

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 04, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 148 ~ 1 of 43

“Every house where love abides and friendship is a guest, is surely home, and home, sweet home for there the heart can rest.”

-Henry van Dyke

Chicken Soup
for the Soul



NO SCHOOL TODAY

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 1- Treeline Tree Service Ad
- 2- Groton Care & Rehab Help Wanted Ad
- 3- Farmers Union PSA
- 3- Blizzard Warning
- 4- Weekly Vikings Roundup
- 5- C&MA Christmas Party
- 5- JVT/NVC Holiday Open Houses
- 6- Wolves Notch Win over Dakota Wesleyan, and Fall to South Dakota State and Augustana from SD Showcase
- 7- Dr. Holm's Column
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- 9- Today in Weather History
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- 13- 2018 Community Events
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Monday

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Groton Community Center

Tuesday

**Milbank Novice Debate
Practice ACT Test at GHS
JHGGB at Ipswich (7th grade at 5:30 p.m.,
8th grade at 6:30 p.m.)
Wrestling at Britton-Hecla is cancelled**

Sperry Stump Removal Tyler: 605/216-8431
Over 30 Years of Combined Experience!
TJ: 605/380-7915 **TreeLine Tree Service**

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**

NEW SIGN-ON BONUSES!

☆☆☆ **\$1,500 for CNAs** ☆☆☆

☆☆☆ **\$3,000 for LPNs** ☆☆☆

☆☆☆ **\$4,500 for RNs** ☆☆☆

Contact Brynn Pickrel or Nellie Hatfield 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

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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")**

BLIZZARD WARNING

Issue Date:5:47 AM Mon, Dec 4, 2017

Expiration:8:00 PM Mon, Dec 4, 2017

...Snow and strong winds Today...

...BLIZZARD WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT FROM 9 AM THIS MORNING TO 8 PM CST THIS EVENING...

* WHAT...Blizzard conditions expected. Travel will be very dangerous to impossible. Damage to trees and power lines is possible. Total snow accumulations of 2 to 4 inches are expected.

* WHERE...Brown and Spink Counties.

* WHEN...From 9 AM this morning to 8 PM CST this evening.

* ADDITIONAL DETAILS...Winds gusting as high as 60 mph will cause whiteout conditions in blowing snow.

A Blizzard Warning means severe winter weather conditions are expected or occurring. Falling and blowing snow with strong winds and poor visibilities are likely. This will lead to whiteout conditions, making travel extremely dangerous. Do not travel. If you must travel, have a winter survival kit with you. If you get stranded, stay with your vehicle. The latest road conditions for the state you are calling from can be obtained by calling 5 1 1.

Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings traveled to Atlanta to battle the Falcons on Sunday, December 3. The Vikings were looking to win their eighth straight game, while the Falcons were attempting to overcome a slow start to the season and remain in the playoff hunt. This game was set up to be a potential playoff-like matchup, and it certainly was a close contest that could have gone either way until late in the fourth quarter. In the end, the Vikings head home sitting pretty with a record of 10-2 after a 14-9 win.

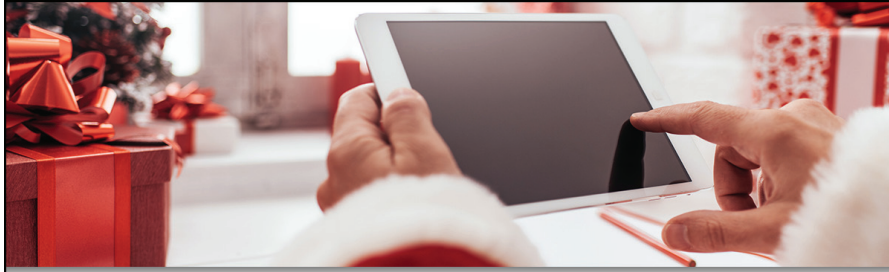
Minnesota's offense wasn't spectacular in this game, but they did enough to bring home the victory. Case Keenum completed 25 of 30 passes for 227 yards and two touchdowns. He did a good job of moving around in the pocket to buy his receivers the time they needed to get open. Latavius Murray led the Vikings on the ground, rushing 16 times for 76 yards, and the Vikings as a team rushed for 105 on the day. Adam Thielen led the team with four catches and 51 receiving yards, which made this his first game of the season without 5 or more receptions (was the longest streak in the NFL). The reason Thielen didn't get his five receptions was because Case did a great job of spreading the ball around, with nine different Vikings catching passes in the game. This was only the third game in which the Vikings scored less than 20 points, with the other two times resulting in the Vikings' two losses on the season.

The Vikings defense did their job on Sunday. The Falcons were able to move the ball down the field – they had six drives that went for over 40-yards – but the Vikings were able to step up when they needed to and hold the Falcons to only three made field goals on the day. This was the first time all season that the Falcons were held out of the end zone, and the first time in 30 games Matt Ryan didn't throw a touchdown. Star wide receiver Julio Jones, who had 12 catches for 253 yards and two touchdowns the week prior, was held to only two catches for 24 yards by Xavier Rhodes on Sunday. The Vikings' defensive line was unable to sack Matt Ryan, but that was primarily because the Falcons did a good job of getting the ball out of his hands quickly to avoid the Vikings' vicious pass rush.

Looking ahead, the Vikings will travel to Charlotte, North Carolina to take on the Panthers. The Panthers are 8-4 and are coming off a 31-21 loss to the New Orleans Saints. After undergoing offseason surgery, former MVP Cam Newton got off to a slow start to the 2017 season. Things have changed, however, and the Panthers were riding a 4-game win streak before colliding with the red-hot Saints. Right now, Carolina is a slight favorite to win according to ESPN, likely due to the game being in Charlotte.

The Panthers rank right in the middle of the NFL (16th), averaging 22.5 points per game – compared to the Vikings at 24.6 (6th). Carolina's offense runs through their run game, which has taken a major leap forward over the last few weeks (they averaged 213.3 yards per game, weeks 10-12). Stopping the Panthers' run game is a challenge, particularly because of Cam Newton, who is always a threat to run the ball and therefore demands extra attention from the defense. However, Minnesota's athletes at defensive end – Everson Griffen and Danielle Hunter – should be able to contain Newton and keep him in the pocket, which will force Carolina into a traditional offense. If the Vikings can do that, and shut down the rest of the Panthers' running game, the Vikings should return home victorious. Skol!

Have any questions or comments, reach out to me on Facebook ([facebook.com/SkolJWright](https://www.facebook.com/SkolJWright)) or on Twitter (@SkolJWright)



JVT/NVC HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSES

Groton - Monday, Dec. 4th 10am-4pm

Aberdeen - Tuesday, Dec. 5th 10am-4pm

Redfield - Wednesday, Dec. 6th 11am-2pm

DOOR PRIZES - CHRISTMAS TREATS - SPECIALS

*Register in stores or online at nvc.net for the
12 Days of Christmas Giveaway!*

Christmas Party Club Groton C&MA Church

706 N Main

December 9

10-11:30am

For ages 5-12

Come join the fun!

**There will be songs, games,
snacks and a bible story!**

Call 397-2696 or 290-8258

for more information.

No reservation necessary

Wolves Notch Win over Dakota Wesleyan, and Fall to South Dakota State and Augustana from SD Showcase

Spearfish, S.D. – The Northern State University wrestling team traveled to Spearfish on Sunday for the annual SD Showcase featuring all four collegiate programs in the state. The Wolves went 1-2 on the day with a 47-6 win over Dakota Wesleyan and losses to South Dakota State (45-4) and Augustana (31-15).

Kenny Jones led the team with two wins from the SD Showcase, going 2-0 overall. He tallied a major decision win over Tyler Pieper of South Dakota State (12-2) notching the lone victory for the Wolves in the dual. The redshirt freshman added a 17-1 technical fall win over Stas Sutera of Dakota Wesleyan in his final match of the day.

David Murphy notched two wins of his own, going 2-1 overall. The senior kicked off competition with a victory by fall over Lukas Poloncic of Augustana at 2:21 in the match. Despite a loss to Brett Bye of SDSU, Murphy bounced back for a 17-2 technical fall win over Zechariah Westergaard of Dakota Wesleyan.

Blake Perryman opened the day defeating Regan Bye of Augustana in an 8-2 decision, but ultimately fell to Logan Peterson of South Dakota State.

Cortez Castellanos notched an 8-4 decision victory over Seth Caro of Dakota Wesleyan in his only match of the afternoon. Billy Holtan also tallied a win against the Tigers, defeating Forrest Lewis in a 14-6 major decision.

Redshirt freshman Riley Lura and Paxton Mewes each tallied victories by fall against the Tigers. Mewes downed Alex Osborne at 1:56 in the match, while Lura defeated Tanner Wernsman at 3:25.

The Wolves return to the mat this Friday for a 7 p.m. dual at Concordia-Moorhead.

The Man with the Bulbous Nose



By Richard P. Holm M.D.

Despite his caring conversation, I heard very little of it because his large, rosy, bulbous, and bumpy nose had stolen my attention. Years later, when I met him again, he looked like a different man. The rosacea and rhinophyma skin condition, which had made his face so red and nose so massive, was calmed down with medication, and the excessive growth of skin over the nose had been trimmed away by laser scalpel. This time my eyes were no longer drawn to that globular and swollen proboscis and instead were charmed by his kind and wizened eyes.

Acne rosacea, or more commonly called just rosacea, affects 14 million people in the U.S., or five percent of the population, and is sometimes said to be an adult version of acne vulgaris. We see rosacea more often in 30 to 50-year-old women, and it can flair as menopause approaches. When it does affect men, it can be severe, and in a percentage of cases, rosacea can cause an ever-growing piling up of skin over the nose, called rhinophyma.

Rosacea usually targets fair-skinned, freckle-faced, blond or redheaded, blue-eyed people who flush easily. It seems triggered by sun exposure, hot drinks, hot baths and showers, hot spicy foods, stress, exercise, and steroid medications. Of course, one way to prevent rosacea is to try to avoid such triggers.

Acne vulgaris, or more commonly called just acne, is similar to rosacea, and seems also related to hormonal swings. Acne affects about 85% of all U.S. adolescents and, more often than rosacea, causes whiteheads and blackheads. Adolescents living in western modernized civilizations struggle with acne, however it rarely affects anyone living in non-industrialized societies. This has led some experts to believe acne and rosacea might be made worse by soap, excessive cleanliness, antibiotic use, and anything that alters the normal-flora living on our skin, which protects us from invasive bacteria. It's like how grass on a lawn protects against weeds.

The two conditions of rosacea and acne have common methods of treatment. Over-the-counter lotions like benzoyl peroxide, prescription antibiotics, and Vitamin A, each in lotion and pill form, are still the mainstay of therapy.

In contrast, recently there is a trend to move toward supporting one's normal flora, avoiding antibiotics, cleansing agents, or oil removing methods, and even trying probiotics. This is all in an effort to re-establish a lawn of protection to fight the invasion of weeds. Treatment is effective in most people, but not all. So if you don't find relief with typical treatments, or your nose starts growing, it's time to see your doctor and/or the dermatologist.

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Tis the Season for Small Business

"Small Business Saturday" is a relatively new phenomenon. While Black Friday has marked the beginning of the Christmas shopping season for more than a half century, the Saturday after Thanksgiving didn't earn its title until 2010. But despite the lack of a formal shopping day for all these years, small businesses have found success in South Dakota for generations.

Time and again, South Dakota is ranked as a top state to start and run a business, which might explain how we have more than 83,000 in the state. I've always been proud to have contributed to this culture of small business, running our farm and ranch, starting a hunting lodge, helping manage a restaurant my mom had, and pursuing a handful of other ventures. I'm grateful for those experiences and now use them to write better policy.

One of the reasons so many small businesses succeed in South Dakota is that we have an extremely favorable tax environment. A 2017 study by Fundera confirmed South Dakota small businesses can take advantage of the second-lowest tax burden in the nation.

I pushed for this low-tax approach as we've debated federal tax reform as well. Through the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which passed the House in November 2017, we reduce small business rates to historically low levels, expand expensing tools, preserve interest deductibility, repeal the Death Tax, and more. Additionally, for those small businesses that file as individuals, we double the standard deduction, keep popular retirement savings options, and dramatically increase the Child Tax Credit and other family credits.

Outside of tax reform, I've heard from a lot of small businesses about the Health Insurance Tax (or HIT). This is an Obamacare tax that disproportionately affects middle-income Americans and small businesses. The National Federation of Independent Business Research Foundation found the HIT will cost between 152,000 and 286,000 jobs by 2023, with 57 percent of those lost jobs coming from small businesses.

While I'm fighting to repeal Obamacare entirely, I've also introduced separate bipartisan legislation to repeal the HIT. If enacted, the provision could save families as much as \$400 per year in healthcare premium costs, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation.

Additionally, I've worked closely with the Trump administration to roll back harmful regulations that have stopped companies of all sizes from expanding. Month after month, we've seen the impact of those changes. During the third quarter of 2017, the U.S. economy grew by 3.3 percent – the fastest expansion we've seen in three years. That growth fuels job creation and is key to pushing wages higher.

Around 59 percent of South Dakota's workforce, or more than 200,000 people, is employed by a small business. K Bar J Leather Company is one of those companies, employing about 10 people in Newell. The company's founder, Jack, actually went to prom with one of my neighbors, but he and I had the chance to sit down when he was in Washington, D.C., this summer to show off his leatherwork to President Trump. It was part of the administration's "Made in America Week."

Jack got started in the 1970s and has built his business while building a family. Today, the company produces about 2,000 pairs of chaps a year. It's businesses like this that keep our small towns alive and keep South Dakota's economy as strong as it is.

As you get ready for the season of gift-giving, I encourage you to use every Saturday as a "Small Business Saturday." In giving them your business, you're supporting your state, your community, your neighbors.

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Today in Weather History

December 4, 1993: Winds gusting to 40 to 60 mph combined with snow cover along with new snow to cause blizzard conditions making travel hazardous across north central and northeast South Dakota. Several vehicles were stranded or slid into ditches. The winds toppled a private building under construction at Selby in Walworth County. New snowfall amounts were generally from one to three inches.

1786 - The first of two great early December storms began. The storm produced 18 inches of snow at Morristown NJ, and twenty inches of snow at New Haven CT. It also resulted in high tides at Nantucket which did great damage. (David Ludlum)

December 4, 1952: The month of December started off with chilly temperatures in London. This cold resulted in Londoners to burn more coal to heat up their homes. Then on December 5, a high pressure settled over the Thames River causing a dense layer of smog to develop. The smog became so thick and dense by December 7 that virtually no sunlight was seen in London. Most conservative estimates place the death toll at 4,000, with some estimating the smog killed as many as 8,000 individuals.

