

# Groton Daily Independent

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**For Sale by Owner: Very nice two-story home 107 South First Street, Andover, SD – 10 minutes from Groton and 20 minutes to Webster. Includes two lots, garage, small shed, three bedrooms, kitchen, living room, dining room, 1 ½ baths, new roof. Call 605-351-7991**

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

**The cardboard/paper**  
recycling trailer at the school is **Closed**

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## Sunday, April 16

EASTER SUNDAY

**St. John's Lutheran:** Worship with Communion at 9 a.m. (No Sunday School)

**Emmanuel Lutheran:** Sunrise service at 7 a.m., Breakfast by League at 8 a.m., Worship with communion at 10:15 a.m., Sunday School serves at nursing home at 3 p.m.

**Heaven Bound Ministries, Pierpont:** Worship at 10 a.m.

**United Methodist:** Sunrise service at 7 a.m., Easter Egg Hunt after lunch at 8 a.m., UMW Easter Brunch at 8 a.m., Conde Worship at 9 a.m., Coffee Fellowship at 10 a.m., Groton worship at 11 a.m.

**Catholic Parish:** Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church at 9 a.m., then at St. Joseph in Turton at 11 a.m.

## Monday, April 17

EASTER MONDAY - NO SCHOOL

**Senior Menu:** Spanish rice with hamburger, green beans, Mandarin oranges, chocolate pudding, whole wheat bread.

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

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

**United Methodist:** Evening Bible Study at 7 p.m.

## Tuesday, April 18

**Senior Menu:** Hot turkey combo, mashed potato and gravy, 7 layer salad, peaches.

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



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David McGannon works on a patch in his yard after a tree was moved. He had to have a tree moved as it was in the way of the SD37 project that is going to be done this summer. After the tree was moved, he hauled in dirt, then added more dirt where he will plant grass seed just before the expected rain this week.

A photograph of the interior of a laundry facility. In the foreground, there is a sign on a counter with contact information for GDI Clean! The sign reads: "Welcome to GDI Clean! For any questions or problems, call or text Paul 605-397-7460 or Tina 605-397-7285". In the background, there are several rows of white washing machines and a set of stairs leading to another level. The floor is dark and polished.

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

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

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The Lord, almighty Jesus Christ has resurrected!  
May this Easter fill you with joy, happiness, and more blessings for you and your family.

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## Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

We're nearing the end of the roster breakdown! This week we will be covering the safeties and special teams, and next week we'll be looking ahead at the draft. The draft is my favorite time of the year, and I can't wait to bring you some predictions and draft profiles of the players the Vikings select.

### Safeties

Harrison Smith is one of the best safeties in the league. Last year, he dealt with injuries and still managed to earn a Pro Football Focus player grade of 85.4, good for 10th best in the NFL. He underwent ankle surgery in February to clean up some issues, and should be good to go once training camp rolls around. Harrison signed a contract extension last summer, which made him one of the highest paid safeties in the league and locks him up through the 2021 season.

Andrew Sendejo was the starter opposite Harrison Smith last season. Sendejo played much better last season compared to 2015, which was a major relief, as he was one of the weakest links on the team two years ago. His player grade was 52.3 in 2015, one of the lowest marks in the league, but he raised that grade up to 76.7 last season. Sendejo also signed an extension last offseason, which locks him up through the 2019 season, but the Vikings can cut him at any time without suffering any cap hits.

The Vikings have three other safeties listed on the official team roster.

Antone Exum was drafted in the 6th round of the 2014 NFL draft, but after starting two games in 2015, he didn't see the field in 2016. He will need to show vast improvement if he intends to stay on the roster.

Anthony Harris was signed as an undrafted rookie in 2015. He started three games last year because of injuries to Smith and Sendejo, but didn't play well. According to PFF, Harris had one of the worst coverage grades of any safety in the league. He is still young and will likely improve, but last season didn't do him any favors.

Jayron Kearse was drafted in the 7th round of last year's draft, and quickly became a fan favorite through training camp. Kearse is a big safety (6'4", 220lbs) and has tons of athletic ability. He impressed the coaching staff so much that he was able to start a game last season. If he can put it all together, it won't surprise me to see him starting next to Harrison Smith soon.

### Special Teams

The Vikings started last season with Blair Walsh as the kicker and Jeff Locke as the punter. Walsh was released during the season, and Locke was allowed to walk this offseason (he has since signed in Indianapolis).

Kai Forbath was signed to replace Blair Walsh last season, and he didn't miss a single field goal over his seven starts in Minnesota. Forbath did miss three extra point attempts, however, although one was blocked so it can't really be blamed on the kicker.

Jeff Locke was one of the worst punters in the league since being drafted in the 5th round of the 2014 draft. According to ESPN, the Vikings were 30th in the league last year, averaging only 42.6 yards per punt.

The Vikings have brought in two punters this offseason to compete for the vacant position. Ryan Quigley has been in the league since 2012 and is on his fourth team. He averages a measly 44.6 yards per punt, and will likely be cut in training camp. Taylor Symmank is the other punter on the Vikings roster. Symmank was undrafted in 2016, although he did attend the Vikings' rookie minicamp. He is also a long shot to make the roster.

It won't surprise me to see the Vikings spend another draft pick on a punter in the upcoming draft.

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## Today in Weather History

April 16, 1967: Severe thunderstorms moved through areas of central and eastern South Dakota, producing large hail, damaging winds, and even a few tornadoes. The event began in the mid-afternoon hours and lasted into the evening. One of the tornadoes, an F1, formed over Lake Poinsette in Hamlin County. From there it moved from southwest to northeast, toward the northern shore, then made a loop and traveled toward the southeast. Two trailer houses and a few small buildings were damaged. 11 people were injured when a trailer house was turned over onto one side, and then turned over on the other side. In Brown County, the storms produced hail 1.75 inches in diameter and 61mph winds.

April 16, 1976: A deepening low-pressure system moved northward out of Nebraska and across western South Dakota. Winds of 60 to 80 mph were reported across the area with gusts over 90 mph in southwest Minnesota. Some recorded wind speeds included 62 mph at Sioux Falls, 70 mph at Brookings, and 82 mph at Watertown. Many buildings were damaged, and many roofs were blown off and at Sioux Falls and Huron airports planes were overturned. Across southwest Minnesota, many trees were uprooted, and several trucks were blown off of the highway. Across the area, many, barns, outbuildings, sheds, and older structures were demolished.

April 16, 2000: Heavy snow of 6 to 9 inches fell across parts of central and northeast South Dakota during the morning hours. The heavy snow caused many roads to become slushy and difficult to travel. The heavy snow also downed some tree branches. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Ferney, Miller, and Webster; 7 inches at Agar, Mellette, and Twin Brooks; 8 inches at Gettysburg, and 9 inches at Faulkton.

1849: Charleston, South Carolina recorded their latest freeze ever with a temperature of 32 degrees while 6 inches of snow fell at Wilmington, North Carolina. Snow fell as far south as Milledgeville, Georgia. A damaging hard freeze occurred from Texas to Georgia devastating the cotton crop.

1851: "The Lighthouse Storm" of 1851 struck New England on this date. Heavy gales and high seas pounded the coasts of New Hampshire and eastern Massachusetts. The storm arrived at the time of a full moon, and high tide was producing unusually high storm tides. The storm was so named because it destroyed the lighthouse at Cohasset, Massachusetts. Two assistant lighthouse keepers were killed there when the structure was swept away by the storm tide.

