

Groton Daily Independent

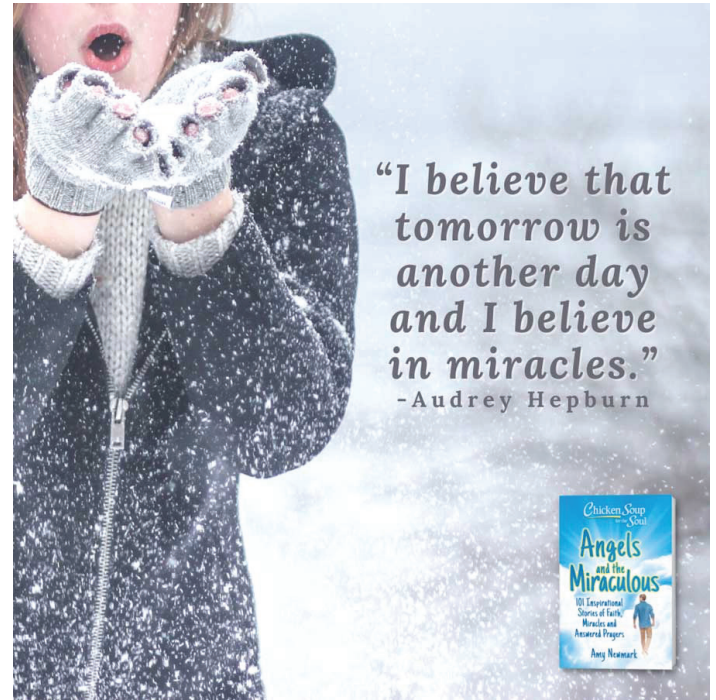
Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 1 of 80

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- World of Experience](#)
- [3- SubVarsity Games Available for sponsorship](#)
- [4- Kurtz, Kroll take second in the state talent division](#)
- [5- NSU Wrestling](#)
- [6- NSU Men's Basketball](#)
- [7- NSU Women's Basketball](#)
- [7- GHS Girls' Wrestling](#)
- [8- GHS Boys' Wrestling](#)
- [10- GHS Boys' Junior Varsity Wrestling](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: Does South Dakota have too many universities?](#)
- [13- SD SearchLight: December jobs report: Wages up, hiring steady as job market ends year strong](#)
- [16- Sunday Extras](#)
- [34- Gov. Noem's Weekly Column](#)
- [35- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column](#)
- [36- Rep. Johnson's Weekly Column](#)
- [37- Rev. Snyder's Column](#)
- [39- EarthTalk - Solar Roadways](#)
- [40- Weather Pages](#)
- [45- Daily Devotional](#)
- [46- Subscription Form](#)
- [47- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [48- News from the Associated Press](#)

Sunday, Jan. 7

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Mass, 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.; St. Joseph, Turton, Mass, 6 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.
United Methodist: Worship with communion: (Conde at 8:30 a.m., Groton at 10:30 a.m.), Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's at 9 a.m. and at Zion at 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.

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



Monday, Jan. 8

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes and gravy, glazed carrots, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Cheese omelets.
School Lunch: Chicken patty, potato wedges.
JV/JH Wrestling at Groton Area, 5 p.m.
Groton Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.
Pantry Open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
United Methodist: PEOPLE Meeting (Outside Group), 7 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 9

Senior Menu: Ham rotini bake, mixed Monterey blend peas, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Biscuits.
School Lunch: Meatballs, mashed potatoes.
Thrift Store open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Food Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Church Council, 6 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2024 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 2 of 80



Nothing!

Technology is always a challenge. I have experienced difficulties and I have seen other people experience difficulties. I don't take pride in seeing someone else having problems as I have my share of them as well.

We have been having issues with the camera we take on the away games with the focus not working correctly. I decided to buy a new camera and then send the other in for repair. I got the new camera and of course, rule number one, is to make sure it works properly with the equipment I have. After a short experiment, the new camera was working wonderfully with our YoloBox. The YoloBox is the encoder that takes the input of audio and video, encodes it, and then sends it over the internet to the cloud so you can view it.

It was time to put it all in practice at the Warner double header. We got it all set up and it was working fine for the girls junior varsity game - well, until about halftime. Jeslyn tapped me on the shoulder and showed me the YoloBox video had frozen. I tried every trick in the book to get the video back. It would not work. By now, I'm getting text messages about us being off the air - but my main focus was on the camera, trying to get it to work. I tried different cables. I went out to the car to bring in more cables. Nothing. I reset the camera to factory default. Nothing. I tried every setting possible on the camera. Nothing. I restarted the YoloBox. Nothing. You see a trend here? By now, my stress level was elevated.

I did search on-line for possible solutions. I came across a site called JustAnswer. I tried them. Of course, it was not free, but I was virtually willing to pay any price to get back on the air. They said they had a four minute wait time. Not bad, I can wait for that. By now, the boys junior varsity game was starting. More than four minutes had passed. Nothing.

Tired of waiting, I tried to call Canon support directly. Do you think I could find a phone number for them? It was impossible. Nothing on the website. Nothing under support. I searched for a phone number and the link just took me back to their website. Nothing. I tried a different wording in my search and saw a phone number pop up in the search. I called it. I actually got a real human being. Maybe things will finally turn around.

I talked with the guy. Told him what I had all done. He was puzzled as well. There was nothing coming out of the HDMI video output. Nothing.

Then I remembered a USB output on the camera. This was something new on the camera. I asked how that worked. He said it would output the video but not the audio. I knew if I could get the video input into the YoloBox, I could rig something up for the audio. The guy wasn't sure if it was going to work. Of course, having the right cable to do it was important. It then dawned on me that the power supply for the YoloBox would work. I plugged it into the camera and into the YoloBox. Nothing. I asked the guy on the phone that somewhere on the camera settings I seen something about USB output. He directed me to the location, made a change. I looked at the YoloBox - YES! THERE WAS VIDEO!!!

I thanked the guy for his help. We would have to trouble shoot the HDMI output another time. It was getting halftime of the boys junior varsity game. Now that I had video, I had to rig up some cables to get the audio going. That was actually the easy part. We now had video and audio. We went back on-line and it was working.

Well, nothing everything was well. You remember when I said I used the power supply cord for the YoloBox to reroute the video. Now we had a new problem. The YoloBox was not going to have enough power to last through the rest of the games. I needed a power supply cable - USBC to USB. I asked around if anyone had one. Nothing.

Then I realized something. The new camera's power supply was a USBC cable. Great! I plugged it into the YoloBox. But the camera only had an hour and half left of power supply. The YoloBox was at 64 percent. Time was not on my side.

So I would take the single power supply cable and switch it between the camera and YoloBox to help

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 3 of 80

keep them going. It worked. By the end of the night, the camera had 15 minutes of life left and the YoloBox was at 15 percent. That was cutting it way too close.

So we survived the night. Both varsity games were broadcast without issue with our modified setup.

The next day, I took the camera and hooked it up to the TV to see if it would work. That was the first thing I would need to do before calling support. Much to my surprise, there was video.

Then I hooked the camera up to the YoloBox. Much to my surprise, there was video. What? Really? Why? I shouldn't be complaining, but really!

Well, on our way to Willow Lake, I took an extra USBC power supply cable and adapter along just in case. We tried the HDMI output at Willow Lake and it worked just fine. I have no clue why it worked, but I had my emergency Plan B in place just in case it would die. It never did. It worked just fine for the whole night.

Meanwhile, at Willow Lake, the IT guy there was making several trips up to our area where they had their equipment. We had hooked into their internet switch. During a break I asked him what was wrong. He said they had no internet and that I was not on either. I looked at our YoloBox, but it said we were transmitting. We looked at the switch box and there was no light. How was that possible? Then I realized the YoloBox had switched to the cellular mode when the ethernet connection was down. Tyler, the IT guy, was bringing in tools, cables, a new switch, crawled under the bleachers to work on the internet connections down there - and he just had rotary cuff surgery on top of it all. He finally got the connection going by about near the end of the C game. I switched to their internet for the junior varsity game and it worked.

I had sent in the old camera for repair - I had an estimate of \$500. They got the camera and sent me the estimate for repair - try \$800. Ouch. But it's still half price of a new one. Oh yeah, remember that JustAnswer that I gave up on - they charged me \$47. I will say they finally did reach out to me, but I was already on Canon's support line.

Once I get the camera back from repair, that one is going to the Arena to replace that camera. That camera has a tendency to zoom out on its own. Plus the camera does not charge the battery. It needs to go bye-bye.

GDILIVE.COM

G Groton Area
Tigers
GT

**Text Paul at
605-397-7460**

Any interest in any of
these basketball games on
GDILIVE.COM?
They are \$25 each.

Tiospa Zina Girls JV
Tiospa Zina Boys JV
Dakota Valley Boys C
Dakota Valley Boys JV
Dakota Valley Girls JV
Milbank Girls JV
Milbank Boys JV
Great Plains Lutheran Girls C
Great Plains Lutheran Girls JV
Northwestern Girls JV
Webster Boys C
Webster Boys JV
Webster Girls JV
Florence/Henry Girls JV
Deuel Girls JV
Deuel Boys JV
Vermillion Boys JV



Kurtz, Kroll take second in the state talent division

Camryn Kurtz and Gavin Kroll placed second in the Senior Talent Division Saturday night at the South Dakota Junior Snow Queen Competition. They are pictured with their instructor, Desiree Yeigh. They get to perform next weekend at Senior Snow Queen. (Photo from Yeigh's Facebook Page)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 5 of 80

NSU Wrestling

No. 18 Wolves Go 1-1 against Ranked Opponents from NWCA Duals

Cedar Falls, Iowa – The No. 18 Northern State University wrestling team capped off their NWCA National Duals the way they opened them with an upset victory over No. 1 West Liberty. Northern kicked off the day with a close 3-point loss to No. 5 Lake Erie College but rallied back for a 36-13 victory over the Hilltoppers. The Wolves close out the weekend with a 2-3 record against some of the top competition in the country.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 16, LEC 19

Records: NSU 4-6, LEC 5-2

Final Score: NSU 36, WLU 13

Records: NSU 5-6, WL 8-6

HOW IT HAPPENED | #5 LAKE ERIE

Lake Erie opened the dual with a decision victory, however Teagan Block quickly tied the dual with a win over 11th ranked Ryan Wehner

Block tallied a 4-2 decision win

The Storm tallied back-to-back wins in the next two weights, taking a 9-3 lead over the Wolves

No. 5 Devin Bahr continued his solid weekend of competition defeating Austin Fietz in a 9-1 major decision
LEC added two more victories, a decision and major, before Mason Fey tallied his second pin of the weekend at 3:37 against Jordan Barnett

With the Storm up 16-13 heading into the final two weights, Lake Erie added a tie-breaker win at 197 and the dual was left in the hands of Nathan Schauer

The junior tallied a decision win over Dylan Norris, but was unable to tie the dual at 19

FINAL RESULTS | #5 LAKE ERIE

Weight	Summary	LEC	NSU
125	Anthony Sagaris (Lake Erie) over Landen Fischer (Northern State) Dec 11-7	3.0	0
133	Teagan Block (Northern State) over #11 Ryan Wehner (Lake Erie) Dec 4-2	0	3.0
141	Carsen Richards (Lake Erie) over Braydon Mogle (Northern State) Dec 8-7	3.0	0
149	#4 Christian Small (Lake Erie) over #1 Wyatt Turnquist (Northern State) Dec 10-6	3.0	0
157	#5 Devin Bahr (Northern State) over Austin Fietz (Lake Erie) Maj 9-1	0	4.0
165	Josh Howey (Lake Erie) over Chase Bloomquist (Northern State) Dec 8-3	3.0	0
174	James Penfold (Lake Erie) over Tyler Voorhees (Northern State) Maj 16-4	4.0	0
184	Mason Fey (Northern State) over Jordan Barnett (Lake Erie) Fall 3:37	0	6.0
197	Brylan Clouse (Lake Erie) over Ryan Hirschhorn (Northern State) TB-1 3-2	3.0	0
285	Nathan Schauer (Northern State) over Dylan Norris (Lake Erie) Dec 4-1	0	3.0
Dual Meet Score		19.0	16.0

HOW IT HAPPENED | #1 WEST LIBERTY

Brenden Salfrank hit the mat to open the dual for the Wolves and opened with a bang, pinning Alexander Crane at 1:24

Teagan Block and Braydon Mogle kept the wins rolling, giving Northern a 14-0 lead through the first three weights

Block defeated Matt Englehardt by decision (8-2) and Mogle downed Chris Barthelemy by technical fall (16-1)

After a loss at 149 pounds, Cael Larson added six points to the win column defeating Jordan Watters by fall at 3:46

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 6 of 80

The Hilltoppers added a second major decision at 165, however Fey quickly responded with his third fall of the weekend, pinning Fabian Chavez at 4:58

West Liberty added their final win of the dual at 184 pounds and Northern closed out the competition with a forfeit win by Ryan Hirschorn and 11-1 major decision by Ayden Viox over Jamie Kilmer

FINAL RESULTS | #1 WEST LIBERTY

Weight Summary	WLU	NSU
125 Brenden Salfrank (Northern State) over Alexander Crane (West Liberty) Fall 1:24	0	6.0
133 Teagan Block (Northern State) over Matt Englehardt (West Liberty) Dec 8-2	0	3.0
141 Braydon Mogle (Northern State) over Chris Barthelemy (West Liberty) TF 16-1	0	5.0
149 #5 Nico Taddy (West Liberty) over Carter Ban (Northern State) Maj 8-0	4.0	0
157 Cael Larson (Northern State) over Jordan Watters (West Liberty) Fall 3:46	0	6.0
165 #10 Alec Cook (West Liberty) over Spencer Roth (Northern State) Maj 14-2	4.0	0
174 Mason Fey (Northern State) over Fabian Chavez (West Liberty) Fall 4:58	0	6.0
184 #1 Ty McGeary (West Liberty) over Tyler Voorhees (Northern State) TF 16-1	5.0	0
197 Ryan Hirschorn (Northern State) over Unknown (Unattached) Forf	0	6.0
285 Ayden Viox (Northern State) over Jamie Kilmer (West Liberty) Maj 11-1	0	4.0
Dual Meet Score	13.0	36.0

UP NEXT

Northern returns to NSIC dual action next Thursday, January 11 on the road at MSU Moorhead. The Wolves and Dragons will face off at 7 p.m. from Nemzek Hall.

NSU Men's Basketball

Late Spark Pushes Northern State Past Winona State

Winona, Minn. – Josh Dilling sealed the Northern State University men's basketball victory over Winona State on Saturday afternoon with a jumper in the lane. Three Wolves scored in double figures and the team hit a combined 13 from beyond the arc in the win.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 77, WSU 75

Records: NSU 6-8 (4-4 NSIC), WSU 9-5 (4-4 NSIC)

Attendance: N/A

HOW IT HAPPENED

The Wolves and Warriors were tied at 37 at the half and Winona State held a lead for over half of the second

Augustin Reede grabbed a fastbreak 3-pointer at 6:31 giving Northern their first lead of the second half Northern shot 45.8% from the floor, 44.9% from the 3-point line, and 83.3% from the foul line in the win Defensively they held Winona State who shot 37.0% from the floor and 24.1% from the 3-point line

They scored 28 points in the paint, 11 points off turnovers, and ten fastbreak points, adding 34 rebounds, 11 assists, four blocks, and three steals

Dilling led the team with 25 points, followed by Reede with 23 and a team leading seven made 3-pointers

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Josh Dilling: 25 points, 66.7 field goal%, 5 assists, 4 rebounds

Augustin Reede: 23 points (season high), 50.0 field goal%, 58.3 3-pt field goal%, 3 rebounds

Jackson Moni: 14 points, 8 rebounds, 4 assists, 4 blocks

UP NEXT

Northern returns to Wachs Arena for a 4-game home stand starting next weekend. The Wolves will match-up against Wayne State at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, January 12 and Augustana at 4 p.m. on Saturday, January 13. For full game promotions visit nsuwolves.com/promotions.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 7 of 80

NSU Women's Basketball

Traphagen has perfect shooting night as Wolves run away with win over Warriors

Winona, Minn. – Madelyn Bragg grabbed her second double double of the year in the win over Winona State, 85-58. The Wolves notched their largest margin of victory this season at 27 points.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 85, WSU 58

Records: NSU 10-4 (6-2 NSIC), WSU 4-8 (3-4 NSIC)

Attendance: 1069

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern State notched 18 points in the first quarter, 25 in the second, 23 in the third, and 19 in the fourth. The Wolves shot well in the contest shooting 52.5 % from the floor, 54.2 % from beyond the 3-point line, and 88.9 % from the foul line.

NSU tallied 37 points off the bench for a season high along with 34 points in the paint and 47 rebounds.

Madelyn Bragg notched her second double double of the season with 18 points and 13 rebounds.

Abbey Holmes and Rianna Fillipi both tallied double digits in points with 11 and ten points respectively, with Holmes notching a career high.

Gracie Traphagen drained three shots from the 3-point arc along with three shots from the floor to shoot perfect.

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Madelyn Bragg: 18 points, 13 rebounds, 2 assists

Abby Holmes: 11 points (career high), 60.0 3-point %, 6 rebounds

Rianna Fillipi: 10 points, 6 rebounds, 4 assists, 2 steals

Gracie Traphagen: 9 points (career high), 2 rebounds, 100.0 3-point %

UP NEXT

Northern State returns to Aberdeen to face off against Wayne State and Augustana. Tip-off times are set for 7:30 p.m. on Friday, January 12th against the Wildcats and 6 p.m. on Saturday, January 12th against the Vikings from Wachs Arena.

GHS Girls' Wrestling

Krueger places second at Lyman Invite

Liza Krueger took second place at the Mid Dakota Bride of the Monster Tournament held Saturday in Lyman.

100: Liza Krueger (12-3) placed 2nd and scored 24.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 12-3 won by fall over Timber Hanson (Stanley County) 4-2 (Fall 0:38)

Quarterfinal - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 12-3 won by fall over Emery Voelker (Tea Area) 8-6 (Fall 2:00)

Semifinal - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 12-3 won by fall over Jaynie Perkins (Lakota Tech) 10-8 (Fall 4:22)

1st Place Match - Finley Evjen (Canton) 21-2 won by fall over Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 12-3 (Fall 1:05)

107: Maddie Little (1-6).

Champ. Round 1 - Harley Iverson (Sisseton) 8-4 won by fall over Maddie Little (Groton Area) 1-6 (Fall 1:39)

Cons. Round 1 - Gemma Stangeland (Pierre T.F. Riggs) 6-5 won by fall over Maddie Little (Groton Area) 1-6 (Fall 2:50)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 8 of 80

GHS Boys' Wrestling

Three wrestlers places at Jesse James Invite

Three Groton Area wrestlers placed at the Jesse James Invitational Wrestling Tournament held Saturday in Garretson. Christian Ehresmann took first place at 144 pounds, Korbin Kucker placed second at 165 pounds and Gavin Englund placed third at 285 pounds.

Groton Area placed sixth in a field of 12 teams.

Team Points: 1. Bon Homme/Avon 230.5, 2. Tri-Valley 203.5, 3. Luverne 142.5, 4. Beresford/Alcester-Hudson 122.0, 5. Marion/Freeman 111.0, 6. Groton Area 100.0, 7. Flandreau 97.0, 8. Lennox 87.0, 9. Elk Point-Jefferson 76.0, 10. Garretson 65.0, 11. Viborg-Hurley 36.5, 12. Chester Area 25.0, 12. Hanson 25.0,

106: Wyatt Hagen (14-7) scored 8.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 14-7 won by fall (1:04) over Payton Barrick (Tri-Valley) 5-6.
Quarterfinal - Logun Pankratz (Marion/Freeman) 20-8 won by a 5-2 decision over Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 14-7.

Cons. Round 2 - Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 14-7 won by 10-4 decision over Brody Kopp (Luverne) 11-9.

Cons. Round 3 - Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 14-7 won by fall (2:13) over Lucas Ludwig (Garretson) 5-4.

Cons. Semi - Owen Bunde (Tri-Valley) 13-4 won by fall (1:49) over Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 14-7.

113: Lincoln Krause (10-6) scored 8.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 10-6 received a bye.

Quarterfinal - Corbin Palsma (Bon Homme/Avon) 16-9 won by fall (3:14) over Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 10-6.

Cons. Round 2 - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 10-6 won by fall in 42 seconds over Beckett Fennel (Elk Point-Jefferson) 2-6.

Cons. Round 3 - Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 10-6 won by fall in 22 seconds over Joseph Lee (Viborg-Hurley) 3-10.

Cons. Semi - Ty Kopp (Luverne) 13-8 won by a 7-6 decision over Lincoln Krause (Groton Area) 10-6.

132: Walker Zoellner (12-8) scored 4.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 12-8 received a bye.

Quarterfinal - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 12-8 won by a 5-2 decision over Alaric Knittel (Marion/Freeman) 7-13.

Semifinal - Brayden Wiese (Flandreau) 13-5 won by an 8-2 decision over Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 12-8.

Cons. Semi - Keaton Prehiem (Marion/Freeman) 21-10 won by fall (2:07) over Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 12-8.

144: Christian Ehresmann (16-2) placed 1st and scored 25.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 16-2 received a bye.

Quarterfinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 16-2 won by fall (1:35) over Levi Hanson (Elk Point-Jefferson) 6-10.

Semifinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 16-2 won by fall (1:30) over Brock Kotalik (Bon Homme/Avon) 8-4.

1st Place Match - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 16-2 won by a 12-1 major decision over Ramsey Williams (Lennox) 19-7.

157: Easten Ekern (2-13) scored 1.0 team point.

Champ. Round 1 - Jensen Christensen (Beresford/Alcester-Hudson) 9-7 won by fall (1:55) over Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 2-13.

Cons. Round 1 - Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 2-13 received a bye.

Cons. Round 2 - Dawson Holtz (Luverne) 8-11 won by fall (5:00) over Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 2-13.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 9 of 80

165: Korbin Kucker (6-2) placed 2nd and scored 21.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 6-2 won by fall (1:29) over Brodee Snyders (Marion/Freeman) 1-11.

Quarterfinal - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 6-2 won by a 10-0 major decision over Cole Schleuter (Garretson) 12-11.

Semifinal - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 6-2 won by fall (4:42) over Robert Watkins (Beresford/Alcester-Hudson) 10-9.

1st Place Match - Landyn Reiser (Tri-Valley) 14-3 won by a 7-1 decision over Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 6-2.

175: Ben Hoeft (6-12) scored 4.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Sam Rock (Luverne) 19-2 won by tech fall over Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 6-12 (TF-1.5 2:10 (17-2))

Cons. Round 1 - Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 6-12 received a bye.

Cons. Round 2 - Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 6-12 won by fall over Alex Lopez (Flandreau) 4-7 (Fall 3:38)

Cons. Round 3 - Logan Willi (Luverne) 12-4 won by fall over Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 6-12 (Fall 1:49)

190: Drew Thurston (3-6) scored 7.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Drew Thurston (Groton Area) 3-6 won by forfeit over a wrestler from Luverne.

Quarterfinal - Karter Headrick (Flandreau) 15-6 won by fall (3:19) over Drew Thurston (Groton Area) 3-6.

Cons. Round 2 - Drew Thurston (Groton Area) 3-6 won by fall (4:20) over Elliot Powell (Tri-Valley) 2-5.

Cons. Round 3 - Trevor Ryan (Viborg-Hurley) 5-5 won by fall (0:55) over Drew Thurston (Groton Area) 3-6.

215: Charlie Frost (2-4) scored 6.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 2-4 received a bye.

Quarterfinal - Cody Sassaman (Bon Homme/Avon) 12-10 won by fall (2:36) over Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 2-4.

Cons. Round 2 - Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 2-4 received a bye.

Cons. Round 3 - Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 2-4 won by fall (2:48) over Jamin Peterson (Hanson) 1-6.

Cons. Semi - Kane Akkerman (Luverne) 10-5 won by a 6-4 decision over Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 2-4.

285: Karter Moody (8-5)

Champ. Round 1 - Karter Moody (Groton Area) 8-5 won by fall (1:00) over Aiden Hilbelink (Chester Area) 5-8.

Quarterfinal - Karter Moody (Groton Area) 8-5 won by fall (1:50) over Tanner Baatz (Garretson) 10-9.

Semifinal - Randall Powers (Bon Homme/Avon) 16-8 won by fall (0:45) over Karter Moody (Groton Area) 8-5.

Cons. Semi - Jacob Johnson (Viborg-Hurley) 13-11 won by fall (1:59) over Karter Moody (Groton Area) 8-5.

285: Gavin Englund (14-6) placed 3rd and scored 16.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 14-6 received a bye.

Quarterfinal - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 14-6 won by fall over Connor Neumayr (Beresford/Alcester-Hudson) 1-13 (Fall 3:48)

Semifinal - Masyn Akkerman (Luverne) 10-1 won by fall (1:51) over Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 14-6.

Cons. Semi - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 14-6 won by fall (2:51) over Tanner Baatz (Garretson) 10-9.

3rd Place Match - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 14-6 won by a 6-2 decision over Jacob Johnson (Viborg-Hurley) 13-11.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 10 of 80

GHS Boys' Junior Varsity Wrestling

Block places third at Madison Tournament

Donovan Block took third place at the Madison Junior Varsity Wrestling Tournament held Saturday. Four other Groton Area wrestlers went to Madison. There were 14 teams at the tournament.

99: Luke Gauer (1-6).

Quarterfinal - Tanner Urdahl (Watertown) 4-2 won by fall over Luke Gauer (Groton Area) 1-6 (Fall 2:00)
Cons. Round 1 - Andrei Schmidt (Chamberlain) 1-2 won by decision over Luke Gauer (Groton Area) 1-6 (Dec 11-6)

106: Aiden Strom (2-6).

Quarterfinal - Charles Aldanna (Madison) 11-8 won by fall over Aiden Strom (Groton Area) 2-6 (Fall 1:04)
Cons. Round 1 - Aiden Strom (Groton Area) 2-6 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Semi - Braxten Petersen (Watertown) 4-2 won by fall over Aiden Strom (Groton Area) 2-6 (Fall 2:15)

106: Noah Scepaniak (4-6) scored 3.0 team points.

Quarterfinal - William O'Connor (Sioux Falls O`Gorman) 8-5 won by tech fall over Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 4-6 (TF-1.5 2:37 (15-0))
Cons. Round 1 - Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 4-6 won by fall over Kenneth Arends (West Central) 0-2 (Fall 0:49)
Cons. Semi - Charles Aldanna (Madison) 11-8 won by fall over Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 4-6 (Fall 1:31)

126: Donavon Block (6-7) placed 3rd and scored 20.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Donavon Block (Groton Area) 6-7 won by fall over Braxten Miller (West Central) 6-5 (Fall 2:40)
Quarterfinal - Donavon Block (Groton Area) 6-7 won by fall over Brody Call (Sioux Falls Lincoln) 3-5 (Fall 1:18)
Semifinal - Brylee Brennan (Chamberlain) 5-0 won by decision over Donavon Block (Groton Area) 6-7 (Dec 10-6)
Cons. Semi - Donavon Block (Groton Area) 6-7 won by fall over Braxten Miller (West Central) 6-5 (Fall 2:46)
3rd Place Match - Donavon Block (Groton Area) 6-7 won by fall over Jackson Keoke (Watertown) 5-4 (Fall 2:31)

175: Isaiah Scepaniak (1-11) scored 4.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Will Dose (Sioux Falls Jefferson) 3-2 won by fall over Isaiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 1-11 (Fall 1:21)
Cons. Round 1 - Isaiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 1-11 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 2 - Isaiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 1-11 won by forfeit over Forfeit Forfeit (Huron) 4-5 (For.)
Cons. Round 3 - Ryder Sauer (Sioux Falls Jefferson) 4-4 won by fall over Isaiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 1-11 (Fall 0:37)

190: Layne Johnson (3-4) scored 3.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 3-4 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Evan Guilfoil (Sioux Falls Lincoln) 5-5 won by fall over Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 3-4 (Fall 2:53)
Cons. Round 2 - Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 3-4 won by fall over Wyatt Bengford (Sioux Falls Lincoln) 0-5 (Fall 2:56)
Cons. Round 3 - Deaonte Brewer (Lakota Tech) 5-6 won by fall over Layne Johnson (Groton Area) 3-4 (Fall 2:12)



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

Does South Dakota have too many universities?

by Joe Kirby

Savvy business owners and managers are always looking for efficiencies in order to enhance profitability. Not so in government. The motivations are different there.

