, Padraic (Colin Farrell) and Colm (Brendan Gleeson), reach an impasse in their longtime friendship when Colm suddenly stops talking to Padraic. After Padraic's constant attempts to speak with Colm and mend the relationship, Colm threatens to start cutting off his own fingers and gift them to Padraic every time he continues to bother him. Barry Keoghan ("Dunkirk") also stars in this gritty, metaphorical Irish film that won Farrell the Volpi Cup for Best Actor at the 79th Venice International Film Festival. Out Dec. 13. (HBO Max)

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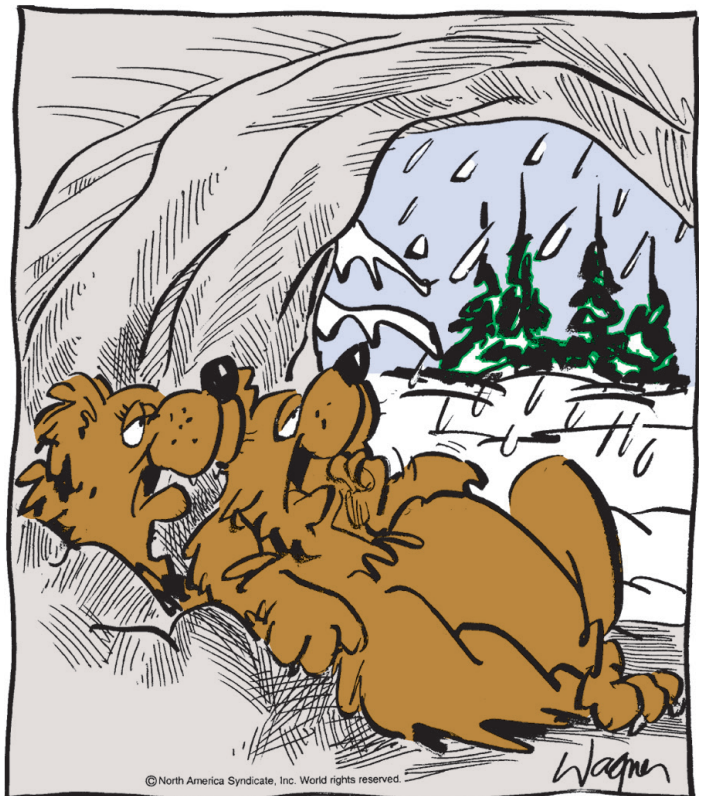
1. What did "Where the Action Is" and "American Bandstand" have in common?
2. Did Gary Puckett & The Union Gap ever have a No. 1 hit single?
3. Who had the most success with "The Tide Is High"?
4. Which artist went on the Who's That Girl World Tour?
5. Name the song that contains these lyrics: "I keep a close watch on this heart of mine, I keep my eyes wide open all the time."

Answers

1. The television musical programs were both created by Dick Clark, with Clark hosting "Bandstand" from 1956 to 1989. He never appeared on "Action," only doing remote announcing of the bands.
2. Once, but it was in the U.K., when "Young Girl" topped the charts in 1968.
3. Blondie, in 1980. The original was released by the Paragons, in 1967.
4. Madonna, in 1987. Her first was the Virgin Tour in 1985.
5. "I Walk the Line," by Johnny Cash. He penned the song, about marital fidelity and avoiding temptation, in under an hour. It stayed on the charts for 43 weeks and, in 2014, ended up as No. 1 on the list of the 100 greatest country songs of all time.

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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}



"I set the alarm for April."

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Cane is different. 2. Chair back is missing. 3. Cap is different. 4. List is smaller. 5. Hair is different. 6. Antenna is smaller.

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* B.G. in Minnesota writes: "If you want to freshen up drawers with sheets, pillowcases or in your luggage, just place a dryer sheet inside. They really do leave a nice scent, and they are also great for dusting jobs!"

* To control the level of garlic in a recipe, add it at the beginning for a lighter taste and at the end for a stronger taste. To get garlic out of the clove quickly instead of tedious peeling, just smash it and squeeze it out.

* The best cure for a foggy windshield is a chalkboard eraser. You can purchase them at office supply stores. They can be stored easily in your glove box. No window cleaner required for a quick clear windshield, and you can

see well after. A clean windshield is a safety issue! -- M.T. in South Carolina

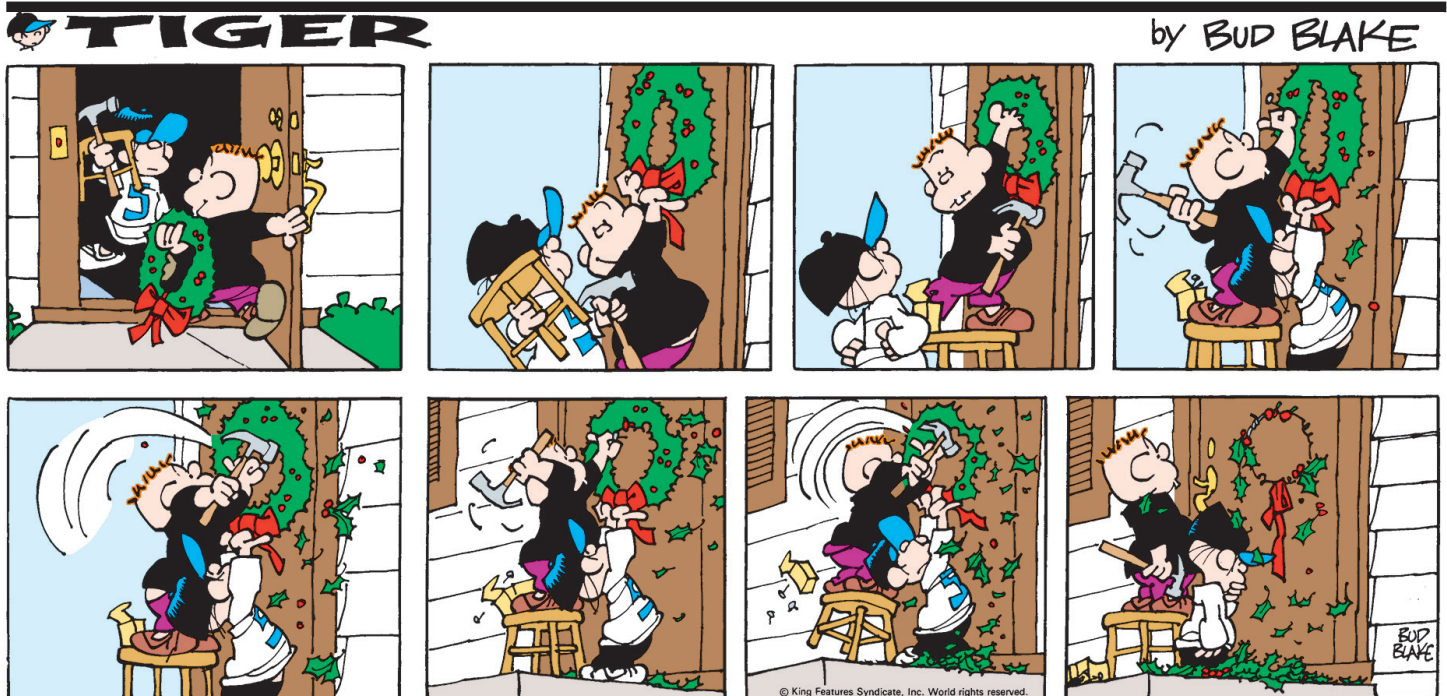
* Fill measuring cups with hot water and empty quickly before measuring sticky substances like honey or peanut butter. It will slide out much easier.

* Banana trick: For faster ripening, leave bunches together and store in a bag. For slower ripening, separate the bananas. They will ripen faster if stored near apples or citrus fruit. Also, remember that just because the outside is getting brown spots, the inside isn't necessarily going soft.

* Warm up refrigerated baked goods in the microwave, but add a mug of water. It will keep the moisture in the bread. If your bread loaf is going stale, wrap it in foil and pop it in the oven for about 10 minutes at 300 F. It will freshen the bread!

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

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Slightly wet
- 5 Wild canine
- 9 Yoga pad
- 12 Close
- 13 Actress
Perlman
- 14 Green prefix
- 15 Requiring low
temperatures
- 17 Moo — pork
- 18 Boy, in
Barcelona
- 19 Big name in
racing
- 21 Antlered ani-
mals
- 24 Jubilation
- 25 Billions of
years
- 26 German
- 30 Aachen article

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15				16						17		
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38	39					40	41					
42				43	44					45	46	47
48				49						50		
51				52						53		

- 31 Postpone
- 50 Turner or Fey
- 10 Dull pain
- 29 Prompted
- 32 Wildebeest
- 51 Billboards
- 11 Go sightsee-
ing
- 31 Girl in "The
Wizard of Oz"
- 33 Romance-
free, as a rela-
tionship
- 52 Evergreens
- 16 USO patrons
- 34 Nanny's
charge
- 35 Head, to
Henri
- 53 Crisp cookie
- 20 Ultramodern-
ist
- 35 Beliefs
- 36 Sweet wine
- 21 Leak out
slowly
- 37 Crone
- 37 King of Judea
- 22 Work hard
- 38 Anti-fur org.
- 38 Snapshot
- 23 Maryland's
capital
- 39 Cattle group
- 40 Graceful bird
- 24 Avocado dip,
for short
- 40 Cabbage
salad
- 42 Slithery fish
- 26 Camp shelter
- 41 Marries
- 43 Looking good
on the tube,
say
- 27 Peyton's
brother
- 44 Shoe width
- 48 Part of TNT
- 8 Teaching staff
- 45 Diarist Anais
- 49 Lettuce unit
- 9 Courier
- 28 Grooving on
- 46 — tizzy
- 47 Bottle top

— King Crossword —

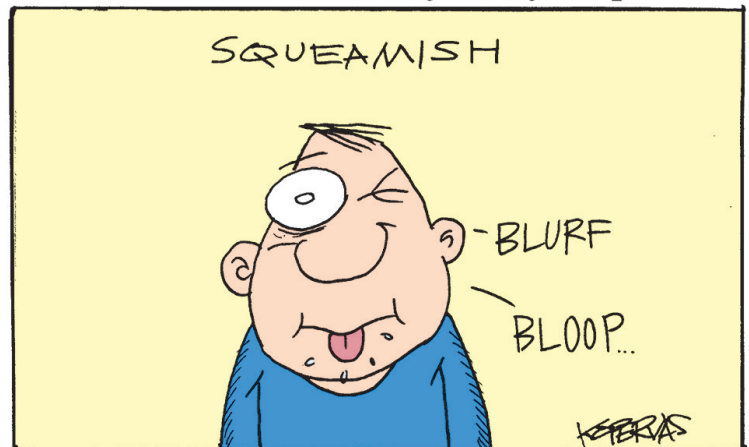
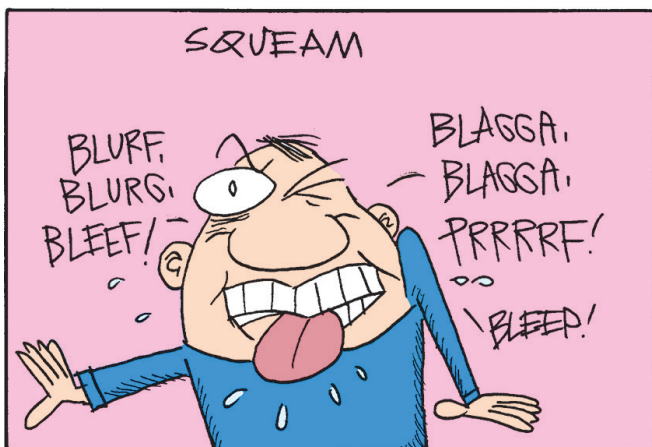
Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.

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

Out on a Limb

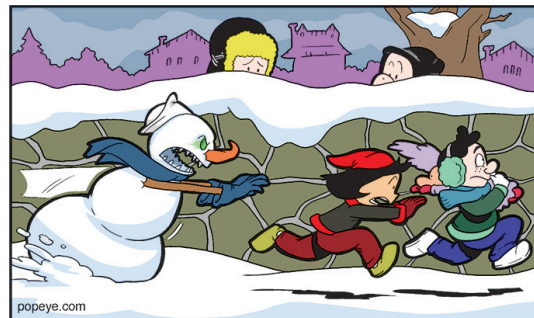
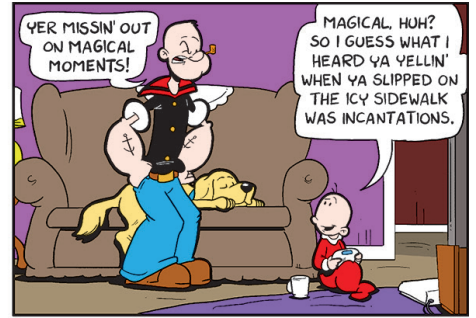
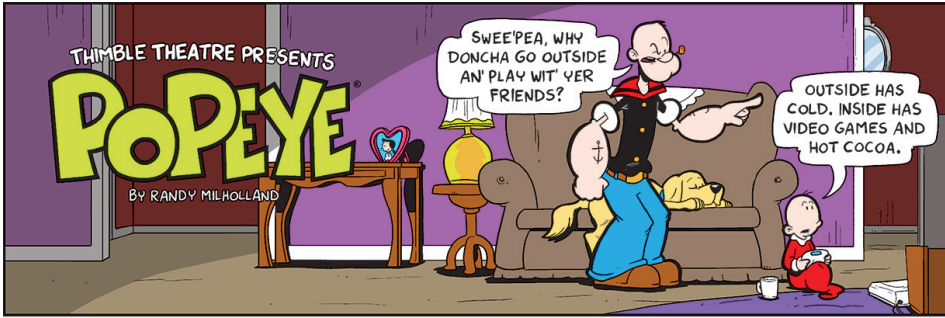
by Gary Kopervas



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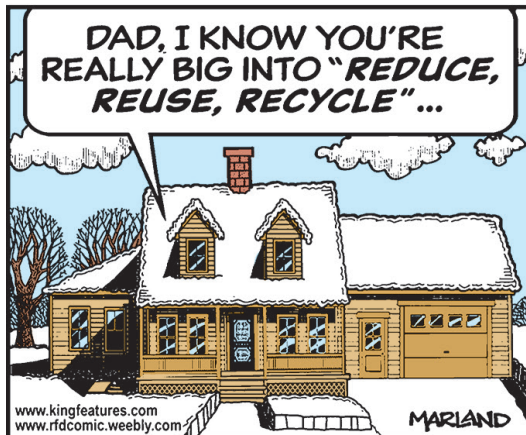
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland

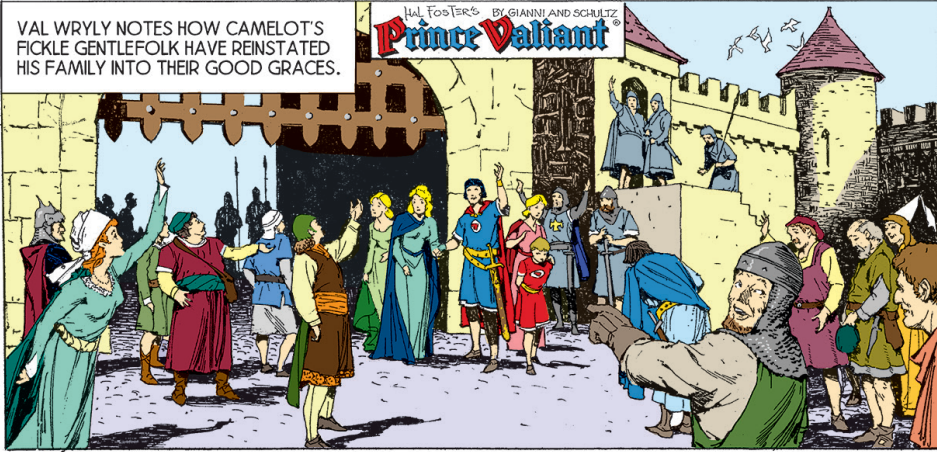


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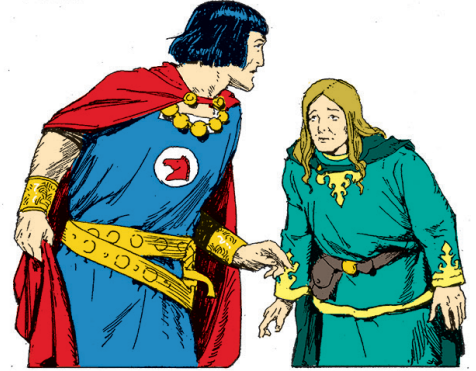
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VAL WRYLY NOTES HOW CAMELOT'S FICKLE GENTLEFOLK HAVE REINSTATED HIS FAMILY INTO THEIR GOOD GRACES.

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



FOR THE MOMENT HIS HEART IS FULL. OF COURSE, OBLIGATION EVENTUALLY INTRUDES - A COURTIER RUSHES UP: "YOUR GRACE, THE REGENT SUMMONS YOU..."



AS VAL HURRIES TO ARN'S OFFICE, THE COURTIER EXPLAINS: "A BLOND GIANT WAS FOUND OUT IN THE FIELDS. SOME SAY HE IS A SAXON SPY, BUT - HE IS STRANGE, POSSIBLY MAD..."



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WHAT VAL FINDS IS A BEMUSED ARN, A DISHEVELED GAWAIN - AND A BLOND GIANT, STRANGE INDEED. BUT - "THIS IS NO SAXON," OPINES VAL. "WELL," HUFFS GAWAIN, "HE FIGHTS AS DIRTY AS ONE, AND AS FIERCE AS A LION!"

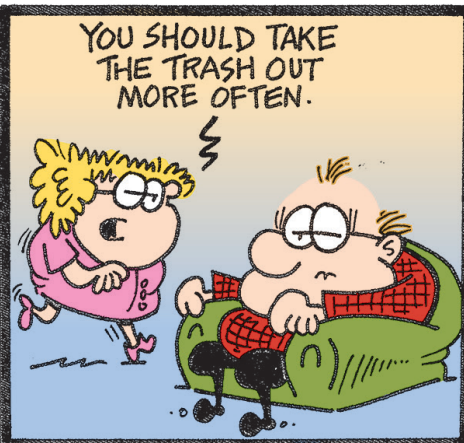


NEXT: Gawain's grievance

The Spats

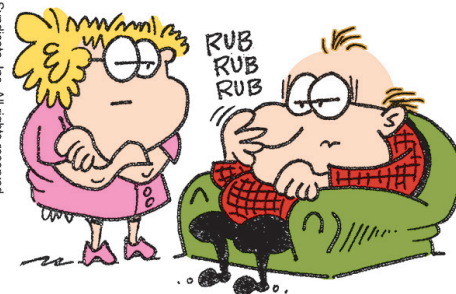
by Jeff Pickering

YOU SHOULD TAKE THE TRASH OUT MORE OFTEN.

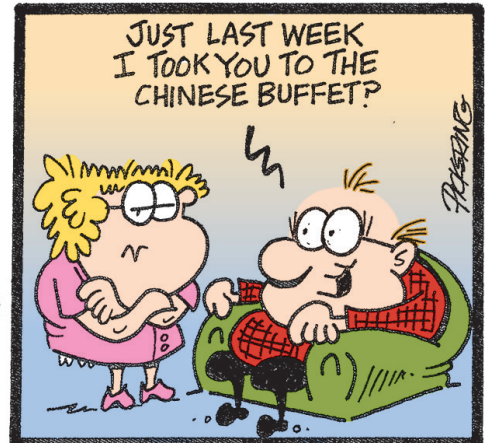


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RUB RUB RUB



JUST LAST WEEK I TOOK YOU TO THE CHINESE BUFFET?



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

The Joys of the Food Bank

A few months ago I escorted three very nervous elderly ladies to the food bank. By “escorted,” I mean I had to scout out the situation in advance, come back with a report (no, the food bank staff wouldn’t ask embarrassing questions about finances) and then actually take the ladies to the food bank in my car to pick up their groceries.

Fast-forward a few months, and I’ve just learned that said ladies actually went to the food bank by themselves today ... and had a wonderful time.