1972 - Winds gusting to 70 mph sent the temperature at Livingston, MT, plunging from 52 degrees to 18 degrees in just twenty minutes. (The Weather Channel)

1982 - The temperature in New York City's Central Park reached 72 degrees to establish a record high for December. The month as a whole was also the warmest of record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front crossing the Pacific Coast Region brought high winds and heavy rain to California. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 55 mph at Newport Beach CA, and Mount Wilson CA was drenched with 2.17 inches of rain in six hours. Gale force winds prevailed along the Northern Pacific Coast, and winds in the Tehachapis Mountains of southern California gusted to 60 mph. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Gale force winds continued to usher cold arctic air into the northeastern U.S. Winds gusted to 65 mph at Windsor Locks CT. Up to a foot of snow blanketed the higher elevations of Vermont. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Seventeen cities in the eastern U.S., including nine in Florida, reported record low temperatures for the date. Lakeland FL reported a record low of 31 degrees, and Watertown NY was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 20 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)


2002 - An early season winter storm brought an expansive shield of snow and ice through much of the eastern U.S., from the lower Ohio Valley, southern Appalachians and into the Northeast. Snow accumulations of 4-8 inches were common along the northern edge of the precipitation shield, while a significant accrual of glaze occurred in the Carolinas. The storm caused at least 17 fatalities, mostly from traffic accidents (CNN). In the Carolinas, electric utilities provider Duke Power characterized the ice storm as the worst in the company's history, with 1.2 million customers or nearly half its entire customer base without power on the morning of the 5th. This surpassed electrical outages inflicted by Hurricane Hugo as it swept through the central Carolinas in September 1989.

December 4, 2002: A total solar eclipse was experienced by millions of people from Africa to Australia, and from space.

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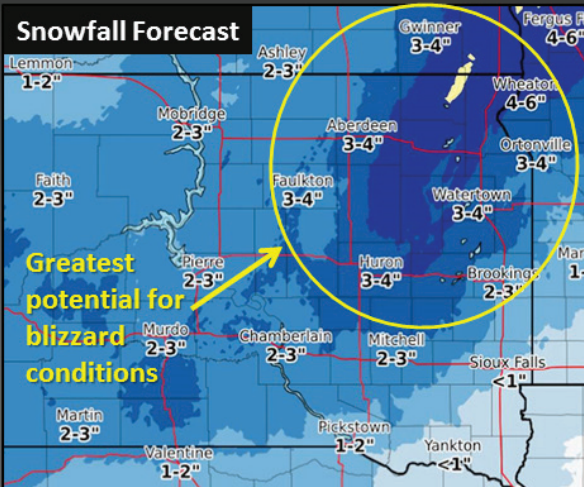
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Blizzard Warning		Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
		Snow/Sleet and Blowing Snow	Mostly Clear and Windy then Mostly Clear	Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Blustery	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Snow then Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy
		High: 33 °F	Low: 12 °F	High: 22 °F	Low: 13 °F	High: 26 °F	Low: 10 °F	High: 27 °F



Blizzard Possible Monday

Snowfall Forecast



Greatest potential for blizzard conditions

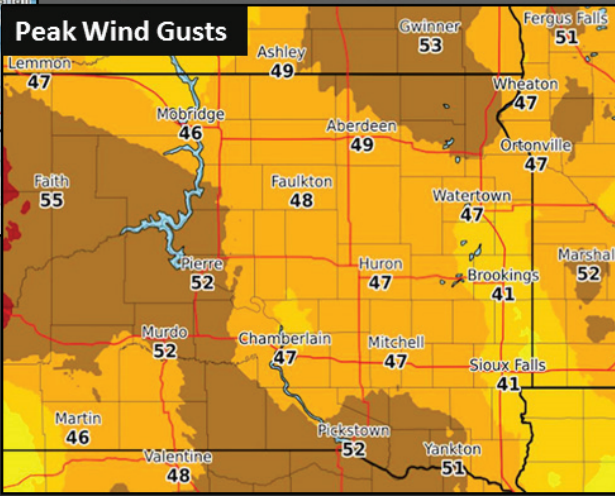
Overview: Strong low pressure will produce accumulating snow and strong northwest winds on Monday. Greatly reduced visibility will be possible due to blowing snow.

Timing: Snow begins Monday morning and persists through the afternoon/early evening. Strongest winds in the afternoon.

Impacts: Travel will be impacted by slick roads and reduced visibility. Power lines could be damaged by the strong winds as well.

Confidence: High confidence for winds, with fair confidence for snow totals as model differences continue.

Peak Wind Gusts



NWS Aberdeen, SD Updated: 12/3/2017 3:53 PM Central

Published on: 12/03/2017 at 3:59PM

Accumulating snow will combine with strong northwest winds on Monday, resulting in greatly reduced visibility at times across the area. If traveling, you may want to consider alternate plans. For the latest snowfall forecast, visit <http://www.weather.gov/abr/winter>.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 48.5

Low Outside Temp: 23.0

High Gust: 21

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 56° in 1979

Record Low: -18° in 1927

Average High: 29°F

Average Low: 10°F

Average Precip in Dec: 0.07

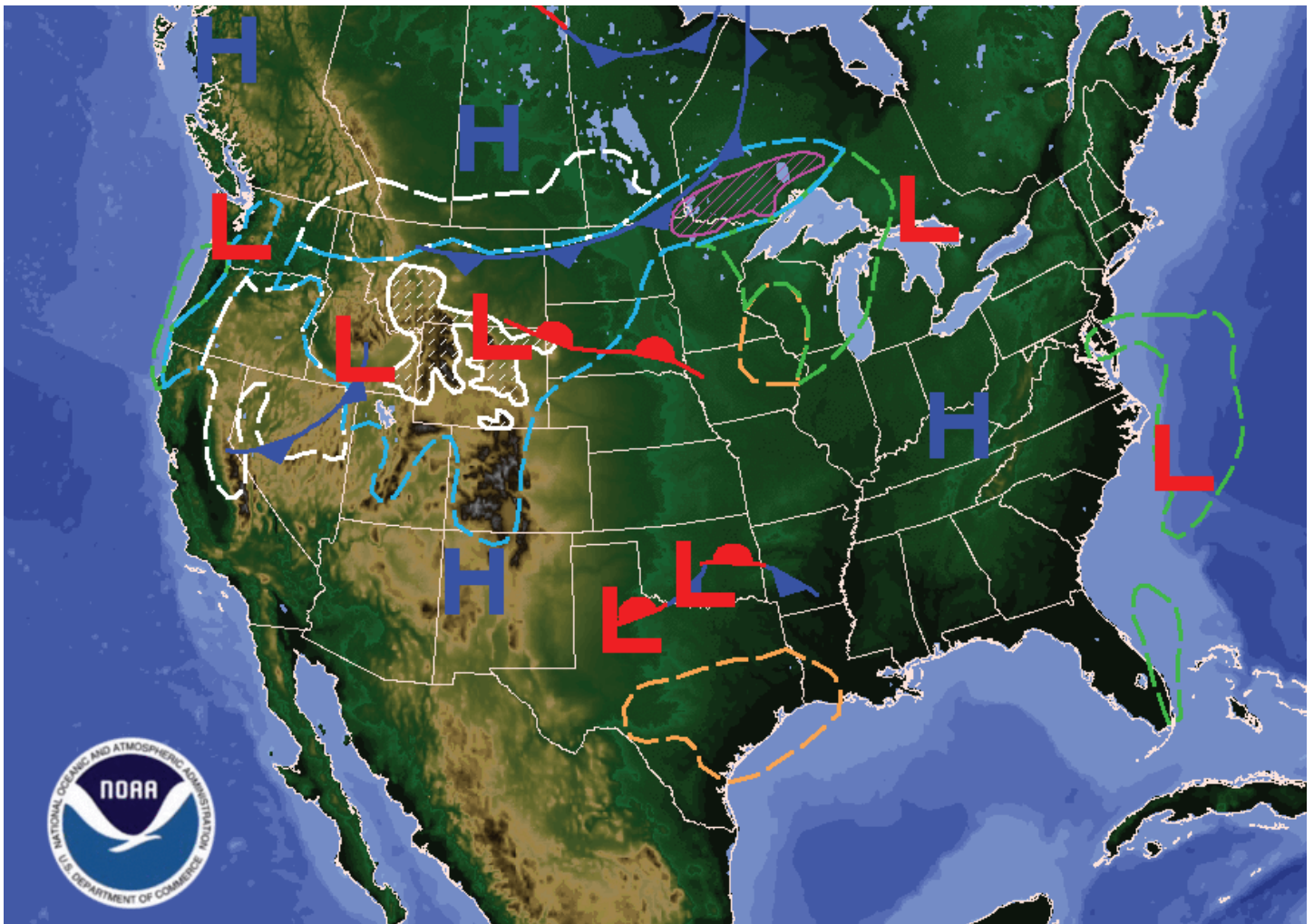
Precip to date in Dec: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.27

Precip Year to Date: 13.47

Sunset Tonight: 4:51 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:57 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sun, Dec 03, 2017, issued 3:58 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Tate with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain

Rain and T'Storms

Rain and Snow

Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)

Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)

Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)

Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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“LOVE WITH SKIN ON IT”

A young man, who grew up in a housing project, having little hope and few goods, heard an evangelist preaching “love” on a street corner. After listening for a few moments he shouted to the preacher, “I’m sick and tired of you people talking about love. I want to see love. I want to feel love. I want to see love with some skin on it!”

That’s Christmas: “God’s love with skin on it.”

Paul wrote, “For in Christ the fullness of God lives in a human body!”

In Jesus, we see Someone bringing love to life – but a very special type of love. It is God’s love. We see this love coming to life when Jesus fed the hungry, gave sight to the blind, cleansed the lepers, healed the sick, offering water to a thirsty soul, calming the waves to relieve the fears of experienced fishermen, washing dirty feet, spending time with little children, teaching people the truth that brought meaning and purpose to their lives and finally hanging lifeless from a cross – abandoned and alone.

Jesus is God loving through a human heart, healing with a human hand, walking on errands of mercy with human feet, showing love, grace and mercy to those who would do Him harm.

Jesus is God loving the least, the last and the lost. In Jesus, God showed His love with “skin on it.”

Prayer: Help us, Father, to put Your “love in our skin” and take Your love to those in need. May we be as faithful in caring for others as You are in caring for us. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Colossians 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

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 Meat- 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)
- 6/15/2018 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 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

News from the Associated Press

Former Catholic abbey in South Dakota welcomes all religions

By J.T. FEY, Watertown Public Opinion

MARVIN, S.D. (AP) — The name has changed, but has the perception?

Two Abbey of the Hills leaders are wondering if people think the former Blue Cloud Abbey is still associated with the Catholic Church, the Watertown Public Opinion reported .

In 2013 the Order of Saint Benedict sold the Blue Cloud Abbey to six families who didn't want to see the facility become anything less than what it had been for decades — a sanctuary for peace and tranquility located among the rolling hills of the Coteau des Prairie near Marvin.

Since then, the Abbey of the Hills has stayed open, hosting a myriad of activities centered around the spirituality of the large facility primarily built by the many Benedictine monks and brothers who resided there during their 60-year ownership.

The centerpiece of the facility is the cross-shaped church, which features beautiful stained-glass windows, a carved crucifix and canopy suspended from the ceiling, and a large pipe organ. The church is also known for its outstanding acoustics.

Concerts, family reunions, religious outings, arts and crafts gatherings and business meetings are a few of the events that are regulars for the abbey. But Director Paul Treinen and Events Coordinator Jill Adelman say there could be much more, and they're wondering what people are thinking about the role of the nonprofit abbey. Treinen said he's often heard people say they're reluctant to volunteer because they believe the abbey is a for-profit business.

"That's on us if that perception continues," Treinen said. "We're a nonprofit not owned by anybody. It's owned by a board."

Treinen is among the group that purchased the abbey. He's also an ordained deacon in the Catholic Church and said the abbey's new mission is not to go against the Catholic Church but is a way to create unity among the different religions of the country and world.

Adelman said the mission statement of the abbey is to foster the rediscovery of peace.

"We want you to walk into the abbey and feel the peace whether you're Lutheran, Catholic or whatever," she said. "Come here and feel the peace."

The Benedictine monks began construction on the abbey in 1950. As the number of monks increased so did the abbey, and construction continued until 1967. By 2012 only 14 monks, all age 79 or older, lived at the abbey and the Order of Saint Benedict was seeking a buyer.

According to Treinen, the Benedictines arrived in South Dakota in the 1870s, sent from the archabbey in St. Meinrad, Indiana. The Dakota monks, led by Bishop Martin Marty, settled into Native American reservations in Dakota Territory. Their purpose was to teach the gospel and to educate the natives. Mount Marty College of Yankton, which also has a satellite campus in Watertown, is named for Bishop Marty.

By the middle of the last century the Benedictines were looking to expand in the Dakotas. They were on their way to North Dakota when they stopped near Milbank. They liked the area and asked a Milbank banker, whose last name was Benedict, if any land was for sale.

Benedict showed them a parcel of land that had become available, and when the monks saw the property they knew they had found their site.

The monks originally owned about 2,000 acres, most of which were sold to private interests. The core 85 acres that include the main structure, three cabins and well-maintained grounds went to the Abbey of the Hills group. And although the monks couldn't walk on water, they did create a small lake near the abbey by damming a nearby creek.

After the change of ownership in 2013, the only staff members were volunteers. Now, there are six full-time and three part-time employees, but volunteers are still key to the operation.

"It's important to say that even though we now have that help, we still need more," Adelman said. "We're

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always looking for people who are interested in volunteering.”

The need for assistance is due to the structure’s large size. The auditorium seats 200 and an adjoining room can seat up to 100. Meals are served in a large lunchroom and a restaurant-like room that can host 50. The room and equipment that the monks used to bake and cut their famous bread are still in use.

Sleeping accommodations include 69 rooms with nine different choices based on price and luxury. Some rooms have a scenic view of the Whetstone Valley to the east; a few do not have private bathrooms. All include a continental breakfast. Other meals may be served depending on the number of participants.

The abbey prides itself on using largely home-grown or donated products for its meals. On the grounds are a vegetable garden, orchard, a honey bee operation and 30-head of cattle. The abbey sells its own wine made from grapes at a nearby vineyard.

