

# Groton Daily Independent

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"We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures."

-Thornton Wilder



## Monday, Feb. 13

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff noodles, mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Mini waffles.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, mashed potatoes.

1 p.m.: Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Community Center.

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

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

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

## Tuesday, Feb. 14

Senior Menu: Valentine Dinner: Baked pork chop, baked potato with sour cream, baby glazed carrots, cheesecake with strawberry glaze, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg and cheese wrap.

School Lunch: Meatballs, tiny whole potatoes.

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

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

Boys Basketball at Aberdeen Roncalli (C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity)

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

## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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## Groton Community Calendar Sunday, Feb. 12

Kids wrestling Tournament in Groton, 10:30 a.m.  
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.

Youth Wrestling Tournament at the Groton Area Arena, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: worship/milestones, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Worship at Bethesda, 2 p.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

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

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

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## GHS Wrestling

### **Four grapplers place at Northeast Conference Tournament**

Four Groton Area wrestlers placed at the Northeast Conference wrestling tournament held Saturday in Webster. Christian Ehresmann placed first at 138 pounds, Korbin Kucker placed second at 160 pounds, Cole Bisbee placed second at 170 pounds and Gavin Englund placed third at 220 pounds.

Deuel won the team title with 125.5 pounds, edging out Redfield for the title with 125 pounds. Clark/Willow Lake took third with 116 points, Hamlin fourth with 100, Milbank fifth with 96.5, Sisseton sixth with 87, Groton Area seventh with 64, Webster Area eighth with 51 and Britton-Hecla ninth with 30 points.

#### **106 Lincoln Krause (1-9)**

Quarterfinal - Cooper Pommer (Clark/Willow Lake) 42-4 won by fall over Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 1-9 (Fall 0:41)

Cons. Round 1 - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 1-9 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Semi - Kayden Tchida (Sisseton) 6-1 won by fall over Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 1-9 (Fall 1:35)

#### **126 Kellen Antonson (4-14)**

Quarterfinal - Kellen Antonson (Groton Area) 4-14 received a bye () (Bye)

Semifinal - Taylor Merkel (Clark/Willow Lake) 21-22 won by fall over Kellen Antonson (Groton Area) 4-14 (Fall 2:24)

Cons. Semi - Reed Gray (Sisseton) 2-1 won by fall over Kellen Antonson (Groton Area) 4-14 (Fall 0:55)

#### **132 Tristan McGannon (2-17)**

Quarterfinal - Haeden Jorgenson (Webster Area) 32-6 won by fall over Tristan McGannon (Groton Area) 2-17 (Fall 1:47)

Cons. Round 1 - Damian Severson (Clark/Willow Lake) 4-19 won by fall over Tristan McGannon (Groton Area) 2-17 (Fall 3:46)

#### **138 Christian Ehresmann (30-3) placed 1st and scored 24.0 team points.**

Quarterfinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 30-3 won by fall over Hayden Cooper (Deuel) 2-10 (Fall 0:20)

Semifinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 30-3 won by fall over Tate Everson (Hamlin) 19-20 (Fall 3:38)

1st Place Match - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 30-3 won by fall over Josh Kannegieter (Clark/Willow Lake) 25-8 (Fall 0:19)

#### **145 Nick Morris (5-16) scored 3.0 team points.**

Quarterfinal - Brock Gisselbeck (Hamlin) 30-10 won by fall over Nick Morris (Groton Area) 5-16 (Fall 0:59)

Cons. Round 1 - Nick Morris (Groton Area) 5-16 won by fall over Blaise McGregor (Webster Area) 6-19 (Fall 3:39)

Cons. Semi - Collin Dean (Redfield) 21-27 won by fall over Nick Morris (Groton Area) 5-16 (Fall 0:29)

#### **152 Easten Ekern (4-16)**

Champ. Round 1 - Mason Whitley (Redfield) 38-6 won by fall over Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 4-16 (Fall 1:11)

Cons. Round 1 - Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 4-16 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Round 2 - Nollen Sheeley (Milbank) 11-18 won by fall over Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 4-16 (Fall 2:09)

#### **160 Korbin Kucker (9-3) placed 2nd and scored 16.0 team points.**

Quarterfinal - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 9-3 received a bye () (Bye)

Semifinal - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 9-3 won by fall over Reese Rabe (Milbank) 8-16 (Fall 3:30)

1st Place Match - Korbin Whiteley (Deuel) 27-11 won by fall over Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 9-3 (Fall 5:05)

#### **170 Cole Bisbee (19-13) placed 2nd and scored 14.0 team points.**

Semifinal - Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 19-13 won by fall over Conner Glines (Britton/Hecla) 11-15 (Fall 3:32)

1st Place Match - Barrett Schneck (Milbank) 26-0 won by tech fall over Cole Bisbee (Groton Area) 19-13 (TF-1.5 4:43 (17-2))

#### **220 Gavin Englund (6-16) placed 3rd and scored 7.0 team points.**

Semifinal - Raymond Klein (Deuel) 11-11 won by fall over Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 6-16 (Fall 5:28)

3rd Place Match - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 6-16 received a bye () (Bye)

*You're Invited!*

**RESET**

*women's conference*

**ROSE HILL CHURCH**

**12099 ROSE HILL RD, LANGFORD SD**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2023**

**9:30 AM - 2:00 PM**

*Women and girls of all generations  
are welcome to enjoy a day to reset.*

**GUEST SPEAKERS**

**PASTORS LISA PALMER  
AND MICAH LOMBARDI, A  
MOTHER-DAUGHTER TEAM**



**REGISTER ONLINE**

**THIS IS A FREE EVENT.  
REGISTER BY SCANNING  
THE QR CODE OR AT  
ROSEHILLEFC.COM**









**CHILDCARE WILL BE AVAILABLE**

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## Region 1A Standings

### Girls Basketball

#	Name	Season			Seed Pts
		W	L	PCT	<u>PTS</u>
1	 Sisseton	15	2	.882	43.941
2	 Milbank	11	7	.611	41.222
3	 Aberdeen Roncalli	9	8	.529	40.941
4	 Groton Area	11	8	.579	40.789
5	 Redfield	8	10	.444	39.222
6	 Waubay/Summit	9	9	.500	38.833
7	 Webster Area	7	11	.389	38.444
8	 Tiospa Zina	5	12	.294	38.176

### Boys Basketball

#	Name	Season			Seed Pts
		W	L	PCT	<u>PTS</u>
1	 Waubay/Summit	14	3	.824	43.471
2	 Groton Area	11	4	.733	42.467
3	 Milbank	9	6	.600	41.600
4	 Tiospa Zina	9	7	.562	41.250
5	 Aberdeen Roncalli	9	9	.500	40.167
6	 Redfield	8	10	.444	39.556
7	 Webster Area	4	13	.235	37.706
8	 Sisseton	1	17	.056	36.444

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## NSU Wrestling

### **Bonus Point Wins for Bahr and Huss Make the Difference in Dual Victory for No. 20 Northern State**

Aberdeen, S.D. – The No. 20 Northern State University wrestling team wrapped up their dual season on a high note Saturday, defeating No. 14 University of Mary. The match was decided via tiebreaker in that Northern tallied 64.0 match points to the Marauders 55.0 after the dual sat tied at 17 through ten weights.

#### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 17, UMARY 17

Records: NSU 10-5 (5-4 NSIC), UMARY 13-4 (6-3 NSIC)

#### HOW IT HAPPENED

- The dual kicked off at 141 pounds with a sudden victory decision in favor of the Marauders
- No. 7 Wyatt Turnquist tied the dual for the Wolves, defeating Leo Mushinsky in a 5-2 decision
- Devin Bahr tallied the first extra point win for NSU, giving Northern a 7-3 lead with a 13-3 major decision win over Anthony Velazquez
- The lead extended in the 165-pound bout with a sudden victory win for Chase Bloomquist over Riley Noble (7-5)
- The Marauders answered back with a decision and major decision win, leading the scoreboard tied at ten with four weights remaining
- No. 3 Cole Huss came up big for NSU, notching a 16-4 major decision win over Matt Kaylor and the 14-10 lead for the Wolves
- Mary added a decision at 285, however NSU got back on track with three team points in Landen Fischer's 8-4 decision victory over Jaden Verhagen
- With one weight remain and one of the Marauders top guys in No. 3 Reece Barnhardt up next, Northern led 17-13
- Teagan Block battled for the Wolves ultimately, giving up a major decision, but not suffering a technical fall or fall
- The win over the Marauders is the third straight for NSU and their third upset victory of the 2022-23 season

#### UP NEXT

Northern State concludes the dual season with a 10-5 record overall and 5-5 mark in the NSIC, sitting fifth in the league standings. Northern State University will host the 2023 NCAA Super Region V tournament from Wachs Arena on Saturday, February 25.

#### MATCH RESULTS

		MARY	NSU
141	Laken Boese (Mary) over Kolton Roth (Northern State) (SV-1 8-6)	3.0	0.0
149	#7 Wyatt Turnquist (Northern State) over Leo Mushinsky (Mary) (Dec 5-2)	0.0	3.0
157	Devin Bahr (Northern State) over Anthony Velazquez (Mary) (MD 13-3)	0.0	4.0
165	Chase Bloomquist (Northern State) over Riley Noble (Mary) (SV-1 7-5)	0.0	3.0
174	#2 Max Bruss (Mary) over Kelby Hawkins (Northern State) (Dec 5-2)	3.0	0.0
184	Wyatt Lidberg (Mary) over Tyson Lien (Northern State) (MD 11-3)	4.0	0.0
197	#3 Cole Huss (Northern State) over Matt Kaylor (Mary) (MD 16-4)	0.0	4.0
285	Luke Tweeton (Mary) over Nathan Schauer (Northern State) (Dec 3-2)	3.0	0.0
125	Landen Fischer (Northern State) over Jaden Verhagen (Mary) (Dec 8-4)	0.0	3.0
133	#3 Reece Barnhardt (Mary) over Teagan Block (Northern State) (MD 10-2)	4.0	0.0
165	0:47 Exhibition: Dante Roggio (Mary) over Spencer Roth (Northern State) (Fall)	0.0	0.0
	<b>Dual Meet Score</b>	17.0	17.0

Winner: Northern State (Tie Breaker: Match Pts: 55.0 vs. 64.0)

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## NSU Men's Basketball

### **No. 22 Wolves Solidify Top Spot, Defeat Golden Eagles on the Road**

Crookston, Minn. – The No. 22 Northern State University men's basketball team locked in at least a share of the NSIC Overall and North Division Titles on Saturday afternoon, defeating Minnesota Crookston by 25 points.

#### **THE QUICK DETAILS**

Final Score: NSU 92, UMC 68

Records: NSU 21-5 (17-3 NSIC), UMC 2-24 (1-19 NSIC)

Attendance: 398

#### **HOW IT HAPPENED**

- The two teams scored nearly mirror images of each other in each half, as the Wolves notched 47 and 46 points to the Golden Eagles 35 and 33
- Northern shot 53.0% from the floor, 43.8% from the 3-point line, and 81.8% from the foul line, while Crookston shot 40.3% from the floor, 30.4% from the 3-point line, and 53.8% from the foul line
- The Wolves recorded a game high 39 rebounds, 16 assists, 14 made 3-pointers, six steals, and three blocks
- NSU scored 36 points in the paint, 21 points off turnovers, 21 points off the bench, and 15 second chance points
- Sam Masten led five in double figures with 25 points, hitting 9-of-11 from the floor, while Michael Nhial led the team off the bench with 12 points and seven rebounds

#### **NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS**

- Sam Masten: 25 points, 81.8 field goal%, 8 rebounds, 5 assists
- Jacksen Moni: 15 points, 4 assists, 3 rebounds, 3 blocks, 3 steals
- Jordan Belka: 14 points, 60.0 field goal%, 6 rebounds
- Michael Nhial: 12 points, 57.1 field goal%, 7 rebounds
- Josh Dilling: 10 points, 57.1 field goal%, 3 rebounds

#### **UP NEXT**

Northern State closes out the regular season next week versus UMary and Minot State. The Wolves travel to Bismarck on Thursday for a 5:30 p.m. tip and face off against the Beavers at 4 p.m. on Saturday in Aberdeen.

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## NSU Women's Basketball

### **Rogers' Career-High Leads to NSIC Win Number Ten**

Crookston, Minn. – Northern State never trailed on Saturday afternoon as they cruised to a 75-60 win at Minnesota Crookston. A career night for Laurie Rogers' kept the Wolves hopes alive for hosting a NSIC Tournament contest in Wachs Arena, as Northern remains tied for fourth place in the North Division with only two games remaining in the regular season.

#### **THE QUICK DETAILS**

Final Score: NSU 75, UMC 60

Records: NSU 15-11 (10-10 NSIC), UMC 10-16 (9-11 NSIC)

Attendance: 399

#### **HOW IT HAPPENED**

Alayna Benike and Rianna Fillipi powered a 9-2 scoring run to break the game open midway through the opening period (15-7), forcing Minnesota Crookston to call an early timeout

A jumper by Kailee Oliverson capped a 10-0 scoring run for Northern to finish the first quarter up 25-9

Oliverson and Rogers extended the scoring run to 14-2 in the opening minutes of the second quarter and pushed the NSU lead to 18 points (29-11)

The Golden Eagles were able to chip away at the Wolves lead in the second period as they shot 46.2 percent in the period compared to 29.4 percent for NSU, however Northern State took a 38-24 lead into the halftime break after a Benike 3-pointer with only 12 second remaining in the half

The opening minutes of the third quarter were back-and-forth and UMC was momentarily able to get within ten points (46-36) with 3:19 remaining in the period, however a 14-6 NSU scoring run in the final three minutes extended the lead back to 18 points (60-42) with only one period remaining

Crookston opened the final quarter of play with five consecutive points and momentarily cut the lead back down to 11 again, however jumpers by Rogers and Oliverson put the game out of reach and secured a weekend sweep up north for Northern State

Northern State shot 12-14 (85.7%) from the free throw line in the contest with Rogers shooting 7-8, Oliverson 4-4, and Fillipi 1-2 from the charity stripe

The Wolves once again won the turnover battle, committing eight turnovers while forcing 12 for the Golden Eagles; NSU committed ten or fewer turnovers for the 11th time this season and improved to 8-3 in those games

Northern State improved to 11-2 when leading at the halftime break this season, while also improving to 7-0 this season when scoring 70 or more points

Rogers scored a career-high 23 points in the win on 8-11 shooting from the field and 7-8 from the free throw line, it was her 17th game of the season in double figures and third consecutive

Oliverson recorded her sixth double-double of the season (12 points, 11 rebounds) and second consecutive; she scored in double figures for the 20th time this season and ninth consecutive

Fillipi scored in double figures for the sixth straight game and 15th this season, while Benike scored in double figures for only the fourth time this season

#### **NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS**

Laurie Rogers: 23 points, 4 rebounds, 4 assists, 1 block

Rianna Fillipi: 19 points, 5 rebounds, 2 assists, 1 steal

Kailee Oliverson: 12 points, 11 rebounds, 1 assist, 4 blocks

Alayna Benike: 11 points, 5 rebounds, 3 assists, 1 steal

#### **UP NEXT**

Northern State looks to the final week of the regular season next weekend as they travel to UMary on Thursday evening before hosting Minot State for Senior Night on Saturday. The Wolves and Marauders are scheduled for a 7:30 p.m. tip-off on Thursday at the McDowell Activity Center in Bismarck, North Dakota. Northern then concludes the regular season at 6 p.m. on Saturday in Wachs Arena against the Beavers.

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## GHS Basketball

### **Boys win, girls lose at Mobridge-Pollock doubleheader**

Two streaks came to an end Saturday at the doubleheader basketball event held in Mobridge.

According to Jay Davis of the Mobridge Tribune, the girls had a five-year streak going where the visiting team won and the boys had a 15 year streak going where the home team won. The opposite happened in both yesterday as the the visiting Groton Area Tigers defeated Mobridge-Pollock and the home team Mobridge-Pollock Tigers defeated Groton Area.

The boys posted a 58-41 win in the varsity game. The game was tied three times and there were six lead changes before Groton Area took a 27-18 lead at halftime. Groton Area led, 41-36, at the end of the third quarter and Jacob Zak scored eight of his 13 points in the fourth quarter to help propel Groton Area to the win.

Lane Tietz led the Tigers with 17 points, four rebounds, one assist and two steals. Jacob Zak had 13 points, three rebounds and one assist. Tate Larson had 10 points, five rebounds and two assists. Cole Simon had eight points, two rebounds, two assists and one steal. Ryder Johnson had six points, three rebounds and one steal. Keegan Tracy had four points and one steal. Cade Larson had one assist. Taylor Diegel had one assist and two steals. Logan Ringgenberg had one rebound.

Groton Area made 15 of 25 two-pointers for 60 percent, three of 11 three-pointers for 27 percent had 18 rebounds, eight assists and seven steals. Groton Area made 19 of 30 free throws for 63 percent off of Mobridge-Pollock's 23 team fouls. Mobridge-Pollock made three of 10 free throws for 30 percent off of Groton Area's 15 team fouls.

Shane Henderson led Mobridge-Pollock with 11 points while Kobe Good Shield had seven, Jackson Eisemann five, Holden Eisemann, Sion Fried, Turner Pfitzer and Coy Hinsz each had two points.

Groton Area won the junior varsity game, 66-32. Scoring for Groton: Teylor Diegel 11, Logan Ringgenberg 10, Braxton Imrie 8, Holden Sippel 8, Keegan Tracy 7, Turner Thompson 6, Dillon Abeln 5, Ryder Johnson 3, Blake Pauli 3, Jayden Schwan 2, Caden McInerney 2, and Gage Sippel 1.

The junior high boys won both of their games. In the first game, quarter scores were 16-8, 28-16 and 33-24 win rout to a 46-28 win. Karson Zak 12, Ryder Schelle 12, Ethan Kroll 9, Easten Weber 7, Alex Abeln 3, Jace Johnson 2, Quinn Cogley 1.

Groton Area led at the quarters top at 14-7, 26-15 and 34-19 en route to a 41-23 win. Easten Weber 17, Karson Zak 11, Ryder Schelle 7, TC Schuster 4, Alex Abeln 3.

Groton Area had the early lead in the girls varsity game, but Mobridge-Pollock would win the game from the free throw line, 20-6, to a post a 53-44 win. Groton Area led after the first quarter, 18-13, Mobridge-Pollock took a 28-24 lead at halftime. The game was tied three times in the third quarter but Groton Area was unable to get back on top as Mobridge-Pollock led at the third quarter break, 37-35, and would make 12 of 13 free throws in the fourth quarter to get the win.

Sydney Leicht led Groton Area with 15 points, four rebounds and one steal. Jaedyn Penning had seven points, five rebounds, two assists and two steals. Faith Trapahgen had six points, four rebounds, two assists and one steal. Kennedy Hansen had five points. Brooke Gengerke had four points, five rebounds, one assist and one steal. Brooklyn Hansen had three points and two rebounds. Rylee Dunker had three points, three rebounds, two assists and one steal. Emily Clark had one point. Jerica Locke had six rebounds, four assists and one steal. Laila Roberts had one assist and two steals.

Groton Area made 13 of 38 two-pointers for 34 percent, four of 17 three-pointers for 24 percent, had 34 rebounds, 13 turnovers, 12 assists and 11 steals. Groton Area made six of 19 free throws for 32 percent off of Mobridge-Pollock's 16 team fouls. Mobridge-Pollock made 20 of 23 free throws for 87 percent off of Groton Area's 23 teams fouls.

Katy Kernitz led Mobridge-Pollock with 16 points while Emma Keller had 11, Charley Henderson 10, Mariah Goehring nine, Reagan Weisbeck three and Emily Hatzenbuhler one.

Mobridge-Pollock won the junior varsity girls game, 44-33. Brooklyn Hansen had eight points, McKenna Tietz seven, Rylee Dunker six, Taryn Traphagen five, Elizabeth Flihs three and Faith Traphagen and Talli Wright each had two points.

Thanks to Shane Clark for calling the girls games, to Ryan Tracy and Melanie Johnson for assisting in the boys JV game, to Jeslyn Kosel for running the cameras and to all of our wonderful sponsors on GDILIVE.COM. Akaska Tavern & Bait Shop sponsored the junior games, Ed and Connie Stauch sponsored the boys JV game, Larry and Val Flihs sponsored the girls JV game, and the varsity game sponsors were 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

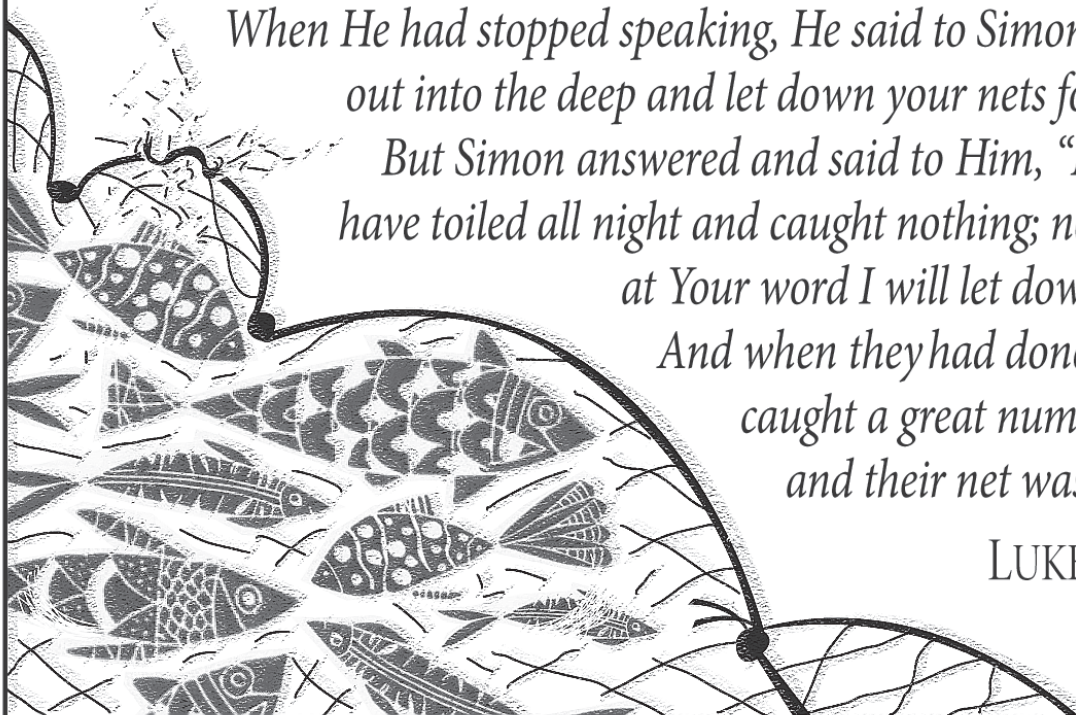


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## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



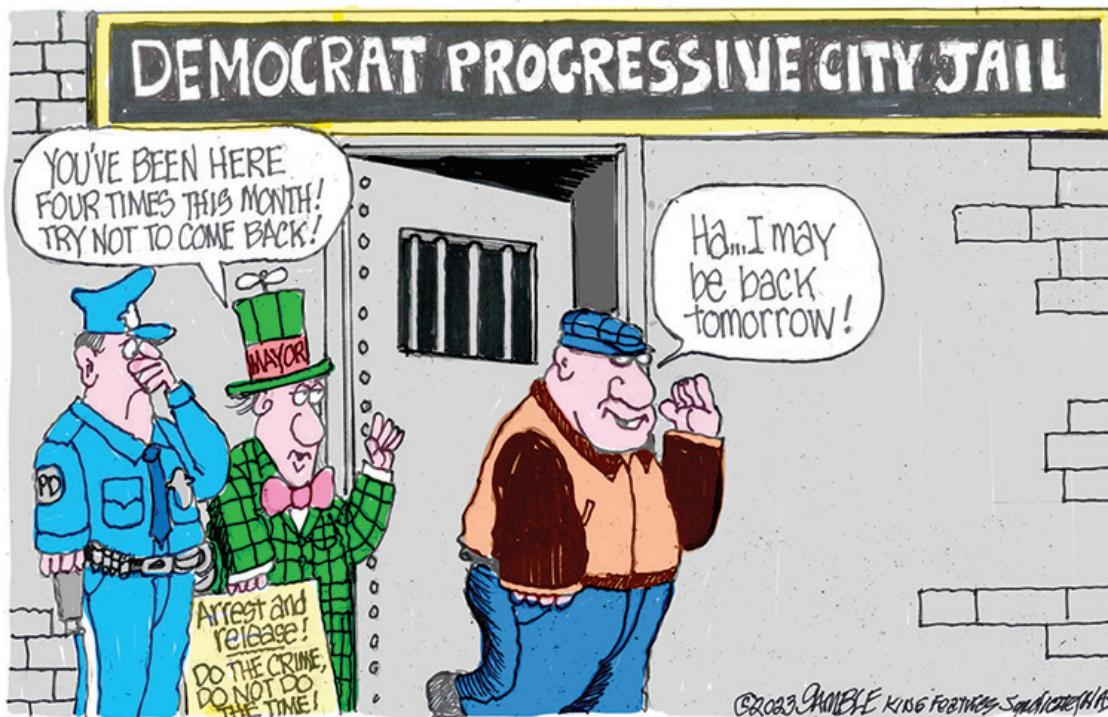
*When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."*

