

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Groton Community Calendar Sunday, Feb. 5

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

Open Gym: Grades JK-8; 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM, Grades 6-12; 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM

United Methodist Church: Worship with communion. Conde Worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 10:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday school after children's sermon; Sunday school sings in worship, 10:45 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Installation of council and WELCA; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

Groton Lions Prom and Formal Dress Sale, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Groton Community Center

Groton Lions dress pickup of unsold dress, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Groton Community Center

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.; Zion Lutheran worship with communion, 11 a.m.

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

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

“Family is a treasure chest with more than a mountain of gold.”

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Chicken Soup  
for the Soul.



## Monday, Feb. 6

Senior Menu: Ranch chicken breast, wild rice, mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Chicken legs, scalloped potatoes.

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

Junior High BB hosting Aberdeen Christian, 5:30 p.m.

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

## Tuesday, Feb. 7

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, peas, sunset salad, cookie, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: French toast.

School Lunch: Lasagna hot dish, corn bread.

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

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

Boys Basketball hosts North Central. JV game at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

United Methodist Church: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1 p.m.

**OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton**

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## THIS IS TODAY!

### Higher Power Sports



➤ **FREE Event**

➤ **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!**

**Groton Fellowship of Christian Students**  
presents TWO motivational speakers,

**Tim Weidenbach & Deb Hadley**

➤ **Sunday,  
February 5<sup>th</sup>  
3:16pm**  
➤ **at the Groton  
Methodist  
Church**



### Tim's Character Coaching & Be Kind Talk:

Higher Power Sports supports & serves HS & College athletes, coaches & families throughout the Midwest. He focuses on leadership, perseverance, opportunity, integrity, loyalty & making an impact on the teams he serves. Tim shares a fun & inspiring message on how kindness is contagious & encourages acceptance.

### Deb's Overcoming Adversity Presentation:

Adversity is inevitable. Deb has had more than her share of loss. Often our students are caught off guard & lack the skill set to cope with hardships that come their way. Broken relationships, setbacks from COVID, bullying, lack of playing time, academic struggles, poor body image & low self-esteem, struggles at home &/or the death of loved ones, are some of the possibilities that can send the life of a student spiraling out of control. The goal of this seminar is to equip today's youth with the tools to help prepare them to handle the hardships that come their way & inspire them to turn their setbacks into opportunities to better their lives!

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## Groton Area Girls' Basketball

### **C-Hawks defeat Lady Tigers at DAK XII/NEC Clash**

Canton defeated Groton Area at the DAK XII vs. NEC Clash held Saturday in Madison, 70-63. Hamlin defeated Vermillion, then it was the Groton-Canton game that was the closest game.

The game was tied twice in the first quarter before Canton took an 18-13 lead at the end of the first quarter. Canton opened up a 16 point lead in the second quarter and led it at halftime, 38-31. Groton Area sliced the lead to two early in the third quarter at 38-36 but Canton took a 10-point lead into the fourth quarter, 56-46. The C-Hawks opened up a 15-point lead early in the fourth quarter but the Tigers continued to battle back and thanks to a three-pointer by each Mia Crank and Laila Roberts in the closing minute cut the final margin down to seven.

Sydney Leicht led Groton Area with 23 points, one rebound, two assists and two steals. Brooke Gengerke had 10 points, two rebounds and one assist. Kennedy H Hansen had eight points, three rebounds, two assists and three steals. Jerica Locke had six points, six rebounds, five assists, three steals and one block. Jaedyn Penning had six points, five rebounds and three steals. Aspen Johnson had four points, one rebound, one assist and three steals. Laila Roberts and Mia Crank each had three points and one assist. Brooklyn Hansen had two points and one assist. Faith Traphagen had six rebounds, one assist and one steal. Elizabeth Flihs had one rebound. Rylee Dunker had one assist and one steal.

Groton Area made 11 of 35 two-pointers for 31 percent, nine of 17 three-pointers for 53 percent, 14 of 24 free throws for 58 percent, had 25 rebounds, 20 turnovers, 16 assists, 16 steals, 23 team fouls and one block.

Amanda Lease led the C-Hawks with 21 points followed by Shelbie Olseth with 20, Bria Cady had 12, Jenna Vande Weerd had seven, Brynn Oakland six and Danica Roseboom had four points. Canton made 24 of 50 field goals for 48 percent, 16 of 29 free throws for 55 percent, had 19 team fouls and 19 turnovers.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, with Shane Clark doing the play-by-play calling. The broadcast was sponsored by Bahr Spray Foam, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Bierman Farm Service, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Groton Chamber of Commerce, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Locke Electric, Milbrandt Enterprises Inc., Spanier Harvesting & Trucking, Thunder Seed with John Wheeting.

- Paul Kosel

## Groton Area Boys' Basketball

The Groton boys hoop team went to Elk Point-Jefferson on Saturday, losing a close game to the Huskies, 60-56.

Groton held an 18-15 lead after the first quarter, but the Huskies led at halftime, 26-25, and after the third quarter, 46-40.

Jacob Zak led the Tigers with 24 points, two rebounds, three assists and one steal. Lane Tietz had 11 points, two rebounds and four assists. Tate Larson had eight points, three rebounds, three assists and one steal. Ryder Johnson had eight points, two rebounds and one steal. Cole Simon had three points, two rebounds and one steal. Logan Ringgenberg had two points, three rebounds, one assist and one steal. Cade Larson had one rebound, one assist and one steal.

Groton Area made 16 of 26 two-pointers for 62 percent, five of 15 three-pointers for 33 percent, made nine of 18 free throws for 50 percent, had 15 rebounds, 10 turnovers, 12 assists, six steals and 18 team fouls.

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## **NSU Men's Basketball**

### **Northern State Men Hand Minnesota Duluth a Double Figure Loss**

Aberdeen, S.D. – The (RV) Northern State University men's basketball took care of business on Saturday afternoon, in their I Hate Winter win over Minnesota Duluth. The Wolves defeated the Bulldogs by 14 points, holding the lead on the scoreboard for a majority of the contest.

#### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 89, UMD 75

Records: NSU 19-5 (15-3 NSIC), UMD 16-8 (12-6 NSIC)

Attendance: 3651

#### HOW IT HAPPENED

- Northern jumped out to a quick lead in the first, leading by as much as 12 through the opening ten minutes of regulation
- The Wolves recorded a game high 20 assists, nine made 3-pointers, six steals, and 38 points in the paint
- They added 34 rebounds, one less than their opponents, 11 points off turnovers, and 5 second chance points
- The NSU offense shot 50.0% from the floor, with all five starters shooting above 50.0% in the win
- In addition, the Wolves hit 16-of-17 from the foul line
- Sam Masten led four Wolves in double figures, notching 26 points, followed by Jacksen Moni and Jordan Belka with 17 apiece
- Josh Dilling rounded out the double figure scorers with 15 points, as well as a team high nine assists
- The victory is the 299th of head coach Saul Phillips career
- Northern is currently in first place in the NSIC and NSIC North Division

#### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Sam Masten: 26 points, 58.8 field goal%, 7 assists, 6 rebounds
- Jordan Belka: 17 points, 50.0 field goal%, 8 rebounds
- Jacksen Moni: 17 points, 70.0 field goal%, 4 rebounds
- Josh Dilling: 15 points, 55.6 field goal%, 9 assists, 6 rebounds

#### UP NEXT

Northern travels to Bemidji State and Minnesota Crookston next Friday and Saturday. Tip-off times are set for 5:30 p.m. on Friday against the Beavers and 3:30 p.m. on Saturday versus the Golden Eagles.

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## NSU Women's Basketball

### **Wolves Drop I Hate Winter Finale to No. 16 Bulldogs**

Aberdeen, S.D. – Northern State held the lead late in the third quarter and battled to keep the game within striking distance in the fourth, however No. 16 Minnesota Duluth proved to be too much on Saturday night as they dropped a 75-62 contest in Wachs Arena.

#### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 62, UMD 75

Records: NSU 13-11 (8-10 NSIC), UMD 20-3 (17-1 NSIC)

Attendance: 2,787

#### HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern State jumped out to an early 6-2 lead in the opening minute and a half behind four early points by Laurie Rogers, however Minnesota Duluth responded with a 10-2 scoring run to and maintained the advantage till the end of the period with a 19-11 lead after ten minutes

The Bulldogs extended the lead to ten points momentarily in the opening minute of the second quarter before Northern rallied off a 7-1 scoring run sparked by a pair of baskets by Kailee Oliverson and a conventional 3-point play by Jordyn Hilgemann

The Wolves would keep the momentum the remainder of the period as Rianna Fillipi knocked down a 3-pointer to give NSU the lead at 28-26, their first lead since the opening minutes of the game; Northern State would then enter the halftime break with a 34-33 lead

The Wolves held a pair of 5-point leads in the third quarter, their largest lead of the game, after jumpers by Oliverson each time

Minnesota Duluth regained the lead (49-47) with 1:05 remaining in the third quarter on a Brooke Olson 3-pointer, and despite one tie moments later the Bulldogs would not surrender the lead the remainder of the game

Despite the Wolves fight to keep the game in single digits in the early minutes of the fourth quarter, an 8-0 scoring run by the Bulldogs mid-way through the final period proved to be too much as Duluth extended the lead to as 14 points late in the contest

Oliverson recorded her seventh consecutive game of scoring in double figures with 16 on the night, and Fillipi notched her fourth consecutive game in double figures with 13 points

The Wolves converted ten offensive rebounds into 18 second chance points against the Bulldogs, while also turning 11 UMD turnovers into 17 points off turnovers

#### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Kailee Oliverson: 16 points, 6 rebounds, 2 assists, 1 block

Rianna Fillipi: 13 points, 5 rebounds, 3 assists, 1 steal

Laurie Rogers: 10 points, 8 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 block, 1 steal

#### UP NEXT

The Northern State women's basketball team will travel to Minnesota next weekend for a pair of north division match-ups with Bemidji State and Minnesota Crookston. The Wolves and Beavers are scheduled for a 7:30 p.m. tip-off of Friday night, while Northern and Crookston will then close out the weekend with a 5:30 p.m. tip-off on Saturday afternoon.

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## Groton Area Wrestling

### **Ehresmann, Bisbee and Kucker place at Big Dakota Conference Wrestling Tournament**

Three Groton Area wrestlers placed at the Big Dakota Conference wrestling tournament on Saturday at Stanley County.

Christian Ehresmann placed second at 138 pounds, Cole Bisbee placed second at 170 pounds and Korbin Kucker placed fourth at 152 pounds.

#### **106 Lincoln Krause (1-4) scored 3.0 team points.**

Champ. Round 1 - Vincent Lenz (Kimball/White Lake/Platte-Geddes) 27-13 won by fall over Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 1-4 (Fall 1:35)

Cons. Round 1 - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 1-4 won by fall over Ben Glanzer (Marion/Freeman) 0-6 (Fall 0:42)

Cons. Round 2 - Maddux Risse (Bennett County) 26-9 won by fall over Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 1-4 (Fall 0:44)

#### **106 John Bisbee (2-10)**

Champ. Round 1 - Gunner Fuegen (Kimball/White Lake/Platte-Geddes) 2-9 won by fall over John Bisbee (Groton Area) 2-10 (Fall 0:59)

Cons. Round 1 - Shay Smith (Harding County) 19-21 won by fall over John Bisbee (Groton Area) 2-10 (Fall 1:22)

#### **132 Tristan McGannon (2-12)**

Champ. Round 1 - Spencer Sargent (Stanley County) 17-13 won by fall over Tristan McGannon (Groton Area) 2-12 (Fall 0:50)

Cons. Round 1 - Sutton Powers (Chamberlain) 4-8 won by fall over Tristan McGannon (Groton Area) 2-12 (Fall 0:46)

#### **138 Christian Ehresmann (23-3) placed 2nd and scored 24.0 team points.**

Champ. Round 1 - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 23-3 won by fall over August Bartels (Winner Area) 10-15 (Fall 1:01)

Quarterfinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 23-3 won by fall over Roy Antrim (Faith) 6-17 (Fall 0:38)

Semifinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 23-3 won by fall over Quinn Long (Chamberlain) 18-13 (Fall 1:03)

#### **138B Isiah Scepaniak (2-14)**

Champ. Round 1 - Isiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 2-14 received a bye ( ) (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Chisum Blum (Chamberlain) 3-0 won by fall over Isiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 2-14 (Fall 0:51)

Cons. Round 2 - Isiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 2-14 received a bye ( ) (Bye)

Cons. Round 3 - Quirt Wondercheck (Faith) 8-9 won by major decision over Isiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 2-14 (MD 10-0)

#### **145 Nick Morris (3-10) scored 4.0 team points.**

Champ. Round 1 - Nick Morris (Groton Area) 3-10 won by forfeit over Forf. Forf. (Lakota Tech) 0-2 (For.)

Quarterfinal - Ryken Orel (Winner Area) 37-15 won by fall over Nick Morris (Groton Area) 3-10 (Fall 1:13)

Cons. Round 2 - Jerrod Larsen (Chamberlain) 2-2 won by fall over Nick Morris (Groton Area) 3-10 (Fall 3:43)

#### **152 Korbin Kucker (5-1) placed 4th and scored 16.0 team points.**

Champ. Round 1 - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 5-1 received a bye ( ) (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Jack Peters (Winner Area) 20-15 won by decision over Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 5-1 (Dec 13-6)

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Cons. Round 2 - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 5-1 won by fall over Carson Schrempp (McLaughlin) 1-15 (Fall 2:48)

Cons. Round 3 - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 5-1 won by fall over Austin Blare (Winner Area) 8-22 (Fall 4:01)

Cons. Semi - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 5-1 won by injury default over Colby Kolda (Miller/Highmore-Harrold) 29-7 (Inj. 0:00)

**170 Cole Bisbee (16-10) placed 2nd and scored 20.0 team points.**

Champ. Round 1 - Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 16-10 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 16-10 won by decision over Kamryn Meek (Winner Area) 13-16 (Dec 7-3)

Semifinal - Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 16-10 won by fall over Case Kolda (Stanley County) 18-14 (Fall 3:55)

**220 Gavin Englund (4-14) scored 4.0 team points.**

Champ. Round 1 - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 4-14 won by fall over Wyatt Zeigler (Mobridge-Pollock) 5-14 (Fall 1:49)

Quarterfinal - Grey Gilbert (Harding County) 32-7 won by fall over Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 4-14 (Fall 1:00)

Cons. Round 2 - Dalton Deffenbaugh (Kimball/White Lake/Platte-Geddes) 9-15 won by decision over Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 4-14 (Dec 10-7)

## GDILIVE.COM

Junior High Boys Basketball at Groton Area  
Monday, Feb. 6, 2023, 5:30 p.m.



**Groton Area vs.  
Aberdeen Christian**



**Sponsored by**  
Akaska Tavern & Bait Shop

\$5 ticket to watch can be purchased at GDILIVE.COM.  
GDI Subscribers can watch for free

## GDILIVE.COM

Boys' Basketball at the Groton Area Arena  
Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023

**Groton Area vs. North Central**

JV game at 6 p.m. sponsored by Larry & Val

**Varsity Game to follow 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

Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.

Spanier Harvesting & Trucking

Bahr Spray Foam

Thunder Seed with John Wheeting



\$5 ticket to watch can be purchased at GDILIVE.COM.  
GDI Subscribers can watch for free

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## GDILIVE.COM

**Girls' Basketball at the Groton Area Arena**  
Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023

**Groton Area vs. Elk Point-Jefferson**

JV game at 4 p.m. sponsored by Mr. Anonymous

**Varsity Game to follow 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  
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.  
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking  
Bahr Spray Foam  
Thunder Seed with John Wheething



**Games called by Shane Clark**

\$5 ticket to watch can be purchased at GDILIVE.COM.  
GDI Subscribers can watch for free

## GDILIVE.COM

**Boys' Basketball**  
Thursday, Feb. 9, 2023

**Groton Area at Redfield**

JH Boys game at 5 p.m. (1 combined game)  
sponsored by Akaska Tavern & Bait Shop

JV game at 6 p.m. sponsored by Grandma & Grandpa

**Varsity Game to follow 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  
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.  
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking  
Bahr Spray Foam  
Thunder Seed with John Wheething



\$5 ticket to watch can be purchased at GDILIVE.COM.  
GDI Subscribers can watch for free

## GDILIVE.COM

**Girls' Basketball**  
Friday, Feb. 10, 2023

**Groton Area hosting Redfield**

C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV sponsored by Mr. Anonymous

**Varsity Game to follow 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  
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.  
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking  
Bahr Spray Foam  
Thunder Seed with John Wheething



\$5 ticket to watch can be purchased at GDILIVE.COM.  
GDI Subscribers can watch for free

## GDILIVE.COM

**Double Header Basketball at Mobridge-Pollock**  
Saturday, Feb. 11, 2023

Girls JV Game @ 1 PM in HS Gym sponsored by Larry & Val Flihs  
Boys JV Game @ 1 PM in MS Gym sponsored by Ed & Connie Stauch

**Varsity Games to follow 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  
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.  
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking  
Bahr Spray Foam  
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## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



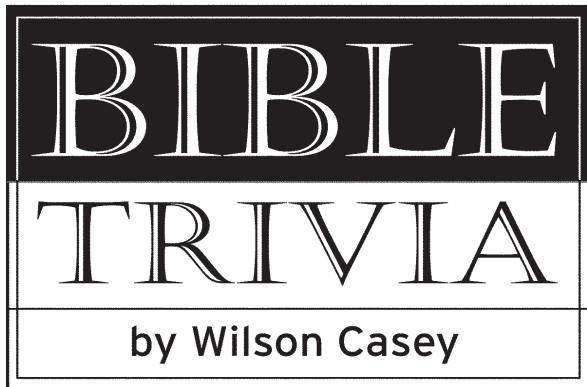
"Törichte Jungfrau" by Robert Philippi (1930)

O God, You are my God;  
Early will I seek You;  
My soul thirsts for You;  
My flesh longs for You  
In a dry and thirsty land  
Where there is no water.  
So I have looked for You in the  
sanctuary, to see Your power  
and Your glory.

PSALM 63:1,2

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

2. From Genesis 21, who was commander of Abimelech's army? *Beniah, Omri, Sisera, Phichol*

3. Saul consulted a medium wanting to talk to whose spirit? *Goliath, Moses, Samuel, Solomon*

4. Which natural disaster occurred only once in the Bible? *Windstorm, Flood, Drought, Earthquake*

5. Who was known as the "Weeping Prophet"? *Jeremiah, Nathan, Elisha, Daniel*

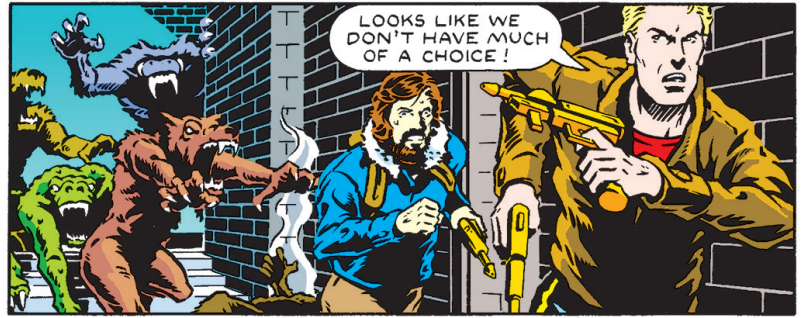
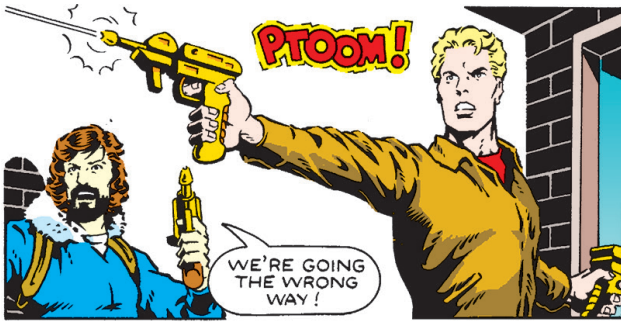
6. Who was the mate of Rachel? *Ananias, Boaz, Jacob, Isaac*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Phichol, 3) Samuel, 4) Flood, 5) Jeremiah, 6) Jacob

*"Test Your Bible Knowledge," a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.*

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## FLASH GORDON

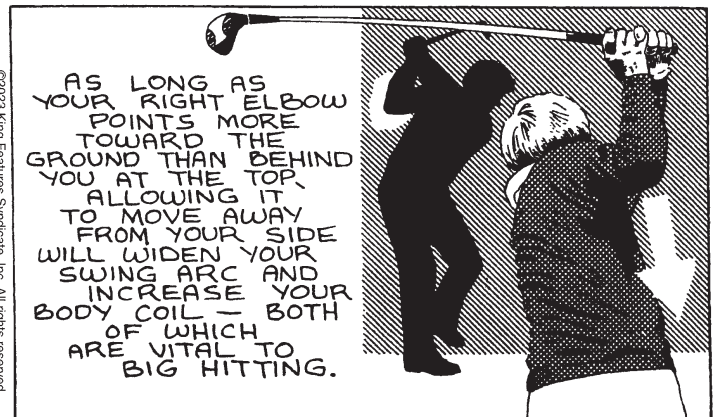
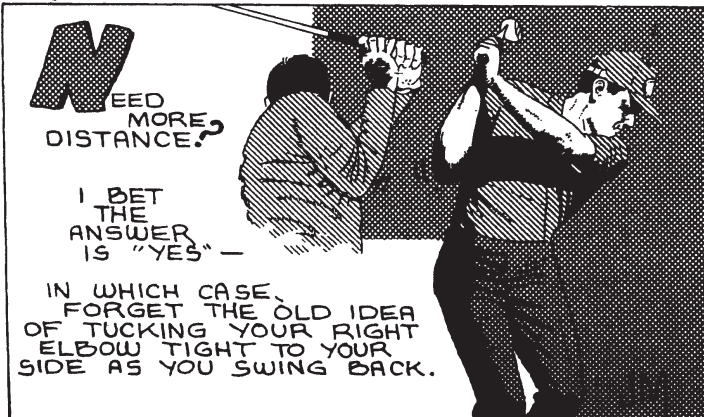
BY JIM KEEFE

FLASH AND THORNE ARE PURSUED THROUGH A MYSTERIOUS CASTLE BY ITS MONSTROUS INHABITANTS!



2-5

## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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## Bariatric Surgery Can Be Considered to Keep Weight Off

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** I have had a BMI over 40 for the last 20 years, and I have not been able to lose weight or keep the weight off. My doctor prescribed Ozempic, which is helping, but as soon as I stop, all the weight creeps back on in a few weeks. I was always wary of surgery for weight loss, but recent studies seem to indicate better long-term health outcomes. What are your thoughts? — *S.O.*

**ANSWER:** Medical or surgical treatment for weight loss is not right for every person who is overweight. Many people take medications in the class called glucagon-like peptide-1 agonists, which includes semaglutide (Ozempic and Wegovy), liraglutide (Saxenda and Victoza) and tirzepatide (Mounjaro). But these medicines have the potential for harm, and an individual's risks, especially conditions that can be affected by being severely overweight or obese, need to be carefully considered.

Surgery has far more risks than medication and requires the most careful consideration before receiving a recommendation of bariatric surgery, of which there are many types.

I am much more likely to refer a patient to one of my colleagues in bariatric surgery when a patient is very obese and when there are clear medical issues that I can expect to get better with surgery. These medical issues can include diabetes, obstructive sleep apnea, or nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. Most of the time, these conditions can be well-managed without bariatric surgery, but sometimes management is very difficult. In this case, consideration of bariatric surgery is

Bariatric surgery is never the first choice in weight management. A comprehensive lifestyle intervention — with an individualized diet (ideally recommended by an expert such as a registered dietician or nutritionist), moderate exercise (with a goal of 150 minutes per week minimum), and regular meetings to help keep a person on track — is the right place to start. It is effective for many people if they maintain the behavioral changes.

I have been prescribing some of my patients with the GLP-1 or GLP-1/GIP medications with good results, but as you mention, if you stop taking them, they stop working. Unless you make a dramatic change to your lifestyle that you can keep up, the weight will return.

Bariatric surgery does have very strong long-term weight-loss data, as well as dramatic reductions in diabetes when used for the appropriate people.

\*\*\*

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** My shoulder pain seems to be getting worse (lack of cartilage), and it is interfering with sleep. I haven't taken any pain medication for it, but I read that the best relief is from either aspirin or ibuprofen. I'd like to switch them back and forth — maybe two to three days with aspirin, then one day with ibuprofen (the most I can tolerate being 200 to 300 mg a day).

**How much aspirin is OK to use in this way? — *J.B.***

**ANSWER:** I recommend against the combination of a medicine like ibuprofen (or naproxen, like Aleve) and aspirin. They have similar toxicities and work nearly in the same way, so you don't get much more, if any, pain relief and instead increase the risk of kidney and stomach damage.

The combination of aspirin or an anti-inflammatory drug like ibuprofen with the drug acetaminophen (Tylenol) is commonly used and can lead to improved pain relief without a big toxicity risk when taken in the recommended doses.