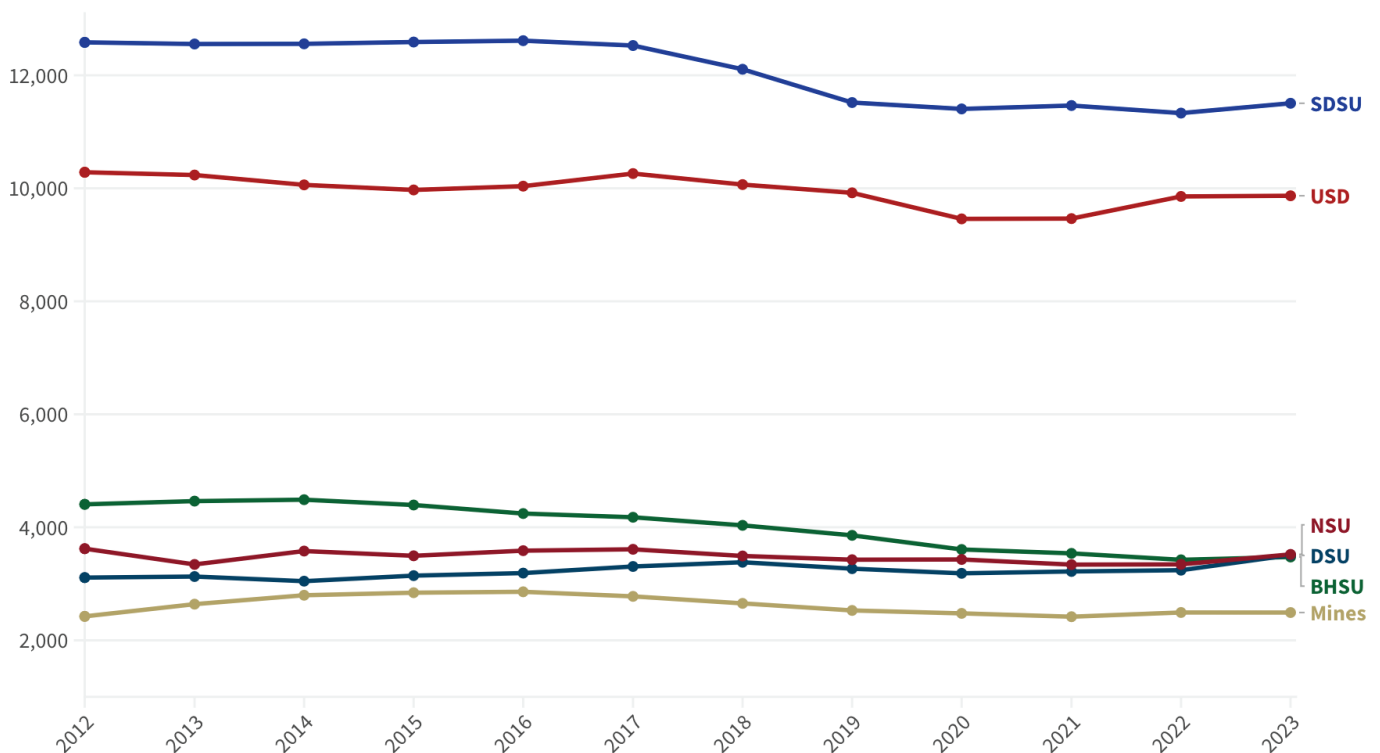
Government officials tend to resist change. Once a government benefit, building or department is created, people and jobs become dependent on maintaining the status quo. And those people wield political clout.

This built-in resistance to change explains why South Dakota subsidizes an excessive number of school districts, counties, governments and public universities, and seems to lack the political will to do anything about it. A good example of this is the recent response of the South Dakota Board of Regents to our expensive and chronic oversupply of state-funded higher education institutions.

Discounts to fill empty seats

The Board of Regents is responsible for running the state's six public universities. They met in mid-December and decided to expand the availability of already generous price discounts in an effort to sus-

South Dakota public university fall enrollments



Source: South Dakota Board of Regents • South Dakota Searchlight

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 12 of 80

tain enrollment. They expanded the in-state tuition program to a few more states and announced a new program for state employees.

The in-state discount was probably originally intended as a logical benefit for South Dakota residents. But it has evolved into a widespread discount for students from a dozen states. College-bound students from Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, Illinois, Wisconsin, Kansas, Missouri and South Dakota now get it.

South Dakota has positioned itself as the low-cost provider of higher education in the region. In fact, Forbes reportedly recently ranked it as the most affordable state to get a college degree. But that strategy presumably comes at a cost in a state with limited resources.

The regents also decided to create another new discount program, giving state employees half price tuition. Some hope this may help worker retention. But it seems like another distraction from the real problem.

Unfortunately, discounts fail to confront the core issue, which is excessive capacity combined with decreasing demand.

At some point in the past, we overbuilt our higher education system and now have more capacity than we need. Sadly, the problem is only going to get worse.

A historic drop in higher education demand is reportedly on the way. The CEO of the Board of Regents was recently quoted as saying the higher education landscape is changing drastically with big demographic challenges coming up in the next decade.

Supporters of the expanded in-state discount program hope it helps with workforce development. Of course, we need more workers in the state. But the unsettling reality is that 72% of university students from outside South Dakota leave the state after we provide them with an inexpensive education. Meanwhile, many of my business friends report that what they really need is more graduates from the state's technical colleges.

The Legislature recognizes there are problems in our higher education system. In 2020, they imposed a bit of financial discipline in higher education with Senate Bill 55. It required more regular efforts to identify and eliminate programs with low enrollment, low graduation rates and a lack of financial viability. Good move! But it did little to address the underlying problem.

Reducing supply would be logical

A better strategic move, in the face of an overbuilt higher education system and declining market demand, might be to close a university or two. While that sounds drastic, it warrants serious consideration with changing market dynamics.

In 1970, Richard Gibb, the commissioner of higher education, conducted a study of South Dakota's system. His report recommended reducing the number of state institutions from seven to four. But that didn't happen.

Many public officials I have talked to privately over the years acknowledge that we have too many universities in the state. None know what to do about it. Collectively, we lack the political will to do what we know we should. Meanwhile, there is a precedent that few seem interested in following.

In the 1980s, Governor Bill Janklow recognized that the state had too many universities. He turned the one in Springfield into a prison.

Come to think of it, maybe we could reduce our excess supply of universities by turning one into a new state men's prison. South Dakota needs one, and Lincoln County would likely welcome that idea. This could be a "two birds with one stone" solution.

OK, perhaps not. But if this were business, we would indeed be exploring creative solutions to our over-supply problem. And if this problem were handled in a businesslike way, perhaps we would have more money available to support our technical colleges and pay our K-12 teachers.

This commentary is adapted with permission from a SiouxFallsJoe.com blog post.

Joe Kirby, of Sioux Falls, formerly led Western Surety Company and worked as an accountant and lawyer. He helped lead a successful effort to modernize Sioux Falls city government in the 1990s and continues to advocate for government reform. He blogs at SiouxFallsJoe.com.

December jobs report: Wages up, hiring steady as job market ends year strong

BY: CASEY QUINLAN - JANUARY 6, 2024 1:00 PM

Friday's jobs data showed a strong, resilient U.S. labor market with wages outpacing inflation — welcome news for Americans hoping to have more purchasing power in 2024.

The December jobs report unveiled another unemployment rate below 4%, as it has for two years, at 3.7%, the same as it was for November. The economy added 216,000 jobs, many of which were concentrated in health care, local government, construction and social assistance, which includes child care, social workers and home care aides, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Democrats celebrated the news and took it as an opportunity to voice their frustrations with Republicans as policymakers grapple with another possible government shutdown over U.S.-Mexico border policy and other issues. Congress has deadlines of Jan. 19 for four government spending bills and Feb. 2 for eight government spending bills.

South Dakota economic snapshot

Labor force: 485,200 in November, up from 484,800 in October.

Employment: 475,300 in November, up from 474,900 in October.

Unemployment: 9,900 in November, unchanged from October.

Unemployment rate: 2% in November, unchanged from October.

Source: South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation

President Joe Biden stated on Friday morning that the jobs data "confirms that 2023 was a great year for American workers.

"The strong job creation continued even as inflation fell to the pre-pandemic level of 2 percent over the last six months ...," he added.

Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), ranking member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, touted the strong jobs report and stated, "Now is not the time to reverse our progress on the economy. I remain committed to opposing any effort that gambles with the lives of everyday Americans in order to engage in political grandstanding."

Economists and data analysts provided States Newsroom with their takeaways on key news in the report, from wages to job growth in healthcare.

Wage growth and cooling inflation provide relief

Wages are outpacing inflation, with average hourly earnings increasing by 15 cents and rising by 4.1% over the past year, well over 3.1% inflation. With inflation coming down fairly quickly, wages are solidly above inflation, economists said.

Moody's Analytics Chief Economist Mark Zandi said wage growth is now firmly above the rate of inflation, which means people's real purchasing power is improving.

"They got creamed back in 2021 and particularly in 2022 when inflation outpaced wages," Zandi said. "And I think that's one reason why people are so uncomfortable with their financial position, but that's improving now and improving very quickly as wage growth remains strong and firm and inflation is lower and continues to moderate."

Elise Gould, senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute, added that lower wage workers in particular have seen that increased purchasing power for longer.

"For the last six months, the average hourly earnings for private sector workers has been beating inflation so their purchasing power has increased and on average, over the last few months, we also know from other data that lower wage workers have been seeing stronger wage growth," she said. "They've been beating inflation for a lot longer. Overall, the purchasing power has certainly been increasing as inflation has been coming down faster."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 14 of 80

Health care and government continue to add jobs

The government workforce grew by 52,000 people with the majority of those jobs — 37,000 — in local governments. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average gains of jobs per month in 2023 was more than double the average for job growth in 2022.

Gould said there still seems to be room for government employment to continue to grow.

"We still have a lot of catching up to do there because when we think about government employment, it has not kept up with population growth in any way," she said. "You would think that the services that are being provided by the government would need to grow even more. So I think there's a fair amount of room there that we are not back to normal in that sense."

Health care also continues to see job growth, which Gould expects to continue partly because of the U.S.'s aging population. Health care jobs rose by 38,000 in December. Ambulatory health care services and hospitals added 19,000 jobs and 15,000 jobs, respectively.

Zandi sees these sectors as mostly playing catchup after the private sector crowded out some of these jobs during the recovery by offering higher pay.

"Private businesses were willing to pay up big wage increases to hold on to workers and hire new ones," he said. "And that was impossible for local governments or for hospitals to keep up with. But now that the private sector is fully recovered, we're now starting to see these other sectors be able to hire again, find workers and bring them on the payrolls."

Economists watch for signs of a slowdown

Economists had mixed responses to the changes in the labor force participation rate and employment-population ratio, which both fell 0.3% percentage point in December. The labor force participation rate sheds light on the economy through the percentage of working age people in the labor force, which includes both those actively seeking work and people who are currently employed. The employment-population ratio shows the number of people employed as part of the working age population.

Gould said she's watching this data closely to see whether these changes are a source for concern but she says it's important to keep in mind that unemployment is still very low.

"Is that just volatility in the series or is there something to watch for?" she said. "...It's not indicative of some huge problem but it's something we want to keep watching. I didn't like the drop in employment, particularly prime-age employment and participation is soft."

Zandi said it's hard to read too much into any month-to-month change in this data yet but that the labor market is slowing down a bit.

"I think the general pattern in the data shows that the job market is resilient, continues to create lots of jobs, and unemployment remains low. But it is throttling back. Job growth is definitively slowing and other measures of the strength of the labor market are, are moderating. You're seeing fewer hours of work and temp employment is declining," he said.

On the labor force participation rate, Zandi said he suspects that participation is not going to continue to rise.

"Boomers are retiring en masse and that's going to wash out any increase in participation by other groups. Broadly speaking, I think the report is consistent with an economy that remains strong but is slow and consistent with getting inflation back to something we all feel comfortable with," he said.

Trends in state pay

Data released by ADP, a payroll processing firm, on Thursday, confirmed Zandi's view on a cooling labor market as pay increases for people staying at their jobs were down in December from November. ADP's median year-over-year pay change was higher in states such as Montana, where pay shot up 8.2% and Idaho, where pay rose 7.5%. New Mexico and Arizona also had higher increases in pay compared to many other states at 6.7% and 6.2%. Washington, Oregon, Wyoming, North Dakota, and South Dakota also had pay growth over that time period.

Liv Wang, lead data scientist at the ADP Research Institute, told States Newsroom that ADP saw higher pay growth for lower-paid workers during the recovery.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 15 of 80

Wang added in an email, "...some of the states with higher percentage increases in pay have lower median pay levels. This is true for some states in both the Northwest and Southwest. This same trend also applies to the Leisure and Hospitality industry, which has been leading pay increases. However more broadly, pay gains have slowed down recently and the pay premium for changing jobs has been falling."

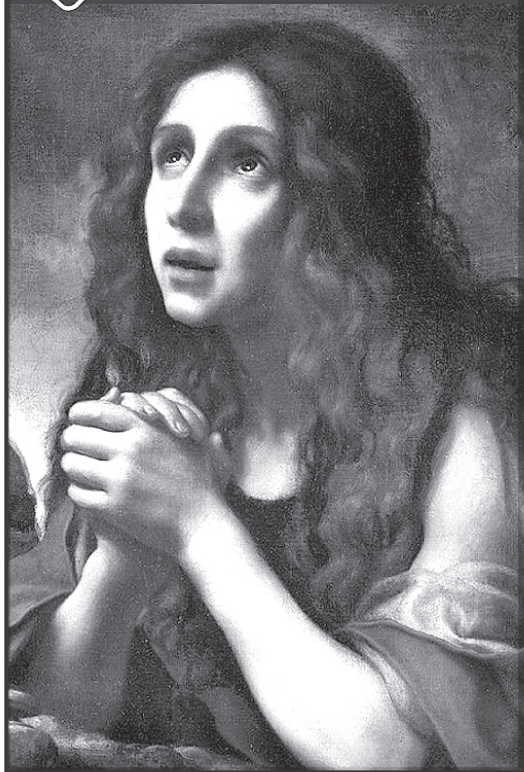
Casey Quinlan is an economy reporter for States Newsroom, based in Washington, D.C. For the past decade, they have reported on national politics and state politics, LGBTQ rights, abortion access, labor issues, education, Supreme Court news and more for publications including The American Independent, ThinkProgress, New Republic, Rewire News, SCOTUSblog, In These Times and Vox.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 16 of 80



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

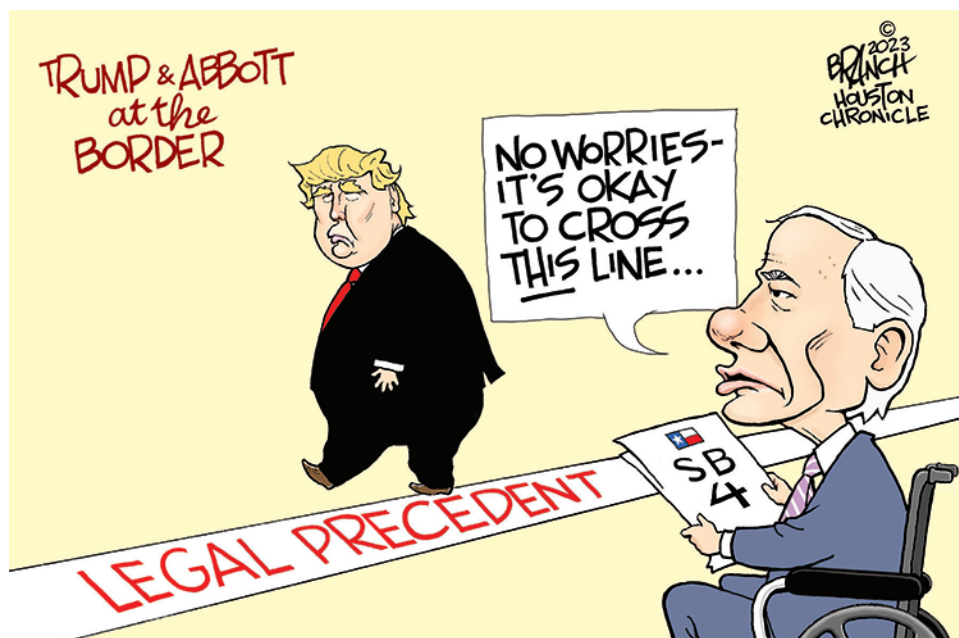


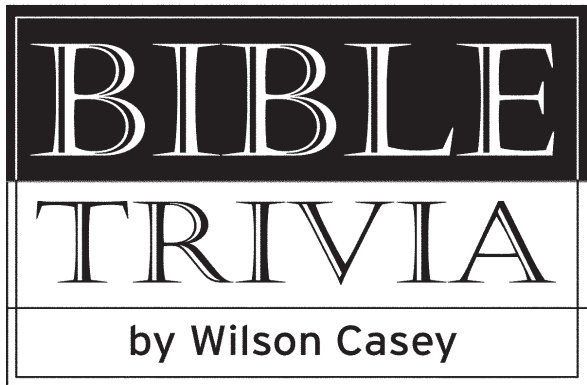
*If we confess our sins,
He is faithful and just
to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all
unrighteousness.*

❧ 1 JOHN 1:9 ❧

Detail of "The Penitent Magdalen" by Carlo Dolci (1670)

© 2024 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.





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

2. Who did Zachariah not believe on telling him his wife would conceive?
Jesus, Luke, Gabriel, Mark

3. From Numbers 27, who became Moses' successor as leader of Israel?
Aaron, Abraham, Elisha, Joshua

4. How many times is the phrase "holy ground" mentioned in the Bible (KJV)? 2, 24, 37, 64

5. From Mark 11, who did Jesus cast out of the Temple?
Armies of Satan, Harlots, Money changers, Lepers

6. What king saw the "handwriting on the wall"?
Darius, Belshazzar, Daniel, Solomon

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Gabriel, 3) Joshua, 4) 2 (Ex 3:5, Acts 7:3), 5) Money changers, 6) Belshazzar

Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey's subscriber site at www.patreon.com/triviaguy.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 18 of 80

A WHILE BACK, A MAN CALLED MING THE MERCILESS ATTACKED THE EARTH.



DR. HANS ZARKOV ROCKETED TO MING'S PLANET TO FIGHT FOR EARTH'S SURVIVAL-- DRAGGING TWO STRANGERS WITH HIM.

ONE WAS DALE ARDEN.

THE OTHER WAS ME...

FLASH GORDON

THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION -- IT'S MESSING WITH REALITY -- THINGS KEEP SHIFTING--



COME ON, FLASH! FOCUS!

THERE'S A PETTY TYRANT ON A POWER TRIP.



THERE'S DALE, NOT GIVING AN INCH.



THERE'S YOU WITH TWO HANDS...



...AND AIR IN YOUR LUNGS.

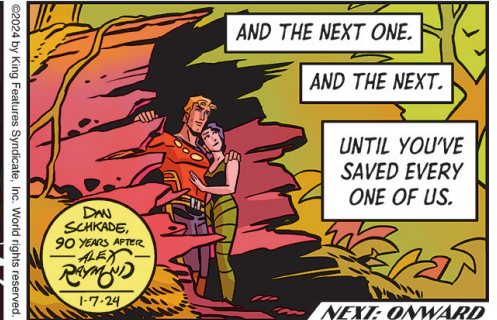
DOESN'T MATTER WHAT CHANGES--



--DOESN'T MATTER IF IT TAKES ONE DAY OR NINETY YEARS--



--YOU FIGHT THE FIGHT.



AND THE NEXT ONE.

AND THE NEXT.

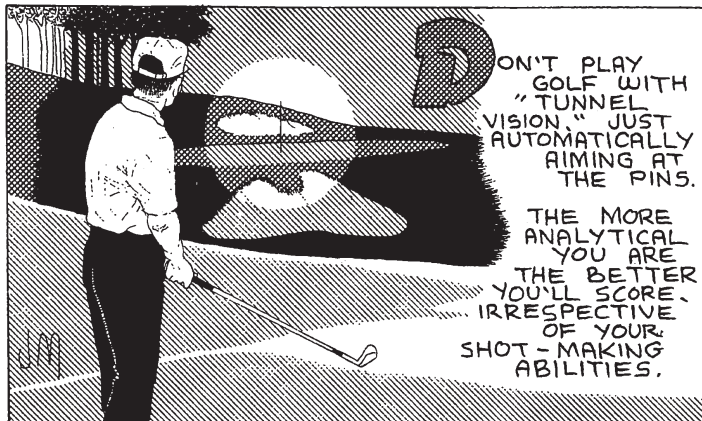
UNTIL YOU'VE SAVED EVERY ONE OF US.

©2024 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

DAN SCHKADE, 90 YEARS AFTER...
ALEX RYAN/AD
1-7-24

NEXT: ONWARD

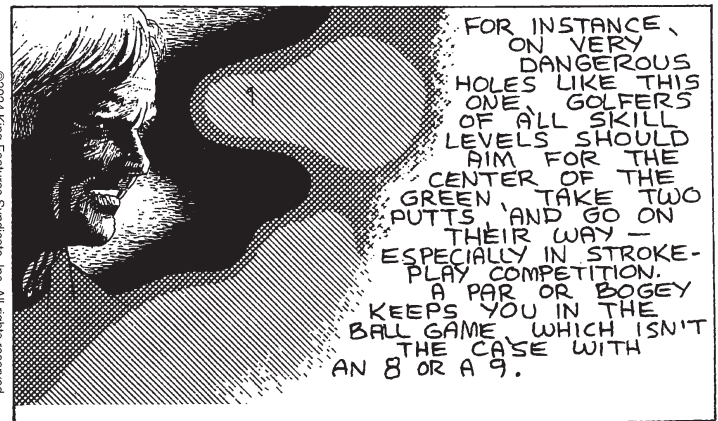
Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



DON'T PLAY GOLF WITH "TUNNEL VISION." JUST AUTOMATICALLY AIMING AT THE PINS.

THE MORE ANALYTICAL YOU ARE THE BETTER YOU'LL SCORE. IRRESPECTIVE OF YOUR SHOT-MAKING ABILITIES.

©2024 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.



FOR INSTANCE, ON VERY DANGEROUS HOLES LIKE THIS ONE, GOLFERS OF ALL SKILL LEVELS SHOULD AIM FOR THE CENTER OF THE GREEN, TAKE TWO PUTTS, AND GO ON THEIR WAY -- ESPECIALLY IN STROKE-PLAY COMPETITION. A PAR OR BOGEY KEEPS YOU IN THE BALL GAME, WHICH ISN'T THE CASE WITH AN 8 OR A 9.



Hot Flashes Persist Well Past Menopause and Thyroidectomy

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am 81 and had a thyroidectomy in 2017. My whole thyroid gland was removed. I also had a little bit of cancer.

I have started to get hot flashes again. I had originally been on thyroid medicine before and after surgery. Then I was put on levothyroxine and decided to try NP Thyroid. I was doing better on NP Thyroid, then started getting the hot flashes again. At this point, for several reasons, I would rather stay on NP Thyroid for the time being.

I was wondering if there is anything I can take for hot flashes? Years ago, in my 50s, I took estrogen, which helped, but this is a different time. I have spoken with other people who are also having hot flashes again. — *Anon.*

ANSWER: Hot flashes are common — about 75% of women in North America will experience them around the time of menopause. It's not uncommon for hot flashes to go away, then return, but I personally haven't seen them recur after 30 or so years. I'd be concerned that there may be another cause for them, which brings me to your thyroid.

Elevated levels of thyroid hormone can cause sensations very similar to hot flashes. One reason that I, along with most endocrinologists, recommend against products like NP Thyroid is because most of those products come

from pigs. There are two thyroid hormones: thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). Humans have a different ratio of T3 and T4 than pigs do, with T4 getting converted into the active form, T3. T3 is then quickly broken down, so if it's used, it needs to be dosed twice daily.

As a result, if a person takes NP Thyroid, their thyroid levels are too high during one part of the day and too low during another. This isn't good for anyone; the "high times" not only cause hot flashes, but also predispose people to atrial fibrillation. But it's particularly a problem in a person with a history of thyroid cancer, where we want the thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH, the hormone in the pituitary gland that regulates the activity of the thyroid gland) to be on the lower side.

If the thyroid blood levels get low in the afternoon/evening when the T3 in NP Thyroid is gone, that can theoretically increase the risk of cancer recurrence as the TSH rises in response. So, in my opinion, you should be on levothyroxine, not NP Thyroid. (I do have a handful of patients who take levothyroxine and also take T3 twice daily. Some people are unable to convert T4 to T3 efficiently.)

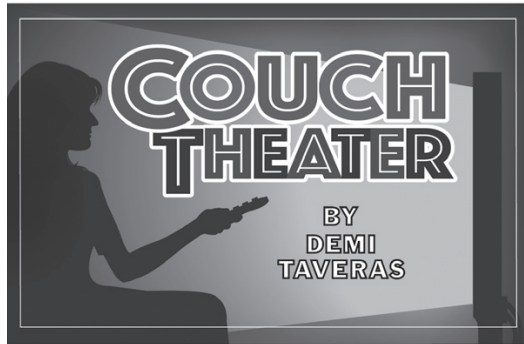
Estrogen is the most effective treatment for hot flashes, but it increases the risk of heart disease when used by women more than 10 years away from menopause. I don't normally prescribe it to a woman in her 80s. However, there is a new medication called fezolinetant (Veozah), which is highly effective and reduced hot flashes by 93% in a trial. My only patient on it so far has reported 100% cessation of her hot flashes.

There are other rare causes of hot flashes, including tumors that secrete substances, such as carcinoid tumors, and tumors that secrete adrenalin-like hormones (pheochromocytomas).

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.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 20 of 80



"The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" (PG-13) -- In 2020, author Suzanne Collins released a prequel to her megahit series, "The Hunger Games," and it was quickly adapted to the big screen to join the other four films in the franchise. Starring Tom Blyth in his breakout role as a young Coriolanus Snow and Rachel Zegler

("West Side Story") as Lucy Gray Baird, the prequel is set 64 years before the events of "The Hunger Games." It focuses on Coriolanus' beginnings as an Academy student and how he was chosen to be Lucy Gray's mentor for the 10th Hunger Games. Clever and dangerously ambitious, Coriolanus knows that he can seize this opportunity to gain great power, but first, he needs to ensure that his songbird District 12 mentee gets out of the arena alive. Out now to rent. (Amazon Prime Video)

"Ted" (TV-MA) -- Based on the feature films created by Seth MacFarlane ("Family Guy"), this prequel series takes viewers back to Massachusetts in 1993 to tell the origin story of the foul-mouthed teddy bear that everyone came to know and love in the first two films. In his early life, Ted lives with the family of his 16-year-old best friend, John (Max Burkholder), previously portrayed by Mark Wahlberg. After being pressured by the family to get an education along with John, Ted enters the terrifying realm of high school and attempts to find hilarity in all the awkward teenage milestones that come with it. The full series, consisting of eight episodes, premieres Jan. 11. (Peacock)

"Self Reliance" (R) -- In his directorial debut, Jake Johnson ("New Girl") plays Tommy, a single network manager, who gets approached by Andy Samberg to star in a dark-web reality show with a prize of \$1 million. The premise of the show is simple: For 30 days, Tommy must avoid a group of hunters who will try to kill him. His only saving grace is that the hunters can only attack when he's alone. So, to survive, this lone wolf must find someone to shadow him. After a handful of people find excuses not to shadow him, Tommy finally encounters another player in the reality show, named Maddy (Anna Kendrick), and the two strangers team up to effectively avoid getting murdered. This comedy thriller releases Jan. 12 (Hulu)

"Lift" (PG-13) -- A heist group consisting of six key players faces a choice between getting charged for identity fraud, money laundering and more or taking a deal offered by a government agent. This score would be their biggest yet -- half a billion in gold -- but the catch is that the gold is locked away in a safe on a plane. The only chance to stop the gold from reaching the terrorist who's desperate to get his hands on it is to steal it mid-flight. Kevin Hart leads this action-packed film, which also stars Gugu Mbatha-Raw ("Loki"), Jean Reno ("Leon: The Professional"), Sam Worthington ("Avatar") and more. Don't miss out on its premiere on Jan. 12. (Netflix)



Jake Johnson, left, and Anna Kendrick star in "Self Reliance."

