

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 1 of 78

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- NSU Football](#)
- [3- NSU Volleyball](#)
- [4- Groton Area girls are state bound in soccer](#)
- [8- Manhart Ad](#)
- [9- Sunday Extras](#)
- [27- Gov. Noem's Weekly Column](#)
- [28- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column](#)
- [29- Rep. Johnson's Weekly Column](#)
- [30- Senator Mike Rounds Column](#)
- [31- Rev. Snyder's Column](#)
- [33- EarthTalk - Waltz track record on climate](#)
- [34- South Dakota Average Gas Prices](#)
- [35- Drought Monitor](#)
- [36- SD SearchLight: IM 29: If voters decriminalize marijuana, lawmakers would make the call on sales](#)
- [39- Weather Pages](#)
- [43- Daily Devotional](#)
- [44- Subscription Form](#)
- [45- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [46- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [47- News from the Associated Press](#)



Sunday, Oct. 13

Fellowship of Christian Students (FCS) monthly meeting.

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; No Sunday School; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Charge Conference, 11:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: St. John's at 9 a.m., Zion at 11 a.m., No Sunday School.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; No Sunday School, Choir, 6 p.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.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, Oct. 14

No School - Native American Day
Volleyball at Britton (7th at 4 p.m.; 8th/C at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow)

Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Groton Community Center

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

United Methodist: PEO Meeting (outside group), 3:30 p.m.

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

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

Three is Sweet, Wolves Win Third Straight on Time Expiring Field Goal

Duluth, Minn. – The Northern State University football team continued their win streak on Saturday, defeating Minnesota Duluth on the road. The Wolves win over the Bulldogs was the first since 2015, as Northern grabbed a 23-15 victory at home.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 24, UMD 21

Records: NSU 3-4 (3-3 NSIC), UMD 3-3 (2-3 NSIC)

Attendance: 2089

HOW IT HAPPENED

The two teams played scoreless football through the first quarter with Northern breaking through in the opening minute of the second

Wyatt Block pushed through the goal line on a 1-yard run to give the Wolves a 7-0 lead

Daniel Britt connected with Ty Wiley on a 33-yard, back of the endzone passing touchdown with 1:02 left in the half and the Wolves led 14-0

The Bulldogs tallied a 17-yard receiving score as time expired in the half and Northern entered the locker room with a 14-7 halftime lead

Similar to the first, neither team was able to break through in the third with some stellar defensive play, including an interception for both squads

Northern's final drive of the third quarter ended with a 12-yard rushing touchdown by Hank Kraft at 14:55 in the fourth

Minnesota Duluth clawed back, scoring back-to-back touchdowns at 8:01 and 2:23 to tie the game at 21

Noah Smith opened the Wolves game winning drive with a 31-yard kick return

With just over two minutes remaining in regulation, the Wolves trotted 44 yards down the field, putting Jeremy Caruso within field goal range with one second remaining

The sophomore sent his second longest attempt of the season, 38-yards, straight through the uprights as time expired

The win marks the Wolves third straight and the second over an NSIC opponent they hadn't defeated in nearly a decade

NSU recorded a game leading 159 yards passing and added 139 yards rushing on a Bulldog defense that entered the contest leading the NSIC giving up just 34.0 yards rushing on average per game

In addition, they averaged 28.0 yards per kick return, went 9-of-14 on third down and 2-of-3 on fourth down, scored all three times they entered the redzone, and sacked the Duluth quarterback on three occasions

Britt threw for 143 total yards, completing 15-of-20 attempts with one touchdown, one interception, and a 33-yard long

Block led the team for the third straight game with 77 yards rushing and one touchdown, averaging 4.5 yards per carry with a 21-yard long

Tanner Branson led the receivers with a season high 70 yards, averaging 14.0 yards per reception with a 32-yard long

Defensively, seven Wolves tallied four tackles or more in the win led by Jake Adams with nine, including six solo stops

Max Van Landingham recorded his second straight game with two sacks, while Matthew Baker added the team's third; the pair combined for 11 total tackles in the win

Kegan Mountain pulled down his third interception of the season on the Bulldog's opening play of their first drive of the third

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 3 of 78

Caruso tallied 225 yards on kickoff, went 3-of-3 in PATs, and sealed the game for the Wolves on his 38-yard field goal; his fourth make of the season

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Wyatt Block: 77 yards rushing, 1 touchdown, 21-yard long

Ty Wiley: 32 yards receiving, 1 touchdown, 33-yard long, 25 kick return yards

Jeremy Caruso: 38-yard field goal, 3-3 PAT, 225 kickoff yards

Matthew Baker: 7 tackles, 1.5 tackles for a loss, 1.0 sack for a loss of 12 yards

Max Van Landingham: 4 tackles, 2.0 sacks for a loss of five yards

UP NEXT

Northern returns to Dacotah Bank Stadium next Saturday, October 19, hosting Southwest Minnesota State. Kickoff is set for 6 p.m. in the annual Blackout Cancer game.

No. 21 Northern Netters Falls in Four Sets to Winona State

Winona, Minn. – The No. 21 Northern State University volleyball team dropped their second straight match on Saturday evening, falling to Winona State. Two of the four sets went to extra points with the Warriors recording 26-24 and 27-25 wins in the third and fourth.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 1, WSU 3

Records: NSU 11-4 (3-4 NSIC), WSU 12-8 (5-4 NSIC)

Attendance: 455

HOW IT HAPPENED

The Wolves dropped the opening set 25-23, however rallied back with a 25-13 win in the second Northern hit a match leading .270 and recorded 62 kills, 54 assists, 76 digs, five aces, and three blocks

The NSU defense forced 20 WSU attack errors as the Warriors hit .253

Hanna Thompson led three Wolves in double figures with 19 kills, hitting .333

Morissen Samuels and Natalia Szybinska followed with 13 and 12 kills respectively

Abby Meister led the defense with a season high 31 digs and added two assists

Keri Walker averaged just under 12 assists per set with 47 total in the match, adding ten digs, five kills, one ace, and one block

Reese Johnson was the final Wolf in double figures defensively with 13 digs, as well as two assists

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Hanna Thompson: 19 kills, .333 attack%, 5 digs

Keri Walker: 47 assists, 10 digs, 5 kills

Abby Meister: 31 digs, 2 assists

UP NEXT

The Wolves will play a split home and away week next Thursday and Saturday. Northern will host MSU Moorhead on October 17 at 6 p.m. and travel to Minot State for a 2 p.m. match on October 19.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 4 of 78

Groton Area girls are state bound in soccer

The Groton Area girls soccer team is heading for the state championship game for the second year in a row. Groton Area defeated Dakota Valley, 2-1, in the state championship semifinal game played Saturday in Groton.

The Panthers scored first on a penalty kick when Lexi Stusse kicked it in to the corner of the net with 31:58 left in the first half. Groton Area had a penalty kick at the 7:20 mark. Kennedy Hansen kicked it, but the goal keeper stopped the ball from going in; however, the ball was loose and the Tigers had a followup kick only to have the Dakota Valley goal keeper stop the ball again. The first half ended with the Panthers on top, 1-0.

Then with 16:38 left in the game, Brooklyn Hansen had a penalty kick that she made and the game was tied at one. Four minutes later, Laila Roberts would kick the ball into the net and the Tigers took the lead, 2-1. From there, Groton Area did time management, kicking the ball around and out of bounds and trying to keep the ball in the Dakota Valley end.

That will set up the championship game on Saturday, 5 p.m., at Yankton as Sioux Falls Christian defeated West Central. The game ended up tied at the end of regulation; but Sioux Falls Christian would win in the shoot out, 4-2.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Avantara - Groton, Dacotah Bank, Groton Chamber, Groton Chiropractic Clinic, Harry Implement of Ferney, John Sieh Agency, Lori's Pharmacy, Milbrandt Enterprises, POET, Rix Farms/R&M Farms, S & S Lumber, Sun & Sea Travel, The Meathouse of Andover, Weismantel Insurance Agency of Columbia.

- Paul Kosel



Taryn Traphagen
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Faith Traphagen
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 5 of 78



Kennedy Hansen
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Brooklyn Hansen
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Sydney Locke
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Jerica Locke
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 6 of 78



Coach Matt Baumgartner is being interviewed by Paper Paul on GDILIVE.COM after the game. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Emerlee Jones
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



The Groton Area girls soccer team is off to the state championship game next Saturday in Yankton. The Tigers will take on Sioux Falls Christian in the title game, starting at 5 p.m.

(Photo from Groton Area facebook page)

Groton Daily Independent



Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 7 of 78

Class A - State Girls Soccer



#1 -

	1 Sioux Falls Christian	10	FINAL
	8 Belle Fourche	0	



#2 - West Central High School Ande...

	4 West Central	3	FINAL
	5 St. Thomas M...	0	



#3 - Groton Soccer Complex

	2 Groton Area	11	FINAL
	7 Vermillion	1	

#4 - Dakota Valley High School

	3 Dakota Valley	4	FINAL
	6 Garretson	0	



#5 - Sioux Falls Christian School

	1 Sioux Falls Christian	1	FINAL
	4 West Central	1	



4-2



#6 - Groton Soccer Complex

	2 Groton Area	2	FINAL
	3 Dakota Valley	1	

#7 - Crane-Youngworth Field

	1 Sioux Falls Christian	11-2-2	10/19 5:00 PM CT
	2 Groton Area	9-1-1	

STATE CHAMPION

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 8 of 78

Working to Protect & Promote Traditional American Values

- ✓ Pro Police
- ✓ Pro Constitution
- ✓ Pro Family



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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 1

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General Election - Nov. 5
Absentee Voting has begun

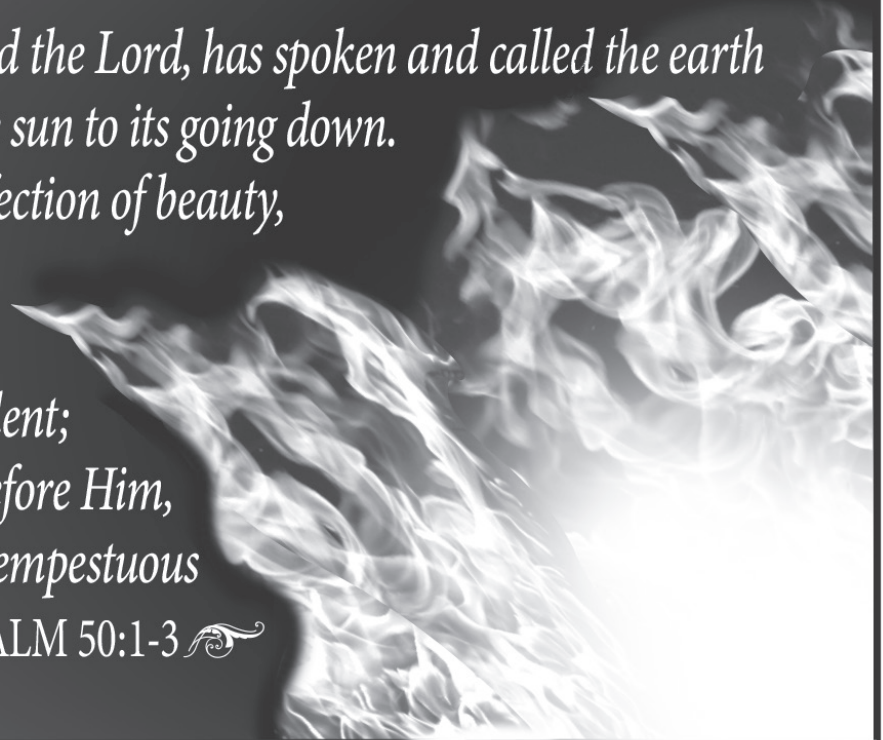
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 9 of 78

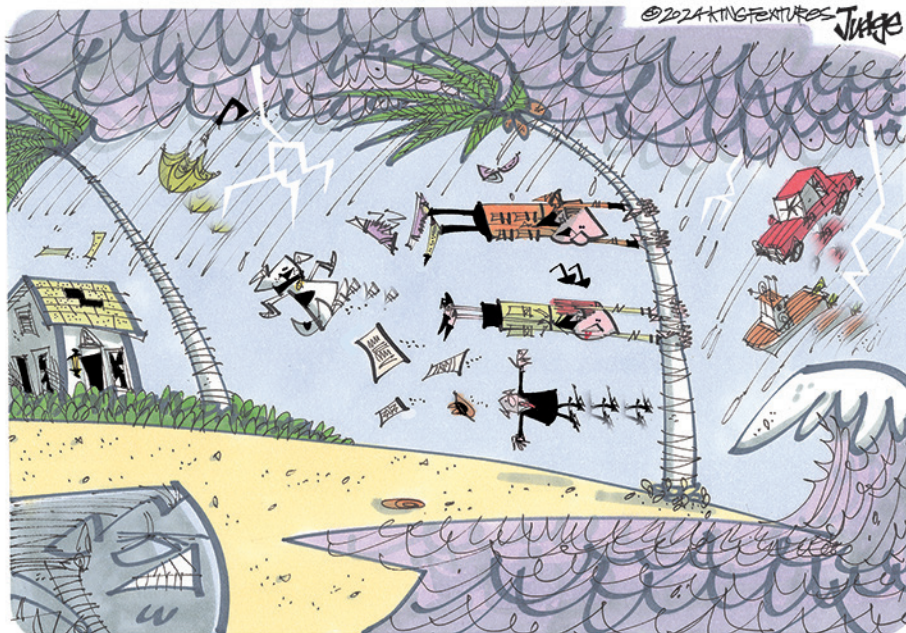


THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*The Mighty One, God the Lord, has spoken and called the earth
from the rising of the sun to its going down.
Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God will shine forth.
Our God shall come,
and shall not keep silent;
a fire shall devour before Him,
and it shall be very tempestuous
all around Him. PSALM 50:1-3*



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"THERE WAS A CLIMATE CHANGE SKEPTIC HERE A MINUTE AGO, BUT I THINK HE GOT BLOWN AWAY."

BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. Who found an Ethiopian eunuch sitting in a chariot reading the words of Esaias (Isaiah)? *Ahaz, Philip, Jotham, Uzziah*

3. In John 3, what does Jesus say that everyone practicing evil hates? *The light, Truth, The Lord, Believers*

4. From Joshua 2, where did Rahab hide Israelite spies? *Under table, In cave, On roof, With oxen*

5. What did Jesus send into a herd of swine? *Unclean spirits, Justice, Breath of life, Mighty wind*

6. Who was the father of Solomon? *Nathan, Uriah, Judas, David*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Philip, 3) The light, 4) On roof, 5) Unclean spirits, 6) David

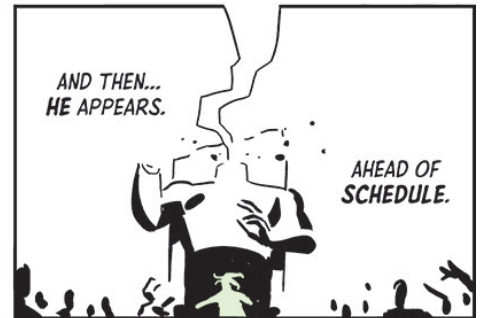
Find expanded trivia online with Wilson Casey at www.patreon.com/triviaguy. FREE TRIAL!

Groton Daily Independent

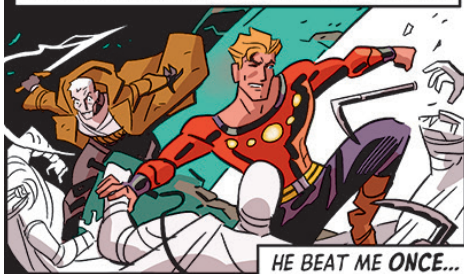
Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 11 of 78



I AM SOJAS, AND I HOLD IN MY HANDS THE KEYS TO DEFEATING OUR FALSE RULERS.

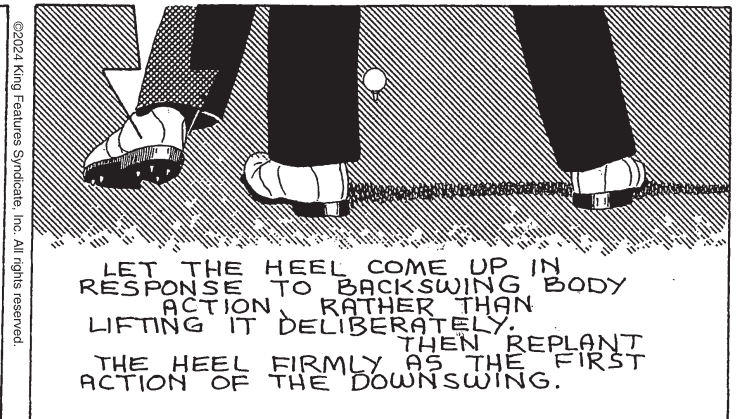
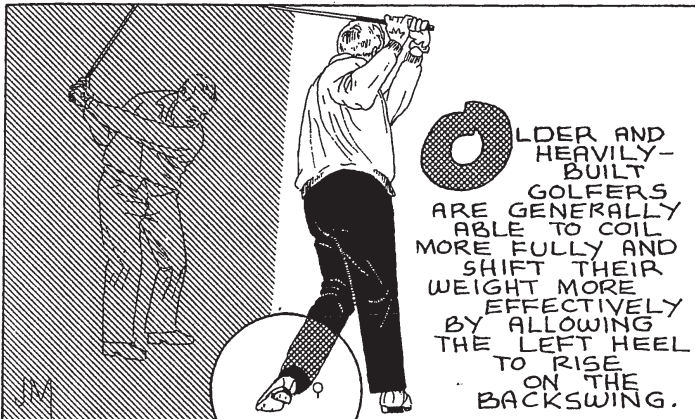


FLASH GORDON, ALONG WITH SOME LUNATIC.



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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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Endometrial Biopsy Indicated for Woman With Blood in Urine

DEAR DR. ROACH: About three months ago, I bled a bit while urinating. This was the first (and only) time in over 30 years that this happened since I went through menopause. An ultrasound was performed, and they found a mildly thickened endometrium (6.1 mm) with scattered cystic change and without focal lesion.

My gynecologist is suggesting an endometrial biopsy. I am concerned because I have no symptoms other than kidney stones. I'm due to see a urologist, but even with my kidney stones, I have no symptoms. I am 80 and concerned about anesthesia. Should I go ahead with the biopsy? -- L.O.

ANSWER: A thickened endometrium is concerning for uterine cancer. The most common symptom of uterine cancer is abnormal uterine bleeding. This usually takes the form of red, pink or brown spotting. However, it sounds like you had blood in your urine, which is more concerning for kidney stones than uterine bleeding.

Your ultrasound is abnormal; 5 mm is the maximum thickness for a normal endometrium. Getting a biopsy is clearly the recommended procedure, as it gives guidance on the next steps. Still, your risk of uterine cancer is small. You do not have to proceed with the biopsy if you do not want to.

An endometrial biopsy is an in-office procedure with minimal risk. My textbooks say there is minimal pain, but my patients tell me this isn't always the case. You don't have to receive anesthesia; you can take pain medication (such as naproxen), get a local anesthetic, or do both. I've had several patients who've requested a nerve block and were very happy with their decision.

If the biopsy shows cancer of the endometrium, surgery is the preferred treatment, but radiation is also a possibility for some people.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have always been a runner, but foot pain has kept me from running in the past few years. Now I have severe pain, even when walking. An MRI showed nothing wrong. The foot and ankle specialist I saw did X-rays and found a large bone spur. He said that surgery to remove the bone spur could get me to walk and run again.

I'm 70 and unanxious to have surgery, and the surgeon says he does many of these surgeries with a good outcome. What do you think? -- E.W.

ANSWER: Insertional Achilles tendinopathy is a cause of foot pain where the Achilles tendon is inserted into the calcaneus, the heel bone. This problem frequently occurs with runners, especially those with tight calf muscles. The damage done to the tendon sometimes causes a reaction in the bone, causing an osteophyte (a bone spur).

Conservative management includes rest, ice and physical therapy to help with strength and flexibility. Anti-inflammatory medicines may be helpful. Splinting at nighttime, orthotics, or special shoes are also helpful for some people. Prior to considering surgery, experts will consider shockwave treatment, although it's not clear how effective this is.

If surgery is considered, there are several different techniques, and your surgeon will pick what they think is best for you and what they have the most expertise in. Patient satisfaction rates are reported to be between 86%-95% with surgery.

Given the fact that your life has already been affected, and the likelihood that your pain and decreased ability to exercise is likely to worsen, you should seek more aggressive treatment. If physical therapy and other nonoperative treatments have failed, I recommend you strongly consider surgery.

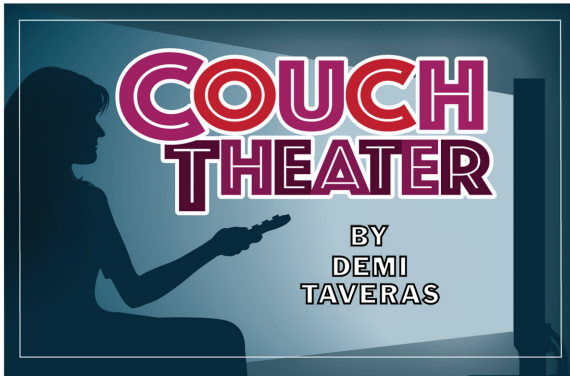
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 13 of 78



Cate Blanchett, left, and Sacha Baron Cohen star in "Disclaimer."

(Courtesy of Applr TV+)

"IF" (PG) -- John Krasinski ("A Quiet Place") wrote, produced, directed, and voiced a character in this fantasy comedy that's fit for the whole family. Led by Cailey Fleming ("Loki") and Ryan Reynolds ("Deadpool & Wolverine"), "IF" follows 12-year-old Bea (Fleming), who moves into her grandmother's apartment as her father awaits heart surgery. One day, Bea starts seeing unfamiliar creatures who are accompanied by a man named Cal (Reynolds). After they give her quite a scare, Cal explains that he works with the matchmaking agency to give imaginary friends, aka IFs, new homes before they disappear. So, Bea decides to embark on an adventure with Cal to help the IFs find their new children. A few voices in the cast you might recognize are Blake Lively, Emily Blunt, George Clooney, Matt Damon and Steve Carell, among many others. Out now. (Amazon Prime Video)

"Woman of the Hour" (R) -- Anna Kendrick ("Pitch Perfect") chose to make her directorial debut with a dicey crime thriller that is based on the true story of serial killer Rodney Alcala. Taking place in 1978, the film picks up just as aspiring actress Cheryl Bradshaw (Kendrick) lands a gig on a dating show called "The Dating Game." As the bachelorette, she gets to interview three potential suitors on the show, one of them being Rodney himself. After Rodney successfully charms her, Cheryl wins a date with him, but romance will be the furthest thing from her mind once she realizes that she could be his next victim. Tony Hale ("Veep") and Daniel Zovatto ("Station Eleven") co-star in the film, which releases on Oct. 18. (Netflix)

"Caddo Lake" (PG-13) -- This hair-raising thriller hails from producer M. Night Shyamalan and stars Dylan O'Brien ("Saturday Night") and Eliza Scanlen ("The First Lady"). Scanlen, who's no stranger to the thriller genre, plays a young woman whose 8-year-old sister, Anna, mysteriously vanishes at Caddo Lake. Even though her family searches tirelessly to find her, the clues behind Anna's disappearance are few and far between. Meanwhile, a young man (O'Brien) returns to his family home near Caddo Lake, which triggers violent memories of when his mother died in an accident on the lake. Could these two tragic stories actually be intertwined? Watch now to find out. (Max)

"Disclaimer" (TV-MA) -- It seems that we have an abundance of suspenseful thrillers rather than typical horror this spooky season! This new psychological-thriller series was written/directed by Alfonso Cuaron ("Roma") and based on the 2015 novel of the same name. The extraordinary Cate Blanchett ("Tar") stars as Catherine Ravenscroft, a celebrated journalist known for revealing hidden truths within different institutions. But when a newly released novel includes her as a character, a deeply hidden truth of her own is publicized for the world to read about. The first two episodes are out now, with subsequent episodes being released every Friday. Fun fact about the series: Finneas O'Connell, who frequently collaborates on music with his sister, Billie Eilish, composed the score. (Apple TV+)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 14 of 78



1. Name the original artist to release "You Light Up My Life."
2. Who wrote and released "Like a Prayer"?
3. Which artist penned and released "Two Hearts"?
4. Name the artist who released "Straight Up."
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "One night in a disco on the outskirts of Frisco, I was cruisin' with my favorite gang."

Answers

1. Kacey Cisyk, a classically trained opera singer of Ukrainian heritage, for the soundtrack of the film of the same name in 1977. This was followed by a cover by Debby Boone that

stayed at No. 1 on the charts for 10 weeks. The song went on to win several awards, including a Grammy for Song of the Year.