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

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"Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" (PG-13) -- The sequel to "Black Panther" (2018) hit theaters in the U.S. last November, two years after the tragic and shocking death of Chadwick Boseman, who played the titular character. Since Marvel Studios chose to retire the character of King T'Challa with Boseman's death, the sequel starts with the king succumbing to an illness. One year after his death, Wakanda is now being threatened by nations around the world attempting to steal their vibranium -- their most precious element, which



**Angela Bassett earned a Golden Globe and an Oscar nomination for her portrayal of Queen Ramonda in "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever."**

Courtesy of Marvel

they refuse to share. This creates great tension for the citizens of Wakanda, as they're still in the process of building their country back up after the loss of their Black Panther. Angela Bassett recently earned a Golden Globe for her portrayal of Queen Ramonda, as well as an Oscar nomination. This makes Bassett the first Marvel actor to receive a nomination from the Academy. "Wakanda Forever" is out now. (Disney+)

"Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile" (PG) -- Eighteen months after magician Hector P. Valenti (Javier Bardem) loses his New York home and leaves his singing crocodile, Lyle, in the attic, the Primm family moves in. Josh, the Primms' son, discovers Lyle in the attic and easily starts to befriend the crocodile, who can sing beautifully but can't speak. Mr. and Mrs. Primm aren't the happiest to find out about the talented, yet large reptile living in their new home, but Lyle seems to bring out the best in the Primms and starts to become a member of their family. A film adaptation of the children's story by Bernard Waber, this goofy musical-comedy has lots of feel-good vibes that no doubt made it a success in the box office last year. Popstar Shawn Mendes stars as Lyle in the film, out now on streaming. (Netflix)

"Somebody I Used to Know" (R) -- On Feb. 10, the second directorial project from Dave Franco ("21 Jump Street" and "Neighbors") reaches Prime Video. Franco's wife, Alison Brie ("Community"), stars as Ally, a workaholic who decides to make a trip back to her hometown. While at a bar, Ally runs into her ex-boyfriend, Sean (Jay Ellis), and the two reconnect and make up for lost time. Almost as if she's retracing the steps of her past, Ally starts to wonder if she made the right decision by leaving her hometown all those years ago. Even after she accidentally crashes Sean's engagement dinner to his fiancée, Cassidy, Ally feels a pull to stay, as Cassidy reminds her of herself when she was younger. Kiersey Clemons, Danny Pudi and Haley Joel Osment also star in this heartfelt romantic comedy about trying to find newfound freedom well into adulthood. (Prime Video)

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1. Which group released "Takin' Care of Business"?
2. Who were Marisa, Merlina, Tony, Benny and Nino?
3. Name the group that released "Freeze-Frame."
4. Who released an album titled "Disco Train"?
5. Name the song that contains these lyrics: "Maybe I don't wanna know the reason why, But lately you don't talk to me, Darling I can't see me in your eyes."

## Answers

1. Bachman-Turner Overdrive in 1973. Randy Bachman had started playing with ideas for the song when he was still a member of The Guess Who.
2. The DeFranco Family. Their best known hit was "Heartbeat, It's a Lovebeat," in 1973. They were on Dick Clark's "American Bandstand" nine times.
3. The J. Geils Band, in 1981, on the album of the same name. The song charted around the world.
4. Donny Osmond, in 1976. His cover of "C'mon Marianne" was the one song from the album released as a single, and it only went to No. 38. The Four Seasons' original 1967 release had climbed to No. 9.
5. "(Our Love) Don't Throw It All Away," by Andy Gibb in 1978. Written by his brother Barry, it was Andy's fifth Top 10 single. Others have covered the song, including Barbra Streisand in 2005.

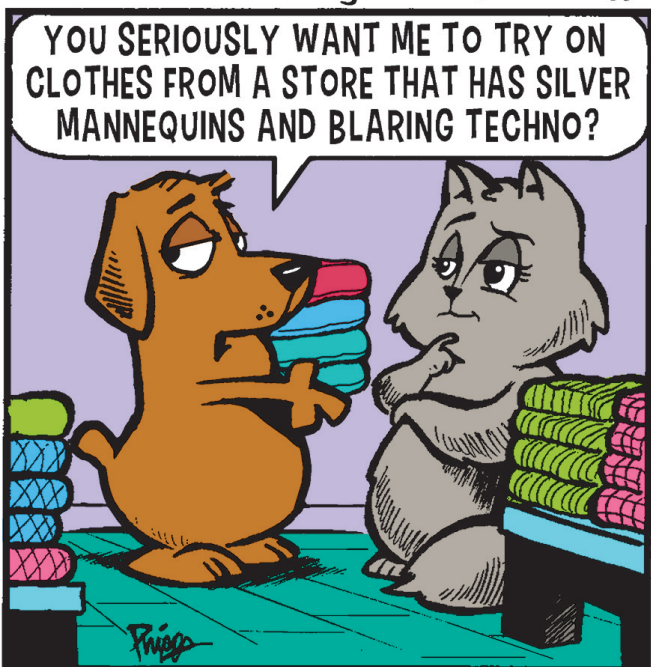
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## GRIN and BEAR IT <sup>Wagner</sup>



"My client is a simple shoemaker. OK, so they're cement shoes."

## Just Like Cats & Dogs <sup>by Dave T. Phipps</sup>



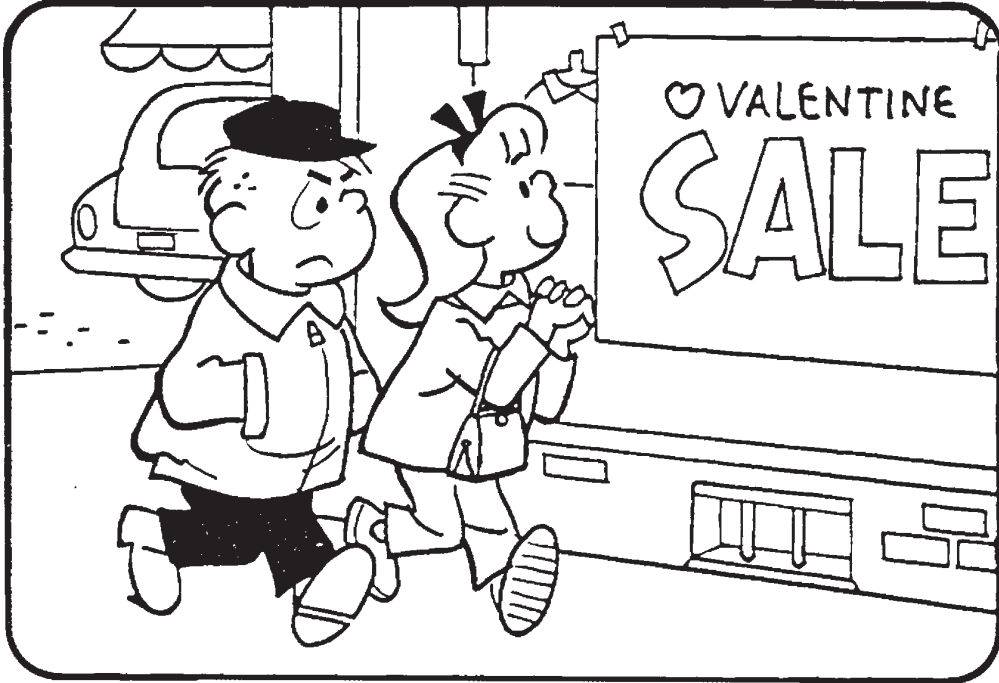
YOU SERIOUSLY WANT ME TO TRY ON CLOTHES FROM A STORE THAT HAS SILVER MANNEQUINS AND BLARING TECHNO?

# Groton Daily Independent

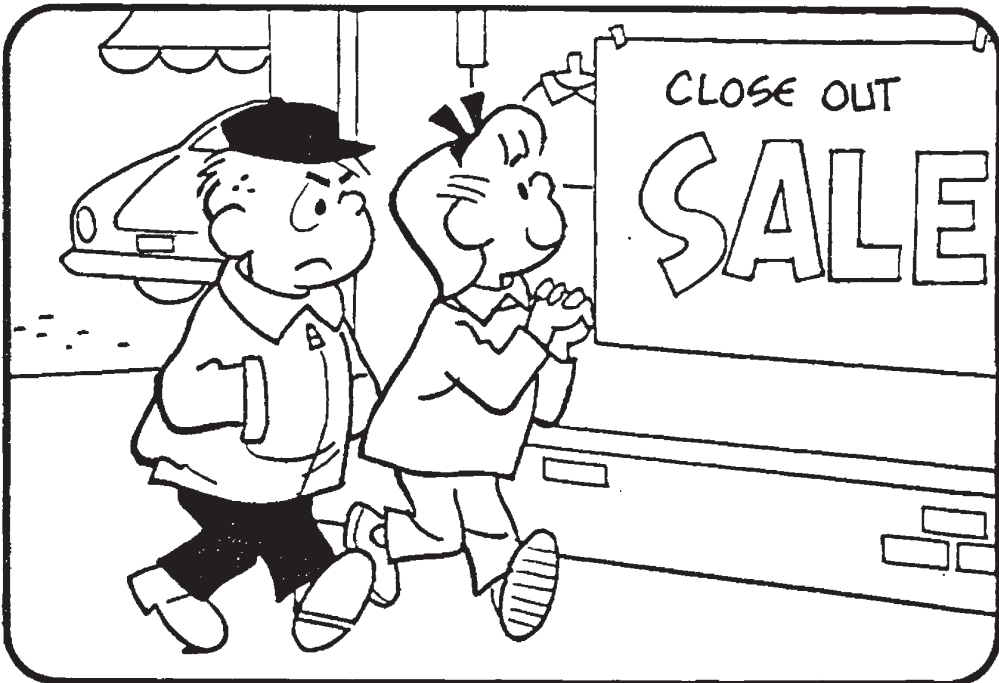
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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Car is different. 2. Leg is moved. 3. Hair is different. 4. Pocketbook is missing. 5. Sign is different. 6. Basement window is missing.

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\* Save smaller bits of leftover veggies in a large freezer-safe container or bag, in the freezer. When it's full, make vegetable soup.

\* "Be sure you use bathroom fans correctly, turning on to remove steam, but turning off to keep from pumping out heat. This is equally important in the summer, when you pump out valuable cooled air. Many people don't think of fans this way, and they end up running for hours." -- R.D. in Mississippi

\* Keep salt or baking soda by the stove for small quick cleanups. A good dose of salt will stop an egg from running all over the place. Dip a damp cloth in baking soda for a handy scrub. Although a handful of either might work in a pinch on a small flare-up on the stove, you should have

a fire extinguisher close by for fires.

\* "I used to comb through my last year's calendar for important yearly dates when transferring them to the new year's calendar. This year I have gotten smart. At the end of the month, before turning the page, I have highlighted the items I would want to put in next year's calendar. When I look back, I will not have to search through all the entries for the good stuff." -- U.L. in Ohio

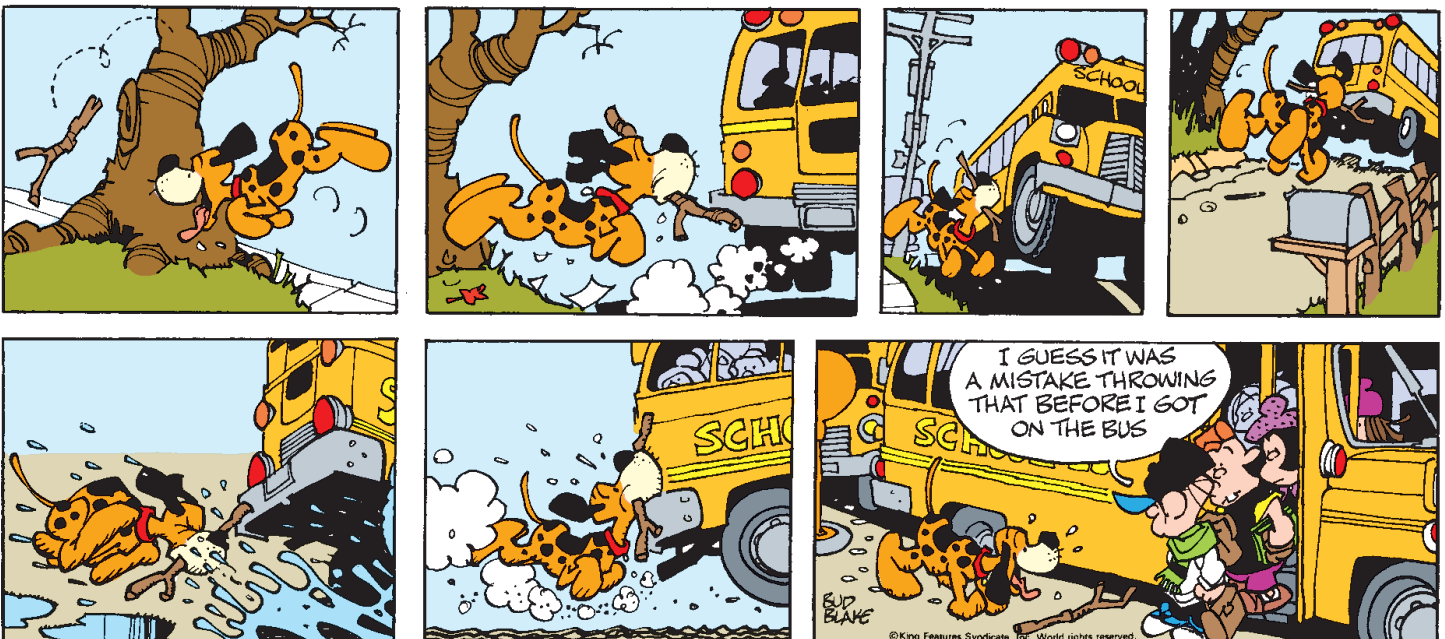
\* "I just spent a lot of time cleaning my mother's bathtub in a long-neglected bathroom. To keep it from mildewing, I used paste wax to protect the walls. You can use car wax for the same purpose, and many people know about this helpful tip. But I wanted to add a caution: walls only. Especially if you have an elderly resident (or a child), do not wax the inside of the tub, and make sure to have a nonslip mat in the tub at all times." -- A daughter in Oregon

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

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 **TIGER**

by **BUD BLAKE**





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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Niger neighbor
- 5 Existed
- 8 Close
- 12 Timber wolf
- 13 Rocker Rose
- 14 — Christian Andersen
- 15 Modern taxi rival
- 16 Museum-funding org.
- 17 Verdi opera
- 18 Anne who married Henry VIII
- 20 Funhouse feature
- 22 Extinct bird
- 23 Documentarian Burns
- 24 Island near Java
- 27 Gymnast's move
- 32 Brit. record label
- 33 Continent north of Afr.
- 34 Bar cubes
- 35 Olympic skating gold medalist Tara
- 38 Grand tale
- 39 "Today" rival, briefly
- 40 "Fresh Air" ailer

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18				19			20	21				
			22					23				
24	25	26			27	28	29				30	31
32					33					34		
35			36	37					38			
		39					40	41				
42	43				44		45			46	47	48
49					50	51			52			
53					54				55			
56					57				58			

- 42 Honeydews shepherd
- 45 Jerry of the Grateful Dead
- 49 Golf bag item
- 50 Frazier foe
- 52 "Heavens!"
- 53 Spanish ayes
- 54 Charged bit
- 55 Mature
- 56 Try out
- 57 Schlep
- 58 Get lippy
- 4 Moolah
- 5 Hopefuls
- 6 Chopping tool
- 7 Bridge coup
- 8 "Doctor Zhivago" star
- 9 Tress holder
- 10 Nullify
- 11 Despot
- 19 "Hey!"
- 21 Annoy
- 24 — canto
- 25 Parisian pal
- 26 Makeup kit item
- 28 Arctic seabird
- 29 Shrinking in fear
- 30 Here, in Dijon
- 31 Chest muscle
- 36 "Leave that to me!"
- 37 Indian bread
- 38 Goofs
- 41 Ma's mate
- 42 Fine spray
- 43 Canal of song
- 44 Go yachting
- 46 — Pet
- 47 Rapsallions
- 48 Pro votes
- 51 Singer Rawls

### DOWN

## — King Crossword —

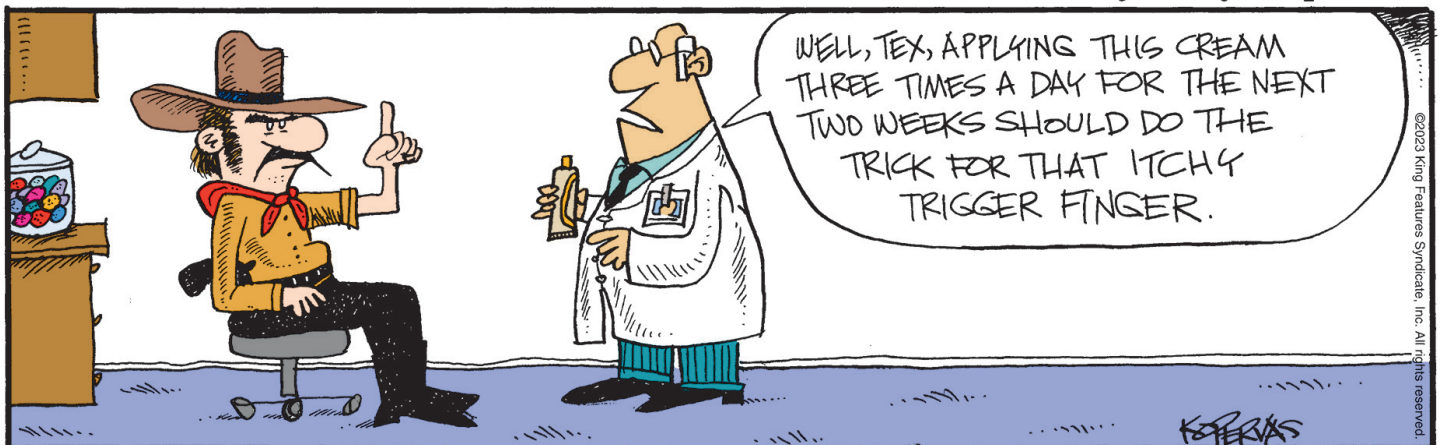
Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS  
**POPEYE**  
BY RANDY MILRHOLLAND

ACCORDIN' T'LEGEND, THIS IS KNOWN AS THE TOMB OF UNENDINK DESTRUCTION!

WELL, THAT SOUNDS FUN!

OLIVE, THAT'S A WARNIN', NOT AN INVITATION.

OH, SURE. IF YOU WANNA BE BORING.

THE LOST TOMB SHOULD BE RIGHT AHEAD.

HALT, TRAVELERS! THE GOAL YOU SEEK IS BEHIND ONE OF THESE DOORS...

WHILE THE OTHER DOOR LEADS TO YOUR DOOM!

ONLY WE CAN TELL YOU WHICH IS WHICH.

BUT ONE OF US ONLY ANSWERS QUESTIONS TRUTHFULLY...

... THE OTHER, ONLY WITH LIES!

PUNCH 'EM BOTH IN THE FACE AND SEE WHICH ONE SAYS IT DIDN'T HURT.

I GOTSK A DIFFRENK IDEA.

SO, HOW IS YA TWO DOINK?

AWFUL. WE'VE BEEN GUARDING THESE DOORS NONSTOP FOR CENTURIES!

WHAT USE IS OVERTIME PAY IF YOU'RE NEVER OFF THE CLOCK TO SPEND IT?

I'M FINE.

WHAT? WHY ARE YOU STARING AT ME?

I'M FINE.

STOP LOOKING AT ME.

I'M FINE.

...I'M FINE.

HOW ON EARTH DID THAT WORK?!

THINK ABOUT WHAT THE LAST FEW YEARS WERE LIKE AN' TELL ME IF YA'D BELIEVE ANYONE SAYIN' THEY IS 'FINE.'

PLEASE LET ME BE FINE.

BARNEY GOOGLE AND  
**SNUFFY SMITH**

WHAT WUZ IT LIKE IN TH' OL' DAYS, GRANNY?

PURTY MUCH TH' SAME...

BUT VERY DIFF'RENT !!

I WEIGHED A HUNNERT AN' TEN POUNDS ON MY WEDDIN' DAY !!

2-13

IS THAT A FACT, GRANNY?

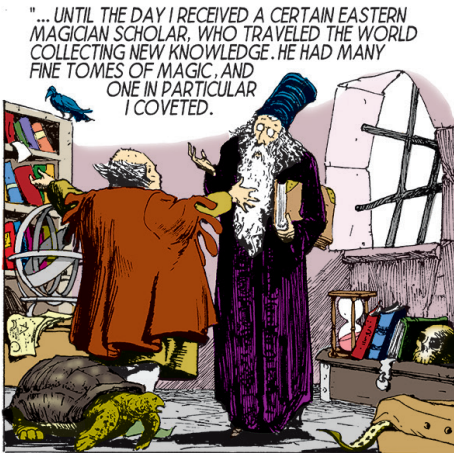
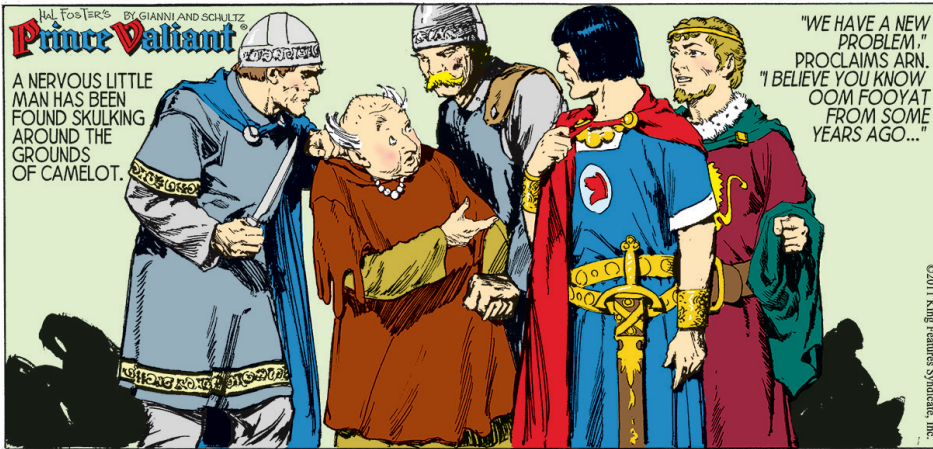
YO'RE DANG RIGHT IT IS, LOWEEZY !!

AN' IF ENNYONE WANTS TO DISPUTE IT, I GOT A WICKED UPPERCUT !!

JOHN ROSE

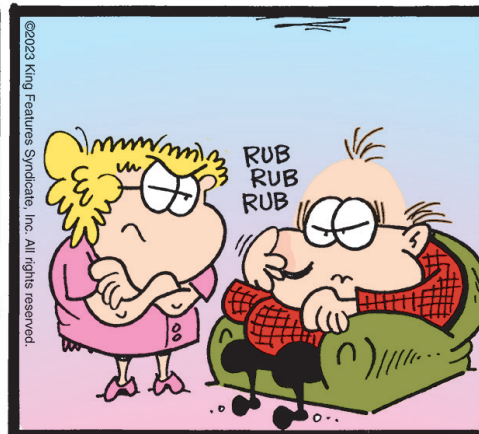
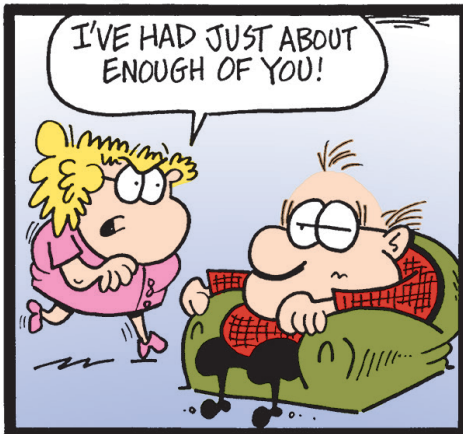
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## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Lowering Our Drug Costs

I got a shock the other day when I went to the pharmacy to pick up the latest refill of my three drugs and realized that the pharmacy assistant had neglected to run it through GoodRx, the program that helps reduce the price of our drugs. Once he did that, the cost dropped significantly.

It made me realize just how much other seniors are paying for the drugs we need to stay healthy. There are ways to cut those costs. It just takes a little work and a lot of monitoring on our part to make sure it happens.

As mentioned, there's GoodRx ([www.goodrx.com](http://www.goodrx.com)), which I've used for several years. Their website isn't the easiest to use, but after you try it once, you'll appreciate being able to cut the costs of your drugs every time you need a refill.

There are other ways as well:

RxAssist ([www.rxassist.org](http://www.rxassist.org)) has programs that are run by the pharmaceutical companies to help those who can't afford their prescriptions. If your drugs cost more than \$10, present your RxAssist card to get the lowest price. Check the website for a long directory of patient assistance programs. Beware that some programs involve a small fee to be a member and many have eligibility requirements.

Consider Walmart pharmacies for their generic program. A 30-day prescription will cost \$4 and only \$10 for a 90-day prescription. Not all generic drugs will qualify for those prices, but it's worth making a call to your local Walmart pharmacy to find out if your drugs are on that list.

NeedyMeds website ([www.needymeds.org](http://www.needymeds.org)) was started by a physician in 1997 to help gather information about reduced drug and health care costs. The website says over \$337 million has been saved so far.

And finally, check the prices at Mark Cuban's Cost Plus Drugs ([costplusdrugs.com](http://costplusdrugs.com)). For some drugs, this one is the lowest of all.

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1. What Loyola Marymount Lions basketball star was selected eighth overall by the Los Angeles Clippers in the first round of the 1990 NBA Draft?

2. First baseman Mo Vaughn was named American League MVP in 1995 as a member of what team?

3. The Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy is the top individual award presented in what sport?

4. Name the music superstar who was fatally shot hours after attending the 1996 Bruce Seldon-Mike Tyson heavyweight boxing match in Las Vegas.

5. Spike Dykes compiled an 82-67-1 record as head coach of what college football team from 1986-99?

6. What iconic sports venue first hosted the NASCAR Clash preseason exhibition race in February 2022?

7. What Basketball Hall of Famer played baseball in the Negro leagues before joining the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team in 1942?



by Ryan A. Berenz

## Answers

1. Bo Kimble.
2. The Boston Red Sox.
3. Cricket.
4. Tupac Shakur.
5. The Texas Tech Red Raiders.
6. The Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.
7. Reece "Goose" Tatum.

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## Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps

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DEAR PAW'S CORNER: This winter, a lot of my family has had colds and flu. Can my cat catch a cold from us? -- Darlene, via email

DEAR DARLENE: Cats don't catch colds directly from humans, but they can suffer from upper respiratory infections that are just as uncomfortable.

