

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Sunday, April 14

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.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with Milestones (4 yr olds and juniors), 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir 6 p.m.

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

High School Baseball in Groton: Groton vs. Elkton/Lake Benton at Noon, Elkton/Lake Benton vs. W-I-N at 2 p.m., Groton vs. W-I-N at 4 p.m

## Monday, April 15

Senior Menu: Beef tips on rice, mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail, cookie, whole wheat bread.

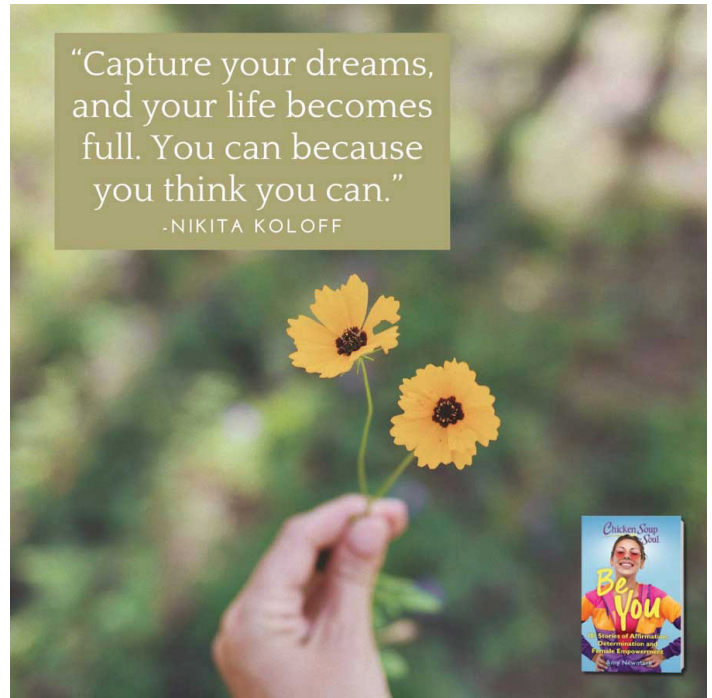
School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, diced potatoes.

**Groton Daily Independent**

**PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445**

**Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460**



JH Track at Ipswich 2 p.m.

Track at Britton, 2 p.m.

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

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

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

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

Groton Area Winter Sports Awards Night, 7 p.m., GHS Arena

State Smarter Balanced Testing: Grade 3-5, Science (Grade 5): Week of April 15-19 (Day TBD), ELA/Math: April 22-26

## Tuesday, April 16

Senior Menu: Baked turkey crunch with dressing, Italian blend vegetables, carrot bars, corn muffin.

School Breakfast: Waffles.

School Lunch: Pizza burgers, cooked broccoli.

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

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

City Council meeting, 7 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Bible Study, 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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## Meade County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash  
Where: 8986 Erickson Ranch Road, Blackhawk, SD  
When: 9:48 p.m., Friday, April 12, 2024

Driver 1: Male, 42, fatal injuries  
Vehicle 1: 2004 GMC Envoy  
Seat Belt Use: No

Meade County, S.D.- A 42-year-old man died Friday evening in a single-vehicle crash in Meade County.

The name of the person involved has not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2004 GMC Envoy was northbound on Erickson Ranch Road when the vehicle left the roadway to the right entering the ditch. The vehicle rolled, ejecting the driver who was not wearing a seatbelt. He suffered fatal injuries and was pronounced deceased at the scene.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.



## Open House Bridal Shower

*honoring*

# Jessica Bjerke

*Saturday, April 20, 2024*

*1:00pm - 3:00pm*

*Olive Grove Golf Course*

*Registered at Target and Amazon*



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## Groton's Results from Aberdeen Middle School Music Contest:

The 6-8 Band received a superior rating from all 3 judges.

5- Superior + Solos

24- Superior Solos

All 3 Duets received Superiors

5- Excellent + Solos

9- Excellent Solos

15 N Main St. - Ste. 101  
Downtown Groton

Call/Text Paul: 605-397-7460  
Call/Text Tina: 605-397-7285



**Living Heart Fitness Center**

Bones need strong muscles for support.  
Not exercising weakens those supporting muscles.  
Weak muscles put more stress on joints. - Mayo Clinic

## EMPLOYMENT

**Dairy Queen in Groton is hiring! If you're looking for a fun job with lots of variety, look no further! We're looking for energetic, smiling people – we provide free meals, uniforms, competitive wages, fun atmosphere and flexible scheduling. Part-time – day, evening, week-end shifts available. We will work with your schedule. Stop in today and pick up an application.**

.....

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## Groton Area presents, "Peter Pan & Wendy"



The GHS School Play, "Peter Pan & Wendy," was held Friday and Saturday evening. The opening is scene 1 with The Darling Nursery. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Tinker Bell and Peter Pan arrive at night. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Scene 2 features Peter Pan and company in flight. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Scene 3 features Neverland. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Scene 4 features **The Mermaid Lagoon.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Scene 5 features **The Lost Boys Underground Home.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Scene 6 features **The Jolly Roger.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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**Scene 6 features a sword fight between Peter Pan and his clan with Captain Hook and his clan.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Scenes 7 and 8 features everyone back at The Darling Nursery.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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**The three seniors, Anna Bisbee, Camryn Kurtz and Emily Clark present the play director Amanda Bisbee with gifts on behalf of the play cast.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



**The three seniors involved with the play this year are Anna Bisbee as Wendy, Emily Clark with tech, and Camryn Kurtz as Peter Pan.** (Courtesy Photo)



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## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

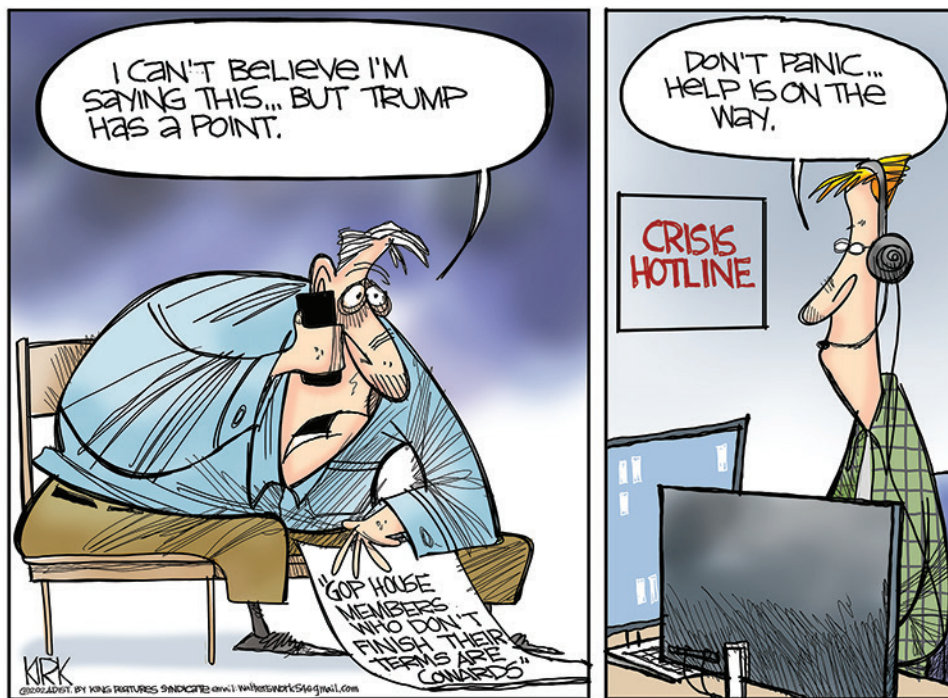
Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

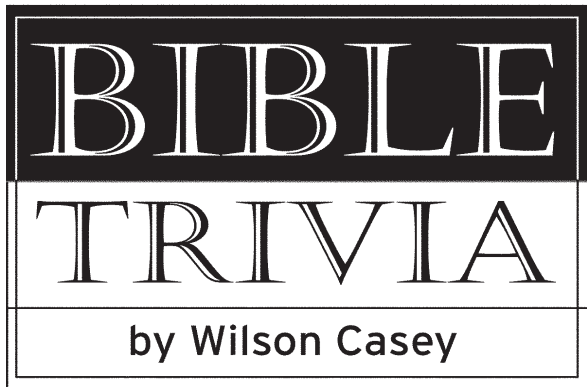
MATTHEW 22:18-21

One side of  
a denarius coin  
portraying Julius Caesar,  
dated 42 BCE



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

2. The villains Sanballat and Geshem are only mentioned in which book? *2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*

3. From Ephesians 5, what did Paul recommend as a substitute for wine? *Water, Laughter, Love, Holy Spirit*

4. Who condemns drinkers who start early in the morning? *Job, Isaiah, Ezra, Esther*

5. Which king had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen? *David, Jehoshaphat, Solomon, Neco*

6. Who wrote the book of Revelation? *John, Jude, Matthew, Peter*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Nehemiah, 3) Holy Spirit, 4) Isaiah, 5) Solomon, 6) John (the Revelator)

*“Test Your Bible Knowledge,” a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.*

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**FLASH GORDON**

MY NAME'S BOK. IT'S THE ONLY THING I OWN.

I'VE NEVER BEEN THIS FAR NORTH. FORTY WINTERS ON MONGO AND I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN THE SNOW.

I OWE THAT TO FLASH GORDON.

IT'S TAKEN AN ALIEN TO SHOW ME MY OWN WORLD.

ME. BOK THE DRAGONMAN. RIDING BIRDS IN THE FROZEN NORTH.

MY OLD SQUAD WOULD LAUGH, IF THEY WERE ALIVE TO SEE IT.

FLASH GORDON'S BROUGHT ME ALONG ON QUEEN FRIA'S TOUR OF HER KINGDOM.

MEETING HER SUBJECTS, HANDLING DISPUTES.

I THOUGHT ROYALS WERE ALL FOOLS WHO LUCKED INTO IT. BUT FRIA, SHE'S SMART. ICEBERG SMART-- LIKE THERE'S THIS BIGGER DIMENSION TO HER THINKING, JUST BELOW THE SURFACE.

A WEEK LATER. WE'VE MADE CAMP ON THE ICE.

NOW, DRAGONMEN? WE DON'T JUST SEE LIGHT. WE SEE HEAT.

AND I SEE SOMETHING ON THE HORIZON AS HOT AS A HOUSE FIRE.

A PACK OF THOSE PIRATE MINERS.

THESE BOYS'LL SET UP FAST, STRIP THE LAND, AND MOVE ON BEFORE THEY GET CAUGHT.

DAN SCHWABE 4-14-24

WE TELL FRIA. I'M READY FOR SOME NONSENSE ABOUT ASSEMBLING A COMMITTEE TO GET PERMISSION TO INVESTIGATE IT...

BUT SHE WANTS THESE SCRUBS GONE NOW.

THIS LAND IS UNDER HER PROTECTION.

**NEXT: STRIPPED TO THE BONE**

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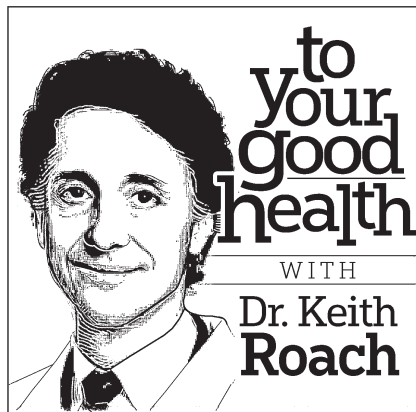
## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD THE OLD SAW ABOUT THE GOLF SWING BEING MADE OR BROKEN BY ITS FIRST 12 INCHES. THAT'S AN EXAGGERATION, BUT THERE'S NO QUESTION THE INITIAL MOTION IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT.

THE TWO QUALITIES TO SEEK AS YOU START THE CLUB BACK ARE SMOOTHNESS AND DELIBERATION — NO JERKS, NO RUSHING.

ANOTHER GOOD OBJECTIVE IS KEEPING THE CLUBHEAD LOW TO THE GROUND AND MOVING DIRECTLY BACK FROM THE BALL UNTIL THE BODY TURN NATURALLY MOVES IT INSIDE THE TARGET LINE.

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## Vocal Cord Becomes Paralyzed After a Cold

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** My daughter, 45, has had a paralyzed left vocal cord for about a year now. We have been to an ear, nose and throat (ENT) doctor who ran at least a half dozen tests, including several scans. These didn't show a reason for the problem, and everything else appeared to be normal. She had a cold before this happened, and we were treating her for a lingering sore throat.

The doctor has told us that there is nothing to be done to unfreeze the vocal cord. I would love your opinion on this matter, as she has a lot of pain associated with it, and she coughs trying to get out what feels stuck in there. — *K.P.*

**ANSWER:** Paralysis of the vocal cord is often the result of damage to the nerve that leads to the vocal cord; there's one on each side. The left side is particularly vulnerable and may be damaged during surgery (especially thyroid surgery), but a big fear is that a mass (especially a cancerous one) can damage the nerve and cause paralysis of the vocal cord. This is why her doctor did a CT scan.

There are other less-common causes, such as nerve damage from other occurrences (stroke and multiple sclerosis); inflammatory diseases (lupus and others); and infections (such as Lyme disease). It sounds like the ENT doctor looked for other possibilities such as these. (But if not, then it should be done.)

When a cause can't be found, we call

it "idiopathic unilateral vocal cord paralysis." This often seems to happen after a viral infection, and it sounds like your daughter might have had one. Many people with this condition get better by themselves during the first year, but now that it has been about a year for her, she isn't likely to get better without treatment.

I am not an expert in treatment, but ENT surgeons have several types of surgical interventions to improve hoarseness, cough and discomfort. It's time to go back to her ENT doctor or get referred to an expert in the surgical treatment of this condition.

\*\*\*

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** If exercise helps new arteries to grow, would it also help new veins to grow and alleviate varicose veins? — *M.D.*

**ANSWER:** It's a good thought, but unfortunately, exercise does not make the body grow new arteries, which are the large blood vessels that bring oxygen-rich blood to our organs and muscles. Exercise increases the size of the arteries and can help keep them from getting stiffer with age. Exercise in combination with a good diet can also help keep them from getting blocked.

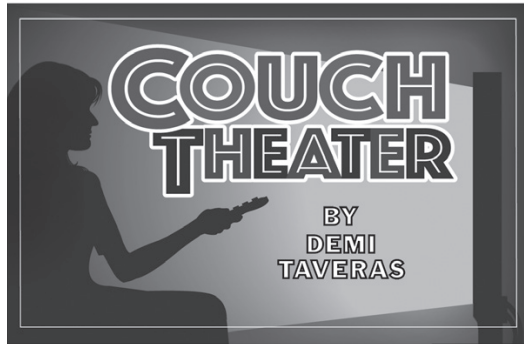
In addition, exercise can help with varicose veins, but once again, it isn't because the body grows new veins. Varicose veins are dilated veins that occur due to damage in the tiny valves inside the veins. Without those valves, the venous blood can pool under the effects of gravity, causing the veins to swell.

Exercise helps because of the pump effect of the intermittent muscle contraction, which forces blood back into the large veins and ultimately back into the heart. Exercise, compression stockings and elevation are among the most important lifestyle changes for varicose veins.

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

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**Wyatt Russell, left, and Kerry Condon star in "Night Swim."** Courtesy of MovieStillsDB

"The Sympathizer" (TV-MA) -- Based on the novel of the same name by Viet Thanh Nguyen, which won a Pulitzer Prize, this seven-episode miniseries tells the story of a North Vietnam spy in the South Vietnam army during the Vietnam War. This spy, called the Captain (Hoa Xuande), is forced to flee with his general to the United States near the end

of the war. Now living among a community of South Vietnamese refugees, the Captain continues to act as a spy against them and report back to Viet Cong. With so many loyalties pulling him every which way, the Captain finds himself at a crossroads, unsure which of his alliances are the most true. Sandra Oh and recent Academy Award winner Robert Downey Jr. co-star in the series. The first episode is out now, with new episodes every Sunday. (Max)

"Under the Bridge" (TV-MA) -- Another miniseries that releases on streaming this week is a true-crime drama starring Riley Keough ("Daisy Jones & the Six") and Lily Gladstone ("Killers of the Flower Moon"). Keough portrays writer Rebecca Godfrey, who hears about the death of a 14-year-old girl named Reena Virk (Vritika Gupta). Reena supposedly joined her friends at a party but never returned home, leaving the local police at a loss as to how she died. Determined to write a novel about Reena, Rebecca works tirelessly alongside police officer Cam Bentland (Gladstone) to see if they can connect the dots about what happened under the bridge. The first two episodes premiere April 17, with new episodes every Wednesday. (Hulu)

"Night Swim" (PG-13) -- So far in 2024, it's been a quiet year for horror movies, but if there's anyone who always has something spooky cooking up his sleeve, it's producer Jason Blum from Blumhouse Productions. His latest film follows a family of four called the Wallers, who happen upon the perfect new home for their household. Since the father, Ray, has an illness that can be improved upon with the swimming pool the home offers, the Wallers quickly decide to purchase the house. However, as Ray's illness starts to go into remission, certain oddities begin to occur, like his kids getting attacked in the pool by some strange phenomenon and their cat going missing. Soon, the Wallers come to realize that their residence has a sinister history that is about to repeat itself. Out now. (Peacock)

## In Case You Missed It

"Bob Marley: One Love" (PG-13) -- Kingsley Ben-Adir takes on the role of reggae legend Bob Marley in this biopic out now to rent! Taking place from the mid-1970s through the 1980s, the film walks viewers through the struggles that Marley had to overcome to bring his musical vision to life. From assassination attempts on his life to leaving Jamaica for his protection, Marley undergoes many trials and tribulations just because he chooses to take a stand for peace. His story is undoubtedly remarkable, and with his family producing the film, it was told in a way that commands respect. But the film still felt standard overall, missing certain visual and cinematic elements that could have propelled it to a different level. (Apple TV+)

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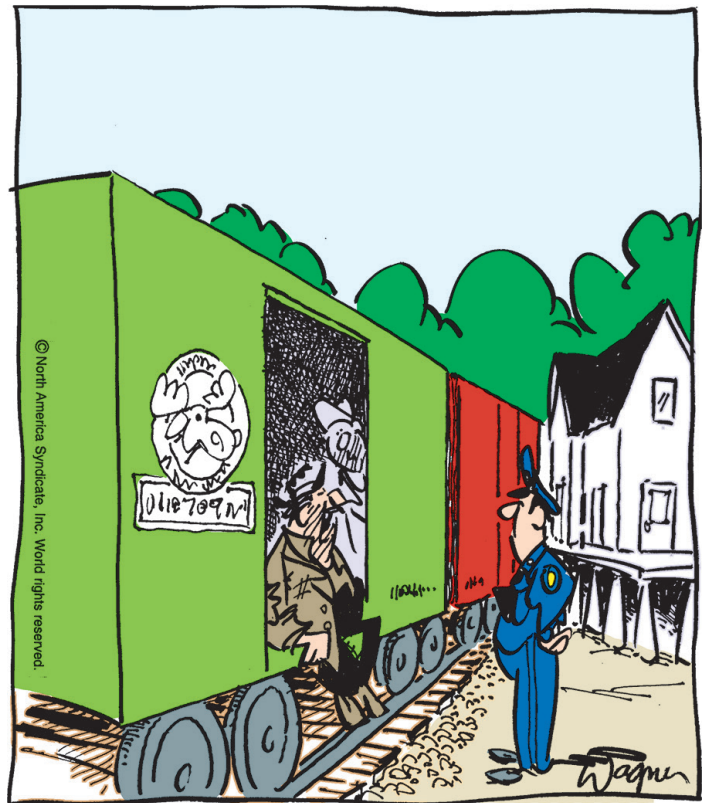
1. Which group had a hit with "Rock and Roll Is Here to Stay"?
2. How much did the Beatles earn for their appearances on "The Ed Sullivan Show" in 1964?
3. Which artist was literally a one-man band?
4. Who sang the theme song in the film "What's New Pussycat"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "I don't know what he does to make you cry, But I'll be there to make you smile."

## Answers

1. Danny & the Juniors, in 1958. They were originally known as the Juvenaires, until DJ Dick Clark suggested a name change.
2. They earned \$2,400 for each of three performances. That's worth about \$24,000 today.
3. Trent Reznor. He could play all the instruments but would temporarily hire other musicians while on tour to play with him under the name Nine Inch Nails. He must be doing something right because he's netted 13 Grammy nominations.
4. Tom Jones, in 1965. It was nominated for an Academy Award in 1966 for Best Original Song.
5. "All I Have to Give," by the Backstreet Boys in 1998. The song reached Top Ten charts around the globe, topping charts in Spain, Hungary and Zimbabwe, of all places. It only reached No. 5 in the U.S.

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



"Amtrak was full."

## Just Like Cats & Dogs

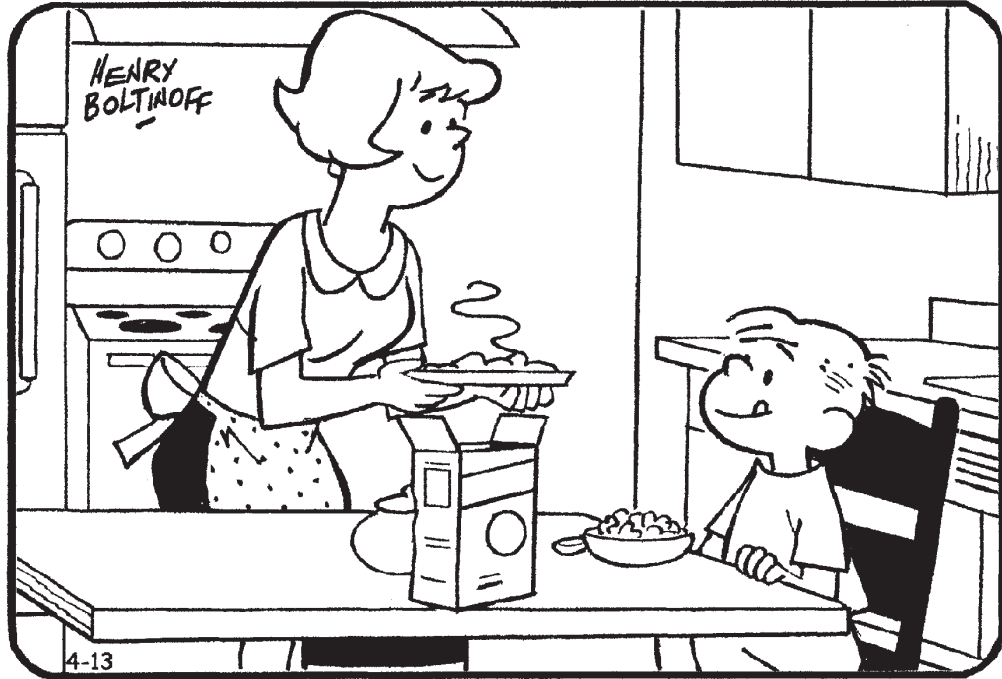
by Dave T. Phipps



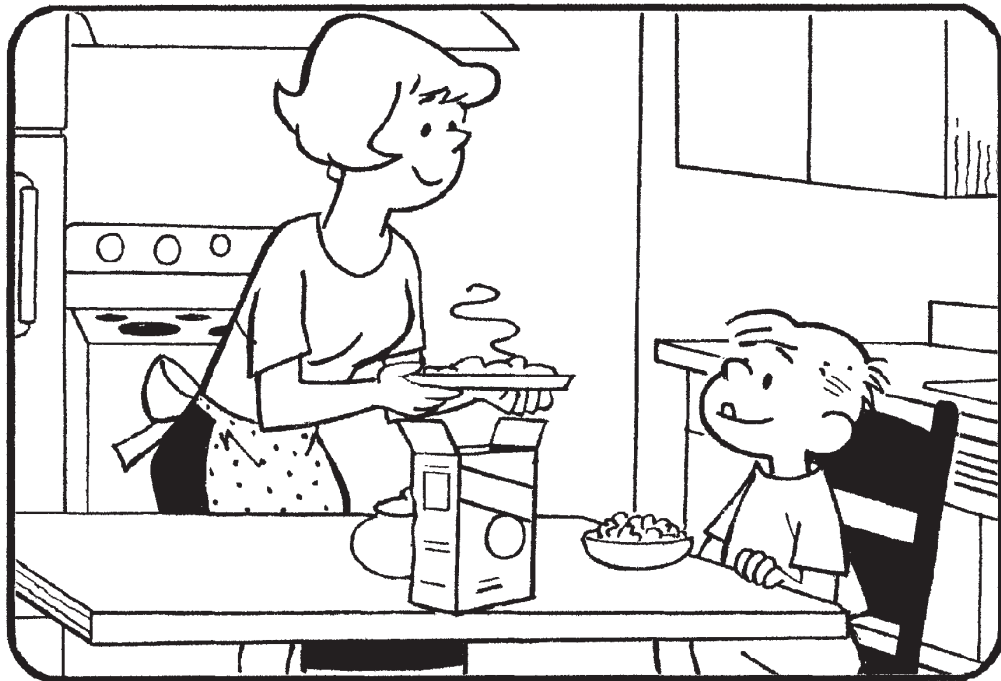
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## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Spoon is missing. 2. Box is different. 3. Collar is missing. 4. Mouth is different. 5. Refrigerator handle is not as long. 6. Oven handle is missing.

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\* "My roses really look beautiful. When I am cutting stems to put in a bouquet, I use a clothespin to grip the stem. It saves me from getting pricked by thorns, because it has a bit of reach to it." -- L.E. in Georgia

\* For even distribution in sowing seeds for your garden, use a saltshaker for tiny seeds. You can get a cheese shaker for larger seeds, if necessary.

\* To keep your brick walkway clear of grass and weeds, sprinkle salt in the cracks.

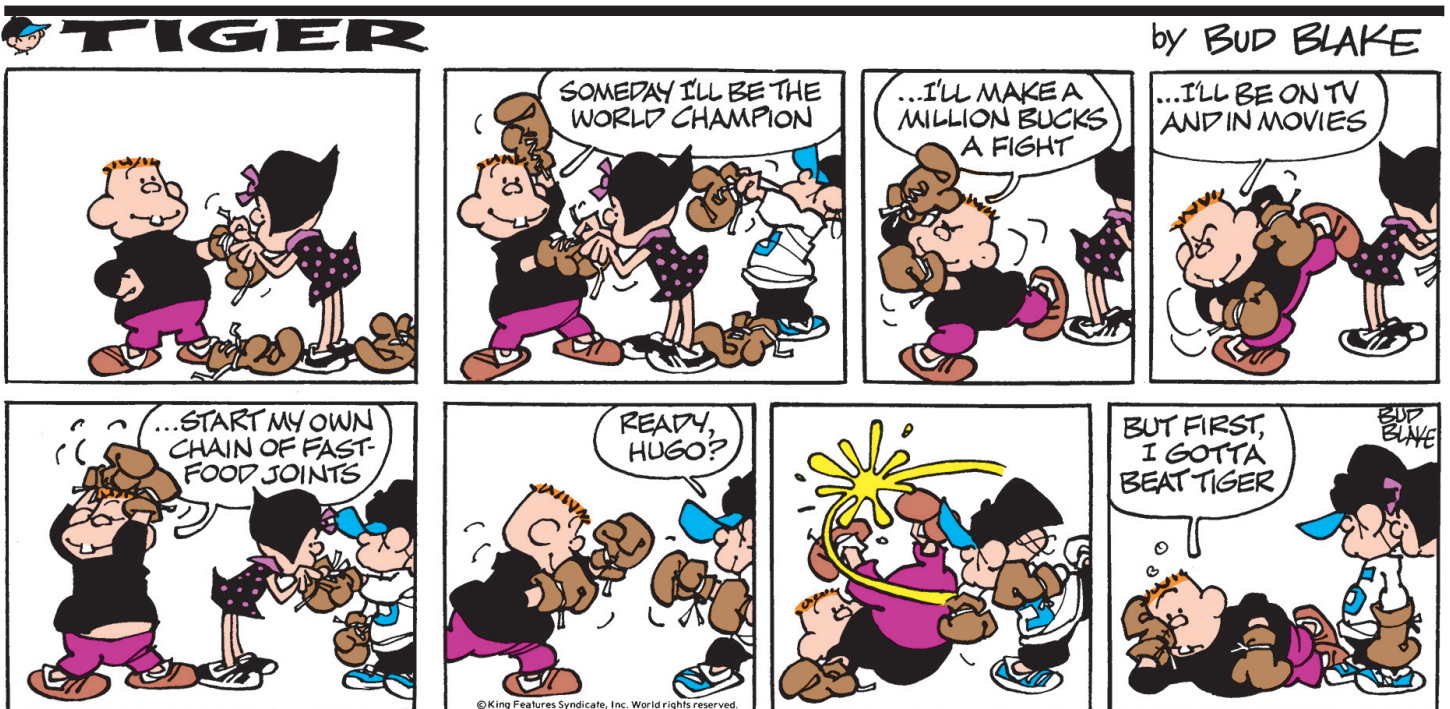
\* "If you have to cut a nylon cord or shoelace, you can use a flame to melt the end into a nub that won't run or fray. Use a little heat and press it together on a hard surface very briefly. It works fast!" -- R.S. in Maine

\* "Cars are getting so big these days. I use a string mop to wash the top and back of my van. I can reach everything better, and it does a great job." -- S.C. in Nevada

\* To get shower doors squeaky clean, use a paste of baking soda and water to scrub stubborn water stains, then rinse the whole thing with straight white vinegar. Put the vinegar in a spray bottle and spray well, then rub off with a sponge. Rinse with plain water.

