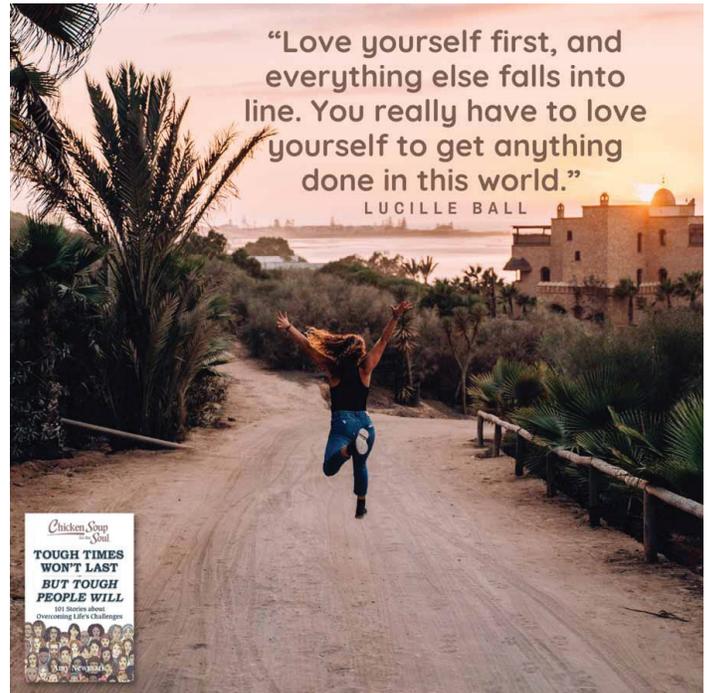


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Groton Community Calendar

Sunday, April 16

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

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Worship at Avantara, 3 p.m.; Choir, 7 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: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday school after children's sermon in worship, 10:30 a.m.

State FFA Convention at SDSU, Brookings

Monday, April 17

Senior Menu: Swiss steak, mashed potatoes, carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Waffles

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, tater tots.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

State FFA Convention at SDSU, Brookings

Tuesday, April 18

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, buttermilk biscuit, winter bled vegetables, cookie, apricots.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sandwich.

School Lunch: Sub sandwiches, chips

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

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

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Conde Ad Council

State FFA Convention at SDSU, Brookings

Track at Britton-Hecla, 2 p.m.

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

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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Girls Golf Schedule

Thursday, April 27: at Redfield, 10 a.m.
Thursday, May 4: Roncalli at Lee Park, 10 a.m.
Monday, May 8: Olive Grove Golf Course, 10 a.m.
Monday, May 15: NEC at Sisseton, 10 a.m.
Thursday, May 18: at Sisseton, 10 a.m.
Thursday, May 25: Region 1A at Lee Park, 10 a.m.
June 5-6: State at Hart Golf Ranch, Rapid City

Groton Area Track Schedule

Thursday, April 20: Sully Buttes (Onida) Charger Invite
Tuesday, April 25: Miller Booster Club Meet (Groton invite cancelled)
Friday, April 28: Webster Area Invitational
Tuesday, May 2: Valley Queen Cheese Invite, Milbank
Saturday, May 6: Eureka Legion Meet
Thursday, May 18: Region 1A
May 25-27: State Track Meet, Sioux Falls

Groton Area High School Baseball Schedule

Sunday, April 16: at Volga, 2 p.m. (V/JV)
Wednesday, April 19: Howard at Canova, 6:30 p.m.
Friday, April 21: (Oldham/Ramona/Rutland)/Arlington at Ramona, 6 p.m. (V/JV)
Wednesday, April 26: at Miller 6 p.m. (V/JV)
Sunday, April 30: Madison/Redfield at Redfield
Sunday, May 7: W.I.N./Elkton at Elkton, Noon
Tuesday, May 16: Hamlin at Groton, 6 p.m. (V/JV)

Groton City Sump Pump Alert



Sump pumps must be discharged outside (not in the sanitary sewer).



Thanks for your immediate compliance!

**Failure to comply will result in fines.
Groton City Council**



South Dakotans: Be Informed



Learn about the proposed extreme abortion amendment to the South Dakota State Constitution that would **legalize abortion to the point of birth.**

Pro-abortion groups are currently circulating petitions to put this amendment up for a vote and into our Constitution.

Learn more and have your questions answered at this free event, which includes a soup supper and dessert.



Jon Hansen

Co-Chair, Life Defense Fund

Sunday, April 16th

4:30 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran Church

308 2nd St. - Groton, SD

A free will offering will be taken.

www.lifedefensefund.com

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



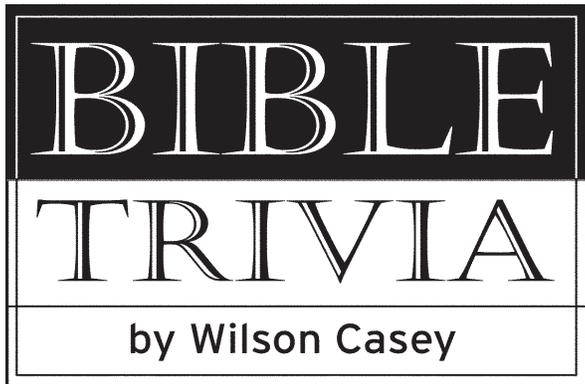
*I am in the midst of lions;
I am forced to dwell
among ravenous beasts
— men whose teeth are
spears and arrows, whose
tongues are sharp swords.*

PSALM 57:4 

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"IT WAS A GIFT."



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

2. From Mark 8, Jesus healed a blind man by putting what onto his eyes? *Sand, Wind, Blood, Spit*

3. What elderly cousin of Mary was the mother of John the Baptist? *Jael, Rahab, Sarah, Elisabeth*

4. In Hebrews 13:17, how should Christians act toward elders? *Respectfully, In submission, Cheerfully, Timidly*

5. What book of the Bible foretold the virgin birth? *Joel, Isaiah, Jonah, Malachi*

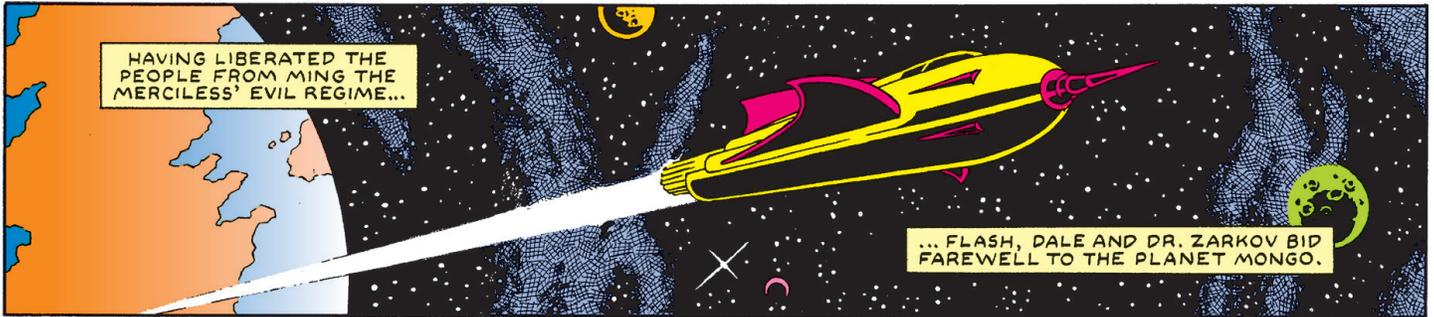
6. Who was Shamgar the son of? *Ehud, Samson, Anath, Tola*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Spit (spittle), 3) Elisabeth, 4) In submission, 5) Isaiah 7:14, 6) Anath

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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HAVING LIBERATED THE PEOPLE FROM MING THE MERCILESS' EVIL REGIME...

... FLASH, DALE AND DR. ZARKOV BID FAREWELL TO THE PLANET MONGO.

FLASH GORDON

BY JIM KEEFE

CONCLUDING: THE WAY IT BEGAN...

WITH MING DEFEATED BY FLASH, DALE AND DR. ZARKOV RETURN TO EARTH.



CRASH-LANDING IN THE ATLANTIC, THEY'RE SPOTTED BY A NAVY VESSEL. UNFORTUNATELY, THE SPACECRAFT CAPSIZES AND IS LOST.



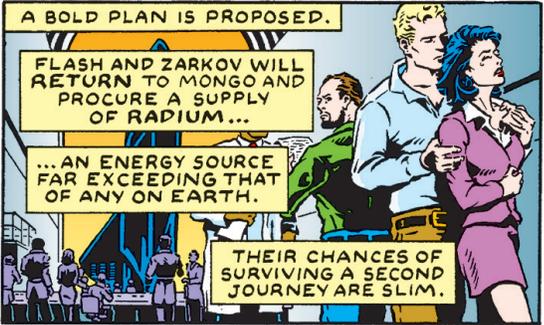
THEIR STORY IS MET WITH SKEPTICISM.

"SORCERERS... HAWKMAN? MING THE MERCILESS?! THAT COMET THAT PASSED DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO EARTH MUST HAVE UNHINGED THEIR MINDS!"

ZARKOV GIVES PROOF BY THE ADVANCED SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE HE HAS ACQUIRED.



WHAT HAD BEEN DISMISSED AS A COMET WAS IN FACT THE PLANET MONGO!

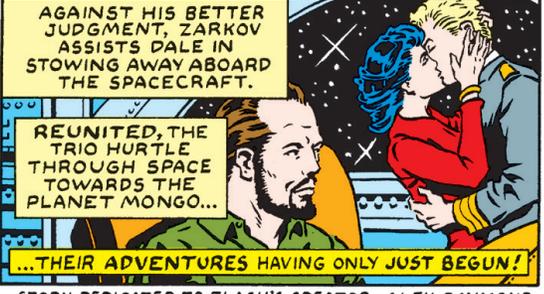


A BOLD PLAN IS PROPOSED.

FLASH AND ZARKOV WILL RETURN TO MONGO AND PROCURE A SUPPLY OF RADIUM...

... AN ENERGY SOURCE FAR EXCEEDING THAT OF ANY ON EARTH.

THEIR CHANCES OF SURVIVING A SECOND JOURNEY ARE SLIM.



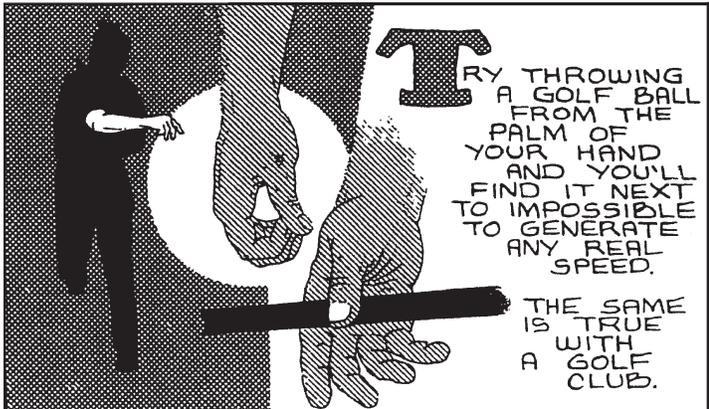
AGAINST HIS BETTER JUDGMENT, ZARKOV ASSISTS DALE IN STOWING AWAY ABOARD THE SPACECRAFT.

REUNITED, THE TRIO HURTLE THROUGH SPACE TOWARDS THE PLANET MONGO...

...THEIR ADVENTURES HAVING ONLY JUST BEGUN!

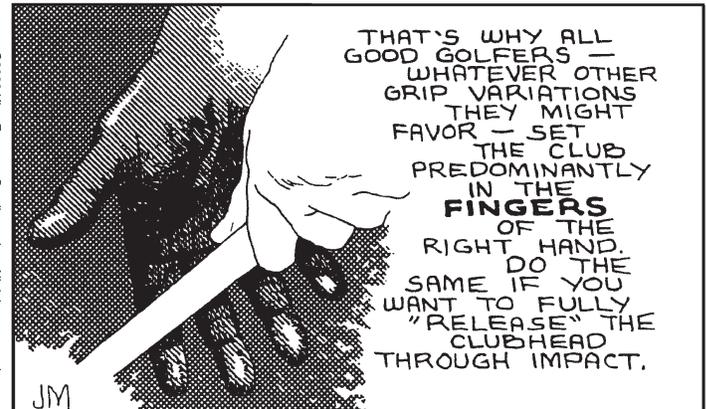
STORY DEDICATED TO FLASH'S CREATOR - ALEX RAYMOND

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



TRY THROWING A GOLF BALL FROM THE PALM OF YOUR HAND AND YOU'LL FIND IT NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE TO GENERATE ANY REAL SPEED.

THE SAME IS TRUE WITH A GOLF CLUB.



THAT'S WHY ALL GOOD GOLFERS — WHATEVER OTHER GRIP VARIATIONS THEY MIGHT FAVOR — SET THE CLUB PREDOMINANTLY IN THE FINGERS OF THE RIGHT HAND. DO THE SAME IF YOU WANT TO FULLY "RELEASE" THE CLUBHEAD THROUGH IMPACT.

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JM



Cipro Prescription No Longer the First-Line Treatment for UTIs

DEAR DR. ROACH: I was diagnosed with a UTI on my yearly physical urinalysis, but I had no symptoms. I was prescribed Cipro. The five pages of warnings attached to the prescription scared me! So, I checked the FDA and Mayo Clinic websites. Both said that the “risks outweigh benefits” and it “should not be the first choice to treat a UTI.” But my doctor says to take it, so I will — 500 mg twice a day for seven days.

Possible side effects include tendon ruptures (including the aorta), nerve damage and more. Scary! I am 71 and in good health with high blood pressure as my only problem, but it’s under control. I wasn’t told if my UTI is complicated or uncomplicated, but I assume uncomplicated, as my blood work, including kidney tests, were all normal.

Is this drug safe? Why does the FDA say not to prescribe this as the first choice? — *C.J.*

ANSWER: There is a lot wrong here.

First off, asymptomatic bacteria in the urine does not normally get treated, so I wouldn’t have recommended treatment in the first place. I’m not even sure why your doctor ordered a urinalysis — it’s not recommended as a screening test for most.

Second, I agree with your research that ciprofloxacin (Cipro) should not be the first-line treatment for symptomatic urine infections. Ciprofloxacin does increase risk of tendon rupture very slightly (three to four cases per 100,000 people treated); may damage the aorta (eight cases per 100,000 in one study, while another large study showed no risk); and may cause neuropathy in one case per 150,000.

Resistance to drugs like ciprofloxacin has been increasing. Other choices, like nitrofurantoin, trimethoprim/

more effectiveness with less risk of toxicity. That’s why Cipro is no longer a first-line choice. But it can be hard for doctors to unlearn behaviors.

Usually, Cipro is effective and doesn’t cause side effects, but practicing evidence-based medicine means changing behaviors to reflect new information, even if your personal experience has generally been good. An individual doctor isn’t likely to see damage to tendons, aorta or nerves, but if all doctors changed their behavior, there would be even fewer of these rare events.

When it is used, a short course of ciprofloxacin is normally prescribed for three days, not seven, for uncomplicated urine infections in women. The less a person uses this drug, the lower the risk of these rare but severe side effects. Three days is normally sufficient.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I want to know how to reduce my blood pressure because it is currently 142/90. — *S.L.*

ANSWER: Treatment of mildly elevated blood pressure of the type you have starts with lifestyle changes. The first thing is to try to reduce sodium in your diet. Some sodium comes from what you add to food, but much more is in prepackaged foods, especially canned foods. Potassium, found in most fresh fruits and vegetables, has a beneficial effect on blood pressure, especially when sodium is also reduced.

Regular exercise can drop blood pressure by 3 to 5 points. Avoiding alcohol can reduce blood pressure as well. Excess alcohol — more than one drink a day for women or more than two drinks a day for men — is particularly likely to increase blood pressure, so cutting down or stopping helps reduce blood pressure.

Combining all of this advice can reduce the risk of requiring medicines by almost half. Additional treatments, such as meditation and stress reduction, further reduces blood pressure and the need for medication. However, some people, even if they do everything right, can still benefit from medication, which can reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke when appropriately given to patients.

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

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"Ghosted" (PG-13) -- Who doesn't know what it's like to be ghosted nowadays? Cole Riggan knows. After a successful date with a woman named Sadie, Cole is reeling and thinks he can see a real future with her. But Sadie has plans to travel to London for work, and when she leaves, Cole doesn't get a single text back from her. Still determined, however, Cole travels to London to meet her there. Once he arrives, Cole suddenly gets kidnapped and taken to a mysterious lair, where none other than Sadie rescues him. After



Chris Evans and Ana de Armas star in "Ghosted."

Courtesy of AppleTV+

Sadie reveals she's in the CIA, he realizes he might've bargained for more than he thought on this trip. Starring Ana de Armas, Chris Evans and Adrien Brody, this rom-com action film premieres April 21. (AppleTV+)

"Dead Ringers" (TV-13+) -- Based on the 1988 film starring Jeremy Irons, this psychological-thriller miniseries premieres April 21 with six episodes all in one shot. Gender-flipping the roles originally played by Irons, Rachel Weisz plays both roles of Elliot and Beverly Mantle, who are identical twin gynecologists. Elliot and Beverly share everything -- their occupations, their drugs, their lovers. And now, they share the same goal of expanding the boundaries of medicine, by essentially creating a baby out of science. The deranged twins must be careful where their ambition leads them, though, as there are eyes watching their every move. (Prime Video)

"The Diplomat" (TV-MA) -- Kate Wyler is the new U.S. ambassador to the U.K., and her first crisis to solve takes her to London, right as a strike force inches closer to the Persian Gulf. With an imminent threat looming closer, Kate must play her role as diplomat very carefully if she wishes to succeed -- and keep her husband, Hal, a former ambassador himself, from intervening in her career. This eight-episode series starring Keri Russell and Rufus Sewell can be compared to Netflix's recent release "The Night Agent," with tons of action, drama and politics. But the casts' performances, combined with hard-hitting dialogue, elevate the series to an entirely different level. (Netflix)

"The Fallout" (R) -- Jenna Ortega ("Wednesday") and Maddie Ziegler ("Dance Moms") star in this heart-felt drama film centering on the aftermath of a high school shooting. Vada (Ortega) meets Mia (Ziegler) in the bathroom on what's supposed to be a normal picture day when a shooter appears on campus. The panicked pair hide in the bathroom, along with another student and are able to narrowly escape the shooter. During the weeks following the shooting, Vada and Mia form a close bond as they grapple with what happened at their school. Although this film is on the shorter side, Ortega and Ziegler's true-to-life portrayals are stunning and give insight to the difficulties that can arise after such a traumatic event. Out now. (HBO Max)

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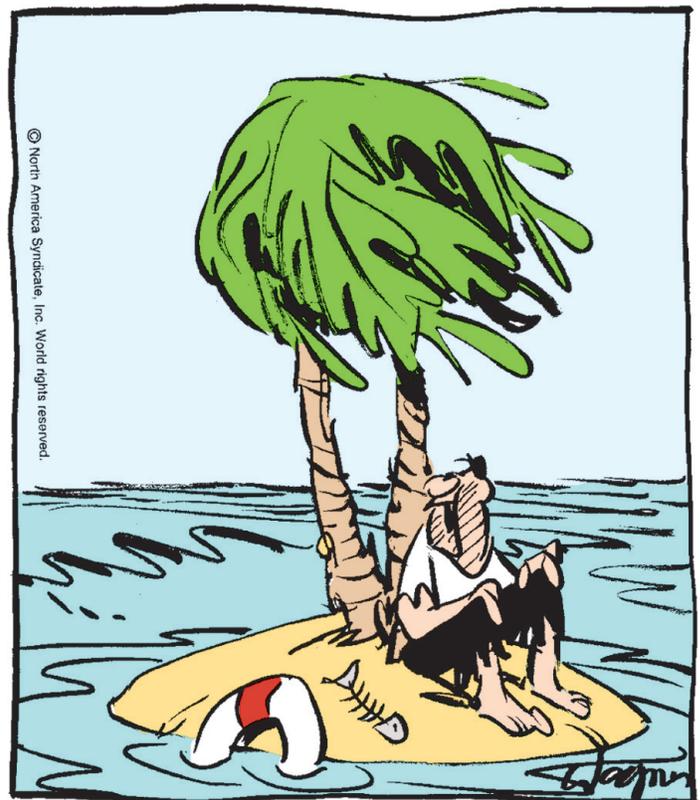
1. Which group released "Where Were You When I Needed You"?
2. Who was Mr. Bojangles in the song by Jerry Jeff Walker?
3. Name the Bangles song that appeared in the 1987 film "Less Than Zero."
4. Which artist wrote and released "She Bop"?
5. Name the song that contains these lyrics: "When you're all alone in your lonely room, And there's nothing but the smell of her perfume."