1880 - A tornado near Marshall, MO, carried the heavy timbers of an entire home a distance of twelve miles. (The Weather Channel)

1933 - Franklin Lake, NH, was buried under 35 inches of snow. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1960 - A wind gust of 70 mph was measured at the Stapleton International Airport in Denver CO, their highest wind gust of record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A slow moving storm system produced heavy rain over North Carolina and the Middle Atlantic Coast States. More than six inches of rain drenched parts of Virginia, and flooding in Virginia claimed three lives. Floodwaters along the James River inundated parts of Richmond VA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

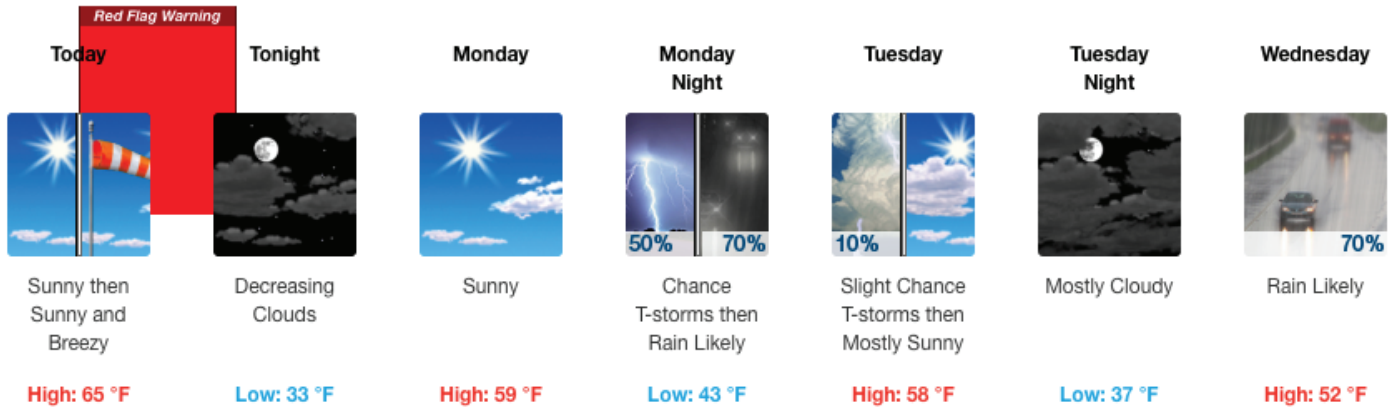
1988 - A storm in the northeastern U.S. produced a foot of snow at Pittsburg VT. Severe thunderstorms produced baseball size hail and spawned five tornadoes in the Southern High Plains Region. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A cold front, ushering sharply colder air into the north central U.S., brought snow to parts of Montana and North Dakota. At midday the temperature at Cutbank MT was just 22 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2008: Typhoon Neoguri forms over the South China Sea on the 15th and rapidly intensifying to attain typhoon strength by the 16th, reaching its peak intensity on the 18th with maximum sustained winds near 109 mph. More than 120,000 people are evacuated from Hainan when heavy rains cause flash floods in low-lying areas. Three fatalities are attributed to the storm, though 40 fishermen are reported missing. Neoguri made landfall in China earlier than any other tropical cyclone on record, about two weeks before the previous record set by Typhoon Wanda in 1971.

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## Critical Fire Danger Today

- ✓ **Very little green-up across much of the region**
- ✓ **Very dry air with high temps in the mid to upper 60s**
- ✓ **Westerly winds 15 to 25 mph with gusts up to 35 mph**
- ✓ **Rain chances are in the forecast late Mon through early Tuesday & again on Wednesday**



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, South Dakota

Created: 4/16/2017 4:31 AM

[www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr)



NWSAberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Published on: 04/16/2017 at 4:41AM

While some areas received a quick shot of rain on Saturday, most of the region remains very dry with little to no green-up. Today, a warm dry air mass will move over the region. Temperatures will rise into the 60s and westerly winds will increase to 15 to 25 mph with gusts up to 35 mph. This will create critical fire danger. Luckily, a couple of fast moving systems are expected to slide across the region next week. The first will arrive late Monday through Tuesday morning and the second should move through on Wednesday. Both systems carry high chances of bringing measurable rainfall to the area.

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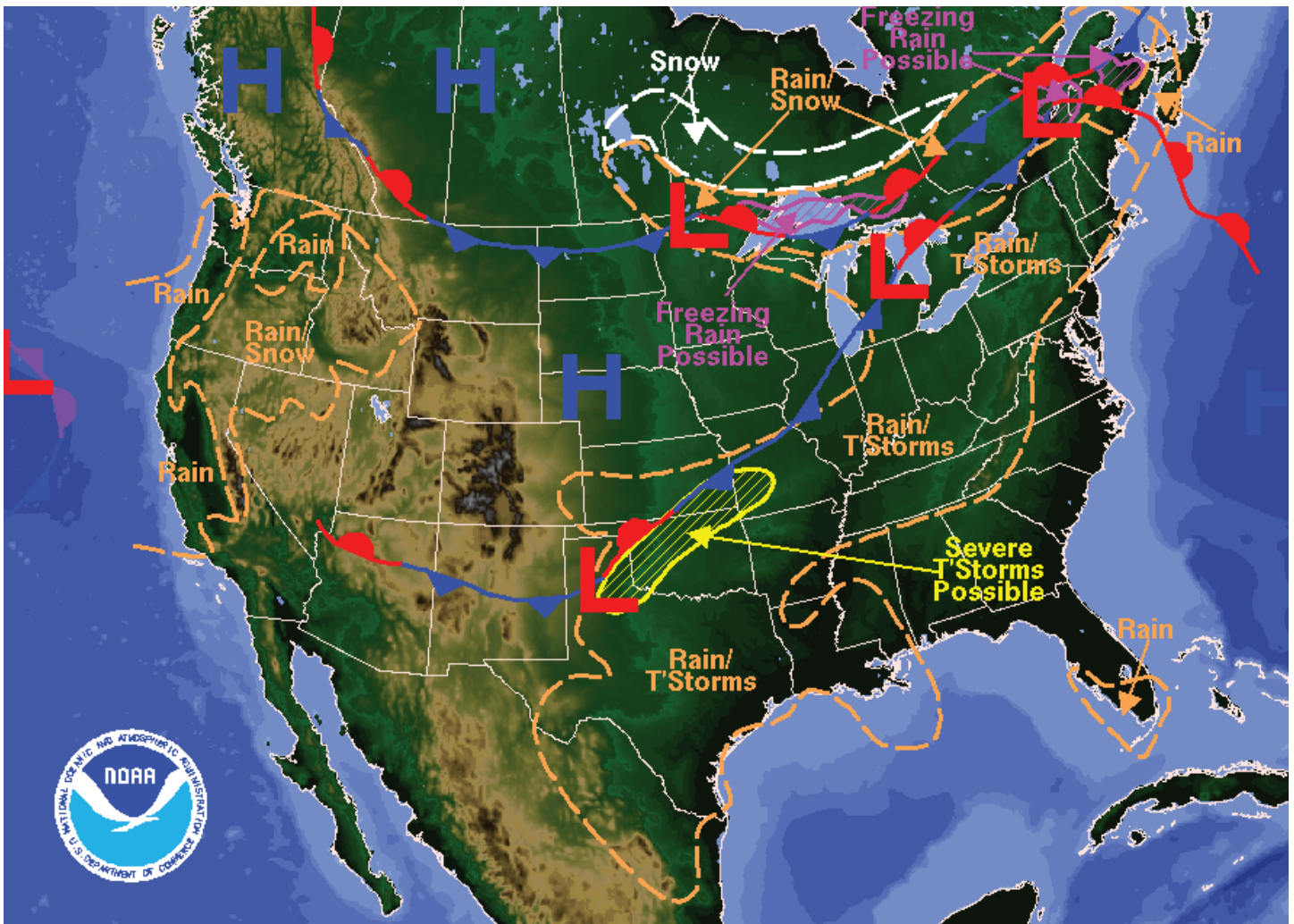
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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 60.6 F at 6:35 PM**  
**Low Outside Temp: 43.0 F at 10:57 PM**  
**High Gust: 28.0 Mph at 9:28 AM**  
**Snow: Precip: 0.07**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 92° in 1913**  
**Record Low: 14° in 1953**  
**Average High: 58°F**  
**Average Low: 32°F**  
**Average Precip in April.: 0.80**  
**Precip to date in April.: 0.20**  
**Average Precip to date: 2.98**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.79**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:21 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:44 a.m.**



Weather Forecast for Sun, Apr 16, 2017, issued 4:50 AM EDT  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by Tate based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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## THE RESURRECTION

"Lo, there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it; his appearance was as lightening and his clothes were as white as snow. For fear of him, the guards trembled and became as dead men.