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

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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Siren
- 5 Cagers' gp.
- 8 Halt
- 12 Eventful periods
- 13 Cleric's tunic
- 14 Jared of "House of Gucci"
- 15 Persistence
- 17 Privy to
- 18 Tar
- 19 Laid down the lawn
- 21 Cattle call
- 22 Crystal gazer
- 23 Not "dis"
- 26 Scale abbr.
- 28 Impetus
- 31 Crunchy cookie
- 33 Chef Garten
- 35 Faux pas
- 36 Reddish dye
- 38 PC screen type
- 40 Salty expanse
- 41 Leave an impression?
- 43 Gear tooth
- 45 Salsa ingredient
- 47 Chopin pieces
- 51 Say it's so
- 52 Stresses
- 54 Hindu royal
- 55 911 responder
- 56 Tizzy
- 57 Sax range

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
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45	46						47			48	49	50
51					52	53						
54					55				56			
57					58				59			

- 58 — Angeles
- 59 JFK postings
- 11 Frogs' hang-out
- 16 Hip
- 20 British ref. work
- 23 Homer's cry
- 24 "Right you —!"
- 25 Multi-family dwelling
- 27 NBC weekend show
- 29 Compete
- 30 Ecol. watchdog
- 32 Toronto's province
- 34 Emphasizes
- 37 Play segment
- 39 Pixels
- 42 "Monopoly" buy
- 44 Appearance
- 45 Skater Lipinski
- 46 Ellipse
- 48 Word of warning
- 49 Author Bagnold
- 50 Bygone fliers
- 53 Punk-rock subgenre

### DOWN

- 1 Nov. honorees
- 2 Bailiwick
- 3 — -pedi
- 4 Sacred song
- 5 Capital of Kenya
- 6 Crunchy sandwich
- 7 Void
- 8 Small burgers
- 9 Curly strands
- 10 Oklahoma tribe

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## — King Crossword —

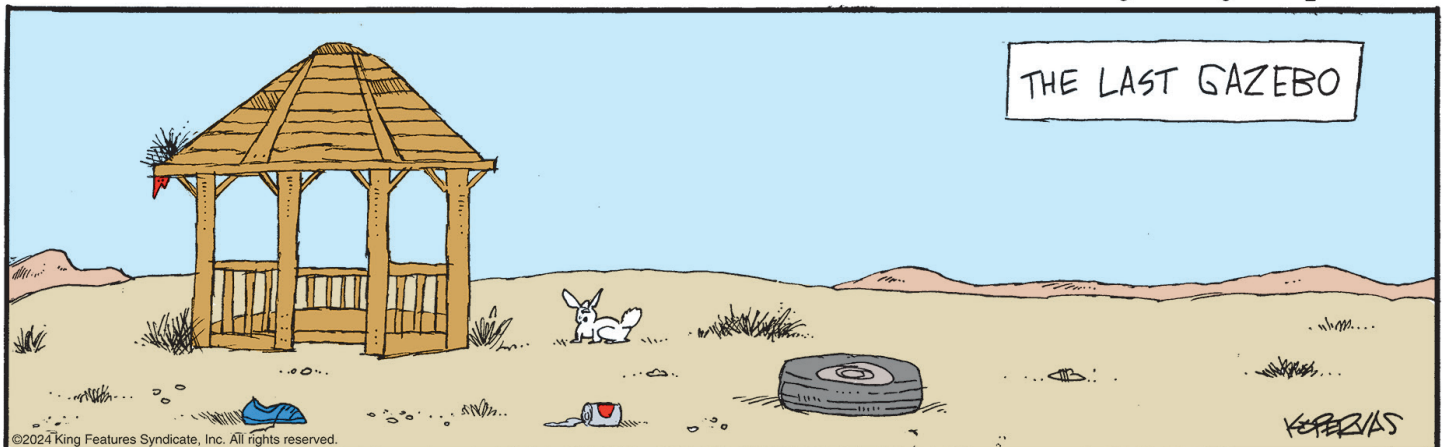
Answers

Solution time: 24 mins.

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

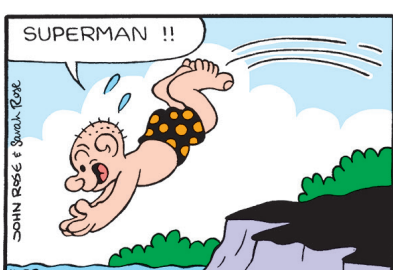
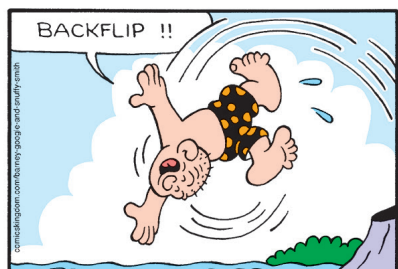
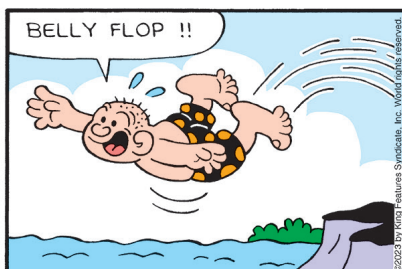
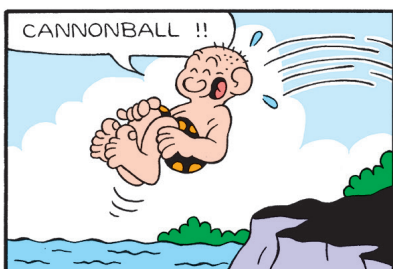
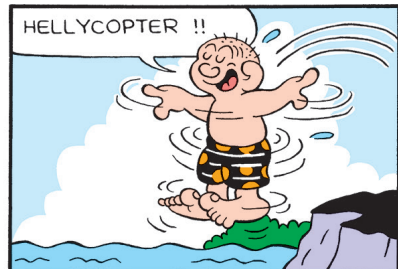
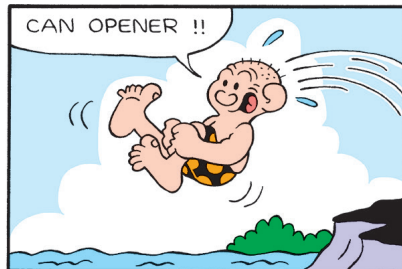
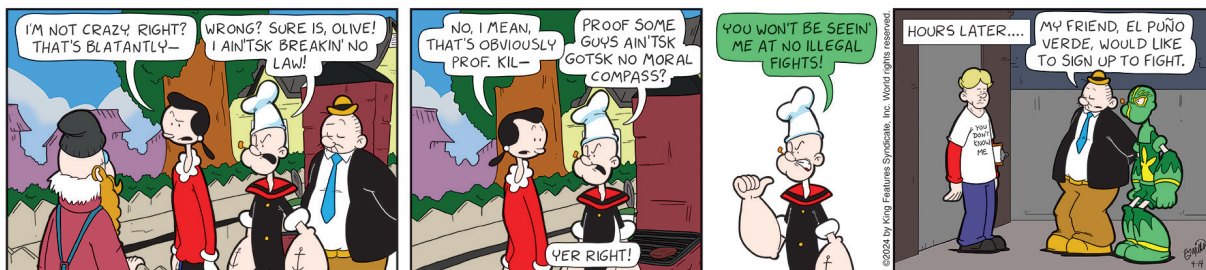
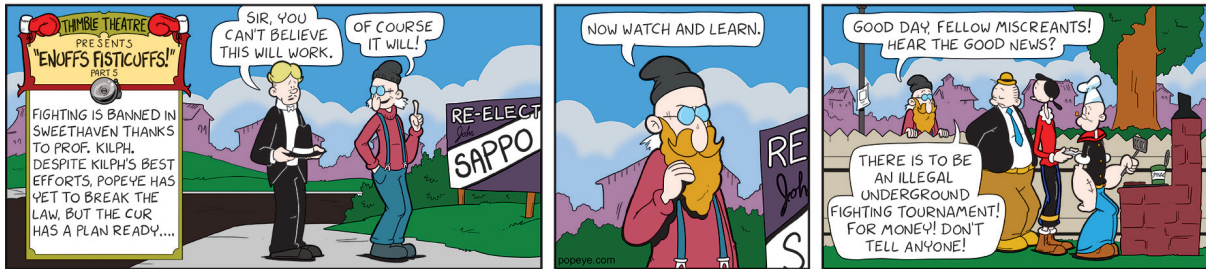
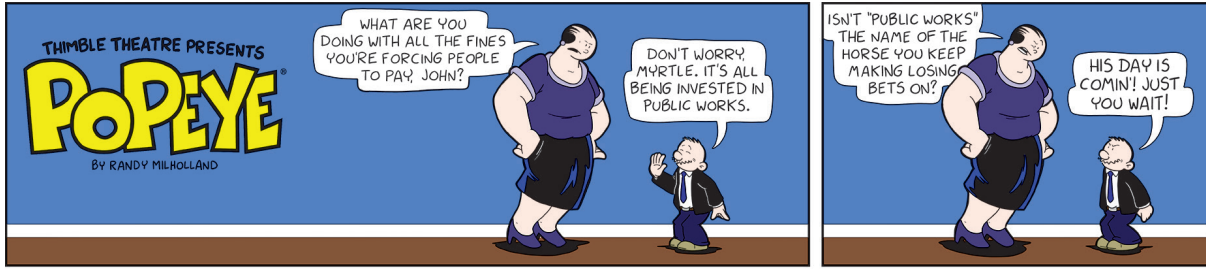
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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HAL FOSTER'S  
BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

## Prince Valiant

3967

SIR ROGER HAS DECIDED THAT DISCRETION IS THE BETTER PART OF TYRANNY - HE FLEES THE REBELLIOUS MOB OVERPOWERING HIS GUARD.

VAL AND GAWAIN GIVE CHASE. "HE'LL BE HEADED FOR THE GUARD'S DOOR UNDER THE BRIDGE TOWER!" RHODA ADVISES THE KNIGHTS.

VAL HAS SEEN ENOUGH OF ROGER RUNETYN'S ACTIONS TO BE CONVINCED THAT HIS STEWARDSHIP HAS BEEN RUINOUS FOR LOCKBRAMBLE. IT IS A STICKY MESS, USURPING A LEGALLY APPOINTED GOVERNOR, BUT SOMETHING MUST BE DONE.

AS RHODA PREDICTED, ROGER HAS INDEED MADE FOR THE NEAREST, SAFEST RETREAT TO THE CASTLE. VAL AND GAWAIN ARRIVE JUST AS HE AND HIS MINIONS DISAPPEAR INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE GREAT BRIDGE.

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THE HEAVY OAKEN DOOR IS SWINGING SHUT AS VAL MAKES A DESPERATE THROW...

YEATES 2/17/13

...WEDGING THE BLADE OF HIS DAGGER INTO THE JAMB OF THE DOOR AND PREVENTING IT FROM LOCKING!

NEXT: Friends in tight places

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

WHAT NATIONALITY IS SANTA CLAUS?

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NORTH POLISH.

PICKERING

## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Spring Cleaning and Safety

It's time to begin my annual spring cleaning, and this year it's going to be a bit different. Instead of just sticking with the window cleaning, closet organizing and dryer vent vacuuming type of activities, I'm going to concentrate on safety.

Grab bar in the shower: I'm going to bite the bullet and admit I probably should have one. I'll hire a handyman to make sure it's done right with the screws put into the studs so it won't come out.

New batteries in the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors: While the handyman is here, I'll have him install them because, yes, I've given up ladders.

Small rug: The little rug I have in front of the kitchen sink has to go. It has a curled corner, and while I've managed not to trip on it, I need to remove it.

The pantry: After stocking up on extra items for the last few years because of the Covid pandemic, it's time to be sure I didn't let any items slip past their expiration date. I'll need to pull out every single thing and check the dates. This will include olive oil, spices, rice and all canned goods. In the laundry room this will include bleach, which can go stale and lose potency. (I'll need to look up the production codes to see when it was manufactured. After one year, it's probably degraded.)

Clutter: Yes, I've let certain things accumulate. I let myself get lazy over the winter about taking stacks of magazines to recycling (mostly because of the ice that always surrounds the recycling bins downtown). But they have to go.

Drugs: Expired drugs will need to go to the drop-off for disposal so they don't end up in a landfill.

Consider whether you want to add these ideas to your own spring cleaning list this year.

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1. In 2002, first baseman Hee-seop Choi became the first Korean-born position player in Major League Baseball when he debuted with what team?

2. Australia's Vern Schuppan won what prestigious sportscar endurance race in 1983?

3. Six days after winning the 1997 Stanley Cup championship, what Detroit Red Wings defenseman's hockey career was ended by injuries sustained in a limousine crash?

4. What Southern Miss Golden Eagles running back was named Offensive MVP of the 2024 East-West Shrine Bowl? (Hint: His father played running back for 16 NFL seasons.)

5. What team selected Notre Dame quarterback Rick Mirer with the second overall pick in the 1993 NFL Draft?

6. Kenyon Martin, the New Jersey Nets' No. 1 pick in the 2000 NBA Draft, played for what college basketball team?

7. Heisman Trophy winner Jameis Winston was cited in 2014 for shoplifting \$32 worth of what seafoods from a Tallahassee, Florida, grocery store?



by Ryan A. Berenz

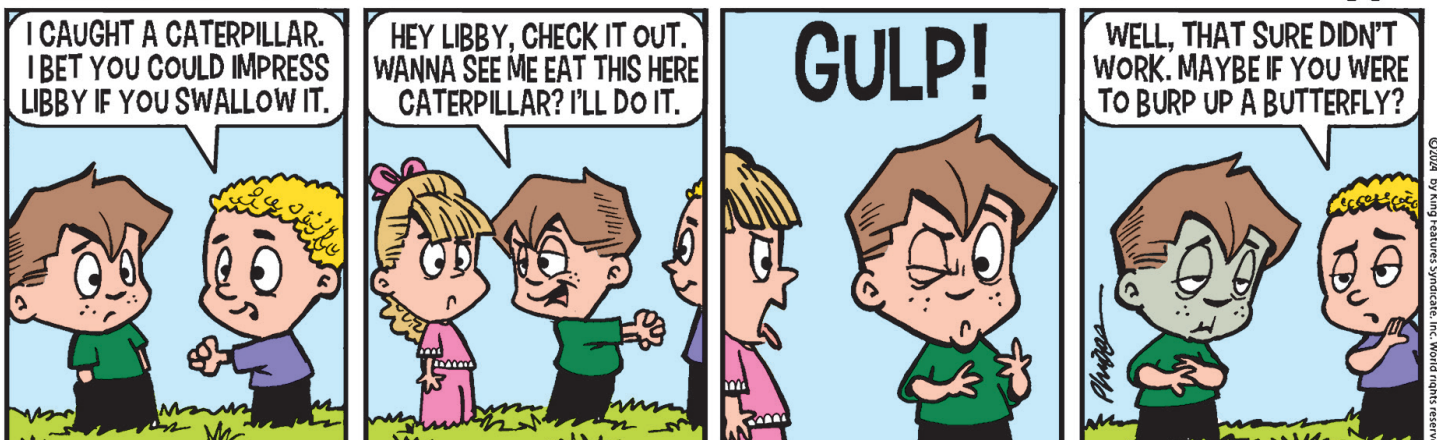
## Answers

1. The Chicago Cubs.
2. The 24 Hours of Le Mans.
3. Vladimir Konstantinov.
4. Frank Gore Jr.
5. The Seattle Seahawks.
6. The University of Cincinnati Bearcats.
7. Crab legs and crawfish.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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## When Tick Removal Goes Wrong

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: After taking my Terrier "Hank" for a walk around my subdivision yesterday, I noticed when taking off his leash that a tick had attached itself to the back of his neck! I don't even know where it came from; we stayed on the sidewalk. I quickly tried to remove it with tweezers, but Hank is kind of a wiggly guy, and just as I tugged on the tick, he moved and the body of the tick broke off! It looks like the tick's head is still embedded in his skin. What can I do? Will this hurt Hank? -- Joe K. in Sarasota Springs, New York

DEAR JOE: Since the tick's body was removed, and you noticed it pretty quickly, Hank's risk of contracting

a tick-borne illness is low. However, an infection might develop where the tick's head is still embedded.

Treat the bite spot with an over-the-counter antibiotic ointment. Monitor the spot for a few days. There may be a little redness around the bite area as the skin reacts to the foreign object, and with luck, the head may be pushed out enough for you to grab it with the tweezers and remove.

When should you contact Hank's veterinarian? If you aren't able to remove the tick head after a few days, it's time to make an appointment with the vet. Or, if the redness spreads or if Hank seems distressed, lethargic or otherwise out of sorts, get him to the vet right away.

Removing a tick as soon as it's found is important, because even though dogs can be vaccinated against Lyme Disease, other tick-borne diseases can be transmitted to your pet. Ticks are becoming active earlier in the year, so consider starting flea and tick prevention earlier, too.

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

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## Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

\* While death by guillotine might seem like an ancient ritual, the practice was still in use in France up until 1977 -- when the original "Star Wars" was in theaters.

\* Sleeping through summer is called estivation.

\* The Museum of Bad Art in Somerville, Massachusetts, is pretty much exactly what it sounds like -- a collection of really bad art! But then again, who's to judge?

\* The American Psychiatric Association's DSM-5 handbook classifies caffeine withdrawal as a mental

disorder.

\* Humans invented booze before the wheel.

\* When swallowed by toads, bombardier beetles project hot, noxious chemicals from their anuses, which sometimes forces the predators to puke the beetle back up.

\* The town of Baarle straddles the Dutch-Belgian border. In some places, the official borderline cuts through houses and cafes.

\* There are approximately 200 feral cats roaming the grounds of Disneyland, where they help control the park's rodent population. All of them are spayed or neutered, and park staff provide them with both extra food and medical care.

\* The second-half kickoff in Super Bowl I had to be done twice, as NBC didn't cut back from a commercial break in time to catch the first one on camera.

\* In Japan, instead of a "Man in the Moon," people see a "Rabbit in the Moon."

\* The Mobile Phone Throwing World Championships are held in Finland. One winner said he prepared for the event by "mainly drinking."

\* Sometimes it snows on Mars, but the flakes are made out of carbon dioxide, not water.


\* After the band OutKast sang "Shake it like a Polaroid picture," Polaroid released a statement warning that "shaking or waving can actually damage the image."

\*\*\*

Thought for the Day: "The stupid neither forgive nor forget; the naive forgive and forget; the wise forgive but do not forget." -- Thomas Szasz

Szasz

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**Groundcover plants** provide dense soil cover, retard weed growth and prevent soil erosion. They can be woody or herbaceous, clumping or running, evergreen or deciduous. With many colors and textures to choose, they can define and unify a landscape, or soften hardscapes such as walks, steps and driveways. - Brenda Weaver

*When selecting a ground cover, consider these choices:*

- Tall or low in height
- Sun or shade-loving
- Clay or sandy soil
- Moist conditions or dry
- Showy flowers or less showy
- Seasonal or evergreen

Sources: [urbanext.illinois.edu](http://urbanext.illinois.edu) [www.greenwoodnursery.com](http://www.greenwoodnursery.com)





by Freddy Groves

## Compensation for Service-Related Conditions

Service-connected injuries and conditions for which you can receive compensation can be either physical or mental. But there's no one-size-fits-all when it comes to how much compensation you can receive. Whether it's hearing loss or depression, or cancer or PTSD, each one has a different rating, which results in a different level of compensation.

The Department of Veterans Affairs disability rating you are assigned after being approved is based on the severity of your condition. Your compensation will be based partially on that and partially on whatever else might increase that compensation, such as having a family or a disabled spouse, or if you've suffered severe disability or loss of limbs.

And from there it gets even more complicated.

It's possible for your rating to change over time if your condition worsens, but even when combining multiple ratings (conditions) it's nearly impossible to reach 100% disability.

Increasing your final rating by combining smaller ratings (for multiple conditions) is difficult because there are rules, charts and math to consider. There is combining the numbers, converting, rounding up or down to the nearest 10. For example, you can't take a 20% rating and a 60% rating and come up with an 80% rating. In this case, the actual combined rating equates to 68%, but it's rounded up to 70% ... because the chart says so.

Combining three or more disabilities is even more complicated. And nowhere on that chart is a rating of 100% disability.

A 100% disability rating, if given, can be temporary (until your condition clears up or gets better) or permanent if given for severe conditions such as blindness or loss of limb. But reaching that level without those severe conditions is difficult enough that whole legal websites across the internet are devoted to that one effort: getting a 100% disability rating.

To wade through the disability compensation ratings and benefits, go to [www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/rates-index.asp#howcalc](http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/rates-index.asp#howcalc).

The ratings calculator can be found at [www.va.gov/disability/about-disability-ratings](http://www.va.gov/disability/about-disability-ratings).

The VA is currently taking 158 days to make decisions about claims.

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## Wishing Well®

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

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

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1. MOVIES: Which dramatic film features the character "V"?
2. GEOGRAPHY: Luzon belongs to which island nation?
3. LANGUAGE: What is the Latin phrase for "before the war"?
4. U.S. STATES: Which state has the most national parks?
5. LITERATURE: Which 1950s novel includes the line, "Nothing behind me, everything ahead of me, as is ever so on the road."
6. CHEMISTRY: What kind of gas makes a drink bubbly?
7. TELEVISION: Which sitcom features a mom named Debra Barone?
8. MUSIC: What was the former name of the English band Muse?
9. SCIENCE: What are the gaps between nerve cells called?
10. THEATER: Who wrote the play "The Crucible"?

### Answers

1. "V for Vendetta" (2005).
2. The Philippines.
3. Antebellum.
4. California, with nine.
5. "On the Road" by Jack Kerouac.
6. Carbon dioxide.
7. "Everybody Loves Raymond."
8. Rocket Baby Dolls.
9. Synapses.
10. Arthur Miller.

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South Dakota Governor

**Kristi Noem**



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

## **"I Like My Freedom"**

We recently launched round three of the most successful workforce recruitment campaign in South Dakota history – Freedom Works Here. We kicked it off with a brand-new ad. In this ad, which we're calling "Building in America," I get to be a homebuilder.

Anyone in South Dakota, or any state that enjoys the winter season, knows the beginning of spring also brings the homebuilding season. And for our state, building new homes is more important now than ever before. Our population is growing rapidly – and when new families move to South Dakota, they need a place to live. So we need to build new homes to keep up with the demand! The newest ad specifically targets homebuilders to move to South Dakota.

This is the perfect time of year to recruit Freedom-loving Americans to move to South Dakota. As the end of the school year approaches, families with school-aged children will start considering making a move over the summer. We want to make sure they are thinking about South Dakota.

South Dakota's story of success is a rare one. People don't hear much good news these days, so we're sharing our story with the nation. Now, because of Freedom Works Here, thousands and thousands of families have moved to South Dakota – and thousands more are in the process of coming here. I have heard some heartwarming stories from people who have moved to our great state.

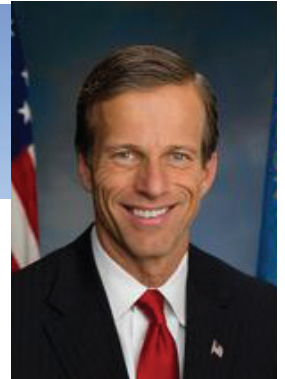
Catherine recently worked with one of our job advisors to secure a job as a substitute teacher in the Sioux Falls School District. She recalls, "I was feeling completely hopeless in California for years searching for even a basic job, but this program has gotten me out of my slump and has restored my hope in the American Dream." With a wage of \$160-175 per day, Catherine not only found employment, but a renewed sense of hope and opportunity. "I can actually afford to live out here," Catherine told us. "It's a miracle!" Her boyfriend also joined the journey to South Dakota and accepted a job as a wastewater treatment operator at the Water District in Sioux Falls, SD.

Jon relocated to Hermosa, South Dakota from Oklahoma. Despite being a newcomer to the state, this veteran wasted no time. Within hours of applying for a position at Mainline Contracting, Jon received an interview call. He quickly accepted the position of heavy equipment operator. Since making the move to South Dakota, Jon and his wife have embraced their new home and community. Their enthusiasm for Jon's new role and the opportunity to live in South Dakota is evident.

These are just a couple of the amazing stories we've heard from folks who have moved to South Dakota from all over the country. I am so proud of our state for being the beacon of hope that America needs right now. And I'm glad that people are coming here to join our way of life.

Another young man who recently moved to South Dakota summed it up so perfectly: "I like my Freedom."

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



## Biden's Tax Plan Would Make Tax Day More Painful

I would be surprised if any American looks forward to Tax Day. No one enjoys writing a check to the IRS or contemplating just how much of their paycheck winds up in the federal government's pocket, especially when the government doesn't have a great track record with making the best use of those dollars. And as unpleasant as April 15 can be, the reckless tax-and-spending agenda that President Biden is putting forward could make it even more painful.

Americans have already suffered from three years of Bidenflation, but instead of abandoning his big-government agenda, President Biden is again proposing the same kind of reckless tax-and-spending policies that contributed to inflation in the first place. His proposed budget is full of new spending programs and \$5 trillion in tax increases. While the president claims his tax hikes will only affect the wealthy and big corporations, the reality is that higher taxes affect the entire economy. Together these tax hikes would make America less competitive, slow our economic growth, reduce job opportunities and wages, and lead to even higher prices. And as lower, Republican-passed, across-the-board tax rates are set to expire in 2025, the president has presented no plan to protect most Americans from a tax hike.

The president's proposed budget would also enable an additional \$100 billion-plus boost to the IRS budget over the next decade. In 2022, Democrats approved nearly \$80 billion on top of the agency's annual budget, the majority of which was directed toward enforcement and audits of American taxpayers. As Democrats were forcing through a bill that would supersize the IRS, Republicans were trying to protect everyday Americans from increased IRS audits. Every Democrat senator voted against our amendment to do just that. As a recent report found, the agency has still not specified how it will prevent increased audits on households earning less than \$400,000.

Unfortunately, there are still more issues at the IRS that should concern taxpayers. In addition to the IRS's troubling history of mishandling and protecting taxpayer information, the agency has also failed to comply with a federal law banning TikTok on government devices, which was enacted because of the app's threat to national security and ties to the Chinese Communist Party.

