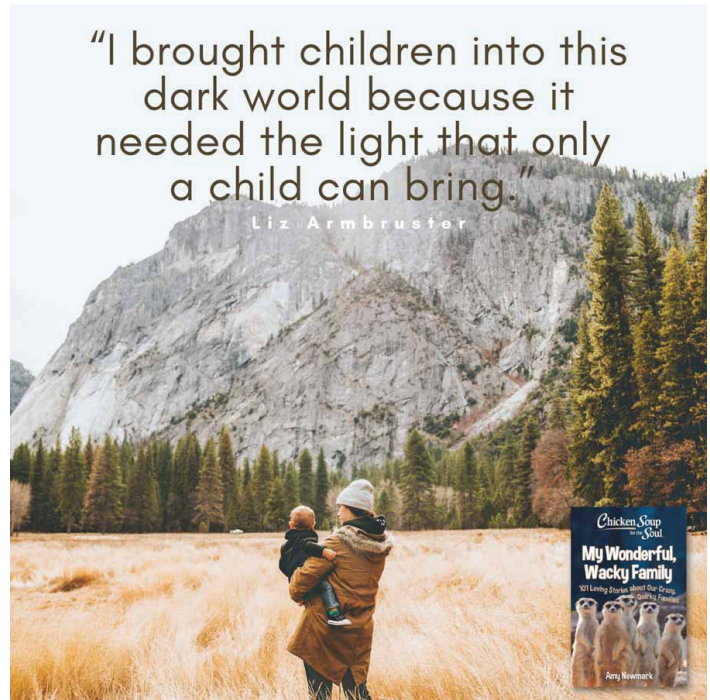


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Groton Community Calendar Sunday, Feb. 26

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

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

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

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Northern Plains Conference meets in Miller, 3 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.

Monday, Feb. 27

Senior Menu: Parmesan chicken breast, baked potato with sour cream, lettuce salad with dressings, peaches, whole wheat bread.

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

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.
School Lunch: Pepperoni pizza, vegetable blend.
Noon.: Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck dinner.
The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
Region 1A GBB at Milbank, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 28

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes with gravy, beets, chocolate cake, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: French toast.
School Lunch: Tacos.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Region 1A Boys Basketball at Groton.
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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Tigers advance to second round regions with win over Mustangs

Groton Area's Lady Tigers advanced to the second round of Region 1A competition with a first round, 55-27, win over Waubay-Summit.

The Mustangs threatened to run away with the game early, jumping out to an 11-0 lead and that forced Coach Matt Locke to use two time-outs. Locke switched everything up in the second time-out and that sparked the Tigers to an 11-point run of their own to tie the game at 11. The Mustangs held on to their lead and led, 14-13, after the first quarter. Groton Area had a 10-point run that went into the second quarter to take the lead, 21-14. After that, the Tigers ruled the game with no threat from the Mustangs. Groton Area led at halftime, 28-18, and after three quarters, 44-21.

Jaedyn Penning nearly had a double-double afternoon with 11 points, nine rebounds and one assist. But it was Sydney Leicht lighting the nets on fire with three three-pointers and leading all scorers with 23 points, one rebound, one assist and three steals. Kennedy Hansen had five points, four rebounds, three assists and three steals. Brooklyn Hansen had five points and one rebound. Faith Traphagen had four points, six rebounds, three assists and two steals. Jerica Locke had three points, three rebounds, three assists and three steals. Talli Wright had two points, one rebound, one assist and one steal. Rylee Dunker had two points, five rebounds, one assist and one steal. Aspen Johnson had two rebounds, two steals and one block shot.



Brooklyn Hansen eyes the basket as she helped to spark the Tigers in the first quarter rally with a three-pointer and a two-pointer.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Jerica Locke prepares to dribble around her defender. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Laila Roberts had two rebounds, one assist and one steal. Elizabeth Flihs had one rebound. Mia Crank had one assist and two steals.

Groton Area made 17 of 39 two-pointers for 44 percent, five of 19 three-pointers for 26 percent, six of eight free throws for 75 percent, had 35 rebounds, 13 turnovers, 15 assists, 18 steals, 11 team fouls and one block shot.

Eva Benike led the Mustangs with 12 points followed by Faith Larson with nine, and Ava Breske, Kailee Berger and Katie Snyder each had two points.

The Mustangs made 10 of 38 field goals for 26 percent, two of six free throws for 33 percent, had 10 team fouls and 20 turnovers.

Groton Area, now 13-8, will play at Milbank on Monday for the second round of the regions against the Bulldogs. Game time is set for 6 p.m. Waubay-Summit finishes its season 9-11.

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The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, with Shane Clark doing the play-by-play and Laura Clark running the camera. Game sponsors were Bahr Spray Foam, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Bierman Farm Service, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Groton Ag Partners, Groton American Legion, Groton Dairy Queen, Groton Chiropractic Clinic, Groton Ford, Harry Implement, John Sieh Agency, Lori's Pharmacy, Love to Travel, Milbrandt Enterprises Inc., S & S Lumber, Weber Landscaping and Weismantel Insurance Agency.

- Paul Kosel



Jaedyn Penning battles through her defender on her way to the basket. (Photo by Paul Kosel)





Brooke Gengerke dribbles around this Waubay-Summit player. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Region 1A Boys Basketball

#1 - Summit School Gym

 1 Waubay/Summit	17-3	2/28 6:00 PM CT
 8 Sisseton	1-19	



#2 - Summit School Gym

 4 Tiospa Zina	10-9	2/28 7:30 PM CT
 5 Aberdeen Ronc...	9-11	

#3 - Groton Area High School

 2 Groton Area	14-5	2/28 6:00 PM CT
 7 Webster Area	4-15	

#4 - Groton Area High School

 3 Milbank	13-7	2/28 7:30 PM CT
 6 Redfield	8-12	

#5 -

#1 WINNER	3/3 TBD
#2 WINNER	

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER



#6 -

#3 WINNER	3/3 TBD
#4 WINNER	

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

Seed Point Averages (calculated Feb. 24)

#1 Waubay/Summit 43.700 - #2 Groton Area 42.368 - #3 Milbank 41.800 - #4 Tiospa Zina 40.684 - #5 Aberdeen Roncalli 39.750 - #6 Redfield 39.200 - #7 Webster Area 37.526 - #8 Sisseton 35.800


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Region 1A Girls Basketball

Class A - Region 1



#1 - Sisseton High School

 1 Sisseton	83	FINAL
 8 Tiospa Zina	46	



#2 - Sisseton High School

 4 Aberdeen Ronc...	45	FINAL
 5 Redfield	32	

#3 - Milbank Armory Gym

 2 Milbank	57	FINAL
 7 Webster Area	39	

#4 - Milbank Armory Gym

 3 Groton Area	55	FINAL
 6 Waubay/Summit	27	



#5 - Sisseton High School

 1 Sisseton	18-2	2/27 6:00 PM CT
 4 Aberdeen Ronc...	11-9	



SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

#6 - Milbank Armory Gym

 2 Milbank	13-7	2/27 6:00 PM CT
 3 Groton Area	13-8	

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

Seed Point Averages (calculated Feb. 17)

#1 Sisseton 44.579 - #2 Milbank 41.526 - #3 Groton Area 41.100 - #4 Aberdeen Roncalli 40.842 - #5 Redfield 40.000 - #6 Waubay/Summit 39.000 - #7 Webster Area 38.474 - #8 Tiospa Zina 37.632

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NSU Wrestling

Wolves Wrestling Sends Three to NCAA National Championships

Aberdeen, S.D. – No. 22 Northern State qualified three for the NCAA National Championships in March and took seventh from the NCAA Super Region V Tournament today in the Barnett Center. Devin Bahr, Cole Huss, and Wyatt Turnquist are headed to the Championships, with Huss and Turnquist making appearances for the second straight season.

Bahr and Huss each advanced to the championship bouts at 157 and 197 pounds, ultimately finishing as the region runner-up. Turnquist fell in the semifinals, but battled back and earned a third place finish at 149 pounds. Landen Fischer was the final placing Wolf, taking fourth in a heavily contested 125-pound weight class.

BAHR'S ROUTE

- The Wolves graduate transfer opened his day with a quarterfinal win over No. 11 Ben Durocher of Wisconsin Parkside, 4-2 in the sudden victory period
- He added a 4-2 decision win over Eric Faught of Upper Iowa, punching his ticket to the national tournament and the championship match
- Bahr faced off against Nick Novak of St. Cloud State who is undefeated this season and ultimately fell in a 4-1 decision

#3 HUSS' ROUTE

- The returning All-American opened his tournament with a 7-1 decision victory over Dustin Swisher of Minot State
- Huss matched up against No. 7 Dalton Hahn in the semifinals and punched his ticket to the national tournament with a 3-2 decision win
- In one of the most exciting championship matches of the evening, Huss battled with No. 10 Dominic Murphy of St. Cloud State and ultimately fell in the first overtime period with a score of 3-1

#8 TURNQUIST'S ROUTE

- The now 2-time national qualifier opened his day in dramatic fashion, defeating Ethen Doty of Upper Iowa by technical fall, 16-0
- The Wolf faced off against No. 6 Jaden Spuhler of Wisconsin Parkside in the semifinals, who he held a 1-1 record with this season
- The match went to the tie-breaker round with Spuhler recording a 3-2 victory over Turnquist and left the Winner native needing two wins to punch his ticket
- Turnquist handily defeated Kelby Armstrong of Minot State in the consolation semifinals with a score of 13-3
- Caleb Meunier was his final opponent of the evening and the two battled to a 4-3 decision in favor of Turnquist

OTHER NOTABLES

- Landen Fischer went 3-2 on the day taking fourth with wins over Clayson Mele of MSU Moorhead (Maj. 16-4), Colby Lopez of Upper Iowa (Dec 3-1), and Paxton Creese of St. Cloud State (injury default at 1:06)
- Kolton Roth tallied 1.5 teams points and went 2-2 with victories over Hunter Hayes of MSU Moorhead (Dec 9-3) and Hunter Pfantz of Southwest Minnesota State (Dec 14-12)
- Chase Bloomquist recorded a win over Lucas Hodges of Southwest Minnesota State (TB-1 7-6) and nearly defeated No. 2 Chase Luensman of Upper Iowa in a 4-3 decision

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FULL REGION RESULTS

125 - Landen Fischer (3-2) placed 4th and scored 12.5 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Landen Fischer (NSU) 3-2 won by major decision over Clayson Mele (MSU Moorhead) 15-14 (MD 16-4)

Quarterfinal - Jaden Verhagen (Mary) 15-9 won by decision over Landen Fischer (NSU) 3-2 (Dec 12-6)

Cons. Round 2 - Landen Fischer (NSU) 3-2 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Round 3 - Landen Fischer (NSU) 3-2 won by decision over Colby Lopez (Upper Iowa) 4-22 (Dec 3-1)

Cons. Semi - Landen Fischer (NSU) 3-2 won by injury default over #5 Paxton Creese (St. Cloud State) 18-5 (Inj. 1:06)

3rd Place Match - Oscar Nellis (Minot State (N.D.)) 4-1 won by decision over Landen Fischer (NSU) 3-2 (Dec 5-4)

133 - Teagan Block (0-2) .

Champ. Round 1 - Teagan Block (NSU) 0-2 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Caleb Meekins (St. Cloud State) 16-6 won by fall over Teagan Block (NSU) 0-2 (Fall 3:24)

Cons. Round 2 - Teagan Block (NSU) 0-2 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Round 3 - #11 Kaden Anderlik (Upper Iowa) 23-11 won by decision over Teagan Block (NSU) 0-2 (Dec 4-2)

141 - Kolton Roth (2-2) place is unknown and scored 1.5 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Kolton Roth (NSU) 2-2 won by decision over Hunter Hayes (MSU Moorhead) 6-17 (Dec 9-3)

Quarterfinal - #5 Tate Murty (Upper Iowa) 27-6 won by fall over Kolton Roth (NSU) 2-2 (Fall 4:56)

Cons. Round 2 - Kolton Roth (NSU) 2-2 won by decision over Hunter Pfantz (Southwest Minn.) 8-16 (Dec 14-12)

Cons. Round 3 - #11 Alyeus Craig (St. Cloud State) 24-5 won by decision over Kolton Roth (NSU) 2-2 (Dec 9-6)

149 - Wyatt Turnquist (3-1) placed 3rd and scored 14.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - #8 Wyatt Turnquist (NSU) 3-1 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - #8 Wyatt Turnquist (NSU) 3-1 won by tech fall over Ethen Doty (Upper Iowa) 13-15 (TF-1.5 6:53 (16-0))

Semifinal - #6 Jalen Spuhler (Wisconsin-Parkside) 27-7 won in tie breaker - 1 over Wyatt Turnquist (NSU) 3-1 (TB-1 3-2)

Cons. Semi - #8 Wyatt Turnquist (NSU) 3-1 won by major decision over Kelby Armstrong (Minot State) 2-3 (MD 13-3)

3rd Place Match - #8 Wyatt Turnquist (NSU) 3-1 won by decision over Caleb Meunier (Minnesota State) 29-10 (Dec 4-3)

157 - Devin Bahr (2-1) placed 2nd and scored 13.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Devin Bahr (NSU) 2-1 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Devin Bahr (NSU) 2-1 won in sudden victory - 1 over #11 Ben Durocher (Wis. Parkside) 21-7 (SV-1 4-2)

Semifinal - Devin Bahr (NSU) 2-1 won by decision over Eric Faught (Upper Iowa) 23-6 (Dec 5-2)

1st Place Match - #2 Nick Novak (St. Cloud State) 23-0 won by decision over Devin Bahr (NSU) 2-1 (Dec 4-1)

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165 - Chase Bloomquist (1-2) place is unknown and scored 0.5 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Chase Bloomquist (NSU) 1-2 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - #10 Anthony Herrera (St. Cloud State) 15-6 won by decision over Chase Bloomquist (NSU) 1-2 (Dec 3-2)
Cons. Round 2 - Chase Bloomquist (NSU) 1-2 won in tie breaker-1 over Lucas Hodges (Southwest Minn.) 10-14 (TB-1 7-6)
Cons. Round 3 - #2 Chase Luensman (Upper Iowa) 28-3 won by decision over Chase Bloomquist (NSU) 1-2 (Dec 4-3)

174 - Kelby Hawkins (0-2) .

Champ. Round 1 - Anthony Castro (MSU Moorhead) 14-12 won by fall over Kelby Hawkins (NSU) 0-2 (Fall 2:46)
Cons. Round 1 - Kelby Hawkins (NSU) 0-2 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 2 - Michael Smith (Minnesota State) 25-11 won by decision over Kelby Hawkins (NSU) 0-2 (Dec 5-3)

184 - Sam Kruger (0-2) .

Champ. Round 1 - Colter Bye (Upper Iowa) 14-9 won by decision over Sam Kruger (NSU) 0-2 (Dec 3-2)
Cons. Round 1 - Sam Kruger (NSU) 0-2 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 2 - #9 Cade Mueller (Augustana) 16-5 won by decision over Sam Kruger (NSU) 0-2 (Dec 3-2)

197 - Cole Huss (2-1) placed 2nd and scored 13.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - #3 Cole Huss (NSU) 2-1 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - #3 Cole Huss (NSU) 2-1 won by decision over Dustin Swisher (Minot State (N.D.)) 3-3 (Dec 7-1)
Semifinal - #3 Cole Huss (NSU) 2-1 won by decision over #7 Dalton Hahn (Upper Iowa) 12-5 (Dec 3-2)
1st Place Match - #10 Dominic Murphy (St. Cloud State) 26-3 won in sudden victory-1 over Cole Huss (NSU) 2-1 (SV-1 3-1)

285 - Nathan Schauer (0-2) .

Champ. Round 1 - #9 Zach Ryg (Upper Iowa) 21-7 won by decision over Nathan Schauer (NSU) 0-2 (Dec 4-0)
Cons. Round 1 - Nathan Schauer (NSU) 0-2 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 2 - Zach Peterson (Augustana) 14-12 won by decision over Nathan Schauer (NSU) 0-2 (Dec 9-5)

UP NEXT

The Wolves three national qualifiers will take on the NCAA National Championships slated for March 10 and 11 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

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NSU Men's Basketball

No. 18 Wolves Advance to Face Winner of UIU and UMD

Sioux Falls, S.D. – It is on to the semifinals for the No. 18 Northern State University men's basketball team. The Wolves battled with Minot State for the second straight game, coming away with a 5-point quarterfinal victory.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 65, MISU 60

Records: NSU 24-5, MISU 11-17

Attendance: 1111

HOW IT HAPPENED

- Northern trailed 27-25 at the half, however a 40-point final 20 minutes pushed the Wolves to victory
- After shooting just over 30% in the first half, the Wolves bounced back knocking down 15-of-28 (53.6%) from the floor, including six made 3-pointers
- NSU closed out the contest shooting 42.4% from the floor, 30.3% from the 3-point line, and 71.4% from the foul line
- Both teams recorded 31 rebounds in the game with Northern notching 11 second chance points off seven offensive boards
- In addition, the Wolves recorded 11 assists, ten made 3-pointers, four blocks, and three steals
- They scored 26 points in the paint and ten points off turnovers
- Jordan Belka and Sam Masten led all five starters in double figures scoring 15 and 14 points respectively
- Belka pulled down a double-double with ten rebounds, shooting 50.0% from the floor

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Jordan Belka: 15 points, 50.0 field goal%, 10 rebounds, 1 assist, 1 block
- Sam Masten: 14 points, 54.5 field goal%, 8 rebounds, 5 assists, 1 block
- Jacksen Moni: 10 points, 3 rebounds, 3 assists, 2 blocks, 2 steals
- Josh Dilling: 12 points, 3 assists, 1 steal
- Augustin Reede: 11 points

UP NEXT

Northern State continues action in the NSIC Tournament on Monday, February 27 at 4:30 p.m. from the Sanford Pentagon. The Wolves will face the winner of Upper Iowa and Minnesota Duluth played on Sunday.

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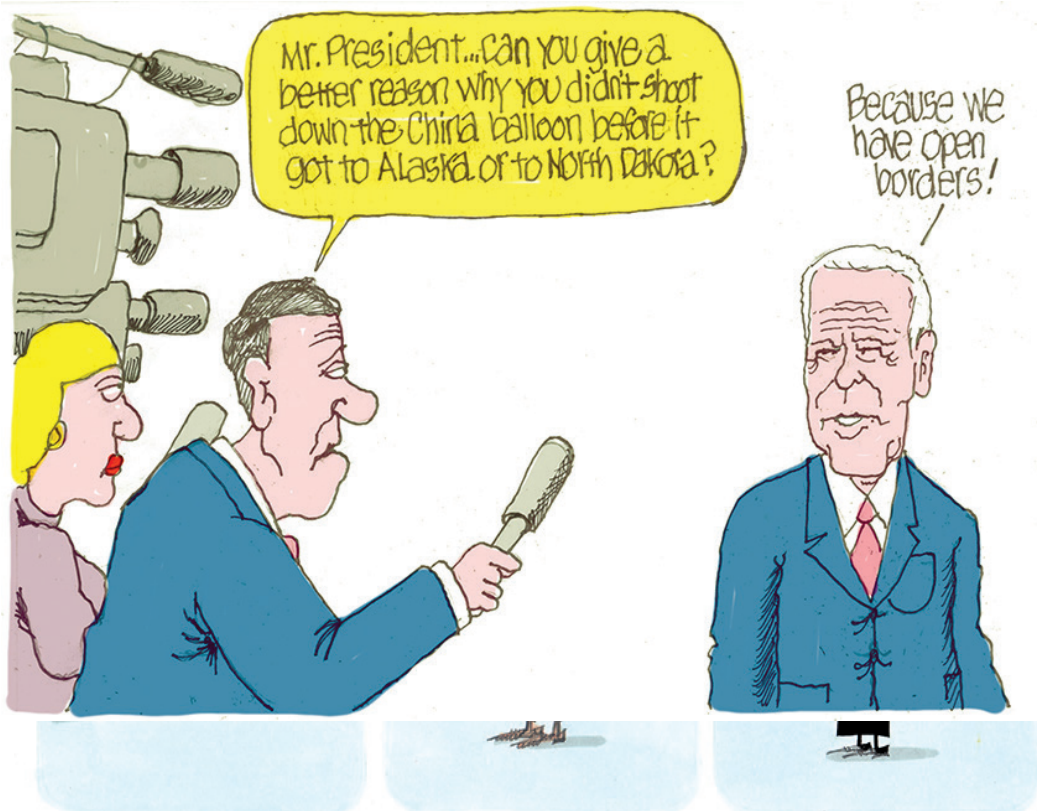
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

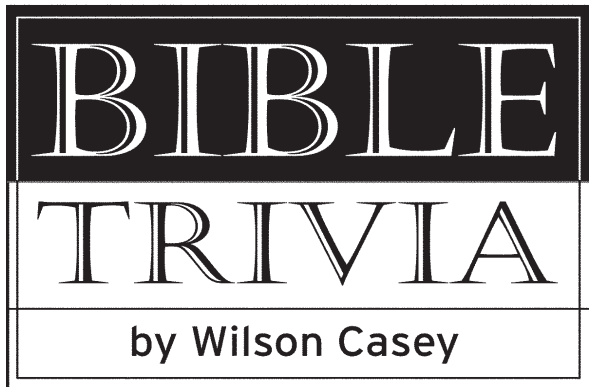
*Yield now
and be at peace with Him;
thereby good will come to you.
Please receive instruction
from His mouth
and establish His words
in your heart.*

🌀 JOB 22: 21-22 🌀



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

2. What perfectly square “new” city is described as having walls made of Jasper? *Jerusalem, Jericho, Paphos, Gibeon*

3. From 1 Samuel, what Philistine soldier was slain by a boy? *Joab, Abishai, Dan, Goliath*

4. On which “Mount” did Jesus deliver his final discourse? *Zion, Olives, Carmel, Pisgah*

5. In which book is the phrase, “Could eat a horse”? *None, Acts, Ruth, Ephesians*

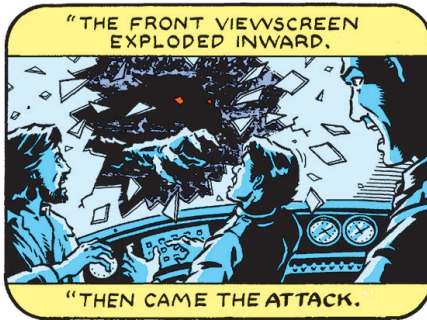
6. Which friend of Jesus was buried in a cave? *Sisera, Joshua, Lazarus, Arioach*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Jerusalem, 3) Goliath, 4) Olives, 5) None, 6) Lazarus

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

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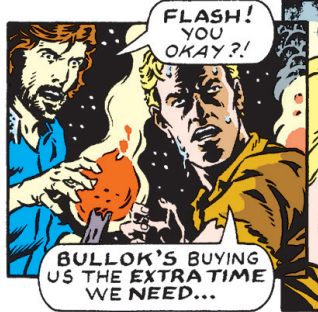
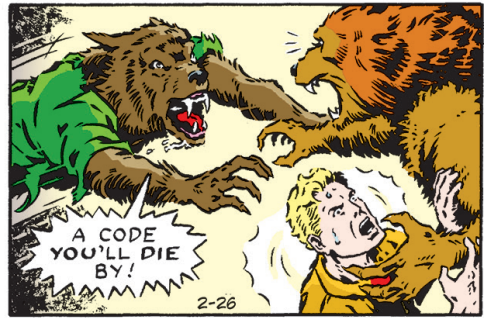
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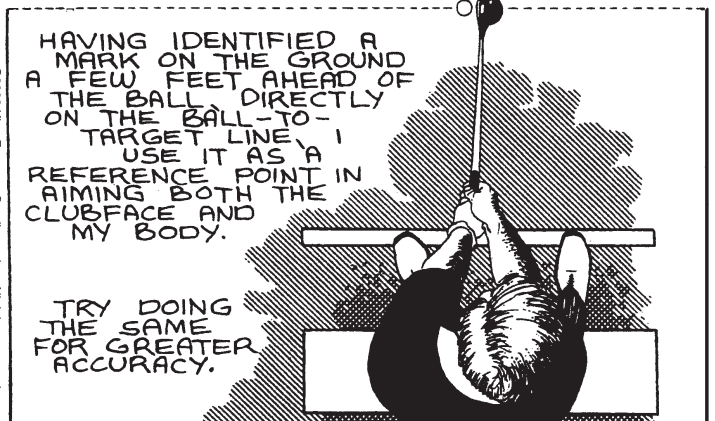
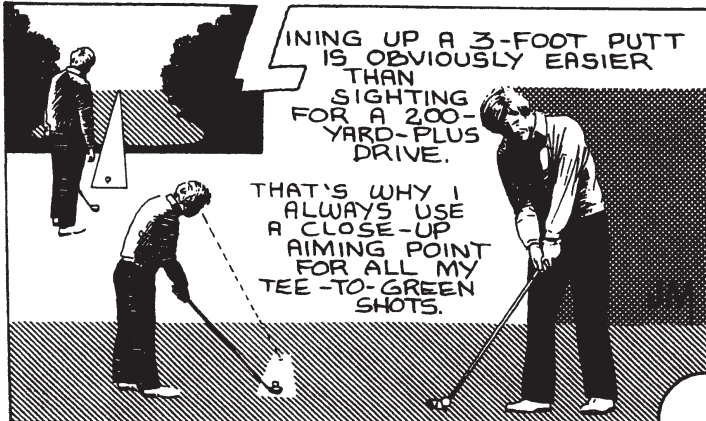
FLASH GORDON

BY JIM KEEFE

AT THE SIGHT OF THE SHE-WOLF SAPPHIRE, BULLOK'S HUMAN MEMORY RESURFACES!



