

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Sunday, Jan. 14

**Postponed:** GHS FCS: Due to cold temps, we are moving the meeting date to next Sunday.

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

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

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

**Cancelled:** United Methodist: Worship: (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 at St. John's at 9 a.m. and at Zion at 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

**Cancelled:** Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.

## Monday, Jan. 15

Senior Menu: Chicken tetrazzine, carrots, pineapple tidbits, bread stick, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick.

School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, cooked carrots.

Boys JV/JH Meet at Redfield, 6 p.m.

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

Pantry Open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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



*"Sometimes the most scenic roads in life are the detours you didn't mean to take."*

— Angela N. Blount

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

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

## Tuesday, Jan. 16

Senior Menu: Hamburger cabbage roll hot dish, corn, pears, muffin.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, chips.

Boys Junior High Basketball at Milbank in the elementary gym (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)

JH Boys Wrestling at Simmons Middle School.

Girls and Boys Varsity Wrestling at Groton Area with Clark/Willow Lake and Hamlin, 6 p.m.

Thrift Store open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Food Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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

## Wednesday, Jan. 17

Senior Menu: Beef/broccoli stir fry rice, cauliflower, five cup salad, whole wheat bread

School Breakfast: Cereal

School Lunch: Loaded baked potato soup.

## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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## NSU Women's Basketball

### **Wolves Triumph Over Vikings in NSIC Action**

Aberdeen, S.D. – Madelyn Bragg led the way for the Wolves with 28 points in the win against Augustana, 63-49. An early lead by the Wolves paved the way to victory, out-scoring the Vikings by ten in the first quarter.

#### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 63, AU 49

Records: NSU 12-4 (8-2 NSIC), AU 4-11 (3-8 NSIC)

Attendance: 2614

#### HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern State notched 18 points in the first quarter, 16 in the second, 15 in the third, and 14 in the fourth. NSU shot 39.3 % from the floor, 38.5 % from the 3-point line, and 76.9 % from the foul line. They tallied 43 rebounds, 26 points in the paint, 11 bench points, and seven second chance points. Madelyn Bragg tied her career high with 28 points, along with 5 rebounds and two steals. Brynn Alfson and Alayna Benike followed with eight and six points respectively in the win. Rianna Fillipi dished out a career-high of 13 rebounds and led the team with six assists and three steals.

#### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Madelyn Bragg: 28 points, 5 rebounds, 2 steals

Brynn Alfson: 8 points, 5 rebounds, 2 assists

Alayna Benike: 6 points, 7 rebounds, 3 assists

Rianna Fillipi: 5 points, 13 rebounds (career-high), 6 assists, 3 steals

#### UP NEXT

Northern State returns to Wachs Arena to take on Concordia-St. Paul and Minnesota Duluth. Tip-off times are set for 5:30 p.m. on Friday, January 19th against the Golden Bears and 4 p.m. on Saturday, January 20th against the Bulldogs. For full game promotions visit [nsuwolves.com/promotions](http://nsuwolves.com/promotions).

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## NSU Men's Basketball

### **Turnovers and Poor 3-Point Shooting Plague Northern State Men**

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State University men's basketball team fell to Augustana on Saturday evening from Wachs Arena. The Vikings got out to a hot start and the Wolves could not find a way to break-up the AU attack that scored 48 points in the first and 46 in the second.

#### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 65, AU 94

Records: NSU 6-10 (4-6 NSIC), AU 10-7 (5-6 NSIC)

Attendance: 2876

#### HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern tallied 29 points in the first and 36 in the second, falling by 29 to Augustana

The Wolves shot 40.0% from the floor, 19.4% from the 3-point line, and 87.5% from the foul line in the contest

They tallied 30 points in the paint, seven points off the bench, and seven second chance points

NSU added a game high two blocks and recorded 36 rebounds, nine assists, and two steals

Jacksen Moni and Josh Dilling led the team with 20 and 18 points respectively, with Moni going a perfect 6-of-6 from the foul line

#### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Jacksen Moni: 20 points, 9 rebounds, 2 assists

Josh Dilling: 18 points, 56.3 field goal%, 6 rebounds, 3 assists

Michael Nhial: 9 points, 5 rebounds

#### UP NEXT

Northern returns to Wachs Arena next Friday and Saturday for the annual I Hate Winter weekend. The Wolves will also make the mid-way flip to the second game of the evening. Tip-off times are set for 7:30 p.m. on Friday against Concordia-St. Paul and 6 p.m. on Saturday versus Minnesota Duluth. For full game promotions visit [nsuwolves.com/promotions](http://nsuwolves.com/promotions).



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Bill would raise cap on private school scholarships funded by insurance companies**

**Opponents equate program to vouchers that harm public districts**

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JANUARY 13, 2024 7:00 AM**

A bill beginning its journey through the Legislature would create more private school scholarships funded by insurance companies in exchange for tax relief.

The legislation would raise the annual tax-credit cap for insurance companies from \$3.5 million to \$5 million. The companies get state tax credits in exchange for donations to a private-school scholarship program for low-income students, which legislators authorized in 2016.

"It's an attempt to give parents a choice in how their kids are educated," said Sen. Jim Stalzer, R-Sioux Falls. "We're at a point where we need to raise the amount or create a waiting list."

The bill passed the Senate Taxation Committee 6-1 on Friday, as the first week of the 38-day legislative session was wrapping up at the Capitol in Pierre. It now heads to the full Senate.

Critics of the scholarships have described them as a "backdoor school voucher program." Traditional school voucher programs — which South Dakota has not authorized — allow state funding to follow students to private schools.

Friday, opponents argued the program diverts would-be tax revenue to private, sometimes faith-based, schools instead of public schools.

"This body is responsible for providing a free and public education to all the children in the state," testified Rob Monson, executive director of School Administrators of South Dakota. "If parents decide they don't want to be in that arena, that is their choice."

Monson said if the committee wants to do something to help low-income students, there are other options.

"If we're looking at low socioeconomic families and children, this body could put that money into property tax reduction," he said, "which would help a lot more families that are struggling, versus just the few that are going to apply for this voucher and go to a private school."

Dianna Miller, a lobbyist for large public school districts and a former educator, also described the program as a back-door school voucher initiative. She said a lot of would-be tax revenue is being diverted.

"It does affect the budget and it will down the road," Miller said. "They are getting an incentive to not pay the full amount of their insurance tax."

The program gives participating insurance companies credits on their state premium tax.

Miller said private businesses could fund the private school program out of generosity, "and they could do it without an incentive."

The program initially made \$2 million in tax credits available to insurance companies, and that was increased to \$3.5 million in 2022.

"When do we stop increasing this?" Miller asked.

That concern resonated with Sen. Herman Otten, R-Tea, who made a motion to send the bill to the budget committee for review. That motion failed 5-2. Otten later cast the only no vote against sending the bill to the Senate floor.

Otten said when the program started in 2016, "I was assured it would only be a couple hundred thousand dollars" of tax credits.

"The program just continues to expand," Otten said. "It is becoming a serious number now."

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Stalzer countered, saying, "It is not state money, because it's never touched by the state."

But Stalzer also said that "for every \$2,000 scholarship we give, there is at least \$5,000 that we're not spending. Every one of these kids that goes to a private school and gets a scholarship puts \$3,000 roughly in our budget."

"That's money our state is not spending because our state aid is based on enrollment," he said.

Later, Monson told South Dakota Searchlight he does not know where Stalzer got his numbers, and added that for the program to be saving the state money, it would have to mean students are leaving public schools to attend private schools. And if the state is saving money on aid to education, that means public school districts are losing state aid.

Stalzer said the program has grown from about 250 students in 2016 to 1,500 students today, and future projections demand that a \$1.5 million increase in tax credits be available.

## Not a new fight

The bill to create the scholarship program passed in 2016 under then-Governor Dennis Daugaard.

To be eligible, students' families must meet the low-income requirements to qualify for free or reduced price school lunch.

Once signed into law, insurance companies became eligible for an 80% tax credit for total contributions to the program. Back then, the total annual credits were capped at \$2 million.

After the passage of a 2019 bill, the insurance companies became eligible for a 100% tax credit for total contributions. Stalzer said that quickly resulted in the \$2 million tax credit limit being reached. In 2022, lawmakers raised the tax credit cap to \$3.5 million.

Another supporter of the program, Sen. Lee Schoenbeck, R-Watertown, testified Friday that for opponents, "the best way to end this program is to take away the reasons for people wanting to find some other place to educate their children."

"Give them an environment where their children are safe to be educated," he said.

Rob Monson, who has spent his life in public education, said that was news to him.

"I think our schools in South Dakota are very safe institutions and a great place for our children to go to school," Monson said. "We do everything we can to keep those schools safe."

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

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## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*So then, my beloved brethren,  
let every man be swift to hear,  
slow to speak, slow to wrath;  
for the wrath of man  
does not produce  
the righteousness of God.*

✿ JAMES 1:19, 20 ✿

*Detail of "Guernica" by Pablo Picasso (1937)*



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From Martin Luther King  
we learned that you can do  
more to change the world  
through peace, love, and  
persistence than you can  
through hate, threats of  
violence and mob rule...

...too bad they don't teach  
that in college.



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

2. By Roman reckoning, about what time of day did Jesus meet the woman at the well at Samaria? *Sunrise, Noon, Sunset, Midnight*

3. Which other servant of Pharaoh besides the butler was imprisoned along with Joseph? *Baker, Tentmaker, Workman, Seamstress*

4. What archangel argued with the devil in a dispute over the body of Moses? *Abaddon, Michael, Gabriel, Chephirah*

5. In Galatians 5, what is the first fruit of the Spirit? *Faith, Love, Peace, Goodness*

6. As mentioned 12 times in the Bible (KJV), what is a hyssop? *Bird, Beggar, Plant, Robe*

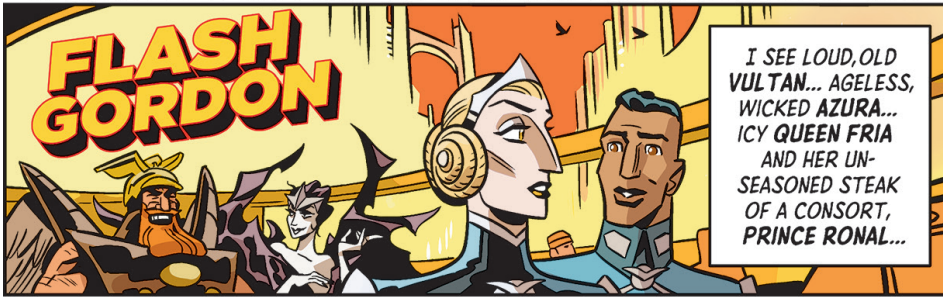
ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Noon, 3) Baker, 4) Michael, 5) Love, 6) Plant

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

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THE HEADS OF THE SO-CALLED ALLIED MONGOTHIC NATIONS ARE ALL GATHERED HERE TODAY.



**FLASH GORDON**

I SEE LOUD, OLD VULTAN... AGELESS, WICKED AZURA... ICY QUEEN FRIA AND HER UN-SEASONED STEAK OF A CONSORT, PRINCE RONAL...



THEY'VE ALL BEEN INVITED TO A WEDDING, YOU SEE.

I WASN'T-- BUT I'M HERE JUST THE SAME.

THEY SAY PRINCE BARIN ENTERED THE PALACE THIS MORNING LOOKING AN AWFUL FRIGHT.



IT SEEMS HE'S BEEN OFF ON A HUNTING TRIP...

...BEFORE HIS WEDDING TO PRINCESS AURA.



NOW, I HEARD THERE WAS A COOLNESS BETWEEN THEM...

...BUT, AT THE APPOINTED HOUR, HERE THEY ARE -- ALL DRESSED AND PERFUMED AT THE ROYAL ALTAR OF TOA.



AND I, WELL... I JUST HAVE TO LAUGH.

BECAUSE I AM MING THE SECOND!

OLDEST LIVING SON OF THE FALLEN EMPEROR!



WITH A FAR BETTER CLAIM ON THE THRONE THAN MY FAITHLESS SISTER.

SHE HAS HER THUG EJECT ME-- GORDON THE ALIEN THEY SAY KILLED OUR FATHER.



I TELL HIM TO ENJOY HIS POWER OVER ME WHILE HE HAS IT...

...FOR I WON'T SIT BY AS MY SISTER STEALS MY THRONE.

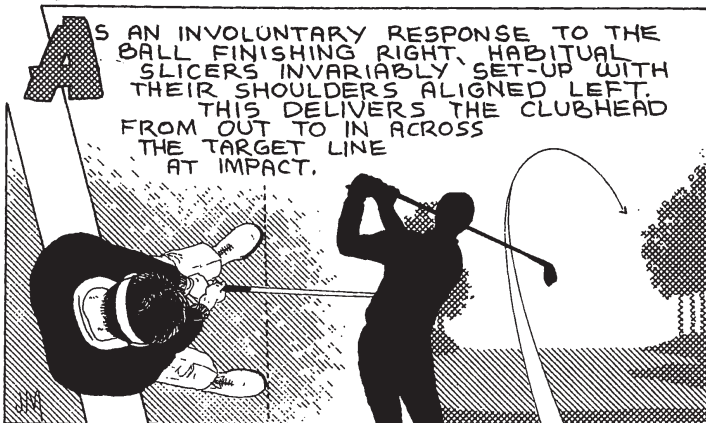


MARK THESE WORDS: MING II IS ON THE RISE.

DAN SCHKADE 1-14-24

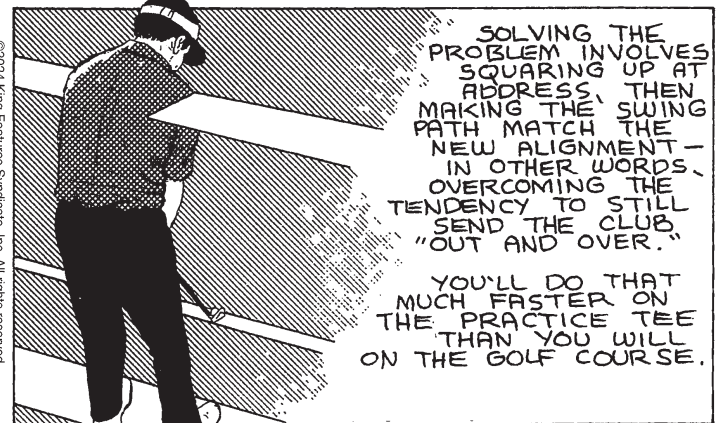
NEXT: THE ROYAL RECEPTION

## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



AS AN INVOLUNTARY RESPONSE TO THE BALL FINISHING RIGHT, HABITUAL SLICERS INvariably SET-UP WITH THEIR SHOULDERS ALIGNED LEFT. THIS DELIVERS THE CLUBHEAD FROM OUT TO IN ACROSS THE TARGET LINE AT IMPACT.

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SOLVING THE PROBLEM INVOLVES SQUARING UP AT ADDRESS, THEN MAKING THE SWING PATH MATCH THE NEW ALIGNMENT -- IN OTHER WORDS, OVERCOMING THE TENDENCY TO STILL SEND THE CLUB "OUT AND OVER."

YOU'LL DO THAT MUCH FASTER ON THE PRACTICE TEE THAN YOU WILL ON THE GOLF COURSE.





## What Dosage of NSAIDs Is Safe to Take After a Gastric Sleeve?

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** I have had weight-loss surgery, specifically an adjustable lap band that was revised to a gastric sleeve in 2018. I have been given and read conflicting recommendations regarding the use of NSAIDs following these procedures. I have read that taking a low dose (400 mg) is considered safe. I have also read and been told to take the children's liquid form at an adult dosage rather than the tablets.

I am a 57-year-old female. I have largely avoided taking NSAIDs for years, but I have developed osteoarthritis and find that I am taking them more often (400 mg once daily, one to two times a week at most). I do ensure that I take them with food and also take a Pepcid whenever I take ibuprofen. — A. W.

**ANSWER:** There are several types of weight-loss (bariatric) surgery, and the best evidence that I found among those who had a Roux-en-Y gastric bypass shows up to a 70% increase in the relative risk of developing peptic ulcers after surgery.

This sounds pretty terrible, but it actually means that in an average time span of four years after surgery, 1.4% of people who didn't take any NSAIDs got an ulcer, while 2.4% of the group that had the greatest amount of NSAID use developed an ulcer. However, the same study showed that only 0.2% of patients who underwent a sleeve gastrectomy developed an ulcer, and the use of NSAIDs did not significantly increase this number.

Finally, other studies have shown that

medicines like famotidine (Pepcid) reduce the risk of ulcers by about half when used long-term. NSAIDs always have risks, but for a person with a gastric sleeve, the risks of low-dose ibuprofen are modest and need to be weighed against the benefits for a person's quality of life.

\*\*\*

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** My mother and one of her brothers had the flu in 1918. She said she was very sick, but unlike her brother, who was profoundly deaf from high fever, she didn't experience any aftereffects. She died at 90 without getting the flu again or taking the yearly flu vaccine.

I am 83, have never had a flu shot and have never had the flu. I have had all the COVID-19 vaccines, but never the yearly flu shots. Could I have received immunity from her? — F.D.B.

**ANSWER:** No, you don't get specific immunity from parents. Babies do get a type of "passive" immunity from their mothers, since antibodies are shared through the placenta to the fetus, but this only lasts for weeks or months.

The 1918 influenza pandemic did leave survivors with very long-lasting immunity to some types of the flu (like H1N1). Unfortunately, this immunity does not extend to other types of flu viruses, so I still recommend getting the yearly flu vaccines.

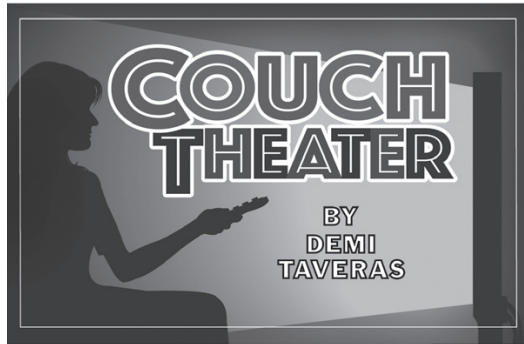
It's my experience that when people tell me they have never had the flu, it's not always true. Sometimes, the flu is mild and goes unrecognized. The flu is highly variable, and even young, healthy people with apparently good immune systems can succumb to the flu.

You may have inherited some of your mother's robust immune system, as this is partially heritable. However, I wouldn't depend on it entirely and do recommend the vaccine to help your immune system reduce your risk of getting a severe flu. People over 65 may get a special, higher-potency flu vaccine.

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

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"Napoleon" (R) -- Director Ridley Scott ("House of Gucci") recruited Joaquin Phoenix ("Beau Is Afraid") to star as the titular character in his historical drama centered on French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. Phoenix gives a very stony but comical performance as Bonaparte, opposite an alluring Vanessa Kirby ("Mission: Impossible")

as Josephine, Bonaparte's first wife. The film spans from 1793 up until the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, jumping between chilling battle sequences and intimate moments of Bonaparte's personal life. Many critics have sounded off about the film, highlighting its historical inaccuracy and anti-French sentiments, but Scott had this to say to his critics: "Excuse me, mate, were you there?" The film's available now to rent. (Amazon Prime Video)

"75th Primetime Emmy Awards" (NR) -- Due to the writers' and actors' strikes of 2023, the annual Primetime Emmy Awards were pushed back from their usual September date, and award-season fanatics couldn't be happier that it's finally arrived! Leading the pack with 27 nominations, including 14 acting nominations, is the incredible comedy-drama series "Succession," which reached its culmination this past May. Other Max series that received nods included "House of the Dragon," "The Last of Us" and "The White Lotus," while actors like Jeremy Allen White ("The Bear"), Jenna Ortega ("Wednesday") and Bob Odenkirk ("Better Call Saul") snagged Lead Actor nominations for their respective series. The show is available to watch in its entirety on Jan. 16. (Hulu)

## In Case You Missed It

"Leave the World Behind" (R) -- After winning a bidding war to get the rights to the apocalyptic novel written by Rumaan Alam, Netflix released its film adaptation starring Julia Roberts and Mahershala Ali. Roberts plays Amanda Sandford, a mother and wife who books a beach vacation rental for her family, when sudden mysterious and concerning occurrences ensue. One of these occurrences, a blackout, brings the owner of the rental, G.H. Scott (Ali), and his daughter back to their home. With no choice but to stay together in this rarest of circumstances, the Sandfords and Scotts bunker down and try to find answers to the terrifying events that show no signs of stopping. Ethan Hawke and Kevin Bacon also play supporting roles in the film, out now. (Netflix)

"Bookie" (TV-MA) -- Italian-American comedian Sebastian Maniscalco leads this comedy series about the day-to-day of a sports bookie named Danny. With his clients often fleeing to avoid paying up, along with a rocky relationship with his partner, Sandra, Danny is often at his wit's end trying to keep the wheels running in his life. Similar to Pete Davidson, Maniscalco doesn't seem to like playing a character other than some variation of himself. But the half-hour episodes do provide good comic relief for those who just want to laugh, especially with Ray (Omar Dorsey), Danny's sidekick, and other characters like Hector (Jorge Garcia) and Lorraine (Vanessa Ferlito). All eight episodes are out now. The jury is still out on whether it'll be picked up for a second season. (Max)



**Sebastian Maniscalco, left, and Omar J. Dorsey star in "Bookie."**

Courtesy of Max

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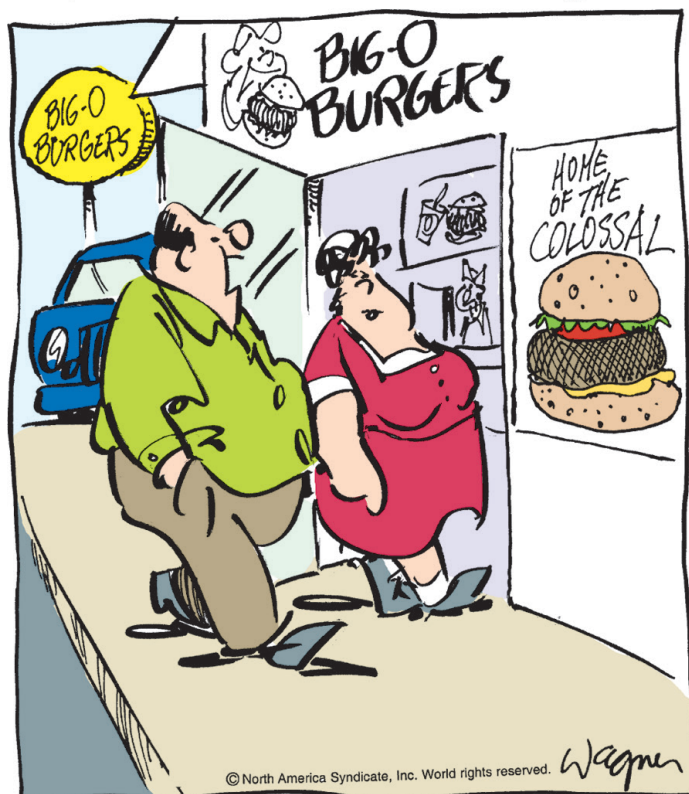
1. Which group had a hit with "Rock Around the Clock"?
2. Name the '60s group that made a hit out of the 1934 classic "Blue Moon."
3. What did Jerry Weiss, Dick Halligan and Jim Fielder have in common?
4. Who sang lead on "My Girl"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "The poet, the physician, the farmer, the scientist, the magician and the other so-called gods of our legends."

## Answers

1. Bill Haley and His Comets, in 1964. It became an anthem for youth of the day, and stayed at the top of the chart for two months.
2. The Marceles. The group named themselves after a hairstyle that used curling tongs heated over a gas burner, the forerunner of a curling iron.
3. They were among the eight original members who started Blood, Sweat & Tears in 1967, all of them backup singers who also played instruments.
4. David Ruffin, with the Temptations.
5. "Atlantis," by Donovan in 1968. The strange song about the mythological Atlantis had everything going against it, including that it was nearly five minutes long, yet it climbed charts around the globe and was even covered by several others.