Courtesy of Hulu

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 21 of 80



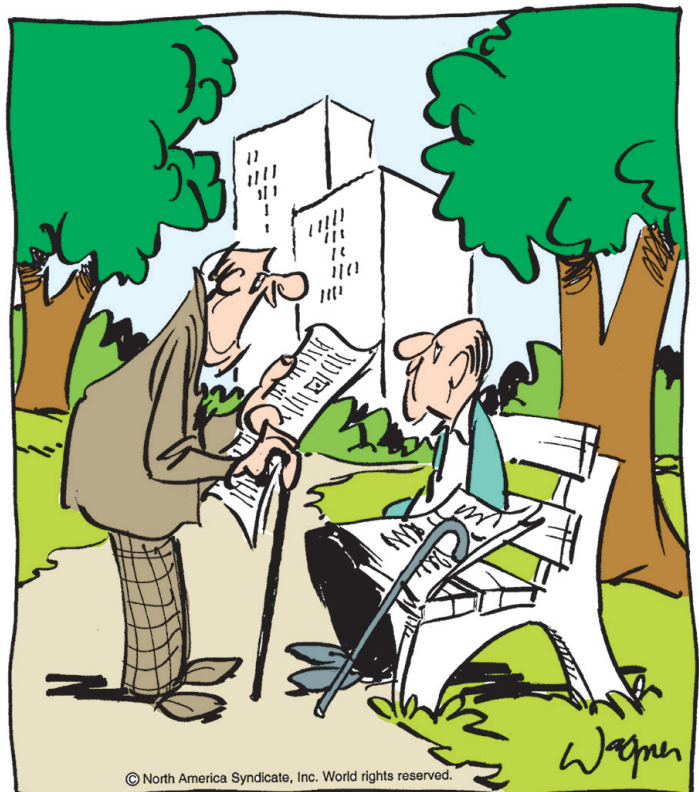
1. Name Shep & the Limelites' best known song.
2. Which one-hit group released "The Book of Love"?
3. What was the name of Rocky Raccoon's girlfriend?
4. Who covered "Tragedy" in 1961?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "It must have been cold there in my shadow, to never have sunlight on your face."

Answers

1. "Daddy's Home," in 1961. The song would have reached No. 1 on the chart but was kept from the top spot by Ricky Nelson's "Travelin' Man."
2. The Monotones, in 1958. They were mentioned in "American Pie," by Don McLean, but never had another major hit. The 1991 film "Book of Love" used the song in its soundtrack, done by Bo Diddley and Ben E. King.
3. Her name was Magil, and she called herself Lil, but everyone knew her as Nancy.
4. The Fleetwoods. Ronnie Dove and Brian Hyland also covered the song in later years.
5. "Wind Beneath My Wings," by Bette Midler in 1988. Although released by several others, Midler's version was the one that took one Grammy for Song of the Year and another for Record of the year and was used in the film "Beaches."

(c) 2024 King Features Syndicate

GRIN *and* BEAR IT *by Wagner*



© North America Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

"Good news! We're not in the obits today!"

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



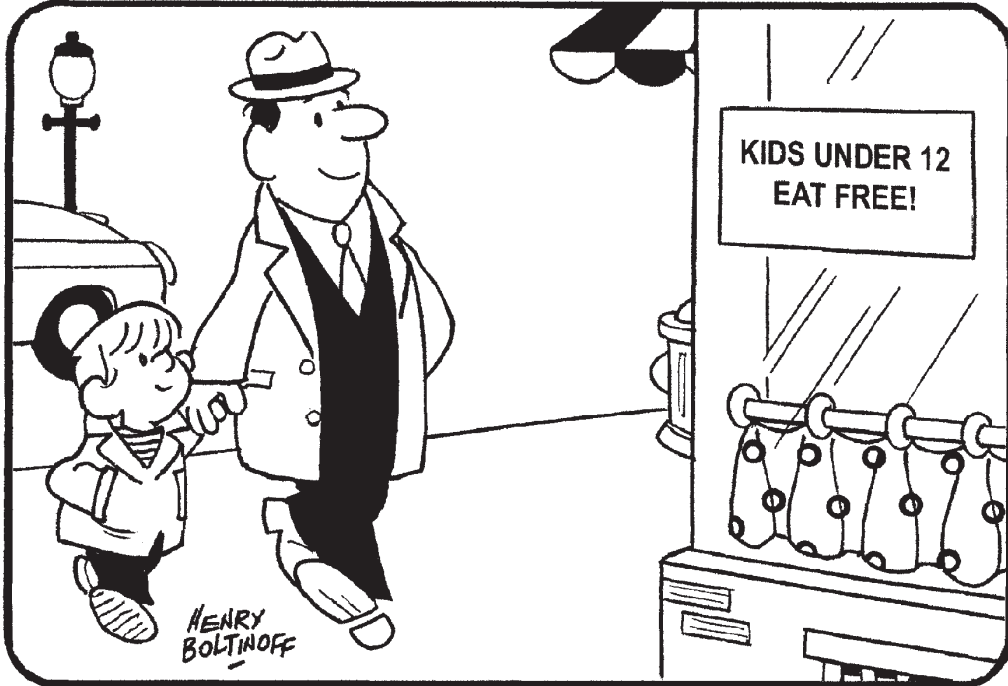
©2024 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.

Groton Daily Independent

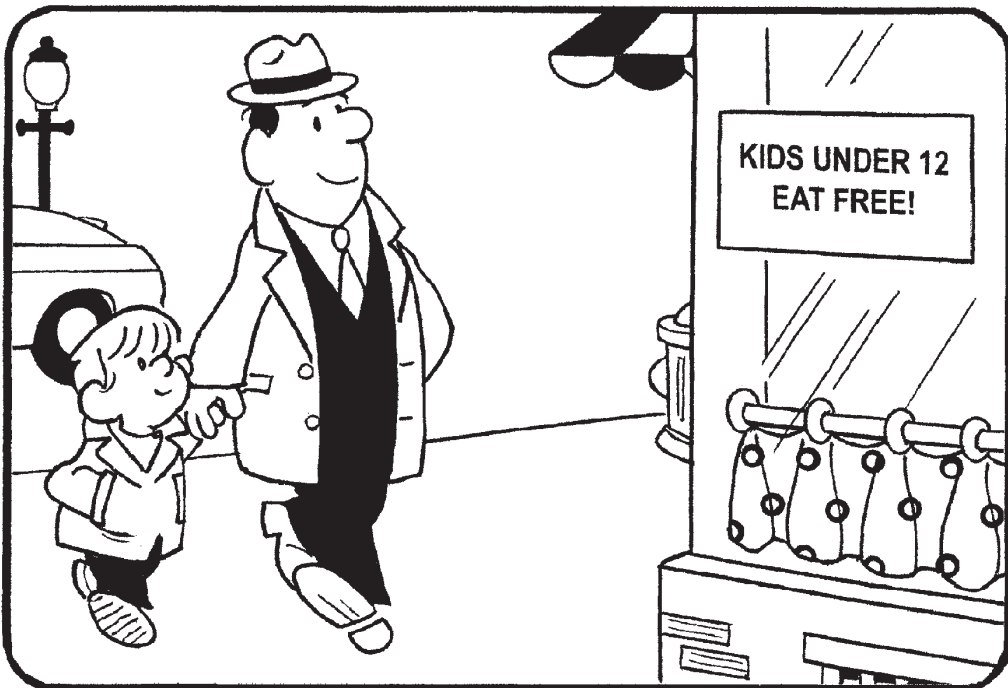
Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 22 of 80

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



©2024 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.

Differences: 1. Light is moved. 2. Nose is smaller. 3. Buttonholes are added. 4. Bricks are lower. 5. Headlight is missing. 6. Shirt is different.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 23 of 80



* If you lose a contact lens, you can try turning off the lights and using a flashlight held perpendicular to the floor. They sort of reflect the light, and as you move the beam of light across the floor, it will flash. This has helped me many times. I am a little clumsy when I put my contacts in. Thanks! -- R.E. in South Carolina

* Great diet control tip: When serving dinner, portion out the meal, then pack up the leftovers right away. You won't be as tempted to go back and have seconds, nor stuff a few more mouthfuls in when cleaning up later.

* I have a medicine that I take with every meal. Surprisingly, it's difficult to remember whether I took it already when I'm eating on the go or out with friends. I keep small containers in my purse labeled "lunch" and "dinner," each

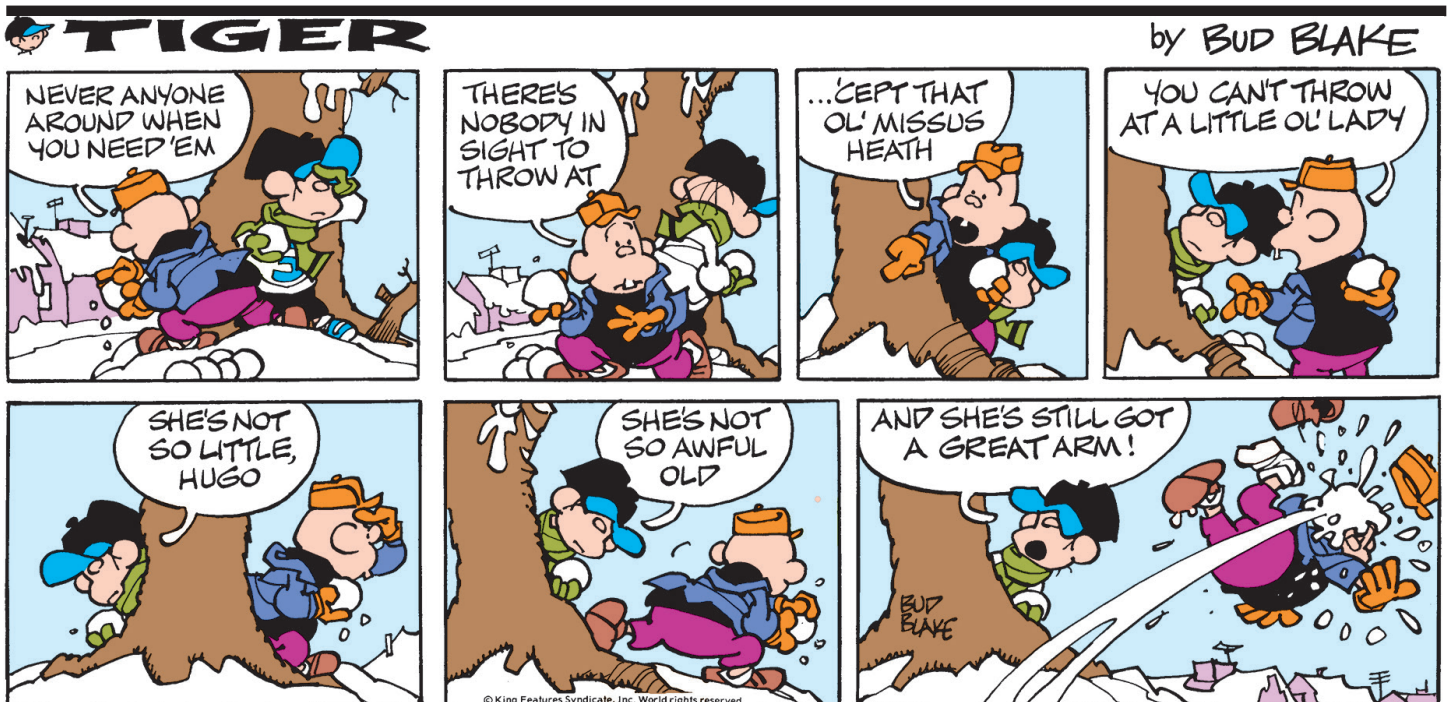
with one pill inside. Before I eat, I look in the container. If a pill is there, it means I forgot to take it. Then I refill the container when I get home and it's ready for next time.

* Last year, I had a large wall calendar at the office. It was a wet-erase calendar with the year on one side and a "planning space" on the back. When the year was over, I needed a new calendar, but the blank side was still usable. I took it home and cut it to fit inside my kitchen cabinets. I have a handy space to jot notes and such. -- R.W. in Colorado

* This is a fun game for kids to play with cookies: Stamp the alphabet letters into the top of mini cookies, or use a kebab skewer to write words. Then let the kids spell out their name or make sentences or silly phrases. -- B.D. in Mississippi

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

(c) 2024 King Features Synd., Inc.



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 24 of 80

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Muscat's land
- 5 Droid
- 8 — Romeo
- 12 Squid dish
- 14 Crowd noise
- 15 Earring shape, often
- 16 Rock's Moetley —
- 17 Little louse
- 18 Great —
- 20 Spiral
- 23 Cannon of film
- 24 Sofa brand
- 25 Cake mixes
- 28 Links org.
- 29 Los —, California
- 30 Satisfied sigh
- 32 "Say something!"

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			

- 34 "Alfred" composer
- 35 Flower part
- 36 Run-down
- 37 Sudden bursts
- 40 Aachen article
- 41 Dog's bowlful
- 42 Fly at a low altitude
- 47 Grate
- 48 Points of view
- 49 Pro votes
- 50 Bit of butter

51 Regimen

DOWN

- 1 Calendar abbr.
- 2 Actress West
- 3 Pie — mode
- 4 Land created by C.S. Lewis
- 5 Lisa's brother
- 6 Spanish gold
- 7 Apex
- 8 Esoteric
- 9 Chicago's Mayor Lightfoot

- 10 Mythic man-goat
- 11 War god
- 13 1509, to Cato
- 19 Back muscles, for short
- 20 Trendy
- 21 Heart charts
- 22 Bound
- 23 Fact
- 25 Pastry store
- 26 Scarce
- 27 Hourglass fill
- 29 Portal
- 31 "Psst!"

- 33 Prevents, legally
- 34 Virgil epic
- 36 Billboard
- 37 Poet Teasdale
- 38 Theater production
- 39 Church section
- 40 Work on proofs
- 43 Clean air org.
- 44 — polloi
- 45 Single
- 46 Calif. clock setting

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 25 of 80

— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

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

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 26 of 80

THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS
POPEYE
BY RANDY MILHOLLAND

WHY DO I EVEN HAVE TO MOP? CAN'T YOU JUST MAGIC THE PLACE CLEAN?

I COULD, BUT I HAVE A GOOD REASON FOR HAVING YOU DO IT INSTEAD.

I JUST HATE DOING THIS SO MUCH!

AND THERE'S THE REASON!

HEY, SEA HAG, WHO'S THIS PAINTING OF?

IT'S ME, OBVIOUSLY.

WELL, IT USED TO BE.

YOU LOOK NOTHING LIKE THAT!

I DID ONCE, BUT THERE WAS A MISHAP. I WAS WORKING ON A NEW POTION TO DEFEAT POPEYE...

I WAS RUNNING LOW ON BASILISK VENOM, BUT MY SISTER LOANED ME SOME.

I GUESS IT HAD GONE BAD, BECAUSE THE BREW BLEW UP IN MY FACE!

THE POTION LEFT MY FACE CHANGED, AND NO SPELL COULD BRING BACK MY LOOKS. EACH SPELL I ATTEMPTED TO FIX MYSELF JUST GAVE ME A NEW DIFFERENT VISAGE.

I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW THIS HAPPENED.

YOU GOT AN INGREDIENT FROM YOUR SISTER, WHO HATES YOU, AND YOU DON'T KNOW HOW THE POTION BACKFIRED TERRIBLY?

WHY DO YOU NEED A GIANT AX IF YOU JUST WANT TO CHAT?

I'VE BEEN WANTING TO USE MY OUIJA BOARD MORE OFTEN!

BARNEY GOOGLE AND
SNUFFY SMITH

ARE THAR ENNY MONSTERS IN HERE, UNCA SNUFFY?

NOPE !!

SPLOOSH!

GOT A FEW PRANKSTERS, THOUGH !!

ARE THAR ENNY ALLYGATORS IN HERE, UNCA SNUFFY?

NOPE !! GOTTA GO T'FLORIDA FER THEM !!

CROCKYDILES?

NOPE !! SAME DEAL !!

HOW 'BOUT SHARKS?

THAR IN TH' OCEAN !!

GEE WHIZ, AIN'T THAR ENNYTHIN' SCARY IN HERE?

JEST GRANNY CREEPS WHEN SHE GOES FER A SWIM !!

JOHN ROSE

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 27 of 80

VAL AND GAWAIN DO A GOOD IMITATION OF DRUNKENNESS AS THEY ARE BROUGHT BEFORE SIR ROGER. "WE ARE SORRY IF OUR - DISAPPEAR'NCE - HAS CAUSED CONCERN, S'ROGER," HICCUPS VAL, "BUT WE HAVE B'N VERY BUSY - EXAM'NING LOCAL TAV'RNS. IM HAPPY TO..."

Hal Foster's **Prince Valiant**
BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

"ENOUGH!" BARKS ROGER. "YOU ARE DISGUSTING - I EXPECT MORE OF KNIGHTS OF CAMELOT." OF COURSE, LOCKBRAMBLE'S STEWARD IS SECRETLY HAPPY TO SEE THAT THE TWO OUTSIDERS POSE NO REAL THREAT TO HIS ENTERPRISES.

BUT THEN GAWAIN PIPES UP: "OH, YESH - ONE MORE THING, Y'R LORDSHIP - WE HAVE HEARD NEWS OF YOUR UPCOM'NG ARCH'RY TOURNEY. WE'D LIKE TO ENTER..."

©2012 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

ROGER BLANCHES - HE REMEMBERS GAWAIN'S DISPLAY OF MARKSMANSHIP. BUT THEN THE KNIGHT CONTINUES: "OH, NO - NOT A KNIGHT OF CAMELOT! THA' WOULD BE UNFAIR..."

"... WE WISH TO SPONS'R A LOCAL TALENT - AN ACQUAINT'NCE OF LORD GRUNYARD, ACTU'LY." THE TWO LEAVE ROGER BOTH RELIEVED AND SUSPICIOUS.

NEXT: Feathered post

YEATES 11/11/12

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

NEVER TELL YOUR WIFE HER PLACE IS IN THE KITCHEN...

©2023 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.



...THAT'S WHERE THE KNIVES ARE!!

PICKERING

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Kittens Versus Senior Cats

One of my easy-to-accomplish resolutions for 2024 was to adopt a kitten, maybe 2-3 months in age. After consulting the local humane society's website and seeing dozens of tiny cats listed, I paid a visit to the shelter's group kitten room.

Of course they were cute, swinging from the chandeliers, racing, climbing and tumbling. And of course they were completely uninterested in the humans in the room who were smiling and enjoying the chaos.

Giving the kittens time to wind down for naps, I made my way to one of the adult cat group rooms ... wherein I was approached by not one, but two beautiful adult cats. I sat on the floor petting them as they milled around me, bumping me with their foreheads, purring, one of them reaching out with a soft paw to get my attention ... and did I mention the purring? The intention of both was clear: You will get me out of this place and you will take me home.

I consulted the list of cat information posted on the wall. One was a boy, one was a girl. Both had been found on the streets, both unclaimed. And they were both 12 years old.

That was not at all what I had in mind.

I came home catless, and a week later I'm still undecided. Can I handle the potential expensive vet care for two older cats? And the possible need for pricey specialty cat food as they age even more? While living on Social Security when our annual increase for 2024 is a mere 3.2% and vet care has increased nearly 15%?

Owning a pet brings down our blood pressure, reduces stress and keeps us active. It would seem that a senior human owning a senior pet would be a perfect match -- except when it isn't because of the cost.

(c) 2024 King Features Synd., Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 29 of 80

1. Cincinnati Reds relief pitchers Norm Charlton, Rob Dibble and Randy Myers were known collectively by what nickname during their 1990 World Series season?

2. For what team did Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback Bart Starr play college football?

3. What ESPN poker analyst penned a weekly syndicated sports humor column called "The Couch Slouch"?

4. What American tennis player was married to British tennis player John Lloyd (1979-87), American skier Andy Mill (1988-2006) and Australian golfer Greg Norman (2008-09)?

5. Athletes who perform a clean, a jerk and a snatch are participating in what sport?

6. What member of the Orlando Magic was NBA scoring champion in consecutive seasons from 2003-04?

7. What team made eight laterals to score on a controversial game-winning kickoff return touchdown vs. the Duke Blue Devils on Halloween 2015?



by Ryan A. Berenz

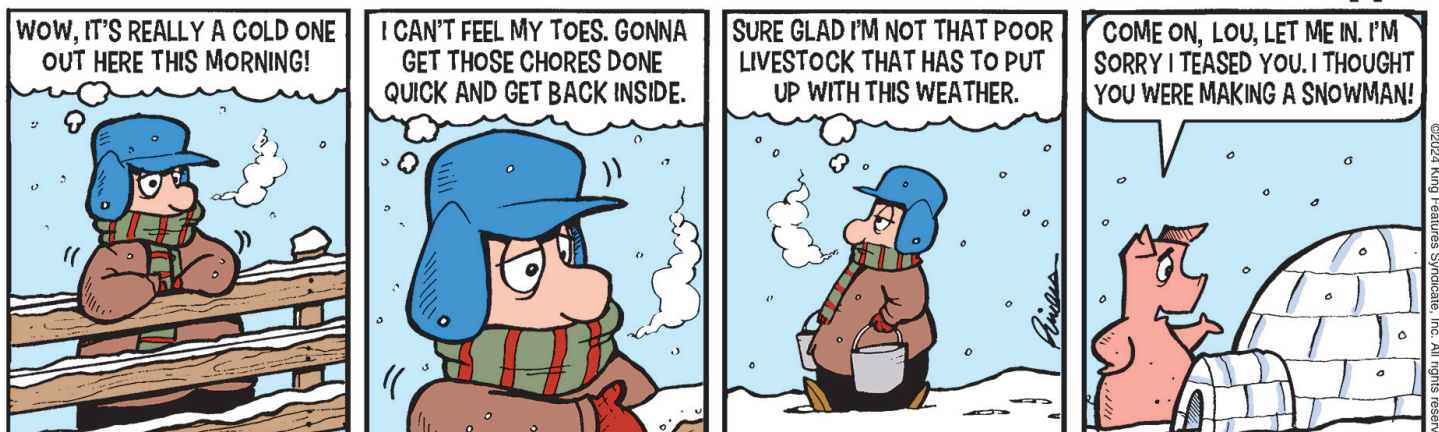
Answers

1. "The Nasty Boys."
2. The Alabama Crimson Tide.
3. Norman Chad.
4. Chris Evert.
5. Weightlifting.
6. Tracy McGrady.
7. The Miami Hurricanes.

(c) 2024 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Aggressive Dogs Keep Owner Away From the Dog Park

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I've had to change the time of day that I visit the local dog park, because a new neighbor brings his two huge, aggressive dogs each morning at the same time as I do. They charge other humans, chase and snarl at other dogs, and make it impossible for other dogs to socialize calmly. The neighbor does nothing to control them and tells other owners that it's their fault that his dogs are acting aggressive. To prevent injury to my dog (or myself), I now wait until after work to go. But this is inconvenient for everyone in the neighborhood. How do I address this problem? -- Dog Mom in New York

DEAR DOG MOM: You're doing the right thing by changing the time that you bring your dog to the park. It's important to remove a dog from a situation you perceive as potentially dangerous or traumatic for them, and protecting them from harm.

That's only the first step, however. The new dogs are terrorizing other dogs within the park, making life miserable for them and their owners. It's not fair, nor is it right.

Dog parks within a city or town typically have rules of conduct posted at each entrance, but sometimes they're vague. It's up to each owner to properly train and socialize their dogs, and to keep them away from the park if they can't control rough play, aggression or reactivity.

Report the problem to the organization in charge of maintaining the dog park. This may be a community group or the municipal parks department. Contacting animal control is another option. Write down the dates and times that incidents have occurred. If there is no active community group for the dog park, consider starting one so that owners can air their grievances and work out problems as a group.

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

(c) 2024 King Features Synd., Inc.

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* Fireflies are the most efficient producers of light in the world.

* Tong Aonan solved 840 Rubik's cubes, then used them to create a portrait of his crush and declare his love for her. Sadly, she rejected him

* A runaway tortoise in Putnam County, Florida, covered a span of five miles in three and a half years before ending up at Florida's Wildest Animal Rescue, where a staff member was able to determine its identity and reunite it with its owners.

* Snake Venom, the world's strongest beer, has an alcohol level of 67.5%.

* Breton, a great white shark, created a self-portrait of sorts with its GPS tracker on its travels through the Atlantic Ocean. What made the mapped outline remarkable was its resemblance to a great white shark!

* Anuptaphobia is the fear of being single forever.

* Sixteen-year-old Titanic survivor Katherine Gilnagh didn't understand the ship's dire situation until she made it safely to New York, but thought that being put into lifeboats and picked up by the Carpathia was part of the voyage.

* Asian hair grows 30% faster than Caucasian hair.

* The soft drink Mountain Dew was created in Tennessee in the 1940s as a mixer for whiskey, hence its name (a slang term for moonshine).

* If, like many Americans, you have trouble getting to sleep, you might try the advice of researchers and go low-tech camping for at least a week. The lack of electronics helps reset the body clock and synchronize melatonin hormones with sunrise and sunset.

* A bookstore in Australia wraps its volumes in paper with short descriptions attached so potential buyers won't "judge a book by its cover."

Thought for the Day: "How wonderful is it that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." -- Anne Frank

(c) 2024 King Features Synd., Inc.



Maintaining an outdoor compost pile through winter months will produce fertilizer for planting in the spring, and can act as a secondary heat source for a greenhouse. To keep compost active over winter, feed it the right balance of **green (nitrogen)** and **brown (carbon)** ingredients. Green scraps will be produced in your kitchen over the winter, but most of the brown matter such as dried leaves, straw and plant debris will have been produced in the fall. Gather these types of materials, bag them and store them in a dry place near your compost, so you can balance the green scraps that are added through the winter. - Brenda Weaver

Source: learn.eartheasy.com



by Freddy Groves

Here We Go Again

I'm not the only one who has opted, once again, to stay home. Both the rec center and the senior center are cutting back on classes and hours because of the lack of participation, again, but mostly because of the sudden increase in cases of Covid, again. Of course this could include the flu and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus), but no one is specifying. It's just clear that more and more people here are getting sick.

At the rec center, the number of exercise classes has been halved, and so has the number of people who can sign up for them. They're going back to spaces outlined in blue painter's tape on the floor, giving a spot to each person to work out. No more walking with pals in a group around the indoor track. Instead, they're going back to single walkers staying a minimum of 10 feet apart.

The senior center has been hit the hardest, I think, because so many of their classes involved sitting around a large table learning a new language, doing painting or fiber art or sharing a meal. The local weekly sightseeing events are stopped because they no longer want to fit 20 seniors into the bus. For some seniors, those social events were the highlight of their week. Now it looks like they'll be back to Zoom meetings.