A number of viral and bacterial infections can make your cat sick. Some of these, such as FVR (feline rhinotracheitis) and FVC (feline calicivirus) can be prevented by making sure your cat gets an annual checkup and vaccinations. An underlying health condition also can make your cat more susceptible to upper respiratory infections. Again, regular checkups and shots can keep it healthy.

What symptoms does a cat with a URI have? It may be sniffing and sneezing, along with a clear or cloudy discharge from the eyes or nose. Your cat also may have little to no appetite and might be lethargic.

Contact the veterinarian right away if your cat has any of these symptoms. The vet will want to examine your cat to confirm what kind of URI it has. Use a cat carrier so other cats in the waiting room won't be exposed, and to keep your cat safe.

Follow the vet's instructions on caring for your sick cat. You may be given a prescription, and you will be asked to keep the cat comfortable and warm, and to try to get it to drink water and eat some food. Dry food may be a turnoff, but it may eat a little wet food. If your cat won't eat or drink, contact the vet again -- an IV may be needed to keep it hydrated.

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

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## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

\* A Calvin and Hobbes comic from 1992 referred to the start of the universe as the "Horrendous Space Kabloolie" because they thought "The Big Bang" was too boring.

\* When a man noticed that his food supply was mysteriously diminishing he set up a webcam, only to discover that a woman had been living in one of his closets -- for a year!

\* The cable car is the only moving National Historic Monument in the world.

\* During Spain's colonial period, the builders of Filipino churches used millions of egg whites in the mortar to make the structures more durable. This also accounts for why Filipino desserts often use lots of eggs: Many of the recipes were developed to use up all those leftover yolks.

\* In 2013, Belgium created five limited edition stamps that smelled and tasted like chocolate.

\* A service operated in several Chinese cities that we'd like to see replicated in America is that of "jam busting." Drivers stuck in traffic snarls who urgently need to be somewhere make a phone call and two people show up on a motorbike. While one stays with the driver's car, the other transports the frustrated driver to their destination.

\* According to the American Kennel Club, dogs will fake a sneeze for play and communication purposes.


\* Iceland has the largest population of green-eyed people in the world.

\* Modern negligence law resulted from a 1932 Scottish court case, *Donoghue v. Stevenson*, aka the "Snail in the Bottle" case, in which Mrs. May Donoghue sued beer manufacturer Mr. David Stevenson after she drank a bottle of ginger beer with a dead snail in it and became ill.


\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again." -- Maya Angelou

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Many perennial wildflower seeds need a period of exposure to cold and moisture. If you get snow by December, you can begin to scatter these seeds atop blankets of snow up until February. The seeds will gradually work their way through the snow as the temperatures rise and fall and the ground thaws and freezes. If needed, cover the seeds lightly with clean straw to keep them moist, to hide them from birds and to keep them from blowing away in the wind. - Brenda Weaver



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





by Freddy Groves

## Fast Help for Suicidal Veterans

It has a very long title, but a short, concise purpose. The Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment Act of 2020, or the Veterans COMPACT Act of 2020, section 201, allows eligible suicidal veterans to go to an emergency room for help. This opens the door for 9 million veterans to get the care they need.

But the scope is much wider. An acutely suicidal veteran can go to not only a Department of Veterans Affairs emergency room, but any emergency room.

The VA will pick up the tab, at no cost to the veteran, for inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and then outpatient care for up to 90 days, as well as any necessary transportation. The veteran doesn't need to be enrolled in VA health care.

After getting that care, they'll determine eligibility for any other VA services and benefits and refer the veteran to appropriate programs.

Even though the VA believes that there are 9 million veterans who can take advantage of this, if necessary, there are a few eligibility requirements.

Veterans must have been discharged or released from active duty after serving more than 24 months, and leave under conditions other than dishonorable.

Eligible individuals are former members of the armed forces (including reserves) who served more than 100 days "under a combat exclusion or in support of a contingency operation either directly or by operating an unmanned aerial vehicle from another location" and again, be discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

And thirdly, former members of the armed forces who were the victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment are eligible.

If you or someone you know needs help, there are a number of ways to get it. Go online to [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net) and view the choices. You can call them by dialing 988 and then pressing 1. You can chat online at that website. Or you can text a message to 838255. Help is available 24/7 from qualified, trained people.

Or, per this Act, help is as close as the nearest emergency room.

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## Wishing Well®

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

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. ART: Where is the Prado Museum located?
2. GEOGRAPHY: What is the only country that the Equator and the Tropic of Capricorn pass through?
3. LANGUAGE: What does the Latin phrase "tempus fugit" mean?
4. MATH: What is another name for the division sign?
5. MUSIC: How long did it take singer Bob Dylan to write the big hit "Blowin' in the Wind"?
6. ANIMAL KINGDOM: How many times on average does a ruby-throated hummingbird flap its wings in one second?
7. MOVIES: Which movie features the line, "Keep the change, ya filthy animal"?
8. LITERATURE: Which novel features four children named Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy?
9. TELEVISION: What is Joey's famous line in the sitcom "Friends"?
10. ANATOMY: What is a common name for the pinna in human anatomy?

### Answers

1. Madrid, Spain.
2. Brazil.
3. Time flies.
4. Obelus.
5. 10 minutes, according to Dylan.
6. About 50 times.
7. "Home Alone."
8. "The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe."
9. "How you doin'?"
10. Outer ear.

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South Dakota Governor

**Kristi Noem**



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

## Securing South Dakota Agriculture

Agriculture is the bedrock of South Dakota. The ag industry is tough, and it's often thankless, but it truly is how we feed the world. As a lifelong farmer and rancher myself, I take great pride in my rural upbringing. Not a day goes by where I don't appreciate the life lessons I learned from my parents on our farm. At our house it was always go, go, go. We were constantly making things better, faster, and more efficient. That's the exact attitude of so many of our farmers and ranchers across South Dakota. I still can't believe I'm lucky enough to go to work every day to serve them.

I've made my living from farming and ranching, worked on ag policy in the state legislature, and helped write and pass farm bills and risk management programs. I sat on the State Committee of the USDA Farm Service Agency, which oversees all federal farm programs in the state and worked on food policy for over 20 Years.

As Governor, it's not only my job to work to help our largest industry thrive, it's also important that I recognize and fight national security threats we face right here at home that affect our land.

Today, agriculture is a \$32 billion industry, and it's responsible for 1 in 5 jobs in the state. When agriculture thrives, the entire state thrives. That's why it is critical that we continue to protect our ag industry for the next generation.

This legislative session, I'm working with legislators on two initiatives to accomplish just that. I announced a bill earlier this month focused on preserving agriculture in South Dakota. It protects operations from frivolous claims that can delay development and increase costs for producers. This legislation will ensure the continued growth and success of the state's agriculture industry.

We also have a duty to protect South Dakota ag land from national security threats. Possibly the greatest external threat facing our nation today is the Chinese Communist Party. Unfortunately, foreign countries now hold approximately 40 million acres of ag land in the United States – and that number will only increase as evil governments like China step up their game. This hasn't been much of a problem in South Dakota. At least, not yet. But we must face the fact that our state is a target.

Earlier this week, Steve Yates, Chair of the China Policy Initiative at the America First Policy Institute, came to Pierre to emphasize the need for this legislation. Yates spoke with South Dakota legislators about the important example that our bill is setting for other states across the nation. If we fail here, it will have a negative effect on the whole country.

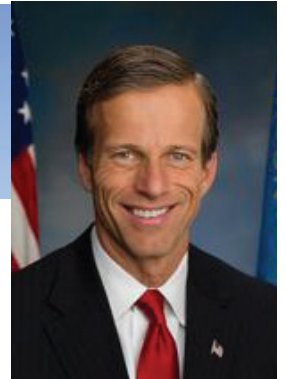
South Dakota is now the only home of the B-21 Bomber. This next generation military asset will be housed at Ellsworth Air Force Base. That's huge for both our state's economy and our national security, but it also means that hostile countries like China are going to do whatever they can to get intelligence on that bomber. Just last year we saw a Chinese entity purchase land near an Air Force Base in North Dakota. Though they claimed it was for corn processing, there is not enough corn nearby to justify the facility. So, it appears to be more nefarious.

We cannot allow this kind of situation to happen in South Dakota. I'm working with legislators to block nations that hate us from purchasing ag land. This bill creates a Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States – South Dakota. We'll rely on national and state security experts and legal counsel to review any purchases, leases, and transfers of South Dakota ag land. If purchases are made by a foreign person, company, or entity, they will recommend whether the purchase should be approved. And if that purchase comes from a nation that hates America, I will not allow it to go forward.

This week, we saw a Chinese spy balloon hovering over Montana. This goes to show that it is more important now than ever for states to step up and defend our people from the threat posed by the Chinese Communist party. This is exactly why we need to pass these bills. We cannot allow Chinese interests to purchase any South Dakota ag land, much less land near any military base or critical infrastructure.

I am committed to keeping South Dakota secure, and that includes protecting our farmers and ranchers from hostile foreign intervention.

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



## The Status Quo at the Border Must Change

For two years now, a crisis has been raging along our southern border. 4.5 million illegal immigrants have been apprehended at the border, and another 1.2 million migrants have evaded capture while entering the United States. At the same time, the number of individuals on the terrorist watch list arrested at the border and the number of migrants who die attempting to enter the country have reached record highs. The border is clearly in crisis, but until recently, President Biden acted as if this crisis didn't exist.

Two years ago the border was significantly more secure. It took time, but through a series of commonsense measures that included enforcing the law, stopping border crossers, and discouraging illegal immigration in the first place, the previous administration made real progress to attain operational control of the nearly 2,000-mile long border. But, on his first day in office, President Biden scrapped many of his predecessor's policies. The effect of his actions was to declare that the United States' border was effectively open. Unsurprisingly, a sea change occurred and border crossings shot up.

While the border crisis has overwhelmed border patrol and local resources in border communities, its impact reaches across the country. Influxes of illegal immigrants have strained the resources of cities from Denver to New York. Drugs, especially fentanyl, have come across the border and taken lives in communities across the country. In fact, fentanyl overdose is the leading cause of death for U.S. adults ages 18-45. Here in South Dakota, about as far from the southern border as you can get, the Minnehaha County sheriff estimates that 90 percent of fentanyl and methamphetamines in our state comes from Mexico, which recently surpassed China as the leading source of fentanyl.

To stem the tide of illegal immigrants and illegal drugs entering our country, we must secure the border. This depends foremost on the president being willing to enforce the laws currently on the books. Without executive leadership, even new laws to secure the border will fail to meaningfully deter individuals from making a dangerous journey that lines the pockets of coyotes and cartels. As long as illegal pathways are viable, we can expect these recent trends to continue.

We also need to ensure that legitimate, legal immigration is a realistic option for those fleeing persecution, pursuing the American dream, or seeking seasonal economic opportunity. I've repeatedly introduced legislation to open up opportunities for individuals to work in the United States when employers can't find enough domestic labor. These programs help fill the need for supplemental workers in South Dakota, where unemployment is 2.3 percent and many business owners will tell you they just can't find enough local workers. Ensuring our visa programs are agile enough to deliver labor relief to local businesses is one way we can enable economic growth through legal immigration.

The status quo at the border is neither safe nor humane, not for our country and not for those entering illegally. I hope the president's visit to the border last month, his first ever, has awakened him to this reality. For our national security, public safety, and the safety of immigrants, we need to uphold the rule of law and secure the border.

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CONGRESSMAN

**DUSTY JOHNSON**

Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



## Planes, Trains, and Automobiles

Transportation and infrastructure are used by everyone – people traveling to work or vacation, grains and parts transported by train, cargo by plane, or goods driven across the country by a semi-truck.

The COVID-19 pandemic aggravated delays and gaps in our supply chain system. Suddenly, Americans couldn't get their goods in a timely manner. Christmas presents were delayed for weeks, Amazon packages weren't delivered on time, store shelves were empty for more reasons than one.

When I came to Congress in 2019, the last thing I expected was a global pandemic. When these problems arose during and after the pandemic, I knew Congress should act. I partnered with Rep. John Garamendi to pass the Ocean Shipping Reform Act, addressing delays at ports across the country. We have seen progress from ocean carriers after passage of OSRA, but more kinks in the supply chain have been discovered.

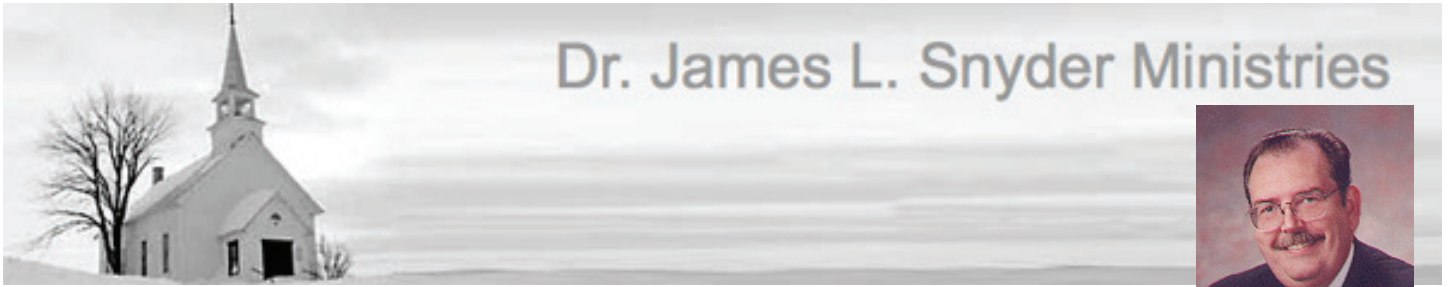
The T&I Committee had our first hearing this week on the State of the Supply Chain. When seeing and hearing problems faced by our nation's truck drivers – an 80,000-truck driver shortage, an aging truck driver population, and not enough parking spaces for each semitruck on the road – I introduced the SHIP IT Act with Rep. Jim Costa to address these concerns. The bill increases safety and shipping capacity for truckers; provides recruitment and retention incentives for drivers; and includes flexibility during times of emergencies or black swan events.

Maintaining our infrastructure is critical to keep our economy going and growing. This is my second term on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and I'm ready to keep improving our supply chain. I'm on the Subcommittees on Aviation; Highways and Transit; Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, which increases my ability to be a leader on supply chain issues for each of these modes of transport.

No one likes empty shelves, roads covered in potholes, or delayed packages, and out-of-date regulations aren't keeping up with technology and innovation. The three subcommittees I am on will allow me to keep working on behalf of South Dakota to deliver results that keep our supply chains moving.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



## Ugly Isn't For Sissies

Over the years of marital bliss, we've not had many disagreements. She likes broccoli. I like Apple Fritters. We've never been able to come to any agreement with that. But, outside of that, everything has been rather smooth.

There's one controversy that has plagued our house for the last few years, and there doesn't seem to be any solution. There are some problems with no solutions, and I guess this is one of them.

The controversy I have is about my bathroom mirror; each of us has our bathroom with our own mirror. My mirror has some very significant issues with it.

For several years I have suggested that we replace my old mirror with a new one.

Once, I even suggested I would be glad to pay for the new mirror out of my Apple Fritter account, which was a mistake.

When I said that, she looked at me with a long pause and then said, "You have an account for Apple Fritters?"

I knew I was in trouble for that; I guess I kissed my Apple Fritter account goodbye.

The controversy I had is that my old mirror portrays me as some old guy. I find it rather frustrating because I have some pictures of myself, and I don't look old at all.

As we discussed this, she said, "My mirror portrays me as I really am." She smiled one of her sarcastic smiles at me.

"Let me," I said, "go and look in your mirror to see if what you're telling me is really true."

I entered her bathroom and was surprised as I looked in her mirror and saw some old guy looking back at me.

Immediately I went out and said, "Hey, who's that old guy in your bathroom?"

She laughed and said, "I think it's you, but all I ever see is some old lady."

"I am not that old," I demanded.

I then went and got our family photo album, brought it back, opened it up, pointed to a picture, and said, "See, that's me."

She looked at the picture, then back at me laughingly, and said, "Yes, that's you when you were in high school."

I flipped a few pages and said, "There I am."

"That's our wedding picture," she said with a smile.

By that time, I was just a little bit frustrated. If I look at those pictures and then look in the mirror, I do not see any resemblance whatsoever. How can that old rascal in the mirror be me?

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage could see that I was just a little bit discouraged. After all, pictures don't lie, but I think mirrors do.

"Don't you realize that as we grow and get older, our looks change?"

Looking at her, I was shaking my head and unwilling to reach her level of understanding.

"But," I complained, "I'm not that old looking, am I?"

Then she handed me a more recent photograph. It was me holding my granddaughter on the day of her birth. I looked at it as though I was looking out for the first time. When I first looked at it, I didn't see myself; rather, I saw my great-granddaughter.

After looking at it for a few moments, I sat back in my chair and sighed deeply. "So, I am an old man."

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"Well, my dear, you're not young anymore."

I stared at her for a few moments and then said, "Tell me, why do you look so good, and I look so old?"

"Because you're not looking in my bathroom mirror."

"Maybe," I said, "we could change bathroom mirrors?"

She started laughing and a few moments later, I joined her in laughing.

This was the first time I ever seriously looked at myself.

In the morning, when I go to the bathroom to comb my hair, shave, and brush my teeth, I ignore what's in the mirror. Maybe I ought to.

Thinking about this for a bit, I had a thought. Does it really matter how old a person looks? After all the only cure for not getting old is dying.

I've noted lately that some of these Hollywood stars get facelifts, tummy tucks, and all sorts of changes to their body. I wonder if they do that for themselves or for the public that's looking?

Does it really matter how a person looks?

I believe the next time I'm in my bathroom, I'm going to have a little chat with that old guy in the mirror. I will say, "I don't care how old you look. You don't scare me." I had to rehearse that line a dozen times to get it right. I'm not sure I can trust that old guy in the mirror.

Of course, one of the great benefits is that I don't have to see how I look throughout the day. The people on the other side of my glasses have that to handle.

I have learned to appreciate what God said to Samuel in, 1 Samuel 16:7, "But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

God does not judge me by my outward appearance, but by my heart. If my heart isn't right with God nothing else really matters.

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## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Since when is the transition to electric vehicles an “environmental justice” issue?

-- P. Balducci, Troy, NY

The poorest members of our society are likely to benefit the least from a widespread transition to electric vehicles (EVs) for a few reasons. For starters, those with the least income are unlikely to be able to afford to purchase a new car, let alone a Tesla. As such, gas guzzling, internal combustion cars and trucks will likely persist well into the future—even if they are not the majority of vehicles on the road any longer—and their drivers will be paying a lot more for fuel (gas) than their EV-driving lane mates.

And lower income individuals who do pony up for an EV will also suffer disproportionately as even the electricity to recharge will be a much higher portion of their overall income than wealthier EV drivers. A January 2023 study from the University of Michigan found that “more than half of the lowest-income U.S. households (an estimated 8.3 million households) would continue to experience high transportation energy burdens, defined...as spending more than 4 percent of household income on filling the tank or charging up.”

“EV ownership in the U.S. has thus far been dominated by households with higher incomes and education levels, leaving the most vulnerable populations behind,” reports Joshua Newell, a co-author on the study and an urban geographer at the University of Michigan’s Center for Sustainable Systems. “Policy interventions are needed to increase EV accessibility so that all Americans can benefit from the EV transition.”

This problem has not gone unnoticed by some lawmakers and policymakers. One positive development is the federal government’s re-upping of its policy offering up to \$7,500 in tax rebates to those who purchase a qualifying new EV. Additionally, many states and localities offer their own financial and other incentives to help low-income individuals afford the transition to an EV. Check out the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency (DESIRE), a free online resource from the North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center at North Carolina State to find what incentives are available in your area. Other ways that some states and cities are trying to bridge the income disparity gap caused by the EV transition include car-sharing programs for low-income residents and education and job training opportunities in the EV industry.

Meanwhile, the cost of EVs continues to go down. U.S. car buyers can comparison-shop among more than a dozen EV models with sticker prices under \$40k for the 2023 model year. And many governments and private organizations are actively engaged in research and development to make EVs more affordable and accessible to everyone. Since EVs are cheaper to own and operate than their gas guzzling counterparts, it’s a shame that those least able to afford them bear a disproportionate burden, whether they upgrade or not.



**The non-profit Forth, which works to electrify transportation by bringing people together to create solutions that reduce pollution and barriers to access, has been running a successful EV car sharing program out of the headquarters of Hacienda, a local community development corporation in a low-income neighborhood in Portland, Oregon, since 2017.**



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## South Dakota COVID-19 Report

<b>New Cases*</b> <b>747</b> <b>+172</b>	<b>Total Cases*</b> <b>274,676</b>	<b>Currently Hospitalized</b> <b>54</b> <b>+5</b>
<b>New Hospitalizations</b> <b>38</b>	<b>Total Hospitalized</b> <b>12,376</b>	<a href="#">Click to Visit</a> <b>SD COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage</b>
<b>New Deaths</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Total Deaths</b> <b>3,152</b>	<a href="#">Click to Visit</a> <b>COVID-19 Community Levels</b>

## SD 2022/2023 Influenza Weekly Summary Week Ending January 28, 2023 (Week 4)

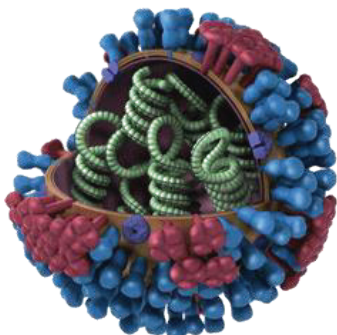
Provisional numbers, \* Lab confirmed: PCR, Culture or DFA. The number of laboratories using rapid confirmatory tests has increased, which may account for some of the increase in confirmed cases observed this influenza season



Lab Confirmed Cases	Jan 22-28	Season to Date
Type A, H1	27	3,959
Type A, H3	5	237
Type A, Unspecified	132	9,821
Type B Unspecified	5	68
B Yamagata	0	0
B Victoria	0	0
Total*	219	14,085

Rapid Antigen Tests (31) sites reporting	Jan 22-28	Season to Date
Total Tested	461	15,372
Total Positive	37 (28A/9B)	2,906 (2,500A/406B)
% Rapid Antigen Tests Positive	8.03%	18.90%

	Jan 22-28	Season to Date
Hospitalizations	16	609
Deaths	0	26



3D Influenza Virus

SD Influenza Geographic: **LOCAL**  
 SD Influenza Activity: **MINIMAL**  
 US Influenza Activity: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivitysurv.htm>

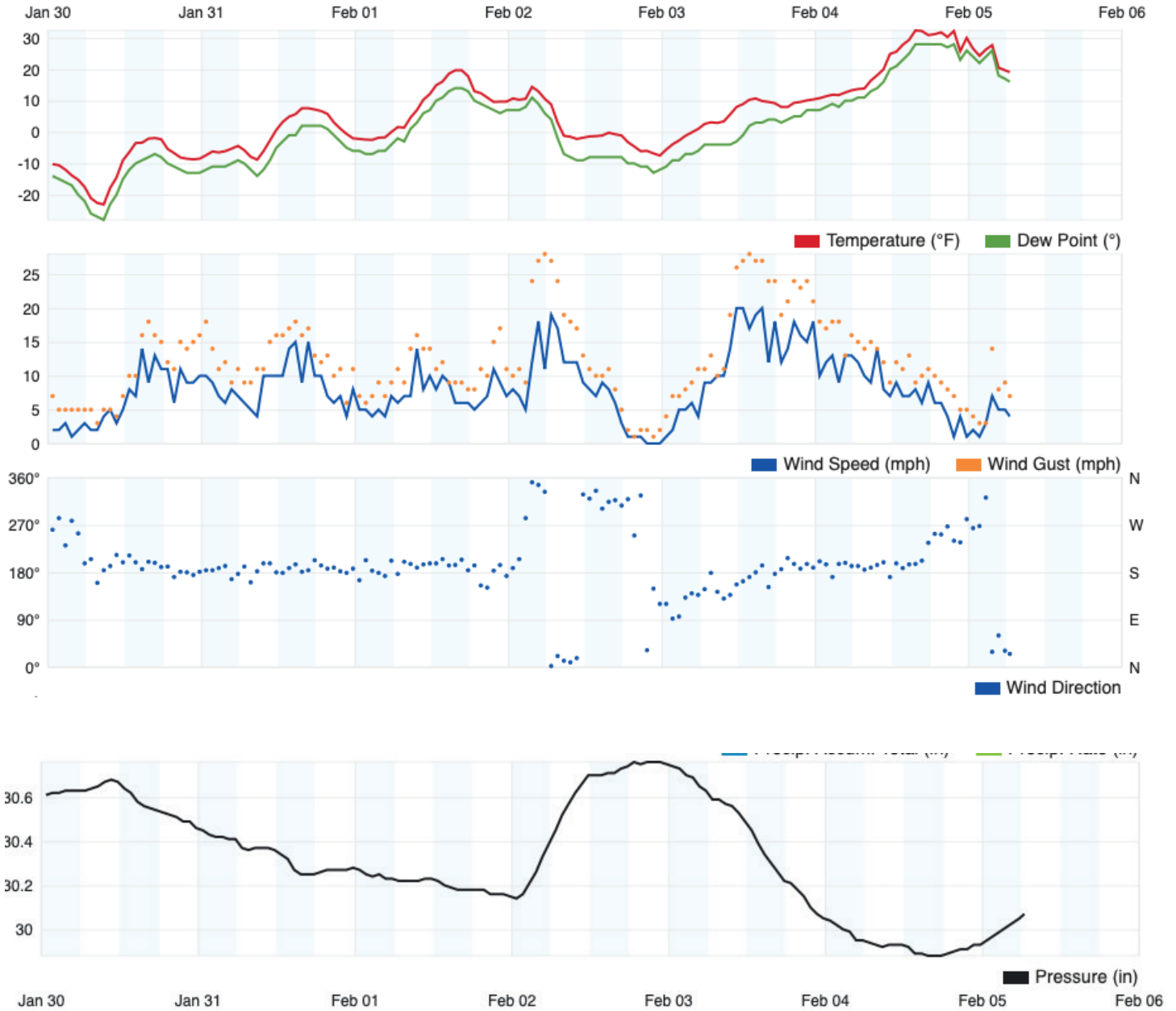
International Flu Activity: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/international/index.htm>

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

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## Past Week's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy and Windy	Mostly Cloudy and Windy then Slight Chance Rain/Snow	Slight Chance Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 31 °F	Low: 29 °F	High: 35 °F	Low: 18 °F	High: 35 °F	Low: 20 °F	High: 34 °F




## Cooler Today For Most, Mild Next Several Days


February 5, 2023  
5:15 AM



**Today**   
Partly/mostly cloudy. Highs 25-45°. Warmest central SD, coolest northeast SD/west central MN.

**Monday**    
Mostly cloudy & breezy/windy. Slight chance rain/snow. Highs 32-42°.

**Tuesday**   
Mostly sunny. Highs 32-45°.

**Wednesday**   
Partly cloudy. Highs 35-50°.

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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

A weak cold front slid through northeast SD and west central MN this morning. Because of this, temperatures today will be a bit cooler than what was experienced on Saturday. Mild temperatures look to persist across the region through the week, with many areas getting above freezing with continued snow melt. Aside from slight rain or snow chances on Monday, conditions look dry for the next few days .

