

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 16, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 276 ~ 1 of 56



**Chicken Soup**  
for the Soul.

“You must train your intuition - you must trust the small voice inside you which tells you exactly what to say, what to decide.”

-Ingrid Bergman

- 1- Dakota Tree Ad
- 1- Blood Drive Ad
- 1- Help Wanted at Langford's Front Porch
- 1- Carlson Bridal Shower
- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 2- GHS Prom Couples
- 25- Weekly Vikings Roundup
- 25- Kindergarten Screening Ad
- 25- Vold Auctioneer's Ad
- 26- Today in Weather History
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- 28- Today's Weather Almanac
- 29- Daily Devotional
- 30- 2018 Groton Community Events
- 31- News from the Associated Press

Monday, April 16: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center, 7 p.m.

Monday, April 16: Girls Golf at Milbank **postponed**

Monday, April 16: JH Track at Ipswich is **cancelled**

Tuesday, April 17: Track at Webster is **cancelled**

Tuesday, April 17: Elementary Spring Concert, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, April 18: NSU Math Contest, 9 a.m.

Thursday, April 19: JH Track Meet at Groton, 3:30 p.m.

Removal, Grinding, Chipping, Trimming

**605-725-WOOD**

Mason Dinger: 605-216-6098

Trevor Zeck: 605-216-8910

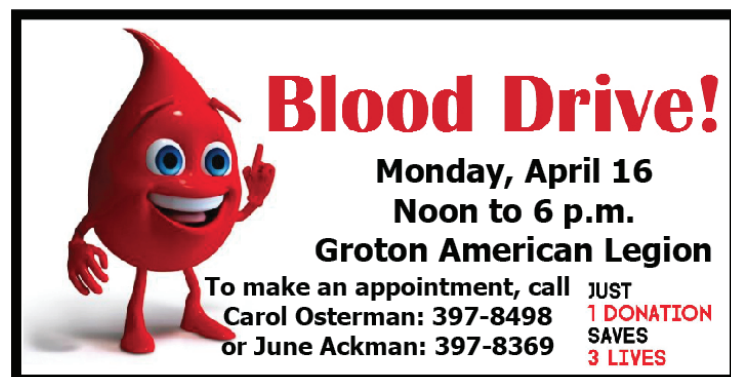


## Help Wanted

Full-time and Part-time cook positions available at The Front Porch in Langford. Day and evening hours available. Apply in person or call 605-493-6570, ask for Suzie. (0411.0418)

## Bridal Shower

A bridal shower for Holly Carlson, bride-to-be of Tyler Candor, will be held Saturday, April 28, 2018, from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton.



**Blood Drive!**

Monday, April 16  
Noon to 6 p.m.  
Groton American Legion

To make an appointment, call  
Carol Osterman: 397-8498  
or June Ackman: 397-8369

JUST  
1 DONATION  
SAVES  
3 LIVES

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

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## GHS Prom Couples



**Junior Class President Taylor Holm,  
escorted by Micah Poor**



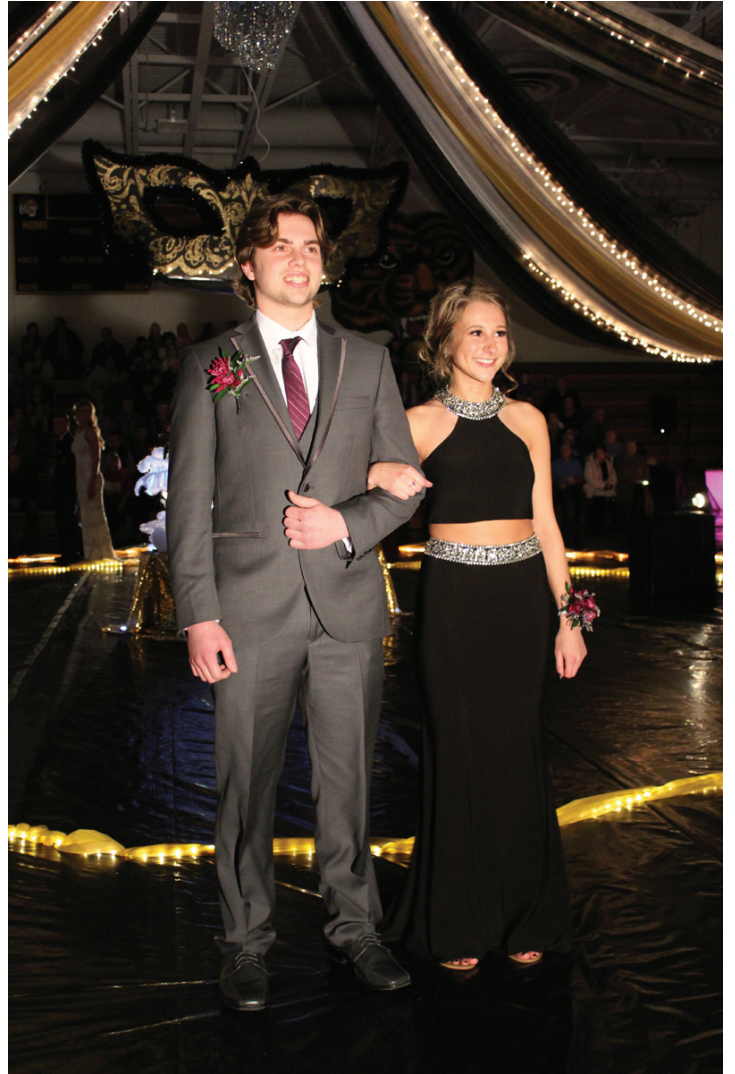
**Senior Class President Alex Stange  
escorted by Wyatt Locke**

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**Cassandra Townsend  
escorted by Isaac Smith**



**Emily Blocker  
escorted by Michael Fetherhuff**

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**Jasmine Schinkel  
escorted by Brandon Lout**



**Gia Gengerke escorted by Hayden Pigors**

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**Sam Menzia escorted by Alex Hvam**



**Kaitlyn Anderson  
escorted by Thomas Cranford**

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**Ashley Garduno escorted by Noah Poor**



**Eliza Wanner escorted by Treyton Diegel**

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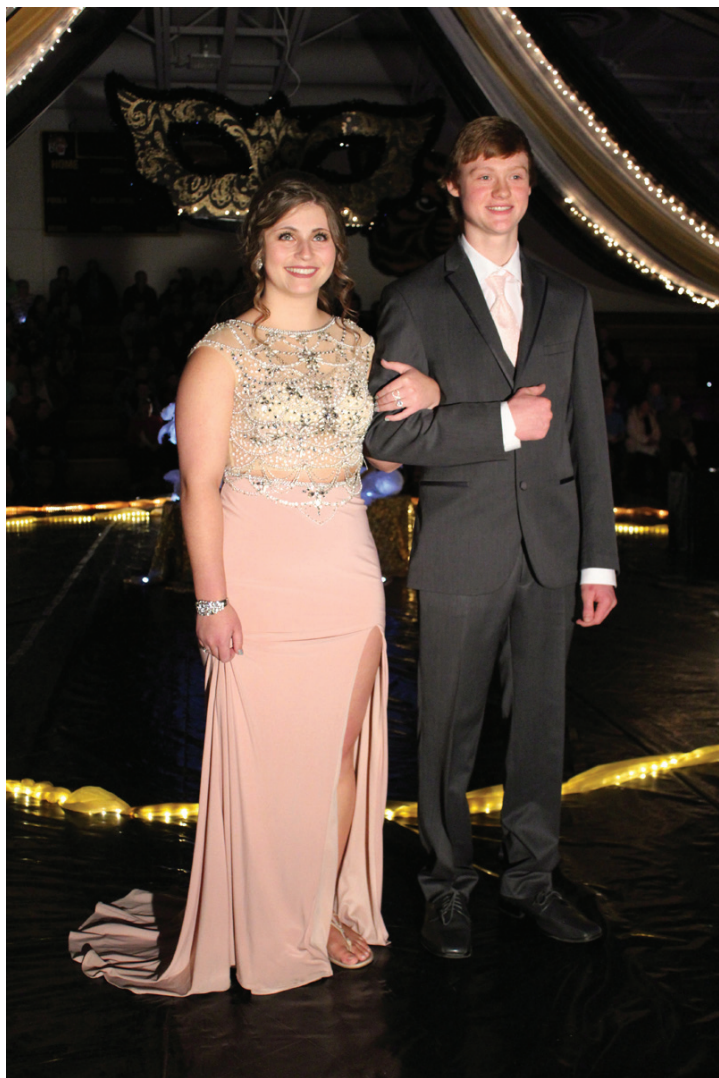
**Claire Davidson escorted by Jackson Oliver**



