

Journal #6187 fron sdc 2.25.26

Moonscape -Three days til six planets align across western sky

Learn about gold discoveries

Genius doesn't wait for permission—it starts solving.

Pell Grant faces looming \$16B shortfall

Mark Trahan Newsrimes and Commentary

Read the complete transcript of Trump's 2026 State of the Union

More Water, Water, Water

Trump Admin Delivers Historic NEPA Reform, Unleashing Resources on America's Public Lands

Santiago Canyon College's new new water sciences lab will enhance classes in water technology

Great video

Scholarships B-M with March 31 Deadline



IN 3 DAYS, YOU HAVE A 20-MINUTE WINDOW TO SEE SIX PLANETS AT ONCE.

Miss it and you wait years for the next one.

February 28. Thirty minutes after sunset. Face west. You have exactly 20 minutes before Mercury drops below the horizon and the window closes.

Here is exactly what you will see and where to look.

STEP 1: Find Venus first. It will be the brightest object in the western sky after the Sun sets. Blazing white-gold. Impossible to miss. Low on the horizon. This is your anchor. Everything else is measured from Venus.

STEP 2: Look just above Venus for Saturn. Pale gold. Close to Venus. Fainter. Easy to confuse with a star. Saturn does not twinkle. Stars do. That is the test.

STEP 3: Scan higher and left for Jupiter. Bright, steady, cream-white. High in the sky. Very easy. The second brightest point after Venus.

STEP 4: Find Mars between Venus and Jupiter. Faint. Reddish-orange. Needs a dark western horizon. Less bright than you expect. Do not mistake it for a red star.

STEP 5: Mercury. The hard one. Extremely low, just above the horizon, setting fast. You have 15 to 20 minutes after sunset to catch it. Clear flat horizon required. Binoculars help enormously.

STEP 6: Uranus. Binoculars required. Faint blue-green dot near Venus. Not naked-eye. But findable with a sky map app.

All six are strung along the same curved arc across the sky. That arc is the ecliptic. The plane of the solar system. The geometry of our formation, 4.6 billion years ago, made visible.

3 days. 30 minutes after sunset. Face west. 20 minutes. Six worlds.

Are you setting a reminder for **February 28** right now, or trusting yourself to remember?

Search on *gold* in Today in History

- Learn more about gold discoveries and gold rushes in other states. Search on *gold* in [Today in History](#).

In these days of depressing news came this story; just had share
[Humanity](#)

Genius doesn't wait for permission—it starts solving.

She was sitting with her parents in Knoxville as a familiar pharmaceutical commercial flickered across the television. The scene was bright and cheerful, but the calm voiceover began listing a growing number of unsettling side effects.

“May cause nausea, dizziness, irregular heartbeat...”

Twelve-year-old Sofia Tomov turned to her parents and asked, “Why do medicines hurt some people and help others?”

Most parents might have offered a simple explanation and moved on. But Sofia was different. She wanted to understand deeply. She always searched for the reason behind the reason.

What she discovered shocked her.

Adverse reactions to prescription drugs were linked to strokes as the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. These reactions killed more people every year than AIDS, diabetes, or pneumonia. This was not a small medical issue—it was a major public health problem hidden in plain sight.

Sofia, a homeschooled eighth-grader who loved playing David Bowie songs on her electric guitar and practicing fencing, decided she wanted to help solve the problem.

The issue was rooted in genetics. Every person's DNA is slightly different, and some people carry mutations that make them react dangerously to certain medications. A drug that is safe for most patients could cause organ failure or even death in others.

Scientists already understood this challenge. What they lacked was a practical solution.

The biggest obstacle was time. During emergencies like heart attacks, seizures, or severe allergic reactions, doctors must act immediately. However, sequencing a patient's full genome to check for dangerous mutations can take hours or even days. The human genome contains roughly six billion base pairs.

Emergency room patients do not have hours. They have minutes.

Sofia came up with an idea. What if patients were screened during routine medical checkups while they were healthy? The results could be stored in their medical records. Then, during an emergency, doctors would already know which medications were safe or risky.

Even if a patient's genome had already been sequenced, searching billions of base pairs for specific mutations still required too much time.

So Sofia decided to speed up the process.

She had studied computer science and developed strong programming skills. After researching existing genomic search algorithms and understanding their limitations, she created a way to run the code across multiple computer processors at the same time, dramatically reducing the search time for dangerous mutations.

Her algorithm was more than just slightly faster—it was a major improvement. Instead of taking hours, it could scan a genome for medication-related mutations much more quickly.

It was fast enough to be useful. Fast enough to potentially save lives.

