



DAILY SITKA SENTINEL

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6 Pages



10th Anniversary

Participants in the Boys Run I toowu klatseen take off running Saturday in the 5K run that caps off the year-long program. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the program that teaches grade school boys about

healthy relationships and lifestyle skills. The program is coordinated by the Pathways Coalition. Former coaches and students joined in the birthday party-themed run. (Sentinel Photo by James Poulson)

Lawsuit Pushes Listing Chinook as Threatened

By NATHANIEL HERZ
Northern Journal

A Washington state-based conservation group filed a lawsuit last week in an effort to speed up the federal government's review of a proposal to list king salmon as threatened or endangered across the Gulf of Alaska.

The Wild Fish Conservancy filed its lawsuit Thursday in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., saying that the National Marine Fisheries Service had missed a 12-month deadline under the Endangered Species Act to decide on the conservancy's proposal to list Gulf of Alaska king salmon.

The conservancy, in its 17-page complaint, said it formally asked the service to list the king salmon in a petition Jan. 11, 2024, which gave the agency until Jan. 11, 2025, to respond. The lawsuit asks a judge to order the service to "promptly issue" its decision on the petition by a specific date.

"With the crisis facing Alaskan chinook, we are out of time and options," Emma Helverson, Wild Fish Conservancy's executive director, said in a prepared statement, using another name for king salmon. She added: "The Endangered Species Act sets clear deadlines for a reason, to evaluate the risk of extinction and trigger action while recovery is still possible."

The conservancy's press release announcing the lawsuit points to other listing proposals that the fisheries service had failed to act on within 12

months and described "systemic dysfunction" at the agency.

A top Alaska official at the fisheries service, Jon Kurland, said in a brief email Friday that the agency is "continuing to review the petition and to develop the required 12-month finding."

The lawsuit to force action from the fisheries service is "fairly routine," said Doug Vincent-Lang, fish and game commissioner for the state of Alaska, which has opposed the conservancy's proposal and numerous other efforts to list species as endangered in Alaska.

Vincent-Lang said that the fisheries service is "working through the process" — if, perhaps, slowed by the change in presidential administrations — and that two state scientists have been given access to a team reviewing the petition, though they're not voting members.

"I understand they're getting closer to a decision," he said. "I'd much rather have them take their time and have a deliberative process than to rush to a decision because of a statutory timeline."

The conservancy has taken multiple actions in Alaska in recent years that have drawn sharp rebukes from the state's elected officials and commercial fishermen.

Another lawsuit filed by the group with the intent of preserving salmon as prey for endangered Pacific Northwest orca whale populations threatened to close down Southeast Alaska's small-boat troll fishery.

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Planners Grant STR, Receive 2024 Report

By CATHY LI
Sentinel Staff Writer

A conditional use permit for a short-term rental at 115 Anna Drive was approved unanimously at Wednesday's Planning Commission meeting.

The commission also heard the 2024 annual short-term rental report and continued its discussion of zoning code changes for cruise-related docks.

Commission members Wendy Alderson and Darrell Windsor were absent.

115 Anna Drive

Conditional Use Permit

Daniel and Patrina Kilkeary applied for a conditional use permit for a short-term rental at 115 Anna Drive in the R-1 MH single-family, duplex and manufactured home zoning district.

The owners plan to make a two-bedroom apartment on the property, currently a long-term rental, into a short-term rental for up to five guests.

Quiet hours will be from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m. on weekdays and midnight to 8 a.m. on weekends. The owners will oversee garbage disposal themselves and give renters bear safety warnings.

2024 Short-Term Rental Report

The annual short-term rental report showed seven permits were issued in 2024, increasing the total number of permits in Sitka to 62. Of those, 56 were active permits, four were active permits that haven't begun renting, and two were active permits that were intended to deactivate in 2025.

Fifty-two permit holders reported bed tax remittance totaling \$90,783. The total rental revenue was \$1,513,057, exceeding 2023's short-term rental revenue by 19 percent. Among permit holders reporting bed tax in 2024,

the average revenue per permit holder was \$29,097.

The average number of nights rented was 72, a slight decrease from the 78 nights reported in 2023. However, if counting only the permit holders who reported bed tax remittance, the number of nights increases to 83 nights.

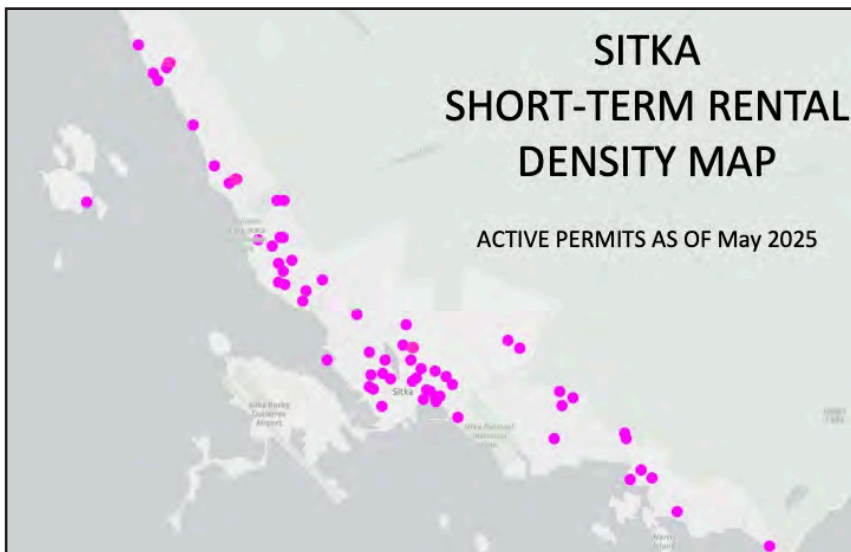
More than half of short-term rentals — 58% — were available only during the summer season, from April to September. The other 42% of properties were evenly split between renting continuously and intermittently throughout the year.

Out of all STR properties, 85% hosted vacation and leisure travelers, 66% hosted travelers visiting Sitka, 49% hosted business travelers and 41% hosted itinerant workers. Forty-one percent of permit holders reported hosting all four categories of visitors.

Cruise-Related Docks Zoning Changes

As part of an ongoing effort to regulate the potential of additional cruise ship docks being built in Sitka, commission members reached general agreements on definitions of cruise ships and cruise-related docks. The plan would regulate docks for ships with a capacity of 250 or more overnight passengers, excluding the ship's crew. Alaska Marine Highway System ferries are not included in this category.

A "cruise ship" is defined as "a passenger vessel with overnight accommodations for commercial passengers and designed for the purpose of providing pleasure and/or leisure travel, generally stopping at multiple ports on a fixed itinerary."



Dots indicate the locations of active short-term rentals in the Short Term Rental Report presented at the Planning Commission meeting Wednesday. (Chart provided by City and Borough of Sitka)

A "cruise-related dock" is "a fixed or floating structure, including moorings, that serves cruise ships that have the capacity to accommodate 250 or more overnight passengers, exclusive of the ship's crew, by either berthing the cruise ship, or berthing passenger lightering vessels that transport passengers to and from the cruise ship otherwise anchored or berthed at another location."

The next consideration is in which zoning districts cruise-related docks can be constructed. City Planning Director Amy Ainslie proposed making all cruise-related docks conditional in any public zones, which led to a larger discussion about the role of public

feedback in making such decisions with a large impact.

Members agreed on having two levels of review for cruise-related conditional use permits, with Planning Commission decisions going to the Assembly for final review. Commission members Katie Riley and Robin Sherman also suggested adding an optional step of a conceptual review.

In terms of requirements for fulfilling a conditional use permit, required items include a site plan and an operations plan that specifies passenger

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Court: Search for Oil In ANWR May Start Soon

By JAMES BROOKS
Alaska Beacon

Alaska's state-owned investment bank could get permission to start oil exploration work in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as soon as the third quarter of this year, according to court documents filed Friday in Anchorage.

In a status report on a series of lawsuits seeking to block oil development in the refuge, attorneys representing the U.S. Department of the Interior say the agency intends to issue a new document known as a "record of decision" that would cover oil and gas leases sold by the agency in 2020.

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, the state's publicly owned investment bank, was the leading bidder on several oil and gas tracts during that 2020 lease sale.

The Biden administration suspended, then canceled the results of that sale, held in the last days of the first Trump administration, but a U.S. District Court judge overturned that cancellation.

The leases remain suspended, but the status report — and a second one filed by AIDEA attorneys — shows the second Trump administration planning to reverse that suspension and reinstate the leases.

"Federal Defendants indicate that they are considering lifting the suspension, which could result in activities

taking place pursuant to the leases in the near future," wrote attorneys representing the plaintiffs, several environmental and Alaska Native groups that have filed suit to block development. "Given the President's and Secretary's direction concerning resource development on the Coastal Plain, lifting the suspension is likely."

That would clear a path for AIDEA to begin seismic testing and other work necessary before oil drilling.

On Alaska's North Slope, most exploration activities take place in winter, when the region's tundra is frozen and travel is easier. Federal action by this fall could permit work in the winter of 2025-2026.

Attorneys for the federal government and AIDEA have asked the U.S. District Court to place a hold legal on proceedings through Sept. 30.

Plaintiffs, meanwhile, are asking for a prompt trial, where they will attempt to prove that the federal government acted incorrectly by opening the refuge to oil and gas leasing in 2020.

<https://alaskabeacon.com/james-brooks>



NEXT SHIP

Tuesday, May 13

Passengers
7553 (capacity)

NG Sea Bird

Petro Marine
7am – 6pm

Road Amundsen

O'Connell Bridge
8am – 4pm

Anthem of the Seas

Sitka Cruise Terminal
8am – 5pm

Silver Moon

Crescent Harbor
9am – 4pm

Serenade of the Seas

Sitka Cruise Terminal
11:30am – 6pm

NOTE: All info based on data available at press time. Subject to change.



REVIVED SAFETY FAIR – Blatchley Middle School seventh-grader Zian Manuel-Cabudol dons a survival suit in a relay race orchestrated by the U.S. Coast Guard Aids to Navigation Team outside the school on May 2. Alaska

Marine Safety Education Association's AmeriCorp Volunteer Romi Manela was one of the main organizers of the revived Safety Fair, which went dormant in 2019 during the COVID pandemic. (Sentinel Photo by James Poulson)

U.S. and China Reach 90-Day Deal on Tariffs

By JAMEY KEATEN, DAVID McHUGH, ELAINE KURTEN-BACH and KEN MORITSUGU
Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The United States and China agreed today to slash their massive recent tariffs, restarting stalled trade between the world's two biggest economies and setting off a rally in global financial markets.

But the de-escalation in President Donald Trump's trade wars did nothing to resolve underlying differences between Beijing and Washington. The deal lasts 90 days, creating time for U.S. and Chinese negotiators to reach a more substantive agreement. But the pause also leaves tariffs higher than before Trump started ramping them up last month. And businesses and investors must contend with uncertainty about whether the truce will last.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said the U.S. agreed to drop the 145% tax imposed last month to 30%. China agreed to lower its tariff rate on U.S. goods to 10% from 125%.

A deal averts a total blockade

Greer and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced the tariff reductions at a news conference in Geneva.

The officials struck a positive tone as they said the two sides had set up consultations to continue discussing

their trade issues. Bessent said that the triple-digit tariffs the two countries imposed on each other last month — in an escalation of tensions Trump started — amounted to "the equivalent of an embargo, and neither side wants that. We do want trade."

The delegations, escorted around town and guarded by scores of Swiss police, met for at least a dozen hours on both days of the weekend at a sunbaked 18th-century villa that serves as the official residence of the Swiss ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva.

At times, the delegation leaders broke away from their staffs and settled into sofas on the villa's patios overlooking Lake Geneva, helping deepen personal ties in the effort to reach a much-sought deal.