The good news is that the food bank is still up and running with no sign (yet) of slowing down what they do. Participants will pull up and stay in their vehicles, while volunteers bring out the bags and boxes.

And bless their hearts, the drivers are still out there, picking up seniors to take them to appointments. Rumor says they vowed, as a group, not to stop what they're doing.

Have we really been doing this for four years?

(c) 2024 King Features Synd., Inc.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 33 of 80

Wishing Well®

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

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.

©2024 King Features Syndicate



1. GEOGRAPHY: The Darien Gap separates which two countries?
2. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is Three Kings Day also known as?
3. MOVIES: What's the name of the supervillain character in the animated film "Despicable Me"?
4. LITERATURE: Who is the author of "The Kite Runner"?
5. TELEVISION: What is the name of the motorcycle-riding greaser in the sitcom "Happy Days"?
6. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which musical instrument does former President Bill Clinton play?
7. GAMES: In the game Battleship, how many ships does each player have at the beginning?
8. MUSIC: Which famous rock singer was born with the name Farrokh Bulsara?
9. HISTORY: What was the name of the first U.S. Space Shuttle?
10. U.S. STATES: Which state is home to the Mammoth cave system, believed to be the longest in the world?

Answers

1. Panama and Colombia.
2. Epiphany.
3. Gru.
4. Khaled Hosseini.
5. Fonzie.
6. Saxophone.
7. Five.
8. Freddie Mercury.
9. Columbia.
10. Kentucky.

© 2024 King Features Synd., Inc.

South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

“Under God, the People Rule”

We are closing in on one of the busiest times of year here in Pierre, South Dakota: legislative session. As we enter into our first week of session, and as I prepare to deliver the State of the State Address, I can't help but think about some of the core reasons why we all engage in public service.

I came to Pierre as a legislator because I saw the effect that bad tax policy had on my family. After almost losing our family farm, I knew something had to be done. So I took it upon myself to make real change happen. That has been a driving force of mine ever since – to make a difference in our state, and to build a South Dakota that my kids, and now my grandkids, can be proud of.

I hope that the legislators heading to Pierre in the coming days have the same kind of passion as I do. I firmly believe that if we can all agree on why we do what we do, we can come together to create the best legislation possible for South Dakota.

Even more than just my own desire to make a difference, I am inspired by our people. I consider them in every decision that I make. South Dakota's state motto is “Under God, the People Rule.” That is not just a passing statement; it is something that I take very seriously.

It is not the job of government to do everything for people. Rather, it is the job of government to empower people to do things for themselves.

That is the ideal that is at the heart of conservative policies. And over the last several years South Dakota has shown the entire nation that those policies work. During the pandemic, we preserved Freedom and let our people make the best choices for themselves and their families. Today, we are continuing to preserve Freedom and tell our story of hope to the rest of the country.

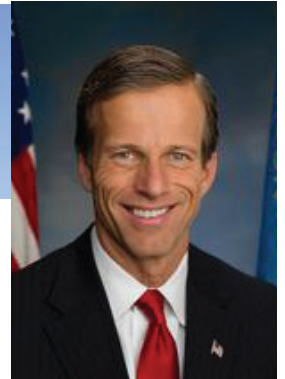
I have always believed that, under the right leadership, South Dakota could become this example of the success that can come when conservative policies are implemented and executed properly. That is exactly what we have been able to do – but we aren't stopping now.

That's one thing I have learned from our people over the years. South Dakotans are some of the hardest working folks I know. We never say, “good enough.” We keep on working to get better.

So, this legislative session, I want to encourage our legislators to do the same. Don't stop working for the people just because we've had so much success already. Instead, let's come together to find even more ways to grow, to improve the lives of South Dakotans, and to make sure our great state is always the Freest state in America.

I am looking forward to kicking off a successful legislative session. I am looking forward to telling South Dakota's story of hope. And, most of all, I am looking forward to continuing to serve the people of South Dakota.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Hometown Hoops

For three days in January, a high school gym in small-town South Dakota feels like the center of the universe. For West River basketball players and fans, the Jones County Invitational in Murdo is the place to be this time of year. You can count on fans coming from all over to support their local team competing for the tournament title. In mid-January, there's nowhere I'd rather be than back in the bleachers in my hometown cheering on the Jones County Coyotes.

The Jones County Invitational has a special place in my heart. The 1969 inaugural tournament was organized by my high school basketball coach, Jerry Applebee, and my dad, Harold Thune, who was our school's athletic director, and Murdo Superintendent Maurice Haugland. They didn't know how long the tournament would last, but each year, as the entire community came together to make it a success, the tournament became further engrained in the area's DNA. Now in its sixth decade, it's still going strong, and it's a cherished part of the impact that my dad and Coach Applebee had in our community and on countless young athletes in Murdo, myself included.

I can remember sitting in the stands as a kid dreaming of one day playing in the big tournament. When I was in high school, my team played in it all four years. I'll never forget the rush of adrenaline I got coming out of the locker room to a packed house for those games – although it could hardly compare to the thrill of actually winning it all, which we did twice.

Basketball, and sports in general, was an important influence in my life. I learned a lot from my dad and Coach Applebee about working hard, playing as a team, and the importance of staying humble – lessons that go far beyond basketball.

The Jones County Invitational also introduced me to another important influence in my life: Jim Abdnor. In the Friday night semi-final game my freshman year, I made five out of six of my free throws. The next day, at the checkout of the Main Street department store, someone tapped me on the shoulder and said, "I noticed you missed one last night." It was then-U.S. Rep. Jim Abdnor. Jim would go on to become a great friend, mentor, and boss, but the Jones County Invitational was how I got introduced to him, and that chance meeting opened the door that would lead me to public service.

This January, once again, I will be in the Harold Thune Auditorium for the Jones County Invitational. I'm looking forward to being back in Murdo – the town where I grew up – reconnecting with old friends and, of course, seeing talented athletes play some great South Dakota basketball. I hope to see you there!

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 36 of 80



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



It's an Emergency

BIG Update

For years, there has been public concern about members of Congress buying and trading individual stocks while they're in Congress due to their authority to regulate corporations and access to confidential information. We can mitigate this concern and protect public trust in our institutions by prohibiting members of Congress and their families from trading individual stocks.

I've long been a supporter of the TRUST in Congress Act to require Members of Congress and their families to place their investments, like individual stocks, in a blind trust during their tenure in Congress. Members of Congress should be held to a high ethical standard, and they shouldn't be able to use confidential information for personal gain.

BIG Idea

This week, I had the honor of shadowing Dr. Eide at Monument Health's Rapid City Emergency Department. While this is the busiest emergency department in all of South Dakota, North Dakota, and Wyoming, Dr. Eide and the healthcare professionals remain composed and compassionate with every patient.

Dr. Eide taught me more about our healthcare system in that short time than I could have dreamed possible, all while providing exceptional care to patients with a variety of complex medical needs. Thank you to Dr. Eide, his coworkers, Monument Health, and the patients who allowed me to observe their care.

I'm grateful for the valuable insight Dr. Eide provided on how emergency departments manage triage, deal with paperwork and records, handle workplace violence, and work for better health outcomes.

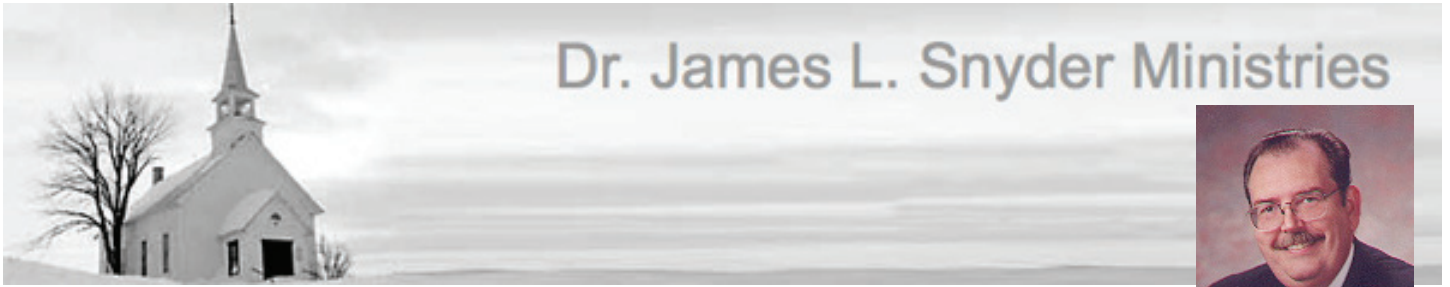
BIG News

It's an emergency – this week, our national debt topped \$34 trillion. Earlier this year, the Congressional Budget Office projected that debt to keep growing, but not slowly. Over the next ten years, we can expect the national debt to grow by \$22.1 trillion. With high interest rates, the amount of interest paid on the national debt is skyrocketing. By 2027, these interest payments will be more than our defense spending. And by 2051, interest payments will be the highest government expenditure, forcing the federal government to divert money away from other government functions, like the VA and our military, just to pay our bills.

I've opposed \$13 trillion in reckless spending by President Biden and Congressional Democrats, but there is more work to be done. These numbers prove our nation's fiscal habits are reckless and out of control. I'll continue to make fiscal responsibility a top priority in 2024.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 37 of 80



What's New About A New Year



On New Year's Eve, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I were celebrating in our living room with some hot apple cider.

We wanted to end the year together. At our age, with so many children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, that's a tough agenda. We love all our family, but sometimes it is just good to be by ourselves.

As we were sipping our hot apple cider, we heard the roar of firecrackers around our neighborhood. We listened to it and chuckled as we leaned back in our chairs, enjoying the time together.

I must confess that this past year was filled with all kinds of things. It is hard to define what a "thing" is these days. Time, however, has a way of bouncing along without any indication of stopping.

As we were coming to the end of our hot apple cider, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage looked over at me and said, "Happy New Year." How she said it caused me to believe she was anticipating a "New Year."

Even though it's another year, I still am who I am, so I looked at her and said very seriously, "What's so new about this coming New Year?"

I surprised her, and she did not understand what I was saying. She looked at me and said, "Well, it will be 2024 and not 2023. I'm sure you can see how that's new?"

I took a deep sip of my hot apple cider, looked at her, and said, "I've looked at the calendar for the year 2024, and all of the months are the same as they were in 2023. Every month has the same seven week days and each of those days have 24 hours. What in the world is new about that?"

She looked at me as though I was a bit crazy, and I must say, she is never wrong.

Of course, she did know how to respond to my question.

"Maybe, just maybe this New Year will be the year that you get a little bit mature."

I was a little confused because I didn't quite know what she was talking about. I thought about what she said and responded, "I'm as mature as I ever want to be."

I couldn't help but think of the time we went out to a restaurant to celebrate my last birthday. As we finished our meal, she looked at me and said, "So, how does it feel to be old?"

Without thinking, which is my MO, I reached across the table, took hold of her upper arm, gently squeezed it, looked at her, and said, "Old is feeling just fine."

As I remember that incident, she wasn't laughing.

Then, I did one of the dumbest things I have done throughout my life. I looked at her and said, "What do you think I need to do to improve my maturity?"

I think she set me up for that question.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 38 of 80

"Well," she said with one of her infamous grins, "maybe you could improve your listening ability this New Year. You just don't listen when I say things and I have to repeat them over and over again."

"What did you say?" I asked.

"That's exactly what I mean. You may hear what I'm saying but you don't listen to what I am saying. Maybe this year you could practice listening a little more."

I almost asked, but I didn't, what she would recommend that I do to practice listening. I'm sure she had an agenda there.

She was not finished.

"Also, you could improve your memory. You forget so many things and I have to remind you of them all the time. Maybe you could do something to improve that part of your maturity."

Those two things would take up my whole year, and I would have no time to do anything else. I was so afraid she would have a number three on her list.

Then it came, "And thirdly, maybe you could do something about your snoring at night. You snore so loud every night that sometimes it wakes me up."

I'm not sure how I can do all three things in one year, but that was the recommendation from The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

As I sat in my chair sipping some hot apple cider, I thought about these things, and then, she had something else to say.

"And there's another thing you could do," she said with a very serious perspective in her voice, "you could tell me some things I need to do to improve my maturity."

That caught me by surprise, I didn't see it coming. How I respond to her statement will determine how happy my life will be in this next New Year.

I just looked at her, smiled, and said, "My dear, you are the most perfect person I know, and I could never think of anything that you need to do that would improve your maturity."

She just looked at me and smiled.

It's not very often that I get out of a mess, but I think I got out of this one. Let's see how long this lasts.

Thinking on this, I thought of Ecclesiastes 1:9, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."

What more can be said?

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Are solar roadways still a “thing”? Why don’t we have them everywhere now helping us keep our EVs charged up and rolling?

-- Jason M., Shelton, CT

In 2014 the concept of solar powered photovoltaic road panels that could collect sunlight and convert it into useable energy went viral when the Idaho-based company Solar Roadways heralded it as a solution to the global energy crisis. The company proposed developing solar-powered panels to form smart roads, highways and parking lots. These solar roadways would theoretically produce electricity while providing other smart features for the cars and trucks that drove on them.

According to Solar Roadways, the benefits of their solar roadways would be more than just the production of clean energy. The roads would provide heating to melt off snow and ice and would use LEDs for lighting and to warn about road obstructions. Solar roadways could also charge electric cars through inductive charging. This means that EVs would be charged just by driving on the solar roadways.

So why aren’t solar roadways being installed across the U.S.? Despite the possible benefits of solar roadways, implementation at scale would be quite a challenge. For one, since solar roadways would lie flat on the ground, they wouldn’t be ideal for maximizing their exposure to direct sunlight. On a regular solar farm, the panels are angled towards the sun to maximize efficiency, and even then, the typical solar panel can only use about 20 percent of the energy that the sun produces. It would be more efficient to run the solar panels alongside the road rather than on top of it. Creating solar roadways that can withstand heavy vehicle pressure while still letting in sunlight has been another difficult task. Also, there are safety and noise concerns. And the LEDs which would act as traffic lines and obstruction warnings are difficult to see during the day. Solar roadways are also incredibly expensive compared to regular old pavement.

While Solar Roadways has not implemented the concept as of yet in the U.S., there have been a few projects abroad that have attempted to turn the concept into reality. In 2016, the French company WattWay completed a 0.62-mile installation in Normandy, France. The project was met with excitement, but quickly fell flat as the road generated little energy and was unable to withstand normal traffic wear and tear. A similar thing happened in Jinan, China when in 2017 Chinese engineers constructed their own 0.62-mile solar roadway. It was closed within a week due to traffic damage and the theft of road panels.

While these false starts don’t bode well for the future of widespread solar roadways, EV charging roads may still be an option. In 2021 the state of Michigan pledged to complete a wireless charging road by 2023. The leading company in the project, Electreon, says that the EV charging road is complete, and will open to the public in the next few years after a testing period. The emergence of EV charging roads would promote the usage of electric cars and provide some reprieve from cars’ fuel emissions.

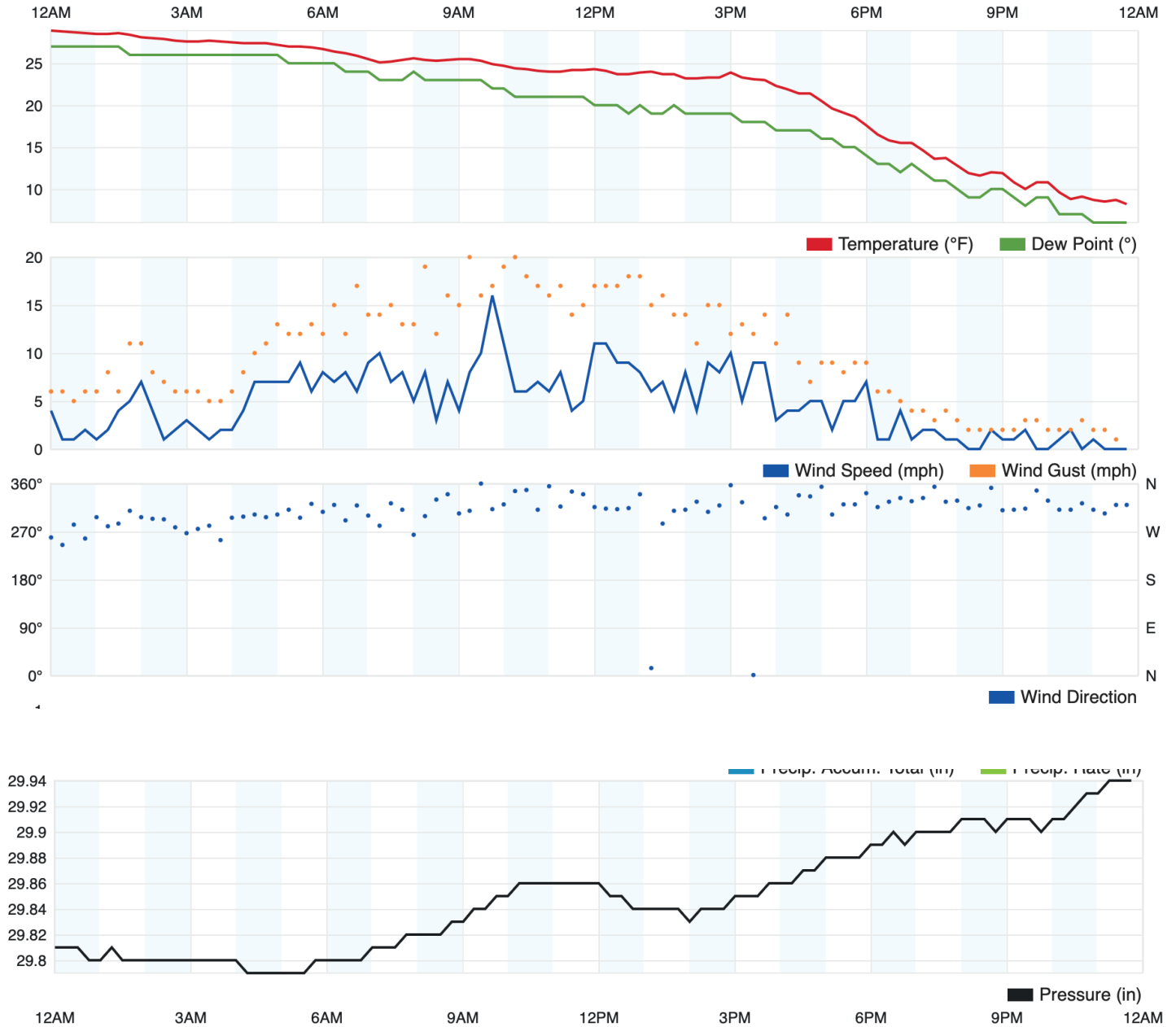


Solar roadways are an appealing concept but so far have not panned out like creators had hoped.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 40 of 80

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 41 of 80

Sun Jan 7	Mon Jan 8	Tue Jan 9	Wed Jan 10	Thu Jan 11	Fri Jan 12	Sat Jan 13
21°F	21°F	16°F	25°F	8°F	1°F	-1°F
12°F	5°F	7°F	4°F	-6°F	-8°F	-12°F
ENE	NE	NNW	S	WNW	NNW	NNW
9 MPH	13 MPH	5 MPH	11 MPH	17 MPH	13 MPH	14 MPH
	70%		50%	20%	20%	30%

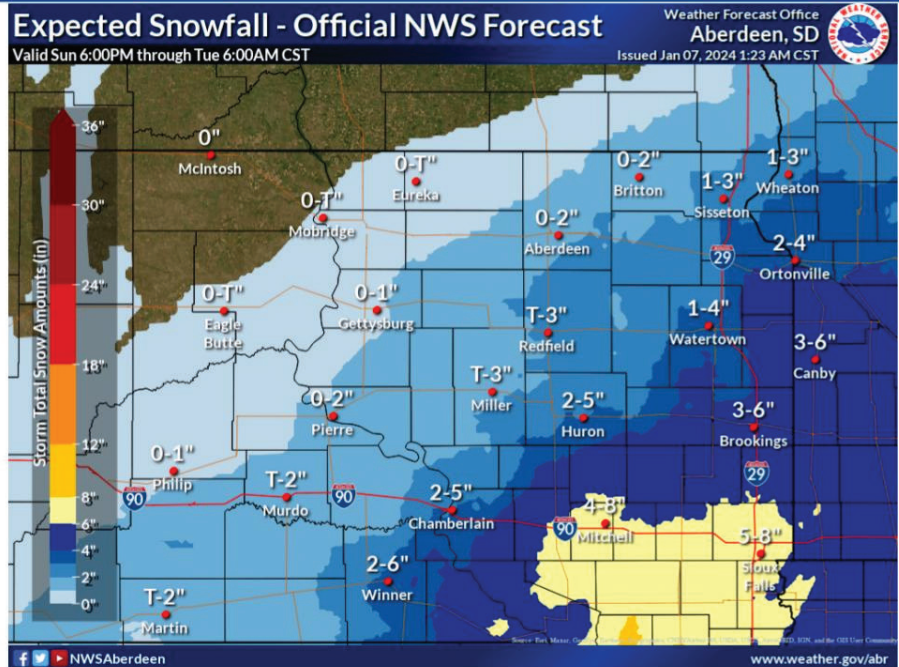


Snow Potential Sunday Night-Monday Night

January 7, 2024
3:20 AM

Key Messages

- Next Round Of Snow Tonight/Monday
- Additional Light Snow Tuesday Night & Wednesday.
- Near Normal Temperatures Followed By An Arctic Blast...
- ...Wind Chills 20 Below to 35 Below For Late Next Week/Weekend



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

An active pattern continues. Next focus for weather will be a system that will bring snow to the area overnight into Monday. A second system is in the works for mid-week, and that will be followed by an Arctic outbreak.

Broton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 42 of 80



Snow Timing

January 7, 2024
3:29 AM

	Sun				Mon				Tue				Wed				Thu				
	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	
Aberdeen					25%	70%	70%	50%	50%							35%	45%	25%	25%	20%	
Britton						70%	70%	70%	70%	20%	20%					25%	65%	45%	30%	30%	20%
Brookings					40%	60%	85%	85%	70%	70%	55%	55%	15%	15%			45%	40%			
Chamberlain			15%	15%	50%	65%	50%	50%	30%	30%					20%	20%					
Clark					60%	85%	85%	75%	75%	30%	30%	15%	15%			15%	55%	30%	15%	20%	
Eagle Butte					20%	50%	50%								40%	60%	15%				
Ellendale						60%	60%	50%	50%							35%	50%	35%	25%	20%	
Eureka						50%	50%	35%	35%					25%	60%	40%	20%	20%	15%		
Gettysburg						40%	65%	65%	25%	25%					20%	55%	35%				
Huron				20%	55%	60%	75%	75%	50%	50%	25%	25%				20%	40%	25%	15%		
Kennebec					60%	65%	75%	75%	50%	50%						25%	20%				
McIntosh							20%	20%	15%	15%					70%	80%	15%				
Milbank						25%	85%	85%	80%	80%	40%	40%	15%	15%			55%	45%	20%	20%	
Miller					30%	70%	85%	85%	55%	55%	20%	20%				30%	35%	15%			
Mobridge							50%	50%	15%	15%					35%	65%	30%				
Murdo					45%	55%	70%	70%	40%	40%						35%	15%				
Pierre					25%	50%	70%	70%	30%	30%						35%	20%				
Redfield						60%	85%	85%	60%	60%	20%	20%				25%	40%	20%	15%	15%	
Sisseton							85%	85%	80%	80%	30%	30%					65%	55%	30%	30%	20%
Watertown						55%	85%	85%	80%	80%	40%	40%	20%	20%			55%	35%	20%	25%	15%
Webster						25%	85%	85%	75%	75%	30%	30%	15%	15%			15%	60%	35%	20%	25%
Wheaton							80%	80%	80%	80%	30%	30%					50%	50%	30%	25%	



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD



Highs & Wind Chills Through Next Week

January 7, 2024
3:33 AM

Maximum Temperature Forecast (°F)

	Maximum Temperature Forecast (°F)							
	1/7 Sun	1/8 Mon	1/9 Tue	1/10 Wed	1/11 Thu	1/12 Fri	1/13 Sat	1/14 Sun
Aberdeen	21	22	18	29	8	2	0	1
Britton	19	21	17	26	11	0	-1	0
Eagle Butte	21	20	27	32	5	-1	-2	0
Eureka	20	20	21	31	5	-1	-2	-2
Gettysburg	20	19	20	31	3	-1	-3	-2
Kennebec	24	22	22	33	7	2	0	2
McIntosh	22	21	28	27	4	-1	-2	0
Milbank	20	27	19	27	14	3	0	2
Miller	21	21	18	31	9	1	-1	0
Mobridge	23	22	26	30	6	1	0	1
Murdo	24	20	25	33	6	1	0	2
Pierre	25	22	25	36	8	3	1	3
Redfield	22	24	16	29	8	3	1	1
Sisseton	19	24	19	27	14	1	-1	1
Watertown	22	25	17	25	11	1	-2	0
Webster	20	23	15	25	10	-1	-2	-1
Wheaton	18	25	17	25	14	2	-1	0

Minimum Wind Chill Forecast (°F)

	Minimum Wind Chill Forecast (°F)																	
	1/10 Wed		1/11 Thu				1/12 Fri				1/13 Sat				1/14 Sun			
	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6pm		
Aberdeen	13	-7	-16	-20	-14	-19	-23	-26	-21	-27	-30	-32	-24	-27	-28	-31	-21	-20
Britton	10	-5	-14	-19	-17	-21	-24	-26	-23	-27	-29	-32	-26	-28	-29	-31	-21	-20
Eagle Butte	6	-12	-20	-23	-20	-22	-23	-25	-23	-29	-31	-34	-29	-28	-28	-31	-24	-22
Eureka	5	-13	-22	-25	-20	-23	-26	-27	-25	-29	-33	-36	-28	-30	-31	-34	-25	-24
Gettysburg	8	-12	-20	-24	-21	-24	-26	-27	-24	-30	-32	-36	-30	-30	-32	-32	-25	-25
Kennebec	16	-5	-17	-21	-15	-20	-23	-24	-20	-26	-31	-33	-25	-28	-28	-31	-20	-21
McIntosh	0	-16	-25	-27	-22	-24	-28	-31	-27	-31	-34	-37	-32	-30	-32	-34	-25	-23
Milbank	12	0	-11	-17	-14	-19	-22	-23	-20	-25	-26	-29	-26	-28	-28	-28	-20	-19
Miller	13	-7	-17	-23	-17	-20	-23	-25	-22	-27	-30	-32	-26	-28	-28	-31	-22	-23
Mobridge	7	-10	-18	-22	-18	-20	-22	-25	-22	-27	-29	-30	-27	-27	-28	-30	-22	-22
Murdo	15	-6	-16	-18	-15	-18	-23	-24	-23	-27	-31	-33	-27	-27	-28	-30	-22	-21
Pierre	16	-4	-15	-18	-15	-17	-21	-22	-20	-26	-29	-31	-24	-26	-27	-29	-21	-19
Redfield	13	-6	-16	-20	-15	-19	-22	-24	-19	-26	-29	-31	-25	-27	-29	-30	-21	-22
Sisseton	13	-1	-12	-17	-16	-20	-22	-23	-21	-25	-28	-30	-25	-28	-28	-28	-22	-19
Watertown	10	-4	-15	-19	-17	-21	-23	-25	-21	-28	-30	-32	-26	-30	-30	-29	-22	-22
Webster	10	-6	-17	-21	-18	-22	-25	-27	-24	-27	-30	-32	-28	-30	-30	-31	-24	-22
Wheaton	9	0	-10	-15	-15	-19	-21	-23	-20	-23	-27	-28	-25	-27	-27	-28	-21	-18



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 43 of 80

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 29 °F at 12:00 AM

Low Temp: 8 °F at 10:36 PM

Wind: 20 mph at 8:04 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 8 hours, 57 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 54 in 1963

