

# Groton Daily Independent

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**“Gratitude is the ability to experience life as a gift. It liberates us from the prison of self-preoccupation.”**

-John Ortberg

## Groton Community Calendar Sunday, April 2

### PALM SUNDAY

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m. (Procession of Palms), No Sunday school Choir, 7 p.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.; Hymn Sign/Night of worship with cookies/bars to follow, 6 p.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.; SEAS Confession, 4-5 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:30 a.m. and at Groton, 10:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Dessert Auction for Mission, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School sing in worship, 10:30 a.m.; Family Feast following worship RSVP Pastor Brandon, 11:30 a.m.

POPS Concert, 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.

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

## Monday, April 3

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Pepperoni pizza, green beans.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 12:00 noon, 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Senior Menu: Sloppy Joe on bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, ice cream sundae.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6 p.m.

## Tuesday, April 4

School Breakfast: Egg and cheese wraps.

School Lunch: Tacos

Senior Menu: Chicken Alfredo, broccoli and cauliflower, peaches, whole wheat bread.

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

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

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

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

**OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton**  
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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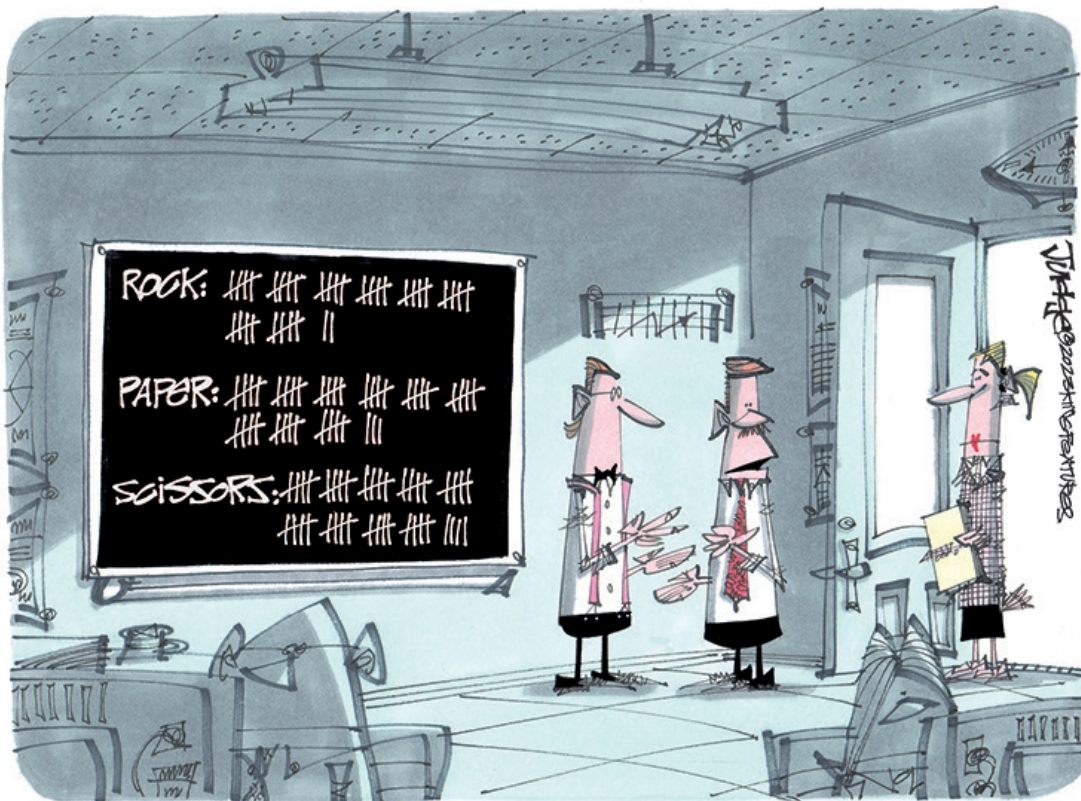


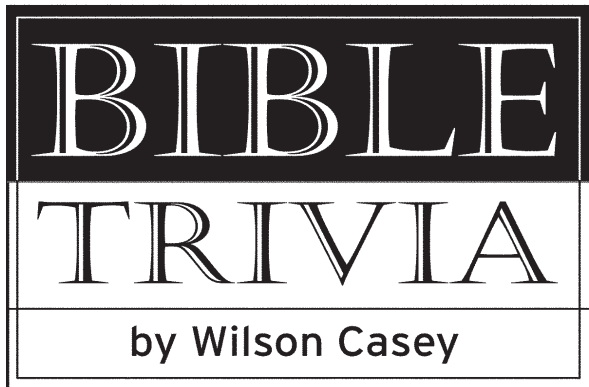
## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*And why do you worry about clothes?  
See how the flowers of the field  
grow. They do not labor or spin.  
Yet I tell you that not even  
Solomon in all his splendor  
was dressed like one of these.*  
MATTHEW 6: 28, 29



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

2. What's the only book of the Bible that mentions Christ's tomb being sealed? *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*

3. From Matthew 28:2, who rolled back the stone from the door of Jesus' tomb and sat upon it? *Simon, An angel, Villagers, Disciples*

4. When Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" came upon the risen Jesus, who did He ask them to inform? *Priests, Disciples, No one, Villagers*

5. From John 20, which disciple doubted that Jesus had risen unless he could see the wounds? *Peter, Andrew, Thomas, Thaddeus*

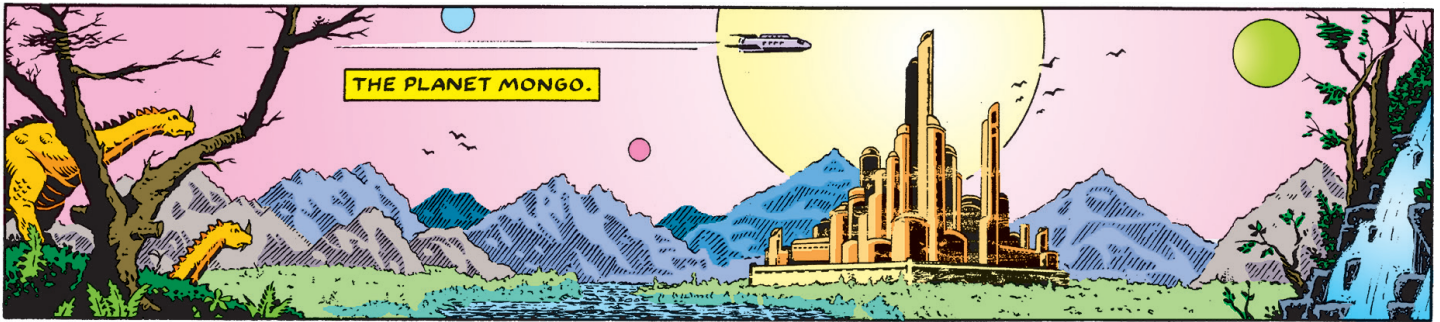
6. How long did Jesus remain after His resurrection before He ascended into heaven? *Instantaneously, 1 hour, 7 days, 40 days*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Matthew (27:65-66), 3) An angel, 4) Disciples, 5) Thomas (called Didymus), 6) 40 days (Acts 1:3)

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

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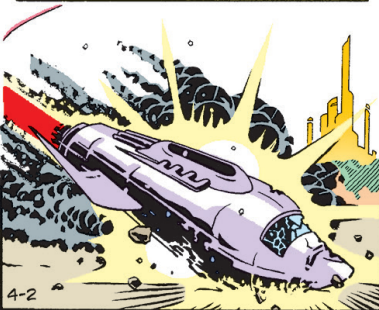


## FLASH GORDON

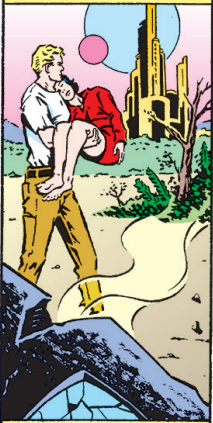
By JIM KEEFE

CONTINUING: THE WAY IT BEGAN...

FLASH GORDON, DALE ARDEN AND DR. HANS ZARKOV CRASH-LAND ON THE ALIEN WORLD THREATENING EARTH'S EXISTENCE.

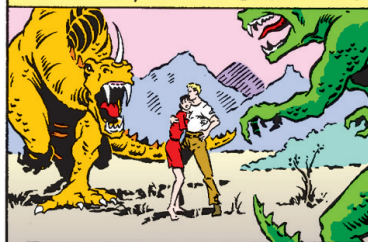


MIRACULOUSLY, THEY SURVIVE. HOWEVER, THE IMPACT LEAVES BOTH DALE AND ZARKOV UNCONSCIOUS.



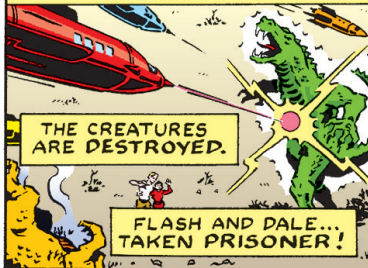
TAKING DALE IN HIS ARMS, FLASH MAKES HIS WAY TOWARD A DISTANT CITY.

EN ROUTE, THEY'RE BESIEGED!



DALE AWAKENS, HORRIFIED, AS THE MONSTERS ADVANCE!

HAVING BEEN SPOTTED FROM THE CITY, A MIGHTY ARMADA IS DISPATCHED.



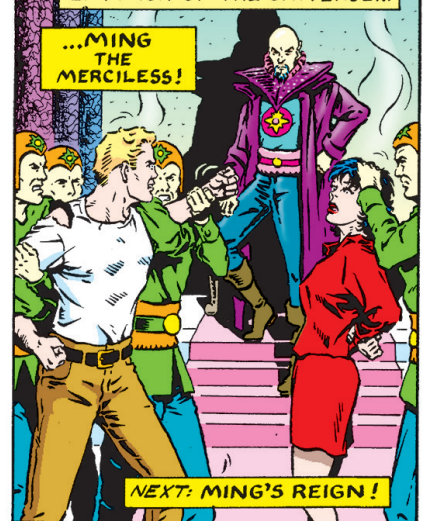
THE CREATURES ARE DESTROYED.

FLASH AND DALE... TAKEN PRISONER!

THEY'RE BROUGHT BEFORE THE TYRANNICAL RULER OF THIS HOSTILE WORLD.

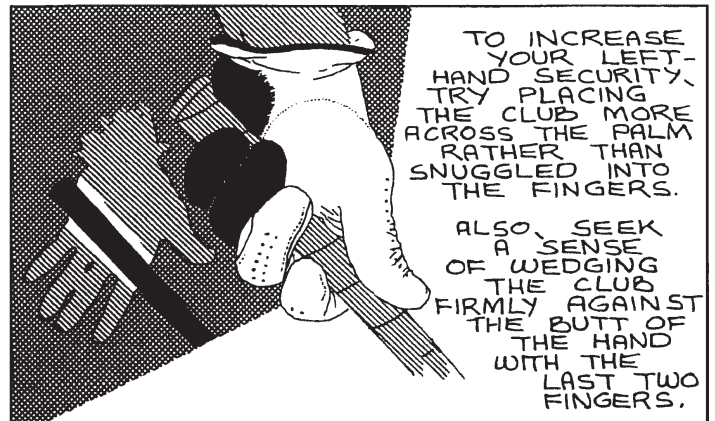
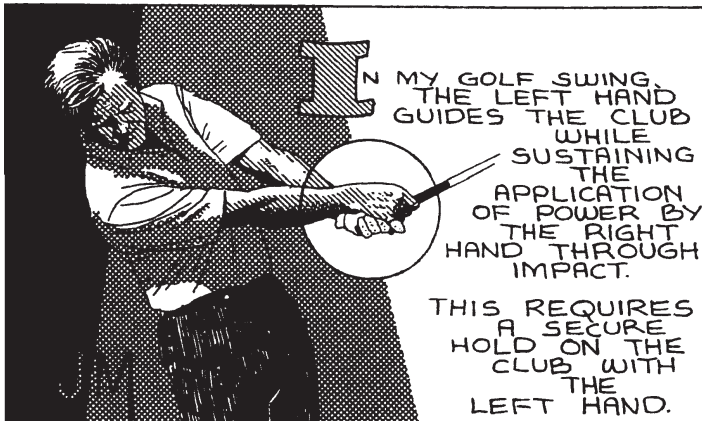
SELF-PROCLAIMED EMPEROR OF THE UNIVERSE...

...MING THE MERCILESS!



NEXT: MING'S REIGN!

## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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## Taking Zinc as Daily Supplement Won't Change Hair Loss

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** I am having trouble finding a reliable recommendation for the daily supplement zinc. I purchased 50-mg pills, but I think this may be too much. I am 74 and female, and I would like to include zinc in my daily supplements, as my hair has begun thinning quite a bit straight down the top of my head. — *R.M.*

**ANSWER:** Zinc is an important nutrient, and it is certainly true that zinc deficiency may lead to hair loss. However, most people with hair loss do not have a zinc deficiency, and there is no convincing data that giving extra zinc to a person with normal zinc levels will help with hair loss. Hair loss along the midline is consistent with female pattern hair loss, which is very common among women in their 70s and usually has nothing to do with zinc.

Very high amounts of zinc supplementation can be dangerous (and impair your body's ability to absorb other trace metals such as copper), but 50 mg is a safe amount. Still, the most effective therapies for female pattern hair loss include minoxidil (usually topical, but low-dose oral is increasingly used), spironolactone and finasteride. A dermatologist is the expert on hair loss and can give you a better diagnosis by exam than I can by your description.

\*\*\*

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** My youngest son has to have both of his hips replaced. He is only 37, but is in a very strenuous job of being a boilermaker in an oil refinery. This is the hardest job in a heavy industry. His doctors are telling me that

consumption — is this even possible? Even if he can get through this ordeal, he is still locked into this physical type of work.

The doctors say he will need another hip replacement in 10 to 15 years if he stays in this line of work. Do you agree with these statements? — *B.M.*

**ANSWER:** Let's take them one by one.

The most common cause of hip disease requiring hip replacement is osteoarthritis of the hips, but it is quite unusual to see someone of your son's age require a hip replacement. Alcohol is not a recognized risk factor for osteoarthritis of the hips, but it is a known underlying cause of a much less-common condition: osteonecrosis of the hips, also called avascular necrosis.

The more a person drinks, the more likely they are to get this rare condition, even though most heavy drinkers will never get this condition. Not every person with osteonecrosis of the hip will require a hip replacement. It is frequent to have both sides of the hip affected with disease.

Untreated congenital hip dysplasia may also lead to severe hip damage requiring a total hip replacement, and it is also one cause I see in a person of your son's age.

Prognosis after a modern hip replacement is very good. More than 90% of people are doing well, pain-free and without complications 15 years after surgery takes place. Of course, some kinds of activities such as heavy lifting and high-impact movements could make the surgical prosthetics wear out faster, but regular activities such as walking, stair climbing and most sports that are not high-intensity or high-impact can be done without damage to the prosthetic.

Although further alcohol use will not affect the prosthetic hips or other bones, many other body systems are very much affected by alcohol. So, if he has been a heavy drinker for some time, it is now time to stop. His doctors can help him find many available resources.

*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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## Chris O'Dowd and Gabrielle Dennis star in "The Big Door Prize."

Courtesy of AppleTV+

"Pretty Baby: Brooke Shields" (NR) -- From filmmaker Lana Wilson, this documentary follows the journey of actress and model Brooke Shields as she skyrockets to fame in the U.S. Titled "Pretty Baby" in homage to her big-break role at age 12 in "Pretty Baby" (1978), this film touches on the intense sexualization and exploitation she suffered in the acting industry at such a young age. Shields choosing to speak out on this is no easy feat, but hopefully this propels other industry greats like her to continue to speak out on the sexual exploitation that remains in Hollywood to this day. Out now. (Hulu)

"The Big Door Prize" (TV-MA) -- In a small town called Deerfield, an odd yet inspiring phenomenon sweeps over its residents. A mystical machine deemed the Morpho appears in the middle of a grocery store, and this machine apparently has the power to reveal a person's life potential. All it takes is inserting a coin and then placing your hands atop the machine. A small card then pops out with the role describing your biggest potential in life (dancer, model, healer, etc.). One man named Dusty (Chris O'Dowd) watches in awe as the citizens in Deerfield begin uprooting their lives just from what the Morpho tells them, but the curiosity of what could be might just get to Dusty in the end. The first three episodes of this series are out now, with the following seven premiering weekly every Wednesday. (AppleTV+)

"Beef" (TV-MA) -- This new series is the next and best project produced by A24, the entertainment company currently reeling from their latest Best Picture win at the Oscars for "Everything Everywhere All at Once." Steven Yeun and Ali Wong star as two strangers, Danny and Amy, who get into a road rage scuffle. Danny and Amy let this one incident take over their entire lives, and they will stop at nothing until either one of them gets their revenge. This 10-episode comedy-drama series premieres April 6. (Netflix)

"On a Wing and a Prayer" (PG) -- In this drama film based on a true story, Dennis Quaid ("Parent Trap") and Heather Graham ("The Hangover") portray married couple Doug and Terri White, who embark on a private plane ride with their daughters that is supposed to land in Louisiana on Easter Sunday. However, once they hit the skies, the pilot suddenly dies from a heart attack mid-flight, forcing Doug to take control of the plane. With the help of an experienced pilot named Cory, Doug must follow Cory's instructions to keep his family safe and land the plane without having any prior flying experience. Talk about the ultimate family bonding session! Premieres April 7. (Prime Video)

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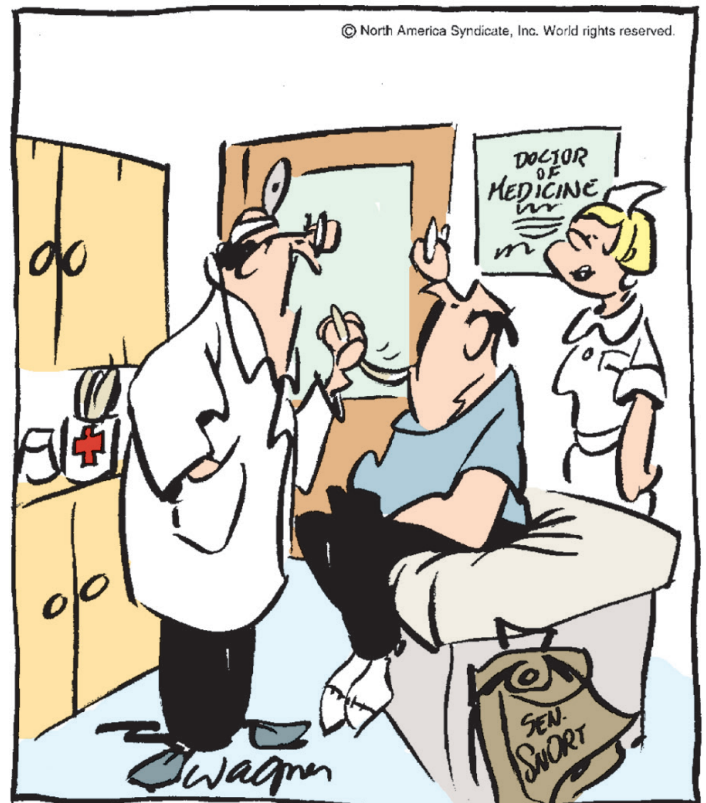
1. Name the first single Diana Ross released after she and the Supremes broke up.
2. Who wrote and released "Your Song" in 1970?
3. Where did the '60s group The Marceles get their name?
4. Who released "I've Told Every Little Star" in 1961?
5. Name the song that contains these lyrics: "Wake up in the morning with the sunshine in your eyes, And the smell of flowers blooming fills the air."

## Answers

1. "Reach Out and Touch Somebody's Hand," in 1970. Ross sang the song at a concert for the Nobel Peace Prize in Norway in 2008.
2. Elton John. This was the first time John reached the Top 10 on international charts. He'd given the nod for it to be cut by Three Dog Night, but they gave him a shot instead.
3. From a hairstyle. The marcel was curls created with an early curling iron. The iron was heated on a gas stove.
4. Linda Scott. The song first appeared in 1932. Dozens of artists have covered the song, including rapper Mac Miller in 2010.
5. "Love (Can Make You Happy)," by Mercy in 1969. The song went to No. 2 on the charts, denied the top slot by a Beatles song, "Get Back."

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



"Hmmm ... Miss Figby, bring me the industrial-strength tonque depressors."

## Just Like Cats & Dogs

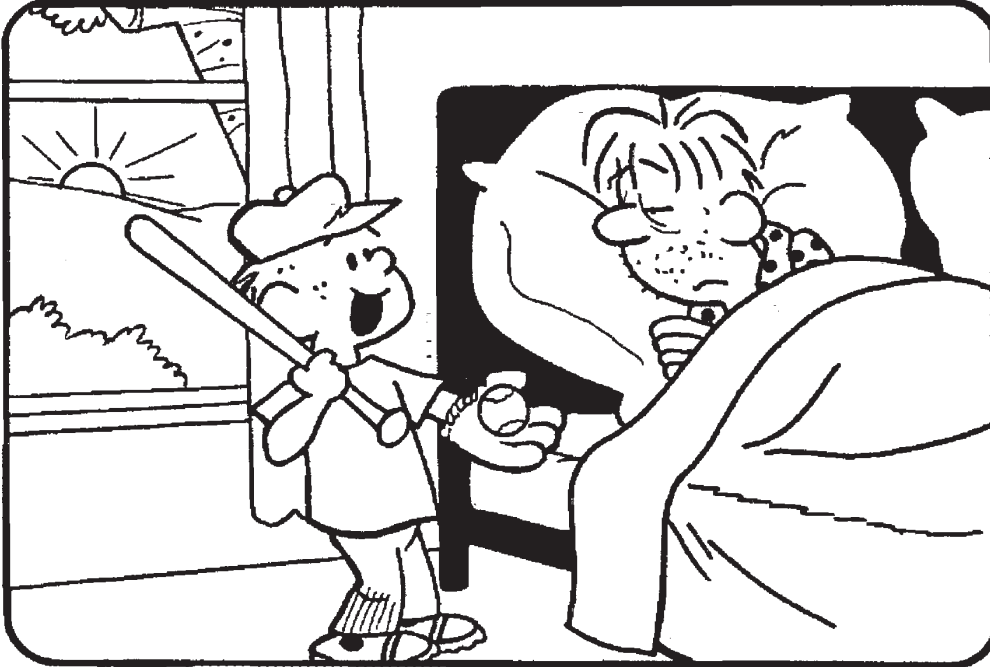
by Dave T. Phipps



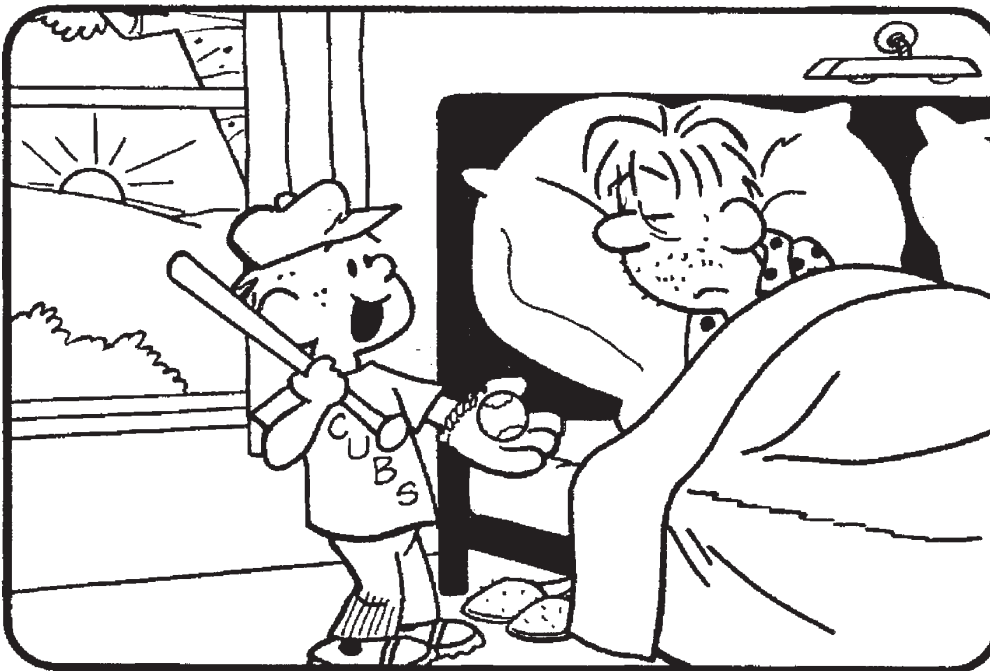
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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Bat is shorter. 2. Logo is missing. 3. Curtain is shorter. 4. Slippers are missing. 5. Hand is missing. 6. Lamp is missing.



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\* I purchase rotisserie chickens and use the meat for different things -- soup, casseroles, etc. I have a trick for getting the skin off. My hand strength isn't what it used to be, and those birds are slippery. I use a paper towel to grip the skin, and pull the meat and bone right out. It works well on a raw bird too. -- L.A. in Florida

\* To re-whiten socks or washcloths, try boiling a pot of water and adding a sliced, juiced lemon. Soak the items for at least an hour, and then pick out the lemon and add the pot -- water and all -- to a load of wash.

\* If there are crushed cookies in a pack I purchase, I set them aside in a plastic baggie in the freezer to use on ice cream. Yummy! -- R.L. in Alberta, Canada

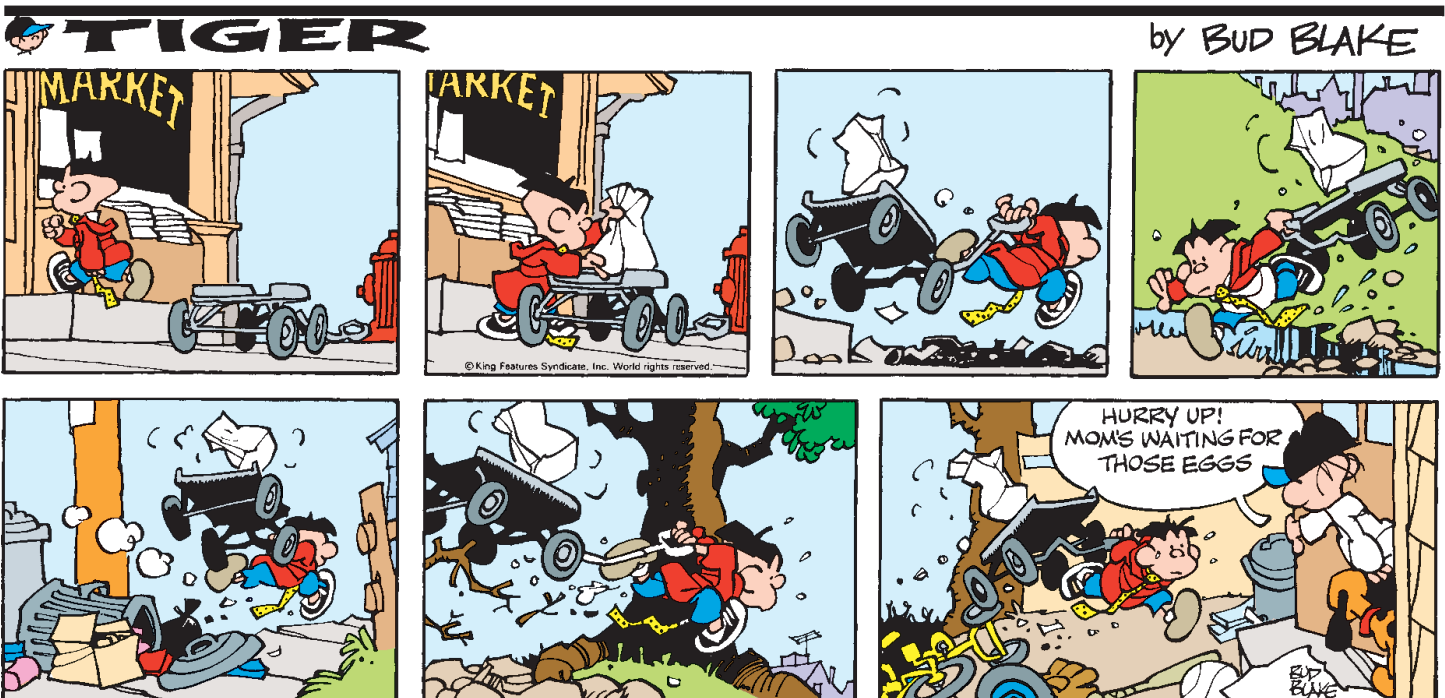
\* If you have been cooking in the oven and have a pan that's got cooked-on food, you can get it clean without all the scrubbing. Immediately after cooking, while the oven is still hot, add enough water to cover the bottom of the pan and a little dishsoap. Put it in the oven until the oven is cool. The residual heat will work on the stuck-on food while you are dining, and it'll wipe right out. -- W.O. in Minnesota

\* When washing out stockings, add a tablespoon of vinegar to the rinse water, and they will retain their elasticity better.

