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Bus Driver Needed

The Groton Area School District has an opening for a morning bus route driver for the 2016-17 school year. Interested persons should contact Superintendent Joe Schwan at 397-2351.

Manager Wanted

Part Time Apartment Manager wanted. Responsible for showing apartments, handing out applications, overseeing maintenance and other duties as needed. Up to \$25 per hour. Previous sale experience a plus. Send email of interest to Grotnmnger@gmail.com

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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Monday, Aug. 1

National Raspberry Cream Pie Day

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato with sour cream, creamed peas, fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Bert Raap • Linda Gengerke • An-nabeth Rohwer • Heather Dixon • Kervin Wolter • Baily Reich • Karen Young • Martin Schumacher, Lacey Grabow

6:30am: Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study

7:00pm: Groton City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center

Tuesday, Aug. 2

National Ice Cream Sandwich Day

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, green beans, grape juice, sour cream apple pie square, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: David Strom • Marsha Wienk • Peggy Fliehs • Jesse Nierman • Chris Wheeting • Jennifer Keimig • Erin Unzen • Dylan Graf • Spencer Kavanaugh • Morgan Rossow • Rebecca Blocker

10:00am: United Methodist Women's Bible Study

Wednesday, Aug. 3

National Watermelon Day

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, buttermilk biscuit, peas, Mandarin oranges, peanut butter cookie.

Anniv: Lance & Kristie Hawkins

Birthdays: Mike Sundling • Michelle Kramer • Brad Hamilton

7:00am: United Methodist Men's Bible Study

12:00pm: Kiwanis meets at the Community

Apts for Rent

1 bedroom and HUGE 2 bedroom, 2 bath apartments available NOW! All utilities included except A/C, 1 bedroom \$504 and HUGE 2 bedroom 2 bath \$674 Please call or text 239-849-7674

Harry Implement

"Family Owned & Operated Since 1935!"



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The 2016 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally

It's almost rally time in South Dakota. What started in 1938 as a single motorcycle race in a small town has grown into one of the largest and best-known motorcycle gatherings in the world. This year is the 76th Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, and though we don't expect the numbers will approach the levels we saw last year, the rally is sure to be well-attended.

Motorcycle enthusiasts won't just be visiting Sturgis. They will be traveling all around the Black Hills – staying in our local hotels and at our campgrounds, eating in our local restaurants, shopping in our local stores and refueling at our gas stations. Each year the rally has a big economic impact on Sturgis and all of the Black Hills, and that creates benefits for our state too.

An event this size is not without its challenges. To help things go smoothly, the state will create a Rally Operations Center and a Traffic Operations Center. Local law enforcement, the Highway Patrol and ambulance services will have additional personnel working during the rally.

Many state agencies will provide additional staff to support food safety, drinking water safety, fire safety, roadway safety, emergency communications, and vendor sales tax registrations and collections. National Guard soldiers will also be prepared in the event they are needed to respond to a large-scale disaster.

For the past 75 years, we've had no major emergency at the Sturgis Rally. Our goal is to get through the 76th rally with that record intact, but we need help.

We're asking South Dakotans to do their part to help make this a safe journey for our visitors. Drive carefully and be particularly mindful of the motorcycles on the road. It only takes one mistake to alter your life and someone else's forever. If you live in the Black Hills area, plan extra time to reach your destinations, and be patient with law enforcement and emergency responders. If something doesn't look right – maybe how someone is taking photos of government buildings or measuring distances between buildings – let law enforcement know. If you see something, say something.

For those who are attending the rally, be careful and be prepared. Wear a helmet and proper riding attire. If you are driving a vehicle, wear your seatbelt. Most importantly, don't drink and drive.

Riders can visit SouthDakotaRides.com for real-time information and some helpful tips. On the website there are links to weather updates, fire danger information, Twitter feeds from the departments of Transportation and Public Safety, and a map of hospital, urgent care and police station locations.

One of government's primary functions is to keep people safe. The state of South Dakota is ready to perform that responsibility and we welcome the opportunity to host so many visitors in our great state. If South Dakotans and our visitors do their part, it will go a long way toward helping make the 76th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally a safe and fun event.

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State Fair to Host Dole Canned Fruit Dessert Baking Competition

(Huron, SD) – The South Dakota State Fair has teamed up with Dole to find the best dessert in South Dakota using Dole canned fruit. The Dole Canned Fruit Dessert Baking Competition is on Sunday, Sept. 4, at 11 a.m. in the Women's Building Kitchen.

To participate, contestants must create a dessert that includes Dole's line of canned fruits as one of the main ingredients. Entries can be breads, cookies, pies, cakes, bars or any other baked, dessert-focused dish. Contestants must bring their entry already prepared; no baking will be done onsite.

There are two age categories, 17 years old and under and 18 years old and older. First place in the youth division will receive \$250, while second place will receive \$125 and \$75 for third place. First place in the adult division will receive \$500, while second place will receive \$250 and \$125 for third place.

Contest rules and a pre-registration form can be found online at www.sdstatefair.com under the special events tab. Pre-registration is not required, but encouraged. More information can also be obtained by calling the State Fair Office at 605.353.7340.

The 2016 South Dakota State Fair will run from Thursday, Sept. 1, through Monday, Sept. 5. Channel Seeds Preview night will be Wednesday, Aug. 31. This year's theme is "Thrills, Squeals and Ferris Wheels." For more information on State Fair events, contact the Fair office at 800-529-0900, visit www.sdstatefair.com or find them on Facebook or Twitter.

Agriculture is a major contributor to South Dakota's economy, generating \$25.6 billion in annual economic activity and employing over 115,000 South Dakotans. The South Dakota Department of Agriculture's mission is to promote, protect, preserve and improve this industry for today and tomorrow. Visit us online at <http://sdda.sd.gov> or find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



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Drought Affecting South Dakota Farm and Ranch Operations

Agriculture in South Dakota accounts for more than half of our economic output and is the state's number one industry. We are one of the nation's leading producers of sunflowers, corn, wheat and soybeans, and our farmers and ranchers work tirelessly to help feed and fuel a growing global population. Unfortunately, our ag producers have been hit hard this summer with abnormally dry conditions. Farmers across the state are struggling to keep their crops healthy.

According to the National Weather Service, parts of South Dakota are experiencing extreme drought conditions which will likely worsen or remain the same through the summer and into fall. For farmers and ranchers, this means water is limited for irrigation and livestock needs, hay production is at a standstill, and dry conditions are causing wildfires, particularly in the western part of the state.

Producers experiencing hardship due to the drought do have options available to them if they live in a county that has been designated as a primary or contiguous disaster area. To receive a disaster designation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has outlined a specific set of conditions: the county must meet a D2 "severe drought" intensity for eight consecutive weeks or more, as reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor.

So far in 2016, USDA has designated Meade, Lawrence, Harding, Butte, Custer and Pennington counties as primary disaster areas, and Butte, Haakon, Perkins, Ziebach, Custer, Jackson, Fall River and Shannon counties as contiguous disaster counties due to worsening drought conditions. This makes these counties eligible for certain assistance from the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Farm and ranch operators seeking assistance in these counties should visit www.usda.gov, or the local FSA office, to find more information on the types of disaster assistance available.

This summer's drought also underscores the importance of the federal crop insurance program. Crop insurance is an important safety net that provides South Dakota producers with much-needed certainty from Washington, D.C., when natural disasters strike. I opposed efforts to cut the important program during last year's budget negotiations and worked with leadership to make sure the proposed cuts were restored. I will continue working to protect it in any upcoming discussions.

Unfortunately, we can't control the weather. In South Dakota, our agricultural producers know to plan ahead for potential periods of drought and work to mitigate losses. We often have hot and dry weather conditions in the summer months, but this year's drought has proven to be intense and ongoing. While western South Dakota is experiencing extreme drought conditions, the central and northeastern areas of South Dakota are having abnormally dry weather this summer as well.

The National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center expects drought conditions to continue into October. If you are in an area of our state that has been seriously affected by the drought and need disaster assistance, please reach out to USDA or FSA. My office can also work to put you in touch with individuals at those agencies who can help. Don't hesitate to reach out to one of my state offices for assistance.

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2016 Spring USD Honors Graduates

VERMILLION, S.D. -- The University of South Dakota graduated 49 students in Spring 2016 who met the requirements for the honors program, including two who were named honors thesis scholars.

The USD Honors Program is made up of 350 students who hold more than 25 percent of all campus leadership positions, study abroad at a higher-than-average rate and compete successfully for nationally competitive scholarships and graduate school placements. Honors classes tend to be smaller than average and are taught by some of the most distinguished faculty members on campus.

The program recommends applicants have an ACT score of 27 or higher (or an SAT score of 1220 or higher) and a high school cumulative GPA of 3.75 or higher, but students who are close to those standards should still apply.

Two Groton Area students graduated as honors scholars. They are Erin Sternhagen, BS degree in medical biology; and Marah (Smith) Van Diest, BS degree in medical biology.



Century Farms" or call the South Dakota Farm Bureau (SDFB) at 605-353-8052. Return the form & documentation of Date of Original Purchase to the SDFB office by Aug. 11, 2016. To qualify as a South Dakota Century Farm or Ranch, a family must have retained continuous ownership of at least 80 acres of original farmland for 100 years or more. If the fam-

Lost Cat

Ruby belong to the Heupels at 407 N Broadway. If you see Ruby, please give them a call at 399-8517.

Britton Grain Terminal Open House and Ribbon Cutting

Monday, August 1st, 2016 ~ 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



Located 1 mile south of Britton, SD on SD Highway 27

This recently completed facility has a licensed capacity of 4.5 million bushels of upright storage. In total, the new facility will be capable of receiving grain at 60,000 bushels per hour and loading 120-car shuttle trains at 80,000 bushels per hour.

Governor Dennis Daugaard is scheduled to attend the ribbon cutting!

Tours and lunch will begin at Noon.



CO-OP ELEVATOR
Britton Grain Terminal, LLC
Britton Grain Terminal
11081 SD Highway 27
Britton, SD 57430
605-448-2261

Everyone is welcome to come and tour the new facility!

www.wdcoop.com

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Today in Weather History

August 1, 1978: A severe thunderstorm developed in west central Beadle County during the afternoon hours and moved southeast. High winds near 80 mph and hail up to golf ball size pelted several counties along the storm path. Hail piled up to six inches deep and up to three feet in ditches. Hail remained visible in some areas up to thirty six hours after the storm passed. Approximately 480,000 acres of crops were badly damaged or completely destroyed. Damage to crops and personal property were estimated to be nearly four million dollars.

August 1, 2000: A severe thunderstorm produced large hail up to golf ball size and damaging winds estimated at 90 to 110 mph across northeastern Wyoming and western South Dakota during the evening hours. The northern foothills of the Black Hills and the communities of Spearfish and Sturgis received the brunt of the storm. Considerable F0 and F1 wind damage (90 to 110 mph) occurred in and around Spearfish. The strong winds blew down trees, business and road signs, and damaged tents for the 60th Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, destroying vendor merchandise and mobile homes.

1954 - Mount Rainier in Washington State was still covered with sixteen inches of snow at the 5500 foot level following a big snow season. (David Ludlum)

1983: During the early afternoon hours, a strong microburst swept across Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. Although the base anemometer was not calibrated at extreme wind speeds, the peak gust hit 149 mph. It was reported that Air Force One, with President Reagan on board, landed less than 10 minutes prior to the peak gust.

1985 - A nearly stationary thunderstorm deluged Cheyenne, WY, with rain and hail. Six inches of rain fell in six hours producing the most damaging flash flood of record for the state. Two to five feet of hail covered the ground following the storm, which claimed twelve lives, and caused 65 million dollars property damage. (Storm Data)

1986: A powerful thunderstorm produced 100 mph winds and large hail in eastern Kansas and southwestern Missouri causing 71 million dollars damage, and injuring 19 persons. It was one of the worst thunderstorms of record for Kansas. Crops were mowed to the ground in places and roofs blown off buildings along its path, 150 miles long and 30 miles wide, from near Abilene to southeast of Pittsburg.


