

# Groton Daily Independent

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## DAIRY QUEEN HELP WANTED

**Dairy Queen in Groton is now hiring. If you're looking for a fun job with part-time hours, flexible scheduling, please stop in for an application.**

**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, March 20

**School Lunch:** Super nachos, refried beans, romaine salad, fruit.

**School Breakfast:** Breakfast pizza, fruit, juice, milk.

**Senior Menu:** Creamed chicken, buttermilk biscuit, peas, pineapple/Mandarin orange sauce, cookie.

**Emmanuel Lutheran:** Bible Study at 6:30 a.m.

**St. John's Lutheran:** Christian Literature Circle at 7:30 p.m.

## Tuesday, March 21

Student Congress at GHS

**School Lunch:** Submarine, French fries, fruit, carrots and dip.

**School Breakfast:** French toast sticks, links, fruit, juice, milk.

**Senior Menu:** Hamburger steak, braised onions, mashed potatoes, broccoli, cookie bar, whole wheat bread.

## Wednesday, March 22

**School Lunch:** Tater tot hotdish, corn, fruit, Cauliflower and dip, garlic toast.

**School Breakfast:** Egg sausage biscuit, fruit, juice, milk.

**Senior Menu:** Herbed roast pork, baked potatoes and sour cream, tomato spoon salad, cinnamon apple sauce, whole wheat bread.

**Emmanuel Lutheran:** Lenten meal at 6 p.m. (Sunday School serves), worship at 7 p.m.

**St. John's Lutheran:** Confirmation at 3:45 p.m., Lenten Service at 7 p.m.

## Thursday, March 23

All State Band at Sioux Falls O'Gorman High

## Harry Implement

*"Family Owned & Operated Since 1935!"*



(605) 395-6421

Ferney



## Glimpse From Greenfield

**Brock Greenfield**  
**State Senator**  
**District 2**

At the outset of the 2017 Session, we knew that two matters were likely to dominate the dialogue. Early indications were that state revenues were coming in lower than originally expected, so the budget was going to take center stage. Also, because of the passage of IM 22 and the subsequent injunction by the court on Constitutional grounds, we knew that the legislature had many decisions to make relative to how to proceed with government ethics and campaign finance. In

the end, we found that revenues continued to fall off during session and they were revised downward a couple times after the December budget address, but we still managed to provide modest inflationary increases for education, healthcare providers who care for those who cannot care for themselves, and state employees, while balancing these increases with budget cuts elsewhere. We also passed nine bills dealing with replacing components of IM 22. I will outline these bills briefly and provide snapshots of a few other bills that passed that may be of interest to you.

Among the bills signed into law to replace IM 22 were HB 1073, the lobbyist gift ban bill that prohibits legislators, statewide elected officials and heads of Executive Branch agencies from accepting gifts from lobbyists; HB 1076 which establishes a government accountability board made up of four retired judges who have the authority to turn issues of concern over to the Division of Criminal Investigation; HB 1052 which provides "whistleblower" protections for public employees who identify illegal acts committed by those they work with; HB 1165 that requires annually (rather than bi-annually) updated financial interest statements for any person elected to statewide or local office; SB 131 to lengthen the time frame retired elected officials must refrain from returning as lobbyists from one year to two years; SB 151 which creates an ethics complaint process for elected officials and public employees and gives the Secretary of State the authority to levy penalties and refer repeated violations to the DCI; SB 54 which includes makes a number of clean ups and clarifies many campaign finance provisions, including prohibiting personal use of campaign money by stipulating that candidates may only use campaign funds for campaign expenses, expenses created by being a current or former elected official, or by making contributions to other political campaigns; SB 171, which creates a task force to establish campaign finance limits and readdress campaign finance laws; and SB 27 to establish stricter criminal penalties for conflicts of interest in which a public official illegally uses, or misappropriates, public finances.

The above-mentioned bills received varying degrees of support, but many of them had bipartisan sponsorship and received bipartisan support. I was the prime sponsor of SB 171, meaning it was my bill, and I was the Senate prime sponsor of HB 1076, which was brought by Representative Karen Soli (D) in the House. SB 171 was amended in the House to narrow the original focus of the bill from a broader task force to address government accountability, lobbyist restrictions, campaign finance, and ethics to simply a task force to address only campaign finance limits. I maintain that the task force should have the authority to look into all matters, so I asked one of the committees I serve on to bring the matter before the executive board to allow them to make the decision to reinstate the original language of the bill. Nevertheless, because of the other bills that were passed, clearly campaign finance limits on contributions to campaigns and ballot question committees will remain the major focus of the committee.

All things considered, I would consider the Session to have been a success. The budgetary difficulties notwithstanding, we managed to effectively pass legislation to make South Dakota a better state. Very early during the year, we passed the bill to establish the governing board for the Vo Tech institutions. This was in response to the passage of Constitutional Amendment R, which directed the legislature to do so. We worked with representatives of our technical institutes to put the framework in place. I believe this

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will prove to be a very positive change regarding the governance of these institutions of higher learning.

We also passed HB 1191, which requires cooperation with the Department of Social Services Division of Child Support as a condition of receiving SNAP (food stamp) assistance. If a non-custodial parent has not complied with conditions of his/her child support order, the custodial parent has to provide information to the department as to the whereabouts of the non-custodial parent who is in arrears. There are safeguards in place to allow a custodial parent protection if he or she has good cause to refuse to comply, but in the end, this will ensure that better methods are in place to ensure that the taxpayers are not shouldering the burden that should be borne by "deadbeat dads" or "deadbeat moms". Similar measures have passed in a handful of other states, so we are not doing anything unprecedented that will result in legal challenges.

Also, during the first week of Session in a press conference, I mentioned that the Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory had to be a top priority to ensure livestock, pet, and food safety, not to mention the safety of those who work in the lab and may be exposed to deadly viruses should air handlers fail. In visiting with Representative Greenfield, I know that she was going to speak more at length about this matter, but I wanted to spotlight passage of ADRDL legislation as one of the major successes of this session. It will allow SD to be upgraded to Biohazard Level 3 preparedness and will serve to benefit not only our agriculture producers, but every other South Dakotan who owns a pet or eats meat. While disease outbreaks are rare, they do happen, and they have happened here and in nearby locales close to our borders. Having a state-of-the-art facility to conduct research, analyze what diseases may be out there, and pinpoint exactly what herds, flocks, etc. may be affected is of major consequence to nearly everybody.

In the final analysis, I was the prime sponsor on four Senate Bills, all of which passed and were signed into law. I was also the Senate prime on six House Bills that passed both bodies. With only veto day remaining, this is a wrap on my columns for the year. I appreciate the opportunity to work for you and your interaction with me throughout the session as you helped to shape legislation and helped me to make informed decisions because of what you shared with me in one fashion or another. Serving you truly is an honor, and subsequently receiving the vote of confidence of my peers to serve as their President Pro Tempore has given me an opportunity to be an even more effective voice for you and all the people of South Dakota. I count my blessings each day as I strive to conduct the state's business with honesty and integrity. Thank you for allowing me to do so, and may God bless each of you.

**Now Open!**  
**GDI CLEAN!**  
**Downtown**  
**Groton**

**Paul - 397-7460**  
**Tina - 397-7285**



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## Bates Township Right-of-Way Notice

Bates Township Board of Supervisors reminds all landowners and tenants that the road right-of-way extends 33 feet from the center of the township road. This ditch is to be maintained and mowed. Any crops planted in the road right-of-way will be mowed and charged to the landowner, effective with the 2017 growing season.

Bates Township Board of Supervisors  
Betty Geist  
Township Clerk

## Bates Township Equalization Meeting Notice

The Bates Township Board of Equalization will meet at the Clerk's home on Tuesday, March 23rd, 2017 at 6:30 pm.

All persons disputing their assessments are requested to notify the clerk prior to the meeting.

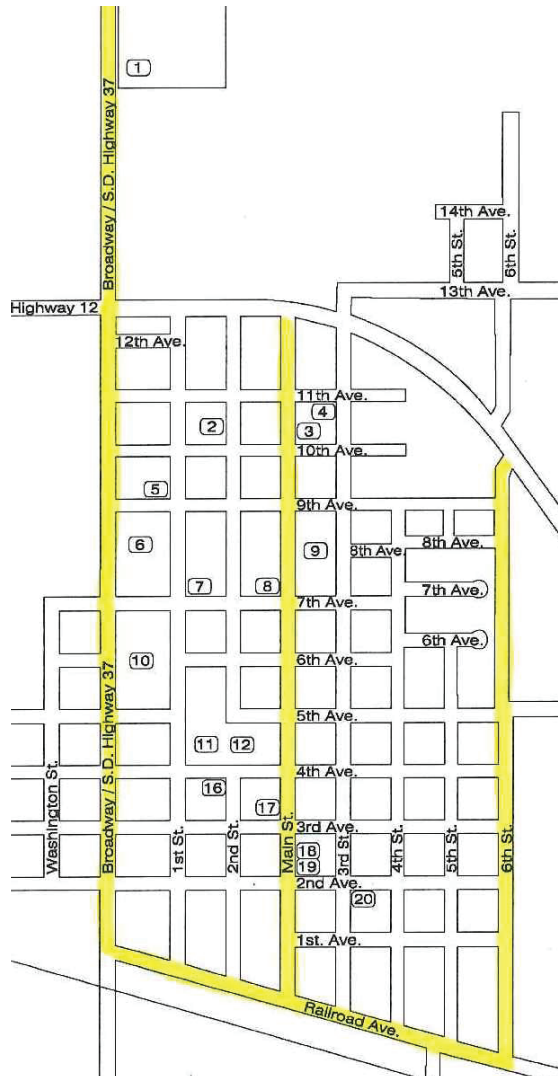
Betty Geist  
Bates Township Clerk  
14523 409th Ave  
Conde, SD 57434



Call or Text  
Paul at  
397-7460  
or Tina at  
397-7285  
for  
membership  
Information

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## EFFECTIVE MARCH 27TH, 2017 UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

**To Help Preserve Our Streets  
GROTON Garbage Pickup Service  
Will only be on Railroad Ave,  
Main St, 6th St, & Hwy 37**

Residents of HRH Mobile Home Park need to take their garbage to Highway 37.

Residents north of 13th Avenue (Olson and Jacobson Development) need to bring their garbage to the Bus Barns.

Please bring your garbage bags & cans to these streets for Tuesday pickup  
Thank you for your cooperation!!

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## Lana's Annals

**Lana  
Greenfield  
District 2  
State  
Representative**

Greetings to you. This is a wrap up of a couple of important issues that were finalized in the close of regular session. The first is the funding for the Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Lab (aka ADRL) in Brookings. The lab covers 2 phases: (1) add 80,763 S ft. of lab space, including biosafety level 3 space and level 2 enhanced necropsy space with equipment, containment technology, decontamination areas, airlocks, and sterilization areas to safely test samples which may contain highly contagious pathogens. (2) renovate the existing lab space to accommodate research needs.

Now all of that being said, the total projected cost is roughly 58 million. The plan for funding is as follows: One-time funding from SDSU/ADRDL-6 million; Livestock Disease Emergency and Animal Remedy Fund-2.6 million; bond 50.1 million with 25 years at 4 per cent interest, including 3 per cent authority fee; 3.3 million is needed per year to pay off the bond. Ag property tax relief from last year's half cent sales tax increase will be re-directed (around 2.5 million of it). An average cost per ag land acre is 13 cents. While I am not a great fan of building new buildings, the current lab is 50 years old and has been "bandaged together" enough. The vent and filter system is inadequate so it has become somewhat hazardous to even enter. This project is widely supported by several farm, livestock, and veterinary organizations in our state.

Another important bill which received bi-partisan support was SB66, the riparian buffer strip bill. These strips will be assessed at 60 per cent of ag land income value. Only land within 120 feet of a listed lake, river, or stream will be classified as a riparian buffer strip and grazing will be prohibited in that area from May 1-Sept.30. This bill got the Governor's support this year as it clearly avoids a separate ag land classification.

When we return to Pierre on Veto day, March 27, we will be re-examining five pieces of legislation. They are as follows: HB1156-concealed carry in the capitol; HB1072-concealed carry with no permit; HB1149 a bill to revise tax on telecommunication service..this would have decreased the tax from 15 to 14 cents on money collected for transmission services to the deaf. Each year there is extra money in that fund so the amount collected was in excess. Also vetoed was HB164, which would revise the maximum period of juvenile commitment to the Department of Corrections. (The problem seems to be the amendment that was introduced on it.) Finally, SB33, a funding mechanism for special education was vetoed. When SB35 was passed to appropriate .3 per cent to the education formula it also included special services; therefore, SB33 is not needed.

In closing, I think that our 2017 session was very successful. Coming to the forefront was a spirit of members of our chambers working together. As a result, we passed an array of bills that hopefully will positively affect farmers, families, businesses, hunters, medical people and facilities. We also successfully passed many bills that replaced the unconstitutional IM22. I have enjoyed your questions and support throughout the entire process. Working together in a respectful way is key to accomplishing what is needed. While we may differ in opinions sometimes, I have enjoyed the fair discussion each bill received. The debate in committee and/or on the floor broadens our prospective of good points to each piece of legislation plus possible negative ramifications that passage may cause.

Thank you for allowing me to represent you once again!

Rep. Lana Greenfield

## Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

Last week, we looked at the free agents who have departed the team and at those who have been added to the Vikings' roster. Since then, there have been a couple more players added, and one of those players signals a clear transition away from one of the greatest players in team history.

One of the biggest signings for the Vikings this offseason happens to be a player who was on the team last year. The Vikings signed Adam Thielen to a three-year deal that is worth at least \$17 million and can get as high as \$27 million with incentives. Thielen led the Vikings in receiving yards last season, and has quickly become a bright young player who has an even brighter future. He ranked 18th among wide receivers last season, according to Pro Football Focus. Thielen gets a full offseason to work with Sam Bradford, who will likely be looking his way plenty next season.

The Vikings also signed a former first round pick of the rival Green Bay Packers. In 2013, the Packers chose Datone Jones in the first round of the draft. In 2017, the Vikings scooped him up in the hopes he can live up to his potential. Jones' stats aren't amazing, but in my opinion he was miscast in Green Bay's 3-4 defense, where they asked him to lose weight and play both defensive end and linebacker. He will bulk up and play defensive end in Minnesota's 4-3 defense, and will likely shift inside to play defensive tackle in pass rush situations. Jones' contract is only for one year, so if he doesn't work out, it won't set the Vikings back.

The Vikings also signed free agent running back Latavius Murray, who will likely split carries with incumbent Jerick McKinnon. Murray will be a nice compliment to McKinnon, as he is a bigger back who can grind out the tough yards. Murray can also catch the ball, which will be great for versatility. Perhaps his biggest asset is his pass blocking, however, as Murray was rated the 3rd best pass-blocking running back by PFF last year.

