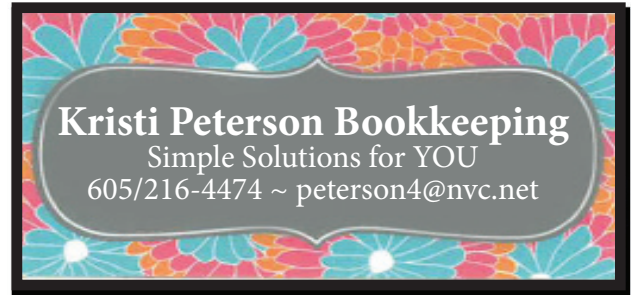


Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 1 of 43

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1-Kristi Peterson Bookkeeping Ad
- 2- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 3- Groton Care & Rehab Help Wanted
- 3- Groton Area Help Wanted
- 3- Thinking About Health Column
- 5- Rev. Snyder's Column
- 6- Farmers Union PSA
- 7- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column
- 8- Rep. Noem's Weekly Column
- 9- Today in Weather History
- 10- Today's Forecast
- 11- Yesterday's Weather
- 11- Today's Weather Info
- 11- National Weather Map
- 12- Daily Devotional
- 13- News from the Associated Press



Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at 9 a.m.; Sunday School at 10 a.m.

United Methodist Church: Conde worship, 9 a.m.; coffee fellowship time, 10 a.m., Sunday School, 10 a.m.; Groton worship, 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.

First Presbyterian: Bible Study at 9:30 a.m., Worship at 11 a.m.

Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance: Sunday School for children, youth and adults, 9:15 a.m.; Worship at 10:45 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at 9 a.m., Sunday School at 10 a.m.

Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden. Worship at 10:30 a.m. Paul Kosel minister

Official Notices

Brown County (updated 8-31)
Frederick Area School (updated 8-29)
Groton City (updated 8-29)
Groton Area School (updated 8-29)
Westport Town (updated 8-21-17)
Other Notices (updated 8-21)
Frederick Town (Updated 8-15)
Groton Area School (updated 8-7)
Claremont Town Official Notices Book

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**

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 2 of 43

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

“**Music**

gives a soul
to the
universe,
wings to
the mind,
flight to the
imagination,
and life to
everything.”

-Plato



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 3 of 43

Help Wanted

We are Hiring Nurses – RN or LPN,
Full or Part Time.

NEW WAGE PACKAGE!!!

Contact Jessica Lindskov or Nellie Peterson at 605-397-2365 or apply in person.

EOE/AA/M/F/V/D-Drug Free Workplace



GROTON
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton
605-397-2365

Groton Area Help Wanted

The Groton Area School District is seeking qualified applicants for a part-time Assistant Business Manager. Job description and application materials can be found under the employment tab at www.grotonarea.com. Questions should be directed to Joe Schwan, Superintendent at 605-297-2351.

THINKING ABOUT HEALTH

Medicaid Still a Target of Healthcare Reform

By Trudy Lieberman, Rural Health News Service

What's going to happen to healthcare now that Senate Republicans have failed to pass their bill, which would have replaced much of the Affordable Care Act? In particular, what's going to happen to Medicaid, the government's largest insurance program, which covers 74 million Americans? This is a good time to clarify what was at stake and may still be up for grabs in the months to come.

Despite its importance to so many people, Medicaid has always been the health system's stepchild. Many doctors and dentists have avoided taking Medicaid patients saying the program didn't pay enough. Until recently, editors haven't been keen to feature stories about Medicaid believing that their audience was not interested in reading about people most likely to be on the program – the poor, the disabled, kids, and seniors who needed it to pay for their nursing home care.

Suddenly, media stories about cutting Medicaid and the loss of coverage to millions became news. "In the course of the debate, it's become clear that Medicaid has tremendous public support. There has been much more focus in this debate than I've seen in any health policy debate," said Shannon Buckingham, vice president for communications at the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington D.C., think tank.

So what is this program that affects so many and will undoubtedly surface again either later this year or next as a political football?

It was created in 1965 under the Johnson administration at the same time Medicare was passed. Unlike Medicare, though, which is a social insurance entitlement to which people contribute throughout their working lives, Medicaid is a welfare program. Those applying for coverage must meet strict asset and income tests, which mean they can't own very much and they can't earn a lot of money. Everyone who qualifies is guaranteed coverage.

The benefit package that all states must offer is generous, covering many services, including nursing home care and transportation to medical appointments. It pays for care given at rural health clinics and

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 4 of 43

federally qualified health clinics. States can provide optional benefits such as prescription drugs, respiratory care, dental services, physical and speech therapy. Many states do.

States and the federal government share in the cost, and that's where the fight in Congress comes in. As medical costs have risen - with few controls on how high they can go - states have found that Medicaid is consuming larger shares of their annual budgets, often crowding out other needs like fixing roads. The federal government continues to pay more too.

One solution for this dilemma is to change the way Medicaid is financed - from a state-federal matching arrangement into what's called a block grant. Under a block grant, the federal government will give a set amount of money to the states. It's a way reduce its healthcare expenditures while shifting more of the burden to the states to cover their residents who depend on Medicaid.

Conservatives have argued for years that giving the states a lump sum would mean they could manage their programs as they saw fit. That's why during debates on Medicaid you hear phrases like "more flexibility" and "greater freedom." But others argue that flexibility and freedom come at a cost. It could allow states to offer fewer benefits and impose restrictions that would make it harder for people to get care.

The Graham-Cassidy bill that was the Senate's last attempt at remodeling the Affordable Care Act called for block grants and eliminated the ACA's Medicaid expansion program that had provided healthcare to those with incomes between the poverty level and 138 percent of the poverty level. This year that's about \$16,600 for a single person and about \$34,000 for a family of four. The expansion had brought some 12 million people onto the program.

The Medicaid debate is far from over and is shifting to the states. Several have applied for waivers from the federal government to allow them more flexibility. For example, a state might ask for permission to enroll Medicaid recipients in private insurance plans as Arkansas has done. While a private market solution might sound good, it could mean that people on Medicaid would have to pay higher deductibles and other cost sharing.

Indiana has a waiver that requires recipients to make small monthly payments and maintain a savings account mostly funded by the state to pay for some of their care. People who don't make their payments may be locked out of coverage for a time. Some states like Arizona and Kentucky are eyeing work requirements. Most Medicaid recipients, however, are already working.

These potential changes raise important questions this last debate didn't answer. Who should get coverage? Should we control rising medical costs by reducing healthcare for those who can least afford it?

Maybe the next debate will give us the answers.

How would you answer these questions? Write to Trudy at trudy.lieberman@gmail.com.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 5 of 43



Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



One Good Deed Deserves A Kick In The Pants

Have you ever had the feeling that any good deed you try is counteracted by a good swift kick in the pants?

I recently grabbed a quick lunch at a local restaurant. I don't like eating at fast food restaurants, but, occasionally, I don't have much choice. Then, once in the restaurant the menu doesn't give me much choice, either.

I ordered my lunch and settled at a corner table. About halfway through my lunch an older couple took the table next to me. Being a "people watcher," which is a fancy way of saying, "I'm nosy," I watched this couple out of the corner of my eye.

I noticed right away the woman got her things situated immediately. Not so with the man.

He struggled to unwrap the plastic fork. He fumbled trying to break the plastic wrapping and free his fork so he could begin eating. Nothing he did seemed to advance his cause.

Without missing a beat, his wife reached over, took the wrapped fork from her husband, popped it open in one easy motion and handed it back to him. Without saying a word, he took it and began eating.

This incident reminded me of something that happened the week before.

A friend phoned, asking me if I could help a friend of his who was moving from Florida to Virginia and had nobody to help him. Immediately I agreed to help all I could. After hanging up my phone, I wondered what I had gotten myself into.

I told him to have this person call me. I figured if he doesn't call, I wouldn't have to help. No sooner had this thought rambled through the little gray cells, then the telephone rang. It was this person requesting my assistance.

I invited him to church on Sunday and we would see how we could help him. I hoped the "we" did not mean "me." After hanging up the telephone, I told my wife the incident and she reassuringly said, "He may not even come to church." I took comfort in her suggestion.

On Sunday morning, an hour before services, this person showed up at church. He introduced himself and we got acquainted.

"All I have," he assured me, "are 25 boxes of books that I need to take to the post office so I can mail them to where I am going."

Well, I mused, this may not be as bad as I thought.

On awakening Monday morning, second thoughts about the whole project bombarded my empty head. I was trying to think of some way to graciously bow out of the whole mess.

I have a problem pronouncing the word "no." You have no idea the trouble this has brought me. I'm thinking of consulting a speech therapist to help me.

My watch told me I was running a little late. I wish my watch would tell me how to get out of such predicaments. But when I inquired, it didn't give a tick. Then an idea burst in my noggin. If he said anything about me being late I will get mad, turn around and go home. Or, if he wasn't ready to move the boxes when I got there, I would, in a huff, turn around and stomp off and go home.

It's been such a long time since I got mad or angry that I wasn't confident of my plan. But, I reasoned to myself, it's worth a try.

I found myself running about 45 minutes late. I was grinning to myself, thinking this would be enough to make him say something about my tardiness.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 6 of 43



All auto owners!
Save \$2-\$4 /tank
& grow your local economy
by choosing low carbon
Super Premium E30's
94 octane, more power,
same mileage, fewer
carbon deposits, lower
maintenance costs,
slashed benzene & related
genotoxic, carcinogenic
tailpipe emissions;
*see sdfu.org's E30 tab for
info, E30 prices\locations.

***Farmers Union's
PSA: Courtesy Merle
Anderson (Merle is 94
year old founder of Ace
and legendary ethanol
supporter... "because it is
the right thing to do")**

When I arrived, he was waiting for me with everything in readiness. He greeted me in a very cheery voice and made no mention whatsoever about my lateness.

This distressed me.

Surveying the work before us, I figured it would only a few hours to load the truck, drive to the post office, which was only a couple blocks away.

I had the auspicious job of lifting every box from the truck up on to the dolly on the dock, several feet over my head. Complicating things even more, the post office personnel supervising the unloading of these boxes was a woman. This meant I could not groan nor complain about the strain of lifting boxes several feet over my head. I guess it must be a man-thing.

I was wondering while working, just why he asked for help. Really, this was not a two-man job. He could have done this quite nicely all by himself.

Then the real reason slipped out from under a nearby rock where it had been hiding.

"The school where I will be teaching," he began, "will reimburse me for all my expenses in moving. But ..." I was now ready for the rest of the story. "But, I am a little short on cash and was wondering if you could help me? I'll be glad to send the money back to you."

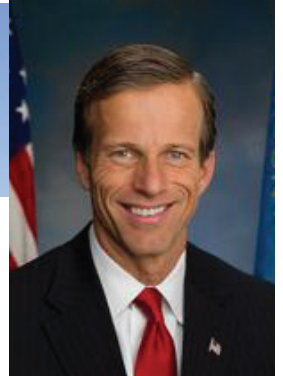
Then I got mad.

I thought he wanted a hand up when in reality he wanted a hand out.

Driving home I was reminded of what the Bible said, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:9-10).

I remembered what someone told me once. Nobody can take advantage of a Good Samaritan.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Tax Reform for Middle-Class South Dakotans

The U.S. tax code is too large, too complicated, and too outdated. Reforming and modernizing it so more middle-income South Dakotans can keep more of what they earn doesn't have to be complicated, and it's something on which both Republicans and Democrats should be able to agree. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity, and I'm excited to be a part of it.

The tax reform framework the Senate, House, and Trump administration recently released is the result of a months-long process that included significant coordination between Congress and the administration. As we work to turn this broad framework into a bill, members of the Senate Finance Committee, myself included, will continue to have an open process by holding hearings, receiving feedback from the American people, and taking our ideas about tax reform to communities in South Dakota and around the country.

The framework we've released would expand the "0 percent tax bracket" by doubling the standard deduction to \$12,000 for single filers and \$24,000 for folks who file jointly. The standard deduction is the amount of money that's taken off the top of your gross income and is not taxable. For a family making \$24,000 or less per year, that means they won't pay a dime in federal income tax. Joint filers who make more than \$24,000 per year won't pay federal income tax on that portion of their earnings either.

The Child Tax Credit is important for a lot of middle-class families in South Dakota, which is why I support preserving and strengthening it. As under current law, up to the first \$1,000 of the credit would be refundable, and the framework wouldn't change that. It would, however, increase the phase-out threshold, which means more families would have access to it.

The current tax code has seven tax brackets and way too many itemized deductions. Our tax reform framework would condense these brackets into three progressive tax brackets. With the increased standard deduction, these new brackets would lower the tax burden on hard-working Americans, while high-income earners would still pay a higher tax rate. While it would get rid of most of the complicated tax deductions, it would preserve popular benefits for home ownership and charitable contributions. These are good tax incentives for families, and I believe they should remain in the code.

I've been fighting to bury the fundamentally unfair death tax for years, and I'm glad the framework incorporated my idea to protect family-run farms and ranches from this burdensome tax that can strike at the worst possible moment. While critics believe certain folks, including some farm and ranch owners, should be taxed twice on their income or forced to spend valuable time and money dealing with lawyers and accountants just to avoid being a victim of the death tax, I do not. These can be scarce resources that could otherwise be used to grow a business or hire new workers.

