

# Groton Daily Independent

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**Holiday  
Trash Pick-Up**

**Garbage pick-up will NOT be on Christmas Day instead pick-up will be the following day, Wednesday, December 26!!**

**Garbage WILL be picked up on New Year's Day, January 1st!!**

## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

## Groton Chiropractic Clinic

Carol McFarland-Kutter, D.C.  
1205 N 1st St., Groton 397-8204

## Homecare Services Caregivers

Flexible, part time positions available in the Groton area. Home Care Services is looking for friendly dependable people to provide care and companionship for elderly and disabled people in their homes. You will be assisting our clients with personal care needs, meal preparations, light housekeeping, errands and other tasks. If you have a passion for helping others and need a flexible schedule, please call our office at (605) 225-1076 or 1-800-899-2578. (1218.0101)

## The Life of Emery Sippel

Services for Emery Sippel, 97, of Groton will be 11:00 a.m., Thursday, December 27th at the United Methodist Church, Groton. Pastor Brandon Dunham will officiate. Burial will follow in Sunset Memorial Gardens under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held at the chapel on Wednesday from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m.

Emery passed away December 22, 2018 at his home.

Emery Arthur Sippel was born on November 25, 1921, on the family farm near Groton, to Albert and Bertha (Johnson) Sippel. He attended country school, first through eighth grade. He later graduated from Groton High School in 1941.

Emery worked for various farmers until he enlisted in the navy in 1943. He attended boot camp at Farragut, Idaho and then went to Seattle, Washington. While serving in WWII, he was stationed on the Prince William aircraft carrier for two years. His job was to work with pilots to land aircraft. He was also on lookout for submarines. They used no lights on the ship, only signals.

Emery's rank was ABMAG2C (Aviation Boatswain's Mate Arresting Gear Petty Officer 2nd Class). He spent time in Guam, Okinawa, and the Philippine Islands. Emery was honorably discharged in 1946 in San Diego.

In the fall of 1946, he went to Minneapolis to do cement finishing. In 1950 he moved back to Groton to help his brother Arnold with harvest. He met Marlys Bonn in 1950, and they married July 2, 1952. Emery and Marlys took over Putney Oil on June 1, 1952. They later renamed it Sippel Oil. They also ran the Putney Store and post office. They lived above the Putney store until 1961, when they built their first home. Emery drove a race car weekly for four years (1956-1959) at Speedy Hollow in Bath and at Tacoma Park. His car was called the Putney 11.

Emery and Marlys built the Red Horse Inn in Groton in 1971, where they moved Sippel Oil Company. In 1973, they built a new home in Groton. They ran the Red Horse from 1972-1975. They continued to run Sippel Oil until 1992, when they sold to Wheat Growers and Emery retired. Marlys passed away May 12, 1994. Emery lived with his daughter Mendy and her family for 24 years until the time of his death.

Emery was a member of the Masons for over 60 years, and the Groton American Legion Post 39 for over 70 years, where he served as commander and vice-commander for many years. Emery enjoyed spending time at his cabin at Pickeral Lake for over 60 years. He was an avid hunter and fisherman, taking many fishing trips to Canada and making hunting trips to the Black Hills for about 70 years. Emery continued to work on his son Marc's farm until the time of his death, and he continued to plant a huge garden there – giving away produce to his children and friends. He enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and liked to attend their activities. Emery was proud that all of his children lived within 16 miles of him, and always celebrated birthdays and holidays together as a family.

Celebrating his life through memories are his children: Meri (John) Erickson; Marc (Franne) Sippel; Monte (Sandi) Sippel; Marjae (Dan) Schinkel; Mendy (Jim) Jones; Melissa (Neil) Gilbert, all of Groton; Grandchildren Seth (Megan) Erickson, Evan Erickson, Sydney Wilkinson, Camille Sippel, Anthony Sippel, Alyssa Sippel, Madison Sippel, Sarah Sippel, Danielle Schinkel, Jasmine Schinkel, Anthony Schinkel, Emma Schinkel, Marlee Jones, Austin Jones, Emerlee Jones, Brooklyn Gilbert and Carly Gilbert. Great-Grandchildren Haley and Max Erickson and Calli Wilkinson; and sister-in-law Hilda Sippel.

Preceding him in death were his parents, wife Marlys, daughter Marcia, brothers Lester, Arnold, and Ralph, sister Edith Hughes, infant sister Irene, and brother-in-law Frank Hughes.

Pallbearers will be Seth Erickson, Evan Erickson, Anthony Sippel, Austin Jones, Anthony Schinkel, and John Sippel. Honorary pallbearers will be Les Dohman, Dick Kolker, Harry Pharis, Jr., Benny Schaller, T.J. Harder, and Cliff Pray.



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EarthTalk®  
From the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine



Dear EarthTalk: I need to replace the wall-to-wall carpeting in my basement. Any tips for finding something new that won't aggravate my allergies or otherwise pollute my indoor air?

-- Jasper Manheim, Los Angeles, CA

Carpeting is an oft-overlooked culprit when it comes to compromised indoor air quality, but the chemicals used to produce it are typically far from natural. According to the non-profit Environmental Working Group (EWG), most carpeting is made from synthetic fibers derived from non-renewable petroleum-based sources and emits harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the air.

Meanwhile, carpet backing is typically made from synthetic rubber derived from styrene and butadiene, also respiratory irritants. And that new carpet smell we know so well comes from the off-gassing of 4-PCH, a potent VOC byproduct of the synthetic rubber manufacturing process known to cause respiratory problems, eye irritation and rashes. EWG adds that it can also react with other chemicals to produce formaldehyde, a known human carcinogen.

Likewise, the glues and sealants used to install most wall-to-wall carpeting come chock full of more VOCs and in some cases, toxic petroleum-based solvents. To add insult to injury, the waterproofing and anti-microbial treatments now common in everyday carpeting have been linked to cancer, birth defects and hormone disruption. Last but not least, carpet padding is typically made from scraps of polyurethane recycled from older furniture and mattresses—and as such likely contains carcinogenic chemical flame retardants now banned in new furniture.

Well that's all well and good, but what choices do we have? Actually, lots. Carpeting labeled with the Carpet & Rug Institute's "Green Label Plus" or UL Environment's "Greenguard" emit low amounts of VOCs and as such are safer for you and your family. Wool is the most common eco-friendly choice, but jute and cotton varieties are coming on strong. Stay away from stain fighting, waterproofing or antimicrobial treatments. For carpet padding, go with felt rather than synthetic rubber. And make sure to use low-emitting, non-solvent adhesives and/or fasteners during installation.

No matter what kind of carpeting you end up with, make sure to vacuum it regularly—the American Lung Association recommends at least 3x/week with a HEPA filter-equipped vacuum—to remove dust, allergens and pollutants that you (or your pets) might track in. "Carpets are ... the perfect environment to harbor dust mites, mold and mildew, which are all common allergens," reports EWG.

One way to avoid all of these issues entirely is to forego carpeting altogether and go with tile, wood, cork or natural linoleum flooring with low-VOC sealant. They don't off-gas VOCs or harbor allergens and pollutants, and they're easy to clean while lasting decades longer than carpeting anyway. Throw down a few wool area rugs (easily cleaned outside) and you'll be good—and green—to go.

Now what to do with the old carpeting is another question entirely. Carpeting is difficult to recycle as it's made from multiple components with different chemical makeups, so your local curbside recycling hauler is unlikely to take it away for you. The non-profit Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE) is working to develop the infrastructure needed to recycle carpet efficiently across the U.S. In the meantime, you can search on Earth911 for a carpet recycler near you.

CONTACTS: EWG, [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org); Green Label Plus, [carpet-rug.org/testing/green-label-plus](http://carpet-rug.org/testing/green-label-plus); Greenguard, [greenguard.org](http://greenguard.org); CARE, [carpetrecovery.org](http://carpetrecovery.org); Earth911, [search.earth911.com](http://search.earth911.com).

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## Little-known law forces adult children to pay for nursing home care for parents

By: Bart Pfankuch

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, a non-profit news organization. Find more in-depth reporting at [www.sdnewswatch.org](http://www.sdnewswatch.org).

An obscure South Dakota law can force adult children to pay the cost of long-term care for their parents if the elder family members cannot pay on their own.

The civil law has been on the books in South Dakota since 1939, and is rarely used. But as the cost of long-term care skyrockets and nursing facilities increasingly face financial challenges, elder law experts theorize the law may be used more often when nursing home bills go unpaid.

South Dakota is one of 29 U.S. states that have the adult child payment requirement, commonly known as a "filial law" that addresses the responsibility of one person or a group of people to pay for the housing, feeding and care of family members, often parents.

The laws allow nursing home operators or owners to sue the children of patients who do not pay and makes no reference to whether the families have close relationships or whether the adult child received any financial assets of the parent.

Supporters of the laws argue that in certain cases they give nursing homes a remedy to collect outstanding bills rather than writing off those debts as a loss, which can diminish a facility's ability to provide quality care to all patients. The laws are most frequently enforced when an adult child was given money or assets or has misappropriated money from a parent prior to admission into a nursing home.

Some experts add that such statutes uphold a general sentiment in law that there is a moral responsibility of those who can afford to pay for a family member's care to do so.

"We all have a duty to support our spouses, our children and our parents; we all have a moral obligation to do that," said Stephen J. Wesolick, an elder law attorney from Rapid City who said he isn't necessarily a supporter of filial laws but understands why they exist. "These nursing homes don't want to be providing long-term care expense for people who have the ability to self-pay, especially if there has been inappropriate behavior by an adult child."

But opponents, including some who have tried in other states to repeal the laws, argue that the filial statutes are overly broad and can place an unfair burden on adult children who are trying to raise their own families or who may have already endured the financial burden of caring for aging or ill parents.

"It's antiquated and I think it's written very broadly," said attorney Bobbi Thury of Legacy Law Firm in Sioux Falls, which specializes in elder care and estate planning. "It's one thing as an adult if we consent

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to becoming a guarantor for another party, but in this situation, it could obligate someone who should not be obligated to pay. To hang the adult children out there to pay for these costs is scary.”



**The Madison Care and Rehabilitation Center in Madison, S.D., is one of two slated for closure due to financial hardship. It is part of a group of 19 long-term care facilities under management of a state-approved financial receiver.**

Photo: Courtesy of Madison Daily Leader

## Ancient idea, modern application

The statute is modeled on the Elizabethan Poor Relief Act of 1601 from England, and was passed into law in South Dakota in 1939.

The statute appears in Title 25 of South Dakota laws labeled Domestic Relations and within a chapter called Support Obligations. That chapter also includes the duty to support one's spouse, the obligation of parents to support a child and a requirement that stepparents must support their spouse's children.

The language in 25-7-27 is fairly straightforward: "Any adult child, having the financial ability to do so, shall provide necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical attendance for a parent who is unable to provide for oneself." The law requires that written notice must be given 90 days in advance before a legal claim for payment can be made.

Though on the books in many states for decades, the laws drew new attention in 2005 after the federal Deficit Reduction Act made it harder for elderly people to qualify for Medicaid. Before people can qualify for Medicaid, in which the federal and state governments pay the cost of long-term care, they must show assets of less than \$2,000.

Part of the law was designed to prevent prospective Medicaid patients from diverting their assets to family members to appear as insolvent in order to qualify for government payment of their long-term care.

The law extended from three years to five years the "look back" period in which assets of a prospective Medicaid recipient could not be transferred to family members without a penalty or delay before Medicaid payments kick in. At the time, some experts predicted that filial laws would be used more frequently by nursing homes that accept patients and later discover that not only are they unable to pay, but that they were also rejected by Medicaid due to recent divestiture.

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Some states have seen a rise in the number of filial cases filed in recent years, including an oft-cited Pennsylvania case in which John Pittas was forced in 2012 to pay \$93,000 for his mother's nursing home care after she was injured in a car accident. The state Supreme Court determined that since Pittas had a net annual income of over \$85,000, he was responsible and capable of paying for his mother's care, even though she recovered and had since moved to Greece.

North Dakota has also seen a number of filial cases recently as nursing homes there, as in South Dakota, are facing financial challenges. South Dakota has seen three nursing homes close in the past three years and two more, in Madison and Mobridge, are targeted for closure in February due to financial losses. Nursing homes in South Dakota on average operate at a .7 percent profit margin, while two-thirds of North Dakota nursing homes expect to operate at a loss in 2018, according to Shelly Peterson, executive director of the North Dakota Long Term Care Association.

North Dakota enacted its filial law in 1877, before statehood and long before people were living so long and requiring years of specialized nursing care, Peterson said.

"It's being used periodically because our bad debt is growing," said Peterson, noting that the state expects its 80 nursing homes to write off about \$1.5 million in unpaid bills in 2018. "We had a rural facility close here that had two non-payments of a half million dollars each, and you just can't absorb that."

**A little-used state law allows nursing home operators to sue the children of patients who do not pay. Supporters of the law say in certain cases it gives nursing homes a remedy to collect outstanding bills rather than write those debts off as losses, diminishing a facility's ability to provide quality care to all patients.**



## Aging population fuels growth in demand

Long-term care costs are rising nationally by about 6 percent a year, though Medicaid pay rates are holding steady or increasing only incrementally. The need for long-term care is sure to grow in both Dakotas as people live longer and the demand for increasingly complex services rises with them.

South Dakota is tied with Hawaii for the highest percentage of nursing home patients who are 95 or older, with 9.5 percent of patients in that age group compared to a national average of only 5.2 percent.

North Dakota has the highest percentage of patients aged 85-95 at 46 percent. South Dakota has 44 percent of its patients in that age range, and the national average is only 31 percent.

North Dakota nursing homes have residents ranging in age from an incapacitated girl of 13 months to a woman who is 114, Peterson said.

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Peterson said it is important to note that she supports the use of filial laws only if it can be shown that an adult child benefited financially when their parent went into a home. She said Medicaid is a safety net for those who cannot afford to pay for their long-term care and should not be used as a way to take advantage of government by divesting assets prior to moving into a home and applying for Medicaid.

She said nursing homes will sometimes take in a patient and discover later that they don't qualify for Medicaid. If it's clear an adult child was given money, land or other assets prior to a parent's admission to the home, then filial laws allow a nursing home to seek recovery of those costs. She said she expects the laws to be used more frequently as finances tighten at long-term care facilities.

"If everybody gave away all their money and went into nursing homes and just relied on Medicaid, we would bankrupt the entire state," Peterson said. "If you have 50 people in a nursing home and 10 aren't paying the bill, it's going to affect everyone because we can't afford to provide quality care and services."

Peterson acknowledged that the North Dakota law, like the South Dakota law, is too broad in that it allows lawsuits against any adult child, not just those who accept assets from a parent. She is working with lawmakers to draft legislation for the 2019 legislative session to repeal the part of the law that allows anyone to be sued for unpaid costs at any time, and instead to target only those who have benefited financially when a parent was placed in a home.

In a 2013 case, a North Dakota nursing home sued a man for \$104,000 after his parents' long-term care bill went unpaid. The state Supreme Court upheld the verdict, arguing that since the parents had sold off land to their son at an undervalued rate, he was responsible to pay for their care.