Finally, a deal

The 30% levy that America is now imposing on Chinese goods includes an existing 20% tariff intended to pressure China into doing more to prevent the synthetic opioid fentanyl from entering the United States. It also includes the same 10% "baseline" tariff Trump has slapped on imports from most of the world's countries. The 30% tax comes on top of other levies on China, including some left over from Trump's first term and kept by former President Joe Biden.

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Letters to the Editor

Disrespectful

Dear Editor: I wish to say that I was very ashamed and disappointed by the disrespect shown during the public meeting to discuss the pros and cons of cruise ship visits and the various impacts to Sitka.

It was intended to be an informative process so each side could present their beliefs. Attendees could interact by written questions.

Instead, it turned into something of a free-for-all. I don't know what has happened to manners.

This issue is still going to a public vote of registered voters of Sitka on May 28. That is when your voice will make a difference, hopefully without any interference and turmoil. This is a democracy, after all! I can only pray that Sitkans will make the best choice to have a quality of life that is good for all sides.

**Kim Elliott,
60-year Sitka resident**

Parade of Species

Dear Editor: Sitka Sound Science Center and Sitka Conservation Society would like to send a HUGE thank you to the many community members and organizations that made our Parade of the Species memorable this April! This yearly event, usually scheduled on or around Earth Day, gathers community members of all ages to march together in celebration of our planet's biodiver-

sity. Participants parade as their favorite living being – wearing everything from homemade cardboard costumes to elaborate recycled art masterpieces to animal onesies.

Thank you first and foremost to all the Sitkans who walked in the parade – the fun and creativity that you bring to the Parade of the Species shines as bright as ever! Thank you to the vendors, shoppers, and family members who came out to support our marchers, and thanks to Sitka PD and the City of Sitka for their help with traffic control and permitting.

This year's parade was headlined by a hand-painted banner created specially for this event by kids from SCS's Alaska Way of Life 4-H project through the UAF Cooperative Extension and by participants in SSSC's Fab Friday afterschool program. Thank you to Sitka Rotary Club for your funding support for the banner and thank you to Skookum Canvasworks for helping to source material and cut pieces.

Finally, thank you to Sitka Public Library for displaying the creative handmade costumes that participants marched in – if you missed the parade or didn't see costumes at the library, find them hanging at Backdoor Café May 24-31!

With admiration and appreciation,
**Kari Paustian,
Sitka Sound Science Center
Kolby Sirowich,
Sitka Conservation Society**

House GOP Targeting Climate, Energy Funds

**By ALEXA ST. JOHN and
MATTHEW DAILY
Associated Press**
WASHINGTON (AP) — Budget proposals by House Republicans would cut billions of dollars in funding for Biden-era climate and environmental programs, including clean energy tax credits, as lawmakers seek to reverse what one GOP leader called “the most reckless parts of the engorged climate spending” approved under former President Joe Biden.

Environmental groups warned the proposals would pave the way for more oil and gas industry activity on public lands and increase planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions in the United States.

The House committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means are set to meet Tuesday to discuss the plans as part of the so-called budget reconciliation process. Several moves are aimed at clawing back billions in spending authorized by the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, a Democratic measure intended to slow climate change and boost clean energy such as wind and solar power.

House Speaker Mike Johnson has set a Memorial Day deadline to pass President Donald Trump's big bill of tax breaks and spending cuts, and the GOP has scheduled round-the-clock hearings this week on various sections of the bill before they are stitched together in what will become a massive package.

Republican Rep. Brett Guthrie of Kentucky, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce panel, said his committee's bill, unveiled Sunday, would return \$6.5 billion in unspent funds intended for climate programs included in the 2022 law. In an op-ed in The Wall Street Journal, he said the plan “ends spending on Green New Deal-style waste” and claws back money “headed for green boondoggles” such as grants for environmental and climate justice.

“The legislation would reverse the most reckless parts of the engorged climate spending in the misnamed Inflation Reduction Act,” Guthrie wrote.

The cuts to climate programs are part of a larger \$880 billion in savings by 2034 proposed in the draft legislation that also covers communication and health-related policy, largely targeting Medicaid.

The cuts fit with Trump's 2026 budget proposal, which looks to slash fed-

eral spending through a sweeping reorganization of federal agencies as well as steep cuts to disease research and, especially, clean energy and policies intended to address climate change. Congress ultimately decides the spending and tax plans.

In Trump's first few months back in the White House, the administration has broadly gone after environmental and climate initiatives, many of which were put into place under the Biden administration, pledging to dismantle what Trump calls the Democrats' “green new scam.”

**Environmental groups
decry the proposals**
“Republicans are once again siding with corporate polluters and billionaires over working families,” said Lena Moffitt, executive director of the environmental group Evergreen Action.

The GOP proposal “guts investments that are cutting energy costs” for families, “powering a domestic manufacturing boom and delivering essential health care to the communities that need it most,” Moffitt said.

The Republican move to loosen pollution standards “would mean more smog in our streets,” while cuts to environmental justice block grants “would force low-income communities to pay more for dirtier energy,” Moffitt said. “Republicans are sacrificing clean energy on the altar of Big Oil to bankroll another round of tax cuts for the ultra-wealthy.”

Alexandra Adams, chief policy advocacy officer at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said the Energy and Commerce bill “gives polluters free rein to foul the air and water,” while gutting key programs that protect children and the elderly from asthma and other lung problems.

Cleaning up U.S. ports and reducing dangerous methane spewing from oil and gas wells have traditionally received bipartisan support, she said.

Climate programs targeted
The draft text from the Energy and Commerce committee would reclaim unused billions from several Inflation Reduction Act programs, repeal sections of the Clean Air Act and emphasize support for oil and gas drilling.

The plan also pulls back money for the Energy Department's multi-billion dollar loan program for clean energy, the Environmental Protection Agency's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund — commonly known as the “green bank” — and certain multistate and offshore wind development.

The proposal also would rescind funding for clean vehicles, loosen vehicle emissions standards and cut money for zero-emission port equipment and air pollution monitoring.

The proposal also would allow for an expedited permitting process — opposed by environmental groups — for natural gas drilling and increase supply of the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Republicans in the House Ways and Means Committee today released their own proposal to repeal clean energy tax credits.

Proponents of the credits, including some Republicans, say they boost demand for technologies, such as solar or electric vehicles, that reduce harmful emissions and help drive down their cost.

Under Trump, federal government agencies have bolstered fossil fuel investment, blocked renewable energy sources, rolled back landmark water and air regulations, cut support for electric vehicles and reconsidered scientific findings supporting climate action.



Afrikaner refugees from South Africa holding American flags arrive today at Dulles International Airport in Dulles, Va. (AP Photo/Julia Demaree Nikhinson)

49 White South Africans Come to U.S. as Refugees

**By GERALD IMRAY
The Associated Press**

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — The Trump administration brought a small number of white South Africans to the United States as refugees today. It says it's the start of a larger relocation effort for members of the minority Afrikaner group who are being persecuted by their Black-led government because of their race.

The 49 South Africans had their applications fast-tracked by the U.S. after President Donald Trump announced the relocation program in February. He said today that white Afrikaner farmers are facing a “genocide” in their homeland, an allegation strongly denied by the South African government.

The Trump administration has taken an anti-migrant stance, suspending refugee programs and halting arrivals from other parts of the world, including Iraq, Afghanistan and most countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Refugee groups have questioned why the white South Africans are being prioritized.

South Africa says there's no persecution

The South African government said the U.S. allegations that Afrikaners are being persecuted are “completely false,” the result of misinformation and an inaccurate view of its country. It cited the fact that Afrikaners are among the richest and most successful people in the country, and said they are amongst “the most economically privileged.”

Afrikaners are the descendants of mainly Dutch and French colonial settlers who first came to South Africa in the 17th century. There are around 2.7 million Afrikaners among South Africa's population of 62 million, which is more than 80% Black. Many in South Africa are puzzled by claims that they are persecuted.

Afrikaners are South Africa's largest white group and part of the country's everyday multi-racial life. Many are successful business leaders and some serve in government. Their language, Afrikaans, is widely spoken — including by non-Afrikaners — and is recognized as an official language, and churches and other institutions reflecting Afrikaner culture hold prominence in almost every city and town.

Afrikaners were the leaders of the apartheid system of white minority rule that ended in 1994.

So what persecution is the U.S. alleging?

Farm attacks
Trump and his South African-born adviser Elon Musk have accused the South African government of having racist anti-white laws and policies, but the claims of persecution and genocide center on a relatively small number of violent farm attacks and robberies on white people in rural communities.

The U.S. alleges those attacks are racially motivated and the South African government is “fueling” them by allowing anti-white rhetoric in politics and not doing enough to protect Afrikaner communities. The government has condemned the farm attacks, but says their cause is being deliberately mischaracterized.

Violent attacks on farm owners in South Africa have been a problem for years but represent a small percentage of the country's extremely high violent crime rates, which affect all races. The government says there is no targeting of white people and farm attacks are part of its struggles with crime.

Groups representing farmers have recorded around 50 or less farm homicides

Sitka Yesterday

**20 YEARS AGO
May 2005**

Photo caption: Teachers retiring at the end of the school year – Linda Swanson, Linda Selvig and Marilyn Guhl – have cake at a retirement party held before the School Board meeting. The three, along with fellow retiring teacher Cal Hayashi, were honored at the retirement celebration.

**50 YEARS AGO
May 1975**

Baranof Senior Squadron-Civil Air Patrol is asking for help from all Sitka boaters. To better operate as a search and rescue unit, the group is attempting to compile a list of all boats in the Sitka area and surrounding logging camps. ... The Baranof Senior Squadron has volunteered to patrol the Sitka Sportsman's Association Salmon Derby this year.

a year in the last two years in South Africa. Those figures are set against a total of more than 20,000 homicides a year affecting all races.

“There is no data at all that backs that there is persecution of white South Africans or white Afrikaners in particular,” South African Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola said. “White farmers get affected by crime just like any other South Africans.”

Still, many rural white communities have long expressed fear at the threat of violence and feel attacks against them in home invasions and robberies are especially brutal.

“So, we’ve essentially extended citizenship to those people ... to escape from that violence and come here,” Trump said.

Affirmative action and ‘reverse racism’

The Trump administration has also criticized South Africa's affirmative action policies as racist against whites and has falsely claimed white South Africans are having their land taken away by the government under a new expropriation law that promotes “racially discriminatory property confiscation.”

No land has been expropriated, but Afrikaners who make up many rural communities have raised fears their land might be targeted.

South Africa has laws designed to advance employment opportunities for Blacks, and many white South Africans and white-led political parties have also criticized them and called them racist and counter-productive.

Some Afrikaner groups say the employment, land and other laws are designed to specifically limit their opportunities in South Africa in a kind of reverse racism as punishment for Afrikaners' role in apartheid. The government rejects that and says the laws are designed to give Blacks access to jobs and land they were denied under apartheid.

Not the only racial minority in South Africa

Afrikaners are not the only racial minority in South Africa, and not the only white minority. South Africa also has nearly 2 million white people with British or other heritage.

The Trump administration's program initially only referred to Afrikaners. But in new guidelines released by the U.S. Embassy today, applicants for refugee status must be “of Afrikaner ethnicity or be a member of a racial minority in South Africa.” Other racial minorities include a group of around 5 million with biracial heritage, as well as people with Indian and other south Asian heritage.

It's not clear how many South Africans have applied for or been granted refugee status, but U.S. State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said the administration would welcome more Afrikaners as refugees in the coming months.

Weather

Sitka Forecast

For tonight a low of 40 degrees with rain and wind 10-15 mph. On Saturday expect a high of 48 degrees with rain, and an overnight low of 41 degrees with a 40 percent chance of rain then cloudy. Sunday's forecast is for a high of 54 degrees and partly sunny followed by an overnight low of 41 degrees and partly cloudy. Monday's forecast is for a high of 54 degrees and a 30 percent chance of rain.