Answers

1. The Grass Roots, in 1966. It was released on the group's debut album of the same name. The song had been written for Herman's Hermits, who never released it, in favor of recording a different song.
2. Mr. Bojangles was a homeless street performer Walker met in jail. Bojangles had taken his name from another street performer born in 1878.
3. "Hazy Shade of Winter." The song was written and originally released by Simon & Garfunkel in 1966.
4. Cyndi Lauper, in 1984 on her debut album.
5. "Cry To Me," by Solomon Burke, in 1962. Although the song has become a standard over the years, it never rose above No. 44 on the Hot 100 list. It was included in the 20th anniversary edition of the soundtrack for "Dirty Dancing."

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GRIN and BEAR IT *Wagner*



"Who do you think I'm talking to, MYSELF?"

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

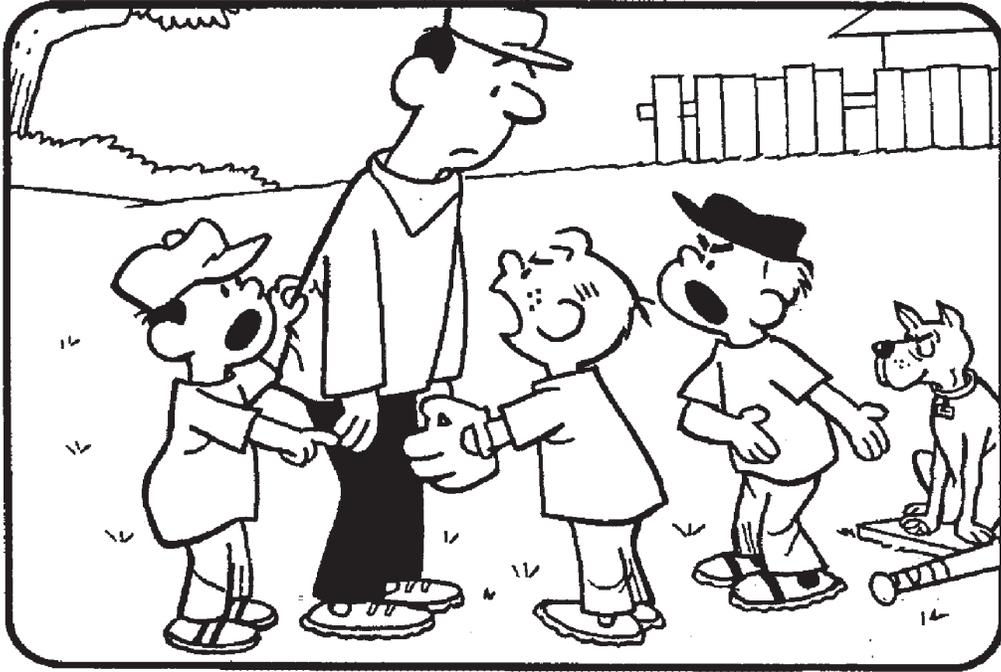


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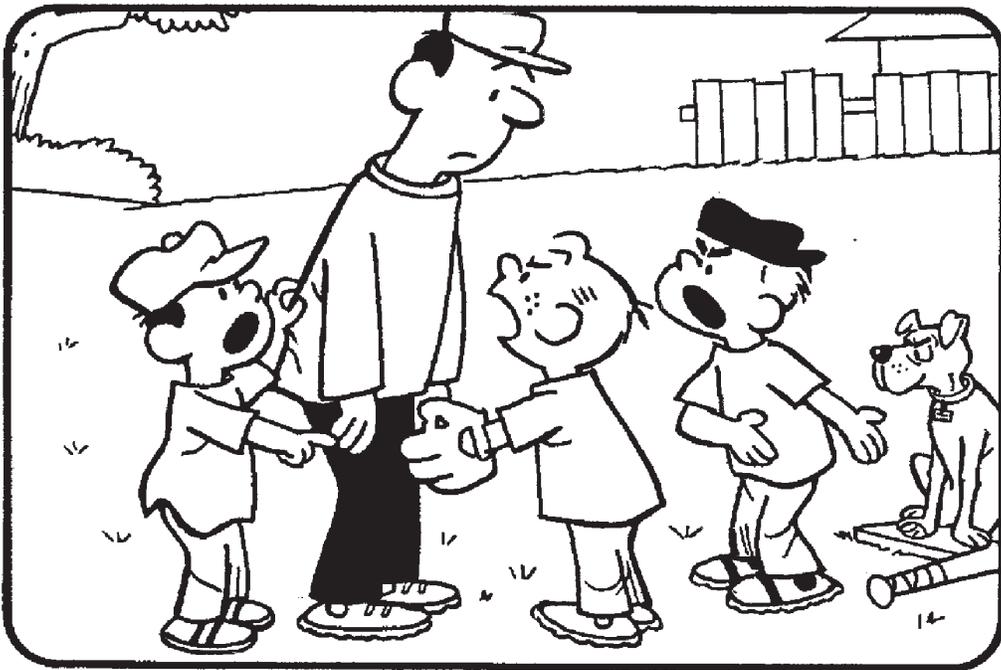
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Shrubbery is shorter. 2. Shirt is shorter. 3. Collar is different. 4. Fence is shorter. 5. Cap is reversed. 6. Ears are different.

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* When packing cookies in a single layer, I trace the shape of my container on parchment paper using the lid as a template. It's pretty easy, and it fits exactly.

* Keep a small wastepaper basket or shredder near your entrance if possible. You can get rid of paper items you don't need (think, junk mail) before it even makes it into the house. This is especially important if you tend to let things pile up, like I do! -- R.F. in Louisiana

* For scratch paper, I use the back side of my kids' extra art pages. We choose the best to display, then they chop up the rest into small booklets, which they staple at the top. And we have notepads! -- M.L. in Iowa

* Keep a map or globe in your family or TV room. This way, when a place is mentioned on the news or in another

program, you can find it on the map. This is a great thing to do with kids, but it's handy and worthwhile for anyone. -- via email

* If you have a very stinky trash can, scrub it with a paste made from baking soda and just a bit of water. It works as a mild abrasive. Then fill a spray bottle with plain white vinegar and spray. It should foam for a moment. Let it sit for about 10 minutes, then rinse well with hot water. Clean and deodorized!

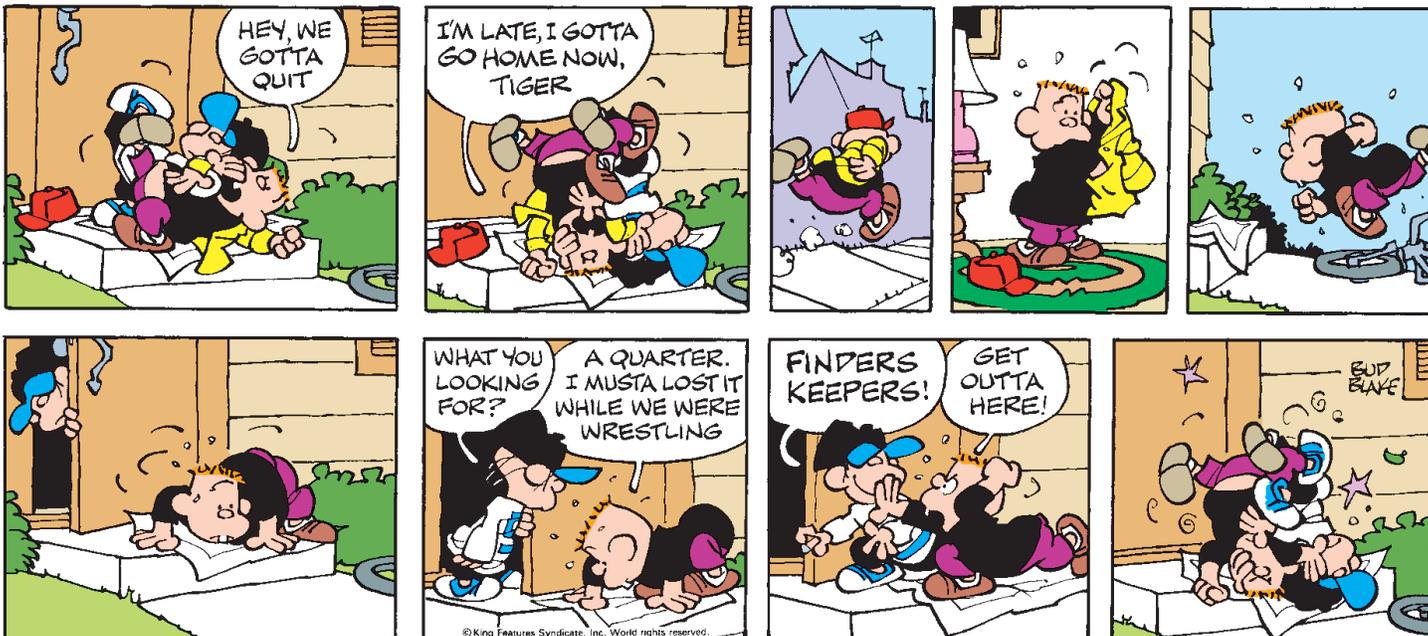
* We have large buckets that store random toys on our back porch. It seems that whenever we'd touch the buckets to get a toy, a horde of mosquitoes would erupt. There's no water, so we didn't know what to do. And we didn't want to douse it with chemicals, as it's filled with kid stuff. A neighbor suggested we put a few dryer sheets in each one, and they really have worked. I guess the bugs don't like the smell! -- W.S. in Florida

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

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TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Burden
- 5 "Terrif!"
- 8 Confront
- 12 Guesser's words
- 13 Rushmore face
- 14 Big-screen format
- 15 Banner
- 16 Actuality
- 18 Prepare for printing
- 20 Staffers
- 21 Small batteries
- 22 "Today" rival, briefly
- 23 Bizarre
- 26 "The West Wing" actor

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

- 30 Altar constellation
- 31 Group of whales
- 32 Pledge
- 33 Was behind schedule
- 36 "Thank Me Later" rapper
- 38 — tear (raging)
- 39 Sticky stuff
- 40 Cockeyed
- 43 Worldly
- 47 Stop signal
- 49 Small iPod
- 50 Story
- 51 Calendar abbr.

- 52 Flintstones' pet
- 53 Scratched (out)
- 54 Earth (Pref.)
- 55 RBI, for one

DOWN

- 1 Barn storage area
- 2 Paris airport
- 3 Now, on a memo
- 4 Ersatz bookmark
- 5 Taxi costs
- 6 Help a crook
- 7 Arthur of "Maude"
- 8 Re offspring

- 9 During
- 10 Sidewalk eatery
- 11 Former mates
- 17 Mary's follower
- 19 Melancholy
- 22 Deity
- 23 Series of battles
- 24 Historic period
- 25 007 creator
- 26 Caviar base
- 27 Lab eggs
- 28 Stir-fry pan
- 29 Lamb's dam
- 31 School support org.

- 34 Did nothing
- 35 Con
- 36 Medico
- 37 Bout segments
- 39 Very beginning
- 40 Jocular
- 41 Ship wood
- 42 Between jobs
- 43 Actress
- 44 Elisabeth
- 44 Cannes milk
- 45 "Downton Abbey" role
- 46 Cheer (for)
- 48 Joke

— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.

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

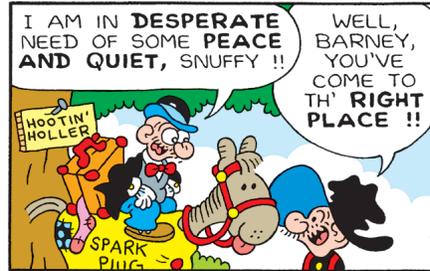
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



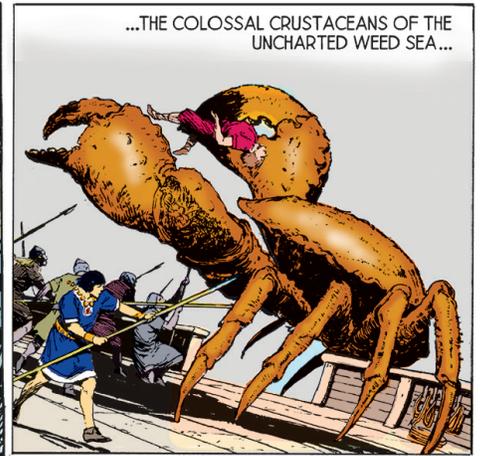
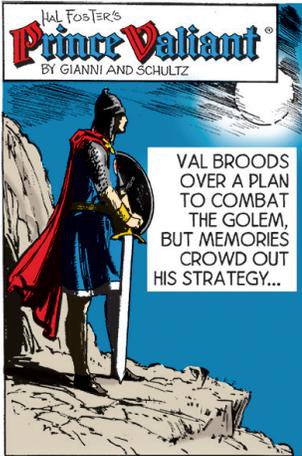
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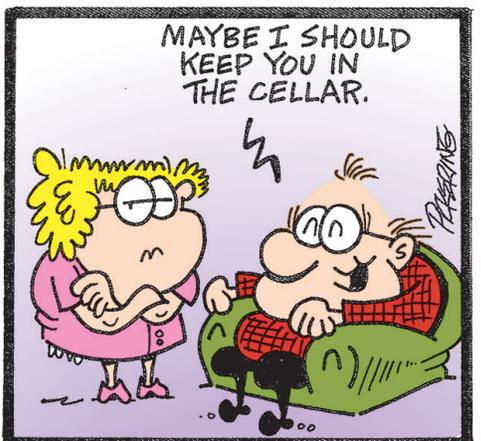
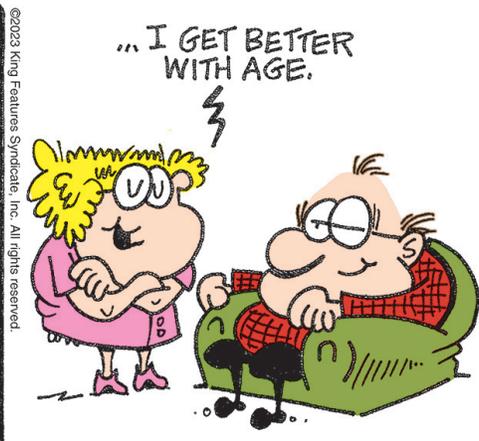
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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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PICKERING

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Is AARP Membership Worth Having?

I remember feeling uneasy when the first AARP envelope showed up in my mailbox. It was one thing to quietly hit the Big Five-O, and it was another thing to realize that I was then eligible for membership in a group for seniors.

It took a little while, but I did sign up. Over the years I've stayed. The benefits are worth it. Here are a few:

I get a discount on my cellphone plan for having an AARP membership.

The list of benefits and discounts keeps growing, many of them local. Rental cars and travel, insurance of all kinds, flowers and groceries, transmissions and tires, paint ... and pizza.

There's the Smart Driver online safety course that, once you pass it, could save you money on your auto insurance.

The monthly newspaper, the AARP Bulletin, is worth reading for the information it contains: money, investing, senior news and events in my state, government affairs, Social Security and health. Then there's the bi-monthly AARP magazine, with a wide variety of articles, from dieting and money management to tests that predict cancer, places to retire and much more. The two publications are worth the \$16 price of membership by themselves because of the information they present.

AARP has an app now with good instructions on how to install it.

If you sign up for AARP membership (the first year is reduced to \$12), it will likely take a few months for your publications to start up. If you change your address, the same thing might happen, depending on where in the publishing cycle your change occurs. If you suspect something has gone astray, call them at 888-687-2277. Meanwhile, you can read both of them online at the AARP website: aarp.org.

What interests me the most today is the 25% off discount on a first order from Silver Cuisine by bistroMD, especially the low sodium meals.

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1. What Baseball Hall of Famer claims to have consumed 107 beers in a single day while flying with his team on a cross-country road trip?

2. Former heavyweight boxing champion James Smith, who fought professionally from 1981-99, was better known by what nickname?

3. What Pro Football Hall of Famer was head coach of the Super Bowl III champion New York Jets?

4. What city in the former nation of Yugoslavia hosted the 1984 Winter Olympic Games?

5. According to Major League Baseball rules instituted for the 2023 season, how many seconds is a pitcher allowed between pitches when there is one or more runners on base?

6. What golfer won the 1977 PGA Championship and finished third at The Masters three times (1990, 1991, 1993)?

7. Interlagos is the unofficial name of an auto racing circuit located in what South American city?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. Wade Boggs.

2. Bonecrusher.

3. Weeb Ewbank.

4. Sarajevo.

5. 20 seconds.

6. Lanny Wadkins.

7. Sao Paulo, Brazil (the track is officially named Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace).

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Can Cats Eat Easter Eggs?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: We were coloring Easter eggs a few days ago, and our cat Jake kept begging underneath the table. Now that we've got lots of leftover boiled eggs, I'm wondering if it would be safe to mix a few into his food? -- Sarah L., Panama City, Florida

Dear Sarah: Because they're hard-boiled, it's completely safe to feed some egg to Jake. Just remember to peel the shell off first!

Eggs are a healthy protein that cats can eat. The American Veterinary Medical Association recommends that they always be cooked. Feeding raw egg to a

cat can make it sick due to the potential for bacteria or other pathogens that are on the shell to transfer to the egg.

Whether the cooked egg is boiled, scrambled, poached or microwaved doesn't matter. Don't add seasonings to the egg, though. Salt, pepper and other spices can upset a cat's small tummy.

If you've never fed eggs to Jake before, only give him a small amount at first. Add a teaspoon to his regular food or to the side of his dish. Monitor his behavior after he eats the egg. If he has an allergy to eggs, he may scratch excessively, act agitated or throw up. If he seems fine, you can give him more next time.