\* Wintergreen oil makes a lovely room freshener. Put two drops on a cotton ball and tuck it into the cushions of your couch, or hide it under a lamp pedestal ... anywhere out of the way. The scent drifts over a week or so. -- G.T. in Delaware

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

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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Shred
- 6 Tyke
- 12 Alaskan capital
- 13 Actress  
Lansbury
- 14 Soak up
- 15 Packed in a box, as oranges
- 16 Boxer Spinks
- 17 Like dried mud
- 19 Mac alternatives
- 20 Round Table titles
- 22 First lady?
- 24 Expected
- 27 Facts and figures
- 29 Congers
- 32 Elvis Presley hit song
- 35 Spiked club
- 36 Mandolin's kin
- 37 UFO crew
- 38 Billboards
- 40 Minor quibbles
- 42 Nile biter
- 44 &&&&
- 46 Deal (with)
- 50 Weak
- 52 Missouri-born president
- 54 "— serious?"
- 55 Small songbirds

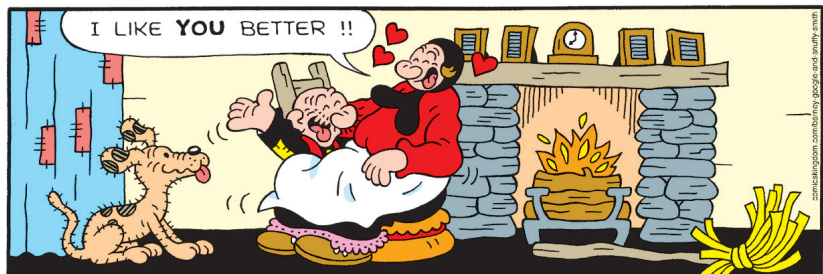
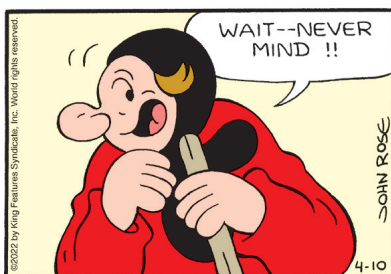
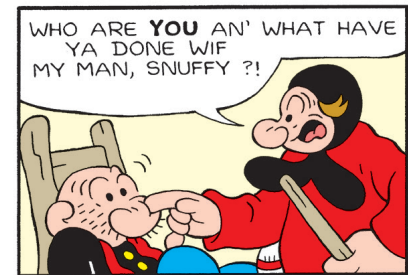
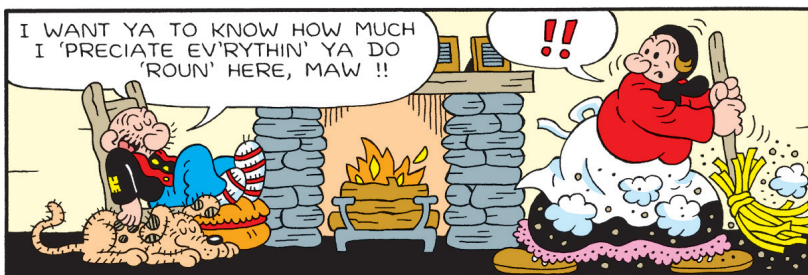
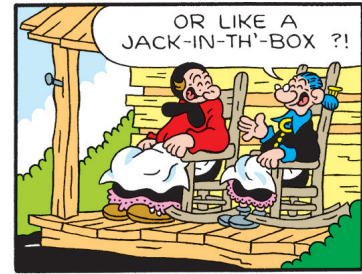
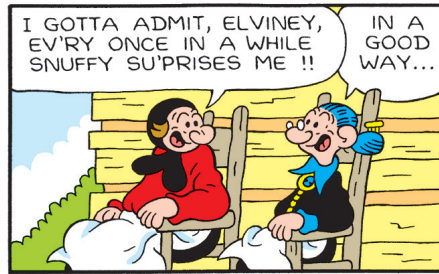
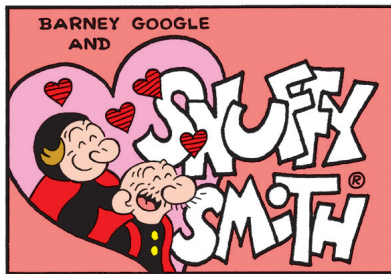
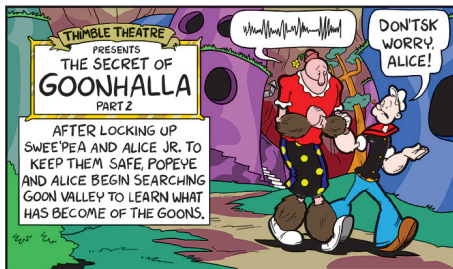
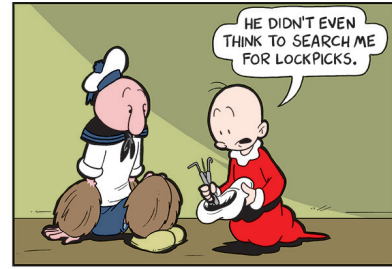
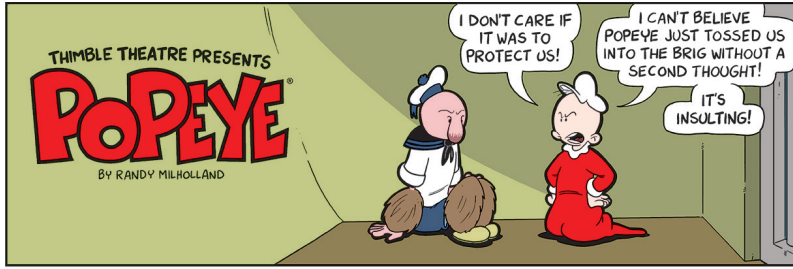
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42	43			44	45				46	47	48	49
50			51				52	53				
54								55				
56								57				

- 56 Take offense at
- 57 "Leda and the Swan" poet
- DOWN**
- 1 Hayseed
- 2 Not — many words
- 3 Drudges
- 4 Eg. and Syr., once
- 5 Barhopping tour
- 6 Big truck maker
- 7 Ham — (deli order)
- 8 Links org.
- 9 Personal bug-aboo
- 10 Power co. supply
- 11 Tiny amounts
- 12 Tokyo-based carrier
- 18 Amaze
- 21 Altar promise
- 23 Victory sign
- 24 Poorly lit
- 25 Actress Hagen
- 26 Fugitives
- 28 Creative flair
- 30 Allow
- 31 Soon-to-be grads
- 33 Homer's neighbor
- 34 Profit
- 39 Beauty parlor
- 41 Diving gear
- 42 Miles away
- 43 Withered
- 45 Neither fem. nor masc.
- 47 Skip
- 48 Frying needs
- 49 Em halves
- 51 "See ya!"
- 53 Caviar



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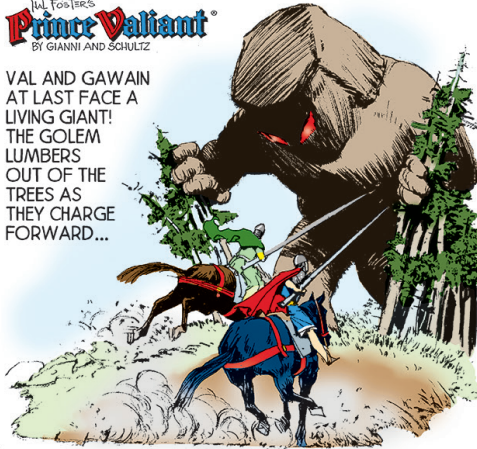


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1st Features  
**Prince Valiant**  
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ

VAL AND GAWAIN AT LAST FACE A LIVING GIANT! THE GOLEM LUMBERS OUT OF THE TREES AS THEY CHARGE FORWARD...



...ONLY TO HAVE THEIR LANCES SINK USELESSLY INTO ITS CLAY-LIKE SUBSTANCE! THE MONSTER IS NO MORE THAN ANNOYED...



... AND THE KNIGHTS THINK BETTER OF CONTINUING THEIR BATTLE. AN ENTIRE TREE FLUNG IN THEIR DIRECTION CONVINCES THEM TO RETREAT.

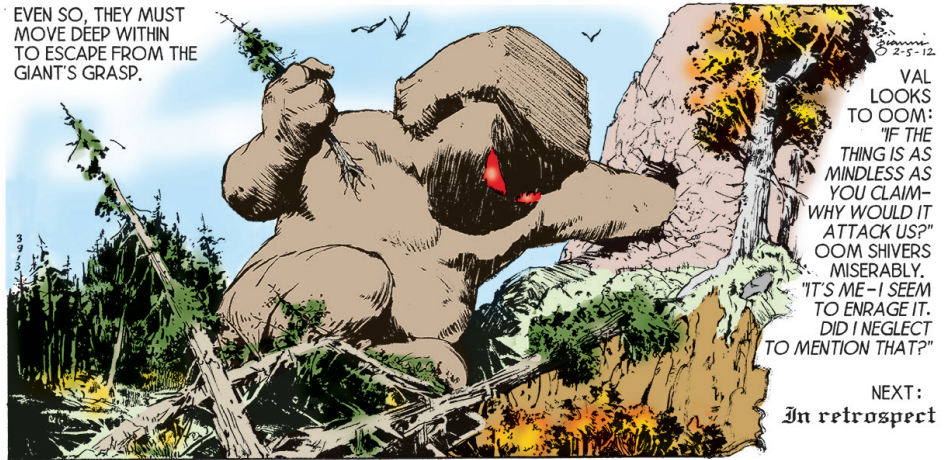


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OOM FOOPYAT CALLS OUT FROM THE CAVE, WHERE HE AND THE OTHERS ARE HIDING: "IN HERE, QUICKLY! IT'S TOO BIG TO FOLLOW!"



EVEN SO, THEY MUST MOVE DEEP WITHIN TO ESCAPE FROM THE GIANT'S GRASP.



VAL LOOKS TO OOM: "IF THE THING IS AS MINDLESS AS YOU CLAIM- WHY WOULD IT ATTACK US?" OOM SHIVERS MISERABLY. "IT'S ME- I SEEM TO ENRAGE IT. DID I NEGLECT TO MENTION THAT?"

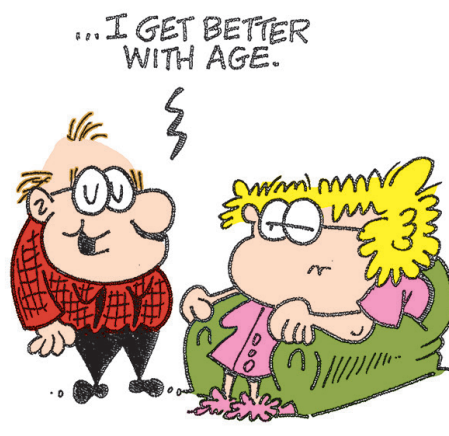
NEXT:  
In retrospect

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Rising Cost of Home Insurance

When I got my home insurance bill and it showed a massive payment for my policy renewal, I actually laughed. I flipped the page over, believing I'd received someone else's mail by mistake ... probably a neighbor down the street. But when I saw my own name, I wasn't laughing anymore when I grabbed my calculator and discovered that the new amount was a 45% increase over last year.

Still, ever hopeful, I called my insurance company, wondering if someone else's home had been plugged into my account. No, it hadn't. The amount listed was indeed for my home, as were the numbers for out buildings, personal property and temporary living expenses.

I called several neighbors: Has your insurance gone up? No, they all said. I discovered the likely reason for that during a call to a friendly local insurance agent. They're no doubt in the middle of a policy period, he said. Their bad surprise will come when it's time to renew that policy and all the price increases hit them.

There are several reasons why a policy can increase, such as material and labor (which is the big one right now), additions to the house, number of prior claims, your deductible, your credit score and the breed of dog you own.

After several calls to different insurance companies, it's not looking good. What I get so far is that if I decide to gamble and lower my coverage level, I run a risk that something will happen and I'll be stuck for mammoth amounts of money that insurance won't cover.

The only thing that's going to save a few dollars is to pay the whole year upfront and not have to pay the monthly budget fees with every payment.

Take a deep breath before you open your next policy renewal envelope. Good luck.

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1. What combat sport from Russia consists of two competitors grappling inside of a parked automobile?

2. The Franklin Sports X-40, Penn 26, ONIX Pure 2 and Dura Fast 40 are brands of balls used in what sport?

3. The Iroquois Steeplechase equestrian event is traditionally held every May in what U.S. city?

4. What third-string San Francisco 49ers quarterback had a 5-1 record starting in place of injured Joe Montana and Steve Young in 1991?

5. Paul Newman starred as what boxing champion in the Oscar-winning 1956 biographical film "Somebody Up There Likes Me?"

6. In February 1990, the Edmonton Oilers and Los Angeles Kings set a record for the number of penalties in a single NHL game with how many?

7. Name the animated mascot that FOX Sports created in the late 2000s for its Gopher Cam used in NASCAR broadcasts.



by Ryan A. Berenz

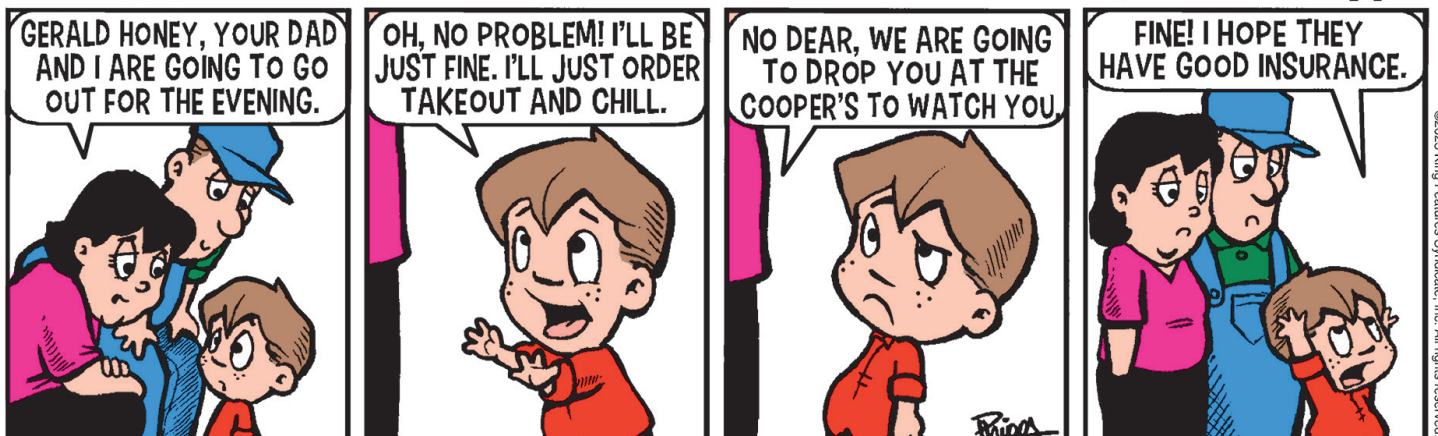
## Answers

1. CarJitsu.
2. Pickleball.
3. Nashville, Tennessee.
4. Steve Bono.
5. Rocky Graziano.
6. 85.
7. Digger.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





## Finding the Right Food Bowl for an Older Cat Takes Trial and Error

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I hope this advice helps other cat owners. My cat, Ferris, is 13 years old, and while he's generally healthy, he does have arthritis and is not as energetic as he once was. I noticed a few months ago that he was not finishing his dry food in the evenings, so I took him to the vet to get him checked out. Everything was fine, but the vet said that he might have some discomfort crouching down to reach his food and water.

I went online to find a raised platform that would hold food and water dishes. The trouble was that many of the platforms were too high for Ferris to reach comfortably, and he didn't seem very happy with the platform design. Instead, I found a dish that he loves. It sits about three inches above the floor and is angled higher in the back so that he doesn't push the food out of the bowl while eating. It's weighted so that it doesn't shift while he eats. This is a lot more comfortable for Ferris, and he's eating all of his food again. -- Terry L., Bloomington, Indiana

DEAR TERRY: Thank you for sharing your story! I'm glad that Ferris found the perfect food dish.

Sometimes we have to try a few different items before discovering the perfect one for our pets. Whether it's a food dish, a toy or a bed, we have to be prepared to spend a little more money than expected to get just the right item. Trial and error is part of the process, and part of the joy of owning a pet.

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

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## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

\* In 2009, six geologists were convicted of manslaughter for failing to predict a deadly earthquake in Italy. Though exonerated, they faced high levels of shame from the general public afterward.

\* Compared to average shoppers, chefs are more likely to buy generic store brands for sugar, baking soda and other common kitchen staples.

\* Lacrosse descends from a version played by Native Americans in the 17th century. Matches could last several days with as many as 1,000 players per team, on a field with goals up to six miles apart. Game sticks

were so treasured that they were often buried with the athletes after death.

\* Thomas Edison attempted to create ghost-hunting equipment, and an assistant died while testing it.

\* Measles can deplete previously acquired immune memory for up to two years in adults.

\* The state of Texas keeps a database of more than 500 executed inmates' last words, going back to the 1980s.

\* Ever been annoyed by the decibel level of a rooster's morning wake-up call? You're not the only one who finds it loud: When the birds crow, they lean their heads back, covering their ear canal, which acts as an earplug to protect themselves from being deafened by their own vocalizations.


\* After plagiarizing work for his directorial debut, actor Shia LaBeouf plagiarized a public apology from a Yahoo! answers question about ... plagiarism.

\* You can buy a room on a cruise ship and live on board for an annual fee.

\* In the 1800's, bananas were seen by some as an "immoral fruit," due to their shape. Fruit companies combatted this perception by issuing postcards of women eating bananas to advertise that they weren't taboo.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "Extraordinary things are always hiding in places people never think to look." -- Jodi Picoult



**The Garden Bug**

**Rosemary room freshener**

Gather one half-cup of fresh rosemary sprigs. Add them to one cup of vodka, place this mixture in a dark place, and leave it to "infuse" for at least two weeks. Pour this liquid through a cheesecloth to remove the used sprigs, then pour the strained liquid into a 1-liter spray bottle. Add 5-10 drops of rosemary essential oil and some purified water, and shake gently before spraying. - Brenda Weaver

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



by Freddy Groves

## Employees Banned From Working at VA

After all the instances of fraud unearthed by the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General over the years, I was not surprised to see this special report of something else they uncovered: "Stronger Controls Help Ensure People Barred from Paid Federal Healthcare Jobs Do Not Work for VHA."

Those who are excluded from getting a VA health-care job are those who previously committed "health-care fraud, patient abuse, controlled substance violations, or acts subject to license revocation," among other things such as Medicare fraud. The Health and Human Services OIG keeps a list of those excluded people, but the VA OIG recently ran a test sample of a single pay period, and yes, they found people on that list employed by the VA.

What apparently happened was that the human resources (hiring) staff didn't correctly do as they were required by federal law, which is run the names of potential new hires through the list to make sure they hadn't been excluded from employment. In instances of surname changes, the previous last names weren't checked even though they were noted on the hiring documents.

But that wasn't the only error. The VA's Office of Integrity and Compliance was also required to do a monthly computer check of all Social Security numbers of people being paid to make sure excluded people hadn't slipped through the employment cracks. They pointed to a computer coding error as the reason they weren't.

Enter the OIG, who made recommendations so it doesn't happen in the future. One of those recommendations is to do a comprehensive audit of the Social Security numbers of all VA employees to see if any additional names show up.

There will be new training, of course, of the people who didn't follow policy, plus written guidelines, plus redundancies with multiple eyes looking at data and processes.

You have to love the VA OIG and the people who work there. Surely they have the highest satisfaction level of any who work in government.

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## Wishing Well®

4	6	3	4	6	5	8	6	2	4	3	7	5
A	W	B	B	A	F	A	R	L	O	E	C	U
7	6	8	3	8	4	6	7	4	7	4	3	2
O	M	N	C	A	L	F	M	D	F	E	O	O
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E	L	E	O	L	N	O	Y	R	Z	K	R	E
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7	3	5	2	5	2	5	2	3	2	3	5	3
D	E	O	W	U	A	R	R	O	D	U	S	S

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

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1. AD SLOGANS: Which company was advertised with the slogan, "Think Outside the Bun"?
2. TELEVISION: Which TV show spawned the spinoff sitcom "Mama's Family"?
3. U.S. CITIES: In which city would you find the USS Arizona Memorial?
4. ANATOMY: What are the bones that make up the spine known as?
5. GEOGRAPHY: What is the lowest point in the United States?
6. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the traditional material in a 40th anniversary gift?
7. MOVIES: What is the name of the tow truck in the animated movie "Cars"?
8. CURRENCY: Which former president is depicted on the U.S. \$50 bill?
9. LANGUAGE: What does the texting acronym SMH mean?
10. LITERATURE: Where do Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends live?

### Answers

1. Taco Bell.
2. "The Carol Burnett Show"
3. Honolulu, Hawaii (Pearl Harbor).
4. Vertebrae.
5. Death Valley, California.
6. Ruby.
7. Mater.
8. Ulysses Grant.
9. Shaking my head.
10. Hundred Acre Wood.

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South Dakota Governor

**Kristi Noem**



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

## **Making the Best State in the Nation Even Better**

As the 2023 legislative session comes to a close, I want to take a moment to look back at what the legislature and I were able to accomplish working together for the people of South Dakota. We advanced the American Dream. We provided opportunities for families to grow even stronger. And we have further guaranteed the safety of our people. Altogether, we made life better for South Dakotans.

First off, our daughters can accomplish anything they set their minds to. To send them that message, I opened my State of the State Address with a promise: to fix our state laws and Constitution so that they reflect that both men and women can hold office. I proudly signed legislation to change references to state officeholders in statute, and a constitutional amendment will be on the ballot in 2024.

As big an accomplishment as this is, we have done even more for the people of South Dakota this legislative session. Together, we are continuing to build and advance the American Dream. We're addressing our workforce "growing pains" head-on by accepting out-of-state licenses for nearly every profession. Over 3,000 jobs will be needed every year through 2030 in professions affected by this legislation – this bill will help us fill them. It will allow Freedom-loving people from every corner of the country to move to South Dakota, join our record-breaking economy, and pursue their American Dream.

We also delivered more than \$100 million in tax relief to the people of South Dakota. Although the legislature only published a temporary tax holiday, I am glad they agreed that such tax relief is necessary. And I will continue to work with them to deliver a permanent tax cut for the people.

I also worked with legislators to preserve South Dakota's number one industry: agriculture. Our farmers are the heart and soul of this state, and they literally feed the world. They should not have to face frivolous claims that delay development and spike the cost of production. This legislation will protect the future of South Dakota ag and ensure that we can pass this thriving industry down to our kids and grandkids.

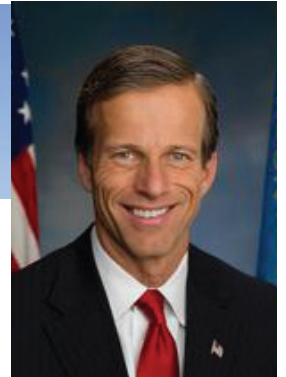
We are continuing to build stronger families in South Dakota. Now, our state laws will guarantee that it is the responsibility of both the mother and father to equally pay expenses related to pregnancy. The gift of a child is a beautiful thing, but too often mothers are faced with financial burden. They should never have to face that alone. Just as life begins at conception, so should financial support.

States have the responsibility to secure their own people. South Dakota is drawing the blueprint for state-led foreign policy. Early this session, I signed an Executive Order to restrict state and local governments from contracting with six "Evil Foreign Governments," China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, and Venezuela. The legislature then passed a bill to codify that Executive Order. This legislation protects our taxpayers' dollars from becoming revenue streams for evil foreign governments, and it ensures that South Dakota will continue to be a beacon of Freedom for the rest of the nation.

South Dakota is the greatest state in America. It's the best state to live, work, and raise a family. The best state to pursue the American Dream. I can see it, South Dakotans can see it, and Americans all over the country can see it. But there are always opportunities to do better. There were even more accomplishments than these. I am proud that this legislative session we improved the lives of South Dakotans.

Our state motto is "Under God, the People Rule." There is not a doubt in my mind that, as long as we continue to listen to the people of South Dakota, we will always be the best state in the nation.

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



## All the President's Tax Hikes

President Reagan once quipped that, "Democrats believe every day is April 15," and the Biden administration's reckless tax-and-spend agenda proves that the Gipper's words still ring true today. After two years of adding trillions to the debt, fueling a multi-year inflation crisis, and increasing taxes by hundreds of billions of dollars, the president recently proposed hiking taxes another \$4.7 trillion. This is the wrong prescription for our economy and our country.

Anybody who looks at the federal budget can see the problem is spending too much, not taxing too little. Yet, three consecutive budgets from the president have proposed greater spending and higher taxes. The president's latest plan would raise taxes on American workers and businesses, double down on the \$80 billion already given to the IRS, and ultimately do little for working families. These proposed tax hikes would reverse the gains made by Republicans' 2017 tax reform effort by making the American economy less competitive, and they would make our economy weaker by lowering wages, stifling job creation, and decreasing economic growth.

Republicans have had success preventing President Biden and Democrats from enacting much of their reckless tax agenda. Last year, the Senate adopted my amendment to protect small businesses from one of these ill-conceived tax plans. Another amendment I authored last Congress, which also passed the Senate, blocked President Biden's proposal to subject family-run businesses to a tax on unrealized gains when the owner dies and passes it on to the next generation. This tax would have been devastating for family farms and ranches.

South Dakota farmers and ranchers often dream of passing their operations to the next generation in their family, but burdensome tax policy can make it untenable. I'm glad to have protected farmers and ranchers from the president's tax hike proposal, but more needs to be done. One common-sense idea is to permanently repeal the death tax because it's fundamentally flawed. The money left in an estate when a person dies has already been taxed at least once, but the death tax allows the federal government to take another cut.

The death tax impacts family farms, ranches, and small businesses, which are often cash-poor operations. A farm or ranch may be valued at several million dollars, but most of that could be tied up in equipment and land, not money in the bank. The result is that families may have to sell all or most of these assets just to cover their tax bill. I've supported repealing this unnecessary tax throughout my time in Congress, and I'm proud that my recently reintroduced bill to repeal it has support from nearly all Senate Republicans. One family farm lost to the death tax is one too many.

Neither higher taxes nor greater spending is the right approach, and together they would only prolong the economic headwinds that are straining family budgets today. I'll continue working to protect South Dakota families, farmers, ranchers, and small businesses from burdensome taxes that get in the way of achieving the American dream.



CONGRESSMAN

**DUSTY JOHNSON**

Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



## Vietnam Veterans Day

March 29th is a day for Americans to remember and commemorate the service and sacrifices made by nearly three million servicemembers who served in Vietnam.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the disestablishment of the United States Military Assistance Command in Vietnam, and the day the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam.

Our troops, many of them our fathers and grandfathers, came home from Vietnam but didn't get the proper welcome they deserved. Throughout my time in Congress, I've had the opportunity to honor over 671 Vietnam Veterans through commemorative pinning ceremonies. While this welcome home is decades overdue, it's never too late to say thank you to our veterans.

During the war era, nine million active duty served. At one point, over three million were in Vietnam at the same time, which was more than any time during World War II.