Sitka Weather

Temperatures ranged from 42 to 51 degrees, winds were calm and .09 inch of rain fell in the 24 hours ending at midnight last night, the National Weather Service said.

LETTERS POLICY

The Sentinel welcomes Letters to the Editor on issues of local interest. Letters should be 500 words or fewer. A letter should be addressed to the editor, and not be a copy of a letter to a third party. Letters must be signed with the writer's name. Anonymous letters or those written under a pseudonym will not be considered. No more than one letter per person per month, please. Letters may be edited for length or content. A phone number must be provided for verification purposes, but it will not be printed. Letters from local residents will be given preference.

Pope Leo XIV Calls For Free Speech, The Press

**By NICOLE WINFIELD
Associated Press**

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Leo XIV today called for the release of imprisoned journalists and affirmed the “precious gift of free speech and the press” in an audience with some of the 6,000 journalists who descended on Rome to cover his election as the first American pontiff.

Leo received a standing ovation as he entered the Vatican auditorium for his first meeting with representatives of the general public.

The 69-year-old Augustinian missionary, elected in a 24-hour conclave last week, called for journalists to use words for peace, to reject war and to give voice to the voiceless.

He expressed solidarity with journalists around the world who have been jailed for trying to seek and report the truth. Drawing applause from the crowd, he asked for their release.

“The church recognises in these witnesses — I am thinking of those who report on war even at the cost of their lives — the courage of those who defend dignity, justice and the right of people to be informed, because only informed individuals can make free choices,” he said.

“The suffering of these imprisoned journalists challenges the conscience of nations and the international community, calling on all of us to safeguard the precious gift of free speech and of the press.”

Leo opened the meeting with a few words in English, joking that if the crowd was still awake and applauding at the end, it mattered more than the ovation that greeted him.

Turning to Italian, he thanked the journalists for their work covering the papal transition and urged them to use words of peace.

‘Diddy’ Combs Defense Denies Crime Occurred

**By MICHAEL R. SISAK
and LARRY NEUMEISTER
Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) — The public knew Sean “Diddy” Combs as a larger-than-life music and business mogul, but in private he used violence and threats to coerce women into drug-fueled sexual encounters that he recorded, a prosecutor said today in opening statements at Combs' sex trafficking trial.

“This is Sean Combs,” Assistant U.S. Attorney Emily Johnson told the Manhattan jury as she pointed at Combs, who leaned back in his chair. “During this trial you are going to hear about 20 years of the defendant's crimes.”

Those crimes, she said, included kidnapping, arson, drugs, sex crimes, bribery and obstruction.

Combs' lawyer Teny Geragos, though, described the trial as a misguided overreach by prosecutors, saying that although her client could be violent, the state was trying to turn sex between consenting adults into a prostitution and sex trafficking case.

“Sean Combs is a complicated man. But this is not a complicated case. This case is about love, jealousy, infidelity and money,” Geragos told the jury of eight men and four women. “There has been a tremendous amount of noise around this case over the past year. It is time to cancel that noise.”

Geragos conceded that Combs' violent outbursts, often fueled by alcohol, jealousy and drugs, might have warranted domestic violence charges, but not sex trafficking and racketeering counts. She told jurors they might think Combs' is a “jerk” and might not condone his “kinky sex,” but “he's not charged with being mean. He's not charged with being a jerk.”

With the trial's first witness, Israel Florez, prosecutors went right to proof of violence by showing footage of Combs kicking and dragging the R&B singer Cassie, his longtime girlfriend, on the floor outside a Los Angeles hotel's elevators in March 2016. Jurors ended up seeing the video four times, including once in which Combs' lawyer tried to poke holes in Florez's recollection of events.

After CNN aired video of the attack last year, Combs apologized and said he was “disgusted” by his actions.

Florez, who worked hotel security in 2016 but is now a Los Angeles police officer, said he knew who Combs was when he encountered him sitting by the hotel's elevators as he responded to a report of a woman in distress.

He said he encountered Combs by the elevators in only a white towel and slouching in a chair “with a blank stare ... like a devilish stare, just looking at me.”

He said that as he was escorting Cassie and Combs to their room, she indicated she wanted to leave and Combs told her: “You're not going to leave.” Florez said he told Combs: “If she wants to leave, she's going to leave.”

Cassie left, and Florez said Combs called out while holding a stack of money with a \$100 bill on top, telling him, “Don't tell nobody.” Florez said he considered it a bribe and told Combs, “I don't want your money. Just go back into your room.”

Cassie, whose legal name is Casandra Ventura, was expected to testify later today or Tuesday.

“Peace begins with each one of us: in the way we look at others, listen to others and speak about others,” he said. “In this sense, the way we communicate is of fundamental importance: we must say ‘no’ to the war of words and images, we must reject the paradigm of war.”

After his brief speech, in which he reflected on the power of words to do good, he greeted some of the journalists in the front rows and then shook hands with the crowd as he exited the audience hall down the central aisle. He signed a few autographs and posed for a few selfies.

Journalists later shared some of the few words they exchanged with him, including hints that Vatican plans are going ahead for Leo to travel to Turkey to commemorate an important event in Catholic-Orthodox relations: the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicea, Christianity's first ecumenical council.

Other tidbits emerged: Journalists offered to play doubles in tennis, or to organize a charity match. Leo, a regular tennis player, seemed game “but we can't invite Sinner,” he joked, referring to the world No. 1 Jannik Sinner, who is playing just up the Tiber at the Italian Open.

It was in the 2013 audience with journalists who covered the election of history's first Latin American pope that Pope Francis explained his choice of name, after St. Francis of Assisi, and his desire for a “church which is poor and for the poor.”

During his 12-year pontificate, Francis too spoke about the value of journalism and as recently as January, he appealed for the release of imprisoned journalists during a Holy Year event with the media.

The second witness called, Daniel Phillip, said he was a professional stripper who was paid \$700 to \$6,000 to have sex with Cassie while Combs watched and gave instructions, with the first encounter in 2012. He said he stopped meeting with them after he saw Combs throw a bottle at her and then drag her by her hair into a bedroom as she screamed.

Combs watched today's proceedings attentively. When he entered the courtroom, he hugged his lawyers and gave a thumbs-up to family and friends. The case has drawn intense public interest, and the line to get into the courtroom stretched down the block. Combs' mother and some of his children attended, including three daughters who left the courtroom when the testimony turned lurid.

Combs, 55, pleaded not guilty to a five-count indictment that could result in a 15-year-to-life prison sentence if he is convicted. Since his September arrest, he's been held at a federal jail in Brooklyn.

Lawyers for the three-time Grammy winner say prosecutors are wrongly trying to make a crime out of a party-loving lifestyle that may have been indulgent, but not illegal.

Prosecutors say Combs coerced women into drugged-up group sexual encounters he called “freak-offs,” “wild king nights” or “hotel nights,” then kept them in line by choking, hitting, kicking and dragging them, often by the hair.

In her opening, Johnson said Cassie was far from the only woman Combs beat and sexually exploited.

The prosecutor said Combs last year brutally beat another woman — identified only as Jane — when she confronted him about enduring years of freak-offs in dark hotel rooms while he took other paramours on date nights and trips around the globe.

The sex parties are central to Combs' sexual abuse, prosecutors say. Combs' company paid for the parties, held in hotel rooms across the U.S. and overseas, and his employees staged the rooms with his preferred lighting, extra linens and lubricant, Johnson said. Combs compelled women, including Cassie, to take drugs and engage in sexual activity with male escorts while he gratified himself and sometimes recorded them, Johnson said.

Combs would beat Cassie over the smallest slights, such as leaving a freak-off without his permission or taking too long in the bathroom, Johnson said. Combs threatened to ruin Cassie's singing career by publicly releasing videos of her sexually involved with male escorts, the prosecutor said. “Her livelihood depended on keeping him happy,” Johnson said.

Cassie sued Combs in 2023, and the lawsuit was settled within hours, but it touched off a law enforcement investigation and was followed by dozens of lawsuits making similar claims.

Geragos claimed Combs' accusers were motivated by money. She told jurors that Cassie demanded \$30 million when she sued him, and another witness will acknowledge demanding \$22 million in a breach of contract lawsuit.

She also conceded that Combs is extremely jealous and “has a bad temper,” telling the jury that he sometimes got angry and lashed out when he drank alcohol or “did the wrong drugs.” But, she said, “Domestic violence is not sex trafficking.”

THE DAILY SITKA SENTINEL

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Help Wanted

LOCAL LARGE-SIZED Sitka fishing lodge with an excellent reputation seeks full- & part-time employees for serving breakfasts and dinners in our Lodge dinner room. Shifts range from 4 to 8 hours and jobs start late May & go thru Sept 16. We are a positive & rewarding workplace with competitive wages. D.L. required. Email: kingfisherlodge@gmail.com

CBC CONSTRUCTION Inc. is hiring Laborers and Carpenters for work on various construction projects in Southeast Alaska. We pay competitive wages. D.O.E. Please call: 907-747-9333 for application. Fax resume to 907-747-9334. Email questions or resume to: cbcalaska@gmail.com

WANTED: BOAT/CREW to harvest outside southeast blackcod. 907 738-1439.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Assistant (OA)- ANILCA Local Hire Opportunity, temporary, full-time. Sitka National Historical Park is seeking a detail-oriented Administrative Support Assistant to provide vital administrative information and assistance to the Superintendent and staff. Key duties include managing office functions, coordinating with Human Resources, processing personnel actions, acting as Timekeeper, and overseeing mail distribution. Ideal candidates possess strong organizational skills, proficiency in typing (40 WPM) and office software applications, and customer service focus. GS-0303-06 Step 01/\$24.36 per hour plus 3% COLA. Detailed Job Announcement available on the outside door of 103 Monastery Street. Open now through August 29 or until position filled. For questions, call 907-747-0102.

SITKA ELKS #1662 is hiring P-T Servers and Bartenders. Please contact Becky, Club Mgr. 907-747-3511.

THE SENTINEL has newspaper delivery routes available on: Katlian St., Lance/Wolff/Anna Drive, & HPR/SMC. Call Hayley or Sarah at 747-3219 for more information.

Path of Hope Cleanup on Tap

Sitka Cancer Survivor's Society invites the public to help with a spring cleanup event at the Path of Hope noon Saturday, May 31.

"We trim, rake, clean, shine and enjoy each other's company," organizers said. "So bring your gear and join us next to Lower Moller Field."

Marine for Sale

208 YAMAHA 50HP hi-thrust 4 stroke. 600 hours, controls, extras. Call Peter 907-738-2434

Business Services

SUMMER TUTORING services available. Get prepared for next school year! Contact Jennifer Tulloh @254-245-1042.

OCEANSIDE EXCAVATION. One-stop source for all excavation and concrete work. Land development, grading, driveway work, rock walls, concrete foundation, retaining walls, patios, concrete driveways, curbs, gutters, and much more. Call for estimate, 738-1027.

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Legal Notices

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Jennifer Baptist has been appointed Personal Representative of the Estate of Lorraine Althoff, date of birth 09/12/1952. All persons having claims against the said deceased are required to present their claims within four months after the date of the first publication of this Notice or said claims will be forever barred. Claims must either be presented to Jennifer Baptist, Personal Representative of Lorraine Althoff, P.O. Box 1814, Sitka, AK 99835 or filed with the Superior Court for the State of Alaska, First Judicial District at Sitka, Alaska, 1SI-24-57PR. **PUBLISH: May 5, 12, 19, 2025**

Sitka Tells Tales About Place

Sitka Tells Tales, the local live story-telling series, will present the radio broadcast premiere of "About Place: Stories of Seeing and Celebrating the Tongass" 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 20. It will air and stream on Raven Radio, kCAW.org.

