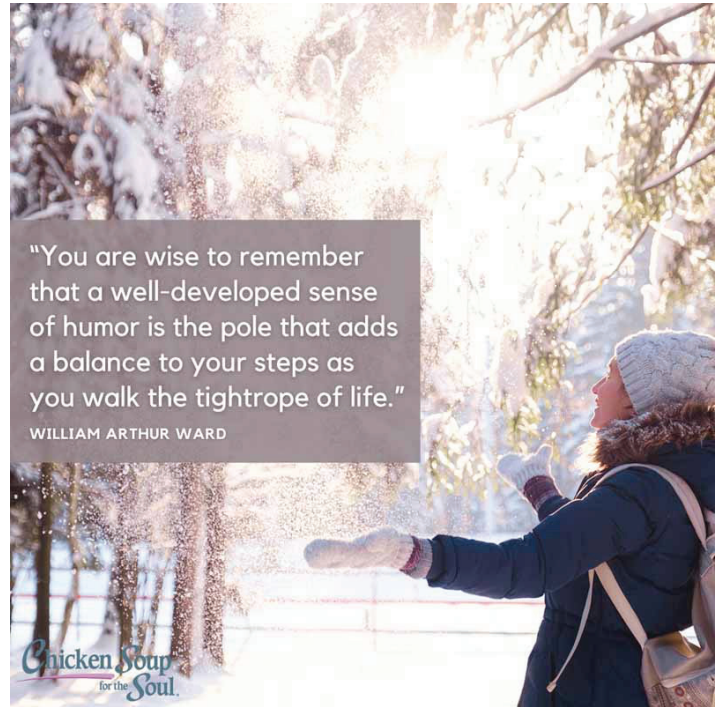


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Groton Community Calendar Sunday, Jan. 22

Open Gym: Grades JK-8; 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.,
Grades 6-12; 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with Milestones for
6th grade at sophomores, 9 a.m.; Annual Meeting;
Sunday School at 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Cof-
fee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.

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

Monday, Jan. 23:

Senior Menu: Spanish rice with hamburger, green
beans, Mandarin orange dessert, whole wheat
bread.

School Breakfast: Mini pancakes.

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

School Lunch: Oriental chicken, egg rolls.
Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community
Center, potluck at noon.

Basketball Doubleheader hosting Northwestern:
Girls JV at 4 p.m. followed by Boys JV, Girls Varsity
and Boys Varsity.

Middle School Wrestling Invitational at Ipswich,
6 p.m.

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

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

Tuesday, Jan. 24

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, buttermilk biscuit,
glazed carrots, apricots, cookie.

School Breakfast: Sausage and cheese egg cups.

School Lunch: Corn dogs, sweet potatoes.

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

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

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

CLOSED: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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NSU Women's Basketball

Northern State Records 1,000th Program Win in Victory Over Golden Bears

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State women's basketball team added to their storied tradition on Saturday night as they reached 1,000 all-time wins in program history with a 71-52 victory over Concordia-St. Paul. The Wolves carried the momentum of a top-25 upset into tonight's contest as they grabbed the lead early and never trailed the Golden Bears. With the win Northern State becomes the first women's basketball program among current NSIC members to achieve the milestone.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 71, CSP 52

Records: NSU 12-8 (7-7 NSIC), CSP 8-10 (5-9 NSIC)

Attendance: 2,085

HOW IT HAPPENED

With the teams trading baskets early in the game, Northern State seized momentum with 9-3 scoring run sparked by a jumper by Jordyn Hilgemann; the Wolves extended the lead to nine points (21-12) at the end of the period with a four straight points off a Kailee Oliverson jumper and a pair of free throws by Hilgemann

Northern increased the lead to as many as 16 points (35-19) late in the second quarter on another Oliverson jumper, and took a 14 point lead into the halftime break after a jumper by Laurie Rogers off a Rianna Fillipi assist with two seconds remaining

Concordia-St. Paul used a 9-2 scoring run in the in the opening minutes of the third quarter to cut the lead to eight points, however the Wolves maintained their composure as Alayna Benike and Hilgemann each knocked down a 3-pointer to push the lead back to double digits

Northern State closed the game strong shooting 50.0 percent from the field in the final ten minutes, and a 3-pointer by Rachel Garvey and a jumper by Halle Heinz gave NSU their largest lead of the game at 19 points (71-52) in the final minute of action

As a team Northern dished out 19 assists in the win (second most in a game this season), led by Benike with a career-high seven assists and Fillipi added six more

NSU collected a season-high 11 blocked shots in the contest, led by Rogers with six blocks on the night; Rogers notched her third game of the season with five or more blocks

The Wolves shot 11-12 (91.7%) from the free throw line, with Oliverson (4-4), Rogers (4-4), and Hilgemann (2-2) each perfect from the charity stripe on the night

With the win Northern State improved to 9-1 when leading at the halftime break and 6-0 when scoring 70 or more points

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Kailee Oliverson: 22 points, 8 rebounds, 2 blocks

Jordyn Hilgemann: 15 points, 5 rebounds, 2 assists, 2 blocks

Laurie Rogers: 14 points, 7 rebounds, 2 assists, 6 blocks

UP NEXT

The Northern State women's basketball team closes out cross-division play next weekend with visits to Winona State and Upper Iowa. The Wolves will battle the Warriors at 7:30 p.m. on Friday evening and will wrap up the weekend with a 5:30 p.m. tip-off on Saturday against the Peacocks.

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GHS Wrestling

Five Place at Kingsbury Invitational

Five Groton Area wrestlers placed at the Kingsbury County Invitational Wrestling Tournament held Saturday in Arlington.

Christian Ehresmann placed second at 138 pounds, Liza Krueger placed second at the 106 pound girls division, Holly Frost placed fourth at the 142 pound girls division, Walker Zoellner placed fifth at 113 pounds and Cole Bisbee placed sixth at 170 pounds.

106-G: Liza Krueger (2-1) placed 2nd.

Round 1 - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 2-1 won by fall over Mya Yonker (Hamlin) 2-3 (Fall 3:58)

Round 2 - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 2-1 won by fall over Trinity Kurtenbach (Sioux Valley) 0-4 (Fall 0:36)

Round 3 - Bailey Tekrony (Brookings) 3-0 won by decision over Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 2-1 (Dec 4-2)

113: Walker Zoellner (14-12) placed 5th and scored 7.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 14-12 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Cody Zell (Kingsbury County) 14-12 won by decision over Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 14-12 (Dec 13-7)

Cons. Round 2 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 14-12 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Round 3 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 14-12 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Semi - Jacob Milliron (Brookings) 5-3 won by fall over Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 14-12 (Fall 1:39)

5th Place Match - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 14-12 won by fall over Dubhlainn Vermeulen (Sioux Valley) 9-18 (Fall 2:40)

126: Kellen Antonson (4-10) scored 4.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Kellen Antonson (Groton Area) 4-10 won by fall over Xavier Kadlec (Ipswich/Leola/Bowdle) 0-12 (Fall 1:00)

Quarterfinal - Carter Schulte (Faulkton Area) 14-11 won by fall over Kellen Antonson (Groton Area) 4-10 (Fall 1:23)

Cons. Round 2 - Zane Miller (Sioux Valley) 9-18 won by fall over Kellen Antonson (Groton Area) 4-10 (Fall 4:13)

132: Tristan McGannon (2-8).

Champ. Round 1 - Tristan McGannon (Groton Area) 2-8 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Kaleb Johnson (Kingsbury County) 9-12 won by fall over Tristan McGannon (Groton Area) 2-8 (Fall 0:39)

Cons. Round 2 - Tristan McGannon (Groton Area) 2-8 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Round 3 - Vanden Virchow (Sioux Valley) 6-10 won by fall over Tristan McGannon (Groton Area) 2-8 (Fall 1:41)

138: Isaiah Scepaniak (1-10)

Champ. Round 1 - Clayton Dulany (Warner/Northwestern) 24-8 won by fall over Isaiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 1-10 (Fall 1:34)

Cons. Round 1 - Donovan Sandven (Kingsbury County) 1-4 won by fall over Isaiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 1-10 (Fall 4:19)

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138: Christian Ehresmann (17-2) placed 2nd and scored 21.5 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 17-2 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 17-2 won by tech fall over Brodyrck Gravdal (Canby) 2-2 (TF-1.5 4:07 (21-5))
Semifinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 17-2 won by fall over Braydon Oldenkamp (Lyman County) 17-10 (Fall 0:53)
1st Place Match - Lane Fink (Canby) 25-8 won by decision over Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 17-2 (Dec 6-1)

142-G: Holly Frost (0-3) placed 4th.

Round 1 - Kyla Logan (Doland) 2-1 won by tech fall over Holly Frost (Groton Area) 0-3 (TF-1.5 2:00 (18-2))
Round 2 - Saige Hinricher (Brookings) 1-2 won by fall over Holly Frost (Groton Area) 0-3 (Fall 0:42)
Round 3 - Summer Guthmiller (Sioux Valley) 3-0 won by fall over Holly Frost (Groton Area) 0-3 (Fall 0:38)

145: Nick Morris (3-7) scored 7.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Nick Morris (Groton Area) 3-7 won by fall over Levi Simonsen (Viborg-Hurley) 7-11 (Fall 3:10)
Quarterfinal - Lincoln Fink (Canby) 17-11 won by fall over Nick Morris (Groton Area) 3-7 (Fall 0:44)
Cons. Round 2 - Nick Morris (Groton Area) 3-7 won by forfeit over Forfeit Forfeit (Hamlin) 20-8 (For.)
Cons. Round 3 - Spencer Christie (Brookings) 11-12 won by decision over Nick Morris (Groton Area) 3-7 (Dec 7-4)

152: Easten Ekern (4-11).

Champ. Round 1 - Maxx Holm (Viborg-Hurley) 6-18 won by fall over Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 4-11 (Fall 1:23)
Cons. Round 1 - Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 4-11 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 2 - Collin Dean (Redfield Area) 14-15 won by fall over Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 4-11 (Fall 0:34)

170: Cole Bisbee (12-9) placed 6th and scored 13.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 12-9 won by forfeit over Forfeit Forfeit (Sioux Valley) 3-14 (For.)
Quarterfinal - Alex Pudwill (Warner/Northwestern) 21-10 won by decision over Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 12-9 (Dec 3-2)
Cons. Round 2 - Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 12-9 won by fall over Deion Harris (Kingsbury County) 3-8 (Fall 2:32)
Cons. Round 3 - Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 12-9 won by fall over Breyten Johnson (Kingsbury County) 10-10 (Fall 4:26)
Cons. Semi - Lane Knutson (Sioux Falls Washington) 24-9 won by fall over Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 12-9 (Fall 1:41)
5th Place Match - Alex Pudwill (Warner/Northwestern) 21-10 won by decision over Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 12-9 (Dec 5-3)

220: Gavin Englund (3-10).

Champ. Round 1 - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 3-10 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Abraham Myers (Sioux Falls Washington) 28-2 won by fall over Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 3-10 (Fall 1:52)
Cons. Round 2 - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 3-10 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 3 - Carson Leonhardt (Faulkton Area) 13-12 won by fall over Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 3-10 (Fall 2:40)

GHS Girls Basketball

Lady Tigers post triple win over Great Plains Lutheran

The Groton Area Tigers girls basketball teams posted a triple win over Great Plains Lutheran in games played in Watertown.

The Tigers led at the quarter breaks in the varsity game at 11-8, 21-12 and 36-18 en route to a 45-29 win. Sydney Leicht led the Tigers with 13 points, five rebounds, one assist and three steals. Brooke Gengerke had eight points, four rebounds, one assist and one steal. Jaedyn Penning had eight points, three rebounds, two assists and one steal. Jerica Locke had six points, four rebounds, one assist and five steals. Rylee Dunker had four points, three rebounds, one assist and one steal. Faith Traphagen had two points, three rebounds, one assist and one steal. Laila Roberts had one point and two rebounds. Aspen Johnson had five rebounds and three steals.

The Tigers made 13 of 39 two-pointers for 33 percent, three of 15 three-pointers for 20 percent, and 10 of 16 free throws for 63 percent, had 31 rebounds, 14 turnovers, 10 assists, 16 steals and 13 team fouls.

Halle Bauer, Olivia Holmen and Esta Cameron each had six points to lead the Panthers while Katherine Prah had five and Abby Kjenstad and Myra Lentz each had two points.

Groton won the junior varsity game, 39-19. Elizabeth Flihs led the Tigers with nine points followed by Faith Traphagen with seven, Rylee Dunker had six, Laila Roberts five, B rookie Hansen four and Kennedy Hansen and Jaedyn Penning each had two points. Emma Dornbush led the Panthers with eight points.

Groton Area won the C game, 41-7. Taryn Traphagen and Kella Tracy each had eight points, Talli Wright had seven, Mia Crank five, McKenna Tietz and Sydney Locke with four each, and Emily Clark and Ashlyn Warrington each had two points.

Special thanks to Shane and Laura Clark for providing transportation for Jeslyn and the equipment to the game and to Shane for calling all three games.

The C and JV game sponsor was Wyane Wright. The varsity game livestream was 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.

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NSU Men's Basketball

Reede and Masten Team up in Saturday Win for Northern State

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State University men's basketball team completed their weekend sweep on Saturday, defeating Concordia-St. Paul 75-67 from Wachs Arena. The Golden Bears stormed back in the second; however, the Wolves held off the CSP attack and finished the game shooting 42.9% from the floor and 40.6% from the 3-point line.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 75, CSP 67

Records: NSU 15-5 (11-3 NSIC), CSP 4-16 (2-12 NSIC)

Attendance: 2323

HOW IT HAPPENED

- Northern tallied 46 points in the first and 29 in the second, knocking down a game high 13 made 3-pointers
- The scored 26 points in the paint and 11 points off 11 forced turnovers
- They were efficient with the ball, giving up just six turnovers in the win, and tallied four steals on defense
- The Wolves tallied 35 rebounds, as well as a game high 16 assists and three blocks
- Augustin Reede led three in double figures with 25 points, knocking down 7-of-13 from beyond the arc
- Jacksen Moni pulled down a team leading 12 rebounds, notching a career high in the process

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Augustin Reede: 25 points, 53.8 3-point field goal%, 4 rebounds, 2 steals
- Sam Masten: 23 points, 72.7 field goal%, 5 rebounds, 5 assists, 2 steals
- Jordan Belka: 16 points, 4 rebounds, 2 steals

UP NEXT

The Wolves hit the road next Friday and Saturday at Winona State and Upper Iowa. Tip-off times are set for 5:30 p.m. on Friday against the Warriors and 3:30 p.m. on Saturday versus the Peacocks. Northern will then host St. Cloud State and Minnesota Duluth for the annual I Hate Winter weekend to open February. Full I Hate Winter details can be found at nsuwolves.com/IHW Visit nsuwolves.com/gameday for full game day promotions and information.

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NSU Wrestling

No. 20 Wolves Leave Kearney on Top, Going 3-0 from Midwest Duals

Aberdeen, S.D. – The No. 20 Northern State University wrestling team went 2-0 from the Midwest Duals with wins over No. 3 Nebraska Kearney, No. 17 Fort Hays State, and (RV) Central Missouri. In total, the Wolves tallied 12 bonus point match victories in the three dual wins. Northern State and No. 8 Adams State were the lone teams to go 3-0 from Kearney.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 22, UNK 20

Final Score: NSU 40, FHSU 0

Final Score: NSU 26, UCM 15

NSU Record: 7-3

HOW IT HAPPENED vs. UNK

- Landen Fischer opened the dual for the Wolves with a victory by fall over Bishop Murray at 3:33 in the second period
- The Lopers took the following two weights by decision and tied the score at 6-all
- No. 7 Wyatt Turnquist kick started the Wolves response, notching a 6-point victory by fall of John Burger at 6:46
- Devin Bahr added a 9-1 major decision win over Teontae Wilson in the 157-pound bought, followed by a hard fought sudden victory win by Chase Bloomquist
- The Wolves 165-pound defeated Briar Reisz with a score of 8-6, giving the Wolves a 19-6 lead
- Kearney posted some tough competition in the final four weights with three ranked wrestlers in action, scoring a combined 14 points at 174, 184, and 285 pounds
- No. 3 Cole Huss made the difference for the Wolves, notching a 6-2 decision win over Jackson Kinsella
- The win over the Lopers is the first for Northern State in program history after three losses in 1997, 2010, and 2014

MATCH RESULTS

	Match Summary	UNK	NSU
125	Landen Fischer (Northern State) over Bishop Murray (Nebraska-Kearney) Fall 3:33	0	6.0
133	Drew Arnold (Nebraska-Kearney) over Teagan Block (Northern State) Dec 6-0	3.0	0
141	#5 Nick James (Nebraska-Kearney) over Kolton Roth (Northern State) Dec 7-2	3.0	0
149	#7 Wyatt Turnquist (Northern State) over John Burger (Nebraska-Kearney) Fall 6:46	0	6.0
157	Devin Bahr (Northern State) over Teontae Wilson (Nebraska-Kearney) Maj 9-1	0	4.0
165	Chase Bloomquist (Northern State) over Briar Reisz (Nebraska-Kearney) SV-1 8-6	0	3.0
174	#3 Austin Eldredge (Nebraska-Kearney) over Kelby Hawkins (Northern State) TF 16-0	5.0	0
184	#1 Billy Higgins (Nebraska-Kearney) over Sam Kruger (Northern State) Maj 15-3	4.0	0
197	#3 Cole Huss (Northern State) over Jackson Kinsella (Nebraska-Kearney) Dec 6-2	0	3.0
285	#1 Lee Herrington (Nebraska-Kearney) over Nathan Schauer (Northern State) TF 22-7	5.0	0
	Dual Meet Score	20.0	22.0

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HOW IT HAPPENED vs. FHSU

- Northern State shut out Fort Hays winning all nine wrestled weights, including six bonus point wins
- After a forfeit at 125, Teagan Block kicked off the major decision victory over Corbin White, 11-0
- The major decisions rolled on for NSU as Kolton Roth defeated Jacob Mitchell 11-3 and No. 7 Wyatt Turnquist downed Drew Burgoon 12-0
- Devin Bahr wrestled to a 9-4 decision win over Cody Hicks and the Wolves were out to a 21-0 lead through the first five weights
- Chase Bloomquist added the final major decision of the dual for NSU, notching a 10-2 victory over Blaise Ronnau
- The highlighted of the duals for the Wolves came at 174-pounds, with a victory by fall by Kelby Hawkins at 1:29 in the first over Juan Urbina
- Sam Kruger bounced back from the morning session and his match up with the top ranked wrestler in the country, defeating Bryce Westmoreland in a 6-1 decision
- In the most high profile match-up of the dual, No. 3 Cole Huss battled to a 2-1 sudden victory win over No. 4 Tereus Henry
- Nathan Schauer closed out the dual for the Wolves, adding a 5-4 decision win over Anthony Cladwell

MATCH RESULTS

	Match Summary	NSU	FHSU
125	Landen Fischer (Northern State) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf	6.0	0
133	Teagan Block (Northern State) over Corbin White (Fort Hays State) Maj 10-0	4.0	0
141	Kolton Roth (Northern State) over Jacob Mitchell (Fort Hays State) Maj 11-3	4.0	0
	#7 Wyatt Turnquist (Northern State) over Drew Burgoon (Fort Hays State)		
149	Maj 12-0	4.0	0
157	Devin Bahr (Northern State) over Cody Hicks (Fort Hays State) Dec 9-4	3.0	0
	Chase Bloomquist (Northern State) over Blaise Ronnau (Fort Hays State)		
165	Maj 10-2	4.0	0
	Kelby Hawkins (Northern State) over Juan Urbina (Fort Hays State) Fall		
174	1:29	6.0	0
	Sam Kruger (Northern State) over Bryce Westmoreland (Fort Hays State)		
184	Dec 6-1	3.0	0
	#3 Cole Huss (Northern State) over #4 Tereus Henry (Fort Hays State) SV-1		
197	2-1	3.0	0
	Nathan Schauer (Northern State) over Anthony Caldwell (Fort Hays State)		
285	Dec 5-4	3.0	0
	Dual Meet Score	40.0	0.0

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HOW IT HAPPENED vs. UCM

- Robert Coyle III tallied the first wrestled win for the Wolves against the Mules, defeating Kaden Stanley ball fall at 3:28 in the second
- No. 7 Wyatt Turnquist went back-to-back with Coyle III, adding a win by fall of Charlie Getz at 1:53 in the match
- Northern led 18-3 and Central Missouri chipped away with a sudden victory win at 157 pounds
- Chase Bloomquist got the Wolves back on track, notching an 11-2 major decision over Brayden Talley
- The two teams traded wins at 174 and 184 pounds, as Sam Kruger recorded a 10-2 major decision win over Zachary Hazen
- The Wolves led 26-9 and had sealed the match victory, despite two in the final weights of competition

MATCH RESULTS

	Match Summary	UCM	NSU
125	Landen Fischer (Northern State) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf	0	6.0
133	Tommy Frezza (Central Missouri) over Teagan Block (Northern State) Dec 5-3	3.0	0
141	Robert Coyle III (Northern State) over Kaden Stanley (Central Missouri) Fall 3:28	0	6.0
149	#7 Wyatt Turnquist (Northern State) over Charlie Getz (Central Missouri) Fall 1:53	0	6.0
157	Nolan Saale (Central Missouri) over Izaak Hunsley (Northern State) SV-1 3-1	3.0	0
165	Chase Bloomquist (Northern State) over Brayden Talley (Central Missouri) Maj 11-2	0	4.0
174	Austin Morgan (Central Missouri) over Kelby Hawkins (Northern State) Dec 9-8	3.0	0
184	Sam Kruger (Northern State) over Zachary Hazen (Central Missouri) Maj 10-2	0	4.0
197	Trent Strong (Central Missouri) over Marshall VanTassel (Northern State) Dec 8-6	3.0	0
285	Matthias Ervin (Central Missouri) over Nathan Schauer (Northern State) Dec 8-1	3.0	0
	Dual Meet Score	15.0	26.0

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NORTHERN STATE EXTRA MATCHES

125 Hector Serratos (Nebraska-Kearney Reserve) over Brenden Salfrank (Northern State Reserve) Maj 14-4
125 Brenden Salfrank (Northern State Reserve) over Adam Concepcion (Adams State Reserve) Fall 2:50
141 Robert Coyle III (Northern State Reserve) over Cael Figueroa (Adams State Reserve) Maj 12-3
157 Travis Vialpando (Adams State Reserve) over Izaak Hunsley (Northern State Reserve) Dec 7-4
157 Brody Arrants (Nebraska-Kearney Reserve) over Izaak Hunsley (Northern State Reserve) Fall 6:47
165 Nico Carrasco (Adams State Reserve) over Spencer Roth (Northern State Reserve) Dec 13-8
165 Spencer Roth (Northern State Reserve) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
174 Tyler Voorhees (Northern State Reserve) over Cody Lewis (Adams State Reserve) TF 16-1
174 Gavyn Brauer (Nebraska-Kearney Reserve) over Tyler Voorhees (Northern State Reserve) Fall 1:11
184 Tyson Lien (Northern State Reserve) over Diego Duarte (Adams State Reserve) Fall 2:19
184 Dylan Vodicka (Nebraska-Kearney Reserve) over Tyson Lien (Northern State Reserve) TF 16-0
197 Jud Kuchera (Nebraska-Kearney Reserve) over Marshall VanTassel (Northern State Reserve) Fall 3:25
197 Marshall Vantassel (Northern State) over David Leck (Colorado School of Mines) Fall 2:41
197 Marshall VanTassel (Northern State Reserve) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf
285 George Bolling (Northern State Reserve) over Abraham Garcia (Adams State Reserve) Fall 5:35
285 Crew Howard (Nebraska-Kearney Reserve) over George Bolling (Northern State Reserve) Fall 4:21

UP NEXT

Northern State will be back in action with three NSIC duals over the next two weeks from Wachs Arena. The Wolves will face (RV) Minnesota State at 7 p.m. on January 27, No. 5 St. Cloud State at 2 p.m. on January 28, and MSU Moorhead at 7 p.m. on February 2.

GDILIVE.COM

Double Header with Northwestern Monday, Jan. 23, 2023

JV girls starts at 4 p.m. followed by JV Boys
JV games sponsored by Dorene and Gordon Nelson

followed by Varsity Games

Sponsored by

Bary Keith at Harr Motors

Bierman Farm Service

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Dacotah Bank

Groton Chamber of Commerce

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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

Community is invited to **EMILY'S HOPE PRESENTATION**



with

*Angela
Kennecke*

SPONSORED BY GROTON RESCUE

JAN | WED | 2023
25
1PM

GROTON AREA H.S. ARENA

ANGELA KENNECKE IS TURNING HER HEARTBREAK INTO ACTION BY TRAVELING THE COUNTRY TO BRING EMILY'S STORY TO COMMUNITIES, CONFERENCES AND SCHOOLS.

"MY NUMBER ONE REASON FOR TALKING ABOUT EMILY'S DEATH IS TO ERASE THE STIGMA SURROUNDING ADDICTION, ESPECIALLY THE USE OF HEROIN OR OPIOIDS OF ANY KIND.



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

She made a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head."

1 SAMUEL 1:11 

Detail of "Les Morphinomanes" by Paul-Albert Besnard (1887)

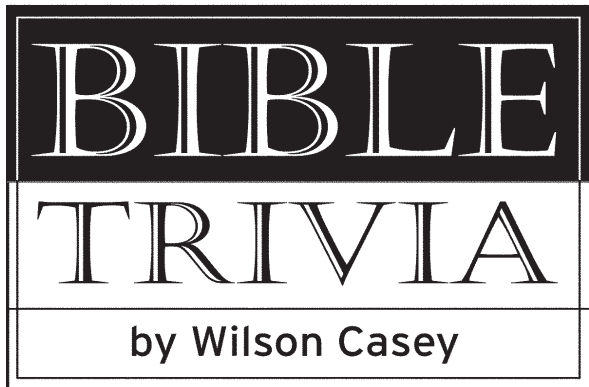


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KIRK
CLOUTIER
PROLOGUE
TO THE GREAT
CRISIS
IN
SPRING





1. Is the book of Nahum (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. From Leviticus 19:25, the fruit of a newly planted tree must not be eaten until which year? *2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th*

3. What was Bathsheba doing on the roof when David first saw her? *Bathing, Praying, Singing, Hiding*

4. Samson's strength was correlated with what part of his body? *Heart, Chest, Hair, Legs*

5. Job suffered from what physical affliction? *Deafness, Boils, Blindness, Coughs*

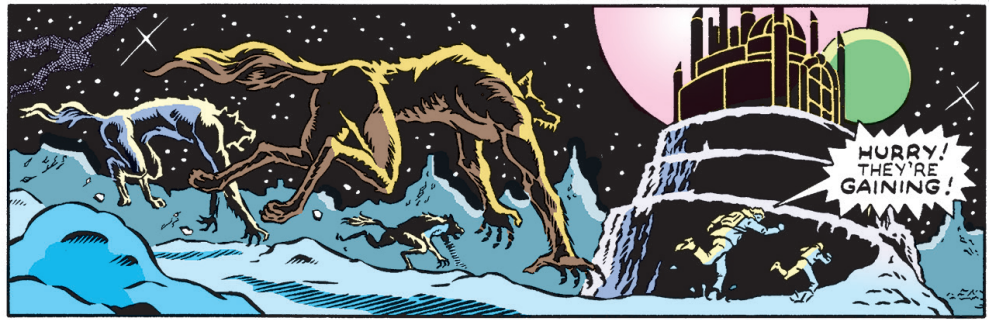
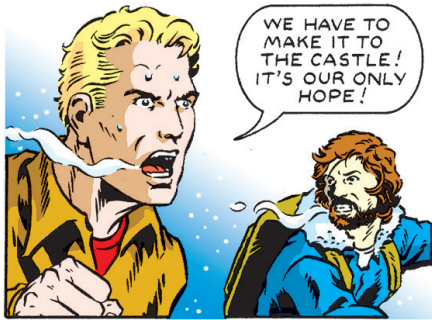
6. Who was the mate of Esther? *Jehu, Darius, Xerxes, Abner*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) 5th, 3) Bathing, 4) Hair, 5) Boils, 6) Xerxes

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

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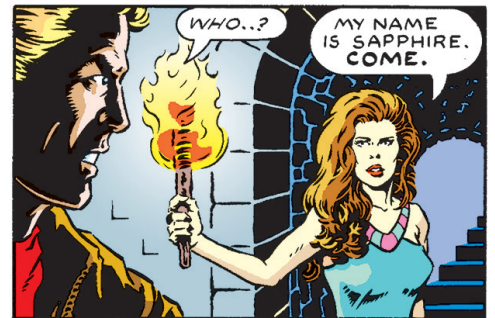
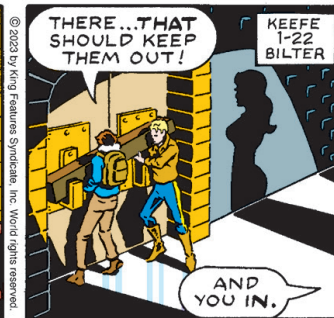
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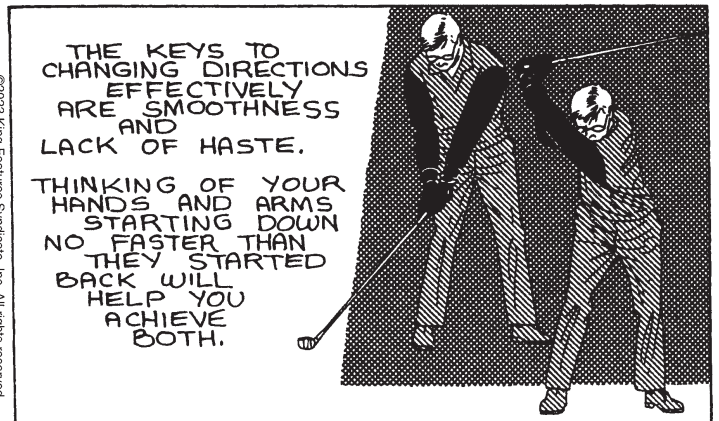
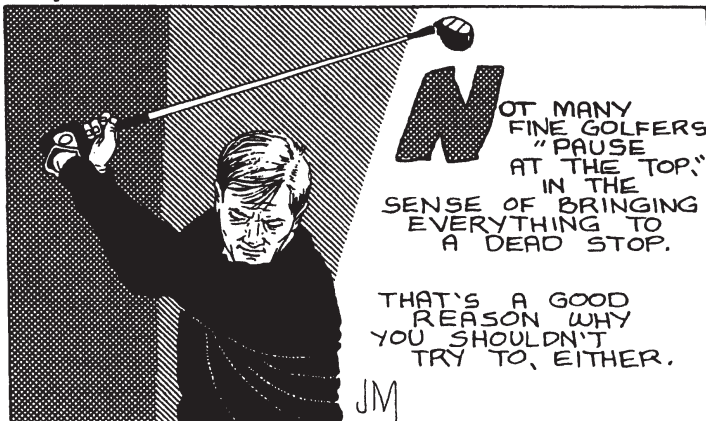
FLASH GORDON

By JIM KEEFE

PURSUED BY A PACK OF WEREWOLVES, FLASH AND THORNE SEEK REFUGE IN A MYSTERIOUS CASTLE!