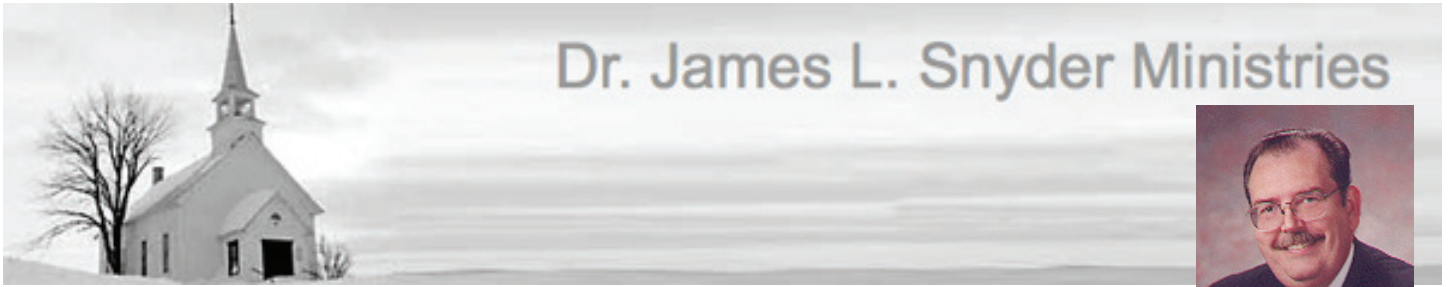
Today, there are still six million Vietnam veterans in America, and millions of families of those who served during the war. Our veterans and military families have made tremendous sacrifices to protect our freedoms.

There are over 54,000 veterans in the State of South Dakota, and although I didn't serve in the Armed Forces, I work to represent them every day in Congress. Meeting with veterans, hearing their stories, taking their concerns, and understanding their needs has given me a deeper understanding of the tremendous sacrifice that our servicemembers and their families, both past and present, have made to protect our freedoms.

I'll be hosting our first Vietnam veterans pinning ceremony of 2023 in April. If you served in the Vietnam War or have a family member who served, please fill out the form here so they can be recognized and properly honored.

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## What a Wacky World We Live in



I like the old saying, "Just when you think it can't get any worse, it does." This is the kind of world we live in today, and I'm still not adjusted to this sort of thing. I'm not sure I will ever adjust to the world around me.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I will be watching the news, and a story of some devastation somewhere in the world will come on.

When this happens, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage will say, "What a wacky world we live in." And if anybody knows about wacky, it is she. After all, she married me.

A story happened in our city when a truck driver was driving under an overpass, and the truck was too big and smashed the overpass. That shut down traffic for at least one day.

"What's wrong with that driver?" The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage asked. "Doesn't he know about overpasses?"

Then she sighed deeply and said, "What a wacky world we live in."

When I was young, we had the Three Stooges. Today we have the news media, and I'm unsure which one is wackier.

Watching the news the other night, a similar story was being reported, and I looked at my wife and said, "What a wacky world we live in." I paused for a moment and then said, "It's not the world I grew up in." Then I laughed.

I wasn't expecting her response, but after all this time, I should've expected something.

"Whatever made you think that you have grown up?"

I didn't catch it at first, but I got what she said after a while.

That gave me pause for thinking, have I really grown up?

When I was a teenager at home, my mother would get aggravated at me and say very dramatically, "Why don't you just grow up?"

Now, after over 50 years, my wife is questioning that I have grown up.

After she said it to me, I pondered for quite a few days on what does it actually mean to grow up? And, most importantly of all, does anybody ever grow up?

We may live in a wacky world because few people have actually grown up yet. So if we had more adults around, maybe things wouldn't get as wacky as it has become.

I wanted to ask The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, who I assume has grown up, what I need to do to grow up?"

As we watched the news one night, she said, "What a wacky world we live in." At that point, I replied, "Maybe it's so wacky because people haven't grown up yet."

She went on a tirade explaining why most people have not grown up yet. I tried to listen carefully and take a few notes, but none made sense. It's like a first-grader listening to a 12th-grader explaining the law of gravity. That makes no sense to them at all.

I thought maybe I could get a few clues as to what I can do to grow up.

I couldn't keep it any longer, so I asked her, "What do you think I need to do to grow up?"

I should never ask questions like this to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

"Well," she started, "you should stop acting like a silly person."

I chuckled and said, "But what if I'm not acting?"

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Staring at me, she said, "That is exactly what I mean."

"So, if you are not acting, you are the silliest person I have ever known."

According to her, you can't be silly and grown-up at the same time.

I asked her for more ideas about growing up.

"The next thing you need to do is stop thinking every situation is a joke."

Pondering this, I'm not sure I will ever grow up if that is true. I see a joke where The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage sees something serious. She's much more grown-up than I ever will be.

"There is a positive side to this wacky world of ours." The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage looked at me smiling. Then she continued, "If the world weren't as wacky as it is, people would see that you're wacky."

I did not know what she meant by that and would not press that point. The fact that she mentioned that is a plus for me, and I won't undermine that.

After all of this, I wonder if it's worth growing up. What good does it do to grow up when those people around you aren't? Maybe wacky is not that bad.

On the bright side, I'm going to try.

I couldn't help but think of one of the strangest stories about David in 1 Samuel 21, "And he [David] changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me? Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?"

David used "wacky" to his advantage. That worked for him and after giving some thought, maybe that could work for my advantage. Of course, David was acting and I probably am not.

# GDILIVE.COM

## GHS POPS Concert

### Sunday, April 2, 2023

### 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.



## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What exactly is permaculture and how is it good for the environment?

-- Mary B., New Haven, CT

A buzzword in sustainability circles, permaculture—historically combining “permanent” and “agriculture”—describes ecologically-conscious farming to create sustainable ecosystems for future generations, using methods such as conservation tillage, proper drainage, and polyculture (growing more than one crop species in the same space, at the same time). The Australian organization Permaculture Visions notes that “natural energies... [and nature’s eight] reliable patterns that collect, store and move resources around” make it possible for humanity to use less energy to create comfortable living.”

More recently, the word combines “permanent” and “culture” to describe sustainable land use in general, especially in ways that prioritize the knowledge of indigenous peoples. The podcast Green Dreamer has highlighted numerous indigenous voices offering ways to reframe the discussion of nature, permaculture and humanity’s potential responses to the climate crisis. The publication Tenth Acre Farm describes its aim as “working with nature to be low maintenance and highly productive.”

Simply put, permaculture is a method of cultivation that uses multiple tools to minimize human impact on the environment by mimicking the zero-waste feedback loops of naturally-existing systems. Much of permaculture is guided by three ethics and several major principles that help us to be good eco-stewards and support ourselves with native species, while disturbing the least amount of land. It introduces the idea of human responsibility in maintaining ecosystems, encourages greater consideration of the impact of human activities on the environment, and reduces waste associated with production intended only for sale.

The Habiba Organic Farm in Egypt puts these principles into practice, converting a former desert settlement, where crops are difficult to grow, to arable land on which many desert-viable plants have been cultivated. Similarly, in India, coconut trees, neem trees and legumes were planted to diversify areas that had been subject to slash-and-burn agriculture for 20 years. Among most current permaculture programs, resilience (especially to growing threats of climate change), cooperation and educational/volunteering opportunities are key elements that define the project and connect it to the permaculture ethos.

Designing irrigation that allows water to seep slowly into soil across a large area prevents soil erosion and nutrient leaching. Similarly, composting and reusing “waste” products reduces pollution and improves soil quality. Readers interested in beginning their own permaculture projects (even home gardens) can start by observing their own land to determine land patterns, plant native species, collect rainwater and runoff, and carefully compost their home “waste” (vegetable peels, coffee grounds, eggshells, etc.). “Permaculture site design follows a multi-step process, which starts with observing the landscape through a specific set of both passive and active observations... [and using maps to] think through many possible scenarios and outcomes before [committing] to certain strategies or concepts”, as Tenth Acre Farm puts it.

In a more general sense, permaculture can be incorporated into people’s daily lives in simple ways that identify activities which drain lots of energy and redirecting that energy into productive activities,



**Community planners have turned a desolate patch of desert onto a thriving organic farm at Habiba in Egypt by applying the principles of permaculture.** Credit: Habiba Community.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Need mental health care in SD? You may have to get in line Months-long waitlists raise concerns about a statewide shortage

BY: NICOLE SCHLABACH - APRIL 1, 2023 7:00 AM

Angelena Plummer, owner of a counseling practice in Rapid City, knows what it's like to wait for mental health care.

A few years ago, she called a therapist after a distressing life event. When she found out the wait was three months for the next available appointment, Plummer recalled, "it was a literal jaw drop."

"My memory of that was a lot of curse words, bewilderment and 'yes I'll still take the appointment,'" she said.

The first session brought up additional issues. So, when the therapist wasn't available again for over a month, Plummer felt "alone and worse off than I was when I entered the session."

Lengthy waitlists are still a concern in Rapid City, reflecting a statewide problem. Several bills in the recently concluded legislative session — including one providing \$2 million for suicide prevention, which passed — addressed the issue.

Considering South Dakota saw record-breaking suicide numbers in 2021 (statistics for 2022 are still provisional), there's concern that the shortage has become critical.

The shortage is "the worst we've seen," according to Anthony Raaphorst, president of the West River Counseling Association. "Over the last two years, we have seen a major change, where it's like, 'We need more help,'" he said.

The total number of licensed counselors and marriage and family therapists in the state has actually grown over the last few years. Last year saw the largest increase in at least seven years, according to data from the Board of Examiners for Licensed Counselors and Marriage & Family Therapists.

The shortage may therefore be explained by rising demand. Certain types of counselors and social workers will be in high demand through 2030 with higher-than-average annual job openings, according to projections published last year by the South Dakota Labor Market Information Center.

The coronavirus pandemic has increased the demand for mental health care, professionals in the field say, while decreasing the stigma against seeking services. The stigma is still there, but "people are accepting that it's OK to get help," Raaphorst said.

This surge in demand "has overwhelmed mental health services, resulting in burnout of providers and



**Counselor Angelena Plummer sits in a room used for therapy at her private practice, A Positive Life, on March 3, 2023, in Rapid City.** (Nicole Schlabach/For South Dakota Searchlight)

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incredibly long waitlists” in Sioux Falls, as reported in the Mental Health Needs Assessment of Sioux Falls, published in January by the Augustana Research Center Institute.

Younger South Dakotans are seeking services more often, the report says.

Every county in South Dakota faces a shortage of mental health professionals, either for the entire county or for a group of people living in the county, according to the Health Resources & Services Administration. These shortages are typically defined as areas, which may span multiple

## Monument Health's Behavioral Health Center in Rapid City. (Nicole Schlabach/

For South Dakota Searchlight)

counties, with no more than one psychiatrist per 15,000-30,000 people.

### Clients 'desperate for help'

The shortage is one reason why Beverly Dafler, owner of Crossroads Counseling Services in Rapid City, hasn't fully retired from her practice.

"I'm semi-retired, and I'm still getting calls from people who are saying they're desperate for help," Dafler said.

Due to obstacles like cost, transportation or the stigma of seeking care, people don't tend to seek mental health care until they really need it.

"Much like the dentist, they don't go until it has reached a critical state," said Duane Kavanaugh, director of counseling services at South Dakota Mines.

If clients don't get the care they need, their health may worsen, Raaphorst said. Or, they may turn to unhealthy coping techniques like substance abuse.

Ultimately, he said, ripple effects may impact the families of those seeking care.

"It's a domino effect," Raaphorst said. "The shortage means that the person isn't getting the help they need, and that affects those around them."

Certain communities may find it especially difficult to find a provider, according to the Mental Health Needs Assessment of Sioux Falls. This includes non-English speakers, rural clients, and non-white clients looking for a provider of a similar racial identity or cultural background.

Lower income clients have few options for affordable care, the report said, and organizations with sliding scale fees often have the longest waitlists. Months-long wait times for services in Sioux Falls were described, with some of the longest wait times for psychiatrists.

In Rapid City, South Dakota Searchlight found wait times between less than one week and over six

months for therapists and psychiatrists. Larger organizations had the longest waitlists.

At the Monument Health Behavioral Health Center, counseling services are booked until July. Psychiatry services are booked until September for adults and July for children.

Across the state, children wait up to 4-6 weeks for mental health care, as described by mental health and juvenile justice system workers during summer meetings of the Legislature's Study Committee on Juvenile Justice. Rep. Taylor Rehfeldt, R-Sioux Falls, used testimony from those meetings to inform a resolution encouraging further research into childhood mental health, but the resolution didn't pass during the legislative session.

Students waited at least two weeks for counseling services at every state university last semester, with some counselors at BHSU working over their lunch breaks "out of the goodness of their hearts," said Caleb Weiland, president of the South Dakota Student Federation.

He also referenced the problem at a legislative hearing in January, where the president of the South Dakota State University Students' Association, Blake Pulse, revealed that over 100 students were on a waitlist for counseling services at the university. The topic of the testimony was the suicide prevention bill that passed during the legislative session. It provides funds to support suicide prevention and loss programs for youth and young adults.

### 'You might get no one to apply'

Some mental health organizations have struggled to hire enough employees to meet the demand. "Years ago, you'd get applicants. But now, depending on where you are, you might get no one to apply to work there," Kavanaugh said.

In early February, there were 66 vacancies at a Behavior Management Systems Agency in western South Dakota with 160 employees.

Of those, 44 were in outpatient counseling and case management, as heard in testimony for a bill in the Legislature that didn't pass, but would have appropriated scholarship funds for students entering the behavioral health field.

In December, there were 64 full-time vacancies across 12 behavioral health organizations that primarily serve Rapid City, according to a survey facilitated by the John T. Vucurevich Foundation of a group of providers, the Systems of Care Collaborative, who meet to discuss youth-centric issues.

Over 70% of those positions required a graduate degree while under 30% required only a bachelor's degree.

Potential job titles ranged from case manager at the bachelor's degree level to psychiatrist at the doctoral degree level.

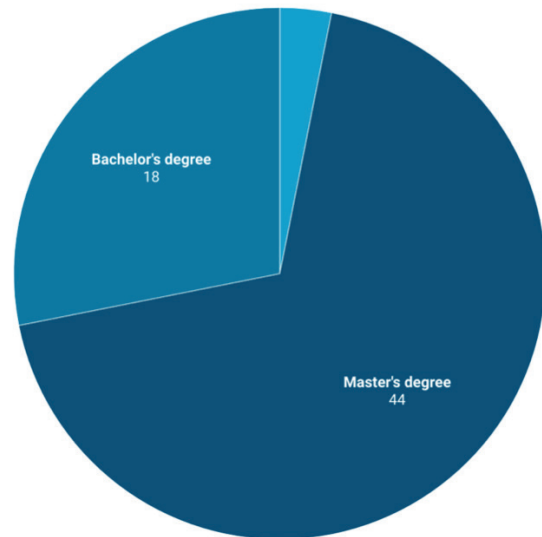
The highest percentage of vacancies required a master's degree but not a doctoral degree, with potential positions of counselor, social worker or psychiatric nurse practitioner.

Workforce issues extend across the state — Sioux Falls providers reported hiring challenges heightened by high turnover rates, as described in the Mental Health Needs Assessment of Sioux Falls. Low pay, along with the long process of obtaining a license, were driving factors.

### Job openings by degree needed

Vacant full-time positions across 12 behavioral health organizations that primarily serve Rapid City as of Dec. 6, 2022

■ Doctoral degree ■ Master's degree ■ Bachelor's degree



This chart does not include licensure or certification requirements.

Chart: Nicole Schlabach • Source: Systems of Care Collaborative • Created with Datawrapper

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## **Filling the pipeline with students**

SDSU offers the only master's degree in counseling on the western side of the state at an off-campus center in Rapid City, where enrollments have increased over the last few years.

Scholarships would have a "profound impact" on recruiting new students since none are currently offered, said Moneik Stephens, the SDSU program coordinator for Rapid City.

Similar support may attract students to the state's only clinical psychology Ph.D. program at the University of South Dakota. Clinical psychologists, unlike counselors, can test clients for psychological conditions like attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or autism.

"Higher stipends, tuition remission and providing health insurance for graduate assistants would be the biggest help in attracting students to our program," said Beth Boyd, director of the clinical psychology program at USD, in an email.

For West River students, limited availability of local graduate programs may influence their career decisions.

"Ideally we would have a Ph.D. program locally or a second master's program," said BHSU Psychology Professor Emilia Flint. When someone realizes they need to move away to advance, she said, "sometimes it's like seeing the wind knocked out of their sails."

## **'People should at least be able to survive'**

Low wages create retention issues for some professions.

"We have a high turnover rate in mental health. A lot of times, it can get to people. Pay is not as high as some people think that it is," Raaphorst said.

Counselor Charlie Hartpence works 60-70 hours per week split between two employers to care for her child as a single mom in Rapid City.

"I love the work that I do — it's really fulfilling, but I regret taking this path in life," Hartpence said.

Her first full-time job at a social services agency paid \$16 an hour in 2020. Now, she divides her time between a counseling practice and an adolescent care center. She has \$120,000 of student loan debt from her undergraduate and master's degrees, she said, "and I make less money now than I made working as a barista."

"In school, they talk about not doing this job for the money, but I think people should at least be able to survive if not flourish," Hartpence said.

School counselors, who need a master's degree to practice, also face low compensation that affects retention. The average salary for school counselors in Rapid City is \$42,340.

"If the starting salary was higher, they would be more inclined to stay in the state," said Daniel DeCino, associate professor in the Division of Counseling and Psychology in Education at USD, in an email.

## **'Ecosystem' support needed**

In this strained system, some clients look beyond professionals for help.

When people can't get into a therapy appointment right away, they sometimes visit peer support groups run by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, said Sheri Nelson, executive director for the alliance in South Dakota.

"It's not in place of therapy — it's in addition to therapy — and it's a good connection point for people who are waiting to see a mental health provider," Nelson said.

On college campuses across the state, students find support in peer-to-peer mentorship programs run by Lost & Found, a suicide prevention nonprofit.

The mentors are not trained to be counselors — instead, they offer a listening ear, teach life skills like boundary setting, and connect their mentee to other mental health resources if needed.

For "students who are at subclinical levels of depression and anxiety, this is exactly what they need" to prevent those conditions from becoming bigger issues, said Carrie Jorgensen, senior prevention program specialist at Lost & Found.

More of this "broader ecosystem support" could help providers by easing the strain on their services, said Erik Muckey, executive director of the nonprofit.

"It's no fault of anybody, but we have to respond," he said. "There is no other time that we can wait for

this to pass because it's not going to pass. It's just going to continue."

*Nicole is a freelance science, health and outdoor writer based in Rapid City. She served as the managing editor of an independent student newspaper in Athens, Georgia, while in school. In recent years, she's worked in editing, growth operations and heritage interpretation — all while maintaining a soft spot for journalism.*

## Mental health resources For non-crisis services

### To find help:

Obtain a mental health resource guide for your area, offered by the Helpline Center. Or, call the center at 211 for listening and support.

Download the Let's Talk About Mental Health Guide published by the nonprofit Lost & Found to learn how to find help or support others.

To find peer support:

Join a support group (virtual or in-person) led by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

For college students, become a mentee through the Peer2Peer program offered by Lost & Found.

For crisis services

For a suicide crisis:

Call or text 988 to reach the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Veterans, press 1 after dialing 988 to connect with the Veterans Crisis Lifeline or text 838255.

For any crisis:

Text HOME to 741741 to connect with the Crisis Text Line.

For LGBTQ youth, text START to 678678 to connect with a crisis counselor with The Trevor Project.

For transgender people, call 877-565-8860 to reach the Trans Lifeline.

For a domestic or sexual violence crisis:

Call 800-565-4673 or chat online with the National Sexual Assault Hotline.

For those who speak Spanish, a different online chat is available.

Call 800-799-7233 or text START to 88788 to reach the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

For teens, call 866-331-9474 or text LOVEIS to 22522 to reach the National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline.

For Native Americans, call 844-762-8483 to reach the StrongHearts Native Helpline or chat online with an advocate.

For rural stress or a disaster-related crisis:

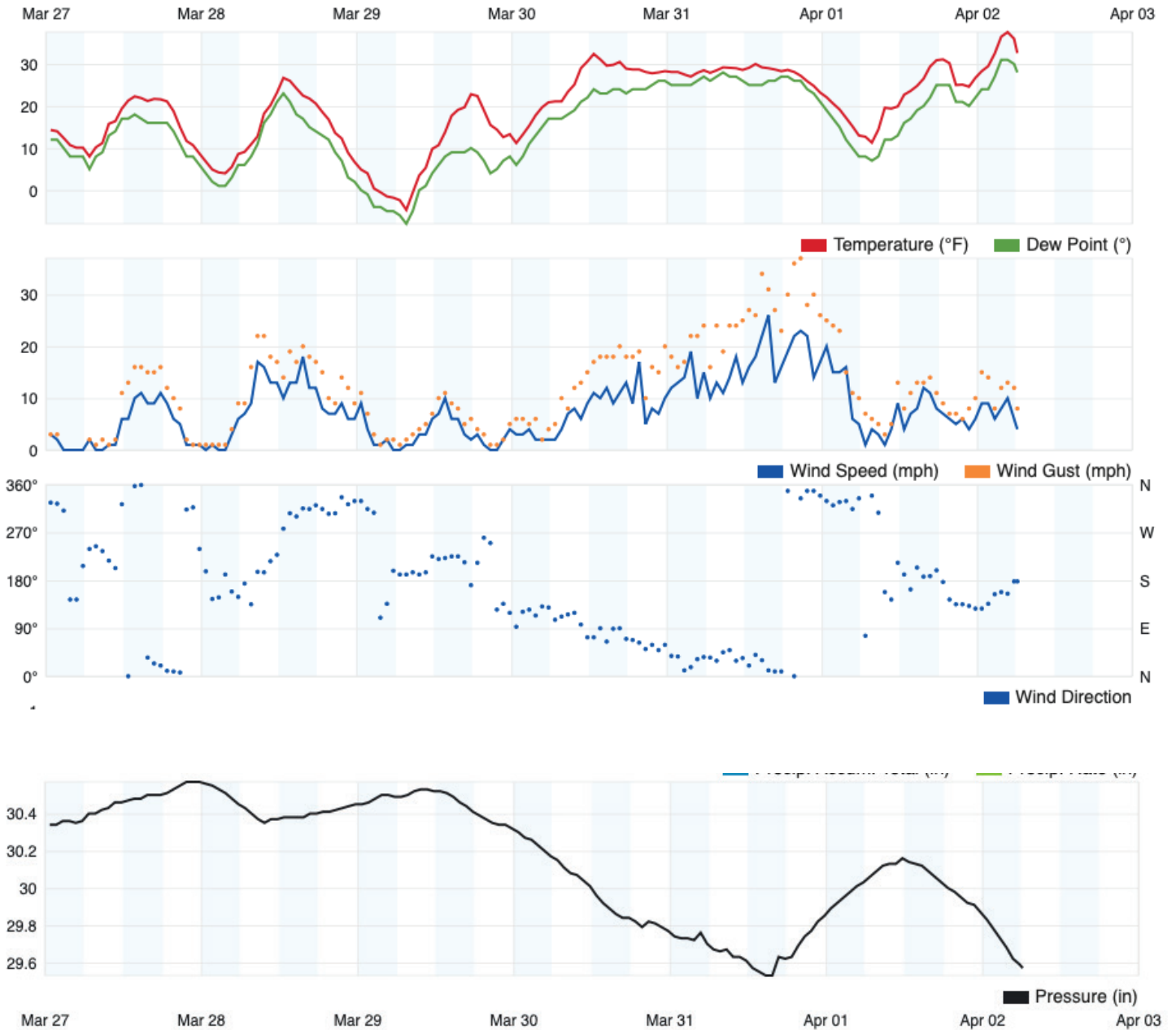
Call 800-985-5990 to receive crisis counseling through the Disaster Distress Helpline.

For farmers, call 800-691-4336 to reach the Farm and Rural Stress Hotline.

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## Past Week's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Breezy. Patchy Blowing Snow then Sunny	Mostly Clear	Increasing Clouds	Cloudy then Snow Likely	Heavy Snow and Blowing Snow	Heavy Snow and Blowing Snow	Snow Likely and Blowing Snow
High: 38 °F	Low: 19 °F	High: 31 °F	Low: 18 °F	High: 29 °F	Low: 16 °F	High: 23 °F

Winter Storm Watch



## Major Blizzard Headed This Way

April 2, 2023  
5:35 AM

Likely The Worst Storm Of The Season

### Overview

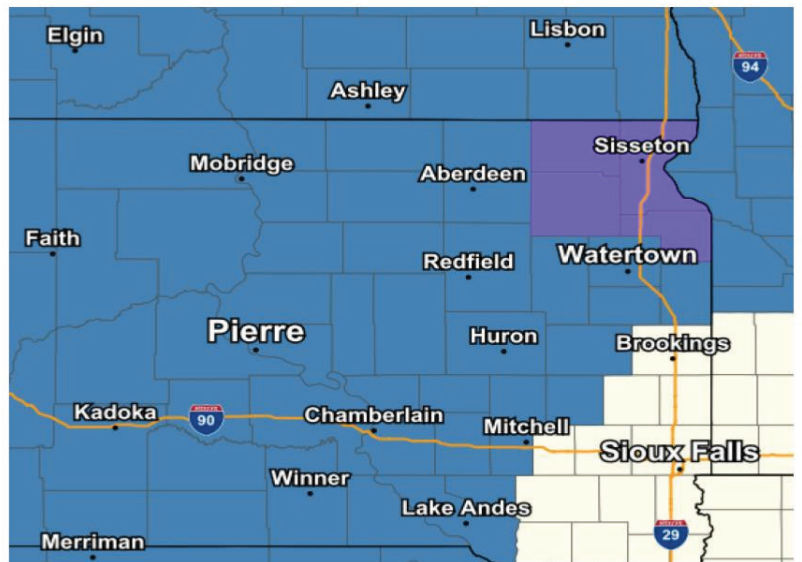
#### TUESDAY

- Moderate to heavy snow possible, developing across central, north central and northeast South Dakota & western Minnesota
- Widespread strong winds possible in excess of 50 mph
- **Anticipate widespread dangerous or impossible travel conditions**

#### WEDNESDAY

- Continued moderate snow possible in the morning
- Continued strong winds possible in excess of 50 mph
- **Widespread dangerous to impossible travel conditions expected to continue**

### Winter Storm Watch For Blizzard Conditions



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

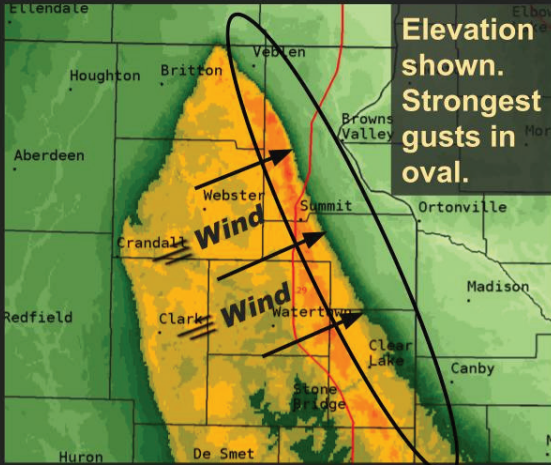
Increasing confidence that a winter weather system will bring a wintry mix, heavy snow and blizzard conditions to the Northern Plains Tuesday into Wednesday. Major impacts are possible including difficult to impossible travel conditions.



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## Gusty Downslope Winds This Morning



### What/Where?

Localized strong winds of up to 45 mph are expected downwind of the Coteau tonight, across portions of Marshall, Roberts, Day, and Grant Counties.

### For How Long?

Through the early afternoon.

### Impacts

Use caution while traveling! Blowing snow will reduce visibilities, significantly at times. Traveling I-29 north of Summit and/or other downslope wind-prone roads may be difficult.