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



"How could those athletes put steroids into their bodies?"

## Just Like Cats & Dogs <sup>by Dave T. Phipps</sup>



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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Lampshade is wider. 2. Curtain is shorter. 3. Leaf is missing from plant. 4. Sleeve is longer. 5. Foot is smaller. 6. Arm of chair is different.

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\* Here's a fun afternoon of play just waiting to happen: Check with your local grocery store or big box store to see if it has uncrushed cardboard boxes. Get several to create a cardboard city in your living room or child's bedroom. They can be decorated to look like anything, or cut, trimmed and taped into most any shape. Kids even like to stock them with pillows and blankets for a cozy sleepover. When you're done, break them down and recycle until the next adventure. -- J.J. in Florida

\* Sources who know say that if you drop a marble (clean glass) in your tea kettle, it will prevent it from scaling.

\* Like to use paper towels to dry your clean hands? Set them aside to dry, then you can use them for cleaning with glass cleaner or other solutions.

\* Use a shower curtain cut or folded in half under baby's highchair to make cleaning up the floor easier.

\* Air-popped popcorn is better for you and healthier. If you have an air popper, you'll also have a jar of popcorn kernels. Keep them in the refrigerator or even the freezer. You can use them straight from the fridge, and the bonus is that you'll have less unpopped kernels and bigger, fluffier popcorn. -- E.M. in Wisconsin

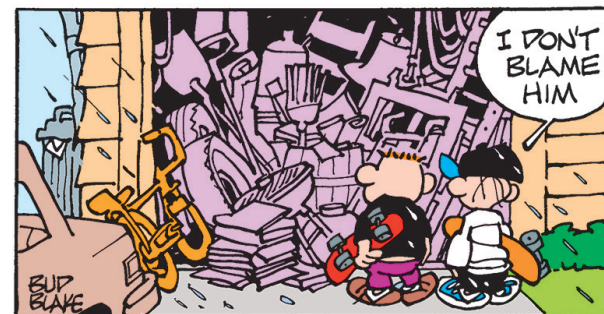
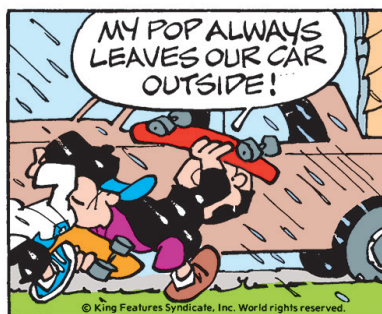
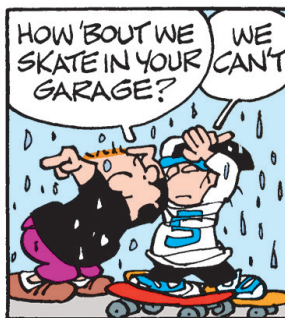
\* Stuck at school with a sticky zipper? Just rub it with a pencil lead and zip back and forth a few times. It totally works. -- W.K., a middle-school student, in Georgia

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

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**TIGER**

by BUD BLAKE



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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Essence
- 5 Sprint
- 9 Weed whacker
- 12 Part of a French play
- 13 Draft status
- 14 Jackson 5 hit song
- 15 Bribe of a sort
- 17 Kanga's kid
- 18 Hindu hero
- 19 Mature, as fruit
- 21 Laugh track sounds
- 24 Painter Joan
- 25 "East of Eden" son
- 26 College life
- 30 Kitten's cry
- 31 Nearby
- 32 USN bigwig
- 33 Wagered
- 35 Shade provider
- 36 Candied veggies
- 37 Plano's state
- 38 Recap
- 40 Wild hog
- 42 — pro nobis
- 43 Website assistance features
- 48 Motorist's org.
- 49 Biblical grain measure

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

- 30 Kitten's cry
- 31 Nearby
- 32 USN bigwig
- 33 Wagered
- 35 Shade provider
- 36 Candied veggies
- 37 Plano's state
- 38 Recap
- 40 Wild hog
- 42 — pro nobis
- 43 Website assistance features
- 48 Motorist's org.
- 49 Biblical grain measure

- 50 Slugger Sammy
- 51 Carrier to Amsterdam
- 52 Sean Astin film
- 53 Wan
- 8 October outing
- 9 Brother of Groucho
- 10 Bassoon's kin
- 11 Nobel Prize subj.
- 16 More (Sp.)
- 20 Fury
- 21 Soccer star Mia
- 22 Region
- 23 Cowboy's greeting
- 24 Sail support
- 26 Priests' garments
- 27 Runner Sebastian
- 28 Notion
- 29 Iowa city
- 31 Moth repellent
- 34 Vichy water
- 35 Nobel-winning Mother
- 37 Highland hat
- 38 Drench
- 39 Russian river
- 40 Ran in the wash
- 41 Nashville venue
- 44 Outback bird
- 45 Refusals
- 46 Show to a seat, slangily
- 47 Utter

### DOWN

- 1 "How frustrating!"
- 2 Hosp. section
- 3 Map lines (Abbr.)
- 4 Capital of Iran
- 5 Unhappy destiny
- 6 Editor Wintour
- 7 Observe

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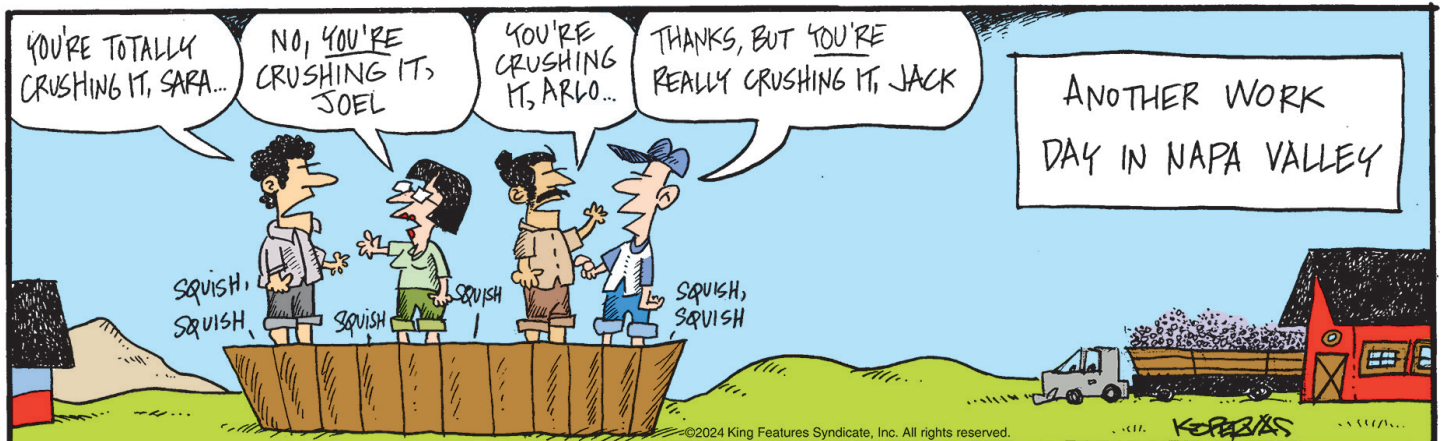
## — King Crossword — Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.

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

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS  
**POPEYE**  
BY RANDY MILHOLLAND

HEY, BABY BROTHER! ARE YOU AND BLUTO COMIN' TO BRUTINA'S BIRTHDAY PARTY?

I AM, BUT I DON'T THINK BLUTO WILL BE THERE, BRUTO.

WHAT'S HE GOT PLANNED?

HE'S ABOUT TO PICK A FIGHT WITH POPEYE, SO AN E.R. VISIT.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THAT SHEET, BLUTO?

I HEARD A RUMOR POPEYE'S SCARED OF GHOSTS!

I'M GONNA SCARE HIM PUBLICLY SO EVERYONE SEES HE'S NOT SO TOUGH AFTER ALL!

HOW'S THAT SOUND FOR A PLAN?

IT COULD DEFINITELY BE MISTAKEN FOR ONE.

BRUTUS, SHUSH! POPEYE'S COMING!

BOO!

A GHOSK!

POW!

I GET IT! HE'S SCARED OF GHOSTS. SO YOU'RE TRYING TO TRICK HIM INTO MAKING YOU INTO A GHOST, RIGHT?

THIS WOULD HURT LESS IF THERE WAS EVEN A HINT OF SARCASTIC IN YOUR VOICE.

BARNEY GOOGLE AND  
**SNUFFY SMITH**

WHY IS GITTIN' IN TROUBLE SO EASY, UNCA SNUFFY, BUT GITTIN' OUT OF IT IS SO HARD ?!

YO'RE ASKIN' TH' WRONG FELLER, JUGHAID !!

JAIL

HOW WUZ SCHOOL T'DAY, JUGHAID ?

WHAT HAPPENS AT SCHOOL STAYS AT SCHOOL, AUNT LOWEEZY !!

WELL, THIS HERE IS HOOTIN' HOLLER, MISTOFER SMARTY PANTS, NOT LAS VEGAS !!

1-22

JOHN ROSE

BUT, FINE, WE'LL DO IT YORE WAY !!

OKAY, WE'RE HERE !! SO--HOW WUZ SCHOOL T'DAY, JUGHAID ?!

SCHOOL



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

3954

VAL AND GAWAIN CONGRATULATE THEMSELVES ON CONVINCING SIR ROGER THAT THEY ARE SOTS WHO POSE NO THREAT TO HIM ...

...WHEN, IN FACT, THE PLOT TO EXPOSE THE NEGLIGENT STEWARD IS WELL UNDER WAY. VAL SENDS A REPORT OF THEIR PROGRESS...

YEATES 11/18/12

...BY FEATHERED COURIER TO A PREARRANGED LOCATION OUTSIDE THE CASTLE WALLS. A WAITING REBEL QUICKLY RETRIEVES THE MISSILE ...

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... AND SOON IT IS IN THE HANDS OF RHODA RED HOOD, WHO READS THE CODE NOTCHED INTO THE SHAFT. ALL IS GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN ...

... AND SHE MAKES A WORTHY EFFORT TO EXPLAIN THAT PLAN TO LORD GRUNYARD. ALTHOUGH SHE'D HOPED THIS EFFORT WOULD SOOTHE HER CONSCIENCE, ALL SHE FEELS IS SADNESS THAT HER RIGHTFUL LORD CONTINUES TO SHIRK HIS RESPONSIBILITIES. SO BE IT.

NEXT:  
Gawain's champion

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

I USED TO HAVE A MAGIC DOG.

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WHAT BREED WAS IT?

IT WAS A LABRACADABRADOR.

PICKERING

## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### 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 for 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?

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1. Sportscaster Roy Firestone hosted the 1995 "Al Bundy's Sports Spectacular" special episode of what FOX sitcom?

2. What Eastern Michigan Eagles quarterback did the Detroit Lions select in the second round of the 1998 NFL Draft?

3. The North Carolina Tar Heels men's basketball team retired jersey No. 50 in honor of what former star?

4. Gerry DiNardo compiled an 8-27 record as head coach of what Big Ten football team from 2002-04?

5. The Overall Distance Standard (ODS) and Actual Launch Conditions (ALC) are used in testing the rules conformance of what sports equipment?

6. Ronnie O'Sullivan, John Higgins and Judd Trump are among the elite players in what sport?

7. Who is the NHL's all-time leader in games played with 1,779 over 23 seasons from 1997-2001?



by Ryan A. Berenz

## Answers

1. "Married ... With Children."

2. Charlie Batch.

3. Tyler Hansbrough.

4. The Indiana Hoosiers.

5. Golf balls.

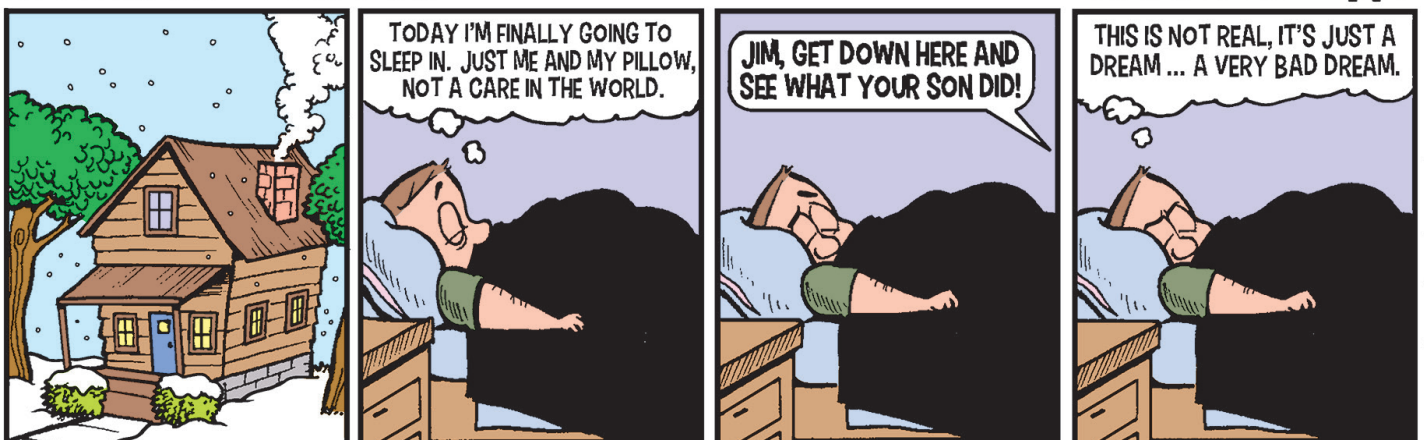
6. Snooker.

7. Patrick Marleau.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





## Kennel or Sitter? Traveling Owner Can't Decide

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I am traveling for business in a few days and will be gone for just over a week. Because I can't bring my dog Jasper with me, I'm trying to decide whether to board him at a nearby kennel or hire a dog-sitter instead. I'm worried about him contracting that respiratory illness that has been affecting dogs lately. What's your recommendation?  
-- Todd G., via email

DEAR TODD: Both of those options are fine -- as long as you take a few minutes to investigate both the kennel and interview the dog-sitter.

Schedule a tour of the kennel facility so you can see the conditions Jasper will live in and talk to the staff. Has the kennel had any dogs develop kennel cough or other transmitted viruses recently? How often do they disinfect the kennels and play areas? How much exercise do the dogs get?

Likewise, interview the dog-sitter in person, or over Zoom. How often will they visit Jasper -- once or twice a day? How often will Jasper get walks and play time? Will Jasper be the only dog being walked, or will he be part of a group of dogs? Is the dog-sitter insured, in case of accidents?

Once you've decided which caregiver to place Jasper with, be sure they have your contact information in case of emergencies, and details about Jasper's diet, type of food and medications. Place an article of clothing that has your scent on it in Jasper's bag so that he is more comfortable whether staying at home or sleeping at the kennel.

After you return, keep an eye on Jasper to make sure he's healthy. If he is coughing or sneezing frequently, has a lot of nasal or eye discharge, and seems lethargic or uninterested in food, take him to the vet for an evaluation.

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

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## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

\* From 1953 to 1959, the Cincinnati Reds baseball team went by a different moniker, the Cincinnati Redlegs, in response to America's fear of communism during the McCarthy era, when the term "Reds" could be problematic.

\* The word "whisky" comes from the Gaelic phrase "uisge beatha," or "water of life."

\* According to researchers at Japan's Nagoya University, electric eels can use their shock to transfer genetic material to nearby fish larvae, altering the larva's genes in the process.

\* An AI program using merely 10 seconds of human speech has been able to identify whether someone has diabetes with 89% accuracy.

\* Workers at an Akron, Ohio, auto wrecking company creatively stopped a potential car thief by using a forklift to raise him, while inside the vehicle, 20 feet into the air until (no doubt amused) police arrived on the scene.

\* If you make a visit to Iceland, you might run across a tiny, intricately designed house known as an alfhof. But it wasn't built for a family of dolls. Rather, such structures are created for the "hidden folk" of Icelandic folklore, creatures often invisible to humans but who are believed to lead lives similar to ours.

\* Smokers with better math skills are more inclined to quit smoking.

\* When Reza Baluchi, a 44-year-old man from Florida, aspired to cross the Atlantic on a visit to London, he didn't take a plane or boat, but a floating contraption much like a giant hamster wheel! Unfortunately, his mode of transportation was deemed "manifestly unsafe" by the Coast Guard off the coast of Georgia's Tybee Island, and after a three-day standoff, Baluchi's mission was aborted.

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals." -- Zig Ziglar

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### The Three Friends of Winter

Pine and bamboo are evergreen through winter, and plum tree blossoms signal the approach of spring. Together these plants form a motif in Chinese art and culture called "The Three Friends of Winter" that represents steadfastness, perseverance, and resilience. This imagery has been used in Chinese literature, painting, poetry, and calligraphy since the thirteenth century. - Brenda Weaver

Sources: [artmuseum.princeton.edu](http://artmuseum.princeton.edu), [chinaonlinemuseum.com](http://chinaonlinemuseum.com)



by Freddy Groves

## Psychedelics for Our Military

The \$883.7 billion National Defense Authorization Act for 2024 makes for some interesting reading, not only for what it left out, but what it included. What you won't find is the medical cannabis pilot program for veterans promoted by many, but you will find a treatment program using psychedelics for veterans and active duty with traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Specifically, it calls for clinical trials with the Department of Defense to create a system wherein they can spend up to \$10 million on psychedelics research. It only gives them 180 days to get started. Covered conditions, besides TBI and PTSD, include depression and insomnia.

Some of the drugs to be used are psychedelic drugs psilocybin (magic mushrooms), MDMA (ecstasy) and 5-MeO-DMT (from toad glands).

There are some reported successes from using psychedelics. The Food and Drug Administration said in 2017 that they'd had positive results using LSD and the magic mushrooms. The amounts given are small and are called "microdoses." A short report with a lengthy list of citations in the Marine Corps Gazette in 2019 describes the use of LSD, mushrooms and more to attempt to gain an edge in efficiency and productivity when it comes to attention to detail, mental processing and reasoning. The report points to the way LSD changes the brain's method of problem solving. Maybe this explains why it might be useful in helping veterans who suffer from PTSD. By creating new ways to think about things?

Yet another study, documented in the Lancet Psychiatry journal, found that the magic mushrooms reduced PTSD symptoms. The trial combined three doses of the mushrooms with psychotherapy. After Phase 2 of the trial, 56% of participants no longer had PTSD when checked 12 months later, after having suffered for many years.

If you want to learn more, listen to a podcast on the topic that includes a veteran who participated in a psychedelics study nine years ago: [news.va.gov/124415/exploring-psychedelics-treatment-of-veterans](https://news.va.gov/124415/exploring-psychedelics-treatment-of-veterans).

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## Wishing Well®

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

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

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1. MOVIES: What state is the setting for the 1990s movie "Twister"?
2. GEOGRAPHY: Lake Okeechobee is in which U.S. state?
3. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president adopted the expression, "Speak softly and carry a big stick"?
4. MUSIC: Actor/singer Jared Leto also is the front man for which rock music band?
5. HISTORY: The U.S. Civil War ended in 1865 when Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union forces in which Virginia town?
6. SCIENCE: Which element has the symbol Pb?
7. GAMES: What is the destination in the board game Candy Land?
8. TELEVISION: Who was the long-running host of "American Bandstand"?
9. U.S. STATES: What is the capital of Alaska?
10. LITERATURE: Who is the author of the autobiographical work "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings"?

### Answers

1. Oklahoma.
2. Florida.
3. Theodore Roosevelt.
4. Thirty Seconds to Mars.
5. Appomattox.
6. Lead.
7. Candy Castle.
8. Dick Clark.
9. Juneau.
10. Maya Angelou.

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South Dakota Governor

**Kristi Noem**



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

## Freedom for Life: Why a Crying Baby is a Good Thing

I recently delivered my State of the State Address to a joint session of our State Legislature. Towards the end of my speech, a small kiddo started crying up in the gallery. Now, to some that would probably be an unwanted interruption, but in South Dakota, we will always welcome a crying baby. And that's a good thing considering the fact that our state has the highest birth rate in the nation – so we have a lot of crying babies around!

This particular kiddo did have some great timing, though. The crying started just as I started discussing Freedom for Life. We couldn't have planned it better if we tried!

That crying represented every South Dakotan's Freedom to get off to the right start. That includes before they are born, after they are born, and continues until the day they die. In that spirit, I just signed a proclamation making 2024 "Freedom for Life Year" in the state of South Dakota.

The best way that we can advance "Freedom for Life Year" in South Dakota is by taking care of both moms and their babies before birth and after. Every human life is precious from the conception of an unborn child until natural death. And being pro-life means valuing every child's life before their birth and throughout their life. Being pro-life also means valuing and protecting the lives of mothers.

Research has shown that the first 1,000 days of a child's life are the most significant days for their development. This time stretches from the moment a child is conceived through their 2nd birthday. The fields of neuroscience, biology, and early childhood development all give us powerful insights into how nutrition, relationships, behaviors, and environments in the first 1,000 days shape future outcomes.

During that critical time, both mom and baby have to be well nourished and cared for to lead to healthy physical, emotional, and mental growth as a child's brain and body develop. The first 1,000 days really does set the foundation for the rest of a child's life.

In South Dakota, we have been dedicated to providing moms, babies, and their families with extensive resources to help them through those first 1,000 days and beyond. We offer the Bright Start program to get one-on-one nursing services to first-time moms and their babies. And my Department of Social Services' Pregnancy Health Home will offer care coordination to all pregnant mothers enrolled in Medicaid.

Life.SD.gov compiles all of our resources in one convenient location. I encourage moms to go there to find answers to any questions they may have about pregnancy, parenting, available financial resources, adoption, and more.

I am proud that South Dakota respects life. And I am looking forward to expanding our efforts to support mothers and their babies throughout 2024, "Freedom for Life Year."

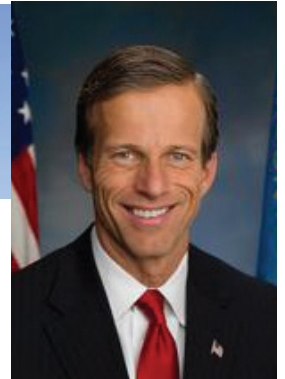
I want to thank that little kiddo for crying during my State of the State Address. Thank you for reminding all of us why we do what we do. I promise that I will keep doing all that I can to make sure you (and every other baby in South Dakota) has Freedom for Life.



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



## Grateful for Those Who Stand Up for Life

Each January, tens of thousands of everyday Americans gather in Washington, D.C., for the March for Life. They come from every part of the country, from every walk of life, and from every generation, but they are united in their conviction that every human life has inherent value.

It's not a complicated idea. The right to life is a fundamental right, one that our founders affirmed in the Declaration of Independence as "unalienable" and "self-evident." Abortion advocates might like to obscure this fact, but they face an uphill battle. At some level, every person knows that when we talk about abortion, we're talking about taking a human life. This is a great moral wrong. So I'm grateful that there continues to be so many Americans dedicated to speaking up for the unborn, standing up for life, and bearing witness to the truth that every life has dignity.

I believe this simple truth is what draws countless Americans to brave long bus rides and cold weather to come to Washington for the annual march. I'm particularly proud of the South Dakotans who have made the long trek to Washington, D.C., or those who traveled to Pierre for the state Walk for Life. For 50 years, marchers kept the faith that the United States would one day affirm protections for the unborn. About 18 months ago, 50 years of hoping and praying paid off when the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* and opened the door to meaningful protections for unborn Americans.