*But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."*

*And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.*

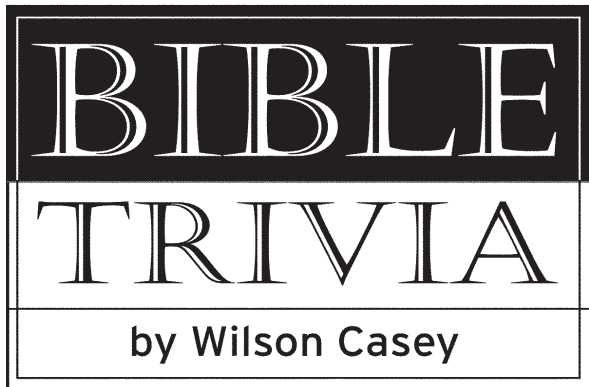
LUKE 5:4-6 

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

2. From 1 John 3:18, “Let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in ...”  
*Hope, Abundance, Touch, Truth*

3. In Proverbs 10:12, “Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all ...”  
*Sins, Beings, Creation, Enemies*

4. Which Old Testament book reads like a love story? *Ruth, Daniel, Habakkuk, Song of Solomon*

5. Where does one find the phrase “God is love”? *Genesis, Nehemiah, Hebrews, 1 John*

6. From Hebrews 13:4, what is honourable in all? *Love, Trust, Marriage, Worship*

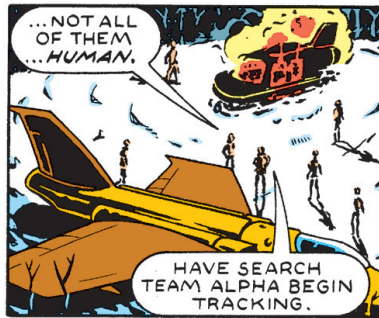
ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Truth, 3) Sins, 4) Song of Solomon, 5) 1 John (4:8, 16), 6) Marriage

*Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey’s subscriber site at [www.patreon.com/triviaguy](http://www.patreon.com/triviaguy).*

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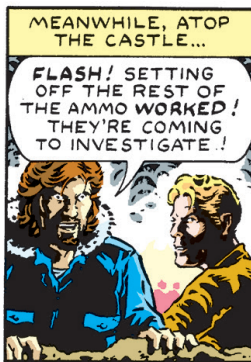
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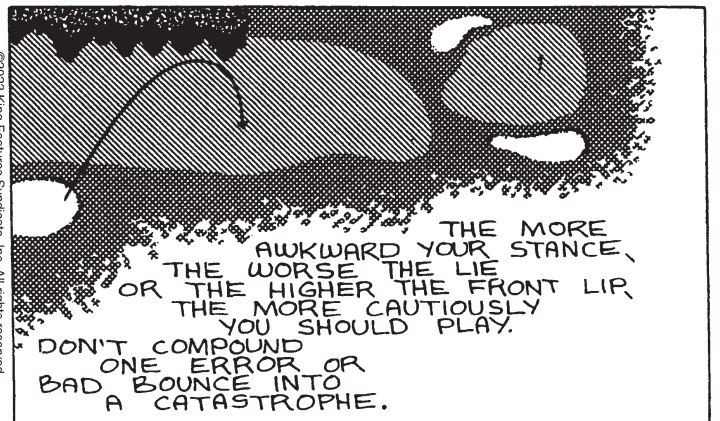
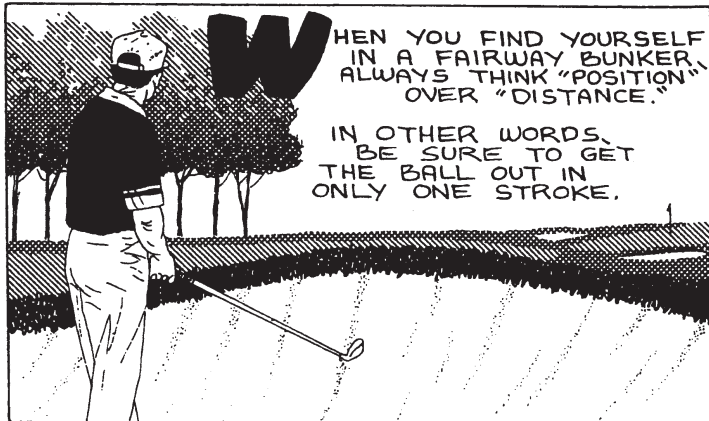
## FLASH GORDON

BY JIM KEEFE

AS A RESCUE TEAM SURVEYS THE WRECKAGE OF FLASH'S SHIP, A SOUND LIKE THUNDER ECHOS THROUGHOUT THE VALLEY.



## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





## Statins Do Not Increase Risk of Death by Suicide in Men Over 60

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** I have read that there is a correlation between the use of statins and suicide in men over 60, especially if they have suffered from chronic depression. Can you tell me if this has been studied more? — *K.M.*

**ANSWER:** This concern has been studied extensively.

An older class of cholesterol medication, the fibrates, was associated with a small increased risk of suicide and violent deaths, in several large studies. However, a very large study published in 2020 showed no increase in risk of death by suicide among those taking statin drugs. In fact, that study, as well as several others, have shown a decrease in depression risk among statin users. Statins have even been found to be (modestly) effective in treatment of drug-resistant depression.

Men over 60 are certainly at a higher risk from death by suicide, but statin drugs do not appear to increase that risk. Anyone with thoughts of hurting themselves should seek care from their doctor, a mental health professional, or the suicide and crisis lifeline at 988 in the U.S. and 833-456-4566 in most Canadian provinces.

\*\*\*

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** I am 74. I have always been described as small-boned. I am on a statin, but otherwise, I'm healthy. I was recently diagnosed with osteopenia. I do not eat dairy, but I do take vitamin D. I am vegetarian and eat lots of tofu. I am very concerned about taking any additional medicines. Suggestions, please? — *F.M.D.*

**ANSWER:** Osteopenia, or low bone

betes or elevated blood pressure. It's not a disease in itself, but it puts you in a range between the healthiest condition and one that can put you at risk. In the case of osteopenia, you are at a higher risk for developing osteoporosis, which, in turn, puts you at a high risk for a fracture, especially one of the spine or the hip. We do not normally treat low bone density with medicine. Lifestyle interventions to help slow loss of bone density include not only the calcium and vitamin D you are taking, but I especially recommend exercise. Weight-bearing, muscle-strengthening and posture exercises are proven to help. Smokers should quit.

You should have gotten a T-score on your report, which compares your bone density for a given bone to a healthy young adult. The worse the T-score, the closer you are to osteoporosis, which is a T score below -2.5. Depending on how close you are to osteoporosis, the sooner your bone density test should be repeated. People with osteoporosis should be considered for medication. I understand your concern about taking more medicine than you need, but you really don't want a hip fracture to occur.

\*\*\*

**DR. ROACH WRITES:** In a recent column on glaucoma, I described it as a disease of the retina. Several eye physicians wrote to clarify that it is actually a disease of the optic nerve. Eye professionals look in the back of the eye at the optic nerve for "cupping," which is an increase in the size of the optic cup related to the loss of nerve cells in the retina. But the site of the damage is in the optic nerve, where there is a difference between the eye pressure and blood pressure, either from high pressure inside the eye or from very low blood pressure. Many people with glaucoma who have normal pressures inside the eye have low blood pressure. Reducing pressure inside the eye remains the preferred treatment. I appreciate the clarifications, especially from Dr. Peter Libre at Columbia University.

*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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"Your Place or Mine" (PG-13) -- Since the arrival of February marked the beginning of the most romantic time of the year, it is the perfect opportunity to dive into a rom-com! First up is a new film out now from rom-com veterans Reese Witherspoon and Ashton Kutcher. They star as Debbie and Peter, a pair of long-distance best friends who once hooked up on the night they first met. Twenty years later, they're both single, and Debbie's barely gotten a break from taking care of her teenage son, Jack. So, Peter offers to take care of Jack, switching places with Debbie for a week while she stays in his apartment and enjoys a well-deserved vacation. But little do Peter and Debbie know how much this one week will uncover deeply buried feelings from the both of them. (Netflix)

"Spoiler Alert" (PG-13) -- The second rom-com film for this week brings a bit more drama with its comedy. Based on the memoir by Michael Ausiello, this film features Jim Parsons ("The Big Bang Theory") and Ben Aldridge ("Fleabag") as Kit and Michael, and just as the title suggests, the spoiler comes before the story actually begins. In the first scene of the film, Kit dies in his husband Michael's arms after an 11-month battle with terminal cancer, with the rest of the film depicting their love story through Michael's eyes. As with any relationship, the two go through ups and downs, but every circumstance ends up making them stronger, leading up to that moment where Kit takes his very last breath. Sally Field and Antoni Porowski ("Queer Eye") also star in this very touching film, out now. (Peacock)

"Sharper" (R) -- For those who'd rather skip all the mushy-gushiness, "Sharper" -- with an impressive cast comprised of Julianne Moore, John Lithgow, Sebastian Stan and Justice Smith -- is a psychological thriller that premieres on Feb. 17. Lithgow portrays billionaire Richard Hobbes, who's in a relationship with Moore's character, Madeline. Madeline's son, Max, is a con artist, who's dying to get his hands on the type of money Richard has. This leads Max to convince his girlfriend, Sandra, to get her claws into Richard's sheepish son, Tom, and make him fall for her so that the two can eventually con him out of Tom's huge inheritance. But don't be fooled -- nobody, not even sweet Madeline, is who they seem to be. (AppleTV+)

"Halloween Ends" (R) -- Did you miss the final installment of the newly rebooted "Halloween" trilogy in theaters? Have no fear ... or maybe have some, because "Halloween Ends" premieres right on Valentine's Day. Jamie Lee Curtis reprises her role as Laurie Strode, who has lived with her granddaughter, Allyson, since the death of her daughter, Karen, by Michael Myers. Michael has "vanished," but his aura is still present throughout Haddonfield. Meanwhile, Allyson begins dating a man named Corey, who increasingly begins to show signs of malicious intent. Corey discovers Michael hiding in a sewer, and Corey's so entranced by him that he starts making plans to follow in his footsteps. While this is the least impressive film in the series by far, at least we got to tie a bow on the end of Michael Myers' terrifying reign. (I hope.) (Prime Video)



**Justice Smith, left, and Julianne Moore star in "Sharper."**

Courtesy of AppleTV+

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1. Who released "Lady Sings the Blues" and when?
2. "I'm Still Standing" was released on which Elton John album?
3. Which song was the first to rank as No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100? When was that?
4. In 1953, Elvis Presley recorded a double-sided record with "My Happiness" and "That's When Your Heartaches Begin." Who was the record for?
5. Name the song that contains these lyrics: "Too many long conversations and no one is hearin' a word."

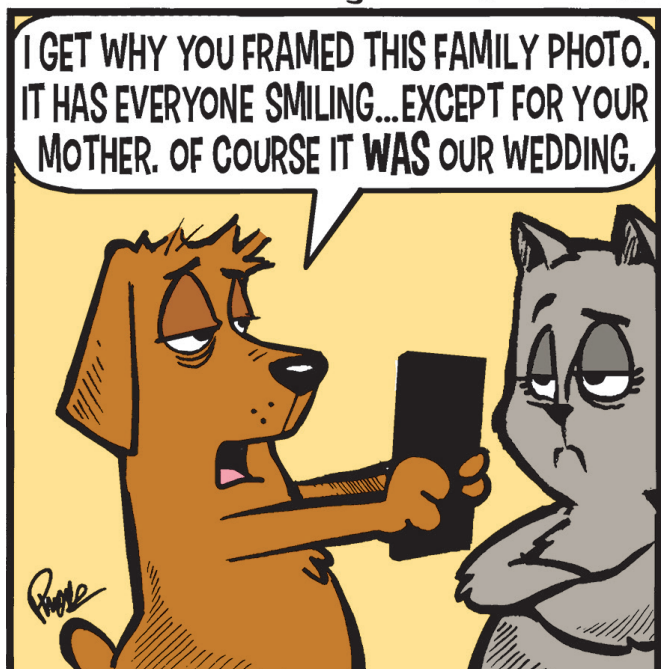
## Answers

1. Diana Ross, in 1972. The song was on the double soundtrack album for the film of the same name, a biopic about singer Billie Holiday.
2. "Too Low for Zero," in 1983. The song did well on the charts, helped by an MTV video.
3. "Poor Little Fool," by Ricky Nelson, in 1958. The first thing Billboard ranked, however, wasn't records, it was sheet music, in 1913. Records weren't listed until 1936.
4. His mother, as a birthday present. Presley paid \$3.98 for the recording fee.
5. "Dancin' Shoes," by Nigel Olsson, in 1978. Olsson got his start in England with the Plastic Penny band and eventually collaborated with Elton John, Neil Sedaka, Rod Stewart and several others on numerous albums.

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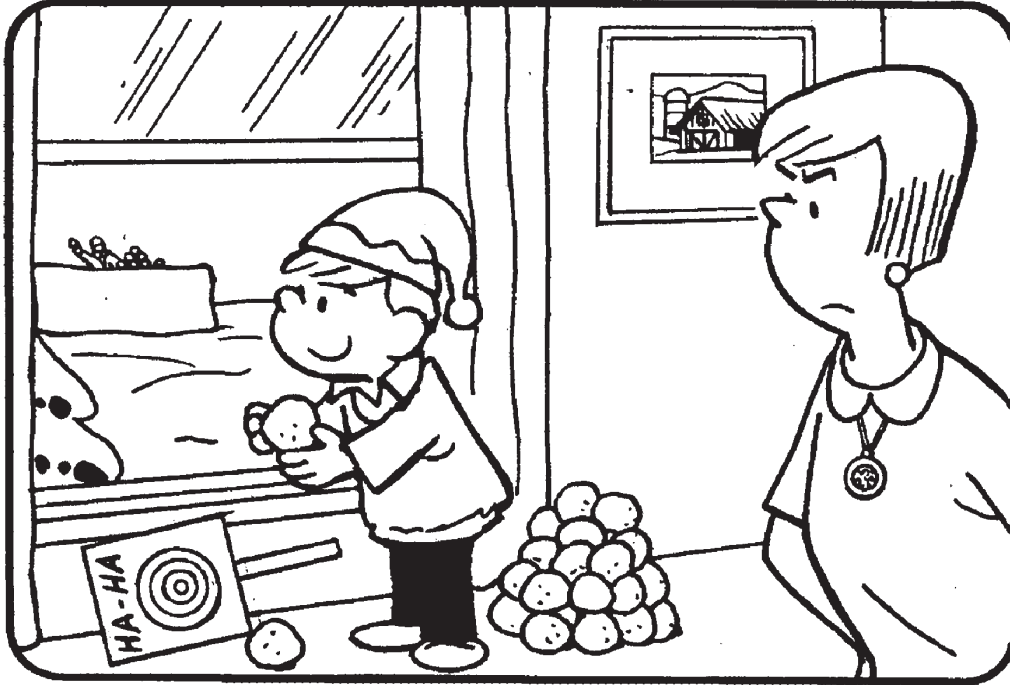
**GRIN and BEAR IT** *by Wagner*

## Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

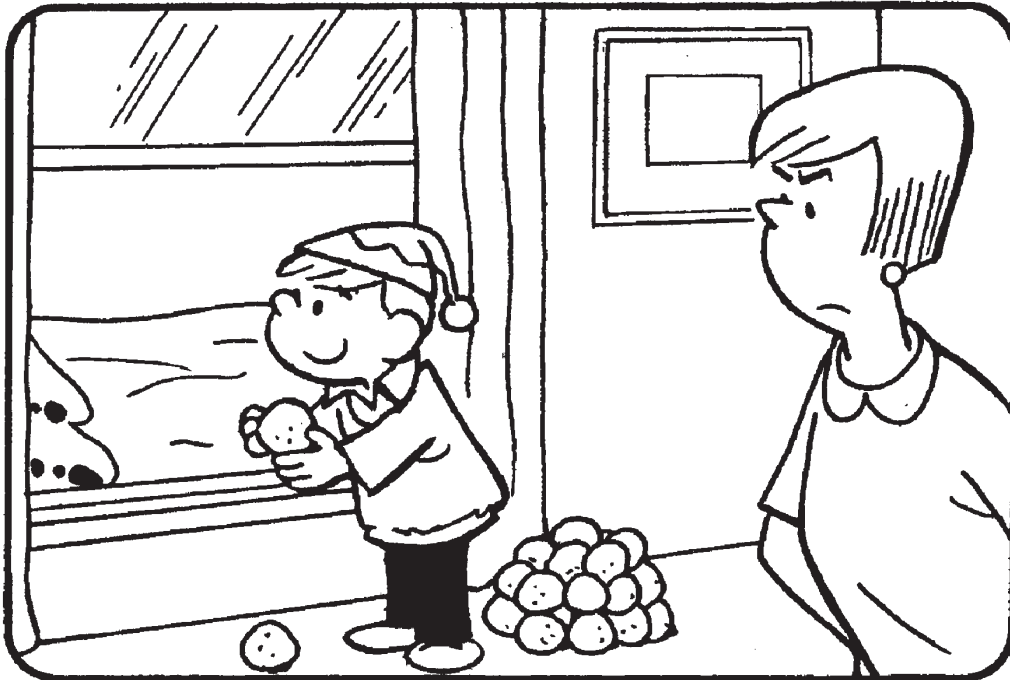


## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Snow fort is missing. 2. Sign is missing. 3. Cap differs. 4. Snowball stack is smaller. 5. Picture is missing. 6. Pendant is missing.

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\* "It can be tricky to add new keys to a key ring, especially if you don't have much of a fingernail. I have found a foolproof way to get the key started. Just use a staple remover. It works wonders!" -- T.R. in Indiana

\* If you find that you have small scratches in your wood furniture, try this old trick: Rub a walnut over dings to cover them up. Or find a matching brown crayon, rub it lightly into the scratch, and finish with a hair dryer held 10 inches away for about 10-15 seconds. It melts the wax of the crayon, and then you can buff it with a soft rag. Any excess is swept away and the color remains.

\* Got small kids? If your little one keeps rolling out of his bed, here's a tip: Use a pool noodle tucked under the fitted sheet, lengthwise along the edge of the bed. It's just enough of a bumper to send a sleeping child back to the center of the mattress.

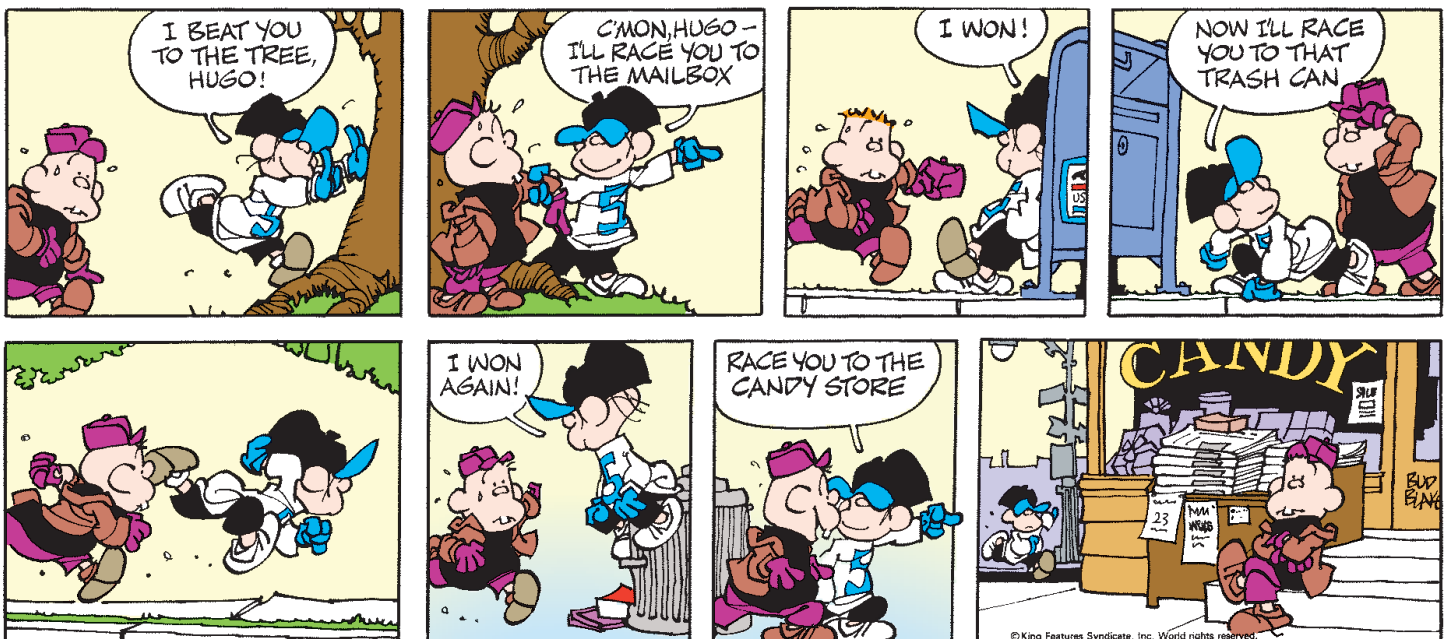
\* "If you have many mismatched frames that you would like to use, you can try spray painting them all the same color. I had several that were different colors and a little bit beat up, but I wanted to use them in one big group. I painted them all glossy black, and they look great!" -- W.F. in Arkansas

\* Hanging shoe racks are a wonderful organizational tool, especially the ones made of plastic that have see-through pockets. You can use them on the back of your bathroom door for small towels and toiletries, or how about on the back of baby's door as a diaper organizer? My favorite use is on the back of my garage door to hold all the cleaning bottles and solutions with other supplies. They are nice and high, and out of reach of little hands.

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 Sailing vessel
- 6 Clear the deck?
- 9 Kitten's cry
- 12 A Marx brother
- 13 Low digit
- 14 "Xanadu" band
- 15 Baby hooter
- 16 Florida city
- 18 Handsome guy
- 20 Convent dwellers
- 21 Brooch
- 23 Tool set
- 24 March honoree, for short
- 25 Fed. food inspector

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				

- 27 Grinding tooth
- 29 "At once!"
- 31 Attention-getting call
- 35 Senior member
- 37 Lingerie fabric
- 38 Houston player
- 41 Sports drink suffix
- 43 TV spots
- 44 Foolproof
- 45 Go places
- 47 Florida city
- 49 Revise
- 52 Tokyo, once
- 53 "Humbug!"
- 54 Keaton of "Annie Hall"
- 55 Lair
- 56 Bikini top
- 57 Old anesthetic
- DOWN**
- 1 HBO competitor
- 2 Attorney's field
- 3 Florida city
- 4 Pundit's piece
- 5 "The Chosen" author Chaim
- 6 Cuban rum cocktail
- 7 Burden
- 8 Zing
- 9 Convened
- 10 Justice Kagan
- 11 In the — way (very much)
- 17 Preambles
- 19 Spock portrayer
- 21 Young seal
- 22 Leb. neighbor
- 24 — Paulo Jackson
- 26 President Carter of "Wonder Woman"
- 30 Overly
- 32 Florida city
- 33 Vintage
- 34 Approves
- 36 Sultry singer Kitt
- 38 Queried
- 39 Soft leather
- 40 Check the fit of
- 42 Dodge
- 45 Russian ruler
- 46 Send forth
- 48 Flow out
- 50 Away from SSW
- 51 Aachen article

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## — King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 26 mins.