**Josie LaMee  
escorted by Frankie Wuestewald**

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**Lexi Gustafson**  
escorted by Jamesen Stange



**Harleigh Stange**  
escorted by Jonathan Doeden



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**Kaitlyn Kassube escorted by Clark Gibbs**



**Kylie Kassube escorted by Cole Larson**

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**Lina Suhr escorted by Anthony Sippel**



**Sam Geffre escorted by Cyruss DeHoet**

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**Jillian Barton escorted by Austin Foote**



**Madison Sippel was supposed to have been escorted by Tarran Even**

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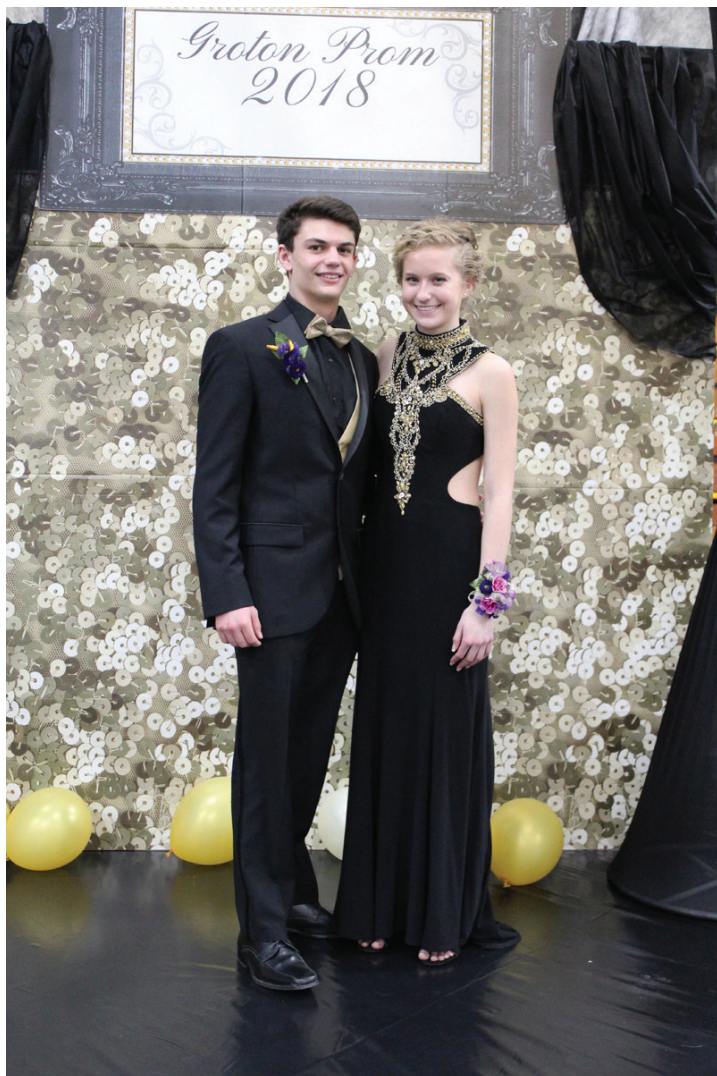
**Nicole Marzahn**  
accompanied by AnneMarie Smith



**Ashley Flihs**  
accompanied by Jenifer Fjelstad

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**Emily Thompson  
escorted by Korbin Blackmun**



**Miranda Hanson escorted by Josh Burgod**

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**Portia Kettering**  
escorted by **Chandler Larson**



**Cassidi Schimmel**  
escorted by **Seric Shabazz**

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**Amanda Kittelson  
escorted by Brock Conner**



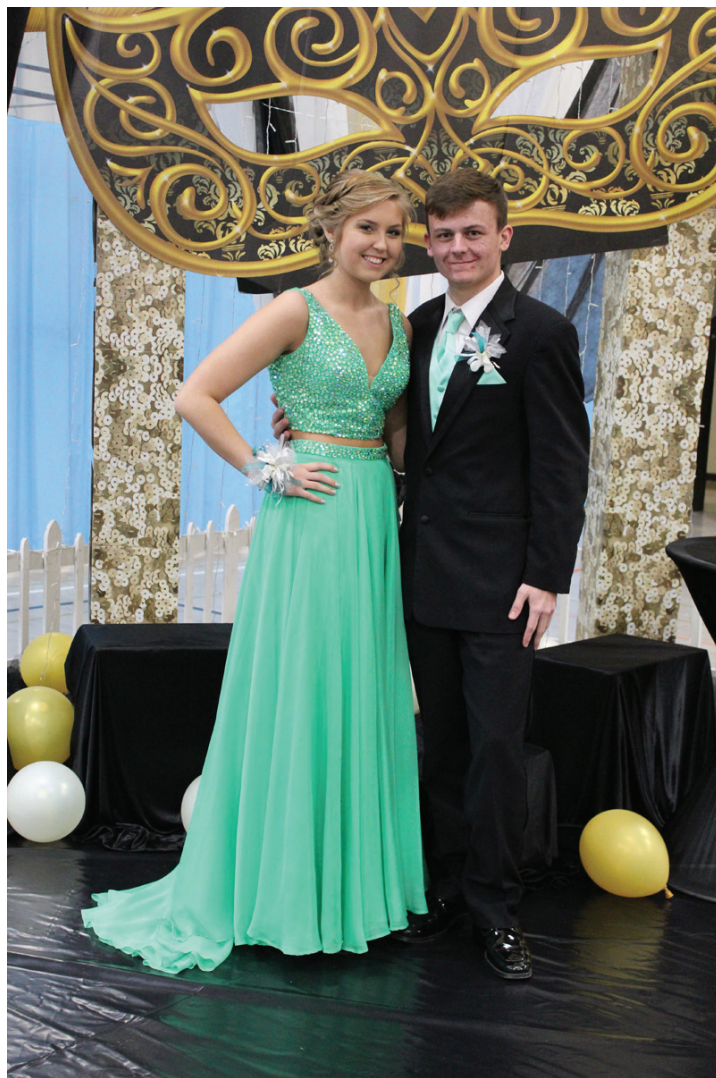
**Alexis Simon escorted by Alex Morris**

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**Shannon Wiedrick  
accompanied by Shyla Larson**



**Brenna Johnson  
escorted by Dalton Gerlach**



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**Maddy Schuelke**  
escorted by **Mitchell Koens**



**Amelie Hartwig**  
escorted by **Anthony Schinkel**

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**Hannah Lewandowski**  
escorted by **Brandyn Anderson**