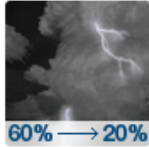





1987 - Record heat gripped parts of the Midwest. A dozen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Lincoln, NE, with a reading of 105 degrees, Moline, IL, with an afternoon high of 103 degrees, and Burlington, IA, with a reading of 102 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Two dozen cities in the Upper Midwest reported record high temperatures for the date, including La Crosse WI with a reading of 105 degrees. Highs of 103 degrees at Milwaukee, WI, and South Bend, IN, were records for the month of August. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Hurricane Chantal made landfall along the Upper Texas coast about sunrise. Chantal deluged parts of Galveston Island and southeastern Texas with 8 to 12 inches of rain. Unofficial totals ranged up to twenty inches. Winds gusted to 82 mph at Galveston, and reached 76 mph in the Houston area. Tides were 5 to 7 feet high. The hurricane claimed two lives, and caused 100 million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Partly Sunny then T-storms Likely	T-storms Likely then Slight Chance T-storms	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Hot	T-storms Likely	Mostly Sunny
High: 87 °F	Low: 64 °F	High: 86 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 91 °F	Low: 64 °F	High: 80 °F

Hot and Humid Today:

Highs in the mid 80s to mid 90s

Slight Risk of Strong to Severe Thunderstorms

Mainly this afternoon over SD, and over eastern SD and western MN tonight

Main Threats



**Frequent
Lightning**



**Damaging
Winds**



**Large
Hail**



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Updated: 8/1/2016 5:09 AM Central

Published on: 08/01/2016 at 5:12AM

It will be hot and humid again today, as temperatures rise into the mid 80s to mid 90s. A low pressure system, and associated frontal boundary, will slide east across South Dakota today and tonight. This will be the focus for scattered strong to severe thunderstorms over South Dakota this afternoon, and over eastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota tonight. The main threats will be frequent lightning, damaging winds, and large hail. For the latest forecast, please visit www.weather.gov/abr

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 89.6

Low Outside Temp: 65.5

High Gust: 19

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 111° in 1900

Record Low: 44 in 1948

Average High: 84°F

Average Low: 59°F

Average Precip in Aug: 0.08

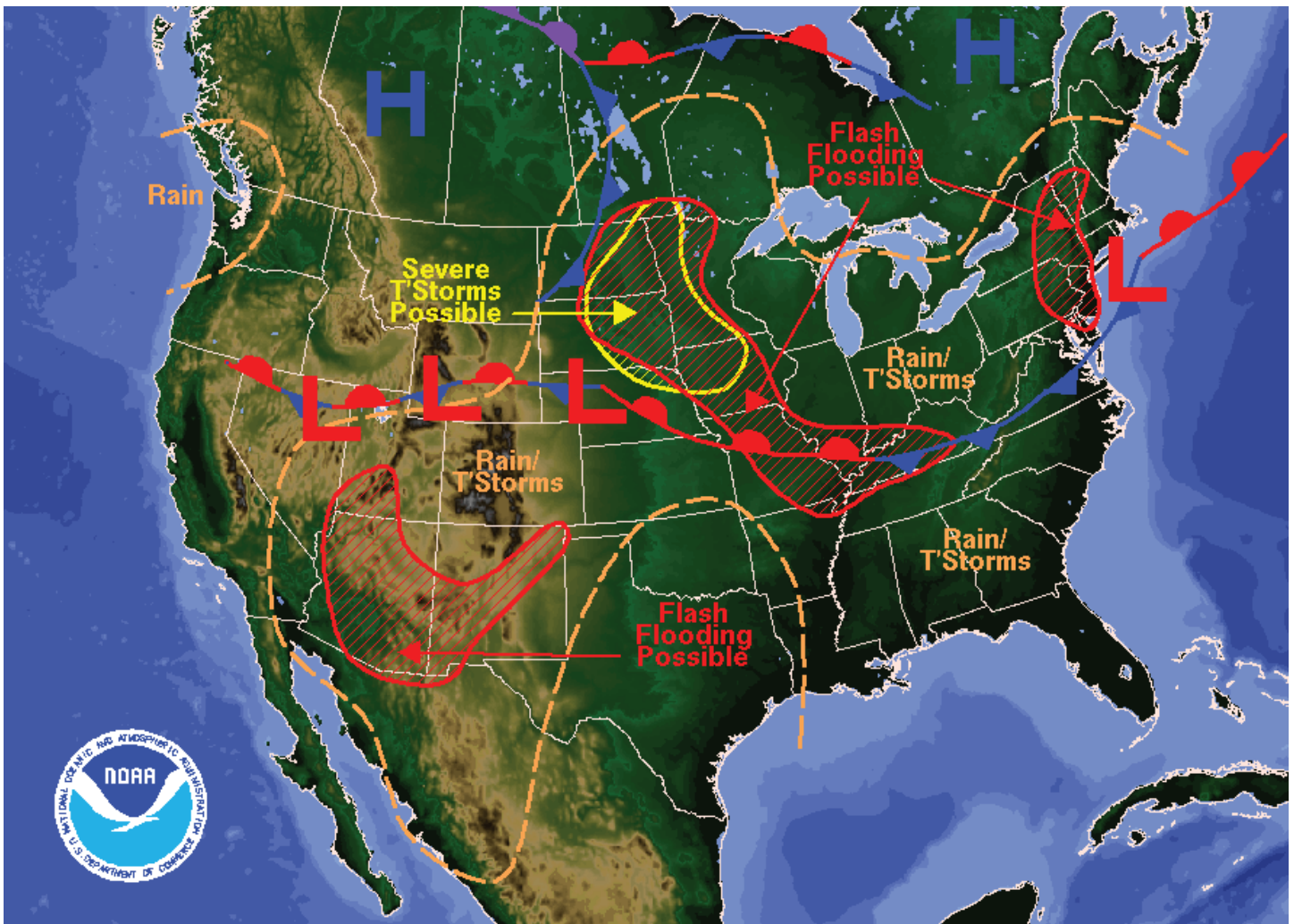
Precip to date in Aug: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 13.86

Precip Year to Date: 10.58

Sunset Tonight: 9:00 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:19 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Mon, Aug 01, 2016, issued 4:46 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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KNOWING AND DOING

When Albert Einstein was a child, he enjoyed playing with a compass. When the Wright Brothers were children, they spent hours with a toy rubber-band-driven helicopter trying to make it fly. Their curiosity in objects gave them a desire to learn that lasted a lifetime and benefitted the world.

Those who have studied the childhood of famous figures in history have come to an interesting conclusion: Many young children who become interested in some particular object make it a part of their life's interest and accomplishments.

What is true about the development of children is also true about the development of Christians. Said Paul to young Timothy, "You have been taught the Holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus."

As parents we give our children many gifts. But rarely do we pause to think of the gift that these gifts will give them. God planted in all children the gift of curiosity. So when we give our children anything, we must always remember that gifts have consequences. They add "something" to a child's life.

Paul commended the parents of Timothy for giving him the gift of God's Word when he was a child. It made a difference in his life: "wisdom to receive salvation!"

Prayer: We pray, Heavenly Father, for insight to give our children those gifts that will lead them to Your grace, mercy and salvation that come from trusting You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. 2 Timothy 3:15

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News from the Associated Press

Midwest economic survey points downward again

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Figures from a survey of supply managers in nine Midwest and Plains states have dropped again and suggest slow or no economic growth ahead.

A report issued Monday says the Mid-American Business Conditions index fell to 47.6 last month from 50.1 in June.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss oversees the survey, and he says global economic uncertainty, including Britain's vote to leave the European Union, was a significant concern for many of the supply managers in the survey.

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests economic growth. A score below that suggests decline. The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Female shot in head; vehicle riddled with bullet holes

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police are investigating a weekend shooting that left a female with life-threatening injuries.

Officers who responded to reports of gunshots shortly after 4:30 a.m. Saturday found a minivan with a female driver who had been shot in the head. Authorities say there were multiple bullet holes inside and outside the vehicle.

The woman was taken to a hospital. Her name, age and condition weren't immediately released. Police asked anyone with information to contact them.

Authorities ID man killed in Meade County motorcycle crash

NEWELL, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a 65-year-old man who died in a motorcycle crash near Newell.

The Highway Patrol says Dale Shull of Sneads Ferry, North Carolina, was driving a motorcycle that went in a ditch off U.S. Highway 212 in Meade County and hit an embankment.

The crash happened Friday evening, east of Newell. Shull died at the scene. He was alone on the bike.

Sanford Health's \$1.5M clinic opening in Minot

MINOT, N.D. (AP) — Dakotas-based Sanford Health is expanding in Minot.

Sanford says in a statement that its \$1.5 million clinic will open Monday.

The 6,800-square-foot Northwest Clinic will provide family medicine and specialty care. The clinic features 16 exam rooms, two procedure rooms, an X-ray area and lab.

Sanford says its Highway 2 Clinic in Minot will remain open, providing walk-in services, primary care and occupational medicine.

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Donald Trump is guaranteed to win _ as top joke target

DAVID BAUDER, AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — There's one area where Donald Trump is guaranteed to beat Hillary Clinton this fall: He'll be the butt of the most jokes by late-night comics.

That would be true even if Trump didn't present such a unique target. In every election year since 1992, the Republican candidate was mocked more by comedians than the Democrat, according to a think tank that tallies punch lines.

Republicans maintained that status even though Bill Clinton was the most joked-about politician during the past 24 years, said Robert Lichter, director of the Center for Media and Public Affairs at George Mason University.

The center's count didn't surprise Comedy Central's Trevor Noah, one of four late-night comics included in the study. The others are Jimmy Fallon, Jimmy Kimmel and Stephen Colbert.

"Comedians are generally progressive," Noah said. "It is very rare that you will find it skewing the other way."

Noah, from South Africa, dipped cautiously into American political humor upon replacing Jon Stewart last fall as host of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show." He's since become much more comfortable expressing his point of view, and it's decidedly liberal.

He said the phrase "conservative" alone implies a sense of comedic opportunity. Whether political, social or religious, conservatives "are the easiest people to poke fun at because they are essentially really steadfast in their ways, and even if their ways seem ridiculous, they're going to stand by them."

Not only are most comedians liberal, but comedy writing rooms are filled with them, said Michael Loftus, a conservative who hosts the syndicated satire show "The Flipside" and frequently writes for television. He's currently working on Kevin James' new sitcom for CBS, "Kevin Can Wait."

"I always thought comedy works best when you're the underdog," Loftus said. "And man, oh man, I'm the underdog in all of this."

While Trump is clearly "the gift that keeps on giving" for comedians and Bernie Sanders opens himself up to material, Loftus said Hillary Clinton is kind of a dull subject for jokes. Meanwhile, Noah found the Republican primary contenders, particularly Ted Cruz and Chris Christie, a font of material.

"Even if you don't know which political side to fall on, you know what side you want to fall on comedically," Noah said.

During the six presidential elections between 1992 and 2012, Republicans were the target of 5,944 late-night jokes and Democrats 3,298 barbs, Lichter said. The average margin will widen this year. Just through April, the most recent numbers tallied, Lichter's researchers counted 587 Trump jokes, and 115 directed at Clinton since last September.

The 1996 campaign was the closest, between Republican Bob Dole (839 jokes) and Bill Clinton (657), the center said.

Late-night comedy is in transition, and getting more liberal. NBC's Seth Meyers isn't included in Lichter's count, and he's been particularly rough on Trump. John Oliver of HBO and Samantha Bee on TBS host very progressive shows, although not quite as punch-line centered as the monologue-driven programs.

Former "Saturday Night Live" comic Dennis Miller swings right, and is a frequent guest on Fox News Channel. Fox has its own conservative-oriented comedy show, "Red Eye," but blesses it with a 3 a.m. time slot.

The key to success as a conservative comic is to worry about the funny first, said Loftus, who got his start in comedy clubs. "If they don't laugh in the comedy clubs, why would I expect them to laugh on

my little TV show? You can't go out there spewing venom — 'they're ripping up the Constitution! Why aren't you laughing?'"

"In a nutshell, it's not fair," he said. "But nobody said the entertainment business is fair. Hopefully, we're in a system where the funniest guy wins in the end."

Russian helicopter shot down in Syria, killing all 5 onboard

LYNN BERRY, Associated Press

BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian transport helicopter was shot down in Syria on Monday and all five people onboard were killed, the Kremlin said, in the deadliest single incident for the Russian military since its involvement in Syria's civil war.

The Mi-8 helicopter was shot down in Idlib province while returning to the Russian air base on Syria's coast after delivering humanitarian goods to the city of Aleppo, the Defense Ministry said in a statement. The helicopter had three crew members and two officers deployed with the Russian center at the Hemeimeem air base on the Syrian coast.

"From what we know from information provided by the Defense Ministry, all those who were on the helicopter died," Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman told journalists. The ministry statement released earlier said their fate was still unknown.

Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said the Russians "died heroically because they tried to move the aircraft away so to minimize losses on the ground."

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

Idlib province has a strong presence of fighters both for the al-Qaida branch in Syria known as the Nusra Front and rebels. The group announced last week that it was changing its name and relinquishing ties with al-Qaida in an attempt to undermine a potential U.S. and Russian air campaign against its fighters.

The group is part of a coalition of insurgent groups called Jaish al-Fateh, or Army of Conquest, which has captured most of Idlib.

Videos uploaded online by Syrian opposition activists show the burning wreckage of a Russian helicopter. The footage was seemingly taken in the first few moments after the helicopter crashed.

In one video, a rocket pod can be seen next to the wreckage. People standing nearby are seen taking cellphone photos and shouting "Allahu Akbar," or God is great in Arabic.

The helicopter appears to have broken up as it crashed. In another video, its tail can be seen lying separately from the aircraft's body in flames.

Monday's helicopter downing was the deadliest for the Russians since Moscow began carrying out airstrikes in Syria in support of Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces last September.

In July, two Russian airmen were killed in the central Homs province when their Mi-25 helicopter was shot down by what the Defense Ministry said were Islamic State fighters.

An Mi-28N helicopter gunship crashed near Homs in April, killing both crew members, but the Russian military said there was no evidence it came under fire.

A Russian warplane was shot down by a Turkey along the Syrian border in November, and one of the two pilots was shot and killed from the ground after ejecting.

Earlier on Monday, a Syrian military official said that government forces repelled an attack by insurgents that was an attempt to break the siege imposed on rebel-held parts of the northern city of Aleppo.

The development came a day after Syrian rebels launched the offensive to break up the government's siege of eastern, rebel-held part of the city.

The U.N. estimates some 300,000 people are still trapped in the rebel section of Aleppo, with dwindling food and medical supplies. The U.N.'s special envoy to Syria, Staffan de Mistura warned on Friday that basic supplies in eastern Aleppo could run out in three weeks.

Opposition activists said intense fighting was still ongoing in Aleppo on Monday. The Syrian military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, did not elaborate.

Texas balloon pilot had been arrested for DWI in 2000

WILL WEISSERT, Associated Press

EMILY SCHMALL, Associated Press

LOCKHART, Texas (AP) — The pilot of a hot air balloon that crashed in Texas and killed all 16 people aboard was arrested in Missouri in 2000 for driving while intoxicated, and the Better Business Bureau warned consumers about doing business with the balloon touring company he used to operate in that state.

Authorities haven't publicly named anyone killed in the crash, saying it could take a while to identify the bodies. But Alfred "Skip" Nichols, 49, was identified as the pilot by his friend and roommate Alan Lirette, who said that Nichols was a good pilot.

"That's the only thing I want to talk about, is that he's a great pilot," Lirette said, speaking to The Associated Press from a house he shared with Nichols in Kyle, Texas. "There's going to be all kinds of reports out in the press and I want a positive image there too."

Authorities say the balloon, which was operated by Heart of Texas Hot Air Balloon Rides, hit high-tension power lines before crashing into a pasture Saturday morning near Lockhart, which is about 60 miles northeast of San Antonio. Margaret Wylie, who lives a quarter-mile from the site, said she heard popping sounds and saw what looked "like a fireball going up."

National Transportation Safety Board investigators are trying to determine what caused the crash, said board member Robert Sumwalt. He said the pilot was licensed to fly the balloon, but that it was too soon to say whether he had a criminal history.

A Missouri police officer, though, told The Associated Press that Nichols was arrested there in 2000 on a felony driving while intoxicated charge and pleaded guilty to misdemeanor DWI in 2002.

The officer said that based on photographs, he is confident the man arrested in Missouri is the same man who piloted the Texas balloon. Nichols had lived in Missouri before moving to Texas. He was known as "Skip" in both places and owned a hot air balloon touring company in St. Louis County at the time, said the officer, who spoke to the AP on condition that he not be identified because he was not authorized to comment publicly.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported in 2008 that the Better Business Bureau had warned consumers about doing business with Nichols, the third time since 2000 that Nichols had gotten an unsatisfactory record for not responding to complaints. The paper quoted the BBB as saying Nichols was on probation in Missouri for the distribution, delivery or manufacturing of a controlled substance and that when asked to respond, Nichols said, "I prefer to make no comment on that."

There were reports of foggy weather in the area of the crash around the time of the flight. At least two of the passengers, Matt Rowan and his wife Sunday Rowan, posted photos on social media of the preparations, the early morning sunrise and themselves in the basket of the balloon a short time before the crash.

Ground crew members told investigators that they launched about 20 minutes after the expected 6:45 a.m. time. The balloon traveled about 8 miles from takeoff to crash, and the basket was found about

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three-quarters of a mile from the balloon itself.

NTSB investigators recovered 14 personal electronic devices, including cellphones, an iPad and three cameras from the crash site, which will be sent to a lab in Washington for analysis.

Sumwalt, the NTSB member, said the immediate focus of the investigation would be gathering witness testimony, starting Monday with the ground crew.

"They've been busy trying to collect the maintenance records for us," Sumwalt said of the crew.

Vandal spray paints 'I'm drunk' on side of police station

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. (AP) — Police in one New Hampshire city are trying to find out who spray painted "I'm drunk" on the side of their station over the weekend.

Portsmouth police Sgt. Chris Kiberd says officers noticed Sunday morning that someone had spray painted the message at some point during overnight hours.

The police department posted on its Facebook page that officers immediately began working to remove "this artist's thoughtful and insightful creation."

Kiberd says surveillance cameras are placed around the municipal complex but none were recording in the area where the graffiti was discovered. Other cameras reportedly captured two males with hoods covering their heads fleeing from the scene around 1 a.m. Sunday.

Police are continuing to investigate and ask that anyone with knowledge come forward.

Maine restaurant cooks up 100-pound burger

YARMOUTH, Maine (AP) — What started out as a joke became reality this past weekend when a Maine restaurant cooked up a 100-pound burger to celebrate its first year in business.

WCSH-TV reports (<http://on.wcsh6.com/2ath6QI>) the owners of Dirigo's Public House in Yarmouth worked all day Sunday to cook a freshly ground, 70-pound beef patty that weighed in well over 100 pounds with all the toppings added.

Co-owner Ben Grant says he and his fellow owners were looking for something creative to celebrate their restaurant's first birthday when someone suggested taking their burger to another level.

Customers purchased tickets for a chance to get a bite of the massive burger, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting a local food bank.

Grant says it seemed inappropriate to do something this excessive without giving back.

10 Things to Know for Today

The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. FIGHT WITH MUSLIM ARMY CAPTAIN'S FAMILY TESTS 'SAY ANYTHING' PLAN

Donald Trump begins the first full week of the general election campaign having put his strategy of saying the politically unimaginable to its greatest test yet.

2. WHAT US PRESIDENT WILL BE TOUTING

Obama is lauding strides in reducing homelessness among military veterans as his administration reaches the halfway point in building a massive database on vets' health.

3. AP: WATERWAYS OF RIO FILTHY AS EVER

Just days ahead of the Olympic Games, popular beaches and aquatic venues are contaminated with raw human sewage teeming with dangerous viruses and bacteria.

4. PAST OF PILOT IN DEADLY BALLOON CRASH EMERGES

Skip Nichols, 49, had been arrested in Missouri for DWI in 2000 and the Better Business Bureau there

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had warned consumers about doing business with him after complaints about his balloon touring company.

5. SYRIAN CHILD ACTOR MEETS TRAGIC END

Qusai Abtini, 14, found a curious path in Syria's civil war: He rose to local celebrity, only to be killed when a missile struck the car he was in as he tried to escape besieged Aleppo.

6. GOING FOR GOLD COMES AT STEEP PRICE

A survey by TD Ameritrade of parents whose children are involved in elite youth sports finds most are depleting savings to help their kids realize their Olympic dreams.

7. FLOOD HELP WEIGHS HEAVILY GOVERNOR'S RACE

Jim Justice opened The Greenbrier, his upscale West Virginia resort, to flood victims this summer — and that could get him a boost from voters.

8. TRAMPOLINE PARK INJURIES JUMP 12-FOLD AS TREND SPREADS

Injuries include broken legs, neck sprains and concussions but 90 percent of the injured children and adults were treated and released, a study by Connecticut Children's Medical Center finds.

9. WHO BROUGHT SERIOUSNESS TO AWARDS SHOW

The rowdy revelry of the Teen Choice Awards momentarily took on a somber tone when Jessica Alba, Ne-Yo and a group of teenagers called for an end to gun violence.

10. ANOTHER MAJOR, ANOTHER FIRST TIME WINNER

Jimmy Walker led wire-to-wire and edged Jason Day to win the PGA Championship at Baltusrol, as all four major championships saw first-time winners.

Flood help weighs heavily in West Virginia governor's race

JONATHAN MATTISE, Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — After deadly floods washed thousands of West Virginians out of their homes last month, about 700 victims bypassed the shelter at the high school gym and got rooms at a luxury resort fit for royalty.

Jim Justice, billionaire owner of The Greenbrier resort and Democratic nominee for governor, closed his hotel for business and opened it as a free shelter after the June 23 floods that killed 23 people, including 15 in Greenbrier County.

Shooing away election talk, Justice said he put his gubernatorial campaign on hold for the two weeks following the floods to focus on victims. But a boost of good will from voters seems likely in return.

There's a long history of storms and other natural disasters making or breaking political leaders — President Barack Obama and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie drew praise for dropping partisan differences and working together after Superstorm Sandy in 2012, while then-President George W. Bush never fully recovered from his administration's response to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005.

Justice, on the other hand, is just a candidate — but he is also West Virginia's richest man. His stately, white-columned hotel turned out to be right in the middle of the flood's worst destruction, putting him in a situation with little precedent in modern politics.

"Candidates have said things, made appeals or, normally, they criticize the response of elected officials, saying 'it's too slow, it's too little,' and that's how they win favor," said Virginia Tech associate public policy professor Patrick Roberts, who specializes in disaster politics. "But I can't think of an instance where someone had the personal resources to really offer."

Dating back to 1778, the 710-room Greenbrier resort has long been one of the jewels of West Virginia's tourism industry, hosting presidents and royalty and holding a once-secret underground bunker built for Congress in case of nuclear attack during the Cold War.

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The Greenbrier's golf course temporarily became a flowing brown river, just two weeks before it was to have hosted a PGA Tour golf tournament — an event that was ultimately canceled.

Justice swears the storm's political implications never occurred to him.

"I don't do many things from a standpoint of what I think would be politically correct," Justice said. "From this standpoint, that hasn't even entered my mind, honest to Pete."

Justice's rival in November, Republican nominee Bill Cole, also stepped in to help after the floods, but with less fanfare. He helped secure tetanus shots for Nicholas County, brought port-a-potties to Clendenin, ran public service ads for donations at his car dealerships and collected 30 tons of goods for victims.

Cole traveled into flood-ravaged regions essentially every day for two weeks. He made some campaign appearances that had been on the books for a long time, but said it was a 90-10 split in favor of flood work.

Still, his efforts were overshadowed by Justice, who announced the reopening of The Greenbrier at a news conference with a banner reading "God Bless The Great People of West Virginia" draped behind him.

"I really went out of my way not to publicize it," Cole said, "then all of a sudden, it was, 'Where are you?' ... 'Why aren't you doing something?'"

Cole, the state Senate president, added in an interview, "To me, the fine line also exists if I'm out there looking for the TV cameras to get interviewed, then am I really helping or am I just looking for earned media?"

Cole said he's not judging Justice's actions. He considers the flood off limits politically.

Whether Justice's intentions are pure, political or somewhere in between, no one disputes that he made an impact on a region in ruin. Among other efforts, he has raised \$1.9 million for flood relief through his charity, Neighbors Loving Neighbors, including checks from celebrities like NBA legend Jerry West and PGA Tour golfer Bubba Watson.

Another indirect benefit: Republican attacks temporarily fell silent against Justice for being delinquent on his bills, taxes, coal mine fines and other obligations.

Local residents sang Justice's praises when they walked the resort's halls to grab a free lunch late last month.

"It's great PR," said Marybeth Beller, a Marshall University political science professor. "The photos that played out in the (Charleston) Gazette-Mail (newspaper) showed ordinary working-class West Virginians all of sudden being able to stay at The Greenbrier with their families. It was a tremendous mark of generosity."