I'm grateful for the marchers who continued to believe in this important cause. The March for Life's public witness is critically important, and it's no less important today than it was before *Roe* was overturned. But it's just one small part of the pro-life movement. Every day, around the country, there are numerous organizations doing the quiet and critical work of supporting expectant mothers and their babies. This important work is often unseen, but it has an immeasurable impact in the lives of those it reaches.

I'm proud that there continues to be a strong pro-life movement working to promote a culture of life in our country. In the March for Life's long history, it has brought together students, church groups, elected officials, professional athletes, and presidents. The faces may change over the years, but the marchers' commitment to the right to life has not wavered. Thank you to all who march.

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



## Prioritizing Safety

### **BIG Update**

Tuesday was Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. On Monday, I was headed to the airport to return to Washington, drove into icy road conditions, and ended up in the ditch. Thankfully, I was wearing my seatbelt and no one was injured. I was impressed with the professionalism of the state trooper that responded to the scene. I'm grateful for our men and women in blue who work tirelessly through all conditions to keep us safe. This winter weather is just beginning, so always remember to wear your seatbelt, travel with a winter weather survival kit, and pay attention to the road and weather conditions. It can save your life.

### **BIG Idea**

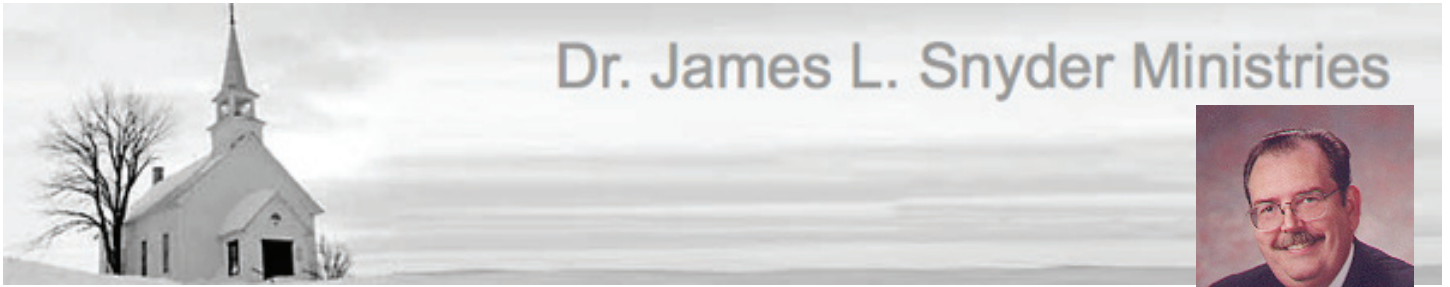
South Dakota School of Mines and Technology President Dr. Jim Rankin was in D.C. this week and gave an update of what's going on at School of Mines. Last week, School of Mines was listed as the #2 recommended university in the Midwest by students and alumni, published in the Wall Street Journal's 2024 Best Colleges in U.S. list. Their 83% student retention rate proves that ranking true, which is seven percent higher than the national average. With a 98% job placement rate in the graduate's field of study, their continued success is obvious, and is one more reason for their high rankings.

### **BIG News**

Last Friday, a plane in Oregon was forced to conduct an emergency landing due to a door plug being ripped off shortly after takeoff. This is a major safety concern for this plane make and model. While Boeing 737 Max 9 planes in America have been grounded to investigate the issue, due diligence should be done to make sure this never happens again. Thankfully, in this case everyone was safe, but an event like this could be catastrophic. I joined Fox Business to talk about the incident and the need for Congress to pass the five-year aviation bill to improve safety in the industry. Watch the interview by clicking here or the image below.

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## O Energy, O Energy, Wherefore Art Thou O Energy



Since I have reached a certain age, I cannot reveal that age; my energy seems limited. I don't have the energy I once had. Where it has gone, I have not discovered yet.

I once inquired of The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage where my energy went, and she replied, "Silly boy, you're over the hill, and so is your energy."

I almost asked her what that meant, but I didn't have the energy, and I didn't have the energy to climb back up that hill.

Not having enough energy does have its good side. One thing is that it is an excellent excuse for not doing something. For example, when my wife asks me to do something that I really don't want to do, I say, "My Dear, I just don't have the energy or I would do it."

Of course, she scowls at me because I think she knows exactly what I'm saying.

I have discovered that the word "retired" is something I didn't understand before. It means that I am tired over and over and over again. How I long for those pre-tired days of long ago.

I didn't understand how tired I was until recently.

A little over a year ago, our great-granddaughter entered our lives. When that happened, the great-grandmother opened "Grandma's Playtime Center." Now, the great-granddaughter is at our home during the week while her parents are working.

Seeing how much this little rascal grows within a year has been interesting. Somebody thought they were teaching her how to walk when, in reality, she learned how to run.

Hardly a step goes by with her that she's not running here and there.

I open my office door, and before I fully open it, she ran inside before me. My challenge is finding the energy to get her out of my office.

Watching her running all day long it is a very tiring experience. I'm not sure where she gets all her energy but she seems never to run out. If only I could borrow some of her energy, it would be great. It would serve both of us well.

Since she's been staying with us throughout the week, I've realized how truly tired I was. Every day is a new level of tirement for me. I'm beginning to believe that there is actually no end to this tirement cycle.

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I still come back to that question: where did my energy go? If I can answer that question, I might solve some of my retirement problems.

Thinking back on my former years, I remember how much energy I had when I was younger.

As a young kid, my parents made me go to bed early, and sleeping early was difficult. I sought ways to convince my parents to let me stay up longer. No matter when I went to bed, I still had energy that I hadn't used that day. Oh, if only I could tap into that energy today.

Now, as I am older and in that tirement cycle, I look for excuses to go to bed earlier.

It has become a game between The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and me. We try to find new excuses to convince us to go to bed earlier.

Sitting in my chair, I will begin to fake a yawning session. Looking at me, my wife asks, "Are you ready for bed already?"

Looking at my watch and seeing that it's not even 9 o'clock, I respond by saying, "Oh, no not yet!"

"You will tell me when you're ready for bed, won't you?"

I'm not too fond when she puts all the responsibility on me. If I had the energy, I would challenge her, but where do I get that kind of energy?

Occasionally, I will sneak a peek in her direction, and sometimes, I will see her eyes closed. I then say, "You're not asleep are you?"

She would quickly open her eyes, looks at me, and says, "No, I was just praying."

Finally, just before the clock hit 10 o'clock, she looked at me and said, "I think I'm ready for bed. I have to get up early tomorrow to take care of our great-granddaughter."

Only she could come up with a legitimate excuse to go to bed early. If only I could come up with a legitimate reason but I had to get up early in the morning I might be able to cash in on that.

Usually, I'll respond by saying, "I'll join you when I find the energy to get up off of my chair."

Finding energy has become a hobby of mine. Unfortunately, I'm not too successful at this hobby.

I won't give up the search for energy. Surely, there is something I can do to tap into some kind of energy. Maybe the fault lies with climate change.

Thinking about this the other day, I remembered a Bible verse. "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

Based on this, I have learned that waiting on God is the real secret to my daily energy. Like many people, I try to find my own energy and have failed many times. Only God can renew the strength I need to live each day for His glory.

## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Is compostable plastic too good to be true? -- Peter C., Pittsburgh, PA

In recent years there has been a global movement to pressure corporations into becoming more eco-friendly. One of the most frequent measures taken by these companies is limiting the use of single-use plastics and replacing them with so-called compostable plastics. Compostable plastics are frequently confused with biodegradable plastics. Biodegradable plastics are defined by their ability to degrade completely into biomass within a given time frame; compostable plastics are designed to be processed in industrial composting facilities. Many of the alleged "100% compostable," plastic-like materials are made from polylactic acid (PLA), a polymer derived from the fermentation of various types of starch.

Of the 6.3 billion tons of plastic that have been discarded since the wonder material started being mass-produced in the 1950s, only around 600 million tons has been recycled. Almost five billion tons have been either sent to landfills or left in the natural environment. Plastic production also contributes immensely to greenhouse gas emissions. Aside from the disastrous effects plastic has on the environment, it can also be extremely dangerous to human health. Microplastics from air or water can cause significant damage to cells in the body, causing cancers, lung disease and birth defects. Residents of "Cancer Alley" in Louisiana face the highest rates of cancer in the U.S., largely as a result of the plastic production plants along the lower Mississippi River.

Compostable plastic—which would theoretically leave no trace on the environment—sounds like a great solution. However, it isn't as simple as it sounds. While plastic-like materials like PLA will decompose in the right conditions, it's rare that PLA is disposed of correctly. Putting a cup made of PLA in your home compost won't break it down as it requires a specific set of microorganisms used in industrial composting that need temperatures well above what most home composts can reach. A UK-based science experiment from 2022, "The Big Compost Experiment," had citizens carry out home compost experiments to test the performance of compostable plastics. The public was generally very confused about what was compostable and what wasn't, and many of the objects labeled as "home compostable" did not fully disintegrate into their compost bins.

What needs to change to make compostable plastics a more viable option for the future? First off, there are very few facilities in the U.S. that are set up to handle the disposal of PLA products. Research by BioCycle magazine found that only 49 out of 4,700 composters nationwide accepted compostable plastic products. The good intentions of using compostable plastic don't make a difference if the waste system isn't set up to process it. Because so few facilities accept PLA, much of it ends up in landfills. It is also difficult to distinguish between regular and compostable plastic. When regular plastic gets into composts it can cause soil and waterway pollution. So, yes—compostable plastic is too good to be true. However, improvements in waste system infrastructure could enable them to play a more effective role in the future.

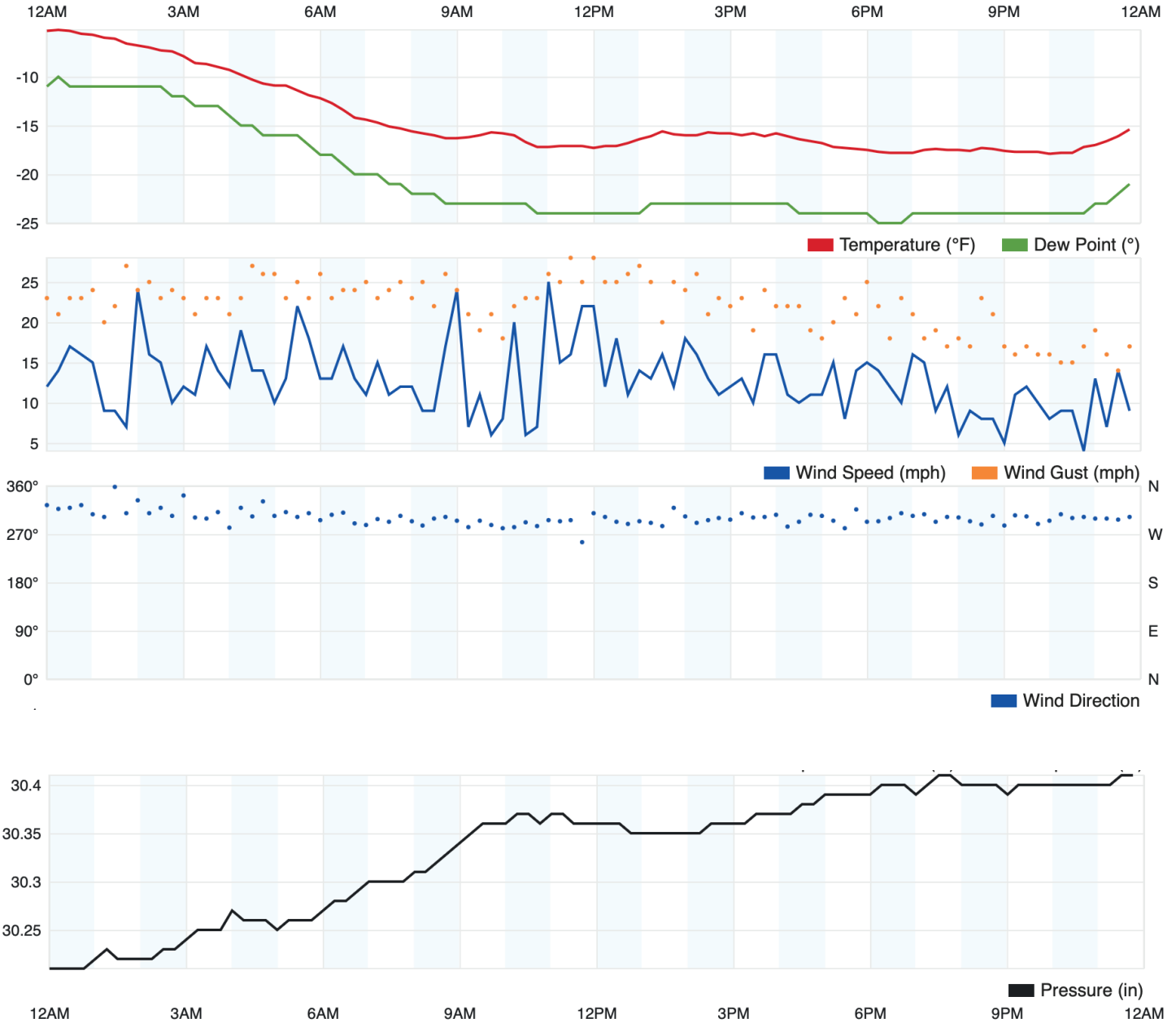


**These 'bioplastic' cups can only be composted in an industrial composting facility; in most cases they just end up in the landfill because they can't be recycled.** Credit: Unsplash.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Broton Daily Independent

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Sun Jan 14	Mon Jan 15	Tue Jan 16	Wed Jan 17	Thu Jan 18	Fri Jan 19	Sat Jan 20
-8°F	-2°F	9°F	12°F	7°F	8°F	15°F
-18°F	-7°F	2°F	0°F	-4°F	-3°F	3°F
WNW	WNW	W	W	NNW	NW	S
13 MPH	19 MPH	19 MPH	11 MPH	13 MPH	12 MPH	13 MPH
			20%	20%		



## Arctic Outbreak Continues

January 13, 2024  
3:36 PM

### Key Messages

- Dangerously cold wind chills of **-35 to -55** degrees through Monday morning.
- Blowing Snow will improve tonight as winds will gradually decrease.
- Looking Ahead: Expect wind gusts of 35-45+ mph again Monday, leading to drifting and blowing snow concerns in the same locations.

### NEW What Has Changed

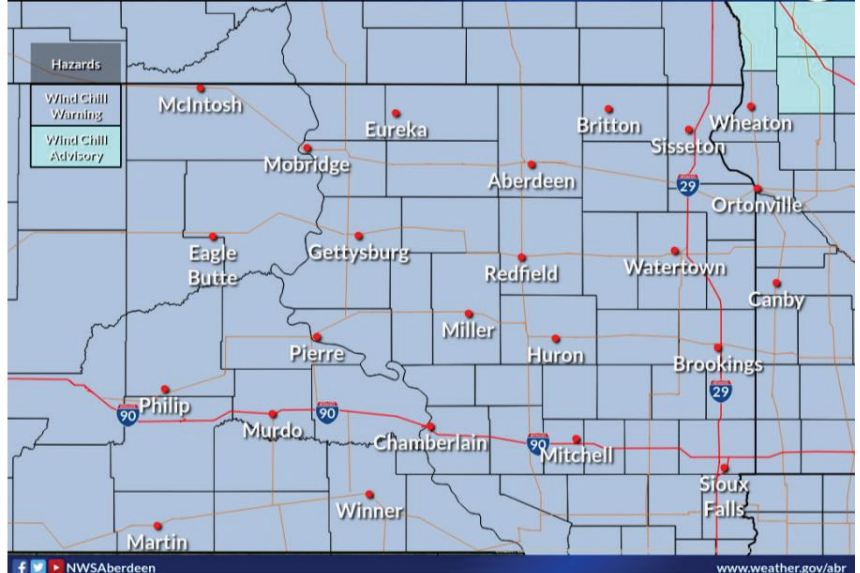
- No significant changes. A Winter Weather Advisory remains in effect through this evening and a Wind Chill Warning through Monday morning.

### Next Scheduled Update

- Sunday morning

### Wind Chill Headlines

Weather Forecast Office  
Aberdeen, SD  
Issued Jan 13, 2024 3:33 PM CST



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Dangerously cold wind chills of -35 to -55 degrees through Monday. Blowing snow will improve tonight as winds will gradually decrease

# Broton Daily Independent

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## Dangerously Cold Wind Chills

January 13, 2024  
3:43 PM



### Hazards:

Wind chills values between -35 to -55 degrees



### Timing & Duration:

The extremely cold air and low wind chills will remain in place through Monday morning



### Impacts:

Exposed skin may freeze in a matter of minutes. Bring your pets inside!

	Minimum Wind Chill Forecast (°F)																			
	1/13 Sat		1/14 Sun				1/15 Mon				1/16 Tue									
	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12am	Minimum				
Aberdeen	-46	-46	-44	-43	-44	-43	-32	-29	-35	-37	-38	-40	-41	-39	-30	-29	-32	-32	-30	-46
Britton	-42	-43	-42	-43	-43	-41	-35	-31	-32	-33	-36	-38	-40	-39	-32	-30	-33	-33	-32	-43
Brookings	-42	-42	-42	-42	-43	-39	-34	-32	-36	-36	-37	-38	-39	-38	-35	-31	-35	-35	-35	-43
Chamberlain	-43	-43	-44	-42	-41	-40	-31	-27	-31	-32	-33	-36	-37	-37	-31	-26	-30	-32	-32	-44
Clark	-50	-49	-48	-49	-49	-47	-39	-34	-38	-42	-42	-43	-44	-43	-37	-34	-34	-34	-36	-50
Eagle Butte	-53	-54	-52	-53	-51	-49	-38	-28	-36	-41	-42	-45	-45	-42	-37	-32	-36	-36	-34	-54
Ellendale	-46	-46	-46	-47	-47	-45	-34	-31	-34	-36	-38	-39	-42	-41	-34	-32	-34	-34	-32	-47
Eureka	-52	-52	-51	-51	-51	-50	-42	-36	-40	-41	-43	-45	-47	-46	-38	-34	-36	-35	-35	-52
Gettysburg	-52	-54	-53	-52	-52	-49	-40	-33	-40	-42	-43	-43	-44	-42	-36	-34	-35	-35	-34	-54
Huron	-43	-43	-42	-42	-42	-40	-31	-28	-34	-34	-35	-35	-36	-37	-32	-28	-31	-31	-31	-43
Kennebec	-49	-50	-49	-50	-48	-47	-37	-33	-36	-36	-39	-41	-43	-41	-34	-29	-32	-32	-33	-50
McIntosh	-55	-56	-56	-55	-54	-52	-42	-32	-39	-42	-45	-46	-47	-47	-40	-34	-37	-38	-37	-56
Milbank	-41	-41	-41	-43	-41	-39	-32	-29	-33	-35	-35	-36	-36	-35	-31	-29	-32	-32	-31	-43
Miller	-49	-52	-51	-50	-50	-47	-40	-34	-37	-39	-41	-40	-41	-40	-34	-31	-33	-33	-32	-52
Mobridge	-48	-48	-46	-45	-45	-43	-36	-30	-37	-38	-39	-41	-43	-41	-33	-30	-33	-32	-29	-48
Murdo	-50	-52	-51	-51	-50	-47	-39	-32	-36	-34	-38	-41	-44	-43	-35	-31	-35	-36	-33	-52
Pierre	-44	-43	-43	-42	-41	-40	-33	-25	-31	-32	-34	-34	-37	-37	-31	-25	-29	-29	-28	-44
Redfield	-47	-46	-47	-49	-47	-45	-35	-33	-36	-39	-41	-40	-41	-39	-32	-29	-31	-31	-31	-49
Sisseton	-43	-43	-43	-43	-42	-42	-34	-31	-35	-34	-35	-37	-39	-37	-33	-30	-33	-33	-32	-43
Watertown	-48	-47	-48	-47	-47	-44	-36	-34	-38	-40	-42	-42	-44	-43	-35	-34	-35	-36	-36	-48
Webster	-48	-48	-47	-47	-47	-45	-37	-33	-37	-40	-41	-43	-45	-44	-38	-34	-36	-36	-36	-48
Wheaton	-37	-39	-40	-40	-41	-40	-34	-28	-29	-33	-34	-33	-37	-37	-32	-28	-30	-30	-30	-41



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD



## Wind Gusts

January 13, 2024  
3:42 PM

### Wind Gusts

- Winds will gradually diminish tonight
- Wind gusts Monday of 35-45+ mph. This will lead to drifting and blowing snow concerns in the same areas

	Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)																			
	1/13 Sat		1/14 Sun				1/15 Mon				1/16 Tue		Maximum							
	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am		6am	9am					
Aberdeen	39	30	23	18	18	22	35	38	36	36	36	36	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39
Britton	37	30	22	20	18	21	31	37	36	33	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	37
Brookings	37	33	25	21	18	18	25	30	36	36	36	36	35	28	36	35	28	36	35	37
Chamberlain	37	33	22	21	17	25	36	38	41	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
Clark	38	35	25	21	21	22	33	38	38	38	38	38	37	38	38	37	38	38	38	38
Eagle Butte	43	35	24	23	25	37	41	49	53	45	40	35	35	35	45	40	35	35	35	53
Ellendale	41	38	26	21	23	26	40	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
Eureka	43	35	29	29	25	35	44	47	46	46	46	46	41	39	46	41	39	46	41	47
Gettysburg	41	35	26	25	23	31	41	45	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48
Huron	37	31	24	21	18	22	30	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	37
Kennebec	41	32	22	22	20	30	41	44	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	44
McIntosh	44	36	28	28	30	40	47	53	53	48	43	40	40	40	48	43	40	40	40	53
Milbank	40	35	26	22	21	22	30	33	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	37	40
Miller	39	32	24	23	21	24	38	41	39	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	41
Mobridge	40	30	22	21	21	29	37	45	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46
Murdo	39	30	21	22	18	31	41	43	52	43	35	30	30	30	43	35	30	30	30	52
Pierre	38	26	20	20	17	24	33	41	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46
Redfield	43	33	24	21	18	23	35	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	43
Sisseton	43	39	29	23	24	25	35	38	41	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
Watertown	38	32	26	22	21	23	33	37	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	39
Webster	43	37	26	23	23	25	36	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
Wheaton	35	32	26	23	20	21	28	31	30	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	35



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD



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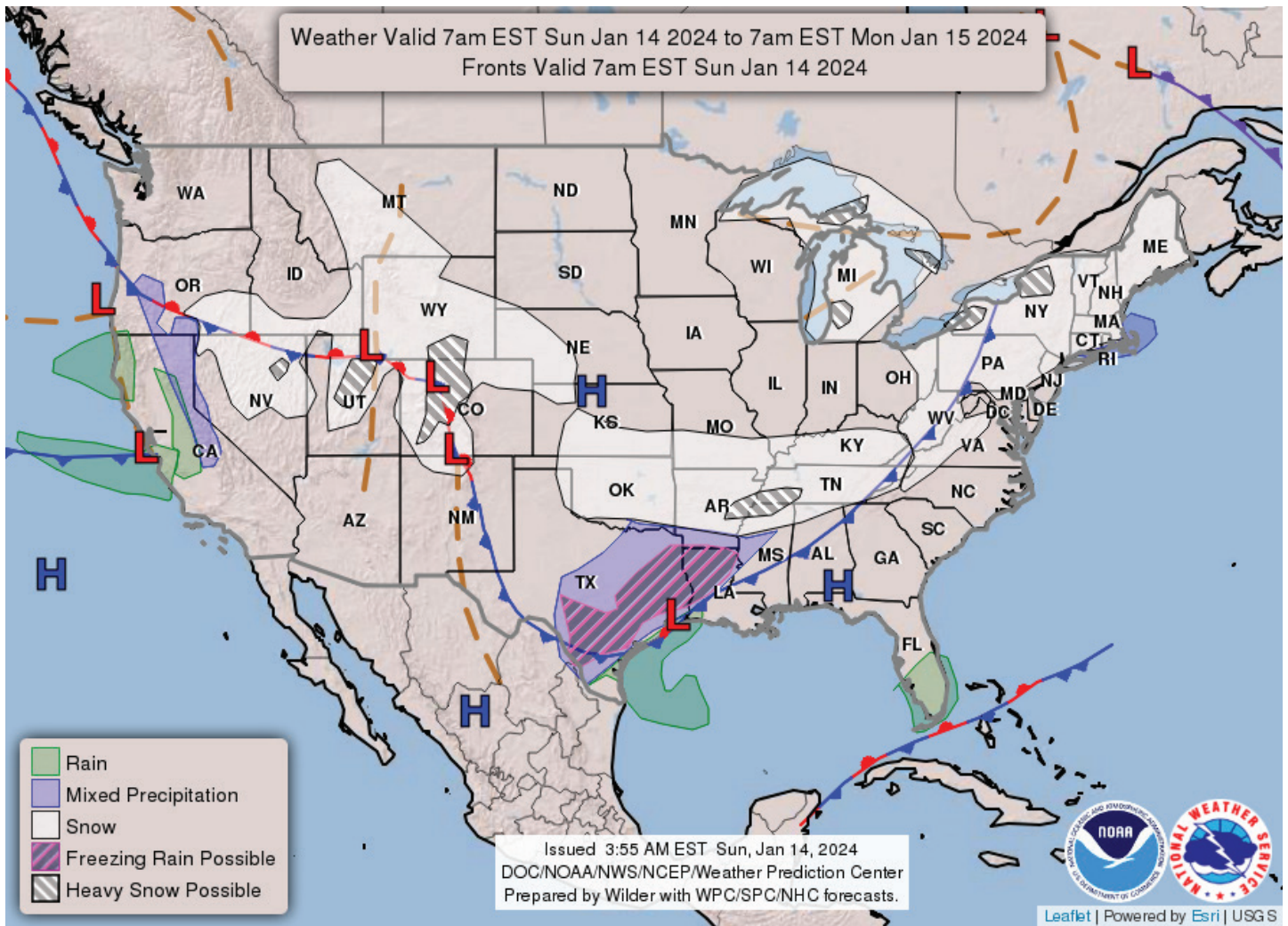
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: -5 °F at 12:15 AM**  
**Low Temp: -18 °F at 6:30 PM**  
**Wind: 30 mph at 11:46 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 9 hours, 8 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 50 in 1901  
Record Low: -36 in 1916  
Average High: 23  
Average Low: 2  
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.28  
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 0.28  
Precip Year to Date: 0.00  
Sunset Tonight: 5:15:24 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:06:47 am



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## Today in Weather History

January 14, 1916: Record cold continued on this date in weather history in 1916 across central and north-east South Dakota and west-central Minnesota. Aberdeen, Kennebec, Mobridge, Timber Lake, Watertown, and Wheaton all set record lows. The record lows were 24 degrees below zero at Kennebec, 28 degrees below zero at Wheaton, 31 degrees below zero at Timber Lake, 35 degrees below zero at Mobridge, 36 degrees below zero at Aberdeen, and 38 degrees below zero at Watertown.