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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Statins and Thiazides Acutely Increase Blood Sugar, Risk of Diabetes

DEAR DR. ROACH: My question regards the results of my fasting glucose tests for the past couple of years. I am 81 and weigh around 150 pounds. The medications I am taking concern me, with relevance to the A1C levels of my quarterly blood work. My A1C levels have mostly been near mid-5%; the last showed 6%. Medications relevant to this that I am suspicious of are 100-12.5 mg of losartan/hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ) and 20 mg of simvastatin. I have read that these medications can have an effect of raising blood glucose. My doctor is adamant that this does not exist, but it seems to me that there is a conflict on this.

Should I perhaps ask him to change those medications because of my blood sugar? I am concerned about issues with the thiazide and the statin. — P.R.

ANSWER: There isn't a conflict. You are absolutely right that both simvastatin (like all statins) and HCTZ (like all thiazides) increase blood sugar and the risk of diabetes. The risk, however, is small. For thiazides, the risk of high blood sugar seems tied to potassium levels — the lower the potassium, the higher the risk of diabetes. Interestingly, the losartan in combination with the HCTZ you are taking tend to raise potassium levels, so that combination may have a lower risk of worsening blood sugar levels than taking HCTZ alone. You are already taking the smallest effective dose of thiazide.

The risk of statins seems greater in higher doses and with more potent statins, like atorvastatin and rosuvastatin; however, the risk is still small. About one person in 100 treated with a high-dose intensive statin, such as

would be expected to get diabetes, while a dosage of 20 mg of simvastatin would be expected to have an even lower risk.

The conflict isn't whether the increased risk exists (it does), but whether the treatments to prevent heart attack and stroke are worth the increased risk. For nearly all people, the benefit of keeping blood pressure and cholesterol under control greatly outweighs the small increased risk of diabetes.

Given your normal A1C level, I would say your risk is low, and I do not generally recommend changing treatment based on your concern over blood sugar.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 64-year-old man who recently had an ultrasound of my kidney to rule out any kidney stones. The ultrasound was negative for stones, but the radiologist noted a 2.3-cm echogenic nodule in the right lobe of my liver. The final impression was an incidental hemangioma in the liver. I was concerned, so I received an AFP (alfa-fetoprotein) test, which came back at 1.8 ng/mL.

Is an echogenic nodule/incidental hemangioma a reason to have further testing? — M.S.

ANSWER: Sensitive imaging studies, especially CT scans and MRIs, often reveal abnormalities that lead to a quandary of whether to get additional testing. For a mass found in the liver by ultrasound, if it is less than 3 cm and meets the radiologic criteria for a hemangioma, no further testing needs to be done in people at low risk for liver cancer (such as people with hepatitis C or cirrhosis). As long as these hemangiomas cause no symptoms, they do not get treated.

The alfa-fetoprotein test is a blood test that, when producing abnormally high results, helps signify several types of cancers, including hepatocellular carcinoma (classic liver cancer) as well as germ cell tumors (cancers of the reproductive cells, which usually occur in the gonads but can occur in the liver or elsewhere in the body). Your level is normal and not concerning.

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

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"Shrinking" (TV-MA) -- Therapist Jimmy Laird (Jason Segel) is grieving the loss of his wife and the void she left behind, especially her role as a mother to their daughter, Alice. Since his job mostly consists of making other people feel heard, Jimmy tries his best to swallow his feelings and continue to help his clients. But at a certain point, there's only so much a person can take. So, one day, Jimmy decides to stop holding back his tongue and tells his clients exactly the kind of tough love they need to hear. Is it ethical? Eh. But

does it make a difference? Definitely. With this new approach, Jimmy is able to start working through his own grief while assisting others to do the same. The first six episodes of the series are out now, with the upcoming four releasing weekly in the coming days. (AppleTV+)

"The Consultant" (NR) -- Academy Award winner Christoph Waltz ("Django Unchained") stars in this bingeable comedy thriller series out now. Waltz plays Regus Patoff, a consultant who gets hired to head the mobile game studio CompWare after CompWare's CEO gets murdered mysteriously. Regus' job as consultant is to "observe, streamline and improve," but he starts shaking up the office in a way that confuses and intrigues the studio's employees. His oddness provokes two employees, Craig and Elaine, to start questioning his motives and his ties to the CEO's death, as Regus broadens the lengths necessary for them to keep their jobs. Nat Wolff ("The Fault in Our Stars") and Brittany O'Grady ("The White Lotus") also star in this twisty series, which was originally based on Bentley Little's 2015 novel of the same name. (Prime Video)

"Perfect Match" (TV-14) -- Move over, "Love Island" and "Too Hot to Handle." Hosted by Nick Lachey, this new series is adding an extra layer of drama to an already dramatic premise -- a reality dating show. A group of contestants staying at a villa must pair up among themselves to share a suite together each night, but the contestants who win at the daily challenges get control of the board, which gives them the power to break other couples up or bring in new people. At the end of their time in the villa, the participants themselves will decide which couple is truly a perfect match. As if that isn't enough chaos, most of the participants have already been featured in other reality dating shows like "The Circle" and "The Ultimatum," so this isn't their first rodeo. The first eight episodes are available to stream now, with the last four premiering Feb. 28. (Netflix)



Christoph Waltz is Regus Patoff in "The Consultant."

Courtesy of Prime Video

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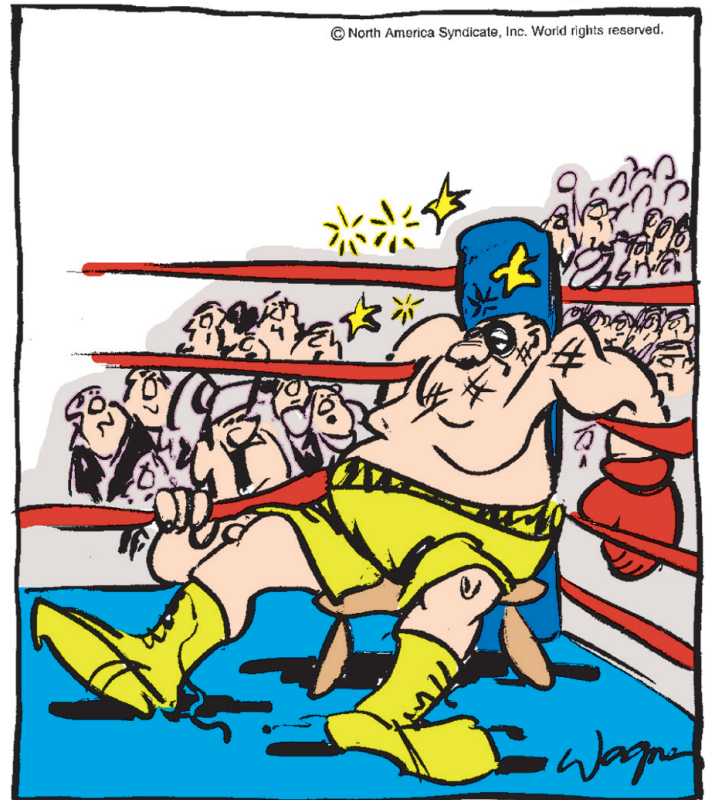
1. Name the group that had a Top Ten hit with "Let Me Love You Tonight."
2. What was Billy Joel's first No. 1 chart topper?
3. Where did Gogi Grant get her first name?
4. Name the artist who wrote and released "Against the Wind."
5. Name the song that contains these lyrics: "I want you to come back and carry me home, Away from these long, lonely nights."

Answers

1. Pure Prairie League, in 1980. Vince Gill sang lead before launching his solo career as a country singer.
2. "Just the Way You Are," in 1977. The song took two Grammy awards for both Record of the Year and Song of the Year in 1979.
3. A record producer changed her first name to Gogi, after the name of a restaurant. Her hit "The Wayward Wind" stayed at the top of the charts for six weeks in 1956.
4. Bob Seger, in 1980.
5. "All Out of Love," by Air Supply, in 1980. The first line of the chorus was originally written as "I'm all out of love, I want to arrest you" but the group was convinced to change it to "I'm all out of love, I'm so lost without you."

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GRIN and BEAR IT *Wagner*



"Hang on one more round ... I've got 12 more bags of peanuts!"

Just Like Cats & Dogs

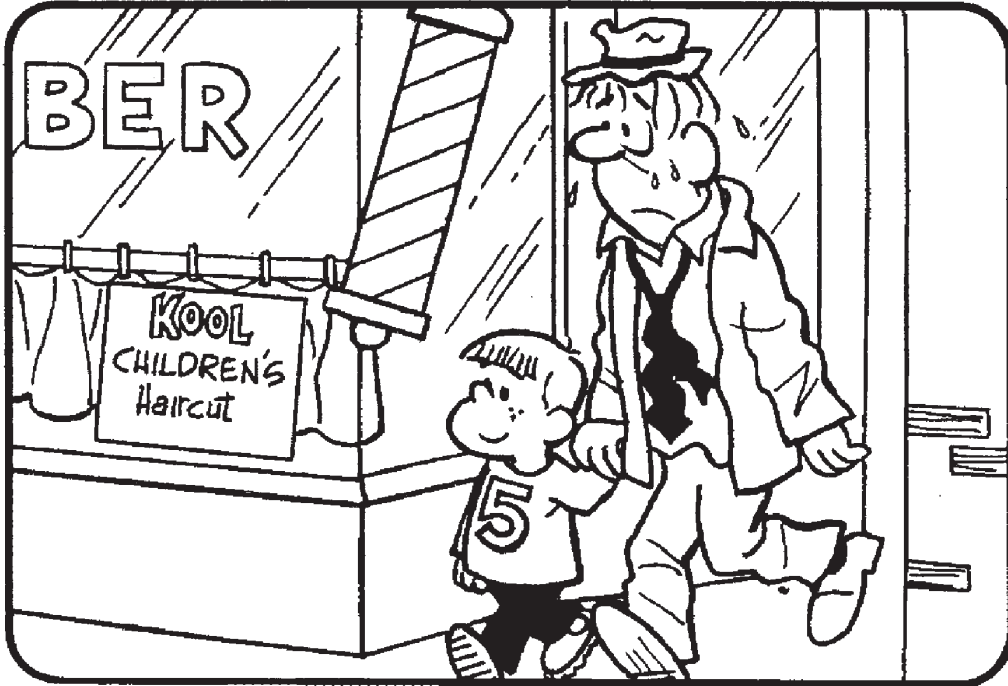
by Dave T. Phipps



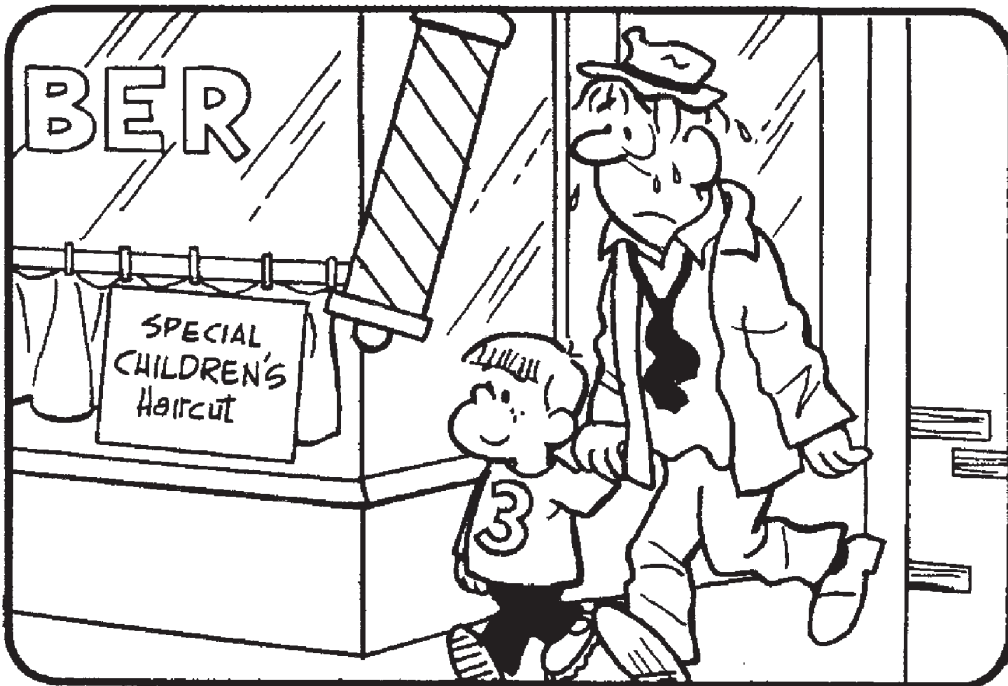
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Sign is different. 2. Drape is shorter. 3. Pole stripes are reversed. 4. Number is different. 5. Hat is moved. 6. Tie is shorter.

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by
Jo Ann
Derson

* If you have a plastic-bristle broom that is starting to get really ragged and it's time to replace it, don't get rid of it. Turn it into a scrub broom. Trim the bristles down to about an inch. You can even cut them at an angle. Then you can use this broom to scrub stubborn spots. The bristles are nice and tight when they are so short.

* Check your windshield wiper blades. Are they smeary? Before you replace them, use a paper towel and rubbing alcohol to clean the blades. They might have life left in them yet!

* Still fire season in your neck of the woods? Most of us know not to burn magazine inserts or anything plastic, but did you know that you CAN add some spice to your fire? Save the peel from your citrus fruits (oranges, tangerines, grapefruit -- even lemons and limes) to add to your fire. They burn well, and they smell great!

* "We had a piece of linoleum left over when we replaced the kitchen flooring. It was almost a perfect size to put over our picnic table. We use it for crafts and whenever we don't want anything to fall through the boards. It stores neatly against the wall behind our outdoor shelves when we aren't using it!" -- R. in Minnesota

* If you have a light bulb that has broken off in the socket and you need to get it out to replace it, use needle-nose pliers to grab the metal ring and unscrew it. Be sure to turn the light off first! If that doesn't work, you might be able to use a bar of soap to grab any glass shards sticking out, and unscrew it that way.

* "When I put on my stockings, I put on my dish gloves first. It sounds silly, but I do not have any snags in my stockings, and the grip of the gloves makes them easy to pull up and adjust for a perfect fit." -- W.M. in New York

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 Pirate's chart
- 4 "Shark Tank" network
- 7 Clench
- 11 Misfortunes
- 13 Monk's title
- 14 Jeans maker Strauss
- 15 Grabbed
- 16 Sailor
- 17 Opposite of "sans"
- 18 Lukewarm
- 20 Soft shoes, for short
- 22 Egg yolk
- 24 Give
- 28 Limo alternative
- 32 Orange variety

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	
11			12		13			14				
15					16			17				
18				19		20		21				
			22		23		24			25	26	27
28	29	30				31		32				
33					34		35		36			
37				38		39		40				
41					42		43					
			44			45		46		47	48	49
50	51	52			53		54		55			
56					57				58			
59					60					61		

- 33 Online auction site
- 34 "Kapow!"
- 36 Traditional tales
- 37 Winter woes
- 39 Lauded
- 41 Balloon filler
- 43 Little rascal
- 44 Beseech
- 46 Speak one's mind
- 50 Big swig
- 53 Profit
- 55 Alike (Fr.)
- 56 Sheltered
- 57 — Jima
- 58 Activist Parks
- 59 Twinkler in the sky
- 60 Venomous viper
- 61 Campaigned
- DOWN**
- 1 Catcher's aid
- 2 Skin soother
- 3 Fall into a soft chair
- 4 Astern
- 5 "Dracula" author Stoker
- 6 Ersatz chocolate
- 7 Fairy-tale footwear
- 8 Speed (up)
- 9 "— had it!"
- 10 Photo, for short
- 12 Swimmer without a suit
- 19 Medico
- 21 Biz bigwig
- 23 Prattle
- 25 New Mexico resort
- 26 Shrek, for one
- 27 Garden intruder
- 28 Georgia or Cal
- 29 Bassoon's kin
- 30 Humpty's perch
- 31 Knock
- 35 Hosp. scan
- 38 California's Big —
- 40 I love (Lat.)
- 42 Craze
- 45 Evergreen trees
- 47 Mr. Stravinsky
- 48 "Apollo 13" org.
- 49 Panache
- 50 Tank filler
- 51 Last (Abbr.)
- 52 Meadow
- 54 Spinning toy

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— King Crossword —

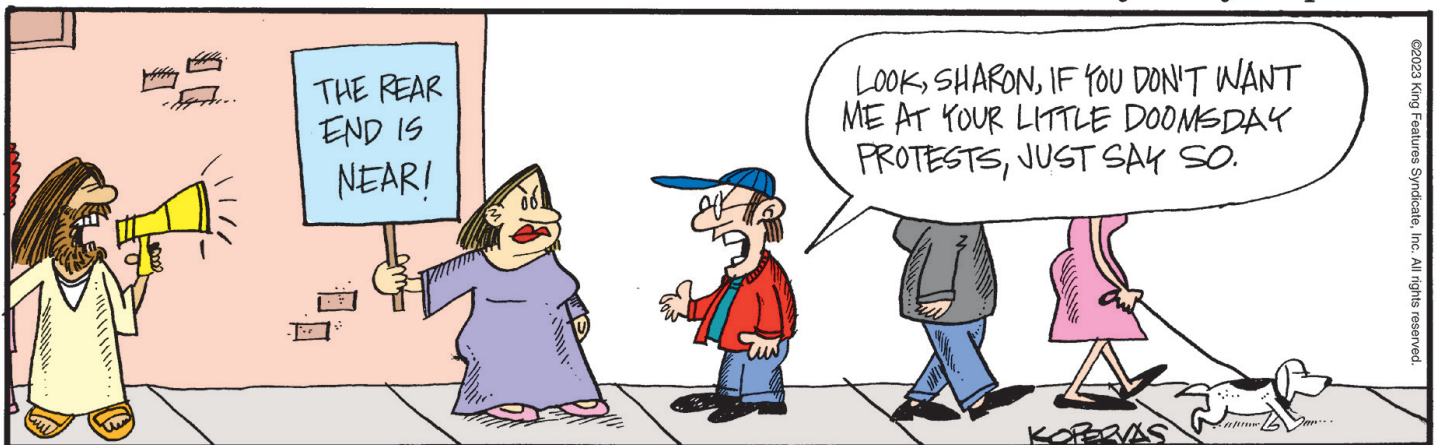
Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

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

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS
POPEYE
BY RANDY MILHOLLAND

BILL... BILL... SECOND ATTEMPT... BILL-

"THIS IS YOUR FOURTH FINAL NOTICE! THAT'S A RARE COLLECTIBLE!"

I AIN'T SURE YA SHOULD BE COLLECTIN' DEBT LETTERS LIKE TRADIN' CARDS.

YOU SAID THE SAME THING ABOUT MY ANXIETY COLLECTION!

I SUPPORT YOU IN YOUR HOBBIES!

WAIT A SECOND! IS THAT HER?!

IT IS! IT'S THE SAME OLIVE OYL WHO BECAME UNFATHOMABLY WEALTHY?!

THE ONE AND ONLY!

IS IT TRUE YOUR WEALTH IS SO VAST YOU NO LONGER HAVE A STUDENT LOAN?!

EVEN WEALTHIER!

ARE YOU SO RICH YOU NEVER GET DEBT CALLS THAT YOU MIGHT OWN YOUR OWN HOME?

EVEN BETTER THAN THAT!

I'M NOW SO RICH...

... I HAVE A BELIEVABLE CHANCE OF RETIRING ONE DAY!

POOF!

WOW! THAT WAS THE BEST DREAM I'VE HAD IN FOREVER!

WHY IS THAT SO DEPRESSING TO HEAR OUT LOUD?

BARNEY GOOGLE AND
SNUFFY SMITH

IF'N YO'RE BORED 'ROUN' HERE, JUGHAID, IT'S YORE OWN DANG FAULT 'CUZ THAR'S PLENTY'A THINGS...

TO AVOID DOIN' !!

NUTHIN' EXCITIN' EVER HAPPENS 'ROUN' HERE !!

WELL, EXCITEMENT DON'T ALWAYS JEST HAPPEN, JUGHAID !!

SOMETIMES YA GOTTA MAKE IT HAPPEN !!

ER, I'M EXERCISIN' M'FIFTH AMENDMENT ON THAT'UN, MAW !!