Here's a cool finding about eggs and cats: Researchers at Purina reported in 2019 that coating a cat's food in a special egg powder formulation helped stop people from having an allergic reaction to cats! A protein in cats' saliva is responsible for 95% of cat allergies in people. Not surprisingly, Purina has developed an entire product line of cat food based on this finding, called LiveClear. So, if you suffer from allergies around cats, this might bring some relief.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* Seventy-five percent of all sesame seeds grown in Mexico wind up on McDonald's hamburger buns.

* In 1998, a British man faked his own death by leaving his clothes on the beach and hiding to make his wife realize how much she missed him. Unfortunately, the prank backfired, as she divorced him after learning about it.

* Former First Lady Hillary Clinton served on the boards of TCBY and Walmart.

* Earthworms in the northern part of North America are a non-native, invasive species and a major factor

in forest deterioration.

* The last duel in Canada wasn't much of a fight at all, being between two men who were so terrified that one fainted and the other was seized by horror. As if that weren't enough, their guns were loaded with blanks.

* Michael Bay, producer of "Friday the 13th," walked out of the film's screening because it contained too much sex.

* Ever wonder why garlic is so anathema to vampires? One theory goes that it's an antibiotic, and since vampirism was often thought to be a disease, it was harmful to them. Another holds that it was believed to repel mosquitoes, and since they're both bloodsuckers, vampires would be repelled as well.

* Brazil has the largest Japanese community outside of Japan.

* A city in Sweden uses light therapy in bus stops to combat depression during the winter when 19 hours of the day are darkness.

* Astronomers have discovered a cloud of fiery gas about 3,000,000 light years across that reaches temperatures in the tens of millions of degrees and gobbles entire galaxies as it moves along.

Thought for the Day: "Nature has given us all the pieces required to achieve exceptional wellness and health, but has left it to us to put these pieces together." -- Diane McLaren

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The Garden Bug

Dogwood trees



The dogwood has graceful blossoms and distinctive bark, and also attracts wildlife. Silk moths and several species of butterflies favor dogwoods as hosts. The flowers provide nectar to many pollinating insects. American robins, northern mockingbirds and sparrows will build nests on its horizontal branches. Many birds eat its berries, including cardinals, titmice, bluebirds, juncos and waxwings. - Brenda Weaver

Source: www.birdsandblooms.com



by Freddy Groves

Home Loans for Native American Veterans

A VA-backed home mortgage is currently in the neighborhood of 5.5% for a 30-year loan, and a refi is approximately 6.63%.

Unless you qualify as a Native American or are married to a Native American. Then, starting in March and for the next 24 months, a home loan can be had with a mortgage interest rate of 2.5% through the Native American Direct Loan program (NADL). The loan can

be to either buy, build or improve a home.

The fine print has important details, of course. "Native American" includes Native Americans, native Hawaiians, Alaska Natives and Pacific Islanders under the Native American Programs Act of 1974, which includes American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas and Guam.

The home must be on federal trust land, and the tribe must have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the federal government.

On an individual level, you'll need the typical COE, a certificate of eligibility. You can get an application at www.va.gov. Look for VA Form 26-1880. If you're uncertain about your eligibility, you can call the VA at 877-827-3702.

To qualify for a VA home loan, you'll need a decent FICO score, the higher the better. Somewhere between 580 and 640 should be enough, depending on the demands of individual lenders. Ideally, you'll have a good debt-to-income ratio.

You'll also need to meet the minimum service requirements. Different time periods require different lengths of service, ranging from 90 to 181 days to 24 months.

You won't need to make a down payment or pay private mortgage insurance (PMI), although you might be required to pay the funding fee. (Sometimes you can roll this into the loan amount and not pay it out of pocket.)

If you have an existing NADL and the interest rate is 3.5% or more, you'll be able to refinance at the new 2.5% rate.

For info about the NADL, call 888-349-7541. You can also go online to www.benefits.va.gov and search for Native American Direct Loan (NADL).

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Wishing Well®

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

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

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1. TELEVISION: Which drama focuses on the inhabitants of Wisteria Lane?
2. GEOGRAPHY: The Aswan Dam is located on which river?
3. LANGUAGE: What is the only word in the English language that ends in "mt"?
4. MOVIES: What is the name of Ryan Reynolds' Alaskan hometown in "The Proposal"?
5. U.S. CITIES: How many buildings in New York City have their own ZIP codes, including the Empire State Building?
6. SCIENCE: Entomology is the scientific study of what?
7. CHEMISTRY: Which natural element is the most unstable?
8. FOOD & DRINK: What is the condiment tahini made of?
9. LITERATURE: What is the setting for John Kennedy Toole's novel "A Confederacy of Dunces"?
10. ANATOMY: How many lobes are in the human brain?

Answers

1. "Desperate Housewives."
2. The Nile River.
3. Dreamt.
4. Sitka.
5. More than 40.
6. Insects.
7. Francium, because it has 49 more neutrons than protons.
8. Sesame seeds.
9. New Orleans.
10. Four.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Freedom, Guaranteed

President Reagan famously said, “the nine most terrifying words in the English language are: I’m from the government, and I’m here to help.” Yet today, too many Americans are still relying on the government for their livelihoods and depend on the government to grant them their Freedoms. They have forgotten that their Liberties do not come from government, they come from God.

While our Founding Fathers created a government that recognizes our God-given rights, “We the People” do not have to ask permission to defend them. God gave us the right to defend ourselves, our families, and our Freedoms.

Here in South Dakota, we have been embracing Liberty and personal responsibility for years, and we are thriving as a result. Our state is setting the standard as the most Second-Amendment-friendly state in the nation.

The very first bill I signed as governor guarantees Constitutional Carry for all law-abiding South Dakotans. I signed legislation to block state and local governments from using an emergency declaration as an excuse to infringe on Second Amendment rights. We strengthened our “Stand Your Ground” law. And we made South Dakota the first state in America to not charge a fee for a concealed carry permit – we’ll even pay for your federal background check.

While leadership in Washington, D.C. has failed time and time again to deliver true, meaningful solutions for this nation, South Dakotans are enjoying the strongest economy in the nation, the lowest unemployment, and unprecedented economic growth. The media may call us crazy for defending our rights, South Dakotans are able to go to sleep at night knowing that they can protect their families.

These things don’t just happen – Freedom generated these blessings.

And it’s not only big government and the media that are attacking our rights. Now, we are seeing banking institutions go after industries they don’t agree with, threaten to withhold funding, cancel loans, or hold them to a different standard. None have been more impacted that those who support the Second Amendment.

I will not stand for it, not in South Dakota.

I have signed an Executive Order to protect the God-given right to keep and bear arms from being infringed upon by financial institutions. My Executive Order, which is effective immediately, blocks state agencies from contracting with large banks that discriminate against firearm-related industries.

Our founders recognized that the right to bear arms is about deterrence. It is about ensuring the government respects the Liberty of citizens. In a letter to James Madison, Thomas Jefferson wrote of his commitment to Freedom. He made his point in Latin, but it translates as, “I prefer dangerous freedom over peaceful slavery.”

It is my hope that this is the kind of Freedom the people of South Dakota can enjoy for generations. A Freedom that empowers. A Freedom that respects. And a Freedom that strengthens.

In South Dakota, Freedom is guaranteed.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



National Security Depends on American Strength

Providing for a strong national defense is one of the core responsibilities of the federal government. Ensuring our men and women in uniform have what they need to defend against any threat is a responsibility I take very seriously. I've long supported and defended Ellsworth Air Force Base and its airmen not only for their importance to South Dakota, but because I believe their mission as an imperative power projection platform is critical to America's national security. We live in a dangerous world, and history is full of examples of weakness inviting aggression, which is why I firmly believe that to secure peace, we must maintain strength.

Recent events have underscored the necessity of making sure our military is the top fighting force in the world so that we can deter – and, if necessary, confront – any threat. Unfortunately, President Biden has placed little emphasis on investing in our defense capabilities, even while China dials up its military budget. The budget request the president introduced for next year requests a massive hike for non-defense spending compared to a mere 3.2 percent increase for defense. The president's proposed increase fails to keep pace with current inflation levels, which means that his defense spending hike is really a defense spending cut. At the same time, we have military services that are struggling to meet recruitment targets, a persistent pilot shortage, and in a number of cases we have too few mission-capable aircraft – all while threats to our security continue to rise. A well-funded, sufficiently manned, and fully equipped military is essential to meeting current and future national security threats.

We've seen too much short-sightedness from the Biden administration. At home, open borders and hostility to domestic energy production have weakened our security. Porous borders and lax immigration enforcement are an invitation to criminals, terrorists, and others who seek to harm our country. In February alone, 16 individuals on the terror watch list were apprehended attempting to cross our southern border illegally. On the energy front, hostility to domestic energy production increases our dependence on hostile nations for energy while driving up prices and harming our economic strength.

These actions have also helped to embolden our adversaries. The Chinese surveillance balloon flying over U.S. military bases is just the latest iteration of the Chinese Communist Party spying on Americans. China is also increasingly aggressive toward Taiwan while further aligning with Russia. Iran is moving closer to nuclear capabilities and strengthening its alliances in the Middle East, while its proxies are launching unprovoked attacks against American forces. And Russia's invasion of Ukraine demonstrates Putin's imperial ambitions, which likely go beyond Ukraine.

It's hard not to draw a line from these emboldened adversaries to the Biden administration's colossal failure in its handling of the withdrawal from Afghanistan, which sent a clear message of weakness to the world. The after-action report recently released by the administration reiterates yet again that it wasn't our intelligence that failed, it was the president. He failed to heed warnings from military experts and members of Congress and did not adequately prepare for the worst-case scenario that came to pass. The administration's attempt to label the withdrawal a success, to wholly blame the previous administration, and skirt accountability, indicates that no lesson has been learned from this failure. And it's a smack in the face to the families of the 13 heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice during the Kabul airlift and dishonors the generation of veterans who fought and died in Afghanistan.

We can't be certain what challenges the future will bring, but we can make certain that those who would do us harm know that the United States will always meet their threats with strength. Wishful thinking will not make our world safer. We need to remain engaged in the world to pursue peace, but always be ready to respond to those who would jeopardize it. There is no surer way of preserving peace or protecting our heritage of freedom.

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



Guest Column: Visiting Our Nation's Capital **By Nathanael Monroe, Tour Coordinator for Rep. Johnson**

Summer is coming quickly. Many are planning their summer trips and vacations, and Washington, D.C. is a popular destination for families in South Dakota. Visiting Washington, D.C. can be a life-long memory for many. The list of things to do seems endless: visiting the U.S. Capitol or the White House, standing in awe at the Lincoln Memorial, watching the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, seeing the city from the top of the Washington Monument, or visiting dozens of museums throughout the city. As the tour coordinator for Dusty's office, I've compiled a few ideas to keep in mind when visiting our nation's capital.

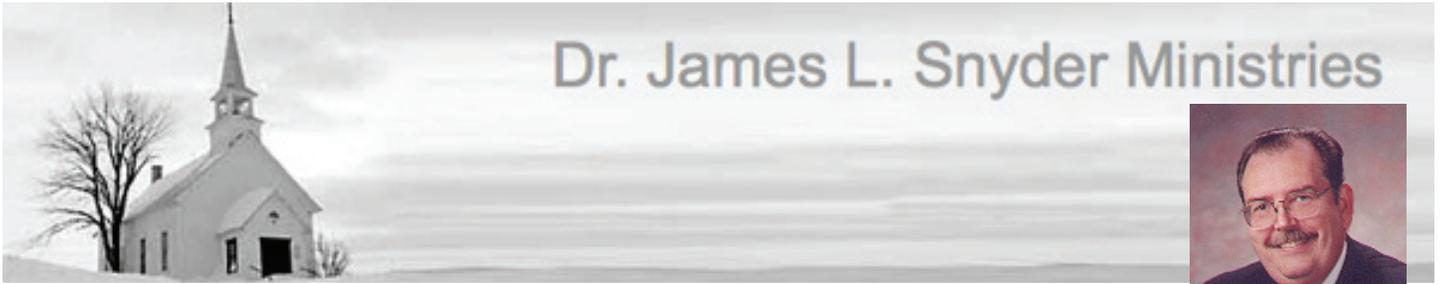
Our office is able to assist in reserving tours of the White House and booking tours of the Capitol, FBI Building, and Supreme Court. We can also provide you with the link to book timed entry passes into the Library of Congress. The best way to do this is by visiting our website. This is the best way to allow me to quickly get to work on securing your trip itinerary. It's important to remember to fill out this form as early as you can (three months in advance is standard). Although we can get tours closer to the time of your trip, they may be limited or unavailable.

D.C. always has something going on both big and small, and the best times to visit the city are often the busiest. Still, my favorite times of the year have been the fall (middle of September to the middle of November) and spring. Independence Day is another exciting time to visit Washington. But if you are planning a visit in the summer, expect crowds, heat, and humidity.

This city is full of our nation's rich history around every corner. If you haven't been to Washington, D.C. yet, I'd recommend a visit sometime soon. I'd also recommend checking out the District's tourism website Washington.org for comprehensive guides for events, attractions, restaurants, and more. Please contact our office so we can assist you with your travel plans!

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Who Invented the AutoCorrect?



The other day I recognized something that had been happening for quite a while. As I was texting, I noticed that there was AutoCorrect. So whenever I spelled a word, it would finish the spelling before I was done. And, if I was spelling it wrong, it corrected me.

A few times, I am typing a word, and AutoCorrect uses a different word. If I'm not paying attention to my typing, I can send the wrong words to someone.

I was drinking my cup of coffee this morning and thinking about that. So who came up with the idea of AutoCorrect? I'm not saying it's not a good idea, but sometimes it can be annoying.

I began remembering certain things happening throughout my lifetime. Those things had to do with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

Soon after we were married, we were at some family reunion, and I was telling a story, and all of a sudden, my wife said, "No, it was not Thursday, but it was a Friday." So I corrected my story and went on.

I ignored that, but I noticed this has happened quite a few times in my home; I have the ultimate AutoCorrect.

One thing that worries me is that during my sermon, sometime she may stand up and correct me by saying, "No, it's John 3:16."

Whenever that happens, and the chances are good that it might sometime, how in the world will I handle that?

I don't mind being corrected, but I prefer she text me instead of speaking out with her voice in front of people.

Several times I wanted to see if she was on the right track. I made up a story that didn't make sense to see if she would correct me. And guess what? She said, "No, it was a coconut pie, not a chocolate pie."

I smiled at her, nodded, and said, "Thank you, my dear."

She was so appreciative that she was able to help me with that story. Unbeknownst to her, the story was untrue from the very beginning. But how she did not know the story wasn't true is beyond my comprehension.

That got me on a personal agenda.

What would happen if I wrongly AutoCorrect her in one of her stories? The very idea brought giggles to my soul.

She was talking about our wedding and anniversary, and I jumped in and AutoCorrected her to see what she would do. "No, our wedding anniversary is August 14."

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She looked at me with a puzzled look and said, "That's what I said. August 14."

"Oh," I said, "I thought you said August 14."

"I did say August 14."

I just smiled because her puzzled look was worth all the nonsense I had just produced.

That night when we got home, she asked me what that was about, and I said, "I'm sorry; I guess I just didn't hear you."

We were having lunch with several new friends and were talking about our children during the conversation. I spouted confidently, "We have four of the most wonderful children in the world."

My wife looked at me and said, "We only have three children. Where did you get four?"

Looking at her, I said, "You mean we only have three children?"

I was snickering and tried to keep most of it inside, but she looked at me with one of "those looks," and our new friends had no idea what was happening. I love it when a plan comes together.

There's no way I could ever catch up with the many times she has AutoCorrected me, but it certainly will be fun trying.

Whenever I say something that's not exactly true, she cannot help but jump in and AutoCorrect me.

But I first remembered this happening right after we were married. I did not know how to handle it. I was a little frustrated when she did it. Now, after over 50 years of marriage, it is one of the great aspects of our relationship.

Most importantly, she doesn't know what I'm doing. And I beg you not to let her know.

One time it did backfire on me. We were with some friends talking about money. I don't know why people talk about money, but they do. And I said something to the effect that we made over \$100,000 a year. I was waiting for her to jump in and do her AutoCorrect. But she said nothing.

I'm not sure why she didn't respond, but when we got home that night, she looked at me and said, "Ok, where is all that money? What have you done with it?"

It took me a while to back out of that hole, but as far as I know, that's the only time it backfired on me.

I should be thankful that I have my own AutoCorrect to keep me from embarrassing myself. It may not be free, but it is worth it.

As I was pondering this, I began to think of the spiritual side. David says in Psalms 119:11, 16, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word."

The most important AutoCorrect for me is the Word of God. I'm so thankful that God's Word AutoCorrects me in my daily life when I need it and it has always been true.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Is Tesla the world's greenest large company given its product line, use of renewable energy and innovations in manufacturing efficiency?

-- Tim M., Fairfield, CT

While it's hard to say which large company is the world's "greenest," Tesla, known for its electric vehicles (EVs) and renewable energy solutions as well as for promoting sustainability and reducing environmental impact, certainly would be one of the contenders for such a title.

Tesla's product line, which includes electric cars and trucks, energy storage systems, solar panels and roof tiles, and now even green tiny homes, aims to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and lower greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation and energy production. By promoting the adoption of EVs, Tesla seeks to contribute to reducing air pollution and addressing climate change.

In addition to its products, Tesla has also made efforts to use renewable energy in its operations. For example, the company has built large-scale solar energy installations and has invested in solar panel manufacturing. Furthermore, Tesla's Gigafactories, which are used for manufacturing batteries and other components for EVs, are powered by renewable energy sources such as solar and wind.

Tesla has also been recognized for its innovations in manufacturing efficiency, such as its use of automated production processes and advanced technologies in its factories. These efforts are aimed at optimizing energy usage, reducing waste, and improving overall environmental sustainability.

However, it's important to note that sustainability and environmental impact are complex issues, and evaluating the "greenness" of a company requires considering various factors beyond just its product line, use of renewable energy, and manufacturing efficiency. Factors such as the entire supply chain, labor practices, waste management and social impact also play a role in determining a company's overall sustainability performance.

So where exactly does Tesla stack up? The non-profit As You Sow ranks the pioneering EV maker at #5 on Clean200, its global list of large companies ranked according to sustainability criteria. Apple tops the list at #1, with Alphabet (parent company of Google), Deutsche Telekom AG and Verizon filling in the other top spots in front of Tesla. As You Sow updates this list every year based on the most current data on each company's so-called "clean" revenue, that is, income derived from green, non-polluting sources.

Whether Tesla can rise above #5 next year is anybody's guess, but its rise on the Clean200 list may be worth betting on given its #9 listing in 2021 followed by #6 in 2022. And this past March, Tesla shocked the business world at its 2023 Investor Day by unveiling not a newer, more affordable Tesla-for-the-masses as expected but instead a master plan to use the company's evolving suite of products and marketing platform to help steer the world away from fossil fuels once and for all.

According to Tesla founder Elon Musk, switching over from fossil fuels to renewable energy globally would cost \$10 trillion, less than the world would spend on fossil fuels over the timeframe it will take to transition. "Earth can and will move to sustainable energy, and it will do so in your lifetime," Musk told investors..