The American people should be able to trust that when they file their taxes, their information will be safe and their tax dollars will be used efficiently and effectively. The Biden administration has demonstrated it is more interested in raising taxes than in raising the standards at the IRS.

Tax Day is another reminder that the government works for the American people. I'll continue to hold the Biden administration and the IRS accountable to protect taxpayers from unnecessary headaches and future generations from the negative effects of the president's reckless tax-and-spending ideas.

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



## Great Faces, Great Places

### **BIG Update**

The United States Postal Service (USPS) recently announced plans to move mail processing centers from Sioux Falls to Omaha, Nebraska, and from Huron to Fargo, North Dakota. Due to this change, South Dakota will be left with no regional mail processing facilities. This move will require any mail sent from Sioux Falls to Chamberlain, for example, to go all the way to Omaha then back over to Chamberlain, a 500-mile journey. This move is inefficient and will delay mail routes across South Dakota, not to mention dozens of South Dakota jobs being lost.

I sent a letter with Senators Thune and Rounds to USPS Postmaster General Louis DeJoy urging him to re-evaluate this adjustment in services to avoid mail delays and disruptions in South Dakota. Rural South Dakota relies on these mail processing centers to get their mail and news in a timely manner. I hope the Postal Service reconsiders this decision.

### **BIG News**

On Monday, I hosted my Level Up Youth Conference in Sioux Falls. Nearly 275 high school students from ten area schools were there to participate and hear from Cardboard Confessional's Mitch Reed, SDPB's Lori Walsh, and Dakota Scout's Jonathan Ellis. We talked about how to be a better engaged and informed citizen and friend, and how to responsibly consume news and media in the age of deep fakes and AI.

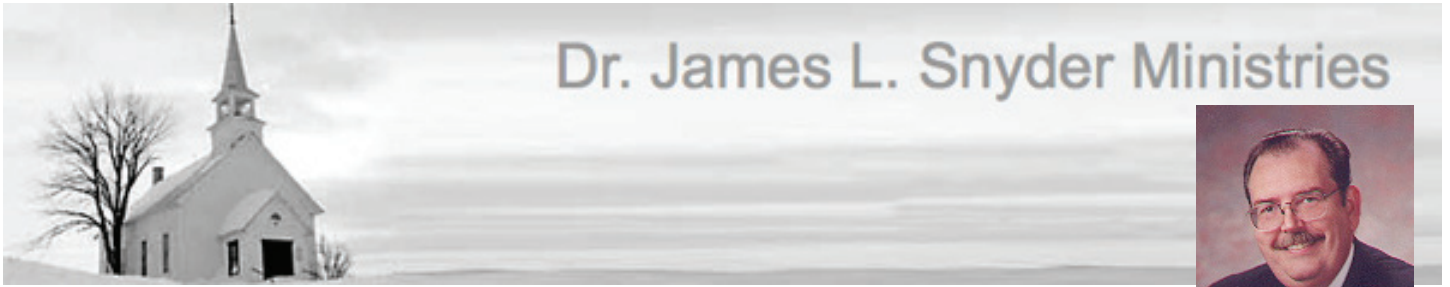
As I told the students, too little salt can cause health problems. It's necessary in a good diet, but too much salt is bad for your health. It's similar with media and news consumption. Too little news consumption, and you don't know what is going on in our country or how to engage. Too much media consumption, and you're overwhelmed and don't know what is true.

The students had thoughtful questions for the speakers and are interested in a wide variety of policy issues that matter today. It was great to host them!

### **BIG Idea**

The South Dakota Trucking Association came to D.C. to talk about speed limiting devices in trucks. We are both opposed to a proposed rule from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) that would require these devices in trucks. This rule would add extra transportation costs to the private sector and slow down the supply chain. It may even make roads less safe due to speed differentials between trucks and passenger vehicles, causing more accidents.

I am a cosponsor of the DRIVE Act to prevent FMCSA from implementing this regulation and others like it that would require these types of devices. The federal government should be working to make it easier for truckers to enter the industry, not dissuade them with more bureaucratic red tape.



Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



## And Then There Was Broccoli

Sometimes, bad days are a blessing in disguise, but you don't know it at the time. I have learned that whenever I have a bad day, it is not a time to get discouraged or sad. A bad day is often a door that opens up something I never expected.

Last week, for example, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage had plans to spend three days in St. Augustine with her daughter and granddaughter on a thrift store drive. They would visit all the thrift stores in the area and buy whatever they could at a good price.

"You don't mind if I and the girls go to St. Augustine for three days," the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage asked.

Asking me a question like that does two things for me.

First, it allows me to have lunch at nearby restaurants.

Second, it allows me to do things against The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage's rules and guidelines without her knowing.

For three days, I will be left to my own rules and guidelines. What in the world more could I ask for?

As I was processing this, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said, "And by the way your meals are already prepared and in the refrigerator."

Well, that wasn't expected.

After all the preparation on both sides of the aisle, she was ready to take off with her daughter and granddaughter for a three-day thrift store extravaganza. She kissed me goodbye, and out the door she went, and my three-day celebration had just begun.

I went to the kitchen, got a fresh cup of coffee, took it to my easy chair, set back, and just thought about what I was going to do during the next three days. I sat there thinking about all of the opportunities that were before me.

At lunchtime, I went to the refrigerator to see what lunch was waiting for me. When I opened the door, I was literally surprised. The refrigerator was jammed full of lunch, dinner, and breakfast food already for me. Every item was labeled either breakfast, lunch, or supper, so I knew which one to take and at what time.

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Being the contrary person I am, instead of eating the lunch package, I ate the supper package. As I chomped on the delicious meal, I chuckled, knowing that I was in charge of my life.

I didn't care about the tags on the food; I just grabbed what was handy, and that was what I was going to eat at the time.

At the beginning of the second day, I noticed something. The labels were not exactly correct. The breakfast label was on the supper package, the lunch label was on the breakfast package, and the supper label was on the lunch package. She made it very distinct and did an excellent job at it.

On the first day, I snuck out in the afternoon and got a cheeseburger, fries, and Diet Coke. I'm not sure if it was lunch or supper, but I enjoyed it.

By midmorning, when I was working at my desk on the second day, a thought fluttered into my head. That thought was about an Apple Fritter. This would be an excellent time for me to sneak over to Publix and get one. I could do that, and she would never know the difference.

I kept thinking about that and wondered how I could accomplish it. After all, everybody at Publix knows my wife and knows that she doesn't want me to eat any Apple Fritters. I tried it once before and got caught, and so I wasn't going to do it again.

It didn't stop me from thinking about those wonderful Apple Fritters. What harm would I do to sneak one into the house, but The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage wasn't home and wouldn't find me out?

I thought about going to the Publix across town, which would be worth the time and the gas.

I was eating the food from the refrigerator, and on the third morning I noticed a box in the back of the fridge. I pulled the box out, and on the top of the box was the word broccoli. I almost had a heart attack when I saw it and was afraid to open it.

Why did she put a box of broccoli in the refrigerator for me to find when she was away? Maybe she thought I would take that broccoli and throw it away. Or maybe she thought I would see it and do nothing with it.

I'm not that kind of person, so I pulled the box out. I was going to throw the broccoli away and put something else in it just to be funny, but when I opened the lid, inside were Apple Fritters.

In the box was a note on which she wrote, "You deserve a break today, just don't break a leg."

I could not help but think of that Bible verse, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

As I munched on those Apple Fritters I thought about what it means to "be agreed." Certainly The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I "walk together." That has been true since our marriage. The important thing is that we agree sometimes to disagree.

Our difference is what makes us a great team. My weakness is her strength and her weakness is my strength.

## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Why are Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos, among others, so bullish on developing nuclear fusion as a power source?

-- Mark P. Newton, MA

While nuclear fission is commonly used in nuclear power plants across the globe, nuclear fusion is a lesser-known process. Whereas fission is the process of releasing energy by splitting atoms apart, fusion is the opposite. During nuclear fusion light nuclei collide with each other to form heavier nuclei, a process that releases large amounts of energy. To produce fusion, it requires a combination of the hydrogen gasses deuterium and tritium, which are heated to over 100 million degrees celsius. The end result is a helium nucleus and a neutron, formed from the collision of light nuclei.

Fusion power offers so many advantages that many have heralded it the "Holy Grail" of clean energy. The most enticing advantage is that nuclear fusion produces no carbon emissions. The only by-products of the reaction are small amounts of helium. There are also abundant resources to produce fusion. Deuterium can be extracted from water and tritium can be produced from lithium. Nuclear fusion offers a safer alternative to nuclear fission, as a large-scale nuclear accident is not possible in a fusion reactor. And unlike fission, there is no radioactive waste as a result. The energy efficiency of fusion is another major advantage. One kilogram of fusion fuels could theoretically provide the same amount of energy as 10 million kilograms of fossil fuel.

Many billionaires and tech moguls have recognized the potential of nuclear fusion and have invested in its future, Bill Gates being the most well-known. Founded by Gates in 2015, Breakthrough Energy Ventures is a fund set up to invest in clean energy transition innovations. Breakthrough Energy is supported and funded by other well-known billionaires like Jeff Bezos and Richard Branson. In an interview with ABC News in 2023, Gates said, "Nuclear energy, if we do it right, will help us solve our climate goals." It is easy to see why scientific minds want to invest in nuclear fusion.

So why isn't nuclear fusion already implemented across the states? Nuclear fusion has proven difficult to implement and other energy sources often provide more reliable and consistent energy gains. It wasn't until December 2022 that the National Ignition Facility announced a breakthrough in that it was the first time a nuclear fusion reaction created a net gain of energy. There is still much work to be done to make fusion a reliable source of energy. Other clean energy sources have considerable head starts on fusion. The first nuclear fusion reactor was started up in 1951, while the first windmills and solar panels were built in the 1880s. Other energy sources have had much more time to be perfected and improved upon. They also achieve much higher net energy gains than fusion.



**Workers at the National Ignition Facility (NIF) at Lawrence Livermore National Labs are still working to get nuclear fusion off the ground as an energy source of the future.** Credit: Steve Jurvetson,

FlickrCC.





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Cattlemen tell Thune: 'More ranch' needed in already overdue farm bill

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - APRIL 13, 2024 6:30 AM

VALLEY SPRINGS — Ranchers urged Republican U.S. Senators John Thune of South Dakota and John Boozman of Arkansas to consider grasslands and cattle – not just crop support – as they finalize federal legislation that will govern many agricultural and food programs for years to come.

The feedback came as the senators fielded questions from various agriculture and conservation groups during a Friday listening session at a Valley Springs-area farm.

The federal farm bill is officially known as the Agriculture Improvement Act. The bill covers everything from farm credit and crop insurance to nutritional programs and conservation.

The most recent version was enacted in 2018, and various subsidies and programs have been outpaced by inflation. The bill was set to expire but has been extended through Sep. 30 as Congress works through disagreements over the legislation.

The forum attracted commodity groups in the corn, soybean, wheat, dairy, pork, poultry and sunflower sectors, all of whom want stronger crop insurance.

"It's time to get it passed, this year," said Scott VanderWal, president of South Dakota Farm Bureau. "We didn't really want to be in a presidential election year when we had to do this, but that's where we're at. We have to deal with it."

Sen. Boozman, the top Republican on the Senate Ag Committee, acknowledged the importance of conservation but said crop insurance should be the focus. He said every acre taken out of production and conserved is less income for small towns.

There needs to be "more farm in the farm bill," Boozman said, a sentiment echoed by Thune.

The session's rhetoric shifted when South Dakota Cattlemen's Association President Warren Symens stood up.

"I agree that putting 'farm' back in the farm bill is crucial," he said. "But our members are looking to see a little more 'ranch' in the farm bill, as well."

Symens spoke of ranchers' role in grassland conservation and stressed the importance of plentiful grazing acres.

"Leaving them idle and not allowing grazing kills small towns" dependent on the cattle industry, he said.

Symens lobbied for the inclusion of beef in farm bill nutrition programs and for electronic cattle traceability funding to manage disease outbreaks better.

With disease outbreaks, he said, "it's not a matter of if, it's when."

Currently, ranching receives less federal support compared to the support provided to crops.

From 1995 to 2020, South Dakota farmers received \$6.7 billion in federal payments for corn, \$3.1 billion for soybeans, \$2.4 billion for wheat and \$1.9 billion for conservation, among other items, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

By contrast, payments to livestock producers totaled \$732 million.

The disparity has left some ranchers feeling sidelined in agricultural policy.

Austin Havlik is an ag lender, rancher and member of the cattlemen's association. He said ranchers com-

ing to his office are asking for bigger loans for more cattle to pay the bills.

"How are you going to protect yourself" is the question Havlik said lenders like him are left asking, making the Livestock Risk Protection insurance program important to continue in the next farm bill. The federally subsidized program was created to insure against declines in livestock market prices.

Tensions between ranchers and farmers sometimes arise when policies that favor crop subsidies encourage the conversion of grassland to cropland or reduce grazing areas for livestock.

Thune told South Dakota Searchlight that balancing those interests can be achieved within the framework of the farm bill.

"Yes, there are competing interests," he said. "Sometimes perhaps at odds with each other, but we're all in this together."

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

## Trump's repeated escapes from political damage to be tested in NYC trial

**BY: JACOB FISCHLER - APRIL 13, 2024 6:00 AM**

Donald Trump on Monday in a New York City courtroom will make history as the first former U.S. president to stand trial in criminal proceedings.

And it raises new issues for the presumptive Republican nominee for president in November, even as he builds a political brand that so far has seemed immune from accusations of wrongdoing.

Trump is accused of falsifying business records to cover up payments made during his first White House run in 2016 to the adult film star Stormy Daniels in return for her silence about an alleged affair.

It's a somewhat complicated, documents-based case in which prosecutors must convince jurors that bookkeeping errors were committed with the aim of illegally affecting an election, Jessica A. Levinson, the director of the Public Service Institute at Loyola Marymount University's law school, said in an interview.

And though some experts consider it an election interference case, it's neither the most serious allegation Trump faces nor the easiest for prosecutors to prove, Levinson said.

"This case is being asked to bear more weight than it possibly should or could," Levinson said. "It's being asked to be a bellwether, a referendum on Trump. And it's a state criminal case. It's not more, it's not less, but the amount of attention it's getting is obviously outsized.

"For people who feel like Trump should be held to account, now all eyes are on this one business records case," she added. "When you think about the things that were most harmful to our democracy, arguably this isn't the case that should have gone first."

The outcome of the trial could affect voters' perceptions of the other prosecutions, Levinson said.

The case is one of four against Trump involving criminal charges, two in state courts and two in federal courts. A state prosecution in Georgia accuses him of conspiring to overturn that state's election results.

The two cases in the federal courts include a federal charge related to Trump's efforts to overturn his loss in the 2020 presidential election that culminated in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, and another federal case charging Trump with improperly storing classified documents after he left office.

### **Election interference?**

Norm Eisen, a legal analyst who was Democratic co-counsel for the U.S. House Judiciary Committee during Trump's first impeachment on charges he solicited election interference from Ukraine during the 2016 election, said the New York state case should also be considered an election interference case.

Levinson, an expert on the law of the political process, including campaign finance law, agreed, though

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she said the allegations are not at the same level as charges related to attempts to overturn the 2020 election results.

The payments to Daniels were meant to disrupt the 2016 election by withholding key information from voters, she said. They began shortly after video footage surfaced of Trump bragging about grabbing women's genitals.

Prosecutors say allegations of infidelity with a porn actor would have further eroded Trump's support with women voters and the payments were meant to stop that.

The allegations in the case are violations of election law and campaign finance law, Levinson noted.

"It's not the same as 'I don't want you to count up Electoral College votes,'" she said, referring to the charges in other election interference cases. But "it is about, in my view, trying to hide a story from the voters right after they had just heard the 'Access Hollywood' tape and right before they were going to the ballot box."

Trump has consistently characterized the case, as he has with all the criminal charges against him, as a political witch hunt by Democrats to undermine a political rival.

In a fundraising appeal Friday, Trump repeated the message.

"ON MONDAY ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE!" the email said. "BIDEN AND HIS ALLIES WANT ME LOCKED AWAY IN PRISON! RABID DEMOCRATS ARE POISED TO RAISE MILLIONS WHILE I'M STUCK DEFENDING MYSELF IN COURT!"

That critique ignores the high standard of evidence needed to bring criminal charges, and doesn't refute the allegations, but that type of all-caps accusation has proved effective at keeping many Republican voters supportive of Trump.

Spokespeople for the Trump campaign did not return messages seeking comment for this story.

## In the courtroom

The trial will start Monday with jury selection, which could last several days or longer.

Once the actual arguments begin, the case will hinge on Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's ability to show jurors that the irregularities in Trump's business records were in service of committing another crime.

Paying hush money is not illegal by itself, Levinson said, so the violation of campaign finance law is crucial to the case.

Bragg and his team should try to simplify the case and "emphasize over and over again" that the payments were meant to influence the election, she said.

Trump's defense will likely focus on Michael Cohen, the former vice president of the Trump Organization and Trump's onetime personal counsel who allegedly delivered the payments to Daniels.

Cohen, who served a federal prison sentence for tax fraud and perjury, has publicly described Trump's role in the alleged scheme. But his credibility, after his convictions and the public reversal of his account, is a major question.

## Electoral impact of conviction unclear

For more than eight years, Trump has successfully deflected and even used to his advantage the types of scandals that were previously believed to be fatal to political candidates, disproving predictions of an imminent political collapse so regularly it became a cliché.

He has so far weathered any significant damage from the criminal proceedings, including the New York case, and even gained some political benefit from them.

He has said the prosecutions are politically motivated attempts by Democrats to weaken their chief political opponent. Republican voters, at least, seem to largely accept that argument, allowing Trump to coast to the nomination early this year.

And the criminal allegations have not yet critically damaged Trump's reputation with general election voters. He is polling close to President Joe Biden in several swing states and in national surveys, though

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voters have told pollsters that their opinions may change if Trump is convicted.

But there is reason to doubt that a conviction would have any impact on Trump's position with voters, Seth Masket, the director of the Center on American Politics at the University of Denver, said in an interview with States Newsroom.

Political observers wondered throughout 2023 how much the four criminal indictments against Trump would affect the former president in the 2024 primaries, Masket said.

The accusations, especially the New York charges that were the first to be revealed, seemed to actually help in the nominating race. His rivals in that contest largely defended Trump.

Even if he's convicted, Republican voters in a polarized country are more likely to side with Trump than a judicial system he describes daily as corrupt, Masket said.

"Everything we've seen so far suggests that every bad thing that happens to him causes Republicans to rally behind him and ratify his view that the system is after him," he said. "The idea that a conviction would be perceived broadly enough across parties as completely legitimate and aboveboard I think is pretty unlikely."

Eisen, who said he expects Trump to be convicted in the New York case, disagrees, saying the spectacle of a criminal conviction would break Trump's hold on voters.

"When a jury of Trump's peers — and their peers, ordinary Americans — sit in judgment and reach a verdict, if they do, that's a different order of magnitude," Eisen said. "And then when you combine that with a criminal sentence following that kind of verdict, well then you really are in a whole different ballgame."

## Beyond the first trial

But if Trump is not convicted, or if the charges are reduced to misdemeanors, it could insulate him in voters' minds against the other pending cases, Levinson said.

Because Trump has for years described the legal actions against him as political, winning the first case to reach court could help reinforce that message, she said.

"If he's anything short of convicted on the felonies, then it's just a huge win for him because he's going to take this to say, 'Look, every legal action against me is baseless,'" Levinson said. "I don't think it has anything to do legally with the other cases. But it will be politically a huge win for the former president."

It's unclear what the historical import of the first trial of a former president will be, Masket said. But the concept that Trump remains a viable presidential contender — and therefore somewhat immune from criminal accountability — is a troubling sign for U.S. democracy.

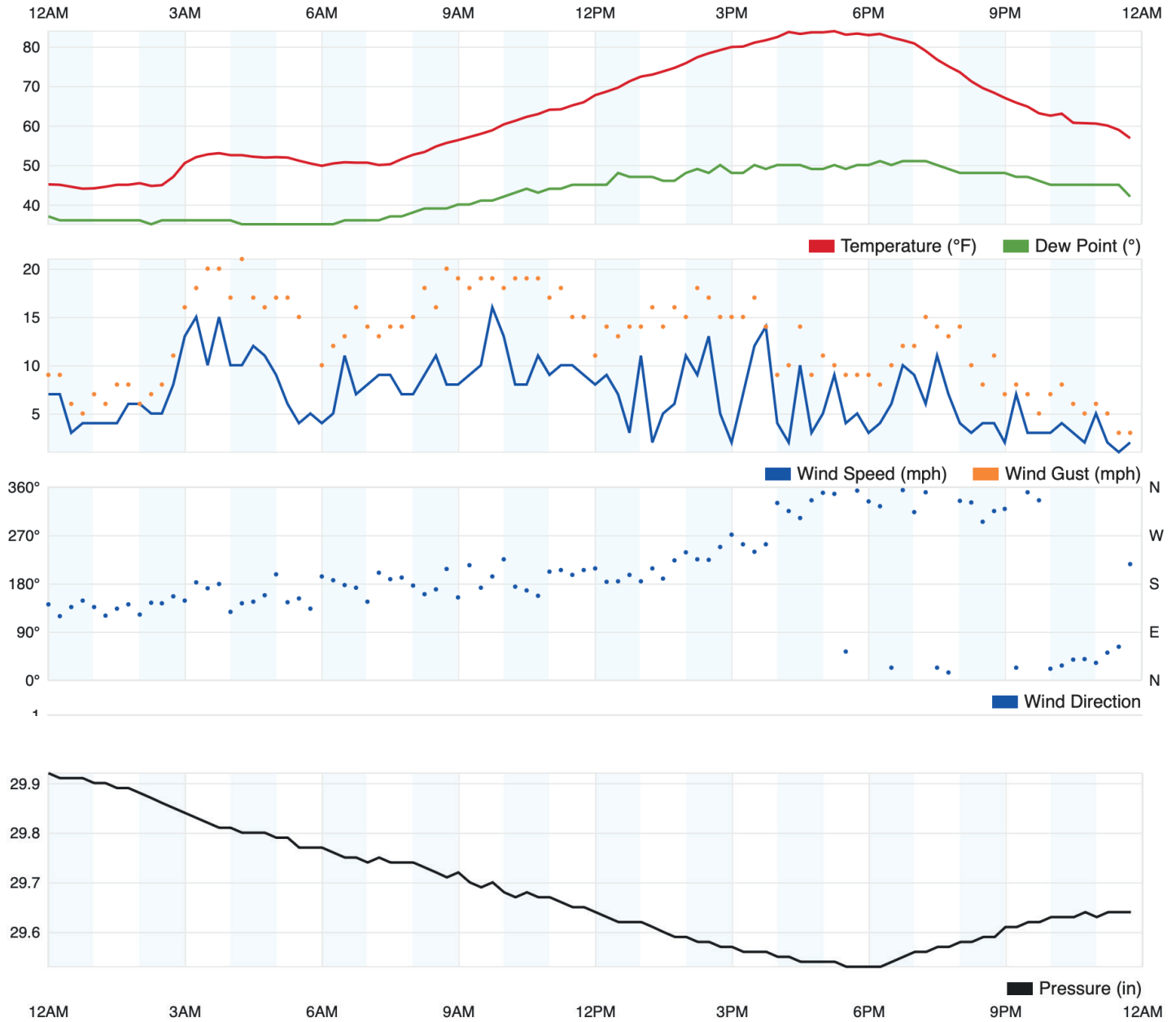
"We repeatedly get this message that no one is above the law, except maybe this one guy," Masket said. "And that's a problem. That just undermines a lot of people's faith in the democratic system."

*Jacob covers federal policy as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Sunny

High: 75 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear  
then Slight  
Chance  
Showers

Low: 45 °F

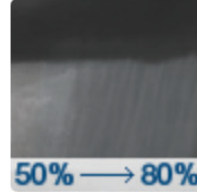
Monday



Chance  
Showers and  
Breezy

High: 75 °F

Monday  
Night



Breezy.  
Chance  
Showers then  
Showers

Low: 51 °F

Tuesday



Showers and  
Breezy

High: 60 °F



## Mild Weather Through Monday

April 14, 2024  
3:30 AM

Turning Wetter & Colder Mid Week

Sunday



Highs:  
72 - 80°F  
5-15 mph

Monday



Highs:  
70 - 82°F  
25-40 mph

Tuesday



Highs:  
58 - 61°F  
35-50 mph

Wednesday



Highs:  
56 - 59°F  
30-40 mph

Thursday



Highs:  
45 - 50°F  
30-40 mph



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Mild temperatures will continue today and Monday. We see thunderstorm chances increase mainly west river for late Monday with more widespread rain and thunder Tuesday. Much colder air will follow for the latter half of the week.

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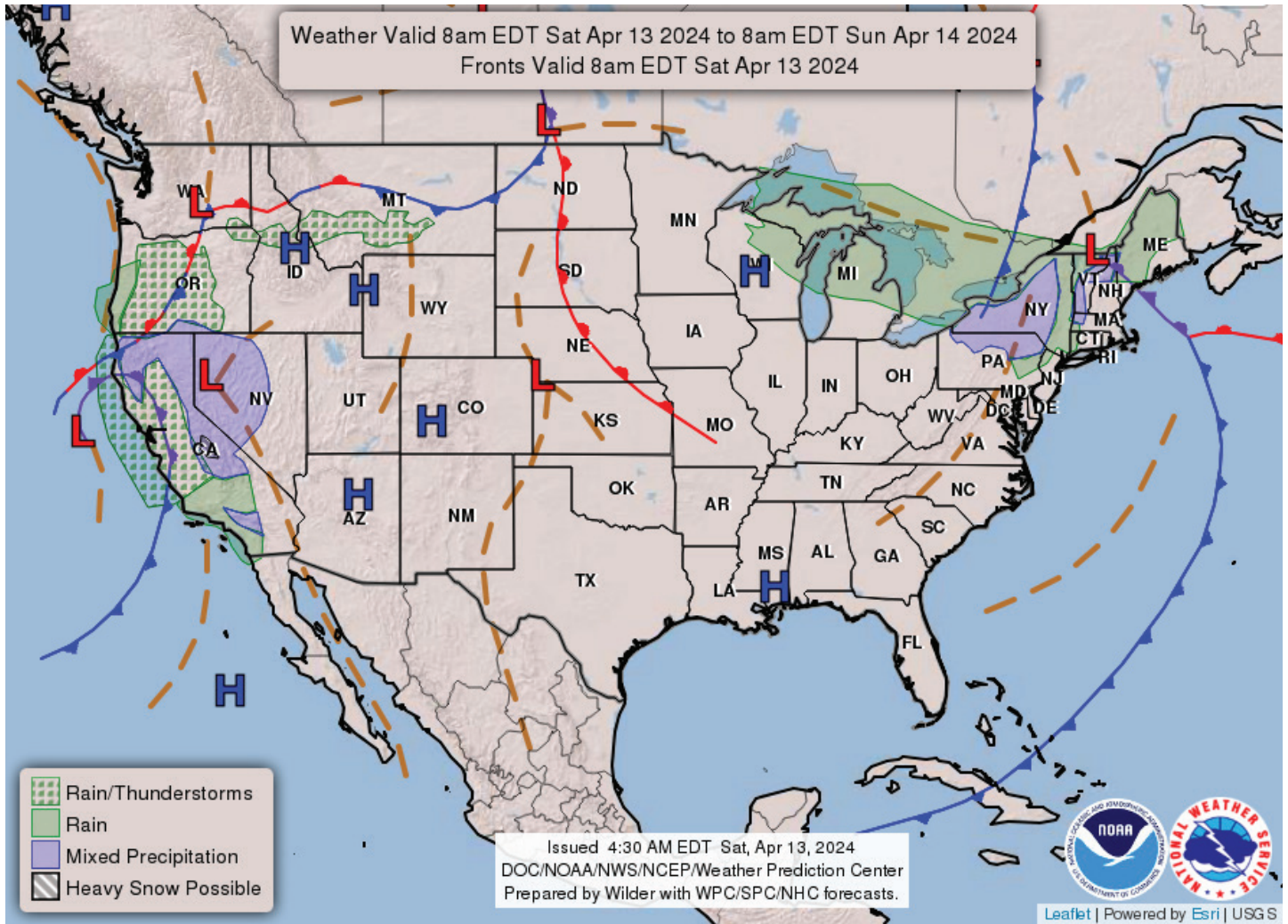
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 84 °F at 5:11 PM**  
**Low Temp: 44 °F at 12:40 AM**  
**Wind: 23 mph at 9:05 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 13 hours, 33 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 89 in 1908  
Record Low: 9 in 1928  
Average High: 57  
Average Low: 31  
Average Precip in April.: 0.67  
Precip to date in April: 1.19  
Average Precip to date: 2.68  
Precip Year to Date: 2.14  
Sunset Tonight: 8:19:19 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:43:52 am



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## Today in Weather History

April 14, 1991: Thawing ice on top of a television tower fell onto buildings below in Garden City, Clark County. The ice had accrued during a freezing rain event on the 11th and 12th. No one was injured, but damage estimates ranged from \$35,000-\$40,000.

