

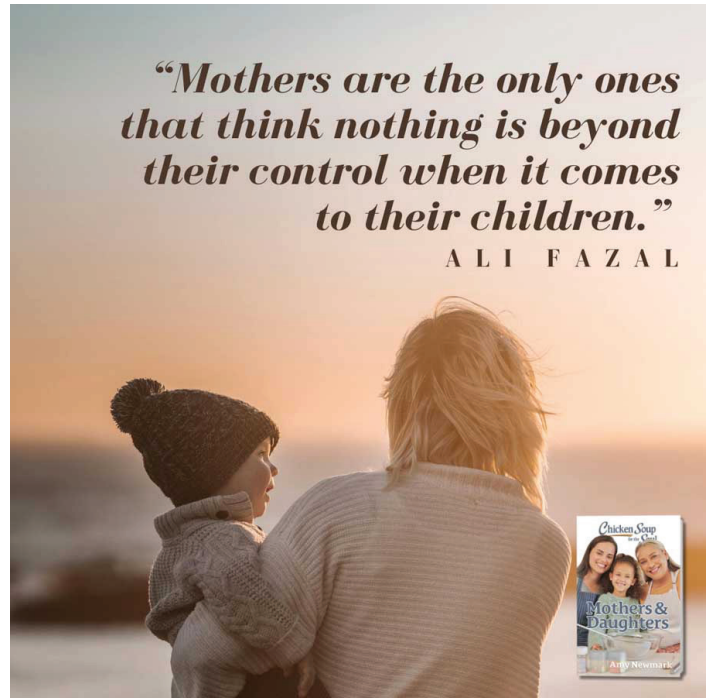
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*“Mothers are the only ones that think nothing is beyond their control when it comes to their children.”*

ALI FAZAL



## Sunday, May 5

High School Baseball at Bryant: O-R/R/A at 2 p.m., Hamlin at 4 p.m.

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 communion, 9 a.m., senior milestones and Faith Forever scholarships; choir singing; Last Day of Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's 9 a.m. (Graduate Recognition), at Zion, 11 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship with communion: At Conde, 8:30 a.m.; and at Groton, 10:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.; Missions Taco Bar, 11:30 a.m.

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

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

## Tuesday, May 7

### OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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## Charles Mix County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD Highway 46, mile marker 292, two miles east of Wagner, SD

When: 5:27 p.m., Friday, May 3, 2024

Driver 1: Female, 24 years old, minor injuries

Vehicle 1: 2012 Dodge Ram 3500

Driver 2: Female, 89 years old, fatal injuries

Vehicle 2: 2013 Ford Edge

Charles Mix County, S.D.- An 89-year-old woman has died as a result of injuries sustained in a two-vehicle crash on the evening of Friday May 3, two miles east of Wagner SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2012 Dodge Ram was traveling eastbound on SD Highway 46 near mile marker 292. At the same time, the driver of a 2013 Ford Edge was also traveling eastbound on SD 46 near mile marker 292. The driver of the Ford Edge slowed down preparing to turn into a driveway. The driver of the Dodge did not see the Ford and rear ended the Ford. The driver of the Dodge sustained minor injuries. The driver of the Ford was taken by ambulance to Wagner Community Hospital where she was pronounced deceased.

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.



## US Postal Service to downgrade South Dakota mail operations

BY STU WHITNEY

South Dakota News Watch

SIoux FALLS, S.D. – The U.S. Postal Service has finalized its plan to downgrade the downtown Sioux Falls post office to a local processing center, shifting non-local mail operations to a facility in Omaha, Nebraska.

The reorganization, first introduced in January, has sparked concerns about slower mail delivery to rural communities because letters and packages formerly processed and sent from Sioux Falls will be routed through Omaha, 160 miles away.

USPS expects the change to impact 35 non-managerial jobs and three management positions in Sioux Falls. Those jobs are protected by union contracts, but the employees will likely have to shift to other facilities, said Todd West, president of the South Dakota chapter of the American Postal Workers Union.

In February, the USPS finalized a decision to downgrade its Huron facility to a local processing center, moving all non-local processing to Fargo, North Dakota.

“These moves are going to affect service,” West, who is based in Watertown, told News Watch. “If you want to mail something and you know it’s going to take three or four days to get there if you go through the post office, what are you going to do? You’re going to FedEx or UPS or another carrier.”

The Sioux Falls downtown facility is currently a processing and distribution center.

In a statement dated April 30, the USPS said that the Sioux Falls facility would remain open as a local processing center and will receive “up to \$12.75 million in upgrades,” including upgraded sorting equipment, new lighting and renovated bathrooms and break rooms.

As for the reorganization, “the business case supports transferring mail processing outgoing operations to the (Omaha facility),” the statement read.

### No timetable set for change

Mark Inglett, a USPS spokesman based in Kansas City, told News Watch that there is no current timetable for when the changes will take place.

Service times for first-class mail are already trending downward in South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska, according to USPS data. The on-time rate for first-class mail for fiscal year 2024 is 81.4%, compared to 86.8% at the same time last year.

South Dakota Rep. Dusty Johnson told News Watch in a statement that the restructuring in Sioux Falls and Huron could affect delivery service and uproot employees.



**The Sioux Falls downtown post office, currently a processing and distribution center, is being downgraded to a local processing center as part of the United States Postal Service’s “Delivering for America” restructuring plan.** (Photo: Stu Whitney / South Dakota News Watch)



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"While the purpose of restructuring the Postal Service nationwide is to increase efficiency, in a state with significant rural populations like South Dakota, the change may decrease speed and efficiency," Johnson said. "South Dakotans rely on timely service to get their news and pay their bills. Not to mention the dozens of positions that will be transferred out of state, forcing families to relocate or find another job."

The reorganization is part of a \$40 billion "Delivering for America" investment strategy spearheaded by Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, who was appointed by former President Donald Trump in June 2020.

It continues a trend from 2012, when the USPS closed processing centers in Aberdeen, Mobridge and Pierre, leaving South Dakota with facilities in Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Huron.

## **Postmaster general takes heat**

The intent of the plan is to "upgrade and improve the USPS's processing, transportation and delivery networks" in the face of changing mail habits and increased competition from package shipping companies.

In November 2023, the USPS announced it has lost \$6.5 billion in the most recent fiscal year, despite its own projections that it would break even.

DeJoy cited inflation as a main cause of the poor performance and pointed to the ongoing restructuring as a positive step in turning things around.

"We are just in the early stages of one of the nation's largest organizational transformations," he said at the time.

The USPS on April 9 proposed an overall increase of nearly 8 percent on the price of postage, pending approval from a regulatory commission. Forever stamps would cost 73 cents instead of 68 cents under the proposal.

DeJoy was harshly criticized by U.S. senators at an April 14 oversight hearing that spotlighted mail delivery delays stemming from centralized USPS operations in the Atlanta area.

Democratic Sen. Jon Ossoff of Georgia cited statistics that showed on-time delivery rates of 36% and told DeJoy: "You've got weeks, not months, to fix this. And if you don't fix it, I don't think you're fit for this job."

## **'Not changing service standards'**

The postmaster general can only be removed from office by the USPS Board of Governors, whose chairman has shown support in the past for the "Delivering for America" strategy.

Under the proposed Sioux Falls plan, mail and packages destined for outside the immediate Sioux Falls area would be routed to Omaha and "aggregated with mail and packages from other areas going to the same places."

"All they will be processing in Sioux Falls is mail for the 570 and 571 ZIP codes," said West. "So if you drop a letter in the mailbox, whether it's going to Sioux Falls, Brandon or Texas, it's going to go down to Omaha. If it's worked out down there that it's going to Sioux Falls or Brandon, it's going to come back to Sioux Falls and that's when they're going to process it."

Some of the concerns about slower delivery have come from groups such as newspaper publishers who rely increasingly on mail delivery and pharmacies that send out prescriptions to customers.

USPS officials held a public input hearing March 13 in Sioux Falls, where they assured attendees that the Sioux Falls facility would not be closing and that no career employees would be laid off.

But Inglett's statement that "we're not changing our service standards" did not put minds at ease, including those of South Dakota's congressional delegation.

Rep. Johnson joined Sens. John Thune and Mike Rounds in sending a letter to DeJoy on April 12 urging the USPS to "avoid downsizing or significantly reorganizing mail processing operations in states like South Dakota without considering the particular effects on rural areas."

Less than three weeks later, USPS finalized the plan.

*This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit news organization. Read more in-depth stories at [sdnewswatch.org](http://sdnewswatch.org) and sign up for an email every few days to get stories as soon as they're published. Contact Stu Whitney at [stu.whitney@sdnewswatch.org](mailto:stu.whitney@sdnewswatch.org).*

## Rural Innovation Highlighted in Smithsonian Exhibit Coming to South Dakota

BROOKINGS, May 3, 2024 – The South Dakota Humanities Council announced today that it is bringing the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street’s Spark! Places of Innovation traveling exhibit to five South Dakota communities in 2024-2025.

Spark! Places of Innovation highlights how innovation has shaped small towns across the country. The exhibition examining the ingenuity and tenacity of rural America opens at the Cheyenne River Youth Project in Eagle Butte on Saturday, May 18. Below is the complete schedule.

Dates/Host Organization	Address/Contact Information
<b>May 18 – June 29, 2024</b> Cheyenne River Youth Project	702 4 <sup>th</sup> St. Eagle Butte, SD 57625 (605) 964-8200 <a href="https://lakotayouth.org/">https://lakotayouth.org/</a>
<b>July 6 – August 17, 2024</b> Rapid City Public Library	610 Quincy St. Rapid City, SD 57701 (605) 394-6139 <a href="https://www.rapidcitylibrary.org/">https://www.rapidcitylibrary.org/</a>
<b>August 24 – October 5, 2024</b> Centennial Stone Church Center	48 Fourth St. SE Huron, SD 57350 (605) 352-2528 <a href="https://www.thedakotalandmuseum.org/">https://www.thedakotalandmuseum.org/</a>
<b>October 12 – January 11, 2025</b> Dacotah Prairie Museum	21 S. Main St. Aberdeen, SD 57401 (605) 626-7117 <a href="https://dacotahpraiiemuseum.org/">https://dacotahpraiiemuseum.org/</a>
<b>January 18 – March 1, 2025</b> Great Plains Art Institute at Sinte Gleska University	381 E. 3 <sup>rd</sup> St. Mission, SD 57555 (605) 856-8123 <a href="https://www.sintegleska.edu/gp-art-institute.html">https://www.sintegleska.edu/gp-art-institute.html</a>



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Spark! Places of Innovation highlights innovation in rural America from the perspective of the people who lived it. The exhibition features stories and images from over 30 communities across the nation gathered through a crowdsourcing initiative. These places of innovation examined their existing assets, characteristics, people, resources, and history to tackle the challenges of today with creative solutions and chart new directions for their future. Through photographs, hands-on interactives, objects, and videos, "Spark!" reveals the leaders, challenges, successes, and future of innovation in each featured town.

"The Spark! exhibition is a celebration of creativity in all its forms, and SDHC is proud to bring it to South Dakota. When people hear the word 'innovation,' they might not immediately think of rural areas, but our communities are constantly developing unique solutions for their own particular challenges. We're excited to share the Smithsonian's national perspective on rural innovation, along with the relevant local programming developed by each of our host sites," said SDHC Interim Executive Director Jennifer Widman.

Designed for small-town museums, libraries, and cultural organizations, Spark! will serve as a community meeting place for conversations about innovation. With the support and guidance of state humanities councils, these communities will develop complementary exhibits, host public programs, and facilitate educational initiatives to raise people's understanding about their own history, the joys and challenges of living rural, how change has impacted their community, and prompt discussion of goals for the future.

The exhibition is part of Museum on Main Street, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils across the nation, and local host organizations. Spark! was inspired by Places of Invention, an exhibition developed by the Smithsonian's Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation. To learn more about Spark! Places of Innovation and other Museum on Main Street exhibitions, visit [www.museumonmainstreet.org](http://www.museumonmainstreet.org).

15 N Main St. - Ste. 101  
Downtown Groton

Call/Text Paul: 605-397-7460

Call/Text Tina: 605-397-7285



**Living Heart Fitness Center**  
Exercise helps ease arthritis  
pain and stiffness. - Mayo Clinic

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## THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*Lord, who will abide  
in Your tabernacle?  
Who will dwell in Your holy hill?*

*He who walks uprightly,  
and does righteousness,  
and speaks truth  
in his heart...*

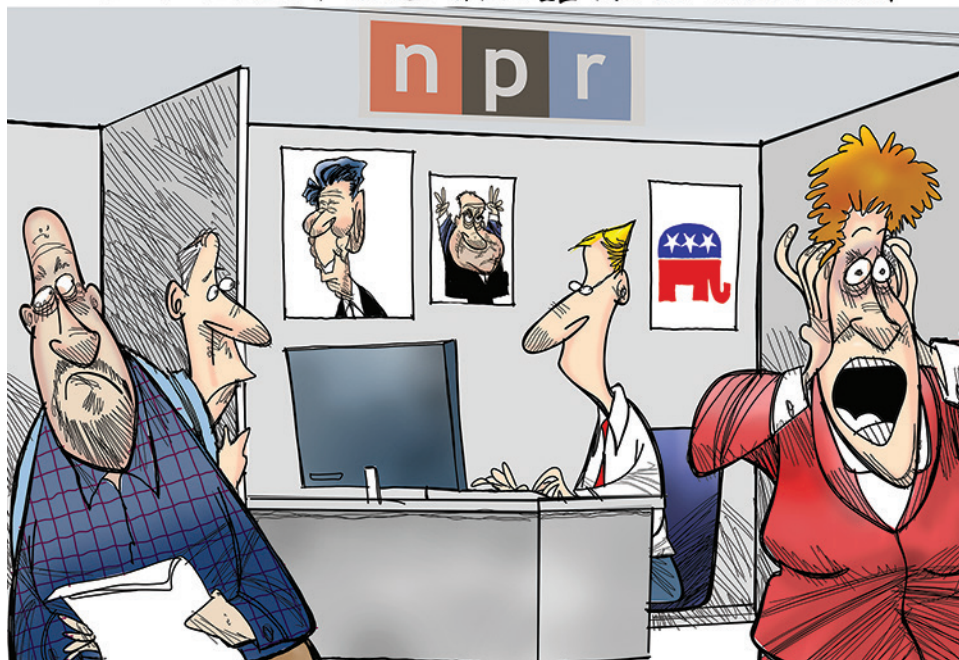
PSALM 15:1,2

*"Portrait of André Breton" (unknown) Early 1900*



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THE DIVERSITY HIRE THAT'LL NEVER HAPPEN...





## BIBLE

## TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of 3 Kings (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. Who said, “Indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost”? *Matthew, Mark, John the Baptist, Luke*

3. From Leviticus 14, how long was a “clean” person required to remain outside his tent? *1 night, 2 nights, 4 days, 7 days*

4. What town or city was Saul of Tarsus near when he converted to Christianity? *Damascus, Assos, Corinth, Gaza*

5. Which apostle’s mother-in-law is referred to in the Bible but not by name? *Peter, Judas, James, Andrew*

6. Jesus says that you have to do what to see the kingdom of God? *Love one another, Be born again, Do what’s right, Tithe*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) John the Baptist (Acts 11:16), 3) 7 days, 4) Damascus, 5) Peter, 6) Be born again

*Comments? More Trivia? Gift ideas? Visit [www.TriviaGuy.com](http://www.TriviaGuy.com).*

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I FIRST MET FRIA WHEN DALE, ZARKOV, RONAL AND I GOT STRANDED IN FRIGIA.

SHE FOUND US FROZEN HALF TO DEATH, COMPLETELY AT HER MERCY.

MY NAME'S **FLASH GORDON**

AND I TEND NOT TO BE A GUY WHO GETS TONGUE-TIED, BUT I WAS RIGHT THEN.

MUST'VE BEEN THE COLD.

QUEEN FRIA NEEDS TO TALK WITH THE GIANTS.

SHE CAN'T COME IN ARMED OR THEY'LL ATTACK EN MASSE, SO ALL SHE'S GOT IS ME.

IT'S NOT LONG BEFORE WE GET JUMPED.

WE FIGHT BACK LIKE THE DEVIL SO THEY'LL RESPECT US ENOUGH TO TAKE US ALIVE.

THEY DRAG US TO THEIR LEADER -- DRUKKA.

EIGHT FOOT SIX, EVERY INCH OF IT MEAN...

BUT FRIA'S GOT GIANT BLOOD IN HER. SHE AND DRUKKA SAVED EACH OTHER WHEN THEY WERE KIDS.

SHE'S THEIR QUEEN, TOO.

WE GET WHAT WE CAME FOR -- AN AUDIENCE WITH THE GIANTS' ORAL HISTORIANS.

WE ASK ABOUT THIS CREATURE THAT'S BEEN ATTACKING FRIGIA.

AND THEY TELL US: IT'S ANCIENT. IT'S ANGRY. AND, AFTER A THOUSAND YEARS, IT'S AWAKE.

THEY CALL IT THE SCREAMING STORM.

**DAN SCHKADE 5-5-24**

*NEXT: A VOICE LIKE THUNDER*

## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

**n** NEED MORE DISTANCE??

GIVEN GOOD UPPER-BODY COILING AND ARM-SWINGING GOING BACK, YOU COULD PROBABLY ADD SOME DISTANCE BY UNWINDING FASTER FROM THE GROUND UP COMING DOWN.

THE BETTER A SOUND SWINGER USES HIS FEET AND KNEES COMING DOWN AND THROUGH, THE GREATER THE CENTRIFUGAL FORCE — AND THUS THE IMPACT SPEED — HE GENERATES.

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## Diabetics Receive Great Results From a Plant-Based Diet

DEAR DR. ROACH: Your recent column about treating diabetes left me wondering. Diabetes, as I understand it, is usually a result of too much sugar being consumed. But consuming carbohydrates is not that different because they are quickly converted to sugar through the human chemical processes. So, why are you promoting a plant-based diet that is high in carbohydrates?

Consuming protein, which is easily obtained by eating meat, seems to be the answer to reducing the consumption of simple and complex carbohydrates that are quickly converted to sugar in our body. I've switched to a high-protein diet (both plant and animal protein), and my blood sugar has

been very well-controlled for a couple of years. -- F.B.

ANSWER: Diabetes is not a result of consuming too much sugar. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disorder where the cells that make insulin are destroyed by the body. Type 2 diabetes is a disease of insulin resistance and a relative inability to secrete insulin in response to a sugar load.

In a person with Type 2 diabetes, consuming too much sugar in a short time overloads the body's ability to respond, so their blood sugar goes up. It is persistent high blood sugar that is responsible for most of the damage to the kidneys, eyes, blood vessels and nerves.

I am careful about what I mean by a plant-based diet. While it's true that a diet consisting entirely of maple syrup and orange juice would be extremely bad for a person with diabetes because of the concerns about blood sugar that you raised, a plant-based diet that is mostly vegetables, whole grains, legumes, fatty fish and nuts/seeds with moderate amounts of whole fruits does not raise blood sugar more than a standard Western diet.

The high fiber content of the legumes, whole grains and vegetables prevents rapid absorption, and the protein and healthy fat in nuts and fatty fish likewise slow stomach-emptying. Finally, there is good evidence that people with diabetes have excellent results with this kind of diet.

You are right that protein is important for a person with diabetes, but many high-protein diets based on meat also have high amounts of saturated fat, which increase the risk for heart blockages. In addition, saturated fat is a major cause of disease and death in people with diabetes. However, it is possible to have a healthy, high-protein diet with care.

\*\*\*

DEAR DR. ROACH: The supplemental facts on the One A Day Men's 50+ vitamins and Women's 50+ vitamins are similar -- only the men's had vitamin K, and the women's didn't. Other than this, the sole differences were variations in some of the daily values.

Is there any potential downside to a man taking a Women's 50+ vitamin or vice versa? --J.M.

ANSWER: I don't recommend daily multivitamins for healthy people, besides a few exceptions: Women of reproductive age who are considering pregnancy should be on a folate-containing regimen. People with known deficiencies (such as vitamin D) should be getting replacement supplements. Finally, vitamin E may increase prostate cancer risk and should be avoided in those with a prostate.

Women who are menstruating need more iron than men do, and sex-specific vitamin formulations keep these issues in mind. (Iron generally isn't dangerous for people who aren't menstruating, unless they have hemochromatosis.) So, while I don't recommend them, and although they are very similar, there are subtle reasons to choose a sex-appropriate vitamin.

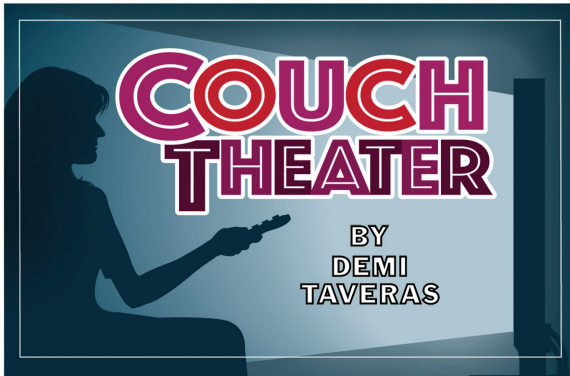
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).

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"Love Lies Bleeding" (R) -- This romantic thriller stars Kristen Stewart ("Spencer") and Katy O'Brian ("Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania"). Taking place in 1989, Stewart plays Lou, a gym manager who falls for a bodybuilder named Jackie (O'Brian). As Jackie prepares for a bodybuilding

competition, she stays with Lou and subsequently finds herself immersed in Lou's family drama. With an estranged criminal father who looms over the town and an abusive brother-in-law, Lou becomes filled with an intense rage that propels Jackie to take matters into her own hands. Buckle up for a deadly, mind-bending cat-and-mouse chase. Out now to rent. (Apple TV+)



**Nicholas Galitzine, left, and Anne Hathaway star in "The Idea of You."** Courtesy of MovieStillsDB

"Unfrosted" (PG-13) -- Jerry Seinfeld makes his feature directorial debut with this comedy film loosely based on the origin story of Pop-Tarts! Set in 1963, Kellogg's and Post Cereal are the two biggest names in the American cereal industry, but both companies are desperate to knock each other out of the running. When Kellogg's receives word that Post is creating a fruit pastry breakfast product, the company decides to recruit a team consisting of NASA scientist Donna Stankowski (Melissa McCarthy), Steve Schwinn (Jack McBrayer), Chef Boyardee (Bobby Moynihan), and Jack LaLane (James Marsden), to come up with a rival product. If those actors aren't enough to get you interested, here are just a few more names from the large ensemble cast Seinfeld was able to pull off: Jim Gaffigan, Hugh Grant, Amy Schumer, Peter Dinklage, Christian Slater, Sebastian Mansicalco, Jon Hamm and Bill Burr. Out now. (Netflix)

"The Idea of You" (R) -- Based on the novel of the same name by Robinne Lee, this rom-com stars Anne Hathaway ("Eileen") and Nicholas Galitzine ("Red, White & Royal Blue"). Hathaway portrays a 40-year-old single mom named Solene who agrees to take her daughter to the musical festival Coachella. After unexpectedly encountering Hayes Campbell (Galitzine), the lead singer of the famous boy band August Moon, Solene and Hayes strike up an intense attraction amid their 16-year age gap. Initially, Solene expresses her fear about what people will say, but as their relationship progresses, she throws caution to the wind and lets herself fall for the picture-perfect boy bander. Rumor has it that Galitzine's character was inspired by several real-life boy banders. Out now! (Amazon Prime Video)

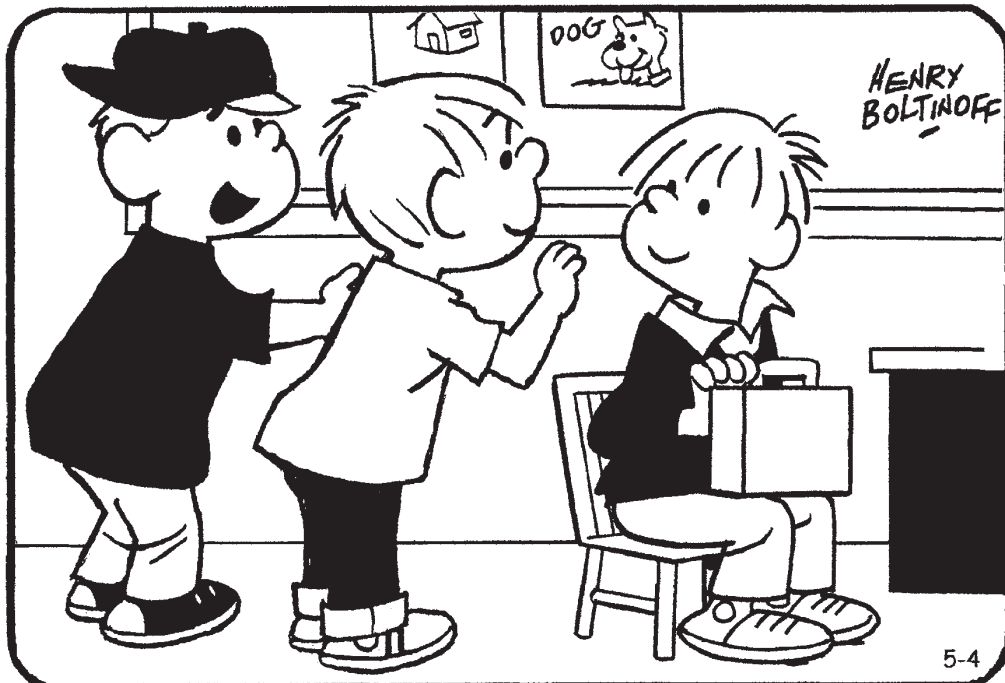
"Prom Dates" (TV-MA) -- Ah, the worry of showing up dateless to prom. It's something we've all likely experienced, and this coming-of-age comedy takes a stab at the hilarity that can ensue as teenagers prepare for this once-in-a-lifetime special night. Hannah (Julia Lester) and Jess (Antonia Gentry) are two best friends who made a pact to have the best prom ever, but the two girls unexpectedly break up with their boyfriends right before. As the hours count down to prom, Hannah and Jess go to absurd lengths to try to find a suitable date in time. Chelsea Handler and John Michael Higgins co-star in this amusing film, out now! (Hulu)



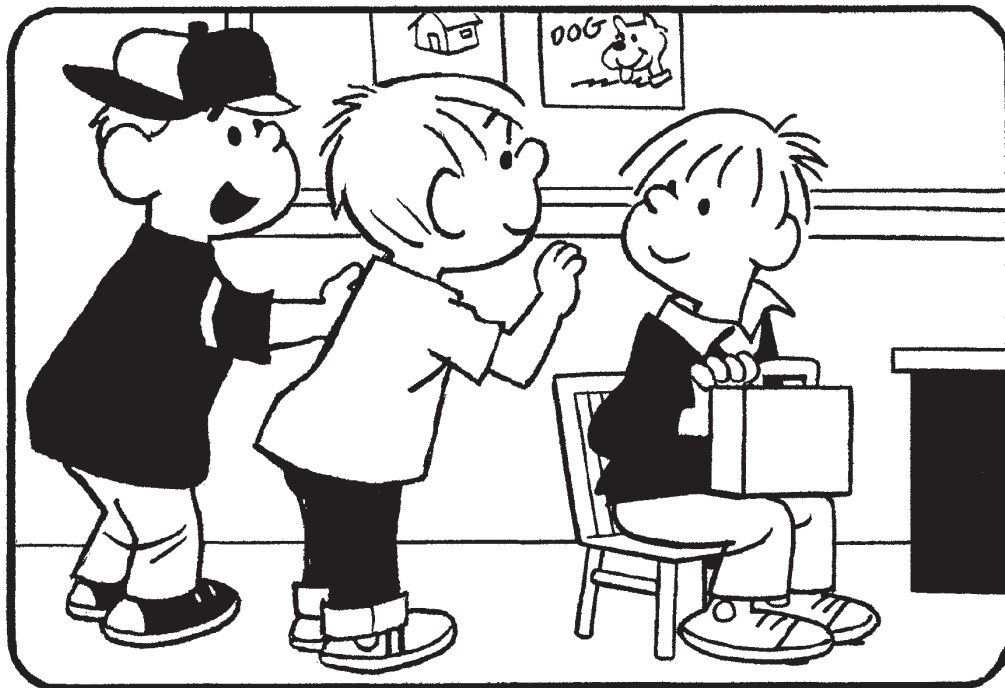


## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY  
HENRY BOLTINOFF



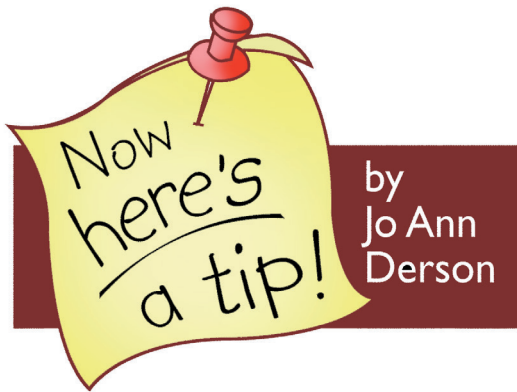
Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Desk is moved. 2. Chalkboard isn't as wide. 3. Stripe is added to sleeve. 4. Cap is different. 5. Chair rung is higher. 6. Sneakers are different.

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\* Buff spots off of silver with toothpaste. Rub gently with a soft cloth, rinse and dry.

\* Keep your dishcloths and sponges germ-free and smelling sweet. Once weekly soak them overnight in a few cups of water to which you've added a tablespoon or so of bleach. It will keep them from developing that mildew smell.

\* "To keep mixes from bunching up on the beaters of my mixer, I spray them with a little canola oil right before mixing. It isn't enough to affect the recipe, but it helps them do a better job, I think. And I don't have to stop the mixer so often to scrape the dough from the beaters." -- R.V. in Oklahoma

\* To clean tea-stained cups, use a couple of drops of dishwasher detergent. Stir and let set, then scrub out. It should

wipe right out.