2. Madonna, in 1989. Pepsi cut a \$5 million deal with Madonna and used the song in one of their commercials.

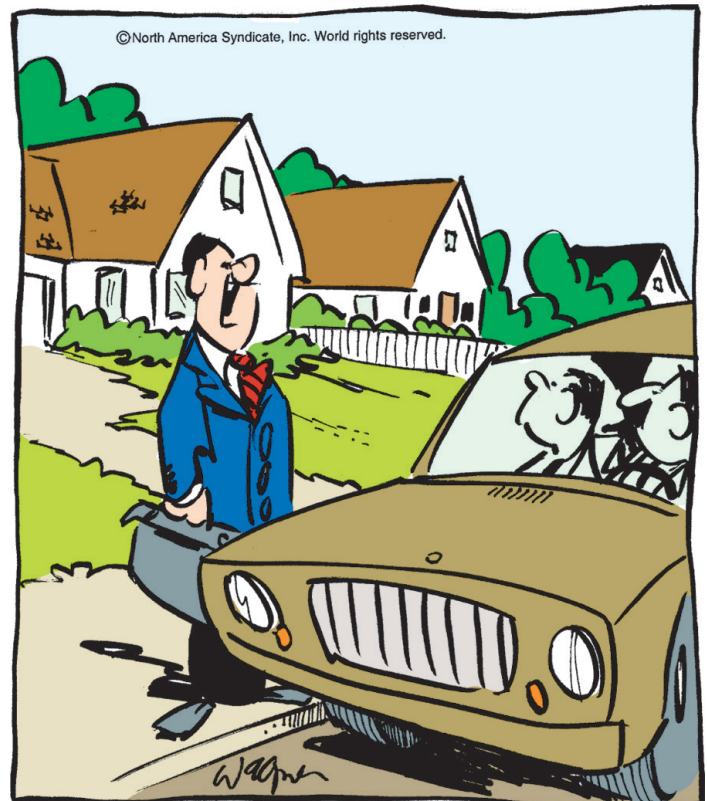
3. Phil Collins, in 1989. The song was used in the soundtrack for the 1988 film "Buster." Collins also played the lead in the heist comedy film.

4. Paula Abdul, in 1988.

5. "He's the Greatest Dancer," by Sister Sledge in 1979. The song, originally intended for Chic to record, topped the Billboard Dance Club Songs chart, as well as others.

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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}



"You can't kick me out of the car pool. ...
It's MY car!"

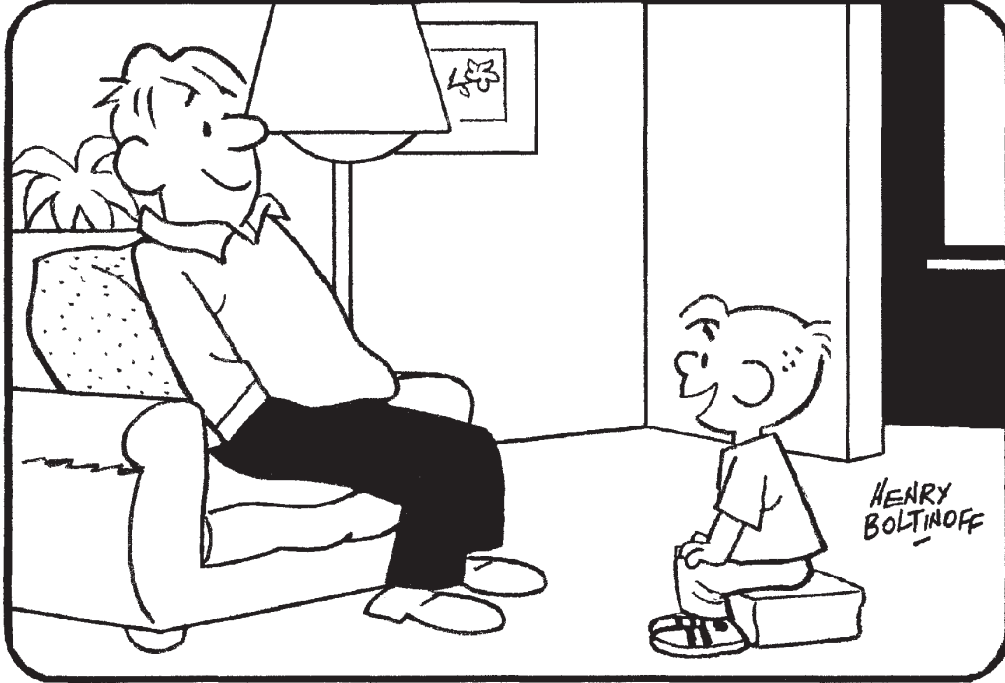
Just Like Cats & Dogs ^{by Dave T. Phipps}



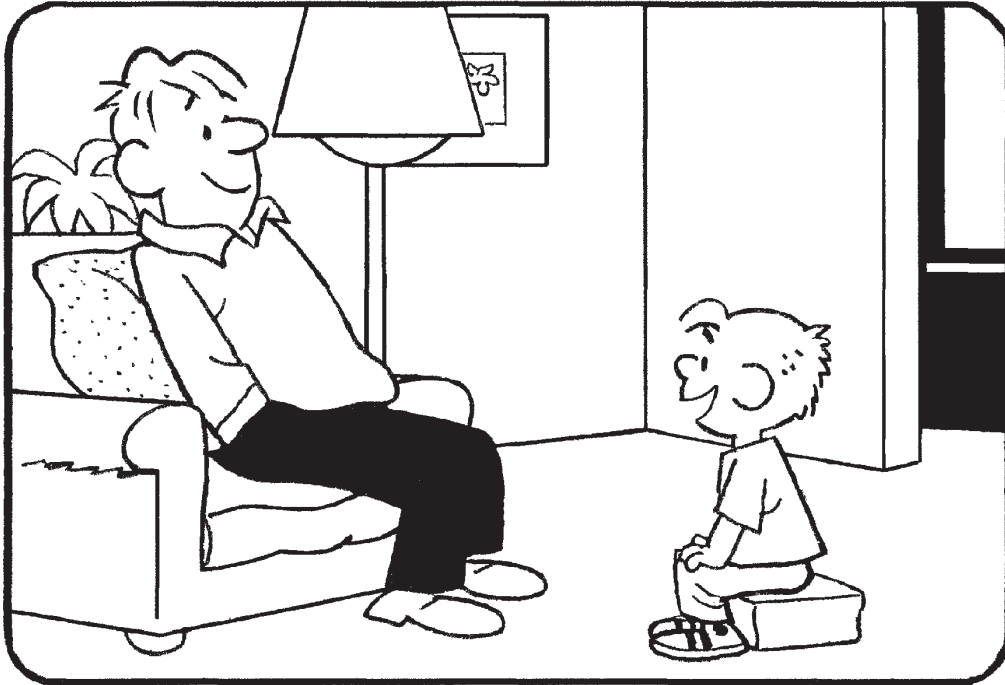
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

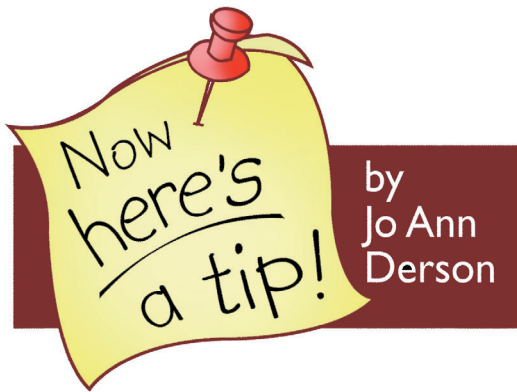


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Differences: 1. Lamp is moved. 2. Arm of chair is different. 3. Wall is wider. 4. Picture frame is different. 5. Pillow is different. 6. Boy's hair is different.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 16 of 78



* Sometimes dry erase markers and permanent markers look the same in a hurry. Ever grabbed a marker to write a note on a dry erase white board and found that it wouldn't wipe off? To remove permanent marker from a white board, try using a pencil eraser. Rub lightly on the marker areas only, working from the outside in. It should come off.

* Rusty bicycle handles can be unsightly and a pain. Make a paste of salt and lemon juice (three parts salt, one part lemon juice), and use it to rub the rust away with a dry cloth.

* What will you do with all that candy from trick-or-treating? Make your holiday cookie plans now, and you can freeze some for later baking use.

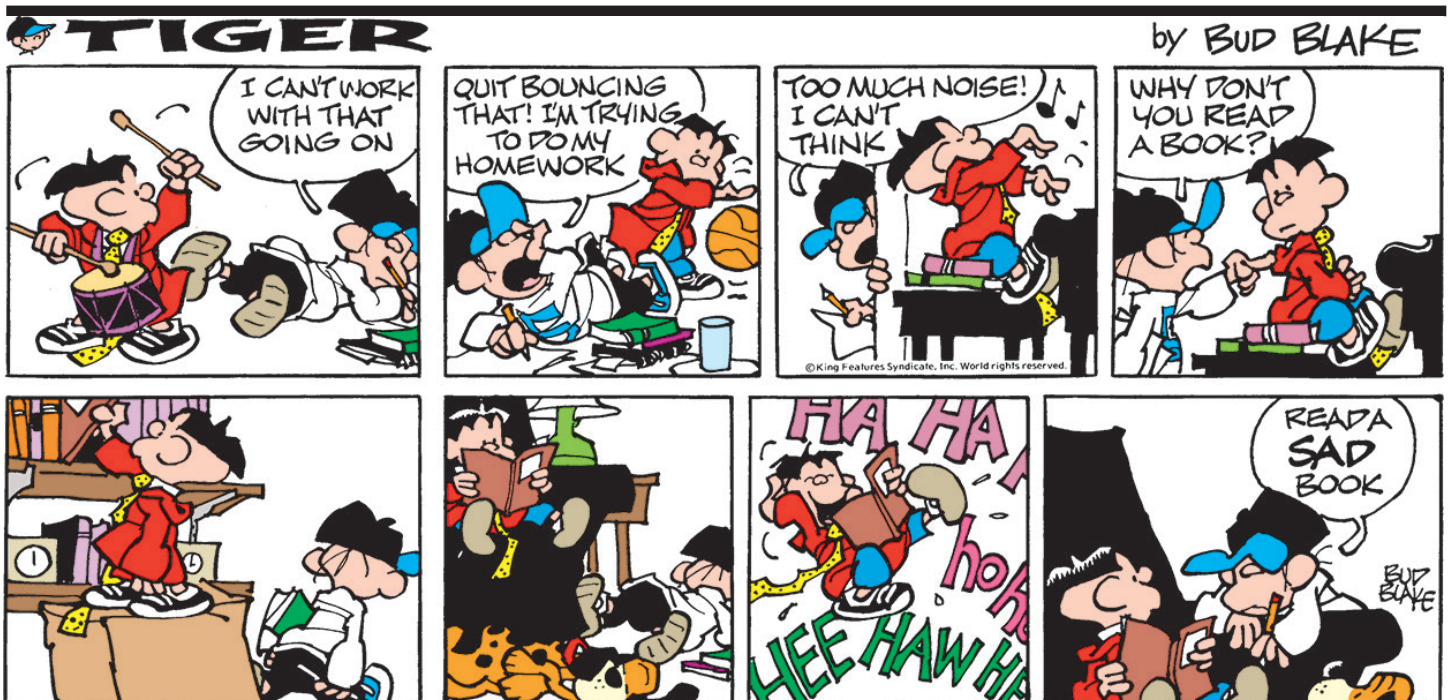
* "If you have magazines or books that you are finished reading, perhaps you'd consider donating them to local seniors centers. You can look in the yellow pages to see if there are any near you. Often, the seniors are grateful to have new reading material." -- T.C. in Florida

* Many more of us are using the reusable fabric shopping bags nowadays. A few cities have banned the use of plastic bags for retail shops. These bags are much better for the environment, and can hold a lot more groceries per bag. One thing many people forget to do is wash them. You can take out the plastic insert (if there is one) and toss them in the washing machine. Hang to dry and you're carrying around a much cleaner bag!

* To sharpen scissors, fold over several layers of aluminum foil and cut into strips.

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

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 17 of 78

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Knock
- 4 Boxer Ali
- 9 "60 Minutes" ainer
- 12 Leading lady?
- 13 Edmonton player
- 14 2016 Olympics city
- 15 Moisturizer
- 17 Finale
- 18 Name
- 19 Buzzing insect
- 21 Neglect
- 24 Steerer's place
- 25 "So that's it!"
- 26 QB's goals
- 28 Nasal partitions

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

- 31 Lopsided win
- 33 Feeling down
- 35 Tank filler
- 36 Chef's garb
- 38 Up to
- 40 "Alice" waitress
- 41 Suffix with "techno"
- 43 Break fluid?
- 45 Sentence fragment
- 47 Overly
- 48 Wish otherwise
- 49 Famed Boston deserts
- 54 Carte lead-in
- 55 Mountain crest
- 56 — -mo
- 57 Orange tuber
- 58 Did yard work
- 59 Layer
- 7 Extract via percolation
- 8 Fighting forces
- 9 Ineffectual type
- 10 Predicament
- 11 Pop
- 16 Sch. URL ender
- 20 Staff symbol
- 21 TV explorer
- 22 Denny's rival
- 23 Baked potato topping
- 27 Used a chair
- 29 Conference leader?
- 30 Body lotion ingredient
- 32 — Bora (Afghan region)
- 34 Give orders
- 37 Daytona 500 acronym
- 39 Was foreboding
- 42 — firma
- 44 Dandy guy
- 45 Use a rosary
- 46 Luau dance
- 50 "A mouse!"
- 51 WWW access enabler
- 52 Right angle
- 53 Tofu source

DOWN

- 1 Game caller
- 2 Glam Gardner
- 3 Chest muscle
- 4 Short-horned grasshopper
- 5 Inflatable sleepers
- 6 Land in la mer

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 18 of 78

— King Crossword —

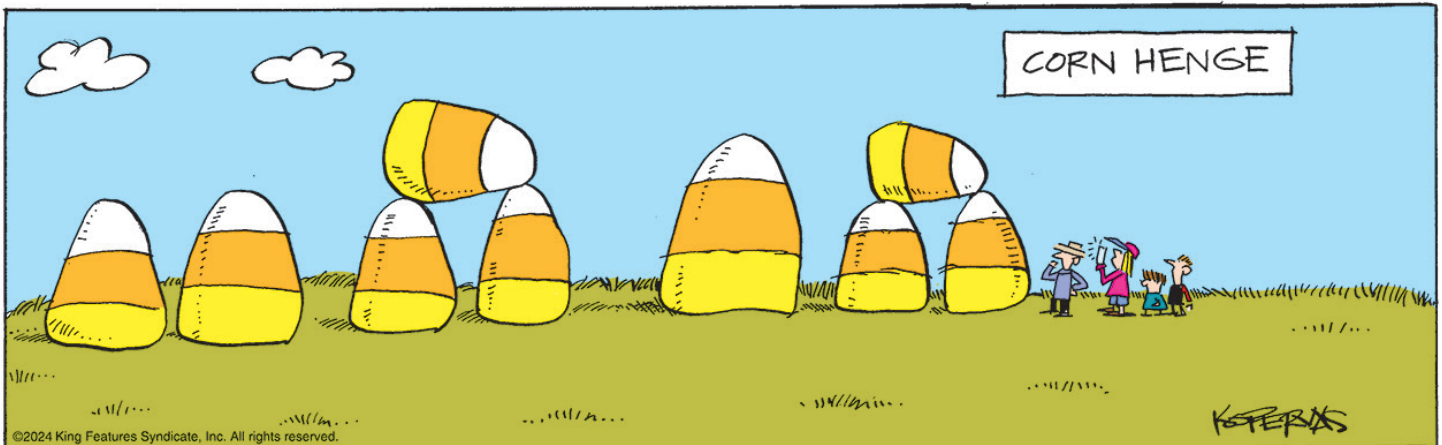
Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

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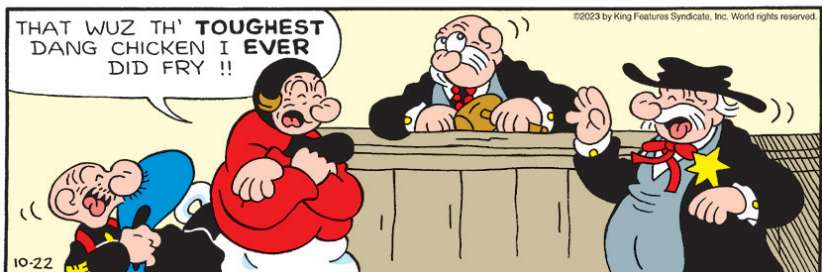
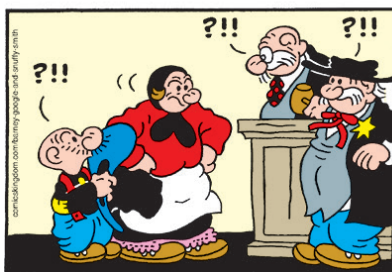
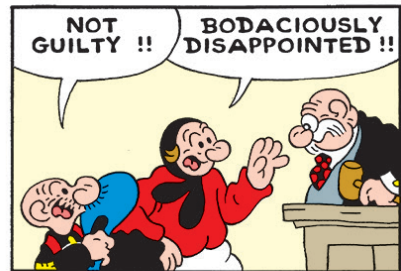
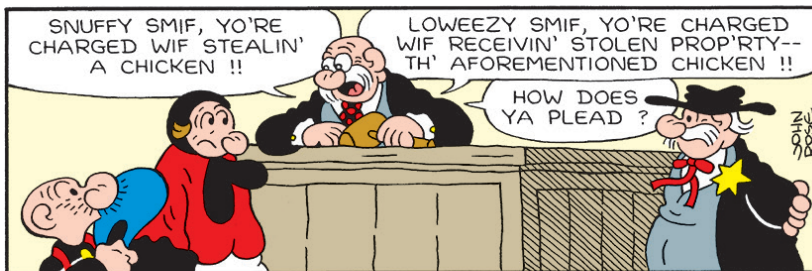
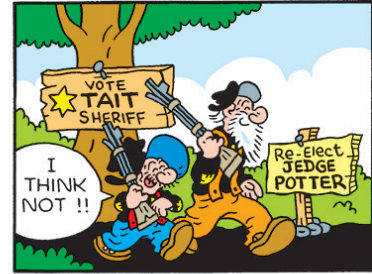
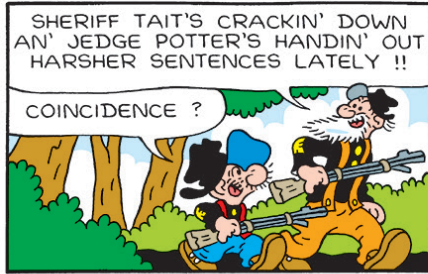
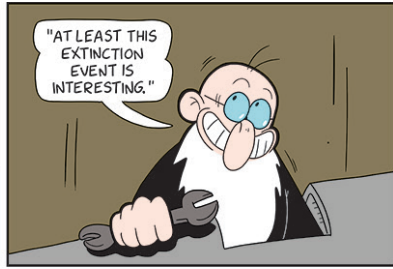
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



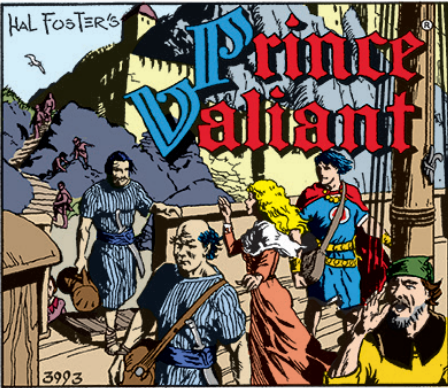
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 19 of 78

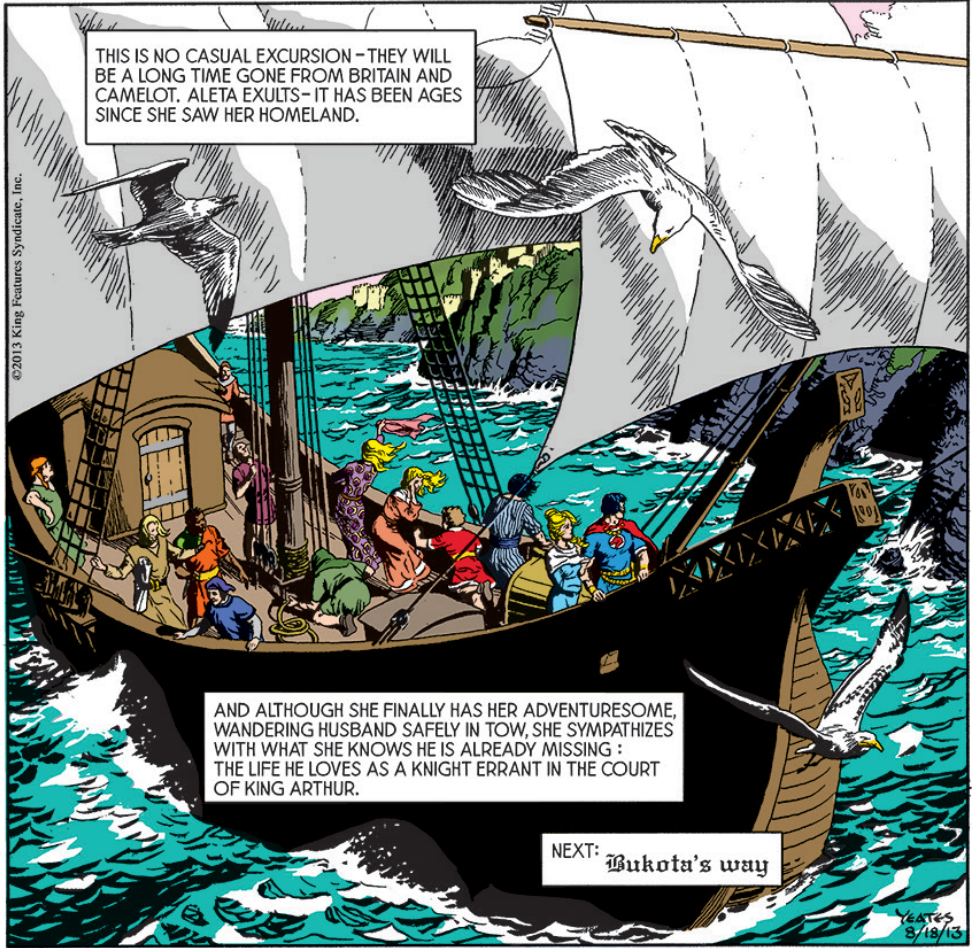
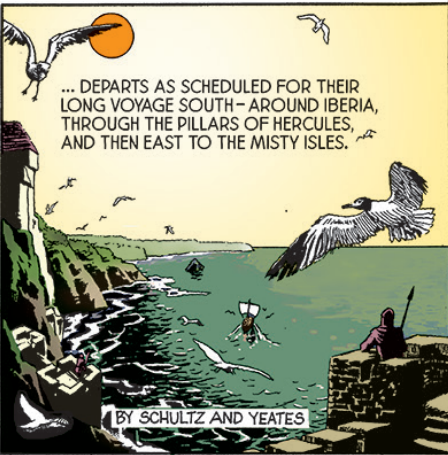


Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 20 of 78

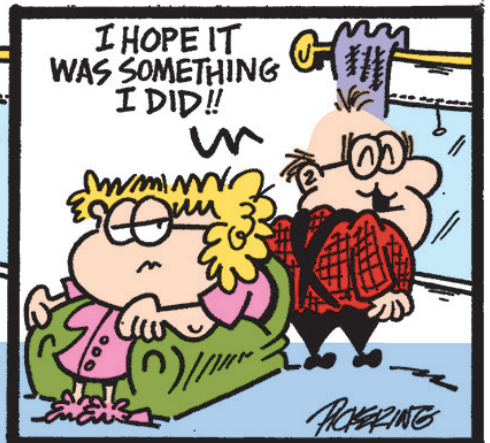
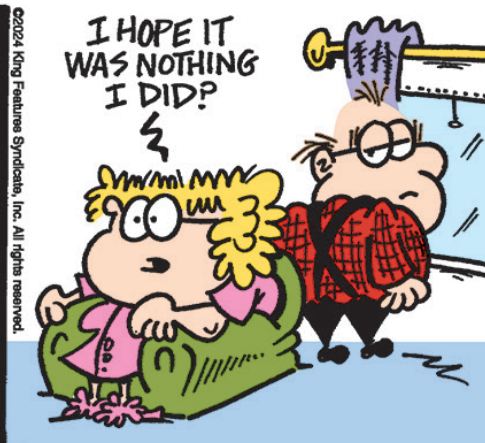
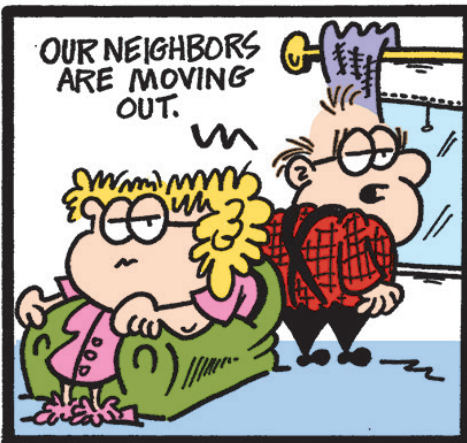


DESPITE THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING GUARD, VALS ENTOURAGE - INCLUDING KAREN'S TWO REMAINING PERSONAL GUARDS ...