April 14, 2005: A dust devil developed on the west side of Bison as a dry cold front passed through the area. As it moved east across town, it blew out windows on several automobiles, damaged a 160 square foot section of roof from a house, and tore shingles off several buildings. The dust devil also pulled a flagpole out of the ground. No one was injured. The dust devil was approximately 20 feet wide, and the path length was one and a half miles.

1873 - A famous Easter blizzard raged across Kansas, Nebraska and South Dakota. Gale force winds blew the wet snow into massive drifts, however there were few deaths due to the sparse population and due to the gradual increase of the storm. (David Ludlum)

1886: The deadliest tornado in Minnesota history razed parts of St. Cloud and Sauk Rapids, leaving 72 dead and 213 injured. 11 members of a wedding party were killed including the bride and groom. The bottom of the Mississippi River was seen during the tornado's crossing.

1912: On her maiden voyage, the RMS Titanic rammed into an iceberg just before midnight. The "unsinkable ship" sank two hours and forty minutes later into the icy water of the Atlantic Ocean near Newfoundland, Canada. Tragically, 1,517 passengers including the crew were lost. A nearby ship, the Carpathia, rushed to the Titanic and was able to save 706 people.

1922: The Mississippi River reached a record height of 21.3 feet at New Orleans, Louisiana, and the river was still rising, with the crest still a week away. Understandably, the City of New Orleans was nervous as reports of levees failing upriver reached the city. A crevasse below New Orleans would relieve the pressure on the town's strained levees on the 27th, spared the city from disaster.

1935: Black Sunday refers to a particularly severe dust storm that occurred on April 14, 1935, as part of the Dust Bowl. During the afternoon, the residents of the Plains States were forced to take cover as a dust storm, or "black blizzard," blew through the region. The storm hit the Oklahoma Panhandle and Northwestern Oklahoma first and moved south for the remainder of the day. It hit Beaver around 4:00 p.m., Boise City around 5:15 p.m., and Amarillo, Texas, at 7:20 p.m. The conditions were the most severe in the Oklahoma and Texas panhandles, but the storm's effects were felt in other surrounding areas.

1987 - A storm system moving slowly northeastward across the Middle Mississippi Valley produced severe thunderstorms which spawned three tornadoes around Ottumwa IA, and produced up to four inches of rain in southeastern Nebraska, flooding rivers and streams. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A weather disturbance off the southern coast of California brought parts of southern California their first rain in six weeks. Rain-slickened roads resulted in numerous accidents in southern California, including a ten car pile-up at Riverside. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Late afternoon thunderstorms in northern Florida soaked the town of Golden Gate with 4.37 inches of rain in about two hours, resulting in local flooding. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather in southeastern Texas during the mid morning hours. Thunderstorms produced dime size hail at Galveston, and wind gusts to 59 mph at Port Arthur. Afternoon thunderstorms over southeast Louisiana spawned tornadoes south of Bogalusa and at Rio. (Storm Data)

1999: In Sydney, Australia, a hailstorm causes \$1.6 billion in damage, making it the costliest hailstorm to strike a populated city in the country. The hail damaged some 22,000 homes and more than 60,000 vehicles. Also, aircraft damage at Sydney Airport was extensive.



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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### JUDGED FOR WHAT?

It was a difficult semester in school for little Tammy. Her grades were very low and her fear of being punished very high. Thinking about a way out of her dilemma she asked her Dad, "Can you write your name with your eyes closed?"

"Yes, I think so," he replied.

"Great!" So, she had him sit at the table, got a pen and said, "Sign here!" as she guided his hand.

When he opened his eyes, he realized that he had signed her report card. Needless to say, he was not pleased and made some appropriate adjustments.

Although we may think that we are hiding things from God, Solomon reminds us that "God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad."

We are reminded by Solomon that we are to enjoy life and everything that God has given us. But this does not excuse us or exempt us from obeying God and what He has commanded us to do. We must train ourselves to recognize what is right or wrong according to God's Word and then live a life that is in agreement with His demands. He has the final say. No excuses! No exemptions! No explanations!

Prayer: May we live our lives, Lord, with a clear understanding of the fact that one day we will stand before You in judgment for all we've done. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad. Ecclesiastes 12:14



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

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.12.24

1 12 14 18 66 16

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$148,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.13.24

7 9 10 29 38 2

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$2,850,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.13.24

15 20 34 36 43 9

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 16 Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.13.24

11 16 23 29 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$58,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.13.24

39 55 60 65 69 26

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.13.24

7 33 40 43 69 10

Power Play: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$63,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### Homicide suspect kills himself after fleeing through 3 states, authorities say

CUSTER, S.D. (AP) — Authorities said they're investigating a case of domestic violence that ended with a man dead and a woman injured in South Dakota, and the suspect fleeing through Wyoming before killing himself Saturday in Colorado.

Deputies responded to a report of a homicide around 9:45 p.m. Friday at a home on U.S. Highway 16 west of Custer in far western South Dakota. They found a man dead there, while a woman who was assaulted in the incident drove herself to a hospital, South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley said in a news release.

The suspect fled the scene into Wyoming. He was eventually stopped early Saturday after a pursuit in northern Colorado, where he died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, the Larimer County, Colorado, Sheriff's Office said in a separate statement.

The sheriff's office said it was notified around 2 a.m. Saturday that the suspect was driving a pickup truck toward Colorado from Cheyenne, Wyoming. Law enforcement tried to contact him, but he eluded officers as he drove south on Interstate 25. Attempts by deputies and state troopers to stop him with tire spikes near the Buckeye exit failed, and the suspect shot at officers, the sheriff's office said.

Deputies eventually used a technique called a PIT maneuver, which involves using a squad car to spin the suspect's car, to stop him, the sheriff's office said.

"The man stayed inside the truck, and before they could contact him, he shot himself," the statement said. He died at the scene just south of the Wellington exit, about 65 miles (105 kilometers) north of Denver and about 280 highway miles (450 kilometers) from Custer.

The sheriff's office said a handgun was recovered from the suspect's vehicle. Officers did not fire their weapons during the incident, it said, and no other injuries were reported.

"This was an extremely dangerous situation involving an armed suspect with a disturbing disregard for public safety," Lt. Troy Badberg of the Larimer County Sheriff's Office said in the statement. "Dispatchers, investigators, and peace officers across multiple states worked together quickly and did everything they could to prevent harm to innocent people."

Names of the victims and the suspect were not immediately released.

### Bird flu is spreading to more farm animals. Are milk and eggs safe?

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

A bird flu outbreak in U.S. dairy cows has grown to affect more than two dozen herds in eight states, just weeks after the nation's largest egg producer found the virus in its chickens.

Health officials stress that the risk to the public is low and that the U.S. food supply remains safe and stable.

"At this time, there continues to be no concern that this circumstance poses a risk to consumer health, or that it affects the safety of the interstate commercial milk supply," the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said in a statement.

Here's what you need to know about bird flu and food:

#### WHICH STATES HAVE FOUND BIRD FLU IN DAIRY COWS?

As of Friday, the strain of bird flu that has killed millions of wild birds in recent years has been found in at least 26 dairy herds in eight U.S. states: Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas and South Dakota.

The virus, known as Type A H5N1, has been detected in a range of mammals over the last few years, but this is the first time it has been found in cattle, according to federal health and animal agencies. Genetic

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analysis of the virus does not show that it has changed to spread more easily in people, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

## HOW IS BIRD FLU AFFECTING FOOD PRODUCTION?

Agriculture officials in at least 17 states have restricted imports of dairy cattle from states where the virus has been detected, but, so far, government agencies say it's had little effect on commercial milk production. Officials believe cows likely have been infected by exposure to wild birds, but said cow-to-cow spread "cannot be ruled out."

Farmers are testing cows that show symptoms of infection, including sharply reduced milk supply and lethargy. Animals that show signs or test positive for illness are being separated from other animals on the farms. The animals appear to recover within two weeks.

U.S. egg producers are watching the situation closely after bird flu was detected in chickens in Texas and Michigan. Millions of birds have been killed, but the FDA said the risk of affected eggs getting into the retail market or causing infections in humans is low because of federal inspections and other safeguards.

## DOES PASTEURIZATION KILL BIRD FLU?

Scientists say there's no evidence to suggest that people can contract the virus by consuming food that's been pasteurized, or heat-treated — or properly cooked.

"It's not a food safety concern," said Lee-Ann Jaykus, an emeritus food microbiologist and virologist at North Carolina State University.

Two people in U.S. have been infected with bird flu to date. A Texas dairy worker who was in close contact with an infected cow recently developed a mild eye infection and has recovered. In 2022, a prison inmate in a work program caught it while killing infected birds at a Colorado poultry farm. His only symptom was fatigue, and he recovered.

## IS GROCERY STORE MILK SAFE FROM BIRD FLU?

Yes, according to food safety experts and government officials.

U.S. producers are barred from selling milk from sick cows and must divert and destroy it. In addition, milk sold across state lines is required to be pasteurized, or heat-treated using a process that kills bacteria and viruses, including influenza.

"We firmly believe that pasteurization provides a safe milk supply," Tracey Forfa, director of the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine told a webinar audience this week.

## IS RAW MILK SAFE FROM BIRD FLU?

The FDA and the CDC are less certain about unpasteurized, or raw, milk sold in many states, saying there's limited information about the possible transmission of the H5N1 virus in such products.

So far, no herds linked to raw milk providers have reported cows infected with bird flu, but the agencies recommend that the industry not make or sell raw milk or raw milk cheese products made with milk from cows that show symptoms — or are exposed to infected cows.

U.S. health officials have long warned against the risk of foodborne illness tied to raw milk, which the CDC said caused more than 200 outbreaks that sickened more than 2,600 people between 1998 and 2018.

Still, raw milk proponents like Mark McAfee, owner of Raw Farm USA in Fresno, Calif., said the outbreak of H5N1 in commercial cows appears to have spurred higher sales of the products, despite federal warnings.

## CAN YOU CATCH BIRD FLU FROM EGGS OR MEAT?

Only dairy cows, not beef cattle, have been infected or shown signs of illness to date, agriculture officials said.

The largest egg producer in the U.S. temporarily halted operations on April 2 after finding bird flu in its chickens. Cal-Maine Foods culled about 1.6 million laying hens and another 337,000 pullets, or young hens, after the detection.

The company said there was no risk to eggs in the market and that no eggs had been recalled.

Eggs that are handled properly and cooked thoroughly are safe to eat, said Barbara Kowalczyk, director of the Center for Food Safety and Nutrition Security at George Washington University.

"A lot of people like runny eggs. Personally, if I eat an egg, it's very well cooked," she said.

Still, Kowalczyk and others cautioned that the situation could change.

"This is an emerging issue and clearly this pathogen is evolving and there's a lot that we don't know," she said. "I do think that everybody is trying to figure it out as quickly as possible."

## **Officer, bystanders hailed for confronting and stopping a man who killed 6 at a Sydney shopping mall**

By RICK RYCROFT and KEIRAN SMITH Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — A police officer and several bystanders are being hailed for running "towards danger" to confront the attacker who stabbed and killed six people at a suburban Sydney shopping center.

The shopping mall, one of the country's busiest and near the world-famous Bondi Beach, was a hub of activity on Saturday afternoon when 40-year-old Joel Cauchi used a knife to kill five women and one man. He also injured at least a dozen others, including a 9-month-old baby whose mother died during the attack, before a police officer shot him dead.

New South Wales Police confirmed Sunday Cauchi had a history of mental illness and investigators weren't treating the attack as terrorism-related.

The number would have been far higher, according to NSW Premier Chris Minns who on Sunday praised "the ordinary members of the public that cornered and confronted a murderer in the Westfield Shopping Centre, showing what I would call instinctive bravery under terrible circumstances."

Talking to reporters while standing outside the shopping mall, Minns underscored the role played by Inspector Amy Scott — the first emergency responder on the scene — who shot and killed Cauchi and has since been widely lauded as a hero.

"(Scott)... ran towards danger and showed professionalism and bravery and without a shadow of a doubt, saved many, many lives in the last 24 hours," he said.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese also praised Scott in a press conference in Canberra: "The wonderful inspector who ran into danger by herself and removed the threat that was there to others, without thinking about the risks to herself," he said.

He commended "ordinary Australians putting themselves in harm's way in order to help their fellow citizens. That bravery was quite extraordinary that we saw yesterday."

Video footage shared online showed many people fleeing, some carrying their children as they escaped while a knife-wielding Cauchi ran erratically through the shopping center, lunging at people.

Other footage showed a bystander holding what appeared to be a metal pole to hold off Cauchi who was coming up an escalator at the time.

Hundreds of floral tributes and messages for the victims had been laid outside the closed shopping mall on Sunday, which police said would remain an active crime scene for days if not weeks.

## **Israel hails 'success' in blocking Iran's unprecedented attack. Biden now seeks diplomatic response**

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel on Sunday hailed its successful air defenses in the face of an unprecedented attack by Iran, saying it and its allies thwarted 99% of the more than 300 drones and missiles launched toward its territory. But regional tensions remain high, amid fears of further escalation in the event of a possible Israeli counter-strike.

U.S. President Joe Biden said he would convene a meeting of the Group of Seven advanced democracies on Sunday "to coordinate a united diplomatic response to Iran's brazen attack." The language indicated that the Biden administration does not want Iran's assault to spiral into a broader military conflict.

Iran launched the attack in response to a strike widely blamed on Israel on an Iranian consular building in Syria earlier this month which killed two Iranian generals. Israel said Iran launched 170 drones, more than 30 cruise missiles and more than 120 ballistic missiles early Sunday.

By Sunday morning, Iran said the attack was over and Israel reopened its air space.

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The two foes have for years been engaged in a shadow war marked by incidents like the Damascus strike. But Sunday's assault, which set off air raid sirens across Israel, was the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Israel has over the years established – often with the help of the United States — a multilayered air-defense network that includes systems capable of intercepting a variety of threats including long-range missiles, cruise missiles, drones and short-range rockets.

That system, along with collaboration with the U.S. and other forces, helped thwart what could have been a far more devastating assault at a time when Israel is already bogged down in its war against Hamas in Gaza and engaged in low-level fighting on its northern border with Lebanon's Hezbollah militia. Both Hamas and Hezbollah are backed by Iran.

Israeli and U.S. officials lauded the response to the aerial assault.

"Iran launched more than 300 threats and 99% were intercepted," said Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the Israeli military spokesman. "That is a success." Asked if Israel would respond, Hagari said the country would do what was needed to protect its citizens.

Hagari said that none of the drones and cruise missiles reached Israel and that only a few of the ballistic missiles got through. He said that of the cruise missiles, 25 were shot down by the Israeli air force.

Hagari said minor damage was caused to an Israeli airbase, but he said it was still functioning. Rescuers said a 7-year-old girl was seriously wounded in southern Israel, apparently in a missile strike, though they said police were still investigating the circumstances of her injuries.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu posted a short message on X, formerly Twitter: "We intercepted. We blocked. Together, we will win."

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant also celebrated the results, thanking the U.S. and other countries for their assistance. He said Israel needs to remain vigilant and prepare for any scenario, but called the interceptions a "great success."

Israel announced it reopened its airspace, loosening one restriction it had imposed ahead of the strike, although schools remained closed around the country. Neighboring Jordan also reopened its airspace.

Gen. Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, the chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces, said the operation was over, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

"We have no intention of continuing the operation against Israel," he was quoted as saying.

Israel may be particularly proud of the success of its defense because it stands in sharp contrast to the failures it endured during Hamas' attack on Oct. 7. Facing a far less powerful enemy in Hamas, Israel's border defenses collapsed and the military took days to repel the marauding militants – an embarrassing defeat for the Middle East's strongest and best-equipped army.

While thwarting the Iranian onslaught could help restore Israel's image, what it does next will be closely watched both in the region and in Western capitals.

In Washington, Biden said U.S. forces helped Israel down "nearly all" the drones and missiles and pledged to convene allies to develop a unified response.

Biden, who had cut short a weekend stay at his Delaware beach house to meet with his national security team at the White House on Saturday afternoon, spoke with Netanyahu later in the day.

"I told him that Israel demonstrated a remarkable capacity to defend against and defeat even unprecedented attacks – sending a clear message to its foes that they cannot effectively threaten the security of Israel," Biden said.

In a statement Sunday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the U.S. does "not seek escalation," and would hold talks with its allies in the coming days.

The U.S., along with its allies, has sent direct messages to Tehran to warn against further escalating the conflict. Leaders from the G7 will hold a video conference on Sunday early afternoon to discuss the Iranian strikes against Israel, according to Italy, which holds the presidency of the group of developed countries, which includes the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, and Canada.

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard issued a new threat against the U.S. "The terrorist U.S. govern-

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ment is warned any support or participation in harming Iran's interests will be followed by decisive and regretting response by Iran's armed forces," said a statement carried by IRNA.

Iran had vowed revenge since the April 1 airstrike in Syria, for which Tehran held Israel responsible. Israel hasn't publicly commented on it.

Israel and Iran have been on a collision course throughout Israel's six-month war against Hamas militants in Gaza, triggered by the Oct. 7 attack on Israel. On that day, militants from Hamas and Islamic Jihad, also backed by Iran, killed 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped 250 others.

An Israeli offensive in Gaza has caused widespread devastation and killed over 33,000 people, according to local health officials.

Negotiations underway, meant to bring about a cease-fire in exchange for the release of the hostages, appeared to hit a setback Sunday. Netanyahu's office said that Hamas rejected the latest proposal for a deal, which had been presented to Hamas a week ago by mediators Qatar, Egypt and the United States.

A Hamas official said the group wants a "clear written commitment" that Israel will withdraw from the Gaza Strip during the second of a three-phase cease-fire deal. The deal presented to the sides calls for a six-week cease-fire in Gaza, during which Hamas would release 40 of the more than 100 hostages the group is holding in the enclave in exchange for 900 Palestinian prisoners from Israel's jails, including 100 serving long sentences for serious crimes.

Hamas welcomed Iran's attack, saying it was "a natural right and a deserved response" to the strike in Syria and urged the Iran-backed groups in the region to continue to support Hamas in the war against Israel.

Almost immediately after the war erupted, Hezbollah began attacking Israel's northern border. The two sides have been involved in daily exchanges of fire, while Iranian-backed groups in Iraq, Syria and Yemen have launched rockets and missiles toward Israel.

## India's Modi vows to boost social spending, make country into a manufacturing hub ahead of election

By ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday vowed to boost social spending, develop infrastructure and make India into a global manufacturing hub as companies shift away from China, as he unveiled his Hindu nationalist party's election strategy.

Modi hopes to return to power for a third five-year term. He and other leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party unveiled their promises in the world's largest democracy days before the start of a multi-phase general election.

Modi promised to expand social programs introduced during his party's 10-year rule, including millions of free homes for the poor, along with health care, cooking gas and free grain. His government has been paying 6,000 rupees (\$73) a year to poor farmers.

He said his government's policies have pulled 250 million people out of poverty since he came to power in 2014. India is the world's most populous country with over 1.4 billion people. The BJP's president, J.P. Nadda, said less than 1% of Indian people now live in extreme poverty.

India holds its elections on different days in different parts of the country, stretching over weeks. Voting for the country's parliament will begin on April 19 and run until June 1, and results will be announced on June 4.

Most polls have predicted a victory for Modi and the BJP. But the opposition Congress Party argues that Modi has undermined India's democracy and favored the interests of the rich.

Modi has been campaigning extensively across the country, promising to expand India's economy to \$5 trillion by 2027 from around \$3.7 trillion. He also promises to put India on track to become a developed country by 2047, when the country celebrates 100 years of independence from British colonialists.

On Sunday, he said his party would develop India as a hub for the pharmaceutical, energy, semiconductor and tourism industries. He also said India will modernize its infrastructure, including its railways,



airways, and waterways. And he said he will seek to increase jobs for young people and access to cheap loans for young entrepreneurs.

Modi is broadly popular in India, where he's considered a champion of the country's Hindu majority and has overseen rapid economic growth.

But critics say another term for the BJP could undermine India's status as a secular, democratic nation, saying its 10 years in power have brought attacks by Hindu nationalists against the country's minorities, particularly Muslims, and a shrinking space for dissent and free media.

## The Latest | Israel hails interception of drones and missiles in unprecedented attack by Iran

By The Associated Press undefined

Israel hailed the success of its defenses in the face of an unprecedented attack by Iran involving hundreds of drones, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles.

An Israeli military spokesman said Sunday the launches numbered more than 300, but 99% of them were intercepted. Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said Iran fired 170 drones, more than 30 cruise missiles and more than 120 ballistic missiles. Several ballistic missiles reached Israeli territory, causing minor damage to an air base.

The Iranian attack on Saturday, less than two weeks after a suspected Israeli strike in Syria that killed two Iranian generals in an Iranian consular building, marked the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Israel and Iran have been on a collision course throughout Israel's six-month war against Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. The war erupted after Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two militant groups backed by Iran, carried out a devastating cross-border attack on Oct. 7 that killed 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped 250 others.

An Israeli offensive in Gaza has caused widespread devastation and killed over 33,000 people, according to local health officials.

Currently:

— President Joe Biden cut short a weekend stay at his Delaware beach house to meet with his national security team and monitor the situation in the Middle East as Iran launched an attack against Israel.

— Israel has a multilayered air-defense system. It faces a big test with the Iranian drone strike.

Here is the latest:

**HAMAS DEMANDS WRITTEN COMMITMENT THAT ISRAEL WILL WITHDRAW FROM GAZA**

CAIRO — Hamas has demanded a "clear written commitment" that Israel will withdraw from the Gaza Strip during the second of a three-phase cease-fire deal, a senior Egyptian official and a Hamas official said Sunday.

The Palestinian militant group said Saturday it submitted its response to a six-week cease-fire proposal to Egyptian and Qatari mediators. It said it's still committed to its demands for a permanent cease-fire, Israeli army withdrawal from all parts of Gaza, the return of displaced people to their homes, intensifying the flow of aid and the start of reconstruction. Israel said earlier Sunday that Hamas had rejected the latest proposal for a deal submitted last week.

"We confirm our readiness to reach a deal regarding a serious exchange of prisoners between the two sides," Hamas said.

The proposal presented to both sides calls for a six-week cease-fire in Gaza, during which Hamas would release 40 of the more than 100 hostages the group is holding in the enclave in exchange for 900 Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails, including 100 serving long sentences for serious crimes.

The Egyptian official said Hamas wants "a comprehensive, phased deal" that included ending the war, Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and an agreement of all hostages in return for a large number of Palestinian prisoners. Israel says it wants to destroy Hamas' military and governing capabilities.

The officials said the response also included an increase in the number of Palestinian prisoners Hamas

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wants released from Israel.

The officials from Egypt and Hamas spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to disclose details from the sensitive negotiations. They said that Hamas' response included the unrestricted return of displaced Palestinians in northern Gaza through the two main south-north thoroughfares.

The Egyptian official said mediators will carefully review the response before calling for another round of talks.

— By Samy Magdy

## G7 LEADERS WILL CONVENE SUNDAY IN A VIDEO CALL

ROME — Leaders of the Group of Seven industrialized nations will hold a video conference Sunday to discuss an unprecedented Iranian attack against Israel.

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, whose country holds the G7 rotating presidency, wrote on X: "We express strong concern about a further destabilization of the region and continue to work to avoid it."

U.S. President Joe Biden said the meeting is "to coordinate a united diplomatic response to Iran's brazen attack." The language indicated that the Biden administration does not want Iran's assault to spiral into a broader military conflict.

## JORDAN REPORTS IT BROUGHT DOWN IRANIAN OBJECTS OVER ITS TERRITORY

AMMAN, Jordan — The Jordanian Council of Ministers says that its forces "dealt with" parts of the Iranian attack that flew over its territory, "to prevent them from endangering the safety of our citizens and residential and inhabited areas."

It said that fragments fell in multiple places but did not cause any significant damage or injuries.

The German Foreign Ministry said in a travel advisory Saturday that the Jordanian air force had shot down Iranian drones over Jordan, including over the capital, Amman.

Jordan's airspace was reopened on Sunday morning.

## JAPAN'S PRIME MINISTER CONDEMNS THE IRANIAN ATTACK

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Sunday condemned Iran's attack on Israel as a move to worsen the ongoing Middle East situation.

"I am deeply concerned and strongly condemn the escalation," he told reporters.

Kishida said his government will do the utmost for the safety of Japanese citizens in the region, and stressed the importance of diplomatic effort to prevent further escalation of tensions. He said there has been no report of injury to Japanese nationals so far from the attack.

Kishida made the comment shortly after returning to Tokyo after a weeklong visit to the United States, where he stressed Japan's role as a committed partner for the U.S. in global security and other issues.

## IRAN SAYS ITS STRIKE WAS MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN IT EXPECTED

TEHRAN, Iran — The chief of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard says the operation against Israel was more successful than expected.

Gen. Hossein Salami, in an interview with state TV, said they were still collecting information but that "the part of the hits that we have detailed and documented reports from the field show that this operation was more successful."

He also said the Iranian forces had carried out a limited operation that matched "the evil that the Zionist enemy had done."

Salami described the Israeli air defense system as complex, multi-layered and advanced and said passing through this system was a very difficult task.

"It means designing an operation that can pass drones, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles through this space and destroy them (targets) on the ground with extremely high accuracy," he said.

## HAMAS LAUDS IRAN'S ATTACK ON ISRAEL

CAIRO — Hamas on Sunday praised Iran's unprecedented missile and drone attack on Israel, saying it was a "deserved response to the crime" of a strike on Iran's consulate in Syria two weeks ago.

The strike on the Iranian diplomatic compound on April 1 killed two Iranian generals and was widely attributed to Israel.

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Hamas, an Islamic militant group backed by Iran, also appealed for continued support for its war with Israel in Gaza, now in its seventh month. Hamas directed the appeal at Arab and Islamic nations, as well as Iran-backed groups in the region.

Hamas said in the statement that it is fighting for "the right of our Palestinian people to freedom and independence and the establishment of its Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital."

Hamas has been branded a terror organization by the West and has rejected a so-called two-state solution, instead seeking Israel's destruction.

**HEZBOLLAH SAYS IT FIRED DOZENS OF ROCKETS TOWARD ISRAELI MILITARY POSTS IN GOLAN HEIGHTS**

BEIRUT — Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group says it fired dozens of rockets toward Israeli military posts in Syria's Israeli-occupied Golan Heights early Sunday after an Israeli airstrike killed one person in Lebanon.