And whether he thought about it or not, likely a mark of good politics as well.

Paradox nation: Norway, a climate leader making money on oil

MARK LEWIS, Associated Press

STAVANGER, Norway (AP) — Norway wants to get rid of gasoline-fueled cars, plans to become carbon neutral by 2030 and spends billions on helping poor countries reduce their carbon footprints. Meanwhile, it's pushing ever farther into the Arctic Ocean in search of more oil and gas.

"We know there is a paradox," admits Vidar Helgesen, Norway's climate and energy minister. "We have been living well from oil and gas. But there is no country in the world that has done more to undermine the oil and gas industry than Norway."

The mountainous Scandinavian country of 5 million people is torn between its ambition to be a global

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leader on climate change and the awareness that its wealth is linked to the world's dependence on fossil fuels.

This apparent contradiction is particularly striking in Stavanger, Norway's oil capital.

The west coast town is the hub of an offshore industry that has made Norway the world's eighth biggest exporter of oil and third biggest exporter of natural gas. Norway's \$875 billion oil kitty is the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, and hydrocarbons account for 40 percent of Norwegian exports.

But very little of those fossil fuels are used at home. Like the rest of the country, Stavanger gets almost all its electricity from hydropower.

And the streams of Teslas driven by oil workers through the streets of Stavanger attest to the rich subsidies the government has poured into the electric car market. E-cars have zero import duty, sales tax is a quarter less than for conventional vehicles and most roads are free.

Some 29 percent of new cars sold in Norway are electric or hybrid. The government in June introduced a target of 100 percent by 2025.

Helgesen says Norway's example is spreading around the world, with once-skeptical car manufacturers investing in green technology and speeding the transition away from hydrocarbons.

In June, lawmakers forced through a commitment for Norway to become carbon neutral by 2030 — some 20 years ahead of schedule.

Norway is also one of the most generous donors to international initiatives to maintain rainforests, which help fight climate change by absorbing some of the heat-trapping carbon dioxide released by the burning of fossil fuels.

It has already spent \$1 billion saving trees in Brazil and is committed to spend up to \$350 million a year preserving trees in places like Indonesia and Guyana.

But Norway is accused of environmental hypocrisy, grandstanding overseas with environmental projects while allowing its domestic oil and gas industry to pump ever larger quantities of carbon into the atmosphere. Plans for carbon neutrality involve buying credits for helping reduce emissions abroad.

In fact, Norway was one of the few Western countries to see a rise in domestic carbon emissions in 2015. That was mainly due to the fact that its aging North Sea oil fields require ever more energy to tap depleting reservoirs.

"The plan has always been to buy carbon credits to allow us to continue polluting as a country," says Lars Haltbrekken, chairman of the Norwegian chapter of Friends of the Earth, an environmental advocacy group.

"That is why we don't think carbon neutrality is the most important factor in combatting climate change," he says. "We can buy credits in developing countries. It doesn't require us to reduce emissions here in Norway."

A tougher European Union scheme will set emissions reduction targets within the next two years. But Norway, which is not an EU member, will still be able to trade emissions credits with European neighbors to reach its reduction quota.

Meanwhile, environmental activists bristle at exploration permits handed out to 13 oil companies in May to drill in a new area of the Norwegian Arctic. Critics say the technology to safely explore in such remote areas is not properly tested and claim plunging prices make Arctic oil unaffordable without hefty Norwegian subsidies. While companies pay 78 percent tax on hydrocarbons they produce in Norwegian waters, they can claim back the same amount on costs for exploration.

"We absolutely regard this as a subsidy," says Ellen Viseth, a political advisor at the Bellona environmental group.

Viseth says the Barents Sea north of Norway is already one of the most expensive places in the world

to produce oil.

"The price and the risk make it uneconomical," she says. "But the Norwegian government is heavily supporting the oil and gas industry. The oil companies don't take much of a risk but their upside is huge."

Norway's state-owned energy company Statoil scooped up the largest share of exploration rights in the latest licensing round. Chevron and ConocoPhillips also secured permits.

In June, Norway became one of the first countries to ratify last year's Paris Agreement on climate change, which seeks to limit global warming to less than 2 degrees C (3.6 degrees F) compared with pre-industrial times.

Haltbrekken says that any Norwegian contribution to this target that does not involve a reduction in oil and gas is empty.

Helgesen disagrees.

"We are living in a time of tremendous energy transformation," he says. "We want to play a part whether it is in electrification, bio-energy, hydropower, or any other green energy. But Norway has the cleanest hydrocarbons anywhere in the world. And as long as the world needs oil and gas, we will provide it."

Israel nabs Palestinian security officer for weapons dealing

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Israeli military says security forces have arrested a "major weapons dealer" who is a member of the Palestinian security services in the West Bank.

The military says it arrested Mahayub Borhan Rashad Knaza in the West Bank city of Nablus early on Monday and confiscated weapons manufacturing equipment.

Recent Israeli raids have seized weapons, shuttered arms-making factories and arrested weapons dealers as part of a crackdown meant to quell a spate of Palestinian attacks. The military says seven weapons-manufacturing machines were seized this year in the Nablus area.

Since mid-September, Palestinians attacks have killed 34 Israelis and two Americans. At least 205 Palestinians have also been killed, mainly by Israeli forces. Most were identified by Israel as attackers while the rest were killed in clashes with Israeli forces.

Obama pointing to strides in veterans' health care

DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama is touting strides in reducing homelessness among military veterans as his administration reaches the halfway point in building a massive database on veterans' health.

Overall veteran homelessness has been cut nearly in half, by 47 percent, although that's still short of Obama's long-held goal of getting it to zero by 2015. Credit also goes to first lady Michelle Obama and Vice President Joe Biden's wife, Jill, for using their initiative on military families to challenge mayors and county officials nationwide to end veterans' homelessness, the White House says.

A half-million veterans have voluntarily given blood samples and health data for a long-term government research program that seeks to enroll 1 million veterans as part of an Obama initiative to make "precision medicine," or tailored treatment, a reality.

Those two milestones are being announced Monday when Obama addresses the annual convention of the Disabled American Veterans in Atlanta, the White House said. The appearance before the service organization is a valedictory address by Obama, who ends his eight years in the White House in Janu-

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ary.

In a preview of his comments, the White House says Obama will argue that getting ex-military members the health care and benefits they've earned is a national promise that "can't be broken." He also will recap how he has tried to help former military members, moving beyond headline-grabbing scandals over lengthy wait-times for veterans seeking medical care that led to the firing of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki.

Care for America's veterans is a top issue in the presidential campaign, with the nearly 21 million veterans in the U.S. making up a critical voting bloc. Republican Donald Trump has repeatedly blasted the VA under Obama; Democrat Hillary Clinton has been less harsh.

Both candidates promise to overhaul the department, including its health care delivery. Trump has proposed allowing veterans eligible for VA health care to take their ID cards to any doctor or facility that accepts Medicare to get immediate care. Clinton would make changes to the existing system.

Despite the problems and bad publicity, demand for VA health care continues to grow, increasing 13 percent in the past year, said DAV Executive Director Garry Augustine.

"We know that even though the access is a problem, health care in the VA is very good," Augustine said in an interview.

The health care side "remains to be fixed," Augustine said, and noted the recent conclusion by a congressionally mandated commission that the department continues to have "profound deficiencies" in delivering health care to millions of veterans. VA already has been making changes in line with the commission's recommendations. Augustine said he'd like veterans to be allowed to seek outside care from an approved system of private doctors who know how to treat veterans.

Augustine also expressed concern, shared by the White House, over a backlog of appeals.

While a backlog of disability claims that neared 610,000 in 2013 has been whittled to below 80,000, more than 450,000 appeals are pending. Veterans wait an average of three years for a decision, which the White House called "unacceptable."

"We want to get them both down," Augustine said, referring to both backlogs.

Overall, though, Augustine said veterans appreciate the support they have received from Obama. He cited increased spending on veterans, expanded and better health care for female veterans, tax credits for hiring veterans and strides toward reducing veterans' homelessness, among other issues.

"We feel the president's been very supportive during his administration and we appreciate that," he said.

VA Secretary Bob McDonald, an Army veteran and former president and CEO of Procter & Gamble who succeeded Shinseki, said in an interview that "the president's got a lot to be proud of." He cited the increased spending and demand for VA health care, progress toward cutting unemployment and homelessness, and efforts to streamline claims and appeals.

McDonald argued against privatizing the VA.

"When all of us signed up, we signed up with the belief and an obligation that we were going to put our lives on the line, and in exchange for that the country was going to help support us," he said. "I see that from this president. He is going to make it clear ... that this commitment is a national responsibility and a promise that can't be broken."

Fight with Khan family tests Trump's 'say anything' strategy

LISA LERER, Associated Press

JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump's presidential bid has thrived on controversy of his own making. Now, the Republican nominee kicks off the first full week of the general election campaign having put his strategy of saying the politically unimaginable to its greatest test yet.

Trump broke a major American political and societal taboo over the weekend when he engaged in an emotionally-charged feud with Khizr and Ghazala Khan, the bereaved parents of a decorated Muslim Army captain killed by a suicide bomber in Iraq. He further stoked outrage by implying Ghazala Khan did not speak while standing alongside her husband at last week's Democratic convention because they are Muslim.

The outcry was swift and bipartisan, leaving Trump largely isolated among his fellow Republicans and potentially putting at risk whatever progress the New Yorker had made during his convention at winning over the independent voters who will likely decide the fall election.

"I am appalled that Donald Trump would disparage them and that he had the gall to compare his own sacrifices to those of a Gold Star family," said New Hampshire Sen. Kelly Ayotte, a Republican seeking re-election in one of the nation's most competitive Senate contests.

Both House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell issued statements praising Capt. Humayun Khan, awarded a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart after the U.S. soldier was killed in Iraq in 2004. Though neither explicitly mentioned Trump, the congressional leaders pointedly denounced his proposed ban on foreign Muslims entering the country, a policy he had altered in recent weeks but nevertheless one that returned to the center of the campaign debate via his attacks on the Khan family.

For the second time in a week, Trump's running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, issued a statement that appeared designed to put some space between the two men atop the GOP ticket. The father of a Marine, Pence said Sunday that he and Trump believe Capt. Khan is a hero and his family "should be cherished by every American."

Last week, Pence said Russia would face "serious consequences" for meddling in U.S. elections at roughly the same time Trump appeared to encourage it, telling reporters he would welcome Russia unearthing emails that Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton deleted from the private servers she used while secretary of state.

Pence's late Sunday statement came after an afternoon of debate among his aides as to whether he should find a way to subtly distance himself from Trump's comments, according to a person familiar with the internal campaign conversations who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss them publicly.

At last week's Democratic convention, the Pakistan-born Khizr Khan told his son's story, questioned whether Trump had ever read the Constitution and said "you have sacrificed nothing." During the speech, Ghazala Khan stood quietly by his side.

Trump responded in an interview with ABC's "This Week," saying: "If you look at his wife, she was standing there. She had nothing to say. She probably, maybe she wasn't allowed to have anything to say."

Ghazala Khan wrote in Sunday's Washington Post that she did not speak because talking about her son's death remains difficult. "Every day, whenever I pray, I have to pray for him, and I cry. The place that emptied will always be empty," she wrote.

Trump's dispute with the Khans entangled his campaign in a days-long dispute at a moment when

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voters typically begin paying closer attention to the presidential race. Trump tried several times to deflect the criticism, though he refused to back down from his initial attack.

"Am I not allowed to respond?" Trump tweeted on Sunday morning. "Hillary voted for the Iraq war, not me!" His tweet followed a late Saturday night statement where Trump described Humayun Khan as "a hero," but said his father had "no right" to "say many other inaccurate things."

That doesn't matter, said Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, who enthusiastically endorsed Trump at the Republican convention. He said Sunday that as the parents of a fallen soldier, the Khans are off limits.

"I don't care what they say. You'll never hear me question anything about a Gold Star family," Walker said. "I've gone to too many funerals, met too many families. What they've sacrificed is just unbelievable."

Trump was taken aback by the uproar, believing he was attacked first by Khan, according to a person familiar with the candidate's thinking who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

The billionaire real estate mogul has also told people around him that when answering questions on "This Week" about sacrifice, he was simply pointing out his own and not equating them to those of the Khan family, the person said.