With Murray, McKinnon, and a draft pick filling up the running back depth chart, it officially signals the end of the Adrian Peterson era. Peterson was the 7th overall pick in the 2007 draft, and leads the Vikings in nearly every important rushing category. Peterson has won many awards during his career, including the 2012 NFL MVP and 7 Pro Bowls, and will always be remembered as one of the greatest Vikings ever. But he is 32 years old and would have cost the Vikings \$18 million if he remained in purple and gold.

According to OverTheCap.com, the Vikings still have over \$18 million in cap space to work with. The team will need to set aside 5 to 6 million for rookie contracts, so that leaves over \$12 million to fill out the rest of the roster. It wouldn't be surprising to see the team look for a backup quarterback and a linebacker who will compete with Emmanuel Lamur for the open linebacker spot now that Chad Greenway has officially retired.

What do you think of the Vikings' signings? Who else do you think they should bring in? Reach out to me on Facebook.com/SkolJWright or on Twitter @SkolJWright





## Need Help With a Federal Agency? Give Us a Call

In the United States Senate, much of our time is focused on crafting and debating legislation, attending committee meetings and making sure federal policies are working for South Dakota families. But we also spend a great deal of time helping South Dakotans who are having difficulties dealing with a federal agency. It is a lesser-known but equally-important service that allows us to act as a liaison between you and the federal government. Washington is so broken and our federal bureaucracy has grown so large that individual needs of American citizens are too often lost in a sea of red tape. Our goal is to work with federal agencies to identify your issue and fix it.

Over the past two years, working with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on behalf of South Dakota veterans has been the most common situation we're asked to help with. We have assisted countless South Dakota veterans navigate the Veterans Choice Act and other VA programs here in South Dakota, while simultaneously seeking changes to federal policy that will improve the care they receive under the current law. We also work frequently with the VA to obtain overdue medals and awards for veterans and their families. I have been able to present a few of those medals to South Dakota veterans firsthand as I've traveled around the state. It is a very special honor to recognize these vets, with their family and friends in attendance, and say thank you to them for their service to our country.

In addition to helping veterans get the benefits and services they have been promised, we have also been able to bring families together by helping individuals get visas or expedited passports. We also help people access social security benefits, file tax returns, work with the Indian Health Service (IHS) and make sure that federal agencies are treating citizens fairly and with the respect and attention they deserve. I am very proud of the work we are doing to help South Dakotans who feel like they have been left behind by the federal government and have nowhere else to turn.

Our South Dakota offices are located in Sioux Falls, Pierre, Rapid City and Aberdeen. Our staff members who handle casework are available every week day, either in person, by phone or by email. You can find the contact information for our offices on my website, [www.rounds.senate.gov](http://www.rounds.senate.gov). My team works closely together across the state and in Washington, and we strive to provide a timely response to everyone who contacts us, particularly if it is an urgent matter in which we are able to intervene.

We take our work on behalf of South Dakotans very seriously, and I am pleased that we've been able to help so many constituents already since setting up our office two years ago. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you are experiencing difficulty dealing with a federal agency. We are here to help.



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## Today in Weather History

March 20, 1982: A winter storm dropped 10-20 inches of heavy wet snow across the northern two-thirds of South Dakota. Five persons were killed and eight others injured in indirect accidents. Downed power lines caused isolated power outages. A half dozen newborn calves died of exposure near Lemmon in Perkins County. In addition, 5% of the pheasant population in Brown, Edmunds, and Faulk Counties were killed. The weight of the snow collapsed a canopy of a grocery store in McLaughlin, Corson County, tearing out part of the brick front and breaking windows in the store.

March 20, 2008: An upper-level disturbance coupled with an area of low pressure moving across the Central Plains brought widespread heavy snow from the late afternoon through the early morning hours to north-central and northeast South Dakota. Heavy snow of 6 to as much as 18 inches fell in this area resulting in school delays and cancelations along with treacherous travel conditions. Some snowfall amounts included: 6 inches at Bowdle, South Shore, and Bradley; 7 inches at Eureka, Chelsea, Bristol, and Pollock; 8 inches near Hosmer, Osaka, and Roscoe; 9 inches at Victor; 10 inches at Westport and Ipswich. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included: 12 inches at Columbia, Milbank, and Wau-bay; 13 inches at Sisseton and Webster; 14 inches at Big Stone City; 15 inches at Summit; 16 inches at Roy Lake; 18 inches at Wilmot and Pickerel Lake State Park.

1924 - A late winter storm in Oklahoma produced nearly a foot of snow at Oklahoma City and at Tulsa. (David Ludlum)

1948 - The city of Juneau received 31 inches of snow in 24 hours, a record for the Alaska capitol. (20th-21st) (David Ludlum)

1984 - A severe three day winter storm came to an end over the Central Plains. The storm produced up to twenty inches of snow in Colorado, Nebraska and Kansas, and left a thick coat of ice from eastern Kansas across northwestern Missouri into Iowa. (Storm Data)

1987 - A storm produced blizzard conditions in Wyoming and eastern Nebraska, and severe thunderstorms in central Nebraska. Snowfall totals ranged up to 12 inches at Glenrock WY and Chadron NE. Thunderstorms in central Nebraska produced wind gusts to 69 mph at Valentine, and wind gusts to 76 mph at Bartley. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Squalls in the Great Lakes Region left up to eight inches of new snow on the ground in time for the official start of spring. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the western U.S. Seven cities reported new record high temperatures for the date, including Tucson AZ with a reading of 89 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Snow and high winds created blizzard conditions in western Kansas to usher in the official start of the spring season. Thunderstorms produced severe weather from east Texas to Alabama and northwest Florida, with nearly fifty reports of large hail and damaging winds during the afternoon and evening hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1990 - The northeastern U.S. was in the midst of a snowstorm as spring officially began at 4 19 PM. Snowfall totals in the Green Mountains of Vermont ranged up to thirty inches, and up to 15 inches of snow was reported in the Catskills and Adirondacks of eastern New York State. Totals in eastern Pennsylvania ranged up to 12 inches at Armenia Mountain. The storm resulted in one death, and forty-nine injuries. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2005 - An F1 tornado hits South San Francisco. Trees are uprooted. At least twenty homes and twenty businesses are damaged, including the city's new fire station.

2006 - Grand Island, NE, receives 17.8 inches of snow in 24 hours, breaking the old local record for the most snowfall in a day by 4.8 inches. 29.7 inches in 48 hours also breaks a record.

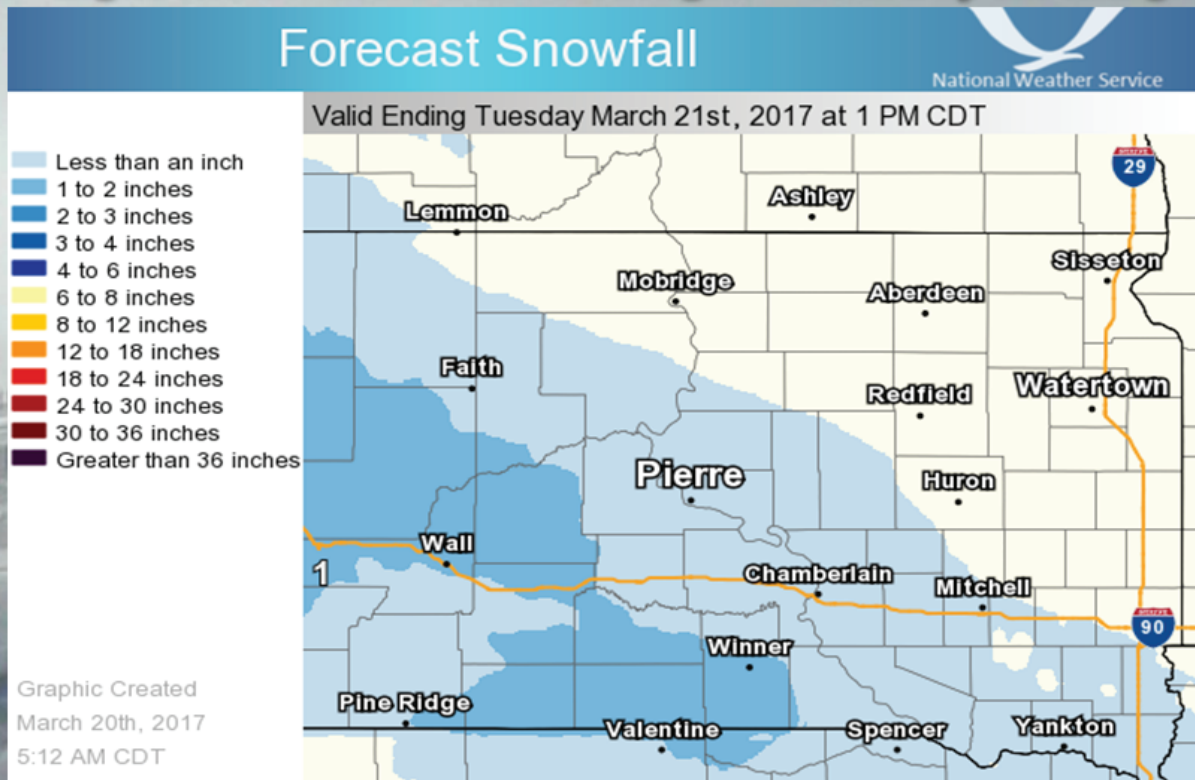
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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Slight Chance Rain/Snow then Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Snow then Chance Rain/Snow and Breezy	Mostly Cloudy	Rain Likely
High: 50 °F	Low: 26 °F	High: 36 °F	Low: 20 °F	High: 37 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 49 °F

## Welcome to Spring?

Light Snow Possible Late Tonight – Tuesday Morning



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

Updated: 3/20/2017 5:18 AM Central

Published on: 03/20/2017 at 5:24AM

Light precipitation can be expected this morning for locations along the North Dakota, South Dakota border. Another system crossing the region late tonight through Tuesday morning will bring light snow to western and central South Dakota. Snowfall amounts between a half inch, to two inches could be possible.

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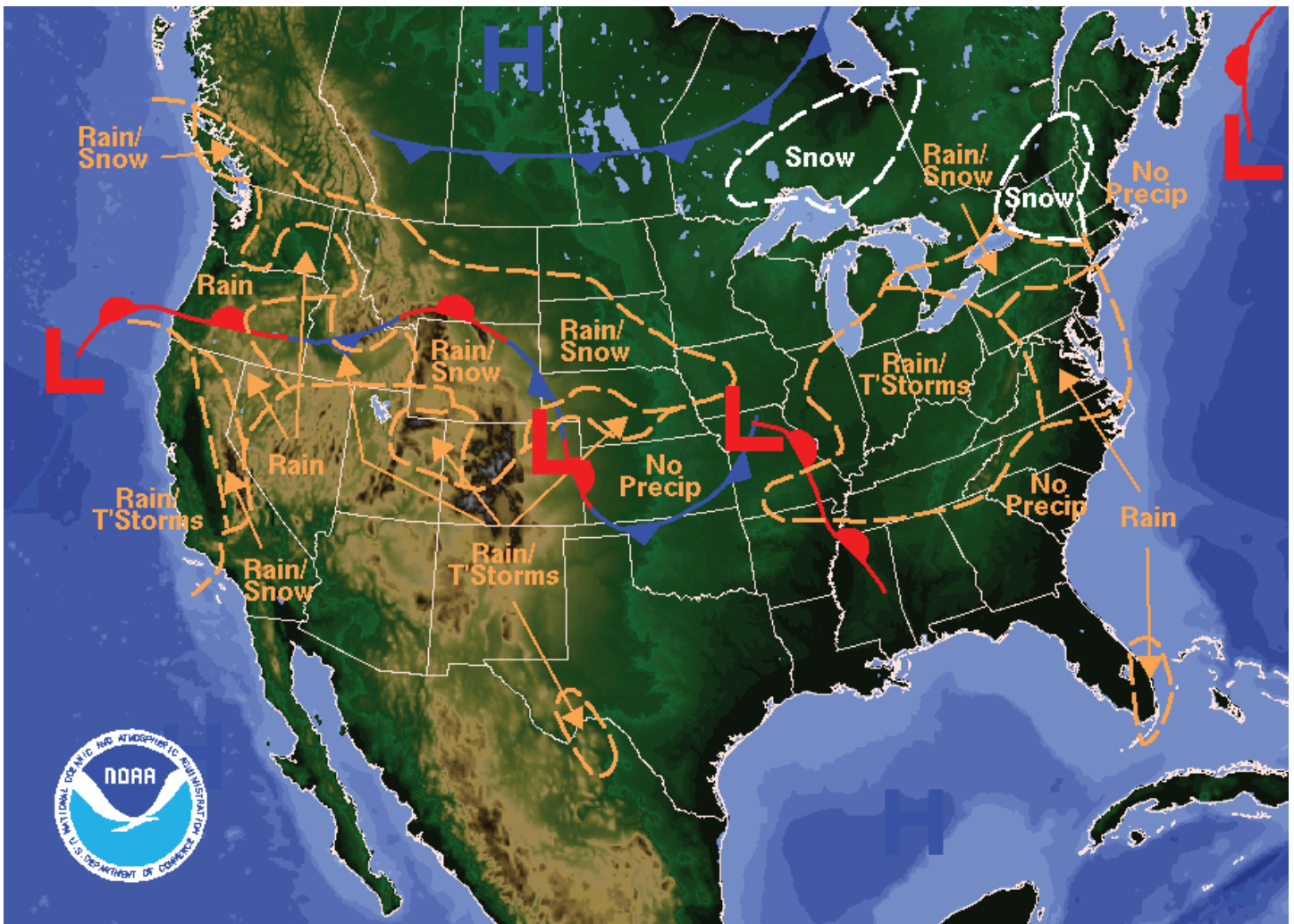
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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 63.8 F at 3:31 PM**  
**Low Outside Temp: 39.2 F at 12:00 AM**  
**High Gust: 39.0 Mph at 5:56 AM**  
**Snow: Precip: 0.00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 70° in 1910**  
**Record Low: -6 in 1965**  
**Average High: 42°F**  
**Average Low: 22°F**  
**Average Precip in March.: 0.67**  
**Precip to date in March.: 0.59**  
**Average Precip to date: 1.69**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.59**  
**Sunset Tonight: 7:46 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:34 a.m.**



Weather Forecast for Mon, Mar 20, 2017, issued 4:45 AM EDT  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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## THE "IN" IN WINNERS

It was the end of the football season and Ryan received a trophy for rushing for over 1,500 yards – the most in the history of his high school. On the way home his father said, "I'm proud of you, Son. I never won a trophy!"