A recent North Dakota case made headlines when three adult siblings and their mother were sued for \$43,000 in unpaid bills by the Sioux Falls-based Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society. The society sued under the filial statute after a man fell ill and spent about six months in a Bismarck nursing home before dying.

The siblings argued that their mother was responsible for the bills and they were not because they had not benefited or received their father's assets before he entered the nursing home.

Peterson said the case was recently settled with a confidential agreement, and shows why the law should be changed to protect adult children who have not benefited financially prior to admitting a parent.

"Adult children who haven't taken their mom or dad's money, we don't want to hold them accountable," she said.

## Great Plains residents living longer than rest of nation

According to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, South Dakota and North Dakota have among the highest percentage of nursing home patients who are older than 85, indicating an increasing need for services in those states. Here is a look at Great Plains states and the percentage of nursing home residents in two high-age categories, as well as the national average and the states with the lowest (\*) percentages in those categories.

	Residents, age 85-95	Residents, 95+
South Dakota	44.1%	9.6%
North Dakota	45.8%	8.7%
Iowa	41.2%	8.2%
Minnesota	38.3%	7.8%
Nebraska	38.4%	6.9%
Wyoming	38.2%	6.6%
Montana	32.1%	4.9%
Nevada.	*19.9%	2.4%
Alaska	22.6%	*1.9%
National Avg.	31.3%	5.2%

## More cases in South Dakota?

Wesolick is concerned that filial laws could be applied more often and possibly in inappropriate ways as government and insurers continue to shift long-term care costs to families and individuals.

"I don't want people to think that this is regularly enforced and that adult children should fear somebody coming after them on a routine basis," he said. "But it is broadly written, and I could see where it could be too liberally enforced and harm families."

South Dakota has one of the lowest Medicaid payment rates to nursing homes in the nation, and the state portion of aid has risen only slightly in recent years. About 55 percent of South Dakota long-term care patients are on Medicaid. With a daily reimbursement rate of only \$131, the state's 110 nursing homes lose about \$32 a day for each Medicaid patient they house, a loss of \$39 million a year statewide.

That equation and an increased need for costly specialized care could prompt nursing homes to bring more filial cases, Wesolick said.

"I don't know that the law has been abused in the state of South Dakota, but I fear it might be as states continue to shift that cost burden to the families," he said. "What I'm seeing is the desperation of families trying to provide compassionate long-term care for their loved one. They don't know how to do it without getting totally wiped out."

Thury would like to see the filial law repealed in South Dakota.

In her practice, she said, she has seen spouses and children of long-term care patients go bankrupt while trying to pay for care of their loved one.

She said that if a nursing home wants to seek payment from a spouse or adult child, they should do so through contractual agreements in which all parties agree and understand their obligations.

The South Dakota statute, she said, gives too much leeway to nursing homes to sue for unpaid bills by people who have already spent all they have.

"Long-term care is the number one reason why middle-class families go broke," she said, "and it's only going to get worse."

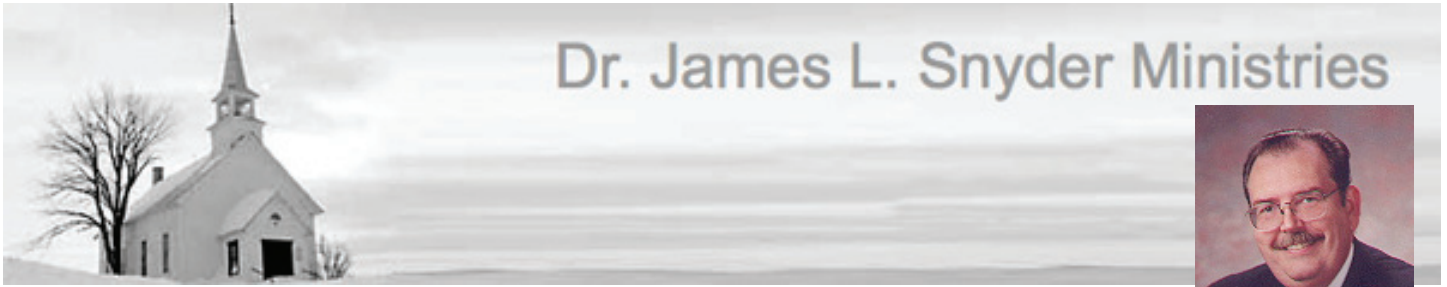


About Bart Pfankuch: Bart Pfankuch, Rapid City, S.D., is an investigative reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A Wisconsin native, he is a former editor of the Rapid City Journal. Bart has spent almost 30 years as a reporter and editor.



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## Oh Wisdom, Wherefore Art Thou

One feature of the Christmas story has to do with the wise men. I'm not sure if there were three or not, but if there were I should like to be number four.

Wisdom is such a rare commodity today I think it would be a wise thing to resurrect these wise men. After all, you never can have too much wisdom.

I was thinking about this the other day as I was going over my weekly "to-do-list." I make one of these every week so I know what I'm supposed to do. As I finish one task, I check it off in red ink.

It's not that I don't do a lot of things during the week, it's simply that I sometimes don't do the things that I plan to do for the week.

I certainly am not like the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage who has a PhD in planning. I know that if I don't make my own plans and write them down, she will be glad to assist me. Looking at her "to-do-list," makes me dizzy. How she can do so much in one week is beyond my understanding, and frankly, I don't want to understand.

My "to-do-list" contains things that I want to do. That is not too hard to figure out. My wife's "to-do-list" contains things that she wants done, whether she does them or I do them.

For example. Next month my wife will begin making plans for next year's Christmas. We are not over this year's Christmas and she has ideas for next year's Christmas.

That brings me to the point of wisdom. I do not have enough wisdom, or at least not enough that I would like to have. I am not smart enough to figure out how much I really need, but I am smart enough to know that I sure do need more wisdom than I've got.

Wisdom tells us what we can do and cannot do. That sounds like my wife.

One of the great advantages of getting old (and the definition of old is up to the person using it) is that I can always say, "I'm too old to do that anymore."

The real problem with this excuse is, it does not work well with my wife. She is, and I say this most cautiously, just a wee bit older than I am. When I offer this excuse, she always says, "I'm older than you and I can do it, so go ahead and do it, and no more excuses."

That is why I need to have my own planner where I can outline my own plans.

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This created somewhat of a problem not too long ago. I am not making any accusations, mind you. But I do have my suspicions.

The beginning of the week I opened my weekly planner and noticed I had jotted down "to-do" things I really did not quite remember. I just thought that was old age and I had forgotten I had jotted down these things.

The whole page was filled with all kinds of things for me to do during the week. I did not recognize one of them. Being the kind of person I am, I began doing those things and checking them off with my red pen as I finish them.

When I got to the fifth thing to do, I was a little surprised and not sure what it meant. It simply said, "Get groceries for the week."

I did not quite understand this. I went back through my weekly planner to see when the last time I got groceries for the week was. I could not find one time that I did.

Right after that one was, "Fill my wife's car up with gas."

The next one was, "Do the laundry for the week."

Now I was getting a little bit frustrated. I do not ever remember writing any of these things down. I know I am getting old and lack a lot of wisdom, but this is ridiculous.

I examined my weekly "to-do-list" and noticed nothing on that list that in any way pertained to me. None of the chores I do every week was even hinted on that page.

Sitting in my chair slowly going over the list my wife walked in and looked at me. She said, "What are you so much in thought about?"

Without even looking up I replied, "I'm trying to figure out my weekly to do list here. I must've been crazy when I planned this week out."

Then, the person on the other side of the room began laughing hysterically. When she quieted down a little she said, "Have you finished all your chores for the week?"

I looked up at her and saw her laughing and all of a sudden, I had a stroke of wisdom like never before. Looking at her I asked, "Did you write this in my book?"

She did not have to answer with words, her dancing eyes and hilarious laughter, told me everything I needed to know.

I thought of what Solomon said, "Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold" (Proverbs 3:13-14).

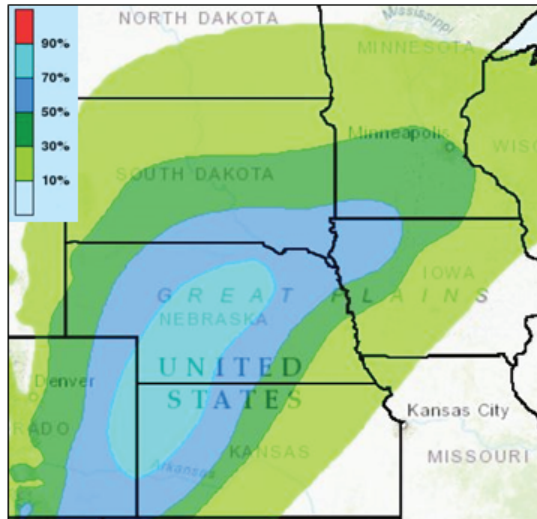
One good thing about having wisdom is that you do not have to be too serious about everything in life.



## National Weather Service Aberdeen SD



### Significant Post-Christmas Winter Storm Likely



Wednesday / Wednesday Night

#### What we know:

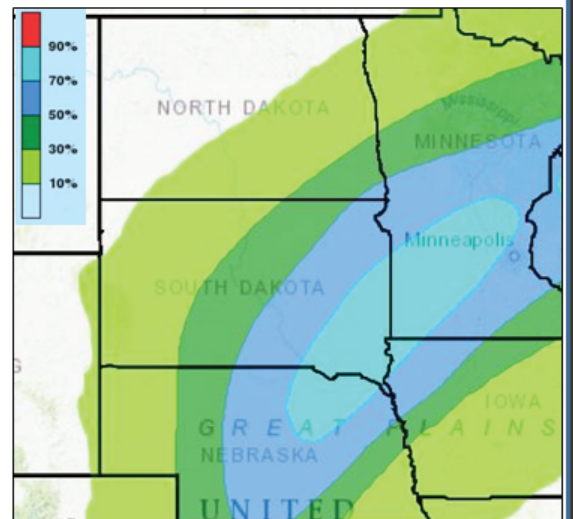
- A winter storm will impact the region after Christmas.
- Heavy snow and a wintry mix may impact travel.

#### What We Don't Know:

- Precipitation amounts, including snowfall, and the locations of the highest amounts.

**Monitor the forecast for the latest updates.**

Maps show the probability of exceeding .25" liquid equivalent of snow/sleet



Thursday / Thursday Night

Published on: 12/23/2018 at 6:41AM

Confidence is increasing for a winter storm after Christmas, Wednesday through Friday. That said, there is still much uncertainty regarding the exact track, and the resulting location of heaviest precipitation. Monitor the forecast for the latest updates. [www.weather.gov/abr/](http://www.weather.gov/abr/)

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## Today in Weather History

December 23, 1987: Five to sixteen inches of snow fell in 24 hours in east central and southeast South Dakota from the morning of the 23rd through the morning of the 24th. Some of the larger amounts measured were 9 inches at Huron, 10 inches at Mitchell, Platte and Brookings, twelve inches at Chamberlain, and sixteen inches at Alpena. Heavy snow also fell in southwestern Minnesota, with Big Stone and Traverse Counties in the west central portion of the state missing out on the heaviest snow. Considerable blowing and drifting snow hampered removal, particularly in South Dakota, due to reduced visibilities. Snowfall amounts also included three inches at Castlewood, five inches at Clear Lake, and six inches at Bryant.

December 23, 1996: Blizzard conditions developed across northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota in the late afternoon of the 23rd and continued into the late evening. Visibilities were frequently below one quarter of a mile. Two to six inches of new snowfall combined with the already significant snow cover and north winds of 20 to 40 mph to cause widespread blizzard conditions and heavy drifting on area roads. Travel was significantly impacted if not impossible, and one fatality resulted from a head-on collision. Some snowfall amounts in Minnesota included 5 inches at Artichoke Lake and 6 inches at Wheaton and Browns Valley. In South Dakota, 7 inches fell at Britton, Webster, and Clear Lake, with 6 inches at Sisseton and 5 inches at Summit.

December 23, 1921: An estimated F3 tornado struck the town of Clarkedale, Arkansas, killing 6 and injuring 60 others. Four people died in the destruction of the Banks and Danner store, where 50 people were doing their Christmas shopping.

December 23, 1924: A storm producing winds of 70 mph cause extensive damage to Sydney, Australia during the evening hours.

December 23, 1998: A major ice storm struck central and southeast Virginia and much of North Carolina beginning on Wednesday, December 23 and lasting until Christmas Day morning. Icy conditions caused injuries from slips and falls and numerous vehicle accidents. Ice accumulations of up to an inch brought down trees and power lines. Outages were so widespread with 400,000 customers were without power on Christmas Eve. Some people were without power for up to ten days.

1811 - A cold storm hit Long Island sound with a foot of snow, gale force winds, and temperatures near zero. During the storm many ships were wrecked, and in some cases entire crews perished. (David Ludlum)

1955 - The barometric pressure dipped to 28.97 inches (981 millibars) at Boise ID, an all-time record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1982 - A major winter storm struck Colorado producing heavy snow and blizzard conditions. A record two feet of snow was reported at Stapleton Airport in Denver, which was shut down for 33 hours. Up to 44 inches of snow fell in the foothills surrounding Denver. The storm hurt the ski industry as skiers were unable to make it out of Denver to the slopes, and the closed airport became a campground for vacationers. (23rd-25th) (The Weather Channel) (Storm Data)

1983 - The temperature plunged to 50 degrees below zero at Williston ND to equal their all-time record. Minneapolis MN reported an afternoon high of 17 degrees below zero, and that evening strong northerly winds produced wind chill readings of 100 degrees below zero in North Dakota. (The National Weather Summary)

1987 - A winter storm brought heavy snow to the Central Rockies, and also spread a blanket of snow across the Middle Missouri Valley in time for Christmas. Snow and high winds created near blizzard conditions in Wyoming. Snowfall totals in Wyoming ranged up to 25 inches at Casper, with four feet of snow reported at the Hogadon Ski Resort on Casper Mountain. The Wolf Creek Ski Resort in Colorado received 26 inches of snow. Totals in the Middle Missouri Valley ranged up to 16 inches at Alpena SD, with 14 inches at Harrison NE. Strong winds ushered unseasonably cold air into the southwestern U.S. Canyon winds gusting to 100 mph created ground blizzards in Utah. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Low pressure in the Upper Midwest produced strong and gusty winds across the Great Lakes Region and the Ohio Valley. Winds in Ohio gusted to 47 mph at Cincinnati, and reached 51 mph at Cleveland. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Today



Scattered  
Flurries

High: 29 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 13 °F

Monday



Partly Sunny

High: 34 °F

Monday  
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 19 °F

Christmas  
Day



Mostly Cloudy

High: 28 °F

### High Temperatures Today

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD  
12/23/2018 4:50 AM

Potential  
Winter Storm  
Wednesday  
through  
Friday

- ❖ Mostly Cloudy over northern SD and Western MN today.
- ❖ Mostly sunny elsewhere.
- ❖ Dry on Monday and Tuesday.

