

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Groton Community Calendar

### Sunday, March 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.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Milestone 4 yr olds and juniors; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

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

### Monday, March 27

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

School Breakfast: Mini waffles.

School Lunch: Oriental chicken, rice.

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

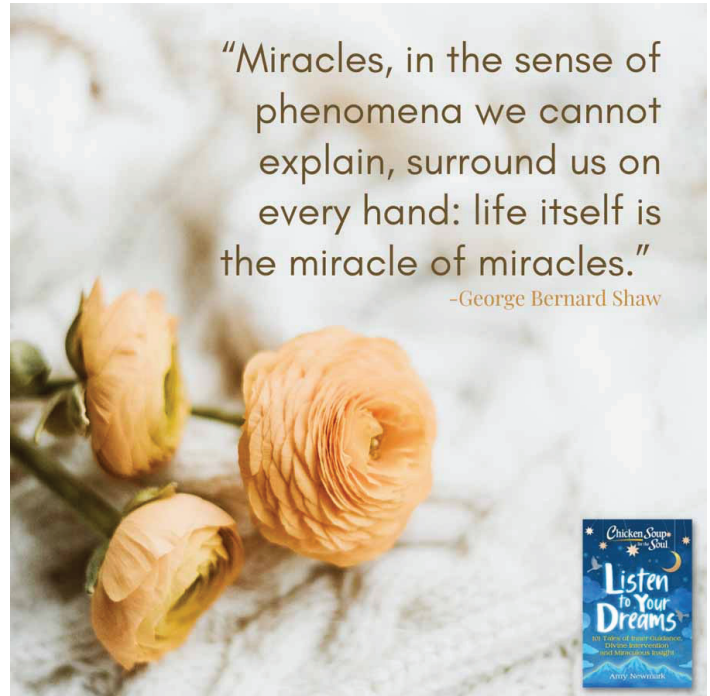
School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Lent Bible Study with Pastor Brandon, 7 p.m.; PEO Meeting, 7 p.m. (outside group)

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

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



"Miracles, in the sense of phenomena we cannot explain, surround us on every hand: life itself is the miracle of miracles."

-George Bernard Shaw

Noon: Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck dinner.

## State Youth Wrestling Today Matches

- Tots 37: Brooks Sombke – Championship
- Bantam 76: Braxten Sombke – 3rd/4th
- Midgets 63: Henry Pharis – 3rd/4th
- Midgets 134: Hank Flihs – Championship
- Novice 68: Bentley Ehresmann – 7/8th
- Novice 87: Keegan Kucker – 5/6th
- Schoolboy 110: Donovan Block – 7/8th
- Girls A (Grades PreK-2) 75: Elsy Hagen – Championship
- Girls C (Grades 6-8) 110: Liza Krueger – 5/6th
- Cadets 220: Gavin Englund – 4th place

## OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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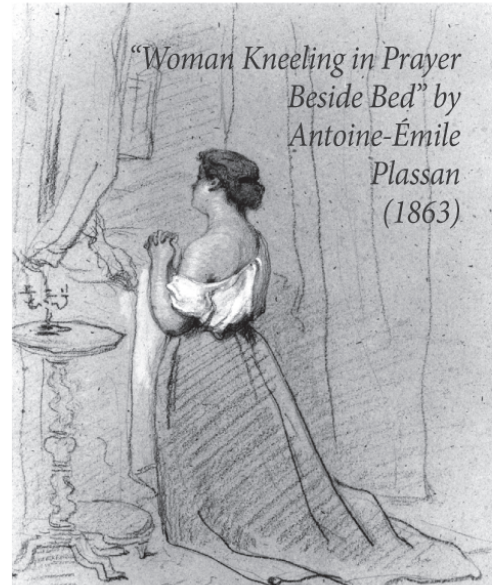
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## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

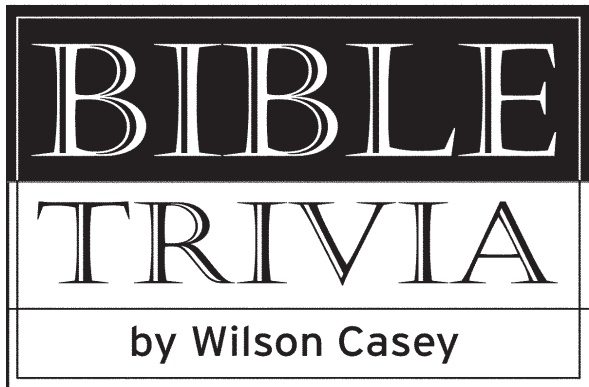
*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

❧ ROMANS 12:1 ❧



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

2. Who was David's oldest brother who picked on him for coming to the battle lines? *Abner, Omri, Amasa, Eliab*

3. After Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, who lived in a cave with his daughters? *Job, Lot, Levi, Joel*

4. In Luke 3, who told Roman soldiers to avoid taking money by force? *John the Baptist, Paul, Mark, Matthew*

5. What Canaanite city was burned down by the men of Dan? *Tarsus, Antioch, Laish, Cana*

6. In which book is the phrase, "Salt of the earth"? *None, Matthew, Mark, Jude*

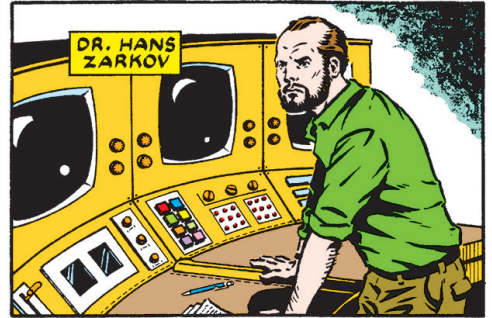
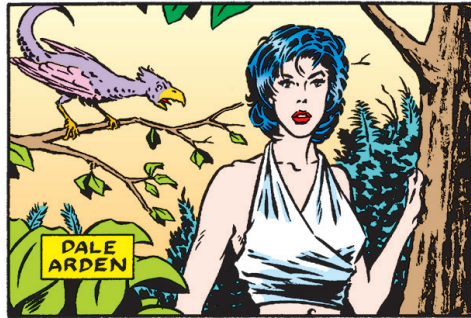
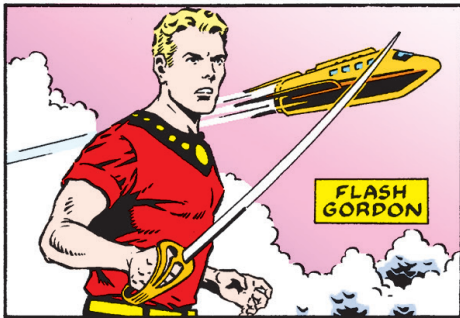
ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Eliab, 3) Lot, 4) John the Baptist, 5) Laish, 6) Matthew 5:13

*Comments? More Trivia? Gift ideas? Visit [www.TriviaGuy.com](http://www.TriviaGuy.com).*



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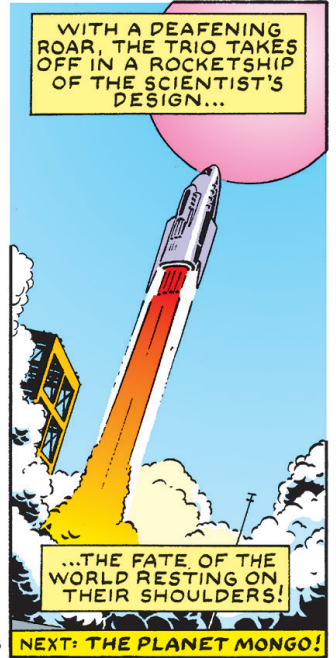
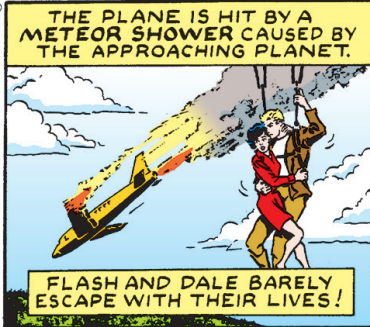
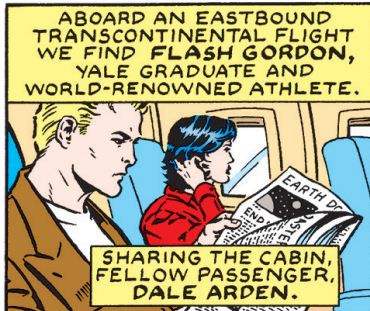
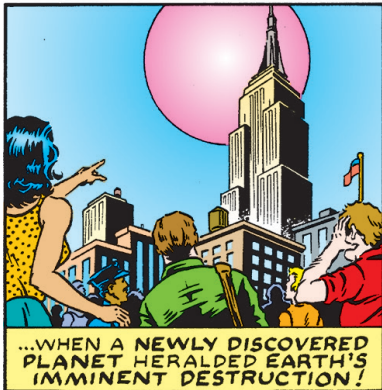
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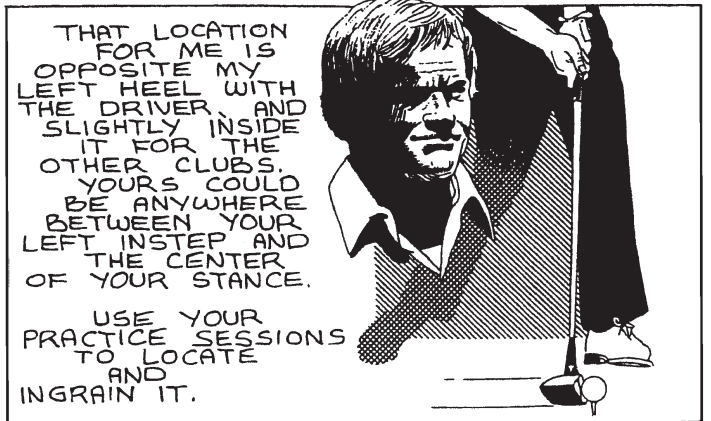
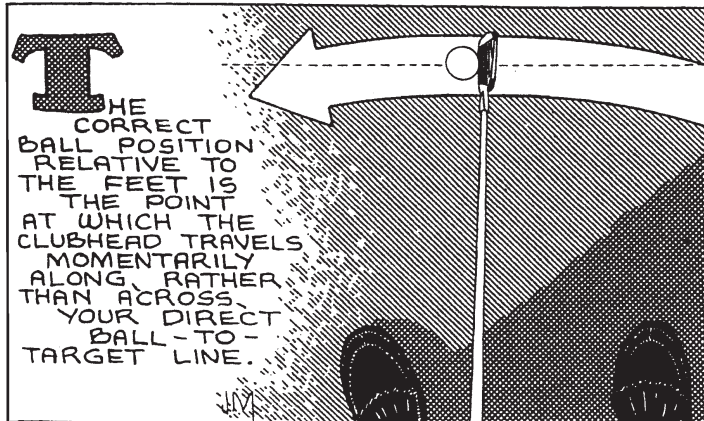
## FLASH GORDON

BY JIM KEEFE

FLASH'S THOUGHTS RETURN TO THAT FATEFUL DAY LONG AGO...



## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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## Longtime Cannabis User Still Tests Positive Weeks After Quitting

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** I am a 68-year-old male who has used cannabis for 51 years. During that time span, I graduated from high school and college with two bachelor's degrees and two master's degrees, and I spent 35 years as an accomplished educator, motivational speaker and author. I have been married to the same person for 31 years and have a wide circle of friends.

Twenty-five years ago, I had my thyroid removed due to cancer, and I currently take medication. I also inject testosterone and take medications for blood pressure and cholesterol, as well as Xanax. I retired to a life that involves little travel, choosing instead to spend my time reading, researching, writing and being active in my community. Once I began to notice a loss of motivation and diminished memory, I became proactive and decided to give up cannabis.

I have had no trouble quitting cold turkey and have no desire to return to it. My memory has vastly improved, and I still enjoy all the things that made my retirement enjoyable before I made this decision. After 10 weeks of not using, I still test positive for the metabolites

that normal detoxing for a heavy user is anywhere from six weeks to two months.

To aid in the process, I drink half a glass of lemon juice in the morning, drink two gallons of water or detox tea a day, cut red meat and dairy from my diet, spend an hour a day on the treadmill, and spend 40 minutes in a steam bath.

How long should I expect to continue testing positive? Is there anything else I can do to speed up the passing of the metabolites? — *Anon.*

**ANSWER:** The active form of THC, the primary chemical in cannabis that causes the psychoactive effects (i.e., the effects for people to feel “high”), accumulates in the fat cells, where it can be stored for long periods of time.

Research in laboratory animals confirms that losing weight over the long-term releases the stored THC from the fat, making it more likely that a urine test will be positive in people who are losing weight (which might be the case with you, given your exercise and diet). Heavy users have told me that they feel like they are “coming out of a fog” for up to six months after stopping the use of cannabis. However, I can't give you any evidence-based answer on how long you will continue to show positive results.

I don't think drinking water and tea, nor the steam bath, are significantly helping you get rid of the accumulated THC in the body, but the diet and exercise changes probably are, if you are losing fat as I suspect. Even if you aren't losing weight, you may be getting more muscular due to exercise and losing fat.

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

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"Murder Mystery 2" (PG-13) -- Even though the first "Murder Mystery" doesn't exactly hook you into the most satisfying whodunnit, it was still an amusing watch nonetheless and prompted Netflix to return with a sequel. Adam Sandler and Jennifer Aniston reprise their roles as married couple Nick and Audrey Spitz, who are invited to the wedding of Maharajah Vikram -- a suspect in the previous murder mystery that took place in the first film. But, at the wedding, the Maharajah gets kidnapped, so the Spitzes, as the most unqualified detectives, naturally see this as a prime opportunity to solve yet another case. Premieres March 31. (Netflix)

**From left, Taron Egerton, Sofia Lebedeva and Nikita Efremov star in "Tetris."**

Courtesy of AppleTV+

"The Estate" (R) -- Macey (Toni Collette) and Savannah (Anna Farris) are owners of a sinking business. When they receive news from their mother that their wealthy Aunt Hilda has terminal cancer, the desperate sisters hatch a plan to visit Hilda and see if they can squeeze themselves into her will before she passes. Upon their arrival, Macey and Savannah realize that their two-faced cousin Beatrice (Rosemarie DeWitt) is already staying with Hilda; their other cousin, Richard (David Duchovny), arrives shortly after them. With all the family gathered around for the same reason, who will get to walk away with the money from Hilda's estate? Kathleen Turner stars as none other than Aunt Hilda in this black comedy out now. (Hulu)

"Tetris" (R) -- Who knew the journey behind bringing the puzzle game Tetris to players across the world would be so tumultuous? Taron Egerton ("Rocketman") stars as businessman Henk Rogers, who attempts to secure the rights of Tetris and get it packaged with the new Game Boy console. Henk must travel from the U.S. to the Soviet Union, during a time when tensions are still high between both countries, to meet with the Russian developer of Tetris. What should have been simple negotiations for a game turns into a dangerous, high-stake battle for all involved. Premieres March 31. (AppleTV+)

"The Power" (TV-16+) -- Based on the bestselling novel of the same name by Naomi Alderman, this upcoming sci-fi drama series hits streaming March 31. Out of nowhere, thousands of teenage girls around the world begin harnessing the power to electrocute others, as electric jolts pour out of their fingertips. Since a multitude of girls can now utilize this power however they wish, it completely upends society as we know it. Depending on how well the girl can wield her power, she could send a piece of paper into flames, light a car on fire, or even take down a potential assailant. So, now that girls really have the power, will they be able to keep it? (Prime Video)

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1. Which song had to be changed before it could get radio airplay because it started with the sounds of a siren?
2. Name the artist who wrote and released "For the Love of Him."
3. Who had an international hit with "Up in a Puff of Smoke"?
4. Who used the stage name Lobo?
5. Name the song that contains these lyrics: "I've been a puppet, a pauper, a pirate, a poet, a pawn and a king."

## Answers

1. "Indiana Wants Me," by R. Dean Taylor in 1970. The police siren at the beginning of the song caused drivers to pull off the road, thinking the siren was real.
2. Bobbi Martin, in 1969. For a real treat, search YouTube for Martin's videos, especially "Bridge Over Troubled Water."
3. Polly Brown, in 1974. While it climbed charts worldwide, it ranked highest (No. 3) on the Billboard Dance/Disco chart.
4. Roland Kent LaVoie, singer-songwriter of the hit "Me and You and a Dog Named Boo."
5. "That's Life," made famous by Frank Sinatra in 1966. It's been widely used, including in the Tony Hawk's Underground 2 video game in 2004. The song was first recorded, however, by Marion Montgomery in 1963.

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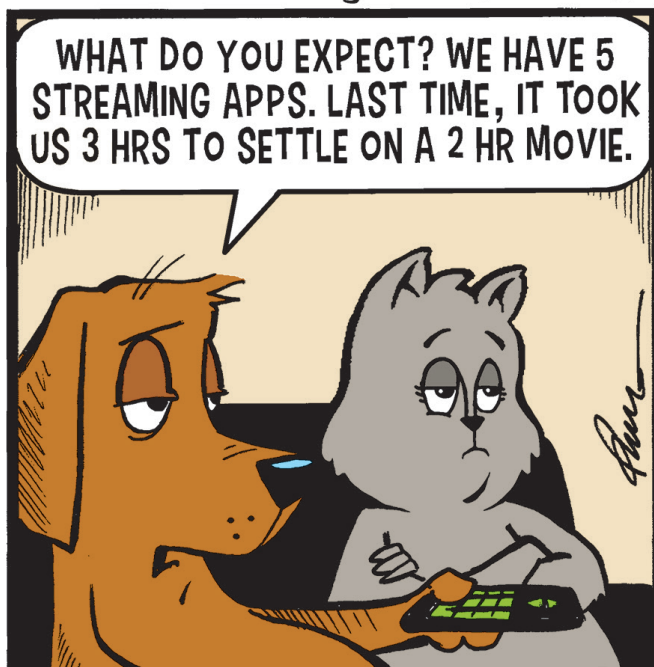
## GRIN *and* BEAR IT <sup>Wagner</sup>



"Personally, I like the challenge of a sluggish economy!"

## Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Neckline is lower. 2. Number is different. 3. Arm and mop are moved. 4. Cabinet is moved. 5. Rag is missing. 6. Skateboard is missing.



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\* Thawing frozen water pipes can be very tricky. Some people use a hot pad wrapped around the pipe; others have been known to use the hair dryer method (electricity and water don't really mix; be careful). Hopefully you learned any lessons the easy way this winter, but if you had to patch any pipes, make sure you get them repaired asap. Sometimes people forget as soon as the weather turns nice. -- A plumber in Illinois

\* When drilling holes in the wall, you can tape an envelope, open side out, to the wall just under where you will be drilling. Open the envelope up a bit so that any dust will fall directly down into the open envelope. It will keep your working area nice and neat!

\* To make a special quilted keepsake, sew together

baby's receiving blankets.

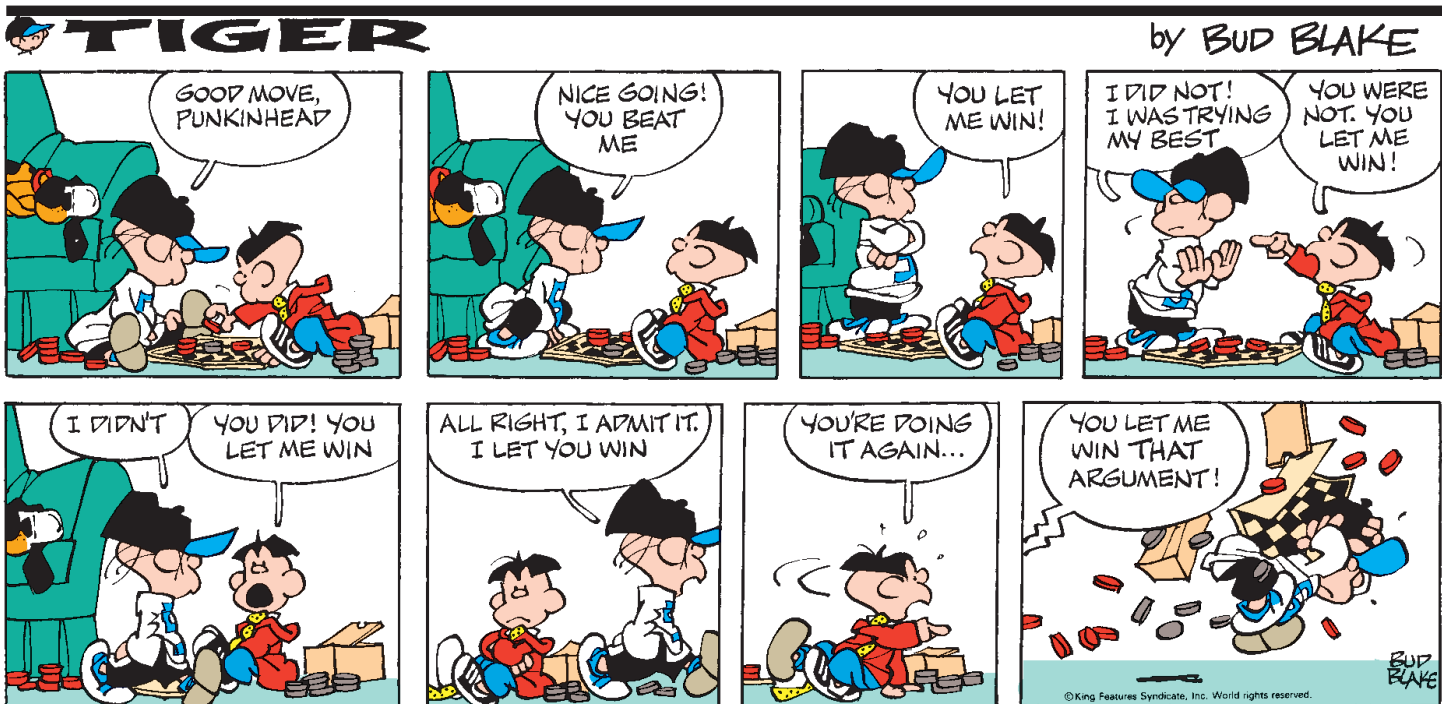
\* Want a delicious coating for chicken? Try basting with mayonnaise and then dip in crushed crackers. The crumbs stick well to the mayo, and it's especially delicious with crushed butter crackers, like Ritz.

\* When washing stockings by hand, add a tablespoon of vinegar to the rinse water. They will keep the stretch better. Also, if you line-dry them outdoors, slip a spoon or a few coins into the toe. This will keep them from twisting up in the wind.

\* If you, like me, are washing your winter sweaters to pack away, add a bit of hair conditioner to the rinse. Also, don't try to pull them into shape when drying. Just lay flat to dry. If you have a screen, you can set it up so that the sweater dries from both sides. This is best. -- D.Y. in Kentucky

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

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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Pot brew
- 4 Rosary component
- 8 Tempo
- 12 Rowing need
- 13 Scarce
- 14 "Damn Yankees" vamp
- 15 Polish composer Chopin
- 17 Squad
- 18 Oust from office
- 19 Not 'neath
- 21 Show to a seat, slangily
- 22 Established rule
- 26 Kick out
- 29 Cat's coat
- 30 Ms. Longoria
- 31 Chaste
- 32 River blocker
- 33 Till bills
- 34 Wyo. neighbor
- 35 Corral
- 36 Sanctify
- 37 — acid
- 39 Luau bowlful
- 40 Khan title
- 41 Blacksmiths' blocks
- 45 Indolent
- 48 Curry powder spice
- 50 Dayton's state

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
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			40				41			42	43	44
45	46	47			48	49						
50					51					52		
53					54					55		

- 51 "Do — others ..."
- 7 Propriety
- 28 Part of Q.E.D.
- 52 "I love," to Livy
- 8 Book jacket write-up
- 29 Summer cooler
- 53 Autograph
- 9 Long time
- 32 Illinois city
- 54 Take five
- 10 "The Greatest"
- 33 Martini garnish
- 55 Bottom line
- 11 Make lace
- 35 Glutton
- 16 Wimbledon tie
- 36 Witticism
- 38 Synthetic fabric
- 1 Bean curd
- 20 Where Lux. is
- 39 Segments
- 2 Deserve
- 23 Actress Russo
- 42 Persia, today
- 3 God of war
- 24 Currier's partner
- 43 Rickey flavor
- 4 Chicken serving
- 25 Mama — Elliot
- 44 Kilt wearer
- 5 Third rock from the sun
- 26 Monumental
- 45 Part of UCLA
- 6 "Exodus" hero
- 27 Dame Dench
- 46 Sashimi fish
- 47 Sharp turn
- 49 French article



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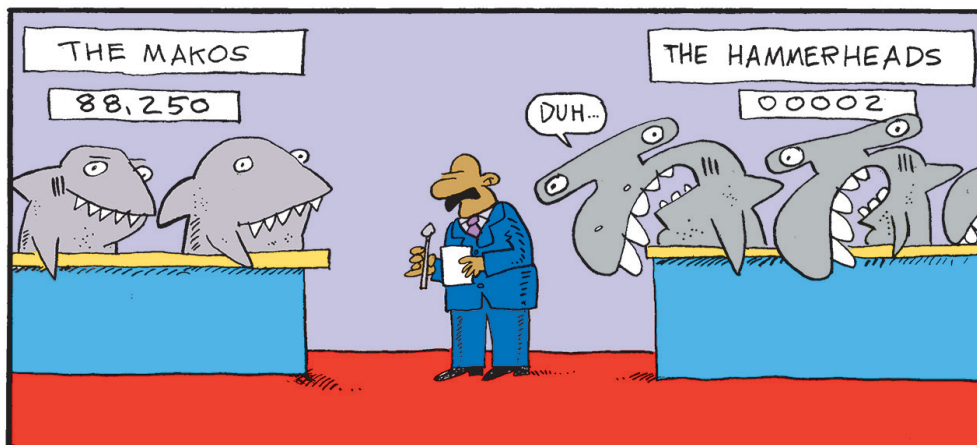
## — King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 26 mins.

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

### Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas

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SHARK  
FAMILY FEUD

KOPERVAS

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THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS  
**POPEYE**  
BY RANDY MILHOLLAND

SWEE'PEA, I LOVES THAT YA WANTS T' MAKE E'RYBODY YER FRIEND...

BUT NOT ALL CRITTERS IS MEANT T'BE YER PAL!  
HE'S SUCH A GOOD HUGGER, THOUGH!

THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS  
**THE SECRET OF GOONHALLA**  
PART I

POPEYE AND SWEE'PEA, JOINED BY ALICE THE GOON AND HER CHILD, ALICE JR., ARE DELIVERING A SHIPMENT OF CARROTS TO FAR-OFF GOON VALLEY, UNAWARE OF WHAT, AND WHO, AWAITS.

...? I NOTICED IT TOO, ALICE.

THERE AINTSK A SOUL 'ROUND!  
IT'S LIKE TH' WHOLE VALLEY WAS ABANDONED.

DON'TSK WORRY. WE'LL GIT T'THE BOTTOM OF THIS.  
AND ME AN' JUNIOR WILL HELP!

SWEE'PEA, MYSKERIES AINTSK FER KID-FOLK.  
C'MON! I'VE BEEN ON SO MANY ADVENTURES WITH YA!  
LET US HELP!

YER RIGHT. IN FACK, I KNOWS TH' FIRSK PLACE YA KIN LOOK FER CLUES.

WHEN DID YOU HAVE A BRIG INSTALLED IN THE SHIP?!!  
NOT SOON 'NUFF, HONESKLY.

BARNEY GOOGLE AND  
**SNUFFY SMITH**

I BRUNG BACK EV'RYTHIN' I BORRIED FROM YA, LOWEEZY, BUT **NOW** I'M GONNA NEED TO BORRY YORE WHEELBARROW !!  
WHAT FER ?

TO HAUL BACK ALL TH' STUFF YA BORRIED FROM **ME** !!

HOWDY, SNUFFY !! CAN I BORRY YORE LADDER ?  
S'OKAY WIF ME, LUKEY, BUT YA BETTER CHECK WIF LOWEEZY-- SHE USES IT MORE'N I DO !!

COULDN'T FIND HER, SNUFFY !!  
I'M SHORE IT'S FINE !! GO AHEAD AN' TAKE IT, LUKEY !!

THANKS, SNUFFY !! I'LL BRING IT BACK TOMORRY !!

JOHN ROSE



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

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VAL AND COMPANY HAVE SEEN THE TERRIBLE GOLEM FROM A DISTANCE, AND PLAN THEIR NEXT MOVE.

"ST. GEORGE," DECIDES VAL, "TAKE ALETA AND OOM FOOYAT TO THE PROTECTION OF THAT CAVE. GAWAIN AND I WILL PROCEED."



NOT LONG AFTERWARD, VAL AND GAWAIN BOLDLY RIDE INTO THE BROODING FOREST OF ILLWYNDE. THE WARRIORS ARE WELL AWARE THAT THE HUSH OF THE AREA KEENLY UNDERSCORES THE DANGER...

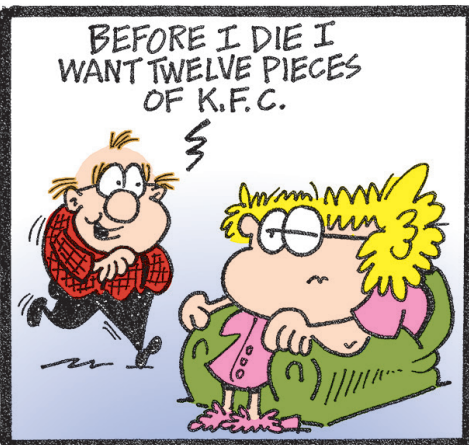


...OF WHAT LIES AHEAD.

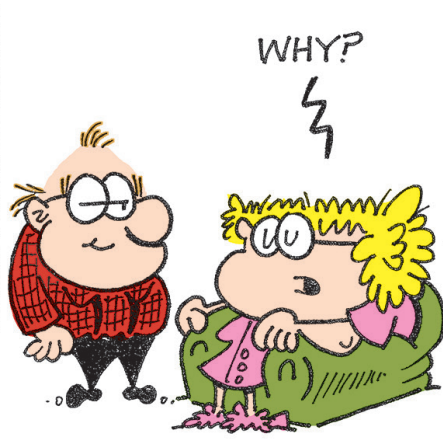
NEXT:  
**Routed**

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Food Prices to Rise Again this Year

Brace yourself, this is going to hurt: The price of all food is likely to go up an additional 7.9% this year. Food we eat at home is predicted to go up 8.6%, per the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Specifically, here are some of their expectations for price increases: Eggs up 37.8% (we've already seen some of that), dairy up 7.2%, cereals and bakery up 12.8%, fresh vegetables up 3%.

Some of us are going to be in trouble, if we aren't already.

Here are some ideas to keep food on the table:

Design your menu from the weekly sales flyer from your local store. Shop early before the sales items are gone. Stock up if you can on shelf-stable items and some multipurpose basics. Think: rice, pasta, soups.

Explore recipes online and search for inexpensive meals for seniors. You can even -- don't laugh -- look up websites with recipes for poor college students. (Some of them are quite creative.) Look up "nutritionally dense foods" to ensure that you're getting value for your shopping dollar.

Encourage your senior center (or even the rec center) to hold classes for seniors on how to put meals on the table without breaking the bank.

Call Meals on Wheels to see if you qualify for free meals. Use the food bank. Look up Commodity Supplemental Food Programs (CSFP) for your state and see if you qualify for a free food box each month.

Become a label reader again, especially if you're shopping by price and are considering buying foods you don't normally eat. Watch the sodium, carbs and calories.

Ask your doctor if you should take a daily vitamin supplement to get you through this period where your nutrition might not be the best. Good nutrition is a big part of staying healthy.

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1. What golfer, known as "The Silver Scot," won three major championships during the late 1920s and early 1930s?

2. Name the Norwegian runner who won the New York City Marathon women's division nine times from 1978-88.

3. Hank Bauer of the New York Yankees holds the longest hitting streak in the World Series (1956-58) with how many games?

4. What NASCAR driver's 105 career wins in the sport's top division ranks second all-time to Richard Petty's 200?

5. In 2021, what famous winter Olympian from Great Britain competed on the U.K. version of TV series "The Masked Dancer" costumed as a rubber chicken?

6. What professional soccer league operated from 1968-84 and included teams such as the New York Cosmos, the Los Angeles Aztecs, the Toronto Blizzard and the Washington Diplomats?

7. Cibona, Zadar, Split and Cedevita are professional basketball clubs competing in what country?



by Ryan A. Berenz

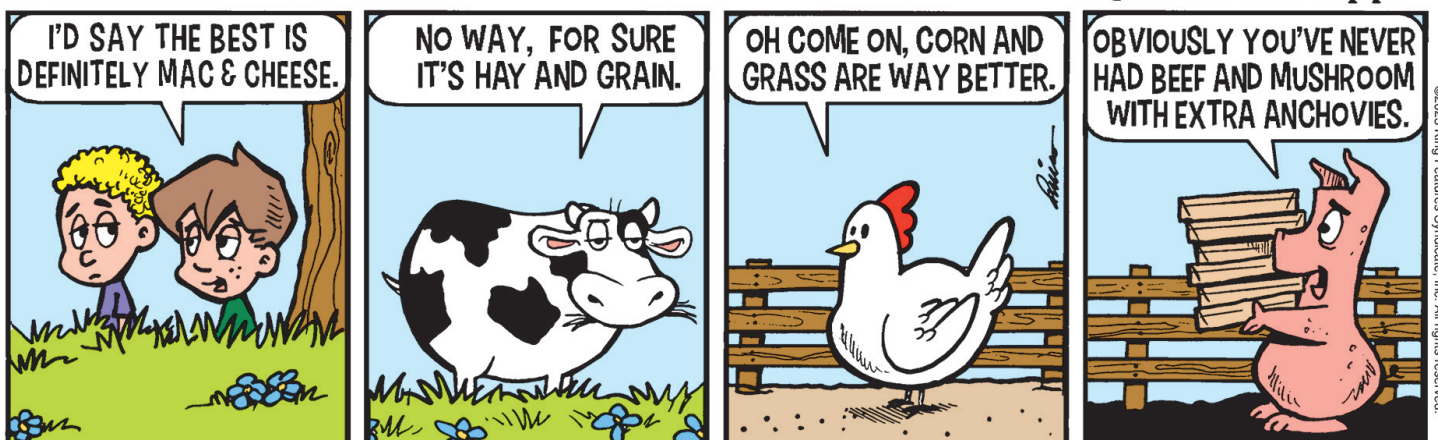
## Answers

1. Tommy Armour.
2. Grete Waitz.
3. 17.
4. David Pearson.
5. Michael "Eddie the Eagle" Edwards.
6. North American Soccer League (NASL).
7. Croatia.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps







## Dog's Driveway Poop Is a Bone of Contention for Neighbors

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My next-door neighbor shares a driveway with me. We get along fine, organizing our cars so no one is blocked in. However, every morning she walks her dog up the side of the driveway and doesn't pick up after it. I've asked her to do so, but she said that since it's her side of the driveway she has the right to let him poop there. What can I do to solve this? -- Stunk Out in Bradenton, Florida

DEAR STUNK: Neighbor disputes over dog droppings are always a bit nerve-wracking, especially

when the offending neighbor asserts their right to leave a mess.

Check your neighborhood homeowners association rules to see if this issue is addressed. If you don't live in an area with an HOA, check out your city or county's website to find out if there are any restrictions for this sort of behavior, and if it's possible to file a complaint.

Even though your neighbor is keeping the dog on her side of the driveway, it's shared property. Further, dog poop left lying around, even on the edge of the driveway, is a health hazard. Not to mention how ick it is for anyone who parks on that side and accidentally steps out onto one of those "gifts."

No matter what, don't lose your cool. Stay civil toward your neighbor. Keep asking her to pick up after the dog, and note down the date and time of each interaction and each time poop is left behind. Take pictures with your phone as well. If the issue can't be resolved by politely asking, you'll need to file a complaint with the HOA or your municipality, and may have to provide evidence (notes and pictures, not the actual poo) to back up your complaint.

Readers, have you dealt with this problem? Tell us about it at [ask@pawscorner.com](mailto:ask@pawscorner.com).

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## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

\* There is an art form called Assquatch that consists of faces made from deer posteriors.

\* Renaissance genius Leonardo da Vinci designed plans for a "mechanized knight," a robot-like creation that relied on a pulley system. When the plans were discovered nearly five centuries later and built according to his specifications, the design worked perfectly.

\* In 2012, a Manchester, U.K., couple jokingly invited Queen Elizabeth to their wedding. Her Royal Highness not only showed up, but brought Prince Philip.

\* Speedy Gonzales was banned by the Cartoon Network for being an offensive stereotype, only to be returned after mass protest by the Hispanic-American community.

\* The lowest sounding instrument in an orchestra is the contrabassoon. Only a few soloists in the world play it.

\* After winning an Oscar, Daniel Day-Lewis retired to become a cobbler in Italy. Fortunately for the theatrical world, he returned to acting after Martin Scorsese convinced him to star in "Gangs of New York."

\* The first Troll doll was created by a Danish fisherman who could not afford a Christmas gift for his daughter. While it wouldn't have won any beauty contests, when other children saw it they wanted one as well.

\* IKEA recalled its chocolate bars because they didn't come with an allergy warning.


\* In 1877, a monkey named Jimmy was charged with assault after biting the finger of one Mary Shea. When a judge said he couldn't legally commit a monkey, Jimmy respectfully removed his velvet hat, climbed on the judge's desk, and attempted to shake his hand.

\* There's a website that tells you the best time to use the restroom during a movie in a theater so you don't miss anything important.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "A man is not old until regrets take the place of dreams." -- John Barrymore

### The Garden Bug




Ladybugs are beneficial to crops and gardens because they eat aphids, which are small sap-sucking insects (such as the greenfly and the blackfly) which feed on plants and crops, often damaging them.

---

Although Asian beetles also eat pesky aphids, they also infest and eat fruit such as apples, grapes, and raspberries. They bite, and secrete a strong-smelling, staining liquid from their legs. - Brenda Weaver

**'bugs vs. beetles**



Sources: ph117.com, Maryland Sierra Club, a-z-animals.com



by Freddy Groves

## Masks at VA Facilities not Gone

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently announced that they were relaxing the requirement for masks to be worn at all VA medical facilities. But if you heard on the news that the mask requirement is gone, it's not necessarily so.

There is now a three-tier safety system whereby each facility is rated as high, medium or low for Covid transmission problems, and each facility will be monitored weekly for any updates or changes.

So what does it mean if your facility ranks as high for Covid risk? I checked a half dozen VA facilities in my state, and all were ranked high. That means everyone has to wear a mask, they might screen for Covid at the door, only approved visitors can come in, physical distancing is required, and you should ask your care team about options for phone or video appointments instead of going in.

Sounds like nothing's changed over the past few years.

So I picked another state. Most were at a high level, but I did see a few rated medium. For those, the facility itself will decide based on what's going on in the area. Care partners will be welcome, but no other visitors.

Then there's the Off-stage and On-stage middle-of-the-pack medium mask category. For Off, it's any area where patient care is not being performed, like hallways and admin areas. For On areas, masks are required in patient rooms and anywhere patients are being provided care.

After much looking, I finally found a VA facility rated as low. The rule is simple: You must wear a mask if veterans are present. Read the signs when you go in so you'll know.

Bottom line: A mask might be required no matter what level facility you enter. Tuck one into your pocket just to be sure you have it handy.

To check the Covid safety level at any VA medical facility you visit, look at their website for their rating. See [www.va.gov/find-locations](http://www.va.gov/find-locations) for the list of locations.

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## Wishing Well®

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

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 U.S. states share a border with Mexico?
2. MOVIES: Which movie was the first sports film to win the Best Picture award?
3. U.S. PRESIDENTS: How many former first ladies are still living?
4. TELEVISION: What is the name of Bart's teacher on "The Simpsons"?
5. LANGUAGE: What does the Japanese phrase "domo arigato" mean in English?
6. CHEMISTRY: What is the lightest element?
7. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Who is Marie Laveau of New Orleans?
8. AD SLOGANS: Which product was advertised with the slogan, "Great taste, less filling"?
9. U.S. CITIES: In which city would you find Thomas Jefferson's Monticello?
10. LITERATURE: Who wrote the autobiography "Dreams From My Father"?

### Answers

1. Four: California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.
2. "Rocky" (1976).
3. Five: Rosalynn Carter, Hillary Clinton, Laura Bush, Michelle Obama and Melania Trump.
4. Edna Krabappel.
5. Thank you.
6. Hydrogen.
7. Famous voodoo queen.
8. Miller Lite beer.
9. Charlottesville, Virginia.
10. Barack Obama.

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South Dakota Governor

**Kristi Noem**



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

## **Giving Back – Permanently**

Every time I travel our state, the best part of my day is just meeting people. I run into old friends at Culver's or HyVee all the time. They usually introduce me to whoever they're with, whether it's family or friends. And that often starts another new relationship that I will treasure for years to come.

Our people are incredible, and they've proven it with more than just their friendliness and common sense. It just so happens that they've also built the strongest economy in the nation with the lowest unemployment rate. Under my leadership, we embraced liberty and personal responsibility. But what that did was give the people the opportunity to succeed. They built it – not me. Freedom generated our record growth; Freedom generated our historic tax revenues.

I have advocated for permanent tax relief for the people of South Dakota because I believe that they know how to spend their own money better than the government does. Yes, state government must invest in agencies and programs that take care of people. But we shouldn't do so wastefully. We must be efficient and respectful of taxpayer dollars.

It is no secret that I advocated for a full repeal of the grocery tax. It's a tax that burdens every single person who buys food in South Dakota. Our citizens overwhelmingly support eliminating the grocery tax because they recognize that it will benefit everyone. It doesn't pick winners and losers.

Unfortunately, the legislature chose to provide a different sort of tax relief. They gave the people a temporary tax holiday by means of a \$100 million reduction in the overall sales tax. This holiday goes away in four years, meaning the legislature can raise taxes without ever having to vote for it. I don't want that to happen. I don't want to see the tax burden on our citizens rise. So I will continue to push for permanent tax relief for the people of South Dakota.

I signed the temporary tax holiday because some help for our people is better than none at all. But public sentiment shows that South Dakotans want a permanent tax cut. The legislature has failed in that regard, but I believe that we can work together to achieve it for the people.

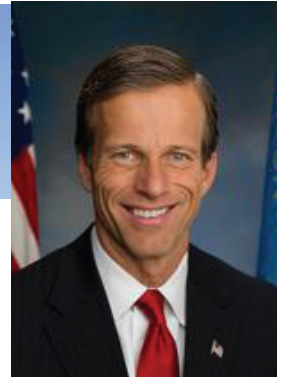
I am glad that the legislature changed their mind and did provide some relief to the people of South Dakota, even though it's temporary. Many in legislative leadership came into the session not wanting to give any kind of tax relief to the people – they just wanted to spend our record revenues. So we have made progress in that regard.

The people still have the opportunity to pass permanent tax relief for themselves by eliminating the grocery tax, and the legislature should be prepared for that to happen.

I will not stop advocating for our people. They are the reason I get out of bed in the morning. I want to give every person in our state the Freedom and opportunity to chase their dreams – to make life better for themselves, their kids, and their grandkids. My honor and good sense require me to continue to fight for the permanent tax cut the people have earned.

And that's what I will do.

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



## Let's Get "PHIT"

With high school and college tournaments in full swing and the spring season just around the corner, March is a great time for sports. Traveling throughout the state, I've been able to see student athletes from around South Dakota competing for a title. Whether I'm in Aberdeen or Huron for high school tournaments or in Sioux Falls for the annual Summit League tournament, the competitive spirit of South Dakota is always in full force.

Being back in a high school gym, seeing student athletes play hard and work together for the good of their team, always brings back good memories and makes me reflect on how sports has shaped my life. In addition to important values like teamwork, humility, and service, playing sports taught me the importance of staying active and made me a lifelong fitness enthusiast. Being active is one of the best ways to live a longer and healthier life. Even a modest amount of regular physical activity is associated with longer lifespans, greater physical well-being, and improved mental health. The earlier in life these habits begin, the greater the benefits.

Unfortunately, some of the tools that help people live healthy lives are too costly for some Americans. A gym membership, fitness equipment, and even registration for youth sports leagues can be expensive, making it harder for some families to take full advantage of the health benefits from these activities. I recently reintroduced a bipartisan bill to help alleviate some of these cost constraints. The Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Act would allow Americans to use a portion of their pre-tax health savings account (HSA) or flexible spending account (FSA) for certain fitness-related expenses.

My bill wouldn't cover things like a new pair of tennis shoes or fees at a country club, but it would help families find room in their budget for investing in preventive health tools like exercise equipment and a gym membership. It would allow individual taxpayers to use up to \$1,000 from their HSA or FSA, or \$2,000 for married couples, toward fitness expenses. Being active throughout life is an investment that can result in meaningful, long-term health care savings. And the earlier in life you commit to a healthy lifestyle, the more health care savings there are as you get older.

The PHIT Act would also allow families to use their FSAs to pay for certain youth sports registration fees and the gear their kids need to participate. The typical family pays hundreds of dollars a year for registration fees and equipment. Unsurprisingly, many families say youth sports can be a strain on their budgets. Youth sports is one of the best ways to build lifelong healthy habits as well as build strong friendships and learn important skills and values.

Whether you're playing with your kids, going to the gym, or getting on a treadmill a few times a week, staying active throughout your life is an important part of staying healthy and preventing the onset of chronic conditions. Making it easier for Americans to invest in tools that make fitness more accessible is a common-sense way to encourage more people to lead longer, healthier, and happier lives by staying active.





CONGRESSMAN

**DUSTY JOHNSON**

Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



## Increasing Processing Capacity

The Wall Meats processing facility has been operating over capacity for years. It is a 2,400 square foot processor and has the capacity to process 11 head of cattle per week. However, they have been processing 15-20 head per week—nearly double what they are suited for. Wall Meats started operating 24/7 to keep up with this demand and applied strategies to get their products in more local stores, schools, and even Meals on Wheels.

Wall Meats alerted me of this issue in 2021, and from their story, my Butcher Block Act to provide grants to small processors looking to expand was born. When the pandemic and black swan events decreased processing capacity across America, more elected officials became interested in solutions like my bill.

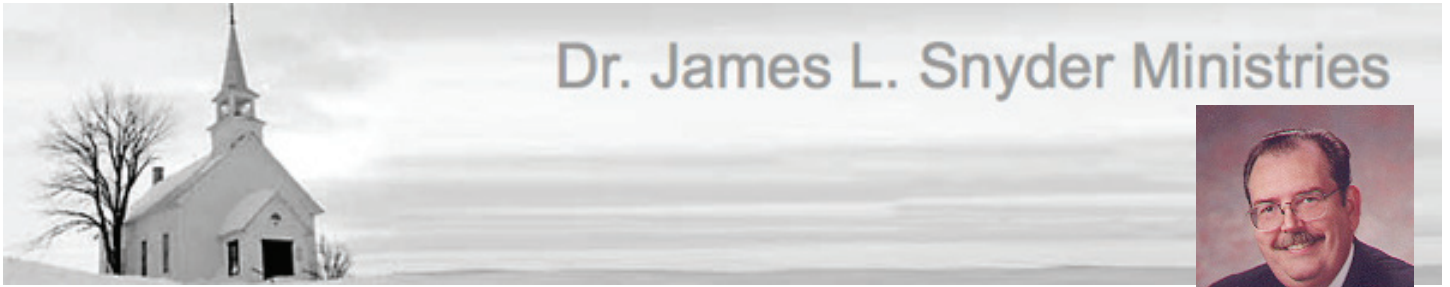
The Butcher Block Act gained more interest in the following months, and by February 2022, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced they were implementing my grant program to assist small processors in states like ours. This is a huge win for processors and producers. South Dakota producers want more options to sell their beef outside of the “Big Four” packers, my bill makes that a reality.

The USDA’s Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program has begun awarding grants across the country. Wall Meats in Wall, South Dakota was recently awarded \$3.3 million to increase their capacity from 11 head per week to 75 head per week. It’s important to note that the funding for these facilities doesn’t cover the whole cost of the expansion. The funding for Wall Meats will only cover about 20% of the total cost, but it’s enough to get them started.

I went to Wall last week along with USDA Undersecretary Xochitl Torres Small to tour the Wall Meats facility again and celebrate their growing business. It is exciting to see these programs going into effect and I look forward to seeing the benefits across the country.

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## I'm So Poor I Can't Pay Attention

Occasionally I go to my computer and search for the wealthiest preachers in America. I am curious to know who came up with this idea, but I check it out occasionally to see who they are.

As often as I have checked this information, I have never found my name on that list. I so much wanted to see my name on that list. Everybody knows that the Internet never lies. So, I need to accept that I am not one of the wealthiest preachers in America. Poor me!

That may explain many things in my life that I did not quite understand before.

When traveling in the Sissy Van, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is always behind the steering wheel. I make it a point not to drive that Sissy Van anymore than I have to.

As we drive, my wife will say, "Did you see that car? They're from Idaho."

Of course, I did not see it because I was not paying attention. When The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage drives, she focuses on everything within her focus. Even when driving my truck, and she is in the passenger seat, she sees everything around her.

Do not let this get back to her, but she sees things that I do not think exist. I will never contest her on that subject.

Unlike my wife, I don't have that much focus to see everything that is happening around me.

Once when she asked me if I saw something, I replied, "No, I'm just too poor to pay attention."

I laughed, of course, but she didn't think it was funny.

Driving across town to church one Sunday morning, she said, "Did you see that sign? What did it say?"

I didn't see it, so I responded, "I'm sorry, but I'm too poor to pay attention." Then I chuckled.

She just threw me one of her infamous grimaces.

For some reason, she believes I should pay attention to everything around me. I don't know why because I'm not interested in many of the things around me. And, I am too poor to pay attention.

While driving to an appointment the other day, I asked, "Could I borrow a dollar from you?"

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She looked at me quizzically and said, "Why do you need a dollar from me?"

"Oh," I said softly, "I just need some money to pay attention while you're driving."

She did not respond to me; of course, she never gave me that dollar. So I tried to explain to her that it is very expensive to pay attention. I don't think she believed me.

Several weeks later, we went to our Sunday morning church service, and I noticed a license plate and said, "Look at that license plate. They're from Montana."

There was silence on the other side of the car, and finally, she looked at me and said, "Where did you get that dollar?"

I had no idea what she was talking about, so I just said, "What dollar are you talking about?"

She snickered like I had not heard her snicker in a long time and said, "You know, the dollar so that you can pay attention."

The only thing I can say is that she has enough money to pay attention to everything, even some things I don't know.

Having enough money to pay attention to everything around you must be nice. I'm sure my life would change if I could afford to pay attention to everything.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage can pay attention even when fast asleep. One time we were taking a trip to St. Augustine. She leaned back in her side and took a nap. At least, I thought she was asleep.

I was coming to where I needed to turn, but I wasn't sure if this was the right place. As I slowed down, I heard The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage say, "No, you need to turn at the next light."

Looking over, I saw her eyes were closed, and it looked like she was sound asleep. She is rich enough to pay attention even when she is sound asleep.

I often wonder where she has all this money, probably in the Central Bank of Mind Your Own Business.

Watching television, suddenly, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said, "Did you see that? I wonder who that is?"

I begin to say, "No..." My wife jumped in and said, "I know, dear, you're too poor to have paid attention."

Boy, has she got me figured out? I'm going to have to open up some kind of a savings account, maybe a little piggy bank, and try to save up enough money to finance my poor attention. So far, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage has refused to loan me money for this cause.

During my Bible reading recently, I read 1 Timothy 6:9-10, "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Being rich does have its challenge, which I will never face. The disturbing aspect of this passage is where Paul says, "the love of money is the root of all evil." That is my temptation.



## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: I've heard that gas stoves are bad for indoor air quality, but what about gas furnaces and other gas-powered appliances typically found in homes? – L.J., Ronkonkoma, NY

Natural gas is almost as ubiquitous an energy source in American households as electricity. Indeed, 48 percent of U.S. homes stay warm with gas-powered furnaces while 38 percent do their cooking with gas. But recent revelations about the negative effect cooking with gas can have on indoor air pollution has given rise to new concerns about other types of gas-powered appliances inside our homes as well.

Gas cooktops may be the biggest offender given how much pollution they throw off when we use them, but gas-powered ovens, water heaters, clothes dryers and fireplaces are also worthy of concern. Gas-powered appliances emit carbon monoxide (CO), a colorless, odorless gas that, when inhaled, can cause headaches, dizziness, nausea—even death in high concentrations. Modern furnaces and appliances have safety features to prevent dangerous levels from building up, but they can still emit small amounts of CO.