The group said the attack was in retaliation for Israeli airstrikes overnight on towns and villages in southern Lebanon that killed and wounded "civilians."

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said Israeli airstrikes hit areas including the border villages of Kfar Kila and Odeisseh, as well as the town of Khiam. It said the airstrike on Khiam, a few miles from the border, killed one person and wounded others.

The exchange early Sunday came as Iran launched hundreds of drones, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles toward Israel in an unprecedented revenge mission for the April 1 airstrike on the Iranian consulate in the Syrian capital, Damascus.

**ISRAEL REOPENS ITS AIRSPACE AFTER IRANIAN ATTACK**

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israel has reopened its airspace following an unprecedented attack on its territory by Iran.

Israel's Transportation Ministry said the country's main international airport has resumed operations. It said domestic airports would reopen throughout the day Sunday.

Israel says Iran launched more than 300 drones and missiles toward its territory in the early morning attack, and that air defenses intercepted 99% of them. Minor damage was caused to an air base, the military said.

The military announced measures on Saturday in anticipation of the Iranian attack, closing its airspace, canceling school and limiting public gatherings to no more than 1,000 people.

**ISRAEL HAILS INTERCEPTION OF IRANIAN MISSILES AND DRONES**

JERUSALEM — Israel on Sunday hailed the interception of virtually all of the more than 300 Iranian missiles and drones targeting its territory as a significant strategic success.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu posted on social platform X: "We intercepted. We blocked. Together, we will win."

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant added that "the Iranian attack was blocked in the most impressive way, together with our partners, the Americans and others."

The Israeli army spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said that 99% of more than 300 launches, including drones, surface-to-surface missiles and cruise missiles, were intercepted outside Israeli territory. He said only a few got through, causing minor damage to an air base and injuring a 7-year-old girl in another location.

The successful interceptions come at a time when Israel is bogged down in its war against Hamas in Gaza, triggered by the militants' deadly Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel. At the start of the war, Israel vowed to crush Hamas and bring back hostages the militants had taken on Oct. 7. Yet Hamas, while significantly weakened, remains standing, and dozens of hostages are still in Gaza.

**NETANYAHU SAYS HAMAS REJECTS LATEST CEASE-FIRE PROPOSAL**

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Sunday that Hamas has rejected the latest proposal for a temporary cease-fire in Gaza, which would be to include the release of about 40 hostages held by the Islamic militants.

The proposal had been presented to Hamas a week ago by mediators Qatar, Egypt and the United States.

The Israeli statement said that Israel had shown flexibility in the negotiations. It alleged that Hamas

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leader Yehya Sinwar “continues to take advantage of the tensions with Iran” and seeks a wider regional escalation.

The statement came just hours after Iran launched more than 300 drones and missiles at Israel early Sunday, with Israel saying 99% of the launches were intercepted.

## ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER CALLS IRAN ‘A COUNTRY OF TERROR’

JERUSALEM — Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on Sunday called Iran “a country of terror” after Tehran launched hundreds of drones and missiles toward Israel in an unprecedented attack.

“The Iranian attack was blocked in the most impressive way, together with our partners, the Americans and others ... The entire world saw today who is Iran — a country of terror,” Gallant said.

The attack, less than two weeks after a suspected Israeli strike in Syria that killed two Iranian generals in an Iranian consular building, marked the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the country’s 1979 Islamic Revolution.

## U.N SECURITY COUNCIL CALLS AN EMERGENCY MEETING

The U.N. Security Council called an emergency meeting for 4 p.m. EDT (2000 GMT) on Sunday, after Iran launched hundreds of drones, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles at Israel.

“The gravity and volume of the attacks is unprecedented,” Israel’s U.N. Ambassador Gilad Erdan wrote in a letter to the council late Saturday calling for the meeting.

## BIDEN SAYS U.S. HELPED ISRAEL DOWN ‘NEARLY ALL’ IRANIAN DRONES AND MISSILES

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden says U.S. forces helped Israel down “nearly all” of the drones and missiles launched by Iran and pledged to convene allies to develop a unified response.

Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke early Sunday, Israeli time, their governments said. Biden said in a statement that he reaffirmed “America’s ironclad commitment” to Israel’s security — a departure from his harsh criticism over Israel’s handling of the war in Gaza.

“At my direction, to support the defense of Israel, the U.S. military moved aircraft and ballistic missile defense destroyers to the region over the course of the past week,” Biden said in the statement. “Thanks to these deployments and the extraordinary skill of our servicemembers, we helped Israel take down nearly all of the incoming drones and missiles.”

## UN CHIEF CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres is calling for an immediate halt to hostilities in the Middle East.

“I strongly condemn the serious escalation represented by the large-scale attack launched on Israel by the Islamic Republic of Iran this evening,” Guterres wrote in a statement Saturday night.

“I am deeply alarmed about the very real danger of a devastating region-wide escalation. I urge all parties to exercise maximum restraint to avoid any action that could lead to major military confrontations on multiple fronts in the Middle East,” Guterres wrote. “I have repeatedly stressed that neither the region nor the world can afford another war.”

## GERMANY, FRANCE, CANADA CONDEMN IRANIAN ATTACKS AGAINST ISRAEL

The French government forcefully condemned the Iranian air attack on Israel.

French foreign minister Stéphane Séjourné said in a statement Saturday that in “taking such an unprecedented action, Iran has crossed a new threshold with regard to its destabilizing activities and is risking a potential military escalation.”

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock wrote early Sunday on X that Germany condemns “in the strongest possible terms the ongoing attack, which could plunge an entire region into chaos.

“Iran and its proxies must stop it immediately,” Baerbock wrote. “We offer Israel our full solidarity at this time.”

Likewise, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his nation “unequivocally condemns Iran’s airborne attacks against Israel.”

“We stand with Israel. After supporting Hamas’ brutal October 7 attack, the Iranian regime’s latest actions will further destabilize the region and make lasting peace more difficult,” Trudeau said in a statement.

“We support Israel’s right to defend itself and its people from these attacks.”

## BRITAIN AND ARGENTINA RESPOND TO IRANIAN ATTACK ON ISRAEL

U.K. Defense Secretary Grant Shapps said additional Royal Air Force jets and air refueling tankers have been sent to the Middle East to bolster Britain's existing operation against the Islamic State Group in Iraq and Syria.

He said the jets "will intercept airborne attacks within range of our existing missions," but did not confirm whether RAF jets had already shot down any Iranian drones.

Meanwhile, the spokesperson of Argentine President Javier Milei says the leader will cancel a trip to Denmark and return to Buenos Aires due to Iran's attack on Israel.

A statement from presidential spokesperson Manuel Adorni said Milei was flying home to form a "crisis committee in light of the latest events in Israel, to take charge of the situation and coordinate actions with the presidents of the Western world."

## Chicago shooting kills 7-year-old girl and wounds 7 people including small children, police say

CHICAGO (AP) — Eight people were shot including a young girl who was killed in what Chicago police believe was gang-related violence on the city's South Side on Saturday night.

The 7-year-old girl was shot in the head and died, while a 1-year-old boy and a 7-year-old boy were each shot multiple times and listed in critical condition, Chicago Police Department Deputy Chief Don Jerome said in a news briefing at the scene on a block of 52nd Street near Damen Avenue.

Police responding to a gunfire alert around 9 p.m. applied tourniquets and chest seals to victims, who also included adults between the ages of 19 and 40, Jerome said.

The victims, who were standing outside at a family gathering at the time of the shooting, were transported to area hospitals by the Chicago Fire Department.

The investigation was still in the preliminary stages but witness accounts described two possible shooters on foot, Jerome said.

"This was not a random act of violence. It was likely gang-related," Jerome said. "Regardless of the motivation for this incident, three innocent children were struck tonight and one of them tragically succumbed to her wounds. The offenders' actions, make no mistake, are horrific and unacceptable in our city."

## World paid little attention to Sudan's war for a year. Now aid groups warn of mass death from hunger

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — On a clear night a year ago, a dozen heavily armed fighters broke into Omaima Farouq's house in an upscale neighborhood in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum. At gunpoint, they whipped and slapped the woman, and terrorized her children. Then they expelled them from the fenced two-story house.

"Since then, our life has been ruined," said the 45-year-old schoolteacher. "Everything has changed in this year."

Farouq, who is a widow, and her four children now live in a small village outside the central city of Wad Madani, 136 kilometers (85 miles) southeast of Khartoum. They depend on aid from villagers and philanthropists since international aid groups can't reach the village.

Sudan has been torn by war for a year now, ever since simmering tensions between its military and the notorious paramilitary Rapid Support Forces exploded into street clashes in the capital Khartoum in mid-April 2023. The fighting rapidly spread across the country.

The conflict has been overshadowed by the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza Strip, which since October has caused a massive humanitarian crisis for Palestinians and a threat of famine in the territory.

But relief workers warn Sudan is hurtling towards an even larger-scale calamity of starvation, with potential mass death in coming months. Food production and distribution networks have broken down and aid agencies are unable to reach the worst-stricken regions. At the same time, the conflict has brought

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widespread reports of atrocities including killings, displacement and rape, particularly in the area of the capital and the western region of Darfur.

Justin Brady, head of the U.N. humanitarian coordination office for Sudan, warned that potentially tens or even hundreds of thousands could die in coming months from malnutrition-related causes.

"This is going to get very ugly very quickly unless we can overcome both the resource challenges and the access challenges," Brady said. The world, he said, needs to take fast action to pressure the two sides for a stop in fighting and raise funds for the U.N. humanitarian effort.

But the international community has paid little attention. The U.N. humanitarian campaign needs some \$2.7 billion this year to get food, health care and other supplies to 24 million people in Sudan – nearly half its population of 51 million. So far, funders have given only \$145 million, about 5%, according to the humanitarian office, known as OCHA.

The "level of international neglect is shocking," Christos Christou, president of the medical charity Doctors Without Borders, or MSF, said in a recent statement.

The situation in fighting on the ground has been deteriorating. The military, headed by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the RSF, commanded by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, have carved up Khartoum and trade indiscriminate fire at each other. RSF forces have overrun much of Darfur, while Burhan has moved the government and his headquarters to the Red Sea city of Port Sudan.

The Sudanese Unit for Combating Violence Against Women, a government organization, documented at least 159 cases of rape and gang rape the past year, almost all in Khartoum and Darfur. The organization's head, Sulima Ishaq Sharif, said this figure represents the tip of the iceberg since many victims don't speak out for fear of reprisal or the stigma connected to rape.

In 2021, Burhan and Dagalo were uneasy allies who led a military coup. They toppled an internationally recognized civilian government that was supposed to steer Sudan's democratic transition after the 2019 military overthrow of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir amid a popular uprising. Burhan and Dagalo subsequently fell out in a struggle for power.

The situation has been horrific in Darfur, where the RSF and its allies are accused of rampant sexual violence and ethnic attacks on African tribes' areas. The International Criminal Court said it was investigating fresh allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the region, which was the scene of genocidal war in the 2000s.

A series of attacks by the RSF and allied militias on the ethnic African Masalit tribe killed between 10,000 and 15,000 people in Geneina, the capital of West Darfur near the Chad border, according to a report by United Nations experts to the Security Council earlier this year. It said Darfur is experiencing "its worst violence since 2005."

With aid groups unable to reach Darfur's camps for displaced people, eight out of every 10 families in the camps eat only one meal a day, said Adam Rijal, the spokesman for the Coordination for Displaced Persons and Refugees in Darfur.

In Kelma camp in South Darfur province, he said an average of nearly three children die every 12 hours, most due to diseases related to malnutrition. He said the medical center in the camp receives between 14 and 18 cases of malnutrition every day, mostly children and pregnant women.

Not including the Geneina killings, the war has killed at least 14,600 people across Sudan and created the world's largest displacement crisis, according to the United Nations. More than 8 million people have been driven from their homes, fleeing either to safer areas inside Sudan or to neighboring countries.

Many flee repeatedly as the war expands.

When fighting reached his street in Khartoum, Taj el-Ser and his wife and four children headed west to his relatives in Darfur in the town of Ardamata.

Then the RSF and its allies overran Ardamata in November, rampaging through the town for six days. El-Ser said they killed many Masalit and relatives of army soldiers.

"Some were shot dead or burned inside their homes," he said by phone from another town in Darfur. "I and my family survived only because I am Arab."

Both sides, the military and RSF, have committed serious violations of international law, killing civilians and destroying vital infrastructure, said Mohamed Osman, Sudan researcher at Human Rights Watch.

Food production has crashed, imports stalled, movement of food around the country is hampered by fighting, and staple food prices have soared by 45% in less than a year, OCHA says. The war wrecked the country's healthcare system, leaving only 20 to 30% of the health facilities functional across the country, according to MSF.

At least 37% of the population at crisis level or above in hunger, according to OCHA. Save the Children warned that about 230,000 children, pregnant women and newborn mothers could die of malnutrition in the coming months.

"We are seeing massive hunger, suffering and death. And yet the world looks away," said Arif Noor, Save the Children's director in Sudan.

About 3.5 million children aged under 5 years have acute malnutrition, including more than 710,000 with severe acute malnutrition, according to the World Health Organization.

About 5 million people were one step away from famine, according to a December assessment by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, considered the global authority on determining the severity of hunger crises. Overall, 17.7 million people were facing acute food insecurity, it found.

Aid workers say the world has to take action.

"Sudan is described as a forgotten crisis. I'm starting to wonder how many people knew about it in the first place to forget about it," said Brady, from OCHA. "There are others that have more attention than Sudan. I don't like to compare crises. It's like comparing two cancer patients. ... They both need to be treated."

## Venezuelans living abroad want to vote for president this year but can't meet absentee requirements

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Giovanni Tovar left Venezuela five years ago in search of a job after his country came undone under the watch of President Nicolás Maduro. He now sells empanadas and tequeños in the streets of Peru's capital, where he pushes around a small cart outfitted with a deep fryer.

Tovar wants nothing more than to vote Maduro out of office. He sees an opportunity for change in July's highly anticipated presidential election but he won't be able to cast a vote. Neither will millions of other Venezuelan emigrants because of costly and time-consuming government prerequisites that are nowhere to be found in Venezuela's election laws.

"I really don't understand why they put so many obstacles in the way of us exercising our vote," Tovar said before offering the main reason emigrants suspect is behind the prerequisites: "I really would like to vote but not to give the vote to Maduro."

More than half of the estimated 7.7 million Venezuelans who have left their homeland during the complex crisis that has marked Maduro's 11-year presidency are estimated to be registered to vote in Venezuela. But of all the Venezuelans fanned out around the world, including those who emigrated before the crisis, government figures show only about 107,000 are registered to vote outside the South American country.

Analysts and emigrants assert people who left Venezuela during the crisis would almost certainly vote against Maduro if given the chance. Maduro, who became interim president in 2013 following the death of the fiery Hugo Chávez, is seeking a third term in office.

Venezuelan law contemplates absentee voting, allowing citizens to vote at embassies and consulates. Interested voters must be properly registered with their foreign address and cannot be living in their host country illegally or seeking refugee or asylum status there.

The residency requirement alone reduces significantly the number of people who can register as the majority of emigrants lack legal status. During this year's registration period, which ends Tuesday, even those who have been granted temporary residency in host countries are being turned away by consular officials because the diplomatic outposts are demanding proof of permanent status.

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“Permanent Residence Documents issued by the host country” must show “validity of ... at least 3 years from the current date” and “must have been issued at least 1 year in advance,” according to a flyer outside the consulate in Colombia’s capital, Bogota. But Venezuela’s election law only calls for interested voters to “have residency or any other status that denotes legality of stay” in a foreign country.

Peru has granted Tovar temporary, not permanent, residency.

Further complicating matters for some interested voters is the requirement to have a Venezuelan passport, which is cost prohibitive and nowadays takes weeks to several months to process.

Maria Cordova and her family, who moved to Mexico 18 years ago, participated in the October presidential primary for the opposition faction backed by the United States. That election was organized by a commission independent of Venezuela’s ruling party-loyal National Electoral Council. The commission allowed interested voters like Cordova to register to vote online, eventually signing up more than 200,000 people around the world.

When it came time to cast a ballot, Cordova traveled from Cancun to Mexico City, where primary organizers set up a voting center. Now, Cordova wants to vote against Maduro on July 28, but she hasn’t received the passport she has been trying to renew since last year.

“It is a plan with ulterior motives because in order to apply, you need to pay,” she said, referring to the passport renewal process.

Polling suggests that Venezuelans overwhelmingly want to go to the polls and would trounce Maduro if given the chance.

Official estimates show that about 36,000 of the 107,000 Venezuelans properly registered to vote abroad live in the U.S. They face an insurmountable obstacle: Consulates where they would typically cast their ballots are closed because Venezuela and the U.S. severed diplomatic relations after Maduro’s 2018 re-election.

That contest was widely considered fraudulent and turned Maduro into a pariah. Hopes for a more democratic presidential election briefly went up when Maduro and the faction of the opposition behind the primary agreed in October to work together on electoral conditions that would level the playing field.

Among the issues both sides were expected to work on was updating the country’s voting rolls. But this and other changes did not materialize after Maduro’s government began to defy the spirit, if not necessarily the letter, of the agreement, including by blocking the presidential candidacy of opposition powerhouse Maria Corina Machado — who won the primary — arresting part of her staff and opening criminal investigations against primary organizers.

Christopher Sabatini, a research fellow at the Chatham House in London, said the opposition may complain about the obstacles faced by emigrants, but it is unlikely to prioritize facilitating voting abroad given the remaining challenges it faces within the country.

“There’s still plenty of people within Venezuela that have never voted before, that have come of age, and engaging those people in the democratic exercise is sort of more of a priority for the opposition,” Sabatini said.

Most people who have left Venezuela over the past decade settled in other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Colombia is home to the largest contingent of them, with more than 2.8 million living across the country.

One of the main barriers that Venezuelans there say they are facing is the refusal of consular officials to accept their Temporary Protection Permit — a document issued by the Colombian government that gives them access to the health care system, education and jobs — as proof of legal status.

Nicole García, a Venezuelan who is part of the grassroots group Venezuelans in Barranquilla, said the request for documents that most migrants do not have is a way in which consulates seek to limit participation and transparency in the election.

“Consular officials are people who are part of the government or who are part of the regime,” she said.



## Israel's multilayered air-defense system protected it from Iran's drone and missile strike

JERUSALEM (AP) — An incoming attack by more than 300 Iranian drones and ballistic missiles was the latest challenge to Israel's air defense system, which already has been working overtime to cope with incoming rocket, drone and missile attacks throughout the six-month war against Hamas.

Israel's defense system with assistance from the U.S. and Britain is credited with preventing serious damage or casualties.

Here's a closer look at Israel's multilayered air-defense system:

**The Arrow:** This system developed with the U.S. is designed to intercept long-range missiles, including the types of ballistic missiles Iran said it launched on Saturday. The Arrow, which operates outside the atmosphere, has been used in the current war to intercept long-range missiles launched by Houthi militants in Yemen.

**David's Sling:** Also developed with the U.S., the David's Sling is meant to intercept medium-range missiles, such as those possessed by Hezbollah in Lebanon.

**Patriot:** This American-made system is the oldest member of Israel's missile-defense system — used during the First Gulf War in 1991 to intercept Scud missiles fired by Iraq's leader at the time, Saddam Hussein. The Patriot is now used to shoot down aircraft, including drones.

**Iron Dome:** This system, developed by Israel with U.S. backing, specializes in shooting down short-range rockets. It has intercepted thousands of rockets since it was activated early last decade — including thousands of interceptions during the current war against Hamas and Hezbollah. Israel says it has a success rate of over 90%.

**Iron Beam:** Israel is developing a new system to intercept incoming threats with laser technology. Israel has said this system will be a game changer because it is much cheaper to operate than existing systems. However, it is not yet operational.

## Israel says Iran launched more than 300 drones and missiles, 99% of which were intercepted

By JOSEF FEDERMAN and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Booms and air raid sirens sounded across Israel early Sunday after Iran launched hundreds of drones, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles in an unprecedented revenge mission that pushed the Middle East closer to a nationwide war. A military spokesman said the launches numbered more than 300 but 99% of them were intercepted.

Calling the outcome "a very significant strategic success," Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said Iran fired 170 drones, more than 30 cruise missiles and more than 120 ballistic missiles. Of those, several ballistic missiles reached Israeli territory, causing minor damage to an air base.

Rescuers said a 7-year-old girl in a Bedouin Arab town was seriously wounded in southern Israel, apparently in a missile strike, though they said police were still investigating the circumstances of her injuries.

In Washington, President Joe Biden said U.S. forces helped Israel down "nearly all" the drones and missiles and pledged to convene allies to develop a unified response.

The Iranian attack, less than two weeks after a suspected Israeli strike in Syria that killed two Iranian generals in an Iranian consular building, marked the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Condemnation from the United Nations chief and others was swift, with France saying Iran "is risking a potential military escalation," Britain calling the attack "reckless" and Germany saying Iran and its proxies "must stop it immediately."

Hagari said the vast majority of the intercepts came outside Israel's borders, including 10 cruise missiles that were intercepted by warplanes.

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"A wide-scale attack by Iran is a major escalation," he said. Asked whether Israel would respond, Hagari said only that the army "does and will do whatever is required to protect the security of the state of Israel." He said the incident was not over, and dozens of Israeli warplanes remained in the skies.

Israel's military said its Arrow system, which shoots down ballistic missiles outside the atmosphere, handled most interceptions and noted that "strategic partners" were involved.

"At my direction, to support the defense of Israel, the U.S. military moved aircraft and ballistic missile defense destroyers to the region over the course of the past week," Biden said in a statement. "Thanks to these deployments and the extraordinary skill of our service members, we helped Israel take down nearly all of the incoming drones and missiles."

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a separate statement that U.S. forces "intercepted dozens of missiles and UAVs en route to Israel, launched from Iran, Iraq, Syria and Yemen."

Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke early Sunday, Israeli time, their governments said. Biden said in his statement that he reaffirmed "America's ironclad commitment" to Israel's security — a departure from his growing criticism of Israel's conduct in its war on Hamas in Gaza.

Iran had vowed revenge since the April 1 airstrike in Syria, which Tehran accused Israel of being responsible for. Israel hasn't commented on it.

Israel and Iran have been on a collision course throughout Israel's six-month war against Hamas militants in Gaza. The war erupted after Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two militant groups backed by Iran, carried out a devastating cross-border attack on Oct. 7 that killed 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped 250 others. An Israeli offensive in Gaza has caused widespread devastation and killed over 33,000 people, according to local health officials.

Almost immediately after the war erupted, Hezbollah, an Iranian-backed militant group in Lebanon, began attacking Israel's northern border. The two sides have been involved in daily exchanges of fire, while Iranian-backed groups in Iraq, Syria and Yemen have launched rockets and missiles toward Israel.

In a statement carried late Saturday by Iran's state-run IRNA news agency, the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard acknowledged launching "dozens of drones and missiles towards the occupied territories and positions of the Zionist regime."

In a later statement, the Revolutionary Guard issued a direct warning to the U.S.: "The terrorist U.S. government is warned any support or participation in harming Iran's interests will be followed by decisive and regretting response by Iran's armed forces."

IRNA also quoted an anonymous official saying ballistic missiles were part of the attack. A ballistic missile moves on an arch trajectory, heading up into space before gravity brings the weapon down at a speed several times faster than the speed of sound.

Israel has a multilayered air-defense network that includes systems capable of intercepting a variety of threats including long-range missiles, cruise missiles, drones and short-range rockets. However, in a massive attack involving multiple drones and missiles, the likelihood of a strike making it through is higher.

Iran has a vast arsenal of drones and missiles. Online videos shared by Iranian state television purported to show delta-wing-style drones resembling the Iranian Shahed-136s long used by Russia in its war on Ukraine. The slow-flying drones carry bombs. Ukraine has successfully used both surface-to-air missiles and ground fire to target them.

Some Israelis watched the interceptions light up the night sky.

Air raid sirens were reported in numerous places including northern Israel, southern Israel, the northern West Bank and the Dead Sea near the Jordanian border.

Israel's army ordered residents in the Golan Heights — near the Syrian and Lebanese borders — as well as the southern towns of Nevatim and Dimona and the Red Sea resort of Eilat into protective spaces. Dimona is home to Israel's main nuclear facility, and Nevatim has a major air base. Loud booms were heard in Jerusalem and northern and southern Israel.

The army's Home Front Command canceled school Sunday and limited public gatherings to no more than 1,000 people. Israel and some other countries in the region closed their airspace.

Earlier, Netanyahu warned: "Whoever harms us, we will harm them."

In Washington, Biden convened a principals meeting of the National Security Council to discuss the attack. Gen. Erik Kurilla, the head of the U.S. military's Central Command, was in Israel over the weekend consulting with Israeli defense officials. The Central Command oversees U.S. forces in the Middle East.

Iran's mission to the United Nations issued a warning to both Israel and the U.S. "Should the Israeli regime make another mistake, Iran's response will be considerably more severe," it wrote online. "It is a conflict between Iran and the rogue Israeli regime, from which the U.S. MUST STAY AWAY!"

For days, Iranian officials including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had threatened to "slap" Israel for the Syria strike.

In Iran's capital, Tehran, witnesses saw long lines at gas stations early Sunday as people appeared worried about what may come next. Dozens of hard-liners demonstrated in support of the attack at Palestine Square.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported heavy Israeli airstrikes and shelling on multiple locations in south Lebanon following Iran's launch of drones. The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah said it launched "dozens" of Katyusha rockets at an Israeli military site in the Golan Heights early Sunday. It was not immediately clear if there was any damage.

Iranian missiles or drones were intercepted in the sky above the Jordanian capital, Amman. In Lebanon's capital, Beirut, and elsewhere in the country, residents reported seeing missiles in the sky and hearing explosions, likely from interceptions. In Syria, explosions were heard in the capital, Damascus, and elsewhere. Britain-based war monitor the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that Syrian air defenses tried to shoot down Israeli attempts to intercept Iranian missiles.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. AP correspondents Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran, Michael Balsamo in New York, Krutika Pathi in New Delhi, Stephen Graham in Berlin, Thomas Adamson in Paris, and Zeke Miller and Lolita C. Baldor in Washington contributed to this report.

## US helps Israel shoot down 'nearly all' Iran-launched attack drones as Biden vows support

By ZEKE MILLER and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Saturday lauded American forces who helped Israel down "nearly all" of the drones and missiles fired by Iran and vowed to coordinate a global response to Tehran's unprecedented attack. And the Pentagon said its forces intercepted "dozens of missiles" and drones launched from Iran, Iraq, Syria and Yemen that were headed toward Israel.

With regional tensions at their highest since the Israel-Hamas war began six months ago, Biden pledged that American support for Israel's defense against attacks by Iran and its proxies is "ironclad." The attack marked the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel, risking a wider regional conflict.

The U.S. and Israel had been bracing for an attack for days after Iran said it would retaliate for a suspected Israeli strike this month on an Iranian consular building in Syria that killed 12 people, including two senior Iranian generals in the Revolutionary Guard's elite Quds Force.

"At my direction, to support the defense of Israel, the U.S. military moved aircraft and ballistic missile defense destroyers to the region over the course of the past week," Biden said in a statement late Saturday. "Thanks to these deployments and the extraordinary skill of our servicemembers, we helped Israel take down nearly all of the incoming drones and missiles."

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin in a statement said the U.S. took out dozens of the attacks, but did not provide details on ships or aircraft involved in the operation that commanders had been preparing for over the past two weeks.

"Our forces remain postured to protect U.S. troops and partners in the region, provide further support for Israel's defense, and enhance regional stability," Austin said, adding that troops are standing ready to prevent any further conflict.

Biden had cut short a weekend stay at his Delaware beach house to meet with his national security

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team at the White House on Saturday afternoon, returning to Washington minutes before Israeli officials confirmed that they had detected drones being launched toward their territory from Iran.