### 3 Day Forecast Highs

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
25-45°	25-40°	25-35°

Published on: 12/23/2018 at 5:02AM

Isolated snow showers will continue across northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota through the mid-morning hours today. After Christmas, a decent winter storm looks possible for the Wednesday through Friday time period. Anyone planning to travel over that time period should keep up to date with the latest forecasts.

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## Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 37 °F at 1:15 PM

Low Outside Temp: 20 °F at 1:10 AM

High Gust: 28 mph at 3:58 PM

Precip: 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 54° in 1893

Record Low: -34° in 1983

Average High: 24°F

Average Low: 4°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.36

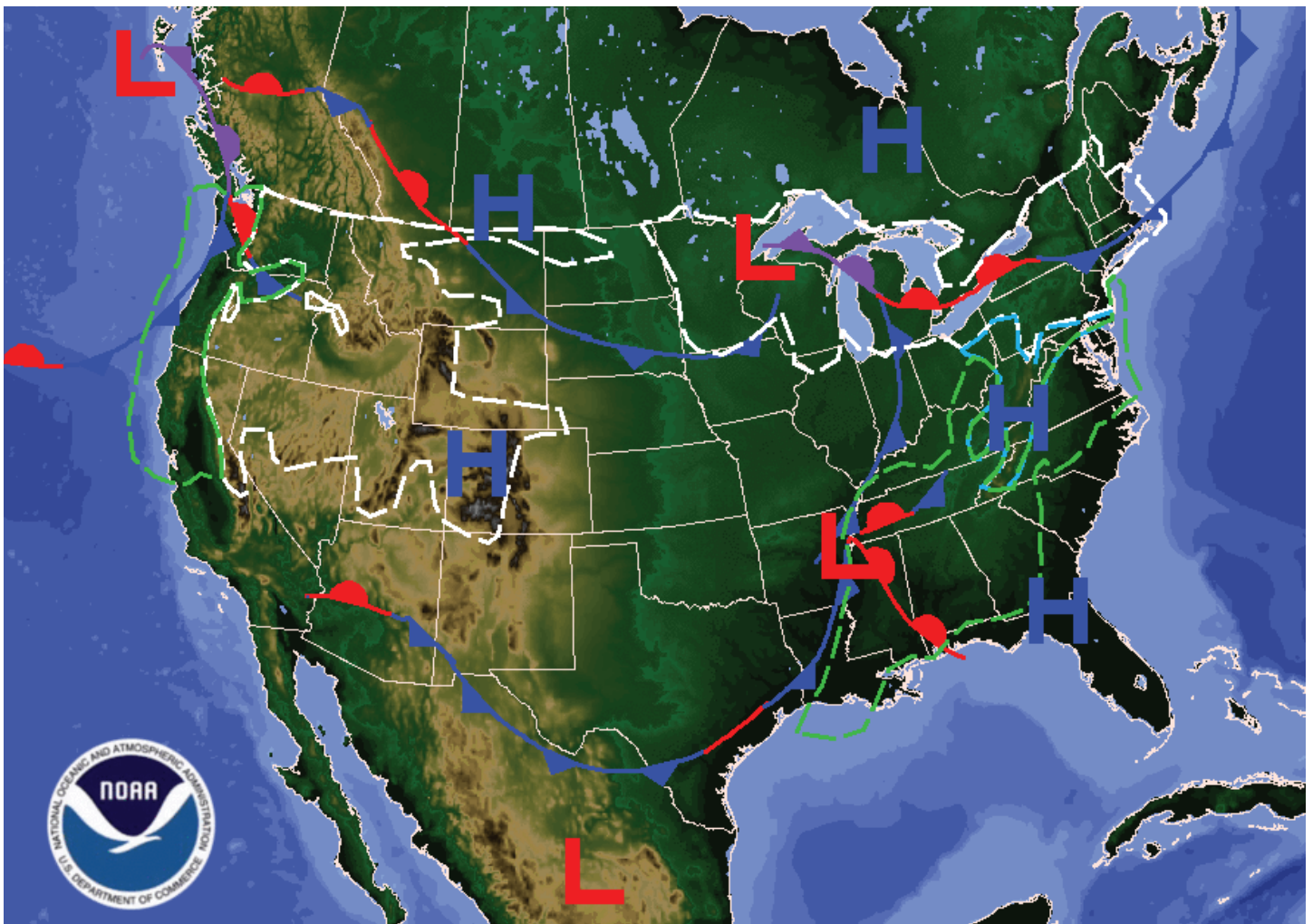
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.56

Precip Year to Date: 15.81

Sunset Tonight: 4:54 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:12 a.m.



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sun, Dec 23, 2018, issued 3:38 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by Ziegenfelder with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain  
Rain and T'Storms  
Rain and Snow  
Snow  
Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)  
Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)  
Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)  
Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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## CHRISTS DAY

On Mothers Day we focus all of our attention on our Mothers, recalling and remembering how much they struggled to raise us. Lovingly we shower gifts on them, purchase cards that describe her many sacrifices for us and the unending care she gave to us. She deserves all of the attention and recognition we can give her.

On Fathers Day, we turn our thoughts to him what he has done for us and express our gratitude for the time he spent with us. We recall his efforts to teach us to throw a ball, catch a pass, cast a fishing line or attend a special event. He, too, deserves all the attention and recognition we can give him.

We also give recognition and attention to our Grandparents, to brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles and friends and relatives on their special days.

But what will we do that is really special or unique to show our appreciation and gratitude for Christ on His day this year?

Will there be an envelope under the tree with a special love-offering that recognizes His importance in our lives? Will it match the amount we gave others?

Will we sacrifice some of our time to show Gods love by being with those who would otherwise be alone and lonely on His day?

Will we share a meal with someone who is hungry? Give some clothes to those who are cold and have little? Spend time reading His story to children?

In as much as you have done it to the least of these, you have done it unto Me!

Prayer: Take Your peace from us Father, until and unless we show others Your love on Your day. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Matthew 25:40 And the King will answer and say to them, Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.

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## 2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- Nov./Dec./Jan./Feb./Mar. Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/4/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 9/7/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party
- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events



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## News from the Associated Press

### Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

#### BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli 68, Oak Grove Lutheran, N.D. 55

Red Cloud 75, Todd County 62

Swiftel Classic(equals)

Alcester-Hudson 54, Iroquois 50

Sioux Valley 89, Canby, Minn. 40

#### GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Red Cloud 67, Todd County 66

St. Thomas More 48, Hill City 37

Swiftel Classic

Canistota 54, Alcester-Hudson 30

Sioux Valley 54, Webster 37

West Central 66, Canby, Minn. 36

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) \_ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Saturday:

Dakota Cash

08-15-25-31-34

(eight, fifteen, twenty-five, thirty-one, thirty-four)

Estimated jackpot: \$20,000

Lotto America

01-16-20-41-44, Star Ball: 6, ASB: 4

(one, sixteen, twenty, forty-one, forty-four; Star Ball: six; ASB: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$12.8 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$321 million

Powerball

21-28-30-40-59, Powerball: 26, Power Play: 3

(twenty-one, twenty-eight, thirty, forty, fifty-nine; Powerball: twenty-six; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$281 million

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## Montana stops South Dakota State's win streak at 26, 85-74

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Michael Oguine scored 23 points and grabbed nine rebounds and Montana snapped the nation's longest home court winning streak, knocking off South Dakota State 85-74 on Saturday night.

The Jackrabbits entered the game having won 26 straight home games, a streak that dates to January 2017.

David Jenkins scored at the basket to get South Dakota State within six, 74-68 with 2:47 left, but Jamar Akoh answered with two free throws and Ahmaad Rorie dunked to push the lead to 10 points with just over two minutes to play. The Grizzlies (7-4) converted 7 of 11 from the free throw line in the final two minutes and South Dakota State missed three attempts from deep.

Oguine hit 4 of 8 from long range and the Grizzlies were 11 of 28 from deep. Rorie finished with 16 points and six assists. Akoh, Montana's leading scorer who has missed seven of Montana's 11 games, finished with eight points, seven rebounds, four assists and two steals.

Mike Daum scored 33 points and grabbed 15 rebounds for South Dakota State (10-5). Skyler Flatten finished with 15 points.

## What happened to Ellabeth Lodermeier?

By KATIE NELSON, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — On March 6, 1974, Sioux Falls police arrived at 305 North Indiana Avenue to find a puzzling scene. On the kitchen floor lay a pizza with one slice missing, along with a spattering of spilled flour. A loaf of bread sat rising on a counter.

The house was locked and a car sat in the driveway, the Argus Leader reported.

The woman who lived there was Ellabeth Lodermeier, a 25-year-old Aberdeen native and Augustana College grad who had recently ended a relationship that friends and family described as abusive.

She did not show up to work that day or any day after. A coworker offered a \$1,200 reward for information about her whereabouts, but no one stepped forward.

Seven months later, a possible breakthrough emerged when three of Lodermeier's credit cards were found at a railway station in Manitoba, Canada. That lead soon stalled.

Eighteen years after that, in 1992, a farmer found her purse and pocketbook along the Big Sioux River east of Sioux Falls. But no arrests were made and no body discovered, adding to the frustration of friends and family.

"It's disappointing," said Ellabeth's niece, Elizabeth Crow, who lives in Sioux Falls. "Somebody has to know something, I feel, but it's just getting them to come forward and say something."

The mystery is equally unsettling to Jerry Thomas, who met Ellabeth the night she filed for divorce and grew close enough that they planned a future together.

It has been nearly 45 years since her disappearance, with many twists and turns in the investigation. But until more answers come forth or her body is found, those who knew her will be haunted by the most maddening question of all: Where is Ellabeth Lodermeier?

To those who knew Ellabeth Mae Keller in Aberdeen, where she grew up, it was not surprising that she ended up helping others for a living.

The youngest of four children born to Leslie and Mildred Keller, Ellabeth was a patient person whose empathy stood out to those around her.

"I knew Ellie as always just caring for other people, and she helped Mom out with us kids," said Kris Jacobsen, of Pierre, one of Ellabeth's nieces.

After graduating from high school, Ellabeth first attended Northern State University in her hometown before transferring to Augustana, where she graduated in 1972 with a bachelor's degree in social work.

At the time of her disappearance, she worked at the Community Services Office in Sioux Falls as a social worker, a job that Jerry Thomas says fit her well.

"She had a personality like you can't believe," said Thomas, 71, a retired businessman who lives in Bis-

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marck, N.D. "And (she was) easy to talk to. I can see where she would have been great at her job."

It was in Aberdeen that Ellabeth met her future husband, Gene Lodermeier, a Washington High School grad who was attending Northern State at the time. Their relationship evolved quickly and led to a wedding in January 1970 at Faith United Methodist Church in Aberdeen.

A newspaper wedding announcement portrayed a smiling Ellabeth, wearing a pearl-trimmed crown and veil, her signature dark bangs visible beneath. She carried two long-stemmed red roses and one white rose on a Bible, symbols of a future that seemed destined to be bright.

But the happy scene depicted in the newspaper did not tell the whole story. Ellabeth's family did not approve of Gene, despite his involvement in church and Boy Scouts.

Ellabeth, described by relatives as a fun, carefree person, was not as relaxed when Gene was around.

"She seemed not herself," said Jacobsen, who was in seventh grade when her aunt disappeared. "When he was there, she was just a different person."

Jacobsen recalled going to the beach and the movies with Gene and Ellabeth, including one outing when Gene's anger flashed on the way home.

"He was very upset about a particular person," Jacobsen said. "He was screaming and hollering and banging on the steering wheel."

By 1973, Ellabeth had had enough: She filed for divorce. According to a deposition she gave in connection with the divorce proceedings, she said under oath that Gene abused her, a charge he denied in court years later.

To this day, though, Jacobsen said the signs were there. She remembers her mother, Ellabeth's sister Sandra Herman, telling her that Gene would sometimes disable Ellabeth's car to prevent her from going to school at Augustana.

"He was a master manipulator," Jacobsen said. "It was unfortunate that Ellie, being a kind soul, got sucked into that. . . . She always thought maybe she could change him."

Three weeks before the divorce was set to go to trial, Ellabeth vanished.

Jerry Thomas met Ellabeth Lodermeier the day she filed for divorce, while both were meeting friends at the Pomp Room, an iconic downtown Sioux Falls bar.

Thomas found Ellabeth easy to talk to, as well as kind and beautiful. They agreed to meet up again a few days later.

"We hit it off, I mean, we just flat hit it off," Thomas said. "We liked each other immediately."

Originally from Redfield, Thomas was working in Sioux Falls when he met Ellabeth. Over the next year, as the two became more serious, he moved to Sioux Falls full-time.

"We had planned a future together," Thomas said.

The night Ellabeth vanished, he had agreed to call her at home between 9 and 9:30 p.m., as he had gone back up to Redfield to do some work. He called the house three times, and each time, the upstairs tenant answered.

The next morning, one of Ellabeth's friends called Thomas to let him know she was missing. His first reaction was fear.

"I got in the car and headed straight for Sioux Falls," he said. "To me, it was (obvious) that she did not leave. There's no way, it wouldn't happen."

When Jerry arrived in Sioux Falls, he headed to the police department, where he was given a polygraph and cleared almost immediately.

"When I walked out of the polygraph test, the guy that administered it . . . said, 'This guy didn't have a damn thing to do with this,'" Jerry said.

From the beginning, the case seemed suspicious. Eight days after Ellabeth's disappearance, the Argus Leader ran a story in which police asked citizens to check abandoned farm buildings and other areas that might conceal a body.

Henry Luebke was one of the police officers assigned to investigate. He had moved to the detective bureau from the patrol division in 1969, about five years before Ellabeth went missing.

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"It appeared that she didn't disappear of her own volition," said Luebke, who is now retired and lives near Canton.

He interviewed family, friends, coworkers and ex-boyfriends, but nothing came of it. Search warrants were issued for areas in Sioux Falls and other parts of South Dakota, but Ellabeth was not found.

"It was a big blank," Luebke said. "No useful information came up."

That trend appeared ready to change when three of Ellabeth's credit cards were found at a railway station in Dauphin, Manitoba. But Detective Pat Mertes, who is the current investigator assigned to Ellabeth's case, said it is unlikely she ever traveled there.

"It appears it was probably a red herring to throw investigators off," he said.

The last notable break in the case came in 1992, 18 years after the initial disappearance. A farmer found a woman's purse and pocketbook along the Big Sioux River east of Sioux Falls. They were determined to be Ellabeth's.

Despite the lack of evidence suggesting Ellabeth was dead, her family was certain something terrible had happened.

"I think everybody from the beginning assumed Gene did something to her," Jacobsen said. "I don't recall anybody thinking that she just picked up and left on her own."

Mertes confirms that Gene was a person of interest in the case, adding that his death in 2013 prevented any further inquiry into his involvement.

"He was never able to be 100 percent cleared," Mertes said, adding that other people were investigated but quickly eliminated as suspects.

While Ellabeth's family suspected Gene and he was interviewed by police, he was never charged in her murder. But the unsolved disappearance of his wife would cast a long shadow over the rest of his numerous brushes with the law.