Another concern with gas-powered appliances is the emission of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). NO<sub>2</sub> is a red-dish-brown gas that can irritate the eyes, nose and throat. It can also exacerbate respiratory conditions such as asthma and bronchitis. Gas stoves are the primary source of indoor NO<sub>2</sub>, but gas furnaces and other gas-powered appliances can also produce it. Gas-powered appliances also emit particulate matter (PM), another type of indoor air pollution. PM is a mixture of tiny particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs. Exposure to PM can cause respiratory and cardiovascular problems, particularly in vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions.

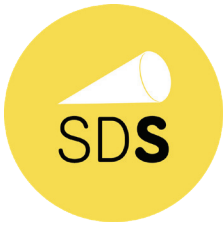
To minimize the negative effects of gas-powered appliances on indoor air quality, it is important to properly maintain and ventilate them. Regular maintenance, such as cleaning and replacing filters, can help ensure that appliances are running efficiently and emitting fewer pollutants. Additionally, proper ventilation can help remove pollutants from the air. Ventilation can be achieved by opening windows or using exhaust fans that vent to the outside.

Another option for reducing indoor air pollution from gas-powered appliances is to switch to electric varieties instead. Electric stoves and furnaces do not produce CO or NO<sub>2</sub>, and they emit far less PM than gas appliances. While electric appliances may have higher upfront costs, they can be more cost-effective over time due to lower operating costs and reduced maintenance needs.

If you are designing a new home from scratch, it's a no-brainer these days to choose appliances powered by electricity not gas. But most of us don't have that luxury, and it's not easy to decide if it's worth the expense and hassle of switching out an old gas-powered appliance with a shiny new electric one. The bottom line is "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" as swapping out an old one for a new one generates more pollution overall thanks to the lifecycle costs of manufacturing. But if your old appliance has reached the end of its useful life anyway, changing to an electric one may well be the best move.



**Recent revelations about the negative effect cooking with gas can have on indoor air quality have given rise to new concerns about other gas-powered appliances.** Credit: Pexels.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Interest groups spend thousands on social events for lawmakers, with no disclosure

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - MARCH 25, 2023 8:00 AM

PIERRE — Politicians, lobbyists and liquor dealers gathered in the back room of a restaurant. It was mid-January, a couple of weeks into South Dakota's annual legislative session. Everybody was unwinding after a long day at the Capitol, chatting and mingling. Pork roast was on the menu. People lined up for drinks at the bar. The atmosphere was social, but it was also an opportunity for lobbyists and industry stakeholders to cultivate relationships with lawmakers and, ultimately, influence legislation. And it was all thanks to the South Dakota Licensed Beverage Dealers & Gaming Association, an interest group that represents bars, restaurants and casinos statewide. Nothing about the event was subject to public disclosure — who was there, what was talked about, or how much money the host group spent on food and drinks for lawmakers. South Dakota's lobbying disclosure laws don't apply to the "Legislative Social Calendar," which included 109 events during this year's January-to-March legislative session. The South Dakota Chamber of Commerce & Industry maintains the calendar on behalf of the dozens of organizations that host events. On this year's calendar, auto dealers and truckers invited legislators to "Pierre's largest sundae bar." Electric utilities hosted a lunch not only for lawmakers but also for the public utilities commissioners who regulate the industry. The National Guard, health care organizations, bankers, and the trust industry were among the hosts of other events, including breakfasts, luncheons, mixers, dinners and socials.

#### Disclosure laws riddled with exemptions

State laws require the secretary of state to keep a directory of registered lobbyists, listing their names, employers, contact information, and the subjects of legislation they plan to lobby about, among other information.

State laws also require lobbyists and their employers to file annual expense reports by July — roughly three months after the annual legislative session ends — showing "all costs incurred for the purpose of influencing legislation."

But there are exemptions in the law for lobbyists' own meals, travel, lodging, phone calls and other "necessary personal needs" during the legislative session.

Those exemptions mean that many expenses are never disclosed. Flipping through the hundreds of annual disclosure forms from lobbyists and their employers often reveals nothing more than the names of the lobbyists and their associated organizations. The expense fields on the forms are often left blank.

A state law also allows gifts from lobbyists to individual lawmakers to a cumulative value of \$115.47 in a calendar year (the number is adjusted annually for inflation). But that cap is riddled with exemptions written into the law. Those exemptions include any food, entertainment or beverage provided for immediate consumption, and any service or event intended "to educate or inform" public officials on matters of public policy.

In other words, events on the social calendar are exempted from disclosure.

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## Gift limit also weakened by exemptions

There was no limit on the value of gifts to legislators until Initiated Measure 22, a ballot measure passed by voters in 2016 that introduced a \$100 limit. Beyond that provision, IM 22 was a massive anti-corruption measure that also created a publicly funded campaign finance system, established an independent ethics commission, and put new limits on campaign contributions, among other reforms.

However, in 2017, opponents of IM 22 convinced a judge to put the law on hold, and the Republican-controlled Legislature repealed the law. Legislators then enacted some individual provisions of IM 22, including the \$100 limit with annual adjustments for inflation and numerous exemptions.

David Owen is president and chief lobbyist for the South Dakota Chamber of Commerce & Industry, which maintains the Legislative Social Calendar. He said whatever people think about the social-calendar events, the exemptions in current law clearly allow them to happen without public disclosures.

"Should that be a publicly recorded expense?" Owen said. "Our decision after IM 22 was no, that's food and drink for immediate consumption and those conversations are something we want to foster, not inhibit. And so the secretary of state does not collect that information."

Free food and drink provided by interest groups to legislators has thus become an accepted part of the legislative process in Pierre, according to Jordan Mason, a lobbyist for the Freedom Caucus Network, a subgroup of Republican lawmakers.

"And that's the problem when people say, 'We don't have corruption.' I'm like, 'It's institutionalized,'" Mason said.

Owen acknowledged that some of the events on the social calendar are open to the public while others are open only to the host group, lawmakers, other state officials and their spouses. And he understands how those events invite criticism.

"They're only open to, say, the membership of the Auto Dealers Association so that the public can't flow in and out of there," Owen said. "And so, in that case, you're kind of restricting access to those."

That's something Weiland also recognizes, which is why he said it should all be disclosed in public documents.

"I don't know if there is a direct correlation between a dinner and corruption, but I do think it's the transparency issue," Weiland said. "Does a steak dinner buy your vote? I think that's maybe a bridge too far. But transparency is the antidote to that."

*Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.*

## Congressional Roundup: Watchdog group rates effectiveness of SD delegation

BY: SETH TUPPER - MARCH 25, 2023 6:30 AM

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the latest installment in a series of periodic updates on the activities of South Dakota's congressional delegation.

All three of the people representing South Dakota in Congress are among the most effective in their party, according to new scores published by a congressional watchdog group.

In its "effectiveness scores" for the 117th Congress, the Center for Effective Lawmaking ranked Rep. Dusty Johnson 14th among 222 Republican House members, while Sens. Mike Rounds and John Thune ranked ninth and 13th, respectively, among 50 Senate Republicans.

Johnson also had the highest rank among House Republicans on agricultural issues.

Further rankings by topic are available on the website of the Center for Effective Lawmaking, which is a project of the University of Virginia and Vanderbilt University. The effectiveness scores are "based on the



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combination of 15 metrics regarding the bills that each member of Congress sponsors, how far they move through the lawmaking process, and how substantial their policy proposals are.”

## Pistol legislation

Rounds joined other Republicans this week to introduce a Congressional Review Act resolution to prevent the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives from enforcing a new rule on pistol braces.

The rule reclassifies pistols as short-barreled rifles if they have a stabilizing brace attachment, and also requires registration with the bureau.

Bureau Director Steven Dettelbach explained the logic behind the rule in a January news release, saying, “In the days of Al Capone, Congress said back then that short-barreled rifles and sawed-off shotguns should be subjected to greater legal requirements than most other guns.”

“The reason for that is that short-barreled rifles have the greater capability of long guns, yet are easier to conceal, like a pistol,” Dettelbach added. “But certain so-called stabilizing braces are designed to just attach to pistols, essentially converting them into short-barreled rifles to be fired from the shoulder. Therefore, they must be treated in the same way under the statute.”

Rounds said some disabled veterans rely on braces to use their firearms. He said they could face jail time, fines and the loss of their firearm if they fail to register pistols with stabilizing braces.

The new rule, Rounds said in a news release, “is nothing more than a harassment of law-abiding citizens exercising their Second Amendment rights – plain and simple.”

In another gun-related development, Johnson introduced a bill to allow members of federally recognized Native American tribes to use their tribal identification cards to obtain a firearm from a federally licensed dealer. Thune and Rounds are cosponsors of a similar bill in the Senate.

## IRS/gun bill

Thune led Republican colleagues this week in introducing the Merchant Category Code Neutrality Act. The legislation would prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from auditing taxpayers based primarily on the category code used by their business, Thune said in a news release. The bill would also require the IRS to issue a public report with an annual total of audits initiated for each code.

Thune’s news release said the legislation is a response to the recent creation of a merchant category code for firearm and ammunition stores by the Geneva-based International Organization for Standardization. The codes are submitted on IRS forms to verify transaction data, which creates a potential avenue for the IRS to initiate targeted audits against certain codes, according to Thune.

“The IRS shouldn’t have free rein to use audits to inappropriately scrutinize or intimidate taxpayers due to the nature of their lawful business, including licensed firearm dealers,” Thune said in his news release.

## Interstate meat shipments

Rounds issued a news release and a one-page explainer about his bill to allow meat and poultry products inspected by state programs to be sold across state lines.

In the past, Round has framed the problem this way: “Today, if you had meat or poultry processed at a South Dakota-inspected facility in Hudson, South Dakota, you wouldn’t be able to sell it across the border just a few miles away in Iowa. But you could sell it several hundred miles away in Lemmon, South Dakota.”

There is an existing federal program that allows for interstate shipments of state-inspected meat. South Dakota avoided joining that program, known as Cooperative Interstate Shipment, for 13 years due to criticism that the program didn’t fully recognize the validity of state inspections.

After the COVID-19 pandemic strained the meat supply chain, South Dakota officials changed their minds, and the state is now one of 10 participating in the program.

Rounds’ bill would remove the necessity of that extra layer of bureaucracy. It would authorize the interstate shipment of meat inspected by federally approved state inspection programs, without the need for states to opt in to an additional federal program.

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## Livestock identification

Rounds submitted written comments about a proposed U.S. Department of Agriculture regulation on radio frequency identification for cattle and bison.

The regulation would amend animal disease traceability regulations to require that the ear tags used to move cattle and bison between states be not only visually but also electronically readable.

Rounds highlighted numerous concerns about the regulation. Those include data security, the need for better traceability standards for international trading partners, and the costs that the new regulation could impose on cattle producers.

"Our farm and ranch families in South Dakota are already facing a range of challenges, including drought, high input costs and declining prices, and the added cost of complying with this mandate could push even more out of business," Rounds wrote.

## Other news

In other congressional action this week:

The Senate unanimously passed a resolution introduced by Rounds and Thune to honor the life and legacy of the late Jim Abourezk, a Democratic former member of Congress from South Dakota who died last month at age 92.

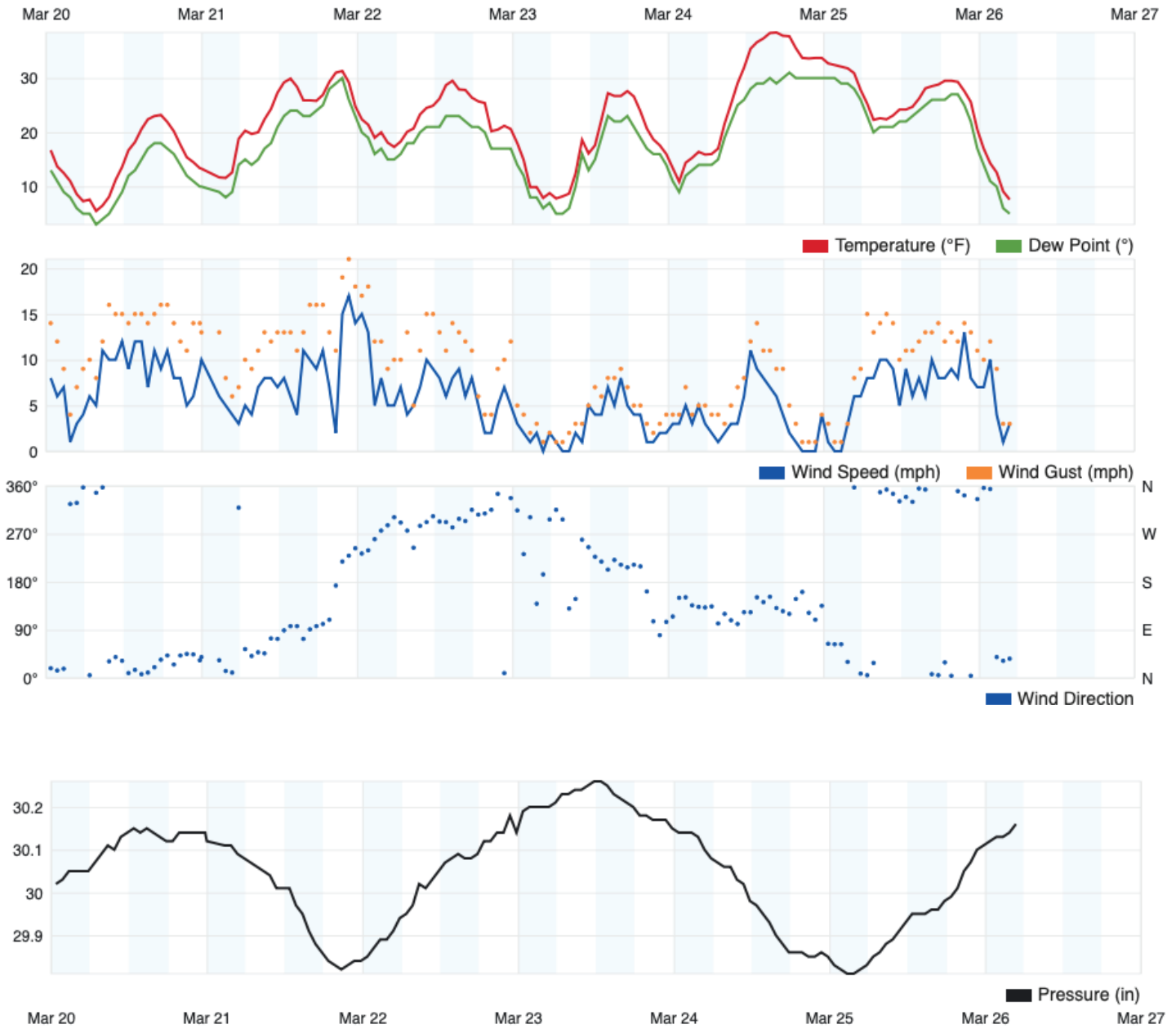
Thune introduced a bill to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from monitoring cattle's gastrointestinal emissions of methane, which is a heat-trapping gas that contributes to climate change.

*Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.*

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## Past Week's Groton Weather Graphs





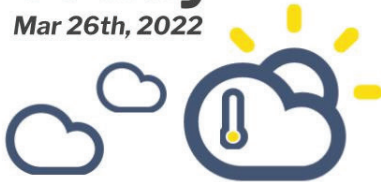
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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 25 °F	Low: 9 °F	High: 24 °F	Low: 3 °F	High: 26 °F	Low: 1 °F	High: 23 °F

## Today

Mar 26th, 2022



Highs 23 to 38°

Coldest ne SD & wc MN, warmest south central SD. 15 to 20° below normal

Monday

Tuesday



22 to 38°

21 to 47°



March 26, 2023

3:26 AM



Today, temperatures will continue to be 15 to 20 degrees below average. This is expected to continue through the start of the work week. Skies will be partly to mostly cloudy with temperatures in the 20s to 30s and light winds.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 33 °F at 12:05 AM

Low Temp: 18 °F at 11:21 PM

Wind: 17 mph at 7:33 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 12 hours, 31 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 74 in 1905

Record Low: -13 in 1964

Average High: 47

Average Low: 24

Average Precip in March.: 0.70

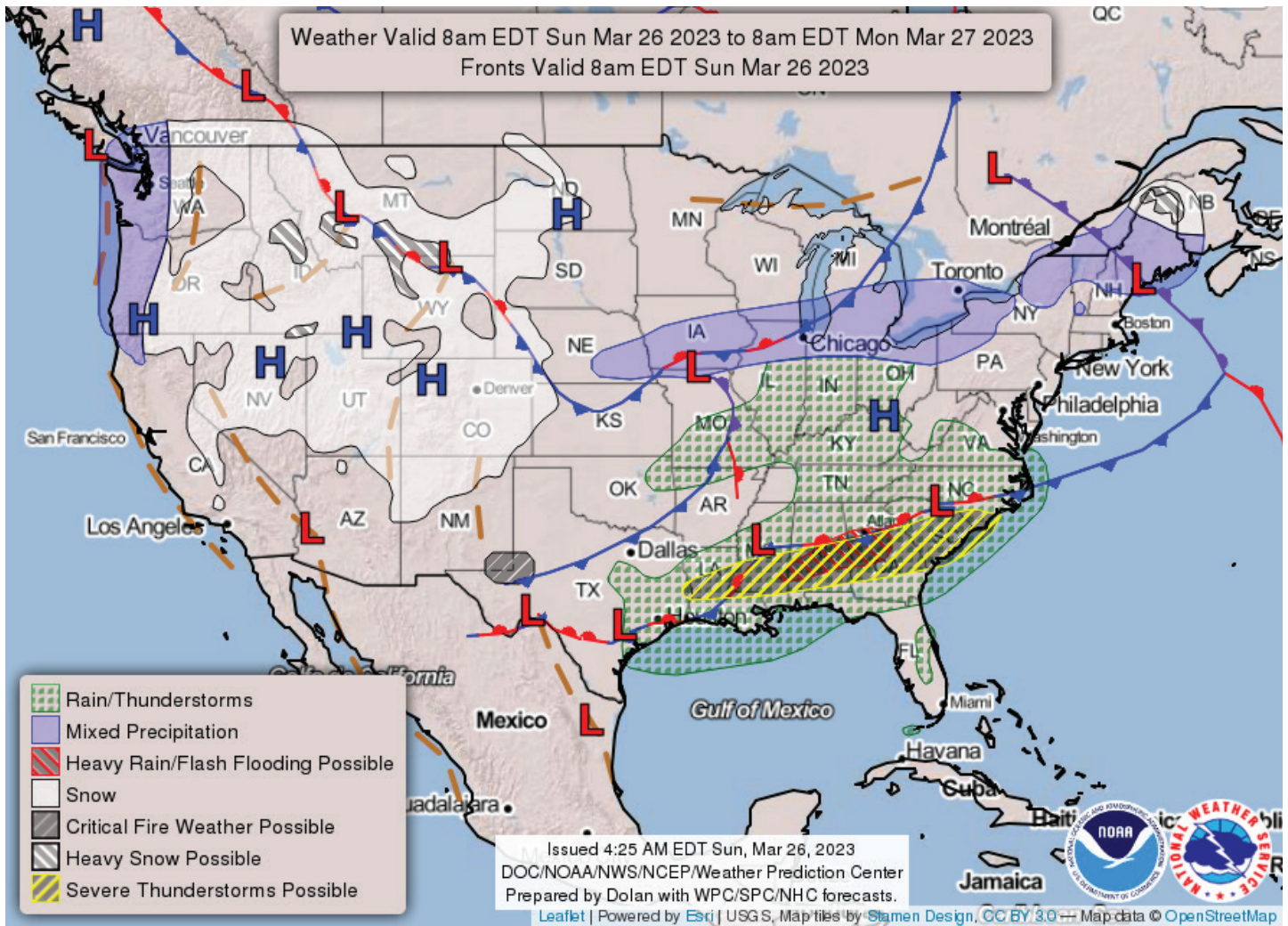
Precip to date in March.: 1.60

Average Precip to date: 1.87

Precip Year to Date: 3.18

Sunset Tonight: 7:53:47 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:20:25 AM



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## Today in Weather History

March 26, 1977: During the early morning, severe weather event, hail up to 1.75 inches in diameter fell 1 mile NE of Watertown in Codington County. Also, hail up to 1.50 inches in diameter fell in Milbank, Grant County.

March 26, 1995: Heavy snow fell over most of central South Dakota, as well as in the northern Black Hills. Heavier accumulations included 14 inches at Murdo, 13 inches at Lead, and 12 inches at Eureka, and Leola. Only a few traffic accidents were reported, although many other vehicles slid into ditches. There was some damage to power lines and poles. Some livestock losses were feared, as the snow fell during the calving season, although this could not be assessed in the short term.

March 26, 2008: An area of low pressure moving across the Northern Plains brought heavy snow from 6 to 15 inches in a band across much of central and northeast South Dakota from the evening to the early morning hours. Schools were delayed or canceled and road travel was difficult, if not impossible. Some snowfall amounts included: 6 inches at Stephan, Willow Lake, Harrold, Miller, and near Hoven; 7 inches at Hayti, east of Hayes, and Eagle Butte; 8 inches at Highmore and Doland; 9 inches at Orient, Bryant, and near Onida; 10 inches at Gettysburg and Faulkton; 11 inches at Seneca and Redfield. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included: 12 inches 23 miles north of Highmore; 13 inches near Agar; 15 inches 24 miles north of Highmore.

1913 - The Ohio River Basin flood reached a peak. Ten inch rains over a wide area of the Ohio River Basin inundated cities in Ohio, drowning 467 persons, and causing 147 million dollars damage. The Miami River at Dayton reached a level eight feet higher than ever before. The flood, caused by warm weather and heavy rains, was the second mostly deadly of record for the nation. (David Ludlum)

1948: Good Friday tornadoes moved from Terre Haute to Redkey, Indiana killing 20 people. About 80% of the town of Coatesville was destroyed, and 16 people were killed. The Coatesville Carnegie Library was a total loss. The path was a half mile wide.

1954 - The temperature at Allaket, AK, plunged to 69 degrees below zero. (The Weather Channel)

1971 - Parts of northern and central Georgia experienced their worst snow and ice storm since 1935. Two day power outages ruined two million eggs at poultry hatches. Two persons were killed when a tree landed on their car. (25th-26th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front crossing the Plateau Region produced high winds in Utah causing some property damage. Winds gusted to 51 mph at Salt Lake City. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Twenty cities in the southwestern U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 73 degrees at Flagstaff AZ, 90 degrees at Sacramento CA, 95 degrees at Santa Maria CA, 95 degrees at Los Angeles CA, 99 degrees at Tucson AZ, and 100 degrees at Phoenix AZ set records for March. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - The Easter Bunny brought record warm temperatures to the central U.S. while such records were still welcome. A dozen cities reported record warm readings, including Dodge City KS with an afternoon high of 88 degrees. Strong southerly winds gusted to 51 mph at Dodge City, and reached 55 mph at Salina KS. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Fair weather prevailed across the nation for the second day in a row. Freezing temperatures were reported in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region in the wake of an early spring snowstorm. Afternoon highs were again in the 70s and 80s in the southeastern U.S., and for the ninth day in a row, temperatures in the southwestern U.S. reached the 90s. (The National Weather Summary)

2009: The proof is in the pudding - A NOAA Weather Radio can save your life. Near Belk, AL, a family was alerted to a tornado by their weather radio; they went to their storm cellar. They heard the "jet roar" of the EF1 tornado as it damaged their home; they were unhurt.



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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### DON'T BLAME US!

Over much opposition from members of the community, a man opened a large night club. One of the local churches came to the logical conclusion that the most important responsibility they had in the matter was to ask God to intervene and close the club. They called an all-night prayer meeting and asked God to honor their request.

During the prayer meeting, lightning struck the club, and it burned to the ground. The club owner, learning of the church's prayer meeting, became angry and sued the church. In response to the lawsuit, the church denied all responsibility.

After hearing the case, the judge said, "Wherever the guilt may lie, the night club owner believes in prayer but the church, obviously, does not."

What at first may appear to be humorous may be an indictment on our faith and trust in the power of God. In His teaching on prayer, Jesus said that we are to ask Him for "anything" and "everything" □ two "all-inclusive" words. When we take them literally and seriously, they will give us the right and responsibility to ask for "whatever" is within the will of God.

Could it be that we do not believe that God can and will answer our prayers? Do we really believe that God is listening, is willing, and is certainly able to respond if we truly believe?

Prayer: Dear Jesus, You clearly and convincingly said that "everything is possible with God" if only we believe! In Your name, please remove any and all of our doubts. Thank You! Amen.

Scripture For Today: Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God." Mark 10:27



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:  
03.24.23

14 17 33 42 66 15

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$322,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
03.25.23

3 17 29 41 52 10

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$39,930,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
03.25.23

9 11 20 22 48 14

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 18 Mins 19 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
03.25.23

7 9 11 14 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$20,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
03.25.23

18 30 35 42 52 1

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

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
03.25.23

15 17 18 47 57 19

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$122,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### **Honduras establishes ties with China after Taiwan break**

BEIJING (AP) — Honduras established diplomatic ties with China on Sunday after breaking off relations with Taiwan, which is increasingly isolated and now recognized by only 13 sovereign states, including Vatican City.

Foreign ministers from China and Honduras signed a joint communique in Beijing — a decision the Chinese Foreign Ministry hailed as “the right choice.”

The diplomatic victory for China comes as tensions rise between Beijing and the United States, including over China’s increasing assertiveness toward self-ruled Taiwan, and signals growing Chinese influence in Latin America. The new China-Honduras relationship was announced after the Honduran and Taiwanese governments made separate announcements that they were severing ties.

China and Taiwan have been locked in a battle for diplomatic recognition since they split amid civil war in 1949, with Beijing spending billions to win recognition for its “one China” policy.

China claims Taiwan is part of its territory, to be brought under its control by force if necessary, and refuses most contacts with countries that maintain formal ties with the island democracy. It threatens retaliation against countries merely for increasing contacts.

The Honduran Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Twitter that its government recognizes “only one China in the world” and that Beijing “is the only legitimate government that represents all of China.”

It added that “Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory, and as of today, the Honduran government has informed Taiwan of the severance of diplomatic relations, pledging not to have any official relationship or contact with Taiwan.”

Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu told a news conference Sunday that Taiwan had ended its relations with Honduras to “safeguard its sovereignty and dignity.”

Wu said that Honduran President Xiomara Castro and her team always had a “fantasy” about China and had raised the issue of switching ties before the presidential election in Honduras in 2021. Relations between Taiwan and Honduras were once stable, he said, but China had not stopped luring Honduras.

Honduras had asked Taiwan for billions of dollars of aid and compared its proposals with China’s, Wu said. About two weeks ago, the Honduran government sought \$2.45 billion from Taiwan to build a hospital and a dam, and to write off debts, he added.