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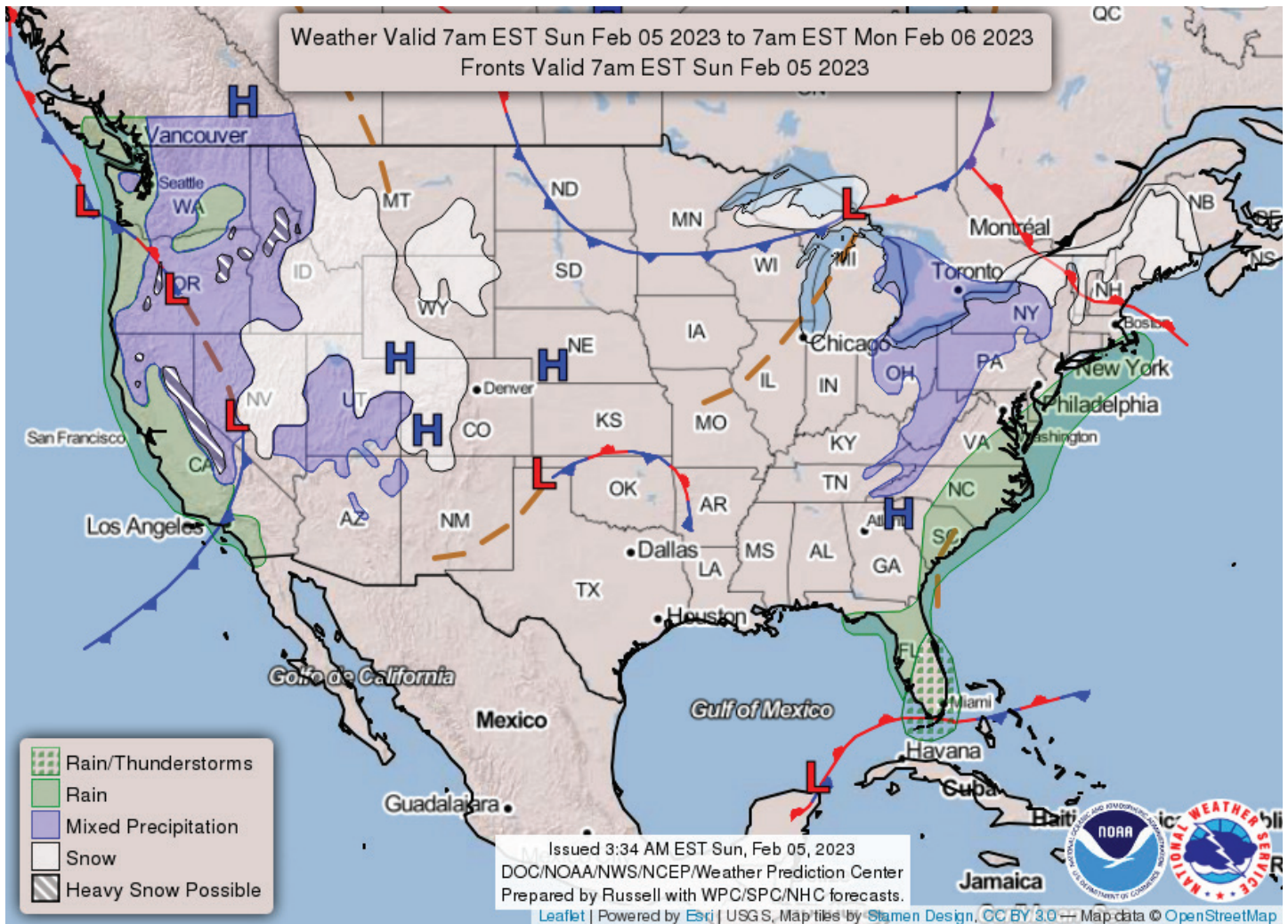
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 32 °F at 3:33 PM**  
**Low Temp: 10 °F at 12:03 AM**  
**Wind: 18 mph at 1:31 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 9 hours, 59 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 57 in 1991  
Record Low: -32 in 1951  
Average High: 26  
Average Low: 3  
Average Precip in Feb.: 0.10  
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 0.65  
Precip Year to Date: 0.25  
Sunset Tonight: 5:46:13 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:45:12 AM



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## Today in Weather History

February 5, 1978: Another winter blizzard plagued the northern half of the state, beginning on February 5th and continuing until the 9th. The unusual aspect of this blizzard was that the wind came from the southeast between 25 to 45 mph. Only one to three inches of new snow accumulation fell during the five days but was piled high on the existing large snowdrifts. Most of the northern half of the state was paralyzed due to blocked roads. Eighteen counties across the north part of South Dakota were declared a disaster by the governor. There were also numerous livestock losses.

1745: Today is National Weatherman/Meteorologist day, commemorating the birth of John Jeffries in 1745. Jeffries, one of America's first weather observers, began taking daily weather observations in Boston, MA, in 1774, and he made the first balloon observation in 1784. You can read a narrative from the [Library of Congress](#) of the two aerial voyages of Doctor Jeffries with Mons. Blanchard: with meteorological observations and remarks. The first voyage was on November 13th, 1784, from London into Kent. The second was on January 7th, 1785, from England into France.

1887: San Francisco experienced its most significant snowstorm of record. Nearly four inches was reported in downtown San Francisco, and the western hills of the city received seven inches. Excited crowds went on a snowball throwing rampage.

1920: An intense nor'easter dumped 17.5 inches of snow over three days in New York City Central Park, New York. Boston, MA, saw 12.2 inches of snow on this day.

1961 - The third great snowstorm of the winter season struck the northeastern U.S. Cortland NY received 40 inches of snow. (David Ludlum)

1976: Record-breaking snowfall of just two inches fell in Sacramento, California. February 5, 1976, is the only time since November 1941 when snow was reported in Sacramento.

1986: A supercell thunderstorm tracked through the Tomball area northwest of Houston, TX, and produced four tornadoes along with damaging microburst winds and up to tennis ball size hail. An F3 tornado killed two people, injured 80 others, and devastated a mobile home park and the David Wayne Hooks Airport. In addition, 300 aircraft were either damaged or destroyed. Much of the more substantial hail was propelled by 60 to 80 mph winds, resulting in widespread moderate damage. The total damage from this storm was 80 million dollars.

1987 - Gales lashed the northern Pacific coast and the coast of northern New England. A storm in the central U.S. produced five inches of snow at Rapid City SD. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A winter storm produced heavy snow from the Upper Ohio Valley to New England, with up to 12 inches reported in Vermont and New Hampshire. Strong northerly winds in the Upper Midwest produced wind chill readings as cold as 60 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Two dozen cities in the south central and northwestern U.S. reported new record low temperatures for the date. The low of 14 below zero at Boise ID was a February record. A winter storm continued in the southwestern U.S. Alta UT reported 49 inches of snow in four days, Wolf Creek CO reported 66 inches in six days, including 28 inches in 24 hours, and up to 84 inches buried the ski resorts of northern New Mexico in three days. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - A winter storm produced heavy snow in the northeastern U.S. Snowfall totals in Maine ranged up to 13 inches at Gorham, with 11 inches reported at Portland. Totals in New Hampshire ranged up to 14 inches at Franconia, with 13 inches reported at Portsmouth. A mixture of snow, sleet and freezing rain caused numerous traffic accidents in eastern New York State resulting in three deaths and fourteen injuries. Subzero cold also gripped parts of the northeastern U.S. Caribou ME and Houlton ME reported morning lows of 15 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2004 - 7.15 inches of rain deluges Pinson, AL, setting an all-time record rainfall over 24 hours for the town. The Weather Doctor

2008: The Super Tuesday 2008 Tornado Outbreak has been one of the deadliest tornado outbreaks in the US, with 59 fatalities reported. So far, it ranks in the top 15 deadly tornado outbreaks (and the highest number of tornado deaths since 1985). According to the SPC Storm Reports, there were over 300 reports of tornadoes, large hail (up to 4.25 inches in diameter in Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri), and damaging wind gusts from Texas to Ohio and West Virginia. The outbreak produced at least 64 tornadoes, some producing EF-3 and EF-4 damage.

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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### FAITHFULNESS IS MUTUAL

Memories are a gift from God. However, what we do with them, how they affect us or the difference they have on our way of living is what matters most.

When we recall the many gifts that God grants to us each day, do we take enough time to pause and thank Him and share the fact of His love, grace, and mercy with others?

When He brings healing and wellness to us and our loved ones, do we give Him the credit He deserves or do we think that He is obligated to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves?

When our financial needs are met and we have a surplus, do we give a "thank you offering" to God and praise Him for blessing us and giving us more than we deserve?

"A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished," is a proverb worth noting carefully. God does indeed bless those who are faithful - often much more than can be imagined or deserved. Unfortunately, there are those who believe they have earned what they have accumulated and therefore do not need to give God credit or praise, thanksgiving or respect. How sad.

We have what we have because of God's grace. Whatever we have is a result of Him showing us His favor. The strength and abilities I have come from Him and the opportunities I have to use them come from Him. If we use them to "get rich" without recognizing it's all because of Him, we can expect a tragic ending. We must use God's gifts for God's glory.

Prayer: We pray, Father, for grateful hearts. May we never cease to recognize Your goodness and faithfulness are to be used to bring honor and glory to Your Name. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished. Proverbs 28:20



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)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 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
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 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
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.03.23

1 4 50 54 59 17

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$31,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.04.23

8 17 18 21 52 5

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$34,620,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.04.23

14 24 30 44 47 18

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 42 Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.04.23

7 10 14 30 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$42,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.04.23

6 38 57 58 63 8

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.04.23

2 8 15 19 58 10

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$747,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

## Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Arlington 47, Great Plains Lutheran 35  
Belle Fourche 59, Custer 53  
Beresford 58, Alcester-Hudson 53  
Brandon Valley 45, Rapid City Stevens 32  
Brookings 59, Douglas 27  
Canton 70, Groton Area 63  
Dakota Valley 76, Tiospa Zina Tribal 41  
Dell Rapids 53, Webster 29  
Dell Rapids St. Mary 82, Mitchell Christian 12  
Deubrook 60, Hitchcock-Tulare 26  
Elk Point-Jefferson 52, Aberdeen Roncalli 35  
Elkton-Lake Benton 69, Iroquois/ Lake Preston Co-op 54  
Freeman Academy/Marion 47, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 22  
Hamlin 51, Vermillion 34  
Hay Springs, Neb. 74, Bennett County 48  
Hill City 31, Hot Springs 13  
Huron 58, Sturgis Brown 38  
James Valley Christian 46, Estelline/Hendricks 21  
Jones County 49, Leola/Frederick 28  
Kimball/White Lake 63, Colome 29  
Lower Brule 66, North Central Co-Op 43  
Lyman 71, Herreid/Selby Area 54  
Marshall, Minn. 58, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 51  
Miller 36, Platte-Geddes 29  
Mitchell 56, Spearfish 52  
Mobridge-Pollock 61, Todd County 45  
New Underwood 47, White River 39  
Newell 49, Lead-Deadwood 22  
Parkston 32, Lennox 28  
Philip 67, Highmore-Harrold 64  
Sioux Falls Christian 63, Sisseton 54  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 49, Rapid City Central 31  
St. Francis Indian 47, Flandreau Indian 37  
Tea Area 48, Milbank 40  
Tri-Valley 63, Redfield 53  
Wagner 63, Viborg-Hurley 41  
Warner 68, Waverly-South Shore 29  
Wessington Springs 60, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 37  
Wilmot 45, Langford 27  
Winner 44, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 23  
Wolsey-Wessington 58, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 36

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## BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Beresford 63, Alcester-Hudson 46  
Brandon Valley 51, Rapid City Stevens 43  
Brookings 59, Douglas 27  
Burke 62, North Central Co-Op 58  
Custer 73, Belle Fourche 67  
Dell Rapids 59, Aberdeen Christian 51  
Dell Rapids St. Mary 81, Mitchell Christian 56  
Elk Point-Jefferson 60, Groton Area 56  
Faith 75, Harding County 71  
Flandreau 51, Elkton-Lake Benton 48  
Freeman Academy/Marion 62, Tri-Valley 56  
Great Plains Lutheran 65, Arlington 34  
Herreid/Selby Area 54, Lyman 48, OT  
Hitchcock-Tulare 53, Deubrook 50  
Hot Springs 66, Hill City 42  
Huron 67, Sturgis Brown 54  
James Valley Christian 88, Estelline/Hendricks 85, 3OT  
Jones County 53, Leola/Frederick 48  
Madison 52, Deuel 40  
Mitchell 56, Spearfish 39  
Mobridge-Pollock 59, Todd County 49  
Moorhead, Minn. 83, Lennox 74  
Philip 61, Highmore-Harrold 53  
Platte-Geddes 55, Miller 54  
Scotland 40, Freeman 39  
Sioux Falls Christian 66, White River 55  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 67, Minneapolis North, Minn. 59  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 76, Rapid City Central 60  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 64, Marshall, Minn. 53  
Sioux Valley 51, St. Thomas More 44  
Tea Area 67, DeSmet 60  
Vermillion 51, Redfield 33  
Viborg-Hurley 61, McLaughlin 41  
Warner 50, Waverly-South Shore 39  
Wessington Springs 57, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 53  
Winner 52, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 34  
Wolsey-Wessington 47, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 30  
Worthington, Minn. 75, Canistota 46  
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=  
Lead-Deadwood vs. Newell, ppd.

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

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## Mayo's 41 lead South Dakota St. past North Dakota St. 90-85

By The Associated Press undefined

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Zeke Mayo scored 41 points for South Dakota State in a 90-85 victory over North Dakota State on Saturday.

Mayo had five assists for the Jackrabbits (14-11, 9-4 Summit League). Matt Dentlinger scored 17 points while shooting 7 of 12 from the field and 3 for 4 from the line, and added five rebounds. Alex Arians recorded 15 points and shot 5 of 10 from the field and 4 for 6 from the line.

The Bison (9-15, 6-6) were led in scoring by Grant Nelson, who finished with 27 points and 15 rebounds. Jacari White added 18 points for North Dakota State. In addition, Damari Wheeler-Thomas finished with 13 points and four assists.

NEXT UP

South Dakota State's next game is Saturday against South Dakota at home. North Dakota State hosts Omaha on Thursday.

## North Dakota knocks off South Dakota 86-72

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Matt Norman scored 21 points as North Dakota beat South Dakota 86-72 on Saturday.

Norman also contributed six rebounds for the Fightin' Hawks (8-17, 2-10 Summit League). B.J. Omot added 17 points while shooting 4 for 10 (1 for 6 from 3-point range) and 8 of 8 from the free throw line, and he also had nine rebounds and five blocks. Tsotne Tsartsidze shot 6 for 13, including 2 for 6 from beyond the arc to finish with 16 points.

The Coyotes (11-14, 6-7) were led in scoring by Kruz Perrott-Hunt, who finished with 18 points and four assists. South Dakota also got 16 points and nine rebounds from Tasos Kamateros. In addition, Damani Hayes finished with eight points and seven rebounds.

## Police say officer shot suspect who held clerk hostage

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a police officer has shot and killed a man after he took a gas station clerk in South Dakota hostage with a knife.

KELO-TV reports that Rapid City Chief of Police Don Hedrick said that the suspect entered the gas station Friday and held a knife to the clerk's throat, fending off a bystander's efforts to intervene.

The suspect then brought the clerk outside with the knife still held near her.

In a release sent Friday evening, the Attorney General's Office said that the suspect refused commands to surrender.

A responding officer fired at the suspect as he held the knife, and he fell to the ground. Hedrick said the officer also stunned the suspect because he still wouldn't let go of the knife.

The suspect was transported by ambulance to a hospital, where he later died. His name wasn't immediately released.

Hedrick said that neither the clerk nor the officer was hurt.

State and county officials are investigating and plan to submit their findings to prosecutors who will make a final determination on whether the shooting was justified.

## Election skeptics slow to get sweeping changes in GOP states

By TOM DAVIES, CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and MEAD GRUVER Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Republicans in some heavily conservative states won their campaigns for secretary of state last year after claiming they would make sweeping changes aimed at keeping fraud out of elections.

So far, their efforts to make good on their promises are mixed, in some cases because their rhetoric has bumped up against skepticism from members of their own party.

Voters in politically pivotal swing states such as Arizona, Michigan and Nevada rejected candidates seek-

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ing to oversee elections who had echoed former President Donald Trump's false claims about the 2020 presidential election. But newly elected secretaries of state in Alabama, Indiana and Wyoming who had questioned the legitimacy of that election won easily in those Republican-dominated states.

They are now facing the task of backing up their campaign pledges in states where Republicans have already set strict election laws.

In Indiana, Secretary of State Diego Morales has been relatively quiet. He has not been making the rounds at the Statehouse trying to persuade lawmakers to embrace the wide-ranging tightening of voting rules he promoted as a candidate.

After defeating the incumbent secretary of state for the Republican nomination last summer, Morales dialed back his description of Joe Biden's 2020 presidential election as a "scam" and his calls for tighter voting laws. That push included cutting Indiana's 28-day early voting period in half and requiring new voters to prove their U.S. citizenship when registering.

No bills for such steps were introduced for this year's legislative session. Morales, who was an aide to Mike Pence when the former vice president was governor, also did not seek any money in his budget request to lawmakers for creating an "election task force," which he had discussed as a candidate, that would investigate voting "shenanigans" around the state.

A concept backed by Morales for requiring voters to include a copy of their driver's license with a mail-in ballot application is being sponsored by a Republican lawmaker, but he said he wasn't working with Morales on the proposal.

Morales' office has declined interview requests from The Associated Press since he took office Jan. 1. Kegan Prentice, the office's legislative director, said Morales was "currently focused on the ongoing transition."

During remarks at an early January inaugural ceremony, Morales continued his campaign theme of promoting "election integrity" without giving specifics.

"My priority is to make Indiana a national model for election confidence and integrity," he said.

Indiana House Speaker Todd Huston, also a Republican, said recently he had talked with Morales and told him he was "comfortable" with the state's election laws.

"I think our election laws are as good as any in the country," Huston said.

Morales was among the otherwise unsuccessful candidates associated with the America First Secretary of State Coalition, which called for large-scale changes to elections with candidates aligned with Trump's views. The group supported losing candidates in several battleground states.

They claimed widespread fraud and manipulation of voting machines, but there has been no evidence of either as exhaustive reviews in states lost by Trump have not revealed wrongdoing. That hasn't stopped Republican candidates, particularly in contested primaries, from parroting the false claims that have taken hold among the party's supporters.

A large segment of Republicans, 58%, still believe Biden's 2020 victory was not legitimate, according to an October poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

While Alabama's Wes Allen and Wyoming's Chuck Gray were not on the America First coalition's candidate list, they also raised doubts about the 2020 vote.

Allen repeated a debunked claim calling the 31-state Electronic Registration Information Center organization a "Soros-funded, leftist group," a reference to liberal billionaire George Soros. The voter registration data-sharing partnership is designed to maintain accurate voter rolls by identifying people who have moved or died. It's funded by states after receiving initial startup support from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Allen's first official act was to withdraw Alabama from the group, citing privacy concerns. Indiana and Wyoming weren't part of the organization.

Even though Wyoming gave Trump his widest victory margins in 2016 and 2020, Gray's election denials worried some of his fellow Republicans. The former state legislator and right-wing radio host often showed "2000 Mules," a film that made unsubstantiated claims about ballot fraud, during his campaign events last year. He solidly beat a fellow Republican lawmaker who said the 2020 presidential outcome wasn't in doubt.

A few Republicans questioned whether Gray should be stripped of his election oversight role given his

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views, but that idea has received little support. Instead, he has received a warm welcome from Wyoming lawmakers considering several election bills that are moving ahead.

One would prohibit "ballot harvesting," or gathering others' completed ballots for delivery, while another would implement new requirements for voting machines that would, in part, ensure they could not be connected to the internet.

But so far there is no legislation to follow through on Gray's campaign proposals to ban ballot drop boxes or electronic voting machines, which despite mainly paper balloting in Wyoming are available in every county to help voters with disabilities.

That reflects the reality of trying to implement the most far-reaching election campaign promises in a heavily Republican state.

In January, Gov. Mark Gordon made a point in his state of the state speech of saying that Wyoming counts on election integrity because of its "professional and dedicated" county clerks.

But going off-script, Gordon hinted at Gray's challenges ahead: "And I'm thrilled that our secretary of state takes that charge very seriously."

## How will EU ban and West's price cap on Russian diesel work?

By DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — The European Union is taking another big step toward cutting its energy ties with Russia. The 27-nation bloc is banning Russian refined oil products like diesel fuel and joining the U.S. and other allies in imposing a price cap on sales to non-Western countries.

Europe's ban takes effect Sunday following its embargo on coal and most oil from Russia. The move is meant to further slash reliance on Russian energy and payments into the Kremlin's war chest as the anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine nears.

The newest energy sanctions have risks: Diesel prices have already jumped since the war started on Feb. 24, and there's uncertainty about how the EU embargo and price cap by the Group of Seven major democracies will affect the market for a fuel crucial to the global economy.

Most things people buy or eat are transported at some point by trucks, which mostly run on diesel. It also powers farm equipment, city buses and industrial equipment. The higher cost of diesel is built into the price of almost everything, helping push up inflation that has made life harder for people worldwide.

Companies have already felt the pain. "We're leaving money in the road to provide our services," said Hans-Dieter Sedelmeier of the family-run German bus and travel company Rast Reisen.

Here are key facts about the sanctions on Russian oil products:

### HOW WILL THE EMBARGO AND PRICE CAP WORK?

European importers have had months since the ban was announced in June to line up new supplies. They have already cut Russia's share of EU imports to 27% in December from more than half before the war began.

U.S. suppliers have stepped up shipments to record levels, from 34,000 barrels a day at the start of 2022 to 237,000 barrels per day so far in January, according to S&P Global.

New refinery capacity coming on line this year in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and next year in Oman also could help. India is another potential source.

Russia, on the other hand, would have to find new customers.

The price cap plays a key role in the embargo: It's designed to keep Russian diesel from disappearing from the global market and causing a price spike for everyone, while still cutting into the income that supports Moscow's military.

The cap is enforceable because it bars Western companies that largely control shipping and insurance from handling diesel priced above the limit as it heads to countries like China and India. Evasion is possible but requires setting up alternative insurance or organizing a fleet of off-the-books tankers.

The cap was set at \$100 per barrel for diesel and other products made from crude, such as jet fuel, in an agreement by the G-7 countries — the U.S., U.K., Japan, Canada, France, Germany and Italy — plus

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the EU and Australia.

The price ceiling is \$45 per barrel for other products that are made from crude but trade below the price of oil, such as fuel oil used in power station boilers and industry.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO DIESEL PRICES?

If the cap works as advertised, global diesel flows should reshuffle, with Europe finding new suppliers and Russian diesel finding new customers, without a major loss of supply.

In practice, markets will have to adjust, and there could be a brief spike. For one, tankers would have a longer journey to Europe from the U.S., Middle East or India than from Russia's Baltic Sea ports, stressing shipping capacity.

"When Russian exports are constrained, for whatever reason, that would of course cause some trouble in this whole reshuffle process," said Hedi Grati, head of fuels and refining research for Europe at S&P Global Commodity Insights. "Europe would be competing with other big importers, and that would cause upward pressure on pricing."

## WHAT DOES THE PRICE CAP ACCOMPLISH?

The hope is to reproduce the effect of the West's \$60-a-barrel price cap on Russian crude oil. Russia has said it won't sell oil to countries observing the limit, but the cap and falling demand from a slowing global economy has meant customers in China, India and elsewhere can buy Russian oil at steep discounts, cutting into the Kremlin's revenue.

The goal is the same with the diesel cap: "It is likely that Russia will have a harder time finding new buyers of its diesel than it did for crude oil and will be forced to accept discounts when doing so," said Simone Tagliapietra, an energy policy expert at the Bruegel think tank in Brussels.

Once they're in place, the caps could be tightened to increase pressure on Russia.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF DIESEL GETS MORE EXPENSIVE?

Fuel prices have been a major factor behind painful inflation in Europe that has robbed consumers of purchasing power and slowed the economy.

Rast Reisen, the bus and travel company near Freiburg im Breisgau in southwestern Germany, has seen diesel fuel rise from 12%-15% of costs to 20%-25%.

Because 15 of its 25 buses are part of the regional public transport network, the company can't automatically raise fares, and government increases so far are "a droplet on a hot stone," said Sedelmeier, managing director for public transport.

Rast Reisen had to add a 10- to 15-euro (\$11 to \$16) diesel surcharge to trips to popular destinations like northern Germany's island of Sylt or Croatia's coast because prices spiked after catalogues were printed. Next year, prices for trips will simply be higher.