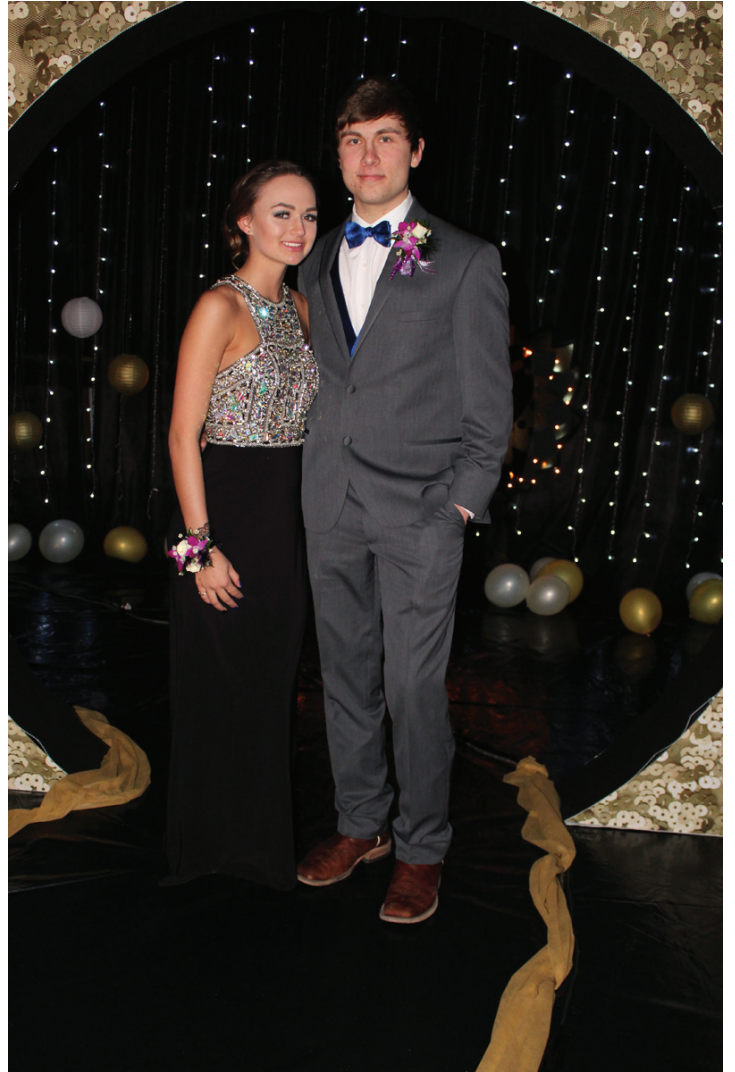
**Madilyn Wright**  
escorted by **Hunter Schaller**

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**Mary Nelson escorted by Cody Blanchard**



**Allison Wilson escorted by Dawson Tunby**

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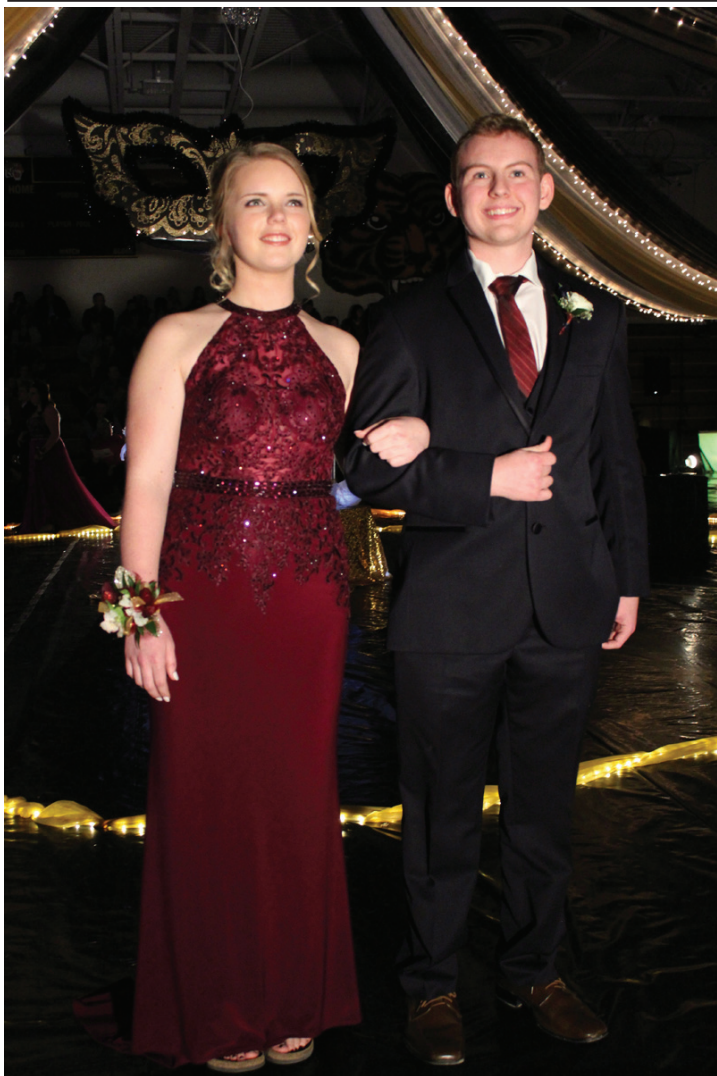
**Tadyn Glover escorted by Brandon Keith**



**Caroline Graf escorted by Doug Dobbins**

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**Erika Herr escorted by Mitchell Thurston**



**Payton Maine escorted by Andrew Rintala**

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**Maggie Crosby escorted by Andrew Artz**



**Jessica Bjerke escorted by Luke Thorson**

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**Jennie Doeden escorted by Brodyn DeHoet**



**Hattie Weismantel escorted by Tylan Glover**



**Lindsey Tietz, Jordan Kjellsen, Becky Erickson and Jodi Sternhagen were the prom supervisors this year.** (Photo seen somewhere on Facebook)

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**Emerald Sturduvant**  
escorted by Lucas Hinman



**Aleaya Worlie**  
accompanied by Emma Donley

Special thanks to Joann Donley for the photos. We had planned to lift the photos from the GDILIVE, but the location we were in had low light; therefore, lacked the quality to lift photos from the video.



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## Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

Last week we covered the Minnesota Vikings' draft needs on offense. Today, let's take a look at the defensive side of the ball.

The Vikings don't have many question marks on a defense that ranked number one in 2017. The only position that doesn't have a returning starter is defensive tackle, and the Vikings filled that void by signing Sheldon Richardson in free agency. However, it doesn't take a crystal ball to realize head coach Mike Zimmer isn't ready to rest on last year's success and will likely target defensive players early and often in the draft.

Here are a few prospects to keep an eye on that will likely be drafted in the first few rounds.

The Vikings don't need a defensive end, with Everson Griffen and Danielle Hunter firmly locked as starters. However, Zimmer can never have enough pass rushers on his defense, and he would love to add another which would allow Griffen and Hunter some rest. A name that is associated with the Vikings is Arden Key, DE, LSU. Key is very similar to Danielle Hunter, and not just because they are both from LSU. Key is an athletic edge rusher who didn't have many sacks in college. He is a raw prospect that Zimmer would love to get his hands on, and will likely be drafted in the third round.

Defensive tackle can be considered a need for the Vikings since Sheldon Richardson was only signed to

### 2018 Groton Area Elementary

#### Kindergarten Roundup (Screening) for children turning

5 on or before September 1, 2018

When: Friday, April 20

Parents of children who will be turning 5 on or before September 1, 2018, in the Groton Area School District are asked to contact Heidi Krueger at the Groton Area Elementary School during school hours at 397-2317 to set up a screening time or to confirm their screening time.

\*Students currently attending Junior Kindergarten will not be screened at this time.

Packets will be sent home shortly with a scheduled time and additional paperwork that will need to be completed.

Kindergarten Roundup will take place at the Groton Area Elementary School. Please check in at the office.



## CONSIGNMENT AUCTION

Sat. April 28, 2018 10:00 am

Trucks-N-Tractors

14069 434th Ave.

Webster, SD 57274

Now taking Consignments  
Tractors, Combines, all types of  
Farm & Haying Equipment, Vehicle,  
Recreational, Sporting,  
& Construction Equipment  
To consign you equipment, call our  
office at 605-448-0048 or

Bill Jensen 605-848-0943

Don Wolter 605-881-6789

Larry Lekness 605-880-5933

Jan Vold 605-228-4250

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a one-year deal. While it's possible the Vikings re-sign him next offseason, the team will still be looking for a defensive tackle who can provide depth in year one and possibly become a starter next season. If either Taven Bryan, DT, Florida or Da'Ron Payne, DT, Alabama fall to the Vikings in the first round, the team will likely pounce. Bryan is a very athletic defensive tackle who some scouts say needs to develop his instinct before he can become an NFL starter. Payne is one of the strongest players in this year's draft and has the ability to come in and contribute right away. He should be a top 15 player in the draft, but some teams will see him as strictly a run-stopping DT which could cause him to slip down the draft.