"And the angel said to the women, "Be not afraid. I know that you seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He is risen. He is not here. Why seek the living among the dead? Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful man and be crucified and on the third day rise again.' Come now and see that place where He lay. (Then they remembered His words.)"

"Go quickly and tell His disciples and Peter that He is risen from the dead, and lo, He goes before you into Galilee. There, you will see Him as He told you."

"Some went away with fear and trembling and said nothing because they were afraid. Others went away quickly with fear and great joy and ran to tell the disciples."

Prayer: Father, how grateful we are for Your victory over death and the assurance of eternal life with You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Mark 16, Matthew 28, Luke 24



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News from the  Associated Press

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

03-04-27-28-31

(three, four, twenty-seven, twenty-eight, thirty-one)

Estimated jackpot: \$85,000

Hot Lotto

19-25-26-31-32, Hot Ball: 19

(nineteen, twenty-five, twenty-six, thirty-one, thirty-two; Hot Ball: nineteen)

Estimated jackpot: \$5.6 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$37 million

Powerball

05-22-26-45-61, Powerball: 13, Power Play: 3

(five, twenty-two, twenty-six, forty-five, sixty-one; Powerball: thirteen; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$70 million

## Ride-sharing operations to come to rural South Dakota

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — A city in southern South Dakota will be getting its own ride-sharing operation aimed at rural communities, to the dismay of existing taxi companies.

The Yankton Press and Dakotan (<http://bit.ly/2ovc6oe>) reports that Tuesday the Yankton Area Progressive Growth's board of directors agreed to pay ride-sharing company Liberty Mobility \$25,000 to help get started in the area.

Liberty Mobility is similar to ride-hailing services Uber and Lyft, where rides can be booked through an app or call center, but focuses on operating in rural areas.

"The company's technology is optimized to work in small urban and rural communities where cell signals may be quite poor," said Yankton city commissioner Nathan Johnson.

Johnson said he hopes the service will put the city on the cutting edge of transportation and help residents be more mobile.

Some taxi cab companies feel the city is too small to support a ride-share program and existing cab companies.

"When they come in, where are they going to get this customer base at, because they're going to pull customers away from us and we're going to fail," said Shawna Fiechuk, co-owner of Yankton Affordable Taxi Cab Co.

Launch of Liberty in Yankton is expected within the next 90 days.

The service will have one full-time employee in the region to manage drivers. A ride of up to four miles will cost \$5.25 no matter how many people are in the vehicle. After that, it is \$1 per mile.

Information from: Yankton Press and Dakotan, <http://www.yankton.net/>

## Turkish voters deciding on expanding presidential power

By ELENA BECATOROS and ZEYNEP BILGINSOY, Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turks were voting Sunday in a historic referendum on constitutional reforms that would greatly expand the powers of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

If the “yes” vote prevails Sunday, the 18 constitutional changes will replace Turkey’s parliamentary system of government with a presidential one, abolishing the office of the prime minister and granting sweeping executive powers to the president.

Erdogan and his supporters say the “Turkish style” presidential system would bring stability and prosperity in a country rattled by last year’s coup attempt and a series of devastating attacks by the Islamic State group and Kurdish militants.

But opponents fear the changes will lead to autocratic one-man rule, ensuring that Erdogan, who has been accused of repressing rights and freedoms, could govern until 2029 with few checks and balances.

Erdogan described the referendum as an opportunity for “change and transformation” as he voted in Istanbul, where black-clad bodyguards with automatic weapons stood guard outside the polling station.

“We need to make a decision that is beyond the ordinary,” Erdogan said, adding he hoped Turkish voters would make the “expected” decision.

Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the leader of Turkey’s main opposition party and top “no” campaigner, described the referendum as a vote on Turkey’s fate.

“We hope the results will be good and together we can have the opportunity to discuss Turkey’s other fundamental problems,” he said.

The ballots themselves do not include the referendum question. Voters use an official stamp to select between “yes” and “no” — the question itself is assumed to have been understood by all in advance.

More than 55 million people in this country of about 80 million are registered to vote. Polls were to close in western Turkey at 5 p.m. (1400 GMT), and an hour earlier in the country’s east.

In one Istanbul polling station, voters were already lined up outside before it opened at 8 a.m. (0500 GMT).

“We are here early to say ‘no’ for our country, for our children and grandchildren,” said retired tax officer Murtaza Ali Turgut. His wife Zeynep agreed, saying: “I was going to come sleep here last night to vote at first light.”

Istanbul resident Husnu Yahsi, 61, also said he was voting “no”.

“I don’t want to get on a bus with no brake system. A one-man system is like that,” he said.

In another Istanbul neighborhood, a “yes” voter expressed full support for Erdogan.

“Yes, yes, yes. Our leader is the gift of God to us,” said Mualla Sengul. “We will always support him. He’s governing so well.”

The official Anadolu news agency reported that military helicopters flew ballots and elections officers to some districts of the southeastern predominantly Kurdish region of Diyarbakir due to security reasons.

The proposed changes would grant the president powers to appoint ministers, senior government officials and half the members of Turkey’s highest judicial body, as well as issue decrees and declare states of emergency. It sets a limit of two five-year terms for presidents and also allows the president to remain at the helm of a political party. The changes would come into effect with the next general elections, scheduled for 2019.

Erdogan, 63, first came to power in 2003 as prime minister and served in that role until becoming Turkey’s first directly elected president in 2014. He has long sought to expand the powers of the president. The result of Sunday’s referendum will determine Turkey’s long-term political future and will likely have lasting effects on its relations with the European Union and the world.

The campaign has been highly divisive and heavily one-sided, with the “yes” side dominating the airwaves and billboards across the country. Supporters of the “no” vote have complained of an atmosphere of intimidation, with the main opposition party recording more than 100 incidents of obstruction to its campaign efforts, including beatings, detentions and threats.

Observers from the 57-nation Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, who were monitoring the voting process, were expected to announce their preliminary findings Monday. In the run-up to the referendum, they had noted intimidation of the "no" campaign, leading to a sharp rebuke from Erdogan.

The vote comes at a time when Turkey has been buffeted by problems. Erdogan survived a coup attempt last July, which he has blamed on his former ally and current nemesis Fethullah Gulen, an Islamic cleric living in the United States. A state of emergency imposed in the coup aftermath remains in effect. A widespread government crackdown has targeted followers of Gulen and other government opponents, branding them terrorists.

Roughly 100,000 people, including judges, teachers, academics, doctors, journalists and members of the military and police forces, have lost their jobs, and more than 40,000 have been arrested. Hundreds of media outlets and nongovernmental organizations have been shut down.

Turkey has also suffered renewed violence between Kurdish militants and security forces in the country's volatile southeast, as well as a string of bombings, some attributed to the Islamic State group, which is active across the border in Syria.

The war in Syria has led to some 3 million refugees crossing the border into Turkey. Turkey has sent troops into Syria to help opposition Syrian forces clear a border area from the threat posed by Islamic State militants.

Meanwhile, Turkey's relations with Europe have been increasingly tense, particularly after Erdogan branded Germany and the Netherlands as Nazis for not allowing Turkish ministers to campaign for the "yes" vote among expatriate Turks.

Suzan Fraser from Ankara, Bram Janssen in Istanbul and Mucahit Ceylan in Diyarbakir contributed to this report.

## Tax Day demonstrators demand Trump release taxes

By TAMMY WEBBER, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Thousands of sign-waving, chanting protesters marched through streets across America demanding that President Donald Trump release his tax returns so the public can examine his business ties and determine whether he has links to foreign powers.