S	L	O	O	P		M	O	P		M	E	W
H	A	R	P	O		O	N	E		E	L	O
O	W	L	E	T		J	U	P	I	T	E	R
		A	D	O	N	I	S		N	U	N	S
P	I	N		K	I	T		S	T	P	A	T
U	S	D	A		M	O	L	A	R			
P	R	O	N	T	O		Y	O	O	H	O	O
			D	O	Y	E	N		S	I	L	K
A	S	T	R	O		A	D	E		A	D	S
S	U	R	E		T	R	A	V	E	L		
K	E	Y	W	E	S	T		A	M	E	N	D
E	D	O		B	A	H		D	I	A	N	E
D	E	N		B	R	A		E	T	H	E	R

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

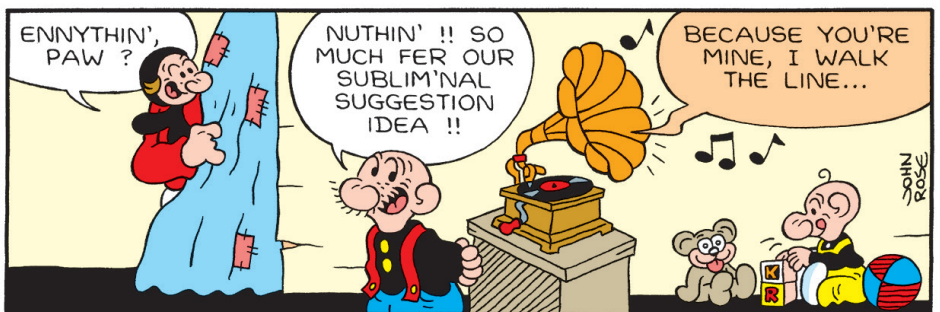
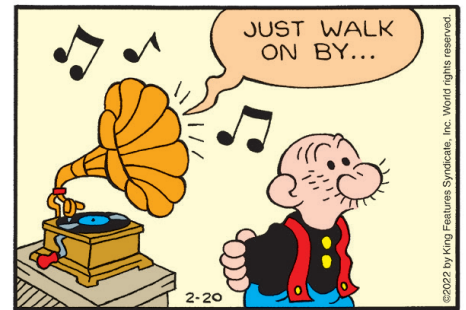
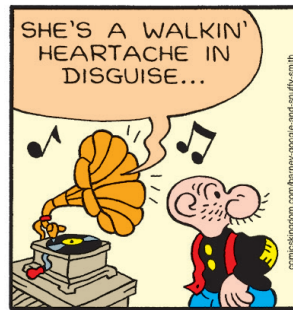
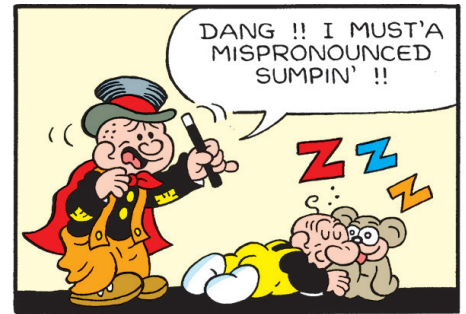
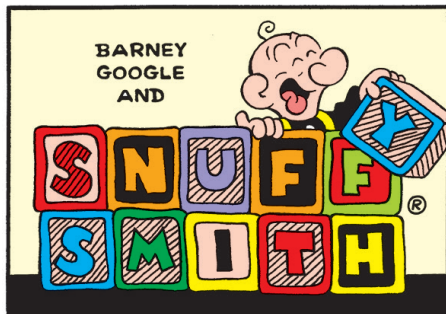
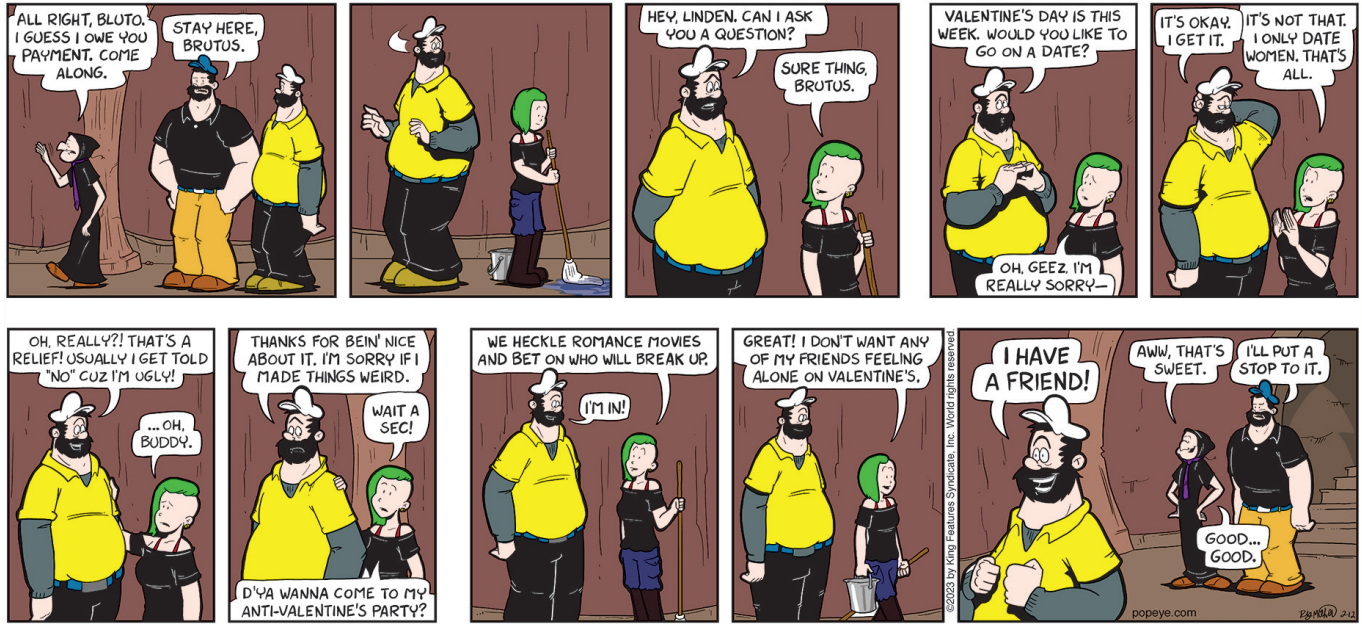


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## POPEYE

BY RANDY MILHOLLAND



# Groton Daily Independent

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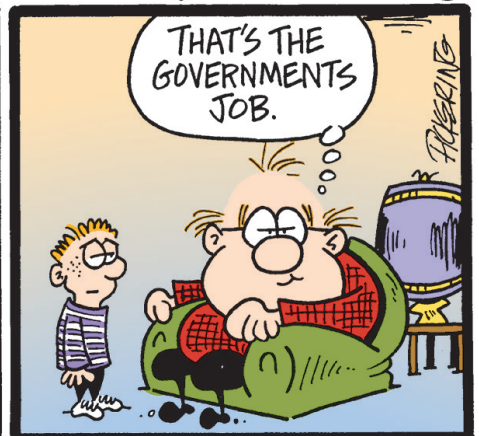
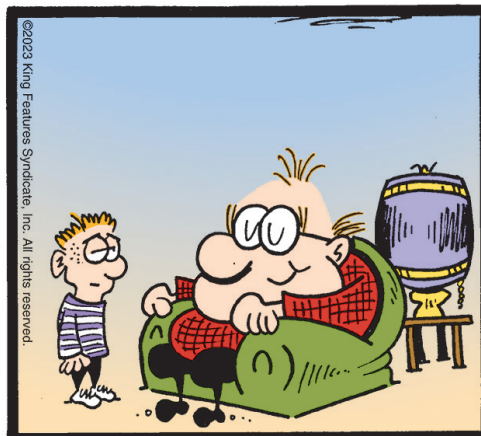
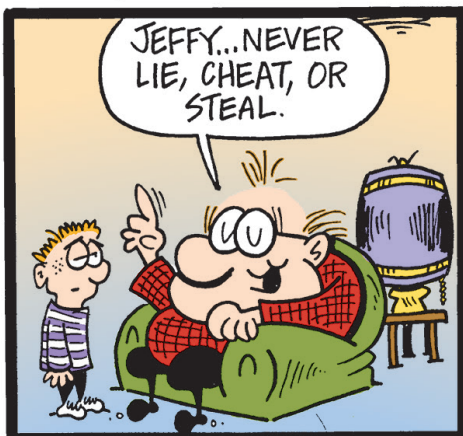
OOM CONTINUES: "THE 'BOOK' TAUGHT ME TO CONTROL MY SERVANT BY INSCRIBING AND REMOVING CERTAIN MYSTIC SYMBOLS. BUT IT DID NOT TELL ME THAT IT WOULD GROW..."

NEXT: **Growing problem**



## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Are There Recalled Foods in Your Freezer?

How many food items in your freezer, refrigerator or kitchen cabinet are on recall lists?

I spotted a food recall alert on the news, but I only heard part of the announcement. On to the internet I went, looking for the information. And sure enough, for the first time ever, I actually had a recalled food item. It was a bit unnerving to realize that I hadn't been reading all the recall alerts I get in my email inbox.

While looking for more sites that provide alerts, I came across one I hadn't known about: FoodManufacturing.com. Just in the past few weeks, they've put out alerts for a certain soup because of an error on the label, several brands of Vienna sausages, hot chocolate K-cups (it might contain peanut products), a pot roast meal, sprouts, frozen chicken entrees, popcorn, frozen manicotti, diced beef ... and more.

To look at their list, go to the site and click on the "Recalls/Alerts" tab.

The Food Safety and Inspection Service arm of the Department of Agriculture issues alerts as well at [www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls). Note the advanced search feature on the left side of the screen where you can filter by cause, risk level, states and more.

Food Safety ([www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)) provides information on the safe handling and storage of food.

Recalls.gov is another good site for recall notices. Click on the "Food" tab to see your online choices.

And what should I do with that recalled product I found in my freezer? I'm going to take it back to the store for a refund, of course.

On a sad note, did you see the Consumer Reports research on the amount of lead and cadmium in our favorite dark chocolate bars? Go to [ConsumerReports.org](http://ConsumerReports.org) and put "Lead and Cadmium Could Be in Your Dark Chocolate" in the search box.

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1. Nicknamed "The Great Imposter," this man's stunts included posing as baseball and basketball players, umpires, officials, the San Diego Chicken and a Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader during the 1970s and '80s. Who is he?

2. Brothers and businessmen Ozzie and Daniel Silna purchased what American Basketball Association franchise in 1974, then relocated the team and changed its name to Spirits of St. Louis?

3. What Florida State Seminoles defensive back was selected by the Tennessee Titans in the 2010 NFL Draft, but left football in 2012 to become a neurosurgeon?

4. What boxer fought a trilogy against Muhammad Ali from 1973-76 and held the World Boxing Council heavyweight championship in 1978? (Hint: His son played linebacker for three Super Bowl champions.)

5. What Buffalo Sabres goaltender was seriously injured when a skate blade severed his carotid artery and partially cut his jugular vein during a game vs. the St. Louis Blues in 1989?

6. What college basketball team had players involved in a point-shaving scheme orchestrated by members of the mafia during the 1978-79 season?

7. Name the team that finished its 13th and final Major League Baseball season with a record of 20-134 in 1899.



by Ryan A. Berenz

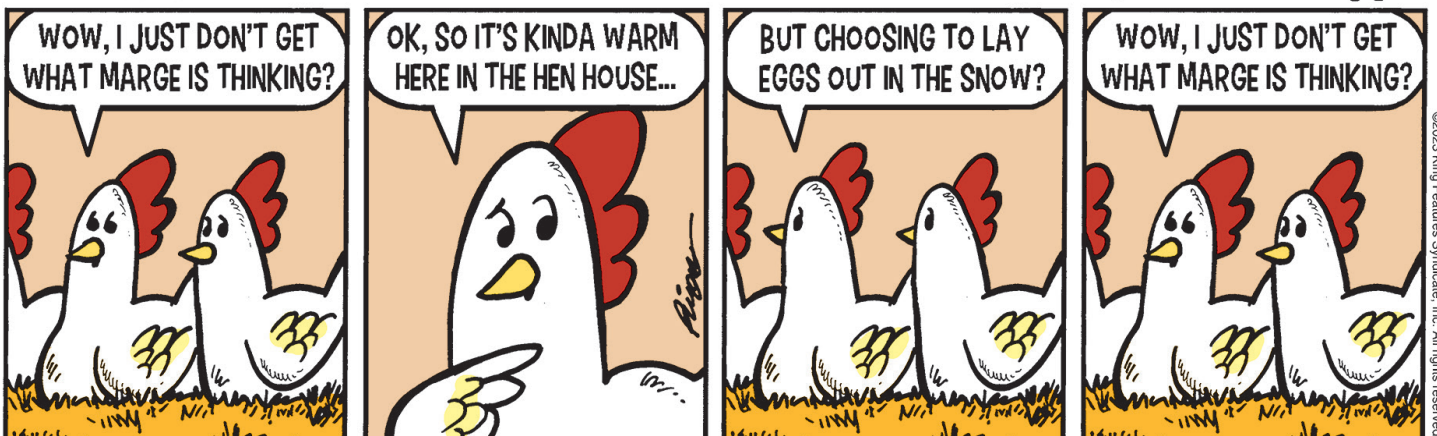
## Answers

1. Barry Bremen.
2. The Carolina Cougars.
3. Myron Rolle.
4. Ken Norton.
5. Clint Malarchuk.
6. The Boston College Eagles.
7. The Cleveland Spiders.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Should I Buy a Pet on an Online Marketplace?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I was scrolling through my social media account and an ad popped up showing a really cute puppy for sale. What are people's experiences buying pets online? -- Curtis, via email

DEAR CURTIS: The short answer is, don't. It's unlikely that what you saw was an approved ad, because most social media companies do not allow pet sales or advertising for the sale of pets. Probably, someone created a post and made it public.

Avoid responding to the post, even if you think you know the person who posted it or think you know the location. Chances are it's either a scam to part

you from your hard-earned money, or you will receive a puppy that is not the one advertised or is very ill and needs a lot of medical care. I've heard too many stories from owners who got scammed from such online transactions.

If you just want a cute animal companion, adopt a pet through your local shelter. You'll be able to see and interact with a potential pet, and the shelter will help you evaluate whether you're ready for a dog at this point. There is a cost involved with adoption, but those fees are upfront. And I guarantee it is substantially less than what you will pay a shady pet dealer (or pay out in medical bills later on).

If you absolutely want a specific breed of dog, do the homework required. Find nearby breeders who specialize in the breed you're interested in. Read up on the breed. Find out the financial requirements to match with, purchase, train and care for that dog.

No matter which path you pick, know that pets are an investment of money and time. The dividend is a healthy, happy pet that adores you. Don't take a shortcut.

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

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## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

museum in Lucas, Kansas, created by Erika Nelson. It consists of miniatures created from photos of the world's largest objects.

\* On May 9, 1945, reports that Nazi Germany had surrendered to the USSR triggered a 22-hour celebration that caused the country to temporarily run out of vodka!

\* An Arizona man didn't realize he was a big winner at a Las Vegas slot machine because its lights and buzzers never went on. Fortunately, an investigation by the Nevada Gaming Control Board resulted in a happy ending and the bestowal of the gentleman's \$230,000.

\* Not only can you be right-handed or left-handed, you can be right or left eared and eyed.

\* "Tartle" is a Scottish word referring to the feeling of hesitation or panic you experience when unable to recall another person's name.

\* Though heavy metal music originated in the U.S. and the U.K., Finland has the most metal bands per capita, with Sweden and Norway tying for second place and Iceland coming in third.

\* There's a name for three consecutive strikes in bowling: a turkey or sizzling turkey. Any additional strike after that is called a bagger.

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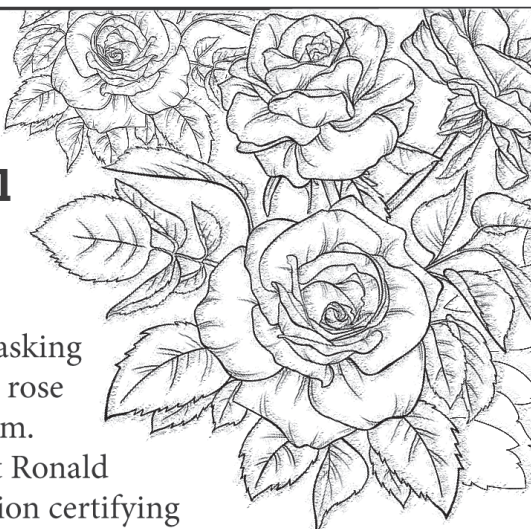
Thought for the Day: "Management is about persuading people to do things they do not want to do, while leadership is about inspiring people to do things they never thought they could." -- Steve Jobs

\* Nintendo was founded in 1889 as a playing card company.

\* Garbage collectors in Turkey have filled their own library entirely from books thrown away by residents. Originally destined for landfills, around 6,000 tomes are now safely housed on shelves, waiting to be re-read -- or discovered -- by the public.

\* Gray cats are frequently the result of a diluted black fur gene.

\* The World's Largest Collection of the World's Smallest Versions of the World's Largest Things is a



**The Garden Bug** Our national flower

In 1985, the United States Senate passed a resolution asking the president to declare the rose as the national floral emblem. On Nov. 20, 1986 President Ronald Reagan signed a proclamation certifying the rose as the U.S. national flower in a ceremony at the White House Rose Garden. - Brenda Weaver

Source: [nationalrosegarden](http://nationalrosegarden.com)





by Freddy Groves

## **\$30 Million for Homeless Veterans Grants**

The Department of Veterans Affairs is gearing up to award \$30 million to organizations to hire case managers across the country to support homeless veterans for two years beginning this October. Those 150 case managers will assist with searching for and obtaining permanent housing and troubleshooting any barriers to keeping that housing.

Those barriers to finding and keeping housing can range from having a poor credit history, to being behind in rent, to having legal problems and more.

The VA goes by the Housing First philosophy: The veteran needs the stability of housing before taking additional steps to improve quality of life. Once the veteran is in permanent housing, the rest of the work starts -- job training, mental health care, education assistance, medical care ... whatever it takes to keep them in their home. The Housing First model was tested early on, and the results were promising: In a test of the first 177 homeless veterans, the program reduced the waiting time for housing placement from 235 days to 35.

If you're a homeless veteran or know someone who is, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838) or see [www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless). If you know that you're likely to be homeless soon, don't wait until the last minute. Reach out for help now. There are resources to help you with health care, employment, housing and much more. You can also go to your closest VA medical center. While you're there, ask about Community Resource and Referral Centers (CRRCs) and their list of contacts who have the resources to help.

If your community group works to assist homeless veterans, take a look at the Housing First information at [www.va.gov/HOMELESS/nchav/resources/housing-programs/housing-first.asp](http://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/nchav/resources/housing-programs/housing-first.asp).

Applications for the Case Management Grants must be received by May 4, 2023. See the notice in the Federal Register at <https://tinyurl.com/27x3djay>. If you have questions, contact the Grant and Per Diem Program at [GPDGrants@va.gov](mailto:GPDGrants@va.gov).

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## Wishing Well®

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

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. TELEVISION: What was the name of the saloon in the 1960s series "Gunsmoke"?
2. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: To date, how many people have walked on the moon?
3. GEOGRAPHY: What is the capital of the Canadian province Nova Scotia?
4. MOVIES: How many "Police Academy" movies have been produced?
5. U.S. STATES: Why is Indiana known as "The Hoosier State"?
6. FOOD & DRINK: What percentage of a cucumber is water?
7. HISTORY: Which company published its first mail-order catalog in 1872?
8. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What does the armadillo's name mean in English?
9. LITERATURE: What is author Mark Twain's real name?
10. CELEBRITIES: What is one of singer/actor Frank Sinatra's famous nicknames, based on a physical attribute?

### Answers

1. Long Branch Saloon.
2. 12.
3. Halifax.
4. Seven, including the original movie and six sequels.
5. The name became popular in the 1800s, likely from the poem "The Hoosier's Nest."
6. 96%.
7. Montgomery Ward.
8. Little armored one.
9. Samuel Langhorne Clemens.
10. Ol' Blue Eyes.

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# Groton Daily Independent

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South Dakota Governor

**Kristi Noem**



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

## Empowering Families – Prioritizing Students

You've heard me talk a lot over the years about helping foster families so that we can build stronger families across our state. In situations where parents aren't able to take care of their kids, foster families step up to fill the void. Unfortunately, foster kids have to face difficult, traumatic, and disruptive events that frequently hinder them from experiencing healthy development – and that includes their development in the classroom. Foster children too often get left behind academically.

This session, I worked with legislators to propose the Stronger Families Scholarship. This legislation would have dedicated \$15 million to provide additional education opportunities for kids in foster care.

The Stronger Families Scholarship would have equipped these children with more resources like tutoring, online learning programs, private school tuition, standardized achievement tests, transportation expenses, and technology. These are the kind of resources that help create an environment where children can learn, and where they can develop positive relationships with adults and reach their full potential as students.

This week, the Senate Education Committee killed that bill. In doing so, they left foster children behind once again. I am extremely disappointed in that decision. It is even more disheartening to know that their decision to kill this bill resulted from a flurry of lies.

Lobbyists with the teachers' union and other establishment organizations killed the bill by lying about what it did.

They claimed that public schools already accept all students – the fact is that public schools do deny education to students on "individual education plans," or IEPs, in certain circumstances. They also claimed that private schools don't accept kids on these plans, but a foster parent who testified in support of the bill has three children with IEPs who all attend private school right now.

They also falsely claimed the bill is unconstitutional, saying that state funds cannot go to private religious schools. To the contrary, that is perfectly constitutional. In fact, the U.S. Supreme Court has decided three times that states are allowed to provide funds to private schools, including those with religious affiliation. These lobbyists were arguing for religious discrimination, which would violate the First Amendment.

The lobbyists lied that funding will be taken from public schools – that's false. In fact, most of the dollars would have helped children in public schools. They argued that \$4,000 is too much – but they also said it's not enough. They said whatever they needed to confuse legislators and get them to vote no. In doing so, they did not help kids. They only hurt the foster children that this scholarship would benefit.

The most concerning claim was that this scholarship will create more confusion for foster parents. I have complete confidence that foster parents are smart enough to access these benefits for the kids in their care. It's very simple: they only need to call the Department of Education.

Parents care about their kids' futures, and education is a huge part of that. Americans across the country are realizing that parents need more options and more say over their kids' education. More than 70% of American parents support more options for their kids' schooling. They support more Freedom in education.

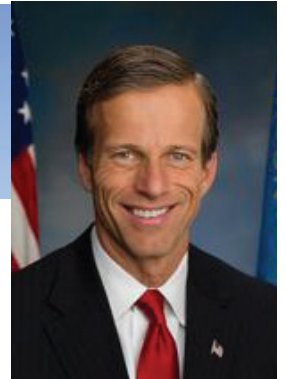
States across America are implementing initiatives to expand educational Freedom. Arizona is offering scholarship dollars to 1.1 million K-12 students that can be applied to any education service that best fits their individual needs. Tennessee started a scholarship to give low-income families a choice in where their kids go to school. Florida is making their flexible scholarship program a top priority, and Iowa has already passed their scholarship legislation. Arkansas just announced universal educational freedom options for every family in the state.

South Dakota is falling behind these other states, but more importantly, we are leaving South Dakota kids behind.

We are blessed to have fantastic public and private schools here in South Dakota, and parents should be able to choose the best option for their kids' individual needs. It's simple – every parent deserves to have a say in their child's education.

I hope that our state legislators will seize the opportunity to expand options for parents and their kids. We must show South Dakota families that we care about them, that we care about their children's futures, and that we care about strengthening families across South Dakota.

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



## We Need a New Approach in Washington

Our country continues to face serious challenges. Inflation is straining family budgets, especially at the grocery store. The prices for electricity, gas, and home heating have increased. Record numbers of illegal immigrants have come across the southern border. Lax law enforcement has caused crime to spike in cities. And rogue nations like Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea have been emboldened to test America's resolve. But if you listened to the president's State of the Union address, you wouldn't have heard much, if anything, about these crises.

Over the past two years, Democrats have pushed through more than \$4 trillion in new spending. The \$1.9 trillion spending spree they passed in March 2021 helped create our current inflation crisis, which is costing South Dakota families nearly \$750 a month. And the hundreds of billions of dollars Democrats have passed in tax hikes will further increase prices, especially on utility bills. Democrats' spending has also contributed significantly to our rising national debt, yet what I heard from the president was proposals for even more spending, more taxes, more government, and more dodging Republicans' good faith efforts to rein in out-of-control spending.

The president's speech was also strikingly light on a vision for our national defense, despite China's recent blatant violation of U.S. airspace and continued trouble abroad, including Russia's war in Ukraine and North Korea's recent unveiling of an alarming number of ballistic missiles. And despite record numbers of illegal border crossings over the past two years, the president, during one of the longest addresses to Congress in American history, spent just one minute talking about our nation's border crisis. He made no mention at all – not a single word – of the rise in violent crime we're seeing in cities across the nation.

Throughout his speech, the president seemed to want to have it both ways. He wants to bring down inflation, but increase the spending that causes it. He celebrates American innovation, but wants to raise taxes and impose price controls. He wants to be tough on China, but lets the Chinese Communist Party get away with increasingly brazen actions. But he can't have it both ways. We can't spend our way out of inflation. We certainly can't bury businesses in taxes and then expect them to lead the way in innovation.

Republicans have solutions that can actually help bring down inflation, strengthen our economy, unleash the power of American innovators, and improve our nation's security at home and abroad. We want to rein in spending to get inflation under control, unleash American energy production to bring down energy costs, and ensure our military, border patrol, and law enforcement have the resources and support they need to keep Americans safe. Any bipartisan work we do needs to move away from the failed policies of the last two years, and I hope the president will work with us to find consensus.

Forty years ago, another American president addressed Congress at a time when our nation was facing serious challenges. President Reagan worked to build consensus with Democrats and made real progress on solving the problems that our nation was facing. I believe this bipartisan approach can work again now. The president just has to be willing to pursue it.

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CONGRESSMAN

**DUSTY JOHNSON**

Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



## Safety or Surveillance?

We learned this week that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) lied to America and the rest of the international community about the route and purpose of their balloon. The House voted yesterday to criticize their actions. I can't say that I am surprised by the lie—in reality, the balloon is just one incident of surveillance that likely didn't gain them much more data. The CCP has been surveilling us for much longer than two weeks, and by many standards, much closer to the ground than a balloon—close enough that they're in your pocket.

It's a much more subtle threat—TikTok—and millions of Americans have it downloaded on their cellphone alongside their most personal information. A spy balloon, viewable by most of America, is an easy physical object to call out for surveillance, but TikTok may pose a much more real and present threat to Americans.