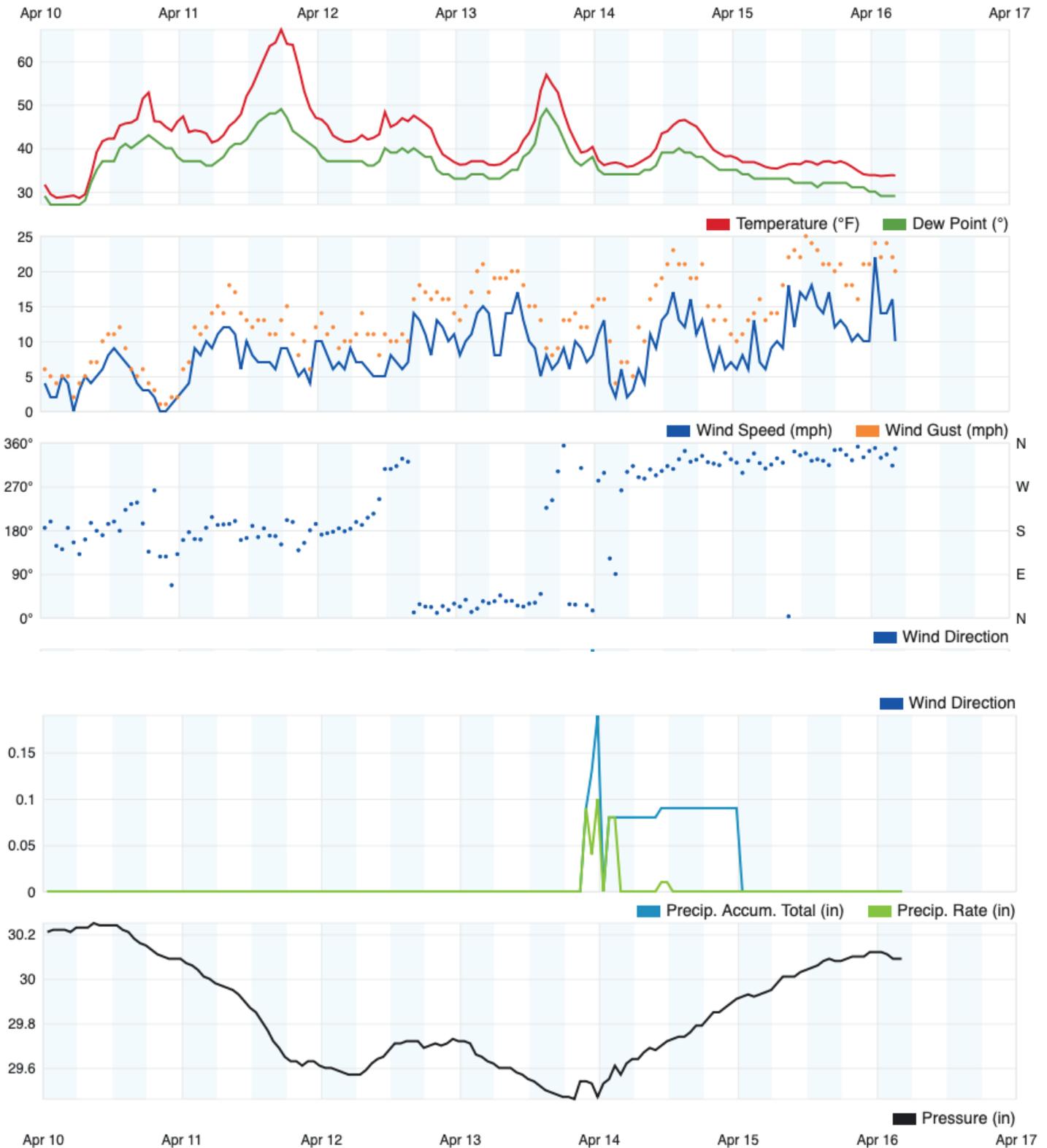
According to Clean200, Tesla is the fifth greenest big company in the world behind Apple, Alphabet, Deutsche Telekom AG and Verizon. Credit:

Chris Yarzab, FlickrCC..

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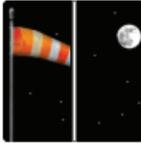
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Past Week's Groton Weather Graphs



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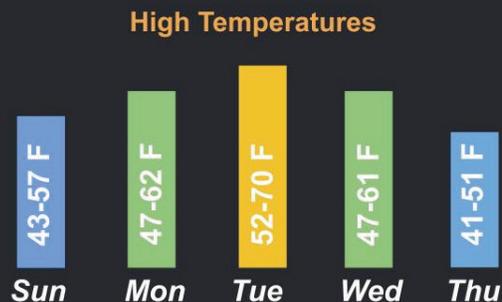
Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Becoming Sunny and Breezy	Clear and Blustery then Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Cloudy and Breezy	Rain Likely and Breezy	Chance Rain
High: 49 °F	Low: 20 °F	High: 46 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 54 °F

Next 5 Days

Temperatures will warm back towards more normal values for Tuesday, before cooling for the end of the week.

Unsettled weather will return Tuesday night and continue through the end of the week.

www.weather.gov/abr



Gusty northwest winds will continue into Sunday, especially over eastern SD and western MN, where gusts of 35 to 45 mph are expected. Temperatures will warm Monday and Tuesday, before more unsettled weather arrives for the middle and end of the upcoming work week.

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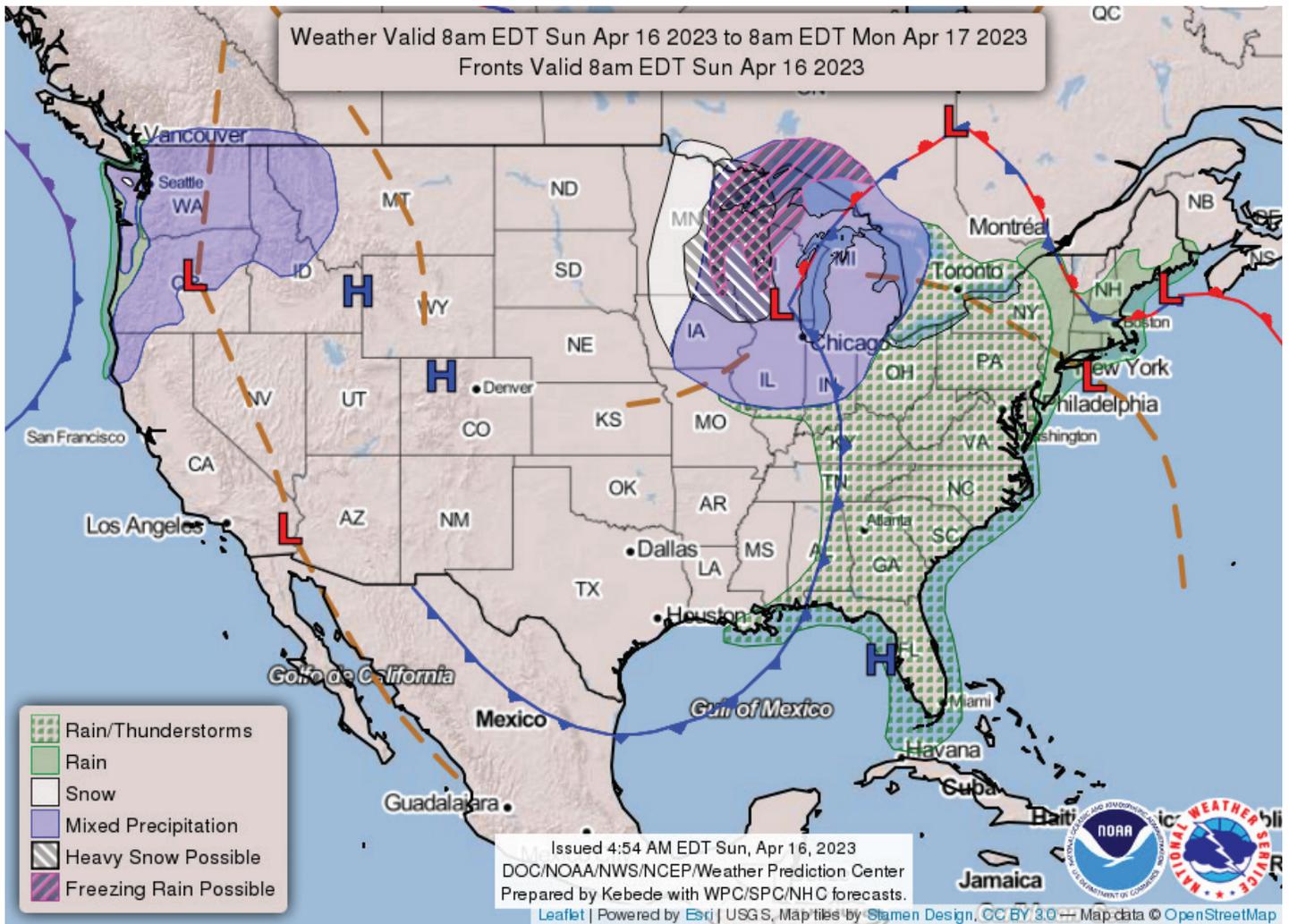
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 42 °F at 5:01 PM
Low Temp: 31 °F at 2:26 AM
Wind: 25 mph at 3:14 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 13 hours, 37 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 91 in 1913
Record Low: 14 in 1953
Average High: 58
Average Low: 32
Average Precip in April.: 0.79
Precip to date in April.: 0.76
Average Precip to date: 2.85
Precip Year to Date: 4.69
Sunset Tonight: 8:20:56 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:41:41 AM



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Today in Weather History

April 16, 1967: Severe thunderstorms moved through areas of central and eastern South Dakota, producing large hail, damaging winds, and even a few tornadoes. The event began in the mid-afternoon hours and lasted into the evening. One of the tornadoes, an F1, formed over Lake Poinsette in Hamlin County. From there it moved from southwest to northeast, toward the northern shore, then made a loop and traveled toward the southeast. Two trailer houses and a few small buildings were damaged. 11 people were injured when a trailer house was turned over to one side, and then turned over on the other side. In Brown County, the storms produced hail 1.75 inches in diameter and 61mph winds.

April 16, 1976: A deepening low-pressure system moved northward out of Nebraska and across western South Dakota. Winds of 60 to 80 mph were reported across the area with gusts over 90 mph in southwest Minnesota. Some recorded wind speeds included 62 mph at Sioux Falls, 70 mph at Brookings, and 82 mph at Watertown. Many buildings were damaged, and many roofs were blown off and at Sioux Falls, and Huron airports planes were overturned. Across southwest Minnesota, many trees were uprooted, and several trucks were blown off of the highway. Across the area, many, barns, outbuildings, sheds, and older structures were demolished.

April 16, 2000: Heavy snow of 6 to 9 inches fell across parts of central and northeast South Dakota during the morning hours. The heavy snow caused many roads to become slushy and difficult to travel. The heavy snow also downed some tree branches. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Ferney, Miller, and Webster; 7 inches at Agar, Mellette, and Twin Brooks; 8 inches at Gettysburg, and 9 inches at Faulkton.

1849: Charleston, South Carolina recorded their latest freeze ever with a temperature of 32 degrees while 6 inches of snow fell at Wilmington, North Carolina. Snow fell as far south as Milledgeville, Georgia. A damaging hard freeze occurred from Texas to Georgia devastating the cotton crop.

1851: "The Lighthouse Storm" of 1851 struck New England on this date. Heavy gales and high seas pounded the coasts of New Hampshire and eastern Massachusetts. The storm arrived at the time of a full moon, and high tide was producing unusually high storm tides. The storm was so named because it destroyed the lighthouse at Cohasset, Massachusetts. Two assistant lighthouse keepers were killed there when the structure was swept away by the storm tide.

1880 - A tornado near Marshall, MO, carried the heavy timbers of an entire home a distance of twelve miles. (The Weather Channel)

1933 - Franklin Lake, NH, was buried under 35 inches of snow. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1960 - A wind gust of 70 mph was measured at the Stapleton International Airport in Denver CO, their highest wind gust of record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A slow moving storm system produced heavy rain over North Carolina and the Middle Atlantic Coast States. More than six inches of rain drenched parts of Virginia, and flooding in Virginia claimed three lives. Floodwaters along the James River inundated parts of Richmond VA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A storm in the northeastern U.S. produced a foot of snow at Pittsburg VT. Severe thunderstorms produced baseball size hail and spawned five tornadoes in the Southern High Plains Region. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A cold front, ushering sharply colder air into the north central U.S., brought snow to parts of Montana and North Dakota. At midday the temperature at Cutbank MT was just 22 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2008: Typhoon Neoguri forms over the South China Sea on the 15th and rapidly intensifying to attain typhoon strength by the 16th, reaching its peak intensity on the 18th with maximum sustained winds near 109 mph. More than 120,000 people are evacuated from Hainan when heavy rains cause flash floods in low-lying areas. Three fatalities are attributed to the storm, though 40 fishermen are reported missing. Neoguri made landfall in China earlier than any other tropical cyclone on record, about two weeks before the previous record set by Typhoon Wanda in 1971.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

WHAT DO THEY SEE?

An instructor was trying to encourage his class to be creative. He carefully cut a piece of white paper into a perfect square and held it up before the class. All eyes were focused on the sheet of paper when he asked the question, "What do you see?"

No one said a sheet of white paper, a square, something to write a letter or assignment on or a blank page for a book. The entire class said, "A black spot." In the left corner of the square was a tiny, black speck. Their focus was on the flaw - not the square.

Most of us seem to look for things that are wrong or improper, incorrect or out of place. It comes with our nature - it's part of who we are. For whatever reason, we try to discover anything about anybody that is not perfect. Or, might it be that we are trying to justify what is not "right" about ourselves by seeing what is "wrong" in others?

There is an important message here for every Christian. Peter wrote, "Make every effort to live a pure and blameless life." What great advice. How would we live or act if we were always conscious of the fact that we, as Christians, are always being evaluated by what we do or say by those who are not Christians? The world looks at us differently because of who we claim to be. And, like it or not, they have every reason to do so. We will never be perfect in this world, but we can be careful. What we do speaks louder than what we say!

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to be on guard for that "little spot" that destroys our witness and damages Your name. May we be ever careful to represent You well! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight. 2 Peter 3:14



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
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.14.23

23 27 41 48 51 22

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.15.23

10 17 24 30 37 3

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,300,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.15.23

6 10 22 23 33 16

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 54 Mins
24 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.15.23

2 5 16 18 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$29,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.15.23

4 6 15 19 28 15

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.15.23

1 33 34 56 59 18

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$235,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Dozens killed as army, rivals battle for control of Sudan

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — The Sudanese military and a powerful paramilitary group battled for control of the chaos-stricken nation for a second day Sunday, signaling they were unwilling to end hostilities despite mounting diplomatic pressure to cease fire.

A doctors' group said that at least 56 civilians were killed and that it believed there were dozens of additional deaths among the rival forces. The Sudan Doctors' Syndicate said close to 600 people were wounded, including civilians and fighters.

The clashes capped months of heightened tensions between the military and its partner-turned-rival, the Rapid Support Forces group. Those tensions had delayed a deal with political parties to get the country back to its short-lived transition to democracy, which was derailed by an October 2021 military coup.

Heavy fighting raged Sunday in the capital of Khartoum and the adjoining city of Omdurman. There were fierce clashes around the military headquarters, Khartoum International Airport and state television headquarters, said Tahani Abass, a prominent rights advocate.

"The battles have not stopped," she said from her family home close to the military headquarters. "They are shooting against each other in the streets. It's an all-out war in residential areas."

Abass said her family spent the night huddling on the ground floor of their home. "No one was able to sleep and the kids were crying and screaming with every explosion," she said. Sounds of gunfire were heard while she was speaking to The Associated Press.

Military jets also pounded RSF bases across the capital.

Fighting was also reported in the western Darfur region where tens of thousands of people live in camps for displaced people after years of genocidal civil war.

The military and the RSF both claimed to be in control of strategic locations in Khartoum and elsewhere in the county. Their claims couldn't be independently verified.

Both sides signaled late Saturday that they were unwilling to negotiate.

The military, headed by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, called for dismantling the RSF, which it labeled a "rebellious militia." The head of the RSF, Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, told the satellite news network Al Arabyia that he ruled out negotiations. Dagalo called on Burhan to surrender.

Meanwhile, diplomatic pressure appeared to be mounting.

Top diplomats, including the U.S. Secretary of State, the U.N. secretary-general, the EU foreign policy chief, the head of the Arab League and the head of the African Union Commission urged the sides to stop fighting. Members of the U.N. Security Council, at odds over other crises around the world, called for an immediate end of the hostilities and a return to dialogue.

Arab states with stakes in Sudan — Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — made similar appeals.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he consulted with the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. "We agreed it was essential for the parties to immediately end hostilities without pre-condition," he said in a statement early Sunday.

The Sudan Doctors' Syndicate appealed to international humanitarian and medical organizations to support medical facilities in the country. The group also called on the international community to press both sides to ensure safe passage for ambulances and medical personnel.

The recent tensions stem from disagreement over how the RSF, headed by Dagalo, should be integrated into the armed forces and what authority should oversee the process. The merger is a key condition of Sudan's unsigned transition agreement with political groups.

Pro-democracy activists have blamed Burhan and Dagalo for abuses against protesters across the county over the past four years, including the deadly break-up of a protest camp outside the military's headquarters in Khartoum in June 2019 that killed over 120 protesters. Many groups have repeatedly called for holding

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them accountable. The RSF has long been accused of atrocities linked to the Darfur conflict.

Sudan, a country at the crossroads of the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa, is known for its history of military coups and civil conflicts since it gained independence in 1950s.

The country has borders with six African nations and a strategic coastline on the Red Sea. A decade-old civil conflict resulted in the secession of South Sudan in 2011.

The clashes will increase hardship in Sudan, where the U.N. says some 16 million people — or one-third of the population — already depend on humanitarian assistance.

Associated Press writer Samy Magdy in Cairo contributed.

Young people drive bullfighting's resurrection in Spain

By JENNIFER O'MAHONY Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Álvaro Alarcón plays out the moment when he will enter Madrid's Las Ventas bullring for his final challenge as a "novillero," or apprentice bullfighter.

The 24-year-old has been training in the dusty countryside outside the Spanish capital, and his skintight suit, delicately woven with beads and gold embroidery, is back from the tailor. If he can triumph this last time, he will be considered for the highest rank of "matador" — bullfighters who take on beasts weighing more than half a ton.

"From the moment you get up until you go to bed, and even when you are asleep, you are dreaming about what you want to do in the bullring," he said. "Being a bullfighter is a way of life."

The death of Spanish bullfighting has been declared many times, but the number of bullfights in the country is at its highest level in seven years, and the young are the most consistent presence as older groups of spectators drop away.

On a Sunday afternoon, Alarcón must kill two young bulls by driving a sword through their shoulder blades, puncturing the animals' aortas. He is cheered on by hundreds of children and teenagers among the 8,700 people who turn out to watch from the stands. In an age of almost unlimited entertainment choices, it's a serious statement.

It is now firmly a minority interest. Just under 2% of Spaniards attended a bullfight in the 2021-22 season, according to Culture Ministry statistics, but among them teenagers aged 15-19 were the largest group. Those aged over 75 were the least likely to attend.

The U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child urged Spain in 2018 to ban children from bullfights to shield them from "exposure to violence." So far, the call has had little effect.

While bullfighting is nowhere close to drawing the crowds of half a century ago, it remains an important, if divisive, symbol of Spanish identity in the country's south and central regions. Audiences are smaller, fans argue, but more committed.