Diesel prices at the pump have swung from 1.66 euros per liter (\$6.43 a gallon) to 2.14 euros per liter (\$8.29 a gallon) in the course of a year.

"That is a gigantic increase," said Christopher Schuldes, the third generation of his family to run German trucking company Schuldes Spedition.

The company has 27 diesel trucks and 50 employees in the small town of Alsbach-Haehnlein between Frankfurt and Heidelberg in southwest Germany. It already has cut fuel costs by equipping trucks with efficient engines, ensuring trucks leave fully loaded and training employees in fuel-efficient driving.

"We did all that a long time ago, long before Russia invaded Ukraine," Schuldes said. "There's no more room for optimization."

To ease the extra diesel costs, the company tried negotiating higher prices with customers who have long-term contracts. Some agreed, some didn't. Even if a contract allows prices to rise with diesel costs, there's a two-month lag.

Regarding the embargo, "I am of two minds about it," Schuldes said. "I have to see that the company is in good shape, and that our purchasing is as economical as possible. On the other hand — on the personal level — I say Russia must not be supported."

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## 9 missing after fishing boat capsizes in South Korea

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean coast guard vessels and aircraft on Sunday were searching for nine fishermen who disappeared after their boat capsized off the country's southwestern coast.

The coast guard from the southwestern port city of Mokpo said that three crew members were rescued by a nearby commercial vessel following the accident late Saturday near Daebichi Island in the sea county of Sinan.

Survivors said the boat's engine room had quickly filled with water before the 24-ton vessel tipped over, according to the coast guard.

Officials were planning to salvage the boat, but it wasn't known whether the nine missing crew members would be inside. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety said seven of the missing were South Korean nationals and the two others were foreigners, but it didn't immediately confirm their nationalities.

More than 30 coast guard vessels and at least eight coast guard and military aircraft were searching the area on Sunday afternoon.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol called for officials to mobilize "all available resources" to widen the search and also to provide support to the families of the missing fishermen, his office said.

## Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan martial ruler in 9/11 wars, dies

By JON GAMBRELL and MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who seized power in a bloodless coup and later led a reluctant Pakistan into aiding the U.S. war in Afghanistan against the Taliban, has died, officials said Sunday. He was 79.

Musharraf, a former special forces commando, became president through the last of a string of military coups that roiled Pakistan since its founding amid the bloody 1947 partition of India. He ruled the nuclear-armed state after his 1999 coup through tensions with India, an atomic proliferation scandal and an Islamic extremist insurgency. He stepped down in 2008 while facing possible impeachment.

Later in life, Musharraf lived in self-imposed exile in Dubai to avoid criminal charges, despite attempting a political comeback in 2012. But it wasn't to be as his poor health plagued his last years. He maintained a soldier's fatalism after avoiding a violent death that always seemed to be stalking him as Islamic militants twice targeted him for assassination.

"I have confronted death and defied it several times in the past because destiny and fate have always smiled on me," Musharraf once wrote. "I only pray that I have more than the proverbial nine lives of a cat."

Musharraf's family announced in June 2022 that he had been hospitalized for weeks in Dubai while suffering from amyloidosis, an incurable condition that sees proteins build up in the body's organs. They later said he also needed access to the drug daratumumab, which is used to treat multiple myeloma. That bone marrow cancer can cause amyloidosis.

Shazia Siraj, a spokeswoman for the Pakistani Consulate in Dubai, confirmed his death and said diplomats were providing support to his family.

The Pakistani military also offered its condolences as did Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, the younger brother of the prime minister Musharraf overthrew in 1999.

"May God give his family the courage to bear this loss," Sharif said.

Pakistan, a nation nearly twice the size of California along the Arabian Sea, is now home to 220 million people. But it would be its border with Afghanistan that would soon draw the U.S.'s attention and dominate Musharraf's life a little under two years after he seized power.

Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden launched the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks from Afghanistan, sheltered by the country's Taliban rulers. Musharraf knew what would come next.

"America was sure to react violently, like a wounded bear," he wrote in his autobiography. "If the perpetrator turned out to be al-Qaida, then that wounded bear would come charging straight toward us."

By Sept. 12, then-U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell told Musharraf that Pakistan would either be "with us or against us." Musharraf said another American official threatened to bomb Pakistan "back into the



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Stone Age" if it chose the latter.

Musharraf chose the former. A month later, he stood by then-President George W. Bush at the Waldorf Astoria in New York to declare Pakistan's unwavering support to fight with the United States against "terrorism in all its forms wherever it exists."

Pakistan became a crucial transit point for NATO supplies headed to landlocked Afghanistan. That was the case even though Pakistan's powerful Inter-Services Intelligence agency had backed the Taliban after it swept into power in Afghanistan in 1994. Prior to that, the CIA and others funneled money and arms through the ISI to Islamic fighters battling the 1980s Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

The U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan saw Taliban fighters flee over the border back into Pakistan, including bin Laden, whom the U.S. would kill in 2011 at a compound in Abbottabad. They regrouped and the offshoot Pakistani Taliban emerged, beginning a yearslong insurgency in the mountainous border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The CIA began flying armed Predator drones from Pakistan with Musharraf's blessing, using an airstrip built by the founding president of the United Arab Emirates for falconing in Pakistan's Balochistan province. The program helped beat back the militants but saw over 400 strikes in Pakistan alone kill at least 2,366 people — including 245 civilians, according to the Washington-based New America Foundation think tank.

Though Pakistan under Musharraf launched these operations, the militants still thrived as billions of American dollars flowed into the nation. That led to suspicion that still plagues the U.S. relationship with Pakistan.

"After 9/11, then President Musharraf made a strategic shift to abandon the Taliban and support the U.S. in the war on terror, but neither side believes the other has lived up to expectations flowing from that decision," a 2009 U.S. cable from then-Ambassador Anne Patterson published by WikiLeaks said, describing what had become the diplomatic equivalent of a loveless marriage.

"The relationship is one of co-dependency we grudgingly admit — Pakistan knows the U.S. cannot afford to walk away; the U.S. knows Pakistan cannot survive without our support."

But it would be Musharraf's life on the line. Militants tried to assassinate him twice in 2003 by targeting his convoy, first with a bomb planted on a bridge and then with car bombs. That second attack saw Musharraf's vehicle lifted into the air by the blast before touching the ground again. It raced to safety on just its rims, Musharraf pulling a Glock pistol in case he needed to fight his way out.

It wasn't until his wife, Sehba, saw the car covered in gore that the scale of the attack dawned on him. "She is always calm in the face of danger," he recounted. But then, "she was screaming uncontrollably, hysterically."

Born Aug. 11, 1943, in New Delhi, India, Musharraf was the middle son of a diplomat. His family joined millions of other Muslims in fleeing westward when predominantly Hindu India and Islamic Pakistan split during independence from Britain in 1947. The partition saw hundreds of thousands of people killed in riots and fighting.

Musharraf entered the Pakistani army at age 18 and made his career there as Islamabad fought three wars against India. He'd launch his own attempt at capturing territory in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir in 1999 just before seizing power from Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Sharif had ordered Musharraf's dismissal as the army chief flew home from a visit to Sri Lanka and denied his plane landing rights in Pakistan, even as it ran low on fuel. On the ground, the army took control and after he landed Musharraf took charge.

Yet as ruler, Musharraf nearly reached a deal with India on Kashmir, according to U.S. diplomats at the time. He also worked toward a rapprochement with Pakistan's longtime rival.

Another major scandal emerged under his rule when the world discovered that famed Pakistani nuclear scientist A.Q. Khan, long associated with the country's atomic bomb, had been selling centrifuge designs and other secrets to countries including Iran, Libya and North Korea, making tens of millions of dollars. Those designs helped Pyongyang to arm itself with a nuclear weapon, while centrifuges from Khan's designs still spin in Iran amid the collapse of Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Musharraf said he suspected Khan but it wasn't until 2003 when then-CIA director George Tenet showed

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him detailed plans for a Pakistani centrifuge that the scientist had been selling that he realized the severity of what happened.

Khan would confess on state television in 2004 and Musharraf would pardon him, though he'd be confined to house arrest after that.

"For years, A.Q.'s lavish lifestyle and tales of his wealth, properties, corrupt practices and financial magnanimity at state expense were generally all too well known in Islamabad's social and government circles," Musharraf later wrote. "However, these were largely ignored. ... In hindsight that neglect was apparently a serious mistake."

Musharraf's domestic support eventually eroded. He held flawed elections in late 2002 — only after changing the constitution to give himself sweeping powers to sack the prime minister and parliament. He then reneged on a promise to stand down as army chief by the end of 2004.

Militant anger toward Musharraf increased in 2007 when he ordered a raid against the Red Mosque in downtown Islamabad. It had become a sanctuary for militants opposed to Pakistan's support of the Afghan war. The weeklong operation killed over 100 people.

The incident severely damaged Musharraf's reputation among everyday citizens and earned him the undying hatred of militants who launched a series of punishing attacks following the raid.

Fearing the judiciary would block his continued rule, Musharraf fired the chief justice of Pakistan's Supreme Court. That triggered mass demonstrations.

Under pressure at home and abroad to restore civilian rule, Musharraf stepped down as army chief. Though he won another five-year presidential term, Musharraf faced a major crisis following former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's assassination in December 2007 at a campaign rally as she sought to become prime minister for the third time.

The public suspected Musharraf's hand in the killing, which he denied. A later United Nations report acknowledged the Pakistani Taliban was a main suspect in her slaying but warned that elements of Pakistan's intelligence services may have been involved.

Musharraf resigned as president in August 2008 after ruling coalition officials threatened to have him impeached for imposing emergency rule and firing judges.

"I hope the nation and the people will forgive my mistakes," Musharraf, struggling with his emotions, said in an hourlong televised address.

Afterward, he lived abroad in Dubai and London, attempting a political comeback in 2012. But Pakistan instead arrested the former general and put him under house arrest. He faced treason allegations over the Supreme Court debacle and other charges stemming from the Red Mosque raid and Bhutto's assassination.

The image of Musharraf being treated as a criminal suspect shocked Pakistan, where military generals long have been considered above the law. Pakistan allowed him to leave the country on bail to Dubai in 2016 for medical treatment and he remained there after facing a later-overturned death sentence.

But it suggested Pakistan may be ready to turn a corner in its history of military rule.

"Musharraf's resignation is a sad yet familiar story of hubris, this time in a soldier who never became a good politician," wrote Patterson, the U.S. ambassador, at the time.

"The good news is that the demonstrated strength of institutions that brought Musharraf down — the media, free elections and civil society — also provide some hope for Pakistan's future. It was these institutions that ironically became much stronger under his government."

## Pope makes final bid for peace, forgiveness in South Sudan

By NICOLE WINFIELD and DENG MACHOL Associated Press

JUBA, South Sudan (AP) — Pope Francis made a final appeal for peace in South Sudan on Sunday as he celebrated Mass before tens of thousands of people to close out an unusual mission by Christian religious leaders to nudge forward the country's recovery from civil war.

On the last day of his African pilgrimage, Francis begged South Sudanese people to lay down their

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weapons and forgive one another, presiding over Mass at the country's monument to independence here John Garang before an estimated 100,000 people, including the country's political leadership.

"Even if our hearts bleed for the wrongs we have suffered, let us refuse, once and for all, to repay evil with evil," Francis said. "Let us accept one another and love one another with sincerity and generosity, as God loves us."

His message aimed to revive hopes in the world's youngest country, which gained independence from the majority Muslim Sudan in 2011 but has been beset by civil war and conflict.

President Salva Kiir, his longtime rival Riek Machar and other opposition groups signed a peace agreement in 2018, but the deal's provisions, including the formation of a national unified army, remain largely unimplemented and fighting has continued to flare.

"We have suffered a lot," said Natalima Andrea, a 66-year-old mother of seven who wiped a tear from her eye as she waited for Francis' Mass to begin. "We need a permanent peace now and I hope these prayers would yield to lasting peace."

The Vatican said more than 100,000 people attended the service, filling the field of the Garang Mausoleum and surrounding roads.

In a bid to spur the process along, Francis was joined on the novel ecumenical peace mission by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and the moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Rt. Rev. Iain Greenshields. The aim of the Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian leaders was to push Kiir and Machar to recommit themselves to the 2018 deal.

Welby and Greenshields joined Francis on the altar at Mass on Sunday and were to accompany him on the flight back to Rome.

The three also aimed to put a global spotlight on the plight of the country, oil-rich and yet one of the world's poorest, where humanitarian needs are soaring for the 2 million people who have been displaced by continued clashes and years of above-average flooding. Watchdogs' allegations of corruption are also widespread; some South Sudanese upon the pope's arrival noted that his modest vehicle was overshadowed by local officials' luxury ones.

During the three-day visit, Francis, Welby and Greenshields sought to draw attention to the plight of South Sudan's most vulnerable people, the women and children who have borne the brunt of displacement and make up the majority of people living in temporary camps.

They raised in particular the plight of women in a country where sexual violence is rampant, child brides are common and the maternal mortality rate is the highest in the world.

"If we look at South Sudan, I would just use one word: South Sudan is a patriarchal country," said Elizabeth Nyibol Malou, a lecturer in economics at the Catholic University of South Sudan. Citing cultural norms in which wealth is passed down to male heirs and women are married young for dowries, she said it is a constant struggle to keep girls in school.

Women in South Sudan, she said, "are tired. They are struggling. They are frustrated, and they're stuck."

Edmund Yakani, executive director of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, said the visit of the three leaders was an important push to the peace process.

He called it a "critical exposure of our political leaders towards their personal responsibility for making peace and stability prevail in the country."

## Former Israeli PM: Putin promised not to kill Zelenskyy

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — A former Israeli prime minister who served briefly as a mediator at the start of Russia's war with Ukraine says he drew a promise from the Russian president not to kill his Ukrainian counterpart.

Former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett emerged as an unlikely intermediary in the war's first weeks, becoming one of the few Western leaders to meet President Vladimir Putin during the war in a snap trip to Moscow last March.

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While Bennett's mediation efforts appear to have done little to end the bloodshed that continues until today, his remarks, in an interview posted online late Saturday, shed light on the backroom diplomacy and urgent efforts that were underway to try to bring the conflict to a speedy conclusion in its early days.

In the five-hour interview, which touched on numerous other subjects, Bennett says he asked Putin about whether he intended to kill Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"I asked 'what's with this? Are you planning to kill Zelenskyy?' He said 'I won't kill Zelenskyy.' I then said to him 'I have to understand that you're giving me your word that you won't kill Zelenskyy.' He said 'I'm not going to kill Zelenskyy.'"

Bennett said he then called Zelenskyy to inform him of Putin's pledge.

"Listen, I came out of a meeting, he's not going to kill you.' He asks, 'are you sure?' I said '100% he won't kill you.'"

Bennett said that during his mediation, Putin dropped his vow to seek Ukraine's disarmament and Zelenskyy promised not to join NATO.

There was no immediate response from the Kremlin, which has previously denied Ukrainian claims that Russia intended to assassinate Zelenskyy.

Bennett, a largely untested leader who had served as prime minister for just over six months when the war broke out, unexpectedly thrust himself into international diplomacy after he had positioned Israel into an uncomfortable middle ground between Russia and Ukraine. Israel views its good ties with the Kremlin as strategic in the face of threats from Iran but it aligns itself with Western nations and also seeks to show support for Ukraine.

An observant Jew and little known internationally, he flew to Moscow for his meeting with Putin during the Jewish Sabbath, breaking his religious commitments and putting himself at the forefront of global efforts to halt the war.

But his peacemaking efforts did not appear to take off and his time in power was short-lived. Bennett's government, an ideologically diverse union that sent current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu into a brief political exile, collapsed in the summer over infighting. Bennett stepped away from politics and is now a private citizen.

## EU migration impasse leaves many refugees out in the cold

By RAF CASERT and AHMAD SEIR Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Some refugees and asylum-seekers in Brussels have been spending months in between the Street of Palaces and the Small Castle — quite literally.

Unfortunately, it's not a dream come true at the end of their fearful flight from halfway across the globe. It's a perpetual nightmare.

Petit Chateau, which means small castle, is a government reception center that often does anything but welcome arrivals. The Rue des Palais — street of palaces — has the city's worst squat, where the smell of urine and the prevalence of scurvy have come to symbolize how the European Union's migration policy is failing.

They are only 2½ miles (four kilometers) from the sleek Europa Building where EU leaders will hold a two-day summit starting Thursday to deal with migration issues that have vexed the 27 member nations for more than a decade.

Shinwari, an Afghan army captain who long helped Western powers try to stave off the Taliban, now lives in a makeshift tent camp right on the canal opposite Petit Chateau.

It's a place as desolate as it is hopeless.

"It is very cold. Some guys have different diseases and many of us are suffering from depression, because we don't know what will happen tomorrow," said the 31-year-old, who left behind his wife and four children, convinced that Taliban forces that took over in August 2021 would kill soldiers like him who worked with NATO countries.

"They search houses. No one's life was safe," Shinwari said. "They have already once told my family

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'your son has taken refuge in an infidel country.'"

Even now, far from home, he's too scared to be identified beyond his last name and with only the vaguest military details. He doesn't want his face shown in photos or video, for fear the Taliban might hurt his family.

Exacerbating his plight is the reception he's been given in the wealthy EU — largely marked by indifference, sometimes even hostility.

"Unfortunately, no one gets to hear our voices," he said from his tent, surrounded by a half-dozen ex-members of the Afghan military.

Instead, the vocabulary of EU leaders before the summit is much more about "strengthening external borders," "border fences" and "return procedures" than it is about immediately making life better for people like Shinwari.

And with 330,000 unauthorized attempts made to enter the EU last year — a six-year record — projecting a warm embrace for refugees doesn't win many elections on the continent these days.

Many Afghans also look with envy at the swift measures that the EU took after Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24 to grant Ukrainians temporary protection measures such as residency rights, labor market access, medical aid and social welfare assistance — things that all largely pass them by.

"The issue of Afghans and Ukrainians are the same, but they don't get treated the same way," Shinwari said. "When Ukrainians come here, they are provided with all the facilities ... on the first day of their arrival, but we Afghans who have left our country due to security threats, we don't get anything.

"It is surprising because human rights are not the same for everyone and that upsets us and makes us feel disappointed and neglected."

EU leaders have already said that a full breakthrough on their migration policies won't come before bloc-wide elections in June 2024.

Shinwari said he was lucky to puncture the EU's beefed up borders to use his right to asylum after an eight-month trek through Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia and eventually Belgium. It included beatings, arrest and escape in Iran, and hunger and fear along much of the trail.

Shinwari made it to Europe alive, "but now that I am here, I am homeless like a nomad" with a flimsy blue tent to keep out Belgium's many rain showers, he said.

Other Afghan former soldiers settled in the Rue des Palais, where their stories of trauma, depression, drugs and violence were just as bleak.

"The situation is not good here. If the Red Cross brings food, we will have something to eat, but if not, then many don't have anything," said Roz Amin Khan, who fled Laghman province to arrive in Belgium two months ago.

Since arriving four months ago, Shinwari said that he had one interview with asylum processing authorities and has been waiting ever since.

The lack of help for most refugees has been driving nongovernmental organizations and volunteers to despair.

"Between the legal framework and the situation on the ground there is a world of difference," said Clement Valentin, a legal advocacy officer at the CIRE refugee foundation. "There is this gap and it is tough to understand — for me and for the NGOs.

"But I cannot even begin to comprehend how tough it must be for Afghans here in Belgium, or other European nations, to understand this."

The legal sloth isn't limited to Belgium. The EU's Agency for Asylum said in its latest trends report of November 2022 that "the gap between applications and decisions had reached the largest extent since 2015," and was widening still. Overall, it said, more than 920,000 cases were still pending, a 14% annual increase.

Such was the bureaucratic backlog at the Petit Chateau when Shinwari arrived, that would-be asylum-seekers had to wait sometimes for days in the rain and cold just to get in the front door. Citizens living close by brought food and set up fire pits, because the government didn't act.

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Even if the situation has improved, the physical and mental scars are easy to see, said Michel Genet, director of Doctors of the World Belgium.

"People have been through big traumas and a very difficult situation and they expect to come here and be taken care of," but they're not, Genet said.

During many sleepless nights in the freezing cold, with the dull buzz of passing cars in the background, Shinwari's thoughts drift back home.

"Sometimes I think about the future, and I think how much longer I have to live on the streets," he said. "My mind is surrounded with problems. I think of the safety of my family and my future."

## US downs Chinese balloon, drawing a threat from China

By ZEKE MILLER, MICHAEL BALSAMO, COLLEEN LONG, AAMER MADHANI and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military on Saturday shot down a suspected Chinese spy balloon off the Carolina coast after it traversed sensitive military sites across North America. China insisted the flyover was an accident involving a civilian aircraft and threatened repercussions.

President Joe Biden issued the order but had wanted the balloon downed even earlier, on Wednesday. He was advised that the best time for the operation would be when it was over water, U.S. officials said. Military officials determined that bringing it down over land from an altitude of 60,000 feet would pose an undue risk to people on the ground.

China responded that it reserved the right to "take further actions" and criticized the U.S. for "an obvious overreaction and a serious violation of international practice."

In its statement Sunday, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that "China will resolutely uphold the relevant company's legitimate rights and interests, and at the same time reserving the right to take further actions in response." China's Ministry of Defense echoed the statement later in the day, saying it "reserves the right to take necessary measures to deal with similar situations."

The presence of the balloon in the skies above the U.S. this week dealt a severe blow to already strained U.S.-Chinese relations that have been in a downward spiral for years. It prompted Secretary of State Antony Blinken to abruptly cancel a high-stakes Beijing trip aimed at easing tensions.

"They successfully took it down and I want to compliment our aviators who did it," Biden said after getting off Air Force One en route to Camp David.

The giant white orb was spotted Saturday morning over the Carolinas as it approached the Atlantic coast. About 2:39 p.m. EST, an F-22 fighter jet fired a missile at the balloon, puncturing it while it was about 6 nautical miles off the coast near Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, senior defense officials said.

The spectacle had Americans looking to the skies all week, wondering whether the mysterious balloon had floated over them.

On Saturday, Ashlyn Preaux, 33, went out to get her mail in Forestbrook, South Carolina, and noticed her neighbors looking up — and there it was, the balloon in the cloudless blue sky. Then she saw fighter jets circling and the balloon get hit.

"I did not anticipate waking up to be in a 'Top Gun' movie today," she said.

The debris landed in 47 feet of water, shallower than officials had expected, and it spread out over roughly seven miles and the recovery operation included several ships. The officials estimated the recovery efforts would be completed in a short time, not weeks. A salvage vessel was en route.

U.S. defense and military officials said Saturday that the balloon entered the U.S. air defense zone north of the Aleutian Islands on Jan. 28 and moved largely over land across Alaska and then into Canadian airspace in the Northwest Territories on Monday. It crossed back into U.S. territory over northern Idaho on Tuesday, the day the White House said Biden was first briefed on it.

The balloon was spotted Wednesday over Montana, home to Malmstrom Air Force Base, which has fields of nuclear missile silos.

The Americans were able to collect intelligence on the balloon as it flew over the U.S., giving them a

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number of days to analyze it and learn how it moved and what it was capable of surveilling, according to two senior defense officials said. The officials briefed reporters on condition of anonymity.

The officials said the U.S. military was constantly assessing the threat, and concluded that the technology on the balloon didn't give the Chinese significant intelligence beyond what it could already obtain from satellites, though the U.S. took steps to mitigate what information it could gather as it moved along.

Republicans were critical of Biden's response.

"Allowing a spy balloon from the Communist Party of China to travel across the entire continental United States before contesting its presence is a disastrous projection of weakness by the White House," said Mississippi Sen. Roger Wicker, the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., tweeted: "Now that this embarrassing episode is over, we need answers from the Biden Administration on the decision-making process. Communist China was allowed to violate American sovereignty unimpeded for days. We must be better prepared for future provocations and incursions by the CCP."

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., was more positive: "Thank you to the men and women of the United States military who were responsible for completing the mission to shoot down the Chinese surveillance balloon. The Biden Administration did the right thing in bringing it down."

China has claimed that the balloon was merely a weather research "airship" that had been blown off course. The Pentagon rejected that out of hand — as well as China's contention that it was not being used for surveillance and had only limited navigational ability.

The Chinese government on Saturday sought to play down the cancellation of Blinken's trip. "In actuality, the U.S. and China have never announced any visit, the U.S. making any such announcement is their own business, and we respect that," China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

The Pentagon also acknowledged reports of a second balloon flying over Latin America. "We now assess it is another Chinese surveillance balloon," Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, Pentagon press secretary, said in a statement. Officials said the balloons are part of a fleet that China uses for surveillance, and they can be maneuvered remotely through small motors and propellers. One official said they carry equipment in the pod under the balloon that is not usually associated with standard meteorological activities or civilian research.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not immediately respond to a question about the second balloon.

This isn't the first time Chinese spy balloons have crossed into U.S. airspace in recent years, one of the officials said. At least three times during the Trump administration and at least one other time during Biden's time as president they've seen balloons cross, but not for this long, the official said.

Blinken, who had been due to depart Washington for Beijing late Friday, said he had told senior Chinese diplomat Wang Yi in a phone call that sending the balloon over the U.S. was "an irresponsible act and that (China's) decision to take this action on the eve of my visit is detrimental to the substantive discussions that we were prepared to have."

Uncensored reactions on the Chinese internet mirrored the official government stance that the U.S. was hyping the situation. Some used it as a chance to poke fun at U.S. defenses, saying it couldn't even defend against a balloon, and nationalist influencers leaped to use the news to mock the U.S.

China has denied any claims of spying and said it is a civilian-use balloon intended for meteorology research. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized that the balloon's journey was out of its control and urged the U.S. not to "smear" it because of the balloon.

In preparation for the operation Saturday, the Federal Aviation Administration temporarily closed airspace over the Carolina coast, including the airports in Myrtle Beach and Charleston, South Carolina, and Wilmington, North Carolina. The FAA rerouted air traffic from the area and warned of delays as a result of the flight restrictions. The FAA and Coast Guard worked to clear the airspace and water below the balloon as it reached the ocean.