“The Castro government dismissed our nation’s longstanding assistance and relations and carried out talks to form diplomatic ties with China. Our government feels pained and regretful,” he said.

Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen said her government would not “engage in a meaningless contest of dollar diplomacy with China.”

“Over these past few years, China has persistently used various means to suppress Taiwan’s international participation, escalate military intrusion, and disrupt peace and stability in the region,” she said in a recorded video.

Her office spokesperson Olivia Lin said in a statement that relations between the sides had lasted for more than 80 years.

Analysts have warned over the implications of the newly formed ties between China and Honduras. Political analyst Graco Pérez in Honduras said Beijing’s narrative would highlight the benefits, including investment and job creation, “but that is all going to be illusory.”

Pérez noted that some other countries have established such relations, but “it didn’t turn out to be what had been offered.”

For decades China has funneled billions of dollars into investment and infrastructure projects across Latin America. That investment has translated to rising power for China and a growing number of allies.

In Honduras, it has come in the form of construction of a hydroelectric dam project in central Honduras built by the Chinese company SINOHYDRO with about \$300 million in Chinese government financing.

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Honduras is the ninth diplomatic ally that Taipei has lost to Beijing since pro-independence President Tsai Ing-wen first took office in May 2016.

Taiwan still has ties with Belize, Paraguay and Guatemala in Latin America, and Vatican City. Most of its remaining partners are island nations in the Caribbean and South Pacific, along with Eswatini in southern Africa.

Tsai is set to begin a 10-day trip on Wednesday with visits to Guatemala and Belize. Her delegation will also stop in New York and Los Angeles, Lin said last week. Taiwan's Vice Foreign Minister Alexander Yui earlier said the purpose of Tsai's trip is to highlight the island's friendship with the two Latin American countries.

Wu said he did not have any evidence that the timing of the announcement was related to Tsai's trip but noted "China seems to be doing this intentionally."

Despite China's campaign of isolation, Taiwan retains robust informal ties with more than 100 other countries, most importantly the United States. The U.S. doesn't have diplomatic relations with Taiwan but has maintained that Taipei is an important partner in the Indo-Pacific.

## Biden declares emergency as crews dig through storm wreckage

By LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

President Joe Biden early Sunday issued an emergency declaration for Mississippi, making federal funding available to Carroll, Humphreys, Monroe and Sharkey counties, the areas hardest hit Friday night by a deadly tornado that ripped through the Mississippi Delta, one of the poorest regions of the U.S.

At least 25 people were killed and dozens of others were injured in Mississippi as the massive storm ripped through several towns on its hour-long path. One man was killed after his trailer home flipped several times in Alabama.

Search and recovery crews on Sunday resumed the daunting task of digging through the debris of flattened and battered homes, commercial buildings and municipal offices after hundreds of people were displaced.

Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Deanne Criswell was scheduled to visit the state on Sunday to evaluate the destruction.

FEMA Coordinating Officer John Boyle has been appointed to oversee federal recovery operations. Following Biden's declaration, federal funding can be used for recovery efforts including temporary housing, home repairs, loans covering uninsured property losses and other individual and business programs, the White House said in a statement.

The twister flattened entire blocks, obliterated houses, ripped a steeple off a church and toppled a municipal water tower. Even with recovery just starting, the National Weather Service warned of a risk of more severe weather Sunday — including high winds, large hail and possible tornadoes — in eastern Louisiana, south central Mississippi and south central Alabama.

Based on early data, the tornado received a preliminary EF-4 rating, the National Weather Service office in Jackson said late Saturday in a tweet. An EF-4 tornado has top wind gusts between 166 mph and 200 mph (265 kph and 320 kph), according to the service. The Jackson office cautioned it was still gathering information on the tornado.

The Friday night tornado devastated a swath of the 2,000-person town of Rolling Fork, reducing homes to piles of rubble, flipping cars on their sides and toppling the town's water tower. Other parts of the Deep South were digging out from damage caused by other suspected twisters. One man died in Morgan County, Alabama, the sheriff's department there said in a tweet.

"How anybody survived is unknown by me," said Rodney Porter, who lives 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of Rolling Fork. When the storm hit Friday night, he immediately drove there to assist in any way he could. Porter arrived to find "total devastation" and said he smelled natural gas and heard people screaming for help in the dark.

"Houses are gone, houses stacked on top of houses with vehicles on top of that," he said.

Annette Body drove to the hard-hit town of Silver City from nearby Belozzi to survey the damage. She said she was feeling "blessed" because her own home was not destroyed, but other people she knows

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lost everything.

"Cried last night, cried this morning," she said, looking around at flattened homes. "They said you need to take cover, but it happened so fast a lot of people didn't even get a chance to take cover."

Storm survivors walked around Saturday, many dazed and in shock, as they broke through thickly clustered debris and fallen trees with chain saws, searching for survivors. Power lines were pinned under decades-old oaks, their roots torn from the ground.

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves issued a state of emergency and vowed to help rebuild as he viewed the damage in a region speckled with wide expanses of cotton, corn and soybean fields and catfish farming ponds. He spoke with Biden, who also held a call with the state's congressional delegation.

More than a half-dozen shelters were opened in Mississippi to house those who have been displaced.

Preliminary information based on estimates from storm reports and radar data indicate the tornado was on the ground for more than an hour and traversed at least 170 miles (274 kilometers), said Lance Perrilloux, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service's Jackson, Mississippi, office.

"That's rare — very, very rare," he said, attributing the long path to widespread atmospheric instability.

Perrilloux said preliminary findings showed the tornado began its path of destruction just southwest of Rolling Fork before continuing northeast toward the rural communities of Midnight and Silver City and onward toward Tchula, Black Hawk and Winona.

The supercell that produced the deadly twister also appeared to produce tornadoes causing damage in northwest and north-central Alabama, said Brian Squitieri, a severe storms forecaster with the weather service's Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma.

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Associated Press writers Emily Wagster Pettus in Rolling Fork, Mississippi; Michael Goldberg in Silver City, Mississippi; and Jim Salter in O'Fallon, Missouri, contributed to this report.

## Tensions on the rise at revered Kyiv monastery complex

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The courtyards of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra have been busy with more than just the usual worshippers, going to and from its churches in the sprawling monastic complex that is Ukraine's most revered Orthodox site.

Also busy Friday were people in civilian clothes, loading cars with plasma televisions, furniture and other items from the buildings — helping the resident monks remove belongings of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, or UOC, before a threatened government eviction on March 29.

There also were police officers checking the cars to make sure no one was removing items that belong to the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra preserve, which oversees the complex.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is reverberating here in a struggle for control of the Lavra, known in English as the Monastery of the Caves. The complex contains church, monastic and museum buildings; its oldest parts date back to the dawn of Christianity here a millennium ago.

The dispute is part of a wider religious conflict playing out in parallel with the war.

The government of Ukraine has already been cracking down on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church over its historic ties to the Russian Orthodox Church, whose leader, Patriarch Kirill, has supported Russian President Vladimir Putin in the invasion of Ukraine.

The parliament is considering a "draft law on making it impossible to operate in Ukraine religious organizations affiliated with centers of influence in the Russian Federation" — which could impact the UOC, depending on how it's interpreted.

The UOC has insisted that it's loyal to Ukraine, has denounced the Russian invasion from the start and has even declared its independence from Moscow.

But Ukrainian security agencies have claimed that some in the Ukrainian church have maintained close ties with Moscow. They've raided numerous holy sites of the church and later posted photos of rubles, Russian passports and leaflets with messages from the Moscow patriarch as proof that some church of-



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ficials have been loyal to Russia.

The raids started after a Nov. 12 service at the Pechersk Lavra complex, where a Ukrainian Orthodox priest was filmed talking about the “awakening” of Russia.

The Ukrainian government has said the Lavra, including a UOC seminary and offices, is a hub of “Russian world” propaganda — an ideology touting Moscow’s political and spiritual hegemony over neighboring Slavic lands such as Ukraine.

The government also has sanctioned the Lavra’s abbot for alleged pro-Moscow activities. It already allowed the rival Orthodox Church of Ukraine, or OCU, to use one of the Lavra’s churches for a Christmas service.

But now it’s ordering the Ukrainian Orthodox Church out of the premises entirely.

The stakes are high. The complex has been called the “pearl of Ukraine” and the “Vatican” of Ukrainian Orthodoxy.

The site is owned by the government, and the agency overseeing the property notified the UOC earlier this month that as of March 29, it was terminating the lease allowing the free use of religious buildings on the property. The government claims that the monks violated their lease by making alterations to the historic site and other technical infractions.

“There are many new buildings there, and this is a UNESCO site, which do not have relevant documents and permits. The legality of such new buildings also raises legitimate questions,” Ukraine’s minister of culture, Oleksandr Tkachenko, said on Ukrainian television. “The state must manage what belongs to it.”

The monks of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church dispute this, saying these claims are a pretext, and they refuse to leave.

Still, they’re moving out what possessions they can in preparation for a possible forcible eviction.

“We understand that we will not be given the opportunity to function properly and therefore we need to remove certain things and prevent their destruction,” said Metropolitan Clement, the head of the UOC press office.

Earlier, the monks said they won’t leave Lavra under any circumstances.

Metropolitan Clement, in an interview with The Associated Press, said lawyers for the UOC appealed to the Ministry of Culture to provide documents explaining its reasons for breaking the agreement.

However, according to Clement, the ministry informed them that such documents won’t be provided, because they have been marked for official use, as if they are classified.

The government’s eviction order doesn’t explicitly say the monastery could be turned over to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

But that church’s leader, Metropolitan Epiphany, issued a statement directed at the Lavra monks, indicating knowledge of changes to come.

The eviction won’t put an end to monastery worship and ministry at the complex, he said.

Metropolitan Epiphany said services will continue and be conducted in their ancient Slavic language along with modern Ukrainian.

“The current affairs of the monastery will be managed by those who know the traditions and life of the monastery ... and who have not tarnished themselves with devotion to the ‘Russian world,’” the metropolitan said.

Epiphany claimed that the UOC is a “tool of hybrid aggression against Ukraine.”

Ukraine’s Ministry of Culture sought to offer similar assurances that Lavra’s monastic life would continue.

The Kremlin, however, cites the termination of the UOC’s lease as further proof that Russia’s actions over the past year in Ukraine are justified — claiming that Russia is defending a beleaguered Orthodox population.

Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church who backed Moscow’s invasion last year, has asked Pope Francis and other religious leaders to intervene in the Lavra controversy.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church has been ultimately loyal to the Moscow patriarch since the 17th century, though it has had broad autonomy and has strongly denounced the Russian invasion.

The independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine received formal recognition in 2019 from the Ecumenical

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Patriarch of Constantinople, who has the top position of honor in Orthodoxy but not the universal power of a pope. Kirill hasn't recognized the OCU as legitimate.

The UOC itself declared full independence from Moscow last year. But the OCU and its supporters say that the UOC retains strong ties and sympathies to Moscow.

The changes in the works at the Lavra received mixed reactions from frequent visitors who were at the complex on Friday.

For Oleksandr, 32, who refused to be identified with his last name, it was upsetting. He said that the UOC is clearly connected to Russia, but he personally hadn't heard any church propaganda, and he plans to attend UOC services elsewhere.

But the changes were welcomed by Oksana Naumenko, who has been working for years in the academy located in the Lavra complex. She said it fulfilled one of her lifelong dreams of having the singing and prayer at Lavra happen in the Ukrainian language.

"It is very large-scale and global event in our history. It is possible that not everyone realizes this," she said. "But perhaps our children will know at what price our religion and language are being acquired."

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Peter Smith contributed to this report from Pittsburgh.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the war at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

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Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP's collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

## **New Russian campaign tries to entice men to fight in Ukraine**

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — Advertisements promise cash bonuses and enticing benefits. Recruiters are making cold calls to eligible men. Enlistment offices are working with universities and social service agencies to lure students and the unemployed.

A new campaign is underway this spring across Russia, seeking recruits to replenish its troops for the war in Ukraine.

As fighting grinds on in Ukrainian battlegrounds like Bakhmut and both sides prepare for counteroffensives that could cost even more lives, the Kremlin's war machine badly needs new recruits.

A mobilization in September of 300,000 reservists — billed as a "partial" call-up — sent panic throughout the country, since most men under 65 are formally part of the reserve. Tens of thousands fled Russia rather than report to recruiting stations.

The Kremlin denies that another call-up is planned for what it calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine, now more than a year old.

But amid widespread uncertainty of whether such a move will eventually happen, the government is enticing men to volunteer, either at makeshift recruiting centers popping up in various regions, or with phone calls from enlistment officials. That way, it can "avoid declaring a formal second mobilization wave" after the first one proved so unpopular, according to a recent report by the U.S.-based think tank Institute of the Study of War.

One Muscovite told The Associated Press that his employer, a state-funded organization, gathered up the military registration cards of all male employees of fighting age and said it would get them deferments. But he said the move still sent a wave of fear through him.

"It makes you nervous and scared — no one wants to all of a sudden end up in a war with a rifle in their hands," said the resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he feared reprisal. "The special operation is somewhat dragging on, so any surprises from the Russian authorities can be expected."

It's been more than a week since he handed in his card, he said, and exemptions usually get resolved in a day or two, heightening his anxiety.

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Russian media report that men across the country are receiving summonses from enlistment offices. In most of those cases, men were simply asked to update their records; in others, they were ordered to take part in military training.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said last week that serving summonses to update records in enlistment offices is "usual practice" and a "continued undertaking."

Other unconfirmed media reports say authorities have told regional governments to recruit a certain number of volunteers. Some officials announced setting up recruitment centers with the goal of getting men to sign contracts that enable them to be sent into combat as professional soldiers.

Ads have appeared on government websites and on the social media accounts of state institutions and organizations, including libraries and high schools.

One of them, posted by a municipal administration in the western Yaroslavl region, promised a one-time bonus of about \$3,800 to sign up, and if sent to Ukraine, a monthly salary of up to \$2,500, plus about \$100 a day for "involvement in active offensive operations," and \$650 "for each kilometer of advancement within assault teams."

The ad said the soldier would also get tax and loan repayment breaks, preferential university admission status for his children, generous compensation for his family if he is wounded or killed in action, and the status of a war veteran, which carries even more perks.

In the Siberian city of Novosibirsk, officials asked universities, colleges and vocational schools to advertise for recruits on their websites, said Sergei Chernyshov, founder of a private vocational school there.

Chernyshov posted the ad on his social media account "so that everyone knows what our city hall is up to," but he told the AP that he doesn't plan to put it on the school website. "It's weird" to target vocational school students, he said.

Other efforts include enlistment officials meeting with college students and unemployed men, or phoning men to volunteer.

A Muscovite who spoke on condition of anonymity for his own safety said that he received such a call and was surprised at how polite it was: "After my 'No,' there were no threats or (attempts to) convince me -- (just) 'Thanks, goodbye.'"

There have only been isolated cases of enlistment officials really pressuring men to sign up, said Grigory Sverdlin, founder of a group called Go by the Forest that helps men avoid mobilization.

The group gets up to 100 messages a day from men seeking advice on dealing with summonses or enlistment officials, he said, compared with dozens per day in recent months. In most cases, the officials wanted to update their records with addresses and phone numbers, and they might try to recruit men during that process.

But Sverdlin said some cases stand out.

In the Vologda region, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) north of Moscow, the group received messages saying that almost everyone going to the enlistment office after receiving a summons "is forced to sign a paper barring them from leaving the region," he said.

Lawyer Alexei Tabalov, who runs the Conscript's School legal aid group, believes there's nothing unusual in authorities handing out summonses now. Some of the notices are traditionally served before Russia's spring conscription draft, scheduled to begin April 1 for those eligible for mandatory service.

All Russian men from age 18 to 27 must serve one year in the military, but a large share avoid the draft for health reasons or get student deferments. The share of men who avoid the draft is particularly big in Moscow and other major cities, and many simply evade enlistment officials bearing conscription summonses.

Tabalov said that men have reported going to enlistment offices to update their records but have officials there who "beat around the bush and promote the idea of signing the contract, talk about how one should love their motherland and defend it."

He doubted anything could make volunteering attractive after 13 months of a war that has killed and wounded tens of thousands.

"People already understand what it means to sign a contract," he said. "Those who got burned once are unlikely to fall into the same trap."

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Tabalov said that his group continues to get messages from soldiers who want to terminate their contracts, but that isn't legally possible until President Vladimir Putin ends the partial mobilization, which began in September, with a new decree.

"Getting out of the war automatically means criminal prosecution," Tabalov said, adding there have been a flurry of criminal cases since December, with prosecutions of soldiers who desert or go AWOL.

The news outlet Mediazona counted 247 verdicts in 536 criminal cases on these and similar charges, adding that over a third of those convicted got suspended sentences, which allows authorities to send them back to the front line.

The current recruitment campaign is similar to one enacted last summer, before the September call-up, said Kateryna Stepanenko, a Russia analyst with the Institute of the Study of War.

Back then, authorities also used financial incentives, and various volunteer battalions were formed, but the effort clearly wasn't successful, because Putin eventually turned to the partial mobilization.

Whether this one will succeed or not is unclear.

"They've already recruited a significant portion of people that were financially incentivized last summer. And they struggled to do so last year," Stepanenko said.

The current recruitment effort shows the military's awareness of manpower needs in Ukraine.

"What the mobilization campaign of 300,000 servicemen told us is that it's not enough to form a sufficient strike group for Russia to push forward with its offensive operations," she said.

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Associated Press writer Yuras Karmanau contributed to this report.

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Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

## FAU holds off Nowell and K-State to reach 1st Final Four

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Alijah Martin sent a message early for upstart Florida Atlantic, soaring to the basket for a one-handed jam and chirping with the Kansas State players about his poster moment at Madison Square Garden.

"They're going to label us whatever, but we're some pit bulls and Rottweilers," Martin said.

Now they can call the ninth-seeded Owls a Final Four team.

Martin and FAU withstood another huge game by Kansas State's Markquis Nowell and brushed off a deficit in the final eight minutes to beat the Wildcats 79-76 on Saturday night.

FAU (35-3), making just its second appearance in the NCAA Tournament and first since 2002, won the East Region and will head to Houston to play the winner of Sunday's South Region final between Creighton and San Diego State.

"I expect the prognosticators to pick us fifth in the Final Four," fifth-year FAU coach Dusty May said.

In one of the most unpredictable NCAA Tournaments ever — all four No. 1 seeds were out by the Elite Eight — the Owls from Conference USA typify the madness.

The winningest team in Division I this season had never won an NCAA Tournament game before ripping off four straight, all by single digits, to become the first No. 9 seed to reach the Final Four since Wichita State in 2013. The Owls are the third No. 9 to get that far since seeding began in 1979.

"Honestly, all the things people say just fuels us to go out there and play even harder," said Bryan Greenlee, who scored 16 points before fouling out. "They can say whatever they want, say we're a Cinderella team, say we don't belong, but we've constantly proven people wrong all season."

Nowell, the 5-foot-8 native New Yorker — @MrNewYorkCity on Twitter — was incredible again at Madison Square Garden, with 30 points, 12 assists and five steals. In the Sweet 16, Nowell set the NCAA Tournament record with 19 assists in an overtime win against Michigan State. He didn't get enough help this time.

Nae'Qwan Tomlin was the only other player in double figures for Kansas State (26-10) with 14 points. Keyontae Johnson, the Wildcats' leading scorer, fouled out with nine points.



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"Keyontae played 18 minutes, and that's why he was neutralized," said first-year Kansas State coach Jerome Tang, who took over a team that went 14-17 last season.

Martin scored 17 points, including a huge 3 down the stretch, the 7-foot-1 Vladislav Goldin had 14 points and 13 rebounds, and Michael Forrest made four clutch free throws in the final 20 seconds for the Owls, who held steady as the Wildcats made one last push.

Cam Carter made a 3 from the wing with 22.8 seconds left to cut FAU's lead to 75-74 and Kansas State sent Forrest to the line with 17.9 seconds left. The senior made both to make it a three-point game.

Nowell found Tomlin inside for a layup with 8.6 seconds left to cut the lead to one again, and again K-State sent Forrest to the line. With 6.9 remaining, he made them both.

With no timeouts left, Nowell rushed down the court, gave up the ball to Ismael Massoud outside the 3-point line — and never got it back. FAU's Johnell Davis swiped it away and time ran out.

"I was trying to get Ish a shot," Nowell said. "Coach wanted Ish to set the screen, and I waved it off because I felt like on the right side of the court, that's where Ish hits most of his shots. And they closed out hard to him, and he didn't get his shot off."

Nowell was named the most outstanding player of the region after his final collegiate game, but FAU turned out to be the best team.

"I gave my heart and soul to this university, to this team," Nowell said. "I maximized everything I had inside of me to see these guys happy."

As the Owls built their lead in the final minutes, Kansas State fans who had packed the building became anxiously quiet and the "F-A-U!" chants started to rise.

The Owls rushed the floor to celebrate a historic moment for the school. FAU didn't even have a basketball program until the late 1980s and has only been in Division I for the last 30 years.

"I'm living the dream right now," Forrest said.

FAU held up to Tennessee's bully ball in the Sweet 16 and dropped a 40-point second half on the best defense in the nation to eliminate the Southeastern Conference team.

Against one of the Big 12's best, FAU dominated the boards, 44-22, and became the first team from C-USA to reach the Final Four since Memphis in 2008.

The Owls aren't hanging around much longer. They're moving to the American Athletic Conference next season. But first: a trip to Texas.

## BIG PICTURE

FAU: The Owls put together four straight winning records under May before breaking through with a season for the ages that nobody saw coming. They were picked fifth in the C-USA preseason coaches' poll.

Kansas State: The Wildcats were trying to get back to the Final Four for the first time since 1964.

## UP NEXT

Florida Atlantic is a combined 0-3 against San Diego State (0-2) and Creighton.

AP March Madness coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/march-madness> and bracket: <https://apnews.com/hub/ncaa-mens-bracket> and <https://apnews.com/hub/ap-top-25-college-basketball-poll> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## UConn routs Gonzaga 82-54 for first Final Four in 9 years

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Basketball Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The critique of UConn under coach Dan Hurley had been the program's inability to win in March.

Consecutive first-round NCAA Tournament exits meant the Huskies were good, not great — certainly not anywhere in league with the UConn women's program.

In perhaps the maddest March of all, Huskies proved they are elite again, putting in another dominating performance a few hours after the UConn women had a rare misstep.

Jordan Hawkins scored 20 points and UConn overwhelmed its fourth straight NCAA Tournament opponent,

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earning its first trip to the Final Four in nine years with an 82-54 blowout of Gonzaga on Saturday night.

"I think it becomes a little bit of a mental hurdle, especially like early rounds of the NCAA Tournament where you feel like maybe the burden of the history and tradition and first-round games, maybe even second-round games," Hurley said. "The climb to get to this point has been real and it's been more challenging than I thought."

The Huskies (29-8) have felt right at home in their first extended March Madness run since winning the 2014 national championship, playing their best basketball of what had been an up-and-down season.

UConn controlled the usually efficient Bulldogs at both ends in the West Region final, building a 23-point lead early in the second half to waltz right into the final section of the bracket.

Those first-round exits are now well in the rearview mirror. So is that midseason funk.

These elite Huskies did what the UConn women couldn't for once and are headed to Houston, where they will play Texas or Miami.

UConn has a pretty good track record once it gets this far, too: The Huskies are 8-1 all-time in Final Four games.

"We've got a lot to prove," said Andre Jackson Jr., who had eight points, 10 assists and nine rebounds. "We still have a chip on our shoulder."

The Bulldogs (31-6) didn't have the same second-half magic they had in a last-second win over UCLA in the Elite Eight.

Gonzaga allowed UConn to go on a late run to lead by seven at halftime and fell completely apart after All-American Drew Timme went to the bench with his fourth foul early in the second half.

The Zags shot 33% from the field — 7 of 29 in the second half — and went 2 for 20 from 3 to stumble in their bid for a third Final Four since 2017.

"UConn was just terrific tonight and we didn't have any answers, especially when kind of everything really didn't bounce our way," Gonzaga coach Mark Few said. "And we can't absorb a game like that when our offense is as bad as it was tonight."

Alex Karaban scored 12 points and Adama Sanogo had 10 points and 10 rebounds for UConn.

Timme had 12 points and 10 rebounds, receiving a warm ovation after being taken out of his final collegiate game with 1:50 left.

"I'm just so thankful that the program and the place took me for who I was," said Timme, who shared a long embrace with Few when he exited. "They didn't ask me to be anybody but myself."

The Zags started off like they had a Vegas hangover, firing off two air-balled 3-pointers and a wild runner by Timme. Once Gonzaga shook out the cobwebs, the Bulldogs kept the Huskies bridled with defense, with hard hedges on screens and Timme sagging off Jackson to protect the lane.

UConn countered by getting the ball into the strong hands of Sanogo, the facilitator. The UConn big man picked apart Gonzaga's double-teams for five first-half assists, including two for layups.

"We figured that out," Hurley said. "That doesn't work anymore."

Karaban hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer to put the Huskies up 39-32 at halftime, and it got worse for Gonzaga to start the second half.

UConn pushed the lead to 12 and Timme picked up his third and fourth fouls in the opening 2 1/2 minutes — one on a charge, another on a box-out under the rim.

"We brought the team together and tried to keep positive thoughts and try to keep chipping away at that lead," Gonzaga forward Anton Watson said. "But it's hard when Drew goes out."

The Huskies really got rolling when Timme took a seat, using their defense to get out in transition and set up 3-pointers. A 14-3 run put UConn up 60-37 and Few took the calculated gamble of bringing Timme back in.

It made little difference.

UConn kept up the pressure and kept making shots, looking an awful lot like the favorite to win it all.

AP March Madness coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/march-madness> and bracket: <https://apnews.com>

[com/hub/ncaa-mens-bracket](https://www.broton.com/hub/ncaa-mens-bracket) and <https://apnews.com/hub/ap-top-25-college-basketball-poll> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## Search on for missing in deadly chocolate factory explosion

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM and RON TODT Associated Press

WEST READING, Pa. (AP) — An explosion at a chocolate factory in Pennsylvania on Friday killed three people and left four people missing, authorities said. One person was pulled alive from the rubble overnight.

Rescue crews using dogs and imaging equipment continued to search through the rubble Saturday — hours after the blast that erupted just before 5 p.m. Friday at the R.M. Palmer Co. plant in the borough of West Reading, about 60 miles (96 kilometers) northwest of Philadelphia.