Record Low: -39 in 1912

Average High: 23

Average Low: 2

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.15

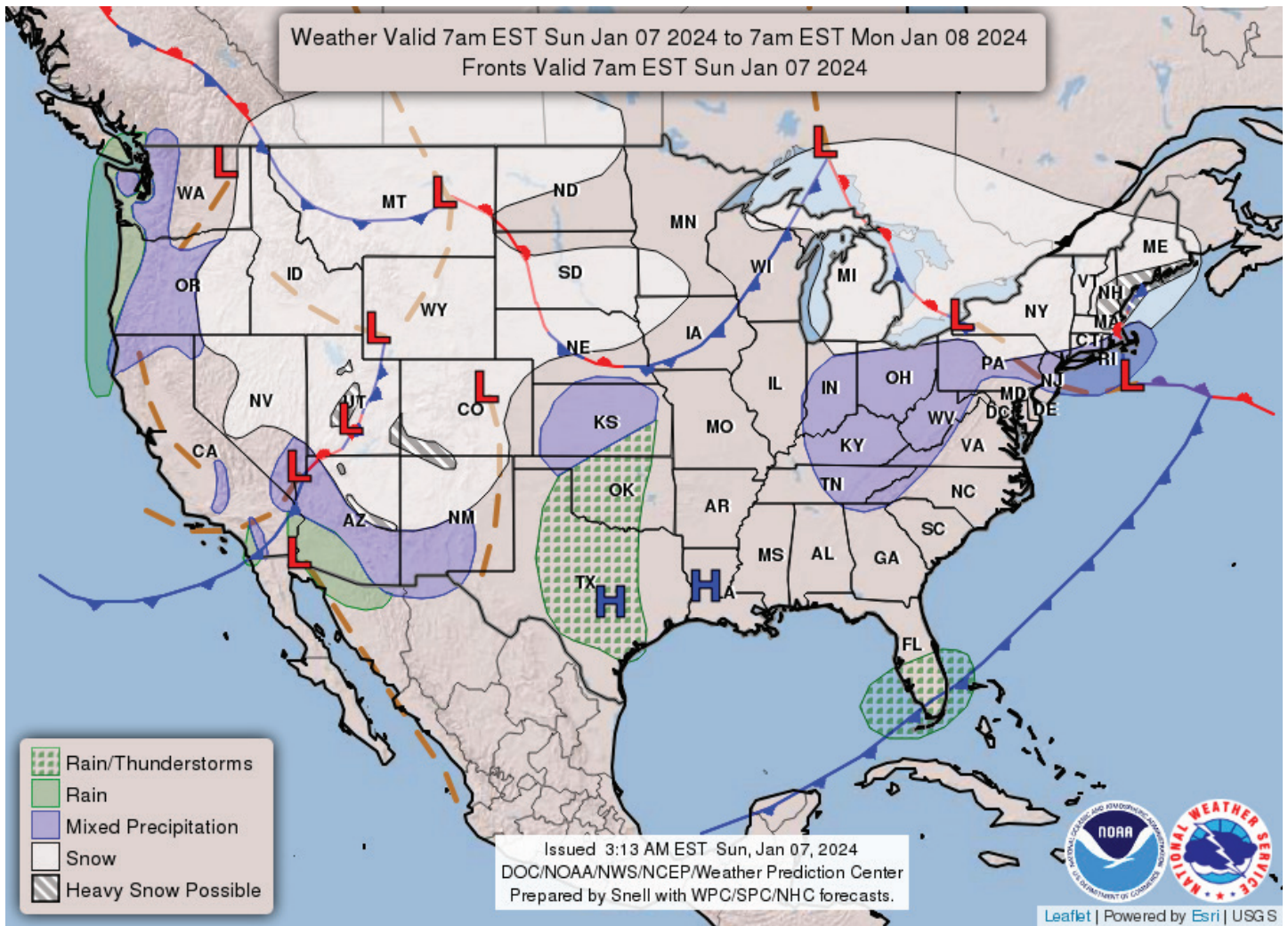
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.15

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:07:12 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09:41 am



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 44 of 80

Today in Weather History

January 7, 1873: A blizzard raged across the Great Plains. Many pioneers, unprepared for the cold and snow, perished in the tristate region of southwest Minnesota, northwestern Iowa, and southeastern South Dakota. Visibility was down to three feet. Cows suffocated in the deep drifts, and trains were stuck for days. More than 70 people died; some bodies were not found until spring.

The following appears on pages 260-261 in the "History of Dakota Territory" by George Kingsbury. "On the 7th of January, 1873, a brother and sister of "John Foster," aged respectively fourteen and twelve years, went a short distance from home and soon afterward a blizzard came up suddenly. The children wandered in the storm to an old sod house that stood out on the prairie and there sought shelter from the driving snow. However, as the house was roofless, it afforded but poor protection against the blizzard, and the children perished, their bodies being buried in the snow. Our subject and the father were absent from home at the time. Weeks passed, and despite continued searching, the bodies of the children were not found, but in March, a neighbor dreamed that the children were in the old house, and on the 16th of that month, their bodies were found there."

January 7, 1980: A strong area of low pressure moved out of the northern Rockies across South Dakota and central Minnesota on January 6th and 7th. Heavy snow, along with very high winds, caused widespread blowing and drifting snow with low visibilities. Many roads were closed, and many motorists were stranded. Snowfall amounts across western and northern Minnesota were from 7 to 12 inches.

January 7, 1989: Heavy snowfall of 5 to 19 inches fell in the north and east-central South Dakota on the 6th and 7th. Snow and blowing snow reduced visibilities to near zero in many locations as winds gusted to near 50 mph. Part of Interstate 29 north of Sisseton closed the night of the 7th. Icy roads contributed to a school bus accident that injured eight boys. Extreme wind chills of 30 to 60 below also occurred. Snowfall amounts included 8 inches in Sisseton, with 12 to 19 inches across Marshall and Roberts counties.

This storm also affected northern Minnesota from the 6th through the 8th with heavy snowfall of 8 to 12 inches with local amounts of 24 to 26 inches. The heavy snow was followed by an Arctic intrusion, which brought in 35 to 50 mph winds. Snowdrifts were from 5 to 10 feet in some areas. The strong winds caused near-blizzard conditions along with extremely low wind chills.

1880 - Seattle, WA, was in the midst of their worst snowstorm of record. Hundreds of barns were destroyed, and transportation was brought to a standstill, as the storm left the city buried under four feet of snow. (David Ludlum)

1884 - The temperature dipped to one degree below zero at Atlanta, GA. It marked the final day of a severe arctic outbreak in the South and Midwest. (David Ludlum)

1966: Tropical Cyclone Denise dropped 45 inches of rain on La Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean in 12 hours and 71.80 inches of rain in 48 hours through the 8th.

1987 - A storm moving across the western U.S. spread heavy snow into the Central Rockies. Casper WY received 14 inches of snow in 24 hours, a January record for that location. Big Piney WY reported 17 inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - It was a bad day for chickens. Heavy snow in Arkansas, with totals ranging up to 16 inches at Heber Springs, claimed the lives of 3.5 million chickens, and snow and ice up to three inches thick claimed the lives of another 1.75 million chickens in north central Texas. Up to 18 inches of snow blanketed Oklahoma, with Oklahoma City reporting a record 12 inches of snow in 24 hours. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989: Empty foundations are all that remain of four homes on the southwest end of Allendale, Illinois after an F4 tornado ripped through. The tornado was extremely rare due to its strength and the fact that it occurred so far north during the middle of meteorological winter.

2008: A rare, EF3 tornado tracked across southeastern Wisconsin. Experiencing a tornado in Wisconsin in January is extremely rare. In fact, it had only happened once between 1950 and 2007, when an F3 tornado affected parts of Green and Rock Counties on January 24, 1967. That tornado in South Central Wisconsin was part of a much larger outbreak of 30 tornadoes across mostly Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri. Wisconsin ended up with 30 tornadoes in 1967.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 45 of 80

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

WHERE IS YOUR FOCUS?

Karl Wallenda was one of the world's greatest tightrope performers. In 1978 he fell to his death.

Sometime later, his wife was speaking of the tragedy. "All Karl thought about," she recalled, "for three straight months before his death was falling. It was the first time he had ever thought about death, and it seemed to me that he put all of his energies into not falling rather than in walking the tightrope."

Paul warned us about focusing on the wrong things. In his letter to the Philippians, he advised them to "look forward to what lies ahead. (Let's) strain to reach the end of the race, and receive the prize for which God through Christ Jesus is calling us to receive in heaven."

The future is in front of all of us. And, often it is not the future that causes us problems, but the past. We can't feel sorry about the issues that may happen in the future, nor can we become discouraged about mistakes we might make in the future. And, neither can we regret sins that we may commit tomorrow. But, unfortunately, we often become overwhelmed with problems and mistakes and sins in our past that we hold tightly to and refuse to let go.

When we allow the past to compete or interfere with our future, we take our eyes off the "prize" that God has waiting for us. We must never surrender our standards or lower our expectations if we want to be all that we can be through Christ. If we do, we lose the prize.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to keep our eyes on You and the prize that we have in Christ Jesus our Lord. May we allow no one or nothing to distract, destroy, or defeat us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. Philippians 3:13-14



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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 46 of 80

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White \$48.99/year
- Colored \$79.88/year
- Colored \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly* \$31.95/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- 1 Month \$15.98
- 3 Months..... \$26.63
- 6 Months..... \$31.95
- 9 Months..... \$42.60
- 12 Months..... \$53.25

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 47 of 80



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.05.24

5 23 26 38 44 25

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$165,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.06.24

14 34 42 46 51 6

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,200,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.06.24

8 15 20 38 39 14

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 49 Mins 54 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.06.24

3 9 22 25 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.06.24

9 14 26 27 32 22

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.06.24

4 31 34 38 61 13

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$46,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 48 of 80

News from the  Associated Press

Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 45, Sioux Falls Lincoln High School 32
Belle Fourche 64, Douglas 36
Carter County, Mont. 70, Bison 27
Chamberlain 46, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 26
Clark-Willow Lake 52, Webster 40
Dakota Valley 70, Sergeant Bluff-Luton, Iowa 43
Deuel 32, Castlewood 28
Elk Point-Jefferson 52, Dell Rapids 36
Faulkton 53, North Central 24
Harding County 49, Faith 34
Harrisburg 31, Huron 29
Kadoka Area 62, Colome 22
Kimball/White Lake 54, Lakota Tech 47
Lemmon High School 67, South Heart, N.D. 29
Leola-Frederick High School 45, Waverly-South Shore 21
Milbank 57, Custer 31
Pierre T F Riggs High School 52, Sioux Falls Washington 47
Red Cloud 78, Todd County 28
Sioux Falls Christian 69, Hamlin 59
Sioux Falls Jefferson 71, Rapid City Stevens 44
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 54, Rapid City Central 44
St. Francis Indian 36, Freeman Academy-Marion 34
Wagner 53, Corsica/Stickney 23
Wall 63, Bennett County 22
White River 75, Lower Brule 51
Winner 64, Gregory 21
Border Battle at Sanford Pentagon=
Grand Forks Red River, N.D. 63, Mobridge-Pollock 17
Minot, N.D. 51, St. Thomas More 31
West Fargo Horace, N.D. 50, Florence-Henry 46
Redfield Holiday Classic=
Estelline-Hendricks 54, Northwestern 41
Ethan 68, Sully Buttes 27
Little Wound 48, Aberdeen Christian 41
McLaughlin 59, Hitchcock-Tulare 45
Redfield 38, Stanley County 17
Wolsey-Wessington 54, Langford 35
Shiloh Christian Tournament=
Shiloh, N.D. 49, Rapid City Christian 42

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Baltic 63, Chester 33
Beresford 76, Garretson 55

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 49 of 80

Carter County, Mont. 70, Bison 27
Castlewood 63, Deuel 44
Clark-Willow Lake 69, Webster 58
Corsica/Stickney 63, Wagner 51
Dakota Valley 69, Sergeant Bluff-Luton, Iowa 41
Dell Rapids 48, Elk Point-Jefferson 40
Douglas 73, Belle Fourche 65
Faith 68, Harding County 27
Faulkton 66, North Central 43
Harrisburg 58, Huron 51
Kadoka Area 67, Colome 42
Lemmon High School 74, Heart River, N.D. 44
Leola-Frederick High School 63, Waverly-South Shore 50
Parker 48, McCook Central-Montrose 46
Parkston 70, Freeman Academy-Marion 50
Platte-Geddes 56, Lower Brule 47
Potter County 68, Strasburg, N.D. 18
Sioux Falls Christian 54, Hamlin 52
Sioux Falls Jefferson 59, Rapid City Stevens 44
Sioux Falls Lincoln High School 65, Aberdeen Central 45
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 67, Rapid City Central 43
Sioux Falls Washington 56, Pierre T F Riggs High School 40
Sioux Valley 57, Flandreau 38
St. Francis Indian 65, Mitchell Christian 46
Wall 61, Bennett County 26
White River 83, Stanley County 49
Winner 44, Custer 41
Border Battle at Sanford Pentagon=
Grand Forks Red River, N.D. 80, Mobridge-Pollock 47
Minot, N.D. 55, St. Thomas More 44
West Fargo Horace, N.D. 82, Florence-Henry 28
Shiloh Christian Tournament=
Rapid City Christian 85, Shiloh, N.D. 69

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

Dischon Thomas scores 19 points, grabs 11 rebounds to lead Montana over South Dakota 82-63

By The Associated Press undefined

MISSOULA, Mont. (AP) — Dischon Thomas' 19 points and 11 rebounds helped Montana defeat South Dakota 82-63 on Saturday night.

Josh Vazquez scored 17 points and added six rebounds for the Grizzlies (10-5). Giordan Williams had 17 points and was 6-of-13 shooting (3 for 8 from 3-point range).

Lahat Thioune led the way for the Coyotes (8-9) with 12 points, 11 rebounds and two blocks. Steven Kramer added 11 points and five assists for South Dakota. Paul Bruns also had nine points.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 50 of 80

South Dakota State defeats Montana State 89-61

By The Associated Press undefined
BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — William Kyle III's 21 points helped South Dakota State defeat Montana State 89-61 on Saturday night.

Kyle also contributed six rebounds for the Jackrabbits (8-8, 1-0 Summit League). Zeke Mayo scored 19 points and added six rebounds and seven assists. Luke Appel shot 5 of 5 from the field and 1 for 3 from the line to finish with 11 points.

Brian Goracke finished with 13 points for the Bobcats (6-9, 1-1 Big Sky Conference). Eddie Turner III added 10 points for Montana State. Sam Lecholot also recorded eight points.

Both teams play again on Thursday. South Dakota State visits St. Thomas and Montana State hosts Northern Arizona.

South Dakota State seeking FCS title repeat, Montana in first championship game since '09

By STEPHEN HAWKINS AP Sports Writer
FRISCO, Texas (AP) — Jimmy Rogers never dreamed of playing at South Dakota State, and certainly never anticipated becoming coach of the Jackrabbits.

The kid from Arizona who was a standout linebacker and captain of their first playoff team in 2009, then defensive coordinator for their first national title last season, is now the first-year head coach as the top-seeded Jackrabbits (14-0) try to repeat in the Football Championship Subdivision. They take a 28-game winning streak into Sunday's game against No. 2 seed Montana (13-1).

"My reality becoming a dream means I wanted to do it at the highest level, and we've taken South Dakota State to the highest level," Rogers said. "To be the head coach of it, I never envisioned that 18 years ago. ... But I did envision winning national championships here."

Less than two weeks after the Jackrabbits beat Missouri Valley Conference rival North Dakota State last January to become champions in John Stiegelmeier's 26th season as head coach, he retired and Rogers was immediately named his successor.

"I don't think during the season there was ever really kind of that we're playing for his last year-type vibe," linebacker Adam Bock said.

Rogers' coaching career began as an SDSU grad assistant in 2010. He played his final game in the first round of the 2009 playoffs, when the Jackrabbits led 48-21 late in the third quarter before Montana scored 40 unanswered points. — "It sticks with me," Rogers said.

The Big Sky champion Grizzlies then went on to lose in the FCS title game for the second year in a row, ending coach Bobby Hauck's first stint as their coach. They are in their first title game since, and first in Frisco, where the championship game has been played since the 2010 season.

"Each of the last two teams, '21 and '22, had potential to be where we're sitting now," said Hauck who returned to the Griz in 2018. "Last year in particular, I think it was a matter of playing four of the top five (teams) on the road over a six-week span. That's a tall task, especially for a team that was injured as we were."

THE QBS

Mark Gronowski will start his third national title game as South Dakota State's quarterback. The AP FCS All-American has thrown for 2,883 yards and 28 touchdowns with only four interceptions.

Gronowski was a true freshman during the pandemic-affected season when SDSU made its first title game in the unusual spring finale in May 2021. He tore the ACL in his left knee on the opening series, and missed the entire 2021 fall before returning last season.

Texas native and Central Arkansas transfer Clifton McDowell is 11-0 as Montana's starter. His 751 yards rushing are a modern-day Griz record for a quarterback, and he has 1,861 yards and 13 TDs passing.

RUNNING JACK

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 51 of 80

Isaiah Davis has consecutive 1,400-yard rushing seasons for the Jackrabbits since missing the last half of the 2021 fall season injured. He had 305 all-purpose yards (178 yards rushing, 114 kickoff return yards and 13 yards receiving) as a true freshman in that spring 2021 title game.

TITLE CHANCES

The Grizzlies' 27 playoff appearances are the most in the second-tier of Division I football. They were national champs in 1995 and 2001, and runner-ups in 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2009 — the last three of those under Hauck.

All three of South Dakota State's title games have come in the past four seasons.

SOME EASIER THAN OTHERS

South Dakota State has two lopsided shutout victories in this playoff run — 41-0 over Mercer and 59-0 over Albany. Those games sandwiched a 23-12 win over Villanova in a game affected by 45-mph wind gusts.

After opening the playoffs with a 30-point win over Delaware, the Griz needed overtime to beat Furman, and two overtimes to win their semifinal against North Dakota State.

"We're a hard-nosed tough team that fights our tail off," said Grizzlies senior defensive tackle Alex Gubner, a first-teamer on AP FCS All-America team.

ON TV, ABC

For the fourth time in five years, ABC will broadcast the FCS title game. It will remain on that over-the-air network as part of a \$920 million, eight-year agreement between the NCAA and ESPN announced this week that includes exclusive rights to 40 championships.

"Sometimes people think, well, ABC's not that big a deal. It's a big deal," said Ty Halpin, the NCAA director of championships and alliances for Division I football. "Montana fans and SDSU fans are going to find the game wherever it is. ... We're trying to get to those people that maybe don't really watch FCS football very often to grow what we're doing."

REMEMBERING COACH READ

Former Montana coach Don Read, who retired after leading the Griz to their first national title in 1995, died Wednesday. He was 90.

Voters cast ballots in a Bangladesh election marred by violence and an opposition boycott

By KRUTIKA PATHI and JULHAS ALAM Associated Press

DHAKA (AP) — Voters in Bangladesh cast ballots Sunday in a parliamentary election fraught with violence and a boycott from the main opposition party, paving the way for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League to seize a fourth consecutive term.

Days of violence including at least 18 arson attacks preceded the vote but the election day passed relatively calm. One hour before the voting closed, turnout was only 27.15%, said the Election Commission.

Security incidents, including four deaths in an arson attack on a passenger train on Friday, have intensified tensions ahead of the election that was shunned by the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its allied groups.

Authorities blamed much of the violence on the BNP, accusing it of seeking to sabotage the election. On Saturday, detectives arrested seven men belonging to the BNP and its youth wing for their alleged involvement in the train attack. The opposition party denied any role in the incident.

On Sunday, a supporter of a candidate from the ruling Awami League was stabbed to death in Munshiganj district near Dhaka, officials said. Police did not comment immediately.

A victory for the 76-year-old Hasina, the country's longest-serving leader and one of its most consequential, would come with a deeply contentious political landscape. The vote, like previous elections, has been defined by the bitter rivalry between Hasina's Awami League and BNP, led by former premier Khaleda Zia, who is ailing and under house arrest on corruption charges, which her supporters claim are politically motivated.

The two women ran the country alternatively for many years, cementing a feud that has since polarized

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 52 of 80

Bangladesh's politics and fueled violence around elections. This year's vote raised questions over its credibility when there are no major challengers to take on the incumbent.

Badshah Mia, a rickshaw puller in Dhaka, said he wouldn't vote given the limited choices, adding that the atmosphere didn't exude that of "a fair election."

Sakibul Hasan Chowdhury, a businessman, felt the same. "There is no opposition and no candidate of my choice. So how would I benefit from voting?"

A small business owner, Habibur Rahman, said he was voting for the ruling party candidate in his constituency but added that there didn't seem to be much of a turnout.

Critics and rights groups say the vote follows a troubling pattern, where the past two elections held under Hasina were sullied by allegations of vote-rigging — which authorities have denied — and another boycott by opposition parties.

The government has rejected a monthslong demand by the BNP to have a neutral caretaker government administer Sunday's vote.

The government has defended the election, saying 27 parties and 404 independent candidates are participating. But with scores of candidates from the Awami League running as independents and mostly smaller opposition parties in the race, analysts say Hasina's win is near inevitable.

Michael Kugelman, director of the South Asia Institute at the Wilson Center, said none of those contesting would be able to mount much of a challenge to Hasina's party. "The outcome is all but guaranteed, and that is that the Awami League will return (to power) again," he said, noting that "Bangladesh's democracy will be in an extremely precarious state once the election is done."

The vote has also been called into question by accusations of a sweeping crackdown against the BNP. The party says about 20,000 of its members were jailed ahead of the vote on trumped-up charges. The government disputed the figures and denied that arrests were made due to political leanings, saying the numbers of those arrested were between 2,000-3,000. The country's law minister in an interview with BBC said 10,000 were likely arrested.

Abdul Moyeen Khan, a former minister and BNP leader, said the spate of arrests forced him and scores of other party members to go into hiding for weeks until candidacy nominations were halted. "It was the only way we could ensure our safety and carry on raising our voice (against the government)" he said.

"We are not boycotting an election — what we are boycotting is a fake and one-sided election that this government is carrying out," Khan added.

Hasina is credited with transforming the economy of a young nation born out of war and making its garment sector one of the world's most competitive. Her supporters say she has staved off military coups and neutralized the threat of Islamic militancy. And internationally, she's helped raise Bangladesh's profile as a nation capable of doing business and maintaining diplomatic ties with countries often at odds with each other, like India and China.

Yet her critics say her rise has risked turning Bangladesh into becoming a one-party state where democracy is under threat, as emboldened government agencies increasingly use oppressive tools to mute critics, shrink press freedoms and restrict civil society.

The global economic slowdown is also being felt in Bangladesh, exposing cracks in its economy that have triggered labor unrest and dissatisfaction with the government.

After casting her ballot, Hasina dismissed concerns over the legitimacy of the vote, telling reporters she was accountable to the people and whether they accepted the election or not was what mattered to her.

"I'm trying my best to ensure that democracy should continue in this country," Hasina added. "Without democracy, you cannot make any development."

Blinken meets Jordan's king and foreign minister on Mideast push to keep Gaza war from spreading

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

AMMAN, Jordan (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Sunday with Jordan's king and foreign minister and visited a World Food Program warehouse in Amman as he pressed ahead with an urgent Middle East diplomatic mission to prevent Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza from spreading.

On his fourth visit to the region in three months, Blinken stressed the need for Israel to adjust its military operations to reduce civilian casualties and significantly boost the amount of humanitarian aid reaching Gaza while highlighting the importance of preparing detailed plans for the post-conflict future of the territory, which has been decimated by intensive Israeli airstrikes and ground offensives.

After a day of talks with Turkish and Greek leaders in Istanbul and Crete, Blinken met Sunday with Jordan's King Abdullah II and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi seeking buy-in for U.S. efforts to tamp down resurgent fears that the three-month-old war could engulf the region, ramp up aid deliveries to Gaza and prepare for the eventual end of hostilities.

King Abdullah II "warned of the catastrophic repercussions" of the war in Gaza while calling on the U.S. to press for an immediate cease-fire, a statement by the Royal Court said.

Jordan and other Arab states have been highly critical of Israel's actions and have eschewed public support for long-term planning, arguing that the fighting must end before such discussions can begin. They have been demanding a cease-fire since mid-October as civilian casualties began to skyrocket. Israel has refused and the U.S. has instead called for specified temporary "humanitarian pauses" to allow aid to get in and people to get to safety.

Blinken also toured the World Food Program's Regional Coordination warehouse in the Jordanian capital where trucks are being packed with aid to be delivered to Gaza through both Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings.

He commended the work of the WFP and other UN agencies as well as the government of Jordan to get assistance into Gaza.

"The efforts right here to collect and distribute food to people in need are absolutely essential," Blinken said. "The United States has worked from day one to open access routes into Gaza."

"We continue to work on that every single day, not only to open them but to multiply them, to maximize them and to try to get more assistance, more effectively," he said. "We're determined to do everything we possibly can to ameliorate the situation for the men, women and children in Gaza."

The U.S. has been pressing Israel for weeks to let greater amounts of food, water, fuel, medicine and other supplies into Gaza, and the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution on Dec. 22 calling for an immediate increase in deliveries. Three weeks ago, Israel opened Kerem Shalom, adding a second entry point for aid into Gaza after Rafah.

Still, the rate of trucks entering has not risen significantly. This week, an average of around 120 trucks a day entered through Rafah and Kerem Shalom, according to U.N. figures, far below the 500 trucks of goods going in daily before the war and far below what aid groups say is needed.

Almost the entire population of 2.3 million depends on the trucks coming across the border for their survival. One in four Palestinians in Gaza is starving, and the rest face crisis levels of hunger, according to the U.N.

More than 85% of people in Gaza have been driven from their homes by Israeli bombardment and ground offensives. Most live in U.N. shelters crowded beyond their capacity, in tent camps that have been sprung up, or on the streets. The few functioning hospitals are overwhelmed with the wounded as well as patients amid outbreaks of disease, as sanitation systems have collapsed.

In Greece on Saturday, Blinken said his trip would be dominated by "not necessarily easy conversations" with allies and partners about what they are willing to do "to build durable peace and security."

Blinken's visit comes as developments in Lebanon, northern Israel, the Red Sea and Iraq have put intense strains on what had been a modestly successful U.S. push to prevent a regional conflagration since Hamas

attacked Israel on Oct. 7, and as international criticism of Israel's military operation mounts.

From Jordan, Blinken will travel to Qatar and the United Arab Emirates on Sunday and Saudi Arabia on Monday. He will then visit Israel and the West Bank on Tuesday and Wednesday before wrapping up the trip in Egypt.

"These are not necessarily easy conversations," he said in Greece. "There are different perspectives, different needs, different requirements, but it is vital that we engage in this diplomacy now both for the sake of Gaza itself and more broadly the sake of the future for Israelis and Palestinians and for the region as a whole."

He said his priorities are protecting civilians — "far too many Palestinians have been killed" — getting more humanitarian aid into Gaza, ensuring Hamas cannot strike again, and developing a framework for Palestinian-led governance in the territory and "a Palestinian state with security assurances or Israel."

Hours before Blinken's meetings on Saturday, Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah militia fired dozens of rockets at northern Israel and said the barrage was an initial response to the targeted killing, presumably by Israel, of a top leader from the allied Hamas group in Lebanon's capital this past week. Israel responded in what became one of the heaviest days of cross-border fighting in recent weeks.

Meanwhile, stepped-up attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels have disrupted international trade and led to increased efforts by the U.S. and its allies to patrol the vital commercial waterway and respond to threats. The coalition of countries issued what amounted to a final warning to the Houthis on Wednesday to cease their attacks on vessels or face potential targeted military action. Since Dec. 19, the militants have carried out at least two dozen attacks in response to the Israel-Hamas war.