You wouldn’t think that “wonderful time” would be an apt description of a trip to a food bank, but they were delighted by the whole experience. For this pick-up, the food bank did things a different way: Having received an abundance of donations from various places, this time they invited their “guests” into the storage area and allowed them to pick out exactly what they wanted for their holiday meals.

One of the ladies chose a small turkey, another a turkey breast to be made into sandwiches and pot pies, and the third a ham for future casseroles, knowing that they were going to split the bounty when they had holiday meals together. They negotiated their way up and down the storage area aisles, accompanied by a friendly staffer, chatting about potential recipes and collecting a wider variety of foods than each would get individually during a typical food pick-up.

I’m told I will be a recipient as well: I am invited to share their meals when they carve the turkey, make the sandwiches and turn the ham into delicious casseroles as my reward for having introduced them to the joys of the food bank.

The food bank is to be lauded for their largess this holiday season. They might never know just how happy they made those three ladies.

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1. A single point in Canadian football is also known by what name?

2. Baseball Hall of Famer Whitey Ford was knocked unconscious by pretzels hurled onto the field by angry fans in a 1997 episode of what animated comedy?

3. In 2003, what Phoenix Suns player became the first NBA Rookie of the Year who was drafted out of high school?

4. Before the Wisconsin Badgers and Minnesota Golden Gophers football teams played for the Paul Bunyan's Axe trophy, the winner of their rivalry game was awarded what?

5. What now-defunct golf equipment retailer, founded in 1967, filed for bankruptcy and was purchased by Dick's Sporting Goods in 2016?

6. What female tennis player was assaulted on the court by a knife-wielding spectator at the 1993 Citizen Cup in Hamburg, Germany?

7. AL Rookie of the Year honors went to Oakland A's players three straight times from 1986 to 1988. Who were they?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. A rouge.
2. "The Simpsons."
3. Amar'e Stoudemire.
4. The Slab of Bacon.
5. Golfsmith.
6. Monica Seles.
7. Jose Canseco ('86), Mark McGwire ('87) and Walt Weiss ('88).

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





After Neutering, Follow the Veterinarian's Advice

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I believe strongly in natural cures and treatments for people and pets. Recently, my tomcat, Jessup, went to the vet to get fixed, to stop my neighbors from complaining about his aggressiveness. I used herbal tinctures and supplements to prevent infection and reduce Jessup's pain so that he wouldn't have to take antibiotics and other medications that might harm his health long-term. When I told this to the vet at Jessup's follow-up, she got really upset and said that if I did that again, she would no longer accept Jessup for treatment. I don't understand why. Who's in the right here? -- Sherry

L., Los Angeles

DEAR SHERRY: While herbal supplements can be helpful for pets, it's very important that you share with the veterinarian any current or intended use of these supplements.

For example, some prescribed drugs can interact with supplements and prevent a pet's liver from properly metabolizing those supplements, causing a dangerous buildup of toxicity.

Vets today will work with pet owners to make sure that prescribed medications don't interfere with, or interact with, herbal or vitamin supplements. But you have to be upfront and list any and all remedies that you're giving to your pet. This is especially important with higher-risk procedures and surgeries of any kind, including neutering and spaying. A small pet's body is especially reactive to pain and infection, and it's important to keep them comfortable and avoid hampering their body's ability to heal.

Work with the vet. Follow their advice. Ask questions before a procedure and disclose the supplemental treatment that you'd like to give your pet. Veterinarians will work with you on an effective treatment plan because, just like you, they want your cat to be healthy and happy.

Readers, how well do you get along with your pet's veterinarian? Let us know at ask@pawscorner.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* The Popigai crater in northern Siberia contains an estimated trillions of karats of industrial-grade diamonds. Unfortunately, they're too expensive to mine.

* Many if not most people hate those annoying pop-up ads that plague our computers ... and you can include their creator, Ethan Zuckerman, in that group. In 2014, he confessed in an article: "I wrote the code to launch the window and run an ad in it. I'm sorry. Our intentions were good."

* Bulgarians nod when they want to say no and shake their heads when they want to say yes.

* A cow will allow itself to be led up the stairs, but it will be impossible for you to lead it back down the stairs again.

* Here's a little extra justification for those of us who dislike daylight saving time: The practice has been linked to increased heart attacks, strokes, car accidents, workplace injuries, headaches, depressive episodes and even lower SAT scores.

* For centuries, the word "topaz" was used to refer to any yellow gemstone, despite the fact that natural topaz is colorless.

Thought for the Day: "Lighting a fire under something may get it burning, but lighting the fire from within something tends to keep it burning." -- Brenda Strohhahn Henderson



Source: "The Future of Frankincense"
by Davison-Bongers-Phillips

Frankincense Boswellia trees exude a healing resin when their bark has been damaged. As this resin hardens, it is collected and sold as *frankincense*. In response to concerns about the conservation, legislation and trade developments affecting this industry, a Global Frankincense Alliance was formed in 2020 to address the long-term future of frankincense trees and the communities that harvest them.

– Brenda Weaver



by Freddy Groves

Two Tasks to Start the Year

In a matter of weeks, we'll have a new year when, ideally, we'll have more control over our lives. Here are two things we can all do to start with a clean slate.

Clean out your medicine cabinet. Pull out expired drugs (both prescription and over the counter) and go on a hunt for a location to drop them off. Some towns have only one drug disposal day per year, but other towns keep a machine in their police department to drop off drugs anytime. Ask if your local Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility has disposal. Or

you can go to <https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch> to search for a controlled substance public disposal location near you. Whatever you do, don't put them down the sink or toilet.

Organize your military files and information. If the worst should suddenly happen to you, don't add to your relatives' grief by making them dig for your information or wonder what your final wishes would be.

Here are some of the things you'll need to gather up:

- Your DD214 or service equivalent. If you don't have one on hand, send for it.
- Your birth certificate.
- Your final will. If you don't have one, now is the time to make an appointment for January with an attorney. Call the nearest military base and ask for Legal Aid to see if you qualify for a free will.
- Any life insurance policies, copies of marriage certificates and divorce decrees, and a list of all the places you served while on active duty along with the dates.

Download or send away for the following:

- Application for United States Flag for Burial Purposes (VA Form 27-2008)
- Claim for One Sum Payment Government Life Insurance (VA Form 29-4125e)
- Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker (VA Form 40-1330)

Print out the Federal Benefits for Veterans Dependents and Survivors book or send away for it by calling the VA (800-827-1000) and add that to your stack.

Once you've gathered all this information (a box on a closet shelf will be enough), make sure someone knows where it is. Remember: Once it's done, it's done.

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Wishing Well®

7	6	2	4	6	8	4	6	4	2	6	8	5
A	Y	P	D	O	C	A	U	R	R	F	H	B
3	2	3	5	2	3	4	2	8	6	2	8	6
H	A	A	O	C	R	I	T	E	L	I	E	O
7	3	5	3	6	3	8	2	4	2	7	4	7
W	D	S	W	U	O	R	C	N	E	A	G	Y
2	7	3	6	2	7	4	3	4	6	8	5	7
T	T	R	R	O	O	T	K	H	I	F	S	S
4	7	5	6	8	7	3	6	7	2	4	5	8
O	U	S	S	U	C	P	H	C	L	U	A	L
5	2	4	2	7	3	2	8	2	7	4	8	3
Y	E	G	R	E	A	A	D	N	E	H	A	Y
7	2	4	3	2	3	8	5	3	5	3	5	5
D	C	T	S	E	O	Y	S	F	Y	F	E	S

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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1. MOVIES: What was the name of the fictional kingdom in "Frozen"?
2. HISTORY: How many people died as a result of the Boston Massacre of 1770?
3. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What was the name of Scrooge's business partner in "A Christmas Carol"?
4. TELEVISION: In what city is the long-running drama "Grey's Anatomy" set?
5. GEOGRAPHY: Which two cities were the original endpoints of the Orient Express?
6. ANIMAL KINGDOM: How many legs does an ant have?
7. LITERATURE: What is the title of Toni Morrison's first novel?
8. MATH: How many minutes are in a week?
9. BUSINESS SLOGANS: Which company's slogan is, "Expect more. Pay less"?
10. EXPLORERS: What is the home country of Roald Amundsen, the first to reach the South Pole?

Answers

1. Arendelle.
2. Five.
3. Jacob Marley.
4. Seattle, Washington.
5. Paris and Istanbul (Constantinople).
6. Six.
7. "The Bluest Eye."
8. 10,080.
9. Target.
10. Norway.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

The Right Tax Cut – The Right Time

Over the last couple months, I've checked out groceries at stores in communities across South Dakota. One out of every four or five customers had to put something back because of how much it cost. They were shocked at how much their grocery bill has gone up. And it isn't getting better. South Dakotans need relief – and we can give it to them by eliminating the sales tax on groceries.

Prices are rising far too rapidly on everyday food items like milk, ground beef, eggs, and other groceries. Eggs alone have increased to over 140% of what they were in January 2021. Even with South Dakota having the best personal income growth, family budgets are not keeping up.

When you elected me to serve a second term as Governor, you tasked me with continuing to fulfill the duty of proposing a budget for our state. I recently announced my budget for the next year, and South Dakota has \$310 million in permanent revenue growth because of our strong economy.

This means we can afford to eliminate the sales tax on groceries. It is a \$102 million tax cut for the people of South Dakota – meaning we still have \$208 million in permanent new revenue even after we deliver this tax cut to the people. The people of South Dakota overwhelmingly want this tax cut, and they know we can afford it.

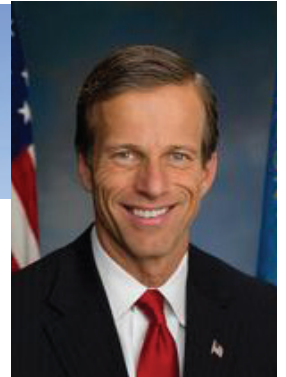
Gas prices continue to increase because of President Biden's energy policies. New regulations and taxes, a lack of utilization of American energy sources, and a dwindling reserve indicate this trend will continue.

Every South Dakotan is paying more for food, gas, and to heat and cool their homes – including those who can afford it least, like senior citizens, working parents, and single moms. Their family finances are struggling under the strain.

Remember – our revenues are strong because we have grown our economy. It is the strongest in the nation. People have moved their families, their jobs, and their businesses to South Dakota. Our new housing developments are here to stay. New industries are thriving. The jobs of the future are right here in South Dakota. We have the fastest growing incomes in America – and we can grow incomes even more by letting people keep more of their own hard-earned money in their pockets.

This growth is sustainable. And there won't be a better opportunity in the future. My team and I are fully confident that this is the right tax cut at the right time. I look forward to working with the legislature to get it done.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Regulation and the Real World

In the last two years, South Dakotans have literally paid the price for the Biden administration's agenda. Democrats' reckless spending contributed to the highest inflation in 40 years. Recent tax increases on energy producers are likely to increase utility costs. And the Biden administration's regulatory agenda may drive utility bills even higher and put our energy and food security in jeopardy in its rush toward a Green New Deal future.

The Biden administration has a disturbing track record of using the financial regulatory system to advance its climate priorities. Using financial regulatory agencies to push through environmental, social, and governance (ESG) regulations risks discouraging investment in industries essential to our economy, like energy and agriculture. For instance, earlier this year the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) proposed a climate disclosure rule that would require publicly traded companies to disclose information not only about their own greenhouse gas emissions, but also about those of their suppliers and their customers – neither of which they can control. Because this disclosure requirement is simply unworkable, companies would likely choose to stop doing business in certain industries altogether.

The SEC is unfortunately not alone in being used to advance Democrats' climate goals. The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and the Federal Reserve have issued draft principles for large banks on "climate-related financial risk management." And the Federal Reserve recently established a pilot program to analyze climate-related financial risks at the nation's largest banks, which I believe clearly exceeds its statutory authority. The National Credit Union Administration issued a since-rescinded strategic plan that seemed to recommend credit unions reduce their membership and loan offerings in farming communities. And the Department of Labor finalized a rule to require pension fiduciaries to consider climate-change factors when making certain investment decisions.

The practical effect of these and similar regulations would be for financial institutions and other firms to choke off investment in oil, natural gas, fertilizer, and agriculture, which would in turn increase prices on consumers. I recently sent a letter to President Biden outlining these concerns and requested that his administration actually take into account the impact its ESG regulations would have on food and energy prices prior to implementing them. This may not be common sense to bureaucrats in Washington, but I know it makes a lot of sense to business owners and families across South Dakota.

Discouraging investment in critical industries like agriculture and energy would be misguided at any time, but it is especially concerning at a time when working families are paying increased utility bills and agricultural producers are facing higher input costs. I'll continue to push back on this administration's ill-conceived attempts to force its radical environmental agenda onto the American economy through the financial regulatory system to ensure that industries essential to South Dakota and our economy continue to have access to the resources they need to keep feeding and fueling the world.

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



Victory for our Servicemembers

On Thursday, the House voted with bipartisan support to pass the annual defense bill—the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This bill has been passed on time for 62 consecutive years. This is a pillar of defense policy and funding, a critical way to protect national security.

There's a lot in these bills, so I have highlighted some wins:

After a year-long push for a repeal of the COVID-19 vaccine requirement for servicemembers—the NDAA removed that requirement. In recent years, we have seen a decrease in recruitment and retention in our military. Requiring servicemembers to get a vaccine they are not comfortable with limits the pool of qualified applicants. Some of these individuals may have natural immunity but have not been allowed to join the military because of this vaccine requirement—I'm grateful we were able to get this done.

The NDAA authorized a pay raise for our troops. Inflation has hit families hard over the past year and it's no different for servicemembers and military families. I am thankful for those who have chosen service and sacrifice—this is just one small way to thank them.

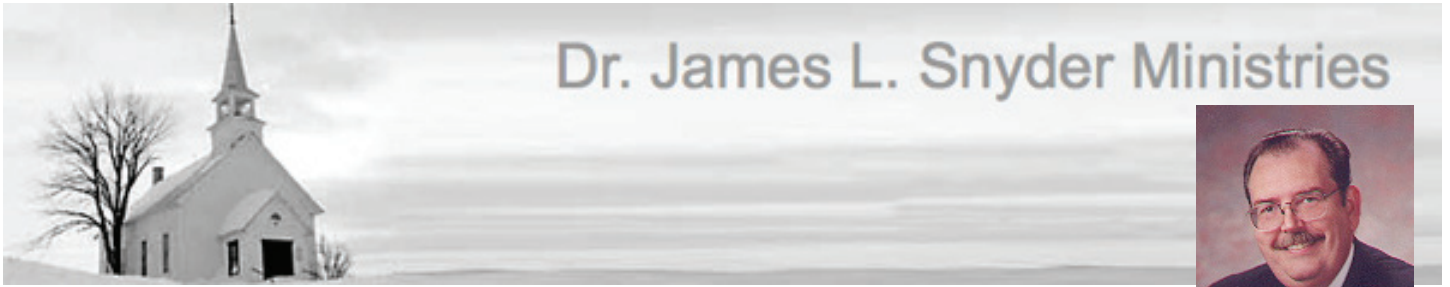
Funding for Ukraine has been a point of contention over the past several months. The NDAA authorizes funds for the Inspector General to audit and account for the U.S. dollars being spent for Ukraine. Assisting Ukraine in their fight against Russia's invasion is a noble cause, but we must ensure the dollars are being used wisely and as they were intended by Congress. Having this audit and account of federal dollars will give the public and elected officials transparency.

Great news for South Dakotans, the NDAA provides necessary funding for the B-21 Raider that is coming to Ellsworth Air Force Base. This is a huge investment in our nation's Air Force, national security, and the Ellsworth community. I was excited to see the unveiling of the first B-21 Raider in California last week. The incredible, cutting-edge technology will ensure our military continues to be the best of the best for generations. I am grateful South Dakota was chosen to be home of the Raider.

I was proud to vote in support of the NDAA, a vote that supports our nation's military, something we should all agree on.

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Do I Need to File a Missing Persons Report



Every week comes and goes, and some go faster than others. Such was last week.

It started pretty well, but then everything went downhill.

I had my semiannual doctor's visit. After all, he has kids that need to go to college.

After his complete examination of me, he said, "You're doing great."

I asked him to repeat that several times, because The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was there, and I wanted her to hear it from someone other than me.. I wanted him to put it in writing and sign it, but he wasn't going to do that. So I accepted his oral pronouncement because it was in front of my wife.

My wife put together the plan for the day so that we could accomplish many things in one day. So the doctor's visit was first.

Then we had to go to the police station to file a report.

My bank informed me that somebody had counterfeited one of my checks and even my signature for \$1800. How they counterfeited my check as well as they did was beyond me. Fortunately, the bank refused to accept the check because they thought it was a fraud. So they took pictures and even had a video of him coming up to the drive-through.

In the memo, on that check, the guy wrote "bonus pay." I don't know what he meant by that, but I sure would like to give him a bonus pay, if you know what I mean.

I spent an afternoon in the bank closing that account and opening another account so they wouldn't try that again. So the bank encouraged me to take this information to the police department and file a complaint.

The bank where they tried to cash the counterfeit check was in Georgia.

So after the doctor's visit, we went to the police department to file a complaint.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said, "You can go in, and I'll stay here in the car."

That worked for me, and so I went in to the police station to file the complaint.

After I presented my case, the police officer said, "What is your address?"

I told him, and he said, "I'm afraid that's in the county, and we cannot process that complaint because we are here in the city." Therefore I had to take my complaint to the Sheriff's office. It was okay because it wasn't that far from our house.

I left the police department, and looked for my wife's car. It was nowhere to be found. So I looked up and down, and nowhere could I find her red sissy van.

At the time, I didn't know what to do because, as "luck would have it," I did not bring my cell phone. Isn't it interesting, I never need my cell phone unless I don't have it with me?

So I couldn't text her to see where she was at.

After a while, I became nervous about this. Where is she?

I was tempted to return to the police department and file a missing person report.

Thinking about the whole situation, I asked myself, "If I was my wife, where would I go?"

That sure is a crazy question to ask, but you try anything when you're in a difficult situation. It's been over 1/2 hour, and I still could not find her.

Then one of those crazy thoughts bounced into my head. If I was my wife, I know exactly where I would go. She isn't known as the Thrift Store Queen for naught. At least, this was something to do.

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The police department is at the beginning of a long line of shopping stores for over a block. Perhaps along that line, there was a thrift store.. My only problem with that, I would have to walk the whole distance.

As I was standing there thinking of what to do next, a woman passed by, and I stopped her and said, "Ma'am do you know if there's a thrift store nearby?"

She laughed and said, "Yes, but it's usually just for women." And she laughed some more.

Smiling as I looked at her, I said, "Where would that thrift store be?"

"What are you looking for," she asked, "maybe there's one I could direct you to."

I was nervous, but without thinking I said, "I'm looking for a wife."

"Well," she said laughing, "a thrift store is the best place to find a wife that I know of."

Then she pointed up the row and said there was a thrift store at the end of that line. She added, "You'll find a lot of wives in that store so that you can make your own choice." Then, walking away, she laughed hysterically.

From where I was standing, I could see something that looked like a thrift store way down at the end. So I started walking and when I arrived at that thrift store, guess who was inside?

On our way home, I couldn't help but think of the Bible verse in Isaiah 41:10. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

No matter what my fears might be, I know that God is going to guide me through that situation for his honor and glory.

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EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Is Google doing anything to prevent the propagation of climate disinformation on the Internet?
-- P. Hanson, Washington, DC

The advent of the internet and smartphone innovations have brought information to our fingertips. As the number of users skyrockets, advertisers have identified lucrative opportunities to meet people where they are. Google is a household name, holding 87 percent of the market share and hosting billions of users. Polls of Google users show that they trust that it produces credible search results. Seventy-three percent of users believe that most or all of the information they find in a search is accurate and trustworthy; however, 68 percent of users were unable to identify the difference between an ad and an organic search result. This gives a leg up to potentially nefarious advertisers spreading climate disinformation.

Google addressed the problem of pervasive climate disinformation prior to the United Nations (UN) Conference of the Parties (COP) 26th annual meeting in 2021; the internet giant pledged to halt the display of ads that promoted climate disinformation. This commitment came in tandem with other advertisers pressuring Google not to display their products alongside climate disinformation.