The reason I believe we're headed in the right direction is because this framework would help the people who need it the most. It would provide relief to middle-class families, and it would help small and medium-sized businesses and farms and ranches grow and create jobs. There's more information about the framework and how we plan to achieve these goals on www.thune.senate.gov. Just click on the tax reform tab on the homepage, and please let me know what you think.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 8 of 43

KRISTI NOEM
REPRESENTATIVE FROM SOUTH DAKOTA



South Dakota's Native American Heritage

If you haven't been to the annual buffalo roundup, believe me when I say it's an event no South Dakotan should miss. "The rumble starts underfoot as the first of 1,300 buffalo crest the hill," the event's materials read. "One can feel the thunder as the mighty animals stampede toward the Buffalo Corrals."

I've been able to take our horses out and help roundup the buffalo a handful of times, and each time, I'm reminded of this animal's power and at the same time amazed by how close the species came to extinction. Fortunately, tribal leaders, ranchers, and conservationists came together to save this resilient animal. Today, one of the world's largest herds is in South Dakota and the annual roundup is a critical part of keeping the herd healthy.

What the buffalo's survival teaches about resilience is powerful to many, but the animal is especially important – both physically and spiritually – in Native American culture. Buffalo (or Tatanka, as they're called in Lakota) offered food, shelter, tools, and clothing. Native Americans could make soap from the fat and homes from their hides. Every piece was used, which is why buffalo were – and continue to be – a symbol of survival and a cultural example of how to live in a healthy and productive manner.

For all these reasons, I was proud to lead efforts to declare the buffalo as our national mammal last year. I'm hopeful that by finally recognizing the buffalo in this way, we'll be able to celebrate the American frontier and the resilience that has long distinguished our country from others around the globe, while also sharing our nation's Native American heritage.

In South Dakota, we set aside time to recognize this important heritage every year on the second Monday in October: Native Americans' Day. Today, nine tribes find their home in South Dakota, and I continually fight for greater opportunity within their communities.

Last Congress, I helped champion the NATIVE Act, which was signed into law in 2016. This legislation aims to create more tourism opportunities in tribal areas, which I'm hopeful will help boost struggling economies. I also worked closely with those in Indian Country to create a permanent Office of Tribal Relations within the U.S. Department of Agriculture as part of the last Farm Bill and helped advance the Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act, which became law in 2014. This legislation ensures those who receive support, like school supplies, from tribal governments are treated the same as those receiving similar state and federal benefits.

But more must be done. I'm fighting hard to reform the Indian Health System, which has had several documented cases of mismanagement and fatal care. I've also introduced legislation to combat suicide in Indian Country by building stronger relationships between state and tribal governments. I was also very pleased to see a provision pass the House in late-September to make the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECV) Program, which helps provide services like parenting education, much more affordable to tribes.

Native American heritage is woven into South Dakota's story, much like the buffalo is. Tribal traditions have enriched our culture and played an important role in the American journey. Please join me on Native Americans' Day in recognizing and honoring their influential heritage.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 9 of 43

Today in Weather History

October 1, 1971: A rare October tornado touched down in Sully County. This brief tornado damaged a ranch home and large barn, 6 miles WSW of Onida.

October 1, 2012: A drought continued to intensify and expand across parts of central and northeast South Dakota through October, resulting in severe to exceptional drought conditions. Many locations continued the trend of recording well below normal precipitation totals for the month. Exceptional drought conditions expanded into Stanley, Jones and southern Lyman counties. Extreme drought conditions spread into southern Dewey, Sully, Hughes, Lyman, Jones, Southwest Hyde, Hamlin, Codington, Grant and Deuel counties. Severe drought conditions spread into Corson, Dewey, northwest Hyde, Hand, Faulk, Edmunds, McPherson, Brown, eastern Clark and southern Roberts Counties.

1752 - The second severe hurricane in two weeks hit the Carolinas. The Onslow County Courthouse was destroyed along with all its records, and Beacon Island disappeared. (David Ludlum)

1890: The weather service is first identified as a civilian agency when Congress, at the request of President Benjamin Harrison, passes an act transferring the meteorological responsibilities of the Signal Service to the newly-created U.S. Weather Bureau in the Department of Agriculture.

1893: On this day, the village of Caminadaville was wiped out by a massive hurricane. Caminadaville was a vibrant fishing community in the late 19th century, located on Cheniere Caminada, adjacent to Grand Isle in coastal Jefferson Parish in Louisiana.


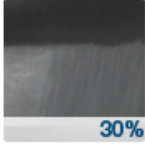

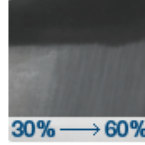



1987 - A blast of cold arctic air hit the north central U.S. An afternoon thunderstorm slickened the streets of Duluth MN with hail and snow, and later in the afternoon, strong northerly winds reached 70 mph. Unseasonably warm weather continued in the Pacific northwest. Afternoon highs of 90 degrees at Olympia WA, 92 degrees at Portland OR, and 89 degrees at Seattle WA, were records for the month of October. For Seattle WA it marked the twenty- first daily record high for the year, a record total in itself. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather across central Oklahoma and the eastern half of Texas. Thunderstorms in Texas produced softball size hail northwest of Nocona, and baseball size hail at Troy and Park Springs. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the southeastern U.S. through the daytime and evening hours. Severe thunderstorms spawned eleven tornadoes, with seven of those tornadoes in Georgia. A tornado southwest of Moultrie, GA, killed two persons and injured a dozen others. Tornadoes also injured one person north of Graceville, FL, and two persons at Bartow, GA. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 10 of 43

Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
70%	30%	20%	30% → 60%	20%		
Showers Likely then Mostly Cloudy	Chance Showers	Partly Sunny then Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers then Showers Likely	Slight Chance Showers	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 70 °F	Low: 50 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 60 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 60 °F



Umbrella Weather



Today: Occasional Showers, Isolated Thunderstorms, especially east of the Missouri River.

*****An Isolated Severe Storm Possible This Afternoon/Early Evening*****

Highs 65 to 75F.



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 10/1/2017 4:44 AM Central

Published on: 10/01/2017 at 4:47AM

Showers and thunderstorms will cross eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota during the morning hours today. A cold front will progress from west to east this afternoon with additional showers and thunderstorms possible. Some thunderstorms this afternoon could become strong to severe.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 11 of 43

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 65.8 at 3:50 PM

Low Outside Temp: 53.2 at 1:05 AM

High Gust: 39 mph at 5:21 PM

Precip: 0.01

Today's Info

Record High: 92° in 1922

Record Low: 21° in 1974

Average High: 65°F

Average Low: 39°F

Average Precip in Oct: 0.08

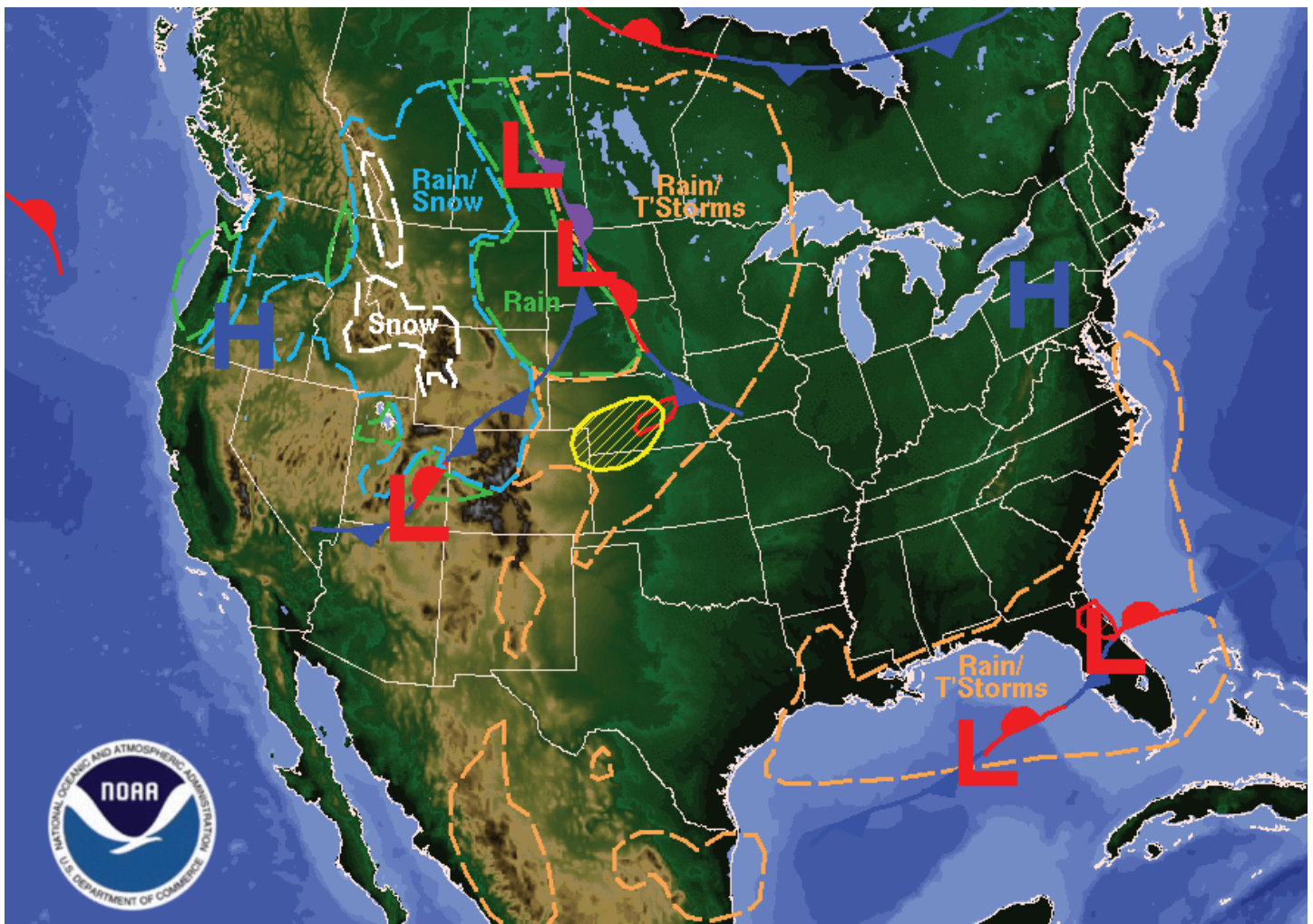
Precip to date in Oct: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 18.56

Precip Year to Date: 13.09

Sunset Tonight: 7:13 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:33 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sun, Oct 01, 2017, issued 6:45 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Kong with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 12 of 43



THE HIGH COST OF CLEANLINESS

"Liquid gold" is a hot, black-market commodity on the "streets" these days. With rising prices and shrinking incomes people are becoming very creative in making ends meet. One new "industry" is stealing "Tide" – the popular laundry detergent.

Last year, police in Maryland broke up a crime ring that was stealing Tide and taking it to a nail salon that was buying the detergent and then reselling it to stores in other countries. Thieves would fill up their shopping carts with the product and then run for the exit doors.

Tide became the "cleaning agent of choice" because it is such a popular brand and has high resale value. It is used by homes in all countries no matter their income bracket – upper, middle or lower. One police detective told The Daily, "It's the item to steal."

We use cleaning products to get soil out of clothes and soap to get our bodies clean but they will not cleanse our hearts from sin. In fact, when David asked for God's "cleansing" for his sins, he used the word "purge" which means un-sin me – purify me – from my uncleanness. He was so disturbed by the guilt he felt from the sins he committed that he used a word that was often used to describe the cleansing of a leper's house. He wanted God to know he was serious and desperate for His cleansing.

Look at his words closely: "blot out," "wash," "cleanse me," "hide Your face from me." These words enable us to understand how much he wanted God's forgiveness. His cry for forgiveness opens the curtain of his soul where we see a heart that was broken by sin, a mind deeply troubled because of sin, the solution for the removal of sin and his need for God to remove that sin and cleanse him.

What an example David set for every one of us!

Prayer: Father, trouble our hearts as You troubled David's heart when we sin and give us no peace until we truly repent. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 51:7-8a Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness.