"Dad," he asked softly, "did you ever try?"

Some never win anything in life because they never begin anything in life that is worthwhile. They wander aimlessly from one interest to another because they are unwilling to do what is necessary or make the sacrifice to become a winner.

Others do not win anything because they give in to doubts and difficulties. They lack the determination to seek help or advice from others who faced the same problems but refused to give in and persevered until they achieved their goals.

If we want to win, we need to begin where the Bible begins – with God. Moses wrote, "In the beginning God..." When we begin any project or attempt to achieve any goal we can count on God to be with us to guard us and guide us, to uphold us and sustain us.

Before we begin a task or work toward any goal we need to stop and pray earnestly and sincerely asking God to keep us from making mistakes, follow His will and give us His wisdom and strength. If we rely on Him in all things for all things, He will lead us from one victory to another.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we know that we can do all things through You and for You, if we remain in You. May we overcome all obstacles in life as we follow You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.



## News from the Associated Press

### **Rapid City man dies in motorcycle crash**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A 51-year-old Rapid City man is dead after a motorcycle crash. The Pennington County Sheriff's Office says deputies responded to the crash on Dark Canyon Road in the Rapid City area on Sunday morning. Authorities found the man's body. His name has not been released yet.

### **Body of 2nd missing duck hunter found in South Dakota**

ARLINGTON, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have found the body of a missing duck hunter in eastern South Dakota, three months after his boat capsized.

Brookings County Emergency Management confirms the body of 28-year-old Thomas Hill was recovered Saturday afternoon.

KELO-TV (<http://bit.ly/2mXJAcC>) reports a resident flying over Brush Lake in a helicopter spotted Hill's body. Authorities were notified and found his body on the lake near Arlington.

Hill was duck hunting with his brother, 23-year-old Matthew Hill of Volga, when their boat capsized in early December. Matthew Hill's body was recovered in December.

Officials had been searching for Thomas Hill's body ever since.

Information from: KELO-TV, <http://www.keloland.com>

### **South Dakota struggling to keep volunteer firefighters**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Volunteer fire departments across South Dakota are facing difficulty in attracting and retaining volunteers at a time when call volumes are dramatically increasing.

Only five of the 337 fire departments in the state are not fully or partially staffed by volunteers, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2niph89>) reported. But as the age of volunteers continues to rise as well as the number of fire and medical emergency calls, the number of volunteer firefighters willing to respond has stayed stagnant.

A National Volunteer Fire Council report said the number of fire department calls has tripled over the past three decades, from around 12 million in 1986 to almost 34 million in 2015.

"Ambulance services are suffering the same way the fire departments are," South Dakota Firefighters Association President Charlie Kludt said. "I think there is a lot more of a demand for fire departments to be assisting on medical calls more than what there was in the past." He estimated that around 70 percent of the department's calls are not for fires.

Kludt said recruiting new volunteers is challenging because of increased demands on people's time, as well as the demanding nature of the job.

"Nowadays there just seems to be so many more things that seem to be family-oriented activities that are taking up their time," he said, explaining the many South Dakota communities consist of people working all day and coming home only to sleep. "They're not home. It wouldn't do me any good to volunteer when I'm not around."

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

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## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

21-28-29-31-33

(twenty-one, twenty-eight, twenty-nine, thirty-one, thirty-three)

Estimated jackpot: \$40,000

Hot Lotto

01-04-12-13-44, Hot Ball: 8

(one, four, twelve, thirteen, forty-four; Hot Ball: eight)

Estimated jackpot: \$4.82 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$140 million

Powerball

13-25-44-54-67, Powerball: 5, Power Play: 3

(thirteen, twenty-five, forty-four, fifty-four, sixty-seven; Powerball: five; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$141 million

## Sioux Falls O’Gorman breaks away to Class AA boys title

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — JP Costello had a double-double with 27 points and 10 rebounds and Sioux Falls O’Gorman pulled away in the second half to beat Aberdeen Central 69-57 Saturday in the championship game of the South Dakota Class AA boys basketball tournament.

The Knights trailed 33-29 at halftime but outscored the Golden Eagles 20-7 in the third quarter and coasted to the title.

Costello was 13-for-18 from the free throw line. Matt Cartwright added 14 points and Joey Messler 13. Aberdeen Central was led by Cole Bergan’s 21 points. Christian Goetz added 13 points and 10 rebounds. The Eagles made 8 of 18 3-point attempts.

## Saturday’s Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS’ BASKETBALL

State A Tournament

Seventh Place: Chamberlain 65, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 52

Fifth Place: Dakota Valley 56, St. Thomas More 41

Third Place: Sioux Falls Christian 64, Tri-Valley 49

Championship: Tea Area 72, Madison 65

State AA Tournament

Seventh Place: Brookings 71, Harrisburg 70, 2OT

Fifth Place: Rapid City Stevens 62, Huron 48

Third Place: Sioux Falls Lincoln 67, Pierre 31

Championship: Sioux Falls O’Gorman 69, Aberdeen Central 57

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State B Tournament

Seventh Place:

Platte-Geddes 59, Harding County 32

Fifth Place: Langford 51, White River 38

Third Place: Sully Buttes 60, Parker 58

Championship: Bridgewater-Emery 63, Wolsey-Wessington 58

## Ethan Freidel scores 29 as Tea Area claims Boys Class title

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Ethan Freidel scored 29 points on Saturday as Tea Area held off a fourth-quarter rally to claim a 72-65 win over Madison and the South Dakota boys Class A basketball championship.

Freidel had six 3-pointers for the Titans (21-4), who led by 13 after three quarters, saw the lead cut to two, but pulled away down the stretch.

Noah Freidel scored 16 points and grabbed nine rebounds. Kade Stearns chipped in 12 points.

Madison, which made just 9 of 22 free throws, was led by Jadon Janke with 20 points. Aaron Fiegen added 12 points and Jaxon Janke 10.

Madison trailed the Titans 50-37 after three quarters but came roaring back in the fourth quarter.

With 2:33 to play, Marcus VandenBosch made a layup to cut the Madison (20-5) deficit to 58-56.

## Jamen Amend's 3 helps Bridgewater-Emery claim State B title

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Bridgewater-Emery rallied in the fourth quarter to beat the Wolsey-Wessington 63-58 in the South Dakota Class B boys basketball title game on Saturday.

The unbeaten Huskies (26-0) trailed after three quarters but took the lead for good on Jamen Amend's 3-pointer with 1:20 to play in the game. Amend finished with 19 points.

Joining Amend in double-figures were Cole Gassman with 17 points, Sam Amend with 13 and Sawyer Schultz with 12.

The Huskies shot 58 percent from the field, to 56 percent for the Warbirds.

Wolsey-Wessington got 15 points from Bennett White and 10 each from Lynden Williams and Riley Gohn.

The Warbirds led 31-24 at halftime.

## Akoi helps Sioux Falls O'Gorman to OT Girls AA title win

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Sebastian Akoi led all scorers with 18 points as Sioux Falls O'Gorman beat Harrisburg 53-48 in overtime in the South Dakota Class AA Girls basketball championship game on Saturday.

Akoi was one of three players in double figures for the Knights (14-11), who snapped Harrisburg's 23-game winning streak.

Emma Ronsiek had two 3-pointers and 13 points to go with eight rebounds. Ashlee Beacom added 11 points.

The game was tied 42-42 at the end of regulation and Harrisburg missed a 3-pointer with two seconds left.

Sami Slaughter led Harrisburg (23-2) with 15 points and 14 rebounds. Sydney Halling had 13 points.

## To aid ferrets, vaccine treats planned for prairie dogs

By MEAD GRUVER, Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Feeding peanut butter kibbles to millions of prairie dogs — by flinging the treats from four-wheelers and dropping them from drones — could be the next big thing to help a spunky

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little weasel that almost went extinct.

Slinky with a robber-like black mask across its eyes, the endangered black-footed ferret is a fierce predator. The up to 2-foot-long weasel feeds almost exclusively on prairie dogs, rodents that live in vast colonies regularly decimated by plague outbreaks.

The disease keeps threatening the food supply of ferrets bred in captivity and reintroduced on the landscape. Biologists are increasingly optimistic that feeding plague vaccine to prairie dogs can improve the ferrets' success rate.

Starting this fall, they hope to ramp up recent plague vaccination experiments to cover as much as 40 square miles of prairie dog colonies in several states in the West.

"We're not attempting to eradicate it. That would be very, very difficult at this point. We're just trying to manage it on selected colonies," said Tonie Rocke, who researches animal diseases with the U.S. Geological Survey's National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

They plan to treat prairie dog colonies with blueberry-sized vaccine pellets made with peanut butter, using a specially made "glorified gumball machine" to fling the pellets from all-terrain vehicles. They might also drop pellets from drones to avoid trampling the countryside.

"Prairie dogs love it. They gobble it up as fast as they can," said John Emmerich, a retired Wyoming Game and Fish Department deputy director who chairs Black-Footed Ferret Friends, a group working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the project.

At a rate of 40 to 50 pellets per acre, Emmerich figures they will need 1 million or more pellets for the job. A U.S. Department of Agriculture supply depot in Pocatello, Idaho, that also makes rodent poison for farmers will manufacture the pellets.

Plague, which killed millions of people in medieval Europe, wasn't a problem for prairie dogs until it arrived in the U.S. over a century ago. The disease now routinely cycles through prairie dog colonies across the ferrets' 12-state historical range.

Habitat loss to farming and poisoning by ranchers also has taken a toll on prairie dogs — and by extension the black-footed ferret, which lives in the rodents' burrows. The ferrets were believed extinct until a ranch dog brought home a dead one near Meeteetse, Wyoming, in 1981.

Beginning in the 1990s, efforts to breed black-footed ferrets at a facility near Fort Collins, Colorado, and release them into the wild have been successful in the sense that the black-footed ferret is no longer teetering on the brink.

Black-footed ferrets recently have been introduced at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge near Denver and to the Meeteetse ranch where scientists collected the last known wild ferrets to start the captive-breeding program. Descendants of those ferrets have been reintroduced at 28 sites and eight states, Canada and Mexico.

But plague, which is spread by fleas, remains a threat to the prairie dog colonies where ferrets live, said Fish and Wildlife spokesman Ryan Moehring.

Biologists often treat the colonies with insecticide to combat fleas. Plague vaccine likewise would need to be applied regularly — once a year, because prairie dogs typically don't live more than a few years, and new ones are born every year. But the vaccine could require a lot less work, especially if drones are used.

An estimated 300 black-footed ferrets now live in the wild. Getting them off the endangered list would require establishing 3,000 or more breeding adults on half a million acres — 780 square miles — of prairie-dog colonies, according to Fish and Wildlife.

The vaccine could help put that goal within reach.

"We'll see as we expand the acreage, and see how it performs, but I think so far the results are promising," Moehring said.

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Follow Mead Gruver at <https://twitter.com/meadgruver>



## Trump says Dems 'made up' allegations of Russia interference

By EILEEN SULLIVAN and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Monday accused Democrats of making up allegations that Russia interfered in last year's election, and said Congress and the FBI should be going after media leaks instead.

His tweets came just hours before a potentially politically damaging hearing in which FBI Director James Comey and National Security Agency Director Michael Rogers planned to testify on allegations of Russian hacking and whether there were any connections between Moscow and Trump's campaign.

"The Democrats made up and pushed the Russian story as an excuse for running a terrible campaign. Big advantage in Electoral College & lost!" Trump tweeted early Monday, as news coverage on the Russia allegations dominated the morning's cable news.

"The real story that Congress, the FBI and others should be looking into is the leaking of Classified information. Must find leaker now!"

A hearing Monday before the House Intelligence Committee, one of several congressional panels probing allegations of Russian meddling, could allow for the greatest public accounting to date of investigations that have shadowed the Trump administration in its first two months.

The top two lawmakers on the House intelligence committee said Sunday that documents the Justice Department and FBI delivered late last week offered no evidence that the Obama administration had wiretapped Trump Tower, the president's New York City headquarters. But the panel's ranking Democrat says the material offers circumstantial evidence that American citizens colluded with Russians in Moscow's efforts to interfere in the presidential election.

"There was circumstantial evidence of collusion; there is direct evidence, I think, of deception," Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., said on NBC's "Meet the Press." "There's certainly enough for us to conduct an investigation."

Rep. Devin Nunes, the California Republican who chairs the committee, said: "For the first time the American people, and all the political parties now, are paying attention to the threat that Russia poses."

"We know that the Russians were trying to get involved in our campaign, like they have for many decades. They're also trying to get involved in campaigns around the globe and over in Europe," he said on "Fox News Sunday."

The Senate Intelligence Committee has scheduled a similar hearing for later in the month.

It is not clear how much new information will emerge Monday, and the hearing's open setting unquestionably puts Comey in a difficult situation if he's asked to discuss an ongoing investigation tied to the campaign of the president.

At a hearing in January, Comey refused to confirm or deny the existence of any investigation exploring possible connections between Trump associates and Russia, consistent with the FBI's longstanding policy of not publicly discussing its work. His appearances on Capitol Hill since then have occurred in classified settings, often with small groups of lawmakers, and he has made no public statements connected to the Trump campaign or Russia.

But Comey may feel compelled to respond to Trump's unproven Twitter assertions that President Barack Obama ordered a wiretapping of Trump Tower during the campaign. Congressional leaders briefed on the matter have said they've seen no indication that that's true, and Obama's top intelligence official, James Clapper, has publicly called the claims false.

The Justice Department's disclosure Friday that it had complied with congressional demands for information regarding Trump's wiretapping tweets could allow Comey to avoid questioning by simply saying that the lawmakers already have the information they requested.

Yet any lack of detail from Comey will likely be contrasted with public comments he made last year when closing out an investigation into Hillary Clinton's email practices and then, shortly before Election Day, announcing that the probe would be revived following the discovery of additional emails.

## Russia says US missile systems a risk to regional security

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Russia views U.S. missile defense systems being deployed in northeast Asia as a threat to regional security, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said following talks Monday with Japanese officials in Tokyo.

Strategic concerns, both in northeast Asia and elsewhere, including Syria and Ukraine, were among a wide range of regional and global issues addressed in the one-day talks among foreign and defense ministers from Japan and Russia.

The two sides said they agreed to keep working toward resolving a longstanding territorial dispute that has prevented the countries from forging a peace treaty officially ending their World War II hostilities. They also joined in urging North Korea to refrain from “provocative actions” and to abide by United Nations resolutions demanding an end to its nuclear and missile testing.

The talks in Tokyo were the two countries’ first “two-plus-two” meeting of foreign and defense ministers since Russia’s annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.

Earlier this month, North Korea fired four missiles, of which three landed inside Japan’s territorial waters.