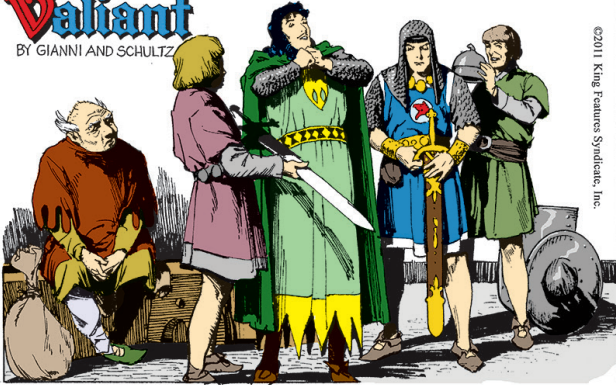
WHAR'S JUGHAID OFF TO IN SUCH A HURRY, PAW ?!

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Hal Foster's
Prince Valiant
By Gianni and Schultz

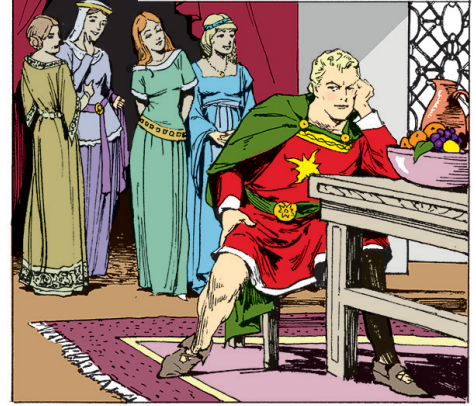
AS VAL AND GAWAIN MERRILY PREPARE FOR THEIR GREAT MISSION TO RID ILLWYNDE OF THE RAMPAGING GOLEM...



... WORD OF HER HUSBAND'S NEW VENTURE WENDS ITS WAY THROUGH THE HALLS TO ALETA'S ATTENTIVE EARS. SHE NOTES OOM'S STORY OF THE THUNDERSTORM.



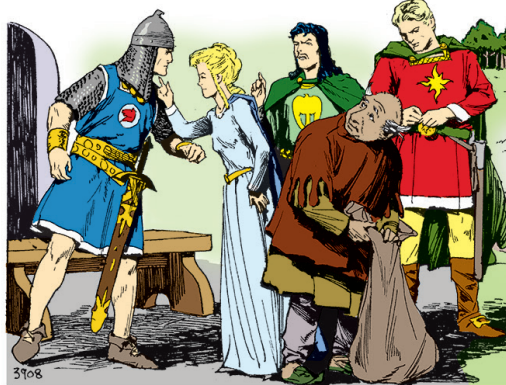
THE SAME STORM THAT BROUGHT THE TROUBLED STRANGER TO CAMELOT.



SHE DECIDES TO TRUST HER INTUITION: "COME, ST. GEORGE!" FOR SO SHE HAS COME TO CALL HIM - "ANOTHER CHANCE FOR YOU MEN TO BE HEROIC!"



ALETA MUST ARGUE HER NOTION TO VAL AND, OF COURSE, HE MUST ARGUE AGAINST IT, BUT IN THE END NO ONE IS SURPRISED ...



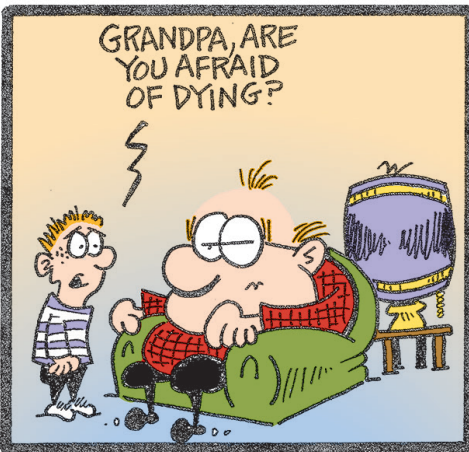
... TO SEE ALETA AND THE STRANGER JOIN THE FORAY TO ILLWYNDE. EVEN VAL SEEMS TO QUIETLY APPROVE.



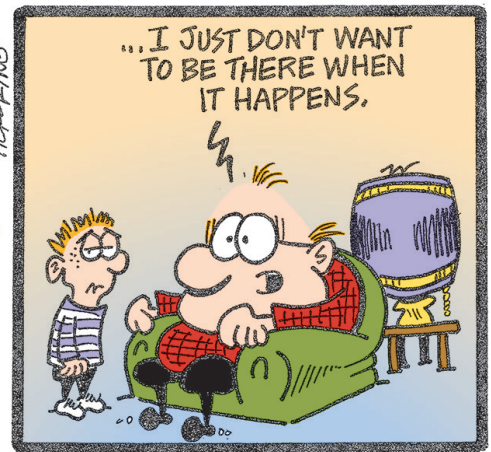
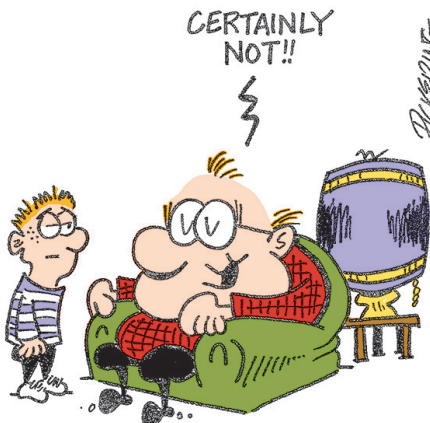
NEXT:
The new
St. George

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Shrinkflation: Beating Them at Their Own Game

“Shrinkflation.” That’s a word that’s been in the news lately, and one that we need to pay attention to.

We know prices are increasing on our groceries. We see it every time we look at the price tags on the shelves when we shop, and certainly at the checkout. But shrinkflation is a different thing and can be harder to spot. Shrinkflation is sneaky price increases.

In shrinkflation, the prices don’t go up, but what we get comes down. This is impacting most things across grocery stores, including dairy, shampoo, meats, frozen foods, toilet paper, pet food, pastries, candy bars, laundry detergent, sliced cheese, tea bags ... well, everything.

Example: The price of a can of beans stays the same, but we get fewer ounces. Example: The price of a loaf of bread stays the same, but it’s smaller. Same with cereal, which you’ll have noticed when the box sizes changed.

In my case, one particular item (frozen meatballs) at my local store dropped from 64 meatballs to 56 ... fewer for the same money.

Keep an eye on the unit pricing on the tag on the grocery store shelf. Yes, it’s in tiny print (which is one reason to carry a small magnifying glass at all times), but the numbers will tell you the unit price per fluid ounce, pound or count. Over time you’ll be able to see if you’re getting less for your money.

Look at generics to save money (and, in many cases, get a better product) or just change brands. Buy more than one if the price is good, but watch the expiration dates.

Lastly, consider signing up for a store’s loyalty card if you get cash benefits for doing so, and sign up for the emailed weekly sales flyer to shop from.

By shopping carefully, we can beat them at their own game.

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1. The media center at the U.S. Open Tennis tournament is named in honor of what flamboyantly dressed journalist and sportscaster?

2. What 1972 arcade video game from Atari was based on table tennis?

3. Bucky the Bison is the official mascot of what Patriot League university's athletic programs?

4. What document sold for \$4,338,500 at a Sotheby's auction in December 2010?

5. Name the French road cyclist who won 10 Grand Tour races, including five Tour de France victories, from 1978-85.

6. Former Major League Baseball pitcher Roberto Hernandez went by what name before his visa from the Dominican Republic was discovered to be fraudulent in 2012?

7. According to Abe Simpson (voice of Dan Castellaneta) in a 1995 episode of "The Simpsons," what NFL great has "a haircut you could set your watch to"?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. Bud Collins.

2. "Pong."

3. Bucknell University.

4. James Naismith's original rules of basketball.

5. Bernard Hinault.

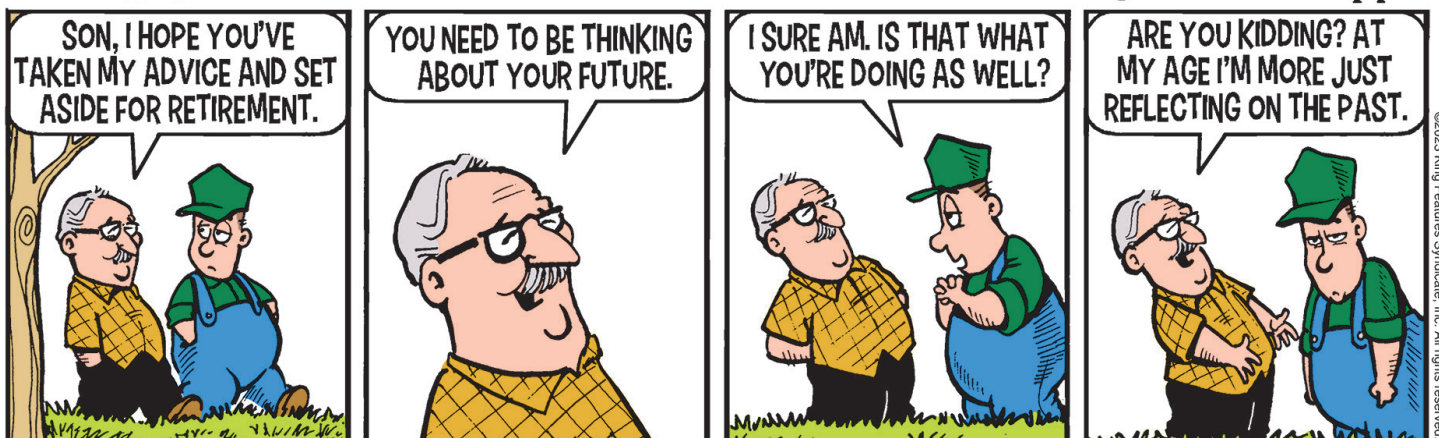
6. Fausto Carmona.

7. Johnny Unitas.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Clicker Training Can Help Your Dog Love to Learn

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: What is the value of training dogs using a clicker? I have tried using a clicker to train my dog Atlas, but he didn't listen very well. When should I click at him -- when he's misbehaving? Or when he's doing something right? And how can he tell? -- John H., Springfield, Massachusetts

DEAR JOHN: Clicker training, or "mark and reward" training, can seem almost magical in terms of how quickly and enthusiastically a dog learns. But that magic only happens when it's being done correctly.

Basically, you press the clicker device when your dog does precisely the thing that you are trying to train him to do. And you follow up immediately (like, within a second) with a reward -- usually a little bit of a treat. So, here's how it is done:

- Decide on one behavior that you want your dog to learn in your training session. Start with a basic behavior, like "sit," "come here," "lie down" or "give paw."
- Give Atlas the command. If he doesn't follow the command, don't click.
- As soon as he follows the command, click once and give him a little treat.
- Repeat the process again and again until he follows the command immediately.

By associating the clicker noise with a command and a reward, Atlas will quickly build a positive association with the command. This works for many types of training, from basic obedience to agility to job-specific commands. But you start with just one command at a time.

Also, consider working with a trainer, either one on one or in a group training setting. You'll pick up many training skills quickly. It's worth the investment.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* Think money doesn't grow on trees? Try telling that to a certain dog in Colombia. After seeing students pass money to a food stall attendant, the enterprising pooch began a regular practice of "paying" for dog biscuits with tree leaves.

* In a few American cities, Halloween was originally called "Cabbage Night." The name came from a Scottish fortune-telling game in which girls would use cabbage stumps to predict the identity of their future husband.

* Best-selling author Maya Angelou was San Francisco's first Black streetcar conductor.

* Sea sponges, like humans, sneeze to clear their internal filter systems. Unlike humans, such sneezes last about half an hour.

* In the 18th century, some wealthy folks with gardens decorated their plots with "ornamental hermits" -- actual people whom they paid to dress like a Druid (however they took that to look) and wander around their estates.

* America's eighth president, Martin Van Buren, tried to keep a pair of tiger cubs given to him by the Sultan of Oman, but Congress made him send them to the zoo.

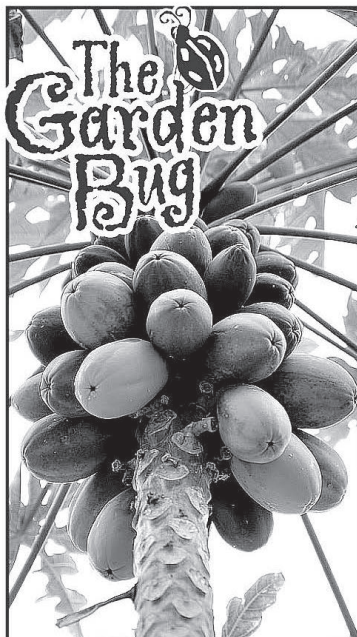
* The space between the bottom of a cabinet and the floor is called the toe kick.

* "Chess boxing" is a sport in which opponents alternate between rounds of chess and boxing until either competitor is checkmated or knocked out.

* In 2004, Alice Pike tried to use a fake \$1 million bill to purchase \$1,675 worth of merchandise at Walmart, expecting to receive change from the undoubtedly startled cashier. Well, she did think the bill was genuine ... as she remarked (from jail), "You can't keep up with the U.S. Treasury."

* The WD-40 Company never patented the WD-40 formula in order to avoid having to publicly disclose its trade-secret ingredients.

Thought for the Day: "Stay in your own lane. Comparison kills creativity and joy." -- Brene Brown



Growing papaya

For these plants you will need a frost-free climate, lots of sunlight, water and very good soil. Cut a papaya in half, scrape out the seeds, and sow them in the location you've chosen. Some will be "male" (long, thin stalks with several small blooms) or "female" (single blooms, bigger, and very close to the trunk); you only need one male for every 10-15 female plants. They flower at about 3 feet tall. You may be picking the first ripe fruit within 10 months.

- Brenda Weaver

Source: www.tropicalpermaculture.com



by Freddy Groves

Honor Flights 2023

By the time you read this, the first Honor Flights of the year will be taking place.

Honor Flights are free trips to Washington, D.C., for veterans, a day of visiting the memorials and monuments dedicated to their service. The trips leave from one of 124 hubs around the country, with all details managed by a crew of volunteers. In 2022, there were 21,800 veterans who made the Honor Flights and 18,709 guardians with them. Since starting in 2005, Honor Flights have escorted over a quarter of

a million veterans on these trips.

Because of the ages of elderly veterans, flights are currently restricted to veterans from the World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War eras.

For those not near a hub, or for those in the five states without hubs, there is the Lone Eagle program (loneeagle.honorflight.org). Any veteran is eligible, but priority is given to veterans from the World War II, Korean War and Vietnam eras. Each veteran needs to have a guardian along on the trip. Children or grandchildren are eligible, but they must be 18 years or older.

For veterans who are seriously ill (and who have less than one year to live), there is the TLC program. TLC in this case is taken to mean Their Last Chance -- veterans who might not have time in the future to make a regular Honor Flight. Each TLC veteran needs to have one guardian, a trained caregiver who will manage all the required medical care for that veteran. The costs are picked up by a donor. For specific info, contact Bobbie Bradley at 937-521-2400 ext 104.

To see the 2023 schedule and learn more about Honor Flights, go to www.honorflight.org.

Will you open your wallet to send a few dollars to Honor Flights to help more veterans make the trip? They're a nonprofit with a four-star Charity Navigator rating. You can donate online at the website or send a check to Honor Flight, Box L-4016, Columbus, OH 43260-4016.

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Wishing Well®

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

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

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1. GEOGRAPHY: Which river flows through the European capitals of Vienna and Budapest?
2. SCIENCE: At what temperature are Fahrenheit and Celsius equal?
3. TELEVISION: The comedy series "Frasier" is a spinoff of which sitcom?
4. LITERATURE: Which novel features a character named Katniss Everdeen?
5. FOOD & DRINK: What kind of beans are used in falafel?
6. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a beaver's home called?
7. THEATER: Which musical features a character named Tracy Turnblad?
8. MOVIES: Which actress plays the young Wendy Darling in the movie "Hook"?
9. HISTORY: Who invented the game of lacrosse?
10. SCIENCE: What percentage of the world's population has brown eyes?

Answers

1. The Danube River.
2. -40.
3. "Cheers."
4. "The Hunger Games."
5. Chickpeas or fava beans.
6. A lodge, or a den.
7. "Hairspray."
8. Gwyneth Paltrow.
9. Iroquois tribes in the eastern United States and Canada.
10. 70%-80%.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Mount Rushmore: Preserving Freedom in America

The celebration of Presidents' Day always brings attention to South Dakota. When people think of our state, they think of Mount Rushmore – and rightly so. In a lot of ways, that mountain is a symbol of American Freedom. It presents the faces of four leaders that fought for and expanded our nation's founding ideal of the inalienable rights to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.

President Washington fought a war to secure these American ideals. President Jefferson famously wrote them down. President Teddy Roosevelt, my favorite president, sent our Navy around the world to show how strong that Freedom has made us. And President Lincoln fought to deliver Freedom for every single American.

The first carving of Mount Rushmore happened in 1927, when President Coolidge handed Gutzon Borglum a set of drill bits. President Coolidge famously said, "this memorial will be another national shrine to which future generations will repair to declare their continuing allegiance to independence, to self-government, to freedom and to economic justice." He also spoke of the strength of the American spirit in the people of South Dakota – something that I still see every single day.

It would be 14 years before Mount Rushmore was completed, but it was well worth the wait. That carving in the Black Hills serves as a reminder not only of what our nation has been through and what we have endured, but as a beacon of hope for our future. It represents the foundational truths upon which America was founded – the same principles that I strive to live by every day.

Unfortunately, today, traditional American ideals are being put on the back burner. National leaders prioritize the defense of other countries above the security of our own borders. Politicians use fear to motivate Americans to shelter in place rather than trusting them to make the best choices for themselves and their families. And the current administration put American security at risk when they let a spy balloon sent by Communist China travel across the entire country before taking any action.

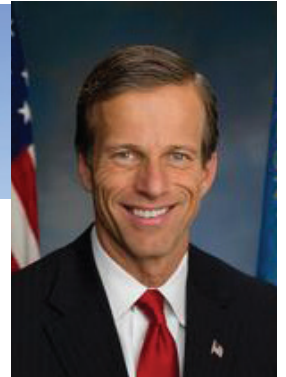
Not in South Dakota.

In South Dakota we value our small-town morals. We protect our people and help build strong families, and then we trust those families to exercise their personal responsibility and make the best choices for themselves. In our state, it's simple – less government, more Freedom.

President Teddy Roosevelt said that "it is a mere truism that every nation, whether in America or anywhere else, which desires to maintain its freedom, its independence, must ultimately realize that the right of such independence cannot be separated from the responsibility of making good use of it." In South Dakota, we maintain our Freedom and our independence by making good use of it. And I can promise that during my time as Governor, I will never infringe upon the inalienable rights of every single South Dakotan.

It is important that we remember our great leaders, that we honor their legacy by preserving the ideals that are at the very heart of this great American experiment in democracy. Presidents' Day reminds us of the great U.S. presidents, but what's even more important is the nation that they built. We must work to protect that nation every single day – to keep the American Dream alive. And that's exactly what we're doing right here in South Dakota.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Choose "All-of-the-Above" for a Secure Energy Future

America's energy security depends on our ability to produce reliable and affordable energy at home. President Biden and Democrats' Green New Deal agenda to prematurely transition from conventional energy, like oil and natural gas, entirely to renewable power would undermine our energy security, as it has already begun to do. The truth is we can't rely solely on renewable sources, as the technology has not advanced to the point that it can support all of our energy needs. Instead of an ill-fated transition that would lead to higher prices and increase dependence on foreign imports, we should pursue an all-of-the-above energy policy.

An all-of-the-above energy policy embraces the full spectrum of available resources: clean sources like wind, solar, hydropower, biofuels, and nuclear, as well as oil, natural gas, and clean coal. South Dakota's all-of-the-above model of wind, hydroelectric, conventional energy, and production of renewable fuels like ethanol and biodiesel has made our state a leader in cleaner and more efficient energy technologies. While South Dakota generates over 80 percent of our electricity from renewable sources, conventional fuels still play an essential role in delivering a reliable and affordable energy supply. In contrast, California relies too heavily on renewables without sufficient storage or backup from conventional sources to meet demand. As a result, Californians pay some of the highest energy prices in the country for a highly unreliable electrical grid.

Unfortunately, President Biden and Democrats remain focused on a premature transition from conventional fuels to green energy. From cutting off oil and natural gas development on federal lands and canceling the Keystone XL pipeline to raising taxes on oil and gas producers, President Biden's policies have made investing in conventional energy an increasingly risky prospect. But the Biden administration is also working to discourage private investment in conventional energy by using the long arm of regulation to implement environmental, social, and governance (ESG) policies.

One example of this overreaching ESG agenda is the Securities and Exchange Commission's proposed climate disclosure rule. It would require publicly traded companies to evaluate climate risks in their financial statements and disclose their own greenhouse gas emissions, as well as that of their suppliers and customers. Since this regulation is infeasible, many companies would be coerced into severing or reconsidering their ties with industries that produce emissions, namely conventional energy and agriculture.

The Biden administration has extended its climate policies across the financial system in an effort to discourage investment in conventional energy, and many financial regulators have promulgated draft principles for "climate-related financial risk management." And, recently, the Department of Labor issued a new rule to allow pension plans to consider ESG factors, rather than just the rate of return, when investing for millions of Americans' retirements. In other words, using workers' retirement funds to invest in green companies, even if it means lower returns for hardworking Americans.

The Biden administration's climate agenda puts America's energy security at risk. By relying too heavily on renewables before the technology is able to meet our energy needs, Democrats' plan ensures today's high prices will persist. A genuine all-of-the-above energy policy, on the other hand, would put the United States on a path to a more secure energy future. I will continue to work toward solutions that embrace all available energy technologies and ensure a reliable, affordable, and secure energy future.

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



Guest Column: The Value of Interns in Congress

By Mason Ohnstad

I grew up in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and stayed around to study Government and Philosophy at Augustana University. After graduating, I knew I needed to gain experience in politics to apply my field of study, so I applied to intern in Congressman Johnson's office.

It only took a few days for the internship to exceed my expectations.

I've learned it takes a lot of work to accomplish anything in Congress. From speaking to constituents, introducing legislation, committee hearings, and so much more; the work of a Congressman is fast-paced.

Much of the work to keep up with the inner workings of Congress is done by young and intelligent individuals, known as interns.

Rep. Dusty Johnson has just 15 full-time staff across four offices, which is a similar scenario for most rural America Representatives. In order to efficiently and effectively serve the needs of over 800,000 South Dakotans, interns are hired. The intern is a vital member in any effective office. Interns also benefit from their service by gaining experience as a young professional.

A Congressional internship provides a unique opportunity to gain firsthand experience of how Congress works with insights and guidance from an office filled with advanced and established professionals.

I'm a couple months into my internship and I've worked on several projects assisting the press and legislative teams, giving tours of the Capitol, talking with constituents, attending meetings and briefings, and so much more.