West Reading Borough Chief of Police Wayne Holben said the death toll rose on Saturday with the discovery of a third body at the site. The Berks County Medical Examiner and Coroner on Saturday night also confirmed three fatalities.

Borough Fire Chief Chad Moyer said four people remained missing as emergency personnel continue searching for victims and state and local fire investigators examine the scene to determine a cause.

"Due to the violence of the explosion and the amount of time that has passed, the chance of finding survivors is decreasing rapidly," Moyer said. "However, please be assured that our primary goal is accounting for all missing individuals and reuniting them with their loved ones."

Holben earlier said the rescue of one person from the rubble "provides hope that others still may be found." Rescue workers were continuing a thorough search using specialized equipment and techniques. Officials said dogs and imaging equipment were being used to look for signs of life during the careful removal of debris.

The blast destroyed one building and damaged a neighboring building. Roadways near the site will be closed until Monday at 8 a.m., Holben said.

"It's pretty leveled," Mayor Samantha Kaag said of the explosion site. "The building in the front, with the church and the apartments, the explosion was so big that it moved that building four feet forward."

Reading Hospital said Saturday afternoon it had received 10 patients, of which one was transferred to Lehigh Valley Hospital and another to Penn State Health St. Joseph Medical Center. Two were admitted to Reading Hospital in good and fair condition, respectively, and the others had been discharged, officials said.

A UGI Utilities spokesperson said crews were brought in after damage from the blast led to the release of gas that was helping to feed the fire.

"We did not receive any calls regarding a gas leak or gas order prior to the incident. But we are cooperating with the investigation and part of that will be to check all our facilities in the vicinity," UGI spokesperson Joseph Swope said Saturday.

R.M. Palmer said in a statement late Saturday that everyone at the company was "devastated by the tragic events" and "focused on supporting our employees and their families."

"We have lost close friends and colleagues, and our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of all who have been impacted," the company said, expressing gratitude to the "extraordinary efforts" of first responders and the support of the Reading community, "which has been home to our business for more than 70 years."

R.M. Palmer said it was anxious to get in touch with its employees and their families. But its email, phones and other communication systems were down, and it was relying on first responders and disaster recovery organizations to provide information to affected families. The company said it would be "providing additional information and making contact with employees, impacted families, and the community as soon as possible."

Kaag said people were asked to move back about a block in each direction, but no evacuations were ordered. She had issued an emergency declaration only to allow more resources for first responders. Borough manager Dean Murray said some residents were displaced from the damaged apartment building.

Gov. Josh Shapiro, who visited the site Saturday along with the emergency management agency director,

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vowed "any and all commonwealth resources needed to support ongoing recovery efforts -- in addition to the extensive assets that have already been deployed."

A team of structural engineers and K-9s from a state urban search and rescue task force had been assisting since last night, and additional personnel arrived Saturday, he said. A state police fire marshal was also assisting in the investigation, he said.

Philip Wert, vice president of the West Reading council, said the building had been constructed in the late 1950s or early 1960s, and officials had to "access our archive to pull the blueprints last night, in order to get a better layout of the building and the mechanicals and the utilities, where things are."

"The silver lining in all this is someone was found alive, someone was found alive that was in rubble, not knowing whether they were going to live or die, and fortunately we found that person and they've got a second chance, and hopefully fingers crossed we're going to find more," he said.

Frank Gonzalez stood on a hill overlooking the blast site, watching the rubble being cleared. He said his sister, Diana Cedeno, was working at the plant at the time of the blast and was among the missing.

"It's not good. It's just stressful waiting, not knowing," he said, expressing frustration at what he perceived as a lack of communication from authorities about the search. "We keep reaching out, bugging, keeping her name alive just in case she is in there and says her name."

He said his sister has two adult children, including a son who is deployed overseas. She has a side job decorating for parties and has also been studying for ministry at her church, he said.

Gonzalez said his son and nephew had also worked at the plant, but that his son had quit a few months ago "because he said he didn't like the smell of the gas that was in there." His son and nephew had complained about the smell to plant supervisors, who told them, "It's all right. We got it. It's being handled. Don't worry about it," he said.

Frank DeJesus said his stepdaughter, Arelis Rivera Santiago, a Palmer employee, was working in the building next door at the time of the blast. The ceiling caved, and she had to crawl under machinery to make it out, he said. DeJesus said he rushed to the scene to find her "shaking and crying hysterically," and she was still too shaken to speak about what had happened.

Plant employees, including his stepdaughter, had complained about smelling gas throughout the day Friday, DeJesus said.

"Everyone complained about smelling gas, and they kept making them work," he said. "The supervisors told them it was nothing. It was being taken care of."

A message was sent earlier to R.M. Palmer seeking comment about the blast.

Doug Olexy was home from work and checking email when the blast shook his house, rattling windows and making the walls vibrate.

"It sounded like a bomb went off," he recalled Saturday. "I mean, all of our houses shook. I've never heard as loud of an explosion in my life."

He and his neighbors ran out onto the street immediately afterward and were met by thick black smoke. At first, Olexy thought it was a train derailment because there are tracks nearby. Then he learned it was the Palmer plant, which he called a West Reading institution.

"Everybody knows Palmer chocolate," he said.

R.M. Palmer's website says it has been making chocolate novelties since 1948 and now has 850 employees at its West Reading headquarters. Its Facebook page includes entries earlier this month advertising Easter treats such as chocolate bunnies and "the newest milk chocolate hollow" in its "bunny family" as one with jelly beans inside. The company is by no means the region's best-known chocolate manufacturer, however, with Hershey less than an hour to the west.

## **Biden's pick to lead FAA withdraws amid shaky Senate support**

By DAVID KOENIG and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President Joe Biden's choice to run the Federal Aviation Administration has withdrawn his nomination, a setback for the administration that comes after Denver International Airport



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CEO Phillip Washington appeared to lack enough support in the closely divided Senate.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg confirmed Washington's withdrawal in a tweet Saturday night, calling him "an excellent nominee" and blaming undeserved and partisan attacks.

Republicans were united in opposition to Washington, calling him unqualified because of limited aviation experience. Democrats and allied independents still might have pushed the nomination through, but key senators on their side balked at supporting Biden's pick.

Washington's fate appeared settled when Senate Commerce Committee Chair Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., abruptly called off a scheduled vote last Wednesday — a sign that she lacked enough votes to move the nomination out of committee. She said some senators wanted more information about Washington.

Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, who was a Democrat until switching to independent in December, and moderate Democrat Jon Tester of Montana declined to say how they would have voted. A person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press that Sinema was holding up the nomination and had indicated her opposition. The person was not authorized to discuss the process publicly and insisted on anonymity.

Before the White House announces a new nominee, it likely will want assurances of support from Sinema, Tester and other moderates.

The FAA has lacked a Senate-confirmed administrator since March 2022. The agency is trying to reassure Americans that air travel is safe despite a surge in close calls between planes this year. It is also struggling with aging technology that failed in January, briefly canceling all takeoffs around the country. And it is still trying to repair its reputation after approving Boeing planes that crashed in 2018 and 2019.

"The FAA needs a confirmed Administrator, and Phil Washington's transportation & military experience made him an excellent nominee," Buttigieg tweeted Saturday night. "The partisan attacks and procedural obstruction he has faced are undeserved, but I respect his decision to withdraw and am grateful for his service."

Washington ran transit agencies in Denver and Los Angeles, but his only aviation-related experience is serving as CEO of the Denver airport for less than two years. He has strong ties to the administration, however — he led Biden's 2020 transition team for the Transportation Department, which includes the FAA.

Biden nominated Washington last July, but he didn't get a committee hearing for eight months. Republicans attacked his resume and seized on disclosures that his name appeared in search warrants related to a corruption investigation in Los Angeles. Washington said he did nothing wrong and had not been contacted by law enforcement.

The agency is being led by an acting administrator, Billy Nolen, a pilot who has held safety jobs at three airlines and the FAA. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, who led opposition to Washington, said Nolen could win bipartisan support.

In a statement Saturday night, Cruz said Washington's lack of necessary experience was obvious.

"Given the significant challenges facing the FAA, this wasn't the time for an administrator who needed on-the-job training," he said. "The Biden administration must now quickly name someone to head the FAA who has an extensive aviation background, can earn widespread bipartisan support in the Senate, and will keep the flying public safe." \_\_\_\_\_

Koenig reported from Dallas. Associated Press writer Mary Clare Jalonick in Washington contributed to this report.

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The agency is being led by an acting administrator, Billy Nolen, a pilot who has held safety jobs at three airlines and the FAA. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, who led opposition to Washington, said Nolen could win bipartisan support.

In a statement Saturday night, Cruz said Washington's lack of necessary experience was obvious.

"Given the significant challenges facing the FAA, this wasn't the time for an administrator who needed on-the-job training," he said. "The Biden administration must now quickly name someone to head the FAA who has an extensive aviation background, can earn widespread bipartisan support in the Senate, and will keep the flying public safe." \_\_\_\_\_

Koenig reported from Dallas. Associated Press writer Mary Clare Jalonick in Washington contributed to this report.

## 'There's nothing left': Deep South tornadoes kill 26

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS, MICHAEL GOLDBERG and ROGELIO SOLIS undefined

ROLLING FORK, Miss. (AP) — Rescuers raced Saturday to search for survivors and help hundreds of people left homeless after a powerful tornado cut a devastating path through Mississippi, killing at least 25 people, injuring dozens, and flattening entire blocks as it carved a path of destruction for more than an hour. One person was killed in Alabama.

The tornado devastated a swath of the Mississippi Delta town of Rolling Fork, reducing homes to piles of rubble, flipping cars on their sides and toppling the town's water tower. Residents hunkered down in bath tubs and hallways during Friday night's storm and later broke into a John Deere store that they converted into a triage center for the wounded.

"There's nothing left," said Wonder Bolden, holding her granddaughter, Journey, while standing outside the remnants of her mother's now-leveled mobile home in Rolling Fork. "There's just the breeze that's

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running, going through -- just nothing."

Based on early data, the tornado received a preliminary EF-4 rating, the National Weather Service office in Jackson said late Saturday in a tweet. An EF-4 tornado has top wind gusts between 166 mph and 200 mph (265 kph and 320 kph), according to the service. The Jackson office cautioned it was still gathering information on the tornado.

The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency announced late Saturday afternoon in a tweet that the death toll had risen to 25 and that dozens of people were injured. Four people previously reported missing had been found.

Other parts of the Deep South were digging out from damage caused by other suspected twisters. One man died in Morgan County, Alabama, the sheriff's department there said in a tweet.

Throughout Saturday, survivors walked around dazed and in shock as they broke through debris and fallen trees with chain saws, searching for survivors. Power lines were pinned under decades-old oaks, their roots torn from the ground.

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves issued a State of Emergency and vowed to help rebuild as he headed to view the damage in an area speckled with wide expanses of cotton, corn and soybean fields and catfish farming ponds. President Joe Biden also promised federal help, describing the damage as "heartbreaking."

The damage in Rolling Fork was so widespread that several storm chasers — who follow severe weather and often put up livestreams showing dramatic funnel clouds — pleaded for search and rescue help. Others abandoned the chase to drive injured people to the hospital.

It didn't help that the community hospital on the west side of town was damaged, forcing patients to be transferred. The tornado also mangled a cotton warehouse and ripped the steeple off a Baptist church.

Sheddrick Bell, his partner and two daughters crouched in a closet of their Rolling Fork home for 15 minutes as the tornado barreled through. Windows broke as his daughters cried and his partner prayed.

"I was just thinking, 'If I can still open my eyes and move around, I'm good,'" he said.

Rodney Porter, who lives about 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of Rolling Fork and belongs to a local fire department, said he didn't know how anyone survived as he delivered water and fuel to families there.

"It's like a bomb went off," he said, describing houses stacked on top of houses. Crews even cut gas lines to the town to keep residents and first responders safe.

The warning the National Weather Service issued as the storm hit didn't mince words: "To protect your life, TAKE COVER NOW!"

Preliminary information based on estimates from storm reports and radar data indicate that the tornado was on the ground for more than an hour and traversed at least 170 miles (274 kilometers), said Lance Perrilloux, a meteorologist with the weather service's Jackson, Mississippi, office.

"That's rare — very, very rare," he said, attributing the long path to widespread atmospheric instability. "All the ingredients were there."

Perrilloux said preliminary findings are that the tornado began its path of destruction just southwest of Rolling Fork before continuing northeast toward the rural communities of Midnight and Silver City, then moving toward Tchula, Black Hawk and Winona.

The supercell that produced the deadly twister also appeared to produce tornadoes that caused damage in northwest and north-central Alabama, said Brian Squitieri, a severe storms forecaster with the weather service's Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma.

In northern Alabama's Morgan County, a 67-year-old man who became trapped beneath a trailer that flipped over during severe overnight storms was rescued by first responders, but he died later at a hospital, AL.com reported.

Even as survey teams work to assess how many tornadoes struck and their severity, the Storm Prediction Center warned of the potential for hail, wind and possibly a few tornadoes Sunday in parts of Mississippi and Louisiana.

Cornel Knight waited at a relative's home in Rolling Fork for the tornado to strike with his wife and 3-year-old daughter. Despite the darkness, its path was visible.

"You could see the direction from every transformer that blew," he said. Just a cornfield away from



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where he was, the twister struck another relative's home, collapsing a wall and trapping several people. Royce Steed, the emergency manager in Humphreys County where Silver City is located, likened the damage to Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

"It is almost complete devastation," he said after crews finished searching buildings and switched to damage assessments. "This little old town, I don't know what the population is, it is more or less wiped off the map."

In the town, the roof had torn off Noel Crook's home.

"Yesterday was yesterday and that's gone – there's nothing I can do about it," Crook said. "Tomorrow is not here yet. You don't have any control over it, so here I am today."

The tornado looked so powerful on radar as it neared the town of Amory, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) southeast of Tupelo, that one Mississippi meteorologist paused to say a prayer after new radar information came in.

"Oh man," WTVA's Matt Laubhan said on the live broadcast. "Dear Jesus, please help them. Amen."

Now that town is boiling its water, and a curfew is in effect. Three shelters in the state are feeding the throngs of displaced people.

"It's a priceless feeling to see the gratitude on people's faces to know they're getting a hot meal," said William Trueblood, of the Salvation Army, as he headed to the area, picking up supplies along the way.

Despite the damage, there were signs of improvement. Power outages, which at one point were affecting more than 75,000 customers in Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama, had been cut by a third by midafternoon Saturday, according to poweroutage.us.

Meteorologists saw a big tornado risk coming for the general region as much as a week in advance, said Northern Illinois University meteorology professor Walker Ashley.

Tornado experts like Ashley have been warning about increased risk exposure in the region because of people building more.

"You mix a particularly socioeconomically vulnerable landscape with a fast-moving, long-track nocturnal tornado, and, disaster will happen," Ashley said in an email.

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Associated Press writer Emily Wagster Pettus in Rolling Fork, Mississippi; Michael Goldberg in Silver City, Mississippi; Jim Salter in O'Fallon, Missouri; Rick Callahan in Indianapolis; Heather Hollingsworth in Mission, Kansas; Lisa Baumann in Bellingham, Washington; Robert Jablon in Los Angeles; Seth Borenstein in Kensington, Maryland; and Jackie Quinn in Washington, D.C. contributed to this report.

## Trump, facing potential indictment, holds defiant Waco rally

By JILL COLVIN and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WACO, Texas (AP) — Facing a potential indictment, Donald Trump took a defiant stance at a rally Saturday in Waco, disparaging the prosecutors investigating him and predicting his vindication as he rallied supporters in a city made famous by deadly resistance against law enforcement.

With a hand over his heart, Trump stood at attention when his rally opened with a song called "Justice for All" performed by a choir of people imprisoned for their roles in the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Some footage from the insurrection was shown on big screens displayed at the rally site as the choir sang the national anthem and a recording played of Trump reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The extraordinary display opened Trump's first rally of his 2024 Republican presidential campaign. He then launched into a speech brimming with resentments and framed the probes, including a New York grand jury investigation, as political attacks on him and his followers.

"You will be vindicated and proud," Trump said "The thugs and criminals who are corrupting our justice system will be defeated, discredited and totally disgraced."

Trump's event at the airport grounds in Waco was part of a broader effort by the former president to use the potential indictment as a rallying cry for supporters to maintain his status as the GOP frontrunner in what is expected to be a crowded primary. It came one day after Trump raised the specter of violence

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should he become the first former president in U.S. history to face criminal charges.

Trump declared his innocence in the Manhattan investigation into a hush money payment made during the 2016 election to porn actor Stormy Daniels to keep her from going public about a sexual encounter she said she had with Trump years earlier. A grand jury hearing the case is expected to meet again on Monday.

Trump said the Manhattan district attorney was investigating him "for something that is not a crime, not a misdemeanor, not an affair."

Some of Trump's recent rhetoric, including at the rally, has echoed language he used before the Capitol insurrection by a mob of his supporters seeking to stop the transfer of power to Democrat Joe Biden, who won the presidential election.

Trump declared Saturday that his "enemies are desperate to stop us" and that "our opponents have done everything they can to crush our spirit and to break our will."

He added: "But they failed. They've only made us stronger. And 2024 is the final battle, it's going to be the big one. You put me back in the White House, their reign will be over and America will be a free nation once again."

Trump could be indicted soon by a Manhattan grand jury investigating a \$130,000 payment that Trump's longtime lawyer and fixer, Michael Cohen, made as Trump was in the throes of his 2016 presidential campaign.

Trump later reimbursed Cohen and his company logged the reimbursements as a legal expense. Cohen has already served time in prison after pleading guilty to campaign finance charges and lying to Congress, among other crimes.

Trump's eyebrow-raising choice of venue in Waco for his first rally came amid the 30th anniversary of a 51-day standoff and deadly siege between U.S. law enforcement and the Branch Davidians that resulted in the deaths of more than 80 members of the religious cult and four federal agents and has become a touchstone for far-right extremists and militia groups.

Trump's campaign insisted the location and timing of the event had nothing to do with the Waco siege or anniversary. A spokesperson said the site, 17 miles from the Branch Davidian compound, was chosen because it was conveniently situated near four of the state's biggest metropolitan areas — Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, Austin and San Antonio — and has the infrastructure to handle a sizable crowd.

Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said before Trump's arrival that he was the one who had suggested Waco as the venue. Any suggestion Trump had picked the city because of the anniversary was "fake news. I picked Waco!" he told the crowd.

Trump did not make any direct references in his speech to Waco's history, telling the crowd of thousands that he told Patrick he wanted to hold his rally in a place with overwhelming support, not "one of those 50-50 areas," and said he told Patrick, "Let's go right into the heart of it."

At several points, Trump criticized Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is expected to run for president and is seen as his strongest potential challenger for the GOP nomination. Trump called his onetime ally disloyal and said he was "dropping like a rock."

Audience members were holding red and white signs handed out by the campaign that said "Witch Hunt," "Trump 2024" and "I stand with Trump."

Hours before Trump arrived, hundreds of his supporters began streaming into the airport past vendors selling merchandise including Trump flags, bumper stickers and action figures.

Among them was Eugene Torres, 41, who said he was unfazed by the prospect that Trump could be indicted.

"It's just another political attack on him to keep him from running and winning this race again," said Torres, who is from the Texas coast city of Corpus Christi.

Alan Kregel, 56, traveled with his wife from Dallas to see Trump in person for the first time. While he voted for Trump in 2016 and 2020, he said he felt the former president's "methods and vocabulary" often detracted from his policies. But now, two years out of office, he said he is more supportive of Trump than he was before.

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"He's an innocent man, just persecuted," said Kregel, arguing an indictment would help Trump win in 2024. Trump has spent weeks now railing against the New York probe and in a post on his social media site on Friday warned of "potential death & destruction in such a false charge" if he's charged with a crime.

In a move that seemed designed to preempt a formal announcement, he claimed last Saturday that he would be arrested the following Tuesday. While that did not happen, Trump has used the days since to try to shape public perception — echoing a strategy he has used before, including during special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation.

Trump has also repeatedly invoked violence, urging his supporters to protest, and used increasingly racist and dehumanizing rhetoric as he has launched ever more personal attacks against Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg.

On Friday, a powdery substance was found with a threatening letter in a mailroom at Bragg's offices, authorities said. Officials later determined the substance wasn't dangerous.

Even before the threatening letter was sent to Bragg's office, Democrats warned that Trump's remarks had the potential to incite violence.

"The twice-impeached former president's rhetoric is reckless, reprehensible and irresponsible. It's dangerous, and if he keeps it up he's going to get someone killed," House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York said.

In addition to the Manhattan case, Trump is also facing an investigation in Georgia over his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election as well as federal investigations into his handling of classified documents and possible obstruction, as well as his efforts on Jan. 6.

Price reported from New York. Associated Press writers Paul Weber in Waco, Texas, Michael R. Sisak in New York and Sagar Meghani in Washington contributed to this report.

## Jonathan Majors arrested on assault charge in New York

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — The actor Jonathan Majors was arrested Saturday in New York on charges of strangulation, assault and harassment, authorities said.

New York City police said that Majors, star of the recently released "Creed III" and "Ant-Man and The Wasp: Quantumania," was involved in a domestic dispute with a 30-year-old woman. Police responded around 11 a.m. to a 911 call inside an apartment in the Manhattan neighborhood of Chelsea.

"The victim informed police she was assaulted," a spokesperson for the NYPD said in a statement. "Officers placed the 33-year-old male into custody without incident. The victim sustained minor injuries to her head and neck and was removed to an area hospital in stable condition."

He was no longer in police custody as of Saturday night, the NYPD spokesperson confirmed to The Associated Press.

A representative for Majors denied any wrongdoing by the actor.

"He has done nothing wrong," the representative said in an email to the AP on Saturday. "We look forward to clearing his name and clearing this up."

Majors is one of the fastest rising stars in Hollywood. After breaking through in 2019's "The Last Black Man in San Francisco," Majors has starred in "Da 5 Bloods," "The Harder They Fall" and last year's "Devotion." He also stars in the recent Sundance Film Festival entry "Magazine Dreams," which Searchlight Pictures is to release in December.

## UConn's Final Four streak ends with 73-61 loss to Ohio State

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

SEATTLE (AP) — UConn's record Final Four run is over, thanks to a monumental performance by Ohio State.

The Buckeyes ended UConn's unprecedented streak of reaching 14 consecutive Final Fours, beating the

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Huskies 73-61 on Saturday in the Sweet 16 of the women's NCAA Tournament.

"The problem with streaks is the longer they go, you're closer to it ending than you are to the beginning of it," UConn coach Geno Auriemma said. "It's just a matter of time. I mean, it's not if it's going to happen. It's just a matter of time when it's going to happen. And it was going to happen sooner rather than later."

Cotie McMahon scored 23 points for the Buckeyes, who snapped their three-decade Elite Eight drought. The Buckeyes hadn't made a regional final since 1993, when they eventually lost in the title game to Texas Tech.

"When I had the opportunity to come to Ohio State, this was certainly the goal and the vision to go farther than they have been going," said coach Kevin McGuff, who had never beaten UConn. "It's not easy to get here, obviously. But I'm really proud of our team and our program of how we've evolved to be able to get to this point.

"Like I said, I mean, I have so much respect for Geno and his staff and all that they have accomplished. So for us to be able to win this game in the Sweet 16 is obviously extremely significant. They're just hard to beat. They're so well-coached. So this is a great win for us."

The third-seeded Buckeyes (28-7) forced No. 2 seed UConn (31-6) into 25 turnovers, ending the Huskies' season before the national semifinals for the first time in 14 seasons. UConn hadn't been eliminated this early since 2006.

"It's an impossibility to do what we have done already," Auriemma said. "What's the next highest streak? ... And you take that in stride and you say, yeah, it was great while it lasted and it's a credit to all the players that we had and all the times that you have to perform really, really well at this level."

Ohio State will play Virginia Tech on Monday night in the Seattle 3 Region final with a trip to Dallas at stake. The Hokies beat Tennessee 73-64.

Ohio State, which had to rally from a double-digit deficit in the first round against James Madison, used full-court pressure to disrupt the Huskies' offense.

"Our press is what we rely on, and sticking together and talking through it," said Ohio State's Jacy Sheldon, who had 17 points and went 10-for-10 from the foul line. "We knew UConn was going to be ready for us, so we knew we were going to have to stay consistent throughout the game."

This has been the most trying year of Auriemma's Hall of Fame career. UConn was beset by injuries and illnesses to both players and coaches, including a torn ACL that sidelined star Paige Bueckers all season. It got so bad the Huskies had to postpone a game when they didn't have enough scholarship players. They also saw their unbelievable run of 30 years without consecutive losses come to an end.

"We picked the worst day to actually be doing the things that we've been struggling with all year long," Auriemma said in a sideline interview during the game.

Lou Lopez Senechal scored 25 points for the Huskies, Azzi Fudd had 14, and Ohio State transfer Dorka Juhasz finished with 13 points and 10 rebounds.

The Huskies led 17-9 before Ohio State started scoring and turning UConn over with its full-court press. The Buckeyes scored the next 17 points, forcing 11 turnovers during that stretch, which spanned the first and second quarters. UConn had eight turnovers to start the second quarter, leaving Auriemma exasperated on the sideline.

McMahon was converting those turnovers into points for the Buckeyes as the freshman finished the half with 18 points — equaling the number of turnovers the Huskies had in the opening 20 minutes. Ohio State led 36-26 at the break.

This was only the sixth time UConn had trailed by double digits at the half in an NCAA Tournament game, according to ESPN. The Huskies lost all of those.

UConn did a better job of taking care of the ball in the second half and cut the deficit to 44-39 on Senechal's layup with 3:53 left in the third quarter. Ohio State responded and still led by 10 after three quarters.

The Buckeyes didn't let the Huskies make any sort of run in the fourth quarter. UConn got within nine with 4:30 left, but McMahon had a three-point play to restore the double-digit lead. The Huskies never threatened after that.



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Now the Huskies will start their offseason sooner than anytime in the past 17 years.

## TIP-INS

This was the first win for Ohio State over UConn in seven tries. The teams' last meeting was in the 2019-20 regular season. ... UConn was a paltry 7-for-15 from the foul line while Ohio State went 22-for-30. ... UConn's season high for turnovers was 27 against Princeton.

## THE HOUSE THAT SUE BUILT

The Seattle Regionals are being played in Climate Pledge Arena — home of the Seattle Storm. UConn and Storm great Sue Bird was in the stands, sitting a few rows behind the scorers' table. She received a loud ovation from the crowd when she was shown midway through the first quarter on the videoboard.