Stories will be by Naomi Jones, Dan Evans, Bob Sam, Selena Zhao, Jacque Foss and Mitchell Feske.

The presentation will be hosted by Artchange Inc., Sitka Conservation Society and the Skipper Science Partnership. For information and to hear past episodes of Sitka Tells Tales go to www.artchangeinc.org.

Police Blotter

Sitka Police Department received the following calls over the weekend.

May 9

At 8 a.m. a vehicle clipped a one-way traffic sign on Barracks Street. Public Works was notified.

At 10:56 p.m. a woman said she had been gardening on the SJ campus when a young man tried to steal her cell phone. She said she defended herself with her gardening shears, putting them under his chin, and he promised not to do it again and ran off. Police opened a case on it.

A vehicle left parked at Eliason Harbor was impounded.

May 10

At 1 a.m. a bear sow and two cubs were reported again getting into trash in the 2300 block of HPR. They were gone when an officer arrived.

At 12:10 p.m. people standing in the middle of the roundabout agreed to move to the sidewalk.

At 3:26 p.m. a woman said someone had hit her parked vehicle in the 200 block of Lincoln Street. Police opened a case.

A woman said she had left an orange dry bag and a blue tote at the Starrigavan campground the previous week.

May 11

A caller said some items apparently had been stolen from a deceased relative's home, but it was found someone had just rearranged some things and nothing was missing.

At 9 a.m. a man said his Toyota Tundra had rolled on Harbor Mountain Road the night before. Officers checked out the incident, and the vehicle was taken to the scrap yard.

At 4:32 p.m. two people were reported arguing on a downtown street. Police found it was a mother and son, and it was just an argument.

At 5:14 p.m. a store reported video had captured a man stealing food. He was trespassing but the store did not want to press charges.

At 10:14 p.m. an intoxicated woman was found hiding in a restroom at the National Park. She was taken to the hospital.

At 11:35 p.m. a caller said a dog was again running at large on Lillian Drive.

Emergency Calls

Sitka Fire Department received three ambulance calls Friday, four on Saturday and two on Sunday.

JACK Quartet to Perform Friday

Sitka Music Festival will present the award-winning JACK Quartet 7 p.m. Friday, May 16, at the Odessa Theater at Allen Hall on the SJ Campus.

The concert will feature a premiere by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer, and former Alaskan resident, John Luther Adams. Tickets are on sale at www.sitkamusicfestival.org

Wildlife Cruise Set for May 17

Sitka Rotary Club and Allen Marine will host a three-hour wildlife cruise on the waters surrounding Sitka May 17.

Participants should plan to embark at noon, and should arrive on the boat by 11:30 a.m. sharp at Crescent Harbor. Ticket prices are: under age 5 with adult free; ages 5-18, \$35 each; and 18 and older, \$55. The boat has limited seating. Call (907) 738-2014 for tickets, or purchase them at Old Harbor Books.

The event is sponsored by Allen Marine Tours, supporting Southeast Alaska through tourism.

New Advisories Listed for PST

Advisories have been issued for Southeast Alaska Tribal Ocean Research sites that have been found to have paralytic shellfish with toxin levels above the FDA regulatory limit of 80 µg/100 g.

The latest beach having tested above the limit is Starrigavan North Beach on May 8 for all species.

PSTs cause paralytic shellfish poisoning. Consuming wild shellfish from these sites may result in an increased risk of poisoning.

SEATOR sites with shellfish PST levels above the regulatory limit also include: Lisa Creek, Nakwasina Sound, butter clams; Aleutkina Bay, butter clams; and Krestof Sound, butter clams.

School Policy Panel to Meet

Sitka School District's policy committee will meet 5 p.m. May 15 in the District Office Boardroom.

A link to a full list of policies to be reviewed may be found on the district website. No action will be taken at this open meeting.

School Board to be At Graduations

Sitka School Board members will attend graduation ceremonies for Pacific High School on May 17 and Sitka High School on May 19.

The board also will attend the Blatchley Middle School Rites of Passage on May 21.



SENIOR SCHOLARSHIPS – Sarah Jordan, Ocean Wave Quilters guild secretary, presents \$1,000 scholarships each to Mt. Edgecumbe High seniors Naomi Jones and Timothy Garcia. Funds were from the guild's annual auction. (Photo provided to the Sentinel)

STA Elders Given Notice

Sitka Tribe of Alaska enrolled elders – age 65 and older living in Sitka – who missed the Honoring Tribal Elders luncheon in February can still receive an elder gift bag and vest.

Gift bags and vests can be picked up at STA Social Services department 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. May 12-16. Each elder will receive one vest and one gift bag.

Annual Quilt Show Event Continues

Ocean Wave Quilt Guild will host its 42nd annual Quilt Show through May 18 at Fraser Hall on the SJ Campus. This year's theme is "Sassy!"

Daily show hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily through Saturday, May 17.

The last day of the show is Sunday, May 18, with 10 a.m.-3 p.m. hours.

Sheenák Offering Locals Day Event

Sheenák Park/Sheet'ká Treetop Adventures will offer a locals day event noon-3 p.m. May 18 at 4951 Halibut Point Road, just past the cruise terminal.

Event highlights include a cultural welcome and ribbon cutting, noon-12:45 p.m.; barbecue lunch, 12:45 p.m. until gone; and free aerial adventures.

Parking is at the ferry terminal where shuttles will run to Sheenak Park every 15 minutes beginning at 11:45 a.m. Limited parking is available on-site for elders and those with limited mobility.

Those with questions can email tonia@sheeatika.com.

Summer Gymnastics Registration on Tap

Registration for City of Sitka Parks and Recreation summer Tongass Tumblers gymnastics opens noon Wednesday, May 14.

Classes are available for ages 18 months to 11 years. Class options are available for both June and July. All sessions taught by Trisha Bessert.

Registration will be online at <http://recreation.cityofsitka.com>. Parents should apply for scholarships prior to registration.

For information, email recreation@cityofsitka.org or call 907 747-4031.

MEHS Pool Open For Swim Lessons

Mt. Edgecumbe High School aquatic center is open for summer swim lessons registration.

Four two-week sessions will run in June and July. Instructors are lifeguard certified. Student to instructor ratio is 3:1 maximum. The pool temperature is kept at 84 degrees.

Individuals should sign up in person during hours of operation, which is posted on the MEHS pool website. The cost of instruction is \$200 per session.

Meeting May 15 On Sportfish Rules

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, NOAA, and U.S. Coast Guard will host a public meeting regarding the sport fishing season 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 15, at Harrigan Centennial Hall.

Staff will be available to answer questions regarding rules, regulations, and/or charter requirements. Ben Jeavons and Kayla Buster will discuss ADFG eLogbook topics.

Youth Advocates of Sitka is hosting a **Human Trafficking Awareness Event** at **Harrigan Centennial Hall**

Wednesday, May 14:
12-2, 2:30-3:30, 5-7

Thursday, May 15:
12-1, 3-4, 4-5

Call 747-3687 for more details

Calendar of Events

MONDAY

5:30-6:30 p.m. AA, Sitka Pioneers Home Recreation Kitchen, call AA hotline 747-8866 for information
6 p.m. Port and Harbors Commission, Harrigan Centennial Hall
6 p.m. White Elephant Shop open

TUESDAY

6-8 a.m. MEHS Aquatic Center pool open
10:30 a.m. Sitka Sprouts, ages 3-5 years and caregivers, Sitka Sound Science Center
Noon Parks and Recreation Committee, Harrigan Centennial Hall
Noon AA, St. Peter's basement, call AA hotline 747-8866 for information
Noon Rotary Club, UAS-Sitka Campus Room 230
1 p.m. SAIL Adventure Club, Halibut Point Recreation Area
6 p.m. Assembly, Centennial Hall

WEDNESDAY

6-8 a.m. MEHS Aquatic Center pool open
10 a.m. Tongass Tots Playgroup, St. Peter's See House
11-2 Salvation Army Little Store open
Noon Youth Advocates of Sitka community human trafficking awareness event, Harrigan Centennial Hall
Noon-2 p.m. MEHS Aquatic Center pool open
Noon White Elephant Shop open
Noon AA, St. Peter's basement, call AA hotline 747-8866 for information
Noon STA Tribal Council, via Teleconference
2 p.m. Brave Heart Volunteers offers drop-in Balance and Bliss, ANB Founders Hall
4:30 p.m. Sitka Parkinson's Support Group, 1212 Seward Ave. (the old BOQ) 907 747-3461
6:15 p.m. Sitka Historic Preservation Commission, Harrigan Centennial Hall

7 p.m. Sitka Sportsman's Association Indoor Range open
7 p.m. AA, St. Gregory's Church, 606 Etolin Street, info: 907-747-8866

Reading Buddies Applications Ready

Adult Reading Buddies are being sought for the summer program at Sitka Public Library.

Those who enjoy reading with a child can sign up to participate in a program that promotes literature among children. Buddies meet up to one hour each week with an assigned first- or second-grader.

The program runs from June 7-Aug. 2 with time off for vacation.

Applications are available at the library. E-mail Maite at maite.lorente@cityofsitka.org for more information. Applications are due May 16.

Call about a subscription to your hometown newspaper. Daily Sentinel • 747-3219

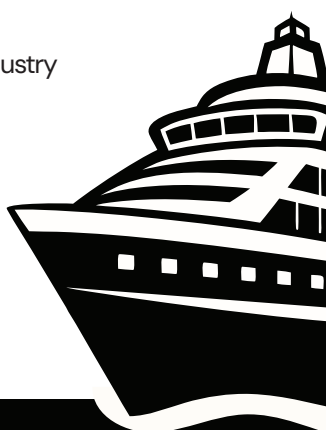
Sitka already has an MOU with the cruise industry that limits and manages visitor impacts.

Ballot Measure 1 ignores this progress and forces a rigid, one-size-fits-all limit. The 300,000 cap isn't "fine tuning"—it's a rigid ceiling that will force Sitka to turn away visitors when our economy needs to grow.

VOTE NO ON BALLOT MEASURE 1.

LEARN MORE AT SAVESITKA.ORG

Paid for by Safeguard Sitka's Future P.O. Box 718 Sitka, Alaska 99835. Chris McGraw, Chair, approves this message. Top contributors are Sitka Dock Company, LLC, Sitka, AK, Allen Marine Tours, Sitka, AK, and Beverly Jean Caldwell, Sitka, AK.



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CITY & BOROUGH OF SITKA

LEGAL NOTICE

Sitka Historic Preservation Commission

The Sitka Historic Preservation Commission will hold its regular monthly meeting at **6:15pm Wednesday, May 14, 2025**, in Harrigan Centennial Hall. The Commission will discuss a memorial and street naming policy, review and discuss previous nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for historic districts in Sitka, comment on Section 106 review of a cell tower at 404 Sawmill Creek Road, and consider a construction project for a detached garage at 301 Park Street. Public comment is welcome. Commission meetings are open to the public; for more information, please contact the Planning Department at "mailto:planning@cityofsitka.org" planning@cityofsitka.org or call (907) 747-1814. **Published: May 12, 2025**

LEGAL NOTICE

Gary Paxton Industrial Park Board of Directors

The Gary Paxton Industrial Board of Directors will hold a work session **3:00pm Thursday, March 15, 2025** in Harrigan Centennial Hall, 330 Harbor Drive. The board will discuss the GPIIP Haul Development Discussions. The public is welcome to attend. No official board action will be taken.