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Chalazions Continue to Develop in Both Eyelids

DEAR DR. ROACH: Are oral antibiotics ever prescribed to treat chalazions, in addition to eye drops and ointment? I have had two this year for seemingly no reason. They were treated with tobramycin eye drops, ointment and warm compresses. The first one didn't resolve with those meds and was excised surgically. That eyelid then became infected without a chalazion and was treated with a second round of antibiotic drops. It remains a bit puffy and pinkish in color, which I chalked up to the new normal appearance.

Now, a chalazion has developed in the other eyelid. I don't wear eye makeup and use an eyelid cleanser recommended by my ophthalmologist. I am an otherwise healthy 76-year-old woman. Could there be a systemic bacterial or viral infection causing chalazions to keep developing? — *M.W.*

ANSWER: The terms for different types of eyelid lesions can be a bit confusing. Most people are familiar with a stye, which is a localized inflammation of the upper or lower eyelid, most commonly caused by an infection of one of the glands of the external eye, usually by the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus*. A stye is also called a hordeolum. An external hordeolum is in the eyelash follicle or the lid margin, whereas an internal hordeolum is inflammation in the meibomian glands, the ones that secrete mucous to help keep the eyes lubricated.

Makeup can block these glands and predispose someone to hordeola. Hordeola are treated with warm compresses and sometimes by an eye specialist, with a combination of antibiotic drops and topical steroids. Drainage by an oph-

get better within one to two weeks. If the infection gets into the skin around the eye, it may need oral antibiotics.

A chalazion is not an infection. It's a usually painless rubbery mass in the eyelid. A chalazion can be a complication of a hordeolum, since the glands are blocked by inflammation, leading to thickened secretions from the gland. Since it's not an infection, neither oral nor topical eye antibiotics are useful. These also usually get better with warm compresses over weeks to months. People with recurrent chalazia should be considered for biopsy, since they can turn out to be tumors in rare circumstances.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 72-year-old female with numerous health issues, including three types of epilepsy. About two years ago, I experienced watching my pillow turn into bubbles and ants marching across my bedroom ceiling. They remained there and did not join me in bed, thankfully. After some time, they went away — until this week. I am awake and alert when I see them, and it always happens at night. Due to a staphyloma, I only have vision in one eye. I was also born with cataracts and had those, along with age-related ones, removed at age 69 and 70. I am wondering if these visions I am experiencing could be yet another form of epilepsy. — *S.G.*

ANSWER: Although epilepsy can certainly cause visual hallucinations, they usually last only seconds and are not normally as complex as what you describe. Rather, I think this is more likely to be Charles Bonnet syndrome, which is associated with visual loss (that does not have to be complete). These visions are usually colored and may stay still or move, and hallucinations of animals and people are well-described. Moving the eyes toward and away from the hallucinations rapidly may suppress them. There are available medications to make them go away, which some people want and others do not.

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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"Everything Everywhere All at Once" (R) -- Evelyn Quan lives in a state of chaos in her everyday life. She is the owner of a laundromat and mother to her misunderstood daughter, Joy, and a million other tasks always seem to snatch up her attention. Because of this, her relationships begin to fall apart, leading up to one seemingly ordinary day when her life gets flipped upside down. A version of her husband, Waymond, from an alternate universe, visits her in need of her help from the evil Jobu Tupaki, who plans to destroy each existing

universe one by one. As this alternate Waymond teaches her about the multiverse, Evelyn learns she has a much bigger purpose than she ever imagined in the fight against Jobu. With Michelle Yeoh and Ke Huy Quan taking home Golden Globes for this visually stunning film, "Everything Everywhere All at Once" is incredibly profound -- and a must-watch. Out now. (Showtime)



From left, Stephanie Hsu, Michelle Yeoh and Ke Huy Quan star as the Wang family in "Everything Everywhere All At Once."

Courtesy of Elevation Pictures

"You People" (R) -- Ezra Cohen (Jonah Hill) hasn't had much luck in his quest for love, although marriage is something he definitely sees in his future. When he accidentally wanders in Amira's (Lauren London) car, thinking that she's his Uber driver, he begs her for the chance to make it up to her. Ezra and Amira begin to hit it off, and Ezra finally feels like he's found the right person for him. As he makes plans to propose to Amira, Ezra's friend, Sam, tells him he needs to speak with Amira's family. So, Ezra sits down with Amira's parents (Eddie Murphy and Nia Long), and he finds that integrating his Jewish family with Amira's Black family isn't as seamless as he thought it'd be. Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Mike Epps also star in this relatable comedy film, co-written by Hill and director Kenya Barris. "You People" premieres Jan. 27. (Netflix)

"Shotgun Wedding" (R) -- Originally starring Armie Hammer as the male lead before abuse allegations came out against him, this romantic comedy film about a destination wedding replaced him with Josh Duhamel in the male lead role, with Jennifer Lopez as his opposite. They play a couple named Tom and Darcy, who are about to say their "I do's" in the perfect tropical setting. At first, Tom and Darcy think the worst of their worries will be dealing with their eccentric family members. But then, right before the wedding, plans get interrupted by a heavily loaded gang of criminals. The criminals take Tom and Darcy's families hostage, but the couple manages to escape and attempts to get help while simultaneously running from the captors. Is there any better way to start the rest of your lives together? This Prime Video original film premieres Jan. 27. (Prime Video)

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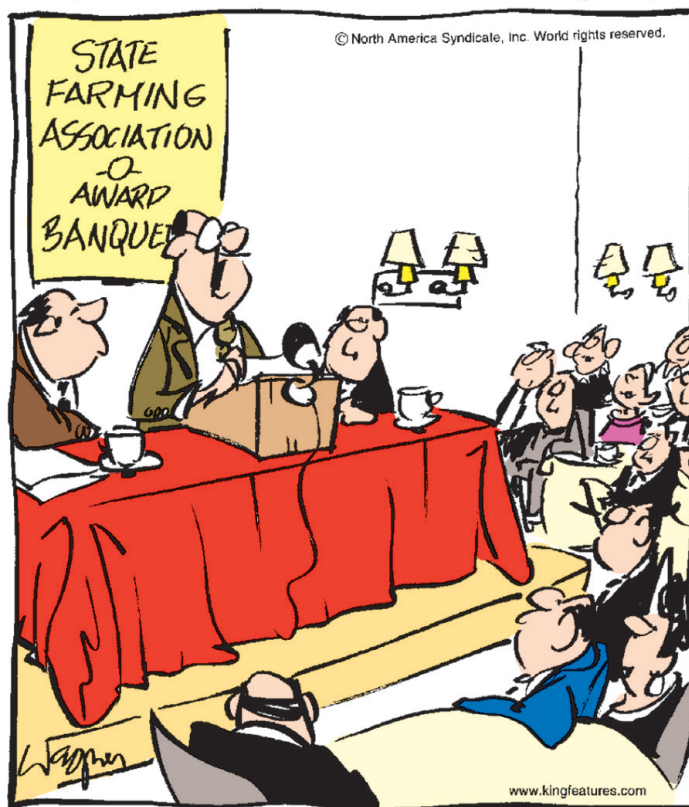
1. Who sang "Seasons in the Sun" in 1974? Bonus for knowing what the song is about.
2. Name the group that recorded "The Love You Save."
3. Who released the popular version of "Wild Thing"?
4. Which Kool & the Gang song was selected for inclusion in the National Recording Registry?
5. Name the song that contains these lyrics: "It's hard for a back street affair to be easy, For each hour of happiness there's two hours of pain."

Answers

1. Terry Jacks. The singer is dying and is saying goodbye to family and friends.
2. The Jackson 5, in 1970. It stayed at the top of the soul charts for six weeks. Michael Jackson was 12 years old at the time.
3. The Troggs, in 1966. Their name came from Troglodytes, who were cave dwellers. The Wild Ones version of the song in 1965 didn't chart.
4. "Celebration," in 1980. It was their only song to top the Billboard Hot 100 chart.
5. "Any Which Way You Can," by Glen Campbell, in 1980. The song was the title track in the film by the same name, a sequel to the 1978 film "Every Which Way But Loose." The films starred Clint Eastwood and an orangutan named Clyde.

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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{Wagner}



Just Like Cats & Dogs

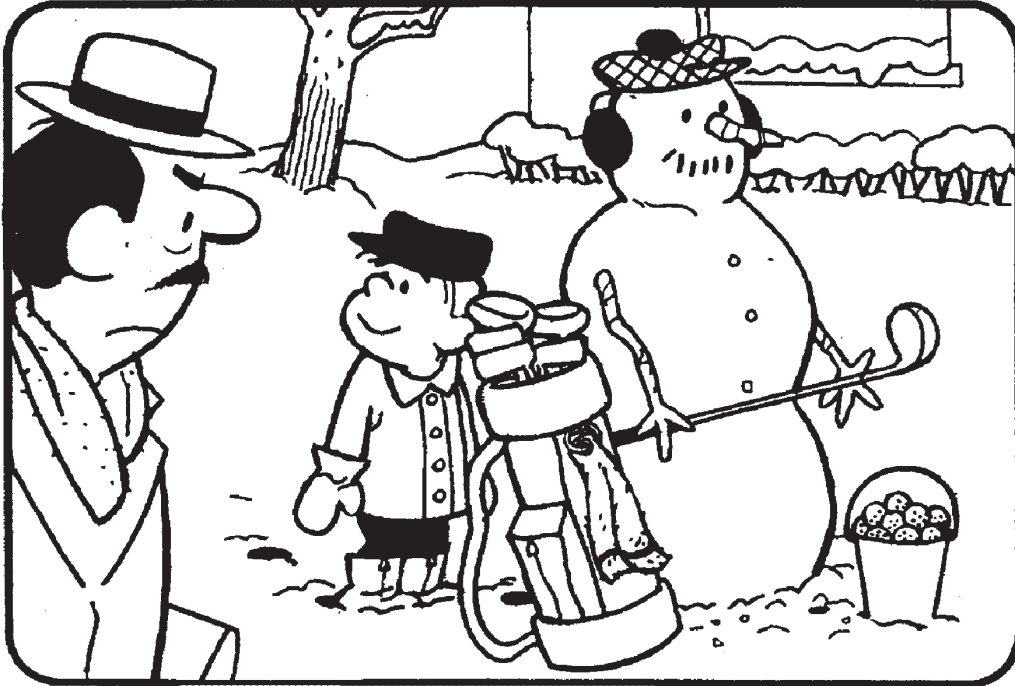
by Dave T. Phipps



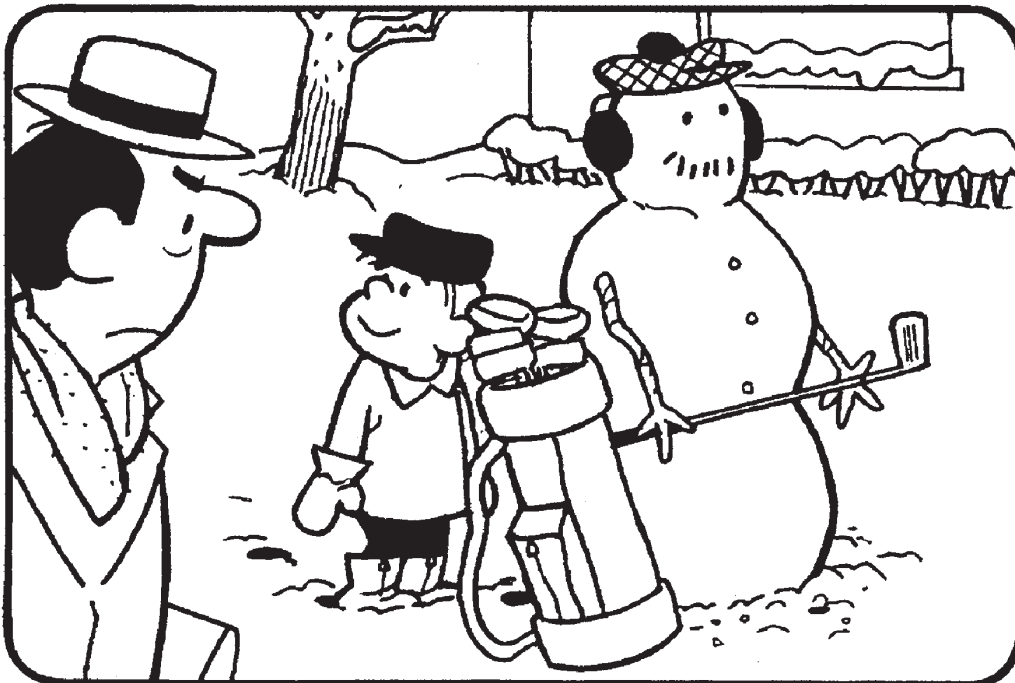
"Plowing right ahead ..."

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Mustache is missing. 2. Buttons are missing. 3. Towel is missing. 4. Carrot is missing. 5. Club is missing. 6. Pall is missing.

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* Toothpaste works well as a silver polish. Wet your silver, plop a little non-gel toothpaste on it and rub gently to clean. Rinse well and let it shine.

* A great hint from Mary R. of Duluth, Georgia: If the kids are drawing with felt markers and their hands get covered with ink, don't worry. Just spray their hands down with hairspray, then wipe off the ink with a paper towel. Don't forget to wash their hands afterward!

* Dip your toothbrush in baking soda before you add toothpaste when brushing your teeth. You get used to the taste, but the extra scrub really gets your teeth clean, and it's very inexpensive to use. -- R.E. in Arizona

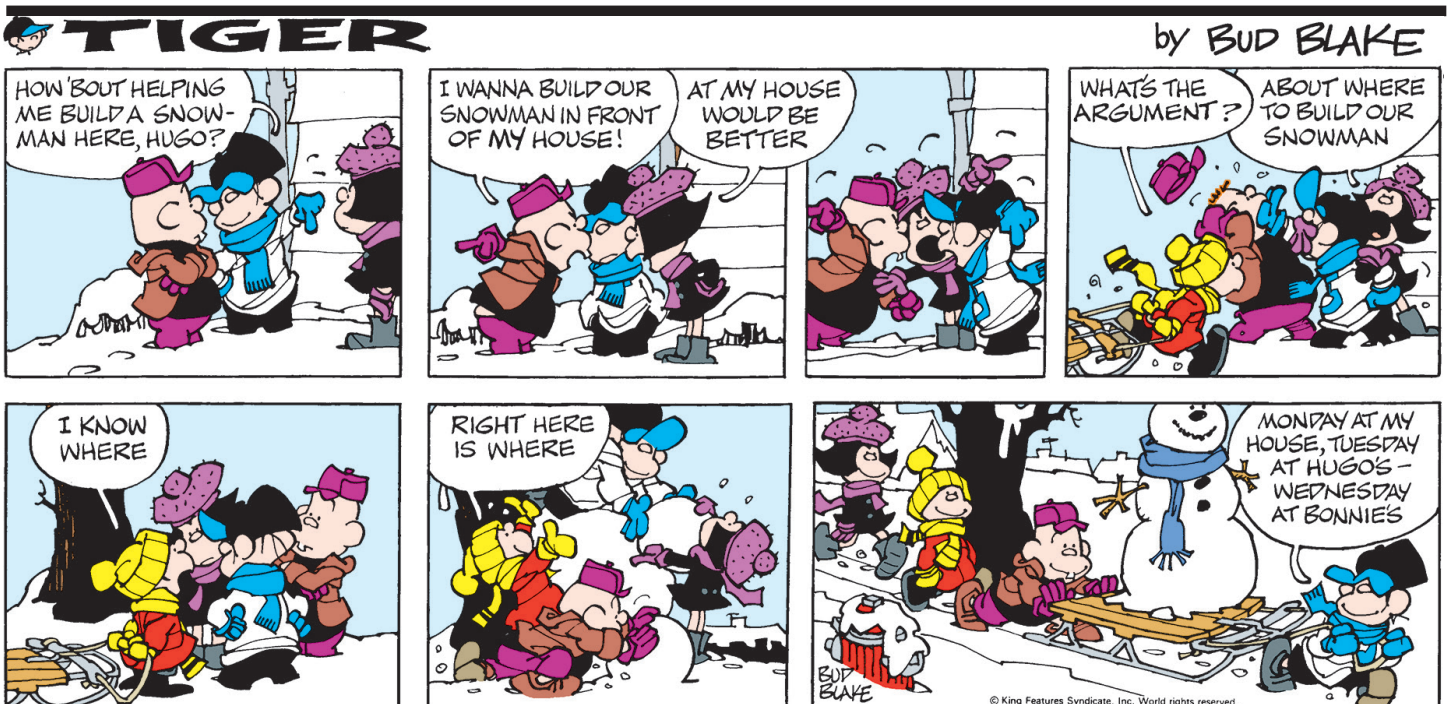
* Have clumped-up sugar in the canister? No worries. To keep sugar from hardening, add a slice of bread to the container from time to time, and leave it there a day before removing.

* Use this quick fix for oily hair. Rub a small amount of cornstarch into the oily areas of your hair. The cornstarch will soak up the dirt and oil; you just brush it out.

* A reader from Michigan wonders: How can I keep from having static head, especially when using a hat? The answer: You probably already have a tube of lip balm in your pocket or purse. Rub some on your palms, then run your palms over your hair.

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

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Choir voice
- 5 Right angle
- 8 Dallas team, to fans
- 12 Check
- 13 Sheep call
- 14 Out of the storm
- 15 Rub with an emery board, perhaps
- 17 Speck
- 18 Author Fleming
- 19 T-shirt fabric
- 21 Primitive
- 24 Spartan queen
- 25 Hamilton-Burr showdown
- 26 Criticize again and again

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

- 37 Steinway product
- 38 "With any luck"
- 41 Fragrant tree
- 42 2004 on a cornerstone
- 43 Color akin to turquoise
- 48 French river
- 49 Wildebeest
- 50 Cold War initials
- 51 Getz of jazz
- 52 Kenny G's instrument
- 53 Litigates
- 7 Guinevere's lover
- 8 Rum cocktail
- 9 Oodles
- 10 Presidential power
- 11 Penn or Astin
- 16 Calendar box
- 20 Praiseful pieces
- 21 Dutch cheese
- 22 German car name
- 23 Authentic
- 24 "The Sound of Music" teenager
- 26 Drags out
- 27 Hefty horn
- 28 Portent
- 29 Peacekeeping org.
- 31 Piece of work
- 34 Football team
- 35 Boeing rival
- 37 Chart format
- 38 Med. plan options
- 39 Skip
- 40 Tower city
- 41 Change
- 44 — pickle
- 45 Baton Rouge sch.
- 46 Exploit
- 47 Hosp. parts

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— King Crossword —

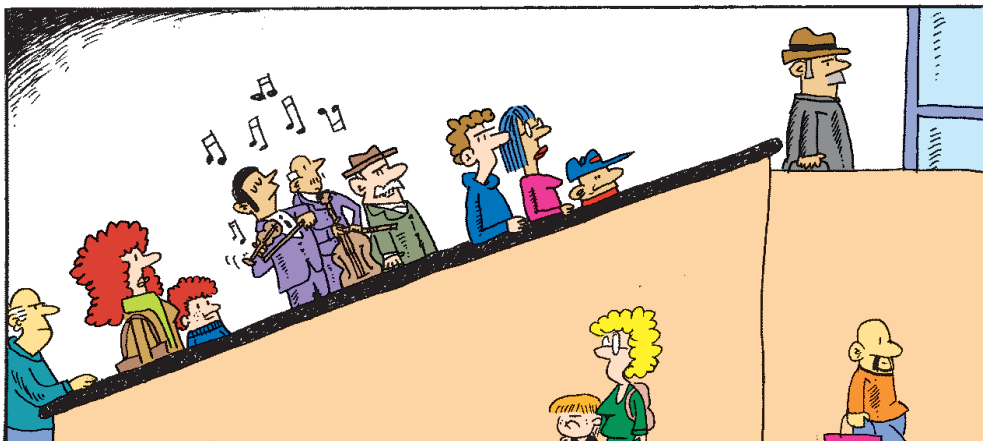
Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.

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

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



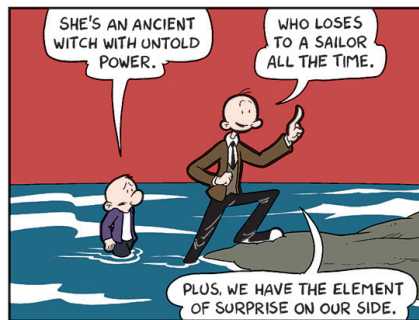
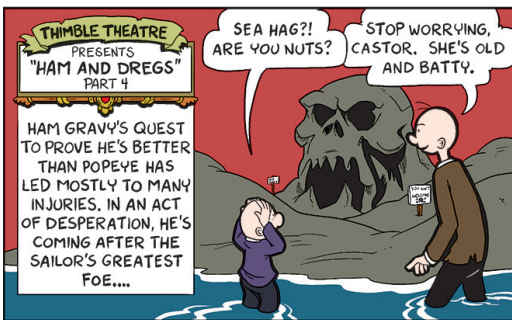
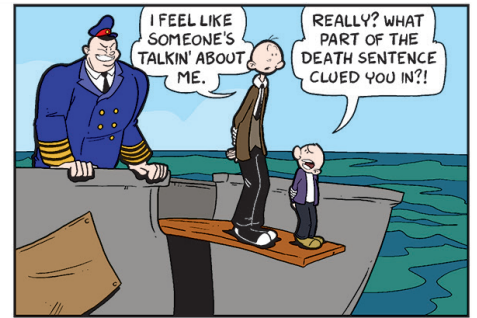
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ESCALATOR
MUSIC

KOPERVAS

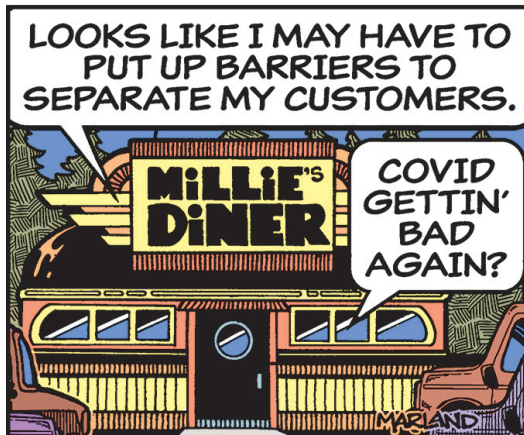
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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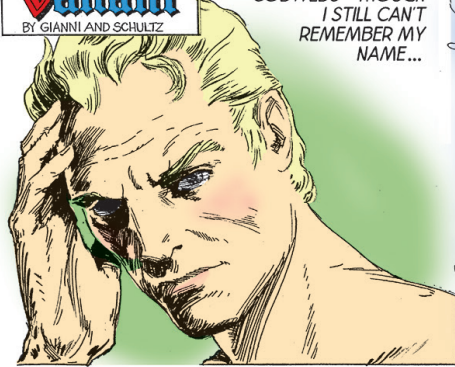
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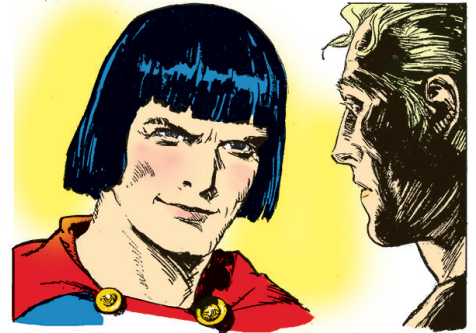
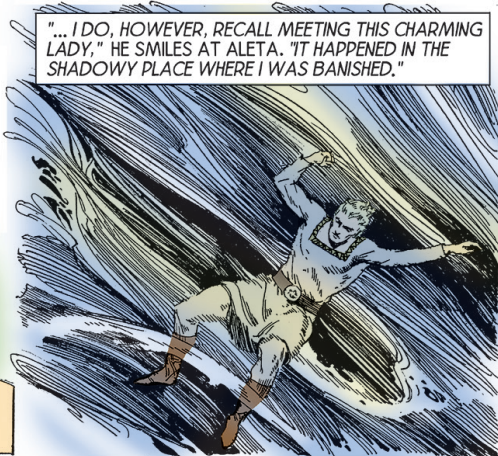
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Hal Foster's
**Prince
Valiant**
By Gianni and Schultz

THE STRANGER RECOVERS:
"YOUR WHACK TO MY
NOGGIN CLEARED SOME
COBWEBS - THOUGH
I STILL CAN'T
REMEMBER MY
NAME..."

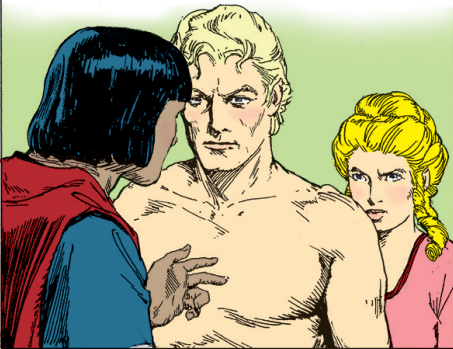


"... I DO, HOWEVER, RECALL MEETING THIS CHARMING
LADY," HE SMILES AT ALETA. "IT HAPPENED IN THE
SHADOWY PLACE WHERE I WAS BANISHED."



VAL STRUGGLES TO REMAIN THE GENTLEMAN: "AS I
TRUST MY WIFE'S MEMORY, IT SEEMS I OWE YOU
MY GRATITUDE. BUT BE AWARE THAT SHE IS A
QUEEN, AND SHALL BE TREATED ACCORDINGLY.
MIND YOUR LANGUAGE."

"FURTHERMORE, YOUR ACTIONS COMPEL ME TO
REVERSE MY EARLIER JUDGMENT - FOR THE TIME
BEING, YOU MUST BE HELD IN STRICT CONFINEMENT."
VAL SHOULD KNOW HIS WIFE BETTER BY NOW...



... BECAUSE IT IS OBVIOUS THAT SHE WILL HAVE NONE OF THIS INHOSPITALITY.



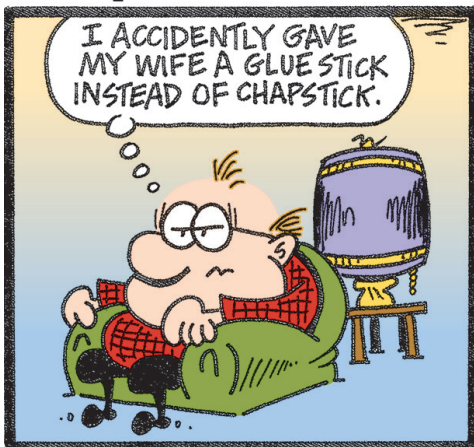
"NONSENSE! THIS MAN
SAVED MY LIFE. HE IS
A FRIEND, AND WILL
BE SO TREATED.
COME ALONG IF YOU
LIKE, BUT I AIM
TO SEE THAT HE IS
PROPERLY CLEANED,
CLOTHED AND
HOUSED!"

NEXT:
**Court
favorite**

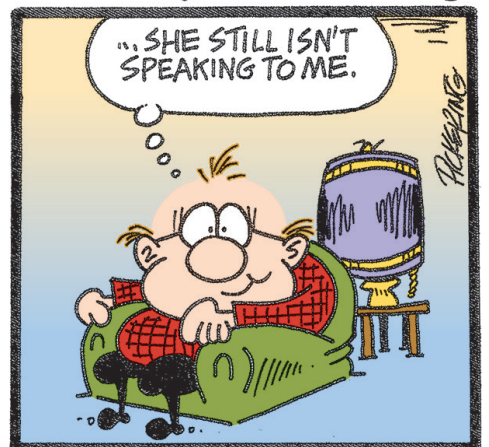
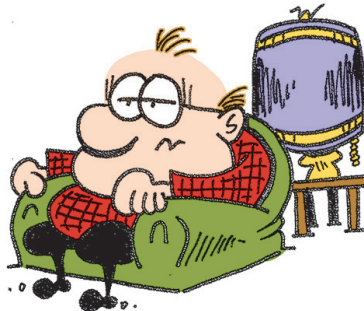
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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Covid ... It's Still Here

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of Covid cases has steadily risen since December. Earlier in the fall, Covid took a short break while the flu and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) made it to center stage. Those illnesses are now waning a bit, and here comes Covid again.

It doesn't help that we have a new variant -- an offshoot of Omicron, the XBB.1.5 -- taking off around the country. By Christmas nearly half the cases of Covid were that new variant, so it's growing.

Seniors, as usual, are being hit hard with those in the age 70+ range being the largest group affected, followed by ages 60-69.

If you're hesitant to go back to being extremely careful, we're experiencing what some doctors are calling the Senior Wave. It means the numbers on a graph show that the largest group affected with hospitalizations are seniors.

Which means it's still not time to let down our guard. If anything, it means renewing our efforts to stay safe. Frequent handwashing, wearing a mask in the store, even if you're the only one who is, staying out of large groups ... we know how to do this.

And like it or not, we should. The growing number of seniors being hospitalized or dying due to Covid should shake up all of us.

Another, and possibly even more accurate, statistic for the spread of Covid is the wastewater. This is where municipalities test the sewage for Covid. People can hide their exposure and illness by using the at-home tests we all received in the mail, thereby skewing the "official" numbers, but the sewage in an area is sure to be more accurate.

To see the wastewater data by county, go online to [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/nwss/) and search for "National Wastewater Surveillance System" (NWSS).

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1. In October 2022, Jacob Runyan and Chase Cominsky were charged with multiple felonies in Ohio for allegedly cheating in a tournament of what sport?

2. American ballet dancer Jackson Haines (1840-75) is famous for his innovations in what sport?

3. In March 2012, what New York Yankees relief pitcher suffered an open dislocation of his ankle while at a trampoline jump center?

4. Whose resume includes head football coaching jobs with the Oakland Raiders, Tennessee Volunteers, USC Trojans, Florida Atlantic Owls and Ole Miss Rebels?

5. American professional pool player Jeanette Lee is known by what nickname?

6. Though he was born in the Soviet Union, former light-welterweight champion Kostya Tszyu represented what country during his pro boxing career?

7. What 1973 NASCAR Winston Cup Series champion retired from racing in 1988 and went on to a career in broadcasting until his death in 2007?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. Walleye fishing (lead weights were found in their fish).

2. Figure Skating.

3. Joba Chamberlain.

4. Lane Kiffin.

5. "The Black Widow."