The commitment that Google made has come under fire as there are questions about the legitimacy of their pledge. Michael Koo, co-chair of the climate change disinformation coalition at Friends of the Earth, stated, "It appears Google is spreading disinformation about its efforts to fight disinformation". In the span of two years, Google has accepted nearly \$24 million in advertisements from oil giants. Of that \$24 million, \$10.9 million was spent on greenwashing ads that were seen 58.6 million times, according to the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH). These ads were targeted to key-word searches including: greenhouse gases, renewable energy and information about "eco-friendly" companies. Additionally, since their pledge, Google has accepted \$421,000 for ads from climate denial groups with taglines like "climate campaigners hype the risks of global warming," and "fossil fuels make the planet safer".

CCDH has outlined steps that Google needs to take to actualize the claims they've made on their stance on climate disinformation. Step one would be to halt climate denial ads and ads promoting greenwashing. Additionally, CCDH suggests that Google introduce a transparent library of their advertisements so that the public can examine how ads are being placed and how they may distort search results. Lastly, CCDH suggests that a legislative framework be established to ensure the transparency, accountability and responsibility of not only Google, but all online platforms.

These recommendations are a good starting point, but there is no guarantee that Google will follow them. That being said, users should be armed with skills to identify climate disinformation. Common tactics that proponents of climate disinformation utilize are: false expertise, logical fallacies, impossible expectations, conspiracy theories and cherry-picked data. The best way to combat these tactics is to be a cautious consumer of online information. Be prepared to vet the source of the information that you find, and get in the habit of developing a mixed-news diet.



After pressure from advertisers. Google pledged to halt the display of ads that promoted climate disinformation. But critics say that's not enough. Credit: Pexels.com.

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South Dakota COVID-19 Report

New Cases* 1089 -16	Total Cases* 269,886	Currently Hospitalized 62 -12
New Hospitalizations 51	Total Hospitalized 12,126	Click to Visit SD COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage
New Deaths 7	Total Deaths 3,106	Click to Visit COVID-19 Community Levels

SD 2022/2023 Influenza Weekly Summary Week Ending December 3, 2022 (Week 48)

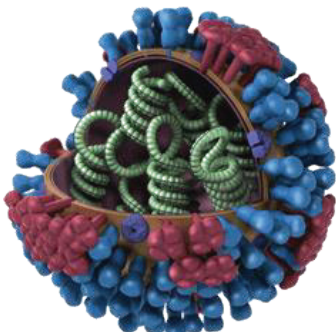
Provisional numbers, * Lab confirmed: PCR, Culture or DFA. The number of laboratories using rapid confirmatory tests has increased, which may account for some of the increase in confirmed cases observed this influenza season



Lab Confirmed Cases	Nov 27-Dec 3	Season to Date
Type A, H1	296	333
Type A, H3	39	110
Type A, Unspecified	1,439	3,593
Type B Unspecified	9	24
B Yamagata	0	0
B Victoria	0	0
Total*	1,783	4,060

Rapid Antigen Tests (52) sites reporting	Nov 27-Dec 3	Season to Date
Total Tested	3,137	8,012
Total Positive	439 (405A/34B)	1,240 (957A/283B)
% Rapid Antigen Tests Positive	13.99%	15.48%

	Nov 27-Dec 3	Season to Date
Hospitalizations	80	179
Deaths	1	2



3D Influenza Virus

SD Influenza Geographic: **WIDESPREAD**

SD Influenza Activity: **MODERATE**

US Influenza Activity: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivitysurv.htm>

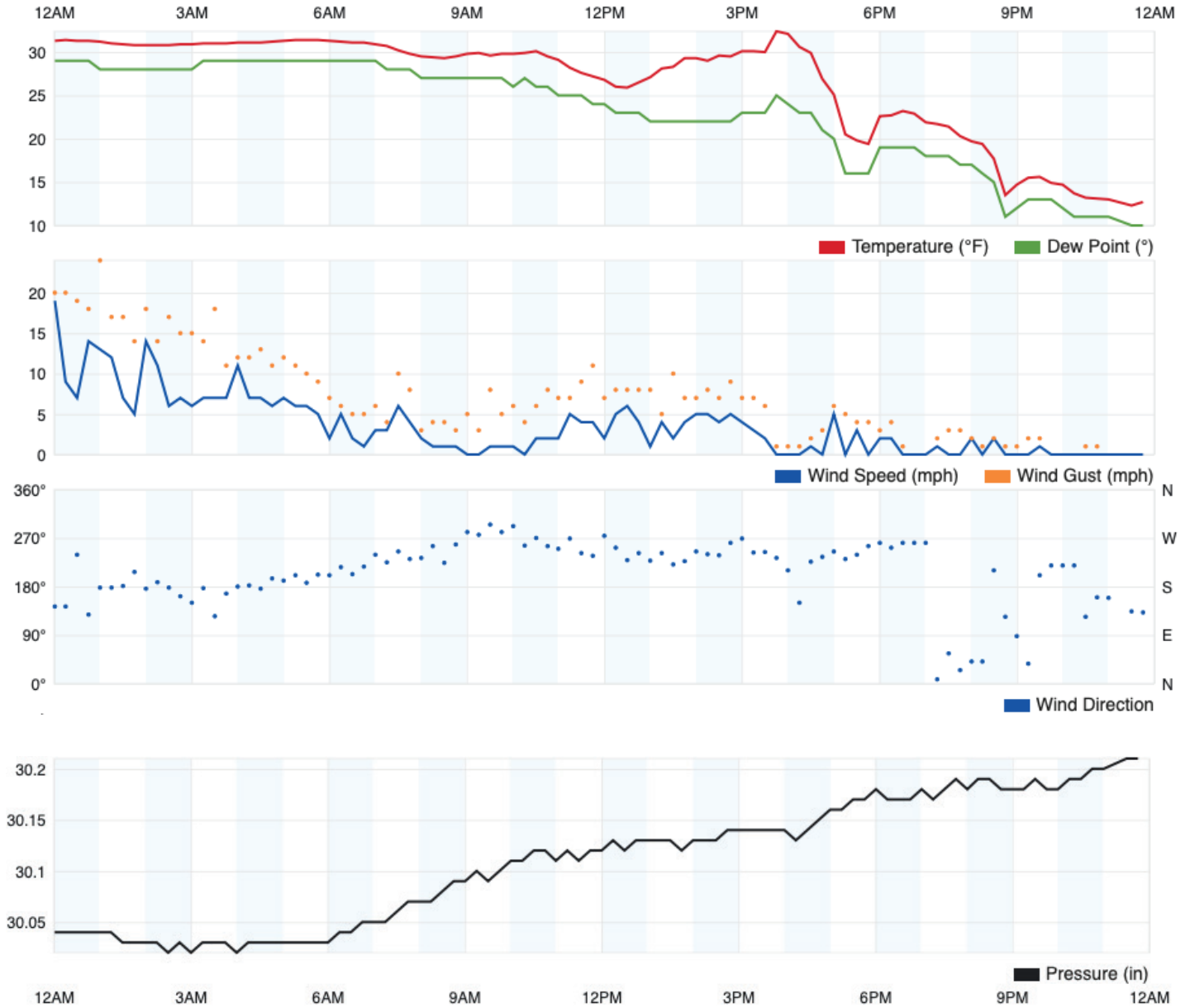
International Flu Activity: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/international/index.htm>

South Dakota Influenza information:
<http://doh.sd.gov/diseases/infectious/flu/>

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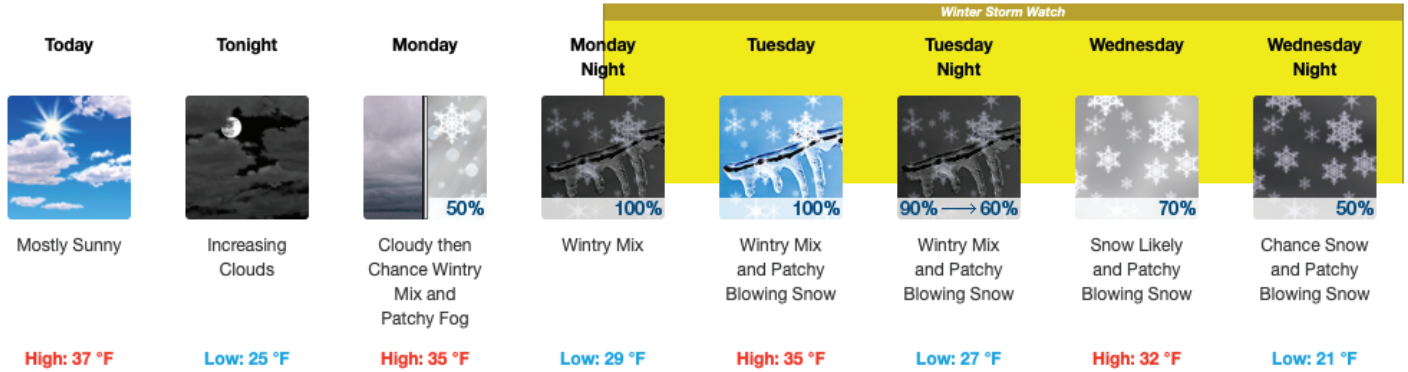
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Sun Morning Update For Upcoming Storm December 11, 2022 4:33 AM

Key Messages

- Only minor shifts in Track/Timing & Temperatures
- Precipitation threat transitions from Drizzle/Freezing Drizzle Monday to Rain/Freezing Rain and Snow Monday Night to Snow/Blowing Snow Tuesday.
- **We still anticipate changes to the forecast as more data becomes available...**

NEW

Important Updates

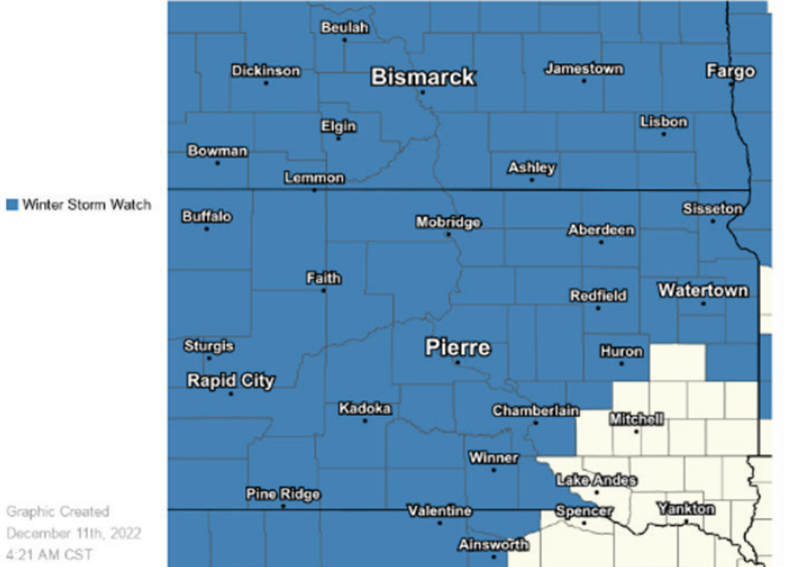
- No significant changes to the forecast. Expanded Winter Storm Watch to cover potential ice in eastern South Dakota/western Minnesota.

Next Scheduled Briefing

- Sunday Afternoon



Winter Watches Warnings and Advisories



Graphic Created December 11th, 2022 4:21 AM CST



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Only minor adjustments have been made to the forecast, though a watch has been expanded into eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota to cover the potential for ice accumulations. We still anticipate changes to the forecast as the storm nears and more data becomes available.

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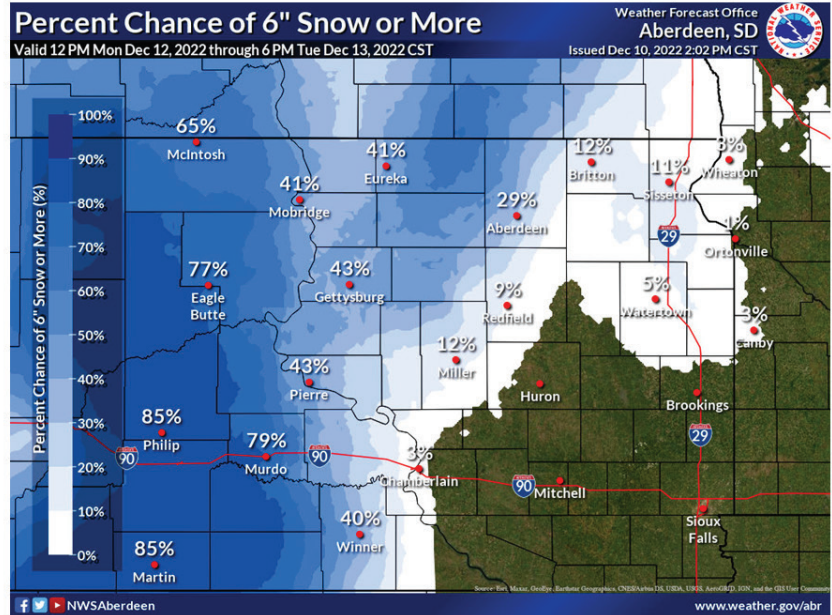


Probability For 6 Inches Or More Of Snow

December 10, 2022
3:24 PM

****This graphic only depicts the probability of snow between Noon CST on Monday, December 12th and 6 PM CST Tuesday, December 13th****

- Highest probabilities for significant snow accumulation is over Central/North Central South Dakota
- Closer to the Minnesota/South Dakota border rain or a mix of rain and freezing rain has a higher probability to last longer, with lower total snow accumulations possible there



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Winter Storm Watch

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE
National Weather Service Aberdeen SD
320 AM CST Sun Dec 11 2022

Brown-Spink-
Including the cities of Aberdeen and Redfield

...WINTER STORM WATCH IN EFFECT FROM LATE MONDAY NIGHT THROUGH LATE WEDNESDAY NIGHT...

- * WHAT...Heavy mixed precipitation possible. Total snow accumulations of 4 to 9 inches and ice accumulations of around one tenth of an inch possible. Winds could gust as high as 40 mph.
- * WHERE...Brown and Spink Counties.
- * WHEN...From late Monday night through late Wednesday night.
- * IMPACTS...Travel could be very difficult. Patchy blowing snow could significantly reduce visibility. The hazardous conditions could impact the morning or evening commute.

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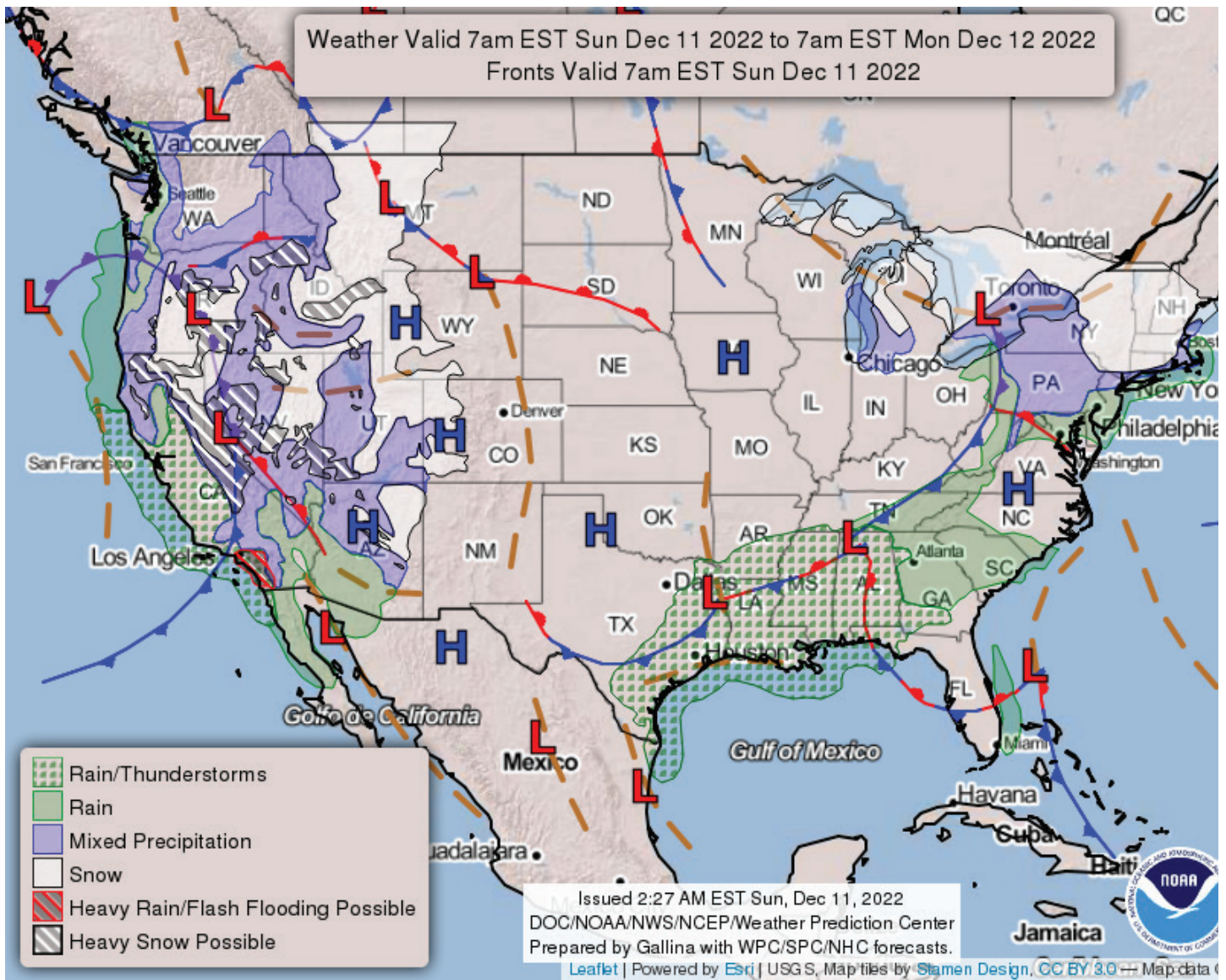
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 33 °F at 3:56 PM
Low Temp: 12 °F at 11:16 PM
Wind: 24 mph at 12:54 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 8 hours, 50 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 59 in 1939
Record Low: -22 in 1927
Average High: 30°F
Average Low: 9°F
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.22
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 21.43
Precip Year to Date: 16.50
Sunset Tonight: 4:50:54 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:01:26 AM



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Today in Weather History

December 11, 1965: Ice, up to 3 inches thick, with even more in some locations, accumulated from freezing rain on utility lines and trees in northern South Dakota, causing extensive damage. The damage was estimated at \$1 million each to telephone lines and power lines, with the highest losses in the northeast quarter of the state. The first accumulation of the glaze began as a thick rime due to dense fog and freezing temperatures before the 11th. Freezing rain, which started the afternoon of the 11th and continued into the 12th, formed a coating of ice over the heavy rime accumulation. The glaze remained for a week or more in most areas. In west central Minnesota, freezing drizzle and freezing rain at night on the 11th caused ice accumulations of 1/2 to 1 inch thick on roads, telephone, and electric wires, as well as tree limbs. Power and other services were disrupted over a broad area. Some services were out for up to four days.

December 11, 2004: High winds gusting to around 60 mph caused some spotty damage in northeast South Dakota. In Watertown, some trees were downed. One tree fell onto a house, causing some minor damage. In Milbank, two rail cars were blown down a railroad track and derailed.

December 11, 1905: The highest temperature ever recorded in South America was recorded at Rivadavia, Argentina with a temperature of 120 degrees.

December 11, 1992: A complex storm system moved eastward from the Gulf Coast of Texas to eastern Georgia on December 9 and 10th. In the next 24 hours, the low-pressure system moved to the Chesapeake Bay and rapidly intensified. This system produced gale force winds with gusts exceeding hurricane force affected not only the Mid-Atlantic coastline but also as far southwest as the southern Appalachians where trees were downed and roofs damaged. This storm also produced 20 to 30-foot waves in Massachusetts on December 12 and 13th. Precipitation amounts varied considerably. Rainfall amounts of 8 inches occurred in southeastern Massachusetts, while several areas in New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Maryland recorded more than 30 inches of snow. Precipitation ended during the evening hours on the 12th. Ten deaths resulted from the storm with insured losses totaling near \$850 million and non-insured losses near \$2 billion.