The Vikings play primarily in the nickel, which means there are only two linebackers on the field to make room for the extra cornerback. The Vikings are fairly set at the position, but they could still look to add depth in the mid rounds of the draft. Lorenzo Carter, LB, Georgia is a name to keep in mind. He is talented enough to be drafted in the first round but could slip into the second. He fits the bill for the Vikings, as a sideline-to-sideline linebacker who was a top recruit coming out of high school. Malik Jefferson, LB, Texas is another player to keep an eye on. He was the top linebacker recruit coming out of high school and should be a first round pick. For some reason, however, scouts are scared away by his apparent lack of production, and he could fall all the way to the second or third round of the draft.

Cornerback is another position that the Vikings will likely draft early. Like pass rushers, Mike Zimmer believes he can never have enough cornerbacks. Xavier Rhodes and Trae Waynes will remain the starters, but the team needs competition at the third corner position. Jaire Alexander, CB, Louisville would likely be the first corner taken in the draft if it wasn't for an injury during his senior season. Mike Hughes, CB, UCF will be drafted in the first round but would be a great selection for the Vikings, as he can play cornerback as well as return kicks.

Safety is not a big need for the Vikings, but if a great prospect falls to the team in the second or third round they might consider it. Two names to keep an eye on here are Ronnie Harrison, S, Alabama and Jessie Bates III, S, Wake Forest.

Make sure to check back next week, where I will have multiple three-round mock drafts for you to peruse. Skol!

If you have any questions or comments, reach out to me by searching for my new Twitter handle (@JordanWrightNFL)

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## Today in Weather History

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Mon Apr 16	Tue Apr 17	Wed Apr 18	Thu Apr 19	Fri Apr 20	Sat Apr 21	Sun Apr 22
44°F	45°F	41°F	47°F	47°F	48°F	50°F
24°F	28°F	28°F	27°F	30°F	31°F	43°F
N 8 MPH	ESE 11 MPH	N 11 MPH Precip 40%	NW 8 MPH	S 7 MPH	E 9 MPH Precip 10%	S 13 MPH

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD  
4/16/2018 5:35 AM

**Today**  
**COLD!**

**Lows: 30-45°**

**More Snow Possible  
Tuesday night –  
Wednesday**

**3 Day Forecast**

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
35-45°	35-45°	40-50°

Published on: 04/16/2018 at 5:43AM

Dry, but cold conditions will continue across the region today with highs in the mid-30s, to the mid-40s. More snow is possible Tuesday night through Wednesday, especially in southeastern South Dakota.

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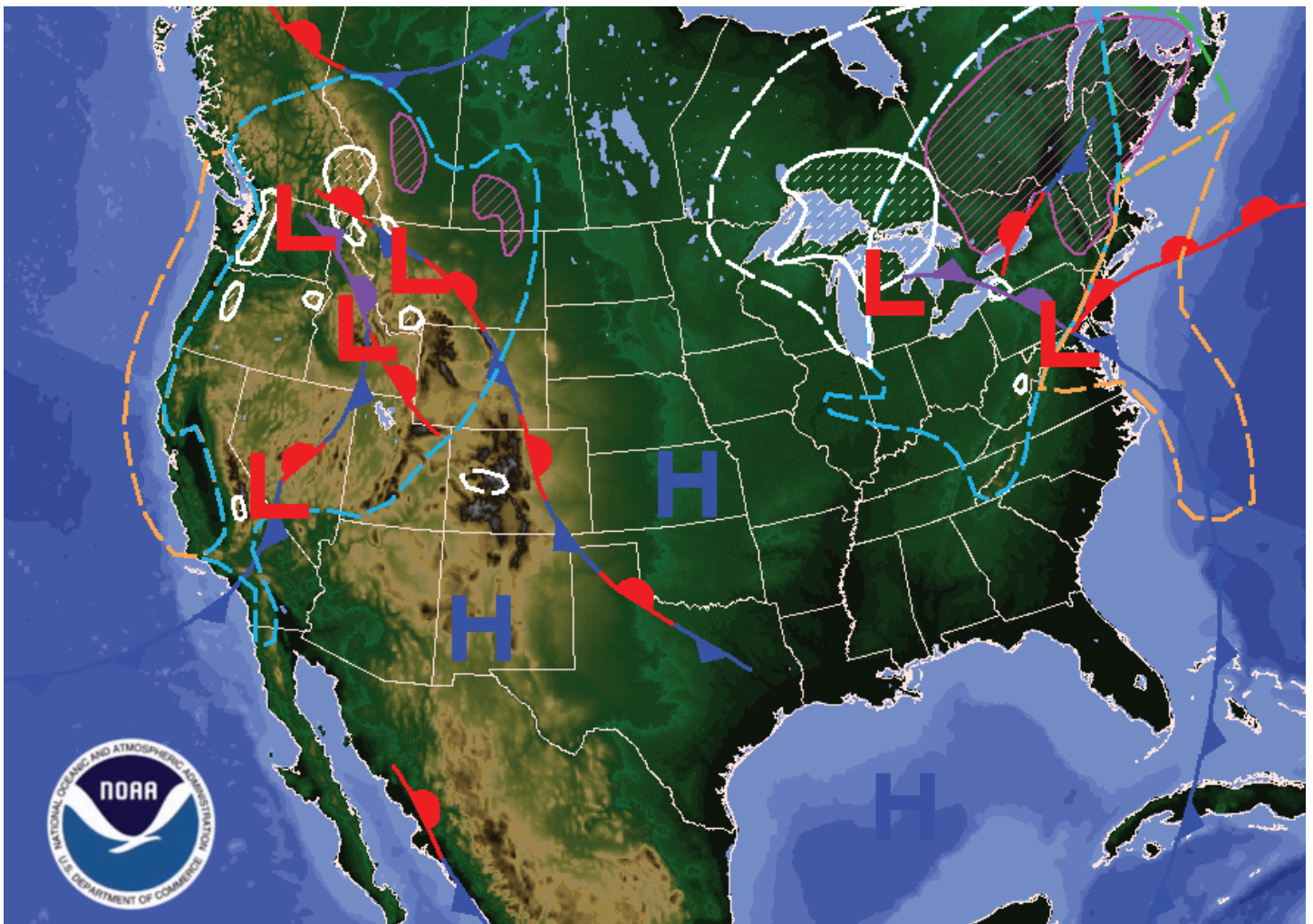
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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 35.7 F at 5:45 PM**  
**Low Outside Temp: 24.2 F at 2:58 AM**  
**Wind Chill:**  
**High Gust: 21.0 Mph at 9:51 AM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 91° in 1913**  
**Record Low: 14° in 1953**  
**Average High: 58°F**  
**Average Low: 32°F**  
**Average Precip in April: 0.80**  
**Precip to date in April: 0.61**  
**Average Precip to date: 2.98**  
**Precip Year to Date: 2.68**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:21 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:44**



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Mon, Apr 16, 2018, issued 4:47 AM EDT  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McReynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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## RELIEF FROM SEARCHING

Many missionaries who travel to visit distant tribes in the most remote villages of the world. They all seem to have a similar experience: when the natives learn and understand that there is only one God, whose story is in the Bible, and whom they can come to know through Jesus Christ, they lose their fear of "their gods." Most of them have many different gods whom they do not know nor understand - only fear. So, they live lives filled with fear - afraid that they will displease the god they have created who may punish or kill them, their families or tribe at any time. So, they live lives that are haunted, not helped, by their beliefs.

How different is the God of the Bible whom we can come to know, love and understand? Our God has the heart of a loving Father. The Psalmist described Him in wonderful, gracious terms when he wrote, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear - stand in awe of - Him."

He has compassion on us when we are weak and need His strength to make it through difficult days and long nights. He has compassion on us when we hurt and need His hope and healing. He has compassion on us when we have failed Him and need His forgiveness.