Israel signals it has wrapped up major combat in northern Gaza as the war enters its fourth month

By JULIA FRANKEL, SAMY MAGDY and NAJIB JOBAINH Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Israeli military signaled that it has wrapped up major combat in northern Gaza, saying it has completed dismantling Hamas' military infrastructure there, as the war against the militant group entered its fourth month Sunday.

The military did not address troop deployments in northern Gaza going forward. Its spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said late Saturday that forces would "continue to deepen the achievement" there, strengthen defenses along the Israel-Gaza border fence and focus on the central and southern parts of the territory.

The announcement came ahead of a visit to Israel by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Biden administration officials, including Blinken, have repeatedly urged Israel to wind down its blistering air and ground offensive in Gaza and shift to more targeted attacks against Hamas leaders to prevent harm to Palestinian civilians.

In recent weeks, Israel had already been scaling back its military assault in northern Gaza and pressing its offensive in the territory's south, where most of Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians are being squeezed into smaller areas in a humanitarian disaster while being pounded by Israeli airstrikes.

The war was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel in which the militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took some 250 people hostage.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has insisted the war will not end until the objectives of eliminating Hamas, getting Israel's hostages returned and ensuring that Gaza won't be a threat to Israel are met.

Israel's retaliation by air, land and sea has killed more than 22,700 Palestinians and wounded more than 58,000, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza. The count of the dead does not distinguish between combatants and civilians. Health officials say about two-thirds of those killed have been women and minors. Israel blames Hamas for the heavy civilian casualties because the group operates in heavily populated residential areas.

On Sunday, officials at Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis received the bodies of 18

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 55 of 80

people, including 12 children, who were killed in an Israeli strike late Saturday. More than 50 people were injured in the strike on a home in the Khan Younis refugee camp, which was set up decades ago to house refugees from the 1948 Mideast war over Israel's creation and morphed into a neighborhood of the city.

Another airstrike hit a house between Khan Younis and the southern city of Rafah, killing at least seven people whose bodies were taken to the nearby European Hospital, according to an Associated Press journalist at the facility.

Israeli forces were also pushing deeper into the central city of Deir al-Balah, where on Saturday residents in several neighborhoods were warned in flyers dropped over the city that they must evacuate their homes.

The international medical charity Doctors Without Borders, known by the acronym MSF, said it was evacuating its medical staff and their families from Deir al-Balah's Al Aqsa Martyrs' Hospital because of the growing danger.

"The situation became so dangerous that some staff living in the neighboring areas were not able to leave their houses because of the constant threats of drones and snipers," said Carolina Lopez, the group's emergency coordinator at the hospital.

She said a bullet penetrated a wall of the hospital's intensive care unit on Friday, and that "drone attacks and sniper fire were just a few hundred meters from the hospital" over the past couple of days.

The group had about 50 Palestinian and international medical staff in the hospital. Lopez said the hospital has received between 150 and 200 injured people daily in recent weeks. "On some days, we have received more dead than injured," she said. "No one and nowhere is safe in Gaza."

Hagari, the military spokesman, said the scattered fighting in northern Gaza was to be expected, along with rockets sporadically being launched from there toward Israel. He said Hamas no longer operates in an organized manner in the area, but that militants "without a framework and without commanders" are still present. The military has said it has killed more than 8,000 Hamas fighters, without presenting evidence.

Hagari said Israeli forces would act differently in the south than they had in northern Gaza, where heavy bombardment and ground combat leveled entire neighborhoods.

He said the urban refugee camps currently being targeted by the military are packed with gunmen and that "an underground city of sprawling tunnels" was discovered underneath Khan Younis. He said the military is "applying the lessons we learned," but did not elaborate. Echoing Israeli political leaders, he said the fighting "will continue throughout 2024."

His comments about changing the way the forces are fighting appeared to be a nod to Blinken, who is on his fourth Mideast trip in three months.

In addition to appeals for scaling back high-intensity combat, Blinken has called for more aid to reach Gaza and urged Israel's leaders to come up with a vision for post-war Gaza.

Two U.S. senators who inspected aid deliveries over the weekend described a cumbersome process that is slowing relief to the Palestinian population in the besieged territory — largely due to Israeli inspections of cargo trucks, with seemingly arbitrary rejections of vital humanitarian equipment. The system to ensure that aid deliveries within Gaza don't get hit by Israeli forces is "totally broken," said Sens. Chris Van Hollen and Jeff Merkley, both Democrats.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration and Netanyahu remain far apart on who should run the territory after the war, with the Israeli leader repeatedly rejecting the Washington-floated idea of having a reformed Palestinian Authority, an autonomy government in parts of the occupied West Bank, eventually administer Gaza.

In a further complication of Blinken's mission, a new escalation of cross-border fighting between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah has put strains on a U.S. push to prevent a regional conflagration. Saturday's fighting was described by Hezbollah as an "initial response" to the targeted killing of a top Hamas leader in a Hezbollah stronghold of the Lebanese capital of Beirut last week. The strike was presumed to have been carried out by Israel.

Snow hinders rescues and aid deliveries to isolated communities after Japan quakes kill 128 people

By HIRO KOMAE, AYAKA MCGILL and YURI KAGEYAMA Associated Press

WAJIMA, Japan (AP) — Rescue teams worked through snow to deliver supplies to isolated hamlets, six days after a powerful earthquake hit western Japan, killing at least 128 people. Heavy snowfall expected in Ishikawa Prefecture later Sunday and through the night added to the urgency.

After Monday's 7.6 magnitude temblor, 195 people were still unaccounted for, a slight decrease from the more than 200 reported earlier, and 560 people were injured. Hundreds of aftershocks have followed, rattling Noto Peninsula, where the quakes are centered.

Taiyo Matsushita walked three hours through mud to reach a supermarket in Wajima city to buy food and other supplies for his family. The home where he lives with his wife and four children, and about 20 nearby homes, are among the more than a dozen communities cut off by landslides.

Power was out, and in a matter of hours, they couldn't even use their cell phones, he told Jiji Press.

"We want everyone to know help isn't coming to some places," Matsushita was quoted as saying by Jiji Press. "We feel such an attachment to this community. But when I think about my children, it's hard to imagine we can keep living here."

Late Saturday, a woman in her 90s was rescued from a crumbled home in Suzu, Ishikawa Prefecture, after 124 hours trapped in the rubble. She was welcomed by shouts of encouragement, although the darkness and a long blue sheet of plastic blocked her from view.

Chances for survival greatly diminish after the first 72 hours.

Of the deaths, 69 were in Wajima, 38 in Suzu, 11 in Anamizu, and the rest in smaller numbers spread among four towns. Firefighters and other disaster officials were trying to get to nine people believed to be buried under collapsed houses in Anamizu, Japanese media reports said.

Ishikawa officials say 1,370 homes were completely or partially destroyed. Many of the houses in that western coastal region of the main island are aging and wooden. Cars lay tossed on cracked, bumpy roads. Snow blanketed the debris and highways. Wires dangled from lopsided poles.

The more than 30,000 people who evacuated to schools, auditoriums and community facilities slept on cold floors. They trembled in fear through the aftershocks. They prayed their missing loved ones were safe. Others cried softly for those who had died.

Mikihito Kokon, one of those who had evacuated, was worried about what the snowfall might do to his home, which was still standing but a wreck.

"You don't even know where to start or where the entrance is," he sighed.

Some people were living out of their cars, and long lines formed at gas stations. Food and water supplies were short. Worries grew about snow and rainfall, which raise the risk of mudslides and further damage, as snow collecting on roofs can flatten barely standing homes.

A fire that raged for hours gutted a major part of Wajima, and a tsunami swept through homes, sucking cars down into muddy waters.

"We're all doing our best to cope, helping each other, bringing things from home and sharing them with everyone," Kokon said. "That is how we are living right now."

At Florida's only public HBCU, students are wary of political influence on race education

By SHARON JOHNSON Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A core mission of Florida A&M University from its founding over a century ago has been to educate African Americans. It was written into the law that established the school along with another college, in Gainesville, reserved for white students.

At Florida's only public historically Black university, some students now fear political constraints might

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 57 of 80

get in the way of teaching parts of their history.

A law signed last spring by Gov. Ron DeSantis, a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, blocks public colleges from using taxpayer money on diversity programs. It also forbids instruction of theories that "systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States and were created to maintain social, political, and economic inequities."

The new law, part of broader GOP efforts to rein in campus efforts on equity and inclusion, has spurred protests on campus. Some students say they are watching for signs the new guidance will affect teaching of topics related to race and American history.

Chad Preston, a senior political science major, said he worries some viewpoints will be silenced.

"We deserve the same level of education that all these other states are getting. We deserve the same information," he said.

DeSantis describes the law as an effort to rid university classrooms of what he calls left-leaning "woke" indoctrination. His education policies — including limits on what schools can teach about racism and which bathrooms students use — have faced criticism from civil rights leaders but fueled his political rise by harnessing culture war passions.

"In reality, what this concept of DEI has been is to attempt to impose orthodoxy on the university," DeSantis said at a ceremony in May when he signed the bill into law. "This has basically been used as a veneer to impose an ideological agenda, and that is wrong."

The university, founded in 1887, hosts about 10,000 students at its campus a few blocks from the state capitol.

The new law has made Florida a difficult learning environment for students and faculty of color, said Marybeth Gasman, a Rutgers University historian whose research focuses on historically Black colleges and universities and systemic racism in higher education.

"I've talked to some FAMU faculty who have basically told me that they're keeping their head down because they're afraid they're going to lose their jobs," Gasman said. "If I were in Florida, I would probably be concerned as well."

FAMU has not seen upheaval anywhere near the scale of New College of Florida, a progressive campus where DeSantis and his allies overhauled the Board of Trustees and installed a majority of conservative figures. But many on the FAMU campus are wary.

Asked about the impact of the new law, a university spokesperson referred to a comment Florida A&M President Larry Robinson made in June.

"There are more than 30 pieces of legislation passed this legislative session that have some impact on educational institutions in Florida, including FAMU, and we take them all seriously," Robinson said. "But our commitment to 'Excellence With Caring' remains strong, and remains unchanged."

In early December, the board overseeing Florida's state university system released proposed regulations outlining programs that would be prohibited from receiving state or federal money under the new law. Programs on the outs would include any that promote "differential or preferential treatment of individuals, or classifies such individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, gender identity, or sexual orientation."

The FAMU Democrats have been taking steps to ensure the messages of speakers they invite to campus are moderate, said Jovan Mickens, a senior and president of the student political group.

"With my organization, there are certain things I can't do like bring certain people on campus for a panel discussion. We're tip-toeing around this university," he said.

Historically Black colleges and universities often receive less funding than predominantly white public colleges. A group of students at FAMU have filed a lawsuit against the state, saying it has underfunded their school by nearly \$1.3 billion.

But for leaders of public colleges, pushing back on policies they disagree with could put them at odds with the same officials deciding on their budgets, said Abul Pitre, chair of the Department of Africana Studies at San Francisco State University.

"It requires a certain kind of balance that does not allow them to have too much of an Afrocentric social

justice perspective, because they have to go to the same politicians for money who are advocating to eliminate it," he said.

Raghan Pickett, a senior at FAMU, traces her lineage back to Rosewood, Florida, where hundreds of Black people were killed or driven out in 1923 by a mob of white men who then destroyed their neighborhoods. She fears the new law could stop instructors from teaching about such atrocities.

"Back then, it was afraid of being lynched," Pickett said. "Today, Black people are still struggling. We're still fighting to learn basic history."

The US sees a drop in illegal border crossings after Mexico increases enforcement

By VALERIE GONZALEZ AND ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

EAGLE PASS, Texas (AP) — Daniel Bermudez's family had fled Venezuela and was headed to the U.S. to seek asylum when the freight train they were riding through Mexico was stopped by immigration officials.

His wife tried to explain that her family had permission to go to the U.S. Instead, they flew her to Mexico's southern border as part of a surge of enforcement actions that U.S. officials say have contributed to a sharp drop in illegal border crossings.

In addition to forcing migrants from trains, Mexico also resumed flying and busing them to the southern part of the country and started flying some home to Venezuela.

Even if temporary, the decrease in illegal crossings is welcome news for the White House. President Joe Biden's administration is locked in talks with Senate negotiators over restricting asylum and \$110 billion in aid for Ukraine and Israel hangs in the balance.

Bermudez said his wife became separated from her family when she talked to authorities as he gathered his stepchild and their belongings. He wanted to run, but his wife said they shouldn't because they had followed procedure by making an appointment with U.S. immigration authorities.

"I told her, 'Don't trust them. Let's go into the brush,'" Bermudez said, adding that other migrants had fled. He recalled her telling him, "Why are they sending us back if we have an appointment?"

Last week, Bermudez, his stepchild and two other relatives were waiting for her at a shelter in the Mexican border town of Piedras Negras as she took a bus back in hopes of still making the date.

Mexico's immigration agency sent at least 22 flights from its border region with the U.S. to southern cities during the last 10 days of December, according to Witness at the Border, an advocacy group that tracks flight data. Most were from Piedras Negras, which is across the border from Eagle Pass, Texas.

Mexico also ran two removal flights to Venezuela with 329 migrants. The stretch was punctuated by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Mexico City on Dec. 28 to confront unprecedented crossings to the United States.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said a financial shortfall that had led the immigration agency to suspend deportations and other operations was resolved. He did not offer details.

Arrests for illegal crossings into the U.S. from Mexico fell to about 2,500 on Monday, down from more than 10,000 on several days in December, according to U.S. authorities. In the Border Patrol's busiest area, arrests totaled 13,800 during the seven-day period ending Friday, down 29% from 19,400 two weeks earlier, according to Tucson, Arizona, sector chief John Modlin.

The drop led U.S. Customs and Border Protection to reopen the port of entry in Lukeville, Arizona, on Thursday after a monthlong closure on the most direct route from Phoenix to its nearest beaches. The U.S. also restored operations at Eagle Pass and three other locations.

Merchants in Eagle Pass, a city of about 30,000 people, saw sales take "a major hit" while a bridge was closed to vehicle traffic so border agents could be reassigned to help process migrants, Maverick County Judge Ramsey English Cantu said.

"We survive pretty much from everything that comes from the Mexican side," he said.

Last month, CBP resumed freight crossings in Eagle Pass and El Paso, Texas, after a five-day shutdown

that U.S. officials said was a response to as many as 1,000 migrants riding atop a single train through Mexico before trying to walk across the border.

In Piedras Negras on Thursday, Casa del Migrante housed about 200 migrants, down from as high as 1,500 recently.

Among them was Manuel Rodriguez, 40, who said his family will miss their appointment to seek asylum that was made through the U.S. government's CBP One app. He said the appointment was registered with his in-laws, who were deported to Venezuela after authorities boarded the bus they were riding.

"It was all under her name and she lost everything," Rodriguez said.

Proposals being discussed by the White House and Senate negotiators include a new expulsion authority that would deny rights to seek asylum if illegal border crossings reach a certain threshold. Any such authority would almost certainly depend on Mexico's willingness to take back non-Mexicans who enter the U.S. illegally, something it does now on a limited scale.

Mexico's support was critical to defunct Trump-era policies that forced 70,000 asylum-seekers to wait in Mexico for hearings in U.S. immigration court and to deny rights to seek asylum during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Andrew Selee, president of the Migration Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., cautioned against overstating Mexico's role in the recent drop in traffic. Panama reported that less than 25,000 migrants walked through the Darién jungle in December, about half of October's level and a sign that fewer people are leaving South America for the U.S. Migration usually drops in December amid holidays and cold weather.

"The U.S. is able to lean on Mexico for a short-term enforcement effect on migration at the border, but the long-term effects are not always clear," Selee said.

Federal officials order grounding of some Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliners after plane suffers a blowout

By CLAIRE RUSH, DAVID KOENIG and BECKY BOHRER Associated Press

Federal officials on Saturday ordered the immediate grounding of some Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliners until they are inspected after an Alaska Airlines plane suffered a blowout that left a gaping hole in the side of the fuselage.

The required inspections take around four to eight hours per aircraft and affect about 171 airplanes worldwide.

Alaska Airlines said in a statement that of the 65 737 Max 9 aircraft in its fleet, crews had inspected the paneled-over exits as part of recent maintenance work on 18 planes, and those were cleared to return to service Saturday. Inspections for the remaining aircraft were expected to be completed in the coming days, the company said.

An Alaska Airlines jetliner blew out a portion of its fuselage shortly after takeoff 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) above Oregon late Friday, forcing the pilots to make an emergency landing as its 171 passengers and six crew members donned oxygen masks.

No one was seriously hurt as the depressurized plane returned safely to Portland International Airport about 20 minutes after departure.

Authorities are still looking for the door from the paneled-over exit and have a good idea of where it landed, near Oregon Route 217 and Barnes Road in the Cedar Hills area west of Portland, National Transportation Safety Board Chair Jennifer Homendy said at a news conference late Saturday.

"If you find that, please, please contact local law enforcement," she said.

It was extremely lucky that the airplane had not yet reached cruising altitude, when passengers and flight attendants might be walking around the cabin, Homendy said.

"No one was seated in 26A and B where that door plug is, the aircraft was around 16,000 feet and only 10 minutes out from the airport when the door blew," she said.

The headrests were gone on seats 26A and 25A and 26A was missing part of its seatback. There were also clothing items strewn about the area, Homendy said.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 60 of 80

Passenger Evan Smith said a boy and his mother were sitting in the row where the panel blew out, and the child's shirt was sucked off him and out of the plane.

"You heard a big loud bang to the left rear. A whooshing sound and all the oxygen masks deployed instantly and everyone got those on," Smith told KATU-TV.

Homendy could not confirm reports that anyone had a shirt sucked off by the depressurization or provide details yet about what happened to those sitting closest to the blown fuselage.

Homendy and investigators from the NTSB arrived in Portland on Saturday to begin an investigation that is likely to last months.

Alaska Airlines CEO Ben Minicucci said the inspection of the company's 737-9 aircraft could take days to complete. They make up a fifth of the company's 314 planes.

"We are working with Boeing and regulators to understand what occurred ... and will share updates as more information is available," Minicucci said. "My heart goes out to those who were on this flight – I am so sorry for what you experienced."

Alaska canceled more than 100 flights, or 15% of its Saturday schedule by midday, according to FlightAware. United said the plane inspections would result in about 60 cancellations.

The Port of Portland, which operates the airport, told KPTV that the fire department treated minor injuries at the scene. One person was taken for more treatment but wasn't seriously hurt.

Flight 1282 took off from Portland at 5:07 p.m. Friday for a two-hour flight to Ontario, California. About six minutes later, the chunk of the fuselage blew out as the plane was at about 16,000 feet (4.8 kilometers). One of the pilots declared an emergency and asked for clearance to descend to 10,000 feet (3 kilometers), the altitude where the air would have enough oxygen to breathe safely.

"We need to turn back to Portland," the pilot told controllers in a calm voice that she maintained throughout the landing.

Videos posted by passengers online showed a gaping hole where the paneled-over exit had been and passengers wearing masks. They applauded when the plane landed safely about 13 minutes after the blowout. Firefighters then came down the aisle, asking passengers to remain in their seats as they treated the injured.

The aircraft involved rolled off the assembly line and received its certification two months ago, according to online FAA records. It had been on 145 flights since entering commercial service Nov. 11, said FlightRadar24, another tracking service. The flight from Portland was the aircraft's third of the day.

Aviation experts were stunned that a piece would fly off a new aircraft. Anthony Brickhouse, a professor of aerospace safety at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, said he has seen panels of fuselage come off planes before, but couldn't recall one where passengers "are looking at the lights of the city."

He said the incident is a reminder for passengers to stay buckled in.

"If there had been a passenger in that window seat who just happened to have their seat belt off, we'd be looking at a totally different news story."

The Max is the newest version of Boeing's venerable 737, a twin-engine, single-aisle plane frequently used on U.S. domestic flights. The plane went into service in May 2017.

The president of the union representing flight attendants at 19 airlines, including Alaska Airlines, commended the crew for keeping passengers safe.

"Flight Attendants are trained for emergencies and we work every flight for aviation safety first and foremost," Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants, said in a statement Saturday.

Two Max 8 jets crashed in 2018 and 2019, killing 346 people and leading to a near two-year worldwide grounding of all Max 8 and Max 9 planes. They returned to service only after Boeing made changes to an automated flight control system implicated in the crashes.

Last year the FAA told pilots to limit use of an anti-ice system on the Max in dry conditions because of concern that inlets around the engines could overheat and break away, possibly striking the plane.

Max deliveries have been interrupted at times to fix manufacturing flaws. The company told airlines in December to inspect the planes for a possible loose bolt in the rudder-control system.

As police lose the war on crime in South Africa, private security companies step in

By MOGOMOTSI MAGOME Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Thamsanqa Mothobi was going about his life in Johannesburg when he was carjacked and taken to an informal settlement where robbers accessed his mobile banking apps.

"They had guns and demanded the PIN codes for my apps. They increased the withdrawal limits in my accounts and emptied them. I was only released in the early hours of the morning," the father of three said, adding that his one comfort was that he was not killed.

It's an all-too-common story in South Africa, a country that in the past year has seen an average of 75 killings and 400 robberies with aggravating circumstances every day, according to official statistics. While it may be Africa's most developed country, it also has one of the highest violent crime rates in the world.

Experts have warned that the South African police are losing the battle against crime — and that has led those citizens who can afford it to turn to a booming private security industry.

"It's not getting better, it is getting worse," said Anton Koen, a former police officer who now runs a private security firm that specializes in tracking and recovering hijacked and stolen vehicles. "The murder rate is the highest in 20 years, violence is getting worse because our justice system seems to be failing us, the public of South Africa."

There are more than 2.7 million registered private security officers in the country, according to the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority, making South Africa's security industry one of the largest in the world. That compares with fewer than 150,000 police officers for the country's 62 million people.

Private security companies earn a monthly fee for patrolling neighborhoods and providing armed response to their clients' alarm systems. They also offer tracking and car recovery services, which often results in them getting involved in high-speed chases of car thieves and hijackers.

Figures from PSIRA show that the number of security businesses in South Africa grew by 43% in the past decade, while the number of registered security officers has increased by 44%.

Associated Press journalists accompanied private security officers on patrols around suburbs in east Johannesburg, where it was evident they were performing the role of the police in many circumstances.

Koen was armed with an assault rifle and wore a bulletproof vest as he patrolled in his response vehicle, which is fitted with cameras and has car registration identification technology that can pick up suspected stolen vehicles.

During one of the patrols, Koen sped to where two suspects had been apprehended by other private security personnel after a vehicle they were traveling in was linked to burglaries and armed robberies. The suspects were handed over at a nearby police station, which typically happens to those apprehended by security firms.

But staying safe and avoiding crime is another example of the stark inequality that afflicts South Africa, as only the wealthy few can afford private security services. The majority of South Africans must still rely on an under-resourced and struggling police force.

More than 580,000 private security guards are currently active and employed — more than the police and army combined — according to figures from PSIRA.

"People with money make up a very small percentage of South Africa. That means that the vast majority of South Africans don't really benefit from this security industry," said Chad Thomas, an organized crime expert who has worked more than 30 years in law enforcement and now in private security.

"If you live in a traditional township environment, or if you live in an informal settlement, it is few and far between that you will see security patrols in those areas because they don't have paying customers."

Even those who are lucky enough to have private protection can't always be sure of safety.

In November, a South African government minister and her bodyguards were held up at gunpoint on a highway and robbed of money and their cellphones. The two bodyguards were made to lie on the ground while the robbers ransacked their vehicle and stole their police-issued guns.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 62 of 80

It was a reminder that as long as violence is so prevalent in South Africa, everyone is in danger. Thomas, like many, ties the high levels of violent crime in South Africa to anger over the country's deep problems of poverty.

"We have seen this anger playing out in violent acts," Thomas said. "So, what should be a normal robbery where someone gets pointed (at) with a firearm and their belongings are taken ... becomes an opportunity for the robber to vent frustration and anger on that innocent victim."

Violent crime in South Africa has spiked over the past decade after a period when it decreased substantially. There were 27,494 killings in South Africa in the year to February 2023, compared with 16,213 in 2012-2013. South Africa's homicide rate in 2022-2023 was 45 per 100,000 people, compared with a rate of 6.3 in the United States and around 1 in most European countries.

The police say 10,000 new police officers are going into service from the start of 2024, in an effort to reverse the trend.

"This is more boots on the ground, we'll have more members on the ground who will be able to reach more communities and more delivery of services," National Police Commissioner Gen. Fannie Masemola said during a graduation parade in December for some of the new officers.

In an indication that police are overwhelmed, local government authorities in the Gauteng province that includes Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city, have recently introduced their own crime wardens to help with law enforcement. The uniformed but unarmed wardens provide support to police operations, though they have faced questions over their legal status.

Thomas said that crime "can thrive in an environment where there is a disorganized police force."

"We don't have a disorganized police force because they set out to be disorganized," he said. "It is simply because they don't have sufficient resources, they don't have sufficient capacity."

Trump downplays Jan. 6 on the anniversary of the Capitol siege and calls jailed rioters 'hostages'

By MICHELLE L. PRICE, JILL COLVIN and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

NEWTON, Iowa (AP) — Former President Donald Trump, campaigning in Iowa Saturday, marked the third anniversary of the Jan. 6, 2021 assault on the U.S. Capitol by casting the migrant surge on the southern border as the "real" insurrection.

Just over a week before the Republican nomination process begins with Iowa's kickoff caucuses, Trump did not explicitly acknowledge the date. But he continued to claim that countries have been emptying jails and mental institutions to fuel a record number of migrant crossings, even though there is no evidence that is the case.

"When you talk about insurrection, what they're doing, that's the real deal. That's the real deal. Not patriotically and peacefully — peacefully and patriotically," Trump said, quoting from his speech on Jan. 6, before a violent mob of his supporters stormed the Capitol as part of a desperate bid to keep him in power after his 2020 election loss.

Trump's remarks in Newton in central Iowa came a day after Biden delivered a speech near Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, where he cast Trump as a grave threat to democracy and called Jan. 6 a day when "we nearly lost America — lost it all."

With a likely rematch of the 2020 election looming, both Biden and Trump have frequently invoked Jan. 6 on the campaign trail. Trump, who is under federal indictment for his efforts to overturn his 2020 loss to Biden, has consistently downplayed or spread conspiracy theories about a riot in which his supporters — spurred by his lies about election fraud — tried to disrupt the certification of Biden's win.

Trump also continued to bemoan the treatment of those who have been jailed for participating in the riot, again labeling them "hostages." More than 1,230 people have been charged with federal crimes connected to the violence, including assaulting police officers and seditious conspiracy.

"They ought to release the J6 hostages. They've suffered enough," he said in Clinton, in the state's far east. "Release the J6 hostages, Joe. Release 'em, Joe. You can do it real easy, Joe," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 63 of 80

Trump was holding the commit-to-caucus events just over a week before voting will begin on Jan. 15. He arrived at his last event nearly three-and-a-half hours late due to what he said was a mechanical issue with a rented plane.

After Trump spoke in Newton, he signed hats and other items people in the crowd passed to him, including a copy of a Playboy magazine that featured him on the cover.

One man in the crowd, Dick Green, was standing about 15 feet away, weeping after the former president autographed his white "Trump Country" hat and shook his hand.

"It'll never get sold. It will be in my family," Green said of the hat.

A caucus captain and a pastor in Brighton, Iowa, Green said he had prayed for four years to meet Trump.

"I'll never forget it," he said. "It's just the beginning of his next presidency."

Trump spent much of the day assailing Biden, casting him as incompetent and the real threat to democracy. But he also attacked fellow Republicans, including the late Sen. John McCain of Arizona, whose "no" vote derailed GOP efforts to repeal former President Barack Obama's signature healthcare law.