Trump spokesman Jason Miller said Sunday a biased media was at work framing the issue as one of "Trump vs. Khan" and suggested the real issue was a "Trump vs. Clinton" battle over fighting terrorism. He added that Clinton camp's was fanning the controversy to distract from her weaknesses on national security, highlighted by the investigation into her private email server.

Clinton carefully leapt on Trump's comments over the weekend, even as her aides admitted that they weren't sure whether the dispute would spark a significant movement of Republicans to her campaign. Their immediate goal is to keep Trump enmeshed in a fight against the Khans.

"One doesn't know where the bottom is. It's hard to imagine anyone who has ever run to be president of the United States saying any of what he's said," Clinton said, at a campaign stop in Ashland, Ohio.

She told Republicans: "This is a time to pick country over party."

Syrian child actor who rose to fame killed in city of Aleppo

BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The sit-com is a little like "I Love Lucy," starring a comic housewife who gets into shenanigans and bickers with her husband. Except children play all the roles. And it all takes place in one of the historic stone houses in the old city of Aleppo, besieged by government forces in one of the worst battlegrounds of Syria's civil war.

"Um Abdou the Aleppan" is a small curiosity of the 5-year-old war, the first sit-com produced out of rebel-held parts of Syria.

Aired in 2014 on a local Aleppo station, it was a light-hearted look at life in the war-ravaged city, finding comedy as it showed residents dealing with everything from cut-offs in electricity and water, to factionalism among rebels, to bombardments and violence. The child actors, even as they spot-on mimic characters of a traditional Aleppo neighborhood, provide a tone of innocence.

The tragic reality intruded on that innocence this month.

Qusai Abtini, the 14-year-old boy who played the husband, was killed when a missile struck the car he was in as he tried to escape Aleppo. Fresh-faced with a toothy grin and thick black hair, Abtini had become a local celebrity.

His life and death underscored the suffering of Aleppans, whose city was once the commercial center

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of Syria with a thriving, unique culture but has now been torn to pieces by fighting, with whole neighborhoods left in ruin. Tens of thousands in the city have been killed since the summer of 2012, when Aleppo split into rebel- and government-held districts and the two sides turned on each other.

In recent weeks, government forces have tightened their siege of rebel-held sections, trying to cut off the last escape routes. Days after Abtini's death, several dozen men marched through his home district in a symbolic funeral, waving opposition flags and chanting "Qusai has gone to heaven. Bashar is the killer of my people."

"Umm Abdou the Aleppan" aired in nearly 30 episodes, each about 10 minutes long, on the opposition station Halab Today TV. It was filmed in Aleppo, even as it was subjected almost daily to bombardment. In one outtake, three girls performing a scene jump at the sound of an explosion, then go on with their lines.

Bashar Sakka, the director, said he cast kids because children are the witnesses to "the massacres committed by Assad against childhood."

The show is steeped in the atmosphere of Aleppo, Syria's largest city, taking place in the stone alleyways of one of its old neighborhoods, with the dialogue in the city's distinct accent of Arabic. The title character, Um Abdou, was played by a young girl named Rasha, while Abtini played her husband, Abu Abdou.

Both show a talent for comic timing, playing a stereotypical traditional husband and wife. He's domineering and patriarchal. She's clever, ambitious and a bit ditzy, dealing with neighboring families living on top of each other in close quarters.

In one episode, the mother of a rebel fighter visits, looking to marry her son to Umm Abdou's daughter. Over tea, Umm Abou tells her all her daughters are married to members of the Free Syrian Army, the comparatively secular rebel umbrella group. When she learns that the prospective groom is a "mujahid" — an Islamic militant fighter — she slyly demands a high dowry to intentionally foil the negotiations.

In another episode, Um Abdou decides with her girlfriends to form an all-female rebel faction. Abu Abdou teases her, saying, "You want to go to the front lines when you're afraid of cockroaches." Then he tells her there's a mouse under the couch and laughs as she jumps up and screams.

Another scene has Abu Abdou going with rebels on a raid, but Um Abdou gossips about it to all her neighbors — and her husband comes back wounded from an ambush by government forces who learned of the planned attack. "I wonder how everyone found out!" Umm Abdou muses.

"Qusai was a very talented boy," Sakka told The Associated Press. "We were looking for an intelligent boy," he said from southern Turkey via Skype. "We wanted him to be free with ideas, and without fear of Bashar Assad's regime and its ruthlessness."

Abtini was 10 years old when mass protests first erupted against the rule of President Bashar Assad erupted in March 2011. He became quickly entangled in the uprising, taking part in anti-Assad demonstrations, often sitting on his older brother's shoulders. He spoke in opposition videos, criticizing Assad's government and describing Aleppo's destruction.

At the same time, he acted in school plays. Afraa Hashem, his school's director, saw his talent and introduced him to Sakka.

"He was very ambitious. Once he moved from acting in plays to TV, his dreams broadened and worked on transforming what he was living through" into his performances, she said, speaking from Aleppo via Skype.

After the TV series, Abtini had roles in local theater. Last summer, he played a rebel killed in fighting. As his mother weeps over his body, a man tells her: "Be happy for him. He wanted martyrdom and got it."

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During recent shelling, Abtini's home was hit and his father was wounded, left bound to a wheelchair. On July 8, Abtini's father decided to send his children out of Aleppo.

But as the car Abtini was in made a run down the one road out of rebel-held parts of Aleppo, a missile struck it.

In a video of the symbolic funeral a few days later, his father in his wheelchair watches the marchers go by, holding a placard reading, "Qusai, Abu Abdu the Aleppan. You are a little hero. You scared the regime with your giant acts so they killed you."

After DNC, it's back to parking as usual in South Philly

JEFF McMILLAN, Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Drive a guest into Philadelphia from the airport, and the first question you're likely to hear is not "What's the best cheesesteak in town?" or "Where is the Rocky statue?" but "Why are all those cars parked in the middle of the street?"

It's a South Philly signature that delegates and protesters at the Democratic National Convention never saw. Anticipating protests along the city's main drag, officials gave ample warning that the long-standing practice of parking cars in the paved median of busy South Broad Street wouldn't be tolerated during the convention.

Now, South Philadelphians have their overflow spaces back, to the consternation of a group pushing for a permanent ban, arguing it puts both drivers and pedestrians at risk as doors swing open into moving traffic and parked motorists jaywalk to reach the sidewalk.

"The median parking is dangerous and ugly, and yet no one has been willing to touch it for fear of political blowback," says the petition by 5th Square, which describes itself as a nonpartisan political action committee that promotes the betterment of city infrastructure.

Parking in the middle of South Broad is, in fact, illegal, but enforcement is nonexistent. That may be a nod to the dearth of driveways and alleyways along the dense corridor; there's simply no need to turn left off Broad unless you're at a lighted intersection, where drivers generally leave turn lanes clear.

"I have no choice," said 47-year-old Tom Ngo, a restaurant worker in Center City on his way home from work Saturday. "Every time I go home, no parking. There's not a lot of parking around here."

Or maybe politicians have learned from history. A 1961 Associated Press article noted: "An angry, jeering crowd of 2,000 persons hurled rocks and eggs and shouted profanity at Mayor Richardson Dilworth Monday night as he tried to defend his controversial \$40 a year parking fee plan."

Jennifer Childs, the producing artistic director for the South Philly-based 1812 Productions comedy theater company, has mined the area's parking ethos with her character Patsy, a South Philly woman of indeterminate middle age with a strong accent and a penchant for pink Philadelphia Eagles (or "Iggles," in Philadelphia parlance) sweatsuits.

"The Philadelphia Parking Authority is in every other neighborhood except for South Philadelphia. It is lawless down here," Childs said.

In one of a video series called "The View From my Stoop," Patsy tells of a neighbor who believes the Philadelphia Parking Authority must be "just an urban legend ." Another neighbor insists she can't talk because "I'm parked in the turning lane on Broad Street."

In hedged language usually reserved for greater issues of our time, mayoral spokesman Mike Dunn indicated city officials were so far unmoved by the petition.

"The mayor certainly understands the safety concerns expressed in the petition," Dunn said in an email Friday. "But before any changes are made we'd need to have a dialogue with the people most affected by those concerns, which are the residents of the surrounding community in South Philly."

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By Sunday, Dunn said "such conversations are being initiated."

At a news conference after convention's end last week, Mayor Jim Kelley personally addressed the kerfuffle.

"I know it's an anomaly for many of us to see that," he said, but acknowledged that "it's been that way" for many years, long before he was born.

It may indeed be a birthright. Dan McQuade, a reporter for Philadelphia magazine, noted in an article last year that a 1916 court case mentioned "several automobiles" parked in the center of Broad Street. McQuade also referenced an interview with journalist and historian Murray Dubin, who postulated the practice originated with mourners at nearby funeral homes who needed to park.

"It's definitely unsafe. It's unsafe for pedestrians, it's unsafe for drivers. A lot of people don't like it because they think it's embarrassing to Philly," McQuade told The Associated Press in an interview. "But anytime someone suggests taking away something, people freak out because they're worried they're going to have to circle for hours for a space."

In character as Patsy, Childs did note the convenience of parking on South Broad during funerals. But then, referencing the event that just wrapped up in her backyard, allowed:

"Maybe it's time for this tradition to change. A man in the White House for all these years, maybe that tradition's got to change, too."

Walker makes it a sweep of first-time major winners in 2016

BARRY WILNER, AP Sports Writer

SPRINGFIELD, N.J. (AP) — One of the last people who would have predicted Jimmy Walker's win in the PGA Championship at Baltusrol was the man himself.

Though Walker felt some improvement last week at the Canadian Open, he'd struggled much of the year, particularly in the majors. And he'd never really come close to winning in golf's biggest events.

So after a pressure-packed par on the final hole gave Walker a one-stroke win over defending champion Jason Day on Sunday, he was somewhat surprised and plenty relieved.

"I wouldn't have called this, but it's huge," Walker said. "It's nice to get in the position and keep the hammer down and keep making birdies and playing well."

Walker played so well in one of the strangest PGA Championships in recent memory that he led wire to wire. And after Day eagled 18 to close within one stroke, Walker played a solid third shot from the rough near the 18th green, then two-putted in near darkness for his first major title.

"It's surreal," said Walker, whose 67 put him at 14-under-par 266. "It feels sweet. It's amazing. I haven't been playing all that well and it felt like some things clicked last week, and brought it in this week and been thinking a little better on the golf course. I'm having a hard time putting words to it right now."

Day, trying to join Tiger Woods as the only back-to-back winners of the PGA Championship in stroke play, didn't have any such trouble.

"One guy this week was better than me," Day said. "I know exactly how Jimmy feels, because I did exactly that last year. So it was actually quite nice to be able to see him celebrate with his family and friends there. ... He's a very deserving winner."

A winner who came out of the blue even though Walker is ranked 48th in the world and has five PGA Tour victories. He missed the cut in the U.S. and British Opens this year after a tie for 29th at the Masters. In fact, he didn't make the weekend in four of his last eight tournaments.

But he was superb this week to get the Wanamaker Trophy. He played the final 28 holes without a bogey, and survived in the tightest of spots during Sunday's 36-hole finish — the first in this event since

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Jim Turnesa won the 1952 PGA Championship in a 36-hole match.

Walker's win completed a sweep of first-time major winners: Henrik Stenson at the British Open, Dustin Johnson at the U.S. Open, and Danny Willett at the Masters.

Walker also moved from No. 29 to No. 4 in the Ryder Cup standings, all but assuring him a spot on the team.

He is a late bloomer who has received as much attention in recent years for his astrophotography, with some of his work recognized by NASA. He met his caddie, Andy Sanders, right here 16 years ago during a practice round at the 10th tee on the Upper Course at the U.S. Amateur. Sanders, who has multiple sclerosis, received a huge hug from Walker after the final putt fell.

That the tournament finished on time was stunning considering the inclement weather and the PGA's decision on Saturday not to go to threesomes nor to have the twosomes tee off on Nos. 1 and 10. Day would have liked the opportunity to play with Walker in the last pairing of the final round, but the same duos played together in the third and fourth rounds, regardless of score.

British Open champion Henrik Stenson, trying to join Ben Hogan as the only players to win back-to-back majors at age 40, finally faded away with a double bogey on the 15th hole.

"It was a long day. I never felt like I brought my 'A' game," said Stenson, who started the final round two shots behind and closed with a 71. "I think I hit more poor shots in the two rounds today than in the previous six or seven rounds combined."