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Medicare for 2025

Have you made your Medicare decisions yet for 2025? The period for open enrollment runs from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7, and by now you should have received your 2025 handbook "Medicare & You" if you're already signed up.

Between Oct. 15 and Dec. 7 you can make any changes to your existing plans, such as a different Part D drug plan or a new Medicare Advantage plan.

Some things to keep in mind about Medicare:

If you have a Medicare Advantage plan and make changes, they will take effect on Jan. 1, 2025.

If you have a Medicare Advantage plan, you cannot also have a supplemental plan. Deciding between the original Medicare, an Advantage plan and a supplemental can be one of the toughest decisions about being on Medicare, and your answer will be determined by your own health status and your expectations about the coming year.

Advantage plans can give you lots of benefits you won't get from original Medicare, such as vision and dental -- but a supplemental plan will help with medical costs and pick up what Medicare doesn't. An Advantage plan will cover everything original Medicare covers, but each plan is different and you'll be limited to a network.

Supplemental plans also vary, but often pick up the 20% of the costs that original Medicare doesn't, as well as the co-pays or deductibles, and you can choose your own doctor. A plan might cost you several hundred dollars per month, and you're required to have original Medicare as well.

Confused? You're not alone. If you need help deciding between the original Medicare, a Medicare Advantage plan or a supplemental plan with original Medicare, do your homework and consider asking for advice. You can call Medicare (800-633-4227), or you can call the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (www.shiphelp.org) in your area.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 22 of 78

1. Name the University of Oregon Ducks basketball star who was selected No. 1 overall by the New York Liberty in the 2020 WNBA Draft.

2. What former CBS and ESPN sportscaster founded sports media content company Walk Swiftly Productions in 2017?

3. What study, first published in 1995, retroactively established rankings for college basketball teams from 1895-1948 before national polling existed?

4. Which legendary Hawaii Rainbow Warriors quarterback had more NCAA career yards passing: Timmy Chang or Colt Brennan?

5. Rangers, Celtic, Dundee, Hibernian and Aberdeen are clubs competing in the top division of what soccer league?

6. In 2011, Charl Schwartzel became the third golfer from what country to win the Masters?

7. Name the "skeletal" offensive formation in American football - popular in the 1970s and '80s - that features a quarterback, a fullback and two halfbacks.



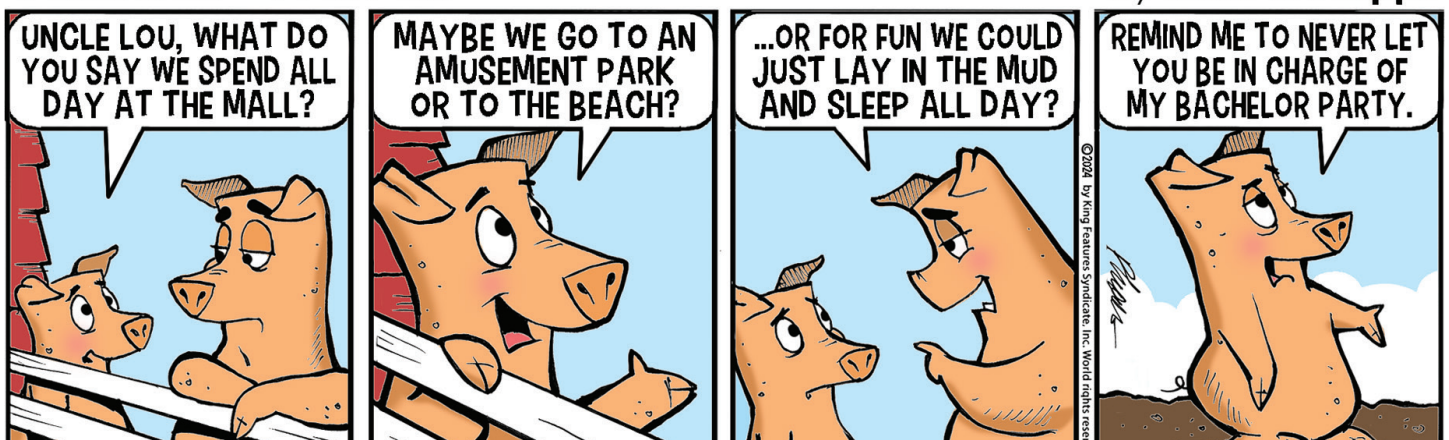
Answers

1. Sabrina Ionescu.
2. Bonnie Bernstein.
3. The Premo-Porretta Power Poll.
4. Chang, with 17,072 (Brennan had 14,193).
5. Scottish Professional Football League.
6. South Africa.
7. The wishbone.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





How to help pets in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I'm heartbroken seeing the destruction in North Carolina, Florida, Georgia and South Carolina after Hurricane Helene. There must be a lot of lost, hungry and suffering pets. I want to fill my truck and trailer with pet food and drive it to where it's most needed, but I'm not sure where to go. Do you have any advice? -- Maggie in upstate New York

DEAR MAGGIE: It is heartwarming knowing that you and other pet owners want to do something positive for people and their pets in these areas that have been so hard hit.

As I write this, organizations from across the country are getting in place, setting up in strategic locations so that they can distribute aid, assist with rescues and help recover those lost to this storm. With many major highways cut, travel is nearly impossible in North Carolina, and very difficult elsewhere.

The best thing that you can do right now is to stay put. Instead of driving supplies to disaster areas, start a fundraising drive and donate cash to an organization that is actively helping pets and their owners.

For example, the ASPCA is working with the Humane Society in Charlotte, North Carolina, to evacuate rescue and foster dogs from Asheville and surrounding areas. The Humane Society of the United States is doing likewise. Both organizations are helping owners with pet food and medical care, and providing shelter to animals without families.

Donating to these major organizations, or selecting a local shelter or rescue group in these areas to support now and in the months to come, will help immensely.

Clarification: In a previous column on ticks, it was implied that ticks transmit heartworm. They do not; however, they can transmit tapeworms.

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

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 24 of 78

Strange BUT TRUE

* According to 19th-century Welsh tradition, any infant whose nails are cut before the age of 6 months will become a thief.

* In 1974, the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis published a paper titled "The Unsuccessful Self-Treatment of a Case of 'Writer's Block.'" It contained a total of zero words.

* Every second, a large hurricane releases the energy of 10 atomic bombs.

* Female kangaroos can stop the development of their joeys in a process called embryonic diapause, which allows them to give birth when conditions are right, or wait until another joey has left their pouch.

* The Subway restaurant chain uses 16 acres of lettuce per day.

* In parts of Europe, people believe that if you light a cigarette from a candle, a sailor will die.

* Researchers at the University of Arizona discovered that the ability to see the color red comes from a gene attached to the X chromosome. Since women have two of those chromosomes, they perceive the red-orange spectrum better than men.

* Bubble gum was originally pink because that was the only food dye available in the factory where it was made.

* The term "sabotage" originated from French textile workers throwing their wooden clogs, known as "sabots," into machinery to protest industrialization and automation in the 19th century.

* All newspapers in the British Library were ironed by hand to ensure a clear image before they were microfilmed.

* The 1967 Outer Space Treaty forbids any nation from trying to own the moon.

* During WWI, German measles were called "liberty measles" and dachshunds became "liberty hounds."

Thought for the Day: "Sometimes people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know why I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved." -- Will Rogers
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The Garden Bug

Dead man's fingers



If these fungal growths are found in mulch or dirt, they are likely not of much concern and can be removed easily; but make sure that as you do so you remove all the soil or mulch around them, and then sanitize any tools, gloves or shoes that come in contact. If they are found at the base of trees such as apple or crabapple trees, the growth may be infecting the tree, causing black root rot. Any tree thus infected should be carefully removed, including the stump, the surrounding soil and as much of the root system as possible. - Brenda Weaver

Source: hort.extension.wisc.edu



by Freddy Groves

Get ready for 2025 adaptive sports and arts

Over 15,000 veterans will be able to take advantage of the Department of Veterans Affairs' Adaptive Sports Program courtesy of nearly \$16 million in grants that have been handed to 91 organizations across the country. The current program runs until September 2025, and disabled veterans will be able to participate not only in adaptive sports, but in therapeutic arts as well.

The national, regional and community grant recipients host a wide variety of programs, ranging from SCUBA to wheelchair basketball to archery to skiing to equine therapy and so much more.

Check out department.va.gov/veteran-sports for the highlights of some of the sports, clinics and games that will be offered. For even more info, click on the Fact Sheet link. Whether it's Golden Age games (for those over age 55, May 31 - June 5, 2025) or sports clinics, if you see something you're interested in, don't wait. Contact those who sponsor the events and find out about how to participate.

If you're hesitant to explore the possibilities for next year, keep in mind that in many cases, the clinics and training are ongoing! For competition next year, you need to start now! If you're training and participating at a high level, in some cases there are stipends and monthly training allowances if you qualify.

Take a look at Move United (moveunitedsport.org) and click on Warfighters. Their goal is to provide adaptive sports opportunities to severely wounded warriors. At this point, over 19,000 veterans have participated in the group's 65-year history. Over 70 sports are offered: adaptive badminton, football, fishing, rock climbing and more. Whether the disability is from brain injury, burns, spinal cord or visual impairment, it doesn't matter if the disability was due to combat. If you have questions, you can give them a call at 301-217-0960.

And then there are the volunteers. You're needed. Apply now. The events and training can't take place without you. Call the organization that you're interested in supporting and get started now.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 26 of 78

Wishing Well®

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E	A	Y	E	S	S	S	O	E	U	D	N	G

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

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1. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a group of walking penguins called?
2. MOVIES: What was the first movie to be adapted from one of Stephen King's novels?
3. GEOGRAPHY: How many time zones does Australia have?
4. LITERATURE: Which country is featured in Sir Walter Scott's historical novels?
5. HISTORY: How many essays are in The Federalist Papers?
6. SCIENCE: Who created the Periodic Table?
7. TELEVISION: What is the reality series "The Deadliest Catch" about?
8. PSYCHOLOGY: What irrational fear is represented in the condition called pogonophobia?
9. U.S. STATES: What is the only state with a one-syllable name?
10. MUSIC: Which branch of the U.S. military did Elvis Presley serve in?

Answers

1. A waddle.
2. "Carrie."
3. Three main time zones.
4. Scotland.
5. 85.
6. Dmitri Mendeleev.
7. Crab fishermen in the Bering Sea.
8. Fear of beards.
9. Maine.
10. Army, 1958-60.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 27 of 78

South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

ROOSTER!

There's a call that you'll hear across much of South Dakota over the next several months. It doesn't sound like a bird, though it's all about one. The shout of "ROOSTER!" will ring out in fields and ditches, just like it does every fall into the early winter.

One thing will be different this year: you'll hear "ROOSTER!" even more than in recent memory.

The Resident Only pheasant season starts the morning of October 12, and the traditional pheasant season starts a week later on October 19. This season, we are looking forward to more pheasants than we've had in years – maybe ever.

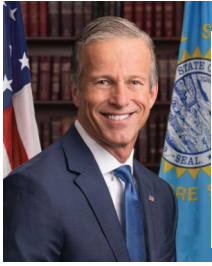
For the past several years, my administration has promoted pheasant habitat, increased hunting access, and we've harvested predators who eat our state bird. We had a mild winter and sufficient moisture across the primary pheasant range, so that habitat is flourishing. All of these efforts are pointing to large pheasant numbers across the state!

The word is getting out. Small game license sales are through the roof. South Dakotans and our visitors alike know that our state is the best place in the world to hunt pheasants. After all, it's ingrained in our way of life.

From a very young age, I hunted pheasants with my family. My grandma Dorris took me out on those very first few trips. While my grandkids are not nearly old enough to hunt themselves, it's never too early for them to fall in love with chasing birds.

If you're a South Dakotan and reading this, I hope you have an opportunity to get out in the field, enjoy the fresh air, spend time with loved-ones, and hunt our state bird. And if you're not from our state (what's taking you so long?), I hope you'll come visit us and share this fantastic experience. It truly is a pastime like no other.

God bless, and happy hunting! I hope you shout "ROOSTER!" 'til you lose your voice.



JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Biden-Harris Inflation Crisis Leaves Americans Falling Behind

According to the Congressional Joint Economic Committee, it costs a typical family \$13,327 more per year to maintain the same standard of living it had at the beginning of the Biden-Harris administration. That's a staggering increase for the same goods and services in the span of less than four years, and Americans are the ones bearing the brunt of this sticker shock, as the price of groceries spiked 22 percent, shelter costs went up 23 percent, and energy prices grew by 34 percent, among other necessities. And the reason costs are so much higher today is because of Washington Democrats' addiction to reckless spending.

Eager to begin implementing their big government agenda, Democrats seized on the pandemic as an excuse to spend \$1.9 trillion on their so-called American Rescue Plan in 2021. They ignored warnings that the bill was too big and that it could "set off inflationary pressures of a kind we have not seen in a generation," and they pushed the bill ahead with Vice President Harris casting critical tie-breaking votes. As predicted, inflation began to accelerate almost immediately.

The Biden-Harris inflation crisis is a classic case of too many dollars chasing too few goods. Democrats flooded our economy with their reckless spending, and inflation began to climb as a result. It kept on climbing for years, reaching a 40-year high and causing untold economic pain across the country.

But this inflation crisis did not deter Democrats. In fact, as inflation was soaring, the Biden-Harris administration was actually trying to force through yet another reckless taxing-and-spending spree, this time with a massive \$3.5 trillion price tag. One can only imagine how much worse inflation would have been had this bill passed.

For the last few years, the American people have been paying more and getting less. They have had to put more on their credit cards and dip into their savings. Others put off necessities and niceties to make ends meet. How many Americans had to lower their standard of living because of higher costs? How many car repairs, family vacations, or braces for the kids had to be put off because of inflation?

Then there's the additional economic pain of rate hikes the Federal Reserve was forced to impose to deal with the Biden-Harris inflation crisis. Those rate hikes meant higher credit card interest rates, higher rates for car loans, and higher mortgage rates. Americans who had to put more on their credit cards to deal with high food or energy prices are now facing increased challenges paying off that debt. Other Americans are finding the American dream of homeownership out of their reach, facing elevated mortgage rates on top of already staggering home prices.

When the history of the Biden-Harris administration is written, I suspect it will be defined by the historic inflation crisis caused by its reckless spending. Years of elevated prices have taken a toll on Americans' budgets, and I fear those effects may linger. Americans simply cannot afford another reckless taxing-and-spending spree.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 29 of 78



Step it Up

BIG Update

FEMA does not and should not use disaster funds for illegal immigrants. There are separate funds and funding sources for both the Disaster Relief Fund and the Shelter and Services Program for migrants. While this separation exists, Congress should ensure that there is no crossover of these funds. Funding designated for Americans' disaster relief should not be used to mitigate a crisis that could be prevented by stricter border policies.

Natural disasters like hurricanes Helene and Milton are plaguing American communities. Families facing unspeakable devastation should not have to wonder if FEMA will run out of resources for recovery because it was instead used to support illegal immigrant programs.

BIG Idea

Call to Freedom serves victims and survivors of human trafficking and sex trafficking in South Dakota. Their work focuses on bringing healing and support to these individuals who have faced terrible trauma. The organization is on track to serve more than 600 individuals this year and has helped people from 61 of South Dakota's 66 counties.

I joined Call to Freedom's ninth annual CommUnity breakfast to hear about the impact the organization is making. There was record attendance – 1,300 people gathered to help support their mission..

BIG News

Earlier this week, South Dakota identified and removed 273 non-citizens from its voter rolls. While non-citizens aren't allowed to vote in federal elections, there has been growing concern about registered voters who aren't American citizens influencing our federal elections. I've been a leader on the SAVE Act in Congress to ensure non-citizens aren't able to register in the first place. Safeguarding our elections is imperative in making sure Americans can trust the process.

I'm supporting other initiatives to bolster election security like requiring a valid photo ID to vote. Voting is an essential pillar of our democracy—every vote counts. Congress must take steps to ensure no one is voting improperly, like casting multiple ballots, voting in the wrong location, or filling out someone else's ballot. A fair and accurate election system is critical to ensuring the success of our democracy.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 30 of 78

Column for National Newspaper Week:

by Senator Mike Rounds

I still look forward to getting my local news through a trusted news source, including my local newspaper, whether it's a real piece of paper or electronically delivered.

Running a newspaper today looks a lot different than it did when I was a kid. Digital photos have replaced the dark room and electronic media now plays a major role in how many of us receive our news. And as artificial intelligence capabilities continue to advance, newspapers are looking at the impact that could have on them, as well.

What hasn't changed, however, is the importance of the reporter, the editor and the entire newspaper team. We still rely on reporters to be objective. We rely on editors to have integrity in determining which stories go on the front page, and which stories go on the editorial page. And we rely on the entire newspaper team to make sure we get our news in a timely fashion.

While newspapers in South Dakota strive to meet these criteria, the U.S. Postal Service doesn't always help with the cause. Since 2021, while delivery rates for periodicals have increased cumulatively by 40%, nationwide on-time delivery has either declined or remained stagnant.

Since the Postal Service's on-time delivery performances have not improved, it leaves local journalists to pick up the slack by handling their own delivery in order to make certain their readers receive their papers on time.

That's why I have introduced a bipartisan bill, called the Deliver for Democracy Act, which would address these persistent postal delays and surging rate increases that are negatively impacting local news outlets across the country. This legislation would require the USPS to improve its delivery of newspapers before it is allowed to raise its rate.

Local journalists work hard every day to deliver news on a timely basis. The U.S. Postal Service should have to do the same.

Earlier this year, I was honored to receive the "Support Journalism Champion Award" from the News-Media Alliance, which represents more than 2,200 news outlets, including newspapers, magazines and online news organizations from across the country. While I am honored to have received this award, the real champions are the local journalists who work tirelessly every day to produce and publish a document at the center of their communities.

As we celebrate National Newspaper Week, I want to recognize and thank everyone working for local newspapers in South Dakota. You all play a vital role in keeping our communities connected, vibrant and strong. You go the extra mile to make sure community members are informed of the news around the world.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 31 of 78



Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

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1-352-216-3025

As If I Didn't Already Know

I've been accused of many things throughout my life, but never having a great memory.

It's not that I don't try to remember things; I can't remember things I'm supposed to remember. It has nothing to do with my age because it started as far back as I can remember.

This dramatically affects my relationship with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

Her memory is perfect. She can remember things that actually never happened. How she does that is beyond my understanding. Trust me, I'm not going to ask her to explain it to me because then I would have to remember that explanation for the rest of my life. Some things are not worth remembering.

It's not so much that I don't remember things, I just am busy when things are happening. I don't remember what's happening when I'm watching TV because I'm busy doing something else. When The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is conversing with me, I don't remember everything because I'm busy doing something else.

When I was young, one of my favorite authors was James Thurber, who wrote the short story "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," which later became a movie.

When Thurber was young, he and his brother played a game called "William Tell," which I had never heard of before but somehow involved bows and arrows. In the middle of that game, his brother, by mistake, shot an arrow hitting Thurber in the left eye, causing him to lose that eye. Later, his other eye suffered, and he was almost completely blind.

Thurber was a writer, and most of his writing was done in his head. Then, the next morning, he would sit down with his secretary, and she would write out the story as Thurber would dictate it to her.

Often, when Thurber and his wife were having dinner with some friends, his wife would say, "Jim, will you stop writing and listen to what we're saying?" Of course, he was always working on some short story wherever he was.

Although I am not blind, I often do the same thing. I'm always working on a sermon, a newspaper column, or an article in my head even when I'm with others. I might be watching TV, visiting friends at some restaurant or just sitting at home with my wife.

I can remember just about everything I'm writing in my head which I will write out later. That technique, which I learned from James Thurber, has greatly profited me. However, it has also hindered me in the social area.

Even though I can remember what I was working on in my head at the time, I can't remember the conversation with people around me. I can never figure that out.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 32 of 78

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage often says, "Do you remember what I told you yesterday?"

That is a question to ponder. Whether I say yes or no, I'm still in some trouble.

Now, if she said something like, "Do you remember what you were thinking last week when we were at dinner with some of our friends?"

I would remember almost to the word what I was thinking, but the talk around the table is beyond my recollection.

Even while watching television, something will happen on some program, which will get me thinking about the sermon I'm working on. Pretty soon, I'll be working on that sermon and laying out details. I call it my thinking cloud.

While watching TV together, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage sometimes laughs and says, "Did you hear that? Wasn't that funny?"

I will look at her, laugh and say, "That was hilarious."

Once, she looked over at me and said, "Did you really hear that joke?"

She knew I didn't hear that joke. Now, if she would say, "What were you thinking about when they told that joke?" I would immediately begin to respond and tell her what I was thinking.

I have so much work to do that I need to take advantage of every bit of time to work on it. I don't necessarily have to be at my computer but as long as my brain is working, so am I.

Whenever we have dinner with friends, I look forward to the next morning. During that dinner, my head is swarming with ideas and thoughts about a project I'm working on.

One of these days, I'm going to thank those people for giving me the opportunity to think through a project I'm working on.

On occasion, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I are on a trip across town.

While driving the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage will look over at me and say, "Ok, what are you thinking?"

Because I'm thinking I don't hear her at first. Finally, she gets my attention and I once replied, "Oh, I was just thinking of what a wonderful, lovely, gracious wife I have. I'm so fortunate."

She has a hard time responding to that. Great thought.

A verse of scripture came to mind. Psalm 139:23-24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

God knows what I'm thinking all the time. I want to discipline myself to have thoughts that honor and please God. To think about God is the great pleasure of being a Christian.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What's Vice-Presidential candidate Tim Walz's track record on climate and environment? Do his views line up with Kamala Harris?

– Paula Lauer, Sacramento, CA

As Minnesota's governor and a current VP candidate, Tim Walz's track record on climate and environmental issues plays a critical role in the 2024 election. Climate change has emerged as a key issue, especially with Walz's running mate Kamala Harris, a strong proponent of environmental justice.

Walz's congressional record reflects consistent support for environmental policies. According to the League of Conservation Voters (LCV), he earned an 86 percent lifetime score, indicating robust backing for climate and conservation legislation. During his time in Congress, Walz supported various efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, protect public lands and invest in clean energy.

As governor, Walz expanded efforts. One significant initiative is Minnesota's effort to achieve 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2040, setting a clear long-term goal for decarbonizing the state's energy sector. His administration has worked to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through a comprehensive approach, blending regulatory changes, public investment and private sector incentives. A notable achievement includes a 2024 announcement of a \$200 million investment aimed at cutting climate pollution, positioning Minnesota as a leader in clean energy infrastructure.

Both Walz and Harris share similar eco-priorities, particularly in reducing carbon emissions, advancing renewable energy and addressing climate change. Harris, known for her advocacy of climate justice, aligns with Walz in their goal to help marginalized communities bear the brunt of climate change impacts.

While they share core values, differences in policy focus can be observed. Harris, with her national scope as a U.S. Senator and Vice President, has pushed for international agreements and federal-level legislation on climate change. Walz's experience is rooted in state-level infrastructure development and clean energy initiatives tailored to Minnesota's specific needs. This practical state-level experience could complement Harris' broader national and international focus, making them a balanced ticket on climate issues.

Walz's stance on climate was front and center in recent debates, where he argued how climate change is exacerbating extreme weather like hurricanes. His focus on his state's energy policies and tangible environmental actions serves to highlight his real-world leadership impact. His emphasis on practical, implemented solutions may resonate with voters seeking leaders who can address climate issues with real-world results.