2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meal- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/28/2018 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 3/24/2018 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/5/2018 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/28/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- 6/14/2018 Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 6/16/2018 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2018 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/22/2018 Summer Fest (4th Sunday in July)
- 9/8/2018 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/6/2018 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/12/2018 Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 14 of 43

News from the  Associated Press

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Harrisburg def. Brookings, 25-19, 25-17, 25-22

Kimball/White Lake def. Mitchell Christian, 25-11, 25-9, 25-16

Wagner def. Tri-Valley, 21-25, 25-21, 17-25, 25-20, 15-3

Watertown def. Brandon Valley, 29-31, 21-25, 25-19, 25-18, 15-10

281 Conference Tournament

Semifinal

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 25-16, 25-19, 25-21

Wolsey-Wessington def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-18, 25-21, 26-24

Third Place

Sanborn Central/Woonsocket def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-16, 25-23, 25-13

Championship

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Wolsey-Wessington, 17-25, 25-13, 25-21, 15-25, 15-9

Lakota Nation Invitational

Pool Play

Pool A

Custer def. Oelrichs, 25-12, 25-18

Custer def. Standing Rock, N.D., 25-10, 25-19

Little Wound def. Oelrichs, 25-22, 23-25, 25-11

Little Wound def. St. Francis Indian, 25-20, 25-20

Little Wound def. McLaughlin, 25-16, 25-15

Red Cloud def. Standing Rock, N.D., 25-15, 25-11

Red Cloud def. McLaughlin, 25-17, 25-20

Red Cloud def. St. Francis Indian, 25-14, 25-16

Tiospa Zina Tribal def. McLaughlin, 25-13, 25-20

Tiospa Zina Tribal def. Standing Rock, N.D., 25-12, 25-17

Pool B

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. Lower Brule, 25-20, 23-25, 25-14

Hill City def. Lower Brule, 25-14, 25-13

Hill City def. Crazy Horse, 25-0, 25-3

Pine Ridge def. Todd County, 25-20, 25-17

Pine Ridge def. Crow Creek, 25-13, 25-5

Pine Ridge def. Crazy Horse, 25-13, 25-8

Todd County def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 19-25, 25-18, 25-20

White River def. Lower Brule, 25-17, 25-17

White River def. Crazy Horse, 25-12, 25-4

White River def. Crow Creek, 25-13, 25-19

Lead-Deadwood Mile High Invitational

Pool Play

Pool A

Edgemont def. Rapid City Central Sophomores, 25-21, 25-18

Wall def. Edgemont, 25-17, 25-20

Wall def. Rapid City Central Sophomores, 25-17, 25-20

Pool B

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 15 of 43

Harding County def. Rapid City Central JV, 25-20, 20-25, 25-16
Kadoka Area def. Harding County, 25-23, 25-18
Kadoka Area def. Rapid City Central JV, 25-19, 25-17
Pool C
Gordon/Rushville, Neb. def. New Underwood, 25-20, 10-25, 25-21
Lemmon def. Gordon/Rushville, Neb., 25-19, 25-20
Lemmon def. New Underwood, 25-16, 14-25, 25-13
Pool D
Hot Springs def. Newell, 25-8, 25-18
Lead-Deadwood def. Hot Springs, 25-14, 25-20
Lead-Deadwood def. Newell, 25-7, 25-11
First Round
Harding County def. Lemmon, 22-25, 25-20, 25-13
Kadoka Area def. Gordon/Rushville, Neb., 25-16, 25-13
Lead-Deadwood def. Edgemont, 25-23, 25-11
Wall def. Hot Springs, 25-12, 25-21
Semifinal
Kadoka Area def. Wall, 25-21, 25-21
Lead-Deadwood def. Harding County, 25-22, 25-21
Championship
Kadoka Area def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-13, 25-19
Tri-Valley Conference Tournament
Pool Play
Pool A
Baltic def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-18, 25-20
Baltic def. Gayville-Volin, 25-13, 25-19
Irene-Wakonda def. Gayville-Volin, 26-24, 25-23
Pool B
Alcester-Hudson def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-16, 25-14
Alcester-Hudson def. Freeman Academy/Marion, 25-23, 20-25, 25-17
Freeman Academy/Marion def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-18, 25-15
Fifth Place
Viborg-Hurley def. Gayville-Volin, 26-24, 14-25, 25-20
Third Place
Freeman Academy/Marion def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-13, 22-25, 25-22
Championship
Baltic def. Alcester-Hudson, 26-24, 25-16
Twin Cities Tournament
Gold Division
Semifinal
Rapid City Stevens def. Casper Kelly Walsh, Wyo., 23-25, 25-18, 27-25
First Round
Rapid City Stevens def. Cheyenne Central, Wyo., 21-25, 25-12, 25-9
Championship
Rapid City Stevens def. Grand Island Northwest, Neb., 23-25, 25-20, 25-21

PREP FOOTBALL

Pierre 58, Sturgis 13

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 16 of 43

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

05-08-10-15-25

(five, eight, ten, fifteen, twenty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$34,000

Hot Lotto

01-18-24-39-44, Hot Ball: 6

(one, eighteen, twenty-four, thirty-nine, forty-four; Hot Ball: six)

Estimated jackpot: \$11.1 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$25 million

Powerball

08-12-25-41-64, Powerball: 15, Power Play: 3

(eight, twelve, twenty-five, forty-one, sixty-four; Powerball: fifteen; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$80 million

Youngstown State rolls to 19-7 win over South Dakota State

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio (AP) — Tevin McCaster ran for a career-high 183 yards and punched in the go-ahead touchdown to lead Youngstown State to a 19-7 win over South Dakota State in the Missouri Valley Football Conference opener Saturday night.

McCaster finished with 35 carries, also a career best, as Youngstown State (3-1) handed the Jackrabbits their first loss.

Youngstown State's Kyle Hegedus recovered a fumble in the game's opening drive, and the Penguins marched 94 yards in 16 plays to set up a 4-yard touchdown run by Nathan Mays, who finished 14 of 19 for 113 yards passing with one interception and had another 65 yards rushing.

South Dakota State (3-1) responded with a 10-play, 75-yard drive capped with Taryn Christion's pass to Jake Wieneke for a 10-yard touchdown to tie it 7-all.

But the Penguins dug in, taking the lead for good with their next possession when McCaster ran it in from the 1 after 75-yard drive. McCaster accounted for all but 15 of the yards in that drive.

The Jackrabbits were held to just 65 yards rushing and 222 overall while Youngstown State finished with a combined 448.

More AP college football: <http://collegefootball.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_Top25

Streveler has 4 TDs, S. Dakota holds on to beat W. Illinois

MACOMB, Ill. (AP) — Chris Streveler accounted for four touchdowns and 417 total yards as South Dakota spoiled Western Illinois' home opener, 38-33 on Saturday.

Streveler threw for 328 yards and three scores, and rushed for 89 yards and another touchdown as South Dakota (4-0, 1-0 Missouri Valley Conference) jumped out to a 24-6 halftime lead.

Streveler has now thrown for 1,168 yards with 10 touchdowns and no interceptions. He is also the leading rusher with 318 yards and another seven TDs.

The Leathernecks (3-1, 0-1) got the ball back trailing 38-33 with 34 seconds left, but Danny Rambo in-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 17 of 43

tercepted on the first play to seal the win.

Western Illinois trailed by 17 at the break last year before coming back to win 35-34. The Leathernecks scored 27 in the second half this time but could not overcome the margin.

WIU's Jaelon Acklin caught a school record 19 passes and had a career-best 343 yards receiving with three scores.

More AP college football: <http://collegefootball.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_Top25

Discussions may lead to fat bike trails in Black Hills

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Wintertime fat-tire bicyclists in South Dakota could have their own designated snow trails to ride if recent discussions are realized.

There aren't any designated, permanent fat-tire snow trails in the Black Hills National Forest, the Rapid City Journal reported. Some winter bicyclists have used snowmobile trails that are off limits, causing tension among some riders.

Black Hills National Forest Supervisor Mark Van Every said those tensions flared during meetings he attended last winter during the Governor's Snowmobile Ride.

"I can assure you there are some concerns, and one of the biggest concerns is safety for the snowmobiler and the biker," Van Every said during a Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board meeting Wednesday.

Van Every said representatives of several trails and recreation groups recently discussed the issue with state and local land managers. They identified some forest roads and trailed in five areas in the Northern Hills and Bear Lodge districts that could be groomed for use as fat-tire bike trails.

Fat-tire bikes, which have surged in popularity in recent years, have oversized tires to lessen their ground pressure and allow riders to get across soft terrain such as mud and snow. The activity is discouraged in designated snow-skiing areas, but some grooming for fat-tire bikes has been allowed in part of the Big Hill Trails area on a temporary basis.

Fat-tire biking is allowed elsewhere in the Black Hills National Forest, but Van Every said riders increasingly want groomed trails for a better experience.

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

Report: More rental housing needed in Yankton

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — The city of Yankton is in need of more housing despite years of fast-paced development.

At a recent work session hosted by the Yankton City Commission, Scott Knudson of Community Partners Research presented an updated housing study, saying "there was a feeling that we needed to look at new information."

"A lot of it had to do with significant housing development that has taken place since (2013), but it also gave us a chance to take a look at updated demographic information," Knudson said.

Knudson noted that this year the city has been on pace to permit more than 50 single-family units. The city hasn't reached that amount since 2006, before the housing market collapsed, the Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan reported. Home values have also gone up, with the median price jumping about \$15,000 from 2015 to 2016.

"That was a pretty big one-year jump," Knudson said. "I'd like to see the 2017 information come in to see if it's now stabilized or it's continuing to go up, but it did indicate to us that there's fairly strong demand for existing houses."

But Knudson said the city still facing an issue with rental occupancy. According to the study, there's a less than 1 percent vacancy in market-rate housing.

"That was actually lower than what we found in 2013 — and it wasn't high in 2013," Knudson said. "Despite some expansion in supply, unit absorption had been strong."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 18 of 43

Some recommendations in the survey include constructing additional rental units over the next five years.

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

Inmate who escaped from Sioux Falls jail arrested

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A sheriff in South Dakota says deputies arrested an inmate who escaped two weeks ago from Sioux Falls' Minnehaha County Corrections Center.

Turner County Sheriff Byron Nogelmeier says deputies arrested Kai Conrad Hansen Saturday morning in Marion. KELO-TV reports that a SWAT team and other law enforcement agencies helped apprehend Hansen.

Authorities say they suspect Hansen stole a truck in Brookings and broke into video lottery machines in Volga during the two weeks he was on the run.

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

For GOP women in politics, a needle that's not moving

By JOCELYN NOVECK, AP National Writer

The president of Emily's List rose to the podium at a recent New York fundraiser to make a proud announcement: More than 18,000 women had contacted the group since Election Day, looking to explore running for office — "an explosion," she called it.

Of course, they're all Democrats. On the Republican side, there's been no such explosion. While a tide of anti-Trump activism has led thousands of Democratic women to consider runs for office, their Republican counterparts are where they were before the 2016 election — with little chance of improving their representation.

"Republican women look very much the same now as they did pre-Trump," says Jennifer Lawless, professor at American University and co-author of a recent report that examined the persistent gender gap in political ambition, on both sides of the aisle. "They're generally not interested in running for office, the overwhelming majority has not been recruited to run, they don't think they're qualified to run, and their levels of political activity and enthusiasm are the same as they have always been."

Lawless' report, called "The Trump Effect," also throws some cold water on the expectation that Democrats will see a seismic shift in numbers of women running; re-energized political activism doesn't necessarily translate into candidacies. But the new enthusiasm has been almost entirely on the left side of the spectrum, and some groups are trying to address that.

Erin Loos Cutraro, CEO of She Should Run, a nonpartisan group, says while the overall pace of adding women to elected office is too slow — women, after all, comprise just under 20 percent of Congress — it's clearly happening faster for Democrats.

Part of the problem: uneven institutional resources and support. "Feeling that you're not going at it alone makes a big difference," Cutraro says, "and it can feel really isolating for Republican women. They don't have the same networks, just in sheer numbers ... or the same level of institutional support. If you're a Democratic pro-choice woman, and you have Emily's List there to support you, that can be incredibly powerful. Republican women don't have anything that plays at the same level."

While a group like Emily's List lends concrete support to get a candidate over the finish line, She Should Run serves women seeking that first step. "I don't even know where to start" is something we hear over and over," says Cutraro.

Rebecca Love is one of those women. A longtime Republican — she was even president of the Republican club in high school — Love, 38, woke up at home in San Diego the morning after Election Day wanting to get involved, somehow.

"I felt that my values as a Republican woman were not represented by the candidate who was elected," says Love, who has a young daughter and works in health care consulting. "I felt Republicans were better than this. It was a wakeup call."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 19 of 43

So Love began Googling programs for women interested in politics. Most, she found, were for Democrats — and her experience had been that even groups calling themselves nonpartisan were populated mostly by Democrats, some not eager to engage with Republicans. Finally, Love, who identifies as a pro-abortion rights, moderate Republican, started working with She Should Run. She's learning the political landscape of her community, and expects to pursue a city council seat or something similar.

By now, Love says, she feels confident enough that she doesn't need to be "asked" to run. But she meets women who do: "I say to them, 'You should think about running,' and they say, 'Me?'"

Virtually any advocate working to get women into politics will say the same thing: Much more than men, women — of any party — need to be asked to run.

Julie Conway of VIEW PAC, which works to get Republican women elected to federal office, puts it this way: "You have to tell women, 'Hey, you'd be great,' and not only that, but you'd be the best, and now I'm going to have 10 other people tell you you're the best. Guys just say, 'Hey, I could do this.'"

It's a bipartisan issue, Conway notes. "Women — Democratic or Republican — need to be convinced that they know everything about everything," she says. "Because they don't want to fake it. Guys, you ask them about a question about a specific tax issue, and they say, 'Oh, we believe in lower taxes.' A woman will say, 'I need the exact details of how that works.'"

Adds Stephanie Schriock, president of Emily's List: "For years we've sat at kitchen tables, we've said, 'You can do this, you don't need five years of training — that dude has no training!'"

For Jinyoung Englund, getting asked — by a former boss — was a turning point. A daughter of Korean immigrants in Washington state, Englund got the bug for public service early, working on a congressional campaign and then on Capitol Hill while she was still in her 20s.

She hadn't planned to run herself, and her first response, she says, was that it sounded "kinda crazy. ... Women, like myself, are often, 'Hey, who am I to think I could run?'"

But she is now the Republican candidate in a much-watched special legislative election; Republican control of the state Senate hangs in the balance. At 33, she'd be the body's youngest woman.

Not every woman, of course, needs to be asked. Shantel Krebs, the South Dakota secretary of state and candidate for Congress, served 10 years in the state legislature — she was 30 when first elected in 2004, and had begun her legislative career at 17, as a page. Krebs says she hasn't encountered the obstacles some other women describe, perhaps because South Dakota has a long history of women in positions of political power. The incumbent in the seat she's seeking, Republican Kristie Noem, is running for governor.

"I think South Dakotans expect another woman in that position," says Krebs, 44. "They know that women compromise and they listen."

Like Republican male candidates, GOP women must consider where they stand on President Donald Trump, their party's polarizing leader. Depending on the district, it's not always easy.