In February 1978, Gene filed a lawsuit against the city of Sioux Falls, saying he had been harassed and followed by police officers during their investigation of Ellabeth's disappearance.

In his complaint, he said they "falsely and maliciously stated directly and by innuendo" that Lodermeier killed his wife, although he was never charged with any crime related to her disappearance.

Lodermeier said that in March 1974, he was questioned by police for 21 hours without being allowed to eat, sleep or use a phone. He said he was then held in the Minnehaha County Jail for nine days.

More than two years later, six Sioux Falls police officers, including Luebke, testified that they had only been doing their job while investigating the case. Luebke testified that he spoke with Lodermeier daily in the early weeks of the investigation.

"We had many different leads we were checking out," Luebke said in court.

When Lodermeier's lawyer, Jon N. Gridley III, asked if the police had a plan to follow Lodermeier, Luebke said, "Absolutely not."

Lodermeier testified that officer Don Skadsen told him, "Gene, we can't let a murder die. This will haunt you until it's solved."

In the end, the six officers were found not guilty of harassment.

Gene would go on to be convicted of both misdemeanor and felony crimes, several of them involving retaliation for other matters.

"In 1975, he was convicted of shoplifting at Lewis Drug here," the Argus Leader reported in 1988. "A year later, he went on a window-breaking rampage at the local chain store's city locations. The police officer who caught Lodermeier breaking the windows, Al Fields, had a homemade pipe bomb explode inside his car a year later."

Lodermeier was never charged in the pipe bomb explosion.

In 1989, he was given three 15-year penitentiary sentences for grand theft, a total of 45 years in prison. When he was arrested, he was held on a \$1 million cash bond, after Judge Robert Heege deemed him a danger to two detectives who had investigated previous grand theft charges against Gene.

He was accused of talking about having two Sioux Falls police officers, a former employee and Judge R.D. Hurd killed, although those charges never made it to court.

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"This defendant has no remorse," Hurd said at Gene's sentencing. "The only remorse he has is that he got caught again."

Although Lodermeier and his parents filed lawsuits and appeals, he was denied a new trial and spent 13 years in prison before being paroled in 2002. He died at home of an aortic aneurysm on April 18, 2013.

Anything he may have known about Ellabeth's disappearance died with him.

It has been nearly 45 years since Ellabeth Lodermeier was last seen, and authorities are no closer to discovering what happened to her.

In 2016, Detective Mertes inherited the case. A press conference he gave to reignite interest in the unsolved mystery generated 17 new tips, but none of them gave police what they needed to find Ellabeth.

To this day, Mertes says police are not done investigating.

"There are still people we're trying to track down," he said. "As people get older . . . they may feel more comfortable saying something."

The case still bothers Luebke, one of the original detectives. He wonders whether DNA evidence could have helped find an answer to the mystery, had such technology been available at the time.

"If this happened today, would it have turned out differently?" he asked.

While samples were taken at Ellabeth's home back in 1974, Mertes said they would not be able to point to a culprit. However, DNA could still play a part in her case.

The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, or NamUs, is a national clearinghouse for missing persons cases. Sioux Falls police submitted Ellabeth's information, including DNA samples, to the database so that if remains were ever found, they could be matched to her.

At this point, Ellabeth's loved ones are not looking for a conviction: They say that hope died with Gene Lodermeier five years ago. But they are hopeful that they will one day find Ellabeth.

Ellabeth's sister, Sandra, died in 2016. Gone, too, are her parents. Most of the original detectives who worked the case with Luebke have passed on as well. But the next generation has taken up the cause, if only to find closure for those who died before justice could be done.

"Why we push it still is because of Mom," Elizabeth Crow said of Sandra, who worked hard to find information in the case. "She was the one who held on to all this. I know it's been a very long time, but it would be nice to just have closure."

While he eventually went on to marry after Ellabeth disappeared, Jerry Thomas has never gotten over the woman he first met at a Sioux Falls bar nearly half a century ago.

"(Her disappearance) is something that I never forget," he said. "I think about it constantly."

Jerry is hopeful that Ellabeth can still come home. A \$20,000 reward is being offered to anyone who can provide verifiable proof of Ellabeth's remains. Jerry's goal is to bury her near her parents in Aberdeen, where he visits each Memorial Day to say prayers and leave flowers.

"There's no place for Ellabeth, it's like she didn't exist," Jerry said. "But she did exist, and she was a beautiful person."

If he is unable to find Ellabeth's remains, Jerry plans to erect a stone for her with her name, birth date and her status as a missing person. He wants to make sure that long after he is gone, Ellabeth won't be forgotten.

"Someday, one of those family members of Ellabeth's, they're going to go back and find Grandma and Grandpa's resting place," he said. "I want them to know there was an Ellabeth."

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

## Lakota Nation Invitational features voices of young poets

By CHRISTOPHER VONDRACEK, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Tyra Akers, a junior at Pine Ridge High School, said she's only been writing poems for a year. Her literary hero?

"Tupac," she says, smiling after a short pause.

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In the first round of the poetry slam at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Akers with her dark hair in a double French braid, denim, and tall boots walked to the mic at the front of the room. DJ Micah Prairie Chicken's turntable stopped — and 70 people stared at her, the Rapid City Journal reported .

"Get it, poet!" yelled a spectator.

And she began.

"I poison my body because my mind was racing," recites Akers. "You want to yell because you love me."

The 12 readers in the Dances with Words poetry slam, sponsored by First Peoples Fund, a women-run nonprofit, and run in conjunction with the Lakota Nation Invitational, ran the gamut from teenage fears to suicide and alcoholism. The first poet opened by reading a poem from her smartphone about the murder of her aunt on Skyline Drive in 1981.

"No more stolen sisters," she ended.

The competition — though emcee Marcus Red Shirt repeatedly wanted to de-emphasize the "competition" and followed up many poets' performances by saying, "You're brave, poet" — had a few rules: no hate speech, three rounds with dwindling time limits, and there were to be content warnings.

"Self-harm." "Addiction." "Lust." Red Shirt presaged one poem saying, "This poem contains intense emotions."

One by one, the poets spoke — on learning to ride a horse from a cousin, on seasonal depression, on heartbreak.

"I see a warrior in the battlefield of self-infliction," said one student.

"I want to drown myself in liquor and bury myself in smoke," said Akers.

A child in the audience played with a Rubik's cube as parents, teachers and loved ones watched. One mother, wiping eyes with Kleenex, met her son on the sidelines, after he said it was poetry that kept him from "living in some other person's poem."

"Here's some advice from ourselves," read one student. "It's OK to change directions because in the end we're all picture perfect reflections of imperfection."

"I must speak my truth as if I'm running," read another.

"I can't trust nostalgia," said another young woman. "Because nostalgia isn't honest about how much I've grown."

"It's their own words," said Autumn White Eyes, wearing a T-shirt that read "de-colonize." White Eyes is a writer and an alum of the poetry slam who now lives in New Jersey but works remotely for First Peoples Fund.

"So often, indigenous people are used to others telling their story. But here, we get to share our stories in our own words," she said.

Recently — as many poets do monthly at open mics hosted by Dances with Words — young, indigenous writers had the floor.

When Akers finished her second poem, the lightning round, she left a warning: "You'll be looking up at me looking down on you."

She walked back, a shy smile coming over her face, as her family stood in applause for her.

"I want to keep writing poems," said Akers, afterward, wearing the medal she'd won for a top performer around her neck, her family smiling on. "I like the feeling of my own words, to get them out of me."

In the hallway, basketball teams prepared to enter the separate arenas for the next game. Children rode the escalators up and down as the young poets mingled, sharing stories and listening to a flute player practicing in the hallway.

Information from: Rapid City Journal, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

## Priest charged with sex crime returned to jail

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A former Rapid City priest accused of sexually touching a 13-year-old girl has been returned to jail after authorities realized the ankle monitor he was wearing would not work due to poor cellular service.

The Rapid City Journal reports that 38-year-old John Praveen was released from jail Thursday afternoon after someone paid for his recently reduced \$10,000 cash-only bond. He was returned to jail three hours later after problems were found with his monitoring device.

He has pleaded not guilty to sexually abusing a child.

The Rapid City diocese earlier offered to house and supervise Praveen at a retirement home for priests in Piedmont, but backed off after some community members objected.

Information from: Rapid City Journal, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

## South Dakota makes history in 2018 with 1st female governor

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The year in South Dakota featured a historic campaign for governor that saw voters elect the first woman for the job.

In a race that was closer than expected, Republican Rep. Kristi Noem held off Democrat Billie Sutton after an October poll showed the race as neck-and-neck. Other top stories included the state's first execution since 2012, a decision by voters that made South Dakota the first state to change its version of Marsy's Law, a U.S. Supreme Court ruling on online sales tax based on a South Dakota case, and the promotion of Republican U.S. Sen. John Thune to majority whip.

A look at some of the state's top stories of 2018:

### FIRST FEMALE GOVERNOR

Noem said it was "pretty humbling" to be elected South Dakota's first female governor. She downplayed the distinction during her campaign, instead focusing on her farming and ranching background and congressional achievements. Noem held off a surprisingly strong challenge from Sutton, a former rodeo cowboy who turned to politics after a paralyzing injury. Noem said she felt relieved to win.

### THUNE PROMOTED

Thune was promoted to the second-highest position in his party's Senate leadership. A term limit for majority whips forced Texas Sen. John Cornyn out of the job. Thune was unopposed for the position and was elected by his Senate colleagues. Whips are responsible for counting heads and rounding up party members for votes and quorum calls, and they occasionally stand in for the majority or minority leaders in their absence.

### EXECUTION

A South Dakota inmate who killed a correctional officer seven years ago during a failed prison escape on the guard's 63rd birthday was put to death in October. Rodney Berget became the second inmate executed for the 2011 slaying of Ronald "R.J." Johnson, who was beaten with a pipe and had his head covered in plastic wrap. A transcript from the execution shows that the 56-year-old Berget's last words were: "Is it supposed to feel like that?" Eric Robert was executed for the crime in 2012.

### MARSY'S LAW

Voters approved changes to South Dakota's version of the "Marsy's Law" victims' bill of rights to ease the burden on law enforcement and prosecutors. The amendment requires victims to opt in to many of their rights and specifically lets authorities share information with the public to help solve crimes. The move made South Dakota the first state to change its version of the law, though Montana's high court tossed it out in that state. Officials in several states say Marsy's Law has had unintended consequences, including causing problems for authorities and increasing costs for counties.

### SHERIFF FIRES DEPUTY

A South Dakota sheriff's deputy was fired by his boss after defeating him in a primary race, unleashing a slew of negative phone calls and comments that hindered emergency response. Former Bon Homme

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County Deputy Mark Maggs was canned after he beat out incumbent Sheriff Lenny Gramkow in the election. Gramkow has said he has no regrets. He also has declined to list the reasons for the termination or comment on the timing. He acknowledged that he was disappointed after Maggs chose to run against him.

## FAMILY SLAIN CASE

The cases of three people charged in the so-called Gear Up scandal were resolved to end an investigation launched after an executive of Mid-Central Educational Cooperative killed his family and himself in 2015. The nonprofit's director, Dan Guericke, pleaded guilty to falsifying evidence. He received a suspended sentence. Two other people were cleared after jury trials. The first hint of major issues with the organization came after the group's chief financial officer, Scott Westerhuis, killed his family, set fire to his house and killed himself. Authorities have said they believe Westerhuis and his wife stole more than \$1 million.

## TRADE-SOYBEANS

Soybean farmers saw the value of their crop plummet amid a Trump administration trade war with China, the top export market for South Dakota beans. China began buying U.S. soybeans again toward the end of the year under a three-month truce, but farmers were lobbying for more federal aid to tide them over until trade with the world's second-largest economy becomes more settled. The trade dispute could not have come at a worse time for South Dakota farmers. The state was expected to produce a record amount of soybeans in 2018.

## RUSSIAN AGENT'S BOYFRIEND

Federal authorities in South Dakota were pursuing a fraud investigation into the boyfriend of a woman accused of being a covert Russian agent. An attorney for Maria Butina, who in December agreed to plead guilty to a conspiracy charge for trying to infiltrate conservative political groups in the U.S., said his client is not "aware of or guilty of any crimes" in South Dakota. Defense lawyer Robert Driscoll told The Associated Press that Butina knew "very little" about the case against South Dakota businessman Paul Erickson.

## ONLINE SALES TAX

A South Dakota case led the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn two decades-old high court decisions that made it tougher for states to collect sales taxes for certain purchases online. The high court ruled in June that South Dakota could enforce a law compelling many out-of-state businesses to collect taxes on sales made to its residents. Shoppers heading online to purchase holiday gifts have discovered they are being charged sales tax at some websites where they weren't before.

## SANFORD DONATION

A South Dakota businessman and philanthropist agreed to donate \$100 million to the National University System, a nonprofit that focuses on education and philanthropy initiatives. The donation by T. Denny Sanford is the largest in the nonprofit's history and comes a year after Sanford gave \$28 million to the network, which supports students looking for alternative ways to learn.

## Construction inside DakotaDome to begin in February

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — The first phase of the University of South Dakota's \$26.3 million renovation project to the DakotaDome is nearly ready for when practice begins in the spring.

The university football team's new outdoor practice area is essentially complete, and construction inside the facility is set to begin in February, the Argus Leader reported.

The series of improvements will create inconveniences next fall for the Coyotes and the team's fans. But coach Bob Nielson said the remodel of the decades-old facility is "going to be first-class."

"We're going to have first-class locker room and player-support facilities and first-class offices and team-meeting facilities that will competitively put us among the best in our division," he said.

The South Dakota board of regents approved the university's renovation project last year. Beyond improvements to locker rooms, coaching offices and meeting rooms, the plans call for updates to lighting, electrical, plumbing and fire and sound systems.

Construction will cut the DakotaDome's capacity in half next year. The current student section won't be available while crews rebuild the west side of the facility, adding new entrances, restrooms, a commercial



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kitchen and other accommodations.

Athletic director David Herbster said the university will have to reduce the quantity of single-game tickets available to make room for a student section.

"It's going to put a premium on season tickets," Herbster said. "And for sure it's going to put a higher value on student tickets, certainly, because they'll only have a third available to them compared to what they had this year. We'll be looking at some creative ways to make sure every seat we have in there that can be sold will be sold."

The football team 2019 season has six home games, which includes a game against South Dakota State University on Nov. 23.

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

## Tsunami set off by volcanic eruption kills 222 in Indonesia

By NINIEK KARMINI, Associated Press

CARITA BEACH, Indonesia (AP) — A tsunami believed to be triggered by a volcanic eruption killed at least 222 people in Indonesia during a busy holiday weekend, sweeping away hotels, hundreds of houses and a group of people attending a beach concert.

More than 800 were reported injured and 28 missing after the tsunami hit around the Sunda Strait on Saturday night, the Disaster Management Agency said. The toll could continue to rise because some areas had not yet been reached.