Brooks Koepka, playing for the first time since he pulled out of the Bridgestone Invitational one month ago because of an ankle injury, didn't make a birdie until the 15th hole and closed with a 70 to tie for fourth. He also is in solid position for the U.S. Ryder Cup squad.

Daniel Summerhays birdied three of his last four holes for a 66 to finish alone in third, earning him his first trip to the Masters next year.

Robert Streb, whose 63 on Friday tied the lowest round in any major, shot 72 and 69 to finish six strokes back.

Jordan Spieth, last year's sensation on tour with two major wins and Player of the Year honors, was blanked in the big tournaments this season. He shot 69 and 68 Sunday and was at 6 under.

Walker already was looking ahead after his exhausting win.

"I saw Davis this week," Walker said of U.S. captain Davis Love, "and I told him, 'Man, I'd love to be on your team.'"

Another goal accomplished.

Adeline Gray beat the boys at wrestling, ready for Rio

MELISSA MURPHY, AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When Adeline Gray stepped on the wrestling mat in high school against a male competitor, she got his attention pretty quickly.

She grabbed her opponent, and his "eyes opened up like saucers, like 'holy cow, I've got to fight for my life,'" said her father, George.

Gray is all business on the mat, with a 38-0 winning streak the past two years against women. She started wrestling at 6, first coached by her dad and uncle near Denver, Colorado. She grappled with the boys in youth leagues through high school. Now, the three-time world champion will attempt to win the first gold for U.S. women's wrestling on Aug. 18 in Rio.

"She has the ability to stay focused when the lights are on," George Gray said. "She knows how to win."

Gray won the majority of her high school matches against boys at 130-140 pounds. Now she's coached

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by Terry Steiner, a former All-American wrestler at Iowa who leads the U.S. women's national team.

Women's wrestling was added at the 2004 Athens Games. When wrestling nearly got tossed out of the Olympics three years ago, increasing women's participation was among the improvements required by the IOC. Women were added to wrestling boards and female referees to the mat. Two more weight classes were added, bringing the total to six in Rio.

Gray, a three-time world champion, has traveled to 22 countries for competitions in the last several years. She's spent eight years at the U.S. Olympic training center in Colorado Springs, getting ready for the Japanese women. They won three of the four golds at the 2012 London Games, where Gray was an alternate.

Here are some things to know about the 25-year-old Gray, who is ranked No. 1 at 75 kilograms (165 pounds).

EARLY TRAINING

She joined her uncle's wrestling club and started with tumbling and basic moves "to see who had better balance." She honed her wrestling technique and competitive skills around age 12, when she developed "strength and skill and put that into a complete match," she said.

Gray says her mother Donna will attest that she was "super-hyper" as a kid. Wrestling and playing soccer with her three younger sisters helped redirect her energy.

"I definitely think my parents had the option to medicate me to kind of calm me down, and they chose to put me in athletics," she said. "It helped me in school, it helped me in so many different areas of my life."

GRAPPLING GUYS

Gray was 16-16 against boys while attending Bear Creek High School her freshman year on the varsity team, where teammates knew her from growing up together on the mat. Her dad said she'd often trail 2-0 because the boys were faster at the takedown, but "she'd always either reverse or get around and then get on top. She pinned a lot of boys."

Her family moved the next year and she went 20-10 at 135 pounds at Chatfield High School. Her junior year she was captain of the boys' team and finished 20-7.

Occasionally, there was pushback from parents at other schools. "Some of these boys played the gender card, 'I'm not going to wrestle her, we're not supposed to be hurting girls,'" George said. "But guess what, I'd see him two weeks later at a different tournament wrestling a girl because he knew he could beat that girl."

While there were some forfeits, George says Adeline "is where she is today because she wrestled the boys. It made her better."

"I had my dad in my corner the whole time," she said of the former wrestler and police officer. "He really just gave me that freedom to go out there and be an athlete."

OLYMPIC PREP

After winning the junior world title at 17, Gray moved to an Olympic development program at Northern Michigan University and finished high school in Marquette, Michigan. She recently earned a business degree through DeVry University.

Gray will be joined in Rio by three teammates — Elena Pirozhkova (63 kg), Helen Maroulis (53 kg) and Hayley Augello (48 kg).

The women wrestle two rounds of 3 minutes in freestyle, which allows for throws and hooking the legs. The men wrestle both Greco Roman, grappling from the waist up, and freestyle.

GATOR ROLL

Gray is known for her arm bar and "chicken wing" pins and the "leg lace" move. That involves an arm

lock around the ankles, crisscrossing them. "Then a gator roll, you start turning," her dad said. "If they don't, they'll pop a knee or the pain is unbelievable, so you turn. That's two points."

Gray tries to dominate the opponent early in the match. "You don't want to wait around to see people's best stuff," she said. "You want to hammer them with what you have and get off the mat."

GAINING GROUND

Women's wrestling is not an NCAA sport, but high school girls wrestling is gaining popularity in California, Washington, Texas, Florida and Hawaii, Gray said.

What's the difference between wrestling boys and girls?

"(Boys) don't have shoulders like Gumby," she said. "Girls get out of pinning holds that no boy would ever be able to get out of. Boys, their shoulders are so stiff, if you get the right leverage on a shoulder, they're going to go over and pin themselves."

Tips for parents on sports participation and spending

The Associated Press

It's a natural desire for parents to support their child's dreams, no matter the cost. But experts say there are ways parents can make their kids' participation in sports more positive and avoid sacrificing their own financial security.

—ENCOURAGE MULTIPLE SPORTS: Parents are often told that a child with potential should participate in intense or year-round programs to build that skill. But studies show early specialization does more harm than good. It increases the risk of overuse in developing bodies, causes kids to burn out on sports and decreases overall athletic development, according to Aspen Institute's Project Play, an effort to make sports accessible to all.

—COMMUNICATE REGULARLY: Check in with kids about what they really want to do. Some crave a competitive environment and others don't want to be pushed into that pipeline, says Travis Dorsch, founding director of the Families in Sport Lab at Utah State University. It's often parents, not kids, that find and suggest these elite teams, he said. And children, attuned to underlying messages, often provide answers based on what the parents want to hear. He suggests checking with kids weekly, monthly and seasonally to make sure they are still having fun and engaged.

—SUPPORT FREE PLAY: Forget practice and drills — engaging in free or loosely structured play is important, says Tom Farrey of the Aspen Institute. Kid-led activities are important in making sports fun and building creativity. Need convincing? Farrey points out that free play was important to athletes like Michael Jordan and Brazilian soccer stars who played pickup games in their neighborhoods.

—MANAGE EXPECTATIONS: Odds are against a child going to the Olympics, going pro or even playing in college. That's no reflection on the parents. Sociologist Jay Coakley says many parents have been conditioned to view their child's achievements — at school, on the field or elsewhere — as a measure of their worth as a parent. Parents should recognize what messages they are listening to internally when making decisions. He suggests providing children with an array of experiences and some autonomy to pursue and enjoy whatever their interests are.

—DON'T DISMISS ACADEMICS: Parents who really want their kid to get college paid for should get a biology tutor, not a sports coach, says Mark Hyman of George Washington University. Academics might be compromised for intense training, but school studies provide more opportunity for scholarships and are important to lifelong success.

—REMEMBER FINANCIAL NEEDS: Parents need to pay the bills each month and have a nest egg when they retire. It's not bad to spend on sports or even elite teams, but athletic and financial experts say parents need to find what works for their lives. As much as parents are committed to their kids and their dreams, they should be committed to their own financial prospects.

Trampoline park injuries jump 12-fold as the trend spreads

LINDSEY TANNER, AP Medical Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Trampoline park injuries have soared as the indoor jumping trend has spread.

That's according to a study that shows annual U.S. emergency room visits jumped 12-fold for park-related injuries from over five years. Injuries included broken legs, neck sprains and concussions but 90 percent of the injured children and adults were treated and released.

The study by researchers at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford was published Monday in *Pediatrics*. They analyzed a national injury database.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends against children using trampolines at home or parks and says injury rates at trampoline parks should be monitored.

THE NUMBERS

In 2010, there were 581 ER visits for injuries from trampoline parks versus 6,932 in 2014. During those years, the number of parks multiplied from 25 to 350 nationwide. Last year, there were 460 in North America, mostly in the U.S., and another 220 around the globe, the industry says.

Most trampoline injuries occur at home, not in indoor parks, and the researchers cite data showing that ER visits for home injuries were mostly stable during the study years, totaling about 60,000 each year.

WHO'S INJURED?

Two-thirds of the trampoline park injuries were in kids aged 6 to 17, while about 1 in 5 were in ages 18 and up. Only 14 percent were younger than age 6, while that age group accounted for 30 percent of those injured on home trampolines.

Injuries were most common in boys and whites.

INDUSTRY RESPONSE

The International Association of Trampoline Parks says the rate of injury is very low — less than one per 10,000 jumpers at a typical park. In a statement, the group said safety "is always a priority" and that it advocates supervision and protective padding. Many parks have padded walls.

Timberlake, Alba bring seriousness to Teen Choice Awards

DERRIK J. LANG, AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The rowdy revelry of the Teen Choice Awards momentarily took on a somber tone Sunday when Jessica Alba, Ne-Yo and a group of teenagers called for an end to gun violence.

The actress was joined on stage at the fan-favorite ceremony by a group of teens related to shooting victims in such places as San Bernardino, California; Newtown, Connecticut; and Orlando, Florida.

Alba and singer Ne-Yo, who performed Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On," asked the audience to stand and for everyone to post on social media using the hashtag #StopTheViolence.

"Tonight, we stand together with these teens united in a call for peace and an end to this violence," Alba said after each of the teens introduced themselves. "Now, more than ever, we need to stop, feel and ask, 'What's going on?'"

Justin Timberlake also brought seriousness to the otherwise silly ceremony. He was bestowed by Kobe Bryant with the show's version of a lifetime achievement award. The singer-actor used his moment in the spotlight to honor late boxer Muhammad Ali, address the importance of diversity and impart wisdom to the young crowd gathered at the Forum in Inglewood, California.

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"As a relatively new dad and a former teen, I am here to say you will make mistakes along the way," he said. "You will fall down. I have many times — even Ali did."

The speech marked the first time Timberlake has accepted an award since he apologized after responding to online backlash following writing that he was inspired by Jessie Williams' speech at the BET Awards, where Williams spoke out about racial issues and cultural appropriation.

"The truth is, we are all different, but that does not mean we all don't want the same thing," said Timberlake.

Teen Choice Awards co-hosts John Cena and Victoria Justice engaged in several goofy stunts between helping to hand out surfboard-shaped trophies in categories honoring film, TV, music, sports and social media, as voted on by viewers.

The 18th annual ceremony kicked off with Cena and Justice respectively dressed as Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. The gender-bending bit wasn't just for laughs. The pair encouraged teens to register to vote.

Other stunts included the wrestler-actor and singer-actress engaging in a 30-second selfie challenge, as well as Justice and Laverne Cox, her co-star in an upcoming remake of "The Rocky Horror Picture," squirting Cena with water bottles as they explained the movie's plot.

This year's winners on hand to pick up their surfboard-shaped trophies included "Captain America" actor Chris Evans, "Neighbors 2" actress Chloe Grace Moretz, "The Flash" actor Grant Gustin, "Star Wars" actress Daisy Ridley and social media stars Cameron Dallas and the Dolan twins.

The casts of "Pretty Little Liars," "Teen Wolf" and "Fuller House" were honored with several awards. Jennifer Garner and her young "Miracles from Heaven" co-star Kiley Rogers dedicated the film's prize to sick children.

"Don't give up hope," said Garner.

The two-hour ceremony included performances by "Empire" actress Serayah, Charlie Puth, Flo Rida, Bebe Rexha and Jason Derulo. Fox said more than 37 million votes were cast online for this year's award winners.

Expert to Rio athletes: 'Don't put your head under water'

JENNY BARCHFIELD, Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Just days ahead of the Olympic Games the waterways of Rio de Janeiro are as filthy as ever, contaminated with raw human sewage teeming with dangerous viruses and bacteria, according to a 16-month-long study commissioned by The Associated Press.

Not only are some 1,400 athletes at risk of getting violently ill in water competitions, but the AP's tests indicate that tourists also face potentially serious health risks on the golden beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana.

The AP's survey of the aquatic Olympic and Paralympic venues has revealed consistent and dangerously high levels of viruses from the pollution, a major black eye on Rio's Olympic project that has set off alarm bells among sailors, rowers and open-water swimmers.