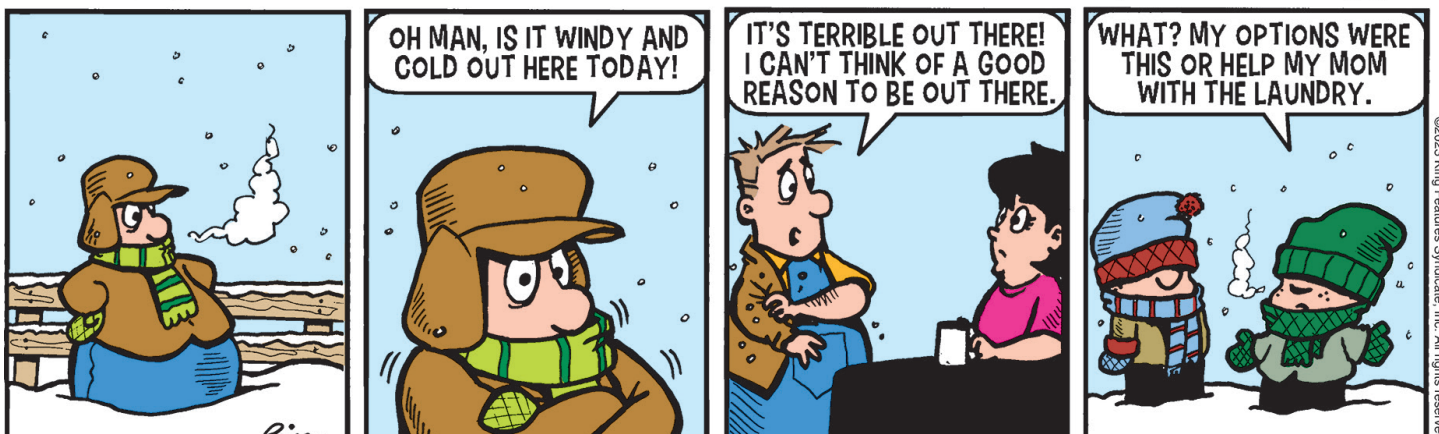
6. Australia.

7. Benny Parsons.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Cats Can Hide Illness Symptoms, So Be Aware

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My cat Sisko became very unaffectionate a few days ago. He hid under the bed or crouched in the corner of the living room and refused to cuddle. Then I noticed when he sat in the litter box that he meowed as if he was in distress. I called the veterinarian, and they had me bring him right in. Turns out that Sisko had a urinary tract infection! He's doing fine now, but I wanted to tell my story so that other readers will know that a sudden behavior change in their cat could be a medical problem. -- Kurt W., Parsippany, New Jersey

DEAR KURT: Thank you for sharing! You did absolutely the right thing: You noticed a sudden change in your cat's behavior, kept a closer eye on his activities and litter habits, and contacted the vet's office to share your observations and get advice.

Cats are very secretive about their health. It's an instinctive behavior that helped their ancestors hide from predators. So it is common for owners not to notice when their cat is experiencing pain, such as a sore tooth or an illness like a urinary tract infection.

While the occasional hairball episode isn't a cause for concern, there are some symptoms that should prompt a call to the vet for an appointment.

- Your cat acts withdrawn, sits hunched over, refuses to play or be petted.
- Eating or drinking habits change.
- Litter box behavior changes: meowing, missing the box or noticeable diarrhea.
- Grooming problems develop, or they have clumpy fur or irritated skin.
- Physical symptoms: eye or ear discharge, strange breathing, unusual vomiting, lethargy or drooling.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* During World War II, the Lay-Z-Boy company had to stop producing recliners because of the war effort. Instead, they used their production facility to mass produce (we hope much more comfortable) seats for tanks and other military vehicles.

* Champagne was originally a holy wine.

* The only people guaranteed to get Super Bowl rings, regardless of a game's outcome, are the referees, though their rings aren't nearly as large or valuable as that of the players.

* In the 1880s, a railroad signalman named James Edwin Wide taught a South African baboon to perform his job by recognizing the whistles that indicated a train was about to change tracks. Dubbed "Signalman Jack," the animal performed his duties so well that not only was he formally hired at a salary of 20 cents per day and half a bottle of beer per week, he carried on for nine years until his death from tuberculosis in 1890.

* Trees were not around for 90% of Earth's history.


* Queen lead singer Freddie Mercury's overbite resulted from four extra teeth in his upper jaw. He refused to have them removed, however, for fear the surgery would affect his voice and vocal range.

* In the 2015 film "Jurassic World," Chris Pratt's character carries a stainless Marlin 1895 -- the only firearm on Marlin's website that's rated for a T-Rex.

* Two churches in Vrontados, Greece, have a particularly unconventional way of marking the Easter holiday: They fire rockets at each other! While they used to use cannons, those were outlawed. The tradition has been carried out for at least four centuries.

Thought for the Day: "The heart of man is very much like the sea, it has its storms, it has its tides and in its depths it has its pearls too." --Vincent Van Gogh

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"Pear Blossom"

All alone by the veranda railing,
teardrops drenching the branches,
although her face is unadorned,
her old charms remain.
Behind the locked gate,
on a rainy night,
how she is filled with sadness.
How differently she looked
bathed in golden waves
of moonlight, before the darkness fell.

Chinese poet Qian Xuan (1280)

Source: www.metmuseum.org



by Freddy Groves

Scammers Nabbed in False Claims Cases

It's not the brightest of individuals who try to con the Department of Veterans Affairs out of goods, services and money. They eventually get caught.

A Pennsylvania company has been fined \$44 million for allegations about services they didn't provide. In this false claims case, the service they allegedly provided was cardiac monitoring. Instead of doing what they'd been contracted to do, when they got "busy,"

they farmed out the services to India. The diagnostic testing and monitoring, as well as other services, were done by personnel in India who weren't qualified. Patients getting health care via the VA, TRICARE, Medicare and the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, and likely their physicians, had no idea.

To their credit, it was some former company employees who blew the whistle and brought the whole thing to light. (They'll be getting \$8.3 million as a reward.) The company, meanwhile, was fined and denied access to any further government business, right? Wrong. Per the press release, the company was put under a five-year agreement to do assessment and internal review to pinpoint compliance risk.

In another false claims case, a New York man is going to prison for 20 years for crimes involving investment fraud and the sale of nonexistent N95 masks. Over the years, in a long-term Ponzi scheme, he continued to solicit money, using new money to fund new acquisitions and a fancy lifestyle.

Enter the pandemic and the need for masks and personal protective gear in hospitals and clinics. Pretending to have a direct pipeline to U.S. factories that could provide those items, he conned \$7.4 million out of medical supply companies that believed they were buying the hard-to-get gear. It didn't help that the criminal attempted to con the VA out of \$3 million in upfront money for 125 million masks, in what would have been a \$750 million deal. Besides the 20 years in prison, he'll also be paying back \$106 million in money he stole from investors.

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Wishing Well®

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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. MUSIC: Which band sang the theme song to TV's "Friends"?
2. ANATOMY: What is the only bone in the human body that isn't attached to another bone nearby?
3. LITERATURE: What is the setting for the "Anne of Green Gables" novel series?
4. TELEVISION: Who plays the lead role in the sitcom "Mr. Mayor"?
5. GEOGRAPHY: Where are the Spanish Steps located?
6. HISTORY: How long did the first man in space, Yuri Gagarin, orbit the planet?
7. AD SLOGANS: Which restaurant chain advises customers to "eat fresh"?
8. SCIENCE: What is the only form of energy that can be seen with the human eye?
9. ANIMAL KINGDOM: With which animal do humans share 98.8% of their DNA?
10. MOVIES: Which movie features the famous line, "I see dead people"?

Answers

1. The Rembrandts ("I'll Be There for You").
2. The hyoid bone.
3. Prince Edward Island.
4. Ted Danson.
5. Rome, Italy.
6. 108 minutes.
7. Subway Restaurants.
8. Light.
9. Chimpanzee.
10. "The Sixth Sense" (1999).

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Champions at the Capitol

This week, we welcomed the South Dakota State University football team to the South Dakota State Capitol in Pierre. On January 8th, the Jackrabbits brought home a Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) national championship win against North Dakota State University! This was not just any victory – it was a win against their rivals. And thanks to SDSU’s excellent play, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum has to keep a Jackrabbit helmet in his office for the rest of the month.

This historic win was the second time this season that the Jackrabbits beat the Bison. Back in October, SDSU won the Dakota Marker 23 – 21. The rivalry between SDSU and NDSU is one rich with tradition, with the first faceoff between the two teams happening way back in 1903. Since then, these rivals have met 113 more times. In 2004, the regular season match-up officially became the “Dakota Marker,” where SDSU and NDSU play for a 75-pound replica of the quartzite monument that marks the border between South Dakota and North Dakota.

NDSU is a well-seasoned veteran, having won a total of 17 national championships in program history. But SDSU did not let that shake them. Instead, they steamrolled into the championship game, beat the Bison 45 – 21, and won the first national title in school history. SDSU showed the grit and grind of South Dakota, and we couldn’t be prouder.

I want to talk a little about two men that helped lead SDSU to victory in different roles: Coach John Stiegelmeier and quarterback Mark Gronowski.

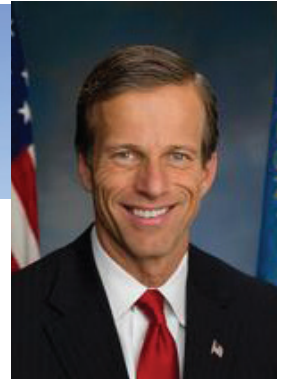
Coach Stiegelmeier is a native of Selby, South Dakota, attended SDSU himself, and has been the SDSU head football coach since 1997. In his 26 seasons with the Jackrabbits, Coach Stiegelmeier has built the program into a yearly playoff contender. He has led the team to the FCS playoffs 11 times. Now, he’ll retire as the winningest football coach in South Dakota State history after leading the Jackrabbits to a national championship victory. I want to wholeheartedly congratulate Coach John Stiegelmeier on being named the winner of the 2022 Eddie Robinson Award, an award given to the top head coach in the Football Championship Subdivision. And I hope he enjoys his retirement.

SDSU’s starting quarterback Mark Gronowski won Most Valuable Player in the national championship game. He completed 223 passing yards during the game and rushed for 57 yards. But what’s even more impressive than his skills on the field is Gronowski’s heart, his love for the game, and his determination.

In 2021, Gronowski led the Jackrabbits all the way to the national championship game. Then, just minutes into the game, he suffered a torn ACL. Gronowski spent the next year rehabbing, determined to get his team the national title they deserved. I admire the ambition and the work ethic of this young man, and I commend him on a job well done, a season of games well played, and a national championship well earned.

It is no secret that, as an SDSU alumna myself, I am a huge Jackrabbits fan. I’m so proud of this team and all that they have accomplished. When I met them, it was hard to contain my excitement. I shared with them how proud I am of their fantastic work. They have made history here in South Dakota. The dedication of the entire coaching staff, as well as of every single member of the SDSU football team, led them to victory. Congratulations to SDSU on their national championship, and, as always, GO JACKS!

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Truth Marches On

For 50 years, members of the pro-life movement, including many South Dakotans, have traveled from every corner of our country to participate in the March for Life. Those who march have given a voice to the voiceless to defend the most basic human right: life itself. They've spoken up, they've kept the faith, and this year, they can celebrate that a day we had long hoped for is here: *Roe v. Wade* has been overturned.

The organizers of the first March for Life in 1974 didn't expect it would take 50 years to overturn *Roe*, but they didn't stop believing that that day would come. Nothing stopped them – not snow, rain, long bus rides, or the bitter cold of winter – and this past year their faith was rewarded. And they continue to march to bear public witness to the fundamental truth that unborn babies are human beings. While the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision overturned *Roe* and opened the door to meaningful legal protections for unborn Americans, there is a lot of work to be done to get to the day when unborn children are fully protected. And so the March for Life – and the work of the pro-life movement – is more important today than ever.

The March for Life's public witness to the humanity of the unborn is critically important. But it's just one small part of the pro-life movement. Every day across our country, there are a multitude of organizations that do the quiet and essential work of supporting expecting and new mothers and their babies. Sadly, some of these organizations have also been targets for attack and vandalism since the *Dobbs* decision leaked in May. Their strength and resilience in the wake of these attacks is a testament to the values and good character of those who provide these critical support services.

The pro-life movement continues to be strong because it is driven by the truth that unborn babies are human beings and human beings deserve to be protected. Those on the pro-abortion left would like to obscure this fact, but science, technology, and common sense tell us it's the truth. Nobody who has witnessed their baby kick or suck their thumb on an ultrasound can deny that we are talking about a human life.

The *Dobbs* decision is an opportunity to change course from the abortion regime *Roe* imposed on the country, which put up barriers to protecting the unborn. Tragically, during the nearly 50 years *Roe v. Wade* was in place, 63 million innocent human lives were lost forever to abortion in the United States. Now, states are able to put protections in place for unborn children through the democratic process, which many have already begun to do. And I am proud that South Dakota was one of the first to do so.

There is a sign you often see at the March for Life that reads, "I am the pro-life generation." I am proud of those who have worked so hard to secure the right to life for the unborn and are helping to make this statement a fact rather than merely a hope. Life prevailed in *Dobbs* because the truth was on our side, but it could not have happened without the patient dedication of pro-life Americans like those who participate in the March for Life. I am glad to see the truth is marching on as we enter the post-*Dobbs* era.

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CONGRESSMAN

DUSTY JOHNSON

Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



Let's Get to Work

This week, Republican Members of Congress were assigned to their Committees. I am proud to serve on the House Agriculture Committee and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for the 118th Congress.

The House Agriculture Committee is a place to secure a lot of wins for South Dakota's farmers, ranchers, and producers. One of the biggest bills the House votes on is the Farm Bill, which is worked on in the Ag Committee. Every five years, the Committee has the opportunity to make changes to this long-standing legislation, and 2023 is the year it needs to be passed again.

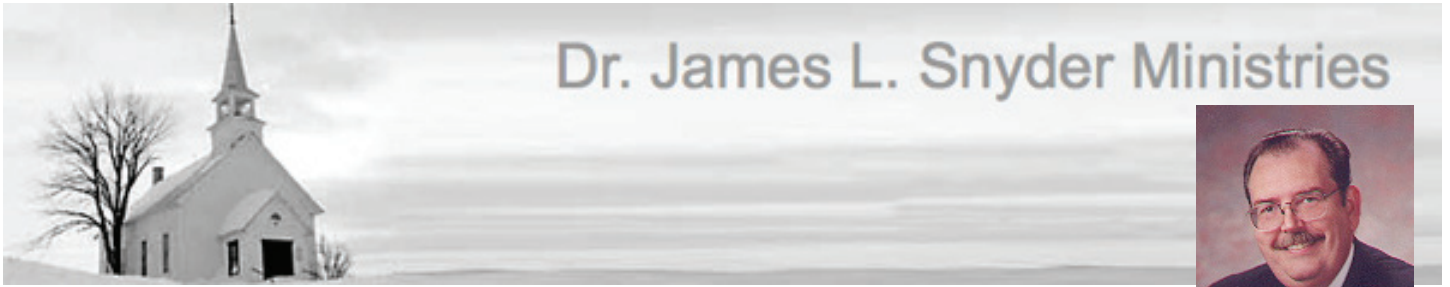
I hosted several roundtables last year with South Dakotans who are impacted by the Farm Bill to get their input. We talked conservation, commodities, livestock, rural development, trade, credit, and more. The House Ag Committee will look at all the current programs in the Farm Bill and each state's priorities to make adjustments for the next five years to ensure our farmers, ranchers, and producers are supported.

In the Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, I expect us to tackle issues that affect our supply chain and ensure it is running smoothly. We will work on legislation to improve roads, rail, ocean shipping, planes, and freight. Last year, my bill the Ocean Shipping Reform Act, became law. There's work to be done to ensure proper implementation of that bill and smooth out other parts of our supply chain to make sure it is functioning properly from manufacturing facilities to grocery stores to your doorstep.

This is my third term serving on House Ag and my second term on House T&I. I'm ready to get to work using the input of South Dakotans to speak on behalf of them on these Committees.

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What Would My Life Be without a Cookie.

This past week was about as crazy as they get. When I think it can't get any crazier, somebody hears me and makes it crazier just for me.

One morning I had to go across town to get some office supplies and other things. I try to ensure that when I go, it's for several things, not just one.

The traffic was somewhat crazy. Everybody was driving as though trying to escape some danger behind them. I don't like it when the traffic gets like this. I'm not sure why people drive the way they drive.

I must say, one of the craziest drivers seemed to be somewhat religious. He stuck his hand out the window and pointed toward heaven. Unfortunately, he got the wrong finger. It's the thought that counts.

Hearing a roaring noise behind me; I looked in my rearview mirror and saw a little red convertible zooming up past me, and behind the steering wheel was an older man looking like my grandfather. He had the biggest smile as he was roared past me. I guess he was living out his teenage years before he died, which could be soon.

Then there was a motorcycle zinging in and out and crossing the double line several times, and he whizzed by me, laughing like he was having the time of his life.

Carefully driving home to avoid getting hit, I began to think about this. Where do these people get their driver's licenses? Perhaps it's an online service, and they don't have to take any driving test. So I would like to get a hold of the person that gave them a driver's license, and shake my finger in his face.

Then I asked myself, who in the world sold a vehicle to these people?

Before I got home, I passed an accident along the way. I guess people don't know that there's a consequence in driving like an idiot. So again, where do idiots get driver's licenses?

The fact that I got home without any accident was a real blessing.

I was frustrated with all the nonsense on the highways. I come from Pennsylvania, and the most traffic is horse and buggy. So what would it be like if all vehicles, both gas and electric, were banned in our country and everybody had to drive a horse and buggy?

It ain't ever going to happen, but it was at least worth thinking about, as nervous as I felt at the time.

I finally arrived home, parked my vehicle, and went inside. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage met me as I walked in and said, "What happened? You look terrible."

Well, I did look in the mirror that morning, so I did look terrible, but that wasn't what she meant.

I told her about all the crazy drivers I had to deal with driving across town.

"Who," I said to her most frantically, "gave these people a driver's license?"

She looked at me sympathetically and smiled.

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Then I said, "Who in the world sold them a vehicle thinking they could drive?"

She knew I was frustrated and tense with all of this nonsense on the road.

It wasn't anything new, but sometimes things have a way of building up.

I went into the living room, sat in my easy chair, and decided to watch a little TV to calm my nerves. I'm not sure what I was watching; I just wanted to take some time and unwind from the crazy day I had.

Then, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage brought me a nice hot cup of coffee.

"Here," she said. "Maybe this will calm you down a little."

I smiled and thanked her because nothing calms me down like a nice hot cup of coffee. Whoever invented coffee should get a Nobel Peace Prize.

I took one sip, and I could feel my nerves starting to unravel. How I love a cup of coffee!

Then, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage did something unexpected. She came in and brought me some cookies.

"Here, these cookies may help you calm down a little more."

She handed me not one but two cookies. This was something that had never happened in my life before.

I sat in my chair, sipped some more coffee, and then gently smelled those cookies. That morning my wife was making cookies for somebody, so the kitchen was full of the cookie aroma. Walking in, I was so stressed that I did not smell those cookies.

The aroma of that cookie seemed to fill me with good vibes, like it was 1969.

I took one bite and began slowly and delicately munching on that cookie. Nothing so wonderful in all the world as a freshly baked cookie. So I leaned back, closed my eyes, and enjoyed that cookie.

I
In no time, the first cookie was gone. Then I picked up the second cookie, looked at it with admiration, and began nibbling it.

As I was chewing that cookie, I thought to myself, what would life be without cookies?

In a rather relaxed mode, I remembered what the apostle Paul said. "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain" (2 Timothy 1:16).

It's amazing how God sends people into our lives to refresh us when we seem to be under some kind of stress.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: How are we going to deal with all the waste when the solar panels everyone is putting up now wear out in 20-30 years?

-- Paul B., Chevy Chase, MD

When purchasing green alternatives for home power generation, there are many features that the average consumer looks for. Most are hoping to find options that are the most efficient, or the lightest, or the most durable, but what about the most recyclable?

This question is often overlooked when making such purchases. Unfortunately, ignoring a product's life cycle can have disastrous consequences, especially if reducing your environmental footprint is a concern.

Take solar panels, for example. The average solar panel lasts roughly 25 years, and the vast majority of them were purchased and put into use within the last 10 years. This means that within the next 15 years, millions of retired and broken solar panels will be flooding landfills. A 2020 study out of the federally funded National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) found that as much as eight million tons of solar modules could arrive in landfills globally by 2030, and by 2050 these solar panels could make up to 10 percent of all e-waste on the planet.

To make matters worse, if the waste isn't disposed of properly, it could cause problems for the groundwater in its vicinity. Solar panels contain trace amounts of toxic compounds, such as lead, and a carcinogen known as cadmium telluride. If either of these chemicals were to leach into a freshwater source, the water would become unsafe to use in most capacities.

Although solar panels are recyclable, there is little incentive to do so. Made from materials such as aluminum, copper, silicon and glass, approximately 80-85 percent of a solar panel can be recycled; however, the process would actually cost more than the raw materials are worth.

Thankfully, the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Energy Technologies Office has been hard at work developing a comprehensive system for handling and recycling solar panels. By 2030, they plan on reducing the cost of solar panel recycling to a mere \$3 per panel. This reduction would actually make solar panel recycling an economically feasible venture!

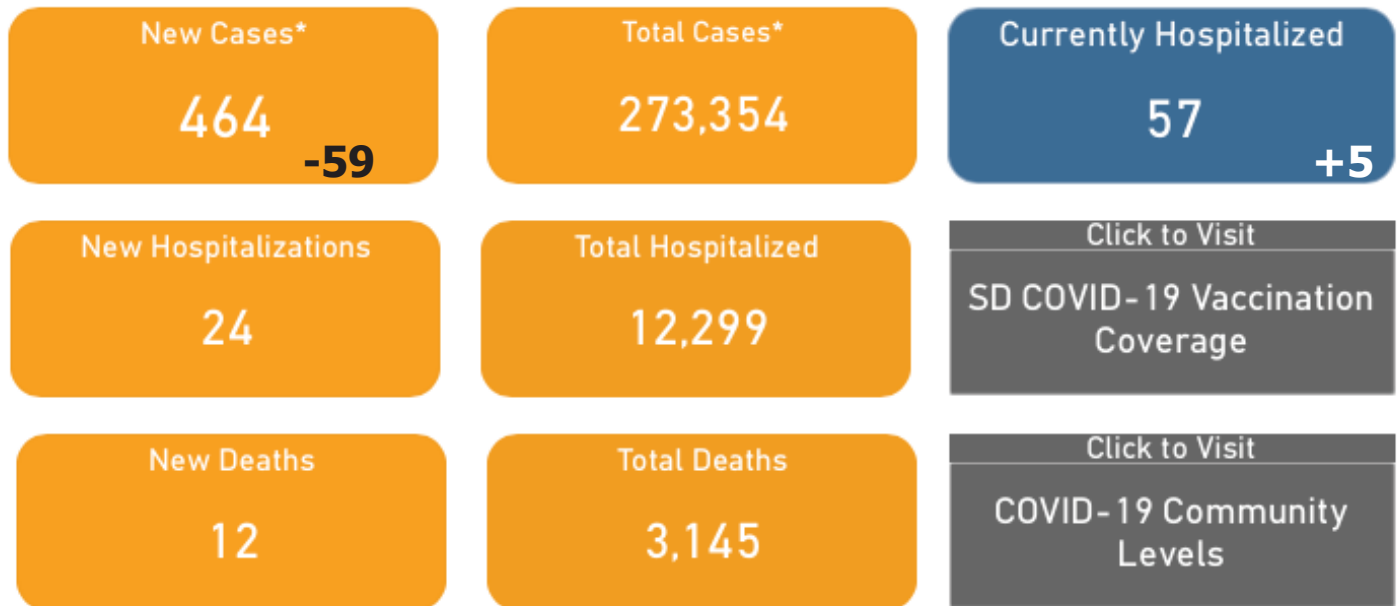
That said, there is still the option to rebuild new solar panels from old ones. However, to accomplish this would require a direct reuse of the materials recovered. Silicon, for example, can be directly recycled back into solar panels, or it can even be used in the anodes of lithium-ion batteries—the functional storage unit of power generated through the use of solar panels.

But what about simply making the solar panels greener? Instead of silicon solar panels (what people normally buy), there is another option available known as Sunflare thin-film solar panels. The lightweight modules have a carbon footprint that is 20 percent that of silicon, they do not require toxic chemicals such as lead, cadmium, hydrofluoric acid or hydrochloric acid to produce, they require less water, and are 80 percent less energy-intensive to make. They are also paper-thin, require no silicon purification, no glass, and no mounts, and are even more efficient in low-light conditions!



We sure do love our solar panels, but in 10-20 years a lot of them will be heading for landfills if we don't figure out how to recycle them.. Credit: Pexels.com.

South Dakota COVID-19 Report



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

As we move deeper into this pandemic, I've been finding it more and more difficult to parse the data I'm seeing. I've mentioned this from time to time, especially lately. I guess I'm not the only one; some folks a whole lot smarter than I are having the same difficulty. From an article this week in the New York Times: "It's a confusing time in the pandemic. For those of us who track the virus, we're used to looking at a bunch of signals and trying to discern where things are headed. But over time, those signals have gotten more complicated — especially as some states have begun reporting their Covid data less frequently or reliably." What I think we can safely say, absent the sudden emergence of some super-variant—and it would have to hurry at this point to be in time to wreck this winter—is that this winter is not going to approach the horrors of last winter. The seven-day new-case average seems to be trending downward for real. We dipped below 60,000 just a couple of days ago and now, at midday today, are at just 54,015. The Northeast where XBB.1.5 emerged first and took over soonest seems to be trending downward. Even if reporting is uneven (and it's probably less so in this region than in, say, the South), wastewater data support the downward trend. All of this is a promising sign. Pandemic total cases are up to 101,592,099.

Hospitalizations seem to be leveling off. We're below 40,000 for the first time in a couple of months at 39,473. Since hospitalization figures do not rely on state department of health reporting, they tend to be a stronger indicator than new-case number. The rest of the country is still approaching its XBB.1.5 peaks, but I'd expect them to follow more or less in the Northeast's tracks. It does appear we have so far this year avoided the kind of surge in hospitalization seen in the winter of 2021, which was well underway at this point in the year. Even in the Northeast and South with their earlier sharp upticks in cases, this is looking more like the summer of 2021 Delta surge which was child's play by comparison to last year at this time. Some of this could be due to a collective increase in immunity due to vaccines and also to infections. A lot of people are getting sick, but not so many are needing hospitalization. We may also be seeing the effect of decreased virulence of the current subvariants people becoming more cautious in response to influenza and RSV in addition to Covid-19. Antiviral medications like Paxlovid may account for another chunk of the

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lower hospitalization rates.

We have an additional factor this year, something called viral interference. Viral interference is basically the phenomenon by which having one viral infection offers some temporary innate protection against other viruses. This happens because when you have a virus infection, your immune system kicks into high gear, temporarily improving your ability to defend against anything else that comes along. Part of what is playing hell with our ability to make projections about Covid-19 transmission patterns is probably the RSV and influenza infection rates. The RSV surge followed by an early influenza peak likely suppressed Covid-19; what we don't know is what happens when that interference has sort of played itself out. In this case, pushing a peak back is probably going to decrease its height as well; within a couple of months, many parts of the country are going to be warm enough for folks to get outdoors again, and only the northern tier of states will still be in the deep freeze. That may significantly blunt any peak that might have otherwise happened. In all of this, we should note that hospitalizations in those 70 and older are nearly five times those in people of all ages combined, so older Americans are presented with their own situation.

At any rate, the longer a surge holds off, the lower will be the death toll. Unfortunately, the deaths numbers are still far too high. The seven-day average is still at 482 with a pandemic total of 1,109,270. Recognizing that this new variant causes milder disease overall doesn't help a bit those folks who can't withstand even this subvariant. I'm not sure how soon (if ever), we get these deaths numbers down where influenza is.

Even with where we are at the moment, overall deaths numbers due to Covid-19 have dropped. In 2020, there were more than 350,000 Covid-19 deaths; in 2021, there were over 475,000; and in 2022, there were more than 267,000. Even though deaths figures for 2022 are still being refined and finalized, that makes this disease likely the third leading cause of death behind heart disease and cancer in the US for the year. That is horrifying. More than 90 percent of Covid-19 deaths are occurring in people who are at least 65 years of age. Older and immunocompromised people are at very high risk for the worst outcomes.

Here's news you probably didn't want: Experts are predicting XBB.1.5 is likely to infect lots of people, perhaps almost everyone, who've never had Covid-19, no matter how careful they are and how up-to-date on vaccination they are. Estimates are that at least 80 percent of us in the US have already been infected, and those folks are highly likely to be reinfected this year as well. This variant is super-good at finding a way to get to you. Paula Cannon, virologist at the University of Southern California, told US Today that essentially everyone in the country is at risk now. This is particularly true because most people are no longer masking in public; wearing a mask yourself is useful, but nowhere as useful as it is when everyone does. A combination of ridiculous transmissibility mediated by super-strong affinity for the ACE2 protein on our cell surfaces and people traveling and carrying on as though there was no Covid-19 is placing every one of us at risk. While this Omicron subvariant is causing milder disease, some non-zero proportion of those infected ends up with long-Covid and some of those become severely ill and die.

China has been revising its Covid-19 reports, perhaps due to pressure from the World Health Organization (WHO), which has been leaning pretty hard on officials there, both in public statements and in private meetings. The National Health Commission (NHC) raised the deaths numbers from November 1 to January 13 from fewer than 50 (which no one believed) to 55,938, which is still likely short of the truth. Their old definition of a Covid-19 death included only those suffering respiratory failure while confirmed positive for SARS-CoV-2, but even so, the new number for those deaths is 5503, not 37. Importantly, there are big gaps in the reported data with no detailed regional data, as well as genomic information, and no deaths outside hospitals are being reported. Louise Blair, head of vaccines and epidemiology at science-forecasting group, Affinity, told the Washington Post, "The new official numbers are most likely not a reflection of the total number of covid-related deaths." This group has estimated over 600,000 deaths due to Omicron in China. Meanwhile satellite imagery of funeral homes and crematoriums show huge temporary storage facilities

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for remains of victims consistent with more deaths even than the revised reports show. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington projects 1.6 million deaths in China by the end of the year. And Chinese officials say they will publish their own research before releasing genomic data, which raises concerns about what is flying under the radar there until such time as this publication occurs. The WHO's office in Beijing is unable to contribute much to the conversation at this time because—surprise!—most of them are sick with Covid-19. Sigh.

I've read a paper from a team at the University of Edinburgh and Public Health Scotland which was published a couple of weeks ago in Nature Communications. The work dealt with congenital anomalies ("birth defects") following Covid-19 vaccination and SARS-CoV-2 infection. The team performed a matched-cohort study based on electronic health records in the national health system of Scotland to look for associations between Covid-19 vaccination of the mother and congenital anomaly; then they used records of unvaccinated women who were infected between six weeks pre-conception and 19 weeks and six days gestation, the prime teratogenic (birth-defect-producing) period of pregnancy, to look for associations between SARS-CoV-2 infection and congenital anomaly. The study included 581,370 fetuses (in the case of pregnancies that did not end in live birth) and babies, which is a huge sample size, strengthening the statistical analysis done here. They looked at both genetic and non-genetic anomalies.

The short version is that they found nothing. From the results on vaccine effects, "Primary analysis find no association between any vaccination and any anomaly." The adjusted odds ratio was 1.01, which means the ratio of anomalies in vaccinated and unvaccinated women was 1.01:1.00; the same rate of anomalies was seen in the fetuses and babies of vaccinated women as in the fetuses and babies of unvaccinated women irrespective of which vaccine the woman received. Likewise, with regard to infection effects, "Our study also adds to a growing body of epidemiological evidence that maternal SARS-CoV-2 infection is not associated with the risk of congenital anomalies." The odds ratio here was 1.14.