Tim Walz's practical state-level experience could complement Kamala Harris' broader national & international focus regarding climate issues. Credit: Gage Skidmore, FlickrCC

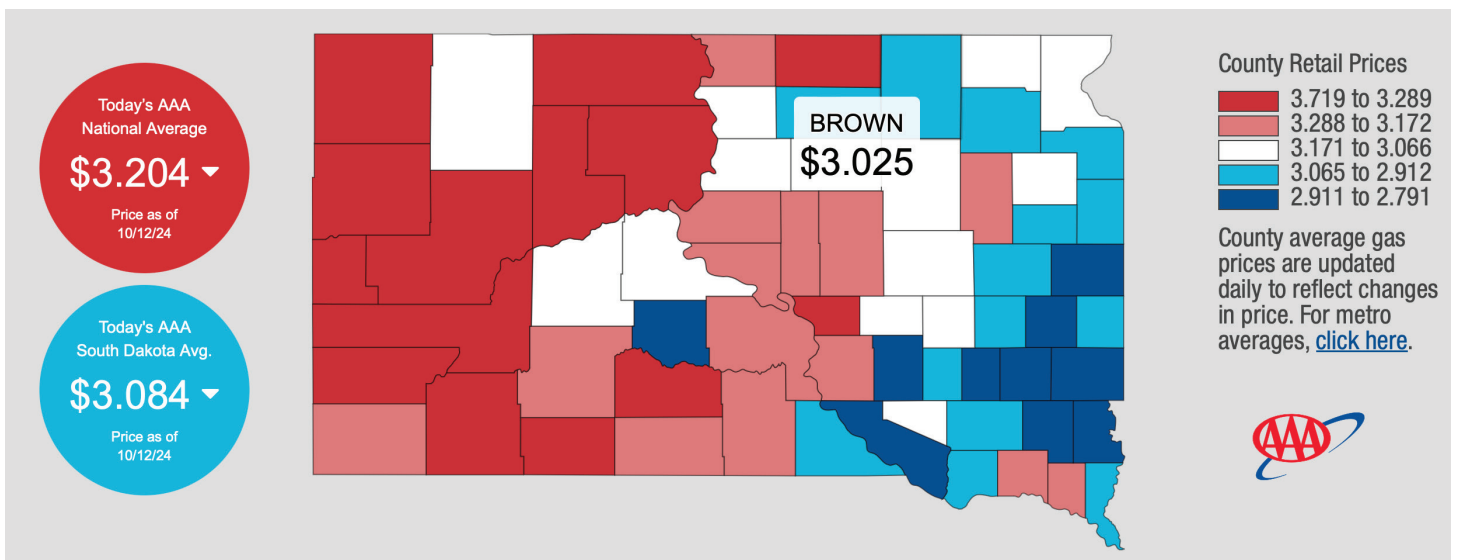
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 34 of 78

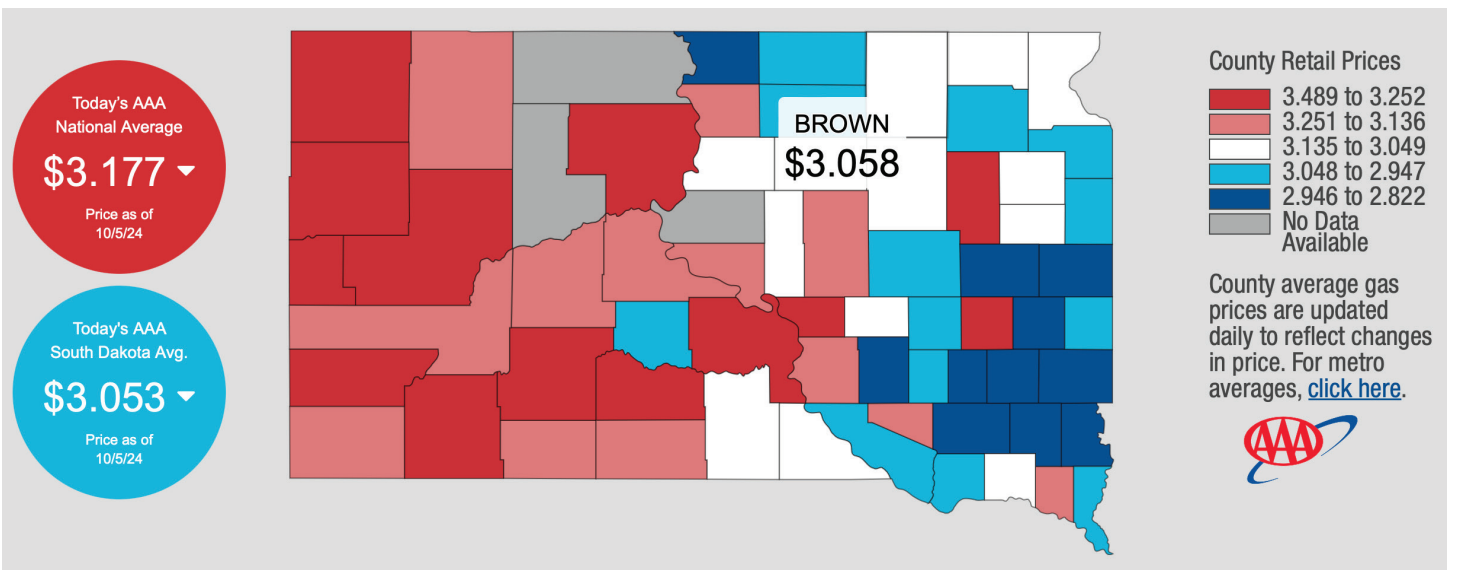
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.084	\$3.285	\$3.697	\$3.321
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.095	\$3.274	\$3.697	\$3.318
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.053	\$3.267	\$3.690	\$3.273
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.146	\$3.347	\$3.757	\$3.338
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.656	\$3.844	\$4.313	\$4.350

This Week



Last Week



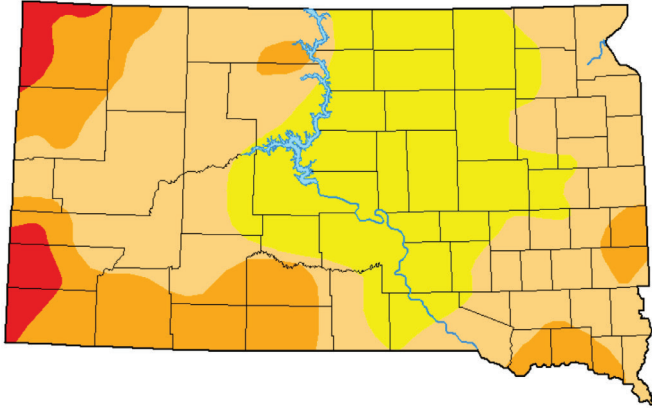
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 35 of 78

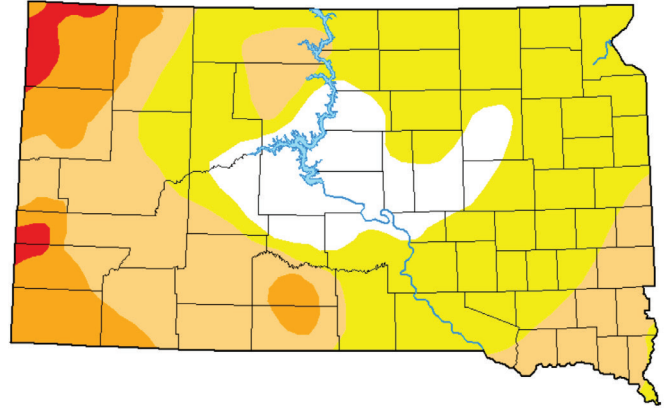
Drought Classification

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Drought Monitor



October 8



October 1

It was very warm and almost bone dry throughout the region for the second successive week. As a result, D0 to D3 conditions all expanded broadly, and most of the region is currently experiencing some degree of dryness or drought. The only areas free of abnormal dryness are central and eastern North Dakota, a few parts of southwestern Nebraska and western Kansas, northeastern Colorado, and parts of southern and western Colorado. A small patch of exceptional drought (D4) was introduced in east-central Wyoming, and extreme drought (D3) expanded across a large part of eastern Wyoming, much of the western tier of the Dakotas, and a couple small patches in southeastern Kansas. Since early June, precipitation has totaled less than half of normal through most of east-central and northeastern Wyoming, and shorter-term deficits of varying intensities envelop most of the High Plains Region. In addition, dryness was exacerbated by high temperatures averaging at least 5 deg. F above normal last week region-wide, and more than 10 deg. F above normal in most of Colorado and Wyoming, plus a few other scattered patches.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

IM 29: If voters decriminalize marijuana, lawmakers would make the call on sales

Measure offers South Dakotans a third chance to vote on recreational cannabis

BY: JOHN HULT - OCTOBER 12, 2024 11:00 AM

The first thing to know about South Dakota's recreational marijuana ballot measure is what it doesn't do: legalize marijuana sales.

That would require later legislative action.

Initiated Measure 29 would lay the groundwork for that potential action by legalizing the possession, use and free distribution of up to 2 ounces of marijuana for adults 21 and older, which is currently a misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail.

It would also decriminalize marijuana edibles and cannabis concentrates, the possession of which is currently a felony in South Dakota punishable by up to five years in prison.

"Distribution" under IM 29 means "transfer without consideration of not more than the possession limit." Under South Dakota law, the words "without consideration" mean "for free."

In other words, only the free distribution of 2 ounces or less would be legalized by IM 29, not sales. The Legislature, during its annual January-to-March lawmaking session, would have the discretion to authorize sales.

The lack of provision for a retail market is tied to what happened the last time a majority of South Dakota voters backed recreational marijuana. In 2020, voters passed a constitutional amendment legalizing both recreational and medicinal marijuana, but it was overturned in court for violating the state constitution's single-subject rule for ballot initiatives.

"We didn't want to get dragged back into court on another single-subject challenge," said Matthew Schweich of South Dakotans for Better Marijuana Laws, which is supporting the Nov. 5 ballot measure.

A separate medical marijuana initiative that passed in 2020 laid the groundwork for the state's current medical marijuana program. In 2022, voters rejected a recreational marijuana measure.



Signs for various pro-cannabis lobbying efforts in recent years, on display at the headquarters of South Dakotans for Better Marijuana Laws in Sioux Falls. The two signs on the left and single sign on the far right refer to recreational marijuana votes on the South Dakota ballot in 2020, 2022, and 2024. (John Hult/South Dakota

Searchlight)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 37 of 78

Backers: Money saved, doors opened

The fiscal note on this year's measure, prepared by the Legislative Research Council, points out passage would save counties \$581,556 a year in prosecution, defense and incarceration costs associated with enforcement of the state's current misdemeanor marijuana law. The fiscal note makes no mention of the costs associated with enforcement of the state's felony possession statute for concentrated cannabis.

Distribution of more than 2 ounces would remain a crime under state law, but people 21 and older would be allowed to "gift" up to that amount of marijuana to others of age.

That's not much different from measures passed in other states, Schweich said. Some marijuana ballot measures outline components of a retail market, but the onus for setting up retail regulations and tax structures for cannabis falls on lawmakers.

"There's always been a lag period between the legalization of possession and retail sales," Schweich said.

Fort Pierre Republican Rep. Will Mortenson, the House majority leader, said he'd expect the Legislature to take up regulations if voters pass IM 29. Some legwork has already been done on the issue. The state Senate passed a retail pot law in 2022, a few months after the state Supreme Court overturned the 2020 cannabis amendment. The bill died in a House committee.

"In the Legislature, we owe a duty to the people," said Mortenson, who told South Dakota Searchlight he plans to vote against IM 29. "They're our bosses, and if they pass Initiated Measure 29, we need to have a good faith effort to put in place a regulatory scheme."

Conservative Legislature could punt on sales

That doesn't guarantee a retail market, though. There are plenty of lawmakers, Mortenson said, who oppose legal cannabis on principle. Many prospective members of the 2025 Legislature rode to victory in the June 4 primary on the strength of more conservative platforms than their competitors.

One of them, Republican Travis Ismay of Newell, is unopposed for the District 28B House seat. Ismay tried unsuccessfully to put a measure on the ballot that would have asked voters to repeal the state's medical marijuana laws.

Rhonda Milstead represents Protecting South Dakota Kids, a group working to prevent the law's passage. She said she saw previous legislatures as more pot-friendly than the current one, and that the House and Senate could become even less amenable to marijuana after the election.

"You have a conservative legislature," Milstead said. "Why would they set up a retail market for something they didn't want in the first place?"

She expects lawmakers won't be faced with the decision, though. A recent poll on the measure, sponsored by South Dakota News Watch and the University of South Dakota's Chiesman Center for Democracy and released in June, showed 52% of voters opposed, 42% supportive and 7% undecided.

Milstead said church leaders, some of whom have also opposed November's pro-abortion rights ballot measure, are among those working to get her organization's message out.

She also thinks the state's existing medical marijuana program will strike voters as sufficient to meet the needs of patients.

"I don't think people are fired up about recreational marijuana," Milstead said.

Opponents: Legal pot comes at a price

Opponents like Milstead are concerned about the increasing potency of marijuana and the impact on public health, upticks in marijuana use by minors in states that have legalized the drug for adults, and the contention that legalization pushes up crime rates.

"Legalizing marijuana has serious potential harm, risk for individuals, for communities and the state of South Dakota, with no identifiable benefits, as proven by state after state after state," Milstead said during a recent debate on the measure in Mitchell. "This drug brings more poverty, more crime, more mental health issues, more youth at risk, more violence, more addiction."

Milstead argues that any tax revenue that might flow into state coffers if lawmakers chose to create

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 38 of 78

a retail market would be eclipsed by increased costs for law enforcement and addiction treatment. The group's website maintains a list of talking points, studies on cannabis legalization and includes 10 "victims' stories" involving people hit by drivers high on marijuana and other drugs. The group also points to increases in marijuana-related traffic fatalities in states that have legalized the drug.

Darci Jensen, an addiction counselor from Canton, told a group of reporters at an Oct. 11 press event for Protecting South Dakota kids that all her current underage clients struggled with marijuana. She believes legalization in so many states has changed the way kids view cannabis.

"The perception of harm has gone down across the country," Jensen said.

Schweich and other proponents reject those arguments. During the debate, Schweich pointed to billions in tax revenue collected since state-level marijuana legalization began to take hold a little over a decade ago.

He also noted that driving under the influence would remain a crime if IM 29 passes, that legalization would allow lawmakers to regulate potency and product safety, and that the price of prohibition in time and treasure for taxpayer-funded law enforcement is too steep in a nation plodding steadily toward cannabis acceptance.

Thirty-eight states have medical pot, 24 and the District of Columbia have recreational pot, and the federal government is considering a change that would reclassify cannabis as a less harmful drug than its current classification under federal law.

"Whether we pass Measure 29 or not, cannabis already exists in South Dakota," Schweich said during the Mitchell debate. "The question is, are we going to be pragmatic and take a common sense approach? Are we going to stick with an obsolete, failed policy of prohibition that has done nothing for us for a century?"

Initiated Measure 29 - What it does

Legalize the possession, use and distribution of 2 ounces or less of marijuana by people 21 or older. It would also legalize cannabis concentrates.

Allow those older than 21 to have up to six marijuana plants in their home, with no more than 12 plants in a single household.

According to the state Legislative Research Council, repealing South Dakota's prohibition on small amounts of marijuana through IM 29 would save counties \$581,556 a year in enforcement and incarceration costs.

What it doesn't do

Set up a legal cannabis market. The word "distribution" in the measure only applies to distribution "without consideration," meaning "for free." Lawmakers would need to set up a regulatory framework before recreational dispensaries would appear – something they don't have to do. Lawmakers could also set tax rates on cannabis, and would be able to decide what cannabis tax revenue would be used for.

Regulate the potency of cannabis or place health and safety testing requirements on cannabis products. As with a retail market framework and any accompanying tax scheme, health and safety regulations would come through legislative action.

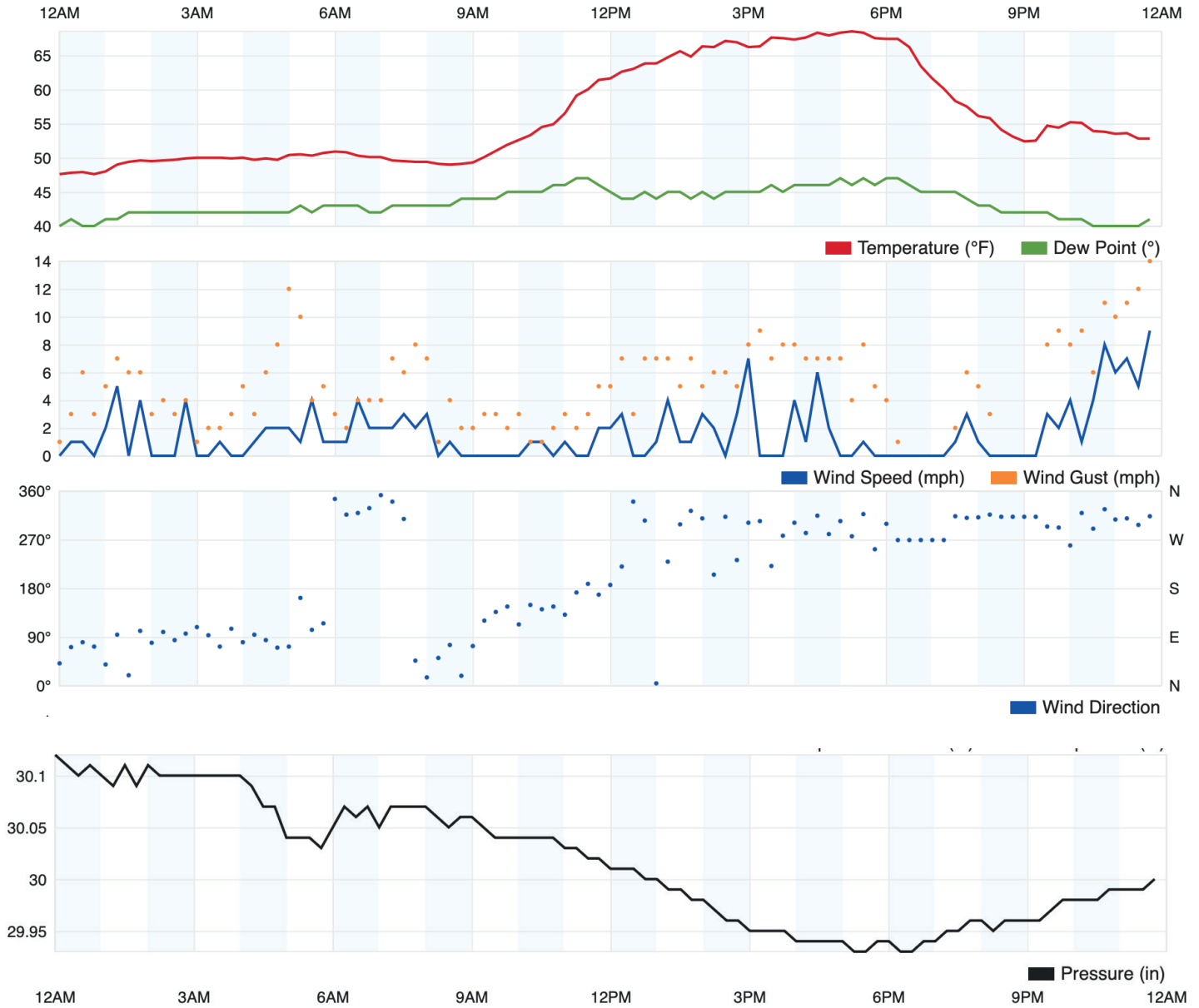
Expunge previous marijuana convictions. Under the South Dakota Constitution, only the governor can grant executive clemency to a person convicted of a crime, and the state Board of Pardons and Paroles screens most clemency requests. Those with marijuana convictions could apply for a pardon, but lawmakers couldn't offer blanket clemency without changing the state constitution to allow it.

John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.

Groton Daily Independent






Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 39 of 78

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs





Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 40 of 78


Today	Tonight	Columbus Day	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
High: 56 °F	Low: 29 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 54 °F
Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy then Frost	Frost then Partly Sunny	Mostly Clear then Frost	Frost then Sunny

More Seasonable Temperatures Ahead

	Sunday	Monday
		
Highs: 53-57	Highs: 52-65	
Lows: 29-33	Lows: 27-33	

Widespread frost Monday morning

October 12, 2024 4:11 PM



Temperatures during the day will be closer to normal for the next few days. Overnight lows are expected to get very close to or below freezing. Widespread frost is forecast for Monday morning. A hard freeze of 28 degrees is possible.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 41 of 78

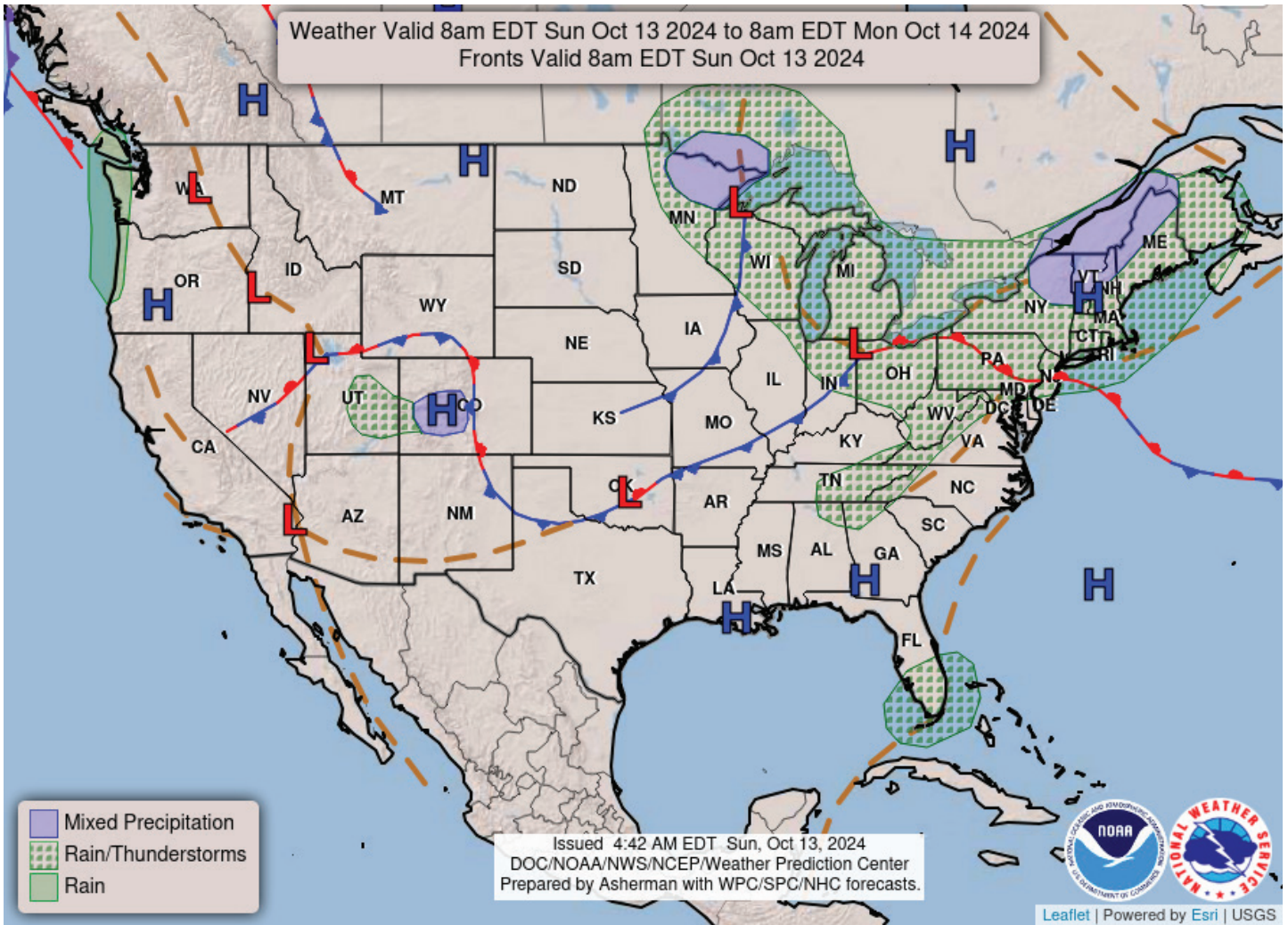
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 69 °F at 5:07 PM
Low Temp: 48 °F at 12:03 AM
Wind: 12 mph at 4:56 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 11 hours, 5 minutes (lost 22 minutes since last Sunday)

Today's Info

Record High: 87 in 1958
Record Low: 10 in 1909
Average High: 61
Average Low: 35
Average Precip in Oct.: 0.98
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 19.31
Precip Year to Date: 19.75
Sunset Tonight: 6:51:19 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:46:53 am



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 42 of 78

Today in Weather History

October 13, 1966: Late season thunderstorms brought hail and high winds to southeast South Dakota, causing extensive damage to some soybean fields. The greatest damage was in the Garretson area. The strong winds also damaged many utility lines along with many farm structures. Lightning struck a church at Lake Andes, and the resulting fire destroyed it. The storms occurred from late on the 13th to the morning of the 14th.

1846 - A great hurricane tracked across Cuba, Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia and Pennsylvania. The hurricane inflicted major damage along its entire path, which was similar to the path of Hurricane Hazel 108 years later. The hurricane caused great damage at Key West FL, and at Philadelphia PA it was the most destructive storm in thirty years. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1983: Severe weather in Falls Church, VA, produced 2-3 tornadoes and caused \$1 million in damages.

1986 - Four tornadoes struck southeastern Virginia late in the night causing three million dollars damage. Tornadoes at Falls Church VA caused a million dollars damage. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders)

1987 - Fifteen cities in the eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Record lows included 34 degrees at Meridian MS, 28 degrees at Paducah KY, and 26 degrees at Beckley WV. Another surge of arctic air entered the north central U.S. bringing snow to parts of Wyoming and Colorado. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A total of forty-three cities in the eastern U.S. and the Upper Midwest reported record low temperatures for the date, including Elkins WV and Marquette MI where the mercury dipped to 18 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Sixteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date as readings warmed into the 80s and low 90s from the Southern and Central Plains to the Southern and Middle Atlantic Coast. Evansville IND and North Platte NE reported record highs of 91 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2006: The October 2006 Buffalo storm was an unusual early-season lake effect snowstorm that hit the Buffalo, New York area, and other surrounding areas of the United States and Canada. Downtown Buffalo reported 15 inches from this event. Depew and Alden record 24 inches, the most from this lake effect storm.