Scientists, including those from Indonesia's Meteorology and Geophysics agency, said Sunday that the tsunami could have been caused by undersea landslides or those occurring above sea level on the Anak Krakatau volcano's steep outside slope following the eruption. The volcano's name translates to "Child of Krakatoa," a volcanic island formed over years after one of the largest eruptions in recorded history occurred at the Krakatoa volcano more than a century ago. The scientists also cited tidal waves caused by the full moon.

Dramatic video posted on social media showed an Indonesian pop band named "Seventeen" performing under a tent on a popular beach at a concert for employees of a state-owned electricity company. Dozens of people sat listening at tables covered in white cloths while others bobbed to the music near the stage as bright strobe lights flashed and theatrical smoke was released.

A child could also be seen wandering through the crowd. Seconds later, with the drummer pounding just as the next song was about to begin, the stage suddenly heaved forward and buckled under the force of the water, throwing the band and all their equipment into the audience.

The group released a statement saying their bass player, guitarist and road manager were found dead, while two other band members and the wife of one of the performers remained missing.

"The tide rose to the surface and dragged all the people on site," the statement said. "Unfortunately, when the current receded our members are unable to save themselves while some did not find a place to hold on."

Tourists were also affected during the long holiday weekend ahead of Christmas.

"I had to run, as the wave passed the beach and landed 15-20m (meters, or 50-65 feet) inland," Norwegian Oystein Lund Andersen wrote on Facebook. The self-described photographer and volcano enthusiast said he was taking pictures of the volcano when he suddenly saw a big wave come toward him.

"Next wave entered the hotel area where I was staying and downed cars on the road behind it," he wrote. "Managed to evacuate with my family to higher ground (through) forest paths and villages, where we are taken care of (by) the locals. Were unharmed, thankfully."

The Anak Krakatau volcano lies in the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra islands, linking the Indian Ocean and Java Sea. It erupted about 24 minutes before the tsunami, the geophysics agency said.

The worst-affected area was the Pandeglang region of Java's Banten province, which encompasses Ujung

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Kulon National Park and popular beaches, the disaster agency said.

Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said 222 deaths had been confirmed and at least 843 people were injured. Rescue workers were still trying to access other affected areas.

Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo expressed his sympathy and ordered government agencies to respond quickly to the disaster.

"My deep condolences to the victims in Banten and Lampung provinces," he said. "Hopefully, those who are left have patience."

In the city of Bandar Lampung on Sumatra, hundreds of residents took refuge at the governor's office. At the popular resort area of Carita Beach, some survivors appeared lost.

Azki Kurniawan, 16, said he was undergoing vocational training with a group of 30 other students at Patra Comfort Hotel when people suddenly burst into the lobby yelling, "Sea water rising!" He said he was confused because he did not feel an earthquake, but ran to the parking lot to try to reach his motorbike. By the time he got there, it was already flooded.

"Suddenly a 1-meter (3.3-foot) wave hit me," he said. "I fell down, the water separated me from my bike. I was thrown into the fence of a building about 30 meters (100 feet) from the beach and held onto the fence as strong as I could, trying to resist the water, which feels like it would drag me back into the sea. I cried in fear. ... 'This is a tsunami?' I was afraid I would die."

The 305-meter (1,000-foot) -high Anak Krakatau volcano, located about 200 kilometers (124 miles) southwest of Jakarta, Indonesia's capital, has been erupting since June. In July, authorities widened its no-go areas to 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from the crater.

However, Anak Krakatau remains much smaller than Krakatoa when it blew in 1883, killing more than 30,000 people. Krakatoa launched far-reaching tsunamis and created so much ash, day was turned to night in the area and a global temperature drop was recorded. The violent explosions sank most of the island into the volcanic crater under the sea, and the area remained calm until the 1920s, when Anak Krakatau began to rise from the site. It continues to grow each year and erupts periodically.

Gegar Prasetya, co-founder of the Tsunami Research Center Indonesia, said Saturday's tsunami was likely caused by a flank collapse — when a big section of a volcano's slope gives way. He said it's possible for an eruption to trigger a landslide above ground or beneath the ocean, both capable of producing waves.

"Actually, the tsunami was not really big, only 1 meter (3.3 feet)," said Prasetya, who has closely studied Krakatoa. "The problem is people always tend to build everything close to the shoreline."

Nine hotels and hundreds of homes were heavily damaged. Broken chunks of concrete and splintered sticks of wood littered hard-hit coastal areas, turning beach getaways popular with Jakarta residents into near ghost towns. Vehicles tossed by the waves remained belly up in the rubble or were lodged in the air under collapsed roofs. Debris from thatch-bamboo shacks was strewn along beaches.

Indonesia, a vast archipelago of more than 17,000 islands and home to 260 million people, lies along the "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin.

In September, more than 2,500 people were killed by a quake and tsunami that hit the city of Palu on the island of Sulawesi, which is just east of Borneo.

Saturday's tsunami rekindled memories for some of the massive magnitude 9.1 earthquake that hit on Dec. 26, 2004. It spawned a giant tsunami off Sumatra island in western Indonesia, killing more than 230,000 people in a dozen countries — the majority in Indonesia.

Roads and infrastructure are poor in many areas of disaster-prone Indonesia, making access difficult in the best of conditions.

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Associated Press writers Margie Mason and Ali Kotarumalos in Jakarta, Indonesia, contributed to this report.

## Trump loses US envoy to anti-IS coalition over Syria plan

By MATTHEW LEE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Brett McGurk, the U.S. envoy to the global coalition fighting the Islamic State group, has resigned in protest over President Donald Trump's abrupt decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria, joining Defense Secretary Jim Mattis in an administration exodus of experienced national security figures. McGurk described Trump's decision as a "shock."

Only 11 days ago, McGurk had said it would be "reckless" to consider IS defeated and therefore would be unwise to bring American forces home. McGurk decided to speed up his original plan to leave his post in mid-February.

"The recent decision by the president came as a shock and was a complete reversal of policy," he said in an email to his staff viewed by The Associated Press. "It left our coalition partners confused and our fighting partners bewildered with no plan in place or even considered thought as to consequences."

Trump's announcement of the withdrawal "left our coalition partners confused and our fighting partners bewildered with no plan in place or even considered thought as to consequences," the email went on.

Appointed to the post by President Barack Obama in 2015 and retained by Trump, McGurk said in his resignation letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that the militants were on the run, but not yet defeated, and that the premature pullout of U.S. forces from Syria would create the conditions that gave rise to IS.

The resignation letter to Pompeo was submitted Friday and described to the AP on Saturday by an official familiar with its contents. The official was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly before the letter was released and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Trump played down the development, tweeting Saturday night that "I do not know" the envoy and it's a "nothing event." He noted McGurk planned to leave soon anyway and added: "Grandstander?"

Shortly after news of McGurk's resignation broke, Trump again defended his decision to pull all of the roughly 2,000 U.S. forces from Syria in the coming weeks.

"We were originally going to be there for three months, and that was seven years ago - we never left," Trump tweeted. "When I became President, ISIS was going wild. Now ISIS is largely defeated and other local countries, including Turkey, should be able to easily take care of whatever remains. We're coming home!"

Although the civil war in Syria has gone on since 2011, the U.S. did not begin launching airstrikes against IS until September 2014, and American troops did not go into Syria until 2015.

McGurk, whose resignation is effective Dec. 31, was planning to leave the job in mid-February after a U.S.-hosted meeting of foreign ministers from the coalition countries, but he felt he could continue no longer after Trump's decision to withdraw from Syria and Mattis' resignation.

In his email to his staff, McGurk said: "I worked this week to help manage some of the fallout, but — as many of you heard in my many meetings and phone calls — I ultimately concluded that I could not carry out these new instructions and maintain my integrity at the same time."

Trump's declaration of a victory over IS has been roundly contradicted by his own experts' assessments, and his decision to pull troops out was widely denounced by members of Congress, who called his action rash.

Mattis, perhaps the most respected foreign policy official in the administration, announced on Thursday that he will leave by the end of February. He told Trump in a letter that he was departing because "you have a right to have a Secretary of Defense whose views are better aligned with yours."

The withdrawal decision will fulfill Trump's goal of bringing troops home from Syria, but military leaders have pushed back for months, arguing that the IS group remains a threat and could regroup in Syria's long-running civil war. U.S. policy has been to keep troops in place until the extremists are eradicated.

Among officials' key concerns is that a U.S. pullout will leave U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces vulnerable to attacks by Turkey, the Syrian government and remaining IS fighters. The SDF, a Kurdish-led force, is America's only military partner in Syria

McGurk said at a State Department briefing on Dec. 11 that "it would be reckless if we were just to say,

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"Well, the physical caliphate is defeated, so we can just leave now."

McGurk, 45, previously served as a deputy assistant secretary of state for Iraq and Iran. During the negotiations for the Iran nuclear deal by the Obama administration, he led secret side talks with Tehran on the release of Americans imprisoned there.

McGurk was briefly considered for the post of ambassador to Iraq after having served as a senior official covering Iraq and Afghanistan during President George W. Bush's administration.

A former Supreme Court law clerk to the late Chief Justice William Rehnquist, McGurk worked as a lawyer for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion and joined Bush's National Security Council staff, where in 2007 and 2008, he was the lead U.S. negotiator on security agreements with Iraq.

Taking over for now for McGurk will be his deputy, retired Lt. Gen. Terry Wolff, who served three tours of active duty in Iraq.

IS militants still hold a string of villages and towns along the Euphrates River in eastern Syria, where they have resisted weeks of attacks by the U.S.-supported Syrian Democratic Forces to drive them out. The pocket is home to about 15,000 people, among them 2,000 IS fighters, according to U.S. military estimates.

But that figure could be as high as 8,000 militants, if fighters hiding out in the deserts south of the Euphrates River are also counted, according to according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the conflict through networks of local informants.

## Government unlikely to get fully back to business for days

By **LISA MASCARO, DARLENE SUPERVILLE and KEVIN FREKING, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government is expected to remain partially closed past Christmas Day in a protracted standoff over President Donald Trump's demand for money to build a border wall with Mexico.

With Trump's insistence on \$5 billion for the wall and negotiations with Democrats in Congress far from a breakthrough, even a temporary measure to keep the government running while talks continued seems out of reach until the Senate returns for a full session Thursday.

From coast to coast, the first day of the shutdown played out in uneven ways. The Statue of Liberty was still open for tours, thanks to money from New York state, and the U.S. Post Office was still delivering mail, as an independent agency.

Yet the disruption has affected many government operations and the routines of 800,000 federal employees. Roughly 420,000 workers were deemed essential and were expected to work unpaid. An additional 380,000 were to be furloughed, meaning they will stay home without pay. The Senate had already passed legislation ensuring that workers will receive back pay, and the House was likely to follow suit.

No one knew how long the closures would last. Unlike other shutdowns, this one seemed to lack urgency, coming during the long holiday weekend after Trump had already declared Monday, Christmas Eve, a federal holiday. Rather than work around the clock to try to end the shutdown, as they had done in the past, the leaders of the House and the Senate effectively closed up shop. But they didn't rule out action if a deal were struck.

"Listen, anything can happen," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell told reporters after he closed the Senate's rare Saturday session hours after it opened.

But after ushering Vice President Mike Pence through the Capitol for another round of negotiations, the Republican chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Sen. Richard Shelby of Alabama, said a quick end to the shutdown was "not probable."

At the White House, Trump hosted a lunch Saturday with conservative lawmakers, including House Freedom Caucus chiefs Mark Meadows of North Carolina and Jim Jordan of Ohio, and several senators. Absent from the guest list were GOP leaders or any Democrats, who would be needed for a deal.

"I am in the White House, working hard," tweeted the president, who canceled his Florida holiday get-

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away to his club Mar-a-Lago due to the shutdown. First lady Melania Trump was flying back to Washington to be with her husband.

Trump's re-election campaign sent out a fundraising email late Saturday launching what he called "the most important membership program ever - the OFFICIAL BUILD THE WALL MEMBERSHIP." The president urged donors to sign up.

With Democrats set to take control of the House on Jan. 3, and Speaker Paul Ryan on his way out, the shutdown was providing a last gasp of the conservative majority before the new Congress.

Trump savored the prospect of a shutdown over the wall for months. Last week he said he would be "proud" to close down the government. He had campaigned on the promise of building the wall, and he also promised Mexico would pay for it. Mexico has refused to do so.

In recent days, though, Trump tried to shift blame to Democrats for not acceding to his demand. He has given mixed messages on whether he would sign any bill into law.

After the luncheon at the White House, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said, "It's clear to me he believes the additional funding is necessary."

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York met with Pence on Saturday at the request of the White House, according to Schumer's office. But the senator's spokesman said they remained "very far apart" on a spending agreement.

Schumer said the "Trump shutdown" could end immediately if the president simply dropped his demand for money. "If you want to open the government, you must abandon the wall," Schumer said.

Democrats said they were open to other proposals that didn't include the wall, which Schumer said was too costly and ineffective. They have offered to keep spending at existing levels of \$1.3 billion for border fencing and other security.

But Trump, digging in, tweeted about "the crisis of illegal activity" at American's southern border is "real and will not stop until we build a great Steel Barrier or Wall."

Republican leaders largely stayed in the background of the negotiations. McConnell acknowledged that any deal to reopen government would require Democratic support for passage and the president's signature.

Senators approved a bipartisan deal earlier in the week to keep the government open into February and provide \$1.3 billion for border security projects, but not the wall. But as Trump faced criticism from conservatives for "caving" on a campaign promise, he pushed to House to approve a package temporarily financing the government but also setting aside \$5.7 billion for the border wall.

A test vote in the Senate on Friday showed that Republicans lacked the 60 votes needed to advance the House plan.

Pelosi, poised to become speaker, said in a letter to colleagues Saturday that "until President Trump can publicly commit to a bipartisan resolution, there will be no agreement before January when the new House Democratic Majority will swiftly pass legislation to re-open government."

The impasse blocked money for nine of 15 Cabinet-level departments and dozens of agencies, including the departments of Homeland Security, Transportation, Interior, Agriculture, State and Justice.

Those being furloughed included nearly everyone at NASA and 52,000 workers at the Internal Revenue Service. About 8 in 10 employees of the National Park Service were to stay home; many parks were expected to close.

Some agencies, including the Pentagon and the departments of Veterans Affairs and Health and Human Services, were already funded and will operate as usual. Also still functioning were the FBI, the Border Patrol and the Coast Guard. Transportation Security Administration officers continued to staff airport checkpoints and air traffic controllers were on the job.

Many of Congress' most conservative Republicans welcomed such a confrontation, but most GOP lawmakers wanted to avoid one because polling found the public opposed the wall and a shutdown over it.

Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee said, "This is a complete failure of negotiations and a success for no one."

Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Mary Clare Jalonick and Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

## China's Huawei faces new setbacks in Europe's telecom market

By KELVIN CHAN, AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — The U.S. dispute with China over a ban on tech giant Huawei is spilling over to Europe, the company's biggest foreign market, where some countries are also starting to shun its network systems over data security concerns.

Some European governments and telecom companies are following the U.S.'s lead in questioning whether using Huawei for vital infrastructure for mobile networks could leave them exposed to snooping by the Chinese government.

