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Sunday, Jan. 21

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.

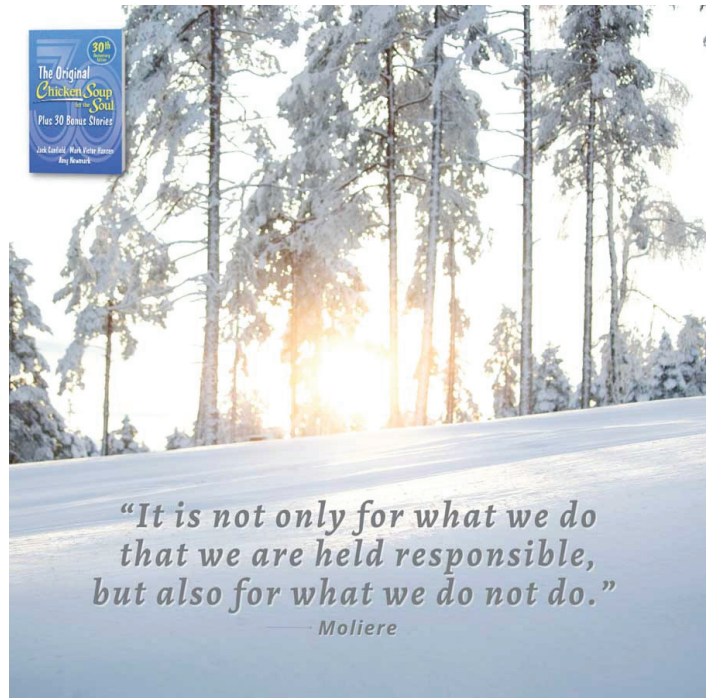
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Milestones - 6th grade and sophomores; Annual Meeting with brunch following meeting; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.

Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
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*"It is not only for what we do
that we are held responsible,
but also for what we do not do."*
— Moliere

Monday, Jan. 22

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

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Tater tot hot dish.

Basketball Double Header at Northwestern: (Boys 7th at 4 p.m., Boys 8th at 5 p.m.; Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 5:15 p.m.; Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity to follow)

Groton Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck at noon.

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

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

Tuesday, Jan. 23

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, biscuit, peas and carrots, pineapple/strawberry ambrosia.

School Breakfast: Waffles.

School Lunch: Chicken legs, mashed potatoes.

Boys JH Basketball at Clark: 7th at 6 p.m., 8th at 7 p.m.

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

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

United Methodist: Bible Study, jewels series for Lent, 10 a.m.

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

Tigers outlast Panthers in girls hoop action

Groton Area had a 10-point run in the first half to open up a close game against Great Plains Lutheran. Groton Area won, 57-43.

The first quarter was tied five times and there was one lead change as the quarter ended knotted up at 18. Groton Area was trailing, 18-15, then went on a 10-point run to take a 25-18 lead and led it half time, 38-23. The Tigers held a 49-33 lead going into the fourth quarter. The Panthers closed to within 10, 53-43, but the Tiger defense overwhelmed the Panthers and Groton Area got the win.

Rylee Dunker led Groton Area with 16 points, seven rebounds, two assists and four steals. Brooklyn Hansen had 10 points, two rebounds, three assists and one steal. Sydney Leicht had nine points, four rebounds and two steals. Jaedyn Penning had nine points, five rebounds, three assists and one steal. Jerica Locke had six points, five rebounds, six assists and two steals. Faith Traphagen had four points, four rebounds, two assists and one steal. Taryn Traphagen had three points, five rebounds and one assist. Laila Roberts had one rebound.

Three-Pointers: Liecht - 3, Hansen - 2, T. Traphagen - 1.

Groton Area made 17 of 42 two-pointers for 40 percent, six of 17 three-pointers for 35 percent, five of nine free throws for 56 percent, had 10 turnovers, 33 rebounds, 17 assists, 11 steals and 18 team fouls.



Rylee Dunker
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Jerica Locke
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

Olivia Holmes led Great Plains Lutheran with 12 points and four rebounds. Esta Cameron made 11 points and had two rebounds. Halle Bauer made three three-pointers for nine points. Abby Kjenstad had six points, three steals and two rebounds. Madeline Praha had five points and eight rebounds. Katherine Praha had three rebounds.

Great Plains Lutheran made 14 of 40 field goals for 20 percent, 12 of 17 free throws for 71 percent, had 21 rebounds, 15 turnovers and 13 team fouls.

Groton Area led at the quarterstops at 13-2, 31-9 and 38-12 en route to a 48-14 junior varsity win. Taryn Traphagen led Groton Area with 13 points and three rebounds. Mia Crank had seven points and one rebound. Kella Tracy had six points and two rebounds. Laila Roberts had five points. McKenna Tietz had four points and three rebounds. Faith Traphagen had four points and two rebounds. Ashlynn Warrington had four points. Chesney Weber had three points and two rebounds. Talli Wright had two points and five rebounds. Sydney Locke and Emerlee Jones each had one rebound.

Three-Pointers: Roberts - 1, T. Traphagen - 1, Weber - 1, Crank - 1.

Groton Area made 22 of 48 field goals for 45 percent,

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Taryn Traphagen

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

only had one free throw attempt and it was a miss off of the Panthers' five team fouls, the Tigers had seven turnovers and 20 rebounds.

Jolie Lien led Great Plains Lutheran with five points followed by Isabella Dunsmoor with four, Lydia Schleusener and Emily Moritz each had two points and Addison Wilkins had one free throw. The Panthers made six of 20 field goals for 30 percent, made one of two free throws off of Groton Area's seven team fouls, had 19 turnovers and 10 rebounds.

Groton Area made it a clean sweep with a 51-17 C game win. Groton Area led at the quarterstops at 12-6, 23-10 and 43-15.

Chesney Weber led Groton Area with 14 points followed by McKenna Tietz with 11, Kella Tracy had 10, Emerlee Jones eight, Sydney Locke four and Teagan Hanten and Brenna Imrie each had two points.

Three-Pointers: Tietz - 1, Weber - 2.

Keturah Schleusener led the Panthers with five points while Katherine Tomczak, Addison Walkins and Isabella Dunsmoor each had four points.

All three games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM. The C game was sponsored by Justin and Chelsea Hanson. The girls junior varsity game was sponsored by Rich and Tami Zimney. The varsity game was sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara Groton, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, BK Custom Ts & More, Bierman Farm Service, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Krueger Brothers, Locke Electric, The MeatHouse of Andover, Rix Farms/R&M Farms and Spanier Harvesting and Trucking. Paul Kosel and Shane Clark did the play-by-play and Jeslyn Kosel ran the camera.

- Paul Kosel

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GHS Boys Wrestling

Groton Area placed seven wrestlers at Arlington

Groton Area's wrestlers placed seven grapplers at the Kingsbury County Tournament held Saturday in Arlington. The Tigers placed seventh in a field of 14 teams.

Placing second were Wyatt Hagen at 106 pounds and Christian Ehresmann at 144 pounds. Easten Ekern placed third at 157 pounds. Korbin Kucker placed fourth at 165 pounds. Walker Zoellner placed fifth at 126 pounds. Placing sixth were Charlie Frost at 215 pounds and Gavin England at 285 pounds.

Team Points: Canby 203, Kingsbury County 195.5, Brookings 177.5, Faulkton Area 158.5, Redfield 137, Sioux Falls Washington 128.5, Groton Area 111, Warner/Northwestern 82, Lyman 64, Hamlin/Castlewood 49, Ipswich/Leola/Bowdle 46, Sioux Valley 36, Britton-Hecla 33, Tiospa Zina 4.

106: Wyatt Hagen (17-10) placed 2nd and scored 22.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 17-10 won by fall over Karsten Lerwick (Kingsbury County) 6-9 (Fall 1:22)

Quarterfinal - Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 17-10 won by fall over Salamana Idris (Sioux Falls Washington) 3-7 (Fall 1:13)

Semifinal - Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 17-10 won by decision over Micah Stern (Brookings) 7-7 (Dec 5-1)

1st Place Match - Maddon Odland (Redfield Area) 27-8 won by fall over Wyatt Hagen (Groton Area) 17-10 (Fall 1:22)

106: Noah Scepaniak (3-6).

Champ. Round 1 - Micah Stern (Brookings) 7-7 won by fall over Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 3-6 (Fall 0:59)

Cons. Round 1 - Ryatt Knippling (Lyman) 10-20 won by decision over Noah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 3-6 (Dec 12-5)

106: Luke Gauer (2-6).

Champ. Round 1 - Maddon Odland (Redfield Area) 27-8 won by fall over Luke Gauer (Groton Area) 2-6 (Fall 1:22)

Cons. Round 1 - Luke Gauer (Groton Area) 2-6 won by fall over Daltin Coughlin (Kingsbury County) 0-8 (Fall 1:48)

Cons. Round 2 - Salamana Idris (Sioux Falls Washington) 3-7 won by major decision over Luke Gauer (Groton Area) 2-6 (MD 10-1)

120: John Bisbee (1-10).

Champ. Round 1 - Tucker Baloun (Faulkton Area) 10-19 won by fall over John Bisbee (Groton Area) 1-10 (Fall 3:03)

Cons. Round 1 - John Bisbee (Groton Area) 1-10 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Round 2 - Rogan Albrecht (Kingsbury County) 3-3 won by fall over John Bisbee (Groton Area) 1-10 (Fall 2:20)

126: Donovan Block (5-10).

Champ. Round 1 - Donovan Block (Groton Area) 5-10 received a bye () (Bye)

Quarterfinal - Riley Williams (Sioux Falls Washington) 16-18 won by tech fall over Donovan Block (Groton Area) 5-10 (TF-1.5 4:41 (17-2))

Cons. Round 2 - Donovan Block (Groton Area) 5-10 won by fall over Noah Vig (Kingsbury County) 0-2 (Fall 2:50)

Cons. Round 3 - Sawyer Johnson (Brookings) 6-12 won by decision over Donovan Block (Groton Area) 5-10 (Dec 10-7)

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126: Walker Zoellner (17-10) placed 5th and scored 11.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 17-10 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Issac Guzman (Canby) 18-12 won by fall over Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 17-10 (Fall 3:23)
Cons. Round 2 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 17-10 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 3 - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 17-10 won by fall over Lane Olivier (Lyman) 6-14 (Fall 2:02)
Cons. Semi - Riley Williams (Sioux Falls Washington) 16-18 won by decision over Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 17-10 (Dec 2-1)
5th Place Match - Walker Zoellner (Groton Area) 17-10 won by fall over Sawyer Johnson (Brookings) 6-12 (Fall 1:31)

144: Christian Ehresmann (20-3) placed 2nd and scored 21.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 20-3 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 20-3 won by fall over Albert Ngandu (Sioux Falls Washington) 1-8 (Fall 1:04)
Semifinal - Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 20-3 won by major decision over Bryce Hawkinson (Britton-Hecla) 21-7 (MD 14-4)
1st Place Match - Sam Drietz (Canby) 19-6 won in sudden victory - 1 over Christian Ehresmann (Groton Area) 20-3 (SV-1 10-8)

157: Easten Ekern (5-16) placed 3rd and scored 16.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 5-16 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Sheldon Balderston (Kingsbury County) 7-4 won by major decision over Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 5-16 (MD 17-7)
Cons. Round 2 - Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 5-16 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 3 - Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 5-16 won by fall over Jaun Gutierrez (Kingsbury County) 5-6 (Fall 0:58)
Cons. Semi - Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 5-16 won by decision over Braydon Pueppke (Sioux Falls Washington) 10-20 (Dec 4-3)
3rd Place Match - Easten Ekern (Groton Area) 5-16 won by medical forfeit over Sheldon Balderston (Kingsbury County) 7-4 (M. For.)

165: Korbin Kucker (10-4) placed 4th and scored 14.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 10-4 received a bye () (Bye)
Quarterfinal - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 10-4 won by fall over Ben Suther (Britton-Hecla) 16-10 (Fall 5:48)
Semifinal - Zander Eidem (Sioux Falls Washington) 23-6 won by fall over Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 10-4 (Fall 3:16)
Cons. Semi - Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 10-4 won by decision over Dustin Dirksen (Warner/Northwestern) 11-8 (Dec 9-4)
3rd Place Match - Rory McManus (Lyman) 23-7 won by major decision over Korbin Kucker (Groton Area) 10-4 (MD 13-2)

175: Isaiah Scepaniak (0-12).

Champ. Round 1 - Sawyer Verhelst (Canby) 13-19 won by fall over Isaiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 0-12 (Fall 0:21)
Cons. Round 1 - Isaiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 0-12 received a bye () (Bye)
Cons. Round 2 - Marshall Holz (Kingsbury County) 16-10 won by fall over Isaiah Scepaniak (Groton Area) 0-12 (Fall 1:19)

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175: Ben Hoeft (7-16) scored 2.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Marshall Holz (Kingsbury County) 16-10 won by fall over Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 7-16 (Fall 0:43)

Cons. Round 1 - Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 7-16 won by major decision over Luke Johnson (Sioux Valley) 2-14 (MD 11-2)

Cons. Round 2 - Sawyer Verhelst (Canby) 13-19 won by fall over Ben Hoeft (Groton Area) 7-16 (Fall 1:25)

190: Drew Thurston (4-9) scored 4.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Drew Thurston (Groton Area) 4-9 won by forfeit over Forfeit Forfeit (Redfield Area) 21-8 (For.)

Quarterfinal - Joey Fitzpatrick (Brookings) 18-5 won by fall over Drew Thurston (Groton Area) 4-9 (Fall 0:57)

Cons. Round 2 - Drew Thurston (Groton Area) 4-9 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Round 3 - Ayden Brakke (Lyman) 9-19 won by decision over Drew Thurston (Groton Area) 4-9 (Dec 8-2)

215: Charlie Frost (5-8) placed 6th and scored 10.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Foster Bode (Faulkton Area) 7-9 won by fall over Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 5-8 (Fall 1:14)

Cons. Round 1 - Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 5-8 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Round 2 - Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 5-8 won by fall over Cade Leonhardt (Faulkton Area) 3-6 (Fall 4:52)

Cons. Round 3 - Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 5-8 won by fall over Rex Hernandez (Canby) 1-2 (Fall 3:17)

Cons. Semi - Kadyn Weisser (Ipswich/Leola/Bowdle) 20-9 won by fall over Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 5-8 (Fall 0:59)

5th Place Match - Foster Bode (Faulkton Area) 7-9 won by decision over Charlie Frost (Groton Area) 5-8 (Dec 1-0)

285: Gavin Englund (17-10) placed 6th and scored 11.0 team points.

Champ. Round 1 - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 17-10 won by fall over Brayden Satter (Warner/Northwestern) 4-8 (Fall 1:28)

Quarterfinal - Louie Thiry (Lyman) 23-7 won by decision over Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 17-10 (Dec 5-2)

Cons. Round 2 - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 17-10 received a bye () (Bye)

Cons. Round 3 - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 17-10 won by forfeit over Karter Moody (Groton Area) 10-7 (For.)

Cons. Semi - Gavin Noyes (Canby) 23-11 won by major decision over Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 17-10 (MD 8-0)

5th Place Match - Louie Thiry (Lyman) 23-7 won by decision over Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 17-10 (Dec 6-0)

285: Karter Moody (10-7).

Champ. Round 1 - Karter Moody (Groton Area) 10-7 won by fall over Dylan Reynolds (Brookings) 6-12 (Fall 3:19)

Quarterfinal - Parker Bode (Faulkton Area) 24-5 won by fall over Karter Moody (Groton Area) 10-7 (Fall 3:12)

Cons. Round 2 - Karter Moody (Groton Area) 10-7 won by fall over Carson Leonhardt (Faulkton Area) 5-8 (Fall 0:51)

Cons. Round 3 - Gavin Englund (Groton Area) 17-10 won by forfeit over Karter Moody (Groton Area) 10-7 (For.)

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GHS Girls Wrestling

Krueger takes first at Arlington

Liza Krueger took first place at the Kingsbury County Invitational Wrestling Tournament held Saturday in Arlington. She won all three matches with a pin.

100: Liza Krueger (15-3) placed 1st and scored 20.0 team points.

Round 1 - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 15-3 won by fall over Jaylynn Johnson (Kingsbury County) 2-9 (Fall 1:13)

Round 2 - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 15-3 won by fall over Reegan Cook (Tiospa Zina) 7-12 (Fall 1:15)

Round 3 - Liza Krueger (Groton Area) 15-3 won by fall over Claire Milliron (Brookings) 9-10 (Fall 4:36)

GDILIVE.COM

GT
Groton Area
Tigers

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

Any interest in any of
these basketball games on
GDILIVE.COM?

They are \$25 each.

~~Milbank Girls JV~~

~~Milbank Boys JV~~

~~Great Plains Lutheran Girls C~~

~~Great Plains Lutheran Girls JV~~

Northwestern Girls JV

Webster Boys C

Webster Boys JV

Webster Girls JV

Florence/Henry Girls JV

Deuel Girls JV

Vermillion Boys JV

Redfield Boys C Game

Redfield Girls JV Game

Mobridge-Pollock Boys C Game

Mobridge-Pollock Girls C Game

Mobridge-Pollock Boys JV Game

Mobridge-Poolock Girls JV Game

Dakota Valley Boys JV

Dakota Valley Girls JV

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Democratic Leadership Column:

Session Moving at a Faster Pace

Rep. Oren Lesmeister (District 28A), House Minority Leader

We are off and running this year at a faster pace than anyone has ever seen, which is great. We started discussing bills almost immediately. In the past we waited until the second week to do so. This has been looked at and talked about for the past few years, and everyone appreciates the fast start to work through the bill load.

One of the bills that I will be carrying this year again will be the update to the Industrial Hemp Statute. We are #1 in the nation in production and processing. We are going to grow our acres to 6,000+. This industry is going to be huge with uses like animal bedding, herd for hempcrete and fiber. The South Dakota Industrial Hemp Association is working to bring a hemp block plant to the state. This plant would build hempcrete blocks to be used in construction of buildings. This is what I envisioned this industry to be when I first started bringing the original bill 8 years ago.

With the work load increasing, we are also seeing more people coming to the Capitol to talk with legislators. This is and has always been the best way to communicate.

I sit on the House State Affairs Committee again this year and we have been working on bills concerning elections of party members, PUC issues, infrastructure on tribal lands, housing funds and even a bill to allow permanent daylight saving time.

We are seeing a draft load in the Legislative Research Council of over 600 bills this year. Sounds like South Dakota needs a lot more laws and regulations.

Some things of interest are always pipeline and property rights bills. We saw the first one of these in a House committee that would have restructured the way you can survey prior to permits being issued by the PUC. This bill failed to pass out of committee. I am not, and never will be, against pipelines to move products. But, I am against using broad sweeping eminent domain for private gain. I have always, and will continue, to stand with land owners on the private property rights issues.

It's an honor and pleasure working for the people of District 28A and the State of South Dakota.

Sen. Reynold Nesiba (District 15), Senate Minority Leader

Democratic and Republican Senators have been working together this week in a bipartisan way on issues of mutual concern. We have passed bills that promote E15 fuel and that ensure polling places are civically-sacred-spaces by giving poll workers greater legal protection from intimidation.

I was also pleased to hear the positive comments from Republican colleagues about the funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) helping South Dakota's infrastructure. This week, the Senate State Affairs Committee passed SB 53 which will provide another \$94 million in federal grants to water and wastewater projects across the state. This is on top of over \$600 million set aside last year as the biggest single investment in water and waste water treatment in our state's history. These investments are only possible because of President Joe Biden's leadership and we thank him for investing in America when all Republican Senators and Representatives voted against it, including South Dakota's entire delegation.

There are also points where we disagree. One of the biggest disagreements is going to be coming up in the next week or two and it's going to be on this Republican idea to expand government and government paperwork to deny people healthcare. The main problem with SJR 501 is the disrespect it shows toward the people of South Dakota. It also benefits no one. It's simply political posturing on the part of Republicans that they are proposing to expand government paperwork to deny people healthcare that they deserve. South Dakota has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation at 2%, and a work reporting requirement would mean another government mandate on people and small business owners who are already working hard to succeed. For those who are sick, it means time spent reporting to the government as opposed to getting better and getting back to living the healthy lives we all hope to enjoy. As a state that prides itself on work ethic, unnecessary reporting requirements are an undue burden on already stretched DSS staff. Let's keep South Dakota free of unnecessary government overreach and red tape and join our caucus in opposing SJR501.

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NSU Wrestling

Brossard and Turnquist Lead Wolves from Younes Hospitality Duals

Kearney, Neb. – The No. 18 Northern State University wrestling team with 1-2 from the UNK Younes Hospitality Duals Saturday, with both losses coming down to the final match of the dual. The Wolves took on No. 1 Central Oklahoma, Colorado State Pueblo, and No. 1 Nebraska Kearney.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 16, UCO 22

Records: NSU 6-7, UCO 8-0

Final Score: NSU 39, CSUP 9

Records: NSU 7-7, CSUP 3-4

Final Score: NSU 21, UNK 24

Records: NSU 7-8, UNK 12-3

HOW IT HAPPENED vs. #1 CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

The Wolves won four of the ten weights with two extra point victories

The Bronchos took a 3-0 lead to open the dual and Jason Henschel Jr. answered back with a decision (1-0) win over Shaun Muse

UCO grabbed the lead against, before No. 1 Wyatt Turnquist knotted things at 6-all, defeating Dylan Brown in a 5-4 decision

The 157-pound bout went to Central Oklahoma, however the Wolves grabbed their first lead at 165-pounds Chase Bloomquist defeated No. 12 Hunter Jump in a 10-2 major decision

Seth Brossard followed that with a victory by fall (4:22) over No. 12 Anthony Des Vigne, however UCO won the final three weights and sealed the dual

The reserve wrestlers from both programs faced off with Northern notching a 29-22 victory

Notable reserve wins included Brenden Salfrank (Fall 2:25), Teagan Block (TF 18-0), Carter Ban (Fall 2:15), and Cael Larson (Fall 4:27)

FINAL RESULTS vs. #1 CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

125 - Guy Clevenger (Central Oklahoma) over Landen Fischer (Northern State) Dec 10-5

133 - Jason Henschel (Northern State) over Shaun Muse (Central Oklahoma) Dec 1-0

141 - Dylan Lucas (Central Oklahoma) over Braydon Mogle (Northern State) Dec 4-0

149 - Wyatt Turnquist (Northern State) over Dylan Brown (Central Oklahoma) Dec 5-4

157 - Gabe Johnson (Central Oklahoma) over Devin Bahr (Northern State) Dec 4-2

165 - Chase Bloomquist (Northern State) over Hunter Jump (Central Oklahoma) Maj 10-2

174 - Seth Brossard (Northern State) over Anthony Des Vigne (Central Oklahoma) Fall 4:22

184 - Garrett Wells (Central Oklahoma) over Sam Kruger (Northern State) TF 18-0

197 - Dalton Abney (Central Oklahoma) over Treyton Cacek (Northern State) Dec 5-0

285 - Shawn Streck (Central Oklahoma) over Nathan Schauer (Northern State) TF 19-4

HOW IT HAPPENED vs. CSU-PUEBLO

It was all Northern State in the second dual of the day as the Wolves won eight of the ten weights, including seven bonus point wins

Landen Fischer opened the dual with a 4-1 decision over Dominick Castro, followed by an injury default by Henschel Jr. at 133-pounds

With the Wolves up 9-0, Turnquist and Mogle combined for nine more points at 141 and 149 pounds

Mogle tallied a 10-2 major decision over Michael Atencio and Turnquist defeated Anthony Nichols in a 16-1 technical fall

The Northern State onslaught continued with a victory by fall for Devin Bahr against Cyruss Meeks (2:30)

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and Northern led 24-0

Spencer Roth grabbed his fifth win of the day at 165-pounds, downing Elijah Valdez in a 15-4 major decision

Brossard added seventh straight victory for the Wolves, defeating Solomon Arnds-Volcin by technical fall (18-3)

The ThunderWolves broke the Northern State streak and tallied wins at 184 and 197 pounds, before Nathan Schauer closed out the dual with an injury default win over Josiah Aldinger (4:19)

FINAL RESULTS vs. CSU-PUEBLO

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HOW IT HAPPENED vs. #7 NEBRASKA KEARNEY

The Wolves wrestled to another close dual against the Lopers notching four bonus point victories

Henschel Jr. grabbed Northern's first lead of the dual defeating Drew Arnold by fall at 5:00

UNK answered back at 141-pounds, taking an 8-6 lead

Turnquist added a 16-1 technical fall over Brody Arrants, giving NSU an 11-8 lead

Bahr extended that lead in the following match defeating Nicholas Stoltenberg by fall at 4:13

After a decision loss at 165, Brossard recorded his third win as a Wolf with a 14-2 major decision over Trenton Munoz, giving Northern a 21-11 lead

The Lopers rallied back taking the final three weights and the dual

The NSU and UNK reserves also faced off with Cael Larson grabbing the Wolves lone win, a 7-2 decision over Roberto Bautista

FINAL RESULTS vs. #7 NEBRASKA KEARNEY

125 - Zachary Ourada (Nebraska-Kearney) over Landen Fischer (Northern State) Maj 12-3

133 - Jason Henschel (Northern State) over Drew Arnold (Nebraska-Kearney) Fall 5:00

141 - Nick James (Nebraska-Kearney) over Braydon Mogle (Northern State) Maj 14-5

149 - Wyatt Turnquist (Northern State) over Brody Arrants (Nebraska-Kearney) TF 16-1

157 - Devin Bahr (Northern State) over Nicholas Stoltenberg (Nebraska-Kearney) Fall 4:13

165 - Kaden Hart (Nebraska-Kearney) over Chase Bloomquist (Northern State) Dec 5-2

174 - Seth Brossard (Northern State) over Trenton Munoz (Nebraska-Kearney) Maj 14-2

184 - Billy Higgins (Nebraska-Kearney) over Tyler Voorhees (Northern State) TF 21-4

197 - Jackson Kinsella (Nebraska-Kearney) over Treyton Cacek (Northern State) Dec 4-1

285 - Crew Howard (Nebraska-Kearney) over Nathan Schauer (Northern State) TF 17-1

UP NEXT

The Wolves return to NSIC action next Thursday, January 25 on the road at No. 6 St. Cloud State. The dual is scheduled for 7 p.m. versus the Huskies.