1863 - The greatest snowstorm of record for Cincinnati OH commenced, and a day later twenty inches of snow covered the ground. That total has remained far above the modern day record for Cincinnati of eleven inches of snow in one storm. (David Ludlum)

1882: Snow fell in southern California, with the highest amount of 15 inches at San Bernardino. Three feet of snow fell in Campo over four days and produced 8-foot drifts in spots. Two to five inches fell in outlying San Diego, including four inches along Poway Grade, 3 inches at El Cajon, and one inch in Poway. Five inches fell in Riverside. Light snow fell in Del Mar. Snowflakes fell but did not stick at San Diego Lindbergh Field. Birds and livestock were killed, telegraph lines were knocked down, and citrus crops were damaged.

1972: In Loma, Montana, the temperature soared from 54 degrees below zero to 49 degrees above zero on January 14-15, 1972. The 103-degree change is the greatest ever recorded in the world for a 24 hour period.

1979 - Chicago, IL, was in the midst of their second heaviest snow of record as, in thirty hours, the city was buried under 20.7 inches of snow. The twenty-nine inch snow cover following the storm was an all-time record for Chicago. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Arctic cold invaded the north central U.S. By evening blustery northwest winds and temperatures near zero at Grand Forks ND were producing wind chill readings of 50 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary)

1988 - A powerful Pacific storm produced rain and high winds in the western U.S. In Nevada, a wind gust to 90 mph at Reno was an all-time record for that location, and wind gusts reached 106 mph southwest of Reno. A wind gust to 94 mph was recorded at nearby Windy Hill. Rainfall totals in Oregon ranged up to six inches at Wilson River. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A winter storm spread snow and sleet and freezing rain from the Middle Mississippi Valley to the northeastern U.S. Freezing rain in West Virginia caused fifteen traffic accidents in just a few minutes west of Charleston. Tennessee was deluged with up to 7.5 inches of rain. Two inches of rain near Clarksville TN left water in the streets as high as car doors.

1990 - A winter storm in the southwestern U.S. blanketed the mountains of southwest Utah with 18 to 24 inches of snow, while sunshine and strong southerly winds helped temperatures warm into the 60s in the Central Plains Region. Five cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including North Platte NE with a reading of 63 degrees. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2009: In Washington State, freezing fog and freezing drizzle enveloped much of the Inland Northwest during 13-23 January 2009. The area most affected by this was the high plateau region along Highway 2 between Wenatchee and Spokane.

2016: Hurricane Alex became the first January hurricane in the Atlantic since Hurricane Alice in 1955.

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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### HOW GOD LOVES

Little Nancy had kept every doll that her family and friends had given her. Over the years, many became tattered and worn. Some even had missing eyes and ears, and a few had lost some or most of their hair.

One day a friend of her mother came for a visit. With pride, Little Nancy invited the guest to visit her bedroom to meet her dolls. All of her dolls had been carefully displayed on her bed. "I love these dolls," she said to the guest.

Picking up a doll with a button missing from an eye, part of the thread gone from its lips, and a face that had become worn from being held so tightly for so many years, with a charming smile she said, "I love this one the most!"

"Why?" asked the friend.

"Well," she replied thoughtfully, "if I didn't, probably nobody would."

How like our Heavenly Father. When we read John 3:16, we are confronted with a love that has no boundaries, no barriers, no exceptions, no requirements, no standards, and no preconditions. When God proclaimed whosoever, He included everyone.

Often when we see those who are marred by sin and scarred by self-destructive behaviors or catch a glimpse of those individuals who are dirty and grimy and homeless, we look away in disrespect and disgust. Not Jesus. He sees in everyone – including us – a life worthy of His love.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to see those for whom You lived and died as You do. May we realize the price You paid for our salvation and do what we can to win them to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.12.24

19 34 35 45 67 7

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$208,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.13.24

6 9 30 38 46 1

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$2,350,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.13.24

3 25 32 36 48 6

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 21 Mins 11 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.13.24

15 23 29 30 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$21,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.13.24

30 41 44 55 58 17

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.13.24

13 31 33 51 58 15

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$88,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### **A weekend of ferocious winter weather could see low-temperature records set in the US heartland**

By JIM SALTER and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

O'FALLON, Mo. (AP) — Icy winter weather blanketed the U.S. on Saturday as a wave of Arctic storms threatened to break low-temperature records in the heartland, spread cold and snow from coast to coast and cast a chill over everything from football playoffs to presidential campaigns.

As the three-day Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday weekend began, the weather forecast was a crazy quilt of color-coded advisories, from an ice storm warning in Oregon to a blizzard warning in the northern Plains to high wind warnings in New Mexico.

"It's, overall, been a terrible, terrible winter. And it came out of nowhere — two days," Dan Abinana said as he surveyed a snowy Des Moines, Iowa. He moved to the state from Tanzania as a child years ago, but said "you never get used to the snow."

The harsh weather in Oregon played a role in three deaths.

In Portland, medical examiners were investigating a hypothermia death as freezing rain and heavy snow fell in a city more accustomed to mild winter rains, and hundreds of people took shelter overnight at warming centers.

Portland Fire and Rescue also reported the death of a woman in her early 30s on Saturday afternoon. An RV caught fire when a small group of people used an open flame stove to keep warm inside and a tree fell on the vehicle, causing the fire to spread. Three other people escaped, including one with minor injuries, but the woman was trapped inside, the fire department said.

Authorities in Lake Oswego, Oregon, said a large tree fell on a home during high winds Saturday, killing an older man on the second floor.

Weather-related deaths already were reported earlier in the week in California, Idaho, Illinois and Wisconsin.

Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen announced a state of emergency, citing "very dangerous conditions." Up to 2 feet (0.6 meters) of snow fell in some areas over the past week, and wind chills were well below zero.

"This event is not going away tonight. It's not going away tomorrow," Pillen said at a news conference "It's going to take a number of days."

About 1,700 miles (2,735 kilometers) of Nebraska highways were closed. State police assisted more than 400 stranded motorists, said Col. John A. Bolduc, head of the Nebraska State Patrol.

In Iowa, cars were stuck for five hours in blowing snow on Interstate 80 after semitrailers jackknifed in slippery conditions. State troopers had handled 86 crashes and 535 motorist-assist calls since Friday, State Patrol Sgt. Alex Dinkla said.

Road crews were "working the snow-blowers like crazy," Dinkla said, but high winds were blowing snow right back onto roadways.

Governors from New York to Louisiana warned residents to be prepared for worrisome weather.

Parts of Montana fell below minus 30 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 34 degrees Celsius) Saturday morning, and the National Weather Service said similar temperatures were expected as far as northern Kansas, with minus 50 F (minus 46 C) possible in the Dakotas. In St. Louis, the National Weather Service warned of rare and "life-threatening" cold.

"We've had, now, multiple back-to-back storms" parading across the country, weather service meteorologist Zach Taylor said. That typically happens at least a couple of times in the U.S. winter.

Still, to Eboni Jones of Des Moines, it felt unusual for "how much we're getting all within one week."

"It's pretty crazy out," Jones said while shoveling snow.

Grant Rampton, 25, also of Des Moines, braved a wind chill of minus 20 F (minus 29 C) to go sledding with friends at a golf course, fighting off the cold by wearing layers of clothing and insulated socks and

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keeping in constant movement.

"It's a great state to be in," said Rampton, a lifelong Iowan. "There's not as much to do, in winter especially, but you can make your own fun, like out here, sledding with your friends."

The temperature in parts of Iowa could dip as low as minus 14 F (minus 26 C) on Monday, when the state's caucuses kick off the presidential primary season. And forecasters said it would be Wednesday before below-zero windchills go away.

Republicans Ron DeSantis, Nikki Haley and former President Donald Trump all canceled campaign events because of the storm.

Electricity was out Saturday afternoon in hundreds of thousands of households and businesses, mainly in Michigan, Oregon and Wisconsin, according to poweroutage.us.

In Yankton, South Dakota, the temperature was minus 15 F (minus 26 C) in the evening. Police there said plows were "freezing and breaking," so they would not operate until conditions improve. The Minnehaha County Highway Department also pulled its plows "due to low visibility and extreme cold temps."

In other places, if the problem wasn't snow and wind, it was water: Record high tides hit the Northeast, flooding some homes in Maine and New Hampshire.

The coastal Northeast was pounded by 1 to 2 inches (2.5 to 5 cm) of rain in the morning, and a storm surge amplified what was already the month's highest tide, National Weather Service meteorologist Michael Cempa said. In Portland, Maine, a gauge recorded a 14.57-foot (4.4-meter) difference between high and average low tide, topping a prior record of 14.17 feet (4.3 meters) set in 1978.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul warned of a "dangerous storm" as she announced that the Buffalo Bills-Pittsburgh Steelers NFL playoff game was postponed from Sunday to Monday. Residents of the county that includes Buffalo were told to stay off the roads starting at 9 p.m. Saturday, with the forecast calling for 1 to 2 feet (0.3 to 0.6 meters) or more of snow and winds gusting as high as 65 mph (105 kph).

Kansas City, Missouri, was set to host a frigid playoff game Saturday night between the Chiefs and the Miami Dolphins. The temperature at kickoff was expected to be minus 2 F (minus 18 C), with the wind making it feel like minus 24 F (minus 31 C).

Still, hundreds of fans lined up hours beforehand outside the Arrowhead Stadium parking lots, some with ski goggles, heated socks and other winter gear they bought for the game.

Chiefs season ticket holder Keaton Schlatter and his friends had considered trying to sell their seats, as many other fans did.

"But we decided that it's all part of the experience, and we didn't want to miss it," said Schlatter, of West Des Moines, Iowa.

In Oregon, Robert Banks, who has been homeless for several years, stood outside his blue tent along a Portland street in the afternoon, wearing one glove as sleet pelted him. He said he wanted to secure his belongings before making his way to a shelter.

"I lived in Alaska for a number of years," he said. "The wind and the wet cold is different from dry tundra cold ... oh, it is bone-chilling."

The snow was welcome in at least one place.

Philip Spitzley of Lake Odessa, Michigan, woke up Friday to 95 small snowmen in his front yard to celebrate his 95th birthday. Fifteen family members and a neighbor collaborated on the snow-packing job, which took about 90 minutes.

"I was quite surprised," Spitzley said. "I sat right here watching my TV and didn't know they were out there. Then I saw flashlights."

The display has turned into a spectacle as motorists slow down for a look. And with days of cold weather ahead, "they'll be there awhile," Spitzley said.

## States with big climate goals strip local power to block green projects

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and JOHN HANNA Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Clean energy developers had planned a 75-turbine wind farm in mid-Michigan's Montcalm County before local voters shot down the idea in 2022 and recalled seven local officials who had supported it.

About 150 miles (240 kilometers) southeast, Clara Ostrander in Monroe County found herself at the center of a similar conflict as rising medical costs forced her and her husband to consider selling land her family has owned for 150 years.

Leasing a parcel to an incoming solar farm could save the property, but neighboring residents complained so vehemently that Ostrander said the township changed its zoning to block the project.

"There are people in this township I will never, ever speak to again," she said.

Local restrictions in Michigan derailed more than two dozen utility-scale renewable energy projects as of last May, according to a study by the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University. Nationwide, and at least 228 restrictions in 35 states have been imposed to stop green energy projects.

The conflicts have hindered many states' aggressive timelines for transitioning to cleaner energy production, with the ultimate goal of eliminating carbon pollution within the next two decades.

Michigan and more than a dozen other states are seeking to upend the decision-making process by grabbing the power to supersede local restrictions and allow state authorities to approve or disapprove locations for utility-scale projects.

The shift has sparked a political backlash that may escalate as more states seek to simplify getting green energy projects approved and built.

"We can't allow projects of statewide importance that are critical to our state energy security to be vetoed on purely local concerns," said Dan Scripps, chair of Michigan's Public Service Commission.

Scripps and two other commission members now have the power to site large-scale renewable energy projects in the state under legislation passed by Michigan lawmakers and signed by Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in November.

Michigan joined Connecticut, New York, Oregon and Minnesota in requiring utility providers to transition to 100% carbon-free electricity generation by 2040. A sixth state, Rhode Island, is shooting for 100% renewable energy by 2033. The goals are consistent with the Biden administration's target of carbon pollution-free electricity by 2035 and a net-zero emissions economy by 2050. Other states have long-standing goals lower than 100%.

But many local officials say giving states the power to site large-scale energy projects clashes with cherished U.S. political principles. Local officials, they say, are the public servants closest to and most directly accountable to voters. They argue that's especially important when it comes to land use and what gets built near homes.

In Kansas, Osage County's moratorium on commercial solar and wind projects came in 2022 after multiple hearings. County Commissioner Jay Bailey said the decision reflected most residents' concerns. Even after all the hearings and discussions, he said he just didn't feel he had enough information about the effects of large turbines or solar farms.

"Here's the difference," he said. "If you allow them, you can't go back and change it, but if you don't allow them, you can always change it."

In other places, such as the Flint Hills of Kansas — home to most of the nation's remaining tall grass prairie — moratoriums on energy projects stem from environmental concerns.

But even with the restrictions in place in parts of Kansas, renewable energy has boomed there. Wind farms now provide 47% of the state's electricity, up from 7% in 2010. The gains came as the clean energy lobby worked steadily to counter opposition from the state's Republican-controlled Legislature.

Elise Caplan, vice president for regulatory affairs at the nonprofit American Council on Renewable Energy, said local rules restricting green energy facilities are "not really based on science." Projects can benefit local environments by retiring generating plants powered by fossil fuels, she said.



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Michigan has pursued its clean-energy goals by rapidly developing facilities where there's ample farmland. It's a choice that can divide rural communities, as it did in the Monroe County case in which Ostrander sought to lease property for a solar farm.

Michigan's new siting law could revive the project.

"No one's forcing this on us," Ostrander said. "This was something we decided and felt it would be good for us to build to keep our property in the family."

Michigan is unusual in that its more than 1,200 townships have the power to enact and enforce zoning ordinances. Twenty of the state's 83 counties have passed ordinances blocking or delaying wind or solar developments.

Scripps, the chair of Michigan's Public Service Commission that can now override those restrictions, has said an additional 209,000 acres (84,579 hectares) will be needed for projects to hit the state's 60% renewable energy goal by 2035. It's a massive increase from the 17,000 acres (6,880 hectares) currently being used.

Developers will still need to go through local communities to approve projects, Scripps said. But if the project is denied, and meets the state's criteria to proceed, the three-person commission can overrule the local decision and approve solar projects with a capacity of 50 megawatts or greater and wind projects with a capacity of 100 megawatts.

A 2023 law in Illinois limits local authorities' power and bans moratoriums on clean-energy projects. In addition to Michigan, the Columbia University study reported that state boards or agencies in California, Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island control decisions about siting projects. Local rules also can be bypassed by the state in Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Florida and South Dakota.

Local government groups in Michigan have overwhelmingly opposed the new law giving the state power to site projects, saying it creates a "one-size-fits-all" process. Citizens for Local Choice, a group with four state lawmakers, announced in early January that it will try put the issue before Michigan voters in November, which would require collecting nearly 357,000 signatures by May 29.

Green energy advocates are frustrated by what they often see driving local opposition to projects: A fear of change, widely circulating misinformation about wind turbines and solar panels and a desire by suburbanites who move to rural areas to preserve views.

Josh Svaty, who assists renewable energy companies seeking county-level approval and lobbies for them at the Kansas Statehouse, decries how opponents can make local officials' lives "absolutely miserable." Yet, he said, he still believes in local decision making.

"County governments — city governments, the same way — they are designed to be accessible to their citizens," Svaty said. "So you can go to that planning and zoning meeting and if you want to say your view, you can do that."

## Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

### **GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL**

Edgemont 37, New Underwood 33

Hill City 50, Sundance, Wyo. 35

Hot Springs 35, Newell 24

West River Tournament=

Moorcroft, Wyo. 57, Oelrichs 31

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=

Alliance, Neb. vs. Rapid City Christian, ccd.

Bon Homme vs. Chamberlain, ppd.

Brandon Valley vs. Douglas, ppd.

Burke vs. Gayville-Volin High School, ppd.

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Canistota vs. Canton, ppd.  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte vs. Bennett County, ppd.  
Dupree vs. Lemmon High School, ppd.  
Ethan vs. Arlington, ccd.  
Faith vs. Upton, Wyo., ppd.  
Flandreau vs. Centerville, ccd.  
Florence-Henry vs. Hanson, ccd.  
Great Plains Lutheran vs. North Central, ppd.  
Groton Area vs. Dakota Valley, ppd.  
Lennox vs. Sisseton, ccd.  
Menno vs. Andes Central-Dakota Christian, ppd.  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton vs. Vermillion, ccd.  
Rapid City Central vs. Thunder Basin, Wyo., ppd.  
Scotland vs. Freeman Academy-Marion, ppd.  
St. Thomas More vs. James Valley Christian, ppd.  
Takini vs. Flandreau Indian, ppd.  
Tea Area vs. Aberdeen Central, ppd.  
Timber Lake vs. Leola-Frederick High School, ppd.  
Wagner vs. Lyman, ppd.  
Yankton vs. Sioux Falls O'Gorman, ppd.

## **BOYS PREP BASKETBALL**

Aberdeen Roncalli 63, Warner 61  
Hill City 50, Sundance, Wyo. 25  
Newell 65, Oelrichs 49  
West River Tournament=  
Moorcroft, Wyo. 65, Edgemont 45  
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=  
Alliance, Neb. vs. Rapid City Christian, ccd.  
Bon Homme vs. Chamberlain, ppd.  
Brandon Valley vs. Douglas, ppd.  
Burke vs. Gayville-Volin High School, ppd.  
Canby, Minn. vs. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, ppd.  
Canistota vs. Canton, ppd.  
Castlewood vs. Dawson-Boyd, Minn., ppd.  
Chester vs. Freeman, ppd.  
Crow Creek Tribal School vs. Tiospa Zina, ppd.  
DeSmet vs. Hills-Beaver Creek, Minn., ppd.  
Dell Rapids vs. Pipestone, Minn., ppd.  
Deubrook vs. Luverne, Minn., ppd.  
Freeman Academy-Marion vs. Scotland, ppd.  
Groton Area vs. Dakota Valley, ppd.  
Kimball-White Lake vs. Avon, ppd.  
Leola-Frederick High School vs. Ellendale, N.D., ppd.  
Little Wound vs. Faulkton, ppd.  
Luverne, Minn. vs. Estelline-Hendricks, ppd.  
Menno vs. Andes Central-Dakota Christian, ppd.  
Mitchell Christian vs. Colman-Egan, ppd.  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton vs. Elkton-Lake Benton, ppd.

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New Underwood vs. Upton, Wyo., ppd.  
North Central vs. Great Plains Lutheran, ppd.  
Pine Ridge vs. Campbell County, Wyo., ppd.  
Rapid City Central vs. Thunder Basin, Wyo., ppd.  
Sioux Falls Lutheran vs. Arlington, ppd.  
St. Francis Indian vs. Todd County, ppd.  
Takini vs. Flandreau Indian, ppd.  
Western Christian, Iowa vs. Lennox, ppd.  
Yankton vs. Sioux Falls O'Gorman, ppd.

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

## **Bruner scores 26 and Denver defeats South Dakota State 99-80**

By The Associated Press undefined

DENVER (AP) — Tommy Bruner had 26 points in Denver's 99-80 victory against South Dakota State on Saturday night.

Bruner added six assists for the Pioneers (11-7, 2-1 Summit League). Pedro Lopez-Sanvicente scored 23 points and added five rebounds and five assists. Touko Tainamo had 13 points and was 4 of 8 shooting and 3 of 5 from the free throw line.

The Jackrabbits (9-9, 2-1) were led in scoring by William Kyle III, who finished with 26 points and eight rebounds. Zeke Mayo added 19 points, two steals and two blocks for South Dakota State. Charlie Easley contributed 12 points, seven rebounds and two steals.

## **US says Texas blocked border agents from entering park to try to save 3 migrants who drowned**

By VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

BROWNSVILLE, Texas (AP) — The U.S. Homeland Security Department said Saturday that Texas denied federal agents access to a stretch of border when they were trying to rescue three migrants who drowned.

The federal government's account came hours after U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar said the Texas Military Department and Texas National Guard "did not grant access to Border Patrol agents to save the migrants" Friday night. Mexican authorities recovered the bodies of a woman and two children Saturday across the border from Eagle Pass, Texas.

"This is a tragedy, and the State bears responsibility," said Cuellar, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee's subcommittee for homeland security, in a statement.

The drownings come amid escalating tensions between Texas and the U.S. government over immigration enforcement. On Friday, the Justice Department told the U.S. Supreme Court that Texas had taken control of an area in Eagle Pass known as Shelby Park and were not letting Border Patrol agents enter.

The Texas Military Department said in a statement Saturday night that one of its units had searched the river after Border Patrol alerted them of the situation but did not find any migrants. The statement did not address the U.S. government's claims that Texas authorities had "physically barred" Border Patrol agents from entering the park at the time.