It is important to recognize that this work involved just congenital anomalies, not other bad outcomes of pregnancy; but it happens the British Medical Journal Global Health published a study on pregnancy outcomes after SARS-CoV-2 infection just this week. The research team was led by people at George Washington University and did a meta-analysis (sort of a compilation of a bunch of other studies) of 12 studies in 12 countries involving 13,136 pregnant women. They found that infected pregnant women had significantly increased risk of maternal mortality (7.68 times as high as uninfected pregnant women), admission to intensive care (3.81 times as high), needing mechanical ventilation (15.23), receiving critical care (5.48), pneumonia (23.46), and thromboembolic disease (abnormal blood clots circulating in the bloodstream) (5.50). They also found that babies born to infected mother had increased risk of neonatal care unit admission (1.86), preterm birth (1.71), moderate preterm birth (2.92), and low birthweight (1.19). Their conclusions say, "This analysis indicates that SARS-CoV-2 infection at any time during pregnancy increases the risk of maternal death, severe maternal morbidities [illness] and neonatal morbidity, but not stillbirth or intrauterine growth restriction."

If we put these two pieces of work together with a boatload of other work that's been done, it is clear that having Covid-19 imposes high risks on both mother and fetus whereas Covid-19 vaccination imposes no risks at all. This bolsters the case that pregnant women and women who may become pregnant absolutely should be receiving vaccination for Covid-19.

I am reading that Paxlovid (nirmatrelvir and ritonavir) is still being underprescribed, a particular problem for the elderly and the immunocompromised, both groups especially at risk for severe outcomes including hospitalization and death. I am not sure why the word hasn't reached so many physicians, but apparently it has not. With so much evidence this drug reduces risk in older people, this is not OK. Early on, there wasn't much in the way of research on the efficacy of this drug for those who had been vaccinated

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because the early studies were all in unvaccinated individuals; but now we have robust evidence for use in the vaccinated—around 75 percent reduction in severe outcomes for the vaccinated and 81 percent reduction in the unvaccinated. It has also been shown to be effective against the Omicron subvariants. I am going to suggest to at-risk people that you make a plan for what you will do if you're diagnosed and are not prescribed this drug up front, including seeing another health care provider who is willing to write a prescription.

Some providers are under the misunderstanding that the drug should be used only in severe cases, but this is just opposite the truth which is that it is effective only when given while symptoms are still mild to moderate. We should note that Paxlovid interacts with more than 120 medications more likely to be prescribed to elderly people with chronic health conditions, but often these drugs can be safely suspended or reduced in dosage for the duration of Paxlovid treatment. It may also be a problem for those with reduced kidney or liver function, so this is a consideration as well. Some folks are concerned about the possibility of rebound, the recurrence of symptoms after the acute disease has abated; but in most cases, rebound has mild symptoms that do not last more than a few days. I wouldn't let that stop me if I were diagnosed.

For those who cannot take Paxlovid, there are other antivirals available. The better choice is Veklury (remdesivir). This is a more difficult alternative because it must be given as an infusion on three consecutive days; but when arrangements can be made and Paxlovid is not an available choice, it is a good option. There is also Lagevrio (molnupiravir), which is less effective, but does reduce duration of symptoms and can prevent severe outcomes as well.

I just ran across the abstract for a paper from a group at the Smidt Heart Institute at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles published way back in September in the Journal of Medical Virology. I was unable to access the full paper, so I'm working from the abstract and a summary here. The research team evaluated acute myocardial infarction (AMI or heart attack) deaths during the pandemic, and the news isn't great. The team worked from data from the CDC's National Vital Statistics System and tracked records from April 2012 through March 2022. For some time before the pandemic, AMI deaths had been steadily decreasing, but since the pandemic began, that trend has reversed itself. Key findings from the summary are as follows: AMI deaths increased from 143,787 in the year before the pandemic to 164,096 in the first year of the pandemic. These excess AMI deaths persisted through all of the variants subsequent to the original Wuhan-Hu-1, including Omicron. Worrisome is that this increase was most pronounced in individuals aged 25 to 44, a group who is not generally considered high risk for AMI. From pre-pandemic to the second year of the pandemic, the observed AMI deaths were 29.9 percent higher than predicted deaths in the 25-44 year group, 19.6 percent higher in the 45 to 64 year group, and 13.7 percent higher in the 65 and over age group.

Not that doesn't necessarily mean these excess deaths were all caused by Covid-19; some proportion of them may be due to things like psychological stresses attendant on this pandemic; but we have to at least consider the possibility that SARS-CoV-2 infection is triggering or exacerbating preexisting coronary artery disease, even in younger people, in a more direct way. We already knew viruses like influenza virus can increase risk for AMI, but this spike is sharper than anything we've seen previously, so it is not unlikely that some combination of inflammation and the ways this virus affects cardiovascular tissue is having an effect.

There is another new paper that deals with cardiovascular consequences of Covid-19 made available as an advance copy this week by the journal Cardiovascular Research from a team at the University of Hong Kong. This paper has been peer-reviewed and edited, just not published. This research team evaluated associations between Covid-19 and the development of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and mortality for up to 18 months following the acute infection. The work was based on medical records of nearly 161,000 patients recruited between March and November 2020, so with the earliest variants and before vaccine

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availability; they were followed up until the end of August 2021. Covid-19 patients were matched 10:1 with people not diagnosed with Covid-19 during the study period and with a historical pre-pandemic cohort (to rule out effects of reduced access to health services due to the pandemic). Matching was on age, sex, smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular and other conditions, body mass index (a measure of overweight), ethnicity, and economic status. The average age was 66 years, so this included people who had high risk for both CVD and Covid-19.

Findings included that people who'd had Covid-19 were more likely to develop cardiovascular conditions—four times more likely in the acute phase—first three weeks after the diagnosis—and 40 percent more likely in the follow-up period (up to 18 months). CVD includes conditions like myocardial infarction (heart attack), coronary heart disease (damaged/occluded arteries that supply the heart muscle itself with blood), heart failure (deficient pumping action of the heart), and deep vein thrombosis (clots lodging in veins of deep tissues, usually in the lower body), all of which were elevated in both the acute and post-acute phases. Risks for other conditions like stroke and atrial fibrillation (irregular and/or too-rapid heart rhythm) were elevated in the acute, but not the post-acute, phase. Death risk was also substantially elevated. The likelihood of dying in the acute phase was as much as 81 times higher compared with those not infected, and that risk remained elevated as much as five-fold for as long as 18 months into the post-acute phase. Those with severe Covid-19 were more likely to develop CVD or die than milder cases. It appears the persistent elevated risks of death were attributable at least in part to the CVD that developed as a consequence of the viral infection.

We should note that this study covers the earliest days of the pandemic, so we are not sure how these findings might generalize to the current period. The newer variants of this virus may have different consequences, and vaccination may prevent some of these complications. The only way to find out how this risk looks today is for further work to be done on a more recent time period. Of course, the 18-month follow-up means we'll never be caught up with current risks, but it's certainly worth a look.

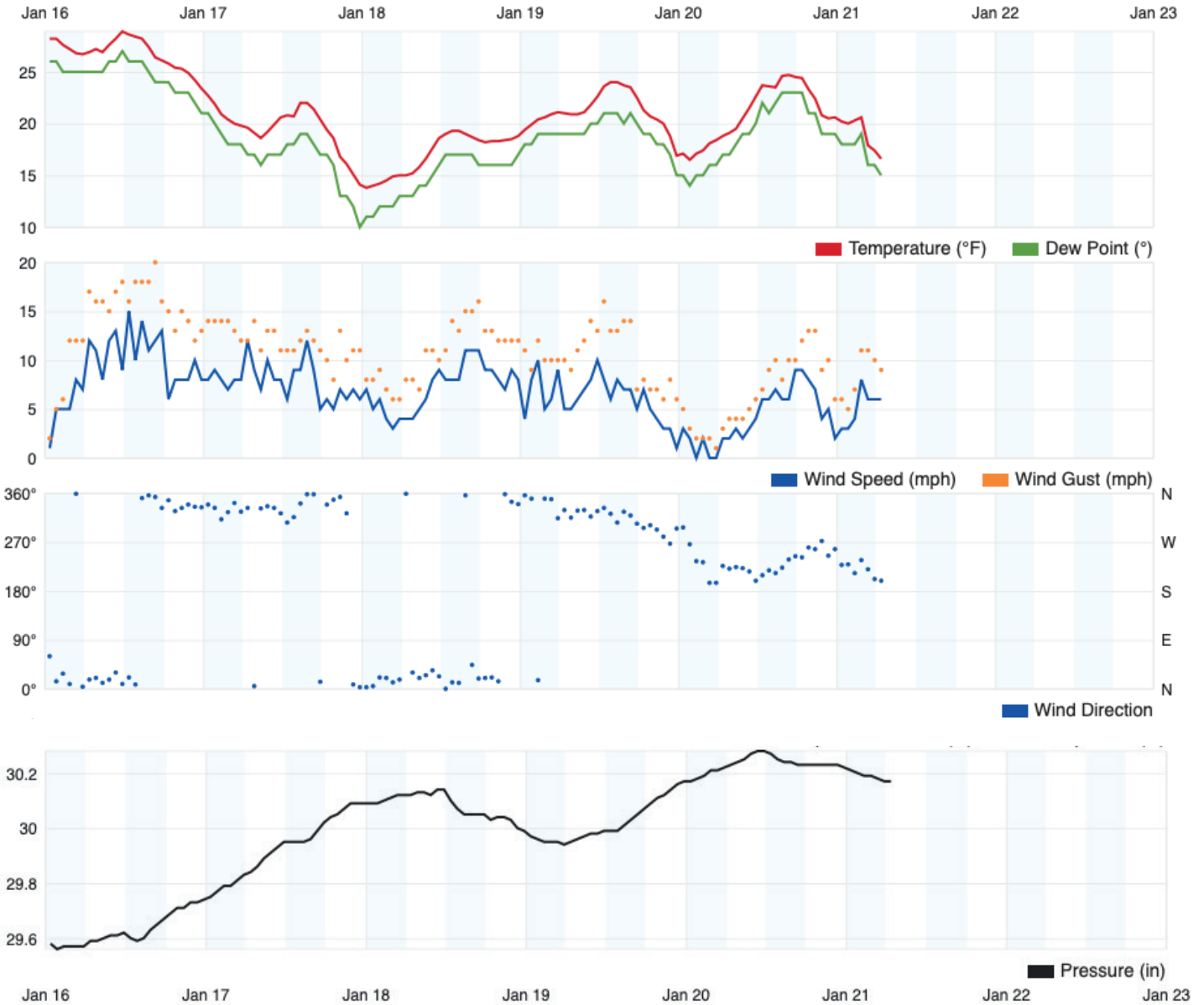
And that's it for today. Keep yourself safe. We'll talk again.

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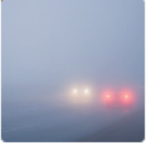






Past Week's Groton Weather Graphs

January 16, 2023 - January 22, 2023



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Patched Dense Fog	Patched Fog then Slight Chance Snow and Areas Freezing Fog	Slight Chance Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy
High: 20 °F	Low: 17 °F↑	High: 32 °F	Low: 7 °F	High: 26 °F	Low: 15 °F	High: 23 °F



Mild Temperatures For January...Until Next Weekend

January 22, 2023
3:45 AM

Areas Of Fog, Some Locally Dense, Across Much Of East River South Dakota



	1/22 Sun	1/23 Mon	1/24 Tue	1/25 Wed	1/26 Thu	1/27 Fri	1/28 Sat
Aberdeen	22	32	28	24	25	27	16
Britton	18	30	25	22	23	24	14
Eagle Butte	35	32	36	29	36	33	23
Eureka	26	31	31	23	28	27	15
Gettysburg	27	31	33	24	30	30	20
Kennebec	30	34	34	29	32	34	22
McIntosh	32	34	32	25	34	29	17
Milbank	20	32	28	24	21	25	12
Miller	26	32	31	25	29	30	21
Mobridge	31	32	36	26	31	33	20
Murdo	34	34	37	31	37	37	25
Pierre	34	36	39	31	35	36	24
Redfield	21	32	27	25	26	28	19
Sisseton	21	32	28	23	23	25	15
Watertown	18	31	25	22	25	25	16
Webster	17	29	25	21	22	24	15
Wheaton	14	31	25	22	19	22	9

*Table values in °F
**Created: 3 am CST Sun 1/22/2023
***Values are maximums over the period beginning at the time shown.

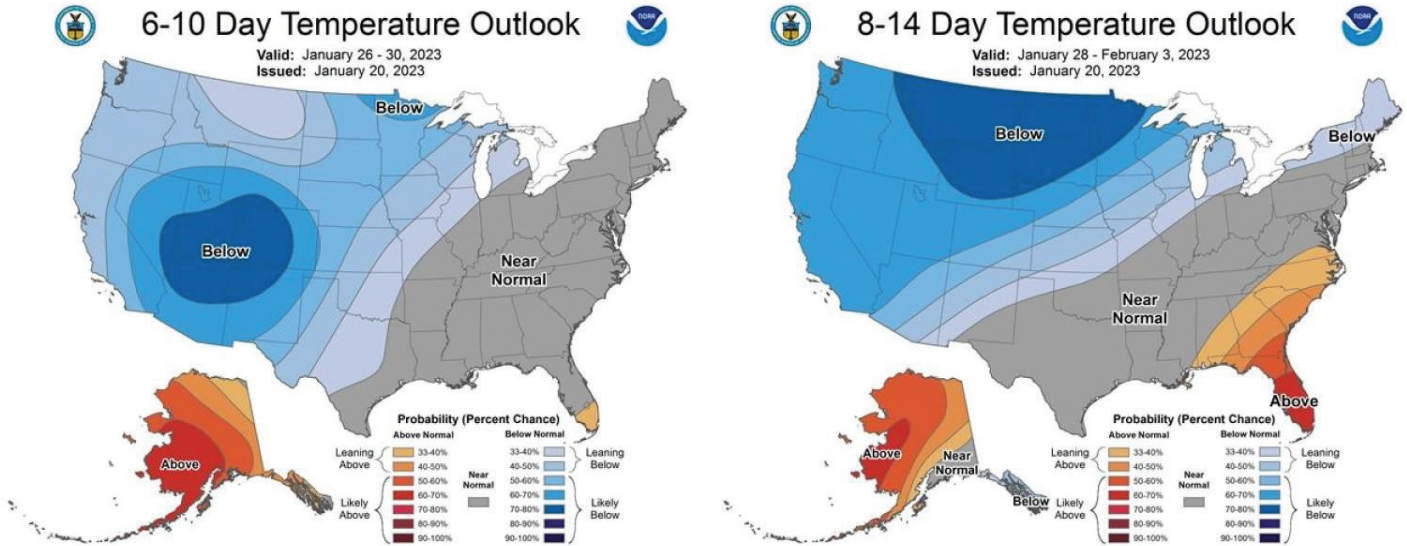


National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

More fog has developed across the region this morning. Daytime sunshine will hopefully dissipate the fog. Meanwhile, one of the bigger stories in the 7-day forecast is the next arctic plunge in temperatures at the end of the week, as noted in the 7-day Temperature Table on the right.

Colder Air Ahead

The likelihood for colder, below normal temperatures increases as we approach the end of January and the beginning of February. Normal high temperatures during this time range from the low to upper 20s across the area.



The likelihood for colder, below normal temperatures increases as we approach the end of January and the beginning of February. Normal high temperatures during this time range from the low to upper 20s across the area.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 23 °F at 2:18 PM

Low Temp: 2 °F at 11:57 PM

Wind: 11 mph at 3:37 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 24 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 58 in 1942

Record Low: -30 in 1937

Average High: 24°F

Average Low: 1°F

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.41

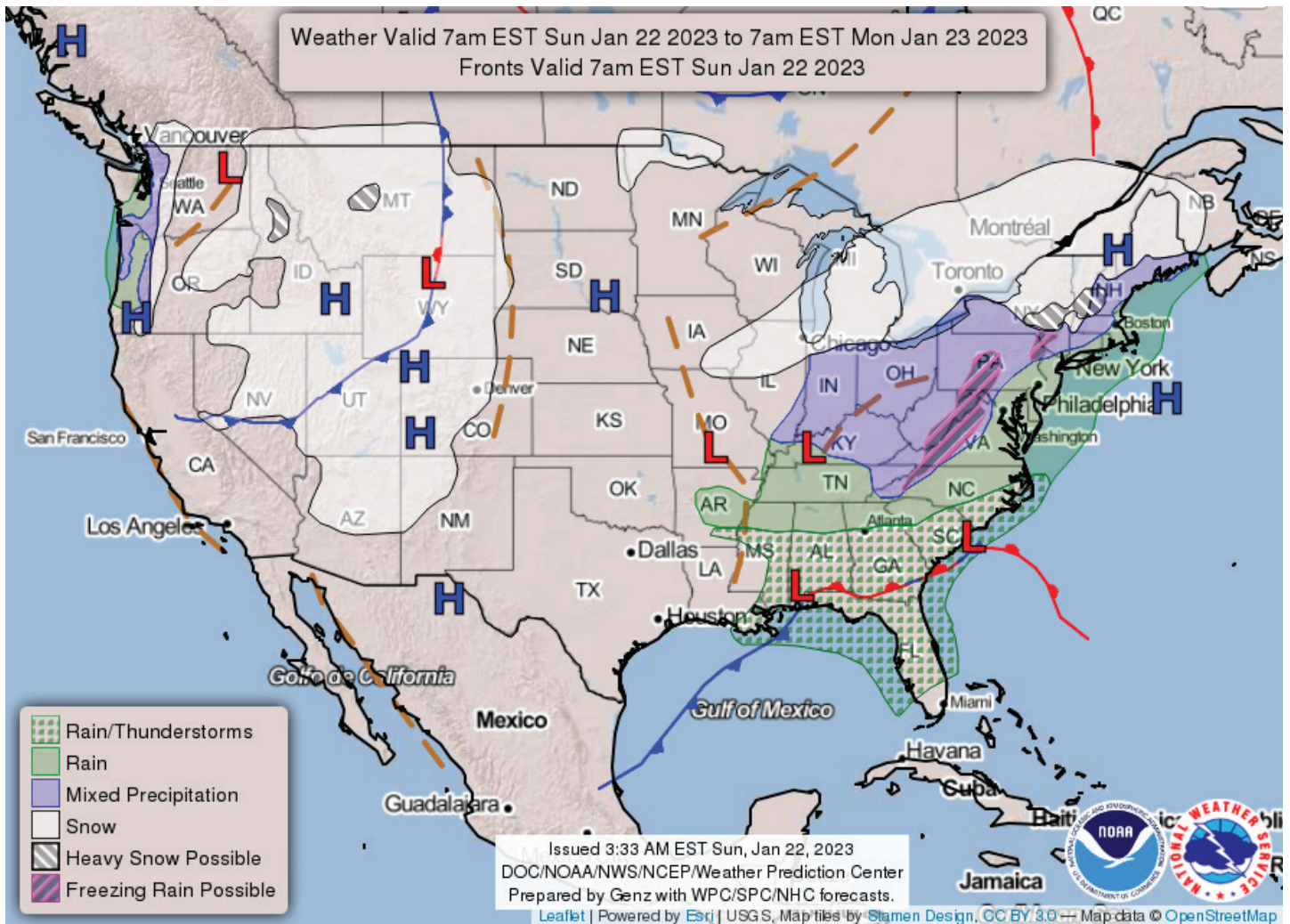
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.41

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:26:15 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:00:49 AM



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Today in Weather History

January 21-22, 1952: A significant winter storm impacted South Dakota, bringing snow, bitter cold temperatures, snow with snowdrifts of 10 to 15 feet. The cold temperatures and drifting snow claimed eight lives. At least 2,500 cattle were lost. Many roads were blocked for three to five days.

January 22, 1973: During the early morning hours, Chinook winds caused the temperature at Spearfish, South Dakota, to rise from 4 below zero to 45 above in just two minutes, the most dramatic temperature rise in the world. An hour and a half later, the mercury plunged from 54 above to 4 below zero in 27 minutes.

January 22, 1982: A winter storm lasting three days from the 22nd to the 24th virtually paralyzed South Dakota with snowfall of 6 to 20 inches. Subzero temperatures statewide coupled with strong winds of 30 to 50 mph brought wind chills of 50 to 70 below zero. One woman died of exposure near her home in Aurora County. Snow drifted as high as 15 feet. Blowing snow caused a reduction in visibility to near zero for most of the duration of the storm. Hundreds of motorists were stranded. Numerous traffic accidents occurred due to near zero visibilities. Some power outages occurred. Major highways, interstates, and airports were closed. Multiple businesses and schools were closed for several days.

January 22, 2010: A powerful mid-season winter storm moved northeast out of the four corners region of the United States and into the Northern Plains. Ahead of this system, warm and moist air streamed northward, creating widespread fog and freezing fog conditions during the days leading up to the event. Heavy rime frost began to accumulate on power lines and tower guide wires, placing a heavy strain on them when the freezing rain arrived in the late morning and afternoon hours on Friday, January 22nd. Along with the freezing rain, southeast winds gusting to 30 mph also strain sagging power lines. Scattered power outages were reported as early as Tuesday, January 19th, due to the frost-covered lines. Still, most of the power lines and power pole damage occurred during the evening of the 22nd and the morning of the 23rd. The freezing rain that arrived during the afternoon and evening of the 22nd was the proverbial "straw that broke the camel's back." By the time the rain, freezing rain, and snow ended Saturday morning, January 23rd, nearly every power cooperative across central and northeast South Dakota suffered large power pole and power line damage. Also, several radio and television towers were downed by the icing and strong winds. The heavy icing and strong winds downed over 5000 power poles and 21,000 miles of power lines across South Dakota, leaving thousands of households without power. Several homes sustained substantial damage caused by broken water pipes. Power was still not restored for many customers until several weeks after the event. Power line crews from Minnesota, Kansas, and Oklahoma were called upon to help restore power. Several counties, along with the state emergency operations center, opened emergency shelters for people to stay. Forty-one National Guard members were on active duty across the state, helping to restore power. Many flights were delayed or canceled at several airports. The ice and the wind also helped topple a canopy at a truck stop at Highway 20 and 212. On January 23rd, a radio and television transmission tower northwest of South Shore was downed along with a tower north of Reliance and a radio tower southwest of Marvin. The hardest-hit area with this storm was the Cheyenne River and Standing Rock Sioux reservations in central and north-central South Dakota. With no electricity, residents depended on donations of food, bottled water, blankets, heat and light sources, toiletries, and cots. The rural water system serving the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe was shut down, resulting in the state EOC shipping water to the reservation. The Governor asked for a presidential disaster declaration for most of the counties and three reservations. The request was for both public and individual assistance for total damages estimated over 20 million dollars for the state.

1904: An unusual estimated F4 tornado leveled the northern part of Moundville, Alabama, just after midnight, killing 37 people. The tornado reportedly had a phosphorescent glow. An engineer on a northbound Great Southern train saw the destruction right after it occurred and backed his train 12 miles in reverse to the town of Akron, where he sent a telegram for help.

1937: Low of 9 degrees above zero in Las Vegas froze many pipes. Schools had trouble keeping warm, and coal was in short supply in the city. January 1937 was the coldest month on record for Las Vegas, with an average temperature of 31.2 degrees, 17.5 degrees below normal.

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

STOP IT!

My sister, "Sis," was an outstanding piano player and could imitate many pianists with her skills and talents. She also authored many hymns and gospel courses and was well-known for her talents and love for the Lord. She was part of several evangelist teams that were popular years ago. Everyone loved "Sis" for her music, sense of humor, and keen insights.

Whenever she became bored with someone who talked too much, she would ask politely, "What would you say if you could not talk about yourself?"

Her question would usually end the "talkers" talking and bring the conversation to an abrupt end. It would force the "talker" to realize what was being said and the conversation would soon end because that person had nothing worth talking about or listening to.

"Without wood, a fire goes out, without gossip a quarrel dies down," said Solomon. All too often quarrels go on endlessly because those involved in the dispute are not listening to what the other person is saying. Beyond that, they usually are not listening to what they are saying, either. Neither has any idea of what they are saying to the other. So, the best way to stop a quarrel is to stop "talking trash!" Gossip is nothing more than rotting trash.

James offers some great advice: "The tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider that a great forest can be set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person..."

Without gossip, quarrels end, and sanity can return.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to control our tongues by filling our minds with Your teachings, our hearts with Your love, wisdom, grace, comfort, and peace to share with others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Without wood, a fire goes out, without gossip a quarrel dies down. Proverbs 26:20



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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2023 Community Events

- 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)
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 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)
- 06/16/2023 – SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 07/04/2023 – Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 – GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 – Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 – GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 – Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 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)
- 12/02/2023 – Tour of Homes & Holiday Party

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.20.23

20 29 31 64 66 17

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$31,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[GAME DETAILS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.21.23

25 27 29 35 50 6

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$34,320,000

NEXT DRAW:

[GAME DETAILS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.21.23

6 10 11 29 35 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 7 Mins 38 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.21.23

3 11 12 22 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$27,000

NEXT DRAW:

[GAME DETAILS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.21.23

1 8 32 37 64 16

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[GAME DETAILS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.21.23

5 14 19 46 64 22

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$502,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[GAME DETAILS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Central 68, Brandon Valley 57

Aberdeen Christian 87, White River 68

Beresford 59, Chester 42

Bowman County, N.D. 76, Belle Fourche 56

Canton 59, Lead-Deadwood 24

Centerville 51, Avon 41

Clark/Willow Lake 47, Canistota 41

Dakota Valley 82, Sioux Valley 57

DeSmet 61, Lower Brule 53

Dell Rapids 77, Elk Point-Jefferson 40

Flandreau 50, Parker 40

Florence/Henry 71, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 39

Hamlin 73, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 48

Hanson 50, Gregory 38

Harding County 52, Bridgewater-Emery 49

Harrisburg 59, Sioux Falls Washington 57, OT

Hot Springs 59, Lead-Deadwood 24

Howard 63, Garretson 18

James Valley Christian 57, Ipswich 52

Jones County 76, Bison 53

Kimball/White Lake 56, Freeman 54, OT

Langford 61, North Central Co-Op 49

Lyman 75, Sunshine Bible Academy 42

McLaughlin 57, Miller 32

Mitchell Christian 63, Arlington 45

Omaha Nation, Neb. 78, Flandreau Indian 66

Philip 58, Kadoka Area 47

Pierre 75, Douglas 45

Rapid City Stevens 43, Brookings 39

Sioux Falls Jefferson 75, Huron 39

Sioux Falls Lincoln 67, Mitchell 66

Sioux Falls Roosevelt 62, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 54

Todd County 73, Crow Creek 71

Watertown 64, Rapid City Central 31

Waverly-South Shore 57, Britton-Hecla 47

West Central 58, Little Wound 39

Winner 51, St. Thomas More 46

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Central 51, Brandon Valley 39

Alcester-Hudson 53, Bon Homme 50

Andes Central/Dakota Christian 48, Irene-Wakonda 40

Arlington 63, Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley, Minn. 44

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Beresford 59, Chester 42
Bison 50, Tiospaye Topa 16
Bowman County, N.D. 65, Belle Fourche 52
Britton-Hecla 55, Waverly-South Shore 17
Castlewood 41, Pipestone, Minn. 39
Centerville 61, Avon 43
Clark/Willow Lake 55, Wilmot 26
Colman-Egan 55, Lower Brule 35
Dakota Valley 51, Scotland 37
Dell Rapids St. Mary 64, Madison 43
Deubrook 39, Westbrook-Walnut Grove, Minn. 30
Elk Point-Jefferson 45, Dell Rapids 37
Elkton-Lake Benton 60, Adrian/Ellsworth, Minn. 26
Estelline/Hendricks 54, Dawson-Boyd, Minn. 25
Faith 55, Lemmon 33
Faulkton 49, Highmore-Harrold 43
Flandreau 63, Parker 22
Freeman 49, Freeman Academy/Marion 11
Gayville-Volin 37, Mitchell Christian 19
Groton Area 45, Great Plains Lutheran 29
Hamlin 45, Florence/Henry 31
Hills-Beaver Creek, Minn. 50, DeSmet 49
Hot Springs 47, Lead-Deadwood 20
James Valley Christian 45, Ipswich 30
Kadoka Area 59, Philip 46
Lakota Tech 62, Wolsey-Wessington 53
Little Wound 57, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 24
Lyman 62, Sunshine Bible Academy 23
Miller/Highmore-Harrold 47, McLaughlin 28
North Central Co-Op 41, Langford 21
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 54, Waubay/Summit 16
Omaha Nation, Neb. 75, Flandreau Indian 36
Rapid City Stevens 43, Brookings 39
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 45, Hitchcock-Tulare 42
Sioux Falls Jefferson 54, Huron 31
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 50, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 25
Timber Lake 52, Harding County 39
Todd County 56, Crow Creek 43
Wakpala 65, McIntosh 38
Wall 70, New Underwood 41
Watertown 77, Rapid City Central 34
Panhandle Conference Tournament=
Championship=
Hay Springs, Neb. 48, Edgemont 39

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

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Mayo's 25 lead South Dakota State past Denver 76-61

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Zeke Mayo's 25 points helped South Dakota State defeat Denver 76-61 on Saturday.

Mayo also contributed seven rebounds and five assists for the Jackrabbits (11-9, 6-2 Summit League). William Kyle III was 6 of 10 shooting and 7 of 9 from the free throw line to add 19 points. Matthew Mims recorded 14 points and was 4 of 10 shooting (4 for 8 from distance).

Touko Tainamo led the way for the Pioneers (12-10, 3-6) with 14 points and eight rebounds. Lukas Kisunas added 14 points and seven rebounds for Denver. Tommy Bruner also had 11 points and four assists.

Both teams next play Thursday. South Dakota State visits St. Thomas while Denver visits Oral Roberts.

Perrott-Hunt scores 22 as South Dakota defeats Omaha 84-68

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Kruz Perrott-Hunt scored 22 points as South Dakota beat Omaha 84-68 on Saturday.

Perrott-Hunt shot 8 for 14 (2 for 3 from 3-point range) and 4 of 4 from the free throw line for the Coyotes (9-11, 4-4 Summit League). A.J. Plitzuweit was 6 of 10 shooting (5 for 7 from distance) to add 19 points. Tasos Kamateros added 16 points.

The Mavericks (7-14, 3-6) were led by Luke Jungers, who posted 27 points. Omaha also got 13 points from Tony Osburn.

These two teams both play Thursday. South Dakota visits Western Illinois while Omaha visits UMKC.

Noem wants investigation into social security number leak

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem is demanding the U.S. Department of Justice investigate why her family's social security numbers were leaked when Congress released its findings in the Jan. 6 investigation.

The House Select Commission on the Jan. 6 Investigation's final report in December included White House logs of visitors in December 2020. About 2,000 people's social security numbers were included in the report, including numbers for Noem, her husband, her three children and her daughter's husband, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported Friday.

Noem visited the White House in December 2020 and met with former President Donald Trump in her official capacity as governor.

Her attorneys have argued the leak violates the 1947 Privacy Act. She said in letters to Attorney General Merrick Garland, the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability and the House Ethics Committee that releasing the numbers could cause "permanent, widespread damage to the lives of my kids and my grandkids, as well as the families of the many other individuals impacted."