"Some candidates find themselves in a no-win situation and it's not a great place to be," says VIEW PAC's Conway. "I'm not seeing a lot of candidates come through saying Trump's the greatest thing since sliced bread. But I also haven't met a lot of people running who are overly willing to speak against him either."

Asked about potential concerns among women voters about Trump's attitudes toward women, Krebs, of South Dakota, says her constituents aren't troubled by that. "I haven't heard from any of my constituents that they're concerned. The concern here is bigger issues. They want government to be accountable, to control spending."

Englund, in Washington state, says she wrote in a candidate for president. "I know part of the Democratic strategy across the country is to try to tie new candidates to the president," she says, "but in our district, and I think nationally, people looked at last year's election and thought, 'Wow, neither candidate really represents my values or my vision for America.'"

In Austin, Texas, Jenifer Sarver is already preparing for the "Trump question," even though she's not yet running for office.

"Certainly people have told me that saying you didn't vote for the president isn't a good thing," says Sarver, 41, who runs a communications consulting business and has been mentioned in the local media

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 20 of 43

as a potential candidate to replace Rep. Michael McCaul — who in turn has been mentioned as a potential Trump Cabinet member. “There are going to be people who won’t vote for me. But I believe I can attract people in the middle ... those who want to see that there are people of integrity and character running, who aren’t afraid to stand up to the system.”

Though a conservative Republican and an opponent of abortion, Sarver voted for Hillary Clinton, “in large part because of (Trump’s) history with misogyny,” she says. While she’s always felt welcome in the Republican Party, Sarver has felt stymied by the lack of an infrastructure to recruit female candidates: “Either there’s not the desire there, which I don’t think is true, or there’s not the support and infrastructure.”

This election cycle, there’s an additional concern for Republican women in Congress. Several aren’t running for re-election, either because they’re running for office elsewhere, or retiring. That could bring numbers of Republican women in Congress “down to numbers like we have not seen,” says Lawless. “It’s going to be very difficult for them to even maintain the numbers that they have.”

And that means a setback for women across the board — if you care about overall female representation in Congress. Because even with all the energy on the left, Lawless says, “the Democrats will have to have a hell of a banner year in order to compensate.”

Price’s exit adds another hurdle to GOP health care push

By JILL COLVIN and RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

BRANCHBURG, N.J. (AP) — The ouster of Tom Price as President Donald Trump’s health secretary is yet another self-inflicted blow for Republicans wishing to put their own stamp on health care — and the latest distraction for a White House struggling to advance its agenda after months of turmoil.

Price resigned Friday amid investigations into his use of costly charter flights for official travel at taxpayer expense. His exit makes it even more unlikely that Republicans will be able to deliver on their promise to repeal and replace former President Barack Obama’s law, even though they control the White House and both chambers of Congress.

“I think health care is a dead letter through the next election,” Joe Antos, a policy expert with the business-oriented American Enterprise Institute, said Saturday.

The health secretary’s exit capped a week in which a last-ditch GOP health care bill failed to advance in the Senate. Regaining momentum will be more difficult now that the White House also has to find a replacement for Price. That makes it harder to visualize how the administration and congressional Republicans can fulfill their goal of remaking the health care system along conservative lines, although Trump has said he’s confident a plan can pass early next year.

Price — who Trump concluded had become a distraction — had been on the rocks with the president since before the travel flap. A former Republican congressman from Georgia, he proved less helpful than expected on the health care fight. Price played a supporting role while Vice President Mike Pence took the lead, especially with the Senate.

The health secretary’s departure — the latest in a list that now includes Trump’s chief of staff, national security adviser, press secretary and two communications directors — is also unlikely to end what has been a steady drip of revelations about potentially inappropriate travel on the part of Cabinet members.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has come under fire for requesting a government aircraft to use on his honeymoon, while Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said he’d taken three charter flights while in office, including a \$12,375 late-night trip from Las Vegas to his home state of Montana in June. The Environmental Protection Agency’s inspector general has opened an inquiry into Administrator Scott Pruitt’s frequent taxpayer-funded travel on commercial planes.

The House Oversight and Government Reform committee has launched a government-wide investigation of top political appointees’ travel.

Trump ran on a pledge to “drain the swamp” in Washington and has taken pride in his efforts to reduce federal spending and negotiate better deals on behalf of American taxpayers.

In a memo Friday, White House budget director Mick Mulvaney said all travel on government-owned,

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 21 of 43

rented, leased or chartered aircraft will now have to be approved by the president's chief of staff, John Kelly. That gives more oversight power to a man who has tried to impose order and structure on what has been a chaotic White House.

On health care, the task of installing another secretary at the Health and Human Services department won't be easy.

The nominee will have to run the gauntlet of Senate confirmation. The already contentious process will be more challenging as Democrats shift from playing defense to offense on health care, heartened by the survival of the Affordable Care Act and polls showing support for the government's leading role in health care.

And HHS is not the only department that needs a leader. Trump has yet to pick a permanent replacement for Kelly, who left his previous job running the Department of Homeland Security in July.

Two potential candidates for health secretary already hold senior Senate-confirmed posts at HHS, which could be a plus for the White House.

Seema Verma leads the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which runs major insurance programs. Scott Gottlieb heads the Food and Drug Administration, which has regulatory authority across pharmaceuticals and consumer products.

Verma is a protege of Pence, who played a major role in negotiations with Congress this year on the futile effort to repeal the Obama health law.

Verma is seen as a talented policy expert, but she's still relatively new to the ways of Washington. Gottlieb is a veteran, but he may prefer the FDA and its clearly defined mission to the quicksand of health care policy.

Also mentioned is Louisiana GOP Sen. Bill Cassidy, co-author of the last Republican health care bill that failed to advance. Cassidy would probably win confirmation easily, but his prospects in the Senate appear bright, and he may not want to depart for a Cabinet post in a tumultuous administration.

Another potential candidate is Florida's Republican Gov. Rick Scott, a former hospital executive who is term-limited after 2018. But Scott is expected to mount a Senate campaign against Democratic incumbent Sen. Bill Nelson next year, and he may have ambitions and interests beyond health care.

Alonso-Zaldivar reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire in New York and Catherine Lucey in Washington contributed to this report.

O.J. Simpson out of prison after 9 years for armed robbery

By KEN RITTER, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Former football legend O.J. Simpson became a free man Sunday after serving nine years for a botched hotel room heist in Las Vegas that brought the conviction and prison time he avoided in the killings of his ex-wife and her friend after his 1995 acquittal in the "trial of the century" in Los Angeles.

Simpson was released at 12:08 a.m. PDT from Lovelock Correctional Center in northern Nevada, state prisons spokeswoman Brooke Keast told The Associated Press. She said she did not know the driver who met Simpson upon his release and didn't know where Simpson was immediately headed in his first hours of freedom.

"I don't have any information on where he's going," said Keast, who watched as Simpson signed documents and was let go.

Her department released video on social media of Simpson being told to "come on out" by a prison staffer, exiting through an open door. He could be seen responding "OK" as he left, wearing a ball cap, denim jacket, jeans and white tennis shoes.

Tom Scotto, a close Simpson friend who lives in Naples, Florida, said by text message that he was with Simpson following his release. Scotto didn't respond to questions about where they were going or whether Simpson's sister, Shirley Baker of Sacramento, California, or his daughter, Arnelle Simpson of Fresno, California, were with him.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 22 of 43

The three had attended Simpson's parole hearing in July at the same prison where Simpson spent his prison term and was released just minutes into the first day a parole board set for his possible release.

Simpson has said he wanted to move back to Florida, where he lived before his armed robbery conviction in Las Vegas in a September 2007 confrontation with two sports memorabilia dealers.

But Florida prison officials said documents weren't filed, and the state attorney general says she doesn't want Simpson to live in the state.

Neither Simpson's attorney, Malcolm LaVergne in Las Vegas, nor state Parole and Probation Capt. Shawn Arruti, who has been handling Simpson's case, immediately responded to messages.

Keast said the dead-of-night release from the prison about 90 miles (145 kilometers) east of Reno, Nevada, was conducted to avoid media attention.

"We needed to do this to ensure public safety and to avoid any possible incident," Keast added, speaking by telephone. She spoke from Lovelock, where she said she witnessed Simpson signing documents to be released.

The 70-year-old Simpson gains his freedom after being granted parole at a hearing in July. Unlike the last time he went free, 22 years ago, he will face restrictions — up to five years of parole supervision — and he's unlikely to escape public scrutiny as the man who morphed from charismatic football hero, movie star and TV personality into suspected killer and convicted armed robber.

Simpson was looking forward to reuniting with his family, eating a steak and some seafood and moving back to Florida, LaVergne said recently.

Simpson also plans to get an iPhone and get reacquainted with technology that was in its infancy when he was sent to prison in 2008, his attorney said.

The Florida Department of Corrections, however, said officials had not received a transfer request or required documents, and the attorney general said the state didn't want him.

"The specter of his residing in comfort in Florida should not be an option," Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi said in a statement on Friday. "Our state should not become a country club for this convicted criminal."

Simpson lost his home near Miami to foreclosure in 2012. But two of his children, Justin and Sydney, also live in Florida.

He could live at least temporarily in Las Vegas, where a friend let Simpson use his home for five weeks during his robbery trial.

His five years of parole supervision could be reduced with credits for good behavior.

It's a new chapter for the one-time pop culture phenomenon whose fame was once again on display when the major TV networks carried his parole hearing live.

He told officials that leading a group of men into a 2007 armed confrontation was an error in judgment he would not repeat.

He told the parole board that he led a "conflict-free life," an assertion that angered many who believe he got away with killing his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman in Los Angeles in 1994.

Simpson was once an electrifying running back dubbed "Juice" who won the Heisman Trophy as the nation's best college football player for USC in 1968 and became one of the NFL's all-time greats with the Buffalo Bills.

Handsome and charming, he also provided commentary on "Monday Night Football," became the face of Hertz rental-car commercials and built a movie career with roles in the "Naked Gun" comedies and other films.

Simpson fell from grace when he was arrested in the slayings, after a famous "slow-speed" Ford Bronco chase on California freeways. His subsequent trial became a live-TV sensation that fascinated viewers with its testimony about a bloody glove that didn't fit and unleashed furious debate over race, police and celebrity justice.

A jury swiftly acquitted him, but two years later, Simpson was found liable in civil court for the killings

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 23 of 43

and ordered to pay \$33.5 million to survivors, including his children and Goldman's family.

He is still on the hook for the judgment, which now amounts to about \$65 million, according to a Goldman family lawyer.

On Sept. 16, 2007, he led five men he barely knew to the Palace Station casino in Las Vegas in an effort to retrieve items that Simpson insisted were stolen after his acquittal in the 1994 slayings. Two of the men with Simpson in Las Vegas carried handguns, although Simpson still insists he never knew anyone was armed. He says he only wanted to retrieve personal items, mementoes and family photos.

He went to prison in 2008, receiving a stiff sentence that his lawyers said was unfair.

If the nation's Simpson obsession waned for a while, it resurged last year with the Emmy-winning FX miniseries, "The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story," and the Oscar-winning documentary "O.J.: Made in America."

Supreme Court conservatives on rise as important term begins

By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Disputes over a wedding cake for a same-sex couple and partisan electoral maps top the Supreme Court's agenda in the first full term of the Trump presidency. Conservatives will look for a boost from the newest justice, Neil Gorsuch, in a year that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has said will be momentous.

President Donald Trump's travel ban appears likely to disappear from the court's docket, at least for now. But plenty of high-profile cases remain.

The justices will hear important cases that touch on gay rights and religious freedoms, the polarized American electorate, the government's ability to track people without search warrants, employees' rights to band together over workplace disputes and states' rights to allow betting on professional and college sporting events.

Last year, "they didn't take a lot of major cases because they didn't want to be deadlocked 4-to-4," said Eric Kasper, director of the Center for Constitutional Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. "This year, that problem doesn't present itself."

Gorsuch quickly showed he would be an ally of the court's most conservative justices, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito, most recently joining them in objecting to the court's decision to block an execution in Georgia.

While justices can change over time, Gorsuch's presence on the bench leaves liberals with a fair amount of trepidation, especially in cases involving the rights of workers.

The very first case of the term could affect tens of millions of workers who have signed clauses as part of their employment contracts that not only prevent them from taking employment disputes to federal court, but also require them to arbitrate complaints individually, rather than in groups.

"I'm very fearful, given the new Supreme Court, of what will happen," said Sherrilyn Ifill, president and director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Just on Thursday, the justices added a case that has the potential to financially cripple Democratic-leaning labor unions that represent government workers.

Taken together, the two cases "have a real chance of being a one-two punch against workers' rights," said Claire Prestel, a lawyer for the Service Employees International Union.

In the term's marquee cases about redistricting and wedding cakes, 81-year-old Justice Anthony Kennedy, closest to the court's center, remains the pivotal vote.

In an era of sharp political division, it may be now or never for the court to rein in excessively partisan redistricting. If the justices do set limits, their decision could affect elections nationwide.

The high court has weighed in several times on gerrymandering over the past 30 years, without agreeing on a standard that would allow courts to measure and oversee a process that elected lawmakers handle in most states.

But a lower court was convinced that Democratic voters' challenge in Wisconsin to the Republican-led

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 24 of 43

redistricting following the 2010 census offered a sensible way to proceed. The GOP plan seemed to consign Democrats to minority status in the Wisconsin Assembly in a state that otherwise is closely divided between the parties.

The only real question in the case is whether Kennedy will decide that partisan redistricting "has just gone too far" in Wisconsin and other states where one party has a significant edge in the legislature, but state-wide elections are closely fought, said Donald Verrilli Jr., solicitor general during the Obama administration.