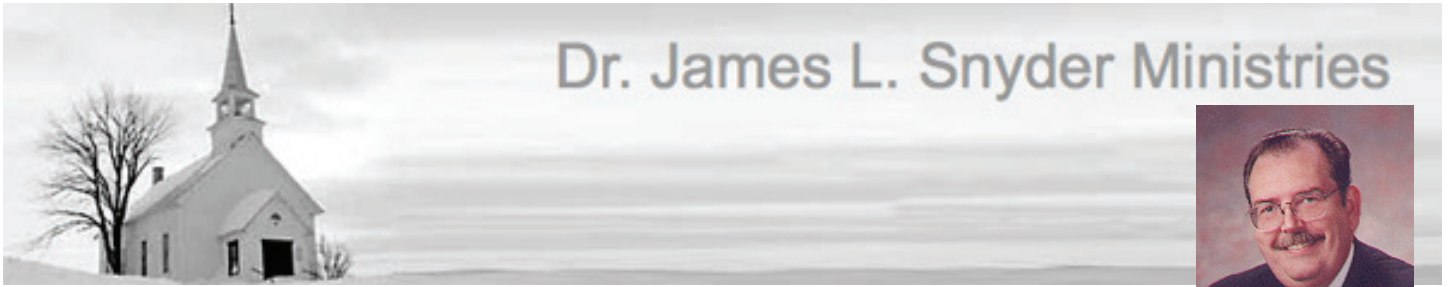
TikTok gathers personal and private data on your life—your face ID, voice recognition, passwords, text messages, Google searches. You name it, the CCP probably has access to it. More than that, the content the CCP promotes on TikTok user devices in China is vastly different than the content promoted on American user devices. An article from Forbes details the educational videos seen on China-based accounts and the videos promoted for American users stirring up divisive political views or encouraging violence, theft, and self-harm. After months of pushing my Block the Tok bill to my colleagues, Congress understood the threat TikTok poses to national security and banned TikTok on federal devices. This is a step in the right direction, but far from the end goal.

China has been surveilling and collecting data on America and other countries for decades. Their government doesn't honor personal freedoms or the right to privacy. We know they are always watching, and even though the spy balloon last week was a very overt surveillance technique, we need to remain vigilant in addressing the threats the CCP poses and combatting their influence over American citizens, supply chains, and our government.

That's why the Select Committee on China is so important. This week, we had our first official meeting—great timing to start laying out our priorities and plans for this Congress, addressing the 360-degree threat the CCP poses. I am honored I get to work with the Select Committee to keep America safe.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



## Another Celebration In The Bank

This month The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I celebrate the 52nd anniversary of our engagement. In August, it'll be the 52nd anniversary of our wedding.

I can't believe we have been together for 52 years. But, alas, here it is.

I first met her in September of 1970 when I went to Bible college. Knowing that God was calling me to be a pastor, I understood that I would need a wife to help me in this ministry.

Not being woman-wise, and no dating experience: I thought a date was simply a dried-up prune.

Not knowing what to do, I simply put it in God's hands. Before I went to this Bible college, my prayer was, "Heavenly Father, make the first young lady I meet when I go to school be the wife you have chosen for me."

It sounds ridiculous, but not being woman-wise, it was my best choice.

My parents took me up to New York, where the college was, as we drove into the men's dorm driveway a young lady was coming out. This young lady had her hair rolled up in tomato cans which was rather usual at that time.

When I saw her walk out, I quickly prayed, "Not yet, Father. My feet have not touched the ground."

I think God was chuckling. For some reason, I was never able to get away from her because it was a very small college, and everybody knew everybody.

Not being woman-wise, I did not know how to conduct myself in such a situation.

In December, we were on some date, and she happened to say, or so I thought she happened to say it, "Wouldn't it be nice to get married?"

Again, my not being woman-wise did not allow me to understand what was going on. I simply replied to her, "I think it would be great to get married."

Foolish me, I thought that was the end of the conversation.

The next day in school, as I walked down the hallway, everybody looked at me, smiled, and said, "Congratulations." So I smiled back and thanked them.

I had no idea what I was being congratulated on, I thought perhaps I finally passed a test in school.

After a while, I stopped somebody congratulating me and asked what he was congratulating me for.

Laughing, he said, "Oh, you silly boy. I'm congratulating you on your upcoming wedding." Then he walked away.

I stood in the hallway for a moment, trying to process what he had just told me.

What wedding was he talking about? Who did they think I was marrying?

Later that afternoon, I met her in the cafeteria, she looked at me, smiled, and said, "I've told everybody, and everybody is happy for us. Isn't it wonderful?"

I then realized I was the last one in the college that knew I was getting married.

God was the first one to know whom I was going to marry, and I was the last one to know. That is chapter 1 in woman-wise psychology.

Although it's been 52 years, I still have not progressed to chapter 2.

Perhaps chapter 2 would begin with, "Do you want to be right or happy?"

I am here to tell you that during those 52 years, I have been happy.

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According to tradition back then, the next step was to get permission from her father to marry his daughter. So you understand I was rather nervous along this line because I had never met her father or mother.

Before the engagement, we traveled back to visit her family. It was then that I met her father.

I took him aside and said, "Sir, I would like to ask your permission for your daughter's hand in marriage."

He looked at me with a rather strange look and said, "No."

At this point, my flabber just got gasted, and I didn't know what to say.

He looked at me strangely and said, "Young man, you take my entire daughter or none of her. Not just her hand."

At this point, I realized I was also not father-in-law-wise. That was well beyond my pay scale. My heart sank, and I did not know the next step.

Looking at me, her father finally broke down laughing. I had no idea what he was laughing about.

"Of course, you can have my daughter's hand in marriage as long as you take the rest of her."

I tried to laugh as best I could but had no idea what was happening in the world. If this is what I was marrying into, it will be a long voyage.

As we were driving back to school, the future Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage looked at me and said, "Well, what do you think of my family?"

I just smiled back at her and she said, "Welcome to my family."

I smiled and thought about my favorite life verse from the Bible.

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

This verse has guided me throughout my entire life, especially in the area of marriage. Either I can lean on my own understanding, or, I can trust in the Lord with all my heart. If I'm going to go down the right path only God can lead me.

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## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Did the Tiger King documentary of 2020 have any impact on the business of illegal wildlife trafficking?  
-- Susan W., Raleigh, NC

Netflix's Tiger King special was as informative as it was sensational, showcasing not only the wild nature of its main star, the Tiger King himself, Joe Exotic (Joseph Maldonado-Passage), but also the harm caused to big cats trapped within the exotic animal industry. On more than one occasion, the outlandish documentary highlights how terribly these animals were treated, all in the name of fame and fortune.

Thankfully, the special brought more to the table than just views, notoriety and cash. Since Tiger King first aired on March 20, 2020, a number of justices have been served.

First and foremost, Joe Exotic's GW Zoo has been shut down, he has been charged and convicted on 17 counts of animal abuse, including the killing of five healthy tigers (as well as attempted murder for hire). As a result of his crimes, he will be serving 22 years in prison. Not only that, all the tigers that were kept in his captivity were eventually removed, and are now safely kept in a sanctuary in Colorado.

Secondly, President Joe Biden has gotten involved in the fight for big cats, a fight that was arguably championed by none other than Carol Baskin (an early supporter of the bill), the infamous star of the Tiger King special, and a rival of Joe Exotic. On December 20 of last year, Biden signed into law HR.263, otherwise known as the "Big Cat Public Safety Act." According to the new law, private citizens may no longer breed, purchase or transport big cats; if they already own any, they must have them registered. The bill also restricts public contact with lions, tigers, cougars, leopards, snow leopards and jaguars, effectively ending the private ownership and exploitation of big cats in the US.

Thirdly, as much as the show focused on Joe Exotic, there was another character, Doc Antle, who was arguably guilty of many similar exploitations of big cats. In fact, during June of 2022, Antle, among others, was charged with both wildlife trafficking and money laundering, and will be facing a maximum of five years in prison for the wildlife charges, and 20 years for the money laundering charges.

Another, less obvious positive consequence of the Tiger King special is that the illegal wildlife industry is now under increased public scrutiny. The special itself was viewed by some 64 million households after a month and a half, drawing 5.3 billion minutes of view-time within the first week of its release. With these kinds of numbers, the exploitation of wild animals will be taken more seriously in the future.

If you're looking to help big cats yourself, there are a number of conservation initiatives that focus on rehabilitating big-cat locales. For example, Save the Tiger Fund and Panthera are collaborating to increase tiger populations in specific locations by 50 percent over a 10-year period. They are looking for donations from those who are interested in helping out.



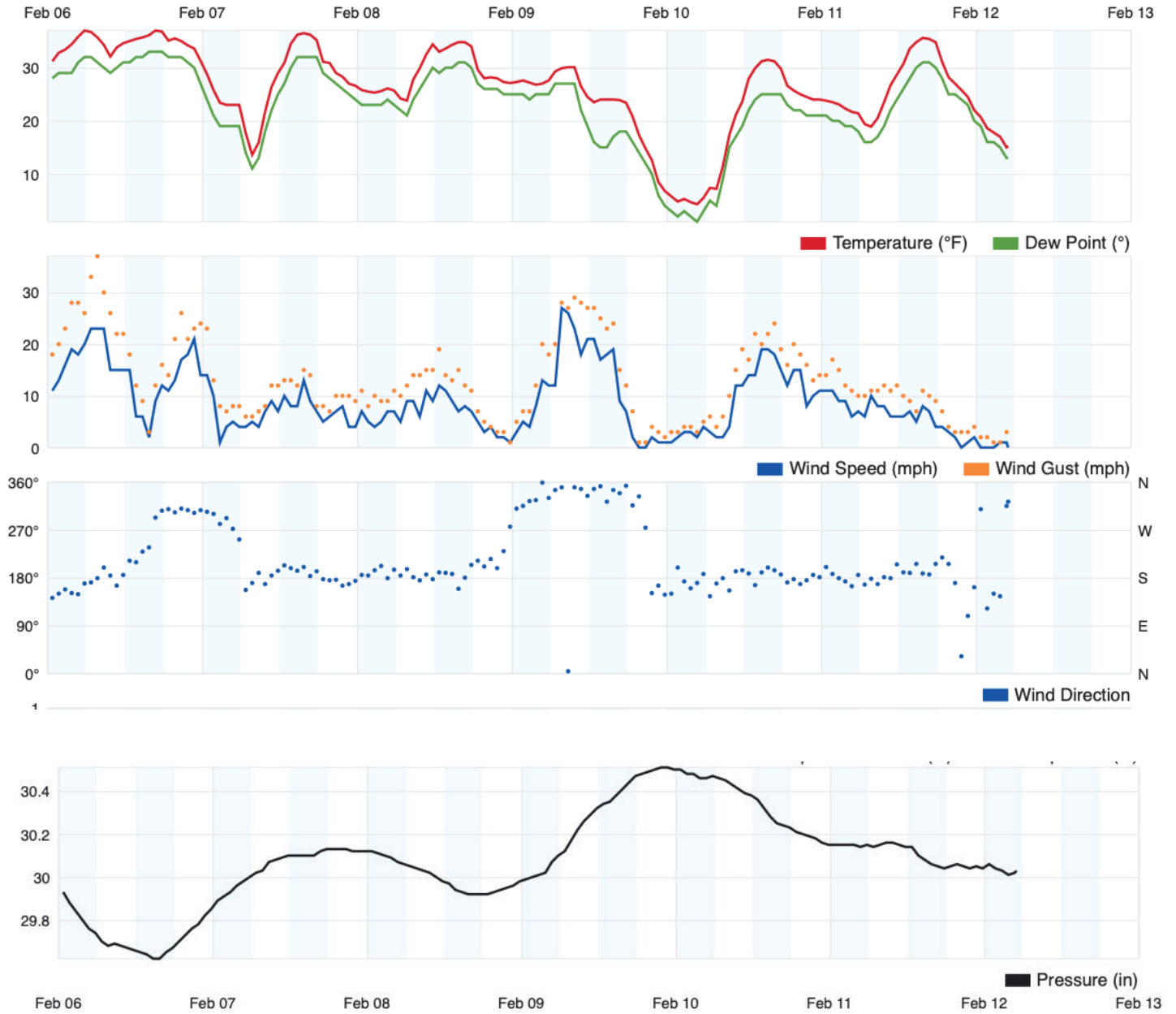
**Since Tiger King first aired in March of 2020, a number of animal rights and wildlife trafficking justices have been served. Credit: Ellie Burgin, pexels.com.**



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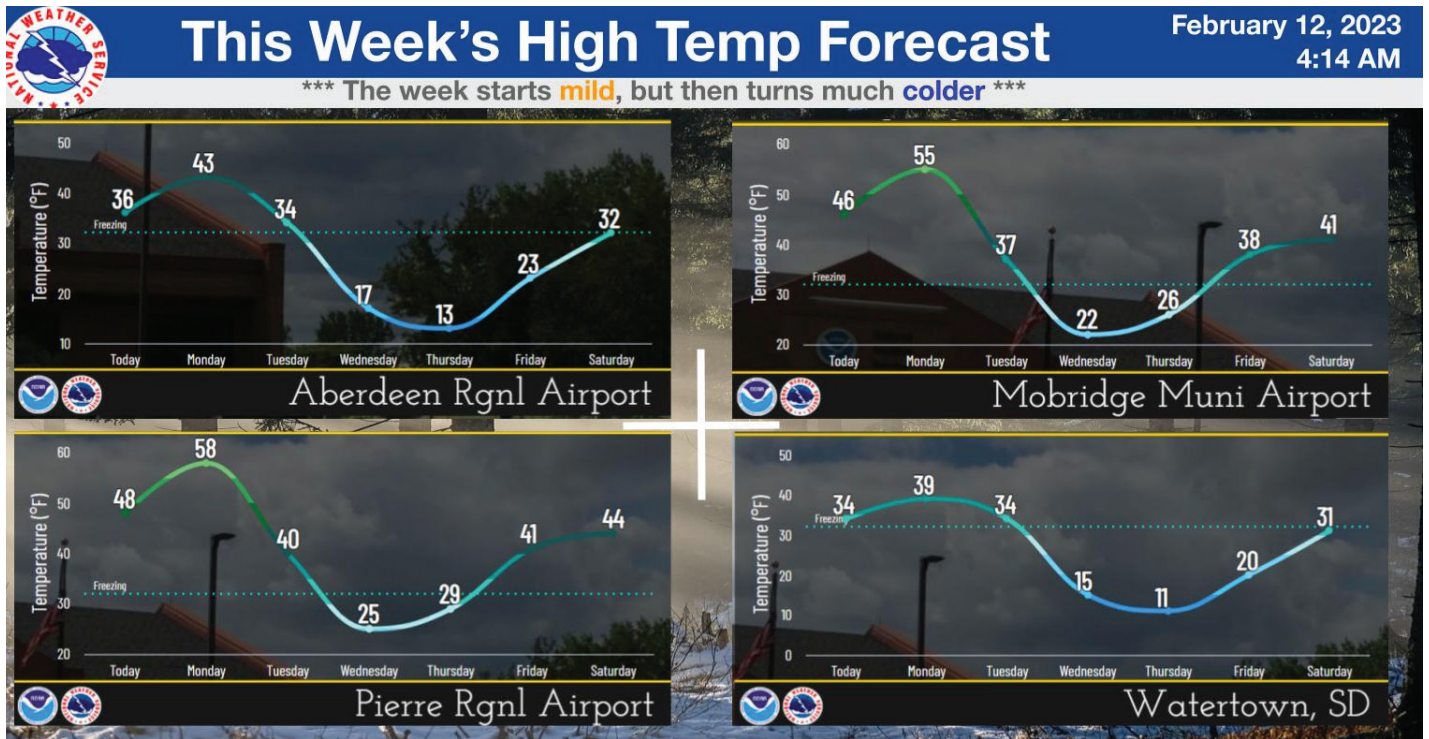
## Past Week's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
Patchy Dense Fog then Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Increasing Clouds	20% → 50% Chance Wintry Mix and Breezy	60% Snow Likely and Patchy Blowing Snow	20% Blustery. Slight Chance Snow then Mostly Cloudy
High: 36 °F	Low: 15 °F	High: 42 °F	Low: 23 °F	High: 35 °F	Low: 12 °F	High: 19 °F



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

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

The week begins mild, but then turns much colder. #sdwx #mnwx

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## Timing Out The Precipitation Chances

February 11, 2023  
2:27 PM

### Probability of Precipitation Forecast

	2/13 Mon								2/14 Tue								2/15 Wed								2/16 Thu								
	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	
Aberdeen	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	28	28	51	51	59	59	48	48	39	39	25	25	11	11	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	
Britton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	34	34	59	59	69	69	56	56	43	43	29	29	14	14	4	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	
Eagle Butte								1	1	1	1	5	5	17	17	41	41	40	40	24	24	11	11	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eureka	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	17	17	39	39	54	54	42	42	34	34	18	18	5	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Gettysburg								1	1	2	2	15	15	31	31	47	47	40	40	33	33	18	18	7	7	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kennebec								1	1	2	2	16	16	26	26	34	34	31	31	34	34	28	28	13	13	4	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
McIntosh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	9	9	22	22	48	48	41	41	20	20	7	7	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Milbank	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	35	35	66	66	70	70	48	48	43	43	36	36	23	23	9	9	5	5	3	3	1	1	
Miller								1	1	4	4	23	23	41	41	51	51	42	42	37	37	29	29	16	16	5	5	2	2	1	1	0	0
Mobridge								1	1	1	1	11	11	28	28	47	47	42	42	28	28	12	12	4	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Murdo								1	1	1	1	9	9	18	18	38	38	38	38	34	34	23	23	11	11	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0
Pierre								1	1	1	1	10	10	23	23	37	37	37	37	30	30	19	19	8	8	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0
Redfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	26	26	47	47	56	56	43	43	36	36	26	26	15	15	5	5	2	2	1	1	0	0	
Sisseton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	35	35	63	63	72	72	58	58	45	45	34	34	19	19	7	7	3	3	1	1	0	0	
Watertown									2	2	32	32	59	59	67	67	42	42	35	35	27	27	25	25	9	9	4	4	2	2	0	0	
Webster	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	34	34	57	57	68	68	51	51	40	40	28	28	19	19	6	6	3	3	1	1	0	0	
Wheaton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	31	31	64	64	74	74	61	61	45	45	36	36	20	20	7	7	4	4	2	2	0	0	



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD



## Blustery Winds Tuesday Night Into Wednesday

February 11, 2023  
2:27 PM

### Maximum Wind Gust Forecast

	2/11 Sat		2/12 Sun				2/13 Mon				2/14 Tue				2/15 Wed				2/16 Thu				2/17 Fri				2/18 Sat												
	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm		
Aberdeen	7	7	9	16	14	13	17	22	26	26	22	18	28	35	36	33	32	29	28	28	22	16	18	22	22	18	17	17	14										
Britton	9	6	10	17	17	16	22	29	33	33	25	17	25	32	33	33	32	30	28	28	24	17	20	24	24	21	18	17	15										
Eagle Butte	15	14	17	25	17	18	17	21	15	14	20	30	33	36	36	35	32	26	23	24	20	15	23	28	22	17	16	17	15										
Eureka	9	8	12	21	14	10	17	20	15	14	16	23	31	37	37	35	32	28	23	23	20	14	18	25	21	18	16	16	14										
Gettysburg	12	12	14	20	15	14	17	21	22	22	21	23	30	36	36	36	33	29	26	26	20	16	21	25	22	20	16	17	15										
Kennebec	7	13	12	15	14	14	16	20	29	26	23	20	28	32	33	33	32	30	29	29	22	15	18	24	20	17	17	17	15										
McIntosh	10	12	18	25	15	17	20	21	12	9	22	31	33	36	35	33	29	23	18	21	17	15	23	29	23	18	16	17	15										
Milbank	9	9	7	14	20	18	16	23	36	37	33	18	20	28	32	33	33	33	33	33	31	25	18	24	25	25	20	17	15										
Miller	7	10	10	15	14	14	17	23	31	32	28	21	24	30	33	33	31	30	28	26	23	16	20	22	21	20	17	17	15										
Mobridge	10	8	12	21	13	10	14	17	14	14	16	24	32	36	35	33	31	26	21	22	16	13	18	24	22	16	15	16	14										
Murdo	13	12	12	20	16	18	20	24	32	31	24	24	29	32	33	33	32	29	26	25	21	16	21	24	20	16	17	15											
Pierre	7	8	10	17	13	12	14	17	18	17	17	22	29	33	33	33	32	26	24	24	18	14	18	23	20	16	15	16	14										
Redfield	6	7	7	10	12	12	15	21	24	30	29	20	24	31	33	33	32	30	28	28	23	16	17	21	21	17	17	17	14										
Sisseton	10	10	9	20	25	24	17	26	33	35	28	18	23	31	35	35	33	32	32	32	30	23	18	25	26	25	21	18	15										
Watertown	7	6	6	13	14	14	15	26	35	40	36	23	18	28	32	33	33	32	33	33	29	23	18	25	26	24	18	18	15										
Webster	6	6	7	16	18	17	20	31	38	40	39	24	23	32	35	36	35	32	31	31	29	22	20	26	28	25	20	20	15										
Wheaton	6	8	7	12	15	16	13	17	18	22	22	18	20	28	32	33	32	32	32	32	30	23	17	20	21	21	16	16	14										

Highest Potential For Reduced Visibility From Falling And Blowing Snow



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 36 °F at 3:06 PM

Low Temp: 19 °F at 7:21 AM

Wind: 17 mph at 1:14 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 10 hours, 19 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 62 in 1921

Record Low: -36 in 1905

Average High: 28

Average Low: 5

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.24

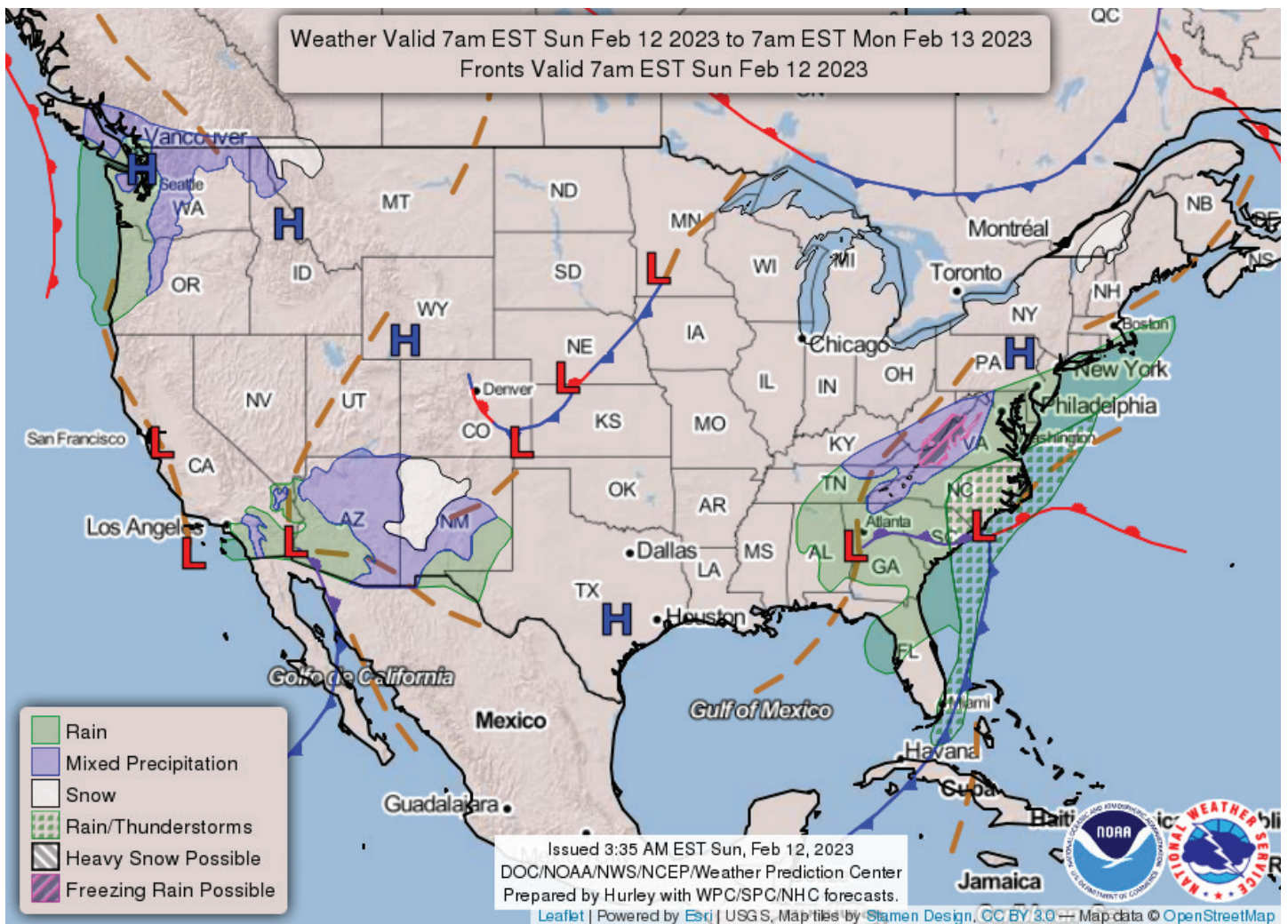
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.79

Precip Year to Date: 0.25

Sunset Tonight: 5:56:22 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:35:18 AM



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## Today in Weather History

February 12, 1905: On this date in weather history, record low temperatures occurred across northeast South Dakota and west-central Minnesota, with lows in the 30s below zero. Sisseton, Aberdeen, and Watertown all had record lows. Sisseton fell to 31 degrees below zero, Watertown saw 35 degrees below zero, and Aberdeen dropped to 36 degrees below zero in 1905. In central South Dakota, Kennebec fell to 34 degrees below zero.

1784: Ice floes were spotted in the Gulf of Mexico after passing out the Mississippi River in February 1784. Ice blocked the river in New Orleans, Louisiana. The ice in New Orleans is one of two times that this occurred during the Great Arctic Outbreak of 1899. The eruption of Laki in Iceland from June 8, 1783, through February 7, 1784, is the likely cause for the severe winter of 1783 - 1784.