The first results of the study published over a year ago showed viral levels at up to 1.7 million times what would be considered worrisome in the United States or Europe. At those concentrations, swimmers and athletes who ingest just three teaspoons of water are almost certain to be infected with viruses that can cause stomach and respiratory illnesses and more rarely heart and brain inflammation — although whether they actually fall ill depends on a series of factors including the strength of the individual's immune system.

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Since the AP released the initial results last July, athletes have been taking elaborate precautions to prevent illnesses that could potentially knock them out of the competition, including preventatively taking antibiotics, bleaching oars and donning plastic suits and gloves in a bid to limit contact with the water.

But antibiotics combat bacterial infections, not viruses. And the AP investigation found that infectious adenovirus readings — tested with cell cultures and verified with molecular biology protocols — turned up at nearly 90 percent of the test sites over 16 months of testing.

“That’s a very, very, very high percentage,” said Dr. Valerie Harwood, Chair of the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of South Florida. “Seeing that level of human pathogenic virus is pretty much unheard of in surface waters in the U.S. You would never, ever see these levels because we treat our waste water. You just would not see this.”

While athletes take precautions, what about the 300,000-500,000 foreigners expected to descend on Rio for the Olympics? Testing at several of the city’s world-famous beaches has shown that in addition to persistently high viral loads, the beaches often have levels of bacterial markers for sewage pollution that would be cause for concern abroad — and sometimes even exceed Rio state’s lax water safety standards.

In light of the AP’s findings, Harwood had one piece of advice for travelers to Rio: “Don’t put your head under water.”

Swimmers who cannot heed that advice stand to ingest water through their mouths and noses and therefore risk “getting violently ill,” she said.

Danger is lurking even in the sand. Samples from the beaches at Copacabana and Ipanema revealed high levels of viruses, which recent studies have suggested can pose a health risk — particularly to babies and small children.

“Both of them have pretty high levels of infectious adenovirus,” said Harwood, adding that the virus could be particularly hazardous to babies and toddlers who play in the sand.

“You know how quickly an infant can get dehydrated and have to go to the hospital,” she added. “That’s the scariest point to me.”

Dr. Fernando Spilki, the virologist and coordinator of the molecular microbiology laboratory at Feevale University in southern Brazil whom AP commissioned to conduct the water tests, says the survey revealed no appreciable improvement in Rio’s blighted waters — despite cleanup promises stretching back decades.

“Unfortunately, what we’ve seen throughout all this time is that there is a variation in the levels of contamination, but it fluctuates much more as a result of climactic conditions than due to any measures that may have been taken to try to remove this contamination,” said Spilki, one of Brazil’s most respected virologists.

The most contaminated points are the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon, where Olympic rowing will take place, and the Gloria Marina, the starting point for the sailing races. In March, 2015, sampling at the Lagoon revealed an astounding 1.73 billion adenoviruses per liter; this June, adenovirus readings were lower but still hair-raising at 248 million adenoviruses per liter. By comparison, in California, viral readings in the thousands per liter are enough to set off alarm bells.

Despite a project aimed at preventing raw sewage from flowing directly into the Gloria Marina through storm drains, the waters remain just as contaminated. The first sampling there, in March, 2015, showed over 26 million adenoviruses per liter; this June, over 37 million adenoviruses per liter were detected.

While local authorities including Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes have acknowledged the failure of the city’s water cleanup efforts, calling it a “lost chance” and a “shame,” Olympic officials continue to insist Rio’s waterways will be safe for athletes and visitors. The local organizing committee did not respond to

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multiple requests for comment, though it has previously said bacterial testing conducted by Rio state authorities has shown the aquatic venues to be within state guidelines.

The crux of the issue lies in the different types of testing used to determine the health and safety of recreational waters.

Bacterial tests measure levels of coliforms — different types of bacteria that tend not to cause illnesses themselves but are indicators of the presence of other, potentially harmful sewage-borne pathogens such as other bacteria, viruses and protozoa that can cause cholera, dysentery, hepatitis A and typhoid, among other diseases. Bacterial tests are the worldwide standard because they're cheap and easy.

But there's a growing consensus that they're not ideal for all climates, as bacteria break down quickly in tropical weather and salty marine waters. In contrast, viruses have been shown to survive for weeks, months or even years — meaning that in tropical Rio low bacterial markers can be completely out of step with high virus levels.

That disparity was borne out in the AP's testing. For instance, in June, 2016, the levels of fecal coliforms in water samples from Copacabana and Ipanema Beaches were extremely low, with just 31 and 85 fecal coliforms per 100 milliliters, respectively. But still, both had alarming readings for rotavirus, the main cause of gastroenteritis globally, with 7.22 million rotaviruses per liter detected in the waters of Copacabana, while 32.7 million rotaviruses per liter were found in the waters of Ipanema Beach.

The testing also revealed alarming spikes in fecal coliform levels — the very measure the state government uses to determine the safety of Rio's recreational waters.

"If these were the reported values in the United States, let's say in California, there is definitely an indication of a problem," said Dr. Kristina Mena, a waterborne virus expert at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

According to California's bacterial tests standards, 400 fecal coliforms per 100 milliliters is the upper limit for a beach to be considered safe for swimming. AP's tests revealed that Copacabana Beach, where the marathon and triathlon swimming are to be held and thousands of tourists are likely to take a dip, exceeded California's limit five times over 13 months of testing.

Nearby Ipanema Beach, which is not playing host to any Olympic sports but is among the city's most popular tourist spots, exceeded California standards five times over 12 months, once spiking to nearly 50 times what would be permitted in California. One of two testing spots along the beach in the Olympic hub neighborhood of Barra da Tijuca once hit more than 60 times that limit over the five months testing was conducted there.

"If we had exceedances that consistently were in the thousands like I'm seeing here, there would be a high likelihood that that beach would be put on our list of impaired water bodies," said Rik Rasmussen, manager of surface water quality standards at California's State Water Board. That would lead to water quality warnings posted on the beach, possible beach closure, and the development of a program to root out the source of the contamination, he said.

The beaches even violate Rio state's own standards, which are much less stringent than those in California, many other U.S. states and beach-loving countries such as Australia and New Zealand. In Rio, beaches are considered unfit if bacterial tests turn up more than 2,500 fecal coliforms per 100 milliliters — more than six times higher than the upper limit in California. But Copacabana and Ipanema even violated those much higher limits on three separate occasions. The state environmental agency, INEA, did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Rasmussen acknowledged that the higher thresholds might make sense in Rio, where sewage pollution has been a perennial problem, meaning that locals are regularly exposed to the pathogens lurking in raw waste from an early age and therefore build up immunities. But visitors are unlikely to have such

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immunities, putting them at risk for illnesses.

After the AP's initial report on the findings of the study in July of last year, the Olympics' adviser on health matters, the World Health Organization, said it would carry out its own viral testing in Rio's Olympic waterways. The agency later flip-flopped, finally concluding that bacterial tests alone would suffice.

Athletes who have trained years for a chance at Olympic glory have resigned themselves to competing in the filth.

"There's been a lot of talk about how dirty the water is and all the viruses," said Finnish team sailor Noora Ruskola. "I'm mentally prepared for this. Some days the water is totally OK, and some days there are bad days."

However, tourists are unlikely to realize the dangers: Water quality warning signs used to dot showcase beaches, but they're no longer there. Now, a brief item on the weather page of the local paper lists which beaches the state environmental agency has deemed safe for swimming.

Most beach-going visitors are likely in the same situation as Raul Onetto, a 52-year-old bank executive from Uruguay recently soaking up the sun on Copacabana Beach.

When asked whether he knew that the bacterial levels sometimes exceeded the norms in other countries and could indicate problems, he expressed disbelief.

"The water looks beautiful. I didn't know it was dirty," said Onetto. "If it's dirty, the public should know it. I came 2,000 kilometers to be on a beach."

In Rio, the main tourist gateway to the country, a centuries-long sewage problem that was part of Brazil's colonial legacy has spiked in recent decades in tandem with the rural exodus that saw the metropolitan area nearly double in size since 1970.

Even in the city's wealthy areas, sewage treatment has lagged dramatically behind, with so-called "black tongues" of fetid, sewage-filled water common even on the tony Ipanema and Leblon Beaches. The lagoons in the fast-growing Barra da Tijuca region have been filled with so much sewage dumped by nearby glass-and-steel residential towers that vast islands of sludge emerge from the filthy waters during low tide. That lagoon system, which hugs the Olympic Park and Athletes' Village, regularly sees massive pollution-related fish die-offs and emits an eye-watering sulfuric stench.

Promises to clean up Rio's waterways stretch back decades, with a succession of governors setting firm dates for a cleanup and repeatedly pushing them back. In the city's 2009 Olympic bid document, authorities pledged the games would "regenerate Rio's magnificent waterways." A promised billion-dollar investment in cleanup programs was meant to be among the games' most important legacies.

Once more, the lofty promises have ended in failure.

Just over a month before the games, biologist Mario Moscatelli spent more than two hours flying over Rio in a helicopter, as he's done on a monthly basis for the past 20 years.

Viewed from above, Rio's sewage problem is as starkly visible as on the spreadsheets of the AP analysis: Rivers are tar-black; the lagoons near the Olympic Park bloom with fluorescent green algae that thrives amid sewage; fishermen's wooden boats sink into thick sludge in the Guanabara Bay; surfers paddle amid a giant brown stain that contrasts with the azure of the surrounding waters.

"It's been decades and I see no improvement," laments Moscatelli, an activist who's the most visible face of the fight to clean up Rio's waterways. "The Guanabara Bay has been transformed into a latrine ... and unfortunately Rio de Janeiro missed the opportunity, maybe the last big opportunity" to clean it up.

Skydiver becomes first person to jump and land without chute

JOHN ROGERS, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — After leaping from an airplane, Luke Aikins rocketed toward earth for two minutes, and then calmly flipped onto his back at the last second and landed in a 100-by-100-foot net in California.

Cheers rose from those who gathered at the Big Sky movie ranch on the outskirts of Simi Valley to watch the stunt, including his family.

The 42-year-old skydiver with more than 18,000 jumps made history as the first person to survive a leap without a parachute and land safely in a net.

As the audience erupted, Aikins quickly climbed out, walked over and hugged his wife, Monica, who had been watching from the ground with their 4-year-old son, Logan, and other family members.

"I'm almost levitating. It's incredible," the jubilant skydiver said, raising his hands over his head as his wife held their son, who dozed in her arms.

"This thing just happened! I can't even get the words out of my mouth," he added as he thanked the dozens of crew members who spent two years helping him prepare for the jump, including those who assembled the fishing trawler-like net and made sure it really worked.

The jump — from the death-defying altitude of 25,000 feet — makes Aikins the only skydiver ever to go from plane to planet Earth without a parachute.

The stunt, broadcast live on the Fox network for the TV special "Stride Gum Presents Heaven Sent," nearly didn't come off as planned when Aikins revealed just before climbing into his plane that the Screen Actors Guild had ordered him to wear a parachute to ensure his safety.

Aikins didn't say what prompted the original restriction, but SAG spokeswoman Pamela Greenwalt said the union and producers "could not come to an agreement on the safest way to pursue this stunt and therefore we could not sanction it to go forward under a union agreement."

Aikins said he considered pulling out at that point because having the parachute canister on his back would make his landing in the net far more dangerous. If he had to wear it, he said he wouldn't bother to pull the ripcord anyway.

"I'm going all the way to the net, no question about it," he said from the plane. "I'll just have to deal with the consequences when I land of wearing the parachute on my back and what it's going to do to my body."

A few minutes before the jump, one of the show's hosts said the requirement had been lifted. Aikins left the plane without the chute.

He jumped with three other skydivers, each wearing parachutes. One had a camera, another trailed smoke so people on the ground could follow his descent and the third took an oxygen canister he handed off after they got to an altitude where it was no longer needed.

Then the others opened their parachutes and left him on his own.

Aikins admitted before the jump he was nervous, and his mother said she was one family member who wouldn't watch.

When his friend Chris Talley came up with the idea two years ago, Aikins acknowledged he turned it down cold.

"I kind of laugh and I say, 'Ok, that's great. I'll help you find somebody to do it,'" he told The Associated Press as he trained for the jump last week.

A couple of weeks after Talley made his proposal, Aikins called back and said he would do it. He'd been the backup jumper in 2012 when Felix Baumgartner became the first skydiver to break the speed of sound during a jump from 24 miles above Earth.