The tax day protests in more than a dozen cities Saturday were largely peaceful, though occasionally demonstrators and some pro-Trump groups taunted each other in face-to-face exchanges.

In Berkeley, California, police arrested at least 20 people after fist fighting erupted at separate unrelated rallies at a park where about 200 people for or against Trump gathered. Officers confiscated knives and makeshift weapons.

The demonstrations came just days before Tuesday's deadline for taxpayers to file their returns. Trump was the first major-party nominee in more than 40 years not to release his tax returns, saying it was because he was under audit. He later said that voters don't care.

But 71-year-old Ilene Singh said he's wrong. She rode a bus from New Jersey to New York City with her friend Geraldine Markowitz, 83, to take part in protests. "We're here to say we care," said Singh.

Pushing her walker, Karin Arlin, 85, a Holocaust survivor who came to the U.S. from Germany when she was 9, said she's also worried about the direction of the country.

"You don't know which way the country goes," said Arlin next to her 89-year-old husband who fled Czechoslovakia during World War II. "I hope Republicans see it."

Protesters in Raleigh, North Carolina, said they suspect that Trump's returns might show he has paid little or nothing to the government he now heads, or that he was indebted to Russian, Chinese or other foreign interests.

"His reputation ... as a businessman and, more importantly, as a true American, a person who is concerned with American values, would be totally destroyed if all his financial information was made public," said Mike Mannshardt, a retired teacher.

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One of Trump's sharpest critics in the House spoke to protesters at the U.S. Capitol just before they set off on a march to the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters, of California, said there's nothing to prevent Trump from releasing his income taxes and that "the simple truth is he's got a lot to hide."

"If he thinks he can get away with playing king, he's got another thought coming," Waters said.

Nancy Traver, of Silver Spring, Maryland, who was at the Washington march said, "Every president, Democratic and Republican for years has showed, has revealed his tax returns, so why shouldn't Trump?"

For four decades, presidents and major party nominees have released some of their tax returns, with the exception of Gerald Ford. Trump's break with precedent has raised questions about possible conflicts of interest.

Democrats are pushing for a vote on a bill from Rep. Anna Eshoo, a Democrat from California, which would require the president and all major-party nominees to publicly disclose their previous three years of tax returns with the Office of Government Ethics or the Federal Election Commission.

Republicans also have rebuffed Democrats' efforts to get the House Ways and Means Committee to act. It has legal authority to obtain confidential tax records, and could vote to make them public.

Many demonstrators said they hoped Saturday's marches would convince Trump to voluntarily release them.

"We do care. We want to see his taxes," said Ann Demerlis, who was among hundreds who marched in Philadelphia from City Hall to an area in front of historic Independence Hall, carrying signs and chanting "We want your taxes now!"

## **Pence: North Korea 'provocation' shows the risk to military**

**By KEN THOMAS, Associated Press**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said Sunday that North Korea's "provocation" underscored the risks faced by American and South Korean service members, hours after the North conducted a failed missile launch shortly before Pence's arrival.

Pence landed in South Korea at the start of a 10-day trip to Asia and was quickly confronted with the stakes facing the United States as Pyongyang seeks to flex its muscles around the birth anniversary of the country's late founder and advance the regime's nuclear and missile capabilities.

While Pence was aboard Air Force Two flying over the Bering Sea, a North Korean missile exploded during launch on Sunday, U.S. and South Korean officials said, representing a high-profile failure that came as a powerful U.S. aircraft supercarrier approaches the Korean Peninsula.

After arriving in Seoul, the vice president placed a wreath at Seoul National Cemetery and then worshipped with military personnel at an Easter church service at the U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan. During a fellowship meal after the services, he said the tensions on the Korean peninsula had put into sharp focus the importance of the joint U.S.-South Korean mission.

"This morning's provocation from the North is just the latest reminder of the risks each one of you face every day in the defense of the freedom of the people of South Korea and the defense of America in this part of the world," said Pence, who was introduced by Army Gen. Vincent Brooks, commander of U.S. Forces Korea. "Your willingness to step forward, to serve, to stand firm without fear, inspires the nation and inspires the world."

Pence told the military members that he had spoken twice with President Donald Trump during the day.

Pence said that under Trump's leadership, "our resolve has never been stronger, our commitment to this historic alliance with the courageous people of South Korea has never been stronger and with your help and God's help, freedom will ever prevail on this peninsula."

Trump has suggested that the U.S. will take a tougher stance against North Korea, telling reporters last week: "North Korea is a problem. The problem will be taken care of." He has repeatedly said if China, North Korea's dominant trading partner, is unwilling to do more to pressure the North, the U.S. might take the matter into its own hands.

Along with the deployment of the Naval aircraft carrier and other vessels into waters off the Korean

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Peninsula, thousands of U.S. and South Korean troops, tanks and other weaponry were also deployed last month in their biggest-ever joint military exercises. That led North Korea to issue routine threats of attacks on its rivals if they show signs of aggression.

A White House foreign policy adviser told reporters aboard Air Force Two that the type of missile that North Korea tried to fire on Sunday was medium-range, and that it exploded about 4 to 5 seconds after it was launched.

According to the adviser, the test had been expected and the U.S. had good intelligence both before and after the launch. The adviser, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the administration's initial understanding of the launch, said there was no expected response from the Trump administration because there was no need for the U.S. to reinforce the failure.

The official said that had it been a nuclear test, "other actions would have been taken by the U.S."

North Korea has conducted five nuclear tests, including two last year. Recent satellite imagery suggests the country could conduct another underground nuclear test at any time.

Despite North Korea's provocations, U.S. officials have said that the U.S. doesn't intend to use military force against North Korea in response to either a nuclear test or a missile launch.

After a two-month policy review, officials settled on a policy dubbed "maximum pressure and engagement," U.S. officials said Friday. The administration's immediate emphasis, the officials said, will be on increasing pressure on Pyongyang with the help of Beijing.

The officials weren't authorized to speak publicly on the results of the policy review and requested anonymity.

Pence will be tasked with explaining the policy in meetings with leaders in South Korea and Japan at the start of his trip, which will also include stops in Indonesia and Australia. He will also aim to reassure allies in South Korea and Japan that the U.S. will take appropriate steps to defend them against North Korean aggression.

Pence's first trip to South Korea carries personal meaning as well. He noted to the soldiers that his late father, Edward, served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and was awarded the Bronze Star on April 15, 1953 — 64 years to the day of the vice president's departure for South Korea. Pence displays in his office his father's Bronze Star and a photograph of his father receiving the honor.

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Follow Ken Thomas on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/KThomasDC>

## North Korean medium-range missile test fails, US says

By FOSTER KLUG and HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A North Korean medium-range missile exploded seconds after it was launched on Sunday, U.S. officials said, a high-profile failure that came hours before the U.S. vice president arrived in South Korea, and as an American aircraft supercarrier approaches the Korean Peninsula in a show of force.

The U.S. had good intelligence both before and after the launch, said a White House foreign policy adviser traveling with Vice President Mike Pence, who arrived in Seoul in the afternoon to start a 10-day trip to Asia.

No planned response is expected from the Trump administration because the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the administration's initial understanding of the launch, said there was no need for the U.S. to reinforce the failure.

The official said that had it been a nuclear test, "other actions would have been taken by the U.S."

North Korea has conducted five nuclear tests, including two last year. Recent satellite imagery suggests the country could conduct another underground nuclear test at any time.

The White House believes that Sunday's test involved a medium-range ballistic missile that failed within 4-5 seconds after launch, and that it did not involve an intercontinental ballistic missile, the foreign policy adviser said.

The North regularly launches short-range missiles, but is also developing mid-range and long-range missiles meant to target U.S. troops in Asia and, eventually, the U.S. mainland.

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The failed launch will sting in Pyongyang because it came a day after one of the biggest North Korean propaganda events of the year— celebrations of the 105th birthday of late North Korea founder Kim Il Sung, the current leader's grandfather.