Bans in Europe could significantly increase the financial pressures on Huawei. They would also cost Europe tens of billions of dollars as the region looks to build up "5G" networks, which are meant to support a vast expansion in internet-connected things, from self-driving cars to factory robots and remote surgery.

"Europe is still divided over Huawei, but the trendline is moving in a fairly clear direction" as the U.S. exerts pressure on allies to block it, said Thorsten Benner, director of the Berlin-based Global Public Policy Institute think tank.

Geopolitical tensions over Huawei intensified after its chief financial officer, who is also the daughter of founder Ren Zhengfei, was arrested Dec. 1 in Canada in connection with U.S. accusations that the company violated restrictions on sales of American technology to Iran.

Huawei has been blocked in the U.S. since 2012, when a House Intelligence Committee report found it was a security risk and recommended that the government and private companies stop buying its network equipment.

Germany's Deutsche Telekom said last week it "takes the global discussion about the security of network elements from Chinese manufacturers very seriously." The company said it uses multiple companies to build its network, including Ericsson, Nokia and Cisco.

"Nevertheless, we are currently reevaluating our procurement strategy," the company said.

The statement is significant because until recently it had been one of Huawei's "biggest cheerleaders" based on its cheap and reliable equipment, said Benner.

It came shortly after Alex Younger, the director of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, or MI6, said in a speech that Britain needs "to decide the extent to which we are going to be comfortable with Chinese ownership of these technologies," according to local media reports.

At about the same time, mobile provider British Telecom said it was removing Huawei equipment from key parts of its current 3G and 4G networks as part of an internal policy not to use it for core infrastructure, which will also apply to 5G networks.

The British government-run center that tests the company's equipment and software this summer identified "shortcomings in Huawei's engineering processes that have exposed new risks" in U.K. networks. Huawei said it's working on fixing those issues.

Norway's telecom ministry said it was considering clarifying requirements from network operators, without being more specific.

Belgium's cybersecurity agency is reportedly considering a ban on Huawei. And the Czech Republic's prime minister ordered his government office on Tuesday to stop using Huawei mobile phones, after the national cybersecurity agency warned that products by Huawei and another Chinese telecom company, ZTE, pose "a security threat."

The European Union's head of technology policies, Andrus Ansip, said "we have to be worried" about possible security risks from Huawei when asked about the company's role in European 5G and driverless car projects.

Huawei, founded in 1987 by a former military engineer, denies accusations it's controlled by China's ruling Communist Party or designs equipment to facilitate eavesdropping. It said it recognizes and shares security

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concerns around the rollout of new 5G networks and is happy to take part in Deutsche Telekom's review. The company noted German officials have said publicly there's no reason to exclude Huawei and it has never been involved in any confirmed cybersecurity breaches.

"Cybersecurity is incredibly important to Huawei. It is central to every decision and product we make," said Vincent Pang, the company's president for Western Europe. "We think the answer lies in global co-operation and collaboration to ensure that networks are as secure as possible."

The Europe, Middle East and Africa market is Huawei's second biggest after China, accounting for 27 percent of its nearly \$90 billion revenue last year. Executives said the company has now signed contracts with 25 telecom carriers for commercial or test use of 5G and shipped more than 10,000 5G base stations.

The rollout of 5G networks is expected to take a decade. As technologies advance, the amount of data flowing between machines is set to surge, prompting governments to increasingly view telecom networks as strategic national assets.

Not everyone is endorsing quick action to ban Huawei.

The CEO of the French telecom company Orange, Stephane Richard, said last week his company wouldn't use Huawei gear for sensitive parts of its network because of "messages of prudence" from French authorities. But he said that was not for any technical reason, and that the debate on Huawei had become politicized.

"We're in the realm of fantasy: 'They're Chinese. They have links to the Chinese army, thus there are spies, thus we can't let them touch our telecom equipment,'" he said.

Excluding Huawei won't be easy, analysts said.

"It's not like there's some cheaper alternative," said Paul Triolo, head of geotechnology practice at the Eurasia Group. "Ericsson and Nokia don't produce the whole spectrum" of equipment, referring to the Scandinavian companies that are the only non-Chinese competitors.

Huawei has thrived in major European markets like Germany and Britain because their telecom industries wanted to ensure there were multiple equipment suppliers to avoid relying on one.

"So if you're asking them to remove a major vendor from their markets, it's going to be difficult," Triolo said.

German companies won't be happy if they can't use Huawei because their costs will go up and it will delay rolling out 5G networks, which will initially rely on existing 4G infrastructure for which Huawei is already a major supplier, said Benner.

But German decisions are also likely to influence those by smaller countries that are part of the German industrial manufacturing supply chain, such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

"They'll all wake up if Germany takes a decision and worries about the security of its infrastructure," said Benner.

## Partial government shutdown likely to extend past Christmas

By LISA MASCARO, DARLENE SUPERVILLE and KEVIN FREKING, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government was expected to remain partially shut down past Christmas as the standoff deepened Saturday over President Donald Trump's demand for funds to build a border wall with Mexico.

With Trump's insistence on \$5 billion for the wall and negotiations with Democrats in Congress far from a breakthrough, even a temporary measure to keep the government running while talks continued seemed out of reach until the Senate returned for a full session Thursday.

From coast to coast, the first day of the shutdown played out in uneven ways. The Statue of Liberty was still open for tours, thanks to funding from New York state, and the U.S. Post Office was still delivering mail, as an independent agency.

In Arizona, the Grand Canyon was remaining open with state funding, the governor said. But visitors arriving at Carlsbad Caverns National Park in southern New Mexico could check out only the surface, not the underground cavern that is the park's main attraction. The memorial to Oklahoma City bombing vic-

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tims was to continue to operate, but the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library Center at College Station, Texas, said its National Archives facilities were closed during the shutdown.

Yet the disruption affected many government operations and the routines of 800,000 federal employees. Roughly 420,000 workers were deemed essential and were expected to work unpaid. An additional 380,000 were to be furloughed, meaning they will stay home without pay. The Senate had already passed legislation ensuring that workers will receive back pay, and the House was likely to follow suit.

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A test vote in the Senate on Friday showed that Republicans lacked the 60 votes needed to advance the House plan.

Pelosi, poised to become speaker, said in a letter to colleagues Saturday that "until President Trump can publicly commit to a bipartisan resolution, there will be no agreement before January when the new House Democratic Majority will swiftly pass legislation to re-open government."

The impasse blocked money for nine of 15 Cabinet-level departments and dozens of agencies, including the departments of Homeland Security, Transportation, Interior, Agriculture, State and Justice.

Those being furloughed included nearly everyone at NASA and 52,000 workers at the Internal Revenue Service. About 8 in 10 employees of the National Park Service were to stay home; many parks were expected to close.

Some agencies, including the Pentagon and the departments of Veterans Affairs and Health and Human Services, were already funded and will operate as usual. Also still functioning were the FBI, the Border Patrol and the Coast Guard. Transportation Security Administration officers continued to staff airport checkpoints and air traffic controllers were on the job.

Many of Congress' most conservative Republicans welcomed such a confrontation, but most GOP lawmakers wanted to avoid one because polling showed the public opposed the wall and a shutdown over it.

Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee said, "This is a complete failure of negotiations and a success for no one."

Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Mary Clare Jalonick and Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

## **AP Explains: What happens in a partial government shutdown**

**By The Associated Press**

A look at the impact of the partial government shutdown:

### **WHAT'S OPEN AND WHAT'S CLOSED**

Social Security checks will go out and troops will remain at their posts. Doctors and hospitals will receive their Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements. The U.S. Postal Service, busy delivering packages for the holiday season, is an independent agency and won't be affected. Passport services, which are funded by fees and not government spending, will also continue.

Virtually every essential government agency, including the FBI, the Border Patrol and the Coast Guard, will remain open. Transportation Security Administration officers will staff airport checkpoints.

The air traffic control system, food inspection, Medicare, veterans' health care and many other essential government programs will run as usual. The Federal Emergency Management Agency can continue to respond to disasters.

Nearly 90 percent of the Department of Homeland Security's 240,000 employees will be at work because they're considered essential.

Special counsel Robert Mueller's office, which is investigating potential ties between the Trump campaign and Russia, is unaffected by a shutdown.

But hundreds of thousands of federal workers will be forced off the job, and some services will go dark.

In the past, the vast majority of national parks were closed to visitors and campers, but beginning with the last government shutdown, in January, the Interior Department has tried to make parks as accessible as possible despite bare-bones staffing levels. Some are staying open thanks to funding from states and charitable groups.

In Washington, the museums along the National Mall will remain open at least through Jan. 1, but Smithsonian officials said they will reevaluate the situation if the shutdown continues into the new year. The Washington Monument is closed for repairs.

Arizona and Utah officials put in place plans to keep open Grand Canyon, Zion, Arches and Bryce Canyon

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and Zion national parks.

At the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, it was business as usual, thanks to funding from New York state.

## FEDERAL WORKERS STILL GET PAID — EVENTUALLY

While they can be kept on the job, federal workers won't be paid for days worked during the lapse in funding. In the past, however, they have been repaid retroactively even if they were ordered to stay home. White House officials said that would be the case again.

The Senate already has passed legislation ensuring that workers will receive back pay. The House seems sure to follow suit.

Federal employees already were granted an extra day of vacation on Monday, Christmas Eve, under an executive order Trump signed this past week.

Federal workers are exempted from furloughs if their jobs are national security-related or if they perform essential activities that "protect life and property."

According to a report by Democrats on the Senate Appropriations Committee, more than 420,000 federal employees deemed essential will continue to work without pay, including about 41,000 law enforcement and corrections officers. The Homeland Security employees who will keep working include about 150,000 from the Coast Guard, TSA and Customs and Border Protection.

More than 380,000 employees will be furloughed — including nearly all from NASA and Housing and Urban Development and 41,000 from the Commerce Department. About 16,000 National Park Service employees — 80 percent of the agency's workforce — will be furloughed.

Also among those who will furloughed: 52,000 staffers at the Internal Revenue Service, slowing analysis and collection of hundreds of thousands of tax returns and audits.

## SHUTDOWNS HAPPEN

Shutdowns happened every year when Jimmy Carter was president, averaging 11 days each. During President Ronald Reagan's two terms, there were six shutdowns, typically just one or two days apiece.

Before a three-day lapse in January, caused by Democrats' insistence that any budget measure come with protections for young immigrants known as "Dreamers," the most recent significant shutdown was a 16-day partial shuttering of the government in 2013.

That one came as tea party conservatives tried to block implementation of President Barack Obama's health care law. The government also shut down for a few hours last February amid a partisan dispute over deficit spending.

## Open and closed: shutdown's varied impact on parks, tourists

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The huddled masses are still able to visit the Statue of Liberty. The Grand Canyon is open for business. The government says other national parks "will remain as accessible as possible," although some roads at Rocky Mountain National Park are closed as snow goes unplowed.

But, while the star-spangled banner yet waves at Fort McHenry in Baltimore, the gates at the War of 1812 landmark are locked.

Tourists trekking to parks and historic sites across the U.S. on Saturday are seeing a mix of impacts from the federal government's second shutdown in less than a year.

Some attractions are staying open thanks to funding from states and charitable groups.

At some parks, you're welcome to take a hike — but you're largely on your own. At others, like the closed Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania, you're out of luck.

Utah's state government is paying to staff the visitor centers at Arches, Bryce Canyon and Zion national parks. Arizona is ponying up to keep trails, shuttles and restrooms open at the Grand Canyon. New York is footing the bill for the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island for the third shutdown in five years.

"Many travelers have planned their visit for months in advance and have traveled from all over the world

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to be here," said Utah Gov. Gary Herbert, a Republican. "We want them to return home with memories of magnificent vistas and welcoming people, not locked doors."

The shutdown is affecting nine of the 15 Cabinet-level departments, including Interior, which runs national parks, and Agriculture, which runs national forests. About 16,000 National Park Service employees — 80 percent of the agency's workforce — are being furloughed.

It's also closing some of the nation's presidential libraries.

The George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in College Station, Texas, is closed, but the family gravesite — where the 41st president was recently buried — will stay open. George W. Bush's presidential library in Dallas is open, but archive services won't be available.

Temporary and permanent exhibits at the Clinton Presidential Library and Museum, a top tourist attraction in Little Rock, Arkansas, are closed, but the restaurant is open and offering "Shutdown Specials."

At Acadia National Park in Maine, austerity measures include closing some bathrooms, curbing trash collection and cutting back on snowplowing.

A lack of plowing is closing roads at Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado, the fourth most popular national park in the country, and the visitor centers are locked. "This is really disappointing," said Sarah Schlesinger of Boulder, Colorado, who went to the park with two nieces from Florida who had never seen snow before.

Unplowed roads also could hinder access to Crater Lake in Oregon, Mount Rainier in Washington and other parks normally inundated with snow this time of year.

Hotels, restaurants, stores and gas stations at Yosemite National Park in California remain open and seem unaffected by the shutdown, which has canceled some programs, closed visitor centers and left campgrounds unstaffed.

"It's basically free to get in the park and people are coming and going as they please," said Jade Lezon, a cashier at the El Portal Market, near an entrance to the park. "It looks like summer today. Perfect weather for a government shutdown."

Superintendent Cassius Cash of Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee said visitors should practice "leave no trace" principles to avoid fouling up the park when no visitor services are available. The holiday period is typically one of the park's busiest weeks, he said.

"During the government shutdown national parks will remain as accessible as possible," said National Park Service spokesman Jeremy Barnum, noting that wilderness-type vault toilets are still available where visitor centers are closed.

At Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, nonprofit organizations are teaming up to keep the visitor center open at the government-run USS Arizona Memorial. The memorial itself is closed until March for repairs to the loading dock, but visitors are still being taken on a narrated harbor tour of Battleship Row and the surrounding area.

Navy sailors operating the tour boats aren't affected by the shutdown.

At Alcatraz, getting in might be harder than getting out. The company that provides ferry services to the federal penitentiary-turned-National Park site in San Francisco Bay kept its daytime tours going on Saturday, but canceled behind-the-scenes and night tours.

At the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, it was business as usual after New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, said the state would fund operations, as it did when the federal government shut down in 2013 and in January. It'll cost the state about \$65,000 per day, Cuomo said.

"Thanks to New York kicking in the funding!" said Steffen Manheim, a tourist from Maine.

In Arizona, Gov. Doug Ducey activated the state's Grand Canyon Protection Plan, which calls for the state to underwrite the cost of public safety and basic services at the desert treasure. Arizona developed the plan after it stepped in to fund operations during the last shutdown, 11 months ago.

"Regardless of what happens in Washington, the Grand Canyon will not close on our watch," said Ducey, a Republican. "If you have plans to visit the Grand Canyon over the weekend, keep 'em. The Grand Canyon will remain open."

Associated Press reporters Julie Walker in New York, David McFadden in Baltimore, Juan Lozano in Houston, Wilson Ring in Montpelier, Vermont, Paul Davenport in Phoenix, Kimberlee Kruesi in Nashville, Tennessee, and Daisy Nguyen in San Francisco contributed to this report.