2011: Three tornadoes hit central and Eastern Virginia on this day. One of the EF1 tornadoes caused damage to the Sylvania Plantation home that was built in 1746. The storm peeled the roof off the house.



HOW GOD LOVES

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

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

Picking up a doll with a button missing from an eye, part of the thread missing from its lips and a face that had become worn from being held so very much, she said, "I love this one the most."

"Why?" asked the friend.

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

How like our Heavenly Father. When we read John 3:16, we are confronted with a love that includes everyone – no exceptions or preconditions. When He said whosoever He included everyone.

Often when we see those who are marred by sin and self-destructive behaviors or catch a glimpse of those who are dirty and grimy and homeless, we look away in disgust. Not Jesus. He sees a life He died for.

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

Scripture For Today: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16

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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 44 of 78

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 45 of 78



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.11.24

3 10 29 52 57 20

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$169,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.12.24

11 15 36 37 49 7

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$11,650,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.12.24

6 17 20 22 46 13

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 5 Mins 31 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.12.24

2 4 10 17 25

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$60,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.12.24

18 22 32 41 49 24

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.12.24

5 14 20 41 57 6

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$388,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 46 of 78

Upcoming Groton Events

- 07/04/2024 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/09/2024 FREE SNAP Application Assistance 1-6pm at the Community Center
- 07/14/2024 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/17/2024 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 07/17/2024 Pro Am Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/25/2024 Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day
- 07/25/2024 Summer Downtown Sip & Shop 5-8pm
- 07/25/2024 Treasures Amidst The Trials 6pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church
- 07/26/2024 Ferney Open Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
- 07/27/2024 1st Annual Celebration in the Park 1-9:30pm
- 08/05/2024 School Supply Drive 4-7pm at the Community Center
- Cancelled:** Wine on 9 at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
- 08/08/2024 Family Fun Fest 5:30-7:30pm
- 08/9-11/2024 Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament
- 08/12/2024 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 1:15-7pm
- 09/07/2024 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/07-08/2024 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/08/2024 Sunflower Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 10/05/2024 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/11/2024 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/31/2024 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2024 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/16/2024 Groton American Legion "Turkey Raffle" 6:30-11:30pm
- 11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/01/2024 Groton Snow Queen Contest, 4:30 p.m.
- 12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close
- 04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
- 05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary Salad Luncheon
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 47 of 78

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Saturday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Central High School def. T F Riggs High School, 25-23, 25-19, 25-21

Aberdeen Christian def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-15, 25-20, 25-13

Gayville-Volin High School def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-6, 25-6, 25-12

Hamlin def. Florence-Henry, 25-12, 25-10, 25-13

Harrisburg def. Omaha Skutt, Neb., 26-24, 15-25, 25-21

Huron def. Rapid City Central, 25-14, 25-15, 25-23

Jones County def. New Underwood, 25-14, 25-18, 25-16

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Chamberlain, 25-4, 25-12, 25-8

Rapid City Stevens def. Mitchell, 25-17, 25-14, 25-22

Stanley County def. Todd County, 25-13, 19-25, 25-21, 25-20

Battler Tourney=

Faulkton def. Faith, 14-25, 25-22, 25-18

Faulkton def. Ipswich, 27-25, 27-17

Faulkton def. Lyman, 25-16, 25-18

Faulkton def. Wolsey-Wessington, 11-25, 25-21, 25-22

Ipswich def. Faith, 11-25, 25-18, 25-20

Ipswich def. Lyman, 25-17, 25-22

Ipswich def. Potter County, 25-15, 25-19

Wolsey-Wessington def. McIntosh High School, 25-7, 25-12

Wolsey-Wessington def. Philip, 25-17, 25-14

Wolsey-Wessington def. Potter County, 25-15, 25-14

Dakota Oyate Challenge=

Omaha Nation, Neb. def. Mahpíya Lúta Red Cloud, 25-13, 25-17

Pine Ridge def. Mahpíya Lúta Red Cloud, 25-19, 18-25, 25-17

Northwestern Tournament=

Pool A=

Herreid-Selby def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-22, 25-8

Mobridge-Pollock def. Herreid-Selby, 25-12, 25-19

Mobridge-Pollock def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-17, 25-9

Northwestern def. Herreid-Selby, 25-15, 25-19

Northwestern def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-8, 25-7

Northwestern def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-22, 25-13

Pool B=

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Kimball-White Lake, 25-21, 25-15

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 25-17, 25-18

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Waubay/Summit, 25-10, 25-5

Kimball-White Lake def. Waubay/Summit, 25-20, 25-15

Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Kimball-White Lake, 25-17, 25-20

Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Waubay/Summit, 25-11, 25-13

Semifinal=

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-15, 25-20

Northwestern def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 25-11, 25-15

Third Place=

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 48 of 78

Mobridge-Pollock def. Sioux Falls Lutheran, 25-12, 25-22
Championship=
Elk Point-Jefferson def. Northwestern, 25-22, 25-23

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Bouman throws for 2 TDs, Pierre runs for 2 more, South Dakota rolls past Northern Iowa 42-17

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Aidan Bouman threw two touchdown passes, Charles Pierre Jr. ran for two scores and South Dakota rolled to a 42-17 win over Northern Iowa on Saturday.

Bouman was 17-of-20 passing for 284 yards and Pierre carried 21 times for 105 yards as the Coyotes (5-1, 3-0 Missouri Valley Football Conference) scored on their first six possessions except for a one-play kneel-down to close the first half.

The Panthers (2-4, 0-2) took the opening drive 75 yards, capped by Tye Edwards' 1-yard plunge. They went 70 yards on their second drive, taking a 10-7 lead on a Caden Palmer field in the opening seconds of the second quarter.

Bouman had a 27-yard catch-and-run connection with JJ Galbreath and 49-yard catch-and-run with Travis Theis out of the backfield as the Coyotes quickly countered the scores.

Theis scored on a 3-yard run and backup quarterback Nevan Cremascoli found A.J. Coons for a 37-yard score and a 28-10 halftime lead.

Pierre had touchdown runs of 1 and 20 yards in the third quarter.

The Coyotes, ranked fourth in the FCS coaches' poll, piled up 513 yards and controlled the ball for 35 1/2 minutes.

Matthew Scheckiman and Jaiden Ellis-Lahey hooked up for a 50-yard touchdown in the third quarter for the Panthers. Scheckiman was 18 of 26 for 250 yards with an interception.

FCS top-ranked South Dakota State cruises to 63-13 win over Youngstown State

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Chase Mason rushed for 161 yards and two long touchdowns and FCS top-ranked South Dakota State rolled over Youngstown State 63-13 on Saturday.

The Jackrabbits (5-1, 2-0) have won 32 straight games over FCS opponents, and their 19th consecutive Missouri Valley Football Conference win tied the league record set by North Dakota State (2017-2020).

Angel Johnson returned the opening kickoff 99 yards for a Jackrabbits touchdown and Mason followed with a 38-yard score. Mason's 48-yard TD gave South Dakota State a 35-3 late in the first half.

Mark Gronowski threw for 127 yards and two touchdowns and rushed for 53 yards and another score for the Jackrabbits.

South Dakota State scored on its first seven true possessions — excluding a one-play possession at the end of the first half — and 8 of 9 overall. The Jackrabbits only punt came with two minutes left.

Beau Brungard threw for 169 yards with an interception and ran for 59 and a score for the Penguins (2-5, 1-2).

Lithuanians vote in parliamentary election with many looking for change despite a strong economy

By LIUDAS DAPKUS Associated Press

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — Lithuanians voted Sunday in the first round of parliamentary elections that could lead to the center-right governing coalition being replaced by the opposition Social Democrats and smaller center-left parties.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 49 of 78

Despite economic successes, strict COVID-19 measures and an influx of migrants have cast shadows over conservative Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė's government, which took office in 2020.

Although European Union member Lithuania has seen annual double-digit personal income growth and has one of the lowest inflation rates in the 27-nation bloc, many voters don't seem to be impressed.

"There's a lot of disappointment and discontent among voters," said Rima Urbonaitė, a political analyst at Vilnius' Mykolas Romeris University. "It is related to numerous crises and shocks and cannot be compensated by economic factors like positive change in purchasing power."

Šimonytė has faced criticism for strict measures during the pandemic, with many complaining that her government didn't do enough to help companies during lockdown. Others say thousands of people didn't have proper access to health care services.

Šimonytė also has been lambasted for her handling of migrants arriving via Belarus. Lithuania has its eastern neighbor, as well as Russia, of orchestrating the influx of people, mostly from Africa and the Middle East.

A recent survey by pollster Vilmorus says that the Social Democratic Party, led by Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, would top the poll, with twice as many votes as Šimonytė's Homeland Union. Nemuno Aušra, a newly registered party of right-wing politician Remigijus Žemaitaitis, who was impeached earlier this year for making antisemitic statements, would come in between them.

However no party would obtain more than 20% of the vote, forcing anyone hoping to govern to look for alliances.

The Social Democrats have ruled out an alliance with Žemaitaitis' party, meaning that three or four parties, likely small groups representing the political center, will be necessary to form a governing coalition.

"I have voted for the conservatives my entire life, but this year I'm thinking of giving my ballot to another good party, not to them," said Darius Mikalauskas, a 51-year-old teacher in Vilnius. "Šimonytė and the entire Homeland Union looks battered, worn out and they would better spend some time on the spare bench."

Analysts say a shift to the left wouldn't bring significant changes to the foreign policy of Lithuania, which also borders Russia's Kaliningrad exclave to the west. But the vote comes at a time when Russia's war in Ukraine is fueling greater fears about Moscow's intentions, particularly in the strategically important Baltic region.

"In this country, the foreign policy course is determined mainly by the president," Urbonaitė said. Earlier this year, President Gitanas Nausėda beat Šimonytė in the presidential election to take a second five-year term.

In 2020, Šimonytė led her Homeland Union to victory in the parliamentary election. She later formed a coalition with two liberal parties, the Freedom Party and the Liberal Movement.

About 2.4 million people are eligible to elect 141 members of the parliament, or Seimas, for a four-year term in two rounds. On Sunday, 70 lawmakers will be elected by party lists, joined by those in single-mandate constituencies who manage to win more than 50% of votes. The runoff is Oct. 27, when the majority of single-member constituencies will vote to choose between the two leading candidates.

Israeli strike on Gaza kills a family of 8

By WAFSA SHURAF and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — An Israeli strike on the central Gaza Strip has killed a family of eight, Palestinian medical officials said Sunday, as Israeli forces battled Palestinian militants and pushed for the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people from the territory's north.

Israel is also waging an air and ground campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon and is expected to strike Iran in retaliation for a missile attack earlier this month, though it has not said how or when.

The strike in Gaza late Saturday hit a home in the Nuseirat refugee camp, killing parents and their six children, who ranged in age from 8 to 23, according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in nearby Deir al-Balah, where the bodies were taken.

It said a further seven people were wounded, including two women and a child in critical condition. An

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 50 of 78

Associated Press reporter counted the bodies and filmed funeral prayers held at the hospital.

More than a year into the war with Hamas, Israel continues to strike what it says are militant targets in Gaza nearly every day. The military says it tries to avoid harming civilians and blames their deaths on Hamas and other armed groups because they operate in densely populated areas. In recent months, it has repeatedly struck schools being used as shelters by displaced people, accusing militants of hiding among them.

Israel presses for full evacuation of northern Gaza

In northern Gaza, Israeli air and ground forces have been attacking Jabaliya, where the military says militants have regrouped. Over the past year, Israeli forces have repeatedly returned to the built-up refugee camp, which dates back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, and other areas.

Israel has ordered the full evacuation of northern Gaza, including Gaza City. An estimated 400,000 people remain in the north after a mass evacuation ordered in the opening weeks of the war. The Palestinians fear Israel intends to permanently depopulate the north to establish military bases or Jewish settlements there.

The military confirmed Saturday that hospitals were included in the evacuation orders but said it had not set a specific timetable. It said a medical convoy scheduled to transfer patients from the Kamal Adwan Hospital in recent days was canceled for security reasons — without elaborating — but that the convoy had delivered fuel to the hospital on Saturday.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. Around 100 hostages are still being held in Gaza, a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel's bombardment and ground invasions of Gaza have killed over 42,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, and left much of the territory in ruins. Palestinian medical officials do not say whether those killed by Israeli forces are militants or civilians, but say women and children make up over half the fatalities. Israel says it has killed over 17,000 fighters, without providing evidence.

Israel expected to strike Iran as fighting rages in Lebanon

Lebanon's Hezbollah, which is allied with Hamas, began firing rockets into Israel on Oct. 8, 2023, drawing retaliatory airstrikes. The conflict dramatically escalated in September with a wave of Israeli strikes that killed Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, and most of his senior commanders. Israel launched a ground operation into southern Lebanon earlier this month.

The Lebanese Red Cross said paramedics were searching for casualties in the wreckage of a house destroyed by an Israeli airstrike in southern Lebanon on Sunday when a second strike left four paramedics with concussions and damaged two ambulances.

It said the rescue operation had been coordinated with U.N. peacekeepers, who informed the Israeli side. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

Israeli forces have repeatedly fired upon first responders and U.N. peacekeepers since the start of the ground operation. The military has accused Hezbollah of using ambulances to ferry fighters and weapons, without providing evidence. Lebanon's Health Ministry denies the allegations.

At least 2,255 people have been killed in Lebanon since the start of the conflict, including more than 1,400 people since September, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were Hezbollah fighters. At least 54 people have been killed in the rocket attacks on Israel, nearly half of them soldiers.

Iran, which supports Hezbollah and Hamas, launched around 180 ballistic missiles at Israel to avenge the killing of Nasrallah; an Iranian general who was with him; and Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of Hamas, who died in an explosion in Iran's capital in July that was widely blamed on Israel.

Macao's former top judge is elected as the Chinese casino hub's first leader born in mainland China

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

MACAO (AP) — Macao's former top judge, Sam Hou Fai, was chosen as the Chinese casino hub's next

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 51 of 78

leader in a largely ceremonial election on Sunday, setting him up to become the city's first chief executive born in mainland China.

Almost the entire election committee stacked with Beijing loyalists — 394 of 398 — voted for Sam, the sole candidate, in a departure from the long-standing custom of having chief executives who were born in the former Portuguese colony, typically from influential business families. The remaining four were blank votes.

The shift in the city's leadership to someone from the legal profession is likely to create expectations of a declining influence from business circles, which critics have often accused of colluding with officials, analysts say. They anticipate Beijing's policy agenda for the city will take priority.

Sam, 62, is widely seen to have Beijing's blessings. During the nomination period, he had already secured endorsements from 386 election committee members who voted in batches in a conference hall on Sunday.

Influential figures among the 400-strong committee were Shun Tak Holdings' group executive chairperson Pansy Ho, daughter of late casino tycoon Stanley Ho, lawmaker Angela Leong, one of Ho's widows, and former chief executives Edmund Ho and Fernando Chui.

After being announced as the chief executive-elect, Sam walked onto the stage to applause from the committee members.

"It is the highest honor of my life," Sam said.

He pledged to uphold national sovereignty, accelerate economic diversification of the city and better integrate it into the national development plans.

Sam is expected to assume office in December, when the city marks the 25th anniversary of its handover to China's rule.

After the election, China's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, Macao's incumbent city leader Ho Iat Seng and Hong Kong's Chief Executive John Lee congratulated Sam in separate statements.

Most of the territory's 687,000 residents lack voting rights, leading to mixed sentiments about the election. Some hope Sam will heed public opinion and avoid prioritizing business interests, while others feel disconnected from an election process they can't participate in.

Still, political observers said many residents are comfortable with Sam's non-local origin in a city that has been home to migrants for decades.

With Sam's victory guaranteed, the real challenges await in the governance hurdles that lie ahead.

Macao is the only place in China where casino gambling is legal. Beijing has called for the city to diversify its gambling-reliant economy.

Sam has promised to accelerate the current government's plan to boost tourism and other sectors such as traditional Chinese medicine, finance, exhibitions and commerce. However, the city will still need to rely on the gambling industry for government revenues to support the city's welfare and accomplish other goals laid out by Beijing, analysts say.

China wants Macao to develop into a world-class tourism and leisure center and play a bigger role as a bridge for trade between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

Small local businesses have been hurt by residents who spend money in the neighboring mainland city of Zhuhai, which offers a wider selection of items with good value for money. Chinese tourists are also now spending less than before.

It remains to be seen whether Sam, with a lack of government leadership experience, can form a capable cabinet to tackle these pressing issues.

Sam told reporters on Sunday that Macao's development cannot be separated from the support that comes from China, saying the city would have to "actively" participate in the development of the Greater Bay Area — Beijing's plan to integrate the casino hub and Hong Kong with other mainland Chinese cities in neighboring Guangdong province.

Sam said that just because the city has a capitalistic economy doesn't mean the government needs to play a passive role.

"In the future, we have to enhance the government's ways of making decisions and such capabilities,"

he said.

Seafood restaurant operator Ip Weng U, 49, said Macao faces social and economic problems that cannot be resolved quickly. He hopes Sam will do a better job than his predecessors.

"He was a judge, so people have expectations toward him," he said.

Sam was born in neighboring Guangdong province in 1962. He graduated from the prestigious law school of Peking University in Beijing. He also studied the Portuguese language, culture and law at the University of Coimbra in Portugal, and once practiced law in mainland China.

When Macao returned to Chinese rule in 1999, Sam was appointed the city's top judge, a role in which he served for nearly 25 years before resigning in August to participate in the election.

He handled some politically sensitive cases, including rejecting an appeal of a police ban on a vigil commemorating China's bloody 1989 military crackdown on the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protests. His court also upheld a decision to bar pro-democracy figures from running in the 2021 legislative elections.

Determination to rebuild follows Florida's hurricanes with acceptance that storms will come again

By RUSS BYNUM, BRENDAN FARRINGTON and TY O'NEIL Associated Press

VENICE, Fla. (AP) — No sooner had residents of the Bahia Vista Gulf condominium complex dug out and from Hurricane Helene than they were faced with the same daunting cleanup from new damage inflicted by Hurricane Milton.

The beachfront units had been gutted, treated and dried out after Hurricane Helene and mounds of sand that had blown in from the beach had been removed. Then, less than two weeks later, Hurricane Milton barreled in and undid all the progress.

"They've got to start the whole process over, cleaning, sanitizing, bringing in drying equipment, getting them all dried and prepped for renovations," lamented Bill O'Connell, a board member at the complex in Venice, about an hour's drive south of Tampa. The second hurricane "brought all the sand back on our property."

Some longtime Floridians have grown accustomed to the annual cycle of storms that can shatter and upend lives in a state known mostly for its balmy weather, sunshine and beaches.

"It's the price you pay to live in paradise," O'Connell said. "If you want to live here with this view, beautiful sunsets, be able to go out on your boat, enjoy what Florida has to offer, you have to be willing to accept that these storms are going to come."

The devastation of the back-to-back storms is still being tallied as a swath of the state comes to terms with damage from the unusual dual strike of storms in such close proximity. Many residents, some returning home after evacuating, spent much of Saturday searching for gas as a fuel shortage gripped the state.

President Joe Biden planned to visit the Gulf Coast on Sunday.

Hurricane Milton killed at least 10 people after it made landfall as a Category 3 storm, tearing across central Florida, flooding barrier islands and spawning deadly tornadoes. Officials say the toll could have been worse if not for the widespread evacuations. Overall, more than a thousand people were rescued in the wake of the storm.

Disaster hits twice

In the fishing village of Cortez, a community of 4,100 southwest of Tampa, Catherine Praught said she and her husband, Mark, felt "pure panic" when Hurricane Milton menaced Cortez so soon after Helene, forcing them to pause their cleanup and evacuate. Fortunately, their home wasn't damaged by the second storm.

"This is where we live," Catherine Praught said of their low-lying home of 36 years that had to be emptied, gutted and scrubbed after Helene. "We're just hopeful we get the insurance company to help us."

Residents of the community's modest, single-story wood and stucco-fronted cottages were working Saturday to remove broken furniture and tree limbs, stacking the debris in the street much like they did after Hurricane Helene.

A similar scene could be found in Steinhatchee, west of Gainesville, where enormous piles of debris lined

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 53 of 78

the streets.

Melissa Harden lives less than a block from a restaurant and neighborhood bar that were reduced to rubble. Her house is on 16-foot (4.9-meter) pilings, but 4 feet (1.2 meters) of water still flooded in. When Milton was forecast, she feared Steinhatchee would be hit by the third hurricane in 14 months.

"Personally, I thought, if it comes, we're already evacuated and our home is pretty messed up," she said as friends and relatives helped with the cleanup, removing bathroom fixtures and pulling out damaged boards. "Of course we didn't want it! No more storms!"

Moody's Analytics on Saturday estimated economic costs from the storm will range from \$50 billion to \$85 billion, including upwards of \$70 billion in property damage and an economic output loss of up to \$15 billion.

Widespread fuel shortage

In St. Petersburg, scores of people lined up at a station that had no gas Saturday, hoping it would arrive soon. Among them was Daniel Thornton and his 9-year-old daughter Magnolia, who arrived at 7 a.m. and were still waiting four hours later.

"They told me they have gas coming but they don't know when it's going to be here," he said. "I have no choice. I have to sit here all day with her until I get gas."

Gov. Ron DeSantis told reporters Saturday morning that the state opened three fuel distribution sites and planned to open several more. Residents can get 10 gallons (37.8 liters) each, free of charge, he said.

"Obviously as power gets restored ... and the Port of Tampa is open, you're going to see the fuel flowing. But in the meantime, we want to give people another option," DeSantis said.

Officials were replenishing area gas stations with the state's fuel stockpiles and provided generators to stations that remained without power.

Rising rivers among the remaining safety threats

As the recovery continues, DeSantis has warned people to be cautious, citing ongoing safety threats including downed power lines and standing water. Some 1.1 million Floridians were still without power Saturday night, according to Poweroutage.us.

National Weather Service Meteorologist Paul Close said rivers will "keep rising" for the next several days and result in flooding, mostly around Tampa Bay and northward. Those areas were hit by the most rain, which comes on top of a wet summer that included several earlier hurricanes.

"You can't do much but wait," Close said of the rivers cresting. "At least there is no rain in the forecast, no substantial rain. So we have a break here from all our wet weather."

Legislative majorities giving one party all the power are in play in several states

By JOHN HANNA and DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

SHAWNEE, Kan. (AP) — After introducing herself at their front doors, Vanessa Vaughn West began her pitch to voters with a question: What issues are important to you? She heard frustration about rising local property taxes, a desire for smaller government and questions about affordable housing.

West is a Democrat making her second run for a Kansas House seat representing a western Kansas City neighborhood where Republicans have held sway since the construction of homes began in the late 1990s.

Despite that history, West's race against Republican state Rep. Angela Stiens is on the national Democratic Party's radar, as is the Kansas Legislature. Democrats need to gain just two seats in the 125-member House or three in the 40-member Senate to break a supermajority that has enabled Republicans to override Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly's vetoes of measures restricting abortion providers and transgender rights.

A similar battle is playing out in North Carolina, where the flip of a single seat in either the House or Senate could cost Republicans a veto-proof majority that has repeatedly imposed its will over the objections of a Democratic governor. In Nevada, meanwhile, it's Democrats who stand to gain a veto-proof majority over a Republican governor, if they can pick up just one more state Senate seat without losing one in the Assembly.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 54 of 78

Nationwide, more than 5,800 state legislative seats in 44 states are up election this year in the background of higher profile contests for president, Congress and governor. Groups aligned with Democrats and Republicans are expected to pour a couple hundred million dollars into the state legislative battles, focusing most intensely on states where control of a chamber is in play: Arizona, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

But they also are paying attention to some states where there is little doubt about which party will prevail, because there is still plenty at stake.

The Associated Press identified 14 states where a swing of just three or fewer seats could determine whether a party holds a supermajority, meaning a margin so dominant that a party is able to enact laws despite a governor's veto, convene special sessions or place constitutional amendments on the ballot without needing any support from lawmakers of an opposing party.

"Having a party in power is really important — the most important thing," said Wesley Hussey, a political science professor at California State University, Sacramento. But "having a supermajority can give you additional tools to enact policy."

GOP districts in Kansas draw Democrats' attention

In Kansas, Stiens was appointed to fill a House vacancy this spring in time to help override Kelly's veto of a bill requiring abortion providers to ask patients why they want to end their pregnancies and submit that data to the state health department. The law isn't being enforced amid legal challenges.

But West said the Legislature's continued push for restrictions on abortion providers is one reason she is running against Stiens, just two years after narrowly losing to Stiens' predecessor. West strongly supports abortion rights and residents in her home of Johnson County voted by nearly 69% in favor of abortion rights during a decisive 2022 statewide vote.

"This is why we need parity, right?" West said as she walked from home to home talking to prospective voters. "And this is why we need support for what I would call the voice of the people — making sure that when the people vote on things like that, that we as legislators reinforce those sentiments with our votes."