The wedding cake case stems from a Colorado baker's refusal, based on his religious beliefs, to make a cake for a same-sex couple.

Colorado's civil rights commission said baker Jack Phillips' refusal violated the state's anti-discrimination law. As the case has come to the Supreme Court, the focus is on whether Phillips, who regards his custom-made cakes as works of art, can be compelled by the state to produce a message with which he disagrees.

On the other side, civil rights groups worry that opponents of same-sex marriage are trying to make an end run around the Supreme Court's 2015 decision that extended same-sex marriage rights across the country by carving out exceptions to civil rights laws.

The competing narratives are both meant to appeal to Kennedy, who has forcefully defended free-speech rights in his 30 years on the court and also wrote the court's major gay rights rulings, including the landmark decision two years ago.

The Trump administration is supporting Phillips in this case. Former Justice Department official Martin Lederman said the administration's high court filing is the first in American history in favor of an exemption from civil rights laws.

The administration also has reversed course in two cases before the justices. In the arbitration case, the administration now is supporting employers over their workers. In the other, the administration backs Ohio's efforts to purge its voter rolls, over the objections of civil rights groups.

The justices have so far largely avoided being drawn into controversy surrounding the president. They found common ground and resisted a definitive ruling on Trump's travel ban, which critics have derided as an effort to exclude Muslims. The latest revision to the policy could prompt the court to jettison the case they originally had planned to hear in October.

David Cole, national legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said plenty of other cases will test "whether and to what extent the court will be playing an independent role in checking the Trump administration's positions with respect to basic rights protections."

One case concerns privacy in the digital age. The issue: Can police obtain cell tower location records from mobile phone companies to track a person's movements for several months without a search warrant?

Amid a clutter of ideologically divisive disputes, this case could unite conservative and liberal justices who have worried about how much unfettered access authorities should have to the digital records of peoples' lives.

"It's hugely important because, although this case is just about cell site records, it's about much more," said Orin Kerr, a privacy expert at George Washington University's law school, including "internet records, bank records, credit card records and telephone records."

Beyond the cases is the perennial court guessing game: Is anyone retiring?

Ginsburg and Kennedy, 81, are the court's oldest justices. Kennedy's plans are anyone's guess. Some of his former law clerks have said they wouldn't be surprised to see him leave the court as early as June.

Ginsburg turns 85 in March, at which point she'd become just the sixth justice to serve beyond that milestone birthday.

She has said she plans to serve as long as she can go "full steam." Ginsburg's discussion in public appearances about her workout routine, including planks and pushups, is her way of saying she's sticking around.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 25 of 43

Spanish police fire rubber bullets near Catalan voting site

By ARITZ PARRA and JOSEPH WILSON, Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Spanish riot police smashed their way into polling stations to try to halt a disputed independence referendum on Sunday and fired rubber bullets at protesters outside a Barcelona polling station. Several people were injured.

The officers fired the rubber bullets while trying to clear protesters who were trying to prevent National Police cars from leaving after police confiscated ballot boxes from the voting center. The Spanish government has ordered police to stop the voting process, saying it's illegal.

Catalan officials said 38 people were treated for mostly minor injuries. An AP photographer saw several people who had been injured during the scuffles outside Barcelona's Rius i Taule school, where some voters had cast ballots before police arrived.

Catalan President Carles Puigdemont condemned the crackdown.

"Police brutality will shame forever the Spanish state," he said as crowds cheered.

Enric Millo, the Spanish government's representative in the region, said police and National Guard forces acted "professionally" to enforce court orders. He said any attempt to claim the referendum as valid is doomed.

"Today's events in Catalonia can never be portrayed as a referendum or anything similar," he said.

Manuel Conedeminas, a 48-year-old IT manager who tried to block police from driving away with the ballot boxes, said agents had kicked them before using their batons and firing the projectiles, which were ball-shaped.

Elsewhere, Civil Guard officers, wearing helmets and carrying shields, used a hammer to break the glass of the front door and a lock cutter to break into the Sant Julia de Ramis sports center near the city of Girona. At least one woman was injured outside the building and wheeled away on a stretcher by paramedics.

Clashes broke out less than an hour after polls opened, and not long before Catalonia regional president Carles Puigdemont was expected to turn up to vote at the sports center. Polling station workers inside the building reacted peacefully and broke out into songs and chants challenging the officers' presence.

Puigdemont was forced to vote in Cornellà de Terri, near the northern city of Girona, his spokesman Joan Maria Pique told The Associated Press.

The Spanish government and its security forces are trying to prevent voting in the independence referendum, which is backed by Catalan regional authorities. Spanish officials had said force wouldn't be used, but that voting wouldn't be allowed.

Spain's Constitutional Court has suspended the vote. Regional separatist leaders pledged to hold it anyway, promising to declare independence if the "yes" side wins, and have called on 5.3 million eligible voters to cast ballots.

Police had sealed off many voting centers in the hours before the vote to prevent their use. Others were filled with activists determined to hold their ground.

Spanish riot police forcefully removed a few hundred would-be voters from a polling station at a school in Barcelona.

Daniel Riano was inside when the police pushed aside a large group gathered outside busted in the Estela school's front door.

The 54-year-old Riano said that "we were waiting inside to vote when the National Police used force to enter, they used a mace to break in the glass door and they took everything."

He said that "one policeman put me in a headlock to drag me out, while I was holding my wife's hand. It was incredible. They didn't give any warning."

National Police and Civil Guard officers also showed up in other polling centers where Catalan officials were expected.

Catalans braved rain and defied police orders to abandon designated voting stations.

Joaquim Bosch, a 73-year-old retiree at Princep de Viana high school, where a crowd of 20 people was growing Sunday morning, said he was uneasy about a possible police response to the crowds.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 26 of 43

"I have come to vote to defend the rights of my country, which is Catalonia," Bosch said. "I vote because of the mistreatment of Catalonia by Spain for many years."

Reporters with The Associated Press saw ballot boxes wrapped in plastic bags being carried into some of the polling stations in Barcelona occupied by parents, children and activists before some polling stations could open at 9 a.m. (0700 GMT) as scheduled.

The plastic ballot boxes, bearing the seal of the Catalan regional government, were placed on tables, prompting the cheering of hopeful voters who had gathered in schools before dawn.

In an effort to overcome myriad obstacles, Catalan officials announced that voters would be allowed to cast ballots in any location and could use ballots printed at home, rather than in designated polling stations as previously announced.

Regional government spokesman Jordi Turull also said that a group of "academics and professionals" would serve as election observers. The official electoral board appointed by the regional parliament was disbanded last week to avoid hefty fines by Spain's Constitutional Court.

"We are under conditions to be able to celebrate a self-determination referendum with guarantees," Turull said in a press conference. "Our goal is that all Catalans can vote."

Tension has been on the rise since the vote was called in early September, crystalizing years of defiance by separatists in the affluent region, which contributes a fifth of Spain's economy (\$1.32 trillion). As one of Spain's 17 autonomous regions, Catalonia enjoys ample autonomy but key areas such as infrastructure and taxes are in the hands of Madrid. Separatist Catalans have long complained of contributing too much to the state while not getting enough in return.

Courts and police have been cracking down for days to halt the vote, confiscating 10 million paper ballots and arresting key officials involved in the preparations. On Saturday, Civil Guard agents dismantled the technology to connect voting stations, count the votes and vote online, leading the Spanish government to announce that holding the referendum would be "impossible."

Associated Press writer Alex Oller contributed to this report from Barcelona, and Gregory Katz and Frank Griffiths contributed from London.

Follow complete AP coverage of the Catalonia referendum here .

'Let's Make a Deal' host, philanthropist Monty Hall dies

By LYNN ELBER, AP Television Writer

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Monty Hall, the genial TV game show host whose long-running "Let's Make a Deal" traded on love of money and merchandise and the mystery of which door had the car behind it, has died. He was 96.

Hall, who had been in poor health, died Saturday morning of heart failure at his home in Beverly Hills, said his daughter, Sharon Hall of Los Angeles.

"Let's Make a Deal," which Hall co-created, debuted as a daytime show on NBC in 1963 and became a TV staple. Through the next four decades, it also aired in prime time, in syndication and, in two brief outings, with hosts other than Hall at the helm.

An episode of "The Odd Couple" featured Felix Unger (Tony Randall) and Oscar Madison (Jack Klugman) as bickering guests on Hall's program.

Contestants were chosen from the studio audience — outlandishly dressed as animals, clowns or cartoon characters to attract the host's attention — and would start the game by trading an item of their own for a prize. After that, it was matter of swapping the prize in hand for others hidden behind doors, curtains or in boxes, presided over by the leggy, smiling Carol Merrill.

The query "Do you want Door No. 1, No. 2 or No. 3?" became a popular catch phrase, and the chance of winning a new car a matter of primal urgency. Prizes could be a car or a mink coat or a worthless item dubbed a "zonk."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 27 of 43

The energetic, quick-thinking Hall, a sight himself with his sideburns and colorful sports coats, was deemed the perfect host in Alex McNeil's reference book, "Total Television."

"Monty kept the show moving while he treated the outrageously garbed and occasionally greedy contestants courteously; it is hard to imagine anyone else but Hall working the trading area as smoothly," McNeil wrote.

For Hall, the interaction was easy.

"I'm a people person," he said on the PBS documentary series "Pioneers of Television." "And so I don't care if they jump on me, and I don't care if they yell and they fainted — those are my people."

The game show gave rise to an academic exercise in which students are asked to weigh this question: In guessing which of three doors might conceal a prize car, and after one is eliminated as a possibility, should you switch your choice to the one you didn't pick?

The puzzle sparked heated exchanges in Marilyn vos Savant's Parade magazine column. (The answer to the Monty Hall Problem, Hall and others said, was yes, take the switch — but only if the contest is set up so the host cannot skew the results by offering some guests the chance to switch doors and not giving others the same option.)

After five years on NBC, "Let's Make a Deal" moved to ABC in 1968 and aired on the network through 1976, including prime-time stints. It went into syndication in the 1970s and 1980s, returning to NBC in 1990-91 and again in 2003. In 2009 it returned on CBS with host Wayne Brady and is still on the air.

His name and show remain part of the language. Typical is the quotation in a 2006 Daytona Beach (Florida) News-Journal profile of a no-nonsense bail bondswoman who says, "I'm not Monty Hall and this isn't 'Let's Make a Deal.'"

Hall also guest-starred in sitcoms and appeared in TV commercials. And with the wealth that the game show brought, he made philanthropy and fundraising his avocation. He spent 200 days a year at it, he said, estimating in the late 1990s that he had coaxed \$700 million from donors.

His daughter Sharon estimated that Hall managed to raise nearly \$1 billion for charity over his lifetime.

Another daughter, Joanna Gleason, is a longtime Broadway and television actress. She won a Tony in 1988 for best actress in a musical for "Into the Woods" and was nominated for Tonys two other times.

Born Monty Halparin in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in Canada, Hall grew up during the Depression. In 1942, Hall was doing manual labor at the time when a wealthy stranger offered to pay for his college education on condition that he repaid the money, got top grades, kept his benefactor's name anonymous and agreed to help someone else.

Hall only revealed the name of the late Max Freed about 30 years later.

Hall earned a degree from the University of Manitoba with the goal of becoming a physician. He was denied entry to medical school, Hall later said, because he was Jewish and faced quotas limiting the admission of minority students.

"Every poor kid wants to get into some kind of profession, and in my case I wanted to get into medicine to become a doctor. ... My dreams of medicine evaporated," Hall said in a 2002 interview with The Canadian Press.

Instead, he turned to entertainment. He first tested his skills on radio and, after moving to New York in 1955 and later to Los Angeles, began working on a variety of television shows. Among the programs he hosted were "Cowboy Theater" in 1957, "Keep Talking," 1958, and "Video Village" in 1960.

He joined with writer-producer Stefan Hatots to create "Let's Make a Deal."

The show's roots could be found in "The Auctioneer," a game show Hall hosted in Toronto in the 1950s. "The Auctioneer" was a "pretty pedestrian" program until the concluding 10 minutes, when he would barter with audience members, Hall told the Daily Herald of suburban Chicago in 2000.

"It was much more exciting than the first 20 minutes of the show," he recalled.

Besides Hall, the hosts of "Let's Make a Deal" were Bob Hilton (1990) and Billy Bush (2003). But it was Hall who was lastingly identified as "TV's big dealer," as the show put it, something he found at least mildly disconcerting.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 28 of 43

When a People magazine interviewer suggested in 1996 that "Let's Make a Deal" would be his epitaph, Hall replied, with a wince: "You put that on my tombstone, and I'll kill you."

However, Sharon Hall said Hall never refused an autograph and used his fame to help others.

His family's financial circumstances and a childhood accident stirred that charitable desire, Hall said.

At age 7, he was severely burned by a pot of boiling water and endured a lengthy recovery.

"When you've been that sick, spent a year out of school, you identify with people who have these ailments and sicknesses," he told the Palm Beach (Fla.) Post in a 2003 interview. "And when you grow up poor, you identify with people in need."

Hall was repeatedly honored for his charity efforts, with awards including the Order of Canada, Order of Manitoba and Variety Clubs International's Humanitarian Award. Wards were named in his honor at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, Hahnemann University Hospital in Philadelphia and other medical centers.

Hall and his wife, Marilyn Plottel, married in 1947. She died earlier this year.

In addition to his daughters, Hall is survived by his son, Richard; a brother, Robert Hall of Toronto, Canada, and five grandchildren.