\* "If there's a lot of burned-on food stuck to your pan, just add water immediately after cooking, then stick it in the oven (if oven-safe) at a low temperature for a little bit. It will soften the food, and you can clean it much easier." -- U.A. in Montana

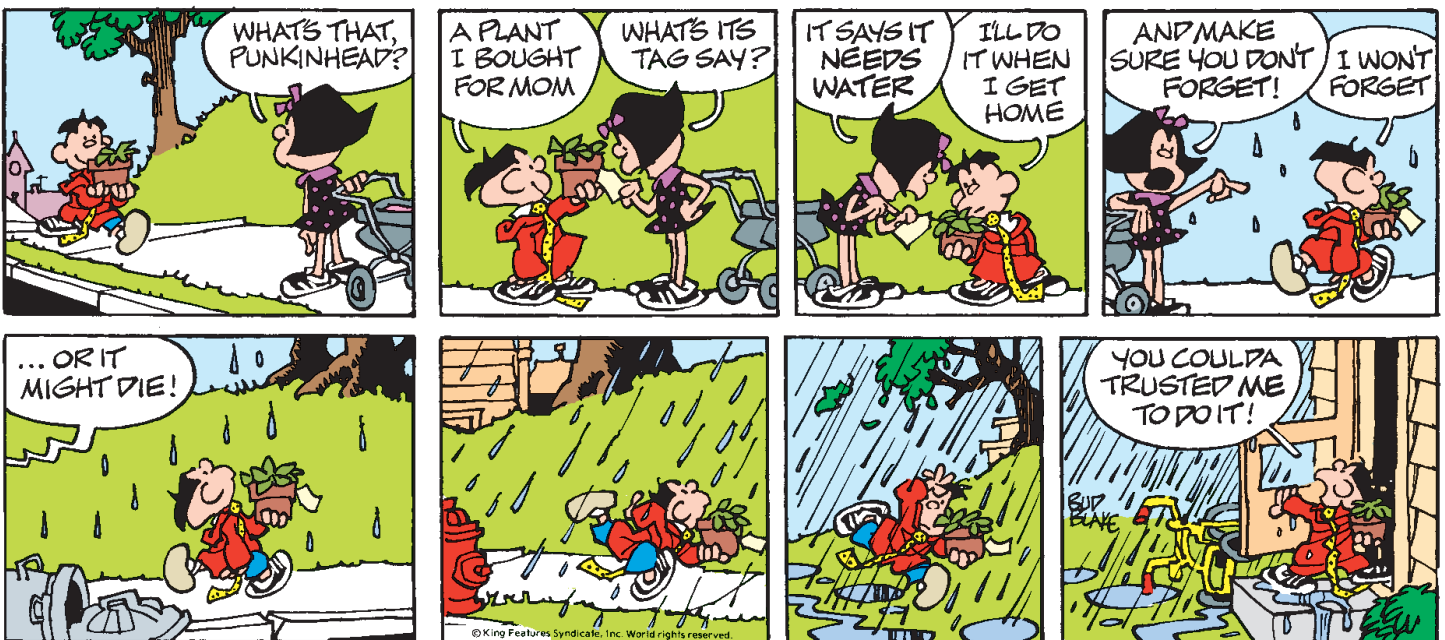
\* "Save larger envelopes in which you receive mail. You can reuse them by gluing or taping a new label on the front. You can close them with packing tape. Some of these envelopes are expensive." -- T.G. in South Carolina

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

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## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Volume-based
- 6 Outcome
- 12 Spud
- 13 Key in again
- 14 Chalkboard accessory
- 15 Vineyard harvest
- 16 Classic soda brand
- 17 "Excuse me ..."
- 19 Tolkien creature
- 20 First lady of scat
- 22 Lith., once
- 24 Six-pack muscles
- 27 "Carmen" solo
- 29 Staffer
- 32 Employer's directive
- 35 Hideaway
- 36 Couturier Christian
- 37 Science guru Bill
- 38 Small tablet
- 40 Iowa city
- 42 Top card
- 44 Hotel chain
- 46 "Casablanca" role
- 50 Tomorrow, in Tijuana
- 52 Witty retort
- 54 Billie Eilish hit song

	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11
12							13					
14							15					
16					17	18				19		
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24	25	26		27			28		29		30	31
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42	43			44	45				46	47	48	49
50			51				52	53				
54							55					
56							57					

- 55 Allow
- 56 Small maps
- 57 Indian yogurt dish
- DOWN**
- 1 Apple center
- 2 Beehive State
- 3 Count with an orchestra
- 4 Mineral suffix
- 5 Lipstick shade
- 6 Incite
- 7 Salon jobs
- 8 Depot (Abbr.)
- 9 Father of Helios
- 10 Serving customers
- 11 Try out
- 12 Stock holder
- 18 Hispaniola resident
- 21 Trail the pack
- 23 Cutting tool
- 24 100%
- 25 "Don't — stranger!"
- 26 Allowances
- 28 Perfume dispenser
- 30 Parched
- 31 Scrape (out)
- 33 Span. lady
- 34 Raw mineral
- 39 Dunkable treat
- 41 Egyptian peninsula
- 42 Both (Pref.)
- 43 "Misery" star James
- 45 Baseball legend Willie
- 47 Pride parade initialism
- 48 Actress Ward
- 49 "How — you?"
- 51 Mature
- 53 — jiffy



## — King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

	C	U	B	I	C		U	P	S	H	O	T
P	O	T	A	T	O		R	E	T	Y	P	E
E	R	A	S	E	R		G	R	A	P	E	S
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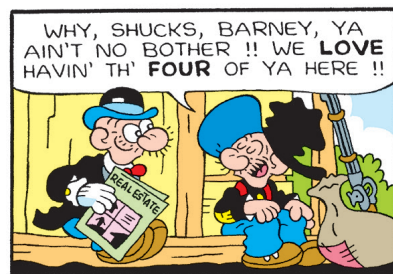
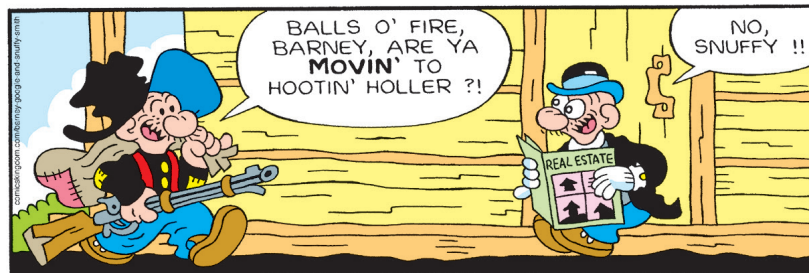
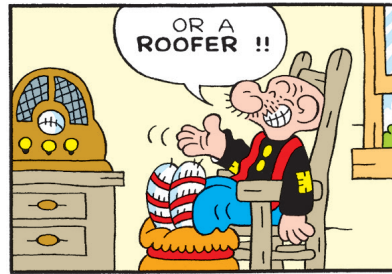
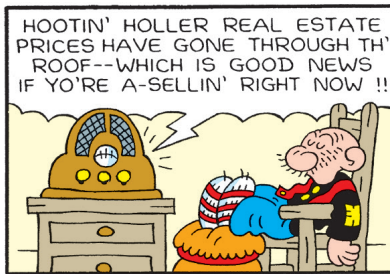
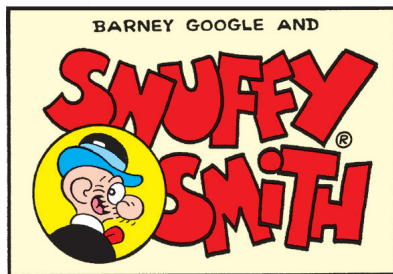
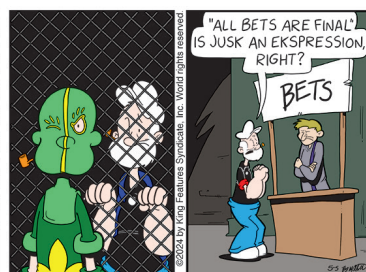
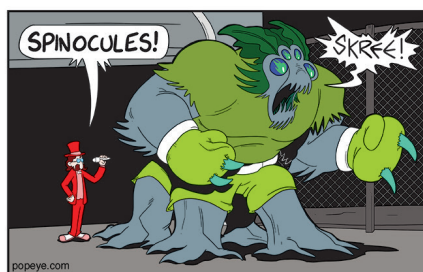
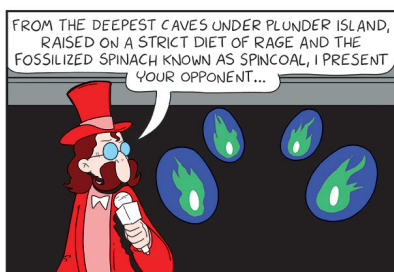
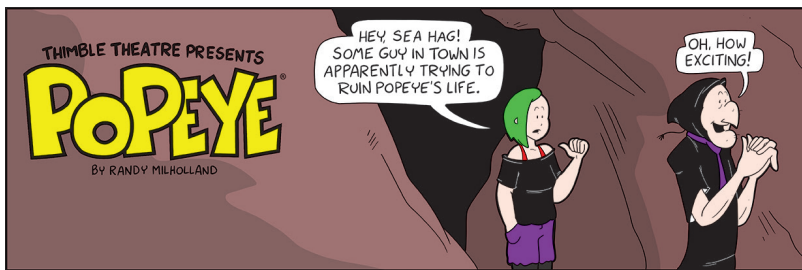
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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

SIR ROGER HAS FLED THROUGH A SECRET PASSAGE INTO HIS CASTLE. VAL GIVES CAUTIOUS PURSUIT...

...UNTIL HE SPIES A DIM COLUMN OF LIGHT, AS IF THROUGH A DOOR LEFT AJAR. IT SEEMS, HE THINKS, A BIT TOO INVITING.

MEANWHILE, IN THE BRIDGE TOWER, GAWAIN CONFRONTS THE DESPERATE BARMUS DRAMFELL, WHO FIGHTS LIKE A CAGED BULL...

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... USING HIS SUPERIOR WEIGHT AND STRENGTH. PERHAPS, CONSIDERS GAWAIN, THOSE VERY QUALITIES CAN BE TURNED AGAINST THIS BRUTISH FOE.

IN THE PASSAGEWAY, VAL CONSIDERS HIS SITUATION FOR A MOMENT, THEN TOSSES HIS DAGGER CLATTERING THROUGH THE DOOR OPENING...

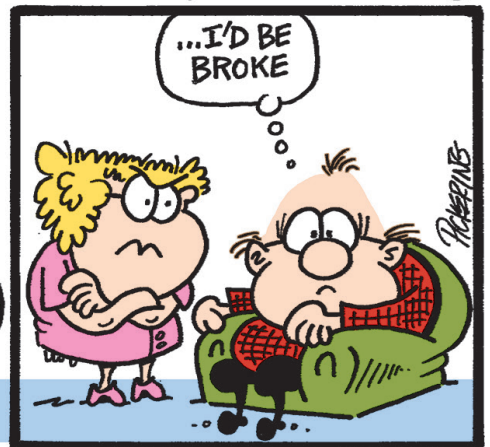
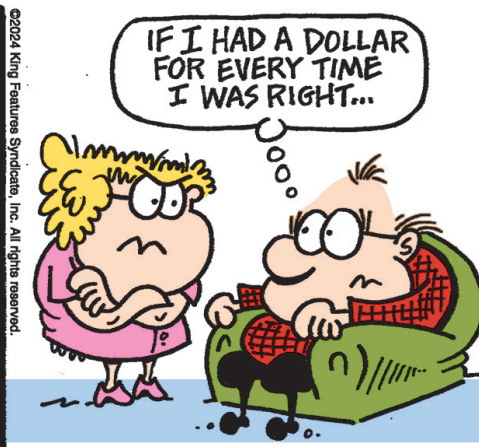
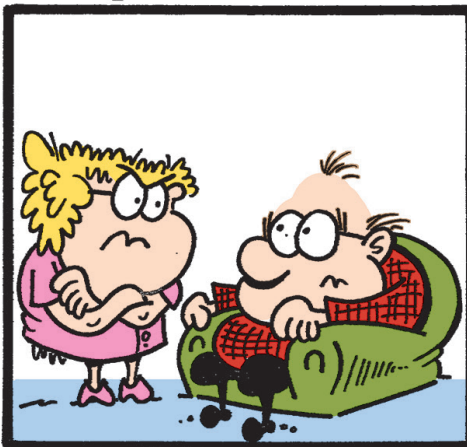
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...AND IS REWARDED, AS HE EXPECTED, WHEN AN OVER-ANXIOUS ROGER SPRINGS HIS TRAP TOO SOON!

NEXT: **Gaining leverage**

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering





## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Walking, Finally

After a less than satisfactory experience trying to order a treadmill online, I signed up at the rec center with a freebie seniors account to have a safe place for daily walking.

Where I live has narrow roads with no sidewalks. The big-box store that used to be ideal is crowded during the day. The high school no longer has after-school hours for people to walk the hallways and climb the stairs. Then there was the faulty treadmill purchase. So, the rec center it was if I wanted to have a safe place for walking.

I neglected to consider the very big men who play basketball and run or fall into the walking track oval that goes along the outside wall. I neglected to consider the kids who play basketball and throw the ball everywhere but into the net. I neglected to consider the people who are learning to play pickleball.

However, all is not lost. With the help of front desk staff and a copy of the current monthly schedule, we identified one afternoon hour that should be fairly hazard free: before the kids get out of school, before the men get off work, before the pickleball games start and -- best of all -- the hour when the only thing on the schedule is track walking. I tried it today. It was wonderful. Just several other seniors and me walking at various speeds.

The next step is a new pair of walking shoes. I've been reading reviews and have determined what are likely the best shoes for me, available at a local shoe store. Add my step counter and a lightweight jacket (staff warned that the air conditioning will be running full blast when the weather warms up), and I'll be ready to get in shape this summer.

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1. Teams from what East-Asian island country won the Little League World Series 17 times from 1969-96?

2. What two convicted murderers can be seen sitting courtside at a New York Knicks game in the photograph for Mark Jackson's 1990-91 NBA Hoops trading card?

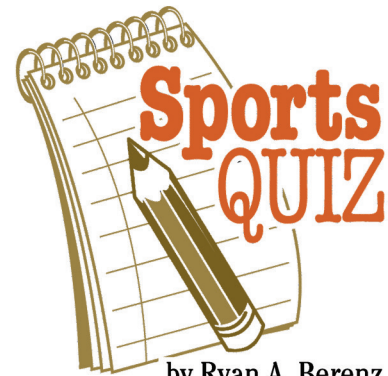
3. In December 2007, what former U.S. Senator and diplomat released a 409-page report on performance-enhancing drug use in Major League Baseball?

4. Ed Marinaro, an NFL running back from 1972-77, went on to play the role of Officer Joe Coffey in what NBC police drama?

5. Name the Buffalo Sabres player who won both the Calder Memorial Trophy for the NHL's best rookie and the Vezina Trophy for best goaltender in 1984.

6. What female gymnast, nicknamed the "Sparrow from Minsk," won four gold medals competing for the Soviet Union at the 1972 Munich and 1976 Montreal Olympic Games?

7. What did the Professional Football Researchers Association create in 2002 to honor outstanding players and coaches who are not in the Pro Football Hall of Fame?



by Ryan A. Berenz

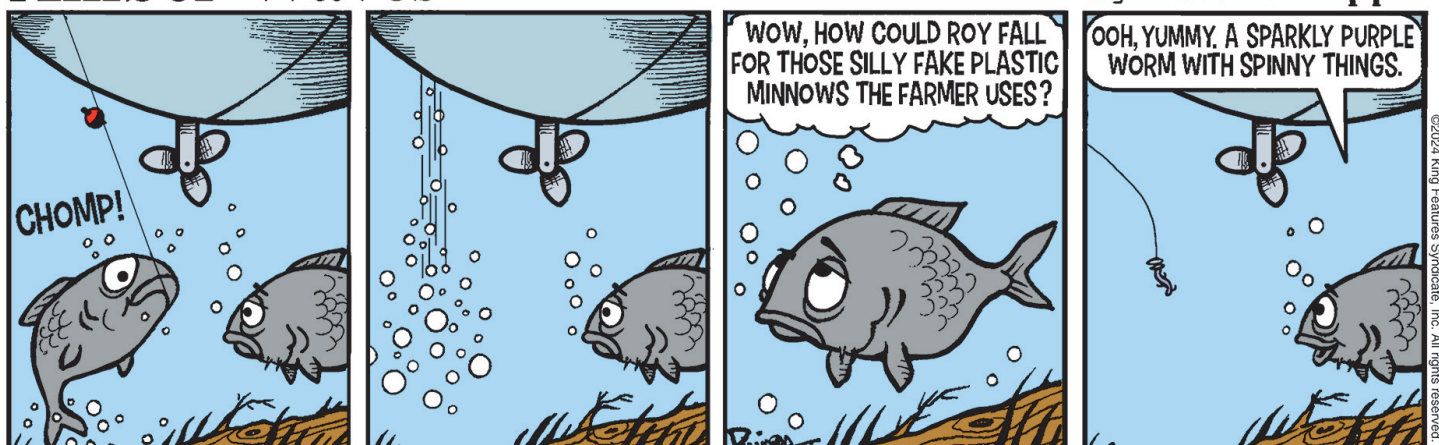
## Answers

1. Taiwan.
2. Lyle and Erik Menendez.
3. George J. Mitchell.
4. "Hill Street Blues."
5. Tom Barrasso.
6. Olga Korbut.
7. The Hall of Very Good.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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## Pet's Allergies Blossom in Spring

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My 7-year-old cat, "Sunbeam," has a tough time in the spring when the pollen starts to fly. He sneezes frequently, his eyes water and he scratches hot spots on his skin. I've tried many things to reduce the allergens in the home: I vacuum every other day, run an air purifier near where he sleeps and I brush his coat daily. TITLE: None of that seems to help. What else can I try? -- Harry in Pittsburgh

DEAR HARRY: You're doing your best to reduce airborne allergens, and that's great. However, because it doesn't seem to be helping, it's time to enlist the help of your cat's veterinarian.

The vet can suggest some other ways to reduce allergens in the home, and will consider that Sunbeam is reacting to more than one issue -- not just pollen, but indoor dust or even the food he's eating. They will also check for any secondary issues that may be contributing to Sunbeam's discomfort, like an ear infection or yeast infection.

Short-term treatment with a prescription medication, like a steroid or an antihistamine, may be necessary during the worst part of the season. These will help reduce the intense itching and eye irritation, and should help clear up hot spots on his skin.

At home, try adding fish oil and probiotics to your cat's food -- these supplements can help with itchy, flaky skin conditions. (I give my cat a teaspoon of plain yogurt daily to balance his gut bacteria.) An occasional bath, twice a month or so, using a pet shampoo that contains oatmeal will soothe his skin and wash away any lingering allergens on his coat.

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

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## Strange BUT TRUE

\* Forget "hair of the dog" -- a banana milkshake sweetened with honey is one of the best ways to cure a hangover. The banana helps calm the stomach while the honey builds up depleted blood sugar levels.

\* If you sign up for the National Do Not Call Registry, anyone who places a sales call to your number can be fined up to \$40,654 per call.

\* Asian hair grows 30% faster than Caucasian hair.

\* The rainbow eucalyptus tree sheds strips of bark as it

grows, revealing a green inner layer that changes color over time, taking on vibrant blue, purple and orange hues.

\* Java junkies, did you know that when coffee spread from Arabia to Europe, some people called it a "Muslim drink" and wanted it banned? Fortunately, it became widely accepted when the Pope tried a cup and liked it enough to declare it a Christian beverage.

\* In much of the U.S. it is illegal to buy a new car directly from the manufacturer.

\* Japanese scientists successfully created an MRI machine that can record dreams and reconstruct them for you to watch while you're awake.

\* In 1818, the U.S. began building a fort near the New York-Quebec border to defend against invasions from Canada. After two years they realized the fort was actually on the Canadian side. The abandoned project was appropriately named Fort Blunder.

\* Blue-eyed people have the highest rate of alcohol dependence.

\* Ever wonder if you have a doppelganger? Head on over to [Twinstrangers.com](http://Twinstrangers.com), where you can register to find your lookalike from anywhere in the world by uploading photos, selecting your facial features, and looking through matches.

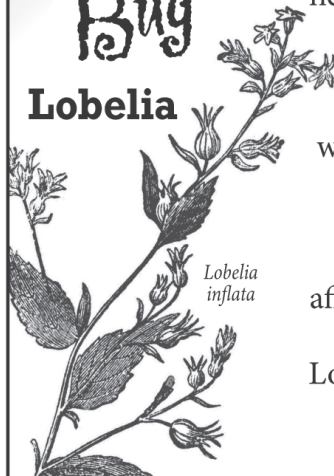
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Thought for the Day: "A wise man can learn more from a foolish question than a fool can learn from a wise answer." -- Bruce Lee

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### The Garden Bug

#### Lobelia



*Lobelia inflata*

Matthaeus Lobelius (1538-1616) was a Flemish physician and plant enthusiast. Born in Flanders, he studied at the University of Montpellier and became personal physician first to William, Prince of Orange and later to James I. As a member of the Flemish School of Botany, he wrote a series of major treatises on plants, and authored famous publications for botany students. He is credited with the first attempt to classify plants according to their natural affinities, rather than their medicinal uses. The plant genus *Lobelia* and the botanical family *Lobeliaceae* are named after him. - Brenda Weaver

Sources: [dbpedia.org](http://dbpedia.org), [prabook.com](http://prabook.com)



by Freddy Groves

## When You Think You Can't Be Shocked ...

The Office of Inspector General for the Department of Veterans Affairs uncovers, investigates and helps bring to justice all types of criminals for all types of crimes. But sometimes the details are surprising and especially appalling.

This is a new charge: forced labor. Specifically, the charges were forced labor, slave labor trafficking and theft of government funds. In the scam, four people obtained the labor and services of an Indian national and kept him a prisoner by use of force and threats of force against his family back in India. They were arrested late last year on the slave labor trafficking charges.

Then it was discovered that the ringleader, a former U.S. Army veteran, and his wife had been collecting caregiver support money from the VA, falsely claiming the veteran was unable to care for himself, that he couldn't walk, cook, shop, manage finances and medicine, take a bath by himself nor do anything else. They claimed caregiver funding for his care for four years before being caught. There were 47 counts alone of stealing government funds, as well as the counts for labor trafficking and forced labor.

Very appalling, besides the theft of government money, was that the kidnapped person was a young man here in the country on a student visa sponsored by the veteran. The kid was brought here to go to college but was instead held captive and physically abused, forced to sleep on the concrete floor in the basement.

Thankfully, a neighbor called police asking for a wellness check, during which the young captive was able to get to the front door to safety when the police showed up. He was hospitalized and found to have both old and new injuries, including open wounds and broken bones as a result of reportedly being beaten with boards, pipes, metal rods and more. The judge in his wisdom denied all the criminals bail.

Most disturbing, however, is knowing that it was a veteran who was behind all the violence.

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## Wishing Well®



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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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- MUSIC: The 1980s group Duran Duran took its name from a character in which movie?
- SCIENCE: What is the science of making maps called?
- GEOGRAPHY: Which country is surrounded by the country of South Africa?
- MOVIES: What is the name of the boy who owns the toys in "Toy Story"?
- THEATER: What are the major divisions in a play?
- TELEVISION: Which sitcom has the theme song, "Everywhere You Look"?
- GAMES: How many checkers does each player get to start the game?
- LITERATURE: Which children's book features a construction vehicle named Mary Anne?
- ANATOMY: What are the smallest blood vessels in the human body called?
- ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is the name of the dog mascot on the front of a Cracker Jack box?

### Answers

- "Barbarella."
- Cartography.
- Lesotho.
- Andy Davis.
- Acts, which are divided into scenes.
- "Full House."
- 12.
- "Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel."
- Capillaries.
- Bingo.

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South Dakota Governor

**Kristi Noem**



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

## Appreciating Teachers

May 6th – 10th is Teacher Appreciation Week, a time to celebrate our educators and thank them for everything they do for our students.

But there's an ongoing problem in South Dakota – teacher salaries have not kept up with increased funding to education. In fact, teacher pay lags far behind the 26.3% increase in funding to K-12 education since I have been Governor. Our teachers deserve better – so we're giving them better.

My administration recognizes and appreciated the many contributions of our teachers every single day, and this legislative session we placed a special focus on educators. I was proud to sign SB 127, which establishes a minimum teacher salary and revises the requirements pertaining to average teacher compensation. The new law requires districts to meet a minimum annual teacher salary of at least \$45,000. It also requires districts to keep pace with annual increases in state funding. This will ensure that teachers do not get left behind like they have far too often.

Rapid City was one school district that was lagging behind in teacher pay, but now, they recently announced they would meet the \$45,000 minimum beginning this fall – two years ahead of the deadline! I am so glad this law is already creating a lasting impact on teachers in our schools.

It took a lot of hard work to get this important legislation across the finish line and to my desk. Together, we are making sure that teachers receive the pay they deserve. The Blue-Ribbon promise to increase teacher pay and to make teachers a top priority is now being upheld.

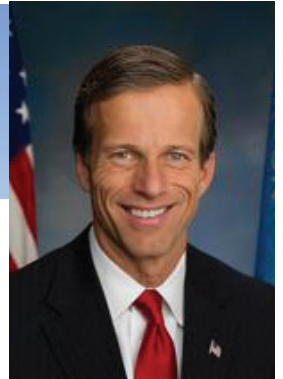
This session, we also made sure our teachers will be equipped to deliver the most proven model of literacy teaching to our kids as the drop in literacy rates is a challenge to schools across America. HB 1022 makes an appropriation to the Department of Education to provide teachers with the latest tools for professional development in literacy. This works with my Department of Education's statewide literacy initiative based on the Science of Reading. It includes an emphasis on phonics, which is the proven best way to teach kids how to read. This legislation funds the continuation of this fantastic effort.

Our teachers do so much more than educate our kids. They teach them life skills. They help them grow and develop. And they care for them. Young minds grow and develop.

This Teacher Appreciation Week, I encourage you to reach out to the teachers in your life, whether they be your kids' teachers, a friend or family member, or even a former teacher of your own who made a lasting impact. Thank them for all that they do. And let them know just how important we know they are.

To our South Dakota teachers, thank you for caring for and educating the next generation.

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



## Antisemitism Has No Place on College Campuses

Over the last few weeks, we have witnessed a disturbing wave of antisemitism sweep college campuses across the country. Anti-Israel protesters have taken over campuses. They have intimidated Jewish students, identified with terrorist groups, and called for violence against fellow Americans. And, too often, these protesters have been abetted by the actions and inactions of campus faculty and administrators.

Jewish students walking around their university campuses have heard things like, "Hamas, we love you," "Burn Tel Aviv to the ground," "Go back to Poland," and "We are Hamas." At Columbia University in New York City, a protester held a sign near a group of Jewish students that read "Al-Qassam's next targets" (Al-Qassam is the military wing of Hamas).

Jewish students have been victims of harassment, intimidation, and violence. In some instances, Jewish students have been blocked from entering campus buildings. A student at the University of Washington said she had been called names, spit at, and told to "go back to the gas chambers." And a Jewish student at Columbia University reported being attacked with sticks outside the library in February.

You could be forgiven for thinking these are scenes from 1930s Germany, not American college campuses in 2024. It's unconscionable that Jewish students can't feel safe walking across their college campuses or that anyone would engage in this type of hate. While the recent uptick in protests has rightly drawn national attention, there has been a 700 percent increase in antisemitic incidents on college campuses since Hamas attacked Israel last October. And too often, it seems university leadership has been unwilling to confront this hate, and lately some universities have chosen to negotiate with protesters and even cancel classes and graduation ceremonies due to the protests.

What's happening at many campuses is sickening, and the fact that it is widespread should prompt some serious soul-searching. Something has gone seriously wrong when students at some of the country's top schools are embracing the actions of and identifying with terrorists who killed 1,200 innocent Israelis last October and still hold several American hostages to this day. Why are a substantial number of young people willing to join these protests and engage in hateful actions toward Jewish students? And what will make university administrators finally say "enough is enough?"

The right to protest is one thing, and colleges should be forums for debate and discussion. Every American has a right to free speech and to peacefully protest. But we are a long way past lawful protests. We are talking about harassment and violence against Jewish students. So it's time for immediate action, including from law enforcement where warranted, to protect Jewish students and ensure they can attend school safely.

There is no place for antisemitism in America or on college campuses. I hope we will see stronger action from more universities, and stronger leadership from the Biden administration. It's time to close this disgraceful chapter and restore order and respect at America's institutions of higher learning.

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



## Great Faces, Great Places

### **BIG Update**

Often, Native Americans are wrongfully left to pay medical bills owed by the Indian Health Service (IHS) through Purchased/Referred Care claims. Patients then must decide to either pay a bill they don't personally owe or risk the bill getting sent to debt collectors. In March, I introduced the Purchased and Referred Care Improvement Act to reform IHS and protect Native Americans' credit.

My bill was discussed during a House Natural Resources Committee hearing this week. Getting a hearing on a bill in Congress is a big deal. Tens of thousands of bills get introduced every two years, but only several hundred receive a hearing. I'm glad this bill is one of those few and hope it passes the Committee soon.

Chairwoman Janet Alkire from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and I testified in support of my bill.

### **BIG News**

The United States Postal Service announced its final reorganization plan for South Dakota's facilities. The Sioux Falls Processing and Distribution Center will be turned into a Local Processing Center and a Sorting and Delivery Center. The nationwide restructuring is intended to increase efficiency for mail deliveries, but there are concerns this will decrease mail delivery speeds in rural areas like South Dakota, where mail will now travel hundreds of extra miles to reach its final destination. It's unfortunate dozens of jobs will be lost or transferred out of state, forcing families to relocate or find another job. This week, I met with Brandon Delzer, the President of South Dakota Rural Letter Carriers Association, to discuss the restructuring and other postal issues.