Homeland Security echoed Cuellar's account of the distress call. In a filing to the U.S. Supreme Court on Saturday, Texas acknowledged seizing the city park on the border but said the federal government had mischaracterized its actions and it was trying to resolve any disputes over access.

"In responding to a distress call from the Mexican government, Border Patrol agents were physically barred by Texas officials from entering the park," Homeland Security said in a statement. "The Texas governor's policies are cruel, dangerous, and inhumane, and Texas's blatant disregard for federal authority over immigration poses grave risks."

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The park lies in a major corridor for migrants entering illegally from Mexico and is the center of Abbott's aggressive attempts to stop them, known as Operation Lone Star. Migrants are periodically swept away to their deaths by the current of the Rio Grande.

Abbott's office referred questions about the drownings to the Texas Military Department, which said its security personnel saw Mexican authorities responding to an incident across the river about 45 minutes after Border Patrol made the state aware of the situation. The department said it maintains water rescue equipment and works with local paramedics to assist migrants needing medical care.

"At no time did TMD security personnel along the river observe any distressed migrants, nor did TMD turn back any illegal immigrants from the US during this period," the department said in the statement.

Cuellar, who represents a Texas border district, said Mexican authorities alerted the Border Patrol to the distressed migrants struggling in the river late Friday. He said federal agents attempted to call and relay the information to Texas National Guard members at Shelby Park, without success. Agents then visited the entrance to the park but were turned away, according to the congressman, who said they were told a Guard member would be sent to investigate the situation.

The 50-acre park is owned by the city, but it is used by the state Department of Public Safety and the Texas Military Department to patrol border crossings. Although daily crossings diminished from the thousands to about 500, state authorities put up fences and stationed military vehicles by the entry to deny access to the public and Border Patrol agents this week, according to a court filing.

In its Supreme Court filing, Texas challenged claims that Border Patrol agents were denied access. They said the Border Patrol has scaled down its presence since summer, when the state moved its resources and manpower to the park.

Federal agents were also granted access to the area to secure supplies, the state said.

Cuellar said there was no immediate information available about the victims' nationalities, relationship and ages. The Mexican government made no public statements.

On Saturday members of the public held a ceremony at the park to mark the deaths of migrants in their region. Julio Vasquez, a pastor, said access was granted after making requests with the city and sharing pictures showing the entry still fenced up and guarded by members of the National Guard and military vehicles.

## **As Israel-Hamas war reaches 100-day mark, here's the conflict by numbers**

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Now 100 days old, the latest Israel-Hamas war is by far the longest, bloodiest, and most destructive conflict between the bitter enemies.

The fighting erupted on Oct. 7 when Hamas carried out a deadly attack in southern Israel. Since then, Israel has relentlessly pounded the Gaza Strip with airstrikes and a ground offensive that have wrought unprecedented destruction, flattening entire neighborhoods. The offensive has displaced the vast majority of Palestinians in Gaza, shuttered operations in more than half of Gaza's hospitals and caused widespread hunger, U.N. monitors say.

The Israeli military says it has now scaled back operations in the hard-hit north. But in the south, where it says Hamas' leaders are hiding, it presses forward at full strength. Meanwhile, Lebanon's Hezbollah militia and Israel have engaged in cross-border skirmishes nearly every day since the war began.

Here's a look in numbers at the toll of the Israel-Hamas war, sourced from Palestinian Health Ministry and Israeli officials as well as international observers and aid groups.

### TOTAL DEATHS

Number of Palestinians killed in Gaza: 23,843

Number of people killed in Israel: more than 1,200

Number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank: 347

### CIVILIANS

Civilians killed in Gaza: The civilian toll of the war is unknown, with women and minors making up an

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estimated two-thirds of those killed

Number of civilians killed in Israel on Oct. 7: 790

U.N. staff killed in Gaza: 148

Health workers killed in Gaza: at least 337

Journalists killed in Gaza: 82

SOLDIERS/MILITANTS

Number of Israeli soldiers killed on Oct. 7: 314

Number of militants killed by Israel: Over 8,000

Number of Israeli soldiers killed in the Gaza ground offensive: 188

Number of Israeli soldiers killed on the northern front: 9

Number of Israeli soldiers killed by friendly fire or "accidents" in Gaza and the north: 29

DESTRUCTION/HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN GAZA

Percentage of Gaza's buildings likely damaged/destroyed: 45-56%

Hospitals in Gaza partially functioning: 15/36

Palestinian civilians facing "catastrophic hunger and starvation": 576,600 (26% of the population)

Percentage of school buildings in Gaza damaged: over 69%

Mosques damaged: 142

Churches damaged: 3

Ambulances damaged: 121

Students out of school: 625,000 (100% of students)

INJURIES

Palestinians injured in Gaza: 60,005

Palestinians injured in West Bank: more than 4,000

Total Israeli injuries: 12,415

Israeli soldiers injured in ground offensive: 1,085

Israeli soldiers injured since Oct. 7: 2,496

DISPLACEMENT

Number of Palestinians displaced in Gaza: 1.9 million (85% of Gaza's population)

Number of Israelis displaced from northern and southern border communities: 249,263 (2.6% of the population)

HOSTAGES/PRISONERS

Hostages taken by Hamas on Oct. 7: around 250

Hostages released: 121

Hostages taken Oct. 7 who remain in the strip: 132

1. 111 men, 19 women, 2 children

2. 121 Israelis, 11 foreigners

Hostages who were killed or died in Hamas captivity: 33

Palestinian prisoners released during weeklong pause in fighting: 240

MUNITIONS

Number of rockets launched toward Israel: 14,000

## Taiwan condemns 'fallacious' Chinese comments on its election and awaits unofficial US visit

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Taiwan on Sunday condemned what it said were "fallacious comments" by China following the self-governing island's presidential and parliamentary election the previous day.

The verbal sparring did not bode well for the future of Taiwan's relations with China under the winner, President-elect Lai Ching-te, or for China's relations with the United States.

The U.S. said it has asked two former officials to go to Taiwan this week for post-election meetings with political leaders, a move that will likely displease China.

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Former National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley and former Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg will arrive in Taipei on Monday and have meetings on Tuesday, the American Institute in Taiwan said in a news release. The institute is the de-facto U.S. Embassy, since the United States does not have formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

Lai's victory means the Democratic Progressive Party will continue to hold the presidency for a third four-year term, following eight years under President Tsai Ing-wen. China portrays the party as its nemesis and a major obstacle to its goal of bringing the island of 23 million people under its control.

A statement from Taiwan's Foreign Ministry accused China's Foreign Ministry and its Taiwan Affairs Office of falsehoods in the respective statements they issued Saturday night after the results of the election were announced.

It took issue specifically with China's often-repeated line that Taiwan is a domestic Chinese issue. China regards Taiwan as a renegade province and says that it should not even have a foreign ministry or any official relations with foreign governments.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said in its statement that "the Taiwan question is China's internal affair. Whatever changes take place in Taiwan, the basic fact that there is only one China in the world and Taiwan is part of China will not change."

That statement "is completely inconsistent with international understanding and the current cross-strait situation. It goes against the expectation of global democratic communities and goes against the will of the people of Taiwan to uphold democratic values," the Taiwanese statement said. "Such cliches are not worth refuting."

Lai, who will take office in May, won a three-way race for president with 40% of the vote, less than the clear majority Tsai won in 2020. Their Democratic Progressive Party lost its majority in the legislature, finishing with one seat fewer than the Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party. Neither holds a majority, giving the Taiwan People's Party — a relatively new force that won eight of the 113 seats — a possible swing vote on legislation.

The statement from the Taiwan Affairs Office in China said that the results showed that the Democratic Progressive Party does not represent mainstream public opinion on the island.

"Our stance on resolving the Taiwan question and realizing national reunification remains consistent, and our determination is rock-solid," Chen Binhua, a spokesperson for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, said in a written statement.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry, in its response, called on China "to respect the election results, face reality and give up its oppression against Taiwan."

The Chinese military regularly sends fighter jets and warships into the skies and waters near Taiwan. Any conflict could draw in the United States, which is Taiwan's main supplier of military equipment for its defense.

## North Korea launches suspected intermediate-range ballistic missile that can reach distant US bases

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired a suspected intermediate-range ballistic missile toward the sea on Sunday, South Korea's military said, two months after the North claimed to have tested engines for a new harder-to-detect missile capable of striking distant U.S. targets in the region.

The launch was the North's first this year. Experts say North Korea could ramp up its provocative missile tests as a way to influence the results of South Korea's parliamentary elections in April and the U.S. presidential election in November.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement that it detected the launch of a ballistic missile of an intermediate-range class from the North's capital region on Sunday afternoon. It said the missile flew toward the North's eastern waters.

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South Korea, the U.S. and Japan are analyzing further details of the launch as the South's military maintains readiness, according to the statement.

Japan's Defense Ministry also said it spotted the North's possible ballistic missile. The Japanese coast guard, quoting the Defense Ministry, said the suspected missile was believed to have landed in the ocean.

In mid-November, North Korea's state media said it had successfully tested solid-fuel engines for a new intermediate-range ballistic missile that observers say is likely designed to hit U.S. military bases in Okinawa, Japan and the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam.

Built-in solid propellants make missile launches harder for outsiders to detect than liquid-fueled missiles, which must be fueled before launch and cannot last long. North Korea has a growing arsenal of solid-fuel short-range missiles targeting South Korea, but its existing intermediate-range missiles, including the Hwasong-12, are powered by liquid-fuel engines.

The last time North Korea performed a public missile launch was Dec. 18, when it test-fired its Hwasong-18 solid-fueled intercontinental ballistic missile, the North's most advanced weapon. The Hwasong-18 is the North's only known solid-fuel ICBM and it's designed to strike the mainland U.S.

In recent days, North Korea has also been escalating its warlike, inflammatory rhetoric against its foes. Leader Kim Jong Un, during visits last week to munitions factories, called South Korea "our principal enemy" and threatened to annihilate it if provoked, the North's state media said Wednesday.

On Jan. 5, North Korea fired a barrage of artillery shells near the disputed western sea boundary with South Korea, prompting South Korea to conduct similar firing exercises in the same area. South Korea accused North Korea of continuing similar artillery barrage in the area for the next two days. The site is where the navies of the two Koreas have fought three bloody sea battles since 1999 and attacks blamed on North Korea killed 50 South Koreans in 2010.

Experts say Kim likely wants to see South Korean liberals pursue rapprochement with North Korea while maintaining a parliamentary majority status and for former U.S. President Donald Trump to be elected again. They say Kim might believe he could win U.S. concessions like sanctions relief if Trump returns to the White House.

In a key ruling party meeting in late December, Kim vowed to expand his nuclear arsenal and launch additional spy satellites to cope with what he called U.S.-led confrontational moves.

## Japan's Kishida visits quake-hit region as concerns rise about diseases in evacuation centers

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida visited Sunday the country's north-central region of Noto for the first time since the deadly Jan. 1 earthquakes to alleviate growing concern about slow relief work and the spread of diseases in evacuation centers.

The magnitude 7.6 earthquake left 220 dead and 26 others still missing while injuring hundreds. More than 20,000 people, many of whom had their homes damaged or destroyed, are taking refuge at about 400 school gymnasiums, community centers and other makeshift facilities, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency report.

Road damage has hampered rescue efforts, and though relief supplies have reached most regions affected by the quake, hundreds of people in isolated areas are getting little support. Additionally, in the hard-hit towns of Noto, Wajima and Suzu, elderly residents account for half their population, and many are facing growing risks of deteriorating health, officials and experts say.

Kishida, in his disaster-response uniform, visited a junior high school that has turned into an evacuation center in Wajima where officials showed him the evacuees' severe living conditions. They also spoke about the potential risk of spreading infectious diseases, such as influenza, COVID-19 and stomach flu due to the lack of running water.

The prime minister said he takes the evacuee's conditions seriously and promised support. "We will do everything we can so that you can have hope for the future," he said.

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To prevent possible health problems and risk of death at evacuation centers, local and central government officials said they would provide the evacuees free accommodation at hotels and apartments — further away from their neighborhoods — until temporary housing was ready. But many of the locals have refused to move out, worried about their destroyed homes, belongings and communities.

Ishikawa Gov. Hiroshi Hase urged on Friday the residents to temporarily relocate to the recommended facilities to rest better and “protect your lives.”

Mototaka Inaba, a medical doctor who heads an international relief organization Peace Winds Japan, told an NHK talk show on Sunday that a secondary evacuation of elderly residents was critical from a medical perspective but should be done in a way that didn’t isolate them.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi also stressed in a pre-recorded interview with NHK the importance of relocating the residents taking into consideration their sense of community, jobs and education.

Many have criticized Kishida’s government over what they called a slow disaster response.

The cabinet has approved 4.7 billion yen (about \$32 million) for relief efforts and is backing the call for a secondary evacuation, including to facilities in the capital region.

## Patrick Mahomes leads Chiefs to 26-7 playoff win over Miami in near-record low temps

By DAVE SKRETTA AP Sports Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — It was so cold that Patrick Mahomes’ helmet shattered on a hit. Andy Reid’s mustache froze on the sideline. Fans and players alike huddled for warmth, trying their best to grit their way through the fourth-coldest game in NFL history.

The Kansas City Chiefs managed to handle the adversity well Saturday night.

Handled the Miami Dolphins quite well, too.

Mahomes threw for 262 yards, found Rashee Rice eight times for 130 yards and a touchdown, and made several daring runs for key first downs. Isiah Pacheco pounded over the frozen turf for 89 yards and another score. And the Chiefs shut down a prolific Miami offense in a 26-9 victory in the wild-card round of the playoffs.

Harrison Butker added four field goals for the reigning Super Bowl champs, who appear to be warming up for another run.

“Guys came with that attitude, that mentality — we knew it was going to be cold,” Mahomes said. “All week we were preaching, ‘Let’s come in there with that fire and just get after it and see what happens.’”

Meanwhile, the injury-depleted Dolphins (11-7) looked nothing like the same dynamic offense that led the league in yards. Tua Tagovailoa was pressured relentlessly by the NFL’s second-ranked defense, wide receiver Tyreek Hill had a 53-yard TD catch but was otherwise shut down in his return to Kansas City, and the Dolphins finished with 264 yards in all.

They have not won at Arrowhead Stadium since Nov. 6, 2011, nor won a playoff game since Dec. 30, 2000.

“Losing is never fun, and when the stakes are higher — when it’s playoff time — you feel that maybe 10 times more,” said Tagovailoa, who was just 20 of 39 for 199 yards passing with an interception. “We’ve got to live with that loss.”

The Chiefs get to live with another win in their 15th consecutive home playoff game, not counting a trio of Super Bowls that netted them two Lombardi Trophies. But they will head to Buffalo next week if the Bills beat the Steelers on Monday in a game pushed back a day by a blizzard. Otherwise, the Chiefs will host Houston, which beat the Browns earlier Saturday.

“Everybody was out there playing for each other,” Rice said. “We just put the weather to the side and knew that our opponent didn’t want to be out there just as much as we didn’t, and we showed our love for the game.”

It was minus-4 degrees Fahrenheit (minus-20 Celsius) at kickoff, easily setting a record for the coldest game at Arrowhead Stadium. But it was wind gusts, whipping through at more than 25 mph and driving



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the wind chill to a bone-rattling minus-27 degrees, that made the weather truly miserable for just about everyone.

That included pop star Taylor Swift, who once again turned up to see her boyfriend, Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce.

She at least got to watch from an enclosed suite. Most fans bundled up outside in parkas, ski goggles and snow pants, and players huddled around heaters on the sidelines as if they were oases in the cold. The National Weather Service even issued a warning for what it called "dangerously cold" weather that had blanketed the Midwest.

In fact, the cold may have made Mahomes' helmet brittle enough that a hit in the third quarter knocked a chunk of the plastic shell from it. Once officials saw the fist-sized hole, they made Mahomes get a backup helmet from the bench.

"We have to talk about where we store the backup," Mahomes said with a smile. "It was like, frozen."

The weather didn't seem to bother Hill, who was playing in Kansas City for the first time since his old team traded him to Miami two years ago. The league's leading receiver warmed up in a short-sleeve shirt, then proceeded to scorch the stout Chiefs defense and All-Pro cornerback Trent McDuffie for a his long touchdown reception midway through the first half.

"It's where it all started for me," Hill said afterward. "Just being back on the field brought back so many memories."

The Dolphins otherwise struggled on offense, though, just as they did in a 21-14 loss to the Chiefs in November in Germany. They were just 1 for 12 on third down, and they never put together a truly sustained drive until the fourth quarter.

"We knew they were going to put a lot of attention toward our receivers," Dolphins coach Mike McDaniel said. "We thought we had the right plan and obviously it wasn't, and hats off to them for executing their plan in the most important time."

On offense, the Chiefs scored on four of their six first-half drives. Mahomes capped the first with his TD toss to Rice, and while ensuing drives continually fizzled in the red zone, Butker added a trio of field goals to help Kansas City forge a 16-3 lead.

"Butker was phenomenal," Reid said. "That was like kicking a block of ice."

The Chiefs added another field goal in the third quarter, but it was still a two-possession game in the fourth when the Dolphins appeared to force another field goal. But a late flag on Christian Wilkins for roughing the passer on third down gave Kansas City a fresh set of downs, and Pacheco plowed into the end zone moments later to give the Chiefs a 26-7 lead.

The Dolphins never threatened down the stretch in their 11th straight loss when game-time temps are 40 degrees or less.

Far less, in this case.

## INJURIES

Miami: S Jevon Holland (knee) and CB Xavien Howard (foot) were inactive. CB DeShon Elliott (calf) left in the fourth quarter.

Kansas City: WR Kadarius Toney (hip) was inactive. DT Derrick Nnadi (elbow) left in the second quarter.

## Wildfire prevention and helping Maui recover from flames top the agenda for Hawaii lawmakers

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Hawaii lawmakers are due to convene this week for the first time since the burning of historic Lahaina awakened the state to the deadly and costly threat posed by wildfires in an age of climate change.

The tragedy refocused the attention of lawmakers. Now, fighting and preventing wildfires and helping the island of Maui recover from the flames top the agenda as Hawaii's Legislature returns for a new session this week.

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"It really kicked us into gear in a different way," said state Rep. Nadine Nakamura, the House majority leader and a Democrat.

The Aug. 8 blaze killed 100 people, destroyed more than 2,000 buildings and displaced 12,000 people. Experts estimate it will cost \$5.5 billion to replace the structures exposed to the fire.

Investigators are still studying how the fire began. Heavy winds whipped up by a powerful hurricane passing south of Hawaii helped the flames spread quickly, as did drought and non-native fire-prone grasses.

Another fire in early August burned about 20 homes in Kula, a town on the slopes of Haleakala volcano.

House Democrats will look at wildfire prevention needs statewide and develop an understanding of what the state Department of Land and Natural Resources needs in order to do a better job, Nakamura said.

A House wildfire prevention working group formed after the fire recommended a range of new measures, including a public awareness campaign to prevent fires from starting and tax or insurance incentives for wildfire-safe structures. The working group recommended that the state maintain firefighting aircraft and other equipment specifically to fight wildfires.

The Senate majority said in a news release it was committed to forming a fire risk task force and seeking permanent funding for the Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization, which is a hub for wildfire prevention and mitigation.

Democrats have overwhelming majorities in both chambers, controlling 44 out of 50 seats in the House (one seat is vacant) and 23 out of 25 seats in the Senate.

Gov. Josh Green, a Democrat, in December asked lawmakers to appropriate \$425 million for the Maui cleanup and emergency housing, and millions more to reduce statewide wildfire risk.

Colin Moore, a University of Hawaii political science professor, said it was clear after Lahaina that state agencies need more money to manage forests and other natural resources. That could help revive a proposal considered last year to charge visitors for a yearlong pass to visit state parks and trails.

The bill would be popular during an election year, Moore said.

"That is the sort of thing legislators will want to advertise in their reelection campaigns," he said.

Nakamura said the Maui fires exacerbated a problem that existed long before: the proliferation of vacation rentals around the state.

Thousands of Lahaina residents who lost their homes in the fire are still living in hotels five months after the blaze because there is not enough housing for them, even though tourists are renting condos in their midst. Many wildfire evacuees have left Maui because they can't find a place to live.

Lawmakers could revisit legislation that has failed before that would give counties the authority to phase out short-term rentals, Nakamura said.

A University of Hawaii analysis estimates vacation rentals account for 15% of Maui's housing stock. In Lahaina, the ratio is 40%.

Moore expects lawmakers to continue to try to address one of Hawaii's most persistent challenges: the statewide housing shortage and high cost of housing that is fueling an exodus of Native Hawaiians and other local-born residents from the state. But any measures would likely be "reforms on the margins" instead of dramatic overhauls, he said.

"I think you're going to see more of what we've seen in the past, which is trying to figure out what is the right mix of regulatory reforms and subsidies and rental assistance," Moore said.

He said people needing affordable housing the most are a large, unorganized group that has little pull at the Legislature. Groups who care passionately about regulations restricting or slowing housing construction — for example, rules governing historic preservation or environmental regulation — are more readily able to mobilize and advocate, he said.

Nakamura said there will be a push for zoning to allow more housing on individual lots and for putting money into funds that subsidize affordable housing development.

There is widespread understanding that Hawaii needs more shelter for residents, Nakamura said, relaying how she has talked to business leaders and people in the tourism and health care industries who say their workers need housing.

"If they can't find an affordable rental and use their skills in Hawaii, then we all lose out," she said.

## **A defiant Netanyahu says no one can halt Israel's war to crush Hamas, including the world court**

By NAJIB JOBAIN, SAMY MAGDY and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel will pursue its war against Hamas until victory and will not be stopped by anyone, including the world court, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a defiant speech Saturday, as the fighting in Gaza approached the 100-day mark.

Netanyahu spoke after the International Court of Justice at The Hague held two days of hearings on South Africa's allegations that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians, a charge Israel has rejected as libelous and hypocritical. South Africa asked the court to order Israel to halt its blistering air and ground offensive in an interim step.

"No one will stop us, not The Hague, not the axis of evil and not anyone else," Netanyahu said in televised remarks Saturday evening, referring to Iran and its allied militias.

The case before the world court is expected to go on for years, but a ruling on interim steps could come within weeks. Court rulings are binding but difficult to enforce. Netanyahu made clear that Israel would ignore orders to halt the fighting, potentially deepening its isolation.

Israel has been under growing international pressure to end the war, which has killed more than 23,000 Palestinians in Gaza and led to widespread suffering in the besieged enclave, but has so far been shielded by U.S. diplomatic and military support.

Thousands took to the streets of Washington, London, Paris, Rome, Milan and Dublin on Saturday to demand an end to the war. Protesters converging on the White House held aloft signs questioning President Joe Biden's viability as a presidential candidate because of his staunch support for Israel during the war.

Israel argues that ending the war means victory for Hamas, the Islamic militant group that has ruled Gaza since 2007 and is bent on Israel's destruction.

The war was triggered by a deadly Oct. 7 attack in which Hamas and other militants killed some 1,200 people in Israel, mostly civilians. About 250 more were taken hostage, and while some have been released or confirmed dead, more than half are believed to still be in captivity. Sunday marks 100 days of fighting.

Fears of a wider conflagration have been palpable since the start of the war. New fronts quickly opened, with Iran-backed groups — Houthi rebels in Yemen, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iran-backed militias in Iraq and Syria — carrying out a range of attacks. From the start, the U.S. increased its military presence in the region to deter an escalation.

Following a Houthi campaign of drone and missile attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea, the U.S. and Britain launched multiple airstrikes against the rebels Friday, and the U.S. hit another site Saturday.

In more fallout from the war, the world court this week heard arguments on South Africa's complaint against Israel. South Africa cited the soaring death toll and hardships among Gaza civilians, along with inflammatory comments from Israeli leaders presented, as proof of what it called genocidal intent.