“I envision this becoming extremely widespread,” Sofia said. She imagined a future where genetic screening would be as routine as measuring blood pressure, where each patient's medical record would include a personalized list of medications to avoid, and where emergency doctors could safely prescribe treatments without risking harmful reactions.

In June 2016, Sofia entered her project in the Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge, one of the most prestigious science competitions for middle school students in America.

Out of thousands of submissions from students in grades 5 through 8 nationwide, Sofia's algorithm earned her a place among the ten national finalists.

She was paired with John Henderson, a scientist from 3M, who mentored her for three months through Skype while she refined her project. In October 2016, she traveled to St. Paul to present her work at the 3M Innovation Center alongside nine other finalists.

This was not Sofia's first major achievement. She had already filed a patent for a device designed to safely dispose of unused medications. She had written and published a children's book and completed two Advanced Placement courses while still in middle school.

The University of Tennessee-Knoxville also accepted her as a part-time visiting student when she was only 12 years old. She planned to take college classes while continuing her high school education.

"I am extremely excited about taking classes on a college campus!" Sofia told reporters.

Her parents strongly supported her curiosity. Her mother, Beverly, a teacher, and her father, who works in computer science, encouraged her learning and creative projects. Beverly homeschooled Sofia and focused on two key lessons: learning through hands-on experience and building connections—between ideas, nature, and people.

Those lessons clearly shaped Sofia's approach.

She was not just studying from books. She identified real-world problems and worked toward real solutions. She connected computer science with medicine, linked faster algorithms to emergency healthcare, and used curiosity to tackle issues affecting millions.

Although Sofia did not win the top prize in the competition, becoming a national finalist at just 12 years old was still remarkable.

More importantly, her research showed real promise.

She understood her algorithm still required further development before being implemented in healthcare systems. She recognized the need for extensive testing, regulatory approval, and the challenges of integrating new technology into existing medical infrastructure.

But she remained determined.

"You can never do enough research about the topic," Sofia advised fellow young scientists. She truly lived by that philosophy—constantly learning, improving, and moving forward.

Her long-term ambitions were already forming. She hoped to earn a Ph.D. in computer science and launch her own company focused on machine learning, building systems capable of solving complex problems through large-scale data analysis.

Sofia Tomov's journey highlights several important lessons.

Age is not a barrier to making meaningful contributions. At just 12, Sofia tackled a problem that had challenged experienced scientists. She did not assume limits—she explored possibilities with fresh thinking.

Curiosity combined with technical skill can lead to powerful innovation. Sofia did not simply wonder why medications affect people differently. She gained the knowledge needed to take action.

Some of the world's biggest problems are often overlooked. Every year, hundreds of thousands of people suffer or die from harmful drug reactions, yet many assume the problem cannot be solved. It took a 12-year-old watching a television commercial to ask a simple but powerful question: Why can't we fix this?

Innovation does not wait for permission. While many adults debate whether young people are ready for major challenges, young minds like Sofia's are already creating solutions.

She did not wait until earning a doctorate to make an impact. She started with the knowledge she had and built something with the potential to save lives.

Genius does not wait for permission. It simply begins working.

Pell Grant faces looming \$16B shortfall

[HIGHER EDUCATION] The Federal Pell Grant Program — the flagship federal financial aid program that aids six to seven million students annually — is projected by the Congressional Budget Office to experience a \$5.4 billion shortfall in fiscal year 2026, one that could grow by \$11.5 billion in fiscal year 2027. This would be the program's first shortfall in more than 10 years.

**[Read
More](#)**

Mark Trahant:

Tuesday Newsrime

*trump to high court: not worth a capital letter
there's a lack of respect? but we can do one better
the state of the union is not worth our time
delusional claims ignored in this lower case rhyme*

Skipping the whole thing. I might read a story or two written by those paid to watch.

Wednesday's Newsrime

All his lies we could not count

(fact checkers tallied the amount)

Tired of winning? More of the same?

Counting days until the midterm game

But the Trumpian claim that probably bothers me the most is in the weeds. From FactCheck:

Trump said Republicans would “always protect” Medicaid. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act’s changes to the program reduce spending by more than \$900 billion and are estimated to result in 7.5 million fewer people with health insurance.