Associated Press writer Robert Jablon contributed to this report.

In a replay, Trump tweets anew about NFL players and protest

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Saturday night stoked the controversy over his call for punitive action against NFL players who take a knee or otherwise protest during the national anthem, tweeting anew that they should remain standing out of respect for the nation and its flag.

Trump took time from a Twitter rant against criticism of the federal response to hurricane damage in Puerto Rico to tweet: "Very important that NFL players STAND tomorrow, and always, for the playing of our National Anthem. Respect our Flag and our Country!"

Protesting during the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" drew national attention last season when Colin Kaepernick, then a quarterback with the San Francisco 49ers, declined to stand as a way to bring attention to police treatment of blacks and to social injustice.

During a wide-ranging speech at a political rally in Alabama on Sept. 22, Trump called for NFL owners to fire players who engaged in such a protest. In the days that followed the president issued a series of tweets reiterating his views and calling for a boycott of games by fans.

Criticism from players, owners and fans — and some praise — greeted Trump's remarks. The controversy boiled for days and seemed to overshadow other issues facing the Trump presidency, including the failure of congressional Republicans to repeal and replace the nation's health care law, the primary loss in Alabama of Trump's favored candidate, a turbulent hurricane season and the back-and-forth between the U.S. and North Korea over missiles and nuclear weapons.

Relatively few players had demonstrated before Trump's remarks. Last Sunday, more than 100 NFL players sat, knelt or raised their fists in defiance during the national anthem.

Trump criticizes media, San Juan mayor in Puerto Rico tweets

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

BRANCBURG, N.J. (AP) — President Donald Trump on Saturday lashed out at the mayor of San Juan and other officials in storm-ravaged Puerto Rico, contemptuous of their claims of a laggard U.S. response to the natural disaster that has imperiled the island's future.

"Such poor leadership ability by the Mayor of San Juan, and others in Puerto Rico, who are not able to get their workers to help," Trump said in a series of tweets a day after the capital city's mayor appealed for help "to save us from dying."

"They want everything to be done for them when it should be a community effort," Trump wrote from his New Jersey golf club.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 29 of 43

The tweets were a biting attack on the leader of a community in crisis. After 10 days of desperation, with many still unable to access essentials including food and water, San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulin Cruz accused the Trump administration Friday of "killing us with the inefficiency" after Hurricane Maria. She implored the president, who is set to visit the U.S. territory on Tuesday, to "make sure somebody is in charge that is up to the task of saving lives."

"I am begging, begging anyone that can hear us, to save us from dying," Cruz said at a news conference, her voice breaking with rage.

His critical response was an unusually pointed rebuke from the president in the heat of a disaster — a time when leaders often put aside partisan differences in the name of solidarity. But it was a reminder of Trump's unrelenting penchant for punching back against critics, whatever the circumstances.

Trump has said he's doing everything possible to help the "great people of PR!" and has pledged to spare no effort to help the island recover from Maria's ruinous aftermath. He has also repeatedly applauded his government's recovery efforts, saying military personnel and first responders have done "an amazing job," despite the significant logistical challenges.

Thousands more Puerto Ricans have received water and rationed food as an aid bottleneck has begun to ease. But many, especially outside the capital, remain desperate for necessities, including water, power and fuel.

Trump's administration has tried in recent days to combat the perception that he failed to quickly grasp the magnitude of Maria's destruction and has given the U.S. commonwealth less attention than he'd bestowed on states like Texas, Louisiana and Florida after they were hit by hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Trump had repeatedly praised the residents of those states as strong and resilient, saying at one point that Texas could "handle anything."

Administration officials have held numerous press conferences providing updates on relief efforts and Trump on Saturday spoke by phone from New Jersey with FEMA Administrator Brock Long, Puerto Rico's governor, Ricardo Rosselló, and other several other local officials.

But after a week of growing criticism, the president's patience appears to be waning.

"The Mayor of San Juan, who was very complimentary only a few days ago, has now been told by the Democrats that you must be nasty to Trump," the president charged, without substantiation.

FEMA administrator Brock Long also piled on: "The problem that we have with the mayor unfortunately is that unity of command is ultimately what's needed to be successful in this response," he said, requesting that she report to a joint field office.

Cruz declined to engage in the tit-for-tat, instead calling for a united focus on the people who need help. "The goal is one: saving lives. This is the time to show our 'true colors.' We cannot be distracted by anything else," she tweeted, along with photos of herself meeting with residents and rescue workers, wading hip-deep through a flooded street and comforting an elderly woman.

After a day of tweets criticizing the news media, Trump seemed to echo the sentiment: "We must all be united in offering assistance to everyone suffering in Puerto Rico and elsewhere in the wake of this terrible disaster."

Trump's Saturday tweets are the latest example of his insistence on "punching back," even against those with far less power. After a deadly terror attack in London in June, for instance, Trump singled out London Mayor Sadiq Khan, suggesting he wasn't taking the attacks seriously enough.

Natural disasters sometimes bring moments of rare bipartisan solidarity. In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, which wreaked havoc along the East Coast in 2012, New Jersey's Republican governor, Chris Christie, praised Democratic President Barack Obama for his personal attention and compassion at a joint press conference. Still, the fight over relief money became politicized and contentious, with numerous Republicans voting against a delayed relief bill.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Andrew, tensions between local and federal officials also ran high. Then-New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin pleaded with the government to send help in sometimes colorful terms, while Terry Ebbert, the city's Homeland Security director, called relief efforts a "national disgrace."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 30 of 43

Kate Hale, Dade County's emergency management chief during Hurricane Andrew, also blasted FEMA's response in an angry news conference that was credited with spurring federal government action.

Associated Press writers Luis Alonso Lugo in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

Tillerson says US has direct channels to talk to North Korea

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN and MATTHEW PENNINGTON, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson acknowledged on Saturday that the United States is maintaining direct channels of communications with North Korea even as tensions rise over the North's nuclear and missile programs and the countries' leaders spar through bellicose name-calling.

Tillerson said the U.S. was probing North Korea's willingness to talk, and called for a calming of the situation on the Korean Peninsula, adding it was incumbent on the North to halt the missile launches.

"We have lines of communication to Pyongyang. We're not in a dark situation, a blackout," Tillerson told reporters during a visit to China. "We have a couple ... three channels open to Pyongyang. We can talk to them, we do talk to them."

No elaboration about those channels or the substance of any discussions came from Tillerson, who met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and other top officials in Beijing.

While Tillerson affirmed that the U.S. would not recognize North Korea as a nuclear power, he also said the Trump administration had no intention of trying to oust Kim. "Despite assurances that the United States is not interested in promoting the collapse of the current regime, pursuing regime change, accelerating reunification of the peninsula or mobilizing forces north of the DMZ, North Korean officials have shown no indication that they are interested in or are ready for talks regarding denuclearization," U.S. State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a statement.

The Korean Peninsula remains in a technical state of war, and the Demilitarized Zone divides North and South Korea.

Since President Donald Trump took office in January, the U.S. has restored a diplomatic back-channel between the State Department and North Korea's mission at the United Nations. That's traditionally been a way for the two sides to communicate because they lack formal diplomatic ties.

The main aim of the initial contacts was to seek the freedom of several American citizens imprisoned in North Korea, although U.S. officials have told The Associated Press that there were broader discussions about U.S.-North Korean relations. Those contacts, however, have failed to reduce the deep mistrust between the adversaries and it's unclear to what extent they have endured the current spike in tensions.

North Korea has in recent months tested long-range missiles that potentially could reach the U.S., and on Sept. 3 conducted its largest nuclear test explosion to date. The standoff has entered a new, more dangerous phase since then as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Trump have exchanged personal insults and threats of war.

"I think the most immediate action that we need is to calm things down," Tillerson said. "They're a little overheated right now. And I think we need to calm them down first." He did not directly address the impact of Trump's own rhetoric.

"Obviously it would help if North Korea would stop firing off missiles. That would calm things down a lot," Tillerson said.

Trump gave a combative speech recently at the U.N. General Assembly in which he mocked Kim as "Rocket Man" on a "suicide mission." Trump said that if "forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea." Kim responded by saying he would "tame the mentally deranged U.S. dotard with fire."

Tillerson's stop in the Chinese capital was helping lay the groundwork for a November state visit by Trump, part of a five-nation swing through Asia. Trump has pressed for sterner measures against the North by China, the North's chief trading partner and source of aid and diplomatic support.

Beijing adamantly opposes steps that could bring down Kim's government, but appears increasingly

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 31 of 43

willing to tighten the screws. China has agreed to tough new U.N. penalties that would substantially cut foreign revenue for the isolated North.

On Thursday, Beijing ordered North Korean-owned businesses and ventures with Chinese partners to close by early January, days after it said it would cut off gas and limit shipments of refined petroleum products, effective Jan. 1. China made no mention of crude oil, which makes up the bulk of Chinese energy supplies to North Korea and is not covered by U.N. sanctions.

China has banned imports of North Korean coal, iron and lead ore, and seafood since early September. Still, Washington hopes China will exert even greater pressure.

China argues that sanctions alone cannot solve the impasse, and has urged Washington to cool its rhetoric and open a dialogue with North Korea. But the North is coming closer to having a nuclear-tipped missile that could strike America, and says it will only discuss the weapons programs if the U.S. abandons its "hostile policy" toward the North.

This was Tillerson's second visit to China as America's top diplomat. China is the world's No. 2 economy and chief U.S. rival for influence in Asia, and increasingly, the world.

In addition to North Korea, the U.S. and China have other security concerns to address.

They are at odds over Beijing's military buildup and assertive claims to disputed islands in the South China Sea. Trump is also looking to reduce China's massive trade surplus with the U.S. — \$347 billion last year — and what American companies say are unfair barriers to investment, including pressure to hand over their technology.

In opening remarks at his meeting with Xi, Tillerson said relations between the sides continue to "grow and mature on the strength of the relationship between yourself and President Trump."

He added: "We look forward to advancing that relationship at the upcoming summit."

Trump and Xi met in April at Trump's estate in Florida. Trump's planned visit next month will come weeks after Xi is expected to receive a new five-year term as leader of the ruling Communist Party.

The presidents' upcoming meeting promises to be grander and more choreographed than the informal talks in Florida that were most memorable for Trump's ordering a missile strike on Syria and then informing Xi about it afterward as they ate chocolate cake.

Pennington reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Joe McDonald contributed to this report.

Trump lashes out at San Juan mayor who begged for more help

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

BRANCHBURG, N.J. (AP) — President Donald Trump on Saturday lashed out at the mayor of San Juan and other officials in storm-ravaged Puerto Rico, contemptuous of their claims of a laggard U.S. response to the natural disaster that has imperiled the island's future.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 32 of 43

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Kate Hale, Dade County's emergency management chief during Hurricane Andrew, also blasted FEMA's response in an angry news conference that was credited with spurring federal government action.

"I wasn't there to criticize; I was there to beg for help," she said. "I was terrified of what was going to happen to people that otherwise could have been saved. It was never my intention to criticize; it was my intention to cry for help, my intention to beg for help. And it came out like it did, because it just does."

"We were all at the end of our rope," she said. "We didn't know what else to do."

She called Cruz's remarks a passionate outcry "from a woman who loves her community and the people in it, has watched it be destroyed and is now watching people die."

Associated Press writers Luis Alonso Lugo in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Darlene Superville in Washington

contributed to this report.

Hurricane stresses Puerto Rico's already weak health system

By BEN FOX and DANICA COTO, Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Martin Lopez was shot in the hand last Saturday by two thieves who made off with his precious cans of gas in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. He was rushed to Centro Medico, a trauma center in the Puerto Rican capital where in ordinary times he would be quickly treated by surgeons and sent on his way.

But five days later, the 26-year-old cook was still waiting because only a fraction of the operating rooms were available due to an island-wide breakdown in the electrical power grid caused by the storm. He finally got the surgery and the hospital said he was on the mend Friday — but the same can't be said for Puerto Rico's badly stressed medical system.

"Thank God I'm fine, I'm getting better," he told The Associated Press in an air-conditioned medical tent set up by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on the grounds of Centro Medico. "But Puerto Rico is destroyed. It's really sad."

Of all the problems unleashed by the storm, which roared over the island Sept. 20 as a Category 4 hurricane with winds up to 155 mph, the plight of overtaxed hospitals and smaller clinics — and health care in general — is one of the most worrying for officials grappling with recovery efforts.

The health system in the U.S. territory was already precarious, with a population that is generally sicker, older and poorer than that of the mainland, long waits and a severe shortage of specialists as a result of a decade-long economic recession. The island of 3.4 million people has higher rates of HIV, asthma, diabetes and some types of cancer, as well as tropical diseases such as the mosquito-borne Zika and dengue viruses.

In Maria's wake, hospitals and their employees are wrestling with the same shortages of basic necessities as everyone else. There are people who are unable to keep insulin or other medicines refrigerated. The elderly are particularly vulnerable to the tropical heat as widespread power outages mean no air conditioning. And amid the widespread disruption, it's often difficult to get kids to a doctor, especially for families who can't afford to drive long distances on a tank running out of gasoline.

"Whenever there is a disaster that impacts an area to the degree that this one has, then yes, people's lives are going to be in danger," said Dr. James Lapkoff, an emergency room doctor in Waynesville, North Carolina, who was part of the HHS team dispatched to Puerto Rico.

Days before the hurricane hit, 56-year-old retired government worker Damaris Torres tried to find a safe place for her son, who has been bedridden for a decade after a traffic accident and depends on a ventilator, oxygen tank and feeding tube.