The Gary Paxton Industrial Board of Directors will hold its regular meeting directly after the work session on Thursday, May 15, 2025, at 3:00 P.M. in Harrigan Centennial Hall, 330 Harbor Drive. Agenda items include: Discussions on the GPIIP Haul Out Development discussions/direction, GPIIP Port Tariff discussion and adjustments, Sitka Marine Trades Association, Arctic Blue Waters Purchase Agreement Extension and NSRAA Tidelands request. The meeting is open to the public. Jess Earnshaw, Deputy Municipal Clerk **Published: May 12, 2025**

SENTINEL SPORTS

Wolves Score Milestone Wins

By Sentinel Staff

Sitka High's baseball team routed Ketchikan in a three-game series, Friday and Saturday in Ketchikan, winning 3-2 Friday before shutting down Kayhi's batters entirely Saturday. Sitka won the second game 24-0 and the third 16-0.

Wolves' pitcher Caleb Calhoun

threw a no-hitter in the second game, racking up 15 strikeouts against 15 batters up. That game ended in only five innings thanks to the mercy rule.

A full story on Sitka's victories in Ketchikan – and Calhoun's exceptional pitching performance – will appear in the Sentinel later this week.

Mariners Complete Sweep of Jays

SEATTLE (AP) — George Springer smacked a three-run homer in the fifth inning as the Toronto Blue Jays beat the Seattle Mariners 9-1 on Sunday to complete a three-game sweep.

Addison Barger added his first homer of the season, a solo shot in the seventh. The Blue Jays had no issues pushing runs across against Bryce Miller (2-4) and the suddenly reeling Mariners, who entered the series with the majors' best record since April 7.

Toronto's onslaught started in the second inning with an RBI single from Myles Straw. Ernie Clement had a sacrifice fly in the fourth before Springer blew it open.

Seattle struggled to do much of anything on the offensive side against opener Jose Urena and piggyback reliever Eric Lauer (1-0), with the duo combining to produce 6 2/3 innings of one-run ball. It was a forgetful first half of a six-game homestand for the Mari-

ners, who scored seven runs across the three games.

The Blue Jays returned to .500 (20-20) with a 4-2 trip. They are 7-4 in their last 11 games.

The game was already trending in the Blue Jays' direction when Springer turned on a fastball down the middle from Miller and launched it 416 feet down the left-field line. Left fielder Randy Arozarena turned around and watched the ball fly but didn't bother to run.

The sweep was the second of the season for the Blue Jays. Toronto took three straight against visiting Washington from March 31-April 2.

Seattle right-hander Emerson Hancock (1-1, 5.70 ERA) starts today night against the visiting New York Yankees. Clarke Schmidt (0-1, 4.79) gets the ball for New York to begin the three-game set. The Blue Jays begin a three-game set against visiting Tampa Bay on Tuesday.

Wolves Take Lead vs. Warriors

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Even with Stephen Curry sidelined and Draymond Green in foul trouble, the Golden State Warriors were ahead by five points in the fourth quarter and felt they had every chance to grab a series lead against the Minnesota Timberwolves at home.

Until Anthony Edwards and Julius Randle took over for the Timberwolves in crunch time.

Edwards hit a baseline 3-pointer with 1:19 remaining and scored 36 points, Randle had 24 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds, and the Wolves beat the Warriors 102-97 on Saturday night for a 2-1 lead in their second-round playoff series.

Jimmy Butler had 33 points, seven assists and seven rebounds and Jonathan Kuminga scored 30 off the bench, but the Warriors still lacked the kind

of rhythm they have with Curry on the floor.

"Obviously with Steph out there, he demands two to three bodies when he's out there on the floor," Butler said. "When he's not, there's no room for error. You can't make mistakes. You can't turn the ball over. You can't give back all of those things. And then you've got to take the right shots."

Kuminga shot 11 for 18 as the Warriors again mixed and matched while playing without Curry as he nurses a strained left hamstring that he injured early in Game 1 on Tuesday.

Game 4 is tonight at Chase Center. Warriors coach Steve Kerr stressed his team had to win with defense — and his team couldn't make the key stops down the stretch.

Medvejie Solstice Run

June 21 at 9 a.m.

Please join us for the 18th running of this SHS Cross Country and Track program fundraiser. The three distance events will begin and end at Herring Cove, adjacent to the Beaver Lake Trailhead parking lot at the end of Sawmill Creek Road. All races will head out toward Medvejie Hatchery and back. The half marathon turn-around is at the Green Lake Power House, 10K near the Medvejie Hatchery, and the 5K at about half-way out to the hatchery. This is a hilly course, please train accordingly.

Registration: <https://runsignup.com/Race/Info/AK/Sitka/MedvejieSolsticeRun> (open until 8 p.m. on 6/20/25). Fees: \$30 - 5K, \$35 - 10K and \$45 - 1/2 marathon. Virtual events are also available for \$30.

In-person registration will be available on race day until 8:30 a.m. at Herring Cove but registration fees are \$5 more on race day. A non cotton T-shirt is included for the first 75 entrants. (SHS students run for free & t-shirt can be purchased separately.)

Volunteers are warmly invited to support this fun event. For more information email runsitkahigh@gmail.com, or send a message on our Facebook page.

MEHS Field Public Notice

Mt. Edgecumbe High School staff and students ask people to keep their dogs off the school's softball field.

The school is gearing up for the spring sports season and aims to keep the softball field clean, safe, and poop-free. We kindly ask that dogs stay off the field.

Alpine Adventure Run Wait List Open

All 125 limited entry spaces for the Alpine Adventure Run are filled. Wait list registration is open. Email christinemariehoran@gmail.com and request entry. A registration form will be sent to you. Your completed registration form and entry fee of \$50 will place you on the wait list in the order your forms and fees are turned in.

The race will take place on July 19, 2025. Wait listed runners move into the race when confirmed runners cancel. Entry fees are held and returned in full in the event you don't get into the run.

The race is a challenging seven-mile mountain run starting at St. Gregory's Catholic Church. The course climbs Gavan Hill and continues along the Harbor Mountain rim to the picnic area on Harbor Mountain.

Runners must be able to complete the course in 2.5 hours and be at least 15 years old. Registration costs \$50 and includes a t-shirt. For further information contact Chris Horan at christinemariehoran@gmail.com or call 907-747-6471.

The Alpine Adventure Run is conducted under a Special Use Permit with the Tongass National Forest.

MEHS Seeks Girls Basketball Coach

Mt. Edgecumbe High School is looking for a coach for the girls basketball team in the 2026 season. The post is open until filled.

Those interested should contact Andrew Friske at 907-966-3228 or andrewf@mehs.us

Julie Hughes Triathlon

May 17

The annual Julie Hughes triathlon is set for Saturday, May 17 here and registration is open now online at juliehughesstri.com. The 41st running of the event will start at 8:30 a.m. at Blatchley Middle School.

The race includes a 5 mile run, 14 mile bike ride and 1,000 yard swim, though the youth course is shortened to a 1.5 mile run, 6 mile bike ride and 500 yard swim.

The triathlon began in 1985 in honor of Julie Hughes, who died of cancer months before the first event, which was held as a memorial.

Sitka Splits Softball Series 2-1 with Ketchikan

By GARLAND KENNEDY

Sentinel Sports Editor

Sitka High scored two wins and suffered one loss in a home softball series against Ketchikan Friday and Saturday, and honored their seniors in the final home games the team was slated to play this season.

The Lady Wolves led off with a 13-5 win over the Kayhi Lady Kings after a slow start in the first few innings of Friday's game. But both teams' bats lit up in Saturday's first game as Sitka won 25-13. Ketchikan then bounced back and took a 13-5 win in the third game of the series.

Late Friday in heavy rain, Ketchikan took an early lead, scoring three runs in the first inning to Sitka's one. Sitka held Kayhi scoreless in the second, third and fourth innings, however, and scored a slow but steady stream of runs for themselves, taking the lead in the bottom of the third and holding it for the remainder of the game.

"We always just have started slow in the first innings, like defense and offense," senior catcher Kaelynn Balovich said after Friday's win.

Audrey Brevick, one of four seniors on the team this year, agreed, and said she hopes the team gets into the swing of the game sooner by the end of the season.

"We just have to start better. Usually, when we play two games, in our second game, the start is a lot better than the first game. So we just need to figure out how to get it going immediately. Get ready, get our bats on quicker," Brevick said. The squad's other seniors are Leia Daly, Kaelynn Balovich and Madison Campbell, and they were honored on the field Saturday in the team's senior night celebration.

In the bottom of the fifth, the Lady Wolves loaded the bases and scored 2 runs due to Ketchikan's fielding errors and three more thanks to hits by Kaelynn Balovich, Ally Mayville and Alina Lebah. On defense, fielding errors cost both teams as Friday's wind and rain added extra difficulty in throwing and catching the ball.

Kayhi tried to rally in the top of the sixth inning and scored 1 more run, but Sitka's defense held, and two Kayhi runners were tagged out at first base to end the inning. Sitka junior Ally Mayville hit a triple and batted in two runners in the bottom of the sixth, and a run batted in by Alina Lebah triggered the mercy rule and ended the game in Sitka's favor, 13-5.

Though it took some time for Sitka's bats to heat up, the team made 13 hits on Friday, compared to Kayhi's 3, though the incessant rain added a new challenge for everyone on the field.



Sitka's Alina Lebahn winds up to pitch against a Ketchikan heavy rain, and played again Saturday, winning one and losing one in the last home series of the season. (Sentinel photo)

"You probably noticed both pitchers struggle with grip, and then throwing spin pitchers without grip is almost impossible," SHS coach Jael McCarty said. "So it really just becomes a battle of control, and then those hitters are jumping on the right pitches. It was more walks than I've seen from either side's pitching in a while, but when you hit 13, it's hard to lose."

Kaelynn Balovich, Sitka's catcher, said her senior year hasn't been so different from prior seasons, but that the team still works as a strong unit, as it has in the past.

"As a catcher, I've always, not been in charge, but I've always had a voice on the field, so that's not really different... Making the goals as a team helps, because we can support each other and we know what each other's working towards," Balovich said.

Madison Campbell, also a senior, said the team works well on and off the diamond, which tends to keep morale high.

"I enjoy our bond that we have. And it really helps, because if you're down,

they'll bring you right back up," Campbell said. She batted in a runner early in the game.

Another senior, Audrey Brevick, said her time with the team has gone quickly.

"You don't feel like it, you remember the seniors from before. It's weird, and it went by so fast. We choose different goals every game, and we just focus on the little ones," she said "Obviously, the overall goal is we want to win state again, but usually every day, we go through everyone and pick goals for the team. So it's always little milestones that we go through."

Coach McCarty has spent years with her current group of seniors, both on the diamond and in the classroom, and said the group has special significance to her.

"These seniors, they're kind of close to me," McCarty said. "They were my COVID kids when I was a teacher at Blatchley. So we were in these small pods, and they were talking to me about softball all the time, and they just love it and eat it up. And Kaelynn has been start-

ing since her freshman year, and making great games — and always makes me laugh, and it's kind of just solid behind the plate. She'll be hard to replace."

"Maddie (Campbell) has always been good to throw a ball for us — soft hands at second base. Audrey (Brevick) stepped up in a big way at state last year, and she makes me laugh the entire game, keeps me light. And Leah is good for all these sliding catches. And she had that giant collision her freshman year with Adriana Denninger. I'm just glad she's back and able to play."

Playing again Saturday, albeit in somewhat better weather, both teams' bats were hot as Sitka made 15 hits and Kayhi 13, though Sitka won 25-13. In the last game of the series, Ketchikan held on and secured a 13-5 victory.

The games were Sitka's last home matches of the year; the team has a bye this weekend and competes in Juneau the week after, with the regional tournament slated for the following week, May 30 and 31.

Gilgeous-Alexander Propels OKC over Denver



Thunder guard Cason Wallace (22) drives to the basket as Denver Nuggets guards Christian Braun (0) and Russell Westbrook (4) defend in the second half of Game 4 in the Western Conference semifinals, Sunday in Denver. (AP Photo/David Zalubowski)

By ARNIE STAPLETON

AP Sports Writer

DENVER (AP) — The Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Denver Nuggets at their own game Sunday.