An indication of the abbey’s self-described mission is that none of the rooms have televisions. A quick tour of the facility found one TV for public viewing.

Adelman, who handles the scheduling, said she’s never refused an event but admits there are restrictions. Weddings and wedding receptions, for instance, are not allowed.

“We’re really in our infancy here at the abbey and we might be challenged by some groups,” she said. “We don’t have a list, but we may gently guide some groups and say this might not be the best fit for you.”

The abbey’s leaders would like to expand the facility’s uses without jeopardizing its fundamental mission. Treinen said he’s been approached many times by people who would like to live at the abbey.

“Some parts of the abbey aren’t being utilized,” he explained. “We’re trying to decide if we just let that space be or should we be transforming it into longer-term housing. I don’t know if we do that. It’s so expensive to rebuild or repurpose stuff like that.

“The buildings that encompass the abbey are well built, but everything needs maintenance, and that’s some of the challenges we have. How do we sustain what we have and maybe look to some (construction) in the future.”

Whatever is ahead for the abbey, its focus will almost assuredly continue to be a destination for people of all religions who are seeking peace and harmony in today’s tumultuous world.

Information from: Watertown Public Opinion, <http://www.thepublicopinion.com>

South Dakota volunteer decorates White House for holidays

By SARA BERTSCH, The Daily Republic

EMERY, S.D. (AP) — By day, Jeremy Jansen is an accountant — but by night, he’s decorating.

As Christmas approaches, the Emery native’s flare for holiday decor is beginning to show. But this year his talents for interior design were not just wowing his family and friends, but a presidential family.

Jansen, 24, was one of approximately 75 volunteers nationwide to be selected as a decorator for the White House this holiday season, the Daily Republic reported . And after working this past week in the halls and rooms of the White House, Jansen knows it’s a memory he’ll always remember.

“I will never forget it as long as I live. It was so nice to be there and use my talent to be part of something that’s so great and so big,” Jansen said. “I know that it’s only one season, but I just feel like I’m part of the history of the White House in a way.”

Jansen spent three days decorating as a volunteer for the White House. Donning a red apron with the phrase “Christmas at the White House 2017,” he was tasked with several projects from Nov. 20 through Nov. 23. He returned home for Thanksgiving holiday in Emery shortly after.

“It was very surreal,” he said of the experience. “It was like, ‘Wow, this is actually happening.’ I didn’t want to get too hyped up about it beforehand, but I was very excited.”

Decorating the White House has always been a dream of Jansen’s. Since he was about 10 years old, Jansen said he’s tuned into the HGTV “White House Christmas” special that airs each December. The hour-long feature goes through the entire decorating process of the monstrous presidential home on 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. in Washington, D.C.

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"I used to tell my parents, 'Someday I'm going to do that,'" Jansen said.

Selected in mid-October, Jansen applied in early fall, submitting an essay explaining why he wanted to be a volunteer. And now in his job as a tax accountant at Deloitte company in Minneapolis, Minn., he finally decided to give it a go.

The 2011 graduate from Bridgewater-Emery High School has always been surrounded by avid decorators as both his mother and grandmother love the holiday season. Their passion rubbed off on Jansen, and he began to help as soon as he could.

Home for Thanksgiving this year, Jansen helped with the remaining holiday decorating chores with his mother, Lori. Together, the mother-son duo will also decorate a tree in the high school's recently completed \$4.5 million gymnasium. He also will help decorate St. Martin's Catholic Church — another tradition he's enjoyed over the years living in Emery.

"This is completely a hobby," Jansen said, motioning to the holiday decor surrounding him in his family's home south of Emery.

The apron he wore for his three days in the White House now hangs in his family's home, for all to see.

The memento is something Jansen plans to treasure, and a reminder of his time in the White House. While he can't go into great detail about the decorations, Jansen said he specifically worked on the ornaments and set-up of the Green Room and foyer.

"I will say it's probably the best I've seen in quite awhile," Jansen said. "How it's going to be styled is very true to the White House. I think it's going to be spectacular."

Part of his volunteer work also included working in a warehouse and then transporting items to the White House. Jansen said First Lady Melania Trump was very involved in the overall vision of the decorations while one male official served as the organizer, along with few other staffers. But the rest was left up to volunteers, who had designated tasks.

Provided with pictures for inspiration and an end goal, Jansen got to work with his fellow volunteers who came from 20 different states and varied in experience. Many of the volunteers had military background, while quite a few also had experience in professional decorating serving as florists and interior designers, Jansen said. But there was also several just like him, who find decorating a hobby.

"You're taking something ordinary and making it into something really cool," Jansen said. "... Everything is always different and I like to mix everything up and make everything look brand new without actually buying anything."

His passion to re-envision and recreate came in handy, as he estimates 90 percent of the decorations were used in prior years at the White House. And Jansen loved it, he said, as it enabled his creative side.

"Honestly, it was amazing," he said.

Although he went to the University of South Dakota in Vermillion for accounting and then later to the University of Minnesota for a master's for the same subject, Jansen's future may include a career revolving around design and landscaping.

Someday, Jansen said, he would like to return to South Dakota, and possibly start his own business. While that is down the road, he's going to relish in his recent accomplishment, and he is already considering applying for the gig again.

While it might not be next year, he plans to encourage his mother to also try. And although he was very skeptical of applying himself this year, he's now learned to "just go for it" and he hopes others will too.

"I've wanted to do this for so long and it is kind of a dream of mine," Jansen said. "Give it a shot. You may or may not succeed but if you don't try, you know you won't."

Jansen is unsure if he'll appear in the 2017 HGTV "White House Christmas" special, but he'll definitely be watching. The air date is still to be determined, but anybody interested can check the program schedule for mid-December, Jansen said.

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No. 4 Louisville rallies to beat South Dakota State 68-64

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Asia Durr scored 18 of her 20 points in the second half and No. 4 Louisville overcame an eight-point halftime deficit to beat South Dakota State 68-64 on Sunday.

Arica Carter added 14 points and Myisha Hines-Allen had 10 for the Cardinals (8-0) in their lowest-scoring and worst-shooting game of the season. Last season, Louisville won the matchup by 53 points.

Macy Miller and Myah Selland led the Jackrabbits (6-2) with 14 points apiece.

The Cardinals entered the game averaging 85.7 points but struggled against the Jackrabbits. Louisville shot 46.7 percent from the field.

"I told myself that I knew eventually my shots would fall," Durr said. "I just tried to stay positive, stay aggressive and tried and create."

Louisville took its first lead of the game in the third quarter on Durr's basket that made it 37-36. But South Dakota State responded and got the lead back to five. Louisville ended the quarter on a 7-2 run to tie it at 46 going into the final frame.

The Cardinals built the lead to five on Sam Fuehring's basket with just over six minutes to play. But the Jackrabbits again got it to two when Miller scored to make it 64-62. South Dakota State had the ball with a minute to play but was unable to get any closer.

South Dakota State shot 67 percent from the floor in the opening quarter and built the lead to as many as 12 points in the frame. Louisville's defense stiffened the rest of the way and limited SDSU's top two scorers, Miller and Maldison Guebert, to a 5-for-25 shooting performance.

"I thought defensively after that first quarter that we did a much better job," Louisville coach Jeff Walz said. "You can't ball watch them. They all shoot it so well."

After trailing by 12 at the start of the second quarter, Louisville responded and opened the frame on a 9-0 run. SDSU didn't get its first bucket in the quarter until the 3:32 mark and Louisville got it to within 26-23 when Carter scored.

But Louisville couldn't cut into the lead before halftime as SDSU scored the final five points of the quarter in just over a minute and took a 31-23 lead into the break.

"They did really good job defensively," Walz said. "They backed off some kids and were really physical with Durr, which was a smart move. Then we finally got our composure."

BIG TURNAROUND

Last year's game between these two schools in Louisville was an 83-30 win for the Cardinals.

HE SAID IT

"I'm not surprised by this at all," Walz said. "Last year's score, actually, surprised me. This year didn't. They are a very good basketball team. I think they finish in the top half of our league for sure."

BIG PICTURE

Louisville: The Cardinals played four straight at home before finishing the month with four straight road games.

South Dakota State: Miller is 4 for 26 from the field in the last two games.

UP NEXT

Louisville: Hosts UT Martin on Tuesday night.

South Dakota State: Hosts Oklahoma on Wednesday night.

Forest Service seeking hundreds of temporary firefighters

CHADRON, Neb. (AP) — The new fire management officer at the U.S. Forest Service Office in Chadron is looking for hundreds of new firefighters.

The Omaha World-Herald reports the Forest Service wants to hire more than 900 temporary firefighters in Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, South Dakota and Wyoming.

Scott Bovey, in Chadron, is in charge of the first of two application phases, which will run Dec. 15-21 and focus on wildland firefighting jobs. Applicants must be at least 18, have a driver's license and a high school or GED diploma and be a U.S. citizen.

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Applicants are also needed for engine crews, aviation support and dispatching. Trainees will go through a "fire camp" at Crawford next spring to be certified to fight fires on federal lands.

Information from: Omaha World-Herald, <http://www.omaha.com>

Missing South Dakota prison inmate back in custody
YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a South Dakota state prison inmate who failed to report to his work release jobsite is back in custody.

The South Dakota Department of Corrections says inmate Benjamin Johnson returned to the Yankton Community Work Center just before 7 p.m. Saturday.

Authorities say Johnson left the Community Work Center earlier Saturday to go to his work release job, but never reported to the jobsite.

South Dakota university looks to raise \$45M

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Northern State University hopes to raise \$45 million for campus projects including a new sports complex, practice fields and a new South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The capital campaign had \$25 million in pledges before it began, the Aberdeen News reported.

"Other than the (South Dakota) School of Mines (and Technology) ... Aberdeen is the largest community in South Dakota with a state university, and I think it's time we start acting like it," said Jim Thares, a member of the Board of Regents. "This campaign is going to put the stamp on the future of both of these institutions and I think this is the right time."

The soccer field and football practice field is estimated to cost \$6.3 million. The school for the blind and visually impaired is expected to cost \$13.7 million. The university has yet to announce the price of the sports complex with a football stadium and softball field.

The Educational Impact Campaign Committee is overseeing the fundraising efforts. The committee has met with Aberdeen officials and Gov. Dennis Daugaard in the hopes of getting financial support.

"To kick it off, we met with Dacotah Bank, and they stepped up to be one of our primary sponsors," Thares said. "They understand not only the economic impact, but the importance of education and the future of education to our state." The new stadium will be named after the bank in honor of their sponsorship, Thares said.

Work on the projects is expected to begin next fall.

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

Western Dakota Tech improves satisfaction drastically

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Student satisfaction with academic services reached record lows at a technical college in western South Dakota five years ago.

School officials decided to make changes, and the turnaround has been dramatic.

Western Dakota Tech was ranked in the eighth percentile on the National Community College Benchmark Project survey in 2012, meaning that 92 percent of schools did better.

"Students felt like they were getting the runaround," said Debbie Toms, the school's student success director.

In response, Western Dakota Tech assigned a success coach to every student and created a student success center in the fall of 2014, the Rapid City Journal reported. Success coaches were set up to identify creative solutions to student issues, like transportation problems or child-care needs. Coaches will address all issues essential to a student's success before classes begin, including housing, tutoring, or unfamiliarity with the college. This gives students an understanding that there's a place to go should any unpredictable setbacks occur in the future.

By 2017, Western Dakota Tech jumped to the 79th percentile on student satisfaction with academic

services. Other satisfaction areas also showed significant improvements.

Jill Elder, admissions and financial aid director, said underlying the big change was the decision to re-focus on student success over education delivery. "It's a student-first model," Elder said.

The spike in satisfaction is also a result of learning to tailor assistance to a diverse group of students.

After opening the Student Success Center, the school saw a 4 percent increase in students returning for the second semester and a 6 percent increase in students returning for the second year. Western Dakota Tech also found that the percentage of courses dropped by students fell by 5 percent.

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

Mattis seeks more cooperation with Pakistan on terror fight

By **LOLITA C. BALDOR** and **MUNIR AHMED**, Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis met with top Pakistani leaders Monday to seek common ground on the counterterrorism fight, amid Trump administration calls for Islamabad to more aggressively go after the insurgents moving back and forth across the border with Afghanistan.

In brief comments before their meeting began, Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said his country is committed to the war on terror and shares the same common objectives as the U.S.

"Engagement is there," he said, adding that they "need to move forward with (the) issues at hand." Mattis did not speak while media were present.

Earlier, Mattis told reporters traveling with him that he wants to work with Pakistan to address the problems, adding that the U.S. is committed to a pragmatic relationship that expands cooperation while also "reinforcing President Trump's call for action against terrorist safe havens."

"We have heard from Pakistan leaders that they do not support terrorism. So I expect to see that sort of action reflected in their policies," Mattis said before his trip to Islamabad.

Mattis met with Abbasi and army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, as well as a number of senior Pakistani leaders and military officials and U.S. Ambassador David Hale.

Asked if he was going to press the Pakistani leaders to take more action against the insurgents, Mattis said: "That's not the way I deal with issues. I believe that we work hard on finding the common ground and then we work together."

Mattis' optimism, however, comes despite persistent U.S. assertions that Islamabad is still not doing enough to battle the Taliban and allied Haqqani network insurgents within its borders.

Since the start of the war in Afghanistan, militants in Pakistan have crossed the mountainous and ill-defined border to wage attacks against U.S., Afghan and allied forces. They then would return to their safe havens in Pakistan, where they have had a long-standing relationship with the ISI, Islamabad's intelligence agency.

In a blunt assessment early last week, Gen. John Nicholson, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, said there have been no changes in Pakistan's support for militant networks.

He said Pakistani leaders went to Kabul and met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.

"They identified certain steps that they were going to take. We've not yet seen those steps play out," Nicholson told reporters in a recent briefing.

The U.S., he said, has been very direct about what it expects Pakistan to do in the fight against the Taliban.

"We're hoping to see those changes," he said. "We're hoping to work together with the Pakistanis going forward to eliminate terrorists who are crossing" between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The White House, meanwhile, condemned Pakistan's release late last month of a U.S.-wanted militant as a "step in the wrong direction" and warned that it could harm Islamabad's relations with the U.S. and its reputation around the world.

In August, the United States said it would hold up \$255 million in military assistance for Pakistan until it cracks down on extremists threatening Afghanistan.

Imtiaz Gul, an Islamabad security analyst, said U.S. officials always come to Islamabad with their "own

wish list.”