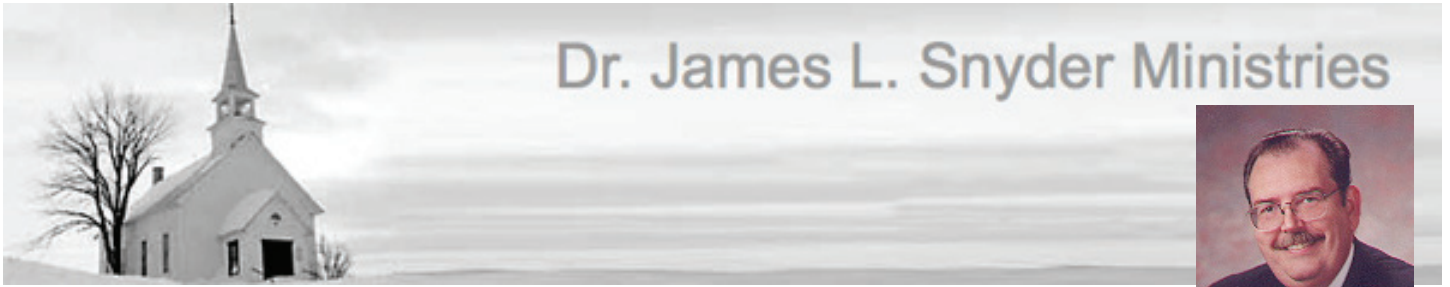
### **BIG Idea**

Regulations and bureaucratic red tape make it difficult to deploy new broadband infrastructure in rural America. I introduced the FOREST Act this week to streamline the permitting process for new broadband infrastructure projects to keep rural Americans up to speed.



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## Dancing in My Pajamas

After 2 ½ weeks of being sick with many days in bed, I have come to appreciate what some people go through when they have a severe sickness. My sickness wasn't that devastating. It just sucked the energy out of me and caused me a lot of coughing and sneezing.

I barely had enough energy to get out of bed, walk to the living room, and sit in my easy chair for my morning cup of coffee. I paused for a few moments to catch my breath after that strenuous trip.

Because of my sickness, I had to go to the bathroom at least five times during the day. I had to run to the bathroom and slowly walk back to my easy chair, which took a lot of energy.

I do remember my grandmother's home in the mountains of Pennsylvania. They didn't have indoor plumbing and used an outhouse in their backyard. Who knows what an outhouse is today?

If you had to go to the bathroom at night, she put something out in the hallway, which she called a "potty pot." I was thinking about that the other day and almost asked The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage if that would be a good idea during my sickness.

After considering that idea, I had enough energy to erase it from my mind and just race back and forth during those potty trips.

During this time, I never left the house, I didn't have enough energy to change out of my pajamas and get into my pants. I've never been in my pajamas for so long, but of course, I didn't realize what I was doing at the time.

Once, when I had to get up from the easy chair and run back to the bathroom, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage looked at me and said, "Is that your pajama dance?"

I had no time to stop and respond, or serious consequences would occur.

When I got back from the bathroom and passed the kitchen area, I could see The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage smiling. I wanted to respond to her, but at the time, I didn't have the energy. I could either respond to her or make it to my easy chair. I took the latter.

Those bathroom trips aren't fun by any stretch of the imagination, and believe me; my imagination was stretched to its limit.

I'm not sure how many pajama dances I did during my sickness, and I'm not sure if I have perfected them yet. I did what was necessary to get through the situation.

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I perfected a "Woozy Waltz" but didn't have the energy to explain it to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Maybe one day I could enter the "Dancing with the Star-Blazers."

One thing I remember during that time is that I could not remember what day of the week it was. I didn't know when I got up in the morning if it was morning, afternoon, or evening. I had to rely upon The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage to tell me what time it was and where in the world I was.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage brought me breakfast, and by the time I ate the last crumb, I didn't remember if it was breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

I couldn't remember anything, so I thought of something. It's a wonder I had the energy to think of anything then, but I did.

With my trouble remembering, how did I know what I was eating? Could it be, and I thought about this, that without my knowing it, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage snuck a piece of broccoli onto my plate?

The more I thought about it, the more confused I got. Certainly, she could not sneak a slice of broccoli when I was in good health, but maybe this was an opportunity she'd been looking for.

I thought about this, and my wife asked, "What are you thinking about?"

I knew I could not tell her exactly what I was thinking, so I said, "I'm just thinking about what I had for lunch this afternoon."

What worried me was that she giggled one of those mysterious giggles when I said that. I did not know what to think about that.

If I ask her about that, she could say, "Ha ha, I got you with that one."

That was the last thing I want to hear before bed that night.

Not long after that, my memory improved and returned to normal. I was happy about that. I noticed every time The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage brought me a plate of food, she was giggling. I was tempted to ask her what she was giggling about, but I just wasn't going to give her the opportunity to tell me.

In my devotions this morning I read, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

Thinking about this verse I was reminded how sickness brings a state of fear in my life. That fear tricks me into thinking I all alone in this situation. This verse reminds me that God is with me. When I trust my problem to the Lord He is faithful and gets me through it victoriously.

## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What are the environmental/climate benefits (or drawbacks) of the Inflation Reduction Act?  
-- David Montague, via email

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), a bill passed by the Biden Administration in 2022 to bolster the U.S. economy, was especially notable for its unprecedented investments in clean energy and climate health. Setting \$369 billion aside for climate investments, the IRA incentivizes citizens to implement and invest in renewable energy by increasing tax benefits to homes with installed solar panels and battery storage equipment, and by giving substantial funding to clean energy companies. The bill's efforts were predicted to bring \$3 trillion into renewable energy, open up 170,000 new jobs within the industry, and increase the sales of electric vehicles.



**Homeowners can reap increasing tax benefits for installing solar panels thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act.** Credit: Pexels.com.

Climate analysts initially projected that America's greenhouse gas emissions would be cut roughly 40 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 due to the IRA's funding of clean energy, with an average of 46 to 79 gigawatts of carbon-free energy predicted to be added to America's electrical grid annually. The IRA puts additional priority on making clean energy more affordable for disadvantaged communities and lower-income households by increasing tax benefits for specific areas and families to start establishing clean energy within their communities. Implementing clean energy in disadvantaged communities may assist in mitigating the harmful air pollution in those areas, and in reducing their carbon footprints.

Despite its environmental benefits, the IRA has still allowed the fossil fuel industry to thrive and even expand. The bill was only approved by the U.S. Senate after the Biden Administration agreed to sell a \$200 million lease for oil and gas companies to develop a large plot of land in the Gulf of Mexico, as many senators are investing partners with those companies. In a recent USA Today article on the IRA, reporters Matthew Brown and Michael Phillis stated that "the bill prohibit[s] leasing of federal lands and waters for renewable energy unless the government has offered at least 2 million acres of public land and 60 million acres in federal waters for oil and gas leasing during the prior year." Clean energy improvements notwithstanding, fossil fuels will continue to burn and communities will continue to suffer from environmental hazards if specific legislation to discourage oil and gas development is not passed.

As of now, fossil fuels are reaching record levels of development and usage in the U.S., while only 32 gigawatts of carbon-free energy, a trifling amount in the scheme of things, have been added to the grid per year due to project delays, supply issues and the resistance of local communities. Many supporters of the bill argue that it was right to secure energy security for the American economy and its citizens via fossil fuels, since the clean energy industry is still developing a greater capacity for energy output. However, it could just as easily be argued that discouraging the continued development of oil and gas could have accelerated the clean energy industry's projects and growth. The IRA is undeniably an economic bill first, and an environmental bill second. But while environmentalists may have their issues with the final outcome, let's remember that the IRA is still the single largest climate bill ever passed in U.S. history.





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Commission dismisses calls to reinstate annual pheasant count** **State ended prior method over concern that poor numbers would deter out-of-state hunters**

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - MAY 4, 2024 10:00 AM**

State wildlife officials are not bringing back a popular method of estimating South Dakota's pheasant population, despite requests from the public to do so.

South Dakota is one of the top states for pheasant hunting in the nation, with millions of birds and millions of dollars in economic impact from the hunters that flock to the state each fall.

When the Department of Game, Fish and Parks recently released the draft of its new pheasant management plan for 2024 to 2028, the end of the document said that "by 2028," the department planned to "improve existing population monitoring programs to develop survey methods to inform biologists on population status, reproductive success, and relative densities of pheasant populations."

After reading that draft plan, some people wrote in to tell the department that the way to improve population monitoring programs is to reinstate the old method — commonly called the "brood count."

"I continue to be amazed and disgusted that GFP no longer conducts the summer brood count survey," John McDermott wrote in a comment to the department.

"Reinstate the statewide pheasant annual brood survey," Larry Fredrickson wrote.

"Bring back the brood survey," Mark Schaefer wrote.

In response, the department deleted the language in the draft plan that sparked the comments.

GF&P Senior Upland Game Biologist Alex Solem told the GF&P Commission on Friday that the change to the plan came "after just some kind of public comments and that sort of stuff." The commission unanimously approved the new version of the plan, without the language calling for improved population monitoring programs.

The state started the brood count as early as 1960 and ended it in 2019, citing concerns at the time that reports of lower pheasant numbers ahead of the hunting season deterred out-of-state hunters from traveling to South Dakota.

The department explained the rationale for ending the count in a Pheasant Hunting Marketing Workgroup and Plan. It said ending the count would "ensure that South Dakota is not unintentionally deterring hunters from coming to our state based on the media headlines reporting of low bird numbers."

#### **The brood count**

Prior to the brood count's end, department staff conducted it by driving the same rural routes annually to count groups of young pheasants and hens. Those observations and other variables, including a winter male-to-female ratio count and hunter harvest numbers, were fed into a formula to determine a pheasant population estimate ahead of the hunting season. The last brood count in 2019 reflected a 17% drop in pheasants counted per mile.

Now, according to the new management plan, the department uses hunter surveys to estimate how many pheasants are harvested, how many people hunted pheasants, the economic impact of pheasant hunting, and hunter satisfaction.

George Vandel, a former wildlife director for Game, Fish and Parks, said the brood count was a more

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accurate way of estimating the pheasant population.

"It wasn't barbershop biology," Vandel said.

The numbers were also used to help inform changes to the federal farm bill's grassland conservation programs, he added. The programs help provide habitat for pheasants and other wildlife.

"It showed them how long and when grasses should be left alone before being hayed or grazed, to give pheasants and similar wildlife the best chance possible," Vandel said. "And they did away with that."

The hunter surveys that the GF&P now relies on were only one of the variables in the brood count formula.

Chuck Dieter, a retired professor of natural resource management at South Dakota State University, does not like the new method.

"I think it's ridiculous to use that one variable to extrapolate a population estimate," Dieter said.

## Commission hears new plan

Last month, Solem shared the draft pheasant management plan with the GF&P Commission. He explained how the department estimates the population "through harvest surveys, hunter questionnaires — that sort of thing."

Solem said about 15,000 resident and 15,000 non-resident hunters participate. Questions include how many birds they harvested, when and where, and their satisfaction level with hunting pheasants in South Dakota.

At the time, Solem referenced the draft pheasant management plan's goal of improving population monitoring programs but did not offer specifics.

"We want to use and improve on current population harvest and public opinion surveys to, obviously, monitor these population trends as well as the economic impact that hunting, harvest levels and hunter satisfaction have on the landscape," Solem said about the draft. "It's no secret that pheasant hunting in the state of South Dakota has a huge economic impact, and we want to make sure that we continue to provide good populations out there for a lot of hunters to come in and harvest birds."

Prior to Friday, GF&P Commission Chair Stephanie Rissler told South Dakota Searchlight that the commission is confident in the department's current method for counting pheasants. She said department staff can use harvest surveys, habitat and weather conditions for a pre-season pheasant forecast, without reinstating the brood count.

"I feel we have come a long way in modeling since 1960," Rissler said in an email.

After Friday's vote to approve the amended management plan, Solem shared the department's annual pheasant harvest report. The report showed about 135,000 hunters harvested 1.2 million pheasants outside of private preserves in South Dakota — representing a 6% increase in hunters and a 7% increase in pheasants harvested compared to the prior year.

*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.*

## Plummeting balance in federal crime victims fund sparks alarm among states, advocates

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MAY 4, 2024 3:00 PM

WASHINGTON — States and local organizations that aid victims of sexual assault and other crimes are raising the alarm about a multi-year plunge in funds, a major problem they say Congress must fix soon or programs will be forced to set up wait lists or turn victims away altogether.

Affected are rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters, child advocacy centers and more that serve millions of Americans and can't necessarily rely on scarce state or local dollars to keep the doors open if federal money runs short.

The problem has to do with a cap on withdrawals from the federal crime victims fund, put in place by Congress years ago in an earlier attempt at a solution.

Under the cap, how much money is available every year is determined by a complex three-year average of court fees, fines and penalties that have accumulated — a number that has plummeted by billions during the past six years. The fund does not receive any taxpayer dollars.

National Children's Alliance CEO Teresa Huizar said in an interview with States Newsroom that child advocacy centers, which help connect children who have survived sexual or domestic abuse to essential services, have no fat left to trim in their budgets.

"What children's advocacy centers are really looking at now are a set of extremely hard choices," Huizar said. "Which kids to serve, which kids to turn away? CACs that have never had to triage cases previously, now will have to. CACs that have never had a waitlist for mental health services will now have long, lengthy waitlists to get kids in for therapy."

"I mean, imagine being a kid who's been sexually abused and being told you're going to have to wait six months to see a counselor," Huizar added. "It's terrible."

New Hampshire Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, chairwoman of the spending panel that sets the cap every year based on the dwindling revenue, and Kansas Republican Sen. Jerry Moran, the subcommittee's ranking member, both indicated during brief interviews with States Newsroom that a fix is in the works, but declined to provide details.

"There is an effort to address that and we're in the process of doing that, but in the meantime there's not as much money there," Shaheen said.

### Fund goes up and down by billions every year

Congress established the crime victims fund in 1984 when it approved the Victims of Crime Act. Its funding comes from fines, forfeited bonds and other financial penalties in certain federal cases.

The money flowing into the fund fluctuates each year, making it difficult for the organizations that apply for and receive grant funding to plan their budgets. Congress hoped to alleviate those boom-and-bust cycles by placing the annual cap on how much money can be drawn from the crime victims fund.

But that cap has sharply decreased recently, causing frustration for organizations that rely on it and leading to repeated calls for Congress to find a long-term solution.

The cap stayed below \$1 billion annually until fiscal year 2015 when it spiked to \$2.3 billion before reaching a high of \$4.4 billion in fiscal year 2018.

The annual ceiling then dropped by more than \$1 billion, starting the downward trend, according to a report from the Congressional Research Service and data from the Department of Justice.

The cap was set at \$2 billion in fiscal year 2021 before rising to \$2.6 billion in fiscal 2022 and then dropping to \$1.9 billion in fiscal 2023.

Congress set the cap on withdrawals at \$1.2 billion for fiscal 2024 when it approved the latest round of appropriations in March, and states and localities have reacted with concern at the prospect of such a dramatic cut. In Iowa, for example, where the state receives \$5 million a year, the potential loss of funding posed a major question as legislators wrote their budget for judicial services.



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## A better fix sought

Congress approved legislation in 2021 to increase the types of revenue from federal court cases moving into the crime victims fund, but advocates say a longer-term answer is needed.

Huizar said the National Children's Alliance and prosecutors as well as organizations that combat domestic and sexual violence have been urging Congress to fix the funding stream or supplement it to provide stability and consistency.

"Now is the time for Congress to turn urgent attention to this issue if they do not want the safety net for kids and families and serious crime victims to just fall apart," Huizar said.

A bipartisan group of lawmakers — Reps. Stephanie Bice, R-Okla., Jim Costa, D-Calif., Debbie Dingell, D-Mich., Nathaniel Moran, R-Texas and Ann Wagner, R-Mo. — have introduced legislation that would move unobligated funds collected from entities that defraud the federal government under the False Claims Act to the crime victims fund. The act is a main tool the federal government uses to fight fraud.

That bill is not a long-term solution, but a "temporary infusion of resources," according to a summary released by lawmakers.

As for the Senate appropriators, Moran said he and others on the spending subcommittee "are waiting for the Judiciary Committee's examination of the issue, so that we can take the authorizers' suggestions and take them into account when we appropriate."

Josh Sorbe, a spokesperson for the Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Illinois Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin, wrote in a statement the "sustainability of the CVF is extremely important, as evidenced by Senator Durbin's work on the VOCA Fix that passed in 2021, and we continue to work with our colleagues and survivor advocates and service providers to examine further ways to strengthen the CVF."

Shaheen's office did not provide details about what changes may be in the works, following multiple requests from States Newsroom.

## Should taxpayer dollars be tapped?

National District Attorneys Association President Charles Smith said his organization supports the House bill, but noted one problem with the short-term fix is that the crime victims fund would be last in line to get the additional revenue.

"I believe that the government gets their money first, the whistleblower second and then we're in kind of third place there," Smith said.

One struggle over the fluctuating revenue and available funding, Smith said, is debate about whether taxpayer dollars should be used to offset low balances.

"We need to set a number that everybody's happy with, so to speak, and fund it through these available sources," Smith said. "But if there's a deficit, there needs to be some mechanism in place for it to come out of the general fund."

The crime victims fund is essential for witness coordinators and victims assistance coordinators in prosecutors' offices as well as other services for people who survive crimes.

"They're critical for the well-being of the victim and a lot of times they are critical for the witness even showing up and testifying," said Smith, who also is the state's attorney for Frederick County, Maryland.

The organizations that support crime victims, like child advocacy centers, domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers, are crucial to prosecutors, Smith said.

"Not only are we directly impacted by a loss of staffing and loss of resources, but a lot of the partner agencies that we rely on collaborating with are going to be hurt as well," Smith said of the reduction to the funding cap.

## 'Real alarm' in states

Karrie Delaney, director of federal affairs for the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, said the slow-down of court cases during the COVID-19 pandemic and the last administration not prosecuting as many corporate cases has impacted the fund more than usual.

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RAINN is the country's largest anti-sexual-violence organization. It operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800-656-HOPE) alongside local organizations and runs the Defense Department's Safe Helpline. It "also carries out programs to prevent sexual violence, help survivors, and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice," according to its website.

"I think what's important from RAINN's perspective is the actual impact that those fluctuations have on the survivors that we support and organizations and service providers across the country," Delaney said.

When the federal cap decreases, she said, organizations that support crime victims often turn to state and local governments to make up the gap. And a lot of the times there aren't enough funds to do that.

"What we've seen across the states is real alarm that the cuts coming down are not just impacting the ability of these organizations to offer certain services, but to really keep their doors open," Delaney said.

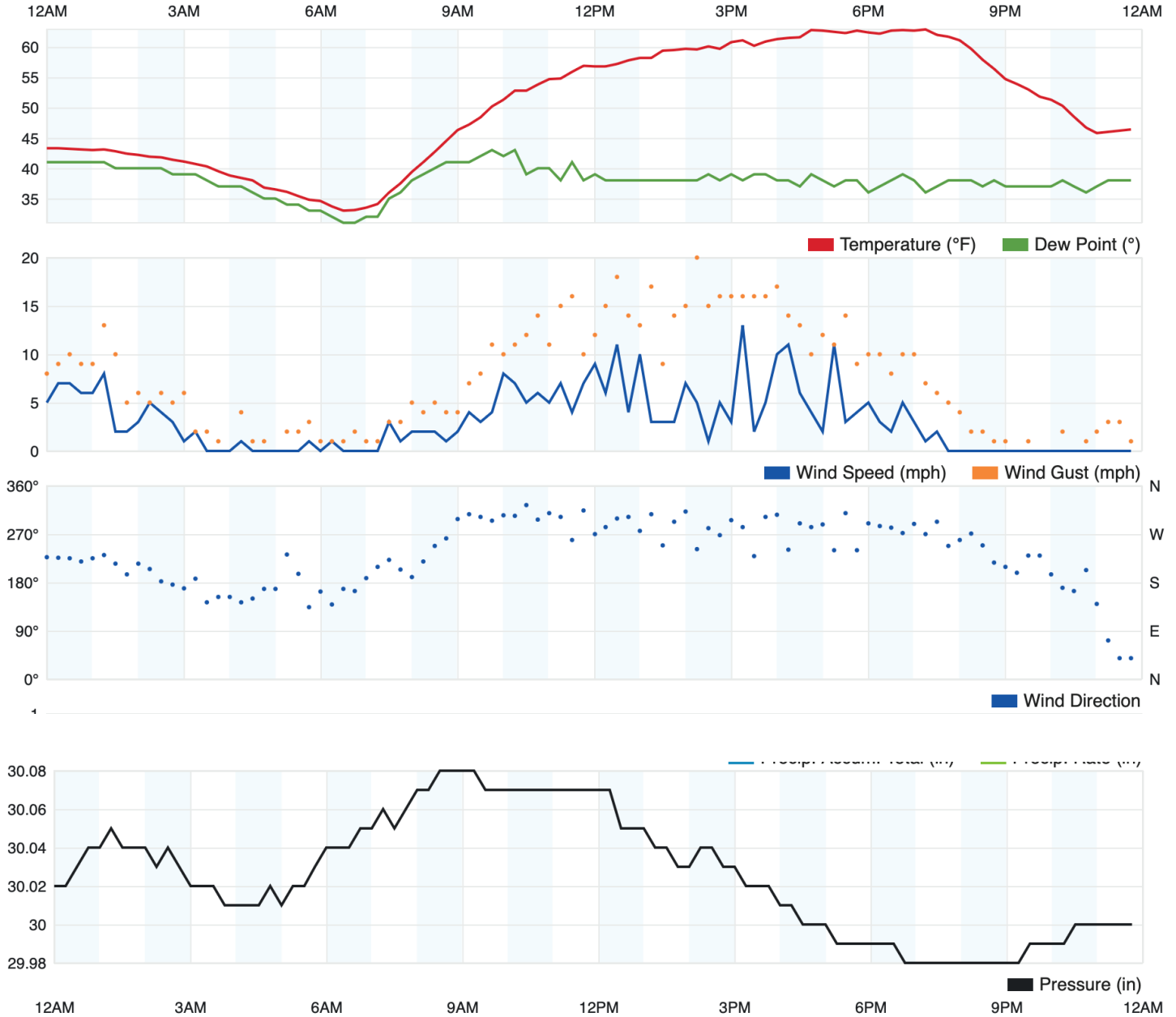
Child advocacy centers, domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers, Delaney added, are the "real boots on the ground organizations that are helping people in times of very active crisis that are at risk of seeing their programs drastically cut to the point where service is placed in jeopardy."

*Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs





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Today



**High: 70 °F**

Sunny then  
Sunny and  
Breezy

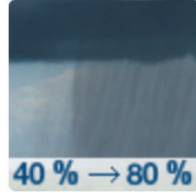
Tonight



**Low: 51 °F**

Partly Cloudy  
and Breezy

Monday



**High: 68 °F**

Chance  
Showers and  
Breezy then  
Showers and  
Windy

Monday Night



**Low: 47 °F**

Showers and  
Windy

Tuesday



**High: 62 °F**

Slight Chance  
Showers and  
Breezy

## Early Week Outlook

Today



Highs: 67-73°F  
Lows: 49-54°F

Clear to partly cloudy

Becoming windy

Monday



Highs: 64-71°F  
Lows: 42-52°F

Windy

Showers and t-storms  
likely

Tuesday



Highs: 57-67°F  
Lows: 41-46°F

Winds decreasing

Showers with some  
t-storms possible



Aberdeen, SD  
[weather.gov/aberndeen](http://weather.gov/aberndeen)

Winds will be increasing throughout the day with gusts of 35+ mph possible west of the James Valley and spread east to start the work week. Monday, expect widespread showers and thunderstorms. Strong to severe storms are possible in the afternoon and evening hours.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 63 °F at 7:12 PM

Low Temp: 33 °F at 6:29 AM

Wind: 20 mph at 2:12 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 34 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 92 in 2000

Record Low: 24 in 1968

Average High: 66

Average Low: 39

Average Precip in May.: 0.54

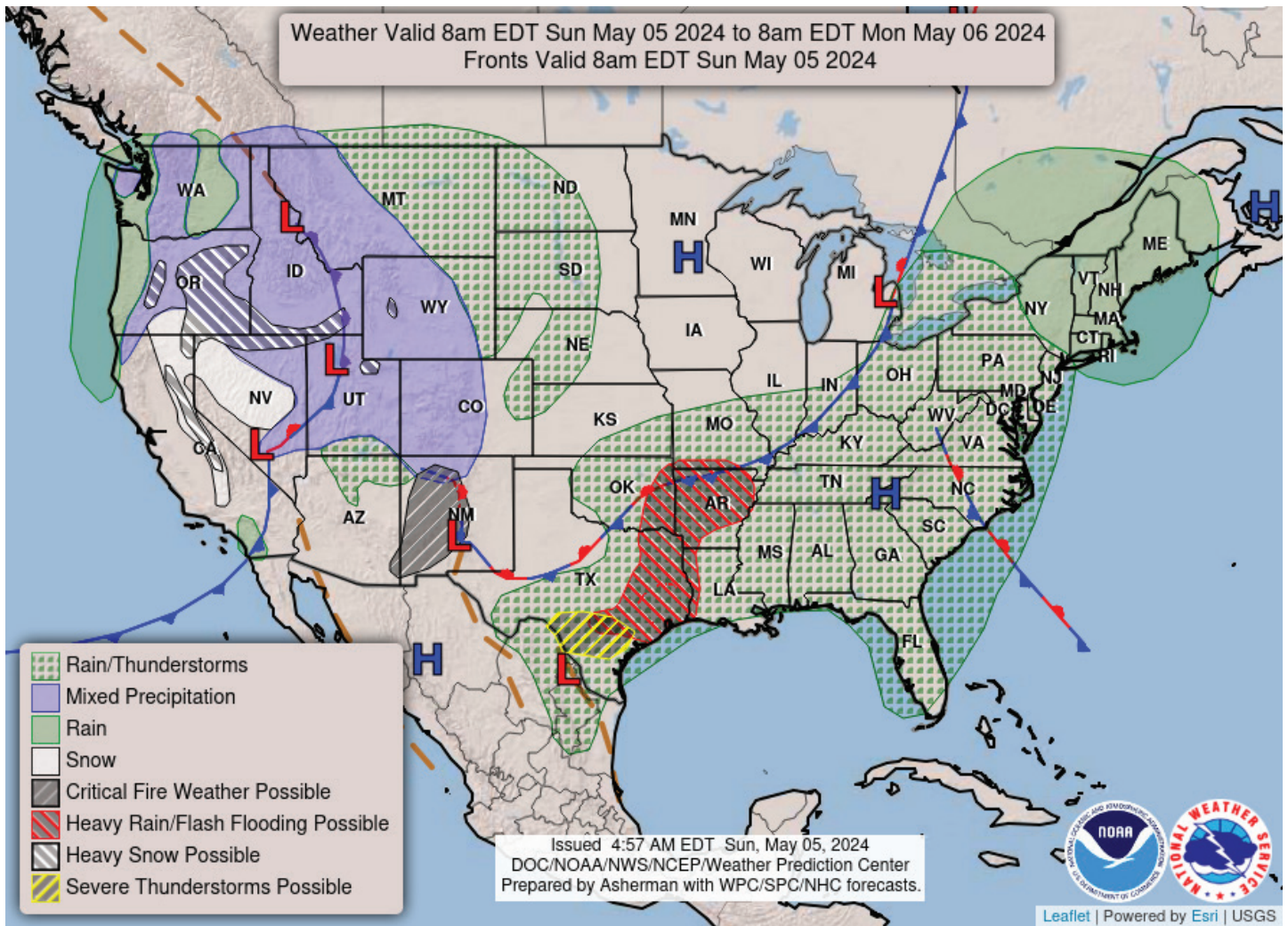
Precip to date in May: 0.18

Average Precip to date: 4.51

Precip Year to Date: 4.71

Sunset Tonight: 8:46:12 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:10:29 am





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## Today in Weather History

May 5, 1964: A two-state, F3 tornado moved northeast from 4 miles WNW of Herreid to the south of Streeter, North Dakota, a distance of about 55 miles. Blacktop was ripped for 400 yards on Highway 10, five miles north of Herreid, South Dakota. Two barns were destroyed northeast of Hague, North Dakota, with a dozen cattle killed on one farm. The F3 damage occurred at one farm about midway between Wishek and Hogue. Other barns were destroyed south of Burnstad.

May 5, 1986: A tight pressure gradient produced winds over 60 mph in west central Minnesota. City officials in Browns Valley estimated a quarter of the city suffered damage. The roof of a grandstand was blown off and landed a quarter of a block away. Seventy-five homes and six businesses sustained roof damage. In nearby Dumont, Minnesota, the wind ripped a large grain bin off its foundation and tore open the top of another.

May 5, 2007: A north to south frontal boundary, powerful low-level winds, and abundant gulf moisture resulted in training thunderstorms across parts of central and northeast South Dakota. The training thunderstorms produced torrential rains from 3 to over 10 inches resulting in widespread flash flooding across Brown, Buffalo, Hand, Spink, Clark, Day, Marshall, and Roberts Counties. The counties of Brown, Buffalo, Clark, Day, Marshall, and Spink were declared disaster areas by President Bush. The Governor also declared a state of emergency for the flooded counties with Senator John Thune and Representative Stephanie Herseth surveying the flood damage. Eight damage assessment teams from local, state, and FEMA came to Brown and other counties.

Dozens of cities were affected by the flooding with several hundred homes, businesses, and countless roads affected and damaged or destroyed by the flooding. Aberdeen received the most extensive damage, especially the north side of Aberdeen. Seventy-five percent of the homes in Aberdeen received some water in their basements. Basement water levels ranged from a few inches to very deep water all the way up to the first floor of homes. Many homes had the basement walls collapse. The overwhelming load on the drainage systems caused sewage to back up into many homes across the region. Also, many vehicles stalled on the roads with many others damaged by the flooding. Power outages also occurred across the area. Many families were displaced from their homes with many living in emergency shelters. Countless homes were condemned across the region with many considered unlivable. Thousands of acres of crops were also flooded and damaged with many seeds, and large quantities of fertilizer washed away.