One day two fathers were talking. "If your son was my son, I would never speak to him again for what he's done to you." "Yes," replied the father who was filled with grief, "but he's not. He's my son and I'll always love him." How like our compassionate Heavenly Father.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for Your compassion which we so desperately need - yet can never earn nor deserve. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 103:13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;

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## 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)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 3/24/2018 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 4/13/2018 Elementary School Carnival, 5 p.m.
- 5/5/2018 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2018 Historic Trinity Church Pump Organ Concert.
- 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)
- 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party
  
- 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

### South Dakota limits voters' ability to put issues on ballot

By DANA FERGUSON, Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The 2016 election was the tipping point.

South Dakota voters passed a sweeping campaign finance and ethics law, and legislators quickly struck it down.

They have been chipping away at voters' ability to bring issues to the ballot ever since.

A year after Initiated Measure 22's demise, the Legislature passed a dozen bills tightening the reins on the initiative and referendum process.

Some changes are small, like requiring a uniform font size for ballot measure petitions. But all told, the onslaught of bills puts South Dakota in a league of its own in terms of restricting direct democracy.

"South Dakota was a standout," said Wendy Underhill, an expert in initiative and referendum processes at the National Conference of State Legislatures. "There's been more action in South Dakota than in other states."

The Argus Leader reports that now, direct democracy advocates are scrambling to undo the laws that do the most damage before they're left fighting under the new constraints imposed on the process.

Discussions over restrictions to initiative and referendum have cropped up from the time South Dakota became the first in the nation to implement the process in 1889.

But they came to a head again after voters approved IM 22.

"(Voters) were hoodwinked by scam artists who grossly misrepresented these proposed measures," Gov. Dennis Daugaard said of the law during his budget address in December of 2016.

He pointed to a provision of the law that would've established a voucher system for funding political campaigns and said South Dakotans would prefer to spend their taxpayer dollars to boost to K-12 education, health care and state employees.

From there, the Legislature made quick work of striking IM 22 in 2017. All the while opponents crowded the galleries at the Statehouse and held demonstrations, including one that involved a plane towing a banner of opposition around the Capitol building.

Lawmakers tried to go one step further, mulling an out-of-state funding ban for ballot measure campaigns. But they couldn't move forward with the lingering political pressure from voters still sore over the ethics law repeal.

So they put off the conversations about reform and scheduled a summer study on the initiative and referendum process.

A panel of lawmakers, campaign leaders, constitutional officers and political science experts met last summer and mulled over changes to the process.

And in the end, they came out with a handful of proposals ranging from requiring a uniform petition and font size to increasing the threshold of support needed to alter the state's Constitution on the ballot.

"There was really a genuine effort to bring bills that were ideas we could all agree upon," said Sen. Jim Bolin, R-Canton, who was a member of the task force. "And we saw that many of those (bills) without the support of the task force were dropped."

For the most part, the task force's bills found bipartisan support in the Statehouse.

But then other lawmakers began filing bills that the task force hadn't OK-ed.

The proposals filed outside the task force ranged from asking voters to opt out of their ability to bring constitutional amendments to the ballot, to requiring petition signatures from a broader geographic area, to asking those who circulate petitions to submit affidavits listing information about their background.

The changes were crucial in blocking foreign influence on South Dakota laws, supporters said.

"The goal is if we're going to ask people to be residents to circulate, we need to make sure enforce that," House Speaker Mark Mickelson, R-Sioux Falls, said. "We've seen many occasions where out-of-state



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groups, many times liberal groups, use that process to promote ideas that don't fit our culture."

Mickelson circulated two ballot measures in 2017 and said he frequently witnessed non-residents circulating petitions, which violates state law. He said he wouldn't have had a problem operating under the new requirements with his teams of dozens of volunteers.

Daugaard agreed that the new requirements wouldn't be significant for those aiming to bring policy questions to the ballot.

"If you're organized enough to recruit 70 people, you should be organized enough to aggregate five or six items of information on each of them," Daugaard told reporters last month. "I don't see that as very burdensome."

But opponents said the measures would block grassroots groups from bringing initiatives to the ballot.

Direct democracy advocates and those who've led ballot measure campaigns in the past said the Legislature's "scattershot" approach would raise the bar for those aiming to bring questions to the ballot in the future.

And while lawmakers passed the bills with a hope of blocking out foreign influence, circulators said they anticipated it would hurt grassroots groups most.

"It's not that there's any one bill this year that's a disaster that will absolutely kill initiatives and referendums," Cory Heidelberger, a Democratic state Senate candidate and former circulator said. "It's that there are so many of them that continue to complicate the process and that crowd grassroots organizers out."

Former state Rep. Steve Hickey, who helped direct an effort to cap interest rates on payday lenders in South Dakota in 2016, said he was frustrated to see the Republican supermajority in the Statehouse aim to make it harder for South Dakotans to bring policy questions to the ballot.

"All the hurdles they sought this year don't make it harder for the out-of-staters who have gobs of money to pay for signatures in far larger states than ours," the Sioux Falls Republican said. "It only makes it harder on South Dakota citizens."

Joe Kirby, who led an unsuccessful campaign to bring a proposal implementing non-partisan primary elections to the November ballot, said it would "pretty much eliminate the volunteer petition drive."

More: 'I'm going to do it myself': Women see path for state's first female-majority Legislature

Compared to other states, South Dakota took a unique approach to addressing perceived problems with the initiative and referendum process, national experts said.

While 13 states considered more than 45 bills aimed at the initiative and referendum process in the last year, South Dakota seemed to lead the charge, said Kellie Dupree. Dupree is the director of partnerships and training at the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center, a Washington, D.C.-based group that supports progressive ballot initiatives.

"While South Dakota is ground zero for what we're seeing in these attacks, it's part of a coordinated attack," Dupree said, pointing to calls from a Republican group of secretaries of state to defeat liberal ballot initiatives.

For now, opponents of South Dakota's new laws say they're not sure what they'll do.

They've mulled referring a couple of the laws back to the voters or challenging them in court. But those options come with hefty price tags. And it takes time to get the petitions needed to bring the laws to the ballot.

"It's hard to keep up with a scattershot assault," Heidelberger said. "It's a lot easier when it's a big missile like the repeal of IM 22 last year."

And the set of smaller changes also come with less voter outrage, he said.

Heidelberger and Sioux Falls City Councilor Theresa Stehly said they'd consider a broader initiative in 2020 that would aim to gut the state's laws dealing with initiative and referendum restrictions.

But bringing that proposal would require them to test the constraints of the new laws.

"This is how the elephant eats us, one bite at a time," Heidelberger said. "They don't just kill initiative and referendum because we won't stand for it, but they do a little thing here, a little thing there, knowing that it's really hard for the people to do a referendum drive on 12 different bills."

\_\_\_ Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

## SD police provide anti-trafficking training in Philippines

By TIFFANY TAN, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — While Rapid City was covered in nearly a foot of snow in March, three local law enforcement officers were battling the tropical heat as they conducted training halfway around the world.

The Rapid City Journal reports that the idea for the trip hit Pennington County Sheriff's Deputy Jesse Fagerland one Sunday last summer, as he watched a film on human trafficking during a church service.

Fagerland, 35, a sheriff's office investigator for 12 years, felt a calling to share his skills and knowledge outside his country. The film propelled him to make something happen.

He proposed a mission trip to his pastor, the Rev. Bryan Faltynski of the Common Ground Church in Rapid City, who serves also as chaplain at the sheriff's office. The men invited other law enforcement officers within their congregation, and two signed up: John Olson, head of the Rapid City Police Department's Criminal Investigation Division, and Jamin Hartland, school resource deputy in the Douglas School District.

They reached out to international organizations that could help them set up the trip. After looking into service opportunities in Cambodia and Taiwan, they finally found something in the Philippines. They then raised funds to cover the nearly \$2,000 that the weeklong trip would cost each person.

On March 11, the four men boarded a plane in Denver that would take them to the other side of the world.

After traveling for nearly 22 hours, including a layover in Narita, Japan, they arrived in the Philippine capital of Manila. There, they were met by Vanesa Perrigo, another Common Ground Church member who flew back to her home country to serve as their language and culture translator.