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION April 2, 2023 5:33 AM

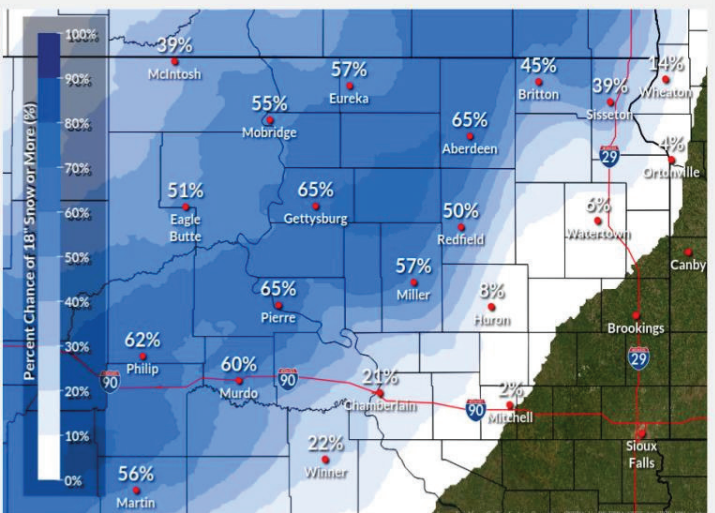
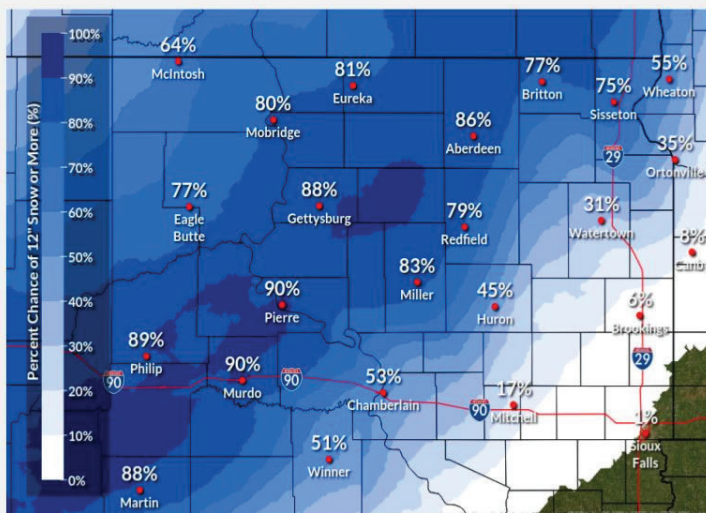


## Snowfall Probabilities

April 2, 2023 5:37 AM

### Probability of 12"

### Probability of 18"



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## SEASONAL SNOW TOTALS AS OF 4-1-23

Location	2022-2023 total through 3/31/23	Seasonal Average	Record (Season)
Sisseton	74.1"	30.7"	87.4 (2018-19)
Mobridge	32.2"	27.8"	86.8 (2018-19)
Watertown	45.1"	35.8"	81.7 (2018-19)
Aberdeen	62.9"	38.5"	109.8 (1936-37)
Kennebec	68.4"	31.5"	73.2 (2000-01)
Pierre	63.2"	31.9"	82.0 (1951-52)
Wheaton	60.6"	32.7"	82.8 (1996-97)
Timber Lake	68.4"	35.4"	92.9 (1949-50)

## Winter Storm/Blizzard Watch

**URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE**  
**National Weather Service Aberdeen SD**  
**229 AM CDT Sun Apr 2 2023**

Traverse-Big Stone-Corson-Campbell-McPherson-Brown-Walworth-Edmunds-Dewey-Potter-Faulk-Spink-Clark-Codington-Hamlin-Deuel-Stanley-Sully-Hughes-Hyde-Hand-Jones-Lyman-Buffalo

Including the cities of Wheaton, Ortonville, McIntosh, Herreid, Eureka, Aberdeen, Mobridge, Ipswich, Isabel, Gettysburg, Faulkton, Redfield, Clark, Watertown, Hayti, Clear Lake, Fort Pierre, Onida, Pierre, Highmore, Miller, Murdo, Kennebec, and Fort Thompson

...WINTER STORM WATCH IN EFFECT FROM LATE MONDAY NIGHT THROUGH LATE WEDNESDAY NIGHT...

\* WHAT...Blizzard conditions possible. Total snow accumulations of 10 to 20 inches possible. Winds could gust as high as 55 mph.

\* WHERE...Portions of west central Minnesota and central, north central and northeast South Dakota.

\* WHEN...From late Monday night through late Wednesday night.

\* IMPACTS...Travel could be very difficult to impossible. Patchy blowing snow could significantly reduce visibility. The hazardous conditions could impact the morning or evening commute. Strong winds could cause tree damage.

\* ADDITIONAL DETAILS...For this blizzard watch...for many locations this has the potential to be the worst storm of the season. This two day long storm system will result in dangerous or impossible driving conditions, which could place stranded motorists in potentially life threatening circumstances.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

Prepare for possible blizzard conditions. Continue to monitor the latest forecasts for updates on this situation.

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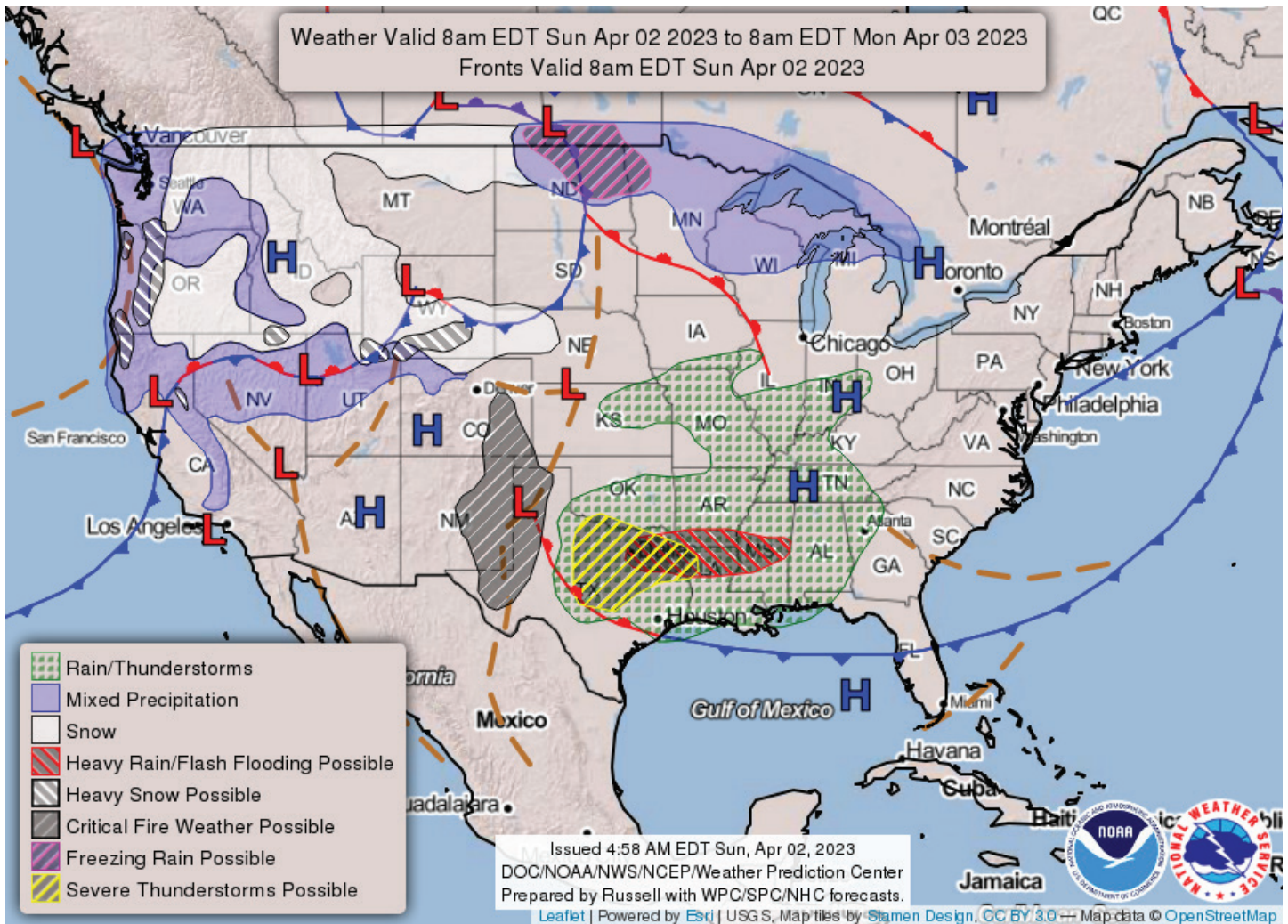
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 31 °F at 6:09 PM**  
**Low Temp: 10 °F at 6:56 AM**  
**Wind: 25 mph at 1:02 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00 (Moisture content from snow: 0.75)**

Day length: 12 hours, 53 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 84 in 1921  
Record Low: 3 in 1975  
Average High: 51  
Average Low: 26  
Average Precip in April.: 0.08  
Precip to date in March.: 2.35  
Average Precip to date: 2.14  
Precip Year to Date: 3.93  
Sunset Tonight: 8:02:51 PM  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:07:11 AM



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## Today in Weather History

April 2, 1998: The James River began to flood in early April from Columbia to Stratford. The James rose to around 1.5 feet above flood stage at Columbia and Stratford through April into May. The James River mainly flooded farmland, pastureland, and a few roads in the vicinity of the channel.

April 2, 2010: In South Dakota, a band of heavy snow set up across Corson and Dewey counties during the early morning hours of April 2nd. Along with heavy wet snow, northwest winds gusting up to 40 mph developed. By the time the storm ended in the late morning hours, 6 to 8 inches of snow had fallen. The heavy snow, combined with the strong winds, downed many power poles across the region along with making travel treacherous. Some snowfall amounts included; 4 inches at Eagle Butte; 6 inches at Timber Lake, McLaughlin, and 14 miles north of Isabel; 7 inches at Isabel and 6 miles southeast of McIntosh; 8 inches southwest of Keldron. More than 400 poles were lost to the heavy snow leaving approximately 800 people without power. Eighty linemen worked through the Easter weekend in the snow and mud. McLaughlin and Keldron were the hardest hit. Several hundred people were still without power on April 5th.

1936: An estimated F4 tornado cut a 15-mile path through Crisp County, GA. The hardest hit area was the town of Cordele, where 276 homes were destroyed in a five-block swath through the town. The storm was on a course that would have missed the center of town, but it made a left turn towards the end of its path. 23 people were killed and 500 injured. Total damage was \$3 million.

1957: An F3 tornado tore through Dallas, TX. 10 people were killed, and 216 were injured. Total damage was \$1.5 million. This tornado was among the most photographed and studied in history.

1975 - The northeastern U.S. was in the grips of a severe storm which produced hurricane force winds along the coast, and two to three feet of snow in Maine and New Hampshire. Winds atop Mount Washington NH gusted to 140 mph. (David Ludlum)

1982: Severe thunderstorms spawned fifty-six tornadoes in the central U.S., including seventeen in the Red River Region of Texas and Oklahoma. The tornadoes claimed thirty lives and injured 383 other persons. A violent tornado near Messer, Oklahoma left only the carpet tack strips on the slab of a house it destroyed and carried a motel sign thirty miles.

1987 - Eleven cities in Florida reported record low temperatures for the date, including Tallahassee with a reading of 31 degrees. The low of 48 degrees at Key West smashed their previous record for the date by 13 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in North Carolina and Virginia during the afternoon and evening. Thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail, and spawned a tornado near Chester VA which caused half a million dollars damage. A storm system produced snow and gale force winds across northern Michigan, with 8.3 inches of snow reported at Marquette. Temperatures in the north central U.S. soared from morning lows in the 20s and 30s to afternoon highs in the 60s and 70s. Eight cities reported record highs for the date, including Havre MT with a reading of 77 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2005 - Heavy rainfall in the Northeast produced flooding in parts of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Severe flooding along the Delaware River forced the evacuation of 6,000 residents in New Jersey and over 5,700 in Pennsylvania during the weekend of the 2nd-3rd. Around 3,200 homes in New Jersey were damaged, while one fatality was reported in New York (Associated Press).

2006 - Tornadoes and hail as big as softballs ripped through eight Midwestern states, killing at least 27 people, injuring scores and destroying hundreds of homes. In Tennessee, tornadoes killed 23 people, including an infant and a family of four. Severe thunderstorms, many producing tornadoes, also struck parts of Iowa, Kentucky, Arkansas, Missouri, Ohio, Illinois and Indiana. Strong wind was blamed or at least three deaths in Missouri. The weather service's Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Okla., said it had preliminary reports of 63 tornadoes. The worst damage occurred throughout the Tennessee Valley.

2015 - Late night severe storms produced 80 to 100 mph straight-line winds that caused extensive damage from Hutchinson to Newton and Wichita. An 89 mph wind gust was reported at the Kansas Aviation Museum located in southeast Wichita. (NWS, Wichita, KS)

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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### IT'S NOT ALL LOOKS

The pastor of a church in a rural community had been complaining about not feeling well for several months. His wife finally persuaded him to see the local doctor. Concerned that he would not explain all of the details of his illness, she decided to accompany him.

After his examination, the doctor asked her to accompany him into an adjacent room. After a moment he said, "I really don't like the way your husband looks."

After a few moments, she said, "I don't either." Then she continued in a hushed voice, "But he's a wonderful pastor, a great husband, and an excellent example for the children to follow."

What gracious compliments! There are not many who measure up to His standards. However, we as Christians are challenged to live lives that are examples. Paul said that we "must be an example to them by doing good deeds of every kind," and "to let everything we do reflect the integrity and seriousness of our teaching."

When we live according to God's standards, we will be examples for others to follow. If we live according to His instructions, we have the right to be heard when we speak, teach or talk. Additionally, we can provide counsel and comfort with certainty to those who are discouraged and in need if we are faithful to His Word. Are you an example of Him?

Prayer: Help us, Father, to live as an example of Your love, grace, and mercy by doing good deeds every moment of every day. May our lives imitate Your Son's! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and have nothing bad to say about us. Titus 2:7-8



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 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
03.31.23

16 26 27 42 61 23

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$385,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.01.23

2 38 43 46 51 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$2,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.01.23

1 12 25 39 45 3

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 42 Mins 41 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.01.23

6 7 11 26 35

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

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.01.23

3 14 34 56 57 2

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

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.01.23

11 19 21 29 52 17

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$159,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### **New York, city of Trump's dreams, delivers his comeuppance**

By MATT SEDENSKY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — His name has been plastered on this city's tabloids, bolted to its buildings and cemented to a special breed of brash New York confidence. Now, with Donald Trump due to return to the place that put him on the map, the city he loved is poised to deliver his comeuppance.

Rejected by its voters, ostracized by its protesters and now rebuked by its jurors, the people of New York have one more thing to splash Trump's name on: Indictment No. 71543-23.

"He wanted to be in Manhattan. He loved Manhattan. He had a connection to Manhattan," says Barbara Res, a longtime employee of the former president who was a vice president at the Trump Organization. "I don't know that he has accepted it and I don't know that he believes it, but New York turned on him."

None of Trump's romances have lasted longer than his courtship of New York. No place else could match his blend of ostentatious and outlandish. His love of the city going unrequited is Shakespearean enough, but Trump took it a step further, rising to the presidency only to become a hometown antihero.

Trump was born and raised in Queens to a real estate developer father whose projects were largely in Queens and Brooklyn. But the younger Trump ached to cross the East River and make his name in Manhattan. He gained a foothold with his transformation of the rundown Commodore Hotel into a glittering Grand Hyatt and ensured a spotlight on himself by appearing at the side of politicians and celebrities, popping up at Studio 54 and other hot spots and coaxing near-constant media coverage.

By the greed-is-good 1980s, he was a New York fixture. And in a city that prides itself as the center of the world, Trump saw himself as king.

"Trump grew up with a great deal of resentment toward others who he thought had more fame, wealth, or popularity," says David Greenberg, a Rutgers University professor who wrote "Republic of Spin: An Inside History of the American Presidency." "Making it in Manhattan — building Trump Tower and becoming a fixture of the Manhattan social scene in the 1980s — meant a lot to him."

The feeling was never truly mutual, though. Trump left a trail of unpaid bills, jilted workers and everyday New Yorkers who saw through his shameless self-promotion.

He may have been a singular character, but in a city of 8 million stories, his was just another one.

So, for years, Trump's life here continued as the city raced on around him. Marriages came and went. Skyscrapers rose. Bankruptcies were filed. Trump flickered in and out of fame's upper echelon.

He may never have been a common New Yorker, packed in the subway on the morning commute or grabbing a hot dog from a street vendor, but for many he remained a benign, if outsized, presence.

That began changing with years of bizarre, racially-fueled lies about Barack Obama's birthplace, and by the time he descended the golden escalator at Trump Tower on June 16, 2015, to announce his presidential bid, many in his hometown had little patience for the vitriol he spewed.

Rockefeller Center played host to a weekly "Saturday Night Live" that made him a mockery, and at a Waldorf-Astoria gala, he elicited groans. In vast swaths of the city, distaste for Trump turned to hatred.

Even among Republicans, many saw him as believable as a Gucci bag on Canal Street. Trump won the state's Republican primary, but couldn't convince GOP voters in Manhattan.

"He's no longer just this TV show charlatan. People see this man is actually going to lead the country and the world in the wrong direction," says Christina Greer, a political scientist at Fordham University.

On Election Night 2016, tears flowed at the Javits Center, where Hillary Clinton's victory party never materialized, while giddy supporters of Trump reveled in his surprise win across town in a Hilton ballroom. New Yorkers' rebuke of their native son meant nothing. His face was projected onto the face of the Empire State Building as locals digested the fact that he would be president.

In the days that followed, a curious parade of politicians and celebrities journeyed to Trump Tower to meet the president-elect and, for weeks after, predictions about his presidency were rampant.

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Among the musings of observers was speculation of a commuter president shuttling between New York and Washington. When word emerged that his wife and young son wouldn't immediately move to the White House, it gave credence to the idea that Trump could never fully part with the city that made him.

But Trump continued being Trump, his presidency gave way to one controversy and broken norm after another, and New York became a capital of the resistance, giving birth to persistent mass protests.

The city of his dreams was no longer a place he could call home.

"New York has gone to hell," he said as Election Day 2020 neared.

When the ballots were counted, Manhattan had seven times as many supporters of Joe Biden than those for Trump, and this time the Electoral College followed. When Trump's presidency ended and he left Washington after the violent insurrection he incited, it was clear New York would be inhospitable.

Like droves of New Yorkers before him, he retired to Florida.

When he returns north now, he spends most of his time at his club in Bedminster, New Jersey. The man who long tried to eschew his bridge-and-tunnel past is again separated from Manhattan by a river.

On his first return to Manhattan after leaving office, the New York Post reported a single person waited outside Trump Tower to catch a glimpse. Even protesters couldn't be bothered with him anymore.

His rebuke came from New Yorkers taking part in a right-of-passage for city dwellers, jury duty, and if it fit the mold of prior grand juries, it brought together a quintessential Manhattan cross-section, from neighborhoods, incomes and backgrounds different enough to ensure a cast of characters fit for TV.

With word of Trump's indictment now out, the story of his deteriorating romance with New York is gaining a sense of finality. Even the Post, part of the Rupert Murdoch media empire that helped Trump win the White House to begin with, has abandoned him. The paper that once documented his affair with a screaming "Best Sex I've Ever Had" headline beside Trump's smirking face, last week called him "deranged" on a front page on which he was branded "Bat Hit Crazy" in huge letters.

Trump once bragged he could shoot someone in the middle of Fifth Avenue and remain popular. Today, he could hand out fifties in New York and still not win the support of most locals.

He has dismissed the grand jury's actions as a "scam" and a "persecution" and denied he did anything wrong. Democrats, he says, are lying and cheating to hurt his campaign to return to the White House.

Outside the courthouse that awaits him, the spectacle has largely been confined to the hordes of media. Among the few regular New Yorkers to make the trip there was Marni Halasa, a figure skater who showed up in a leopard print leotard, cat ears and wads of fake bills strung into a "hush money" boa. She stood alone outside Friday to celebrate the indictment of one of her city's most famous sons.

"New Yorkers are here in spirit," she says, "and I feel like I'm representing most of them."

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Associated Press writer Bobby Caina Calvin contributed to this report.

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## Ukrainian official offers plan for a Crimea without Russia

By KARL RITTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A top Ukrainian official on Sunday outlined a series of steps the government in Kyiv would take after the country reclaims control of Crimea, including dismantling the strategic bridge that links the seized Black Sea peninsula to Russia.

Oleksiy Danilov, the secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, published the plan as Ukraine's military prepares for a spring counteroffensive in hopes of making new, decisive gains after more than 13 months of war to end Russia's full-scale invasion.

Moscow annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, but most of the world does not recognize it as Russian territory. The peninsula's future status will be a key feature in any negotiations on ending the current fighting.

The Kremlin has demanded that Ukraine recognize Russia's sovereignty over Crimea and acknowledge other land gains made by Moscow as a condition for peace. Kyiv has ruled out any peace talks with Mos-

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cow until Russian troops leave all occupied territories, including Crimea.

Danilov suggested prosecuting Ukrainians who worked for the Moscow-appointed administration in Crimea, adding that some would face criminal charges and others would lose government pensions be banned from public jobs.

All Russian citizens who moved to Crimea after 2014 should be expelled, and all real estate deals made under Russian rule nullified, Danilov wrote on Facebook.

As part of the plan, he also called for dismantling a 19-kilometer (12-mile) bridge that Russia built to Crimea. A truck bomb severely damaged the bridge, Europe's longest, in October. Moscow blamed Ukrainian military intelligence for the attack.

Russia has repaired the damaged section of the bridge and restored the flow of supplies to Crimea, which has served as a key hub for the Russian military during the war. Ukraine did not claim responsibility for the bomb, but Ukrainian officials had repeatedly threatened to strike the bridge in the past.

Danilov also argued for renaming the city of Sevastopol, which has been the main base for the Russian Black Sea Fleet since the 19th century. He said it could be called Object No. 6 before the Ukrainian parliament chooses another name, suggesting Akhtiar after a village that once stood where the city is now.

The Moscow-appointed head of Sevastopol, Mikhail Razvozhayev, shrugged off Danilov's plan as "sick." "It would be wrong to seriously treat comments by sick people. They must be cured, and that's what our military is doing now," Razvozhayev told the Russian state news agency Tass.

Danilov published his plan as Ukrainian troops prepared to use newly supplied Western weapons, including dozens of battle tanks, to break through Russian defenses and reclaim occupied areas in a counteroffensive expected as early as this month.

Russian troops are trying to capture the key Ukrainian stronghold of Bakhmut as part of their efforts to take all of Donetsk province, which is part of Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland of the Donbas. The 8-month campaign for Bakhmut is the longest and potentially deadliest battle of the war.

Russia's latest rocket and artillery attacks killed 4 civilians and wounded 15 others since Saturday, according to the Ukrainian military.

Ukrainian authorities reported that Russian shelling killed another six civilians later Sunday in Kostiantynivka, a small city in Donetsk province. The Russian barrage also damaged numerous residential buildings and wounded eight people, officials said.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, the war has destroyed entire cities and killed tens of thousands of people.

Ukrainian Sports Minister Vadym Huttsait, reaffirming Kyiv's call to bar Russia from the Olympics, said the death toll included 262 Ukrainian athletes.

The include Vitalii Merinov, a four-time world kickboxing champion. Merinov, who had joined the Ukrainian armed forces, died Friday of wounds sustained in action, according to the mayor of the western city of Ivano-Frankivsk.

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

## The US leads the world in weather catastrophes. Here's why

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

The United States is Earth's punching bag for nasty weather.

Blame geography for the U.S. getting hit by stronger, costlier, more varied and frequent extreme weather than anywhere on the planet, several experts said. Two oceans, the Gulf of Mexico, the Rocky Mountains, jutting peninsulas like Florida, clashing storm fronts and the jet stream combine to naturally brew the nastiest of weather.

That's only part of it. Nature dealt the United States a bad hand, but people have made it much worse by what, where and how we build, several experts told The Associated Press.

Then add climate change, and "buckle up. More extreme events are expected," said Rick Spinrad, head

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of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Tornadoes. Hurricanes. Flash floods. Droughts. Wildfires. Blizzards. Ice storms. Nor'easters. Lake-effect snow. Heat waves. Severe thunderstorms. Hail. Lightning. Atmospheric rivers. Derechos. Dust storms. Monsoons. Bomb cyclones. And the dreaded polar vortex.

It starts with "where we are on the globe," North Carolina state climatologist Kathie Dello said. "It's truly a little bit ... unlucky."

China may have more people, and a large land area like the United States, but "they don't have the same kind of clash of air masses as much as you do in the U.S. that is producing a lot of the severe weather," said Susan Cutter, director of the Hazards Vulnerability and Resilience Institute at the University of South Carolina.

The U.S. is by far the king of tornadoes and other severe storms.

"It really starts with kind of two things. Number one is the Gulf of Mexico. And number two is elevated terrain to the west," said Victor Gensini, a Northern Illinois University meteorology professor.

Look at Friday's deadly weather, and watch out for the next week to see it in action: Dry air from the West goes up over the Rockies and crashes into warm, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico, and it's all brought together along a stormy jet stream.

In the West, it's a drumbeat of atmospheric rivers. In the Atlantic, it's nor'easters in the winter, hurricanes in the summer and sometimes a weird combination of both, like Superstorm Sandy.

"It is a reality that regardless of where you are in the country, where you call home, you've likely experienced a high-impact weather event firsthand," Spinrad said.

Killer tornadoes in December 2021 that struck Kentucky illustrated the uniqueness of the United States.

They hit areas with large immigrant populations. People who fled Central and South America, Bosnia and Africa were all victims. A huge problem was that tornadoes really didn't happen in those people's former homes, so they didn't know what to watch for or what to do, or even know they had to be concerned about tornadoes, said Joseph Trujillo Falcon, a NOAA social scientist who investigated the aftermath.

With colder air up in the Arctic and warmer air in the tropics, the area between them — the mid-latitudes, where the United States is — gets the most interesting weather because of how the air acts in clashing temperatures, and that north-south temperature gradient drives the jet stream, said Northern Illinois meteorology professor Walker Ashley.

Then add mountain ranges that go north-south, jutting into the winds flowing from west to east, and underneath it all the toasty Gulf of Mexico.

The Gulf injects hot, moist air underneath the often cooler, dry air lifted by the mountains, "and that doesn't happen really anywhere else in the world," Gensini said.

If the United States as a whole has it bad, the South has it the worst, said University of Georgia meteorology professor Marshall Shepherd, a former president of the American Meteorological Society.

"We drew the short straw (in the South) that we literally can experience every single type of extreme weather event," Shepherd said. "Including blizzards. Including wildfires, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes. Every single type. ... There's no other place in the United States that can say that."

Florida, North Carolina and Louisiana also stick out in the water so are more prone to being hit by hurricanes, said Shepherd and Dello.

The South has more manufactured housing that is vulnerable to all sorts of weather hazards, and storms are more likely to happen there at night, Ashley said. Night storms are deadly because people can't see them and are less likely to take cover, and they miss warnings in their sleep.

The extreme weather triggered by America's unique geography creates hazards. But it takes humans to turn those hazards into disasters, Ashley and Gensini said.

Just look where cities pop up in America and the rest of the world: near water that floods, except maybe Denver, said South Carolina's Cutter. More people are moving to areas, such as the South, where there are more hazards.

"One of the ways in which you can make your communities more resilient is to not develop them in the

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most hazard-prone way or in the most hazard-prone portion of the community," Cutter said. "The insistence on building up barrier islands and development on barrier islands, particularly on the East Coast and the Gulf Coast, knowing that that sand is going to move and having hurricanes hit with some frequency ... seems like a colossal waste of money."

Construction standards tend to be at the bare minimum and less likely to survive the storms, Ashley said. "Our infrastructure is crumbling and nowhere near being climate-resilient at all," Shepherd said.

Poverty makes it hard to prepare for and bounce back from disasters, especially in the South, Shepherd said. That vulnerability is an even bigger issue in other places in the world.

"Safety can be bought," Ashley said. "Those that are well-to-do and who have resources can buy safety and will be the most resilient when disaster strikes. ... Unfortunately that isn't all of us."

"It's sad that we have to live these crushing losses," said Kim Cobb, a Brown University professor of environment and society. "We're worsening our hand by not understanding the landscape of vulnerability given the geographic hand we've been dealt."

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Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears

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## Rebounding Pope Francis marks Palm Sunday in Vatican square

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Bundled in a long, white coat and battling a hoarse voice, Pope Francis presided over Mass in St. Peter's Square before tens of thousands of faithful on Palm Sunday, a day after he left a Rome hospital where he was treated for bronchitis.

The sun broke through the clouds during the Mass, one of the longest services on the Church's calendar, as Francis, red vestments placed over his coat, sat in a chair under a canopy erected in the square.