Rainfall amounts from this historic event included 3.65 inches in Miller, 3.82 inches in Britton, 4 inches in Eden, 4.47 inches in Andover, 4.90 inches in Webster, 5.68 inches west of Britton, 5.7 inches in Garden City, and 5.82 inches in Conde. Locations with 6 or more inches of rain included, 6 inches in Langford, 6.33 inches in Gann Valley, 6.72 inches in Clark, 7.41 inches in Ashton, 7.49 inches in Stratford, 7.55 inches near Mellette, 7.97 inches in Aberdeen, 8.02 inches in Redfield, 8.73 inches in Columbia, and 8.74 inches in Groton. The 8.74 inches of rainfall in Groton set a new 24-hour state rainfall record. Adding in the rainfall for the previous day, Aberdeen received a total of 9.00 inches; Columbia received a total of 10.19 inches; Groton received an astonishing two-day total rainfall of 10.74 inches.

1933: An estimated F4 tornado cut a 35-mile path from near Brent into Shelby County, Alabama. The town of Helena, AL was especially hard hit, as 14 people died. The tornado roared through Helena at 2:30 am.

1987: Unseasonably hot weather prevailed in the western U.S. A dozen cities in California reported record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 93 degrees at San Francisco, 98 degrees at San Jose, 100 degrees at Sacramento, and 101 degrees at Redding were the warmest on record for so early in the season. The high of 94 degrees at Medford, Oregon was also the warmest on record for so early in the season.

1995: A supercell thunderstorms brought torrential rains and large hail up to four inches in diameter to Fort Worth, Texas. This storm also struck a local outdoor festival known as the Fort Worth Mayfest. At the time the storm was the costliest hailstorm in the history of the US, causing more than \$2 billion in damage.



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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### **COURAGE!**

Anne Lindbergh was a highly respected author as well as an aviator. Once, while visiting with a Japanese friend she remarked, "I understand that the Japanese honor the bamboo for prosperity and the pine for long life. But why is the plum honored for courage?"

"Because," replied her friend, "the plum puts forth blossoms while the snow is on the ground. That takes courage."

Courage is not the absence of fear - it is the willingness to face fear. It is not avoiding danger and hardship because we do not want what may come from them - but the determination to face danger and hardship with confidence and resolution. Courage is our willingness to accept new surroundings and situations knowing that God is with us, will protect us and provide for our safety and security if we go forward in His strength.

Think of Joshua. He was responsible for leading two million people into a strange new land and conquer it. The words strange and new are enough of a warning to frighten most of us and cause us to withdraw from a situation in fear. But that was not an option for him. Many tasks God calls us to do are challenging, frightening and appear overwhelming. But God will not put us in any situation without giving us the strength and skills to succeed. When God calls us to battle, He equips us to win.

Prayer: Give us the faith and trust, Heavenly Father, to know that You love us too much to abandon us or will neglect to prepare us for every challenge we face. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. Joshua 1:6



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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## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.03.24

6 13 15 53 56 11

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$306,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.04.24

5 11 25 37 42 5

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$2,200,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.04.24

1 4 5 6 33 1

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 47 Mins 57  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.04.24

11 12 20 34 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$85,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.04.24

1 8 27 63 66 26

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.04.24

14 20 23 53 69 4

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$214,000,000**

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)



## News from the Associated Press

### **As the US moves to reclassify marijuana as a less dangerous drug, could more states legalize it?**

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

As the U.S. government moves toward reclassifying marijuana as a less dangerous drug, there may be little immediate impact in the dozen states that have not already legalized cannabis for widespread medical or recreational use by adults.

But advocates for marijuana legalization hope a federal regulatory shift could eventually change the minds — and votes — of some state policymakers who have been reluctant to embrace weed.

“It is very common for a state legislator to tell me, ‘Well, I might be able to support this, but ... I’m not going to vote for something that’s illegal under federal law,’” said Matthew Schweich, executive director of the Marijuana Policy Project, which advocates for cannabis legalization.

Although a proposal to reclassify marijuana would not make it legal, “it is a historic and meaningful change at the federal level that I think is going to give many state lawmakers a little less hesitation to support a bill,” Schweich added.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration has proposed to shift marijuana from a “Schedule I” drug, which includes heroin and LSD, to a less tightly regulated “Schedule III” drug, which includes ketamine and some anabolic steroids. Federal rules allow for some medical uses of Schedule III drugs. But the proposed change faces a lengthy regulatory process, which may not be complete until after the presidential election.

In the meantime, the proposed federal change could add fresh arguments for supporters of ballot measures seeking to legalize marijuana. Florida voters will decide on a constitutional amendment allowing recreational cannabis this November. Public votes could also be held in several other states, including South Dakota, where supporters plan to submit signatures Tuesday for a third attempt at legalizing recreational marijuana.

Following two previous failed attempts, a Nebraska group is gathering signatures to get two measures onto this year’s ballot: one to legalize medical marijuana and another to allow private companies to grow and sell it.

In North Dakota, criminal defense attorney Mark Friese is a former police officer who is backing a marijuana legalization ballot initiative. He said the proposed federal reclassification could immensely help this year’s initiative campaign. North Dakota voters rejected legalization measures in 2018 and 2022 but approved medical marijuana in 2016.

“The bottom line is the move is going to allow intelligent, informed discussion about cannabis legislation instead of succumbing to the historical objection that marijuana is a dangerous drug like LSD or black tar heroin,” Friese said.

Others aren’t so sure the reclassification will make a difference.

Jackee Winters, chairperson of an Idaho group backing a ballot initiative to legalize medical marijuana, said it’s tough to get would-be supporters to sign their petition.

“People are literally afraid to sign anything in Idaho that has to do with marijuana,” she said. “They’re afraid the cops will be coming to their house.”

The proposed federal change may have little affect in 24 states that already legalized recreational marijuana for adults, or in an additional 14 states that allow medical marijuana. But advocates hope it could sway opinions in a dozen other states that either outlaw cannabis entirely or have limited access to products with low levels of THC, the chemical that makes people high.

Georgia has allowed patients with certain illnesses and physician approval to consume low-THC cannabis products since 2015. But until last year, there was no legal way to buy them. Eight dispensaries are now selling the products.

The Georgia Board of Pharmacy last year also issued licenses for low-THC products to 23 independent

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pharmacies, but the federal DEA in November warned pharmacies that dispensing medical marijuana violated federal law.

Dawn Randolph, executive director of the Georgia Pharmacy Association, said a federal reclassification of marijuana could open the way for pharmacists to treat marijuana products "like every other prescription medication."

In other states, such as Tennessee, elected leaders remain hesitant to back either medical or recreational marijuana. Tennessee Senate Speaker Randy McNally, a Republican, previously said he wouldn't support changing state law until the federal government reclassifies marijuana.

But after reports about the DEA's recommended reclassification, McNally still held off on supporting any push to legalize medical marijuana.

Removing marijuana as a Schedule I drug "would only start the conversation in my mind. It would not end it. There would still be many issues to resolve if the downgrade to Schedule III happens as proposed," he said Thursday.

A proposal to legalize medical marijuana died in a Kansas Senate committee without a vote this year, and an attempt to force debate in the full Senate failed by a wide margin. The strongest and most influential opposition came from law enforcement officials, who raised concerns that any legalization could invite organized crime and make it difficult to assess whether people are driving under the influence.

Kansas Bureau of Investigation Director Tony Mattivi considers the DEA effort to reschedule marijuana "misguided and politicized," KBI spokesperson Melissa Underwood said.

The head of the South Carolina state police force also has opposed efforts to legalize medical marijuana, saying it opens the door to other drug use. A legalization bill backed by Republican state Sen. Tom Davis passed the Senate this year but has stalled in a House committee.

"It's difficult to rewire a lot of people who have been conditioned to think of marijuana in a certain way," said Davis, who vowed to push a medical marijuana bill again next year if reelected.

Although not fully embracing medical marijuana, Iowa and Texas both have laws allowing limited access to some cannabis products with low levels of THC. Some Texas cities have passed ordinances allowing small amounts of marijuana. But a similar effort in Lubbock, home to Texas Tech University, was derided in a Facebook post by Republican state Rep. Dustin Burrows as part of "nationwide effort by the left to undermine public safety."

In Wyoming, a decade of pro-marijuana efforts through ballot initiatives and legislation has gotten nowhere. Gov. Mark Gordon, a Republican, has been ambivalent about legalizing medical marijuana and opposes legal recreational pot. The GOP-led Legislature didn't even debate the latest bill to decriminalize marijuana and legalize medical marijuana.

Yet one organizer, who helped unsuccessful petition efforts in 2022 and 2023, hopes federal reclassification of marijuana nudges more lawmakers to support legalization.

"Resistance will be a lot less palpable," legalization advocate Apollo Pazell said.

## Ukraine marks its third Easter at war under fire from Russian drones

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — As Ukraine marked its third Easter at war, Russia launched a barrage of drones concentrated in Ukraine's east where the situation on the front line is worsening. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Ukrainians in an Easter address to be united in prayer and called God an "ally" in the war with Russia.

Ukraine's air force said Sunday that Russia had launched 24 Shahed drones, of which 23 had been shot down by air defenses.

Six people, including a child, were wounded in a drone strike in the eastern Kharkiv region, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said.

Fires broke out when debris from drones that were shot down fell on buildings in the neighboring Dnipropetrovsk region. No casualties were reported.

Officials in Kyiv urged residents to follow Orthodox Easter services online due to safety concerns. Serhiy

Popko, head of the Kyiv city administration, warned that "even on such bright days of celebration, we can expect evil deeds from the aggressor."

Zelenskyy called on Ukrainians to unite in prayer for each other and soldiers on the front line.

In a video filmed in front of Kyiv's Saint Sophia Cathedral, wearing a traditional Vyshyvanka embroidered shirt, Zelenskyy said that God "has a chevron with the Ukrainian flag on his shoulder." With "such an ally," Zelenskyy said, "life will definitely win over death."

A majority of Ukrainians identify as Orthodox Christians, though the church is divided. Many belong to the independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine. The rival Ukrainian Orthodox Church was loyal to the patriarch in Moscow until splitting from Russia after the 2022 invasion and is viewed with suspicion by many Ukrainians.

In Moscow, worshippers including President Vladimir Putin packed Moscow's landmark Christ the Savior Cathedral late Saturday for a nighttime Easter service led by Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church and an outspoken supporter of the Kremlin.

Eastern Orthodox Christians usually celebrate Easter later than Catholic and Protestant churches, because they use a different method of calculating the date for the holy day that marks Christ's resurrection.

## **Driver dies after crashing into White House perimeter gate, Secret Service says**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A driver died after a vehicle crashed into a gate at the White House Saturday night, but the fatal collision is being investigated "only as a traffic crash" and there was no threat to the president's residence, law enforcement authorities said.

The male driver, who was not immediately identified, was found dead in the vehicle following the crash shortly before 10:30 p.m. at an outer perimeter gate of the White House complex, the U.S. Secret Service said in a statement.

The Washington Metropolitan Police Department said the vehicle crashed into a security barrier at the intersection of 15th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW.

"At this time, the incident is being investigated only as a traffic crash by MPD's Major Crash Investigations Unit," the metro police said in a statement posted on social media.

Security protocols were implemented but there was no threat to the White House, the Secret Service said.

The Secret Service will continue to investigate the matter, while turning over the fatal crash portion of the investigation to the metro police, the agency said.

## **A Holocaust survivor will mark that history differently after the horrors of Oct. 7**

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

KIBBUTZ MEFALSIM, Israel (AP) — When Hamas fighters invaded southern Israel on Oct. 7, the militant group that rules the Gaza Strip perpetrated the deadliest attack on Jews since the Holocaust.

So this year's Holocaust Remembrance Day, which begins on Sunday evening in Israel, carries a heavier weight than usual for many Jews around the world.

For Judith Tzmir, a Holocaust survivor from Germany who moved to Israel in 1964, the horrors of Oct. 7 prompted her to mark the somber holiday by making a pilgrimage she has long avoided: She will visit Auschwitz, the Nazi concentration camp in Poland.

Tzmir, whose kibbutz fended off Hamas attackers on Oct. 7, will join 55 other Holocaust survivors from around the world and about 10,000 others participating in the March of the Living. The event recreates the 2-mile (3-kilometer) march from Auschwitz to Birkenau, where approximately 1 million Jews were killed by Nazi Germany.

The event, now in its 36th year, usually draws thousands of participants, including Holocaust survivors and Jewish students, leaders and politicians. This year, Israeli hostages released from captivity in Gaza and families whose relatives are still being held captive will also join the march.



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"I don't know if the world will listen, but even for myself, it's important," said Tzamir, who had turned down past invitations to visit Auschwitz. "To remember that there's still antisemitism around, and there are still people who will kill just for religious reasons."

Holocaust Remembrance Day, marked on the anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, has traditionally been a time for Israelis to gather and listen to testimony from survivors.

It is one of the most somber days of the year — highlighted by a two-minute siren when traffic halts and people stand at attention in memory of the victims. Memorial ceremonies are held throughout the day, and names of victims are recited. While Israel's national Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem, tries to steer clear of politics, its ceremony this year includes an empty yellow chair in solidarity with the Israeli hostages still held in Gaza.

In 1948, when Tzamir was 4 1/2 years old, the people she knew as her parents dressed her in a light blue dress, with black shoes and white socks, and took her to a plaza in Berlin. She remembers clutching her doll, Yula, when they revealed that they were not her parents and that the woman standing before them was her biological mother.

Tzamir's mother had hidden her Jewish identity during World War II by serving in the German army. She gave birth to Judith in 1943 in a hospital run by nuns, and left Judith behind to save her life. Tzamir, called Donata at the time, was placed in a foster family. She had no idea she was Jewish until she met her mother.

Sixteen years later, while she was in college, Tzamir went to Mefalsim, a kibbutz in southern Israel on the border with Gaza, through a student-exchange program. After her studies, she returned to Mefalsim, fell in love with a new immigrant from Argentina who was also living on the kibbutz, and stayed, raising four children.

On Oct. 7, Tzamir was faced with the possibility of losing her home once again. Hamas militants poured over the border from Gaza and attacked towns, army bases and a music festival in southern Israel. Mefalsim was luckier than many other kibbutzim in the area, where militants burned homes and left wide swaths of destruction.

The militants killed around 1,200 people that day, mostly civilians, and kidnapped 250 others. The attack sparked the Israeli invasion in Gaza, where the death toll has soared to more than 34,500 people, according to local health officials, and driven around 80% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million from their homes. The high death toll and humanitarian crisis have prompted genocide accusations against Israel in the International Court of Justice — a charge that Israel angrily rejects.

Hamas has said its attack was aimed against Israeli occupation and its blockade of Gaza, and pro-Palestinian activists deny any antisemitic motives in their opposition to Israel's military offensive. For most Jewish Israelis, global protests calling for boycotts of Israel and questioning the country's right to exist often veer into antisemitism.

On the day of the attack, Mefalsim's emergency preparedness squad was able to hold most of the Hamas militants outside the kibbutz perimeter. Many residents stayed in safe rooms for nearly 24 hours, until the Israeli army was able to evacuate them the next day.

Although there were no fatalities at Mefalsim, its roughly 800 residents were told to leave, along with more than 120,000 Israelis who lived within a few kilometers of the borders with Gaza and Lebanon. Mefalsim, Tzamir's steady anchor after a childhood filled with upheaval and uncertainty, was no longer a safe haven.

Many Mefalsim residents have been living in a hotel north of Tel Aviv the past seven months, uncertain of next steps, though Tzamir and some others hope to return to the kibbutz in June.

Tzamir said the Oct. 7 attack brought up all kinds of memories from her childhood trauma. She could function during the day, but when she went to sleep her dreams were filled with blood and death and fires, visions that reminded her of the bombings she witnessed as a child in Germany.

Tzamir is one of approximately 2,000 Holocaust survivors in Israel who were forced to evacuate from their homes due to the war in Gaza, according to Israel's Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs. The ministry estimates that 132,000 Holocaust survivors live in Israel.

Tzamir served as a director of her kibbutz for 13 years, so she knows every resident. She said some

families may never return to Mefalsim, just a mile (1.4 kilometers) from the Gaza border. Explosions from Gaza reverberate over the buildings, and the sense of security is difficult to reclaim.

But it was never a question for her, she said.

"I'm 80 years old, I don't want to lose my home again," Tzamir said as her husband Ran, busied himself tending to a garden bursting with succulents and flowers, just before their flight to Poland. "We are coming back."

## **King Charles III's openness about cancer has helped him connect with people in year after coronation**

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — King Charles III's decision to be open about his cancer diagnosis has helped the new monarch connect with the people of Britain and strengthened the monarchy in the year since his dazzling coronation at Westminster Abbey.

Charles has used his illness to highlight the need for early diagnosis and treatment, showing leadership at a time of personal hardship. And in the process, people have begun to see him as a more flesh-and-blood character who faces the same challenges as them, not just an archetype of wealth and privilege.

"Ultimately, the great leveler is health," said Anna Whitelock, a professor of the history of the monarchy at City University, London. "And the fact is, the royal family, like so many other families, are coping with a cancer diagnosis. And I think that has ... taken the energy out of big challenges to the king."

Questions still remain. Can a 1,000-year-old inherited monarchy represent the people of modern Britain? How will the institution address concerns about its links to empire and slavery? Should the monarchy be replaced with an elected head of state?

But for now, at least, those issues have been largely set aside as the 75-year-old king undergoes treatment for an undisclosed type of cancer.

Of all the things experts expected the royal family to face in the year following Charles' coronation, the events of the last five months took Britain by surprise.

First, Charles was treated for an enlarged prostate, then he revealed his cancer diagnosis. That was followed quickly by the announcement that the Princess of Wales, Prince William's wife, Kate, also had cancer.

Both retreated from public duties to focus on their health. William followed suit so he could support his wife and the couple's three young children.

It was not just the septuagenarian monarch who was ill, but the much younger future queen. Her spouse needed to help out. Suddenly the royal family seemed much more vulnerable, more human.

With three senior royals out of action, the Windsors were stretched thin as they tried to keep up with the perpetual whirl of ceremonial appearances, awards presentations and ribbon cuttings that make up the life of a modern royal.

Into the breach stepped, of all people, Queen Camilla.

Once seen as the scourge of the House of Windsor because of her role in the breakup of Charles' marriage to the late Princess Diana, Camilla emerged as one of the monarchy's most prominent emissaries. Increasing her schedule of appearances, the queen played a crucial role in keeping the royal family in the public eye.

Wherever she went, royal fans offered get well cards and words of encouragement for Charles and Kate.

In many ways, the story of Charles' first year since the coronation is about the rise of Camilla and how effective she's been in representing the king, Whitelock said.

"The crowds reaching out to her has actually been quite remarkable," she said. "So I think this first year has very much been the reign of Charles and Camilla in a way that we would never have imagined."

Together, they helped create a year of stability for the monarchy, despite predictions from some critics that the death of Queen Elizabeth II would usher in an era of change.

That's not to say Charles is free from troubles, many in his own family.

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The king's relationship with his younger son was strained even before Prince Harry and his wife Meghan ditched royal duties and moved to California in 2020. But the publication early last year of Harry's bombshell memoir, "Spare," deepened the rift with allegations about the unintentional racism of the royal family and sweetheart deals with the tabloid press.

And then there is Charles' brother Prince Andrew, whose links to the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein continue to cause headaches for the king. Just last month, Netflix dropped a full-length movie about the disastrous 2019 interview in which Andrew tried to justify his relationship with Epstein.

But throughout the last year, Charles worked to increase openness about the workings of the monarchy, continued to speak out on environmental issues and promoted interfaith dialogue, said George Gross, a royal historian at King's College London.

Then came the king's decision to publicize his health problems to demonstrate the benefits of early intervention in a country where cancer survival rates lag behind those in many other wealthy nations.

"Out of adversity, he's managed to turn it around. It's wrong to say he's taken advantage of it, because it's a disastrous situation to be in, and anyone with a cancer diagnosis will be very worried, very concerned," Gross said. "But it has been this way that, as a head of state, he's been able to do good with a very simple message, and I think that's an extraordinary thing."

Charles underscored his message last week when he began his return to public-facing duties with a visit to a cancer-care center.

Touring the University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre in central London, the king sat with Lesley Woodbridge, a 63-year-old cancer patient, and held her hand as chemotherapy drugs dripped slowly into her arm.

"It's always a bit of a shock, isn't it, when they tell you?" he said, adding: "I've got to have my treatment this afternoon as well."

It's the kind of personal connection Britons don't usually expect from the royals, who are known more for reserve than emotion.

After the king announced his diagnosis, Cancer Research UK recorded a 33% increase in visits to its website as people sought information about the signs of cancer, said Michelle Mitchell, chief executive of the charity.

That may have saved lives. And it connected people to the king.

Mitchell said she was struck by how very personal the king's visit to the cancer center was.

Patients willingly told their cancer stories to Charles and Camilla, and the royal couple responded with intimate details of their own journey, she said.

"I observed not just empathy, but real compassion," Mitchell said. "And overall, the atmosphere of the day was one of hope — but hope, I think, framed with the importance of research bringing greater progress."

## **Australian police shoot dead a boy, 16, armed with a knife after he stabbed a man in Perth**

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — A 16-year-old boy armed with a knife was shot dead by police after he stabbed a man in the Australian west coast city of Perth, officials said Sunday.

The incident occurred in the parking lot of a hardware store in suburban Willetton on Saturday night.

The teen attacked the man and then rushed at police officers before he was shot, Western Australian Premier Roger Cook told reporters on Sunday.

"There are indications he had been radicalized online," Cook told a news conference.

"But I want to reassure the community at this stage it appears that he acted solely and alone," Cook added.

A man in his 30s was found at the scene with a stab wound to his back. He was taken to a hospital in serious but stable condition, a police statement said.

Police and Australian Security Intelligence Organization agents have been conducting a counterterrorism



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investigation in the east coast city of Sydney since another 16-year-old boy stabbed an Assyrian Orthodox bishop and priest in a church on April 15.

That boy has been charged with committing a terrorist act. Six of his alleged associates have also been charged with a range of offenses, including conspiring to engage in or planning a terrorist act. All remain in custody.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he had been briefed on the latest stabbing in Perth by Australian Federal Police Commissioner Reece Kershaw and ASIO Director-General Mike Burgess, who heads the nation's main domestic spy agency.

"I'm advised there is no ongoing threat to the community on the information available," Albanese said.

"We are a peace-loving nation and there is no place for violent extremism in Australia," he added.

Police received an emergency phone call after 10 p.m. from a teenager saying he was going to commit acts of violence, Western Australian Police Commissioner Col Blanch said.

The boy had been participating in a program for young people at risk of radicalization, Blanch added.

"I don't want to say he has been radicalized or is radicalized because I think that forms part of the investigation," he said.

Police said they were later alerted by a phone call from a member of the public that a knife attack was underway in the parking lot. Three police officers responded, one armed with a gun and two with conducted energy devices.

Police deployed both conducted energy devices but they failed to incapacitate the boy before he was killed by a single gunshot, Blanch said.

Blanch said members of the local Muslim community had raised concerns with police about the boy's behavior before he was killed on Saturday.

The Imam of Perth's largest mosque, the Nasir Mosque, condemned the stabbing.

"There is no place for violence in Islam," Imam Syed Wadood Janud said in a statement.

"We appreciate the effort of the police to keep our communities safe. I also want to commend the local Muslim community who had flagged the individual prior with the police," Wadood added.

Some Muslim leaders have criticized Australian police for declaring last month's church stabbing a terrorist act but not a rampage two days earlier in a Sydney shopping mall in which six people were killed and a dozen wounded. The 40-year-old attacker in the mall attack was shot dead by police. Police have yet to reveal the man's motive.

The church attack is only the third to be classified by Australian authorities as a terrorist act since 2018.

In December 2022, three Christian fundamentalists shot dead two police officers and a bystander in an ambush near the community of Wieambilla in Queensland state. The shooters were later killed by police.

In November 2018, a Somalia-born Muslim stabbed three pedestrians in downtown Melbourne, killing one, before police shot him dead.

## Many Florida women can't get abortions past 6 weeks.

### Where else can they go?

By MAKIYA SEMINERA and GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — When Florida enacted its six-week abortion ban last week, clinics in several other Southern and mid-Atlantic states sprang into action, knowing women would look to them for services no longer available where they live.

Health care providers in North Carolina, three states to the north, are rushing to expand availability and decrease wait times.

"We are already seeing appointments," said Katherine Farris, chief medical officer of Planned Parenthood South Atlantic. "We have appointments on the books with patients who were unable to get in, in the last days of April in Florida."

Their reaction is part of a growing trend in the United States: Since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, spurring more than 20 states to adopt laws banning or severely limiting abortions, states with

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looser restrictions have taken steps to welcome women who want or need to end their pregnancies.

Since the court overturned Roe in June 2022, some Democratic-controlled states have made it easier for out-of-state women to obtain abortions. Several have adopted laws protecting in-state health care workers from being investigated for providing abortion to women from states with bans. Such measures have included allowing providers to prescribe abortion pills, the most common abortion method, via telehealth.

Officials in California, New Mexico, Oregon and other states have used taxpayer money to increase abortion access.

Florida recorded more than 84,000 abortions in 2023, a slight increase from 2022. As of April 1, the state reported approximately 14,700 abortions this year, potentially leaving a substantial number of women to consider going out of state.

"Patients will travel when they're desperate to get an abortion," said Mara Buchbinder, a social medicine professor at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "We know that."

At one point, Florida was a go-to state for women from other Southeastern states with restrictions, including neighboring Georgia and South Carolina, which both ban abortions around six weeks of gestation, before many women even know they are pregnant.

Last year, about 7,700 abortions in Florida were for out-of-state patients, according to state data.

But the state has steadily narrowed access. In anticipation of Roe being reversed, the Legislature passed a 15-week ban in April 2022 that took effect despite a court challenge. In 2023, it passed a six-week abortion ban that would take effect only if the earlier ban held up in court. The state Supreme Court upheld the ban last month, and the new law quickly went into effect.

A referendum in November asking voters to codify abortion rights in Florida's constitution could reverse the ban. But at least until then, Florida abortion advocacy groups will still need to organize many out-of-state trips.

For women who are more than six weeks pregnant, South Florida is now the farthest from a legal provider of any highly populated area in the U.S. Subsequently, the average cost per abortion is expected to jump from \$600 or \$700 to as much as \$1,800 or more, said Daniela Martins, a board member and caseworker team leader at the Women's Emergency Network, a nonprofit organization that helps people in the region pay for abortion and other reproductive health care.

Martins said her group anticipates helping women get to Virginia and places even farther north, such as Maryland and Washington, D.C. She said it is committed to not turning away clients in need, though raising enough money to honor that commitment could be challenging.

"We've seen a lot of outpouring of support," she said. "It's nowhere near what we project we'll need."

Another group, The Brigid Alliance, which provides travel and support across the country for women seeking abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, is preparing for more needs in the coming months.

Serra Sippel, the group's interim executive director, said the alliance is adding six new logistical coordinators, including four who speak Spanish, and is partnering with a clinic in Puerto Rico, an option particularly for Spanish-speaking people.

One of the largest patient influxes is anticipated in North Carolina, where, even before Florida's ban, 32% of abortions provided at the state's Planned Parenthood clinics were for out-of-state patients, Farris said.

But while it might be the most convenient place for Florida women given its geographical proximity, North Carolina is not without its own set of hurdles. The state's 2023 law allows for abortions through 12 weeks of pregnancy, but requires two in-person visits to a provider 72 hours apart.

Those extra steps can turn a single-day procedure into a weeklong affair, said Justine Orlovsky-Schnitzler, engagement director for Carolina Abortion Fund, a nonprofit in North Carolina and South Carolina that operates a helpline to assist callers with abortion care.

Providers in North Carolina also fear the arrival of new patients will lengthen the wait time for an abortion, currently five to 20 days. Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, which serves North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia, is trying to avoid that by rolling out seven additional days of abortion services and adjusting providers' schedules at North Carolina clinics to expand availability, Farris said.

"We are all willing to do the work," she said. "Operationally, it is incredibly challenging, and I think it's

important to remember that this is a chaotic system.”

Farris, who provides abortions in North Carolina, has to turn away patients who don't qualify under the state's law because they are more than 12 weeks along. She initially refers them to Virginia, which allows abortions until 24 weeks. If there are no appointments available, women can travel to Maryland, Washington or places farther north.

Carolina Abortion Fund has six staff members and a volunteer network, but working there could often feel like having two full-time jobs even before Florida's ban, Orlovsky-Schnitzler said.

Volunteers have sometimes stayed up until midnight to help someone coordinate an emergency abortion, and there have been months in which the organization has received as many as 1,000 calls, she said. After Roe was overturned, calls rose by 400%.

“That's not an exaggeration,” she said.

The center received 650 calls in April alone, according to data it provided.

The organization often runs out of money, but Orlovsky-Schnitzler said that doesn't stop workers from answering every call to get people the help they're seeking.

Staff at A Preferred Women's Health Center in North Carolina, with clinics in Charlotte and Raleigh, are fielding about 4,000 calls weekly, most from women in Southern states, Executive Director Calla Hales said.

Since Roe was overturned, about 70% of the clinics' approximately 13,000 abortions each year have been with out-of-state patients, she said.

The center also operates two clinics in Georgia under the state's six-week ban. The clinics' operations there may give a preview of what's to come in Florida, Hales said.

“As soon as they pee on a pregnancy stick, they're running in,” she said.