“I am sure the U.S. defense secretary is also carrying a wish list with him but I don’t think Pakistan will accept any dictation as it has already demonstrated its seriousness in fighting terrorism, and Washington in recent weeks has appreciated and acknowledged Pakistan’s sacrifices in war on terror,” he said.

Gul said relations between Pakistan and the United States have gone from bad to worse since the Trump administration announced Afghan strategy in which Pakistan was degraded and India was elevated.

“Pakistan is genuinely concerned,” he said.

President Donald Trump’s tough words about Pakistan as he unveiled the updated U.S. strategy for the war in Afghanistan, infuriated Islamabad and triggered anti-U.S. protests there that Pakistani police had to use tear gas to disperse

Pakistani Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif said during a visit to Washington in October that Pakistan was willing to cooperate fully with the Trump administration. He said Pakistan had wiped out militant hideouts with little help from the U.S.

Mattis’ trip to Pakistan comes at the end of a short trip to the region, including stops in Egypt, Jordan and Kuwait.

Associated Press Writer Ahmed Munir contributed to this story from Islamabad

Trump offers full support for embattled Republican Roy Moore

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is throwing his full support behind embattled Republican Roy Moore in the Alabama Senate race.

Trump tweeted early Monday that “Democrats refusal to give even one vote for massive Tax Cuts is why we need Republican Roy Moore to win in Alabama.”

It was Trump’s most full-throated endorsement of Moore, who has lost backing of many top Republicans since he was hit with allegations of sexual misconduct decades ago.

Trump has assailed Democratic candidate Doug Jones and has defended Moore against allegations of child molestation. But the White House has said he has no plans to make campaign appearances.

Trump tweeted: “We need his vote on stopping crime, illegal immigration, Border Wall, Military, Pro Life, V.A., Judges 2nd Amendment and more. No to Jones, a Pelosi/Schumer Puppet!”

Billy Bush says Trump ‘Access Hollywood’ tape is real

NEW YORK (AP) — Billy Bush said it was indeed Donald Trump’s voice captured on a 2005 “Access Hollywood” tape talking about fame enabling him to grope and try to have sex with women.

“Of course he said it,” the former “Access Hollywood” and “Today” show personality said in an op-ed published Sunday in The New York Times.

The video shows Trump, who was the star of “The Apprentice,” riding on an “Access Hollywood” bus with then-host Bush. At one point, Trump describes trying to have sex with a married woman. He also brags about women letting him kiss and grab them because he is famous.

“When you’re a star, they let you do it,” Trump says. “You can do anything.”

“Along with Donald Trump and me, there were seven other guys present on the bus at the time, and every single one of us assumed we were listening to a crass standup act. He was performing. Surely, we thought, none of this was real. We now know better,” Bush said in the op-ed.

The recording of the lewd conversation between Bush and Trump emerged during the 2016 presidential campaign. Trump later said he never did any of the actions described on the tape, and dismissed his words as locker room talk.

In the waning days of the presidential election, more than a dozen women came forward to say that Trump had sexually assaulted or harassed them over the years. He denied it.

But Bush said he believes the women, and he felt the need to write the piece following reports that Trump had privately suggested that the “Access Hollywood” tape was not authentic.

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"I can only imagine how it has reopened the wounds of the women who came forward with their stories about him, and did not receive enough attention," Bush said. "This country is currently trying to reconcile itself to years of power abuse and sexual misconduct. Its leader is wantonly poking the bear."

Bush, who had recently been hired as co-host of the "Today" show, lost his job following the release of the tape. He said he has since gone through a lot of soul searching.

"None of us were guilty of knowingly enabling our future president," he said. "But all of us were guilty of sacrificing a bit of ourselves in the name of success."

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. TRUMP TWEETS TAKE AIM AT TARGETS OLD AND NEW

The president criticizes the FBI and raises questions about Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian election meddling and possible ties to his campaign.

2. HOW A TEEN COPEd IN IRAQI CITY RULED BY FANATICS

Ferah, a 14-year-old girl in then Islamic State-occupied Mosul, gained a wide following for her writings of the day-to-day struggle to survive under IS and created a new world in her bedroom.

3. US, SOUTH KOREA LAUNCH MASSIVE AIR FORCE EXERCISE

The war games come a week after North Korea test-fired its most powerful missile ever, an ICBM that may be able to target the eastern seaboard of the U.S.

4. KIM. NUCLEAR. WAR.

Nothing sums up the message embedded in North Korea's propaganda better than those three words, which its official news service has used more than any others since July 1, AP finds.

5. HOW CVS MAY LOOK IN FUTURE

Shoppers may find more clinics and more health services in its nearly 10,000 stores after the drugstore giant's proposed \$69 billion purchase of the health insurer Aetna.

6. 'TAKE ALL THEIR EXCUSES AWAY'

At Chicago's Saint Anthony Hospital, a new hospital-based team works on behalf of heroin users and matches them with addiction treatment in the community.

7. 'OF COURSE HE SAID IT'

Billy Bush says it was indeed Trump's voice captured on a 2005 "Access Hollywood" tape talking about fame enabling him to grope and try to have sex with women.

8. OFFICE HOLIDAY PARTIES FACING NEW SCRUTINY

After a series of high-profile cases of sexual misconduct in the workplace, a survey shows fewer companies will serve alcohol this year than last year.

9. WHAT UN IS VOICING ALARM ABOUT

The HIV epidemic is silently spreading in Egypt, with an annual growth rate of up to 40 percent and funds to deal with the crisis running out by next year, the world body says.

10. SEAHAWKS STAY IN PLAYOFF HUNT

Russell Wilson throws three touchdown passes and Seattle beats Philadelphia 24-10, snapping the Eagles' nine-game winning streak.

Stealth jets, other aircraft fly in US, South Korean drills

By YOUKYUNG LEE, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Hundreds of aircraft including two dozen stealth jets began training Monday as the United States and South Korea launched a massive combined air force exercise. The war games come a week after North Korea test-fired its most powerful missile ever, an ICBM that may be able to target the eastern seaboard of the United States.

The five-day drill, which is called Vigilant Ace, is meant to improve the allies' wartime capabilities and

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preparedness, South Korea's defense ministry said.

The U.S. Seventh Air Force sent major strategic military assets, including an unusually large number of the latest generations of stealth fighter jets, for the annual training in the Korean Peninsula. They include six F-22 and 18 F-35 stealth fighter jets. About 12,000 U.S. military personnel are participating. In total, 230 aircraft will be flying at eight U.S. and South Korean military installations in the South.

An official at the South Korean Defense Ministry, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of office rules, corrected his earlier statement that the exercise was the biggest ever.

Some local media report that B-1B bombers will also join aerial drills, but officials did not confirm their participation.

The training, held each year in late fall, is not in response to any incident or provocation, the Seventh Air Force said in a statement.

North Korea's state media said the drill pushes the Korean Peninsula "to the brink of nuclear war." Such language is typical in North Korean propaganda because the country claims U.S.-South Korean drills are preparation for invasion.

Still, always bad tensions are at a particularly dangerous point as North Korea edges toward its goal of a viable arsenal of nuclear-tipped long-range missiles, and as President Donald Trump ramps up his rhetoric toward the North, threatening, for instance, to unleash "fire and fury" against the country.

Pyongyang will "seriously consider" countermeasures against the drill, and the U.S. and South Korea will "pay dearly for their provocations," the Korean Central News Agency said on Sunday before the start of the exercises.

While many South Koreans typically ignore North Korea's rhetoric, some senior American officials have expressed worry following the ICBM test, North Korea's third.

On Sunday, Lindsey Graham, a Republican U.S. senator from the state of South Carolina, said he believes that it's time for U.S. military families in South Korea to leave the country because conflict with North Korea is getting close. The U.S. government has not announced a formal decision to evacuate U.S. citizens from South Korea, and there were no such signs in the diplomatic community in Seoul. An evacuation of dependents by Seoul's closest ally and major military defender could prompt a panicked reaction by other countries, and among South Koreans.

In addition to American diplomats and other embassy workers, about 28,500 U.S. troops operate in South Korea, and many come to their posts with their families, who often live on huge, well-guarded military bases.

Also on Sunday, the White House national security adviser said that Trump will take care of North Korean threats by "doing more ourselves."

"The priorities that the president's given us to move as quickly as we can to resolve this crisis with North Korea," General H.R. McMaster told Fox News in an interview.

"If necessary, the president and the United States will have to take care of it, because he has said he's not going to allow this murderous, rogue regime to threaten the United States."

This story was corrected to reflect South Korea's defense ministry retracting statement that this was the largest-ever joint air force exercise.

Trump takes to Twitter to criticize FBI, special prosecutor

By KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Amid a rush of weekend tweets taking aim at targets old and new, President Donald Trump criticized the FBI and raised questions about the special prosecutor's investigation into Russian election meddling and possible ties to his campaign.

The Twitter storm — more than a dozen tweets Saturday and Sunday — came after his former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI. In one his messages, Trump again denied

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that he directed FBI Director James Comey to stop investigating Flynn.

Trump questioned the direction of the federal law enforcement agency and wrote that after Comey, whom Trump fired in May, the FBI's reputation is "in Tatters — worst in History!" He vowed to "bring it back to greatness." The president also retweeted a post saying new FBI Director Chris Wray "needs to clean house."

Former Attorney General Eric Holder tweeted in response: "Nope. Not letting this go. The FBI's reputation is not in 'tatters'. It's composed of the same dedicated men and women who have always worked there and who do a great, apolitical job. You'll find integrity and honesty at FBI headquarters and not at 1600 Penn Ave right now."

Trump seized on reports that a veteran FBI counterintelligence agent was removed from special prosecutor Robert Mueller's team last summer after the discovery of an exchange of text messages that were viewed as potentially anti-Trump. The agent, Peter Strzok, had also worked on the investigation of Democrat Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server.

Peter Carr, a spokesman for Mueller, said Mueller removed Strzok from the team "immediately upon learning of the allegations." He would not elaborate on the nature of the accusations. The person who discussed the matter with The Associated Press was not authorized to speak about it by name and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Trump tweeted Sunday: "Tainted (no, very dishonest?) FBI 'agent's role in Clinton probe under review.' Led Clinton Email probe." In a separate tweet, he wrote: "Report: 'ANTI-TRUMP FBI AGENT LED CLINTON EMAIL PROBE' Now it all starts to make sense!"

Strzok's removal almost certainly reflected a desire to insulate the investigators from any claims of political bias or favoritism. Trump and many of his supporters have at times sought to discredit the integrity of the investigation, in part by claiming a close relationship between Mueller and Comey and by pointing to political contributions to Democrats made by some lawyers on the team.

Following the tweets, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., warned the president to tread cautiously. "You tweet and comment regarding ongoing criminal investigations at your own peril. I'd be careful if I were you, Mr. President. I'd watch this," Graham said.

On Saturday, Trump tweeted that he "had to fire General Flynn because he lied to the Vice President and the FBI. He has pled guilty to those lies. It is a shame because his actions during the transition were lawful. There was nothing to hide!"

The tweet suggested that Trump was aware when the White House dismissed Flynn on Feb. 13 that he had lied to the FBI, which had interviewed him weeks earlier. Comey has said Trump the following day brought up the Flynn investigation in private at the White House and told him he hoped he could "let this go."

With questions raised by the tweet, Trump associates tried to put distance Saturday evening between the president himself and the tweet. Trump's personal lawyer John Dowd told ABC News that he drafted the tweet and gave it to the president's social media director Dan Scavino. Dowd had declined to comment when reached by the AP on Saturday night.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, the top Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said the panel is beginning to see "the putting together of a case of obstruction of justice" against Trump.

"I think we see this in indictments ... and some of the comments that are being made. I see this in the hyperfrenetic attitude of the White House, the comments every day, the continual tweets," Feinstein said. "And I see it most importantly in what happened with the firing of Director Comey, and it is my belief that that is directly because he did not agree to lift the cloud of the Russia investigation. That's obstruction of justice."

Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said given that Mueller could have charged Flynn with more crimes but instead limited it to just one offense, "Bob Mueller must have concluded that he was getting a lot of value in terms of Gen. Flynn's cooperation."

"I do believe he will incriminate others in the administration. Otherwise, there was no reason for Bob Mueller to give Mike Flynn this kind of deal," Schiff said, adding, "Whether that will ultimately lead to the

president, I simply don't know."

Feinstein spoke on NBC's "Meet the Press," Graham spoke on CBS' "Face the Nation," and Schiff spoke on ABC's "This Week."

Beyond Rx? CVS Health-Aetna deal may mean more services

By TOM MURPHY, AP Health Writer

CVS Health wants to do much more than fill your prescription or jab your arm with an annual flu shot. The second-largest U.S. drugstore chain is buying Aetna, the third-largest health insurer, in order to push much deeper into customer care. The evolution won't happen overnight, but in time, shoppers may find more clinics in CVS stores and more services they can receive through the network of nearly 10,000 locations that the company has built.

"They'll be pretty much a soup-to-nuts health company ... except for the hospital part of it," said Craig Johnson, president of Customer Growth Partners, a retail consulting and research firm.

Patients also may find the CVS-Aetna combination much more involved in managing their care, especially for those with expensive chronic conditions like diabetes. The bulked-up company also may gain more negotiating leverage over prescription drug prices, but it's far too early to say how much or whether that benefit will trickle down to customers.

The \$69 billion deal announced Sunday evening will push the drugstore chain more forcefully in a direction it has been heading for years, according to Wall Street analysts. The company, which stopped selling tobacco products in 2014 to further burnish its image as a care provider, already runs about 1,100 clinics and has been steadily expanding the health care it offers.

The clinics started off as a place to treat basic health care needs like sinus infections or strep throat. Gradually, CVS added services like blood draws or monitoring of chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes. Expect that trend to continue as the drugstore switches more from selling products in its stores to services that can't be bought online, where retailers face formidable competition from the likes of Amazon.

"I think over time you're going to see less of that front-store retail and more health care services in their stores," said Jeff Jonas, a portfolio manager for Gabelli Funds who follows drugstores.

The mammoth acquisition pairs a company that runs more than 9,700 drugstores with an insurer covering around 22 million people. CVS Health Corp. is also one of the nation's biggest pharmacy benefit managers, processing more than a billion prescriptions a year for clients like large employers and insurers including Aetna Inc.

Analysts say the combined company could add more clinics and expand in-store services to include eye care or maybe centers for hearing aids. That could gradually turn CVS into a one-stop-shop for health care, a place where patients can get a hearing aid checked, then see a nurse practitioner and pick up prescriptions.