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NSU Women's Basketball

An Aggressive Offence Led the Wolves to Victory Over Bulldogs in Overtime

Aberdeen, S.D. – In the final seconds of regular play, Morgan Fiedler took the Wolves into overtime with a bucket from downtown. A strong offense in overtime led the Wolves to victory over the Bulldogs, 81-70. With a career-high game, Madelyn Bragg paved the way for the Wolves with 35 points.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 81, UMD 70

Records: NSU 14-4 (10-2 NSIC), UMD 10-6 (7-5 NSIC)

Attendance: 2612

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern State tallied 24 points in the first quarter, 16 in the second, 13 in the third, 17 in the fourth, 11 in overtime; NSU held the UMD offence scoreless in overtime

The Wolves tied the game in the final seconds of regular play with a made 3-pointer from Morgan Fielder to go into overtime

NSU shot well in the contest, shooting 43.8 % from the floor, 41.2 % from the 3-point arc, and 81.8 % from the foul line

They notched 42 rebounds, 34 points in the paint, 22 assists, 14 bench points, and 13 points off of turnovers

Madelyn Bragg was first on the team with 35 points for a new career-high along with nine rebounds and four assists

Rianna Fillipi dished out a team lead, with ten rebounds and seven steals along with 16 points and three made 3-pointers

Deontee Smith was first off the bench with 12 points, while shooting 71.4 % from the floor

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Madelyn Bragg: 35 points (career-high), 9 rebounds, 4 assists

Rianna Fillipi: 16 points, 10 rebounds, 7 steals, 6 assists

Deontee Smith: 12 points, 2 rebounds

Alayna Benike: 9 points, 6 rebounds, 3 assists

UP NEXT

Northern State is back on the road to take on the University of Sioux Falls and Southwest Minnesota State. Tip-off times are set for Friday, January 26th at 5:30 p.m. against the Cougars and Saturday, January 27th at 5 p.m. against the Mustangs.

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NSU Men's Basketball

Wolves Suffer I Hate Winter Loss to the Bulldogs

Aberdeen, S.D. – Despite a close first half, the Northern State University men's basketball team fell to Minnesota Duluth on Saturday with the Bulldogs pulling away in the second. UMD was dominant under the basket racking up 60 points in the paint and 43 rebounds.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 72, UMD 96

Records: NSU 7-11 (5-7 NSIC), UMD 13-5 (8-4 NSIC)

Attendance: 3003

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern trailed 52-44 at the half, however Duluth ran away with the game in the second; out-scoring the Wolves 44-28

NSU shot 43.1% from the floor, 39.3% from the free throw line, and 64.7% from the foul line

They tallied 29 rebounds, 14 points in the paint, 11 assists, and six points off turnovers

The two teams combined for just 13 turnovers in the contest and each shot efficiently, however Duluth won the rebound game and saw double figure scoring off their bench

Jackson Moni led four starters in double figures with 23 points and seven rebounds

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Jackson Moni: 23 points, 7 rebounds, 3 assists

Josh Dilling: 17 points, 53.3 field goal%, 4 assists, 3 rebounds

Augustin Reede: 15 points, 55.6 field goal%, 2 rebounds

Michael Nhial: 10 points, 7 rebounds, 2 assists

UP NEXT

Northern State hits the road next Friday and Saturday against Sioux Falls and Southwest Minnesota State. Tip-off times are schedule for 7:30 p.m. on Friday against the Cougars and 7 p.m. on Saturday versus the Mustangs.

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WBB: South Dakota State 73, South Dakota 55

BROOKINGS, S.D.—Three Jackrabbits scored in double-figures to lead South Dakota State to a 73-55 win over South Dakota on Saturday night inside Frost Arena.

South Dakota State (13-5) is the last remaining undefeated Summit League team, sitting atop the standings at 5-0. South Dakota's (13-7, 2-3) three losses in Summit play are to the top three teams in the standings.

The Coyotes jumped out to an 11-2 start in the opening five minutes and after junior Alexi Hempe knocked down buzzer-beater to end the first frame the Coyotes led 21-14.

The Jackrabbits responded with 15 unanswered points in the second quarter and turned a deficit into an eight-point lead entering intermission. The Coyotes' shooting went cold through the second and third quarter as SDSU pushed its lead to 13 entering the fourth period. SDSU shot 48.1 percent (25-of-52) for the game as the Jacks went on to win 73-55.

Junior guard Grace Larkins was the lone Coyote in double-figures with a game-high 18 points. Fourth-year sophomore Natalie Mazurek led the Coyotes on the boards with a career-high 10 rebounds.

South Dakota State forward Tori Nelson led the Jacks with 15 points, while centers Brooklyn Meyer and Mesa Byom added 13 and 10 apiece, respectively.

South Dakota returns home to host Denver at 7 p.m. Thursday inside the Sanford Coyote Sports Center in Vermillion, S.D.

MBB: South Dakota State 73, South Dakota 55

VERMILLION, S.D.—Zeke Mayo scored a game-high 20 points and Charlie Easley added 19 to lift South Dakota State to a 73-55 win against South Dakota Saturday inside the Sanford Coyote Sports Center.

The victory puts the Jackrabbits (11-9, 4-1 Summit) alone atop the Summit League standings with a 4-1 record. South Dakota (9-11, 2-3) is part of a logjam of conference teams now trailing the Jacks. The rematch of this rivalry series is Feb. 4 in Brookings.

Mayo hit four 3-pointers while Easley hit a variety of shots during a 9-for-12 shooting effort. The Jacks jumped out to a 12-2 lead and never trailed. The Coyotes trimmed a 37-26 halftime deficit to 45-42 on a Kaleb Stewart 3-pointer seven minutes into the second half and Max Burchill hit a 3 for South Dakota that closed the gap to 50-47 with 10:43 left. USD totaled eight points on 2-of-13 shooting and committed seven turnovers the rest of the way.

Jevon Hill was 5-for-9 from behind the arc for 15 points to lead South Dakota. Stewart had 10 points on 4-of-14 shooting two days after missing Thursday's game due to illness. Lahat Thioune had six points and eight rebounds.

South Dakota State big men Luke Appel (12) and William Kyle III combined for 23 points on 11-of-24 shooting and the Jackrabbits dominated the paint, outscoring the home team 46-12 there. South Dakota settled for a season-high 32 three-point tries and made 11.

Mayo was 4-of-9 from long range, but the rest of the Jacks were 2-of-12. A string of misses allowed South Dakota to pull close in the second half. Easley scored 11 of his 19 points over the final nine minutes. He was two points shy of his season high against Division I foes this season.

It was a physical game as most rivalry contests are but both teams shot just four free throws apiece. Half of SDSU's attempts came after a technical foul with seven minutes to go.

South Dakota takes to the road next week with contests at Denver (Thursday) and Kansas City (Saturday).



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

Does Kristi Noem believe in Freedom, or just freedom? The scandalous truth.

by **SETH TUPPER**

Gov. Kristi Noem really likes freedom. Not just little freedom. She likes big Freedom, and even bigger FREEDOM.

She reached the apotheosis of her freedom fetish during her recent State of the State address, when she used the word 38 times in 39 minutes. In the published text of the speech, every instance of the word included a capital "F."

Noem capitalizes the "F" in freedom every time she writes it — not only in published speeches, but also on social media and in her weekly columns. I emailed her spokespeople and asked why, but they didn't respond. I guess they believe in Freedom from the press.

Left to my own curiosity, I did some digging and discovered something shocking. It could threaten Noem's Freedom-loving reputation, and maybe even spoil her chance of becoming the running mate for Donald Trump, the nation's leading serial capitalizer (on his Truth Social platform, he recently dispensed with lower-case letters and posted an entire rant in all-caps).

In fact, this information about Noem is so disturbing that if you're a Freedom-loving fan of the most Freedom-loving governor in the Freest state in this Free nation, you might want to brace yourself before reading Further (oops, that one was accidental).

The disturbing truth is this: Kristi Noem has not always believed in big "F" Freedom. She formerly espoused only a feckless fondness for small "f" freedom. You might say she's a flip-flopper. Or a Flip-flopper. Or maybe a flip-Flopper.

As recently as August of 2022, she was routinely tapping the "f" key while typing "freedom" with careless disregard for the "shift" and "caps lock" buttons.

On Aug. 4 of that year, for example, Noem wrote this on Facebook about her then-opponent for governor, Democrat Jamie Smith: "He would destroy the strongest economy in America that we've built and take away the freedoms that we've protected."

Fortunately for all of us, Smith only wanted to steal our freedoms and not our Freedoms. Regardless, Noem beat him and protected both.

Noem's Big "F" Big Bang happened five days later on Aug. 9, 2022. She had just ridden a motorcycle at the annual Sturgis rally, in defiance of freedom-hating party poopsters who'd said in prior years that packing hundreds of thousands of people into a small town during a pandemic was a bad idea.

"When the liberal media attacked Sturgis, they turned it into something more — a powerful symbol of FREEDOM!" Noem wrote on Facebook that Fateful day. "So glad to share the Freedom and fresh air with you all yesterday."

Notably, the air was fresh, but not Fresh, probably on account of the motorcycle exhaust. And it makes sense that fumes were present when Noem suddenly developed a compulsion to capitalize common nouns.

There was some inconsistency after that — most obviously in a weekly column that was published three days after her motorcycle ride and was devoted to that very topic. She wrote "freedom" with a lower-case "f" twice before switching, mid-column, to an upper-case "F" for the final three uses of the word.

Noem eventually imposed a big dose of Big "F" discipline on herself and her staff, and it's been all big "F" Freedom ever since.

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I've had plenty of laughs about it, but I'd be remiss if I didn't also mention that it violates a basic rule of writing. Few writing guides capture the essence of the rule as hilariously as the one published online by the Skidmore College Political Science Department.

"Capitalize only words that need to be capitalized," the guide says. "If you capitalize words just because they are Important, you risk looking like a Pompous Fool."

In this case, Noem thinks voters are the fools. She believes shouting the word "FREEDOM!" loudly enough will distract them from noticing what a complicated relationship she has with the actual concept.

Because while Noem extols freedom from mask mandates and government regulations, she seems to believe just as fervently in her own freedom from accountability. That freedom allows her to use the state airplane for political events in other states, to spend an inordinate amount of time pursuing her national political ambitions instead of governing South Dakota, and to make herself the star of a taxpayer-funded, national workforce advertising campaign that's at least partially in service to those ambitions.

In some situations, Noem doesn't support freedom at all. She doesn't believe in freedom for women to make their own reproductive choices. She doesn't believe in freedom for transgender children and their families and doctors to make their own decisions about health care. And she doesn't believe in freedom of information — like legally designating government emails as public records — when it threatens her grip on power.

But she'll keep using that big "F," because consistent commitment to a principle like freedom is hard. Making people believe you care about freedom by capitalizing the first letter of the word is a lot easier, and politically more beneficial.

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

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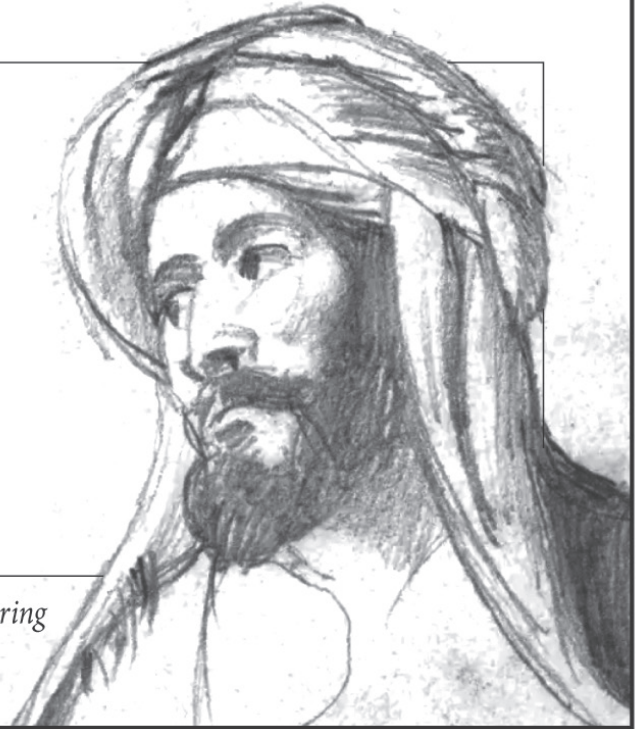
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

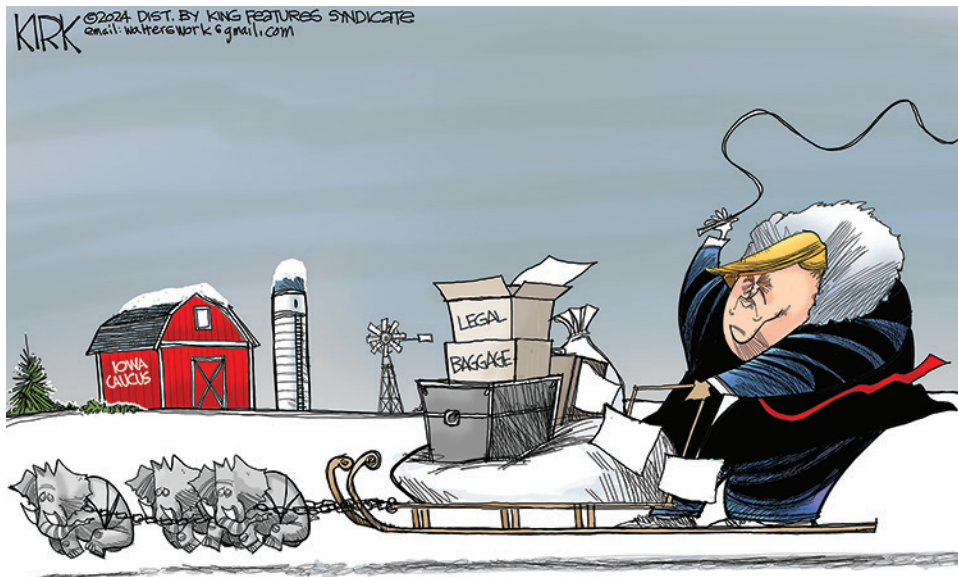
*I put on righteousness,
and it clothed me;
My justice was like a robe
and a turban.*

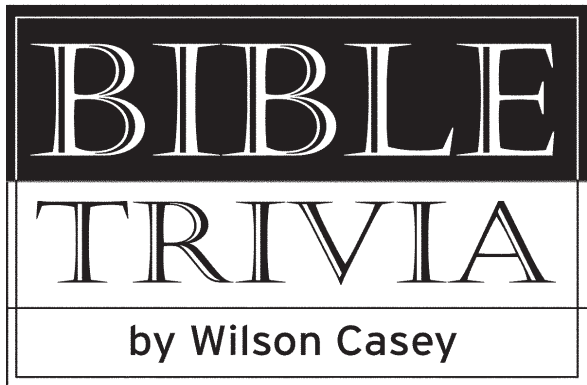
❧ JOB 29:14 ❧



Detail of "Four sketches of the head of a man wearing a turban" by Solomon Alexander Hart (1857)

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

2. Joseph was buried in a plot of ground at Shechem costing how many pieces of silver? *1, 7, 30, 100*

3. Which metal, used to sharpen other metals, does Proverbs 27 compare to friends? *Gold, Silver, Iron, Tin*

4. What is the middle chapter of the New Testament? *Romans 13, Galatians 2, Ephesians 5, Titus 1*

5. The book of Hebrews tells us to entertain strangers as they may be ...? *Demons, Angels, Prophets, Reincarnations*

6. From Ruth 1, who was Naomi's husband? *Elimelech, Mahlon, Chilion, Malachi*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) 100, 3) Iron, 4) Romans 13, 5) Angels, 6) Elimelech

Find expanded trivia online with Wilson Casey at www.patreon.com/triviaguy. FREE TRIAL!

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FLASH GORDON

THE WEDDING FEAST OF PRINCESS AURA AND PRINCE BARIN.

I'VE WORKED IN THE PALACE SINCE I WAS A CUB, BUT THERE WAS NEVER THIS... ENERGY.

THIS HOPE.

I THINK I MAY BE SEEING THE START OF SOMETHING WONDERFUL.

I HAVEN'T EVEN FINISHED POURING THE WINE BEFORE MING II BARGES INTO THE RECEPTION.

HE CHALLENGES HIS SISTER'S CLAIM TO THE THRONE -- AND QUESTIONS HER HONOR.

THE ALIEN FLASH GORDON DEMANDS MING'S SON ANSWER FOR HIS INSULTS--

BUT THEN RONAL -- BARIN'S COUSIN, CONSORT TO QUEEN FRIA -- FORCES THEM APART.

MING II SNEERS BACK AT US AS HE LEAVES.

HE SAYS HE HAS ALLIES.

AND AURA'S REIGN WILL BE SHORT.

HIS WORDS ECHO IN MY EARS AS I WALK TO THE WINE CELLAR.

SUDDENLY, ALL MY THOUGHTS STOP.

MY EYES CUT CLEAR THROUGH THE DARKNESS, AND I SEE...

FLASH GORDON, THE HERO OF AURA'S REVOLUTION.

FLECKED WITH BLOOD.

STANDING OVER THE LIFELESS BODY OF THE SON OF MING.

NEXT: CONFESS, FLASH!


DAN SCHRADE 1-21-24

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



GOOD BUNKER PLAY STARTS WITH OWNING THE CORRECT CLUB FOR THE JOB. I.E. A SAND-WEDGE. IT'S KEY CHARACTERISTIC IS THE LOWERED SOLE, WHICH PROMOTES "BOUNCING" THROUGH RATHER THAN DIGGING INTO THE SAND.



NEXT COMES ALWAYS HITTING INTO THE SAND BEHIND THE BALL, NEVER THE BALL ITSELF. A LITTLE TIME IN THE PRACTICE BUNKER IS THE QUICKEST WAY TO GAIN THE CONFIDENCE NECESSARY TO DO THAT.

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Defining Hashimoto's Thyroiditis and Finding Out How to Treat It

DEAR DR. ROACH: Please explain Hashimoto's disease. I have heard that it is rare, but two colleagues have recently been diagnosed. We all work in a very high-stress field. — *J.H.*

ANSWER: Hashimoto's thyroiditis is not at all a rare disease. It occurs in up to 10% of the population and much more frequently in women than men. Although people can be diagnosed at a young age, it is more common at older ages. It is caused by an autoimmune reaction to different parts of the thyroid, with thyroglobulin and thyroid peroxidase antibodies commonly found. TSH receptor antibodies are found on occasion.

Hashimoto's thyroiditis most commonly causes low thyroid levels, although there may be a period of time early in the disease where thyroid levels are high. Not everybody with antibodies will develop low thyroid levels. The thyroid is sometimes enlarged, but a careful exam will usually show that the gland is firm, showing that immune cells have infiltrated the gland.

Treatment of Hashimoto's thyroiditis involves replacing the thyroid hormone that the gland can no longer make. The dose depends on body size to a certain extent, but needs to be adjusted based on lab results. Most people are treated with levothyroxine, also called T4, which is the primary hormone made by the thyroid.

T4 is converted to T3 (also called triiodothyronine, the active form of the hormone) in various tissues outside the

thyroid. T3 only stays in the body for a short while before it is destroyed, so a once-daily treatment with T4, which lasts longer, allows the body to convert T4 to T3.

Most people do very well with T4 treatment. A minority of people cannot efficiently make the active T3 form, in which case-combination treatment can be considered. Unfortunately, T3 must be dosed twice daily.

It is thought that stress hormones play a role, since stress does seem to increase the risk of developing an autoimmune thyroid disease like Hashimoto's.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Huntington's disease runs in my family; my brother and sister started having symptoms in their early 60s. I am 80 and don't have any symptoms. Can I assume that I don't have it? I hear testing can be expensive. Are there any organizations that test for free? — *S.B.*

ANSWER: Huntington's is a progressive, degenerative neurological disease that causes abnormal body movements, psychiatric changes and dementia. The movement disorder, called chorea, is the first symptom. It can begin very slowly, and people may not be aware of it. A careful exam can show the characteristic findings. A movement disorder specialist is the ideal person to see in this case.

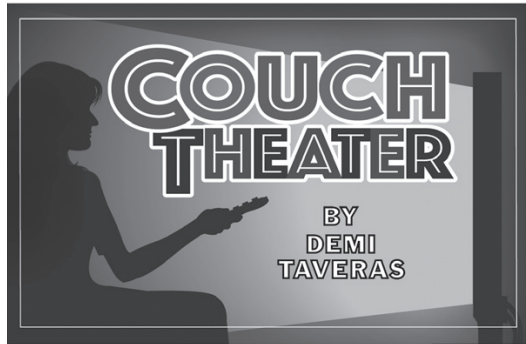
It would be very unusual to begin having symptoms at, or after, the age of 80, so it is very likely that you do not have the disease if you don't have any symptoms and have received a normal exam by an expert.

Testing should be performed only after careful consideration and counseling by an expert such as a genetic counselor. According to the Huntington's Disease Society of America (see tinyurl.com/HDgeneticstesting), testing can cost between \$315-\$1,500, but it is often covered by insurance. Free testing may be available as part of a research study.

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

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Austin Butler, left, and Callum Turner star in "Masters of the Air."

Courtesy of AppleTV+

"True Detective: Night Country" (TV-MA) -- After several decades, Jodie Foster is making a great return to television by leading the newest season of the anthology crime drama series "True Detective." Foster plays Detective Liz Danvers, making this her first adult TV role and first starring role in a TV series since 1975! Opposite of Foster is Kali

Reis as steely Detective Evangeline Navarro, who partners up with Liz to close out one last case before they go their separate ways. The case centers around the disappearance of eight men who operated a research station in the cold and rough Alaskan night country. The first two episodes are out now, with subsequent episodes releasing every Sunday until Feb. 25. (Max)

"Griselda" (TV-MA) -- Crime dramas abound this week! Hailing from Eric Newman, the showrunner of the series "Narcos," comes a new crime-drama miniseries led by none other than Sofia Vergara ("Modern Family"). Vergara sheds her usually cheery persona to portray Colombian drug lord Griselda Blanco, nicknamed "the Black Widow" and "the Godmother of Cocaine." After being introduced to the drug industry by her second husband, Blanco based her drug trade business in Miami during the 1980s and kept it bustling with profits of \$80 million a month. Alberto Guerra and Vanessa Ferlito co-star in main roles, while Colombian singer Karol G stars in her first on-screen role ever! All six episodes release on Jan. 25. (Netflix)

"Masters of the Air" (TV-MA) -- Based on the 2007 book by Donald L. Miller, this war-drama miniseries features Academy-Award nominee Austin Butler ("Elvis") and Callum Turner ("Fantastic Beasts") as Air Force Majors Buck Cleven and John Egan, respectively. The two majors were the first pilots assigned to the 100th Bomb Group during World War II, which was given the name "Bloody Hundredth" due to the incredibly difficult missions and heavy losses incurred. But no matter the ruthless conditions, Buck and John are determined to lead their men through these missions. The cast is hefty, with over 50 actors noted in the main cast, but make sure to watch out for a few familiar faces like Barry Keoghan ("Saltburn") and Anthony Boyle ("Harry Potter and the Cursed Child"). (Apple TV+)

In Case You Missed It

"Bottoms" (R) -- Produced by Elizabeth Banks ("Cocaine Bear"), this film stars comedian/writer Rachel Sennott ("The Idol") and Golden Globe winner Ayo Edebiri ("The Bear") as two unpopular lesbian high school students. This hormonal pair of best friends are desperate and mortified that they're seniors who haven't had sex yet, so they hatch a plan to create a feminist self-defense club to help them cozy up to the girls they have crushes on. Rooted in hysterical juvenile chaos, this club escalates into somewhat of a girl gang, even exacting revenge on the conceited quarterback of the football team. Kaia Gerber ("Babylon") and Nicholas Galitzine ("Red, White & Royal Blue") co-star. Out now! (MGM+)

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1. What was the name of Kenny Rogers' band in the '60s?
2. Name the longest Beatles song.
3. Which group was the first to release "Alley Oop"?
4. What was the original name of The Supremes?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "I know there's only, only one like you, There's no way they could have made two."