1932 - Very cold weather prevailed along the West Coast. San Francisco received 0.8 inch of snow, and at the airport the temperature dipped to 20 degrees. At Sacramento CA, the mercury dipped to 17 degrees to establish an all-time record low for that location. Morning lows were below freezing from the 9th to the 15th at Sacramento, and the high on the 11th was just 34 degrees. The cold wave dealt severe damage to truck crops and orange groves in the Sacramento Valley. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Low pressure over southwestern Ontario, Canada, brought snow and gusty winds to the North Central U.S. Winds gusted to 62 mph at Riverton WY. Snow and high winds in eastern North Dakota reduced visibilities to less than one hundred feet at times. Warm weather prevailed across the Southern Plains Region. Half a dozen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Del Rio TX with a reading of 89 degrees. Laredo TX and Kingsville TX tied for honors as hot spot in the nation with afternoon highs of 92 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Arctic cold invaded the central and eastern U.S. Sault Ste Marie MI reported a record low of 14 degrees below zero, and International Falls MN was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 25 degrees below zero. Temperatures remained below zero all day over parts of eastern Upper Michigan and northern New England. (The National Weather Summary)

2008 - A rare snowstorm swept across parts of south Louisiana and Mississippi, blanketing the area with snow. Nearly 8 inches of snow fell over parts of Louisiana. These conditions caused schools and bridges to close and left thousands of residents without power (Associated Press). (NCDC)

2010 - The "Pineapple Express" - a meteorological event where southwest winds bring warm, moist air to the U.S. West Coast - produced record rainfall to the Pacific Northwest during December 11th-12th. Seattle experienced record daily rainfall two days in a row. The Seattle-Tacoma International Airport recorded 1.42 inches of rain on the 11th, breaking the old daily record of 1.32 inches set in 1955. The next day, 2.19 inches fell, breaking the daily record of 1.70 inches set in 1966. The Stillaguamish River in western Washington state reached 21.06 feet at Arlington, tying the record set in November 2006. Flood stage for the river is 14 feet. The storm system also brought record warmth to the area. On December 14th, the temperature at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport reached 57, breaking the old daily record of 55 set in 2004. (NCDC)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

WHERE'S JESUS' PRESENT?

It was Christmas Eve. The tree was brightly decorated, the presents were wrapped with beautiful paper and colorful bows, the meal was over, and the family gathered together to read the Story of the Birth of Jesus, followed by a time of prayer. It was a family tradition.

"Now," said Dad, "let each one of us say a prayer and I will end our prayer-time before we go to bed."

After praying, Susie went to the tree and began to look at each present. She looked at the name on each of them very carefully. The family was curious but quiet.

Finally, Susie, looked at each member of the family and asked, "Where's the present for Jesus? What are we giving Him this year?"

Stunned, the family sat in silence. No one had thought about a gift for Jesus.

Paul has a suggestion for the best gift we could give Christ this Christmas. Writing to the Romans he said, "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies – your entire self – to God... be a living and holy sacrifice to Him – the kind He will accept."

When we think of giving gifts this Christmas each of us would do well to think first of the gift God wants from us. We need to take Paul's words seriously, and give the most valuable gift – the gift of ourselves – to God!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, trouble our hearts with the words of Paul this season, and carefully and prayerfully consider the gift You want most – surrendered lives! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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2022-23 Community Events

- 07/21/2022: Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/22/2022: Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
07/24/2022: Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20
07/27/2022: 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
No Date Set: 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)
09/11/2022: 6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
09/11/2022: Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10 a.m.
09/02-04: Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/01/2022: Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/07/2022: Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
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
11/13/2022: Snow Queen Contest
11/19/2022: 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
12/10/2022: Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm
01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
07/04/2023 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start (4th of July)
07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)

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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

01-02-05-07-26

(one, two, five, seven, twenty-six)

Estimated jackpot: \$231,000

Lotto America

02-17-29-31-43, Star Ball: 10, ASB: 2

(two, seventeen, twenty-nine, thirty-one, forty-three; Star Ball: ten; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$30,890,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: 400,000,000

Powerball

09-23-47-49-68, Powerball: 19, Power Play: 2

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

Estimated jackpot: \$124,000,000

Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Alcester-Hudson 44, Menno 35

Alliance, Neb. 56, Hot Springs 23

Chamberlain 27, Todd County 23

Corsica/Stickney 72, Colome 16

Crow Creek 50, Little Wound 47

Elk Point-Jefferson 66, Madison 33

Faith 53, Kadoka Area 49

Garretson 58, Chester 29

Hanson 75, Ethan 65

Harding County 56, Lead-Deadwood 10

Hitchcock-Tulare 57, Ipswich 30

James Valley Christian 61, Aberdeen Christian 12

Jones County 46, Highmore-Harrold 23

Lennox 42, Milbank 41

Lower Brule 55, Marty Indian 43

McCook Central/Montrose 54, Parker 37

Miller 58, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 18

New Underwood 49, Dupree 48

North Central Co-Op 52, McIntosh 29

Pierre 62, Rapid City Central 35

Platte-Geddes 51, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 45

Ponca, Neb. 51, Irene-Wakonda 26

Potter County 60, Lyman 58

Rapid City Christian 65, Douglas 41

Rapid City Stevens 55, Aberdeen Central 52

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Red Cloud 60, Hill City 41
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 57, Sunshine Bible Academy 7
Sioux Valley 53, Clark/Willow Lake 39
Sisseton 70, Mobridge-Pollock 49
Wall 60, Edgemont 32
Warner 51, Webster 36
Gillette Early Bird Tournament=
Campbell County, Wyo. 67, St. Thomas More 56
Upton Tournament=
Arvada-Clearmont, Wyo. 37, Spearfish 26

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Central 45, Rapid City Stevens 36
Aberdeen Christian 74, James Valley Christian 45
Bison 55, Newell 54
Chamberlain 47, Todd County 42
Chester 38, Garretson 36
Colome 54, Corsica/Stickney 46
Elk Point-Jefferson 70, Madison 63
Faith 67, Kadoka Area 49
Harding County 66, Lead-Deadwood 41
Highmore-Harrold 67, Jones County 45
Lennox 68, Milbank 32
Little Wound 65, Crow Creek 53
Lower Brule 89, Marty Indian 55
Lyman 62, Potter County 60
McCook Central/Montrose 52, Parker 42
Menno 50, Alcester-Hudson 39
Miller 58, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 34
Mobridge-Pollock 55, Sisseton 36
New Underwood 71, Dupree 40
North Central Co-Op 54, McIntosh 29
Pierre 71, Rapid City Central 44
Platte-Geddes 77, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 38
Rapid City Christian 74, Douglas 49
Red Cloud 75, Hill City 41
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 45, Sunshine Bible Academy 33
Sioux Falls Christian 61, West Central 33
Sioux Falls Jefferson 73, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 61
Sioux Valley 70, Clark/Willow Lake 54
Wall 75, Edgemont 15
Warner 51, Webster 46
Upton Tournament=
Spearfish 60, Arvada-Clearmont, Wyo. 8
Spearfish 64, Ten Sleep, Wyo. 51

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

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South Dakota St. comeback tops Eastern Washington 77-76

By The Associated Press undefined

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Zeke Mayo drove left, spun back to his right and leaned into a jumper in the lane with two seconds left to cap a 23-point South Dakota State comeback to edge Eastern Washington, 77-76 on Saturday night.

Ethan Price drilled a 3-pointer with just under nine minutes left to push Eastern Washington's lead to 69-46. Mayo knocked down three clutch 3-pointers and scored 15 points as the Jackrabbits finished the game on a 31-7 run.

Mayo finished with 30 points on 11 of 16 shooting, including 5 for 10 from distance, and went 3 for 3 from the line for the Jackrabbits (4-7). William Kyle III scored 10 points, shooting 3 of 4 from the field and 4 for 4 from the line. Alex Ariens was 3 of 10 shooting (1 for 5 from distance) to finish with nine points.

The Eagles (4-6) were led by Price, who posted 16 points and eight rebounds. Casey Jones added 15 points, nine rebounds and two steals for Eastern Washington. In addition, Steele Venters finished with 13 points and eight rebounds.

Selland, South Dakota State women top No. 25 Kansas State

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Myah Selland scored nine of her 20 points in the fourth quarter and South Dakota State held off No. 24 Kansas State 82-78 on Saturday, the Jackrabbits' third win over a ranked team this season.

South Dakota State (6-4) never trailed after the first quarter and had a 71-57 lead when Madysen Vlastuin drained a 3-pointer with seven minutes to go. Gabby Gregory brought the Wildcats (9-2) back with 12 of her 31 points in the fourth quarter.

Serena Sundell scored with 10 seconds remaining to bring Kansas State within 79-76. Tori Nelson had a pair of free throws after a quick foul and Brylee Glenn made a layup with three seconds left. Nelson then hit 1 of 2 from the line to ice the game.

Paiton Buckhard scored 13 points for the Jackrabbits to pass 1,500 for her career. Haleigh Timmer and Vlastuin both added a dozen. Selland was 8-of-11 shooting and has 1,759 career points, fifth in school history. SDSU had 51% (26 of 51) and made 25 of 33 free throws.

South Dakota State, which was No. 23 in the preseason poll, now has wins over Mississippi State, Rutgers and then-ranked Louisville and losses to ranked Creighton and UCLA.

Sundell scored 15 points for the Wildcats, who lost to SDSU for the first time in eight meetings. Gregory was 10 of 27 on her milestone day, including 2 of 12 from distance as the Wildcats were 8 of 37 on 3s and 36% overall (26 of 72). Gregory, who started her career at Oklahoma, had 35 points earlier this season.

The Jackrabbits led 19-17 after a back-and-forth first quarter and never trailed in the second, taking a 41-37 halftime lead. While South Dakota State had a balanced attack and shot 52%, Gregory scored 17 points and Kansas State shot just 32%.

K-State faces Northern Colorado on Dec. 18. South Dakota State plays UT Martin on Monday before facing top-ranked South Carolina in the Hall of Fame Showcase on Thursday.

Davis scores 17, leads UC Irvine past South Dakota, 83-71

By The Associated Press undefined

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — DJ Davis had 17 points in UC Irvine's 83-71 win over South Dakota on Saturday.

Davis was 4 of 14 shooting, including 3 for 9 from distance, and went 6 for 6 from the line for the Ant-eaters (7-3). Dawson Baker scored 16 points and added five rebounds. Justin Hohn shot 6 for 9, including 2 for 4 from beyond the arc to finish with 14 points.

Paul Bruns finished with 20 points for the Coyotes (5-6). Tasos Kamateros added 12 points and nine rebounds for South Dakota. Mason Archambault also had eight points.

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No. 1 seed Jackrabbits pull away in 4th quarter in FCS semis

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Mark Gronowski passed to Jaxon Janke for the go-ahead touchdown and South Dakota State scored 21 points in the fourth quarter to break away from Holy Cross for a 42-21 win on Saturday in the FCS quarterfinals.

The top-seeded Jackrabbits (12-1), on a school-record 12-game win streak after losing to Iowa 7-3 in their opener, will play fourth-seeded Montana State in the semifinals. The Bobcats beat South Dakota State 31-17 in the semifinals in Bozeman, Mont., last year. This year's semifinal will be in Brookings.

The eighth-seeded Crusaders (12-1) gave the Jackrabbits a tough test through three quarters behind quarterback Matthew Sluka, who rushed for a career-high 212 yards on 26 carries. It was Sluka's 36-yard run that set up Peter Oliver's 1-yard TD plunge to tie the game at 21-all.

But the Jackrabbits dominated the fourth quarter.

"We had some big pass plays, and then Isaiah Davis is a heck of a running back, the fat guys up front got excited about running the ball and we played our kind of football. Holy Cross is a really good team. This is an exciting win for us," Jackrabbits coach John Stiegelmeier said in an on-field interview with ESPN after the game.

Gronowski passed for 177 yards and two touchdowns and rushed for 47 more yards and a TD. Davis had 154 yards on 20 carries with a score, his eighth straight game with a rushing TD and his seventh game this season with 100-plus yards.

After Derek Ng missed his second field goal of the game on the first play of the fourth quarter, the Jackrabbits drove 78 yards on nine plays with Janke making a catch at the Holy Cross 12, dodging one tackler and dragging another into the end zone for a 28-21 lead.

A 13-yard sack blunted the Crusaders' next possession and the Jackrabbits added an insurance touchdown on Gronowski's 18-yard keeper around the left end. A 27-yard run by Davis during which he tossed a defender aside with a stiff-arm was the key play on the drive.

Gronowski threw a 21-yard touchdown pass to Jadon Janke, twin brother of Jaxon, in the final minute.

The Jackrabbits went into the half ahead 21-14 after a Sluka pass deflected off Ayir Asante and into the hands of Jason Freeman, who returned it 37 yards for the touchdown with just over a minute left.

Holy Cross had taken a 14-6 second-quarter lead after Sluka handed off to Tyler Purdy who then tossed a jump pass to Sean Morris, all alone in the backfield for a 27-yard score. Davis' 3-yard TD tied it.

In the first quarter, Sluka found an opening in the middle of the Jackrabbits line and sprinted 56 yards for the game's first points.

South Dakota State came back with two short Hunter Dustman field goals to trail 7-6, the first coming after a Holy Cross onside kick went out of bounds and the second set up on Gronowski's 44-yard pass to Jaxon Janke to the 9-yard line.

Japanese company's lander rockets toward moon with UAE rover

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A Tokyo company aimed for the moon with its own private lander Sunday, blasting off atop a SpaceX rocket with the United Arab Emirates' first lunar rover and a toylike robot from Japan that's designed to roll around up there in the gray dust.

It will take nearly five months for the lander and its experiments to reach the moon.

The company ispace designed its craft to use minimal fuel to save money and leave more room for cargo. So it's taking a slow, low-energy path to the moon, flying 1 million miles (1.6 million kilometers) from Earth before looping back and intersecting with the moon by the end of April.

By contrast, NASA's Orion crew capsule with test dummies took five days to reach the moon last month. The lunar flyby mission ends Sunday with a Pacific splashdown.

The ispace lander will aim for Atlas crater in the northeastern section of the moon's near side, more than 50 miles (87 kilometers) across and just over 1 mile (2 kilometers) deep. With its four legs extended, the lander is more than 7 feet (2.3 meters) tall.

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With a science satellite already around Mars, the UAE wants to explore the moon, too. Its rover, named Rashid after Dubai's royal family, weighs just 22 pounds (10 kilograms) and will operate on the surface for about 10 days, like everything else on the mission.

In addition, the lander is carrying an orange-sized sphere from the Japanese Space Agency that will transform into a wheeled robot on the moon. Also flying: a solid state battery from a Japanese-based spark plug company; an Ottawa, Ontario, company's flight computer with artificial intelligence for identifying geologic features seen by the UAE rover; and 360-degree cameras from a Toronto-area company.

Hitching a ride on the rocket was a small NASA laser experiment that is now bound for the moon on its own to hunt for ice in the permanently shadowed craters of the lunar south pole.

The ispace mission is called Hakuto, Japanese for white rabbit. In Asian folklore, a white rabbit is said to live on the moon. A second lunar landing by the private company is planned for 2024 and a third in 2025.

Founded in 2010, ispace was among the finalists in the Google Lunar XPRIZE competition requiring a successful landing on the moon by 2018. The lunar rover built by ispace never launched.

Another finalist, an Israeli nonprofit called SpaceIL, managed to reach the moon in 2019. But instead of landing gently, the spacecraft Beresheet slammed into the moon and was destroyed.

With Sunday's predawn launch from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, ispace is now on its way to becoming one of the first private entities to attempt a moon landing. Although not launching until early next year, lunar landers built by Pittsburgh's Astrobotic Technology and Houston's Intuitive Machines may beat ispace to the moon thanks to shorter cruise times.

Only Russia, the U.S. and China have achieved so-called "soft landings" on the moon, beginning with the former Soviet Union's Luna 9 in 1966. And only the U.S. has put astronauts on the lunar surface: 12 men over six landings.

Sunday marked the 50th anniversary of astronauts' last lunar landing, by Apollo 17's Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt on Dec. 11, 1972.

NASA's Apollo moonshots were all "about the excitement of the technology," said ispace founder and CEO Takeshi Hakamada, who wasn't alive then. Now, "it's the excitement of the business."

"This is the dawn of the lunar economy," Hakamada noted in the SpaceX launch webcast. "Let's go to the moon."

Liftoff should have occurred two weeks ago, but was delayed by SpaceX for extra rocket checks.

Eight minutes after launch, the recycled first-stage booster landed back at Cape Canaveral under a near full moon, the double sonic booms echoing through the night.

Free for a month, Kherson still toils to clear Russian traps

By INNA VARENYTSIA and JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

KHERSON, Ukraine (AP) — A hand grenade jerry-rigged into the detergent tray of a Kherson home's washing machine. A street sign maliciously directing passers-by toward a deadly minefield. A police station that allegedly housed a torture chamber but remains so booby-trapped that demining crews can't even start to hunt for evidence.

Sunday marks exactly one month since Russia's troops withdrew from Kherson and its vicinity after an eight-month occupation, sparking jubilation across Ukraine. But life in the southern city is still very far from normal.

The departing Russians left behind all sorts of ugly surprises, and their artillery continues to batter the city from new, dug-in positions across the Dnieper River. The regional administration said Saturday that shelling over the past month has killed 41 people, including a child, in Kherson, and 96 were hospitalized.

Residents' access to electricity still comes and goes, although water is largely connected, and indoor heating has only very recently been restored — and only to about 70-80% of the city — after the Russians last month blew up a giant central heating station that served much of the city.

For authorities and citizens, sifting through the countless headaches and hazards left behind by the Russians, and bracing for new ones, is a daily chore.

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On Friday alone, according to the local affiliate of public broadcaster Suspilne, Russian forces shelled the region 68 times with mortars, artillery, tank and rocket fire. Meanwhile, in the last month, a total of 5,500 people have taken evacuation trains out, and work crews have cleared 190 kilometers (115 miles) of road, Suspilne reported.

When aid trucks arrived a month ago, war-weary and desperate residents flocked to the central Svoboda (Freedom) Square for food and supplies. But after a Russian strike on the square as a line of people queued to enter a bank in late November, such large gatherings have become less common and aid is doled out from smaller, more discreet distribution points.

Regional officials say some 80% of Kherson's pre-war population of about 320,000 fled after the Russians moved in, days after their invasion began on Feb. 24. With some 60,000-70,000 residents remaining, the city now has a feel of a ghost town. Those who remain mostly keep indoors because they're cautious about making forays into the streets.

"Life is getting back to normal, but there is a lot of shelling," said Valentyna Kytaiska, 56, who lives in the nearby village of Chornobaivka. She lamented the nightly "Bam! Bam!" and the unsettling uncertainty of where the Russian ordnance may land.

Normal is a relative term for a country at war. There's no telling whether what Russia insists on calling a "special military operation" will end in days, weeks, months or even years.

In the meantime, painstaking efforts go on to establish a better sense of normalcy, like clearing the mess and mines left behind by the Russians, in tough wintertime weather.

"The difficulties are very simple, it's the weather conditions," said one military demining squad member, who goes by the nom de guerre of Tekhnik. He said some of their equipment simply doesn't work in frost conditions "because the soil is frozen like concrete."

The deployment of additional teams could help ease the heavy workload, he said. "To give you an idea, during the month of our work, we found and removed several tons of mines," said Tekhnik, adding that they focused only on about 10 square kilometers (about 4 square miles).

In Kherson's Beryslavskyi district, a main road was blocked off with a sign reading "Mines Ahead" and rerouting passersby to a smaller road. In fact, it was that side road which was mined, and cost the lives of some military deminers. A few weeks later, four police officers were also killed there, including the police chief from the northern city of Chernihiv, who had come down to help Kherson regain its footing.

The general state of disrepair of weather-beaten roads helped the outgoing Russians disguise their deadly traps: Potholes, some covered with soil, provided a convenient place to lay mines. Sometimes, the Russians cut into the asphalt to make holes themselves.

Demining squads go slowly house-to-house to ensure it's safe for owners or previous residents to return. Experts say a single home can take up to three days to be cleared.

One crew turned up a hand grenade in one house, stuffed into a washing machine — the pin placed in such a way that opening the detergent tray would set off an explosion.