"If you think about it, we actually don't have anything like that," said Jefferies analyst Brian Tanquilut said.

Clinics aren't especially profitable, but they are important because they draw people into the stores and help build deeper customer relationships, analysts say.

The clinics have become an attractive option for customers in need of basic health care because they are usually open longer than the family doctor's office. A clinic visit also can be cheaper than a \$100 doctor visit for someone who doesn't have insurance, but they have drawbacks. Family doctors say they know their patients better and can check on their overall health during a visit rather than dealing with just the one issue that brought that person in.

Some CVS shoppers also are skeptical about getting their health checked in a retail store.

Jessy Tatenco, 23, buys household items and over-the-counter medications for his three children at CVS. But he said would be reluctant to get medical services there. He feels more comfortable in a doctor's office or traditional clinic setting.

"I wouldn't trust them with my health care. They sell toys," he said after leaving a CVS store Sunday in

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downtown San Diego.

CVS isn't the only health care giant delving into clinical care. The deal will help it compete with others like UnitedHealth Group Inc. The nation's largest health insurer also runs clinics and doctor's offices. Like CVS, it also has one of the nation's largest pharmacy benefit management businesses.

CVS and Aetna also want to go beyond just clinic visits to help patients and customers.

Aetna Chairman and CEO Mark Bertolini has talked frequently about how most of a person's life expectancy is determined by genetics and location and not by clinical care, which is where health care spending is focused.

"Our conventional operating model is not effective," Bertolini said earlier this year. "People are angry at this model. It doesn't work effectively in controlling costs."

He has talked about the need to get into patients' homes to gauge what they need, like whether they have enough food or may need transportation.

CVS can help through its home infusion business, which sends nurses to patients' homes to deliver complex drugs for people with hemophilia among other conditions. The clinic and drugstore locations could also give patients with chronic conditions like diabetes more convenient options to get their blood monitored or counseling on their condition.

Over time, health care experts say that can help keep these conditions from growing worse and stave off expensive hospital stays.

CVS will pay about \$207 in cash and stock for each share of Aetna. The boards of both companies have approved the deal, and the companies expect the deal to close in the second half of next year.

But ant-trust regulators still need to evaluate it.

The Justice Department said last month that it is suing AT&T to stop its \$85 billion purchase of Time Warner. Regulators also sued to stop the Aetna's approximately \$34 billion purchase of rival Humana Inc. — a deal that fell apart earlier this year.

Hartford, Connecticut-based Aetna and Woonsocket, Rhode Island-based CVS both manage Medicare prescription drug coverage. Some of that business may have to be sold to address antitrust concerns. But otherwise, Leerink analyst David Larsen thinks a CVS-Aetna combination has decent odds of getting past regulators, in part because the businesses have little overlap.

AP Writers Elliot Spagat in San Diego and David Koenig in Dallas contributed to this report.

Trump to scale back 2 national monuments in trip to Utah

By CATHERINE LUCEY and KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is announcing plans to scale back two sprawling national monuments in Utah, responding to what he has condemned as a "massive federal land grab" by the government.

Trump is traveling to Salt Lake City on Monday to outline his intention to shrink the Bears Ears and the Grand-Staircase Escalante national monuments spanning millions of acres in Utah. The two national monuments were among 27 that Trump ordered Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to review earlier this year.

Utah's Republican leaders, including Sen. Orrin Hatch, pressed Trump to launch the review, saying the monuments declared by Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton locked up too much federal land.

Trump's plans to curtail the strict protections on the sites have angered tribes and environmentalist groups who have vowed to sue to preserve the monuments.

In December, shortly before leaving office, Obama irritated Utah Republicans by creating the Bears Ears National Monument on 1.35 million acres of land sacred to Native Americans and home to tens of thousands of archaeological sites, including ancient cliff dwellings.

Trump signed an executive order in April directing Zinke to conduct a review of the protections. Trump is able to upend the protections under the 1906 Antiquities Act, which gives the president broad authority to declare federal lands as monuments and restrict their use.

The president said in April his order would end "another egregious abuse of federal power" and "give that power back to the states and to the people where it belongs."

Trump said at the time that he had spoken to state and local leaders "who are gravely concerned about this massive federal land grab. And it's gotten worse and worse and worse, and now we're going to free it up, which is what should have happened in the first place. This should never have happened."

The move marks the first time in a half century that a president has attempted to undo these types of land protections. And it could be the first of many changes to come.

Zinke also has recommended that Nevada's Gold Butte and Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou monuments be reduced in size, although details remain unclear. The former Montana congressman's plan would allow logging at a newly designated monument in Maine and more grazing, hunting and fishing at two sites in New Mexico.

Democrats and environmentalists have opposed the changes, accusing Trump and Zinke of engaging in a secretive process aimed at helping industry groups that have donated to Republican campaigns.

Associated Press writer Brady McCombs in Salt Lake City contributed to this report.

UN voices alarm about spread of HIV in Egypt

By NARIMAN EL-MOFTY, Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The U.N. is voicing alarm over the spread of HIV in Egypt, where the number of new cases is growing by up to 40 percent a year, and where efforts to combat the epidemic are hampered by social stigma and a lack of funding to address the crisis.

The virus that causes AIDS, U.N. officials say, is infecting more young and adolescent people than any other age group.

Egypt, home to some 95 million people, ranks behind only Iran, Sudan and Somalia in the Middle East for the rate at which the epidemic is spreading, according to U.N. figures. In Egypt, patients are often jailed on trumped up charges and ostracized by society. The disease is associated with homosexuality, which is not explicitly illegal but is widely seen as a transgression against religion and nature in the conservative, Muslim-majority country.

"There is a 25-30 percent increase in incidents every year... It's alarming to us because the growth of the epidemic and the discontinuation of interest from donors in funding," Ahmed Khamis, of the U.N. AIDS agency, told The Associated Press.

Estimates of the number of people living with HIV in Egypt vary. UNAIDS says there are over 11,000 cases, while the country's Health Ministry estimates the figure to be around 7,000.

The rise in the number of new infections, however, is not in dispute.

"Most recently, we've been seeing people of a much younger age group infected with the virus. There is a higher risk now for adolescents and youths than in the past," said Khamis.

"We don't have exact numbers, but this is what the evidence we are seeing on the ground is suggesting," he added, explaining that the lack of funds is hampering Egypt's capacity to produce precise figures.

Patients who require surgical intervention are often unable to access basic health care at hospitals because of the associated stigma, UNAIDS officials said.

The virus can be spread through sexual contact, as well as contaminated needles or syringes, or blood transfusions. It can also be passed from infected women to their babies at birth or through breast-feeding. But in Egypt, the virus is widely associated with homosexuality, which is seen by many Egyptians as a lifestyle choice.

In a recent conference on AIDS, Islamic scholar and cleric Ali al-Jifri spoke about the stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV and AIDS patients. "A person diagnosed with HIV is a human. We should never question their diagnosis," he told the conference.

A Christian priest, Bolous Soror, told the conference that Egyptians should accept others, regardless of their HIV status.

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Shunned by society, it is not uncommon for patients to contemplate suicide.

Ahmed, 40, is one of them. He has been trying to gain asylum status in the U.S. because, he says, he has lost hope in a future in Egypt.

"I do not want to be living a life always feeling strapped down and imprisoned," he told his therapist during a session attended by an AP reporter. Fearing further stigma, he asked that he be identified only by his first name.

In an anonymous testimony given to UNAIDS and seen by the AP, one woman said she was infected by her late husband and later found it hard to live in a society that rejects people carrying the virus. She was beaten and denied by her family an inheritance she and her children were legally entitled to when her husband died. When she attempted to start a new life with her children in a different neighborhood, her in-laws made sure her new neighbors learned about her condition.

AP word cloud: The message in Pyongyang's propaganda

By ERIC TALMADGE and PENNY YI WANG, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Kim. Nuclear. War.

Nothing sums up the message embedded in North Korea's propaganda better than those three words. That's exactly what the world hears — and what's revealed in this word cloud, a visual display of terms used by the Korean Central News Agency's English-language service.

The Associated Press boiled down 1,542 stories filed between July 1 and Oct. 11 by the official North Korean news agency to a list of the 183 words that appear most frequently. The resulting word cloud reveals some of the key patterns Pyongyang employs in its rhetorical wars with Washington.

Just as important, it reflects the way the government wants to be seen by the outside world.

'KIM' AND 'NUCLEAR'

The first takeaway (no surprise) is that North Korean propagandists spend nearly all of their time hailing be-all-end-all leader Kim Jong Un.

The appearance of his surname in KCNA reports 2,793 times, way more than "nuclear" at 1,671, is the predictable result of the North's inescapable cult of personality.

The reverence goes deeper. While it doesn't show in the word cloud, when the North Korean media mentions the leader's name, or the names of his father and grandfather, it uses a special font reserved especially for that purpose. Even the dates on the pages of the ruling party newspaper come from a calendar that counts the years in terms of the birth of Kim's grandfather, Kim Il Sung. This year in North Korea isn't 2017; it's "Juche 106."

In contrast, the frequency of "nuclear" is telling because of the relatively narrow range of contexts in which it is used.

The primary mission of the North Korean media is to chronicle Kim Jong Un's frequent "on-the-spot-guidance" trips, the heaps of laurels he receives from foreign dignitaries, the vows of devotion from his countrymen. "War," the third-most common word in the AP cloud, is also used not just when talking of a looming conflict with the United States but in connection with the historical one — the 1950-53 Korean War, which North Korean propaganda uses as the prime example of American imperialism and barbarism.

"Nuclear," however, is almost always used in just two ways.

It's either cited in defense of the North's development of nuclear weapons as a just act of self-defense, or in threats that Pyongyang is willing and ready to use them to counter the "nuclear" blackmail of the United States. That it shows up so much attests to just how obsessive the North's rhetorical defenses of its nuclear program really are.

LIKE A SNAPSHOT

A caveat is probably in order at this point.

When it comes to North Korean propaganda, word clouds produce a more impressionistic than scientific

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picture. The best way to look at this one is like a Polaroid snapshot. It's a little blurry around the edges and a higher resolution would certainly be helpful. But to anyone who pays close attention to politics in the North, the words do fall pretty much where expected.

"Party" and "military," for example, are among the top-tier nouns — they're rendered larger than other words as a result — along with honorifics frequently used in connection to Kim and his forefathers. "Sanctions" — a major target of Pyongyang's ire — hovers in the top 10 as well. Stories about bouquets offered at monuments to the leaders are a staple on KCNA, explaining the fairly strong showing of "floral," and allies of the U.S. are customarily written off as "puppets," another robust performer.

Of course, this word cloud does not show every single word that KCNA used. Using a common practice called a "stoplist," we excluded words such as "the," "an" and "whatever" for a basic reason: They were generic words that added no real meaning to the graphical representation. Other words jettisoned included basic numbers ("three," "seven") and procedural terms whose appearance would have offered little overall insight ("government," "newspaper").

For this word cloud, countries and cities were also excluded (though it's worth noting the U.S. was the second-most mentioned after North Korea itself).

FRESH FROM THE NEWS

And then there are the more recent, newsy additions.

ICBM — short for intercontinental ballistic missile — made 475 appearances in the more than 1,500 KCNA English-language stories between July and October that were analyzed, a period that saw the North launching missiles at a record pace. Hwasong, the name North Korea attaches to most of its long-range missiles, appeared 271 times.

President Donald Trump, despite being the single-biggest villain in the North's eyes, figures in the mix a bit less than one might expect.

At 388 mentions, he falls far short of "imperialists" (454), the more generic KCNA term for Americans. "Lunatic" and "dotard," which are emerging as KCNA's favored adjectives for Trump, are still being broken in and haven't established themselves enough to make the top 100 list. Trump's locking of horns with Kim Jong Un didn't really get going until late August, which also might account for the fewer appearances.

And what of "justice," "friendship," "dignity?" When it comes to word deployment, unfortunately — but perhaps not unexpectedly — they remain relegated to the blurry fringe.

Associated Press designer Penny Yi Wang in Bangkok produced the word cloud for this story using Voyant Tools. Eric Talmadge, the writer, has been the AP's Pyongyang bureau chief since 2013. Follow him on Twitter and Instagram at @erictalmadge

Met opera suspends conductor after sex abuse accusations

By TOM McELROY, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York's Metropolitan Opera on Sunday said it was suspending its relationship with longtime conductor James Levine pending an investigation into multiple allegations of sexual misconduct against him.

"Mr. Levine will not be involved in any Met activities, including conducting scheduled performances at the Met this season," the Met said in a statement.

The Met also said it has appointed attorney Robert J. Cleary, a former U.S. attorney and the current head of the investigations practice at the Proskauer Rose law firm, to lead the investigation into the allegations that took place from the 1960s to 1980s.

The move to suspend Levine came a day after the New York Post first reported that one of Levine's accusers claimed he had sexual contact with Levine as a teenager. Met officials said they were launching an investigation. Then on Sunday, The New York Times reported similar accounts from two other men accusing Levine of sexual misconduct.

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One of Levine's accusers, Ashok Pai, also spoke to The Associated Press in recent weeks but declined to tell his story on the record at the time. He declined to be interviewed again when contacted this weekend.

According to the Times, Pai said he was sexually abused by Levine starting in the summer of 1986, when he was 16. He reported the allegations to the police department in Lake Forest, Illinois, in October 2016. Details of the police report were first reported on Saturday on the New York Post's website. Met officials said they learned of the police report last year.

Pai said he reached out to police in Lake Forest because some of his encounters with Levine took place there in the mid-1980s. Levine served as music director at the Ravinia Festival, outside Chicago, from 1973 to 1993.

Chris Brown played principal bass in the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra for more than 30 years. He told the Times that he and Levine masturbated each other when Brown was 17 at the Meadow Brook School of Music in Michigan, where Levin was on the summer program's faculty.

James Lestock described a similar account there when he was a 17-year-old cello student.

"Based on these new reports, the Met has made the decision to act now, while we await the results of the investigation," said Peter Gelb, Met General Manager. "This is a tragedy for anyone whose life has been affected."

An email to Levine's manager seeking comment on the accusations was not immediately returned.

Met officials said in an earlier statement that Levine has denied the charges.

On Saturday afternoon, Levine conducted a performance of Verdi's "Requiem" that was broadcast on radio worldwide. It was expected to be his last appearance at the Met for at least the rest of this year and possibly the foreseeable future. Levine was scheduled to conduct a New Year's Eve gala performance of "Tosca."

The opera company honored Levine with the title of Music Director Emeritus after the end the 2015-2016 season.