Answers

1. The First Edition. Their first big hit came with "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town," written by Mel Tillis, about a paralyzed veteran whose wife goes out at night by herself.
2. "Hey Jude." It came in at over seven minutes. Written by Paul McCartney, it was originally titled "Hey Jules" for John Lennon's 5-year-old son Julian who was upset over his parents' divorce.
3. The Hollywood Argyles, in 1957. Astonishingly enough, the caveman song topped the Billboard Hot 100 chart.
4. The Primettes, until 1967.
5. "You're the First, the Last, My Everything," by Barry White, in 1974. The song sat for over 20 years, originally written as a country song by Peter Radcliffe, until White changed the lyrics and turned it into disco. It was originally titled "You're the First, the Last, My In-Between."

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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{Wagner}



"Oh, WE'RE fine, but our spouses need some counseling."

Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



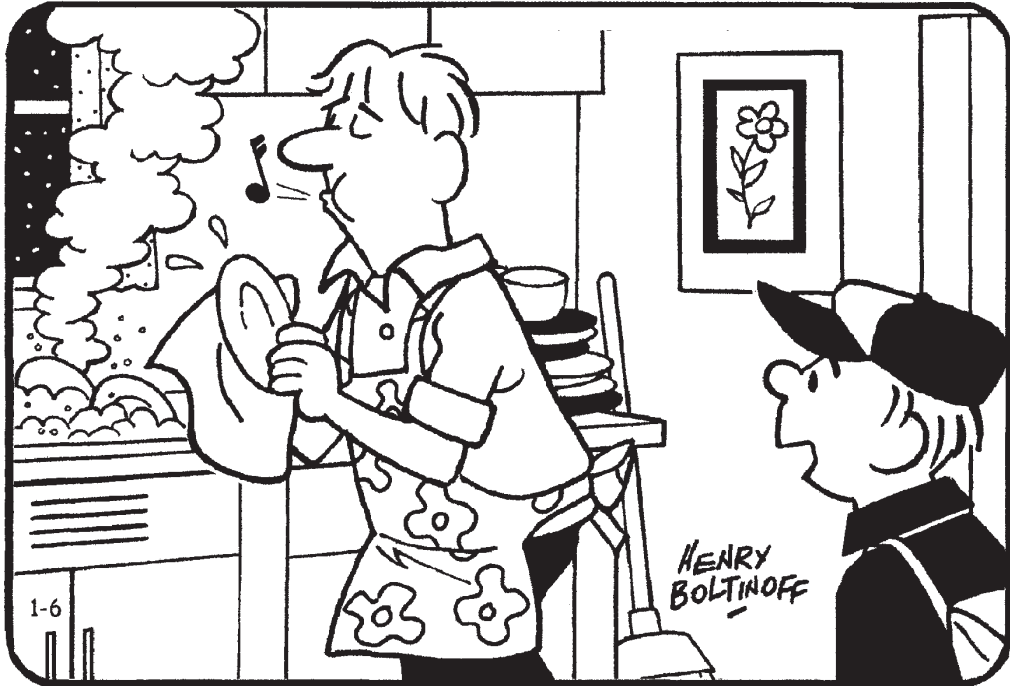
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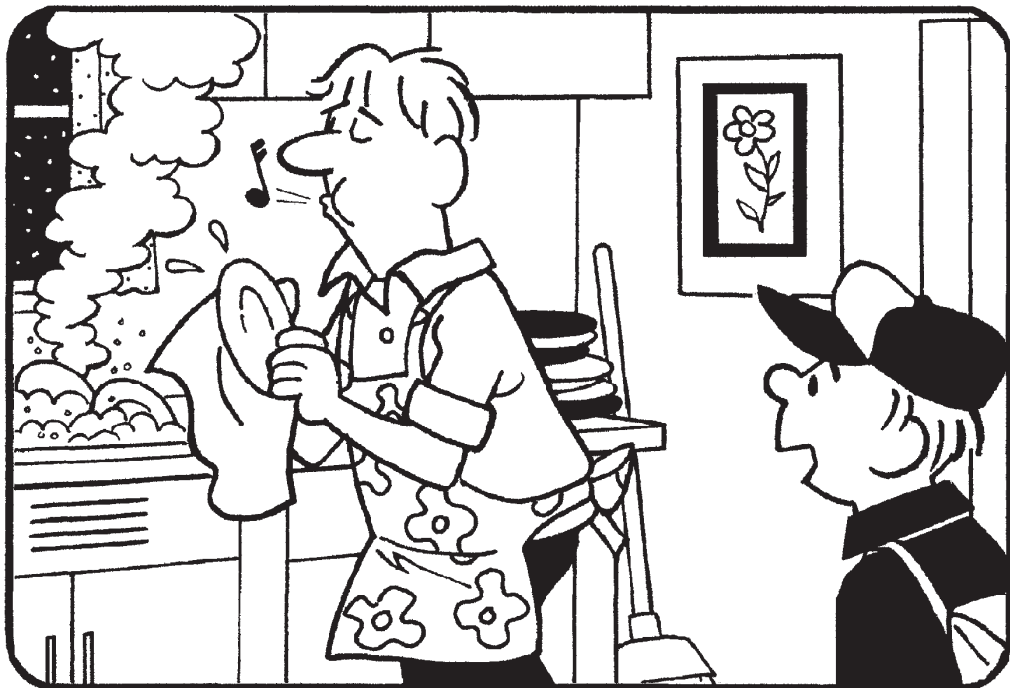
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Broom handle is longer. 2. Cloth is different. 3. Cap is different. 4. Cup is missing. 5. Cabinet is wider. 6. Flower picture is reversed.

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* File this one under safety AND energy smarts: Clean the dryer vent after every load. Clean the dryer vent screen monthly with a gentle soap and water bath. Rinse well and dry thoroughly before inserting back into your dryer.

* "I used to struggle with plastic wrap every time I tried to use it. But now, it's a breeze since I learned to do these two things: One, keep plastic wrap in the freezer. It unrolls evenly, not one side or the other. Two, use a serrated knife to cut it instead of relying on the metal strip down the side of the box. You lay it out on the counter, and just run the knife down the edge you want to cut. Works like magic, and it's no longer frustrating." -- G.S. in Georgia

* Store an apple or two with your potatoes to keep them from sprouting. Be sure to check them often.

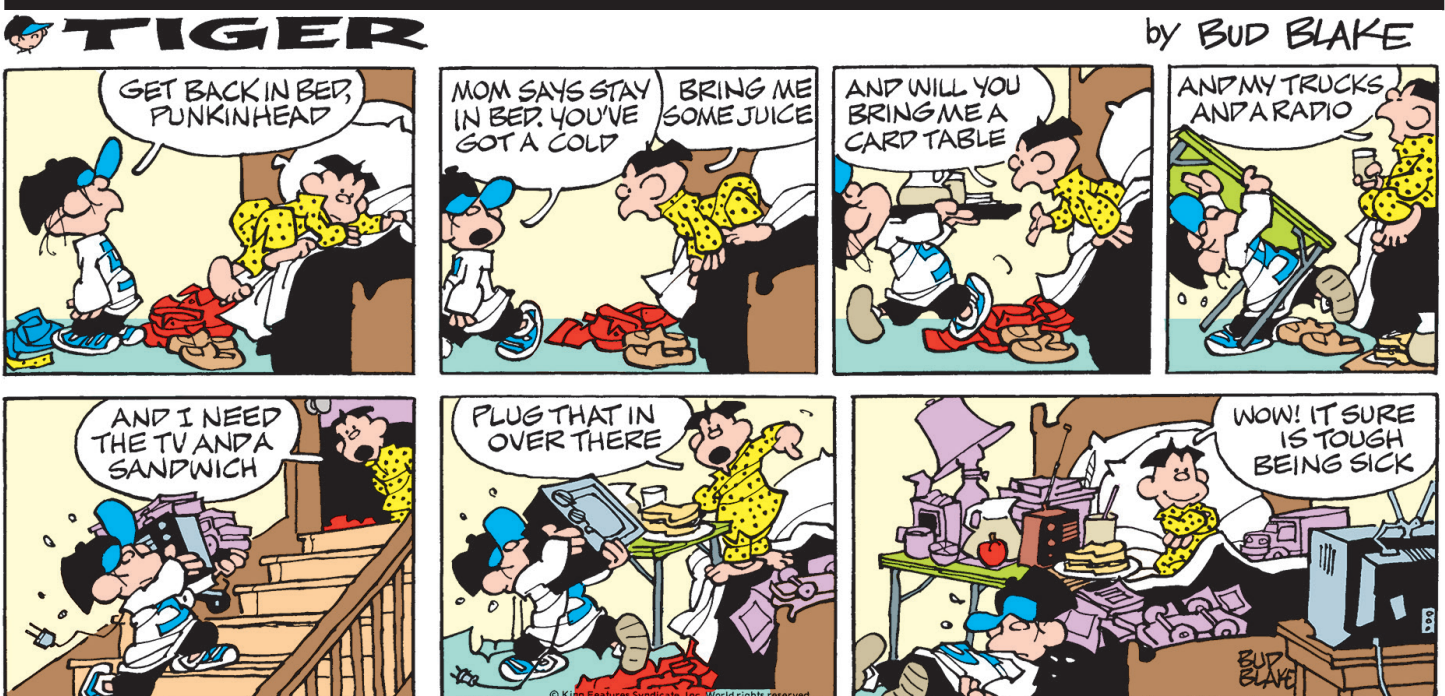
* Cut cotton pads in half to double your supply. They are typically big enough for two uses, and you can always use two halves if you need a whole.

* "Make a cream lipstick last longer and stay cleaner by using a makeup brush to apply. Your skin picks up more of the lipstick than necessary, one reason why we blot our lips afterward. But the brush uses only what you need. And there's less bacteria transfer." -- Y.R. in Massachusetts

* Studies have shown that you spend more and make worse decisions when grocery shopping at peak hours. To be a saver on the family food bill, pick a time to shop when you're not rushed; have a list; know the sales ahead of time; and eat before you go.

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

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Hot tub
- 4 Pack (down)
- 8 Honeycomb division
- 12 Joke
- 13 Teen fave
- 14 Celestial bear
- 15 Capote nickname
- 16 Difficult problem
- 18 Celery unit
- 20 Pantheon member
- 21 Morays
- 24 Twilight, poetically
- 28 "Bravo!"
- 32 Wry Bombeck
- 33 Raw rock
- 34 Begets
- 36 Melody
- 37 Actress Meg
- 39 Maintains
- 41 Wheel connectors
- 43 Bake sale orgs.
- 44 — Victor
- 46 Dugout seating
- 50 Sociable and lively
- 55 "Caught ya!"
- 56 Medicinal plant
- 57 Vogue rival
- 58 Singer Phair
- 59 Reporter's quest

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18			19				20					
			21		22	23		24		25	26	27
28	29	30					31		32			
33				34				35		36		
37			38		39				40			
41				42		43						
			44		45			46		47	48	49
50	51	52				53	54			55		
56					57					58		
59					60					61		

- 60 Workout count
- 61 Mimic
- 10 Baton Rouge sch.
- 11 Felon's flight
- 17 Eggy quaff
- 19 Triathlon segment
- 22 Secular
- 23 Razor sharpener
- 25 Algerian port
- 26 During
- 27 Red planet
- 28 Mrs. Dithers of "Blondie"
- 29 African antelope
- 30 "Hud" actress Patricia
- 31 Faxed
- 35 Equine homes
- 38 Butterflies
- 40 Language suffix
- 42 High school subj.
- 45 Declare
- 47 "The Lion King" lion
- 48 Intel product
- 49 Visibility hindrance
- 50 Fire
- 51 Flamenco cheer
- 52 At once
- 53 — -de-France
- 54 Jungfrau, for one

DOWN

- 1 Boot camp VIPs
- 2 Section
- 3 Water, in Mexico
- 4 Hearts, slangily
- 5 Big fuss
- 6 Calendar abbr.
- 7 Advertise
- 8 Get cozy (with)
- 9 Blunder

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— King Crossword —

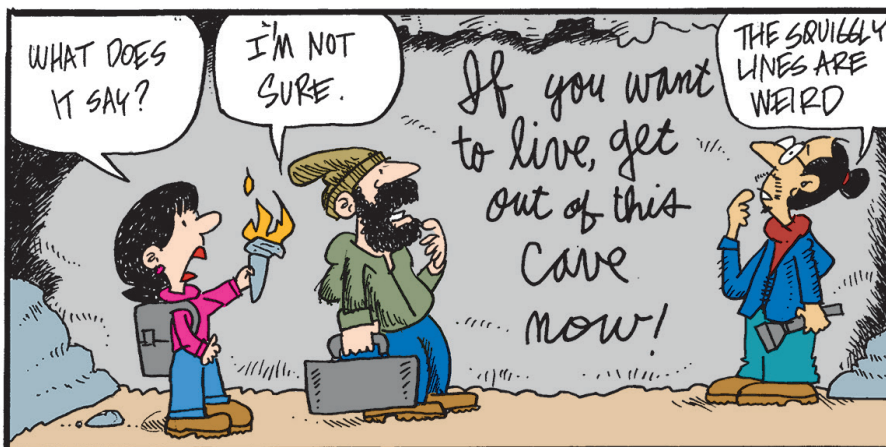
Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

S	P	A		T	A	M	P		C	E	L	L	
G	A	G		I	D	O	L		U	R	S	A	
T	R	U		C	O	N	U	N	D	R	U	M	
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			E	E	L	S			G	L	O	A	M
C	O	N	G	R	A	T	S		E	R	M	A	
O	R	E		S	I	R	E	S		A	I	R	
R	Y	A	N		C	O	N	T	E	N	D	S	
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			R	C	A				B	E	N	C	H
C	O	N	V	I	V	I	A	L		A	H	A	
A	L	O	E		E	L	L	E		L	I	Z	
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Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

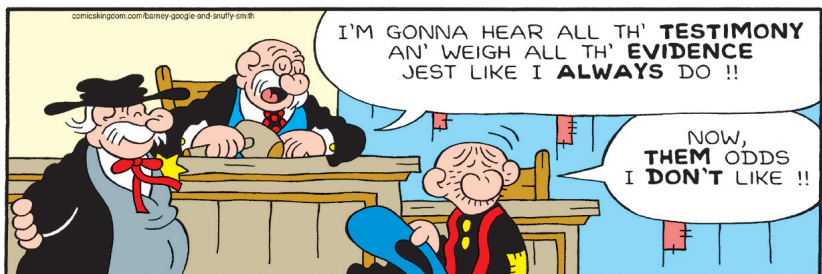
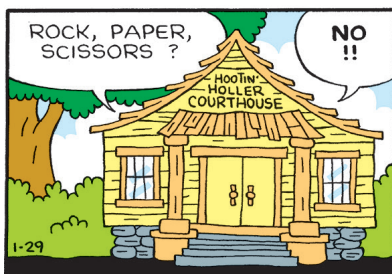
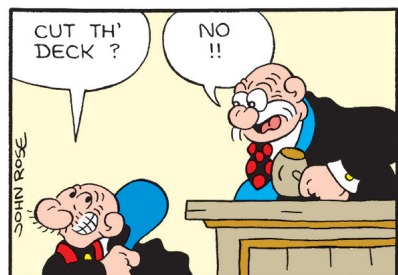
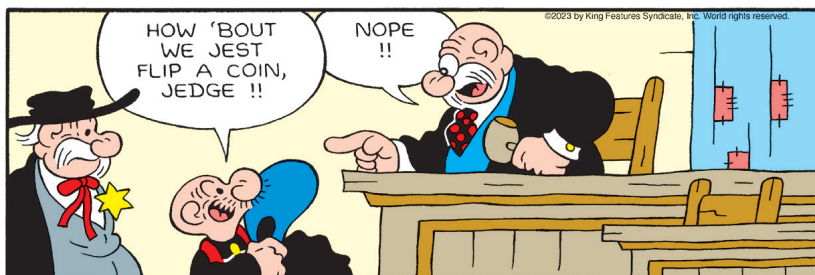
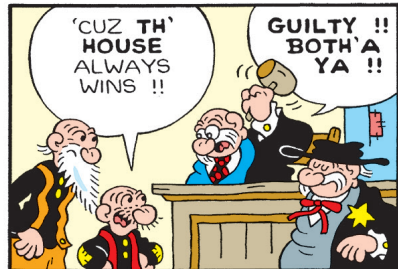
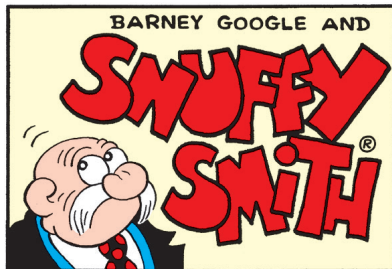
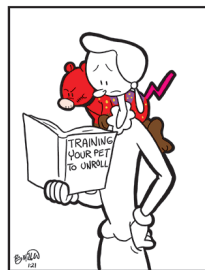
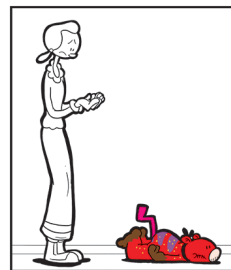
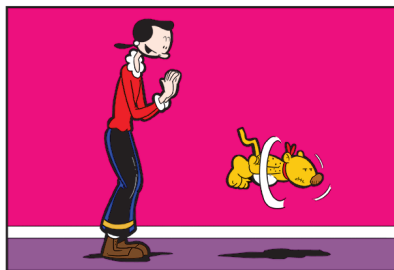
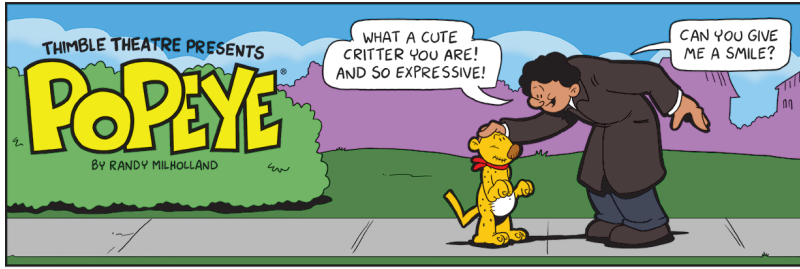


BECAUSE OF THEIR INABILITY TO DECIPHER CURSIVE HANDWRITING, GEN Z EXPLORERS LIVE IN CONSTANT DANGER

KOPERVAS

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HAL FOSTER'S **Prince Valiant** BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

VAL AND GAWAIN, BACK IN CASTLE GRUNYARD AND UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF THE DESPOT GOVERNOR SIR ROGER, HAVE SIGNALLED RHODA RED HOOD THAT ALL GOES WELL AT THEIR END. AND SO SHE AND HER REBELS PLAN TO INFILTRATE ROGER'S ARCHERY TOURNAMENT...



...WHILE, IN HIS STRONGHOLD, SIR ROGER OVERSEES PREPARATIONS FOR THE TOURNAYMENT ITSELF. MUCH PRIDE AND VANITY RIDE ON THE SUCCESS OF THIS COMPETITION, AND LOCKBRAMBLE'S STEWARD MEANS TO ENSURE THAT IT ALL REFLECTS ON HIM.



AS THE DAY APPROACHES, A STEADY PROCESSION OF GENTRY AND FREE MEN FROM NEIGHBORING FIEFDOMS POURS INTO LOCKBRAMBLE. VAL AND GAWAIN POSITION THEMSELVES TO AWAIT ONE IN PARTICULAR...

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...ALWAYS MINDFUL THAT THEY ARE WATCHED BY ROGER'S SUSPICIOUS GUARD. FINALLY, THEIR CHAMPION, THE ARCHER THEY WILL SPONSOR, TEETERS UP THE ROAD - WEARING THE PELT OF A RED FOX.

NEXT: Quarters too close

11/25/12 3955

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

LAST NIGHT I ATE YEAST AND DRANK SHOE POLISH.

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WHY DID YOU DO THAT??

SO I COULD RISE AND SHINE THIS MORNING.

PICKERING

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Daily Step Counting

How many daily steps do we really need for optimum health? Ten thousand steps seems to be the gold standard in most of what we read to keep diabetes and high blood pressure (as well as several other conditions) at bay. And how do we keep track of all our steps?

Before you decide on a target number of steps per day, call your medical provider and ask how many you should be doing. You might learn that with an otherwise active, healthy life, several thousand steps per day might be enough, rather than the whole 10,000.

How to count those steps is the tricky part. I have several of those little clip-on step counters, and unfortunately, they all come up with different results. I have no way of knowing which are accurate.

There is a popular tracker called Fitbit, a fancy step counter that looks like a watch. Each model has pros and cons, per thousands of online reviews. Some do more than just count steps; they also keep tabs on your location with GPS, your pace and how far you've walked, your sleep profile, your heart rate and your stress level. They can be pricey, especially if you want to unlock all the features and sign up for Fitbit Premium to see all your data on the dashboard.

Your best bet is to Google "best step counters for seniors" and wade through a few dozen choices. You'll find Apple Watch, 3DTriSport Walking 3D Pedometer, Garmin Vivofit 4 activity tracker and so many more. If you have a subscription to Consumer Reports, check their reviews on activity trackers for seniors.

Before you opt for an expensive tracker, visit a store where they are sold and try them out. A watch font might be too tiny to read, or a clip-on might not stay clipped on.

Bonus: Several Medicare Advantage plans provide either free or reduced-cost Fitbit devices.

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1. What American tennis player beat France's Nicolas Mahut in the longest match ever played -- lasting 11 hours and five minutes and played over three days -- at Wimbledon in 2010?

2. What award, presented annually since 2009, honors the male or female soccer player judged to have scored the most "aesthetically significant" goal?

3. What American track and field athlete -- who appeared on Season 17 of the CBS reality series "Survivor" -- was stripped of her 2004 Athens Summer Olympics gold medal after admitting to using anabolic steroids?

4. Name the Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher -- regarded as the best knuckleballer in Major League Baseball history -- who played 24 seasons from 1964-87.

5. In April 2001, Australia defeated what national soccer team 31-0 in a FIFA World Cup qualifying match?

6. In the 1973 season, what NFL team activated offensive coordinator Zeke Bratkowski to be the emergency backup quarterback (though he did not play)?

7. Who did boxer Chuck "The Bayonne Bleeder" Wepner fight in a boxing/wrestling match at Shea Stadium in 1976?



by Ryan A. Berenz

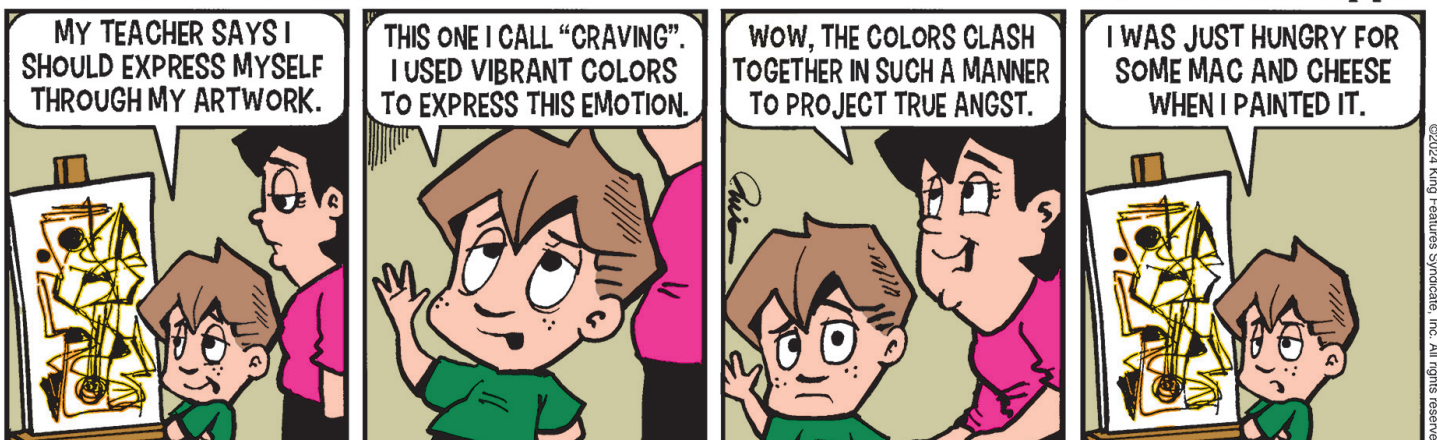
Answers

1. John Isner.
2. The FIFA Puskas Award.
3. Crystal Cox.
4. Phil Niekro.
5. American Samoa.
6. The Chicago Bears.
7. Andre the Giant.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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Does Pet Insurance Extend to Pet Sitters?