"John McCain, for some reason, couldn't get his arm up that day," said Trump of McCain, who was shot down over Vietnam in 1967 and spent 5½ years as a prisoner of war. The injuries he suffered left him unable to lift his arms over his head for the rest of his life. His daughter, Meghan McCain, responded on X, the site formerly known as Twitter, calling Trump an expletive and her father an "American hero."

Earlier Saturday, Trump courted young conservative activists in Des Moines, speaking to members of Run GenZ, an organization that encourages young conservatives to run for office.

Trump's campaign is hoping to turn out thousands of supporters who have never caucused before as part of a show of force aimed at denying his rivals momentum and demonstrating his organizing prowess heading into the general election.

His chief rivals, former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, were also campaigning in the state as they battle for second place in hopes of emerging as the most viable alternative to Trump, who is leading by wide margins in early state and national polls.

Trump has used the trip to step up his attacks against Haley, who has been gaining ground. He again cast her Saturday as insufficiently conservative and a "globalist" beholden to Wall Street donors, and accused her of being disloyal for running against him.

"Nikki will sell you out just like she sold me out," he charged.

On Friday, Trump had highlighted several recent Haley statements that drew criticism, including her comment that voters in New Hampshire correct Iowa's mistakes ("You don't have to be corrected," he said) and her failure to mention slavery when asked what had caused the Civil War.

"I don't know if it's going to have an impact, but you know like ... slavery's sort of the obvious answer as opposed to her three paragraphs of bulls---," he told a crowd Friday.

In Newton, he said that he was fascinated by the "horrible" war, which he suggested he could have prevented.

"It's so fascinating," he said. "It's just different. I just find it... I'm so attracted to seeing it... So many mistakes were made. See that was something I think could have been negotiated, to be honest with you."

Haley's campaign has pointed to his escalating attention, including a new attack ad, as evidence Trump is worried about her momentum.

"God bless President Trump, he's been on a temper tantrum every day about me ... and everything he's saying is not true," Haley told a crowd Saturday in North Liberty, Iowa. ____

A California law banning the carrying of firearms in most public places is blocked again

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A new California law that bans people from carrying firearms in most public places was once again blocked from taking effect Saturday as a court case challenging it continues.

A 9th Circuit Court of Appeals panel dissolved a temporary hold on a lower court injunction blocking the law. The hold was issued by a different 9th Circuit panel and had allowed the law to go into effect Jan. 1.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 64 of 80

Saturday's decision keeps in place a Dec. 20 ruling by U.S. District Judge Cormac Carney blocking the law. Carney said that it violates the Second Amendment and that gun rights groups would likely prevail in proving it unconstitutional.

The law, signed by Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, prohibits people from carrying concealed guns in 26 types of places including public parks and playgrounds, churches, banks and zoos. The ban applies regardless of whether a person has a concealed carry permit.

Newsom has positioned himself as a leader on gun control and says he will keep pushing for stricter regulations.

Following Saturday's ruling his office issued a statement saying, "this dangerous decision puts the lives of Californians on the line."

The president of the California Rifle and Pistol Association, which sued to block the law, countered that "the politicians' ploy to get around the Second Amendment has been stopped for now."

A woman in her 90s is rescued alive 5 days after Japan's deadly earthquake

By HIRO KOMAE, AYAKA MCGILL and YURI KAGEYAMA Associated Press

WAJIMA, Japan (AP) — A woman in her 90s was pulled alive from a collapsed house in western Japan late Saturday, 124 hours after a major quake slammed the region, killing at least 126 people, toppling buildings and setting off landslides.

The woman in Suzu city, Ishikawa Prefecture, had survived for more than five days after the 7.6 magnitude quake that hit the area Monday. Nationally broadcast news footage showed helmeted rescue workers covering the view of the area with blue plastic, and the woman was not visible.

Chances for survival diminish after the first 72 hours. Several other dramatic rescues have been reported over the past few days as soldiers, firefighters and others joined a widespread effort.

Among the 126 dead was a 5-year-old boy who had been recovering from injuries he suffered when boiling water spilled on him during Monday's 7.6 magnitude earthquake. His condition suddenly worsened and he died Friday, according to Ishikawa prefecture, the hardest-hit region.

Aftershocks threatened to bury more homes and block roads crucial for relief shipments. Officials warned that roads already cracked could collapse completely. That risk was growing with rain and snow expected overnight and Sunday.

Wajima city has recorded the highest number of deaths with 69, followed by Suzu with 38. More than 500 people were injured, at least 27 of them seriously.

The temblors left roofs sitting haplessly on roads and everything beneath them crushed flat. Roads were warped like rubber. A fire turned a neighborhood in Wajima to ashes.

More than 200 people were still unaccounted-for, although the number has fluctuated. Eleven people were reported trapped under two homes that collapsed in Anamizu.

For Shiro Kokuda, 76, the house in Wajima where he grew up was spared but a nearby temple went up in flames and he was still looking for his friends at evacuation centers.

"It's been really tough," he said.

Japan is one of the fastest-aging societies in the world. The population in Ishikawa and nearby areas has dwindled over the years. A fragile economy centered on crafts and tourism is now more imperiled than ever.

In an unusual gesture from nearby North Korea, leader Kim Jong Un sent a message of condolence to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, the official Korean Central News Agency reported Saturday.

Japan received messages earlier expressing sympathy and promises of aid from United States President Joe Biden and other allies.

Japanese government spokesperson Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters that Japan was grateful for all the messages, including the one from North Korea. Hayashi said the last time Japan received a condolence message from North Korea for a disaster was in 1995.

Along Japan's coastline, power was gradually being restored, but water supplies were still short. Emer-

gency water systems were also damaged.

Thousands of troops were flying and trucking in water, food and medicine to the more than 30,000 people who had evacuated to auditoriums, schools and other facilities.

The nationally circulated Yomiuri newspaper reported that its aerial study had located more than 100 landslides in the area, some blocking lifeline roads. Some communities remained isolated and waiting for aid.

"I hope the city recovers, and I hope people won't leave, and they stay here to work hard toward recovery," said Seizo Shinbo, a seafood trader, who was stocking up on noodles, canned goods and rice balls at a supermarket.

"There is no food. There is no water. And the worst is gas. People are still in kilometer-long lines," Shinbo said.

Senior Biden leaders, Pentagon officials unaware for days that defense secretary was hospitalized

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senior Biden administration leaders, top Pentagon officials and members of Congress were unaware for days that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin had been hospitalized since Monday, U.S. officials said Saturday, as questions swirled about his condition and the secrecy surrounding it.

The Pentagon did not inform the White House National Security Council or top adviser Jake Sullivan of Austin's hospitalization at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, until Thursday, according to two administration officials. The officials were not authorized to speak publicly about the matter and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The Pentagon's failure to disclose Austin's hospitalization for days reflects a stunning lack of transparency about his illness, how serious it was and when he may be released. Such secrecy, at a time when the United States is juggling myriad national security crises, runs counter to normal practice with the president and other senior U.S. officials and Cabinet members.

Still, President Joe Biden spoke with Austin on Saturday, and expressed confidence in him, according to a White House official who was not authorized to speak publicly about internal discussions and spoke on condition of anonymity.

In a statement issued Saturday evening, Austin took responsibility for the delays in notification.

"I recognize I could have done a better job ensuring the public was appropriately informed. I commit to doing better," said Austin, acknowledging the concerns about transparency. "But this is important to say: this was my medical procedure, and I take full responsibility for my decisions about disclosure."

Austin, 70, remained hospitalized due to complications following a minor elective medical procedure, his press secretary said, as it became increasingly clear how closely the Pentagon held information about his stay at Walter Reed. In his statement, Austin said he is on the mend and is looking forward to returning to the Pentagon soon, but he provided no other details about his ailment.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said the White House and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were notified about Austin's hospitalization, but he would not confirm when that notice happened.

A number of U.S. officials said Saturday that many of the most senior Pentagon service leaders were unaware until Friday that Austin was in the hospital. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations. Politico was the first to report the White House learned of his condition on Thursday.

Ryder said members of Congress were told late Friday afternoon, and other officials said lawmakers were informed after 5 p.m. It was not clear when key senior members of Austin's staff were told, but across the Pentagon, many staff found out when the department released a statement about Austin's hospital stay just minutes after 5 p.m. Many believed Austin was out on vacation for the week.

Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks, who took over when Austin was hospitalized, was also away. A U.S. official said she had a communications setup with her in Puerto Rico that allowed her to do the job while Austin, who spent 41 years in the military and retired as a four-star Army general in 2016, was incapacitated.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 66 of 80

Ryder said Saturday that Austin is recovering well and resumed his full duties Friday evening from his hospital bed. Asked why the hospital stay was kept secret for so long, Ryder said on Friday that it was an "evolving situation," and that due to privacy and medical issues, the Pentagon did not make Austin's absence public. Ryder declined to provide any other details about Austin's medical procedure or health.

"The Department of Defense deliberately withheld the Secretary of Defense's medical condition for days. That is unacceptable," said Mississippi Sen. Roger Wicker, the highest-ranking Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee. "We are learning more every hour about the Department's shocking defiance of the law."

Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Arkansas, also criticized the delayed notice.

"The Secretary of Defense is the key link in the chain of command between the president and the uniformed military, including the nuclear chain of command, when the weightiest of decisions must be made in minutes," said Cotton in a statement, adding that if Austin didn't immediately tell the White House, "there must be consequences for this shocking breakdown."

The Pentagon Press Association, which represents media members who cover the Defense Department, sent a letter of protest on Friday evening to Ryder and Chris Meagher, the assistant defense secretary for public affairs.

"The fact that he has been at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for four days and the Pentagon is only now alerting the public late on a Friday evening is an outrage," the PPA said in its letter. "At a time when there are growing threats to U.S. military service members in the Middle East and the U.S. is playing key national security roles in the wars in Israel and Ukraine, it is particularly critical for the American public to be informed about the health status and decision-making ability of its top defense leader."

Other senior U.S. leaders have been much more transparent about hospital stays. When Attorney General Merrick Garland went in for a routine medical procedure in 2022, his office informed the public a week in advance and outlined how long he was expected to be out and when he would return to work.

Austin's hospitalization comes as Iranian-backed militias have repeatedly launched drones, missiles and rockets at bases where U.S. troops are stationed in Iraq and Syria, leading the Biden administration to strike back on a number of occasions. Those strikes often involve sensitive, top-level discussions and decisions by Austin and other key military leaders.

The U.S. is also the chief organizer behind a new international maritime coalition using ships and other assets to patrol the southern Red Sea to deter persistent attacks on commercial vessels by Houthi militants in Yemen.

In addition, the administration, particularly Austin, has been at the forefront of the effort to supply weapons and training to Ukraine, and he's also been communicating frequently with the Israelis on their war against Hamas.

Things to know about a school shooting in the small Iowa town of Perry

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

A small town in Iowa is stunned but pulling together after a school shooting in which a 17-year-old killed a sixth-grade student and wounded seven other people before authorities say he died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Many questions remain about how the shooting unfolded and what might have led up to it, but a few details have emerged.

Here are some things to know about Thursday's shooting at Perry High School:

WHAT HAPPENED

According to authorities and school officials, a teenage student armed with a pump-action shotgun and a small-caliber handgun opened fire at Perry High School just after 7:30 a.m. Thursday, shortly before classes were set to begin on the first day back after winter break. Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation spokesman Mitch Mortvedt said the shooting started in the cafeteria, where students from several grades were eating breakfast, then spilled outside the cafeteria.

The student who was killed, 11-year-old Ahmir Jolliff, was shot three times, though details about where he was at the time have not been released. Perry High School Principal Dan Marburger and six others,

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 67 of 80

including two staff members and four teenage students, suffered injuries ranging from significant to minor. The high-schooler identified as the shooter, Dylan Butler, died of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot.

Butler also had what authorities called a "rudimentary" improvised explosive device that was safely disarmed.

Police said they believe Butler acted alone.

STORIES OF SELFLESSNESS

While authorities have said little about what happened inside the school, some stories of bravery and selflessness have begun to emerge.

Authorities have said Marburger, who has been principal since 1995, put himself in harm's way in an apparent effort to protect students. Perry Superintendent Clark Wicks said Marburger was a "hero" who intervened with Butler so students could escape. Wicks said other staff also acted heroically, including Middle School Assistant Principal Adam Jessen who "carried a wounded student into a safe area."

The principal's daughter, Claire Marburger, posted on Facebook Friday night that cards were coming in from community members and students. She said her favorite, which made her and family members laugh and smile, read, "not all heroes wear capes, some are the school principal."

One mother, Bobbi Bushbaum, posted on Facebook that her son Corey was shot multiple times, but was able to stumble to a nearby field. When she arrived, she saw him being helped toward an ambulance by others, whom she thanked, saying: "I would like them to know my son wouldn't be here without them."

WHAT WAS THE MOTIVE?

Authorities haven't said.

But a law enforcement official briefed on the investigation said federal and state investigators were interviewing Butler's friends and analyzing Butler's social media profiles, including posts on TikTok and Reddit. Shortly before Thursday's shooting, Butler posted a photo on TikTok inside the bathroom of Perry High School, the official said. The photo was captioned "now we wait" and the song "Stray Bullet" by the German band KMFDM accompanied it. Investigators also have found posted photos of Butler posing with firearms, according to the official, who was not authorized to publicly discuss details of the investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Two friends and their mother who spoke with the AP said Butler was a quiet person who had been bullied relentlessly since elementary school. Sisters Yesenia Roeder and Khamya Hall, both 17, said alongside their mother, Alita, that it escalated recently when Butler's younger sister started getting picked on, too.

Wicks wouldn't discuss whether Butler had been bullied, but he defended the way his district responds to bullying.

"We take every bullying situation seriously and our goal is to always have that safe and inviting atmosphere," Wicks told reporters Friday.

THE BOY WHO WAS KILLED

Ahmir Jolliff, whose family knew him as "Smiley," was a whirlwind of cheerful activity. The 11-year-old had dashed out of his home Thursday morning, eager to see his friends on the first day back. His mother, Erica Jolliff, told the AP he loved soccer, played the tuba and sang in choir. He had a habit of touching people on their shoulder and asking them how their day was.

Ahmir, who attended the middle school connected to the high school, was shot three times.

"He was so well-loved and he loved everyone," she said. "He's such an outgoing person."

A COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER

Perry Mayor Dirk Cavanaugh expressed confidence Friday that his community would get through the painful experience together.

"We are a small town, but we will pull together in a big way to get through this," Cavanaugh told reporters.

In a show of solidarity and support for Perry, Des Moines is illuminating three bridges in the city in blue, the official school color of the Perry district.

"For the next week, as you pass by or visit the bridges lit in blue, take a moment to pause to consider those affected by the senseless tragedy at Perry High School, and the families whose safety and sense

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 68 of 80

of normalcy was shattered by the shooting," Des Moines Mayor Connie Boesen said Saturday.

Perry has about 8,000 residents and is about 40 miles (65 kilometers) northwest of Des Moines. It's home to a large pork-processing plant and is more diverse than Iowa as a whole. Census figures show 31% of residents are Hispanic, versus less than 7% statewide. Nearly 19% were born outside the U.S.

SCHOOL PLANS

Wicks said the high school will remain closed for the entire coming week while it is cleaned and repaired. He said Friday will be the earliest that classes for elementary and middle-school students could resume.

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

The shootings have cast a shadow over the state's first-in-the-nation Republican presidential caucuses, set for Jan. 15.

Questions about the shooting kept bubbling up as candidates swung through the state Thursday and Friday, but didn't disrupt their pitches to conservative caucus-goers. It reflects both Republican resistance to restrictions on guns and how commonplace school attacks have become.

At a pair of CNN town halls Thursday night, the first questions to both Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley were about guns. Both answered by stressing the need for more mental health services and school security.

Former President Donald Trump briefly mentioned the shooting at a rally Friday night in Sioux Center, Iowa.

"It's a very terrible thing that happened," Trump said. "And it's just terrible. To see that happening. That seems terrible. So surprising to see it here. But we have to get over it. We have to move forward. We have to move forward."

11-year-old killed in Iowa school shooting was a joyful boy known as 'Smiley,' his mother says

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Ahmir Jolliff dashed out of his home in Perry Thursday morning, eager to see his friends on the first day back to school after winter break.

It was vintage Ahmir — known as "Smiley" around his house — an 11-year-old whirlwind of cheerful activity. He kept a trunk of toys unlocked in the front yard so anyone could play with them, his mother said. He loved soccer, played the tuba and sang in choir. He had a habit of touching people on their shoulder and asking them how their day was.

Ahmir was killed Thursday before class even started, when a 17-year-old student at Perry High School opened fire in the cafeteria. The sixth-grader, who attended the middle school that's connected to the high school, was shot three times, authorities said. Seven others, including the school's principal, two other staff members and four students, were wounded before the shooter died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Ahmir's mother, Erica Jolliff, said on that morning, her son couldn't wait to get to school and left minutes ahead of his mom and sister, who is in ninth-grade. Jolliff soon found herself scouring the streets for her children when authorities sped into town and blocked access to the complex after the shooting. She found her daughter unharmed. But she couldn't find Ahmir.

"I just had a feeling he was still in that building," she said.

Jolliff said she was horrified to hear that friends of 17-year-old Dylan Butler, who police have identified as the shooter, say he was bullied for years and that teachers and school officials did nothing to protect him.

"We send our condolences to the family of Dylan; they're in our prayers and we're truly sorry for his loss as well," she said in an interview late Friday with The Associated Press.

On Saturday, a rock outside the school was repainted the school color, bright blue, in honor of Ahmir. The rock, which previously had been painted white, had already become a memorial site where people left teddy bears and flowers.

The shooting happened just after 7:30 a.m. Thursday, shortly before classes were set to begin on the first day back after winter break. Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation spokesman Mitch Mortvedt told the AP the shooting started in the cafeteria, where students from several grades were eating breakfast,

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 69 of 80

then spilled outside the cafeteria but was contained to the north end of the school.

Authorities said Butler had a pump-action shotgun and a small-caliber handgun. Mortvedt said authorities also found a "pretty rudimentary" improvised explosive device in Butler's belongings, and it was rendered safe.

Two friends and their mother who spoke with the AP said Butler was a quiet person who had been bullied since elementary school. Investigators are still working to get a "good grasp of who Dylan was," Mortvedt said. The investigation will include Butler's background along with the "environment of the school," he said.

Superintendent Clark Wicks wouldn't discuss whether Butler had been bullied, but he defended the way his district responds to those situations, saying: "We take every bullying situation seriously and our goal is to always have that safe and inviting atmosphere."

Perry has about 8,000 residents and is about 40 miles (65 kilometers) northwest of Des Moines, on the edge of the state capital's metropolitan area. The high school is part of the 1,785-student Perry Community School District.

Jolliff remembered her son as a font of happiness and sociability, who seemingly knew everyone in town and whose ample dimples were constantly lit up by a perpetual grin.

"He was so well-loved and he loved everyone," she said. "He's such an outgoing person."

Jolliff said she didn't know anything about Butler's situation, but had sympathy for him. Jolliff says she hopes that administrators have learned the importance of checking on students to make sure they're ok.

"I just pray that what we lost isn't in vain and that other things can be put in place with the school system," Jolliff said.

Hezbollah, Israel trade heavy cross-border fire as Blinken seeks to prevent regional escalation

By BASSEM MROUE, SAMY MAGDY and NAJIB JOBAIN Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Israel and Lebanon-based Hezbollah traded fire Saturday in one of the heaviest days of cross-border fighting in recent weeks, a day after the militia's leader urged retaliation for the targeted killing, presumably by Israel, of a top Hamas leader in Lebanon's capital.

Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said that if his group didn't strike back for the killing Tuesday of Saleh Arouri, Hamas' deputy political leader, all of Lebanon would be vulnerable to Israeli attacks.

With the risk of regional escalation, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken kicked off an urgent Middle East diplomatic tour, his fourth since the Israel-Hamas war erupted three months ago.

"It is absolutely necessary to avoid Lebanon being dragged into a regional conflict," the European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, said in Beirut during his own Middle East tour.

Hezbollah said it launched 62 rockets toward an Israeli air surveillance base on Mount Meron and scored direct hits in its "initial response" to Arouri's killing. It said rockets also struck two army posts near the border. The Israeli military said about 40 rockets were fired toward Meron and that a base was targeted. The army's chief spokesperson, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said the rockets caused no casualties in Israel.

Hagari said the military struck the Hezbollah squads that fired the rockets and also attacked Hezbollah military sites. Hezbollah said six of its fighters were killed Saturday, raising the toll since the fighting began to 150.

Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon hit the outskirts of Kouthariyeh al-Siyad, a village about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the border, Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said, adding that there were casualties. Such strikes deeper inside Lebanon have been rare since the border fighting started nearly three months ago. NNA also said Israeli forces shelled border areas including the town of Khiam.

Separately, the armed wing of the Islamic Group in Lebanon, the country's branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and a close ally of Hamas, said it fired two volleys of rockets toward the Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona on Friday night. Two of the group's members were killed in the strike that killed Arouri.

The war in Gaza was triggered by a deadly Hamas attack on southern Israel in which militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took roughly 250 hostages.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 70 of 80

In recent weeks, Israel has been scaling back its military assault in northern Gaza and pressing its offensive in the territory's south, where most of Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians are being squeezed into smaller areas in a humanitarian disaster while being pounded by Israeli airstrikes.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a video statement reiterated that "the war must not be stopped" until the objectives of eliminating Hamas, getting Israel's hostages returned and ensuring that Gaza won't be a threat to Israel are met.

On Saturday, the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said 122 Palestinians had been killed over the past 24 hours, bringing the total since the start of the war to 22,722. The count does not differentiate between combatants and civilians. The ministry has said two-thirds of those killed have been women or children. The overall wounded rose to 58,166, the ministry said.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in the central city of Deir al-Balah received at least 46 bodies overnight, according to hospital records seen by The Associated Press. Many were men who apparently had been shot. The dead also included five members of a family who were killed in an airstrike.

The latest Israeli-dropped leaflets urged Palestinians in some areas near the hospital to evacuate, citing "dangerous fighting."

In the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, the focus of Israel's ground offensive, the European Hospital received the bodies of 18 people killed in an overnight airstrike on a house, said Saleh al-Hamms, head of the hospital's nursing department. Citing witnesses, he said more than three dozen people had been sheltering in the house, including some who had been displaced.

Israel has held Hamas responsible for civilian casualties, saying the group embeds itself within Gaza's civilian infrastructure. Still, international criticism of Israel's conduct has grown because of the rising civilian death toll. The United States has urged Israel to do more to prevent harm to civilians, even as it sends weapons and munitions while shielding its close ally against international censure.

The U.S. also has pressed Israel to let much more aid into Gaza. Two U.S. senators who visited Egypt's Rafah border crossing described lines of hundreds of trucks that have been waiting for weeks to enter.

Blinken began his latest Mideast trip in Turkey, which the Biden administration believes can exert influence, particularly on Iran and its proxies, to tamp down fears of a regional conflagration.

Those fears have spiked in recent days with incidents in the Red Sea, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran. On Saturday, a drone launched from an area of Yemen controlled by the Houthi militant group was shot down by the U.S. destroyer Laboon near multiple commercial vessels in the Red Sea, the U.S. Central Command said in a statement, adding there were no casualties or damage reported.

In talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Blinken sought support for nascent plans for post-war Gaza that could include monetary or in-kind contributions to reconstruction efforts and some form of participation in a proposed multinational force that could operate in or adjacent to the territory.

Blinken then traveled to Turkish rival and fellow NATO ally Greece to meet Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who has been supportive of U.S. efforts to prevent the Israel-Hamas war from spreading.

Other stops include Jordan, followed by Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia on Sunday and Monday. Blinken will visit Israel and the West Bank next week before wrapping up the trip in Egypt.

The EU's foreign policy chief also will visit Saudi Arabia on Sunday. He said he aims to jump-start a European-Arab initiative to revive a peace process that would result in a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Cumbersome process and 'arbitrary' Israeli inspections slow aid delivery into Gaza, US senators say

By LEE KEATH Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — At Egypt's Rafah border crossing, lines of hundreds of trucks carrying aid wait for weeks to enter Gaza, and a warehouse is full of goods rejected by Israeli inspectors, everything from water testing equipment to medical kits for delivering babies, two U.S. senators said Saturday after a visit to the border.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 71 of 80

Sens. Chris Van Hollen and Jeff Merkley pointed to a cumbersome process that is slowing relief to the Palestinian population in the besieged territory — largely due to Israeli inspections of aid cargos, with seemingly arbitrary rejections of vital humanitarian equipment. The system to ensure that aid deliveries within Gaza don't get hit by Israeli forces is "totally broken," they said.

"What struck me yesterday was the miles of backed-up trucks. We couldn't count, but there were hundreds," Merkley said in a briefing with Van Hollen to a group of reporters in Cairo.

The U.S. has been pressing Israel for weeks to let greater amounts of food, water, fuel, medicine and other supplies into Gaza, and the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution on Dec. 22 calling for an immediate increase in deliveries. Three weeks ago, Israel opened its Kerem Shalom crossing into Gaza, adding a second entry point for aid after Rafah.

Still, the rate of trucks entering has not risen significantly. This week, an average of around 120 trucks a day entered through Rafah and Kerem Shalom, according to U.N. figures, far below the 500 trucks of goods going in daily before the war and far below what aid groups say is needed.

Other than the trickle of aid through the crossings, Israel has barred the entry of supplies since its assault on Gaza began three months ago, aiming to destroy Hamas after its Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

The result has been a humanitarian catastrophe for the territory's 2.3 million Palestinians.

Almost the entire population depends on the trucks coming across the border for their survival. One in four Palestinians in Gaza is starving, and the rest face crisis levels of hunger, according to the U.N. More than 85% of Gaza's people have been driven from their homes by Israeli bombardment and ground offensives. Most live in U.N. shelters crowded many times beyond their capacity, in tent camps that have sprung up or on the streets. The few functioning hospitals are overwhelmed with wounded and patients amid outbreaks of disease, as sanitation systems have collapsed.

Van Hollen and Merkley said a more simplified process for getting aid into Gaza is necessary. During a three-day visit to Egypt, they met with Egyptian officials, U.N. aid agencies and non-governmental relief groups working in Gaza. At Rafah on Friday, they also spoke to doctors who had come out of Gaza and a truck driver waiting to get in.

Trucks carrying aid cargos can wait for weeks at the border for their turn to be processed, they said they were told by aid officials. They enter the Egyptian side of the border, drive along no-man's land to the Israeli facility at Nitzana for inspection by the military, then return to Rafah to cross into Gaza — or go to Kerem Shalom for inspection and entry there.

Kerem Shalom operates eight hours a day, and both it and Nitzana close part of Friday and all Saturday. "This, in a 24-hour-a day" humanitarian crisis, Van Hollen said.

Israel says the inspections are necessary to prevent items of military use from reaching Hamas.

During the process, cargos are unloaded and reloaded several times. If inspectors reject a single item in a truck, it must return with its entire cargo to be re-packaged, starting the weeks-long process all over again, said Van Hollen, a Democrat from Maryland.

The reasons for rejection are often "very vague, and they are conveyed informally. Sometimes they were very unreasonable," said Merkley, a Democrat from Oregon.

The two senators said they saw a warehouse in Rafah filled with material that had been rejected in inspection. It included oxygen cylinders, gas-powered generators, tents and medical kits used in delivering babies.

Aid workers told the senators the tents were refused because they included metal poles, and the medical kits because they included scalpels. Most solar-powered equipment appears to be barred — though it is vital in Gaza, where central electricity has collapsed and fuel for generators is in short supply.

"The warehouse was a testament to the arbitrariness" of the process, Van Hollen said.

There is a process for pre-approving cargos, but it can take weeks, they said, and even items that obtained prior approval are sometimes rejected during inspection. After inspection, trucks are considered "sanitized" and their drivers are not allowed to interact with anyone; the senators said they were told one truck driver was turned back after someone brought him a cup of coffee, violating the rule.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 72 of 80

The process is “completely incompatible” with a humanitarian crisis of this extent, Merkley said. “There has to be a simplified process” that honors Israel’s concerns over potential military uses of goods but also addresses the scale of the situation, he said.