Television footage showed a small explosion, followed by the giant deflated balloon descending like a ribbon toward the water.

Bill Swanson said he watched the balloon deflate instantly from his house in Myrtle Beach as fighter jets

circled around.

"When it deflated it was pretty close to instantaneous," he said. "One second it's there like a tiny moon and the next second it's gone." Swanson added that a trail of smoke followed the balloon as it dropped.

## Grammys could make history with Beyoncé, Bad Bunny wins

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Will Beyoncé emerge from the Grammy Awards as its most decorated artist ever? That's one of the main storylines heading into Sunday's ceremony, where the superstar is the leading nominee and needs four wins to make history.

Several of music's biggest names, including Beyoncé, are in the running for the night's top honors — Harry Styles, Mary J. Blige, Kendrick Lamar, ABBA and Lizzo are all among the nominees in for album of the year. Adele joins them in the record of the year competition.

Trevor Noah will host the telecast live from downtown Los Angeles' Crypto.com Arena beginning at 8 p.m. Eastern on CBS and Paramount+. The show will include performances by Bad Bunny, Mary J. Blige, Sam Smith, Lizzo as well as special musical tributes to the late musicians Takeoff, Loretta Lynn and Christine McVie.

But with 91 Grammy categories, most of the awards are given out during the Recording Academy's livestreamed Premiere Ceremony. It is during that show that Beyoncé could pass Hungarian-British composer Georg Solti as the artist with the most Grammys. (Solti won his record-breaking 31st Grammy in 1997.)

There could be many other firsts: If Bad Bunny wins album of the year for "Un Verano Sin Ti," it would be the first time a Spanish-language album has taken home the top honor. Taylor Swift, whose latest album "Midnights" wasn't eligible for this year's Grammys, could win her first song of the year trophy for "All Too Well." An Adele win for song of the year for her track "Easy on Me" would make her the most decorated artist in the category with three wins, the others coming for her megahits "Hello" and "Rolling in the Deep."

This year's Grammys have also introduced several new categories, including one for video game music composition. And several non-musicians, such as actor Viola Davis and Amanda Gorman, could take home trophies. A Davis win in the best audiobook, narration and storytelling recording category would make her an EGOT — an artist who's won an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony award.

This year's show marks a return to Los Angeles after the pandemic first delayed, then forced the Grammys to move to Las Vegas last year. Noah hosted the ceremony as well, which saw Jon Batiste take home album of the year.

## US states take control of abortion debate with funding focus

By JOHN HANNA and GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — Though the Insight Women's Center sits at the epicenter of a reinvigorated battle in the nation's culture wars, the only hint of its faith-based mission to dissuade people from getting abortions is the jazzy, piano rendition of "Jesus Loves Me" playing in a waiting room.

The Republican-controlled Kansas Legislature is considering allocating millions of dollars in state funds to similar anti-abortion centers that persuade people to bring their pregnancies to term by offering free pregnancy tests and sonograms, as well as counseling and parenting classes taught by volunteers. They're also considering offering millions more in income tax credits for donors supporting what they call "crisis pregnancy centers."

When the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade last year and gave control of abortion policy to the states, it led to bans and restrictions in some states, and executive orders and laws protecting access in others. Those debates continue, but perhaps less noticed is how this change refueled the renewed battle over taxpayer money.

Supporters say the effort shows abortion opponents are addressing families' social and financial needs. But critics say the amount of new funding proposed for organizations like Insight — either in direct funding or tax credits for their donors — fall far short of what's necessary to improve people's access to health



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care and address ongoing poverty.

"You funnel money through a short-term solution that makes it appear as though you are doing something," said Alesha Doan, a University of Kansas associate professor who has studied and written books about abortion politics.

Increasingly, liberal cities and states are funding access to abortion, including telemedicine, which has seen a notable rise with more than half of U.S. abortions now done with pills rather than surgery. Meanwhile, states with GOP legislatures and governors are looking to put more taxpayer money into organizations that talk people out of ending their pregnancies.

Legislative committees held hearings Thursday on proposals for a 70% income tax credit to donors who support anti-abortion centers, with a cap of \$10 million in total credits. A Senate committee might vote this week.

It's similar to a longstanding Missouri law that provides income tax credits to donors supporting anti-abortion centers. Arizona has such a law, and Mississippi's Republican House speaker is trying to expand a cap on tax credits to \$10 million from the \$3.5 million authorized last year.

Arkansas and Oklahoma are considering adding similar tax credits, according to the National Right to Life Committee.

In Missouri, donors to anti-abortion centers have received \$15 million in total state tax credits over the past five years, and one state analysis estimates the centers served about 43,000 people last year.

Abortion opponents have operated centers like Insight for decades, and the practice of conservative-led states offering financial aid to them predates Dobbs — the decision in June overturning Roe v. Wade.

On the abortion-rights side, Oregon lawmakers last year created a \$15 million abortion-access fund, with the first \$1 million going to a nonprofit that covers the costs of patients' travel and procedures. California, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Washington have also allocated or are considering offering public funding for abortions or related services.

In New Mexico last year, Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham pledged \$10 million in state funds to the construction of a new abortion clinic.

Morgan Hopkins, president of the abortion-rights advocacy group All(asterisk) Above All praised the funding. "Budgets are a reflection of our values," she said.

Kansas already provides grants to programs that provide prenatal care, and encourage people to carry their pregnancies to term. But it spends less than \$339,000 in a state budget of \$24 billion on the program — and made only two grants totaling less than \$74,000 to anti-abortion centers.

Now, some abortion opponents talk about emulating Missouri's more than \$8 million annual funding, plus the income tax credits.

Abortion rights supporters are frustrated that the push for such support is coming so soon after an Aug. 2 statewide vote that decisively rejected a proposed amendment to the Kansas Constitution that would have allowed legislators to greatly restrict or ban abortion.

"I have general concerns that we're not respecting what was the very clear will of voters," said state Sen. Ethan Corson, a Kansas City-area Democrat who serves on the Senate tax committee.

Abortion rights advocates say the centers lure patients away from abortion clinics with free services, give them inaccurate medical information and counseling from people who are not trained therapists. Some see funding them as a political gesture designed to make abortion bans look less harsh.

Abortion opponents argue that centers like Insight offer patients a wide range of prenatal and post-birth classes, in addition to other help. They also argue that boosting funding for free services after the August vote is a promise not to abandon parents and families.

In Lawrence, where the nearest abortion clinic is a 40-minute drive away, 28-year-old Korbe Bohac is still visiting the Insight center nearly 8 months after her son Winston was born. She told legislators the classes and counseling make her a better, more confident parent — and helped preserve her mental health. She called it "a safety net."

The Insight center, which is only a few miles from the University of Kansas, has two sonogram nurses,

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and a doctor and radiologist sometimes volunteer their time. But services depend mostly on about 50 volunteers. The \$340,000 annual budget is mostly supplied by private donations, but the organization received a community development grant in 2014 to launch parent education programs.

Center staff said that although they do not refer clients to abortion providers, they discuss abortion as an option. They said some patients who met with them went on to have abortions, though this is not possible to verify given patients' privacy protocols.

Insight has two separate waiting rooms — one for its educational programs and one for medical services. Executive director Bridgit Smith said one reason is that it keeps pregnant patients from being influenced by seeing babies and toddlers.

Smith said she believes the proposed tax credit would increase donations, helping Insight start a maternity home for people without shelter.

"We're trying to build strong individuals and strong families. And isn't that what we all want?" Smith said. "Even for the woman that doesn't choose to parent, we still want her to be strong and healthy after the decision."

## Chinese balloon's downing creates spectacle over tourism hub

By JAMES POLLARD Associated Press/Report for America

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (AP) — The downing of a suspected Chinese spy balloon just off South Carolina's coast created a spectacle over one of the state's tourism hubs and drew crowds reacting with a mixture of bewildered gazing, distress and cheering.

The balloon was struck by a missile from an F-22 fighter just off Myrtle Beach, fascinating sky-watchers across a populous area known as the Grand Strand for its miles of beaches that draw retirees and vacationers. Crowds gathered in neighborhoods, hotel parking lots and beaches to watch the balloon hover, with some cheering just after it went down.

The festive mood belied the seriousness of the situation, with law enforcement around the county of 366,000 warning people not to touch any debris and to instead call dispatchers.

"Members of the US Military are coordinating to collect debris; however, fragments may make it to the coastline," the Horry County Police Department said in a statement.

Ashlyn Preaux, 33, went out to get her mail in Forestbrook, South Carolina, just inland of Myrtle Beach when she saw her neighbors gathered outside. Curious, she went to see what they were looking at. It was easy to spot the balloon in the cloudless blue sky and then what appeared to be fighter jets circling overhead as well. After the strike, she could see the balloon start to fall apart and fall from the sky.

"I did not anticipate waking up to be in a Top Gun movie today," she said.

The balloon hovered directly above the Hardy family as they checked into their oceanfront hotel in Myrtle Beach. The family from Anderson joined several employees in the parking lot taking videos of the scene unfolding above before going up to their room ahead of the missile strike.

Logan Hardy, 12, said the moment of impact generated a "boom" that shook the building. His room's balcony gave the middle-schooler a clear view of the debris dropping.

"It looked like stars falling down," he said, adding: "I will never forget this day."

Some watchers rushed to nearby beaches as the balloon approached the ocean. Travis Huffstetler, who captured photos of the balloon, said the packed Garden City Beach almost looked like summertime on the chilly winter day with people looking skyward and taking pictures and videos on their phones.

When the balloon began crossing the water, Mark Doss, 54, drove a golf cart three blocks down from his home to Garden City Beach. There, Doss said he and his two teenage children spent 90 minutes watching the balloon strike and waiting in vain for debris to wash ashore.

The sheer size of the white orb awed Doss, who said the approaching fighter jet looked like a little model airplane. Doss recalled a "white puff of smoke" after the missile struck the balloon.

"That one jet made a beeline straight to it — wham!" Doss said.

Life continued uninterrupted for many others into the evening. Doss described the spectacle from a biker

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bar. There, Saturday night thrill seekers gathered like normal as if international tensions had not played out hours earlier 60,000 feet (18,300 meters) above them. A cover band performed while people shot pool and huddled around patio heaters. Along the Myrtle Beach Boardwalk, nightlife staff went unbothered by the day's events. Other line-waiters outside a club had completely missed the news.

But the severity of the growing diplomatic turmoil was not lost on Doss. He lamented the stress the events placed on his two teenage children, whose exposure to such sights had previously only come through the big screen.

State Sen. Greg Hembree of Horry, who represents the area in the South Carolina General Assembly, watched the strike from his neighbor's backyard.

The sight was both impressive and "a little bit scary" for Hembree, who said Americans typically expect such images to come from other countries.

"It was stunning," Hembree said. "You don't ever think you're going to see a live engagement with an adversary in sort of a military context."

## 50-car train derailment causes big fire, evacuations in Ohio

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio (AP) — A freight train derailment in Ohio near the Pennsylvania state line left a mangled and charred mass of boxcars and flames Saturday as authorities launched a federal investigation and monitored air quality from the various hazardous chemicals in the train.

About 50 cars derailed in East Palestine at about 9 p.m. EST Friday as a train was carrying a variety of products from Madison, Illinois, to Conway, Pennsylvania, rail operator Norfolk Southern said Saturday. There was no immediate information about what caused the derailment. No injuries or damage to structures were reported.

"The post-derailment fire spanned about the length of the derailed train cars," Michael Graham, a member of the National Transportation Safety Board, told reporters Saturday evening. "The fire has since reduced in intensity, but remains active and the two main tracks are still blocked."

Norfolk Southern said 20 of the more than 100 cars were classified as carrying hazardous materials — defined as cargo that could pose any kind of danger "including flammables, combustibles, or environmental risks." Graham said 14 cars carrying vinyl chloride were involved in the derailment "and have been exposed to fire," and at least one "is intermittently releasing the contents of the car through a pressure release device as designed."

"At this time we are working to verify which hazardous materials cars, if any, have been breached," he said. The Environmental Protection Agency and Norfolk Southern were continuing to monitor air quality, and investigators would begin their on-scene work "once the scene is safe and secure," he said.

Vinyl chloride, used to make the polyvinyl chloride hard plastic resin used in a variety of plastic products, is associated with increased risk of liver cancer and other cancers, according to the federal government's National Cancer Institute. Federal officials said they were also concerned about other possibly hazardous materials.

Mayor Trent Conaway, who earlier declared a state of emergency citing the "train derailment with hazardous materials," said air quality monitors throughout a one-mile zone ordered evacuated had shown no dangerous readings.

Fire Chief Keith Drabick said officials were most concerned about the vinyl chloride and referenced one car containing that chemical but said safety features on that car were still functioning. Emergency crews would keep their distance until Norfolk Southern officials told them it was safe to approach, Drabick said.

"When they say it's time to go in and put the fire out, my guys will go in and put the fire out," he said. He said there were also other chemicals in the cars and officials would seek a list from Norfolk Southern and federal authorities.

Graham said the safety board's team would concentrate on gathering "perishable" information about the derailment of the train, which had 141 load cars, nine empty cars and three locomotives. State police had aerial footage and the locomotives had forward-facing image recorders as well as data recorders that

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could provide such information as train speed, throttle position and brake applications, he said. Train crew and other witnesses would also be interviewed, Graham said.

Firefighters were pulled from the immediate area and unmanned streams were used to protect some areas including businesses that might also have contained materials of concern, officials said. Freezing temperatures in the single digits complicated the response as trucks pumping water froze, Conaway said.

East Palestine officials said 68 agencies from three states and a number of counties responded to the derailment, which happened about 51 miles (82 kilometers) northwest of Pittsburgh and within 20 miles (32 kilometers) of the tip of West Virginia's Northern Panhandle.

Conaway said surveillance from the air showed "an entanglement of cars" with fires still burning and heavy smoke continuing to billow from the scene as officials tried to determine what was in each car from the labels outside. The evacuation order and shelter-in-place warnings would remain in effect until further notice, officials said.

Village officials warned residents that they might hear explosions due to the fire. They said drinking water was safe despite discoloration due to the volume being pumped the fight the blaze. Some runoff had been detected in streams but rail officials were working to stem that and prevent it from going downstream, officials said.

Officials repeatedly urged people not to come to the scene, saying they were endangering not only themselves but emergency responders.

The evacuation area covered 1,500 to 2,000 of the town's 4,800 to 4,900 residents, but it was unknown how many were actually affected, Conaway said. A high school and community center were opened, and the few dozen residents sheltering at the high school included Ann McAnlis, who said a neighbor had texted her about the crash.

"She took a picture of the glow in the sky from the front porch," McAnlis told WFMJ-TV. "That's when I knew how substantial this was."

Norfolk Southern opened an assistance center in the village to take information from affected residents and also said it was "supporting the efforts of the American Red Cross and their temporary community shelters through a \$25,000 donation.

Elizabeth Parker Sherry said her 19-year-old son was heading to Walmart to pick up a new TV in time for the Super Bowl when he called her outside to see the flames and black smoke billowing toward their home. She said she messaged her mother to get out of her home next to the tracks, but all three of them and her daughter then had to leave her own home as crews went door-to-door to tell people to leave the evacuation zone.

## Mount Washington experiences record-setting wind chill

By MARK PRATT Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The Arctic air that descended on the Northeast on Saturday brought dangerously cold sub-zero temperatures and wind chills to the region, including a record-setting wind chill of minus 108 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 78 C) on the summit of Mount Washington in New Hampshire.

Temperatures got so low that authorities in Massachusetts took the unusual step of keeping the South Station transit hub open overnight so homeless people had a safe place to sleep. Several cities in the Northeast set or tied record low temperatures for the date, while the high winds brought down a tree branch on a car in western Massachusetts killing an infant.

"I can't remember it being this cold, not since 2015," said Gin Koo, 36, wrapped up in three shirts and a down jacket, as well as a hat and a hood, as he walked his Boston terrier, Bee, in Boston on Saturday morning. Even Bee, wrapped in a doggie coat, shivered. "I wouldn't go out if I didn't have to."

Paul Butler, 45, who has been homeless since he was evicted in December 2021, took shelter in South Station.

"This is the coldest I ever, ever remember, and I worked the door at a bunch of clubs for 15 years," said the former Marine.

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The Arctic air reached the region just as a rapid cyclogenesis developed over Labrador and Newfoundland, churning up powerful winds, meteorologist Donald Dumont at the National Weather Service in Gray, Maine, said Friday, explaining the temperature plunge.

A cyclogenesis refers to an intensification of a cyclone or low-pressure storm system.

The Mount Washington Observatory at the peak of the Northeast's highest mountain, famous for its extreme weather conditions, also recorded an actual temperature of minus 47 (minus 44 C), tying an observatory record set in 1934 and a wind gust of 127 mph (204 kmh).

Across the rest of the region, wind chills — the combined effect of wind and cold air on exposed skin — dropped to as low as minus 45 to minus 50 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 43 to minus 45 C), the National Weather Service reported.

The current method to measure wind chill has been used since 2001.

In Southwick, Massachusetts on Friday the winds brought a tree branch down on a vehicle driven by a 23-year-old Winsted, Connecticut woman, according to the Hampden district attorney's office. The driver was taken to the hospital with serious injuries, but the infant died, authorities said.

Boston's Pine Street Inn, the largest provider of homeless services in New England, ramped up outreach to those on the streets, doubling the number of vehicles that could transport people to shelters and opening their lobby to provide extra space.

"On a night like last night, the biggest concern is the people who have compromised judgment," President and CEO Lyndia Downie said Saturday of people who have substance use disorder or mental illness. "On these cold nights, they are not thinking at 100% of their capacity. Those are the people we are most worried about."

The emergency room at Massachusetts General Hospital treated several people for hypothermia overnight and a couple were admitted for frostbite.

"The reason that people unfortunately end up with severe frostbite in most cases is just because they don't have anywhere warm and safe to go," said Dr. Ali Raja, deputy chair of the emergency department.

Boston; Providence, Rhode Island; Hartford, Connecticut; Worcester, Massachusetts; Albany, New York; and Glens Falls, New York set or matched record low temperatures for Feb. 4, according to the National Weather Service.

The cold curtailed some traditional winter activities. Organizers of an annual ice castle attraction in North Woodstock, New Hampshire shortened the evening visitor schedule for Saturday night.

Erin Trotta of Massachusetts, who had already booked a visit still planned to go, but was taking extra steps to stay warm.

"We are prepared to take on the polar vortex ice castles. ... Snow pants, thick winter coats, hand and foot warmers, face masks, the kind where only your eyes are exposed, and good gloves and winter boots. Plan to drink some hot cocoa to keep warm."

In New York's Adirondack Mountains, Old Forge recorded a temperature early Saturday of minus 36 degrees (minus 38 C) degrees. Temperatures plunged into the negative teens in dozens of other cities and towns.

Mackenzie Glasser, owner of Ozzie's Coffee Bar in Old Forge, said frigid temperatures are just part of living in the Adirondacks.

"I even had customers for the first hour that I was open, and I wasn't expecting that at 7 a.m. So I don't think it's keeping too many people away," she said.

The good news is that the cold air is expected to move out of much of the region by Sunday, when temperatures could rise to the 40s.

## 'Died suddenly' posts twist tragedies to push vaccine lies

By ALI SWENSON and ANGELO FICHERA Associated Press

Results from 6-year-old Anastasia Weaver's autopsy may take weeks. But online anti-vaccine activists needed only hours after her funeral this week to baselessly blame the COVID-19 vaccine.

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A prolific Twitter account posted Anastasia's name and smiling dance portrait in a tweet with a syringe emoji. A Facebook user messaged her mother, Jessica Day-Weaver, to call her a "murderer" for having her child vaccinated.

In reality, the Ohio kindergartner had experienced lifelong health problems since her premature birth, including epilepsy, asthma and frequent hospitalizations with respiratory viruses. "The doctors haven't given us any information other than it was due to all of her chronic conditions. ... There was never a thought that it could be from the vaccine," Day-Weaver said of her daughter's death.

But those facts didn't matter online, where Anastasia was swiftly added to a growing list of hundreds of children, teens, athletes and celebrities whose unexpected deaths and injuries have been incorrectly blamed on COVID-19 shots. Using the hashtag #died suddenly, online conspiracy theorists have flooded social media with news reports, obituaries and GoFundMe pages in recent months, leaving grieving families to wrestle with the lies.

There's the 37-year-old Brazilian television host who collapsed live on air because of a congenital heart problem. The 18-year-old unvaccinated bull rider who died from a rare disease. The 32-year-old actress who died from bacterial infection complications.

The use of "died suddenly" — or a misspelled version of it — has surged more than 740% in tweets about vaccines over the past two months compared with the two previous months, the media intelligence firm Signal Labs found in an analysis conducted for The Associated Press. The phrase's explosion began with the late November debut of an online "documentary" by the same name, giving power to what experts say is a new and damaging shorthand.

"It's kind of in-group language, kind of a wink wink, nudge nudge," said Renee DiResta, technical research manager at the Stanford Internet Observatory. "They're taking something that is a relatively routine way of describing something — people do, in fact, die unexpectedly — and then by assigning a hashtag to it, they aggregate all of these incidents in one place."

The campaign causes harm beyond just the internet, epidemiologist Dr. Katelyn Jetelina said.

"The real danger is that it ultimately leads to real world actions such as not vaccinating," said Jetelina, who tracks and breaks down COVID data for her blog, "Your Local Epidemiologist."

Rigorous study and real-world evidence from hundreds of millions of administered shots prove that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Deaths caused by vaccination are extremely rare and the risks associated with not getting vaccinated are far higher than the risks of vaccination. But that hasn't stopped conspiracy theorists from lobbing a variety of untrue accusations at the vaccines.

The "Died Suddenly" film features a montage of headlines found on Google to falsely suggest they prove that sudden deaths have "never happened like this until now." The film has amassed more than 20 million views on an alternative video sharing website, and its companion Twitter account posts about more deaths and injuries daily.

An AP review of more than 100 tweets from the account in December and January found that claims about the cases being vaccine related were largely unsubstantiated and, in some cases, contradicted by public information. Some of the people featured died of genetic disorders, drug overdoses, flu complications or suicide. One died in a surfing accident.

The filmmakers did not respond to specific questions from the AP, but instead issued a statement that referenced a "surge in sudden deaths" and a "PROVEN rate of excess deaths," without providing data.

The number of overall deaths in the U.S. has been higher than what would be expected since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, in part because of the virus, overdoses and other causes. COVID-19 vaccines prevented nearly 2 million U.S. deaths in just their first year of use.

Some deaths exploited in the film predate the pandemic. California writer Dolores Cruz published an essay in 2022 about grieving for her son, who died in a car crash in 2017. "Died Suddenly" used a screenshot of the headline in the film, portraying his death as vaccine related.

"Without my permission, someone has taken his story to show one side, and I don't appreciate that," Cruz said in an interview. "His legacy and memory are being tarnished."

Others featured in the film survived — but have been forced to watch clips of their medical emergencies

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misrepresented around the world. For Brazilian TV presenter Rafael Silva, who collapsed while reporting on air because of a congenital heart abnormality, online disinformation prompted a wave of harassment even before the "Died Suddenly" film used the footage.

"I received messages saying that I should have died to serve as an example for other people who were still thinking about getting the vaccine," Silva said.

Many of the posts online cite no evidence except that the person who died had been vaccinated at some point in the past, using a common disinformation strategy known as post hoc fallacy, according to Jetelina.

"People assume that one thing caused another merely because the first thing preceded the other," she said.

Some claims about those who've suffered heart issues also weaponize a kernel of truth — that COVID-19 vaccines can cause rare heart inflammation issues, myocarditis or pericarditis, especially in young men. Medical experts say these cases are typically mild and the benefits of immunization far outweigh the risks.

The narrative also has leveraged high-profile moments like the collapse of Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin as he suffered cardiac arrest during a game last month after a fierce blow to his chest. But sudden cardiac arrest has long been a prominent cause of death in the U.S. — and medical experts agree the vaccine didn't cause Hamlin's injury.

For some families, the misinformation represents a sideshow to their real focus: understanding why their loved ones died and preventing similar tragedies.

Clint Erickson's son, Tyler, died in September just before his 18th birthday while golfing near their home in Florida. The family knows his heart stopped but still doesn't know exactly why. Tyler wasn't vaccinated, but his story appeared in the "Died Suddenly" film nonetheless.

"It bothers me, him being used in that way," Erickson said. But "the biggest personal issue I have is trying to find an answer or a closure to what caused this."

Day-Weaver said it was upsetting to see people exploiting her daughter's death when they knew nothing about her. They didn't know that she loved people so much she would hug strangers at Walmart, or that she had just learned how to snap.

Still, Day-Weaver said, "I wouldn't wish the loss of a child on anybody. Even them."

## Chile wildfires spread amid heat wave as death toll rises

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Chile extended an emergency declaration to yet another region on Saturday as firefighters struggled to control dozens of raging wildfires that have claimed at least 22 lives amid a scorching heat wave that has broken records.

The government declared a state of catastrophe in the La Araucanía region, which is south of Ñuble and Biobío, two central-southern regions where the emergency declaration had already been issued. The measure allows for greater cooperation with the military.

At least 22 people have died in connection to the fires and 554 have been injured, including 16 in serious condition, according to Interior Minister Carolina Tohá. The death toll is likely to rise as Tohá said there are unconfirmed reports of at least 10 people missing.

Sixteen of the deaths took place in Biobío, five in La Araucanía and one in Ñuble.

The deaths included a Bolivian pilot who died when a helicopter that was helping combat the flames crashed in La Araucanía. A Chilean mechanic also died in the crash.

Over the past week, fires have burned through an area equivalent to what is usually burned in an entire year, Tohá said in a news conference.

The fires come at a time of record high temperatures.

"The thermometer has reached points that we have never known until now," Tohá said.

As of Saturday morning, there were 251 wildfires raging throughout Chile, 151 of which were under control, according to Chile's Senapred disaster agency.