## **With a vest and a voice, helpers escort kids through San Francisco's broken Tenderloin streets**

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Wearing a bright safety vest with the words “Safe Passage” on the back, Tiana Alabsi strides through San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood to its only public elementary school, navigating broken bottles and stained sleeping bags along tired streets that occasionally reek of urine.

Along the way in one of America's most notorious neighborhoods, she calls out to politely alert people huddled on sidewalks, some holding strips of tin foil topped with illicit drugs.

“Good afternoon, happy Monday!” Alabsi says to two men, one slumped forward in a wheelchair and wearing soft hospital socks and one slipper. Her voice is cheerful, a soothing contrast to the misery on display in the 50-block neighborhood that's well-known for its crime, squalor and reckless abandon. “School time. Kids will be coming soon.”

Further along, Alabsi passes a man dancing in the middle of the street with his arms in the air as a squealing firetruck races by. She stops to gently touch the shoulder of a man curled up in the fetal position on the sidewalk, his head inches from the tires of a parked car.

“Are you OK?” she asks, before suggesting he move to a spot out of the sun. “Kids will be coming soon.”

Minutes later, Alabsi arrives at the Tenderloin Community Elementary School, where she is among several adults who escort dozens of children to after-school programs. The students hitch up backpacks emblazoned with Spider Man and the sisters of “Frozen,” then form two rambunctious lines that follow Alabsi like ducklings through broken streets.

The smallest ones hold hands with trusted volunteers.

Long known for its brazen open-air drug markets, chronic addiction, mental illness and homelessness, the Tenderloin neighborhood is also home to the highest concentration of kids in San Francisco, an estimated 3,000 children largely from immigrant families.

The neighborhood is rich with social services and low-income housing but the San Francisco Police Department also has seized nearly 200 kilograms (440 pounds) of narcotics in the area since last May. Of a



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record 806 overdose fatalities last year, about 20% were in the Tenderloin.

But amid the chaos is a vibrant community stitched together by differing languages that has found ways to protect its most vulnerable and deliver hope, something many say the city has failed to do. Officials have sent in toilets, declared a mayoral emergency and vowed to crack down on drugs, but change is glacial.

A group of mothers fed up with drug dealers started the efforts in 2008 after a child temporarily went missing. The Safe Passage program is now part of the Tenderloin Community Benefit District, a nonprofit funded in part by Tenderloin property owners who also cleans sidewalks, staffs parks and hosts community events.

Alabsi started as a volunteer after the Russian native moved to the United States from Yemen with her husband and sought asylum a decade ago. They joined her husband's mother and his siblings, who had settled in the Tenderloin.

Life was not easy in their new homeland. Alabsi, 54, and her husband Jalal, both medical doctors, had to start over years into their careers. The mother of two despaired when her younger son began to count poop piles he spotted from his stroller on their walks home from daycare.

Then she learned of Safe Passage. At her husband's urging, she signed up to volunteer to help spare the children the worst sights on their walk after school.

Many people, Alabsi says, respond politely or tuck away their drugs or scoot their belongings out of the way when she reminds them that school time is over. But others ignore the request. Some even get angry.

"It's better to give nice smile and say good afternoon or good morning, to show people I am friendly," said a laughing Alabsi, who is fluent in Arabic and Russian and speaks English with an accent. "I am not monster."

The program's safety stewards guide the students along the cleanest and calmest routes, redirecting them to avoid people acting erratically or overdosing. Sometimes stewards use their bodies to block the children from seeing things they shouldn't, like a woman crouched between two cars, no longer able to control her bowels.

On a recent afternoon, two girls with ponytails sashayed across an intersection, talking about becoming TikTok stars one day, seemingly oblivious to a couple hunched over at a bus stop across the street, struggling to light up. As they walked, Alabsi blocked their view of smeared feces.

The girls, one in first grade and the other in second, were headed to the Cross Cultural Family Center, one of some half-dozen nonprofits that provide after-school programs for the K-5 kids.

Alabsi and her immediate family moved out of the Tenderloin but are still an integral part of it. Their son is in the elementary school's fourth grade and Alabsi now manages the Safe Passage program.

She loves the mix of Latin, Asian, Arab and American cultures in the Tenderloin. The big hearts of residents who are striving for a better life is what "makes it special," she said.

One recent Saturday, Alabsi worked at an Eid celebration at the neighborhood's recreation center. She helped monitor the block that was closed to traffic for the day while greeting her sisters-in-laws, who had joined the festivities with their children.

When the celebration ended at 4 p.m., she left with her soccer-loving son, Sami, to drop off her vest and radio at the office. They chatted in Russian as they passed tents, sleeping bags and blankets, an abandoned microwave and lawn chair and a human-shaped lump under a blanket, shoes peeking out.

From loud speakers, the doo-wop of The Moonglows singing "Sincerely" soared prettily over gritty streets. On a pole was a flyer with photos of a missing daughter: "Mimi please call home," read the April notice. "You are so loved."

"We can change world in better way by our presence, by our examples, by our positive attitude," Alabsi said. "Every year it's little bit better and better and better."

## The American paradox of protest: Celebrated and condemned, welcomed and muzzled

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — They're hallmarks of American history: protests, rallies, sit-ins, marches, disruptions. They date from the early days of what would become the United States to the sights and sounds echoing across the landscapes of the nation's colleges and universities during this activist spring.

And just as much a part of that American history? Those same events being met with irritation, condemnation, anger, calls to desist, and at times the use of law enforcement and aggressive tactics to make that happen.

"Dissent is essential for democracy. But dissent must never lead to disorder," President Joe Biden said Thursday, summing up the enduring national paradox.

Americans cherish the right to assemble, to speak out, to petition for the redress of grievances. It's enshrined in the first of the constitutional amendments. They laud social actions of the past and recognize the advances toward equality that previous generations made, often at risk of life and limb. But those same activities can produce anger and outright opposition when life's routines are interrupted, and wariness that those speaking out are outsiders looking to sow chaos and influence impressionable minds.

"The public at large disliked the Civil Rights protesters. The public at large disliked the Vietnam War protesters. And the public at large disliked the women's movement protesters ... and all of the protests that have that basically have occurred going forward," says Robert Shapiro, professor of political science in the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University and an expert on public opinion in American politics.

But that doesn't mean protests haven't had an impact, he says, even if it's not immediate. "Public opinion changes on the issues as a result of the effectiveness of the protests doing one very important thing, raising the visibility and salience of the issues."

Consider, for example, the Occupy Wall Street protest of 2011. "It drew attention to economic inequality in the United States," he says. "People were paying more attention to the conversation thereafter. The issue of economic inequality in the United States has become, and remains, more visible."

### PROTESTS SWELL, AND OPPOSITION TO THEM DOES TOO

Over the last few weeks, protest camps have sprung up and been forced down over the Israel-Hamas war, which has been going on since early October.

The Israeli government launched military action in the Gaza Strip after militants from Hamas killed about 1,200 people and took about 250 more as hostages in an attack on Oct. 7 in southern Israel. The Israeli offensive has killed more than 34,500 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza, as well as caused widespread damage to infrastructure.

Pro-Palestinian demonstrators at U.S. schools have been calling on their administrations to cut economic and other ties with Israel or companies they say support the war. The protest encampments started April 17 at Columbia University and have rippled out nationally.

What has also rippled is opposition to the demonstrations. Administrators, under pressure to restore order and normal functioning close to college commencements, have said they support the right to speak but not to disrupt life for other students or violate conduct rules. Police have been called to clear campus encampments all over the country, with more than 2,300 people arrested.

When it comes to protest activity, though, disruption is the point, says Celeste Faison, co-national Director of the Movement for Black Lives network, a coalition of organizations that came together following the Black Lives Matter protests in 2014 that were catalyzed by the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.

"It's always in those uncomfortable moments and those uncomfortable pushes that change is possible," she says. "What historically has created change in the United States are those who are willing to put their bodies on the line, their voice on their line, their communities on the line."

That resonates with Andrew Basta, a fourth-year undergraduate student at the University of Chicago who

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was spending time on Tuesday at the encampment at that school. Said Basta, 21: "It's not only fair, but it's actually, I think, a responsibility on us to be disruptive, to change our lives accordingly and to resist."

WHERE IS THE LINE DRAWN?

Rabbi Moshe Hauer would disagree that disruption is necessary. He points to demonstrations and rallies that have taken place over the years with permits and required approvals, and where people made their voices heard without blocking roadways or interrupting life.

The right for people to speak out is one "we absolutely embrace as part of being American, as part of being serious human beings who know that nobody has a monopoly on the truth," says Hauer, executive vice president of the Orthodox Union, a Jewish organization. "We have to enable ourselves to listen to other voices and people raising their voice, clearly expressing their opinion — whether we like the opinion, whether we dislike the opinion."

But he is among those dismayed by the current spate of campus protests. He says they have descended into antisemitism and created an atmosphere that is unsafe for Jewish students and communities. It's cause for concern, he says, when there is a movement which "chooses to define its tactics by things ... which are intimidating, which are threatening, which clearly, clearly, clearly lead to violence."

Calls for orderly protest have been frequent in American history, at times accompanied by a nostalgia for previous eras that can be misplaced.

"It's a romanticism of the past that it's actually not true. For instance, media covers Martin Luther King with a lot of love and reverence. But we know: Back then, he was presented in media as this anarchist disruptor," Faison says. "At the end of the day, we have a really bad pattern of defaming protesters when they're in the fight, and then celebrating protesters when they get the win or after they take the risk."

It's a sort of "ideological appropriation" when people who were considered radical or crazy at the time of their protests are later considered "on the right side of history," says Charles McKinney, associate professor of history at Rhodes College, who studies the Civil Rights Movement. "The state's role then is to incorporate those values while being ambivalent about the process in which those values were incorporated into the nation."

It reinforces the idea that the power of protest isn't necessarily in convincing people in the present, but in impacting the conversations in the culture. The most potent of American history's protests — from the Boston Tea Party in 1773 on down — resonated far beyond their eras and, with their enduring notoriety, succeeded.

"It works, right?" says Robert Widell, Jr., associate professor of history at the University of Rhode Island, who has studied political movements. "It's effective in, at the very least, altering the terms of debate and changing the way that people think about a particular issue or a set of issues, or just putting it in people's brains that something is happening here."

## As Putin begins another 6-year term, he is entering a new era of extraordinary power in Russia

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

Just a few months short of a quarter-century as Russia's leader, Vladimir Putin on Tuesday will put his hand on a copy of the constitution and begin another six-year term as president wielding extraordinary power.

Since becoming acting president on the last day of 1999, Putin has shaped Russia into a monolith — crushing political opposition, running independent-minded journalists out of the country and promoting an increasing devotion to prudish "traditional values" that pushes many in society into the margins.

His influence is so dominant that other officials could only stand submissively on the sidelines as he launched a war in Ukraine despite expectations the invasion would bring international opprobrium and harsh economic sanctions, as well as cost Russia dearly in the blood of its soldiers.

With that level of power, what Putin will do with his next term is a daunting question at home and abroad.

The war in Ukraine, where Russia is making incremental though consistent battlefield gains, is the top concern, and he is showing no indication of changing course.



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"The war in Ukraine is central to his current political project, and I don't see anything to suggest that that will change. And that affects everything else," Brian Taylor, a Syracuse University professor and author of "The Code of Putinism," said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"It affects who's in what positions, it affects what resources are available and it affects the economy, affects the level of repression internally," he said.

In his state of the nation address in February, Putin vowed to fulfill Moscow's goals in Ukraine, and do whatever it takes to "defend our sovereignty and security of our citizens." He claimed the Russian military has "gained a huge combat experience" and is "firmly holding the initiative and waging offensives in a number of sectors."

That will come at huge expense, which could drain money available for the extensive domestic projects and reforms in education, welfare and poverty-fighting that Putin used much of the two-hour address to detail.

Taylor suggested such projects were included in the address as much for show as for indicating real intent to put them into action.

Putin "thinks of himself in the grand historical terms of Russian lands, bringing Ukraine back to where it belongs, those sorts of ideas. And I think those trump any kind of more socioeconomic-type programs," Taylor said.

If the war were to end in less than total defeat for either side, with Russia retaining some of the territory it has already captured, European countries fear that Putin could be encouraged toward further military adventurism in the Baltics or in Poland.

"It's possible that Putin does have vast ambitions and will try to follow a costly success in Ukraine with a new attack somewhere else," Harvard international relations professor Stephen Walt wrote in the journal Foreign Policy. "But it is also entirely possible that his ambitions do not extend beyond what Russia has won — at enormous cost and that he has no need or desire to gamble for more."

But, Walt added, "Russia will be in no shape to launch new wars of aggression when the war in Ukraine is finally over."

Such a rational concern might not prevail, others say. Maksim Samorukov, of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, said that "driven by Putin's whims and delusions, Moscow is likely to commit self-defeating blunders."

In a commentary in Foreign Affairs, Samorukov suggested that Putin's age could affect his judgment.

"At 71 ... his awareness of his own mortality surely impinges on his decision-making. A growing sense of his limited time undoubtedly contributed to his fateful decision to invade Ukraine."

Overall, Putin may be heading into his new term with a weaker grip on power than he appears to have.

Russia's "vulnerabilities are hidden in plain sight. Now more than ever, the Kremlin makes decisions in a personalized and arbitrary way that lacks even basic controls," Samorukov wrote.

"The Russian political elite have grown more pliant in implementing Putin's orders and more obsequious to his paranoid worldview," he wrote. The regime "is at permanent risk of crumbling overnight, as its Soviet predecessor did three decades ago."

Putin is sure to continue his continue animosity toward the West, which he said in his state of the nation address "would like to do to Russia the same thing they did in many other regions of the world, including Ukraine: to bring discord into our home, to weaken it from within."

Putin's resistance to the West manifests not only anger at its support for Ukraine, but in what he sees as the undermining of Russia's moral fiber.

Russia last year banned the notional LGBTQ+ "movement" by declaring it to be extremist in what officials said was a fight for traditional values like those espoused by the Russian Orthodox Church in the face of Western influence. Courts also banned gender transitioning.

"I would expect the role of the Russian Orthodox Church to continue to be quite visible," Taylor said. He also noted the burst of social media outrage that followed a party hosted by TV presenter Anastasia Ivleva where guests were invited to show up "almost naked."

"Other actors in the system understand that that stuff resonates with Putin. ... There were people in-

terested in exploiting things like that," he said.

Although the opposition and independent media have almost vanished under Putin's repressive measures, there's still potential for further moves to control Russia's information space, including moving forward with its efforts to establish a "sovereign internet."

The inauguration comes two days before Victory Day, Russia's most important secular holiday, commemorating the Soviet Red Army's capture of Berlin in World War II and the immense hardships of the war, in which the USSR lost some 20 million people.

The defeat of Nazi Germany is integral to modern Russia's identity and to Putin's justification of the war in Ukraine as a comparable struggle.

## **As US spotlights those missing or dead in Native communities, prosecutors work to solve their cases**

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — It was a frigid winter morning when authorities found a Native American man dead on a remote gravel road in western New Mexico. He was lying on his side, with only one sock on, his clothes gone and his shoes tossed in the snow.

There were trails of blood on both sides of his body and it appeared he had been struck in the head.

Investigators retraced the man's steps, gathering security camera footage that showed him walking near a convenience store miles away in Gallup, an economic hub in an otherwise rural area bordered on one side by the Navajo Nation and Zuni Pueblo on the other.

Court records said the footage and cell phone records showed the victim — a Navajo man identified only as John Doe — was "on a collision course" with the man who would ultimately be accused of killing him.

A grand jury has indicted a man from Zuni Pueblo on a charge of second-degree murder in the Jan. 18 death, and prosecutors say more charges are likely as he is the prime suspect in a series of crimes targeting Native American men in Gallup, Zuni and Albuquerque. Investigators found several wallets, cell phones and clothing belonging to other men when searching his vehicle and two residences.

As people plan to gather around the nation on Sunday to spotlight the troubling number of disappearances and killings in Indian Country, authorities say the New Mexico case represents the kind of work the U.S. Department of Justice had aspired to when establishing its Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons outreach program last summer.

Special teams of assistant U.S. attorneys and coordinators have been tasked with focusing on MMIP cases. Their goal: Improve communication and coordination across federal, tribal, state and local jurisdictions in hopes of bridging the gaps that have made solving violent crimes in Indian Country a generational challenge.

Some of the new federal prosecutors were participating in MMIP Awareness Day events. From the Arizona state capitol to a cultural center in Albuquerque and the Qualla Boundary in North Carolina, marches, symposiums, art exhibitions and candlelight vigils were planned on May 5, which is the birthday of Hanna Harris, who was only 21 when she was killed on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation in Montana in 2013.

Alex Uballez, the U.S. attorney for the District of New Mexico, told The Associated Press on Friday that the outreach program already is paying dividends.

"Providing those bridges between those agencies is critical to seeing the patterns that affect all of our communities," Uballez said. "None of our borders that we have drawn prevents the spillover of impacts on communities — across tribal communities, across states, across the nation, across international borders."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Eliot Neal oversees MMIP cases for a region spanning New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah and Nevada.

Having law enforcement agencies and attorneys talking to each other can help head off other crimes that are often precursors to deadly violence. The other pieces of the puzzle are building relationships with

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Native American communities and making the justice system more accessible to the public, Neal said.

Part of Neal's work includes reviewing old cases: time-consuming work that can involve tracking down witnesses and resubmitting evidence for testing.

"We're trying to flip that script a little bit and give those cases the time and attention they deserve," he said, adding that communicating with family members about the process is a critical component for the MMIP attorneys and coordinators.

The DOJ over the past year also has awarded \$268 million in grants to tribal justice systems for handling child abuse cases, combating domestic and sexual violence and bolstering victim services.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Bree Black Horse was dressed in red as she was sworn in Thursday during a ceremony in Yakima, Washington. The color is synonymous with raising awareness about the disproportionate number of Indigenous people who have been victims of violence.

She prosecutes MMIP cases in a five-state region across California and the Pacific Northwest to Montana. Her caseload is in the double digits, and she's working with advocacy groups to identify more unresolved cases and open lines of communication with law enforcement.

An enrolled member of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma and a lawyer for more than a decade, Black Horse said having 10 assistant U.S. attorneys and coordinators focusing solely on MMIP cases is unprecedented.

"This is an issue that has touched not only my community but my friends and my family," she said. "I see this as a way to help make sure that our future generations, our young people don't experience these same kinds of disparities and this same kind of trauma."

In New Mexico, Ubaldez acknowledged the federal government moves slowly and credited tribal communities with raising their voices, consistently showing up to protest and putting pressure on politicians to improve public safety in tribal communities.

Still, he and Neal said it will take a paradigm shift to undo the public perception that nothing is being done.

The man charged in the New Mexico case, Labar Tsethlikai, appeared in court Wednesday and pleaded not guilty while standing shackled next to his public defender. A victim advocate from Ubaldez's office was there, too, sitting with victims' family members.

Tsethlikai's attorney argued that evidence had yet to be presented tying her client to the alleged crimes spelled out in court documents. Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew McGinley argued that no conditions of release would keep the community safe, pointing to cell phone data and DNA evidence allegedly showing Tsethlikai had preyed on people who were homeless or in need of alcohol so he could satisfy his sexual desires.

Tsethlikai will remain in custody pending trial as authorities continue to investigate. Court documents list at least 10 other victims along with five newly identified potential victims. McGinley said prosecutors wanted to focus on a few of the cases "to get him off the street" and prevent more violence.

## **Panamanians vote in election dominated by former president who was banned from running**

By JUAN ZAMORANO Associated Press

PANAMA CITY (AP) — Panamanians head to the polls Sunday to vote in an election that has been consumed by unfolding drama surrounding the country's ex-president, despite not even being on the ballot.

Voters in the normally sleepy Central American nation will weigh promises of economic prosperity and migratory crackdowns with a corruption scandal.

"Panama's election will be one of the most complex in its modern history. The vote is marked by increased political fragmentation and social discontent under outgoing President Laurentino Cortizo," said Arantza Alonso, senior analyst for the Americas at the risk consulting firm Verisk Maplecroft.

The presidential race remained in uncertain waters until Friday morning, when Panama's Supreme Court ruled that leading presidential contender José Raúl Mulino was permitted to run. It said he was eligible despite allegations that his candidacy wasn't legitimate because he wasn't elected in a primary.

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Mulino joined the race late, replacing former President Ricardo Martinelli as the candidate for the Achieving Goals party. The fiery Martinelli was barred from running in March after he was sentenced to more than 10 years in prison for money laundering.

Martinelli has dominated much of the race, campaigning for his former running mate from inside the walls of the Nicaraguan Embassy, where he took refuge in February after receiving political asylum.

While lacking Martinelli's spunk, Mulino has coasted on his connection to the ex-president. He was rarely seen without his blue "Martinelli Mulino 2024" cap and promised to help Martinelli if elected.

"Everybody said if (Martinelli) runs, he'll win," said Ragnhild Melzi, vice president of public programs for the New York-based Council of the Americas. "Mulino is his successor and I think he benefits from what Martinelli had, from the positives that a very large part of Panamanians saw in him. The dynamism there was."

Trailing Mulino are former President Martín Torrijos and two candidates from previous elections, Ricardo Lombana and Rómulo Roux.

Mulino also promised to usher in a humming economy seen under Martinelli, and stop migration through the Darien Gap, the perilous jungle region overlapping Colombia and Panama that was traversed by a half million migrants last year.

His message resonated with many voters tired of the political establishment in Panama, which was roiled for weeks last year by mass anti-government protests.

The protests targeted a government contract with a copper mine, which critics said endangered the environment and water at a time when drought has gotten so bad that it has effectively handicapped trade transit through the Panama Canal.

## Hundreds rescued from Texas floods as forecast calls for more rain and rising water

By JUAN A. LOZANO and LEKAN OYEKANMI Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — High waters flooded neighborhoods around Houston on Saturday following heavy rains that resulted in crews rescuing more than 400 people from homes, rooftops and roads engulfed in murky water. Others prepared to evacuate their properties.

A flood watch remained in effect through Sunday afternoon as forecasters predicted additional rainfall Saturday night and the likelihood of major flooding in Harris County, the nation's third-largest county which includes Houston, and nearby areas.

"A lull in heavy rain is expected through (Saturday) evening," the National Weather Service reported. "The next round of heavy rainfall is expected late (Saturday) into Sunday."

Up to 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) of additional rain was expected, with up to 5 inches (12.7 centimeters) possible in isolated areas.

Houston authorities have not reported any deaths or injuries. Judge Lina Hidalgo, Harris County's top elected official, said Saturday that 178 people and 122 pets had been rescued so far in the county.

A wide region has been swamped from Houston to rural East Texas, where game wardens rode airboats through waist-high waters rescuing people and pets who did not evacuate in time. One crew brought a family and three dogs aboard as rising waters surrounded their cars and home.

"It's going to keep rising this way," said Miguel Flores Jr., of the northeast Houston neighborhood of Kingwood. "We don't know how much more. We're just preparing for the worst."

### RAIN FORCES EVACUATIONS, TRAPS RESIDENTS

Friday's fierce storms forced numerous high-water rescues, including some from the rooftops of flooded homes. Officials redoubled urgent instructions for residents in low-lying areas to evacuate, warning the worst was still to come.

Most weekends Flores' father, Miguel Flores Sr., is mowing his huge backyard on a 2.5-acre (1-hectare) lot behind his home in Kingwood. But on Saturday, he and his family loaded several vehicles with clothes, small appliances and other items.



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Water from the San Jacinto River already had swallowed his backyard and was continuing to rise, from about 1 foot (30 centimeters) high in the yard Friday to about 4 feet (1.2 meters) the following day.

"It's sad, but what can I do," Flores said, noting that he has flood insurance.

For weeks, drenching rains in Texas and parts of Louisiana have filled reservoirs and saturated the ground. Floodwaters partially submerged cars and roads this week across parts of southeastern Texas, north of Houston, reaching the roofs of some homes.

More than 21 inches (53 centimeters) fell over a five-day period through Friday in Liberty County near the city of Splendora, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) northeast of Houston, according to the National Weather Service.

Scores of rescues took place in neighboring Montgomery County. In Polk County, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) northeast of Houston, officials said there had been more than 100 water rescues in the previous few days.

## HOUSTON PRONE TO FLOODING

Houston is one of the most flood-prone metro areas in the country. The city of more than 2 million people has long experience dealing with devastating weather.

Hurricane Harvey in 2017 dumped historic rainfall that flooded thousands of homes and resulted in more than 60,000 rescues by government rescue personnel across Harris County.

Of particular concern was an area along the San Jacinto River, which was expected to continue rising as more rain falls and officials release water from a full reservoir. Hidalgo issued a mandatory evacuation order on Thursday for people living along portions of the river.

The weather service reported the river was at nearly 74 feet (22.6 meters) late Saturday morning after reaching nearly 78 feet (23.7 meters). The rapidly changing forecast said the river was expected to fall to near flood stage of 58 feet (17.6 meters) by Thursday.

Most of Houston's city limits were not heavily impacted by the weather. Officials said the area received about four months' worth of rain in about a week's time.

The greater Houston area covers about 10,000 square miles (25,900 square kilometers), a footprint slightly bigger than New Jersey. It is crisscrossed by about 1,700 miles (2,700 kilometers) of channels, creeks and bayous draining into the Gulf of Mexico, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) southeast of downtown.

The system of bayous and reservoirs was built to drain heavy rains, but the engineering initially designed nearly 100 years ago has struggled to keep up with the city's growth and bigger storms.

Husband and wife Aron Brown, 45, and Jamie Brown, 41, were two of the many residents who drove or walked to watch the rising waters near a flooded intersection close to the San Jacinto River. Nearby restaurants and a gas station were beginning to flood.

Water could be seen flowing into parts of the couple's subdivision, but Aron Brown said he wasn't worried because their home is at a higher elevation than others in the neighborhood.

Brown, who drove from his home in a golf cart, said the flooding wasn't as bad as Hurricane Harvey in 2017. He pointed to nearby power lines and said flooding during Harvey reached the top of the lines.

## **They study next to one of Africa's largest trash dumps.**

### **They're planting bamboo to try to cope**

By ZELIPHA KIROBI Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Armed with gardening hoes while others cradled bamboo seedlings, students gathered outside their school in Kenya's capital. They hoped the fully grown bamboo would help to filter filthy air from one of Africa's largest trash dumps next door.

More than 100 bamboo plantings dot the ground around Dandora secondary school, which shares a name with the dumpsite that was declared full 23 years ago. Hundreds of trucks still drive in daily to dump more trash.

Allan Sila, 17, said sitting in his classroom is like studying in a smelly latrine.

Acrid smoke billowing from the burning of trash fills the air every morning, hindering visibility and leaving

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some students with respiratory issues.

"Asthma is a disease that is commonly known," Sila said.

The school's principal, Eutyclus Maina, recalled being greeted by the smell and smoke when he was posted to the school last year. He knew he had to do something.

"My motivation for initiating the bamboo project in the school was to mitigate the effects of the dumpsite. It really pollutes the air that we breathe," he said.

He said he researched online and came across the use of bamboo. He believes it will help reduce the cases of respiratory infections in the community.

The fast-growing bamboo has been promoted by the United Nations and others for its high uptake of carbon dioxide.

Aderiana Mbandi is an air quality research and policy expert at the United Nations Environment Program, based in Nairobi. She said the impact of air pollution is felt in all parts of the body including the brain, and the best way to reduce its effects is minimizing exposure.

The seedlings the students began planting last August are already nine feet (three meters) tall. The giant bamboo variety is expected to reach 40 feet when mature, depending on soil conditions.

Students hope the bamboo will help transform the school compound into a green haven in the litter-strewn Dandora neighborhood.

The publicly funded school relies on donations to afford the seedlings that retail at 400 Kenyan shillings (\$3) each.

But the school management is determined to keep going until bamboo lines the 900-meter wall that separates the school and the dumpsite.

The Dandora dump occupies about 50 hectares (123 acres) of land and receives more than 2,000 tons of waste daily from around Nairobi, home to 4 million people.

Its stench can be smelled kilometers (miles) away.

UNEP, in partnership with the Stockholm Environment Institute, deployed sensors to the Dandora neighborhood from October to April to monitor pollution levels from the dumpsite.

Out of the 166 days monitored, only 12 had a daily average of excellent air quality according to World Health Organization guidelines.

Nairobi's air is also polluted by emissions from secondhand cars that make up much of the city's transport. Other pollutants include smoke from industries that are often located near residential areas.

The Dandora school is also planting trees including jacaranda and grevillea.

Student Josiah Nyamwata called them easy to obtain and easy to plant. "The other advantage is that the trees will be helpful in order to boost our air circulation around our school," he said.

The air isn't the school's `only challenge. Vultures from the dumpsite are a nuisance at mealtimes. Students guard their plates from being snatched.

## Georgian protesters against 'Russia-style' media law mark Orthodox Easter with candlelight vigil

TBILISI, Georgia (AP) — Several thousand Georgians marked Orthodox Easter with a candlelight vigil outside Parliament on Saturday evening as daily protests continue against a proposed law that critics see as a threat to media freedom and the country's aspirations to join the European Union.

The proposed bill would require media, non-governmental organizations and other nonprofits to register as "pursuing the interests of a foreign power" if they receive more than 20% of their funding from abroad.

Protesters and the Georgian opposition denounce it as "the Russian law," saying Moscow uses similar legislation to stigmatize independent journalists and those critical of the Kremlin.

Demonstrators crowded along a broad avenue in Tbilisi late Saturday, clutching Georgian and EU flags, as a small choir sang Easter songs and activists bustled about distributing food, including hand-painted eggs and traditional Easter cakes.

Unlike at mass rallies earlier in the week, which met with a heavy police response, the atmosphere was

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peaceful. Unarmed police officers stationed sparsely at the vigil's sidelines received festive foods along with the protesters.

Most Western churches observed Easter on March 31 this year, but Orthodox Christians in Georgia, Russia and elsewhere follow a different calendar.

"It is the most extraordinary Easter I have ever witnessed. The feeling of solidarity is overwhelming, but we should not forget about the main issue," activist Lika Chachua told The Associated Press, referring to the proposed legislation.