President Donald Trump was uncharacteristically quiet about the failed launch, which was attempted from the east coast city of Sinpo. In a statement, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said Trump and his military team "are aware of North Korea's most recent unsuccessful missile launch. The president has no further comment."

Pence said North Korea's "provocation" was another reminder of the risks that U.S. and South Korean service members face every day "in the defense of the freedom of the people of South Korea and the defense of America in this part of the world."

The vice president said at a fellowship dinner at U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan in Seoul that the willingness of military members "to stand firm without fear inspires the nation and inspires the world."

North Korea's ultimate goal is to have a full array of nuclear-tipped missiles in response to what Pyongyang says is hostility by Washington and Seoul meant to topple its government. North Korea is thought to have a small arsenal of atomic bombs and an impressive array of short- and medium-range missiles.

Many outside analysts believe that North Korea has not yet mastered the technology to build warheads small enough to place on long-range missiles, though some civilian experts say it can already build nuclear-tipped shorter range missiles that have South Korea and Japan within its striking range.

The U.S. Pacific Command said in a statement that Sunday's missile exploded on launch. South Korea's Defense Ministry said it was analyzing exactly how the North Korean launch failed.

In Seoul, South Korea's presidential office convened a national security council meeting to examine security postures.

Always high animosity has risen on the Korean Peninsula in recent months, as the United States and South Korea conduct annual war games that North Korea claims are invasion preparation and the North prepared for Saturday's anniversary celebrations. A U.S. aircraft carrier, the USS Carl Vinson, is heading to waters off Korea in a show of force.

Analysts warn that even failed missile launches provide valuable knowledge to North Korea as it tries to build its weapons program. The country launched a long-range rocket and conducted the two nuclear tests last year, including its most powerful to date.

Aside from improving the technology, North Korean missile and nuclear tests are seen by outside analysts partly as efforts to bolster the domestic image of leader Kim Jong Un and apply political pressure on Seoul and Washington.

Kim has overseen three nuclear tests and a string of missile and rocket launches since taking over after the death of his father, dictator Kim Jong Il, in late 2011.

Another missile test from Sinpo failed earlier this month, when the rocket spun out of control and plunged into the ocean. That launch came shortly before Trump's first meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. China is North Korea's only major ally.

The extended-range Scud missile in that earlier launch suffered an in-flight failure and fell into the sea off North Korea's east coast, according to U.S. imagery and assessments.

Despite Sunday's failure, the North's previous claim to have used "standardized" warheads has led to worries that it was making headway in its push to develop small and sophisticated warheads to be topped on long-range missiles.

Washington sees North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles as a threat to world security and to its Asian allies, Japan and South Korea. The United States, South Korea and other countries have vowed to apply more pressure on the North, but so far nothing has worked to stop Pyongyang's nuclear program.

Six-nation negotiations on dismantling North Korea's nuclear program in exchange for aid fell apart in early 2009.

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Associated Press writer Ken Thomas contributed to this report.

## 5 things to know about US Vice President Mike Pence

By KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence is embarking on a 10-day, four-nation tour of the Asia-Pacific this weekend, arriving in South Korea after a failed missile launch by the North. His visit comes amid tensions over North Korea's aggressive flaunting of its nuclear and missile program.

Pence will visit South Korea, Japan, Indonesia and Australia during his trip, meeting with leaders in the region, military troops and business groups. It will be Pence's second foreign trip as vice president — he traveled to Germany and Belgium in February to meet with NATO and European Union officials.

Five things to know about President Donald Trump's No. 2 at the start of his visit:

### ON MESSAGE

If Trump is known for his unpredictability and blunt talk, Pence projects a polite Midwestern humility and is more measured in his speeches, rarely going off-script. Pence's first foreign trip to Europe included steady assurances that the U.S. would honor its commitment to NATO even after Trump said the military alliance was "obsolete." The Republican has doggedly pursued an agreement in Congress to repeal and replace the so-called "Obamacare" health care law, but lawmakers have failed to cut a deal. The vice president was initially out of the loop when former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn's contacts with Russia emerged at the start of the administration, even though Flynn had denied those conversations to Pence and others. Pence said he was "disappointed" in Flynn and supported Trump's decision to fire him.

### INDIANA ROOTS

Pence is a former Indiana governor and congressman. He was a prominent conservative member of Congress during the presidencies of George W. Bush and Barack Obama, frequently championing anti-abortion causes and reducing federal spending. He opposed Bush's White House on education and prescription drug plans, arguing that the administration had veered from its conservative principles. He unsuccessfully challenged future House Speaker John Boehner in a leadership election but joined the House Republicans' leadership team two years later. Elected Indiana's governor in 2012, Pence signed a controversial "religious freedom" bill in 2015 that critics said allowed businesses to discriminate against gays and lesbians by allowing them to cite religious beliefs as a reason for denying services. After a backlash from corporations, Pence softened the law following criticism that it was discriminatory.

### FAITH AND FAMILY

Pence often describes himself as "a Christian, a conservative and a Republican, in that order." Pence and his wife, Karen, a former elementary school teacher, have been married since 1985 and have three adult children. The couple's son, Michael, is serving as an officer in the U.S. Marines, and their two daughters, Charlotte, a recent college graduate and filmmaker, and Audrey, a college senior, are traveling to Asia with their parents. Pence often speaks of his Christian faith and participated in Bible study groups in Congress. One of the first stops on his itinerary in South Korea will be attending Easter services with U.S. and South Korean troops and their families.

### ASIA TIES

Pence's late father, Edward, served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and was awarded the Bronze Star on April 15, 1953 — 64 years to the day of Pence's departure for Asia. The vice president displays in his office his father's Bronze Star, accommodation letter and a photograph of his father receiving his pin. Indiana has a significant Japanese manufacturing hub and Pence conducted two trade missions to Japan while serving as governor. Toyota, Subaru and Honda all have manufacturing plants in Indiana and Japanese companies employ tens of thousands of workers in the state. Honda's plant in Greensburg, Indiana, is near Pence's hometown of Columbus, Indiana, near Indianapolis. Pence will be making his first visits to

South Korea, Indonesia and Australia.

## TALK RADIO, ART THERAPY

Before serving in Congress, Pence was a conservative radio and television talk show host in Indiana during the 1990s. His shows were not known for a combative style that marked conservative talk radio during the era — Pence liked to call himself “Rush Limbaugh on decaf.” Karen Pence is a longtime advocate of art therapy, the use of art in mental health treatment and forms of rehabilitation, and will be attending art therapy events throughout the trip.

Follow Ken Thomas on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/KThomasDC>

## Fugitive Mexican ex-Gov. Javier Duarte detained in Guatemala

By **SONIA PEREZ D. and PETER ORSI, Associated Press**

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — Javier Duarte, the former governor of Mexico’s Veracruz state who is accused of running a corruption ring that allegedly pilfered from state coffers, was detained in Guatemala after six months as a fugitive and high-profile symbol of government graft in his country.

A statement from Mexico’s federal Attorney General’s Office said Duarte was detained Saturday with the cooperation of Guatemalan police and the country’s Interpol office in the municipality of Panajachel, a picturesque tourist town on Lake Atitlan in Guatemala’s highlands.

It said he is wanted on suspicion of money laundering and organized crime, and prosecutors directed the Foreign Relations Department to request Duarte’s extradition via its Guatemalan counterpart.

A photo released by Guatemalan police showed a bespectacled Duarte, clad in a gray shirt and black jacket-vest, being escorted by Interpol agents.

Manuel Noriega, deputy director of Interpol in Guatemala, said Duarte was located at a hotel where he was staying with his wife. He was asked to leave his room, did so voluntarily and then was arrested without incident in the lobby.

Noriega said Duarte would be presented before a judge to consider his possible extradition.

Duarte was being transferred to the Guatemalan capital early Sunday. In a brief cellphone conversation with The Associated Press, he declined to comment.