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I left my dog Shep in the care of a pet sitter for a week while I was away on business. The sitter texted me that Shep cut his paw during a walk in the nearby woods, and they took him to my veterinarian for care. Shep is doing fine now. I have pet insurance, but I don't think it's my responsibility to pay for this. The injury occurred while the sitter was walking him. The sitter says that injury and illness are my responsibility to cover. Who should pay? -- Bill in Chicago

DEAR BILL: Did the sitter give any details of how Shep was injured? The circumstances are important. For example, if Shep was on-leash and stepped on an unexpected piece of debris in the path, that's different than if Shep was let off-leash and was running free in the woods. But, if you normally let him off-leash in the woods and instructed the sitter that it was OK to do that, then that's another consideration.

Talk more with the sitter to get more details. In the meantime, pay the vet and submit the reimbursement claim to the pet insurance company.

Professional sitters routinely include a statement in their contract with clients that any illness or injury is the responsibility of the client. This protects them from financial loss if something does happen. However, if they are accused of deliberately neglecting or abusing a pet in their care, that statement won't protect them.

On this note, I'll add that sitters should purchase liability insurance that specifically covers them and their business in case a claim is made against them -- or worse, if they're injured while caring for someone else's pet.

Pet sitters and owners, what's your take on this situation? Tell me at ask@pawscorner.com.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* Ever wonder why your kitty tries to play or even fight with its own reflection in a mirror? Animal specialists believe felines don't realize that their image isn't another animal because it has no scent.

* And speaking of scent, the Odeuropa research project has created an online encyclopedia dedicated to the history of smells.

* Vomitoriums in ancient Rome weren't actually spaces for gastronomic feasting and purging, but an architectural feature in stadiums that allowed for more efficient crowd exits.

* Null Island gets its curious moniker from its coordinates: zero degrees latitude and zero degrees longitude. It also doesn't exist, but is the result of a common error in GIS data.

* ChatGPT can easily be convinced it's wrong, even when it's right.

* Irving Berlin dedicated all royalties from "God Bless America" to a fund of the same name, specifically for the benefit of such youth organizations as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts in New York City. To date, more than \$10 million has been raised.

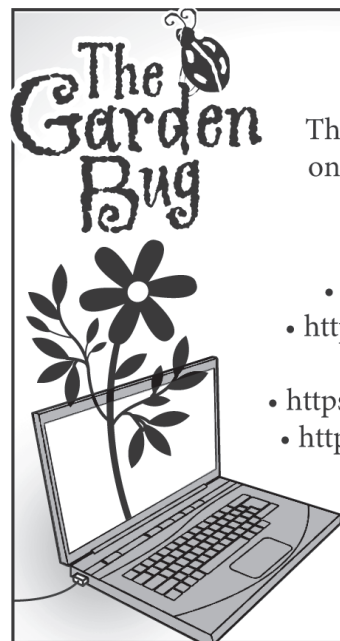
* Researchers at Dublin City University found that soccer goalkeepers process both visual and auditory cues more efficiently than other players, as well as non-players, which could be the clue to their speedy reactions during games.

* By 2027, Sweden plans to boast a city made entirely of wood.

* The last U.S. conviction for blasphemy went to atheist activist Charles Lee Smith in 1928, after he rented a Little Rock, Arkansas, storefront and put a sign in the window reading: "Evolution Is True. The Bible's a Lie. God's a Ghost." Because, as an atheist, he couldn't swear the court's usual oath to tell the truth, he also couldn't testify in his own defense.

Thought for the Day: "If people are doubting how far you can go, go so far that you can't hear them anymore." --Michele Ruiz

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Online gardening classes

The winter months are a good time to take some online gardening classes. Here are a few sources:

- garentutor.com
- MasterClass.com
- <https://www.udemy.com/topic/gardening>
- <https://www.wildabundance.net/online-classes/online-gardening-school>
- <https://www.skillshare.com/en/browse/gardening>
- <https://www.classcentral.com/subject/gardening>
- <https://organicgardeningacademy.com>
- <https://www.learnndirect.com/category/gardening>

- Brenda Weaver



by Freddy Groves

Whom to trust?

Wouldn't you get a sick feeling in the pit of your stomach if you wondered whether your treatment nurse had obtained a fake diploma?

Three owners of nursing schools in two states were found guilty, as well as several of their pals (for a total of 27 scammers), for a scheme that involved selling fake nursing diplomas they apparently got from two formerly genuine schools. Students who wanted to take the national nursing board exam could purchase from the scammers diplomas that would allow them

to take the tests. The genuine schools were eventually closed because of their test failure rate. However, some applicants managed to pass the exam and used the fake documents to get jobs everywhere in the country. Over 7,000 fake diplomas were handed out.

What happens now, one wonders? Assuming there were records, will anyone go after any of the faux nurses and at least let their new employers (such as the Department of Veterans Affairs) know about the fake diplomas?

In another case, a man was sent to prison (not for long enough) for distributing over \$16 million in adulterated HIV drugs, as well as other medications, all around the country. The scammer and his pals actually set up businesses in multiple states from which they sold the corrupted drugs to wholesale drug suppliers, which then sold them to pharmacies, ensuring that the drugs were spread far and wide. The criminals had on hand enough drugs to net them at least \$25 million when sold.

In one gut-wrenching case, two nurses lied to investigators after a patient died at a VA hospital. They claimed they hadn't "paused" the patient's medication. They actually had. The patient died.

Curiously, one nurse was given only three months in the federal slammer, and the other one got six months. Even more curious, the judge gave them both until January to turn themselves in at the prison, noting the "circumstances of the offense." What on earth does that mean?

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Wishing Well®

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

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. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What is the last name of Ken, who was Barbie's boyfriend?
2. TELEVISION: In the sitcom "The Office," the company is in which U.S. city?
3. GEOGRAPHY: In which country is The Matterhorn located?
4. MUSIC: Which 1990s group was the singer Beyonce a part of?
5. U.S. STATES: In which state is Monument Valley located?
6. LITERATURE: In which children's book do the characters Tweedledee and Tweedledum appear?
7. MATH: In Roman numerals, what is XLVIII divided by XII?
8. MEDICAL: What is a common name for polythelia?
9. CHEMISTRY: How many elements are listed on the Periodic Table?
10. MOVIES: What is the year of the Olympics in the movie "Chariots of Fire"?

Answers

1. His full name is Kenneth Sean Carson.
2. Scranton, Pennsylvania.
3. Switzerland.
4. Destiny's Child.
5. Arizona.
6. "Through the Looking-Glass."
7. IV (Four).
8. Having an extra nipple, which affects about 1%-5% of the population.
9. 118.
10. 1924.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Freedom to Be Healthy: A Story of Heroism

In South Dakota, we value living a healthy life, no matter where you live. Every South Dakotan should have the Freedom to live where they want – but they shouldn't have to choose between a rural way of life and good health outcomes.

In our rural communities, emergency responders are sometimes the only local healthcare providers. Growing up on a rural farm, we always knew that emergency services were our closest healthcare lifeline. And when my dad had a tragic accident, EMS personnel showed up. Unfortunately, they weren't able to save him – but I saw firsthand how hard they work, how much they care, and how dedicated they are to serving the people of South Dakota.

My Department of Health has been working to advance EMS access across our state to ensure that every South Dakotan has the Freedom to Be Healthy. We put brand new state-of-the-art LIFEPAK 15s in the back of ambulances, we worked with Indian Health Services to get these devices to ambulance crews in Eagle Butte and Pine Ridge, and we just completed a comprehensive analysis of the current state of EMS in South Dakota to learn how we can best continue to expand these services.

South Dakota was the first state in the nation to implement Telemedicine in Motion. We use telemedicine to connect physicians, nurses, and paramedics with EMS personnel in the field. Nearly 60 ambulance services throughout the state have installed Telemedicine in Motion – and it is saving lives.

One of the first major calls to Telemedicine in Motion came last December. Jim Lutter, rancher from Gann Valley, was out caring for his buffalo when he was attacked by one of his animals. His injuries were life threatening – dozens of injuries from the horns and hooves of the animal, multiple broken ribs, lungs filling with blood, broken neck, and more.

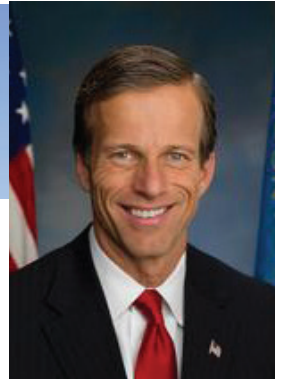
After pulling himself into a front-loader and driving back home for help, Jim was picked up by the local EMS agency who connected with the Avel team via telemedicine. A board-certified physician and nurses were on camera to help stabilize the rancher, coordinate with the receiving hospital, and activate the care flight team to expedite the transfer of the patient to Sioux Falls.

Once the EMS crew arrived at the hospital, Avel maintained their support of the patient since Avel Emergency was installed in the hospital's ER. After Jim recovered, he shared feedback with the care team, saying, "they held my life in their hands and gave it back to me, something that I will be forever grateful for."

It was my privilege to honor Ed Koenechne, Dr. Katie DeJong, and nurse Casie Hunter, the team that saved Jim's life, with the Governor's Award for Heroism during my State of the State Address. Ed is a volunteer with Kimball Ambulance Services, and Dr. Katie and nurse Casie are on the Avel team. Together, thanks to telemedicine, they took incredible action to save Jim's life.

I am proud that folks who choose to live in remote parts of the state can sleep a little easier at night thanks to our EMS expansion efforts like Telemedicine in Motion. Thank you to all of our healthcare providers for giving every South Dakotan the Freedom to Be Healthy.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Three Years In, Are We Better Off?

As he begins his fourth year in office, President Biden's approval rating has fallen to a new low. It's not hard to figure out why. Inflation, spurred by Democrats' excessive government spending, has strained working families' budgets. The southern border has been in a state of crisis since the president rolled back border security policies at the beginning of his administration. And we have seen the consequences of the United States failing to demonstrate strength on the world stage as it has grown increasingly unstable. To put it simply, the Biden administration has harmed our economy, our national security, and our standing in the world.

At the beginning of his term, President Biden and Democrats passed a reckless \$1.9 trillion spending bill disguised as COVID relief despite warnings that it could cause inflation. Since that bill passed, Americans have faced higher prices for just about everything from groceries to gas, and it now costs a typical family \$11,400 more per year just to maintain the standard of living they enjoyed three years ago.

Paying more and getting less has become the hallmark of the Biden economy. And it's not just higher bills. The higher interest rates that the Federal Reserve was forced to put in place to help rein in the Biden inflation crisis has meant more expensive mortgages. Combined with higher home prices, this has eroded prospective homebuyers' purchasing power and put the American dream of owning your own home increasingly out of reach for a lot of hardworking Americans.

For three years now, the crisis at our southern border has grown worse and worse. Customs and Border Protection has had more than 7 million encounters with illegal immigrants trying to cross the border since the president took office. Millions have been let into the country under our broken and overwhelmed asylum and parole systems. And an alarming number of individuals on the terrorist watch list, criminals, and gang members have been stopped at the border. Yet the president still refuses to acknowledge there is a crisis.

Before President Biden took office, his team was warned of the possibility of a migrant surge should he roll back the prior administration's policies. Nevertheless, the president immediately went about weakening our border security, and the surge came. And while I'm glad that after three years of chaos, the president has finally – finally – agreed to work with Republicans on some policies to actually secure the border, this crisis was avoidable.

Highlighted by the disastrous and tragic withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Biden administration has also failed to demonstrate American strength abroad. Strong national defense often deters threats to the United States from materializing in the first place. In a dangerous world like ours, we can't afford for defense policy to be divorced from reality. Yet under President Biden, we have seen multiple conflicts erupt, some directly involving U.S. forces, all while adversaries like China ramp up their military investment.

Rest assured, my Republican colleagues and I are doing all we can to fight the disastrous policies that are creating these crises and mitigate the damage from the Biden administration. We're working to rein in the spending impulses of the president and his Democrat allies in Congress. We're working on policies that will substantially improve border security. And we've worked to secure steady investments in our defense capabilities. But we can only do so much without presidential leadership, and it's long past time for the president to face reality and start working with us to get this country back on track.

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



Prioritizing Safety

BIG Update

Last month, the Colorado Supreme Court removed former President Donald Trump from their ballot, citing the 14th Amendment of the Constitution and Trump's actions on January 6, 2021. Section 3 of the 14th Amendment bars anyone from office who took an oath to uphold the Constitution but "engaged" in "insurrection or rebellion" against the Constitution. This week, I joined 136 House Republicans and 42 Senate Republicans to file an amicus brief opposing Donald Trump's removal from ballots. President Trump has not been convicted of or charged with insurrection. Using the 14th Amendment to kick him off the ballot is a massive overreach by Colorado's highest court.

BIG Idea

This week, I voted to pass two bills to support and educate expectant mothers and provide resources to mothers and families in need.

The Pregnant Students' Rights Act provides necessary support for pregnant students on our college campuses. Women should never feel pressured to make a choice between continuing their education or carrying their child to full term.

The Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act supports women and families by protecting a state's right to provide dollars to pregnancy resource centers through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

My support for pro-life policies earned me an A+ rating on Susan B. Anthony's Pro-Life Scorecard for my work in 2023. I am proud to defend unborn children's right to life.

BIG News

Two of my bills to strengthen Second Amendment rights passed the House Judiciary Committee on Thursday.

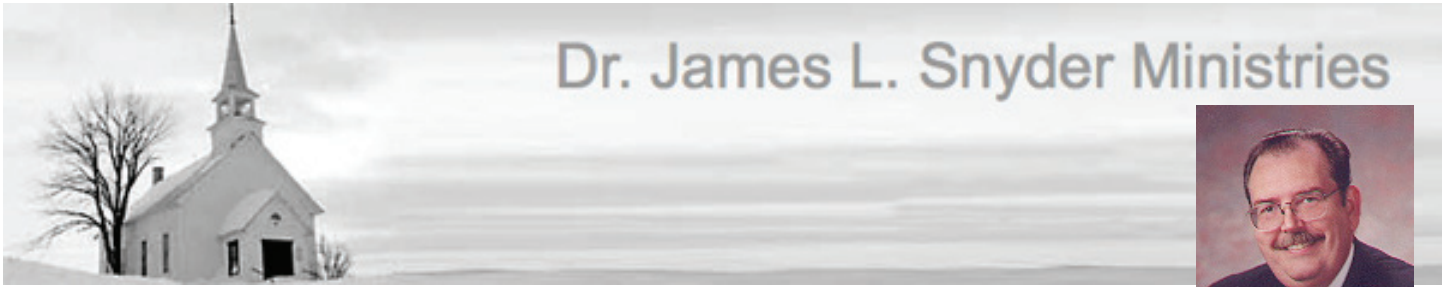
My bill, the Tribal Firearm Access Act, would allow tribal members to use their legally issued tribal I.D. as a valid form of identification to purchase a gun. Under current law, you can use a passport from a foreign government such as Russia, but a tribal I.D. is not on the list of approved identification documents. My bill would ensure tribal members can exercise their Second Amendment rights.

Another barrier to obtaining a firearm is the lack of a permanent street address for a home. For many RVers, servicemembers, and their families who lack a permanent street address, it's difficult to meet that requirement, even if they are law-abiding citizens. My Traveler's Gun Rights Act would allow individuals to list a P.O. Box as their primary mailing address.

Committee passage is just one step in the process of a bill becoming law, so I'll keep working to ensure law-abiding South Dakotans can exercise their rights.

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I'm Not Diabetic But I Am A Sweet Guy



Lately, I've been very tired, which has nothing at all to do with my age. Rather, it has everything to do with all these spam calls I get every day.

It seems most spam calls come during lunchtime when I'm eating. How dare they?

I don't know who created this idea of spam calls, but I would like five minutes alone with them. If you know what I mean.

For me, it began with my expired car warranty. I would get calls daily telling me that my car warranty had expired and that I could remedy that situation by signing up with their warranty program. They have everything I need, so they say. What I really need is an Apple Fritter. Nobody's ever offered me that.

One thing they did not have was my fist in their nose. But that's another story.

Finally, I responded to their calls by telling them that I had a 1915 Ford Model T, with only 896,000 miles on it. I had so many clicks following this that I couldn't count them. Thanks Henry Ford.

The in-person calls are annoying, but it is the recorded calls that I just don't like.

I've been getting recorded calls saying that two years ago I had an accident and they would be glad to help me get the money I deserve. If I had an accident two years ago, I must've been asleep at the wheel.

Companies that call me with a recorded message will never get my business.

Then there are those Medicare calls wanting to upgrade my coverage at no cost to me.

One of the first things they want to know is my age.

I get so sick and tired of this that after a while I came up with my story.

"So, how old are you sir?"

My response, "Well, I tell you, that is a difficult answer because every year my age changes, and I get confused, and I can't keep up with my actual age."

There's a chuckle on the other end of the line and the person says, "So, when is your birthday?"

Again, my response is, "Well, my birthday is the day I celebrate being born."

I sense a little frustration on the other line, and then they say, "Tell me what day your birthday is on."

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"Well, one year it's on a Tuesday, and the next year it's on a Thursday, and then it's on a Saturday, and boy, I can't keep up with it."

Finally, I hear what I've been waiting for: a click from the other end of the line.

I don't think my age or birthday is anybody's business but mine. If I want somebody to know that information, I'll call them myself. When somebody I don't know calls me and asks for personal information, I will not cooperate. If these spam callers act foolish, I will reciprocate and act foolish to them. I'm a good actor, so says The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

I'm often confused when someone calls me and wants me to tell them when they can deliver some medical equipment that will not cost me anything. It will be absolutely free.

Of course, if I want some medical equipment, I'm going to go through my doctor. After all, that's why I pay him all that money.

I would like to know how much money these spammers make doing the kind of job they do. They must be making money, or they wouldn't always be calling. Where do they get the money, and who in the world would be foolish enough to give them personal information?

One person asked for my Social Security number, so I gave him 123-45-6789. That has to be somebody's security number, but it certainly isn't mine.

Then the latest thing is that some spammer calls me and tells me that they are sending me some medical equipment to help me with my diabetes. And, (drumroll) it won't cost me anything. I know when somebody says it's not costing me anything, it will definitely cost me something.

"So, sir," the spammer said, "do you have diabetes?"

Why in the world do they call me thinking I have diabetes? Where are they getting that information? I know they haven't talked to my doctor about it.

Then I had an idea. The next time a spammer called me and asked if I had diabetes, I said, "I'm not diabetic, but I am a sweet guy."

After doing that several times, one person angrily said, "Are you hitting on me?"

"No," I said, "but I sure would like to hit you."

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage often tells me not to answer any of those calls. I explain to her I need to have fun and make it hard on some of these scammers. After all, don't you get what you give?

There was a pause in those annoying calls and I had an opportunity to think about a Bible verse.

David said in Psalm 18:3, "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies."

My thought was, no call from me could ever annoy God. He is waiting for me to call upon him. Whenever I call upon God, He is anxious to respond to my need. God doesn't look on me as a spammer, but a claimer of His amazing grace.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: I've been hearing a lot of negative things about electric vehicles lately. Is the bloom off the rose?
-- H.J. Columbia, MD

It has been a tough run for electric vehicles (EVs) in recent months, with lots of bad press about everything from shorter ranges in cold weather to consumer frustration with getting stranded to the huge carbon footprint of the newfangled cars when factoring in life cycle assessments that include manufacturing. Whether or not these problems are enough to reduce sales in 2024 for the first time in the modern history of EVs is anybody's guess.

Perhaps EV's biggest Achilles heel is the precious metal mining involved. According to Hesham Bakhbakhi, an expert in the central heating and renewable energy industry, the manufacture of a single Tesla Model Y battery requires moving some 250 tons of soil to obtain the needed metals (lithium, nickel, manganese and cobalt), not counting hundreds more pounds of aluminum, steel, graphite and plastic that are needed. "The Caterpillar 994A is used for earthmoving to obtain the essential minerals. It consumes 264 gallons of diesel in 12 hours," says Bakhbakhi. "Finally, you get a 'zero emissions' car."

According to the International Energy Agency, manufacturing EVs requires six times the minerals and metals as an internal combustion engine vehicle. To add insult to injury, most of the minerals Tesla uses to manufacture these batteries come from China or Africa. "Much of the labor for extracting the minerals in Africa is done by children," adds Bakhbakhi. "If we buy electric cars, it's China who profits most."

A 2019 study by Ernst & Young found that it takes 65,000-80,000 miles of driving (5-7 years) to offset the carbon footprint of purchasing a new EV. But according to Carl Medlock of Seattle's Medlock and Sons, one of the few independent Tesla repair shops in the country, you'll have to replace that EV battery every eight years or so—at a cost of \$15,000-\$25,000! And you would be starting the whole carbon footprint cycle all over again. Indeed, many EVs that aren't even that old are heading for the scrapyard instead of onto a second life on the road. None of this is good news for consumers or the environment.

Perhaps this is why you can score a used EV surprisingly cheap. Rental car company Hertz announced recently that it is selling off some 20,000 EVs from its rental fleet with prices starting at only \$20,000 for a high-mileage but well-maintained Tesla Model 3. Hertz is also unloading Chevy Bolt EUVs starting at around \$22,500 and Tesla Model Ys for \$33,000. Hertz says it's time to sell these cars to better balance its supply and expected demand for EVs, but analysts point to the company needing to scrap lower-margin rentals and reduce damage expenses associated with EVs, which are much more expensive to fix after an accident or breakdown than their internal combustion counterparts. But one can't also wonder whether the battery replacement cost of high-mileage EVs has a bit to do with Hertz's big sell-off now.

Nevertheless, most environmentalists remain bullish on the transition to EVs and view these bumps in the road as opportunities to learn and improve so that someday in the not-to-distant future, we can get most of the gas-guzzling cars and trucks off the American road and power our EVs with clean, renewable energy.