The city's main police station, where detainees were reportedly tortured, is packed with explosives. When demining squads tried to work their way in, part of the building exploded — so they've shelved the project for now.

Longer term questions remain: Kherson sits in an agricultural region that produces crops as diverse as wheat, tomatoes, and watermelon — a regional symbol. The fields are so heavily mined that about 30% of arable land in the region is unlikely to be planted in the spring, Technik the deminer said. A cursory look reveals the tops of anti-tank mines poking up in the fields.

Even so, after a night of shelling from Friday evening into Saturday, Kherson resident Oleksandr Chebotariov said life had been even worse under the Russians for himself, his wife and 3-year-old daughter.

"It's easier to breathe now," the 35-year-old radiologist said — only to add: "If the banging doesn't stop before the New Year, I'm going on vacation."

Pioneering Black feminist Dorothy Pitman Hughes dies at 84

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Dorothy Pitman Hughes, a pioneering Black feminist, child welfare advocate and lifelong community activist who toured the country speaking with Gloria Steinem in the 1970s and appears with her in one of the most iconic photos of the second-wave feminist movement, has died. She was 84.

Hughes died Dec. 1 in Tampa, Florida, at the home of her daughter and son-in-law, said Maurice Sconiers of the Sconiers Funeral Home in Columbus, Georgia. Her daughter, Delethia Ridley Malmsten, said the cause was old age.

Though they came to feminism from different places — Hughes from community activism and Steinem from journalism — the two forged a powerful speaking partnership in the early 1970s, touring the country at a time when feminism was seen as predominantly white and middle class, a divide dating back to the origins of the American women's movement. Steinem credited Hughes with helping her become comfortable speaking in public.

In one of the most famous images of the era, taken in October 1971, the two raised their right arms in the Black Power salute. The photo is now in the National Portrait Gallery.

Hughes, her work always rooted in community activism, organized the first shelter for battered women in New York City and co-founded the New York City Agency for Child Development to broaden childcare services in the city. But she was perhaps best known for her work helping countless families through the community center she established on Manhattan's West Side, offering day care, job training, advocacy training and more.

"She took families off the street and gave them jobs," Malmsten, her daughter, told The Associated Press on Sunday, reflecting on what she felt was her mother's most important work.

Steinem, too, paid tribute to Hughes' community work. "My friend Dorothy Pitman Hughes ran a pioneering neighborhood childcare center on the west side of Manhattan," Steinem said in an email. "We met in the seventies when I wrote about that childcare center, and we became speaking partners and lifetime friends. She will be missed, but if we keep telling her story, she will keep inspiring us all."

Laura L. Lovett, whose biography of Hughes, "With Her Fist Raised," came out last year, said in Ms. Magazine (of which Pitman was a co-founder along with Steinem) that Hughes "defined herself as a feminist, but rooted her feminism in her experience and in more fundamental needs for safety, food, shelter and child care."

Born Dorothy Jean Ridley on Oct. 2, 1938, in Lumpkin, Georgia, Hughes committed herself to activism at an early age, according to an obituary written by her family. When she was 10, it said, her father was nearly beaten to death and left on the family's doorstep. The family believed he was attacked by the Ku Klux Klan, and Hughes decided to dedicate herself to helping others through activism.

She moved to New York City in the late 1950s when she was nearly 20 and worked as a salesperson, nightclub singer and house cleaner. By the 1960s she had become involved in the civil rights movement and other causes, working with Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and others.

In the late 1960s, she set up her West 80th St. community center, providing care for children and also support for their parents.

"She realized that child-care challenges were deeply entangled with issues of racial discrimination, poverty, drug use, substandard housing, welfare hotels, job training and even the Vietnam War," Lovett wrote last year. Hughes "recognized that the strongest anchor for local community action centered on children and worked to fix the roots of inequality in her community."

It was at the center that she met Steinem, then a journalist writing a story for New York Magazine. They became friends and, from 1969 to 1973, spoke across the country at college campuses, community centers and other venues on gender and race issues.

"Dorothy's style was to call out the racism she saw in the white women's movement," Lovett said in Ms. "She frequently took to the stage to articulate the way in which white women's privilege oppressed Black women but also offered her friendship with Gloria as proof this obstacle could be overcome."

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By the 1980s, Hughes was becoming an entrepreneur. She had moved to Harlem and opened an office supply business, Harlem Office Supply, the rare stationery store at the time that was run by a Black woman. But she was forced to sell the store when a Staples opened nearby, part of President Bill Clinton's Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone program.

She would remember some of her experiences in the 2000 book, "Wake Up and Smell the Dollars! Whose Inner-City Is This Anyway!: One Woman's Struggle Against Sexism, Classism, Racism, Gentrification, and the Empowerment Zone."

Hughes was portrayed in "The Glorias," the 2020 film about Steinem, by actor Janelle Monaé.

She is survived by three daughters: Malmsten, Patrice Quinn and Angela Hughes.

USC's Williams wins Heisman after leading Trojan turnaround

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Caleb Williams brought sizzle, excitement and star power back to Southern California football.

And now the Heisman Trophy, too.

Williams, the dynamic quarterback who was the catalyst for the Trojans' turnaround season, won the Heisman on Saturday night to make USC the first school to take home college football's most prestigious player of the year award eight times.

Williams received 544 first-place votes and 2,031 points to easily outpoint TCU quarterback Max Duggan (1,420).

Williams, who played last season at Oklahoma, is the fourth transfer to win the Heisman in the last six years, joining Baker Mayfield (2017) and Kyler Murray (2018) of Oklahoma and Joe Burrow (2019) of LSU.

Ohio State quarterback C.J. Stroud was third in the voting after coming in fourth last season. Georgia quarterback Stetson Bennett, the first Bulldogs' player to attend the award's presentations in 30 years, finished fourth. The top-ranked Bulldogs will face Stroud and the fourth-ranked Buckeyes in the College Football Playoff on Dec. 31.

Duggan and the third-ranked Horned Frogs will play No. 2 Michigan in the other CFP semifinal on New Year's Eve.

"I may be standing up here today, but y'all get to the College Football Playoffs. Guess you can't win 'em all," Williams said as he started his acceptance speech by thanking the other finalists.

Before taking hold of his big bronze trophy, Williams hugged Mike Garrett, USC's first Heisman winner in 1965, Garrett was one of 23 previous winners — and three former Trojans along with Matt Leinart and Carson Palmer — to attend the ceremony near Lincoln Center.

Williams was as meticulous and thorough with his 10-minute speech as he is preparing for a game. And almost as poised as when he plays.

Williams got a little choked up talking about coach Lincoln Riley, who he followed from Norman to Los Angeles, and really had to hold it together when thanking his parents.

He called his mother, Dayna, who paints his nails with a motivational message before each game, the most important woman in his life.

He thanked his father, Carl, for instilling a relentless work ethic.

"You're always there for me making sacrifices in your life so I can achieve my dreams, which eventually became our dreams," Caleb Williams said.

He finished with USC's battle cry: "Dreams really do come true. Thank you, and fight on."

Williams and No. 8 USC fell short of the Pac-12 championship and a spot in the playoff, but it was still a rebirth for a college football blue blood that has had only short spurts of success over the last decade.

The last time USC had a Heisman winner was 2005, when running back Reggie Bush was the second of consecutive Trojans players to win the award. Leinart won the Heisman in 2004 on the way to a national championship.

Bush's Heisman win, the Trojans' seventh, was later vacated for NCAA violations that began the descent

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of USC.

Notre Dame, Ohio State and Oklahoma each have seven Heisman victories.

The Trojans hope a revival is underway, led by Riley and Williams. With the two of them orchestrating one of the nation's most prolific offenses, USC went from 4-8 last season to 11-2 and a Cotton Bowl bid this year.

"These individual awards aren't why we do it, they are not why Caleb does it, but they're evidence that there's a lot of great things going on," Riley said. "Because, let's be honest, Heisman winners don't show up on average teams."

Williams is the epitome of the modern college football star. As a five-star recruit from Washington, he has been a celebrity since high school.

At the age of 10, Williams and his father began plotting a path to greatness. The to-do list included winning a Heisman.

As a freshman at Oklahoma last year, Williams came off the bench to rally the Sooners past rival Texas and immediately became one of the college football's most exciting players.

Williams jumped into the transfer portal in the offseason and where he would play next became one of the biggest stories in sports. He amassed an extensive and lucrative endorsement portfolio before ever playing a game for the Trojans.

Thanks to one of his NIL deals, Williams was able to bring eight of USC offensive lineman with him to the Heisman ceremony in New York.

When the games did start, Williams delivered on the promise and potential.

He passed for 4,075 yards, 37 touchdowns and just four interceptions, setting a USC record for total offense with 4,447 yards. The 6-foot-1, 215-pound sophomore also ran for 10 touchdowns, drawing comparisons to Chiefs' star Patrick Mahomes for his ability to improvise and deliver perfect passes from a variety of arm angles.

Williams finished with a kick, accounting for seven touchdowns in Top-25 victories against UCLA and Notre Dame that put USC in playoff position.

The Trojans could not close the deal, losing the Pac-12 title game to Utah with Williams hobbling through much of the game with a strained hamstring. Still, he threw for 363 yards and three touchdowns to give USC a chance, and solidified his status as Heisman frontrunner.

Williams is the 19th quarterback to win the Heisman since 2000, the third from USC and the third to do it after transferring to play for Riley. Mayfield and Murray took similar paths.

Riley said Williams' combination of elite physical tools and confidence beyond his years separates him from even the other great players he has coached.

"He's so hungry to get better. But he's also so fearless in the moment." Riley said.

Williams is the sixth sophomore, and second straight, to win the Heisman. Alabama's Bryce Young won the Heisman in his second season last year, and finished sixth in the voting this year, behind Tennessee quarterback Hendon Hooker.

Williams will become the latest player with a chance to join Ohio State's Archie Griffin (1974-75) as a two-time Heisman winner.

But first, it's time to find some space for another trophy at USC's Heritage Hall. Williams has made Southern California Heisman U. again.

Scientists lower alert for Mauna Loa, say eruption could end

HONOLULU (AP) — Scientists lowered the alert level for the Mauna Loa volcano on Hawaii's Big Island from a warning to a watch on Saturday and said the mountain's first eruption in nearly 40 years may soon end.

The U.S. Geological Survey's Hawaiian Volcano Observatory said in a bulletin that the eruption on the mountain's northeast rift zone was continuing, but lava output and volcanic gas emissions were "greatly reduced."

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"High eruption rates will not resume based on past eruptive behavior and current behavior suggests that the eruption may end soon," the observatory said. "However, an inflationary trend of Mauna Loa's summit is accompanying the decreased activity and there is a small possibility that the eruption could continue at very low eruptive rates."

Meanwhile, it said, a lava flow front had "stagnated" nearly 2 miles from Saddle Road, the vital highway that residents and tourists alike use to travel between the city of Hilo on the east side of the island and coastal resorts to the west.

Scientists said earlier this week that the road was no longer under imminent threat from the lava, allaying fears previously that it could be cut off.

Mauna Loa began spewing molten rock Nov. 27 after being quiet for 38 years, drawing onlookers to take in the incandescent spectacle and setting some nerves on edge early on among people who've lived through destructive eruptions. For many Native Hawaiians, the phenomenon has a deep yet very personal cultural significance.

The observatory said its scientists were continuing to monitor the volcano closely, and flight restrictions remained in place in the area up to 1,500 feet (457 meters) above ground level.

Army tops Navy 20-17 in first OT game in 123 rivalry games

By DAN GELSTON AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Navy running back Anton Hall Jr. collapsed to the ground and buried his face in his hands. West Point cadets spilled from the stands onto the field and joined Army players who ripped off their helmets and ran around in celebration.

Hall's push toward the end zone in the second overtime -- and first OT game in Army-Navy history -- resulted in a fumble that Army recovered. The Black Knights went from potentially playing for a tie to simply playing for a winning score.

"Somehow, the ball got loose and we hit that thing when we needed to," Army coach Jeff Monken said.

Quinn Maretzki kicked the game-winning 39-yard field goal after he had sent the game into overtime with a 37-yarder late in the fourth quarter and led Army past The Midshipmen 20-17 on Saturday night in the first OT game in the 123 matchups of "America's Game."

"It's obviously a big moment, but I try my best to put that aside," Maretzki said. "Just being able to block everything out, (my teammates) just made that job so easy for me. So I just had to go out there and not even really think."

Hall -- who earlier raced 77 yards for a TD and 10-7 lead -- coughed up the ball as he plunged toward the end zone and stood crestfallen as Maretzki prepared to kick the winner. Hall dropped to the ground as the kick sailed through the uprights and he was consoled by teammate Amin Hassan. But the fullback's fumble forced by Austin Hill and recovered by defensive lineman Nate Smith will forever be etched on the highlight reel of game-changing plays in the series.

"The game is not lost with him. That could happen to anyone that was carrying the ball on that one play," Navy QB Xavier Arline said. "They made a good play. That's football. That's life. The game was not lost within that one play."

Navy coach Ken Niumatalolo stood hunched on the sideline and could not stomach to watch the final field goal.

"What do you tell them when you get your heart broken," Niumatalolo said. "We were in the driver's seat. We were feeling pretty good. Unfortunately, the game slipped out of our hands."

The offense was stagnant throughout the game until the waning moments of regulation when Maretzki kicked the 37-yarder with 1:53 left to tie the game at 10-all.

A thrilling overtime followed.

The NCAA instituted overtime in 1996, and the series had never had to go a little extra to settle one of the sport's greatest rivalry games.

Army's Markel Johnson ran 25 yards for a touchdown on the first play of overtime for a 17-10 lead, and

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Navy matched the Black Knights when Arline tossed a 25-yard touchdown pass to Maquel Haywood that made it 17-all.

It was Navy's first completion of the game and Arline had perhaps the sweetest 1 of 1 for 25-yard game in Navy history. He also rushed for 102 yards.

Navy still leads the series against Army 62-54-7. The Black Knights, though, have won five of the last seven meetings.

Army finished 6-6; Navy was 4-8.

"This team never stopping fighting, they never stopped believing," Monken said. "Somehow, some way, we found a way to get it done tonight. It was an epic battle. It was one I'll remember for a long time, probably forever."

The teams combined for only 53 yards passing.

One of Cade Ballard's rare passing attempts for Army was a success when a pass interference call brought the ball down to the 28 with 4 minutes left on a drive that set up Marezki's tying field goal.

Ballard was 2-of-10 passing for 26 yards.

Hall's run up the middle in the third quarter was the biggest burst of offense of the game for either team -- at that point, that run alone had outgained Army's 69 total yards.

His run was a double gut punch to the Black Knights after QB Tyhier Tyler had a 40-yard touchdown run wiped out on a penalty on the previous possession.

Hall provided one of the few highlights in a game full of wobbly punts, errant throws and a dearth of first downs.

The first spark came in the final seconds of the first half when Army's Noah Short blocked Riley Riethman's punt and Jabril Williams recovered -- after almost knocking the ball out of the end zone -- for the touchdown and a 7-3 lead.

That bit of excitement in front of a packed house of 69,117 at Lincoln Financial Field just about made up for 29 minutes of two offenses that could not move the ball down field.

The first half ended with 0 passing yards. From both teams. Zero.

That stat of futility wasn't necessarily uncommon for either program. Navy won two games this season without completing a pass, and Army threw for 852 yards passing — this season. That's about 2½ games of yardage on the same field for Philadelphia Eagles QB Jalen Hurts.

With points at a premium, Navy sent out Bijan Nichols for a long field goal, and his 44-yarder hugged the inside of the right goal post for a 3-0 lead in the second quarter.

Army finished the half 0-for-5 passing, failed to convert on 5 of 6 third downs and had 33 total yards in the half.

This game is rarely about quality football anyway and more about the pageantry and revelry of cadets and midshipmen standing, bouncing and cheering for their branch. The hours before kickoff were highlighted by the Army Corps of Cadets and the Brigade of Midshipmen march onto the field. The Navy "Leap Frogs" parachute team earned a roar from the crowd with each safe landing on the field. Mark Wahlberg even made an appearance and leaped into a crowd of midshipmen and then received an award for his work with the military.

UP NEXT

It was the 90th time the game was played in Philadelphia, including 38 straight times from 1945 to 1982.

The series is hitting the road starting with next season's game in Foxboro, Massachusetts. The 2024 game is at FedEx Field in Landover, Maryland; 2025 is at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore; and 2026 is at MetLife Stadium, the New Jersey home of the Jets and Giants just outside New York City. The game returns to Philly in 2027.

Heavy rain, wind, snow blows through California into Sierra

By SCOTT SONNER Associated Press

RENO, Nev. (AP) — A winter storm packing powerful winds, heavy rain and potentially several feet of snow in the Sierra Nevada shut down mountain highways, toppled trees and triggered flood watches and avalanche warnings on Saturday from the coast of Northern California to Lake Tahoe.

More than 250 miles (400 kilometers) of the Sierra remained under a winter storm warning at least until Sunday night or early Monday from north of Reno to south of Yosemite National Park.

As much as 4 feet (1.2 meters) of snow is expected to fall by the end of the weekend in the upper elevations around Lake Tahoe, and as much as 6 feet (1.8 meters) in more remote parts of the Sierra to the north and south.

A 70-mile (112-kilometer) stretch of eastbound U.S. Interstate 80 was closed "due to zero visibility" from Colfax, California to the Nevada state line, transportation officials said. Chains were required on much of the rest of I-80 in the mountains from Reno toward Sacramento.

A stretch of California Highway 89 also was closed due to heavy snow between Tahoe City and South Lake Tahoe, California, the highway patrol said.

The U.S. Forest Service issued an avalanche warning for the backcountry in the mountains west of Lake Tahoe where it said "several feet of new snow and strong winds will result in dangerous avalanche conditions."

Gusts of wind up to 50 mph (80 kph) that sent trees into homes in Sonoma County on Saturday could reach 100 mph (160 kph) over Sierra ridgetops by early Sunday, the National Weather Service said.

Heavy rain was forecast through the weekend from San Francisco to the Sierra crest with up to 2 inches (5 centimeters) in the Bay Area and up to 5 inches (13 cm) at Grass Valley northeast of Sacramento.

The weather service issued a flash flood warning on Saturday when inches of rain fell on burn scars left by wildfires south of Monterey and farther south of Big Sur.

More than 30,000 customers were without power in the Sacramento area at one point Saturday morning, but it was restored to all but a few hundred late in the day. The drivers and passengers of five cars that had been trapped between downed power lines escaped unharmed, the Sacramento Bee reported.

San Francisco Bay Area officials reported power outages and fallen trees, some of which damaged cars and homes. In Monte Rio, a small town along the Russian River in Sonoma County, firefighters responded to several reports of downed trees crashing into homes in 50 mph wind gusts.

Monte Rio Fire Department Chief Steve Baxman told KRON-TV that four different down trees had damaged houses in the area and that no injuries were reported.

"This is our first big storm, we've had several years of drought and all these trees were dry. Now they're filling up with water and starting to topple over," Baxman told the television station.

In the Sierra, about 10 inches (25 centimeters) of snow already had fallen Saturday afternoon at Mammoth Mountain ski resort south of Yosemite where more than 10 feet (3 meters) of snow has been recorded since early November.

"It just seems like every week or so, another major storm rolls in," resort spokeswoman Lauren Burke said.

As much as 18 to 28 inches (45 to 71 centimeters) of snow was forecast through the weekend at lake level, and up to 4 feet (1.2 meters) at elevations above 7,000 feet (2,133 meters) with 50 mph (80 kph) winds and gusts up to 100 mph (160 kph).

On the Sierra's eastern slope, a winter weather advisory runs from 10 p.m. Saturday to 10 a.m. for Reno, Sparks and Carson City, with snow accumulations of 1 to 3 inches (2.5-7.5 cm) on valley floors and up to 8 inches (20 cm) above 5,000 feet (1,524 meters).

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France advances to semifinals at World Cup, tops England 2-1

By JAMES ROBSON AP Soccer Writer

AL KHOR, Qatar (AP) — France's players reacted as if they had already won the World Cup. What they were actually celebrating, though, was Harry Kane's missed penalty.

The match wasn't over yet, but France was leading 2-1 when Kane, England's captain and its best player, stepped up to take a penalty that would even the score in the 84th minute of Saturday's match at Al Bayt Stadium.