Though still leaning Republican and largely white, the Kansas City suburbs have become more racially diverse and friendlier to Democrats since former President Donald Trump's victory in 2016. But national Democrats also are targeting a portion of southwestern Topeka, a longtime Republican area where GOP state Rep. Jesse Borjon is seeking a third term against Democrat Jacquie Lightcap, a local school board member.

Campaigning door-to-door recently in a neighborhood of late-1980s homes with three-car garages, Borjon emphasized his support for public schools and tax cuts enacted this year. His vote for eliminating the state income tax on Social Security benefits resonated with Bob Schmidt, a retired computer company executive who chatted with Borjon about rising property taxes.

Regardless of party label, Schmidt said he wants a representative who will "maintain conservative values."

A change of one seat could affect North Carolina laws

North Carolina provides a clear example of how legislative supermajorities can affect laws.

When North Carolina state Rep. Tricia Cotham switched from the Democratic to Republican party in 2023, it gave Republicans the final seat they needed to obtain a veto-proof majority in both legislative chambers. Republicans quickly flexed their new powers to override Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's veto of legislation barring most abortions after 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Republicans have since enacted two dozen additional laws by overriding Cooper's vetoes, including ones weakening the governor's election oversight, restricting medical treatments and sports activities for transgender youths and limiting school lessons about gender identity in early grades.

"Republicans have been easily overriding his vetoes and basically putting their stamp on the state in terms of public policies," said Michael Bitzer, a political science professor at Catawba College in Salisbury, North Carolina.

Though Cooper is term-limited, Democratic Attorney General Josh Stein is leading in the race to replace him. That makes it critical for Republicans to retain a supermajority, "or else they have to deal with the governor," Bitzer said.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 55 of 78

Supermajorities are at their highest point in decades

The number of states with legislative supermajorities is at its highest level since at least 1982, according to research by Saint Louis University political scientist Steven Rogers. Democrats hold nine veto-proof majorities. But Republicans hold 20, including in Nebraska, where the single-chamber Legislature is officially nonpartisan but two-thirds of members identify as Republicans.

Democrats need a gain of three or fewer seats this election to break Republican supermajorities in Florida, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska and North Carolina while a similar flip for Republicans could end Democratic supermajorities in Delaware and New York.

Meanwhile, a gain of three or fewer seats could create new supermajorities for Republicans in Iowa and South Carolina and for Democrats in Colorado, Connecticut, Nevada and New Mexico.

But gaining a supermajority is no guarantee legislative leaders will always get their way.

Democrats dominate in California. Yet Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has vetoed numerous bills, none of which have been overridden by the Democratic legislative supermajority. The legislature also has at times failed to achieve the two-thirds majority needed to pass tax increases.

In Missouri, where Republicans hold a supermajority, a conservative Senate faction has repeatedly clashed with GOP leadership. Ultimately, Republicans mired in tensions have failed to pass some of their own priority measures.

"Having a veto-proof majority can matter," said Ben Williams, associate director of elections and redistricting at the National Conference of State Legislatures. But "the larger a legislative majority gets, the more factions you get within that majority, and sometimes they don't necessarily agree."

They fled their homes to escape Boko Haram.

Now Nigeria is resettling them back despite their fears

By CHINEDU ASADU Associated Press

DAMASAK, Nigeria (AP) — When Boko Haram launched an insurgency in northeastern Nigeria in 2010, Abdulhameed Salisu packed his bag and fled from his hometown of Damasak in the country's battered Borno state.

The 45-year-old father of seven came back with his family early last year. They are among thousands of Nigerians taken back from displacement camps to their villages, hometowns or newly built settlements known as "host communities" under a resettlement program that analysts say is being rushed to suggest the conflict with the Islamic militants is nearly over.

Across Borno, dozens of displacement camps have been shut down, with authorities claiming they are no longer needed and that most places from where the displaced fled are now safe.

But many of the displaced say it's not safe to go back.

Boko Haram — Nigeria's homegrown jihadis — took up arms in 2009 to fight against Western education and impose their radical version of Islamic law, or Sharia. The conflict, now Africa's longest struggle with militancy, has spilled into Nigeria's northern neighbors.

Some 35,000 civilians have been killed and more than 2 million have been displaced in the northeastern region, according to U.N. numbers. The 2014 kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls by Boko Haram in the village of Chibok in Borno state — the epicenter of the conflict — shocked the world.

Borno state alone has nearly 900,000 internally displaced people in displacement camps, with many others absorbed in local communities. So far this year, at least 1,600 civilians have been killed in militant attacks in Borno state, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, a U.S.-based nonprofit.

And in a state where at least 70% of the population depends on agriculture, dozens of farmers have also been killed by the extremists or abducted from their farmland in the last year.

In May, hundreds of hostages, mostly women and children who were held captive for months or years by Boko Haram were rescued from a forest enclave and handed over to authorities, the army said.

In September, at least 100 villagers were killed by suspected Boko Haram militants who opened fire on

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 56 of 78

a market, on worshippers and in people's homes in the Tarmuwa council area of the neighboring Yobe state, west of Borno.

Analysts say that a forced resettlement could endanger the local population as there is still inadequate security across the hard-hit region.

Salisu says he wastes away his days in a resettlement camp in Damasak, a garrison town in Borno state of about 200,000 residents, close to the border with Niger.

Food is getting increasingly difficult to come by and Salisu depends on handouts from the World Food Program and other aid organizations. He longs to find work.

"We are begging the government to at least find us a means of livelihood instead of staying idle and waiting for whenever food comes," he said.

On a visit last week to Damasak, Cindy McCain, the WFP chief, pledged the world would not abandon the Nigerian people as she called for more funding to support her agency's aid operations.

"We are going to stay here and do the very best we can to end hunger," McCain told The Associated Press as she acknowledged the funding shortages. "How do I take food from the hungry and give it to the starving," she said.

Resettlement usually involves the displaced being taken in military trucks back to their villages or "host communities." The Borno state government has promised to provide returnees with essentials to help them integrate into these areas, supported by aid groups.

The government says the displacement camps are no longer sustainable.

"What we need now is ... durable solutions," Borno governor Babagana Zulum told McCain during her visit.

As the resettlement got underway, one in five displaced persons stayed back in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital, and nearby towns but were left without any support for local integration, the Global Protection Cluster, a network of non-government organizations and U.N. agencies, said last December.

Many others have crossed the border to the north, to settle as refugees in neighboring Niger, Chad or Cameroon. The three countries have registered at least 52,000 Nigerian refugees since January 2023, according to the U.N. refugee agency — nearly twice the number registered in the 22 months before that.

A rushed closure of displacement camps and forced resettlement puts the displaced people at risk again from militants still active in their home areas — or forces them to "cut deals" with jihadis to be able to farm or fish, the International Crisis Group warned in a report earlier this year.

That could make the extremists consolidate their presence in those areas, the group warned. Boko Haram, which in 2016 split into two main factions, continues to ambush security convoys and raid villages.

Abubakar Kawu Monguno, head of the Center for Disaster Risk Management at the University of Maiduguri, said the best option is for government forces to intensify their campaign to eliminate the militants or "push them to surrender."

After not being able to access their farms because of rampant attacks by militants, some farmers in Damasak and other parts of Mobbar district returned to work their land last year, armed with seedlings provided by the government.

Salisu was one of them.

Then a major flood struck in September, collapsing a key dam and submerging about 40% of Maiduguri's territory. Thirty people were killed and more than a million others were affected, authorities said.

Farms that feed the state were ruined, including Salisu's. His hopes for a good rice harvest were washed away. Now he lines up to get food at a Damasak food hub.

"Since Boko Haram started, everything else stopped here," he said. "There is nothing on the ground and there are no jobs."

Maryam Abdullahi also lined up at a WFP hub in Damasak with other women, waiting for bags of rice and other food items she desperately needs for her family of eight. Her youngest is 6 years old.

The donations barely last halfway through the month, she said, but she still waited in the scorching heat.

What little money she has she uses to buy yams to fry and sell to sustain her family but it's nowhere enough. Her only wish is to be able to get a "proper job" so she and her children would feel safe, she said.

"We either eat in the morning for strength for the rest of the day or ... we eat only at night," Abdullahi said.

Volunteers bring solar power to Hurricane Helene's disaster zone

By GABRIELA AOUN ANGUEIRA Associated Press

BAKERSVILLE, N.C. (AP) — Nearly two weeks after Hurricane Helene downed power lines and washed out roads all over North Carolina's mountains, the constant din of a gas-powered generator is getting to be too much for Bobby Renfro.

It's difficult to hear the nurses, neighbors and volunteers flowing through the community resource hub he has set up in a former church for his neighbors in Tipton Hill, a crossroads in the Pisgah National Forest north of Asheville. Much worse is the cost: he spent \$1,200 to buy it and thousands more on fuel that volunteers drive in from Tennessee.

Turning off their only power source isn't an option. This generator runs a refrigerator holding insulin for neighbors with diabetes and powers the oxygen machines and nebulizers some of them need to breathe.

The retired railroad worker worries that outsiders don't understand how desperate they are, marooned without power on hilltops and down in "hollers."

"We have no resources for nothing," Renfro said. "It's going to be a long ordeal."

More than 43,000 of the 1.5 million customers who lost power in western North Carolina still lacked electricity on Friday, according to Poweroutage.us. Without it, they can't keep medicines cold or power medical equipment or pump well water. They can't recharge their phones or apply for federal disaster aid.

Crews from all over the country and even Canada are helping Duke Energy and local electric cooperatives with repairs, but it's slow going in the dense mountain forests, where some roads and bridges are completely washed away.

"The crews aren't doing what they typically do, which is a repair effort. They're rebuilding from the ground up," said Kristie Aldridge, vice president of communications at North Carolina Electric Cooperatives.

Residents who can get their hands on gas and diesel-powered generators are depending on them, but that is not easy. Fuel is expensive and can be a long drive away. Generator fumes pollute and can be deadly. Small home generators are designed to run for hours or days, not weeks and months.

Now, more help is arriving. Renfro received a new power source this week, one that will be cleaner, quieter and free to operate. Volunteers with the nonprofit Footprint Project and a local solar installation company delivered a solar generator with six 245-watt solar panels, a 24-volt battery and an AC power inverter. The panels now rest on a grassy hill outside the community building.

Renfro hopes his community can draw some comfort and security, "seeing and knowing that they have a little electricity."

The Footprint Project is scaling up its response to this disaster with sustainable mobile infrastructure. It has deployed dozens of larger solar microgrids, solar generators and machines that can pull water from the air to 33 sites so far, along with dozens of smaller portable batteries.

With donations from solar equipment and installation companies as well as equipment purchased through donated funds, the nonprofit is sourcing hundreds more small batteries and dozens of other larger systems and even industrial-scale solar generators known as "Dragon Wings."

Will Heegaard and Jamie Swezey are the husband-and-wife team behind Project Footprint. Heegaard founded it in 2018 in New Orleans with a mission of reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of emergency responses. Helene's destruction is so catastrophic, however, that Swezey said this work is more about supplementing generators than replacing them.

"I've never seen anything like this," Swezey said as she stared at a whiteboard with scribbled lists of requests, volunteers and equipment. "It's all hands on deck with whatever you can use to power whatever you need to power."

Down near the interstate in Mars Hill, a warehouse owner let Swezey and Heegaard set up operations and sleep inside. They rise each morning triaging emails and texts from all over the region. Requests for equipment range from individuals needing to power a home oxygen machine to makeshift clinics and community hubs distributing supplies.

Local volunteers help. Hayden Wilson and Henry Kovacs, glassblowers from Asheville, arrived in a pickup

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 58 of 78

truck and trailer to make deliveries this week. Two installers from the Asheville-based solar company Sundance Power Systems followed in a van.

It took them more than an hour on winding roads to reach Bakersville, where the community hub Julie Wiggins runs in her driveway supports about 30 nearby families. It took many of her neighbors days to reach her, cutting their way out through fallen trees. Some were so desperate, they stuck their insulin in the creek to keep it cold.

Panels and a battery from Footprint Project now power her small fridge, a water pump and a Starlink communications system she set up. "This is a game changer," Wiggins said.

The volunteers then drove to Renfro's hub in Tipton Hill before their last stop at a Bakersville church that has been running two generators. Other places are much harder to reach. Heegaard and Swezey even tried to figure out how many portable batteries a mule could carry up a mountain and have arranged for some to be lowered by helicopters.

They know the stakes are high after Heegaard volunteered in Puerto Rico, where Hurricane Maria's death toll rose to 3,000 as some mountain communities went without power for 11 months. Duke Energy crews also restored infrastructure in Puerto Rico and are using tactics learned there, like using helicopters to drop in new electric poles, utility spokesman Bill Norton said.

The hardest customers to help could be people whose homes and businesses are too damaged to connect, and they are why the Footprint Project will stay in the area for as long as they are needed, Swezey said. "We know there are people who will need help long after the power comes back," she said.

Cubans searching for a better future leave their pets behind

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Balto, Pepa and Mami were among the lucky ones.

After being abandoned by their owners who left Cuba — or simply couldn't care for them anymore — the dogs were rescued by animal rights activists on the island, who fed them, sterilized them and found them a new home.

Many others didn't have such luck, and were left wandering the streets.

While there are no official figures or estimates of how many pets have been left behind by their owners who leave the island, the number of abandoned cats and dogs has spiked in the last two years as Cubans migrate in record numbers, animal activists say.

"We'd receive a phone call from someone asking us to care for their pets, because they're suddenly migrating and don't know what to do with them," said Elizabeth Meade, founder of Adoptions for Love, an animal shelter in Havana.

Although the shelter found a home for some 300 rescued pets in the past year, many of those were returned — or simply went missing — after their new owners also decided to migrate. For these animals, said Meade, "it's not always a happy ending."

Between October 2021 and September 2024, U.S. authorities reported more than 600,000 encounters with Cubans — a significant number for an island of roughly 10 million people. That is in addition to the thousands who choose to migrate to Spain or other Latin American countries.

For many Cubans, taking their pets with them is not an option.

Transporting an animal from Havana to Miami through a specialized agency can cost up to \$1,200 — including medical examinations and the flight — and, since September, pet owners have to pay an additional \$1,300 to comply with a legal obligation of a quarantine.

For those who remain in Cuba, daily life is not easy: the country's gross domestic product fell by 2% in 2023, resulting in rampant inflation and food and fuel shortages.

Caring for a pet on the island can be prohibitive for most Cubans. While the average monthly salary in the state sector — the largest employer — is about \$21, a 20-kilo bag of imported dog food can cost up to \$70 and a visit to the vet costs the equivalent of \$10.

The increase in the number of abandoned pets in Cuba has been largely countered by animal activism,

a phenomenon that began to take shape in 2018 after the Internet was massively adopted and social media helped coordinate actions.

In 2021, animal rights activists scored a win when the government passed a long-awaited animal welfare law, which seeks to prevent cruelty and raise awareness about the need to protect animals. The law also penalizes animal cruelty, including dogfights, and the sacrifice of animals for religious purposes but activists say it is not enough.

"Abandonment is the worst form of animal abuse," said Leandro Valdés, a dog trainer and proud owner of Koffee, a rescued dog that has gone viral as he rides around Havana in the back of Valdés' motorcycle, wearing goggles and a seatbelt.

"The increase in migration has resulted in more pets being abandoned," says Valdés, noting the "loss of values" that resulted from Cuba's deepening economic crisis.

Floridians cleaning up from Hurricane Milton are hampered by a widespread fuel shortage

By RUSS BYNUM, BRENDAN FARRINGTON and TY ONEIL Associated Press

CORTEZ, Fla. (AP) — Floridians recovering from Hurricane Milton, many of whom were journeying home after fleeing hundreds of miles to escape the storm, spent much of Saturday searching for gas as a fuel shortage gripped the state.

In St. Petersburg, scores of people lined up at a station that had no gas, hoping it would arrive soon. Among them was Daniel Thornton and his 9-year-old daughter Magnolia, who arrived at the station at 7 a.m. and were still waiting four hours later.

"They told me they have gas coming but they don't know when it's going to be here," he said. "I have no choice. I have to sit here all day with her until I get gas."

Gov. Ron DeSantis told reporters Saturday morning that the state opened three fuel distribution sites and planned to open several more. Residents can get 10 gallons (37.85 liters) each, free of charge, he said.

"Obviously as power gets restored ... and the Port of Tampa is open, you're going to see the fuel flowing. But in the meantime, we want to give people another option," DeSantis said.

Officials were replenishing area gas stations with the state's fuel stockpiles and provided generators to stations that remained without power.

Disaster hits twice

Those who reached home were assessing the damage and beginning the arduous cleaning process. Some, like Bill O'Connell, a board member at Bahia Vista Gulf in Venice, had thought they were done after the condo association hired companies to gut, treat and dry the units following Hurricane Helene. Milton undid that work and caused additional damage, O'Connell said.

"It reflooded everything that was already flooded, brought all the sand back on our property that we removed," O'Connell said. "And also did some catastrophic wind damage, ripped off many roofs and blew out a lot of windows that caused more damage inside the units."

The two hurricanes left a ruinous mess in the fishing village of Cortez, a community of 4,100 along the northern edge of Sarasota Bay. Residents of its modest, single-story wood and stucco-fronted cottages were working to remove broken furniture and tree limbs, stacking the debris in the street much like they did after Hurricane Helene.

"Everything is shot," said Mark Praught, a retired street sweeper for Manatee County, who saw 4-foot (1.2-meter) storm surges during Helene. "We'll replace the electrical and the plumbing and go from there."

Praught and his wife, Catherine, have lived for 36 years in a low-lying home that now looks like an empty shell. All the furniture had to be discarded, the walls and the brick and tile floors had to be scrubbed clean of muck, and drywall had to be ripped out.

Catherine Praught said they felt "pure panic" when Hurricane Milton menaced Cortez so soon after Helene, forcing them to pause their cleanup and evacuate. Fortunately, their home wasn't damaged by the

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 60 of 78

second storm.

"This is where we live," Catherine Praught said. "We're just hopeful we get the insurance company to help us."

In Bradenton Beach, Jen Hilliard scooped up wet sand mixed with rocks and tree roots and dumped the mixture into a wheelbarrow.

"This was all grass," Hilliard said of the sandy mess beneath her feet. "They're going to have to make 500 trips of this."

Hilliard, who moved to Florida six months ago and lives further inland, said she was happy to pitch in and help clean up her friend's home a block from the shore in Bradenton Beach

Furniture and household appliances sat outside alongside debris from interior drywall that was removed after Helene sent several feet of storm surge into the house. Inside, walls were gutted up to 4 feet (1.2 meters), exposing the beams underneath.

"You roll with the punches," she said. "Community is the best part, though. Everybody helping each other."

Milton killed at least 10 people after it made landfall as a Category 3 storm, tearing across central Florida, flooding barrier islands and spawning deadly tornadoes. Officials say the toll could have been worse if not for the widespread evacuations.

Overall, more than a thousand people had been rescued in the wake of the storm as of Saturday, DeSantis said.

Property damage and economic costs in the billions

On Sunday, President Joe Biden will survey the devastation inflicted on Florida's Gulf Coast by the hurricane. He said he hopes to connect with DeSantis during the visit.

The trip offers Biden another opportunity to press Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson to call lawmakers back to Washington to approve more funding during their preelection recess. It's something Johnson says he won't do.

Biden is making the case that Congress needs to act now to ensure the Small Business Administration and FEMA have the money they need to get through hurricane season, which stretches through November in the Atlantic.

DeSantis welcomed the federal government's approval of a disaster declaration announced Saturday and said he had gotten strong support from Biden.

"He basically said, you know, you guys are doing a great job. We're here for you," he said when asked about his conversations with Biden. "We sent a big request and we got approved for what we wanted."

Moody's Analytics on Saturday estimated economic costs from the storm will range from \$50 billion to \$85 billion, including upwards of \$70 billion in property damage and an economic output loss of up to \$15 billion.

Safety threats remain, including rising rivers

As the recovery continues, DeSantis has warned people to be cautious, citing ongoing safety threats including downed power lines and standing water. Some 1.3 million Floridians were still without power by Saturday afternoon, according to poweroutage.us.

National Weather Service Meteorologist Paul Close said rivers will "keep rising" for the next four or five days resulting in river flooding, mostly around Tampa Bay and northward. Those areas were hit by the most rain, which comes on top of a wet summer that included several earlier hurricanes.

"You can't do much but wait," Close said of the rivers cresting. "At least there is no rain in the forecast, no substantial rain. So we have a break here from all our wet weather."

Donald Trump holds a rally in California, a state he's almost certain to lose

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD and MEG KINNARD AP Political Writers

COACHELLA, Calif. (AP) — With the presidency on the line in battlegrounds like Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, Donald Trump spent Saturday night in solidly liberal California, seeking to link Vice President Kamala Harris to what he described as the failures of her home state.

Trump is almost certain to lose California, and that won't change after his Saturday stop in Coachella, a desert city east of Los Angeles best known for the annual music festival bearing its name. Still, Trump took advantage of his visit to tear into the nation's most populous state, bringing up its recent struggles with homelessness, water shortages and a lack of affordability. Harris, the Democratic nominee, was previously the state's junior senator and attorney general.

"We're not going to let Kamala Harris do to America what she did to California," Trump said, referring to the state as "Paradise Lost."

The former president lost California in a landslide in 2020. He did get 6 million-plus votes, more than any GOP presidential candidate before, and his margins topped 70% in some rural counties that typically favor conservatives on the ballot.

That's an enormous pool of potential volunteers to work on state races and participate in phone banks into the most contested states. And Trump drew media coverage in the Los Angeles market, the second-largest in the country.

Trump visited Coachella in between stops in Nevada, at a roundtable in Las Vegas for Latinos earlier Saturday — where he praised Hispanics as having "such energy" — and Arizona, for a rally Sunday in Prescott Valley. He narrowly lost those two swing states to Democrat Joe Biden in 2020.

Attendees who waited in broiling temperatures that approached 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) said they didn't expect Trump to win their state but were thrilled to see him.

"It's like a convention of like-minded people," said Tom Gibbons of Palm Desert, who's backed Trump since 2016 but been unable to see him in person until Saturday, as he waited in line. "Everybody understands the heartbeat of America, the plight of the working man ... It's reassuring."

Going to California gives Trump the "ability to swoop in and leverage this big population of Trump supporters," said Tim Lineberger, who was communications director for Trump's 2016 campaign in Michigan and also worked in the former president's administration. He's "coming here and activating that."

Lineberger recalled Californians making calls to Michigan voters in 2016 on Trump's behalf and said the campaign's decision to go into safe, Democratic turf at this point was "an aggressive, offensive play."

California is also a fountain of campaign cash for both parties, and Trump will be fundraising. Photos with the former president in Coachella were priced at \$25,000, which comes with special seating for two. A "VIP Experience" was priced at \$5,000.

Speaking for 80 minutes Saturday night, Trump ran through the standard list of Republican complaints about the Democrat-dominated state — its large number of immigrants in the U.S. illegally, its homeless population and its thicket of regulations — and waded into a water rights battle over the endangered Delta smelt that has pitted environmentalists against farmers.

The former president was particularly scathing about illegal immigration, warning at one point: "Your children are in danger. You can't go to school with these people, these people are from a different planet."

He continued his long-running spat with Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, whom Trump called "Newsom." Trump again threatened Newsom over the water rights battle, saying that if he didn't act in favor of farmers, "we're not giving you any of that fire money that we send you all the time for all the forest fires that you have."

Republicans beforehand listed a number of potential reasons for Trump's visit.

With congressional races in play that could determine which party controls the House, the Coachella rally "is a get-out-the-vote type of thing that motivates and energizes Republicans in California, when they are not as close to what is going on in the national campaign," Republican consultant Tim Rosales said.

Jim Brulte, a former chairman of the California Republican Party, said he thinks Trump is angling for something that has eluded him in previous campaigns: winning more total votes than his Democratic opponent.

"I believe Donald Trump is coming to California because he wants to win not only in the Electoral College, but he wants to win the popular vote. There are more registered voters in California than there are residents in 46 of the other 49 states," Brulte said.

The Trump National Golf Club Los Angeles sits on the Pacific Coast, south of the city. But Trump has long had a conflicted relationship with California, where a Republican has not carried the state since 1988 and Democrats outnumber registered Republicans by about 2-to-1.

California was home to the so-called Trump resistance during his time in office, and Trump often depicts California as representing all he sees wrong in America. As president, he called the homeless crises in Los Angeles and San Francisco disgraceful and threatened to intercede.

Newsom on Wednesday predicted Trump would be denigrating his state at the rally, overlooking its strengths as the world's fifth-largest economy. The governor said that for the first time in a decade, California has more Fortune 500 companies than any other state.

"You know, that's not what Trump is going to say," he predicted.

Doctor deems Harris in 'excellent health.' Her team aims to contrast with Trump's scant medical info

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris is in "excellent health" and "possesses the physical and mental resiliency" required to serve as president, her doctor said in a letter released Saturday that summarizes her medical history and status.

Dr. Joshua Simmons, an Army colonel and physician to the vice president, wrote that Harris, 59, maintains a healthy, active lifestyle and that her most recent physical last April was "unremarkable."