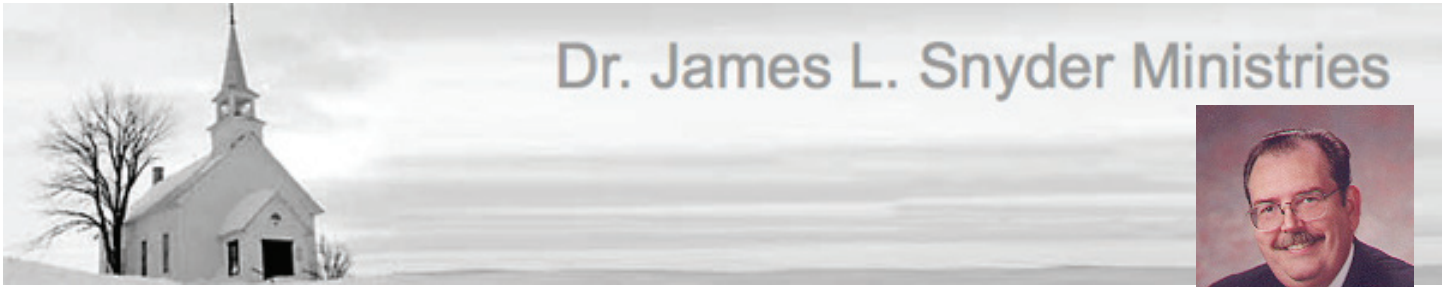
Oh, and did I mention you go to work on Capitol Hill?!

I cannot give enough praise for how valuable this internship has been, nor can I put words to how much I recommend this experience.

The window for applying for the summer internship is open, so apply now! You can fill out the application at <https://dustyjohnson.house.gov/services/internships>.

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Relaxing Is Not Always so Relaxing

For the past several weeks, or has it been several months, I've been busy with many projects to complete.

Finally, I finished my latest manuscript and sent it in; all the other projects were also finished.

That afternoon I sat back in my office chair and sighed deeply, appreciating the moment, that I was all caught up with everything. As I was thinking about it, I decided it would be good to take a day off.

I'm not one for taking days off, and I can't remember the last day I took off, but I had convinced myself that I deserved a good day off. Then, leaning back in my chair, I tried to think of what I would do on my day off. Then the thought came to me to do nothing. Have a day when I don't do anything.

After supper, I revealed my plan to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

"Tomorrow," I said with a big smile, "I'm going to take the day off and do nothing."

As always, she looked at me with one of her curious smiles and asked me what my "do nothing" really meant.

"That means I will spend the whole day doing nothing and just relaxing. It's been so long since I've had a relaxing day."

I saw her smiling and remembered that kind of smile before, but it just didn't register at the time. A thought began nagging me; maybe I should not have told her I would take the day off. Oh well, it's already done.

I got up the following day, got a cup of coffee, sat in my easy chair, and started thinking about what I would do today. I always do that to organize my projects so I can get them finished.

My wife walked into the room and said, "What are you doing? I thought today you were not going to do anything."

Looking at her, I sighed deeply and said, "You're right. I guess I just forgot."

So, this is what doing nothing is all about. I'm not sure I can get used to it, but at least I was going to experience it for the very first time.

About that time, I heard the front door ring, and when The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage answered, I found out that the great-granddaughter was coming to spend the day with us. I didn't know that before, but after all, it's good to have the great-granddaughter with us.

Looking at my wife, I said, "I didn't know she was coming today. You should've told me."

She looked at me and smiled; I recognized that smile for some reason but couldn't define it.

In a few minutes, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage carrying our great-granddaughter came into the living room and said, "You know, I forgot about the garbage today."

Not knowing what she was talking about, I said, "What do you mean?"

"Well," she stuttered a little, "I got the garbage all together in the garage to take to the dump today, and I just forgot that the great-granddaughter was coming. I was wondering if maybe you could take the garbage to the dump."

At that point, what in the world is a husband to say? So I agreed, went to the garage, put all the garbage in my truck, and headed for the dump.

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So, I said to myself, driving back, this is what doing nothing is all about.

I got home, and my wife was on the rocking chair feeding the baby from the bottle.

Those little babies look so cute, especially the ones in my family.

The telephone rang, and my wife asked me if I would answer it.

A recorded message said that our latest prescriptions were ready to pick up at the local pharmacy. Looking at my wife, I told her the message and then hung up.

"Would you mind going to the pharmacy and picking up our prescriptions?"

Since I was doing "nothing" for the day, I nodded in the affirmative, went out to my vehicle, and headed for the pharmacy to pick up our latest prescriptions.

I returned the prescriptions, put them on the counter, and headed to my easy chair and maybe read a book.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage entered the living room and said, "What would you like for lunch?"

I told her anything that she would like would be okay with me.

"How about going to Wendy's and getting our lunch?"

I looked at her, slowly shook my head, and headed for my truck. I got what she wanted written down so I wouldn't forget it and headed to Wendy's to pick up our lunch.

After finishing our lunch from Wendy's, I sat back in my chair and snoozed.

Before long, she returned to the living room and said, "You know, I forgot I was going to go to the grocery store and pick up some groceries. Would you mind doing that while I babysit our great-granddaughter?"

Then she handed me a list of what she wanted at the grocery store.

At the end of the day of doing nothing, I ended up doing everything. I need to think this through the next time.

I thought of what the Bible says in Ephesians 6:7, "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men."

Doing nothing doesn't really please the Lord, but He is pleased when. I dedicate my service unto Him.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What are ski resorts doing to fight back against global warming and keep their businesses alive as the world warms? Which ski resorts or ski regions will fare best in the future?

-- C. Warner, Aspen, CO

As the world warms, many of our customs begin to feel the encroaching threat of climate change. Skiing is one dramatic example, among many. With warming winters and increasingly unpredictable snow, the ski industry, like the white winters it relies upon, is slowly being nudged towards extinction.

But necessity is the mother of invention, and the increased threat the ski industry faces is also what has encouraged it to take great leaps toward a sustainable future. Says Gilles Delarule, head of tourism for Courchevel, one of France's most famous ski resorts, "It's a responsibility that everyone needs to have for the next generation. If we don't protect nature, we won't have skiing for the future." Needless to say, perhaps, finding sustainable ways to generate electricity is necessary for affording the increased burden of snowmaking, and for slowing or reversing the climate change that is why more snowmaking is needed.

This same mantra of 'diversify or die' has been carried across the Atlantic, too. Aspen Skiing Company, for instance, is already on track to shift to 100 percent renewable energy by 2030 and has invested \$5.24 million in a plant that converts methane from coal into electricity. Jackson Hole Mountain Resort in Wyoming is already entirely powered by an Idaho wind farm, and Big Sky Resort in Montana has been fueled by renewable energy since 2021. The nimbleness of the ski industry in reacting to the climate crisis is an example of what can happen when companies have a vested interest in going green.

As for the ski resorts and regions that are most likely to survive longest as we move into a warmer future, the answer is not so optimistic. "Are we winning? No," says Auden Schendler, the Senior Vice President of Aspen Skiing Company. "You've got to reverse global CO2 emissions and bend the curve down and that's not happening." Despite their efforts, the ski industry cannot halt the climate crisis alone. Until the rest of the world begins to take the vital action needed, the ski resorts that stand the best chance of survival are not those most proactive in fighting warming, but rather those fortuitously situated closest to the poles, with the highest latitude and the lowest temperatures.

The Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research (ISAR) predicts that if we continue with a "business-as-usual" level of emissions—without changing our consumption of gas, oil and coal—then the Alps risk losing up to 70 percent of their snow coverage by 2100. The stakes are high for change, however. "The world is currently on track for an average of 2.7C (4.9F) of warming by 2100," reports ISAR. "If global temperature rise is kept below 2C (3.6F), though, the reduction in snow cover will be limited to 30 percent."

Although the future for skiing is not all that bright, a glimmer of hope can be found among the many resorts that demonstrate what action is possible in the face of the climate crisis. If other industries followed suit, then perhaps skiing, like our white winters, would stand a chance of surviving extinction.



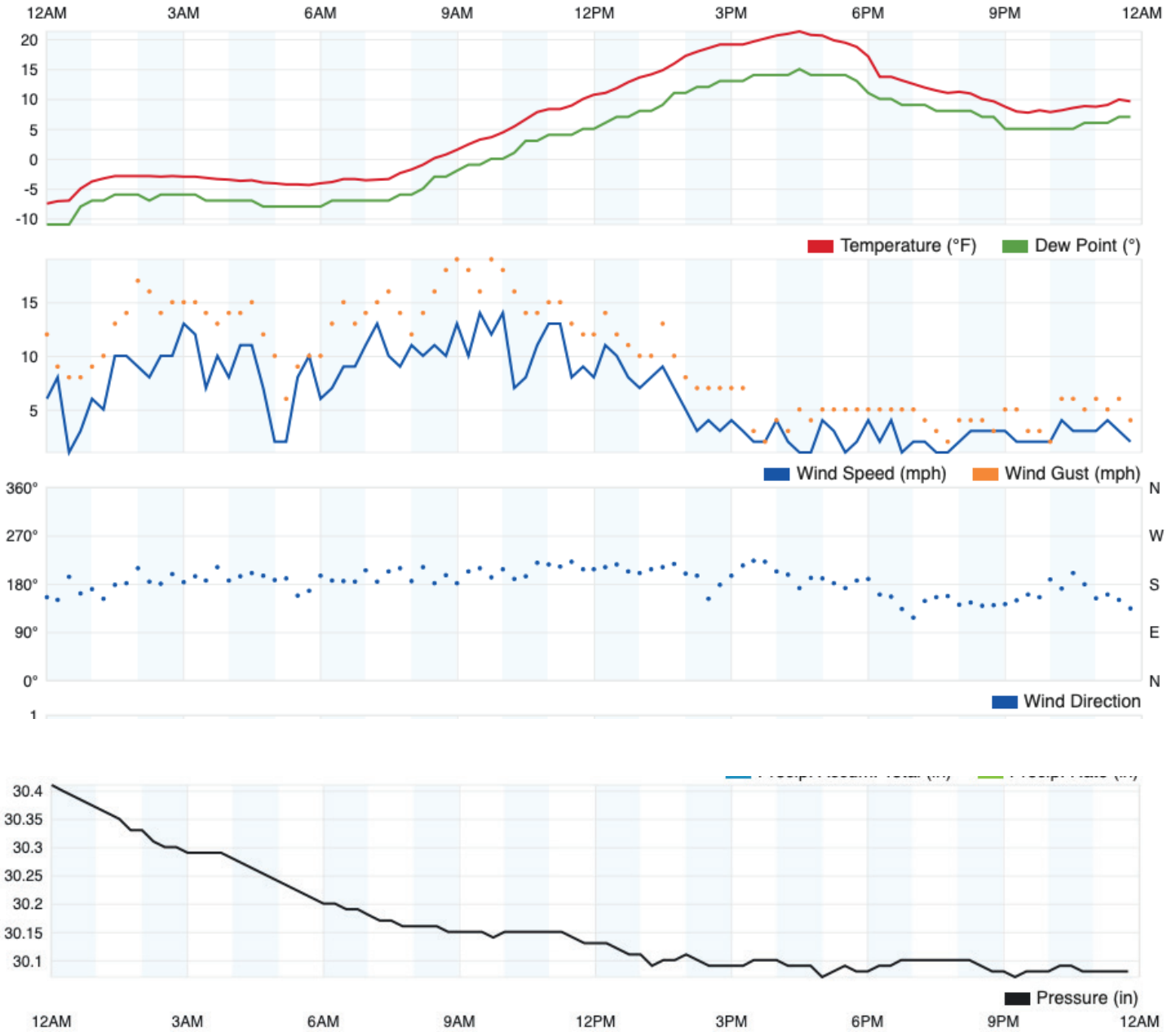
Less and less snow each year means skiing at resorts like France's Courchevel might become a thing of the past within just a few decades.

Credit: Courchevel.

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Past Week's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Patchy Fog then Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Freezing Drizzle	Patchy Blowing Snow and Breezy	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny then Chance Snow	Chance Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow	Chance Snow and Areas Blowing Snow
High: 34 °F	Low: 23 °F	High: 35 °F	Low: 7 °F	High: 31 °F	Low: 11 °F	High: 19 °F

Warmer but Breezy

Tonight

-1 to 19°

Sun

27 to 42°

Mon

30 to 40°

***Coldest Temps across Northeast SD/Western MN**

***Milder Temps across South Central SD**

www.weather.gov/abr

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Winds will pick up across the east on Sunday after early morning fog. A low will move through the Plains Sunday night into early Monday bringing breezy winds to the entire forecast area. These winds may cause some drifting or blowing snow, mainly east of the Missouri River.

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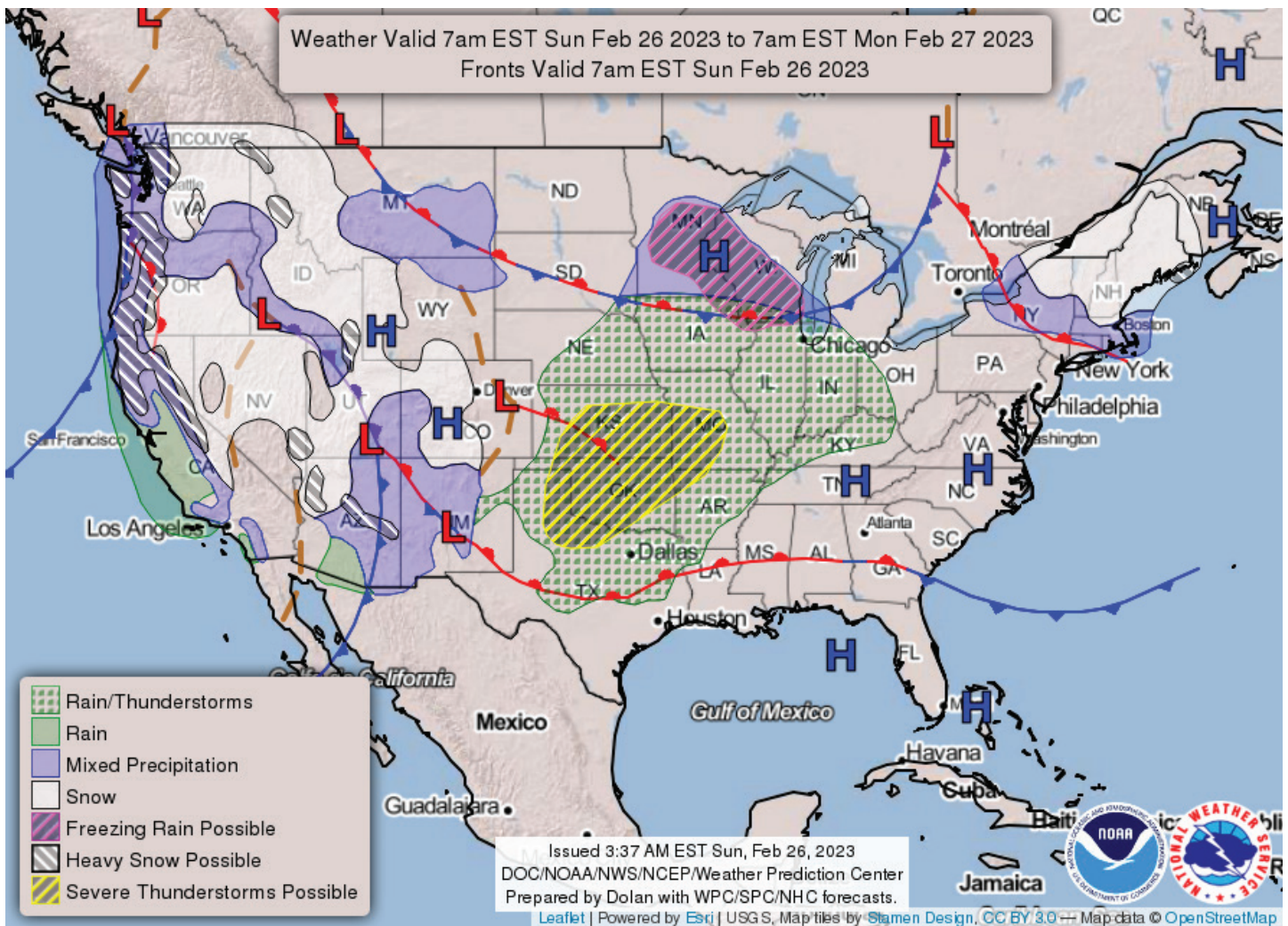
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 22 °F at 4:33 PM
Low Temp: -7 °F at 12:15 AM
Wind: 19 mph at 8:54 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 11 hours, 02 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 65 in 1896
Record Low: -20 in 1962
Average High: 33
Average Low: 11
Average Precip in Feb.: 0.57
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 1.12
Precip Year to Date: 1.58
Sunset Tonight: 6:16:18 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:12:27 AM



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Today in Weather History

February 26, 1995: Heavy snow fell on the 26th and 27th in western and central South Dakota near the state's northern border. McLaughlin received 14 inches, Eureka 12 inches, and McIntosh 11 inches. Snowfall amounts dropped to two to four inches about 20 miles south of the northern border.

February 26, 1998: A substantial area of low pressure moved across central and northeast South Dakota from the morning of the 26th to the morning of the 27th. As the low moved northeast, cold north winds of 25 to 35 mph gusting to 45 mph caused widespread rain to change over to snow. Many roads became icy and poor visibilities in snow and blowing snow, and low wind chills developed. Four to 8 inches of snow fell across the counties bordering the Missouri River and in far western McPherson and far western Edmunds counties. Many area schools were dismissed early or canceled. Some residents, especially West River, lost power during the storm. Many McIntosh residents were without power for over 24 hours. Numerous activities and sports events were canceled. Some car accidents did not result in injury. A semi rolled onto its side northwest of Gettysburg on the 26th. Ranchers also experienced some calving problems as a result of the winter storm. Some snowfall amounts included 4 inches at Selby, Herreid, and Mobridge, 5 inches at Isabel, 6 inches at Gettysburg, 7 inches about 11 miles east of Hosmer, and 8 inches at McIntosh. Due to the heavy snow and strong winds, some large drifts also developed, especially West River.

February 26, 2009: A vigorous but relatively fast-moving winter storm system tracked across South Dakota Wednesday night and Thursday. Even with the reasonably quick movement of the system, storm total snowfall amounts were quite impressive. In fact, during the peak of the snowstorm, snowfall rates of 1" to 2" per hour were observed!

1910: Parts of Washington State were amid a storm that produced 129 inches of snow at Laconia between the 24th and the 26th, a single storm record for the state. A series of storms began on the 23rd and led to a deadly avalanche on March 1. Late on the 28th, the snow had changed to rain, setting the stage for disaster.

1972: The Buffalo Creek disaster occurred in the Buffalo Creek Hollow of Logan County in West Virginia. A coal slag dam on the Middle Fork of Buffalo Creek burst, sending a fifty-foot wall of water down a narrow valley killing 125 persons and causing 51 million dollars in damage. Three days of rain atop a six-inch snow cover caused the dam to break.

1987 - A slow moving storm in the southwestern U.S. spread heavy snow from the southern and central Rockies into the Central High Plains Region. Totals in Colorado ranged up to 62 inches at Purgatory. Colorado Springs CO reported a February record of 14.8 inches of snow in 24 hours. Lander WY received four inches in one hour, 13 inches in seven hours, and a record storm total of 26 inches. High winds created near blizzard conditions at Colorado Springs. Fairplay CO reported 43 inches of snow, with drifts ten feet high. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Eight cities in the central and western U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date, including Lamoni IA with a reading of 67 degrees. Temperatures in North Dakota were as warm as those in Florida. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - An upper level weather disturbance brought snow to parts of the central U.S. which just one day earlier were enjoying temperatures in the 60s. Snowfall totals in Missouri ranged up to nine inches at Rolla. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Unseasonably cold weather followed in the wake of the winter storm in the northeastern U.S. Ten cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Syracuse NY with a reading of 10 degrees below zero. Freezing temperatures in southeastern Virginia caused considerable damage to plants and fruit trees. The barometric pressure reading of 30.88 inches at Wilmington NC was February record for that location. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2004 - A major snowstorm dumps up to 20 inches of snow in the Charlotte metropolitan area. Charlotte's third largest snowstorm on record accumulates 11.6 inches at the airport.

2011: The tallest tree in Wales falls after a wind storm. Located on the Lake Vyrnwy Estate, this 124-year-old Douglas fir stood at 63.7 m (208.9 feet). The tree reportedly was leaning over and had two substantial cracks in the main trunk. This tree would be carved into a giant hand.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

DRIVEN BY DESIRE

Young Antonio was driven by a desire to play the violin and sing. Unfortunately, his fingers were not nimble enough to move swiftly over the strings, and his voice sounded screechy. He went from one teacher to another, and then another. They all agreed that he would never be a great musician. They would laugh, and he would cry.

One day, by chance, he met Amati, a violin maker. He was very attracted to the sincerity and passion that Antonio had for music, even though he could neither play nor sing. "Son," said Amati, "it is a song in your heart that makes the difference. There are many ways to make music. And you can make music if you want."

Those words inspired Antonio, and he became an apprentice to Amati to learn how to make violins. In time, Antonio Stradivarius became the world's greatest maker of violins. He was helped by a friend, something all of us can do for others.

The Apostle Paul had some great advice: "Don't make your children - or anyone's children - angry by the way you treat them." The true purpose of guidance is to help children grow by example and encouragement. All children deserve a parent or teacher who is Christ-honoring, hard-working, accountable to God and others. Expressing love by being kind, patient, and encouraging to children, ours and others, is an honor and calling. Showing "our Father's" love by encouraging and mentoring children is a gift we can all give to children.