The Associated Press does not generally name alleged victims of sexual abuse unless they come forward with their allegations. In this case the three alleged victims agreed to have their names published in the Times.

The accusations against Levine, among the most prominent classical music conductors in the world, are the latest in a stream of sexual misconduct charges involving high-profile men in entertainment and the media that have rocked the nation since accusations against film mogul Harvey Weinstein were reported in October.

Levine served as music director of the Met from 1976 to 2016, when he assumed the position of music director emeritus.

Levine has struggled with health problems including Parkinson's disease in recent years but was scheduled to conduct several productions this season.

Kushner: Trump still undecided on Israel's capital

By MATTHEW LEE, AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has not yet decided whether to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital or whether to proceed immediately in moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to the holy city. That's according to his son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner.

Kushner said Sunday that the president continues to weigh his options ahead of an announcement on the matter that is expected this week.

"The president is going to make his decision," Kushner said in a rare public appearance at an event hosted by the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank. "He is still looking at a lot of different facts."

Kushner's comments were his first public remarks on his efforts to restart peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. And, they came as he faces increasing scrutiny over actions taking during the transition period following former national security adviser Michael Flynn's guilty plea on charges of lying to the FBI.

Shortly before Kushner spoke, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas warned that American recognition

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of Jerusalem as Israel's capital would jeopardize the White House's Mideast peace efforts.

"Any American step related to the recognition of Jerusalem as capital of Israel, or moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, represents a threat to the future of the peace process and is unacceptable for the Palestinians, Arabs and internationally," Abbas told a group of Arab lawmakers from Israel, according to the official Wafa news agency.

U.S. officials said last week that Trump is poised to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital in a move that would upend decades of U.S. policy but also to put off once again moving the embassy from Tel Aviv. The officials said Trump is expected to make his decision known in a speech on Wednesday.

The highly charged declaration risks inflaming tensions across the Middle East, and U.S. embassies and consulates around the region have been warned to expect protests. But it would also offset disappointment from Trump supporters from deferring once again his campaign promise to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem.

Trump's announcement will follow months of internal deliberations that grew particularly intense last week, according officials familiar with the discussions. They described the president as intent on fulfilling his pledge to move the embassy but also mindful that doing so could set back his aim of forging a long-elusive peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, who claim part of Jerusalem as the capital of an eventual state.

Moving the embassy could spark widespread protest across the Middle East and undermine an Arab-Israeli peace push led by Kushner. Trump's campaign season promises won him the support of powerful pro-Israel voices in the Republican Party. But as president, he has faced equally forceful lobbying from close U.S. allies such as King Abdullah II of Jordan, who have impressed on him the dangers in abandoning America's carefully balanced position on the holy city.

Under U.S. law signed by President Bill Clinton in 1995, the U.S. must relocate its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem unless the president waives the requirement on national security grounds, something required every six months. If the waiver isn't signed and the embassy doesn't move, the State Department would lose half its funding for its facilities and their security around the world. Republicans have championed embassy security since a 2012 attack on American compounds in Benghazi, Libya.

Trump is likely to issue a waiver on moving the embassy by Monday, the officials said, though they cautioned that the president could always decide otherwise.

All presidents since Clinton have issued the waiver, saying Jerusalem's status is a matter for Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate. Trump signed the waiver at the last deadline in June, but the White House made clear he still intended to move the embassy.

All-SEC title game on horizon? Alabama gets nod over Ohio St

By RALPH D. RUSSO, AP College Football Writer

Back in January 2012, the day after Alabama beat LSU in the BCS championship game, the commissioners of the FBS conferences gathered in New Orleans to discuss the future of the college football postseason.

There had already been movement toward tearing up the unpopular Bowl Championship Series, but the all-Southeastern Conference championship game was the final blow. The College Football Playoff was created soon after.

On Sunday, the field for the fourth College Football Playoff was set and for the first time two teams from the same conference made it. Alabama (11-1) will face Clemson (12-1) in the Sugar Bowl and fellow SEC member Georgia (12-1) will play Oklahoma (12-1) in the Rose Bowl.

Another all-SEC championship game could be on the horizon, and for the second straight year the value of a conference championship was diminished. Unlike in 2012, though, the winds of change are not picking up — even with both the Big Ten and Pac-12 sitting out this playoff altogether.

"It doesn't change my view that the present structure is best for college football," Big Ten Commissioner Jim Delany said during an interview with ESPN. "I can be supportive of (the selection committee) and at the same time be disappointed and a little bit surprised."

When Alabama got the nod for the fourth and final spot over Ohio State, the Big Ten was left out for

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the first time — and for the second time in four seasons the Pac-12 was shut out, too. When the conference commissioners were putting the playoff together, ensuring only conference champions would be included was considered. Eventually, the compromise was to craft a protocol that emphasized conference championships, but not make them mandatory.

"I don't see anything that's happened in the first four years in the work of the selection committee or the playoff that is inconsistent with how it was designed or what was possible," Pac-12 Commissioner Larry Scott told the AP in a phone interview.

Tide or Buckeyes was the toughest call for the committee in the four-year history of the playoff.

"We walked into that room knowing we had a big task ahead of us," said committee chairman Kirby Hocutt, the athletic director at Texas Tech.

The Tide had been more consistent and lost just once. The Buckeyes lost twice, including an embarrassing 31-point loss at unranked Iowa, but have the more impressive set of victories. Ohio State won the Big Ten while Alabama did not even win its SEC division.

The committee rolled with the Tide and stayed on the task of choosing the best teams, regardless of conference affiliation. For the second straight season a team that did not win its conference is in the playoff. Ohio State did it last year.

"Of course we all know at the end of the day what the narrative is going to be based on the identification of the those four very best teams because we're all in this profession. This is our livelihood. We're very familiar with it," Hocutt said. "But does it impact our discussion in that room? And I can tell you very straight forward no."

Ohio State was ranked fifth by the CFP, Wisconsin was sixth and Auburn was seventh. Southern California finished eighth, followed by Penn State and Miami. Washington was 11th and unbeaten UCF was 12th.

The rest of the New Year's Six bowls fell this way: USC (11-2) vs. Ohio State (11-2) in the Cotton Bowl on Dec. 29 ; Washington (10-2) vs. Penn State (10-2) in the Fiesta Bowl on Dec. 30 ; Miami (10-2) vs. Wisconsin (12-1) in the Orange Bowl on Dec. 30 ; and UCF (12-0) vs. Auburn (10-3) in the Peach Bowl on Jan. 1 .

"Look at how healthy the system is," Scott said. "From our perspective, of course we'd love a team in the playoff this year, but we've got amazing bowl games."

Hocutt said the Iowa loss hurt Ohio State and the Buckeyes were not close enough to the Tide for the Big Ten championship result — a 27-21 win over previously unbeaten Wisconsin — to matter.

Alabama made it 4-for-4 in the playoff, the only team that has made them all. Coach Nick Saban said he trusted the committee would come to the right conclusion.

"I really do believe based on the total body of work that our team really deserved to be in," Tide coach Nick Saban said in an ESPN interview.

For the third straight season, college football gets an Alabama-Clemson matchup in the playoff, though this time in the semifinals. The Tide beat the Tigers in a classic national championship game in Glendale, Arizona, two seasons ago. The teams played another thriller last season and Clemson took the title in Tampa, Florida.

Ohio State coach Urban Meyer said, "I sank in my chair at home, because I really thought we were in." He noted his team had three wins "against the top 16 teams in America."

"But I get it," he said.

Revenue distribution from the College Football Playoff is not heavily weighted toward the teams and conferences that reach the semifinals. The SEC, Big 12 and ACC will get \$6 million for each playoff team and no additional money if its teams advance. The conferences get \$4 million for each team in a New Year's Six game.

So the SEC gets \$16 million for three teams in the six games. The Big Ten makes \$12 million for three teams. The ACC gets \$10 million for Clemson in the playoff and Miami in the Orange Bowl. The Big 12 gets \$6 million for Oklahoma in the playoff. The Pac-12 gets \$8 million and the American Athletic Conference gets \$4 million for UCF in the Peach Bowl. That money is in addition to the approximately \$54 million each Power Five conference receives before a team is ever selected.

Every year the commissioners meet to discuss the playoff and Scott said he doubts this year's selections

will change the agenda.

"My impression is," Scott said, "that the commissioners are very pleased with how the playoff is working and the job of the committee."

Follow Ralph D. Russo at www.Twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP

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

Remembering 1963 eruption, Bali's elderly wary of another

By **STEPHEN WRIGHT** and **WAYAN NAMBI**, Associated Press

KLUNGKUNG, Indonesia (AP) — Bali's glowering Mount Agung has seemingly quieted since hurling huge columns of ash from its crater a week ago, but some villagers on the Indonesian island who survived the catastrophic 1963 explosions believe a bigger eruption is coming.

Ash plumes have dissipated in the past few days though an online seismogram from the mountain's monitoring post resembles a crazed abstract painting, indicating the tremendous forces churning within.

Explosions from the smoking crater and tremors still rattle the surrounding region and authorities have maintained Agung's alert at the highest level. Its 1963 eruptions killed about 1,100 people.

"The situation now is almost the same," said Nengah Tresni, who was 12 when Agung erupted in 1963. She recalls being at one of the Hindu temples that dot the volcano's slopes and the sky suddenly turning dark as she left with her family.

"I'm sure there will be a big eruption. It is just a matter of time," said Tresni, who came with family members on Tuesday to an aging sports center that's serving as an evacuation camp after officials told them to leave their village.

"In the old eruption many people did not expect it to be big because there were small eruptions for a long time and villagers just went to the temple to pray," she said.

It's the second time Tresni has fled to the camp since September, when the 3,140-meter (10,300-foot) volcano burst into life after more than half a century of inactivity. Officials lowered the volcano's alert level at the end of October and most of the 140,000 people who had evacuated returned home. It proved to be a brief respite.

"I actually didn't want to go back because I thought there would be big eruptions, but my family wanted to go home," she said. "And now we're refugees here again."

Nyoman Siki from a village high on the volcano's slopes was 6 or 7 years old in 1963 and remembers it being said that 200 people from his area were killed. But he was philosophical about the situation. When people returned a year after the eruption, he said they were happy because it had renewed the fertility of the land.

"After years of cultivation, the volcano is just about to erupt again," he said.

More than 55,000 people are living in shelters such as sports halls, temples and tent camps since officials expanded the no-go area around the volcano on Monday. Many centers appear well organized, but one visited by Associated Press reporters in Rendang district on Saturday was tightly packed and muddy from the frequent rains. Tourists who were stranded when the idyllic island's airport closed for nearly three days have rushed to leave.

Nyoman Merta said that after the 1963 eruption, he and his family walked for three days from their village before authorities picked them up and took them to an evacuation camp.

"I was 9 years old but I can remember many people still stayed. There were no warnings like now and maybe that was why many people were killed then," he said.

The family stayed in Denpasar in the south of Bali for a year. When they returned home, he said, their house was uninhabitable because of damage caused by the eruptions.

He compared the recent months of escalating danger signs from Agung with 1963.

Scientists agree the danger remains though making an exact prediction is difficult if not impossible.

"At all volcanoes we can expect fluctuations in activity. This does not mean that the threat is over," said Heather Handley, a volcanologist at Sydney's Macquarie University. "It is clearly still in an active phase."

In the 1963 eruption, there were small ash explosions in February followed by a lava flow and then a large explosive eruption on March 17, she said. A second major eruption occurred two months later "so activity can stop and start again," said Handley.

At the muddy Rendang camp, bare-chested 77-year-old Nyoman Arse remembered the 1963 disaster in great detail and was unperturbed by Agung's ash eruptions in the past week.

Recalling events when he was 24, Arse said the mountain sent out ash for a month and then exploded about the same time as Galungan, an important religious celebration in majority Hindu Bali that in 1963 fell in mid-March.

"I saw the rocks coming down the mountain with a very loud noise," he said, imitating crashing sounds. "The rocks were huge," he said. "What's happening now is still nothing."

Yemen's rebel alliance unravels amid Sanaa street clashes

By AHMED AL-HAJ, Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — Snipers took over rooftops in residential areas, tanks deployed and militiamen set up checkpoints Sunday across the Yemeni capital, where fighting forced families to hunker down indoors in anticipation of more violence.

Five days of bombings and heavy gunfire have underscored the unraveling of the already fragile alliance between Yemen's strongman and former president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, and the Shiite rebels known as Houthis. The two sides joined ranks three years ago and swept across the capital, Sanaa, forcing the country's internationally recognized president to flee the country and seek military intervention led by Saudi Arabia.

After months of political and military stalemate, the street battles between Saleh's forces and the Houthi militiamen have marked a turning point in the conflict. The two sides had been enemies before the six-year-war that began in 2004 when Saleh was a president. Their alliance, in the eyes of many Yemenis, was doomed to fail given their stark differences.

The Iran-backed rebels perceive themselves as a religious awakening movement, while Saleh is a pragmatic politician, shifting political alliances, buying tribal loyalties and exploiting Yemen's power fault lines throughout his three-decades in power before he was ousted after the country's Arab Spring uprising in 2011.

Over the past 48 hours, in a series of surprise announcements, all of Yemen's political players spoke about turning a new page and unifying against the Houthis — a new alliance that appeared to have been in the making for some time as the Shiite rebels have accused Saleh of working against them.

The Houthis, who descended from their northern enclave and seized Yemen's capital in 2014 with the help of Saleh's forces, are now becoming isolated in the face of popular anger.

Pictures of angry Yemenis tearing down posters of the Houthi leader, Abdul-Malik a-Houthi, in Sanaa flooded social media as street fighting there appeared to split the capital in two, with northern areas under Houthi control and southern ones under Saleh's fighters.

Clashes between fighters loyal to Saleh and the Houthis first erupted last week when Saleh accused the rebels of storming his giant mosque in Sanaa and attacking his nephew, the powerful commander of the special forces, Tarek Saleh.

Both sides have set up checkpoints, placed snipers on rooftops and sealed off entrances to the city. Bombings and sporadic gunfire rocked the southern part of Sanaa on Sunday, where Houthi militants stormed Saleh's Yemen Today TV network, beat up its director, and held over 40 journalists and crew members inside the building, Yemen's Press Syndicate said.

Many state institutions — including the airport, state TV headquarters and the official news agency — remained under the control of the Houthis, despite earlier reports that Saleh's forces had taken them over.

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A southern Sanaa district that houses the residential compound of Saleh and his family was surrounded during the intense clashes.