The U.S. and South Korea have agreed to install an advanced anti-missile system as a defense against North Korea. The Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense system, or THAAD, has angered both Russia and China. Russia also objects to U.S. missile defense systems in Japan.

“The U.S. global ballistic missile defense poses a deep risk to the security of the region,” Lavrov said. He said it was crucial to avoid upsetting the balance in the region and setting off an even greater arms buildup that could lead North Korea to step up its own military expansion.

Lavrov said the installation of the THAAD system was “a response completely out of proportion” to the threat from North Korea. He accused the U.S. of “pumping arms into the region.”

Lavrov also called for approaches that might encourage North Korea to engage in dialogue with its neighbors.

Lavrov met with Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu held talks with his Japanese counterpart, Tomomi Inada. The four ministers then held combined talks on international and bilateral issues.

Japan and Russia last held “two-plus-two” talks in November 2013. Meetings were shelved after that due to the crisis in Ukraine, as Japan joined sanctions against Moscow.

As expected, the Tokyo talks did not yield a breakthrough on conflicting Russian and Japanese claims to islands just north of Japan’s northernmost main island of Hokkaido — Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and the Habomai islets — that came under Russian control in the closing weeks of World War II.

But the countries discussed possible visa-free travel between Hokkaido and the area. They also are working toward joint development of fisheries, tourism and other areas that might help bridge the gap.

“I believe this joint development will become an important step to create an appropriate environment for resolving a peace treaty,” Lavrov told reporters.

Russia has been eager to enlist Japanese help with development of energy and other industries in its Far East.

But while Monday’s talks yielded an agreement to keep talking, Japan has concerns over Russia’s installation of surface-to-ship missiles on Etorofu and other military activity elsewhere on the disputed islands.

The territorial issue has lingered since World War II, but disputes between Japan and Russia date back much further, to the 19th century, when the Russian and Japanese empires fought for domination of northeastern China, then known as Manchuria, and the Korean Peninsula.

Japan’s victory in the 1904-05 Russo-Japanese war hobbled Russia’s expansion in the Far East and was the first significant triumph of an Asian country over a European nation. A treaty brokered by the U.S. enabled Tokyo to claim territories that were later regained by Moscow after Japan’s World War II defeat in 1945.

Associated Press journalists Howard Amos in Moscow and Emily Wang and Kaori Hitomi in Tokyo contributed to this report.

## 10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

### 1. SENATE HEARINGS SET FOR SUPREME COURT PICK

Thirteen months after Justice Antonin Scalia's death created a vacancy on the high court, testimony gets underway for the highly credentialed conservative judge, Neil Gorsuch.

### 2. RUSSIA INQUIRY GOES PUBLIC ON CAPITOL HILL

A congressional inquiry into Russian interference in the U.S. presidential election moves into the open with a hearing featuring FBI Director James Comey.

### 3. NEW MIDEAST BOX ON CENSUS IS SENSITIVE

Some are wary of singling themselves out a time when Trump is seeking to ban travel to the U.S. from some majority-Muslim countries.

### 4. WHERE LIFE IS ABOUT TO CHANGE

Brexit will affect Gibraltar and the 300,000 people that live in the low-tax, business-friendly rocky outcrop on the Mediterranean.

### 5. WHO'S HAPPY, WHO'S NOT

A new report shows Norway is the happiest country on Earth, Americans are getting sadder, and it takes more than just money to be happy.

### 6. HOW MARINES ARE ADDRESSING NUDE PHOTO SCANDAL

The Corps issues a longer and more detailed social media policy that lays out professional and legal ramifications.

### 7. WHAT HAS ADVOCATES FOR DISABLED CONCERNED

New York's move to a \$15 minimum wage could push low-paid health aides into less risky jobs and deepen a shortage in the field.

### 8. BATTER UP ... IN GAZA

Palestinian women don baseball caps on top of Islamic headscarves and field tennis balls with fabric gloves, giving a local feel to the treasured American pastime.

### 9. MUPPET WITH AUTISM A BREAKTHROUGH

Folks on Sesame Street have a way of making everyone feel accepted, and that goes for Julia, a Muppet youngster with blazing red hair, bright green eyes — and autism.

### 10. BRACKET BUSTERS LITTER NCAA TOURNAMENT

No. 7 seed South Carolina had the biggest takedown, knocking off No. 2 Duke 88-81 a day after Villanova, the defending national champion and the top overall seed, lost to Wisconsin.

## Counting Americans: A new Mideast box on census is sensitive

By LAURIE KELLMAN and JEFF KAROUB, Associated Press

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP) — Zahraa Ballout isn't "white," and she certainly isn't "some other race." If the government gives her the choice of checking a new "Middle East/North Africa" box on a census form, would she?

Yes, she says, despite some reservations about what it would mean to stand out after Americans elected a president who wants to ban travel from some countries in the region and has spoken favorably of registering Muslims in the U.S.

"I would feel some wariness because you don't know exactly the consequences or what's coming next after you check the box," says 21-year-old Ballout, a student in Dearborn, Michigan, who's been in the country three years. "I don't want to fool myself to think that checking another box (other than the new one) is going to protect me in some way."

Ballou's risk-benefit analysis reflects a new caution surrounding the way the U.S. government counts Americans, an every-decade exercise mandated in the Constitution that influences the nation's day-

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to-day operations in ways big and small. That includes representation in Congress and how taxpayer money is doled out — for education, public health, transportation and more.

The Census Bureau on Feb. 28 for the first time recommended including the new category, which would mostly affect Muslims. The Office of Management and Budget is expected to make the decision later this year. The move is the product of years of research and decades of advocacy for Arab and other groups from the region that pre-date Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

The Census Bureau said that when it tested a new MENA category in 2015, people of Middle Eastern or North African descent tended to check off that box. When it wasn't there, they'd select "white" or, increasingly, "some other race." Including the separate category, the agency said, is "optimal" to get a more accurate count of Americans.

"There's nothing for me to hide," said Hussein Dabajeh, 30, a lifelong Dearborn resident who said his ancestors arrived from what's now Lebanon in 1911. Dabajeh says he'd check the MENA box. "I can be American of Arab descent without being un-American."

The disparity can be seen in a basic statistic. The Arab American Institute estimates as many as 3.7 million people in the United States have Arab roots. The Census Bureau estimates there are 1.8 million Arab Americans in the U.S, according to data it has collected. Among other things, that means there are no accurate national numbers to provide clues to whether certain medical ailments are — as suspected — unusually common in people of that background, experts say.

Both tallies show explosive growth in that population since 2000. And both support the new box on the 2020 census that would represent people with backgrounds from 19 countries in the region.

But singling oneself out in that way has become sensitive at a time when Trump has linked a crackdown on Muslims with better national security. As a candidate, he called for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States." As president, Trump has twice ordered travel bans on people from certain majority-Muslim nations. Federal courts have blocked those orders, but on Friday, the Trump administration said it would appeal the latest ruling.

In 2016, Trump said the government should investigate mosques in the U.S. in much the same way the New York Police Department's now-shuttered "Demographics Unit" spied on Muslims with help from the CIA. The group assembled databases on where Muslims lived, shopped, worked and prayed, infiltrated Muslim student groups, put informants in mosques and monitored sermons, The Associated Press reported in 2011.

"The fear is legitimate. It's something I worry about," said Maya Berry, executive director of the Arab American Institute, which has been pushing for the change since before the 1990 census, when it put up posters reading, "We want to be counted, do you?"

"It's very hard for us now to sort of reject that wholly, because we've been working on it for decades," she adds. "We've been telling our members: We understand why you're concerned, it's a legitimate concern. Let's just proceed with caution."

Former Census director Robert Groves traces the worries in part to one "black mark" on the department's history. During World War II, the Census Bureau provided the government with neighborhood information to help it sweep up 120,000 people of Japanese descent for imprisonment, under an order by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. But he points out that the law prohibits workers from disclosing personal census information.

"The culture of the Census Bureau and this law has been successful over successive decades in allowing me and others to say this is the best protection that can be given to people," said Groves, now provost of Georgetown University.

While some members of the MENA community share the concerns, they also believe the government is powerful enough to discriminate against anyone.

"There are better ways to do that than the census," said Germine Awad, a University of Texas psychologist born in Egypt but raised in the United States. "That could happen at any moment."

Kellman reported from Washington.



## A Muppet with autism to be welcomed soon on 'Sesame Street'

By **FRAZIER MOORE, AP Television Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — Folks on Sesame Street have a way of making everyone feel accepted.

That certainly goes for Julia, a Muppet youngster with blazing red hair, bright green eyes — and autism. Rather than being treated like an outsider, which too often is the plight of kids on the spectrum, Julia is one of the gang.

Look: On this friendliest of streets (actually Studio J at New York's Kaufman Astoria Studios, where "Sesame Street" lives) Julia is about to play a game with Oscar, Abby and Grover. In this scene being taped for airing next season, these Muppet chums have been challenged to spot objects shaped like squares or circles or triangles.

"You're lucky," says Abby to Grover. "You have Julia on your team, and she is really good at finding shapes!"

With that, they skedaddle, an exit that calls for the six Muppeteers squatted out of sight below them to scramble accordingly. Joining her pals, Julia (performed by Stacey Gordon) takes off hunting.

For more than a year, Julia has existed in print and digital illustrations as the centerpiece of a multi-faceted initiative by Sesame Workshop called "Sesame Street and Autism: See Amazing in All Children."

She has been the subject of a storybook released along with videos, e-books, an app and website. The goal is to promote a better understanding of what the Autism Speaks advocacy group describes as "a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences."

But now Julia has been brought to life in fine Muppet fettle. She makes her TV debut on "Sesame Street" in the "Meet Julia" episode airing April 10 on both PBS and HBO. Additional videos featuring Julia will be available online.

Developing Julia and all the other components of this campaign has required years of consultation with organizations, experts and families within the autism community, according to Jeanette Betancourt, Sesame Workshop's senior vice president of U.S. Social Impact.

"In the U.S., one in 68 children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder," she says. "We wanted to promote a better understanding and reduce the stigma often found around these children. We're modeling the way both children and adults can look at autism from a strength-based perspective: finding things that all children share."

Julia is at the heart of this effort. But while she represents the full range of children on the spectrum, she isn't meant to typify each one of them: "Just as we look at all children as being unique, we should do the same thing when we're looking at children with autism," Betancourt says.

It was with keen interest that Stacey Gordon first learned of Julia more than a year ago. "I said, 'If she's ever a puppet, I want to BE Julia!'"

No wonder. Gordon is a Phoenix-based puppeteer who performs, conducts classes and workshops, and creates whimsical puppets for sale to the public.

She also has a son with autism, and, before she started her family, was a therapist to youngsters on the spectrum.

Although she figured her chances of landing the dream role of Julia were nil, her contacts in the puppet world paid off: Two friends who worked as Muppeteers on "Sesame Street" dropped her name to the producers. After submitting tapes, then coming to New York for an audition, she was hired.

In the introductory segment, Julia is having fun with Abby and Elmo when Big Bird walks up. He wants to be her new friend, but she doesn't speak to him. He thinks she doesn't like him.

"She does things just a little differently, in a Julia sort of way," Abby informs him.

Julia, chuckling, then displays a different-but-fun way of playing tag, and everyone joins in. But when a siren wails, she covers her ears and looks stricken.

"She needs to take a break," Big Bird's human friend Alan calmly explains. Soon, all is well and play resumes.

"The 'Meet Julia' episode is something that I wish my son's friends had been able to see when they were small," says Gordon. "I remember him having meltdowns and his classmates not understanding

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how to react.”

Gordon says her son, now 13, isn't drawn to puppetry. "He's more interested in math and science, and plays the piano brilliantly," she says with pride.

But she's having a blast being part of the show that helped hook her, as a child, on puppeteering.

"It is so much fun to be on set with everyone, and get to play up all the positive things I've seen with the kids that I've worked with," Gordon says. "At the same time, I come at this with a reverence. I don't want to let the autism community down."

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Frazier Moore is a national television columnist for The Associated Press. He can be reached at [fmoore@ap.org](mailto:fmoore@ap.org). Past stories are available at <http://bigstory.ap.org/content/frazier-moore>

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[www.sesamestreet.org/autism](http://www.sesamestreet.org/autism)

## Cheerleaders, chambermaids: The Supreme Court's broad reach

By NANCY BENAC, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The rhythms of daily life for ordinary Americans may seem far removed from the rarified world of the U.S. Supreme Court.

But from the time people roll out of bed in the morning until they turn in at night, the court's rulings are woven into their lives in ways large and small.

So pay attention as Congress prepares to take up the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to join the high court: The influence of the court's nine justices is hard to overstate — even if Justice Stephen Breyer once noted that their names are less well known than those of the Three Stooges.

"From the air you breathe and the water you drink to the roof over your head and the person across from you in bed, the Supreme Court touches all of that," says Elizabeth Wydra, president of the Constitutional Accountability Center.

A walk through daily life on the lookout for Supreme Court fingerprints:D

**Pillow talk**

It starts when your alarm goes off. Perhaps you glance over at your spouse.

The Supreme Court has had a big say over the decades in who can marry whom: In 1967, it ruled in *Loving v. Virginia* that laws banning interracial marriage were unconstitutional. And the *Loving* ruling helped lay the foundation for the court's 2015 ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that nationalized the right for same-sex couples to marry.

**Rinse and Spit**

Consider the water you swish when you brush your teeth: The high court has repeatedly taken up cases related to the Clean Water Act in an ongoing attempt to resolve confusion over which waterways are protected by the law, including streams that feed into drinking water supplies. This is still a live issue: President Donald Trump is working to undo former President Barack Obama's attempt to shield more waterways from pollution under the law, and more court cases are surely in the offing.

**California Raisins**

What's for breakfast? Maybe a bowl of raisin bran.

Yes, the Supreme Court deals with raisins. They were at the center of a property rights dispute that ended with a 2015 ruling in *Horne v. Department of Agriculture* that raisin farmers don't have to participate in a Depression-era program that let the government seize a portion of their crop to help keep prices stable.

**Cheerleaders and Chambermaids**

Time for work and school. The makeup of the student body at your child's school is tied to the court's

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landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954 that unanimously declared it unconstitutional to have separate public schools for black and white students, a turning point in the civil rights movement. In more recent years, the court has ruled repeatedly on how to ensure disabled students get a "free appropriate public education" under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. And it has helped define rules of the road for school choice programs.

How about the cheerleaders on the sidelines of the high school football game? The Supreme Court even goes there. Last year, the court took up a trademark dispute over cheerleader uniforms, debating matters of stripes, zigzags and chevrons and what makes a cheerleader look slimmer or more curvy. Look for a ruling on *Star Athletica v. Varsity Brands* this spring, with big implications for the fashion industry.