Medicaid is essential — and it’s the program that could be the core of any health care reform that could follow after the Republicans exit governing. As I have written before we have a fundamental difference of opinion about health care. (This is too general, but more Democrats see health care as a right, while Republicans see this as a give-away. It makes sense in their world-view to limit access, instead of expanding.) We need to remember that the rest of the world has figured this out and it’s connected to our tax policies. The thing is: Health care makes most sense as a government-sponsored entity because the size of the pool is so large. What you want is a system where more healthy people (who might not need services right now) are paying into a system to provide services for people who need care right now. The problem with a “private-sector” plan is that healthy people save their money and don’t buy enough coverage. That makes it more expensive, often unaffordable, for those who really need the insurance. If you look around the world, there are only two paths that work. You can have government-run care (the VA is an example of that) or government-sponsored insurance (Medicare is a great example.) Medicare is mostly for older people, but there’s no reason why Medicaid could not become a platform for universal care. After Trump.

Speaking of Medicaid, I am writing from Fort Hall, Idaho, and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes recently reached out to the Idaho legislature about its plans for Medicaid rollbacks. This is nutty — and it’s a reason why Medicaid needs reform. The program is a state, federal partnership. And the state sets the rules. (In 2009 [I wrote a piece for Kaiser Health News](#) suggesting Indian Country be the 51st state for Medicaid purposes.) But when it comes to Medicaid for tribal communities, the federal government pays the bill (a 100 percent match.) So it makes no sense for the state to cut back on a program that will not cost them. Here we have Idaho.

From ICT (and the Idaho Capital Sun):

Michael Steele, a policy analyst for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, asked the council to support

the program, especially for the state's Native American residents. He noted that the federal government reimburses 100% of Medicaid services costs for tribal members.

“The past year that I’ve worked for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe, I’ve seen firsthand the importance of Medicaid,” Steele said. “I see individuals on a weekly, sometimes daily basis, just walking past my office. Many of them are vulnerable children, elders or other tribal members that are really suffering ... The need is staggering, and Medicaid saves lives.”

Steele noted that treaty responsibilities between U.S. and tribes call for the provision of health care to tribal members, and some of that responsibility had been delegated to states through Medicaid.

He said that 54% of tribal members living on Fort Hall Indian Reservation are enrolled in Medicaid, and that funding from Medicaid represented 82% of the Tribal Health and Human Services budget.

This is not just an Idaho problem. Pretty much every Republican-controlled legislature is looking for ways to make Medicaid non-operational. (Goes back to that philosophical divide.)

-
- [Read the complete transcript of Trump's 2026 State of the Union](#)

Colorado River plan could wipe Arizona from the map, officials say

“A Central Arizona Project-backed advocacy group called the Coalition for Protecting Arizona’s Lifeline has begun rolling out television ads and online videos defending the water supplier’s rights to a Colorado River that is under serious hydrological and political strain. “Arizona is being unfairly targeted for reductions of Colorado River water that would cripple our state, flatten our economy and weaken our nation’s defense,” an ad aired by the coalition warns. It goes on to note that Arizona communities have done their part, committing more water for conservation in Lake Mead than those in other states, and that several options that the federal government is weighing for managing the river would fall hardest on the state. One such alternative under review, CAP General Manager Brenda Burman recently said, would essentially dry up the agency’s canal from the river to Phoenix and Tucson. ... ” [Read more from Arizona Central.](#)

Food & Water Watch: To save the Colorado River, stop corporate water guzzlers

“The Colorado River supplies 40 million people with drinking water, but the water levels of the river and its two major reservoirs are reaching crisis levels. For years, the federal government and the seven states in the Colorado River Basin have failed to advance a plan that tackles the real root of the crisis — corporate water abuses. And most recently, Basin states have missed the latest deadline to get a plan together, putting the fate of the Colorado in even greater

peril. Efforts to save the river will only be successful if they specifically target and rein in corporate water guzzlers. Big Agribusinesses withdraw egregious amounts of water for unsustainable operations. Mega-dairies and the vast alfalfa operations that support them shoulder much of the blame. And now, the Colorado faces a looming new threat: the water-hungry data centers powering the artificial intelligence (AI) boom. ... ” [Read more from Food & Water Watch](#).

SRP measures snowpack after winter storms to gauge Arizona’s water supply

“Storm systems last week left much of Arizona’s high country blanketed with snow. All the snow the high country received last week is beautiful, but it plays a bigger role than just that. By measuring the snowpack, it will help identify how much water will flow into the Valley’s reservoirs and if SRP needs to start thinking about water conservation. After a short hike and a few different measurements, Zachary Keller, a SRP field hydrologist, has a better understanding of our state’s water supply. “We’re sitting about medium which is actually really good when you think about how little snow we’ve had this year, and it also gives strength to the resiliency of our watershed,” Keller said. ... ” [Read more from Arizona Family](#).