## FAMILIAR FOE

Juhasz graduated from Ohio State two years ago and flourished there, earning all-Big Ten honors twice. She came to UConn last year looking for a new challenge and wanting to play for a team that could compete for national championships. She'll leave without one.

There is a mutual respect between Juhasz and the Buckeyes' coaching staff.

AP March Madness coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/march-madness> and <https://apnews.com/hub/ap-top-25-womens-college-basketball-poll> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## After tornado, harrowing tales of survival in Mississippi

By MICHAEL GOLDBERG and CLAIRE RUSH Associated Press

SILVER CITY, Miss. (AP) — Nothing remained of William Barnes' home in the tiny western Mississippi town of Silver City after a killer tornado tore it off its foundations. He stood in disbelief Saturday as he surveyed the lot where he'd lived for 20 years, twisted debris of cinder blocks and mangled wood siding scattered across where his home once stood.

"We lost everything but got out alive," he said, holding his young granddaughter in his arms.

Stories were similar throughout the town of just over 200 people, about 60 miles (97 kilometers) northwest of the state capital of Jackson. Devastating accounts of utter destruction, incredible survival and tragic deaths followed Friday's twister that killed at least 25 in Mississippi and one in Alabama as it surged nearly 170 miles (274 kilometers) across the Deep South.

Residents sat in folding chairs outside the mud-splattered ruins of beloved family homes as people came by in all-terrain vehicles and golf carts packed with bottles of water to distribute. A line of cars was parked on the road from first responders and family who had driven in to help with clean up and rescue efforts.

Remnants of the storm and reminders of its ferocity were everywhere.

A child's Shrek doll lay face down in the dirt next to a pile of broken plywood and branches, feet from a busted-up refrigerator with its back torn clean off. Limbs from several fallen trees blocked a school bus. Outside the wall of what used to be a house, a bike lay upside down in another pile of debris.

Lakeisha Clincy, Yaclyn James and Shaquetin Burnett had just returned to their Silver City home from an evening out in the nearby town of Belzoni when the tornado struck. They parked in their driveway and opened the car doors, but it was too late.

"I saw houses flying everywhere," Burnett said. "The house on the corner was spinning."

They closed the car doors and waited.

"It only lasted about three minutes, but it was the longest three minutes I've ever had," Clincy said. "This I will never forget."

They exited the car to find their house destroyed. Officials later transported them by bus to a hotel, where they fell asleep sometime after 4 a.m. They didn't know where they would sleep Saturday night.

Christin George said her parents and grandmother narrowly escaped when the tornado blew out the windows and ripped off part of the roof of their home.

She said her parents huddled behind a door that hadn't been hung yet and threw a blanket over her grandmother to shield themselves from the glass that "shot down the hallway and peppered everybody."

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"Everything else around them is just gone," she said, at times clutching her hand to her chest. "They were lucky. That's all there is to it."

Christine Chinn, who's lived in Silver City her whole life, sought refuge with her husband and son in the hallway, covering themselves with a blanket as they desperately sought to protect themselves. After the storm, the roof was gone on the home where she's lived for 17 years and cars were upended in her yard.

"It just got calm and all of sudden everything just — like a big old train or something coming through," she said, adding that much of her belongings weren't salvageable.

She said she was very scared and had never experienced anything like it.

That same fear gripped residents of Rolling Fork, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) away, as the twister flattened the town of just under 2,000 people.

Derrick Brady Jr., 9, said he tried to cover his 7-year-old sister Kylie Carter with his body as the tornado moved over their home. He had to dive in the bathtub as his mom pushed herself up against the bathroom door, trying to keep it closed. He described the sensation of feeling both pushed and pulled by the twister's force.

"I was scared, but I was brave that time," he said. "We had to say our own prayers in our heads."

Wanda Barfield, grandmother of Derrick and Kylie, said she was running around the devastated town Friday night and Saturday trying to account for loved ones. After the storm hit, she kept calling family members' cell phones, but no one answered. She found her sister-in-law dead amid the wreckage, she said.

She said her family is doing the best they can to survive.

"Our life is more important than anything else. You can get a job, money, car, clothes, shoes — you can get all that," she said. "For me, and for my house, we're going to serve the Lord."

James Hancock was helping with search and rescue efforts in Rolling Fork late Friday as the storm tore through town.

He was part of a crew who forced open a store that community members started using to care for injured people. It took two hours for ambulances to maneuver through debris-filled streets to get to the store to start tending to them, he said. As he moved from the ruins of one home to the next, he said he could hear people crying out in the dark.

"You could just hear people needing help, and it was just devastating," he said.

Rush contributed from Portland, Oregon. Associated Press reporters Emily Wagster Pettus and Leah Willingham contributed from Rolling Fork, Mississippi and Charleston, West Virginia.

Michael Goldberg and Claire Rush are corps members for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

## Voting rights effort targets those held in jails across US

By GARY FIELDS and MICHAEL TARM Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The voting precinct could have been any one of hundreds throughout Chicago, except that these voters in the first round of the mayoral election were all wearing the same beige smocks. And the security at this polling place wasn't intended to keep disrupters and campaigners out, but the voters in.

When first-time voter Tykarri Skillon finished studying the list of nine candidates, looking for those who shared his priorities on jobs and affordable housing, he marked his ballot and then was escorted with other voters back to their cells in the Cook County Jail.

The 25-year-old, awaiting trial on a weapons charge, is part of a group not always mentioned in discussions about voting disenfranchisement. People serving sentences for felony convictions lose their right to vote. Detainees awaiting trial or serving misdemeanor sentences do retain that right, but face barriers to exercising it in many parts of the United States.

The Cook County Jail, with more than 5,500 inmates and detainees, is one of the largest such facilities

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in the nation. It is one of several lockups where voting rights advocates have worked with local election and jail officials to offer voting for those held there. The list includes jails in Denver; Harris County, Texas; Los Angeles County; and the District of Columbia.

Expanding jailhouse voting is one of the latest steps to combine voting rights with criminal justice changes. "It feels good to have a voice," Skillon said after casting his ballot during early voting, before the race went to an April 4 runoff. "We're going home someday, so we should have a voice in our community."

Candidates he chose from included the current mayor, Democrat Lori Lightfoot. Among the issues that damaged her politically was rising crime. She eventually came in third in the election, bumping her from an April 4 runoff between the two top vote-getters, also Democrats.

The most recent survey from the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics, released last December, showed that 451,400 of the 636,300 people held in jails across the country had not been convicted and thus should retain their right to vote.

Voting rights for pretrial detainees and inmates serving sentences for misdemeanors were upheld in a U.S. Supreme Court decision from 1974, in a case from New York, O'Brien v. Skinner.

Despite that ruling, voting rights advocates say a "de facto disenfranchisement" exists because of mistakes over eligibility and the difficulties that detainees and prisoners face in registering or voting.

In a 2020 report, the Prison Policy Initiative focused on three main reasons: registration is difficult due to issues such as mail-in ballot deadlines and voter ID laws; detention does not meet the criteria for absentee voting in some jurisdictions; and the churn of the jail populations.

At least one state, Tennessee, had a bill introduced this year to address one of the barriers. Being in jail as a pretrial detainee is not one of the reasons considered valid for granting a mail ballot request, said Democratic state Sen. Jeff Yabro, the bill's sponsor. Yabro, who recently announced he was running for mayor of Nashville, wants that changed.

"Being a full citizen should be the default," he said. "Everybody ought to have the expectation of fully participating in a democracy."

In Harris County, Texas, which includes Houston, about 75% of the nearly 10,000 people held in jail are pretrial. The sheriff's department established a polling place there in 2019, working with the county elections office, and has allowed voting during the past two election cycles. Before that, detainees voted only by mail.

The move started in 2017 with the Houston Justice Coalition and an initiative known as Project Orange that has helped register thousands of detainees and taught them how to navigate the mail ballot process, Nadia Hakim, a spokeswoman for the Harris County Elections Administration, said in an email.

"Previously if detainees wanted to vote, they had to do the legwork," she said. "They had to know their registration status and make the request for the mail ballot application."

In-person voting has multiple advantages. The mail ballot application deadline is April 25 for this year's May 6 election. Someone booked after the deadline would not be able to request a mail ballot, Hakim said. With the in-jail polling place, all detainees can vote, as well as members of the staff and public because machines are available in secure and public spaces. In last November's election, 528 people checked in to vote there, including detainees, employees and members of the public, she said.

In California, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Capt. Roel Garcia said staff members let pretrial detainees know they can register and vote and hold voter registration drives. Garcia, who oversees the inmate reception center, said the department works with groups such as the League of Women Voters to get information to the detainees about candidates and issues on the ballot.

The department and the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk have teamed up on a pilot program since 2020 that allows voting in two jails. There are plans to expand it to all eight county jails in 2024.

Registrar Dean Logan said as many as 11,700 people could be eligible at a given time when the voting goes countywide. He said it could serve as a model for other counties.

"I think the in-person vote centers is something where people are watching to see how that's going to work and whether or not they have the infrastructure, the equipment and the capacity to offer that,"

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Logan said.

Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart said in an interview that giving detainees a sense of empowerment and finding ways to get them to rethink their place in the world and to inspire them to change are constant challenges. He said engaging them as elections approach presents an opportunity to accomplish that.

"If you are trying to get inside someone's head ... what better way to do that than to say we want you to be a real decision-maker?" he said. "I'm not saying it is magic fairy dust. ... But all (these) things start moving the dial."

A 2019 state law required that jails take steps to enable voting by detainees who have not been convicted. Smaller jails aren't required to have polling stations but must arrange for absentee ballots.

Dart said the jail helps organize classes overseen by university staff and other organizations to instruct inmates and detainees, before they vote, on everything from the electoral process to the rationale behind judicial elections. Detainees also are able to tune into televised debates between candidates.

"Their election IQ is off the charts," Dart said. "Participation level, turnout — is higher than it is outside."

The sheriff's office said about 1,500 inmates and detainees — or roughly 27% of the jail's population — voted during the first round of the Chicago mayoral election.

The Chicago Board of Elections brought in several voting booths this year along with a large ballot-collection machine and put them in a section of the jail called "the chapel," which is normally used for religious services and small concerts.

With just a few guards looking on, half a dozen board of elections staff managed the jail polling stations, first helping with registration.

Among the voters was 20-year-old Tony Simmons, who marked his ballot while a dozen others sat in an adjoining room, waiting their turn. For safety reasons, just four were brought into the polling station at a time.

Simmons, who is awaiting trial on burglary, robbery and other charges in Cook County, said he had seen campaign ads on jail televisions featuring tough-on-crime messages. It didn't bother him, he said, adding that crimes rates should come down.

Asked what kinds of candidates he voted for, he answered: "Ones who were more lenient" on issues surrounding the law and crime.

First-time voter Skillon, the one awaiting trial on a weapons charge, said he believed what many jaded voters outside the walls don't.

"Your vote matters," he said. "One vote can most definitely make a difference."

\_\_\_ Fields reported from Washington.

Associated Press coverage of democracy receives support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Mourners gather for American killed by cartel on Mexico trip

By JAMES POLLARD Associated Press/Report for America

LAKE CITY, S.C. (AP) — Photos of a peewee football player flashed across a slideshow. The image of a smiling young man adorned memorial T-shirts. But the body of the American gunned down three weeks ago by the Gulf cartel in Mexico was kept shielded from funeral-goers.

Over 100 people gathered Saturday to remember Shaeed Woodard at the first funeral service for the two people killed in the attack in the border town of Matamoros. The sendoff came at the end of a month that should have featured birthday celebrations for the man slain just days before he turned 34 during a tightknit group's road trip to help Woodard's cousin get cosmetic surgery.

Instead, friends and family shuffled across the maroon carpeting of Good News Deliverance Temple on an overcast afternoon in Lake City, South Carolina. The 6,000-person town was thrust into the international spotlight in early March when Woodard and three friends with ties to the area were attacked over 1,400 miles away.



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On March 2, just a few miles across the border, a vehicle crashed into the group's van as they made their way to a medical appointment for Latavia McGee. Several men with tactical vests and assault rifles surrounded them and shots rang out.

Woodard and Zindell Brown died; McGee and Eric Williams survived.

The cartel's Scorpions faction apologized in a letter obtained by The Associated Press through a Tamilipas state law enforcement official.

At the funeral, spiritual leaders rejected vengeful thinking.

"We are asking you to give us a clean heart. Because no cartel, no demon, no evil spirit, no hellmaker, no one... We won't seek retribution," Minister Dearest Price said. "But, Lord, we ask you to deliver us from evil."

There, Nisheeka Simmons read a letter poem for her cousin whose "untimely departure" brought everyone together "in solidarity." She recalled his sweet nature, strength of mind, and the safety others felt around him.

A handout featured another poem suggesting Woodard "wanted to celebrate this birthday far different from before" with music, laughter and jokes "out on the open road."

"If any of you knew the outcome, you would have cautioned me to stay," the poem continued. "But those plans were of my Master and could not be delayed."

The day contained mixed emotions.

Pastor Hugh Samuels shared words of consolation for the family shocked by the sudden loss of Woodard and heartened by the return of his cousin, McGee, who survived the brutal kidnappings. A reading from the Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes reminded attendees that there is "a time to weep and a time to laugh" and "a time to mourn and a time to dance."

Hands clapped and voices rang out during powerful medleys of songs.

Samuels thanked God for bringing people together in Woodard's death, which he said should remind people of the future's uncertainty.

"Brother Shaeed and three others went to Mexico. But the Son of Man called Brother Shaeed down," Samuels said. "We are not promised to walk out of this place today. You don't know when God is going to call your name."

State Cemetery marked the final resting place for Woodard, whose body had been handed over to U.S. authorities on March 9 after crossing the international bridge to Brownsville, Texas.

Since then, the Woodards have received an outpouring of support, said Colin Ram, an attorney for the family. Local officials' sympathy cards were read at the funeral. A nearby activist network promised to raise money. Ram pledged to guide them through the injustice's fallout.

"Make no mistake, what happened in Mexico was an act of terrorism that affected the lives of four Americans, of four South Carolinians," Ram told The Associated Press.

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James Pollard is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

## Challenger wins close race to lead United Auto Workers union

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — A challenger defeated the president of the United Auto Workers in a close election and vowed Saturday to take a more confrontational stance in negotiating with the big automakers.

A court-appointed monitor declared challenger Shawn Fain the winner over incumbent Ray Curry. Fain's slate of candidates won control of the big union, as workers rejected most incumbents in the wake of a bribery and embezzlement scandal

It was the 372,000-member union's first direct election of its 14-member International Executive Board, which came in the wake of the wide-ranging scandal that landed two former presidents in prison.

The vote count had been going on since March 1, and the outcome was uncertain going into Saturday

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because of challenges against several hundred ballots.

Curry had filed a protest alleging election irregularities and campaign-financing violations. But he conceded Saturday and said Fain would be sworn in on Sunday.

Fain said members clearly wanted the union to become more aggressive in dealing with the auto makers. "Today we put the companies on notice the fighting UAW is back," Fain said in a video.

Fain vowed to end two-tiered contracts that provide lower pay and fewer benefits for some workers. He said the UAW will fight against factory closures that result in lost union jobs.

"We've seen plant after plant close without any serious fight from our union," he said. "We've lost 40% of our active membership over the past 20 years. That ends here."

Fain also promised to clean up the union.

Fain, 54, now an administrator with the international union in Detroit, had 69,459 votes, or 50.2%, while Curry had 68,976 votes, or 49.8%, according to an unofficial tally as the counting neared completion.

Earlier, Curry had asked court-appointed monitor Neil Barofsky to hold another runoff election because of the alleged irregularities, but Barofsky denied the request.

Fain's UAW Members United slate now holds seven of 14 seats on the board, with one independent member siding with his slate. The Curry Solidarity Team slate has six board members. Four of five top officers are from Fain's slate, including the secretary-treasurer and two of three vice presidents.

The new leadership will have to move quickly to gear up for what are expected to be contentious contract talks coming up this summer with Detroit's three automakers, Ford, General Motors and Stellantis.

Many in the industry expect strikes against the companies by the union.

Fain will have little time to prepare for the union's bargaining convention, which is scheduled to start Monday in Detroit. Delegates to the convention decide what the union will want in upcoming contract talks.

In the past, contracts with the Detroit Three set the standard for manufacturing wages nationwide. Fain's statement said he wants to return to the union setting the wage and benefit standard for other sectors of the economy.

Fain and his slate will have to deal with member demands to restore concessions made when the automakers were headed into financial trouble starting in 2007. Many want cost-of-living pay raises, general raises, defined-benefit pensions for all workers, and eliminating tiers of workers so they all get the same pay and benefits.

Automakers prefer annual profit-sharing checks instead of raises so they pay workers when times are good and can cut expenses during economic downturns.

In a February draft of a transition plan, Fain wrote about a big shakeup coming in his first 30 days in office. Jobs will change, and new things will be expected of workers, some of whom will leave, it said.

"Everything we do, at every stage, must be reinforcing the message: there is a new sheriff in town," Fain's memo said.

The memo talks about a campaign to prepare workers for strikes.

Mike Booth, one of the new vice presidents, said the automakers are starting to argue that they are financially strapped because they have to fund the development of new electric vehicles. "You can't develop an electric vehicle product on the backs of UAW members," he said.

Strikes are possible as the union pushes to organize joint-venture battery plants being built by the companies, and to reverse a Stellantis decision to begin closing a plant in Belvidere, Illinois. Under Curry's leadership for nearly the past two years, the UAW has taken a more aggressive stance in labor talks, having gone on strike against Volvo Trucks, John Deere, the University of California and CNHI, a maker of agricultural and construction equipment.

When asked about new UAW leadership on Friday, Ford CEO Jim Farley said his company gets along with the union. "Whomever is leading the UAW, we'll have a great relationship with, and we'll work hard to improve our industry ... We'll welcome whoever leads UAW," he said.

Curry, who was not part of the scandal, was elected to the UAW's top post by the executive board in June 2021.

The leadership change came after union members decided to directly vote on leaders for the first time

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in the union's 87-year history. Under the old system, leaders were picked by delegates to a convention who were selected by local union offices. The new slate of officers was picked by the current leadership, and rarely was there serious opposition.

The direct voting came after 11 union officials and a late official's spouse pleaded guilty in the corruption probe, including the two former presidents who were sentenced to prison. The first criminal charges in the probe were filed in 2017.

To avoid a federal takeover, the union agreed to reforms and Barofsky's appointment to oversee the UAW and elections of the executive board.

This story has been corrected to say that it was Shawn Fain, not Ray Curry, who said he wants to return to the United Auto Workers setting the wage and benefit standard for other sectors of the economy.

Associated Press writers Adrian Sainz in Memphis, Tennessee, and David Koenig in Dallas contributed to this report.

## **Boston, South Carolina women overpower UCLA in March Madness**

By AARON BEARD AP Basketball Writer

GREENVILLE, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina's defenders chased ballhandlers and used their length to disrupt any flow. Its bigs continued to snag just about every miss coming off the rim.

It's an unwavering combination, one that at times has the Gamecocks' push for a second straight national championship flirting with a vibe of inevitability.

Three-time All-American Aliyah Boston had 14 boards and two blocks while reigning national champion South Carolina turned in its latest overwhelming defense-and-rebounding-first performance to beat UCLA 59-43 on Saturday in the Sweet 16 of the women's NCAA Tournament.

Kamilla Cardoso added 10 points and Boston had eight for the Gamecocks (35-0), the top overall tournament seed and the headliner in the Greenville 1 Region. It marked South Carolina's 41st consecutive victory, securing the program's sixth trip to the Elite Eight under coach Dawn Staley.

"We definitely do a lot of (defensive) work in practice, whether it's ball-screen, whatever the case may be," said Brea Beal, who had 10 points for South Carolina. "I think for games like this when offensive scoring is very low, we definitely rely on our defense to keep their scoring lower than ours."

Three games into the NCAAs, the Gamecocks have yet to surrender more than 45 points or let an opponent hit even 30% of its shots. They next face 2-seed Maryland in Monday's regional final in a rematch of the Gamecocks' 81-56 win from the season's opening week.

It wasn't an easy offensive operation for South Carolina, with UCLA sagging defensively to pack the paint in hopes of negating the Gamecocks' size advantage behind Boston. But South Carolina turned nearly every look into a difficult one for the fourth-seeded Bruins (27-10).

"It was the lowest point total that anyone had held them to in a half in the first half," UCLA coach Cori Close said, "and we couldn't even take advantage of that because we were struggling so much offensively."

The Gamecocks won the first meeting with UCLA 73-64 in November, with the Bruins shooting 32% in that game. Things got worse this time, with UCLA going shooting 29% — including 3 for 18 from 3-point range.

"I feel like everything was rough," UCLA guard Camryn Brown said, adding: "We were a little frantic out there."

By the final horn, UCLA had committed 15 turnovers on 63 possession, a nearly 25% rate.

Charisma Osborne scored 14 points to lead UCLA, which was in the Sweet 16 for the eighth time. The Bruins were trying to reach the regional finals for the first time since 2018 and only the third time in program history while pursuing their first Final Four appearance.

But in a sign of what was to come, the Bruins kept missing shots that they needed for any chance at a stunning upset. Worse, they failed to grab even a few of those misses to keep possessions alive early, with the Gamecocks taking a 9-0 edge in offensive rebounds in the first half.

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Meanwhile, the Gamecocks led 25-15 at halftime before matching their game-long point total in the third quarter.

That included a couple of way-too-familiar sequences for Close. Twice the Gamecocks managed to lob a pass inside to the 6-foot-7 Cardoso, who used her long arms to reach over 6-2 fronting defender Christeen Iwuala and snag the ball for easy under-the-rim finishes in traffic.

Or there was Beal using her right hand to tap out a loose rebound over Gabriela Jaquez before securing it, then dumping it immediately inside to Victaria Saxton inside for a soft hook.

It was all the same often-demoralizing sequences that has overwhelmed teams all season, this time coming with the home-state Gamecocks as the main draw here in the new double-regional format.

They drew loud cheers from the crowd just for making their way into the locker-room tunnel during the Notre Dame-Maryland game with their game to follow. The roars returned as each player who lingered to wrap up pregame shootaround came off the court — several waving two arms high in acknowledgement — in a mostly full arena.

The cheers were louder, of course, as the Gamecocks spent the final minutes closing out a win to advance again.

## WORD OF THE DAY

The key for South Carolina's offense was patience, and making sure to keep working the ball to find seams inside.

"That's something Coach emphasized at halftime," Boston said. "She was like ... 'Just take our time, we're taking great shots but taking a split-second longer could help us out.'"

## CLASSY GESTURE

Staley showed a noteworthy bit of sportsmanship in the third quarter.

UCLA's Emily Bessoir fell awkwardly after trying to beat Boston to a rebound, and the Bruins forward was down on the baseline as the Gamecocks took possession across half-court. But instead of continuing to run the play 5-on-4, Staley burned a timeout and pointed for officials to tend to Bessoir at the far end.

"I think these kind of moments in games, they reveal people's character," Close said, "and I think it just revealed a layer of her character, of what she deems most important. And that's always the kids."

Staley said: "It was the right thing to do to make sure the young lady was OK."

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Follow Aaron Beard on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/aaronbeardap>

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AP March Madness coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/march-madness> and <https://apnews.com/hub/ap-top-25-womens-college-basketball-poll> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## Putin says Russia will station tactical nukes in Belarus

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin announced plans on Saturday to station tactical nuclear weapons in neighboring Belarus, a warning to the West as it steps up military support for Ukraine.

Putin said the move was triggered by Britain's decision this past week to provide Ukraine with armor-piercing rounds containing depleted uranium.

Tactical nuclear weapons are intended for use on the battlefield and have a short range and a low yield compared with much more powerful nuclear warheads fitted to long-range missiles. Russia plans to maintain control over those it sends to Belarus, and construction of storage facilities for them will be completed by July 1, Putin said.

He didn't say how many nuclear weapons Russia would keep in Belarus. The U.S. government believes Russia has about 2,000 tactical nuclear weapons, which include bombs that can be carried by tactical aircraft, warheads for short-range missiles and artillery rounds.

Putin argued that by deploying its tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, Russia was following the lead of the United States, noting that the U.S. has nuclear weapons based in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey.



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"We are doing what they have been doing for decades, stationing them in certain allied countries, preparing the launch platforms and training their crews," Putin said, speaking in an interview on state television that aired Saturday night. "We are going to do the same thing."

Russia has stored its tactical nuclear weapons at dedicated depots on its territory, and moving part of the arsenal to a storage facility in Belarus would up the ante in the Ukrainian conflict by placing them closer to the Russian aircraft and missiles already stationed there.

Some hawkish commentators in Russia long have urged the Kremlin to put the tactical nuclear weapons close to the weapons to send a signal to the West about the readiness to use them.

The U.S. said it would "monitor the implications" of Putin's announcement.

"We have not seen any reason to adjust our own strategic nuclear posture nor any indications Russia is preparing to use a nuclear weapon," National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said. "We remain committed to the collective defense of the NATO alliance."

Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine had Soviet nuclear weapons stationed on their territory but handed them over to Russia after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

Putin said Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko has long asked to have nuclear weapons in his country again as a counter to NATO. Belarus shares borders with three NATO members — Latvia, Lithuania and Poland — and Russia used its territory as a staging ground to send troops into neighboring Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.

Putin noted that Russia helped modernize Belarusian military aircraft last year to make them capable of carrying nuclear warheads. He said 10 such planes were ready to go. He said nuclear weapons also could be launched by the Iskander short-range missiles that Russia provided to Belarus last year.

Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who is living in exile, said the agreement to transfer the tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus "underlines the threat to regional security" from Lukashenko's regime.

"Europe won't be safe until Belarus dictator is removed & brought before tribunal to face justice for crimes against our country & Ukraine," Tsikhanouskaya wrote in English on Twitter.

Lukashenko's support of the war has drawn international criticism and sanctions. But he has publicly stood by Russia, which has pumped billions of dollars into shoring up his Soviet-style, state-controlled economy with cheap energy and loans.

Putin had initially objected to the depleted uranium rounds that Britain promised to ship to Ukraine by making the false claim that they have nuclear components.

He subsequently toned down his language, but insisted Saturday that the ammunition posed an additional danger to both troops and civilians in Ukraine by leaving a radioactive trace and contaminating agricultural land.

"Those weapons are harmful not just for combatants, but also for the people living in those territories and for the environment," he said.

Putin added that Russia has vast stockpiles of similar ammunition but so far has refrained from using it.

Depleted uranium is a byproduct of the uranium enrichment process needed to create nuclear weapons. The rounds can't generate a nuclear reaction but they do emit low levels of radiation. The U.N. nuclear watchdog has warned of the possible dangers of exposure.