At work, the constitutionality of minimum wage laws and health and safety regulations dates to New Deal-era Supreme Court rulings. It was a 1937 case, *West Coast Hotel v. Parrish*, involving hotel chambermaid Elsie Parrish, that paved the way for the court's ruling that Washington state's "Minimum Wages of Women" law was constitutional. Later court rulings bolstered protections against racial discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Still a hot topic: Whether unions representing government employees can collect fees from workers who choose not to join. The high court split 4-4 on the question last year in *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, with the tie upholding the collection of "fair share" fees from nonmembers. The question is widely expected to make its way back to the court once the vacancy created by Justice Antonin Scalia's death is filled.

## Prime Time

After work, maybe you kick back to watch TV. How you watch — and what you see — both could be influenced by the court. For one thing, a 2014 court ruling in *ABC v. Aereo* put the kibosh on a company that let people watch and record broadcast TV online for \$8 a month on tablets, phones and other gadgets. The court said the company had violated copyright law by taking the networks' signal for free. Aereo was soon kaput.

What do you see on TV? If it's campaign season, thank — or blame — the Supreme Court's 2010 *Citizens United v. FEC* ruling for an explosion in political advertising by outside groups after the court threw out parts of a 63-year-old law prohibiting corporations and unions from running ads for or against political candidates.

## Home Rule

When it's finally time to turn in for the night, consider that which house you live in — and what it's worth — could be affected by the Supreme Court's handiwork. The court is frequently called on to interpret the anti-discrimination Fair Housing Act. This term, it is considering *Bank of America v. Miami and Wells Fargo v. Miami*, in which the banks are challenging the city's right to sue them for predatory lending practices that led to foreclosures and declining property taxes and property values.

And hope you can hang on to that house. In 2005, the court ruled in *Kelo v. New London* that cities can take away people's homes to make way for shopping malls or other private development. The court gave local governments broad power to seize property to generate tax revenue. But more than 40 states have since taken steps to amend their eminent domain laws to protect property rights.

Follow Nancy Benac on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/nbenac>

## Senate hearings get underway on Trump Supreme Court pick

By ERICA WERNER and MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thirteen months after Antonin Scalia's death created a vacancy on the Supreme Court, hearings get underway on President Donald Trump's nominee to replace him.

Judge Neil Gorsuch, 49, is a respected, highly credentialed and conservative member of the Denver-

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based 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. His nomination has been cheered by Republicans and praised by some left-leaning legal scholars, and Democrats head into the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on Monday divided over how hard to fight him.

The nomination has been surprisingly low-key thus far in a Capitol distracted by Trump-driven controversies over wiretapping and Russian spying as well as attempts to pass a divisive health care bill. That will change this week as the hearings give Democratic senators a chance to press Gorsuch on issues like judicial independence, given Trump's attacks on the judiciary, as well as what they view as Gorsuch's own history of siding with corporations in his 10 years on the bench.

The first day of the hearings Monday will feature opening statements from senators and Gorsuch himself. Questioning will begin on Tuesday, and votes in committee and on the Senate floor are expected early next month.

"Judge Gorsuch may act like a neutral, calm judge, but his record and his career clearly show that he harbors a right-wing, pro-corporate special interest agenda," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said at a recent news conference featuring sympathetic plaintiffs Gorsuch had ruled against. One was a truck driver who claimed he'd been fired for abandoning his truck when it broke down in the freezing cold.

Gorsuch's supporters dispute such criticism and argue that the judge is exceptionally well-qualified by background and temperament, mild-mannered and down to earth, the author of lucid and well-reasoned opinions.

As for the frozen truck case, Gorsuch wrote a reasonable opinion that merely applied the law as it was, not as he might have wished it to be, said Leonard Leo, who is on leave as executive vice president of the Federalist Society to advise Trump on judicial nominations.

"His jurisprudence is not about results," Leo said.

Gorsuch told Democratic senators during private meetings that he was disheartened by Trump's criticism of judges who ruled against the president's immigration ban, but Schumer and others were dissatisfied with these comments and are looking for a more forceful stance on that issue and others.

Democrats have struggled with how to handle the Gorsuch nomination, especially since the nominee is hardly a fire-breathing bomb-thrower. Democrats are under intense pressure from liberal voters to resist Trump at every turn, and many remain irate over the treatment of Merrick Garland, President Barack Obama's nominee for the Supreme Court, who was denied so much as a hearing last year by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Several of the more liberal Senate Democrats have already announced plans to oppose Gorsuch and seek to block his nomination from coming to a final vote. But delay tactics by Democrats could lead McConnell to exercise procedural maneuvers of his own to eliminate the 60-vote filibuster threshold now in place for Supreme Court nominations, and with it any Democratic leverage to influence the next Supreme Court fight.

Republicans control the Senate 52-48. The filibuster rule when invoked requires 60 of the 100 votes to advance a bill or nomination, contrasted to the simple 51-vote majority that applies in most cases.

## **Battered by scandal, Marines issue new social media policy**

**By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Battered by a nude photo-sharing scandal, the Marine Corps has issued a longer and more detailed social media policy that lays out the professional and legal ramifications for service members culpable of online misconduct. Among the coming changes: a requirement that all Marines sign a statement acknowledging they have read and understand the new guidelines.

The adjustments are designed to give leaders more leeway in prosecuting or punishing offenders. Former and current female Marines have reported their photographs and those of women in other services being posted on social media pages without their consent. Investigators are also looking into threatening and obscene comments Marines wrote accompanying the images.



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The new policy makes it clear how existing rules and the Uniform Code of Military Justice can be used to prosecute offensive, indecent or disrespectful online activities. But it creates no new laws, underscoring the legal quagmire posed by the internet and the constraints on military leaders posed by privacy laws and the First Amendment right of free speech.

Released in recent days by Gen. Robert Neller, the Marine commandant, the Corps' new guidance is one result of the ongoing criminal investigation.

"Marines should think twice before engaging in questionable online activities, and must avoid actions online that threaten the morale, operational readiness and security, or public standing of their units, or that compromise our core values," the policy states, addressing any content or comments that are deemed defamatory, threatening, harassing or discriminating on the basis of race, color, sex, gender, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or other criteria.

It makes clear that bad behavior can be punished under the military code.

The Marine Corps isn't the only service making changes. The Army is sending out a new message to its force, signed by senior leaders including Gen. Mark Milley, the Army chief of staff, and warning soldiers that online misconduct is unacceptable and passive tolerance of bad behavior by others is also wrong. The Army has routinely updated its social media policy to emphasize treating soldiers with dignity and respect, including in February before the Marine scandal surfaced.

The services are urging any victims of improper photo-sharing to come forward. The Naval Criminal Investigative Service said it is getting more tips every day, but investigators acknowledge the legal hurdles in finding and prosecuting offenders.

Twenty women have reported that they're victims. The probe has expanded in the last two weeks, as services beyond the Marines examine if their members are involved. So far, they say no victims from the other services have come forward. No men have said they were victimized.

One problem for investigations is that photos were shared by Marines and others on a private Facebook page that was members-only and men-only. And they were mainly housed on a Google Drive linked to the page. The Facebook page has been taken down and that Google drive link is also gone, although officials say the photos likely migrated to other sites.

Because the page is gone, investigators must rely on screenshots showing the screen names of military members, as well as reports from victims who heard about or saw the images. Tracking offenders is difficult because many may not use real names.

Another challenge: The bulk of the photos are selfies. Many were likely provided willingly by the person in the picture to someone else, or possibly posted on Instagram or another such site. The question then becomes whether sharing an explicit photo that was provided willingly is a crime.

A number of states have laws prohibiting so-called revenge pornography, and the military is looking at making a similar addition to its code, a change several senators are suggesting. But such a law may require prosecutors to prove the posting's intent was to harm the individual and that it had an impact. Both can be difficult to prove.

Officials also have to tread carefully to avoid restricting free speech. As an example, attempting to prohibit anyone from looking at or posting a nude photo on the internet would be difficult to do and nearly impossible to enforce.

The military, however, has greater ability to punish service members beyond strictly legal violations. Officers can be charged with conduct unbecoming an officer, and service members can be punished for harming the good order and discipline of their unit, or their military service. These broader categories give commanders greater flexibility in ordering administrative punishment or even forcing service members to leave the military.

## President of embattled Uber leaves after 6 months on job

By **OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ, Associated Press**

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Jeff Jones, president of the embattled ride-hailing company Uber, has resigned just six months after taking the job, the company confirmed Sunday.

In a brief statement, Uber didn't say why Jones left. "We want to thank Jeff for his six months at the company and wish him all the best," it said.

Jones told the tech blog Recode, which first reported his resignation, that his values didn't align with Uber's.

"The beliefs and approach to leadership that have guided my career are inconsistent with what I saw and experienced at Uber, and I can no longer continue as president of the ride sharing business," he said in a statement.

Jones is the latest of several high-level executives to leave the San Francisco-based company.

Last month, a top engineering executive, Amit Singhal, left Uber five weeks after his hire was announced. He allegedly failed to disclose that he'd left his previous job at Google because of a sexual harassment allegation.

Ed Baker, Uber's vice president of product and growth, resigned earlier this month. So did Charlie Miller, Uber's top security researcher, who left to join Didi, China's larger ride-hailing company.

Jones' departure comes days after Uber CEO Travis Kalanick said the company will hire a chief operating officer who can help write its "next chapter."

Jones had left Target, where he was chief marketing officer, to join Uber in September.

Uber has been hit by several controversies, including allegations that it routinely ignores sexual harassment. A recent video showed Kalanick profanely berating a driver who confronted him about steep cuts in Uber's rates.

Uber also acknowledged it has used a program to thwart authorities who have been trying to curtail or shut down its service in cities around the world.

The company also has faces challenges in court.

Waymo, a self-driving car company that used to be part of Google, last month sued Uber in federal court, alleging betrayal and high-tech espionage. The complaint accuses Anthony Levandowski, a former top manager for Google's self-driving car project, of stealing technology now propelling Uber's effort to build an autonomous vehicle fleet.

Uber denied Waymo's claims, calling them "a baseless attempt to slow down a competitor."

## Who's happy, who's not: Norway tops list, US falls

By **SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — If you want to go to your happy place, you need more than cash. A winter coat helps — and a sense of community.

A new report shows Norway is the happiest country on Earth, Americans are getting sadder, and it takes more than just money to be happy.

Norway vaulted to the top slot in the World Happiness Report despite the plummeting price of oil, a key part of its economy. Income in the United States has gone up over the past decade, but happiness is declining.

The United States was 14th in the latest ranking, down from No. 13 last year, and over the years Americans steadily have been rating themselves less happy.

"It's the human things that matter. If the riches make it harder to have frequent and trustworthy relationship between people, is it worth it?" asked John Helliwell, the lead author of the report and an economist at the University of British Columbia in Canada (ranked No. 7). "The material can stand in the way of the human."

Studying happiness may seem frivolous, but serious academics have long been calling for more testing about people's emotional well-being, especially in the United States. In 2013, the National Academy of

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Sciences issued a report recommending that federal statistics and surveys, which normally deal with income, spending, health and housing, include a few extra questions on happiness because it would lead to better policy that affects people's lives.

Norway moved from No. 4 to the top spot in the report's rankings, which combine economic, health and polling data compiled by economists that are averaged over three years from 2014 to 2016. Norway edged past previous champ Denmark, which fell to second. Iceland, Switzerland and Finland round out the top 5.

"Good for them. I don't think Denmark has a monopoly on happiness," said Meik Wiking, chief executive officer of the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen, who wasn't part of the global scientific study that came out with the rankings.

"What works in the Nordic countries is a sense of community and understanding in the common good," Wiking said.

Still, you have to have some money to be happy, which is why most of the bottom countries are in desperate poverty. But at a certain point extra money doesn't buy extra happiness, Helliwell and others said.

Central African Republic fell to last on the happiness list, and is joined at the bottom by Burundi, Tanzania, Syria and Rwanda.

The report ranks 155 countries. The economists have been ranking countries since 2012, but the data used goes back farther so the economists can judge trends.

The rankings are based on gross domestic product per person, healthy life expectancy with four factors from global surveys. In those surveys, people give scores from 1 to 10 on how much social support they feel they have if something goes wrong, their freedom to make their own life choices, their sense of how corrupt their society is and how generous they are.

While most countries were either getting happier or at least treading water, America's happiness score dropped 5 percent over the past decade. Venezuela and the Central African Republic slipped the most over the past decade. Nicaragua and Latvia increased the most.

Study co-author and economist Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University said in a phone interview from Oslo that the sense of community, so strong in Norway, is deteriorating in the United States.

"We're becoming more and more mean spirited. And our government is becoming more and more corrupt. And inequality is rising," Sachs said, citing research and analysis he conducted on America's declining happiness for the report. "It's a long-term trend and conditions are getting worse."

University of Maryland's Carol Graham, who wasn't a study author but did review some chapters, said the report mimics what she sees in the American rural areas, where her research shows poor whites have a deeper lack of hope, which she connects to rises in addictions to painkillers and suicide among that group.

"There is deep misery in the heartland," Graham, author of the book "The Pursuit of Happiness," wrote in an email.

Happiness — and doing what you love — is more important than politicians think, said study author Helliwell. He rated his personal happiness a 9 on a 1-to- 10 scale.

## China's trading partners alarmed by food import controls

By **JOE McDONALD** and **GILLIAN WONG**, **The Associated Press**

BEIJING (AP) — China's trading partners are bringing the top U.N. food standards official to Beijing in a last-ditch attempt to persuade regulators to scale back plans to require intensive inspections of food imports — including such low-risk items as wine and chocolate — that Washington and Europe say could disrupt billions of dollars in commerce.

The rule could inflame tensions with the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, who has promised to raise tariffs on imports from China, and the European Union.

Under the rule, due to take effect as early as October, each consignment of food would require a certificate from a foreign inspector confirming it meets Chinese quality standards. Other countries require

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such inspections only for meat, dairy and other perishable items.

That alarms suppliers that see China as a growing market for American fruit juice and snack foods, French wine, German chocolate, Italian pasta and Australian orange juice. They complain Beijing already uses safety rules in ways that hamper access for beef and other goods in violation of its market-opening commitments.

"It could bring down food imports quite dramatically," said the German ambassador to Beijing, Michael Clauss. "It often seems it is more about protecting Chinese producers than about food safety."

The requirement would add "unnecessary regulatory complexity" at a time when Beijing has promised to reduce regulation, Jake Parker, vice president of China operations for the U.S.-China Business Council, said in an email.

Chinese regulators say closer scrutiny is needed as food imports increase. They say they are willing to consider suggestions about alternatives, but foreign officials say they have yet to make any changes.