1899: The bitter cold outbreak of February 1899 continued across the southern Plains, Texas, and the Deep South. The mercury dipped to 8 degrees below zero at Fort Worth, Texas, and 22 degrees below zero at Kansas City, Missouri. Nebraska's temperature at Camp Clarke plunged to 47 degrees below zero to establish a state record. The all-time record low for Oklahoma City was set when the temperature fell to a frigid 17 degrees below zero, breaking the previous record low of 12 below zero, set on the previous day. Washington D.C. hit 15 degrees below zero, while Charleston, SC, received a record four inches of snow. Snow was also reported in Fort Myers, Tampa, and Tallahassee in Florida.

1958: Snow blanketed northern Florida, with Tallahassee reporting a record 2.8 inches. A ship in the Gulf of Mexico, 25 miles south of Fort Morgan, Alabama, reported zero visibility in heavy snow on the afternoon of the 12th.

1960 - A snowstorm in the Deep South produced more than a foot of snow in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A storm in the eastern U.S. produced high winds from North Carolina to Maine. A storm in the western U.S. produced up to thirty inches of snow in the Sierra Nevada Range of California. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A classic "nor'easter" formed off the Carolina coast and intensified as it moved up the Atlantic coast bringing heavy snow to the northeastern U.S. Totals ranged up to 26 inches at Camden NY and Chester MA. Arctic cold gripped the north central U.S. Duluth MN was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 32 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Unseasonably mild weather prevailed across Alaska. Morning lows of 29 degrees at Anchorage and 31 degrees at Fairbanks were actually warmer than those in northern Florida. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Strong southerly winds ahead of an arctic cold front pushed temperatures into the 70s as far north as Iowa and Nebraska. Twenty-one cities in the central U.S., seven in Iowa, reported record high temperatures for the date. Lincoln NE reported a record high of 73 degrees, and the afternoon high of 59 degrees at Minneapolis MN smashed their previous record for the date by twelve degrees. Springfield IL reported a record forty-eight consecutive days with above normal temperatures. (The National Weather Summary)

2006 - An intense snow squall off of Lake Michigan cuts visibility to zero along a section of US 31. The resulting whiteout causes 96 cars to pile up. 25 were injured.

2017: There was an imminent failure of the auxiliary spillway on the Oroville Dam in California.

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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### FAITHFUL MEANS CONSISTENT

Imagine what it would be like to go to bed at night and wonder if the sun would be there to greet us in the morning. Or, to fear that the sun would stand still and scorch the earth because the universe lost its way. Or, to see a drought begin and worry that the rain will never come again.

We live in an orderly, predictable universe. It's the way God created and planned it to be. It is, simply stated, a picture of a God who is faithful, dependable, reliable and trustworthy. Who He was yesterday He will be today and when the sun sets this evening, it will not go into hiding. It will rise again tomorrow because of the enduring faithfulness of a sovereign God.

Faithfulness is important because it gives us the assurance of stability and structure. It creates trust and the possibility of planning. Though we may not desire some of the "contents" that come with predictability, at least we can prepare for them.

God's covenant with the children of Israel gave them the assurance of His faithfulness. Other gods were created by men but our God is the One who created man. He promised to guide, guard and grant us mercy, grace and salvation because of His great love for His creation.

"Wisdom" speaks of this God, to be sure. But, to be faithful to Him in all things and pass this wisdom on to children as mothers and mentors is something our God ordained to be an important priority in Christian homes. "She speaks with God's wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue." There is little doubt in God's mind: Mothers matter!

Prayer: Father, we pray for Your strength and dignity to fill all who are called by You to be mothers and mentors. Lead them by Your Spirit to be God-centered. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: She speaks with God's wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue. Proverbs 31:26



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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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.10.23

20 29 30 52 58 19

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$67,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.11.23

2 3 24 28 46 9

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$35,870,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.11.23

1 12 13 36 48 6

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 1 Mins 55 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.11.23

12 14 18 23 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$51,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.11.23

45 48 54 60 63 2

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

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.11.23

10 23 30 54 65 11

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$45,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

## Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Baltic 56, Menno 45

Centerville 71, McCook Central/Montrose 59

Clark/Willow Lake 40, Flandreau 29

Crazy Horse 78, Flandreau Indian 52

Custer 71, Wall 36

DeSmet 69, Deuel 53

Douglas 82, Lead-Deadwood 44

Edgemont 68, Kadoka Area 18

Elkton-Lake Benton 61, Garretson 48

Freeman 57, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 22

Freeman Academy/Marion 64, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 32

Gregory 56, Bridgewater-Emery 50

Hamlin 48, Aberdeen Christian 43

Hanson 58, Platte-Geddes 45

Harrisburg 67, Rapid City Stevens 43

Howard 67, Waubay/Summit 52

Ipswich 62, Langford 34

Lemmon 50, New Underwood 40

Leola/Frederick 64, Webster 43

Lower Brule 62, White River 54

Madison 71, Canton 63

McIntosh 90, Takini 75

Milbank 67, Tri-Valley 44

Miller 90, Todd County 61

Mobridge-Pollock 58, Groton Area 41

Newell 65, Tiospaye Topa 61

Parkston 59, Canistota 49

Pine Ridge 71, Kimball/White Lake 54

Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 49, Scotland 46

Santee, Neb. 89, Lyman 86

Sioux Valley 84, Parker 34

St. Francis Indian 65, Dupree 50

St. Thomas More 68, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 57

Sturgis Brown 62, Belle Fourche 37

Sunshine Bible Academy 54, Sioux Falls Lutheran 52

Viborg-Hurley 69, Philip 55

Wessington Springs 58, Hitchcock-Tulare 39

Wolsey-Wessington 51, Irene-Wakonda 44

Yankton 74, Rapid City Central 53

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Alcester-Hudson 39, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 37

Brandon Valley 59, Sioux Falls Lincoln 50

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Canton 68, Madison 41  
Corsica/Stickney 60, Burke 37  
DeSmet 58, Deuel 34  
Deubrook 77, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 38  
Flandreau 59, Clark/Willow Lake 34  
Florence/Henry 51, Belle Fourche 47  
Gayville-Volin 58, Colome 29  
Harrisburg 55, Rapid City Stevens 40  
Marty Indian 58, Freeman Academy/Marion 42  
Mobridge-Pollock 53, Groton Area 44  
Newell 69, Tiospaye Topa 47  
Platte-Geddes 47, Baltic 41  
Rapid City Central 73, Yankton 35  
Sioux Valley 60, Parker 33  
Webster 59, Leola/Frederick 48

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

## South Dakota State fends off South Dakota 72-67

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Matt Dentlinger scored 20 points, Zeke Mayo added 19 and South Dakota State defeated South Dakota 72-67 on Saturday night.

Dentlinger shot 6 of 8 from the field and 8 for 10 from the free-throw line for the Jackrabbits (15-11, 10-4 Summit League). Mayo shot 8 for 21, including 3 for 12 from beyond the arc. Alex Arians had 13 points.

A.J. Plitzuweit finished with 18 points and four assists to pace the Coyotes (11-15, 6-8). Kruz Perrott-Hunt added 15 points and Tasos Kamateros scored 13.

NEXT UP

Both teams next play Thursday. South Dakota State visits Denver and South Dakota visits Omaha.

## Russia continues to shell Ukraine amid grinding push in east

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian forces over the weekend continued to shell Ukrainian cities amid a grinding push to seize more land in the east of the country, with Ukrainian officials saying that Moscow is having trouble launching its much-anticipated large-scale offensive there.

One person was killed and one more was wounded on Sunday morning by the shelling of Nikopol, a city in the southeastern Dnipropetrovsk region, Gov. Serhii Lysak reported. The shelling damaged four residential buildings, a vocational school and a water treatment facility.

In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, one person was wounded after three Russian S-300 missiles hit infrastructure facilities overnight, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said.

Ukrainian forces also downed five drones — four Shahed killer drones and one Orlan-10 reconnaissance drone — over the partially occupied Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions on Saturday evening, Kyiv's military reported.

The attacks come as Russian forces push to take over more land in the eastern industrial heartland of Donbas, comprised of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Ukrainian and Western officials have warned that Russia could launch a new, broad offensive there to try to turn the tide of the conflict as the war approaches the one-year mark.

But Ukrainian officials say that Moscow is having trouble mounting such an offensive.

"They are having big problems with a big offensive," Oleksiy Danilov, the secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, told Ukrainian television on Saturday night.

"They have begun their offensive, they're just not saying they have, and our troops are repelling it very

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powerfully. The offensive that they planned is already gradually underway. But (it is) not the offensive they were counting on," Danilov said.

A U.S.-based think tank noted that it is also Russia's pro-Kremlin military bloggers who question Moscow's ability to launch a broad offensive in Ukraine. They "continue to appear demoralized at the Kremlin's prospects for executing a major offensive," the Institute for the Study of War said in its latest report.

Earlier this week the owner of the Russian Wagner Group private military contractor actively involved in the fighting in Ukraine said that the war could drag on for years.

Yevgeny Prigozhin said in a video interview released late Friday that it could take 18 months to two years for Russia to fully secure control of Donbas. He added that the war could go on for three years if Moscow decides to capture broader territories east of the Dnieper River.

The statement from Prigozhin, a millionaire who has close links to Russian President Vladimir Putin and was dubbed "Putin's chef" for his lucrative Kremlin catering contracts, marked a recognition of the difficulties that the Kremlin has faced in the campaign, which it initially expected to wrap up within weeks when Russian troops invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Russia suffered a series of humiliating setbacks in the fall when the Ukrainian military launched successful counteroffensives to reclaim broad swaths of territory in the east and the south.

On Sunday, Prigozhin said that Wagner fighters have taken over the Krasna Hora settlement north of Bakhmut, a strategic city at the epicenter of the fighting in recent months.

## Turkey arrests building contractors 6 days after quakes

By JUSTIN SPIKE and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ANTAKYA, Turkey (AP) — As rescuers still pulled a lucky few from the rubble six days after a pair of earthquakes devastated southeast Turkey and northern Syria, Turkish officials detained or issued arrest warrants for some 130 people allegedly involved in the construction of buildings that toppled down and crushed their occupants.

The death toll from Monday's quakes stood at 28,191 — with another 80,000-plus injured — as of Sunday morning and was certain to rise as bodies kept emerging.

As despair also bred rage at the agonizingly slow rescue efforts, the focus turned to who was to blame for not better preparing people in the earthquake-prone region that includes an area of Syria that was already suffering from years of civil war.

Even though Turkey has, on paper, construction codes that meet current earthquake-engineering standards, they are too rarely enforced, explaining why thousands of buildings slumped onto their side or pancaked downward onto residents.

Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay said late on Saturday that warrants have been issued for the detention of 131 people suspected to being responsible for collapsed buildings.

Turkey's justice minister has vowed to punish anyone responsible, and prosecutors have begun gathering samples of buildings for evidence on materials used in constructions. The quakes were powerful, but victims, experts and people across Turkey are blaming bad construction for multiplying the devastation.

Authorities at Istanbul Airport on Sunday detained two contractors held responsible for the destruction of several buildings in Adiyaman, the private DHA news agency and other media reported. The pair were reportedly on their way to Georgia.

Two more people were arrested in the province of Gaziantep suspected of having cut down columns to make extra room in a building that collapsed, the state-run Anadolu Agency said.

A day earlier, Turkey's Justice Ministry announced the planned establishment of "Earthquake Crimes Investigation" bureaus. The bureaus would aim to identify contractors and others responsible for building works, gather evidence, instruct experts including architects, geologists and engineers, and check building permits and occupation permits.

A building contractor was detained by authorities on Friday at Istanbul airport before he could board a flight out of the country. He was the contractor of a luxury 12-story building in the historic city of Antakya,

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in Hatay province, the collapse of which left an untold number of dead.

The detentions could help direct public anger toward builders and contractors, deflecting attention away from local and state officials who allowed the apparently sub-standard constructions to go ahead. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government, already burdened by an economic downturn and high inflation, faces parliamentary and presidential elections in May.

Survivors, many of whom lost loved ones, have turned their frustration and anger also at authorities. Rescue crews have been overwhelmed by the widespread damage which has impacted roads and airports, making it even more difficult to race against the clock.

Erdogan acknowledged earlier in the week that the initial response has been hampered by the extensive damage. He said the worst-affected area was 500 kilometers (310 miles) in diameter and was home to 13.5 million people in Turkey. During a tour of quake-damaged cities Saturday, Erdogan said a disaster of this scope was rare, and again referred to it as the "disaster of the century."

Rescuers, including crews from other countries, continued to probe the rubble in hope of finding additional survivors who could yet beat the increasingly long odds. Thermal cameras were used to probe the piles of concrete and metal, while rescuers demanded silence so that they could hear the voices of the trapped.

Two sisters were removed from the wreckage on Sunday in the city of Adiyaman, 153 hours after the quake, according to HaberTurk television, which also broadcast the live rescue of a 6-year-old boy removed from the debris of his home in Adiyaman. The child was wrapped in a space blanket and put into an ambulance. An exhausted rescuer removed his surgical mask and took deep breaths as a group of women could be heard crying in joy.

Turkey's health minister, Fahrettin Koca, posted a video of a young girl in a navy blue jumper who was rescued. "Good news at the 150th hour. Rescued a little while ago by crews. There is always hope!" he tweeted.

The efforts of a team of Italian and Turkish rescuers also paid off when they removed a 35-year-old man from the wreckage in the hard-hit city of Antakya. The man, Mustafa Sarigul, appeared to be unscathed as he was being transported on a stretcher to an ambulance, private NTV television reported.

Overnight, a child was also freed in the town of Nizip, in Gaziantep, state-run Anadolu Agency reported, while a 32-year woman, was rescued from the ruins of a eight-story building in the city of Antakya. The woman, a teacher named Meltem, asked for tea as soon as she emerged, according to NTV.

In Kahramanmaraş, near the epicenter of the first 7.8 quake that struck early Monday morning, efforts were underway to reach a survivor detected by sniffer dogs beneath a now-pancaked seven-story building, NTV reported.

Those found alive, however, remained the rare exception.

A large makeshift graveyard was under construction in Antakya's outskirts on Saturday. Backhoes and bulldozers dug pits in the field as trucks and ambulances loaded with black body bags arrived continuously. The hundreds of graves, spaced no more than 3 feet (a meter) apart, were marked with simple wooden planks set vertically in the ground.

The picture is less clear of the plight across the border in Syria.

The death toll in Syria's northwestern rebel-held region has reached 2,166, according to the rescue worker group the White Helmets. The overall death toll in Syria stood at 3,553 on Saturday, though the 1,387 deaths reported for government-held parts of the country hadn't been updated in days.

## Neutral Austria under pressure to get tougher on Russia

By STEPHANIE LIECHTENSTEIN Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — Austria has come under heavy criticism for granting visas that will allow sanctioned Russian lawmakers to attend a Vienna meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The issue highlights the delicate balancing act the European country has engaged in while trying to maintain its longstanding position of military neutrality during the war in Ukraine. The Austrian government has condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine almost a year ago but also stressed the need to maintain

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diplomatic relations with Moscow.

Austria hosts several U.N. agencies and international organizations such as the OSCE, which was established during the Cold War as a forum for dialogue between East and West. Russia is one of the 57 nations in North America, Europe and Asia that participate in the Vienna-based organization.

Moscow plans to send delegates to the Feb. 23-24 meeting of the OSCE's parliamentary assembly, including 15 Russian lawmakers who are under European Union sanctions. Among them are Deputy Duma Chairman Pyotr Tolstoy and fellow parliament member Leonid Slutsky.

In a letter to Austria's chancellor, foreign minister and other officials, 81 OSCE delegates from 20 countries, including France, Canada, Britain, Poland and Ukraine, called upon the Austrian government to prohibit the participation of the sanctioned Russians.

"It is important to remember that Russian parliamentarians are an integral part of the power system and complicit in the crimes Russia commits every day in Ukraine," read the letter, which was seen by The Associated Press. "They have no place in an institution tasked with promoting sincere dialogue and opposition to the war."

The U.S. delegates to the Parliamentary Assembly were not among the letter's signatories. U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE Michael Carpenter told reporters Friday that the Russian delegates "are not people who deserve to be able to travel to Western countries." However, Carpenter added that it was "up to the Austrian government to determine whether they are going to grant visas or not."

Austrian officials haven't commented on the letter. On Feb. 5, Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg defended Austria's decision to allow the sanctioned Russians to enter the country, arguing it was important to keep channels of communication with Moscow open despite the "brutal Russian attack against Ukraine."

The Austrian Foreign Ministry also insisted that as host to the OSCE headquarters in Vienna, it is legally obliged to grant visas to representatives of participating nations who want to take part in meetings there.

Austria, which became a European Union member in 1995, has criticized Moscow and joined the sanctions the EU imposed against Russia over the invasion of Ukraine. But unlike Finland and Sweden, which decided to abandon their neutral stances in May by applying to join NATO, Austria remains committed to the military neutrality it adopted in 1955.

The Austrian government has sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine but no weapons. Chancellor Karl Nehammer became the first and so far only EU leader to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin face-to-face after the war started. Nehammer traveled to Moscow in April 2022 in a fruitless attempt to persuade the Russian leader to end the invasion.

Support remains strong for Austrian neutrality among the public and political establishment.

"I believe that Austrian neutrality can still play a positive role today," saysid Ralph Janik, an expert in international law and researcher at the Sigmund Freud private university in Vienna. "The alternative would be to join NATO, but every single Austrian politician is very well aware that this is not supported by the majority of the Austrian public."

Austria, which was annexed by Nazi Germany in the run-up to World War II, declared neutrality after the war under pressure from Western allies and the Soviet Union. It sought a role as a mediator between East and West and developed ties with Moscow during and after the Cold War.

In 1968, Austria became the first Western European country to import gas from the Soviet Union, and its dependence on Russian energy increased in the following decades. Before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, 80% of Austria's natural gas came from Russia. It has since reduced the share to just over 20% by turning to Norwegian gas, according to Austria's regulator for electricity and gas.

The Austrian banking system is also closely connected to Russia. Austria's second-largest bank, the Raiffeisenbank International, earned more than half of its profits in 2022 from Russia. The bank has come under intense pressure for continuing its business in Russia despite Moscow's war against Ukraine, and is currently evaluating strategic options, including an exit from Russia.

Vienna is also known to be a playground for spies, including from Russia, due to its lenient espionage laws. Despite its initial reluctance, Austria has expelled eight Russian diplomats who are believed to have

been engaged in spying since the start of the Russian war against Ukraine.

While there are no signs of a shift away from Austrian neutrality, some have called for the policy to be reassessed following the Ukraine war.

Werner Fasslabend, a former Austrian defense minister from the conservative People's Party, is among the few prominent voices arguing in favor of the country renouncing neutrality and joining NATO. With the end of Cold War and Austria's accession to the EU, Austrian neutrality has "lost its function," said Fasslabend, the director of the Austrian Institute for European and Security Policy.

As a NATO member, Austria would "be in a better position to shape European security policy and will gain greater security," he added, admitting that it was unlikely to happen given it would require changing the constitution by a two-thirds majority in the Austrian parliament.

"This majority is not within sight," Fasslabend said.

## Earthquake in Turkey is only the latest tragedy for refugees

By MEHMET GUZEL, FAY ABUELGASIM and TANYA TITOVA Associated Press

ANTAKYA, Turkey (AP) — When war broke out in Ukraine, Aydin Sisman's relatives there fled to the ancient city of Antakya, in a southeastern corner of Turkey that borders Syria.

They may have escaped one disaster, but another found them in their new home.

They were staying with Sisman's Ukrainian mother-in-law when their building collapsed last Monday as a 7.8 magnitude earthquake leveled much of Antakya and ravaged the region in what some in Turkey are calling the disaster of the century.

"We have Ukrainian guests who fled the war, and they are also lying inside. We have had no contact," said Sisman, whose Turkish father-in-law also was trapped under the rubble of the 10-year-old apartment building.

As rescuers dig through heaps of rubble, Sisman appeared to have lost hope.

Millions of refugees, like Sisman's relatives, have found a haven in Turkey, escaping from wars and local conflicts from countries as close as Syria to as far afield as Afghanistan.

There are at least 3.6 million Syrians who have fled their homeland's war since 2011, arriving in trickles or en masse, sometimes overrunning the border, to seek safety from punishing bombardments, chemical attacks and starvation. Over 300,000 others have come to escape their own conflicts and hardships, according to the United Nations.

For them, the earthquake was just the latest tragedy — one that many are still too shocked to comprehend.

"This is the greatest disaster we have seen, and we have seen a lot," said Yehia Sayed Ali, 25, a university student whose family moved to Antakya six years ago to escape Syria's war at its peak.

His mother, two cousins and another relative all died in the earthquake. On Saturday, he sat outside his demolished two-story building waiting for rescuers to help him dig out their bodies.

"Not a single Syrian family has not lost a relative, a dear one" in this earthquake, said Ahmad Abu Shaar, who ran a shelter for Syrian refugees in Antakya that is now a pile of rubble.

Abu Shaar said people are searching for loved ones and many have refused to leave Antakya even though the quake has left the city with no inhabitable structures, no electricity, water or heating. Many are sleeping on the streets or in the shadows of broken buildings.

"The people are still living in shock. No one could have imagined this," Abu Shaar said.

Certainly not Sisman, who flew from Qatar to Turkey with his wife to help find his in-laws and their Ukrainian relatives.

"Right now, my mother-in-law and father-in-law are inside. They're under rubble ... There were no rescue teams. I went up by myself, took a look, and walked around. I saw bodies and we pulled them out from under the rubble. Some without heads," he said.

Construction workers sifting through the debris told Sisman that although the top of the building was solid, the garage and foundations were not as strong.

"When those collapsed, that's when the building was flattened," a shaken Sisman said. He appeared to

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have accepted his relatives were not coming out alive.

Overwhelmed by the trauma, Abdulqader Barakat stood desperately pleading for international aid to help rescue his children trapped under concrete in Antakya.

"There are four. We took two out and two are still (inside) for hours. We hear their voices and they are reacting. We need (rescue) squads," he said.

At the Syrian shelter, Mohammed Aloo sat in a circle surrounded by his children who escaped the building that swayed and finally folded like an accordion.

He came to Antakya in May from a refugee camp along the Turkish-Syrian border. He had survived artillery shelling and fighting in his hometown in Syria's central Hama province, but he called his survival in the earthquake a miracle.

Other relatives were not so lucky. Two nieces and their families remain under the debris, he said, holding back tears.

"I wish this on no one. Nothing I can say that would describe this," Aloo said.

Scenes of despair and mourning can be found across the region that only a few days earlier was a peaceful refuge for those fleeing war and conflict.

At a cemetery in the town of Elbistan, about 200 miles (320 kilometers) north of Antakya, a Syrian family wept and prayed as it buried one of its own. Naziha Al-Ahmad, a mother of four, was pulled dead from the rubble of their new home. Two of her daughters were seriously injured, including one who lost her toes.

"My wife was good, very good. Affectionate, kind, a good wife, God bless her soul," said Ahmad Al-Ahmad. "Neighbours died, and we died with them."

Graves are quickly filling up.

At the Turkish and Syria border, people transferred body bags into a truck waiting to take the remains to Syria for burial in their homeland. They included the body of Khaled Qazqouz's 5-year-old niece, Tasneem Qazqouz.

Tasneem and her father both died when the quake wracked the border town of Kirikhan.

"We took her out from under the destruction, from under the rocks. The whole building fell," Qazqouz said. "We worked for three days to get her out."

Qazqouz signed his niece's name on the body bag before sending her off to the truck heading for Syria. He prayed as he let her go.

"Say hi to your dad and give him my wishes. Say hi to your grandfather and your uncle and everyone," he cried. "Between the destruction and the rubble, we have nothing now. Life has become so difficult."

## New Mexico State players interviewed about alleged hazing

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

The chancellor at New Mexico State says players on the basketball team were interviewed by school personnel Saturday about an alleged hazing incident that led to the program's suspension.

In a letter to the school community, chancellor Dan Arvizu said he was "heartbroken and sickened to hear about these hazing allegations."

"Hazing is a despicable act," he wrote. "It humiliates and degrades someone and has the potential to cause physical and emotional harm, or even death. Sadly, hazing can become part of an organization's culture, if left unchecked."

He said the team, which arrived back in Las Cruces after its game at California Baptist was canceled, would remain under suspension until further notice.

The letter came out a few hours after the school announced it would hold a closed meeting Tuesday night to "discuss limited personnel matters concerning individual employees." It did not name the employees who were to be discussed.

In announcing the virtually unheard-of midseason suspension of a Division I basketball program, the university put coach Greg Heiar and his staff on administrative leave pending an investigation into an alleged violation of university policy.



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"NMSU policy strictly prohibits hazing, in all forms, and it's something we simply will not tolerate," Arvizo wrote in the letter.

A few hours before the letter came out, two Aggies, Shahar Lazar and Kent Olewiler, announced on social media that they were leaving the team.

Neither player had played this season. This was shaping up as a redshirt year for Lazar, a freshman who came to Las Cruces from Israel. Olewiler also took a roundabout path to Las Cruces; he was a preferred walk-on who was not listed on the Aggies official roster

Lazar said he was leaving because, "I don't think the program that I originally committed to aligns with my beliefs and core values."

Olewiler said, simply, "my recruitment is 100% open."

The hazing allegations come nearly three months after the Nov. 19 fatal shooting in Albuquerque of Brandon Travis, a 19-year-old student from rival school, University of New Mexico. Aggies forward Mike Peake was suspended early in December while an outside investigator looked into his involvement in Travis' killing. In the moments before the shooting, Peake suffered a leg injury and was later taken to the hospital by three of his teammates.