The NBA's youngest team made all the clutch plays in crunch time against an experienced squad teaming with a cham-

pionship pedigree, knotting the second-round series with a 92-87 win in Game 4.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored nine of his 25 points in the fourth quarter, pulling the top-seeded Thunder from the brink of a 3-1 deficit against a Denver team known for closing out games while winning six of its last seven playoff series

Slumping Rockies Fire Manager after 21-0 Loss

By PAT GRAHAM

AP Sports Writer

DENVER (AP) — It's no longer Bud Black's job to steer the Colorado Rockies away from baseball infamy.

The team fired Black, the winningest manager in franchise history, after a 7-33 start that's one of the worst in Major League Baseball history.

Colorado promoted third base coach Warren Schaeffer to be the interim manager, the team announced Sunday after a 9-3 win over San Diego. That victory wasn't enough to save Black's job after the Rockies lost 21-0 to the Padres on Saturday night. They also fired bench coach Mike Redmond. Hitting coach Clint Hurdle takes over as interim bench coach.

The Rockies have the worst 40-game start since the 1988 Baltimore Orioles, who were 6-34.

"Our play so far this season, especially coming off the last two seasons, has been unacceptable. Our fans deserve better, and we are capable of better," Rockies owner, chairman and CEO Dick Monfort, said in a statement. "While we all share responsibility in how this season has played out, these changes are necessary."

Colorado is 19 1/2 games out of first

place in the NL West. The Rockies have been outscored by 128 runs so far this season. The only team since 1900 with a worse run differential through 40 games was the 2023 Oakland Athletics (-144).

"We have to get better and move forward — we owe it to our fans to play better baseball," general manager Bill Schmidt said Sunday.

On Saturday afternoon, Schmidt backed Black, saying, "Buddy's doing a good job right now. They're showing up for work and playing with effort."

Hours later, the Rockies were routed by the Padres.

Schmidt said he was attempting to get everything in place Sunday morning to make the move after the game — win or lose.

"I know it took a little air out of winning the game," said Schmidt, whose team snapped an eight-game slide.

The seventh manager in team history, Black initially found success with Colorado when he led the Rockies to back-to-back playoff appearances in 2017 and '18. They haven't finished with a winning record since and are coming off two straight 100-loss seasons. Colorado has a .349 winning percentage since 2023.

Black's contract was set to expire following the season. He signed a one-year extension in October.

Black was 544-690 in nine seasons while wearing the purple pinstripes. He surpassed Hurdle last season for the team record in both games managed and wins.

The easy-going demeanor of Black seemed to be a good fit for a Rockies team relying heavily on youth. The lineup featured a nucleus of Gold Glove winners Ezequiel Tovar (currently on the injured list) and Brenton Doyle, along with the recent call-up of highly touted outfielder Zac Veen, who has since been sent back down. On the mound, they've promoted prized pitcher Chase Dollander, the ninth overall draft pick in 2023.

But little has gone right for Black and the Rockies. They allowed 10 or more runs in four straight games, culminating in the football-like 21-0 score Saturday.

"I love both those guys to death. I'll be in contact with them for hopefully the rest of my life," pitcher Kyle Freeland said of Black and Redmond. "Clearly some changes needed to be made to see if we can start turning this thing around, get going in a new direction, and get some traction."

A team owned by Monfort and run by

Schmidt didn't make any splash moves to bolster a spiraling club. Their total payroll this season is listed at \$125.5 million and is 20th in the league, according to Spotrac, a site that tracks payroll.

One reason for the Rockies' free fall has been the health of slugger Kris Bryant, who's struggled to stay on the field after signing a \$182 million, seven-year contract ahead of the 2022 season. He's currently on the 60-day injured list with lumbar degenerative disk disease.

Black was with the Royals when they won the 1985 World Series, making one start and an appearance against St. Louis.

Schaeffer will make his first appearance as interim manager today in Arlington, Texas, against the Rangers. He's been Colorado's third base and infield coach since the 2023 season. Prior to joining the big league team, he spent 10 seasons as a manager and coach in the Rockies' minor league system. He most recently managed Triple-A Albuquerque in the 2021 and 2022 seasons.

"I believe that Warren is the right person to lead us forward for the remainder of this season, develop our young talent at the major league level and get our club back to playing a better brand of baseball," Schmidt said.

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My oldest sister has it in her head that since she's home all week, she needs to go out every Sunday. She started calling me every Saturday to invite me to accompany her, which I did a few times. In doing so, I realized she has mobility issues and the beginnings of dementia. She wants to go to these certain places where we would always go. Other friends and family members used to accompany her, but no longer do for liability reasons. Hence the reason she turned to me. Apparently, she refuses to accept her limitations.

My sister should use a walker and no longer be driving but does both. I am afraid and concerned. She keeps calling me every weekend, and I've already run out of excuses. I feel terrible about this and don't know how to handle the situation. I desperately need some advice. She obviously doesn't get the hints. -- DESPERATE SIS IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR SIS: Stop hinting. Talk to your other relatives about what to do if, as your sister's dementia increases, someone has to take her car away. That she wants to get out of the house on weekends isn't surprising, considering the fact that she's cooped up there all week. Contact your nearest senior center and inquire about supervised activities for seniors and transportation options for people with disabilities.

Folks with memory issues also have been known to get on the highway intending to drive to Sacramento only to wind up in San Diego because they lost their sense of

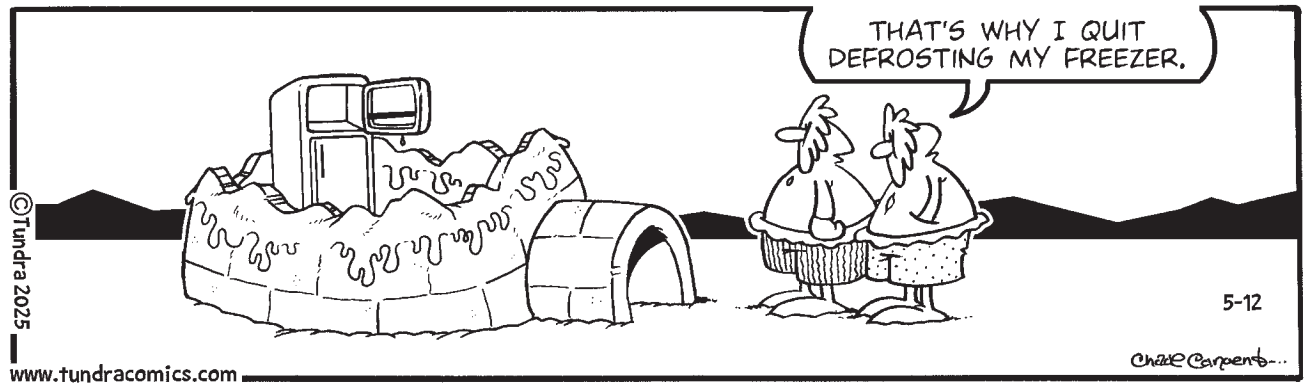
direction or misremembered their destination. If necessary, because your sister could be a danger to herself and others on the road, send a letter to the DMV.

DEAR ABBY: My best friend "Troy" and I hang out all the time. We do everything together, and people often mistake us for a couple. Troy wouldn't correct people until I said something, but since then, I noticed how it started feeling more like a relationship. We don't hold hands or kiss, but he asks me what I'm doing, who I'm with and things like that when he's not around.

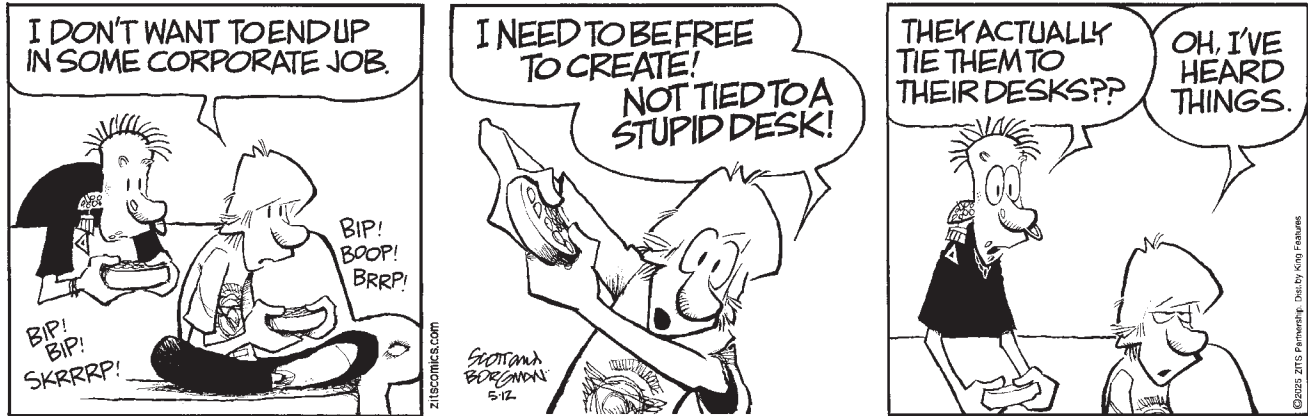
Every time we're on the phone we say "I love you" to each other before hanging up. I have feelings for him. He says he doesn't have the same for me, but he's the one who is making it feel like it's a relationship. I have asked him to stop because it's confusing, but it only lasts for a little bit before we are right back to it. I can't tell if he wants a relationship but just not with me, or if he doesn't know for sure how he feels about me. What can I do about this? Can you help? -- MIXED UP IN MONTANA

DEAR MIXED UP: You have made clear that you want a relationship with Troy. He has stated plainly that he doesn't have romantic feelings for you. True, he enjoys your company and tells you he loves you, but he doesn't hold hands or kiss you. Most importantly, he DOESN'T say he is IN love with you. Unfortunately, there is nothing you can do about this. If you are looking for a boyfriend, Troy is not it. You appear to be firmly in the friend zone. You have my sympathy.

TUNDRA



ZITS



RHYMES WITH ORANGE



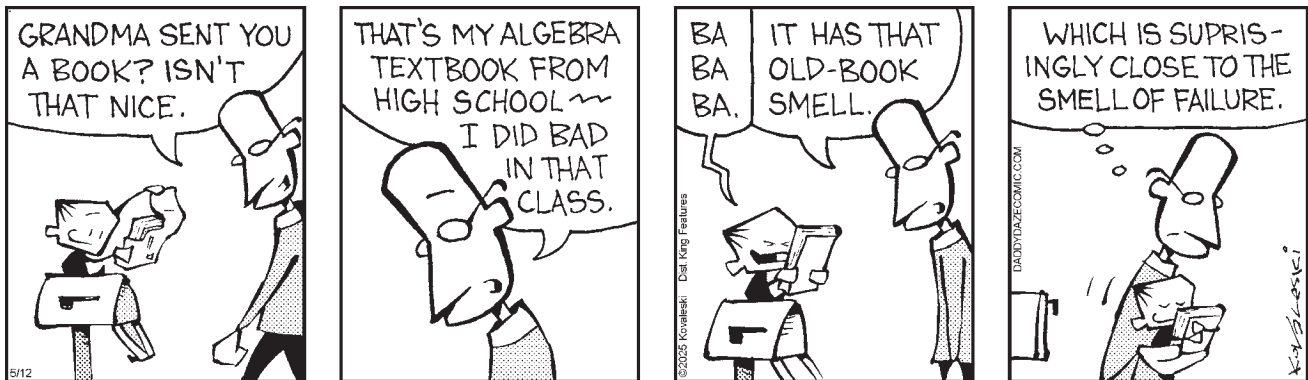
BLONDIE



GARFIELD



DADDY DAZE



SATURDAY'S CARTOON...