LA mass shooting suspect kills 10 near Lunar New Year fest

By ANDREW DALTON Associated Press

MONTEREY PARK, Calif. (AP) — A gunman killed 10 people and wounded 10 others at a Los Angeles-area ballroom dance club following a Lunar New Year celebration, setting off a manhunt for the suspect in the fifth mass killing in the U.S. this month.

Capt. Andrew Meyer of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department said Sunday that the wounded were taken to hospitals and their conditions range from stable to critical. He said the 10 people died at the scene in the city of Monterey Park.

Meyer said people were "pouring out of the location screaming" when officers arrived at around 10:30 p.m. Saturday. He said officers then went into the ballroom and found victims as firefighters treated the wounded.

Meyer gave no description of the male suspect or the weapon he used, or why police gave no information on the shooting for hours while the shooter remained on the run. He also said police were investigating

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another incident in the nearby city of Alhambra to see whether it was connected.

Meyer said it's too early in the investigation to know if the gunman knew anyone at the ballroom or if it was a hate crime or not. He gave no other details.

The Lunar New Year celebration had attracted thousands.

Monterey Park is a city of about 60,000 people that sits at the eastern edge of Los Angeles. The majority of its residents are Asian immigrants or their descendants, most of them Chinese. The dance studio in downtown Monterey Park is just a few blocks from city hall on its main thoroughfare of Garvey Avenue, which is dotted with strip malls that are full of small businesses whose signs are in both English and Chinese. Cantonese and Mandarin are both widely spoken, Chinese holidays are celebrated, and Chinese films are screened in the city.

The tragedy marked not just the fifth mass killing in the U.S. since the start of the year but also is the deadliest since May 24, 2022 - when 21 people were killed in a school in Uvalde, Texas, according to The Associated Press/USA Today database on mass killings in the U.S. The latest violence comes two months after five people were killed at a Colorado Springs nightclub.

Seung Won Choi, who owns the Clam House seafood barbecue restaurant across the street from where the shooting happened, told The Los Angeles Times that three people rushed into his business and told him to lock the door.

The people said to Choi that there was a shooter with a gun who had multiple rounds of ammunition on him.

Wong Wei, who lives nearby, told The Los Angeles Times that his friend was in a bathroom at the dance club that night when the shooting started. When she came out, he said, she saw a gunman and three bodies.

The friend then fled to Wei's home at around 11 p.m., he said, adding that his friends told him that the shooter appeared to fire indiscriminately with a long gun.

The celebration in Monterey Park is one of the largest Lunar New Year events in Southern California. Two days of festivities were planned but officials canceled Sunday's events following the shooting.

Lawmakers seek to bar insurrectionists from holding office

By MAYSOON KHAN Associated Press/Report for America

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Democratic lawmakers in a handful of states are trying to send a message two years after the violent attack on the U.S. Capitol: Those who engage in an attempted overthrow of the government shouldn't be allowed to run it.

New York, Connecticut and Virginia are among states where proposed legislation would prohibit anyone convicted of participating in an insurrection from holding public office or a position of public trust, such as becoming a police officer.

While the bills vary in scope, their aim is similar.

"If you've tried to take down our government through violent means, in no way should you be part of it," New York state Sen. Brad Hoylman-Sigal said.

He is sponsoring a bill that would bar people convicted of engaging in an insurrection or rebellion against the United States from holding civil office, meaning they would not be able to serve as a judge or member of the Legislature. Hoylman-Sigal said he introduced the bill this year because he saw more people who were involved in the riot in Washington on Jan. 6, 2021, running for office last year.

He described the assault on the Capitol as "a real attack on the foundations of our free and fair democracy and the values which enable that to persist."

A Virginia lawmaker introduced a bill this month, on the second anniversary of the Capitol riot, that would prohibit anyone convicted of a felony related to an attempted insurrection or riot from serving in positions of public trust — including those involving policymaking, law enforcement, safety, education or health.

A Connecticut bill would prohibit people convicted of sedition, rebellion, insurrection or a felony related to one of those acts from running for or holding public office. Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff, who intro-

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duced the measure, told The Associated Press that he wants the legislation eventually to bar them from holding state or municipal jobs.

The legislation in the states comes after the House Jan. 6 committee's final report, which found Donald Trump criminally engaged in a conspiracy to overturn the lawful results of the 2020 presidential election he lost and failed to take action to stop his supporters from attacking the Capitol.

The committee's recently concluded work may have provided another springboard for lawmakers to act and propose ways to hold people accountable, said Victoria Bassetti, a senior policy adviser at States United Democracy Center, a nonpartisan organization that advocates for fair elections.

Some Republicans say the legislation is unnecessary.

In New York, Republican Assemblyman Will Barclay, the minority leader, called the bill there a "political statement," saying it is "more political than it is a concern about public policy."

He said existing rules already apply to people in certain positions who are convicted of crimes and that those laws "should be sufficient."

The legislation is another example of how the Capitol riot has become a political Rorschach test in the country.

Many Republicans refuse to see the attempt to violently halt the presidential certification — which was based on lies that 2020 election was stolen — as an insurrection, while a strong majority of the party continues to believe that President Joe Biden was not legitimately elected. Even students are being taught different versions of the attack, depending on whether they live in more conservative or liberal parts of the nation.

The opposing realities came into sharp focus this month in Pennsylvania during a fraught exchange between two lawmakers.

In a committee hearing, Republican state Sen. Cris Dush slammed his gavel as he ruled Democratic state Sen. Amanda Cappelletti out of order after she described the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 as "the site of an insurrection."

"Insurrection, nobody has been charged with that," Dush said. "There's not been a single charge against any of those people as insurrectionists. In this committee, we are not using that term."

Nearly 1,000 people have been charged in the Capitol riot with federal crimes, with about half of them pleading guilty to riot-related charges and more than three dozen convicted at trial. The charges range from misdemeanors for those accused of entering the Capitol illegally but not participating in violence to felony seditious conspiracy for far-right extremist group members accused of plotting to stop the transfer of presidential power.

In November, two leaders of the Oath Keepers extremist group were convicted of seditious conspiracy for what prosecutors alleged was a weeklong plot to use force to keep Trump in office. Leaders of the Proud Boys and additional members of the Oath Keepers are currently standing trial on the sedition charge, which carries up to 20 years behind bars.

Weeks after the committee exchange, Cappelletti told The Associated Press that it's important to make sure people understand that the attack on the Capitol was an insurrection.

"These are factually correct things," she said. "That doesn't mean that we can't disagree politically about policy or other things, but we can acknowledge that that happened and start to figure out how we move forward to work together to build up that public trust again."

Dush remained steadfast in his view that what unfolded on Jan. 6 was not an insurrection.

"If there had been some sort of plot for an insurrection, that would've come apart quite quickly after the government got the control back," he said in a phone interview.

There have been some earlier attempts to prevent certain officials from either running for or holding office.

A New Hampshire bill that would have barred anyone who participates in an insurrection or rebellion from holding office in the state died last year.

Also last year, groups brought lawsuits under a rarely cited section of the 14th Amendment dealing with insurrection. They sought to disqualify a handful of U.S. House members from seeking reelection for

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events surrounding the Jan. 6 riot.

In New Mexico, a state court in September disqualified a rural county commissioner from holding public office for engaging in the Capitol insurrection. Couy Griffin had been previously convicted in federal court of a misdemeanor for entering the Capitol grounds, without going inside the building. He was sentenced to 14 days and given credit for time served.

The judge permanently barred Griffin, who was then an elected commissioner from Otero County, from federal and local public office.

In West Virginia, a former state lawmaker who pleaded guilty to a felony — civil disorder — for participating in the riot and who served time, announced earlier this month that he was running for Congress.

"We have to really rid ourselves of those who would take down our government," said Duff, the Connecticut lawmaker. "There's no place for any of them to be (in) any kind of elected or appointed officer."

Hockey brawls to debt limit: Emmer wrangles House GOP votes

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The way Republican Rep. Tom Emmer tells it, the lousiest job he ever had — he has a saltier way of describing it — was running the House Republican campaign committee.

But after having helped lead his party back into control of the House in November, the former youth hockey coach now must round up votes from those Republicans, as the majority whip, in order to pass GOP priorities.

Corralling colleagues for their support on the debt ceiling, spending cuts and investigating the Biden administration will be tough work for the third-ranking leader who has served in Congress since 2015. With Republicans holding only 222 seats in the 435-member House, almost everyone is needed to reach the 218 votes needed for approving most bills.

Just agreeing to elect California Rep. Kevin McCarthy as the House speaker took 15 ballots.

Emmer was a central negotiator in that effort, hammering out the side-deal to win over holdouts after endless meetings in his first-floor office at the Capitol. It was a crash-course for the budget battles and showdowns ahead.

A look at how the rough-and-tumble Minnesotan told The Associated Press he plans to tackle the job.

SPEAKER'S ELECTION AS HOCKEY BRAWL

Before joining Congress, Emmer was a lawyer and state legislator. Some of his most applicable professional experience, however, comes from coaching hockey.

When McCarthy failed to win the speaker's race on the first votes, Emmer convened the holdouts in his still new Capitol office, so bare there are no pictures hanging on the walls.

"Good teams are always going to have differences of opinion," Emmer said. "If you don't let them express that, you are never going to succeed."

Emmer told the story of a fabled hockey coach who would let players fight it out during practices — almost encouraging it, he said — much the way Republicans nearly came to blows on the House floor during the speaker's election.

"You know what, these guys actually become closer," Emmer said.

BRACING FOR BUDGET BATTLES

Emmer is not part of the conservative House Freedom Caucus. In fact, some Republicans did not think he was conservative enough for the leadership post.

But he won his own internal GOP election to become the whip, brushing back two challengers. When it came time to broker the deal for McCarthy's election, Emmer had to win over some of those same conservative holdouts.

One of the many key concessions McCarthy made to earn the votes of his detractors was a commitment to return to federal spending to 2022 budget levels. Cuts of that size would amount to an 8% reduction in domestic defense, veterans and domestic accounts — or even more, 17%, if the Pentagon money is spared.

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The Republicans also agreed to aim for a balanced budget in 10 years.

From Emmer's point of view, much of what was agreed to with the holdouts is "aspirational."

"Some might criticize me when I say it's an aspirational document because they think it's more than that, and they're right," Emmer said. "Because we now have to hold ourselves to this."

SPEAKER BOEHNER, SPEAKER RYAN AND DEBT CEILINGS PAST

One of the biggest challenges Emmer will face is rounding up the votes for the coming debt ceiling showdown.

Congress is being asked by the Treasury Department to raise the nation's debt cap so it can borrow more money to pay off the nation's already accruing bills.

House Republicans insist they will not lift that limit without changes in the way the federal government spends money — most likely, cuts in spending levels. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in an Associated Press interview Saturday that she expects Congress will ultimately vote to increase the cap. But she said GOP demands for spending cuts in return for backing an increase are "a very irresponsible thing to do" and risk creating a "self-imposed calamity" for the global economy.

It's a repeat from the battles Republicans waged last time they had the House majority, when then-Reps. John Boehner of Ohio and Paul Ryan of Wisconsin were the speakers during the Obama and Trump administrations. In those days the Republicans tried to curb federal spending, with some success, but also with failures that disappointed the right flank.

Those decades-old spending battles simmer on Capitol Hill, especially for conservatives, which is why the Freedom Caucus and others drove such a hard bargain with McCarthy during the speaker's race.

"A lot of it was personality issues that have probably been driven from as far back as when John Boehner was the speaker and then Paul Ryan," Emmer said about dynamics.

"And there's just been a lot over the last several years."

SPARING DEFENSE CUTS

Republicans have different views when it comes to what spending to cut as they try to use the debt ceiling vote to extract their own budget priorities.

While some say they want to see all spending on the table for review, Emmer is among those who believe defense should largely be spared.

"The argument is if you go to FY22 baseline, it affects both domestic and defense — not under Republicans," he said, referring to 2022 budget levels. "Republicans will look for efficiencies, they'll look for waste. We aren't cutting defense. We assured our appropriators and ask our House Armed Services Committee. That's not what we're doing."

THE BEST, WORST JOB

Having helped to elect the class of new House Republicans, Emmer now must help lead them.

The reason he didn't like his old campaign chairman job was because he had to be the "attack dog," as he put it, always on offense. He also had to provide quite a bit of customer service to the Republican candidates. He twice ran the National Republican Congressional Committee.

The GOP whip's job?

"Contrary to popular belief, it's a lot the same," he said — lots of listening and lots of responding.

"The great thing about having 222 (House Republicans) is every voice matters," he said. "So you respect everybody, you respect their opinion. Don't have to agree with them. You don't even have to like them. That's not the issue. But you have to respect them."

And so what's the strategy for passing the debt ceiling or the spending bills?

"I'll let our members tell you a plan," Emmer said. "Our job is to make sure that once that plan is ready for primetime, we get it across the finish line."

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France, Germany renew alliance strained amid war in Ukraine

By SYLVIE CORBET and EMILY SCHULTHEIS Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — France and Germany are seeking to overcome differences laid bare by Russia's war in Ukraine while celebrating their decades-long friendship with a day of ceremonies and talks Sunday on Europe's security, energy and other challenges.

Germany's entire Cabinet is in Paris for joint meetings, and 300 lawmakers from both countries are coming together at the Sorbonne University to mark 60 years since a landmark treaty sealed a bond between the longtime enemies that underpins today's European Union.

French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz will oversee two rounds of talks at the Elysee Palace, focusing first on energy and economic policy, and then on defense.

"Let us use our inseparable friendship ... to shape the present and future of our continent, together with our European partners," Scholz said at the ceremony at the Sorbonne.

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year, the European peace project is at a "turning point," he said. "Putin's imperialism will not win. ... We will not allow Europe to revert to a time when violence replaced politics and our continent was torn apart by hatred and national rivalries."

Macron added: "Our unfailing support for the Ukrainian people will continue in every field."

Both countries have contributed significant weaponry to Ukraine, but Ukraine is asking for tanks and more powerful arms as Russia's war drags on.

The war has exposed differences in strategy between the two countries, notably in European talks on how to deal with the resulting energy crisis and punishing inflation, as well as over future military investment.

Macron called for "a new energy model" in the EU based on diversifying supplies and encouraging carbon-free energy production.

Aside from Ukraine, a top priority for the meeting is working out Europe's response to the subsidies for U.S. electric car makers and other businesses in the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act, according to senior French and German officials.

France wants Europe to counter what it considers an unfair move by Washington. Paris is pushing for the EU to relax rules on state subsidies in order to accelerate their allocation, simplify the bloc's support for investments and create an EU sovereign fund to boost green industries. Berlin, however, warns against protectionism.

French-German government meetings are usually held at least once a year to coordinate policies. The last one was held in May 2021 via videoconference due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sunday's gathering is the first in-person meeting since 2019. It was originally scheduled for October, but was delayed amid divergences on issues including energy, defense and the economy.

The officials are marking the 60th anniversary of the Elysee Treaty signed by French President and wartime anti-Nazi resistance leader Charles de Gaulle and West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer on Jan. 22, 1963.

Berlin and Paris have a decades-long history of bilateral irritants and European disputes that coexist with the countries' friendship and cooperation.

France and Germany have been described as the "engine" of the EU. They have always found compromises even in difficult terrain since they co-founded, with four other countries, the forerunner of the EU in 1957.

"The Franco-German engine is a compromise machine: well-oiled, but also loud at times and marked by hard work," Scholz said.

Israel's Netanyahu fires Cabinet ally, heeding court ruling

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fired a key Cabinet ally on Sunday, heeding a Supreme Court ruling commanding him to do so and deepening a rift over the power of the courts.

Netanyahu announced he was firing Aryeh Deri, who serves as Interior and Health Minister, at a meet-

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ing of his Cabinet. Israel's Supreme Court decided last week Deri could not serve as a Cabinet minister because of a conviction last year over tax offenses.

The court ruling came as Israel is mired in a dispute over the power of the judiciary. Netanyahu's far-right government wants to weaken the Supreme Court, limit judicial oversight and grant more power to politicians. Critics say the move upends the country's system of checks and balances and imperils Israel's democratic fundamentals.

According to his office, Netanyahu told Deri he was removing him from his post with "a heavy heart and great sorrow."

"This unfortunate decision ignores the people's will," Netanyahu told Deri. "I intend to find any legal way for you to continue to contribute to the state of Israel."

Deri said he would continue to lead his party and assist the government in advancing its agenda, including the legal overhaul.

Deri's firing is also expected to shake Netanyahu's governing coalition, a union buoyed by ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox parties, including Deri's Shas, which is the third largest party in the government. While some Shas lawmakers threatened to bolt the fledgling coalition in the aftermath of the court ruling, it is expected to survive Deri's absence and to attempt to craft legislation that would pave the way for his swift return.

Netanyahu is now expected to appoint other Shas members to replace Deri, at least temporarily.

Deri has long been a kingmaker in Israeli politics and has become a key ally of Netanyahu's who has relied on him repeatedly to join his governments and back his agenda.

Netanyahu's government, the most right-wing in Israeli history, has made overhauling the country's judiciary a centerpiece of its agenda. It says a power imbalance has given judges and government legal advisers too much sway over lawmaking and governance. Critics say the overhaul could help Netanyahu, himself on trial for corruption charges, evade conviction or see his trial disappear entirely.

The plan has drawn fierce criticism from top legal officials, the chief justice of the Supreme Court, former lawmakers and tens of thousands of Israelis who have come out repeatedly to protest the overhaul.

In a move that was seen as crucial to bringing the governing coalition together, Israeli legislators last month changed a law that prohibited a convict on probation from being a Cabinet minister. That cleared the way for Deri to join the government but prompted the Supreme Court challenge.

Deri has faced legal problems in the past. He was sentenced to three years in prison for bribery, fraud and breach of trust in 2000 during a stint as interior minister in the 1990s. He served 22 months in prison but made a political comeback and retook the reins of Shas in 2013.

China rings in Year of Rabbit with most COVID rules lifted

By EMILY WANG FUJIYAMA and KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — People across China rang in the Lunar New Year on Sunday with large family gatherings and crowds visiting temples after the government lifted its strict "zero-COVID" policy, marking the biggest festive celebration since the pandemic began three years ago.

The Lunar New Year is the most important annual holiday in China. Each year is named after one of the 12 signs of the Chinese zodiac in a repeating cycle, with this year being the Year of the Rabbit. For the past three years, celebrations were muted in the shadow of the pandemic.

With the easing of most COVID-19 restrictions that had confined millions to their homes, people could finally make their first trip back to their hometowns to reunite with their families without worrying about the hassles of quarantine, potential lockdowns and suspension of travel. Larger public celebrations also returned for what is known as the Spring Festival in China, with the capital hosting thousands of cultural events — on a larger scale than a year ago.

"He has never experienced what a traditional new year is like because he was too young three years ago and he had no memory of that," said Si Jia, who brought her 7-year-old son to the Qianmen area

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near Beijing's Tiananmen Square to experience the festive vibe and learn about traditional Chinese culture.

Nearly 53,000 offered prayers at Beijing's Lama Temple but the crowds appeared to be smaller compared to pre-pandemic days. The Tibetan Buddhist site allows up to 60,000 visitors a day, citing safety reasons, and requires an advance reservation.

Throng of residents and tourists swarmed pedestrian streets in Qianmen, enjoying snacks from barbecue and New Year rice cake stands, and some children wore traditional Chinese rabbit hats. Others held blown sugar or marshmallows shaped like rabbits.

At Taoranting Park, there was no sign of the usual bustling new year food stalls despite its walkways being decorated with traditional Chinese lanterns. A popular temple fair at Badachu Park that was suspended for three years will be back this week, but similar events at Ditan Park and Longtan Lake Park have yet to return.

The mass movement of people may cause the virus to spread in certain areas, said Wu Zunyou, the chief epidemiologist at China's Center for Disease Control. But a large-scale COVID-19 surge will be unlikely in the next two or three months because about 80% of the country's 1.4 billion people have been infected during the recent wave, he wrote on the social media platform Weibo on Saturday.

The center reported 12,660 COVID-19-related deaths between Jan. 13 and 19, including 680 cases of respiratory failure caused by the virus and 11,980 fatalities from other ailments combined with COVID-19. These are on top of 60,000 fatalities reported last week since early December. The statement on Saturday said the deaths occurred in hospitals, which means anyone who died at home would not be included in the tally.

China has counted only deaths from pneumonia or respiratory failure in its official COVID-19 death toll, a narrow definition that excludes many deaths that would be attributed to COVID-19 in much of the world.

In Hong Kong, revelers flocked to the city's largest Taoist temple, Wong Tai Sin, to burn the first incense sticks of the year. The popular ritual was suspended the last two years due to the pandemic.

Traditionally, big crowds gather before 11 p.m. on Lunar New Year's Eve, with everyone trying to be the first, or among the first, to put their incense sticks into the stands in front of the temple's main hall. Worshippers believe those who are among the first to place their incense sticks will stand the best chance of having their prayers answered.

Resident Freddie Ho, who visited the temple on Saturday night, was happy that he could join the event in person.

"I hope to place the first incense stick and pray that the New Year brings world peace, that Hong Kong's economy will prosper, and that the pandemic will go away from us and we can all live a normal life," Ho said. "I believe this is what everyone wishes."

Meanwhile, the crowds praying for good fortune at the historic Longshan Temple in Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, were smaller than a year ago even as the pandemic has eased. That is partly because many had ventured to other parts of Taiwan or overseas on long-awaited trips.

As communities across Asia welcomed the Year of the Rabbit, the Vietnamese were celebrating the Year of the Cat instead. There's no official answer to explain the difference. But one theory suggests cats are popular because they often help Vietnamese rice farmers to chase away rats.

Ukraine's tragic week shows there's no safe place in war

By SAMYA KULLAB and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

BROVARY, Ukraine (AP) — A small broom and dustpan in hand, Olga Prenzilevich cleans up the debris along the road in a sleepy Kyiv suburb next to a cordoned-off mound of charred vehicles and misshapen wreckage.

But she can't sweep away the terrible memory of seeing the government helicopter that carried Ukraine's interior minister tumbling through the fog and crashing into the kindergarten building. Or the frantic dash afterward to save the children, their tiny bodies in flames.

"I am still in shock," the 62-year-old custodian says, the acrid stench of burning still in the air.

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Nearby, Oksana Yuriy, 33, watches investigators photograph the scene to try to piece together how Wednesday's crash happened.

"I thought this was a safe place," she said. "Now I understand there is no such thing."

This is the hard lesson Ukrainians have had to learn in a week of mourning at least 59 dead in places that many considered safe from the violence of the war against Russia, now in its 11th month.

Since February, they have seen lives lost from missile strikes and battlefield combat, and civilians dying in schools, theaters, hospitals and apartment buildings. They have suffered irretrievable losses: a loved one, a place to call home, and for some, any hope for the future.

But this past week seemed to have a special cruelty to it.

It started on the weekend, when a barrage of Russian missiles slammed into an apartment complex that housed about 1,700 people in the southeastern city of Dnipro. The Jan. 14 barrage killed 45 civilians, including six children — the deadliest strike on civilians since spring — in an area once considered safe for many who fled front-line areas farther east.

Then came Wednesday's helicopter crash at the kindergarten in the Kyiv suburb of Brovary that killed 14, including Interior Minister Denys Monastyrskyi, other members of his ministry and the aircraft's crew. One child on the ground was killed and 25 people were injured, including 11 children.

Monastyrskyi, 42, had been traveling to the front line when the Super Puma helicopter went down in the fog, although no official cause has been determined.

Flowers piled up Friday at the fence outside the kindergarten. A 73-year-old woman hung a plastic bag full of aloe vera plants after reading that they might help heal burn victims.

But not all the mourning was in Brovary or Dnipro.

At a cemetery in the town of Bucha, near the capital, Oleksy Zavadskyi was laid to rest after falling in battle in Bakhmut, where fighting has been intense for months. His fiancée, Anya Korostenstka, tossed dirt on his casket after it was lowered into the grave. Then she collapsed in tears.

"The courage of our military and the motivations of the Ukrainian people is not enough," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a news conference Thursday at the Mariynski Palace in Kyiv.

He had appeared a day earlier in a video link to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where he asked his high-powered audience to stand silently to honor those killed in the helicopter crash. His wife, Olena Zelenska, who had traveled to the conference to muster support for Ukraine in person, dabbed tears from her eyes as she learned of the crash.

At an event Thursday at Kyiv's lavish Fairmont Hotel, U.S. Ambassador Bridget Brink told attendees that some of the embassy's staff had died in fighting on the front.

"I know a lot of Ukrainians inside and outside the government are hurting right now," she said, urging her audience of diplomats, businessmen and journalists to not lose faith.

"If you're looking at it day to day, it's almost too hard," she added. "In the bigger sweep of things, it's a different story."

Inside a hospital ward in Dnipro, where she was recovering from last weekend's missile attack Olha Botvinova, 40, celebrated with birthday balloons and cards. It wasn't her actual birthday, she said, but she believes she was born a second time by merely surviving.

"We plan to keep living," she said.

She had fled war-ravaged Donetsk in 2014 when Moscow-backed separatists seized the city. In the spring of 2022, they had to flee again, this time from the city of Kherson after it fell to the Russians.

She thought she would be safe in Dnipro.

The missile attack blew out kitchen and bedroom walls of dozens of apartments. Inside, life as it was moments before the blast is preserved: In an eighth floor kitchen with bright yellow walls, a bowl of apples was untouched.

Many residents are still without windows. Oleksii Kornieiev returned from the eastern front to help his wife clean up.

"Our family's mood is low," he said, saying they must cope with power outages amid frigid temperatures.

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"But we're glad to be alive."

Clothes, pillows, blankets and mattresses were being handed out at distribution points in the city.

"Yesterday they had everything, and today they have nothing," volunteer Uliana Borzova, said of the residents.

"I am trying to hold on," she added. "Because otherwise, we will all just drown in sorrow."

EXPLAINER: Tensions high over isolated Azerbaijan region

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Two years after Azerbaijan and Armenia ended a war that killed about 6,800 soldiers and displaced around 90,000 civilians, tensions between the countries are again high in a dispute over a six-kilometer (nearly four-mile) road known as the Lachin Corridor.

The winding road, which is the only land connection between Armenia and the ethnic Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh region in Azerbaijan, has been blocked by protesters claiming to be environmental activists since mid-December, threatening food supplies to Nagorno-Karabakh's 120,000 people.

The dispute raises fears that new fighting could break out. It also could destabilize Armenia's chronically excitable politics. As well, it casts doubts on the competence and intentions of Russia, whose peacekeeping troops are charged with keeping the road secure.

ROOTS OF THE DISPUTE

Mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh, smaller than the U.S. state of Delaware, has significant cultural importance to both Armenians and Azeris. It had a substantial degree of autonomy within Azerbaijan when it was part of the Soviet Union. As the USSR deteriorated, Armenian separatist unrest broke out, later turning into a full-scale war after the Soviet Union collapsed.

Most of the Azeri population was driven out by the end of the fighting in 1994. Ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia took control not only of Nagorno-Karabakh itself but of sizable surrounding Azerbaijani areas.

For the next quarter-century, Nagorno-Karabakh was a "frozen conflict," with Armenian and Azerbaijani forces facing off across a no man's land and occasional clashes. In September 2020, Azerbaijan launched a full-scale assault to take the region. The fierce fighting lasted six weeks.

The war ended with a Russia-brokered armistice under which Azerbaijan regained control of parts of Nagorno-Karabakh and all the surrounding territory previously occupied by Armenians. Russia sent a peacekeeping force of 2,000 troops to maintain order, including ensuring that the Lachin Corridor remained open.

CURRENT TROUBLE

In mid-December, Azeris claiming to be environmental activists began blocking the road, saying they were protesting illegitimate mining by Armenians. Armenia contends the protests are orchestrated by Azerbaijan. In turn, Azerbaijan alleges that Armenians have used the corridor to transport land mines into Nagorno-Karabakh in violation of the armistice terms.

After more than a month of blockages, food shortages in Nagorno-Karabakh have become severe as reserves run low. The local government on Friday implemented a coupon system allowing only limited purchases of rice, pasta, buckwheat, sugar and sunflower oil. Local authorities have called for a humanitarian airlift for critical supplies, but Azerbaijan hasn't given authorization for the region's airport to operate.

Azerbaijan also has sporadically cut gas supplies to Nagorno-Karabakh — most recently on Saturday evening — and electricity supplies are reduced.

Although Russia is tasked with ensuring the Lachin Corridor's operation, it has taken no overt action to end the blockade.

The European Parliament has called for Russian peacekeepers to be replaced by a mission from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe — even though it criticized the OSCE for failing to resolve Nagorno-Karabakh's status during the decades that preceded the 2020 war.

CONSEQUENCES

With its attention focused on the fighting in Ukraine, Russia has taken a wait-and-see approach to the

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Lachin Corridor blockade, angering Armenia. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan this month refused to allow Armenia to host military exercises of the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization alliance, saying that "Russia's military presence in Armenia not only fails to guarantee its security, but it raises security threats for Armenia." Armenia hosts a Russian military base.

Russia's involvement in ending the 2020 war was seen as a significant accomplishment that boosted its influence in the region. The esteem it gained could be lost if it doesn't take stronger measures to open up the road.

Pashinyan's assenting to the Russia-brokered agreement to end the fighting was widely unpopular in Armenia, with opponents accusing him of being a traitor and large protests demanding his resignation. Failure to resolve the current dispute, leaving Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenians suffering and isolated, could provoke new unrest — and Pashinyan is aware of the potential power of such protests, having become prime minister himself on the heels of large demonstrations in 2018.

Hurts, Eagles pound Giants early, coast to NFC title game

By DAN GELSTON AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — All it took was one throw. Jalen Hurts let it fly on his first pass attempt of the game and suddenly the unease that crept into that often worrisome Philly sports psyche — yeah, but how is his banged-up right shoulder, really? — seemed to dissipate.

Hurts' shoulder was fine. No doubt about that.

With Hurts in complete control, the Philadelphia Eagles once again look like the team that was rarely challenged during an NFL-best 13-1 start.

Hurts threw two touchdown passes and ran for a score during a dominant first half, and the Eagles overwhelmed the New York Giants 38-7 on Saturday night in an NFC divisional playoff game.

"To have him out there, I know this is high praise, it's like having Michael Jordan out there," coach Nick Sirianni said. "He's your leader. He's your guy. That's the biggest respect I can pay to him."

Top-seeded Philadelphia will host the NFC championship game next Sunday against either Dallas or San Francisco.

Hurts missed two late-season losses with a sprained right shoulder and then showed the Giants nothing in the season finale when the Eagles ran a vanilla offense designed to protect the Pro Bowl QB.

Under bright postseason lights at the Linc, the Eagles unleashed an offense designed to clobber the Giants. Hurts dazzled early with his arm and Philadelphia's offensive line opened big holes for Miles Sanders and Kenneth Gainwell as the Eagles finished with 268 yards on the ground. Hurts finished 16 of 24 for 154 yards.

"Seemed like the old Jalen to me," Sanders said.

Hurts showed he was fine when he aired out a pass on the second play of the game and hit DeVonta Smith in stride for a 40-yard reception. The fun was just starting in Philly.

Hurts was flawless on the drive, completing passes of 9 yards, 5 yards, and then — boom — a 16-yard TD pass on a one-handed grab by tight end Dallas Goedert.