## London's Gatwick Airport reopens; drone suspects questioned

By GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — London's Gatwick Airport was plagued by long lines and flight delays Saturday but no new drone sightings, allowing British officials to hope the worse was over after two people were arrested in connection with the drone invasion that had shut down the country's second-busiest airport.

Check-in lines at Gatwick stretched the length of the departures hall as harried travelers tried to make good on Christmas plans upended by three days of extended shutdowns caused by drones being spotted over the airfield.

The persistent drone crisis at Gatwick, 30 miles (45 kilometers) south of London, has had a ripple effect throughout the international air travel system since Wednesday night, when the first drone was spotted.

A Gatwick spokesman said Saturday that "things are going in the right direction" and should be back to normal by the end of the weekend after a horrendous few days that saw tens of thousands of travelers stranded or delayed.

Sussex police released few details about the two suspects arrested late Friday in the worst drone-inflicted travel chaos to hit Britain. Police say the investigation is ongoing and the military was still deployed to prevent further drone incursions from shutting Gatwick's airspace.

Police said Saturday the drone suspects are a 47-year-old man and a 54-year-old woman from Crawley, a town 5 miles (8 kilometers) from the airport. They were arrested on suspicion of disrupting civil aviation.

The suspects, who have not been named or charged, were being questioned in custody. Sky television showed footage of police searching a house, reportedly where one suspect was living.

British police have not said if they think the two suspects acted alone or as part of a larger group. The motive for their aggressive drone flights has not been established, but officials say there are no indications it is "terror related." There have been no new drone sightings since the arrests.

Gatwick's arrival and departure boards showed that most flights operated Saturday but there were still a significant number of delayed takeoffs and landings. In all, the airport hoped to run 757 flights, serving just under 125,000 passengers.

Still, Gatwick authorities urged passengers to check the status of their flights Saturday with their airlines before heading to the airport, which handles 43 million passengers a year.

"Passengers should expect some delays and cancellations as we continue to recover our operations following three days of disruption," a Gatwick spokesman said.

New drone sightings Friday evening caused fresh problems for holiday travelers at Gatwick, which had just reopened in the morning after a 36-hour shutdown. Authorities then had to hastily suspend flights for more than an hour Friday afternoon on one of the busiest travel days of the year.

Officials said extra military capabilities allowed flights to resume Friday night after the 70-minute halt but did not say what equipment had been put in place to counteract the drones.

"Our investigations are still ongoing, and our activities at the airport continue to build resilience to detect and mitigate further incursions from drones," said Superintendent James Collis, who urged the public to contact authorities immediately if they had any relevant information about the drones.

Hundreds of people had to sleep at Gatwick on Thursday night, and many noted how freezing and uncomfortable it was. In response, officials said Saturday they are keeping the airport's two main terminals heated.

## Analysis: Trump, Republicans flirting with a political split

By ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's relationship with the Republican Party, always a marriage of convenience, is showing signs of serious strain.

The president threatened his bond with virtually every GOP constituency this past week.

His move to withdraw troops from Syria led to the resignation of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and left Washington's Republican foreign policy establishment aghast, drawing unusual criticism from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., normally a Trump ally.

Trump's initial openness to a government funding bill that didn't include money for his much-heralded border wall with Mexico infuriated conservatives, including the talk radio and cable television personalities who often shower the president with praise. By pushing the government into a partial shutdown with no clear strategy out, Trump frustrated the rest of his party, which was hoping for a holiday break from Trump-driven dramas.

The divergent plotlines had a common theme: Trump's rejection of his party's counsel as he looks once again to rely on his own instincts to guide his political future.

The whirlwind week seemed to foreshadow what probably will be a rocky two years ahead as Trump, a businessman-turned-politician, gears up for re-election by putting his political interests ahead of those of his adoptive party. Trump is ending the year with his political vulnerabilities exposed, unwilling or unable to forge consensus and catering to a narrow base that he hopes will recreate his improbable 2016 election victory.

"This is tyranny of talk radio hosts," said retiring Sen. Bob Corker, a Tennessee Republican and frequent Trump critic who skipped a White House meeting Friday on the spending impasse. "You have two talk radio hosts who completely flipped a president."

In an attempt to shift blame for the shutdown, the outsider president who ran on a slogan of "drain the swamp" embraced the tactic employed of so many of his predecessors: positioning himself in contrast to the far-less-favorably viewed Congress. He vented publicly and privately at lawmakers for failing to get him the border wall money even as they noted he barely registered an opinion on the legislation until the 11th hour.

"I think he had thought he would be able to accept this," said Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D. "But I think once he saw the reaction from the base, it strengthened his resolve to move forward. Unfortunately that puts us in this position we've got right now."

Trump's decision to withdraw American forces from Syria and his contemplated drawdown in Afghanistan should hardly come as a surprise to Republicans who saw him promise those moves during the campaign. Still, that doesn't lessen the sting.

Trump's isolationist foreign policy broke with decades of mainstream GOP thinking, and the departure of Mattis and a U.S. envoy to the global coalition fighting the Islamic State proved that Trump's instincts are now the guiding ideology of his administration.

Though some in the GOP can barely contain their anger with the president, Republicans are hardly defecting from Trump, who is still wildly popular with primary voters. To that point, Republicans in the House rallied Thursday to pass a bill that included money for the border wall.

Amid persistent speculation that another Republican may try to challenge Trump in 2020, the party is considering ways to protect him.

Some Republicans in New Hampshire, for example, pressed for a rules change that would drop the state party's traditional neutrality in primaries. GOP leaders in South Carolina have debated scrapping their primary altogether, which would deny a challenger the chance to collect early delegates who would otherwise go to Trump.

The president is taking a gamble with his go-it-alone approach.

He risks damaging relationships with Republicans in Congress days before Democrats are set to regain control of the House and are poised to pursue multiple investigations into Trump's personal and professional

conduct. Trump's ties with GOP lawmakers will be especially important if Democrats pursue impeachment.

Perhaps more importantly, it's not clear his moves will resonate with voters, especially the suburban women who turned out in droves in the November midterm elections to back Democrats. A Quinnipiac University poll this month found that 62 percent of registered voters overall said they were opposed to shutting down the government over differences on funding the border wall, though 59 percent of Republicans said they were in favor.

According to AP VoteCast, a nationwide survey of more than 115,000 midterm voters conducted for The Associated Press by NORC at the University of Chicago, more midterm voters opposed building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border than favored it, 53 percent to 47 percent.

Overall, 82 percent of Republican voters expressed support for the wall, while nearly as many Democrats, 86 percent, said they were opposed. Also, nearly 6 in 10 independents (59 percent) also expressed opposition.

Associated Press writers Alan Fram and Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Associated Press writer Zeke Miller has covered the White House for the AP since 2017. Follow him at <http://twitter.com/zekejmiller>

## Respite in Paris; Fewer protesters take to the streets

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — France's yellow vest protesters, who have brought chaos to Paris for weeks with their economic demands, turned out in sharply reduced numbers Saturday at the start of the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Still, some violent incidents in the French capital marred the end of a largely peaceful day.

The number of protesters on the French capital's elegant Champs-Elysees Avenue was down sharply. Paris police said only 2,000 protesters took to the streets, compared to 4,000 a week before and 10,000 the prior week. Police arrested 142 people and detained 19, compared to the several hundred arrested two weeks ago when the protests turned violent.

Tensions arose at nightfall when protesters gathered on the Champs-Elysees and police fired tear gas and used water cannon to disperse some demonstrators. A video circulating on social media showed three police on motorcycles surrounded and attacked by protesters. At some point, one of the policemen appeared to pull his weapon out on charging protesters. Paris police told The Associated Press the officer pulled out it to deter the assailants but did not use his weapon.

Earlier in the day, in stark contrast to the last few weekends, tourists strolled down the avenue near the Arc de Triomphe monument, holiday shoppers were out in force and the grandest of Parisian boulevards remained open for traffic.

Protesters appeared disorganized, with scattered groups walking randomly across the capital. A few hundred protesters cordoned by police marched toward the Madeleine Church near the presidential Elysee Palace but were stopped in a small adjacent street. Tempers frayed and police with batons fired tear gas to repel a few demonstrators trying to break through a police line.

The protests, which have morphed from an outcry against a fuel tax hike to incorporate a wide array of economic concerns, are still having a knock-on effect across France.

The palace of Versailles just outside Paris was shut down for the day Saturday after yellow vest protesters said they will demonstrate there. The famous chateau was home to a succession of French kings until the French Revolution in 1789.

But only a few protesters showed up in Versailles. Most gathered peacefully at the foot of the Sacre-Coeur basilica in the picturesque Paris neighborhood of Montmartre.

The French capital's other big tourist hotspots such as the Louvre museum and the Eiffel Tower, which had closed for an earlier protest this month, both remained open.

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French President Emmanuel Macron appears to have taken some of the anger out of the protests by offering concessions like tax-free overtime for workers and a freeze on gas and electricity prices this winter. The measures are expected to cost an estimated 10 billion euros (\$1.14 billion).

Much of France, but particularly Paris, has endured weeks of protests that at times descended into violence. Ten people have died since the start of the yellow vest movement in November, mostly in traffic accidents. French media said a man died Friday night near the southern city of Perpignan after his car slammed into a truck that had stopped near a group of protesters.

Protesters take their name from the fluorescent yellow vests that French motorists must keep in their vehicles.

Outside Paris, around 200 traffic roundabouts remained occupied by protesters across the country. In southern France near the Spanish border, dozens of demonstrators blocked trucks and chanted "Macron, resign!"

In central France near the city of Saint-Etienne, protesters blocked a major road and set fires but shops remained open.

In the Belgian capital of Brussels, police scuffled with some protesters during a march inspired by France's yellow vest movement.

## Trump's 2018: A year in a stranger-than-sitcom presidency

By CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The stranger-than-sitcom American presidency opened 2018 with a big tease about mutual nuclear destruction from two leaders who then found "love" not war. It seems President Donald Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un were just playing hard to get.

The presidency ends the year saturated in tumult, with the government in partial shutdown and Trump tweeting a video of himself warbling a parody of the theme song from "Green Acres," a television sitcom from the 1960s, to mark his signing of a farm bill.

Throw in a beer-loving and very angry Supreme Court nominee, an unhappy departing defense secretary, Trump's parallel universe of facts and his zillion tweets, and you can see that the president's world this year was touched by the weird, the traumatic and the fantastical — also known as WTF.

There was no holding back the self-described "very stable genius" with the "very, very large brain."

Some serious and relatively conventional things got done in 2018.

There was a midterm election. Many more Democrats are coming to Congress and not quite all of them plan to run for president. Divided government dawned in January when Democrats take control of the House; Republicans retain their grip on the Senate.

An overhaul of the criminal justice system was accomplished, and in an unusually bipartisan way, though it took a dash of reality TV's Kim Kardashian West to move it along. Gun control actually was tightened a bit, with Trump's unilateral banning of bump stocks.

Trump shocked allies and lost Defense Secretary Jim Mattis over a presidential decision to pull U.S. troops out of Syria, quickly following up with indications that up to half the troops in Afghanistan might be withdrawn, too.

Self-described "Tariff Man" started one trade war, with China, and headed off a second by tweaking the North American Free Trade Agreement and giving it an unpronounceable acronym, USMCA. He withdrew the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal, putting action behind his Twitter shout: "WE ARE NO LONGER A COUNTRY THAT WILL STAND FOR YOUR DEMENTED WORDS OF VIOLENCE & DEATH."

Trump placed his second justice on the Supreme Court in two years after Brett Kavanaugh, accused of alcohol-fueled sexual assault in his youth, raged against the allegations at a congressional hearing and acknowledged only: "I liked beer, I still like beer," but "I never sexually assaulted anyone."

There were frustrations and fulminations aplenty for the president, particularly about the steaming-ahead Russia-Trump campaign investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller ("special counsel" in some Trump tweets).

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Nor did he make much progress on his promised border wall ("boarder wall"), which he renamed "artistically designed steel slats" in December in what he regarded as a concession to wall-despising, concrete-cursing Democrats. The concession did not work: large parts of the government closed Saturday over the wall-induced budget impasse.

He took heat for a zero-tolerance policy that forced migrant children from their parents until he backed off, inaccurately blaming Democrats for "Child Separation."

It was a very good year for jobs. It was a check-your-smartphone-right-now, pass-the-smelling-salts year for the stock market. Trump, who assailed the unemployment rate as a phony measure when he was a candidate, couldn't speak of it enough as Obama-era job growth continued on his watch. He went mum about the market, a prime subject for his boasting before it took a sustained dive.

Trump's approval rating in polls was one of the few constants on this swiftly tilting planet: 42 percent approval and 56 percent disapproval in The Associated Press-NORC's latest and 38 percent-57 percent via Gallup, neither much different than in January.

Through it all, the mainstreaming of the bizarre proceeded apace and North Korea's Kim set that tone right on Jan. 1 with his New Year cheer to Americans across the ocean: "It's not a mere threat but a reality that I have a nuclear button on the desk in my office. All of the mainland United States is within the range of our nuclear strike."

Trump responded the next day with a tweet about size and performance. "I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger & more powerful one than his, and my Button works!"

Once they got that out of their system, things quickly improved, helped along by Kim's letters to Trump, which the U.S. president called "beautiful." There was no more talk about Trump being a "mentally deranged dotard" or Kim being a "maniac," the musty insults of an earlier time. In June, they held history's first meeting between a North Korean leader and a current U.S. president. "We fell in love," Trump later said at a West Virginia rally.

Kim had previously vowed to visit "fire and fury" on the U.S. but the "Fire and Fury" that made Trump livid early this year was the book of the same name, Michael Wolff's insider account of the Trump White House. That was a different sort of missile. The president took particular exception to observations in the book by his former chief strategist, tweeting about "Sloppy Steve Bannon, who cried when he got fired and begged for his job. Now Sloppy Steve has been dumped like a dog by almost everyone. Too bad!"

They are said to be on better terms now.

Over the course of the year, Trump spoke at more than 40 campaign rallies, kept up his Twitter barrage (40,000 tweets since 2009 on his @realDonaldTrump account) and answered plenty of questions in infrequent but lengthy news conferences and sit-down interviews.

So what stands out in this blizzard of whiteout of unconventionality?

How about this farewell to his secretary of state, Rex Tillerson? "He was dumb as a rock and I couldn't get rid of him fast enough. He was lazy as hell." (The president usually reserves "dumb as a rock" for journalists.)

Or his description of Stormy Daniels, paid to stay quiet about their alleged affair, as "horseface?"

Or this description of his attorney general, Jeff Sessions, as "scared stiff and Missing in Action," before Sessions was finally out in November?

Will history long remember that in 2018 the president called Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff "little Adam Schitt" on Twitter and nations in Africa "shithole countries" in a private meeting?

Or that he (correctly) predicted Hurricane Florence would be "tremendously wet" or told the AP: "I have a natural instinct for science?"

In July, Trump appeared to side with Russian President Vladimir Putin when he stood by Putin's side at a Helsinki summit news conference and gave weight to Putin's denial that Russia meddled in the 2016 election, despite the firm conclusion of U.S. intelligence agencies that it had. "I don't see any reason why it would be" Russia, Trump said.