In counter arguments Friday, Israel asked for the case to be dismissed as meritless. Israel's defense argued that the country has the right to fight back against a ruthless enemy, that South Africa had barely mentioned Hamas, and that it ignored what Israel considers attempts to mitigate civilian harm.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu and his army chief, Herzl Halevi, said they have no immediate plans to allow the return of displaced Palestinians to northern Gaza, the initial focus of Israel's offensive. Fighting in the northern half has been scaled back, with forces now focusing on the southern city of Khan Younis, though combat continues in parts of the north.

Netanyahu said the issue had been raised by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken during his visit earlier this week. The Israeli leader said he told Blinken that "we will not return residents (to their homes) when there is fighting."

At the same time, Netanyahu said Israel would eventually need to close what he said were breaches

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along Gaza's border with Egypt. Over the years of an Israeli-Egyptian blockade, smuggling tunnels under Egypt-Gaza border had constituted a major supply line for Gaza.

However, the border area, particularly the city of Rafah in southern Gaza, is packed with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who had fled northern Gaza, and their presence would complicate any plans to widen Israel's ground offensive.

"We will not end the war until we close this breach," Netanyahu said Saturday, adding that the government has not yet decided how to do that.

In Gaza, where Hamas has put up stiff resistance to Israel's blistering air and ground campaign, the war continued unabated.

The Gaza Health Ministry said Saturday that 135 Palestinians had been killed in the last 24 hours, bringing the overall toll of the war to 23,843. The count does not differentiate between combatants and civilians, but the ministry has said about two-thirds of the dead are women and children. The ministry said the total number of war-wounded surpassed 60,000.

Following an Israeli airstrike before dawn Saturday, video provided by Gaza's Civil Defense department showed rescue workers searching through the twisted rubble of a building in Gaza City by flashlight.

Footage showed them carrying a young girl wrapped in blankets with injuries to her face, and at least two other children who appeared dead. A boy, covered in dust, winced as he was loaded into an ambulance.

The attack on the home in the Daraj neighborhood killed at least 20 people, according to Civil Defense spokesperson Mahmoud Bassal.

Another strike late Friday near the southern city of Rafah on the Egyptian border killed at least 13 people, including two children. The bodies of those killed, primarily from a family displaced from central Gaza, were taken to the city's Abu Youssef al-Najjar hospital where they were seen by an Associated Press reporter.

The Palestinian telecommunications company Jawwal said two of its employees were killed Saturday as they tried to repair the network in Khan Younis. They company said the two were hit by shelling. Jawwal said it has lost 13 employees since the start of the war.

Israel has argued that Hamas is responsible for the high civilian casualties, saying its fighters make use of civilian buildings and launch attacks from densely populated urban areas.

The Israeli military released a video Saturday that it said showed the destruction of two ready-to-use rocket launching compounds in Al-Muharraqa in central Gaza. A large grove of palm trees and some homes are seen in the frame. In the video, a rocket is being thrown into the air by the blast. The military said there had been dozens of launchers ready to be used.

Since the start of Israel's ground operation in late October, 187 Israeli soldiers have been killed and another 1,099 injured in Gaza, according to the military.

More than 85% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million has been displaced as a result of Israel's air and ground offensive, and vast swaths of the territory have been leveled.

Fewer than half of the territory's 36 hospitals are still partially functional, according to OCHA, the United Nations' humanitarian affairs agency.

Amid already severe shortages of food, clean water and fuel in Gaza, OCHA said in its daily report that Israel's severe constraints on humanitarian missions and outright denials had increased since the start of the year.

The agency said only 21% of planned deliveries of food, medicine, water and other supplies have been successfully reaching northern Gaza.

American and other international efforts pushing Israel to do more to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian civilians have met with little success.

## Chiefs and Dolphins play fourth-coldest game in NFL history at minus-4 degrees

By DAVE SKRETTA AP Sports Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The Kansas City Chiefs and Miami Dolphins played the fourth-coldest game in NFL history on Saturday night, with bitter wind chills that made it feel even colder at kickoff and intrepid fans bundled up in parkas, snow pants and ski goggles.

The temperature for the wild-card playoff game was minus-4 degrees Fahrenheit (minus-20 Celsius), and wind gusts up to 27 mph made for a wind chill of minus-27 degrees. That shattered the record for the coldest game in Arrowhead Stadium history, which had been 1 degree, set in a 1983 game against Denver and matched in 2016 against Tennessee.

The coldest game in league history remains minus-13 for the 1967 NFL championship, when the Packers beat the Cowboys at Lambeau Field in a game that came to be known as the Ice Bowl. The wind chill that day was minus-48 degrees.

Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs handled the elements better than the visitors from South Florida, beating the Dolphins 26-7.

"It was cold, I'm not going to lie. It was cold," Kansas City's quarterback said. "At the end of the day, you have to be mentally tough enough that if something doesn't work, I'm going to come back and keep firing."

The bitter cold didn't seem to bother fans. Among them was pop superstar-turned-Chiefs fan Taylor Swift, who arrived wearing a puffy winter coat designed to look like the jersey of her boyfriend, Kansas City tight end Travis Kelce.

Many fans began showing up at the parking gates more than 12 hours before kickoff Saturday, beginning their tailgating right in the street. And while there was less tailgating than usual, the smell of pregame barbecue still wafted through the parking lots.

"We definitely had that initial shock when we looked at the forecast," said Chiefs season ticket holder Keaton Schlatter, who drove from West Des Moines, Iowa, for Saturday night's game. "We thought about maybe posting our tickets for sale and if they don't sell, then we would go. But we decided that it's all part of the experience."

At least Chiefs and Dolphins fans could make it to the stadium.

The NFL was concerned that nobody could make it to the Bills' game against the Steelers on Sunday in Buffalo, where a blizzard was expected to drop a couple of feet of snow. So, the league and New York state officials decided to postpone the wild-card game until Monday, when the brunt of the snow was expected to have ended.

"We want our Bills to win," Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz said at a news conference in suburban Buffalo, "but we don't want 60,000 to 70,000 people traveling to the football game in what's going to be horrible conditions."

The snow wasn't the problem in Kansas City, where more fell Saturday morning but tapered off before kickoff. Rather, the big concern was what the National Weather Service called "dangerously cold" wind chills, which were expected to make a forecasted temperature of minus-10 degrees by the finish feel more like minus-30.

"The spectators need to be prepared. Think cold ski trip or ice fishing," said Dr. Sarah Spelsberg, who teaches in Northeastern University's Graduate Program in Extreme Medicine. "If it's me, I'm wearing ski goggles, too. There would not be a millimeter of my skin showing in these temperatures. I had frostbite one time and I never wanted to have it again."

About six hours before kickoff, stadium workers began to plow snow from the tarp covering the field, scoop it into trucks and drive it away. The field itself is heated, though, and it appeared to thaw out as gametime approached.

Dolphins wide receiver Tyreek Hill, who was back at Arrowhead Stadium for his first game since Kansas City traded him away, walked out for pregame warmups wearing a short-sleeve shirt. Chiefs linebacker Leo Chenal, who grew up in Wisconsin, arrived wearing shorts. Several other players, including Kelce, also

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had skin showing when the Chiefs took the field for their opening drive.

By the second quarter, Chiefs coach Andy Reid had icicles in his mustache. In the third, Mahomes had his helmet shattered on a hit from Miami safety DeShon Elliott.

As for the fans, the Chiefs had numerous warming stations throughout the stadium, and they bent some of their rules to help them deal with the weather. Fans were allowed to carry in blankets, provided they had no zippers or compartments, and could use portable chargers to power the kind of heated apparel that Schlatter was bringing to the game.

Fans also could bring cardboard to put under their feet, a useful tip Chiefs safety Justin Reid passed along this week.

"Trying to figure out what to wear that will be the warmest has been the concerning part," said Lauren Bays, a Chiefs fan from Smithville, Missouri. "I've been thinking of ways to add warmth all week and did find a pair of ski goggles that I plan to wear."

Not every fan is a diehard. Ticket prices on the secondary market plummeted throughout the week as fans tried to unload their seats. The price to get in was less than \$30 by Saturday morning, or about 10% of what it would normally cost, and empty seats were visible at kickoff.

The weather probably put a chill into the Dolphins, whose loss to Buffalo last week cost them an opportunity to host a home playoff game this weekend. They practiced all week in Miami, and it was 86 degrees on Friday when they stepped on the plane to Kansas City. It was 10 degrees with a wind chill of minus-6 when they arrived, an almost 100-degree difference.

"You can't prepare for a game like that with that kind of weather, so it'll be new," said Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa, who grew up in Hawaii and played his college football in the relative warmth of Alabama.

"Cold's cold. For you, me — it's cold," Andy Reid said. "But you go do your thing. That's how you go play."

## **The ruling-party candidate strongly opposed by China wins Taiwan's presidential election**

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN and SIMINA MISTREANU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Ruling-party candidate Lai Ching-te emerged victorious in Taiwan's presidential election on Saturday, a result that will determine the trajectory of the self-ruled democracy's contentious relations with China over the next four years.

China had called the poll a choice between war and peace. Beijing strongly opposes Lai, the current vice president who abandoned his medical career to pursue politics from the grassroots to the presidency.

At stake is peace, social stability and prosperity on the island, 160 kilometers (100 miles) off the coast of China, which Beijing claims as its own and to be retaken by force if necessary. China is run by the Communist Party, which allows no political opposition.

While domestic issues such as the sluggish economy and expensive housing also featured prominently in the campaign, Lai's Democratic Progressive Party's appeal to self-determination, social justice and rejection of China's threats ultimately won out. It's the first time a single party has led Taiwan for three consecutive four-year presidential terms since the first open presidential election in 1996.

At a post-election news conference, Lai thanked the Taiwanese electorate for "writing a new chapter in our democracy. We have shown the world how much we cherish our democracy. This is our unwavering commitment."

He added: "Taiwan will continue to walk side by side with democracies from around the world ... through our actions. The Taiwanese people have successfully resisted efforts from external forces to influence this election."

Lai supporter Hsieh Hsin-chou, a 57-year-old physical therapist, said he was "very proud" of the election result.

"We choose our own president in Taiwan. We are a country. We are a country. We are a light of the world. We love freedom. We love democracy. We (are) supposed to choose our new president," Hsieh said.

Lai and incumbent President Tsai Ing-wen reject China's sovereignty claims over Taiwan, a former Japa-

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nese colony that split from the Chinese mainland amid civil war in 1949. They have, however, offered to speak with Beijing, which has repeatedly refused to hold talks and called them separatists.

Beijing was believed to have favored the candidate from the more China-friendly Nationalist party, also known as Kuomintang, or KMT. Its candidate, Hou Yu-ih, also had promised to restart talks with China while bolstering national defense. He had vowed not to move toward unifying the two sides of the Taiwan Strait if elected.

In his concession speech, Hou apologized for "not working hard enough" to regain power for the KMT, which ran Taiwan under martial law for nearly four decades before democratic reforms in the 1980s.

"I let everyone down. I am here to express my sincerest apologies, I'm sorry," Hou said in front of an audience whose numbers fell well short of expectations.

Hou supporter David Chiau, who works in information technology, said the loss came as a shock, but he was pleased by the turnout for the KMT, which he had hoped could have merged with the opposition.

A third candidate in the race, Ko Wen-je of the smaller Taiwan People's Party, or TPP, had drawn the support particularly of young people wanting an alternative to the KMT and DPP, Taiwan's traditional opposing parties, which have largely taken turns governing since the 1990s.

Ko said that dialogue between the sides was crucial, but that his bottom line would be that Taiwan needs to remain democratic and free.

"At least this time the TPP has become a critical opposition power. I would like to say thank you to every one again, as the chairman of the TPP," Ko said. "Each vote represents recognition and support for us."

"This is also the first time that Taiwan managed to create a whole new three-party-competition between the clash of the green and blue," he said, referring to the DPP and the KMT by the colors with which they are affiliated.

Chen Binhua, spokesperson of the Chinese Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office, said that Beijing wouldn't accept the election result as representing "the mainstream public opinion on the island," without giving any evidence or justification.

"This election cannot change the basic situation and the direction of cross Strait relations, nor can it change the common desire of compatriots on both sides to get closer and closer, nor can it stop the general trend that the motherland will eventually and inevitably be reunified," Chen said.

The United States, which is bound by its laws to provide Taiwan with the weapons needed to defend itself, had pledged support for whichever government emerges, reinforced by the Biden administration's plans to send an unofficial delegation made up of former senior officials to the island shortly after the election.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken congratulated Lai on his victory.

"We also congratulate the Taiwan people for once again demonstrating the strength of their robust democratic system and electoral process," Blinken said in a statement.

Lai won nearly 5.6 million votes, amassing just over 40%, while Hou claimed 33.5%. Ko garnered 26.5%.

Evelyn Ni traveled from China especially to get a taste of Taiwan's election.

"I would really like to experience what it is like to be empowered," the 24-year-old student told The Associated Press. She said that she started paying closer attention to relations between Taipei and Beijing after Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and is worried that China could one day do the same with Taiwan.

Besides the China tensions, domestic issues such as the dearth of affordable housing and stagnating wages dominated the campaign.

For Tony Chen, a 74-year-old retiree who voted in Taipei in the hour before the polls closed, the election boiled down to a choice between communism and democracy.

"I hope democracy wins," he said. He added that more Taiwanese were open to China's model of governance decades ago, when the Chinese economy was growing by double digits annually, but are repulsed by the crackdown on civil liberties that has occurred under current Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Stacy Chen, 43, said she has always voted for the DPP, because "Taiwan is an independent country." She said she wanted her son to grow up in a country that is separate from China.

Taiwan's election was seen as having "real and lasting influence on the geopolitical landscape," said

Gabrielle Reid, associate director with the global intelligence consultancy S-RM.

"The outcome of the vote will ultimately determine the nature of ties with China relative to the West and will have strong bearing on the state of play in the South China Sea," she said.

The warming of Taiwan's ties with the U.S. will likely continue under Lai's administration, said Wen-Ti Sung, a fellow with the Washington, D.C.-based Atlantic Council.

Beijing is likely to deploy a "maximum pressure campaign" to influence the new administration along military, economic and political lines, Sung told the AP.

## **In Uganda, refugees' need for wood ravaged the forest. Now, they work to restore it**

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

NAKIVALE, Uganda (AP) — Enock Twagirayesu was seeking sanctuary when he and his family fled violence in Burundi, and they found it in Uganda, the small East African nation that has absorbed thousands of refugees from unsettled neighbors.

Twagirayesu's family has grown from two children when they arrived more than a decade ago to eight now, a boon for the family but also a marker of the immense pressure the Nakivale Refugee Settlement has put on the landscape near the Tanzania border.

What was wide forest cover two decades ago is now mostly gone, cut down for cooking fuel. When Twagirayesu saw women digging up roots to burn a few years ago, he knew it was time to act.

"We saw that in the days to come, when the trees are finished, we will also be finished," he said. "Because if there are no trees to be used for cooking even the people cannot survive."

He and two other refugees began planting trees in 2016, and Twagirayesu, who had sewn for a living back home, turned out to have a gift for mobilizing people. That early group quickly grew, and he now leads the Nakivale Green Environment Association to carry out what Twagirayesu calls the urgent business of reforestation.

"A tree is not like beans or maize, which you plant and tomorrow you will get something to eat. Planting trees is challenging," he said.

Deforestation is a national issue in Uganda, where most people use firewood for cooking, trees are often cut to make charcoal for export and some forests fall to illegal logging. The country has lost 13% of its tree cover since 2000, according to Global Forest Watch.

Nakivale, sparsely populated by locals, is one of the few territories in Uganda that could accommodate many refugees. More than 180,000 live there now, with regular new arrivals.

They come from neighboring countries such as Congo, where sporadic violence means an influx of arrivals heading toward Nakivale. There are Rwandan refugees still living in Nakivale who first arrived there shortly after the 1994 genocide. After the refugees are registered, they are allocated small plots of land upon which they can build homes and plant gardens.

Nsamizi Training Institute for Social Development, a local organization, is supporting the tree-planting activities of Twagirayesu and others. The institute's yearly goal is to plant 300,000 trees, with about 3 million planted in recent years, said Cleous Bwambale, who is in charge of monitoring and evaluation for the institute.

On one recent afternoon, a group of refugees were busy planting thousands of pine seedlings on the rocky, steep side of a hill facing the Kabahinda Primary School. In scorching heat, they attacked solid ground with pickaxes and hoes before carefully tucking the seedlings into the earth. Nearly all of the workers have children enrolled at the government-owned but donor-supported school.

Deputy Headteacher Racheal Kekirunga said heavy rains in the valley bring the school to a standstill as stormwater races down the hill and runs through the yard, forcing teachers and students to stay inside.

"We hope that when we plant these trees it will help us to reduce on the running water that could affect our school, and our school gardens," Kekirunga said. "Especially our learning and teaching. When the rain is too heavy, you must wait until it reduces and then you go to class."



The Nsamizi institute, serving as an implementing partner in Nakivale for the U.N. refugee agency, collaborates with mobilizers like Twagirayesu in four parts of the 185-square-kilometer (71-square-mile) settlement, according to the U.N. refugee agency. The institute encourages refugees with small cash payments for specific work done, maps out plans to reforest specific blocks of land and provides seedlings.

Twagirayesu said his group has planted at least 460,000 trees in Nakivale, creating woodlots of varying sizes and age. They include pine, acacia and even bamboo. That success has come despite fears among some in the settlement that the authorities, wanting to protect mature woodlots, one day might force the refugees to go back home.

"We got a problem because some people were saying that when they plant trees, they will be chased away," he said. "Teaching people to plant trees also became a war. But right now, after they saw us continue to plant trees, saw us getting firewood, they began to appreciate our work."

Twagirayesu said that while he isn't done yet as a tree planter, "when we are walking in the places where we planted trees we feel much happiness."

## John Kerry, the US climate envoy, to leave the Biden administration

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — John Kerry, the U.S. special envoy on climate, is stepping down from the Biden administration in the coming weeks, according to two people familiar with his plans.

Kerry, a longtime senator and secretary of state, was tapped shortly after Joe Biden's November 2020 election to take on the new role created specifically to fight climate change on behalf of the administration on the global stage.

Kerry's departure plans were first reported Saturday by Axios.

Kerry was one of the leading drafters of the 2015 Paris climate accords and came into the role with significant experience abroad, as secretary of state during the Obama administration and from nearly three decades as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Biden's decision to tap Kerry for the post was seen as one way the incoming president was making good on his campaign pledge to battle climate change in a more forceful and visible manner than in previous administrations.

"The climate crisis is a universal threat to humankind and we all have a responsibility to deal with it as rapidly as we can," Kerry said in a visit to Beijing last summer, when he met with Vice President Han Zheng on climate matters.

At international climate summits, Kerry always kept a breakneck pace, going from one meeting to another, with world leaders, major business figures and scientists, all interspersed with one press conference after another — to share what he just learned, announce an initiative, or say a few words as civil groups announced their own plans to help combat climate change, thus lending his credibility and weight.

In the span of an hour, at one meeting Kerry would talk in detail about the need for oil companies to drastically reduce methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, then go to another gathering and detail his latest idea to help pay for green energy transition in developing countries and then, some minutes later, go into a long explanation of illegal fishing around the world while attending an event with leaders of Pacific Island nations.

"John Kerry's tireless work to deliver global progress on the climate crisis has been heroic," former Vice President Al Gore, who has focused primarily on climate in his post-public office life, said in a statement Saturday. "He has approached this challenge with bold vision, resolute determination, and the urgency that this crisis demands. For that the U.S. and the whole world owe him a huge debt of gratitude."

While his gravitas has made him a central climate figure around the world, Kerry also has strong critics who argue America's climate policies don't amount to leadership in fighting global warming. The Inflation Reduction Act, the largest climate law in U.S. history, is pumping billions of dollars into renewable energies. But many facets of the law emphasize domestic production, thus leading other nations to complain

that the law is protectionist and detrimental to their own green industries.

And for years, the United States opposed the creation of a "loss and damage" fund that would see rich nations contribute billions of dollars to help developing countries, often hit hard by extreme weather events driven by climate change. During COP27 in Egypt in 2022, the fund was approved, as the U.S. and other rich countries relented and supported it. However, Kerry is always quick to say the fund is not about "reparations" or "compensation," and so far the U.S. has promised only modest funding for it.

Kerry represented Massachusetts for 28 years in the Senate and was also the Democratic presidential nominee in 2004.

## **Trump, Haley, DeSantis campaign in frigid Iowa in the final days before the Republican caucuses**

By JILL COLVIN, ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON, THOMAS BEAUMONT and BILL BARROW Associated Press  
DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Ron DeSantis and Nikki Haley pushed across ice-cold Iowa Saturday to find voters open to an alternative to former President Donald Trump with just two days before the state's caucuses open the Republican primary calendar.

Trump, the heavy front-runner in Monday's caucuses, opted for "tele-rallies" after canceling larger in-person events due to a blizzard blanketing much of the state, but he remained confident as he looks for a big victory to blunt the potential rise of any rival.

Shortly after arriving in Des Moines, Trump held a livestreamed town hall-style event hosted by Iowa Attorney General Brenna Bird, one his top Iowa backers. "It's nasty out there," he said of Iowa's icy conditions. He confessed to some worry that weather could dampen turnout Monday but said his supporters will "walk over glass" to support him.

Perhaps more important than the margin of Trump's expected victory is whether either of his remaining top rivals can claim a clear second-place finish and gain momentum as the race moves forward to New Hampshire and other states.

The final Des Moines Register/NBC News poll before the caucuses found Trump maintaining a formidable lead, supported by nearly half of likely caucusgoers compared with 20% for Haley and 16% for DeSantis. Haley, the former U.N. ambassador and South Carolina governor, and DeSantis, the Florida governor, remain locked in a close battle for second. Trump is also viewed more favorably than the other top contenders by likely caucusgoers, at 69% compared with 58% for DeSantis and just 48% for Haley.

Trump's modified schedule gave DeSantis and Haley a chance to see more voters across the state on Saturday. DeSantis in particular is under great pressure in Iowa given his campaign's heavy bet on a strong finish in the caucuses.

"You're going to pack so much more punch on Monday night than in any other election you'll ever be able to participate in," the Florida governor told about 60 voters at his first event in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the western edge of the state.

DeSantis is hoping for more voters like Michael Durham, a former Trump supporter who plans to caucus for him Monday night.

"He's just kind of no nonsense," said Durham, a 47-year-old from Council Bluffs. Durham praised DeSantis for opening Florida schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and challenging federal power. "He doesn't make any apologies for the way he thinks."

Other Iowans showed why DeSantis and Haley still have work to do in their respective final pushes.

Courtney Raines, a teacher, came to hear Haley on Saturday morning and planned to see DeSantis later in the day. "I'd like to know how she's going to handle the border crisis and mitigate the racial divide," said Raines, who expressed concern about divisions in American society.

Americans for Prosperity, the political arm of the conservative Koch Brothers' network, canvassed the state through the winter storm on Haley's behalf.

Patti Parlee, a 65-year-old accountant from Urbandale, was among the Iowans visited at home Saturday by AFP. But Parlee said she is choosing between Trump and DeSantis and likely won't decide until Monday

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night, when she will hear the two candidates' representatives make a pitch at her caucus site.

"That's what the caucuses are all about is people get to speak for their candidates," Parlee said. "And we have to keep in mind: This isn't the final election. It goes on from here."

Parlee argued that DeSantis has not gotten fair treatment from political media, while Trump has not been treated fairly by prosecutors who have charged him in four separate criminal cases. She said she loved Trump's policies during his administration but thinks he sometimes acts like a "fifth-grader."