China contends the inspections requirement is supported by the Codex Alimentarius, the "Food Code" of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization, according to a person familiar with the discussions. The Codex sets quality standards but other nations say it recommends certificates only for risky products.

The president of the Codex council, Awilo Ochieng Pernet, a Swiss lawyer, will attend an April 6 seminar with Chinese officials in Beijing to explain its standards, according to that person, who asked not to be identified further. Participants plan to propose alternatives such as giving Beijing access to electronic records to track sources of shipments.

Ambassadors from the United States and another government expressed concern in a letter in January to Wang Yang, a deputy premier who oversees farming and commerce.

Officials of the United States, the EU, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Argentina, Chile and other governments sent a similar letter to the Chinese product quality agency, the General Administration for Quality Inspection, Supervision and Quarantine, known as AQSIQ.

EU officials believe requiring health certificates for all products "is not scientifically justified," the EU mission in Beijing said in a statement.

The rules would be a burden on foreign suppliers and "a waste of the precious control resources" that should focus on risky products, it said.

The rules follow an avalanche of scandals over Chinese suppliers caught selling tainted milk and other shoddy or counterfeit food products.

Western officials say the proposed food rules appear meant to shift responsibility away from AQSIQ, which Chinese consumers often blame for safety failures.

In a written statement, AQSIQ told The Associated Press it is talking with more than 30 exporting countries and regions including the European Union, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. The agency said it welcomes suggestions of "alternative solutions."

The measures are aimed at "promoting the international co-governance of food safety," the agency said. It said that would improve regulators' ability to trace imported food and block counterfeits.

"We have to assess the food management of areas abroad that export food to China to ensure the food safety of our country," the minister in charge of AQSIQ, Zhi Shuping, said at a March 14 news conference.

Zhi did not refer directly to the inspection requirement but said his agency's activities are "in line with international practice."

Beijing already is at odds with the U.S. and Europe over low-priced exports of steel and aluminum they say are hurting foreign competitors.

In the Trump administration's first trade complaint, a group for American aluminum producers asked March 9 for higher import duties on Chinese-made aluminum foil to counter what it said were improper subsidies.

Clauss, the German ambassador, said the rules should be submitted for WTO review — a step that AQSIQ said in its written statement it will take.

"We don't see that they really are trying to compromise on this so far," said Clauss. "To our knowledge, this doesn't exist anywhere else in the world."



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General Administration for Quality Inspection, Supervision and Quarantine: [www.aqsiq.gov.cn](http://www.aqsiq.gov.cn)  
Codex Alimentarius: [www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius](http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius)

## NCAA Tournament picks up steam just before Sweet 16

By JOHN MARSHALL, AP Basketball Writer

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — The first three days of this year's NCAA Tournament lacked the drama and multitude of upsets the previous few tournaments had, more March Meh-ness than madness.

A scintillating Sunday of games jolted the tournament to life like a triple shot of espresso.

The madness is back in March.

North Carolina, the South Region No. 1 seed, had the most frenetic finish, blowing a 17-point lead and then scoring the game's final 12 points to hold off Arkansas. South Carolina, the No. 7 seed in the East, had the biggest takedown, knocking off No. 2 Duke 88-81 in what was essentially a home game in Greenville.

"This is a new platform," Gamecocks coach Frank Martin said. "It's the first time in the history of our university that we're going to the Sweet 16."

Kentucky had its hands full until the end against Wichita State, needing two blocked 3-pointers in the final minute to beat the Shockers 65-62.

Oregon trailed most of the second half against spunky Rhode Island in the Midwest Region before scoring the final 7 points to beat the No. 11 seed Rams 75-72. Baylor had a late spurt to beat Southern California in a taut game and UCLA kicked its offense in high gear after a sluggish first half to beat Cincinnati.

Even the 20-point win by Kansas over Michigan State was filled with highlight-reel plays.

"It was a fast-paced game," Kansas coach Bill Self said. "The pace was faster than the final score indicated even in number of points."

Before Sunday, the bracket had been like a deflated balloon compared to previous iterations.

Last year's tournament was filled with upsets, buzzer beaters and spectacular individual performances. And that was just the first round. The dance ended in glorious fashion with Villanova's Kris Jenkins splashing a walk-off 3-pointer for the national title.

The highlights from the first three days of this year's tournament: The top overall seed going down in the second round and a player mistakenly fouling in the closing seconds when his team was up, not down.

Villanova, the defending national champion and the top overall seed, lost 65-62 to No. 8 seed Wisconsin. The Badgers play in the Big Ten and are headed to the Sweet 16 for the fourth straight season, so it wasn't exactly a David-and-Goliath scenario.

The other what-just-happened moment came in the first-round game between Northwestern and Vanderbilt in Salt Lake City.

That's where Commodores guard Matthew Fisher-Davis inexplicably grabbed Northwestern's Bryant McIntosh on purpose despite his team leading by 1. His mistake — he thought they were down 1 — sent McIntosh to the free throw line for the go-ahead points with 14.6 seconds left. Vanderbilt lost 68-66.

"An honest mistake," Northwestern coach Chris Collins called it. "You feel bad for players. He was tremendous today. Certainly, I was surprised."

Northwestern's magical run to its first NCAA Tournament in 113 years as a program ended in the next round, when the Wildcats put together a furious rally, only to come up short against No. 1 West seed Gonzaga.

As for upsets, Middle Tennessee had a decent one, knocking off Minnesota as a No. 12 seed, but then the Blue Raiders did it last year against Sparty — so why not expect it again?

Three No. 11 seeds got through the first round with upsets over No. 6 seeds, but two are out of the bracket already. Only Xavier, which beat Maryland and Florida State, is through to the Sweet 16.

Besides, 11-over-6 upsets are not really much of a surprise. No. 6 seeds have a winning record against the 11s once in the last eight years.

The buzzer beaters came down to a miss and a make that didn't matter.

Princeton's Devin Cannady had the miss, an open 3-pointer against Notre Dame. Oklahoma State had

the make in a 1-point loss to Michigan, which didn't matter to anyone except for gamblers, as the 3 meant the Cowboys ended up covering the spread.

The best shot of March Madness so far? Destiny Slocum's 70-foot heave for Maryland that looked like a soccer throw-in.

Sunday restored the drama-filled aura of March Madness, giving perhaps a springboard for the rest of the bracket.

Butler's Blue III is still in the tournament, so there's that. And it's safe to say what comes next is unexpected — by most, at least.

According to ESPN, just 18 of the 18.8 million brackets filled out on its website correctly predicted the entire Sweet 16. For some reason, that seems high.

More AP college basketball: <http://collegebasketball.ap.org> and [http://www.twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](http://www.twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## Jimmy Breslin, chronicler of wise guys and underdogs, dies

By VERENA DOBNIK, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Jimmy Breslin scored one of his best-remembered interviews with President John F. Kennedy's grave-digger and once drove straight into a riot where he was beaten to his underwear.

In a writing career that spanned six decades, the columnist and author became the brash embodiment of the street-smart New Yorker, chronicling wise guys and big-city power brokers but always coming back to the toils of ordinary working people.

Breslin, who died Sunday at 88, was a fixture in New York journalism, notably with the New York Daily News, and he won a Pulitzer Prize for pieces that, among others, exposed police torture in Queens and took a sympathetic look at the life of an AIDS patient.

"His was the triumph of the local, and to get the local right, you have to get how people made a living, how they got paid, how they didn't get paid, and to be able to bring it to life," said Pete Hamill, another famed New York columnist who in the 1970s shared an office with Breslin at the Daily News.

"Jimmy really admired people whose favorite four-letter word was work," said Hamill, speaking from New Orleans.

Breslin died at his Manhattan home of complications from pneumonia, according to his stepdaughter, Emily Eldridge.

It was the ruffled Breslin who mounted a quixotic political campaign for citywide office in the 1960s; who became the Son of Sam's regular correspondent in the 1970s; who exposed the city's worst corruption scandal in decades in the 1980s; who was pulled from a car and nearly stripped naked by Brooklyn rioters in the 1990s.

With his uncombed mop of hair and sneering Queens accent, Breslin was a confessor and town crier and sometimes seemed like a character right out of his own work. And he didn't mind telling you.

"I'm the best person ever to have a column in this business," he once boasted. "There's never been anybody in my league."

He was an acclaimed author, too. "The Gang that Couldn't Shoot Straight" was his comic account of warring Brooklyn mobsters that was made into a 1971 movie. "Damon Runyon: A Life" was an account of another famous New York newsman, and "I Want to Thank My Brain for Remembering Me" was a memoir.

Breslin was "an intellectual disguised as a barroom primitive," wrote Jack Newfield and Wayne Barrett in their book "City for Sale."

He acknowledged being prone to fits of bad temper. After spewing ethnic slurs at a Korean-American co-worker in 1990, Breslin apologized by writing, "I am no good and once again I can prove it."

But under the tough, belligerent personality was someone else - a son whose hard-drinking father left home when he was 6 to get a loaf of bread and never returned, Hamill said. Breslin's mother supported the family by working as a welfare system administrator, raising the boy along with her two sisters.

"The gruff personality was a mask a guy would don to get through the day," Hamill said. "Under the

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mask, what you found at his core was being raised by women, so life is more complicated than a punch in the jaw."

In the 1980s, he won both the Pulitzer for commentary and the George Polk Award for metropolitan reporting. The Pulitzer committee noted that Breslin's columns "consistently championed ordinary citizens."

A few days after the 2001 World Trade Center attacks, he wrote of the dwindling hopes for families. "The streets have been covered with pictures and posters of missing people," he wrote. "The messages on the posters begging for help. Their wife could be in a coma in a hospital. The husband could be wandering the street. Please look. My sister could have stumbled out of the wreckage and taken to a hospital that doesn't know her. Help. Call if you see her. But now it is the ninth day and the beautiful sad hope of the families seems more like denial."

In other columns, Breslin presented an array of recurring characters - Klein the Lawyer, Shelly the Bail Bondsman, Un Occhio the mob boss. They seemed to blur the line between fact and fiction, until the first pair became key figures in Breslin's 1986 exclusive on the multimillion-dollar Parking Violations Bureau scandal.

"Of course I would betray a friend for the biggest story of the year," he said after doing just that on the last manual typewriter in the News' old 42nd Street newsroom.

After such successes, he held court in Costello's bar in midtown Manhattan - until he quit drinking in his post-Pulitzer years.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo knew Breslin as a fellow Queens native and a close friend of the family. "He was irascible, tough, but he was an authentic voice for New York," Cuomo said. "He was the people's voice."

Breslin demonstrated few early skills as a wordsmith, graduating from high school before a brief, un-distinguished stay at Long Island University starting in 1948, while he was already working at the Long Island Press.

As a sportswriter, he bounced between papers until he landed at the New York Herald Tribune.

He became a news columnist in 1963 and quickly found a story when none seemed left to tell. As reporters from around the world arrived to cover President Kennedy's funeral, Breslin alone sought out the presidential grave-digger, Clifton Pollard, and began his report with Pollard having a breakfast of bacon and eggs at his apartment on the Sunday following JFK's assassination.

"Pollard was in the middle of eating them when he received the phone call he had been expecting. It was from Mazo Kawalchik, who is the foreman of the gravediggers at Arlington National Cemetery, which is where Pollard works for a living," Breslin wrote.

"Polly, could you please be here by eleven o'clock this morning?" Kawalchik asked. "I guess you know what it's for." Pollard did. He hung up the phone, finished breakfast and left his apartment so he could spend Sunday digging a grave for John Fitzgerald Kennedy."

Breslin later covered Robert Kennedy's assassination, in 1968, from a much closer angle. He was standing 5 feet away when Sirhan Sirhan struck at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles.

In 1969, Breslin joined author Norman Mailer on a twisted political ticket: Mailer for mayor, Breslin for city council president. After their predictable loss, Breslin observed, "I'm mortified to have taken part in a process that has closed the bar for the better part of the day."

By then, he was a successful author with a second book, "Can't Anybody Here Play This Game?" It was praised for its tales of the sad-sack New York Mets.

Breslin dabbled in television and magazine writing but returned to the newspaper business in 1976 as a Daily News columnist and became part of one of the city's most horrifying stories, the "Son of Sam" killings in 1977. David "Son of Sam" Berkowitz sent Breslin several letters and impressed the columnist enough for him to observe: "He's the only killer I ever knew who knew how to use a semicolon."

He jumped to New York Newsday in 1988, signing a contract for more than \$500,000 a year. During the Crown Heights riots in 1991, the then-61-year-old columnist commandeered a cab and ordered the driver to head directly into the action. About 50 rioters yanked Breslin from the taxi, robbed and beat him. He was left with only his underwear and his press card.

Three years later, he underwent successful surgery for a brain aneurysm - an episode that led to his

memoir.

While Breslin had crowds of admirers, he created an equal number of enemies. One of his most enduring feuds was with ex-Mayor Edward I. Koch, who once promised to "give the eulogy at Jimmy Breslin's funeral." Koch died in 2013.

Breslin had two daughters and four sons with his first wife, Rosemary, who died of cancer in 1981. He later married Ronnie Eldridge, a former New York City councilwoman.

On Sunday, just hours after her husband's death, she summed up their life together, saying: "We were married for 34 years and it was a great adventure."

This story has been corrected to show Breslin was 88, not 87.

## Man who drove suspicious car near White House is detained

WASHINGTON (AP) — A man who drove to a security checkpoint near the White House in a car that was deemed suspicious has been detained by the U.S. Secret Service.

Media outlets reported Sunday that the suspect has been identified by police as 29-year-old Sean Patrick Keoughan of Roanoke, Virginia.

The car was stopped Saturday night about a quarter-mile from the White House.

The Secret Service says it's investigating. It hasn't said what caused the car to be considered suspicious. Republican President Donald Trump wasn't at the White House because he and his family are spending the weekend at his resort in Palm Beach, Florida.

Earlier Saturday someone jumped a low metal barrier just outside a White House fence. About a week earlier a man breached an outer perimeter fence and scaled a vehicle gate to gain entry to the White House grounds, raising questions about lapses in security under the Secret Service's watch.

## Ryan: More help for older people needed in GOP health bill

By HOPE YEN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Days before a pivotal vote, House Speaker Paul Ryan said Sunday he will seek changes to a GOP health care bill to provide more help to older people. The new willingness to compromise was a bid for more support from moderate Republicans, who expressed continuing unease about the plan to replace Barack Obama's health law unless significant changes were made.

Ryan insisted that he felt "very good" about the bill's prospects but acknowledged that House leadership was "making fine-tuning improvements to the bill to reflect people's concerns."

A House vote was scheduled for Thursday.

"We believe we should have even more assistance. And that's one of the things we're looking at for that person in their 50s and 60s because they experience higher health care costs," the Wisconsin Republican said.