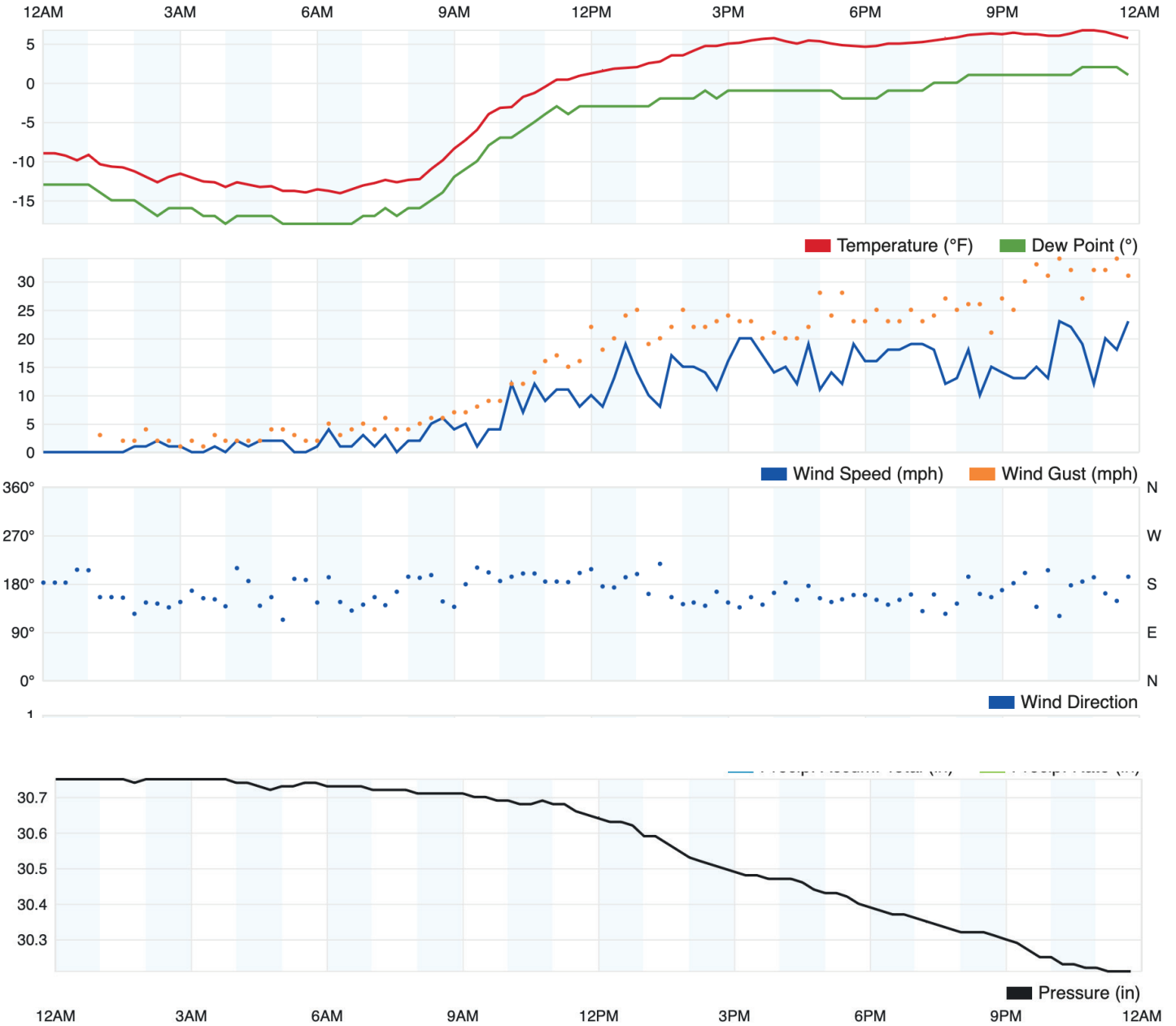


Does replacing an EV's battery for \$15-25k when it wears out in less than eight years jeopardize the emissions reduction gains we get from ditching the gas-guzzler? Credit: Pexels.com.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Jan 21	Jan 22	Jan 23	Jan 24	Jan 25	Jan 26	Jan 27
24°F	25°F	30°F	34°F	32°F	32°F	28°F
12°F	14°F	20°F	22°F	22°F	20°F	22°F
S	NNW	ENE	S	NNW	WSW	WNW
28 MPH	10 MPH	9 MPH	13 MPH	8 MPH	10 MPH	11 MPH

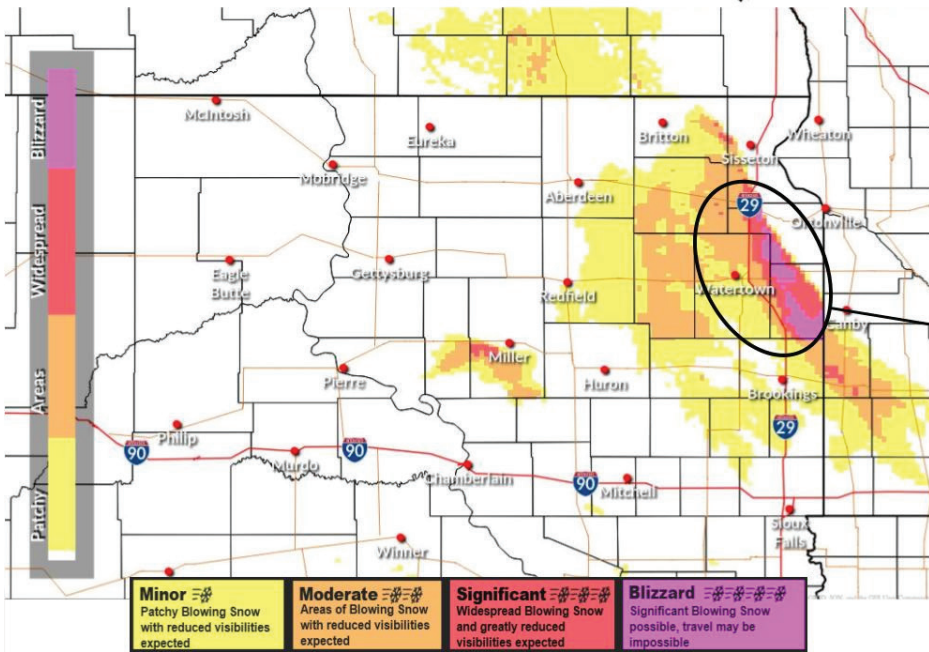


Strong Winds into Sunday Morning

January 20, 2024

1:21 PM

Blowing Snow Intensity midnight to noon Sunday



- Winds out of the south **gusting 35 to around 50 mph**
 - Strongest over the eastern slopes of the Prairie Coteau tonight into early Sunday morning (Sisseton, Summit, South Shore, and Clear Lake area)
- **A 60% chance of Blowing Snow** over and along the Prairie Coteau
 - Greatest concern for **widespread/significant blowing snow** in the circle
 - Will lead to reductions in visibility less than a 1/2 mile at times
- If you are traveling through this area, please take it slow and drive with caution
 - Especially on I-29
 - US HWY 12/US HWY 212

Gusty winds between 35-50mph expected with the strongest winds over the eastern slopes of the Prairie Coteau. This same area has a 60% chance of widespread/significant blowing snow. This will lead to reductions in visibility less than a 1/2 mile at times.

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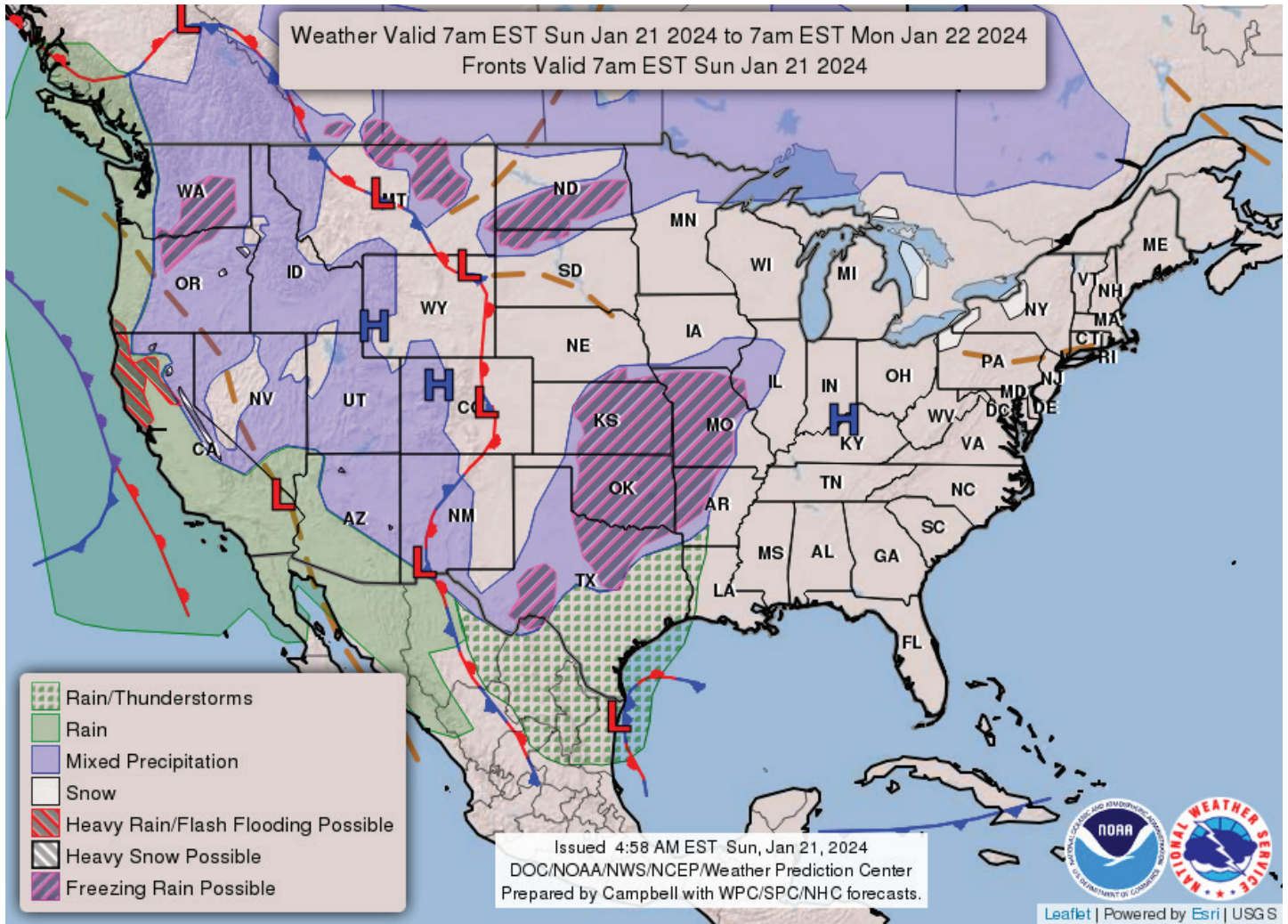
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 7 °F at 10:56 PM
Low Temp: -14 °F at 5:40 AM
Wind: 34 mph at 10:08 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 21 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 57 in 1942
Record Low: -31 in 1949
Average High: 24
Average Low: 1
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.39
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.39
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:24:33 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:01:52 am



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Today in Weather History

January 21, 1999: Widespread dense fog and freezing drizzle created treacherous driving conditions across northeast South Dakota from the evening of the 21st to around noon on the 22nd. The freezing drizzle ended in the early morning hours of the 22nd. As a result, slippery conditions developed, especially across Hamlin, Deuel, and Codington counties. Many vehicles slid into the ditch. A few accidents resulted in minor injuries. Numerous activities were canceled on the evening of the 21st, and many schools had delayed starts on the 22nd.

1863 - A severe coastal storm dropped heavy rain on the Fredericksburg area of Virginia. It disrupted a Union Army offensive in an ill famed "mud march." (David Ludlum)

1963: Up to 3" of snow falls on San Francisco, their heaviest since 1887.

1982 - The second of two major snowstorms to hit southern Minnesota came to an end. Minneapolis received 20 inches of snow in 24 hours to break the previous record of 17 inches in 24 hours established just a few days earlier. A record 38 inches of snow covered the ground following the two storms, with drifts ten feet high. (David Ludlum)

1985: Jacksonville, Florida, recorded its all-time record low of 7 degrees. Macon, Georgia, had its coldest day ever with a temperature of 6 degrees. It was the coldest Inauguration day in history as President Reagan is sworn in for a second term during cold and winds that resulted in wind chill readings of 30 degrees below zero. Because of the bitter cold temperatures, many outdoor Inauguration events were canceled, and President Reagan was sworn in the Capitol Rotunda.

1985 - Three days of snow squalls at Buffalo NY finally came to an end. The squalls, induced by relatively warm water in Lake Erie, produced 34 inches of snow at the International Airport, with up to 47 inches reported in the suburbs of Buffalo. The New York "blizzard of '85" left many counties disaster areas. (19th-21st) (Weather Channel) (Storm Data) President Reagan was sworn in for a second term in the coldest Inauguration Ceremony of record. Cold and wind resulted in wind chill readings as much as 30 degrees below zero. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - Low pressure over Minnesota produced high winds in the Northern Plains Region. Winds gusted to 66 mph at Rapid City SD, and reached 70 mph at Belle Fourche SD. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - High pressure over northern Nevada and low pressure off the coast of southern California combined to produce high winds in the southwestern U.S. Wind gusts in the San Francisco area reached 70 mph at Fremont. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Cold and snow prevailed in the northeastern U.S. Up to 13 inches of snow was reported between Woodford and Searsburg in Vermont. Montpelier VT reported a wind chill reading of 42 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across the state of Florida. Eight cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including West Palm Beach with a reading of 86 degrees. Rain in southern New England changed to freezing rain, then to sleet, and then to heavy snow during the late morning. Most of Massachusetts was blanketed with 6 to 10 inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1999: A major tornado outbreak occurred from the southwest into central and northeast Arkansas during the afternoon and evening. In the Little Rock Area, 30 tornadoes tracked across 15 counties. Homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed in Little Rock, Beebe, McRae, and areas farther north and east. Eight deaths resulted from the tornadoes, with 140 to 150 injuries also reported.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

MERCY. WHO NEEDS IT?

Alexander the Great was the first conqueror of the world. Even today, as we recognize leaders who have left their imprint and impact on the world, he is considered one of the most remarkable men of history.

Late in his life an artist was commissioned to paint a portrait of him. In discussing the content of the painting Alexander informed the artist that he was anxious to conceal the scar on his face.

To accommodate him, the artist painted the portrait of Alexander in a reflective mood with his head resting on his hand and a finger covering the scar. This act of insight and kindness by the artist worked perfectly, and the scar was hidden.

That is love in action - reflecting the mercy of one who honors the needs of others.

The Apostle Peter summed up the behavior that we, as Christians, are to show to others: "Most important of all," he wrote, "continue to show deep love for each other."

Love is always expressed in deeds of kindness that we offer to those in need. If we say that we have love for others yet do nothing to help them in their times of need, we do not reflect our appreciation for the deeds of kindness that God, through Christ, has shown us.

We can only show our gratitude for the grace of God in our lives by what we do to and for others. Words are not works, and thoughts do not bring change or help to those in need.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to show our gratitude to You for the love, grace, and mercy You shower on us each day. Give us hearts of compassion and hands that help others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8



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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.19.24

1 9 16 17 30 17

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$262,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.20.24

7 11 23 24 44 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,500,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.20.24

9 10 18 23 40 16

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 45 Mins 3 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.20.24

6 7 11 27 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$27,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.20.24

13 26 30 40 50 13

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.20.24

16 31 34 47 65 10

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$133,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli 56, Clark-Willow Lake 24
Belle Fourche 55, Bowman County, N.D. 50
Bennett County 70, Colome 28
Beresford 63, Chester 55
Brandon Valley 56, Aberdeen Central 31
Britton-Hecla 57, Waverly-South Shore 33
Crow Creek Tribal School 58, Todd County 55
DeSmet 64, Lower Brule 58
Flandreau 66, Parker 21
Groton 57, Great Plains Lutheran 43
Hot Springs 49, Lead-Deadwood 26
Huron 50, Sioux Falls Jefferson 48, OT
Langford 48, North Central 31
Leola-Frederick High School 59, South Border, N.D. 31
Miller 46, McLaughlin 43
Oelrichs 82, Crazy Horse 17
Potter County 44, Wolsey-Wessington 31
Rapid City Central 50, Watertown 46
Rapid City Stevens 59, Brookings 46
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 59, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 21
St. Thomas More 45, Douglas 28
Standing Rock, N.D. 57, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 40
Wall 72, Custer 47
Blizzard Buster Classic=
Dakota Valley 66, Andes Central-Dakota Christian 50
Elk Point-Jefferson 45, Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 35
Florence-Henry 45, Vermillion 31
Freeman 58, White River 47
Gayville-Volin High School 52, Chamberlain 29
Lakota Tech 49, Alcester-Hudson 39
Menno 40, Scotland 34
Platte-Geddes 54, Irene-Wakonda 29
Viborg-Hurley 60, Freeman Academy-Marion 17
Dakota Valley Conference Classic=
Estelline-Hendricks 45, Luverne, Minn. 37
Dakota Vallley Conference Classic=
Arlington 50, Westbrook-Walnut Grove, Minn. 37
Castlewood 59, Pipestone, Minn. 51
Dell Rapids St Mary 56, Lac qui Parle Valley, Minn. 26
Deubrook 57, Canby, Minn. 26
Elkton-Lake Benton 46, Edgerton, Minn. 31
Hills-Beaver Creek, Minn. 46, Colman-Egan 40
Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 47, Aberdeen Christian 41

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Sisseton 84, Minneota, Minn. 39
DSU Shootout=
Crofton, Neb. 63, Hamlin 49
Hill City 54, Garretson 31
Mitchell 46, Harrisburg 44
Sioux Valley 68, Howard 53
Tri-Valley 57, Sergeant Bluff-Luton, Iowa 47
Panhandle Conference Tournament=
Championship=
Hay Springs, Neb. 52, Edgemont 44
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=
Omaha Nation, Neb. vs. Flandreau Indian, ppd.

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Bennett County 67, Colome 63
Bowman County, N.D. 88, Belle Fourche 34
Brandon Valley 61, Aberdeen Central 40
Chester 55, Beresford 51
Crow Creek Tribal School 53, Todd County 43
Custer 55, Wall 50
Flandreau 56, Parker 34
Garretson 68, Colman-Egan 65
Grant County/Mott-Regent, N.D. 52, Bison 36
Herreid-Selby 56, Strasburg, N.D. 53
Hot Springs 73, Lead-Deadwood 36
Huron 71, Sioux Falls Jefferson 55
Leola-Frederick High School 61, South Border, N.D. 47
McLaughlin 54, Miller 39
North Central 45, Langford 13
Rapid City Stevens 59, Brookings 38
Sioux Falls Christian 81, Vermillion 50
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 62, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 53
Watertown 50, Rapid City Central 38
Waverly-South Shore 52, Britton-Hecla 25
Dakota Vallley Conference Classic=
Canby, Minn. 80, Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 48
Deubrook 31, Minneota, Minn. 27
Lac qui Parle Valley, Minn. 66, Lower Brule 52
Luverne, Minn. 66, Estelline-Hendricks 42
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 52, Elkton-Lake Benton 47
DSU Shootout=
Florence-Henry 61, Alcester-Hudson 55
Hanson Classic=
DeSmet 57, St. Thomas More 45
Gregory 55, Ipswich 51
Hamlin 84, Dakota Valley 62
Hanson 66, Clark-Willow Lake 64
Howard 54, Winner 43
Sioux Valley 71, Rapid City Christian 65
Viborg 55, Castlewood 54

White River 63, Dell Rapids 49
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=
Aberdeen Christian vs. Sioux Falls Lutheran, ccd.
Omaha Nation, Neb. vs. Flandreau Indian, ccd.

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

North Korea stresses alignment with Russia against US and says Putin could visit at an early date

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Sunday that Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his willingness to visit the North at an unspecified “early date” as the countries continue to align in the face of their separate, intensifying confrontations with the United States.

The North Korean Foreign Ministry highlighted Putin’s intent for a visit following North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui’s meetings with Putin and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow last week. The ministry said in a statement published by state media that the two countries agreed to further strategic and tactical cooperation with Russia to establish a “new multi-polarized international order,” a reference to their efforts to build a united front against Washington.

Putin had already confirmed his willingness to visit the capital, Pyongyang, at a convenient time during his meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Russia’s Far East in September. One of the few world leaders openly supporting Putin’s war on Ukraine, Kim has been actively boosting the visibility of his ties with Russia in an attempt to break out of diplomatic isolation and strengthen his footing, as he navigates a deepening nuclear standoff with Washington, Seoul and Tokyo.

In a separate statement on Sunday, the North’s Foreign Ministry condemned the U.N. Security Council for calling an emergency meeting over the country’s latest ballistic test, which state media described as a new intermediate-range solid-fuel missile tipped with a hypersonic warhead. The ministry said the test-firing on Jan. 14 was among the country’s regular activities to improve its defense capabilities and that it didn’t pose a threat to its neighbors.

South Korea on Thursday urged the Security Council “to break the silence” over North Korea’s escalating missile tests and threats. Russia and China, both permanent members of the council, have blocked U.S.-led efforts to increase sanctions on North Korea over its recent weapons tests, underscoring a divide deepened over Russia’s war on Ukraine.

The alignment between Pyongyang and Moscow has raised international concerns about alleged arms cooperation, in which the North provides Russia with munitions to help prolong its fighting in Ukraine, possibly in exchange for badly needed economic aid and military assistance to help upgrade Kim’s forces. Both Pyongyang and Russia have denied accusations by Washington and Seoul about North Korean arms transfers to Russia.

North Korea’s Foreign Ministry, in comments published by state media, said Choe and the Russian officials in their meetings expressed a “strong will to further strengthen strategic and tactical cooperation in defending the core interests of the two countries and establishing a new multi-polarized international order.”

Russia expressed “deep thanks” to North Korea for its “full support” over its war on Ukraine, the North Korean ministry said. It said Choe and the Russian officials expressed “serious concern” over the United States’ expanding military cooperation with its Asian allies that they blamed for worsening tensions in the region and threatening North Korea’s sovereignty and security interests.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest point in years, after Kim in recent months used Russia’s invasion of Ukraine as a distraction to ramp up his weapons tests and military demonstrations. The United States, South Korea and Japan have responded by strengthening their combined military exercises, which Kim portrays as invasion rehearsals, and sharpening their deterrence plans built around nuclear-capable U.S. assets.

In the latest tit-for-tat, North Korea on Friday said it conducted a test of a purported nuclear-capable underwater attack drone in response to a combined naval exercise by the United States, South Korea and Japan last week, as it continued to blame its rivals for tensions in the region.

Choe's visit to Moscow came as Kim continues to use domestic political events to issue provocative threats of nuclear conflict.

At Pyongyang's rubber-stamp parliament last week, Kim declared that North Korea is abandoning its long-standing goal of a peaceful unification with war-divided rival South Korea and ordered the rewriting of the North's constitution to cement the South as its most hostile foreign adversary. He accused South Korea of acting as "top-class stooges" of the Americans and repeated a threat that he would use his nukes to annihilate the South if provoked.

Analysts say North Korea could be aiming to diminish South Korea's voice in the regional nuclear standoff and eventually force direct dealings with Washington as it looks to cement its status as a nuclear weapons state.

Palestinian death toll soars past 25,000 in Gaza with no end in sight to Israel-Hamas war

By NAJIB JOBAIN and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The Palestinian death toll in Gaza from over three months of war between Israel and the territory's Hamas rulers has soared past 25,000, the Gaza Health Ministry said Sunday.

At least 178 bodies were brought to Gaza's hospitals in 24 hours along with nearly 300 wounded people, according to Health Ministry spokesperson Ashraf al-Qidra.

Women and children are the main victims in the Israel-Hamas war, according to the United Nations.

The war began with Hamas' surprise attack into Israel on Oct. 7, in which Palestinian militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took around 250 hostage, including men, women and children.

Israel responded with a three-week air campaign and then a ground invasion into northern Gaza that flattened entire neighborhoods. Ground operations are now focused on the southern city of Khan Younis and built-up refugee camps in central Gaza dating back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation.

Some 85% of Gaza's population have fled their homes, with hundreds of thousands packing into U.N.-run shelters and tent camps in the southern part of the tiny coastal enclave. U.N. officials say a quarter of the population of 2.3 million is starving as only a trickle of humanitarian aid enters because of the fighting and Israeli restrictions.

Gaza's Health Ministry says a total of 25,105 Palestinians have been killed in the territory since Oct. 7, and another 62,681 have been wounded. Al-Qidra said many casualties remain buried under the rubble from Israeli strikes or in areas where medics cannot reach them.

The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its death toll but says around two-thirds of those killed were women and minors.

The Israeli military says it has killed around 9,000 militants, without providing evidence, and blames the high civilian death toll on Hamas because it fights in dense, residential neighborhoods.

The military says 195 of its soldiers have been killed since the start of the Gaza offensive.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to keep up the offensive until Hamas is dismantled and all the hostages are returned.

Nearly half of the captives were released during a weeklong cease-fire in November in exchange for the release of scores of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Israel says some 130 remain in captivity, but only around 100 are believed to still be alive.

A century after Lenin's death, the USSR's founder seems to be an afterthought in modern Russia

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

Not long after the 1924 death of the founder of the Soviet Union, a popular poet soothed and thrilled the grieving country with these words: "Lenin lived, Lenin lives, Lenin will live."

A century later, the once-omnipresent image of Vladimir Lenin is largely an afterthought in modern Russia, despite those famous lines by revolutionary writer Vladimir Mayakovsky.

The Red Square mausoleum where his embalmed corpse lies in an open sarcophagus is no longer a near-mandatory pilgrimage but a site of macabre kitsch, open only 15 hours a week. It draws far fewer visitors than the Moscow Zoo.

The goateed face with its intense glare that once seemed unavoidable still stares out from statues, but many of those have been the targets of pranksters and vandals. The one at St. Petersburg's Finland Station commemorating his return from exile was hit by a bomb that left a huge hole in his posterior. Many streets and localities that bore his name have been rechristened.

The ideology that Lenin championed and spread over a vast territory is something of a sideshow in modern Russia. The Communist Party, although the largest opposition grouping in parliament, holds only 16% of the seats, overwhelmed by President Vladimir Putin's political power-base, United Russia.

Lenin "turned out to be completely superfluous and unnecessary in modern Russia," historian Konstantin Morozov of the Russian Academy of Sciences told the AP.

Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov talks as if Lenin still was in charge: "100 years since the day when his big and kind heart stopped, the second century of Lenin's immortality begins," he said.

Putin himself appears inclined to keep Lenin at arm's length, even aiming some darts at him.

In a speech three days before the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Putin dismissed its sovereign status as an illegitimate holdover from Lenin's era, when it was a separate republic within the Soviet Union.

"As a result of Bolshevik policy, Soviet Ukraine arose, which even today can with good reason be called 'Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's Ukraine.' He is the author and the architect," Putin said.

In a speech a year earlier, Putin said that allowing Ukraine and other republics the nominal right to secede had planted "the most dangerous time bomb."

Whatever objections to those policies, Putin also is clearly aware of the emotional hold that Lenin retains for many Russians, and he does not support initiatives that arise periodically to remove the body from the mausoleum.

"I believe it should be left as it is, at least for as long as there are those, and there are quite a few people, who link their lives, their fates as well as certain achievements ... of the Soviet era with that," he said in 2019.

Such links may persist for decades. A 2022 opinion survey by state-run polling agency VTsIOM found that 29% of Russians believed Lenin's influence would fade so much that in 50 years he would be remembered only by historians. But that response was only 10 percentage points lower than one to the same question a decade earlier, suggesting Lenin remains important.

Lenin's hold on Russia's heart is still strong enough that three years ago, the Union of Russian Architects succumbed to a public outcry and canceled a competition soliciting suggestions for how the Red Square mausoleum could be repurposed. That competition did not even specifically call for the removal of Lenin's body.

Lenin died on Jan. 21, 1924, at age 53, severely weakened by three strokes. His widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya, wanted him to be buried in a conventional grave.