Peake has not been charged in the case, which is also under investigation by the district attorney in Albuquerque.

## Trudeau: US fighter shot down object over northern Canada

By JIM MORRIS Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Saturday that on his order a U.S. fighter jet shot down an "unidentified object" that was flying high over the Yukon, acting a day after the U.S. took similar action over Alaska.

North American Aerospace Defense Command, the combined U.S.-Canada organization that provides shared defense of airspace over the two nations, detected the object flying at a high altitude Friday evening over Alaska, U.S. officials said. It crossed into Canadian airspace on Saturday.

Trudeau spoke with President Joe Biden, who also ordered the object to be shot down. Canadian and U.S. jets operating as part of NORAD were scrambled and it was a U.S. jet that shot down the object.

Canadian Defense Minister Anita Anand told a news conference in Ottawa that the object, flying at around 40,000 feet, had been shot down at 3:41 p.m. EST, approximately 100 miles from the Canada-U.S. border in the central Yukon. A recovery operation was underway involving the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP.

Hours later, in the U.S., the Federal Aviation Administration said Saturday night it had closed some airspace in Montana to support Defense Department activities. NORAD later said the closure, which lasted a little more than an hour, came after it had detected "a radar anomaly" and sent fighter aircraft to investigate. The aircraft did not identify any object to correlate to the radar hits, NORAD said.

F-22 fighter jets have now taken out three objects in the airspace above the U.S. and Canada over seven days, a stunning development that is raising questions on just what, exactly, is hovering overhead and who has sent them.

At least one of the objects downed was believed to be a spy balloon from China, but the other two had not yet been publicly identified.

While Trudeau described the object Saturday as "unidentified," Anand said it appeared to be "a small cylindrical object, smaller than the one that was downed off the coast of North Carolina." A NORAD spokesman, Maj. Olivier Gallant, said the military had determined what it was but would not reveal details.

Anand refused to speculate whether the object shot down over Canada came from China.

"We are continuing to do the analysis on the object and we will make sure that analysis is thorough," she said. "It would not be prudent for me to speculate on the origins of the object at this time."

Anand said to her knowledge this was the first time NORAD had downed an object in Canadian airspace.

"The importance of this moment should not be underestimated," she said. "We detected this object

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together and we defeated this object together.”

She was asked why a U.S. jet, and not a Canadian plane, shot the object down.

“As opposed to separating it out by country, I think what the important point is, these were NORAD capabilities, this was a NORAD mission and this was NORAD doing what it is supposed to do,” she said.

Anand didn’t use the word “balloon” to describe the object. But later, Gen. Wayne Eyre, chief of the defense staff, said the instructions given to the planes was “who ever had the first, best shot to take out the balloon had the go-ahead.”

Trudeau said Canadian forces would recover the wreckage for study. The Yukon is westernmost Canadian territory and the among the least populated part of Canada.

After the airspace closure over Montana, multiple members of Congress, including Montana Sens. Steve Daines and Jon Tester, said they were in touch with defense officials. Daines tweeted that he would “continue to demand answers on these invasions of US airspace.”

Just about a day earlier, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said an object roughly the size of a small car was shot out of the skies above remote Alaska. Officials couldn’t say if it contained any surveillance equipment, where it came from or what purpose it had.

Kirby said it was shot down because it was flying at about 40,000 feet (13,000 meters) and posed a “reasonable threat” to the safety of civilian flights, not because of any knowledge that it was engaged in surveillance.

According to U.S. Northern Command, recovery operations continued Saturday on sea ice near Deadhorse, Alaska.

In a statement, the Northern Command said there were no new details on what the object was. It said the Alaska Command and the Alaska National Guard, along with the FBI and local law enforcement, were conducting search and recovery.

“Arctic weather conditions, including wind chill, snow, and limited daylight, are a factor in this operation, and personnel will adjust recovery operations to maintain safety,” the statement said.

On Feb. 4, U.S. officials shot down a large white balloon off the coast of South Carolina.

The balloon was part of a large surveillance program that China has been conducting for “several years,” the Pentagon has said. The U.S. has said Chinese balloons have flown over dozens of countries across five continents in recent years, and it learned more about the balloon program after closely monitoring the one shot down near South Carolina.

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.”

The Navy continued survey and recovery activities on the ocean floor off South Carolina, and the Coast Guard was providing security. Additional debris was pulled out Friday, and additional operations will continue as weather permits, Northern Command said.

## **Brittney Griner attends WM Phoenix Open golf tournament**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) — WNBA star Brittney Griner attended the WM Phoenix Open golf tournament Saturday in her second public appearance since her release from a Russian prison.

Griner was part of a crowd of about 200,000 fans at the tournament, watching the action from the stadium 16th hole.

Last month in her first appearance, the Griner was at the Martin Luther King Jr. march in downtown Phoenix.

Griner is skipping the USA Basketball training camp in Minnesota so she can be with her wife and recover from her time in jail in Russia. She was traded in a dramatic prisoner swap in December.

Griner has said she’ll play for the Phoenix Mercury again this season, although she’s still an unsigned free agent. She hasn’t talked about her international future and potentially playing in the Olympics next year in Paris.

## **Bolsonaro says he may return to Brazil in the coming weeks**

By CARLA BRIDI Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — Former President Jair Bolsonaro said Saturday he intends to return to Brazil “in the following weeks.”

The comment during an event at an evangelical church in Florida was the first time that Bolsonaro has made a statement in public about returning home.

The far-right politician has been in the U.S. since arriving in Orlando, Florida, on Dec. 31, the eve of the inauguration of his leftist rival, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, as Brazil’s current president.

Saturday’s event was held entirely in Portuguese for a Brazilian crowd of Bolsonaro supporters living abroad and was organized by the right-wing organization Yes Brazil USA. Bolsonaro was cheered throughout the event.

There has been speculation during recent weeks on when Bolsonaro might return to Brazil, where is the subject of several investigations into possible wrongdoing.

He initially entered the U.S. on a one-month diplomatic visa, which ended Jan. 31. He was accompanied by a team of presidential advisers and his wife, all of whom left Florida last month.

Lawyers for Bolsonaro told Brazilian media recently that they applied for a tourist visa to extend his stay in the U.S.

Amid the speculation about Bolsonaro’s plans, one of his sons, Sen. Flavio Bolsonaro, told Brazilian reporters that he didn’t know when his father would return. “It could be tomorrow, it could be in six months, he might never return. I don’t know. He’s relaxing,” the son said.

For the first time in his more than three-decade political career as a lawmaker and then as president, Bolsonaro no longer enjoys the special legal protection that requires any trial be held at the Supreme Court.

Bolsonaro is being investigated in four inquiries, which had been in the Supreme Court and were sent to trial court this past week.

Among the inquiries is whether Bolsonaro had any role in inciting the Jan. 8 riot by his supporters who stormed into government buildings in the capital, Brasilia, demanding his election defeat to Lula be overturned.

Investigators are also looking into who organized and financed the mass gathering of Bolsonaro supporters, who came to the capital from all over Brazil.

One of the investigations held by the Brazilian justice is who are the ones responsible for inciting the crimes, as well as who financed people from all over the country to travel to Brasilia.

## **Union: Fired EMTs didn’t get enough info in Nichols response**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — The head of a union representing most of the Memphis Fire Department said three employees who were fired after the death of Tyre Nichols weren’t given enough information as they responded to the call for medical help.

Thomas Malone, president of the Memphis Fire Fighters Association, also wrote in a letter to city councilmembers that information was withheld from those first responders by people on the scene.

Nichols, who is Black, was beaten by Memphis police after he was pulled over Jan. 7 for an alleged traffic violation. However, police Chief Cerelyn “CJ” Davis has said publicly released footage failed to show why Nichols was stopped at all.

The union leader came to the defense of the fire department as a whole, saying its more-than-1,600 employees “serve this city and its citizens with purpose and intent each and every day.”

The Daily Memphian reported on and published a copy of the letter, which says “there is no way any member could be truly prepared for a situation that occurred on January 7, 2023.”

“Our members were not given adequate information upon dispatch or upon arrival of the scene,” Malone wrote. “Quite frankly, there was information withheld by those already on the scene which caused our members to handle things differently than they should have.”

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Three fire department employees were fired after Nichols died. In all, 13 police officers have either been disciplined or are under investigation for their roles in Nichols' death. Six were fired, and five of them are charged with murder. Two Shelby County sheriff's deputies were also suspended.

Two of the former fire department employees, EMT Robert Long and advanced EMT JaMichael Sandridge, had their professional licenses suspended by a state medical board. Lt. Michelle Whitaker was the third employee let go. Her license was not considered for suspension, though state Emergency Medical Services board members commented that more actions could follow.

Memphis city spokeswoman Arlenia Cole told the Daily Memphian that all three former fire department employees have appealed their firings.

Fire Chief Gina Sweat has said the department received a call from police after someone was pepper-sprayed. When the workers arrived at 8:41 p.m., Nichols was handcuffed on the ground and slumped against a squad car, the statement said.

Long and Sandridge, based on the nature of the call and information they were told by police, "failed to conduct an adequate patient assessment of Mr. Nichols," the statement said. Whitaker remained in the vehicle with the driver during the response to Nichols' beating, the department said.

An ambulance was called, and it arrived at 8:55 p.m., the statement said. An emergency unit cared for Nichols and left for a hospital with him at 9:08 p.m., which was 27 minutes after Long, Sandridge and Whitaker arrived, officials said. Nichols died three days later.

An investigation determined that all three violated multiple policies and protocols, the statement said.

"They were reacting to what they saw, what they were told at the scene," Sweat recently told city council members. "Obviously, they did not perform at the level that we expect, or that the citizens of Memphis deserve."

Before suspending the licenses of Long and Sandridge earlier this month, the state EMS board watched 19 minutes of surveillance video that showed the two first responders as they failed to care for Nichols, who couldn't stay seated upright against the side of the vehicle, laying prone on the ground multiple times.

EMS board member Sullivan Smith said it was "obvious to even a lay person" that Nichols "was in terrible distress and needed help."

## Survivors still being found as quake death toll tops 28,000

By JUSTIN SPIKE, ABDELRAHMAN SHAHEEN and ZEYNEP BILGINSOY Associated Press

LATAKIA, Syria (AP) — Ibrahim Zakaria lost track of time drifting into and out of consciousness while trapped for nearly five days in the rubble of his home following the massive earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria this week.

The 23-year-old cellphone shop worker from the Syrian town of Jableh survived on dirty drips of water and eventually lost hope that he'd be saved.

"I said I am dead and it will be impossible for me to live again," Zakaria, who was rescued Friday night, told The Associated Press on Saturday from his bed at a hospital in the coastal city of Latakia where his 60-year-old mother, Duha Nurallah, was also recovering.

Five days after two powerful earthquakes hours apart caused thousands of buildings to collapse, killing more than 28,000 people and leaving millions homeless, rescuers were still pulling unlikely survivors from the ruins — one of them just 7 months old.

Although each rescue elicited hugs and shouts of "Allahu akbar!" — "God is great!" — from the weary men and women working tirelessly in the freezing temperatures to save lives, they were the exception in a region blanketed by grief, desperation and mounting frustration.

More than a dozen survivors were rescued Saturday, including a family in Kahramanmaras, the Turkish city closest to the epicenter of Monday's quake. Crews there helped 12-year-old Nehir Naz Narli to safety before going back for her parents.

In Gaziantep province, which borders Syria, a family of five was rescued from a demolished building in the city of Nurdagi, and a man and his 3-year-old daughter were pulled from debris in the town of Islahiye,

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television network HaberTurk reported. A 7-year-old girl was also rescued in Hatay province.

In Elbistan, a district in Kahramanmaraş province, 20-year-old Melisa Ulku and another person were saved from the rubble 132 hours after the quake struck. Before she was brought to safety, police asked onlookers not to cheer or clap so as not to interfere with nearby rescue efforts.

Turkish TV station NTV reported that a 44-year-old man in Iskenderun, in Hatay province, was rescued 138 hours into his ordeal. Crying rescuers called it a miracle, with one saying they weren't expecting to find anyone alive but as they were digging, they saw his eyes and he said his name. In the same province, NTV also reported that a baby boy named Hamza was found alive in Antakya 140 hours after the quake. Some details of his rescue, including how he survived so long, weren't immediately clear.

Not every attempt ended happily. Zeynep Kahraman, who was brought out of the rubble after a spectacular rescue that took 50 hours, died at a hospital overnight. The ISAR German team who rescued her were shocked and saddened.

"It is important that the family could say goodbye, that they could see each other one more time, that they could hug each other again," a member of the rescue team told German TV news channel n-tv.

The rescues came amid growing frustration over the Turkish government's response to the earthquake, which has killed 24,617 people and injured at least 80,000 people in Turkey alone.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan acknowledged earlier in the week that the initial response was hampered by the extensive damage to roads and other infrastructure that made it difficult to reach some points. He also said the worst-affected area was 500 kilometers (310 miles) in diameter and was home to 13.5 million people in Turkey.

That has meant rescue crews have had to pick and choose how and where to help.

During a tour of quake-damaged cities Saturday, Erdogan said a disaster of this scope was rare and again referred to it as the "disaster of the century."

But the challenges facing aid efforts were of little comfort to those waiting for help.

In Antakya, the capital of Hatay province, scattered rescue crews were still hard at work but many residents had left by Saturday. Among those who stayed were people with family still buried. Many of them had been camping in the streets for days and sleeping in cars.

Acting on a tip, a rescue team from Hong Kong found three survivors under a building near the city's center on Saturday, said Gallant Wong, the group's spokesperson.

But Bulent Cifcikli, a local man, said he has been waiting for days for crews to pull his mother's body from her collapsed home. He said rescuers were working to retrieve her body at one point, but they were called to another location because they suspected there were survivors.

"Six days later, we don't know how many are still under the rubble, and how many are dead or alive," Cifcikli said, blaming a lack of heavy equipment.

Yazi al-Ali, a Syrian refugee who came to Antakya from Reyhanli, has been living in a tent as she waits for crews to find her mother, two sisters, including one who was pregnant, and their families. At one point, she stood over the rubble of the home in Antakya's old city center where she believes her pregnant sister was buried and, in a cracking voice, shouted her sister's name, "Rajha!"

"No one is answering to us, and no one comes to look," she said. "They have stopped us from looking ourselves. I don't know why."

Even though experts say trapped people can live for a week or more, the odds of finding additional survivors are quickly waning. Rescuers were shifting to thermal cameras to help identify life amid the rubble, a sign that any remaining survivors could be too weak to call for help.

As aid continued to arrive Saturday, a 99-member group from the Indian Army's medical assistance team began treating the injured in a temporary field hospital in the southern city of Iskenderun, where a main hospital was demolished.

One man, Sukru Canbulat, was wheeled into the hospital, his left leg badly injured with deep bruising, contusions and lacerations.

Wincing in pain, he said he was rescued from his collapsed apartment building in nearby Antakya within

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hours of the quake. But after receiving basic first aid, he was released without getting proper treatment.

"I buried (everyone that I lost), then I came here," Canbulat said, counting his dead relatives. "My daughter is dead, my sibling died, my aunt and her daughter died, and the wife of her son" who was 8½ months pregnant.

A large makeshift graveyard was under construction in Antakya's outskirts on Saturday. Backhoes and bulldozers dug pits in the field as trucks and ambulances loaded with black body bags arrived continuously. Soldiers directing traffic on the busy adjacent road warned motorists not to take photos.

The hundreds of graves, spaced no more than 3 feet (a meter) apart, were marked with simple wooden planks set vertically in the ground.

A worker with Turkey's Ministry of Religious Affairs who didn't wish to be identified because of orders not to share information with the media said that around 800 bodies were brought to the cemetery Friday, its first day of operation. By midday Saturday, he said, as many as 2,000 had been buried.

The disaster compounded suffering in a region beset by Syria's 12-year civil war, which has displaced millions of people within the country and left them dependent on aid. The fighting sent millions more to seek refuge in Turkey.

The conflict has isolated many areas of Syria and complicated efforts to get aid in. The United Nations said the first earthquake-related aid convoy crossed from Turkey into northwestern Syria on Friday, the day after an aid shipment planned before the disaster arrived. The U.N. refugee agency estimated that as many as 5.3 million people have been left homeless in Syria alone.

The death toll in Syria's northwestern rebel-held region has reached 2,166, according to the rescue worker group the White Helmets. The overall death toll in Syria stood at 3,553 on Saturday, though the 1,387 deaths reported for government-held parts of the country hadn't been updated in days.

## Ukrainians, Junior Bruins celebrate unity arm-in-arm on ice

By JOHN WAWROW AP Hockey Writer

QUEBEC CITY (AP) — The decision to have players from both teams line up arm-in-arm at center ice for the playing of the Ukrainian and United States' national anthems was pre-planned in what stood as a symbol of unity and solidarity.

What no one anticipated was the spontaneous celebration that erupted among the 11- and 12-year-olds following the Ukrainian Selects' 3-1 victory at the International Peewee Hockey tournament on Saturday.

Rather than shuffle off the ice, members of the Boston Junior Bruins happily took part in a victory lap along with the Selects, which ended with the teams gathering again at center ice, where they posed for a picture with one player from each side holding up the ends of a large Ukrainian flag.

"First of all, it's a message that everybody can be friends and should be friends and live in peace and respect each other," Ukraine forward Denys Lupandin said in an answer translated by coach Evgheni Pysarenko. "It doesn't matter from where you are."

The bonds that were made and the electric atmosphere of playing in front of some 18,000 fans in Quebec City's Videotron Centre weren't lost on Boston goalie James Boccuzzi.

"This was definitely a life-changing moment for me," Boccuzzi said. "I've never experienced anything like it."

The moments went far beyond fulfilling the message of peace that tournament organizers hoped to send across the world nearly a year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine began. And it exceeded the vision Pysarenko and Sean Berube had in August, when they began the lengthy process of cobbling together a team of Ukrainian refugees.

"The players reacted like that because they also want to show unity," said Berube, who spent countless hours and some \$20,000 of his own money crisscrossing Europe to gather the players in Romania. "What a day for hockey. What a day for sport."

The game didn't lack for drama, either.

With Boccuzzi keeping the swift-skating and play-making Ukrainians at bay on a number of close-in

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chances, Boston's Kai Ochi opened the scoring 1:27 into the third period.

The pro-Ukraine — but not anti-Boston — crowd finally got a chance to cheer and chant "Ole, Ole, Ole," when Yehor Kosenko batted in a bouncing puck to tie the game with 4:48 remaining. Lupandin sneaked a shot in off a faceoff with 2:04 remaining and then sealed the win with an empty-net goal.

Speaking in English, Lupandin said he and his teammates were nervous to open the game upon being welcomed by the large crowd.

"The first moment it was so scary. I look and up and too many people look at me and my team, and first moment it was so hard, first period," he said. "But second and third period, it was easily for me and maybe for my team. And thank you to the fans who come looking at us."

A large number of fans arrived three hours before puck drop. White T-shirts spelling out "UKRAINE" were draped over the backs of chairs in one section. In another, a blue-and-yellow version of the Canadian flag was attached to a railing.

In Section 113, Roger Poirier carried a Ukrainian flag while handing out blue-and-white handkerchiefs. Poirier, who is from Quebec City, has become active in supporting Ukraine in part because he had business there, during which he also met his wife.

Jessica Anthony wore a T-shirt with the Ukrainian flag on it and had on matching yellow sweatpants. Though an avid hockey fan, she acknowledged she doesn't normally attend peewee games.

"I want to express my solidarity with Ukraine," Anthony said.

The atmosphere was mostly foreign from what the Ukrainian Selects have known for much of the past year. Many of them have resettled with their families as refugees in countries neighboring Ukraine. At least five still live in Ukraine, where rocket-warning sirens in the middle of the night are the norm.

"It's an honor to participate in this event and everybody in solidarity with us and supporting our country," Pysarenko said. "Everybody wants peace. These kids want peace mostly probably because you don't know their stories, but I tell you they have the terrible times and terrible experiences."

One of those experiences included five players' trip to the Romanian border to open training camp last month. Twice, they saw rockets fly above them.

That's something Bruins assistant coach Mike Cashman couldn't even imagine. He hoped the Ukrainians can enjoy the new memories they've made at the tournament.

"I just hope that these kids from Ukraine, they just experienced a thrill of a lifetime like our players did," Cashman said. "You know, I don't know what the future holds for them, unfortunately, but today they can remember today and be really excited about the future."

## Wagner owner says war in Ukraine could drag on for years

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The owner of the Russian Wagner Group private military contractor actively involved in the fighting in Ukraine has predicted that the war could drag on for years.

Yevgeny Prigozhin said in a video interview released late Friday that it could take 18 months to two years for Russia to fully secure control of Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland of Donbas. He added that the war could go on for three years if Moscow decides to capture broader territories east of the Dnieper River.

The statement from Prigozhin, a millionaire who has close links to Russian President Vladimir Putin and was dubbed "Putin's chef" for his lucrative Kremlin catering contracts, marked a recognition of the difficulties that the Kremlin has faced in the campaign, which it initially expected to wrap up within weeks when Russian troops invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Russia suffered a series of humiliating setbacks in the fall when the Ukrainian military launched successful counteroffensives to reclaim broad swaths of territory in the east and the south. The Kremlin has avoided making forecasts on how long the fighting could continue, saying that what it called the "special military operation" will continue until its goals are fulfilled.

The Russian forces have focused on Ukraine's Luhansk and Donetsk provinces that make up the Donbas region where Moscow-backed separatists have been fighting Ukrainian forces since 2014.

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Ukrainian and Western officials have warned that Russia could launch a new broad offensive to try to turn the tide of the conflict as the war approaches the one-year mark. But Ukraine's military intelligence spokesman, Andriy Chernyak, told Kyiv Post that "Russian command does not have enough resources for large-scale offensive actions."

"The main goal of Russian troops remains to achieve at least some tactical success in eastern Ukraine," he said.

Prigozhin said that the Wagner Group mercenaries were continuing fierce battles for control of the Ukrainian stronghold of Bakhmut in the Donetsk region. He acknowledged that the Ukrainian troops were mounting fierce resistance.

As Russian troops have pushed their attacks in the Donbas, Moscow has also sought to demoralize Ukrainians by leaving them without heat and water in the bitter winter.

On Friday, Russia launched the 14th round of massive strikes on Ukrainian energy facilities and other vital infrastructure. High-voltage infrastructure facilities were hit in the eastern, western and southern regions, resulting in power outages in some areas.

Ukraine's energy company, Ukrenergo, said Saturday that the situation was "difficult but controllable," adding that involved backups to keep up power supplies but noting that power rationing will continue in some areas. Head of Ukraine's state nuclear operator Energoatom Petro Kotin said Saturday that more power will come into the country's energy system after two nuclear reactors have been repaired.

Ukraine's military chief, Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi, said that Russian forces launched 71 cruise missiles, 35 S-300 missiles and seven Shahed drones between late Thursday and midday Friday, adding that Ukrainian air defenses downed 61 cruise missiles and five drones.

The Ukrainian authorities reported more attacks by killer drones later on Friday. The Ukrainian air force said the military downed 20 Shahed drones in the evening.

Russia's Defense Ministry said that Friday's strikes hit all the designated targets, halting the operation of Ukraine's defense factories and blocking the delivery of supplies of Western weapons and ammunition. The claim couldn't be independently verified.

Late Friday, Russian military bloggers and some Ukrainian news outlets posted a video showing an attack by a sea drone on a strategic railway bridge in the Odesa region. The grainy video showed a fast-moving object on the surface of the water approaching the bridge in Zatoka, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) southwest of Odesa, and exploding in a powerful blast.

The authenticity of the video couldn't be verified, but the Ukrainian military on Saturday confirmed the use of sea drones by Russian forces.

Ukraine's military chief Zaluzhnyi said in an online statement that he has expressed concern about the use of such drones in a phone conversation with the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Mark Milley, on Saturday, adding that it "poses a threat to civilian navigation in the Black Sea."

The attack marks the first combat use of a sea drone by Russia in the conflict. Igor Korotchenko, a retired colonel of the Russian armed forces who frequently comments on the conflict on Russian state TV, noted Saturday that such drones should be equipped with a more powerful load of explosives to inflict more significant damage.

The bridge, which was targeted by Russian missile strikes early in the war, serves the railway link to Romania, which is a key conduit for Western arms supplies.

In other developments, the governor of Russia's Kursk region along the border with Ukraine said that a group of construction workers was hit by Ukrainian shelling that killed one of them and wounded another.

The governor of another Russian border region, Belgorod, reported the shelling of the town of Shebekino, saying it damaged two buildings but no one was hurt.

## Schools become flashpoint for Republicans eyeing White House

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Former President Donald Trump has called for parents to elect and fire school prin-



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cipals. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has banned instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade. And Nikki Haley, the former U.N. ambassador who is expected to announce her White House candidacy this coming week, is among the Republicans taking aim at critical race theory.

In the opening stages of the 2024 GOP presidential race, the "parents' rights" movement and lessons for schoolchildren are emerging as flashpoints.

The focus on issues related to racism, sexuality and education is a way for potential White House hopefuls to distinguish themselves in a crowded field, suggesting new and deeper ways for government to shape what happens in local classrooms.

But the effort has prompted criticism from LGBTQ advocacy groups, teachers' unions, some parents and student activists and those worried about efforts to avoid lessons about systemic racism. Democrats have cast the efforts as race-baiting and improperly injecting politics into schools.