He took his place there after standing and clutching a braided palm branch in a popemobile that drove at the tail end of a long, solemn procession of cardinals, other prelates and rank-and-file Catholics. Participants carried palm fronds or olive tree branches.

Francis, 86, received antibiotics administered intravenously during his three-day stay. He last previous appearance in St. Peter's Square saw him conduct his his regular Wednesday public audience. He was taken to Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic that same day after feeling ill.

His voice sounded strong as he opened the Mass, but quickly turned strained. Despite the hoarseness, Francis read a 15-minute-long homily, occasionally adding off-the-cuff remarks for emphasis or gesturing with a hand.

The homily focused on moments when people feel "extreme pain, love that fails, or is rejected or betrayed." Francis cited "children who are rejected or aborted," as well as broken marriages, "forms of social exclusion, injustice and oppression, (and) the solitude of sickness."

Deviating from his prepared speech, Francis spoke about a homeless German man who recently died, "alone, abandoned," under the colonnade circling St. Peter's Square, where homeless persons often sleep.

"I, too, need Jesus to caress me and be near to me," Francis said.

Concern over abandonment threaded through his homily. "Entire peoples are exploited and abandoned; the poor live on our streets and we look the other way; migrants are no longer faces but numbers; prisoners are disowned, people written off as problems," Francis said.

The pope also referred to "young people who feel a great emptiness inside without anyone really listening to their cry of pain," and who "find no other path but that of suicide."

Palm Sunday marks Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem in the time leading up to his crucifixion, which Christians observe on Good Friday.

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At the end of Mass, Francis greeted the Romans, tourists and pilgrims who had flocked to the square, noting that many in the crowd of 60,000 had come from afar.

"I thank you for your participation and prayers, that in the last days you intensified," the pontiff said, a reference to the many wishes he received for a quick recovery during his hospitalization. "Thanks!"

Francis' appearance on Sunday opened a heavy schedule of Holy Week appointments, including a Holy Thursday Mass at a juvenile prison in Rome. Holy Week culminates on April 9 with Easter Sunday Mass, which recalls the Christian belief in Jesus' resurrection.

Francis said Holy Week will see "more intense prayer" for the "martyred Ukrainian people." In a reference to Russia's war in Ukraine, he noted that the olive branches Catholics wave on Palm Sunday are symbols of Jesus' peace.

Then, the cardinals greeted Francis one by one, some shaking his hand or chatting briefly with him as he sat in the wheelchair he uses to cope with a chronic knee problem. At least one prelate gave him a kiss on each cheek.

Finally, Francis went back aboard the open-topped popemobile to loop around and through the square, as he smiled and waved to the faithful, many of whom held aloft national flags. At one point during the nearly 20-minute jaunt over the cobblestones, he was driven down a stretch of the boulevard lined with cafes and souvenir shops that leads to St. Peter's Square.

## Trans people face rhetoric, disinformation after shooting

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

Anti-transgender rhetoric and disinformation in the days following the shooting at a Nashville Christian school that killed six people have heightened the fears of a community already on edge amid a historic push for more restrictions on trans people's rights this year.

Authorities haven't shared any evidence linking Audrey Hale's gender identity to the motive for the attack, which killed three children and three adults at The Covenant School last week.

Yet right-wing commentators, politicians and other figures have cited the shooting as they've shared false claims of a rise in transgender mass shooters and suggested that the fight for trans rights is radicalizing people.

Advocates worry the comments are further jeopardizing transgender people by turning them into scapegoats, at a time when they're speaking out against a wave of bills focused on trans people in statehouses across the country.

"We've certainly seen the uptick in transphobic rhetoric in the past week, even directed towards our own public platforms, and there have absolutely been community members that are wearier of being in the public eye," the Trans Empowerment Project, an advocacy and support group based in Tennessee, said in a statement.

The rhetoric has come even from members of Congress, with Republican Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene questioning whether the shooter was on hormone replacement therapy or medications to treat mental illness.

Donald Trump Jr., the former president's son, suggested the FBI and Justice Department monitor "violent factions within the trans community." In Idaho, the head of the state Republican Party invoked the shooting as she called for the governor to sign legislation banning gender affirming medical care for minors.

For hours Monday, police identified the shooter as a woman. Later in the day, the police chief said Hale was transgender. In an email Tuesday, a police spokesperson said Hale "was assigned female at birth" but used masculine pronouns on a social media profile.

Police have said Hale was under a doctor's care for an undisclosed emotional disorder and was not on the radar of police before the attack. Hale was fatally shot by police at the school Monday.

The disinformation surrounding the shooting doesn't surprise Imara Jones, a transgender woman and creator of "The Anti-Trans Hate Machine," a podcast that focuses on the spread of disinformation about transgender people.

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Jones noted how quickly false posts spread online falsely identifying a transgender woman as the shooter who killed 19 children and two teachers at a school in Uvalde, Texas last year.

"This disinformation, one of the things that it is doing is further isolating, stigmatizing and demonizing trans people, allowing us to be targeted by all forms of violence, both from the state and from individuals," Jones said. "That's what the disinformation is doing."

Several hundred bills restricting transgender people's rights have been introduced in statehouses this year, including a resurgence of bathroom bills and bans on gender affirming care for minors. Transgender people have also faced increasingly hostile rhetoric from lawmakers who are considering these proposals.

Some of the most stringent measures have been enacted in Tennessee, where the Republican governor has signed into law restrictions on drag show performances and a ban on gender affirming care for minors. A federal judge on Friday blocked the drag show ban from taking effect.

Many of the restrictions are being advanced by Republican lawmakers who say they're protecting children.

A large number of transgender people say they regularly face verbal and physical abuse. A Washington Post-KFF survey of transgender adults conducted late last year showed that 64% of trans adults say they have been verbally attacked because of their gender identity, gender expression or sexual identity, and 25% say they have been physically attacked.

"There is a vocal minority of people who try to stoke fear of what they don't understand, who label trans people as 'other' and tell us we don't belong," the National Center for Transgender Equality said in a statement. "Because of this, trans people, especially trans women of color, face very real threats and violence."

The climate has already been fraught for trans people like Jessica Disney, who's appeared regularly at Arkansas' Capitol to testify against anti-transgender measures.

"Anytime there's a spike in the rhetoric for whatever thing that is latched onto, it is immediately more taxing and truly terrifying about living here in the South, living here in Arkansas and what has already happened to me and other people being encouraged to act out," Disney said.

Advocates say the disinformation and focus on the shooter's gender are distracting from needed discussions about how to prevent mass shootings.

"Extremist politicians and pundits are focusing on speculations about the shooter and fear-mongering about transgender people because they have no interest or willpower to offer real commonsense solutions to America's gun problem," Jay Brown, the Human Rights Campaign's senior vice president for programs, research and training, said in a statement.

Despite the fear, the Trans Empowerment Project said it's seen an "amazing push to act" on addressing gun violence and building allies with the community.

"More than anything, we're amazed by the resilience of our community," the group said.

Sami Morris, a nonbinary resident of Durham, North Carolina, said the anti-trans "finger pointing" that followed the shooting in their home state of Tennessee made them feel "more unwelcome in the South" than they did already. They criticized North Carolina Republicans Wednesday for overriding the Democratic governor's veto of legislation loosening gun access just two days after the Nashville shooting.

"The anti-trans rhetoric has become so pronounced that's it's drowning out mourning the victims," Morris said. "It's drowning out necessary calls for gun control and important conversations about what might actually make schools safer."

The anti-trans rhetoric was on display as Dylan Michael Turner, 27, stood at a Transgender Day of Visibility event Friday outside the South Carolina State House.

"Terrorist attack!" a passenger in a car passing by yelled at Turner, a transgender man from Columbia, holding a sign that said "TRANS RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS."

Turner said he had received six or seven such comments, but said the supportive messages he got far outweighed the hateful ones.

"I wish that (cisgender heterosexual) people would have a chance to get to know trans people and that would sway their view of things," he said.



Associated Press writers Hannah Schoenbaum in Raleigh, North Carolina and James Pollard in Columbia, South Carolina contributed to this report.

## **Pandemic pounds push 10,000 U.S. Army soldiers into obesity**

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

After gaining 30 pounds during the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Murillo is finally getting back into fighting shape.

Early pandemic lockdowns, endless hours on his laptop and heightened stress led Murillo, 27, to reach for cookies and chips in the barracks at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. Gyms were closed, organized exercise was out and Murillo's motivation to work out on his own was low.

"I could notice it," said Murillo, who is 5 feet, 5 inches tall and weighed as much as 192 pounds. "The uniform was tighter."

Murillo wasn't the only service member dealing with extra weight. New research found that obesity in the U.S. military surged during the pandemic. In the Army alone, nearly 10,000 active duty soldiers developed obesity between February 2019 and June 2021, pushing the rate to nearly a quarter of the troops studied. Increases were seen in the U.S. Navy and the Marines, too.

"The Army and the other services need to focus on how to bring the forces back to fitness," said Tracey Perez Koehlmoos, director of the Center for Health Services Research at the Uniformed Services University in Bethesda, Maryland, who led the research.

Overweight and obese troops are more likely to be injured and less likely to endure the physical demands of their profession. The military loses more than 650,000 workdays each year because of extra weight and obesity-related health costs exceed \$1.5 billion annually for current and former service members and their families, federal research shows.

More recent data won't be available until later this year, said Koehlmoos. But there's no sign that the trend is ending, underscoring longstanding concerns about the readiness of America's fighting forces.

Military leaders have been warning about the impact of obesity on the U.S. military for more than a decade, but the lingering pandemic effects highlight the need for urgent action, said retired Marine Corps Brigadier General Stephen Cheney, who co-authored a recent report on the problem.

"The numbers have not gotten better," Cheney said in a November webinar held by the American Security Project, a nonprofit think tank. "They are just getting worse and worse and worse."

In fiscal year 2022, the Army failed to make its recruiting goal for the first time, falling short by 15,000 recruits, or a quarter of the requirement. That's largely because three-quarters of Americans aged 17 to 24 are not eligible for military service for several reasons, including extra weight. Being overweight is the biggest individual disqualifier, affecting more than 1 in 10 potential recruits, according to the report.

"It is devastating. We have a dramatic national security problem," Cheney said.

Extra weight can make it difficult for service members to meet core fitness requirements, which differ depending on the military branch. In the Army, for instance, if soldiers can't pass the Army Combat Fitness Test, a recently updated measure of ability, it could result in probation or end their military careers.

Koehlmoos and her team analyzed medical records for all active duty Army soldiers in the Military Health System Data Repository, a comprehensive archive. They looked at two periods: before the pandemic, from February 2019 to January 2020, and during the crisis, from September 2020 to June 2021. They excluded soldiers without complete records in both periods and those who were pregnant in the year before or during the study.

Of the cohort of nearly 200,000 soldiers who remained, the researchers found that nearly 27% who were healthy before the pandemic became overweight. And nearly 16% of those who were previously overweight became obese. Before the pandemic, about 18% of the soldiers were obese; by 2021, it grew to 23%.

The researchers relied on standard BMI, or body mass index, a calculation of weight and height used to categorize weight status. A person with a BMI of 18.5 to 25 is considered healthy, while a BMI of 25 to less than 30 is considered overweight. A BMI of 30 or higher is categorized as obese. Some experts

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claim that the BMI is a flawed measure that fails to account for muscle mass or underlying health status, though it remains a widely used tool.

In Murillo's case, his BMI during the pandemic reached nearly 32. The North Carolina Army soldier knew he needed help, so he turned to a military dietician and started a strict exercise routine through the Army's Holistic Health and Fitness, or H2F, program.

"We do two runs a week, 4 to 5 miles," Murillo said. "Some mornings I wanted to quit, but I hung in there."

Slowly, over months, Murillo has been able to reverse the trajectory. Now, his BMI is just over 27, which falls within the Defense Department's standard, Koehlmoos said.

She found increases in other service branches, but focused first on the Army. The research squares with trends noted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which warned that in 2020, nearly 1 in 5 of all service members were obese.

The steady creep of obesity among service members is "alarming," said Cheney. "The country has not approached obesity as the problem it really is," he added.

Putting on extra pounds during the pandemic wasn't just a military problem. A survey last year of American adults found that nearly half reported gaining weight after the first year of the COVID-19 emergency. Another study found a sharp rise in obesity among kids during the pandemic. The gains came in a country where more than 40% of American adults and nearly 20% of children struggle with obesity, according to the CDC.

"Why would we think the military is any different than a person who is not in the military?" said Dr. Amy Rothberg, an endocrinologist at the University of Michigan who directs a weight-loss program. "Under stress, we want to store calories."

It will take broad measures to address the problem, including looking at the food offered in military cafeterias, understanding sleep patterns and treating service members with issues such as PTSD, or post-traumatic stress disorder, Rothberg said. Regarding obesity as a chronic disease that requires comprehensive care, not just willpower, is key. "We need to meet military members where they are," she said.

A new category of effective anti-obesity drugs, including semaglutide, marketed as Wegovy, could be a powerful aid, Rothberg said. TRICARE, the Defense Department's health plan, covers such drugs, but uptake remains low. Since June 2021, when Wegovy was approved, just 174 service members have received prescriptions, TRICARE officials said. Novo Nordisk, which makes Wegovy, funded the security group's report, but didn't influence the research, Rothberg said.

"People are working hard at their weight and we have to give them whatever tools we have," Rothberg said.

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The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Science and Educational Media Group. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Montenegrins choose new president amid political turmoil

By PREDRAG MILIC Associated Press

PODGORICA, Montenegro (AP) — Voters in Montenegro cast ballots Sunday in a runoff presidential election that is a contest between a long-serving pro-Western incumbent and a newcomer promising changes in the small NATO member nation located on Europe's Balkan peninsula.

Observers think President Milo Djukanovic, who is credited with leading Montenegro to independence and into NATO, could be defeated by Jakov Milatovic, a former economy minister. Milatovic has the backing of the country's governing parties, which advocate closer ties with Serbia.

The runoff vote was scheduled after none of the contenders won a majority in the first round of voting two weeks ago. Some 540,000 people were eligible to vote. Montenegro has a population of 620,000 and borders Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Albania, Kosovo and the Adriatic Sea.

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The outcome of Sunday's election is likely to provide indications for an early parliamentary election set for June 11. That vote was scheduled because of a months-long government deadlock that stalled Montenegro's European Union integration and alarmed the West as war rages in Ukraine.

Djukanovic, 61, first became prime minister at age 29 and has remained in power for 32 years — longer than his Democratic Party of Socialists, which was ousted from governing in a 2020 parliamentary election.

Djukanovic hopes his reelection to another five-year term would pave the way for the party to return to power in June.

Djukanovic has been a key Western ally in countering Russian influence and keeping the Balkans stable. He has insisted that the struggle is not over despite Montenegro's NATO membership because of Serbia's alleged expansionist policies and Russia's influence.

Milatovic, 36, was educated in Britain and the United States. He has appealed to voters disillusioned with established politicians like Djukanovic. Milatovic has insisted he wants Montenegro to join the EU, although some of the parties that backed his candidacy are pro-Russian.

If Milatovic wins, his Europe Now movement could find itself in a position to dominate the next government after June's parliamentary election.

Europe Now emerged after the first government that resulted from the 2020 parliamentary election collapsed. As the economy minister in that government, Milatovic gained popularity by increasing salaries but critics say this was done at the cost of the already depleted health system and not as an outcome of reform.

## Mozambique works to contain cholera outbreak after cyclone

By TOM GOULD Associated Press

QUELIMANE, Mozambique (AP) — Weeks after massive Cyclone Freddy hit Mozambique for a second time, the still-flooded country is facing a spiraling cholera outbreak that threatens to add to the devastation.

There were over 19,000 confirmed cases of cholera across eight of Mozambique's provinces as of March 27, according to U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, a figure which had almost doubled in a week.

Freddy was likely the longest-lived cyclone ever, lasting over five weeks and hitting Mozambique twice. The tropical storm killed 165 people in Mozambique, 17 in Madagascar and 676 in Malawi. More than 530 people are still missing in Malawi two weeks later so that country's death toll could well exceed 1,200.

Freddy made its second landfall in Mozambique's Zambezia province, where scores of villages remain flooded and water supplies are still contaminated.

At a hospital in Quelimane, Zambezia's provincial capital, National Institute of Health director general Eduardo Sam Gudo Jr reported there were 600 new confirmed cases a day in Quelimane district alone, but said that the real number may be as high as 1,000.

At least 31 died of cholera in Zambezia and over 3,200 were hospitalized between March 15 and 29, according to data from the Ministry of Health.

Cases are highest in the neighborhood of Icidua on the city outskirts, where most residents live in bamboo or adobe mud huts and fetch water in buckets from communal wells. Flooding brought by the cyclone has exposed many of these wells to water contaminated with sewage overflow and other sources of bacteria. Cholera spreads through feces, often when it gets into drinking water.

But until water pipelines ruptured in the floods are repaired, these wells are the only source of water for those in Icidua and communities like it. For now, temporary solutions offer the only hope of stemming the outbreak.

Volunteers go from house to house distributing bottles of Certeza, a local chlorine-based water purifier. Each bottle should last a family for a week, but supplies are running low as local production struggles to keep pace with demand. There are also not enough people to distribute the Certeza, even if greater supplies could be procured, Gudo said.

In the meantime, health workers are struggling to treat the infected with many clinics and hospitals badly

damaged. "The cyclone destroyed the infrastructure here," said José da Costa Silva, the clinical director of the Icidua health center. "We are working in parts of the hospital that were not destroyed. Some colleagues are working outside in the open because there's not enough space available for everyone."

Eighty health centers in total were affected by Freddy's two landfalls in Mozambique, according to INGD, the country's disaster management agency.

Although cyclones do occur in southern Africa from December to May, human-caused climate change has made tropical cyclones wetter, more intense and more frequent. The now-dissipated natural La Nina event also worsened cyclone activity in the region. While Cyclone Freddy itself hasn't yet been attributed to climate change, researchers say it has all the right hallmarks of a warming-fueled weather event.

Formed in early February off Australia, the cyclone with exceptional longevity made an unprecedented crossing of more than 8000 kilometers (5,000 miles) from east to west across the Indian Ocean.

It followed a looping path rarely recorded by meteorologists, hitting Madagascar and Mozambique for the first time at the end of February, and then again in March before barreling into Malawi.

Restoring normal water supplies in Mozambique will take time, as many damaged pipelines run through areas that are still inaccessible two weeks after the cyclone's last impact.

"A cholera outbreak in a flooded flatland with a very high water table is 'mission impossible' to address," Myrta Kaulard, the UN resident coordinator in Mozambique, told Associated Press. "Sanitation is a huge problem and the flooding has affected key infrastructure, such as the water pipelines and the electricity supply ... Repairing that infrastructure in flooded areas is another 'mission impossible.'"

Meanwhile, rural areas around Quelimane are facing other threats. Many villages and fields are still underwater, and the humidity has bred swarms of mosquitoes carrying malaria. In a makeshift displacement camp on the bank of a flooded rice paddy near the village of Nicoadala, 20 out of 290 residents are sick with malaria, according to Hilário Milisto Irawe, a local chief.

There were 444 reported cases of malaria in Quelimane district on 24 March alone, but the number is likely much higher as many, such as those in the camp outside Nicoadala, lack access to health facilities.

Compounding the public health crisis, the material livelihoods of hundreds of thousands are at risk as Freddy hit just before the main harvest. It also carried seawater inland, threatening the long term fertility of the soil in an area where malnutrition is already chronic.

"All our farms are flooded. Our rice farms are destroyed. All we can do is start over again, but we don't know how we will do that," said Irawe.

## War-crimes warrant for Putin could complicate Ukraine peace

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — An international arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin raises the prospect of the man whose country invaded Ukraine facing justice, but it complicates efforts to end that war in peace talks.

Both justice and peace appear to be only remote possibilities today, and the conflicting relationship between the two is a quandary at the heart of a March 17 decision by the International Criminal Court to seek the Russian leader's arrest.

Judges in The Hague found "reasonable grounds to believe" that Putin and his commissioner for children's rights were responsible for war crimes, specifically the unlawful deportation and unlawful transfer of children from occupied areas of Ukraine to Russia.

As unlikely as Putin sitting in a Hague courtroom seems now, other leaders have faced justice in international courts.

Former Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic, a driving force behind the Balkan wars of the 1990s, went on trial for war crimes, including genocide, at a United Nations tribunal in The Hague after he lost power. He died in his cell in 2006 before a verdict could be reached.

Serbia, which wants European Union membership but has maintained close ties to Russia, is one of the countries that has criticized the ICC's action. The warrants "will have bad political consequences" and

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create “a great reluctance to talk about peace (and) about truce” in Ukraine, populist Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said.

Others see consequences for Putin, and for anyone judged guilty of war crimes, as the primary desired outcome of international action.

“There will be no escape for the perpetrator and his henchmen,” European Union leader Ursula von der Leyen said Friday in a speech to mark the one-year anniversary of the liberation of Bucha, the Ukraine town that saw some of the worst atrocities in the war. “War criminals will be held accountable for their deeds.”

Hungary did not join the other 26 EU members in signing a resolution in support of the ICC warrant for Putin. The government’s chief of staff, Gergely Gulyas, said Hungarian authorities would not arrest Putin if he were to enter the country.

He called the warrants “not the most fortunate because they lead toward escalation and not toward peace.”

Putin appears to have a strong grip on power, and some analysts suspect the the warrant hanging over him could provide an incentive to prolong the fighting.

“The arrest warrant for Putin might undermine efforts to reach a peace deal in Ukraine,” Daniel Krmaric, an associate professor of political science at Northwestern University, said in emailed comments to The Associated Press.

One potential way of easing the way to peace talks could be for the United Nations Security Council to call on the International Criminal Court to suspend the Ukraine investigation for a year, which is allowed under Article 16 of the Rome Statute treaty that created the court.

But that appears unlikely, said Krmaric, whose book “The Justice Dilemma,” deals with the tension between seeking justice and pursuing a negotiated end to conflicts.

“The Western democracies would have to worry about public opinion costs if they made the morally questionable decision to trade justice for peace in such an explicit fashion,” he said, adding that Ukraine also is unlikely to support such a move.

Russia immediately rejected the warrants. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow doesn’t recognize the ICC and considers its decisions “legally void.” And Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia’s Security Council, which is chaired by Putin, suggested the ICC headquarters on the Netherlands’ coastline could become a target for a Russian missile strike.

Alexander Baunov, an analyst with the Carnegie Endowment, observed in a commentary that the arrest warrant for Putin amounted to “an invitation to the Russian elite to abandon Putin” that could erode his support.

While welcoming the warrants for Putin and his commissioner for children’s rights, rights groups also urged the international community not to forget the pursuit of justice in other conflicts.

“The ICC warrant for Putin reflects an evolving and multifaceted justice effort that is needed elsewhere in the world,” Human Rights Watch associate international justice director Balkees Jarrah said in a statement. “Similar justice initiatives are needed elsewhere to ensure that the rights of victims globally — whether in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Myanmar, or Palestine — are respected.”

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

## Griner concerned for American journalist held in Russia

WASHINGTON (AP) — American basketball star Brittney Griner and her wife are concerned about the detainment in Russia of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich and said “we must do everything in our power to bring him and all Americans home.”

“Every American who is taken is ours to fight for and every American returned is a win for us all,” Griner, who was held in Russia for most of last year, said in a statement with Cherelle Griner posted Saturday night on Instagram.

Russian security officials took Gershkovich, 31, into custody on Thursday and accused him of spying.

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The newspaper denied the charge and demanded his release.

President Joe Biden on Friday urged Russia to release Gershovich, the first American correspondent to be detained on spying accusations since the Cold War.

Brittney Griner was detained in Russia for 10 months after being arrested at an airport near Moscow on drug possession charges. She returned to the U.S. in a prisoner exchange in December involving Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout.

The Griners said in their statement they were grateful for Biden and his administration's efforts to rescue those being held abroad, noting the recent release of Jeff Woodke more than six years after his kidnapping in Niger and Paul Rusesabagina, a U.S. legal resident, after his imprisonment for more than two years in Rwanda.

The Griners called on their supporters to encourage the administration to do everything possible to bring wrongly detained Americans home.

With Russia's Federal Security Service accusing Gershovich of trying to obtain classified information, more than 30 news organizations and press freedom advocates have written to Russia's U.S. ambassador to express concern Russia is sending the message that reporting inside the country is criminalized.

## LA police: 1 dead, 3 wounded in shooting at shopping center

LOS ANGELES (AP) — One person is dead and three others were injured in a shooting during a drug deal outside a Los Angeles shopping center Saturday, police said.

Multiple suspects shot at each other during what police believe was a dispute during a narcotics deal in a parking lot in the area of Vanowen and Fallbrook in West Hills around 3:45 p.m., Los Angeles Police Department Deputy Chief Alan Hamilton said.

The deceased man was not immediately identified by police.

Three victims hit by gunfire were transported to a hospital and treated for non-life-threatening injuries. At least two of those may face charges after their release from medical care, Hamilton said.

Three suspects were in custody Saturday evening and investigators believe the shooting involved gang members, he said.

Police recovered two firearms at the scene, Hamilton said.

"We believe that all of the people involved in this dispute have been identified and we believe we have them either in custody or we have them where we can provide them medical care," Hamilton said.

An LAPD helicopter spotted a vehicle with windows shot out leaving the scene and tracked the vehicle, Hamilton said.

"That suspect became involved in a hit-and-run traffic collision where they injured someone else and continued fleeing the area," Hamilton said. "They subsequently switched vehicles and the air units saw them switch vehicles and directed ground units to the location where the suspect was fleeing."

There was a pursuit lasting two to three minutes before the vehicle pulled over. A female driver and the male suspect who fled the shooting scene surrendered and were taken into custody, Hamilton said.

The person who was injured in the hit-and-run accident was treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

## March Madness: San Diego State to meet UConn in title game

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Basketball Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Lamont Butler hit the biggest shot in San Diego State history, putting the Aztecs in the national championship game for the first time.

The next step, in Monday's title game, will be a difficult one.

UConn has been the dominant team all through the bracket, delivering one beatdown after another while showing no weaknesses — even on a short turnaround.

The Huskies snatched the euphoria right out of Gonzaga last week in the Elite Eight, ruining the Zags' vibes after their last-second win over UCLA two days earlier. Baylor did the same thing to Gonzaga in the

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2021 national title game, bullying the Zags two days after Jalen Suggs' miracle shot.

"We don't stop," UConn guard Jordan Hawkins said after scoring 13 points against Miami on Saturday night. "We keep putting our foot on their neck. We have a really tough team."

The Huskies got to the title game by breaking their opponents' will.

UConn won its first four NCAA Tournament games by at least 15 points and wrecked Miami's first Final Four appearance by dominating the Hurricanes at both ends in a 72-59 win.

The Aztecs have done it with defense.

San Diego State shut down four straight NCAA Tournament opponents and leaned on its D in the second half to overcome a 14-point deficit to ruin Florida Atlantic's first Final Four. Butler provided the heroics, hitting a buzzer-beater in the 72-71 win that had all of San Diego celebrating.

The first buzzer-beating game-winner by a trailing team in Final Four history now puts the Aztecs within a win of the Mountain West Conference's first national title.

"I don't consider ourselves a mid-major," San Diego State coach Brian Dutcher said. "I think we're a high-major program."

UConn (30-8) will be vying for its fifth national title since 1999, but first since Dan Hurley was hired to bring back the program after its fall from grace.

UConn won its fourth title under Kevin Ollie in 2014, but spiraled downward in the wake of recruiting violations and Ollie's ugly departure.

When Hurley took over in 2018, UConn was 170th on the KenPom analytics rankings and low on the national relevance scale.

The knock on Hurley's Huskies then turned to UConn's meager Marches; two first-round NCAA Tournament burnouts, including to No. 12 seed New Mexico State last year.

UConn had an uneven 2022-23 season, climbing to No. 2 in the AP Top 25, tumbling back toward irrelevance with six losses in eight games.

The Huskies turned into the best team in the maddest of Marches that culminated in the most unexpected Final Four, putting them in position to tie Duke and Indiana for fourth on the all-time championships list.

"The group has shown their quality so many times in terms of the level that we could play at," Hurley said. "And I think we experienced everything in that month of January, it's a battle-tested team."