Lenin's close associates had feared his death for months. Artist Yuri Annenkov, summoned to do his portrait at the dacha where he was convalescing, said he had "the helpless, twisted, infantile smile of a man who had fallen into childhood."

Amid those concerns, Josef Stalin told a Politburo meeting of a proposal by "some comrades" to preserve Lenin's body for centuries, according to a history by Russian news agency Tass. The idea offended Leon

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Trotsky, Lenin's closest lieutenant, who likened it to the holy relics displayed by the Russian Orthodox Church — a staunch opponent of the Bolsheviks— that had "nothing in common with the science of Marxism."

But Stalin, once a divinity school student, understood the value of the secular analogue to a saint.

The weather may have tipped the scales. Temperatures were reportedly as low as minus 30 C (minus 22 F) when Lenin's body was displayed during a wake in Moscow, stalling decomposition and inspiring authorities to hastily build a small wooden mausoleum in Red Square and make further efforts to preserve the body.

A later version, a more modernist take on ancient stepped pyramids clad in somber deep red stone, opened in 1930. By that time, Trotsky had been forced into exile and Stalin was in full control, bolstered by a determination to portray himself as absolutely loyal to Lenin's ideals.

In the end, the cult of "Lenin After Lenin" may have worked against the Soviet Union rather than strengthening it by enforcing a rigid mindset, in the view of some historians.

"In many ways the tragedy of the USSR lay in the fact that all subsequent generations of leaders tried to rely on certain 'testaments of Lenin,'" Vladimir Rudakov, editor of the journal *Istoriik*, wrote in this month's issue.

The Mayakovsky poem that proclaimed Lenin's immortality was "a parting word, or a spell, or a curse," Rudakov said.

About 450,000 people file past Lenin's corpse per year, according to Tass, about a third of the number of Moscow Zoo visitors and a sharp contrast from the Soviet era when seemingly endless lines shuffled across Red Square.

The honor guards whose goose-stepping rotations fascinated visitors were removed from outside the mausoleum three decades ago. At the annual military parade through Red Square, the structure is blocked from view by a tribune where dignitaries watch the festivities.

Lenin is still there — just harder to see.

Christian McCaffrey's 2nd TD rallies the 49ers to 24-21 playoff win over Jordan Love and the Packers

By JOSH DUBOW AP Pro Football Writer

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) — Brock Purdy's throws were off-target all night. The San Francisco defense kept giving up big plays. There were even a couple of special teams blunders.

Just when it seemed like the top-seeded 49ers might be sent home in their first playoff game, they did something they hadn't managed to do all season: mount a late-game comeback.

Christian McCaffrey capped a game-winning, 69-yard drive by running for his second touchdown with 1:07 to play, and the 49ers held on to beat the Green Bay Packers 24-21 in a divisional-round thriller on Saturday night.

"We're built for those moments," McCaffrey said. "We didn't play well at all but still had a chance at the end. To go out there and execute is a sign of a high character team."

After spending all regular season as front-runners, the Niners (13-5) rallied behind Purdy and McCaffrey to reach their third straight NFC championship game. And they will host it this time after losing the past two on the road. San Francisco will play the winner of Sunday's game between Tampa Bay and Detroit next weekend for a spot in the Super Bowl.

Purdy went 6 for 7 for 47 yards on the decisive drive, converting a third down with a 10-yard pass to Brandon Aiyuk and throwing a 17-yarder to Chris Conley.

"Obviously it's four quarters for a reason, you know? So the way I started, it's like, 'Man, I've got to be better, got to play efficient football,'" Purdy said. "But when it comes down to it, with the season on the line, you've got to make it happen for your boys around you."

McCaffrey finished it off with his 6-yard run on third-and-short and the 49ers' defense held on from there, with Dre Greenlaw intercepting Jordan Love for the second time to seal San Francisco's fifth straight playoff win over Green Bay (10-9).

"We feel exhausted," linebacker Fred Warner said. "That took everything. It took everyone. We knew

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it'd be a close game. That's a heck of a team. They give us everything. This is the playoffs. We knew we had to find a way to win no matter what."

That last throw across his body was one of the few mistakes by Love, who had given the Packers the lead with two TD passes in the third quarter. But his first full season as the starter in place of Aaron Rodgers had a disappointing ending.

"It's tough," Love said. "Very tough. We had an opportunity to win that game and didn't capitalize on it. It's a tough way to end the season."

Purdy — who struggled with his accuracy early on a rainy night — threw for 252 yards and a touchdown, and McCaffrey rushed for 98 yards on 17 carries.

Love put the Niners in the unusual spot of playing from behind. Green Bay converted a third-and-15 when Ambry Thomas was called for a 41-yard pass interference penalty against Bo Melton. Love and Melton connected on the next play for a wide-open 19-yard touchdown aided by Tashaun Gipson slipping on the wet grass in coverage.

After McCaffrey put San Francisco back in the lead with a 39-yard TD run, Green Bay struck quickly thanks to a 73-yard kick return by All-Pro Keisean Nixon that he fumbled, only to have teammate Eric Wilson recover.

Four plays later, Love threw a 2-yard touchdown pass to Tyler Kraft and the Packers extended the lead to 21-14 on a 2-point conversion pass to Aaron Jones.

"It was the story of our whole team," 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan said. "There was times when we were all off."

The Niners were the first team to make the playoffs in 13 seasons without overcoming a second-half deficit to win a game.

They got a 52-yard field goal from Jake Moody on the first play of the fourth quarter to make it a four-point game, and it stayed there when rookie Anders Carlson missed a 41-yarder for Green Bay.

The Packers moved the ball easily in the first half, getting into the red zone on three straight drives to open the game. But they couldn't finishing any of them off, setting for two field goals and getting stopped on a fourth-and-1 sneak. They became the first team in 20 years to reach the red zone on their first three drives of a playoff game without getting a TD.

The Niners made them pay for that with Purdy hitting George Kittle on a 32-yard pass on the run for a TD that gave San Francisco the lead.

But San Francisco squandered another chance late in the half when Shanahan wasted time before settling for a 48-yard field goal attempt by Moody that was blocked by Colby Wooden to send the Niners into the half with a 7-6 lead.

Jones finished with 108 yards on 18 carries for the Packers, and Love was 21 of 34 for 194 yards for the Packers, who overcame a 2-5 start to the season to make it this far.

"For us to lose this game certainly stings and I'm sure it's going to sting for a long time," coach Matt LaFleur said. "But I was proud of the effort of our guys, our ability to weather some real adversity throughout the course of the season and stick together."

INJURIES

Packers: RT Zach Tom left in the third quarter to get checked for a head injury and didn't return.

49ers: WR Deebo Samuel injured his shoulder on the opening drive and missed most of the game.

A Hindu temple built atop a razed mosque in India is helping Modi boost his political standing

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Three decades after Hindu mobs tore down a historical mosque, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the consecration of a grand Hindu temple at the same site on Monday in a political move to boost his party ahead of a crucial national vote.

Experts say the temple, dedicated to Hinduism's most revered deity Lord Ram, will cement Modi's

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legacy — enduring but also contentious — as one of India's most consequential leaders, who has sought to transform the country from a secular democracy into an avowedly Hindu nation.

"Right from the beginning, Modi was driven by marking his permanency in history. He has ensured this with the Ram Temple," said Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay, an expert in Hindu nationalism and author of a book on Modi.

Many see the temple's opening as the beginning of the election campaign for Modi, an avowed nationalist who has been widely accused of espousing Hindu supremacy in an officially secular India. Modi's Hindu nationalist party is expected to once again exploit religion for political gain in the upcoming national elections in April or May and secure power for a third consecutive term.

Made into a national event by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, the temple's opening in Ayodhya — a small city in northern India that has been a historical flashpoint — is expected to resonate deeply with Hindu voters.

Many of Modi's supporters see him as responsible for restoring Hindu pride in India, where Muslims make up a little more than 14% of the population.

"What is being done in Ayodhya, the kind of scale at which it is being built at the moment is actually going to make it look like the Hindu Vatican, and that is what is going to be publicized," Mukhopadhyay said. "Modi is not going to lose a single opportunity to try to sell the accomplishment of having built a temple."

Built at an estimated cost of \$217 million, Ram Temple is central to Hindus who believe the Lord Ram was born at the exact spot where Mughal Muslims built Babri Mosque in the 16th century on top of temple ruins. The mosque was demolished by Hindu mobs in December 1992, sparking nationwide riots that killed more than 2,000 people, mostly Muslims. It set in motion events that redefined the politics of social identity in India and catapulted Modi's BJP from two parliamentary seats in the 1980s to its current political dominance.

In the early 1990s, then a little-known local leader in his native Gujarat state, Modi also helped organize public agitation that aimed to shore up support for the construction of what is now Ram Temple at the former Babri Mosque site.

Muslim groups waged a decadeslong court battle for the restoration of Babri Mosque. The dispute ended in 2019 when, in a controversial decision, India's Supreme Court called the mosque's destruction "an egregious violation of the rule of law," but granted the site to Hindus. The court granted Muslims a different plot of land in an isolated area.

That fraught history is still an open wound for many Muslims, and some say the temple is the biggest political testament yet to Hindu supremacy.

"There is a fear that this government and all the affiliates, they want to wipe out all traces of Muslim or Islamic civilization from the country," said Ziya Us Salam, author of the book "Being Muslim in Hindu India."

Indian Muslims have increasingly come under attack in recent years by Hindu nationalist groups, and at least three historical mosques in northern India are embroiled in court disputes due to claims made by Hindu nationalists who say they were built over temple ruins. Hindu nationalists have also filed numerous cases in Indian courts seeking ownership of hundreds of historic mosques.

"On the one side, they want to change names of all cities which have a Muslim-sounding name. On the other side, they want to get rid of virtually every mosque, and the courts are happy to accept petitions on whatever pretext," Salam said.

Rebuilding the temple at the disputed site has been part of BJP's election strategy for decades, but it was Modi — rising to power in 2014 on a wave of Hindu revivalism — who finally oversaw that promise after attending its groundbreaking ceremony in 2020.

In the lead-up to its opening, Modi asked people to celebrate across the country by lighting lamps at homes and in local shrines, saying the temple will be a symbol of "cultural, spiritual, and social unity." His government has also announced a half-day closure of all its offices Monday to allow employees participate in the celebrations. Modi has released postage stamps on Ram Temple, and live screenings of the ceremony are planned across the country.

In many cities and towns, saffron-colored flags, a symbol of Hindu nationalism, have become ubiquitous.

A number of other politicians, high profile movie stars, and industrialists are also expected to attend.

But the event will also be marked by some conspicuous absences.

Some opposition leaders are boycotting the ceremony, while denouncing it as a political gimmick and accusing the government of exploiting religion for political gain. Four key Hindu religious authorities have refused to go the opening, with two of them saying consecrating an unfinished temple goes against Hindu scriptures, and that Modi is not a religious leader and therefore not qualified to lead the ceremony.

Salam said Modi has erased a line between the state and the religion by making his faith a public exhibition that has energized his hardcore supporters.

"When was the last time he acted as a prime minister? There have been so many instances where he has just behaved either as a BJP leader or as a Hindutva mascot, seldom as the prime minister of India," Salam said.

'Access Hollywood' tape of Trump won't be shown to jury at defamation trial, lawyer says

By LARRY NEMEISTER NEW YORK

A lawyer for a writer who says Donald Trump sexually abused her in the 1990s and then defamed her while president in 2019 said Saturday that the infamous "Access Hollywood" tape and two women who accused Trump of abuse will not be put before a New York jury considering defamation damages.

The revelation by attorney Roberta Kaplan, who represents advice columnist E. Jean Carroll, means that the Republican front-runner in this year's presidential race could testify in Manhattan federal court as early as Monday, a day before the New Hampshire primary.

The jury is considering whether Trump owes more to Carroll than the \$5 million awarded to her last spring by another jury that concluded Trump sexually abused but did not rape Carroll in the dressing room of a luxury Manhattan department store in spring 1996 and then defamed her in October 2022.

Trump attended the trial for two of its first three days, only skipping it on Thursday, when he attended the funeral of his mother-in-law in Florida.

Kaplan said late Saturday in a letter to the judge that she would not show jurors the 2005 tape in which Trump is caught on a hot mic speaking disparagingly of women to keep the issues in the trial "focused."

For the same reason, she said she won't call two other Trump accusers as witnesses: Natasha Stoyneff and Jessica Leeds.

Both women testified at the trial that ended last May. Leeds, a former stockbroker, said Trump abruptly groped her against her will on an airline flight in the 1970s, while Stoyneff, a writer, said Trump forcibly kissed her against her will while she was interviewing him for a 2005 article.

Kaplan noted that Trump's lawyers had said he is entitled to testify concerning the "Access Hollywood" tape and the allegations of Stoyneff and Leeds, though he would not be if they were not introduced into the case by Carroll's attorneys.

The judge in the case has instructed the jury that it must accept the findings of the jury last year and thus the evidence has focused almost exclusively on what harm has been caused to Carroll by Trump's continuous claims that he never attacked her and doesn't know her and that she is lying.

Trump, 77, has denied her claims in the last week during campaign stops, on social media and at a news conference. And he continues to assert that Carroll, 80, made false claims against him to sell the 2019 memoir in which she first revealed the allegations publicly and for political reasons.

The judge has severely limited what Trump can testify about if he takes the witness stand, and Carroll's lawyers likely decided to limit the introduction of more evidence to prevent Trump from straying into subjects such as what he maintains are many false claims against him.

However, Kaplan said she does plan to show the jury statements Trump has made since her client finished testifying in the case on Thursday.

Kaplan said Trump said he plans to repeat his claims that he never attacked Carroll and doesn't know

her "a thousand times."

"Such statements," she wrote, "are of course relevant to the issue of punitive damages, as they illustrate that Defendant has no intention of ceasing his defamation campaign against Ms. Carroll, even in the face of judicial proceedings in which his liability for defaming her is settled."

A lawyer for Trump did not return a request for comment on Kaplan's letter Saturday night.

Air pollution and politics pose cross-border challenges in South Asia

By RIAZAT BUTT Associated Press

LAHORE, Pakistan (AP) — The air smells burnt in Lahore, a city in Pakistan's east that used to be famous for its gardens but has become infamous for its terrible air quality.

Toxic smog has sickened tens of thousands of people in recent months. Flights have been canceled. Artificial rain was deployed last December to battle smog, a national first. Nothing seems to be working.

Lahore is in an airshed, an area where pollutants from industry, transportation and other human activities get trapped because of local weather and topography so they cannot disperse easily. Airsheds also contribute to cross-border pollution. Under certain wind conditions, 30% of pollution in the Indian capital New Delhi can come from Pakistan's Punjab province, where Lahore is the capital. There are six major airsheds in South Asia, home to many of the world's worst polluted cities.

Experts are calling for greater cross-border cooperation among countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and India to address air pollution together rather than working in silos on a city-by-city basis. But it's a tall order when political relations in the region are fraught.

Ties between India and Pakistan are broken. Their interactions are riddled with animosity and suspicion. They have fought three wars, built up their armies and developed nuclear weapons. Travel restrictions and hostile bureaucracies largely keep people from crossing the border for leisure, study and work, although the countries make exceptions for religious pilgrimages.

"There's a recognition among the technical and scientific community that air pollution doesn't need a visa to travel across borders," said Pakistani analyst Abid Suleri, from the nonprofit Sustainable Development Policy Institute. The culprits and problems are the same on both sides of the India-Pakistan border, he said, so it makes no sense for one province to implement measures if a neighboring province across the border isn't adopting the same practices.

Regional and international forums offer opportunities for candid discussions about air pollution, even if governments aren't working together directly or publicly, Suleri said, adding that countries should treat air pollution as a year-round problem, rather than a seasonal one arriving with cold weather.

"Airshed management needs a regional plan," he said. "But 2024 is an election year in India and Pakistan, and government-to-government cooperation hasn't reached that level."

Pakistan is weeks away from voting in national parliamentary elections. So far, only the former foreign minister and political party leader Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has pledged heavy investment in climate adaptability, following record-breaking floods that killed more than 1,700 people.

In India, air pollution doesn't figure as a core issue that people would vote on, said Bhargav Krishna, a fellow at the New Delhi-based Sustainable Futures Collaborative think-tank. But the experience or impact of climate change could make people think about how they vote.

Krishna said that regional elections sometimes see air pollution-related promises. "It was a feature of every party's election manifesto in the New Delhi elections in 2020," he noted.

According to the World Bank, a regional airshed management policy would involve countries agreeing to set common air quality targets and measures that everyone can implement, meeting regularly to share their experiences and, if possible, setting common air quality standards.

The global body said almost 93% of Pakistanis are exposed to severe pollution levels. In India, it's 96% of the population. More than 1.5 billion people are exposed to high concentrations of air pollution in these two countries alone. It estimates around 220,000 deaths a year in Pakistan's Punjab can be attributed to causes related to bad air.

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Gray haze hangs pall-like over Punjab's homes, mosques, schools, streets and farmland. There are 6.7 million vehicles on Lahore's roads every day. Construction, emissions and waste are rife. There is scant visibility at major intersections after dark. Smog shrouds landmarks like the Mughal-era Badshahi Mosque.

The shopping website Daraz has reported a spike in searches for air purifiers and face masks since last October, especially in Punjab.

Pulmonologist Dr. Khawar Abbas Chaudhry laments the deterioration of Lahore, which he describes as a "once beautiful" city. The hospital where he works is part of the Bill Gates-backed Evercare Group that has hospitals in the region, including India and Bangladesh, and in East Africa.

Chaudhry says he has seen a 100% increase of patients sickened with respiratory illnesses this winter. He attributes this rise to air pollution.

There are forums within Evercare to discuss issues like air pollution, and he and colleagues, including those from India, talk about smog's health impact. But this dialogue is only happening within one institution.

"Countries, governments, departments need to be involved," said Chaudhry. "They need to meet regularly. Ultimately, people need to reach out and that could put some pressure on movers and shakers on both sides of the border."

Pratima Singh, a senior research scientist at Bengaluru-based Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy, has researched air pollution in India for over a decade.

She said South Asian countries could emulate the European Union model of collaboration to deal with pollution challenges, formalize new policies and share data and best practices.

After India launched its National Clean Air Programme in 2019, authorities quickly found it was crucial for cities to understand what was happening in surrounding areas -- and the boundary kept expanding. "Everyone started realizing that airshed management is essential if we want to actually solve the problem," Singh said.

The director of Punjab's Environment Protection Department, Syed Naseem Ur Rehman Shah, is proud of local achievements to fight air pollution. Emissions from industry and brick kilns are under control, farmers can soon buy subsidized machinery to end the menace of crop stubble burning, and there is a drive toward getting electric three-wheeled tuk-tuks, motorbikes and buses on the roads, he said.

Although things are getting better, Shah said it will take time.

He has gone to India to discuss climate change and said a regional body, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, provides opportunities for countries to talk about air pollution. But he acknowledges the absence of formal cooperation at a ministerial level with India.

A screen in a monitoring room, called the Smog Cell, showed Pakistan's Air Quality Index to be higher than China's that day. Shah said the province only exceeds World Health Organization-recommended levels for PM2.5 — fine particulate matter that can be inhaled. Everything else about the air quality is within parameters, he said.

His assessment is of little consolation to Pakistani poet and former ambassador Ata ul Haq Qasmi, who is in Evercare for respiratory issues exacerbated by air pollution. "If my friends aren't in hospital, they should be," he said. "You only have to step outside for it (the smog) to grab you."

Brutally cold weather reaching deep into lower United States

By ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Arctic weather brought more misery to much of the U.S. on Saturday, especially for people unaccustomed to such bitter cold in places like Memphis, Tennessee, where residents were urged to boil water and some had no water at all after freezing temperatures broke water mains across the city. Temperatures weren't expected to rise until after the weekend.

The bracing cold followed a week of storms blamed for at least 67 deaths around the U.S., many involving hypothermia or road accidents.

At the Four Way Grill in Memphis, owner Patrice Bates Thompson said the water problems have closed their soul food kitchen for days.

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"This is our staple, and this is what basically drives the force of my family financially," Thompson told Fox-13 Memphis. "We depend on business, and we have been at home."

So many pipes broke in Memphis that water pressure fell throughout the city. Concerned about possible contamination, Memphis Light, Gas & Water urged its more than 400,000 customers to boil water for drinking or teeth-brushing or use bottled supplies on Saturday while crews worked around the clock to make repairs.

"Our production and treatment of water is working well," the utility said in an email. "We cannot give restoration estimates until all leaks are identified."

The utility said more than 100 employees volunteered Saturday to identify breaks, and residents were urged to report leaks in the street, at homes and in unoccupied buildings.

Without water since Thursday morning, Pamela Wells was visited Saturday by a worker who asked whether they had a leak.

"My husband said, 'How can we have a leak, if we don't have any water?'" she said.

They had filled a bathtub with water to flush toilets with when they noticed the pressure dropping, Wells said. For everything else they were using a dwindling supply of bottled water until their street became passable on Saturday and friends brought in fresh supplies.

"It's been a struggle," she said, recalling how they lost water for a 10-day stretch in December 2022. "You don't know how long it'll be out."

Meanwhile, the Memphis City Council opened seven bottled water distribution stations on Saturday, one in each council district. Two others were operating at fire stations. One had 300 cars lined up when it opened on Saturday, Shelby County Emergency Management Director Brenda Jones said in a telephone interview.

"You have people with absolutely no water, people with low water pressure, and you have the boil water advisory," she said.

A huge swath of the U.S. was under wind chill advisories, from Montana into central Florida. It was particularly harsh in the Midwest. The wind made it feel like minus 16 degrees (minus 26 Celsius) in Iowa City on Saturday, and overnight wind chills hovered around zero in Oklahoma City, where David Overholser sought shelter at the non-profit Homeless Alliance.

"Being 63 and from Florida originally, I don't like cold. I can't handle it," Overholser told The Oklahoman. "It's been very, very rough and painful and I just, you know, try to hang on one day, one hour at a time ... it's definitely scary."

Wind chills dipped to minus 20 Fahrenheit (minus 28 Celsius) early Saturday in Vermont, where the Stowe Mountain Resort urged hardy skiers to "bust out all the stuff you need to hang on the mountain safely, take frequent warm up breaks inside, and keep a close eye on each other for signs of frostbite."

Ravens fans unaccustomed to such cold in Baltimore bundled up for wind chills near zero (minus 17 Celsius) for Saturday's playoff against the Houston Texans, but the weekend weather was business as usual in Buffalo, where the Bills called out for more shovelers to finish clearing snow from the stands before Sunday's big game. Highmark Stadium got smothered by five feet of lake-effect snow in five days.

Snow tapered in the Northeast after blanketing a large area including Washington and New York City. In New York, aid groups distributed food and clothes near an elementary school Saturday to migrants who bundled up in thick coats and knit caps to ward off the freezing temperatures.

More snow was coming to West Virginia, where the weather service predicted up to 4 more inches (10 centimeters) Saturday, along with winds gusting to 40 mph (64 kph), driving wind chills down to 20 below zero (minus 29 Celsius).

More lake-effect snow pounded northwestern Indiana Friday into Saturday, creating near white-out conditions near Lake Michigan and making the busy highway corridor in and out of Chicago treacherous.

"We're kind of taking a chance — rolling the dice," Frank Finney told WBBM-TV. Finney and his family were navigating Interstate 94 through Michigan City to La Porte, Indiana.

Tennessee alone recorded 26 deaths, including a 25-year-old man found dead on the floor of a mobile home in Lewisburg after a space heater overturned and turned off, said Bob Johnson, chief deputy for the Marshall County Sheriff's Office.

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"There was ice on the walls in there," Johnson said.

On the West Coast, more freezing rain was forecast Saturday in the Columbia River Gorge and the area was expected to remain near or below freezing through at least Sunday night. Trees and power lines already coated with ice could topple if they get more, the National Weather Service warned.

"Stay safe out there over the next several days as our region tries to thaw out," the weather service said. "Chunks of falling ice will remain a hazard as well."

Thousands have been without power since last weekend in parts of Oregon's Willamette Valley because of storm damage. Despite work by repair crews, about 25,000 customers were without electricity in Oregon on Saturday, according to the website poweroutage.us.

The weather service forecast above-average temperatures across most of the country next week. Meanwhile, not everyone hated the white stuff.

"It's fun right now," Michigan City resident Andrew Smith told WBBM-TV. "We haven't had this much snow in a minute, and Christmas wasn't snowy, so it's fun to do this. I can play with the kids, make snowballs, make a snowman."

Lamar Jackson and Ravens pull away in the second half to beat Texans 34-10 and reach AFC title game

By NOAH TRISTER AP Sports Writer

BALTIMORE (AP) — Lamar Jackson had already done plenty of running by the time he reached the end zone in the fourth quarter.

Apparently, he still had quite a bit of energy, leaping past the photographers and disappearing into the tunnel in a celebration that seemed cathartic for the All-Pro quarterback.