Miriam Cabas is a 21-year-old bullfighter from the southern Andalusia region, and one of just 250 women who are registered as professionals in Spain. She has watched the profile of the crowds shift since she was a child in the stands. "It is true that bullfighting has decreased," she admitted. "But right now, I perceive that the youth is booming and people are eager to know and go to the bullrings."

For some right-wing youth, proudly associating oneself with symbols of traditional Spain, like sporting the colors of the flag on bracelets and polo shirts, or attending bullfights, has become fashionable.

But Alarcón grew up in a family that had no interest in bullfighting, with parents who were horrified when he wanted to join a school to learn the practice as a teenager. "I loved motorbikes, and anything related to extreme sports," he told the AP. "I had never even seen a bull until I watched a documentary about bullfighting aged 13, and discovered this beautiful profession."

Beyond the bullfighters themselves, the industry employs thousands of ranchers, plus event organizers and promoters, and even bullfighting critics who still write up reports from the events in prestigious national newspapers. "Álvaro Alarcón took two young bulls with fuel and momentum," read a recent report in the El País daily, which noted that Alarcón was awarded with an ear severed from a felled bull.

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África Calderón García, 20, is a seamstress for a Madrid tailor who crafts the intricate "traje de luces," or suit of lights, that bullfighters wear into the ring. She grew up attending bullfights with her grandmother and will continue the tradition, though she considers herself someone who cares deeply for animals.

"It is an art form; it is Spanish culture," she said on a break from weaving white beads onto a bright blue shoulder section. "People are not aware of all the work that goes on behind it and how well cared-for the animals are," she added, citing a common argument among pro-bullfighting groups that the toro bravo breed lives a well-fed existence outdoors until they enter the bullring.

Young fans were outraged by the government's attempt last year to exclude bullfighting from a 400-euro (\$436) subsidy given to 18 year olds to spend on cultural activities. A legal case brought by a bullfighting association ended up in Spain's Supreme Court, which found against the left-wing coalition currently governing the country.

The successful legal argument rested on the fact that bullfighting is protected as cultural patrimony in Spain by decade-old legislation passed to ensure its survival. "While this law is in force, bullfighting will be protected in Spain, although it is legalized animal abuse," said Yolanda Morales, spokeswoman for Spain's Animalist Party, in a recent social media video.

Since the 1970s, once-iconic bullrings have shut down in Barcelona, Benidorm and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, and reopened as shopping centers, cultural centers and even nightclubs.

But for Antonio López Fuentes, a master tailor and Calderón García's boss, the government's action was just the latest attempt to proscribe a practise that kings, popes and Moorish rulers have all tried to stamp out over the past thousand years. "They (the young) think: 'If you are trying to ban me from something, I am going to do it,'" he said.

The risks remain as high as they have ever been. On Alarcón's last night as a novillero, he was gored by a bull and left with three broken ribs. Following surgery, he texted: "I'll be back in the ring very soon."

Sudan's army and rival force battle, killing at least 56

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — Sudan's military and a powerful paramilitary force battled fiercely in the capital and other areas, dealing a new blow to hopes for a transition to democracy and raising fears of a wider conflict. A doctors' syndicate said Sunday the death toll rose to 56, with at least 595 people wounded.

The clashes capped months of heightened tensions between the military and its partner-turned-rival, the Rapid Support Forces group. Those tensions had delayed a deal with political parties to get the country back to its short-lived transition to democracy, which was derailed by an October 2021 military coup.

Chaotic scenes unfolded in the capital of Khartoum, where fighters firing from truck-mounted machine guns battled in densely populated neighborhoods. "Fire and explosions are everywhere," said Amal Mohamed, a doctor in a public hospital in Omdurman. "We haven't seen such battles in Khartoum before," said resident Abdel-Hamid Mustafa.

By the end of the day, the military issued a statement ruling out negotiations with the RSF, instead calling for the dismantling of what it called a "rebellious militia." The head of the paramilitary group, in turn, branded the armed forces chief a "criminal." The tough language signaled that the conflict between the former allies, who jointly orchestrated the 2021 coup, was likely to continue.

Meanwhile, diplomatic pressure appeared to be mounting. Top diplomats, including the U.S. Secretary of State, the U.N. secretary-general, the EU foreign policy chief, the head of the Arab League and the head of the African Union Commission urged the sides to stop fighting.

Arab states with stakes in Sudan — Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — also called for a cease-fire and for both parties to return to negotiations.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he consulted with the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. "We agreed it was essential for the parties to immediately end hostilities without pre-condition," he said in a statement early Sunday.

The fighting comes after months of escalating tensions between the commander of Sudan's military, Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the head of the RSF, Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo. It also followed

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years of political unrest since the 2021 coup.

The recent tensions stem from disagreement over how the RSF, headed by Dagalo, should be integrated into the armed forces and what authority should oversee the process. The merger is a key condition of Sudan's unsigned transition agreement with political groups.

The fighting erupted early Saturday. The two sides traded blame over who started and also made rival claims over who controlled strategic installations around the capital.

By early Sunday, at least 56 people had been killed across Sudan and at least 595 wounded.

The Sudan Doctor's Syndicate said at least six of the deaths were reported in the capital Khartoum and its sister city Omdurman and another eight near Nyala, the capital city of the South Darfur province in the southwest.

The syndicate said the casualty toll was likely higher, with many believed to be still uncounted in western Darfur region and the northern town of Merowe.

The military said in a statement late Saturday that its troops had seized all RSF bases in Omdurman, while residents reported heavy airstrikes on paramilitary positions in and around the capital that continued into the night. After nightfall, sounds of gunfire and explosions were still heard in several parts of Khartoum, they said.

One of the flashpoints was Khartoum International Airport. There was no formal announcement that the airport was closed, but major airlines suspended their flights.

Saudi Arabia's national airline said one of its aircraft was involved in what it called "an accident." Video showed the plane on fire on the tarmac. Another plane also appeared to have caught fire. Flight-tracking website FlightRadar24 identified it as a Boeing 737 for SkyUp, a Kyiv, Ukraine-based airline. It did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The doctors' group said two civilians were killed at the airport.

Burhan, the armed forces chief, told the Qatar-based satellite news network Al Jazeera, that the day began with RSF troops "harassing" the military south of Khartoum, triggering the clashes. He said RSF fighters entered Khartoum airport and set fire to some planes.

He said all strategic facilities including the military's headquarters and the Republican palace, the seat of Sudan's presidency, are under his forces' control. He threatened to deploy more troops to Khartoum.

Dagalo accused Burhan of starting the battle by surrounding RSF troops. "This criminal, he forced this battle upon us," he said.

Dagalo told Al Jazeera that he believed the fighting would be over in "the next few days."

The RSF alleged that its forces controlled strategic locations in Khartoum and the northern city of Merowe some 350 kilometers (215 miles) northwest of the capital. The military dismissed the claims as "lies."

The clashes also took place in other areas across the country including the Northern province, the conflict-ravaged Darfur region, and the strategic coastal city of Port Sudan on the Red Sea, a military official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media.

Pro-democracy activists have blamed Burhan and Dagalo for abuses against protesters across the county over the past four years, including the deadly break-up of a protest camp outside the military's headquarters in Khartoum in June 2019 that killed over 120 protesters. Many groups have repeatedly called for holding them accountable. The RSF has long been accused of atrocities linked to the Darfur conflict.

Former Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, who was ousted in the 2021 coup, warned of a possible regional conflict if the fighting escalates. "Shooting must stop immediately," he said in a video appeal to both sides posted on his Twitter account.

Cameron Hudson, a senior associate with the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank and a former U.S. diplomat, said the fighting could become wider and prolonged, calling on the United States to form a coalition of regional countries to pressure the leaders of the military and RSF to de-escalate.

Volker Perthes, the U.N. envoy for Sudan, and the Saudi ambassador in Sudan, Ali Bin Hassan Jaffar, were in contact with Dagalo and Burhan to try to end the violence, said a U.N. official who asked for anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

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Chad announced that it is closing its land borders with Sudan. ___ Associated Press writers Samy Magdy in Cairo and Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, contributed to this report.

Jimmy Carter and Playboy: How 'the weirdo factor' rocked '76

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

PLAINS, Ga. (AP) — Jimmy Carter already had drawn months of media scrutiny as a devout Southern Baptist running for president. Then the 1976 Democratic nominee brought up sex and sin as he explained his religious faith to Playboy magazine.

Carter was not misquoted. But he was certainly misunderstood, as his thoughts in the wide-ranging interview were reduced in the popular imagination to utterances about "lust" and "adultery."

Nearly a half-century later, as the 98-year-old Carter receives hospice care in the same south-Georgia home where he once spoke with Playboy journalists, interviewer Robert Scheer still believes Carter was treated unfairly. He recalls the former president as a "real" and "serious" figure whose intent was smothered by the intensity of a campaign's closing stretch.

"Jimmy Carter was a thoughtful guy," Scheer, now 87, told The Associated Press. "But that got lost here. I've never seen a story like it. It was worldwide. ... It just never went away."

Political disaster ensued. Rosalynn Carter was suddenly being asked whether she trusted her husband. The fallout, in Carter's words, "nearly cost me the election."

Carter spent five-plus hours with Playboy across several months — "more time with you than with Time, Newsweek and all the others combined," the nominee told Scheer.

The resulting Q&A spanned 12,000 words, and Scheer added thousands more in an accompanying story. Carter discussed military and foreign policy, racism and civil rights, political journalism and his reputation as a "vague" candidate.

"They weren't interested in sensationalized stuff," Scheer said of Playboy.

Hugh Hefner's iconic publication reached an estimated 20 million-plus readers each month with its pictorials of nude women. But the magazine chronicled American culture as well, with its branded "Playboy Interview" featuring such power players as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., John Lennon, Malcom X and leading newsman Walter Cronkite.

Carter, unafraid of nuance, proved he belonged among them, Scheer said.

The nominee's most-remembered comments came at the end of their final session. Standing outside Carter's front door, Golson pressed Carter on whether his piety would make him a "rigid, unbending president" unable to represent all Americans.

The Baptist deacon responded with an 823-word soliloquy on human imperfection, pride and God's forgiveness. He said he believed in "absolute and total separation of church and state" and explained his faith as rooted in humility, not judgment of others.

Quoting Matthew 5:27-28, Carter explained that Jesus Christ considered an offending thought equivalent to consummated adultery, and by that standard, he was in no position to judge a man who "shacks up" and "screws lots of women," because he had "looked on many women with lust" and, thus, "committed adultery many times in my heart."

Scheer called it a "sensible statement," reflecting Carter's Baptist tradition: "He was saying, look, I'm not going to be some fanatic. ... I'm not this perfect guy."

Playboy realized Carter provided explosive material — and not just about sex. Citing President Lyndon Johnson's handling of Vietnam, Carter included the last Democratic president alongside disgraced Republican Richard Nixon as guilty of "lying, cheating and distorting the truth."

The magazine decided to send the full Q&A text to about 1,000 media outlets in late September, ahead of the usual October publication date for the November edition.

The idea, Scheer explained, was to allow time for fair coverage rather than drop bombshells days before the election.

Headline writers, satirists and late-night television pounced anyway, labeling it Carter's "lust in my heart"

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interview. "Saturday Night Live," then a fledgling NBC sketch comedy show, had a field day. One political cartoonist depicted Carter lusting after the Statue of Liberty.

He lamented to NPR in 1993 that the Playboy interview morphed into "the No. 1 story of the entire 1976 campaign."

"I was explaining Jesus' Sermon on the Mount," Carter wrote wistfully in a 2015 memoir.

As a candidate, Carter's faith had endeared him to many fellow white evangelicals and cultural conservatives. That made him a difficult foil for Republicans, who wanted to cast Democrats as out-of-step with most of America. The flip side, Scheer noted, was the many young voters and urban liberals — key Democratic constituencies — who "wondered if he was this Southern square."

"Hamilton Jordan (Carter's campaign manager) had always called Carter's faith 'the weirdo factor,'" said media historian Amber Roessner, a University of Tennessee professor who has written extensively on Carter. "Talking to Playboy was their way to prove he wasn't some kind of prude."

Scheer, who was with Carter as part of his traveling press corps, said Playboy's early text release sparked a frenzy.

"Reporters were scrambling, asking me, 'Bob, what is this?'" he recalled.

Traveling press focused initially on Carter's criticism of Johnson, who had died in 1973. It was a juicy detail because Carter was headed Texas to campaign with Johnson's widow.

Carter initially told reporters he was taken out of context. Scheer "ran back to the plane to get the tapes," and effectively caught the nominee violating his pledge never to make a "misleading statement."

Lady Bird Johnson skipped Carter's Texas events, Scheer said. Carter apologized to her by telephone.

When his commentary on adultery ballooned, Carter insisted the exchange had been off-the-record, throwaway banter as Scheer and Golson prepared to leave.

"He was still wearing the mic!" Scheer told AP.

The way the story morphed "ended up making Carter seem like a creep," Roessner said.

Rosalynn Carter fashioned a pat response: "Jimmy talks too much, but at least people know he's honest and doesn't mind answering questions." And, no, she never worried about his fidelity.

"The only lust I worried about was that of the press," she wrote in 1984, recounting how her discipline finally cracked when a reporter asked whether she ever committed adultery.

"If I had," she replied, "I wouldn't tell you."

Ford, who had been gaining on Carter but still trailed badly, leveraged the story. The Republican president was an Episcopalian, soft-spoken about religion, but he invited leading evangelical pastors to the White House the day after the interview's release, including the Rev. W.S. Criswell of Dallas First Baptist Church.

Criswell later declared from his pulpit that he had asked Ford: "Mr. President, if Playboy magazine were to ask you for an interview, what would you do?" Ford's reply, according to Criswell: "I was asked by Playboy magazine for an interview — and I declined with an emphatic 'No!'"

Thousands of his parishioners roared.

The Rev. Billy Graham, the nation's top evangelist, and the Rev. Jerry Falwell, the rising leader of the so-called Religious Right, also blitzed Carter. National media, including The AP, highlighted criticism from Christian pastors from around the country.

Roessner, the daughter of a Protestant pastor, said Carter's Playboy comments were clumsy, "but if anyone should have understood the context ... it should have been the ministers."

She recalled Carter's resentment during a 2014 interview she conducted with him. Decades of global humanitarian work had by that time afforded the former president a profile above politics, yet "almost 40 years later, it was clearly something he held on to," she said. He was "still incredibly frustrated by what he felt was unfair coverage and response."

The 1976 campaign was the first after Nixon's resignation, driven by reporting from The Washington Post, and many journalists were demonstrating a new level of distrust of politicians, especially one Scheer described as "wearing his religion on his sleeve."

Those same news organizations largely ignored what the soon-to-be president said about them, Roessner noted.

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"The traveling press have zero interest in any issue unless it's a matter of making a mistake," Carter told Playboy. "There's nobody in the back of this plane who would ask an issue question unless he thought he could trick me into some crazy statement."

Scheer, at least, asked plenty of policy questions, and, looking back, he pointed to Carter's narrow victory just weeks later.

"Whatever they said, I think it did exactly what they wanted to accomplish," Scheer said. "That doesn't mean they weren't nervous."

Fox leads Kings past Warriors 126-123 in playoff return

By JOSH DUBOW AP Sports Writer

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — De'Aaron Fox finished off a dazzling playoff debut that was years in the making and had one more task to do.

With the home crowd counting down following an exhilarating return to the postseason, Fox pressed the button and lit the ceremonial beam, letting out 17 seasons of frustration for Sacramento.

"Sacramento showed out tonight," Fox said. "But doing this for the fans, just knowing the way that they support this team through thick and thin — really thin. It's just a testament to the way they are."

Fox was the biggest reason why, scoring 38 points to tie for the second highest playoff debut in NBA history to lead the Kings to a 126-123 victory over the defending-champion Golden State Warriors on Saturday night.

Fox scored 29 points in the second half after taking time to adjust to the playoff physicality and hit the 3-pointer that gave Sacramento the lead for good late in the fourth quarter.

Fox took until his sixth season to reach the postseason stage but announced himself as a star as only Luka Doncic scored more points in a playoff debut with 42 against Dallas three years ago.

"You need guys like that on your side because they know everything that we're throwing at them," coach Mike Brown said. "There's no secrets. You have to have guys on your team that can go make plays and Foxy went and made plays tonight."

The first playoff meeting between the Northern California neighbors lived up to the hype and delighted the raucous crowd that had been waiting for a playoff game since 2006.

The inexperienced Kings closed the game strong against a Warriors team that won four titles in the previous eight seasons.

After Stephen Curry hit a corner 3-pointer to give Golden State a 114-112 lead with about four minutes left, the Kings responded with seven in a row starting with a 3-pointer from Fox.

The Warriors didn't go away and cut the deficit to one on a layup by Curry in the final minute. But Andrew Wiggins missed a corner 3 for the lead in the closing seconds of his first game in more than two months.

"That last one felt amazing," Wiggins said of the last shot. "Only up from here. ... I'm here to compete and I believe in myself."

Malik Monk made two free throws to make it 126-123 with 2.9 seconds left. Curry missed a runner from 3 at the buzzer, giving the Kings their first playoff win since April 30, 2006, against San Antonio.

"That first game is kind of a feeling out process," Curry said. "We responded. That's what we are capable of doing. It was a high energy game from start to finish."

Monk finished with 32 points off the bench and Domantas Sabonis had 12 points and 16 rebounds.

Curry led the Warriors with 30 points, Klay Thompson added 21 and Wiggins and Poole scored 18 apiece.

It was a festive environment in success-starved Sacramento where fans gathered outside the arena hours before the start of the Kings first playoff game following an NBA record 16-year drought.

The arena was deafening starting in pregame warmups with some fans even bringing back the cow bells that were so common during their playoff runs two decades ago.

"It was incredible all night," forward Harrison Barnes said. "When guys ran out for layup lines with how loud it got in there and I think everyone got chills."

The excitement appeared to take a toll on the inexperienced Kings, who struggled shooting the ball early.

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Sacramento shot just 39.2% in the first half and trailed Golden State 61-55 at the half.

The Warriors built the lead to 10 points in the third quarter before Sacramento ended the quarter on a 15-4 run fueled by 10 points from Trey Lyles to take a 91-90 lead into the fourth.

WIGGINS' RETURN

Wiggins showed few signs of rust in his first game in more than two months after leaving the team to deal with an undisclosed family matter.

Wiggins came off the bench after starting his first 657 games in the NBA and made an immediate impact. He had his first shot attempt blocked but hustled back for a block of his own on the defensive end.

The only thing missing from his game was the outside shot as he was 1 for 8 from 3.

TIP-INS

Warriors: Golden State opened a series on the road for the fourth time in 25 playoff series under Steve Kerr. The Warriors won Game 1 and the series in the 2018 Western Conference Finals against Houston and the second round against Memphis last season. Golden State lost the opener of the 2019 Finals and the series to Toronto.

Kings: Sacramento starters missed their first 15 attempts from 3-point range before Fox hit one late in the third quarter,

UP NEXT

Game 2 is Monday night in Sacramento. The Warriors haven't fallen behind 2-0 in a playoff series since the second round against Utah in 2007.

AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/hub/NBA> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

China auto show highlights intense electric car competition

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

SHANGHAI (AP) — Global and Chinese automakers plan to unveil more than a dozen new electric SUVs, sedans and muscle cars this week at the Shanghai auto show, their first full-scale sales event in four years in a market that has become a workshop for developing electrics, self-driving cars and other technology.