For San Diego State (32-6), Monday's title game will be the culmination of the program building Steve Fisher started and Dutcher pushed forward.

Fisher had built San Diego State into a mid-major power, leading them to six straight NCAA Tournaments. When he retired in 2017, the reins were handed to Dutcher, his assistant back to Michigan's national championship with the Fab Five in 1989.

Dutcher kept many of the same principles Fisher had, adding an extra dash of defensive devilry.

San Diego State appeared ready to break through in 2020, on its way to a likely No. 1 seed before the pandemic wiped out the NCAA Tournament.

The Aztecs suffered first-round NCAA Tournament flameouts the next two seasons before becoming defensive dominators this year.

San Diego State was fourth in the KenPom.com defensive efficiency ratings while winning 27 games during the regular season. The Aztecs took it to new lows in the NCAA Tournament, holding their first four opponents to 57 points per game and 17% shooting from the 3-point arc.

Upstart FAU appeared to have solved San Diego State's defense in the first half of Saturday night's first semifinal, stretching its lead to 14 midway through the second half.

The Aztecs got back to being dirty (in a good way) to get back in it and Butler finished it off with one of the most memorable shots in NCAA Tournament history.

"We're going to the national championship," Butler said. "That's not things many people do."

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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 puts Final Four beatdown on Miami 72-59

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Nobody was guarding UConn's best player. So Adama Sanogo spun the ball to get his fingers just right, set his feet behind the 3-point line and splashed in the shot. Then, less than a minute later, he did it again.

It was as much basketball clinic as highlight video — and all of it perfectly fitting for the Huskies, who are methodically steamrolling through a March Madness bracket that has been a free-for-all everywhere else.

UConn doled out another drama-free beatdown Saturday, getting 21 points and 10 rebounds from Sanogo to dispatch Miami 72-59 and move one win from the school's fifth national title.

"There's a lot of teams that want to play Monday," Sanogo said. "It means a lot to us."

Jordan Hawkins overcame his stomach bug and scored 13 for the Huskies, who came into this most unexpected Final Four as the only team with any experience on college basketball's final weekend and with the best seeding of the four teams in Houston — at No. 4.

Against fifth-seeded Miami, they were the best team on the court from beginning to end. Starting with three straight 3s — one jumper from Hawkins and two of those set shots from Sanogo — UConn took a quick 9-0 lead and never trailed.

"This is something that I worked on all summer, especially shooting," Sanogo said.

On Monday in the title game, the Huskies will face San Diego State, which became the first team to hit a buzzer-beater while trailing in a Final Four game for a 72-71 victory over Florida Atlantic. UConn was an early 7 1/2-point favorite, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

"They're one of the best teams in the country," UConn coach Dan Hurley said of the Aztecs. "And I think it's fitting that both of us kind of earned our way into this title game."

But while the early game was an all-timer, the nightcap was simply more of the same from the Huskies (30-8).

The 13-point win was UConn's closest since the brackets came out. The Huskies are the sixth team since the tournament expanded to 64 teams in 1985 to reach the title game with five straight double-digit victories. It's an impressive list of behemoths with a knack for closing: Four of the first five went on to win the championship.

Some thought Miami (29-8), with the nation's fifth-ranked offense and four players who have scored 20 points at least three times this season, might be the team to slow this Huskies juggernaut. Not to be.

Isaiah Wong led the 'Canes with 15 points on 4-for-10 shooting. Harassed constantly by Sanogo, 7-foot-2 Donovan Clingan and the rest of Connecticut's long-armed, rangy perimeter players, Miami, which came in with the nation's fifth-best offense, shot 25% in the first half and 33.3% for the game.

"Obviously what we tried to do not only didn't work, I couldn't even recognize it," Miami coach Jim Larranaga said. "Offensively we were out of sync, but defensively we were too."

Not that UConn was all boring. The Huskies enjoyed their own sort of buzzer-beater in the form of a 3 from Alex Karaban that sent the Huskies jogging into the locker room with a 13-point lead at halftime.

They built it to 20 before the first TV timeout of the second half. By then, Jim Nantz, calling his last Final Four, could start saving his voice for Monday.

Miami did get it under double digits a few times, but this never got interesting.

Not helping: Hurricanes guard Nijel Pack missed about five minutes after managers had trouble locating a substitute for a busted shoe. Pack finished with eight points, and Jordan Miller, who hit all 20 shots he took from the floor and the line in Miami's Elite Eight win, went 4 for 10 for 11 points. Only one Miami player made more than half his shots.

"I'm a defensive guy first and foremost," Hurley said. "I just love the way we guarded them. They're one of the best offenses in the country, and we really disrupted them."

UConn had five blocks, including two from Sanogo, and 19 assists, led by eight from Tristen Newton — both signs of the sort of all-around effort the Huskies have been putting in since the start of February,



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when they began the bounce back from a six-loss-in-eight-games stretch that halted their momentum.

That cold stretch is a big reason they were seeded only fourth for March. Now, it's April and the number UConn is thinking about is "5" — as in, a fifth title that will come if it can keep this up for one more game.

"Maybe it was a little bit delusional," Huskies guard Andre Jackson Jr. said, "but we always knew we were the best team in our mind."

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)

## Butler's buzzer-beater sends San Diego State to title game

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Basketball Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — San Diego State's vaunted defense staggered well into the second half as free-flowing Florida Atlantic breezed to a 14-point lead.

The Aztecs found their teeth again to get back into the game. Then Lamont Butler delivered at the very end.

Butler hit a buzzer-beating jumper for the ages, sending San Diego State to its first national championship game with a 72-71 win over fellow mid-major Florida Atlantic in the Final Four on Saturday night.

"I didn't really know how big it was," Butler said after his calm reaction to one of the greatest shots in NCAA Tournament history. "We're going to the national championship. That's not things many people do."

A diabolical defense had pushed San Diego State (32-6) all the way to the final stop for the NCAA tourney. The Aztecs bumped and harassed opponents all season to create the first all-mid-major national semifinal since VCU and Butler in 2011.

The swaggy Owls (35-4) seemed to have solved San Diego State's vaunted defense, using constant movement and ball reversals to create mismatches they could exploit.

San Diego State found its defensive mojo midway through the second half, clamping down on the Owls while whittling their lead down to one on Jaedon LeDee's short jumper with 36 seconds left.

When FAU's Johnell Davis missed a contested layup, San Diego State coach Brian Dutcher opted to not call timeout, joking that he didn't have any plays left.

All he had to do was get the ball to Butler.

The clock ticking down, Butler dribbled to the baseline, found that cut off and circled back. He stepped back to create a little room and hit a jumper that sent the Aztecs racing out onto the floor and had San Diego Padres fans going wild at Petco Park.

Butler's winning buzzer-beater was the first for the Final Four since Jalen Suggs for Gonzaga against UCLA in 2021 and No. 5 overall. But it's the only one when the winning team was trailing at the time of the shot.

Next up for the Mountain West's first Final Four team is a chance to win the conference's first national title Monday night against UConn, which advanced with a 72-59 win against Miami.

"We've always been knocked down," said San Diego State's Matt Bradley, who had 21 points after struggling in the previous three games. "But the biggest thing we always do is get back up and keep fighting."

San Diego State had been building toward this since coach Brian Dutcher took over for his longtime mentor Steve Fisher. Dutcher followed the mold Fisher had created, adding an extra dose of nasty to the defense.

The Aztecs lost an opportunity when they were in position for a No. 1 seed in the 2020 NCAA Tournament, only to have it wiped out by the pandemic.

San Diego State followed a pair of NCAA Tournament first-round flameouts with a solid 2023 season, winning 27 games to earn a No. 5 seed in the East Region in this year's bracket.

Once the NCAA Tournament started, the Aztecs ramped up their defense even more, holding their first four opponents to an average of 57 points per game and 17% shooting from the 3-point arc.

FAU found an answer through quick ball movement, with the occasional dump into the post to keep the

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Aztecs honest.

The result: The Owls led 40-33 at halftime after hitting 5 of 11 from 3-point range against a defense that held its previous two NCAA Tournament opponents to 5-of-44 shooting from the arc.

FAU kept making shots, stretching the lead to 14 midway through the second half.

Then, with Fisher watching in the stands, the Aztecs got gritty.

Contesting nearly every shot and pass while pulling down a string of offensive rebounds, including six in 59 seconds, San Diego State rallied to tie it at 65-all.

"They went on a run, getting extra possessions," said FAU's Nick Boyd, who hit three early 3s and finished with 12 points. "That was really the turning point of the game."

FAU kept San Diego State at bay most of the second half thanks to Alijah Martin, who seemed to have an answer for every Aztecs move by scoring 19 of his 26 points in the second half.

He hit a reverse layup with 45 seconds left to put FAU up 71-68, but wasn't enough to prevent the Owls' improbable run from coming to an end.

"These guys have created memories and a legacy that will last a lifetime," FAU coach Dusty May.

So did the Aztecs — with one more chance to add to it.

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)

## At least 26 dead after tornadoes rake US Midwest, South

By ADRIAN SAINZ and ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

WYNNE, Ark. (AP) — Storms that dropped possibly dozens of tornadoes killed at least 26 people in small towns and big cities across the South and Midwest, tearing a path through the Arkansas capital, collapsing the roof of a packed concert venue in Illinois and stunning people throughout the region Saturday with the damage's scope.

Confirmed or suspected tornadoes in at least eight states destroyed homes and businesses, splintered trees and laid waste to neighborhoods across a broad swath of the country. The dead included at least nine in one Tennessee county, four in the small town of Wynne, Arkansas, three in Sullivan, Indiana, and four in Illinois.

Other deaths from the storms that hit Friday night into Saturday were reported in Alabama and Mississippi, along with one near Little Rock, Arkansas, where city officials said more than 2,600 buildings were in a tornado's path.

Residents of Wynne, a community of about 8,000 people 50 miles (80 kilometers) west of Memphis, Tennessee, woke Saturday to find the high school's roof shredded and its windows blown out. Huge trees lay on the ground, their stumps reduced to nubs. Broken walls, windows and roofs pocked homes and businesses.

Debris lay scattered inside the shells of homes and on lawns: clothing, insulation, toys, splintered furniture, a pickup truck with its windows shattered.

Ashley Macmillan said she, her husband and their children huddled with their dogs in a small bathroom as a tornado passed, "praying and saying goodbye to each other, because we thought we were dead." A falling tree seriously damaged their home, but they were unhurt.

"We could feel the house shaking, we could hear loud noises, dishes rattling. And then it just got calm," she said.

Recovery was already underway, with workers using chainsaws and bulldozers to clear the area and utility crews restoring power.

Nine people died in Tennessee's McNairy County, east of Memphis, according to Patrick Sheehan, director of the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency.

"The majority of the damage has been done to homes and residential areas," said David Leckner, the

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mayor of Adamsville.

Gov. Bill Lee drove to the county Saturday to tour the destruction and comfort residents. He said the storm capped the "worst" week of his time as governor, coming days after a school shooting in Nashville that killed six people including a family friend whose funeral he and his wife, Maria, attended earlier in the day.

"It's terrible what has happened in this community, this county, this state," Lee said. "But it looks like your community has done what Tennessean communities do, and that is rally and respond."

Jeffrey Day said he called his daughter after seeing on the news that their community of Adamsville was being hit. Huddled in a closet with her 2-year-old son as the storm passed over, she answered the phone screaming.

"She kept asking me, 'What do I do, daddy?'" Day said, tearing up. "I didn't know what to say."

After the storm passed, his daughter crawled out of her destroyed home and over barbed wire and drove to nearby family. On Saturday evening, baby clothes were still strewn about the site.

In Memphis, police spokesman Christopher Williams said via email late Saturday that there were three deaths believed to be weather-related: two children and an adult who died when a tree fell on a house.

Tennessee officials warned that the same weather conditions from Friday night are expected to return Tuesday.

In Belvidere, Illinois, part of the roof of the Apollo Theatre collapsed as about 260 people were attending a heavy metal concert. A 50-year-old man was pulled from the rubble.

"I sat with him and I held his hand and I was (telling him), 'It's going to be OK.' I didn't really know much else what to do," concertgoer Gabrielle Lewellyn told WTOV-TV.

The man was dead by the time emergency workers arrived. Officials said 40 others were hurt, including two with life-threatening injuries.

Crews cleaned up around the Apollo on Saturday, with forklifts pulling away loose bricks. Business owners picked up glass shards and covered shattered windows.

In Crawford County, Illinois, three people were killed and eight injured when a tornado hit around New Hebron, said Bill Burke, the county board chair.

Sheriff Bill Rutan said 60 to 100 families were displaced.

"We've had emergency crews digging people out of their basements because the house is collapsed on top of them, but luckily they had that safe space to go to," Rutan said at a news conference.

That tornado was not far from where three people died in Indiana's Sullivan County, about 95 miles (150 kilometers) southwest of Indianapolis.

Sullivan Mayor Clint Lamb said at a news conference that an area south of the county seat of about 4,000 "is essentially unrecognizable right now" and several people were rescued overnight. There were reports of as many as 12 people injured, he said.

"I'm really, really shocked there isn't more as far as human issues," he said, adding that recovery "is going to be a very long process."

In the Little Rock area, at least one person was killed and more than 50 were hurt, some critically.

The National Weather Service said that tornado was a high-end EF3 twister with wind speeds up to 165 mph (265 kph) and a path as long as 25 miles (40 kilometers).

Masoud Shahed-Ghaznavi was lunching at home when it roared through his neighborhood, causing him to hide in the laundry room as sheetrock fell and windows shattered. When he emerged, the house was mostly rubble.

"Everything around me is sky," Shahed-Ghaznavi recalled Saturday. He barely slept Friday night.

"When I closed my eyes, I couldn't sleep, imagined I was here," he said Saturday outside his home.

Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders declared a state of emergency and activated the National Guard. On Saturday, Sanders requested a major disaster declaration from President Joe Biden to support recovery efforts with federal resources.

Another suspected tornado killed a woman in northern Alabama's Madison County, officials said, and in northern Mississippi's Pontotoc County, authorities confirmed one death and four injuries.

Tornadoes also caused damage in eastern Iowa and broke windows northeast of Peoria, Illinois.

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The storms struck just hours after Biden visited Rolling Fork, Mississippi, where tornadoes last week destroyed parts of town.

It could take days to determine the exact number of tornadoes from the latest event, said Bill Bunting, chief of forecast operations at the Storm Prediction Center. There were also hundreds of reports of large hail and damaging winds, he said.

"That's a quite active day," he said. "But that's not unprecedented."

More than 530,000 homes and businesses were without power as of midday Saturday, over 200,000 of them in Ohio, according to PowerOutage.us.

The sprawling storm system also brought wildfires to the southern Plains, with authorities in Oklahoma reporting nearly 100 of them Friday. At least 32 people were said to be injured, and more than 40 homes destroyed.

The storms also caused blizzard conditions in the Upper Midwest.

A threat of tornadoes and hail remained for the Northeast including in parts of Pennsylvania and New York.

DeMillo reported from Little Rock. Associated Press writers around the country contributed to this report, including Kimberlee Kruesi in Adamsville, Tennessee, Harm Venhuizen in Belvidere, Illinois, and Corey Williams in Detroit.

## After Nashville, Congress confronts limits of new gun law

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, COLLEEN LONG and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nine months ago, President Joe Biden signed a sweeping bipartisan gun law, the most significant legislative response to gun violence in decades.

"Lives will be saved," he said at the White House.

The law has already prevented some potentially dangerous people from owning guns. Yet since that signing last summer, the tally of mass shootings in the United States has only grown. Five dead at a nightclub in Colorado. Eleven killed at a dance hall in California. And just this past week, three 9-year-olds and three adults were shot and killed at an elementary school in Nashville, Tennessee.

A day after that school shooting, Biden's tone was markedly less optimistic than it was the signing ceremony.

"What in God's name are we doing?" he asked in a speech Tuesday, calling for a ban on so-called assault weapons like those that were used to kill at The Covenant School in Nashville. "There's a moral price to pay for inaction."

Biden and others had hailed last year's bipartisan gun bill — approved in the weeks after the shooting of 19 children and two adults at a school in Uvalde, Texas — as a new way forward.

Several months in, the law has had some success: Stepped-up FBI background checks have blocked gun sales for 119 buyers under the age of 21, prosecutions have increased for unlicensed gun sellers and new gun trafficking penalties have been charged in at least 30 cases around the country. Millions of new dollars have flowed into mental health services for children and schools.

But the persistence of mass shootings in the United States highlights the limits of congressional action. Because the law was a political compromise, it did not address many Democratic priorities for gun control, including universal background checks or the ban on "assault weapons" for which Biden repeatedly has called.

Now, in the wake of the Nashville shooting, Congress appears to have returned to a familiar impasse. One of the top Republican negotiators on the gun law, Texas Sen. John Cornyn, has said new compromise is unlikely. In the House, the new GOP majority favors fewer restrictions on guns, not more.

Asked Thursday about a way ahead, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said legislation alone cannot solve the gun violence problem. He said Americans need to think deeply about mental illness and other factors that drive people to act.

In contrast, House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York said Congress should "act with the

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fierce urgency of now.”

“Our classrooms have become killing fields,” he said. “Is that acceptable in America?”

Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut, the lead negotiator on the 2022 bill, says he thinks it represented a paradigm shift in how Congress considers gun legislation. But, he said, “I don’t think that will happen all at once.”

“This is sickening, but the opportunities for legislative change normally come after really terrible mass shootings,” said Murphy, who has been the lead Senate advocate for gun control since the 2012 mass shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Conn. “I hate that, I wish that wasn’t how it works.”

Tensions were running high on both sides of the Capitol this past week.

On Wednesday, Rep. Jamaal Bowman, D-N.Y., stood outside the House chamber and yelled that Republicans are “cowards” for not doing more on gun control, eventually arguing with Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., who advocated for allowing teachers to carry guns.

“More guns lead to more deaths!” Bowman screamed at Massie. “Children are dying!”

In the Senate, Republican Ted Cruz of Texas tried on Thursday to force a vote on legislation that would boost police presence at schools. He all but blamed Democrats, who had blocked the same legislation last year, for the Nashville shooting and called the 2022 law “meaningless.” Murphy angrily objected to Cruz’s bill, arguing that Cruz wasn’t serious about compromise and that his move was a stunt for the cameras.

Despite the frustrations, lawmakers who negotiated the compromise last year say they see slivers of hope.

Murphy said the implementation of the new law, and some of its early successes, will ultimately persuade Republicans to get on board with more legislation.

“What happened last year was seismic for Republicans,” Murphy said.

In terms of the bill’s success, “People don’t get excited about the mass shootings that didn’t happen,” Murphy said, and that can be a challenge as they talk about it and contemplate what more could be done. But the dynamics can change quickly, he said.

While Republicans in the past might have tried to shy away from gun measures even if they supported them, Cornyn and Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., have been promoting the new law and have discussed it frequently. Late last year, they joined Murphy, Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and FBI Director Christopher Wray on a visit to an FBI facility in West Virginia for a briefing on how the background checks were working.

“I am proud to see this commonsense legislation already making a difference,” Tillis said in a statement afterward.

According to recent data obtained by The Associated Press, those who were flagged in the stepped-up background checks and prevented from buying a gun included an 18-year-old in Nebraska who had made terroristic threats and was prone to violent outbursts, a 20-year-old drug dealer in Arizona and an 18-year-old in Arizona who had been previously charged with unlawful possession of weapons and was found carrying fentanyl. All were attempting to purchase long guns.

Tillis said he is aware of a separate case in his home state where a person under 21 who had been charged with assault and battery and assaulting a police officer was flagged and prevented from buying a gun.

“It’s just one of those bills that’s going to age well,” Tillis said, noting that the number of denials of gun sales is a very small fraction of total sales.

Cornyn said that so far, the bill “seems to be working.” But he said he doesn’t expect Congress to go any further any time soon. He said would strongly oppose an “assault weapons” ban, as Biden is proposing.

When Biden and other lawmakers talk about “assault weapons,” they are using an inexact term to describe a group of high-powered guns or semi-automatic long rifles, such as an AR-15, that can fire 30 rounds fast without reloading.

Most Republicans are steadfastly opposed to such a ban, arguing that it would be too complicated, especially as sales and varieties of the firearms have proliferated. There are many more types of these high-powered guns today than in 1994, when the ban was signed into law by President Bill Clinton.

Law-abiding citizens own those guns, Cornyn said, and “no law-abiding citizen is a threat to public safety.”

Despite the current standstill, John Feinblatt, president of Everytown for Gun Safety, a gun control advocacy group, says last year's bill was proof that they can break gridlock.

"It was never the finish line," he said.

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaro, Kevin Freking and Farnoush Amiri contributed to this report.

## Ukrainian court puts an Orthodox leader under house arrest

By KARL RITTER and ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A Kyiv court ordered a leading priest to be put under house arrest Saturday after Ukraine's top security agency said he was suspected of justifying Russian aggression, a criminal offense. It was the latest move in a bitter dispute over a famed Orthodox monastery.

Metropolitan Pavel is the abbot of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra monastery, Ukraine's most revered Orthodox site. He has denied the charges and resisted the authorities' order to vacate the complex.

In a court hearing earlier in the day, the metropolitan said the claim by the Security Service of Ukraine, known as the SBU, that he condoned Russia's invasion was politically driven and that he had "never been on the side of aggression."

After the court's ruling, a monitoring bracelet was placed around his ankle, despite his objections that he has diabetes and should not wear it. The house arrest was to last two months.

"I am accepting this," he said shortly before the bracelet was attached. "Christ was crucified on the cross, so why shouldn't I accept this?"

Earlier in the week, he cursed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, threatening him with damnation.

The monks in the monastery belong to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which has been accused of having links to Russia. The dispute surrounding the property, also known as the Monastery of the Caves, is part of a wider religious conflict that has unfolded in parallel with the war.

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

Many Orthodox communities in Ukraine have cut their ties with the UOC and transitioned to the rival Orthodox Church of Ukraine, which more than four years ago received recognition from the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

The UOC has insisted that it's loyal to Ukraine and has denounced the Russian invasion. But Ukrainian security agencies say some in the church have maintained close ties with Moscow. The agencies have raided numerous holy sites of the church and then posted photos of rubles, Russian passports, and leaflets with messages from the Moscow patriarch as proof that some church officials have been loyal to Russia.

The government had ordered the monks to leave the compound by March 29. It claims they violated their lease by making alterations to the historic site, and other technical infractions. The monks rejected the claim as a pretext.

Dozens of UOC supporters gathered outside the monastery on Saturday, singing hymns in the rain. A smaller group of protesters also turned up, accusing the other side of sympathizing with Moscow.

"They wash the brains of people with Russian support, and they are very dangerous for Ukraine," said Senia Kravchuk, a 38-year-old software developer from Kyiv. "They sing songs in support of Russia, and that's horrible, here, in the center of Kyiv."

Third-year seminary student David, 21, disagreed. Dressed in a priest's robes and with a Ukrainian flag draped round his shoulders, he insisted the Lavra priests and residents were in no way pro-Russian. The state, he said, was trying to evict hundreds of people from Lavra without a court order.

"Look at me. I'm in priest's clothes, with a Ukrainian flag and a cross around my neck. Could you say that I'm pro-Russian?" said David, who declined to give his last name because of the tensions surrounding the issue. "The priests are currently singing a Ukrainian hymn, and they're being called pro-Russian. Can you believe it?"

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In other news Saturday, Zelenskyy condemned the U.N. Security Council for allowing Russia to assume its presidency. The council's 15 members each serve as president for a month, on a rotating basis.

Zelenskyy said Russian artillery had killed a 5-month-old boy in the town of Avdiivka on Friday, "one of hundreds of artillery attacks" each day, and added that Russia presiding over the Security Council "proves the complete bankruptcy of such institutions."

Two civilians were reported killed in Russian shelling on Saturday, one each in the Kherson and Kharkiv regions, Ukrainian authorities there said.

Zelenskyy also said he spoke with French President Emmanuel Macron on Saturday about defense co-operation.

While Ukraine is preparing for a counteroffensive expected later this spring, Russian forces have kept pressing their effort to capture the city of Bakhmut. Fighting in that stronghold in Ukraine's east has dragged on for eight months.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said during a Saturday visit to the military headquarters overseeing the action in Ukraine that Russia's defense industries have boosted production of ammunition "by several times."

The U.K. Defense Ministry said in an analysis Saturday that the Russian offensive overseen by Gen. Valery Gerasimov, the chief of the General Staff of the Russian military, has fizzled.

"Gerasimov's tenure has been characterized by an effort to launch a general winter offensive with the aim of extending Russian control over the whole of the Donbas region," the British ministry said on Twitter. "Eighty days on, it is increasingly apparent that this project has failed."

The ministry said Russian forces have made only marginal gains in the Donbas "at the cost of tens of thousands of casualties." Russia was "largely squandering its temporary advantage in personnel" from a partial mobilization of 300,000 reservists Putin ordered in the fall, the U.K. analysis said. \_\_\_\_

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

## **Biden and his 2024 campaign: Waiting for some big decisions**

By ZEKE MILLER and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden has all but announced he's running for reelection, but key questions about the 2024 campaign are unresolved: Who will manage it? Where will it be based? When will he finally make it official?

Advisers have long said he planned to wait until after March, when the year's first fundraising period wraps up. That was an effort to help manage expectations because many donors who gave generously to Democratic causes during last fall's elections were looking for a break.

But an announcement isn't imminent even now, aides insist, and probably won't come until at least after Biden returns from an expected trip to Ireland in mid-April.

Working on his own timeline could counter Biden's low approval ratings and questions about his age — the 80-year-old would turn 86 before the end of a second term. It also means Biden won't be hurried by pressure from former President Donald Trump, who's already announced his 2024 campaign, or other top Republicans who may enter the race, including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis or former Vice President Mike Pence.

"He's earned the luxury of making the timetable," said Brad Bannon, a Democratic strategist in Washington. "The longer he can keep this thing focused on his duties in the White House, and less about the campaign back-and-forth, the better off he's going to be."

That said, Biden aides are mindful that Trump has been indicted for his role in the payment of hush money to a porn actor, and they say Biden will look to time his announcement to a point when he won't share the political spotlight with the man he beat in the 2020 election.

Biden's inner political circle is ready to begin executing on the campaign's strategy from Day One and sees no drawbacks to the president taking his time. Biden faces no significant Democratic challenger for the nomination. The self-help guru Marianne Williamson is the sole contender at this point in the primary race.

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It will also be up to Biden to decide where next year's Democratic National Convention is held among the three finalist cities of Atlanta, Chicago and New York. But with the logistical groundwork mostly laid, there is little pressure for that decision until the president is ready to make it, organizers say.

Much of the reelection effort will be run from the White House, where Biden's most senior advisers are expected to remain. Still, the campaign manager and top staff will be responsible for raising vast sums of money, reaching millions of voters and making the case for Biden at Americans' doors and online while he is still occupied with governing.

One top Biden adviser, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a reelection campaign that hasn't yet been announced, noted that Biden's 2020 bid was a \$1.7 billion operation and that the effort this time would be larger. The adviser said a key will be finding "validators," or non-Washington voices who can spread the campaign's message at a time when many people have lost faith in everything political.

Aides and allies are discussing how to build the appropriate 2024 race infrastructure. The circumstances are different from 2020 for Biden, whose race then was conducted while the country was largely shut down by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The political environment is different, too, as technological and cultural shifts have continued to change how people communicate. Biden's advisers are preparing a new model of campaigning fit for the moment to activate his base and identify and woo the persuadable center — essentially a customized communication strategy for each target voter.

Aba Blankson, chief marketing and communications officer for the NAACP, said her organization is non-partisan but found success mobilizing Black voters — an important part of Biden's base — before last November's elections using similarly targeted political messaging. That included text messages, radio ads and knocking on doors to promote "peer-to-peer" organizing in areas capable of swinging pivotal races.

"I think his timing is what his timing is," Blankson said. "But, for us, it is an every-year reality."

The choice of Biden's campaign headquarters has been narrowed to Philadelphia, the 2020 location, and Wilmington, Delaware, where his home is and where the president spends many weekends away from the White House. While Biden tends to prefer Delaware on all matters, some top Democrats worry that recruiting top campaign talent to Wilmington will be difficult.