Jackson threw two touchdown passes and ran for two scores, and the Baltimore Ravens pulled away in the second half for a 34-10 win over the Houston Texans on Saturday to advance to the AFC championship game. It was only the second victory in five playoff games for Jackson, a fact he was well aware of.

"You know I heard that," he said. "I don't even got to hear it. I see it. But it is what it is. I really don't care about what people say. ... Those guys just had our team's number in the past, but it's a different team."

Jackson made some more history Saturday, becoming the first quarterback since at least 1948 — in the regular season or playoffs — with at least two touchdown passes, two TD runs, 100 yards rushing and a 100 passer rating in the same game.

"Credit to Lamar," Texans coach DeMeco Ryans said. "He made a ton of great plays. That's why he's the MVP."

The Ravens (14-4) dominated the second half after the teams finished the second quarter tied at 10. Jackson said he did most of the talking at halftime.

"A lot of cursing," he said.

Jackson's 15-yard scoring run put Baltimore ahead to stay. Although C.J. Stroud had a solid, composed first half for Houston, the Texans (11-8) ultimately couldn't turn enough promising drives into points against an impressive Ravens defense.

Now Baltimore will host the AFC title game for the first time since January 1971, when the Colts beat the Oakland Raiders on their way to a Super Bowl championship. The Ravens will play in that semifinal round for the fifth time since their arrival in Baltimore. They'll take on the winner of Sunday's matchup between Buffalo and Kansas City.

"Our fans are going to get a chance to cheer just as loud or louder than they did in this game, and they were amazing," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said. "I thought our fans were incredible. Man, it was deafening out there."

Harbaugh's brother Jim was on hand for the game, returning the favor after John went to watch Jim coach Michigan to college football's national title earlier this month.

Ravens fans have been haunted by what happened in the playoffs four years ago, when Baltimore went

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14-2 in the regular season but dropped its postseason opener to Tennessee. Houston did enough to create some anxiety, especially when Steven Sims returned a punt for a touchdown and Jackson struggled at times with the blitzing Texans defense.

But on the first possession of the second half, Jackson guided Baltimore 55 yards in six plays and scored on a run up the middle. Then, a 15-yard touchdown pass to Isaiah Likely early in the fourth made it 24-10.

Jackson's final touchdown came on an 8-yard run with 6:20 to play, and the fired up quarterback kept running right into the tunnel in that corner of the field.

Sims' return was the only TD for the Texans, whose offense never did reach the end zone in 120 minutes against the Ravens this season. Houston lost 25-9 in its season opener at Baltimore.

Jackson rushed for 821 yards during the regular season, which is a big part of the case for his second MVP award. But he surpassed 100 yards on the ground only once. He ran for exactly 100 on Saturday on 11 attempts. A 14-yard bootleg on fourth-and-1 near midfield led to the touchdown by Likely that gave the Ravens some breathing room.

Jackson also passed for 152 yards.

"Lamar is a dog. I've been a fan of his since high school," Stroud said. "It's really an honor to share the field with a player like that."

Stroud threw for 175 yards and didn't take a sack against a tough Baltimore defensive front, but the Texans dropped to 0-5 in the divisional round of the playoffs. They're the only current franchise that hasn't reached a conference championship game.

The Ravens led the NFL in sacks this season, but it was Jackson who was under pressure in the first half, when Houston got to him three times. Two of those sacks came back-to-back in the final minute of the second quarter after a missed field goal gave Baltimore decent field position.

Penalties held the Texans back all day — they ended up with 11 for 70 yards. After Justin Tucker opened the scoring for Baltimore with a 53-yard field goal, Houston appeared headed for points of its own before two false starts and an intentional grounding flag pushed the Texans out of range.

Houston did eventually tie it on a 50-yard field goal by Ka'imi Fairbairn, but the Ravens answered with a 76-yard march capped by Jackson's 3-yard touchdown pass to Nelson Agholor.

Down 10-3, the Texans struck back on special teams. Sims, who was signed from the practice squad to the active roster earlier in the week, broke free up the middle for a 67-yard touchdown.

ADJUSTMENTS

According to the NFL's Next Gen Stats, Jackson faced a career-high blitz rate of 75% and went 13 of 18 for 120 yards and two touchdowns against the blitz. He got rid of the ball in an average of 2.25 seconds in the second half, compared to 3.51 in the first.

ONE-DIMENSIONAL

The Ravens outrushed Houston 229-38, and eventually the Texans' lack of any real ground attack caught up with them — even though they avoided any sacks and turnovers on the day.

UP NEXT

Texans: Houston's rise this season included an AFC South title and a first-round playoff rout against Cleveland. The future looks bright with Stroud at quarterback.

Ravens: Baltimore is one win away from its first Super Bowl appearance in 11 years. The Ravens did not face the Bills or Chiefs during the regular season.

Nikki Haley questions Trump's mental fitness after he appears to confuse her for Nancy Pelosi

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Nikki Haley on Saturday questioned whether Donald Trump is mentally capable of serving as president again after he repeatedly seemed to confuse her with former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in a campaign speech.

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As she campaigned in Keene, New Hampshire, Haley referenced Trump's speech the night before, in which he mistakenly asserted that Haley was in charge of Capitol security on January 6, 2021, when a mob of Trump supporters stormed the building seeking to stop the certification of his loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

Trump first said that Haley turned down security offered by his administration on Jan. 6 and then again mentioned Haley, adding, "They destroyed all of the information, all of the evidence, everything, deleted and destroyed all of it."

Trump, 77, has accused Pelosi of turning down security he says his administration offered, but a special House committee empaneled to probe the attack found no evidence to support that claim.

"They're saying he got confused, that he was talking about something else, he's talking about Nancy Pelosi," Haley said on Saturday.

"He mentioned me multiple times in that scenario. The concern I have is — I'm not saying anything derogatory — but when you're dealing with the pressures of the presidency, we can't have someone else that we question whether they're mentally fit to do this," Haley said. "We can't."

Speaking at a Bloomberg News forum on Saturday in Manchester, Haley campaign manager Betsy Ankney referenced Haley's remarks and said Trump "made a pretty apparent gaffe last night."

"It's a distinction without a difference. It's Nikki and Nancy," Trump campaign senior adviser Chris LaCivita said to reporters Saturday night. "What's the difference?"

At his rally Saturday night in Manchester, Trump said that he took a cognitive test and "aced it."

"I'll let you know when I go bad. I really think I'll be able to tell you," he added. "I feel my mind is stronger now than it was 25 years ago. Is that possible?"

Trump, who won Monday's Iowa caucuses and is the current GOP front-runner, picked Haley to serve as his United Nations ambassador and has ramped up his criticism of her campaign as the year's votes have gotten underway.

On Saturday, he stumped in New Hampshire with a robust complement of backers from Haley's home state of South Carolina, including Gov. Henry McMaster and several U.S. House members. A day earlier, Sen. Tim Scott — who ended his own 2024 bid in November and was appointed to the Senate by Haley in 2012 — endorsed Trump over Haley in a rousing call-and-response speech of his own in New Hampshire.

Since entering the GOP race nearly a year ago, Haley, 52, has advocated for "mental competency tests" for older politicians, a swipe at the ages of both Trump and Biden.

An Israeli airstrike on the Syrian capital killed at least 5 Iranian advisers, officials say

By ALBERT AJI and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — An Israeli strike on the Syrian capital on Saturday destroyed a building used by the Iranian paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, killing at least five Iranians, Syrian and Iranian state media reported.

The Syrian army said the building in the tightly guarded western Damascus neighborhood of Mazzeh was entirely destroyed, adding that the Israeli air force fired the missiles while flying over Syria's Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. The Israeli military did not comment.

A few hours later, an Israeli drone strike on a car near the southern Lebanese port city of Tyre killed two people, including a Hezbollah member, who were in the vehicle and two people who were in a nearby orchard, an official with the group and Lebanon's state news agency said. One of those killed was Ali Hudruj, a local Hezbollah commander, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, without giving further details.

Nour News, which is believed to be close to Iran's intelligence apparatus, identified two of the dead in Damascus as Gen. Sadeqh Omidzadeh, the intelligence deputy of the guard's expeditionary Quds Force in Syria, and his deputy, who goes by the nom de guerre Hajj Gholam. The guard later issued statements identifying the five dead as Hojjatollah Omidvar, Ali Aghazadeh, Hossein Mohammadi, Saeed Karimi and Mohammad Amin Samadi. It gave no ranks for them. The difference in information could not be im-

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diately reconciled.

An opposition war monitor, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said at least six people — five Iranians and a Syrian — were killed in the missile attack that struck while officials from Iran-backed groups were holding a meeting. The Observatory's chief, Rami Abdurrahman, said three of the Iranians were commanders, adding that four other people are still missing under the rubble.

The Telegram channel for Iranian state TV reported that Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi condemned the Israeli attack on Damascus, adding that "the Islamic Republic will not leave the crimes of the Zionist regime unanswered."

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani condemned the Israeli strike in a statement saying that "without any doubt, the blood of these high-ranking martyrs will not be wasted."

Iran also tried again to link Israel to the Islamic State group, something its leaders have been trying to do since a suicide bombing by the extremists in early January in Iran killed more than 90 people.

Security forces deployed around the destroyed four-story building as ambulances and fire engines were seen in the area. A search for people trapped under the rubble was underway. Windows were also shattered in nearby buildings.

A grocer near the scene of the strike said he heard five consecutive explosions at about 10:15 a.m., adding that he later witnessed the bodies of a man and a woman being taken away as well as three wounded people.

"The shop shook. I stayed inside for a few seconds then went out and saw the smoke billowing from behind the mosque," the man, who asked that his name not be used for security reasons, told The Associated Press.

"What happened was terrifying. I collapsed," said Khaled Mawed, who lives nearby.

The strike came amid widening tensions in the region as Israel pushes ahead with its offensive in Gaza. Israel's assault there, one of the deadliest and most destructive military campaigns in recent history, has killed nearly 25,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza health authorities, caused widespread destruction and uprooted over 80% of the territory's 2.3 million people from their homes.

Israel launched the offensive after an unprecedented cross-border attack into Israel by Hamas on Oct. 7 that killed 1,200 people and took some 250 others hostage. Roughly 130 hostages are believed by Israel to remain in Hamas captivity. The war has stoked tensions across the region, threatening to ignite other conflicts.

Last month, an Israeli airstrike on a suburb of Damascus killed Iranian general Seyed Razi Mousavi, a longtime adviser of the Iranian paramilitary Revolutionary Guard in Syria. Israel has also targeted Palestinian and Lebanese operatives in Syria over the past years.

Iranian and Syrian officials have long acknowledged Iran has advisers and military experts in Syria, but denied there were any ground troops. Thousands of fighters from Iran-backed groups took part in Syria's conflict that started in March 2011, helping tip the balance of power in favor of President Bashar Assad.

Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes on targets inside government-controlled parts of war-torn Syria in recent years.

Israel rarely acknowledges its actions in Syria, but it has said that it targets bases of Iran-allied militant groups, such as Lebanon's Hezbollah, which has sent thousands of fighters to support Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces.

Earlier this month, a strike said to be carried out by Israel killed top Hamas commander Saleh Arouri in Beirut.

Over the past weeks, rockets have been fired from Syria into northern Israel and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, adding to tensions along the Lebanon-Israel border and attacks on ships in the Red Sea by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels.

911 calls from Maui capture pleas for the stranded, the missing and those caught in the fire's chaos

By REBECCA BOONE, CLAUDIA LAUER and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

The day after the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century destroyed a seaside community on Maui, the barrage of 911 calls didn't stop: Reports of missing people, stranded family members and confused tourists trapped without food or water lit up the emergency lines every few minutes, interspersed with reports of new fires starting and older ones flaring back up.

The 911 recordings from the morning and early afternoon of Aug. 9 were the third batch of calls released by the Maui Police Department in response to a public record request. They show how first responders and emergency dispatchers — many of whom had already worked long hours during what was likely the most harrowing experience of their lives — continued to be hindered by limited staffing and widespread communication failures.

Several callers reached out to 911 throughout the morning asking for wellness checks for relatives or friends they couldn't reach. Cell communications were still down in some areas. Authorities told people to call the nonemergency police number to file missing person reports or so that police could check with the Red Cross and other volunteers who had registered evacuees at the shelters.

But callers who couldn't get through on the nonemergency line, turned to 911.

"My house is in Lahaina, in the fire area. And I have not been able to contact my husband. Is there any way that I can get someone to drive by the house?" a woman asked just after 1:30 p.m.

Another caller at about 9:45 a.m. called to report that his wife was missing.

"She should be in Lahaina. She went to work yesterday," the caller told a dispatcher.

In one case, a 911 caller reported that a family missing their 15-year-old son had been "ignored."

The operator answers were the same each time. Emergency responders weren't able to help find missing people because they were still trying to get everyone to safety, still working hotspots and responding to fires. There weren't enough officers to do house checks or wellness checks, but most of the town had been evacuated to the shelters.

They told callers to wait for cellphone communications to return and to keep trying the nonemergency line.

"I'm really sorry, that's all I can give you right now," one operator said.

Maui County and police officials did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment on Saturday.

One hundred people died because of the Lahaina fire, and thousands of survivors remain displaced because their homes were destroyed or badly damaged.

Callers turned to 911 when information was scarce or when they heard contradicting information.

A handful of residents called to ask if the Lahaina Bypass had reopened, saying they had heard an announcement on the radio that it had opened for traffic. Emergency dispatchers repeatedly batted down the misinformation.

Early in the morning dispatchers rebuked some callers asking how to get to the airport, or what roads would be open, saying the line was for emergencies only.

One caller retold how he and his family while evacuating had grabbed an elderly couple to help them also get out of Lahaina. But he said the husband had gone with him and the wife had gone with his uncle, and they could not contact each other to reunite the couple.

"We don't know what to do with him," the caller said.

"You can bring him to one of the emergency shelters so he can rest and get something to drink," the dispatcher told him, adding that once communications were back up, the volunteers there could help find his wife.

Dispatchers were forced to deal with sometimes impossible situations, trying to reassure people while also knowing resources were scarce.

An exhausted Lahaina survivor, walking along the highway south of town, called asking for help just before 1 p.m.

"Our house is all burned down and everyone is just passing us by. We're dying out here. There's like 12

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of us, all like walking along the Pali," he said, using a nickname for a coastal, cliffside portion of the Honoapiilani Highway. He asked for someone to pick the group up, saying he feared dying of heat exhaustion.

The dispatcher said there were no buses to come get them, but they could send ambulances if they needed.

Just before 11 a.m., someone from another island called on behalf of some Lahaina residents who lost their home and vehicles but had fled up the mountain, away from the burning town.

"She's got her husband and their two children and then some neighbors," the caller said. The group was safe from the fire, but had no food and water and no way to evacuate.

"I'm going to let the fire department know," the dispatcher said, "but we are really short on resources. And they're going to see what they can do."

At that point, fire crews were still trying to extinguish the flames that had destroyed much of Lahaina, as well as fighting three other fires in and around the towns of Kula and Kihei. People living near those blazes continued to report flames at their properties and fires reigniting like they had in Lahaina.

In one case, a 911 caller reported seeing flames and hotspots on their property and trying to put them out with a garden hose that was rapidly losing pressure. Another reported that her husband and son were fighting a fire that had broken out on their ranch in the Upcountry region of Maui, but they feared they'd need help from a helicopter.

Some areas were still dotted with potentially dangerous downed power lines. One person who called several times in the morning reported that lines were sparking and smoking at her home in the Kula area and she and her husband were unable to turn the power off. They eventually did so with the help of a friend that worked at the power company.

Callers had trouble controlling their frustration at times. A woman called in tears saying her family had left their resort when the power went out the previous day.

"We slept in our car. We can't get ahold of the hotel. My medication, my car keys, everything is there. My kid has autism. His medication is there. I just don't know what to do," she said.

The dispatcher offered to have a medic sent out for the woman's son and also suggested she try to have her doctor call in a prescription. But she said no one was being let back into Lahaina.

Israel's Netanyahu rejects any Palestinian sovereignty in post-war Gaza, rebuffing Biden

By JULIA FRANKEL and, SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Saturday that he "will not compromise on full Israeli control" over Gaza and that "this is contrary to a Palestinian state," rejecting U.S. President Joe Biden's suggestion that creative solutions could bridge wide gaps between the leaders' views on Palestinian statehood.

In a sign of the pressures Netanyahu's government faces at home, thousands of Israelis protested in Tel Aviv calling for new elections, and others demonstrated outside the prime minister's house, joining families of the more than 100 remaining hostages held by Hamas and other militants. They fear that Israel's military activity further endangers hostages' lives.

Netanyahu is also under heat to appease members of his right-wing ruling coalition by intensifying the war against Hamas, which governs Gaza, while contending with calls for restraint from the United States, its closest ally.

Netanyahu posted his statement on social media a day after his first conversation with Biden in nearly a month. Discussing his administration's position Friday, Biden said "there are a number of types of two-state solutions" and, asked if a two-state solution was impossible with Netanyahu in office, Biden replied, "No, it's not."

After Netanyahu's statement, a spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called for the United States to go further. "It is time for the United States to recognize the state of Palestine, not just talk about a two-state solution," Nabil Abu Rudeineh said in a statement.

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U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said "the refusal to accept the two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians, and the denial of the right to statehood for the Palestinian people, are unacceptable." Speaking in Uganda, he said the refusal would "indefinitely prolong" the conflict.

Netanyahu has said Israel must fight until it achieves "complete victory" and Hamas no longer poses a threat but has not outlined how this will be accomplished.

But a member of Israel's War Cabinet, former Israeli army chief Gadi Eisenkot, has called a cease-fire the only way to secure the hostages' release, a comment that implied criticism of Israel's current strategy.

Critics have accused Netanyahu of preventing a Cabinet-level debate about a post-war scenario for Gaza. They say he is stalling to prevent conflict within his coalition. Netanyahu's office called the claim that he was unnecessarily prolonging the war "utter nonsense."

Israel launched its war against Hamas after the militant group's unprecedented Oct. 7 attack that killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in Israel and saw about 250 others taken hostage. Health authorities in Hamas-ruled Gaza say Israel's offensive has killed nearly 25,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children.

The offensive, one of the most destructive military campaigns in recent history, has pulverized much of the territory and displaced more than 80% of its population of 2.3 million people. An Israeli blockade that allows only a trickle of aid into Gaza has led to widespread hunger and outbreaks of disease, United Nations officials have said.

Netanyahu has insisted that the only way to secure the hostages' return is by crushing Hamas through military means. More than 100 hostages, mostly women and children, were released during a brief November cease-fire in exchange for the release of Palestinian women and minors imprisoned by Israel. Israel has said that more than 130 hostages remain in Gaza, but only about 100 are believed to be alive.

The protest outside Netanyahu's home in the coastal town of Caesarea grew, with police pushing a few attendees away, sparking arguments.

"We can't take it anymore. We've been told to sit quiet, let the government do its job. Well, it's not bringing us any result for the last two months," said Yuval Bar On, whose father-in-law, Keith Siegel, is among the hostages.

The protest began Friday when the father of a 28-year-old held by Hamas began what he called a hunger strike. Eli Shtivi pledged to eat only a quarter of a pita a day — the amount some hostages reportedly receive some days — until the prime minister agrees to meet with him.

At the Tel Aviv protest, former hostage Chen Goldstein-Almog told the crowd that "if we, as a society, as a state, don't do everything, I mean everything, to return the abductees, the living and the dead, we have no right to exist, as a state and as a society."

The Israeli military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said the military was not carrying out attacks in areas where it knows or assumes there are hostages and the army works "in all possible ways to bring them home."

Dozens of anti-war protesters also gathered in the Israeli city of Haifa, carrying signs reading "Stop genocide" and scuffling with police who tried to confiscate the placards. Police made one arrest.

As part of its search for the hostages, Israel's military dropped leaflets on Gaza's southernmost town of Rafah. The leaflets, with photos of dozens of hostages, carried a message suggesting benefits for anyone who spoke up.

"You want to return home? Please report if you identified one of them," the message read.

Hours later, Al-Majd al-Amni, a media outlet linked to the Hamas internal security force, warned Palestinians against supplying any information about Israeli soldiers held hostage in Gaza.

The war has rippled across the Middle East, with Iranian-backed groups attacking U.S. and Israeli targets. Fighting between Israel and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon threatens to erupt into all-out war, and Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen are targeting international shipping in the Red Sea despite U.S.-led airstrikes.

On Saturday, an Israeli strike on Syria's capital destroyed a building used by the Iranian paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, killing at least five Iranians, Syrian and Iranian state media reported. Also Saturday,

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an Israeli drone strike on a car near the Lebanese port city of Tyre killed two people, the state-run National News Agency reported. It was not immediately clear who the target was.

In Gaza, residents reached by phone after a seven-day communications blackout reported heavy bombardment and fighting between militants and Israeli troops in and around the southern city of Khan Younis and the urban refugee camp of Jabaliya in the north.

The fighting has forced many families to leave their homes, many of which were reduced to rubble, said Halima Abdel-Rahman, a woman displaced from northern Gaza who now shelters in Bani Suheila on the outskirts of Khan Younis.

A car was apparently struck by a drone in Rafah, killing four, according to an Associated Press cameraman at a local morgue. Israel's military didn't immediately comment.

In the Israeli-occupied West Bank, meanwhile, mourners gathered for the funeral of Tawfiq Ajaq, a 17-year-old American Palestinian shot and killed a day earlier near Ramallah. The circumstances of the shooting remained unclear, and police said the incident was under investigation.

Grand jury indictment against Alec Baldwin opens two paths for prosecutors

By MORGAN LEE Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — Alec Baldwin once again is staring down a felony involuntary manslaughter charge after a grand jury indicted the actor in connection with the fatal 2021 shooting of a cinematographer on the set of a Western movie in New Mexico.

The lead actor and a co-producer on "Rust," Baldwin pointed a gun at cinematographer Halyna Hutchins during rehearsal on a movie set outside Santa Fe when the gun went off, killing her and wounding director Joel Souza.

A new analysis of the gun opened the way for prosecutors to reboot the case, after dismissing an involuntary manslaughter charge last year. A new one-page indictment delivered by the grand jury Friday alleges Baldwin caused Hutchins' death — either by negligence or "total disregard or indifference" for safety.

Defense attorneys for Baldwin indicate they'll fight the charge, which carries a potential prison sentence of up to 18 months.

Here are some things to know about the case.

Next steps

Baldwin can enter a formal plea with or without a court arraignment, setting in motion preparations for trial.

The indictment provides prosecutors with two alternative standards for the felony involuntary manslaughter charge against Baldwin. One would be based on the negligent use of a firearm.

Baldwin has said he pulled back the gun's hammer, but not the trigger, and the weapon fired. But a recent analysis of the gun used by Baldwin from Lucien and Michael Haag of Forensic Science Services in Arizona concluded that "the trigger had to be pulled or depressed sufficiently to release the fully cocked or retracted hammer of the evidence revolver." Michael Haag testified to the grand jury this week as a witness, according to the new indictment.

An earlier FBI report on the agency's analysis of the gun found that, as is common with firearms of that design, it could go off without pulling the trigger if force was applied to an uncocked hammer — such as by dropping the weapon. The gun eventually broke during testing.

A second alternative for prosecutors is to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Baldwin caused the death of Hutchins without due caution or "circumspection," also defined as "an act committed with total disregard or indifference for the safety of others."

Baldwin as co-producer

Prosecutors declined to answer questions Friday after spending about a day and a half presenting their case to the grand jury.

Santa Fe-based defense attorney and former prosecutor John Day, who is not connected to the case, believes the indictment gives prosecutors a possible opportunity to address Baldwin's safety obligations

as a co-producer.

"We don't know exactly what their theory is," Day said. "It could be that they're including his role as basically CEO of the production ... not having a safe workplace and somebody dies and you're at the top of the pyramid."

The company Rust Movie Productions has paid a \$100,000 fine to state workplace safety regulators following a scathing narrative of safety failures in violation of standard industry protocols, including testimony that production managers took limited or no action to address two misfires on set before the fatal shooting.

Two related trials

Separately, special prosecutors Kari Morrissey and Jason Lewis are preparing for a February trial against "Rust" armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, who has pleaded not guilty to involuntary manslaughter and evidence tampering in the case.

That trial is likely to proceed independently — and could give Baldwin's attorneys insights into prosecution strategies and testimony from key witnesses who are likely to also testify in proceedings against Baldwin.

"His attorneys will certainly be watching the armorer's trial closely," said Los Angeles-based entertainment litigator and defense attorney Kate Mangels, who is not involved in the case. "It could offer a preview of the prosecution's approach and potential witness testimony."

Baldwin's case was assigned to Santa Fe-based state District Court Judge T. Glenn Ellington, a specialist in criminal cases. The Gutierrez-Reed case is overseen by a different judge.

"We look forward to our day in court," said Luke Nikas and Alex Spiro, defense attorneys for Baldwin.

Potential witnesses

Two of the witnesses seen at the courthouse included crew members — one who was present when the fatal shot was fired and another who had walked off the set the day before due to safety concerns.