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 43 Deducive

1 Leafy meal

44 Tirade

6 Antlered animal

10 Weather zone

11 Movie barbarian

13 Highway exits

14 Blow away

15 French friend

16 Knight's title

18 Acquire

19 Nature personified

22 Noah's boat

23 Deck worker

24 Isolated

27 Oven feature

28 Metal boxes

29 Light brown

30 Rhyme writer

35 Count start

36 Marks a ballot

37 Mend

38 Smell or sight

40 Banded rock

42 Choir member

DOWN

1 "Beat it!"

2 San

Antonio land-mark

3 Maximum amount

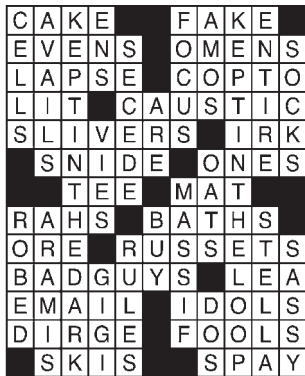
4 Guitar booster

5 Sweet course

6 Frighten

7 Male cat

8 Integrals, for triangles, e.g.



Friday's answer

9 Common newspa-

per name

12 Lower

17 Tick off

20 Severe

21 Acid type

24 Maximally

25 Trailblazer

26 Reception aid

27 Site of suburban bargains

29 Uno

plus

31 Use, as

force

32 No longer

a minor

33 Peaceful

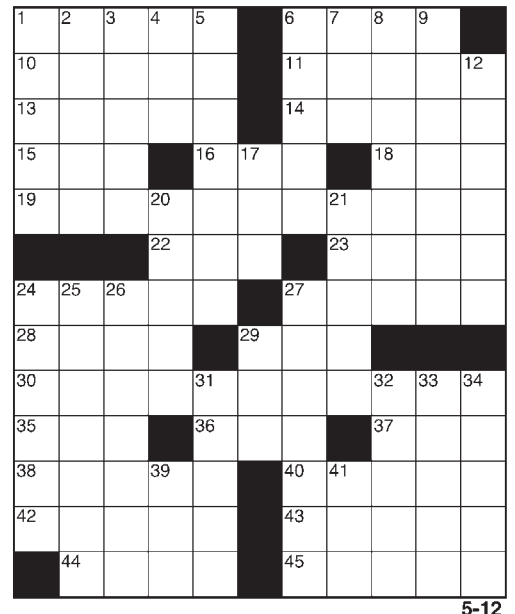
34 Suits

39 Junior, to

senior

41 Zeus or

Apollo



Sitka by the Stars

For Tuesday, May 13, 2025

While yesterday may have been an emotionally intense start to the week, today offers much more cheerful vibes. We can make the most of the current cosmic energy by focusing on the positive and connecting with people who bring out the best in us. Embodying the spirit of generosity is also encouraged since being kind and giving toward others can inspire the people around us to do the same. Today's astro-weather also emphasizes the value of learning, adventure and open-mindedness. The evening bodes well for fun, creativity and romance.

ARIES

(March 21 to April 19)
Learning can be enjoyable. Take a class or a course that sparks your interest and imagination.

TAURUS

(April 20 to May 20)
Taking time to attune to what others are feeling can help foster stronger relationships. It's also an indication of being a great leader.

GEMINI

(May 21 to June 20)
Expect success with a collaborative or team-based project, especially if it's just for fun.

CANCER

(June 21 to July 22)
Engaging in work that's meaningful to you, even if it's something you do part-time or for a few hours a day, is good for your well-being.

LEO

(July 23 to Aug. 22)
You can inspire others through your creativity, generosity or positive attitude.

VIRGO

(Aug. 23 to Sept. 22)
You may be in a contemplative

mood. It's good to check in with yourself and what you're feeling.

LIBRA

(Sept. 23 to Oct. 22)
The day is favorable for meetings, socializing and discussions. If there's an idea you want to propose or an ask you want to make, go for it!

SCORPIO

(Oct. 23 to Nov. 21)
Take time out to nourish yourself so that you can keep up with the demands of the day.

SAGITTARIUS

(Nov. 22 to Dec. 21)
Savor the feel-good vibes in the air. Let your romantic side out to play. Fill the day with as much laughter as you can.

CAPRICORN

(Dec. 22 to Jan. 19)
Try to find some time in your day to breathe and relax. Rest is needed.

AQUARIUS

(Jan. 20 to Feb. 18)
Make a date to connect with friends. Community is key.

PISCES

(Feb. 19 to March 20)
If you have an important decision to make, go with your gut.

FOR TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

You're serious, dedicated and headstrong. You pride yourself on being your own person; you're led by your principles and an aversion to following what everyone else does. While you may need to be mindful of being too rigid in your beliefs, at the end of the day, you're a person who people can rely on. You stick to your word, and you have a low tolerance for anything deemed nonsensical or impractical. If there's an element of your life that you want to change or improve, this year is a great time to start.

CRYPTOQUOTE

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-12 CRYPTOQUOTE

HYCKX PASK VGAFBXWUX. EZ

EH C FCP ZA CQYEXJX

ENNAKZCBEZP. — ZYX WCBCE

Previous Cryptoquote: I USED TO FEEL A LOT OF GUILT ABOUT HAVING DEPRESSION, BUT ... THAT'S ... LIKE FEELING GUILTY FOR HAVING BROWN HAIR. — JENNY LAWSON

ARROWHEAD PRESS

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Take this Super Quiz to a Ph.D. Score 1 point for each correct answer on the Freshman Level, 2 points on the Graduate Level and 3 points on the Ph.D. Level.

Subject: AMERICANA
(e.g., It's the national bird of the U.S.
Answer: Bald eagle.)

FRESHMAN LEVEL

1. She played Lucy on TV's "I Love Lucy."
Answer _____

2. What instrument did Chet Atkins play?
Answer _____

3. In what city was America's first boardwalk (1870)?
Answer _____

GRADUATE LEVEL

4. For what did the letters stand in B&O Railroad?
Answer _____

5. What song is most closely associated with the film "Casablanca"?
Answer _____

6. What was the "House That Ruth Built"?
Answer _____

PH.D. LEVEL

7. Who was Crispus Attucks?
Answer _____

8. On what children's TV show was Clarabell the Clown?
Answer _____

9. What did Abraham Lincoln say "cannot stand"?
Answer _____

SCORING:

18 points -- congratulations, doctor; 15 to 17 points -- honors graduate; 10 to 14 points -- you're plenty smart, but no grind; 4 to 9 points -- you really should hit the books harder; 1 point to 3 points -- enroll in remedial courses immediately; 0 points -- who reads the questions to you?

ANSWERS: 1. Lucille Ball, 2. Gulf-
ter, 3. Atlantic City, 4. Baltimore
and Ohio, 5. "As Time Goes By," 6.
Yankee Stadium, 7. The first victim
of the Boston Massacre (1770), 8.
"Howdy Doody," 9. "A house divid-
ed against itself."

Sudoku 数独

ANSWER TO
FRIDAY'S PUZZLE

8	7	6	2	1	5	4	3	9
4	9	1	7	3	6	5	8	2
3	5	2	9	4	8	6	7	1
5	2	3	6	8	4	1	9	7
1	6	9	5	7	3	2	4	8
7	4	8	1	9	2	3	6	5
9	8	5	3	6	1	7	2	4
6	1	4	8	2	7	9	5	3
2	3	7	4	5	9	8	1	6

Difficulty: ★★ ★

5/9

King Classic Sudoku

9			7			4		
	6	2		4		9	1	
5		4			2	6		3
6		7	9	5	1	2	3	
8	5		2				9	4
	2		3					6
					3	5	7	2
		5				3	6	1
7					5			

Difficulty: ★

5/12

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Sudoku increases from Monday to Friday. Each day the previous day's answer will be published.

Last Israeli-American Hostage Freed by Hamas

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and TIA GOLDENBERG
Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Hamas on Monday released an Israeli-American soldier who had been held hostage in Gaza for more than 19 months, offering a goodwill gesture toward the Trump administration that could lay the groundwork for a new ceasefire with Israel.

Edan Alexander, 21, was the first hostage released since Israel shattered an eight-week ceasefire with Hamas in March and unleashed fierce strikes on Gaza that have killed hundreds of Palestinians.

He was handed over to the Red Cross and then to Israeli forces before being flown by helicopter to a hospital in Tel Aviv. Israeli authorities released video and photos showing a pale but smiling Alexander in an emotional reunion with his mother and other family members.

Israel has promised to intensify its offensive, including by seizing Gaza and displacing much of the territory's population again. Days before the ceasefire ended, Israel blocked all imports from entering the Palestinian enclave, deepening a humanitarian crisis and sparking warnings about the risk of famine if the blockade isn't lifted. Israel says the steps are meant to pressure Hamas to accept a ceasefire agreement on Israel's terms.

Wearing shirts emblazoned with his name, Alexander's extended family gathered in Tel Aviv to watch the release. They chanted his name when the military said he was free, while in the city's Hostage Square, hundreds of people broke out into cheers.

Alexander's grandmother, Varda Ben Baruch, beamed. She said her grandson looked mostly all right in the first photo of him after nearly 600 days in captivity.

"He seemed like a man. He has re-

ally matured," she said. Reports that Alexander cracked a joke on the phone while speaking to his mother for the first time did not surprise her. "He's got such a sense of humor," she said.

Alexander was 19 when he was taken from his military base in southern Israel during Hamas' cross-border attack on Oct. 7, 2023, which set off the war in Gaza.

In his hometown of Tenafl, New Jersey, hundreds of supporters packed the streets, holding signs with his image and listening to speakers blasting Israeli music. As they watched the news of his release on a large screen, the crowd hugged and waved Israeli flags. Since he was taken hostage, supporters there gathered every Friday to march for the hostages' release.

Israel says 58 hostages remain in captivity, with about 23 of them said to be alive. Many of the 250 hostages taken by Hamas-led militants in the 2023 attack were freed in ceasefire deals.

Trump calls expected release 'hopefully' a step toward ending war

Hamas announced its intention to release Alexander shortly before U.S. President Donald Trump was set to arrive Tuesday in the Middle East on the first official foreign trip of his second term.

Trump on Sunday called the planned release "a step taken in good faith toward the United States and the efforts of the mediators — Qatar and Egypt — to put an end to this very brutal war and return ALL living hostages and remains to their loved ones."

"Hopefully this is the first of those final steps necessary to end this brutal conflict. I look very much forward to that day of celebration!" Trump said on social media.

Trump, who is traveling to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, is not scheduled to stop in Israel.

under consideration between Qatar's Ministry of Defense and the US Department of Defense."

"But the matter remains under review by the respective legal departments, and no decision has been made," the statement added.

Meanwhile, administration officials, anticipating ethics concerns, have prepared an analysis arguing that accepting the plane would be legal, according to ABC. The Constitution's Emoluments Clause bars anyone holding government office from accepting any present, emolument, office or title from any "King, Prince, or foreign State," without congressional consent.

One expert on government ethics, Kathleen Clark of the Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, accused Trump of being "committed to exploiting the federal government's power, not on behalf of policy goals, but for amassing personal wealth."

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer poked fun at Trump's "America first" political slogan.

"Nothing says 'America First' like Air Force One, brought to you by Qatar," the New York Democrat said in a statement. "It's not just bribery, it's premium foreign influence with extra legroom."

Even some conservatives expressed dismay online, noting that an aircraft being offered by a foreign government could present security risks if used by a U.S. president.

Air Force One is a modified Boeing 747. Two exist, and the president flies on both, which are more than 30 years old. Boeing Inc. has the contract to produce updated versions, but delivery has been delayed while the company has lost billions of dollars on the project.

Trump intends to convert the Qatari aircraft into a plane he can fly on as president, with the Air Force planning to add secure communications and other classified elements to it. But it will still have more limited capabilities than the existing planes that were built to serve as Air Force One, as well as two other aircraft currently under construction, according to a former U.S. official.