The fighting also spread to northern areas. In Amran, armed tribesmen tried to cut the road between the provinces of Saada, a Houthi stronghold, and Jawf, sparking clashes in which scores of tribesmen were killed and wounded, witnesses said. In Mehwat, a province in northern Yemen, sporadic fighting also broke out between Saleh's supporters and the Houthis, while heavy fighting rocked the western district of Gidr in Sanaa province, where tribesmen took over military camps briefly before surrendering them to the Houthis.

Medical officials in Sanaa said nearly 75 people from both sides were killed and wounded in clashes there. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief media, did not provide a breakdown of the casualties.

Meanwhile, Yemen's President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who is in Saudi Arabia in self-imposed exile, appeared to extend an offer of reconciliation to his predecessor, Saleh. In a statement from Riyadh, Hadi said his side would support "any party confronting Houthi terrorist gangs."

The offer followed a televised statement Saturday by Saleh in which he announced that he and his party, the People's General Congress, were open to dialogue and willing to turn a "new page" in dealings with the Saudi-led coalition.

Apparently confirming his break with the Houthis and aligning himself with Saudi Arabia, Saleh told Kuwait's al-Rai daily that "the era of the militias is over and there is no coexistence after today between a state and a quasi-state."

"Our natural orbit as Yemenis is the Gulf orbit," he added, referring to Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf Arab states. "Whatever differences we have with the Gulf countries, we will cooperate and agree."

If Saleh and his fighters switch sides and join the Saudi-led coalition and Hadi's loyalists, the Houthis would become completely isolated.

Relations between the Houthis and Saleh's forces deteriorated over the past weeks amid accusations from the rebels that Saleh was opening a back channel with the coalition through the United Arab Emirates, a coalition member, to turn against the Houthis.

Deif Allah al-Shami, a top Houthi politician, told The Associated Press that Saleh — by his statements and actions on the ground — had de facto joined the Saudi-led coalition. However, he said this spelled the end of Saleh, insisting the Houthis remain firmly in control.

"Saleh is over, this card is over," he said. "He is now part of the coalition and the aggression."

Saleh's family members, including his son Ahmed, who was once groomed to succeed his father and who led the powerful Republican Guards, have been in self-exile in the UAE since Saleh stepped down in the aftermath of the mass uprising against his rule during the 2011 Arab Spring.

Saleh and the Houthis have always been unlikely allies. When Saleh was president he repeatedly went to war with the rebels in their northern heartland. In recent weeks, the Houthis have accused Saleh of trying to pull his forces from the front lines, while his supporters have complained about the Houthis monopolizing power.

Last summer, Saleh also appeared to work against the Houthis as he welcomed a United Nations initiative to hand the vital Red Sea port city of Hodeida to a third neutral party in order to ease the blockade and open the port to free access of humanitarian aid. The Houthis shot down the proposal and have refused to meet with the U.N. envoy to Yemen.

The cracks deepened in August after street fighting ended with the killing of one of Saleh's close associates, Khaled al-Radhi. Since then, Saleh's party members have been vowing to take revenge.

Colored pens and coin tosses used to settle tied elections

By MARTHA WAGGONER, Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — In Manteo, North Carolina, population about 1,400, the vote for one town commission post was so close that it took nearly three weeks, two recounts, a drawing of straws and a coin

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toss to settle the election.

The town in coastal Dare County is among several in North Carolina where elections were decided by just a few votes or ended in a tie, demonstrating once again an old political truism.

"This is proof that every vote is important," said Dare County elections director Michele Barnes.

In places like Manteo, no one is challenging the election results, even though not everyone is happy with them or the method used to determine the winner.

But in others, the circumstances surrounding close races have spurred legal challenges. That's the case in Sharpsburg, which lies 140 miles west of Manteo in three counties: Nash, Edgecombe and Wilson. Mayoral candidate Robert L. Williams Jr. lost by three votes, 139-136.

Williams, represented by the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, alleges in a complaint that the Wilson County Board of Elections provided only 12 ballots in the Sharpsburg election precinct where 349 voters are registered. Just 71 ballots, or 20 percent, were cast in that precinct.

In all three counties, 276 of 1,213 registered voters cast a ballot, a turnout of less than 23 percent.

It took more than two hours for election officials to deliver more ballots, by which time voters had left and couldn't return, the complaint says. The majority of those turned away are African-Americans, Williams said. The Wilson County Board of Elections will hold a hearing Dec. 14 on the complaint.

A study conducted by Democracy North Carolina of the November 2015 elections identified 69 cities where the mayor or a town council member won election by five or fewer votes. In 31 cities, elections were determined by one vote. Coin tosses broke ties for town council races in Sparta, West Jefferson, Clarkton and Godwin, while the winner's name was drawn from a box in Dover.

The candidates who tied in Garland put colored pens in box, and the elections board chair picked the winner — in this case, the purple pen.

That's legal in North Carolina. State law says when a vote ends in a tie, county election boards "shall determine the winner by lot."

Three communities gave mayoral candidates one-vote victories: Spruce Pine, St. Pauls and Biscoe.

Other states have similar quirky election rules. In 2012, a candidate for a Walton, Ohio, city council race was decided by a coin toss after a tie vote when one candidate's wife didn't vote. He called tails — and lost.

And a 2002 race in Goldfield, Nevada, was settled the Old West way — by a draw of the cards.

After the Nov. 7 Manteo election, incumbent Richie Burke led incumbent Martha Wickre by two votes — 210 to 208 — for the third of three seats on the town commission. A Nov. 21 recount showed them tied at 210 each, and a second recount Monday confirmed it.

The candidates then drew straws to see who would call heads or tails. Wickre called heads and lost, making Burke the winner. Of Manteo's 1,241 voters, 424 — or 34 percent — voted, Barnes said.

"The biggest thing I have encountered is the community's outcry over the coin toss," Wickre said. "But then, it all goes down to people actually getting out and voting."

Wickre is exactly right, said Bob Hall, executive director of Democracy North Carolina. "The decision of one voter not to vote or which way they vote can decide who your next mayor is, can decide who your next police chief is and how your garbage gets picked up. ... Lots of decisions are made by local governments and affect people very directly." In addition, local politicians often move on to higher office.

Close elections have become the norm in Manteo. Four years ago, Wickre ousted long-time commissioner David Farrow by one vote. Farrow ran again two years later and lost to someone else — also by one vote, said Wickre and Barnes.

A tie for a Troutman Town Council seat was settled when an elections board member drew a slip of paper bearing a candidate's name from a bowl. A similar method was used to settle a tie in the race for a seat on the Pine Knoll Shores town commission. About 39 percent of registered voters cast a ballot in Pine Knoll Shores, while the turnout was just 11.7 percent in Troutman. The statewide turnout was almost 17 percent.

As for Wickre, she says she'll probably run again in two years. "It was very disappointing," she said of her coin-toss loss. "I thought I had really engaged with the town to make it better, and I had some projects I wanted to complete."

Follow Martha Waggoner at <http://twitter.com/mjwaggonernc>

Sex cases put spotlight on sex addiction, but is it real?

By LINDSEY TANNER, AP Medical Writer

Is sex addiction a true addiction, a crime, or a made-up condition used by misbehaving VIPs to deflect blame or repair tarnished images?

A tide of high-profile sexual misconduct accusations against celebrities, politicians and media members has raised these questions — and sowed confusion. Sex addiction is not an officially recognized psychiatric diagnosis, though even those who doubt it's a true addiction acknowledge that compulsive sexual behavior can upend lives.

Either way, there is an important distinction, sometimes blurred, between a mental condition and a crime. Some men who have been accused of assault or other sexual crimes have sought treatment for sex addiction or other unspecified conditions. But compulsive behavior is very different from a crime, and the vast majority of people who suffer from sexually compulsive behavior do not harass or assault others.

There's "an extremely fine line between addict and offender" and sometimes the two overlap, said psychologist Leah Claire Bennett of Pine Grove Behavioral Health & Addiction Services, a rehab center that offers sex addiction treatment in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Despite pressure from some therapists, sex addiction was not included in the most recent edition of the manual that psychiatrists use to diagnose mental illness. "The reason is very simple," said Dr. Charles O'Brien, a University of Pennsylvania psychiatry professor involved in the manual's 2013 update. There is no rigorous scientific proof that compulsive sexual behavior affects the brain in the same ways that have been shown with addiction to drugs or alcohol, he said.

"There's an overuse of the word 'addiction,'" O'Brien said. "There are many treatment programs. That doesn't make it a disorder."

Still, some skeptics don't dispute that compulsive sexual behavior can become a serious problem. The issue for some is whether it amounts to mental illness, or whether it might result from a different psychiatric condition, such as obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Robert Weiss, a California-based sex addiction therapist, said the condition involves unrestrained compulsive sexual behavior without regard to consequences. Sometimes that leads to illegal behavior.

The International Institute for Trauma and Addiction Professionals says sex addiction affects from 2 percent to 5 percent of the general population but that only 10 percent of those with this addiction engage in criminal sexual behavior. Most patients and sex offenders are men.

Some treatment programs won't admit patients accused of rape and other violent sex crimes, referring them to centers or therapists who specialize in treating sex offenders.

Addiction treatment at Pine Grove, The Meadows in Arizona and other high-profile residential rehab centers can cost tens of thousands of dollars. Despite country club-like settings, there's nothing cushy or indulgent about sex addiction therapy, Weiss said.

Pine Grove requires daylong sessions including group therapy daily for up to three months. Some centers use 12-step programs similar to Alcoholics Anonymous, but they don't require swearing off sex for good. Some use brain "retraining" exercises, or sharing stories about bad behavior with a roomful of strangers.

Some centers use equine therapy. Weiss says that interacting with horses can help patients recognize problems sometimes associated with sex addiction, including overly aggressive, controlling behavior.

The New York Post published a photograph last year that it said showed former New York Congressman Anthony Weiner riding a horse as part of treatment at a Tennessee sex addiction rehab center. Weiner was sentenced in September for sexting with a teenager. He said at the time that he was undergoing therapy and had been "a very sick man for a very long time."

Weiss and other therapists say sex addicts are never cured, but they can learn to manage their behavior and avoid triggers, including avoiding jobs and circumstances that could lead to a repeat of problem

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behavior.

L.J. Schwartz, a former real estate adviser in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, says a nearly 30-year addiction to sex almost ruined his life.

Schwartz says his addiction included having sex with strangers at adult bookstores or masturbating there while watching porn nearly every chance he got; working as a stripper and phone sex. He was never arrested but says his behavior endangered his job and marriage.

"There's no pleasure derived from sex addiction; it's pain," Schwartz said.

He says a 12-step program helped him resist his compulsions and he now works as a recovery coach for other patients.

But hard evidence that treatment works is lacking. "There's not a lot of data," Bennett acknowledged.

"We have a lot of anecdotal evidence. We can see the change in people," she said. She said Pine Grove plans a long-term study to measure the benefits.

Whether treatment can repair tarnished images is uncertain.

"The accusations levied against Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey, Louis C.K. and others for sexual assault, harassment and abuse have created righteous outrage and concerns that 'sex addiction treatment' is being used to excuse their offensive behavior," the addiction professionals institute said in a recent statement.

Whether any of these men have a diagnosed mental condition has not been publicized.

A representative for Weinstein confirmed that he is receiving treatment and has been taking his recovery and sessions seriously. But the representative declined to specify Weinstein's condition or the treatment he is receiving for it. A former publicist for Spacey said he also is seeking unspecified treatment.

Bennett said some people do use sex addiction as an excuse, "but that's not who we're treating here at Pine Grove. These peoples' lives are in shambles. They've been traumatized throughout their lives. They have huge psychological wounds and are using very maladaptive ways of coping."

Actor David Duchovny voluntarily sought rehab for sex addiction in 2008 while starring on Showtime's "Californication." Married to actress Tea Leoni at the time, he had been dogged by cheating rumors. His career never stalled. He returned to "Californication" for the remainder of its run and has continued to appear in high-profile roles.

When sex addiction may have contributed to criminal behavior, a trip to rehab could bolster a defense attorney's argument that the accused person has changed, said Samuel Pillsbury, a professor at Loyola School of Law in Los Angeles. But it's a less effective strategy for violent crimes, he said.

"It's very difficult for me to imagine a prosecutor deciding, 'Oh, he's in rehab, I'll drop the charges or I'll reduce the charges significantly,'" Pillsbury said. "But it could have an effect on sentencing."

AP Entertainment Writer Sandy Cohen contributed to this report from Los Angeles.

Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner on Twitter at @LindseyTanner. Her work can be found here .

Office holiday parties get another look as scandals continue

By MARLEY JAY, AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — With a series of high-profile workplace sex scandals on their minds, employers are making sure their holiday office parties don't become part of the problem.

There will be less booze at many. An independent business organization has renewed its annual warning not to hang mistletoe. And some will have party monitors, keeping an eye out for inappropriate behavior.

TV and movies often depict office parties as wildly inappropriate bacchanals or excruciatingly awkward fiascos, if not, horrifyingly, both. But even a regular office party can be complicated because the rules people normally observe at work don't quite apply, which makes it easier for people to accidentally cross a line — or try to get away with serious misbehavior. Especially when too much drinking is involved.

According to a survey by Chicago-based consulting company Challenger, Gray & Christmas, only 49 percent of companies plan to serve alcohol at their holiday events. Last year that number was 62 percent,

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the highest number in the decade the firm has run its survey. The number had been going up each year as the economy improved.

"As soon as you introduce alcohol at an off-site activity, peoples' guards are dropped," said Ed Yost, manager of employee relations and development for the Society for Human Resource Management based in Alexandria, Virginia. "It's presumed to be a less formal, more social environment. Some people will drink more than they typically would on a Friday night or a Saturday because it's an open bar or a free cocktail hour."

The Huffington Post reported Friday that Vox Media, which runs sites including Vox and Recode, won't have an open bar this year at its holiday party and will instead give employees two tickets they can redeem for drinks. It will also have more food than in years past. The company recently fired its editorial director, Lockhart Steele, after a former employee made allegations of sexual harassment against him.

A survey by Bloomberg Law said those kinds of safeguards are common: while most companies ask bartenders or security or even some employees to keep an eye on how much partygoers are drinking, others limit the number of free drinks or the time they're available. A small minority have cash bars instead of an open bar.

The National Federation of Independent Businesses recommends all of those steps, and adds another that might seem obvious these days: don't hang mistletoe. It's been giving those suggestions for several years.