How Arizona mining is reducing water use during drought

“Concerns about water shortages are often questioned in connection with Arizona mining. But, even with the Grand Canyon State under the Governor’s Drought Emergency Declaration and Arizona Drought Monitoring Technical Committee (DMTC) Drought Declaration, the reality of how much water is utilized in mining might come as a surprise. New approaches, practices and technological advancements have changed the relationship between water and mining, as have those with federal, Tribal and municipal water partners. ... So, are water allocation concerns in mining operations warranted? Sure, but just as much as the scrutiny over how water is distributed and shared among all other state users. “The water usage by the mines is not an insignificant amount,” says Les Presmyk, Arizona State Mine Inspector, “but in the grand scheme of things, the [industry] is one of the [smaller] users.” ... ” [Read more from Arizona Big Media](#).

February storms offer a good, but not great, boon to Colorado’s snowpack and ski resorts

“Colorado’s snowpack is hugging record lows or crawling past them in some areas thanks to a series of storms that dropped snow on the state since Feb. 11. As much as 50 inches of snow fell on some parts of the state. That’s good news for Colorado industries, like ski resorts that have been forced to keep some runs closed or rely on machine-made snow for much of this season. But the state’s snowpack is still only 63% of the 30-year norm for this point in the season and the worst since 1987. “Getting these late-season storms is going to help,” said Brianna Bealo, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Grand Junction. “But there’s only so much we can do this late in the season. We probably won’t get anywhere close to median.” ... ” [Read more from the Colorado Sun](#).

Both sides are running out of water: US and Mexico’s deal amid historic drought

“Mexico has committed to delivering 431.7 million cubic meters of water a year to the United States under the 1944 Water Treaty — a deal announced last week after sustained pressure from Washington on Mexico who has often delivered significantly as required by the treaty. The agreement, confirmed by the U.S. State and Agriculture departments, comes after months of

negotiation and threats from President Donald Trump to impose higher tariffs on Mexican imports unless Mexico met its water delivery obligations. In a phone call last month, Trump and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum reportedly agreed to measures to stabilize deliveries and support rural producers on both sides of the border. President Sheinbaum explained that both sides agreed that the water would be delivered over several months within the framework of the treaty. ... ” [Read more from Texas Public Radio.](#)

Interior claws back NEPA regs

“The Interior Department on Monday unveiled a final rule that pulls back more than 80 percent of the agency’s regulations tied to implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, the nation’s bedrock environmental law. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum said NEPA for decades “has been twisted into a weapon” to block energy, infrastructure and conservation projects. “Under the leadership of President Trump, this administration is fixing that,” Burgum said in a statement. “We are cutting unnecessary bureaucracy, speeding up approvals, and putting Americans back to work, while enforcing NEPA as Congress originally intended.” The final rule largely adopts a draft the agency released last summer, which was criticized for curbing public input and analysis of energy projects. The draft cut close to one-sixth of the agency’s regulations implementing NEPA, instead switching most of the remaining rules to less-stringent guidelines. ... ” [Read more from E&E News.](#)

[Trump Administration Delivers Historic NEPA Reform, Unleashing Resources on America’s Public Lands, from the Department of the Interior](#)

[Santiago Canyon College’s new water sciences lab will enhance classes in water technology](#)

The lab will help fill a demand for highly skilled, certified workers throughout the region.

Congratulations to Lorena Eban who was featured on local news tonight (2,25).

Her coach, Ray Charles, was also featured as she paid homage to her teammates.

Feb 24, 2024 — *Pyramid Lake's Lorena Eben* shoots while taking on McDermitt during the NIAA 1A girls state basketball. Olivia Lara, a junior, led the way with ...

[Great video](#)

[https://www.facebook.com/reel/1208583861255028/?s=single unit& cft \[0\]=AZYgCTn6vmndbt5fZhl131JCPPRFopsW8z1ACGyfXq-xOPknhR80mqFOrp0wJOaJT sue4oneG7F9dTKBmykAkWf2WhxgHU08J7f84iTxO35i2tS35z6dpf_dBzi3mGOPTOqtXNAhkU0KPydMi1Pxbi4kRt75B5N2ISGlgW9JQQUqrcZoObcKMMz-EbrLDksJN4& tn =H-R](https://www.facebook.com/reel/1208583861255028/?s=single%20unit&_cft__[0]=AZYgCTn6vmndbt5fZhl131JCPPRFopsW8z1ACGyfXq-xOPknhR80mqFOrp0wJOaJT sue4oneG7F9dTKBmykAkWf2WhxgHU08J7f84iTxO35i2tS35z6dpf_dBzi3mGOPTOqtXNAhkU0KPydMi1Pxbi4kRt75B5N2ISGlgW9JQQUqrcZoObcKMMz-EbrLDksJN4&_tn_=-H-R)