He sent his shot high over the bar and defending champion France held on to win 2-1 for a spot in the semifinals.

"That's football," England coach Gareth Southgate said. "There is nobody I would rather have in that situation and if we had one tomorrow, I'd feel exactly the same way."

France is looking to become the first country to successfully defend its World Cup title since Brazil — led by Pele — won back-to-back tournaments in 1958 and 1962. Italy also won two World Cups in succession in 1934 and 1938.

France will next face Morocco on Wednesday for a spot in the final.

"We are getting to the semifinals. We are closer to the final and this was an important achievement tonight and we can believe, but we have an important game on Wednesday," France coach Didier Deschamps said. "In the past the world champions didn't always do well in the next World Cup and we've managed to do that."

France knows that all too well.

As defending champions in 2002, the French team was eliminated in the group stage. France reached the final in 2006, losing to Italy in a penalty shootout, and then was knocked out in the group stage four years later in 2010.

On Saturday, Aurelian Tchouameni gave France the lead but England evened the score when Kane converted from the penalty spot in the 54th minute. Olivier Giroud put France back in front with a header in the 78th minute, setting up Kane for that chance to equalize again against his Tottenham teammate, France goalkeeper Hugo Lloris.

That's when he blasted his shot over.

"It is very difficult when you get a second penalty and, of course, a goalkeeper that knows you really well as well," Southgate said. "There's a lot involved in that situation. He's the best, but the best are still 85% (accurate), so even the best are going to miss at times."

Kane sank to his knees after the final whistle. His earlier goal put him in a tie with Wayne Rooney as his country's leading scorer, but that wasn't what mattered.

At the same time, an elated France team ran across the field in a blue wave of celebration before gathering together in a huddle, bouncing up and down joyously.

The singing and dancing continued into the locker room.

Morocco, the first African team to reach the semifinals of a World Cup, now stands in the way of France's bid to make history.

"Allow us to savour our victory tonight against a very good England team," Deschamps said when faced with questions about his next opponent.

For Southgate, it's time for reflection as he decides whether to carry on in the England job after leading the team through three tournaments since he was hired in 2016.

"Whenever I've finished these tournaments I've needed time to make the correct decision because emotionally you go through so many different feelings and the energy that it takes through these tournaments is enormous," he said. "I want to make the right decision, whatever that is for the team, for England, the FA (Football Association). I think it is right to take time to do that."

"I know in the past how much my feelings have fluctuated in the immediate aftermath of tournament."

BOLD APPROACH

Southgate has often been criticized for being too cautious in the biggest games, but he opted for a back

four against France and loaded his team with attacking threats.

FLAT START

Maguire kicked the ball out of play at the very beginning of the match even though there was no pressure from a France opponent. Air was leaking out of the ball and Maguire informed the referee that a new one was needed.

Deputy in California slayings killed self with service gun

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (AP) — A Virginia sheriff's deputy who police say traveled to California to kill three family members of a 15-year-old girl he tried to sexually extort online killed himself with a government-issued firearm, authorities said Saturday.

Austin Lee Edwards, 28, drove across the country and on Nov. 25 killed the girl's mother and grandparents and set fire to their home in Riverside, a city about 50 miles (80 kilometers) east of downtown Los Angeles, authorities said.

That same day, Edwards died by suicide during a shootout with San Bernardino sheriff's deputies. The teenage girl was rescued.

"Our detectives determined the gun used was Edwards' department-issued semi-automatic service pistol," sheriff's spokeswoman Gloria Huerta said in a statement.

The Riverside Police Department, which is investigating the deaths of the girl's family members, has not said how they were killed.

Edwards, a resident of North Chesterfield, Virginia, appears to have posed online as a 17-year-old boy to engage in a romantic relationship with the girl and obtain her personal information by deceiving her with a false identity, known as "catfishing," police said.

Authorities said the girl stopped communicating with him after he asked her to send him nude photos of herself.

Edwards was a former Virginia state trooper and was a sheriff's deputy in Washington County, Virginia, at the time of the killings.

Both law enforcement agencies have said they found no warning signs about Edwards before he was hired. But a police report from the Abingdon Police Department in Virginia shows he was detained in 2016 for a psychiatric evaluation over threats to kill himself and his father, years before he joined law enforcement.

On Thursday — a day after the Los Angeles Times broke the news about the mental health episode — the Virginia State Police said a recently completed review showed "human error" resulted in an incomplete database query during the hiring process.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office did not respond to calls seeking comment on the 2016 episode.

EU parliament chief takes action as lobbying scandal simmers

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — A vice president of the European Union's parliament was suspended from her duties on Saturday after being caught up in an investigation into influence peddling at the EU assembly allegedly involving officials from Qatar.

Eva Kaili, a 44-year-old Greek former TV news anchor, was suspended by her party in Greece and the EU assembly's Socialists and Democrats group Friday after Belgian police staged 16 raids across Brussels as part of a probe into corruption and money laundering at the parliament.

Four people were detained for questioning, and investigators recovered around 600,000 euros (\$633,500) in cash and seized computer equipment and mobile telephones. Prosecutors did not identify the four but at least one was an EU lawmaker and one was a former member.

Authorities have not identified the Gulf country suspected of offering cash or gifts to officials at the parliament in exchange for political favors, but several members have linked the investigation to Qatar.

Parliament President Roberta Metsola "has decided to suspend with immediate effect all powers, duties and tasks that were delegated to Eva Kaili in her capacity as vice president of the European Parliament,"

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Metsola's spokesman said late Saturday.

The decision was taken "in the light of the ongoing judicial investigations by Belgian authorities," he said, without providing further details.

The EU assembly is set to hold its last plenary session of the year in Strasbourg, France, beginning Monday.

The co-president of the Greens group, Philippe Lamberts, called for a parliamentary inquiry and for the issue to be put to debate this week, echoing calls from some other political groups.

The Greens "strongly condemn corruption and bribery, cash and precious gifts cannot draw the political lines in this house," Lamberts said in a statement. He added that his group "will vote against visa facilitation for Qatar in this week's plenary vote."

The EU's executive branch, the European Commission, proposed in April that citizens from Qatar be granted short visa-free stays in the 27-nation bloc provided they have a biometric passport. The legislation has been working its way through the assembly.

Kaili's party in Greece, the Socialist Pasok-Movement for Change, publicly distanced itself from remarks she made in the EU parliament last month praising Qatar, which is currently hosting soccer's gala event, the World Cup.

She said the World Cup is "proof, actually, of how sports diplomacy can achieve a historical transformation of a country with reforms that inspired the Arab world." Kaili also repeated what she said is an International Labour Organization view that "Qatar is a frontrunner in labor rights."

After Friday's raids, Belgian prosecutors said federal judicial police suspect that an undisclosed country in the Gulf region has been trying "to influence the economic and political decisions of the European Parliament."

It said this was allegedly done "by paying large sums of money or offering large gifts to third parties with a significant political and/or strategic position within the European Parliament."

In Italy on Saturday, Article One, a small center-left party, suspended former EU lawmaker Pier-Antonio Panzeri following reports he was caught up in the scandal.

In a statement posted on the party's Facebook page, Article One said it was "disturbed" by the reports but expressed full confidence in Belgian investigators. It added that it "hopes that Panzeri can show he is not involved in something that is completely incompatible with his history and political commitment."

Panzeri, who was inscribed in the Lombardy branch of Article One, was also once a member of the same political group in the EU parliament as Kaili, the Socialists and Democrats. The head of the group, Iratxe Garcia Perez, tweeted Saturday that "Eva Kaili should be replaced as EP vice-president in order to protect the institution's respectability and citizens' trust."

The International Trade Union Confederation declined to comment Friday when asked by The Associated Press about reports that its general secretary, Luca Visentini, was also caught up in the affair. A message on the organization's website on Saturday said that "ITUC has no further comment on this issue at present, pending further information."

US soccer journalist Grant Wahl dies at World Cup

By RONALD BLUM AP Sports Writer

LUSAIL, Qatar (AP) — Grant Wahl, an American journalist who helped grow the popularity of soccer in the U.S. and reported on some of the biggest stories in the sport, died Saturday while covering a World Cup match between Argentina and the Netherlands. He was 49.

Wahl fell back in his seat in a section of Lusail Stadium reserved for journalists during extra time of the game, and reporters adjacent to him called for assistance.

Emergency services workers responded very quickly, treated him for 20 or 30 minutes on site and then took him out on a stretcher, said Keir Radnedge, a veteran British sports journalist who was working nearby at the time.

The World Cup organizing committee said he was taken to Doha's Hamad General Hospital, but it did not state a cause of death. "We are in touch with the US Embassy and relevant local authorities to ensure

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the process of repatriating the body is in accordance with the family's wishes," it said in a statement.

Wahl, who wrote for Sports Illustrated for more than two decades and then started his own website, was a major voice informing an American public of soccer during time of increased interest after the U.S. hosted the 1994 World Cup. He also brought a critical eye to the organizational bodies of the international sport.

Wahl attempted to run for FIFA president against Sepp Blatter and Mohamed bin Hammam in 2011. He promised to open FIFA to greater transparency and said he contacted 150 countries without winning support for a nomination.

He "really helped put soccer on the mainstream sports map in the States," Radnedge said.

"Grant had a strong moral compass, on where sports should be and how sport ... should help set standards for people," he said. "There was never any doubt that Grant was on the side of the good guys in wanting soccer to make the best of itself."

Wahl was covering his eighth World Cup. He wrote Monday on his website that he had visited a medical clinic while in Qatar.

"My body finally broke down on me. Three weeks of little sleep, high stress and lots of work can do that to you," Wahl wrote. "What had been a cold over the last 10 days turned into something more severe on the night of the USA-Netherlands game, and I could feel my upper chest take on a new level of pressure and discomfort."

Wahl wrote that he tested negative for COVID-19 and sought treatment for his symptoms.

"I went into the medical clinic at the main media center today, and they said I probably have bronchitis. They gave me a course of antibiotics and some heavy-duty cough syrup, and I'm already feeling a bit better just a few hours later. But still: No bueno," he wrote.

Wahl tweeted on Wednesday that he had celebrated his birthday that day.

"We could always count on Grant to deliver insightful and entertaining stories about our game, and its major protagonists," the U.S. Soccer Federation said in a statement. "Grant's passion for soccer and commitment to elevating its profile across our sporting landscape played a major role in helping to drive interest in and respect for our beautiful game."

Wahl's wife, Dr. Celine Gounder, tweeted that she was thankful for the support of her husband's "soccer family" and friends who had reached out.

"I'm in complete shock," wrote Gounder, who is an associate professor at New York University School of Medicine, an attending physician at Bellevue Hospital Center and a CBS News contributor.

U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said in a tweet that American officials were in touch with Qatari authorities "to see to it that his family's wishes are fulfilled as expeditiously as possible."

Wahl wore a rainbow T-shirt in support of LGBTQ rights to the United States' World Cup opener against Wales on Nov. 21 and wrote that security refused him entry and told him to remove the shirt. Gay and lesbian sex is criminalized in Qatar, a conservative Muslim emirate.

Wahl wrote he was detained for 25 minutes at Ahmed Bin Ali stadium in Al Rayyan, then was let go by a security commander. Wahl said FIFA apologized to him.

Among Wahl's work before he began covering soccer exclusively was a Sports Illustrated cover story about LeBron James in 2002, when James was a junior at St. Vincent-St. Mary High in Akron, Ohio.

"He was always pretty cool to be around. He spent a lot of time in my hometown of Akron," James said in Philadelphia after the Los Angeles Lakers lost in overtime to the 76ers. "Any time his name would come up, I'll always think back to me as a teenager having Grant in our building down at St. V's. It's a tragic loss. It's unfortunate to lose someone as great as he was. I wish his family the best. May he rest in paradise."

A voter at times in FIFA's annual awards, Wahl was among 82 journalists honored last week by FIFA and the international sports press association AIPS for attending eight or more World Cups.

"His love for football was immense and his reporting will be missed by all who follow the global game," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said in a statement.

Wahl graduated from Princeton in 1996 and worked for Sports Illustrated from 1996 to 2021, known primarily for his coverage of soccer and college basketball. He then launched his own website, Fútbol with

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Grant Wahl, and a podcast with Meadowlark Media.

Wahl also worked for Fox Sports from 2012-19 and was hired by CBS Sports in 2021 as an analyst and editorial consultant. Wahl wrote the 2009 book "The Beckham Experiment" after English soccer star David Beckham joined Major League Soccer's LA Galaxy, and the 2018 book "Masters of Modern Soccer."

His death at the World Cup left fellow journalists covering the games stunned.

"You come to a World Cup as a journalist to work, to share the stresses, the pressures but also the enjoyments and the fascination of it — and to share that with your readers, your listeners, your viewers. That's what Grant was doing, that's what he enjoyed doing. Everybody recognized that enthusiasm in him," Radnedge said.

"So for him to not be with us anymore at such a young age, that's an immense shock."

Devotion to Virgin Mary draws millions to Mexico City shrine

By MARÍA TERESA HERNÁNDEZ Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — It is one of the world's most visited and beloved religious venues — the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, with a circular, tent-shaped roof visible from miles away and a sacred history that each year draws millions of pilgrims from near and far to its hilltop site in Mexico City.

Early December is the busiest time, as pilgrims converge ahead of Dec. 12, the feast day honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe. To Catholic believers, the date is the anniversary of one of several apparitions of the Virgin Mary witnessed by an Indigenous Mexican man named Juan Diego in 1531.

The COVID-19 pandemic curtailed the number of pilgrims in 2020. Last year, even with some restrictions still in place, attendance for the December celebrations rose to at least 3.5 million, according to local officials. Bigger numbers are expected this year.

For many pilgrims, their journey to the site is an expression of gratitude for miracles that they believe the Virgin brought into their lives. Around the basilica, some people light candles while praying in silence. Some kneel and weep. Others carry statues of the Virgin in their arms as they receive a priest's blessing.

Among the first-time pilgrims this year was Yamilleth Fuente, who entered the basilica wearing a yellow scarf decorated with an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Fuente, who traveled alone to Mexico City from her home in El Salvador, said that she was diagnosed with cancer in 2014 and recovered after praying to the Virgin. When she suggested making the pilgrimage, her husband and two children encouraged her.

"I've loved the Virgin my whole life. I even used to dream about her," Fuente said. "My daughter's name is Alexandra Guadalupe because she's also a miracle that the Virgin granted me."

For the Catholic Church, the image of the Virgin is a miracle itself — dating to a cold December dawn in 1531 when Juan Diego was walking near the Tepeyac Hill.

According to Catholic tradition, Juan Diego heard a female voice calling to him, climbed the hill and saw the Virgin Mary standing there, in a dress that shone like the sun. Speaking to him in his native language, Nahuatl, she asked for a temple to be built to honor her son, Jesus Christ.

As the church teaches, Juan Diego ran to notify the local bishop, who was skeptical, and then returned to the hill for more exchanges with the Virgin. At her suggestion, he left the hillside carrying flowers in his cloak, and when he later opened the cloak in the bishop's presence it displayed a detailed, colorful image of the Virgin.

That piece of cloth currently hangs in the center of the Basilica, protected by a frame.

In an annotated edition of the apparition story, the Rev. Eduardo Chavez — a leading expert on the topic — said the Virgin's appearance occurred in a time of despair. By 1531, 10 years after the Spaniards' conquest of the Aztecs, smallpox had killed nearly half of Mexico's Indigenous population, wrecking their pre-conquest social and religious systems.

To many Mexicans, the Virgin's image became a symbol of unity because her face looks mixed-race — neither fully Indigenous nor European, but a bit of both.

Some academics have said that the devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe intertwines Indigenous and

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Catholic beliefs, though the Catholic Church rejects this theory. At the foot of the hill that today accommodates the basilica was a temple for the goddess Coatlicue Tonantzin, and the date of the apparition coincided with an Indigenous festival.

On a recent day, numerous motorcycle taxis were parked on one of the esplanades outside the basilica. Abraham García, a 45-year-old driver from the nearby city of Nezahualcóyotl, was there, accompanied by more than 70 colleagues.

"We come year after year to thank God, the basilica and the Virgin, and to ask her for help," he said. "This was a good year for us, so now we'll leave even more blessed."

Many of the drivers' vehicles have stickers bearing the Virgin's image on their windows; others display a statuette of her under the rear-view mirror.

According to Nayeli Amezcua, a researcher at the National School of Anthropology and History, images and carvings play a substantial role in this faith.

"Catholicism is a very sensory religion... Through many objects, the sacred is transmitted," she said. "We could think of them as representations, but for those who believe, the images themselves are alive."

Fuente, the Salvadoran pilgrim, is eager to share the fervor of her faith.

"My entire life is filled with miracles from God and the Blessed Virgin," she said. "You could write a book about all that she has done for me."

Russia grinds on in eastern Ukraine; Bakhmut 'destroyed'

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces have turned the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut into ruins, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, while Ukraine's military on Saturday reported missile, rocket and air strikes in multiple parts of the country that Moscow is trying to conquer after months of resistance.

The latest battles of Russia's 9 1/2 month war in Ukraine have centered on four provinces that Russian President Vladimir Putin triumphantly — and illegally — claimed to have annexed in late September. The fighting indicates Russia's struggle to establish control of those regions and Ukraine's persistence to reclaim them.

Zelenskyy said the situation "remains very difficult" in several frontline cities in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk provinces. Together, the provinces make up the Donbas, an expansive industrial region bordering Russia that Putin identified as a focus from the war's outset and where Moscow-backed separatists have fought since 2014.

"Bakhmut, Soledar, Maryinka, Kreminna. For a long time, there is no living place left on the land of these areas that have not been damaged by shells and fire," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address, naming cities that have again found themselves in the crosshairs. "The occupiers actually destroyed Bakhmut, another Donbas city that the Russian army turned into burnt ruins."

Some buildings remain standing in Bakhmut, and the remaining residents still mill about the streets. But like Mariupol and other contested cities, it endured a long siege and spent weeks without water and power even before Moscow launched massive strikes to take out public utilities across Ukraine.

The Donetsk region's governor, Pavlo Kyrylenko, estimated seven weeks ago that 90% of the city's pre-war population of over 70,000 had fled in the months since Moscow focused on seizing the entire Donbas.

The Ukrainian military General Staff reported missile attacks, about 20 airstrikes and more than 60 rocket attacks across Ukraine between Friday and Saturday. Spokesperson Oleksandr Shtupun said the most active fighting was in the Bakhmut district, where more than 20 populated places came under fire. He said Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks in Donetsk and neighboring Luhansk.

Russia's grinding eastern offensive succeeded in capturing almost all of Luhansk during the summer. Donetsk eluded the same fate, and the Russian military in recent weeks has poured manpower and resources around Bakhmut in an attempt to encircle the city, analysts and Ukrainian officials have said.

After Ukrainian forces recaptured the southern city of Kherson nearly a month ago, the battle heated up around Bakhmut, demonstrating Putin's desire for visible gains following weeks of clear setbacks in Ukraine.

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Taking Bakhmut would rupture Ukraine's supply lines and open a route for Russian forces to press on toward Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, key Ukrainian strongholds in Donetsk. Russia has battered Bakhmut with rockets for more than half of the year. A ground assault accelerated after its troops forced the Ukrainians to withdraw from Luhansk in July.

But some analysts have questioned Russia's strategic logic in the relentless pursuit to take Bakhmut and surrounding areas that also came under intense shelling in the past weeks, and where Ukrainian officials reported that some residents were living in damp basements.

"The costs associated with six months of brutal, grinding, and attrition-based combat around #Bakhmut far outweigh any operational advantage that the #Russians can obtain from taking Bakhmut," the Institute for the Study of War, a think tank in Washington, posted on its Twitter feed on Thursday.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Saturday that Russian troops also pressed their Donbas offensive in the direction of the Donetsk city of Lyman, which is 65 kilometers (40 miles) north of Bakhmut. According to the ministry, they "managed to take more advantageous positions for further advancement."

Russia's forces first occupied the city in May but withdrew in early October. Ukrainian authorities said at the time they found mines on the bodies of dead Russian soldiers that were set to explode when someone tried to clear the corpses, as well as the bodies of civilian residents killed by shelling or who had died from a lack of food and medicine.