Second drive, more of the same. Hurts had completions of 12 yards and 9 yards en route to a 9-yard TD pass to Smith.

It was 14-0 in the first quarter and the Giants already needed a standing eight count. New York turned the ball over on downs on its first possession, and Daniel Jones was intercepted by James Bradberry on its second.

The Linc was bonkers with full-throated chants of "E-A-G-L-E-S!" filling the air and Sirianni went wild chest-bumping assistants on the sideline.

"Philly's been drinking since 8 a.m.," Goedert cracked of the raucous atmosphere.

Hurts' shoulder may not have been 100 percent.

But his passing was: He went 7 of 7 for 89 yards in the first quarter.

"This guy leads, he brings this calmness to the entire team," Sirianni said. "He's as tough as they come."

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To me, there's not anybody that's played better football than him this year."

Even when the calls were obvious for the Eagles, the Giants were helpless to stop them. Case in point: The Eagles had the ball on the New York 3. Give the ball to Boston Scott? Yes they did. Scott scored his 11th touchdown against the Giants for a 21-0 lead. He has only 19 TDs in his career. Giants defensive coordinator Wink Martindale riled up Philly fans this week when he insisted Scott wasn't a "Giant killer."

Hard to argue against that point now.

Hurts wrapped the half with a 5-yard touchdown run — he bobbled the shotgun snap but still coasted untouched into the end zone — for a 28-0 lead. There have been only four more lopsided first-half playoff shutouts in NFL history.

"I'm so proud of this team, how we came out here. I'm so proud of these fans. It's a Philly thing, you know? It's special," Hurts said.

Gainwell finished with 112 yards on 12 carries, including a late 35-yard touchdown. Sanders had 17 rushes for 90 yards.

Coach Brian Daboll's Giants were discombobulated from the start and looked nothing like the team that beat the Minnesota Vikings 31-24 last week for their first postseason win since their Super Bowl victory under Tom Coughlin 11 years ago.

Matt Brieda had an 8-yard TD run for the Giants in the third quarter. Daniel Jones was 15 of 27 for 135 yards and a pick.

"Give Philly credit, they did everything better than we did tonight," Daboll said.

Hurts ran, threw and directed the offense with the same authority as he did when he led the Eagles to a 14-1 start and won over a city that still wasn't so sure about him in the preseason. In last year's playoff loss to Tampa Bay, Hurts threw two interceptions and was just 23 of 43 for 258 yards.

A year later, Hurts is a fan favorite and has the Eagles in the hunt for their first Super Bowl since 2018.

"We're close to the top," Sirianni said. "But don't look at the the top yet."

NEVER BREAK THE CHAIN

There was a busted link at the Linc.

The game was briefly stopped in the opening quarter because of a broken first down chain. The NFL still uses chains connected to two signal poles to measure the distance to a first down. With the Giants driving midway through the quarter, the game was delayed because of an "administrative stoppage." The chain was quickly replaced and the game resumed with the Eagles ahead 7-0.

M-V-P

Two-time NL MVP Bryce Harper, who led the Phillies to the World Series, narrated a hype video. Three-time AL MVP Mike Trout, a New Jersey native and Eagles fan, attended the game and exhorted the crowd to get louder.

UP NEXT

The Eagles moved to 6-0 and Hurts threw two touchdown passes in a 26-17 win over the Cowboys in October. The Cowboys won 40-34 on Dec. 24 against Hurts' backup, Gardner Minshew.

The Eagles last played San Francisco in 2021 and lost.

Bali welcomes back 1st flight from China as COVID rules ease

By FIRDIA LISNAWATI Associated Press

DENPASAR, Indonesia (AP) — A direct flight from China landed in Indonesia's resort island of Bali for the first time in nearly three years on Sunday after the route was suspended due to the pandemic.

At least 210 people were on board the chartered plane operated by Indonesia's Lion Air from Shenzhen in China's southern Guangdong province.

Some Chinese tourists who arrived at the airport in Bali said they were glad to have the chance to travel internationally again after China ended its strict COVID-19 restrictions.

"I feel very happy and relaxed. It was a long time we did not go abroad," said An Pei, a Chinese tourist who was on the flight.

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The flight followed the Chinese government's decision to lift travel restrictions announced on January 8 and it coincided with the start of the Lunar New Year, which was being marked Sunday.

The Shenzhen-to-Bali route will operate once a week during its initial phase, according to a statement from Danang Mandala Prihantoro, a spokesperson for Lion Air.

Indonesia is targeting 255,000 tourists from China in 2023. Indonesia recorded 94,924 visits from China from January to October 2022. More than 2 million tourists from China visited Indonesia each year before the pandemic.

The return of Chinese tourists is expected to support the overall target of foreign tourist arrivals this year. Indonesia aims to record 3.5 million to 7.4 million foreign visits, said Sandiaga Uno, the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, in a statement Friday. China is one of the largest markets for inbound tourism in Indonesia.

"Based on online travel agent data in China, there has been an increase in search volume for overseas tourist destinations by 430%. Indonesia is in the top 5 searches and Bali's search volume has increased by 250%," Uno said.

Indonesia's government is exploring ways to attract more Chinese tourists, including the possibility of direct flights from three main cities in China, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

FBI searched Biden home, found items marked classified

By ZEKE MILLER, MICHAEL BALSAMO and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI searched President Joe Biden's home in Wilmington, Delaware, on Friday and located additional documents with classified markings and also took possession of some of his handwritten notes, the president's lawyer said Saturday.

The president voluntarily allowed the FBI into his home, but the lack of a search warrant did not dim the extraordinary nature of the search. It compounded the embarrassment to Biden that started with the disclosure Jan. 12 that the president's attorneys had found a "small number" of classified records at a former office at the Penn Biden Center in Washington shortly before the midterm elections. Since then, attorneys found six classified documents in Biden's Wilmington home library from his time as vice president.

Though Biden has maintained "there's no there there," the discoveries have become a political liability as he prepares to launch a reelection bid, and they undercut his efforts to portray an image of propriety to the American public after the tumultuous presidency of his predecessor, Donald Trump.

During Friday's search, which lasted nearly 13 hours, the FBI took six items that contained documents with classified markings, said Bob Bauer, the president's personal lawyer. The items spanned Biden's time in the Senate and the vice presidency, while the notes dated to his time as vice president, he said. The level of classification, and whether the documents removed by the FBI remained classified, was not immediately clear as the Justice Department reviews the records.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph Fitzpatrick confirmed Saturday that the FBI had executed "a planned, consensual search" of the president's residence in Wilmington.

The president and first lady Jill Biden were not at the home when it was searched. They were spending the weekend at their home in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.

Speaking to reporters during a trip to California on Thursday, Biden said he was "fully cooperating and looking forward to getting this resolved quickly."

"We found a handful of documents were filed in the wrong place," Biden said. "We immediately turned them over to the Archives and the Justice Department."

It remained to be seen whether additional searches by federal officials of other locations might be conducted. Biden's personal attorneys previously conducted a search of the Rehoboth Beach residence and said they did not find any official documents or classified records.

The Biden investigation has also complicated the Justice Department's probe into Trump's retention of classified documents and official records after he left office. The Justice Department says Trump took hundreds of records marked classified with him upon leaving the White House in early 2021 and resisted

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months of requests to return them to the government, and that it had to obtain a search warrant to retrieve them.

Bauer said the FBI requested that the White House not comment on the search before it was conducted, and that Biden's personal and White House attorneys were present. The FBI, he added, "had full access to the President's home, including personally handwritten notes, files, papers, binders, memorabilia, to-do lists, schedules, and reminders going back decades."

The Justice Department, he added, "took possession of materials it deemed within the scope of its inquiry, including six items consisting of documents with classification markings and surrounding materials, some of which were from the President's service in the Senate and some of which were from his tenure as Vice President."

Attorney General Merrick Garland has appointed former Maryland U.S. Attorney Robert Hur as a special counsel to investigate any potential wrongdoing surrounding the Biden documents. Hur is set to take over from the Trump-appointed Illinois U.S. Attorney John Lausch in overseeing the probe.

"Since the beginning, the President has been committed to handling this responsibly because he takes this seriously," White House lawyer Richard Sauber said Saturday. "The President's lawyers and White House Counsel's Office will continue to cooperate with DOJ and the Special Counsel to help ensure this process is conducted swiftly and efficiently."

The Biden document discoveries and the investigation into Trump, which is in the hands of special counsel Jack Smith, are significantly different. Biden has made a point of cooperating with the DOJ probe at every turn — and Friday's search was voluntary — though questions about his transparency with the public remain.

For a crime to have been committed, a person would have to "knowingly remove" the documents without authority and intend to keep them at an "unauthorized location." Biden has said he was "surprised" that classified documents were uncovered at the Penn Biden Center.

Generally, classified documents are to be declassified after a maximum of 25 years. But some records are of such value they remain classified for far longer, though specific exceptions must be granted. Biden served in the Senate from 1973 to 2009.

Top Biden aide Ron Klain expected to soon leave White House

By SEUNG MIN KIM, MICHAEL BALSAMO and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

REHOBOTH BEACH, Del. (AP) — White House chief of staff Ron Klain, who has spent more than two years as President Joe Biden's top aide, is preparing to leave his job in the coming weeks, according to a person familiar with Klain's plans.

Klain's expected departure comes not long after the White House and Democrats had a better-than-expected showing in the November elections, buoyed by a series of major legislative accomplishments, including a bipartisan infrastructure bill and a sweeping climate, health care and tax package that all Republicans rejected.

The personnel change is also a rarity for an administration that has had minimal turnover so far. No member of Biden's Cabinet has stepped down, in stark contrast to Donald Trump's White House, with frequent staff turmoil and other crises.

The person familiar with Klain's plans was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity to confirm the development, which was first reported by The New York Times.

The White House did not return calls or emails seeking comment on Klain's expected exit. Spending the weekend in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, Biden did not respond to shouted questions about when his chief of staff is expected to depart.

Klain sent an email to White House staff on Friday, which was the second anniversary of Biden's inauguration. "Although much work remains ahead, as we look back on these two years, I am awestruck at what this team has done and how you have done it," he wrote in the email, obtained by The Associated Press, and noted that he bought cake to mark the occasion. He added: "These cakes are my small way of

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adding my personal thanks to those of the President, the Vice President and the country for your service and outstanding achievements.”

Now that Republicans have regained a majority in the House, the White House is preparing to shift to a more defensive posture. GOP lawmakers are planning multiple investigations into the Biden administration, examining everything from the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan to U.S. border policy. Republicans are also pledging to investigate the president’s son, Hunter Biden.

Klain’s departure also comes as the White House struggles to contain the fallout after classified documents dating from Biden’s time as vice president were discovered at his home in Wilmington, Delaware, and at his former institute in Washington. Attorney General Merrick Garland has appointed a special counsel to investigate the matter. Biden’s lawyer said Saturday that the FBI searched the Wilmington home on Friday, locating six additional documents containing classified markings and taking possession of some of his notes.

Among those on the shortlist to succeed Klain include Steve Ricchetti, counselor to the president; Labor Secretary Marty Walsh; former White House COVID-19 response coordinator Jeff Zients; Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack; and Anita Dunn, a White House senior adviser.

Dunn has publicly ruled out interest in the chief of staff job but would be the first woman in the post. She played a leading role in shaping Biden’s political and communications strategy, including the “ultra-MAGA” framing of Republicans that helped Democrats exceed expectations during the 2022 midterms.

Zients has returned to the White House since running the COVID-19 response team in a low-profile role to ensure the administration is appropriately staffed for the remainder of Biden’s first term. Ricchetti, a former lobbyist, followed after Klain and senior adviser Bruce Reed as Biden’s final vice presidential chief of staff.

Walsh, Boston’s mayor before joining the Cabinet, earned praise from Biden as recently as Friday for his job performance. Vilsack, a former Iowa governor, is in his second stint as agriculture secretary after serving in the role for the entirety of the Obama administration. He volunteered for Biden during Biden’s ill-fated 1988 presidential bid in Iowa.

Klain, a longtime Democratic political operative, has overseen a West Wing that has been largely free of the high-stakes drama that permeated the upper echelons of the Trump administration. Klain has been an outspoken proponent of Biden’s agenda via Twitter, where he frequently engages with reporters to defend the president’s record.

His social-media use has run Klain into trouble at times. In October, he was found to have violated the Hatch Act, which bars government officials from political activity when acting in their official capacity, when he retweeted a message from a political group last spring. At the time, the White House said Klain “got it wrong this time” and he promised to be more careful with his Twitter account.

The Indianapolis native has served under Biden for decades, including as chief counsel of the Senate Judiciary Committee when Biden was its chairman. Klain also worked on judicial picks in the Clinton White House, helping with the nomination of Ruth Bader Ginsberg for the Supreme Court.

“With all due respect to my predecessors, I’m sure this is a higher priority for me.” Klain said in an Associated Press interview last month in which he discussed the importance placed by Biden of seating judges on the federal bench. “The fact that (the president) makes it such a priority, makes it a big priority for me.”

Klain helped lead then-Vice President Al Gore’s legal team during the 2000 election’s Florida vote recount in the race against Republican George W. Bush. Actor Kevin Spacey portrayed Klain in HBO’s “Recount,” an account of the events that determined the presidency.

He was also tapped during the Obama administration to lead its response to the Ebola crisis — a background that came in handy as the Biden White House took on the COVID-19 pandemic in the early months of his presidency.

The father of three is married to Monica Medina, an assistant secretary of state.

Violent protest in downtown Atlanta over killing of activist

By R.J. RICO Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A protest turned violent in downtown Atlanta on Saturday night in the wake of the death of an environmental activist who was killed by authorities this week after officials said the 26-year-old shot a state trooper.

Masked activists dressed in all black threw rocks and lit fireworks in front of a skyscraper that houses the Atlanta Police Foundation, shattering large glass windows. They then lit a police cruiser on fire, smashed more windows and vandalized walls with anti-police graffiti as stunned tourists scattered.

The violent protesters were a subsection of hundreds of demonstrators who had gathered and marched up Atlanta's famed Peachtree Street to mourn the death of the protester, a nonbinary person who went by the name Tortuguita and used they/it pronouns.

Tortuguita was killed Wednesday as authorities cleared a small group of protesters from the site of a planned Atlanta-area public safety training center that activists have dubbed "Cop City."

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation has said Tortuguita was killed by officers after shooting and wounding a state trooper, but activists have questioned officials' version of events, calling it a "murder" and demanding an independent investigation.

According to the GBI, the incident was not recorded on body cameras. The bureau said Friday that it determined the trooper was shot in the abdomen by a bullet from a handgun that was in Tortuguita's possession.

Word of Saturday's protest had been widely circulated ahead of time on social media and among leftist activists, with some passing out flyers that read, "Police killed a protester. Stand up. Fight back."

Atlanta Police Chief Darin Schierbaum said during a news conference that authorities made six arrests Saturday and recovered explosive devices after the protesters damaged property along Peachtree Street, a corridor of hotels and restaurants. He said authorities halted the violence within two blocks and no citizens or law enforcement officers were injured.

"We can tell now, early in this investigation, this was not the focus tonight just to damage the windows of three buildings and set a police car on fire," Schierbaum said. "The intent was to continue to do harm, and that did not happen."

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp decried the violence and thanked responding officers.

"Violence and unlawful destruction of property are not acts of protest," the Republican governor tweeted. "They are crimes that will not be tolerated in Georgia and will be prosecuted fully."

The initial hour of the demonstration had been peaceful as a few activists shared their memories of Tortuguita, describing them as an extremely loving, caring member of the "Stop Cop City" community. The speakers said Tortuguita had undergone a 20-hour medic course in order to serve as a medic for fellow "forest defenders" who had found their home in the DeKalb County woods just outside Atlanta city limits.

Opponents of the training center have been protesting for over a year by building platforms in surrounding trees and camping out at the site.

They say the \$90 million project, which would be built by the Atlanta Police Foundation, involves cutting down so many trees that it would be environmentally damaging. They also oppose spending so much money on a facility they say will be used to practice "urban warfare."

The GBI said about 25 campsites were located and removed in Wednesday's raid, and mortar-style fireworks, edged weapons, pellet rifles, gas masks and a blow torch were recovered.

Seven people were arrested and charged with domestic terrorism and criminal trespass, with other charges pending, the GBI said. They range in age from 20 to 34 years, and none are Georgia residents.

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Chiefs, led by hobbled Mahomes, beat Jags 27-20 in playoffs

By DAVE SKRETTA AP Sports Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Patrick Mahomes pleaded with Chiefs coach Andy Reid to let him stay in the game on Saturday.

He argued with trainers, assistant coaches and anyone else within earshot on the Kansas City sideline to let him play through an injured right ankle.

"I'm not coming out of a playoff game," Mahomes would say later, "unless they take me out."

Well, the Chiefs did, forcing him to get X-rays late in the first half of their divisional game against Jacksonville.

But when they came back negative, and Mahomes proved he could protect himself in the halftime locker room, Reid decided to let his All-Pro quarterback back on the field — and he gamely led them to victory.

Mahomes finished with 195 yards passing and two touchdowns, the second capping a 75-yard drive late in the fourth quarter, and lifted Kansas City to a 27-20 victory over the Jaguars and a spot in a fifth straight AFC championship game.

Mahomes also vowed to be ready for next week against the winner of Sunday's game between Cincinnati and Buffalo. If the Bengals win, they will be back at Arrowhead Stadium; if the Bills win, they're headed to Atlanta.

Chad Henne led a 98-yard touchdown drive while Mahomes was out. Travis Kelce had a career-high 14 catches for 98 yards and two scores. Marquez Valdes-Scantling hauled in the eventual clinching TD pass with about 7 minutes left in the game.

"It's a credit to the team I have around me, the coaches around me and the organization in general," Mahomes said. "We try to do whatever we can to be in this position, to get to the AFC championship game and find a way to the Super Bowl."

The Jaguars, who rallied from a 27-0 deficit to beat the Chargers in the wild-card round, squandered two chances to mount another late rally. The first ended when Jamal Agnew had the ball pop loose inside the Chiefs 5 with about 5 1/2 minutes to go, and the second when Jaylen Watson made a leaping, one-handed interception near midfield.

The Jaguars' last-gasp chance ended when Kansas City recovered an onside kick with 24 seconds to go.

Trevor Lawrence finished with 217 yards passing with a touchdown toss to Christian Kirk, who was briefly hurt midway through the fourth quarter but returned to finish the game. Travis Etienne added 62 yards rushing and a touchdown.

"When you get this far you don't want to only go this far," the Jaguars' Foyesade Oluokun said. "You want to keep going."

"I don't really have the words right now," Lawrence added. "The Chiefs did more today than we did."

Long before Mahomes hobbled to the sideline in pain, he was at his creative best, driving the Chiefs downfield on their opening possession.

There was a shortstop-style sidearm sling to JuJu Smith-Schuster, a key third down pass to Kelce as he was being dragged to the turf, and the flip pass to his tight end that gave Kansas City a 7-0 lead.

The Jaguars came right back, taking advantage of a big kickoff return and a short field.

Lawrence, whose four touchdown throws helped to stun the Chargers last week, proceeded to hit Kirk for the matching touchdown.

Then, the complexion of the game changed.

Mahomes was moving up in the pocket when Arden Key brought the full weight of his body down on the quarterback's ankle. Mahomes hobbled to the huddle and managed to get through three more plays to end the first quarter, then was on the field two more plays before Harrison Butker kicked a 50-yard field goal.

During the Jaguars' ensuing possession, Mahomes got into a heated argument with Reid and the training staff. He then threw down his coat and headed to the locker room, forcing Henne to take over midway through the second quarter, just as the 37-year-old journeyman did two years ago in a playoff win over Cleveland.

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"Yeah, I did not want to go, and they kind of gave me the ultimatum that I wasn't going back in unless I went in there," said Mahomes, who cheered on Henne's 98-yard drive from the sideline, wearing a puffy winter coat on a cold, sleeting night.

As the second half began, though, that familiar red No. 15 jersey was trotting back onto the field.

"It was a short leash," Reid acknowledged. "If I felt like he wasn't able to handle it, he would have been out."

His right ankle heavily taped, Mahomes struggled to move around, but simply his presence seemed to calm the Chiefs — and their angst-filled fan base. Butker added a second 50-yard field goal late in the third quarter to extend the lead to 20-10, and when the AFC South champs answered with a touchdown of their own, so did the Chiefs.

Mahomes drove them downfield for one last score that proved to be the margin of victory.

"We know that if it's up to Pat, he's going to be in there. I'm sure he had some words with everyone on the sideline that he wanted to be in there as fast as possible," Kelce said afterward.

"It's just a different feeling when one-five is in there. He can make anything happen, even on one ankle."

STATS AND STREAKS

Mahomes improved to 5-0 in the divisional round of the playoffs. He's thrown 28 TD passes and three interceptions in 10 home playoff games. ... Henne was 5 of 7 for 23 yards and a score. ... Jacksonville had eight wins as an underdog this season, tied for the most in the Super Bowl era.

UP NEXT

The Chiefs wait to hear whether they play the Bengals at Arrowhead Stadium or the Bills in Atlanta for a spot in their third Super Bowl in four years. The Jaguars turn their attention to the free agency and the NFL draft.

Peru closes Machu Picchu as anti-government protests grow

By DANIEL POLITI Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Peru indefinitely shut the famed ancient ruins of Machu Picchu on Saturday in the latest sign that anti-government protests that began last month are increasingly engulfing the South American country.

The Culture Ministry said it had closed the country's most famous tourist attraction as well as the Inca Trail leading up to the site "to protect the safety of tourists and the population in general."

There were 417 visitors stuck at Machu Picchu and unable to get out, more than 300 of them foreigners, Tourism Minister Luis Fernando Helguero said at a news conference.

The closure of the Incan citadel that dates to the 15th century and is often referred to as one of the new seven wonders of the world comes as protesters have descended on Lima, many of them traveling to the capital from remote Andean regions, to demand the resignation of President Dina Boluarte.

Also Saturday, police raided Peru's most important public university in Lima to evict protesters who were being housed at the campus while participating in big demonstrations. More than 100 people were detained, Interior Minister Vicente Romero said.

Until recently, the protests had been concentrated in the country's south. They began last month after then-President Pedro Castillo, Peru's first leader with a rural Andean background, was impeached and imprisoned for trying to dissolve Congress.

Demonstrators are demanding the resignation of Boluarte, the former vice president sworn into office Dec. 7 to replace Castillo. They also want Congress dissolved and new elections held. Castillo is currently detained on charges of rebellion.

More than 55 people have died in the ensuing unrest, most recently on Friday night when a protester was killed and at least nine others injured in clashes with police in Puno. A total of 21 protesters and one police officer have died in the southern region.

On Saturday morning, police used a small tank to burst into the National University of San Marcos in the morning.

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Javier Cutipa, 39, who traveled by bus from Puno, had been sleeping on the floor there since Thursday but left for breakfast right before the police arrived. He described the police action as "practically an assault," with helicopters, tear gas and small tanks.

"This outrages us. The only thing the government is doing with these detentions is worsen tensions," Cutipa said. He added that "when the population finds out about this they're going to react in a more radical fashion."

Hundreds of protesters congregated outside the law enforcement offices where the detainees were being held Saturday evening chanting "Freedom" and "We're students, not terrorists." More congregated at other points of downtown Lima.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights expressed "concern over the police incursion, eviction and massive detentions" at the university and urged the state to "guarantee the integrity and due process of all people."

The university issued a news release saying the police raid took place after protesters "assaulted" security personnel.

Cusco, where Machu Picchu is located, has been the site of some of the most intense clashes, leading to significant loss of tourism revenue. The Cusco airport was briefly shut down this week after protesters tired to storm it.

Train service to Machu Picchu has been closed since Thursday due to damage to the tracks.

Some stranded tourists have chosen to leave by walking to Piscacucho, the nearest village, Helguero said, "but that involves a walk of six, seven hours or more and only a few people are able to do it."

Tourists who had already bought tickets for Machu Picchu from Saturday until one month after whenever the protests end will be able to obtain a full refund, the Culture Ministry said.

The AP Interview: Yellen says debt standoff risks 'calamity'

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in an Associated Press interview Saturday she expects Congress will ultimately vote to raise America's debt limit, but demands by House Republicans for spending cuts in return for backing an increase are "a very irresponsible thing to do" and risk creating a "self-imposed calamity" for the global economy.

The Biden administration and Republican lawmakers have been at loggerheads over how to increase the government's legal borrowing capacity. On Thursday, the government bumped up against the \$31.381 trillion debt cap, forcing the U.S. Treasury Department to take "extraordinary" accounting steps to keep the government running.

Asked in the interview, conducted during her trip to Africa, about such talk of withholding approval for a higher debt limit unless there are accompanying spending cuts, Yellen called that stance "a very irresponsible thing to do" and said it could have serious consequences even before "the day of reckoning."

"It is possible for markets to become quite concerned about whether or not the U.S. will pay its bills," she said, pointing to the negative economic impacts of a debt showdown in 2011.

As for a potential default, she said, that "would impose a self-imposed calamity in the United States and the world economy." The Treasury's extraordinary steps so far mean that the U.S. government should be able to operate until some point in June, when the limit would need to be increased to avoid what could be significant economic damage.

Yellen said she has not spoken with the U.S. Rep. Kevin McCarthy, the newly elected Republican speaker of the House. McCarthy has yet to spell out the size and target of the spending cuts that he contends are needed to put the federal government on a healthier financial path.

President Joe Biden and administration officials have called for a "clean increase" — not linked to cuts — to the borrowing capacity, saying that the risks of an extended impasse could lead to a deep recession that would echo dangerously worldwide if faith is lost in the credit of the U.S. government.

"Congress needs to understand that this is about paying bills that have already been incurred by deci-

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sions with this and past Congresses and it's not about new spending," Yellen said. She said she believes in making sure that government debt levels are sustainable, "but it can't be negotiated over whether or not we're going to pay our bills."

Despite the dire warnings, Yellen said she believes the situation ultimately will be defused because lawmakers can appreciate the escalating danger if the federal government was unable to pay all of its bills: crashing financial markets, mass firings, and an economic downturn that could jeopardize America's place in the world hierarchy.

"I believe in the end we will find a way around this," Yellen said.

The treasury secretary said that White House and officials from her department "are meeting to discuss possible paths forward. And we will have discussions with members of Congress to try to understand what they see as a path forward."

The White House said Friday that Biden "looks forward" to sitting down with McCarthy to discuss a range of topics. But its statement came with no invitation or a date for a meeting.

Yellen said the administration's position remains to not negotiate over the debt limit, but she did not detail possible strategies being discussed inside the White House to ensure the ceiling is raised.

"Congress has to do it," she said. "It has to be done. It can't be something that's contingent on cuts."

Yellen sat down for the Saturday interview in the middle of a continent-spanning trip, in which she met with her Chinese counterpart in Switzerland before heading to Senegal, Zambia and South Africa.

The Biden administration is trying to signal its support for improving the economies of African countries, many of which have young populations that will eventually make those nations the drivers of growth in decades to come. At an African nation summit held in Washington last month, Biden said he would visit the continent this year in a sign of the desire to increase engagement with the United States.

Before the interview, Yellen went to Senegal's Goree Island, touring a building known as the House of Slaves that was a center for the Atlantic slave trade that defined much of American history.

The economist and former Federal Reserve chair has emphasized her desire to reduce racial and income inequality, an element of the systemic racism tied to slavery and its aftermath of segregation. For Democrats, the issue of how to bridge that divide is not just a matter social justice but political pragmatism, given that Black voters are a key constituency for winning elections.

Yellen said the administration has not turned to reparations — payments and other programs intended for the descendants of slaves — to address the inequality.

"The administration has not embraced reparations as part of the answer," said Yellen, adding that "we have a program to try to address these issues that involves many positive steps and adjustments and increasing opportunity."

America is trying to appeal to African countries on moral terms, saying that aid and loans from the U.S. will be transparent and fair in ways that Chinese investments have not been.

Relations between the U.S. and China — the world's two largest economies — have taken on an increasingly antagonistic streak amid the geopolitical fallout from China's friendship from Russia, the persistence of the coronavirus and an era of open globalization that has given way to national security priorities.

The past two U.S. presidential administrations have challenged China's trade practices, with the Biden administration limiting the export of advanced computer chips as it simultaneously tries to boost the U.S. sector.

"This is not competition with China — we want to deepen our engagement with Africa," Yellen said. "We want to make sure that we don't create the same problems that Chinese investment has sometimes created here. That we have transparency, that we have projects that really bring broad based benefits to the African people and don't leave a legacy of unsustainable debt."

Yellen said she had been struck during her time in Senegal by "a sense of dynamism and optimism among all of the government officials and private sector people that I've met with." She pointed to female entrepreneurs who received seed money through the Senegalese government.

"There's a kind of vibrancy about the country and a can-do spirit that we saw," Yellen said. "They're

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coming up with very innovative and original ideas about what they can do to both satisfy local needs and could easily find a global market.”

Brazil’s army chief fired in aftermath of capital uprising

By CARLA BRIDI Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva fired Brazil’s army chief Saturday just days after the leftist leader openly said that some military members allowed the Jan. 8 uprising in the capital by far-right protesters.

The official website of the Brazilian armed forces said Gen. Julio Cesar de Arruda had been removed as head of the army. He was replaced by Gen. Tomás Miguel Ribeiro Paiva, who was head of the Southeast Military Command.

Lula, who did not comment publicly on the firing, met with Defense Minister Jose Mucio, chief of staff Rui Costa and the new army commander in Brasilia at the end of the day. Speaking to journalists afterward, Mucio said the Jan. 8 riots had caused “a fracture in the level of trust” in the army’s top levels and the government decided a change was needed.

In recent weeks, Lula targeted the military with criticism after supporters of former President Jair Bolsonaro stormed through government buildings and destroyed public property in an attempt to keep Bolsonaro in office.

The uprising underlined the polarization in Brazil between the left and the right.

Lula said several times in public that there were definitely people in the army who allowed the rioting to occur, though he never cited Arruda.

During a breakfast with the press, Lula said earlier this week that “a lot of people from the military police and the armed forces were complicit” and had allowed protesters to enter the buildings with open doors. In another interview, the president said that “all the military involved in the coup attempt will be punished, no matter the rank.”

The comments were followed by Lula scheduling several meetings with the defense minister and the armed forces’ commanders. Mucio denied they had mentioned the Jan. 8 rioting, but he said relations between the military and the government needed adjustment.

On the eve of Arruda’s firing, a video of a Paiva speech earlier in the week was released in which he said the election results should be respected in order to guarantee democracy.

Rioters who stormed through the Brazilian Congress, the presidential palace and the Supreme Court in Brasilia sought to have the military intervene and overturn Bolsonaro’s loss to Lula in the presidential election.

In a video posted on social media from inside the presidential palace on the day of the attack, a colonel is seen trying to stop police from arresting Bolsonaro’s supporters who had invaded the building. He asks for patience from the military police, which report to the federal district’s government.

More than a thousand people were arrested on the day of the riot and the morning after the disturbance, which bore strong similarities to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Congress by mobs who wanted to overturn former President Donald Trump’s election loss.

A Brazilian Supreme Court justice earlier this month authorized adding Bolsonaro in its investigation into who incited the rioting in Brasilia as part of a broader crackdown to hold responsible parties to account.