The legislature approved a second reading of the bill Wednesday. The third and final reading is expected later this month.

The proposal is nearly identical to a measure that the governing Georgian Dream party was pressured to withdraw last year after large street protests.

Georgian Dream argues the bill is necessary to stem what it deems as harmful foreign influence over the country's political scene and to prevent unidentified foreign actors from trying to destabilize the country's political scene.

But EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell has described the parliament's move as "a very concerning development" and warned that "final adoption of this legislation would negatively impact Georgia's progress on its EU path."

Russia-Georgia relations have been strained and turbulent since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the two fought a brief war in 2008 that ended with Georgia losing control over two Russia-friendly separatist regions. In the aftermath, Tbilisi severed diplomatic ties with Moscow, and the issue of the regions' status remains a key irritant, even as relations have somewhat improved.

The opposition United National Movement accuses Georgian Dream, which was founded by Bidzina Ivanishvili, a billionaire who made his fortune in Russia, of serving Moscow's interests. The governing party vehemently denies that.

## **Mystik Dan wins 150th Kentucky Derby by a nose in the closest 3-horse photo finish since 1947**

By BETH HARRIS AP Racing Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — The 150th Kentucky Derby produced one of the most dramatic finishes in its storied history — three noses at the wire.

Mystik Dan desperately fought to hang on with two challengers coming to him in the closing strides. He did, too, after a delay of several minutes while the closest three-horse photo finish since 1947 was sorted out.

That year, Jet Pilot won by a head over Phalanx, who was another head in front of Faultless.

This one was much tighter.

Mystik Dan, an 18-1 shot, edged Sierra Leone by a nose, with Forever Young another nose back in third on Saturday. Sierra Leone was the most expensive horse in the race at \$2.3 million.

Long shots Track Phantom and Just Steel led the field through the early going, with 3-1 favorite Fierceness racing three-wide just off the leaders.

At the top of the stretch, everything changed.

Track Phantom drifted off the rail, opening a hole that Hernandez squeezed Mystik Dan through, and the bay colt suddenly found another gear. He quickly opened up a daylight advantage on the field.

"When he shot through that spot, he was able to cut the corner and I asked him to go for it," Hernandez said. "He shot off and I'm like, 'Oh man, I've got a big chance to win the Kentucky Derby.'"

To Mystik Dan's outside, Sierra Leone and Forever Young took up the chase in the middle of the track.

As Mystik Dan sped along the rail, Sierra Leone lugged in and bumped Forever Young three times in the stretch, but jockey Ryusei Sakai didn't claim foul.

Mystik Dan got so close to the rail that Hernandez's boot struck it.

"But I think we can buy another pair of boots," he said.

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The winner's share of the record \$5 million purse was \$3.1 million, with the jockey and trainer typically earning 10% each.

"Just a brilliant, brilliant, brilliant jockey and ride," McPeek said. "Brian is one of the most underrated jockeys, but not anymore, right?"

Sierra Leone, the second choice at 9-2 odds, and Forever Young from Japan came up just short at the wire in front of 156,710 at Churchill Downs, the largest crowd since 2018.

"You get beat a nose in the Kentucky Derby, it's a tough one," said Chad Brown, trainer of Sierra Leone. "But I'm so proud of the horse."

It was just the 10th Kentucky Derby decided by a nose — the closest margin in horse racing — and the first since Grindstone edged Cavonnier to wear the garland of red roses in 1996.

The crowd waited several minutes in the heat and humidity as the result was reviewed by the stewards and declared official.

"The longest few minutes of my life," Hernandez said, after he and Mystik Dan walked in circles while the stunning result was settled. "To see your number flash up to win the Derby, I don't think it will sink in for a while."

Fierceness finished 15th in the field of 20 3-year-olds. Owner Mike Repole is 0 for 8 in the derby. He had the favorite in 2011 with Uncle Mo, who was scratched the day before the race with an illness. Last year, Forte was scratched the morning of the race as the favorite with a bruised foot.

Mystik Dan ran 1 1/4 miles over a fast track in 2:03.34 and paid \$39.22, \$16.32 and \$10.

Hernandez and trainer Kenny McPeek had teamed for a wire-to-wire win in the Kentucky Oaks for fillies on Friday with Thorpedo Anna. McPeek is the first trainer to sweep both races since Ben Jones in 1952.

McPeek's only other victory in a Triple Crown race was also a shocker: 70-1 Sarava won the 2002 Belmont Stakes — the biggest upset in that race's history. The colt spoiled the Triple Crown bid of War Emblem.

The winning owners are cousins Lance and Brent Gasaway and Daniel Hamby III, all from Arkansas. They bred Mystik Dan.

"We've done it with what I call working-class horse," McPeek said, explaining the colt's sire and dam weren't big names.

Sharilyn Gasaway, Brent's wife, said, "It is surreal for sure. We feel like we're just ordinary people and we've got an amazing horse."

Sierra Leone returned \$6.54 and \$4.64. Forever Young was another nose back in third and paid \$5.58 to show.

Catching Freedom was fourth, followed by T O Password of Japan, Resilience, Stronghold, Honor Marie and Endlessly. Dornoch was 10th and then came Track Phantom, West Saratoga, Domestic Product, Epic Ride, Fierceness, Society Man, Just Steel, Grand Mo the First, Catalytic and Just a Touch.

## Hundreds rescued from flooding in Texas as waters continue rising in Houston

By JUAN A. LOZANO and LEKAN OYEKANMI Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — High waters flooded neighborhoods around Houston on Saturday following heavy rains that have already resulted in crews rescuing more than 400 people from homes, rooftops and roads engulfed in murky water. Others prepared to evacuate their property.

A wide region was swamped from Houston to rural East Texas, where game wardens rode airboats through waist-high waters rescuing both people and pets who did not evacuate in time. One crew brought a family and three dogs aboard as rising waters surrounded their cars and home.

A flood watch was in effect through Sunday afternoon, as forecasters predicted additional rainfall Saturday night and the likelihood of major flooding.

"It's going to keep rising this way," said Miguel Flores Jr., of the northeast Houston neighborhood of Kingwood. "We don't know how much more. We're just preparing for the worst."



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Husband and wife Aron Brown, 45, and Jamie Brown, 41, were two of the many residents who drove or walked to watch the rising waters near a flooded intersection close to the San Jacinto River. Nearby restaurants and a gas station were beginning to flood.

Water could be seen flowing into parts of the couple's subdivision, but Aron Brown said he wasn't worried because their home is at a higher elevation than others in the neighborhood.

Brown, who had driven from his home in a golf cart, said the flooding wasn't as bad as Hurricane Harvey in 2017. He pointed to nearby power lines and said that flooding during Harvey had reached the top of the lines.

## RESIDENTS IN LOW-LYING AREAS ASKED TO EVACUATE

Friday's fierce storms forced numerous high-water rescues, including some from the rooftops of flooded homes. Officials redoubled urgent instructions for residents in low-lying areas to evacuate, warning the worst was still to come.

"A lull in heavy rain is expected through (Saturday) evening," according to the National Weather Service. "The next round of heavy rainfall is expected late (Saturday) into Sunday."

Up to 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) of additional rain was expected, with up to 5 inches (12.7 centimeters) possible in isolated areas.

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo said more rain was expected Sunday, and if it's a lot, it could be problematic. Hidalgo is the top elected official in the nation's third-largest county.

## ONGOING RAIN HAS LEFT PARTS OF TEXAS DRENCHED, RESIDENTS TRAPPED

Most weekends Flores' father, Miguel Flores Sr., is mowing his huge backyard on a 2.5-acre (1-hectare) lot behind his home in Kingwood. But on Saturday, he and his family were loading several vehicles with clothes, small appliances and other items.

Water from the San Jacinto River had already swallowed his backyard and was continuing to rise — what was about 1 foot (30 centimeters) high in the yard Friday measured about 4 feet (1.2 meters) the following day.

"It's sad, but what can I do," Flores said. He added that he has flood insurance.

For weeks, drenching rains in Texas and parts of Louisiana have filled reservoirs and saturated the ground. Floodwaters partially submerged cars and roads this week across parts of southeastern Texas, north of Houston, reaching the roofs of some homes.

More than 21 inches (53 centimeters) fell over a five-day period through Friday in Liberty County near the city of Splendora, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) northeast of Houston, according to the National Weather Service.

Hidalgo said Saturday that 178 people and 122 pets have been rescued so far in the county. Scores of rescues took place in neighboring Montgomery County. In Polk County, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) northeast of Houston, officials said they have done over 100 water rescues in the past few days.

## HOUSTON IS ONE OF THE MOST FLOOD-PRONE METRO AREAS IN THE US

Authorities in Houston have not reported any deaths or injuries. The city of more than 2 million people is one of the most flood-prone metro areas in the country and has long experience dealing with devastating weather.

Hurricane Harvey in 2017 dumped historic rainfall that flooded thousands of homes and resulted in more than 60,000 rescues by government rescue personnel across Harris County.

Of particular concern was an area along the San Jacinto River, which was expected to continue rising as more rain falls and officials release water from a full reservoir. Hidalgo issued a mandatory evacuation order on Thursday for people living along portions of the river.

The weather service reported that the river was at nearly 74 feet (22.6 meters) late Saturday morning after reaching nearly 78 feet (23.7 meters). The rapidly changing forecast said the river was expected to fall to near flood stage of 58 feet (17.6 meters) by Thursday.

Most of Houston's city limits were not heavily impacted by the weather. Officials said the area received about four months' worth of rain in about a week's time.

The greater Houston area covers about 10,000 square miles (25,900 square kilometers) — a footprint slightly bigger than New Jersey. It is crisscrossed by about 1,700 miles (2,700 kilometers) of channels, creeks and bayous that drain into the Gulf of Mexico, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) southeast of downtown.

The system of bayous and reservoirs was built to drain heavy rains, but the engineering initially designed nearly 100 years ago has struggled to keep up with the city's growth and bigger storms.

## 25 arrested at University of Virginia after police clash with pro-Palestinian protesters

By PHILIP MARCELO and DENISE LAVOIE Associated Press

Twenty-five people were arrested Saturday for trespassing at the University of Virginia after police clashed with pro-Palestinian protesters who refused to remove tents from campus, and demonstrators at the University of Michigan chanted anti-war messages and waved flags during commencement ceremonies.

In Virginia, student demonstrators began their protest on a lawn outside the school chapel Tuesday. On Saturday, video from WVAW-TV showed police wearing heavy gear and holding shields lined up on the campus in Charlottesville. Protesters chanted "Free Palestine," and university police said on the social platform X that an "unlawful assembly" had been declared in the area.

As police moved in, students were pushed to the ground, pulled by their arms and sprayed with a chemical irritant, Laura Goldblatt, an assistant professor of English and global studies who has been helping student demonstrators, told The Washington Post.

"Our concern since this began has been the safety of our students. Students are not safe right now," Goldblatt said.

The university administration said in a statement that the demonstrators were told the tents and canopies they erected were prohibited under school policy and were asked to remove them. Virginia State Police were asked to help with enforcement, the university said.

It was the latest clash in several tense and sometimes violent weeks at colleges and universities around the country that have seen dozens of protests and hundreds of arrests at demonstrations over the ongoing Israel-Hamas war.

Tent encampments of protesters calling on universities to stop doing business with Israel or companies they say support the war in Gaza have spread across campuses nationwide in a student movement unlike any other this century. Some schools have reached agreements with protesters to end the demonstrations and reduce the possibility of disrupting final exams and commencements.

The Associated Press has recorded at least 61 incidents since April 18 in which arrests were made at protests, with more than 2,400 people being arrested on 47 campuses. The figures are based on AP reporting and statements from universities and law enforcement agencies.

Many encampments have been dismantled.

Michigan was among the schools bracing for protests during commencement this weekend, including Indiana University, Ohio State University and Northeastern University in Boston. Many more are slated in the coming weeks.

In Ann Arbor, the protest happened at the beginning of the event at Michigan Stadium. About 75 people, many wearing traditional Arabic kaffiyehs along with their graduation caps, marched up the main aisle toward the graduation stage.

They chanted "Regents, regents, you can't hide! You are funding genocide!" while holding signs, including one that read: "No universities left in Gaza."

Overhead, planes flew banners with competing messages. "Divest from Israel now! Free Palestine!" and "We stand with Israel. Jewish lives matter."

Officials said no one was arrested, and the protest didn't seriously interrupt the nearly two-hour event, which was attended by tens of thousands of people, some of them waving Israeli flags.

State police prevented the demonstrators from reaching the stage and university spokesperson Colleen Mastony said public safety personnel escorted the protesters to the rear of the stadium, where they

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remained through the conclusion of the event.

"Peaceful protests like this have taken place at U-M commencement ceremonies for decades," she added.

The university has allowed protesters to set up an encampment on campus, but police assisted in breaking up a large gathering at a graduation-related event Friday night, and one person was arrested.

At Indiana, protesters were urging supporters to wear their kaffiyehs and walk out during remarks by President Pamela Whitten on Saturday evening. The Bloomington campus designated a protest zone outside Memorial Stadium, the arena for the ceremony.

At Princeton, in New Jersey, 18 students launched a hunger strike in an effort to push the university to divest from companies tied to Israel.

One of them, senior David Chmielewski said in an email that the strike started Friday morning with participants consuming water only, and it will continue until administrators meet with students about demands including amnesty from criminal and disciplinary charges for protesters.

Other demonstrators are participating in "solidarity fasts" lasting 24 hours, Chmielewski said.

Princeton students set up a protest encampment and some held a sit-in at an administrative building this week, leading to about 15 arrests.

Students at other colleges, including Brown and Yale, launched similar hunger strikes earlier this year before the more recent wave of encampments.

Meanwhile in Medford, Massachusetts, students at Tufts University peacefully took down their encampment without police intervention Friday night.

School officials said they were pleased with the development, which wasn't the result of any agreement. Protest organizers said in a statement that they were "deeply angered and disappointed" that negotiations with the university had failed.

The protests stem from the conflict that started Oct. 7 when Hamas militants attacked southern Israel, killing about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking roughly 250 hostages.

Vowing to destroy Hamas, Israel launched an offensive in Gaza that has killed more than 34,500 Palestinians, around two-thirds of them women and children, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory. Israeli strikes have devastated the enclave and displaced most of its inhabitants.

## **Biden and Trump offer worlds-apart contrasts on issues in 2024's rare contest between two presidents**

By SEUNG MIN KIM, JILL COLVIN and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden and Donald Trump are two presidents with unfinished business and an itch to get it done.

Their track records and plans on abortion, immigration, taxes, wars abroad — you name it — leave no doubt that the man voters choose in November will seek to shape the landscape of American life in ways wholly distinct from the other.

The choices, if the winner gets his way, are sharply defined. The onward march of regulation and incentives to restrain climate change, or a slow walk if not an about-face. Higher taxes on the super rich, or not. Abortion rights reaffirmed, or left to states to restrict or allow as each decides. Another attempt to legislate border security and orderly entry into the country, or massive deportations. A commitment to stand with Ukraine or let go.

At no time in living memory have two presidents, current and former, competed for the office. Not since Presidents Teddy Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, both Republicans, in 1912, and that didn't work out for either of them — Democrat Woodrow Wilson won that three-way race.

More than a century later, voters again get to judge two presidents on their records alongside their promises for the next four years. Here's where they stand on 10 of the top issues:

### **ABORTION**

**BIDEN:** The president has called for Congress to send him legislation that would codify in federal law the right to an abortion, which stood for nearly 50 years before being overturned by the Supreme Court.

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He has also criticized statewide bans on abortion in Republican states and says he will veto any potential nationwide ban should one come to his desk. In the absence of legislation, his administration has taken narrower actions, such as proposals that would protect women who travel to obtain abortions and limit how law enforcement collects medical records.

**TRUMP:** The former president often brags about appointing the Supreme Court justices who overturned *Roe v. Wade*, ending the constitutional right to an abortion. After dodging questions about when in pregnancy he believes the procedure should be restricted, Trump announced in April that decisions on access and cutoffs should be left to the states. He said he would not sign a national abortion ban into law. But he's declined to say whether he would try to limit access to the abortion pill mifepristone. He told *Time* magazine in recent interviews that it should also be left up to states to determine whether to prosecute women for abortions or to monitor their pregnancies.

## CLIMATE/ENERGY

**BIDEN:** In a second term, Biden could be expected to continue his focus on implementing the climate provisions of his Inflation Reduction Act, which provided nearly \$375 billion for things like financial incentives for electric cars and clean energy projects. Biden is also enlisting more than 20,000 young people in a national "Climate Corps," a Peace Corps-like program to promote conservation through tasks such as weatherizing homes and repairing wetlands. Biden wants to triple the group's size this decade. Despite all this, it's unlikely that the U.S. will be on track to meet Biden's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by half by 2030.

**TRUMP:** His mantra for one of his top priorities: "DRILL, BABY, DRILL." Trump, who in the past cast climate change as a "hoax" and harbors a particular disdain for wind power, says it's his goal for the U.S. to have the cheapest energy and electricity in the world. He'd increase oil drilling on public lands, offer tax breaks to oil, gas and coal producers, speed the approval of natural gas pipelines and roll back the Biden administration's aggressive efforts to get people to switch to electric cars, which he argues have a place but shouldn't be forced on consumers. He has also pledged to re-exit the Paris Climate Accords, end wind subsidies and eliminate regulations imposed and proposed by the Biden administration targeting energy-inefficient kinds of lightbulbs, stoves, dishwashers and shower heads.

## DEMOCRACY/RULE OF LAW

**BIDEN:** Protecting democracy has been the *raison d'être* behind Biden's decision to run for reelection. In a symbolic nod to the Revolutionary War, Biden delivered his first campaign speech of 2024 near Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, where he spoke of George Washington's decision to step down as the leader of the Continental Army after American independence was won. During the Jan. 5 speech, Biden said this year's presidential contest is "all about" whether U.S. democracy will survive and he regularly condemns Trump's denial that he lost the 2020 general election. Biden has called the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the Capitol a "day that we nearly lost America — lost it all."

**TRUMP:** The former president, who famously refused to accept his loss to Biden in 2020, has not committed to accepting the results this time. "If everything's honest, I'll gladly accept the results," Trump recently told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. "If it's not, you have to fight for the right of the country." He has said he will pardon the Jan. 6 defendants jailed for assaulting police officers and other crimes during the attack on the Capitol. He vows to overhaul the Justice Department and FBI "from the ground up," aggrieved by the criminal charges the department has brought against him. He also promises to deploy the National Guard to cities such as Chicago that are struggling with violent crime, and in response to protests, and has also vowed to appoint a special prosecutor to go after Biden.

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

**BIDEN:** The Biden administration is already taking steps to make it harder for any mass firings of civil servants to occur. In April, the Office of Personnel Management issued a new rule that would ban federal workers from being reclassified as political appointees or other at-will employees, which makes them easier to dismiss. That was in response to Schedule F, a 2020 executive order from Trump that reclassified tens of thousands of federal workers so they could be fired more easily.



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**TRUMP:** The former president vows an overhaul of the federal bureaucracy, which he has long blamed for stymying his first term agenda: "I will totally obliterate the deep state." He plans to reissue the Schedule F order stripping civil service protections. He'd then move to fire "rogue bureaucrats," including those who "weaponized our justice system," and the "warmongers and America-Last globalists in the Deep State, the Pentagon, the State Department, and the national security industrial complex." He's pledged to terminate the Education Department and wants to curtail the independence of regulatory agencies like the Federal Communications Commission.

## IMMIGRATION

**BIDEN:** The president continues to advocate for the comprehensive immigration bill he introduced on his first day in office, which would grant an eight-year pathway to citizenship for immigrants in the U.S. without legal status, with a faster track for young immigrants living in the country illegally who were brought here as children. That legislation went nowhere in Congress. This year, the president backed a Senate compromise that included tougher asylum standards and billions more in federal dollars to hire more border agents, immigration judges and asylum officers. That deal collapsed on Capitol Hill due to Trump's opposition. Biden is currently considering executive action on the border, particularly if the number of illegal crossings increases later this year.

**TRUMP:** The former president promises to mount the largest domestic deportation in U.S. history — an operation that could include detention camps and the National Guard. He'd bring back policies he put in place during his first term, like the Remain in Mexico program and Title 42, which placed curbs on migrants on public health grounds. And he'd revive and expand the travel ban that originally targeted citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries. After the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel, he pledged new "ideological screening" for immigrants to bar "dangerous lunatics, haters, bigots, and maniacs." He'd also try to deport people who are in the U.S. legally but harbor "jihadist sympathies." He'd seek to end birthright citizenship for people born in the U.S. whose parents are both in the country illegally.

## ISRAEL/GAZA

**BIDEN:** The war in Gaza, far more so than other national security considerations, has defined Biden's foreign policy this year, with significant political implications. He has offered full-throated support for Israel since Hamas militants launched a surprise deadly assault on Oct. 7. But as the death toll in Gaza continues to climb, Biden has faced massive backlash at home. His administration is working to broker a temporary ceasefire that would release some hostages held by Hamas, which would also allow for more humanitarian aid to enter the war-torn region. Biden also calls for a two-state solution, which would have Israel existing alongside an independent Palestinian state.

**TRUMP:** The former president has expressed support for Israel's efforts to "destroy" Hamas but he's also been critical of some of Israel's tactics. He says the country must finish the job quickly and get back to peace. He has called for more aggressive responses to pro-Palestinian protests at college campuses and applauded police efforts to clear encampments. Trump also proposes to revoke the student visas of those who espouse antisemitic or anti-American views.

## LGBTQ ISSUES

**BIDEN:** The president and White House officials regularly denounce discrimination and attacks against the LGBTQ community. Shortly after he took office, Biden reversed an executive order from Trump that had largely banned transgender people from military service, and his Education Department completed a rule in April that says Title IX, the 1972 law that was passed to protect women's rights, also bars discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The new rule was silent on the issue of transgender athletes.

**TRUMP:** The former president has pledged to keep transgender women out of women's sports and says he will ask Congress to pass a bill establishing that "only two genders," as determined at birth, are recognized by the United States. He promises to "defeat the toxic poison of gender ideology." As part of his crackdown on gender-affirming care, he would declare that any health care provider that participates in the "chemical or physical mutilation of minor youth" no longer meets federal health and safety standards and won't get federal money. He'd take similarly punitive steps in schools against any teacher or school

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official who “suggests to a child that they could be trapped in the wrong body.” Trump would support a national prohibition of hormonal or surgical intervention for transgender minors and bar transgender people from military service.

## NATO/UKRAINE

**BIDEN:** The president has spent much of his time rebuilding alliances unraveled by Trump, particularly NATO, a critical bulwark against Russian aggression. Since the onset of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Biden has pledged unceasing support to Kyiv and he made an unannounced visit there in February 2023 in a show of solidarity. His administration and Congress have sent tens of billions of dollars in military and other aid to Ukraine. The latest tranche of aid totaled \$61 billion in weapons, ammunition and other assistance and is expected to last through this year. Continued U.S. assistance is critical, Biden says, because he argues that Russian leader Vladimir Putin will not stop at invading Ukraine.

**TRUMP:** The former president has repeatedly taken issue with U.S. aid to Ukraine and says he will continue to “fundamentally reevaluate” the mission and purpose of the NATO alliance if he returns to office. He has claimed, without explanation, that he will be able to end the war before his inauguration by bringing both sides to the negotiating table. (His approach seems to hinge on Ukraine giving up at least some of its Russian-occupied territory in exchange for a cease-fire.) On NATO, he has assailed member nations for years for failing to hit agreed-upon military spending targets. Trump drew alarms this year when he said that, as president, he had warned leaders that he would not only refuse to defend nations that don’t hit those targets, but “would encourage” Russia “to do whatever the hell they want” to countries that are “delinquent.”

## TARIFFS/TRADE

**BIDEN:** This is where Biden and his protectionist tendencies — in a continued appeal to working-class voters — have some similarities with Trump. Biden is calling for a tripling of tariffs on Chinese steel, a move that would shield U.S. producers from cheaper imports. The current tariff rate is 7.5% for both steel and aluminum but Biden wants that to go to 25%. Biden has also said he opposes the proposed acquisition of U.S. Steel by Japan’s Nippon Steel, because it is “vital for it to remain an American steel company that is domestically owned and operated.”

**TRUMP:** The former president wants a dramatic expansion of tariffs, proposing a levy of perhaps 10% on nearly all imported foreign goods. Penalties would increase if trade partners manipulate their currencies or engage in other unfair trading practices. He would also urge Congress to pass legislation giving the president authority to impose a reciprocal tariff on any country that imposes one on the U.S. Much of his trade agenda has focused on China. Trump has proposed phasing out Chinese imports of essential goods including electronics, steel and pharmaceuticals and wants to ban Chinese companies from owning U.S. infrastructure in sectors such as energy, technology and farmland. Whether higher tariffs come from a Biden administration or a Trump one, they are likely to raise prices for consumers who have already faced higher costs from inflation.

## TAXES

**BIDEN:** In his State of the Union address, Biden proposed raising the corporate tax rate to 28% and the corporate minimum tax to 21% as a matter of “fundamental fairness” that will bring in more money to invest in Americans. The current corporate rate is 21% and the corporate minimum, raised under the Inflation Reduction Act, is at 15% for companies making more than \$1 billion a year. Biden also wants to require billionaires to pay at least 25% of their income in taxes and to restore the child tax credit that was enacted under his 2021 COVID-19 relief package, but has since expired.

**TRUMP:** The former president has promised to extend the tax cuts he signed into law in 2017 and that are due to sunset at the end of 2025. That package cut the corporate tax rate from 35% to 21% and roughly doubled the standard deduction and child tax credit.

## **Bodies recovered likely those of 2 Australians, 1 American who went missing, Mexican prosecutors say**

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Three bodies recovered in an area of Mexico's Baja California state are likely to be those of the two Australians and an American who went missing last weekend during a camping and surfing trip, the state prosecutor's office said Saturday.

While there has not yet been confirmation based on forensic examination, physical characteristics — including hair and clothing — means there is a high likelihood that the bodies are those of the three tourists, local TV network Milenio reported, citing chief state prosecutor María Elena Andrade Ramírez.

"It is presumed that (the bodies) are the ones being investigated," an employee of the state prosecutors' office who was not authorized to be quoted by name told The Associated Press.

The bodies were found in a well where investigators also found another body that authorities said would be investigated.

"A fourth body was located. It is not related to the three foreigners. The fourth body had been there for a long time," the official added.

The site where the bodies were discovered near the township of Santo Tomás was near the remote seaside area where the missing men's tents and truck were found Thursday along the coast.

The men — identified by family members as brothers Jake and Callum Robinson from Australia and American Jack Carter Rhoad — went missing Saturday. They did not show up at their planned accommodations over the weekend.

The U.S. State Department said: "We are aware of those reports (of bodies) and are closely monitoring the situation. At this time we have no further comment."

Baja California prosecutors had said Thursday that they were questioning three people in the case. On Friday, the office said the three had been arrested on charges of a crime equivalent to kidnapping. It was unclear if they might face more charges.

Andrade Ramírez, the chief state prosecutor, said evidence found along with the abandoned tents was linked to the three people being questioned about the missing foreigners.

Milenio reported that she said the suspects appeared to have stolen the surfers' truck and some of its parts were found in another truck belonging to one of the suspects.

On Wednesday, the missing Australians' mother, Debra Robinson, posted on a local community Facebook page an appeal for help in finding her sons. Robinson said Callum and Jake had not been heard from since April 27. They had booked accommodations in the nearby city of Rosarito.

Robinson said one of her sons, Callum, was diabetic. She also mentioned that the American who was with them was named Jack Carter Rhoad, but the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City did not immediately confirm that. The U.S. State Department said it was aware of reports of a U.S. citizen missing in Baja, but gave no further details.

In 2015, two Australian surfers, Adam Coleman and Dean Lucas, were killed in western Sinaloa state, across the Gulf of California — also known as the Sea of Cortez — from the Baja peninsula. Authorities said they were victims of highway bandits. Three suspects were arrested in that case.

## **Kentucky Derby fans pack the track for the 150th Run for the Roses**

By CLAIRE GALOFARO AP National Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — When Lori Hennesy imagined her outfit for the 150th running of the Kentucky Derby, she wanted to create something deserving of that monumental anniversary, a celebration of Kentucky's greatness and history.

So she got a bucket of chicken, red and white striped with Colonel Sanders' famous face on the front, filled it with roses and attached a plastic horse. She wore it on top of her head.

"I wanted to have fun," she said. Hennesy reckons that is what this place has always been about and

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how it came to host the longest continuously held sporting event in America.

She imagines what Churchill Downs must have been at that first race on May 17, 1875, when Ulysses Grant was the president, the country was still reeling in the aftermath of the Civil War and patrons arrived to watch the horses by riding horses there themselves. Women required a male escort to attend, The Courier-Journal reported, and admission was as little as \$1.

The 150th Run for the Roses would be unrecognizable to the 10,000 people who attended that first race at an unknown track on the rural outskirts of Louisville, Kentucky. Now more than 157,000 pack into Churchill Downs from all over the world for a dayslong spectacle of huge hats and mint juleps, where most grandstand tickets cost more than \$500 and celebrities celebrate in lavish suites high above the track.

But Hennesy suspects that the vibe back then would have been the same as today: People are there to see and be seen, to distract themselves from ordinary troubles and have a good time.

"I can imagine even then, it was just fun," she said. "This day is magical."

The sun was shining Saturday, and Derby-goers didn't have to contend with the bad news that put a damper on the race last year, when seven horses died in the week leading into the race. They posed for pictures in front of a sign commemorating the anniversary and whispered about the celebrities who made an appearance.

Kentucky native Wynonna Judd was at the track to sing the National Anthem. Martha Stewart was the day's grand marshal, charged with saying "Riders' Up!" to start race. Travis Kelce, three-time Super Bowl champion and Taylor Swift's boyfriend, comedian Jimmy Fallon and musician Kid Rock were also at the track.