The Biden adviser downplayed the importance of choosing between the two immediately. And Biden waited until weeks after the start of his 2020 campaign to announce that he had settled on Philadelphia, making a commitment to an important battleground state.

More challenging has been filling the job of campaign manager. Some potential candidates view it as a thankless task, with so much of the decision-making confined to the White House, though the adviser said whomever is ultimately chosen will be empowered with wide latitude to run 2024.

Jen O'Malley Dillon, Biden's 2020 campaign manager, is now a deputy White House chief of staff and plans to remain in her job. Many potential candidates have expressed interest in the campaign manager position, but among those on the short list are Julie Chavez Rodriguez, director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and a deputy campaign manager of Biden's 2020 campaign, and Sam Cornale, executive director of the Democratic National Committee.

Quentin Fulks, campaign manager for Georgia Sen. Raphael Warnock's reelection victory last fall, has been mentioned.

Biden led Democrats to a stronger than expected midterm performance in 2022 by urging voters to reject "extreme" adherents to Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement. So bringing in an outsider who ran successful Democratic campaigns last fall is a possibility. But party leaders acknowledge that breaking into Biden's famously tight inner circle has at times been challenging.

An exception is O'Malley Dillon, who was a late 2020 entrant to Biden's orbit after leading former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke's failed presidential bid.

Trump hasn't named a campaign manager despite announcing his candidacy months ago. But others aren't waiting to staff up.

Republican Nikki Haley, Trump's U.N. ambassador and a former South Carolina governor, picked Betsy



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Ankney, executive director of Haley's Stand for America political action committee, to manager her presidential campaign . The super PAC linked to DeSantis brought on former Trump aide Matt Wolking and strategist Jeff Roe, the architect of Texas Sen. Ted Cruz's 2016 presidential campaign and Republican Glenn Youngkin winning campaign for Virginia governor in 2021.

Even with the unanswered questions about his campaign structure, the outlines of Biden's pitch to voters are forming.

From the State of the Union address in February to speeches to donors, the president has begun making the case that Americans should let him "finish the job" he started. He's also tried framing the race as a choice between himself and "MAGA Republicans" who, he argues, will undermine the nation's core values.

Biden has spent recent months traveling to promote what he sees as his administration's key policy accomplishments, including a bipartisan public works package, and plans more of the same going forward. That would let him use this year to test political messaging that can best resonate in 2024, aides said.

"He's not going to win reelection or lose reelection based on what happens in his campaign," Bannon predicted. "He's going to win it based on his performance as president and the performance of his opponent, whoever it is."

## Kaley Cuoco has 1st child, a daughter, with Tom Pelphrey

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kaley Cuoco is flying high after giving birth to her first child.

The star of "The Flight Attendant" and "The Big Bang Theory" said on Instagram Saturday that she and fellow actor Tom Pelphrey now have a daughter named Matilda Carmine Richie Pelphrey.

"The new light of our lives!" Cuoco posted, along with a series of pictures of the baby, who was born Thursday. "We are overjoyed and grateful for this little miracle."

Cuoco has been married twice before, most recently to equestrian Karl Cook. The two split in 2021. Last year she began dating Pelphrey, and in October they announced they were expecting a child together.

Cuoco, 37, appeared for 12 seasons on the CBS sitcom "The Big Bang Theory." She has played the title role in "The Flight Attendant" on HBO Max for two seasons, and was nominated for an Emmy for each.

It's also the first child for Pelphrey, 40, who has acted primarily in soaps, including "Guiding Light" and "As The World Turns."

## Trump indictment ends decades of perceived invincibility

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When Donald Trump steps before a judge this coming week to be arraigned in a New York courtroom, it will not only mark the first time a former U.S. president has faced criminal charges. It will also be a reckoning for a man long nicknamed "Teflon Don," who until now has managed to skirt serious legal jeopardy despite 40 years of legal scrutiny.

Trump, who is the early front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination, is expected to turn himself in Tuesday. He faces charges including at least one felony offense related to hush money payments to women during his 2016 campaign. Like any other person facing trial, he will be booked, fingerprinted and photographed before being given the chance to enter a plea.

The spectacle that is sure to unfold will mark an unprecedented moment in American history that will demonstrate once again how dramatically Trump — who already held the distinction of being the first president to be impeached twice — has upended democratic norms. But on a personal level, the indictment pierces the cloak of invincibility that seemed to follow Trump through his decades in business and in politics, as he faced allegations of fraud, collusion and sexual misconduct.

"Boy, after all this time it's a bit of a shock," Trump biographer Michael D'Antonio said of the indictment. "You know I always thought of him as the Gingerbread Man, shouting, 'You can't catch me!' as he ran away."

"Given his track record," he said, "I had trouble imagining he would ever be held accountable."

"These are not things that Donald Trump ever thought in his entire life, nor I, for that matter, that he would ever be confronted with," Michael Cohen, Trump's longtime fixer and a key witness in the case who

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served jail time for the payments, told CNN.

Of course, some of the celebration by Trump's detractors may be premature. Trump could seek to have a judge quickly dismiss the case. Even if it moves forward, there's no guarantee of conviction. Intensifying investigations in Atlanta and Washington are seen as potentially more serious legal threats.

Still, Trump and his team were caught by surprise when word of the New York indictment broke Thursday evening, following news reports that the grand jury hearing the case was set for a weeklong hiatus. As the deliberations dragged on, some in Trump's orbit had become convinced that the case had stalled and that charges might never be brought. That included Trump lawyer Joe Tacopina, who said Friday morning he had hoped the "rule of law would prevail."

Trump, he said on the "Today" show, was "initially was shocked" by news of the charges, but quickly pivoted to his usual pushback playbook.

"After he got over that," he said, Trump "put a notch on his belt and he decided we have to fight now. And he got into a typical Donald Trump posture where he's ready to be combative on something that he believes is an injustice. ... I think he's now in the posture that he's ready to fight this."

In the meantime, Trump and his team have tried to use the news to his advantage, hoping to energize his loyal base by painting the investigation as part of a larger plot to derail his candidacy.

Already, the charges have been a boon to his struggling fundraising. The campaign announced Friday evening that it had raised over \$4 million in the 24 hours after the indictment became public, far smashing its previous record after the FBI search of Trump's Mar-a-Lago club.

More than 25% of donations, according to the campaign, came from first-time donors. The average contribution: \$34.

His campaign also continued to blast out supportive statements from dozens of top Republicans who have rallied behind Trump, including several of his declared and likely challengers, underscoring his continued hold on the party.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, in a speech Saturday to conservatives meeting in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, accused the Democratic prosecutor in New York, Alvin Bragg, of weaponizing the law "for political purposes" in bringing a case against "a former president." DeSantis said the district attorney had indicted "a former president on misdemeanor offenses" that he was "straining to try to convert into felonies."

Trump has been in contact by phone with key congressional allies, including members of House leadership and top committees, according to people familiar with the conversations, who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the response.

Trump ally Rep. Jim Banks, R-Ind., who formally endorsed the former president Friday, said Trump "doesn't back down" and was going to "fight back," telling a local radio show it was "yet another chapter where Donald Trump is going to come back on top in the end."

The media maelstrom has catapulted Trump back into the spotlight he craves, at least temporarily limiting attention being paid to his rivals, including DeSantis, who is widely expected to challenge Trump for the nomination, and has been holding events across the county to promote his book.

Trump aides have been discussing other ideas to maximize the situation, including the possibility of holding a press event either before or after the arraignment. Trump is expected to travel from Florida to New York on Monday and stay overnight at Trump Tower in midtown Manhattan before heading to the courthouse early Tuesday. He will return to Florida after the arraignment.

Trump has long denied that he had a sexual encounter with the porn actor known as Stormy Daniels and has blasted Bragg for pursuing the years-old case.

Trump is also facing continued investigations in Georgia, over his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election, and in Washington, where a special counsel is probing the events of Jan. 6, 2021, as well as Trump's handling of classified documents at Mar-a-Lago and potential obstruction of the investigation.

But Sam Nunberg, a longtime former aide who broke with Trump years ago, said that while he no longer supports Trump, he believes the Manhattan case is "a waste of time," given the allegations, which remain under seal. And he said he was skeptical it would ultimately matter.

"It doesn't surprise me," he said of the indictment. "What would surprise me is if he actually ended up

behind bars in prison and I don't see that happening."

D'Antonio said that sentiment — and a continued belief that Trump will somehow prevail and dodge the charges — continues among the many people who have reached out to him in the last 24 hours, despite the charges.

"They're like, he's going to get away with it," he said. "Somehow, he's going to get it thrown out."

This story has been corrected to reflect that Trump Tower is in midtown Manhattan, not lower Manhattan.

Associated Press writer Marc Levy in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, contributed to this report.

## Drug trafficking blamed as homicides soar in Costa Rica

By JAVIER CORDOBA Associated Press

LIMON, Costa Rica (AP) — In this colorful Caribbean port, where cruise ship passengers are whisked to jungle adventures in Costa Rica's interior, locals try to be home by dark and police patrol with high-caliber guns in the face of soaring drug violence.

Costa Rica logged a record 657 homicides last year and Limon — with a homicide rate five times the national average — was the epicenter.

The bloodshed in a country better known for its laid-back, "it's all good" outlook and its lack of a standing army has stirred a public outcry as the administration of President Rodrigo Chaves scrambles for answers.

Where Costa Rica had previously been just a pass-through for northbound cocaine from Colombian and Mexican cartels, authorities say it is now a warehousing and transshipment point for drugs sent to Europe by homegrown Costa Rican gangs.

In Limon, that shifting criminal dynamic has mixed with swelling ranks of young unemployed men who make up the majority of the casualties in fierce territorial battles.

Martin Arias, the deputy security minister and head of Costa Rica's Coast Guard, said Limon's violence stems from disputes over both the control of cocaine shipped to Europe and the marijuana sold locally.

In January, authorities dismantled a ring working to smuggle drugs through the container port. Cocaine has been secreted into walls of the steel containers and even packed among pineapple and yucca headed for Spain and Holland.

Foreign drug traffickers used to pay Costa Rican fishermen to bring gasoline to their smuggling boats.

"Later, the Mexican narcos said, 'We're not going to use money; we're not going to leave the trail that money leaves in banks, in systems; we're going to pay in cocaine,'" Arias said.

At first, the fishermen and their associates didn't have the contacts to sell their cocaine abroad, so they sold it locally as crack. But once they realized how much more the cocaine was worth in Europe, they began smuggling it out of the port, he said.

Meanwhile, marijuana was arriving from Jamaica and Colombia, and gangs fought over the local market. Victims of that violence are mostly in marginalized neighborhoods, Arias said.

Costa Rican authorities classified 421 of last year's 657 homicides as "score settling."

Former Security Minister Gustavo Mata estimated that 80% of the killings in Costa Rica were related to the growth in drug trafficking.

"We used to talk about Colombian cartels, Mexican cartels," Mata said. But now investigators have found gangs led by Costa Ricans, he said.

Mata, who served as security minister from 2015 to 2018, said that Costa Rica had become an "enormous warehouse" of drugs and an operations center for exports to Europe.

The Limon port's shipping business — both legal and illegal — has placed it at the center of violence.

"In Limon, there are four strong criminal groups competing for the drug market," said Randall Zúñiga, director of Costa Rica's Judicial Investigation Department. These groups clash, and "generally the people who die are sellers or members of the criminal groups."

But the violence has not been confined to Limon or to those involved in the drug trade.

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The Feb. 28 shooting of 8-year-old Samuel Arroyo, killed by a stray bullet while he slept in the capital San Jose, stirred popular outrage. Costa Ricans with no connection to the boy's family turned out for his funeral carrying white balloons.

President Chaves said Samuel died in a manner that was "outrageous, inexplicable and unacceptable." The president said the shooting apparently stemmed from a gang war. A 15-year-old was arrested in connection with the death.

One month earlier, Ingrid Muñoz organized a demonstration outside federal courts in San Jose to demand action after her 19-year-old son Keylor Gambia was killed defending his girlfriend from an assault.

"What we're seeking is to create consciousness so that there is not impunity," Muñoz said. "What we want is justice, so that the judges, as well as the prosecutors, understand the serious situation that not only the youth, but everyone in the country, is living."

Security Minister Jorge Torres, in comments to congress in January, faulted a justice system in which he said those sentenced on drug violations serve only a fraction of their prison sentences. "There are crimes for which you must serve the entire sentence," Torres said.

Torres said he would have a new security strategy ready by June, but meanwhile more resources for police were needed. "If we want to resolve this in the short term we need more police in the streets," he said.

Limon sits 100 miles (160 kilometers) east of San Jose. It is Costa Rica's most important port, handling much of the country's exports to the United States and Europe.

In 2018, the government privatized its container port, giving the concession to a Dutch company.

Antonio Wells, secretary general of the dockworkers union for Costa Rica's Atlantic ports, said some 7,000 jobs were lost in the port privatization, which he blames for Limon's social problems.

Last year, Limon was the canton with the second-highest murder rate with more than 62 homicides per 100,000 residents.

"If there are no jobs, it sounds terrible to say, but for many the closest thing to a job is being a hit man," Wells said.

Costa Rica's murder rate has increased in each of the last four years. Last year's rate was 12.6 per 100,000 residents, still only about one-third of Honduras, but the highest for Costa Rica since at least 1990.

Costa Rica's Association of Professionals in Economic Sciences in January found a strong correlation between low levels of development and high homicide rates in the most violent cantons like Limon.

"This isn't the Limon I grew up in," a retiree who identified himself only as David said on a recent day as he chatted with others in the city's central square. "After 9 o'clock at night you can't walk and it's really sad."

## Pope Francis leaves hospital; 'Still alive,' he quips

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — A chipper-sounding Pope Francis was discharged Saturday from the Rome hospital where he was treated for bronchitis, quipping to journalists before being driven away that he's "still alive."

Francis, 86, was hospitalized at Gemelli Polyclinic on Wednesday following his weekly public audience in St. Peter's Square after reportedly experiencing breathing difficulties. The pontiff received antibiotics administered intravenously during his stay, the Vatican said.

In a sign of his improved health, the Vatican released details of Francis' Holy Week schedule. It said he would preside at this weekend's Palm Sunday Mass and at Easter Mass on April 9, both held in St. Peter's Square and expected to draw tens of thousands of faithful. A Vatican cardinal will be at the altar to celebrate both Masses, a recent practice due to the pontiff having a troublesome knee issue.

But Francis is scheduled to celebrate Holy Thursday Mass, which this year will be held in a juvenile prison in Rome. Still unclear was whether he would attend the late-night, torch-lit Way of the Cross procession at Rome's Colosseum to mark Good Friday.

Before departing Gemelli Polyclinic late Saturday morning, Francis comforted a Rome couple whose 5-year-old daughter died Friday night at the Catholic hospital. Outside, Serena Subania, mother of Angelica, sobbed as she pressed her head into the chest of the pope, who held her close and whispered words of comfort.

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Francis seemed eager to linger with well-wishers. When a boy showed him his arm cast, the pope made a gesture as if to ask "Do you have a pen?" Three papal aides whipped out theirs. Francis took one of the pens and added his signature to the child's already well-autographed cast.

The pontiff answered in a low voice that was close to a whisper when reporters peppered him with questions, indicating he had felt unwell — "I felt sick," he said, pointing to his mid-section — a symptom that convinced his medical staff to take him to the hospital Wednesday.

Asked how he felt now, Francis joked, "Still alive, you know." He gave a thumbs-up sign.

Francis exited the hospital from a side entrance, but his car stopped in front of the main entrance, where a gaggle of journalists waited. He opened the car door himself and got out from the front passenger seat. Francis had a cane ready to lean on.

After chatting, he got back into the white Fiat 500 car that drove him away from Gemelli Polyclinic. But instead of heading straight home, his motorcade sped right past Vatican City and went to St. Mary Major Basilica, a Rome landmark that is one of his favorites.

There, startled tourists rushed to snap photos of him as he sat in a wheelchair, which he has used often to navigate longer distances in recent years due to a chronic knee problem. When he emerged after praying, residents and tourists in the street called out repeatedly, "Long live the pope!" and clapped.

Francis spent 10 days at the same hospital in July 2021 following intestinal surgery for a bowel narrowing. After his release back then, he also stopped to offer prayers of thanksgiving at St. Mary Major Basilica, which is home to an icon depicting the Virgin Mary. He also visits the church upon returning from trips abroad.

Before leaving the hospital Saturday, Francis, while chatting with journalists, praised medical workers, saying they "show great tenderness."

"We sick are capricious. I much admire the people who work in hospitals," he said. Francis also said he read journalists' accounts of his illness, including in a Rome daily newspaper, and pronounced them well done.

Francis stopped to talk to reporters again before he was driven into the Vatican through a gate of the tiny walled city-state, where he lives at a Holy See hotel. Speaking through an open car window, he said: "Happy Easter to all, and pray for me."

Then, indicating he was eager to resume his routine, he said, "Forward, thanks."

In response to a shouted question from a reporter, who asked if the pope would visit Hungary at the end of April as scheduled, Francis answered, "Yes."

On yet another stop, he got out of his car to distribute chocolate Easter eggs to the police officers who drove the motorcycles at the head of his motorcade.

Given his strained voice, it was unclear if the pope would read the homily at the Palm Sunday service or deliver the usually lengthy "Urbi et Orbi" (Latin for to the city and to the world) address, a review of the globe's conflicts, at the end of Easter Mass.

He told reporters that after Palm Sunday Mass, he would keep his weekly appointment to greet and bless the public in St. Peter's Square.

As a young man in his native Argentina, Francis had part of a lung removed, leaving him particularly vulnerable to any respiratory illness.

Gregorio Borgia contributed reporting.

## Wisconsin Supreme Court control, abortion access at stake

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Control of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, and likely the future of abortion access, Republican-drawn legislative maps and years of GOP policies in the key swing state rests with the outcome an election Tuesday that has seen record campaign spending.

The winner of the high-stakes contest between Republican-backed Dan Kelly and Democratic-supported Janet Protasiewicz will determine majority control of the court headed into the 2024 presidential election.

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The court came within one vote of overturning President Joe Biden's narrow win in 2020, and both sides expect another close race in 2024.

It's the latest election where abortion rights has been the central issue since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade last June. It's also an example of how officially nonpartisan court races have grown into political battles as major legal fights play out at the state level.

All of it has fueled spending that will double, and likely triple or more, the previous high of \$15.4 million spent on a state court race in Illinois in 2004. Democrats have spent heavily for Protasiewicz and Republicans for Kelly.

Democrats are trying to flip control of the court, which has had a majority of conservative justices the past 15 years. That has allowed the court to uphold an array of Republican priorities, including banning absentee ballot drop boxes last year and affirming the 2011 law all-but ending collective bargaining for most public workers.

"The policy direction of Wisconsin is going to be determined in large part by this Supreme Court race," said University of Wisconsin-Madison political science professor Barry Burden. "Everything from abortion to disputes over the 2024 presidential election are going to land in the lap of this court. And the winner will be the deciding justice on these issues."

Protasiewicz, 60, has tried to make the race a referendum on abortion, running on a Democratic-backed agenda that includes her loudly voicing her "personal values" in support of abortion rights.

The court is expected to rule on a lawsuit challenging the state's 174-year-old law banning nearly all abortions.

That law, enacted a year after statehood, went back into effect after the Supreme Court's ruling overturning Roe v. Wade, leading to an end to abortions being provided in Wisconsin. Democrats, including Gov. Tony Evers who won reelection in November, have seized on the issue.

"Abortion was a real motivator for Democrats and independents," Burden said. "It's been amped up in this election because the court has a real role in determining the policy."

Protasiewicz won the backing of Planned Parenthood and other similar groups as she focused on abortion without saying how she would rule on the pending case challenging the ban. But she's promised that Kelly would vote to uphold it.

Kelly hasn't said whether he thinks the ban is legal. But he has expressed opposition to abortion in the past, including in a 2012 blog post in which he said the Democratic Party and the National Organization for Women were committed to normalizing the taking of human life.

Kelly also has done legal work for Wisconsin Right to Life, one of three anti-abortion groups that has endorsed him.

Abortion isn't the only hot political issue Protasiewicz has embraced. She also called the Republican-drawn legislative maps upheld by the current court "rigged" and said she would welcome revisiting them.

The state Supreme Court upheld Republican-drawn maps in 2022. Those maps, widely regarded as among the most gerrymandered in the country, have helped Republicans increase their hold on the state Legislature to near supermajority levels, even as Democrats have won statewide elections, including Evers as governor in both 2018 and 2022 and Biden in 2020.

When asked in an interview on Wisconsin Public Radio whether he thought the GOP-drawn maps were fair, Kelly punted.

"I think that's a political judgment," he said, adding that his view was "entirely irrelevant."

Kelly was appointed to the state Supreme Court by then-Gov. Scott Walker, a Republican, in 2016. He served four years before being defeated in 2020 on the same ballot as the Democratic presidential primary. Kelly was endorsed by then-President Donald Trump that year.

Protasiewicz has tried to paint Kelly as an "extreme partisan" and a "true threat to democracy" given his ties to Republicans, including advising them on the plan to have fake GOP electors cast their ballots for Trump following the 2020 election even though he had lost.

Four of the past six presidential races in Wisconsin have been decided by less than a percentage point,

including Trump's victory in 2016 and Biden's win in 2020.

Kelly, 58, has tried to distance himself from his previous Republican clients and his political beliefs.

"I don't talk about my politics because I understand they are not relevant to the work of the court," he told the Dane County Bar Association in March. "We're there to decide questions of the law and that's it."

Protasiewicz is a former prosecutor who was first elected as a Milwaukee County judge in 2014.

Kelly has accused Protasiewicz of being "bought and paid for" by Democrats and crossing the line by all-but declaring how she would rule on cases expected to come before the court. Kelly also tried to paint Protasiewicz as soft on crime, citing cases she handled as a judge, while also accusing her of "straight up lying" throughout the campaign on various issues.

The winner will serve a 10-year term starting in August replacing retiring conservative Justice Pat Roggensack.

In a sign of how divisive the race is, Roggensack endorsed Kelly, while her daughter, Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Ellen Brostrom, backed Protasiewicz. Brostrom said Kelly was "unfit" to serve because of his involvement in the fake GOP electors scheme.

## Lanterns and crescents: more retailers court Ramadan buyers

By MARIAM FAM and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO Associated Press

With her 3-year-old daughter sitting inside a red Target shopping cart, Aya Khalil looked through the aisles with anticipation. The author was on a mission: See for herself that her children's book about a boy and his grandmother baking for an Islamic feast was actually carried by her local Target store in Toledo.

"Oh my God! ... It's right there," Khalil said on spotting "The Night Before Eid."

"Oh yeaaaaah!" her daughter joyously exclaimed. Khalil giggled.

For Khalil, it was a pinch-me moment as an author -- and also a big deal as a mother.

"This didn't happen when I was growing up. It was like, 'Are things really changing now?'" she said. "I'm just really happy that now my own kids will be able to see that and that they'll know that their stories are valid and ... are out there like a totally normal thing."

For this year's Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which started last week, Target rolled out its first dedicated Ramadan and Eid collection, including decoration kits with crescent and lantern-shaped cutouts. It's one of the latest signs of big retailers in the United States catering to Muslim shoppers' needs.

Many Muslim Americans enthusiastically welcomed the recognition, applauding retailers that are making it easier for them to bring their families the cheer that ubiquitously and publicly marks some other faiths' holidays.

"As stores have accommodated for Easter and Christmas for centuries, I'm glad to see them bring in Ramadan items," said Hass Beydoun of Dearborn Heights, Michigan. "We welcome it, because they are welcoming our culture and beliefs in their stores."

Others echoed the sentiment on Target's website: "Thank you so much for making Ramadan decor mainstream," one shopper wrote. "We feel seen and heard!" wrote another.

Still, some have been debating the merits of buying Ramadan decor from big box retailers in America, where Muslims make up a small but growing part of the population, to encourage representation, versus supporting small, Muslim-owned businesses that have made such items. Some others caution against excessively commercializing a religious period.

Ramadan is a month of fasting, increased worship and charity. It's often a time for festive gatherings; on social media, some share photos of their decorated homes or swap ideas for DIY Ramadan decor and children's activities. Ramadan is followed by the Eid al-Fitr holiday.

Target's new Ramadan and Eid collection is sold online and in a few hundred stores in areas with numerous Muslim shoppers. The retailer, which didn't provide sales figures, said it received positive feedback from shoppers and that the collection is part of its commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Party supplies retailer Party City started selling Ramadan and Eid items in 2018 and has since increased such products amid growing demand. More than 280 stores, particularly in locations with large Muslim

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populations, carry the items, which include lantern string lights and table runners reading "Ramadan Mubarak," or "Blessed Ramadan."

"Our goal is to offer authentic and inclusive celebration options to all of our customers, particularly those who are underrepresented in the retail industry," said Susan Sanderson, Party City's senior vice president of brand marketing.

Walmart Inc., the nation's largest retailer, said it recently started carrying items related to Ramadan and Eid but the merchandise is sold only online, not in stores.

Still, that's a change from when Jomana Siddiqui received an Eid present in Christmas gift wrap in 2011; at the time, Siddiqui, whose business is based in Fullerton, California, said she didn't see American retailers carrying merchandise for Ramadan or Eid. She tried to get malls and stores to put up signage acknowledging the Muslim holy days but was rebuffed.

From 2014 to 2016, she worked with Macy's at South Coast Plaza mall in Costa Mesa, California, to design the display towers with "Happy Ramadan" signs for an event. In 2018, she started selling her own items at a pop-up shop at Macy's in Westminster, California.

Even now, Siddiqui is struggling to convince major retailers to sell her modern-style items like "Ramadan Blessings" platters -- and Ramadan and Eid-appropriate gift wrap sheets. She contends many retailers treat American Muslims, who are racially and culturally diverse, as a monolith and says they should avoid cultural stereotypes.

"Putting camels and palm trees on something doesn't speak to Indonesian Muslims or a Mexican Muslim," she said.

Fatima Siddiqui, who lives in the metro Detroit area and owns a calligraphy art business, wrote on Facebook that amid the excitement at retailers carrying Ramadan decorations, community members shouldn't forget to support Muslim-owned small businesses.

Responses varied. Some shoppers said that while supporting such businesses is important, so is buying from the big, national ones to encourage more representation and for Muslim children to feel celebrated. Others argued that decorations offered by many of the small businesses were often expensive or that big retailers were more accessible. Others suggested buying from both.

"Why wouldn't retailers partner up with small businesses to showcase their products that are handcrafted with thoughtful meanings?" said Fatima Siddiqui. This year, she organized a Ramadan market in Canton, Michigan, where vendors sold items including banners, wreaths and serving trays.

"Ramadan decor boosts our excitement and mood," she said. "It helps our younger generation feel special because of the obvious displays of Christmas and other non-Islamic holidays."

The decor can spark educational conversations with non-Muslims, said Yasmen Bagh, who lives in Jersey City and has founded a business selling outdoor inflatables in such shapes as mosques and lanterns.

"It brings awareness to your neighbors," she said. "The images that they see on TV and what Muslims look like is usually like a bad guy; it's changing that."

Bagh is conflicted about big retailers stepping into the Ramadan and Eid space. "As a Muslim, it makes me happy; as a business owner, it makes me worry."

Some other business owners say there's room for everyone. And while some Muslims argue a focus on decor and other material items can distract from the month's spiritual essence, others say a balance can be struck and that the products help children get engaged.

Mainstream retailers have gradually paid more attention to Muslim customers. Macy's sells modest wear, including hijabs. Nike unveiled a hijab for Muslim female athletes in 2017, sparking mixed reactions and a discussion about inclusivity in sports. Other activewear brands followed with their own athletic hijabs. Since 2021, Mattel's American Girl brand has been selling an Eid al-Fitr celebration outfit, which includes a long-sleeved turquoise abaya dress, for its 18-inch dolls.

The move to embrace Muslim shoppers is part of a broader strategy by retailers to better connect with increasingly diverse generations of customers. Some critics dismiss the effort as a marketing tactic to boost the bottom line.



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Sabiha Ansari, co-founder and vice president at American Muslim Consumer Consortium, a nonprofit dedicated to developing the American Muslim consumer market, said she doesn't mind whether the goal is to make a dollar. She's just happy companies are embracing products catering to Muslims.

"People want to be recognized," she said.