According to the text of his ruling, Justice Alexandre de Moraes granted the request from the prosecutor-general’s office, which cited a video that Bolsonaro posted on Facebook two days after the riot. The video claimed Lula wasn’t voted into office, but rather was chosen by the Supreme Court and Brazil’s electoral authority.

Lula has been trying to reduce the high number of military officers in the government administration left by Bolsonaro. At least 140 military officers have been dismissed since Lula took office Jan. 1.

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Jurors leave Sundance premiere over closed captioning glitch

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

PARK CITY, Utah (AP) — Marlee Matlin, Jeremy O. Harris and Eliza Hittman exited the premiere of a film playing in competition at the Sundance Film Festival on Friday night after the closed captioning device failed to work.

Matlin, who is deaf, is serving on the jury alongside Harris and Hittman for films debuting in the U.S. Dramatic Competition at the festival in Park City, Utah, this week. The jurors walked out collectively when they realized the situation, which happened during the premiere of "Magazine Dreams." Variety first reported the news.

Joana Vicente, the CEO of the Sundance Institute, said in a statement to The Associated Press on Saturday that the closed captioning device, which relies on Wi-Fi, had been checked before the screening and was working, but malfunctioned nonetheless.

"Our team immediately worked with the devices in that venue to test them again for the next screening and the device worked without any malfunction," Vicente said. "Our goal is to make all experiences (in person and online) as accessible as possible for all participants. Our accessibility efforts are, admittedly, always evolving and feedback helps drive it forward for the community as a whole."

Accessibility at film festivals has been a major topic for years, and the incident once again spotlighted how organizers are trying to make changes to accommodate all fans. Vicente said her team has been working hard in that area, but acknowledged there is more to be learned.

"We are committed to improving experiences & belonging for all festival attendees," the statement read. "We consider accessibility as one of the primary drivers of institutional excellence and this work is done in partnership with film teams."

Matlin did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Vicente said she and her fellow jurors would see "Magazine Dreams" in the coming days.

The Sundance Film Festival runs through Jan. 29.

NYC to use cruise ship terminal as asylum-seeker shelter

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City is temporarily turning a cruise ship terminal into a shelter and services hub for asylum-seekers, Mayor Eric Adams said Saturday, announcing the latest in a series of facilities the city has set up — and sometimes shut down — as it strains to handle an ongoing influx.

The Brooklyn Cruise Terminal will have room, food, medical care and other services for 1,000 single men until it reverts to the cruise business in springtime, the mayor's office said in a release. Its first occupants will move from another relief center at a hotel, which will switch to accommodating asylum-seeking families with children.

"Our city is at its breaking point," said Adams, a Democrat who has repeatedly pleaded for state and federal assistance to address the flow of asylum-seekers — some of them bused by out-of-state governors — to the nation's most populous city. Adams traveled this week to El Paso, Texas, to visit the southern U.S. border and press the point. He declared a state of emergency over the issue this fall.

Altogether, 41,000 asylum-seekers have come to the city since last spring, according to the mayor. With the terminal, the city will have five such "Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief" centers for the nearly 28,000 asylum-seekers it is currently housing and those who may yet arrive. Some 77 hotels also have been tapped as emergency shelters.

The city's previous moves to create shelters for the newcomers have gotten a mixed reception and usage. A plan to erect a hangar-sized tent in a beach parking lot was scrapped amid concerns about storm flooding. The city then built a complex of giant tents on an island that houses a park and sports facilities; the tent facility closed three weeks later after light usage as the number of arrivals slowed for a time.

Some advocates for people who need shelter criticized the cruise ship terminal plan, saying that the waterfront building could flood and is ill-suited to housing people. Hotels are a better short-term option,

and the longer-term plan should be to free up space in the city's existing homeless shelters by making more robust efforts to get their occupants permanent housing, the Legal Aid Society and the Coalition for the Homeless said.

"Continuing to move asylum seekers around the boroughs like chess pieces is callous and indicative of City Hall's failure to competently manage this crisis," the groups said in a statement.

Adams said city officials "continue to surpass both our moral and legal obligations and meet the needs of people arriving in New York."

Time's Up to halt operations, shift resources to legal fund

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Golden Globes carpet typically glitters with crystal-studded gowns in pastel hues, but it looked different in January 2018: The ballgowns were black, and the night's key accessory was a pin that read "Time's Up." Onstage, Oprah Winfrey brought guests to their feet with a warning to powerful abusers: "Their time is up!"

Five years later, Time's Up — the now-embattled anti-harassment organization founded with fanfare during the early days of the #MeToo reckoning against sexual misconduct — is ceasing operations, at least in its current form.

A year after pledging a "major reset" following a scandal involving its leaders' dealings with then-Gov. Andrew Cuomo amid sexual harassment allegations, the group tells The Associated Press that Time's Up is shifting remaining funds to the independently administered Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, and stopping other operations.

The decision, which board chair Gabrielle Sulzberger said takes effect by the end of January, caps a tumultuous period for an organization that made a splashy public entrance on Jan. 1, 2018, with newspaper ads running an open letter signed by hundreds of prominent Hollywood movie stars, producers and agents.

Following the highly visible show of support days later at the Globes, donations large and small flowed into a GoFundMe to the tune of \$24 million, earmarked for the nascent Time's Up Legal Defense Fund. The following months saw the formation of the rest of Time's Up, which promised a house-cleaning of an industry rocked by the stunning allegations against mogul Harvey Weinstein.

By January 2023, Time's Up looked very different after a radical house-cleaning of its own — sparked by a damaging internal report — with only a skeleton crew and three remaining board members. Remaining funds now total about \$1.7 million, Sulzberger said; the millions from the early donations already went to the legal fund.

"It was not an easy decision, but the board was unanimous that it's the right decision and the most impactful way we get to move forward," Sulzberger told the AP.

She and the remaining board members — Colleen DeCourcy and Ashley Judd, the actor and one of the most powerful early Weinstein accusers — will step down as Time's Up Now and the Time's Up Foundation, the two groups that formed what is commonly known as Time's Up, shut down.

"Very simply, the Legal Defense Fund really reflects who we were not only at our inception but really at our core," Sulzberger said. "We really just decided that at the end of the day, we needed to go back to our roots. (The fund) was the first initiative that we formed and funded, and remains at the heart of everything we stood for."

The fund is administered by the National Women's Law Center in Washington and provides legal and administrative help to workers, most of them identifying as low-income and 40% as people of color. Time's Up Now and the Time's Up Foundation had focused on policy and advocacy work.

Uma Iyer, vice president of marketing and communications at the law center, says the fund has helped connect more than 4,700 workers with legal services, and funded or committed funding to 350 cases out of just over 500 that applied.

Employment and civil rights lawyer Debra Katz, long among the nation's most prominent attorneys dealing with sexual harassment cases, called the fund a crucial resource for survivors and their advocates.

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"They understand these issues and they've always been completely survivor-centric and respectful of survivors," Katz said of the National Women's Law Center, with which she's worked for decades.

But Katz, who represented key Cuomo accuser Charlotte Bennett, was highly critical of the Time's Up organization, specifically former CEO Tina Tchen and former board chair Roberta Kaplan's dealings with the Cuomo administration. Both resigned in August 2021 amid uproar over revelations they had offered advice after Cuomo was accused of misconduct and that Tchen initially discouraged other Time's Up leaders from commenting publicly on allegations by accuser Lindsey Boylan.

"You cannot backchannel to corporations and entities and believe you were providing strategic advice when you're also suing those entities because they've engaged in serious wrongdoing," Katz said. "That's what they attempted to do. It just erodes trust with survivors."

Current Time's Up leaders take pains to point out that the organization was instrumental in the fight for legislation increasing protections for workers, including extending the statute of limitations on rape in 15 states, and working toward achieving pay equity in women's soccer. The group also worked on issues involving working families impacted by COVID-19, such as emergency sick leave.

"I have two adult daughters, and the kinds of issues that I faced as a young woman in the workplace, I feel Time's Up has made a huge difference in moving that needle," Sulzberger said.

Despite early fundraising success, Time's Up was plagued by issues from the start, often accused of being too aligned with Hollywood's rich and powerful — a theme of the early #MeToo movement overall. The group had leadership problems, too. In February 2019, CEO Lisa Borders resigned over sexual harassment allegations against her son. A bit more than two years later came Tchen's and Kaplan's departures.

Announcing its "reset" in November 2021, the organization made public a report prepared by an outside consultant that listed numerous deficiencies. Among them: confusion over purpose and mission, ineffective communication internally and externally, the appearance of being politically partisan, and seeming too connected with Hollywood.

Part of the problem, the report said, was how fast the organization grew, ramping up "like a jet plane to a rocket ship overnight."

The staff was reduced to a skeleton crew and the few remaining board members spent a year, according to Sulzberger, listening to the group's many stakeholders before making a decision.

Katz said it would be wrong to see the travails of Time's Up — or any organization, for that matter — as a sign of weakness of the overall #MeToo movement. Quite the opposite, she said: It shows the movement's resilience.

"As movements progress and become more mature they go through phases. But if anything, this shows the power of this movement because victims of sexual violence came forward and said, 'We're not going to countenance this (conflict) within our organization,'" Katz said. "It shows the power of individuals demanding clarity in their organizations and leaders."

Britain urges parties, volunteering to accompany coronation

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Buckingham Palace plans a weekend of community events and voluntarism to mark the coronation of King Charles III, looking to highlight the monarchy's links to the nation when Britain crowns a new sovereign for the first time in 70 years.

The plans were revealed Saturday when the palace released the schedule for the three-day coronation weekend, which will begin with the crowning of Charles and Camilla, the queen consort, on Saturday, May 6.

The ceremony at Westminster Abbey will be preceded by a procession from Buckingham Palace to the abbey. It will be followed by another procession, in which Charles and Camilla will be joined by other members of the royal family, and an appearance on the palace balcony.

But there will be more to the weekend than crowns, scepters and ermine robes.

The palace wants the coronation to demonstrate that the monarchy still has a role to play in a multicultural nation struggling to deal with a cost-of-living crisis, budget cuts and a wave of strikes by public-sector

workers.

While there was widespread respect for Queen Elizabeth II, as demonstrated by the tens of thousands of people who waited hours to file past her coffin after she died in September, there is no guarantee that reverence will transfer to her eldest son.

The coronation will be a solemn service presided over by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, but the palace also plans a weekend of events that highlight the various communities and cultures that contribute to modern Britain.

The palace is asking neighborhoods around the nation to take part in the "Coronation Big Lunch" on Sunday, May 7 — the latest incarnation of the block parties that have become a staple of big royal celebrations.

That night there will be a concert at Windsor Castle featuring a choir drawn from amateur troupes across the United Kingdom, including refugee choirs, National Health Service choirs, LGBTQ singing groups and deaf signing choirs. The "Coronation Choir" will perform alongside another one made up of singers from across the Commonwealth who will appear virtually during the televised concert that will also include as yet undisclosed headliners.

During the concert, locations across the country will be lit up using projections, lasers and drone displays.

The next day, the palace is inviting people around the country to take part in "The Big Help Out," encouraging them to volunteer in their own communities.

"The Big Help Out will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas," the palace said in a statement. "The aim of The Big Help Out is to use volunteering to bring communities together and create a lasting volunteering legacy from the coronation weekend."

Walmart shooting victim's mom: Gunman threatened daughter

EVANSVILLE, Ind. (AP) — The mother of a Walmart employee who was shot and wounded by a former co-worker inside a Walmart store in Indiana says the gunman had repeatedly threatened to kill her daughter.

Jenny Couch told WFIE-TV that her daughter, 28-year-old Amber Cook, was targeted by Ronald Ray Mosley II because he was in love with her boyfriend. When the boyfriend told Mosley that he wasn't interested in him romantically, Mosley became angry with Cook and threatened to kill her, she said.

"He kept sending my daughter messages, anonymous, everything. He kept calling her, telling her that he was going to kill her, that he watched her walk her dog," Couch told the Evansville station Friday.

According to the Evansville Police Department, 25-year-old Mosley walked into a store break room where employees were meeting Thursday night and shot Cook in the face with a 9mm handgun. Another employee escaped the room and called 911. Law enforcement officers responded within minutes and fatally shot Mosley. There were about 40 employees and 40 shoppers in the store at the time, but no one else was injured.

On Friday, Evansville Police Chief Billy Bolin praised as a hero a female employee who came to the victim's aid after Mosley left the break room in pursuit of a male employee who had fled. Bolin said she called 911, moved the victim to another room, locked the door and turned out the lights before Mosley returned looking for the wounded woman.

Mosley had worked at the southwestern Indiana store until he was fired last year after being charged with four misdemeanor counts of battery in May 2022 for attacking four co-workers, Evansville police said Friday.

A probable cause affidavit in that case states Mosley told police he had issues with people at work and "lost control." A man who was one of those victims told police that before the attack Mosley was "mad at him" because he told Mosley he had no romantic interest in him, according to the affidavit.

After the 2022 attack at the store, Mosley pleaded guilty to the battery charges, and the case was referred to Vanderburgh County's mental health court, the county's prosecutor, Diana Moers, said Friday. Moers said Mosley had been complying with court-ordered mental health treatment.

Couch said her daughter has life-threatening injuries after being shot in the head but described her

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daughter as "very strong. Strong-willed, strong-headed." She said Cook is surrounded by loved ones at an Indianapolis hospital but is frightened.

"My little girl, laying up here, wondering if she's even going to wake up. She's scared to go to sleep because she's scared that she's not going to wake up," Couch said.

Sgt. Anna Gray with Evansville police said Friday that the woman was in stable condition after being taken by helicopter to the hospital in Indianapolis. She said Saturday that police did not have an update on her condition.

Walmart said in a statement on Saturday that the store has not reopened.

"The store remains closed while we provide support to our associates and determine next steps. An appropriate reopening date has yet to be finalized," the Bentonville, Arkansas-based retail giant said.

Evansville is a city of about 116,000 residents along the Ohio River, some 170 miles (275 kilometers) southwest of Indianapolis.

Big waves to deliver storied Hawaii surf contest The Eddie

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — One of the world's most prestigious and storied surfing contests is expected to be held Sunday in Hawaii for the first time in seven years.

And this year female surfers will be competing alongside the men for the first time in the 39-year history of The Eddie Aikau Big Wave Invitational.

The event — alternatively known simply as The Eddie — is a one-day contest held in Waimea Bay on Oahu's North Shore only when the surf is consistently large enough during the winter big wave surfing season from mid-December through mid-March. The wind, the tides and the direction of the swell also have to be just right.

"Large enough" means 20 feet (6 meters) by Hawaii measurements. That's equivalent to about 40 feet (12 meters) when measured by methods used in the rest of the U.S. Before this year, conditions have only aligned for it to be held nine times since the initial competition in 1984.

Organizer Clyde Aikau said at a news conference Friday that he was expecting waves to reach 25-30 feet (7.6-9 meters) by Hawaii measurements or 50-60 feet (15-18 meters) on the national scale.

"Yes, The Eddie will go on Sunday," he said.

Other places around the world have big wave surfing events: Mavericks in California, Nazare in Portugal and Peahi on Hawaii's Maui Island. But author Stuart Coleman says The Eddie is distinguished by how it honors Eddie Aikau, a legendary Native Hawaiian waterman, for his selflessness, courage and sacrifice.

"What makes this contest the most unique is that it's in memory of a particular individual who really has transcended his time and place when he lived," said Coleman, who wrote "Eddie Would Go," a biography of Aikau.

Edward Ryon Makuahanai Aikau rose to prominence as the first lifeguard hired by Honolulu to work on Oahu's North Shore and was revered for saving over 500 people during his career. He's also famous for surfing towering waves that no one else would dare ride.

Aikau died in 1978 at the age of 31 during an expedition to sail a traditional Polynesian voyaging canoe from Honolulu to Tahiti. Just hours out of port, the giant double-hulled canoe known as the Hokulea took on water and overturned in stormy weather. Aikau volunteered to paddle several miles to nearby Lanai Island on his surfboard to get help for the rest of the crew but was never seen again.

The U.S. Coast Guard rescued the remaining crew a few hours later after being alerted by a commercial plane that spotted the canoe.

Coleman said The Eddie is about the best of big wave surfing and the best of Hawaiian culture.

"They always say at the opening ceremony, where they gather to launch the holding period, 'This is not just a contest. We're not surfing against each other. We're surfing in the spirit of Eddie,'" Coleman said.

This year organizers have invited 40 competitors and 18 alternates from around the world, including Kelly Slater, who has won a record 11 world surfing titles. John John Florence, who hails from the North

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Shore and who has won two back-to-back world titles, has also been asked to join.

Keala Kennelly of Kauai, a women's big wave surf champion, is among the female invitees.

Mindy Pennybacker, a surf columnist for the Honolulu Star-Advertiser and author of the upcoming book "Surfing Sisterhood Hawaii: Wahine Reclaiming the Waves" said there's long been an assumption that Waimea was too dangerous for women and they couldn't surf there.

She said they've had to fight to be included and have meanwhile shown that they could handle big waves in spots around the world.

"To see women — not only women surfing Waimea but women and men sharing the same event together, with mutual respect and equality — I'm just really thrilled at the thought," Pennybacker said.

The contest is expected to attract tens of thousands of spectators to the two-lane highway winding through the North Shore and the small towns that dot the coastal community.

Kathleen Pahinui, the chairperson of the North Shore Neighborhood Board, said it will be good for businesses, restaurants and shops. She urged visitors to carpool and take the bus because the roads will be congested.

"I wish all the participants the best of luck," she said.

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"I wish all the participants the best of luck," she said.

Justice Department investigating Abbott baby formula plant

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. Justice Department is investigating the Abbott Laboratories infant formula plant in Michigan that was shut down for months last year due to contamination, the company confirmed.

The factory's closure in February 2022 was a key cause of a nationwide baby formula shortage that forced parents to seek formula from food banks, friends and doctor's offices. Production restarted in June.

The Justice Department has informed Abbott of its investigation and the company is "cooperating fully," Abbott spokesperson Scott Stoffel said via email. He declined to provide further details.

The investigation was first reported by The Wall Street Journal, which said the Justice Department's consumer protection branch is looking into conduct at the Sturgis, Michigan, plant that led to its shutdown.

Abbott closed the factory after the Food and Drug Administration began investigating four bacterial infections among infants who consumed powdered formula from the plant. Inspectors uncovered several violations at the plant, including bacterial contamination, a leaky roof and lax safety protocols. But Abbott has stated that its products have not been directly linked to the infections, which involved different bacterial strains.

Abbott is one of just four companies that produce 90% of U.S. formula, and its February recall of several leading brands, including Similac, squeezed supplies that had already been strained by supply chain disruptions and stockpiling during COVID-19 shutdowns.

The shortage was especially acute for children with allergies, digestive problems and metabolic disorders who rely on specialty formulas. The Abbott factory is the only source of many of those products.

The FDA has faced intense criticism for taking months to close the plant and then negotiate its reopening.

Venezuela frees former spy chief who defied Nicolás Maduro

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Venezuela's government has freed a former spy chief who spent nearly five years in prison for leading a movement of loyalists to the late leftist President Hugo Chávez in challenging the rule of his handpicked successor, Nicolás Maduro.

Miguel Rodríguez Torres departed his homeland Saturday to live in exile in Spain, according to someone close to Rodríguez Torres who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the release hadn't yet been announced by the Maduro government. He was accompanied by former Spanish President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, who had been working behind the scenes to secure Rodríguez Torres' freedom,

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according to the person.

Rodríguez Torres is a former army major general with deep ties inside Venezuela's military, which is the traditional arbiter of the country's political disputes. He cut his teeth as revolutionary stalwart by partaking in a failed 1992 coup led by Chávez, who was a tank commander at the time.

But he ran afoul of Maduro, by questioning the socialist leader's stubborn adherence to rigid foreign exchange controls blamed for soaring inflation and a cratering currency.

Never embraced by Maduro's traditionally conservative opponents, who despised him for leading a crack-down on anti-government protests in 2014 while serving as interior minister, Rodríguez Torres nonetheless galvanized a small if combative movement of onetime loyalists.

Maduro, who, unlike Chávez, never served in the military, immediately viewed him as a threat. In March 2018, he was hauled away by agents from the Bolivarian intelligence service he once commanded while delivering a speech at a hotel ballroom in which he called for free and fair elections.

Later, he was charged with multiple crimes, including treason and leading a barracks rebellion. But he never admitted his guilt and spent most of the past five years at a military prison in Caracas.

Door of No Return: Yellen visits onetime slave-trading post

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

GORÉE ISLAND, Senegal (AP) — U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen paid a solemn visit Saturday to the salmon-colored house on an island off Senegal that is one of the most recognized symbols of the horrors of the Atlantic slave trade that trapped tens of millions of Africans in bondage for generations.

Yellen, in Senegal as part of a 10-day trip aimed at rebuilding economic relationships between the U.S. and Africa, stood in the Gorée Island building known as the House of Slaves and peered out of the "Door of No Return," from which enslaved people were shipped across the Atlantic.

She was guided on a tour through various corridors and tight quarters in the house, shaking her head in disgust at what she was told about the economics of how slaves were valued.

"Gorée and the trans-Atlantic slave trade are not just a part of African history. They are a part of American history as well," Yellen said later in brief remarks during her visit.

"We know that the tragedy did not stop with the generation of humans taken from here," she added. "Even after slavery was abolished, Black Americans — many of whom can trace their descent through ports like this across Africa — were denied the rights and freedoms promised to them under our Constitution."

Later, in an interview with The Associated Press, Yellen said that while promoting diversity and racial equality is a key goal, "the administration has not embraced reparations as part of the answer."

The economic benefits that major slave-trading nations, including the United States, reaped for hundreds of years on the backs of unpaid labor could amount to tens of trillions of dollars, according to research on the commerce.

And in the U.S., African slaves and their children contributed to the building of the nation's most storied institutions, including the White House and Capitol, according to the White House Historical Association.

Yellen acknowledged the ongoing ramifications of that brutal past in her public remarks.

"In both Africa and the United States, even as we have made tremendous strides, we are still living with the brutal consequences of the trans-Atlantic slave trade," she said.

In a guest book at the house, she wrote that it served as "an important reminder that the histories of Africa and America are intimately connected. While I am pained by its past, I am also heartened by the vibrant community I have seen here. I take from this place the importance of redoubling our commitment to fight for our shared principles and values of freedom and human rights wherever they are threatened — in Africa, in the United States, and around the world."

Yellen's trip to the island is one that many dignitaries have made, including former Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton and South Africa's Nelson Mandela. Today, Gorée Island is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Yellen's stop there during a trip meant to revitalize U.S.-African economic relations is one that evoked

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the massive costs of the slave trade. There has been a resurgence in interest in determining the true cost of slavery on the generations impacted.

The House Financial Services Committee in recent years has studied how U.S. banks and insurance companies profited from the practice of slavery before it was outlawed in 1865. There have also been hearings on the study and development of reparations proposals in the United States.

In the AP interview, Yellen said the administration was "working in many ways in communities of color and low-income communities to try to bring more capital to advance lending and other things," she said. "It's a critically important goal."

Astronaut Buzz Aldrin marries longtime love on 93rd birthday

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Astronaut Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin announced on Facebook that he has married his "longtime love" in a small ceremony in Los Angeles.

Aldrin, who made history along with Neil Armstrong as the first humans to set foot on the surface of the moon, said the wedding took place on Friday, which was his 93rd birthday.

"I am pleased to announce that my longtime love and partner, Dr. Anca V Faur, and I have tied the knot. We were joined in holy matrimony in a small private ceremony in Los Angeles, and are as excited as eloping teenagers," he wrote.

The post received 53,000 Facebook "likes" and "loves" by Saturday and was accompanied by several photos of the newlyweds.

On July 20, 1969, Apollo 11 astronauts Armstrong and Aldrin made their historic walk on the lunar surface, fulfilling a vow by the late President John F. Kennedy to send a manned crew to the moon and safely return them to Earth. Michael Collins was the third member of the crew.

GOP investigations of Biden to test Chairman Comer's power

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In early 2017, freshman Rep. James Comer found himself aboard Air Force One with the country's two most powerful Republicans, President Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. As they returned to Washington from a Kentucky rally, the conversation turned to the president's first legislative push, with McConnell encouraging Trump to pursue an infrastructure deal.

But Trump and House GOP leaders chose instead to carry out a futile fight to repeal the Affordable Care Act. It was a mistake that Comer believes has cost his party for years — and one that serves as a lesson for him as he takes charge now of the powerful House Oversight and Accountability Committee.

"Let's commit to things that are achievable, not just red-meat talking points that will get you on Fox News for 4 1/2 minutes," Comer told The Associated Press in a March interview as Republicans campaigned to regain control of the House.

Those high-minded words will soon be put to a test.

Comer, the grandson of rural Kentucky political leaders, will lead a committee whose members are among the most hard-line conservatives in Congress. Some have introduced articles of impeachment against President Joe Biden and pledged far-reaching investigations of his administration and family, particularly his son Hunter.

Comer has called for vigorous inquiries, too, and during Rep. Kevin McCarthy's grueling path to being elected House speaker, argued that the drawn-out process — 15 ballots over several days — was only delaying the start of that much-needed work.

And yes, Comer has landed regularly on Fox News.

The 50-year-old, who often goes by Jamie and speaks in a thick Appalachian drawl, has been little known nationally. Comer is described by members of both parties as even-keeled and approachable, and his climb to power is playing out in an overtly partisan environment as Republicans hold a slim majority in the House and face Democratic control in the Senate.

Comer, first elected to public office at age 27, has pledged to go after waste, fraud and abuse in the

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government. But as one of his first acts as chairman, he sent letters to former Twitter executives over the company's role in the handling of a New York Post story about Hunter Biden's laptop. In December, Comer called for a halt to all funding of the FBI until bureau leaders came to Congress to explain claims made through internal Twitter communications that officials from the previous leadership team had suppressed right-wing voices. The FBI said those claims had no merit.

Comer is now also confronted by committee members utterly devoted to Trump and to returning him to the White House. Some cling to the baseless allegation that Trump beat Biden in 2020 and seem more bent on getting attention than achieving any legislative outcome.

"I think we've got an important job and I think it's important to be factual," Comer said in an interview with the AP this past week. "I think it's important for the future of congressional investigations because, at this moment in time, congressional investigations don't have a lot of credibility because they've been so partisan."

The former state legislator arrived in Congress after losing the Republican nomination for governor in 2015, a mere 83 votes behind Matt Bevin, a tea party-backed rival.

Days before that primary election, a former college girlfriend outlined several allegations of abuse against Comer in an article in the Louisville Courier-Journal. Comer, who acknowledged dating the woman, denied abusing her, saying at the time that the crime of domestic violence "sickens me."

He came to Washington with a mission to work his way up from the backbench of the committee he now heads. In the last Congress, he became the top Republican on the committee, which was led by then-Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y.

Maloney, who lost a Democratic primary to Rep. Jerry Nadler last year, said she had a good working relationship with Comer. "He was a partisan fighter, but it was also reasonable," she said in an interview. "And we did work together on several bills that helped the country."

Asked whether she thought Comer would be able to lead the committee in a divided Washington, Maloney said: "I think you'll soon find out. He was a serious legislator with me."

Appointed to Comer's committee this past week were ultra-conservative firebrands and loyal Trump allies Reps. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, Lauren Boebert of Colorado and Paul Gosar of Arizona. Their additions are expected to further complicate the chairman's ability to not stray the committee into the fringe.

"I think that Kevin McCarthy has put him in something of a squeeze play by giving in to all of the extreme right-wing demands in order to assemble his thin majority and then placing so many of the extremist members on the Oversight Committee," said Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, the top Democrat on the committee.

"And I know it will take every bit of political skill that he has to both conduct serious oversight and then also accommodate the demands of a group of members who can often be fanatical and unreasonable."

Greene introduced articles of impeachment against Biden on his first day of office and promised to pursue the effort once seated on the committee.

"Joe Biden, be prepared. We are going to uncover every corrupt business dealing, every foreign entanglement, every abuse of power, and every check cut for The Big Guy," Greene said in a statement last week.

The White House responded this week by saying that Comer is "setting the stage for divorced-from-reality political stunts."

Ian Sams, a spokesperson for the White House counsel's office, said in a statement that the chairman "once said his goal was to ensure the committee's work is 'credible,' yet Republicans are handing the keys of oversight to the most extreme MAGA members of the Republican caucus who promote violent rhetoric and dangerous conspiracy theories."

That's the acronym for Trump's 2016 campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again," which has since come to describe his policies and supporters.

Comer said he has made it clear to those members that their mandate is the truth: "I said, 'We'll look into anything, but it's not going to be on Oversight stationery unless we can back it up with facts.'"

Rep. Byron Donalds, R-Fla., who is returning to the committee this session, said he has confidence in Comer's ability to steer the ship. "He's interested in what the facts and the details are," Donalds said. "He's

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not hunting for news cameras and stuff like that. He just wants to get the job done.”

A new committee member, Rep. Lisa McClain, R-Mich., said Comer is going to bring a level of “deliberateness” to “a very firebrand committee.”

One of the main GOP targets will be the Biden family, specifically the business dealings of Hunter Biden and James Biden, the president’s brother.

Republicans now hold subpoena power in the House, giving them the authority to compel testimony and conduct a far more aggressive investigation. GOP staff has spent the past year analyzing messages and financial transactions found on a laptop that belonged to Hunter Biden. Comer said the evidence they have compiled is “overwhelming, but did not offer specifics.

Hunter Biden’s taxes and foreign business work are already under federal investigation by a federal grand jury in Delaware. The younger Biden has never held a position in the presidential campaign or in the White House. But his membership on the board of a Ukrainian energy company and his efforts to strike deals in China have long raised questions about whether he traded on his father’s public service.

Joe Biden has said he has never spoken to his son about foreign business. There are no indications that the federal investigation involves the president.

And Comer has pledged there won’t be hearings regarding the Biden family until the committee has the evidence to back up any claims of alleged wrongdoing. He also acknowledged that the stakes are high whenever an investigation centers on the leader of a political party.

“I just feel like, for better or worse, we’re going to be judged differently than Adam Schiff,” Comer said, referring to the Democratic congressman from California who led the first impeachment of Trump and who has become a boogeyman of the right. “I don’t think he suffered the ire of the media like Republicans would suffer if we crank out stuff that’s not true.”

Gyms that survived pandemic steadily get back in shape

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — One day in January, a once-regular customer at Fuel Training Studio in Newburyport, Massachusetts, stopped in to take a “shred” class. She hadn’t stepped foot in the gym since before the pandemic.

The customer told owners Julie Bokat and Jeanne Carter that she had been working out at home alone in her basement but had slowly become less motivated and sometimes exercised in pajamas without breaking a sweat.

“I was getting bored of what I was doing, so here I am,” Bokat quoted her as saying. She’s heard similar comments from customers who’ve returned after more than two years of working out in a basement or a converted home office.

During the “dark days” of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, Bokat and Carter moved equipment outdoors to hold classes in parking lots and a greenhouse they built for the winter. They also held classes online, but attendance still plummeted by 70%. They weren’t certain the business would survive.

They weren’t alone. Gyms and fitness studios were among the hardest hit businesses during the pandemic, hammered by lockdowns and then limits on the number of people they could allow in for classes and workouts. Unlike bars, restaurants and live venues, there was no industry-specific federal aid given to health clubs. Twenty-five percent of U.S. health clubs and studios have closed permanently since the pandemic began, according to the National Health & Fitness Alliance, an industry group.