From left, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, French President Emmanuel Macron, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz make a call to U.S. President Donald Trump from Kyiv, Ukraine, Saturday. (AP Photo/Mstyslav Chernov)

Russia Drones Strike After Ceasefire Rejected

By ILLIA NOVIKOV and DMYTRO ZHYHINAS
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia launched more than 100 Shahed and decoy drones at Ukraine in nighttime attacks, the Ukrainian air force said today, after the Kremlin effectively rejected an unconditional 30-day ceasefire in the more than three-year war, but reiterated it would take part in possible peace talks later this week without preconditions.

There was no direct response from the Kremlin, meanwhile, to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's challenge for Russian leader Vladimir Putin to meet him for face-to-face peace talks in Turkey on Thursday.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov today refused to say who might travel to Istanbul from the Russian side.

"Overall, we're determined to seriously look for ways to achieve a long-term peaceful settlement. That is all," Peskov said.

The United States and European governments are making a concerted push to stop the fighting, which has killed tens of thousands of soldiers on both sides, as well as more than 10,000 Ukrainian civilians. Russia's invading forces have taken around one-fifth of Ukraine in Europe's biggest conflict since World War II.

U.S. President Donald Trump said today that he's optimistic about the Istanbul talks. There is "the potential

for a good meeting" between Putin and Zelenskyy, Trump said in Washington, adding that he was "thinking about flying over" to the talks from his visit to Qatar and the United Arab Emirates that day.

Zelenskyy supported the prospect of Trump attending the negotiations. "I supported President Trump with the idea of direct talks with Putin. I have openly expressed my readiness to meet," he said. "And of course, all of us in Ukraine would appreciate it if President Trump could be there with us at this meeting in Turkey."

In a flurry of diplomatic developments over the weekend, Russia shunned the ceasefire proposal tabled by the U.S. and European leaders, but offered direct talks with Ukraine on Thursday.

Ukraine, along with European allies, had demanded that Russia accept a ceasefire starting today before holding peace talks. Moscow effectively rejected that proposal and instead called for direct negotiations in Istanbul.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said today he had discussed Russian-Ukrainian peace efforts in separate calls with Zelenskyy, Putin and Trump.

Erdogan said "a new window of opportunity has emerged for peace," and claimed that previous talks hosted by Turkey in 2022 came close to success but were derailed by "war barons."

Judge Refuses To Block IRS In Giving ICE Data

(AP) — A federal judge today refused to block the Internal Revenue Service from sharing immigrants' tax data with Immigration and Customs Enforcement for the purpose of identifying and deporting people illegally in the U.S.

In a win for the Trump administration, U.S. District Judge Dabney Friedrich denied a preliminary injunction in a lawsuit filed by nonprofit groups. They argued that undocumented immigrants who pay taxes are entitled to the same privacy protections as U.S. citizens and immigrants who are legally in the country.

Friedrich, who was appointed by President Donald Trump, had previously refused to grant a temporary order in the case.

The decision comes less than a month after former acting IRS commissioner Melanie Krause resigned over the deal allowing ICE to submit names and addresses of immigrants inside the U.S. illegally to the IRS for cross-verification against tax records.

The IRS has been in upheaval over Trump administration decisions to share taxpayer data. A previous acting

commissioner announced his retirement earlier amid a furor over Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency gaining access to IRS taxpayer data.

The Treasury Department says the agreement with ICE will help carry out President Donald Trump's agenda to secure U.S. borders and is part of his larger nationwide immigration crackdown, which has resulted in deportations, workplace raids and the use of an 18th century wartime law to deport Venezuelan migrants.

The acting ICE director has said working with Treasury and other departments is "strictly for the major criminal cases."

Advocates, however, say the IRS-DHS information-sharing agreement violates privacy laws and diminishes the privacy of all Americans.

Tariffs . . .

Continued from Page 1
Trump had ratcheted the combined tariff to 145% last month, furious that China was retaliating, before backing down today.

China's Commerce Ministry called the agreement an important step for the resolution of the two countries' differences and said it lays the foundation for further cooperation.

"This initiative aligns with the expectations of producers and consumers in both countries and serves the interests of both nations as well as the common interests of the world," a ministry statement said.

China hopes the U.S. will stop "the erroneous practice of unilateral tariff hikes" and work with China to safeguard the development of economic and trade relations, injecting more certainty and stability into the global economy, the ministry said.

The joint statement by the two countries said China also agreed to suspend or remove other measures it has taken since April 2 in response to the U.S. tariffs. China has increased export controls on rare earths, including some critical to the defense industry, and added more American companies to its export control and unreliable entity lists, restricting their business with and in China.

Markets rally as two sides de-escalate

The full impact on the complicated tariffs and other trade penalties enacted by Washington and Beijing remains unclear. And much depends on whether they will find ways to bridge longstanding differences during the 90-day suspension.

House GOP Prepares Huge Cuts in Medicaid

By LISA MASCARO and KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans proposed sweeping tax breaks today in President Donald Trump's big priority bill, tallying at least \$4.9 trillion in costs so far, partly paid for with cuts to Medicaid and green energy programs used by millions of Americans.

The House Ways and Means Committee named its package 'THE ONE, BIG, BEAUTIFUL BILL' in all capital letters, a nod to Trump himself. It seeks to extend the tax breaks approved during Trump's first term — and boost the standard deduction, child tax credit and estate tax exemption — while adding new tax breaks on tipped wages, overtime pay, Social Security benefits and auto loans that Trump promised during his campaign for the White House.

There's also a tripling of the state and local tax deduction, called SALT, from \$10,000 up to \$30,000 for couples, which certain high-tax state GOP lawmakers from New York and California already rejected as too meager. Private universities would be hit with hefty new tax on their endowments, as much as 21%, as the Trump administration goes after the Ivy League and other campuses. And one unusual provision would terminate the tax-exempt status of groups the State Department says support "terrorists," which civil society advocates warn is a way to potentially punish those at odds with the Trump administration.

Overall, the package is touching off the biggest political debate over taxes, spending and the nation's priorities in nearly a decade. Not since 2017 has Congress wrestled with legislation as this, when Republicans approved the Trump tax cuts, but also failed to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare. The cost assessments are only preliminary, and expected to soar.

Trump Sets Deadline For Cut in Drug Prices

By AMANDA SEITZ and SEUNG MIN KIM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump today signed a sweeping executive order setting a 30-day deadline for drugmakers to electively lower the cost of prescription drugs in the U.S. or face new limits down the road over what the government will pay.

The order calls on the health department, led by Robert F. Kennedy Jr., to broker new price tags for drugs over the next month. If deals are not reached, Kennedy will be tasked with developing a new rule that ties the price the U.S. pays for medications to lower prices paid by other countries.

"We're going to equalize," Trump said during a Monday morning press conference. "We're all going to pay the same. We're going to pay what Europe pays."

It's unclear what — if any — impact the Republican president's executive order will have on millions of Americans who have private health insurance. The federal government has the most power to shape the price it pays for drugs covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

Trump's promised new — but uncertain — savings on drug prices, just hours after the Republican-led House released its new plan to trim \$880 billion from Medicaid.

Bessent said in an interview with CNBC that U.S. and Chinese officials will meet again in a few weeks.

But investors rejoiced as trade envoys from the world's two biggest economies blinked.

Futures for the S&P 500 jumped 2.6% and the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 2%. Oil prices surged more than \$1.60 a barrel, and the dollar gained against the euro and the Japanese yen.

"This is a substantial de-escalation," said Mark Williams, chief Asia economist at Capital Economics. But he warned "there is no guarantee that the 90-day truce will give way to a lasting ceasefire."

Dani Rodrik, an economist at Harvard University, said that the two countries had stepped back "from a needless trade war" but that U.S. tariffs on China remain high at 30% "and will mainly hurt U.S. consumers."

"Trump has obtained absolutely nothing from China for all the chaos he generated," Zilch," Rodrik wrote, posting on Bluesky.

Craig Singleton, senior director of the China program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, said the speed at which the agreement came about suggested that "both sides were more economically boxed in than they let on."

"For China, the economic pain was real: Rising unemployment, capital flight, and export orders falling at their fastest rate in nearly two years," Singleton said. "For Trump, markets mattered, and this deal gives him a win without abandoning leverage."

Republicans prepare to cut Medicaid and Medicare. "Republicans need to UNIFY," Trump posted on social media before departing for a trip abroad to the Middle East.

Trump said when he returns to Washington, "we will work together on any and all outstanding issues, but there shouldn't be many — The Bill is GREAT. We have no alternative, WE MUST WIN!"

But one key Republican, Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri, implored his party not to impair Medicaid, arguing that cutting health care to pay for tax breaks is both "morally wrong and politically suicidal."

"If Republicans want to be a working-class party — if we want to be a majority party — we must ignore calls to cut Medicaid and start delivering on America's promise for America's working people," Hawley wrote in The New York Times.

Round-the-clock work ahead
As Republicans race toward House Speaker Mike Johnson's Memorial Day deadline to pass Trump's big bill of tax breaks and spending cuts, they are preparing to flood the zone with round-the-clock public hearings starting Tuesday and stitch the various sections together in what will become a massive package.

The politics ahead are uncertain. The bipartisan Joint Committee on Taxation said today that tax breaks would reduce revenue by \$4.9 trillion over the decade — and that was before Trump's new tax breaks were included.

Texas Rep. Chip Roy, a member of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, warned the price tag could climb to \$20 trillion, piling onto the deficits and debt.

"I sure hope House & Senate leadership are coming up with a backup plan," Roy posted on social media, "... because I'm not here to rack up an additional \$20 trillion in debt over 10 years."

Taxpayers spend hundreds of billions of dollars on prescription drugs, injectables, transfusions and other medications every year through Medicare, which covers nearly 70 million older Americans. Medicaid, which provides nearly-free health care for almost 80 million poor and disabled people in the U.S. also spends tens of billions of dollars each year for drugs.

Top US drugmakers say Trump's order is bad for patients

The nation's pharmaceutical lobby, which represents the top U.S. drugmakers, immediately pushed back against Trump's order, calling it a "bad deal" for American patients. Drugmakers have long argued that any threats to their profits could impact the research they do to develop new drugs.

"Importing foreign prices from socialist countries would be a bad deal for American patients and workers," Stephen J. Ubl, the president and CEO of PhRMA, said in a statement. "It would mean less treatments and cures and would jeopardize the hundreds of billions our member companies are planning to invest in America."

Trump's so-called "most favored nation" approach to Medicare drug pricing has been controversial since he first tried to implement it during his first term. He signed a similar executive order in the final weeks of his presidency, which called for the U.S. to only pay a lower price that other countries pay for some drugs — such as injectables or cancer drugs given through infusions — administered in a doctor's office.

That narrow executive order faced hurdles, with a court order that blocked the rule from going into effect under President Joe Biden's administration. The pharmaceutical industry argued that Trump's 2020 attempt would give foreign governments the "upper hand" in deciding the value of medicines in the U.S.

The concept also remains unpopular with many in his own party. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., noted to reporters on Monday that it would be "fairly controversial" if Trump had tried to push through the policy legislatively, rather than via an executive order.

Trump says other countries are to blame

Trump repeatedly defended pharmaceutical companies, instead blaming other countries for the high price Americans pay for drugs, during a wide-ranging speech at the White House on Monday. The president was flanked by Kennedy, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz, Food and Drug Administration commissioner Dr. Marty Makary and National Institutes of Health director Jay Bhattacharya.

He did, however, threaten the companies with federal investigations into their practices and opening up the U.S. drug market to bring in more imported medications from other countries.

"The pharmaceutical companies make most of their profits from America," Trump said. "That's not a good thing."

Trump played up the announcement over the weekend, boasting in one post that his plan could save "TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS."



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