"Seventy-six new fires appeared yesterday," Tohá said Saturday.

The minister also suggested the fires should serve as yet another wake up call about the effects of

climate change.

"The evolution of climate change shows us again and again that this has a centrality and a capacity to cause an impact that we have to internalize much more," Tohá said. "Chile is one of the countries with the highest vulnerability to climate change, and this isn't theory but rather practical experience."

Chile is requesting international cooperation to assist the firefighting efforts.

"We're requesting support from several countries to address the emergency," President Gabriel Boric wrote on social media.

## Dems reshuffle primaries to stress diversity over tradition

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The Democratic Party on Saturday approved reordering its 2024 presidential primary, replacing Iowa with South Carolina in the leadoff spot as part of a major shake-up meant to empower Black and other minority voters critical to its base of support.

Although more changes are possible later this year, the formal endorsement by the Democratic National Committee during its meeting in Philadelphia is an acknowledgement that the start of the 2024 primary will look very different from the one in 2020. Hundreds of party stalwarts climbed to their feet and cheered after the easy passage by voice vote.

States with early contests play a major role in determining the nominee because White House hopefuls struggling to raise money or gain political traction often drop out before visiting states outside the first five. Media attention and policy debates concentrate in those areas, too.

The new plan was championed by President Joe Biden, who is expected to formally announce his reelection campaign in the coming months. The reconfiguring would have South Carolina hold its primary on Feb. 3, followed three days later by New Hampshire and Nevada, which is swapping the caucus it used to hold in favor of a primary.

Georgia would vote fourth on Feb. 13, followed by Michigan on Feb. 27, with much of the rest of the nation set to vote on Super Tuesday in early March.

"The Democratic Party looks like America and so does this proposal," said DNC chair Jaime Harrison, a South Carolinian. The change "continues to make us stronger and elevates the backbone of our party," he said.

Biden wrote the DNC rules committee in December, saying, "We must ensure that voters of color have a voice in choosing our nominee much earlier in the process and throughout the entire early window." That committee approved the new lineup, setting up Saturday's vote.

The move remakes the current calendar, which saw Iowa start with its caucus, followed by New Hampshire and then Nevada and South Carolina. The Republican Party has voted not to change its 2024 primary order, meaning the campaign has already begun in Iowa.

"The DNC has decided to break a half-century precedent and cause chaos by altering their primary process, and ultimately abandoning millions of Americans in Iowa and New Hampshire," Republican National Committee chair Ronna McDaniel said in a statement Saturday.

Four of the first five new states under Democrats' new plan are battlegrounds, meaning the eventual party winner would be able to lay groundwork in important general election spots. That's especially true for Michigan and Georgia, both of which voted for Republican Donald Trump in 2016 before flipping to Biden in 2020.

The exception is South Carolina, which hasn't backed a Democrat in a presidential race since 1976, leading some to argue that the party shouldn't be concentrating so many early primary resources there. But the state's population is nearly 27% Black, and African American voters represent Democrats' most consistent base of support. Iowa and New Hampshire are each more than 90% white.

The revamped calendar could be largely meaningless for 2024 because Biden is expected to run for a second term without a major primary challenge. Also, the DNC has already pledged to revisit the voting calendar before the 2028 presidential election.



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Still, this year's changes could establish precedent, just as a new lineup that moved Nevada and South Carolina into the first states to vote did when the DNC approved a new primary calendar before the 2008 presidential election.

"These things may be symbolic, but they're realistic," South Carolina Rep. Jim Clyburn, assistant Democratic leader in the House and a close Biden ally, told The Associated Press.

The new order follows technical glitches that caused Iowa's 2020 caucus to meltdown. It also gives Biden the chance to repay South Carolina, where he scored a decisive 2020 primary win that revived his presidential campaign after losses in Iowa, New Hampshire and Nevada.

Democrats have worked on overhauling their primary lineup for months. On Saturday, nearly an hour of final debate turned raw at times.

Some Black members of the DNC said those arguing to abide by tradition could be seen as implying that states with larger African American populations were incapable of handling the responsibility of going early in the primary.

"If we're really a family, it means some of y'all got to shift to make room at the table for others," said Leah Daughtry, a DNC rules committee member from New York.

Iowa Democratic Party chair Rita Hart argued that Republicans in her state were already accusing Democrats of "have turned their back on Iowa and on rural America." But Michigan Rep. Debbie Dingell, to sustained applause, countered: "No one state should have a lock on going first."

Despite the approval, the final slate is not yet set. South Carolina, Nevada and Michigan have met party requirements to join the party's new top five. But in Georgia may not change its Democratic primary calendar date without the Republicans also doing so.

Iowa argued that continued uncertainty could cause other states to try and jump ahead of the new DNC calendar, as happened before the 2008 presidential race. The new rules include penalties for states trying to move up without permission, including possibly losing delegates to the party's national convention.

New Hampshire has a state law mandating that it hold the nation's first presidential primary, which Iowa circumvented since 1972 by holding a caucus. New Hampshire Democrats have joined with top state Republicans in pledging to go forward with the nation's first presidential primary next year regardless of the DNC calendar.

No major challenger has yet emerged from his own party to run against Biden for president next year. Still, top New Hampshire Democrats have warned that another Democrat could run in an unsanctioned primary the state stages and, if Biden skips it in accordance with party rules, could win and embarrass the president — prolonging a primary process that wasn't supposed to be competitive.

"Respecting our state law and lifting up diverse voices need not be mutually exclusive," said Joanne Dowdell, a DNC rules committee member from New Hampshire.

## Route to Super Bowl dangerous for Mexico's avocado haulers

By ARMANDO SOLÍS Associated Press

SANTA ANA ZIROSTO, Mexico (AP) — It is a long and sometimes dangerous journey for truckers transporting the avocados destined for guacamole on tables and tailgates in the United States during the Super Bowl.

It starts in villages like Santa Ana Zirosto, high in the misty, pine-clad mountains of the western Mexico state of Michoacan. The roads are so dangerous — beset by drug cartels, common criminals, and extortion and kidnap gangs — that state police provide escorts for the trucks brave enough to face the 40-mile (60-kilometer) trip to packing and shipping plants in the city of Uruapan.

Truck driver Jesús Quintero starts early in the morning, gathering crates of avocados picked the day before in orchards around Santa Ana, before he takes them to a weighing station. Then he joins up with other trucks waiting for a convoy of blue-and-white state police trucks — they recently changed their name to Civil Guard — to start out for Uruapan.

"It is more peaceful now with the patrol trucks accompanying us, because this is a very dangerous area," Quintero said while waiting for the convoy to pull out.

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With hundreds of 22-pound (10-kilogram) crates of the dark green fruit aboard his 10-ton truck, Quintero's load represents a small fortune in these parts. Avocados sell for as much as \$2.50 apiece in the United States, so a single crate holding 40 is worth \$100, while an average truck load is worth as much as \$80,000 to \$100,000.

Mexico supplies about 92% of U.S. avocado imports, sending north over \$3 billion worth of the fruit every year.

But it's often not just the load that is stolen.

"They would take away our trucks and the fruit, sometimes they'd take the truck as well," Quintero said. "They would steal two or three trucks per day in this area."

It happened to him years ago. "We were coming down a dirt road and two young guys came out and they took our truck and tied us up."

Such thefts "have gone down a lot" since the police escorts started, Quintero said. "They have stolen one or two, one every week, but it's not daily like it used to be."

State police officer Jorge González said the convoys escort about 40 trucks a day, ensuring that around 300 tons of avocados reach the packing plants each day.

"These operations have managed to cut the (robbery) rate by about 90 to 95 percent," González said. "We accompany them to the packing house, so they can enter with their trucks with no problem."

Grower José Evaristo Valencia is happy he doesn't have to worry if his carefully tended avocados will make it to the packing house. Packers depend on arrangements they have made with local orchards to fill promised shipments, and lost avocados can mean lost customers.

"The main people affected are the producers," Valencia said. "People were losing three or four trucks every day. There were a lot of robberies between the orchard and the packing house."

The police escorts "have helped us a lot," he said.

Once the avocados reach Uruapan or the neighboring city of Tancitaro — the self-proclaimed avocado capital of the world that greets visitors with a giant cement avocado — the path to the north is somewhat safer.

The shipment north of avocados for Super Bowl season has become an annual event, this year celebrated in Uruapan. It is a welcome diversion from the drumbeat of crimes in the city, which is being fought over by the Viagras and Jalisco cartels.

On Jan. 17, Michoacan Gov. Alfredo Ramírez Bedolla "kicked off" the first Super Bowl avocado shipments, literally, kicking a football through tiny goalposts on an imitation football field.

Behind him, a big tractor trailer bore a huge sign reading "Let's Go! Super Bowl 2023."

It was an attempt by Michoacan growers to put behind them last year's debacle, when the U.S. government suspended inspections of the fruit in February, right before the 2022 Super Bowl.

The inspections were halted for about 10 days after a U.S. inspector was threatened in Michoacan, where growers are routinely subject to extortion by drug cartels. Some Michoacan packers were reportedly buying avocados from other, non-certified states and trying to pass them off as being from Michoacan and were angry the U.S. inspector wouldn't go along with that.

U.S. agricultural inspectors have to certify that Mexican avocados don't carry diseases or pests that would harm U.S. orchards. The Mexican harvest is January through March, while avocado production in the U.S. runs from April to September.

Exports resumed after Mexico and the United States agreed to enact "measures that ensure the safety" of the inspectors.

"This season we are going to recover the confidence of the producers, growers and consumers. By increasing the export production, we hope to send 130,000 tons this season," the governor said.

## Grammy predictions: AP writers debate who'll win on Sunday

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. and KRISTIN M. HALL AP Entertainment Writers

The Beyhive is all abuzz over the possibility that Beyoncé will have a chance to make Grammy history this year, which should make for an exciting awards show as she's up against heavy hitters Adele, Kend-

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rick Lamar and Harry Styles.

She'll need just four more trophies to ascend to the top decorated artist in the Recording Academy. Odds are in her favor in most of the categories she's nominated in, including album of the year and record of the year.

Associated Press Entertainment Writers Jonathan Landrum Jr. and Kristin M. Hall break down the extremely close races for Grammy glory. The 65th annual Grammy Awards will air on Sunday on CBS and Paramount+.

**ALBUM OF THE YEAR:** "Voyage," ABBA; "30," Adele; "Un Verano Sin Ti," Bad Bunny; "Renaissance," Beyoncé; "Good Morning Gorgeous" (Deluxe), Mary J. Blige; "In These Silent Days," Brandi Carlile; "Music of the Spheres," Coldplay; "Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers," Kendrick Lamar; "Special," Lizzo; "Harry's House," Harry Styles.

**LANDRUM:** Beyoncé is going after her Grammy throne, again. With the superstar singer being on the cusp of becoming the most decorated artist in Grammy history, it's no coincidence Queen Bey returned to the live show stage for the first time in four years with a spectacular, star-studded performance at Dubai's newest luxury hotel last month. She even held a two-night "Club Renaissance" event in Los Angeles last month with Amazon Music to celebrate her seventh album "Renaissance," an album of the year candidate. Beyoncé's lead up game is strong, and both of her remarkable displays feel like a grand tour toward her multiple Grammy crowning. No disrespect to the other more-than-worthy nominees in the category, but Beyoncé is an easy choice here. It just makes sense.

**HALL:** The last time Adele and Beyoncé were both nominated in this category, the British singer-songwriter used her acceptance speech to heap praise on Beyoncé, calling her the "artist of my life." It's one of the toughest years in this category with so many deserving albums from the biggest names. It would be amazing to see Bad Bunny take home the award for his incredibly popular "Un Verano Sin Ti," but I agree, Jonathan, all signs are pointing to a record-breaking year for Beyoncé.

**RECORD OF THE YEAR:** "Don't Shut Me Down," ABBA; "Easy on Me," Adele; "Break My Soul," Beyoncé; "Good Morning Gorgeous," Mary J. Blige; "You and Me on the Rock," Brandi Carlile featuring Lucius; "Woman," Doja Cat; "Bad Habit," Steve Lacy; "The Heart Part 5," Kendrick Lamar; "About Damn Time," Lizzo; "As It Was," Harry Styles.

**HALL:** So many danceable bops this year to choose from! Lizzo is a powerhouse at delivering good-time positive bangers with catchy lyrics and Harry Styles' pop rock jam "As It Was" is an undeniable hit and fan favorite. While Adele absolutely kills her performance of "Easy on Me," I don't think it has the dominance of her other record of the year hit "Hello." For me, the best two in the category are "Break My Soul" and "Bad Habit." The '90s house music-inspired "Break My Soul" captures an entire mood and an exciting pivot for Beyoncé, so she'll likely add this award to her wall of Grammys.

**LANDRUM:** I totally rode the Beyoncé album-of-the-year bandwagon, but I'm riding with Harry Styles' "As It Was" in this category. Kudos to the other nominees from Kendrick Lamar, Steve Lacy and Adele — who are also deserving of this award. But "As It Was" was just too massive in a category where the biggest commercial hits usually reign supreme. For me, it seems like I've heard his infectious jam whenever I go out. Even my 2-year-old daughter perks up when she hears the song, sings along and requests to listen to it again, again, and again.

**SONG OF THE YEAR (songwriter's award):** "abcdefu," Sara Davis, GAYLE and Dave Pittenger; "About Damn Time," Melissa "Lizzo" Jefferson, Eric Frederic, Blake Slatkin and Theron Makiel Thomas; "All Too Well (10 Minute Version – The Short Film)," Liz Rose and Taylor Swift; "As It Was," Tyler Johnson, Kid Harpoon and Harry Styles; "Bad Habit," Matthew Castellanos, Brittany Fousheé, Diana Gordon, John Carroll Kirby and Steve Lacy; "Break My Soul," Beyoncé, S. Carter, Terius "The Dream" Gesteelde-Diamant and Christopher A. Stewart; "Easy on Me," Adele Adkins and Greg Kurstin; "God Did," Tarik Azzouz, E. Blackmon, Khaled Khaled, F. LeBlanc, Shawn Carter, John Stephens, Dwayne Carter, William Roberts and Nicholas Warwar; "The Heart Part 5," Jake Kosich, Johnny Kosich, Kendrick Lamar and Matt Schaeffer;

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"Just Like That," Bonnie Raitt.

LANDRUM: I might've chosen Harry Styles to pull away victorious with record of the year, but Beyoncé's powerful words in "Break My Soul" spoke to my spirit — especially in a category for songwriters who wrote the lyrics or melodies to one song. Her tune became a dance floor anthem after the pandemic thanks to the attractive upbeat melody and the well-written lyrics by the formidable writing team comprised of Beyoncé, her husband Jay-Z, The-Dream and Tricky Stewart — who's behind penning big singles including Rihanna's "Umbrella" and Mary J. Blige's "Just Fine." In this collaboration, the writing foursome created a collection of inspiring words suited for Beyoncé who took the proverbial baton and sang with beautiful authority. In the end, "Break My Soul" should cross the finish line first as song of the year.

HALL: If you've only heard the TikTok snippet from Steve Lacy's dreamy confessional song, do yourself a favor and listen to the whole thing, and then his whole album, too. The song, like Lacy, is experimental and complicated and the song twists and distorts into something brand new while his voice is charmingly disarming. I think he's a dark horse in this category, though, going up against so many crazy talented songwriters.

BEST NEW ARTIST: Anitta; Omar Apollo; DOMi & JD Beck; Muni Long; Samara Joy; Latto; Månekskin; Tobe Nwigwe; Molly Tuttle; Wet Leg.

HALL: Normally I feel like there are one or two heavy hitters in this category that are riding the wave of a big debut hit, but this category is wide open this year. Bluegrass musician Molly Tuttle and R&B singer-songwriter Muni Long are well-established in their respective music fields and it would be great for them to get the widespread attention they deserve with a win in this category. But I think Anitta has a big advantage with her multi-platinum global hit "Envolver," even if she may not be as familiar to American audiences.

LANDRUM: Anitta certainly feels like the leading choice in this loaded category. The Brazilian artist has been nothing short of phenomenal with her trilingual album "Versions of Me," which was led by her single "Envolver." Månekskin, Muni Long and Latto can make their claim here too. But I'm going with a category dark horse: Tobe Nwigwe. He broke through with "I Need You To," a 44-seconds long song that called attention to the police killing of Breonna Taylor in Kentucky. It was reposted by big names like LeBron James, Madonna and Diddy. Along with that, the Nigerian singer-rapper has posted an original song and video every week across social media for the past several years. He performs alongside his wife, Fat Nwigwe, and their ballad "Fye Fye" is a legit smooth hit.

BEST POP SOLO PERFORMANCE: "Easy on Me," Adele; "Moscow Mule," Bad Bunny; "Woman," Doja Cat; "Bad Habit," Steve Lacy; "About Damn Time," Lizzo; "As It Was," Harry Styles.

LANDRUM: This is a tough one. Each song is a certified hit. My gut tells me Adele or Steve Lacy could prevail in a category filled with strong contenders. But my mind, heart and soul is screaming "HARRY STYLES." I'm going with my latter feelings. "As it Was" for me, please.

HALL: Adele is likely to pick up a win here, if voters are more inclined to choose Beyoncé in the top categories.

BEST RAP PERFORMANCE: "GOD DID," DJ Khaled featuring Rick Ross, Lil Wayne, Jay-Z, John Legend & Fridayy; "Vegas," Doja Cat; "pushing P," Gunna & Future featuring Young Thug; "F.N.F. (Let's Go)," Hitkidd & GloRilla; "The Heart Part 5," Kendrick Lamar

HALL: I gotta give all the love to Memphis-native GloRilla for her first Grammy nomination for her breakout hit "F.N.F. (Let's Go)." Her toughness and bravado show up well on the track that celebrates being free of no-count scrubs and proves she can go as hard as any male rapper.

LANDRUM: Kendrick Lamar's "The Heart Part 5" will win, but DJ Khaled's "GOD DID" should be victorious. Why? Because with Khaled bringing together Jay-Z, Lil Wayne, Mr. EGOT John Legend and Rick Ross on one track, God certainly did that!

BEST R&B PERFORMANCE: "VIRGO'S GROOVE," Beyoncé; "Here With Me," Mary J. Blige featuring Anderson .Paak; "Hrs & Hrs," Muni Long; "Over," Lucky Daye; "Hurt Me So Good," Jazmine Sullivan

LANDRUM: Jazmine Sullivan could pull a repeat with "Hurt Me So Good" after she won in this same category last year for "Pick Up Your Feelings." The sheer appeal of Beyoncé's "VIRGO'S GROOVE" gives

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her a strong shot to win as well. There are other viable contenders including Mary J. Blige and Lucky Daye, who had big hits in their own right. But if I was a betting man, my money would be on Muni Long's "Hrs & Hrs," a breakthrough hit for the best new artist contender. After maintaining strong momentum throughout a year, I believe Muni (pronounced as Money) will be ready to cash in as this category's victor.

HALL: When Muni Long starts the song by whispering "Can I sing to you?" in that breathy voice of hers, it's clear she is masterfully in control. I hope she gets this win.

BEST COUNTRY SOLO PERFORMANCE: "Heartfirst," Kelsea Ballerini; "Something In The Orange," Zach Bryan; "In His Arms," Miranda Lambert; "Circles Around This Town," Maren Morris; "Live Forever," Willie Nelson

HALL: I think the Recording Academy voters are trying to send a message by nominating "Live Forever" from Willie Nelson, who is (remarkably) turning 90 this year and is showing no signs of slowing down. But I think new artist Zach Bryan has momentum this year and lots of buzz, so the slow-burning "Something In The Orange" should win.

LANDRUM: I think Zach Bryan is Willie Nelson's biggest threat here. But with Nelson still performing at a high level at 90, his song "Live Forever" is a fitting title for his musical legacy.

## Pope says South Sudan's future depends on treatment of women

By NICOLE WINFIELD, DENG MACHOL and TRISHA THOMAS Associated Press

JUBA, South Sudan (AP) — Pope Francis warned Saturday that South Sudan's future depends on how it treats its women, as he highlighted their horrific plight in a country where sexual violence is rampant, child brides are common and the maternal mortality rate is the highest in the world.

On his second and penultimate day in Africa, Francis called for women and girls to be respected, protected and honored during a meeting in the South Sudanese capital Juba with some of the 2 million people who have been forced by fighting and flooding to flee their homes. Women, girls and children make up the majority of those displaced.

The encounter was one of the highlights of Francis' three-day visit to the world's youngest country and one of its poorest. Joined by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and the Presbyterian head of the Church of Scotland, Francis is on an historic ecumenical pilgrimage to draw global attention to the country's plight and encourage its stalled peace process.

The aim of the three-way visit is to encourage South Sudan's political leaders to implement a 2018 peace accord ending a civil war that erupted after the overwhelmingly Christian country gained independence from mostly Muslim Sudan in 2011.

Greeted by song and high-pitched ululation, Francis urged the hundreds of people gathered at Freedom Hall to be "seeds of hope," that will soon bear fruit for the country of 12 million.

"You will be the trees that absorb the pollution of years of violence and restore the oxygen of fraternity," he said.

The head of the U.N. mission in South Sudan, Sara Beysolow Nyanti, told Francis that women and girls were "extremely vulnerable" to sexual and gender-based violence, with U.N. statistics estimating some four out of 10 have been victim to one or more forms of assault. She said women and girls were at risk for rape when they were just out doing their daily routines and chores.

"If the women of South Sudan are given an opportunity to develop, to have space to be productive, South Sudan will be transformed," she told Francis.

The pope picked up her theme in his remarks, saying women were the key to South Sudan's peaceful development.

"Please, protect, respect, appreciate and honor every woman, every girl, young woman, mother and grandmother," he said. "Otherwise, there will be no future."

According to UNICEF, roughly 75% of girls in South Sudan don't go to school because their parents prefer to keep them at home and set them up for a marriage that will bring a dowry for the family.

Half of South Sudan's women are married before age 18, and they then face the world's highest maternal

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mortality rate. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan said in a report last year that overall, women and girls here live a "hellish existence."

"South Sudanese women are physically assaulted while being raped at gunpoint, typically held down by men while being abused by others. They are told not to resist in the slightest way, and not to report what happened, or they will be killed," the report said.

Maria Nyataba Wur, a displaced woman now living in Juba who attended Francis' event, told The Associated Press that one of her neighbors was raped in front of her children, so violently that she limped for days afterward.

"According to what she told us as a survivor was that they tied her legs apart and then three people entered her, raped her," Wur said, adding that she lost track of the neighbor during her own efforts to flee to safety in the capital.

Mariam Nyantabo, another 36-year-old resident of a Juba protection camp, said women were grateful for Francis' visit.

"The plight against women is shocking," she said, noting the risk of rape comes from everyday chores like collecting firewood. "His visit is blessed to women of South Sudan, and I believe there will be a great change, the suffering of the women will be reduced."

Welby, too, addressed the plight of women during his remarks at an ecumenical prayer service later Saturday. He praised their "incredible" strength when "on top of the grief of conflict and the responsibility to provide for your families, many of you live with the trauma of sexual violence and the daily fear of mistreatment in your own homes."

To the men in the audience, Welby was more blunt: "You will value and honor women, never raping, never violent, never cruel, never using them as if they were there to satisfy desire," he said to applause from the crowd.

Francis began his day meeting with the priests and nuns who minister to South Sudan's people, urging them to accompany their flocks by joining in their suffering.

At the St. Theresa Cathedral, he heard of the sacrifice nuns have made over the years, including the 2021 ambush killings of Sisters Mary Daniel Abut and Regina Roba Luete of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart Sisters.

Sister Regina Achan, from the same congregation, said Francis' visit would encourage other sisters to keep serving the people of South Sudan. "We stand with them because we are their voices, we don't run away at difficult times," said Achan.

Sister Orla Treacy, an Irish Loreto nun who runs a secondary school for girls in the central town of Rumbek, walked for over a week with her students to see the pope in Juba. The school makes contracts with the girls' extended families, with relatives committing to not remove the girls from school to get married.

"It is still a challenge for young women, but it is changing and the young women are now coming with a vision for what they also want for their country as well," Treacy said at the cathedral event.

Upon arrival Friday, Francis issued a blunt warning to President Salva Kiir and his onetime rival and now deputy Riek Machar that history will judge them harshly if they continue to drag their feet on implementing the peace accord.

Kiir for his part committed the government to return to peace talks — suspended last year — with groups that didn't sign onto the 2018 accord. And late Friday, the Catholic president granted presidential pardons to 71 inmates at Juba's central prison in honor of the ecumenical pilgrimage, including 36 on death row.

## State of the Union: Biden sees economic glow, GOP sees gloom

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Going into Tuesday's State of the Union address, President Joe Biden sees a nation with its future aglow.

Republicans take a far bleaker view — that the country is beset by crushing debt and that Biden is largely responsible for inflation. And the GOP now holds a House majority intent on blocking the president.

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The harder reality is that the United States is on a tight rope, trying to balance efforts to reduce inflation with the need to stay upright and avoid falling into a recession. That's with the seemingly inherent contradiction of the Federal Reserve's interest rate increases and the unemployment rate falling to a near 54-year low.

Based on past speeches, Biden believes the policies adopted under his watch can fill the U.S. with new factories and protect against climate change. Roads, bridges, sewer systems, ports and internet service would be improved. The middle class would be more financially secure. So would America's place in the global economy's hierarchy.

On Friday, the president said the proof was in the January employment report. It showed 517,000 jobs were added as the unemployment rate fell to 3.4%, making it "crystal clear" that his "chorus of critics" were wrong.

"Here's where we stand: The strongest job growth in history," Biden said. "Put simply, I would argue the Biden economic plan is working."

Republicans are pushing back. They blamed Biden's trillion-dollar plus spending for high inflation and surging gas and food prices. GOP lawmakers want to repeal his tax increases and additional money for the IRS. They oppose his forgiveness of student debt and blame him for the migrants seeking to enter the country at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Neither side captures the fullness of the actual state of the economy.