For gyms that made it through the worst, signs of stability are afoot. Foot traffic in fitness studios is still down about 3% from 2019 so far in January, but up 40% compared with 2021, according to data from Placer.ai, which tracks retail foot traffic.

At Fuel Training, the greenhouse is gone, as are the parking lot spin classes. Attendance is still down about 35% from 2019, but Bokat and Carter say more people are coming in every day. The gym-goers say they miss the sense of community a gym can provide.

“I feel pretty positive that man, if we sustained our community during like the darkest of days, it can

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only go up from there, and it has," Bokkat said.

Many gyms and fitness studios had to quickly diversify their offerings in order to attract customers during the pandemic – and some say those changes worked so well, they're permanent.

Guy Codio, who owns the NYC Personal Training Gym in New York, went from nine to four trainers during the pandemic and had to pivot to online training sessions. In 2021, he moved to a different space with lower rent and started renting out space to others in the health and wellness industry including physical therapists and massage therapists.

"Everybody was worried during COVID, so we just need to downgrade a little bit," he said. "We had to change the model in order for us to succeed -- almost take a step back, to take another step forward."

Now, he's back to six trainers, but plans to keep the new business model renting out space to hedge his bets in case of another downturn.

In his new space, Codio limits people on the floor to 10 or 12 so customers feel more comfortable COVID-wise. But most customers he sees are "over COVID," and not as worried about getting sick as they used to be, he says.

"If a person is feeling worried there are measures we take, we do have masks or we have them in during different hours when there's less amount of people," he said.

For Jessica Benhaim of Lumos Yoga & Barre in Philadelphia, some pandemic changes have led to a boom in business. Not only is she back to pre-pandemic attendance levels, she recently opened a second location.

Demand returned to normal in the summer of 2022, Benhaim said. She raised the price for a drop-in class by \$5 to \$25 to offset higher costs for employee wages and cleaning supplies, but says that hasn't deterred customers.

Benhaim credits two pandemic changes with helping demand recover: outdoor classes and limited class size. She started outdoor classes from April through October during the pandemic in a nearby community garden out of necessity, but now has no plans to stop them.

"People just love being outside, especially when it's really nice out in the spring, even in the summer when it's hot," she said.

Classes are still capped at 12, down from 18 pre-pandemic. She offsets the decrease by offering more classes in her two studios.

"I think it just gives everyone a little bit more space like, you know, just having a couple extra inches between mats, people really appreciate that."

When the pandemic first hit, Vincent Miceli, owner of Body Blueprint Gym in Pelham, N.Y., expected that 30% of his clients wouldn't come back. He underestimated.

Miceli thinks about 30% of his members left Pelham, a bedroom community near New York City, and moved elsewhere. Another 30% changed their habits and stopped working out altogether.

Now, he's seeing slow growth, similar to pre-pandemic levels, of about 5% month over month as working out at home loses its luster. He's still down about 35% client-wise from where he was in February 2020. Most of the new customers are people who haven't worked out before, he said.

"That gives us a whole new kind of lifeblood of the business," he said. Personal training is booming – up 60%. And he's focusing on fewer classes that are more tailored to his current clients, like a strength and conditioning class called "Strength in Numbers" for women 40 and up.

He says people's interest in being healthy is overshadowing their fear of getting sick in a gym.

"I do think the severity in which unhealthy people got sick over past few years is also letting people who have not done any fitness pay more attention to it," he said.

Miceli's business has recovered to the point that he's ready to start opening other locations.

"I think in-person fitness will never go away," he said.

Brazil's right-wing movement persists without Bolsonaro

By DAVID BILLER and NATÁLIA SCARABOTTO Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Brazil's defeated former president, Jair Bolsonaro, was in Florida this month

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when his supporters tried — but failed — to overthrow the country's young democracy. It was a sign that many in Latin America's largest nation believe so fiercely in his movement that it can persist without its namesake.

Although Bolsonarismo appears disoriented at the moment, the broader trend will endure. That's according to academics who study the movement and participants in the trend themselves, from the far-right radicals who stormed the capital to more ordinary Brazilian social conservatives. Many feel that leftist Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was such a threat to their country that his victory required the military to prevent him from taking office.

Daniel Bressan, 35, traveled 300 miles from the interior of Parana state to join protesters in the capital, Brasilia. He was taken into custody on Jan. 9, the morning after he and thousands of others invaded Congress, the Supreme Court and the presidential palace.

"Bolsonaro brought the spirit of patriotism and family values back to the people, and now we have to unite to keep fighting," Bressan, who denies vandalizing the buildings, said by phone on Jan. 10 from inside the federal police's temporary holding center. "From Bolsonaro himself, we don't expect anything."

On the campaign trail in 2018, Bolsonaro tapped into outrage sparked by a sprawling corruption investigation into public figures. The seven-term lawmaker cast himself as an outsider to segments of society that felt undeservedly sidelined.

Some quietly shared his taboo nostalgia for the military dictatorship. Bolsonaro, a former army captain, has supported torture and said the regime should have killed even more communists than it did. Other hardcore supporters were drawn to his exaltation of conservative values, his full-throated embrace of Christianity and his push to arm the general public. Bolsonaro became the "symbolic glue" holding these groups together, according to anthropologist Isabela Kalil, coordinator of the Extreme Right Observatory.

"It's more about how supporters mobilize the image of Bolsonaro than about his actions themselves," said Kalil. "Those images are independent from the figure of Bolsonaro. He controls them partially, but not totally."

Radicalism deepened at the encampments that mushroomed outside military buildings nationwide after Bolsonaro's loss, with die-hard backers demanding the army intervene to overturn the closest race since the nation's return to democracy over three decades ago. Bolsonaro had repeatedly characterized Lula as a thief who would plunge the nation into communism.

Bolsonaro has been virtually invisible since the election, surprising many who expected a show of righteous indignation after months casting doubt on electronic voting machines. While he didn't concede defeat and requested that millions of ballots be annulled, he also refrained from crying fraud.

Two days before Lula's inauguration, Bolsonaro went to Florida. A week after the inauguration, without any apparent signal from Bolsonaro or the military, rioters took action. The horde smashed windows, trashed artworks, sprayed fire extinguishers and firehoses. Into a wooden table in the Supreme Court, someone carved: "Supreme are the people."

To the limited extent that Bolsonaro commented on the uprising, it was to say that destroying public property was a step over the line. Many of his supporters were left disappointed.

"Trying to distance himself from what happened causes him to lose his link to the base that coordinated these attacks," said Guilherme Casarões, a political scientist at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, a university and think tank. "The attack in Brasilia was a shot in the foot and weakens Bolsonarismo as a personalist, radical movement, its two fundamental characteristics."

Bolsonaro's party had intended for him to be a leading voice in the opposition, yet it remains unclear when he will return from Florida. Back home, several investigations targeting him could strip him of his ability to run for office.

His far-right allies who were elected to office have the opportunity to claim his political spoils for themselves and are vocally defending arrested rioters. Paulo Baía, a sociologist and political scientist at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, said he believes that "the term 'Bolsonarismo' will disappear in coming months," even as the movement continues onward, diluted among other actors.

Unlike Bolsonaro, U.S. President Donald Trump was present on Jan. 6 just before the attack on the Capitol, urging his followers to the building. He has continued defending their behavior since and tried

to make support for the election lies that fueled the attack a defining issue in November's elections. The Republican party underperformed, however, rendering Trump's position within it more precarious than at any time since 2016.

Thomas Carothers, co-director of the Democracy, Conflict and Governance program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said the U.S. and Brazilian riots have no true precedents elsewhere and it is hard to predict what will happen next, but they may have marked high points for both their populist inspirations' political power.

"We need to stop thinking about just Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro isn't the principal leader," Alberdan Souza, 28, who administers a Telegram channel about geopolitics, said by phone from Juazeiro do Norte in Brazil's poor northeast, where he said he is the rare schoolteacher to be proudly right-wing. "He is the guy who caused a surge for the right and for the feeling of Brazilian patriotism, but the movement is much bigger than Bolsonaro."

Radicals have remained engaged on social media, firstly washing their hands of responsibility for the destruction by blaming supposed left-wing infiltrators.

And they continue issuing calls to stay mobilized so the military can act, announcing general strikes and the shutdown of refineries and gasoline stations to grind Brazil to a halt, according to Marie Santini, coordinator of NetLab, a research group at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro that monitors social media. So far, further aggression in the real world has been limited. At least 12 transmission towers were attacked, several of which were toppled, according to the energy regulator.

"It isn't that these calls were successful, but it demonstrates that the coup impetus remains strong," Santini said. "Bolsonaristas show no sign that of stopping anytime soon."

Three days after the uprising, a supposed "mega-protest to retake power" was ultimately a dud. At Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana beach, police and journalists outnumbered the few demonstrators. It was a stark contrast with the scene in the same spot weeks before the election, with flyovers, paratroopers, warships and Bolsonaro delivering a stump speech to a jubilant crowd in his thrall.

"I lost my joy of living," demonstrator Léia Marques, 65, said as she wept. Like other Bolsonaro supporters interviewed, Marques fears the crackdown targeting their movement.

Still, she isn't giving up.

"People are mobilized on social networks and that has a lot of strength," she said through tears. "We will stay strong on the streets."

Obnoxiously loud car? A traffic camera might be listening

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — After the relative quiet of the pandemic, New York City has come roaring back. Just listen: Jackhammers. Honking cars and trucks. Rumbling subway trains. Sirens. Shouting.

Over the years, there have been numerous efforts to quiet the cacophony. One of the latest: traffic cameras equipped with sound meters capable of identifying souped-up cars and motorbikes emitting an illegal amount of street noise.

At least 71 drivers have gotten tickets so far for violating noise rules during a yearlong pilot program of the system. The city's Department of Environmental Protection now has plans to expand the use of the roadside sound meters.

"Vehicles with illegally modified mufflers and tailpipes that emit extremely loud noise have been a growing problem in recent years," said City Council member Erik Bottcher, who heralded the arrival of the radars to his district to help reduce "obnoxious" noise.

New York City already has one of the most extensive noise ordinances in the country, setting allowable levels for a host of noisemakers, such as jackhammers and vehicles.

A state law known as the Stop Loud and Excessive Exhaust Pollution Act, or the SLEEP Act, that went into effect last spring raised fines for illegal modifications of mufflers and exhaust systems.

Because police officers often have other priorities, offenders have gone their merry, noisy way. The new

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devices record the license plates of offenders, much like how speedsters are nabbed by roadside cameras. Vehicle owners face fines of \$800 for a first noise offense and a penalty of \$2,625 if they ignore a third-offense hearing.

City officials declined to reveal where the radars are currently perched.

A year ago, Paris, one of Europe's noisier cities, installed similar equipment along some streets.

Evidence is clear that noise affects not only hearing but mood and mental health, not to mention possible links to heightened risks of heart disease and elevated blood pressure.

"You listen to the noise out there, it is nonstop — the horns, the trucks, the sirens," New York City Mayor Eric Adams bemoaned during a recent press conference that blamed an expressway for noise and illness. "Noise pollution makes it hard to sleep and increases the risk of chronic disease."

Nearly a decade ago, one of Adams' predecessors, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, launched a war on noise, releasing 45 pages of rules that covered chiming ice cream trucks and how long a canine can continuously yap (five minutes during the wee hours of the night, 10 during most of the day) before its owner gets in the doghouse.

In 1905, the New York Times had declared the metropolis "a bonfire of sound that is rapidly spreading beyond control of any ordinary extinguisher." The article asked: "Is there any relief possible?"

A global pandemic more than a century later answered that question. For a few months in the spring of 2020, the roar of vehicles on city streets stopped as people stayed in their homes.

The silence allowed people to hear birdsong again — though it was often interrupted by wailing ambulance sirens and, at night, bursts of illegal fireworks.

"As quiet as it was during the lockdown, it was a very uncomfortable quiet. It was a scary quiet because it carried a lot of implications with it," said Juan Pablo Bello, the lead investigator of Sounds of New York City, or SONYC, a New York University endeavor to study urban noise.

Bello and his team initially hoped to collect data on the dissonance of routine urban life but the coronavirus intervened. Instead, they monitored the acoustical rhythms of a city under lockdown.

The number of noise complaints actually grew during the pandemic, but some experts say that was a symptom of homebound people becoming hypersensitive to their uneasy environments.

Complaints over noisy neighbors nearly doubled in the first year of the pandemic. Many other complaints were attributed to cars and motorcycles with modified mufflers.

Still, some people say efforts to quiet loud vehicles go too far. Phillip Franklin, a 30-year-old Bronx car enthusiast, launched an online petition to protest the state's noise law.

"The majority of us live here in New York City, where noise is a part of our daily lives," said his petition, which asserted that quiet vehicles pose dangers to inattentive pedestrians.

"Fixing potholes is a lot more important than going after noisy cars," Franklin said in an interview.

Loud noise, hitting 120 decibels, can cause immediate harm to one's ears, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Even prolonged noise above 70 decibels can eventually damage hearing. A roaring motorcycle is about 95 decibels.

Firms specializing in architectural acoustics have multiplied. Designing new buildings or retrofitting old ones with anti-noise technology is now a booming business.

At the Manhattan offices of the environmental engineering firm AKRF, the company has what it calls the "PinDrop" room — suggesting a space so quiet you might hear a pin drop — that has an audio system that simulates the erratic symphony of sounds that the city's denizens must endure.

While architectural drawings might render the use of space, acoustical renderings depict how sound and noise might fill a space.

"So if it's for sleeping, we want you to be able to sleep. If it's for listening, we want you to be able to hear," said AKRF acoustical consultant Nathaniel Fletcher.

Even with sound barriers, tight-fitting windows and noise-dampening insulation, there's only so much that can be done about the racket. Most New Yorkers come to peace with that.

"I think people developed an appreciation for the fact that it's a messy, noisy city," said Bello, the NYU

researcher. "We like it to be active, and we like it to be lively. And we like it to be full of jobs and activity, and not this sort of scary, quite unnerving place."

German caution on Ukraine arms rooted in political culture

By GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germany has become one of Ukraine's leading weapons suppliers in the 11 months since Russia's invasion, but Chancellor Olaf Scholz also has gained a reputation for hesitating to take each new step — generating impatience among allies.

Berlin's perceived foot-dragging, most recently on the Leopard 2 battle tanks that Kyiv has long sought, is rooted at least partly in a post-World War II political culture of military caution, along with present-day worries about a possible escalation in the war.

On Friday, Germany inched closer to a decision to deliver the tanks, ordering a review of its Leopard stocks in preparation for a possible green light.

There was still no commitment, however. Defense Minister Boris Pistorius rejected the suggestion that Germany was standing in the way but said, "we have to balance all the pros and contras before we decide things like that, just like that."

It's a pattern that has been repeated over the months as Scholz first held off pledging new, heavier equipment, then eventually agreed to do so.

Most recently, Germany said in early January that it would send 40 Marder armored personnel carriers to Ukraine — doing so in a joint announcement with the U.S., which pledged 50 Bradley armored vehicles.

That decision followed months of calls for Berlin to send the Marder and stoked pressure for it to move up another step to the Leopard tank.

"There is a discrepancy between the actual size of the commitment and weapons deliveries — it's the second-largest European supplier — and the hesitancy with which it is done," said Thomas Kleine-Brockhoff, a Berlin-based senior analyst with the German Marshall Fund of the United States think tank.

Scholz, an unshakably self-confident politician with a stubborn streak and little taste for bowing to public calls for action, has stuck resolutely to his approach. He has said that Germany won't go it alone on weapons decisions and pointed to the need to avoid NATO becoming a direct party to the war with Russia.

As pressure mounted last week, he declared that he wouldn't be rushed into important security decisions by "excited comments." And he insisted that a majority in Germany supports his government's "calm, well-considered and careful" decision-making.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Wednesday, Scholz listed some of the equipment Germany has sent to Ukraine, declaring that it marks "a profound turning point in German foreign and security policy."

That is, at least to some extent, true. Germany refused to provide lethal weapons before the invasion started, reflecting a political culture rooted in part in the memory of Germany's own history of aggression during the 20th century — including the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

"No German chancellor, of no party, wants to be seen out front in pushing a military agenda — you want to try all other options before you resort to that," Kleine-Brockhoff said. "And therefore for domestic consumption, it is seen as a positive thing for a German chancellor not to lead on this, to be cautious, to be resistant, to have tried all other options."

Scholz does face calls from Germany's center-right opposition and some in his three-party governing coalition to be more proactive on military aid; less so from his own center-left Social Democratic Party, which for decades was steeped in the legacy of Cold War rapprochement pursued by predecessor Willy Brandt in the early 1970s.

Scholz "decided early on that he does not want to lead militarily on Ukraine assistance," Kleine-Brockhoff said, though "he wants to be a good ally and part of the alliance and in the middle of the pack."

But the cautious approach "drives allies crazy" and raises questions over whether they can count on the Germans, Kleine-Brockhoff acknowledged.

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Berlin kept up its caution on the Leopard tank even after Britain announced last week that it would provide Ukraine its own Challenger 2 tanks.

The hesitancy isn't just an issue between Berlin and Kyiv, since other countries would need Germany's permission to send their own stocks of German-made Leopards to Ukraine. On Wednesday, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said Warsaw would consider giving its tanks even without Berlin's permission.

"Consent is of secondary importance here. We will either obtain it quickly, or we will do the right thing ourselves," Morawiecki said.

British historian Timothy Garton Ash wrote in *The Guardian* and other newspapers this week that "to its credit, the German government's position on military support for Ukraine has moved a very long way since the eve of the Russian invasion."

But he argued that the tank issue has become "a litmus test of Germany's courage to resist (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's nuclear blackmail, overcome its own domestic cocktail of fears and doubts, and defend a free and sovereign Ukraine," and that Scholz should lead a "European Leopard plan."

Whether that will eventually happen remains to be seen. Scholz's government has insisted on close coordination with the United States, a possible reflection in part of the fact that Germany — unlike Britain and France — relies on the U.S. nuclear deterrent.

On Friday, Scholz's spokesman, Steffen Hebestreit, denied reports that Germany had insisted it would only deliver Leopard tanks if the U.S. sends its own Abrams tanks. He rejected the notion that Berlin is trailing others and insisted it is taking the right approach.

"These are not easy decisions, and they need to be well-weighed," he said. "And this is about them being sustainable, that all can go along with them and stand behind them — and part of a leadership performance is keeping an alliance together."

The U.S. has resisted providing M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine, citing extensive and complex maintenance and logistical challenges with the high-tech vehicles. Washington believes it would be more productive to send German Leopards since many allies have them and Ukrainian troops would need less training than on the more difficult Abrams.

Afghan soldier seeks asylum after arrest at US-Mexico border

By JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Abdul Wasi Safi kept documents detailing his time as an Afghan soldier who worked with the U.S. military close to him as he made the monthslong, treacherous journey from Brazil to the U.S.-Mexico border.

He fled Afghanistan fearing retribution from the Taliban following the August 2021 American withdrawal, and hoped the paperwork would secure his asylum in the U.S. Despite thick jungles, raging rivers and beatings, he kept those documents safe.

But after crossing the U.S.-Mexico border near Eagle Pass, Texas, in September, Wasi Safi was arrested on a federal immigration charge. He remains jailed at a detention center in Eden, Texas, and fears his asylum claim may be denied.

Wasi Safi's brother, attorneys, military organizations and a bipartisan group of lawmakers working to free him say his case highlights how America's chaotic military withdrawal continues to harm Afghan citizens who helped the U.S. but were left behind.

"He tried every way possible to save these certificates in the hopes that once he ... presents his appropriate documents at the southern border ... he would receive a warm welcome and his service would be appreciated and recognized," said Sami-ullah Safi, his brother.

If sent back to Afghanistan, he could be killed by the Taliban, which since its takeover has killed more than 100 Afghan officials and security force members, according to a United Nations report.

"It's honestly just shameful that we've treated people that helped protect our country this way," said Jennifer Cervantes, one of Wasi Safi's immigration attorneys.

Wasi Safi, 27, had been an intelligence officer with the Afghan National Security Forces, providing U.S.

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forces with information on terrorists, said Sami-ullah Safi, 29, who goes by Sami.

Sami Safi had been employed by the U.S. military as a translator since 2010, making him eligible for a special immigrant visa for interpreters and others paid by the U.S. government. The visa allowed him to move to Houston in 2015.

But Wasi Safi was not eligible for that visa because he was not employed directly by the U.S.

When American forces withdrew from Afghanistan, Wasi Safi went into hiding and learned that friends in the Afghan military had been killed by the Taliban.

He was able to get a visa for Brazil and traveled there in 2022. But he realized he wasn't much safer as he and other migrants were beaten and robbed by gangs.

In the summer of 2022, Wasi Safi began his journey to the U.S.

When he crossed a huge river in the Darien Gap, the imposing and dangerous stretch of thick jungle between Colombia and Panama, Wasi Safi kept a backpack with his documents above his head, so they wouldn't get wet.

When police officers in Guatemala tried to extort him and took his backpack, Wasi Safi endured their beatings until he got the documents back, according to his brother.

On his journey, Wasi Safi suffered serious injuries from beatings, including damaged front teeth and hearing loss in his right ear. Zachary Fertitta, one of his criminal defense attorneys, said Wasi Safi has not received proper medical care while in detention. A GoFundMe page has been set up to help pay for medical care if he's released.

Sami Safi said his brother has become disillusioned since his detention, believing the documents he thought would save him are worthless.

But Fertitta said those documents show "he's clearly an ally, was trained by our troops, worked with our troops."

U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, a Houston Democrat, last week sent a letter to President Joe Biden, asking him to pardon Wasi Safi for his immigration related charges. She said Thursday that his documents show he's "an individual who obviously loved this country ... and was willing to die for this country."

Republican Congressmen Dan Crenshaw of Texas and Michael Waltz of Florida, as well as more than 20 veterans groups have also called for Wasi Safi's freedom while his asylum claim is reviewed.

The White House declined to comment on Friday, referring questions to the Justice Department and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Texas, which is prosecuting his case for the Justice Department, and Customs and Border Protection didn't immediately return emails seeking comment.

During a news conference Tuesday, Pentagon spokesman U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder said he couldn't comment on Wasi Safi's case but that the Defense Department is "supportive of any efforts that we can make to ensure that we're taking appropriate care of" the country's Afghan allies.

Fertitta said Wasi Safi's criminal case has to first be resolved before his asylum claim can be considered, and he's hoping that resolution doesn't include a conviction, which could imperil the asylum request.

Nearly 76,000 Afghans who worked with American soldiers since 2001 as translators, interpreters and partners arrived in the U.S. on military planes after the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan. But their immigration status remains unclear after Congress failed to pass a proposed law, the Afghan Adjustment Act, that would have solidified their legal residency status.

Fertitta said Wasi Safi's case highlights the country's "broken immigration system" and its failure to help Afghan allies.

"You have all of those things colliding at our border and it's a very difficult problem to sort out," Fertitta said.

Sami Safi said he remains hopeful.

"I am hoping that President Biden and those who have authority over this case step up and save his life. He has given enough sacrifice for this country. My whole family has sacrificed for this country," he said.

Schools face pressure to take harder line on discipline

By ANNIE MA and BEN FINLEY Associated Press

As kids' behavior reaches crisis points after the stress and isolation of pandemic shutdowns, many schools are facing pressure from critics to rethink their approaches to discipline — including policies intended to reduce suspensions and expulsions.

Approaches such as "restorative justice" were adopted widely in recent decades as educators updated exclusionary policies that cut off students' access to learning and disproportionately affected students of color.

But more students have been acting out, and some school systems have faced questions from teachers, parents and lawmakers about whether a gentle approach can effectively address problems that disrupt classrooms.

The latest example came this week in Newport News, Virginia, where teachers complained at a school board meeting that the school system where a 6-year-old shot his teacher had become too lenient with students. Students who assaulted staff were routinely allowed to stay in the classroom, they said, because of a misguided focus on keeping them in school.

The local school board said it would take "the necessary steps to restore public confidence" in the school system.

Both anecdotally and according to federal data, instances of misbehavior have been on the rise since students returned to classrooms from the COVID-19 pandemic. A National Center for Education Statistics survey of school leaders last summer found 56% of respondents said the pandemic led to increased classroom disruptions from student misbehavior and 48% said it led to more acts of disrespect toward teachers and staff.

New scrutiny of approaches to discipline could halt momentum for policy reform, said Rachel Perera, a fellow at the Brookings Institution who studies education.

"There's a lot of pressure on schools right now," she said. "Schools also say they don't have the resources to address more behavioral problems, and I worry that that will translate to schools falling back on old practices that are not effective in terms of supporting students in the way they need."

Policy reversals are already underway. In Gwinnett County, Georgia, the school board approved the use of a "restorative practices" program in August that was meant to focus on conflict resolution, repairing harm and rebuilding relationships in the classroom. But the district paused the program in December, with plans to restart it in the 2023-2024 school year, after concerns were raised over incidents in school, including a video of a student assaulting a teacher at a high school.

In Clark County, Nevada, district leaders announced in March that they would take a harder line on fighting and physical altercations, saying they would be grounds for expulsion. Some in the community had blamed a "restorative justice" approach for an increase in violence.

As of 2020, 21 states and the District of Columbia had passed legislation supporting the use of restorative practices in schools, according to research from the Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality.

Implementing the practice properly takes time, resources, and community support, said Rebecca Epstein, the center's executive director.

"Change is hard," Epstein said. "Change takes work and it also takes resources and educators are spread really thin. It can't be up to individual teachers alone to shift the culture of automatically resorting to excluding students in response to disruptive behavior. It really takes a whole school cultural shift."

Using restorative justice does not mean a school cannot remove a disruptive student from the classroom, said Thalia González, a professor at the UC College of the Law, San Francisco. But unlike other forms of discipline, restorative practices aim to address the root cause of student's behavior and reintegrated them into classroom.

"That's the problem with punitive discipline such as suspension and expulsion," Gonzalez said. "You get removed and then you just come back. There's nothing done to reintegrate into the community and rebuild the climate, the connectedness, the sense of safety, all the things that we know are so important to young people learning."

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Traditional discipline has widened inequities. Black children often are suspended or expelled at rates far higher than white children. Research has found that these discipline disparities can have lifelong consequences for children, such as worsened educational outcomes and higher rates of incarceration.

Newport News has its own history with restorative justice.

At a school board meeting in 2017 district officials discussed efforts to reduce school suspensions while implementing restorative practices. Tracy Pope, then the school system's restorative practices specialist, said at the time that such practices did not do away with anything already in place, but was rather "another way to look at how we do discipline."

Well before the Jan. 6 shooting of a first-grade teacher, not all educators were happy with the handling of student discipline. According to a spring 2022 survey of teachers and staff, only 60% of respondents said administrators were addressing negative student behaviors.

Michelle Price, a spokesperson for the Newport News schools, said in an email that the district's code of conduct "fosters the school division's mission to ensure all students graduate 'citizen-ready.'"

"It provides guidance for students, families, and staff, and details the many options available to NNPS staff to address student conduct," she said.

Today in History: JAN 22, Supreme Court gives abortion right

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Jan. 22, the 22nd day of 2023. There are 343 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court, in its Roe v. Wade decision, declared a nationwide constitutional right to abortion.

On this date:

In 1901, Britain's Queen Victoria died at age 81 after a reign of 63 years; she was succeeded by her eldest son, Edward VII.

In 1938, Thornton Wilder's play "Our Town" was performed publicly for the first time in Princeton, New Jersey.

In 1944, during World War II, Allied forces began landing at Anzio, Italy.

In 1947, America's first commercially licensed television station west of the Mississippi, KTLA-TV in Los Angeles, made its official debut.

In 1953, the Arthur Miller drama "The Crucible" opened on Broadway.

In 1995, Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy died at the Kennedy compound at Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, at age 104.

In 1997, the Senate confirmed Madeleine Albright as the nation's first female secretary of state.

In 1998, Theodore Kaczynski (kah-ZIHN'-skee) pleaded guilty in Sacramento, California, to being the Unabomber responsible for three deaths and 29 injuries in return for a sentence of life in prison without parole.

In 2006, Kobe Bryant scored 81 points, the second-highest in NBA history, in the Los Angeles Lakers' 122-104 victory over the Toronto Raptors.

In 2007, a double car bombing of a predominantly Shiite commercial area in Baghdad killed 88 people. Iran announced it had barred 38 nuclear inspectors on a United Nations list from entering the country in apparent retaliation for U.N. sanctions imposed the previous month.

In 2008, actor Heath Ledger, 28, was found dead of an accidental prescription overdose in a New York City apartment.

In 2009, President Barack Obama signed an executive order to close the Guantanamo Bay prison camp within a year. (The facility remained in operation as lawmakers blocked efforts to transfer terror suspects to the United States; President Donald Trump later issued an order to keep the jail open and allow the Pentagon to bring new prisoners there.)

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In 2020, Chinese health authorities urged people in the city of Wuhan to avoid crowds and public gatherings after warning that a new viral illness that had infected hundreds of people and caused at least nine deaths could spread further. Health officials in Washington state said they were actively monitoring 16 people who'd come in close contact with a traveler to China, the first U.S. resident known to be infected with the virus.

Ten years ago: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-line bloc fared worse than expected in a parliamentary election, forcing Netanyahu to negotiate a broad coalition deal. The U.N. Security Council unanimously approved a resolution condemning North Korea's rocket launch in Dec. 2012 and imposing new sanctions. Linda Pugach, who was blinded in 1959 when her then-lover, Burton Pugach, hired hit men to throw lye in her face - and became a media sensation after later marrying him - died in New York at age 75.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump signed a bill reopening the government after a 69-hour shutdown. Former soccer star George Weah was sworn in as Liberia's new president, taking over the impoverished West African nation from Africa's first female leader, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Singer Neil Diamond announced that he would be retiring from touring because he'd recently been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

One year ago: Thousands of people gathered in European capitals to protest vaccine passports and other requirements their governments had imposed in hopes of ending the coronavirus pandemic. Don Wilson, co-founder and rhythm guitarist of the instrumental guitar band The Ventures, died at 88.

Today's birthdays: Actor Piper Laurie is 91. Celebrity chef Graham Kerr (TV: "The Galloping Gourmet") is 89. Author Joseph Wambaugh is 86. Singer Steve Perry is 74. Country singer-musician Teddy Gentry (Alabama) is 71. Movie director Jim Jarmusch is 70. Actor John Wesley Shipp is 68. Actor Linda Blair is 64. Actor Diane Lane is 58. Actor and rap DJ Jazzy Jeff is 58. Celebrity chef Guy Fieri is 55. Actor Olivia d'Abo is 54. Actor Katie Finneran is 52. Actor Gabriel Macht is 51. Actor Balthazar Getty is 48. Actor Christopher Kennedy Masterson is 43. Jazz singer Lizz Wright is 43. Pop singer Willa Ford is 42. Actor Beverley Mitchell is 42. Rock singer-musician Ben Moody (Evanescence) is 42. Actor Kevin Sheridan is 41. Actor-singer Phoebe Strole is 40. Rapper Logic is 33. Tennis player Alizé Cornet (uh-LEEZ' kohr-NAY') is 33. Actor Sami Gayle is 27.