The senators, who both sit on the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, said they were drawing up recommendations for changes.

Speaking to reporters in Jerusalem this week, Col. Elad Goren, a senior official in the Israeli military body overseeing Palestinian civilian affairs known as COGAT, admitted that Israeli security checks could be hampering rapid aid delivery but largely blamed the bottlenecks on international agencies and the United Nations.

Asked about certain forms of medical equipment not being allowed in, he said, “I want to make it clear we are not refusing anything that is underneath four headlines ... Food, water, medical supplies and shelters.”

Goren said the U.N. should increase manpower and workers’ hours and deploy more trucks to deliver aid. He maintained the humanitarian situation in Gaza was under control and there was sufficient food. Officials at COGAT did not respond to Associated Press requests for comment on the senators’ briefing.

Van Hollen and Merkley said U.N. and other aid workers described extensive problems in distributing aid. They must ration the small amount of fuel Israel allows to enter Gaza between hospitals, bakeries and aid trucks. Frequent collapses of the communications system — or simple inability to recharge phone batteries — makes contact and coordination with aid teams impossible.

Arranging safe passage for aid deliveries is an enormous challenge, they said. “Nothing about deconfliction is working,” Merkley said. Aid groups inform the Israeli military of their movements but even once they have assurances an area is safe, it sometimes gets struck.

“No place really becomes deconflicted,” Merkley said. “It is not safe for them to move.”

Nearly 3,000 pages of Jeffrey Epstein documents released, but some questions remain unanswered

NEW YORK (AP) — For nearly two decades, journalists, police detectives, FBI agents, lawyers and amateur sleuths have pried into the depraved world of Jeffrey Epstein.

Yet even after the release of thousands of pages of court records in recent days, some questions about the millionaire pedophile remain unanswered. The documents have gotten a lot of attention, but they shed little new light on the financier’s habitual sexual abuse of underage girls.

More than anything, the public is still fascinated with the possibility that some of the rich and powerful men in Epstein’s social circle were also involved in the abuse.

Here’s a look at what we know — and what we don’t — about Epstein and his crimes:

JETSETTER TO CONVICT

Epstein first began getting media attention in 2002 after news organizations, including The Associated Press, covered a trip to Africa by former President Bill Clinton, actor Kevin Spacey and comedian Chris Tucker. The five-day tour of Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Mozambique and South Africa was intended to draw attention to the fight against AIDS.

After the visit, New York magazine ran a profile of the man who provided the private jet for the trip: Jeffrey Epstein. The story portrayed him as an “international moneyman of mystery,” who cultivated relationships with Nobel Prize-winning scientists and diplomats but puzzled Wall Street insiders who couldn’t figure out how a college dropout got so rich.

“Terrific guy,” Epstein’s neighbor in both Florida and New York, Donald Trump, said in the story. “He’s a lot of fun to be with. It is even said that he likes beautiful women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side.”

Those celebrity contacts made it big news when Epstein was arrested in 2006 over allegations that he had hired multiple teenage girls to give him sexualized massages at his home in Palm Beach, Florida.

Two years later, prosecutors allowed Epstein to plead guilty to a charge involving a single victim. He served 13 months in a jail work-release program, then quietly started rebuilding his network of influential

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 73 of 80

friends, with the help of his socialite former girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell.

After a series of Miami Herald stories about the plea bargain that deprived Epstein's victims of justice, federal prosecutors in New York revived the investigation and charged Epstein in 2019 with sex trafficking.

When Epstein killed himself in jail, prosecutors charged Maxwell with facilitating his illicit sexual encounters and participating in some of the abuse. She was convicted and is serving a 20-year prison term.

WAS ANYONE ELSE INVOLVED?

In 2009, one of Epstein's victims, Virginia Giuffre, filed a lawsuit saying he had flown her around the world for sexual encounters with billionaires, politicians, royals and heads of state.

She initially kept the names of those men secret, but in later legal filings started providing names: Britain's Prince Andrew, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, the French modeling scout Jean Luc Brunel, the billionaire Glenn Dubin and the law professor Alan Dershowitz, who had represented Epstein.

Some details of Giuffre's allegations have changed over time. She initially said she was 15 when Epstein began to abuse her, but she later acknowledged that she met him the summer she turned 17.

In 2022, she withdrew her allegations against Dershowitz, saying she "may have made a mistake" in identifying him as one of her abusers. She said she "was very young at the time" and "it was a very stressful and traumatic environment."

In one newspaper interview, for which Giuffre was paid \$160,000, she described dancing with Prince Andrew at a club but said there was no sexual contact. Later, she said they had three sexual encounters. She said the newspaper had refused to print those allegations.

In another interview, she described riding in a helicopter with Bill Clinton and flirting with Donald Trump, but she later said in a deposition that those things hadn't happened and were mistakes by the reporter.

Giuffre's allegations have been investigated by the FBI. No charges have been brought based on her claims, but because of the attention generated by them Brunel was investigated in France and charged with raping other underage girls. He killed himself while awaiting trial.

Manhattan's top federal prosecutor in 2020, Geoffrey Berman, sought to speak with Prince Andrew about matters related to Epstein, but the royal declined to be interviewed. Berman blasted Andrew at the time for falsely portraying himself to the public as eager to cooperate when he was actually dodging questions.

Andrew has repeatedly denied having sex with Giuffre and said he couldn't recall ever meeting her, though a photograph appears to show them together, and a member of Epstein's household staff also testified about seeing the two at Epstein's home in New York.

Many of the documents unsealed in recent days involve efforts by Maxwell's lawyers to discredit Giuffre, and Giuffre's lawyers' efforts to gather evidence backing up her accounts.

The records released in the case have contained scant evidence of wrongdoing by famous figures, but testimony from multiple witnesses confirmed Giuffre's accounts of Epstein's sexual misconduct.

DEATH BEHIND BARS

Any chance that Epstein himself might have been able to answer questions about his famous friends died with him at a federal detention center in Manhattan in August 2019.

The death, a month after he was arrested, has fueled conspiracy theories. But multiple investigations, including an autopsy and FBI probe, have concluded Epstein died by suicide.

Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz said in a June report that Epstein was able to take his own life because of "negligence, misconduct and outright job performance failures" within the jail.

The Metropolitan Correctional Center was shut down in 2021 amid concerns about squalid conditions, COVID-19, crumbling infrastructure and lingering questions about Epstein's death.

Overworked officers assigned to guard Epstein had failed to recognize he had amassed a surplus of bed linens. After a first suspected suicide attempt, jail officials left him alone and never assigned him a new cellmate.

On the night Epstein died, officers sat at desks just 15 feet (4.6 meters) from his cell, shopping online and snoozing instead of making required rounds every 30 minutes, prosecutors said.

The day before Epstein killed himself, a federal court unsealed about 2,000 pages of records in Giuffre's

lawsuit against Ghislaine Maxwell — the same case involved in the records released in recent days.

That, combined with a lack of significant interpersonal connections and “the idea of potentially spending his life in prison were likely factors contributing to Mr. Epstein’s suicide,” prison officials wrote in documents obtained by The Associated Press.

Whether Epstein would have ever been keen to answer questions to clear up some of the mysteries surrounding his life is a different story. In a 2016 deposition in Giuffre’s lawsuit, he repeatedly invoked his Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination.

WHAT’S NEXT

The document dump isn’t over yet. So far, 191 of the approximately 250 files that U.S. District Judge Loretta Preska authorized for release have been made public. Lawyers involved in the case are posting them to the docket on a rolling basis, as per the judge’s instructions.

Another batch is expected Monday, though there is little indication they will yield more than what has already been seen in the nearly 3,000 pages of deposition transcripts, legal memos, emails and other records made public since Wednesday.

Versions of many of those records had already been made public in past years, though with some sections blacked out for privacy reasons or to protect the identities of Epstein’s victims.

Blinken says Turkey is committed to a ‘positive’ role in postwar Gaza as he opens a diplomatic push

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

CHANIA, Greece (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Saturday that Turkey is committed to playing “a positive, productive” role for postwar Gaza and prepared to use its influence in the region to prevent the Israel-Hamas conflict from broadening even more.

The latest Mideast mission by America’s top diplomat opened with talks in Turkey and Greece before shifting to the region for “not necessarily easy conversations” with allies and partners about what they are willing to do “to build durable peace and security.”

Blinken’s fourth visit in three months comes as developments in Lebanon, northern Israel, the Red Sea and Iraq have put intense strains on what had been a modestly successful U.S. push to prevent a regional conflagration since Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, and as international criticism of Israel’s military operation mounts.

Blinken held meetings with Turkey’s president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and foreign minister, Hakan Fidan, in Istanbul about what Turkey and others can do to exert influence, particularly on Iran and its proxies, to ease tensions, speed humanitarian aid deliveries to Gaza and begin planning for reconstruction and governance of postwar Gaza. Much of the territory has been reduced to rubble by Israeli bombardments.

In Chania, a port city on the Mediterranean island of Crete, Blinken later visited with Greece’s prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, at his residence. “These are difficult and challenging times,” Mitsotakis said.

Blinken’s day was ending in Jordan, with stops in Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia on Sunday and Monday. Blinken will visit Israel and the West Bank on Tuesday and Wednesday before wrapping up the trip in Egypt. He said his priorities are protecting civilians — “far too many Palestinians have been killed” — getting more humanitarian aid into Gaza, ensuring Hamas cannot strike again and developing a framework for Palestinian-led governance in the territory and “a Palestinian state with security assurances or Israel.”

The ultimate goal, he said, is lasting peace, and his talks will focus on what U.S. allies and partners are prepared to do to help with that process.

“These are not necessarily easy conversations. There are different perspectives, different needs, different requirements, but it is vital that we engage in this diplomacy now both for the sake of Gaza itself and more broadly the sake of the future for Israelis and Palestinians and for the region as a whole,” Blinken said.

“There is clearly a strong desire among the majority of people in the region for a future that is one of peace, of security, of de-escalation of conflicts, of integration of countries and that’s one path, that’s one

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 75 of 80

future. The other future is an endless cycle of violence, a repetition of the horrific events that we've seen and lives of insecurity and conflict for people in the region, which is what virtually no one wants."

Turkey, and Erdogan in particular, have been harshly critical of Israel and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the prosecution of the war and the impact it has had on Palestinian civilians.

But Blinken told reporters before he flew from Crete to Amman that "from our conversations today, it's clear that Turkey is prepared to play a positive, productive role in the work that needs to happen the day after the conflict ends and as well more broadly in trying to find a path to sustainable peace and security." Blinken would not go in details about what he heard from the Turkish officials.

"I think they're also prepared ... to use the ties, the influence they have, the relationships they have with some of the critical players and some of the critical countries in the region to do everything possible to deescalate and to prevent the conflict from spreading. ... They clearly have a shared interest with us in doing just that and I'm confident from these conversations that they're going to make every possible effort," Blinken said.

Hours before Blinken's meetings, Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah militia fired dozens of rockets at northern Israel and said the barrage was an initial response to the targeted killing, presumably by Israel, of a top leader from the allied Hamas group in Lebanon's capital this past week.

Stepped-up attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels have disrupted international trade and led to increased efforts by the U.S. and its allies to patrol the vital commercial waterway and respond to threats. The coalition of countries issued what amounted to a final warning to the Houthis on Wednesday to cease their attacks on vessels or face potential targeted military action. Since Dec. 19, the militants have carried out at least two dozen attacks in response to the Israel-Hamas war.

From the Turkish officials, Blinken sought at least consideration of potential monetary or in-kind contributions to reconstruction efforts in Gaza and participation in security arrangements, according to U.S. officials.

Blinken also stressed the importance that the U.S. places on Turkey's ratification of Sweden's membership in NATO, a long-delayed process that the Turks have said they will complete soon. Sweden's entry to the alliance is seen as a significant response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

A Turkish official said Fidan told Blinken that Israel's "increasing aggression" in Gaza was a threat to the region and he called for an immediate cease-fire and the delivery of "uninterrupted" humanitarian aid. Fidan said negotiations for a two-state solution should begin "as soon as possible," according to the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issues in the private talks.

Fidan also said Turkey was awaiting the outcome of its request to upgrade its fleet of F-16 fighter jets and stressed that the ratification of Sweden's NATO membership lay in the hands of the Turkish parliament.

Russian shelling kills 11 in Donetsk region while Ukraine claims it hit a Crimean air base

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Eleven people were killed Saturday in Russian shelling in Ukraine's partially occupied Donetsk province, according to regional Gov. Vadym Filashkin. Five children were among the dead and eight further people were wounded in the attack on the Pokrovsk district, he said.

Ukraine's military claimed Saturday it successfully attacked the Saki military airbase in the west of the Russian-occupied Crimean peninsula.

"Saki airfield! All targets were hit!" Air Force commander Mykola Oleshchuk wrote on Telegram. He also published a photo appearing to show the airfield, though it was not immediately possible to verify the image.

Russian officials did not comment on the alleged attack, but Russia's Defense Ministry said in the early hours of Saturday that it had successfully downed four Ukrainian missiles over the peninsula overnight. Later on Saturday, the ministry reported that its air defense forces had shot down six anti-ship missiles over the Black Sea.

Traffic was temporarily suspended for a third straight day on a bridge connecting the peninsula, which Moscow seized illegally in 2014, with Russia's southern Krasnodar region. The span is a crucial supply link

for Russia's war effort.

In Russia, local officials in Belgorod — some 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the border with Ukraine — said that an "air target" was shot down on approach to the city. Ukrainian attacks on Dec. 30 in Belgorod killed 25 people, officials there said, with rocket and drone attacks continuing throughout this week.

As Russians prepared to celebrate Orthodox Christmas, Christmas Eve masses in Belgorod were canceled due to the "operational situation," mayor Valentin Demidov said.

South Korea says the North has again fired artillery shells near their sea border

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea conducted a new round of artillery drills near the disputed sea boundary with South Korea on Saturday, officials in Seoul said, a day after the North's similar exercises prompted South Korea to respond with its own firing drills in the same area.

The North's back-to-back firing exercises come after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un repeatedly called for stronger war readiness to cope with what he called deepening confrontation led by the U.S.

Experts say North Korea is likely to continue its provocative run of weapons tests to boost its leverage in potential future negotiations with Washington as the U.S. heads into November elections.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that the North fired more than 60 rounds into the waters north of the western sea boundary on Saturday afternoon.

The joint chiefs said South Korea strongly urges North Korea to halt acts that heighten tensions. It said it will take corresponding military steps if North Korea continues artillery drills that pose a threat to South Korean nationals.

The statement didn't say whether South Korea would respond with its own drills. South Korean media reported the South didn't stage firing exercises, after determining the direction of North Korean shells fired Saturday was less provocative than Friday.

The Koreas' firing exercises were a violation of a 2018 inter-Korean agreement that was meant to ease front-line military tensions. Struck during a brief period of rapprochement, the accord calls for a halt in live-fire exercises and aerial surveillance in front-line buffer and no-fly zones. But rising animosities over the North's first military spy satellite launch in November has left the military agreement in tatters, with both Koreas taking steps to breach the deal.

On Friday, North Korea used coast artillery systems to fire about 200 rounds, also north of the sea boundary, in its first maritime firing exercise in the buffer zone in about a year.

In response, South Korea's Defense Ministry said troops on two border islands fired artillery rounds south of the sea boundary. Local media said South Korea fired 400 rounds.

Ahead of the South Korean drills, South Korean authorities asked residents on five major islands near the sea boundary to evacuate to safe places due to worries that North Korea would fire back. The evacuation order was lifted a few hours later.

North Korea's military said later Friday that its drills were in response to South Korea's military training earlier in the week. It warned that North Korea will launch "tough counteraction on an unprecedented level" if South Korea engages in provocations.

The Koreas' poorly marked western sea boundary was the site of bloody naval skirmishes between the Koreas in 1999, 2002 and 2009. The North's alleged torpedoing of a South Korean warship killed 46 South Korean sailors in March 2010, and the North's artillery bombardment of Yeonpyeong Island killed four South Koreans in November 2010.

In a recent key ruling party meeting, Kim fired off fierce, derisive rhetoric against South Korea, saying South Korea must not be considered as a partner for reconciliation or unification. He ordered the military to use all available means — including nuclear weapons — to conquer South Korea in the event of a conflict.

Since 2022, North Korea has conducted more than 100 missile tests, many of them nuclear-capable weapons targeting the U.S. mainland and South Korea. The U.S. and South Korea have responded by

expanding their military training, which North Korea calls an invasion rehearsal.

Defense Secretary Austin has been hospitalized since Jan. 1, but the Pentagon kept the news quiet

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has been hospitalized since Monday due to complications following a minor elective medical procedure, his press secretary said, in the Defense Department's first acknowledgement that Austin had been admitted five days earlier to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said Friday that it was not clear when Austin would be released from the hospital, but said the secretary was "recovering well."

The Pentagon's failure to disclose Austin's hospitalization is counter to normal practice with the president and other senior U.S. officials and Cabinet members. The Pentagon Press Association, which represents media members who cover the Defense Department, sent a letter of protest to Ryder and Chris Meagher, the assistant defense secretary for public affairs.

"The fact that he has been at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for four days and the Pentagon is only now alerting the public late on a Friday evening is an outrage," the PPA said in its letter. "At a time when there are growing threats to U.S. military service members in the Middle East and the U.S. is playing key national security roles in the wars in Israel and Ukraine, it is particularly critical for the American public to be informed about the health status and decision-making ability of its top defense leader."

The White House has refused to say when or how it had been notified of Austin's hospitalization, and it referred questions to the Pentagon.

When Attorney General Merrick Garland went in for a routine medical procedure in 2022, his office informed the public a week in advance and outlined how long he was expected to be out and when he would return to work.

Ryder, the Pentagon spokesman, cited an "evolving situation," and said that due to privacy and medical issues, the Pentagon did not make Austin's absence public. He declined to provide any other details about Austin's medical procedure or health.

Austin, 70, spent 41 years in the military, retiring as a four-star Army general in 2016.

In a statement, Ryder said that at all times, Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks "was prepared to act for and exercise the powers of the Secretary, if required."

Austin's hospitalization comes as Iranian-backed militias have repeatedly launched drones, missiles and rockets at bases where U.S. troops are stationed in Iraq and Syria, leading the Biden administration to strike back on a number of occasions. Those strikes often involve sensitive, top-level discussions and decisions by Austin and other key military leaders.

The U.S. is also the chief organizer behind a new international maritime coalition using ships and other assets to patrol the southern Red Sea to deter persistent attacks on commercial vessels by Houthi militants in Yemen.

In addition, the administration, particularly Austin, has been at the forefront of the effort to supply weapons and training to Ukraine, and he's also been communicating frequently with the Israelis on their war against Hamas.

On Jan. 6 many Republicans blamed Trump for the Capitol riot. Now they endorse his presidential bid

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the follow-up to their 2018 bestseller "How Democracies Die," authors Daniel Ziblatt and Steven Levitsky write about three rules that political parties must follow: accept the results of fair elections, reject the use of violence to gain power and break ties to extremists.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 78 of 80

In the aftermath of the 2020 election, they write, only one U.S. political party “violated all three.”

Saturday marks the third anniversary of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, and Donald Trump, the former president, is far-and-away the leading Republican candidate in 2024. He still refuses to acknowledge his earlier loss to President Joe Biden. Far from rejecting the rioters, he has suggested he would pardon some of those who have been convicted of violent crimes. Rather than distance himself from extremists, he welcomes them at his rallies and calls them patriots.

And Trump is now backed by many of the Republican leaders who fled for their lives and hid from the rioters, even some who had condemned Trump. Several top GOP leaders have endorsed his candidacy.

The support for Trump starkly highlights the divisions in the aftermath of the deadly storming of the Capitol and frames the question about whose definition of governance will prevail — or if democracy will prevail at all.

“If our political leaders do not stand up in defense of democracy, our democracy won’t be defended,” said Levitsky, one of the Harvard professors whose new book is “Tyranny of the Minority.”

“There’s no country in the world, no country on Earth in history, where the politicians abdicated democracy but the institutions held,” he told The Associated Press. “People have to defend democracy.”

The third anniversary of the Jan. 6 attack comes during the most convulsive period in American politics in at least a generation, with Congress barely able to keep up with the basics of governing, and the start of the presidential nominating contests just over a week away.

Trump’s persistent false claims that the election of 2020 was stolen — which has been rejected in at least 60 court cases, every state election certification and by the former president’s one-time attorney general — continue to animate the presidential race as he eyes a rematch with Biden.

Instead, Trump now faces more than 90 criminal charges in federal and state courts, including the federal indictment brought by special counsel Jack Smith that accused Trump of conspiring to defraud the U.S. over the election.

Biden, speaking Friday near Pennsylvania’s Valley Forge, commemorated Jan. 6, saying on that day “we nearly lost America — lost it all.”

While the Congress returned that night to certify the election results and show the world democracy was still standing, Biden said Trump is now trying to revise the narrative of what happened that day — calling the rioters “patriots” and promising to pardon them. And he said some Republicans in Congress were complicit.

“When the attack on Jan. 6 happened there was no doubt about the truth,” Biden said. “Now these MAGA voices — who know the truth about Trump and Jan. 6 — have abandoned the truth and abandoned the democracy.”

At a quieter Capitol, without much ceremony planned for Saturday, it will be the last time the anniversary will pass before Congress is called upon again, on Jan. 6, 2025, to certify the results of the presidential election -- democracy once more put to the test.

Rep. Jamie Raskin, the Maryland Democrat who led Trump’s impeachment over the insurrection, said Biden’s 306-232 electoral victory in 2020 remains “the hard, inescapable, irradicable fact that Donald Trump and his followers have not been able to accept — to this day.”

Raskin envisions a time when there will be a Capitol exhibit, and tours for visitors, to commemorate what happened Jan. 6, 2021. Five people died during the riot and the immediate aftermath, including Trump supporter Ashli Babbitt, who was shot and killed by police.

All told, 140 police officers were injured in the Capitol siege, including U.S. Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick who died later. Several others died later by suicide.

One officer, Harry Dunn, has announced he is running for Congress to “ensure it never happens again.”

Trump’s decision to reject the results of the 2020 election was the only time Americans have not witnessed the peaceful transfer of presidential power, a hallmark of U.S. democracy.

A giant portrait of George Washington resigning his military commission hangs in the U.S. Capitol, a symbol of the voluntary relinquishing of power — a move that was considered breathtaking at the time. He later was elected the first U.S. president.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 79 of 80

Trump opened his first rally of his 2024 presidential campaign with a popular recording of the J6 Prison Choir --- riot defendants singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" recorded over a phone line from jail, interspersed with Trump reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

More than 1,200 people have been charged in the riot, with nearly 900 convicted, including leaders of the extremist groups the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers who are serving lengthy terms for seditious conspiracy.

Trump has called Jan. 6 defendants "hostages" and said there was so much love at the "Stop the Steal" rally he held near the White House that day before he encouraged the mob to march down Pennsylvania Avenue, assuring he would be with them at the Capitol, though he never did join.

Allies of Trump scoff at the narrative of Jan. 6 that has emerged. Mike Davis, a Trump ally sometimes mentioned as a future attorney general, has mocked the Democrats and others for turning Jan. 6 into a "religious holiday."

Republican Kevin McCarthy, who went on to become House speaker, had called Jan. 6 the "saddest day" he ever had in Congress. But McCarthy, R-Calif., retired last month he endorsed Trump for president and said he would consider joining his cabinet.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has said he would back whomever becomes the Republican Party nominee, despite a scathing speech at the time in which he called Trump's actions "disgraceful" and said the rioters "had been fed wild falsehoods by the most powerful man on Earth because he was angry he lost an election."

Asked about Trump's second-term agenda, GOP lawmakers brushed off his admission that he would be a dictator on "day one."

"He's joking," said Trump ally Byron Donalds, R-Fla.

"Just bravado," said Rep. Tim Burchett, R-Tenn. "There's still checks and balances."

Levitsky said when he and his colleague wrote their earlier book, they believed that the Republicans in Congress would be a "bulwark against Trump."

But with so many of the Trump detractors having retired or been voted out of office, "We were much less pessimistic than we are today."

Today in History: January 7

Truman reveals US has developed Hydrogen bomb

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Jan. 7, the seventh day of 2024. There are 359 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 7, 1953, President Harry S. Truman announced in his State of the Union message to Congress that the United States had developed a hydrogen bomb.

On this date:

In 1608, an accidental fire devastated the Jamestown settlement in the Virginia Colony.

In 1789, America held its first presidential election as voters chose electors who, a month later, selected George Washington to be the nation's first chief executive.

In 1927, commercial transatlantic telephone service was inaugurated between New York and London.

In 1955, singer Marian Anderson made her debut with the Metropolitan Opera in New York, in Verdi's "Un Ballo in Maschera."

In 1959, the United States recognized the new government of Cuba, six days after Fidel Castro led the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista.

In 1963, the U.S. Post Office raised the cost of a first-class stamp from 4 to 5 cents.

In 1979, Vietnamese forces captured the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh, overthrowing the Khmer Rouge government.

In 1989, Emperor Hirohito of Japan died in Tokyo at age 87; he was succeeded by his son, Crown Prince

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Jan. 7, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 197 ~ 80 of 80

Akihito.

In 1999, for the second time in history, an impeached American president went on trial before the Senate. President Bill Clinton faced charges of perjury and obstruction of justice; he was acquitted.

In 2004, President George W. Bush proposed legal status, at least temporarily, for millions of immigrants improperly working in the U.S.

In 2013, No. 2 Alabama Crimson Tide rolled top-ranked Notre Dame 42-14 for college football's BCS championship.

In 2015, masked gunmen stormed the Paris offices of Charlie Hebdo, a French newspaper that had caricatured the Prophet Muhammad, methodically killing 12 people, including the editor, before escaping in a car. (Two suspects were killed two days later.)

In 2018, the Golden Globes ceremony became an expression of female empowerment in the post-Harvey Weinstein era, capped by a speech in which Cecil B. DeMille Award winner Oprah Winfrey said of men who use their power to abuse women, "Their time is up!"

In 2019, Amazon eclipsed Microsoft as the most valuable publicly traded company in the U.S.

In 2022, three white men who chased and killed Ahmaud Arbery were sentenced to life in prison; a judge in Georgia denied any chance of parole for the father and son who armed themselves and initiated the deadly pursuit of the 25-year-old Black man after spotting him running in their neighborhood.

In 2023, Republican Kevin McCarthy was elected speaker of the House on a historic post-midnight 15th ballot, overcoming holdouts from his own ranks after a chaotic week that tested the new GOP majority's ability to govern.

Today's Birthdays: Magazine publisher Jann Wenner is 78. Singer Kenny Loggins is 76. Singer-songwriter Marshall Chapman is 75. Actor Erin Gray is 74. Actor Sammo Hung is 72. Actor Jodi Long is 70. Actor David Caruso is 68. Talk show host Katie Couric is 67. Country singer David Lee Murphy is 65. Rock musician Kathy Valentine is 65. Actor David Marciano is 64. Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., is 63. Actor Hallie Todd is 62. Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., is 61. Actor Nicolas Cage is 60. Singer-songwriter John Ondrasik (on-DRAH'-sik) (Five for Fighting) is 59. Actor Rex Lee is 55. Actor Doug E. Doug is 54. Actor Kevin Rahm is 53. Actor Jeremy Renner is 53. Country singer-musician John Rich is 49. Actor Reggie Austin is 45. Singer-rapper Aloe Blacc is 45. Actor Lauren Cohan is 42. Actor Brett Dalton is 41. Actor Robert Ri'chard is 41. Actor Lyndsy Fonseca is 37. Actor Liam Aiken is 34. Actor Camryn Grimes is 34. Actor Max Morrow is 33. Actor Marcus Scribner is 24.