Over two days, at the Bright Lights Learning Center located about 20 miles west of Manila, the group conducted training on self-defense, basic crime investigation and combatting human trafficking. About 100 Filipinos participated, including students of criminology, teachers and high school students.

Hefziba Lagman, a 17-year-old participant, said the self-defense and anti-human trafficking training taught her to be more aware of the behavior of people around her, especially when she's walking on the streets or taking public transportation.

"Don't always be looking at your cellphone. Look around you," said Lagman, a 10th-grader at Bright Lights, a school in the municipality of Cainta that offers free education to underprivileged youth with the help of donations from foreign countries.

Lagman said she learned also to push back against bullying by saying, "No."

The training had its light-hearted moments, too.

During the crime investigation class, the officers set up a mock crime scene with Faltynski playing the role of a homicide victim. To simulate blood, they poured some banana ketchup — a local version of tomato ketchup — over Faltynski as he lay on the floor.

"We put fingerprints and footprints around," Olson said in an interview a few days after the group's return to Rapid City, "then the kids had to come into the class and they had to tell us what parts of the crime scene they saw."

The thick, sweet, red sauce attracted flies, but the pastor had to lie still as the criminology students practiced finding clues to the supposed crime.

The four Rapid City men got a chance to play basketball with local youth — and apparently got badly beaten — as they interacted with Filipinos on a more personal level. They also visited some local homes.

Olson said the group wanted to show that the trip wasn't about "just a bunch of benevolent, white cops coming in to try and help people from the Philippines."

They wanted to offer mentoring, and at the same time learn from people of another country and culture.

"Really all of us are just children of Christ," Olson added. "We just happen to be half a world apart."

The pastor, citing a common Filipino stereotype of Americans as more powerful and on a higher social level, said he and the officers tried to bridge that perceived distance. "We had to quickly learn how to lower ourselves and lift other people up, so that we met on the same level," Faltynski said.

The men had a chance also to visit Camp Crame, the Philippine National Police headquarters, and met an officer with its Internet Crimes Against Children unit. They offered Filipino police the technical assis-

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tance of the ICAC unit in Rapid City, as well as advisory help from the Rapid City Police Department and Pennington County Sheriff's Office.

"We really admire the work they are currently doing in Manila," Olson said. "We hope someday to do some training together."

The officers had such a memorable experience in the Philippines that they're already talking about a similar trip back. But they don't yet know when or how it will happen.

Fagerland, for his part, has already started saving money so he can take his wife and three children along the next time. Fagerland believes experiencing life in a developing country will enable him and his family members to grow beyond the comfort of the lives they know.

He has also started taking a basic course in the Filipino language, and one morning last week was practicing how to say "Good morning."

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

## Spring storm moves east after blanketing central US in snow

By JEFF BAENEN and RICK CALLAHAN, Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minnesota residents slogged through a mid-April storm Sunday that dumped 2 feet (half a meter) of snow on parts of the Upper Midwest, coated roads with ice and battered areas farther south with powerful winds and tornadoes before plowing toward the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic U.S.

The storm system prompted Enbridge Energy to temporarily shutter twin oil and gas pipelines in Michigan that may have been recently damaged by a ship anchor strike.

The Line 5 pipelines were temporarily shuttered Sunday afternoon due to a power outage at Enbridge's terminal in Superior, Wisconsin, Enbridge spokesman Ryan Duffy told The Detroit News. Enbridge decided to shut down the twin pipelines until weather conditions improve in the Straits of Mackinac, which links Lake Huron and Lake Michigan, Duffy said.

At least four deaths were blamed on the weather.

At Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, where more than 13 inches (33 centimeters) of snow had fallen, 230 flights were canceled Sunday. Two runways were open, but winds were still strong and planes were being de-iced, spokesman Patrick Hogan said. On Saturday, the storm caused the cancellation of nearly 470 flights at the airport.

The wintry grip on the Twin Cities continued to keep the boys of summer off the diamond, forcing the postponement of the third straight Minnesota Twins-Chicago White Sox game. The New Yankees and the Tigers were rained out Saturday in Detroit and had planned to play a doubleheader on Sunday, but those games also were postponed. The Los Angeles Angels at Kansas City Royals, Atlanta Braves at Chicago Cubs and Toronto Blue Jays at Cleveland Indians games also were rained out Sunday.

The prolonged wintry weather is "starting to beat everybody down," said Erik Ordal, who lives in downtown Minneapolis and was taking his 3-month-old golden retriever puppy, Dakota, out for a walk in the snow. Ordal, who grew up in South Dakota, said he is used to the cold, snowy weather "but I'm certainly ready for some warmth."

Two northeastern Wisconsin communities, Tigerton and Big Falls, received more than 2 feet (60 centimeters) of snow over the weekend, the National Weather Service in Green Bay reported. Parts of the state that were already blanketed were getting a second helping of snow on Sunday. The heavy snow caused part of a hotel roof to collapse over a pool at a hotel in Ashwaubenon, which is next to Green Bay, but no one was in the pool area at the time and no one was hurt.

The storm finally let up in South Dakota, allowing the airport in the state's largest city, Sioux Falls, to reopen for the first time since Thursday. Interstates 90 and 29 in parts of eastern South Dakota also reopened, and no-travel advisories were lifted across the state border in southwestern Minnesota.

In Michigan, freezing rain that began falling overnight had left roads treacherous and cut power to hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses by midday Sunday even as heavy snow was forecast to

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dump a foot or more of snow on parts of the state's Upper Peninsula by early Monday.

In North Carolina, authorities declared a local state of emergency in the city of Greensboro after an apparent tornado caused damage Sunday afternoon in several locations. Greensboro police said in a tweet that there also was one storm-related fatality but they did not elaborate. Media reports prior to the police tweet said high winds damaged at least seven homes, destroyed a mobile classroom at an elementary school, and toppled trees and power lines.

To the south, officials in Lexington County, South Carolina, said several buildings were damaged and toppled trees were blocking roads, but no injuries were reported.

Tens of thousands of homes and businesses in the Carolinas were without power Sunday.

In addition to the Greensboro fatality, three other deaths were blamed on the weather.

A sleeping 2-year-old girl in Louisiana was killed when a tree fell on her family's recreational vehicle early Saturday. A Wisconsin woman was killed when she lost control of her minivan on slick roads and veered into an oncoming SUV. And an Idaho truck driver was killed when his semitrailer struck a semi in western Nebraska that had been stranded on a highway by the bad weather.

In Arkansas, a tornado ripped through the tiny Ozark Mountain town of Mountainburg on Friday, injuring at least four people. In Texas, hail the size of hen eggs fell south of Dallas, according to meteorologist Patricia Sanchez.

And another round of snow is possible midweek in the Upper Midwest, said meteorologist Eric Ahasic at the National Weather Service in Chanhassen, Minnesota.

"It's not going to be as much snow as this one, thankfully," Ahasic said.

Callahan reported from Indianapolis.

## Trolley rental business to launch in Aberdeen

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The streets of Aberdeen can expect to see the return of a century-old transit service as a business owner plans to launch a private trolley rental company in the area.

Hunting lodge owner Dave Usselman bought his fourth used trolley from the city of Deadwood last month, the Aberdeen American News reported. Now, he's getting ready to turn the trolleys into a full-service rental business in Aberdeen called Big Star Trolley Co.

Usselman's primary business, Half Cocked Hunting Lodge, led him to buy the trolleys in the first place. He opened the hunting lodge near Mina around 2000.

"That business has really paved the road for me to buy these trolleys," he said. "I was just going to buy them for hunters. All of this is just a bonus."

Usselman saw the trolleys' potential after he parked one in Aberdeen earlier this year, drawing attention and interest.

He envisions marketing the trolleys for food tours, weddings, group parties and even road trips.

Since then, he's found five drivers and he's obtained an alcohol license and insurance. There's still a few loose ends, including speaking with the city's police about maximum capacity standards and whether underage people can be present on a trolley if others are consuming alcohol.

Usselman plans to price the trolley rentals for events without alcohol at \$150 per hour for the first two hours and \$100 per hour after that. He'll increase prices for events with alcohol since his license mandates that he provides the beverages.