On Friday, Putin lashed out at recent comments by former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who said a 2015 peace deal for eastern Ukraine negotiated by France and Germany had bought time for Ukraine to prepare for war with Russia this year.

That deal was aimed to cool tensions after pro-Russia separatists seized territory in the Donbas a year earlier, sparking a war with Ukrainian forces that ballooned into a war with Russia itself after the Feb. 24 full-scale invasion.

Ukraine's military on Saturday also reported strikes in other provinces: Kharkiv and Sumy in the northeast, central Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia in the southeast and Kherson in the south. The latter two, along with Donetsk and Luhansk, are the four regions Putin claims are now Russian territory.

A month ago, Russian troops withdrew from the western side of the Dniper River where it cuts through Kherson province, allowing Ukrainians forces to declare the region's capital city liberated. But the Russians still occupy a majority of the province and have continued to attack from their news positions across the river.

Writing on Telegram, the deputy head of Zelenskyy's office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, said two civilians died and another eight were wounded during dozens of mortar, rocket and artillery attacks over the previous day. Residential areas, a hospital, shops, warehouses and critical infrastructure in the Kherson region were damaged, he said.

To the west, drone attacks overnight left much of Odesa province, including its namesake Black Sea port city, without electricity, regional Gov. Maxim Marchenko said. Several energy facilities were destroyed at once, leaving all customers except hospitals, maternity homes, boiler plants and pumping stations were without power, electric company DTEK said Saturday.

The Odesa regional administration's energy department said late Saturday that fully restoring electricity could take as long as three months and it urged families whose homes are without power to leave the region if possible.

Ronaldo fails again in likely last chance to win World Cup

By TALES AZZONI AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Cristiano Ronaldo choked up with emotion as the tears ran down his cheeks. He momentarily covered his face with his hand, but couldn't hide his disappointment.

This moment was too big.

It was likely the last World Cup match for the 37-year-old Ronaldo, and probably his last chance to win soccer's biggest prize.

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When it mattered most, he couldn't conjure up the kind of soccer magic that has made him one of the greatest players the sport has ever seen.

Ronaldo was dropped from the starting lineup for the second straight match on Saturday. The five-time player of the year came on as a substitute in the second half with his team already trailing, but his one real chance was saved easily by the opposing goalkeeper. In the end, Morocco beat the Portuguese 1-0 to become the first African team to reach the tournament's semifinals.

It was a sad ending for Ronaldo on the day he made his 196th international appearance, tied for the most in the men's game with Kuwait forward Badr Al-Mutawa. He leaves Qatar as the only player to have scored in five World Cups but remains with eight goals at the tournament, one shy of Eusébio's record with Portugal.

Ronaldo, the all-time leading scorer in men's international soccer with 118 goals, did not say anything about his future after the match, going straight to the team bus from the locker room. He had said before the World Cup he did not plan to retire from the national team, and that he planned to play at least through the 2024 European Championship in Germany — eight years after he helped Portugal win its only major title at Euro 2016.

Ronaldo was first dropped to the bench in the round of 16 against Switzerland, making an appearance as a substitute. His replacement in that match, Gonçalo Ramos, scored a hat trick in the 6-1 victory.

Ramos was again selected ahead of Ronaldo on Saturday.

"No regrets," Portugal coach Fernando Santos said of not starting Ronaldo. "Cristiano is a great player, he came in when we thought it was necessary. We have no regret."

After receiving the captain's armband from Portugal defender Pepe in the 51st minute, Ronaldo rushed onto the field and started encouraging his teammates. As time ran down, he raised his arms toward the Portugal fans — heavily outnumbered by the Moroccans — and asked for their support.

Ronaldo helped increase the intensity of a Portugal attack that struggled to get past the well-organized Moroccan defense. He immediately created an opportunity with a cross into the area, but then lost possession shortly afterward. He also set up a shot by João Félix in the 82nd, but his teammate's attempt was saved. Then Ronaldo had that last-gasp shot in stoppage time that never was a real threat.

Ronaldo, who has never scored in the knockout stage at the World Cup, quickly made his way off the field after the final whistle and was crying by the time he entered the tunnel heading into the locker rooms.

Some Moroccan players went to console him, but there were no Portugal teammates nearby as he walked off. Most of them stayed on the field at Al Thumama Stadium and thanked the Portugal fans for their support.

As Ronaldo got near the sideline, what appeared to be a fan tried to get near him but was quickly taken away.

Santos then patted Ronaldo's back as he passed by, possibly for the last time.

Ronaldo was left out of the starting lineup against the Swiss after Santos expressed frustration about his team captain's attitude in the previous game against South Korea. Santos later said Ronaldo was "not happy" to be told he was being benched, but never threatened to leave the World Cup because of the decision.

Ronaldo was coming off lackluster performances in the group stage, though he scored in the 3-2 win over Ghana to become the first player to score in five World Cups. He has played in every edition of the tournament since 2006.

The World Cup elimination caps a turbulent few weeks for Ronaldo, starting with an explosive interview with Piers Morgan and the fallout that ended with the termination of his contract at Manchester United and rumors of a move to play for Saudi club Al Nassr.

Portugal was trying to make it to the World Cup semifinals for the third time, having finished third in 1966 and fourth in 2006. The team hadn't gotten past the round of 16 since that tournament in Germany 16 years ago.

The next chance to win the golden trophy will come in four years at the 2026 World Cup in North America,

but it will likely be without Ronaldo on the team.

Attorney: Kidnap plot leader should not get life sentence

By RICK CALLAHAN Associated Press

The leader of a plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer should not be sentenced to life in prison because federal prosecutors overstated his role in the plot and have created a "false narrative of a terrifying para-military leader," his attorney argues.

Attorney Christopher Gibbons said in his sentencing memorandum filed late Friday for Adam Fox that the government had employed "histrionic descriptions" of Fox to overstate "his actual intentions or his actual capabilities."

The filing in federal court in Grand Rapids, Michigan, came after prosecutors told the court Monday in their sentencing recommendation that a life prison sentence would be justified for Fox, saying his goal in the 2020 kidnapping plot was a forerunner of rampant anti-government extremism.

Fox and co-defendant Barry Croft Jr. were convicted in August of conspiring to kidnap Whitmer. They were also found guilty of conspiring to obtain a weapon of mass destruction.

The FBI broke up the kidnapping plot with arrests in October 2020. Evidence showed that Fox and others trained with guns inside crudely built "shoot houses" in Wisconsin and Michigan and made trips to Elk Rapids, Michigan, to scout Whitmer's vacation home. The strategy included blowing up a bridge to slow down police officers responding to an abduction, according to trial evidence.

But Gibbons said in Friday's filing that "in this case there was no bomb whatsoever" and that no funds "to pay for the 'bomb'" were provided to an FBI agent who was working undercover and had fooled the group into believing he knew someone in the mining industry who could get high-grade explosives.

He said that prosecutors' sentencing "memorandum employs exaggerated language to create the false narrative of a terrifying para-military leader."

"Adam Fox is described as creating an army with a cadre of operators. For example, Adam Fox's conduct is compared to Timothy McVeigh who committed an actual bombing that killed 168 people, 19 of whom were children," Gibbons wrote.

"These histrionic descriptions of Adam Fox do not rationally address his actual conduct and they do not accurately reflect either his actual intentions or his actual capabilities."

At trial, Gibbons portrayed Fox as hapless and virtually homeless, a man with a loud, vile mouth who was living in the basement of a Grand Rapids-area vacuum shop. He repeated that description in Friday's filing, calling his client "an unemployed vacuum repairman who was venting his frustrations on social media but abiding by the laws of the State of Michigan."

U.S. District Judge Robert Jonker is scheduled to sentence Fox on Dec. 27. Croft, a trucker from Bear, Delaware, will be sentenced on Dec. 28. Two more men pleaded guilty to the kidnapping conspiracy and testified against Fox and Croft, while two other men were acquitted last spring.

In October, in state court, three members of a paramilitary group called the Wolverine Watchmen were convicted of providing support for Fox.

Germany: Suspect dead after killing mother, taking hostages

BERLIN (AP) — German police said Saturday that a man suspected of killing his mother and later taking two people hostage in the eastern city of Dresden has died.

Authorities had urged people to avoid an area in the city center and ordered Dresden's Christmas market to remain closed while the police operation to free the hostages was underway.

Police initially said they were communicating with the suspect before announcing shortly after noon that the hostage situation was over.

"The suspect died during the operation," Dresden police later wrote on Twitter. "The 40-year-old suffered fatal injuries while ... the hostages were freed."

Dresden police didn't immediately respond to requests for confirmation about whether the man had

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been killed by police or died from self-inflicted injuries.

Police also said the hostages were "outwardly uninjured."

The 40-year-old German was also suspected of killing his 62-year-old mother. Police had found the woman dead in another part of the city early Saturday.

Radio Dresden reported that the man had tried to enter a building where the broadcaster is based, near the city's main train station. He reportedly fired several shots before fleeing, according to Radio Dresden.

Effect of Georgia's voting law unclear, despite high turnout

By AYANNA ALEXANDER and GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Georgia's 2022 election season ended dramatically this past week, but that was because of the closely watched Senate runoff that solidified Democratic control of the chamber and not for any large-scale problems with voting.

That led Republicans in the state to say concerns over a 2021 law that imposed several new restrictions on voting were overblown.

"Georgia's election system has been challenged and scrutinized and criticized and passed every test," Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger said in a statement after Tuesday's runoff, citing high turnout.

Voting rights and community groups say their grassroots efforts to work around the new restrictions were key to the relatively strong turnout. But they also caution that they don't know how many people might have been deterred from voting.

In his victory speech, Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock said he did not share the rosy sentiment about this year's election.

"Now there will be those both in our state, and across the country, who will point to our victory tonight and try to use it to argue there is no voter suppression in Georgia," he said. "The fact that millions of Georgians endured hours in lines — and were willing to spend hours in line, lines that wrapped around buildings and went on for blocks, lines in the cold, lines in the rain — is most certainly not a sign voter suppression does not exist."

The overhaul of the state's election laws, known as Senate Bill 202, was passed by the Republican-controlled Legislature after Democrats won the 2020 presidential contest and two Senate runoff elections in early 2021.

The law shortened the time period to request an absentee ballot and addressed several issues that had arisen during the pandemic election of 2020. To ease the process for voters concerned about COVID-19, the state created an online portal for mail ballot requests while counties deployed drop boxes.

After the 2020 election, state lawmakers said voters should be required to sign absentee ballot applications by hand, meaning they needed access to a printer. And while lawmakers established drop boxes as legal, they put limits on how many could be used by each jurisdiction and when those boxes would be accessible. This resulted in fewer drop boxes in the state's most populous counties.

The new law also required a driver's license or other ID rather than a signature for requesting a mailed ballot.

Also under the law, the runoff period was shortened, creating more hurdles. Saturday voting almost didn't occur during this year's runoff, after state election officials interpreted state law to mean it could not be held if it followed a holiday — in this case Thanksgiving and the Friday afterward. Democrats sued over the issue and won in state court.

Gabriel Sterling, a top official in the secretary of state's office, said in an interview "the mechanics went through beautifully" while acknowledging the tight turnaround time between general elections and runoffs presented challenges for officials. That was especially true in processing mail-in ballot requests and dealing with postal delivery delays at some locations.

The new law shortened the runoff period from nine weeks to four weeks.

"Nobody thought about having to do audits and the amount of work and effort that takes, and then to

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re-recruit people to be poll workers," Sterling said.

He said a main reason for long lines at early voting locations was that some local election offices had fewer locations for the runoff than during the general election. Fulton County, which includes Atlanta, had 13 fewer early voting locations for the runoff than it did for the Nov. 8 general election, Sterling said. Those decisions were made by local election officials, not the secretary of state's office.

It's impossible to determine whether Georgia's new elections law discouraged anyone from voting, and turnout can be affected by a number of factors, including the weather and enthusiasm about the candidates.

Overall turnout during the general election was 56.9% of registered voters, according to the secretary of state's office, which certified the results. That roughly aligns with the turnout rate from the last midterm four years ago, even though a record number of midterm ballots were cast, given that more voters are on the rolls. That dropped to just over 50% for the runoff.

Bishop Reginald Jackson, who leads the African Methodist Episcopal churches in Georgia, said the religious community played a significant role in driving turnout among Black voters, along with civil rights, legal and voting rights groups. They modified how they interacted with voters because of the new law, canvassing neighborhoods and holding town hall meetings to get as many as possible people to vote.

Among other things, they pushed early in-person voting over mail balloting, worried that some of the additional hurdles to request and return a mail ballot would lead to a high number of rejections.

To think the 2021 law did not have a negative effect on at least some voters is "conscientious stupidity," said Jackson, who helped create Faith Works, a group organized by Black church leaders in response to the election law.

Turnout does not tell the whole story, said Xakota Espinoza, spokesperson for the Georgia voting rights group Fair Fight. Long lines, voter challenges, limited early voting and fewer drop boxes are barriers, she said.

"So it's not just this cut and dry, like, 'Oh, well, were they able to vote or not?'" she said. "It's what are voters having to sacrifice? Will they be forced to choose two hours of wages or staying in lines to vote?"

Andrea Young, executive director of ACLU Georgia, said she believes that had it not been for the additional restrictions from the new voting law, Warnock might have won enough votes in the November election to avoid a runoff.

Democratic state Rep. James Beverly, the minority leader in the Georgia House of Representatives, said he wants lawmakers to consider changes to the state's runoff elections. One could be lowering the winning threshold to avoid a runoff to 45% rather than 50% plus one.

He also wants to see a mechanism in place that would compel election officials to open more polling locations if wait times become excessive. Any election law changes ultimately will be up to Republicans, who have majorities in both houses of the Legislature and control the governor's office.

"While we had record turnout, how many people did we lose because they walked away and said, 'I don't want to stand in line?'" Beverly said.

He gives credit to voters and voting rights groups for a largely trouble-free election period.

"People turned out in spite of SB202," he said, "not because of SB202."

EXPLAINER: What's at stake in Turkey's new Syria escalation

By BASSEM MROUE and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — After weeks of deadly Turkish airstrikes in northern Syria, Kurdish forces and international players are trying to gauge whether Ankara's threats of a ground invasion are serious.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has repeatedly warned of a new land incursion to drive Kurdish groups away from the Turkish-Syrian border, following a deadly Nov. 13 bombing in Istanbul. Turkish authorities blamed the attack on the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, and on the Syria-based People's Protection Units, or YPG. Both have denied involvement.

On Nov. 20, Ankara launched a barrage of airstrikes, killing dozens, including civilians as well as Kurdish fighters and Syrian government troops. Human Rights Watch has warned that the strikes are exacerbating

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a humanitarian crisis by disrupting power, fuel and aid.

In the most recent development, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin flew to Turkey this week for talks on the situation in Syria.

Here's a look at what various foreign powers and groups embroiled in the Syria conflict stand to gain or lose:

WHAT TURKEY WANTS

Turkey sees the Kurdish forces along its border with Syria as a threat and has launched three major military incursions since 2016, taking control of large swaths of territory.

Erdogan hopes to relocate many of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey to northern Syria and has begun building housing units there. The plan could address growing anti-refugee sentiment in Turkey and bolster Erdogan's support ahead of next year's elections, while diluting historically Kurdish-majority areas by resettling non-Kurdish Syrian refugees there.

Erdogan has also touted plans to create a 30-kilometer (19-mile) security corridor in areas currently under Kurdish control. A planned Turkish invasion earlier this year was halted amid opposition by the U.S. and Russia.

THE KURDISH RESPONSE

Kurdish groups are pressing the U.S. and Russia, both of which have military posts in northern Syria, to once again prevent Turkey from carrying out its threats.

The Kurds are worried that West will stand aside this time to appease Ankara in exchange for approval of Sweden and Finland joining NATO.

"This silence toward Turkey's brutality will encourage Turkey to carry out a ground operation," said Badran Jia Kurd, deputy co-chair of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria.

Kurdish groups, which fought against the Islamic State group alongside a U.S.-led coalition and now guard thousands of captured IS fighters and family members, warn that a Turkish escalation would threaten efforts to stamp out the extremist group.

In recent weeks, officials from the U.S. and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said they had stopped or scaled back joint patrols against IS because of the airstrikes, although patrols have since resumed.

THE ROLE OF THE SYRIAN INSURGENTS

The so-called Syrian National Army, a coalition of Turkey-backed Syrian opposition groups with tens of thousands of fighters, would likely provide foot soldiers for any future ground offensive. In previous incursions, including the 2018 offensive on the town of Afrin, the SNA was accused of committing atrocities against Kurds and displacing tens of thousands from their homes.

Several officials from the SNA did not respond to calls and text messages by The Associated Press. One official who answered said they were ordered by Turkish authorities not to speak about plans for a new incursion.

THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT'S STANCE?

The Syrian government has opposed past Turkish incursions but also sees the SDF as a secessionist force and a Trojan horse for the U.S., which has imposed paralyzing sanctions on the government of Bashar Assad.

Damascus and Ankara have recently been moving to improve relations after 11 years of tension triggered by Turkey's backing of opposition fighters in Syria's civil war. Damascus has kept relatively quiet about the killing of Syrian soldiers in the recent Turkish strikes.

WILL THE UNITED STATES GET INVOLVED?

The United States maintains a small military presence in northern Syria, where its strong backing of the SDF has infuriated Turkey.

However, the U.S. at first said little publicly about the Turkish airstrikes, speaking more forcefully only after they hit dangerously close to U.S. troops and led to anti-IS patrols being temporarily halted. U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin last week voiced "strong opposition" to a new offensive.

Asked if the U.S. had any assurances for Kurds worried that the U.S. might abandon them to coax a NATO deal out of Turkey, a senior U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity said only that there

had been no changes to U.S. policy in the region.

WILL RUSSIA BROKER A DEAL?

Russia is the Syrian government's closest ally. Its involvement in Syria's conflict helped turn the tide in favor of Assad.

Although Turkey and Russia support rival sides in the conflict, the two have coordinated closely in Syria's north. In recent months, Russia has pushed for a reconciliation between Damascus and Ankara.

Moscow has voiced concerns over Turkey's recent military actions in northern Syria and has attempted to broker a deal. According to Lebanon-based pan-Arab Al-Mayadeen TV, the chief of Russian forces in Syria, Lt. Gen. Alexander Chaiko, recently suggested to SDF commander Mazloum Abdi that Syrian government forces should deploy in a security strip along the border with Turkey to avoid a Turkish incursion.

IRAN'S INTERESTS

Iran, a key ally of the Assad government, strongly opposed Turkish plans for a land offensive earlier this year but hasn't commented publicly on the possible new incursion.

Tehran also has a sizable Kurdish minority and has battled a low-level separatist insurgency for decades. Iran has seen sustained protests and a deadly crackdown by security forces since the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, a Kurdish woman, in the custody of the country's morality police in mid- September.

Iran has blamed much of the unrest on Kurdish opposition groups exiled in neighboring Iraq, charges those groups deny, and has carried out strikes against them. Another Turkish incursion into Syria could provide a model for a wider response if the unrest in Iran's Kurdistan continues to escalate.

Afghan academic rebuilds life in Italy, dreams of returning

By PAOLO SANTALUCIA Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Batool Haidari used to be a prominent professor of sexology at a Kabul university before the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. She taught mixed classes of male and female students, and helped patients struggling with gender identity issues.

Her husband owned a carpet factory, and together they did their best to provide a good education for their 18-year-old son and two daughters aged 13 and eight.

That comfortable life came to an abrupt halt on Aug. 15, 2021, when the former insurgents who adhere to a strict interpretation of Islam swept back into power following a costly two-decade U.S.-led campaign to remake the country.

Haidari, 37, was among the many women who fled the Taliban, fearing a return to the practices of their previous rule in the late 1990s, including largely barring girls and women from education and work. She reached Rome at the end of 2021, after a daring escape through Pakistan aided by Italian volunteers who arranged for her and her family to be hosted in the Italian capital's suburbs.

She is among thousands of Afghani women seeking to maintain an active social role in the countries that have taken them in. Haidari and her husband are studying Italian while being financially supported by various associations. She keeps in touch with feminist organizations back home and tries to maintain contact with some of her patients via the internet.

"Being alive is already a form of resistance," she said, adding that she wants her children to contribute to the future of Afghanistan, where she is sure her family will return one day.