But while it's been hardly noticed in a capital consumed by the shutdown drama, Mattis, Syria, steel slats and market convulsions, 2018 draws to a close as it started — with warnings of a nuclear Armageddon,



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this time from Putin.

Putin's prompt was Trump's intention to walk away from one arms control treaty and his reluctance to extend another.

That, said Putin, "could lead to the destruction of civilization as a whole and maybe even our planet." Maybe he's just playing hard to get.

AP polling director Emily Swanson, and AP writers Darlene Superville, Zeke Miller, Catherine Lucey, Jill Colvin, Jonathan Lemire and Nancy Benac contributed to this report.

## AP FACT CHECK: Trump's 'record' poverty drop, Flynn's lies

By HOPE YEN and CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is spreading misinformation about U.S. economic growth, the Russia investigation and the Islamic State group in Syria.

He and his advisers are declaring a "record" drop in U.S. poverty last year where none exists, and "very strong" capital spending next year due to Trump administration tax cuts. In fact, capital spending is projected to slow, probably dampening economic growth.

On the Russia investigation, Trump's White House asserts that former national security adviser Michael Flynn was unfairly targeted by FBI investigators even after Flynn himself said that wasn't the case and declined a judge's offer to withdraw his guilty plea of lying to the FBI. And on Syria, Trump declared a premature victory over IS to justify withdrawing U.S. troops.

The assertions came during a frenetic week in which Trump kept Washington on edge, culminating with a partial government shutdown over a dispute about money for his proposed border wall, after he failed to deliver on his campaign promise to make Mexico pay. His decision to take U.S. troops out of Syria was quickly followed by the resignation of his defense secretary, Jim Mattis.

A look at some claims and the reality:

### RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

PRESS SECRETARY SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS, on Flynn: "We're arguing that he was certainly ambushed and that the FBI, that we know, had clear political bias." — interview Tuesday with Fox News.

SANDERS: "The FBI broke standard protocol in the way that they came in and ambushed Gen. Flynn and in the way that they questioned him." — news briefing Tuesday.

THE FACTS: She's suggesting impropriety in the FBI's questioning of Flynn that Flynn himself rejected in court.

Sanders was echoing an argument by Flynn's lawyers in court filings that Flynn may have been tricked into lying by FBI agents. His lawyers had pulled from FBI documents in pointing out that unlike other defendants in the Russia investigation, Flynn wasn't warned in advance that it was a crime to lie to the FBI. Trump himself has argued that Flynn was unfairly targeted by special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation and suggested that Flynn did not actually lie, despite having fired him nearly two years ago for just that reason.

But at his sentencing hearing Tuesday, Flynn told Judge Emmet Sullivan that he knew it was a crime when he lied to the FBI in January 2017. Flynn declined to accept the judge's offer to withdraw his guilty plea. Neither he nor his lawyers disputed that he had lied to agents.

Sullivan asked Flynn and his lawyers several times whether they believed Flynn was entrapped or if Flynn wanted to challenge the circumstances of his conversation with the FBI that led to charges.

"No, your honor," Flynn said.

### POVERTY

TRUMP: "Last year alone, we lifted 1 million Americans out of poverty, which is a record." — remarks Dec. 12.

THE FACTS: It's not a record and barely a decline.

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The Census Bureau did report that the number of Americans living in poverty last year was 39.7 million, a decline of 918,000 from 2016. But the bureau said the 39.7 million is not a meaningfully different number statistically from 2016, when the figure stood at 40.6 million. In other words, the drop could be accounted for by variations in sampling the population rather than by an actual decline in the number of poor people.

Last year's drop of 918,000 is also dwarfed by bigger decreases in the number of poor people of 2.5 million in 2016 and 3.5 million in 2015.

The biggest recorded decline came in 1966, when nearly 4.7 million Americans were found to have been lifted above the poverty line. The agency considers declines of that size to represent a "a true difference that exists in the population as a whole," rather than just a sampling variation.

## ECONOMY

KEVIN HASSETT, chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers: "Survey data suggests that the capital spending plans over the next year are very strong, or over the next six months." — phone call with reporters on Wednesday, the one-year anniversary of passage of the administration's tax cuts.

THE FACTS: Actually, most economists note that surveys and more-reliable economic data point to a slowdown in capital spending growth next year. This is a critical point because Hassett is arguing that administration's tax cuts will continue to spur investment in large machinery, computers and other long-lasting equipment. Such investment not only lifts short-term economic growth but also can make the economy more efficient, which accelerates growth over time. Capital investment did increase markedly in the first half of this year, probably in part because Trump's tax cuts sharply reduced corporate taxes.

But the most recent data suggests investment will slow, not accelerate, next year. U.S. factory orders for large capital goods have fallen in three of the past four months. Surveys by regional Federal Reserve banks show that companies are planning to spend less on capital equipment next year. That's one reason many economists forecast economic growth will slow in 2019 from a pace of about 3 percent this year.

## SYRIA

TRUMP: "We have defeated ISIS in Syria, my only reason for being there during the Trump Presidency." — tweet Wednesday.

THE FACTS: The militants remain a deadly force, and U.S. partners warn that a premature American withdrawal will allow IS to storm back. Trump seemed to contradict his own assertion when he tweeted the next day that the U.S. withdrawal means Russia, Syria and Iran "will have to fight ISIS and others, who they hate, without us."

IS militants still hold a string of villages and towns along the Euphrates River in eastern Syria, where they have resisted weeks of attacks by the U.S.-supported Syrian Democratic Forces to drive them out.

The pocket is home to about 15,000 people, among them 2,000 IS fighters, according to U.S. military estimates.

But that figure could be as high as 8,000 militants, if fighters hiding out in the deserts south of the Euphrates River are also counted, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the conflict through networks of local informants.

Observatory head Rami Abdurrahman said they include seasoned militants who have fought global wars of jihad since the 1990s.

The SDF, a Kurdish-led force that is America's only military partner in Syria, said Thursday: "The war against Islamic State has not ended and the group has not been defeated." The group is at the front lines of the battle against IS along the Euphrates River.

It said a U.S. withdrawal would leave Syrians "between the claws of enemy forces."

At their height in 2014, IS militants controlled approximately one-third of territory in Syria and Iraq, including major cities in both countries. The group flourished in the political vacuum of Syria's civil war, in which President Bashar Assad has violently put down a 2011 uprising against his family's 40-year rule.

The pocket along the Euphrates represents just one percent of the territory it once held. But recent at-

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tacks in Iraq show the group is still capable of mounting deadly assaults even without holding urban areas.

Trump's own advisers have described the battle against IS as a long-term commitment that depends on stabilizing Syria after nearly eight years of civil war.

"Nobody is declaring mission accomplished," said Brett McGurk, the special presidential envoy to the coalition to defeat IS in Syria and Iraq, on Dec. 11.

**TRUMP:** "Russia, Iran, Syria & many others are not happy about the U.S. leaving, despite what the Fake News says, because now they will have to fight ISIS and others, who they hate, without us." — tweet Thursday.

**THE FACTS:** Actually, Moscow welcomed the development, which gives both Russia and Iran more of a chance to spread influence in Syria. A lawmaker in Damascus put it bluntly, saying a U.S. withdrawal would be "recognition that Syria has won" the war.

The U.S. military presence has been contentious for Assad and Russian and Iranian allies. In an otherwise negative appraisal of relations with the U.S., Russian President Vladimir Putin said Trump "has done the right thing" in deciding to pull troops out of Syria. He has long argued that the U.S. presence in Syria is illegitimate because it wasn't vetted by the U.N. Security Council or approved by Assad's government.

## BORDER WALL

**TRUMP:** "Mexico is paying (indirectly) for the Wall through the new USMCA, the replacement for NAFTA! Far more money coming to the U.S. Because of the tremendous dangers at the Border, including large scale criminal and drug inflow, the United States Military will build the Wall!" — tweet Wednesday.

**THE FACTS:** He's making a flimsy assertion intended to cover up the fact that Mexico refused to pay for a U.S. border wall, as Trump promised it would do during the 2016 campaign.

Trump is arguing that new terms of trade with Mexico will increase economic growth in the U.S. and produce more tax revenue. As part of that, he hopes for a lower trade deficit with Mexico. But those outcomes are not assured.

The deal negotiated with Mexico and Canada is an update of the North American Free Trade Agreement he railed against, not a transformative pact. The three countries will continue trading in an environment of mainly low or no tariffs, with improvements here and there for all three partners. There is no credible way for Trump to forecast additional growth covering costs that are being charged to U.S. taxpayers if the wall is built. Trade balances depend on too many factors — consumer tastes, exchange rates, overall economic performance, and the choices of thousands of companies among them — and some are well outside any government's control.

Trump specifically promised in the campaign that Mexico would pay for the wall. That is not the same as trying to reduce the U.S. trade deficit, which is about the exchange of goods and services among private entities rather than payments between governments.

He wants \$25 billion from Congress for wall construction over five years. If Trump gets the money, it will not be because lawmakers expect a refund to the treasury in future years from extra growth produced by a trade deal.

**TRUMP:** "Illegal immigration costs the United States more than 200 Billion Dollars a year. How was this allowed to happen?" — tweet Tuesday.

**THE FACTS:** He's exaggerating the costs of illegal immigration.

"I'm not sure where the president got his numbers," said Dave Ray, a spokesman for the nonprofit group FAIR, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which advocates for lower immigration numbers.

Neither the White House nor the Department of Homeland Security has said where Trump's estimate of \$200 billion to \$250 billion comes from.

The Heritage Foundation, for instance, estimated in 2013 that households headed by immigrants living in the U.S. illegally impose a net fiscal burden of around \$54.5 billion per year.

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Trump himself has contradicted the figure. During his 2016 campaign, Trump claimed that illegal immigration cost the country more than \$113 billion a year — less than half the number he tweeted Tuesday.

That estimate appeared based on a paper by FAIR, which released an updated report in 2017 that claimed taxpayers “shell out approximately \$134.9 billion to cover the costs incurred by the presence of more than 12.5 million illegal aliens, and about 4.2 million citizen children of illegal aliens” at the federal, state and local levels, with “a tax burden of approximately \$8,075 per illegal alien family member and a total of \$115,894,597,664.”

The \$116 million figure included services such as health care and education, as well as spending on agencies including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, minus the \$19 billion the group concluded those who are living in the country illegally pay in taxes. But it also included costs associated with the children of those immigrants in its tally, even when they are U.S. citizens. The estimate was criticized for making broad generalizations and other major methodological flaws.

Associated Press writers Eric Tucker and Cal Woodward in Washington and Philip Issa in Baghdad contributed to this report.

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## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Dec. 23, the 357th day of 2018. There are eight days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 23, 1948, former Japanese premier Hideki Tojo and six other Japanese war leaders were executed in Tokyo.

On this date:

In 1783, George Washington resigned as commander in chief of the Continental Army and retired to his home at Mount Vernon, Va.

In 1788, Maryland passed an act to cede an area “not exceeding ten miles square” for the seat of the national government; about 2/3 of the area became the District of Columbia.

On Dec. 23, 1805, Joseph Smith Jr., principal founder of the Mormon religious movement, was born in Sharon, Vt.

In 1913, the Federal Reserve System was created as President Woodrow Wilson signed the Federal Reserve Act.

In 1941, during World War II, American forces on Wake Island surrendered to the Japanese.

In 1954, the first successful human kidney transplant took place at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston as a surgical team removed a kidney from 23-year-old Ronald Herrick and implanted it in Herrick's twin brother, Richard.

In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson, on his way home from a visit to Australia and Southeast Asia, held an unprecedented meeting with Pope Paul VI at the Vatican; during the two-hour conference, Johnson asked the pope for help in bringing a peaceful end to the Vietnam War.

In 1968, 82 crew members of the U.S. intelligence ship Pueblo were released by North Korea, 11 months after they had been captured.

In 1975, Richard S. Welch, the Central Intelligence Agency station chief in Athens, was shot and killed outside his home by the militant group November 17.

In 1986, the experimental airplane Voyager, piloted by Dick Rutan (ruh-TAN') and Jeana (JEE'-nuh) Yeager, completed the first non-stop, non-refueled round-the-world flight as it returned safely to Edwards Air Force Base in California.

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In 1997, a federal jury in Denver convicted Terry Nichols of involuntary manslaughter and conspiracy for his role in the Oklahoma City bombing, declining to find him guilty of murder. (Nichols was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.)

In 2003, the government announced the first suspected (later confirmed) case of mad cow disease in United States, in Washington state. A jury in Chesapeake, Va., sentenced teen sniper Lee Boyd Malvo to life in prison, sparing him the death penalty. A gas well accident in southwestern China killed 233 people. New York Gov. George Pataki posthumously pardoned comedian Lenny Bruce for his 1964 obscenity conviction.

Ten years ago: Rene-Thierry Magon de la Villehuchet (reh-NAY'-tee-ay-REE' ma-GOHN' duh lah veel-oo-SHAY'), founder of an investment fund that had lost \$1.4 billion in Bernard Madoff's Ponzi scheme, was discovered dead after committing suicide at his Madison Avenue office. A military-led group seized control of the airwaves in Guinea and declared a coup after the death of the country's long-time dictator, Lansana Conte.

Five years ago: The last two imprisoned members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot (Maria Alekhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova) were given amnesty and set free after spending nearly two years in prison for a protest at Moscow's main cathedral. Auburn's Gus Malzahn was honored as The Associated Press national coach of the year. Mikhail Kalashnikov, 94, designer of the AK-47 assault rifle, died in Izhevsk, Russia.

One year ago: The top leadership of the Miss America Organization resigned amid a scandal over emails in which pageant officials had ridiculed past winners over their appearance and intellect and speculated about their sex lives. A federal judge in Seattle partially lifted a Trump administration ban on certain refugees after two groups argued that the policy kept people from some mostly Muslim countries from reuniting with family living legally in the United States.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Ronnie Schell is 87. Emperor Akihito of Japan is 85. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Paul Hornung is 83. Actor Frederic Forrest is 82. Rock musician Jorma Kaukonen (YOR'-mah KOW'-kah-nen) is 78. Rock musician Ron Bushy is 77. Actor-comedian Harry Shearer is 75. U.S. Army Gen. Wesley K. Clark (ret.) is 74. Actress Susan Lucci is 72. Singer-musician Adrian Belew is 69. Rock musician Dave Murray (Iron Maiden) is 62. Actress Joan Severance is 60. Singer Terry Weeks is 55. Rock singer Eddie Vedder (Pearl Jam) is 54. The former first lady of France, Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, is 51. Rock musician Jamie Murphy is 43. Jazz musician Irvin Mayfield is 41. Actress Estella Warren is 40. Actress Elvy Yost is 31. Actress Anna Maria Perez de Tagle (TAG'-lee) is 28. Actor Spencer Daniels is 26. Actor Caleb Foote is 25.

Thought for Today: "If you want to do things, do things." — Grace Paley, American writer (1922-2007).