Automakers are competing to roll out faster, more luxurious, more feature-drenched electric vehicles in the technology's biggest, most crowded market. The ruling Communist Party has invested billions of dollars in subsidies to buy an early lead in an emerging industry. Established global brands face intense competition from Chinese rivals.

For the first time since 2019, executives are flying in from the United States, Europe and Japan for the world's biggest auto show after anti-virus curbs that blocked most travel into China were lifted in December. Auto shows in the industry's biggest market went ahead during the pandemic, but on a smaller scale. Global brands were represented by employees of their China operations.

Drivers in the world's biggest auto market bought 5.4 million pure-electric vehicles last year, or about two-thirds of the global total of 8 million, plus 1.5 million gasoline-electric hybrids. That was more than one-quarter of total auto sales of 23.6 million. This year's EV sales are forecast to rise another 30%.

"Consumers lost interest in gasoline cars. That is the biggest challenge for foreign brands to compete in China," said industry analyst John Zeng of LMC Automotive. "They are going to have to show their best EV products."

Beijing is winding down government support and shifting the burden to automakers by requiring them to earn credits for EV sales. Manufacturers are pouring billions of dollars into developing models that can compete on price and features without subsidies. Many are forming partnerships to share soaring costs.

Auto Shanghai 2023 fills the cavernous Shanghai exhibition center, a 1.5 million-square-meter (16 million-square-foot) subcontinent of a building that is among the world's biggest.

Volkswagen AG, the country's top-selling brand, says it plans to display 28 models, half of them electrified. VW says it will debut its ID.7 limousine, which promises a 700-kilometer (435-mile) range on one charge.

China's BYD Auto, which competes with Tesla Inc. for the title of world's biggest-selling electric automaker,

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says it will display for the first time its U9 supercar from its luxury Yangwang brand. The automaker says the U9, with a 1 million yuan (\$145,000) sticker price, can accelerate from zero to 100 kph (60 mph) in two neck-straining seconds.

China's auto sales peaked in 2017 at 24.7 million but collapsed in 2020 to 20.2 million after dealerships closed as part of efforts to contain COVID-19. They are recovering but are yet to return to the pre-pandemic level.

The ruling party's support for EV development is part of plans to gain wealth and global influence by transforming China into a creator of profitable technologies.

That campaign has strained relations with Washington and other trading partners, which are cutting off access to advanced processor chips used by makers of smartphones, electric cars and other high-tech products. China's own foundries can supply low-end chips used in many cars but not processors for artificial intelligence and other advanced functions.

Sales of gasoline-electric hybrids and pure-electric vehicles rose 26.2% over a year ago in the first three months of 2023 to 1.6 million, according to the China Association of Auto Manufacturers. Sales of pure electrics rose 14.4% to 1.2 million while hybrids increased 75.1% to 433,000.

Tesla and some other brands cut prices by 5% to 15% starting in January after sales growth slowed, though to still-robust levels compared with the slack U.S. and European markets. That prompted warnings the squeeze on an industry with dozens of fledgling brands might force smaller automakers into mergers or out of business.

China also is, along with the United States, a leader in development of self-driving taxis and trucks.

Baidu Inc., best known as a search engine operator, is the most prominent among developers that also include Pony.ai. Geely Group, owner of Volvo Cars, Lotus and Polestar, has announced plans for satellite-linked autonomous vehicles. Network equipment maker Huawei Technologies Ltd. is working on self-driving mining and industrial vehicles.

Baidu and Pony.ai received China's first licenses to offer autonomous ride-hailing services in Beijing with a safety driver aboard to take over in the event of an emergency in 2022. That came 18 months after Alphabet Inc.'s Waymo started driverless ride-hailing service in Phoenix, Arizona.

"We see very strong support from the government," said Jason Low of Canalys.

At the auto show, Chinese brand Aito plans to display its new M5 SUV with autonomous technology developed in an alliance with Huawei Technologies Ltd. The telecom equipment maker is expanding into the auto and other industries after U.S. sanctions imposed in a feud with Beijing over technology crushed Huawei's smartphone business.

China's market is so huge that even brands whose strongest selling point is roaring, gasoline-powered engines are embracing electrics.

BMW AG says its whole vehicle lineup at Auto Shanghai will be electrified. The German sport luxury brand says it will unveil two new models, the i7 M70L and XM Red Label, and show its M760Le in China for the first time.

Italy's Maserati, a Stellantis unit known for using high-performance Ferrari engines, plans to unveil its first electric SUV and says its electric sports car will get an Asia premiere.

Chinese luxury EV brand NIO Inc., which competes with Tesla at the premium end of the market, plans to display its latest SUV, the ES6. It promises a 610-kilometer (380-mile) range on one charge.

Mercedes Benz plans to unveil an electric SUV under its luxury Maybach brand and two SUVs. The company also has EV joint ventures with BYD Auto and Geely Group.

Toyota says it plans to unveil two new models in its bZ line of zero-emissions vehicles. Nissan plans to display its Max-Out electric convertible concept car. Honda is debuting a new prototype for its China-focused e:N electric brand.

Despite such investments, Western and Japanese brands need to be more aggressive about EV development to keep up with China's rapid evolution, said LMC's Zeng. He said many take too long to create models abroad without Chinese input.

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"The model they bring to China lags behind Chinese models by three or four years in driving range and equipment," Zeng said. "They have to learn to design and test cars in China for China."

Kamala Harris rallies as high court eyes abortion pill rules

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris on Saturday urged Americans to take action during "a critical point in our nation's history" as thousands of protesters demonstrated across the country against new limits to abortion rights making their way through the courts.

Saturday's nationwide rallies were sparked by the U.S. Supreme Court's actions the day before, when the high court intervened to delay rule changes that would have limited the way the abortion drug mifepristone could be used and dispensed. The limits were paused while the court reviews the case more thoroughly.

Harris made a surprise stop in Los Angeles at one of the rallies, where she called the latest upheaval over abortion rights a further incursion by conservatives into myriad "fundamental rights" many Americans thought they had.

"And so this is a moment that history will show required each of us — based on our collective love of our country — to stand up, and fight for, and protect our ideals. That's what this moment is," she said Saturday, speaking to several hundred demonstrators from the steps of City Hall. "When you attack the rights of women in America, you are attacking America."

Some of the protesters voiced their anger at the steps of the nation's high court, which took Friday's action at the request of the federal Justice Department. The agency asked the high court to lift restrictions on mifepristone imposed by an appellate court in Texas earlier in the week. The decision by the appellate court reduced the window of time when the drug could be used and prevented the drug from being dispensed by mail.

Critics of the Texas and appellate court decisions, including pharmaceutical companies, viewed the courts' actions as a dangerous intrusion into the authority of the FDA, which regulates how medications are sold and used in the United States.

Demonstrators in New York City stood behind a sign with a four-letter expletive directed at Texas, where a federal judge set off the latest salvo in the battle over abortion. They held signs urging the government to defend medication abortions.

But the crowd was modest, attracting a little more than 100 people outside the picturesque public library along Fifth Avenue.

Still, the demonstrators attracted looks from passersby along the busy thoroughfare, some briefly joining the group to lend their voices.

"It can be hard to get people out, because people are being bombarded with all kinds of assaults on their bodies and people are tired and poor," said Viva Ruiz, who said she helped organize the rally.

"The news cycle is so fast that when one thing happens something terrible happens the next day. So it's hard to sustain the momentum or the energy for people to be on the streets," Ruiz said.

With few exceptions, many of the rallies — organized under the banner of a group calling itself "Bigger than Roe" — were held in smaller cities.

Since last year's reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized the right to an abortion, more than a dozen states have effectively outlawed abortion, while additional states have moved to further tighten abortion laws.

On Thursday, the GOP-dominated Florida Legislature moved to become the latest state to ban abortions after six weeks of pregnancy.

Restrictions on the delivery and use of mifepristone, part of a two-drug regimen to end a pregnancy, would be a further blow to abortion rights advocates. The other drug, misoprostol, can be used on its own, but doing so is less effective than using both drugs in combination.

When mifepristone was initially approved, the FDA limited its use to up to seven weeks of pregnancy. It also required three in-person office visits: the first to administer mifepristone, the next to administer the

second drug, misoprostol, and the third to address any complications.

If the appeals court's action stands, those would again be the terms under which mifepristone could be dispensed.

States that support abortion rights, including California and New York, have begun stockpiling misoprostol to assure their states have adequate supplies. Washington state is among those stockpiling a supply of mifepristone or its generic form. And Massachusetts Democratic Gov. Maura Healey said the administration is dedicating \$1 million to help providers contracted with the Department of Public Health buy additional quantities of mifepristone.

More than 5.6 million women in the U.S. had used mifepristone as of June 2022, according to the FDA. In that period, the agency received 4,200 reports of complications in women, or less than one-tenth of 1% of women who took the drug.

Calvan reported from New York.

Over and out: Germany switches off its last nuclear plants

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — "Nuclear power, no thanks!"

What was once a slogan found on the bumper of many a German car became a reality Saturday, as the country shut down its three remaining nuclear power plants in line with a long-planned transition toward renewable energy.

The shutdown of Emsland, Neckarwestheim II and Isar II shortly before midnight was cheered earlier in the day by anti-nuclear campaigners outside the three reactors and at rallies in Berlin and Munich. Inside the plants, staff held more somber ceremonies to mark the occasion.

Decades of anti-nuclear protests in Germany, stoked by disasters at Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima, had put pressure on successive governments to end the use of a technology that critics argue is unsafe and unsustainable.

But with other industrialized countries, such as the United States, Japan, China, France and Britain, counting on nuclear energy to replace planet-warming fossil fuels, Germany's decision to stop using both has drawn skepticism at home and abroad, as well as unsuccessful last-minute calls to halt the decision.

Defenders of atomic energy say fossil fuels should be phased out first as part of global efforts to curb climate change, arguing that nuclear power produces far fewer greenhouse gas emissions and is safe, if properly managed.

As energy prices spiked last year due to the war in Ukraine, some members of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government got cold feet about closing the nuclear plants as planned on Dec. 31, 2022. In a compromise, Scholz agreed to a one-time extension of the deadline, but insisted that the final countdown would happen on April 15.

Still, Bavaria's conservative governor, Markus Soeder, who backed the original deadline set in 2011 when Chancellor Angela Merkel was Germany's leader, this week called the shutdown "an absolute mistaken decision."

"While many countries in the world are even expanding nuclear power, Germany is doing the opposite," Soeder said. "We need every possible form of energy. Otherwise, we risk higher electricity prices and businesses moving away."

Advocates of nuclear power worldwide have slammed the German shutdown, aware that the move by Europe's biggest economy could deal a blow to a technology they tout as a clean and reliable alternative to fossil fuels. On Friday, dozens of scientists including James Hansen, a former NASA climate expert credited with drawing public attention to global warming in 1988, sent a letter to Scholz urging him to keep the nuclear plants running.

The German government has acknowledged that, in the short term, the country will have to rely more heavily on polluting coal and natural gas to meet its energy needs, even as it takes steps to massively

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ramp up electricity production from solar and wind. Germany aims to be carbon neutral by 2045.

But officials such as Environment Minister Steffi Lemke say the idea of a nuclear renaissance is a myth, citing data showing that atomic energy's share of global electricity production is shrinking.

At a recent news conference in Berlin, Lemke noted that new nuclear plants in Europe, such as Hinkley Point C in Britain, have faced significant delays and cost overruns. Funds used to maintain ageing reactors or build new ones would be better spent on installing cheap renewables, she said.

Energy experts such as Claudia Kemfert of the German Institute for Economic Research in Berlin say the 5% share of Germany's electricity currently coming from nuclear can be easily replaced without risking blackouts.

The northwestern town of Lingen, home to the Emsland plant, plans to become a hub for hydrogen production using electricity generated from North Sea wind farms, Mayor Dieter Krone told The Associated Press in an interview this week.

The power plant's operator, RWE, made clear that it is committed to the shutdown. The company still runs some of Europe's dirtiest coal-fired power plants. It recently pushed through the destruction of a village for a mine expansion as part of a plan to increase short-term production before ending coal use by 2030.

Many of Germany's nuclear power plants will still be undergoing costly dismantling by then. The question of what to do with highly radioactive material accumulated in the 62 years since the country's first reactor started operating remains unsolved. Efforts to find a final home for hundreds of containers of toxic waste have faced fierce resistance from local groups and officials, including Soeder, the Bavarian governor.

"Nuclear power supplied electricity for three generations, but its legacy remains dangerous for 30,000 generations," said Lemke, who also pointed to previously unconsidered risks such as the targeting of civilian atomic facilities during conflicts.

Finding a place to safely store spent nuclear fuel is a problem that other nations using the technology face, including the United States. Still, U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm has said that nuclear power will "play a critical role in America's clean energy future." This week, she welcomed Japan's decision to restart many of its reactors.

With debate raging again in Germany about whether the shutdown is a good idea, the top official in charge of nuclear safety at the Environment Ministry, Gerrit Niehaus, was asked by a reporter to sum up in a single sentence what lessons should be learned from the country's brief atomic era.

"You need to think things through to the end," Niehaus said.

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Explosive thrown at Japan PM at campaign event; 1 hurt

By MARI YAMAGUCHI and FOSTER KLUG Associated Press

WAKAYAMA, Japan (AP) — Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida was evacuated unharmed Saturday after someone threw an explosive device in his direction while he was campaigning at a fishing port in western Japan, officials said. Police wrestled a suspect to the ground as screaming bystanders scrambled to get away and smoke filled the air.

One police officer was slightly hurt and Kishida continued campaigning Saturday, but the chaotic scene was reminiscent of the assassination nine months ago of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, which also came on a campaign tour and continues to reverberate in Japanese politics. Kishida was visiting Saikazaki port in Wakayama prefecture to support his ruling party's candidate in a local election, and the explosion occurred just before he was to begin his speech.

A young man believed to be a suspect was arrested Saturday at the scene after he allegedly threw "the suspicious object," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters. Matsuno refused to comment on the suspect's motive and background, saying police are still investigating.

TV footage shows Kishida standing with his back to the crowd. His security detail suddenly points to the ground near him, and the prime minister whips around, looking alarmed. The camera quickly turns to the

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crowd just as several people, including uniformed and plainclothes police officers, converge on a young man wearing a white surgical mask and holding what appears to be another device, a long silver tube.

As they collapse on top of the man, working to remove the tube from his hands, a large explosion is heard near where Kishida had been standing. The crowd scatters in panic as police roughly drag the man away.

It wasn't immediately clear what the explosive device was or how many the suspect had, but some reports said it was a smoke or pipe bomb, possibly with a delayed fuse.

No injuries among the crowd were reported in the incident, which came on the eve of a major international forum in Japan. Kishida was not hurt and continued his campaign speeches later Saturday, Matsuno said. One police officer was slightly injured.

The investigation at the scene continued late into the night. Japanese media reports said the suspect refused to talk to police until his lawyer arrived.

Kishida did not mention the explosion and returned to the Tokyo region in the evening after campaigning in Chiba for another candidate.

"Elections are the core of democracy, and we should never tolerate threats or obstruction by violence," Matsuno said.

He said he instructed national police to ensure their utmost effort for the protection of dignitaries who are visiting Japan in the period leading up to the Group of Seven summit in May.

Abe's assassination, which shocked a nation that prides itself on public safety and extremely tight gun controls, came as he delivered a campaign speech in the western city of Nara. Amid a national outcry, police have tightened their protective measures following a subsequent investigation that found holes in Abe's security.

Security has been also ramped up in Japan as senior diplomats from some of the world's most powerful democracies arrive for Sunday's G-7 foreign minister meetings. Kishida will host a May 19-21 G-7 leaders' summit in his hometown of Hiroshima.

One witness Saturday told NHK television that she was standing in the crowd when she saw something come flying from behind. After a sudden loud noise, she fled with her children. Another witness said people were screaming and that he saw someone being apprehended right before the explosion occurred.

Saturday's attack comes ahead of nationwide local elections, including several by-elections for vacated parliamentary seats, with voting scheduled for April 23.

In Abe's assassination, the former prime minister was shot with a homemade gun during a campaign speech. The suspect, Tetsuya Yamagami, has been charged with murder and several other crimes, including violating the gun control law.

He told investigators that he killed Abe, one of Japan's most influential and divisive politicians, because of the former prime minister's apparent links to a religious group that he hated. In statements and in social media postings attributed to him, Yamagami said he developed a grudge because his mother had made massive donations to the Unification Church that bankrupted his family and ruined his life.

Abe's assassination led to the resignation of top local and national police chiefs and a tightening of security guidelines for political leaders and other prominent people.

Kishida's government was hoping to focus world attention this weekend on the hot spring resort town of Karuizawa, where senior diplomats will gather Sunday for the so-called Group of Seven foreign ministers' meeting.

The foreign ministers from Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, Italy and the European Union are expected to focus on worries over Russia's war in Ukraine, China's increasingly belligerent rise and North Korea's provocative string of weapons' tests.

Klug reported from Karuizawa, Japan.

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Report finds democracy for Black Americans is under attack

By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Extreme views adopted by some local, state and federal political leaders who try to limit what history can be taught in schools and seek to undermine how Black officials perform their jobs are among the top threats to democracy for Black Americans, the National Urban League says.

Marc Morial, the former New Orleans mayor who leads the civil rights and urban advocacy organization, cited the most recent example: the vote this month by the Republican-controlled Tennessee House to oust two Black representatives for violating a legislative rule. The pair had participated in a gun control protest inside the chamber after the shooting that killed three students and three staff members at a Nashville school.

"We have censorship and Black history suppression, and now this," Morial said in an interview. "It's another piece of fruit of the same poisonous tree, the effort to suppress and contain."

Both Tennessee lawmakers were quickly reinstated by leaders in their districts and were back at work in the House after an uproar that spread well beyond the state.

The Urban League's annual State of Black America report released Saturday draws on data and surveys from a number of organizations, including the UCLA Law School, the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League. The collective findings reveal an increase in recent years in hate crimes and efforts to change classroom curriculums, attempts to make voting more difficult and extremist views being normalized in politics, the military and law enforcement.

One of the most prominent areas examined is so-called critical race theory. Scholars developed it as an academic framework during the 1970s and 1980s in response to what they viewed as a lack of racial progress following the civil rights legislation of the 1960s. The theory centers on the idea that racism is systemic in the nation's institutions and that they function to maintain the dominance of white people in society.

Director Taifha Alexander said the Forward Tracking Project, part of the UCLA Law School, began in response to the backlash that followed the protests of the George Floyd killing in 2020 and an executive order that year from then-President Donald Trump restricting diversity training.

The project's website shows that 209 local, state and federal government entities have introduced more than 670 bills, resolutions, executive orders, opinion letters, statements and other measures against critical race theory since September 2020.

Anti-critical race theory is "a living organism in and of itself. It's always evolving. There are always new targets of attack," Alexander said.

She said the expanded scope of some of those laws, which are having a chilling effect on teaching certain aspects of the country's racial conflicts, will lead to major gaps in understanding history and social justice.

"This anti-CRT campaign is going to frustrate our ability to reach our full potential as a multiracial democracy" because future leaders will be missing information they could use to tackle problems, Alexander said.