She has a small generator at home and a battery connected to an inverter as backup, but she didn't want a rerun of what happened when Hurricane Irma hit just weeks earlier. Back then her son, 30-year-old Manuel Alejandro Olivencia, was transferred to three hospitals in less than 40 hours because his family was told there was no "special place" for someone on a ventilator.

"He's in such delicate condition," Torres said, her eyes welling with tears as she recounted how a hospital in the northern fishing town of Catano finally took him in.

That facility relies on a generator, but officials say they constantly worry about running out of fuel.

"Diesel is the one thing everyone is asking for," Mayor Felix Delgado said as he visited the hospital on a recent morning.

Maria knocked out electricity to the entire island, and only a handful of Puerto Rico's 63 hospitals had generators operating at full power. Even those started to falter amid a shortage of diesel to fuel them and a complete breakdown in the distribution network.

Patients were sent to Centro Medico and several other major facilities, quickly overwhelming them. The situation is starting to improve, with about half of the hospitals getting direct power or priority shipments

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 34 of 43

of diesel, but that barely addresses the challenges facing the island as a whole.

Jorge Matta, CEO of the nonprofit that runs the complex of hospitals that make up Centro Medico, said progress was being made on restoring power capacity there and finding places to send patients whose homes were destroyed. He said they expected to have all 20 operating rooms at the trauma center back up this weekend. But other parts of the island are in much worse shape.

"Right now we have hospitals (elsewhere) that need diesel, they need water, they need oxygen," Matta said.

On Saturday, authorities evacuated dozens of patients at one hospital in the capital of San Juan after its backup generator failed. They were taken to other nearby hospitals already struggling with an overflow of patients.

Metro Pavia, which operates several hospital campuses across the island, warned Friday that it was closing emergency rooms in Arecibo and Ponce because it did not have enough diesel.

Meanwhile medicines are running low and obtaining fuel is an ongoing struggle, said Dr. David Lenihan, president of Ponce Health Sciences University, the only medical clinic currently serving southern Puerto Rico.

"If these things start deteriorating, there's a significant amount of lives at risk," he said. "We're providing care, but it's not optimal care."

At the Doctors' Center Hospital in the northern city of Bayamon, Dr. Victor Rivera said they are so overwhelmed that he has been intercepting patients in the ER waiting room and even outside while people are still in their cars, and sending them on their way with medical advice or a prescription in non-emergency cases.

Only one of the hospital's four surgery rooms is operating because the others were contaminated when they were used as shelters after Maria ripped off the roof on the fifth floor and blew out the windows on the fourth.

Rivera said the hospital, like many others, is relying on overworked generators.

"They've been hit with an enormous amount of work," he said, noting that the hospital had turned them on earlier during Hurricane Irma and increasingly worries they could fail. "This could potentially be a catastrophe for any hospital."

With capacity maxed out, he has been sending patients who suffer from asthma, diabetes and other conditions to other hospitals nearby.

Hospitals are struggling to treat a wide variety of conditions in Maria's wake. The first wave was people with cuts and other wounds sustained in the storm. There are also people like Lopez, who was robbed after waiting in line five hours to buy a rationed supply of gas, who have the type of non-storm-related injuries typically treated at Centro Medico.

The hospital serves as the main trauma center for many around the Caribbean, and when Maria hit, it was already treating patients from the island of St. Maarten who were injured in Hurricane Irma.

Centro Medico and a couple others are also receiving patients from all over Puerto Rico from clinics unable to handle them, straining the system.

Gov. Ricardo Rossello has ordered that all major hospitals be placed on a priority list for receiving diesel.

The U.S. Navy has also dispatched the USNS Comfort, a hospital ship that has been deployed during previous disasters such as the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

The vessel's sailing plan was a Friday departure from Norfolk, Virginia, with up to five days before it would reach Puerto Rico.

Red Sox clinch AL East, top Astros 6-3; rematch in playoffs

By JIMMY GOLEN, AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — The hard chopper bounced off first baseman Mitch Moreland's glove and high into the air. Second baseman Brock Holt jumped to glove the ball and flipped it to first, where David Price was covering.

When the Boston Red Sox needed him, Price was there.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 35 of 43

The one-time ace came out of the bullpen in relief of Drew Pomeranz and squelched a dangerous seventh-inning rally on Saturday, helping the Red Sox beat the Houston Astros 6-3 and clinch the first back-to-back AL East titles in franchise history.

With the win, the Red Sox avoided a possible tiebreaker against the rival New York Yankees.

"That was important: Just get it done today," star Hanley Ramirez said afterward in the Red Sox clubhouse, where music blared, the lockers were covered in plastic and players wore goggles to protect their eyes from the spray of beer and domestic sparkling wine.

With the Boston win, the Yankees were left with a wild-card spot and a one-game matchup against the Minnesota Twins for the right to play Cleveland in the best-of-five AL Division Series. The Astros' loss meant the Indians, with the tiebreaker over Houston and 101 wins entering Saturday, clinched the best record in the AL.

Boston's win set up an immediate rematch with the AL West champion Astros in the ALDS, starting Thursday in Houston.

"This is a good team across the way. We're a good team. We're both division champions," Astros manager A.J. Hinch said. "We'll obviously see a lot of each other over the next 10 days."

Boston leads New York by two games with one to play, the remnants of what had been a five-game lead when the Red Sox returned to Fenway Park for a season-ending homestand. A loss Saturday — coupled with the Yankees' 2-1 win over Toronto — would have forced Boston to use Chris Sale on the final day of the season to avoid a tiebreaker on Monday.

The AL East has not had needed a one-game playoff since Bucky Dent's homer cleared the Green Monster to help the Yankees eliminate Boston in 1978.

"We get a chance to get a couple of days rest," said manager John Farrell, who scratched Sale from Sunday's start and said Hector Velazquez will pitch instead. "Chris is deserving of a couple of extra days to just get some rest."

Mookie Betts homered and scored three times, and Pomeranz (17-6) had a two-hit shutout through six innings. With a heavy rain beginning to fall in the top of the seventh, the Astros rallied against Carson Smith and made it 5-2 before Price came in.

BEING THERE

Farrell had said before the game that Price, who threw 24 pitches on Friday night, was unavailable. "He came in today and said, 'Hey, if the situation presents itself, give me the ball,'" Farrell said.

That situation was in the seventh inning, with two in and two on, nobody out and the tying run at the plate. Price got Brian McCann on the 3-4-1 putout thanks to a fortuitous bounce, struck out Cameron Maybin and walked pinch-hitter Tyler White to load the bases.

Instead of sending pitching coach Carl Willis to the mound to discuss strategy, Farrell went himself, prompting reliever Addison Reed to run in from the bullpen, thinking he was being called upon to pitch.

"That's the first time all year I've gone to the mound without making a move," Farrell said.

Price stayed in, fanning George Springer looking on three pitches to end the threat.

LATE RALLY

McCann homered off Red Sox closer Craig Kimbrel in the ninth to make it 6-3. Maybin then doubled before Kimbrel struck out Tony Kemp and Springer to end it.

"They can shorten the game with their bullpen," Hinch said. "Especially with Price now in the 'pen throwing the way he's thrown the last couple times against us (and) Kimbrel, an elite closer, at the end. You've got to get them early and the games that we've had success against them we've done that."

ALSO OF NOTE

Pomeranz allowed one run on three hits and two walks, striking out three. ... Lance McCullers (7-4), who was pitching for a spot in the postseason rotation, allowed five runs on six hits and two walks, striking out six in 4 1/3 innings. ... With one hit in four at-bats, Jose Altuve's major league-leading batting average fell one point, to .347. ... Betts and Colorado's Nolan Arenado are the only players to have at least 100 RBIs and score at least 100 runs in both 2016 and 2017. ... Andrew Benintendi is the third Red Sox rookie with 20 homers and 20 steals in a season, joining Ellis Burks (1987) and Nomar Garciaparra ('97).

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 36 of 43

TRAINER'S ROOM

Astros: RF Josh Reddick (sore back) remained in Houston. He missed his third straight game.

Red Sox: 2B Dustin Pedroia was scratched on Saturday morning because of concerns over how the wet conditions might affect his sore left knee.

UP NEXT

The teams finish out the regular season on Sunday. With all positions clinched, Dallas Keuchel will throw a simulated game instead of starting. RHP Collin McHugh (4-2) faces the righty Velazquez (3-1), who replaced Sale.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 37 of 43

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Mormon leader reaffirms faith's opposition to gay marriage

By BRADY McCOMBS, Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A top Mormon leader reaffirmed the religion's opposition to same-sex marriage on Saturday during a church conference — and reminded followers watching around the world that children should be raised in families led by a married man and woman no matter what becomes the norm in a "declining world."

The speech by Dallin H. Oaks, a member of a top governing body called the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, followed a push in recent years by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to uphold theological opposition to gay marriage amid widespread social acceptance while trying to foster an empathetic stance toward LGBT people.

The Mormon church is one of many conservative faith groups navigating the challenges that arise from trying to strike the right balance.

"We have witnessed a rapid and increasing public acceptance of cohabitation without marriage and same-sex marriage. The corresponding media advocacy, education, and even occupational requirements pose difficult challenges for Latter-day Saints," Oaks said. "We must try to balance the competing demands of following the gospel law in our personal lives and teachings even as we seek to show love for all."

Oaks acknowledged that this belief can put Mormons at odds with family and friends and doesn't match current laws, including the recent legalization of gay marriage in the United States. But he told members of the nearly 16-million member faith watching around the world that the religion's 1995 document detailing the doctrine — "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" — isn't a policy statement that will be changed.

He lamented that more children in the United States are raised in families led by unmarried mothers.

"Even as we must live with the marriage laws and other traditions of a declining world, those who strive for exaltation must make personal choices in family life according to the Lord's way whenever that differs from the world's way," Oaks said.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 38 of 43

After the Utah-based Mormon church received backlash in 2008 for helping lead the fight for California's Proposition 8 constitutional ban on gay marriage, religious leaders spent several years carefully developing a more empathetic LGBT tone.

That was interrupted in 2015 when the church adopted new rules banning children living with gay parents from being baptized until age 18 and clarifying that people in same-sex relationships are apostates. That policy drew harsh criticism from gay church members and their supporters, who considered it a major setback from recent progress.

A year ago, church leaders updated a website created in 2012 to let members know that that attraction to people of the same sex is not a sin or a measure of their faithfulness and may never go away. But the church reminded members that having gay sex violates fundamental doctrinal beliefs that will not change.

Brittany Krallis Stapf, a lifelong Mormon who lives near Spokane, Washington, with her husband and sons, was among church members who were disappointed in Oaks' speech. In a phone interview, Krallis, 36, said she's teaching her sons, ages 12 and 9, to be inclusive and loving to everyone and stick up for LGBT members.

"My heart was pounding. It is very difficult to hear an apostle give a speech you feel contradicts the message you're trying to teach your children," Krallis said.

She said she knows many Mormons from her generation who share her hope that church leaders will eventually soften on the issue.

"Social change comes first," Krallis said. "At times, it's followed in the church."

The twice-yearly conference is proceeding without church President Thomas S. Monson, 90, who is dealing with ailing health. It's the first time in more than a half century that Monson hasn't spoken at the conferences. Before becoming church president in 2008, he served on the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles starting in 1963.

Monson has scaled back conference participation in recent years, and in May, church officials said that he was no longer going regularly to meetings at church offices because of limitations related to his age.

Church presidents serve until they die.

Monson is the first church president since 1994 not to attend and make at least one speech. But prior to that, it was fairly common for presidents to miss conferences toward the end of their lives.

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, one of Monson's top two counselors, said Monson was watching from his home. "President Monson, we love you very much," Uchtdorf said.

Also missing will be Robert D. Hales, 85, a top leader who was hospitalized in recent days.

Church leaders use the conference to deliver spiritual guidance to members and sometimes announce church news.

Quentin L. Cook, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, briefly denounced racism during a speech on the importance of humility. Cook reminded members that the religion's signature scripture, the Book of Mormon, declares that "we all are unlike unto God" and said anyone who claims superiority based on race, sex, language or economic class is morally wrong and doesn't understand God's purpose for his followers.

Cook's message echoed a church statement delivered in August condemning white supremacist attitudes as "morally wrong and sinful" after a protest over a Confederate War monument in Charlottesville, Virginia, descended into deadly violence.

The religion still deals with questions about their views on race, in part because the faith banned men of African descent from the lay clergy until 1978. The church now disavows the theories of the past that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse, which led to the ban.

Mormon leaders also cautioned about the pitfalls of social media, where the carefully crafted images of an altered reality lead people to end up envious and discouraged and in constant search of more followers and likes.

Jeffrey R. Holland, a member the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, warned members not to let the pursuit of Christ-like perfection lead to ulcers, bulimia, depression or lowered self-esteem.

"Let's strive for steady improvement without obsessing over what behavioral scientists call 'toxic perfectionism,'" Holland said.

Separatists vow to defy police ultimatum over Catalan vote

By ARITZ PARRA and JOSEPH WILSON, Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Catalan separatists vowed Saturday to ignore a police ultimatum to leave the schools they are occupying to use in a vote seeking independence from Spain. As police methodically sealed off hundreds of schools, some parents decided to send their children home and girded for pre-dawn confrontations Sunday with police.

Tensions rose across the country over the planned vote. In the Spanish capital of Madrid, thousands marched to protest the separatists' attempt to break up their nation, demanding that Catalan leaders be sent to jail. In Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia, thousands more also took to the streets to urge their prosperous region to stay united with Spain.

The police deadline of 6 a.m. Sunday for the activists, parents and children in the occupied Catalan schools is designed to prevent the vote from taking place, since the polls are supposed to open three hours later.