Prayer: We pray, Lord, for opportunities to demonstrate Your concern for children. May we show Your love and grace by word and deed, and follow Your example. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4



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:
02.24.23

2 22 49 65 67 7

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$145,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.25.23

14 22 34 39 50 8

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$38,310,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.25.23

26 28 38 42 46 1

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 48 Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.25.23

11 14 19 25 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$68,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.25.23

4 6 39 60 66 2

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.25.23

11 24 58 66 67 26

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$131,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Brandon Valley 55, Mitchell 33

Rapid City Stevens 54, Sioux Falls Lincoln 43

Sioux Falls Washington 51, Rapid City Central 38

Spearfish 39, Brookings 33

Sturgis Brown 44, Yankton 42

SDHSAA Playoffs=

Class A Region 1=

Aberdeen Roncalli 45, Redfield 32

Groton Area 55, Waubay/Summit 27

Milbank 57, Webster 39

Sisseton 83, Tiospa Zina Tribal 46

Class A Region 2=

Flandreau 51, Great Plains Lutheran 17

Florence/Henry 54, Clark/Willow Lake 23

Hamlin 74, Estelline/Hendricks 26

Sioux Valley 57, Elkton-Lake Benton 44

Class A Region 3=

Garretson 44, West Central 43

Sioux Falls Christian 69, Tri-Valley 29

Class A Region 4=

Lennox 53, Canton 22

Class A Region 5=

Parkston 62, Hanson 56

Wagner 73, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 36

Class A Region 6=

Dupree 68, Mobridge-Pollock 62

Miller 64, Crow Creek Tribal School 35

Class A Region 7=

Lakota Tech 61, Winner 50

Red Cloud 75, Todd County 42

Class A Region 8=

Rapid City Christian 66, Belle Fourche 49

St. Thomas More 42, Hill City 26

Class B Region 1=

Hitchcock-Tulare 41, Britton-Hecla 40

Leola/Frederick 50, Aberdeen Christian 13

Northwestern 67, Wilmot 47

Warner 58, Langford 26

Class B Region 2=

Castlewood 52, Arlington 48

Wolsey-Wessington 60, James Valley Christian 35

Class B Region 3=

Ethan 50, Colman-Egan 21

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Howard 57, Dell Rapids St. Mary 31
Class B Region 4=
Centerville 77, Freeman 62
Viborg-Hurley 60, Scotland 22
Class B Region 5=
Corsica/Stickney 45, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 38
Wessington Springs 66, Gregory 50
Class B Region 6=
Sully Buttes 49, Herreid/Selby Area 31
Class B Region 7=
Jones County 46, Kadoka Area 29
Wall 62, White River 55
Class B Region 8=
Harding County 58, Faith 46
Timber Lake 66, Lemmon 53

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=
Aberdeen Central 49, Watertown 44
Brookings 73, Spearfish 67
Mitchell 57, Brandon Valley 49
Sioux Falls Lincoln 75, Rapid City Stevens 41
Sioux Falls Washington 75, Rapid City Central 49
Yankton 60, Sturgis Brown 42

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

South Dakota defeats UMKC 82-48

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Tasos Kamateros had 24 points in South Dakota's 82-48 victory over UMKC on Saturday night.

Kamateros added six rebounds for the Coyotes (12-18, 7-11 Summit League). Kruz Perrott-Hunt scored 21 points, shooting 6 for 12 (4 for 8 from 3-point range) and 5 of 6 from the free-throw line. Mason Archambault recorded 13 points and finished 5 of 6 from the field. The Coyotes snapped a five-game slide.

Rayquawndis Mitchell led the way for the Kangaroos (11-20, 7-11) with 13 points. Jeff Ngandu added nine points and nine rebounds for UMKC. In addition, Tyler Andrews finished with nine points.

Russia, Iran sending top envoys to UN's human rights council

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will help kick off the latest and longest-ever session of the U.N.'s top human rights body on Monday, with Iran's foreign minister, a senior Russian envoy, and the top diplomats of France and Germany among scores of leaders set to take part.

The more than five-week session of the Human Rights Council opens as the world grapples with rights concerns including Russia's war in Ukraine, repression of dissent in Russia and Belarus, new violence between Palestinians and Israelis, and efforts to solidify a peace deal in Ethiopia that ended two years of conflict between the national government and rebels in the Tigray region.

The council, made up of 47 members countries, takes up an extensive array of human rights issues — including discrimination, the freedom of religion, right to housing or the deleterious impact of economic sanctions targeting governments on regular people — as well as country "situations" like those in Afghanistan, Syria, Myanmar, Nicaragua and South Sudan. It usually meets three times a year.

Proponents say the Geneva-based rights body has grown in importance as a diplomatic venue because

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the U.N. Security Council in New York has been increasingly divided in recent years due to a major rift between affiliations among its five permanent members: China and Russia on one side, Britain, France and the United States on the other.

On Monday, among the speakers after Guterres and the presidents of Congo, Montenegro and Colombia, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian will come up between Germany's Annalena Baerbock and France's Catherine Colonna. China's foreign minister, Qin Gang, is set to make a statement by video.

Amirabdollahian's visit comes in the wake of vociferous and continued protests that erupted in Iran after the death in September of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini following her arrest by the country's morality police.

Moscow is set to be represented at the highest level since Russia suspended its council membership last year — largely because the U.N. General Assembly was on the cusp of stripping it. Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, known more for his expertise on defense matters, is set to attend on Thursday. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is expected to speak by video message the same day.

A year ago, scores of diplomats walked out of the council chamber as Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov appeared by video, to express their opposition to Russia's invasion of Ukraine days earlier. He had originally been set to attend in person but many Western countries closed their airspace to flights from Russia after the invasion.

In the session, the United States is likely to try to keep pressure on China over its record on issues over a crackdown on pro-democracy activists and others in Hong Kong, long-running concerns about Tibet, and others about the western region of Xinjiang — on which former U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachelet issued a scathing report last fall just minutes before she left office.

"We will continue to shine a spotlight on documented abuses of Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang by the PRC," said the U.S. ambassador to the council, Michèle Taylor. "We are not going to just walk away from that ... I don't have an answer right now for exactly what's planned, but I can tell you that we're engaged in robust conversations about what that might look like."

Western diplomats say they are looking to see what tone the new U.N. human rights chief, Volker Türk, takes on the issue. He is set to speak right after Guterres.

Among other items on the agenda will be the possible renewal of the term of a team of experts, known as a Commission of Inquiry, on the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and Ethiopia's effort to prematurely end the mandate of a council-designated team of investigators who have been looking into rights issues related to the conflict with Tigray rebels.

Borsch without a 't': Kyiv chef uses food to reclaim culture

By J.M. HIRSCH Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Don't tell Ievgen Klopotenko that borsch is just food. For him, that bowl of beet-and-meat soup is the embodiment of everything Ukraine is fighting for.

"Food is a powerful social instrument by which you can unite or divide a nation," said Klopotenko, Ukraine's most recognizable celebrity chef and the man who in the midst of a bloody war spearheaded what would become an unlikely cultural victory over Russia.

"It's our symbol," Klopotenko said. "Borsch is our leader."

If that seems hyperbolic, you underestimate how intrinsic borsch (the preferred Ukrainian spelling) is to this country's soul. More than a meal, it represents history, family and centuries of tradition. It is eaten always and everywhere, and its preparation is described almost reverentially.

And now, at the one-year mark of the war with Russia, Klopotenko uses the dish as a rallying call for preserving Ukrainian identity. It's an act of culinary defiance against one of Moscow's widely discredited justifications of the war — that Ukraine is culturally indistinct from Russia.

Thanks to a lobbying effort that Klopotenko helped lead, UNESCO issued a fast-track decision last July declaring Ukrainian borsch an asset of "intangible cultural heritage" in need of preservation. Although the declaration noted borsch is consumed elsewhere in the region, and that no exclusivity was implied, the move infuriated Russia.

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A Russian foreign ministry spokesperson accused Ukraine of appropriating the dish and called the move an act of xenophobia and Nazism.

But in Ukraine, where until a year ago Russian was as widely spoken as Ukrainian, the declaration legitimized a notion that many had struggled to express.

"People started to understand that they are Ukrainians," Klopotenko said recently while preparing borsch at his Kyiv apartment. From his living room window, the husk of a high-rise gutted by Russian missiles dominated the view.

"A lot of people started to eat Ukrainian food. A lot of people began to discover Ukrainian traditions," he said.

Klopotenko, 36, is an unlikely figure to grab headlines during a war that has left hundreds of thousands from all sides dead or wounded. But the television chef and restaurateur — recognizable by an unruly head of curls, rapid-fire dialogue and lively fashion sense — began his mission to elevate Ukrainian food years before Russia's invasion in February 2022.

Though born in Kyiv, Klopotenko had by age 5 spent months at a time living with his grandmother, who had moved just outside Manchester, England. He'd been raised on bland Soviet-era cuisine, and this was a culinary awakening. He encountered waves of new flavors and ingredients, experiences that set him on a path to restaurant work.

His break came in 2015 when he won the television competition "MasterChef Ukraine." He parlayed that into study at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris and later a successful campaign to overhaul the Soviet-influenced cafeteria menus in Ukrainian schools.

Always in the background was his sense that Ukrainian food — ditto the country's culture writ large — wasn't being true to itself. Much of Ukraine's identity, he felt, from language and food to fashion and architecture, had been subjugated to Russian influences. Before the start of Soviet rule in 1917, Ukrainian cuisine was more diverse and robustly seasoned. That was quashed in favor of a more uniform palate with socialist sensibilities.

Even after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, Ukraine's cuisine didn't quite bounce back. But Russia's invasion and annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 was a trigger. Trying to identify and hold onto Ukrainian heritage, Klopotenko and others began researching pre-Soviet Ukrainian cooking, hoping to return it to the mainstream and give people another toehold for reclaiming their culture.

In 2019, he opened his Kyiv restaurant, 100 Rokiv Tomu Vpered (100 Years Ago Ahead), a reference to what Ukrainian cuisine was before Soviet rule, and what it could be again. The menu draws heavily on flavors and ingredients many have forgotten.

Roasted parsnips with smoked sour cream. Buckwheat bread flavored with chamomile. Banosh, a sort of corn porridge topped with cottage cheese, mushrooms and apples.

And, of course, borsch seasoned with the traditional smoked pears. Written records tie the recipe to Ukraine over many centuries. The effort to have it declared a cultural asset began in 2018, when Klopotenko enlisted the help of Maryna Sobotiuk, an adviser to the Ukrainian Ministry of Information Policy and co-founder of the Institute of Culture of Ukraine.

They assembled a dossier that would become the country's application to UNESCO. Their work took on greater urgency after Russia's invasion a year ago and received the blessing of Ukraine's government.

Like Klopotenko, Sobotiuk said it's a cause much deeper than dinner.

"Our neighbors want to not just take our territory, but also our culture and our history," she said, calling culinary heritage a soft power with tremendous potential to motivate and inspire. "It is important to give people something they can align with Ukraine except war."

Darra Goldstein, a food historian and expert in Eastern European cuisines, agreed, noting that the difficulty of delineating culinary boundaries doesn't diminish the cultural import of the dishes.

"It's not simply a matter of claiming ownership of a dish, since the precise origins of any given dish are often difficult to trace. Instead, food goes to the heart of national belonging, how people define who they are," she said.

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Borsch, of course, was just the start for Klopotenko. As more Ukrainians have rejected Russian culture since the war began, and consumption of traditional Ukrainian foods has spiked, he and others see an opening for codifying and celebrating more of their own.

Though UNESCO is unlikely to grant similar status to other Ukrainian dishes — chicken Kyiv, garlicky pampushky bread and latke-like deruny enjoy similar popularity — Klopotenko said the next step is to raise the profile of the country's cuisine as a whole, at home and abroad.

To that end, his cookbook, "The Authentic Ukrainian Kitchen," which offers modern takes on traditional Ukrainian cooking, will be released this fall in the U.S.

"The war accelerated the growth of Ukrainian culture," he said. "Russia wanted to kill the culture with the huge invasion, but it's worked the other way."

It's a sentiment shared widely on the streets of the nation's capital, where restaurants have revamped menus to replace Russian dishes with Ukrainian ones. They've been rewarded with packed dining rooms despite rolling blackouts and frequent air-raid warnings.

At Kyiv's bustling Volodymirsky market — a warren of stalls offering beets, smoked seafood, caviar and mounds of the local, crumbly cottage cheese — Tetyana Motorna has sold pickled fruit and vegetables for decades. She held back tears as she discussed the war and why Klopotenko's work to secure borsch as a national treasure for her country matters.

"Borsch is everything for Ukrainians," she said. "The war has made borsch even more important. ... With borsch, we prove that we are a separate nation. It confirms us as a nation."

Carter: Still a model for candidates asking 'Why not me?'

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — As the 2024 campaign season begins, political players are looking in the mirror and deciding whether they see an American president staring back.

It was no different for Jimmy Carter in the early 1970s. And it took meeting several presidential candidates and then encouragement from an esteemed elder statesman before the young governor of Georgia, who had never met a president himself, saw himself as something bigger.

He announced his White House bid on Dec. 12, 1974, amid fallout from the Vietnam War and President Richard Nixon's resignation. Then he leveraged his unknown — and politically untainted — status to become the 39th president. That whirlwind path has been a model, explicit and otherwise, for would-be contenders ever since.

"Jimmy Carter's example absolutely created a 50-year window of people saying, 'Why not me?'" said Steve Schale, who worked on President Barack Obama's campaigns and is a longtime supporter of President Joe Biden.

Carter's climb is getting new attention as the 98-year-old receives end-of-life care at home in Plains, Georgia.

David Axelrod, who helped engineer Obama's four-year ascent from state senator to the Oval Office, said Carter's model is about more than how his grassroots strategy turned the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary into his springboard.

"There was a moral stain on the country, and this was a guy of deep faith," Axelrod said. "He seemed like a fresh start, and I think he understood that he could offer something different that might be able to meet the moment."

Donna Brazile, who managed Democrat Al Gore's 2000 presidential campaign, got her start on Carter's two national campaigns. "In 1976, it was just Jimmy Carter's time," she said.

Of course, the seeds of his presidential run sprouted even before Nixon won a second term and certainly before his resignation in August 1974.

In Carter's telling, he did not run for governor in 1966 — he lost — or in 1970 thinking about Washington. Even when announced his presidential bid, neither he nor those closest to him were completely confident.

"President of what?" his mother, Lillian, replied when he told her his plans.

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But soon after he became governor in 1971, Carter's team envisioned him as a national player. They were encouraged in part by the May 31 Time magazine cover depicting Carter alongside the headline "Dixie Whistles a Different Tune." Inside, a flattering profile framed Carter as a model "New South" governor.

In October 1971, Carter ally Dr. Peter Bourne, an Atlanta physician who would become U.S. drug czar, sent his politician friend an unsolicited memo outlining how he could be elected president. On Oct. 17, a wider circle of advisers sat with Carter at the Governor's Mansion to discuss it. Carter, then 47, wore blue jeans and a T-shirt, according to biographer Jonathan Alter.

The team, including Carter's wife Rosalynn, now 95, began considering the idea seriously.

"We never used the word 'president,'" Carter recalled upon his 90th birthday, "but just referred to 'national office.'"

Carter invited high-profile Democrats — Washington players who were running or considering running in 1972 — to one-on-one meetings at the mansion. He jumped at the chance to lead the Democratic National Committee's national campaign that year.

The position allowed him to travel the country helping candidates up and down the ballot. Along the way, he was among the Southern governors who angled to be McGovern's running mate. Alter said Carter was never seriously considered.

Still, Carter got to know, among others, former Vice President Hubert Humphrey and Sens. Henry Jackson of Washington, Eugene McCarthy of Maine and George McGovern of South Dakota, the eventual nominee who lost a landslide to Nixon.

Carter later explained he had previously defined the nation's highest office by its occupants immortalized by monuments.

"For the first time," Carter told The New York Times, "I started comparing my own experiences and knowledge of government with the candidates, not against 'the presidency' and not against Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. It made it a whole lot easier."

Adviser Hamilton Jordan crafted a detailed campaign plan calling for matching Carter's outsider, good-government credentials to voters' general disillusionment, even before Watergate. But the team still spoke and wrote in code, as if the "higher office" weren't obvious.

It was reported during his campaign that Carter told family members around Christmas 1972 that he would run in 1976. Carter later wrote in a memoir that a visit from former Secretary of State Dean Rusk in early 1973 affirmed his leanings.

Carter described Rusk in adoring terms. "Our most distinguished Georgian," Carter called the man who led the State Department during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

During another private confab in Atlanta, Rusk told Carter plainly: "Governor, I think you should run for president in 1976." That, Carter wrote, "removed our remaining doubts."

Schale said the process is not always so involved.

"These are intensely competitive people already," he said of governors, senators and others in high office. "If you're wired in that capacity, it's hard to step away from it."

But Schale and Axelrod emphasized that circumstances matter.

"We judged what people felt was missing in our politics," Axelrod said of Obama and his "Hope and Change" theme.

"He seemed uniquely positioned to answer that call ... where others were not," Axelrod explained, alluding to Hillary Clinton's long resume as a liability given voters' anger over the Iraq war and other matters by the end of George W. Bush's presidency.

Republican Donald Trump countered in 2016, riding a populist wave of discontent after two Obama terms. Schale noted that Biden, then vice president, passed on 2016 in part because Obama privately backed Clinton's reprisal bid.

In 2020, though, a 77-year-old Biden came out of retirement specifically to hammer Trump as a threat to the "soul of the nation." Biden won.

"Does he even run if it's anybody but Trump in office? No way," Schale said.

Now 80, the president appears to be running again. So is 76-year-old Trump. That's drawn new mes-

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sengers to the stage with what they hope is the right message.

"We're ready — ready to move past the stale ideas and faded names of the past," said Nikki Haley, the 51-year-old former U.N. ambassador, as she declared her underdog candidacy on Feb. 15.

The South Carolina Republican's call for "a new generation to lead us" echoed as a potential 2024 equivalent of the Georgia Democrat who told voters in his 1976 opening argument that "our trust has been betrayed."

"Jimmy Carter showed us that you can go from a no-name to president in the span of 18 or 24 months," said Jared Leopold, a top aide in Washington Gov. Jay Inslee's unsuccessful bid for Democrats' 2020 nomination.

"For people deciding whether to get in, it's a real inspiration," Leopold continued, "and that's a real success of American democracy."

The SAG Awards, streaming Sunday, should offer Oscar preview

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

Last year, the top winners at the Screen Actors Guild Awards all corresponded exactly with the Academy Awards winners. Will Sunday's SAGs offer the same preview?

The 29th annual Screen Actors Guild Awards will begin at 8 p.m. EST Sunday and be streamed live on Netflix's YouTube page. After the awards, presented by the film and television acting guild SAG-AFTRA, lost their broadcast home at TNT/TBS, Netflix signed on to stream the ceremony. Though future editions will be streamed live directly on Netflix, this year's show, at Fairmont Century Plaza in Los Angeles, will be on the streaming service's YouTube page and its social media channels.

"Everything Everywhere All at Once" and "The Banshees of Inisherin" come in with a co-leading five nominations. Each film is up for the guild's top award, best ensemble, along with "Babylon," "The Fabelmans" and "Women Talking."

The SAG Awards are considered one of the most reliable Oscar bellwethers. Actors make up the biggest percentage of the film academy, so their choices have the largest sway. Last year, "CODA" triumphed at SAG before winning best picture at the Oscars, while Ariana DeBose, Will Smith, Jessica Chastain and Troy Kotsur all won both a SAG Award and an Academy Award.

With both supporting categories seemingly sown up by Angela Bassett ("Black Panther: Wakanda Forever") and Ke Huy Quan ("Everything Everywhere All at Once"), Sunday's SAG Award could offer the most clarity in the lead acting awards.

Best actress could go to either Michelle Yeoh ("Everything Everywhere All at Once") or Cate Blanchett ("Tár"). While Andrea Riseborough's much-debated campaign led to an Academy Awards nomination, some of the most notable Oscar snubs are up for best actress. Though nominated by the actors guild, Danielle Deadwyler ("Till") and Viola Davis ("The Woman King") were overlooked by the academy, prompting some to decry racial bias in Hollywood. Ana de Armas ("Blonde") is also nominated.

In best actor, Austin Butler ("Elvis"), Brendan Fraser ("The Whale") and Colin Farrell ("The Banshees of Inisherin") all are considered contenders with a realistic shot of winning. The guild also nominated Adam Sandler ("Hustle") and Bill Nighy ("Living").

On the TV side, nominated for best ensemble in a drama series are: "Better Call Saul," "The Crown," "Ozark," "Severance" and "The White Lotus." Up for best comedy series ensemble are the casts of "Abbott Elementary," "Barry," "The Bear," "Hacks" and "Only Murders in the Building."

Presenters on Sunday include Zendaya (who scored her first SAG nomination for her leading performance in "Euphoria", Aubrey Plaza, Jenna Ortega, Adam Scott, Chastain and Jeff Bridges. Sally Field is to receive the SAG lifetime achievement award, an honor to be presented to her by Andrew Garfield.

Angela Bassett, 'Wakanda Forever' top NAACP Image Awards

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — Angela Bassett won entertainer of the year at Saturday's NAACP Image Awards on a night that also saw her take home an acting trophy for the television series "9-1-1."

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The Bassett-led Marvel superhero sequel "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" won best motion picture at the ceremony, which was broadcast live on BET from Pasadena, California.

Viola Davis won outstanding actress for the action epic "The Woman King," a project she championed and starred in. Will Smith won for the slavery drama "Emancipation," his first release since last year's Academy Awards, where he slapped comedian Chris Rock on stage before winning his first best actor trophy.

"I never want to not be brave enough as a woman, as a Black woman, as an artist," Davis said, referencing a quote from her character in the film, which she called her magnum opus. "I thank everyone who was involved with 'The Woman King' because that was just nothing but high-octane bravery."

"Abbott Elementary" won for outstanding comedy series. Creator and series star Quinta Brunson invited her costars onstage and praised shows like "black-ish" for paving the way for her series.

The 54 NAACP Image Awards were presented Saturday in Pasadena, California, with Queen Latifah hosting. Serena Williams received the Jackie Robinson Sports award, which recognizes individuals in sports for high achievement in athletics along with their pursuit of social justice, civil rights and community involvement.

The ceremony, which honors entertainers, athletes and writers of color, was hosted by Queen Latifah. Special honorees included Dwyane Wade and Gabrielle Union and civil rights attorney Ben Crump.

Conley's pitch clock violation leaves Braves-Red Sox tied

By BERNIE WILSON AP Sports Writer

Cal Conley of the Atlanta Braves thought he had just won the game with a two-out, full-count, bases-loaded walk-off walk on Saturday. He took a few steps toward first base, bat still in hand, when umpire John Libka jumped out from behind the plate and indicated strike three.

Game over. Conley, apparently thinking he had been awarded an automatic ball four, couldn't believe it. He pointed to himself and said, "Me?" His teammates couldn't believe it, either. Fans booed.

Welcome to 2023, where baseball's new rules designed to improve pace of play are coming fast at everyone, particularly the players.

The most dramatic moment of the new pitch clock era arrived on the first full day of spring games, and in the most dramatic scenario possible. Conley, facing reliever Robert Kwiatkowski of the Boston Red Sox, wasn't set in the box and alert to the pitcher as the clock wound under eight seconds.

The penalty is an automatic strike, which led to the game at North Port, Florida, finishing in a 6-6 tie. Kwiatkowski got the strikeout after throwing only two real strikes.

It was a far more dramatic moment than when San Diego Padres slugger Manny Machado on Friday became the first player to draw a pitch clock violation when he was called for an automatic strike in the bottom of the first inning against Seattle because he wasn't set in the box in time.

The pitch clock is one of the new rules designed to speed pace of play. Players will have 30 seconds to resume play between batters. Between pitches, pitchers have 15 seconds with nobody on and 20 seconds if there is a baserunner. The pitcher must start his delivery before the clock expires. After a pitch, the clock starts again when the pitcher has the ball back, the catcher and batter are in the circle around home plate, and play is otherwise ready to resume.

MORE SIGN STEALING?

Could the pitch clock lead to more on-field sign stealing, in turn forcing managers to cut out the third base coach as the middleman for relaying signs?

Veteran managers Dusty Baker and Buck Showalter think so.

It's an interesting point from Baker, considering that he took over as Houston's manager in 2020 after A.J. Hinch was fired following the stunning revelation that the Astros had illicitly stolen signs in 2017, when they won the World Series, and again in 2018.