She said one example is the rewriting of Florida elementary school material about civil rights figure Rosa Parks and her refusal to give up her seat to a white rider on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus in 1955 — an incident that sparked the bus boycott there. Mention of race was omitted entirely in one revision, a change first reported by The New York Times.

Florida has been the epicenter of many of the steps, including opposing AP African American studies, but it's not alone.

"The things that have been happening in Florida have been replicated, or governors in similarly situated states have claimed they will do the same thing," Alexander said.

In Alabama, a proposal to ban "divisive" concepts passed out of legislative committee this past week. Last year, the administration of Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin, a Republican, rescinded a series of policies, memos and other resources related to diversity, equity and inclusion that it characterized as "discriminatory and divisive concepts" in the state's public education system.

Oklahoma public school teachers are prohibited from teaching certain concepts of race and racism under a bill Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt signed into law in 2021.

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On Thursday, the Llano County Commissioners Court in Texas held a special meeting to consider shutting down the entire public library system rather than follow a federal judge's order to return a slate of books to the shelves on topics ranging from teenage sexuality to bigotry.

After listening to public comments in favor and against the shutdown, the commissioners decided to remove the item from the agenda.

"We will suppress your books. We will suppress the conversation about race and racism, and we will suppress your history, your AP course," Morial said. "It is singular in its effort to suppress Blacks."

Other issues in his group's report address extremism in the military and law enforcement, energy and climate change, and how current attitudes can affect public policy. Predominantly white legislatures in Missouri and Mississippi have proposals that would shift certain government authority from some majority Black cities to the states.

In many ways, the report mirrors concerns evident in recent years in a country deeply divided over everything from how much K-12 students should be taught about racism and sexuality to the legitimacy of the 2020 election.

Forty percent of voters in last year's elections said their local K-12 public schools were not teaching enough about racism in the United States, while 34% said it already was too much, according to AP VoteCast, an expansive survey of the American electorate. Twenty-three percent said the current curriculum was about right.

About two-thirds of Black voters said more should be taught on the subject, compared with about half of Latino voters and about one-third of white voters.

Violence is one of the major areas of concern covered in the Urban League report, especially in light of the 2022 mass shooting at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York. The accused shooter left a manifesto raising the "great replacement theory" as a motive in the killings.

Data released this year by the FBI indicated that hate crimes rose between 2020 and 2021. African Americans were disproportionately represented, accounting for 30% of the incidents in which the bias was known.

By comparison, the second largest racial group targeted in the single incident category was white victims, who made up 10%.

Rachel Carroll Rivas, deputy director of research with the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project, said when all the activities are tabulated, including hate crimes, rhetoric, incidents of discrimination and online disinformation, "we see a very clear and concerning threat to America and a disproportionate impact on Black Americans."

Associated Press writers Julie Wright in Kansas City, Missouri, and Hannah Fingerhut in Washington contributed to this report.

Boston remembers deadly marathon bombing 10 years later

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — With a bagpiper playing "The Bells of Dunblane" and a few runners looking on, families of those killed in the Boston Marathon bombing marked the 10th anniversary of the tragedy early Saturday by slowly walking together to the memorial sites near the finish line and laying wreaths.

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, who was making her first run for City Council when the bombing happened, joined the somber procession along with Gov. Maura Healey. At each memorial site — marked with three stone pillars — they stood with the families in silence.

Thousands, including many marathon runners in their blue and yellow windbreakers and several former Boston Red Sox players, came out to a second ceremony Saturday afternoon near the finish line. Church bells were rung and the Boston City Singers and Boston Pops performed "Amazing Grace" and "America the Beautiful."

The 127th running of the Boston Marathon takes place Monday.

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"The day never leaves me," said Jennifer Black, 71, a realtor from Loveland, Ohio, who was watching the morning procession and recounted how her race in 2013 was cut short due to the bombing and talked about those who died in the attack. She is back in Boston to run this year.

"So much loss, so much pain all because of hate," she continued, tears streaming down her face. "We have to stand up for people. We have to look out for each other, and we have to pray for these families every day."

Standing next to Black, Karen Russell, of Boston, said she felt it was important to witness the procession especially on the 10th anniversary.

"The families are still suffering even though we've gone on," Russel said. "There are a lot of people that got hurt that day and that pain will never go away. ... I feel it's important to be here to let them know we still care."

Three people were killed and more than 260 were injured when two pressure-cooker bombs went off at the marathon finish line. Among the dead were Lu Lingzi, a 23-year-old Boston University graduate student from China; Krystle Campbell, a 29-year-old restaurant manager from Medford, Massachusetts; and 8-year-old Martin Richard, who had gone to watch the marathon with his family.

During a tense, four-day manhunt that paralyzed the city, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Police Officer Sean Collier was shot dead in his car. Boston Police Officer Dennis Simmonds also died a year after he was wounded in a confrontation with the bombers.

Police captured a bloodied and wounded Dzhokhar Tsarnaev in the Boston suburb of Watertown, where he was hiding in a boat parked in a backyard, hours after his brother died. Tamerlan Tsarnaev, 26, had been in a gunfight with police and was run over by his brother as he fled.

"I think we're all still living with those tragic days 10 years ago," Bill Evans, the former Boston Police Commissioner, said recently.

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was sentenced to death and much of the attention, in recent years, has been around his bid to avoid being executed.

A federal appeals court is considering Tsarnaev's latest bid to avoid execution. A three-judge panel of the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston heard arguments in January in the 29-year-old's case, but has yet to issue a ruling.

The appeals court initially threw out Tsarnaev's death sentence in 2020, saying the trial judge did not adequately screen jurors for potential biases. But the U.S. Supreme Court revived it last year.

The 1st Circuit is now weighing whether other issues that weren't considered by the Supreme Court require the death sentence to be tossed a second time. Among other things, Tsarnaev says the trial judge wrongly denied his challenge of two jurors who defense attorneys say lied during jury selection questioning.

The bombing not only unified Boston — "Boston Strong" became the city's rallying cry — but inspired many in the running community and prompted scores of those impacted by the terror attack to run the marathon. At the memorial sites Saturday several flower pots with the words "Boston Strong" held what have become known as Marathon daffodils.

"It really galvanized and showed our sport's and our city's resiliency, our desire together to continue even better and to enhance the Boston Marathon," Boston Athletic Association President and CEO Jack Fleming said. "The bombing in 2013 resulted in a new appreciation or a different appreciation for what Boston, what the Boston Marathon, has always stood for, which is that expression of freedom that you receive and get while running."

On Saturday, the focus was mostly on remembering victims and survivors of the bombing but also, as Wu said, "really making sure this was a moment to focus on where the city and our communities, our families are headed in the future."

That sentiment will be reflected in what has become known as "One Boston Day," where acts of kindness and service take place to honor victims, survivors and first responders. This year, nearly two dozen community service projects are happening including a shoe drive and several food drives, blood drives and neighborhood cleanups.

"This time of year evokes a strong emotion for so many of us across the City and the people touched by the tragedy ten years ago. But the most prevailing one is that Boston is indeed strong, and that our communities show up for each other in times of need," Jacob Robinson, the executive director of West Roxbury Main Streets, one of the groups hosting the shoe drive, said in a statement.

AP Sports Writer Jimmy Golen contributed to this report.

Archeologists in Italy unearth ancient dolphin statuette

ROME (AP) — Excavations in southern Italy have unearthed terracotta bull heads and a figurine of the Greek god Eros riding a dolphin, shining new light on the religious life and rituals of an ancient city, culture ministry officials said Saturday.

It's the first trove of artifacts identified from a sanctuary in the ancient Greek city of Paestum, which dates from the 5th century B.C. Paestum, famed for its three massive Doric-columned temples, is near the archaeological site of Pompeii, but farther down the Amalfi coast.

The small temple was first identified in 2019 along the ancient city walls but excavations were halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Italian Culture Ministry said in a statement.

Excavations yielded several small terracotta figurines in the first months of resuming work, the Ministry said. Archeologists found seven bull heads found around a temple altar as if placed there on the ground in a form of devotion.

A dolphin statuette found in the first trove of artifacts appears to be from the Avili family of ceramists whose presence had never before been documented in Paestum, the statement said.

Limited excavations began at the temples in the 1950s, and the ministry believes more treasures can be found in the area.

Ancient Romans controlled the city by around 275 B.C., renaming it Paestum from the Greek "Poseidonia," in what had before been Magna Graecia.

Resort famous for Elvis' 'Blue Hawaii' movie will be rebuilt

HONOLULU (AP) — Demolition will soon begin on a resort once favored by Elvis Presley and other Hollywood royalty before it was heavily damaged by a hurricane three decades ago.

The Coco Palms Resort on the island of Kauai will be torn down for a new 350-room hotel, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported.

The resort is best known in movie lore as the location where Presley and Joan Blackman's characters married in the 1961 movie "Blue Hawaii."

It's also the site of other key scenes in the movie, including the last where Presley sings the "Hawaiian Wedding Song" and holds Blackman's hand while they board a raft to cross a lagoon.

In its heyday, it was famed for being frequented by other Hollywood stars like Frank Sinatra, Rita Hayworth and Bing Crosby.

The 46-acre (19-hectare) grounds were also once home to Kauai's last queen, Deborah Kapule, who died in 1853.

The resort opened in 1953 next to a historic coconut grove and an ancient Hawaiian fishpond. The property fell into disrepair after being damaged when the powerful Hurricane Iniki hit the island in 1992.

Several attempts to restore the property have failed over the years.

The \$250 million project will take three years to complete, said Patrick Manning, a managing partner of Reef Capital Partners from Utah.

Reef Capital served as the lender to a previous developer and took over the property in 2018 when they defaulted on a loan. Manning said the plan was to sell the property, but that changed after he investigated its history.

"I called my partners, and I said, 'This property is too important to sell,'" Manning said.

The new hotel and a cultural center to honor the property's history will be built on about 10 acres (4

hectares) of the property.

At one time, the community wanted the resort rebuilt, but those sentiments have changed, said Kauai Council Chairman Mel Rapozo. "They don't want to see a resort built," he added.

At a state Board of Land and Natural Resources meeting Friday, some spoke in opposition to the development, citing a number of ancestral bones buried on the property.

Cultural practitioner Joseph Kekaulike Kamai said his great-grandmother is buried there, and others are buried under the hotel, driveway and tennis courts.

"I really don't want them to be digging anymore. I don't want them grubbing our land," Kamai said.

Manning said something needs to be done or the site will be an eyesore for another 30 years.

"Even though we know there are many that don't want it rebuilt, we intend to be viewed and earn a reputation for doing everything we can to honor its past and respect the people of Kauai and guests of Kauai and how we manage its future," Manning said.

G-7 talks may measure allies' reaction to US documents leak

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

HANOI (AP) — While the Biden administration sees minimal damage from the disclosure of highly classified documents related to the war in Ukraine and U.S. views of its allies and partners, that assessment will get its first real test when U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets in Japan with counterparts from six of America's closest foreign friends.

The three days of talks between the Group of Seven foreign ministers, which begin Sunday, may shed light on whether the disclosure has harmed trust between the allies or is only the latest embarrassment for the U.S., which has been grappling with the fallout from leaks of highly sensitive secrets over the past decade.

Blinken said Saturday he had heard no concerns from allies, but the revelations, and the arrest of a relatively low-level suspect in the leaks, will loom over the G-7 meeting, the first major international diplomatic conference since the documents were discovered online and made public.

"We have engaged with our allies and partners since these leaks came out, and we have done so at high levels, and we have made clear our commitment to safeguarding intelligence and our commitment to our security partnerships," Blinken told reporters in Hanoi before leaving for Japan.

"What I've heard so far at least is an appreciation for the steps that we're taking, and it's not affected our cooperation," he said. "I just haven't seen that, I haven't heard that. And, of course, the investigation is taking its course."

That argument may be wishful thinking, especially as the world digests what is being revealed almost daily with new revelations.

Apart from military analyses of Ukraine's capabilities and Russian losses, the leaked documents also reveal assessments of the defense capabilities of Taiwan and internal arguments in Britain, Egypt, Israel, South Korea and Japan.

"There's now, as you know, a suspect in custody, but importantly as well, I know, measures being taken to further safeguard information," Blinken said. "But to date, based on the conversations I've had, I have not heard anything that would affect our cooperation with allies and partners."

Yet the U.S. has had similar problems before, most notably when then-Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton was forced to apologize for numerous embarrassing revelations in leaks of U.S. diplomatic cables by Wikileaks in 2010.

Clinton, in particular, said she had been forced to explain the U.S. position on Argentina, Israel, Italy and other allies in the aftermath of the Wikileaks drop.

On Friday, the man accused in the latest leak, Massachusetts Air National Guardsman Jack Teixeira, 21, appeared in court as prosecutors unsealed charges and revealed how billing records and interviews with social media comrades helped pinpoint the suspect.

The classified documents Teixeira is alleged to have posted on an online social gaming platform have

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not been individually authenticated in public by U.S. officials. But they appear authentic in the main.

Those documents range from briefing slides mapping out Ukrainian military positions to assessments of international support for Ukraine and other sensitive topics, including under what circumstances Russian President Vladimir Putin might use nuclear weapons.

Classified documents have strict guidelines on how they must be handled, secured and destroyed. They are required to be kept in secure facilities, protocols Teixeira would have violated if copies were taken to his house.

Regardless of the legal implications for Teixeira and the findings of the internal administration investigation, Blinken and top aides are not likely to escape questioning about the leaks, which are at least the fourth from U.S. sources since 2010.

The 2010 Wikileaks release involved 251,287 State Department cables, written by 271 American embassies and consulates in 180 countries and were dated December 1966 to February 2010. The cables were passed by Assange to his three media partners, plus El País and others, and published in stages from Nov. 28, 2010, with the names of sources removed.

WikiLeaks said it was the largest set of confidential documents ever to be released into the public domain.

More than 100 arrested as activists delay Grand National

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

The Grand National, one of the world's most famous horse races, was delayed Saturday after animal rights activists scaled fences around the perimeter of Aintree racecourse and got onto the track.

A total of 118 people were arrested on suspicion of criminal damage and public nuisance offenses in a bid to disrupt the race, Merseyside Police said.

Many activists from an estimated group of 300 climbed the high fences around the racecourse just outside Liverpool and got onto the track a few minutes before the race was scheduled to start. Some affixed themselves to the race fences using glue and lock-on devices, according to the Animal Rising organization, before being taken away by police and security officials.

Police and security officials were seen stopping other activists by shaking the perimeter fences to prevent them being climbed. Local residents were seen helping security keep activists away from the course.

The race was delayed as a result and the 39 competing horses were kept in the parade ring. It was originally scheduled to begin at 5:15 p.m. local time (1615 GMT) and ended up starting around 15 minutes later.

The day started with three people arrested in connection with a plan by the activists to disrupt the race. All three were arrested on "suspicion of conspiracy to cause public nuisance," police said. Their names were not disclosed.

"We respect the right to peaceful protest and expression of views," Merseyside Police said, "but criminal behavior and disorder will not be tolerated and will be dealt with robustly."

Animal Rising had called on protesters to gather outside the racecourse to demand an end to "animal cruelty for entertainment." The group tweeted a video that it said shows one of its spokespeople being arrested at the protest.

Police said they have been working with race organizers ahead of and during the Grand National Festival, which started Thursday.

Animal Rising activist Alex Lockwood this week told British radio station talkSPORT that they planned to disrupt the Grand National, arguing that standing outside and handing out fliers "never stopped anything."

Further inflaming matters was the news that two horses — Dark Raven and Hill Sixteen — died in races at Aintree on Saturday. Hill Sixteen was in the field for the Grand National and died after sustaining an "unrecoverable injury," organizers said.

On Thursday, another horse — Envoye Special — suffered a fatal injury in the Foxhunters' Chase, which is run over the fences used for the Grand National.

"This horrific 'sport' continues to take lives right in front of our eyes. It's time to BAN this horrific industry," Animal Rising wrote Saturday.

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The Grand National is among the biggest occasions on the British sporting calendar and is regarded as one of the most dangerous horse races in the world because of the size of the fences.

Changes were made in 2012 to make the course safer, including softening some of the fences, after two horses died in the Grand National that year and in 2011.

There have been four fatalities from 356 runners in the nine Grand Nationals since. Four horses died at the Aintree festival last year, including two who were injured in the Grand National.

AP sports: <https://apnews.com/hub/sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Trump raised \$34M so far in 2023, including indictment bump

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Former President Donald Trump has raised more than \$34 million for his 2024 White House run since the start of the year, buoyed by a big bump in donations since the announcement of criminal charges against him in New York, according to his campaign. His total after the March 30 indictment approached what he took in over the previous three months.

Trump's latest fundraising report due to be filed Saturday with the Federal Election Commission will show he raised more than \$18.8 million between his main campaign account and a joint fundraising account over the the first three months of the year, the campaign said.

Of that total for the Jan. 1-March 31 period, \$4 million came in after Trump was indicted March 30 by a grand jury in Manhattan on charges related to a hush money case stemming from the 2016 election.

The fundraising numbers were first reported by Politico.

Trump began raising money off the news of his indictment, and his campaign said he took in \$15.4 million since the announcement of charges and Saturday's filing deadline for the fundraising report.

Trump, who is also facing several other criminal investigations, has tried to use his legal troubles to galvanize supporters, claiming all the cases are politically motivated. He has portrayed the New York charges as "election interference" but also suggested they may help him win support.

Trump has dominated the GOP field in the early stages of the 2024 presidential race. But many high-dollar GOP donors have been looking to send their support elsewhere this time. Until his indictment, his campaign fundraising had lagged behind the massive amounts he used to raise in days or in hours when he was president.

Only a few candidates have officially entered the race, Trump's U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley, a former South Carolina governor; former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, who announced days after Trump's indictment was filed; and tech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy.

More candidates, including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, are expected to enter the race by the time next fundraising reports are due in mid-July.

Christian faithful celebrate 'Holy Fire' under restrictions

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Christian worshippers thronged the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem on Saturday to celebrate the ceremony of the "Holy Fire," an ancient ritual that sparked tensions this year with the Israeli police.

In the annual ceremony that has been observed for over a millennium, a flame taken from Jesus' tomb is used to light the candles of fervent believers in Greek Orthodox communities near and far. The devout believe the origin of the flame is a miracle and is shrouded in mystery.

On Saturday, after hours of frantic anticipation, a priest reached inside the dim tomb and ignited his candle. Each neighbor passed the light to another and, little by little, the darkened church was irradiated by tiny patches of light, which eventually illuminated the whole building.

Bells rang out. "Christ is risen!" the multilingual worshippers shouted. "He is risen indeed!"

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Many trying to get to the church — built on the site where Christian tradition holds that Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected — were thrilled to mark the rite of the Orthodox Easter week in Jerusalem. But for the second consecutive year, Israel's strict limits on event capacity dimmed some of the exuberance.

"It is sad for me that I cannot get to the church, where my heart, my faith, wants me to be," said 44-year-old Jelena Novakovic from Montenegro, who, like thousands of others, was trapped behind metal barricades that sealed off alleys leading to the Christian Quarter in Jerusalem's walled Old City.

In some cases, the pushing and shoving escalated into violence. Footage showed Israeli police dragging and beating several worshippers, thrusting a Coptic Priest against the stone wall and tackling one woman to the ground. At least one older man was whisked, bleeding, into an ambulance.