Scholarships B-M with March 31 Deadline

BAFTX Susan Howard Community Service Award	\$5,000	March 31, 2026
BAFTX Undergraduate Scholarship	\$5,000	March 31, 2026
BBB Chicago Educational Foundation Scholarship	\$3,000	March 31, 2026
Beaches Go Green Ambassador Scholarship	\$2,500	March 31, 2026
Becca's Closet Scholarships	\$1,000	March 31, 2026
Beyond the Cure Ambassador Scholarship	\$3,500	March 31, 2026
Bill Countryman Scholarship	Varies	March 31, 2026
Board of Directors Memorial Scholarships	\$1,500	March 31, 2026
Boom & Bucket's Student Scholarship Program	\$1,000	March 31, 2026
Burditt, Woodward, and Rooney Scholarships	\$2,500	March 31, 2026
California Credit Union Student Scholarship	\$1,000	March 31, 2026
Campus Safety Health & Environmental Management Association Scholarship	\$3,000	March 31, 2026
Carl N. and Margaret Karcher Founders' Scholarship Program	\$10,000	March 31, 2026
Chahta Foundation Scholarships	\$40,000	March 31, 2026
Chicana Latina Foundation Scholarships	\$2,000	March 31, 2026
CNCDA Scholarship Program	\$1,000	March 31, 2026
Cobell Undergraduate Scholarship	\$12,000	March 31, 2026
College Now Adult Learner Scholarship	\$10,000	March 31, 2026
Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts	\$3,000	March 31, 2026
CSAWWA Water Works Scholarships	\$3,500	March 31, 2026
Dairy MAX Scholarship	\$2,500	March 31, 2026
Dan Whitworth Memorial Scholarship	\$1,000	March 31, 2026
Dave Ledo Scholarship	\$2,500	March 31, 2026
Districts Make the Difference Video Contest	\$2,000	March 31, 2026
Fayetteville Friends Peace Scholarship	\$1,000	March 31, 2026
Folds of Honor Higher Education Scholarship	\$5,000	March 31, 2026
Galvanize the Future Richard L. Brooks Memorial Scholarship	\$2,500	March 31, 2026
Garage Gurus Scholarship	\$2,500	March 31, 2026
Greater Kansas City NAWIC Scholarship	\$3,000	March 31, 2026
GRHS Youth Essay Contest	\$1,000	March 31, 2026

Hearthstone Housing Foundation Scholarship	\$5,000	March 31, 2026
HGP Essay Contest	\$3,000	March 31, 2026
High School Senior Scholarship for Future Teachers	\$1,000	March 31, 2026
Hustle and Heart Scholarship	\$5,000	March 31, 2026
IFDAEF Scholarships	\$4,000	March 31, 2026
Indiana Engineering Scholarships	\$5,000	March 31, 2026
Jerry Dominguez Scholarship Fund	\$10,000	March 31, 2026
Jim Boyce Memorial Scholarship	Varies	March 31, 2026
Jim McDonnell Scholarship	\$500	March 31, 2026
Jim McKay Memorial Scholarship	\$10,000	March 31, 2026
Jo Ann Rodriguez Memorial Scholarship	\$3,000	March 31, 2026
Kylie Murray Memorial Flight Training Scholarship	\$11,000	March 31, 2026
L. Ron Hubbard Illustrators of The Future Contest	\$5,000	March 31, 2026
L. Ron Hubbard Writers of The Future Contest	\$5,000	March 31, 2026
Les Dames d'Escoffier Chicago Scholarships	\$2,500	March 31, 2026
Lighthouse Guild Scholarship Program	\$10,000	March 31, 2026
Live Poets Society of New Jersey - National High School Poetry Contest	\$500	March 31, 2026
Mae & Mary Scholarship Fund	\$1,000	March 31, 2026
Mary C. Rawlins Scholarship	\$500	March 31, 2026
Mercer Family Foundation	\$7,500	March 31, 2026
Michigan Pagan College Scholarship	\$500	March 31, 2026
Minority Teachers of Illinois Scholarship	\$7,500	March 31, 2026
Mississippi Higher Education Legislative Plan for Needy Students	Full-Tuition	March 31, 2026
Mitchell Ostry Memorial Scholarship	\$500	March 31, 2026
MNLA Foundation for Educational Excellence Scholarship	\$1,000	March 31, 2026
Monk's Service Scholarship	\$2,000	March 31, 2026
MSPE Western Chapter Scholarship Program	\$3,000	March 31, 2026

Sorry for delay; no signals along the way :~(