Under the GOP plan, older people who are not yet eligible for Medicare stand to be the biggest losers. It would shrink the tax credits they use to help buy insurance and it would increase their premiums because the bill allows insurers to charge more as people age and become more susceptible to health problems.

A Congressional Budget Office analysis last week said a 64-year-old with income of \$26,500 would pay \$1,700 out of pocket for insurance under the Affordable Care Act, compared with \$14,600 under the GOP plan. It estimated that 24 million people of all ages would lose coverage over 10 years.

On Sunday, Ryan said he believed the CBO analysis was not accurate because Obamacare wouldn't be able to last 10 years. But he allowed the additional assistance was one of several House revisions to be discussed in advance of Thursday's vote, along with possible changes to help low-income people more with tax credits and require able-bodied Medicaid recipients to meet work requirements.

"We think that we should be offering even more assistance than what the bill currently does," he said. Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price also said legislative revisions were possible.



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"If it needs more beefing up ... for folks who are low income, between 50 and 64 years of age, that's something that we've talked about, something that we've entertained, and that may happen throughout the process," he said.

Their comments came as President Donald Trump and House leaders seek to win support from GOP skeptics as prospects for the bill remain wobbly. Last week, Trump agreed to add fresh Medicaid curbs to appease some conservatives. But moderate Republicans are balking over the CBO's findings that millions more people would lack coverage even while premiums in many cases could rise.

In a Facebook post Saturday night, Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa., said he couldn't vote for the bill, stressing a need "to take our time and to get this right." He joins GOP Rep. John Katko, from a closely divided district in upstate New York, who cited inadequate insurance access and cost controls.

In the Senate, where Republicans hold a narrow 52-48 majority, prospects for the GOP bill also were uncertain as both moderates and conservatives criticized it.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she would not vote for the measure without additional changes to provide more aid to older Americans. She also wants an improved proposal that would cover more Americans and offer better Medicaid benefits than the current GOP plan. She joins at least four other GOP senators in opposing the bill after conservative Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas said Sunday he wouldn't vote for it as is. Sens. Dean Heller of Nevada, Mike Lee of Utah and Rand Paul of Kentucky are also opposed.

"I cannot vote for any bill that keeps premiums rising," Cruz said.

Rep. Steve Scalise, the Louisiana Republican who serves as majority whip, sent out a message late Sunday to encourage House Republicans to support the health care measure. "These next few days could define us for years to come," he said. "The American Health Care Act needs to pass the House of Representatives so the American people can be rescued from Obamacare."

He encouraged fellow Republicans pushing for support from House colleagues to "remind members that attacks from the Left are nothing new, and rarely accurate." He told them: "This is our moment to make history."

Separately, Ryan said he also expected the House to make changes to Trump's proposed budget, which calls for a boost to military spending but big-time cuts in domestic programs. Trump's plan, for instance, would cut \$5.8 billion from the National Institutes of Health, an 18 percent drop for the \$32 billion agency that funds much of the nation's research into what causes different diseases and what it will take to treat them.

Ryan said Congress was proud to have passed the Cures Act last year, which calls for additional NIH money for "breakthrough discoveries on cancer and other diseases," so he expects the proposed NIH cut to be revised.

"I would say, this is the very, very beginning of the budget process," he said. "We are encouraged that we're seeing an increase in defense because we think our military has been hollowed out. But I will say that NIH is something that's particularly popular in Congress. ... So, that is something that I think in Congress you'll see probably some changes."

Ryan spoke on "Fox News Sunday," Price appeared on ABC's "This Week," Collins was on NBC's "Meet the Press" and Cruz spoke on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Follow Hope Yen on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/hopeyen1>

## Tests find drugs, alcohol in blood of Paris airport attacker

By JOHN LEICESTER, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Blood tests determined Sunday that a suspected Islamic extremist consumed drugs and alcohol before a frenzied spree of violence that ended when he took a soldier hostage at Paris' Orly Airport and was shot dead by her fellow patrolmen.

The Paris prosecutors' office said toxicology tests conducted as part of an autopsy found traces of cocaine and cannabis in the blood of the suspect, Ziyed Ben Belgacem.

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He also had 0.93 grams of alcohol per liter of blood when he died Saturday, the prosecutors' office said. That is nearly twice the legal limit for driving in France.

The 39-year-old Frenchman with a long criminal record of drugs and robbery offences stopped at a bar in the wee hours Saturday morning, around four hours before he first fired bird shot at traffic police. Then, 90 minutes later, he attacked the military patrol at Orly, causing panic and the shutdown of the French capital's second-biggest airport.

Yelling that he wanted to kill and die for Allah, Belgacem wrestled away a soldier's assault rifle but was shot to death by two other soldiers before he could fire the military-grade weapon in Orly's busy South Terminal, Paris prosecutor Francois Molins said.

In an interview Sunday with French radio Europe 1, a man identified as the suspect's father said Belgacem wasn't a practicing Muslim and drank alcohol.

"My son was never a terrorist. He never attended prayer. He drank. But under the effects of alcohol and cannabis, this is where one ends up," said the father. Europe 1 did not give his name.

The father was released from police custody overnight Saturday. Belgacem's brother and a cousin were released later Sunday.

Belgacem called his father and brother early Saturday morning, minutes after he fired at a police traffic patrol, injuring an officer in the face, to say that he had made a stupid mistake, according to Molins, the prosecutor.

"He called me at seven, eight in the morning and said, 'There you go, Papa.' He was extremely angry, even his mother couldn't understand him," the man identified as the father said on Europe 1. "He told me: 'I ask for your forgiveness. I've screwed up with a gendarme.'"

A subsequent police search of Belgacem's flat found cocaine, Molins said.

Belgacem had been flagged as having been radicalized during a spell in detention in 2011-2012, Molins said. His house was among dozens searched in November 2015 in the immediate aftermath of suicide bomb-and-gun attacks that killed 130 people in Paris.

The Orly attack forced both of the airport's terminals to shut down and evacuate, sent passengers and workers fleeing in panic and trapped hundreds of others aboard planes that had just landed.

According to the soldiers, the attacker yelled: "Put down your weapons! Put your hands on your head! I am here to die for Allah. Whatever happens, there will be deaths," Molins said.

The drama, which caused no injuries except for the light wound to the traffic police officer, further rattled France, which remains under a state of emergency after attacks the past two years that have killed 235 people.

## Tillerson lauds China-US contacts in meeting with leader Xi

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The United States is looking forward to the first meeting between President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Sunday, on the final day of a swing through Asia dominated by concerns over North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

In talks with Xi in Beijing, Tillerson said Trump places a "very high value" on communications with the Chinese president.

Trump looks forward to "the opportunity of a visit in the future," Tillerson said, in an apparent reference to unconfirmed reports of plans for the two leaders to meet in Florida next month.

While few details of his talks have been released, Tillerson appeared to strike a cordial tone during his meetings in Beijing, in contrast to Trump's tough talk on Chinese economic competition during his presidential campaign.

Xi told Tillerson that China considered his meetings Saturday with Foreign Minister Wang Yi and top diplomat Yang Jiechi to have been productive and constructive.

"Both (Trump) and I believe that we need to make joint efforts to advance China-U.S. cooperation and we believe that we can make sure the relationship will move ahead in a constructive fashion in the new era," Xi said.

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Tillerson's Beijing visit followed his remarks in South Korea on Friday that pre-emptive military action against North Korea might be necessary if the threat from its weapons program reaches a level "that we believe requires action."

China, the North's biggest source of diplomatic support and economic assistance, hasn't responded directly to those comments, although Beijing has called repeatedly for all sides to take steps to reduce tensions.

China has agreed reluctantly to U.N. Security Council resolutions sanctioning North Korea, but is adamantly opposed to measures that might bring about a collapse of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's regime. Beijing fears Kim's fall would send waves of refugees into northeastern China and see South Korean and American forces taking up positions along its border.

Beijing's patience with Pyongyang appears to be growing thin, however. Last month, China potentially deprived Kim's regime of a crucial source of foreign currency by banning imports of North Korean coal for the rest of the year.

On Sunday, Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that he and his advisers discussed North Korea before returning to Washington from a weekend at his private club in Florida. On that subject, Trump said: "He's acting badly. He's acting very, very badly."

## Chuck Berry's spirit lives on through countless songs

By HILLEL ITALIE, AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Behind so many great rock bands and rock songs looms the music of Chuck Berry. Like the time a teenage Keith Richards ran into a childhood friend, Mick Jagger, at a train station in England and discovered they were musical soul mates.

"You know I was keen on Chuck Berry and I thought I was the only fan for miles," Richards wrote to a relative in April 1962. "I was holding one of Chuck's records when a guy I knew at primary school ... came up to me. He's got every Chuck Berry ever made and all his mates have, too."

Berry died Saturday at age 90, leaving behind not only a core of rock classics such as "Johnny B. Goode" and "Roll Over Beethoven," but countless descendants in songs clearly indebted to him in sound and in spirit.

You could assemble a heavenly mix tape just of the hits built around his guitar work. You can hear it overtly in the Rolling Stones' "Brown Sugar," which closes with a near-verbatim homage to "Johnny B. Goode," in Bob Seger's "Get Out of Denver" and the Beach Boys' "Fun, Fun, Fun," or in brief passages to songs that might not otherwise remind anyone of Berry, like the Eagles' "Peaceful Easy Feeling" or the Who's "Who are You."

"It started with Chuck Berry. He inspired us all," tweeted Rod Stewart, whose Berry-influenced songs included "Hot Legs" and "Stay With Me," a hit when he was with the Faces. "The 1st album I bought was Chuck's 'Live at the Tivoli' and I was never the same."

Berry also patented an animated, stream of consciousness storytelling style that artists have been using ever since. Listen to Bob Dylan unfurl his story of paranoia in "Subterranean Homesick Blues" or his old man's boast in "Thunder On the Mountain," or the Rolling Stones' mockery in "Respectable," songs inconceivable without Berry's "Maybellene" and "Too Much Monkey Business" among others. Berry's rocking groove and comic spirit inspire Creedence Clearwater Revival's sci-fi "It Came Out of the Sky," while Seger's "Rock and Roll Never Forgets" consciously brings Berry's teen world into adult life.

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So now sweet 16's turned 31  
You get to feelin' weary when the workday's done  
Well all you got to do is get up and into your kicks  
If you're in a fix  
Come back baby, rock and roll never forgets

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Critic Peter Guralnick notes that Berry's influence is both literal, in the way Richards might consciously

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imitate one of his riffs, and more general in his poetry and novelistic detail. The Cadillac in Berry's "Nadine" is not just a Cadillac, but a "coffee colored" Cadillac. He says one of Dylan's great accomplishments was absorbing Berry's gifts into his own style.

"Dylan called Berry the 'Shakespeare of rock n' roll' and with good reason," Guralnick said Sunday. "Had the Nobel committee been open to popular musicians before Dylan's era, they might have given the prize to Berry."

Berry didn't just create the music for so many rock n' roll lives but helped invent the characters — the bored student, the groupie, the would-be guitar hero — and placed them in an American landscape of restlessness, aspiration and motion. The simple pleasure, and underlying boredom, of The Beach Boys' "I Get Around" were the suburban Californians' take on Berry's "No Particular Place to Go." Springsteen's "Born to Run" is rock romance and adventure in the grandest Berry style.

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In the day we sweat it out on the streets of a runaway American dream  
At night we ride through mansions of glory in suicide machines  
Sprung from cages on Highway 9  
Chrome-wheeled, fuel-injected  
And steppin' out over the line

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Up ahead, and moving along, was Berry and the Garden State adventures of "You Can't Catch Me":

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New Jersey Turnpike in the wee wee hours  
I was rollin' slowly 'cause of drizzlin' showers  
Here come a flat-top, he was movin' up with me  
Then come wavin' by me in a little' old souped-up jitney  
I put my foot on my tank and I began to roll

## Key dates in the life of rock 'n' roll visionary Chuck Berry

By The Associated Press

Some key dates in the life of Chuck Berry:

- Oct. 18, 1926: Born Charles Edward Anderson Berry in St. Louis.
- Oct. 28, 1948: Marries Themetta Suggs with whom he has four children.
- Dec. 31, 1952: Needing a replacement for an ailing musician for a New Year's Eve show, pianist/bandleader Johnnie Johnson calls acquaintance Berry.
- May 1, 1955: Berry signs with Chess Records.
- May 21, 1955: Berry records "Maybellene," his version of "Ida Red."
- Aug. 1, 1955: "Maybellene" reaches No. 5 on Billboard's Best Sellers chart, goes on to top R&B chart.
- June 30, 1956: Berry's "Roll Over Beethoven" hits No. 2 on the R&B chart, No. 29 on pop chart.
- May 1957: Berry's first album, "After School Session," released; single "School Day" reaches No. 3 on pop chart.
- Feb. 24, 1958: Berry's "Sweet Little Sixteen" released. Weeks later, reaches No. 2 on Billboard's pop chart and tops the R&B chart.
- June 14, 1958: "Johnny B. Goode," his tribute to Johnson, makes the Top Ten.
- 1962: Convicted of transporting a minor girl across state lines.
- June 1, 1966: Berry leaves Chess for Mercury Records. Re-signs with Chess in 1970.
- May 1, 1972: "The London Chuck Berry Sessions" released, including novelty song "My Ding-a-Ling." Album becomes Berry's best seller, reaching No. 8 on the Billboard chart.
- 1973: Johnson leaves Berry's band.
- June 1, 1979: Berry performs at White House at President Carter's request, months before serving several months in prison on tax evasion.
- Feb. 26, 1985: Berry given Lifetime Achievement Award at annual Grammy Awards.
- Jan. 23, 1986: Berry inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.



—1987: Release of “Hail! Hail! Rock ‘n’ Roll,” the documentary of the Fox Theatre concert in St. Louis to celebrate Berry’s 60th birthday.

—1988, 1989: Berry sued for allegedly punching a woman in New York and later for allegedly videotaping women secretly while they were using the restroom at his St. Louis-area restaurant.

—1996: Berry begins performing monthly at Blueberry Hill’s Duck Room in St. Louis.

—November 2000: Berry sued by Johnnie Johnson, who seeks share of royalties on songs he co-wrote with Berry but were credited to Berry alone.

—April 13, 2005: Johnnie Johnson dies following dismissal of lawsuit, resumption of his and Berry’s friendship, and a few more concerts together at Blueberry Hill.

—Oct. 18, 2016: Berry announces on his 90th birthday that he plans to release his first album since 1979, called “Chuck,” sometime in 2017. A specific release date isn’t set.

—March 18, 2017: Berry dies at his home in suburban St. Louis.

Source: Interviews and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, Cleveland.