He plans to be in operation within the next month.

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

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## Sioux Falls airport traffic spikes in 2017, may drop in 2018

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls' airport saw record traffic in 2017 for the seventh consecutive year, but this year could see a drop.

The Sioux Falls Regional Airport had more than a million passengers go through the airport last year, the Argus Leader reported. The spike is largely due to Frontier competing with Allegiant in adding direct flights to Las Vegas, said Dan Letellier, the airport's executive director.

"We had more seats, and especially to Las Vegas, those were pretty low fares between those carriers trying to fill their seats up," he said. "That boosted our numbers quite a bit last year."

Frontier added four flights to Las Vegas each week last summer, nearly doubling the number of flights out of Sioux Falls. The two carriers had also been competing for customers with price specials.

But Frontier recently decided to discontinue its direct flights between Sioux Falls and Las Vegas after its surge in flights last summer.

"People love to go to Vegas, but that's a lot of seats to Vegas for our size of community," Letellier said.

Letellier expects the loss of additional flights to result in an up to 12 percent decrease in seats this year, lowering the passenger totals for 2018.

"It'll be a little tougher this year to make it eight years in a row," he said. "When you lose 10-12 percent of your available seats in the summer months, that's hard to recover from."

Frontier flights out of Sioux Falls began April 11 this year, with four direct flights a week to Denver.

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

## Clicking 'checkout' could cost more after Supreme Court case

By JESSICA GRESKO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sales Tax: \$0.

Online shoppers have gotten used to seeing that line on checkout screens before they click "purchase." But a case before the Supreme Court could change that.

At issue is a rule stemming from two, decades-old Supreme Court cases: If a business is shipping to a state where it doesn't have an office, warehouse or other physical presence, it doesn't have to collect the state's sales tax.

That means large retailers such as Apple, Macy's, Target and Walmart, which have brick-and-mortar stores nationwide, generally collect sales tax from customers who buy from them online. But other online sellers, from 1-800 Contacts to home goods site Wayfair, can often sidestep charging the tax.

More than 40 states are asking the Supreme Court to reconsider that rule in a case being argued Tuesday. They say they're losing out on "billions of dollars in tax revenue each year, requiring cuts to critical government programs" and that their losses compound as online shopping grows. But small businesses that sell online say the complexity and expense of collecting taxes nationwide could drive them out of business.

Large retailers want all businesses to "be playing by the same set of rules," said Deborah White, the president of the litigation arm of the Retail Industry Leaders Association, which represents more than 70 of America's largest retailers.

For years, the issue of whether out-of-state sellers should collect sales tax had to do mostly with one company: Amazon.com. The online giant is said to account for more than 40 percent of U.S. online retail sales. But as Amazon has grown, dotting the country with warehouses, it has had to charge sales tax in more and more places.

President Donald Trump has slammed the company, accusing it of paying "little or no taxes" to state and local governments. But since 2017, Amazon has been collecting sales tax in every state that charges it. Third-party sellers that use Amazon to sell products make their own tax collection decisions, however.

The case now before the Supreme Court could affect those third-party Amazon sellers and many other sellers that don't collect taxes in all states — sellers such as jewelry website Blue Nile, pet products site Chewy.com, clothing retailer L.L. Bean, electronics retailer Newegg and internet retailer Overstock.com.

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Sellers on eBay and Etsy, which provide platforms for smaller sellers, also don't collect sales tax nationwide.

States generally require consumers who weren't charged sales tax on a purchase to pay it themselves, often through self-reporting on their income tax returns. But states have found that only about 1 percent to 2 percent actually pay.

States would capture more of that tax if out-of-state sellers had to collect it, and states say software has made sales tax collection simple.

Out-of-state sellers disagree, calling it costly and extraordinarily complex, with tax rates and rules that vary not only by state but also by city and county. For example, in Illinois, Snickers are taxed at a higher rate than Twix because foods containing flour don't count as candy. Sellers say free or inexpensive software isn't accurate, more sophisticated software is expensive and that collecting tax nationwide would also subject them to potentially costly audits.

"For small businesses on tight margins, these costs are going to be fatal in many cases," said Andy Pincus, who filed a brief on behalf of eBay and small businesses that use its platform.

The case now before the Supreme Court involves South Dakota, which has no income tax and relies heavily on sales tax for revenue. South Dakota's governor has said the state loses out on an estimated \$50 million a year in sales tax that doesn't get collected by out-of-state sellers.

In 2016 the state passed a law requiring those sellers to collect taxes on sales into the state, a law challenging the Supreme Court precedents. The state, conceding it could win only if the Supreme Court reverses course, has lost in lower courts.

South Dakota says the high court's previous decisions don't reflect today's world. The court first adopted its physical presence rule on sales tax collection in a 1967 case dealing with a catalog retailer. At the time, the court was concerned in part about the burden collecting sales tax would place on the catalog company. The court reaffirmed that ruling in 1992.

It's unclear how the justices might align on the question this time. But three justices — Neil Gorsuch, Clarence Thomas and Anthony Kennedy — have suggested a willingness to rethink those decisions. Kennedy has written that the 1992 case was "questionable even when decided" and "now harms states to a degree far greater than could have been anticipated earlier."

"Although online businesses may not have a physical presence in some states, the Web has, in many ways, brought the average American closer to most major retailers," he wrote in suggesting the days of inconsistent sales tax collection may be numbered. "A connection to a shopper's favorite store is a click away regardless of how close or far the nearest storefront."

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

## Comey speculates Russians may have damaging info on Trump

By CATHERINE LUCEY and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former FBI Director James Comey says he thinks it's possible the Russians have compromising information on President Donald Trump, that there is "some evidence of obstruction of justice" in the president's actions and that Trump is "morally unfit" for office.

Comey's comments in an ABC News interview broadcast Sunday were almost certain to escalate his war of words with the president and further erode a relationship marked by open hostility and name-calling.

Trump adviser Kellyanne Conway criticized Comey on Monday, accusing him of peddling a "revisionist version of history" and sinking into the "gutter" with petty comments about the size of Trump's hands and the length of his tie. "He looked a little shaky," she offered on ABC's "Good Morning America."

Hours before the interview was shown, the president, who fired Comey last year, unleashed a Twitter outburst that labeled Comey "slippery," suggested he should be put in jail and branded him "the WORST FBI Director in history, by far!"

Comey's televised remarks, coupled with the release of his forthcoming book, offer his version of events surrounding his firing and the investigations into Russian election meddling and Hillary Clinton's email prac-

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tices. Several of the episodes he describes in detail, including a private conversation about former White House national security adviser Michael Flynn, are central to special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation and his recollections are presumably valuable for prosecutors examining whether the president's actions constitute obstruction of justice.

The FBI director, who until his firing last May led an investigation into possible ties between Russia and the Trump campaign, acknowledged that it was "stunning" to think that Russia could have damaging information about an American president. But he said that in Trump's case, he could not discount the possibility that the president had been compromised.

"These are more words I never thought I'd utter about a president of the United States, but it's possible," Comey told ABC News' chief anchor George Stephanopoulos.

He also answered "possibly" when asked if the president was attempting to obstruct justice when he cleared the Oval Office of other officials last February before encouraging him to close the investigation into Flynn, who by that point was suspected of lying to the FBI about his Russian contacts. The retired general pleaded guilty last December and is now cooperating with Mueller's investigation.

Comey also said he believed that Trump was "morally unfit" to be president and that he treated women like "pieces of meat."

"A person who sees moral equivalence in Charlottesville, who talks about and treats women like they're pieces of meat, who lies constantly about matters big and small and insists the American people believe it — that person's not fit to be president of the United States, on moral grounds," Comey said.

Trump on Sunday rejected Comey's assertion that Trump had sought his loyalty at a January 2017 dinner, saying "I hardly even knew this guy. Just another of his many lies." He also suggested Comey should be imprisoned, saying, "how come he gave up Classified Information (jail), why did he lie to Congress (jail)." There is no indication Comey is under investigation for doing either.