Duarte, 43, was governor of Veracruz from 2010 until he left office Oct. 12, 2016, two months before the scheduled end of his term, saying he was doing so in order to face the allegations against him.

At the time he denied having links to phantom businesses that allegedly won state contracts, and said he had not stolen a single peso of state money or diverted government funds overseas.

“I don’t have foreign accounts,” he said last year. “I don’t have properties anywhere.”

Duarte promptly disappeared and had been sought by Mexican authorities ever since. Earlier this year, Interpol issued a notice for his capture.

The Mexican government has found millions of dollars purportedly linked to Duarte, frozen more than 100 bank accounts and also seized property and businesses tied to the former governor. A reward of 15 million pesos (\$730,000) had been offered for his capture.

The detention comes a week after Tomas Yarrington, the former governor of Mexico’s Tamaulipas state, was arrested in Italy, also on allegations of organized crime and money laundering.

Another ex-governor, Cesar Duarte of Chihuahua state, is also wanted on suspicion of corruption and is said to have fled to El Paso, Texas. He is not related to Javier Duarte.

All three ex-governors were members of the ruling Institutional Revolution Party, or PRI, of President Enrique Pena Nieto.

The party, which expelled Javier Duarte on Oct. 25, 2016, and has sought to distance itself from him, applauded the arrest.

“The PRI calls for all the relevant investigations to be carried out and, respecting due process, for the ex-governor of Veracruz to be punished in an exemplary fashion, as well as anyone who is confirmed to



have taken part in his criminal ring," the party said in a statement.

Duarte became a powerful symbol of alleged corruption during mid-term elections last year in which the PRI lost several governorships, including Veracruz, that it had held uninterrupted since its founding in 1929.

Duarte has also been widely criticized for rampant violence in the state during his administration, as drug cartels warred for territory and thousands of people were killed or disappeared into clandestine graves in cases that mostly remain unsolved. The dead include at least 16 journalists slain in Veracruz during his six years in office.

Orsi reported from Mexico City.

## **US: North Korean test missile explodes on launch**

**By FOSTER KLUG and HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A North Korean missile exploded during launch Sunday, U.S. and South Korean officials said, a high-profile failure that comes as a powerful U.S. aircraft supercarrier approaches the Korean Peninsula in a show of force.

It wasn't immediately clear what kind of missile was test-fired from the east coast city of Sinpo. But the failure will sting in Pyongyang because it comes a day after one of the biggest North Korean propaganda events of the year— celebrations of the 105th birthday of late North Korea founder Kim Il Sung, the current leader's grandfather.

The North's test firing can be seen as a message of defiance to the Trump administration in Washington, coming as it does on the day U.S. Vice President Mike Pence is set to arrive in Seoul for talks on North Korea.

President Donald Trump was uncharacteristically quiet about the failed launch. In a statement, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said Trump and his military team "are aware of North Korea's most recent unsuccessful missile launch. The president has no further comment."

Washington and Seoul will try hard to figure out what exactly North Korea fired. This matters because while North Korea regularly launches short-range missiles, it is also developing mid-range and long-range missiles meant to target U.S. troops in Asia and, eventually, the U.S. mainland.

The ultimate goal is to have a full array of nuclear-tipped missiles in response to what Pyongyang says is hostility by Washington and Seoul meant to topple its government. North Korea is thought to have a small arsenal of atomic bombs and an impressive array of short- and medium-range missiles.

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Six-nation negotiations on dismantling North Korea's nuclear program in exchange for aid fell apart in early 2009.

## **It's a boy! Zoo confirms April the giraffe's calf is a male**

**HARPURSVILLE, N.Y. (AP) — And baby makes glee.**

Before an online audience of more than a million viewers, April the giraffe gave birth to a male calf Saturday at a New York zoo, ending weeks of proverbial pacing by animal lovers in a virtual worldwide waiting room.

The 15-year-old giraffe delivered her calf shortly before 10 a.m. EDT in an enclosed pen at the zoo in Harpursville, a rural upstate village about 130 miles (209 kilometers) northwest of New York City. The mama giraffe tenderly licked her calf, which began to slowly pick its head up from the floor of the pen. About 45 minutes after it was born, the calf stood on its wobbly legs for the first time while mom helped keep her baby steady.

He began nursing not long after.

At least 1.2 million people watched the Adventure Park's YouTube streaming of the event. A logo on the feed quickly changed from ToysRUs to BabiesRUs following the birth.

Animal Adventure Park owner Jordan Patch said that both mom and calf are doing fine.

Patch said the calf's entrance into the world "was unnerving to even those of us who have witnessed animal births previously."

"Giraffes give birth standing up, which means when the calf is ready to be born, it exits its mother hooves first from six feet off the floor, making for a very exciting event," Patch said in a news release.

This is April's fourth calf, but Animal Adventure Park's first giraffe calf. The proud papa, a 5-year-old giraffe named Oliver, watched from an adjacent pen. This is his first offspring.

The privately owned zoo began livestreaming from April's enclosure in February. People around the world have been tuning in daily.

April has her own website and even an apparel line. A GoFundMe fundraiser page that initially set a goal of \$50,000 sat at more than \$125,000 on Saturday morning. The money will be used for the care of the animals.

A contest will be held to decide on a name for the calf.

The park's livestream was briefly interrupted in February when YouTube pulled the feed after someone reported the images contained explicit material and nudity. Jordan Patch, owner of the Animal Adventure Park, blamed "a handful of extremists and animal rights activists" for the interruption.

The wait for the giraffe became an anxiety-ridden experience for some. A Farmington, New Hampshire, songwriter even posted a music video on YouTube called, "I'm Going Crazy Waiting (For A Giraffe)."

The reaction on Twitter was ebullient and hopeful: "We did it, internet! We had a giraffe baby together;" "Everybody sticking their neck out for this baby giraffe;" and "On a day where "mother of all bombs" is a

trending phrase, I love how the world unites over the birth of a baby giraffe.”

No other details on the calf were announced, but they usually weigh around 150 pounds (68.04 kilograms) and are about 6 feet (1.83 meters) tall at birth. Giraffes are pregnant for 15 months on average.

Animal Adventure park is currently closed to the public and will open in mid-May.

## Over 100 killed during Syria's troubled population transfer

By SARAH EL DEEB and PHILIP ISSA, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A stalled population transfer resumed Saturday after a deadly explosion killed at least 100, including children, government supporters and opposition fighters, at an evacuation point — adding new urgency to the widely criticized operation.

The blast ripped through a bus depot in the al-Rashideen area where thousands of government loyalists evacuated the day before waited restlessly for hours, as opposition fighters guarded the area while negotiators bickered over the completion of the transfer deal. Only meters away, hundreds of evacuees from pro-rebels areas also loitered in a walled-off parking lot, guarded by government troops.

Footage from the scene showed bodies, including those of fighters, lying alongside buses, some of which were charred and others gutted from the blast. Personal belongings could be seen dangling out of the windows. Fires raged from a number of vehicles as rescuers struggled to put them out.

The scenes were the last in the unyielding bloodshed Syrians are living through. Earlier this month, at least 89 people were killed in a chemical attack as children foaming at the mouth and adults gasping for last breath were also caught on camera.

The bloody mayhem that followed the Saturday attack only deepened the resentment of the transfer criticized as population engineering. It also reflected the chaos surrounding negotiations between the warring parties. The United Nations did not oversee the transfer deal of the villages of Foua and Kfraya, besieged by the rebels, and Madaya and Zabadani, encircled by the government.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack but pro-government media and the opposition exchanged accusations, each pointing to foreign interference or conspiracies undermining the deal.

State TV al-Ikhbariya said the attack was the result of a car bomb carrying food aid to be delivered to the evacuees in the rebel-held area — ostensibly crisps for the children — and accused rebel groups of carrying it out. A TV broadcaster from the area said: “There can be no life with the terrorist groups.”