Spain's Constitutional Court suspended the independence vote more than three weeks ago and the national government calls it illegal. Police have been ordered to stop ballots from being cast on Sunday and have been cracking down for days, confiscating millions of ballots and posters.

Catalonia's defiant regional government is pressing ahead anyway, urging the region's 5.3 million voters to make their voices heard.

Spain's foreign minister dismissed the planned vote as anti-democratic, saying it runs "counter to the goals and ideals" of the European Union.

"What they are pushing is not democracy. It is a mockery of democracy, a travesty of democracy," Alfonso Dastis told The Associated Press in an interview.

He accused some pro-independence groups of "adopting Nazi-like attitudes by pointing at people that are against that referendum and encouraging others to harass them."

Spain's Interior Ministry said police had sealed off "most" of the region's 2,315 polling stations and disabled software being used in the referendum. Enric Millo, the highest-ranking Spanish official in the northeastern region, said parents and students were occupying at least 163 schools by mid-Saturday, when about 1,000 more still needed to be checked. In a later update, the ministry didn't provide a new figure but only said "some" schools remained occupied.

The regional police force has been ordered not to use force in vacating the schools but Millo said anyone remaining after 6 a.m. will need to be removed.

"I trust in the common sense of Catalans and that people will operate with prudence," he said.

Authorities have already confiscated 10 million paper ballots in the last few days — which will make it much more difficult for Catalan officials to carry out an effective vote. Millo said the Spanish government would tolerate ad hoc voting in the streets but that those results could not be considered valid.

"They can always put a makeshift table in the street with some buckets and put papers in," he said. "But what Catalan authorities have promised, an effective referendum with legal basis and binding, is something that won't happen."

At the Congres-Indians school in Barcelona, designated as a polling place, activist Quim Roy said he would be sending his two daughters home before the deadline out of concerns about possible violence. He said other parents planned to do the same.

"Who knows what will happen if the Guardia Civil comes?" Roy said, referring to the Spanish national guard.

He said he would not resort to violence but will not leave the building voluntarily.

"If they tell me I can't be in a public school to exercise my democratic rights, they will have to take me out of here. I won't resist, but they will have to carry me out," he said.

Organizers set up a range of activities in the schools — including yoga sessions, games, film screenings and picnics — to keep spirits high as the historic confrontation with Spain's central government unfolds.

Roy said there were no ballot boxes or ballots yet at the school but he was not worried about that.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 40 of 43

"They will appear," he said with a shrug.

At the La Sagrera primary school in Barcelona, parent Saverio Trioni said 20 parents and children slept over on Friday but "we expect way more tonight. The plan is 100 at least." They are holding a music festival to keep everyone occupied.

Trioni said, however, that "we will leave if ordered to."

A pro-independence grassroots group admitted that Sunday's vote could be in jeopardy unless more schools were kept open to hold it. Open Schools spokesman Ramon Font told the AP he did not have an exact number on how many schools were being occupied but felt it was more than the number stated by police.

"If the number of schools kept open does not rise, then the ability to exercise our right to self-determination will be in serious jeopardy. It will be very difficult to vote," Font said.

In Madrid, thousands of people rallied Saturday in a central plaza to protest the Catalan independence vote, angry and fearful that it could divide Spain. Some shouted "Long live Spain!" and "Puigdemont to jail!"

Catalan regional President Carles Puigdemont, who openly favors breaking away from Spain, is among those promoting the independence vote.

In Barcelona, Francisco Morales, a 69-year-old retiree, said he was marching Saturday to defend the unity of Spain against the "lies" of Catalan separatists. Morales and his wife were among thousands protesting the independence referendum.

"We don't want division. It's been enough lies telling people that they can't be Catalans and Spanish at the same time," Morales said. "The politicians supporting independence are bending the law to tear this country apart."

Some anti-vote protesters scaled the windows of Barcelona's city hall and tore a banner calling for "More Democracy" that the municipal government had hung in response to efforts to halt the vote.

Dozens of similar protests calling for the nation's unity popped up in other Spanish cities in the first large grassroots response to the Catalan independence bid.

The main civic group behind Catalonia's push for independence said — given the concentrated efforts by Spain to block the vote — that a turnout of 1 million voters, less than a fifth of the electorate, should be considered an "overwhelming success."

Jordi Sanchez, president of the Catalan National Assembly, told reporters that police actions in Catalonia may make a large turnout difficult.

Catalan authorities had hoped previously for a larger turnout than the 2.3 million people who voted in a mock referendum in 2014 in which 80 percent favored independence.

The Catalan government has pledged to declare independence from Spain within 48 hours of Sunday's vote if the 'yes' side wins, no matter what the turnout is.

Ciaran Giles contributed from Madrid.

Follow complete AP coverage of the Catalonia referendum [here](#) .

Spain, Catalonia head for showdown over independence vote

By ARITZ PARRA and CIARAN GILES, Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Montserrat Aguilera wasn't intending to vote for the Catalonia region to secede from the rest of Spain.

But the 52-year-old laboratory worker changed her mind amid an unprecedented crackdown by Spain's government as it tries to prevent Sunday's independence referendum from going ahead.

Spain and its most powerful and prosperous region are headed for a showdown, with police trying to shut down polling stations to stop the referendum and activists, students and parents occupying schools designated voting places to keep them open.

Much remains unclear, including whether police will forcibly remove people who are still in the polling

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 41 of 43

stations at a 6 a.m. Sunday deadline and how many of Catalonia's voters will be able to cast ballots amid the central government's crackdown.

Also unknown is what happens next if regional leaders declare any vote legitimate and Catalonia declares independence. The referendum was suspended under constitutional rules weeks ago so a court could consider its legality.

Turnout will be key, and if people like Aguilera are any indication, it could be high. She wanted a referendum to be held under constitutional rules so she could vote "no" and try to keep Spain and Catalonia united. Now, she wants Madrid to feel the pinch of the region's disgust.

"I don't agree with the way the vote has been convoked by the Catalan government. It should have been a legal one," Aguilera said. "But this is going to be a demonstration of democratic force to show (Prime Minister Mariano) Rajoy that we deserve respect and that he needs to listen to Catalonia."

Catalan authorities have pledged to make the voting possible even if police, acting on judges' orders, manage to close polling stations and seal off ballot boxes. Some 5.3 million people are eligible to vote in the region, one of 17 in Spain.

The latest surge for independence essentially started in 2010, when Spain's Constitutional Court struck down key parts of a groundbreaking charter that would have granted Catalonia greater autonomy and recognized it as a nation within Spain.

The rejection stung, and Spain's 2008-2013 financial crisis and the harsh austerity measures that followed generated more support for secession, with many Catalans feeling they could do better on their own. Catalonia contributes a fifth of the country's 1.1 trillion-euro economy (\$1.32 trillion.)

While the vast majority of Catalans favor holding a referendum, they have long been almost evenly split over independence.

If "yes" wins, Catalan authorities have promised to declare independence within 48 hours. No minimum participation rate has been set, but regional President Carles Puigdemont has acknowledged that a significant turnout will be needed to declare the results legitimate.

In a mock referendum in 2014, only about 35 percent of Catalans voted. Eighty percent favored independence.

Officials say the Spanish crackdown could make the difference this time. Catalan Vice President Oriol Junqueras said six out of 10 Catalans were expected to vote, according to the regional government's polling.

Nou Barris, where Aguilera lives, showed the least support among Barcelona's neighborhoods for separatist parties in regional elections two years ago. In balconies and windows, there are few of the pro-independence flags ubiquitous in other central and wealthier areas of Barcelona.

Still, Aguilera says many in her neighborhood, including her son, have decided to show for Sunday's disputed vote.

"Vote yes, vote no, vote null or an empty ballot, but vote to be free and be heard," she said. "These two governments need to sit down and talk, and this is how we'll make them understand that."

The Spanish government says the vote, which has been ordered suspended by the Constitutional Court, will not take place. It has called in thousands of police reinforcements that are being housed in ferries in Barcelona's port, raising tensions in one of Europe's most popular tourist destinations.

The government has also initiated a barrage of legal challenges, including placing 700 pro-independence mayors under investigation and briefly arresting a dozen or so government officials.

"These are not easy days, for sure, but we feel strong," Puigdemont said recently. "While Spain acts like a regime where the authority of power grows inversely to its moral strength, we feel increasingly supported by the Catalan people's greatest asset: its people."

But it's hard to see how a vote will take place when millions of ballot papers were seized and police have been ordered to make sure no polling center stays open. There is no electoral board to monitor the election, but Catalan authorities say votes will be counted.

"Voting is not guaranteed," Andrew Dowling, a Catalonia specialist at Cardiff University in Wales, said. "We don't know what will happen but there won't be a referendum in any meaningful sense."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 42 of 43

There has also been little or no campaigning by those opposed to independence.

"The 'no' side don't feel they have to turn out on Sunday because they don't think independence is going to happen," Dowling said.

No country or international body has expressed an appetite for Catalan independence either. The European Union backs Spain and says an independent Catalonia would have to reapply for EU membership, something Spain could block.

"On a legal level, Madrid is right," European Parliament President Antonio Tajani said Friday. "I think it's important to talk on a political level after Monday and to respect laws — Catalan laws and Spanish laws."

U.S. President Donald Trump said Tuesday that Spain should stay united, branding the secession move as "foolish."

Rajoy, the prime minister, has warned Catalonia to drop the referendum bid, which he called a "totalitarian act."

Talks between the two sides have been virtually nonexistent and both accuse each other of acting illegally and undemocratically.

The issue has so far had almost no economic fallout, although the S&P credit rating agency warned that growth prospects may weaken if tensions in Catalonia escalate.

"If you have got financial interests in Madrid or internationally you do not think that Catalan independence is imminent and I think that feeling is true for lots of Spanish people and lots of Catalans," Dowling said.

Giles contributed from Madrid.

Find complete AP coverage of the Catalonia referendum [here](#).

Today in History **By The Associated Press**

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Oct. 1, the 274th day of 2017. There are 91 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 1, 1957, the motto "In God We Trust" began appearing on U.S. paper currency.

On this date:

In 1890, Congress passed the McKinley Tariff Act, which raised tariffs to a record level.

In 1908, Henry Ford introduced his Model T automobile to the market.

In 1932, Babe Ruth of the New York Yankees made his supposed called shot, hitting a home run against Chicago's Charlie Root in the fifth inning of Game 3 of the World Series, won by the New York Yankees 7-5 at Wrigley Field.

In 1939, Winston Churchill described Russia as "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma" during a radio address on the invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

In 1940, the first section of the Pennsylvania Turnpike opened to the public, stretching 160 miles from Carlisle to Irwin.

In 1961, Roger Maris of the New York Yankees hit his 61st home run during a 162-game season, compared to Babe Ruth's 60 home runs during a 154-game season. (Tracy Stallard of the Boston Red Sox gave up the round-tripper; the Yankees won 1-0.)

In 1962, Johnny Carson debuted as host of NBC's "Tonight Show," beginning a nearly 30-year run.

In 1964, the Free Speech Movement began at the University of California, Berkeley. Japan's first high-speed "bullet train," the Tokaido Shinkansen, went into operation between Tokyo and Osaka.

In 1971, Walt Disney World opened near Orlando, Florida.

In 1982, Sony began selling the first commercial compact disc player, the CDP-101, in Japan.

In 1987, eight people were killed when an earthquake measuring magnitude 5.9 struck the Los Angeles area.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Oct, 1, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 084 ~ 43 of 43

In 1994, National Hockey League team owners began a 103-day lockout of their players.

Ten years ago: Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a surprise announcement, opened the door to becoming the country's prime minister. Olympic gold-medal discus thrower Al Oerter died in Fort Myers, Florida, at age 71.

Five years ago: Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem, addressing the U.N. General Assembly, accused the U.S. and its allies of stoking "terrorism" in his country. "Family Guy" creator Seth MacFarlane was named host of the 2013 Academy Awards.

One year ago: The New York Times reported that Donald Trump had reported losses of more than \$900 million on his 1995 income tax returns that experts said could have allowed him to forgo paying federal income taxes for nearly two decades; Hillary Clinton's campaign seized upon the report as evidence of "the colossal nature of Donald Trump's past business failures and just how long he may have avoided paying any federal income taxes whatsoever."

Today's Birthdays: Former President Jimmy Carter is 93. Actress-singer Julie Andrews is 82. Actress Stella Stevens is 79. Rock musician Jerry Martini (Sly and the Family Stone) is 74. Baseball Hall-of-Famer Rod Carew is 72. Jazz musician Dave Holland is 71. Actress Yvette Freeman is 67. Actor Randy Quaid is 67. Rhythm-and-blues singer Howard Hewett is 62. British Prime Minister Theresa May is 61. Alt-country-rock musician Tim O'Reagan (The Jayhawks) is 59. Singer Youssou N'Dour is 58. Actor Esai Morales is 55. Retired MLB All-Star Mark McGwire is 54. Actor Christopher Titus is 53. Actress-model Cindy Margolis is 52. Producer John Ridley is 52. Rock singer-musician Kevin Griffin (Better Than Ezra) is 49. Actor Zach Galifianakis (ga-lih-fih-NA'-kihs) is 48. Singer Keith Duffy is 43. Actress Kate Aselton is 39. Actress Sarah Drew is 37. Actor-comedian Beck Bennett is 33. Actress Jurnee Smollett-Bell is 31. Actress Brie Larson is 28.

Thought for Today: "Anything one man can imagine, other men can make real." — Jules Verne, French author (1828-1905).