Patrons jockeyed to watch the horses get saddled at the track's renovated new paddock, now a massive horseshoe-shaped space at the foot of the famous Twin Spires.

Mary and Skip Keopnick weren't sure they were going to like the changes, but they said they were pleasantly surprised. They have a room in their Michigan home devoted to the Derby that features old hats and memorabilia from their decades in attendance.

Skip Keopnick attended his first Derby in 1977 and hasn't missed one since. In the years since, he has seen a lot change. Women have always worn big hats, he said, but the men have finally caught up, often sporting bright, patterned suit jackets.

He fashioned a helmet years ago — with a motor and a gear system — that spins two horses around the top of his head. For the 150th Derby, he said, he made the motor bigger and the gear taller so the plastic horses on his head could run around faster. His wife had a floor-length dress screen-printed to read "Kentucky Derby 150th."

"It's a milestone," he said. "We had to do it up bigger than usual."

Some in the stands came to commemorate their own milestones.

Charlotte Amsden turned 70 this year. She grew up with horses and always dreamed of watching them run at the world's most famous race. She read that the Derby had special birthday of its own this year and called her daughters: "We have got to go celebrate my birth and the birth of the Derby," she said.

She came with three generations: her three daughters, her granddaughter, a grandson, her great-granddaughter, just 4 months old, who had to have her own ticket to get into the racetrack.

Amsden got choked up at the idea that maybe, 50 years from now, that little one will return to watch the 200th Derby.

"That would be so special," she said.

And she wondered: What would this place look like then?

## Russia puts Ukrainian President Zelenskyy on its wanted list

The Associated Press undefined

Russia has put Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on its wanted list, Russian state media reported Saturday, citing the interior ministry's database.

As of Saturday afternoon, both Zelenskyy and his predecessor, Petro Poroshenko, featured on the ministry's list of people wanted on unspecified criminal charges. The commander of Ukraine's ground forces,



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Gen. Oleksandr Pavlyuk, was also on the list.

Russian officials did not immediately clarify the allegations against any of the men. Mediazona, an independent Russian news outlet, claimed Saturday that both Zelenskyy and Poroshenko had been listed since at least late February.

In an online statement published that same day, Ukraine's foreign ministry dismissed the reports of Zelenskyy's inclusion as evidence of "the desperation of the Russian state machine and propaganda."

Russia's wanted list also includes scores of officials and lawmakers from Ukraine and NATO countries. Among them is Kaja Kallas, the prime minister of NATO and EU member Estonia, who has fiercely advocated for increased military aid to Kyiv and stronger sanctions against Moscow.

Russian officials in February said that Kallas is wanted because of Tallinn's efforts to remove Soviet-era monuments to Red Army soldiers in the Baltic nation, in a belated purge of what many consider symbols of past oppression.

Fellow NATO members Latvia, Lithuania and Poland have also pulled down monuments that are widely seen as an unwanted legacy of the Soviet occupation of those countries.

Russia has laws criminalizing the "rehabilitation of Nazism" that include punishing the "desecration" of war memorials.

Also on Russia's list are cabinet ministers from Estonia and Lithuania, as well as the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor who last year prepared a warrant for President Vladimir Putin on war crimes charges. Moscow has also charged the head of Ukraine's military intelligence, Kyrylo Budanov, with what it deems "terrorist" activities, including Ukrainian drone strikes on Russian infrastructure.

The Kremlin has repeatedly sought to link Ukraine's leaders to Nazism, even though the country has a democratically elected Jewish president who lost relatives in the Holocaust, and despite the aim of many Ukrainians to strengthen the country's democracy, reduce corruption and move closer to the West.

Moscow named "de-Nazification, de-militarization and a neutral status" of Ukraine as the key goals of what it insists on calling a "special military operation" against its southern neighbor. The claim of "de-Nazification" refers to Russia's false assertions that Ukraine's government is heavily influenced by radical nationalist and neo-Nazi groups - an allegation derided by Kyiv and its Western allies.

The Holocaust, World War II and Nazism have been important tools for Putin in his bid to legitimize Russia's war in Ukraine. World War II, in which the Soviet Union lost an estimated 27 million people, is a linchpin of Russia's national identity, and officials bristle at any questioning of the USSR's role.

Some historians say this has been coupled with an attempt by Russia to retool certain historical truths from the war. They say Russia has tried to magnify the Soviet role in defeating the Nazis while playing down any collaboration by Soviet citizens in the persecution of Jews, along with allegations of crimes by Red Army soldiers against civilians in Eastern Europe.

## Japan and India reject Biden's comments describing them as xenophobic countries

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan and India on Saturday decried remarks by U.S. President Joe Biden describing them as "xenophobic" countries that do not welcome immigrants, which the president said during a campaign fundraising event earlier in the week.

Japan said Biden's judgment was not based on an accurate understanding of its policy, while India rebutted the comment, defending itself as the world's most open society.

Biden grouped Japan and India as "xenophobic" countries, along with Russia and China as he tried to explain their struggling economies, contrasting the four with the strength of the U.S. as a nation of immigrants.

Japan is a key U.S. ally, and both Japan and India are part of the Quad, a U.S.-led informal partnership that also includes Australia in countering increasingly assertive China in the Indo-Pacific.

Just weeks ago, Biden hosted Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on an official visit, as the two lead-

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ers restated their "unbreakable alliance" and agreed to reinforce their security ties in the face of China's threat in the Indo-Pacific.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also made a state visit to Washington last year, when he was welcomed by business and political leaders.

The White House said Biden meant no offense and was merely stressing that the U.S. was a nation of immigrants, saying he had no intention of undermining the relationship with Japan.

Japan is aware of Biden's remark as well as the subsequent clarification, a Japanese government official said Saturday, declining to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue.

The official said it was unfortunate that part of Biden's speech was not based on an accurate understanding of Japanese policies, and that Japan understands that Biden made the remark to emphasize the presence of immigrants as America's strength.

Japan-U.S. relations are "stronger than ever" as Prime Minister Kishida showed during his visit to the U.S. in April, the official said.

In New Delhi, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Saturday also rebutted Biden's comment, saying India was the most open society in the world.

"I haven't seen such an open, pluralistic, and diverse society anywhere in the world. We are actually not just not xenophobic, we are the most open, most pluralistic and in many ways the most understanding society in the world," Jaishankar said at a roundtable organized by the Economic Times newspaper.

Jaishankar also noted that India's annual GDP growth is 7% and said, "You check some other countries' growth rate, you will find an answer." The U.S. economy grew by 2.5% in 2023, according to government figures.

At a hotel fundraiser Wednesday, where the donor audience was largely Asian American, Biden said the upcoming U.S. election was about "freedom, America and democracy" and that the nation's economy was thriving "because of you and many others."

"Why? Because we welcome immigrants," Biden said. "Look, think about it. Why is China stalling so badly economically? Why is Japan having trouble? Why is Russia? Why is India? Because they're xenophobic. They don't want immigrants."

Japan has been known for a strict stance on immigration. But in recent years, it has eased its policies to make it easier for foreign workers to come and stay in Japan as a way to mitigate its declining births and rapidly shrinking population. The number of babies born in Japan last year fell to a record low since Japan started compiling the statistics in 1899.

India, which has the world's largest population, enacted a new citizenship law earlier this year by setting religious criteria that allows fast-tracking naturalization for Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians who fled to India from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, while excluding Muslims.

## There's progress reported in Gaza truce talks, but Israel downplays chances of ending war with Hamas

By SAM MEDNICK and JACK JEFFERY Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — A Hamas delegation was in Cairo on Saturday as Egyptian state media reported "noticeable progress" in cease-fire talks for Gaza. But Israel hasn't sent a delegation and a senior Israeli official downplayed prospects for a full end to the war while emphasizing the commitment to invading Rafah.

Pressure has mounted to reach a deal halting the nearly 7-month-long war. A top U.N. official says there is now a "full-blown famine" in northern Gaza, while the United States has repeatedly warned close ally Israel about its planned offensive into Rafah, the southernmost city on the border with Egypt, where more than 1 million Palestinians are sheltering.

Egyptian and U.S. mediators have reported signs of compromise in recent days, but chances for a cease-fire deal remain entangled with the key question of whether Israel will accept an end to the war without reaching its stated goal of destroying the militant group Hamas.

Egypt's state-owned Al-Qahera News TV channel said that a consensus had been reached over many

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disputed points but did not elaborate. Hamas has called for a complete end to the war and withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Gaza.

A senior Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing negotiations, played down the prospects for a full end to the war. The official said Israel was committed to the Rafah invasion and that it will not agree in any circumstance to end the war as part of a deal to release hostages.

Israeli media said that statement had been dictated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose government could be threatened if he agrees to a deal because hard-line Cabinet members demand an attack on Rafah.

The proposal that Egyptian mediators had put to Hamas sets out a three-stage process that would bring an immediate, six-week cease-fire and partial release of Israeli hostages, and would include some sort of Israeli pullout. The initial stage would last for 40 days. Hamas would start by releasing female civilian hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

Some families of hostages accused Netanyahu of prolonging the war for his political interests. Daniel Elgert, whose brother Itzhak is held by Hamas, addressed Netanyahu at the latest rally in Tel Aviv: "Bibi, we call on you from here to announce the end of the war in exchange for the return of all the hostages. The war is effectively over, we know it's over, you can't fool us."

The war has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's local health officials, caused widespread destruction and plunged the territory into an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

The conflict erupted on Oct. 7, when Hamas attacked southern Israel, abducting about 250 people and killing around 1,200, mostly civilians. Israel says militants still hold around 100 hostages and the remains of more than 30 others.

Israeli strikes Saturday on Gaza killed at least six people. Three bodies were recovered from the rubble of a building in Rafah and taken to Yousef Al Najjar hospital. A strike in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza killed three people, according to hospital officials.

In the last 24 hours, the bodies of 32 people killed by Israeli strikes have been brought to local hospitals, Gaza's Health Ministry said Saturday. The ministry does not distinguish between fighters and civilians in its tallies but says that women and children make up around two-thirds of those killed.

The Israeli military says it has killed 13,000 militants, without providing evidence to back up the claim.

It has also conducted mass arrests during its raids inside Gaza. The territory's Health Ministry urged the International Criminal Court to investigate the death in Israeli custody of a Gaza surgeon. Adnan al-Borsh, 50, was working at al-Awda Hospital when Israeli troops stormed it in December, according to the Palestinian Prisoner's Club.

The United Nations has warned that hundreds of thousands would be "at imminent risk of death" if Israel's military moves forward into densely packed Rafah, which is also a critical entry point for humanitarian aid. Israel has briefed U.S. officials on its plan to evacuate civilians.

The director of the U.N. World Food Program, Cindy McCain, said Friday that trapped civilians in the north, the most cut-off part of Gaza, have plunged into famine. McCain said a cease-fire and a greatly increased flow of aid through land and sea routes was essential.

A Israeli humanitarian official on Saturday called McCain's assertion incorrect and said Israel has been facilitating the delivery of more aid. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the situation.

Israel recently opened new crossings for aid into northern Gaza, but on Wednesday, Israeli settlers blocked the first convoy before it crossed into the besieged enclave. Once inside Gaza, the convoy was commandeered by Hamas militants, before U.N. officials reclaimed it.

Some displaced residents of northern Gaza said they had been skipping meals and hadn't seen vegetables for weeks.

"You know now everything is scarce in Gaza. There are no vegetables and there is no aid or food packages. It is about once a month that we get food parcels," Marwan Al-Zaid said.

In the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where tensions have been high since the outbreak of the war in Gaza, the Israeli military said it and Shin Bet had killed five fighters in Tulkarem, asserting the fighters had

opened fire. Palestinian authorities said five people were killed by Israeli fire in the town of Deir al-Ghusun, roughly 7 kilometers (4.3 miles) northeast of Tulkarem.

## **I-95 overpass in Connecticut scorched during a fuel truck inferno has been demolished**

NORWALK, Conn. (AP) — A bridge damaged in a fiery crash that kept Interstate 95 in Connecticut closed Thursday and Friday has been demolished.

A live camera operated by the Connecticut Department of Transportation on Saturday showed excavators and bucket loaders scooping up rubble from the destroyed Fairfield Avenue overpass above I-95 in Norwalk and dumping it into large containers and dump trucks to be hauled away.

Crews started tearing down the bridge on Friday morning and work, including the repaving of damaged parts of the roadway, was expected to last through the weekend.

Workers are aiming to get all six lanes of traffic on the interstate, which is the main artery linking New England and New York, reopened before rush hour Monday morning.

The bridge was scorched Thursday morning after a gasoline tanker collided into two other vehicles and burst into flames.

State police said a car was merging from the right lane when it struck the gas truck, which was carrying 8,500 gallons (32,000 liters) of fuel. The truck then hit a tractor trailer in another lane and caught fire. Nobody was seriously injured, and no charges have been filed.

About 160,000 vehicles travel daily on the affected stretch of I-95.

The bridge removal and road repairs could cost about \$20 million, with the state's congressional delegation asking the Federal Highway Administration for emergency funds to pay all the expenses.

## **Boeing is on the verge of launching astronauts aboard new capsule, the latest entry to space travel**

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — After years of delays and stumbles, Boeing is finally poised to launch astronauts to the International Space Station for NASA.

It's the first flight of Boeing's Starliner capsule with a crew on board, a pair of NASA pilots who will check out the spacecraft during the test drive and a weeklong stay at the space station.

NASA turned to U.S. companies for astronaut rides after the space shuttles were retired. Elon Musk's SpaceX has made nine taxi trips for NASA since 2020, while Boeing has managed only a pair of unoccupied test flights.

Boeing program manager Mark Nappi wishes Starliner was further along. "There's no doubt about that, but we're here now."

The company's long-awaited astronaut demo is slated for liftoff Monday night.

Provided this tryout goes well, NASA will alternate between Boeing and SpaceX to get astronauts to and from the space station.

A look at the newest ride and its shakedown cruise:

### **THE CAPSULE**

White with black and blue trim, Boeing's Starliner capsule is about 10 feet (3 meters) tall and 15 feet (4.5 meters) in diameter. It can fit up to seven people, though NASA crews typically will number four. The company settled on the name Starliner nearly a decade ago, a twist on the name of Boeing's early Stratoliner and the current Dreamliner.

No one was aboard Boeing's two previous Starliner test flights. The first, in 2019, was hit with software trouble so severe that its empty capsule couldn't reach the station until the second try in 2022. Then last summer, weak parachutes and flammable tape cropped up that needed to be fixed or removed.



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## THE CREW

Veteran NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams are retired Navy captains who spent months aboard the space station years ago. They joined the test flight after the original crew bowed out as the delays piled up. Wilmore, 61, is a former combat pilot from Mount Juliet, Tennessee, and Williams, 58, is a helicopter pilot from Needham, Massachusetts. The duo have been involved in the capsule's development and insist Starliner is ready for prime time, otherwise they would not strap in for the launch.

"We're not putting our heads in the sand," Williams told The Associated Press. "Sure, Boeing has had its problems. But we are the QA (quality assurance). Our eyes are on the spacecraft."

## THE TEST FLIGHT

Starliner will blast off on United Launch Alliance's Atlas V rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. It will be the first time astronauts ride an Atlas since NASA's Project Mercury, starting with John Glenn when he became the first American to orbit the Earth in 1962. Sixty-two years later, this will be the 100th launch of the Atlas V, which is used to hoist satellites as well as spacecraft.

"We're super careful with every mission. We're super, duper, duper careful" with human missions, said Tory Bruno, CEO of ULA, a joint venture of Boeing and Lockheed Martin.

Starliner should reach the space station in roughly 26 hours. The seven station residents will have their eyes peeled on the approaching capsule. The arrival of a new vehicle is "a really big deal. You leave nothing to chance," NASA astronaut Michael Barratt told the AP from orbit. Starliner will remain docked for eight days, undergoing checkouts before landing in New Mexico or elsewhere in the American West.

## STARLINER VS. DRAGON

Both companies' capsules are designed to be autonomous and reusable. This Starliner is the same one that made the first test flight in 2019. Unlike the SpaceX Dragons, Starliner has traditional hand controls and switches alongside touchscreens and, according to the astronauts, is more like NASA's Orion capsules for moon missions. Wilmore and Williams briefly will take manual control to wring out the systems on their way to the space station.

NASA gave Boeing, a longtime space contractor, more than \$4 billion to develop the capsule, while SpaceX got \$2.6 billion. SpaceX already was in the station delivery business and merely refashioned its cargo capsule for crew. While SpaceX uses the boss' Teslas to get astronauts to the launch pad, Boeing will use a more traditional "astrovan" equipped with a video screen that Wilmore said will be playing "Top Gun: Maverick."

One big difference at flight's end: Starliner lands on the ground with cushioning airbags, while Dragon splashes into the sea.

## THE FUTURE

Boeing is committed to six Starliner trips for NASA after this one, which will take the company to the station's planned end in 2030. Boeing's Nappi is reluctant to discuss other potential customers until this inaugural crew flight is over. But the company has said a fifth seat will be available to private clients. SpaceX periodically sells seats to tycoons and even countries eager to get their citizens to the station for a couple weeks.

Coming soon: Sierra Space's mini shuttle, Dream Chaser, which will deliver cargo to the station later this year or next, before accepting passengers.

## Drone footage shows Ukrainian village battered to ruins as residents flee Russian advance

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The Ukrainian village of Ocheretyne has been battered by fighting, drone footage obtained overnight by The Associated Press shows. The village has been a target for Russian forces in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine.

Russian troops have been advancing in the area, pounding Kyiv's depleted, ammunition-deprived forces

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with artillery, drones and bombs. Ukraine's military has acknowledged the Russians have gained a "foothold" in Ocheretyne, which had a population of about 3,000 before the war, but says that fighting continues.

Residents have scrambled to flee the village, among them a 98-year-old woman who walked almost 10 kilometers (6 miles) alone last week, wearing a pair of slippers and supported by a cane, until she reached Ukrainian front lines.

Not a single person is seen in the footage obtained late Friday, and no building in Ocheretyne appears to have been left untouched by the fighting. Most houses, apartment blocks and other buildings look damaged beyond repair, and many houses have been pummeled into piles of wood and bricks. A factory on the outskirts has also been badly damaged.

The footage also shows smoke billowing from several houses, and fires burning in at least two buildings. Elsewhere, Russia has in recent weeks stepped up attacks on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, in an attempt to pummel the region's energy infrastructure and terrorize its 1.3 million residents.

Four people were wounded and a two-story civilian building was damaged and set ablaze overnight after Russian forces struck Kharkiv, in northeastern Ukraine, with exploding drones, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said Saturday.

The four, including a 13-year-old, were hurt by falling debris, he said on the Telegram messaging app. Russian state agency RIA reported Saturday that Moscow's forces struck a drone warehouse in Kharkiv that had been used by Ukrainian troops overnight, citing Sergei Lebedev, described as a coordinator of local pro-Moscow guerrillas. His comments could not be independently verified.

Russian forces continued hitting Kharkiv and its surroundings on Saturday, according to updates posted by Syniehubov and other Ukrainian officials on the Telegram messenger app. One strike hit a civilian business in an industrial district of the city, wounding at least six people, Syniehubov said. A further attack killed a 49-year-old civilian outside his house in Slobozhanske, a village northeast of the city, the governor reported.

In the Black Sea port of Odesa, which has been repeatedly targeted in recent days, three people were hurt in a rocket attack on "civil infrastructure," regional Gov. Oleh Kiper said.

Ukraine's military said Russia launched a total of 13 Shahed drones at the Kharkiv and Dnipropetrovsk regions of eastern Ukraine overnight, all of which were shot down by Ukrainian air defenses.

Ukraine's energy ministry on Saturday said the overnight strikes damaged an electrical substation in the Dnipropetrovsk region, briefly depriving households and businesses of power.

According to Serhii Lysak, the province's governor, falling drone debris damaged critical infrastructure and three private houses, one of which caught fire. Two residents were hospitalized.

Russia's Defense Ministry claimed early on Saturday that its forces overnight shot down four U.S.-provided long-range ATACMS missiles over the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014. The ministry did not provide further details.

Ukraine has recently begun using the missiles, provided secretly by the United States, to hit Russian-held areas, including a military airfield in Crimea and in another area east of the occupied city of Berdyansk, U.S. officials said last week.

Long sought by the leadership in Kyiv, the new missiles give Ukraine nearly double the striking distance — up to 300 kilometers (190 miles) — than it had with the mid-range version of the weapons it received from the U.S. last October.

Later that day, Russia's Emergencies Ministry reported that a major fire had engulfed a warehouse on the outskirts of the Crimean city of Simferopol. Dozens of emergency workers were dispatched to the site, and had extinguished the fire by early evening, according to the ministry.

The ministry did not say what had caused the blaze, or what was stored at the warehouse. There were no immediate reports of casualties or comment from Ukraine.

Also on Saturday, a Ukrainian drone damaged telecommunications infrastructure on the outskirts of Belgorod, a Russian city some 50 kilometers (31 miles) from the Ukrainian border, according to the local governor. Vyacheslav Gladkov did not say what the site was used for.

Hours later, Gladkov reported that five people in Belgorod were hospitalized, with shrapnel wounds

and other injuries, following a strong blast on Saturday that also damaged around 30 private homes and sparked two fires. He did not immediately clarify what caused the explosions.

One Telegram news channel focusing on Belgorod posted claims Saturday that a Russian aerial bomb meant for Ukraine's Kharkiv region across the border might have been dropped on the city by mistake.

According to an update by Pepel ("Ashes" in English), a channel run by Belgorod journalists now based outside Russia, local authorities had not issued any warnings prior to the blast. The destruction also appeared inconsistent with a Ukrainian drone strike, the post alleged.

Russian officials did not immediately respond to these claims, which could not be independently verified.

## Senate races are roiled by campus protests over the war in Gaza as campaign rhetoric sharpens

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — The student protest movement disrupting university campuses, classes and graduation ceremonies over the war in Gaza is also roiling Senate contests across the nation as Democrats tread cautiously over an internal divide and Republicans play up their rivals' disagreements.

The political impact of the protests on the White House campaign has drawn considerable attention, with opposition to President Joe Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war reverberating from Columbia to UCLA. The fast-evolving landscape of the demonstrations is shaping pivotal Senate races, too.

Tent encampments have popped up at universities in many states where Democrats this election year are defending seats essential to maintaining the party's razor-thin Senate majority. At some schools, police crackdowns and arrests have followed.

The protests have sharpened the campaign rhetoric in Pennsylvania, Nevada, Ohio and Michigan, among other places. Republican candidates in California and Florida have stepped up their criticism of the Democratic president for the U.S. response to the war or for chaotic scenes on American campuses.

Some Republicans have shown up at encampments, including one at George Washington University, not far from the White House. Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., who is facing reelection, said on social media that he went there to show solidarity with Jewish students. "We need to do all we can to protect them," he said.

Republican candidate David McCormick, during a visit to the University of Pennsylvania, said protesters at the Ivy League school did not know the "difference between right and wrong, good and evil," and were creating a hostile atmosphere for Jewish students.

McCormick has decried what he frames as a lack of leadership and moral clarity on the part of his Democratic opponent, Sen. Bob Casey, as well as by Biden and administrators at the school buffeted by accusations of harboring antisemitism.

"What's happening on campuses is clearly a test of leadership and moral courage, both for the college presidents and for our leaders and for Sen. Casey and President Biden," McCormick said in an interview.

Israel and its supporters say the protests are antisemitic, a charge that Israel's critics say is sometimes used to silence legitimate opposition. Although some protesters have been caught on camera making antisemitic remarks or violent threats, protest organizers, some of whom are Jewish, say it is a peaceful movement aimed at trying to save the lives of Palestinians civilians.

Many Democrats, from Biden on down, avoided saying much about the situation until recently as universities began to crack down and comparisons were made to anti-war protests of the 1960s.

Even then, Democrats balanced their criticism of antisemitism and rule-breakers with the need to protect the right to free expression and peaceful protest. Some have tried to avoid taking sides in protests that have pitted pro-Israeli versus pro-Palestinian Democrats and divided important parts of the party's base, including Jewish, Arab American and younger voters.

Republicans, meanwhile, have railed at what they characterized as equivocating or silence by Democrats. Republicans professed solidarity with Jews against antisemitism while condemning the protests as lawless.

Mike Rogers, a Republican seeking an open Senate seat in Michigan, said student protesters at Columbia

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were " Hamas sympathizers." In California, GOP Senate candidate Steve Garvey called them "terrorists" practicing "terrorism disguised as free speech."

In five states, the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the Senate Republicans' campaign arm, is using the protests in digital ads about student loan forgiveness, saying Democrats want to pay off the loans of students "radicalized by the far left" who are "threatening Jews," "attacking police" and "acting like terrorists."

McCormick and others say universities that, in their view, tolerate antisemitism should lose federal subsidies and that visas should be revoked for any foreign student inciting violence or expressing pro-Hamas sentiments at the encampments.

Casey, long a staunch supporter of Israel, has criticized acts of antisemitism on campuses and pointed to legislation he sponsored as a way to make sure the Education Department takes action.

"Students of course have the right to peacefully protest, but when it crosses the line either into violence or discrimination, then we have an obligation to step in and stop that conduct," Casey said Thursday as he urged colleagues to pass his bill.

Democratic Sen. Jacky Rosen of Nevada, who is Jewish and facing reelection, said she was "horrified" by displays of antisemitism on campuses and, like Casey, called for the department to hold schools accountable.

In California, U.S. Rep Adam Schiff, the Democratic nominee for an open Senate seat, took aim at the Columbia demonstration and said "antisemitic and hateful rhetoric is being loudly and proudly displayed." Accused by Garvey of being "incredibly silent" on the protests, Schiff, who is Jewish, voted for a House bill similar to Casey's and released a statement that condemned violence and the "explicit, repeated targeting and intimidation of Jewish students."

Republicans elsewhere contended statements by Democrats were equivocating and inadequate.

Republicans called out Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, after he told an Axios reporter last week that he was "not going to talk about the politics of that. People always have the right to speak out and should."

His Republican opponent, Bernie Moreno, charged that Brown had "wholeheartedly endorsed these vile and violent antisemitic demonstrations."

Later, at a news conference, Brown gave more expansive comments. "Students want to make their voices heard, they need to do it in a way that's nonviolent, they need to do it in a way that doesn't spew hatred, and laws need to be enforced," he said.

In Michigan, which has a relatively significant Muslim population, Biden's handling of the war is expected to factor heavily into the presidential and Senate races.

Rogers, a favorite for the GOP nomination, thanked New York City police for confronting protesters and "standing up to protect Jewish students at Columbia from the visceral hatred we've witnessed from Hamas sympathizers on their campus."

Republicans argued that U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin, the front-runner for the Democratic nomination for Senate, had not spoken out strongly against protests at Columbia, her alma mater, and that she took five days after they began to say anything at all.

Slotkin, who is Jewish, said in an April 22 statement — the most recent wave of demonstrations began at Columbia on April 17 — that "the use of intimidation, antisemitic signs or slogans, or harassment, is unacceptable."

It was, she suggested, a complicated topic.

"I would rather be thoughtful and take more time than have a knee-jerk answer for any issue," Slotkin said in an interview. "But especially this one."



## After Roe, the network of people who help others get abortions see themselves as 'the underground'

By LAURA UNGAR AP Science Writer

NAMPA, Idaho (AP) — Waiting in a long post office line with the latest shipment of “abortion aftercare kits,” Kimra Luna got a text. A woman who’d taken abortion pills three weeks earlier was worried about bleeding — and disclosing the cause to a doctor.

“Bleeding doesn’t mean you need to go in,” Luna responded on the encrypted messaging app Signal. “Some people bleed on and off for a month.”

It was a typically busy afternoon for Luna, a doula and reproductive care activist in a state with some of the strictest abortion laws in the nation. Those laws make the work a constant battle, the 38-year-old said, but they draw strength from others in a makeshift national network of helpers — clinic navigators, abortion fund leaders and individual volunteers who have become a supporting cast for people in restrictive states who are seeking abortions.

“This is the underground,” said Jerad Martindale, an activist in Boise.

Abortion rights advocates worry Idaho is a harbinger of where more states may be headed. Here, abortion is banned with very limited exceptions at all stages of pregnancy, and a law signed by the governor but temporarily blocked forbids adults from helping minors leave the state for abortions without parental consent. Recently, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments about Idaho’s enforcement of its abortion ban in hospital emergencies.

Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, said such laws protect the unborn. While she doesn’t know if anything can be done to prevent people from helping others get abortions, she said, “I would certainly wish that they wouldn’t do it.”

But Luna and others consider their work mutual aid essential to the community.

“I wouldn’t be able to live with myself if I just acted scared and didn’t do the things that I do,” said the single parent of three boys, who uses the pronoun they. “I know I’m put here to do this.”

Luna helps run Idaho Abortion Rights, launched in 2022 with extra bail money that was raised after they got arrested at a protest. A longtime activist, they strongly believe abortion pills should be accessible and once brought some to the state Capitol steps to prove residents could still get them online. Recently, they got a face tattoo of a mailbox with abortion pills falling out of it.

Luna is a full-spectrum doula, aiding in births as well as abortions. Most abortion work is remote, providing support, advice, answers to questions and referrals to resources like abortion funds.

“We’ve always found a way to make sure people get help no matter what that help is,” Luna said of their group.

That also includes caring for people after abortions. One April morning, Luna assembled aftercare kits on the couch, pink-and-purple braids falling in front of their face as they filled packets with supplies like sanitary pads, Advil, over-the-counter stomach medicines and red raspberry leaf tea.

In places where abortion is legal, navigators at clinics provide some of the same sorts of logistical help. Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains has three navigators for its 21 clinics, one of them virtual, in Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada. They handle about 1,000 calls a month — some from out-of-state patients who drive up to 17 hours for care, said Adrienne Mansanares, the organization’s president and CEO.

Abortion opponents try to steer people away from ending their pregnancies and toward centers they say also provide support like pregnancy-related information, parenting classes and baby supplies.