"When my son passed the exam to access the faculty of Medicine at a university in Rome, for me it was good news," she said, during a commute to her Italian classes in central Rome. "Because if I came to a European country, it was mainly for the future of my children."

After they overran Afghanistan in 2021, the Taliban initially promised to respect women's and minorities' rights. Instead, they gradually imposed a ban on girls' education beyond sixth grade, kept women away from most fields of employment, and forced them to wear head-to-toe clothing in public.

Haidari tried to stay in Kabul with her family after the Taliban took over. She became an outspoken activist of the Afghanistan Women's Political Participation Network to fight for women's education, work and political involvement.

But the risks soon became too high. Haidari was not only an educated female activist, but also a mem-

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ber of the Hazara ethnic group.

The Hazara minority has been a frequent target of violence since the Taliban takeover. Most are Shiite Muslims, despised and targeted by Sunni militants like the Islamic State group, and discriminated against by many in the Sunni majority country.

Haidari received death threats for her research on sexual abuse of children in Afghan society, and in December 2021 decided to leave. She crossed to Pakistan with her family, and an Italian journalist, Maria Grazia Mazzola, helped her get on a plane from Pakistan to Italy.

"We heard that Taliban were shooting and searching houses very close to their hiding place," Mazzola said. "We were frantically in touch with the Italian embassy in Pakistan, with confidential contacts in Afghanistan, and we decided together that they had to change their hiding place every three days."

The Italian government evacuated more than 5,000 Afghans on military planes right after the Taliban takeover. Later, a network of Italian feminists, Catholic and Evangelical Churches and volunteers like Mazzola kept organizing humanitarian corridors and set up hospitality in Italy throughout the following year.

Mazzola, who works for Italian public RAI TV and is an expert on Islamic fundamentalism, created a network of associations to host 70 Afghans, mostly Hazara women activists and their families.

Now that the refugees are in Italy and gradually getting asylum, Mazzola said, the priority is to secure for them official recognition of their university degrees or other qualifications that will help them find dignified employment.

"A woman like Batool (Haidari) cannot work as a cleaner in a school. It would be a waste for our society too. She is a psychologist and deserves to continue working as such," Mazzola said.

Haidari agreed. While she said she misses the streets and alleys of Kabul, and the easy life she used to have, "most of all I miss the fact that in Afghanistan I was a much more useful person."

New Japan law aims at Unification Church fundraising abuses

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's parliament on Saturday enacted a law to restrict malicious donation solicitations by religious and other groups, which mainly targets the Unification Church, whose fundraising tactics and cozy ties with the governing party caused public outrage.

The South Korean-based religious group's decades-long ties with Japan's governing Liberal Democratic Party surfaced after the July assassination of former leader Shinzo Abe. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, whose support ratings tumbled, sought to calm public fury over his handling of the scandal and has replaced three Cabinet ministers — one over his church ties, another over a capital punishment gaffe and a third over political funding problems.

The new law, approved at this year's closing parliamentary session, allows believers, other donors and their families to seek the return of their money and prohibits religious groups and other organizations from soliciting funds by coercion, threats or linking donations to spiritual salvation.

Kishida, who has heard former adherents' experience, described their sufferings as "ghastly" and praised the law as a bipartisan effort to help the victims and their families.

The law's passage was one of Kishida's top priorities that also include Japan's new national security strategy and defense policy to achieve a substantial buildup of its military over the next five years.

Kishida, who earlier this week set five-year defense spending targets of 43 trillion yen (\$316 billion), said his government will need an extra 4 trillion yen (\$30 billion) annually. Of that, a quarter will have to be funded through tax increases, Kishida said.

On Saturday, Kishida said Japan needs to continue reinforcing military power beyond the next five years. He said a planned tax increase will be gradual from 2024 and that income tax won't be raised. He said he was against issuing government bonds to cover the defense increase.

"We must secure the source of funding to reinforce our defense power for our future," Kishida said. "To do so is our responsibility for the future generations."

A revised national security strategy, which is expected to be released later this month, would allow Japan

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to develop a preemptive strike capability and deploy long-range missiles. It marks a major and contentious shift away from Japan's self-defense-only policy adopted after its World War II defeat in 1945.

"Our ongoing project will involve a major change to our national security and finance policies," Kishida said.

The suspect who fatally shot Abe at an outdoor campaign rally in July told police he targeted the former prime minister because of his links to the Unification Church. A letter and social media postings attributed to the suspect said large donations by his mother to the church bankrupted his family and ruined his life.

A police investigation led to revelations of widespread ties between the church and members of the governing party over shared interests in anti-communist and conservative causes.

The case also shed light on the suffering of children of church followers, including some who say they were forced to join the church or were left in poverty or neglected by their parents' devotion. Many critics consider the church to be a cult because of financial and mental hardships experienced by followers and their families.

The Education Ministry, which is in charge of religious issues, formally started an investigation into the church. It could potentially lead to a court decision revoking the group's legal status, though the church can still continue its religious activity.

The Health and Welfare Ministry is separately investigating questionable adoptions involving hundreds of children among church followers.

Opposition lawmakers who proposed tougher measures have accused Kishida of being lax and slow because his party's coalition partner, Komeito, is backed by the Buddhist sect Soka Gakkai.

Some experts say the law lacks teeth, including donation limits, protection for children of church members and consideration for those believed to be brainwashed into joining the group and making large donations.

Kishida has said he has no links to the church and has pledged his party will cut all such ties.

The Unification Church, founded in South Korea in 1954 by Sun Myung Moon, obtained legal status as a religious organization in Japan in 1968 amid an anti-communist movement supported by Abe's grandfather, former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi.

Since the 1980s, the church has faced accusations of devious business and recruitment tactics, including brainwashing members into making huge donations to Moon, often ruining their finances and families.

The group has acknowledged cases of "excessive" donations but says the problem has since been mitigated for more than a decade and recently pledged further reforms.

Experts say Japanese followers are asked to pay for sins committed by their ancestors during Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula, and that the majority of the church's worldwide funding comes from Japan.

Biden called gay marriage 'inevitable' and soon it'll be law

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A decade ago, then-Vice President Joe Biden shocked the political world and preempted his boss by suddenly declaring his support for gay marriage on national television. But not everyone was surprised.

A small group had attended a private fundraiser with Biden weeks earlier in Los Angeles, where he disclosed not only his approval but his firm conclusion about a positive future for same-sex marriage.

He predicted, "Things are changing so rapidly, it's going to become a political liability in the near term for someone to say, 'I oppose gay marriage.'"

"Mark my words. And my job — our job — is to keep this momentum rolling to the inevitable."

The day that Biden envisioned may have arrived. He plans on Tuesday to sign legislation, passed by bipartisan majorities in Congress, to protect gay unions — even if the Supreme Court should revisit its ruling supporting a nationwide right of same-sex couples to marry.

Biden's signature will burnish his legacy as a champion of equality at a time when the LGBTQ community is anxious to safeguard legal changes from a backlash on the right that has used incendiary rhetoric, particularly against transgender people.

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The politics were far different a decade ago, when gay rights activists were frustrated with President Barack Obama. He had made some changes, such as eliminating the "don't ask, don't tell" rule that prevented gay people from serving openly in the military, but stopped short of embracing marriage equality.

As Obama's vice president, Biden shared the same stance. So there was some tension in April 2012 when Biden attended the fundraiser at the Los Angeles home of a married gay couple and their children.

Chad Griffin, an activist who had also helped organize the event, decided to ask Biden about it.

"When you came in tonight, you met Michael and Sonny and their two beautiful kids," he said to Biden. "And I wonder if you can just sort of talk in a frank, honest way about your own personal views as it relates to marriage equality."

Biden responded, "All you got to do is look in the eyes of those kids. And no one can wonder, no one can wonder whether or not they are cared for and nurtured and loved and reinforced. And folks, what's happening is, everybody is beginning to see it."

Just over two weeks later, Biden was on NBC's "Meet the Press," and host David Gregory asked whether he supported gay marriage.

Biden said the issue came down to "will you be loyal to the person you love? And that's what people are finding out is what all marriages, at their root, are about, whether they're marriages of lesbians, or gay men, or heterosexuals."

Biden said the president, not him, "sets the policies." But he said gay couples should have "all the civil rights, all the civil liberties."

It was an unusually unscripted moment in carefully choreographed Washington.

For Biden, "all politics is personal," said Bruce Reed, the White House deputy chief of staff who also was chief of staff in Biden's vice presidential office. "And I think that's what prompted him to speak his mind."

Not everyone was pleased. Obama was left trailing a step behind his vice president, and three days later did an interview to disclose his own support for gay marriage. He said Biden had gotten "a little over his skis" but there were no hard feelings.

The following year, the Supreme Court ruled that the Defense of Marriage Act was unconstitutional, and Jim Obergefell proposed to his partner, John Arthur.

They married in Maryland, where it was legal, but their home state of Ohio would not recognize their union. Although Arthur died, their legal battle continued to the Supreme Court. Obergefell met Biden for the first time in 2015.

"I just remember walking up to him and he hugged me and the first words out of his mouth were condolences for the loss of my husband," he said.

The Supreme Court soon legalized gay marriage nationwide in a decision known as Obergefell v. Hodges.

The issue resurfaced in June when the court's conservative majority overturned Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion in 1973. In a concurring opinion, Justice Clarence Thomas wrote that the court "should reconsider" other precedents as well, including the Obergefell ruling.

Supporters believed they could rally enough Republican votes to sidestep a filibuster in the Senate and safeguard gay marriages. They were right.

Obergefell, however, is not experiencing a sense of satisfaction.

"We now know that rights that people counted on and expected are no longer safe," he said.

It's a common sentiment right now in the face of political attacks over LGBTQ issues.

Gov. Ron DeSantis, R-Fla., signed legislation limiting teachers' ability to talk about sexual orientation or gender identity in schools. In Texas, GOP Gov. Greg Abbott wants state child welfare investigators to consider gender-affirming care as a form of abuse.

Protesters, sometimes armed, have shown up at events where drag queens read to children. Five people were shot to death at a gay club in Colorado last month. The suspect has been charged with hate crimes.

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Biden has taken steps to safeguard rights for transgender people, such as reinstating anti-discrimination provisions eliminated by Donald Trump. He also ended the ban on transgender people serving in the military.

Sarah McBride, a transgender state senator from Biden's home state of Delaware, said it's a comfort "for so many of us, who feel frightened or vulnerable or alone, to know that the leader of this country, the leader of the free world, not only sees us but embraces us."

McBride worked for Biden's eldest son, Beau, during his campaigns for Delaware attorney general. Before Beau died from brain cancer in 2015, he helped pass Delaware laws that legalized gay marriage and banned discrimination over gender identity. McBride said the experience deepened the elder Biden's own commitment to these issues and "he's carrying on Beau's legacy."

As last month's midterm elections approached, the White House played host to Dylan Mulvaney, a Broadway performer who has chronicled her gender transition on TikTok, to talk about transgender issues with Biden.

Asked by Mulvaney how leaders can better advocate for transgender people, Biden responded that it was important to be "seen with people like you."

"People fear what they don't know. They fear what they don't know," he said. "And when people realize, individuals realize, 'Oh, this is what they're telling me to be frightened of, this is the problem.' I mean, people change their minds."

House advances giant Texas storm surge project in water bill

By JUAN A. LOZANO and MICHAEL PHILLIS Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Fourteen years after Hurricane Ike ripped through thousands of homes and businesses near Galveston, Texas — but mostly spared the region's oil refineries and chemical plants — the U.S. House of Representatives voted Thursday to authorize the most expensive project ever recommended by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to protect against the next raging storm.

Ike erased beachfront neighborhoods, causing \$30 billion in damage. But with so much of the nation's petrochemical industry in the Houston-Galveston corridor, it could have been even worse. That close call inspired marine science professor Bill Merrell to first propose a massive coastal barrier to protect against a direct hit.

Now, the National Defense Authorization Act includes authorizations for a \$34 billion plan that borrows from Merrell's idea.

"It was quite different than anything we had done in the United States and it took us a little while to come around to it," said Merrell of Texas A&M University at Galveston.

The House passed the \$858 billion defense bill by a vote of 350-80. It includes major projects to improve the nation's waterways and protect communities against floods made more severe by climate change.

Specifically, the vote advances the Water Resources Development Act of 2022. That lays out a sprawling set of policies for the Army Corps and authorizes projects that touch on navigation, improving the environment and protecting against storms. It typically passes every two years. It received strong, bipartisan support and now advances to the Senate.

The Texas coastal protection project far outstrips any of the 24 other projects greenlit by the bill. There is a \$6.3 billion plan to deepen vital shipping channels near New York City and a \$1.2 billion effort to raise homes and businesses on the central Louisiana coast.

"No matter what side of politics you are on, everyone is interested in having good water resources," said Sandra Knight, president of WaterWonks LLC.

THE IKE DIKE

Researchers at Rice University in Houston have estimated that a Category 4 storm with a 24-foot storm surge could damage storage tanks and release more than 90 million gallons of oil and hazardous substances.

The most prominent feature of the coastal barrier would be floodgates, including some 650 feet wide — roughly the equivalent of a 60-story building on its side — to prevent storm surge from entering Galveston Bay and plowing up the Houston Ship Channel. An 18-mile ring barrier system would also be built along

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the backside of Galveston Island to protect homes and businesses from storm surge. The plan took six years of study involving roughly 200 people.

There will also be beach and dune ecosystem restoration projects along the Texas coast. The Houston Audubon Society raised concerns the project would destroy some bird habitat and harm fish, shrimp and crabs populations in the Bay.

NEXT STEPS

The legislation authorizes the construction of the project, but funding will remain a challenge — money must still be allocated. The huge cost burden falls heaviest on the federal government, but local and state entities also will have to pitch in billions. Construction could take two decades.

“It significantly reduces the risk of that catastrophic storm surge event that is not recoverable,” said Mike Braden, chief of the Army Corps Galveston District’s mega projects division.

The bill also includes a range of policy measures. When future hurricanes hit for example, coastal protections can be rebuilt with climate change in mind. Designers will be able to think about how much seas will rise when they draw up plans.

“The future for a lot of these communities is not going to look like the past,” said Jimmy Hague, senior water policy advisor at the Nature Conservancy.

The water resources bill continues a push towards wetlands and other flood solutions that use nature to absorb water instead of concrete walls to keep it at bay. On the Mississippi River below St. Louis, for example, a new program will help restore ecosystems and create a mix of flood control projects. There are also provisions for studying long-term drought.

There are measures to improve outreach with tribes and make it easier to complete work in poorer, historically disadvantaged communities.

It can take a long time to study projects, move them through Congress and find funding. Merrell, who will turn 80 in February, said he hopes to see some of the Texas project be constructed but he doesn’t think he’ll be around to see it finished.

“I just hope the end product comes and it protects my children and grandchildren and all the other citizens of this area,” Merrell said.

Today in History: December 11, King Edward VIII abdicates

By The Associated Press

Today is Sunday, Dec. 11, the 345th day of 2022. There are 20 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Dec. 11, 1936, Britain’s King Edward VIII abdicated the throne so he could marry American divorcee Wallis Warfield Simpson; his brother, Prince Albert, became King George VI.

In 1816, Indiana became the 19th state.

In 1941, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States; the U.S. responded in kind.

In 1946, the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was established.

In 1972, Apollo 17’s lunar module landed on the moon with astronauts Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt aboard; they became the last two men to date to step onto the lunar surface.

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter signed legislation creating a \$1.6 billion environmental “superfund” to pay for cleaning up chemical spills and toxic waste dumps. “Magnum P.I.,” starring Tom Selleck, premiered on CBS.

In 1997, more than 150 countries agreed at a global warming conference in Kyoto, Japan, to control the Earth’s greenhouse gases.

In 1998, majority Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee pushed through three articles of impeachment against President Bill Clinton, over Democratic objections.

In 2001, in the first criminal indictment stemming from 9/11, federal prosecutors charged Zacarias Moussaoui (zak-uh-REE’-uhs moo-SOW’-ee), a French citizen of Moroccan descent, with conspiring to murder thousands in the suicide hijackings. (Moussaoui pleaded guilty to conspiracy in 2005 and was sentenced

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to life in prison.)

In 2002, a congressional report found that intelligence agencies that were supposed to protect Americans from the Sept. 11 hijackers failed to do so because they were poorly organized, poorly equipped and slow to pursue clues that might have prevented the attacks.

In 2008, former Nasdaq chairman Bernie Madoff was arrested, accused of running a multibillion-dollar Ponzi scheme that wiped out the life savings of thousands of people and wrecked charities. (Madoff died in April 2021 while serving a 150-year federal prison sentence.)

In 2018, a Virginia jury called for a sentence of life in prison plus 419 years for the man who killed a woman when he rammed his car into counterprotesters at a white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. (James Alex Fields Jr. received that sentence in July, 2019.)

In 2020, the Supreme Court rejected a lawsuit backed by President Donald Trump to overturn Joe Biden's election victory, ending a desperate attempt to get legal issues that were rejected by state and federal judges before the nation's highest court. The Food and Drug Administration authorized an emergency rollout of the nation's first COVID-19 vaccine, developed by Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech; the decision came as the U.S. recorded a new daily high in the number of coronavirus deaths. (Hours before the FDA action, according to two administration officials, a high-ranking White House official told the FDA's chief that he could face firing if the vaccine was not cleared by day's end.)

Ten years ago: The Michigan Legislature gave final approval to a pair of right-to-work bills that were quickly signed by Republican Gov. Rick Snyder amid angry protests by union members and their supporters. Former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue (TAG'-lee-uh-boo) overturned the suspensions of four New Orleans Saints players in the league's bounty investigation but said three of the players had engaged in conduct detrimental to the league.

Five years ago: A Bangladeshi immigrant set off a crude pipe bomb in a New York City subway passageway in a botched suicide bombing; it did not fully detonate and Akayed Ullah was the only one seriously hurt. (Ullah was convicted on terrorism charges in federal court and sentenced to life in prison.) A Southern California wildfire exploded in size again, becoming the fifth largest in state history; officials handed out masks to those who stayed behind in an exclusive community where Oprah Winfrey and other stars had homes. Chef Mario Batali stepped away from his restaurant empire and his cooking show "The Chew" as he conceded that reports of sexual misconduct "match up" to his behavior. French President Emmanuel Macron awarded millions of dollars in grants to 18 climate scientists from the U.S. and elsewhere, allowing them to relocate to France for the remainder of Donald Trump's presidential term. The Pentagon said transgender recruits would be allowed to enlist in the military beginning Jan. 1; a ban ordered by Trump had suffered a series of legal setbacks.

One year ago: Anne Rice, author of best-selling gothic novels including "Interview With the Vampire," died at 80 due to complications from a stroke. Alabama's Bryce Young won the Heisman Trophy, beating out Michigan defensive end Aidan Hutchinson to give the Crimson Tide consecutive winners of college football's most famous individual award. Football star and TV celebrity Michael Strahan (STRAY'-han) was among the latest to ride into space aboard Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin, sharing the trip with Laura Shepard Churchley, daughter of Alan Shepard, who was America's first astronaut.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Rita Moreno is 91. Pop singer David Gates (Bread) is 82. Actor Donna Mills is 82. Former Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., is 81. Former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is 79. Singer Brenda Lee is 78. Actor Lynda Day George is 78. Music producer Tony Brown is 76. Actor Teri Garr is 75. Movie director Susan Seidelman is 71. Actor Bess Armstrong is 69. Singer Jermaine Jackson is 68. Rock musician Mike Mesaros (The Smithereens) is 65. Rock musician Nikki Sixx (Motley Crue) is 64. Rock musician Darryl Jones (The Rolling Stones) is 61. Actor Ben Browder is 60. Singer-musician Justin Currie (Del Amitri) is 58. Rock musician David Schools (Hard Working Americans, Gov't Mule, Widespread Panic) is 58. Actor Gary Dourdan (DOOR'-dan) is 56. Actor-comedian Mo'Nique is 55. Actor Max Martini is 53. Rapper-actor Yasiin Bey (formerly Mos Def) is 49. Actor Rider Strong is 43. Actor Xosha (ZOH'-shah) Roquemore is 38. Actor Karla Souza is 36. Actor Hailee Steinfeld is 26.