Israel has capped the ritual to just 1,800 people. The Israeli police say they must be strict because they're responsible for maintaining public safety. In 1834, a stampede at the event claimed hundreds of lives. Two years ago, a crush at a packed Jewish holy site in the country's north killed 45 people. Authorities say they're determined to prevent a repeat of the tragedy.

But Jerusalem's minority Christians — mired in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and caught between Jews and Muslims — fear Israel is using the extra security measures to alter their status in the Old City, providing access to Jews while limiting the number of Christian worshippers.

The Greek Orthodox patriarchate has lambasted the restrictions as a hindrance of religious freedom and called on all worshippers to flood the church despite Israeli warnings.

As early as 8 a.m., Israeli police were turning back most worshippers from the gates of the Old City — including tourists who flew from Europe and Palestinian Christians who traveled from across the occupied West Bank — directing them to an overflow area with a livestream.

Angry pilgrims and clergy jostled to get through while police struggled to hold them back, allowing only a trickle of ticketed visitors and local residents inside. Over 2,000 police officers swarmed the stone ramparts.

Ana Dumitrei, a Romanian pilgrim surrounded by police outside the Old City, said she came to pay tribute to her late mother, whose experience witnessing the holy fire in 1987 long inspired her.

"I wanted to tell my family, my children, that I was here as my mom was," she said, straining over the crowds to assess whether she had a chance.

After the ceremony, Palestinian Christians carried the fire through the streets and lit the tapers of the worshippers waiting outside. Chartered planes will ferry the flickering lanterns to Russia, Greece and beyond with great fanfare.

The dispute over the church capacity comes as Christians in the Holy Land — including the head of the Roman Catholic church in the region as well as local Palestinians and Armenians — say that Israel's most right-wing government in history has empowered Jewish extremists who have escalated their vandalism of religious property and harassment of clergy. Israel says it's committed to ensuring freedom of worship for Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Friction over the Orthodox Easter ritual has been fueled in part by a rare convergence of holidays in Jerusalem's bustling Old City. A few hundred meters away from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Muslims fasting for the 24th day of the holy month of Ramadan were gathering for midday prayers at the Al-Aqsa mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam. Earlier this week, tens of thousands of Jews flocked to the Western Wall during the Passover holiday.

Tensions surged last week, when an Israeli police raid on the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, Jerusalem's most sensitive site, ignited Muslim outrage around the world. The mosque is the third holiest site of Islam. It stands on a hilltop that is the holiest site for Jews, who revere it as the Temple Mount.

Israel captured the Old City, along with the rest of the city's eastern half, in the 1967 Mideast war and later annexed it in a move not internationally recognized. Palestinians claim east Jerusalem as the capital of their hoped-for state.

In its limestone passageways Saturday, Christians pushed back by police were trying to cope with their disappointment. Cristina Maria, a 35-year-old who traveled from Romania to see the light kindled from the holy fire, said there was some consolation in the thought that the flame was symbolic, anyway.

"It's the light of Christ," she said, standing between an ice cream parlor and a dumpster in the Old City.

"We can see it from here, there, anywhere."

NATO member Finland breaks ground on Russia border fence

By KOSTYA MANENKOV and SERGEI GRITS Associated Press

IMATRA, Finland (AP) — The construction of barbed-wired fence along Finland's long border with Russia - primarily meant to curb illegal migration - has broken ground near the southeastern town of Imatra less than two weeks after the Nordic country joined NATO as the 31st member of the military alliance.

The Finnish Border Guard on Friday showcased the building of the initial three kilometer (1.8 mile) stretch of the fence to be erected in Pelkola near a crossing point off Imatra, a quiet lakeside town of some 25,000 people.

Finland's 1,340 kilometer (832 mile) border with Russia is the longest of any European Union member.

Construction of the border fence is an initiative by the border guard that was approved by Prime Minister Sanna Marin's government amid wide political support last year. The main purpose of the three-meter (10-foot) high steel fence with a barbed-wire extension on top is to prevent illegal immigration from Russia and give reaction time to authorities, Finnish border officials say.

In 2015-2016, Moscow attempted to influence Finland by organizing large numbers of asylum-seekers to northern Finnish crossing points in the Arctic Lapland region. Russian authorities were seen deliberately ushering thousands of asylum-seekers - mostly from Iraq, Afghanistan and other Middle East nations - to those border crossing points.

The move was seen as a show of muscle by Moscow. The issue was settled when Finnish President Sauli Niinistö held talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The flow of migrants stopped shortly thereafter.

This is a scenario that Finland - a nation 5.5 million people that officially became a NATO member on April 4 - wants to prevent from repeating itself.

Border officials are quick to acknowledge, however, that it was Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 last year - the main reason for Finland's quick push to join NATO after decades of military nonalignment - that prompted construction of the border fence.

"Border barrier fence was no kind of political topic before the war (in Ukraine). And actually, it wasn't a kind of plan of the Finnish border guard," Brig. Gen. Jari Tolppanen, head of the technical division at the Finnish Border Guard, told The Associated Press. "All changed after the attack (of Russia against Ukraine)."

The pilot section of the fence is scheduled to be completed by this summer, while the barrier will eventually be extended to a maximum of 200 kilometers (124 miles). It will cover areas - in bits and pieces of separate length - mainly in southeastern Finland near the main border crossing points with Russia but it will also have sections up in the Arctic north in Lapland.

"In this new situation, we must have much more credible and much more independent border control," Tolppanen said. "We need to strengthen our resources. And the fence is necessary in order to manage, for example, large-scale illegal immigration."

Imatra is located a mere seven kilometers (4.4 miles) off the Russian industrial town of Svetogorsk in the Karelia region and is a few hours' drive away from Russia's second city of St. Petersburg. The town has a long history in dealing with Russians - tourists, day-trippers and permanent residents alike.

"Here in Imatra, we're not so afraid about Russians because the border has always been there and it has never been open like between European countries," said Antero Lattu, vice chairman of Imatra City Council. He stressed that locals aren't afraid of Russians "but we're happy because of that fence."

Erkki Jouhki, who works as a town planner, agreed but also stressed Finland's military capabilities. NATO membership gives Finland "a strong back but we have a very strong army. it's very well (armed) ... it's a very modern army here because of Russia."

The border fence project is estimated to cost a total of 380 million euros (\$422 million) and is scheduled to be completed by 2026.

Finland's long eastern frontier runs mainly through thick forests. In some places the Finnish-Russian border is marked only by wooden posts with low fences meant to stop stray cattle.

Jari Tanner in Helsinki contributed to this article.

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

What to know about 1st test flight of SpaceX's big Starship

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

Elon Musk's SpaceX is about to take its most daring leap yet with a round-the-world test flight of its mammoth Starship.

It's the biggest and mightiest rocket ever built, with the lofty goals of ferrying people to the moon and Mars.

Jutting almost 400 feet (120 meters) into the South Texas sky, Starship could blast off as early as Monday, with no one aboard. Musk's company got the OK from the Federal Aviation Administration on Friday.

It will be the first launch with Starship's two sections together. Early versions of the sci-fi-looking upper stage rocketed several miles into the stratosphere a few years back, crashing four times before finally landing upright in 2021. The towering first-stage rocket booster, dubbed Super Heavy, will soar for the first time.

For this demo, SpaceX won't attempt any landings of the rocket or the spacecraft. Everything will fall into the sea.

"I'm not saying it will get to orbit, but I am guaranteeing excitement. It won't be boring," Musk promised at a Morgan Stanley conference last month. "I think it's got, I don't know, hopefully about a 50% chance of reaching orbit."

Here's the rundown on Starship's debut:

SUPERSIZE ROCKET

The stainless steel Starship has 33 main engines and 16.7 million pounds of thrust. All but two of the methane-fueled, first-stage engines ignited during a launch pad test in January — good enough to reach orbit, Musk noted. Given its muscle, Starship could lift as much as 250 tons and accommodate 100 people on a trip to Mars. The six-engine spacecraft accounts for 164 feet (50 meters) of its height. Musk anticipates using Starship to launch satellites into low-Earth orbit, including his own Starlinks for internet service, before strapping anyone in. Starship easily eclipses NASA's moon rockets — the Saturn V from the bygone Apollo era and the Space Launch System from the Artemis program that logged its first lunar trip late last year. It also outflanks the former Soviet Union's N1 moon rocket, which never made it past a minute into flight, exploding with no one aboard.

GAME PLAN

The test flight will last 1 1/2 hours, and fall short of a full orbit of Earth. If Starship reaches the three-minute mark after launch, the booster will be commanded to separate and fall into the Gulf of Mexico. The spacecraft would continue eastward, passing over the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans before ditching near Hawaii. Starship is designed to be fully reusable but nothing will be saved from the test flight. Harvard astrophysicist and spacecraft tracker Jonathan McDowell will be more excited whenever Starship actually lands and returns intact from orbit. It will be "a profound development in spaceflight if and when Starship is debugged and operational," he said.

LAUNCH PAD

Starship will take off from a remote site on the southernmost tip of Texas near Boca Chica Beach. It's just below South Padre Island, and about 20 miles from Brownsville. Down the road from the launch pad is the complex where SpaceX has been developing and building Starship prototypes for the past several years. The complex, called Starbase, has more than 1,800 employees, who live in Brownsville or elsewhere in the Rio Grande Valley. The Texas launch pad is equipped with giant robotic arms — called chopsticks — to eventually grab a returning booster as it lands. SpaceX is retooling one of its two Florida launch pads to accommodate Starships down the road. Florida is where SpaceX's Falcon rockets blast off with crew, space station cargo and satellites for NASA and other customers.

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THE ODDS

As usual, Musk is remarkably blunt about his chances, giving even odds, at best, that Starship will reach orbit on its first flight. But with a fleet of Starships under construction at Starbase, he estimates an 80% chance that one of them will attain orbit by year's end. He expects it will take a couple years to achieve full and rapid reusability.

CUSTOMERS

With Starship, the California-based SpaceX is focusing on the moon for now, with a \$3 billion NASA contract to land astronauts on the lunar surface as early as 2025, using the upper stage spacecraft. It will be the first moon landing by astronauts in more than 50 years. The moonwalkers will leave Earth via NASA's Orion capsule and Space Launch System rocket, and then transfer to Starship in lunar orbit for the descent to the surface, and then back to Orion. To reach the moon and beyond, Starship will first need to refuel in low-Earth orbit. SpaceX envisions an orbiting depot with window-less Starships as tankers. But Starship isn't just for NASA. A private crew will be the first to fly Starship, orbiting Earth. Two private flights to the moon would follow — no landings, just flyarounds.

OTHER PLAYERS

There are other new rockets on the horizon. Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin is readying the New Glenn rocket for its orbital debut from Cape Canaveral, Florida, in the next year or so. Named after the first American to orbit the world, John Glenn, the rocket towers over the company's current New Shepard rocket, named for Mercury astronaut Alan Shepard's 1961 suborbital hop. NASA will use New Glenn to send a pair of spacecraft to Mars in 2024. United Launch Alliance expects its new Vulcan rocket to make its inaugural launch later this year, hoisting a private lunar lander to the moon at NASA's behest. Europe's Arianespace is close to launching its new, upgraded Ariane 6 rocket from French Guiana in South America. And NASA's Space Launch System moon rocket that will carry astronauts will morph into ever bigger versions. ____

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Ukraine awaits US missile system after latest Russian strike

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The death toll from Russian missile strikes on eastern Ukraine's city of Sloviansk rose to 11 Saturday as rescue crews tried to reach people trapped in the rubble of an apartment building, Ukrainian authorities said.

Ukraine's air force said the country would soon have weapons with which to try to prevent attacks like the one on Friday. The delivery of the Patriot air defense system promised by the U.S. was expected in Ukraine sometime after Easter, Ukrainian air force spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat said.

The primarily Orthodox Christian country is preparing to observe Easter on Sunday. Speaking Saturday on Ukrainian state TV, Ihnat declined to give a precise timeline for the arrival of the defensive missile system but said the public would know "as soon as the first Russian aircraft is shot down."

A group of 65 Ukrainian soldiers completed their training last month at Fort Sill, a U.S. Army post in Oklahoma, and returned to Europe to learn more about using the defensive missile system to track and shoot down enemy aircraft.

Officials said at the time that the Ukrainians would then go back to their country with a Patriot missile battery, which typically includes six mobile launchers, a mobile radar, a power generator and an engagement control center.

Germany and the Netherlands also have pledged to provide a Patriot system each to Ukraine. In addition, a SAMP/T anti-missile system pledged by France and Italy "should enter Ukraine in the near future," Ihnat said this week.

The Ukrainian military is looking to beef up its ability to intercept missiles as it prepares for an expected spring counter-offensive to retake Russian-occupied areas of the country. Although more than a year of fighting has depleted weapons supplies on both sides, Russian forces have intensified their 8 1/2-month campaign to seize the city of Bakhmut, the focus of the war's longest battle so far.

Bakhmut and Sloviansk are located about 45 kilometers (28 miles) apart in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk

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province.

Rescue teams in Sloviansk recovered the bodies of two people from under the rubble of a house hit in Friday's missile strikes, according to the State Emergency Service. They also searched Saturday for five people who remained in the wreckage of the apartment building, as well as the residents of three units who were reported missing, Vadym Liakh, the head of the local government, said.

Separately, a 48-year-old woman and her 28-year-old daughter died Saturday after Russian forces shelled a neighborhood of the city of Kherson, the regional administration said on Telegram. The southern port city was occupied by Russian forces in the early months of the war, but Ukrainian forces regained control of it in November, one of the most notable battlefield defeats for Moscow.

A new law signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday that allows military offices to send draft notices electronically instead of delivering them in person is part of Russia's preparation for a protracted war in Ukraine, the U.K. Defense Ministry said in a Saturday morning assessment.

According to British intelligence, a "unified registry of individuals eligible for military service" will be digitally linked to other government services, allowing Russian authorities to "punish draft-dodgers by automatically limiting employment rights and restricting foreign travel."

Since the law does not come into force until later in the year, the U.K. Defense Ministry said the e-notices do not automatically point to a "major new wave of enforced mobilization" but rather form part of a "longer-term approach to provide personnel as Russia anticipates a lengthy conflict in Ukraine."

Meanwhile, 52,000 young Russian men already have received draft orders as part of the country's regular spring call-up, and 21,000 of them qualified for military service, Col. Andrey Biryukov, who is in charge of mobilization, said Saturday.

Biryukov addressed concerns that the new electronic conscription law presaged a broader mobilization of reservists, like one Putin ordered in September.

"I'd like to stress that all army deferrals for citizens will still be valid. And e-draft orders will not be mailed in bulk," Biryukov said.

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

This version corrects the name of the U.S. Army post in Oklahoma to Fort Sill, not Fort Still.

Today in History: April 16, MLK writes from Birmingham jail

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, April 16, the 106th day of 2023. There are 259 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On April 16, 1945, a Soviet submarine in the Baltic Sea torpedoed and sank the MV Goya, which Germany was using to transport civilian refugees and wounded soldiers; it's estimated that up to 7,000 people died.

On this date: In 1789, President-elect George Washington left Mount Vernon, Virginia, for his inauguration in New York.

In 1889, comedian and movie director Charles Chaplin was born in London.

In 1945, In his first speech to Congress, President Harry S. Truman pledged to carry out the war and peace policies of his late predecessor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1947, the cargo ship Grandcamp, carrying ammonium nitrate, blew up in the harbor in Texas City, Texas; a nearby ship, the High Flyer, which was carrying ammonium nitrate and sulfur, caught fire and exploded the following day; the blasts and fires killed nearly 600 people.

In 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in which the civil rights activist responded to a group of local clergymen who had criticized him for leading street protests; King defended his tactics, writing, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

In 1972, Apollo 16 blasted off on a voyage to the moon with astronauts John W. Young, Charles M. Duke Jr. and Ken Mattingly on board.

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In 1977, Alex Haley, author of the best-seller "Roots," visited the Gambian village of Juffure, where, he believed, his ancestor Kunte Kinte was captured as a slave in 1767.

In 1996, Britain's Prince Andrew and his wife, Sarah, the Duchess of York, announced they were in the process of divorcing.

In 2003, Michael Jordan played his last NBA game with the Washington Wizards, who lost to the Philadelphia 76ers, 107-87.

In 2007, in one of America's worst school attacks, a college senior killed 32 people on the campus of Virginia Tech before taking his own life.

In 2010, the U.S government accused Wall Street's most powerful firm of fraud, saying Goldman Sachs & Co. had sold mortgage investments without telling buyers the securities were crafted with input from a client who was betting on them to fail. (In July 2010, Goldman agreed to pay \$550 million in a settlement with the Securities and Exchange Commission, but did not admit wrongdoing.)

In 2020, the Trump administration gutted an Obama-era rule that compelled the country's coal plants to cut back emissions of mercury and other human health hazards.

Ten years ago: Federal agents zeroed in on how the Boston Marathon bombing the day before was carried out — with kitchen pressure cookers packed with explosives, nails and other lethal shrapnel — but said they didn't know yet who had done it, or why. An envelope addressed to Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., tested positive for ricin (RY'-sin), a potentially fatal poison. (A Mississippi man later pleaded guilty to sending letters dusted with ricin to Wicker, President Barack Obama and a judge.) NFL player-turned-broadcaster Pat Summerall, 82, died in Dallas.

Five years ago: The New York Times and The New Yorker won the Pulitzer Prize for public service for breaking the Harvey Weinstein scandal with reporting that galvanized the #MeToo movement. Rap star Kendrick Lamar was awarded the Pulitzer for music, becoming the first non-classical or non-jazz artist to win the prize. American pastor Andrew Brunson went on trial in Turkey in a case that strained ties between that country and the United States; he denied accusations that he aided terror groups or spied against Turkey. (Brunson was convicted but sentenced to time served and was freed from house arrest in October to return to the United States.) Actor Harry Anderson, best known for playing an off-the-wall judge working the night shift of a Manhattan court room on the comedy series "Night Court," was found dead in his North Carolina home; he was 65.

One year ago: Russian forces accelerated scattered attacks on Kyiv, western Ukraine and beyond, a sign that the entire country was still under assault despite Russia's pivot toward mounting a new offensive in the east. Nine people were shot and wounded in a shooting at a shopping mall in Columbia, South Carolina. (Three suspects were arrested and charged with attempted murder and other crimes in the subsequent days.) Rosario Ibarra, whose long struggle to learn the fate of her disappeared son helped develop Mexico's human rights movement and led her to become the country's first female presidential candidate, died at age 95. Today's Birthdays: Singer Bobby Vinton is 88. Denmark's Queen Margrethe II is 83. Basketball Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is 76. Former Massachusetts first lady Ann Romney is 74. NFL coach Bill Belichick is 71. Rock singer (Midnight Oil) and former politician Peter Garrett is 70. Actor Ellen Barkin is 69. Actor Michel Gill is 63. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is 61. Rock musician Jason Scheff (Chicago) is 61. Singer Jimmy Osmond is 60. Rock singer David Pirner (Soul Asylum) is 59. Actor-comedian Martin Lawrence is 58. Actor Jon Cryer is 58. Actor Peter Billingsley is 52. Actor Lukas Haas is 47. Actor-singer Kelli O'Hara is 47. Actor Claire Foy (TV: "The Crown") is 39. Figure skater Mirai Nagasu is 30. Actor Sadie Sink is 21.