For someone “not sure how she is going to move forward and trying to figure out what resources are available for her if she wants to carry the pregnancy to term, there is support” at about 3,000 locations nationwide, said Tobias, of the Right to Life Committee. “That is definitely the better way to go.”

Some people facing unplanned pregnancies find answers online, like DakotaRei Belladonna Frausto, a 19-year-old student at San Antonio College in Texas. They sought an abortion a couple of years ago and came across a Facebook group, and eventually decided to start their own private Facebook group where people can share abortion resources and experiences.

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In April, about two dozen people gathered at a Boise community center to help Luna assemble boxes containing emergency contraception, condoms and information about accessing abortions.

Stephanie Vaughan, 39, said she had an abortion at 17, when a baby might have kept her from going to college and getting a good job.

Martindale recalled how a girlfriend was able to get an abortion when they were teens. He and his wife, Jen, now devote much of their free time to Idaho Abortion Rights; they keep thousands of packages of emergency contraception on hand to donate.

"It's a community responsibility," said Jen Martindale, 48.

The next morning, the Martindales took reproductive health supplies to local shops that offer them for free. Their first stop was Purple Lotus, a clothing and accessories store.

Worker Taylor Castillo immediately opened a box: "Pregnancy tests? Oh good," she said. "Those have been flying!"

Castillo said she's glad to help. When she suffered a miscarriage in 2021, her doctor prescribed the same pills used in medication abortion. She wonders what would happen if she needed them today.

"Now, everything is on fire," she said. "The good thing is, there are mutual aid programs that are willing to stand up for us." \_\_\_\_\_

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Science and Educational Media Group. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## The bystander's role is changing in the era of livestreaming. North Carolina's standoff shows how

By ERIK VERDUZCO and LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Saing Chhoeun was locked out of his Charlotte, North Carolina, home on Monday as law enforcement with high-powered rifles descended into his yard and garage, using a car as a shield as they were met with a shower of gunfire from the direction of his neighbor's house.

As bullets flew just feet away, Chhoeun took out his phone and started live-streaming the standoff between officials and a man wanted for possession of a firearm by an ex-felon and fleeing to elude.

By the end of the ordeal, five people including four officers and the shooter were dead and more injured in the deadliest single-day incident for U.S. law enforcement since 2016.

The deadly shootout also illustrated how smartphone-wielding bystanders don't always run for cover when bullets start to fly. Increasingly, they look to livestream their perspective of the attack. Experts say the reaction reflects the new role that bystanders play in the age of smartphones.

"It's become sort of a social norm," said Karen North, a digital social media professor at the University of Southern California Annenberg.

Humans always have had trouble defining the responsibilities of a bystander in a crisis situation, North said. It's not always safe to intervene, as with the situation in Charlotte, and people can feel helpless when they're doing nothing. Social media has provided a third option.

The "new responsibility of the bystander" in the digital era is to take a record of what happened on their phones, she said.

"It used to be, 'If you see something, say something,'" North said. "Now, it's, 'If you see something, start recording.'"

Chhoeun had been about to leave for work when U.S. marshals blocked his driveway and he was forced to huddle for safety in his garage, his keys in the ignition of his truck. He crouched by the door knocking for his son to let him in with one hand and recording with the other.

Chhoeun said he never would have risked his life to shoot a video if he hadn't been locked outside. But since he was, he thought: "I might just live it, you know, get everybody the world to see also that I've witnessed that. I didn't see that coming."

Rissa Reign, a youth coordinator who lives in the neighborhood, said she was cleaning her house when she heard gunfire and walked out to find out what was happening.

She began recording when she heard sirens, thinking she would share the video to Charlit, a Facebook group with 62,000 members where residents post about news and events. She had no idea how serious the situation had become until a SWAT vehicle pulled up behind her.

"Once we were out there, it was, 'Oh, no. This is an active situation,'" she said. "And the next thing you know, you're in the middle of something way bigger than what you thought."

Reign saw livestreaming as a way to keep the community informed, she said.

"Seeing that really puts things in perspective and lets you know that is really real, not just reading it or hearing about it in the news," she said of the live stream video. "When you really see it, you can, you know, you know that it's real."

Mary Angela Bock, a media professor at the University of Texas at Austin, said there are many reasons why someone might pull out their phone in a situation like the one in Charlotte. There are always going to be people who try to shoot videos because of a human attraction to violence or to catch someone in an embarrassing situation.

"There are also good reasons for good people to respectfully, from a safe distance, record police activity, or any kind of government activity for the sake of citizenship: to bear witness on behalf of other citizens, to bear witness on behalf of the community," she said. "We're all in this together."

Bock, who studies people who film law enforcement, said police leaders often will say to her that they support the idea of respectfully distanced citizen video because it creates more evidence. But that is sometimes easier said than done on the ground during a crisis situation.

"Police officers will often talk about how, and this is true, video doesn't always show the whole story. Video has to start and stop. Somebody might not have been there in the beginning, somebody might not see the whole thing. One perspective is not the whole perspective," she said.

"Which is why I advocate to people to respectfully record from a distance because the more perspectives, the better when we triangulate. When we have more than one view of a scene, we have a better idea of what happened," Bock said.

Numerous federal appeals courts have affirmed the right to record police work in public.

Stephen Dubovsky, professor emeritus of psychiatry at the State University of New York at Buffalo, said for someone in that situation, connecting with others through livestreaming might give them a sense of safety.

"You go out there and you might be at risk, but you're looking at it through your phone," he said. "You're looking at it through the video, you're one step detached from it."

In Chhoeun's video, two agents can be seen sheltering behind a vehicle. Another agent is shown by a fence in his yard, dropping to the ground as what appear to be bullets spray the area around him.

"It was so, so sad for law enforcement," he said. "I know they are not choosing to die on my backyard, but just do their job. And that's what happened to them, left their family behind."

## **After Roe, the network of people who help others get abortions see themselves as 'the underground'**

By LAURA UNGAR AP Science Writer

NAMPA, Idaho (AP) — Waiting in a long post office line with the latest shipment of "abortion aftercare kits," Kimra Luna got a text. A woman who'd taken abortion pills three weeks earlier was worried about bleeding — and disclosing the cause to a doctor.

"Bleeding doesn't mean you need to go in," Luna responded on the encrypted messaging app Signal. "Some people bleed on and off for a month."

It was a typically busy afternoon for Luna, a doula and reproductive care activist in a state with some of the strictest abortion laws in the nation. Those laws make the work a constant battle, the 38-year-old said, but they draw strength from others in a makeshift national network of helpers — clinic navigators, abortion fund leaders and individual volunteers who have become a supporting cast for people in restrictive states who are seeking abortions.

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Abortion rights advocates worry Idaho is a harbinger of where more states may be headed. Here, abortion is banned with very limited exceptions at all stages of pregnancy, and a law signed by the governor but temporarily blocked forbids adults from helping minors leave the state for abortions without parental consent. Recently, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments about Idaho's enforcement of its abortion ban in hospital emergencies.

Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, said laws like Idaho's protect the unborn. While she doesn't know if anything can be done to prevent people from helping others get abortions, she said, "I would certainly wish that they wouldn't do it."

But Luna and others consider their work mutual aid, as essential to the community as a volunteer fire department.

"I wouldn't be able to live with myself if I just acted scared and didn't do the things that I do," said the single parent of three boys, who uses the pronoun they. "I know I'm put here to do this."

'WE'VE ALWAYS FOUND A WAY'

Luna, who traces their family back generations in Idaho, lives and works out of a small house inherited from their grandparents. Their reproductive rights activism goes back to giving out condoms in eighth grade. And their abortion — while married and living in New York — only strengthened their resolve.

Luna helps run Idaho Abortion Rights, launched in 2022 with extra bail money that was raised after they got arrested at a protest. In their home office, they proudly display a name tag from the arrest near abortion pill flyers with sayings like "The Future is in Our Hands."

Strongly believing those pills should be accessible, they once brought some to the state Capitol steps to prove residents could still get them online, and recently got a face tattoo of a mailbox with abortion pills falling out of it.

Luna is a full-spectrum doula, aiding in births as well as abortions, and trains others how to be abortion doulas. They mostly provide remote support, advice, answers to questions throughout the abortion process and referrals to resources like [plancpills.org](http://plancpills.org), the Northwest Abortion Fund, out-of-state clinics and domestic violence shelters.

"We've always found a way to make sure people get help no matter what that help is," Luna said.

Sometimes, that's getting to an abortion clinic. Luna once flew to Colorado with a woman whose fetus died at 28 weeks gestation, staying by her side for the two-day procedure. "She needed somebody just to be there for emotional support and tell her what to expect," Luna said.

They also care for people after abortions. One April morning, eight women — from Idaho, South Dakota and Nebraska — requested aftercare kits. Luna assembled them on the couch, pink-and-purple braids falling in front of their face as they filled packets with supplies like sanitary pads, Advil, over-the-counter stomach and nausea medicines and red raspberry leaf tea.

Before going to the post office, Luna loaded their vehicle with big boxes of condoms for the evening's "packing party" — where volunteers would assemble other prevention-focused kits to give away.

BEYOND IDAHO

In places where abortion is legal, navigators at clinics provide some of the same sorts of logistical help Luna does, such as linking patients with abortion funds to pay for procedures and travel. In the year after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, the National Network of Abortion Funds said it saw a 39% increase in requests and doled out around \$37 million to people seeking abortions.

Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains has three full-time navigators for its 21 clinics, one of them virtual, in Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada. Together, the navigators handle about 1,000 calls a month — some from out-of-state patients who drive up to 17 hours for care, said Adrienne Mansanares, the organization's president and CEO.

Planned Parenthood of Maryland also has a three-person navigator program, which handles an influx of patients from restrictive states like West Virginia or places like Virginia, where the procedure is allowed until the third trimester but demand is so high that many people can't get appointments.

"What we're doing is just making it so that they can access something safer, sooner and with less com-



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plications," said Tica Torres, who oversees the others on the team.

Abortion opponents, meanwhile, try to steer people away from ending their pregnancies and toward centers they say also provide support like pregnancy-related information, parenting classes and baby supplies.

For someone "not sure how she is going to move forward and trying to figure out what resources are available for her if she wants to carry the pregnancy to term, there is support" at about 3,000 locations nationwide, said Tobias, of the Right to Life Committee. "That is definitely the better way to go."

Some people facing unplanned pregnancies find answers online.

DakotaRei Belladonna Frausto, a 19-year-old student at San Antonio College in Texas, recalled feeling "clueless and overwhelmed" when they became pregnant a couple of years ago. They knew they wanted an abortion, but learned they'd have to travel 700 miles to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to get one. They eventually got help through a Facebook group.

Frausto, whose family is Mescalero Apache, decided to start a new private group, which has several chat rooms where 500 members can share abortion experiences, resources and support — and find others of similar diverse backgrounds.

"What makes this group so effective," Frausto said, "is that people know everyone in the group who is actively answering questions has been in the same spot."

## 'A COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY'

Many of the two-dozen volunteers who gathered at a Boise community center for Luna's "packing party" shared their stories as they assembled boxes containing emergency contraception, condoms and information about accessing abortions.

Stephanie Vaughan, 39, said she had an abortion at 17, when a baby might have kept her from going to college and getting a good job. Martindale, standing across the table from her, recalled how a girlfriend was able to get an abortion when they were teens.

"No one knows how to raise a kid if you're a kid," said the now-45-year-old.

Martindale and his wife, Jen, devote much of their free time to Idaho Abortion Rights. At any point, they have 3,000 packages of donated emergency contraception to give away at their house.

"I have children that can be pregnant. I live in a state with a lot of marginalized people," said Jen Martindale, 48. "It's a community responsibility."

Tori Coates, a 20-year-old Starbucks barista, said if she got pregnant right now, "my option personally would be to suffer. I can't afford to leave the state."

By the time volunteers headed home, the waning light of the day illuminated the mountains. The Martindales had more work the next morning: taking reproductive health supplies to local shops that offer them for free.

Their first stop was Purple Lotus, a clothing and accessories store. Jerad Martindale set a box on the counter, which worker Taylor Castillo immediately opened. "Pregnancy tests? Oh good," she said. "Those have been flying!"

Customers ask daily about the supplies, she told the couple, especially emergency contraception. Teens often duck in to grab them.

Castillo said she's glad to help. When she suffered a miscarriage in 2021, her doctor prescribed the same pills used in medication abortion. She wonders what would happen if she needed those pills today.

"Now, everything is on fire," she said. "The good thing is, there are mutual aid programs that are willing to stand up for us." \_\_\_\_\_

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## A group of Republicans has united to defend the legitimacy of US elections and those who run them

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — It was Election Day last November, and one of Georgia's top election officials saw that reports of a voting machine problem in an eastern Pennsylvania county were gaining traction online.

So Gabriel Sterling, a Republican who had defended the 2020 election in Georgia amid an onslaught of threats, posted a message to his nearly 71,000 followers on the social platform X explaining what had happened and saying that all votes would be counted correctly.

He faced immediate criticism from one commenter about why he was weighing in on another state's election while other responses reiterated false claims about widespread fraud in the 2020 presidential election.

"It's still the right thing to do," Sterling told a gathering the following day, stressing the importance of Republican officials speaking up to defend elections. "We have to be prepared to say over and over again -- other states are doing it different than us, but they are not cheating."

Sterling, the chief operating officer for the Georgia Secretary of State's Office, is part of an effort begun after the last presidential election that seeks to bring together Republican officials who are willing to defend the country's election systems and the people who run them. They want officials to reinforce the message that elections are secure and accurate, an approach they say is especially important as the country heads toward another divisive presidential contest.

The group has held meetings in several states, with more planned before the Nov. 5 election.

With six months to go before the likely rematch between Democratic President Joe Biden and former Republican President Donald Trump, concerns are running high among election officials that public distrust of voting and ballot counting persists, particularly among Republicans. Trump, the presumptive GOP nominee, continues to sow doubts about the last presidential election and is warning his followers — without citing any evidence — that Democrats will try to cheat in the upcoming one.

This past week, during a campaign rally in Michigan, Trump repeated his false claim that Democrats rigged the 2020 election. "But we're not going to allow them to rig the presidential election," he said.

Just 22% of Republicans expressed high confidence that votes will be counted accurately in November, according to an Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll last year.

"It's an obligation on Republicans' part to stand up for the defense of our system because our party -- there's some blame for where we stand right now," said Kentucky's secretary of state, Michael Adams, who is part of the group and won reelection last year. "But it's also strategically wise for Republicans to say, 'Hey Republicans, you can trust this. Don't stay at home.'"

The effort, which began about 18 months ago, is coordinated by the SNF Agora Institute at Johns Hopkins University and the center-right think tank R Street Institute. The goal has been to start conversations about trust in elections, primarily among conservative officials, and to develop a set of principles to accomplish that.

"This has never been and will never be about Trump specifically," said Matt Germer, director of governance for the R Street Institute and a lead organizer of the effort. "It's about democratic principles at a higher level -- what does it mean to be a conservative who believes in democracy, the rule of law?"

He said an aim is to have a structure in place to support election officials who might find themselves in situations like that of Georgia's secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger in 2020, when he supported Trump but rejected false claims that the election was stolen. Prosecutors in Georgia have since charged Trump and others, alleging a plot to overturn the results. Trump has pleaded not guilty.

"You can be a Republican and you can believe in all the Republican ideas without having to say the election was stolen," Germer said.

A guiding principle for the group is that Republican officials should "publicly affirm the security and integrity of elections across the U.S. and avoid actively fueling doubt about elections in other jurisdictions."

Kim Wyman, a Republican who previously served as Washington state's top election official, said it's imperative when officials are confronted with questions about an election somewhere else that they don't

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avoid the question by promoting election procedures in their own state.

It's OK to say you don't know the various laws and procedures in another state, Wyman said, but she urged fellow Republicans to emphasize what states do have in common -- "the security measures, the control measures to make sure the election is being conducted with integrity."

Kansas' secretary of state, Scott Schwab, a Republican who has participated in meetings organized by the group, said he believes there are certain aspects of elections that officials should feel comfortable talking about. But he said he would remain cautious of speaking directly about something specific happening in another state.

"If I start going beyond my realm and my role, then they don't trust me. And if they don't trust me, then they don't trust the elections in Kansas, and that's pretty important," Schwab said in an interview.

Some election officials who have questioned election procedures outside their state have a different perspective.

Secretary of State Mac Warner of West Virginia, a Republican who has questioned the legitimacy of the 2020 election, said the focus should be on improving policies, such as putting in place voter ID requirements across the country, not silencing those who have questions.

"Our primary job as election officials is to build confidence, and that comes from strengthening protocols and not weakening them," he said.

Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose, a Republican who has raised questions about the way elections are run in other states, criticized what he called "activist lawsuits" and state officials who seek to change voting rules previously set by legislators.

"The things that happen in other states that go wrong are not the result of some cloak and dagger, secretive cabal conspiracy," he said in an interview. "That's the far-fetched stuff that makes for great YouTube videos and what have you. But the real things that go wrong in other states, are out in the open, are in full public view."

Utah Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson, a Republican who is the state's top election official and has been participating in the group's discussions, said avoiding criticism of other states and vouching for the legitimacy of election procedures is important for another reason: It can help reduce the threats and harassment directed toward election workers.

A recent survey by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University's Law School found that nearly 40% of local election officials had experienced such abuse. It's caused many to leave their jobs. Of 29 clerks in Utah, Henderson said 20 are new since 2020 and nine have never overseen an election.

"It's one thing to suggest that someone could do something better. It's another thing to impugn their integrity, their character, accuse them of cheating, accuse them of nefarious things that don't happen," Henderson said. "It's exhausting."

## **Hulk Hogan, hurricanes and a blockbuster recording: A week in review of the Trump hush money trial**

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Crucial witnesses took the stand in the second week of testimony in Donald Trump's hush money trial, including a California lawyer who negotiated deals at the center of the case and a longtime adviser to the former president.

Jurors heard a potentially pivotal piece of evidence — a 2016 recording of Trump discussing a plan to buy a Playboy model's silence — as well as testimony about the wrestler Hulk Hogan and hurricanes, literal and figurative.

Outside the jury's presence, Trump was fined for running afoul of a judge's gag order. Additional sanctions could await the presumptive Republican nominee for president.

A look at some of the highlights from the past week:

A POLITICAL HURRICANE ... AND AN ACTUAL ONE

Hope Hicks, a onetime Trump confidant who for years was central in his orbit, described in detail a

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seminal moment of the 2016 campaign: The Washington Post's disclosure of a 2005 "Access Hollywood" recording in which Trump boasted about grabbing women's genitals without their permission.

Hicks acknowledged being "concerned, very concerned" when a reporter reached out to her for comment before breaking the story.

"I had a good sense to believe this was going to be a massive story and that it was going to dominate the news cycle for the next several days," Hicks testified. "This was a damaging development."

The recording, made public just days before a debate with Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton, is relevant to the case because prosecutors believe it helps explain the frenetic efforts by Trump and allies in the campaign's remaining weeks to try to suppress any additional harmful stories that might arise.

In fact, in the aftermath of the tape's release, Hicks said she asked Michael Cohen, Trump's then-lawyer and personal fixer, to hunt down a rumor of another potentially damaging recording. "There was no such tape regardless," Hicks said, "but he sort of chased that down for me."

Regardless, the immediate impact of the "Access Hollywood" story was so intense, Hicks recalled, that it took attention away from an actual storm. Hurricane Matthew was dominating the news cycle when Hicks was contacted about the forthcoming story. That didn't last long.

"The 'Access Hollywood' tape pushed the hurricane off the news?" prosecutor Matthew Colangelo asked.

"Yes," Hicks replied.

## TRUMP THE EXTORTION TARGET?

Trump may be a criminal defendant, but an element of his defense came into view this past week when one of his lawyers suggested Trump might actually have been a victim.

Attorney Emil Bove implied during a notably tense cross-examination that his client had been effectively targeted for extortion by Keith Davidson, a crucial witness and the lawyer who negotiated hush money deals for two women, porn actor Stormy Daniels and Playboy model Karen McDougal, claiming to have had sexual encounters with Trump. Trump denies it.

Bove name-dropped a gaggle of celebrities he suggested had been coerced over the years into paying Davidson's clients eye-popping sums to suppress harmful videos or stories. Among them was actor Charlie Sheen, whom Bove said Davidson had "extracted sums of money from;" Davidson took issue with the word "extract" but said he had been involved in "valid settlements" with Sheen.

Davidson also acknowledge that he had faced an FBI investigation, but was never charged, for allegedly attempting to extort Hogan to head off the release of the professional wrestling star's sex tape.

By 2016, Bove suggested, Davidson was well-versed in the concept of squeezing celebrities such as Trump.

"And you did everything that you could to get as close to that line as possible in these negotiations without crossing it, right?" Bove asked.

"I did everything I could to make sure my activities were lawful," Davidson replied.

'WHAT DO WE GOT TO PAY FOR THIS?'

The prosecution's key witness, Cohen, has yet to testify — and Trump might never at all — but their voices were played in the courtroom in perhaps the most vivid piece of evidence so far.

Prosecutors played aloud a September 2016 recording that Cohen made of himself briefing the then-presidential candidate on a plan to buy McDougal's silence with a \$150,000 payment. McDougal was prepared to come forward with her account of an extramarital affair with Trump, a disclosure Trump and his allies were determined to prevent in the final days of the election.

"What do we got to pay for this? One-fifty?" Trump can be heard saying at one point.

They discuss whether the payment should be done with cash or check. Then the recording cuts out.

Though the existence of the recording surfaced in the summer of 2018 and has long been known to the public, its disclosure to the jury was a dramatic moment meant to establish that the hush money payment was done with Trump's knowledge.

He appeared visibly irritated as the recording was played. Jurors seemed riveted.

THE 'JERK'

The recording was hardly the only time Cohen surfaced in court over the past week. When he did, it was generally in a negative light.



Davidson said his introduction to Cohen came in 2011 when Davidson was told that he needed to return an angry call from Cohen over a blog post related to Daniels and Trump. Davidson said Cohen was described to him by Daniels' talent manager as "some jerk" who have been "very, very aggressive and threatened to sue me."

When Davidson called Cohen and introduced himself, "I was just met with, like, a hustle barrage of insults and insinuations and allegations. That went on for quite a while."

Davidson also recounted a memorable phone conversation with Cohen one month after the 2016 election in which the Trump attorney sounded "depressed and despondent" and complained about being passed over for a role in the new Trump administration.

"He said something to the effect of: 'Jesus Christ. Can you (expletive) believe I'm not going to Washington,'" Davidson described Cohen as saying. "After everything I've done for that (expletive) guy. I can't believe I'm not going to Washington. I've saved that guy's (expletive) so many times, you don't even know."

The uncharitable characterizations may help Trump's team in its efforts to undermine Cohen's credibility. But they could also help prosecutors distance themselves from Cohen, subtly indicating to jurors that he is not a teammate but rather someone who simply has information.

## TO JAIL A PRESIDENT

A side issue throughout the trial is what to do about Trump's outside-of-court comments. He repeatedly has maligned witnesses and suggested bias on the jury — all despite a judge's gag order meant to bar him from verbal tirades against key players in the case.

Trump was assessed a \$9,000 fine — \$1,000 for each of nine separate gag order violations that the judge identified. Prosecutors later requested an additional \$4,000 penalty for what they said were additional breaches of the order.

Yet it remains unclear what, if anything, Judge Juan M. Merchan can do in the event of continued violations. Merchan floated the possibility of jail, an unprecedented outcome for a former American president. That also would risk inflaming Trump's base as he pursues the presidency and would further upend the 2024 White House race.

Trump's attorneys insist he needs some leeway to be able to respond to relentless criticism, including from witnesses, and that his candidacy means he's the subject of nonstop news media coverage.

Merchan seemed unpersuaded, but jail, for now at least, seems to be no one's desired outcome.

"Because each of these statements was made before the Court held the Defendant in contempt for violating this order nine previous times, and because we prefer to minimize disruptions to this proceeding, we are not yet seeking jail," prosecutor Chris Conroy said.

"But," he added, "the Court's decision this past Tuesday will inform the approach we take to any future violations."

## Kevin Spacey denies new allegations of inappropriate behavior to be aired on UK television next week

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Kevin Spacey, the Oscar-winning actor, has denied new allegations of inappropriate behaviour from men who will feature in a documentary on British television that is due to be released next week.

In an online interview with journalist Dan Wootton, Spacey said he has never done anything illegal and admitted that he has struggled to get back to work after being acquitted last year of criminal charges in a London court.

"I can't go through this again, allowing myself to be baselessly attacked without defending myself," he said in the interview entitled "Kevin Spacey: Right Of Reply" which was aired late Friday on Wootton's YouTube channel.

Last July, a London jury acquitted Spacey on sexual assault charges stemming from allegations by four

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men dating back 20 years. The court victory was his second since he saw off a \$40 million lawsuit in 2022 in New York brought by "Star Trek: Discovery" actor Anthony Rapp.

The documentary "Spacey Unmasked" is set to be aired on May 6 and 7 on Channel 4 in Britain and streamed on Max in the U.S.

The documentary is said to feature testimony from men regarding events between 1976 and 2013, the actor revealed during the interview.

"I take full responsibility for my past behaviour and my actions, but I cannot and will not take responsibility or apologize to anyone who's made up stuff about me or exaggerated stories about me," said Spacey, who won Academy Awards for "The Usual Suspects" and "American Beauty".

"I've never told someone that if they give me sexual favors, then I will help them out with their career, never," he added.

Spacey, who served as artistic director of the Old Vic Theatre in London from 2004 to 2015, again admitted that he was a "flirt" with men in their 20s and that he made "clumsy" passes at times.

"I've clearly hooked up with some men, who thought they might get ahead in their careers by having a relationship with me," he said. "But there was no conversation with me, it was all part of their plan, a plan that was always destined to fail, because I wasn't in on the deal."

The actor also claimed on X, formerly Twitter, that he had "repeatedly requested" that Channel 4 give him more than seven days to respond to the allegations made about him in their documentary.

Spacey said the broadcaster refused "on the basis that they feel that asking for a response in 7 days to new, anonymized and non-specific allegations is a 'fair opportunity' for me to refute any allegations made against me."

"Each time I have been given the time and a proper forum to defend myself, the allegations have failed under scrutiny and I have been exonerated," he added.

Spacey said he has struggled to get back to work after being acquitted of all criminal charges, describing his experience as a "life sentence."

His acting career has been adversely affected since 2017 when he was first publicly accused of inappropriate behaviour at the beginning of the #MeToo movement. He then lost his lead role as Frank Underwood in the Netflix drama "House of Cards".

Channel 4 has been contacted for comment.

## Today in History: May 5

### Alan Shepard becomes first American in space

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, May 5, the 126th day of 2024. There are 240 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 5, 1961, astronaut Alan B. Shepard Jr. became America's first space traveler as he made a 15-minute suborbital flight aboard Mercury capsule Freedom 7.

On this date:

In 1494, during his second voyage to the Western Hemisphere, Christopher Columbus landed in Jamaica.

In 1821, Napoleon Bonaparte, 51, died in exile on the island of St. Helena.

In 1925, schoolteacher John T. Scopes was charged in Tennessee with violating a state law that prohibited teaching the theory of evolution. (Scopes was found guilty, but his conviction was later set aside.)

In 1942, wartime sugar rationing began in the United States.

In 1945, in the only fatal attack of its kind during World War II, a Japanese balloon bomb exploded on Gearhart Mountain in Oregon, killing the pregnant wife of a minister and five children. Denmark and the Netherlands were liberated as a German surrender went into effect.

In 1973, Secretariat won the Kentucky Derby, the first of his Triple Crown victories, in a time of 1:59.4,

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a record that still stands.

In 1981, Irish Republican Army hunger-striker Bobby Sands died at the Maze Prison in Northern Ireland on his 66th day without food.

In 1994, Singapore caned American teenager Michael Fay for vandalism, a day after the sentence was reduced from six lashes to four in response to an appeal by President Bill Clinton.

In 2009, Texas health officials confirmed the first death of a U.S. resident with swine flu.

In 2014, a narrowly divided Supreme Court upheld Christian prayers at the start of local council meetings.

In 2016, former Los Angeles trash collector Lonnie Franklin Jr. was convicted of 10 counts of murder in the "Grim Sleeper" serial killings that targeted poor, young Black women over two decades.

In 2017, President Donald Trump signed his first piece of major legislation, a \$1 trillion spending bill to keep the government operating through September.

In 2018, Justify, on his way to a Triple Crown sweep, splashed through the slop at Churchill Downs to win the Kentucky Derby by 2½ lengths, becoming the first horse since Apollo in 1882 to win the Derby without having raced as a 2-year-old.

In 2020, Tyson Foods said it would resume limited operation of its huge pork processing plant in Waterloo, Iowa, with enhanced safety measures, more than two weeks after closing the facility because of a coronavirus outbreak among workers.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Michael Murphy is 86. Actor Lance Henriksen is 84. Comedian-actor Michael Palin is 81. Actor John Rhys-Davies is 80. Rock correspondent Kurt Loder is 79. Rock musician Bill Ward (Black Sabbath) is 76. Actor Melinda Culea is 69. Actor Lisa Eilbacher is 67. Actor Richard E. Grant is 67. Former broadcast journalist John Miller is 66. Rock singer Ian McCulloch (Echo and the Bunnymen) is 65. Broadcast journalist Brian Williams is 65. Rock musician Shawn Drover (Megadeth) is 58. TV personality Kyan (KY'-ihn) Douglas is 54. Actor Tina Yothers is 51. R&B singer Raheem DeVaughn is 49. Actor Santiago Cabrera is 46. Actor Vincent Kartheiser is 45. Singer Craig David is 43. Actor Danielle Fishel is 43. Actor Henry Cavill is 41. Actor Clark Duke is 39. Soul singer Adele is 36. Rock singer Skye Sweetnam is 36. R&B singer Chris Brown is 35. Figure skater Nathan Chen is 25.