## While Trump talks tough, US quietly cutting nuclear force

By **ROBERT BURNS, AP National Security Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Air Force is quietly shrinking its deployed force of land-based nuclear missiles as part of a holdover Obama administration plan to comply with an arms control treaty with Russia. The reductions are nearing completion despite President Donald Trump’s argument that the treaty gives Moscow an unfair advantage in nuclear firepower.

The reduction to 400 missiles from 450 is the first for the intercontinental ballistic missile, or ICBM, force in a decade — when the arsenal came down from 500 such weapons. The Air Force says the latest cut in Minuteman 3 missiles will be completed in April, leaving the deployed ICBM arsenal at its smallest size since the early 1960s.

In 2014, President Barack Obama’s administration announced the planned ICBM reduction to tailor the overall nuclear force, including bombers and nuclear-armed submarines, to the New START accord that the U.S. and Russia sealed in 2010. Both nations must comply with the treaty’s limits by February 2018.

The shrinking of the ICBM force runs counter, at least rhetorically, to Trump’s belief that the U.S. has fallen behind Russia in nuclear muscle. In December, he tweeted that the U.S. must “greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes.” He has criticized New START as a bad deal.

It’s unclear how Trump intends to conduct a nuclear expansion, which critics call unnecessary and a potential drain on funds needed for non-nuclear forces. A long-term plan to replace and modernize the current nuclear force is already underway and will end up costing hundreds of billions of dollars.

As of March 14, the Air Force had 406 Minuteman missiles in launch-ready silos, Maj. Daniel Dubois, an Air Force spokesman, said Friday. In September the number was 417. Dubois said the number will be down to 400 by April. Also as part of the treaty’s compliance process, the Air Force in January finished converting 41 B-52H bombers to non-nuclear status.

Michaela Dodge, a defense policy analyst at the conservative Heritage Foundation think tank, says the U.S. should get out of New START.

“There should be a way to reverse those decreases,” she said, referring to the 50 Minuteman missiles pulled out of their silos. “As long as Russia continues to increase the number of its nuclear warheads under New START, we should not be decreasing.”

Russia’s warheads have surpassed the treaty limit of 1,550, and the U.S. is below the limit. But by next February, neither is expected to be above.

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, said Moscow would honor its New START commitment.

“It’s important for the United States to stay on schedule,” he said, arguing that such efforts “will help ensure that Russia does the same.”

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Based on military calculations, Obama declared in 2013 that the U.S. could safely reduce its nuclear force by one-third from New START levels. But negotiations to do so never took place. They seem even unlikelier after Russia's military actions in Ukraine and Kremlin rhetoric that U.S. officials have considered reckless and dangerous. However, Trump's suggestions of interest in a grand bargain with Russia, including nuclear reductions, could provide an avenue for fresh talks.

After taking office, Trump ordered a review of nuclear forces, a Pentagon-led process likely to take a year or more. Among the key questions: whether to continue Obama's weapons modernization plan and a possible withdrawal from New START. One element of the modernization plan calls for a new-generation ICBM force that could cost more than \$100 billion.

Sticking with New START would not necessarily constrain the U.S. for long. It expires in February 2021 unless both sides agree on an extension. Besides the overall warhead limit, the treaty allows each side a maximum of 700 deployed launchers, including missile silos. Russia and the United States can decide for themselves how their totals are apportioned among the three weapons categories: ICBMs, submarines and bombers.

The 50 underground silos from which the Minuteman missiles are being removed will be kept "warm," meaning capable of returning to active use. The missiles are being put in storage. Those decisions came after members of Congress from the ICBM base states — North Dakota, Wyoming and Montana — pushed for no elimination of silos.

The 400 remaining deployed ICBMs would be the fewest since 1962, according to a history of the force written by Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists.

## AP Explains: Senate confirmation and Supreme Court pick

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thirteen months after the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, the Senate is finally holding confirmation hearings to fill the vacancy, considering President Donald Trump's choice of Neil Gorsuch for the high court.

Republicans refused to even grant a hearing to former President Barack Obama's choice, Merrick Garland, insisting the next president should decide. Now, the Senate will exercise its "advice and consent" role, a politically fraught decision with liberals pressuring Democrats to reject Gorsuch.

The Senate has confirmed 124 Supreme Court justices since the United States was founded.

The process is arduous, with dozens of one-on-one meetings with senators in recent weeks giving way to days of testimony starting Monday. Gorsuch and the Judiciary Committee's 20 members will give opening statements that day. Gorsuch will answer questions Tuesday and Wednesday, and outside witnesses will testify Thursday.

A look at the confirmation process, its rules, terminology and politics:

### WHAT DOES THE CONSTITUTION SAY

The Constitution lays out the process in just a few words, saying the president shall nominate Supreme Court justices "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate." Senate rules and tradition dictate the rest. President Donald Trump nominated Gorsuch, a judge on the Denver-based 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, on Jan. 31 and set the process in motion.

### THE PREPARATION AND DAY ONE

Gorsuch has met with 72 of the 100 senators in advance of his hearings. Like other nominees, he has participated in mock questioning facilitated by the Trump administration. These are sometimes dubbed "murder boards" because of their intensity.

On Monday, Gorsuch will have to sit through 10-minute statements from each of the 20 members of the committee, which will take several hours. After that, Gorsuch will finally speak, delivering his own 10-minute opening statement.

### THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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In past hearings, the questions have centered around the nominee's legal qualifications, decisions as a judge, positions on political issues, interpretations of the Constitution, general legal philosophy and current legal controversies.

The stakes are high with any court pick, and especially now as confirmation of Gorsuch would ensure a conservative advantage on the court.

Gorsuch will face the same dilemma of many nominees before him — how to answer the questions clearly and concisely without weighing in on issues that could come before the Court or get himself in political trouble.

Democrats are likely to push him if he is reluctant. Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York has already criticized him for deflecting questions when he asked him during their meeting whether Trump's immigration ban is constitutional.

## THE OTHER WITNESSES

The fourth and final day of the hearings, Thursday, will feature outside witnesses, usually former colleagues and advocacy groups who will testify for or against Gorsuch. In the past, one of the first to testify has been the chair of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary. That group has given Gorsuch a unanimous "well qualified" rating.

## THE COMMITTEE VOTE

By tradition, the committee will report the nomination to the Senate floor even if the majority of the panel opposes the nominee, so the full Senate can have the ultimate say. So instead of approving or rejecting the nominee, the committee will usually report the nomination favorably, unfavorably or without recommendation.

Of the 15 most recent nominations, 13 were reported favorably. Robert Bork, whose nomination was ultimately rejected by the Senate, was reported unfavorably in 1987; Clarence Thomas, who won confirmation, was reported without recommendation in 1991.

Gorsuch is expected to be reported favorably by the Republican-led committee.

## THE PROCEDURAL VOTES

Gorsuch is expected to have support from more than half the Senate, but getting to that vote will require several procedural maneuvers. Some Democrats have already said they will try to hold up the nomination, which means Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., will have to hold a procedural vote requiring 60 votes to move forward.

Republicans have a 52-48 majority, so at least eight Democrats and independents will have to vote with Republicans. It's unclear whether Republicans will have those votes, meaning Democrats have the ability to block the nomination.

If the nomination is blocked, McConnell has another option. He could hold a vote to change the rules and lower the vote threshold. Former House Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., made a similar change for lower court nominations in 2013, a move called "the nuclear option." McConnell was extremely critical of that move but may have to do it if that's his last option to confirm Gorsuch.

## THE REAL VOTE

Once the Senate gets past procedural votes, it can hold a simple majority vote to confirm. In recent years, senators have sat at their desks during a Supreme Court vote and stood one by one to cast their votes. The votes have become more partisan over the years; the last unanimous vote was for Justice Anthony Kennedy in 1987.

## North Korea tests newly developed high-thrust rocket engine

By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — North Korea has conducted a ground test of a new type of high-thrust rocket engine that leader Kim Jong Un is calling a revolutionary breakthrough for the country's space program, the North's state media said Sunday.

Kim attended Saturday's test at the Sohae launch site, according to the Korean Central News Agency, which said the test was intended to confirm the "new type" of engine's thrust power and gauge the reliability of its control system and structural safety.

Kim called the test "a great event of historic significance" for the country's indigenous rocket industry, the KCNA report said.

He also said the "whole world will soon witness what eventful significance the great victory won today carries" and claimed the test marks what will be known as the "March 18 revolution" in the development of the country's rocket industry.

The report indicated that the engine is to be used for North Korea's space and satellite-launching program.

North Korea is banned by the United Nations from conducting long-range missile tests, but it claims its satellite program is for peaceful use, a claim many in the U.S. and elsewhere believe is questionable.

North Korean officials have said that under a five-year plan, they intend to launch more Earth observation satellites and what would be the country's first geostationary communications satellite — which would be a major technological advance.

Getting that kind of satellite into place would likely require a more powerful engine than its previous ones. The North also claims it is trying to build a viable space program that would include a moon launch within the next 10 years.

The test was conducted as U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was in China on a swing through Asia that has been closely focused on concerns over how to deal with Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs.

It's hard to know whether this test was deliberately timed to coincide with Tillerson's visit, but Pyongyang has been highly critical of ongoing U.S.-South Korea wargames just south of the Demilitarized Zone and often conducts some sort of high-profile operation of its own in protest.

Earlier this month, it fired off four ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan, reportedly reaching within 200 kilometers (120 miles) of Japan's shoreline.

Japan, which was Tillerson's first stop before traveling to South Korea and China, hosts tens of thousands of U.S. troops.

While building ever better long-range missiles and smaller nuclear warheads to pair with them, North Korea has marked a number of successes in its space program.

It launched its latest satellite — the Kwangmyongsong 4, or Brilliant Star 4 — into orbit on Feb. 7 last year, just one month after conducting what it claims was its first hydrogen-bomb test.

It put its first satellite in orbit in 2012, a feat few other countries have achieved. In 2013, rival South Korea launched a satellite into space from its own soil for the first time, though it needed Russian help to build the rocket's first stage.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, March 20, the 79th day of 2017. There are 286 days left in the year. Spring arrives at 6:28 a.m. Eastern time.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 20, 1942, U.S. Army Gen. Douglas MacArthur, having evacuated the Philippines at the order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, told reporters at a train station in Terowie, Australia: "I came out of Bataan, and I shall return."



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On this date:

In 1727, physicist, mathematician and astronomer Sir Isaac Newton died in London.

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte returned to Paris after escaping his exile on Elba, beginning his "Hundred Days" rule.

In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe's influential novel about slavery, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was first published in book form after being serialized.

In 1922, the decommissioned USS Jupiter, converted into the first U.S. Navy aircraft carrier, was re-commissioned as the USS Langley.

In 1933, the state of Florida electrocuted Giuseppe Zangara for shooting to death Chicago Mayor Anton J. Cermak at a Miami event attended by President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt, the presumed target, the previous February.

In 1952, the U.S. Senate ratified, 66-10, a Security Treaty with Japan. At the Academy Awards, "An American in Paris" won best picture; Humphrey Bogart received best actor for "The African Queen" while Vivien Leigh was named best actress, Kim Hunter best supporting actress and Karl Malden best supporting actor for "A Streetcar Named Desire."

In 1969, John Lennon married Yoko Ono in Gibraltar.

In 1977, voters in Paris chose former French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac to be the French capital's first mayor in more than a century.

In 1987, the Food and Drug Administration approved the sale of AZT, a drug shown to prolong the lives of some AIDS patients.

In 1995, in Tokyo, 12 people were killed, more than 5,500 others sickened when packages containing the deadly chemical sarin were leaked on five separate subway trains by Aum Shinrikyo (ohm shin-ree-kyoh) cult members.

In 1996, a jury in Los Angeles convicted Erik and Lyle Menendez of first-degree murder in the shotgun slayings of their wealthy parents. (They were sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.)

In 1997, President Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin opened talks in Helsinki, Finland, on the issue of NATO expansion.

Ten years ago: Saddam Hussein's former deputy, Taha Yassin Ramadan, was hanged in Baghdad, the fourth man to be executed in the killings of 148 Shiites. Rescuers found Michael Auberry, a 12-year-old Boy Scout, who was dehydrated and disoriented after four days in the wooded mountains of North Carolina.

Five years ago: Front-runner Mitt Romney won the Illinois Republican primary with ease, routing Rick Santorum for his third big-state win in a row. A 7.4-magnitude earthquake in Mexico damaged hundreds of homes and killed at least two people near the border between Guerrero and Oaxaca (wuh-HAH'-kah) states. Army linebacker Andrew Rodriguez received the James E. Sullivan Award, given by the Amateur Athletic Union to the top amateur athlete in the United States.

One year ago: President Barack Obama opened a historic visit to Cuba, eager to push decades of acrimony deeper into the past. A bus carrying university exchange students back from Spain's largest fireworks festival crashed on a highway south of Barcelona, killing 13 passengers. The United States won 13 golds out of a possible 26 events and 23 medals in all, making it the biggest haul in the history of the world indoor track and field championships which were held in Portland, Oregon.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Dame Vera Lynn is 100. Producer-director-comedian Carl Reiner is 95. Actor Hal Linden is 86. Former Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney (muhl-ROO'-nee) is 78. Country singer Don Edwards is 78. TV producer Paul Junger Witt is 76. Country singer-musician Ranger Doug (Riders in the Sky) is 71. Hockey Hall-of-Famer Bobby Orr is 69. Blues singer-musician Marcia Ball is 68. Actor William Hurt is 67. Rock musician Carl Palmer (Emerson, Lake and Palmer) is 67. Rock musician Jimmie Vaughan is 66. Country musician Jimmy Seales (Shenandoah) is 63. Actress Amy Aquino (ah-KEE'-noh) is 60. Movie director Spike Lee is 60. Actress Theresa Russell is 60. Actress Vanessa Bell Calloway is 60. Actress Holly Hunter is 59. Rock musician Slim Jim Phantom (The Stray Cats) is 56. Actress-model-designer Kathy Ireland is 54. Actor David Thewlis is 54. Rock musician Adrian Oxaal (James) is 52. Actress Jessica Lundy is 51. Actress Liza Snyder is 49. Actor Michael Rapaport is 47. Actor Alexander Chaplin is

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46. Actor Cedric Yarbrough ("Speechless") is 44. Actress Paula Garces is 43. Rock singer Chester Bennington (Linkin Park) is 41. Actor Michael Genadry is 39. Actress Bianca Lawson is 38. Comedian/actor Mikey Day ("Saturday Night Live") is 37. Rock musician Nick Wheeler (The All-American Rejects) is 35. Actor Michael Cassidy is 34. Actress-singer Christy Carlson Romano is 33. Actress Ruby Rose is 31.

Thought for Today: "Tell me what you pay attention to and I will tell you who you are." — Jose Ortega y Gasset, Spanish philosopher (1883-1955).