“I know nothing of my family. I can't find them,” said a woman who appeared on al-Ikhbariya, weeping outside the state hospital in Aleppo where the wounded were transported.

Ahrar al-Sham, the rebel group that negotiated the deal, denounced the “cowardly” attack, saying a number of opposition fighters as well as government supporters were killed in the attack. The group said the attack only serves to deflect the attention from government “crimes” and said it was ready to cooperate with an international probe to determine who did it.

Yasser Abdelatif, a media official for Ahrar al-Sham, said about 30 rebel gunmen were killed in the blast. He accused the government or extremist rebel groups of orchestrating the attack to discredit the opposition.

The Syrian Civil Defense in Aleppo province, also known as the White Helmets, said their volunteers pulled at least 100 bodies from the site of the explosion. White Helmets member Ibrahim Alhaj said the 100 fatalities documented by the rescuers included many children and women, as well as fighters.

Syrian state media said at least 39 were killed, including children. The opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights put the death toll at 43, adding that it would likely rise because of the extensive damage. A Facebook page belonging to the pro-government Foua and Kfraya villages said all those in three buses were killed or are still missing while a rebel official said at least 30 opposition fighters who were guarding the evacuees were killed in the blast.

According to Abdul Hakim Baghdadi, an interlocutor who helped the government negotiate the evacuations, 140 were killed in the attack. He added it was not clear how many rebels were killed because they were evacuated to their areas.

Hours after the explosion, the transfer resumed — as dozens of buses, starting with the wounded, left

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to their respective destinations. Before midnight Saturday, 100 of some 120 buses from both sides had already arrived.

The explosion hit the al-Rashideen area, a rebel-controlled district outside Aleppo city where evacuation buses carrying nearly 5,000 people from the northern rebel-besieged villages of Foua and Kfraya were stuck. Residents from the two villages had been evacuated Friday, along with more than 2,000 from Madaya, an opposition-held town outside of Damascus besieged by government forces.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the attack Saturday in a statement from his spokesman Stephane Dujarric, and called on all parties "to ensure the safety and security of those waiting to be evacuated."

"Those responsible for today's attack must be brought to justice," the statement added.

The coordinated evacuations delivered war-weary fighters and residents from two years of siege and hunger, but moved Syria closer to a division of its national population by loyalty and sect.

Madaya and Zabadani, once summer resorts to Damascus, have been shattered under the cruelty of a government siege. The two towns rebelled against Damascus' authority in 2011 when demonstrations swept through the country demanding the end of President Bashar Assad's rule.

Residents were reduced to hunting rodents and eating tree leaves. Photos of children gaunt with hunger shocked the world and gave new urgency to U.N. relief operations in Syria.

Foua and Kfraya, besieged by the rebels, lived under a steady hail of rockets and mortars. They were supplied with food and medical supplies through military airdrops.

Critics say the string of evacuations, which could see some 30,000 people moved across battle lines over the next 60 days, amounts to forced displacement along political and sectarian lines.

The explosion came as frustration was already mounting over the stalling evacuation process.

"The situation is disastrous," said Ahmed Afandar, a resident evacuated from the opposition area near Madaya. "All these thousands of people are stuck in less than half a kilometer (500 yards)." He said the area was walled off from all sides and there were no restrooms.

Afandar said people were not allowed to leave the buses for a while before they were let out. Food was distributed after several hours and by early afternoon the evacuees from rebel-held areas were "pressured" to sit back on their buses, Afandar said.

The evacuees from Madaya headed to rebel-held Idlib, west of Aleppo. After the blast, evacuees from opposition areas pleaded for protection fearing revenge attacks.

Syrian state TV blamed the rebels for obstructing the deal.

An opposition representative, Ali Diab, accused the government side of violating the terms of the agreement, by evacuating fewer armed men than agreed to from the pro-government areas.

## Judge's anti-death penalty protest riles conservatives

By ANDREW DeMILLO, Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — After barring Arkansas from executing eight inmates in rapid succession because of a dispute over how it obtained one of its execution drugs, Judge Wendell Griffen went to an anti-death penalty rally, where he made a stir by lying down on a cot and binding himself as though he were a condemned man on a gurney.

Griffen's participation in Friday's protest outside the governor's mansion sparked outrage among death penalty supporters, including Republican lawmakers who described it as judicial misconduct and potential grounds for Griffen's removal from the bench.

Griffen, a Pulaski County circuit judge, said he's morally opposed to the death penalty and that his personal beliefs alone shouldn't disqualify him from taking up certain cases. For years, he has been pushing the boundaries of how much a judge can speak out on controversial issues.

"We have never, in my knowledge, been so afraid to admit that people can have personal beliefs yet can follow the law, even when to follow the law means they must place their personal feelings aside," Griffen

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told The Associated Press on Saturday.

On Friday, Griffen granted a restraining order preventing Arkansas from using its supply of vecuronium bromide, one of three drugs it uses in executions, because the supplier said the state misleadingly obtained the drug. The ruling came a day before a federal judge halted the executions on different grounds. The supplier, however, on Saturday sought to drop its lawsuit and have Griffen's order lifted because it believed the federal ruling removed the imminent risk its drug would be used in executions.

The back-to-back decisions upend what had initially been a plan to execute eight men in 11 days in four double executions, starting Monday night, because the state's supply of one of the other execution drugs expires at the end of the month.

Attorney General Leslie Rutledge on Saturday also asked the state's highest court to vacate Griffen's ruling, citing the judge's participation in anti-death penalty events before and after he issued it. She asked for a new judge to be assigned the case.

"This court should put a stop to the games being played by a judge who is obviously unable to preside over this case impartially," Rutledge's wrote in her request.

Griffen declined to comment on the demonstration or his ruling, saying he'd address any questions about it at a hearing he scheduled for Tuesday.

Lawmakers have suggested the move may be grounds for the Arkansas House to begin impeachment proceedings, saying the demonstration and a blog post Griffen wrote on the death penalty this week may amount to "gross misconduct" under the state constitution.

"He is outside the bounds of normal behavior for most judges probably anywhere in America," Republican state Sen. Jason Rapert said.

It's also unclear whether the move would prompt action from the state's Judicial Discipline and Disability Commission. Griffen, who served 12 years on the state appeals court, previously battled with the panel over remarks he made criticizing President George W. Bush and the war in Iraq. The panel ultimately dropped its case against him.

Griffen testified in 2015 before the state Legislature against a religious objections measure that was criticized as anti-gay, and he regularly blogs about current events in posts that weave in Biblical passages. They include a post days before his ruling which criticized the execution push in Arkansas.

"While the world meditates about divine love, forgiveness, justice, and hope, Arkansas officials plan to commit a series of homicides," he wrote.

Griffen, 64, is a Baptist minister who was first elected as Pulaski County judge in 2010. He ran twice unsuccessfully for state Supreme Court — including a bid for chief justice in 2004. In his other state Supreme Court race in 2006, Griffen challenged his rival to a debate over the free-speech rights of judges.

Griffen said he wouldn't consider a person's participation in an anti-execution event enough, on its own, to warrant disqualifying a juror from a death penalty case. The question, he said, is whether the juror could set his or her personal views aside and follow the law.

"We do not require people to come into court with blank slates, either in their minds or their heart," he said.

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Follow Andrew DeMillo on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ademillo>

## Microsoft says users are protected from alleged NSA malware

By RAPHAEL SATTER, AP Cybersecurity Writer

PARIS (AP) — Up-to-date Microsoft customers are safe from the purported National Security Agency spying tools dumped online, the software company said Saturday, tamping down fears that the digital arsenal was poised to wreak havoc across the internet .

In a blog post , Microsoft Corp. security manager Phillip Misner said that the software giant had already built defenses against nine of the 12 tools disclosed by TheShadowBrokers, a mysterious group that has repeatedly published NSA code . The three others affected old, unsupported products.

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"Most of the exploits are already patched," Misner said.