"Rust" assistant director and safety coordinator David Halls pleaded no contest to unsafe handling of a firearm last March and received a suspended sentence of six months of probation. He agreed to cooperate in the shooting investigation.

New court filings Friday indicate that "Rust" prop master Sarah Zachry has signed an agreement to cooperate with special prosecutors in return for leniency. Zachry worked closely to secure guns and ammunition on set with Gutierrez-Reed.

Mangels said a grand jury indictment is by no means an assurance that prosecutors will prevail at trial.

"Just getting an indictment from a grand jury in no way means the prosecution has a slam dunk case or even a strong case," she said.

Protests against Germany's far right gain new momentum after report on meeting of extremists

By EMILY SCHULTHEIS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Tens of thousands of people protested the far right in cities across Germany on Saturday, attending events with slogans such as "Never Again is Now," "Against Hate" and "Defend Democracy." The large crowds were the latest in a series of demonstrations that have been gaining momentum in recent days.

The demonstrations came in the wake of a report that right-wing extremists recently met to discuss the deportation of millions of immigrants, including some with German citizenship. Some members of the far-right Alternative for Germany party, or AfD, were present at the meeting.

Police said a Saturday afternoon protest in Frankfurt drew 35,000 people. Demonstrations in Stuttgart, Nuremberg and Hannover, among other cities, also drew large crowds.

A similar demonstration Friday in Hamburg, Germany's second-largest city, drew what police said was a crowd of 50,000 and had to be ended early because the mass of people led to safety concerns.

Additional protests planned for Sunday in other major German cities, including Berlin, Munich and Cologne, are also expected to draw tens of thousands of people.

Although Germany has seen other protests against the far right in past years, the size and scope of protests being held this weekend — not just in major cities, but also in dozens of smaller cities across the

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country — are notable.

Saturday's crowds were a sign that the protests seem to be galvanizing popular opposition to the AfD in a new way. What started out as relatively small gatherings have grown into protests that, in many cases, are drawing far more participants than organizers expected.

The catalyst for the protests was a report from the media outlet Correctiv last week on an alleged far-right meeting in November, which it said was attended by figures from the extremist Identitarian Movement and from the AfD. A prominent member of the Identitarian Movement, Austrian citizen Martin Sellner, presented his "remigration" vision for deportations, the report said.

The AfD has sought to distance itself from the extremist meeting, saying it had no organizational or financial links to the event, that it wasn't responsible for what was discussed there and members who attended did so in a purely personal capacity. Still, one of the AfD's co-leaders, Alice Weidel, has parted ways with an adviser who was there, while also decrying the reporting itself.

The protests also build on growing anxiety over the last year about the AfD's rising support among the German electorate.

The AfD was founded as a euroskeptic party in 2013 and first entered the German Bundestag in 2017. Polling now puts it in second place nationally with around 23%, far above the 10.3% it won during the last federal election in 2021.

Last summer, candidates from the AfD won the party's first-ever mayoral election and district council election, the first far-right party to do so since the Nazi era. And in state elections in Bavaria and Hesse, the party made significant gains.

The party leads in several states in eastern Germany, the region where its support is strongest — including three, Brandenburg, Saxony and Thuringia, that are slated to hold elections this fall.

As a result, Germany is grappling with how best to respond to the party's popularity.

The widespread anger over the Correctiv report has prompted renewed calls for Germany to consider seeking a ban on the AfD. On Saturday, the Brandenburg chapter of Germany's Greens voted at a party convention in favor of pursuing a potential ban to help prevent the rise of "a new fascist government in Germany."

However, many of the AfD's opponents have spoken out against the idea, arguing that the process would be lengthy, success is highly uncertain and it could benefit the party by allowing it to portray itself as a victim.

Elected officials from across the political spectrum, including Chancellor Olaf Scholz, expressed their support for the protests.

"From Cologne to Dresden, from Tuebingen to Kiel, hundreds of thousands are taking to the streets in Germany in the coming days," Scholz said in his weekly video statement, adding that protesters' efforts are an important symbol "for our democracy and against right-wing extremism."

Friedrich Merz, head of the center-right Christian Democrats, said the protests show Germans are "against every form of hate, against incitement and against forgetting history."

"The silent majority is raising its voice and showing that it wants to live in a country that is cosmopolitan and free," he told the German news agency dpa.

Attention to, and support for, the protests extends beyond the political sphere. Prominent figures in sports, entertainment and business have also commented on them.

Bayern Munich soccer coach Thomas Tuchel spoke out against right-wing extremism at a Saturday news conference: "There is no doubt about it, we stand up 1000% against any kind of extremism," he said, according to dpa. For such a message, he added, there can "never be too many voices."

Ohio is poised to become the 2nd state to restrict gender-affirming care for adults

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine announced proposals this month that transgender advocates say could block access to gender-affirming care provided by independent clinics and general practitioners, leaving thousands of adults scrambling for treatment and facing health risks.

Ashton Colby, 31, fears the clinic where he gets the testosterone he has taken since age 19 would no longer offer it. The transgender Columbus man believes he could eventually be treated by another provider that would meet the new requirements. But even a few months' wait could leave Colby experiencing a menstrual cycle for the first time in many years.

"My mental health has been stressed," Colby said. "These are feelings related to being transgender that I have not felt in years, but now I'm thrown into feeling devastated about my experience as a transgender person."

DeWine announced the proposed rules amid a whirl of activity that could push Ohio further than most other states in controlling gender-affirming care and make it just the second to set forth restrictions on adult care.

He also signed an executive order to ban gender-affirming surgery for minors but vetoed a bill that would ban all gender-affirming care for minors. One chamber of the state legislature has already overridden it and the other is voting Jan. 24 on whether to do so.

"It is a policy project that attempts to make it so onerous, so restrictive to get care, that people are functionally unable to do so," said Kellan Baker, executive director of the Whitman-Walker Institute, a Washington-based organization focused on the health of LGBTQ+ people.

The policies focused on care for adults come in draft administrative rules released this month by the Ohio Department of Health and the state's Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

They would require psychiatrists, endocrinologists and medical ethicists to have roles in creating facility-wide gender-affirming care plans for patients of all ages. Patients under 21 would have to receive at least six months of mental health counseling before starting gender-affirming medication or surgery. Providers would be barred from referring minors to treatment elsewhere, such as clinics in other states.

When he announced the measures, DeWine said they would ensure safe treatment and make it impossible to operate "fly-by-night" clinics.

The rules are not intended to stop treatment for those already receiving it and are in line with the way specialized care is generally practiced, even if the approach isn't always state-mandated, said DeWine spokesperson Dan Tierney, who noted the administration is open to wording changes to clarify the rules.

Still, advocates say those rules go beyond the standard of care established by organizations including the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, and at any rate there are no sketchy gender clinics in the state.

"It's bad and unnecessary bureaucracy, and we know what they're trying to do — and they're hoping to cut off health care for as many people as possible," said Dara Adkison, board secretary for the advocacy group TransOhio. "It's not subtle."

Mimi Rivard, a nurse practitioner and clinical director at Central Outreach Wellness Center Ohio's Columbus clinic, said clinics already successfully prescribe hormones without the involvement of endocrinologists and there aren't enough of those specialists in the state to do the current work, plus serve an estimated 60,000 Ohioans of transgender experience.

Many transgender patients are wary of other medical settings, which they might see as unfriendly, for more routine needs like hypertension or diabetes, but clinics like hers also treat them for those conditions, she said.

"We have to behave in ways that are consistent with the oaths we've taken as caregivers," Rivard said. "And these guidelines will not allow for this."

Patients who have undergone surgery and stop hormones could be at risk for osteoporosis and extreme

fatigue, she said.

Dr. Carl Streed Jr., president of U.S. Professional Association for Transgender Health, who provides gender-affirming care in Boston, noted abortion is the only other realm in which states have weighed in to bar health professionals from providing services allowed by their licenses.

"The rules are draconian. They don't follow any standard of care," Streed said. "It is a veil of this false sense of safety that will effectively lead to a ban."

How the policy would affect transgender patients might depend on where they are treated. The big academic medical centers providing gender-affirming care already employ the required specialists.

Equitas Health, a Columbus-based nonprofit focused on LGBTQ+ health care, strongly opposes the regulations but also says it will fulfill the requirements to continue offering gender-affirming care if the rules are finalized.

Advocates warn the care might not be available via smaller clinics or general practitioners, creating more hurdles to care for lower-income, minority and rural transgender people.

Adkison, who lives in Cleveland, expects their own treatment to continue.

"I'm a white person living in the city near multiple major hospital systems," they said. "I'm definitely not as concerned as many of my friends."

GOP-controlled governments in 22 other states already have passed bans or restrictions on gender-affirming care for minors. So far, though, adoption of policies aimed at adults is rare.

The only other restriction currently in force at the state level is in Florida, where a law took effect last year requiring physicians to oversee any health care related to transitioning, and for those appointments to be in person. Those rules have been onerous for people who have received care from nurse practitioners or used telehealth.

It's not clear when the Ohio rules might take effect, or in what form if they are finalized. The health department is taking public comment until Feb. 5; for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services proposal, public comment is open only until Jan. 26.

The rules also are subject to review of a legislative committee looking at whether rules exceed the administration's power, something DeWine's proposals do, said Rhea Debussy, spokesperson for Equitas Health.

"He's really done an impressive job in the last two weeks, making a lot of Democrats, a lot of progressives, a lot of conservatives and Republicans across the state of Ohio very mad at him," she said.

The measures were unveiled Jan. 5, the same day DeWine signed an executive order banning gender-affirming surgery for those under 18. Advocates expect the move will have little practical impact because such surgeries are almost never performed on minors.

"It's very cruel," said Erin Upchurch, executive director of Kaleidoscope Youth Center, a Columbus-based organization serving young LGBTQ+ people. "It's vindictive, it's mean and it's unnecessary."

Election-year politics threaten Senate border deal as Trump and his allies rally opposition

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A politically treacherous dynamic is taking hold as negotiators in Congress work to strike a bipartisan deal on the border and immigration, with vocal opposition from the hard right and former President Donald Trump threatening to topple the carefully negotiated compromise.

Senators are closing in on the details of an agreement on border measures that could unlock Republican support for Ukraine aid and hope to unveil it as soon as next week. But the deal is already wobbling, as House Speaker Mike Johnson faces intense pressure from Trump and his House allies to demand more sweeping concessions from Democrats and the White House.

"I do not think we should do a Border Deal, at all, unless we get EVERYTHING needed to shut down the INVASION of Millions & Millions of people," Trump posted on social media this week.

It's a familiar political dynamic, one that has repeatedly thwarted attempts to reform U.S. immigration law, including in 2013 when House Republicans sought to pin illegal immigration on a Democratic president

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and in 2018 when Trump helped sink another bipartisan effort. The path for legislation this time around is further clouded by an election year in which Trump has once again made railing against illegal immigration a central focus of his campaign.

Even though the terms of the policy negotiations have shifted significantly in the Republicans' direction, skepticism is running high among conservatives, creating a precarious moment that could determine not only the contours of U.S. immigration and border law for years to come, but the future of Ukraine as it faces dwindling U.S. supplies in its fight against Russia.

President Joe Biden is pressing lawmakers to say yes. During a White House meeting this week with congressional leaders that was meant to underscore how desperately Ukraine needs funding, the president said he was ready for a "big deal on the border."

The president has reason to want an agreement. The historic number of migrants who have come to the U.S. border with Mexico during Biden's term is seen as one of the largest political vulnerabilities in his re-election campaign.

During Iowa's Republican caucuses last week, which Trump won, immigration was a top issue. An AP VoteCast survey found about 9 in 10 caucusgoers backed building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, with about 7 in 10 expressing strong support for the idea.

As asylum seekers have made their way across the country, often by the busloads to Democratic-leaning cities as part of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's program, they have strained the resources and political tolerance of areas that will be vital to Biden's re-election chances.

"It's gotten to the point where, in a way, everybody's back is against the wall," said Sen. Michael Bennet, a Colorado Democrat. "I'm not talking about politically, I mean, substantively, these are challenges that the country can't ignore."

Bennet was joined at the Capitol on Thursday by Denver Mayor Mike Johnston, a Democrat who told reporters that the recent influx of migrants has caused "a humanitarian crisis and a fiscal crisis unlike anything we've seen in the last 25 years."

Democrats in Congress are split on the merits of the Senate package. Progressive and Hispanic lawmakers decry changes that would toughen the process for claiming asylum in the United States. Still, many Democrats say that Johnson's resistance to bipartisan compromise shows that Republicans aren't serious about solving the problems at the border.

"They basically want to make sure that the situation is as chaotic as possible so that they can win elections in November," said Rep. Joaquin Castro, a Texas Democrat. "That is their strategy. It's not a sincere attempt to do something about what's going on at the border."

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, meanwhile, has been strongly making the case for the deal. He's told fellow Republicans that the border package, which he insisted be paired with Biden's \$110 billion request for war aid for Ukraine, Israel and other national security priorities, is a rare opportunity to get stronger policies through Congress.

The proposal crafted by the Senate would toughen the asylum process with a goal of cutting the number of migrants who come to the southern border to make an asylum claim.

Negotiators have worked on some policies intended to aid immigrants. The plan could include a pathway to citizenship for Afghans who came during the U.S. withdrawal from their country, along with work permits for migrants who enter the asylum system, according to two people familiar with the talks who were granted anonymity to discuss the private negotiations.

But the package will mostly leave out broad immigration changes, like protections for immigrants who entered the U.S. illegally as children, that have been foundational in previous Senate bills.

"It will be by far the most conservative border security bill in four decades," said Oklahoma Sen. James Lankford, the lead GOP negotiator.

Lankford and other Senate Republicans have urged their House colleagues to remain open-minded. They argue that the changes would actually pave the way for Trump to implement his border agenda if he wins the election. Lankford has also said that the legislation would not dramatically reduce the number of

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migrants at the border for months — a tacit signal that border security could remain a top issue through the election.

Still, Johnson has argued that a hardline House bill, H.R. 2 which passed the chamber in May without a single Democratic vote, is the solution to America's border woes. It would create a sweeping system intended to bottle up illegal immigration.

Johnson has also made clear that he has been speaking regularly with Trump.

"We're not playing politics with this, we're demanding real, transformative policy change," Johnson said this week.

Even beyond Trump, Johnson is dealing with far-right House members who are furious over his willingness to work with Democrats to pass legislation. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, a close Trump ally, has threatened to trigger a motion to oust Johnson if he brings a border bill with Ukraine aid to the House floor.

Greene this week said Trump is backing the House conservatives' plan because "it brings back all of his strong border policies." In December, she said that passing bipartisan border legislation would only give Biden an opportunity to tout the legislation on the campaign trail.

"I've been telling everyone that President Trump is the leader of the Republican Party," Greene said. "That decisive victory in Iowa should be the shot across the bow to every single Republican that's elected."

Despite the pressure, Johnson signaled some support for the legislative push after a meeting this week at the White House, calling the talks "productive." But what he does next remains to be seen.

Rep. Jim Himes, D-Conn, left the White House meeting worried that a direct plan of action had not been discussed.

"We've got to figure out how to put the leaders in a position to walk over some broken glass, because whatever deal is passed is going to make a lot of people unhappy," Himes said.

GOP Speaker Mike Johnson has a House majority in name only. He's left with daunting choices ahead

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — New Speaker Mike Johnson finds himself leading House Republicans with a majority in name only.

Unable to unite his unruly right flank and commanding one of the slimmest House majorities in history, Johnson is being forced to rely on Democrats for the basics of governing, including the latest bill to prevent a federal shutdown.

Approaching his first 100 days on the job, Johnson faces daunting choices ahead. He can try to corral conservatives, who are pushing rightward in endless hours of closed-door meetings, to work together as a team. Or he can keep reaching out to Democrats for a bipartisan coalition to pass compromise legislation.

So far, rather than the speaker of a dysfunctional GOP majority, Johnson, R-La., has shown he is willing to compile a rare, large supermajority of Democrats and Republicans to get things done with Democratic President Joe Biden.

And that supermajority is exactly what some in Congress want, but others fear is coming.

"Everyone understands the reality of where we are," Johnson said at a weekly news conference.

"The House Republicans have the second-smallest majority in history," he said. "We're not going to get everything that we want. But we're going to stick to our core conservative principles."

Johnson is about as conservative as they come in Washington. He's a "movement" conservative steeped in Christian beliefs who made his way from Louisiana working in the trenches of hard-right social policy, particularly against abortion, gay rights and other issues.

Elected in 2016, Johnson has become aligned with Donald Trump who won the White House that year, and Johnson led a key legal challenge for Trump in 2020 trying to overturn Biden's election.

For now, the far-right forces that ousted Johnson's predecessor, former Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California, from the speaker's office, are allowing a grace period. They are frustrated by Johnson's reluctance to take dramatic action such as a government shutdown to win their priorities. But they are heartened that

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at least Johnson is forthcoming with them.

But the hard-line Republicans are watching and waiting — any single lawmaker can file a motion for a vote to oust the speaker — especially as Johnson confronts the challenges ahead on government spending, U.S. border security and wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

“It’s a loss for the American people to join hands with Democrats to form a governing coalition,” said Virginia Rep. Bob Good, the newly elected chairman of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus, after last week’s vote to keep government running.

Good complained that passage of the short-term spending bill, which Biden signed into law before the Friday midnight deadline, was “a failure.”

Johnson will confront another shutdown threat March 1 when some of the temporary funding again runs out.

More immediately, Johnson and House Republicans are warily watching Senate negotiations over an immigration and border security package designed to reduce the record flow of migrants and expedite the deportations of some of those who have already entered the United States illegally.

Biden is considering the emerging border deal as part of his broader \$110 billion national security package, which has grown urgent as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s forces need to replenish weaponry in their fight against Russia’s invasion.

But such a deal swapping border policy for Ukraine aid could be politically devastating for Johnson, whose Trump-aligned Republicans want an even harder line against the migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border and a more isolationist approach to U.S. foreign policy that rejects Ukraine aid.

Biden hosted congressional leaders at the White House this past week, surrounding the new speaker with prominent and influential voices, including the chairmen of the national security committees, to impress on Johnson the weight of the challenges ahead.

It put the speaker in a central seat of U.S. power.

The top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Adam Smith of Washington state, spoke up at one point during the White House meeting. He made a pitch to Johnson.

“The argument I made to him was, ‘You know, the border is not going to be ‘solved,’” Smith recalled.

Smith told Johnson there is no “magic piece of legislation” that will suddenly end the countless numbers of migrants pouring northward.

“But we can make it better,” Smith said.

“So make it better,” Smith went on. “And I said, ‘You know, politically, you are still going to be in a position to bash Democrats on the border. That’s not going away.’”

Smith added, “So why don’t you do something good for the border, do something good for Ukraine, and you still got your politics. And it’s a win, win win.”

And Johnson’s response?

“He didn’t say anything,” Smith said.

Hovering over Johnson’s speakership is Trump, the former president who elevated McCarthy to the speakership but then did not save him from removal. Trump is now the party’s front-runner for the presidential nomination in 2024 to challenge Biden for the White House.

Johnson and Trump talk often, but some of Trump’s strongest allies in the House are those conservatives pushing the speaker rightward and denying him a governing majority.

Trump signaled his skepticism of the emerging border deal but also his trust, for now, in the speaker’s ability to drive the hardest bargain possible for Republicans.

In many ways, Johnson finds himself living day to day, much the way McCarthy was, trying to keep Congress functioning, and hold on to his job.

“Speaker Johnson is in a 24-hour survival mode,” said Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut, a key Democratic negotiator on the border package. “He needs to say whatever he needs to say in order to survive Wednesday to Thursday, and Thursday to Friday.”

The vote late last week to prevent a shutdown exposed the limits of Johnson’s grasp on his majority.

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Republicans control the House by just a few seats, 220-213. That number will drop over the weekend, when one of the many lawmakers who have already announced their retirements leaves early. Absences, illnesses and weather delays trim the numbers further.

When voting was underway, 107 Republicans were voting against the temporary spending bill and 106 voted for it, which would have been a politically embarrassing outcome if not even a majority of Johnson's majority was on board.

By the time the gavel struck closing the voting, the bill was overwhelmingly approved, with Democrats and Republicans, 314-108. The final tally was 107 Republicans in favor of the bill, 106 Republicans against.

"He's doing the best he can," said Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee and a failed rival for the speaker's gavel. "Mike's a good guy, a friend, and it's a tough position but he's doing the best he can."

13 students reported killed in an elementary school dorm fire in China's Henan province

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — A fire broke out in dorms at a boarding school for elementary students in central Henan province, and 13 students died in the blaze, Chinese state media reported Saturday.

All of the dead were third grade students, a teacher told Zonglan news, a state-backed media outlet from Hebei province. One person rescued from the scene was being treated in the hospital, CCTV, China's state broadcaster said.

Police set up a cordon around the school, a Xinhua news report showed, and the dorm where the fire had happened was charred black even on the outside of the building. The school had metal grilles covering the windows, as is common in buildings in China.

The dormitory room housed approximately 30 students, according to Xinhua. The remaining 16 students were safely evacuated.

The fire started Friday night and was put out just before midnight at Yingcai School in rural Fangcheng district in central Henan. The school's owner was detained, CCTV reported.

State media reported that public records showed the owner of the school is a man called Li Jizhong. The AP could not reach Li.

Local authorities said they were investigating the cause of the fire. China's central Emergency Management Ministry dispatched a team to the scene to do an investigation as well.

Fire safety remains a concern across the country. Last April, a fire in a hospital in Beijing killed 29 people. Patients trapped in the multistory building apparently tied bedsheets into makeshift ropes and escaped by climbing out windows, as seen in videos circulating on social media.

The Henan boarding school caters primarily to students in the elementary grades, though it has an attached kindergarten, according to the school's WeChat page. Many of the boarding students come from rural areas, the Beijing Youth Daily reported.

The facility is in Dushu township and is one of the school's two branches.

Today in History: January 21 Supreme Court's Citizens United decision

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Jan. 21, the 21st day of 2024. There are 345 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 21, 2010, a bitterly divided U.S. Supreme Court, in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, vastly increased the power of big business and labor unions to influence government decisions by freeing them to spend their millions directly to sway elections for president and Congress.

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On this date:

In 1793, during the French Revolution, King Louis XVI, condemned for treason, was executed on the guillotine.

In 1910, the Great Paris Flood began as the rain-swollen Seine River burst its banks, sending water into the French capital.

In 1915, the first Kiwanis Club, dedicated to community service, was founded in Detroit.

In 1924, Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin died at age 53.

In 1942, pinball machines were banned in New York City after a court ruled they were gambling devices that relied on chance rather than skill (the ban was lifted in 1976).

In 1950, former State Department official Alger Hiss, accused of being part of a Communist spy ring, was found guilty in New York of lying to a grand jury. (Hiss, who proclaimed his innocence, served less than four years in prison.)

In 1976, British Airways and Air France inaugurated scheduled passenger service on the supersonic Concorde jet.

In 1977, on his first full day in office, President Jimmy Carter pardoned almost all Vietnam War draft evaders.

In 2003, the Census Bureau announced that Hispanics had surpassed blacks as America's largest minority group.

In 2013, a day after being inaugurated for a second term in a private ceremony, President Barack Obama took a public oath, summoning a divided nation to act with "passion and dedication" to broaden equality and prosperity at home, nurture democracy around the world and combat global warming.

In 2017, a day after Donald Trump's inauguration, more than 1 million people rallied at women's marches in the nation's capital and cities around the world to send the new president an emphatic message that they wouldn't let his agenda go unchallenged.

In 2020, the U.S. reported its first known case of the new virus circulating in China, saying a Washington state resident who had returned the previous week from the outbreak's epicenter was hospitalized near Seattle.

In 2021, on his first full day in office, President Joe Biden signed 10 executive orders aimed at combating the coronavirus pandemic.

In 2022, the FBI said Brian Laundrie, the boyfriend of slain cross-country traveler Gabby Petito, had admitted to killing her in a notebook discovered near his body in a Florida swamp.

Today's birthdays: World Golf Hall of Famer Jack Nicklaus is 84. Opera singer-conductor Placido Domingo is 83. Actor Jill Eikenberry is 77. Country musician Jim Ibbotson is 77. Singer-songwriter Billy Ocean is 74. Former U.S. Ambassador to China Gary Locke is 74. Former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder is 73. Actor-director Robby Benson is 68. Actor Geena Davis is 68. Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., is 63. Basketball Hall of Famer Hakeem Olajuwon is 61. Actor Charlotte Ross is 56. Actor John Ducey is 55. Actor Karina Lombard is 55. Actor Ken Leung is 54. Rock musician Mark Trojanowski (Sister Hazel) is 54. Rock singer-songwriter Chan Marshall (Cat Power) is 52. Rock DJ Chris Kilmore (Incubus) is 51. Actor Vincent Laresca is 50. Singer Emma Bunton (Spice Girls) is 48. Actor Jerry Trainor is 47. Country singer Phil Stacey is 46. R&B singer Nokie is 45. Actor Izabella Miko (MEE'-koh) is 43. Actor Luke Grimes is 40. Actor Feliz Ramirez is 32.