"I'm concerned about that because you're always aware of people stealing signs," Baker said Saturday when his defending World Series champion Astros beat Showalter's New York Mets 4-2 in West Palm Beach, Florida. "And then there's the sensitive area. OK, are you cheating? Is that part of the game, stealing signs? If I know you're hitting and running that's what I'm supposed to do."

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Baker said there's less time for the dugout to signal the third base coach, who in turn must relay signs to batters and runners, and therefore less time for to use decoys, making the signs easier to decipher.

Baker believes the pitch clock puts even more pressure on the third base coach to be quick — and somewhat deceptive. On the other hand, the pitch clock also limits the amount of time defenses have to react, even if they know a hit-and-run or bunt is coming.

Baker said the toughest job on the field is being a third base coach. "Everybody in the ballpark has eyes on him. Everybody's trying to decipher his sequence of signs. There are guys in the stands, are guys now on videos. I mean, if you know what the opposition is going to do, that makes it even tougher to do. Yeah, I'm concerned about that."

Showalter shares Baker's concern to the point that he's considering eliminating the middleman and having all signs come directly from the dugout, a practice common in the amateur ranks.

"There are so many things that, because we're afraid to copy colleges or high schools because, 'Oh, they're amateurs and we're pros,'" Showalter said. "There are things they did better. They don't go through the third base coach. Why do we transfer stuff to a third base coach to then transfer to the player? It's just another relay."

A HOMER AND A VIOLATION

Los Angeles Angels outfielder Jo Adell used his one allotted timeout during his at-bat in the second inning, and then on the next pitch launched a long two-run homer to left off Seattle lefty Marco Gonzales. In his final at-bat, he drew a violation for strike two by plate umpire Mike Muchlinski and eventually struck out.

"I was trying to figure out how many timeouts before a strike, so I wanted to make sure I didn't call another one," Adell said. "The following at-bat I ran into seven seconds and got a strike called. I think it's fine, we'll all get into the rhythm of it, there's going to be a few violations here and there."

HOME PLATE TENSION

St. Louis Cardinals manager Oliver Marmol said umpire C.B. Bucknor "has zero class" for refusing to shake his hand during the lineup card exchange at home plate before a game against the Washington Nationals. Marmol, who did shake hands with the other three umps, was seeing Bucknor for the first time since being ejected in a contentious dispute Aug. 21 in Arizona.

"I went into that game pretty certain of my thoughts on him as an umpire," Marmol said. "They weren't very good and it shows his lack of class as a man. I chose my words wisely. I just don't think he's good at his job and it just showed his lack of class as a man."

Marmol was ejected last year in the final game of a series after protesting a strike call by Bucknor against Nolan Arenado, with each loudly questioning the other's "time in the league."

Bucknor was not available after Saturday's game and did not return a reporter's telephone call.

BRYANT ON THE MOVE

Colorado Rockies slugger Kris Bryant's first spring training game this season included more running than he expected. The 31-year-old is trying to bounce back after missing a big chunk of the 2022 season with various injuries, including to his right foot. He hit .306 with five homers in 42 games.

Bryant reached first base on a fielder's choice in the first inning against the Diamondbacks. He then scored from first base on Ryan McMahon's double to the wall.

"I felt fine running, I just felt slow," Bryant said, laughing. "But I figure for the first time in spring training doing that, it's a good test for me."

SONG THROWS

Phillies right-hander Noah Song threw off a mound during his third day of workouts after joining the team from the U.S. Navy and said the session was "good." The 25-year old had been a flight officer training on a P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft before he was allowed to transfer from active duty to reserves.

Song was impressive in his only pro season, making seven starts for Boston's Class A Lowell affiliate in 2019, striking out 19 in 17 innings with a 1.06 ERA. With a fastball in the upper 90s mph, he went 11-1 with a 1.44 ERA and 161 strikeouts in 94 innings during his senior year at Navy.

The Phillies selected Song from the Phillies in the December draft for unprotected minor league players.

Media drop Dilbert after creator's Black 'hate group' remark

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

The creator of the Dilbert comic strip faced a backlash of cancellations Saturday while defending remarks describing people who are Black as members of "a hate group" from which white people should "get away."

Various media publishers across the U.S. denounced the comments by Dilbert creator Scott Adams as racist, hateful and discriminatory while saying they would no longer provide a platform for his work.

Andrews McMeel Syndication, which distributes Dilbert, did not immediately respond Saturday to requests for comment. But Adams defended himself on social media against those whom he said "hate me and are canceling me."

Dilbert is a long-running comic that pokes fun at office-place culture.

The backlash began following an episode this past week of the YouTube show, "Real Coffee with Scott Adams." Among other topics, Adams referenced a Rasmussen Reports survey that had asked whether people agreed with the statement "It's OK to be white."

Most agreed, but Adams noted that 26% of Black respondents disagreed and others weren't sure.

The Anti-Defamation League says the phrase was popularized in 2017 as a trolling campaign by members of the discussion forum 4chan but then began being used by some white supremacists.

Adams, who is white, repeatedly referred to people who are Black as members of a "hate group" or a "racist hate group" and said he would no longer "help Black Americans."

"Based on the current way things are going, the best advice I would give to white people is to get the hell away from Black people," Adams said on his Wednesday show.

In another episode of his online show Saturday, Adams said he had been making a point that "everyone should be treated as an individual" without discrimination.

"But you should also avoid any group that doesn't respect you, even if there are people within the group who are fine," Adams said.

The Los Angeles Times cited Adams' "racist comments" while announcing Saturday that Dilbert will be discontinued Monday in most editions and that its final run in the Sunday comics — which are printed in advance — will be March 12.

The San Antonio Express-News, which is part of Hearst Newspapers, said Saturday that it will drop the Dilbert comic strip, effective Monday, "because of hateful and discriminatory public comments by its creator."

The USA Today Network tweeted Friday that it also will stop publishing Dilbert "due to recent discriminatory comments by its creator."

The Plain Dealer in Cleveland and other publications that are part of Advance Local media also announced that they are dropping Dilbert.

"This is a decision based on the principles of this news organization and the community we serve," wrote Chris Quinn, editor of The Plain Dealer. "We are not a home for those who espouse racism. We certainly do not want to provide them with financial support."

Christopher Kelly, vice president of content for NJ Advance Media, wrote that the news organization believes in "the free and fair exchange of ideas."

"But when those ideas cross into hate speech, a line must be drawn," Kelly wrote.

5 dead, including patient, in medical flight crash in Nevada

STAGECOACH, Nev. (AP) — All five people aboard a medical transport flight, including a patient, were killed in a plane crash Friday night in a mountainous area in northern Nevada.

The Lyon County Sheriff's office said authorities began receiving calls about the crash near Stagecoach, Nevada, around 9:15 p.m. and found the wreckage two hours later. Stagecoach, a rural community home to around 2,500 residents, is about 45 miles (72 kilometers) southeast of Reno.

Care Flight, which provides ambulance service by plane and helicopter, said the dead included the pilot,

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a flight nurse, a flight paramedic, a patient and a patient's family member.

Barry Duplantis, president and CEO of the company, said Saturday afternoon that relatives of all five victims had been notified, the Reno Gazette Journal reported. "We send our deepest condolences to their families," Duplantis said.

The crash occurred amid a winter storm warning issued by the National Weather Service in Reno for large swaths of Nevada, including parts of Lyon County.

The weather service said it was expecting heavy snow, wind gusts of up to 65 mph (105 kph) and periods of whiteout conditions between 4 a.m. Friday and 4 a.m. Sunday.

"It's a pretty mountainous region," Lyon County Sgt. Nathan Cooper said. "Especially with the weather being the way it is right now, it's not very good."

The National Transportation Safety Board said Saturday morning on Twitter that it is sending a seven-member team of investigators to the crash site. The NTSB is expected release more information Sunday at a news conference.

Care Flight identified the downed aircraft as a Pilatus PC-12 airplane. Federal Aviation Administration records show the aircraft was manufactured in 2002.

The company said in a statement that it is halting flights to focus on helping responding agencies, team members and the families.

Los Angeles area still blanketed by snow in rare heavy storm

By JOHN ANTCZAK and KEN KUSMER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A powerful winter storm that swept down the West Coast with flooding and frigid temperatures shifted its focus to southern California on Saturday, swelling rivers to dangerous levels and dropping snow in even low-lying areas around Los Angeles.

The National Weather Service said it was one of the strongest storms to ever hit southwest California and even as the volume of wind and rain dropped, it continued to have significant impact including snowfall down to elevations as low as 1,000 feet (305 meters). Hills around suburban Santa Clarita, north of Los Angeles, were blanketed in white, and snow also surprised inland suburbs to the east.

Rare blizzard warnings for the mountains and widespread flood watches were ending late in the day as the storm tapered off in the region. Forecasters said there would be a one-day respite before the next storm arrives on Monday.

After days of fierce winds, toppled trees and downed wires, more than 120,000 California utility customers remained without electricity, according to PowerOutage.us. And Interstate 5, the West Coast's major north-south highway, remained closed due to heavy snow and ice in Tejon Pass through the mountains north of Los Angeles.

Multiday precipitation totals as of Saturday morning included a staggering 81 inches (205 centimeters) of snow at the Mountain High resort in the San Gabriel Mountains northeast of Los Angeles and up to 64 inches (160 centimeters) farther east at Snow Valley in the San Bernardino Mountains.

Rainfall totals as of late Saturday morning were equally stunning, including nearly 15 inches (38.1 centimeters) at Los Angeles County's Cogswell Dam and nearly 10.5 inches (26.6 cm) in the Woodland Hills section of Los Angeles.

"Quite a remarkable storm the last few days with historic amounts of precip and snow down to elevations that rarely see snow," the LA-area weather office wrote.

The Los Angeles River and other waterways that normally flow at a trickle or are dry most of the year were raging with runoff Saturday. The Los Angeles Fire Department used a helicopter to rescue four homeless people who were stranded in the river's major flood control basin. Two were taken to a hospital with hypothermia, said spokesperson Brian Humphrey.

In the Valencia area of north Los Angeles County, the roiling Santa Clara River carried away three motorhomes early Saturday after carving into an embankment where an RV park is located. No one was hurt, KCAL-TV reported, but one resident described the scene as devastating.

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The storm, fueled by low pressure rotating off the coast, did not depart quietly. Lightning strikes shut down LA County beaches and scattered bursts of snow, showers and thunderstorms persisted.

Derek Maiden, 57, who lives in a tent in LA's Echo Park neighborhood, collected cans in the rain to take to a recycling center. He said this winter has been wetter than usual. "It's miserable when you're outside in the elements," he said.

Meanwhile, people farther east were struggling to deal with the fallout from storms earlier this week.

More than 350,000 customers were without power in Michigan as of early Saturday afternoon, according to reports from the the two main utilities in the state, DTE and Consumers Energy. Both said they hope to have the lights back on for most of their customers by Sunday night.

Brian Wheeler, a spokesman for Consumers Energy, said half an inch (1.27 centimeters) of ice weighed down some power lines — equivalent to the weight of a baby grand piano.

"People are not just angry but struggling," said Em Perry, environmental justice director for Michigan United, a group that advocates for economic and racial justice. "People are huddling under blankets for warmth."

She said the group will demand that utilities reimburse residents for the cost to purchase generators or replace spoiled groceries.

In Kalamazoo, Michigan, Allison Rinker was using a borrowed generator to keep her 150-year-old house warm Saturday after two nights in the cold and dark.

"We were all surviving, but spirits were low on the second day," she said. "As soon as the heat came back and we were able to have one or two lights running, it was like a complete flip in attitude."

After driving to a relative's home to store food, Rinker, 27, compared the destruction of trees to tornado damage.

"The ice that was falling off the trees as it was melting was hitting our windshield so hard, I was afraid it was going to crack," she said. "There's just tree limbs everywhere, half of the trees just falling down. The destruction is insane."

Back in California, the Weather Prediction Center of the National Weather Service forecast heavy snow over the Cascade Mountains and the Sierra Nevada through the weekend.

The low-pressure system was also expected to bring widespread rain and snow in southern Nevada by Saturday afternoon and across northwest Arizona Saturday night and Sunday morning, the National Weather Service office in Las Vegas said.

An avalanche warning was issued for the Sierra Nevada backcountry around Lake Tahoe, which straddles the California-Nevada border. Nearly 2 feet (61 cm) of new snow had fallen by Friday and up to another 5 feet (1.5 meters) was expected when another storm moves in with the potential for gale-force winds and high-intensity flurries Sunday, the weather service said.

In Arizona, the heaviest snow was expected late Saturday through midday Sunday, with up to a foot of new snow possible in Flagstaff, forecasters said.

Weekend snow also was forecast for parts of the upper Midwest to the Northeast, with pockets of freezing rain over some areas of the central Appalachians. The storm was expected to reach the central high Plains by Sunday evening.

At least three people have died in the coast-to-coast storms. A Michigan firefighter died Wednesday after coming into contact with a downed power line, while in Rochester, Minnesota, a pedestrian died after being hit by a city-operated snowplow. Authorities in Portland, Oregon, said a person died of hypothermia.

Much of Portland was shut down with icy roads after the city's second-heaviest snowfall on record this week: nearly 11 inches (28 centimeters). While the city saw sunny skies and temperatures approaching 40 degrees Saturday afternoon, the reprieve — and thaw — was short-lived. More snow was expected overnight and Sunday.

Rights to 'Crying Indian' ad to go to Native American group

By TERRY TANG Associated Press

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Since its debut in 1971, an anti-pollution ad showing a man in Native American attire shed a single tear at the sight of smokestacks and litter taking over a once unblemished landscape has become an indelible piece of TV pop culture.

It's been referenced over the decades since on shows like "The Simpsons" and "South Park" and in internet memes. But now a Native American advocacy group that was given the rights to the long-parodied public service announcement is retiring it, saying it has always been inappropriate.

The so-called "Crying Indian" with his buckskins and long braids made the late actor Iron Eyes Cody a recognizable face in households nationwide. But to many Native Americans, the public service announcement has been a painful reminder of the enduring stereotypes they face.

The nonprofit that originally commissioned the advertisement, Keep America Beautiful, had long been considering how to retire the ad and announced this week that it's doing so by transferring ownership of the rights to the National Congress of American Indians.

"Keep America Beautiful wanted to be careful and deliberate about how we transitioned this iconic advertisement/public service announcement to appropriate owners," Noah Ullman, a spokesperson for the nonprofit, said via e-mail. "We spoke to several Indigenous peoples' organizations and were pleased to identify the National Congress of American Indians as a potential caretaker."

NCAI plans to end the use of the ad and watch for any unauthorized use.

"NCAI is proud to assume the role of monitoring the use of this advertisement and ensure it is only used for historical context; this advertisement was inappropriate then and remains inappropriate today," said NCAI Executive Director Larry Wright, Jr. "NCAI looks forward to putting this advertisement to bed for good."

When it premiered in the 1970s, the ad was a sensation. It led to Iron Eyes Cody filming three follow-up PSAs. He spent more than 25 years making public appearances and visits to schools on behalf of the anti-litter campaign, according to an Associated Press obituary.

From there, Cody, who was Italian American but claimed to have Cherokee heritage through his father, was typecast as a stock Native American character, appearing in over 80 films. Most of the time, his character was simply "Indian," "Indian Chief" or "Indian Joe."

His movie credits from the 1950s-1980s included "Sitting Bull," "The Great Sioux Massacre," "Nevada Smith," "A Man Called Horse" and "Ernest Goes to Camp." On television, he appeared in "Bonanza," "Gunsmoke" and "Rawhide" among others. He also was a technical adviser on Native American matters on film sets.

Dr. Jennifer J. Folsom, a journalism and media communication professor at Colorado State University and a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, remembers watching the public service announcement as a child.

"At that point, every single person who showed up with braids and buckskins, on TV or anywhere in the movies, I glommed on to that because it was such a rare thing to see," said Folsom, whose areas of study include Native American pop culture. "I did see how people littered, and I did see how the creeks and the rivers were getting polluted."

But as she grew up, Folsom noticed how media devoted little coverage to Native American environmental activists.

"There's no agency for that sad so-called Indian guy sitting in a canoe, crying," Folsom said. "I think it has done damage to public perception and support for actual Native people doing things to protect the land and protect the environment."

She applauded Keep America Beautiful's decision as an "appropriate move." It will mean a trusted group can help control the narrative the ad has promoted for over 50 years, she said.

The ad's power has arguably already faded as Native and Indigenous youths come of age with a greater consciousness about stereotypes and cultural appropriation. TikTok has plenty of examples of Native people parodying or doing a takedown of the advertisement, Folsom said.

Robert "Tree" Cody, the adopted son of Iron Eyes Cody, said the advertisement had "good intent and good heart" at its core.

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"It was one of the top 100 commercials," said Robert Cody, an enrolled member of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community in Arizona.

And, it reminded him of time spent with his father, said Cody, who lives at Santa Ana Pueblo in New Mexico.

"I remember a lot, even when he went on a movie set to finish his movies and stuff," Cody said. "I remember going out to Universal (Studios), Disney, places like that."

His wife, Rachel Kee-Cody, can't help but feel somewhat sad that an ad that means so much to their family will be shelved. But she is resigned to the decision.

"You know, times are changing as well. You keep going no matter how much it changes," she said. "Disappointment. ... It'll pass."

EPA orders 'pause' of derailment contaminated waste removal

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio (AP) — Federal environmental authorities have ordered a temporary halt in the shipment of contaminated waste from the site of a fiery train derailment earlier this month in eastern Ohio near the Pennsylvania state line.

Region 5 administrator Debra Shore of the Environmental Protection Agency said Saturday the agency ordered Norfolk Southern to "pause" shipments from the site of the Feb. 3 derailment in East Palestine but vowed that removal of the material would resume "very soon."

"Everyone wants this contamination gone from the community. They don't want the worry, and they don't want the smell, and we owe it to the people of East Palestine to move it out of the community as quickly as possible," Shore said.

Until Friday, Shore said, the rail company had been solely responsible for the disposal of the waste and supplied Ohio environmental officials with a list of selected and utilized disposal sites. Going forward, disposal plans including locations and transportation routes for contaminated waste will be subject to EPA review and approval, she said.

"EPA will ensure that all waste is disposed of in a safe and lawful manner at EPA-certified facilities to prevent further release of hazardous substances and impacts to communities," Shore said. She said officials had heard concerns from residents and others in a number of states and were reviewing "the transport of some of this waste over long distances and finding the appropriate permitted and certified sites to take the waste."

The Ohio governor's office said Saturday night that of the twenty truckloads (approximately 280 tons) of hazardous solid waste hauled away, 15 truckloads of contaminated soil was disposed of at a Michigan hazardous waste treatment and disposal facility while five truckloads had been returned to East Palestine.

Liquid waste already trucked out of East Palestine would be disposed of at a licensed hazardous waste treatment and disposal facility in Texas, but that facility would not accept more liquid waste, the Ohio governor's office said.

"Currently, about 102,000 gallons of liquid waste and 4,500 cubic yards of solid waste remain in storage on site in East Palestine, not including the five truckloads returned to the village," the governor's office said. "Additional solid and liquid wastes are being generated as the cleanup progresses."

No one was injured when 38 Norfolk Southern cars derailed in a fiery, mangled mess on the outskirts of town, but as fears grew about a potential explosion due to hazardous chemicals in five of the rail cars, officials evacuated the area. They later opted to release and burn toxic vinyl chloride from the tanker cars, sending flames and black smoke billowing into the sky again.

Shore said the EPA was not involved in the decision to do the controlled burn, but she called it a "well-founded" decision by local and state officials based on the information they had at the time "to deal with a highly explosive toxic chemical."

Federal and state officials have repeatedly said it's safe for evacuated residents to return to the area and that air testing in the town and inside hundreds of homes hasn't detected any concerning levels of contaminants from the fires or burned chemicals. The state says the local municipal drinking water system

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is safe, and bottled water is available while testing is conducted for those with private wells.

Despite those assurances and a bevy of news conferences and visits from politicians, many residents still express a sense of mistrust or have lingering questions about what they have been exposed to and how it will impact the future of their families and their communities.

After delays, Nigerians keep watch for key vote's outcome

By CHINEDU ASADU Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Some frustrated Nigerians cast their ballots with flashlights while others stood watch at their polling stations as counting got under way late Saturday amid fears of vote tampering after a day of delays in Africa's most populous nation.

Election officials blamed the delays on logistical issues, though other observers pointed to the upheaval created by a redesigned currency that has left many unable to obtain bank notes. The cash shortage affected transport not only for voters but also election workers and police officers providing security.

Voting ended well beyond schedule in many places after delays but some were still voting in a few areas where the exercise stretched into the night. In the northwest Bauchi state, Lagos-based Channels TV reported that voters were still voting using their torchlights at around 9 p.m.

And in Abuja and Delta state, voters stuck around to monitor the process and ensure the results were not tampered with.

"Nightfall has come — anything can happen (now)," Torke Ezekiel said after casting his ballot.

While there were fears of violence on Election Day, from Islamic militants in the north to separatists in the south voting was largely peaceful Saturday though a dramatic scene unfolded in the megacity of Lagos in the mid-afternoon.

Associated Press journalists saw armed men pull up to the voting station in a minibus, fire shots in the air and snatch the presidential ballot box. The shots sent voters screaming and scattering for cover, and ballots strewn across the floor.

And in the northeast state of Borno, at least five people including children, were wounded when Boko Haram extremists attacked voters in Gwoza town, local authorities said.

Mahmood Yakubu, head of Nigeria's election commission, said national collation of results in the presidential election would commence at noon on Sunday. In 2019, the winner of the presidential election was announced four days after the voting day.

"We are making very steady progress and we will continue to ensure that nothing truncates our democracy or truncates the will of the Nigerian people," said Yakubu, the election chief.

However, Mucahid Durmaz, senior analyst at Verisk Maplecroft, a global risk intelligence company, said voting "has been very complicated for Nigerians."

There have been "widespread complaints about late-arriving officials, nonfunctioning machines, low presence of security and attacks on polling stations," he added.

Incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari is stepping down after two four-year terms in Nigeria, a West African country where unemployment has soared to 33% even as one of the continent's top oil producers.

Out of the field of 18 presidential candidates, three front-runners emerged in recent weeks: the candidate from Buhari's ruling party, the main opposition party candidate and a third-party challenger who has drawn strong support from younger voters.

But it remained unclear how many voters were deterred because of the cash crisis, which has left Nigerians with funds in their bank accounts unable to obtain the cash they need for things like gas and taxis.

"Voters said the new naira policy made it very difficult for people to transport themselves to their polling units and they were also hungry. So they felt rather than going out to burn energy, they should just stay back home," said Anthony Adejuwon who monitored the election in Osun state.

The vote is being carefully watched as Nigeria is Africa's largest economy. By 2050, the U.N. estimates that Nigeria will tie with the United States as the third most populous nation in the world after India and China.

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It is also home to one of the largest youth populations in the world with a median age of only 18. About 64 million of its 210 million people are between the ages of 18 and 35.

Favour Ben, 29, who owns a food business in the capital, Abuja, said she was backing third-party candidate Peter Obi.