"What we're seeing now, at least in this period, is much more focus on so-called 'culture war' issues," said Jeffrey Henig, a professor of political science and education at Columbia University's Teachers' College.

Nowhere is the drive more visible than in Florida, where DeSantis has made an aggressive push against what he calls "woke" policies.

He gained national attention last year for signing the so-called Don't Say Gay bill into law, barring instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity for young elementary schoolers, as well as material deemed not age-appropriate, which critics have argued is vague and could stifle classroom discussions. He also signed the "Stop WOKE" act in 2022, a law that restricted teaching that members of one race are inherently racist or should feel guilt about past actions by other people of the same race, among other things.

DeSantis has also extended his political influence to local school board races, endorsing candidates last year in what had been nonpartisan contests and flipping at least three boards from a liberal majority to a conservative majority.

More recently, he blocked high schools from teaching a new Advanced Placement course on African American studies, contending it was a violation of a state law and historically inaccurate. Beyond K-12 schools, he appointed six conservative trustees to the board of a small liberal arts college and he has announced plans to restrict state colleges from having programs on diversity, equity and inclusion, and critical race theory.

Critical race theory, a way of thinking about America's history through the lens of racism, has been a top target. The theory, which DeSantis has called "pernicious," was developed by scholars in the 1970s and 1980s in response to what they viewed as a lack of racial progress following the civil rights legislation of the 1960s. It centers on the idea that racism is systemic in the nation's institutions, which function to maintain the dominance of white people in society.

As DeSantis emerges as the most formidable potential challenger to Trump, who has staked out his own positions on the same issues and recently released a nearly 5-minute video outlining what his campaign called a "Plan to Save American Education and Give Power Back to Parents."

Declaring that "public schools have been taken over by the radical left maniacs," and warning about "pink-haired communists teaching our kids," Trump pledged, if elected president again, that he would cut federal money for any school or program promoting "critical race theory, gender ideology or other inappropriate racial, sexual or political content on to our children."

Trump said he planned to create a national credentialing organization that would certify teachers "who embrace patriotic values, support our way of life and understand that their job is not to indoctrinate children" and would set up favorable treatment for states and school districts that adopt reforms such as allowing parents to directly elect school principals.

"If any principal is not getting the job done, the parents should have the right and be able to vote or to fire them and to select someone else that will do the job properly," Trump said at a campaign appearance in South Carolina.

Former Vice President Mike Pence, who is considering a presidential campaign, is using a group he formed to rally conservatives against transgender-affirming policies in schools. The group's plans to run ads, hold

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rallies and canvass in early voting state Iowa comes as a federal appeals court is set to consider a case involving an Iowa school district's policy to support transgender students.

In the U.S., public education is run by states and largely paid for by state and local taxpayers. The federal government does not, for instance, certify teachers or regulate how schools hire staff. And Washington also doesn't control curriculum standards like those DeSantis has backed in Florida. But Congress or the Department of Education can incentivize certain education practices by tying them to federal money.

So it's not unheard of for presidential candidates to talk about education.

George H.W. Bush declared he wanted to be known as the "education president" and started a push for national standards and goals. His son, George W. Bush, centered his message in the 2000 campaign in part on education reform and during the first year of his administration, signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act, which ignited a national debate over the proper use of standardized testing in schools.

The more recent divisive shift to social issues in schools is an outgrowth of Glenn Youngkin's successful bid in 2021 to become the first Republican in more than a decade to be elected as Virginia's governor. Youngkin, himself a potential presidential candidate in 2024, campaigned on parental rights. He appealed to parents frustrated over school closures during the pandemic and said he would ban the teaching of critical race theory in public schools.

Once in office, his administration began the process of rewriting the state's model policies for the treatment of transgender students, issuing guidance for school divisions that would roll back some accommodations and tighten parental notification requirements.

Kristin Davison, a strategist for Youngkin's gubernatorial campaign, said Youngkin focused on education after the pandemic thrust parents into the classroom, leading to frustrations with remote learning to the curriculum itself.

"Voters want their leaders to understand the issues that they're talking about at their kitchen table," she said. "Right now, families are sitting at their kitchen table looking at report cards, looking at homework assignments, frustrated at curriculum."

The debate over education still carried weight during last year's elections, potentially giving Republican presidential candidates a reason to stay focused on the issue. Half of voters in 2022 said their local K-8 schools were teaching too much about gender identity issues, according to AP VoteCast, a national survey of the electorate. Only about one-quarter said schools teach too little on the subject.

About 4 in 10 voters said too little is taught on racism in the U.S., while about one-third said schools were teaching too much on related issues. Roughly one-quarter of voters said the focus on each is "about right."

There was broad agreement among Republicans — about 8 in 10 of whom said gender identity is taught too much in schools. A smaller majority, 56%, said that about racism.

Among Democrats, about two-thirds said there's too little taught about racism. But there was less consensus around teaching gender identity. About 4 in 10 said too little is taught, about 2 in 10 said too much is taught and about 4 in 10 said schools handle it about right.

Celinda Lake, a Democratic pollster and strategist who worked on President Joe Biden's 2020 campaign, said the GOP messages about protecting children seem to be aimed at trying to win over suburban women, who have drifted away from Trump and the GOP, particularly after the Supreme Court ended constitutional protections for abortion last year.

"I think it's getting extra energy because of its appeal or its presumed appeal to women voters," she said.

## Nearly 1 million French march in 4th day of pension protests

By THOMAS ADAMSON and JADE LE DELEY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Police were out in force across France on Saturday as protesters held a sometimes restive fourth round of nationwide demonstrations against President Emmanuel Macron's plans to reform the country's pension system.

Over 960,000 people marched in Paris, Nice, Marseille, Toulouse, Nantes and other cities, according to the Interior Ministry. Protesters hoped to keep up the pressure on the government to back down, and

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further action is planned for Feb. 16.

In the French capital, authorities counted some 93,000 participants, the most to demonstrate in Paris against the pension changes since the protests started last month.

The weekend demonstrations drew young people and others opposed to the pension proposals who weren't able to attend the previous three days of action, all held on weekdays.

This time, though, rail worker strikes did not accompany the demonstrations, allowing trains and the Paris Metro to run Saturday. However, an unexpected strike by air traffic controllers meant that up to half of flights to and from Paris' second largest airport, Orly, were canceled Saturday afternoon.

In Paris, some workers and students who wanted to voice opposition attended the protests for the first time, owing to heavy weekday workloads.

"We often hear that we should be too young to care, but with rising inflation, soaring electricity prices, this reform will impact our families," Elisa Haddad, 18, said. "It is my first demonstration because I couldn't attend with uni. It is important that the voice of (France's) parents and students is heard."

French lawmakers began a rowdy debate earlier this week on the pension bill to raise the minimum retirement age for a full state pension from 62 to 64. It's the flagship legislation of Macron's second term.

Saturday's protests featured flashes of unrest. One car and several trash bins were set on fire on a central Parisian boulevard as police charged the crowd and dispersed protesters with tear gas. Paris police said officers they arrested eight people for infractions ranging from possession of a firearm to vandalism.

Some demonstrators walked as families through the French capital's Place de la Republique and carried emotional banners. "I don't want my parents to die at work," read one, held by a teenage boy.

The protests are a crucial test both for Macron and his opponents. The government has insisted it's determined to push through Macron's election pledge to reform France's generous pension system. Of the 38 member nations of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, France is among countries that spend the most years in retirement.

The president has called the reforms "indispensable" for ensuring the long-term survival of the country's pension system and noted that workers in neighboring countries retire years later.

Despite opinion polls consistently showing growing opposition to the reform and his own popularity shrinking, Macron insisted that he's living up to a key campaign pledge he made when he swept to power in 2017 and before his April 2022 reelection.

His government is now facing a harsh political battle in parliament that could span weeks or months.

Strong popular resentment will strengthen efforts by labor unions and left-wing legislators to try to block the bill.

Unions issued a joint statement Saturday, calling the government "deaf" and demanding French officials scrap the bill. They threatened to cause a nationwide "shutdown" from March 7, if their demands were not met.

During the previous day of protests four days ago, over 750,000 people marched in many French cities, significantly fewer than on the previous two protest days in January in which over a million people took to the streets.

## Protest outside UK asylum-seeker hotel ends in 15 arrests

By ELISE MORTON Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — An anti-migration protest outside a hotel housing asylum-seekers in northwest England turned violent and resulted in the arrests of 15 people, local police said Saturday.

The Merseyside Police department said a police officer and two civilians sustained minor injuries during the disturbance on Friday night in Knowsley, a village located 13.5 kilometers (8.4 miles) from the city of Liverpool.

The police force said some protesters threw objects and set a police van on fire. The people arrested, who ranged in age from 13 to 54, were detained "following violent disorder."

"A number of individuals who turned up at the Suites Hotel last night were intent on using a planned

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protest to carry out violent and despicable behavior," Merseyside Chief Constable Serena Kennedy said. "They turned up armed with hammers and fireworks to cause as much trouble as they could, and their actions could have resulted in members of the public and police officers being seriously injured, or worse,"

Speculation on social media about a man accused of making inappropriate advances toward a teenage girl in a nearby town might have triggered the demonstration outside the hotel, Kennedy said. The man in his 20s was arrested elsewhere in England on Thursday "on suspicion of a public order offense" but later released on the advice of child protective services, she said.

George Howarth, who represents Knowsley in the U.K. Parliament, said the violence on Friday night did not reflect the community.

"The people of Knowsley are not bigots and are welcoming to people escaping from some of the most dangerous places in the world in search of a place of safety," he said. "Those demonstrating against refugees at this protest tonight do not represent this community."

Britain takes in fewer asylum-seekers than some other European countries, including France and Germany, but has seen a sharp increase in the number of people trying to reach the U.K. across the English Channel in dinghies and other small boats.

More than 45,000 people reached Britain by that route in 2022, and most applied for asylum. The system for considering asylum applications has slowed to a crawl because of political turmoil and bureaucratic delays, leaving many migrants stuck in hotels or other temporary accommodation.

The Channel crossings have become a hot political issue, with the Conservative government promising to "stop the boats." Opponents accuse the government of demonizing desperate people fleeing war and poverty.

In October, a man firebombed a processing center for new arrivals in the Channel port of Dover. Police said he was motivated by far-right ideology. He killed himself after the attack.

## Super Bowl Guide: Where to watch and who to watch

By DAVID BRANDT AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — The Super Bowl between the Philadelphia Eagles and Kansas City Chiefs is rapidly approaching. Here are some things to know ahead of Sunday's game:

### HOW DO I WATCH?

The game begins at 6:30 p.m. EST on Sunday and can be viewed on Fox, Fox Deportes and the NFL+ app. It can also be streamed on multiple services, including YouTube TV. The national radio broadcast is on Westwood One.

### WHO ARE THE TEAMS AND PLAYERS?

The Kansas City Chiefs are back in the Super Bowl for the third time in four years after winning another AFC Championship. The Chiefs won Super Bowl 54 against the 49ers after the 2019 season but lost to the Buccaneers after 2020.

The Chiefs are led by quarterback Patrick Mahomes, who claimed his second MVP award on Thursday night. They've also got several other stars, led by tight end Travis Kelce and defensive lineman Chris Jones.

The Philadelphia Eagles won the NFC championship and are trying to win their second Super Bowl in six years. They're led by quarterback and MVP finalist Jalen Hurts, receivers A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith and linebacker Haason Reddick.

### WHAT'S THE HALFTIME SHOW?

Nine-time Grammy Award winner Rihanna is the headline act of this year's halftime show.

She's had 14 No. 1 Billboard Hot 100 hits, including "We Found Love," "Work," "Umbrella" and "Disturbia." She and rapper A\$AP Rocky recently welcomed her first child.

"The setlist was the biggest challenge. That was the hardest, hardest part. Deciding how to maximize 13 minutes but also celebrate — that's what this show is going to be. It's going to be a celebration of my catalog in the best way that we could have put it together," Rihanna said.

### WHERE'S THE GAME BEING PLAYED?

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The Super Bowl will be played at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona, which is home to the NFL's Arizona Cardinals. Glendale is a suburb of Phoenix.

It's the third Super Bowl the stadium has hosted.

The Phoenix area is no stranger to big events: In fact, two of them are happening right now. The Super Bowl is obviously attracting a lot of attention but the yearly WM Phoenix Open is also this week, drawing thousands of golf fans — and a steady stream of private planes — to the city to watch players like top-ranked Rory McElroy.

The NBA even made a brief cameo: The Phoenix Suns acquired superstar Kevin Durant in a trade with the Brooklyn Nets late Wednesday that rocked the sport and galvanized the city's fan base.

WHO IS FAVORED?

The Eagles are favored by 1 1/2 points to beat the Chiefs, according to FanDuel Sportsbook, and the line has stayed fairly constant over the past two weeks. The over-under is 50.5 points.

Picking the game's winner is one of the basic ways to bet, but there are many, many prop bets gamblers can also choose.

Sportsbooks have taken advantage of the increasing popularity of prop bets, which could range from whether there will be a safety to whether the Chiefs or Eagles will score more points than NBA stars LeBron James or Steph Curry when their teams meet the day before the big game.

Professional sports bettors tend to make the more traditional wagers and look for value in the props if they believe they can find a betting number to exploit. For the most part, the props belong to the general public.

WHAT WERE THE TOP MOMENTS FROM NFL HONORS?

The league had its yearly "NFL Honors" show on Thursday night, with Mahomes receiving his second MVP and Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott earning the NFL Walter Payton Man of the Year.

Another highlight: Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin made his second appearance of the week, paying tribute to those who had a hand in giving him a second chance at life.

Hamlin was on stage a little more than a month after he went into cardiac arrest and needed to be resuscitated on the field in Cincinnati.

## Hilltop coal-mining town a tactical prize in Ukraine war

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — In a small coal-mining town on Ukraine's eastern front line, a fight for strategic superiority is being waged in a battlefield steeped with symbolism as the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion nears.

The town of Vuhledar — meaning "gift of coal" — has emerged as a critical hot spot in the fight for Donetsk province that would give both sides, the Ukrainian forces who hold the urban center, and the Russians positioned in the suburbs, a tactical upper hand in the greater battle for the Donbas region.

Located on an elevated plane that is one of the few high-terrain spots in the area, its capture would be an important step for Russia to disrupt Ukrainian supply lines. Securing Vuhledar would give Ukraine a potential launching pad for future counter-offensives south.

Then there is the symbolic weight: Vuhledar is close to the administrative border of Donetsk province, and winning it would play into Russia's greater aim of controlling the region as a whole.

"The center of gravity of the Russian military effort is in Donetsk, and Vuhledar is basically the southern flank of that," said Gustav Gressel, a senior policy fellow with the European Council on Foreign Relations' Berlin office.

The grinding fight to win the area has cost Russia manpower and weapons, as Ukrainians continue to hold up defensive lines. Russia sends battalion-sized scout groups to probe Ukrainian lines and shoot artillery toward their positions with an eye to pushing north toward the critical N15 highway, a key supply route.

In remarks this week, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Russian troops were advancing "with success" in Vuhledar. Meanwhile, a British defense intelligence briefing said Russia's aim was to capture

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unoccupied areas of Ukrainian-held Donetsk but it was unlikely to build up the forces required to change the outcome of the war.

Vuhledar's pre-war population of 14,000 has dwindled to about 300. The majority of the town's residents worked in the coal mine and nearby factories before the war.

Olha Kyseliova, who was recently evacuated, worked in a brick factory before the fighting upended her life.

Russian forces ramped up attacks beginning on Jan. 24, residents said. That day, a missile tore through Kyseliova's nine-story building. She was sheltering in the basement with her three children and emerged to find a gaping hole through the roof of her third-floor apartment.

That was the moment she decided she had to leave her hometown. "I cried the entire way out, I didn't want to leave," she said.

Three Ukrainian brigades are positioned in Vuhledar and on the outskirts of the town. The Associated Press spoke to five commanders in units from all three, who provided only their first names in keeping with Ukraine's military policy. Russia's 155 Marine infantry troops are positioned just four kilometers (two miles) away in Vuhledar's suburbs.

For both sides, the town is tactically important.

"It's one of the main logistics points of the Donbas region, and also one of the main points of elevation," said Maksym, the deputy commander of a Ukrainian marine infantry battalion. "By capturing Vuhledar, Russians can easily occupy the entire Donetsk region."

Seizing Vuhledar would enable Russia to push forward and threaten Ukrainian supply lines feeding into the fierce Marinka front line to the north, said Gressel of the European Council on Foreign Relations. For Ukraine, Vuhledar would be a launching pad for future counter-offensives toward Mariupol and Berdiansk.

From their perch in the town, Ukrainian forces can see into Russian lines and have so far been able to repel Russian attempts to encircle Vuhledar. Columns of Russian tanks and armored vehicles transporting infantrymen continuously assault and attempt to break Ukrainian defenses. Aviation, rockets and artillery target the town.

"But with our fighters and anti-tank equipment their attempts have not been successful," said Maksym, the Ukrainian deputy commander. "The situation is strained, but controlled."

Similar to other front lines along the east, the Russians are losing scores of infantrymen in an attempt to tire and weaken Ukrainian defensive lines. Serhii, the commander of a Ukrainian intelligence unit, said he saw Russian soldiers sent straight through fields mined by the Ukrainians following Russia's capture of the village of Pavlivka, south of Vuhledar, in November.

"They de-mine our fields by using their own people," he said.

Ukrainian commanders said some of their units are suffering from dire ammunition shortages.

That view was not shared across brigades, suggesting some are better supplied than others. Taras, the commander of a mortar unit, said his forces were suffering very serious shortages. Faced with orders to target an enemy position, he said, "I have just two or three rounds of ammunition to do it. It's nothing."

Two commanders of a brigade inside Vuhledar reported the Russians hurled gas-laden projectiles that caused severe disorientation for hours, and burning of the throat and skin. Higher-ranking commanders did not comment on the type of gas used and said an investigation was ongoing.

"They are probing and testing us across the eastern front line, including in Vuhledar," said Oleksandr, a commander who was recently rotated out of the town. "They are trying to find our points of weakness."

For now, Russia's activities around Vuhledar are not "operationally significant," said Kateryna Stepanenko, a Russia analyst with the U.S.-based think tank Institute for the Study of War. More combat power is required to execute breakthroughs that would achieve the stated aim of the Russian invasion — the capture of the entire Donetsk province.

Even in the event of victory in Vuhledar, Russia would still need a lot of combat power to push north. Three months after capturing the village of Pavlivka in November, Russian forces have yet to make breakthroughs in Vuhledar, which is only four kilometers — a six-minute drive — away.

"It's not operationally significant because Russians will still have to fight for more territory to make a meaningful disruption of Ukrainian ground lines of communication to western Donetsk," Stepanenko said.

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Vuhledar is just "one settlement on their way, where they are already suffering significant losses and where they already seem to have suffered losses in the area before."

Meanwhile, the last of Vuhledar's residents said they are staying put.

Oleksandra Havrylko, police press officer for the Donetsk region, pleads with those who remain to leave the devastated area. Most spend their days hiding in basements, coming out when there are lulls in fighting to charge phones and gather supplies in the town's points of refuge, called "invincibility centers".

All but one of the town's children have been evacuated. The father of a 15-year-old, the last remaining minor in the town, refuses to part with his son or leave the area, she said.

"There are people in the city who don't want to be evacuated, we tried many times," she said. Most have never ventured far from their hometown.

## US blacklists 6 Chinese entities over balloon program

BEIJING (AP) — The United States has blacklisted six Chinese entities it said were linked to Beijing's aerospace programs as part of its retaliation over an alleged Chinese spy balloon that traversed U.S. airspace.

The economic restrictions announced Friday followed the Biden administration's pledge to consider broader efforts to address Chinese surveillance activities and will make it more difficult for the five companies and one research institute to obtain American technology exports.

The move is likely to further escalate the diplomatic row between the U.S. and China sparked by the balloon, which was shot down last weekend off the Carolina coast. The U.S. said the balloon was equipped to detect and collect intelligence signals, but Beijing insists it was a weather craft that had blown off course.

The incident prompted Secretary of State Antony Blinken to abruptly cancel a high-stakes trip to Beijing aimed at easing tensions.

The U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security said the six entities were being targeted for "their support to China's military modernization efforts, specifically the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) aerospace programs including airships and balloons."

"The PLA is utilizing High Altitude Balloons (HAB) for intelligence and reconnaissance activities," it said.

Deputy Secretary of Commerce Don Graves said on Twitter his department "will not hesitate to continue to use" such restrictions and other regulatory and enforcement tools "to protect U.S. national security and sovereignty."

The six entities are Beijing Nanjiang Aerospace Technology Co., China Electronics Technology Group Corporation 48th Research Institute, Dongguan Lingkong Remote Sensing Technology Co., Eagles Men Aviation Science and Technology Group Co., Guangzhou Tian-Hai-Xiang Aviation Technology Co., and Shanxi Eagles Men Aviation Science and Technology Group Co.

The research institute did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The other five entities could not be reached.

On Friday, a U.S. military fighter jet shot down an unknown object flying off the remote northern coast of Alaska on orders from President Joe Biden. The object was downed because it reportedly posed a threat to the safety of civilian flights, instead of any knowledge that it was engaged in surveillance.

But the twin incidents in such close succession reflect heightened concerns over China's surveillance program and public pressure on Biden to take a tough stand against it.

## Jill Biden not shy about her 'Philly girl' sports fandom

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jill Biden won't let even a White House gala get between her and the Philadelphia Eagles.

After a late night entertaining governors with President Joe Biden at a black-tie dinner on Saturday, the first lady was heading for the Super Bowl in Arizona on Sunday with hopes of watching "the Birds" defeat the Kansas City Chiefs and claim the NFL title.

First ladies have been involved with sports in a variety of ways over the years, from throwing out the

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first pitch at baseball games to representing the United States at the Olympics. But Jill Biden's unabashed public expressions of support for Philadelphia's teams — she grew up in suburban Willow Grove — are a rare kind of devotion.

"The first lady is a proud Philly girl and devoted sports fan, and is excited to cheer on her hometown team for the Super Bowl," said her spokesperson, Vanessa Valdivia.

At a time when national politicians often avoid taking sides in sports contests, Jill Biden, a community college professor, wears her Eagles and Phillies garb in public and tweets photos of herself watching games in the private cabin on a government plane.

She and her grandson, Hunter, were at the stadium in Philadelphia on Jan. 29 when the Eagles won the NFC championship. The 16-year-old will join her again on Sunday.

"I'm going. I'll wave to you at the game," the first lady was overheard telling two girls about the Super Bowl when she visited California last weekend.

No sitting president has attended a Super Bowl, mainly because of the strict security requirements authorities would need to impose upon the tens of thousands of fans. President Biden will be at the White House on Sunday.

Boston University communications professor Tammy Vigil said first ladies usually aren't seen as overt sports fans because many of them have not been, even though they often participate in the ceremonial aspects of some sports. Timing could also be a factor for Jill Biden, she said.

"Her teams happen to be very successful at the time she occupies the White House," Vigil, author of "Melanie and Michelle," a book about first ladies, said in an email.

Biden also uses her interest in sports to highlight one of the causes she promotes as first lady: cancer awareness. She has appeared at Eagles and Phillies home games, including the World Series, in recent months to cheer patients and boost league efforts at promoting early detection.

There is a long history of first ladies and their involvement with sports, especially baseball, according to the National First Ladies' Library. And for some, their interest continued, or even deepened, after they left the White House.

Grace Coolidge enjoyed baseball more than President Calvin Coolidge did. "He did not share my enthusiasm for baseball," she once said. Within months of becoming first lady, she appeared at a game for the first time, bringing the president to a World Series game between the New York Giants and Washington Senators in 1924.

After leaving the White House, Grace Coolidge became a regular at Boston's Fenway Park, rooting for the Red Sox from a reserved seat just above their dugout.

Bess Truman joined President Harry Truman for opening day of Washington Senators' games, but also went alone or with her daughter and friends. When the Trumans returned to Missouri after his presidency, she split her loyalties between the Kansas City Athletics (and later, the Kansas City Royals) and the St. Louis Cardinals.

Pat Nixon was the first first lady to throw out the ceremonial first pitch for a major league team, doing so at the second game of the 1971 World Series in Baltimore. For a time, she would watch one football game during the weekend.

"However at one time, I followed teams and then, of course, I wouldn't miss a game," Nixon said in a 1971 television interview.

Nancy Reagan threw out the first pitch before the first game of the 1988 World Series, using the opportunity to promote one of her causes, the "Just Say No" anti-drug program.

Barbara Bush became the first first lady to throw the ceremonial pitch for a Texas Rangers game in May 1989. She later would attend Rangers games after her son, future President George W. Bush, became a managing general partner of the team.

Hillary Clinton tossed the ceremonial first pitch for the Chicago Cubs, her hometown team, at Wrigley Field in April 1994. But years later, when she ran for a Senate seat from New York, she split her loyalties and adopted the Yankees.



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Michelle Obama and Jill Biden, then second lady of the United States, made a joint appearance at the 2009 World Series at Yankee Stadium for their Joining Forces military initiative. In 2010, Mrs. Obama threw the first pitch at an Orioles game in Baltimore.

While President Biden has opened the White House to celebrate Olympians and championship sports teams, including ones that turned down invitations from his predecessor, Biden has not yet attended a sporting event, including the annual Army-Navy football game.

That leaves his wife to assume the role of White House sports ambassador. She led the U.S. delegation to the delayed Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2021, and she and Doug Emhoff, the vice president's husband, sipped beer in the stands at Minute Maid Park after they participated in a COVID-19 vaccination clinic sponsored by the Houston Astros.

Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney said he's happy that so many Philadelphia fans, including the first lady, will fill State Farm Stadium in Arizona with Eagles chants on Sunday.

"We're very proud that she's part of our diverse, passionate Eagles fan base," Kenney said in a statement.

President Biden says he's a Philadelphia sports fan, too, out of necessity, and often jokes that "I'd be sleeping alone" otherwise.

But in a 2011 interview with a Wisconsin radio station when he was vice president, Biden swore allegiance to the Green Bay Packers.

Biden told WTMJ that the Norbertines, the order of priests at the Catholic school he attended in Claymont, Delaware, had their abbey house in De Pere, Wisconsin. On Sundays when the Packers won, the headmaster, Father Justin E. Diny, would announce that last period had been canceled.

"He made every one of us Packers fans, so I have a sentimental place," Biden said. "Besides, I'm fearful I'll go to hell if I don't root for the Packers. Father Diny may come back. I can't go against Father Diny. He'll come out of his grave if he knew I was rooting for anybody else."

## Migrants seeking US sponsors find questionable offers online

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

Pedro Yudel Bruzon was looking for someone in the U.S. to support his effort to seek asylum when he landed on a Facebook page filled with posts demanding up to \$10,000 for a financial sponsor.

It's part of an underground market that's emerged since the Biden administration announced it would accept 30,000 immigrants each month arriving by air from Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua and Haiti. Applicants for the humanitarian parole program need someone in the U.S., often a friend or relative, to promise to provide financial support for at least two years.

Bruzon, who lives in Cuba, doesn't know anyone who can do that, so he searched online. But he also doesn't have the money to pay for a sponsor and isn't sure the offers — or those making them — are real. He worries about being exploited or falling prey to a scam.

"They call it humanitarian parole, but it has nothing to do with being humanitarian," said Bruzon, who said he struggles to feed himself and his mother with what he makes as a 33-year-old Havana security guard. "Everyone wants money, even people in the same family."

It's unclear how many people in the United States may have charged migrants to sponsor them, but Facebook groups with names like "Sponsors U.S." carry dozens of posts offering and seeking financial supporters.

Several immigration attorneys said they could find no specific law prohibiting people from charging money to sponsor beneficiaries.

"As long as everything is accurate on the form and there are no fraudulent statements it may be legal," said lawyer Taylor Levy, who long worked along the border around El Paso, Texas. "But what worries me are the risks in terms of being trafficked and exploited. If lying is involved, it could be fraud."

Also, she noted, it "seems counterintuitive" to pay someone to promise to provide financial support.

Attorney Leon Fresco, a former top aide to Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, said charging to be a sponsor is a "gray area" and the U.S. should send a forceful message against the practice.

Kennji Kizuka, an attorney and director of asylum policy for the International Rescue Committee, which

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resettles newcomers in the United States, said this type of thing happens with every new U.S. program benefitting migrants.

"It looks like some are just going to take people's money and the people are going to get nothing in return," Kizuka said.

Levy said such exploitation surrounding a similar U.S. program for Ukrainians prompted the government to publish an online guide about how to spot and protect against human-trafficking schemes.

One common scheme with immigration programs is known as notario fraud and involves people who call themselves "notarios públicos" charging large sums. In Latin America, the term refers to attorneys with special credentials, leading lead migrants to believe they are lawyers who can provide legal advice. In the U.S., notaries public are merely empowered to witness the signing of legal documents and issue oaths.

In another scheme, someone poses as a U.S. official asking for money. The U.S. government notes: "We do not accept Western Union, MoneyGram, PayPal, or gift cards as payment for immigration fees."

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services warns about potential scams with the humanitarian parole program for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans that was rolled out last month and notes online that the program is free.

"Fulfilling our humanitarian mission while upholding the integrity of the immigration system is a top priority for USCIS," the agency said in response to questions about the potential for exploitation. It says the agency "carefully vets every prospective supporter through a series of fraud- and security-based screening measures."

"Additionally, USCIS thoroughly reviews each reported case of fraud or misconduct and may refer those cases to federal law enforcement for additional investigation," the statement said.

The agency did not address whether any application has been rejected because of concerns that potential sponsors might be requesting money.

The Department of Homeland Security says 1,700 humanitarian parole applications were accepted as of Jan. 25 from Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans, plus an undisclosed number of Venezuelans. A Texas-led lawsuit seeks to stop the program, which could allow 360,000 people a year to enter the U.S. legally.

One Facebook post advertising paid sponsorships led to a person who identified himself as an American citizen living in Pensacola, Florida. Told he was communicating with a journalist, the person refused to talk on the phone and would only text.

The person told The Associated Press he had sponsored a Cuban uncle and aunt for \$10,000 each. He refused to provide contact information for those relatives, then stopped responding to questions.

Another would-be sponsor said via Facebook messenger that they charge \$2,000 per person, which includes a sponsorship fee, document processing and an airline ticket. Requests for more information were answered with a phone number from the Dominican Republic that rang unanswered.

A man who posted seeking a sponsor told the AP that he was disturbed by some offers.

"It's very easy to trick a desperate person and there are an abundance of them here," the man, who identified himself as Pedro Manuel Carmenate, of Havana, said. "You just have to tell the people what they want to hear."

Of course, not all sponsors charge a fee. A new initiative called Welcome.US aims to match Americans to migrants without supporters. Also, nonprofit organizations are trying to spread accurate information about the program.

Sarah Ivory, executive director of the nonprofit USAHello that provides online information in multiple languages, said the proliferation of offers for paid sponsorship is "deeply troubling and frustratingly predictable," reflected in hundreds of queries to the group.

"Many report that they barely have the money to feed themselves, much less pay to get a passport or arrange a sponsor," Ivory said.

Such desperation is reflected on social media.

"I'm looking for a sponsor for two people please, my husband is in a wheelchair," reads a post from someone who says she lives in Havana. "I will give my house with everything inside and I'll pay \$4,000 for each" person sponsored.

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## Chiefs-Eagles Super Bowl matchup could come down to trenches

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — The all-star cast of players in the trenches should decide the Super Bowl champion. Sure, Patrick Mahomes and Jalen Hurts will make their share of plays. But Sunday's game will come down to which team controls the line of scrimmage.

The Philadelphia Eagles (16-3) reached this point mainly because of a dominant offensive line that allowed Hurts to thrive. He developed into an AP NFL MVP and Offensive Player of the Year finalist playing behind a line that features All-Pro center Jason Kelce and All-Pro right tackle Lane Johnson.

Kelce, Johnson, left tackle Jordan Mailata, Pro Bowl left guard Landon Dickerson and right guard Isaac Seumalo have excelled in the playoffs, helping the Eagles rack up 416 yards rushing in two lopsided wins. The Eagles outscored the Giants and 49ers by a combined margin of 69-14.

A defensive line featuring four players with at least 10 sacks roughed up opposing quarterbacks throughout the season. Haason Reddick was a game-wrecker against San Francisco, knocking Brock Purdy out of the game.

The Kansas City Chiefs (16-3) know what it's like to face a fearsome pass rush in the Super Bowl. Behind a banged-up offensive line, Mahomes looked ordinary in a 31-9 loss to the Buccaneers in the big game two years ago.

They're healthy this time around and have a pair of second-team All-Pros: left guard Joe Thuney and center Creed Humphrey.

On the opposite side, All-Pro defensive tackle Chris Jones was a nightmare for opponents this season. Jones had 15 1/2 sacks. If Philly's O-line can't slow him down, it could be a rough day for Hurts.

**WHEN THE CHIEFS HAVE THE BALL:**

Mahomes, the two-time AP NFL MVP, is a magician, even with an ankle injury that should feel better now than it did two weeks ago against Cincinnati. He'll look often for All-Pro tight end Travis Kelce, who had 110 catches in the regular season and 21 in two playoff games.

Wide receiver Marquez Valdes-Scantling had a big game against the Bengals, catching six passes for 116 yards and a TD. JuJu Smith-Schuster and Kadarius Toney are ready to go after being injured in that game.

The Chiefs had the league's 20th-ranked run offense mostly because Mahomes led the NFL in passing. Rookie seventh-round pick Isiah Pacheco had 830 yards rushing in the regular season and 95 against Jacksonville but only 26 in the AFC title game. Running back Jerick McKinnon is more of a pass-catching threat. He had 56 receptions.

Protecting Mahomes will be critical to Kansas City's success. The Eagles are five sacks away from breaking the NFL record for a season. Reddick, Brandon Graham, Josh Sweat and Javon Hargrave each had at least 10 sacks.

Cornerbacks James Bradberry and Darius Slay are among the top duos in the league so they'll make it difficult for Mahomes to connect often with his receivers. Travis Kelce vs. Philly's linebackers and safeties is a mismatch that the Chiefs will look to exploit.

**WHEN THE EAGLES HAVE THE BALL:**

The Eagles can beat teams on the ground or in the air. Hurts could run for 100 yards or throw for 300. This offense has plenty of versatility with Hurts leading the way. Miles Sanders had 1,268 yards rushing in the regular season. Kenny Gainwell leads the team with 160 yards rushing in the playoffs. Boston Scott is another option in a stacked backfield.

Hurts only has 275 yards passing in the playoffs but the Eagles haven't had to throw. They've had success running, built big leads and kept it on the ground to chew the clock.

If they air it out, wide receivers A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith are among the top tandems in the NFL and tight end Dallas Goedert is underrated. The Chiefs allowed a league-high 33 passing TDs this season so it could be a big day for Hurts and his receivers.

Everything starts for the Eagles on the O-line. They've protected Hurts, paved the way for running backs

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and imposed their will on defenses throughout the season.

Chiefs defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo is a two-time Super Bowl champion who has a history of shutting down top offenses in the Super Bowl. Just ask Tom Brady. Spagnuolo is known for bringing the heat to knock QBs off rhythm. Considering Hurts has a major drop-off in production when blitzed, expect Spagnuolo to dial it up.

If Hurts has time, Kansas City's four rookie defensive backs will be in for a long day.

#### SPECIAL TEAMS:

Chiefs kicker Harrison Butker is perfect in two Super Bowls, making four extra points and four field goals. Punter Tommy Townsend had an All-Pro season with a net of 45.6 yards.

The Chiefs' return teams were both in the top seven.

Eagles kicker Jake Elliott made all three of his field goals and two of three extra points in his only Super Bowl five years ago.

Punter Arryn Siposs may return for the first time since an ankle injury sidelined him in December. Veteran Brett Kern has been filling in and would make his first Super Bowl appearance of a 15-year career.

The Eagles have had some issues with their coverage units at times this season.

#### COACHING:

Chiefs coach Andy Reid is facing his former team. He won more games than any coach in Eagles history over a 14-year period. Reid is second behind Bill Belichick (31) with 21 playoff wins. He's 1-2 in the Super Bowl, including a loss with the Eagles.

Sirianni is 25-12 in two seasons as a head coach, including 2-1 in the playoffs. Like Reid, he's an excellent game planner. Sirianni is also aggressive and doesn't lack any confidence.

#### INTANGIBLES:

Reid vs. his former team. Sirianni vs. a coach who fired him. No extra motivation needed for a Super Bowl. Both teams have loud, loyal fan bases who have flooded Phoenix for the game.

## Minnesota Buddhist temple opens up sacred dance troupe

By GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

HAMPTON, Minn. (AP) — The Buddhist community anchored by an ornate temple complex here in the Minnesota farmland is trying a new way to ensure its faith and ancestral culture stay vibrant for future generations -- an open call for the sacred dance troupe.

Founded by refugees fleeing the Khmer Rouge regime, which sought to eradicate most religious institutions, Watt Munisotaram and its troupe hope that teaching young children sacred dance will strengthen their ties to both Buddhism and Cambodian traditions.

"The connection is stronger when I dance," said Sabrina Sok, 22, a Wattanak Dance Troupe leader. "The thing that stays in my head is this dance form almost disappeared with the Khmer Rouge."

During their 1975-79 regime, the Khmer Rouge caused the deaths of an estimated 1.7 million in Cambodia. Hundreds of thousands fled, first to neighboring Thailand and later the United States, where Southeast Asians are one of the largest refugee communities.

They carried this sacred dance tradition with them. On a frigid early February evening, Sok rehearsed for the upcoming Cambodian New Year holiday with fellow troupe leader Garrett Sour and his sister Gabriella, whose parents were among those refugees.

Practice used to be held at the temple, whose golden spires outshine the red barn roofs and silos in the snow-covered fields about 30 miles (48 kilometers) south of the Twin Cities. But it was recently moved to a Minneapolis studio to make it easier for families to participate.

While recruitment was by word of mouth, this winter's enrollment — open to anybody eager to learn the dance form — brought in the highest number ever after being posted on the temple's Facebook page.

Clothed in traditional thick silk shirts and pants from Cambodia, the three dancers sinuously stretched and bent every part of their bodies, from joint-defying toe curls on up. Each movement helps tell ancient stories about gods, the cycle of life and other spiritual tales that intertwine elements of Buddhism, Hindu-

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ism and Animism.

"We're never ourselves, we're just physical embodiments of higher spirits," said Garrett Sour, 20, as he meticulously coached the poses, urging a smaller step here, a deeper calf tilt there. "Dance was seen not as entertainment but a medium between heaven and earth."

The marketing student at a Twin Cities university started dancing when he was six and has learned Khmer to better delve into the sacred storytelling. He will be one of the teachers for the incoming dancers – about 20, which nearly doubles the troupe, and most of them younger than teens.

"For me, to see the kids perform these traditional dances is verification they cherish and take seriously our tradition and our religion," said Garrett's mother, Sophia Sour, who has long been a volunteer at Watt Munisotaram.

In the temple's ornate higher room, where the ten monks in residence chant and meditate daily surrounded by sacred books and large Cambodian-made paintings of Buddha's life, the Venerable Vicheth Chum also highlighted the importance of what he called "blessed dance."

"Very important to have, and to keep our ancestral tradition even when moved to (Minnesota)," said Chum, who came to the United States more than 20 years ago from Cambodia. "Buddhist teaching is practice for peace and happiness, no matter the nation."

Monks at Watt Munisotaram – which roughly means the place to enjoy learning from wise men – practice Theravada, one of the oldest forms of Buddhism rooted in Southeast Asian cultures.

During the Khmer Rouge regime, and the communist Vietnamese rule that followed it, religious institutions were targeted by violence and repression, but Cambodian refugees kept traditions alive, said John Marston, an expert in Cambodian Buddhism at the Mexican university Colegio de Mexico.

Dance in particular, which dates back nearly 1,000 years and was linked to the royal court as well as temples, has become "a marker of Cambodian identity" in the U.S. diaspora, he added.

That's why the dance troupe was started at Watt Munisotaram, which has grown into a 40-acre complex with golden Buddha statues, a stupa with relics and a meditation pond that lay frozen under knee-high snow on that early February weekend.

Dozens of faithful in equally bright white outfits met then to celebrate Magha Puja, a holiday marking the gathering of 1,250 of Buddha's first disciples and the establishment of his rules for the new community.

Chum and seven other monks in elaborately folded, bright orange robes led a candlelit procession multiple times past an altar with several golden Buddha statues, glittery decorations and a profusion of flowers including lotus blossoms – most artificial, though in more clement weather some are grown locally or shipped from Florida.

Several children marched along, carrying the U.S. flag and Cambodia's state and Buddhist flags, before everyone sat in neat rows on the carpeted floor for two hours of chanting in Khmer.

Chum said the monks worry about young people's growing disenchantment with religion but believe that life's inevitable struggles will eventually bring most back to the temple for guidance from Buddha's teachings.

"It's like learning a map and then taking action," he said.

Garrett Sour, who grew up going frequently with his family to the temple, said he's still figuring out how Buddhism applies to his life culturally and religiously.

But he's fully embraced sacred dancing, and is eager to share what he learned from his teachers – including an aunt who danced in refugee camps before moving to Minnesota – with children, so the tradition can continue through generations.

The troupe's main goal "is to preserve dances that were already there," he said, adding that each summer they perform in a special ceremony honoring the spirits of previous dancers with altars replete with dancing ornaments and offerings.

Watching the recent rehearsal, Garrett's mother beamed with pride.

"The world is using them to educate the other communities, I keep on reminding them," Sophia Sour said. She hopes to take Garrett and Gabriella to Cambodia to learn even more about the roots of their spiri-

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tuality, whose fundamental values she listed as respect for the elders and good deeds.

"If you do good, good will come to you," she said. "I'm not sure if that's religion, or just life."

## **3 weeks, dozens of witnesses: Takeaways from Murdaugh trial**

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

Three weeks into disgraced South Carolina attorney Alex Murdaugh's double murder trial, prosecutors have called dozens of witnesses offering wide-ranging — and sometimes disjointed — testimony.

Jurors have heard from the investigators who found the bodies of Murdaugh's wife and son, and technicians who found gunshot residue, cracked open cellphones to get videos and tested dozens of ammunition casings.

They've heard from betrayed law firm employees, heartbroken friends of Murdaugh and his family, and a man whose insurance settlement was stolen after his mother, the Murdaughs' housekeeper, died in a fall at their home.

But witnesses have been called in disorganized groups and tantalizing scraps of evidence have been introduced but not explained. The defense hopes to start its case in middle of next week and had planned a week of testimony but is rethinking that because of the trial's length.

Here are some key takeaways from the trial so far.

### FINANCIAL CRIMES

Murdaugh, 54, is charged with murder in the deaths of 52-year-old Maggie, shot several times with a rifle, and their 22-year-old son, Paul, shot twice with a shotgun at kennels near their Colleton County home on June 7, 2021. He faces 30 years to life in prison if convicted.

The disbarred lawyer also faces about 100 other charges ranging from stealing money from clients to running a drug and money laundering ring.

Much of the week's testimony focused on whether Murdaugh stole money from his family's law firm and clients. Prosecutors contend Murdaugh thought he was about to get caught stealing and killed his wife and son to buy time to cover up the money trail.

The office manager from the family law firm said Murdaugh stole millions in fees and client settlements. A law school buddy said Murdaugh took advantage of his trust and left him to pay \$192,000 to keep his client trust fund balanced. The son of the Murdaughs' housekeeper and nanny who died in a fall testified Murdaugh promised to get them a hefty insurance settlement for the death but kept more than \$4 million collected for himself.

The defense objected to each witness, saying there was no evidence linking the killings to financial misdeeds.

"This is piling on. This is more trying to prejudice the jury into believing somehow someone who steals a bunch of money in any way whatever would commit a murder," Murdaugh lawyer Dick Harpootlian said.

### DISJOINTED CASE

Prosecutors have called 47 witnesses in 12 days of testimony, but at times there has been little rhythm to the order.

This week, the caretaker of Murdaugh's mother testified about a blue jacket Murdaugh might have held when he visited but then other witnesses testified about financial crimes before the state forensic scientist who tested the jacket for blood and gunshot residue took the stand.

Long, tedious testimony has focused on cellphone data between Paul Murdaugh's friends.

Some intriguing evidence has been introduced but never explained to jurors, who do not have notebooks to keep track of testimony.

A crime scene technician put into evidence a receipt with a \$1,021.10 item from Gucci circled, but it hasn't been brought up since. An FBI technician gave the times Murdaugh's SUV was shifted into and out of park the night of the killings without interpretation.

### THE ACCUSED

A courtroom camera is trained on Alex Murdaugh every moment he is in court. Several cameras wait

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for him as he gets in and out of a prison van each day.

At the beginning of the trial, Murdaugh cried and rocked in his chair several times as crime scene photos of his wife and son were shown and described. Prosecutors and defense have said the aftermath of the shooting was gruesome. Agents testified Paul Murdaugh's brain was detached from his skull with a close range shotgun blast.

Murdaugh has adamantly denied killing his wife and son. His lawyers said he was visiting his ailing mother the night of the murders and police wrongly focused on him from the start.

Murdaugh cried Thursday as the defense showed video of a family birthday party weeks before the killings.

But during the financial crimes testimony, Murdaugh has been much more stoic, listening and occasionally speaking to his lawyers.

## TECHNOLOGICAL WIZARDRY

Within weeks of the killings, state agents wanted data from the SUV Alex Murdaugh drove to visit his mother the night of the killings and from Paul Murdaugh's cellphone.

But both devices were encrypted and impossible to crack in 2021.

Advancements in hacking allowed agents to get into Paul Murdaugh's iPhone data last year and they found one of the key pieces of evidence so far — a video he took of a dog at the family's kennels about five minutes before investigators said the killings took place. Several witnesses have said all three Murdaughs can be heard in the video taken near where the bodies were found.

Alex Murdaugh told police both right after the bodies were found and again a few days later he was never at the kennels.

A FBI agent testified he worked for a year to crack the encrypted data from the computer entertainment and information console on the SUV the family law firm provided Murdaugh.

Along with other information, he extracted the times the vehicle was shifted into and out of park, although he couldn't tell if the vehicle was in motion or someone had their foot on the brake. The agent said he also could tell when the windows were raised or lowered, but never said if that happened during Murdaugh's 20-minute ride to his mother's home the night of the killings.

Maggie Murdaugh's cellphone was recovered from the side of a road the day after the killings.

## Today in History: FEB 12, Abraham Lincoln born in Kentucky

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Feb. 12, the 43rd day of 2023. There are 322 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, was born in a log cabin in Hardin (now LaRue) County, Kentucky.

On this date:

In 1554, Lady Jane Grey, who had claimed the throne of England for nine days, and her husband, Guildford Dudley, were beheaded after being condemned for high treason.

In 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP, was founded.

In 1912, Pu Yi, the last emperor of China, abdicated, marking the end of the Qing Dynasty.

In 1914, groundbreaking took place for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. (A year later on this date, the cornerstone was laid.)

In 1973, Operation Homecoming began as the first release of American prisoners of war from the Vietnam conflict took place.

In 1983, composer-pianist Eubie Blake, who wrote such songs as "I'm Just Wild About Harry" and "Memories of You," died in Brooklyn, New York, five days after turning 100.

In 1999, the Senate voted to acquit President Bill Clinton of perjury and obstruction of justice.

In 2000, Charles M. Schulz, creator of the "Peanuts" comic strip, died in Santa Rosa, California, at age 77.

In 2002, former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic went on trial in The Hague, accused of war crimes

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(he died in 2006 before the trial could conclude).

In 2006, figure skater Michelle Kwan effectively retired from competition as she withdrew from the Turin Olympics due to injury (she was replaced on the U.S. team by Emily Hughes). Snowboarder Shaun White beat American teammate Danny Kass to win the Olympic gold medal.

In 2019, Mexico's most notorious drug lord, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, was convicted in New York of running an industrial-scale smuggling operation; a jury, whose members' identities were kept secret as a security measure, had deliberated for six days. (Guzman is serving a life sentence at the federal supermax prison facility in Florence, Colorado.)

In 2020, Holland America Line said a cruise ship, the MS Westerdam, which had been barred from docking by four governments because of fears of the coronavirus, would arrive the next day in Cambodia. In Japan, officials confirmed 39 new cases on a cruise ship that had been quarantined at Yokohama, bringing the total number of cases on the Diamond Princess to 174.

Ten years ago: The manhunt for a rogue ex-Los Angeles cop Christopher Dorner, who was seeking revenge for his firing, came to an end with his apparent suicide in a mountain cabin following a gunbattle with law enforcement; authorities blamed him for killing four people, including two officers. The U.N. Security Council strongly condemned North Korea's latest nuclear test. IOC leaders dropped wrestling for the 2020 Games in a surprise decision to scrap one of the oldest sports on the Olympic program.

Five years ago: In a retreat from promises to balance the budget, President Donald Trump unveiled a \$4.4 trillion plan that envisioned steep cuts to America's social safety net but mounting military spending; the outline acknowledged that the 2017 Republican tax overhaul would add billions to the deficit. Two Baltimore police detectives were convicted of robbery, racketeering and conspiracy at a trial that was part of a federal probe of corruption among rogue members of the city's police force. The National Portrait Gallery unveiled portraits of former President Barack Obama and his wife, painted by African-American artists chosen by the Obamas. American snowboarder Jamie Anderson won gold in the women's slopestyle event at the Winter Olympics in South Korea.

One year ago: President Joe Biden called on President Vladimir Putin to pull back more than 100,000 Russian troops massed near Ukraine's borders and warned that the U.S. and its allies would "respond decisively and impose swift and severe costs" if Russia invaded. (Russia would invade Ukraine eight days later.) Paris police fired tear gas against a handful of demonstrators on the Champs Elysees Avenue who defied a police order by taking part in a vehicle protest against virus restrictions.

Today's birthdays: Movie director Costa-Gavras is 90. Actor Joe Don Baker is 87. Author Judy Blume is 85. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak is 81. Country singer Moe Bandy is 79. Actor Maud Adams is 78. Actor Cliff DeYoung is 77. Actor Michael Ironside is 73. Rock musician Steve Hackett is 73. Rock singer Michael McDonald is 71. Actor Joanna Kerns is 70. Actor Zach Grenier is 69. Actor-talk show host Arsenio Hall is 67. Actor John Michael Higgins is 60. Actor Raphael Sbarge is 59. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh is 58. Actor Christine Elise is 58. Actor Josh Brolin is 55. Singer Chynna Phillips is 55. Rock musician Jim Creeggan (Barenaked Ladies) is 53. Actor Jesse Spencer is 44. Rapper Gucci Mane is 43. Actor Sarah Lancaster is 43. Actor Christina Ricci is 43. Actor Jennifer Stone is 30. Actors Baylie and Rylie Cregut (TV: "Raising Hope") are 13.