One group of experts can read the data and claim a recession is on the horizon. A different group can focus on a separate set of figures and see reason to rejoice. It's a disorienting moment.

Biden can celebrate the low jobless rate even as Republicans bemoan inflation that is still running dangerously hot.

"It's the best of times and the worst of times for the U.S. economy, to borrow a phrase," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics. "The economy is full of contradictions as it struggles to get beyond the massive global shocks of the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine."

Zandi said he expects the U.S. economy will "skirt" a recession this year, though many economists believe a downturn will come.

Gus Faucher, PNC Financial Services' chief economist, pegs the odds of a recession this year at 60%. But he said any downturn would be "mild" because "worker shortages will limit layoffs, consumer balance sheets are in great shape, the banking system is solid."

Most people in the U.S. assume the nation is already in a recession, even if they personally feel fine.

Only 24% of adults call the national economy good and 76% say conditions are poor, according to a poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. At the same time, 57% say their personal financial situation is good. That's unchanged since December, but it has eroded slightly since earlier last year when 62% felt positively about their finances.

The key force shaping the economy right now is the Fed, which has the mission of keeping prices stable and inflation at around 2%. Consumer prices jumped 6.5% last year.

To bring down inflation, the Fed has tried to slow down hiring and growth by raising its benchmark rate over the past year. When Biden delivered the State of the Union Address in 2022, the Fed's benchmark rate was effectively near-zero. It's now over 4.5%, the fastest increase in four decades, and Fed Chairman Jerome Powell said Wednesday that the rate will likely go higher.

"Without price stability, the economy does not work for anyone," Powell told reporters after the Fed board's most recent meeting.

The Fed rate increases mark a major reversal in how the economy operates.

Ever since the 2008 financial crisis, the U.S. central bank had held its benchmark rate near historic lows to bring back growth. That made it easier for tech start-ups because cheap money meant investors expected them to focus on growth instead of profits. Consumers got use to historically cheap rates for mortgages and auto loans.

The past year's rate jumps produced a sudden whiplash. The stock market fell. Prominent tech compa-

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nies such as Google and Microsoft recently announced layoffs. Even as computer chip companies began building new plants and crediting Biden's policies, the world economy swung from a dearth of semiconductors to a glut. Mortgage rates initially doubled to over 7%, before falling back a bit to 6% last week. The big increase meant monthly payments became unaffordable for would-be homebuyers, forcing many to stay in rentals.

Glenn Kelman, CEO of the real estate brokerage Redfin, said the housing market is stronger than many people expected. But the years of low rates worsened generational inequality. Baby boomers became wealthy as their homes increased in value, but then rates jumped at the time when more millennials wanted to buy and they found themselves priced out.

"A generation ago, boomers owned 21% of U.S. wealth," Kelman said. "For millennials, that number is 7%. They're still on the outside looking in."

Carl Tannenbaum, chief economist for Northern Trust, said he is surprised that the rate increases have hit housing but not employment. Traditional models assumed that efforts to lower inflation would automatically include job losses. But when he talks to companies, most are reluctant to fire their workers because businesses had trouble finding skilled employees during the pandemic.

"Because the supply of labor has been so starved for the past two years, firms are holding on to who they have," Tannenbaum said. "The prevailing wisdom is if we have a recession it's going to be shallow. Firms are going to want to be ready to go."

As much as Biden says his mission is about giving Americans a sense of confidence, his challenge might rest with an economy in which few things are certain.

When the pandemic hit in 2020, the government aid was so overwhelming that a financial market crash turned into a rally. Biden tried to assure the country in 2021 that rising prices were a temporary inconvenience, only to find that inflation defined how many perceived his first two years as president. The expectation was that interest rate increases would ultimately lead to layoffs and higher unemployment, but hiring stayed robust in a sign that the economy is unmoored from traditional expectations.

If Biden faces a challenge on the economy, it might just be that no one really knows what could happen next.

"We're in an environment where there is a lot of uncertainty," said Gregory Daco, chief economist at EY-Parthenon. "The conflicting signals we keep getting on the economy make it very hard to get an accurate pulse."

## Electronic pollbook security raises concerns going into 2024

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — They were blamed for long lines in Los Angeles during California's 2020 presidential primary, triggered check-in delays in Columbus, Ohio, a few months later and were at the center of former President Donald Trump's call for supporters to protest in Detroit during last November's midterms.

High-profile problems involving electronic pollbooks have opened the door for those peddling election conspiracies and underscore the critical role the technology plays in whether voting runs smoothly. Russia and Iran already have demonstrated interest in accessing the systems.

Despite their importance and potential vulnerabilities, national standards for the security and reliability of electronic pollbooks do not exist and efforts underway to develop them may not be ready or widely adopted in time for the 2024 presidential election.

"We have a trust issue in elections. The more we can say there are standards that equipment must be tested to, the better," said Larry Norden, an election security expert with the Brennan Center for Justice. "It's like a seal of approval that really doesn't exist right now."

Poll workers use electronic pollbooks to check in voters. They typically are a tablet or laptop computer that accesses an electronic list of registered voters with names, addresses and precinct information, with some doing so through an internet connection.

Testing standards and a certification program for voting machines have been in effect for years, a pro-



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cess overseen by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. While compliance is voluntary, most states will use at least some aspect of the federal process to ensure their voting and ballot-counting machines are secure and functioning properly.

But there is a much wider system of technology that supports U.S. elections beyond the devices used to scan and tally votes — from electronic pollbooks to voter registration databases and systems used to report unofficial election results to the public. Their use has been expanding rapidly in recent years.

Nearly one-third of all voting jurisdictions in the U.S. used electronic pollbooks in 2020, compared with about 18% four years earlier, according to data collected by Election Assistance Commission.

The systems come with unique security challenges.

In 2016, Russian hackers scanned state voter registration systems looking for vulnerabilities and even accessed the voter registration database in Illinois, although an investigation later determined no voter data was manipulated. In 2020, Iranian hackers obtained confidential voter data and used it to send misleading emails to voters, seeking to spread misinformation and influence the election.

Experts say the systems could be prime targets again for those seeking to disrupt the voting process and sow chaos around U.S. elections. Gaining access to a voter registration database, for example, could allow someone to delete voters from the rolls. When people show up to vote, they are told they are not on the list.

Although those voters would be allowed to cast a provisional ballot that eventually could count, widespread problems with the voter registration database would trigger questions about a process that already has suffered a loss in public confidence following a sustained campaign by Trump and his allies to discredit the results of the 2020 presidential election. There is no evidence of widespread fraud or manipulation of voting equipment in 2020, backed up by exhaustive reviews in states lost by Trump.

In Detroit last November, a few polling locations had a brief issue checking in voters related to a data error that was quickly identified and resolved. Trump seized on the early reports, calling the situation in Detroit “REALLY BAD” in a social media post and urging people to “Protest, Protest, Protest!”

Unlike voting machines that are not directly connected to the internet, many electronic pollbook systems are connected by design. Some are quite sophisticated.

In counties that have put in place a vote center model, where registered voters can cast a ballot at any polling place, electronic pollbooks must be able to communicate with each other and with a central system. That’s to ensure voters are not able to cast ballots at multiple locations or vote in-person after returning a mail ballot.

While that can present significant security challenges, scrutiny for the pollbook systems is not as consistent as with voting machines.

The lack of national standards has left state and local election officials on their own. For the 2020 election, 15 states, including Arizona, Florida and Nevada, did not require any type of electronic pollbook testing or certification, according to federal data.

States and even some counties are often testing their pollbook systems in isolation and results are not routinely shared — an information gap that could be addressed with a national testing program.

“Having that type of knowledge allows them to put compensating controls into place, but they are doing it on an individual basis — state by state, county by county,” said Ryan Macias, an election and security expert who advises federal, state and local officials.

Aware of the risks, many election officials require back-up measures, such as paper copies of voter lists at polling locations. Election officials and experts note that one advantage of national testing standards for voting machines is the ability to assure voters that they have been properly scrutinized.

Two efforts are underway that seek to address the lack of uniform testing standards for electronic pollbooks. The Election Assistance Commission partnered with the nonprofit Center for Internet Security to test pollbooks and other nonvoting machine technology. But the federal agency began working on its pilot testing program in late 2021, about the same time the center announced results of the first phase of its own project.

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It's not clear why the two groups went their separate ways and what will happen next. A spokesman for the center, Jay Billington, said the group is "close to concluding the pilot" and expects to provide an update soon.

Thomas Hicks, chair of the commission, said the agency is making progress on its own pilot program, but that it was unlikely testing standards could be in place before the 2024 election.

"But this is why we move forward," he said. "In 2026, there will be another federal election, and in 2028 another."

Hicks said he welcomed the work done by the center and thought having more than one testing program could allow states to pick the best option for them.

Experts said having national testing standards would go a long way to reducing costs of the systems and lessen the burden on state and local election officials to navigate security on their own. Companies that make the equipment have expressed support for the effort.

During a November 2021 panel hosted by the commission to discuss its pilot project, representatives from testing laboratories said they had evaluated 76 different pollbooks by about a dozen manufacturers over the past three years. Agency officials noted the stakes were high.

"Real or perceived attacks on our voting systems can threaten voter confidence," one commissioner, Don Palmer, said during the panel. "So that's one reason why we think as much testing as possible is a good thing."

## In Tyre Nichols' neighborhood, Black residents fear police

By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

MEMPHIS (AP) — In a terrible way, the death of Tyre Nichols brings vindication to members of the Black community in Memphis who live in constant fear of the police.

Often, before, people didn't believe them when told how bad it is.

The fatal beating of Nichols, 29, by five police officers tells the story many residents know by heart: that any encounter, including traffic stops, can be deadly if you're Black.

Examples abound of Black residents, primarily young men, targeted by police. Some are in official reports. Anyone you talk to has a story. Even casual discussions in a coffee shop net multiple examples.

A homeowner who called the police because a young man who had been shot was on his front porch. The responding officers ignored the gunshot victim and entered the caller's home. The caller was slammed to the ground and a chemical agent used on him as he was subdued. The officers then lied about the circumstances, but there was video.

A woman who lives in a "safe" northeast Memphis neighborhood yet says her 18-year-old son was hog-tied and pepper-sprayed by police several years ago — while she was with him. He became agitated after police arrived on the scene while he picked up his child from a girlfriend, triggering a mental health crisis, she said.

In police sweeps, unmarked cars roll into neighborhoods and armed plainclothes officers jump out, rushing traffic violators and issuing commands. The result is a community in fear, where people text, call and use social media to caution each other to stay inside or avoid the area when police operations are underway.

"There's one type of law enforcement that keeps people safe, and then there's a type of law enforcement that keeps people in check," said Joshua Adams, 29, who grew up in south Memphis' Whitehaven, home to Elvis Presley's Graceland Mansion, now a mostly Black neighborhood.

If you are in the wrong neighborhood "it really doesn't matter whether you're part of the violence or not," said Adams. "I'm less likely to be shot in a gang conflict than I am to be shot by police."

Chase Madkins was about a block from his mother's Evergreen neighborhood home just east of downtown Memphis dropping off his 12-year-old nephew when the blue lights of an unmarked police car flashed behind him.

Within seconds the officer ordered him out of the car and told him he made an illegal turn, and his license plate was not properly displayed because it was bent at the corner.

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Madkins said the officer, dressed in tactical gear with his face covered and no visible identification, refused to give his badge number, unless he consented to a weapon search of the car.

Madkins, 34, consented, but called an activist friend to get to the scene.

"I had to remind myself, 'Chase, this is how people get murdered, in a traffic stop,'" he said. To this day he does not know who the officer was.

The random stops are meant to terrorize, said Hunter Demster, organizer for Decarcerate Memphis. He's the one Madkins called when he was stopped in November.

"They go into these poor Black communities and they do mass pullover operations, terrifying everybody in that community," Demster said. Some people might think the officers are looking for murderers or people accused of heinous crimes, or have stacks of warrants for violent criminals, he said, but "that is not the case."

People want more police, Demster said, but "what they're really trying to say is we want more detectives looking for violent criminals."

Marcus Hopson, 54, a longtime resident and barber in the neighborhood, said the sweeps remind him of how in the early 1990s New York focused on nuisance crimes and zero tolerance and that morphed into stop-and-frisk.

"It didn't work then. It's not going to work now," said Hopson, who now splits time with a home in Mississippi. "You are terrorizing the neighborhoods."

Black residents make up about 63% of the city's population of 628,000. In many ways it is two cities: One is Beale Street and blues, barbecue and Elvis. The other is a spiritual center because of what happened here decades ago. There's the Mason Temple where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous and prophetic speech proclaiming that Black people would eventually reach a world of equality. And there is the balcony at the Lorraine Motel, less than 2 miles away, where an assassin's bullet killed King the next day and changed the future of Black life.

What that left here is complicated, especially when it comes to policing and crime. In 2021, the year the SCORPION unit – a specialty squad that all five officers were part of -- was set up, homicides hit a record, breaking one set in 2020, the previous year. Homicides dropped in 2022 but high-profile cases kept crime in the news. Most of the victims those years were young Black men. In the cases where arrests have been made, the suspects were overwhelmingly Black.

"There are more officers in Black communities here because unfortunately we've seen a spike in crime in our communities," said Memphis NAACP President Van Turner.

But adding police without addressing the underlying issues, including poverty, won't help, he said.

"You have not resolved the systemic issues which create the crime in the first place," Turner said.

The data also shows a disparity between the city's population and who police target with force: Black men and women accounted for anywhere from 79% of use of force situations to 88%. The data doesn't show how many of those people were being sought on a warrant for violent crimes.

The Memphis police chief has called Nichols' death "heinous, reckless and inhumane." The five officers, all of whom were Black, accused of beating him were all charged with second-degree murder, and other officers and fire department employees on scene also have been fired or disciplined and could be charged. The SCORPION unit has been disbanded. The chief has ordered a review of all the special units.

Some people in the community are willing to give the police chief a chance to reform the department.

Marcus Taylor, 48, who owns a janitorial business and lives in south Memphis, urged officers in the precincts to come into their communities and network, "talk to store owners, go to barbershops, come to basketball games, and do it regularly. Get to know the people you are supposed to be protecting."

"Come out without the lights flashing," he said. "You're out here to protect and serve, not beat up and whip. Everybody is not that hardened criminal."

Madkins, who was among hundreds of people attending Nichols' funeral on Wednesday, said he wants to be hopeful. He heard the words of the Rev. Al Sharpton, who delivered a eulogy: "I don't know when. I don't know how. But we won't stop until we hold you accountable and change this system," Sharpton said.

"I felt affirmed. I felt seen and heard in my own struggle," Madkins said.

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The vindication, if you can call it that, comes too late for Tyre Nichols.

At the place where he was fatally beaten grows an unofficial symbol of violence and tragedy — a makeshift memorial with balloons and stuffed animals. It is around the corner from his mother's home.

Nowhere seems safe for Black young men and boys.

When they start walking around the neighborhoods alone, or first start to drive, parents universally caution them on what to do when they encounter cops.

"This has to change," said Erica Brown, 47, who described officers hogtying and pepper-spraying her son while she was with him. The memories of that day in 2014 kept her from watching all the video of Nichols being beaten. "Not just here in Memphis, but it needs to change nationwide."

## Dozens of soldiers freed in Russia-Ukraine prisoner swap

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Dozens of Russian and Ukrainian prisoners of war have returned home following a prisoner swap, officials on both sides said Saturday.

Top Ukrainian presidential aide Andriy Yermak said in a Telegram post that 116 Ukrainians were freed.

He said the released POWs include troops who held out in Mariupol during Moscow's monthslong siege that reduced the southern port city to ruins, as well as guerrilla fighters from the Kherson region and snipers captured during the ongoing fierce battles for the eastern city of Bakhmut.

Russian defense officials, meanwhile, announced that 63 Russian troops had returned from Ukraine following the swap, including some "special category" prisoners whose release was secured following mediation by the United Arab Emirates.

A statement issued Saturday by the Russian Defense Ministry did not provide details about these "special category" captives.

At least three civilians have been killed in Ukraine over the past 24 hours as Russian forces struck nine regions in the country's south, north and east, according to reports on Ukrainian TV by regional governors on Saturday morning.

Two people were killed and 14 others wounded in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region by Russian shelling and missile strikes, local Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said in a Telegram update on Saturday morning.

The casualty toll included a man who was killed and seven others who were wounded Friday after Russian missiles slammed into Toretsk, a town in the Donetsk region. Kyrylenko said that 34 houses, two kindergartens, an outpatient clinic, a library, a cultural centre and other buildings were damaged in the strike.

Seven teenagers received shrapnel wounds after an anti-personnel mine exploded late on Friday in the northeastern city of Izium, local Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said on Telegram. He said they were all hospitalized but their lives were not in danger.

Elsewhere, regional Ukrainian officials reported overnight shelling by Russia of border settlements in the northern Sumy region, as well as the town of Marhanets, which neighbors the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Kyiv has long accused Moscow of using the plant, which Russian forces seized early in the war, as a base for launching attacks on Ukrainian-held territory across the Dnieper river.

Elsewhere, Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odesa and surrounding areas were plunged into the dark following a large-scale network failure, the country's grid operator reported.

Ukrenergo said in a Telegram update that the failure involved equipment "repeatedly repaired" after Russia's savage strikes on Ukraine's energy grid, and that residents should brace themselves for lengthy blackouts.

"Unfortunately, the scale of the accident is quite significant, and this time, the power supply restrictions will be longer. It is not yet possible to determine a specific time when (power) will be fully restored," the company said.

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said that the energy ministry was sending "all the powerful generators it has in stock" to Odesa "within 24 hours" and that both the Ukrainian energy minister and the head of Ukrenergo were on their way to Odesa to oversee repair works.

## Why a new Alzheimer's drug is having a slow US debut

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

The first drug to show that it slows Alzheimer's is on sale, but treatment for most patients is still several months away.

Two big factors behind the slow debut, experts say, are scant insurance coverage and a long setup time needed by many health systems.

Patients who surmount those challenges will step to the head of the line for a drug that delivers an uncertain benefit. Here's a closer look.

### THE SITUATION

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Leqembi, from Japanese drugmaker Eisai, in early January. It's for patients with mild or early cases of dementia tied to Alzheimer's disease.

Regulators used the FDA's accelerated pathway, which allows drugs to launch before they're confirmed to benefit patients. In studies, Leqembi modestly slowed the fatal disease, but doctors aren't sure yet how that translates into things like greater independence for patients.

Patients get the drug by IV every two weeks. Eisai says the company has shipped Leqembi to U.S. specialty drug distribution centers. From there, it can be delivered overnight to hospitals or medical centers.

Eisai spokeswoman Libby Holman said prescriptions for the drug have been written, and they expect patients to start receiving it "very soon."

### COST AND COVERAGE

A year's treatment will run about \$26,500. Patients who can afford that without insurance will be able to start the treatment if they are deemed a candidate for Leqembi and they find a doctor and health care system prepared to help them.

There are currently few options outside self-pay. Most of the patients who may be candidates for this drug are on Medicare, and the federal program's coverage is narrow so far. It has said it will cover treatments like Leqembi only for patients enrolled in certain research trials designed to test the drug.

There are no such studies currently accepting new patients.

"There's a theoretical door (to coverage) that's completely slammed shut," said Robert Egge, chief public policy officer for the nonprofit Alzheimer's Association.

Medicare made that coverage decision last year when another Alzheimer's drug, Biogen's Aduhelm, hit the market.

Health insurers, which run Medicare Advantage coverage, have been sticking to that decision, said a spokesman for the trade group America's Health Insurance Plans.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which oversees Medicare, said after Leqembi's approval that it may reconsider its coverage stance, something the Alzheimer's Association has urged it to do.

Coverage also is likely to change if the drug receives full approval from the FDA. That could happen later this year.

In the meantime, Eisai has an assistance program that provides Leqembi for free to some patients, including those on Medicare. It's based partly on financial need.

### DIAGNOSING

It can take anywhere from several months to more than a year for doctors to diagnose a patient and then figure out if that person is a candidate for Leqembi, according to Dr. Sarah Kremen, a neurologist with the Cedars-Sinai health system in Los Angeles.

That can depend on where a patient lives and the physician's expertise.

First, a doctor must determine whether a patient has mild dementia.

Then the doctor has to decide what caused the condition. It could stem from Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease, a stroke or a brain injury.

If it's related to Alzheimer's disease, doctors must determine whether the patient's brain has an amyloid protein. The new drug aims to slow the progression of Alzheimer's by removing that protein.

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After all that, some doctors may hesitate to prescribe Leqembi because they don't have a good idea yet for how the drug will help the patient or affect their everyday life, Kremen said. They have to consider that uncertainty against the brain swelling and bleeding that can develop in patients taking it.

"I think this benefit versus harm issue is going to weigh heavily," she said.

## DELIVERING TREATMENT

Health systems must first develop plans for delivering drugs like Leqembi before they start offering it. That can take months, although some may have started before regulators approved the drug.

This planning might include training nurses on how to give the drug and making sure prescribing doctors know how to recognize candidates for it. Care providers also need a plan for how patients will be monitored once they start taking it.

Patients need repeated brain scans to check for side effects.

Doctors may want to know that such a plan is in place before they feel comfortable writing a prescription, Kremen noted.

Hospital systems also will have to figure out how many patients might come to them for this drug and be able to cover all the costs tied to it. Those might include clinic, nursing, radiologist and pharmacy fees.

"Frankly, the hospital systems are going to have to decide if they want to offer it," Kremen said. "Is it worth the cost?"

Eisai estimates that about 100,000 people will be diagnosed and eligible to receive Leqembi in the United States by 2026. Representatives of the drugmaker declined to estimate how many people might receive it this year.

## Today in History: FEB 5, Senate acquits Trump

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Feb. 5, the 36th day of 2023. There are 335 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 5, 2020, the Senate voted to acquit President Donald Trump, bringing to a close the third presidential trial in American history, though a majority of senators expressed unease with Trump's pressure campaign on Ukraine that resulted in the two articles of impeachment. Just one Republican, Mitt Romney of Utah, broke with the GOP and voted to convict.

On this date:

In 1811, George, the Prince of Wales, was named Prince Regent due to the mental illness of his father, Britain's King George III.

In 1917, the U.S. Congress passed, over President Woodrow Wilson's veto, an act severely curtailing Asian immigration.

In 1918, during World War I, the Cunard liner SS Tuscania, which was transporting about 2,000 American troops to Europe, was torpedoed by a German U-boat in the Irish Sea with the loss of more than 200 people.

In 1922, the first edition of Reader's Digest was published.

In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed increasing the number of U.S. Supreme Court justices; the proposal, which failed in Congress, drew accusations that Roosevelt was attempting to "pack" the nation's highest court.

In 1971, Apollo 14 astronauts Alan Shepard and Edgar Mitchell stepped onto the surface of the moon in the first of two lunar excursions.

In 1973, services were held at Arlington National Cemetery for U.S. Army Col. William B. Nolde, the last official American combat casualty before the Vietnam cease-fire took effect.

In 1983, former Nazi Gestapo official Klaus Barbie, expelled from Bolivia, was brought to Lyon (lee-OHN'), France, to stand trial. (He was convicted and sentenced to life in prison -- he died in 1991.)

In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act, granting workers up to 12 weeks unpaid leave for family emergencies.

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In 1994, white separatist Byron De La Beckwith was convicted in Jackson, Mississippi, of murdering civil rights leader Medgar Evers in 1963, and was immediately sentenced to life in prison. (Beckwith died Jan. 21, 2001 at age 80.)

In 2008, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, a guru to the Beatles who introduced the West to transcendental meditation, died at his home in the Dutch town of Vlodrop; he was believed to be about 90.

In 2014, CVS Caremark announced it would pull cigarettes and other tobacco products from its stores.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama asked Congress for a short-term deficit reduction package of spending cuts and tax revenue that would delay the effective date of steeper automatic cuts scheduled to kick in March 1. (The president and congressional leaders failed to reach an agreement, and the \$85 billion in federal spending cuts, known as sequester, went into effect.)

Five years ago: Stocks took their worst loss in six and a half years, with the Dow Jones industrial average plunging more than 1,100 points. Jerome Powell was sworn in as the 16th chairman of the Federal Reserve. Former sports doctor Larry Nassar received his third long prison sentence, 40 to 125 years, for molesting young athletes at an elite Michigan gymnastics club. President Donald Trump accused Democrats of being "un-American" and perhaps "treasonous" for not clapping during his State of the Union address a week earlier.

One year ago: On the eve of the celebration of her 70th anniversary on the throne, Queen Elizabeth II offered her support to have the Duchess of Cornwall become known as Queen Camilla, a significant decision in shaping the future of the British Monarchy. A 5-year-old boy named Rayan trapped in a deep well in Morocco for four days died. He was pulled from the well by rescuers after the lengthy operation that captured global attention.

Today's birthdays: Tony-winning playwright John Guare is 85. Financial writer Jane Bryant Quinn is 84. Actor David Selby is 82. Football Hall of Famer Roger Staubach is 81. Movie director Michael Mann is 80. Rock singer Al Kooper is 79. Actor Charlotte Rampling is 77. Racing Hall of Famer Darrell Waltrip is 76. Actor Barbara Hershey is 75. Actor Christopher Guest is 75. Actor Tom Wilkinson is 75. U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm is 64. Actor-comedian Tim Meadows is 62. Actor Jennifer Jason Leigh is 61. Actor Laura Linney is 59. Rock musician Duff McKagan (Guns N' Roses) is 59. World Golf Hall of Famer Jose Maria Olazabal is 57. Actor-comedian Chris Parnell is 56. Rock singer Chris Barron (Spin Doctors) is 55. Singer Bobby Brown is 54. Actor Michael Sheen is 54. Actor David Chisum is 53. Country singer Sara Evans is 52. Country singer Tyler Farr is 39. Actor-singer Darren Criss is 36. Actor Alex Brightman is 36. Actor Henry Golding is 36. Rock musician Kyle Simmons (Bastille) is 35. Actor Jeremy Sumpter is 34. Drummer Graham Sierota (Echosmith) is 24.