"Obi knows what Nigerians need," she said. "He knows what is actually disturbing us and I believe he knows how to tackle it."

Buhari's tenure was marked by concerns about his ailing health and frequent trips abroad for medical treatment. Two of the top candidates are in their 70s and both have been in Nigerian politics since 1999.

By contrast, at 61, Obi of the Labour party is the youngest of the front-runners and had surged in the polls in the weeks leading up to Saturday's vote.

Still, Bola Tinubu has the strong support of the ruling All Progressives Congress party as an important backer of the incumbent president. And Atiku Abubakar has the name recognition of being one of Nigeria's richest businessmen, having also served as a vice president and presidential hopeful in 2019 for his Peoples Democratic Party.

For the first time this year Nigeria's election results will be transmitted electronically to headquarters in Abuja, a step officials say will reduce voter fraud. Officials also say they'll be enforcing a ban on mobile phones inside voting booths to prevent vote-buying: images of the votes are usually sent as proof if people have received money to pick a certain candidate.

Since officials in November announced the decision to redesign Nigeria's currency, the naira, new bills have been slow to circulate. At the same time, older bank notes stopped being accepted, creating a shortage in a country where many use cash for daily transactions.

Durmaz says the currency change should have been laid out in a longer timeline before or after the election. Lengthy waits to vote "will likely disenfranchise voters, deepen the electoral disputes and trigger violence."

"Delays along with reports of voter suppression in Lagos risk aggravating the disappointment among passionate voters in a highly-anticipated election and cause an explosion of violent protests in urban centers," he warned. "Any outbreak of violence could rapidly embrace ethnic and religious undertones, given the considerable impact of ethnic and religious differences on elections in Nigeria."

Florida Dems pick Fried to lead party after tough midterms

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Florida Democrats selected former state Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried as their new party chair on Saturday, hoping to move past a disastrous midterm performance in the onetime presidential battleground state where high-profile Gov. Ron DeSantis has helped cement Republican control.

Fried, 45, outdistanced former state Sen. Annette Taddeo at a special meeting of party members in suburban Orlando, and will replace Manny Diaz. In his resignation announcement letter last month, he listed a number of problems facing the party, including a lack of resources and volunteers and poor messaging.

Both women had lost their own races last year — Fried to Charlie Crist in the primary for governor and Taddeo to U.S. Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar in November.

Within the past few years, Republicans have erased the voter registration advantage in Florida that Democrats held for decades. In the midterm election, longtime Democratic strongholds such as Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties flipped to the GOP, and DeSantis won a landslide reelection victory as he eyes a 2024 presidential bid.

Democrats performed particularly poorly with Latinos in Florida compared with previous years. Miami-Dade, the state's most populous county, is home to 1.5 million Latinos of voting age.

Fried, whose term as agriculture commissioner wrapped up last month, has pledged to rebuild the party "from the ground up," with a focus on voter registration. As the only statewide elected Democrat, Fried was a fierce critic of DeSantis, often challenging him on policies related to the COVID-19 pandemic and later on a law critics called the "Don't Say Gay" bill, which bars instruction on sexual orientation and gender

identity in kindergarten through third grade.

Taddeo, 55, was a state senator from 2017 to 2022. She had said she wanted a year-round effort to register voters without outsourcing that job to other groups and to mobilize young voters. She also says the party must conduct more outreach to Black and Hispanic communities.

Just over a decade ago, President Barack Obama won reelection to the White House after twice carrying the state of Florida. President Donald Trump won the state in the last two elections, carrying Florida by an even larger margin in 2020 than four years earlier.

Jill Biden talks safe sex, condoms with Kenya's young adults

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — It was a Saturday of learning for U.S. first lady Jill Biden in Kenya.

She praised young adults for learning about safe sex and dating practices, attended a meeting of women who created their own banking system and chatted with local entrepreneurs who have been helped by a program that connects tractor owners and farmers.

All three programs aim to help women and young people take control of their lives so they can support themselves and their families. Biden has been highlighting U.S.-backed efforts to empower these groups during a five-day, two-country visit to Africa this week.

"These are issues that really all people need to talk about and yet, somehow, they don't, and the consequences of not talking about it are so dire," Biden told dozens of young people after talking with them about safe sex, condom use and birth control at the Shujaaz Konnect Festival, a local youth empowerment event. "So I love seeing the young people here."

At a tent where young people were having networking-like conversations, they showed her a questionnaire they use to spur discussion. The first question: "What would you say if I told you I had a condom in my pocket right now?"

Biden laughed. "And this is the first time they're meeting?" she asked.

A Shujaaz representative said such blunt propositions help teenagers and young adults overcome shyness, saying that it's sometimes easier to ask strangers these types of questions.

"I'm surprised you don't start with like, 'What's your biggest achievement?' rather than, 'I have a condom in my pocket,'" the first lady said.

The festival is a collaboration with MTV Staying Alive Foundation, which works with the U.S. Agency for International Development and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief to help teach young Kenyans how to avoid becoming infected with HIV, which causes AIDS.

Biden, who is on the fourth day of her five-day trip to Namibia and Kenya, has spent the week promoting HIV/AIDS education programs and initiatives that teach woman and young people skills they need to find jobs or start businesses.

Her visit is part of a commitment by President Joe Biden to deepen U.S. engagement with the nations of Africa, many of which feel overlooked by the United States. Part of that effort is also about countering China's influence on the continent that Beijing has achieved through increased trade and spending on roads and other public works projects.

Biden was scheduled to cap her visit by traveling on Sunday to an area near Kenya's border with Tanzania to raise awareness about a severe drought that is endangering lives and livelihoods.

Earlier Saturday, the first lady went to a government community center in Kibera, an informal settlement in Nairobi, to attend a meeting of women small-business owners who participate in the Joyful Women program. Founded in 2009 by Rachel Ruto, Kenya's first lady, the program promotes women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion.

Participants create "table banking" groups, pooling their resources so they can lend each other money they cannot get from traditional banks. Some of the women have used the loans to start businesses. One woman said she opened a day care center.

"It's pretty ingenious that women found a way to support other women, to lift them up and to increase

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economic prosperity for families, right?" said Biden, who visited a different empowerment program on a 2010 stop at Kibera.

"I've always taught my own daughter and my granddaughter the importance of being financially independent and, so now, here, you've found a way to do your own banking system, which is pretty incredible," Biden said. Her granddaughter, Naomi, 29, sat nearby.

Before taking her seat at the table, Biden was wrapped from the waist down in an apron-like cloth known as a leso or kanga that women wear in the home.

At a separate event, Biden chatted with local entrepreneurs, small farmers and others who have been helped by Hello Tractor, which connects tractor owners and farmers who need the machinery.

The first lady also laid a wreath at August 7th Memorial Park to honor those who were killed the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. More than 200 people were killed, including 12 Americans. More than 4,500 people were wounded.

Pipeline debate at center of California carbon capture plans

By MICHAEL PHILLIS and KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — In its latest ambitious roadmap to tackle climate change, California relies on capturing carbon out of the air and storing it deep underground on a scale that's not yet been seen in the United States.

The plan — advanced by Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration — comes just as the Biden administration has boosted incentives for carbon capture projects in an effort to spur more development nationwide. Ratcheting up 20 years of climate efforts, Newsom last year signed a law requiring California to remove as much carbon from the air as it emits by 2045 — one of the world's fastest timelines for achieving so-called carbon neutrality. He directed the powerful California Air Resources Board to drastically reduce the use of fossil fuels and build massive amounts of carbon dioxide capture and storage.

To achieve its climate goals, California must rapidly transform an economy that's larger than most nations, but fierce opposition to carbon capture from environmental groups and concerns about how to safely transport the gas may delay progress — practical and political obstacles the Democratic-led Legislature must now navigate.

Last year, the California state legislature passed a law that says no carbon dioxide may flow through new pipelines until the federal government finishes writing stronger safety regulations, a process that could take years. As a potential backup, the law directed the California Natural Resources Agency to write its own pipeline standards for lawmakers to consider, a report now more than three weeks overdue.

While there are other ways to transport carbon dioxide gas besides pipelines, such as trucks or ships, pipelines are considered key to making carbon capture happen at the level California envisions. Newsom said the state must capture 100 million metric tons of carbon each year by 2045 — about a quarter of what the state now emits annually.

"We do not expect to see (carbon capture and storage) happen at a large scale unless we are able to address that pipeline issue," said Rajinder Sahota, deputy executive officer for climate change and research at the air board.

State Sen. Anna Caballero, who authored the carbon capture legislation, said the state's goal will be to create a safety framework that's even more robust than what the federal government will develop. But she downplayed any urgent need to move forward with pipeline rules, saying smaller projects that don't require movement over long distances can start in the meantime.

"We don't need pipelines across different properties right now," she said.

Last year's Inflation Reduction Act increases federal funding for carbon capture, boosting payouts from \$50 to \$85 per ton for capturing carbon dioxide from industrial plants and storing it underground. There are also federal grants and state incentives.

Without clarity on the state's pipeline plans, the state is putting itself at a "competitive disadvantage" when it comes to attracting projects, said Sam Brown, a former attorney at the Environmental Protection

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Agency and partner at law firm Hunton Andrews Kurth.

If the pipeline moratorium slows projects for three or four years, Brown said, "why would you put your money into those projects in California when you can do it in Texas or Louisiana or somewhere else?"

The geology for storing carbon dioxide gas is rare, but California has it in parts of the Central Valley, a vast expanse of agricultural land running down the center of the state.

Oil and gas company California Resources Corp. is developing a project there to create hydrogen. It plans to capture carbon from that hydrogen facility and the natural gas plant that powers it. The carbon dioxide would then be stored in an old oil field. That doesn't require special pipeline approval because it's all happening within the company's property.

But the company also wants to store emissions from other industries like manufacturing and transportation. Transporting that would rely on pipelines that can't be built yet.

"These are parts of the economy that have to be decarbonized," said Chris Gould, the company's executive vice president and chief sustainability officer. "It makes economic sense to do it."

Safety concerns increased in 2020 after a pipeline in Mississippi ruptured in a landslide, releasing a heavier-than-air plume of carbon dioxide that displaced oxygen near the ground. Forty-five people were treated at a hospital, and several lost consciousness. There are thousands of miles of carbon dioxide pipelines operating across the country and industry proponents call the event an anomaly. But the Mississippi rupture prompted federal regulators to explore tightening the existing rules for carbon pipelines.

Lupe Martinez, who lives in California's Kern County, worries what will happen as developers target the region for carbon storage.

He used to spray fields with pesticides without protective equipment. On windy days, he'd be soaked in chemicals. Martinez, who watched some of his fellow workers later fight cancer, says he was lied to about safety then and doesn't believe promises that carbon capture is safe now.

"They treat us like guinea pigs," said Martinez, a longtime labor activist.

The oil and gas industry's emissions are a main cause of climate change and in the past the industry undermined sound evidence that greenhouse gases are deeply disturbing the climate. Now carbon capture — unproven as a major climate solution — will help the industry keep polluting in places that are already heavily polluted, environmentalists argue. Instead of shutting down fossil fuel plants, carbon capture will increase their profits and extend their life, said Catherine Garoupa, executive director of the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition.

But advocates of carbon capture say it's essential for Kern County oil and gas companies to find new ways to make money and keep people employed as California moves away from fossil fuels, an industry that is the "very fabric" of the region's identity, said Lorelei Oviatt, director of Kern County Planning and Natural Resources.

Without a new revenue source like carbon capture, "Kern County will be the next Gary, Indiana," she said, referring to the rust belt's years-ago collapse.

There are currently no active carbon capture projects in California. To demonstrate the technology is viable and people can get permits for it, it's essential to build the first projects, said George Peridas, director of carbon management partnerships at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories.

Peridas said one area with potential to store carbon dioxide is the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, a vast estuary on the western edge of the Central Valley that's a vital source of drinking water and an ecologically sensitive home to hundreds of species.

A levee-ringed island of farmland in the region that's nearly half the size of Manhattan would be an ideal place for storing carbon dioxide safely, Peridas said.

Tom Zuckerman, who represents the islands' owners on the project and is an owner himself, recently submitted a federal permit application for a project to capture emissions from an ethanol plant in Stockton, ship it by barge nearly 10 miles down the San Joaquin River and sequester it deep beneath the island. The project doesn't need a pipeline so it isn't affected by the ban. He hopes it will be up and running in a few years.

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"If we are going to be doing much of significance about reducing greenhouse gases in this country, areas like this are going to be critical," Zuckerman said.

Chicago mayor's race dominated by concerns about city crime

By SARA BURNETT Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — For years, Republicans have sought to win over voters by depicting Democratic-led cities as lawless centers of violence that need tough-on-crime policies. In Chicago, some of the Democrats running for mayor are deploying the same strategy as they debate how to make the city safer.

One leading candidate, who touts his endorsement from the Chicago police union, says "crime is out of control" and the city needs hundreds more officers patrolling its streets. Another hopeful says that if suspects flee a crime scene, officers should be able to "hunt them down like a rabbit."

Even incumbent Lori Lightfoot, the first Black woman and first openly gay person to serve as Chicago mayor, has used language right out of the GOP playbook, saying a top rival in her reelection bid wants to defund the police.

The shift in rhetoric reflects the degree to which concerns about crime have dominated Tuesday's mayoral election in Chicago and threatened Lightfoot's reelection bid. Far from being an outlier, the nation's third-largest city is just the latest Democratic stronghold where public safety has become a top election issue.

In San Francisco, progressive District Attorney Chesa Boudin was ousted in a recall election last year that was fueled by frustration over public safety. In Los Angeles, two Democrats running for mayor debated how to deal with rising crime rates and an out-of-control homelessness crisis. In New York City, voters elected Eric Adams as mayor, elevating a former city police captain who pledged to fix the department and invest more in crime prevention. And in Philadelphia, candidates running for mayor this year are debating how to curb gun violence.

The increased attention on public safety follows a spike in crime rates in many communities that coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. High-profile incidents of police misconduct drew more scrutiny of policing, and there has been disagreement even among Democrats about so-called progressive public safety policies such as ending cash bail or providing safe injection sites for drug users.

Jaime Domínguez, a political science professor at Northwestern University, said it's the first time in 20 years that he's seen public safety be "front and center" in a Chicago mayoral election.

The difference, he said, is that crime is no longer largely isolated to some predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods. As more crime is occurring in other parts of the highly segregated city, including in the downtown and other areas frequented by tourists, public safety is also top of mind for white voters.

"Historically, it was primarily a pocketed matter. It was still pernicious and candidates spoke to it, but it didn't really affect areas where you see crime occurring now," Dominguez said. "That has been blown up. It's just, it's everywhere."

Chicago has a higher per-capita homicide rate than New York or Los Angeles, but it's lower than other Midwestern cities, such as St. Louis and Detroit. Still, the number of homicides in Chicago hit a 25-year high in 2021 with 797, according to the Chicago Police Department.

That number decreased last year but is still higher than when Lightfoot took office in 2019. Other crimes, such as carjackings and robberies, have increased in recent years.

Nine candidates are running in Tuesday's officially nonpartisan mayoral election. With no candidate expected to get over 50% of the vote, an April 4 runoff between the top two vote-getters is likely.

Randall Fearnow, a 67-year-old health care attorney who is white and who lives near Wrigley Field on the city's north side, experienced the city's crime problem firsthand when he and his wife walked in the back door of their home one day last October and discovered burglars inside. The criminals ransacked the home and stole thousands of dollars' worth of jewelry and money before running out the front door, he said. Police didn't catch the perpetrators.

"It happened in the broad daylight," Fearnow said. "When you step out, it makes you feel a little uneasy. ... You're not immune anywhere from crime in the city."

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Fearnow cast an early ballot for Paul Vallas, who was endorsed by the Chicago police union. He also voted against Lightfoot four years ago, saying he believed her rival in the 2019 runoff was “much more level-headed.” This year, Fearnow said the two most important factors in his vote were crime and rising property taxes.

“The city gets more expensive to live in and less safe,” he said. “So somebody needs to do something.”

As she fights to land a spot in the April runoff, Lightfoot has taken on opponents she sees as a threat — among them Cook County Commissioner Brandon Johnson. In a recent ad, Lightfoot accuses Johnson of wanting to defund police, using video of him speaking on a local radio program in 2020. During the interview, Johnson said reducing the amount of money spent on policing isn’t a slogan but “an actual real political goal.”

His statements came after the protests across the United States over the killing by Minneapolis police of George Floyd. Johnson also sponsored a nonbinding resolution, passed by the county board, that said money should be redirected from policing and incarceration and into social services.

Lightfoot said Johnson, who avoids the word “defund” when speaking on the campaign trail about policing, isn’t being candid with voters.

“He’s asked direct questions at a variety of forums, and that guy’s got more bobs and weaves than Muhammad Ali,” Lightfoot said.

Johnson, a former teacher and union organizer endorsed by the Chicago Teachers Union, says he wants to invest more in areas such as mental health treatment. In a statement responding to Lightfoot, his campaign said that doesn’t mean cuts to the police department. Johnson also notes that Chicago still has a violence problem even though the police budget grows every year.

“Lori Lightfoot hasn’t made Chicago safer, but I will,” Johnson says in a new ad. “It’s time to get smart, not just tough.”

All of Lightfoot’s opponents want to fire the police superintendent she hired, saying that the former Dallas police chief has been ineffective and that hiring an outsider hurt morale. Lightfoot has defended the superintendent, David Brown, and says that while the city faced never-before-seen challenges such as the pandemic, their strategies are working and some crimes are falling.

Vallas, an adviser to the Fraternal Order of Police during the union’s contract negotiations with Lightfoot’s administration, says that if he becomes mayor, he would promote a new leadership team from within the department. Vallas says he would welcome back hundreds of officers who have retired or gone elsewhere out of frustration with Lightfoot. He also wants to return to a community policing strategy, with dedicated officers assigned to patrol each of the city’s nearly 300 police beats.

“We’ve got to restore public safety,” said Vallas. “Everything proceeds from that.”

Wealthy businessman Willie Wilson, another mayoral candidate, has doubled down on his comment that suspects in violent crimes should be hunted down like rabbits. Wilson says he lost a son to gun violence, and he believes police officers are being prevented from doing their jobs.

The other candidates are Rep. Jesus “Chuy” Garcia, Chicago City Council members Sophia King and Roderick Sawyer, activist Ja’Mal Green and state Rep. Kambium “Kam” Buckner.

Ukraine: Zelenskyy seeks more sanctions, fighting grinds on

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Fighting is grinding on in Ukraine after the country marked the anniversary of Russia’s invasion, with Ukrainian authorities on Saturday reporting dozens of new Russian strikes and attacks on cities in the east and south.

After a somber and defiant day of commemorations on Friday and a marathon news conference, Ukraine’s seemingly indefatigable president followed up with new video posts a day later in which he declared that “Russia must lose in Ukraine” and argued that its forces can be defeated this year.

In a separate tweet, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy also pushed for more sanctions pressure on Russia after the U.K., U.S. and the European Union all announced new measures aimed at further choking off

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funding and support for Moscow.

"The pressure on Russian aggressor must increase," Zelenskyy tweeted in English.

He said Ukraine wants to see "decisive steps" against Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom and the Russian nuclear industry as well as "more pressure on military and banking."

Russian President Vladimir Putin said this week that Rosatom and his Defense Ministry need to work on ensuring that Russia is ready to resume nuclear weapons tests if needs be. He alleged that the U.S. is working on nuclear weapons and that some in the U.S. are pondering plans to carry out nuclear tests banned under the global test ban that took effect after the end of the Cold War.

"If the U.S. conducts tests, we will also do it," Putin said.

Russia has already become the most sanctioned nation in the world over the past year, targeted with sanctions by more than 30 countries representing more than half of the world's economy. But the squeeze on its economy, trade and firms has yet to deliver a knockout blow.

Russia's ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Antonov, called the latest U.S. sanctions "thoughtless."

"We have learned to live under economic and political pressure," Antonov said. "The experience of previous sanctions has shown that they harm the world market to a greater extent, worsen the situation of ordinary citizens in states that initiate or support reckless sanctions."

The Feb. 24 anniversary of last year's invasion brought no respite in Russian attacks.

Still, in one of his video posts on Saturday, Zelenskyy asked: "Is it possible for us to win?"

"Yes," he said. "We are capable of this in unity, resolutely and unyieldingly, to put an end to Russian aggression this year."

Ukraine's military on Saturday reported 27 Russian airstrikes and 75 attacks from multiple rocket launchers in the most recent 24-hour spell. It said Russian offensive efforts continue to be concentrated in Ukraine's industrial east and northeast. Five wounded civilians were reported in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk province, where territory is roughly split between Russian and Ukrainian control.

Battles raged "around" and "nearby" Bakhmut, a city in the Donetsk region that has become the focus of the fighting in recent months, according to Ukraine's Land Forces. The military said the Russian forces continued attempts to break through Ukrainian defenses, encircle and seize the city.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, owner of Russia's private military company Wagner, claimed on Saturday that his fighters have "completely taken over" the village of Yahidne on the north outskirts of Bakhmut. There has been no confirmation of the claim from either the Russian military or the Ukrainian army.

In the southern Kherson region, Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin also reported 83 Russian shelling attacks, with the regional capital, also called Kherson, hit nine times, and residential buildings, a preschool and a medical institution struck. The head of Ukraine's presidential office reported three civilian wounded in the region.

French President Emmanuel Macron said Saturday that he aims to discuss peace efforts related to the Ukraine war with China when he travels there in April. China has called for a cease-fire and peace talks. Zelenskyy on Friday gave qualified support for Beijing's apparent interest in playing a role.

Macron said in Paris that "China must now help us to put pressure on Russia."

"Obviously so that Russia never uses neither chemical nor nuclear weapons," he said. "But also so that (Russia) stops this aggression as a condition for a negotiation."

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Saturday that he welcomed parts of the peace plan for Ukraine proposed by China, but disagreed with other aspects.

"There are things that are remarkably right, such as the renewed condemnation of the use of nuclear weapons," Scholz told reporters during an official visit to India. "What's missing in my view is a discernible line that says: 'Russian troops must also withdraw.'"

Met Opera marks 1st year of Ukraine war with concert

By RONALD BLUM Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Emily D'Angelo made her point with attire before singing a single note at the Metropolitan Opera's concert to mark the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

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The 28-year-old Canadian mezzo-soprano walked onto the stage Friday night for the Mozart Requiem wearing a dark skirt covered with white tally marks, like on a school chalkboard: four vertical slashes and a diagonal to close out each set of five. There were 365 in all on the outfit created by Berlin designer Esther Perbandt, one to mark each day of Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War II.

"Although an opera house doesn't have the offensive capacity of an Abrams tank or an F-16 jet, the Metropolitan Opera is proud to be a powerful cultural resource for Ukraine, helping to lead the fight for artistic liberty against (Vladimir) Putin's cultural propaganda machine," Met general manager Peter Gelb told an intermission group that included U.N. Ambassadors Sergiy Kyslytsya of Ukraine and Linda Thomas-Greenfield of the U.S. "We demonstrate the free world's ongoing cultural resolve to defend Ukraine's liberty in the face of brutal oppression."