Such rounds were developed by the U.S. during the Cold War to destroy Soviet tanks, including the same T-72 tanks that Ukraine now faces in its push to break through a stalemate in the east.

## Protests erupt in NYC — not for Trump but for 'The Joker'

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Throngs of protesters gathered at the courthouse steps, chanting for freedom for their embattled hero. Police kept watch as passions flared and voices roared. Squad cars and television trucks encircled the commotion.

It's a scene New York City authorities have been bracing for as prosecutors consider an indictment against

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former President Donald Trump, who has invited followers to rally on his behalf. But on Saturday, it was just a movie shoot — for the “Joker” sequel to be precise.

The roars faded and the crowds dispersed — on command — when the director yelled, “Cut!”

The New York City shoot for the upcoming “Joker” sequel had been planned for months; but in recent days, production crews wrestled with the possibility that filming could be disrupted by real-life protests over the Trump case — none of which have so far materialized.

In the end, film workers forged ahead, said Leo Maniscalchi, a production assistant, who was taking a break at a nearby coffee house.

“They needed to do what they needed to get this done,” he said.

In the film, the Joker, played by Joaquin Phoenix, inspires protests against Gotham’s elites.

In real life, Trump has inspired protests, too. In recent weeks, the former president has called on his supporters to protest what he said was an impending indictment accusing him of paying \$130,000 to buy the silence of porn actor Stormy Daniels.

“They can’t stop production for anything, really,” Maniscalchi said. “The scene didn’t call for rain, but we’re still out here.”

For the past week, crowds — mostly news media — have been staking out another courthouse up the street from filming. Earlier in the week, a band of young Republicans staged a protest but its numbers were dwarfed by a crush of journalists. A rumored caravan of Trump adherents also did not take place, neither did a march dozens of blocks from the Trump Tower on Fifth Avenue to the Manhattan courthouse in the lower city.

When we last saw the Joker, he was running down the halls of a mental asylum with Frank Sinatra singing “That’s Life.”

In the sequel, called “Joker: Folie à Deux,” Lady Gaga joins the cast as Harley Quinn, his love interest. Fittingly, the new movie, expected to be released late next year, is being billed as a musical.

Siris Pagan, 30, arrived in lower Manhattan with his friend, Marissa Perez, to watch the filming.

“When some of the shots were being filmed, we started hearing loud chanting in the background and everybody was just turning around,” Pagan said.

Just a block away, both sides of the abortion issue were competing for attention.

He thought it might have been part of the movie, but soon realized: “Oh, no, it’s a whole different thing going on.”

Reality and make-believe were suddenly colliding, he said.

Jaymie Robinson, a 24-year-old extra from Newark, New Jersey, recounted how she heard one bystander who seemed confused about whether she was part of a real protest. The cameras and phony police cars — and signs saying “Free Joker” — should have been a dead giveaway, she said.

Laurie Allard, who was visiting from Montreal, Canada, came upon the outdoor movie set while touring downtown Manhattan and initially didn’t know it was related to filming.

She was vaguely familiar with the Trump case — and knew it was happening nearby. So when she saw the throngs, she was a bit startled.

“I didn’t want to be trapped in a protest or something ... if there’s one happening,” Allard said.

Filming continues Sunday.

## McConnell leaves rehab facility after therapy for concussion

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said Saturday he has been released from the rehabilitation facility where he had physical therapy for a concussion caused by a fall earlier this month.

The 81-year-old Kentucky Republican said in a statement released by his office that he will work from home for the next few days. The Senate is scheduled to be on break for the weeks of April 3 and April 10.

McConnell was at dinner on March 8 after a hotel reception for a campaign committee aligned with him when he tripped and fell. In addition to the concussion, he also had a rib fracture.

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He was released from the hospital on March 13 and, upon the advice of his doctor, moved to an inpatient rehabilitation facility for physical therapy and to continue his recovery.

Concussions can be serious injuries and take time for recovery. Even a single incident of concussion can limit a person's abilities during that period.

"I'm going to follow the advice of my physical therapists and spend the next few days working for Kentuckians and the Republican Conference from home," McConnell said in the statement. "I'm in frequent touch with my Senate colleagues and my staff. I look forward to returning in person to the Senate soon."

Almost four years ago he tripped and fell at his home in Kentucky, causing a shoulder fracture that required surgery. The Senate had just started a summer recess, and he worked from home for some weeks as he recovered.

In his early childhood, he had polio and he has acknowledged some difficulty as an adult in climbing stairs.

McConnell was first elected in 1984. In January, he became the longest-serving Senate leader when the new Congress convened, breaking the previous record of 16 years.

## Israeli defense minister calls for halt to judicial overhaul

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's defense minister became the first ally in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition to break ranks on Saturday as he called for an immediate halt to the far-right government's contentious plan to overhaul the country's judiciary.

In a televised address, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant expressed concern over the turmoil within Israel's military that he said posed a threat to the country's security. Citing the need for dialogue with the opposition, Gallant asked that Netanyahu's coalition wait until after Parliament reconvenes from its holiday break next month before pushing ahead with its divisive plan to weaken the Supreme Court.

"For the sake of Israel's security, for the sake of our sons and daughters, the legislative process must be stopped at this time," Gallant, a top official in Netanyahu's Likud party, said.

The government's plan to increase its control over the judiciary has sparked the largest protest movement in Israeli history and triggered a grave national crisis, including even warnings from the president of civil war.

On Saturday, tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets as they have every week since the start of the year — in many cases bringing parts of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv to a standstill. It has also raised the hackles of Israel's closest allies, testing its ties with the United States.

Police unleashed water cannons on masses of protesters who whistled and waved Israeli flags as they marched down Ayalon highway in Tel Aviv on Saturday night. "Shame! Shame!" they chanted in Hebrew. As the protesters advanced, officers on horseback violently rammed into the crowds. "Haven't the Jewish people suffered enough?" read one protester's sign.

The judicial proposal has drawn intensifying criticism from across Israeli society — including from former prime ministers and defense officials, high-tech business leaders, Israel's attorney general and American Jews.

In recent weeks, discontent over the overhaul has even surged from within Israel's army — the country's most popular and respected institution, which has historically been an apolitical unifier. A growing number of Israeli reservists have threatened to withdraw from voluntary duty in the past weeks, posing a broad challenge to Netanyahu as he defiantly plows ahead with the judicial changes while on trial for corruption.

"The events taking place in Israeli society do not spare the Israel Defense Forces — from all sides, feelings of anger, pain and disappointment arise, with an intensity I have never encountered before," Gallant said. "I see how the source of our strength is being eroded."

In security-minded Israel, the unrest has prompted concern about the Israeli military's stability as it maintains its 55-year-old occupation of the West Bank and faces threats from Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group and from its archenemy Iran.

Violence both in Israel and the occupied West Bank has escalated over the past few weeks to heights

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unseen in years. On Saturday, a Palestinian shot and wounded two Israeli soldiers in the northern West Bank town of Hawara, the site of a violent settler rampage last month.

"This is a clear, immediate and tangible danger to the security of the state," he said, referring to the judicial plans. "I will not take part in this."

Gallant stopped short of saying what, if anything, he would do if Netanyahu ignored his plea. But his strong statement of concern for the polarized nation marked the first crack in Netanyahu's coalition, the most right-wing and religiously conservative government in Israeli history.

Despite mounting dissent, the government passed a key part of the overhaul on Thursday, approving legislation that would protect the Israeli leader from being deemed unfit to rule because of his trial and claims of a conflict of interest. Critics say the law is tailor-made for Netanyahu and encourages corruption.

That day, Gallant met with Netanyahu, reportedly to voice concerns that protests by Israeli reservists and other security forces were hurting Israel's international image and power of deterrence. After the meeting, Netanyahu nonetheless announced that he would become directly involved in the overhaul, declaring his hands "untied."

Israel's attorney general issued a sharp rebuke on Friday, warning that Netanyahu had broken the law by announcing his direct involvement in the overhaul while facing criminal charges — a stern statement that raised the specter of a constitutional crisis.

Netanyahu is on trial for fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in a series of scandals involving wealthy associates and powerful media moguls. He denies wrongdoing and dismisses critics who say he could find an escape route from the charges through the legal overhaul his government is advancing.

Supporters of the judicial overhaul — which includes plans to increase the coalition's control over judicial appointments and diminish the Supreme Court's ability to strike down laws passed by Parliament — say it will restore power to elected legislators and make the courts less interventionist. Critics say the move upends Israel's system of checks and balances and pushes it toward autocracy.

In spite of the backlash, Netanyahu has dismissed offers for a compromise, including from Israel's mainly ceremonial president earlier this month.

"For the sake of our security, for the sake of our unity, it is our duty to return to the arena of dialogue," Gallant said.

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Associated Press writer Sam McNeil in Tel Aviv, Israel contributed to this report.

## 2 Cuban migrants fly into Florida on motorized hang glider

KEY WEST, Fla. (AP) — Two Cuban migrants used a motorized hang glider to fly the approximately 90 miles (145 kilometers) from the communist island to Key West on Saturday, Florida officials said.

The Monroe County Sheriff's Office said the duo landed safely at Key West International Airport at about 10:30 a.m. and were turned over to the U.S. Border Patrol.

Border Patrol officials in South Florida did not answer a phone call Saturday seeking comment.

Overwhelmed by Cubans and other migrants arriving at the Mexican border and into Florida by boat, the Biden administration in early January implemented a policy change that makes them request a permit, or parole, online before arriving with the sponsorship of a relative or acquaintance in the U.S.

Those who arrive without doing that risk deportation.

## 2 dead in rail car; human smuggling investigation indicated

By KEN MILLER Associated Press

Two people found dead in a railroad car in south Texas were Honduran men, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said in a statement Saturday, indicating it was investigating the case as possible human smuggling.

"We will continue to address the serious public safety threat posed by human smuggling organizations and their reckless disregard for the health and safety of those smuggled," department spokesperson Nina



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Pruneda said in the statement.

Pruneda declined to comment beyond the statement, which said the investigation is ongoing but did not say whether any of the migrants were in custody.

The two dead were among 17 people — 15 men and two women — found Friday in what Union Pacific railroad said were two rail cars near Knippa, Texas, about 70 miles (113 kilometers) west of San Antonio and less than 100 miles (161 kilometers) from the U.S. border with Mexico, according to Pruneda's statement.

Union Pacific said in a statement Saturday that it is working with authorities to determine what happened and how the migrants boarded the train. The statement said the company is "deeply saddened" by the loss of life.

"Safety is our focus, and we have strict policies in place to prevent unauthorized access of our trains," the statement from company spokesperson Robynn Tysver said.

Four of the survivors found in the cars were taken to hospitals, Pruneda said. Their nationalities and conditions were not released.

University Health in San Antonio tweeted that two male survivors were in critical condition Saturday.

Spokesperson Leigh Strobe from Christus Health in San Antonio said one survivor was hospitalized there in undisclosed condition.

Officials at other hospitals in the area either had no patients from the train or did not respond to messages seeking comment Saturday.

Uvalde police Chief Daniel Rodriguez had said dispatchers received a 911 call about 3:50 p.m. Friday from an unknown person seeking help for "numerous undocumented immigrants 'suffocating' inside of a train car."

Rodriguez told local media it was believed the call came from inside one of the two rail cars where the migrants were found, a shipping container where the two dead men were found and a freight car.

A suspected cause of the deaths has not been released. Highs in the area neared 90 F (32 C), and shipping containers often get much hotter than the surrounding temperature.

Last summer, more than 50 migrants died after dozens of people were found in the back of a sweltering tractor-trailer that had been abandoned on the outskirts of San Antonio. The tragedy was the nation's deadliest smuggling episode on America's southern border, which led to officials vowing to step up policing efforts.

Migrants routinely travel through Uvalde, leading to high-speed vehicle pursuits that put schools in the area on lockdown. After the Robb Elementary School massacre in Uvalde last May, when a gunman killed 19 children and two teachers, Texas lawmakers concluded in a report that the frequency of the lockdowns may have led to a "diminished sense of vigilance" about security.

On the other side of Texas, a 17-year-old was charged Friday with kidnapping two migrants whose rescue this week from a Houston hotel by FBI agents ended in gunfire that killed another suspect.

The migrants were stopped on a highway northwest of Houston on Saturday and were forced into another vehicle by the kidnappers, according to a prosecutor. Officials have said little about what happened between then and Thursday morning, when the FBI says its agents rescued two migrants following the shooting in north Houston.

## March Madness betting guide: UConn, Texas new favorites

By MARK ANDERSON AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — March Madness is down to eight teams, and often by this point, nearly all the expected top teams are still playing. All the No. 1 seeds are gone, and Texas is the only No. 2 that still has a shot at the Final Four. All the unpredictability has made betting even more dicey than usual. Here's a look at what to expect this weekend — but keep in mind the numbers listed change regularly.

WHO'S FAVORED TO REACH THE FINAL FOUR?

Based on the FanDuel Sportsbook lines for the Elite Eight games, No. 2 seed Texas, No. 3 Kansas State, No. 4 UConn and No. 6 Creighton. All the betting lines are within 3 1/2 points, so if No. 3 Gonzaga, No. 5

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seeds Miami and San Diego State and No. 9 Florida Atlantic win, it wouldn't be a shock. Especially this year.

WHO'S FAVORED TO WIN THE TITLE?

UConn at plus-330 and Texas at plus-370 are the clear favorites. Someone betting on the Huskies would win \$330 on a \$100 bet if they take it all. Gonzaga is listed at plus-500, Creighton at plus-550 Kansas State at plus-700.

WHO IS THE BIGGEST UNDERDOG?

FAU would be a big payoff off at plus-1,300, and Miami is next at plus-1,100.

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST SPREAD DIFFERENCE?

Texas is favored by 3 1/2 points over Miami.

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST OVER/UNDER?

Expect a lot of scoring in the Gonzaga-UConn game, which has a total of 153 1/2 points. The other three matchups are less than 150, though Texas-Miami is on the edge at 149 1/2.

PROPS

Circa Sports in Las Vegas has a number of player totals in this weekend's Elite Eight games. Among them: Gonzaga's Drew Timme (21 1/2 points), UConn's Adama Sanogo (18), Kansas State's Keyontae Johnson and Markquis Nowell (17 1/2 each), Texas' Marcus Carr (17), Miami's Isaiah Wong (16 1/2), UConn's Jordan Hawkins (16) and Gonzaga's Julian Strawther and Creighton's Ryan Kalkbrenner (15.5 each).

BRACKETS

In the ESPN Bracket Challenge game, 15.1% of brackets still have a potential national champion remaining. Texas is the top team remaining at 6.2%, and Gonzaga is on 4.5% of bracket. Regarding the Elite Eight matchups, 9.1% had Gonzaga playing UConn, 4.5% had Texas-Miami, .7% had Creighton-San Diego State and .3% had Kansas State-FAU. Gonzaga (5.9%) and Texas (5.7%) are the most popular remaining teams to win on CBS Sports' brackets, and the rest are 1.9% or less.

AP March Madness coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/march-madness> and bracket: <https://apnews.com/hub/ncaa-mens-bracket> and <https://apnews.com/hub/ap-top-25-college-basketball-poll> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## Hungary: Criticism makes it hard to cooperate with West

By MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The West's steady criticism of Hungary on democratic and cultural issues makes the small European country's right-wing government reluctant to offer support on practical matters, specifically NATO's buildup against Russia, Hungary's foreign minister said.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó also said Friday that his country has not voted on whether to allow Finland and Sweden to join NATO because Hungarian lawmakers are sick of those countries' critiques of Hungarian domestic affairs.

Lawmakers from the governing party plan to vote Monday in favor of the Finnish request but "serious concerns were raised" about Finland and Sweden in recent months "mostly because of the very disrespectful behavior of the political elites of both countries towards Hungary," Szijjártó said.

"You know, when Finnish and Swedish politicians question the democratic nature of our political system, that's really unacceptable," he said.

The timing of a vote on Sweden is harder to predict, Szijjártó said.

The EU, which includes 21 NATO countries, has frozen billions in funds to Budapest and accused populist Prime Minister Viktor Orban of cracking down on media freedom and LGBTQ rights. Orban's administration has also been accused of tolerating an entrenched culture of corruption and co-opting state institutions to serve the governing Fidesz party.

In a European Parliament resolution, EU lawmakers declared last year that Hungary had become "a hybrid regime of electoral autocracy" under Orban's nationalist government and that its undermining of the bloc's democratic values had taken Hungary out of the community of democracies.

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That criticism raised objections within Hungary and made it hard for the government to support Finland and Sweden's bids to join NATO, Szijjártó said. Skeptics insist that Hungary has simply been trying to win lucrative concessions.

When it comes to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Szijjártó said that his country's advocacy of peace does not mean accepting that Russia would keep the territory it currently controls.

"You know, stopping the war and sitting around the table does not mean that you accept the status quo," he said. "When the war stops and the peace talks start, it's not necessary that the borders would be where the front lines are. We know this from our own history as well ... Cease-fire has to come now."

As for relations with the United States, Szijjártó said they had a heyday under former President Donald Trump. His government found things more difficult under President Joe Biden.

In perfect, nearly unaccented English, Szijjártó explained that Hungary is "a clearly rightist, right-wing, Christian Democratic, conservative, patriotic government." He then went on in terms that would be familiar to millions of Americans.

"So we are basically against the mainstream in any attributes of ours. And if you are against the liberal mainstream, and in the meantime, you are successful, and in the meantime, you continue to win elections, it's not digestible for the liberal mainstream itself," he said. "Under President Trump, the political relationship was as good as never before."

Key to that relationship was Trump's acceptance of Hungary's policies toward its own citizens. The government has banned the sharing of materials with minors that it regards as a display or promotion of homosexuality or gender reassignment.

The law has been condemned by human rights groups and politicians from around Europe as an attack on Hungary's LGBT community.

Szijjártó said Trump was more welcoming of such measures than the Biden administration.

"He never wanted to impose anything. He never wanted to put pressure on us to change our way of thinking about family. He never wanted us to change our way of thinking about migration. He never wanted us to change our way of thinking about social issues," Szijjártó said.

He also said Trump's attitude toward Russia would be more welcomed by some parties today.

During Trump's term in the White House, Russia did not start "any attack against anyone," Szijjártó said.

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Associated Press Writer Justin Spike in Budapest, Hungary, contributed to this report.

## Russia 'largely stalled' in Bakhmut, shifting focus, UK says

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The top commander of Ukraine's military said Saturday that his forces were pushing back against Russian troops in the long and grinding battle for the town of Bakhmut, and British military intelligence says Russia appears to be moving to a defensive strategy in eastern Ukraine.

"The Bakhmut direction is the most difficult. Thanks to the titanic efforts of the defense forces, the situation is being stabilized," Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi said in a post on Telegram giving a synopsis of a telephone call with Adm. Sir Tony Radakin, Britain's chief of defense staff.

The seven-month fight for Bakhmut, where Russian forces have closed in on three sides, is the longest battle of the war, with Russia deploying both regular soldiers and fighters of the mercenary Wagner Group.

Russian forces must go through Bakhmut to push deeper into parts of the eastern Donbas region, though Western officials say the capture of the city would have limited impact on the course of the war.

Britain's Defense Ministry said in its latest intelligence update that "Russia's assault on the Donbas town of Bakhmut has largely stalled. This is likely primarily a result of extreme attrition of the Russian force."

Russia is likely shifting its focus toward two other sectors, which "suggests an overall return to a more defensive operational design after inconclusive results from its attempts to conduct a general offensive since January," the U.K. ministry wrote on Twitter.

However, the Ukrainian military cautioned that a change in strategy was not yet clear and that Bakhmut remained Russia's main point of attack for now. A spokesman for Ukraine's eastern forces, Serhii Chere-

vaty, said the Russian forces were still hitting the town with artillery and airstrikes, although the number of daily clashes had dropped to fewer than 20, down from 30 to 50 not long ago.

"The coming week will tell," Cherevaty said on Ukrainian television.

Pavlo Kyrylenko, the governor of Donetsk province, where Bakhmut is located, said one civilian was killed in the fighting on Friday and another civilian was killed elsewhere in the province. Russian rockets hit the town of Kramatorsk during the night, but caused no injuries, Kyrylenko said.

On Saturday, Russian artillery struck Chasiv Yar, a city west of Bakhmut, and Toretsk to the south, killing two civilians, the Ukrainian presidential office said.

Two people were killed and six injured in Russian firing on the southern Kherson region, the local administration said.

Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine: <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

## Idaho governor signs firing squad execution bill into law

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Republican Gov. Brad Little signed a bill allowing execution by firing squad, making Idaho the latest state to turn to older methods of capital punishment amid a nationwide shortage of lethal-injection drugs.

The Legislature passed the measure March 20 with a veto-proof majority. Under it, firing squads will be used only if the state cannot obtain the drugs needed for lethal injections.

Pharmaceutical companies increasingly have barred executioners from using their drugs, saying they were meant to save lives. One Idaho death row inmate has already had his execution postponed repeatedly because of drug scarcity.

The shortage has prompted other states in recent years to revive older methods of execution. Only Mississippi, Utah, Oklahoma and South Carolina have laws allowing firing squads if other execution methods are unavailable, according to the Death Penalty Information Center. South Carolina's law is on hold pending the outcome of a legal challenge.

Some states began refurbishing electric chairs as standbys for when lethal drugs are unavailable. Others have considered — and, at times, used — largely untested execution methods. In 2018, Nevada executed Carey Dean Moore with a never-before-tried drug combination that included the powerful synthetic opioid fentanyl. Alabama has built a system for executing people using nitrogen gas to induce hypoxia, but it has not yet been used.

"While I am signing this bill, it is important to point out that fulfilling justice can and must be done by minimizing stress on corrections personnel," Little wrote in a transmittal letter after signing the bill. "For the people on death row, a jury convicted them of their crimes, and they were lawfully sentenced to death. It is the responsibility of the state of Idaho to follow the law and ensure that lawful criminal sentences are carried out."

During a historic round of 13 executions in the final months of Donald Trump's presidency, the federal government opted for the sedative pentobarbital as a replacement for lethal drugs used in the 2000s. It issued a protocol allowing firing squads for federal executions if necessary, but that method was not used.

Some lawyers for federal inmates who were eventually put to death argued in court that firing squads actually would be quicker and less painful than pentobarbital, which they said causes a sensation akin to drowning.

However, in a 2019 filing, U.S. lawyers cited an expert as saying someone shot by firing squad can remain conscious for 10 seconds and that it would be "severely painful, especially related to shattering of bone and damage to the spinal cord."

President Joe Biden's attorney general, Merrick Garland, ordered a temporary pause on federal executions in 2021 while the Justice Department reviewed protocols. Garland did not say how long the moratorium will last.

Idaho Sen. Doug Ricks, a Republican who co-sponsored that state's firing squad bill, told his fellow sena-



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tors Monday (3/20) that the state's difficulty in finding lethal injection drugs could continue "indefinitely," that he believes death by firing squad is "humane," and that the bill would help ensure the rule of law is carried out.

But Sen. Dan Foreman, also a Republican, called firing-squad executions "beneath the dignity of the state of Idaho." They would traumatize the executioners, the witnesses and the people who clean up afterward, he said.

The bill originated with Republican Rep. Bruce Skaug, prompted in part by the state's inability to execute Gerald Pizzuto Jr. late last year. Pizzuto, who now has terminal cancer and other debilitating illnesses, has spent more than three decades on death row for his role in the 1985 slayings of two gold prospectors.

The Idaho Department of Correction estimates it will cost around \$750,000 to build or retrofit a death chamber for firing squad executions.

Agency Director Jeff Tewalt has said he would be reluctant to ask his staffers to participate in a firing squad.

Both Tewalt and his former co-worker Kevin Kempf played a key role in obtaining the drugs used in the 2012 execution of Richard Albert Leavitt, flying to Tacoma, Washington, with more than \$15,000 in cash to buy them from a pharmacist. The trip was kept secret by the department but revealed in court documents after University of Idaho professor Aliza Cover sued for the information under a public records act.

Biden pledged during his campaign to work at ending the death penalty nationwide, but he has remained silent on the issue as president. Critics say his hands-off approach risked sending a message that he's OK with states adopting alternative execution methods.

## Greene's DC jail visit pulls GOP closer to Jan. 6 rioters

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene swept into the District of Columbia jail to check on conditions for the Jan. 6 defendants, with Republican lawmakers handshaking and high-fiving the prisoners, who chanted "Let's Go Brandon!" — a coded vulgarity against President Joe Biden — as the group left.

A day earlier Speaker Kevin McCarthy met with the mother of slain rioter Ashli Babbitt, an Air Force veteran who was shot and killed by police as she tried to climb through a broken window during the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

And the House Republican leader recently gave Fox News' Tucker Carlson exclusive access to a trove of Jan. 6 surveillance tapes despite the conservative commentator's airing of conspiracy theories about the Capitol attack.

Taken together, the House Republicans can be seen as working steadily but intently to distort the facts of the deadly riot, which played out for the world to see when Donald Trump's supporters laid siege to the Capitol, and in the process downplay the risk of domestic extremism in the U.S.

In actions and legislation, the Republicans are seeking to portray perpetrators of the Capitol riot as victims of zealous federal prosecutors, despite many being convicted of serious crimes. As Trump calls for the Jan. 6 defendants to be pardoned, some House Republicans are attempting to rebrand those who stormed the Capitol as "political prisoners."

The result is alarming to those who recognize a dangerously Orwellian attempt to whitewash recent history.

"There's no question Marjorie Taylor Greene and other Republicans are attempting to rewrite history," said Heidi Beirich, the co-founder of the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism. "They're making light of what was a serious attack on our democracy."

The tour Greene led at the local jail Friday comes as nearly 1,000 people have been charged by the Justice Department in the attack on the Capitol — leaders of the extremist Oath Keepers convicted of seditious conspiracy. The 20 or so defendants being held at the jail, many in pretrial detention on serious federal charges, are among those who battled police at the Capitol, officials said, in what at times was a gruesome bloody scene of violence and mayhem.

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Greene told The Associated Press the idea she's trying to rewrite history is the "stupidest thing" she's ever heard of, especially since the assault on the Capitol has been captured in the 41,000 hours of video that McCarthy made available to Fox News.

"We can't rewrite it — it's all on video," Greene told the AP.

"You can't change the history, but what we can do is expose the truth. That's what we need to do," Greene said.

The country has been here before — in the aftermath of the Civil War, when the Lost Cause movement sought to reframe the battle over ending slavery in the U.S. as one of states' rights, and again in the years following the Civil Rights movement as critics of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. questioned his transformative legacy.