He convened a principals meeting of the National Security Council in the White House Situation Room to discuss the unfolding situation, the White House said, before speaking with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu late Saturday.

"I told him that Israel demonstrated a remarkable capacity to defend against and defeat even unprecedented attacks – sending a clear message to its foes that they cannot effectively threaten the security of Israel," Biden said.

Biden added that he would convene a meeting of the Group of Seven advanced democracies on Sunday "to coordinate a united diplomatic response to Iran's brazen attack."

The Pentagon reported that Austin had spoken twice, including late Saturday night, with his Israeli counterpart to praise the "extraordinary defensive measures and strong cooperation undertaken to defeat this Iranian attack against Israel" and again stated clearly that "Israel could count on full U.S. support to defend Israel against any future attacks by Iran and its regional proxies." National security adviser Jake Sullivan also spoke with his counterpart to reinforce Washington's "ironclad commitment to the security of Israel."

National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said in a Saturday statement that "Iran has begun an airborne attack against Israel." She added: "The United States will stand with the people of Israel and support their defense against these threats from Iran."

Biden on Friday said the United States was "devoted" to defending Israel and that "Iran will not succeed." Asked by reporters what his message was for Iran, the president's only reply was: "Don't."

He ignored a question about what would trigger a direct U.S. military response.

The U.S., along with its allies, have sent direct messages to Tehran to warn against further escalating the conflict.

During the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, there have been near-daily exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group along the Israel-Lebanon border. U.S. officials have recorded more than 150 attacks by Iran-backed militias in Iraq and Syria on U.S. forces at bases in those countries since war started on Oct. 7.

One attack in late January killed three U.S. service members in Jordan. In retaliation, the U.S. launched a massive air assault, hitting more than 85 targets at seven locations in Iraq and Syria.

Meantime, on Saturday, commandos from Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard rappelled from a helicopter onto an Israeli-affiliated container ship near the Strait of Hormuz and seized the vessel.

Watson, the NSC spokesperson, said the U.S. strongly condemned the seizure and urged Iran to release the ship and crew immediately.

"We will work with our partners to hold Iran to account for its actions," she said.

Also Saturday, the Israeli-occupied West Bank also saw some of the worst violence since Hamas' attack on Israel.

## How to get rid of NYC rats without brutality? Birth control is one idea

By MAYSOON KHAN and CEDAR ATTANASIO Associated Press

New York lawmakers are proposing rules to humanely drive down the population of rats and other rodents, eyeing contraception and a ban on glue traps as alternatives to poison or a slow, brutal death.

Politicians have long come up with creative ways to battle the rodents, but some lawmakers are now proposing city and statewide measures to do more.

In New York City, the idea to distribute rat contraceptives got fresh attention in city government Thursday following the death of an escaped zoo owl, known as Flaco, who was found dead with rat poison in his system.

City Council Member Shaun Abreu proposed a city ordinance Thursday that would establish a pilot program for controlling the millions of rats lurking in subway stations and empty lots by using birth control instead of lethal chemicals. Abreu, chair of the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management,

said the contraceptives also are more ethical and humane than other methods.

The contraceptive, called ContraPest, is contained in salty, fatty pellets that are scattered in rat-infested areas as bait. It works by targeting ovarian function in female rats and disrupting sperm cell production in males, The New York Times reported.

New York exterminators currently kill rats using snap and glue traps, poisons that make them bleed internally, and carbon monoxide gas that can suffocate them in burrows. Some hobbyists have even trained their dogs to hunt them.

Rashad Edwards, a film and television actor who runs pest management company Scurry Inc. in New York City with his wife, said the best method he has found when dealing with rodents is carbon monoxide.

He tries to use the most humane method possible, and carbon monoxide euthanizes the rats slowly, putting them to sleep and killing them. Edwards avoids using rat poison whenever possible because it is dangerous and torturous to the rodents, he said.

Some lawmakers in Albany are considering a statewide ban on glue boards under a bill moving through the Legislature. The traps, usually made from a slab of cardboard or plastic coated in a sticky material, can also ensnare small animals that land on its surface.

Edwards opposes a ban on sticky traps, because he uses them on other pests, such as ants, to reduce overall pesticide use. When ants get into a house, he uses sticky traps to figure out where they're most often passing by. It helps him narrow zones of pesticide use "so that you don't go spray the entire place."

"This is not a problem we can kill our way out of," said Jakob Shaw, a special project manager for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. "It's time to embrace these more common sense and humane methods."

Two cities in California have passed bans on glue traps in recent years. On the federal level, a bill currently in committee would ban the traps nationwide.

"It ends a really inhumane practice of managing rat populations," said Jabari Brisport, the New York state senator who represents part of Brooklyn and sponsored the bill proposing the new guidelines. "There are more effective and more humane ways to deal with rats."

Every generation of New Yorkers has struggled to control rat populations. Mayor Eric Adams hired a "rat czar" last year tasked with battling the detested rodents. Last month, New York City reduced the amount of food served up to rats by mandating all businesses to put trash out in boxes.

While the war on rats has no end in sight, the exterminator Edwards said we can learn a lot from their resilience. The rodents, he said, can never be eradicated, only managed.

"They're very smart, and they're very wise," he said. "It's very inspiring but just — not in my house."

## **A jury of his peers: A look at how jury selection will work in Donald Trump's first criminal trial**

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump's history-making criminal trial is set to start Monday with a simple but extraordinary procedural step that is vital to American democracy. A group of regular citizens — Trump's peers, in the eyes of the law — will be chosen to decide whether the former president of the United States is guilty of a crime.

The process of picking a jury could take days. Lawyers on both sides of the case will have limited opportunities to try and shape the panel in their favor, but the court's goal won't be to ensure that it has a partisan balance between Democrats and Republicans, or is made up of people oblivious to previous news coverage about the trial.

The idea is to get people who are willing to put their personal opinions aside and make a decision based on the evidence and the law.

Here are some of the factors that will go into jury selection:

Who can sit on the jury?

This jury will be made up only of people who live in Manhattan, one of New York City's five boroughs. All English-speaking, U.S. citizens over age 18 who have not been convicted of a felony are eligible for jury duty in New York. Court officials identify potential jurors from lists of registered voters, taxpayers, driver's

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license holders, public benefit recipients and other sources.

The pool of potential jurors for Trump's trial will have been chosen at random. People can volunteer for jury duty, but they can't pick what trial they serve on.

What if a juror doesn't want to serve?

Jury duty is compulsory, but you can get excused for a variety of reasons, including a financial or medical hardship.

How will the jury get picked?

Judge Juan M. Merchan will begin by bringing a large group of potential jurors into his courtroom. He will then give a brief outline of the case and introduce the defendant, Trump, to the jury. The judge will then ask the potential jurors a critical question: Can they serve and be fair and impartial? Those who cannot will be asked to raise their hand. For this trial, jurors who indicate they cannot serve or be fair will be dismissed.

Those who remain will be called in groups into the jury box, where they will be asked 42 questions, some with multiple parts.

The lawyers on each side will have a limited number of strikes they can use to exclude potential jurors who they don't like, without giving a reason. They can also argue that a particular juror should be excluded, but have to get the judge to agree to dismiss that person.

The process continues until 12 jurors and six alternates have been picked. More large groups of potential jurors can be brought into the courtroom, if needed.

What questions will jurors be asked?

The judge won't allow the lawyers to ask whether potential jurors are Democrats or Republicans, whom they voted for or whether they have given money to any political causes. But there are multiple questions aimed at rooting out whether people are likely to be biased against, or in favor of, Trump.

Among them:

"Do you have any political, moral, intellectual, or religious beliefs or opinions which might prevent you from following the court's instructions on the law or which might slant your approach to this case?"

"Have you, a relative, or a close friend ever worked or volunteered for a Trump presidential campaign, the Trump presidential administration, or any other political entity affiliated with Mr. Trump?"

"Have you ever attended a rally or campaign event for Donald Trump?"

"Do you currently follow Donald Trump on any social media site or have you done so in the past?"

"Have you, a relative, or a close friend ever worked or volunteered for any anti-Trump group or organization?"

"Have you ever attended a rally or campaign event for any anti-Trump group or organization?"

"Do you currently follow any anti-Trump group or organization on any social media site, or have you done so in the past?"

"Have you ever considered yourself a supporter of or belonged to any of the following: The QAnon movement, Proud Boys, Oathkeepers, Three Percenters, Boogaloo Boys, Antifa."

Jurors will be asked what podcasts and talk radio programs they listen to and where they get their news.

Will the public learn the identities of the jurors?

The judge has ordered that the jurors' names be kept secret, an unusual but not unprecedented step in trials where there is a potential that jurors might wind up being harassed or threatened during or after the trial. There is nothing to stop jurors from voluntarily talking about their experiences after the trial is over. While it is pending, they aren't supposed to talk about it to anyone.

What will this jury decide?

Jurors in this trial will listen to testimony and decide whether Trump is guilty of any of 34 counts of falsifying business records. Their decision to convict or acquit must be unanimous. If they cannot agree on a verdict, the judge can declare a mistrial. If jurors have a reasonable doubt that Trump is guilty, they must acquit him. If they convict him, the judge will be the one who decides the sentence, not the jurors.

## The Latest | Iran launches its first direct military attack against Israel

By The Associated Press undefined

Iran launched its first direct military attack against Israel on Saturday. The Israeli military says Iran fired more than 100 bomb-carrying drones toward Israel. Hours later, Iran announced it had also launch much more destructive ballistic missiles and cruise missiles.

Iran had been threatening to attack Israel after an airstrike earlier this week widely blamed on Israel destroyed Iran's consulate in Syria, killing 12 people, including two elite Iranian generals.

The Israeli Defense Forces said in a statement early Sunday the "vast majority" of missiles launched from Iran were intercepted outside of Israel's borders. Israel has made missile defense a priority, with a variety of air-defense systems available to shoot down incoming missile and drone fire.

Israel and Iran have been on a collision course throughout Israel's six-month war against Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. The war erupted after Hamas and Islamic Jihad, two militant groups backed by Iran, carried out a devastating cross-border attack on Oct. 7 that killed 1,200 people in Israel and kidnapped 250 others.

An Israeli offensive in Gaza has caused widespread devastation and killed over 33,000 people, according to local health officials.

Currently:

— President Joe Biden cut short a weekend stay at his Delaware beach house to meet with his national security team and monitor the situation in the Middle East as Iran launched an attack against Israel.

— Israel has a multilayered air-defense system. It faces a big test with Iranian drone strike.

Here is the latest:

### BIDEN SAYS U.S. HELPED ISRAEL DOWN 'NEARLY ALL' IRANIAN DRONES AND MISSILES

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden says U.S. forces helped Israel down "nearly all" of the drones and missiles launched by Iran and pledged to convene allies to develop a unified response.

Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke early Sunday, Israeli time, their governments said. Biden said in a statement that he reaffirmed "America's ironclad commitment" to Israel's security — a departure from his harsh criticism over Israel's handling of the war in Gaza.

"At my direction, to support the defense of Israel, the U.S. military moved aircraft and ballistic missile defense destroyers to the region over the course of the past week," Biden said in the statement. "Thanks to these deployments and the extraordinary skill of our servicemembers, we helped Israel take down nearly all of the incoming drones and missiles."

The Iranian attack, less than two weeks after a suspected Israeli strike in Syria that killed two Iranian generals in an Iranian consular building, marked the first time it has launched a direct military assault on Israel

### ISRAEL SAYS MOST MISSILES LAUNCHED FROM IRAN WERE INTERCEPTED

JERUSALEM — Israel's military says the "vast majority" of missiles launched from Iran were intercepted outside of Israel's borders.

The Israeli Defense Forces said in a statement early Sunday that dozens of surface-to-surface missile launches from Iran were identified approaching Israeli territory and that "the IDF Aerial Defense Array successfully intercepted the majority of the launches using the 'Arrow' Aerial Defense System, together with Israel's strategic allies, before the launches crossed into Israeli territory."

"A small number of hits were identified, including at an IDF base in southern Israel, where minor damage was caused to infrastructure," the statement added.

It said "many dozens of hostile aircraft, as well as dozens of cruise missiles, from Iran were identified approaching Israeli territory and intercepted."

Dozens of Israeli Air Force fighter jets are currently operating to intercept aerial threats approaching Israeli territory, it added.

### UN CHIEF CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres is calling for an immediate halt to hostilities in the Middle East.

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"I strongly condemn the serious escalation represented by the large-scale attack launched on Israel by the Islamic Republic of Iran this evening," Guterres wrote in a statement Saturday night.

"I am deeply alarmed about the very real danger of a devastating region-wide escalation. I urge all parties to exercise maximum restraint to avoid any action that could lead to major military confrontations on multiple fronts in the Middle East," Guterres wrote. "I have repeatedly stressed that neither the region nor the world can afford another war."

## GERMANY, FRANCE, CANADA CONDEMN IRANIAN ATTACKS AGAINST ISRAEL

The French government forcefully condemned the Iranian air attack on Israel.

French foreign minister Stéphane Séjourné said in a statement Saturday that in "taking such an unprecedented action, Iran has crossed a new threshold with regard to its destabilizing activities and is risking a potential military escalation."

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock wrote early Sunday on X that Germany condemns "in the strongest possible terms the ongoing attack, which could plunge an entire region into chaos.

"Iran and its proxies must stop it immediately," Baerbock wrote. "We offer Israel our full solidarity at this time."

Likewise, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his nation "unequivocally condemns Iran's airborne attacks against Israel."

"We stand with Israel. After supporting Hamas' brutal October 7 attack, the Iranian regime's latest actions will further destabilize the region and make lasting peace more difficult," Trudeau said in a statement.

"We support Israel's right to defend itself and its people from these attacks."

## BRITAIN AND ARGENTINA RESPOND TO IRANIAN ATTACK ON ISRAEL

U.K. Defense Secretary Grant Shapps said additional Royal Air Force jets and air refueling tankers have been sent to the Middle East to bolster Britain's existing operation against the Islamic State Group in Iraq and Syria.

He said the jets "will intercept airborne attacks within range of our existing missions," but did not confirm whether RAF jets had already shot down any Iranian drones.

Meanwhile, the spokesperson of Argentine President Javier Milei says the leader will cancel a trip to Denmark and return to Buenos Aires due to Iran's attack on Israel.

A statement from presidential spokesperson Manuel Adorni said Milei was flying home to form a "crisis committee in light of the latest events in Israel, to take charge of the situation and coordinate actions with the presidents of the Western world."

## US FORCES DOWN ATTACK DRONES HEADED TO ISRAEL

U.S. officials say American military forces have downed some Iran-launched attack drones flying toward Israel.

That is according to a U.S. defense official and two U.S. officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the matter. The defense official said the effort to intercept the attack was continuing.

Since Iran announced its attack Saturday against Israel, air raid sirens have gone off in Jerusalem, in northern and southern Israel, in the Negev region, in the Shomron area and in the Dead Sea region.

— Associated Press writers Zeke Miller and Lolita C. Baldor in Washington and Mike Balsamo in New York contributed.

## ISRAEL ORDERS RESIDENTS IN SOME AREAS TO MOVE CLOSE TO PROTECTED SPACES

The Israeli army has ordered residents of the Golan Heights in the north and Nevatim, Dimona and Eilat in the south to stay close to a protected space — such as a shelter, stairwell or inner room — until further notice.

Residents must be able to reach the protected spaces as soon as air raid sirens are activated, the statement said.

"We ask the public to follow the instructions of the Home Front Command regarding the situation and wait for additional instructions," the statement said.

## IRAN SAYS IT HAS FIRED BALLISTIC MISSILES AT ISRAEL



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Iran's state-run IRNA news agency says Tehran has fired ballistic missiles at targets inside of Israel. The announcement came shortly after Iran said it fired dozens of bomb-carrying drones.

Slow-moving Shahed-136 drones have been seen in the skies over Iran. However, those are more easily shot down.

Israel has missile defense systems capable of targeting ballistic missiles. However, in a massive attack involving multiple drones and missiles like the campaign launched late Saturday by Iran, the likelihood of a strike making it through is higher.

## ISRAELI ARMY SAYS IT IS DETERMINED TO DEFEND THE COUNTRY

The Israel Defense Forces says that it is prepared to defend itself against a massive drone attack launched by Iran.

Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, the army's spokesperson, said the country is closely monitoring the drones that are headed to Israel.

"Our defensive and offensive capabilities are at the highest level of readiness," he said. "Together with our partners, the Israel Defense Forces is operating at full-force to defend the State of Israel and the people of Israel."

## US PLEDGES UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL AMID IRANIAN ATTACK

National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said Saturday that the United States "will stand with the people of Israel and support their defense against these threats from Iran."

The Pentagon reported that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin had spoken with his Israeli counterpart "and made clear that Israel could count on full U.S. support to defend Israel against any attacks by Iran and its regional proxies."

National security adviser Jake Sullivan also spoke with his counterpart to reinforce Washington's "ironclad commitment" to Israel's security.

## ISRAEL CLOSES ITS AIRSPACE AS IT ANTICIPATES DRONE ATTACK

Israel says it has closed its airspace after Iran launched dozens of drones against it late Saturday.

Israeli aviation authorities said they were closing the country's airspace to all flights as of 12:30 a.m. local time (5:30 p.m. EDT).

## ATTACK REPRESENTS FIRST DIRECT MILITARY ASSAULT ON ISRAEL BY IRAN

The attack late Saturday marked the first time Iran had ever launched a direct military assault on Israel, despite decades of enmity dating back to the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iran has a vast arsenal of drones and missiles. Tehran's choice of the Shahed-136 drones both give Israel and its allies hours to shoot down the bomb-carrying drones. For the time being, it does not appear Iran has used any of its ballistic missiles in the attack, which would pose a greater risk to Israel.

## Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese headline one of the most anticipated WNBA drafts in years

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Caitlin Clark, Angel Reese, Cameron Brink and others make this one of the most anticipated WNBA drafts in recent years. There are several impact players up for grabs, but their talent is nearly eclipsed by their popularity among basketball fans.

"Caitlin is kind of in a world of her own, but I don't know that we have seen this kind of excitement across the board," ESPN analyst Rebecca Lobo said. "You know, Angel Reese has a massive following. Cameron Brink has a large following of people, whether it's following them on social media or following them throughout the course of their college career.

"We have women coming into the draft this year, who people are very much aware of and eager to see how their game is going to translate at this level."

Clark has helped bring millions of new fans to the game with her signature logo shots and dazzling passing ability. The Iowa star was a big reason why a record 18.9 million viewers tuned in to the NCAA championship game where South Carolina beat the Hawkeyes.

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The NCAA Division I all-time scoring leader will go first to the Indiana Fever on Monday night when the draft takes place at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in front of 1,000 fans.

"This is the first time we're going to have fans at the draft, so I think that's going to be special," ESPN analyst Andraya Carter said. "For people watching at home to see and hear a crowd and fans and people there, I think it'll be really exciting."

While Clark is a lock to go first, Brink, Tennessee's Rickea Jackson and South Carolina's Kamilla Cardoso have all been in the discussion to be taken at No. 2 by Los Angeles. The Sparks also own the No. 4 pick with Chicago choosing third.

"They are foundational. They're an incredible opportunity for our organization," Sparks GM Raegan Pebley said. "We definitely want to see two players that not only have the skill set to make an impact early, but also a long runway ahead of them, opportunities to develop, opportunities to, not only be excellent in what they do, but how they impact the other pieces around them as we continue to build this team."

Dallas is fifth and Washington sixth. Minnesota, Chicago, Dallas, Connecticut, New York and Atlanta close out the first round. In all, there are three rounds and 36 picks in total.

Here are a few other tidbits for the draft:

## INJURY SETBACKS

All-Americans Mackenzie Holmes of Indiana and Elizabeth Kitley of Virginia Tech won't be able to play in the WNBA this season because of knee injuries. Holmes said on social media that she is having surgery next month.

"At this time to ensure my body is healthy and my playing career is as long and successful as possible, I have decided to get the necessary surgery in May to prevent further issues and alleviate the pain it has caused," she said. "I have declared for the 2024 WNBA draft and pray that a team honors me with a selection knowing I will be ready for the start of 2025 training camp."

Kitley tore the ACL in her left knee in Virginia Tech's final regular season game and missed the entire postseason.

"Whenever you see any player go through an injury at any point in their career, but especially at that point, this special season that Virginia Tech was having. But I think she's a player that has, I'll use this word 'track' again," Pebley said. "Just a lot of runway ahead of her. She's going to, I think, have a great career with her versatility, her footwork abilities. And I think her impact around the rim."

## INVITEES

The WNBA invited 15 players to the draft Monday, including Clark, Reese, Brink, Jackson, Cardoso and Kitley. The others are Aaliyah Edwards and Nika Muhl of UConn; Charisma Osborne of UCLA; Celeste Taylor and Jacy Sheldon of Ohio State; Alissa Pili of Utah; Marquasha Davis of Mississippi; Dyaisha Fair of Syracuse; and Nyadiew Puoch of Australia.

## Barges break loose on Ohio River in Pittsburgh, damaging a marina and striking a bridge

PITTSBURGH (AP) — More than two dozen river barges broke loose from their moorings and floated down the Ohio River in Pittsburgh, striking one bridge that had already been preemptively closed and damaging a marina, officials said. The boats eventually were pinned to the riverbank or went over a dam downstream, officials said.

Pittsburgh police, fire and emergency medical services responded around 11:25 p.m. Friday to reports of the barges "floating uncontrolled" down the river, Pittsburgh Public Safety said in a statement. The area had been hit by flooding after heavy rains Thursday.

The Sewickley Bridge was struck by a barge a few minutes before 2 p.m. Saturday, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation said. It "was closed in advance of the strike and will remain closed until our crews complete an inspection," spokesperson Steve Cowan said.

Officials in Moon Township, which is connected by the bridge to the community of Sewickley, earlier said the span would be temporarily closed "due to unmanned barge passing through."

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Eleven of the 26 barges that broke free were quickly contained to one side by another towing vessel just downstream, said Cmdr. Justin Jolley of the Coast Guard marine safety unit in Pittsburgh. Nine others were collected at the Emsworth lock and dam downstream.

Five or six barges went through the dam. Four ended up just downstream at a lock and dam, while another ended up on the bank of the river and was stabilized. Marine safety units were searching for one barge unaccounted for, Jolley said.

Pittsburgh public safety officials reported damage to Peggy's Harbor, a marina on the river. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported that the McKees Rocks Bridge was also closed as a precaution but later reopened following inspection.

Twenty-three of the barges were carrying dry cargo, mostly coal, and at least one was loaded with fertilizer, according to the owner, Jolley said. Three were empty. There were no hazardous materials on any of the vessels, the city said.

The Coast Guard put out a broadcast notice to mariners to inform them about the potential hazard, but high water was preventing traffic on the river, Jolley said.

The barges were owned or operated by Campbell Transportation Co., the city's statement said. Jolley said Coast Guard officials were working with the owner on a salvage plan. Pennsylvania State Police and other agencies were also alerted.

The vulnerability of bridges to strikes from barges and ships came into stark relief last month when a container ship rammed a support of the major Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, collapsing the span and leading to the deaths or presumptive deaths of six road workers.

## **Trump goes after the judge and prosecutors in his hush money case in last rally before trial begins**

By JOSH BOAK and JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

SCHNECKSVILLE, Pa. (AP) — Former President Donald Trump on Saturday lit into New York prosecutors and the criminal hush money case they brought against him during his last rally before what he called a "communist show trial" begins Monday.

"I will be forced to sit fully gagged. I'm not allowed to talk. They want to take away my constitutional right to talk," said Trump, who has been barred from publicly discussing potential witnesses and jurors but not the judge or prosecutors.

"I'm proud to do it for you," Trump told a crowd in northeast Pennsylvania. "Have a good time watching."

Trump spoke as Israel was fighting off a retaliatory drone attack from Iran that threatened to tip into a regional war in the Middle East. After a short mention of the attack, which he claimed wouldn't have happened if he were president, Trump turned to an extended tirade against his own legal troubles.

He went after Judge Juan M. Merchan, whom he called "corrupt," and District Attorney Alvin Bragg, declaring himself a victim of Democrats bent on blocking his return to the White House.

Trump is navigating four separate criminal prosecutions while running to avenge his loss to President Joe Biden, creating an unprecedented swirl of legal and political chaos.

Jury selection starts Monday in New York in his trial where he is charged with seeking during his 2016 campaign to bury stories about extramarital affairs by arranging hush money payments.

It will be the first criminal trial ever of a former U.S. president. And it will limit Trump's availability on the campaign trail, though he is expected to speak to the media after court often and has for months fundraised and campaigned on the felony charges he faces.

Trump spoke at the Schnecksville Fire Hall in Lehigh County, where a long line formed outward three hours before Trump's planned appearance. It was Trump's third visit this year to the vital swing state, one that could decide who wins this year's presidential race. He also plans to attend a fundraiser in nearby Bucks County before the event.

Pennsylvania is a critical battleground in the rematch between Trump and Biden, with both candidates expected to visit the state frequently through November. Trump flipped the state to the Republican column

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in 2016 but lost it four years after to Biden, who was born in the northeast city of Scranton and has long talked about his roots in the city. Biden plans to deliver a major address Tuesday in Scranton on tax fairness.

Bob Dippel, 69, retired after working as a chief financial officer for several small businesses. He said he didn't think the upcoming trial "would matter too much" to independent voters because "people are starting to see the mockery being made" of the legal system.

Biden has argued Trump's lies about losing the 2020 election are dangerous for the country. He has said Trump poses a fundamental threat to democracy and U.S. alliances abroad — rhetoric that Trump has argued applies to Biden.

"We're going to win in the biggest landslide in history, because we're the ones who are fighting to save our democracy and Joe Biden is a demented tyrant," Trump said.

Iran's attack on Israel, in apparent retaliation for a strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus that killed 12 people, may once again push foreign policy and the Middle East into the center of the presidential campaign.

It marked the first time Iran has launched a direct military assault on Israel, where officials have vowed to strike Iran directly in response to any attack from Iranian soil.

Prior to Saturday, Trump has recently said Israel needs to "finish up" its offensive in Gaza, warning the country is "absolutely losing the PR war" as deaths mount and images of mass destruction proliferate. Israeli forces are going after Hamas after militants staged an Oct. 7 attack in which they killed an estimated 1,200 people and took 250 hostages.

"Get it over with, and let's get back to peace and stop killing people. And that's a very simple statement," Trump said in an interview with conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt earlier this month. "They have to get it done. Get it over with, and get it over with fast because we have to — you have to get back to normalcy and peace."

Trump recently said that any Democratic-leaning voters who support Israel should back him instead, as Biden has criticized Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's actions in his war against Hamas. The Republican said Wednesday that "any Jewish person who votes for a Democrat or votes for Biden should have their head examined."

During his presidency, he moved the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and facilitated the normalization of relations between Israel and several Arab states through a series of agreements known as the Abraham Accords. He pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal negotiated by his predecessor, Barack Obama, a move that Israel welcomed.

The deal lifted sanctions on Iran, which agreed in exchange to limit its nuclear program and allow inspections. Trump said it was too generous to Iran, while supporters of a deal said it was the best option to forestall a nuclear-armed Iran.

## Scottie Scheffler leads Masters by 1 shot on a wild day of movement

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Scottie Scheffler was in the lead and seemingly in control of his game Saturday in the Masters until realizing there was no such thing at Augusta National.

He posed over another beautiful shot at the flag on the 10th hole and was stunned to see it take a hard hop over the green and roll down into the bushes. He made double bogey and suddenly was one shot behind.

"Make another bogey at 11 and all of a sudden I'm probably going from in the lead to a few out of the lead and then," Scheffler said, "you know, things happen pretty fast out there."

It was so fast and furious that it was hard to keep up.