She "possesses the physical and mental resiliency required to successfully execute the duties of the Presidency, to include those as Chief Executive, Head of State and Commander in Chief," he wrote in a two-page letter.

Harris' campaign hopes the release of her medical report will draw a contrast with Republican Donald Trump, who has shared only limited information about his health over the years, and raise questions about his fitness to serve, according to a campaign aide who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

Trump has released very little health information, including after his ear was grazed by a bullet during an assassination attempt in July in Pennsylvania.

Steven Cheung, a spokesperson for the Trump campaign, said Saturday that Trump has voluntarily released updates from his personal physician as well as detailed reports from Rep. Ronny Jackson, R-Texas, who, before he was elected to Congress, was Trump's physician at the White House. Jackson also treated Trump after the assassination attempt.

"All have concluded he is in perfect and excellent health to be Commander in Chief," Cheung said in a statement. The campaign press office provided links to some of Trump's past medical reports. They included: <https://tinyurl.com/yckc495b> and <https://tinyurl.com/4z27pk2f>

If Trump, who is 78, were to be elected next month, he would be the oldest president in U.S. history by the time his term ends in 2029.

Harris addressed the issue on Saturday before she traveled to North Carolina.

"It's clear to me that he and his team do not want the American people to really see what he is doing and if he is fit to be the president," she told the reporters accompanying her.

Asked if she thought Trump's mental acuity had declined, Harris said, "I invite the public to watch his rallies and be the decision-maker."

Simmons, who said he has been Harris' primary care physician for the past 3 1/2 years, said the vice president has a history of seasonal allergies and urticaria, or hives. She has been able to "dramatically"

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 63 of 78

improve her symptoms over the past three years with an immunotherapy medication that helps the body become less sensitive to allergens.

Simmons said Harris' latest blood work and other test results were "unremarkable." Her blood pressure is not worryingly high and she is at low risk for heart disease.

According to the summary of an exam conducted six months ago, Harris' vital signs showed a blood pressure of 128 over 74, a heart rate of 78 beats per minute, pulse oximetry of 100% on room air with a respiratory rate of 16 breaths per minute and a temperature of 98.7 degrees. Pulse oximetry measures the amount of oxygen in a person's blood.

Simmons reported that Harris' head, eyes, ears, nose and pharynx are normal.

Also in the report: Harris wears contact lenses for mild nearsightedness; her family history includes maternal colon cancer; she is up to date on preventive care recommendations, including having a colonoscopy and annual mammograms, as well as routine immunizations.

Harris' mother, Shyamala Gopalan, was 70 when she died of colon cancer in February 2009.

The vice president "maintains a healthy, active lifestyle, despite her busy schedule," including "vigorous daily aerobic exercise and core strength training," Simmons reported. She eats a healthy diet, does not use tobacco products and drinks alcohol "only occasionally and in moderation," he wrote.

As Harris' office released the medical report, her campaign highlighted recent media reports raising questions about Trump's health and mental acuity and his reluctance to provide detailed information about the state of his health and medical history.

Trump eagerly questioned President Joe Biden's physical and mental fitness when the 81-year-old sought reelection. Since Biden dropped out of the race and was replaced by Harris on the Democratic ticket, Trump's health has drawn more attention.

Last November, Trump marked Biden's birthday by releasing a letter from his physician that reported the former president was in "excellent" physical and mental health. The letter posted on Trump's social media platform contained no details about his weight, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, or the results of any tests to support its claims.

Harris helps pack aid boxes for North Carolina hurricane victims ahead of Sunday campaign push

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris on Saturday helped pack diapers into boxes of personal care products destined for North Carolina hurricane victims, agreeing with one helper who said "it takes a village."

"You're exactly right," Harris replied to Greg Hatem, owner of The Pit Authentic Barbecue restaurant as she put two packages of diapers inside each cardboard box that was placed in front of her assembly-line style.

Harris met with Black leaders at the barbecue restaurant in Raleigh before she joined volunteers who were there to pack bandages, baby formula, baby wipes, pain relief pills and other items for victims of Hurricane Helene, which tore through western North Carolina last month.

The vice president was overnighting in the state, which narrowly backed her rival, Republican Donald Trump, in 2020. Democrats are campaigning hard to flip North Carolina into their column in the presidential election next month. On Sunday, Harris was attending church in Greenville as part of her campaign's "Souls to the Polls" effort to get out the vote and holding a rally.

The weekend trip was her second to the battleground state after it was struck by Hurricane Helene. The Democratic presidential nominee went to North Carolina last Saturday to survey the aftermath of Helene and pledged federal assistance for its victims.

Before her plane left Washington, Harris told reporters accompanying her that she looked forward to talking with residents "first and foremost to see how they're doing in the wake of the hurricane."

Democrats view North Carolina as swinging their way this year with its base of Black and college-educated

voters, as well as women concerned about the loss of abortion protections. But the aftermath of Hurricane Helene has become a political flashpoint with former President Trump and his allies attacking the Biden administration's response to the natural disaster.

At The Pit, Harris met with Black elected, faith and community leaders. Her campaign did not release a list of the people she met with.

After church on Sunday, Harris, a Baptist, was set to speak about her economic plans at a rally to generate support for early voting, which starts Thursday in North Carolina.

Making landfall on Sept. 26, Hurricane Helene resulted in the deaths of roughly 230 people and wiped out roads, electrical power and cell phone service. Just two weeks later, Hurricane Milton hit Florida this week and generated an estimated \$50 billion worth of damage and left several people dead.

Harris also visited Georgia after Helene struck there, too, in addition to virtually attending briefings on the federal government's response and rejiggering her campaign schedule. She continued to travel for the presidential race with time spent this week in Nevada and Arizona.

One of her prime messages has been that there should be no price gouging by companies seeking to take advantage of shortages caused by the hurricanes, an issue she has made central to her campaign as a way to tackle inflation.

"To any company or individual that is using this crisis to jack up prices through illegal fraud or price gouging, whether it be at the gas pump, the airport or the hotel counter, we will be monitoring and there will be a consequence," Harris said at Friday's briefing.

But Trump and his allies have falsely suggested that disaster relief from the Federal Emergency Management Agency went to immigrants instead of hurricane victims, while also suggesting that people are not getting the full financial support to which they're legally entitled.

At a recent rally in Reading, Pennsylvania, Trump said the response has been worse than during 2005's Hurricane Katrina, which left nearly 1,400 people dead and caused \$200 billion in damages.

"North Carolina's been hit very hard and this administration has not done a proper job at all. Terrible, terrible," Trump said at the rally, adding that Harris was "on a fundraising comedy tour while people are stranded and drowning all over some of our greatest states."

President Joe Biden has called Trump's falsehoods about the government's response "un-American" and told his predecessor to "get a life, man."

Heavy Israeli bombardment in northern Gaza as UN peacekeepers in Lebanon are hit again

By SAMY MAGDY and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Palestinians in northern Gaza described heavy Israeli bombardment Saturday in the hours after airstrikes killed at least 22 people, as Israel warned people there and in southern Lebanon to get out of the way of offensives against the Hamas and Hezbollah militant groups.

In Lebanon, the U.N. peacekeeping force said its headquarters in Naqoura was hit again, with a peacekeeper struck by gunfire late Friday and in stable condition. It wasn't clear who fired. It occurred a day after Israel's military fired on the headquarters for a second straight day. Israel, which has warned peacekeepers to leave their positions, didn't immediately respond to questions.

Hunger warnings emerged again in northern Gaza as residents said they hadn't received aid since the beginning of the month. The U.N. World Food Program said no food aid had entered the north since Oct. 1. An estimated 400,000 people remain there.

Israel's military renewed its offensive in northern Gaza almost a week ago while escalating its air and ground campaign against the Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon. Amid Israel's war with Hezbollah, a top U.N. official, Carl Skau, told The Associated Press he's concerned that Lebanon's ports and airport might be taken out of service. More than 1 million people have been displaced.

Israel's military said Hezbollah fired more than 300 projectiles over Yom Kippur, the holiest and most solemn day on the Jewish calendar. Hezbollah claimed a series of rocket strikes on Israeli military positions

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 65 of 78

and said fighters engaged an Israeli infantry unit attempting to enter Lebanese territory.

Israel's military also said it killed 50 militants in Lebanon. Claims on either side couldn't be verified.

Israeli airstrikes on Saturday hit multiple areas in southern and eastern Lebanon, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. Nine were killed in Maisra village in the northeast. Four were killed in an apartment building on the edge of Barja south of Beirut. Rayak and Tal Chiha hospitals in the Bekaa Valley were damaged. In Nabatieh, eight people were wounded.

The total toll in Lebanon over the past year of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah is now 2,255 killed, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. More than 1,400 people have been killed since mid-September. It isn't clear how many were fighters.

"We will keep standing with the Lebanese people during these difficult circumstances and also with the Palestinian people," the speaker of Iran's parliament, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, said Saturday while touring the scene of an Israeli airstrike in Beirut.

Some Gaza residents are trapped

In northern Gaza, residents told the AP many were trapped in their homes and shelters with dwindling supplies while seeing bodies uncollected in the streets as the bombing hampered emergency responders.

Those who rushed to the scene of the latest deadly airstrikes in the urban refugee camp of Jabaliya found a hole 20 meters (65 feet) deep where a home once stood.

At least 20 bodies were recovered while others likely were under rubble, emergency service officials said.

Elsewhere in Jabaliya, a strike on a home killed two brothers and wounded a woman and newborn baby, the officials said. An afternoon strike on a home killed at least four people, including a woman, said Fares Abu Hamza, an official with the emergency service.

Israel's military said it killed more than 20 militants in the Jabaliya area over the past day.

Military spokesperson Avichay Adraee told people in parts of Jabaliya and Gaza City to evacuate south to an Israeli-designated humanitarian zone as Israel plans to use great force "and will continue to do so for a long time."

Israel has repeatedly returned to parts of Gaza as Hamas and other militants regroup. The war has destroyed large areas of Gaza and displaced around 90% of its population of 2.3 million people, often multiple times.

Once again, some families moved south on foot, in donkey carts or crowded in vehicles that navigated piles of rubble. Others refused to go.

"It's like the first days of the war," said a Jabaliya resident, Ahmed Abu Goneim. "The occupation is doing everything to uproot us. But we will not leave."

The 24-year-old said Israeli warplanes and drones struck many neighboring houses in the past week. He counted 15 relatives and neighbors, including four women and five children as young as 3, killed in neighboring homes.

Hamza Sharif, who stays with his family in a school-turned-shelter in Jabaliya, described "constant bombings day and night."

He said the shelter hasn't received aid since the beginning of the month and that families "will run out of supplies very soon."

Food is running out

The World Food Program said it was unclear how long the limited food supplies it distributed in northern Gaza earlier will last.

The U.N.'s independent investigator on the right to food last month accused Israel of carrying out a "starvation campaign" against Palestinians, which Israel has denied.

Israel's offensive in Gaza started after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, when militants stormed into Israel, killing about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250 others.

Israel's offensive has killed more than 42,000 Palestinians, according to local health authorities, who don't specify between combatants and civilians. Gaza's Health Ministry said that hospitals had received the bodies of 49 people killed over the past 24 hours.

The U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III spoke with Israeli Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant on

Saturday to express his "deep concern" about reports that Israeli forces fired on UN peacekeeping positions in Lebanon, as well as the reported death of two Lebanese soldiers, according to a Pentagon statement.

Austin said it was important to ensure the safety and security of UNIFIL forces and Lebanese Armed Forces, and "reinforced the need to pivot from military operations in Lebanon to a diplomatic pathway as soon as feasible," according to the statement.

The U.S. Secretary of Defense also said steps must be taken to address the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and reaffirmed the United States' "unwavering, enduring, and ironclad commitment to Israel's security," according to the statement.

Fight for House raging in districts ringing NYC where Trump struggled but other Republicans thrived

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

NELSONVILLE, N.Y. (AP) — Voters in a ring of congressional districts encircling New York City where Republican candidates often do well but Donald Trump struggled in 2020 could decide which party controls the U.S. House for the next two years.

Eleven districts within a 90-mile drive of Manhattan are expected to be among the country's most closely contested House races on Election Day.

Republicans hold a slim 6-5 edge now in the nearly contiguous circle that starts in the Long Island suburbs, cuts through western Connecticut and New York's Hudson River Valley and Catskills regions, then carves through eastern Pennsylvania before curling back into New Jersey.

Both parties have a shot at picking up seats across the broad territory of dense suburbs, leafy exurbs and former mill towns. Democrats have made the region an important part of their strategy to reclaim a House majority, but voters in the districts have been far from uniform in their thinking in recent elections.

They have been united in two key ways: Most have been open to Republican candidates, but they also have shown an aversion to Trump. That means having the former president at the top of the GOP ballot this year could be decisive in congressional races unless opposition to him has softened or voters in the region are willing to split their tickets.

Trump lost to Democrat Joe Biden in all but two of the 11 districts in 2020. Two years later, voters in seven of them sent Republicans to Congress. In three of those districts where Republicans won in 2022, and two more where Democrats prevailed by razor-thin margins, Trump lost to Biden by at least 10 percentage points, according to voting data tabulated by The Associated Press.

It isn't clear whether the political dynamics that helped Republicans do well outside New York City in the 2022 midterms exist today. In that election, many suburban voters were worried about a spike in violent crime after the COVID-19 pandemic. But crime rates since then have dropped.

"The message environment in 2022 made the battlefields very uphill for Democrats," said former U.S. Rep. Steve Israel, a Long Island Democrat who once served as chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

But in a presidential election year, with Trump in a fierce campaign against Vice President Kamala Harris, "the message environment is defined by the top of the ticket." Israel said. "In these districts, this tends to become a referendum on Donald."

The ability of Republican candidates to outperform Trump two years ago was illustrated in New York's 17th Congressional District, a suburban area north of the city that is home to the Village of Sleepy Hollow, Sing Sing Prison and such luminaries as Bill and Hillary Clinton and the billionaire George Soros.

Trump owns a golf club and a private estate in the district, but still lost to Biden there by 10 percentage points. In 2022, Republican Mike Lawler narrowly defeated U.S. Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, a Democrat who had been in office for a decade.

Now, Lawler is in a tough campaign against Mondaire Jones, a former Democratic congressman who was one of the first two openly gay Black men to serve in the House when he was elected in 2020. Jones

Croton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 67 of 78

lost his seat when the boundaries of his district were redrawn.

Both candidates have geared their strategies toward attracting moderate voters, while criticizing each other as being in league with radicals.

"People are waking up to the fact that even if they don't believe Mike Lawler is as bad as Marjorie Taylor Greene, they can't afford to vote for him because he empowers the chaos and the extremism that we are seeing down in Washington," Jones told The Associated Press, referring to the far-right congresswoman from Georgia.

Democrats have also claimed that Lawler wants to ban abortion, which the Republican denies. Lawler said Democrats are trying to mislead voters on an issue that has proved to be a winner for many Democrats since the Supreme Court in 2022 ended constitutional protections for abortion rights.

"It speaks to the fact that they have nothing else to discuss or talk about, from the economy to the border to the international crises around the globe," Lawler told the AP.

Lawler's approach has worked with constituents such as Michelle Patterson, 71, who lives in a small home adorned with Trump flags and Republican lawn signs in the village of Nelsonville.

She described Lawler as "common sense" and Jones as a "radical" and said Democrats are trying to distract voters with their warnings about abortion access.

"He's not advocating to ban abortion!" she said of Lawler.

For other voters, it's a harder sell.

"I don't believe him," said Jill Ferson, 77, a social worker who lives in the village of Croton-on-Hudson, when asked about Lawler saying he will not support a federal abortion ban.

Ferson said her biggest concerns this election were keeping Trump out of office and preserving abortion and LGBTQ+ rights.

Similar dynamics surface in the other ring districts.

On Long Island, Republican Rep. Anthony D'Esposito is trying to hold onto a congressional district right outside New York City that Biden won by 15 percentage points. D'Esposito is trying to cast Democrat Laura Gillen as soft on crime while criticizing Democrats over immigration policies he blames for an influx of migrants.

Gillen, a former town supervisor, has rejected those criticisms and said that if elected, she would push for more law enforcement and border security.

Northwest of the city, Democrat Josh Riley is trying to unseat U.S. Rep. Marc Molinaro, a Republican, in a rematch of their close contest in 2022. The district runs from the Hudson River Valley to the Finger Lakes.

In some New York districts, Democrats could face questions about the indictment of New York City Mayor Eric Adams, who has pleaded not guilty to charges that he accepted bribes and illegal campaign contributions. But Adams is not on the ballot, so that may not matter to voters. While some Republicans have used the scandal to assert that there's rampant corruption in the Democratic Party, Trump has spoken sympathetically about Adams, portraying his prosecution as politically motivated.

In eastern Pennsylvania, a presidential battleground, three perennially contested congressional districts feature incumbents with a knack for survival. They include Republican U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, who is chasing a fifth term in a district that favored Biden by 5 percentage points in 2020. His opponent is Ashley Ehasz, a former Army helicopter pilot whom he beat two years ago by almost 10 percentage points.

Solidly blue New Jersey and Connecticut also have at least one competitive race apiece.

In a New Jersey district that includes Trump's Bedminster golf club, Republican U.S. Rep. Tom Kean Jr. is seeking a second term against Democrat Sue Altman, a former leader of the state's progressive Working Families Alliance.

In Connecticut, Democratic U.S. Rep. Jahana Hayes is matched up again with former Republican state Sen. George Logan, whom she defeated by less than 1 percent two years ago in a district Biden won by 11 percentage points.

At a recent debate, Hayes accused Logan of hiding his support for Trump. Logan denied that, but did not say Trump's name once.

Obama's callout to Black men touches a nerve among Democrats. Is election-year misogyny at play?

By MATT BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Barack Obama had frank words for Black men who may be considering sitting out the election.

"Part of it makes me think that, well, you just aren't feeling the idea of having a woman as president, and you're coming up with other alternatives and other reasons for that," he said Thursday to Harris-Walz campaign volunteers and officials at a field office in Pittsburgh.

America's first Black president touched a nerve among Democrats worried about Vice President Kamala Harris' chances of becoming the second.

Harris is counting on Black turnout in battleground states such as Pennsylvania in her tight race with Republican Donald Trump, who has focused on energizing men of all races and tried to make inroads with Black men in particular.

Obama's comments belie that Black men still overwhelmingly back Harris. But her campaign and allies have worked hard trying to shore up support with this critical group of voters — and addressing questions about potential misogyny.

Black Americans are the most Democratic-leaning racial demographic in the country, with Black men being outpaced only by Black women in their support for Democrats.

A recent poll conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that about 7 in 10 Black voters had a favorable view of Harris and preferred her leadership to that of Trump on several major policy issues including the economy, health care, abortion, immigration and the war between Israel and Hamas.

There was little difference in support for Harris between Black men and Black women.

But Khalil Thompson, co-founder and executive director of Win With Black Men, said he agreed with what he saw as Obama's larger point.

"I believe President Obama is speaking to a tangible, visceral understanding of what it means for all men to relate to women in America. Calling out misogyny is not wrong," said Thompson, whose group raised more than \$1.3 million for Harris from 20,000 Black men in the 24 hours after President Joe Biden bowed out of the race in July and made way for Harris.

Win With Black Men has organized weekly calls and events meant to bolster Harris' standing with Black men. The flurry of activism has focused on combating misinformation in Black communities about Harris, as well as an emphasis on the policy priorities of Black men, which the group found are often centered on greater economic opportunities, safe communities, social justice policies and health care, particularly for the partners and children of Black men.

"We're not a monolith," Thompson said. "However, we are just like every other American in this country who wants a good paying job, that we can provide for our children and participate in their lives and the lives of our partner, that we can get them home safely, afford to go to the grocery store, save a little for retirement and have a vacation."

Harris said she believes the votes of Black men must be earned, like with any group of voters.

Black men "are not in our back pocket," she told a panel hosted by the National Association of Black Journalists in September.

Harris recently sat down with the "All The Smoke" podcast hosted by former NBA players Matt Barnes and Stephen Jackson to discuss her racial identity and policy issues of interest to Black men. On Tuesday, Harris will appear in Detroit for a live conversation with Charlamagne tha God, a prominent Black media personality.

The Harris campaign is conducting a number of outreach efforts to Black voters, including an tour of homecomings at historically Black colleges and universities, a number of radio and TV ads targeting Black voters in key states, and a get-out-the-vote operation engaging Black communities that complements the work of allied groups such as Win With Black Men.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 69 of 78

It has also tapped high-profile surrogates, including politicians, business leaders, professional athletes and musical artists, to court Black men.

"Our Black men, we've got to get them out to vote," said former NBA star Magic Johnson during a recent Harris rally in Flint, Michigan. "Kamala's opponent promised a lot of things to the Black community that he did not deliver on. And we've got to make sure we help Black men understand that."

The Trump campaign and its allies have held roundtables for Black men and conducted a bus tour through swing states that featured cookouts in cities like Baltimore, Chicago and Philadelphia. The campaign believes the former president's appeals on issues such as the economy, immigration and traditional gender roles resonate with some Black men.

Trump has also sought to exploit Obama's remarks, writing on social media Friday that Obama "admits a total lack of enthusiasm for Kamala, especially with Black Men." On Saturday, the campaign's Black Men for Trump advisory board released a statement condemning Obama's remarks as "insulting."

"It's demeaning to suggest that we can't evaluate a candidate's track record — especially when Kamala Harris has done more harm than good to Black communities," wrote the group in a letter that was co-signed by Reps. Byron Donalds, R-Fla., Wesley Hunt, R-Tex., as well as former state lawmakers and long-time Trump allies, including former Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, whose prison sentence for corruption crimes was commuted by Trump during his administration's final hours.

Trump earlier this year mused that the criminal charges against him in four separate indictments, one of which led to a conviction with another dismissed, made him more relatable to Black people.

"A lot of people said that's why the Black people like me, because they have been hurt so badly and discriminated against, and they actually viewed me as I'm being discriminated against," he told a Black conservative audience in South Carolina.

Trump's support among Black, white, and Hispanic male voters worries senior Harris campaign officials as the election increasingly shapes up as divided along gender lines, with Harris stronger with women and Trump stronger with men.

But the debate over to what degree misogyny plays a role in some Black men not supporting Harris sidesteps a broader conversation on how Black men are engaged as full citizens in politics, argues Philip Agnew, founder of the grassroots political organization Black Men Build.

"To be a Black man in the United States is to be invisible and hypervisible at the same time, and neither one of those is a humanizing viewpoint," Agnew said.

Agnew's group traveled to 10 cities across the summer, hosting roundtables with Black men and making the case for civic engagement and a progressive politics. Agnew said many Black men throughout those conversations expressed exasperation toward politics, a sentiment shared by many Americans, in addition to a feeling that their political perspectives were often misunderstood or unappreciated.

"The Black men I know are incredibly concerned with the lives of our families and our communities," Agnew said. "It's because of an abundance of love for our sisters that we ask questions, not a lack of love."

Far from where Hurricane Milton's eye hit, tornadoes wrought unexpected damage

By STEPHANY MATAT and CHRISTOPHER L. KELLER Associated Press

WELLINGTON, Fla. (AP) — Tony Brazzale, a diving boat captain who has lived for 10 years in his Wellington home in southeastern Florida, wasn't worried about Hurricane Milton. The storm's center was forecast to make landfall on the opposite side of the peninsula and then cross the state well to the north of his family.

But on Wednesday afternoon as the hurricane began to pummel the state, he stood outside his house and watched as a tornado loomed in the sky. He took video on his phone. The pressure dropped, and his wife said her ears were popping. It was time to go inside.

The twister shattered windows in the home, tore off roof shingles, ripped a tree from the ground and left branches and other debris scattered in the yard. Two days later Brazzale was wearing safety goggles and using a chainsaw as he cleaned up the damage.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 70 of 78

"The hurricane was a nonevent for us," he said. "Had it not been for an F-3 tornado, the entire thing would have been a nonevent for us."

It was one of dozens of tornadoes spawned by Milton that hit South Florida far from where the storm made landfall near Sarasota. One of them killed at least six people in Spanish Lakes Country Club Village near Fort Pierce, about an hour's drive north from Wellington.

Meteorologists believe there may have been at least 38 tornadoes associated with Milton. The National Weather Service is still reviewing preliminary reports, which could take weeks, but it issued 126 tornado warnings in the state the day the hurricane hit.

When the review is complete, the storm could crack the all-time top-10 list for most tornadoes caused by a hurricane.

The highest number of confirmed tornadoes from a hurricane were the 118 unleashed by Ivan in 2004, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Hurricane Beryl, which hit in July of this year and is still under review, generated at least 65 confirmed tornadoes and currently ranks fifth.

By comparison, Florida overall typically sees about 50 tornadoes a year on average, according to Matthew Elliot, a warning coordination meteorologist for the Storm Prediction Center.

In Wellington, 210 miles (340 kilometers) southeast of Tampa near West Palm Beach on the Atlantic Coast, sheriff's deputies spent Friday morning and afternoon helping residents clean up debris and move large trees that were obstructing roads.