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Aikins was able to hit the net with pinpoint precision thanks to GPS alerts in his helmet and a sophisticated lighting setup on the ground that was visible from more than 25,000 feet up, Talley said Sunday. If Aikins veered off course the lights appeared red, but when he was on target they shone bright white.

"They're very similar to the lights that a pilot sees when landing a plane at an airport," Talley said.

Aikins was able to alter his course with just the slightest adjustments of his hands, said Talley, who added that experienced skydivers have "incredible control" over where they land.

The 42-year-old daredevil made his first tandem jump when he was 12, following with his first solo leap four years later. He's been racking them up at several hundred a year ever since.

His father and grandfather were skydivers, and his wife has made 2,000 jumps. His family owns Skydive Kapowsin near Tacoma, Washington.

Aikins is also a safety and training adviser for the United States Parachute Association and is certified to teach both students and skydiving instructors. His business Para Tactics provides skydiving training to Navy Seals and other members of elite fighting forces.

Pope: not right to talk about a 'violent, terrorist' Islam

ABOARD THE PAPAL PLANE (AP) — Pope Francis says he won't describe Islam as "terrorist" since that's "not fair and not true."

Francis was asked Sunday why he never uses the word "Islam" when denouncing extremists' killings like that of an elderly French priest during Mass in France last week.

He was speaking to reporters aboard the papal plane back to Rome after a five-day pilgrimage in southern Poland. While there he prayed privately in a church that God protect people from the "devastating wave" of terrorism in many part of the world.

Francis said he thinks "it's not right to identify Islam with violence."

He added that every religion has its "little group of fundamentalists." He said that if he speaks of violent Islam, he'd have to speak of violent Catholicism, since Catholics kill, too.

Pope will let justice take its course on Pell allegations

FRANCES D'EMILIO, Associated Press

ABOARD THE PAPAL PLANE (AP) — Pope Francis told reporters Sunday he won't address child molestation allegations against a top Vatican cardinal who is one of his most-trusted aides until justice officials in Australia have made a determination.

Francis said as far as he's concerned, accusations against Cardinal George Pell, Francis' top financial adviser, "are in the hands of justice." He said that the accused deserved the benefit of the doubt, adding that "once justice has its say, I will speak."

"You can't judge before they decide. We must wait for justice and not make judgments ahead of time," the pope said. He was responding to a question posed by an AP reporter aboard the papal plane on a late evening flight to Rome after a pilgrimage in Poland about what would be the right thing to do in the Pell case.

Pell has long been dogged by allegations of mishandling cases of abusive clergy when he was archbishop of Melbourne and later Sydney. More recently, the prelate has been accused of child abuse himself when he was a young priest. Two men, now in their 40s, said he touched them inappropriately under the guise of play at a swimming pool during the late 1970s, according to Australian media, which reported the men have given statements to Victoria police.

Separately, a businessman this week told Australia's public broadcaster, ABC television, that he saw

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the cardinal exposing himself to three young boys in a surf club changing room in the late 1980s. Pell was at the time a senior priest in Melbourne.

Pell, 74, has denied any inappropriate behavior.

Francis cautioned against what he called doing "justice by gossip" concerning the allegations against Pell.

In a long-distance video hookup from Rome, the cardinal testified in February about clerical sex abuse, telling an Australian inquiry that he should have done more when a boy raised abuse allegations against a cleric in the 1970s.

Pell told the commission that the church had "mucked things up and let people down" and for too long had dismissed credible abuse allegations "in absolutely scandalous circumstances."

But he also acknowledged that he too had made mistakes in often believing the priests over victims who alleged abuse.

"I must say in those days, if a priest denied such activity, I was very strongly inclined to accept the denial," he said.

Pell led the Australian church until Pope Francis named him the Vatican's top finance manager in 2014.

Today in History The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, Aug. 1, the 214th day of 2016. There are 152 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 1, 1966, Charles Joseph Whitman, 25, an engineering student at the University of Texas in Austin, went on an armed rampage that killed 14 people, most of whom were shot by Whitman while he was perched in the clock tower of the main campus building. Whitman, who had also slain his wife and mother hours earlier, was finally gunned down by police.

On this date:

In 1714, Britain's Queen Anne died at age 49; she was succeeded by George I.

In 1876, Colorado was admitted as the 38th state.

In 1907, the U.S. Army Signal Corps established an aeronautical division, the forerunner of the U.S. Air Force.

In 1913, the Joyce Kilmer poem "Trees" was first published in "Poetry: A Magazine of Verse."

In 1936, the Olympics opened in Berlin with a ceremony presided over by Adolf Hitler.

In 1944, an uprising broke out in Warsaw, Poland, against Nazi occupation; the revolt lasted two months before collapsing.

In 1946, President Harry S. Truman signed measures establishing the Fulbright Program and the Atomic Energy Commission.

In 1957, the United States and Canada agreed to create the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD).

In 1971, the Concert for Bangladesh, organized by George Harrison and Ravi Shankar, took place at New York's Madison Square Garden.

In 1975, a 35-nation summit in Finland concluded with the signing of a declaration known as the Helsinki Accords dealing with European security, human rights and East-West contacts.

In 1981, the rock music video channel MTV made its debut.

In 1994, Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley confirmed they'd been secretly married 11 weeks earlier. (Presley filed for divorce from Jackson in January 1996, citing irreconcilable differences.)

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Ten years ago: Mel Gibson issued a statement in which he denied being a bigot; he also apologized to “everyone in the Jewish community for the vitriolic and harmful words” he’d used when he was arrested for investigation of drunken driving. Fidel Castro released a statement a day after ceding power to his brother Raul in which he sought to reassure Cubans that his health was stable after intestinal surgery.

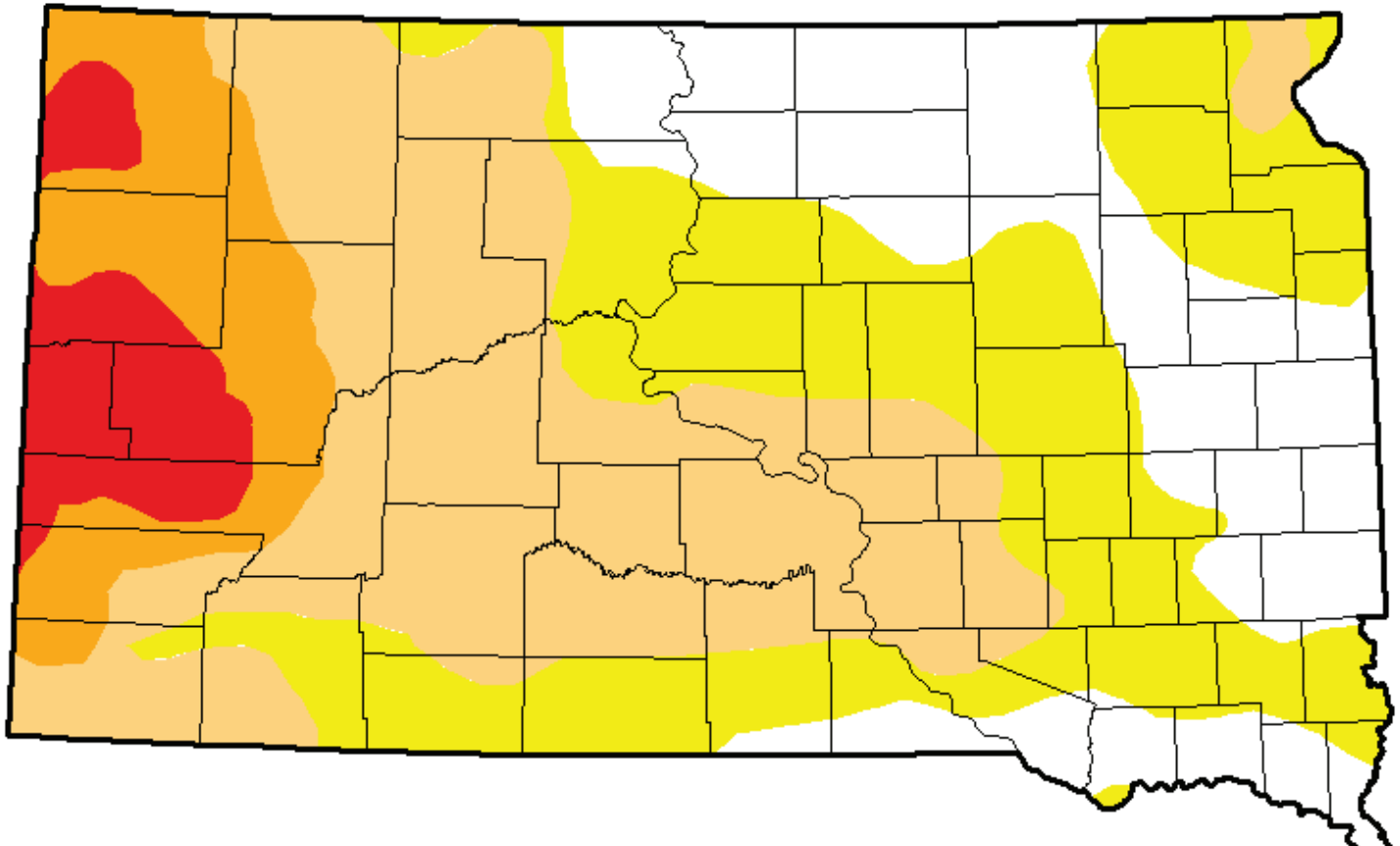
Five years ago: The U.S. House of Representatives passed, 269-161, emergency legislation to avert the nation’s first-ever financial default; Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords returned to the House for the first time since being shot in January 2011 to cast a “yes” vote.

One year ago: Japan’s Imperial Household Agency released a digital version of Emperor Hirohito’s radio address on Aug. 15, 1945, announcing his country’s surrender in World War II; the digital recording offered clearer audio, although Hirohito spoke in an arcane form of Japanese that many of his countrymen would have found difficult to comprehend. British singer and TV host Cilla Black, 72, died in Estepona (eh-steh-POH’-nah) in southern Spain.

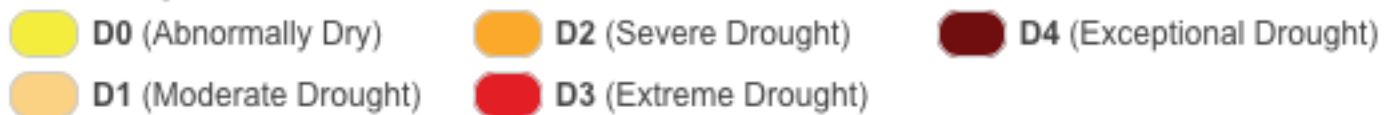
Today’s Birthdays: Singer Ramblin’ Jack Elliott is 85. Former Sen. Alfonse D’Amato, R-N.Y., is 79. Actor Giancarlo Giannini is 74. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Roy Williams is 66. Blues singer-musician Robert Cray is 63. Singer Michael Penn is 58. Rock singer Joe Elliott (Def Leppard) is 57. Rock singer-musician Suzi Gardner (L7) is 56. Rapper Chuck D (Public Enemy) is 56. Actor Jesse Borrego is 54. Actor Demian Bichir is 53. Rapper Coolio is 53. Actor John Carroll Lynch is 53. Rock singer Adam Duritz (Counting Crows) is 52. Movie director Sam Mendes is 51. Country singer George Ducas is 50. Country musician Charlie Kelley is 48. Actress Jennifer Gareis is 46. Actor Charles Malik Whitfield is 44. Actress Tempestt Bledsoe is 43. Actor Jason Momoa is 37. Actress Honeysuckle Weeks (TV: “Foyle’s War”) is 37. Singer Ashley Parker Angel is 35. Actress Taylor Fry is 35. Actor Elijah Kelley is 30. Actor James Francis Kelly is 27. Actress Ella Wahlestedt is 18.

Thought for Today: “The only fool bigger than the person who knows it all is the person who argues with him.” — Stanislaw J. Lec, Polish writer (1909-1966).

Drought Monitor as of July 26, 2016



Intensity:



Meanwhile, heat briefly compounded the effects of patchy drought across the northern and central Plains. In South Dakota, triple-digit, daily-record highs for July 20 soared to 108°F in Dupree and 107°F in Timber Lake. On July 24, South Dakota led the nation with 15% of its spring wheat rated in very poor to poor condition, followed by North Dakota at 10%. However, some areas received significant rain during the monitoring period, helping to trim drought coverage in parts of North Dakota and environs.