Yost said he always gets a lot of requests for advice in planning and managing these events, but he's getting even more of them this year. He said he'll be spending his corporate holiday party the way he always does: patrolling hallways, checking secluded areas and trying to watch for people who look like they are stuck in an uncomfortable situation — for example, inappropriate touching or a conversation that's taken a bad turn. If they're visibly uncomfortable, he'll intervene and plan a later conversation with the person responsible.

The Challenger, Gray & Christmas survey shows that about 80 percent of companies will have a holiday party, the same as last year. And not everyone is planning changes.

Anthony Vitiello, the marketing director for software company Anton Robb Group, said he planned his company's event and didn't rethink it. For the last few years the firm's has marked the holiday with drinks and passed hors d'oeuvres in the wide cellar of a local restaurant. Vitiello thinks the formal setting makes the event calmer.

"We haven't had any incidents, not a single one I can recall, where anyone got loud or over-consumed," he said. He added that many of his company's 25 employees go out for drinks once a month, and he's not aware of any cases of misconduct.

Yost said he's not making changes to his group's event either. He added that companies concerned about sexual misconduct need to look further than the holiday party.

"While there are additional complications that are associated with a holiday event, that's one day a year," he said.

Supreme Court taking up sports betting case

By JESSICA GRESKO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is taking up a case that could make sports betting widely available.

The case the justices are hearing Monday is a result of New Jersey's yearslong effort to bring betting on sports to its casinos and racetracks. New Jersey is challenging a federal law that bars states from authorizing sports gambling. If the Supreme Court strikes down the law, giving sports betting the go-ahead, 32 states would likely offer it within five years, according to one report.

The case pits New Jersey and other states against all four major U.S. professional sports leagues and the federal government. The stakes are high. The American Gaming Association estimates that Americans illegally wager about \$150 billion on sports each year.

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In court, the NBA, NFL, NHL and Major League Baseball have fought New Jersey's gambling expansion, arguing that it would hurt the integrity of their games, though leaders of all but the NFL have shown varying degrees of openness to legalized sports gambling.

More than a dozen states are supporting New Jersey, which is arguing that Congress exceeded its authority when it passed a 1992 law that keeps states from authorizing sports betting. The state says the Constitution allows Congress to make wagering on sports illegal itself but that it can't require states to keep sports gambling prohibitions in place.

New Jersey has spent millions of dollars in legal fees trying to legalize sports betting. In 2012, with voters' support, state lawmakers authorized sports betting at the state's casinos and racetracks. The action was a direct challenge to the federal law, the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act.

The law bars state-authorized sports gambling with exceptions for Nevada, Montana, Oregon and Delaware, states that had approved some form of sports wagering before the law took effect. Nevada is the only state where a person can wager on the results of a single game, though the law doesn't cover wagering between friends. In passing the law, Congress gave New Jersey a yearlong window to authorize sports betting at its casinos, but the state didn't act.

Two decades later, when New Jersey decided to legalize sports betting, the four major professional sports leagues and the NCAA sued, but the state lost in court. In 2014, New Jersey tried a different tactic by repealing laws prohibiting sports gambling at casinos and racetracks. It lost again in court.

Now that the case is before the Supreme Court, the justices could ultimately greenlight the expansion of sports gambling nationwide by striking down the federal law. But the justices could also uphold it, leaving in place the status quo, or rule narrowly that what New Jersey did didn't violate the law.

A decision is expected by the end of June.

Follow Jessica Gresko on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/jessicagresko>

This Week: Trade balance, consumer credit, nonfarm payrolls

By The Associated Press

A look at some of the key business events and economic indicators upcoming this week:

BALANCING ACT

The nation's trade deficit has been growing even though a weaker dollar has made U.S.-made products less expensive.

Through September, the U.S. had run a trade gap this year of \$405.2 billion, a 9 percent increase from a year earlier. September's deficit widened to \$43.5 billion as imports grew faster than exports. Did the trend continue in October? Find out Tuesday, when the Commerce Department reports its latest trade data.

Trade balance, monthly, billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted:

May -46.4

June -43.5

July -43.6

Aug. -42.8

Sept. -43.5

Oct. (est.) -45.8

Source: FactSet

RACKING UP DEBT

The Federal Reserve releases its latest snapshot of consumer borrowing Thursday.

Economists expect the tally, which excludes mortgages and other loans secured by real estate, will show consumer borrowing increased by \$16.8 billion in October. That would be down from a gain of \$20.8 billion the previous month. The increase in September pushed total consumer credit to a record \$3.79 trillion.

Consumer credit, monthly change, seasonally adjusted, billions of dollars:

May 18.4

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June 11.8
July 17.9
Aug. 13.1
Sept. 20.8
Oct. (est.) 16.8

Source: FactSet
ALL ABOUT JOBS

Economists predict hiring in the U.S. slowed last month after a sharp increase the previous month.

They expect the Labor Department will report Friday that nonfarm employers added 191,500 jobs in November. Employers added 261,000 jobs in October as many businesses reopened in Texas and Florida after closing in the aftermath of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

Nonfarm payrolls, monthly change, seasonally adjusted:

June 210,000
July 138,000
Aug. 208,000
Sept. 18,000
Oct. 261,000
Nov. (est.) 191,500

Source: FactSet

Economists expect modest boost from tax cuts

By PAUL WISEMAN, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Economists expect a tax overhaul to provide a modest boost to the U.S. economy but are increasingly worried that a rewrite of the North American Free Trade Agreement will take a toll on growth.

The National Association of Business Economics survey found that forecasters expect tax law changes to add 0.2 percentage points of growth to the U.S. economy, down slightly from what they expected in the previous NABE survey in September. The survey was taken Nov. 6-15, before the Senate passed a major tax overhaul early Saturday.

Forty-six percent of 51 panelists believe the renegotiation of NAFTA will do at least some damage to the American economy, up from 27 percent in September. NAFTA has expanded trade between the United States, Mexico and Canada, but President Donald Trump calls it a job-killing disaster and is demanding a better deal.

Talks to revamp NAFTA began in August but have bogged down over the United States' demands, including its insistence a new deal bring down America's trade deficits and guarantee that more auto production moves to America.

The NABE economists expect the U.S. economy to expand 2.2 percent this year and 2.5 percent in 2018. They expect unemployment to match October's 4.1 percent throughout the first half of 2018, and then slip to 4 percent in the second half.

They also expect inflation to remain below the Federal Reserve's 2 percent target next year. But they still expect the Fed, which has already raised interest rates twice this year, to raise rates again in December and to approve three more hikes in 2018.

3 reasons why CVS would want to buy health insurer Aetna

By TOM MURPHY, AP Health Writer

A CVS-Aetna combination could create a health colossus that would reach deeper into the average customer's life to manage care and cut costs, according to analysts who follow the companies.

Drugstore chain and pharmacy benefits manager CVS Health Corp. has agreed to buy the nation's third-

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largest insurer, Aetna Inc., a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press on Sunday. The deal would be worth about \$69 billion.

Such a deal would combine a health insurer that covers around 22 million people with a company that runs 9,700 drugstores and more than 1,100 walk-in medical clinics. CVS also processes more than a billion prescriptions annually through CVS Caremark, its pharmacy benefits management business.

The marriage makes sense for several reasons, Wall Street analysts have said since the negotiations were first reported. Here are three key factors:

BETTER CARE MANAGEMENT

Pharmacy benefit managers — which run prescription drug plans for employers, government agencies and insurers — use their large purchasing power to negotiate prices. But they and insurers have long wanted to do more than just process claims and pay bills.

They believe the key to controlling health care costs is making sure people stay on their medicines, get care at the right locations and do whatever they can to avoid expensive hospital stays. The idea is to work with patients while they are healthy instead of waiting until they're sick.

For example, Aetna could use the CVS network of clinics to help patients with diabetes keep tabs on their blood sugar and cholesterol levels. That could stave off more serious complications like a heart attack.

The combined company also could push the clinics and telemedicine as an alternative to expensive emergency rooms. Insurers have long fought to curb the use of ERs for anything that isn't life threatening. Retail clinics can cost a third of the price for an ER visit, Leerink analyst David Larsen said in a research note late Thursday to investors.

CVS could expand its clinics or create small urgent care centers — which can handle a wider array of ailments — in its stores, Mizuho Securities USA analyst Ann Hynes said in another note. Then it could steer people to them by waiving co-payments for those options and charge \$500 if they went to an ER instead.

BULKING UP FOR AMAZON

Combining with Aetna would help CVS protect its stake in the pharmacy benefits management market in case online retail giant Amazon jumps into prescription drugs. It also would bring in more customers to its stores as Aetna patients fill prescriptions and possibly buy other items, too.

Pharmacy benefits managers and their investors have been sweating a possible Amazon entry into this market for weeks. Amazon has yet to announce any plans for such an expansion, but the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported recently that Amazon has been approved for wholesale pharmacy licenses in at least 12 states.

Amazon would represent a "massive threat" to CVS, Leerink analyst Ana Gupte said. She noted Amazon could take prescriptions away from CVS and is already competing with the drugstore chain over store merchandise it sells outside the pharmacies.

DECENT REGULATORY ODDS

Antitrust regulators have shown a disdain for big business combinations in the same sector.

They sued to stop Aetna's purchase of rival Humana Inc. and the Blue Cross-Blue Shield insurer Anthem Inc.'s deal with Cigna Corp. Those multibillion-dollar acquisitions would have boiled the country's five biggest insurers down to three.

CVS also saw a plan by rival drugstore chain Walgreens Boots Alliance Inc. to buy all of Rite Aid Corp. languish for a couple years before the companies agreed to a much smaller combination.

The businesses of CVS and Aetna have fewer overlapping parts than those other combinations that worried regulators. The companies both manage Medicare prescription drug coverage, and some of that business may have to be sold.

Today in History
By The Associated Press

Today in History

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Today is Monday, Dec. 4, the 338th day of 2017. There are 27 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On Dec. 4, 1942, during World War II, U.S. bombers struck the Italian mainland for the first time with a raid on Naples. President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the dismantling of the Works Progress Administration, which had been created to provide jobs during the Depression.

On this date:

In 1619, a group of settlers from Bristol, England, arrived at Berkeley Hundred in present-day Charles City County, Virginia, where they held a service thanking God for their safe arrival.

In 1783, Gen. George Washington bade farewell to his Continental Army officers at Fraunces Tavern in New York.

In 1867, the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, also known as The Grange, was founded in Washington, D.C., to promote the interests of farmers.

In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson left Washington on a trip to France to attend the Versailles (veh-SY') Peace Conference.

In 1945, the Senate approved U.S. participation in the United Nations by a vote of 65-7.

In 1956, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins gathered for the first and only time for a jam session at Sun Records in Memphis.

In 1965, the United States launched Gemini 7 with Air Force Lt. Col. Frank Borman and Navy Cmdr. James A. Lovell aboard on a two-week mission. (While Gemini 7 was in orbit, its sister ship, Gemini 6A, was launched on Dec. 15 on a one-day mission; the two spacecraft were able to rendezvous within a foot of each other.)

In 1967, actor-comedian Bert Lahr, who played the Cowardly Lion in "The Wizard of Oz," died in New York at age 72.

In 1977, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, ruler of the Central African Empire, crowned himself emperor in a lavish ceremony. (Bokassa was deposed in 1979; he died in 1996 at age 75.)

In 1984, a five-day hijack drama began as four armed men seized a Kuwaiti airliner en route to Pakistan and forced it to land in Tehran, where the hijackers killed American passenger Charles Hegna. (A second American, William Stanford, also was killed during the siege.)

In 1991, Associated Press correspondent Terry Anderson, the longest held of the Western hostages in Lebanon, was released after nearly seven years in captivity. The original Pan American World Airways ceased operations.

In 1996, the Mars Pathfinder lifted off from Cape Canaveral and began speeding toward the red planet on a 310 million-mile odyssey. (It arrived on Mars in July 1997.)

Ten years ago: Defending his credibility, President George W. Bush said Iran was dangerous and needed to be squeezed by international pressure despite a U.S. intelligence finding that Tehran had halted its nuclear weapons program four years earlier, contradicting earlier U.S. assessments. Pimp C (Chad Butler), a rapper with the Texas hip-hop group Underground Kingz, was found dead in a hotel room in West Hollywood, California; he was 33.

Five years ago: Two Australian radio disc jockeys impersonating Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Charles made a prank call to a London hospital and succeeded in getting a nurse to tell them the condition of the Duchess of Cambridge, who was being treated for acute morning sickness; another nurse who had put the call through would be found dead three days later in an apparent suicide.

One year ago: A North Carolina man armed with a rifle fired several shots inside Comet Ping Pong, a Washington, D.C., pizzeria, as he attempted to investigate an online conspiracy theory that prominent Democrats were harboring child sex slaves at the restaurant; no one was hurt, and the man surrendered to police. (He was later sentenced to four years in prison.) Italian voters dealt Premier Matteo Renzi a stinging defeat on his reforms referendum, triggering his resignation. Actor Al Pacino, gospel singer Staples, pianist Martha Argerich, singer-songwriter James Taylor, and Don Henley, Timothy B. Schmidt and Joe Walsh, the surviving members of the Eagles, received Kennedy Center Honors.

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Today's Birthdays: Game show host Wink Martindale is 84. Pop singer Freddy Cannon is 81. Actor-producer Max Baer Jr. is 80. Actress Gemma Jones is 75. Rock musician Bob Mosley (Moby Grape) is 75. Singer-musician Chris Hillman is 73. Musician Terry Woods (The Pogues) is 70. Rock singer Southside Johnny Lyon is 69. Actor Jeff Bridges is 68. Rock musician Gary Rossington (Lynyrd Skynyrd; the Rossington Collins Band) is 66. Actress Patricia Wettig is 66. Actor Tony Todd is 63. Jazz singer Cassandra Wilson is 62. Country musician Brian Prout (Diamond Rio) is 62. Rock musician Bob Griffin (The BoDeans) is 58. Rock singer Vinnie Dombroski (Sponge) is 55. Actress Marisa Tomei is 53. Actress Chelsea Noble is 53. Actor-comedian Fred Armisen is 51. Rapper Jay-Z is 48. Actor Kevin Sussman is 47. Actress-model Tyra Banks is 44. Country singer Lila McCann is 36. Actress Lindsay Felton is 33. Actor Orlando Brown is 30. Actress Scarlett Estevez (TV: "Lucifer") is 10.

Thought for Today: "Beauty is the promise of happiness." — Stendahl (Henri Beyle (ahn-REE' behl)), French author and critic (1783-1842).