Six players had at least a share of the lead at one point. There was a five-way tie for the lead early on the back nine. No one was safe. It was like that to the very end.

Scheffler made an 8-foot birdie putt on the final hole for a 1-under 71 that gave him a one-shot lead over Collin Morikawa, the two-time major champion who has largely disappeared from the elite in golf and

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now is one round away from the third leg of the Grand Slam.

Bryson DeChambeau looked to be on the verge of a meltdown when he drove into the trees right of the 18th fairway, punched out to the short grass and then hit wedge from 77 yards that spun back into the cup for a birdie to sum up a wild Saturday.

"Easier than putting," DeChambeau, adding that he was joking although there was some truth to that. He three-putted three times on the back nine.

Max Homa has gone 32 holes without a birdie and he was only two behind after a round of 17 pars and one bogey for a 73. Xander Schauffele has gone 25 holes without a bogey, and that goes a long way. He was five back after a 70.

Augusta National didn't need a ferocious wind to be wildly entertaining. The course was tough as ever, with a wind that would have felt scary if not for the day before. The greens made players feel as though they were putting on linoleum floors.

Scheffler was at 7-under 209 as he goes for a second Masters green jacket and tries to extend a dominant stretch that includes two wins on tough courses (Bay Hill and TPC Sawgrass) and a runner-up finish in his last three tournaments.

"It's nice to have that experience, but going into tomorrow, that's really all that it is," he said.

Morikawa made two tough pars to finish off a 69 — of those was a long birdie putt that hit the lip and spun 12 feet away. He is the only player to break par all three days at this Masters. Not bad for a someone who only found a swing key on Monday, switched putters after the first round and hasn't had a top 10 since the first week of the year.

"If you asked me at the beginning of the week I'd be one back heading into Sunday, I would have taken that any time," Morikawa said. "You give yourself a chance with 18 holes left, that's all you can really do."

Another shot back was Homa, whose last birdie was on the fourth hole of the second round. He has made 32 pars in his last 36 holes.

Eight players were separated by five shots going into the final round, where the greens are likely to be even faster, crispier and more frightening.

Tiger Woods was not among them. Neither was Rory McIlroy.

Woods, having made his Masters-record 24th consecutive cut Friday, started the third round seven shots out of the lead and hopeful of at least making his massive following think there might be more magic left in that battered 48-year-old body.

Instead, Woods posted his highest round in three decades playing the majors. He shot an 82, the third time he has failed to break 80 in a major, and the first since the 2015 U.S. Open.

"Just hit the ball in all the places that I know I shouldn't hit it," Woods said.

McIlroy came to the Masters thinking this might be the year he finally got the last leg of the career Grand Slam. All he could muster was a 71 that left him 10 shots behind with 20 players in front of him.

There were no shortage of challengers.

Ludvig Aberg, the rising Swedish star playing in his first major, was among those who had a brief share of the lead until missing a pair of short par putts on the back nine. He still managed a 70 and was only three shots behind.

Another newcomer to the Masters, Nicolai Hojgaard of Denmark, had the lead to himself with three straight birdies around the turn. He celebrated that good fortunate by running off five straight bogeys, putting the ball in the water on both par 5s.

And then there was DeChambeau, who started the third round tied with Scheffler and Homa.

DeChambeau kept making enough birdies to hang around and was only one shot behind until he decided to go for the green from the trees on the par-5 15th. He went well right toward the 17th fairway — the second time in as many days he played a par 5 from two holes — only this one didn't work out so well.

He chunked his wedge and watched it tumble into the pond. He took a penalty drop, pitched on and two-putted for double bogey. And then he three-putted for bogey on the 16th. And right when it appeared to be falling apart, he made his surprise birdie to limit the damage to 75. He was four shots behind.

Scheffler didn't escape the craziness. He reached 8 under quickly by chipping in across the green on

No. 1 and making a 30-foot birdie putt on No. 3. But all it took was two holes to make it feel like his head was spinning.

What saved his day was a 7-foot par putt on No. 12 and then a 30-foot eagle putt on the par-5 13th that dropped on its final turn and elicited rare emotion from Scheffler.

"C'mon, baby!" he yelled when the putt dropped.

"Things got a little dicey in the middle," Scheffler said. "On No. 10, I hit what I thought was a decent shot 8 feet from the hole and it wound up in the bushes. I did a good job of staying patient."

He'll need another dose for Sunday, even with the experience of winning a Masters. Two years ago, he had a three-shot lead going into the final round and spent the morning in tears as his wife gave him soothing words of confidence.

Now his wife is home in Dallas expecting their first child at the end of the month. Scheffler brought in his best friends from home to stay with him.

"I didn't want to be in the house all by myself this weekend. Didn't really seem that exciting to me," Scheffler said.

There's plenty of that inside the ropes.

## **Faith Ringgold, pioneering Black quilt artist and author, dies at 93**

NEW YORK (AP) — Faith Ringgold, an award-winning author and artist who broke down barriers for Black female artists and became famous for her richly colored and detailed quilts combining painting, textiles and storytelling, has died. She was 93.

The artist's assistant, Grace Matthews, told The Associated Press that Ringgold died Friday night at her home in Englewood, New Jersey. Matthews said Ringgold had been in failing health.

Ringgold's highly personal works of art can be found in private and public collections around the country and beyond, from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American Art to New York's Museum of Modern Art and Atlanta's High Museum of Fine Art. But her rise to prominence as a Black artist wasn't easy in an art world dominated by white males and in a political cultural where Black men were the leading voices for civil rights. A founder in 1971 of the Where We At artists collective for Black women, Ringgold became a social activist, frequently protesting the lack of representation of Black and female artists in American museums.

"I became a feminist out of disgust for the manner in which women were marginalized in the art world," she told The New York Times in 2019. "I began to incorporate this perspective into my work, with a particular focus on Black women as slaves and their sexual exploitation."

In her first illustrated children's book, "Tar Beach," the spirited heroine takes flight over the George Washington Bridge. The story symbolized women's self-realization and freedom to confront "this huge masculine icon — the bridge," she explained.

The story is based on her narrative quilt of the same name now in the permanent collection of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.

While her works often deal with issues of race and gender, their folk-like style is vibrant, optimistic and lighthearted and often reminiscent of her warm memories of her life in Harlem.

Ringgold introduced quilting into her work in the 1970s after seeing brocaded Tibetan paintings called thangkas. They inspired her to create patchwork fabric borders, or frames, with handwritten narrative around her canvas acrylic paintings. For her 1982 story quilt, "Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemina," Ringgold confronted the struggles of women by undermining the Black "mammy" stereotype and telling the story of a successful African American businesswoman called Jemima Blakey.

"Aunt Jemima conveys the same negative connotation as Uncle Tom, simply because of her looks," she told The New York Times in a 1990 interview.

Soon after, Ringgold produced a series of 12 quilt paintings titled "The French Collection," again weaving narrative, biographical and African American cultural references and Western art.

One of the works in the series, "Dancing at the Louvre," depicts Ringgold's daughters dancing in the

Paris museum, seemingly oblivious to the "Mona Lisa" and other European masterpieces on the walls. In other works in the series Ringgold depicts giants of Black culture like poet Langston Hughes alongside Pablo Picasso and other European masters.

Among her socially conscious works is a three-panel "9/11 Peace Story Quilt" that Ringgold designed and constructed in collaboration with New York City students for the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks. Each of the panels contains 12 squares with pictures and words that address the question "what will you do for peace?" It was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

In 2014, her "Groovin High," a depiction of a crowded energetic dance hall evocative of Harlem's famous Savoy Ballroom, was featured on a billboard along New York City's High Line park.

Ringgold also created a number of public works. "People Portraits," comprised of 52 individual glass mosaics representing figures in sports, performance and music, adorns the Los Angeles Civic Center subway station. "Flying Home: Harlem Heroes and Heroines" are two mosaic murals in a Harlem subway station that feature figures like Dinah Washington, Sugar Ray Robinson and Malcolm X.

In one of her recent books, "Harlem Renaissance Party," Ringgold introduces young readers to Hughes and other Black artists of the 1920s. Other children's books have featured Rosa Parks, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Underground Railroad.

Born in Harlem in 1930, Ringgold was the daughter of a seamstress and dress designer with whom she collaborated often. She attended City College of New York where she earned bachelor and master's degrees in art. She was a professor of art at the University of California in San Diego from 1987 until 2002.

Ringgold's motto, posted on her website, states: "If one can, anyone can, all you gotta do is try."

## **174 people stranded in the air are rescued, almost a day after a fatal cable car accident in Turkey**

ISTANBUL (AP) — The last of 174 people stranded in cable cars high above a mountain in southern Turkey were brought to safety Saturday, nearly 23 hours after one pod hit a pole and burst open, killing one person and injuring seven when they plummeted to the rocks below.

Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya announced the successful completion of the rescue operation on X Saturday afternoon.

A total of 607 search and rescue personnel and 10 helicopters were involved, including teams from Turkey's emergency response agency, AFAD, the Coast Guard, firefighting teams and mountain rescue teams from different parts of Turkey, officials said. Helicopters with night-vision capabilities had continued rescuing people throughout the night.

The stranded people had been stuck on the Tunektepe cable car, just outside the Mediterranean city of Antalya, since 5:30 p.m. on Friday, when the accident occurred.

Istanbul resident Hatice Polat and her family were rescued seven hours into the ordeal. Speaking to the Anadolu agency, she said the power went out and the pod flipped four or five times.

"The night was awful, we were very scared. There were children with us, they passed out," she said. "It was torture being up there for seven hours. It is swaying every second, you're constantly in fear. ... It was very traumatic, I don't know how we'll get over this trauma."

State-run Anadolu Agency identified the deceased as a 54-year-old Turkish man. Those injured included two children and were six Turkish citizens and one Kyrgyz national. They were all rescued by Coast Guard helicopters soon after the crash and sent for treatment. Images in Turkish media showed the battered car swaying from dislodged cables on the side of the rocky mountain as medics tended the wounded.

Yerlikaya also announced that 13 people rescued from other cars were also taken to hospitals for checkups.

Friday was the final day of a three-day public holiday in Turkey marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which sees families flock to coastal resorts.

The cable car carries tourists from Konyaalti beach to a restaurant and viewing platform at the summit of the 618-meter (2,010-foot) Tunektepe peak. It is run by Antalya Metropolitan Municipality. The cable car line was completed in 2017 and receives a major inspection around the beginning of the year, as well

as routine inspections throughout the year.

Antalya Chief Public Prosecutor's Office has launched an investigation. An expert commission including mechanical and electrical engineers and health and safety experts was assigned to determine the cause of the incident.

## **Progressive candidates are increasingly sharing their own abortion stories after Roe's demise**

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI and CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — For decades, only three people knew Gloria Johnson had had an abortion.

But a year of watching women and doctors agonize under Tennessee's strict abortion ban kicked up a fire in the longtime Democrat. She watched in dismay as her Republican colleagues in the General Assembly dismissed concerns that the law was harming women. Many GOP lawmakers argued that only on rare occasions was an abortion needed to save a life.

So without telling her legislative staff or family in advance, the then-60-year-old state representative stood before a Republican-controlled House panel in March 2023 and testified about the abortion she had at age 21. She made the decision to have an abortion, she said, as a newly married college student after being diagnosed with an aortic aneurysm. That would likely have killed her if she did nothing, but might have harmed the baby if Johnson got the treatment she needed to save her own life.

"The reality is that we're in a situation where people act like stories like mine are one in a million when actually they happen every day," Johnson said in a recent interview, nearly a year after her dramatic testimony.

Johnson, now running as a Democrat for the U.S. Senate against Republican incumbent Marsha Blackburn, has joined the growing ranks of progressive candidates choosing to tell their own abortion stories. They are doing so more frequently in states that have banned abortion in the aftermath of the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Democrats think that even in many strongly Republican states voters support their view that such personal choices should be left to women to make for themselves and that showing voters how hard their own decisions were will help make that case.

Recent elections suggest the fight for abortion rights may have real currency. Statewide ballot measures supporting reproductive rights have won big since the high court's ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, including in GOP strongholds such as Kansas and Kentucky.

Reproductive rights supporters celebrated last month after Marilyn Lands won a special election in Alabama, claiming a legislative seat long held by Republicans. Alabama currently bans abortion at all stages of pregnancy, with almost no exception.

Lands made abortion rights central to her campaign, releasing a video in which she disclosed having an abortion after testing determined that her baby had a genetic disorder and could not survive.

Lands made a comparison to Alyssa Gonzales, a woman denied the same care just months after *Dobbs* despite having almost the same diagnosis as Lands. Gonzales traveled 10 hours out of state to Washington, D.C., to get the help she needed.

"Our media consultant did say, 'Marilyn, you don't have to do this, the issue is compelling enough on its own,'" Lands said. "I think they wanted to be sure that I really was comfortable with it, and I was. ... It was absolutely the right thing to do."

For the most part, though, election victories have been slower to come for pro-choice candidates than when they are framed in a ballot measure. Measures legalizing recreational marijuana and Medicaid expansion also have won in conservative states but have not translated into many wins for candidates supporting them.

That leaves political experts watching races such as Johnson's Tennessee Senate bid to see if telling more personal stories will make a difference.

"If these candidates continue to be successful, it'll just once again show us that people are unhappy with



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state abortion policies but also that abortion is a big enough deal to them that they may vote for someone they may not otherwise," said Mary Ruth Ziegler, a law professor at the University of California, Davis.

Heather Williams, president of the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee, which works to elect Democrats to state legislatures, said Lands' victory was a "political earthquake in Alabama."

"In red states, when candidates share these stories, it helps voters see there's someone championing the things they care about, who shares their experiences," she said.

While the majority of candidates and lawmakers who have shared abortion stories have been Democrats, Republican Sam Brown has chosen to revisit his wife's abortion as he vies for a U.S. Senate seat in Nevada. Earlier this year, Brown's wife talked candidly about the abortion she had before the two met. Brown said he would oppose a federal abortion ban while supporting Nevada's current law protecting the right to an abortion up to 24 weeks — roughly the standard nationally under *Roe v. Wade*.

Even before the right to abortion was struck down, there were hints that politicians' personal stories could make a difference.

In Georgia, Democrat Shea Roberts first ran for the state House in 2018 but lost to Republican Deborah Silcox. In 2020, Roberts shared her abortion story while running once again and won.

Roberts started talking about her decision to terminate her nonviable pregnancy — first before small groups of voters and then at news conferences. She said she owed her win to that decision.

"I regretted not being braver the first time around," she said.

At the federal level, Democratic Reps. Cori Bush of Missouri, Pramila Jayapal of Washington state and Barbara Lee of California have shared their abortion stories openly since speaking about them at a House committee hearing in 2021 on abortion rights.

And as the future of *Roe v. Wade* hung in the balance after the Supreme Court's draft ruling leaked, Democratic Reps. Marie Newman of Illinois and Gwen Moore of Wisconsin also spoke openly about their abortions.

In Arizona, state Sen. Eva Burch told fellow lawmakers from the Senate floor last month that she was going to get an abortion because her pregnancy was no longer viable. In a nearly 10-minute speech, the 43-year-old first-term lawmaker, who previously worked as a nurse practitioner at a women's health clinic, described a "rough journey" with fertility and an earlier miscarriage.

Burch criticized Arizona's restrictions as out of touch, saying state law requires an ultrasound that her doctor did not order. She also said she was given bad information about alternative treatments.

"I think a lot of people wish they could tell their story, but either they don't have the platform or they don't want to and they shouldn't have to," Burch said later. "If that's something that I can do for people, I'm going to do it in whatever capacity I possibly can."

In Wisconsin, Dr. Kristin Lyerly, an obstetrician and gynecologist who performs abortions, entered the race last week for an open congressional seat in a Republican district. Minnesota state Sen. Kelly Morrison, a practicing OB-GYN, is running for Congress and promoting her support for abortion rights.

Back in Tennessee, which severely limits exemptions to its abortion ban, Gloria Johnson isn't the only candidate sharing her story.

At 19 weeks pregnant, Allie Phillips learned she had a nonviable pregnancy, but she did not meet the requirements to receive an abortion in the state despite the many complications she was having. Her account of traveling outside Tennessee with her husband to get the services she needed has circulated widely on social media.

Phillips has since joined a group of women challenging the legality of Tennessee's abortion law. She announced her candidacy for the state House against a Republican who she says played down her story when she met with him last year.

Johnson says reproductive rights are a priority for Democrats and Republicans. She knows Tennessee voters have not elected a Democrat to statewide office in nearly 20 years but thinks being open will help her connect with anyone who cares about how women are treated.

"I'm absolutely setting myself apart. I'm letting you know that I'm a woman who cares about women's reproductive choice," she said. "To me it's about equality and rights."

## West Bank sees biggest settler rampage since war in Gaza began as Israeli teen's body is found

By NASSER NASSER and JACK JEFFERY Associated Press

Al-MUGHAYYIR, West Bank (AP) — Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank went on the largest rampage against Palestinians there since the war in Gaza began, as Israel's army said Saturday the body of a missing Israeli teen was found after he was killed in a "terrorist attack." Witnesses said settlers assaulted a number of communities.

The Israeli military said dozens of people were injured in confrontations in several locations, with shots fired and rocks thrown. It did not specify how many Palestinians and Israelis were hurt. Several companies with the defense forces were deployed and "all of the incidents have concluded," it asserted.

The disappearance of 14-year-old Binyamin Achimair sparked the attacks on Palestinian villages on Friday and Saturday. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in a statement on social media urged people not to take the law into their own hands in the territory where tensions have simmered for months.

On Friday, Palestinian Jihad Abu Alia was killed and 25 others were wounded in the attack on al-Mughayyir village, Palestinian health officials said. On Saturday, Israeli troops delayed for several hours the ambulance carrying the 26-year-old man's body for burial, witnesses said.

Dozens of Israeli settlers returned to the village's outskirts on Saturday, burning 12 homes and several cars. The Palestinian Health Ministry said three people from the village were injured, one critically. Border police fired tear gas toward villagers who gathered, trying to disperse them.

"They entered the house and burned it and burned cars, as you can see," 42-year-old Akef Abu Allu said, looking at his blackened two-story home in al-Mughayyir.

In the nearby village of Douma, Israeli settlers set fire to around 15 homes and 10 farms, the head of the local village council, Slieman Dawabsheh, told The Associated Press, saying he had been there. "The army came but unfortunately, the army were protecting the settlers," he said, asserting that it fired tear gas and rubber bullets at Palestinians trying to confront and expel them.

The Israeli military didn't respond to questions. The Palestinian Red Crescent said six people were injured by gunfire but did not say who fired.

The Israeli human rights group Yesh Din in a statement said at least 10 villages in the West Bank were attacked by Israeli settlers, with homes and vehicles damaged.

Tensions in the West Bank have been especially high since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza on Oct. 7, sparked by the Hamas attack on southern Israel that killed about 1,200 people and took 250 hostages. More than 33,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed in Israel's offensive, according to Gaza health officials.

Since then, Hamas has been trying to ignite other fronts, including in the West Bank, in hopes of exerting more pressure on Israel. Such efforts have largely failed, though more than 460 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank since Oct. 7, most in clashes sparked by army raids but some by vigilante settlers.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the killing of the Israeli teen.

According to Israeli media, the teen was last seen leaving the settler outpost of Malachei Shalom early Friday to tend to livestock nearby. The sheep returned to the outpost hours later without him, reports said.

Israel's Channel 13 TV reported that Achimair's body was discovered by a drone. The broadcaster said he was not shot but did not elaborate.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the killing. "We will get to the murderers and their helpers as we do to anyone who harms the citizens of the state of Israel," he said in a statement issued by his office.

In 2014, the abduction and killing of three Israeli teens in the West Bank escalated tensions and eventually ignited a 50-day Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, at the time the deadliest round of fighting between the two sides.

Consecutive Israeli governments have expanded Israeli settlement construction in east Jerusalem and

the West Bank, territories the Palestinians seek for a future state, along with Gaza. Some are highly developed and resemble suburbs of Israeli cities, while smaller outposts often have only a few caravans.

While Israel has established scores of settlements across the occupied West Bank, the outposts are not authorized, though the government gives them tacit support. The international community overwhelmingly considers all West Bank settlements illegal and obstacles to peace.

Over 700,000 Israelis now live in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem — territories captured by Israel in 1967.

## **'Run, run, run': Chaos at a Sydney mall as 6 people stabbed to death, and the suspect fatally shot**

By RICK RYCROFT Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — A man stabbed six people to death at a busy Sydney shopping center Saturday before he was fatally shot, police said, with hundreds fleeing the chaotic scene, many weeping as they carried their children. Eight people, including a 9-month-old, were injured.

New South Wales police said they believed a 40-year-old man was responsible for the Saturday afternoon attack at the Westfield Shopping Centre in Bondi Junction, in the city's eastern suburbs and not far from the world-famous Bondi Beach. They said they were not able to name him until a formal identification had taken place but that they weren't treating the attack as terrorism-related.

The man was shot dead by a police inspector after he turned and raised a knife, New South Wales Assistant Police Commissioner Anthony Cooke told reporters.

"This all happened very, very quickly — the officer that was in the vicinity attended on her own, was guided to the location of the offender by people who were in the center," he said. "She took the actions that she did saving a range of people's lives."

The attack at the shopping center, one of the country's busiest and which was a hub of activity on a particularly warm fall afternoon, began around 3:10 p.m. and police were swiftly called.

"They just said run, run, run — someone's been stabbed," one witness told ABC TV in Australia. "(The attacker) was walking really calmly like he was having an ice cream in a park. And then he went up the escalators ... and probably within about a minute we heard three gunshots."

Six of the victims — five women and a man — and the suspect died. The officer conducted CPR on the attacker until the arrival of paramedics, who also worked on the man.

New South Wales Police Commissioner Karen Webb said the eight injured people were being treated at hospitals. The baby was in surgery, but it was too early to know the condition, she said.

"We are confident that there is no ongoing risk, and we are dealing with one person who is now deceased," Webb said in a later briefing. "It's not a terrorism incident."

Witnesses were shocked at the rare outburst of violence. Australia enacted strict gun laws after a man killed 35 and wounded another 23 in 1996, in Tasmania.

"I saw all the people running and I didn't know what was happening," said Ayush Singh. "I thought it was some people playing a prank or something and after some time I saw a guy with a knife running from the footpath to the cafe where I work."

He said police arrived quickly and told everyone to stay put.

Singh said he saw the man running just meters (yards) away as he wielded a knife. "I didn't hear him say anything," he added. "Just a random guy stabbing people. Mad guy."

Video footage shared online appears to show a man confronting the attacker on an escalator in the shopping center by holding what appeared to be a post towards him.

Roi Huberman, a sound engineer at ABC TV in Australia, told the network that he sheltered in a store during the incident.

"And suddenly we heard a shot or maybe two shots and we didn't know what to do," he said. "Then the very capable person in the store took us to the back where it can be locked. She then locked the store

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and then she then let us through the back and now we are out.”

As the attack unfolded, panicked individuals streamed out of the shopping center, many with children in their arms. Paramedics treated injured people at the scene. The shopping center and the surrounding area remains in lockdown as police piece together what went on.

“This was a horrific act of violence indiscriminately targeted at innocent people going about a normal Saturday, doing their shopping,” said Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

“Today Bondi Junction was the scene of horrific violence, but it was also witness to the humanity and the heroism of our fellow Australians, our brave police, our first responders, and of course our everyday people who could never have imagined that they would face such a moment,” he added.

The most senior members of Britain’s royal family, who are also royals in Australia, expressed their shock and sadness over the stabbings.

King Charles III said he and his wife Queen Camilla were “utterly shocked and horrified” by the “senseless attack” in Sydney and that their “hearts go out to the families and loved ones of those who have been so brutally killed.” The king’s eldest son Prince William and his wife Catherine, Princess of Wales, said they too were “shocked and saddened” and that their thoughts are with those affected and the “heroic emergency responders who risked their own lives to save others.”

Pope Francis also expressed his sadness at the “senseless tragedy” in Sydney, offering his “spiritual closeness” to all those affected and prayers for the dead and injured. The message was contained in a telegram to Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher and sent by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican’s secretary of state.

## **Far fewer young Americans now want to study in China. Both countries are trying to fix that**

By DIDI TANG and DAKE KANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Stephen Garrett, a 27-year-old graduate student, always thought he would study in China, but the country’s restrictive COVID-19 policies made it nearly impossible and now he sees interest among fellow scholars wane even after China reopened.

Common concerns, he said, include restrictions on academic freedom and the risk of being stranded in China.

These days, only about 700 American students are studying at Chinese universities, down from a peak of close to 25,000 a decade ago, while there are nearly 300,000 Chinese students at U.S. schools.

Some young Americans are discouraged from investing their time in China by what they see as diminishing economic opportunities and strained relations between Washington and Beijing.

Whatever the reason for the imbalance, U.S. officials and scholars bemoan the lost opportunities for young people to experience life in China and gain insight into a formidable American adversary.

And officials from both countries agree that more should be done to encourage the student exchanges, at a time when Beijing and Washington can hardly agree on anything else.

“I do not believe the environment is as hospitable for educational exchange as it was in the past, and I think both sides are going to need to take steps,” said Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell.

The U.S. has advised its citizens to “reconsider travel” to China over concerns of arbitrary detentions and widened use of exit bans to bar Americans from leaving the country. Campbell said this has hindered the rebuilding of the exchanges and easing the advisory is now under “active consideration.”

For its part, Beijing is rebuilding programs for international students that were shuttered during the pandemic, and Chinese President Xi Jinping has invited tens of thousands of U.S. high school students to visit.

The situation was far different after President Barack Obama started the 100,000 Strong initiative in 2009 to drastically increase the number of U.S. students studying in China.

By 2012, there were as many as 24,583 U.S. students in China, according to data by the Chinese education ministry. The Open Doors reports by the Institute of International Education, which only track students enrolled in U.S. schools and studying in China for credit, show the number peaked at 14,887 in the 2011-12

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school year. But 10 years later, the number was down to only 211.

In late 2023, the number of American students stood at 700, according to Nicholas Burns, the U.S. ambassador to China, who said this was far too few in a country of such importance to the United States.

"We need young Americans to learn Mandarin. We need young Americans to have an experience of China," Burns said.

Without these U.S. students, "in the next decade, we won't be able to exercise savvy, knowledgeable diplomacy in China," warned David Moser, an American linguist who went to China in the 1980s and is now tasked with establishing a new master's program for international students at Beijing Capital Normal University.

Moser recalled the years when American students found China fascinating and thought an education there could lead to an interesting career. But he said the days of bustling trade and money deals are gone, while American students and their parents are watching China and the United States move away from each other. "So people think investment in China as a career is a dumb idea," Moser said.

After 2012, the number of American students in China dipped but held steady at more than 11,000 for several years, according to Open Doors, until the pandemic hit, when China closed its borders and kept most foreigners out. Programs for overseas students that took years to build were shuttered, and staff were let go, Moser said.

Amy Gadsden, executive director of China Initiatives at the University of Pennsylvania, also attributed some of the declining interest to foreign businesses closing their offices in China. Beijing's draconian governing style, laid bare by its response to the pandemic, also has given American students a pause, she said.

Garrett, who is on track to graduate this summer from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, said he is ambivalent about working in China, citing the lack of access to information, restrictions on discussions of politically sensitive issues and China's sweeping anti-spying law. He had lived in Hong Kong as a teenager and interned in mainland China, and said he is still interested in traveling to China, but not anytime soon.

Some American students remain committed to studying in China, said Andrew Mertha, director of the China Global Research Center at SAIS. "There are people who are interested in China for China's sake," he said. "I don't think those numbers are affected at all."

About 40 U.S. students are now studying at the Hopkins-Nanjing center in the eastern Chinese city, and the number is expected to go up in the fall to approach the pre-pandemic level of 50-60 students, said Adam Webb, the center's American co-director.