Brazzale toiled to fix roof tiles and replace his shattered windows. Throughout his neighborhood, Pine Trace at Binks Forest, others were doing the same thing — cleaning up debris, putting tarps on damaged roofs and chain sawing fallen trees and branches.

The most important thing is that nobody died here, Brazzale said.

"It's a significant pressure drop when one of those things goes over," he said of the tornado. "You heard it. It was a freight train."

Ted Cruz and Colin Allred wage another big US Senate fight in Texas

By SEAN MURPHY and JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Attack ads on every TV break. Campaign money pouring in. And on a sunny Saturday, a crowd stretching out the door for a campaign rally at Tulip's, a popular Fort Worth nightclub — this time for Democratic U.S. Rep. Colin Allred, a former NFL linebacker trying to unseat Republican Sen. Ted Cruz.

Texas is having one of those Octobers again.

With Democrats defending twice as many Senate seats as Republicans, Allred's bid could be their best chance to flip a seat next month and preserve their thin Senate majority. Cruz is imploring Republican supporters to take the challenge seriously, six years after his narrow victory over Beto O'Rourke revealed fault lines for Republicans after decades of dominance in Texas.

But Allred, who would become Texas' first Black senator, is doing things his own way. Out for more than the moral victories Texas Democrats have settled for since 1994 — the last time they won a statewide election — Allred has run to the center and away from O'Rourke's barnstorming and break-the-rules blueprint. The different look has frustrated some Democrats, but amid signs of a competitive race with less than a month to go, Allred is sticking to the script.

"Beto didn't win, but he was successful," said Ryan Armstrong, 21, who was registering voters outside Tulip's on a clipboard still adorned with a "Beto for Texas" sticker. "I have a lot of hope that (Allred) will win, but I honestly don't know if he's done enough."

Abortion rights and a Cancun trip

Allred, a three-term congressman from Dallas, is by nature a far different candidate than O'Rourke, an electrifying orator who was quick to hop up on a table to fire up a crowd and road-tripped across all 254 counties. Allred describes himself as someone who "keeps a cool head" and presents himself as a bipartisan problem-solver. To win with that low-key approach, he'll need enthusiasm generated by Vice

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 71 of 78

President Kamala Harris at the top of the Democratic ticket even as he sets himself apart from her in a state former President Donald Trump is expected to win handily.

"Colin has to outperform Harris, so that's a little more delicate for him than it was for us," said David Wysong, a top O'Rourke adviser during his 2018 run against Cruz.

Allred boosts his moderate credentials by touting endorsements from prominent Republicans, including former U.S. Reps. Adam Kinzinger and Liz Cheney.

Other factors also could work in Allred's favor. Most notably, there's the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in 2022 to strip away constitutional protections for abortion, a ruling that paved the way for Texas to outlaw nearly all abortions. That has been a winning issue for Democrats ever since, even in red states like Kentucky and Kansas.

Allred has featured abortion rights in his campaign, highlighting the personal story of Kate Cox, a Texas woman forced to flee the state to get an abortion after doctors determined her fetus had a fatal condition for which there are no exceptions under Texas law.

He has also not let up on Cruz's family vacation to Mexico during a deadly winter storm that crippled the state's power grid and is likely to remind voters again when the candidates debate on Oct. 15.

Cruz goes on the offensive

Cruz, meanwhile, has transformed from selling himself as an unapologetic partisan who showed little interest in governing when he arrived in Washington to a get-things-done Republican holding the line against Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and other Democrats. He remains just as combative, attacking Allred as a "radical leftist" and linking the congressman to immigration problems and transgender rights.

"Let me tell you, Chuck Schumer and the communists have set their targets on Tarrant County," Cruz told a packed house of supporters at Outpost 36, a barbecue restaurant in the Fort Worth suburb of Keller.

"They can't have it," he said, prompting cheers from people waving Cruz signs that read "Keep Texas Texas."

Tarrant County, which includes Fort Worth and the fast-growing suburbs surrounding it, is the kind of place Allred needs to win big in. Races here have been close in recent cycles, with O'Rourke topping Cruz by less than 1 percentage point in 2018 and President Joe Biden winning the county by a similar margin four years ago.

"Six years ago it was a real battle, and this year it's a real battle," Cruz said. "It's not complicated. If you are a hardcore partisan Democrat, after Donald Trump there's nobody in the country you want to beat more than me."

And while O'Rourke's Senate campaign in 2018 may have provided some kind of statewide roadmap for Democrats, he lost in his attempt to unseat Gov. Greg Abbott two years ago by more than 10 percentage points.

Campaign spending tops \$120M in Texas

The amount of money being spent by both sides hints at the race's national significance.

According to AdImpact, which tracks spending on advertising, the \$120 million both parties are spending on the Texas U.S. Senate race is set to exceed the roughly \$40 million either paid for or reserved in the Florida Senate race, another top target for Democrats. But it pales in comparison with races in Montana and Ohio, where total spending exceeds \$700 million on races in which Democrats are defending seats in red-leaning states.

Part of the heavy spending in Texas is attributable to its size, with 20 separate television markets, including two of the largest and most expensive in the country in Dallas and Houston.

"I think part of it also reflects the fact that Allred has been very successful raising money, and he's been spending quite a bit of that on TV advertising," said Mark Jones, a Rice University political science professor. "National Democrats have not yet demonstrated the same level of enthusiasm and optimism as the Allred campaign. Part of that may be that they're still trying to figure out the difficult calculus of combining defense, which they're far more focused on, and offense."

Allred: From NFL to Congress

Allred's resume seems perfect for the Lone Star State. A star high school athlete from Dallas, he played linebacker and was captain of the football team at Baylor University in Waco. After his NFL career, he worked as a civil rights attorney.

He also has knocked off a high-profile Republican, having defeated Rep. Pete Sessions after he'd spent more than two decades in Congress in 2018. That campaign drew considerable energy from O'Rourke's bid to unseat Cruz, who beat the former El Paso congressman by less than 3 percentage points.

Still, running a successful statewide campaign comes with a higher degree of difficulty, and Allred's approach has left some Democrats scratching their heads. In Laredo, for example, a fast-growing county along the U.S.-Mexican border, some Democrats wonder where he's been.

"He's done absolutely nothing, nothing to appeal to our voters," said Sylvia Bruni, chair of the Webb County Democratic Party. "As far as he's concerned, apparently we're not worth the time."

Allred defends his strategy, saying the political landscape has shifted.

"I'm a different candidate and this is a very different year," he said. "We have different issues that have happened since 2018."

A-bomb survivors use Nobel Peace Prize to share anti-nuke message with the young

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The recipient of this year's Nobel Peace Prize is a fast-dwindling group of atomic bomb survivors who are facing down the shrinking time they have left to convey the firsthand horror they witnessed 79 years ago.

Nihon Hidankyo, the Japanese organization of survivors of the U.S. atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was awarded for its decadeslong activism against nuclear weapons. The survivors, known as hibakusha, see the prize and the international attention as their last chance to get their message out to younger generations.

Terumi Tanaka, 91 and who survived the Nagasaki bombing at age 13, said he hopes the award will help raise public awareness about the need to join hands to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. He said he feels the hibakusha's desperate wish is not fully understood even as their population rapidly declines.

"Now we face the crisis in which nuclear weapons may be actually used and they are not even going away, we need to properly communicate with younger people and teach them about atomic weapons and the work we have been doing ... so everyone can think what he or she can do," Tanaka told a news conference in Tokyo with several other survivors.

"We've led the activism because we were atomic bombing victims, but I must say all of you are the future hibakusha candidates. So you should fully understand what it means to be hibakusha" and work together, Tanaka said.

The honor rewards members' grassroots efforts to keep telling their stories — even though that involved recollecting horrendous ordeals during and after the bombings, and facing discrimination and worries about their health from the lasting radiation impact — for the sole purpose of never again let that happen.

Now, with their average age at 85.6, the hibakusha are increasingly frustrated that their fear of a growing nuclear threat and push to eliminate nuclear weapons are not fully understood by younger generations.

The number of prefectural hibakusha groups decreased from 47 to 36, according to Hidankyo. And the Japanese government, under the U.S. nuclear umbrella for protection, has refused to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon.

Japan's new Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, at a party leaders' debate in Tokyo Friday, said that while Japan needs to keep conveying the tragedy of nuclear weapons to the world, in reality it is crucial to balance nuclear deterrence and the need to achieve a nuclear-free world.

Tanaka rejected Ishiba's justification for nuclear weapons for deterrence and his idea of sharing the U.S. nuclear capability in the region as "out of the question." Tanaka, who briefly talked with Ishiba who called to congratulate him earlier Saturday, said he hoped to meet the prime minister for fuller talks.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 73 of 78

Another Hidankyo executive, Jiro Hamasumi, who survived the Hiroshima bombing inside of his mother's womb, said the group has faced declining hibakusha membership and financial difficulty, and is seeking to involve younger supporters and second-generation hibakusha to keep their activity going.

But there is hope, and a youth movement seems to be starting, the Nobel committee noted.

Three high school students accompanied Mimaki at the city hall, stood by him as the prize winner was announced, and promised to keep their activism alive.

"I had goose bumps when I heard the announcement," said a beaming Wakana Tsukuda. "I have felt discouraged by negative views about nuclear disarmament, but the Nobel Peace Prize made me renew my commitment to work toward abolishing nuclear weapons."

Another high school student, Natsuki Kai, said, "I will keep up my effort so we can believe that nuclear disarmament is not a dream but a reality."

In Nagasaki, a group of students celebrated Hidankyo's win. Yuka Ohara, 17, thanked the survivors' yearslong effort despite the difficulty. Ohara said she heard her grandparents, who survived the Nagasaki bombing, repeatedly tell her the importance of peace in daily life. "I want to learn more as I continue my activism."

In April, a group of people set up a network, Japan Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, connecting younger generations around the country to work with survivors and pursue their effort.

Efforts to document the survivors' stories and voices have grown in recent years around Japan, including in Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Tokyo. In some places, young volunteers are working with hibakusha to succeed their personal story telling when they are gone.

The first U.S. atomic bombing killed 140,000 people in the city of Hiroshima. A second atomic attack on Nagasaki on Aug. 9, 1945, killed another 70,000. Japan surrendered on Aug. 15, bringing an end to its nearly half-century aggression in Asia.

Hidankyo was formed 11 years later in 1956. There was a growing anti-nuclear movement in Japan in response to U.S. hydrogen bomb tests in the Pacific that led to a series of radiation exposures by Japanese boats, adding to demands for government support for health problems.

As of March, 106,823 survivors — 6,824 fewer than a year ago, and nearly one-quarter of the total in the 1980s — were certified as eligible for government medical support, according to the Health and Welfare Ministry. Many others, including those who say they were victims of the radioactive "black rain" that fell outside the initially designated areas of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, are still without support.

Dense breasts can make it harder to spot cancer on a mammogram

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

When a woman has a mammogram, the most important finding is whether there's any sign of breast cancer.

The second most important finding is whether her breasts are dense.

Since early September, a new U.S. rule requires mammography centers to inform women about their breast density — information that isn't entirely new for some women because many states already had similar requirements.

Here's what to know about why breast density is important.

Are dense breasts bad?

No, dense breasts are not bad. In fact, they're quite normal. About 40% of women ages 40 and older have dense breasts.

Women of all shapes and sizes can have dense breasts. It has nothing to do with breast firmness. And it only matters in the world of breast cancer screening, said Dr. Ethan Cohen of MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

With the new rule, "there are going to be a lot of questions to a lot of doctors and there's going to be a lot of Googling, which is OK. But we want to make sure that people don't panic," Cohen said.

How is breast density determined?

Doctors who review mammograms have a system for classifying breast density.

There are four categories. The least dense category means the breasts are almost all fatty tissue. The most dense category means the breasts are mostly glandular and fibrous tissue.

Breasts are considered dense in two of the four categories: "heterogeneously dense" or "extremely dense." The other two categories are considered not dense.

Dr. Brian Dontchos of the Seattle-based Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center said the classification can vary depending on the doctor reading the mammogram "because it's somewhat subjective."

Why am I being told I have dense breasts?

Two reasons: For one, dense breasts make it more difficult to see cancer on an X-ray image, which is what a mammogram is.

"The dense tissue looks white on a mammogram and cancer also looks white on a mammogram," said Dr. Wendie Berg of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and chief scientific adviser to DenseBreast-info.org. "It's like trying to see a snowball in a blizzard."

Second, women with dense breast tissue are at a slightly higher risk of developing breast cancer because cancers are more likely to arise in glandular and fibrous tissue.

Reassuringly, women with dense breasts are no more likely to die from breast cancer compared to other women.

What am I supposed to do?

If you find out you have dense breasts, talk to your doctor about your family history of breast cancer and whether you should have additional screening with ultrasound or MRI, said Dr. Georgia Spear of Endeavor Health/NorthShore University Health System in the Chicago area.

Researchers are studying better ways to detect cancer in women with dense breasts. So far, there's not enough evidence for a broad recommendation for additional screening. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force called for more research in this area when it updated its breast cancer screening recommendations earlier this year.

Do I still need a mammogram?

Yes, women with dense breasts should get regular mammograms, which is still the gold standard for finding cancer early. Age 40 is when mammograms should start for women, transgender men and non-binary people at average risk.

"We don't want to replace the mammogram," Spear said. "We want to add to it by adding a specific other test."

Will insurance cover additional screening?

For now, that depends on your insurance, although a bill has been introduced in Congress to require insurers to cover additional screening for women with dense breasts.

Additional screening can be expensive — from \$250 to \$1,000 out of pocket, so that's a barrier for many women.

"Every woman should have equal opportunity to have their cancer found early when it's easily treated," Berg said. "That's the bottom line."

Hindus in Bangladesh celebrate their largest festival under tight security following attacks

By JULHAS ALAM and AI EMRUN GARJON Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — Schoolteacher Supriya Sarker is glad to celebrate Bangladesh's largest Hindu festival of Durga Puja but feels the festivities would be more jubilant without the fear and violence that overshadow this year's event.

The weeklong celebration that ends in the Muslim-majority Bangladesh on Sunday with immersions of the Hindu Goddess has strained the Hindu community with reports of vandalism, violence and intimidation in parts of Bangladesh, which has seen harassment and attacks on Hindus, who make up about 8% of the country's nearly 170 million people, or more than 13 million people.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 75 of 78

Despite pledges to keep the festival safe, this year's version was subdued coming following the ousting of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and attacks on minority groups, especially Hindus. Hasina left the country for India because of a mass uprising spearheaded by a student-led anti-government movement.

Bangladesh's current interim leader, Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, has faced serious challenges in maintaining law and order since he took over in August, and Durga Puja was seen as an acid test of his administration's ability to protect minorities.

Minority communities have blamed the Yunus-led government for failing to adequately protect them, and reports suggest that hardline Islamists are becoming increasingly politically influential and visible since the fall of Hasina.

"It is a challenging time for us Hindus," said Sarker, the schoolteacher, as she joined the Kumari Puja in Dhaka's Uttara district. "We faced problems in the past as well, but we did not see such escalation earlier. This is our country, we want to live here peacefully with our Muslim brothers and sisters and others without discrimination or intimidation."

Her concern comes as the country's leading minority rights group, the Bangladesh Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Unity Council, said that between Aug. 4 and 20, a total of 2,010 incidents of communal violence targeting minorities, mostly Hindus, were reported. The group's leaders said at least nine people belonging to minority groups were killed, four women were raped, and homes, businesses and temples were torched or vandalized.

In recent weeks, new incidents of vandalism occurred in parts of Bangladesh as the Hindu community prepared their temples for Durga Puja. In Dhaka's Uttara neighborhood, Hindus were forced to hold the festival in a smaller venue after a procession by Muslims called on authorities to not allow them to install idols in an open field.

Jayanta Kumar Dev, president of Sarbajanin Puja Committee, said they have reports of attacks on temples and idols before this year's festival formally began on Oct. 9.

Bangladesh's Home Affairs Adviser Mohammad Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, and incumbent Army Chief Gen. Waker-Uz-Zaman, had promised to provide adequate security, Dev said.

"They told us there's nothing to be worried about. We became content and puja is taking place across the country," he said.

But the situation remains tense.

This week, police arrested at least two members of an Islamic cultural group in the southeastern city of Chattogram after six of its members sang Islamic revolutionary songs inviting Hindus to join an Islamic movement after they took the stage of a temple on Thursday.

The video of the singing became viral in social media, drawing criticism as the authorities promised to arrest and punish those involved. Media reports said they belongs to the student wing of the country's largest Islamist party - Jamaat-e-Islami- but the party denied the allegation.

On Friday night, a firebomb was thrown at the Hindu Goddess at a temple in Dhaka's Tantibazar area, creating panic among the devotees who thronged the temple. No one was hurt, police said. Media reports said, quoting volunteers, that at least five people were injured after being stabbed by muggers.

Security was heightened after Friday night's incident at the temple, authorities said.

Ankita Bhowmick, a resident of Dhaka, said she was happy with the security provided by the government, but such a situation is suffocating.

"We won't need any security if we have the mentality and tendency that each individual can practice their religion according to their customs. There will be no fear. There will be no need for comparison between last year's security arrangement and this year's measures," she said at Dhaka's Dhakeswari temple.

Home Affairs Adviser Chowdhury said a special security measures would remain in place until Sunday when the festival ends.

He said apart from police and the usual security agencies, the military, navy and air force have also been deployed to ensure law and order beyond the Hindu festival.

Arpita Barman, a university student, was optimistic.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 76 of 78

"People who thronged here are jubilant. In the future we also want to see, more people come here and celebrate puja. I feel happy to see people irrespective of their religions here. We want to see such scenes in the future and a harmonious Bangladesh," she said.

NASA's Europa Clipper spacecraft will scour Jupiter moon for the ingredients for life

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A NASA spacecraft is ready to set sail for Jupiter and its moon Europa, one of the best bets for finding life beyond Earth.

Europa Clipper will peer beneath the moon's icy crust where an ocean is thought to be sloshing fairly close to the surface. It won't search for life, but rather determine whether conditions there could support it. Another mission would be needed to flush out any microorganisms lurking there.

"It's a chance for us to explore not a world that might have been habitable billions of years ago, but a world that might be habitable today — right now," said program scientist Curt Niebur.

Its massive solar panels make Clipper the biggest craft built by NASA to investigate another planet. It will take 5 1/2 years to reach Jupiter and will sneak within 16 miles (25 kilometers) of Europa's surface — considerably closer than any other spacecraft.

Liftoff is targeted for this month aboard SpaceX's Falcon Heavy rocket from NASA's Kennedy Space Center. Mission cost: \$5.2 billion.

Europa, the superstar among Jupiter's many moons

One of Jupiter's 95 known moons, Europa is almost the size of our own moon. It's encased in an ice sheet estimated to be 10 miles to 15 miles or more (15 kilometers to 24 kilometers) thick. Scientists believe this frozen crust hides an ocean that could be 80 miles (120 kilometers) or more deep. The Hubble Space Telescope has spotted what appear to be geysers erupting from the surface. Discovered by Galileo in 1610, Europa is one of the four so-called Galilean moons of Jupiter, along with Ganymede, Io and Callisto.

Seeking conditions that support life

What type of life might Europa harbor? Besides water, organic compounds are needed for life as we know it, plus an energy source. In Europa's case that could be thermal vents on the ocean floor. Deputy project scientist Bonnie Buratti imagines any life would be primitive like the bacterial life that originated in Earth's deep ocean vents. "We will not know from this mission because we can't see that deep," she said. Unlike missions to Mars where habitability is one of many questions, Clipper's sole job is to establish whether the moon could support life in its ocean or possibly in any pockets of water in the ice.

Supersized spacecraft

When its solar wings and antennas are unfurled, Clipper is about the size of a basketball court — more than 100 feet (30 meters) end to end — and weighs nearly 13,000 pounds (6,000 kilograms). The supersized solar panels are needed because of Jupiter's distance from the sun. The main body — about the size of a camper — is packed with nine science instruments, including radar that will penetrate the ice, cameras that will map virtually the entire moon and tools to tease out the contents of Europa's surface and tenuous atmosphere. The name hearkens to the swift sailing ships of centuries past.

Circling Jupiter to fly by Europa

The roundabout trip to Jupiter will span 1.8 billion miles (3 billion kilometers). For extra oomph, the spacecraft will swing past Mars early next year and then Earth in late 2026. It arrives at Jupiter in 2030 and begins science work the next year. While orbiting Jupiter, it will cross paths with Europa 49 times. The mission ends in 2034 with a planned crash into Ganymede — Jupiter's biggest moon and the solar system's too.

Europa flybys pose huge radiation risk

There's more radiation around Jupiter than anywhere else in our solar system, besides the sun. Europa passes through Jupiter's bands of radiation as it orbits the gas giant, making it especially menacing for spacecraft. That's why Clipper's electronics are inside a vault with dense aluminum and zinc walls. All this

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 77 of 78

radiation would nix any life on Europa's surface. But it could break down water molecules and, perhaps, release oxygen all the way down into the ocean that could possibly fuel sea life.

Earlier this year, NASA was in a panic that the spacecraft's many transistors might not withstand the intense radiation. But after months of analysis, engineers concluded the mission could proceed as planned.

Other visitors to Jupiter and Europa

NASA's twin Pioneer spacecraft and then two Voyagers swept past Jupiter in the 1970s. The Voyagers provided the first detailed photos of Europa but from quite a distance. NASA's Galileo spacecraft had repeated flybys of the moon during the 1990s, passing as close as 124 miles (200 kilometers). Still in action around Jupiter, NASA's Juno spacecraft has added to Europa's photo album. Arriving at Jupiter a year after Clipper will be the European Space Agency's Juice spacecraft, launched last year.

Ganymede and other possible ocean worlds

Like Europa, Jupiter's jumbo moon Ganymede is thought to host an underground ocean. But its frozen shell is much thicker — possibly 100 miles (160 kilometers) thick — making it tougher to probe the environment below. Callisto's ice sheet may be even thicker, possibly hiding an ocean. Saturn's moon Enceladus has geysers shooting up, but it's much farther than Jupiter. Ditto for Saturn's moon Titan, also suspected of having a subterranean sea. While no ocean worlds have been confirmed beyond our solar system, scientists believe they're out there — and may even be relatively common.

Messages in a cosmic bottle

Like many robotic explorers before it, Clipper bears messages from Earth. Attached to the electronics vault is a triangular metal plate. On one side is a design labeled "water words" with representations of the word for water in 104 languages. On the opposite side: a poem about the moon by U.S. poet laureate Ada Limon and a silicon chip containing the names of 2.6 million people who signed up to vicariously ride along.

Today in History: October 13

Chilean miners rescued after 69 days underground

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Oct. 13, the 287th day of 2024. There are 79 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 13, 2010, rescuers in Chile using a missile-like escape capsule pulled 33 men one by one to fresh air and freedom, 69 days after they were trapped in a collapsed mine 2,300 feet (700 meters) underground.

Also on this date:

In 1792, the cornerstone of the executive mansion, later known as the White House, was laid by President George Washington during a ceremony in the District of Columbia.

In 1932, President Herbert Hoover and Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes laid the cornerstone for the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington.

In 1943, Italy declared war on Germany, its one-time Axis partner.

In 1960, the Pittsburgh Pirates won the World Series, defeating the New York Yankees in Game 7, 10-9, on a home run hit by Bill Mazeroski.

In 1972, a Uruguayan chartered flight carrying 45 people crashed in the Andes. In order to stay alive, survivors resorted to feeding off the remains of some of the dead until they were rescued more than two months later.

In 1999, in Boulder, Colorado, the JonBenet Ramsey grand jury was dismissed after 13 months of work with prosecutors saying there wasn't enough evidence to charge anyone in the 6-year-old beauty queen's slaying.

In 2011, Raj Rajaratnam (rahj rah-juh-RUHT'-nuhm), the hedge fund billionaire at the center of one of the biggest insider-trading cases in U.S. history, was sentenced by a federal judge in New York to 11 years behind bars.

In 2016, Bob Dylan was named winner of the Nobel prize in literature.

Today's Birthdays: Gospel singer Shirley Caesar is 86. Singer-musician Paul Simon is 83. Dallas Cowboys

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 110 ~ 78 of 78

owner Jerry Jones is 82. Singer-musician Sammy Hagar is 77. Model Beverly Johnson is 72. Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., is 66. Singer/TV personality Marie Osmond is 65. NBA coach Doc Rivers is 63. Actor T'Keyah Crystal Keymah (tuh-KEE'-ah KRYS'-tal kee-MAH') is 62. Football Hall of Famer Jerry Rice is 62. Actor Matt Walsh is 59. Baseball Hall of Famer Trevor Hoffman is 57. Actor Kate Walsh is 56. Actor Tisha Campbell is 56. Olympic silver medal figure skater Nancy Kerrigan is 55. Actor Sacha Baron Cohen is 53. Olympic gold medal swimmer and TV personality Summer Sanders is 52. Basketball Hall of Famer Paul Pierce is 47. Singer Ashanti is 44. Olympic gold medal swimmer Ian Thorpe is 42. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., is 35. Former first daughter Tiffany Trump is 31. "Stranger Things" actor Caleb McLaughlin is 23.