"I almost want to vote DeSantis just to say yes, he should be getting more support than it seems like he is," Parlee said. "I almost want to vote Trump just to say: We know that all this bullcrap out there is bullcrap." In Des Moines, Trump hit Haley for "working with" the Koch network.

Haley, for her part, was measured in her criticisms of Trump, a reflection of her attempt at broad appeal. That includes Republicans who still have favorable opinions about the former president and independents and moderate Republicans who have soured on Trump and could be wildcards on Monday.

Speaking Saturday in the liberal college town of Iowa City, Haley drew enthusiastic applause when she hit her signature line aimed at raising doubts about Trump: "Chaos follows him. You know I'm right. We can't defeat Democratic chaos with Republican chaos."

It struck Julie Slinger, who voted for Trump in 2016 but then for President Joe Biden, a Democrat, in the 2020 general election. Trump is "a disaster waiting to happen. A time bomb," the 57-year-old accountant said. "Even if you like Trump, he is going to be crippled by this mayhem swirling around him."

Haley's appearance in Iowa City, part of the state's most Democratic county, highlights the wide net she is casting. Slinger entered the event undecided. She left committed to Haley.

DeSantis and Haley held back-to-back events a few miles apart in Davenport on Saturday evening, making little mention of the other to their friendly crowds. They'll both travel north to Dubuque on Sunday.

Trump is looking for as wide a margin of victory as possible in Iowa. His aides say the former president can become the presumptive nominee early in the primary calendar with comfortable victories that keep DeSantis and Haley from mounting a sustained threat; alternately, his advisers have privately reminded reporters that no Republican presidential candidate has won a contested Iowa caucus by more than 12 points since Bob Dole in 1988.

Before Trump's late arrival Saturday, Kari Lake, the failed Arizona gubernatorial candidate who is now running for Senate, paid a visit to the campaign's Urbandale, Iowa, campaign headquarters, where dozens of volunteers were gathered making calls.

"The Republican caucus that's going to happen on Monday night is going to send a shockwave. We're going to see such huge numbers," said Lake, who grew up in Iowa.

After days of storm conditions, Monday's weather is expected to be the coldest for any caucus day in history, with temperatures falling below 0 degrees Fahrenheit when Republicans are supposed to head to caucus sites.

Republican Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks was hit from behind Saturday by a semi-trailer on her way to Haley's event in Iowa City, according to fellow GOP Rep. Ashley Hinson, who spoke to the crowd in Miller-Meeks' place. Miller-Meeks said in a statement posted on X, formerly Twitter, that she did not require medical attention.

Aides for multiple campaigns and longtime Iowa political observers have suggested the weather could sharply depress turnout. Republican caucus turnout peaked at more than 180,000 in 2016, Trump's first campaign. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz won the caucuses narrowly that year. Trump's campaign has put considerably more effort this time into building a caucus turnout structure.

## Stroud becomes youngest QB to win a playoff game as Texans rout Browns 45-14

By KRISTIE RIEKEN AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — As the games get bigger, C.J. Stroud just keeps getting better.

The rookie became the youngest quarterback to win a playoff game after throwing for 274 yards and three touchdowns, and the Houston Texans returned two interceptions by Joe Flacco for scores in a 45-14 rout of the Cleveland Browns in a wild-card matchup Saturday.

"C.J. is the reason why we're in this position," coach DeMeco Ryans said. "He's special, a special young man. Special player. Continues to shine no matter how big the moment is.

"Our whole team is leaning on him and he has the shoulders to carry that weight."

Stroud, the second overall pick in the draft last April, is also the highest-drafted rookie QB to win in the postseason. He picked apart Cleveland's vaunted defense, throwing touchdown passes of 15 yards to Nico Collins, 76 to Brevin Jordan and 37 to Dalton Schultz.

"It's been a heck of a year and I thank God, I can just go another week with my teammates," Stroud said. "This is like a dream come true."

At 22 years and 102 days old, Stroud passed Michael Vick, who was 22 years, 192 days old in 2002 when his Falcons beat the Packers.

"I'm super blessed to be considered with a great name like Michael Vick, who was my favorite quarterback growing up," he said. "And hopefully I can make it two (wins)."

Stroud threw for 236 yards and three touchdowns before halftime as the Texans built a 24-14 lead. The defense took over after that, with Steven Nelson and Christian Harris returning interceptions for touchdowns on consecutive drives in the third quarter to extend the lead to 38-14.

"It was really, really big to put up 14 points on top of what C.J. was already doing," Nelson said. "That just put the icing on the cake for us."

With the Texans up 45-14 with nine minutes to go, Stroud's work was done, and he was replaced by Davis Mills.

It's the Browns' worst postseason loss since a 34-0 thumping by the Baltimore Colts on Dec. 29, 1968.

Houston is back in the playoffs for the first time since 2019, and Stroud's stellar play and the leadership of Ryans, who's in his first year, transformed the Texans (11-7) from NFL laughingstock to AFC South champions.

Flacco, who turns 39 on Tuesday, came off the couch to go 4-1 as a starter to end the regular season. He led the Browns (11-7) to just their third playoff appearance since their 1999 expansion rebirth, but second in four seasons under coach Kevin Stefanski.

"We picked a bad day to have a bad day," Stefanski said. "That's all of us. That's players, coaches, offense, defense, special teams. Not good enough."

Playing in his 17th postseason game but first in nine years, Flacco couldn't continue his magical run under the bright lights of the playoffs.

"It's definitely a shame the way it went down and hard to deal with at the moment," Flacco said.

He finished with 307 yards and had a touchdown pass in the first half, but his mistakes under pressure in the third quarter were too much for the Browns to overcome on a day when Stroud easily outshined him in his playoff debut.

The previous highest-drafted rookie QB to win a postseason game was the New York Jets' Mark Sanchez, who was the fifth overall pick in 2009.

Cleveland's Deshaun Watson was under center for the Texans during their last playoff run but played just six games for the Browns this season before having season-ending shoulder surgery. He was on the sideline Saturday for just the second time since his surgery, watching the coming out party for the man who replaced him as Houston's franchise quarterback.

The sellout crowd was rowdy and ready for Houston's return to the postseason after three awful seasons where the team combined for just 11 wins. They chanted "MVP! MVP!" throughout the game when

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Stroud dropped back to pass.

Collins had six receptions for 96 yards and a touchdown, and Devin Singletary ran for 66 yards and a late score for Houston.

Kareem Hunt ran for a touchdown and had a TD reception in the first half, but had just 26 yards rushing.

The Browns took a 7-3 lead on Hunt's 1-yard run with about two minutes left in the first quarter.

Collins' 15-yard TD catch put the Texans back on top 10-7.

The Browns regained the lead on their next drive when Hunt grabbed a shovel pass from Flacco and ran 11 yards for a touchdown.

But the advantage would last only 10 seconds as Jordan grabbed a short pass and outran multiple defenders for a 76-yard touchdown to make it 17-14. It was Houston's longest play this season and the longest in franchise playoff history.

"I was a running back my whole life," Jordan said. "So I feel like that's one of those things that I really carry with me as a tight end."

Stroud's 37-yard TD pass to Schultz pushed the lead to 24-14 with about a minute left in the second quarter.

Flacco was hit by Derek Barnett as he threw and his pass was picked off by Nelson and returned 82 yards for a touchdown to make it 31-14 with about six minutes left in the third quarter.

The Browns went for it on fourth-and-2 on their next drive and Flacco was picked off again. This time, Harris returned it 36 yards for the score.

The Texans are the first team to return two interceptions for touchdowns in a game since Seattle did it against Washington on Jan. 5, 2008.

## INJURIES

Browns: LG Joel Bitonio injured an ankle in the second quarter.

Texans: WR Noah Brown hurt a shoulder in the first quarter. ... LB Denzel Perryman injured his ribs in the third quarter.

## A global day of protests draws thousands in Washington and other cities in pro-Palestinian marches

By DANICA KIRKA, FATIMA HUSSEIN and MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thousands of demonstrators converged opposite the White House on Saturday to call for an end to Israeli military action in Gaza, while children joined a pro-Palestinian march through central London as part of a global day of action against the longest and deadliest war between Israel and Palestinians in 75 years.

People in the U.S. capital held aloft signs questioning President Joe Biden's viability as a presidential candidate because of his staunch support for Israel in the nearly 100-day war against Hamas. Some of the signs read: "No votes for Genocide Joe," "Biden has blood on his hands" and "Let Gaza live."

Vendors were also selling South African flags as protesters chanted slogans in support of the country whose accusations of genocide against Israel prompted the International Court of Justice in the Hague, Netherlands, to take up the case.

Dan Devries, a New York resident said he attended the protest because he wants to see a free Gaza, but that he wouldn't vote for either Biden or possible Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.

"I see this war as part of the U.S.'s drive to offset its economic decline by engaging in continual war," said Devries.

Washington resident Phil Kline held up a sign calling for Pope Francis to excommunicate Biden.

"I know he's a devout Catholic. Maybe he will take this issue seriously when the pope removes him from the church. There's no justification for bombing civilians," Kline said, though he added he still intends to vote for Biden in the November elections.

Medea Benjamin, a co-founder of anti-war group CodePink, told The Associated Press that the moniker "Genocide Joe" will stick with Biden for a certain segment of the community because of his handling of

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the war in Gaza.

"I think the Democrats are playing with fire in many ways — playing with fire in that they're supporting a genocide in Gaza but also playing with fire in terms of their own future," Benjamin said.

Jake and Ida Braford, a young couple from Richmond, Virginia, who brought their two small children to the protest, said they were unsure of whether to vote for Biden in November.

"We're pretty disheartened," Ida Braford said. "Seeing what is happening in Gaza, and the government's actions makes me wonder what is our vote worth?"

The plight of children in the Gaza Strip was the focus of the latest London march, symbolized by the appearance of Little Amal, a 3.5-meter (11.5-foot) puppet originally meant to highlight the suffering of Syrian refugees.

The puppet had become a human rights emblem during an 8,000-kilometer (4,970-mile) journey from the Turkish-Syrian border to Manchester in July 2001.

Nearly two-thirds of the 23,843 people killed during Israel's campaign in Gaza have been women and children, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

Israel declared war in response to Hamas' unprecedented cross-border attack on Oct. 7 in which the Islamic militant group killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 250 others hostage. It was the deadliest attack in Israel's history and the deadliest for Jews since the Holocaust.

March organizers had said the Palestinian children would accompany Little Amal through the streets of central London.

"On Saturday Amal walks for those most vulnerable and for their bravery and resilience," said Amir Nizar Zuabi, artistic director of The Walk Productions. "Amal is a child and a refugee and today in Gaza childhood is under attack, with an unfathomable number of children killed. Childhood itself is being targeted. That's why we walk."

London's Metropolitan Police force said some 1,700 officers would be on duty for the march, including many from outside the capital.

Home Secretary James Cleverly said he had been briefed by police commissioner Sir Mark Rowley on plans to "ensure order and safety" during the protest.

"I back them to use their powers to manage the protest and crack down on any criminality," Cleverly said.

A number of conditions were placed for the march, including a directive that no participant in the protest shall venture near the Israeli Embassy.

A pro-Israel rally was set to take place in London on Sunday.

The London march was one of several others being held in European cities including Paris, Rome, Milan and Dublin, where thousands also marched along the Irish capital's main thoroughfare to protest Israel's military operations in the Palestinian enclave.

Protesters waved Palestinian flags, held placards critical of the Irish, U.S. and Israeli governments and chanted, "Free, free Palestine."

In Rome, hundreds of demonstrators descended on a boulevard near the famous Colosseum, with some carrying signs reading, "Stop Genocide."

At one point during the protest, amid the din of sound effects mimicking exploding bombs, a number of demonstrators lied down in the street and pulled white sheets over themselves as if they were corpses, while others knelt beside them, their palms daubed in red paint.

Many hundreds of demonstrators gathered in Paris' Republic square to set off on a march calling for an immediate cease-fire, an end to the war, a lifting of the blockade on Gaza and to impose sanctions on Israel. Marching protesters waved the Palestinian flag and held aloft placards and banners reading, "From Gaza to Paris. Resistance."

## War in Gaza and US election factor into some of the many events planned for MLK holiday

By TERRY TANG and NOREEN NASIR Associated Press

As communities nationwide celebrate the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday this weekend with events ranging from parades to prayer services, some people are taking a cue from the slain civil rights icon's history of protest to demonstrate against the war in Gaza and draw attention to the looming U.S. presidential election.

The Monday holiday also marks 100 days since Oct. 7, when Hamas launched an attack in southern Israel that killed some 1,200 people and resulted in about 240 taken hostage. Since then, more than 100 Israelis remain kidnapped and more than 23,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's bombardment of Gaza, as global health organizations have warned of a worsening humanitarian crisis there.

Perhaps the biggest organized event of the weekend in the U.S. was held in the nation's capital Saturday — the March on Washington for Gaza, co-hosted by the American Muslim Task Force on Palestine, comprising some of the largest Muslim organizations in the U.S., along with antiwar and racial justice groups.

Thousands of people rallied near the White House to call for an end to Israeli military action in Gaza, with some holding signs questioning President Joe Biden's viability as a presidential candidate because of his staunch support for Israel in the war against Hamas.

March organizers called on Biden to demand a permanent cease-fire and an end to the violence against civilians in Gaza and the West Bank. They also called for the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian political prisoners and an end to "American unconditional financial support for the Israeli military," according to Edward Ahmed Mitchell, AMTP media coordinator and deputy director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

A similar demonstration held in November, the National March on Washington: Free Palestine, drew tens of thousands of participants from around the country. Some estimates suggested at least 100,000 attended.

The title of Saturday's march evoked the famous March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963, at which King delivered his historic "I Have a Dream" speech atop the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. That history, as well as King's vocal opposition to the U.S. role in the Vietnam War toward the end of his life, was a guiding factor for the organizers.

Mitchell, who called King's legacy "multifaceted," said King spoke up even if it meant getting vilified.

"He was considered un-American and called a traitor. Even the political establishment shunned him," Mitchell said.

In 1967, exactly one year before he was assassinated, King delivered his famous "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence" speech at Riverside Church in New York City. After quietly opposing the Vietnam War for years, he took the public step to condemn it, connecting racial and economic inequality in the U.S. with increased military spending abroad.

"I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor, and attack it as such," King said in his speech.

King's daughter, Bernice King, has said her father was against antisemitism and also would have opposed the bombing of Gaza. The taking of lives through retaliatory violence is not the strategy he would want to see today.

"There is an opportunity for us to have a real breakthrough and get to some genuine conversations and actions that can allow people to co-exist in an area of the world," Bernice King said in a recent interview from The King Center in Atlanta, where she is CEO.

She believes protests are critical in difficult times. King just hopes that people in general use nonviolent words and actions if they invoke her father's name.

"My father had a certain manner, tone and tenor in his protest. You know, your language, your speech has to be in line, not just the physical acts," she said. "But if your language is violent, that is not necessarily in sync with Dr. King."

The center also will hold a holiday commemorative service Monday at Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church,

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where the late civil rights icon served as pastor.

Observed federally since 1986, the holiday occurs on the third Monday of January, which this year happens to be the Rev. King's actual birthday. Born in 1929, the minister would have been 95. This year also marks the 60th anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act and King's Nobel Peace Prize.

Prominent Democrats will be commemorating the holiday in South Carolina, now the first state in the Democratic Party's reshuffled presidential primary schedule.

The NAACP is hosting Vice President Kamala Harris, the first Black person to hold the office, at the State House in Columbia. Harris visited the city in November to officially file paperwork putting Biden on the presidential ballot. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, the first Black leader of a party in Congress, will speak at an interfaith prayer service. The day's events will center on a theme of "Ballots for Freedom, Ballots for Justice, Ballots for Change!"

For many, the holiday will be an opportunity to counter the recent backlash over efforts at companies and universities to implement diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

The Rev. Al Sharpton, founder and president of the National Action Network, will announce Monday a national campaign to sustain DEI measures. This comes after he led a demonstration against last week's resignation of Claudine Gay, Harvard University's first Black president. Sharpton will also be hosting the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Breakfast. Members of King's family will be in attendance.

Giving back is also an intrinsic part of the MLK holiday. AmeriCorps will host its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of National Service. The government agency is working with the King Center and several charities, faith-based organizations and businesses on community service projects. Various cities and organizations are holding their own volunteer events such as neighborhood clean-ups, food drives and packing care kits for the unhoused.

On the actual holiday, events will go beyond just Washington and Atlanta, King's birthplace. Some will touch on the war in Gaza.

Detroit will hold its 21st annual MLK Day Rally & March. The speakers' list includes Democratic Rep. Rashida Tlaib, the only Palestinian American in Congress, who was censured for rhetoric over the Israel-Hamas war, and Shawn Fain, the United Auto Workers president who led negotiations during six weeks of strikes.

There will also be plenty of opportunities to attend events after the holiday is over. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation will hold its eighth annual National Day of Racial Healing on Tuesday. It has partnered with nonprofits, schools and communities to hold over 200 events nationwide. These include "sing-ins" of Civil Rights era songs and neighborhood dialogues.

The hope is "challenging the attitudes and assumptions that people hold about folks who are different from themselves," said Alandra Washington, the foundation's vice president for transformation and organizational effectiveness.

"Even a conversation can make a difference in the lives of others," she said.

## **Families of hostages held in Gaza for 100 days hold 24-hour rally, beg government to bring them home**

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

The families of hostages held in the Gaza Strip kicked off a 24-hour rally in Tel Aviv Saturday night, calling on the government to bring their loved ones home after 100 days spent in Hamas captivity.

Thousands of people poured into "Hostages Square" in Tel Aviv — a central plaza opposite Israel's Defense Ministry that has served as a gathering point for the campaigners.

Hamas and other Gaza militants captured some 250 people during its deadly Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel, while killing some 1,200 other people, most of them civilians.

More than 100 hostages were released during a temporary truce in November, but 132 remain held in Gaza including the remains of about two dozen who died or were killed.

"We were here on day 50 and spoke on this stage. We are not going to speak again in 50 days. It's time to bring them back. Now! Bring them back!" said Ronen Neutra, the father of Omer Neutra, an Israeli



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soldier who was taken. "They are being held in terrible conditions. They are starving. They are dying."

There has been little visible progress toward a new deal to release hostages. Their families are using the 100-day mark for a new appeal to the government to prioritize bringing home the abductees. Some have said the government has not done enough.

Israel said Saturday that it had brokered a deal with mediator Qatar to deliver badly needed medicines to the hostages with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross. There was no immediate sign that the deal was being implemented.

Osama Hamdan, a Hamas leader in exile, said Saturday in Beirut that the group was giving some of the available drugs in Gaza to hostages.

Near the rally in support of the hostages, anti-government demonstrators calling for new elections to be held blocked a major Tel Aviv highway, clashing with police who made arrests and tried to push the crowd back. Other protesters advanced toward Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's private residence in the coastal town of Caesarea, calling for his dismissal from office.

In Tel Aviv, many of the protesters were planning to stay out all night. The crowd listened to a recorded message from French President Emmanuel Macron, and heard from the U.S. ambassador to Israel, Jacob Lew. Lew and Macron pledged to exhaust every effort to bring the remaining hostages home.

"Today, as we mark 100 days since hundreds of innocent men, women and children were violently seized from Israel, we join as one in demanding their release," Lew said.

In previous exchanges of hostages for Palestinian prisoners, nearly all freed on both sides were women and minors. Now, 111 men, 19 women and two children remain in Gaza.

## Two Navy SEALs are missing after Thursday night mission off coast of Somalia

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two U.S. Navy SEALs are missing after conducting a nighttime boarding mission Thursday off the coast of Somalia, according to three U.S. officials.

The SEALs were on an interdiction mission, climbing up a vessel when one got knocked off by high waves. Under their protocol, when one SEAL is overtaken the next jumps in after them.

Both SEALs are still missing. A search and rescue mission is underway and the waters in the Gulf of Aden, where they were operating, are warm, two of the U.S. officials said.

The U.S. Navy has conducted regular interdiction missions, where they have intercepted weapons on ships that were bound for Houthi-controlled Yemen.

The mission was not related to Operation Prosperity Guardian, the ongoing U.S. and international mission to provide protection to commercial vessels in the Red Sea, or the retaliatory strikes that the United States and the United Kingdom have conducted in Yemen over the past two days, the official said Saturday. It was also not related to the seizure of the oil tanker St. Nikolas by Iran, a third U.S. official said.

The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss details that have not yet been made public.

Besides the defense of ships from launched drones and missiles shot from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen, the U.S. military has also come to the aid of commercial ships that have been the targets of piracy.

In a statement Saturday, U.S. Central Command said that search and rescue operations are currently ongoing to locate the two sailors. The command said it would not release additional information on the Thursday night incident until the personnel recovery mission is complete.

The sailors were forward-deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations supporting a wide variety of missions.

## Genocide case against Israel: Where does the rest of the world stand on the momentous allegations?

By GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — South Africa says more than 50 countries have expressed support for its case at the United Nations' top court accusing Israel of genocide against Palestinians in the war in Gaza.

Others, including the United States, have strongly rejected South Africa's allegation that Israel is violating the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Many more have remained silent.

The world's reaction to the landmark case that was heard Thursday and Friday at the International Court of Justice in The Hague shows a predictable global split when it comes to the inextricable, 75-year-old problem of Israel and the Palestinians. Sunday marks 100 days of their bloodiest ever conflict.

The majority of countries backing South Africa's case are from the Arab world and Africa. In Europe, only the Muslim nation of Turkey has publicly stated its support.

No Western country has declared support for South Africa's allegations against Israel. The U.S., a close Israel ally, has rejected them as unfounded, the U.K. has called them unjustified, and Germany said it "explicitly rejects" them.

China and Russia have said little about one of the most momentous cases to come before an international court. The European Union also hasn't commented.

### US: 'MERITLESS' ALLEGATIONS

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on a visit to Israel a day before the court proceedings began that South Africa's allegations are "meritless" and that the case "distracts the world" from efforts to find a lasting solution to the conflict. National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said genocide is "not a word that ought to be thrown around lightly, and we certainly don't believe that it applies here."

"We don't agree with what the South Africans are doing," U.K. Foreign Minister David Cameron said of the case.

Israel fiercely rejects the allegations of genocide and says it is defending its people. It says the offensive is aimed at eradicating the leaders of Hamas, the militant group that runs the territory and provoked the conflict by launching surprise attacks on southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 people, mainly civilians, and taking around 250 hostages.

Blinken said a genocide case against Israel was "particularly galling" given that Hamas and other groups "continue to openly call for the annihilation of Israel and the mass murder of Jews."

The U.S., the U.K., the EU and others classify Hamas as a terrorist organization.

Israel's military response in Gaza has killed more than 23,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The count doesn't distinguish between combatants and civilians. It says more than two-thirds of the dead are women and children. Much of northern Gaza has become an uninhabitable moonscape with entire neighborhoods erased by Israeli air strikes and tank fire.

South Africa has also condemned Hamas' Oct. 7 attack but argues that it did not justify Israel's response.

### GERMAN SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

Germany's announcement of support for Israel on Friday, the day the hearings closed, has symbolic significance given its history of the Holocaust, when the Nazis killed 6 million Jews in Europe. Israel was created after World War II as a haven for Jews in the shadow of those atrocities.

"Israel has been defending itself," German government spokesperson Steffen Hebestreit said. His statement also invoked the Holocaust, which in large part spurred the creation of the U.N. Genocide Convention in 1948.

"In view of Germany's history ... the Federal Government sees itself as particularly committed to the Convention against Genocide," he said. He called the allegations against Israel "completely unfounded."

Germany said it intends to intervene in the case on Israel's behalf.

The EU has only said that countries have a right to bring cases to the U.N. court. Most of its member states have refrained from taking a position.

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Turkey, which is in the process of joining the EU, was a lone voice in the region. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country provided documents that were being used against Israel in the case.

"With these documents, Israel will be condemned," he said.