Met music director Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducted what was titled "For Ukraine: A Concert of Remembrance and Hope," that also featured Ukrainian tenor Dmytro Popov and bass-baritone Vladyslav Buialskyi and South African soprano Golda Schultz. With the Metropolitan Opera House bathed in the yellow and blue colors on Ukraine's flag, and an actual flag hung above the stage, they opened with Ukraine's anthem, followed with the Mozart Requiem and Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 and ended with Valentin Silvestrov's hymn "Prayer for Ukraine."

"The Metropolitan Opera," Kyslytsya said, "adopted Ukrainian culture, adopted me, adopted my mission."

Ukraine First Lady Olena Zelenska addressed the crowd at the start of the evening in a prerecorded video speech.

"You have proven that art can help and save, literally," she said. "I hope that it is on this stage that we will soon be able to celebrate the victory of humanity, of art, of Ukraine, and it will be our common victory."

The Ukrainian singers wrapped themselves in flags during the curtain calls. Tickets were priced at \$50, with the Met saying it held the amount lower than its usual prices in the hope audience members would donate large amounts to supporting Ukraine's war effort.

Gelb dropped Russian artists who refused to distance themselves from Putin from the Met's roster, most famously star soprano Anna Netrebko.

"It's a small price to pay," he said. "To be on the side of right was what's important. I wouldn't be able to look at myself in the mirror and have known Putin supporters performing on our stage."

Russian bass Ildar Abdrazakov, who withdrew from a new production of Verdi's "La Forza del Destino" at the Met next season, was quoted recently as saying artists should remain neutral.

"My response is they chose a side and they chose the wrong side," Gelb said. "I feel sorry that he like many other Russians are so misinformed and don't really understand what's going on in the world."

The Met has hired four interns from Ukraine and Gelb plans to add Ukrainian composers to the Met's commissioning program. His wife, Canadian-Ukrainian conductor Keri-Lynn Wilson, will again lead a summer tour of the Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra. She was back in New York after conducting a Verdi Requiem and Ukrainian composer Viktoriia Poliova's "Bucha. Lacrimosa" at the Lviv National Opera on Tuesday to commemorate fallen soldiers and victims of Russia's invasion.

"I felt that I had to go and experience this myself and show Putin that he cannot kill culture, he cannot kill the soul of Ukraine," Wilson said. "We had to hide in a bomb shelter for the first rehearsal. For the dress rehearsal we were delayed two hours in a bomb shelter. But I didn't feel any fear -- there was no fear. There was this determination to somehow get through this concert, and it went on beautifully.

"The power stayed on. And there soldiers in the audience, young boys, they were in the first two rows. And when I went to make my bow and people were applauding me, I began applauding the soldiers. And we all applauded the soldiers. And that's what the power of music does."

Justice Thomas wrote of 'crushing weight' of student loans

By MARK SHERMAN and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court won't have far to look if it wants a personal take on the "crushing weight" of student debt that underlies the Biden administration's college loan forgiveness plan.

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Justice Clarence Thomas was in his mid-40s and in his third year on the nation's highest court when he paid off the last of his debt from his time at Yale Law School.

Thomas, the court's longest-serving justice and staunchest conservative, has been skeptical of other Biden administration initiatives. And when the Supreme Court hears arguments Tuesday involving President Joe Biden's debt relief plan that would wipe away up to \$20,000 in outstanding student loans, Thomas is not likely to be a vote in the administration's favor.

But the justices' own experiences can be relevant in how they approach a case, and alone among them, Thomas has written about the role student loans played in his financial struggles.

A fellow law school student even suggested Thomas declare bankruptcy after graduating "to get out from under the crushing weight of all my student loans," the justice wrote in his best-selling 2007 memoir, "My Grandfather's Son." He rejected the idea.

It's not clear that any of the other justices borrowed money to attend college or law school or have done so for their children's educations. Some justices grew up in relative wealth. Others reported they had scholarships to pay their way to some of the country's most expensive private institutions.

Of the seven justices on the court who are parents, four have signaled through their investments that they don't want their own children to be saddled with onerous college debt, and have piled money into tax-free college savings accounts that might limit any need for loans.

Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Neil Gorsuch have the most on hand, at least \$600,000 and at least \$300,000, respectively, according to annual disclosure reports the justices filed in 2022. Each has two children.

Justices Amy Coney Barrett, who has seven children, and Ketanji Brown Jackson, who has two, also have invested money in college-savings accounts, in which any earnings or growth is tax free if spent on education.

None of the justices would comment for this story, a court spokeswoman said.

Thomas wrote vividly about his past money woes in his up-from-poverty story, recounting how a bank once foreclosed on one of his loans because repayment and delinquency notices were sent to his grandparents' house in Savannah, Georgia, instead of Thomas' home at the time in Jefferson City, Missouri.

Thomas was able to take out another loan to repay the bank only because his mentor, John Danforth, then-Missouri attorney general and later a U.S. senator, vouched for him.

Thomas noted that he signed up for a tuition postponement program at Yale in which a group of students jointly paid for their outstanding loans according to their financial ability, with those earning the most paying the most.

At the time, Thomas' first wife, Kathy, was pregnant. "I didn't know what else to do, so I signed on the dotted line, and spent the next two decades paying off the money I borrowed during my last two years at Yale," Thomas wrote.

When he was first nominated to be a federal judge in 1989, Thomas reported \$10,000 in outstanding student loans, according to a news report at the time. The Biden administration has picked the same number as the amount of debt relief most borrowers would get under its plan.

Personal experience can shape the justices' questions in the courtroom and affect their private conversations about a case, even if it doesn't figure in the outcome.

"It is helpful to have people with life experiences that are varied just because it enriches the conversation," Justice Sonia Sotomayor has said. Sotomayor, like Thomas, also grew up poor. She got a full scholarship to Princeton as an undergraduate, she has said, and went on to Yale for law school, as Thomas did.

Keeping people from avoiding the kinds of difficult choices Thomas faced is a key part of the administration's argument for loan forgiveness. The administration says that without additional help, many borrowers will fall behind on their payments once a hold in place since the start of the coronavirus pandemic three years ago is lifted, no later than this summer.

Under a plan announced in August but so far blocked by federal courts, \$10,000 in federal loans would be canceled for people making less than \$125,000 or for households with less than \$250,000 in income. Recipients of Pell Grants, who tend to have fewer financial resources, would get an additional \$10,000 in

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debt forgiven.

The White House says 26 million people already have applied and 16 million have been approved for relief. The program is estimated to cost \$400 billion over the next three decades.

The legal fight could turn on any of several elements, including whether the Republican-led states and individuals suing over the plan have legal standing to go to court and whether Biden has the authority under federal law for so extensive a loan forgiveness program.

Nebraska and other states challenging the program argue that far from falling behind, 20 million borrowers would get a "windfall" because their entire student debt would be erased, Nebraska Attorney General Michael Hilgers wrote in the states' main Supreme Court brief.

Which of those arguments resonate with the court may become clear on Tuesday.

When she was dean of Harvard Law School, Justice Elena Kagan showed her own concern about the high cost of law school, especially for students who were considering lower-paying jobs.

Kagan established a program that would allow students to attend their final year tuition-free if they agreed to a five-year commitment to work in the public sector. While that program no longer exists, Harvard offers grants to students for public service work.

At the time the program was created, Kagan said she wanted students to be able to go to work where they "can make the biggest difference, but that isn't the case now." Instead, she said: "They often go to work where they don't want to work because of the debt burden."

Mexican states in hot competition over possible Tesla plant

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico is undergoing a fevered competition among states to win a potential Tesla facility in jostling reminiscent of what happens among U.S. cities and states vying to win investments from tech companies.

Mexican governors have gone to loopy extremes, like putting up billboards, creating special car lanes or creating mock-ups of Tesla ads for their states.

And there's no guarantee Tesla will build a full-fledged factory. Nothing is announced, and the frenzy is based mainly on Mexican officials saying Tesla boss Elon Musk will have an upcoming phone call with Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

The northern industrial state of Nuevo Leon seemed to have an early edge in the race.

It painted the Tesla logo on a lane at the Colombia border crossing into Texas last summer, and erecting billboards in December in the state capital, Monterrey, that read "Welcome Tesla."

The state governor's influencer wife, Mariana Rodriguez, was even shown in leaked photos at a get-together with Musk.

However, López Obrador appeared to exclude the semi-desert state from consideration Monday, arguing he wouldn't allow the typically high water use of factories to risk prompting shortages there.

That set off a competitive scramble among other Mexican states, like feeding time at a piranha tank. The governors' offers ranged from crafty proposals to near-comic ones.

"Veracruz is the only state with an excess of gas," quipped Gov. Cuitláhuac García of the Gulf coast state of Veracruz, before quickly adding "gas ... for industrial use, for industrial use!"

A late-comer to the race, García had to try harder: He noted Veracruz was home to Mexico's only nuclear power plant. And he claimed Veracruz had 30% of Mexico's water, though the National Water Commission puts the state's share at around 11%. Water, it turns out, is thicker than blood.

The governor of the western state of Michoacan wasn't going to be left out. Gov. Alfredo Ramírez Bedolla quickly posted a mocked-up ad for a Tesla car standing next to a huge, car-sized avocado — Michoacan's most recognizable product — with the slogan "Michoacan — The Best Choice for Tesla."

"We have enough water," Ramírez Bedolla said in a television interview he did between a round of meetings with auto industry figures and international business representatives.

Michoacan also has an intractable problem of drug cartel violence. But similar violence in neighboring Guanajuato state hasn't stopped seven major international automakers from setting up plants in Guanajuato.

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Nuevo Leon Gov. Samuel García had to think fast to avoid being shut out entirely, and came up with a novel strategy.

García reached out to the western state of Jalisco, whose governor, Enrique Alfaro, belongs to the same small Citizen's Movement party. Together, the two came up with an "alliance" Thursday that would allow trucks from Jalisco preferential use of Nuevo Leon's border crossing, the same one where a "Tesla" lane appeared last year.

Jalisco has an already healthy foreign tech sector, but most importantly, it has more water than Nuevo Leon.

The two appeared intent on playing nice. "We are two states that do not have to compete and cannibalize each other ... cannibalization for investment is a mistake," Alfaro said.

López Obrador's focus on water might be more about politics than about droughts, said Gabriela Siller, chief economist at Nuevo Leon-based Banco Base. She said the president appeared to be trying to steer Tesla investment to a state governed by his own Morena party, like Michoacan or Veracruz.

That could be a dangerous game, Siller said.

"Tesla could say it's not somebody's toy to be moved around anywhere, and it could decide not to come to Mexico," she said.

Sam Abuelsamid, a principal research analyst at U.S.-based Guidehouse Insights, said playing one state off against another has been common practice in the U.S.

"You remember a few years back, Amazon talked about building their headquarters, like every state, city in the country was putting in bids, trying to lure Amazon there," Abuelsamid said.

There are doubts that whatever Musk eventually does announce will be an auto assembly plant. Foreign Relations Secretary Marcelo Ebrard said his understanding is that it won't be a plant, but rather an "ecosystem" of suppliers.

Musk previously has made promises that don't come true, or happen years after he says they will. For instance, in 2019 he promised a fleet of fully autonomous robotaxis on the roads sometime in 2020. Nearly three years later, Tesla has yet to sell any autonomous vehicles.

While there has been little talk in Mexico so far of subsidies, many auto companies have gotten significant incentives to build plants in Mexico. That kind of race can be costly.

"It's questionable whether it's actually that economically beneficial to localities or providing those subsidies," said Abuelsamid. "They're sometimes spending billions of dollars in tax breaks to lure a company in there."

Musk at times has floated the idea of building a \$25,000 electric vehicle that would cost about \$20,000 less than the current Model 3, now Tesla's least-expensive car. Many automakers build lower-cost models in Mexico to save on labor costs and protect profit margins.

A Tesla investment could be part of "near shoring" by U.S. companies that once manufactured in China but now are leery of logistical and political problems there. That those companies will now turn to Mexico represents the Latin American country's biggest foreign investment hope.

"The fight among states to attract investments from this nearshoring phenomenon is going to be tough, complicated," Alfaro said.

As Ramírez Bedolla put it, "wherever Tesla sets up, it is going to be big news in Mexico."

Inadequate investigation? Takeaways at Murdaugh murder trial

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

Investigators like to say the crime scene at a killing tells the story even if no one else does.

In the double murder trial of disgraced South Carolina attorney Alex Murdaugh, his defense lawyers want jurors to believe the crime scene can't tell them much about the deaths of his wife and son because state agents did a poor job investigating.

Murdaugh, 54, is accused of killing his wife, Maggie, 52, and their 22-year-old son, Paul, at kennels near their home on June 7, 2021, as the once-prominent attorney's career and finances were crumbling.

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Murdaugh has denied any role in the fatal shootings. He faces 30 years to life if convicted.

Here are some key takeaways from the 61 prosecution and 11 defense witnesses called so far in the five-week trial, including Murdaugh himself.

CRIME SCENE PROBLEMS

The defense has called experts who said investigators didn't dust for fingerprints, collect and test blood, or photograph evidence with the angles or clarity needed to study it properly later.

The first officer arrived at the rural Colleton County estate 20 minutes after Murdaugh called 911 when he returned home from visiting his ailing mother. Almost immediately, the local sheriff realized he was dealing with someone whose family dominated the legal system in neighboring Hampton County for generations and turned the investigation over to the State Law Enforcement Division.

It took hours for agents from across the state to get deep into the South Carolina Lowcountry. During that time, more than a dozen family and friends walked around the scene, comforting Murdaugh. The bodies of Paul and Maggie Murdaugh were covered with a sheet, which can absorb fluid, instead of a tarp. Then the sheet wasn't saved, meaning possible hair or DNA from a killer could have been lost. Intermittent rain fell and the runoff from the kennel roof fell on Paul Murdaugh's covered body.

"It's a crime scene. You don't want water dripping all over the place. But more importantly, I thought it was pretty disrespectful," Murdaugh's former law partner Mark Ball testified.

When state agents arrived, they sent Murdaugh and his entourage to the home. Witnesses testified it hadn't been searched for weapons, bloody clothes and other evidence or even checked to see if a suspect was hiding inside.

Prosecutors have little direct evidence of Murdaugh's guilt. The weapons used in the killings have not been found. There's no blood-spattered clothes or surveillance video.

Prosecutor John Meadors told one of the experts that the investigators did the best they could under the circumstances.

"You're being paid to come in here and say they did a bad job," Meadors said.

STAR WITNESS

He was the 72nd witness of the five-week trial. But everyone perked up Thursday when Alex Murdaugh headed to the witness stand.

His defense team wasted no time. Their first questions were whether he killed his wife or son.

"I did not kill Maggie, and I did not kill Paul. I would never hurt Maggie, and I would never hurt Paul — ever — under any circumstances," Murdaugh said.

Murdaugh admitted he lied for the 20 months when he told police, his family and anyone else who asked that he was not at the kennels before he found the bodies of his wife and son there. A video on his son's iPhone, shot minutes before prosecutors think the killings happened, recorded Alex Murdaugh's voice. It took state agents more than a year to hack into the phone and find it.

In cross-examination, Murdaugh admitted he stole from clients and his law firm, likely sealing his fate for many of the 100 other charges he faces ranging from theft to insurance fraud to tax evasion.

"I took money that wasn't mine. And I shouldn't have done it. I hate the fact that I did it. I am embarrassed by it. I'm embarrassed for my son. I am embarrassed for my family," Murdaugh said.

COUSIN EDDIE

Outside of Murdaugh and his family, no potential witness has piqued the interest of trial watchers like Curtis "Eddie" Smith.

"Cousin Eddie," as many have taken to calling him, was the person Murdaugh said he called when he wanted someone to kill him three months after the deaths of his wife and son.

The fatal shot only grazed Murdaugh's head. Smith told reporters that the gun fired as they wrestled over the weapon and if he had shot intentionally at Murdaugh, he wouldn't have missed.

Smith and Murdaugh met about a decade ago when Smith needed a lawyer for a workers' compensation case. Investigators said they ran a drug and money laundering ring together with Smith cashing checks to help Murdaugh hide money he was stealing from clients.

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In the end, both prosecutors and defense attorneys appear to have decided Smith could hurt their cases as much as help them.

Defense attorney Dick Harpootlian said Smith had six different explanations for shooting Murdaugh "and any other information you ask him about."

But earlier this month as prosecutors and Harpootlian discussed with the judge whether Smith would testify, the feisty defense attorney lamented Smith might not be called.

"The cross-examination of Mr. Smith is something I am looking forward to," Harpootlian said.

G-20 meeting in India ends without consensus on Ukraine war

By AIJAZ RAHI and ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

BENGALURU, India (AP) — A meeting of finance chiefs of the Group of 20 leading economies ended on Saturday without a consensus, with Russia and China objecting to the description of the war in Ukraine in a final document.

The meeting hosted by India issued the G-20 Chair's summary and an outcome document stating that there was no agreement on the wording of the war in Ukraine. The first day of the meeting took place on the anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The Group of Seven major industrial nations announced new sanctions against Russia on Friday, just as the talks of the G-20 group wrapped up in confusion in the Indian technology hub of Bengaluru.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen condemned the "illegal and unjustified war against Ukraine" at a session attended by Russian officials and reiterated calls for G-20 nations to do more to support Ukraine and hinder Moscow's war effort.

At the last major G-20 meeting, in Bali, Indonesia, in November, leaders had strongly condemned the war, warning that the conflict was intensifying fragilities in the world's economy. The group includes Russia and also countries like China and India that have significant trade with Moscow.

India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told reporters that the communique prepared for the Bengaluru meeting carried two paragraphs from the Bali declaration, but Russia and China demanded they be deleted and said they could not be part of the final document this time.

Their contention was they had approved the Bali declaration under the then prevailing circumstances, she said. "Now they didn't want it," Sitharaman said. She didn't give any other details.

The Bali declaration said that "most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine and stressed that it is causing immense human suffering and exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy – constraining growth, increasing inflation, disrupting supply chains, heightening energy and food insecurity, and elevating financial stability risks."

The declaration also said: "There were other views and different assessments of the situation and sanctions. G-20 is not the forum to resolve security issues, we acknowledge that security issues can have significant consequences for the global economy."

The second paragraph of the declaration, which is now unacceptable to Russia and China, said, "It is essential to uphold international law and the multilateral system that safeguards peace and stability. ... The use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible. The peaceful resolution of conflicts, efforts to address crises, as well as diplomacy and dialogue, are vital. Today's era must not be of war."

Sitharaman said the meeting could not issue a communique because of the objections raised by Russia and China and decided to opt for a summary and an outcome document.

Today in History: FEB 26, World Trade Center bombed in 1993

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Feb. 26, the 57th day of 2023. There are 308 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 26, 1993, a truck bomb built by Islamic extremists exploded in the parking garage of the North

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Tower of New York's World Trade Center, killing six people and injuring more than 1,000 others. (The bomb failed to topple the North Tower into the South Tower, as the terrorists had hoped; both structures were destroyed in the 9/11 attack eight years later.)

On this date:

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte escaped from exile on the Island of Elba and headed back to France in a bid to regain power.

In 1904, the United States and Panama proclaimed a treaty under which the U.S. agreed to undertake efforts to build a ship canal across the Panama isthmus.

In 1942, "How Green Was My Valley" won the Academy Award for Best Picture of 1941, beating out nine other films, including "The Maltese Falcon" and "Citizen Kane."

In 1945, authorities ordered a midnight curfew at nightclubs, bars and other places of entertainment across the nation.

In 1952, Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced that Britain had developed its own atomic bomb.

In 1966, South Korean troops sent to fight in the Vietnam War massacred at least 380 civilians in Go Dai hamlet.

In 1987, the Tower Commission, which had probed the Iran-Contra affair, issued its report, which rebuked President Ronald Reagan for failing to control his national security staff.

In 1998, a jury in Amarillo, Texas, rejected an \$11 million lawsuit brought by Texas cattlemen who blamed Oprah Winfrey's talk show for a price fall after a segment on food safety that included a discussion about mad cow disease.

In 2005, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak ordered his country's constitution changed to allow presidential challengers in an upcoming fall election.

In 2012, Trayvon Martin, 17, was shot to death in Sanford, Florida, during an altercation with neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman, who said he acted in self-defense. (Zimmerman was later acquitted of second-degree murder.)

In 2014, Republican Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer vetoed a bill pushed by social conservatives that would have allowed people with sincerely held religious beliefs to refuse to serve gays.

In 2016, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie stunned the Republican establishment by endorsing Donald Trump for president.

In 2017, At the 89th Academy Awards, "Moonlight," an LGBT coming of age drama, won three Oscars, including best picture of 2016 (in a startling gaffe, the musical "La La Land" was mistakenly announced as the best picture winner before the error was corrected).

In 2020, the World Health Organization reported that the number of new coronavirus cases outside China had exceeded the number of new infections in China for the first time.

Ten years ago: A deeply divided Senate voted, 58-41, to confirm Republican Chuck Hagel to be U.S. defense secretary. A hot air balloon burst into flames during a sunrise flight over the ancient Egyptian city of Luxor and then plummeted 1,000 feet to earth, killing 19 tourists.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump, who had been highly critical of the law enforcement response to the Florida school shooting, told a roomful of governors at the White House that if he had been there, he would have rushed in, unarmed. Thousands of people from all walks of life, including former President George W. Bush and his wife, filed slowly past the casket of the Rev. Billy Graham in Charlotte, North Carolina.

One year ago: Kyiv residents braced for another night sheltering underground, as Russian troops closed in on Ukraine's capital and skirmishes were reported on the outskirts. Ukraine's leader, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, vowed to continue fighting the Russian assault as he appealed for more outside help. He accused Russia of hitting infrastructure and civilian targets. John Landy, an Australian runner who duelled with Roger Bannister to be the first person to run a four-minute mile, died at age 91.

Today's birthdays: Actor-director Bill Duke is 80. Singer Mitch Ryder is 78. Actor Marta Kristen (TV: "Lost in Space") is 78. Rock musician Jonathan Cain (Journey) is 73. Singer Michael Bolton is 70. The president

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of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan (REH'-jehp TY'-ihp UR'-doh-wahn), is 69. Actor Greg Germann is 65. Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., is 65. Bandleader John McDaniel is 62. Actor-martial artist Mark Dacascos is 59. Actor Jennifer Grant is 57. Rock musician Tim Commerford (Audioslave) is 55. Singer Erykah Badu (EHR'-ih-kah bah-DOO') is 52. Actor Maz Jobrani (TV: "Superior Donuts") is 51. R&B singer Rico Wade (Society of Soul) is 51. Olympic gold medal swimmer Jenny Thompson is 50. R&B singer Kyle Norman (Jagged Edge) is 48. Actor Greg Rikaart is 46. Rock musician Chris Culos (O.A.R.) is 44. R&B singer Corinne Bailey Rae is 44. Pop singer Nate Ruess (fun.) is 41. Former tennis player Li Na is 41. Latin singer Natalia Lafourcade is 39. Actor Teresa Palmer is 37.