The post knocked back warnings from some researchers that the digital espionage toolkit made public by TheShadowBrokers took advantage of undisclosed vulnerabilities in Microsoft's code. That would have been a potentially damaging development because such tools could swiftly be repurposed to strike across the company's massive customer base.

Those fears appear to have been prompted by experts using even slightly out-of-date versions of Windows in their labs. One of Microsoft's fixes, also called a patch, was only released last month .

"I missed the patch," said British security architect Kevin Beaumont, jokingly adding, "I'm thinking about going to live in the woods now."

Beaumont wasn't alone. Matthew Hickey, of cybersecurity firm Hacker House, also ran the code against earlier versions of Windows on Friday. But he noted that many organizations put patches off, meaning "many servers will still be affected by these flaws."

Everyone involved recommended keeping up with software updates.

"We encourage customers to ensure their computers are up-to-date," Misner said.

Online:

Raphael Satter is reachable on: <http://raphaelsatter.com>

## Italy's Emma Morano, the world's oldest person, dies at 117

By **FRANCES D'EMILIO, Associated Press**

ROME (AP) — Emma Morano, at 117 the world's oldest person who is also believed to have been the last surviving person born in the 1800s, died Saturday at her home in northern Italy, her physician said.

Dr. Carlo Bava told The Associated Press by phone that Morano's caretaker had called him to say she had stopped breathing in the afternoon while sitting in an armchair at her home in Verbania, a town on Italy's Lake Maggiore.

Bava said he had last seen his patient on Friday when "she thanked me and held my hand," as she did every time he called on her. While Morano had been increasingly spending more time sleeping and less time speaking in recent weeks, she had still eaten her daily raw egg and biscuits that day, he said.

A woman in Jamaica, Violet Brown, who was born in that Caribbean island on March 10, 1900, is now considered the oldest known person in the world, according to a list kept by the Gerontology Research Group. Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness tweeted his congratulations to her.

Morano's doctor, who lives a few blocks away from his patient, had been her physician for nearly a quarter of a century.

Morano, born on Nov. 29, 1899, had been living in a tidy, one-room apartment, where she was kept company by her caregiver and two elderly nieces.

"She didn't suffer. I'm happy she didn't suffer but passed away that way, tranquilly," Bava said Saturday.

He said she had been her usual chatterbox self until a few weeks ago. Since then it was clear, "she was slowly fading away," and spending nearly all day in bed, Bava said.

Last fall on her birthday, Morano declared: "I'm happy I have turned 117!"

Bava has previously told the AP that Morano lost a son to crib death when he was six months old.

Morano left her husband in 1938 because he would beat her. She "abandoned the husband in the Fascist era, when women were supposed to be very submissive," Bava said in a 2015 interview. "She was always very decisive."

Morano began working in a factory making jute bags when she was 16. Then she worked at a hotel, working way beyond the usual retirement age.

Beside work, she enjoyed herself. She was considered a good dancer with a beautiful singing voice in her youth.

She also defied health advice, Bava said Saturday. Some doctors had warned her against eating three eggs daily, which she did for years, but she ignored their advice.

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Researchers from Harvard Medical School visited her in 2014 as part of a study into immunity to diseases, the Italian news agency ANSA said.

Frances D'Emilio is on twitter at [www.twitter.com/fdemilio](http://www.twitter.com/fdemilio).

## Today in History By The Associated Press

### Today in History

Today is Easter Sunday, April 16, the 106th day of 2017. There are 259 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlights in History:

On April 16, 1947, the cargo ship *Grandcamp*, carrying a load of ammonium nitrate, blew up in the harbor in Texas City, Texas; a nearby ship, the *High Flyer*, which was carrying ammonium nitrate and sulfur, caught fire as a result and exploded the following day; the blasts and fires killed nearly 600 people. In a speech at the South Carolina statehouse in Columbia, financier Bernard M. Baruch said: "Let us not be deceived — we are today in the midst of a cold war."

### On this date:

In 1789, President-elect George Washington left Mount Vernon, Virginia, for his inauguration in New York.

In 1867, aviation pioneer Wilbur Wright was born in Millville, Indiana (his brother Orville was born five years later in Dayton, Ohio).

In 1912, American aviator Harriet Quimby became the first woman to fly across the English Channel, leaving Dover, England, and arriving near Calais, France, in 59 minutes.

In 1917, following the abdication of Czar Nicholas II, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin returned to Russia after years of exile.

In 1937, the Laurel & Hardy slapstick comedy "Way Out West" was released by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

In 1940, Major League Baseball's first (and, to date, only) opening day no-hitter took place as Bob Feller of the Cleveland Indians pitched a no-no against the Chicago White Sox, 1-0, at Comiskey Park.

In 1945, during World War II, a Soviet submarine in the Baltic Sea torpedoed and sank the MV *Goya*, which Germany was using to transport civilian refugees and wounded soldiers; it's estimated that up to 7,000 people died. In his first speech to Congress, President Harry S. Truman pledged to carry out the war and peace policies of his late predecessor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in which he said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

In 1972, Apollo 16 blasted off on a voyage to the moon with astronauts John W. Young, Charles M. Duke Jr. and Ken Mattingly on board.

In 1986, dispelling rumors he was dead, Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi appeared on television to condemn the U.S. raid on his country and to say that Libyans were "ready to die" defending their nation.

In 1996, Britain's Prince Andrew and his wife, Sarah, the Duchess of York, announced they were in the process of divorcing.

In 2014, 304 people, mostly students, died when a South Korean ferry, the *Sewol*, sank while en route from Incheon to the resort island of Jeju; 172 people survived.

Ten years ago: In one of America's worst school attacks, college senior Seung-Hui Cho (sung-wee joh) killed 32 people on the campus of Virginia Tech before taking his own life. Robert Cheruiyot (CHEHR'-ee-ahht) of Kenya won the Boston Marathon for the third time in 2:14:13; Russia's Lidiya Grigoryeva (grih-gohr-YEV'-uh) captured the women's race in 2:29:18. Carrie Underwood's dark hit "Before He Cheats" won video of the year, female video and best video director at the fan-voted CMT Music Awards.

Five years ago: A trial began in Oslo, Norway, for Anders Breivik (AHN'-durs BRAY'-vihk), charged with killing 77 people in a bomb and gun rampage in July 2011. (Breivik was found guilty of terrorism and premeditated murder and given a 21-year prison sentence.) The Associated Press won a Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting for documenting the New York Police Department's widespread spying on Muslims,

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while the Philadelphia Inquirer was honored in the public service category for its examination of violence in the city's schools; for the first time in 35 years, no Pulitzer for fiction was given.

One year ago: In an extraordinary gesture, Pope Francis brought 12 Syrian Muslims to Italy aboard his plane after an emotional visit to the Greek island of Lesbos, which was facing the brunt of Europe's migration crisis. A magnitude 7.8 earthquake on Ecuador's central coast near the town of Muisne (MWIHZ'-nee) killed more than 660 people.

Today's Birthdays: Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI is 90. Actor Peter Mark Richman is 90. Singer Bobby Vinton is 82. Denmark's Queen Margrethe II is 77. Basketball Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is 70. Former Massachusetts first lady Ann Romney is 68. NFL coach Bill Belichick is 65. Rock singer and former politician Peter Garrett is 64. Actress Ellen Barkin is 63. Actor Michel Gill (TV: "House of Cards"; "Mr. Robot") is 57. Rock musician Jason Scheff (Chicago) is 55. Singer Jimmy Osmond is 54. Rock singer David Pirner (Soul Asylum) is 53. Actor-comedian Martin Lawrence is 52. Actor Jon Cryer is 52. Rock musician Dan Rieser is 51. Actor Peter Billingsley is 46. Actor Lukas Haas is 41. Actress-singer Kelli O'Hara is 41. Figure skater Mirai Nagasu is 24. Actress Sadie Sink is 15.

Thought for Today: "Chaos is the score upon which reality is written." — Henry Miller, American author (1891-1980).