## ARAB CONDEMNATION

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation was one of the first blocs to publicly back the case when South Africa filed it late last month. It said there was "mass genocide being perpetrated by the Israeli defense forces" and accused Israel of "indiscriminate targeting" of Gaza's civilian population.

The OIC is a bloc of 57 countries that includes Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Egypt. Its headquarters are in Saudi Arabia. The Cairo-based Arab League, whose 22 member countries are almost all part of the OIC, also backed South Africa's case.

South Africa drew some support from outside the Arab world. Namibia and Pakistan agreed with the case at a U.N. General Assembly session this week. Malaysia also expressed support.

"No peace-loving human being can ignore the carnage waged against Palestinians in Gaza," Namibian President Hage Geingob was quoted as saying in the southern African nation's *The Namibian* newspaper.

Malaysia's Foreign Ministry demanded "legal accountability for Israel's atrocities in Gaza."

## CHINA AND RUSSIA: SILENCE

China, Russia — which is also facing allegations of genocide in the world court — and the emerging power of India have largely remained silent, seemingly aware that taking a stand in such an inflammatory case has little upside and could irreversibly upset their relationships in the region.

India's foreign policy has historically supported the Palestinian cause, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi was one of the first global leaders to express solidarity with Israel and call the Hamas attack terrorism.

## SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE

A handful of South American countries have spoken up, including the continent's biggest economy, Brazil, whose Foreign Ministry said President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva backed South Africa's case. However, the ministry's comments did not directly accuse Israel of genocide but focused on the need for a cease-fire in Gaza.

South Africa's case against Israel is two-fold: It wants the court to say Israel is committing genocide and to issue an interim ruling ordering an end to its military campaign in Gaza. The court said it would decide on an interim ruling soon but, reflecting the gravity of the case, it could take years for a final verdict on the genocide charge.

Brazil said it hoped the case would get Israel to "immediately cease all acts and measures that could constitute genocide."

Other countries have stopped short of agreeing with South Africa. Ireland premier Leo Varadkar said the genocide case was "far from clear cut" but that he hoped the court would order a cease-fire in Gaza.

It's uncertain if Israel would obey any order to stop its military action. Russia didn't when the same court told it to halt its invasion of Ukraine nearly two years ago.

## A British D-Day veteran celebrates turning 100, but the big event is yet to come

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British D-Day veteran Bill Gladden turned 100 on Saturday, a day after his niece threw a surprise birthday party for him. It was a big fuss he didn't really expect, though the old soldier had tears in his eyes long before he caught sight of a cake decorated with a replica of his uniform and the medals he earned.

But Gladden isn't focused on his birthday this year, big as it is. He's looking six months down the road.

That's because the event he really wants to attend is the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings on June 6. It may be the last of the big events marking the beginning of the end of World War II in Europe because so few of the 850,000 troops who took part remain. Gladden wants to be there to honor those who are gone — to remind people that victory did not come cheap.

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"If I could do that this year, I should be happy," he told The Associated Press from his home in Haverhill, eastern England, where he still lives on his own. "Well, I am happy now, but I should be more happy."

A dispatch rider with the 6th Airborne Reconnaissance Regiment, Gladden landed behind the front lines on D-Day, June 6, 1944, in a wooden glider loaded with six motorcycles and a 17,000-pound (7,700-kilogram) tank. The unit was part of an operation charged with securing bridges over the River Orne and Caen Canal so they could be used by Allied forces moving inland from the Normandy beaches.

Based in an orchard outside the village of Ranville, Gladden spent 12 days making forays into the surrounding countryside to check out reports of enemy activity.

On June 16, he carried two injured soldiers into a barn that was being used as a makeshift field hospital. Two days later, he found himself at the same barn, his right ankle shattered by machine gun fire.

Lying on the grass outside the hospital, he read the treatment label pinned to his tunic:

"Amputation considered. Large deep wound in right ankle. Compound fracture of both tibia and fibula. All extension tendons destroyed. Evacuate."

Gladden didn't lose his leg, but he spent the next three years in the hospital as doctors performed a series of surgeries, including tendon transplants, skin and bone grafts.

After the war, Gladden married Marie Warne, an army driver he met in 1943, and spent 40 years working for Siemens and Pearl Insurance. They had a daughter.

These days he's more likely to talk about how proud he is of his family than he is to reminisce about D-Day. But his wartime story is preserved in a scrapbook that includes a newspaper clipping about "the tanks that were built to fly," his drawings and other memorabilia.

There's also a scrap of parachute left behind by one of the paratroopers who landed in the orchard at Ranville. As he lay in the hospital recovering from his wounds, Gladden painstakingly stitched his unit's shoulder insignia into the fabric.

The edges are frayed and discolored after eight decades, but "Royal Armoured Corps" still stands out in an arc of red lettering on a yellow background. Underneath is a silhouette of Pegasus, the flying horse, over the word "Airborne."

"These are the flashes we wore on our battledress blouses," says the caption in neat block letters.

Nothing has faded from memory though. At his party, people celebrated his service and offered a booming happy birthday chorus.

"I just think he's a legend, what he's been through, what he's seen, what he's done," said his niece, Kaye Thorpe. "He's just amazing, and he's still bright as a button on top."

For men like Bill Gladden, though, there was no I in D-Day. Even as he celebrated his 100th birthday, somehow it wasn't just about him. Instead, he echoed the words of many who survived the invasion.

"When you think of all those young lives that lay in those cemeteries abroad, the Allies and us won the war but (victory) was a very expensive one, life-wise," he said. "Because so many youngsters died."

## Republicans try to block Biden administration plan to cut money for anti-abortion counseling centers

By AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a new twist to the fight over abortion access, congressional Republicans are trying to block a Biden administration spending rule that they say will cut off millions of dollars to anti-abortion counseling centers.

The rule would prohibit states from sending federal funds earmarked for needy Americans to so-called "crisis pregnancy centers," which counsel against abortions. At stake are millions of dollars in federal funds that currently flow to the organizations through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, a block grant program created in 1996 to give cash assistance to poor children and prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

"Programs that only or primarily provide pregnancy counseling to women only after they become pregnant likely do not meet the ... standard," the Health and Human Services agency said in its rule proposal.

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released late last year.

More than 7,000 comments have been submitted on the proposed rule, which includes a series of restrictions on how states would be able to spend TANF dollars.

The proposal limiting funds for anti-abortion counseling centers is the Biden administration's latest attempt to introduce federal policies that expand abortion access. Conservative states, meanwhile, have severely restricted the care since the U.S. Supreme Court stripped women of their federal right to an abortion in 2022.

Congressional Republicans this week introduced legislation that would block the Health and Human Services Agency from restricting the funds from the centers. The bill has no chance of becoming law this year.

"Pregnancy centers are an important and vital alternative for expectant mothers," Republican Rep. Darin LaHood of Illinois said Thursday during a House Ways and Means Committee hearing to mark up the legislation.

The anti-abortion counseling centers have become an increasingly popular way for conservatives to sermonize against abortions, with an Associated Press investigation last year finding that states have been sending more and more money to the programs over the last decade. More than a dozen states have given the centers roughly \$500 million in taxpayer dollars since 2010. Last year, Pennsylvania's Democratic governor cut funding for all centers from the state budget.

The centers' mission is controversial not only because workers often advise pregnant patients against seeking an abortion, but, critics say, the organizations can provide some misleading information about abortion and contraception, like suggesting that abortion can cause breast cancer. Most centers are religiously affiliated and not licensed healthcare facilities. They typically offer pregnancy tests and some offer limited medical services such as ultrasounds.

The Human Coalition, an anti-abortion organization that has locations in Georgia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Texas, estimates it would lose millions of dollars in funds, said Chelsey Youman, the group's national director of public policy. Plans to expand to Louisiana and Indiana could be put on hold if the rule goes through, she added.

Youman argues that her organization helps connect women to social services, like Medicaid, while persuading them to continue with their pregnancy.

"The work we do is truly compassionate and loving care for women who are facing sometimes the most difficult moment of their life," Youman said.

HHS is suggesting several tweaks that would change how states can use the \$16.5 billion in block grants intended for the nation's neediest families. The proposal comes on the heels of a high-profile corruption scandal in Mississippi, where \$77 million in TANF funds were squandered over several years.

The restrictions would limit how much of the money ends up benefitting middle- and high-income earners, with the agency saying that the percentage of impoverished families who get cash assistance has dropped from nearly 70% in 1996 to just over 21% in 2020. The plan would restrict how states use the money for college scholarships and child care, for example.

## **Mass shooting at Buffalo supermarket now Justice Department's first death penalty case under Garland**

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Just a few months after he took office, Attorney General Merrick Garland issued a moratorium to halt federal executions — a stark contrast after his predecessor carried out 13 in six months. Under Garland's watch and a president who vowed to abolish the death penalty, the Justice Department took on no new death penalty cases.

That changed Friday as federal prosecutors said they would seek capital punishment for a white supremacist who killed 10 Black people at a Buffalo supermarket. The decision doesn't change the halt on federal executions, but Garland's first approval of a new capital prosecution opens a new chapter in the

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long and complicated history of the death penalty in the U.S.

Those complexities have been on full display in recent years. President Joe Biden campaigned in part on a promise to abolish it but has taken few concrete steps to do so. The Justice Department has pulled back significantly on the use of capital punishment under Garland's leadership, but also has shown a continued willingness to use it in certain cases.

White House spokesman Andrew Bates didn't take issue with the decision in the Buffalo case Friday, saying the president has discussed his views on the issue and would leave individual cases to the appropriate authorities. The Justice Department, in keeping with its practice on ongoing cases, did not explain its decision.

"It's a little hard to identify a consistent approach," said Eric Berger, a law professor at the University of Nebraska. "This Justice Department is far more reluctant to use the death penalty, certainly than the Trump administration was, and far more cognizant of the problems, but it's not willing to throw away the death penalty altogether."

Under Garland, the Justice Department has reversed more than two dozen decisions to seek the death penalty, including for alleged gang members accused in the deaths of two teens in New York. Garland has authorized the continuation of only two death penalty cases he inherited, including another mass shooting at a Pittsburgh synagogue motivated by hate.

Robert Bowers was sentenced to death in August for carrying out the deadliest antisemitic attack in U.S. history when he shot and killed 11 worshipers in 2018. The other case was against Sayfullo Saipov, a 35-year-old Islamic extremist convicted of maniacally racing a truck along a popular New York City bike path, killing eight people and maiming others. A split among jurors meant he was not sentenced to the death penalty.

In Buffalo, 20-year-old Payton Gendron pleaded guilty to driving across the state to target a largely Black neighborhood and carrying out the attack with a semi-automatic weapon marked with racial slurs and phrases including "The Great Replacement," a reference to a conspiracy theory that there's a plot to diminish the influence of white people.

"It's a mass shooting, and mass shootings have only increased over the years and gotten worse. It was also racially motivated, and that seems to be a huge factor here," said Deborah Denno, a Fordham University law professor who studies the death penalty. "Garland is sort of indicating what he thinks is important, what would drive him to ask for the death penalty."

In changes made under Garland, the Justice Department's manual instructs prosecutors to give more weight to cases involving the most harm to the country.

Still, the department chose not to pursue the death penalty in another racist mass shooting targeting Hispanic people that left 23 people dead in an El Paso Wal-Mart. In that case, 24-year-old shooter Patrick Crusius was diagnosed with a severe mental health condition, which may have played a role.

There's been no public evidence of mental illness so far in the Gendron case. But courts are increasingly questioning severe punishments for young defendants amid new research on brain development, said Robin Maher, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center. Gendron has also pleaded guilty and expressed "sincere remorse," and been sentenced to multiple life sentences without the possibility of parole, she said.

"This federal trial will take a long time and they will cost taxpayers millions of dollars in pursuit of the very same result that exists today, which is that Mr. Gendron will die in prison," Maher said.

Legal Defense Fund President Janai Nelson condemned the decision, saying that the history of the death penalty has been rife with racial discrimination. "Justice for the many Black people that were killed in this horrendous attack does not begin with pursuit of the death penalty," she said. "In times rife with extreme violence, we cannot resort to capital punishment as a solution."

Death penalty opponents have long argued Biden has done little to fulfill his campaign promise and want him to commute sentences of those on federal death row. During his presidency, the Justice Department has fought vigorously in courts to maintain the sentences of death row inmates, an Associated Press re-

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view of dozens of legal filings found. And while the moratorium on federal executions Garland announced in 2021 means no federal inmates will be put to death while it's in place, there have been no public signs that a review of execution policies that he ordered at the same time is nearing completion.

In Buffalo, the victims' loved ones have had different feelings on whether they thought prosecutors should pursue the death penalty. The death penalty decision-making process calls for a lengthy review involving the U.S. Attorney overseeing the case and a review committee.

"Garland is extremely exacting and meticulous and nonpartisan and careful," Berger said. "Whether or not you agree with his ultimate decision, he's going to play the process exactly by the book."

## Republican candidates struggle with Civil War history as party grapples with race issues in present

By MATT BROWN AP National Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — As Republicans make their case for the future, they keep getting stuck on the past. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis spent much of the summer mired in controversy over new educational standards that call for teaching that slaves developed skills that "could be applied for their personal benefit." Former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley failed last month to mention slavery as the root cause of the Civil War. And former President Donald Trump last weekend called the Civil War "so fascinating" and said it could have been "negotiated," sidestepping the fundamental dilemma of slavery.

Such moments reflect tension inside the GOP — the Party of Lincoln that abolished slavery, won the Civil War and embarked on Reconstruction — with the first primaries of the 2024 election just around the corner. Some in the party's conservative base, which is deeply rooted in the Deep South, are more willing to overlook unpleasant historical facts about the Civil War at a time when they feel under siege from the left during the movement to remove Confederate monuments and names from institutions. Others fear the controversy will hurt the party's ambitions to make inroads with nonwhite voters who may be repelled by minimizing the historical atrocity of slavery.

On the eve of Monday's Iowa caucuses, Republicans are increasingly frustrated by the dynamic and have sought to turn the issue back on Democrats.

"Quite frankly, I'm getting damn tired of the re-interpretation of history that I hear from Democrats," Iowa Republican Party chair Jeff Kaufmann said at the state party's annual legislative breakfast Tuesday. "The Republican Party emerged because Democrats would not give on slavery."

The prominent role slavery and the Civil War have played in the GOP primary is notable at a time when the next president faces immediate challenges, including two major wars and a domestic economic recovery many voters say they're not feeling. Some fear the party risks losing the chance to make inroads into President Joe Biden's support, especially as Arab American, Black and Latino leaders are increasingly vocal that the president is vulnerable among voters of color.

Biden and his fellow Democrats are eager to highlight the GOP missteps. Speaking Monday at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, where nine Black parishioners were killed by a white supremacist in 2015, Biden said it was a "lie" that the Civil War was about states' rights.

"Let me be clear, for those who don't seem to know: Slavery was the cause of the Civil War," he said. "There's no negotiation about that."

Vice President Kamala Harris traveled to Florida shortly after DeSantis enacted the new history standards to criticize the policies and accused Florida Republicans of being "extremists" who "want to replace history with lies."

Republican leaders are conscious of the critiques and eager to push back on any characterization that the party has shifted from its abolitionist roots.

Republicans were founded "because somebody needed to take a bold, uncompromising stand on human rights and civil liberties. That is not woke. That is a fact," said Kaufmann, the Iowa GOP chair. "We are the party of Abraham Lincoln. We have always been the party of Abraham Lincoln."

While the controversies focus on the past, conservative opposition to broader accounts of American

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history are rooted in concerns over the social implications they open up, experts say.

"The Republican Party is very much in favor of an understanding of American history that we are a country that is exceptional, that we have brought freedom to the world, that we have overcome the challenges of the past and that we need to be proud of our past," said Paul Peterson, director of the Program on Education Policy and Governance at Harvard University.

Democrats, Peterson said, are "more likely to say there's a lot in our past that we need to reflect upon and, and maybe apologize for."

Republican candidates have traded barbs among themselves over historical issues for months. DeSantis and Trump have both criticized Haley for her Civil War comments. South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, the only Black Republican in the Senate, criticized DeSantis over Florida's history standards, saying slavery was "devastating" and that he "would hope that every person in our country — and certainly running for president — would appreciate that."

Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who suspended his campaign on Wednesday, referenced the Civil War with a word of caution to Republican voters. Benjamin Franklin, Christie recalled, said Americans had been given, "a republic, if you can keep it."

"Benjamin Franklin's words were never more relevant in America than they are right now. The last time they were that relevant was the Civil War — which we know was caused by slavery," Christie said.

The intra-party jabs echo a broader debate over the legacy of the Civil War for policymaking today.

"The Civil War was more than 150 years ago and we still haven't fully come to terms with the consequences for this society," said Eric Foner, Columbia University professor emeritus and author of histories of the Republican Party and the Civil War.

"I think there's generally a feeling on the part of Republicans and conservatives across the board that the people who are trying to take down statues and trying to rename the streets are against American history and that everything about America that we used to believe was good in the past is now being cast as evil," said Geoff Kabaservice, vice president of political studies at the Niskanen Center, a center-right think tank.

Such sentiments are widely shared among Republican voters, who may react "with polarization and partisanship on these historical issues" in response to broader cultural shifts in the understanding of America's central story, Kabaservice said.

The Civil War debate also highlights other realities about the GOP's coalition, which is now based in the American South and not in the North where the party was founded. Democrats and Republicans "have essentially stolen the garb of the other party from the 19th century," Foner said.

"I think, in fact, it's very possible to acknowledge the sins of the country, even the atrocities committed in this country, and also its noble ideals and promises," Kabaservice said.

"But this is not really a time that is generous toward complexity and nuance so that kind of thing gets lost in the politics that we have nowadays."

## Turkey launches airstrikes against Kurdish militants in Iraq and Syria after 9 soldiers were killed

By ANDREW WILKS Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkey carried out airstrikes targeting Kurdish militants in neighboring Iraq and Syria on Saturday, the Turkish Defense Ministry said, coming a day after an attack on a Turkish military base in Iraq killed nine Turkish soldiers.

Turkey often launches strikes against targets in Syria and Iraq it believes to be affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, a banned Kurdish separatist group that has waged an insurgency against Turkey since the 1980s.

The defense ministry said that aircraft struck targets in Metina, Hakurk, Gara and Qandil in northern Iraq, but didn't specify areas in Syria. It said fighter jets destroyed caves, bunkers, shelters and oil facilities "to eliminate terrorist attacks against our people and security forces ... and to ensure our border security."



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The statement added "many" militants were "neutralized" in the strikes.

On Friday night, attackers attempted to infiltrate a military base in northern Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region, killing five soldiers. Four others died later of critical injuries. The Turkish government said that 36 militants were killed in Iraq, and nine others in Syria, in the 24 hours following the attack.

There was no immediate comment from the PKK, the government in Baghdad or the Kurdish region's administration.

Turkey launched Operation Claw-Lock in northern Iraq in April 2022, during which it established several bases in Duhok Governorate. Baghdad has repeatedly protested the presence of Turkish troops and called for their withdrawal.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan expressed his condolences for the deaths of the Turkish soldiers. "We will fight to the end against the PKK terrorist organization within and outside our borders," he tweeted.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan later chaired a security meeting in Istanbul at which Turkey's counter-terrorism strategy was evaluated, the government said in statement.

Meanwhile, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya announced police had detained 113 people suspected of ties to the PKK following raids across 32 Turkish provinces.

He added that six people were arrested after police identified 110 social media accounts that "praised the separatist terrorist organization for provocative purposes" or had spread misleading information.

Three weeks ago, PKK-affiliated militants tried to break into a Turkish base in northern Iraq, according to Turkish officials, leaving six soldiers dead. The following day, six more Turkish soldiers were killed in clashes.

Turkey retaliated by launching strikes against sites that officials said were associated with the PKK in Iraq and Syria. Defense Minister Yasar Guler said at the time that dozens of Kurdish militants were killed in airstrikes and land assaults.

It wasn't immediately clear if Friday night's attack and the one three weeks earlier targeted the same base. The Rudaw news website, based in Erbil in northern Iraq, reported that the base attacked on Friday was located on Mount Zap in Amedi district, which lies 17 kilometers (about 10 miles) from the Turkish border.

Meanwhile, Turkey's state-run news agency Anadolu said that a senior PKK militant was "neutralized" in Iraq. Faik Aydin was targeted in an operation run by Turkish intelligence agency MIT, about 160 kilometers (100 miles) inside the Turkey-Iraq frontier, Anadolu reported.

The PKK, which maintains bases in northern Iraq, is considered a terror organization by Turkey's Western allies, including the United States. Tens of thousands of people have died since the start of the conflict in 1984.

Turkey and the U.S., however, disagree on the status of the Syrian Kurdish groups, which have been allied with Washington in the fight against the Islamic State group in Syria.

## Today in History: January 14

### Lance Armstrong admits to using performance-enhancing drugs

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Jan. 14, the 14th day of 2024. There are 352 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 14, 2013, cyclist Lance Armstrong ended a decade of denial by confessing to Oprah Winfrey during a videotaped interview that he'd used performance-enhancing drugs to win the Tour de France.

On this date:

In 1784, the United States ratified the Treaty of Paris ending the Revolutionary War; Britain followed suit in April.

In 1914, Ford Motor Co. greatly improved its assembly-line operation by employing an endless chain to pull each chassis along at its Highland Park, Michigan, plant.

In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and French General Charles de Gaulle opened a wartime conference in Casablanca.

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In 1952, NBC's "Today" show premiered, with Dave Garroway as host.

In 1954, Marilyn Monroe and Joe DiMaggio were married at San Francisco City Hall.

In 1963, George C. Wallace was sworn in as governor of Alabama with the pledge, "Segregation forever!" — a view he later repudiated.

In 1964, former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy, in a brief televised address, thanked Americans for their condolences and messages of support following the assassination of her husband, President John F. Kennedy, nearly two months earlier.

In 1967, the Sixties' "Summer of Love" unofficially began with a "Human Be-In" involving tens of thousands of young people at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

In 1970, Diana Ross and the Supremes performed their last concert together, at the Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas.

In 1975, the House Internal Security Committee (formerly the House Un-American Activities Committee) was disbanded.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed an accord to stop aiming missiles at any nation; the leaders joined Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk in signing an accord to dismantle the nuclear arsenal of Ukraine.

In 2010, President Barack Obama and the U.S. moved to take charge in earthquake-ravaged Haiti, dispatching thousands of troops along with tons of aid.

In 2022, the Australian government revoked the visa of tennis star Novak Djokovic for a second time as he fought to stay in the country and compete in the Australian Open despite being unvaccinated for COVID-19.

Today's birthdays: Blues singer Clarence Carter is 87. Singer Jack Jones is 86. Actor Faye Dunaway is 83. Actor Holland Taylor is 81. Actor Carl Weathers is 76. Singer-producer T-Bone Burnett is 76. Movie writer-director Lawrence Kasdan is 75. Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Maureen Dowd is 72. Rock singer Geoff Tate (Queensryche) is 65. Movie writer-director Steven Soderbergh is 61. Actor Mark Addy is 60. Former Fox News Channel anchorman Shepard Smith is 60. Actor/producer Dan Schneider is 60. Rapper Slick Rick is 59. Actor Emily Watson is 57. Actor-comedian Tom Rhodes is 57. Rock musician Zakk Wylde is 57. Rapper-actor LL Cool J is 56. Actor Jason Bateman is 55. Rock singer-musician Dave Grohl (Foo Fighters) is 55. Actor Kevin Durand is 50. Actor Jordan Ladd is 49. Actor Ward Horton is 48. Actor Emayatzy Corinealdi is 44. Retro-soul singer-songwriter Marc Broussard is 42. Rock singer-musician Caleb Followill (Kings of Leon) is 42. Actor Zach Gilford is 42. Actor Jake Choi is 39. Actor Jonathan Osser is 35. Actor-singer Grant Gustin ("Glee") is 34. Singer/guitarist Molly Tuttle is 31.