Back in Toledo, Khalil, the author, said her book is, first, for the Muslim children and, even adults, who haven't seen themselves in books. It tells the story of Zain, who helps his grandmother who is visiting from Egypt, where Khalil was born, bake traditional cookies covered in powdered sugar for the feast. He shares the treats with his classmates, who love them.

For this Ramadan, Khalil spruced up her home with lights, lanterns and signs, mostly from small businesses. Her kids also painted a craft kit—that one was bought from Target.

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Associated Press reporter Mike Householder in Dearborn Heights, Michigan, contributed.

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## 'War of the states': EV, chip makers lavished with subsidies

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — States are doling out more cash than ever to lure multibillion-dollar microchip, electric vehicle and battery factories, inspiring ever-more competition as they dig deeper into their pockets to attract big employers and capitalize on a wave of huge new projects.

Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas have made billion-dollar pledges for a microchip or EV plant, with more state-subsidized plant announcements by profitable automakers and semiconductor giants surely to come.

States have long competed for big employers. But now they are floating more billion-dollar offers and offering record-high subsidies, lavishing companies with grants and low-interest loans, municipal road improvements, and breaks on taxes, real estate, power and water.

"We're in the second war of the states," said John Boyd, a principal at the Florida-based Boyd Company, which advises on site selections. "That's how competitive economic development is between the states in 2023."

The projects come at a transformative time for the industries, with automakers investing heavily in electrification and chipmakers expanding production in the U.S. following pandemic-related supply chain disruptions that raised economic and national security concerns.

One of the driving forces behind them are federal subsidies signed into law last summer that are meant to encourage companies to produce electric vehicles, EV batteries, and computer chips domestically. Another is that states are flush with cash thanks to inflation-juiced tax collections and federal pandemic relief subsidies.

The number of big projects and the size of state subsidy packages are extraordinary, said Nathan Jensen, a University of Texas professor who researches government economic development strategies.

"It is kind of a Wild West moment," Jensen said. "It's wild money and every state seems to be in on it."

Good Jobs First, a nonprofit that tracks and is critical of corporate subsidies, said 2022 set a record for the number of billion-dollar-plus incentive deals. At least eight were finalized, though that figure might be higher since such deals can be cloaked in secrecy and take time to come to light.

Eighteen of last year's 23 known "megadeals," in which state and local incentive packages to private companies exceeded \$50 million in value, were for semiconductor and EV plants, according to the group's data.

More than \$20 billion in public money was committed to subsidizing those known megadeals, according to Good Jobs First data. That total eclipsed the previous record of \$17.7 billion that was committed to subsidizing such deals in 2013.

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Many of the companies drawing the biggest subsidy offers — such as Intel, Hyundai, Panasonic, Micron, Toyota, Ford and General Motors — are profitable and operate around the globe. Some lesser-known names in the nascent EV field are getting big offers too, such as Rivian, Volkswagen-backed Scout Motors and Vietnamese automaker VinFast.

The subsidy offers are generally embraced by politicians from both major parties and the business elite, who point to promises of hundreds or thousands of jobs, massive investments in construction and equipment, and what they contend are immeasurable trickle-down benefits.

Still, academics who study such subsidies find them to be a waste of money and rarely decisive in a company's choice of location.

In a 2021 paper arguing that subsidies are driven by politicians for their own benefit, researchers from The Citadel, the College of Charleston and the University of Louisville-Lafayette wrote that studies conclude "they do little, if anything, to promote meaningful improvements in economic outcomes."

The mounting cost of competing for the projects hasn't dissuaded states from trying. On the contrary, they're clambering to outdo each other.

Michigan was stung by hometown Ford's \$11.4 billion commitment in 2021 to build electric vehicle and battery plants in Tennessee and Kentucky. It responded by pledging more than \$2.5 billion for electric-vehicle projects by Ford and GM and plants by makers of EV batteries and battery components.

Pennsylvania has yet to lure a microchip or EV factory, and the state's business elite are sounding the alarm after watching neighboring Ohio land a \$20 billion Intel plant.

In his first budget speech to lawmakers, newly inaugurated Gov. Josh Shapiro said Pennsylvania needs to "get in the game" and warned that it would take money.

Jabbing a finger in the air, he brought the room to a standing ovation, saying: "It's time to compete again here in Pennsylvania!"

Oregon lawmakers hoping to attract a major semiconductor plant are advancing legislation that would marshal \$200 million in subsidies and loosen decades-old protections against urban sprawl.

The aim is to procure huge plots of land with ready-made utilities. That has elicited protests from conservationists who say the state mishandled developable land and agricultural groups that warned of the permanent destruction of high-quality farmland.

Dick Sheehy, a retired site selection consultant who traveled the world to inspect possible locations for semiconductor makers, told a panel of Oregon lawmakers in January that states are tipping the scales over better-qualified competitors by offering larger incentive packages.

"The money the state is putting up is so large that certain companies can't afford not to look at it," Sheehy said.

In Texas, Gov. Greg Abbott promised to win passage of "economic development tools" during the current legislative session, saying the state lost out on a massive Micron semiconductor plant because it couldn't match the \$5.5 billion in tax credits offered by New York.

"The CEO of Micron was basically begging me because he really wanted to do business in Texas. He knew Texas was a better place. He said, 'Please could you come up with some more?'" Abbott told a Greater Arlington Chamber of Commerce crowd in February. "We gave every penny that we could give."

Asked about Abbott's assertions, Micron declined to address Abbott's description of the phone call with CEO Sanjay Mehrotra, but it called New York the most competitive state and listed reasons why it is the "ideal home" for its plant.

Those included a compelling case made by top officials — including Gov. Kathy Hochul and U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer — plus an attractive local workforce, local research and development partners, and a good quality of life for employees.

In Oklahoma, frustration among lawmakers has been bubbling over since the state lost out on a string of projects: first a Tesla plant to Texas, then a Panasonic EV battery plant to Kansas and, just days ago, a Volkswagen EV battery plant to Canada.

That latest loss led state Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat to create a committee to figure out

what went wrong in Oklahoma's bidding for a "megaproject."

Business-friendly Oklahoma shouldn't keep losing out to other states, Treat said.

"You never know if you're being used so they can go to that other state so they can say, 'Hey, Oklahoma is willing to do this,'" Treat said in an interview. "And they intend on going to that state the whole time."

Associated Press writers Sean Murphy in Oklahoma City and Andrew Selsky in Salem, Oregon, contributed to this report.

Follow Marc Levy on Twitter: @timelywriter

## Alaska Native Scouts feted 67 years after rescuing Navy crew

By MARK THIESSEN Associated Press

GAMBELL, Alaska (AP) — Bruce Boolowon, then a lean 20-year-old, and a group of friends were hunting for murre eggs in a walrus skin boat on a remote Alaska island in the Bering Strait when they saw a crippled airplane flying low.

"Something was wrong," Boolowon, now 87, recalled of that day in 1955. "They came in and one engine was smoking."

Long before drones or weather balloons became military targets, a U.S. Navy P2V-5 Neptune maritime patrol aircraft had been attacked at about 8,000 feet (2,438 meters) by two Soviet MiG-15 fighters roaring out of nearby Siberia. The plane's right engine was destroyed and the pilot was making a controlled crash landing.

Its 11 crewmen had injuries in varying degrees of severity, caused either by the bullets sprayed by the two jet fighters, shrapnel or the fireball that erupted when the Neptune landed wheels up on the tundra of St. Lawrence Island and fuel tanks stored in the plane's belly exploded.

"And as the plane decelerated, the fireball didn't. And it rolled forward. It burned everybody," the navigator on the flight, David Assard, told the Anchorage Daily News in 2015. Several of the men had severe burns.

The men took refuge in a ditch on St. Lawrence Island — just 40 miles (64 kilometers) from Siberia and 715 miles (1,151 kilometers) west of Anchorage — to avoid the exploding ammunition and waited, but for what they weren't sure. When the armed Siberian Yupik Eskimo egg hunters showed up, the Navy men didn't know if they were about to be captured or rescued.

"Well, they were glad to see us and that we were Americans," Boolowon told The Associated Press.

They were not only friendly faces but members of the First Scouts unit of the Alaska National Guard who lived on the island and whose job it was to monitor the Soviet Union given their proximity. The 16 guardsmen and an unknown Air Force member helped the crew get medical attention and alerted military authorities the men were safe.

On Tuesday, the guardsmen were honored with Alaska Heroism Medals, giving the Alaska Native men the recognition that wasn't available 67 years ago. Boolowon, then a corporal, is the sole survivor, and family members of the other 15 received the medals on their behalf.

Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe, the adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, not only approved the medals for the men, he personally handed them out at the ceremony held with a driving snow outside. Residents filled the gym at John Apangalook School in Gambell, home to the King Polar Bears — or Qughsatkut in Siberian Yupik— sports teams. Family members receiving medals sat in honored seats on the gym floor, and Saxe posed for photos with each after presenting the medals and a certificate. A community luncheon followed.

"I'm glad we're going to get recognized a little bit for saving the crewmembers," Boolowon said.

Shortly after the June 22, 1955, rescue, two of the guardsmen, MSgt. Willis Walunga and SSgt. Clifford Iknokinok, received honorific letters and certificates from the Navy and National Guard. They were taken to Washington, D.C., and presented "Wings of Gold" with the Honorary Naval Aviator Program designation. They were only the second and third persons so honored after the program started in 1949.

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The other 14 only received letters. "I don't know why they didn't include us," Boolowon said of the Navy designation.

There were no other medals available to the men for their deeds because it wasn't a combat mission, and the rescue was considered a peacetime affair.

"The families felt like that the members should have received a better award than a letter of appreciation," said Verdie Bowen, the director of the state Office of Veterans Affairs. "The best one that we could find that fit this feat of valor was the state of Alaska's Heroism Award," he said. It honors Alaska National Guard members who distinguish themselves by heroism, meritorious achievement or going beyond the call of duty.

Boolowon was with Iknokinok, Walunga and others in the first boat to arrive at the crash site, where they found the men.

He said they weren't scared it was a Soviet aircraft because they were familiar with the U.S. plane from its frequent maritime patrols out of Naval Air Station Kodiak. On this mission, the plane was looking for icebergs and navigational aids in the Bering Strait. The wreckage of the plane still sits 8 miles (12.9 kilometers) from the village.

Boolowon and two other men from the first boat went to Gambell to get medical supplies, stretchers and more help. Another boat arrived, and the guardsmen eventually took the men to the village for treatment by a local nurse at a clinic and a church until a transport plane arrived about 12 hours later to take them to Anchorage. Seven of the injured were later flown to California to recuperate.

The June 22, 1955, attack was labeled a possible "mistake" by embarrassed Soviet leaders and came at a problematic time for the Soviet Union. A summit to de-escalate Cold War tensions was planned the following month in Geneva with President Dwight Eisenhower, Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin and the prime ministers of Great Britain and France.

After learning the plane was shot down, Eisenhower directed Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to meet with Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov during the 10th anniversary meeting of the United Nations in San Francisco.

Molotov was unaware of the incident but promised an investigation. The Kremlin wired Molotov his instructions, which included presenting Dulles "with a conciliatory note that admitted the incident could have been 'due to a mistake,'" David Winkler, the historian at the Naval Historical Foundation, wrote in his 2017 book "Incidents at Sea: American Confrontation and Cooperation with Russia and China, 1945-2016."

It was the first time the Soviets both ever expressed regret and paid reparations, Winkler told the AP last summer, and the summit went on as planned. The Soviets agreed to compensate the U.S. for the plane, sending just over \$35,000 (about \$400,000 today) in reparations. The money was split among the crewmen.

In the early 1990s, Assard travelled to Gambell to thank them and presented the village with a bronze plaque.

"We were very fortunate in landing on an American island and being found by American Eskimos," Assard, the flight navigator who is now deceased, told the Anchorage newspaper in 2015. "They couldn't have been more gracious."

The other 13 guardsmen posthumously awarded medals were Pfc. Holden Apatiki, Lane Iyakitan, Woodrow Malewotkuk, Roger Slwooko, Vernon Slwooko and Donald Ungott; Sfc. Herbert Apassingok; Sgt. Ralph Apatiki Sr.; Cpls. Victor Campbell, Ned Koozaata and Joseph Slwooko, and Pvts. Luke Kulukhon and Leroy Kulukhon.

JoAnn Kulukhon accepted medals on behalf of her two uncles and plans to prominently display them in her home. "I'm so proud of them," she said. "I know they're happy."

As for receiving his own medal, Boolowon said the recognition is simply for work well done.

"I'm glad we did our duty as a guardsman," he said.

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AP Investigative Researcher Randy Herschaft in New York contributed to this report.

## Fatal fire complicates border city's tensions with migrants

By FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ Associated Press

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (AP) — When Irwing López made it to Ciudad Juarez on the U.S.-Mexico border in January, the 35-year-old construction worker thought he had survived the worst and was steps away from his goal.

He'd traversed jungle and raging rivers, and evaded Mexico's notorious cartels, traveling thousands of miles from his native Venezuela. But then he found himself in a purgatory between U.S. immigration policies that pushed him back to Mexico and the unrelenting pursuit of Mexican immigration agents.

And on Monday, López was reminded just how fragile his situation is. His friend and fellow Venezuelan Samuel Marchena was detained by immigration agents and hours later became one of the 39 migrants who died in a fire at a detention center.

López, who sleeps in a shelter and washes windshields at stoplights for cash, said he won't give up trying to enter the U.S., but he recognizes he's not welcome in this sprawling border city that has grown tired of migrants in its community.

"My dream has become a nightmare," López said recently, waiting to weave between cars at a light.

Tensions have simmered between migrants and residents in Mexican border cities for several years, with large camps set up near crossings by those who can't afford housing or cling to unrealistic hopes that U.S. authorities will suddenly admit them. In Ciudad Juarez, a city of 1.5 million estimated to have as many as 25,000 migrants, constant new arrivals facing an indeterminate wait were already the subject of heated debate. The deadly fire and accompanying attention have only added to the strained situation.

Many border residents take pride in their cities as beacons of diversity and hospitality, but challenges mounted after the U.S. introduced a practice under which migrants were forced to wait in Mexican border cities for an appointment to enter the U.S. to seek asylum or other legal status.

An opaque system of waiting lists for a chance to apply for U.S. asylum managed by nongovernmental groups or individuals topped 55,000 names in 11 Mexican border cities in August, according to a report by the Strauss Center for International Security and Law at the University of Texas, Austin.

Additionally, a Trump-era policy that ended last year resulted in more than 70,000 people waiting in Mexico for hearings in U.S. immigration court.

And since March 2020, the U.S. has returned migrants from several countries, largely Guatemala and Honduras, to Mexico under a rule designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In January, the Biden administration introduced a glitch-plagued app to exempt migrants from the pandemic-era rule, known as Title 42, and it is now scheduling about 740 appointments per day along the border.

López has found the application, called CBPOne, to be complicated and frustrating, but U.S. authorities have scheduled about 63,000 appointments through the app since Jan. 18.

U.S. authorities have already returned López to Mexico twice after he crossed the border without an appointment. Once they allowed his sister, her husband and cousin who he had traveled with from Venezuela to remain in the U.S.

"Right now, this is a border of uncertainty, insecurity," said the Rev. Javier Calvillo, director of the Casa del Migrante shelter. Like many, Calvillo fears fallout from the fire could aggravate the existing chaos, which he blamed on a lack of coordination among local, state and federal officials.

In early March, hundreds of migrants crossed one of the international bridges here on the false rumor that U.S. authorities would let them enter. The incident shut down traffic for hours on a vital link to El Paso, Texas, angering residents.

Mayor Cruz Pérez Cuellar started asking Juarez residents to stop giving money to panhandling migrants, warning that his patience was running out. He insisted there was room in the city's shelters and work available for migrants who want it, leaving no need for them to clog intersections.

"We're going to have a stronger posture in this sense, taking care of the city," he said March 13. "A crucial moment has arrived to put a stop and have a breaking point ... because they can affect the city's

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economy and thousands of Juarez (residents)."

After the fire, critics accused the mayor of being behind the roundup of some of the migrants detained that day. In response, Pérez Cuellar softened his rhetoric to say the city would bolster efforts to tell migrants about opportunities for work and shelter. He said city police could not legally take migrants to the immigration detention center and that he did not know of migrants' complaints that police often took their possessions and extorted them.

Mexico has arrested five people on charges of murder and causing injury: three immigration officials, two private security guards and the migrant they accuse of setting fire to mattresses in the facility. They say they plan to arrest at least one more.

Estrella Pérez, a 24-year-old nurse and Juarez resident, said she was sorry about what happened, but didn't disguise her unhappiness with the increase in migration through the city, especially of Venezuelan migrants. She said they're not looking for work.

She accused migrants of "invading" the streets and bridges. Despite the tragedy of the fire, she said, "there are going to be few people who change their perspective of them," adding that people are no longer willing to tolerate new arrivals.

On Wednesday, Belen Sosa of Caracas, Venezuela, plodded with her husband and a teenage daughter across a dusty clearing in Ciudad Juarez overlooking the Rio Grande and the U.S. border fence.

She described the indignations of living in limbo while seeking an appointment to apply for U.S. asylum and said migrants live in fear of detention and harassment as they search for odd jobs.

The family weighed whether to turn themselves in to a cluster of U.S. Border Patrol agents Wednesday and risk immediate removal, as hundreds of migrants flocked to a gate in the border fence. Sosa previously worked as a forensic technician in a morgue in the Venezuelan capital.

"People are tired of the mistreatment," she said. "They want to make us out to be delinquents. Migrating isn't a crime. What crime are we committing?"

Luis Vázquez, owner of a hamburger stand in the city, conceded that many fellow residents are fed up with migrants, again emphasizing the outsized presence of Venezuelans who tend to be more visible and vocal than the Central Americans moving through the city. But he said ultimately the city's history as a border crossing would win out.

"What Juarez has is that it has always helped people, and never left them alone," he said "And with this opportunity, many of us are going to help them."

Yannerys Vian, a 31-year-old Venezuelan, carefully maneuvered her pregnant belly between cars to sell candy at an intersection.

The deaths in the fire made her angry, but not ready to quit. She said she left Venezuela in September after her young daughter died from lack of medical attention. She set out for the U.S. with her husband and 3-year-old son, making it to Juarez in December.

On Wednesday, she joined the migrants crossing again on the rumor the U.S. would let them enter. Many turned themselves over to authorities at an opening in the border fence, but Vian balked, fearing the she'd be passed back to Mexico, which would in turn send her family farther south, erasing the gains they made.

"What happened filled me with hate, with anger," she said. "What they did to those people was a crime, but I won't give them the satisfaction of sending me back." —

AP writers Morgan Lee in Ciudad Juarez and Elliot Spagat in San Diego contributed to this report.

## Doomsday plot? After 3 years, slain kids' mom to stand trial

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — It has been more than three years since police announced that two kids were missing from a rural eastern Idaho town, and each twist in the grim investigation has seemed stranger than the last.

Their mother claimed to be a deity, her estranged husband wrote in divorce papers. She called the children "zombies" before they vanished, a friend told police. A handful of followers seemed to buy into her doomsday claims, Arizona investigators reported.

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Those are just some of the details that could be aired in court starting next week, when Lori Vallow Daybell stands trial on murder, conspiracy and grand theft charges in the deaths of 7-year-old Joshua "JJ" Vallow, and Tylee Ryan, who was last seen a few days before her 17th birthday.

Her husband, Chad Daybell, faces the same charges. And they are both also charged in the October 2019 death of Daybell's late wife.

Here's a look at what is known and what is next in the bizarre case:

## HOW DID THE CASE BEGIN?

JJ's grandparents, Larry and Kay Woodcock of Louisiana, were increasingly worried about the kids in 2019. For the first half of the year, Lori Vallow Daybell was still married to JJ's father, Charles Vallow, but the two were estranged and he had filed for divorce.

In the divorce documents, Vallow claimed his wife believed she was a god-like figure, sent to usher in the apocalypse and carry out the work of 144,000 believers.

Their marriage ended suddenly in July when Lori's brother, Alex Cox, shot and killed her husband outside the family's suburban Phoenix home. Police initially determined the shooting was in self-defense and Cox was never charged.

Vallow Daybell, the kids and Cox moved to eastern Idaho, and JJ's grandparents struggled to reach him by phone. The Woodcocks said Vallow Daybell wouldn't tell them why the child was always unavailable. They grew suspicious and called police.

## WHEN DID THE CASE BECOME A MURDER INVESTIGATION?

Rexburg police performed a welfare check in November of 2019, and said Lori Vallow Daybell and Chad Daybell — an Idaho man who had known Lori for months — lied about the children's whereabouts.

When police returned the next day, the couple had left town.

Police determined Tylee Ryan was last seen in September headed into Yellowstone National Park with her mom and other family for a day trip, and JJ was last seen by school officials several days later.

The search spanned several states and continued until June 2020, when the children's bodies were found buried in the yard of Daybell's eastern Idaho home.

Detectives meanwhile learned that his previous wife, Tammy Daybell, had unexpectedly died in October 2019 of what was initially reported as "natural causes," and the family had declined an autopsy.

Chad and Lori married just two weeks after Tammy's death. Authorities exhumed Tammy Daybell's body and expanded their investigation.

## WHAT DO PROSECUTORS SAY HAPPENED?

Prosecutors say the Daybells espoused strange doomsday-focused beliefs to further their alleged plan to kill the kids and Tammy Daybell, then collect life insurance money and the kids' social security and survivor benefits.

Several family members and friends described to detectives a group led by Lori and Chad that met to pray, believing that they could drive out evil spirits and seek revelations from "beyond the spiritual veil."

Though the beliefs Vallow Daybell's friends described to detectives were loosely based in theology from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, they veered into the extreme.

In police reports, one friend said Vallow Daybell told her she could "teleport" between Arizona and Hawaii, and that Daybell said he had a "portal" in his home where he could receive revelations and travel to other realms.

Vallow Daybell's close friend Melanie Gibb told investigators that the couple used a scoring system to determine whether people were good or evil, and that they believed people became "zombies" when they were possessed by evil spirits.

The group would spend time praying to get rid of the zombies, and believed that if they were successful the possessed person would physically die, freeing their trapped soul from "limbo."

Vallow Daybell called JJ and Tylee "zombies" several times before they died, Gibb told investigators.

## WHAT DO DEFENSE ATTORNEYS SAY?

Vallow Daybell is being represented by eastern Idaho-based attorneys John Thomas and James Archibald.

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She has pleaded not guilty in the case, and her attorneys have submitted formal notice that they intend to offer an alibi.

In that court document, Vallow Daybell's attorneys said she was in her own apartment in Rexburg, Idaho, when the children died at a nearby apartment where her brother lived. The attorneys said she was with a couple of friends, "and/or Chad Daybell."

Her attorneys also wrote that Vallow Daybell was in Hawaii with other friends when Daybell's previous wife died the next month.

Daybell's attorneys haven't offered details about his planned defense, other than saying in court that Daybell and Vallow Daybell will have "mutually antagonistic defenses" — a legal term that generally means a jury would have to disbelieve one defendant in order to believe the other.

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE TRIAL?

Vallow Daybell's trial is expected to last up to 12 weeks. Jury selection begins Monday.

The judge has banned cameras from the courtroom and the trial was moved to Boise to increase the likelihood of finding jurors that aren't deeply familiar with the case.

Her husband will be tried later.

Prosecutors announced they would seek the death penalty against both defendants. But just two weeks before the trial was to begin, 7th District Judge Steven Boyce granted a request from Vallow Daybell's defense attorneys to take the death penalty off the table.

The judge said the decision was made because of the volume of evidence that was turned over to the defense team. Vallow Daybell has not waived her right to a speedy trial, so it could not be delayed.

Daybell still faces the death penalty in his case.

## ANY OTHER CHARGES?

Vallow Daybell has also been indicted in metro Phoenix on a charge of conspiring to murder Charles Vallow. The indictment says she conspired with her brother, Alex Cox, in Vallow's death.

Cox was never arrested in the case. He died five months after Vallow was killed from what medical examiners said was a pulmonary blood clot.

Idaho likely won't agree to extradite Vallow Daybell to face the Arizona charges until the case against her in Idaho is completed. She has not yet entered a plea in the Arizona case.

## Today in History: April 2, Pope John Paul II dies

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, April 2, the 92nd day of 2023. There are 273 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 2, 2005, Pope John Paul II died in his Vatican apartment at age 84.

On this date:

In 1792, Congress passed the Coinage Act, which authorized establishment of the U.S. Mint.

In 1865, Confederate President Jefferson Davis and most of his Cabinet fled the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, because of advancing Union forces.

In 1912, the just-completed RMS Titanic left Belfast to begin its sea trials eight days before the start of its ill-fated maiden voyage.

In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war against Germany, saying, "The world must be made safe for democracy." (Congress declared war four days later.)

In 1982, several thousand troops from Argentina seized the disputed Falkland Islands, located in the south Atlantic, from Britain. (Britain seized the islands back the following June.)

In 1986, four American passengers, including an 8-month-old girl, her mother and her grandmother, were killed when a terrorist bomb exploded aboard a TWA jetliner en route from Rome to Athens, Greece.

In 1992, mob boss John Gotti was convicted in New York of murder and racketeering; he was later sentenced to life, and died in prison.



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In 1995, after a work stoppage lasting nearly eight months, baseball owners accepted the players' union offer to play without a contract.

In 2002, Israel seized control of Bethlehem; Palestinian gunmen forced their way into the Church of the Nativity, the traditional birthplace of Jesus, where they began a 39-day standoff.

In 2003, during the Iraq War, American forces fought their way to within sight of the Baghdad skyline.

In 2007, in its first case on climate change, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency*, ruled 5-4 that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases were air pollutants under the Clean Air Act.

In 2020, the number of confirmed coronavirus cases worldwide passed the 1 million mark, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

Ten years ago: North Korea said it would restart its long-shuttered plutonium reactor and increase production of nuclear weapons material in what outsiders saw as its latest attempt to extract U.S. concessions by raising fears of war. Pope Francis prayed before the tomb of Pope John Paul II on the eighth anniversary of his death. Irish character actor Milo O'Shea, 86, died in New York.

Five years ago: Anti-apartheid activist Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, who'd been married for nearly 38 years to Nelson Mandela, died in a Johannesburg hospital at the age of 81. Thousands of Oklahoma teachers began two weeks of walkouts and descended on the state Capitol to demand more education funding. Ethan Couch, who as a 16-year-old driver drunkenly struck and killed four pedestrians but dodged prison after suggesting at his trial that his irresponsibility was a result of an entitled upbringing, went free after serving almost two years in a Texas jail on a probation violation. Villanova beat Michigan to capture its second NCAA college basketball championship in three years.

One year ago: Ukrainian troops moved cautiously to retake territory north of the country's capital, using cables to pull the bodies of civilians off the streets in at least one town out of fear that Russian forces may have set booby traps before leaving. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned residents that departing Russian troops were creating a "catastrophic" situation for civilians. Retiring Duke men's basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski coached his final game, a loss to archrivals North Carolina in the Final Four of the NCAA Tournament in New Orleans. Patrick Demarchelier, a French-born photographer known for his high fashion images top models and celebrities including Princess Diana, died at age 78.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Sharon Acker is 88. Actor Dame Penelope Keith is 83. Actor Linda Hunt is 78. Singer Emmylou Harris is 76. Actor Sam Anderson is 76. Social critic and author Camille Paglia is 76. Actor Pamela Reed is 74. Rock musician Dave Robinson (The Cars) is 74. Country singer Buddy Jewell is 62. Actor Christopher Meloni is 62. Singer Keren Woodward (Bananarama) is 62. Country singer Billy Dean is 61. Actor Clark Gregg is 61. Actor Jana Marie Hupp is 59. Rock musician Greg Camp is 56. Actor Roselyn Sanchez is 50. Country singer Jill King is 48. Actor Pedro Pascal is 48. Actor Adam Rodriguez is 48. Actor Michael Fassbender is 46. Actor Jaime Ray Newman is 45. Rock musician Jesse Carmichael (Maroon 5) is 44. Actor Bethany Joy Lenz is 42. Singer Lee Dewyze (TV: "American Idol") is 37. Country singer Chris Janson is 37. Actor Drew Van Acker is 37. Actor Briga Heelan (TV: "Great News") is 36. Actor Jesse Plemons is 35. Singer Aaron Kelly (TV: "American Idol") is 30.