In the House under Republican control this year, the new leadership openly questions what happened on Jan. 6 as well as how the federal government is investigating and prosecuting extremists. Outside groups are raising money and rallying to the aid of Jan. 6 defendants.

This past week, a Republican-led Judiciary subcommittee probed the federal government's treatment of parents protesting school board policies — sometimes violently — as unfair. Next week, the new Republican committee on the "weaponization" of the federal government will delve into First Amendment free speech rights on social media.

McCarthy warned that the federal government is labeling parents as "domestic terrorists" for showing up at school board meetings, even though such prosecutions are extremely rare.

His was a reference to a 2021 Justice Department memo from Attorney General Merrick Garland responding to the National School Board Association's concerns about violent protesters at school board meetings. Garland had directed federal law enforcement to address what he called a "disturbing spike" in harassment of school officials.

Probing the matter, the Republican-led House Judiciary Committee released a report showing that in one federal investigation, the FBI interviewed a mom for allegedly telling a local school board "we are coming for you." In another, the FBI investigated a dad who opposed COVID mask mandates after a tipster to a federal hotline said he "fit the profile of an insurrectionist" because he "rails against the government" and "has a lot of guns and threatens to use them."

"Parents should have a right to go to school board meetings and not be called terrorists," McCarthy said.

While Greene has said the Capitol attack was wrong, at the jail visit Friday she said she believes there's a "two-tiered" justice system and that the Jan. 6 defendants are being "treated as political prisoners" for their beliefs.

Democrats on the tour said that is categorically false. While the local jail came has long been the subject of complaints — the U.S. Marshals made plans to relocate 400 detainees after a surprise 2021 inspection found parts of the facility "do not meet the minimum standards" — the Jan. 6 defendants have been housed in a newer wing that was not cited as problematic in the Marshals' statement.

The two Democrats who joined the tour as members of the House Oversight Committee said they both had visited detention facilities before. "It's probably as good as a jail can be," said Rep. Jasmine Crockett, D-Texas, a former public defender.

Democratic Rep. Robert Garcia of California noted the way the Republicans led by Greene treated the Jan. 6 defendants as celebrities — shaking their hands and slapping backs when the lawmakers arrived in the jail facility.

As they left, the defendants chanted the "Let's Go Brandon!" phrase against Biden, he said in a tweet.

"What is most important to remember is that while Marjorie Taylor Greene and others want to treat these folks as pseudo celebrities, some of these folks are insurrectionists," Garcia told reporters. "And we can't forget that."

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This story has been corrected to reflect that Ashli Babbitt was an Air Force veteran, not a Navy veteran.

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## Intel co-founder, philanthropist Gordon Moore dies at 94

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Gordon Moore, the Intel Corp. co-founder who set the breakneck pace of progress in the digital age with a simple 1965 prediction of how quickly engineers would boost the capacity of computer chips, has died. He was 94.

Moore died Friday at his home in Hawaii, according to Intel and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. Moore, who held a Ph.D. in chemistry and physics, made his famous observation — now known as “Moore’s Law” — three years before he helped start Intel in 1968. It appeared among a number of articles about the future written for the now-defunct Electronics magazine by experts in various fields.

The prediction, which Moore said he plotted out on graph paper based on what had been happening with chips at the time, said the capacity and complexity of integrated circuits would double every year.

Strictly speaking, Moore’s observation referred to the doubling of transistors on a semiconductor. But over the years, it has been applied to hard drives, computer monitors and other electronic devices, holding that roughly every 18 months a new generation of products makes their predecessors obsolete.

It became a standard for the tech industry’s progress and innovation.

“It’s the human spirit. It’s what made Silicon Valley,” Carver Mead, a retired California Institute of Technology computer scientist who coined the term “Moore’s Law” in the early 1970s, said in 2005. “It’s the real thing.”

Moore later became known for his philanthropy when he and his wife established the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, which focuses on environmental conservation, science, patient care and projects in the San Francisco Bay area. It has donated more than \$5.1 billion to charitable causes since its founding in 2000.

“Those of us who have met and worked with Gordon will forever be inspired by his wisdom, humility and generosity,” foundation president Harvey Fineberg said in a statement.

Intel Chairman Frank Yeary called Moore a brilliant scientist and a leading American entrepreneur.

“It is impossible to imagine the world we live in today, with computing so essential to our lives, without the contributions of Gordon Moore,” he said.

In his book “Moore’s Law: The Life of Gordon Moore, Silicon Valley’s Quiet Revolutionary,” author David Brock called him “the most important thinker and doer in the story of silicon electronics.”

Moore was born in San Francisco on Jan. 3, 1929, and grew up in the tiny nearby coastal town of Pescadero. As a boy, he took a liking to chemistry sets. He attended San Jose State University, then transferred to the University of California, Berkeley, where he graduated with a degree in chemistry.

After getting his Ph.D. from the California Institute of Technology in 1954, he worked briefly as a researcher at Johns Hopkins University.

His entry into microchips began when he went to work for William Shockley, who in 1956 shared the Nobel Prize for physics for his work inventing the transistor. Less than two years later, Moore and seven colleagues left Shockley Semiconductor Laboratory after growing tired of its namesake’s management practices.

The defection by the “traitorous eight,” as the group came to be called, planted the seeds for Silicon Valley’s renegade culture, in which engineers who disagreed with their colleagues didn’t hesitate to become competitors.

The Shockley defectors in 1957 created Fairchild Semiconductor, which became one of the first companies to manufacture the integrated circuit, a refinement of the transistor.

Fairchild supplied the chips that went into the first computers that astronauts used aboard spacecraft.

In 1968, Moore and Robert Noyce, one of the eight engineers who left Shockley, again struck out on their own. With \$500,000 of their own money and the backing of venture capitalist Arthur Rock, they founded Intel, a name based on joining the words “integrated” and “electronics.”

Moore became Intel’s chief executive in 1975. His tenure as CEO ended in 1987, though he remained chairman for another 10 years. He was chairman emeritus from 1997 to 2006.

He received the National Medal of Technology from President George H.W. Bush in 1990 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George W. Bush in 2002.

Despite his wealth and acclaim, Moore remained known for his modesty. In 2005, he referred to Moore’s

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Law as “a lucky guess that got a lot more publicity than it deserved.”

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Betty, sons Kenneth and Steven, and four grandchildren.

This story corrects the name of California Institute of Technology.

## **Biden’s moves on Alaska drilling, TikTok test young voters**

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — Recent moves by President Joe Biden to pressure TikTok over its Chinese ownership and approve oil drilling in an untapped area of Alaska are testing the loyalty of young voters, a group that’s largely been in his corner.

Youth turnout surged in the three elections since Donald Trump was elected president in 2016, helping Biden eke out victories in swing states in 2020, pick up a Democratic Senate seat in the 2022 election and stem potential losses in the House.

But the 80-year-old president has never been the favorite candidate of young liberals itching for a new generation of American leadership. As Biden gears up for an expected reelection campaign, a potential TikTok ban and the Alaska drilling could weigh him down.

Meanwhile, his plan to wipe out billions of dollars in student loan debt is in jeopardy at the Supreme Court. The effort, announced shortly before last year’s midterms, was an attempt by Biden to keep a promise he made after defeating progressive Sen. Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primary campaign in 2020.

The risk for Biden is less that young left-of-center voters will vote Republican and more that they would sit out an uninspiring election altogether.

“I’m a Democrat, but I’m not voting for Biden,” said Mark Buehlmann, a 20-year-old Arizona State University student who said he likely would abstain if Biden is the Democratic nominee, as expected. “He’s maybe capable of doing a good job, but he’s not capable of gathering the troops, rallying the people. Especially the Democratic voter base. I don’t think he’s a strong candidate.”

TikTok allows users, 150 million of whom are in the United States, to post short, creative videos for friends and strangers. Its algorithm has an uncanny ability to figure out what interests its users and serve up videos they’ll enjoy. It’s become a supremely popular — some say addictive — place for young people to find entertainment and community.

Western governments are growing increasingly worried that TikTok’s owner, Beijing-based ByteDance, might give browsing history or other data about users to China’s government or promote propaganda and disinformation. The U.S. and other nations have banned TikTok from government-owned devices, as have several states.

The U.S. Committee on Foreign Investment, part of Biden’s Treasury Department, has threatened to ban TikTok if ByteDance doesn’t sell its stake in the app, according to a Wall Street Journal report this month.

Trump tried to ban TikTok in 2020, but the move was blocked in court and later rescinded when Biden took office and ordered an in-depth study of the issue.

ByteDance says it’s working to address security concerns and has plans to route traffic through servers owned by Oracle, a Silicon Valley-based tech company.

Biden administration officials insist that political concerns aren’t weighing into the national security review underway, but they’re also not blind to it.

Both political parties have reoriented around staking out tougher economic and security positions on China’s rise, and Biden has come under increasing pressure from GOP lawmakers to take action against TikTok.

In a recent interview with Bloomberg, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo offered hyperbolically, “The politician in me thinks you’re going to literally lose every voter under 35, forever.”

But it’s clear that the Biden White House and his likely reelection campaign are keenly aware of the app’s massive domestic reach and demographic skew toward Democratic-leaning younger voters.

Highlighting Biden’s balancing act, Rep. Jamaal Bowman, a progressive New York Democrat popular on



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the left, held a news conference this past week with TikTok creators who have built popular and profitable channels on the social network "in support of free expression."

Lawmakers grilled TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew for nearly six hours Thursday over data security and harmful content. They responded skeptically during a tense House committee hearing to his assurances that the app prioritizes user safety and should not be banned due to its Chinese connections.

"Let me state this unequivocally: ByteDance is not an agent of China or any other country," Chew said.

In interviews at Arizona State, one of the largest college campuses in the U.S. and a contributor to Biden's narrow 10,000-vote win in the swing state, young people described a TikTok ban as somewhere between an annoyance and an inevitability — but not something that would change their views of the president.

"Most people don't really think about those kinds of things," Lucas Vittor, a 19-year-old business administration student from Houston, said of a TikTok ban. "I think that they'll probably just see it as, 'He's an oppressive leader, an old dude, he doesn't know about social media.'"

If TikTok disappears, another app will emerge to capture the attention of young people, Vittor predicted. Other social media platforms, including YouTube and Instagram, have incorporated similar algorithm-driven video features, though some find them clunky compared with TikTok.

"It's not really Biden's issue," said Ginny Xu, a 20-year-old chemical engineering student from Goodyear, Arizona. "It's more of a bipartisan thing — 'safety' from China."

Losing access to TikTok would be disappointing, Xu said, but it wouldn't dissuade her from voting for Biden if there's no better Democratic choice.

Her friend, 20-year-old chemical engineering student Maddie Bruce, agreed.

"I just am not a big Joe Biden fan," Bruce said. She would prefer to see another Democrat run, but she would still vote for Biden, she said.

Forcing TikTok's Chinese parent to sell its stake in the U.S. company could provide a convenient middle ground: minimizing the national security threat while avoiding having access to the app cut off for tens of millions of users.

The young have never voted at the same rates as their parents and grandparents, but their participation has ticked up markedly since the start of the Trump presidency.

The 2018 and 2020 midterms brought the highest levels of youth turnout of the past three decades, according to the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University, which studies young voters.

And when they do vote, young people vote overwhelmingly for Democrats.

Biden won 63% of voters age 18 to 24, compared with 34% for Trump, according to AP VoteCast, an expansive survey of the electorate. Republican House candidates did better with young voters in last year's midterms, but Democrats still had a 14-percentage point advantage, winning voters 24 and younger 54% to 40%.

"If Democrats are looking for their secret weapon, young voters are it," said Jack Lobel, spokesperson for Voters of Tomorrow, which organizes young voters online and in person. "For Democrats especially, who already have young voters basically on their side, we are the untapped potential that campaigns are looking for."

A TikTok ban might irritate a lot of young voters, but Biden can point to a strong record of standing up for young people's interests, Lobel said.

Biden has tried to offer relief from student loan debt and has advocated for abortion rights. He signed a massive climate spending bill along with the most sweeping gun violence bill in decades.

Marisol Ortega, a 21-year-old journalism student from Glendale, Arizona, said many of her peers are looking for someone younger and more exciting, even if they'll likely hold their nose and vote for him.

"Joe Biden has been a name in American politics for a very, very long time," Ortega said. "I think people are just kind of ready for something new."

Still, the Biden administration irked environmentalists and young people by approving the huge Willow oil drilling project on Alaska's North Slope.

Young activists have been particularly active in pushing to drastically reduce oil drilling and move away from reliance fossil fuels. Before the president's decision, a #StopWillow campaign garnered millions of views on TikTok urging Biden to block the project.

"He has delivered a lot for young people, and that's why our advice to the administration was, 'This is not the right direction to head on this issue,'" said Cristina Tzintzún Ramirez, president of NextGen America, a youth organizing group.

AP White House Correspondent Zeke Miller in Washington contributed to this report.

## **Pope expands sex abuse law, reaffirms adults can be victims**

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis on Saturday updated a 2019 church law aimed at holding senior churchmen accountable for covering up sexual abuse cases, expanding it to cover lay Catholic leaders and reaffirming that vulnerable adults and not just children can be victims of abuse when they are unable to freely consent.

With the update, Francis made permanent temporary provisions that were passed in 2019 in a moment of crisis for the Vatican and Catholic hierarchy. The law was praised at the time for laying out precise mechanisms to investigate complicit bishops and religious superiors, even though it amounted to bishops policing fellow bishops without any requirement that civil law enforcement be informed.

But implementation has been uneven, and abuse survivors have criticized the Vatican for a continued lack of transparency about the cases. Their advocates said a wholesale overhaul was necessary, not just Saturday's minor modifications.

"The Catholic people were promised that (the law) would be 'revolutionary,' a watershed event for holding bishops accountable. But in four years, we've seen no significant housecleaning, no dramatic change," said Anne Barrett Doyle, co-director of BishopAccountability.org, an online resource that has identified 40 bishops investigated globally under the new protocols.

The new rules conform to other changes in the Catholic Church's handling of abuse that were issued in the last four years. Most significantly, they are extended to cover leaders of Vatican-approved associations headed by laymen and women, not just clerics.

The expansion is a response to the many cases that have come to light in recent years of lay leaders abusing their authority to sexually exploit people under their spiritual care or authority, most recently the L'Arche federation of Jean Vanier.

The update also reaffirms that adults such as nuns or seminarians who are dependent on their bishops or superiors can be victims of abuse. Church law had long held that only adults who "habitually" lack the use of reason could be considered victims in the same sense as minors.

The 2019 law expanded that definition and it is retained in the update, making clear that adults can be rendered vulnerable to abuse as situations present themselves. The inclusion is significant given resistance in the Vatican to the #MeToo pressure to recognize rank and file parishioners who are abused during spiritual direction by a priest as possible victims.

The definition reads that a victim can be "any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offense."

"This can be read as further manifestation of how the church cares for the frailest and weakest," said Archbishop Filippo Iannone, prefect of the Vatican's legal office. "Anyone can be a victim, so there has to be justice. And if the victims are like these (vulnerable adults), then you must intervene to defend their dignity and liberty."

Francis originally set out the norms as a response to the decades of cover-up exposed by the 2018 Pennsylvania grand jury report and the scandal over then-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, who was eventually defrocked for abusing adults as well as minors. Francis himself was implicated in that wave of the

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scandal, after he dismissed claims by victims of a notorious predator in Chile.

After realizing he had erred, Francis ordered up a full review of the Chilean abuse dossier, summoned the presidents of bishops' conferences to Rome for a four-day summit on safeguarding and set in motion plans for a new law to hold senior churchmen to account for abuse and cover-ups.

The 2019 law and its update Saturday contain explicit standards for investigating bishops and superiors, but entrusts other bishops to do the work. It also mandates all church personnel to report allegations of clergy abuse in-house, though it doesn't mandate reporting of abuse by lay leaders and refrains from requiring any reporting to police. The new law expands whistleblower protections and reaffirms the presumption of innocence of the accused.

The update makes clear each diocese must have an office to receive complaints, a more specific requirement than the original call for a mere "system," such as an email address. The change derived from Francis' realization that many dioceses, particularly in poorer parts of the world, dragged their feet.

The pope recently warned there was a "clear and present danger" of abuse in areas with fewer financial resources.

"Maybe upwards of two-thirds of the bishops' conferences around the world haven't really had the type of capacity-building and resources to implement process this in any meaningful way," said the Rev. Andrew Small, secretary of the pope's child protection advisory board.

Survivors have long complained that the Vatican spent decades turning a blind eye to bishops and religious superiors who moved predator priests around from parish to parish rather than report them to police.

The 2019 law attempted to respond to those complaints, but victims' advocates have faulted the Holy See for continued secrecy about the investigations and outcomes. The most egregious recent case concerned the secret sanctions imposed in 2021 on East Timor Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo, a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Small agreed that abuse survivors, as well as the broader Catholic flock, must at the very least be informed of case outcomes.

"Part of the process of justice, let alone healing, is the awareness that people were held accountable for their actions," he said. "And we're not anywhere near where we should be on that."

## As South bans abortion, thousands turn to Illinois clinics

By AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS, Ill. (AP) — Dr. Colleen McNicholas is fresh off performing two abortions when a ringing phone quickly stops her.

"Oh, ugh," she said, eyes widened, before she darted off to another room.

Just the day before, 58 women had abortions at the Fairview Heights' Planned Parenthood clinic, 15 miles east of St. Louis. But the new day is still stacked with appointments; as many as 100 abortion and family planning patients might walk through the doors.

Every day is busy now.

Hundreds of women travel each week to the southern tip of Illinois to secure an abortion, something that is no longer available to millions living in a 1,800 mile stretch of 11 Southern states that have mostly banned pregnancy terminations since the Supreme Court stripped away constitutional protections for women to end pregnancies.

But another barrier awaits them once they reach the clinic in one of the country's most abortion-friendly states. Anti-abortion advocates in neon hazard vests frantically try to wave passersby down at the gates, hoping to talk them out of what they are about to do.

The clinic's waitlist for abortions has only grown from two days to nearly three weeks after the Supreme Court ruling last June — even after staffers started working 10-hour shifts and they opened the clinic on Saturdays.

"With every piece of litigation, with every new constitutional amendment, with every new abortion restriction in a state that has some access, we are on this teeter-totter of what can we do here to make more

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space for the people who are going to be fleeing their home state?" McNicholas said.

With 10,000 abortion patients expected this year at the clinic, there's talk of opening on Sundays. Staff developed an emergency plan that would convert some patient rooms, normally reserved for birth control consultations or vasectomies, to make more room for abortions. A recreational vehicle has been retooled into a mobile clinic that can travel along the state line for doctors to provide abortions.

That still won't be enough to keep up, McNicholas predicted.

She's eyeing a proposed six-week abortion ban in Florida which could send even more women from the South seeking abortions up north. And she's closely watching how a Texas judge will rule on a case that seeks to keep the abortion pill mifepristone off the market.

"Any additional decision has the potential to really change demand again," she said. "It's like crisis management every day of the year."

Months before Roe v. Wade was overturned, Planned Parenthood and the nearby Hope Clinic had already been grappling with a surge of patients from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas and elsewhere after Gov. Greg Abbott, R-Texas, signed a bill into law that effectively shut down several abortion clinics in his state and led to long waiting lists in neighboring states' facilities. Together, the clinics launched a new regional logistics center in January 2022 dedicated to helping out-of-state patients book hotels, flights, gas money, bus rides or rental cars to either facility.

Just six months later, on June 24, the Supreme Court ruled that abortion was not a constitutionally protected right. Within hours, states such as Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas began enacting trigger laws that banned abortions.

Now, about 70 women call the center every day for help getting to an abortion clinic in southern Illinois, said Kawanna Shannon, the director of patient access at the Planned Parenthood clinic. When they reach the line, a navigator first goes over what they can pay toward their abortion. There are other details: How will the patient get to the area? Does she have money for food while she stays there? Will she need child care?

When someone cannot afford to pay for hotels, bus tickets or plane rides, the center books the travel for the patient and works with more than 30 nonprofit groups around the country that solicit funds for abortion access to fund the trip.

The work doesn't end there.

A staffer is available around-the-clock to answer desperate calls from patients who run into travel issues. Workers raced to arrange a ride to the airport in the middle of the night for one patient to flee her abusive partner. They troubleshoot when a car breaks down on the trip to southern Illinois. They navigated canceled flights during a crushing winter travel season to make sure one woman made it back to her family on Christmas day after an abortion.

"It's not going to slow down," Shannon said. "We are really taking care of the entire Southern region. All the (patients) in the South are really coming to southern Illinois because we're the closest. Almost all of them need some type of help – be it travel, be it procedure costs."

Two hours south of the Planned Parenthood clinic, two new abortion clinics opened in Carbondale, Illinois, late last year to give women living in banned states a closer option.

After reading the Supreme Court's leaked draft opinion last May, Andrea Gallegos, the director of the Alamo Clinic, said she hopped on Google and started looking for liberal-leaning cities in rural, southern Illinois.

"Illinois was just a state that really stood out in this sea of states that would more than likely ban abortion," Gallegos said. "It seemed like a good choice to try and get over there."

The Alamo Clinic relocated to the area from Oklahoma last November.

Three doctors in a rotation travel from Montana, Tennessee or Texas weekly to perform about 30 abortions daily at the clinic, which will terminate a pregnancy before 18 weeks. Gallegos says fewer than 5% of patients who come to the clinic are from Illinois.

Most patients coming to the Fairview Heights clinic are no longer from the region, either. During the final six months of last year, the clinic saw 2,042 abortion patients from outside of Missouri or Illinois — up from just 314 the six months before.



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Women are now seeking abortions later in their pregnancies at the Planned Parenthood clinic, which offers the procedure through 26 weeks. About one-quarter of patients need a second trimester abortion, McNicholas said.

But the hardest change to deal with has been the steady increase in children who are coming to the clinic, hoping to end a pregnancy that was the result of a rape or abuse.

"What you use to see was maybe one or two 10-and 11-year-olds a year," she said. "Now you're seeing a couple a month because they're coming from all over the country. Just sitting with that knowledge that this many people are experiencing so much trauma ... There are times where it's really hard."

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## Today in History: March 26, Beethoven dies at age 56

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, March 26, the 85th day of 2023. There are 280 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 26, 2010, the U.S. and Russia sealed the first major nuclear weapons treaty in nearly two decades, agreeing to slash the former Cold War rivals' warhead arsenals by nearly one-third.

On this date:

In 1812, an earthquake devastated Caracas, Venezuela, causing an estimated 26,000 deaths, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

In 1827, composer Ludwig van Beethoven died in Vienna at age 56.

In 1945, during World War II, Iwo Jima was fully secured by U.S. forces following a final, desperate attack by Japanese soldiers.

In 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Baker v. Carr*, gave federal courts the power to order reapportionment of states' legislative districts.

In 1973, the soap opera "The Young and the Restless" premiered on CBS-TV.

In 1979, a peace treaty was signed by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and witnessed by President Jimmy Carter at the White House.

In 1982, groundbreaking ceremonies took place in Washington, D.C., for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

In 1988, Jesse Jackson stunned fellow Democrats by soundly defeating Michael S. Dukakis in Michigan's Democratic presidential caucuses.

In 1992, a judge in Indianapolis sentenced former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson to six years in prison for raping a Miss Black America contestant. (Tyson ended up serving three years.)

In 1997, the bodies of 39 members of the Heaven's Gate techno-religious cult who committed suicide were found inside a rented mansion in Rancho Santa Fe, California.

In 2014, Osama bin Laden's son-in-law, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith (SOO'-lay-mahn AH'-boo gayth), was convicted in New York for his role as al-Qaida's fiery chief spokesman after 9/11. (He was later sentenced to life in prison.)

In 2020, the U.S. surpassed official Chinese government numbers to become the country with the most reported coronavirus infections.

Ten years ago: Italy's top criminal court overturned the acquittal of American Amanda Knox in the grisly murder of British roommate Meredith Kercher and ordered Knox to stand trial again. (Although convicted in absentia, Knox was exonerated by the Italian Supreme Court in 2015.) A study from the Society of Actuaries said that insurance companies would have to pay out an average of 32 percent more for medical claims under President Barack Obama's health care overhaul. President Obama named veteran Secret Service agent Julia Pierson as the agency's first female director.

Five years ago: The Commerce Department said the 2020 U.S. Census would include a question about

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citizenship status; opponents said the question would discourage immigrants from responding to the census. A toxicology report obtained by The Associated Press revealed that the late pop superstar Prince had levels of fentanyl in his body that multiple experts described as "exceedingly high." Two women and their six adopted children were killed when one of the women drove their SUV off a cliff into the ocean about 150 miles north of San Francisco.

One year ago: President Joe Biden said in Poland that Vladimir Putin "cannot remain in power," dramatically escalating the rhetoric against the Russian leader after his brutal invasion of Ukraine. The White House attempted to clarify soon after that he was not calling for a new government in Russia. Chinese authorities officially confirmed that there were no survivors in the crash of a China Eastern 737-800 with 132 people on board. U.S. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry of Nebraska resigned from office after a jury convicted him of lying to federal authorities about an illegal campaign donation from a foreign national.

Today's Birthdays: Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor is 93. Actor Alan Arkin is 89. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is 88. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is 83. Author Erica Jong is 81. Journalist Bob Woodward is 80. Singer Diana Ross is 79. Rock singer Steven Tyler (Aerosmith) is 75. Singer and TV personality Vicki Lawrence is 74. Actor Ernest Thomas is 74. Comedian Martin Short is 73. Country singer Ronnie McDowell is 73. Movie composer Alan Silvestri is 73. Rock musician Monte Yoho is 71. Former Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao is 70. Radio talk show host Curtis Sliwa is 69. Country singer Dean Dillon is 68. Country singer Charly McClain is 67. TV personality Leeza Gibbons is 66. Actor Ellia English is 64. Actor Jennifer Grey is 63. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Marcus Allen is 63. Actor Billy Warlock is 62. Actor Eric Allan Kramer is 61. Basketball and College Basketball Hall of Famer John Stockton is 61. Actor Michael Imperioli is 57. Rock musician James Iha is 55. Country singer Kenny Chesney is 55. Movie director Martin McDonagh is 52. Actor Leslie Mann is 51. Actor T.R. Knight is 50. Rapper Juvenile is 48. Actor Amy Smart is 47. Actor Bianca Kajlich (KY'-lihk) is 46. Moderator Margaret Brennan (TV: "Face the Nation") is 43. Actor Sterling Sulieman is 39. Actor Keira Knightley is 38. Rapper J-Kwon is 37. Actor Carly Chaikin is 33.