Among them is Chris Hankin, 28, who said he believed time in China was irreplaceable because he could interact with ordinary people and travel to places outside the radar of international media. "As the relationship becomes more intense, it's important to have that color, to have that granularity," said Hankin, a master's student of international relations with a focus on energy and the environment.

Jonathan Zhang, a Chinese American studying at the prestigious Schwarzman Scholars program at Tsinghua University in Beijing, said it was more important than ever to be in China at a time of tense relations. "It's really hard to talk about China without being in China," he said. "I think it's truly a shame that so many people have never stepped foot in China."

Zhang was met with concerns when he deferred an offer at a consulting firm to go Beijing. "They're like, 'oh, be safe,' or like, 'what do you mean, you're going back to China?'" Zhang said. "I feel like the (Chinese) government is trying with an earnest effort, but I feel like a lot of this trust has been broken."

Gadsden said U.S. universities need to do more to nudge students to consider China. "We need to be more intentional about creating the opportunities and about encouraging students to do this deeper work on China, because it's going to be interesting for them, and it's going to be valuable for the U.S.-China relationship and for the world," she said.

In China, Jia Qingguo, a professor of international relations and a national political adviser, has suggested Beijing clarify its laws involving foreign nationals, introduce a separate system for political reviews of foreign students' dissertations, and make it easier for foreign graduates to find internships and jobs in Chinese companies.

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Meanwhile, China is hosting American high school students under a plan Xi unveiled in November to welcome 50,000 in the next five years.

In January, a group of 24 students from Iowa's Muscatine High School became the first to travel to China. The all-expenses-paid, nine-day trip took them to the Beijing Zoo, Great Wall, Palace Museum, the Yu Garden and Shanghai Museum.

Sienna Stonking, one of the Muscatine students, now wants to return to China to study.

"If I had the opportunity, I would love to go to college in China," she told China's state broadcaster CGTN. "Honestly, I love it there."

## Nearing 50 Supreme Court arguments in, lawyer Lisa Blatt keeps winning

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — No woman has appeared more often before the Supreme Court than Lisa Blatt, who will make her 50th argument this month.

No lawyer, male or female, has done it with quite the same mix of humor, passion and style. And her win-loss record isn't bad, either: 40-6, with two cases yet to be decided.

She elicits laughs and the occasional sharp response from the justices, who seem to enjoy Blatt's presentations as much as they respect her legal acumen.

When Blatt joked that Justice Samuel Alito was being her "enforcer" with a friendly question in a case about a claimed retaliatory arrest that was argued last month, the justice said, "I'm not trying to be your enforcer by any means. ... You don't need one, by any means."

The Supreme Court's guide for lawyers who are arguing before the justices essentially warns against trying to emulate Blatt.

"Attempts at humor usually fall flat. The same is true of attempts at familiarity," the guide advises. "Avoid emotional oration and loud, impassioned pleas. A well-reasoned and logical presentation without resort to histrionics is easier for listeners to comprehend."

She can be strikingly informal, in one case referring to the highest court in the land as "you guys." She is often blunt, once telling Justice Elena Kagan that her question was factually and fundamentally wrong. She has resorted to the personal, in one case where she felt her Harvard-educated opponent was being condescending. "I didn't go to a fancy law school, but I'm very confident in my representation of the case law," the University of Texas graduate said.

"Texas is a fine law school," Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said, just as the arguments were ending and before the court handed Blatt a unanimous win.

Blatt also can be hyperbolic, cautioning last year that a decision against her client, a Turkish bank, would be "borderline, you know, cataclysmic." A ruling that recognized a large swath of Oklahoma as tribal land would have "earth-shattering" consequences, she said in 2018. The justices risked causing "madness, confusion, and chaos" if they ruled for a high school student who was suspended from the cheerleading squad over a vulgar social media post.

Clients keep hiring her and the court keeps agreeing to hear her cases, said Paul Clement, Blatt's friend and onetime boss at the Justice Department.

"She just has this kind of inimitable style, and she's very confident in her own style and the justices love it," said Clement, who has argued more than 100 times at the Supreme Court. Only a dozen active lawyers who have made as many as 50 arguments.

Blatt, 59, makes no apologies.

"Oral argument is like truth serum. Under the stress of their questioning, you can't become someone you aren't," she said in an email. "I do think I am very direct but at bottom, my style reflects the fact that I want to win and the Court to step into the shoes of the party I am representing."

She heads the Supreme Court and appellate practice at the Williams and Connolly law firm, where her husband also is a partner. They have two children in law school. Blatt has argued just over half her high court cases in private practice, the rest as a Justice Department lawyer.

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When she made her first appearance at the court in December 1996 at the age of 31, there were two women on the court, Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Ginsburg. Blatt had been a clerk for Ginsburg on the federal appeals court in Washington.

Today, four of the nine justices are women, a record. The percentage of women who argue before them is lower, though the number has jumped markedly this term. Since October, just over one-third of the arguments were made by women, compared with under one-quarter of arguments the year before.

Blatt is one of only a handful of women in private practice who regularly argue at the Supreme Court and she has called out the lack of diversity. Last term, two women in her firm argued three cases between them and her onetime partner Charles McCloud is one of the few Black men who have argued at the court in recent years. McCloud now works for the Justice Department.

She also courted controversy in 2018, when as a self-described "liberal Democrat and feminist," Blatt publicly backed Justice Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court. She called him "the best choice that liberals could reasonably hope for" at a time when Republicans controlled the Senate and the White House. Blatt testified before college professor Christine Blasey Ford came forward with the explosive allegation that Kavanaugh had sexually assaulted her while they were in high school. Kavanaugh has denied any misconduct.

Opponents of Kavanaugh's confirmation complained that Blatt spoke up because she often represents wealthy clients at the Supreme Court. In a tweet at the time, Brian Fallon, then with the progressive judicial reform group Demand Justice, wrote that Blatt puts "corporate interests ahead of progressive causes."

Corporate clients are an important part of Blatt's business and include Google, Atlantic Richfield Co., Bank of America and Starbucks. She is representing the coffee chain in what will be her 50th argument in a dispute with the National Labor Relations Board over efforts by workers to unionize at a store in Memphis, Tennessee.

On Monday, Blatt is representing James Snyder, the former mayor of Portage, Indiana, who is appealing his bribery conviction. Other clients include Lynn Goldsmith, the photographer who won a copyright fight involving an Andy Warhol image of the singer Prince, and state and local government officials.

The case she argued last month that prompted the "enforcer" exchange with Alito involved a city council member in the San Antonio suburb of Castle Hills, Texas, who contends she was arrested on a trumped-up charge because she spoke up against the mayor and his allies.

Blatt, representing the mayor, said it would be easy to get away with crimes if the court rules against the mayor.

"I mean, I really would advise every criminal to put a, you know, political bumper sticker on their car," she said, to laughter.

## **As a landmark United Methodist gathering approaches, African churches weigh their future.**

By PETER SMITH Associated Press

The United Methodist Church lost one-fourth of its U.S. churches in a recent schism, with conservatives departing over disputes on sexuality and theology.

Now, with the approach of its first major legislative gathering in several years, the question is whether the church can avert a similar outcome elsewhere in the world, where about half its members live.

The question is particularly acute in Africa, home to the vast majority of United Methodists outside the U.S. Most of its bishops favor staying, but other voices are calling for regional conferences to disaffiliate.

At the upcoming General Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, delegates will tackle a wide range of proposals – from repealing the church's ban on same-sex marriage and ordaining LGBTQ people, to creating more autonomy for regional conferences to set such rules, to making it easier for international churches to leave the denomination.

Delegate Jerry Kulah of Liberia said he believes it's time for African churches to leave.

He said that when he first attended a General Conference in 2008, he was shocked by proposals to

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liberalize church rules. Since then, he helped mobilize African delegates to vote with American conservatives to create ever-stricter denominational rules against same-sex marriage and ordaining LGBTQ people.

But progressive American churches have increasingly been defying such rules and now appear to have the votes to overturn them.

"We know that we are not going to the General Conference to necessarily win votes," said Kulah, general coordinator of the advocacy group UMC Africa Initiative. "So our goal is to go and articulate our position and let the world know why it has become very necessary to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church, because we cannot afford to preach different gospels."

But Jefferson Knight, also a delegate from Liberia, opposes disaffiliation. He said a schism would amount to forsaking the rich spiritual legacy of the UMC in Africa and would sever its valuable international bonds.

"Liberia was the birthplace of the United Methodist Church on the continent of Africa in the 1800s," said Knight, of the advocacy group United Methodist Africa Forum. The church has developed leaders in education, health care and evangelism across the continent, said Knight, who also works as a human rights monitor for the church.

Knight said schism isn't necessary.

He shares the widespread opposition in Africa to liberalizing policies on marriage or ordination, but he favors a proposal that would allow each region of the church – from America to Africa to Europe to the Philippines – to fit rules to its local context.

"The best way out is to regionalize and see how we can do ministry peacefully and do ministry within our context, our culture," Knight said.

The United Methodist Church traces its roots to 18th century revivalist John Wesley and has long emphasized Christian piety, evangelism and social service. It has historically been present in almost every U.S. county.

But it's also the most international of the major U.S. Protestant denominations.

Generations of missionary efforts brought Methodism across the world. Local churches took root and grew dramatically, particularly in Africa.

Today, members from four continents vote at legislative gatherings, serve on boards together, go on mission trips to each others' countries and are largely governed by the same rules. U.S. churches help fund international ministries, such as Africa University in Zimbabwe.

More than 7,600 U.S. congregations departed during a temporary window between 2019 and 2023 that enabled congregations to keep their properties – held in trust for the denomination – under relatively favorable legal terms, according to a UM News count.

That provision applied only to American churches. Some say the General Conference – running April 23 through May 3 – should approve one for other countries.

"Our main goal is to ensure that African and other United Methodist outside the U.S. have the same opportunity that United Methodists in the U.S. have had," said the Rev. Thomas Lambrecht, vice president of the conservative advocacy group Good News.

Opponents say overseas churches already can disaffiliate under church rules – and some conferences in Eastern Europe have taken such steps. But proponents say the process is too cumbersome.

Further complicating the matter is that churches operate in a range of legal settings. Some African countries criminalize same-sex activity, while in the U.S., same-sex marriage is legal.

Most departing American congregations were conservative churches upset with the denomination's failure to enforce its bans on same-sex unions and the ordination of LGBTQ people. Some joined denominations such as the new Global Methodist Church, while others went independent.

The departures accelerated membership losses in what until recently had been the third-largest American denomination. The United Methodist Church recorded 5.4 million U.S. members in 2022, a figure sure to plummet once disaffiliations from 2023 are factored in.

A detailed study by the UMC's General Council on Finance and Administration indicated there are 4.6 million members in other countries – fewer than earlier estimates, but still approaching U.S. numbers.

The United Methodist Church has been debating homosexuality since the early 1970s, steadily tightening



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its LGBTQ bans through its last legislative gathering in 2019.

That year, "the traditionalists won the vote but they lost the church" said the Rev. Mark Holland, executive director of Mainstream UMC, which advocates for lifting the church-wide bans and for a "regionalization" proposal allowing each region to decide on such rules.

He noted that numerous regional church conferences in the United States reacted to the 2019 vote by electing more progressive delegates to the upcoming General Conference.

Progressives believe they have adequate votes to repeal language in the governing Book of Discipline barring ordination of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" and penalizing pastors who perform same-sex marriages.

Less certain is the fate of regionalization, which would increase regional autonomy. Regionalization involves constitutional amendments requiring a two-thirds General Conference majority and approval by two-thirds of local conferences worldwide.

Proponents say regionalization would also bring parity to different regions, saying the current system is a U.S.-centric relic of an earlier missionary era. The regionalization scenario could also allow churches in some regions to maintain LGBTQ bans while others remove them.

Church regions outside the United States already have some leeway in adapting rules to their settings, but regionalization would define that flexibility more precisely and extend it to U.S. churches.

The UMC-affiliated church in the Philippines – the only one in Asia, with about 280,000 members – would maintain its opposition to same-sex marriage, which is not legally recognized there, a church official said. It will also not allow openly LGBTQ people to be ordained.

Most African bishops oppose disaffiliation, even as they oppose LGBTQ ordination and marriage.

"Notwithstanding the differences in our UMC regarding the issue of human sexuality especially with our stance of traditional and biblical view of marriage, we categorically state that we do not plan to leave The United Methodist Church and will continue to be shepherds of God's flock in this worldwide denomination," said a statement signed by 11 African bishops at a meeting in September.

Among those withholding signatures was Nigeria Area Bishop John Wesley Yohanna.

Nigerian Methodists in December celebrated 100 years of the denomination in their country, but its future remains uncertain. Deeply conservative views on sexuality are widespread in Nigeria. A spokesman said the bishop's position on disaffiliation would be determined by what happens at the General Conference.

Same-sex marriage "is unbiblical and also is incompatible with Christian teaching according to our Book of Discipline," Yohanna said at a January news conference, in which he also said "no to regionalization."

## How a hush money scandal tied to a porn star led to Trump's first criminal trial

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — It was the kind of tawdry tale that Donald Trump might have relished before politics: a porn actor claiming they had had sex.

But on the eve of the 2016 presidential election, Trump feared the story, which he says is false, would cost him votes. So, prosecutors say, he arranged to pay Stormy Daniels to keep quiet.

Now, after years of fits and starts before an indictment last year, Trump is set to stand trial Monday in New York on state charges related to the very sex scandal that he and his aides strove to hide.

Barring a last-minute delay, it will be the first of Trump's four criminal cases to go to trial. It will be an unprecedented event in U.S. history — the first criminal trial of a former president.

It wasn't always clear the hush money allegations would even lead to charges — let alone be the first to reach trial. It is arguably the least perilous of Trump's indictments, with others involving government secrets and threats to democracy.

Yet it is almost certain to be the most salacious, with testimony expected about alleged marital infidelity, a supermarket tabloid's complicity in a cover-up, and payouts orchestrated by a former Trump loyalist who now counts himself among the ex-president's enemies.

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Many details of the case have been public since 2018, when federal prosecutors charged Trump's ex-lawyer Michael Cohen with campaign finance crimes in connection with a scheme to bury not only Daniels' claims, but other potentially damaging stories from Trump's playboy past.

They later implicated Trump as directing Cohen's efforts, obliquely identifying him in court papers as "Individual-1." Justice Department policy forbids charging a sitting president with a crime, and nothing came of it.

In the ensuing years, the saga of sex, politics and coverups largely faded from the headlines, eclipsed by an investigation into Russian election interference, Trump's two impeachments and allegations that he plotted to overturn his 2020 election and hoarded classified documents after leaving office.

Former Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. examined the circumstances of a \$130,000 payout that Cohen made to Daniels and declined to take the politically explosive step of seeking Trump's indictment.

The district attorney's office was so unsure about the hush money case that it became known among prosecutors as the "zombie case." They would revisit it, then abandon it again as they pursued Trump on multiple fronts over the last five years, going to the Supreme Court twice to obtain his tax records and prosecuting his company and a top executive for tax fraud.

Vance's successor, Alvin Bragg, a Democrat who took office in January 2022, saw the hush money case differently.

The grand jury convened in January 2023. It heard from Cohen, now an outspoken critic of his ex-boss, and other witnesses, including the former publisher of the National Enquirer tabloid, which helped Trump by buying some negative stories and suppressing them in a practice known as "catch-and-kill."

The grand jury voted to indict on March 30, 2023, on charges that Trump had falsified his company's internal records to obscure the true nature of payments made to Cohen to reimburse him for his work covering up potentially embarrassing stories. The charges are felonies punishable by up to four years in prison, though there is no guarantee that a conviction would result in prison time.

Trump denies the allegations, saying it is prosecutors who are engaging in "election interference" and a "witch hunt." He has pleaded not guilty.

In a court filing, Bragg's office framed the prosecution as another of Trump's election interference cases, accusing the Republican of orchestrating an "expansive and corrupt criminal scheme to conceal damaging information from the voting public" and "undermine the integrity of the 2016 presidential election."

In the indictment paperwork, prosecutors told of a multipart scheme dating to the early days of Trump's 2016 campaign to suppress stories alleging he had extramarital sexual encounters.

Before the Daniels payment, prosecutors said, Cohen arranged for the National Enquirer to pay \$150,000 to former Playboy model Karen McDougal, who claimed she had a monthslong affair with Trump. The tabloid also paid \$30,000 to a Trump Tower doorman who claimed to have a story about a child he alleged Trump had out of wedlock.

Trump, reeling from the October surprise of the never-before-seen 2005 "Access Hollywood" tape in which he boasted about grabbing women's genitals, then directed Cohen to arrange the payment to Daniels, who was agitating to come forward with her claims that they had a sexual encounter at a 2006 celebrity golf outing in Lake Tahoe, California, according to the indictment.

Trump's arraignment, five days after the indictment, was a spectacle attracting hordes of news media, supporters and protesters. His trial will take place in the same courtroom — and the same cauldron.

After Trump's New York indictment, others followed in rapid succession.

Within 70 days, special counsel Jack Smith charged Trump in Florida with keeping classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate. Fifty-four days after that, Smith charged Trump in Washington with attempting to subvert the 2020 election in the lead-up to the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection. Two weeks later, Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis in Atlanta charged Trump with racketeering and other charges in a similar election subversion case.

While the New York case has progressed at a rapid clip, Trump's other criminal cases seem increasingly unlikely to come to trial before the November election.

The Atlanta case has been slowed by allegations of impropriety against the top prosecutor, the Washing-

ton case by a Supreme Court appeal on a legally untested immunity question and the Florida prosecution by a slew of unresolved motions.

"Partly it's just that there are fewer of those practical obstacles to making the case move along, and maybe in some degree, this is a simpler case," said Alex Reinert, a professor at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York City.

Trump has tried repeatedly to get the New York trial delayed as well. His lawyers were rejected three times this week in trying to get a state appeals court to put off the case.

In its allegations of hefty payments to stifle an election-year sex story, the case bears some cautionary parallels to the Justice Department's unsuccessful prosecution of former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards. He was charged with campaign finance crimes in connection with nearly \$1 million secretly provided by two wealthy donors who helped hide his pregnant mistress during the 2008 Democratic presidential primary.

Defense lawyers argued that the money was meant to conceal the affair from his wife, not to boost his election chances. Edwards was ultimately acquitted on one charge while a jury deadlocked on five other counts.

Jeremy Saland, a former Manhattan assistant district attorney who now works as a criminal defense lawyer, said that because of the magnitude of the case, Bragg must believe he has a more winnable case against Trump.

"He has to be going into the courtroom believing that he has the goods," Saland said. "Otherwise, for the psyche of America, it could be catastrophic — that a former president is prosecuted in a case that ends up falling flat on its face, and even if not true, appearing like a sham."

But he said that if the allegations are proved, it would still amount to "significant misconduct of somebody who was vying to be at the time the leader of the free world." For those who say, "Come on, it's just hush money," he said he believed "that we hold our elected officials to a higher standard and we subject them to more scrutiny, and rightfully so."

## **It's the first drug shown to slow Alzheimer's. Why is it off to a slow start?**

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

The first drug shown to slow Alzheimer's disease hit the U.S. market over a year ago, but sales have lagged, major hospital systems have taken months to start using it and some insurers have rejected coverage.

Doctors also expect some patients will hesitate to take Leqembi due to its limited impact and potential side effects. They say it will take years to learn how best to deploy the drug and that work must be done to improve diagnosis.

"This is the start of a very exciting journey," said Dr. Ambar Kulshreshtha, a suburban Atlanta family physician focused on dementia patients.

More than 6 million Americans, and millions more worldwide, have Alzheimer's disease, the most common cause of dementia. There's no cure, but Leqembi clears a sticky brain protein called amyloid that's a key indicator of Alzheimer's.

Studies showed that it can delay the progression of the disease by a few months when given to people with mild symptoms. Some experts say the delay may be too subtle for patients to notice.

The drug also can cause brain swelling and bleeding. Patients need regular brain scans to monitor for that.

The Food and Drug Administration gave Leqembi full approval last summer for patients with early stages of the disease. The federal Medicare program for people ages 65 and over covers Leqembi and the cost of scans needed to diagnose patients.

The drug's maker, Japan's Eisai, initially expected to have 10,000 patients taking the IV drug by the end of March. Company executives have since backed off that projection, though they say sales are growing.

Hospitals and health systems have needed more time than expected to set up their systems for delivering Leqembi, said Alexander Scott, an Eisai executive vice president.

"It's not like we are adding a drug to an existing system," he said. "They are building the system for

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the drug.”

The Cedars-Sinai health system in Los Angeles started administering the drug in early March. Getting there required months of meetings to iron out a plan to coordinate diagnosis, treatment and then monitoring for problems.

“We were very careful about it,” said Dr. Sarah Kremen, a behavioral neurologist.

Banner Health in Arizona also recently started using Leqembi at a couple specialty clinics in Phoenix, a spokeswoman said.

“This is a very phased and staged approach,” said Dr. Alireza Atri, a neurologist who has worked as a paid consultant for Eisai. “As we learn more, we’ll expand and extend it.”

The Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, started using Leqembi in October but only for patients who live within a 100-mile radius so it can reach them quickly if they develop side effect symptoms. Doctors evaluate three to five patients every week for potential treatment, said Alzheimer’s expert Dr. Ron Petersen.

Health systems are still trying to understand how coverage for the drug, its infusions and the needed scans works so patients don’t get stuck with bills. That’s a significant variable for a drug that can cost more than \$26,000 a year.

An Eisai spokeswoman said nearly three-quarters of commercial plans in the U.S. cover the drug outside Medicare.

But doctors are concerned that coverage still may be tough for some patients, especially those too young to qualify for Medicare.

Insurance denials delayed Scott Berkheiser’s first Leqembi infusion a few months until last December. The 57-year-old Venice, Florida, resident said the drugmaker eventually agreed to give it to him for free while he makes co-payments for the infusions.

“It was a little crazy,” he said. “It seemed like it was kind of a game that must make sense for some monetary reason.”

Getting treatments started on time remains another challenge.

Texas Neurology had 60 patients screened as possible candidates for Leqembi and on a waitlist when the drug launched last year. Only eight eventually started treatment. The rest either declined to take it or had advanced beyond the mild phase of the disease when they were rescreened, CEO David Evans said.

“That window gets very short very quick,” he said.

Doctors say more must be done to quickly identify patients and get treatment started before the disease advances. But that’s a murky process.

If people mention memory trouble, doctors must rule out reversible causes like thyroid problems, vitamin deficiencies, medication issues or depression, Kulshreshtha said. Then memory tests for dementia can take a few visits.

Some patients may be ineligible for Leqembi because it would conflict with medication they already take to prevent strokes.

And then getting in to see a neurologist who prescribes the drug can take months.

Those who make it to the first infusion say the treatment process is manageable. Berkheiser says infusions have gone “like clockwork” since his delayed start.

He fits them in between his work as an engineer and training six days a week to compete in an Ironman triathlon.

Charles “Bum” Clegg recently finished his 13th Leqembi infusion. The Salem, Alabama, resident visits a treatment center only 15 minutes from his home.

Clegg and his wife, Carol, say he has had no side effects, and his short-term memory has improved.

“This drug gives you hope,” Carol said.

Treatment access may improve over time. The FDA is reviewing another potential treatment that targets amyloid protein, Eli Lilly and Co.’s donanemab. Eisai is planning to seek approval for an injectable version of Leqembi that would be easier to use. Blood tests may eventually speed up amyloid detection.

But researchers say there’s still a long road ahead. It’s not clear what causes Alzheimer’s disease, and many think combination treatments will be needed to stop it.

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"We still have a lot to learn about Alzheimer's," said Dr. Eric Widera a geriatric specialist with the University of California San Francisco. "It's complex, and it's much more than amyloid."

## Today in History: April 14

### Abraham Lincoln is fatally shot at Ford's Theatre

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, April 14, the 105th day of 2024. There are 261 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 14, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln was shot and mortally wounded by John Wilkes Booth during a performance of "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theatre in Washington.

On this date:

In 1828, the first edition of Noah Webster's "American Dictionary of the English Language" was published.

In 1902, James Cash Penney opened his first store, The Golden Rule, in Kemmerer, Wyoming.

In 1912, the British liner RMS Titanic collided with an iceberg in the North Atlantic at 11:40 p.m. ship's time and began sinking. (The ship went under two hours and 40 minutes later with the loss of 1,514 lives.)

In 1910, President William Howard Taft became the first U.S. chief executive to throw the ceremonial first pitch at a baseball game as the Washington Senators beat the Philadelphia Athletics 3-0.

In 1935, the "Black Sunday" dust storm descended upon the central Plains, turning a sunny afternoon into total darkness.

In 1949, the "Wilhelmstrasse Trial" in Nuremberg ended with 19 former Nazi Foreign Office officials sentenced by an American tribunal to prison terms ranging from four to 25 years.

In 1960, Tamla Records and Motown Records, founded by Berry Gordy Jr., were incorporated as Motown Record Corp.

In 1981, the first test flight of America's first operational space shuttle, the Columbia, ended successfully with a landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 1994, two U.S. Air Force F-15 warplanes mistakenly shot down two U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopters over northern Iraq, killing 26 people, including 15 Americans.

In 1999, NATO mistakenly bombed a convoy of ethnic Albanian refugees; Yugoslav officials said 75 people were killed.

In 2007, riot police beat and detained protesters as thousands defied an official ban and attempted to stage a rally in Moscow against Russian President Vladimir Putin's government.

In 2012, in Belfast, Northern Ireland, where the RMS Titanic was built, thousands attended a choral requiem at the Anglican St. Anne's Cathedral or a nationally televised concert at the city's Waterfront Hall to mark the 100th anniversary of the ship's sinking.

In 2013, Adam Scott became the first Australian to win the Masters, beating Angel Cabrera on the second hole of a playoff on a rainy day at Augusta National.

In 2017, former NFL star Aaron Hernandez, already serving a life sentence for a 2013 murder, was acquitted in Boston in a 2012 double slaying prosecutors said was fueled by his anger over a drink spilled at a nightclub. (Five days later, Hernandez hanged himself in his prison cell.)

In 2018, Czech filmmaker Milos Forman, whose American movies "Amadeus" and "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" won a deluge of Academy Awards including Oscars for best director, died in Connecticut at age 86.

In 2021, A white former suburban Minneapolis police officer, Kim Potter, was charged with second-degree manslaughter for killing 20-year-old Black motorist Daunte Wright in a shooting that ignited days of unrest.

In 2022, the flagship of Russia's Black Sea fleet, a guided-missile cruiser that became a potent target of Ukrainian defiance in the opening days of the invasion, sank after it was heavily damaged. Ukrainian officials said their forces hit the Moskva with missiles, while Russia acknowledged a fire aboard the Moskva but no attack.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Julie Christie is 84. Retired MLB All-Star Pete Rose is 83. Rock musician Ritchie

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Blackmore is 79. Actor John Shea is 76. Actor Peter Capaldi is 66. Actor-turned-race car driver Brian Forster is 64. Actor Brad Garrett is 64. Actor Robert Carlyle is 63. Rock singer-musician John Bell (Widespread Panic) is 62. Actor Robert Clendenin is 60. Actor Catherine Dent is 59. Actor Lloyd Owen is 58. Baseball Hall of Famer Greg Maddux is 58. Rock musician Barrett Martin is 57. Actor Anthony Michael Hall is 56. Actor Adrien Brody is 51. Classical singer David Miller (Il Divo) is 51. Rapper Da Brat is 50. Actor Antwon Tanner is 49. Actor Sarah Michelle Gellar is 47. Actor-producer Rob McElhenney is 47. Roots singer JD McPherson is 47. Actor Claire Coffee is 44. Actor Christian Alexander is 34. Actor Nick Krause is 32. Actor Vivien Cardone is 31. Actor Graham Phillips is 31. Actor Skyler Samuels is 30. Actor Abigail Breslin is 28.