Asked if the president wanted the Justice Department to investigate Comey, White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Sunday on ABC's "This Week" that she was not aware of a specific request. But, she said, "if they feel there was any wrongdoing, they should certainly look into that just as they do on a number of other topics."

But the president's attacks on Comey began even before the interview aired.

He seized on an excerpt shown Saturday in which Comey said his belief that Clinton would beat Trump in the 2016 presidential election was probably a factor in his decision to disclose the investigation into her emails. Comey, Trump tweeted, "was making decisions based on the fact that he thought she was going to win, and he wanted a job. Slimeball!"

That argument was startling given that Comey's handling of the email investigation, including his disclosure shortly before the election that the FBI had reopened its probe, enraged Democrats. After Clinton's loss, many Democrats blamed Comey, and Clinton herself has said it hurt her election prospects.

Comey again defended his actions, telling ABC that he made what he thought was the best decision at the time. Comey said he did not remember "consciously thinking" about the election results as he decided to disclose that the FBI had reopened its investigation into candidate Clinton's email use. But, he acknowledged, "I was operating in a world where Hillary Clinton was going to beat Donald Trump, and so I'm sure that it was a factor."

"I don't remember spelling it out," he added, "but it had to have been that she's going to be elected president and if I hide this from the American people, she'll be illegitimate the moment she's elected, the moment this comes out."

Former Attorney General Loretta Lynch pushed back against Comey's criticism in the book that, early in the Clinton email inquiry, she had instructed him to refer to it as a "matter" rather than an "investigation." In a statement Sunday, Lynch said she was simply following longstanding Justice Department protocol against confirming or denying the existence of an investigation.

Trump fired Comey in May 2017, setting off a scramble at the Justice Department that led to the appointment of Mueller as special counsel overseeing the Russia investigation. Mueller's probe has expanded to include whether Trump obstructed justice by firing Comey. So far, 19 people — including Flynn and

Trump's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort —have been charged in the investigation. Flynn and two of the president's campaign aides, Rick Gates and George Papadopoulos, have pleaded guilty and are cooperating with Mueller.

Asked whether he believed Trump ought to be impeached, Comey replied, "I hope not because I think impeaching and removing Donald Trump from office would let the American people off the hook and have something happen indirectly that I believe they're duty bound to do directly. People in this country need to stand up and go to the voting booth and vote their values."

He added: "But you cannot have, as president of the United States, someone who does not reflect the values that I believe Republicans treasure and Democrats treasure and Independents treasure. That is the core of this country. That's our foundation. And so impeachment, in a way, would short circuit that."

## **7 inmates dead, 17 injured in South Carolina prison fighting**

**By MEG KINNARD, Associated Press**

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Seven inmates have been killed and at least 17 others seriously injured amid fighting between prisoners inside a maximum security prison in South Carolina.

Prisons spokesman Jeff Taillon announced the grim outcome after State Law Enforcement Division agents helped secure Lee Correctional Institution around 3 a.m. Monday.

Taillon said no officers were wounded after multiple inmate fights broke out at 7:15 p.m. Sunday. He said 17 of the injured required medical attention outside the prison.

The South Carolina Department of Corrections tweeted that it involved multiple inmate-on-inmate altercations in three housing units.

Lee County Fire/Rescue said ambulances from multiple jurisdictions lined up outside to tend to the wounded. The local coroner's office also responded.

The maximum-security facility in Bishopville houses about 1,500 inmates, some of South Carolina's most violent and longest-serving offenders. Two officers were stabbed in a 2015 fight. One inmate killed another in February.

## **Feds: Increase medication-based treatment for opioids**

**By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Deep within President Donald Trump's plan to combat opioid abuse, overshadowed by his call for the death penalty for some drug traffickers, is a push to expand the use of medication to treat addiction.

It's a rare instance in which Trump isn't trying roll back Obama administration policies, and where fractious Republicans and Democrats in Congress have come together.

Trump declared last month that "we're making medically assisted treatment more available and affordable," even as Congress was working to approve \$1 billion for a new treatment grant program for opioids as part of the massive spending bill to keep the government running.

Not to offer such treatment for opioid addiction is like "trying to treat an infection without antibiotics," new Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar told the National Governors Association earlier this year.

Experts have long argued that medication-assisted treatment should be the standard of care for people addicted to heroin and other opioid drugs. But acceptance lags. Cost is a barrier, as are government regulations. Some of the treatment drugs are opioids themselves and there's no consensus on how long patients should remain in treatment.

In its final year, the Obama administration pushed through Congress \$1 billion for opioid crisis grants to states. Of that, \$500 million was to be released last year and the other \$500 million this year. States had to show that their opioid programs are based on clinical evidence, so medication-assisted treatment got a big boost.

The 2018 spending bill provides another \$1 billion.



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"The government is talking about treatment and medication-assisted treatment in a way that the government has never done before," said Tom Hill, vice president of addiction and recovery at the National Council for Behavioral Health, which advocates for mental health and addiction treatment.

Overdose deaths from heroin, synthetics like fentanyl, and prescription painkillers, reached 42,000 in 2016, according to the latest statistics.

"This is being addressed as the illness that it is," said Elinore McCance-Katz, assistant secretary of HHS for mental health and substance abuse. "Most definitely the government is acknowledging the disease of addiction as it pertains to opioids — and other substances as well — but opioids of course are an emergency."

Grants are awarded to states based on a variety of factors, including overdose deaths and the number of people who can't find treatment.

Vermont has been hard hit by the addiction epidemic and is one of the states that have gotten federal money for medication-assisted treatment. Its central goal is to improve access, according to a report on grant recipients released by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

In Massachusetts, the plan is aimed in part on pregnant women and new mothers. Indiana wants to focus on rural residents.

A study looking at New England by the nonprofit Institute for Clinical and Economic Review found that every dollar invested in medication treatment would return about \$1.80 in savings, when factoring in society's costs from lost productivity and crime.

One Vermont physician, Dr. Deborah Richter, says medications have helped her patients, especially when combined with counseling.

"People got back to what they were before the addiction seized them," she said.

As a doctor, "it was on a personal level so rewarding to save other mothers' children."

Skeptics of the government emphasis on medication-assisted treatment say it's not a cure-all.

Jonathan Goyer, manager of the Anchor recovery program in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, said he sees many patients who don't want to take medication, because they want to be free of drugs altogether.

"We should be increasing medication-assisted treatment," said Goyer. "But we should also be increasing everything else."

At the Neil Kennedy Recovery Centers in Youngstown, Ohio, outpatient director Pam Ramsey said her program emphasizes medication as an aid, not as the sole treatment.

"It really is an assist to the treatment," said Ramsey. Along with medication, treatment incorporates a version of the traditional 12-step approach to quitting, counseling sessions, group meetings, and follow-up. "Our goal is still abstinence."

Home remodeling contractor Rob Judy said he's wrestled with heroin addiction for more than 20 years. Medication alone did not keep him drug free, nor did a faith-based program.

Finally Judy signed up for comprehensive treatment at Neil Kennedy.

The medication puts out "the fire of active addiction, of having to wake up and use," said Judy. But he says that needs to be followed with counseling, peer support and follow-up care.

"I believe that addiction is based on and driven by loss, and at the core of it is pain," said Judy. "If you don't address those issues, sooner or later you're going to relapse."

## Syrians rally in Damascus in support of Assad's military

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Hundreds of Syrians gathered on Monday in a landmark square in Syria's capital, Damascus, rallying in support of their armed forces, which they say succeeded in confronting the unprecedented joint airstrikes by the West over the weekend.

State TV broadcast the rally live from the central Omayyad Square. Protesters waved Syrian flags at the demonstration, dubbed a "salute to the achievements of the Arab Syrian Army," set off fireworks and unleashed celebratory gunfire.

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Shouts of "Allah, Syria, and only Bashar," a reference to Syrian President Bashar Assad, rang out.

The joint airstrikes by the United States, Britain and France bombed sites that the three countries said were linked to Syria's chemical weapons program. The airstrikes were triggered by an alleged chemical attack in the town of Douma, just outside of Damascus.

Syrian activists said more than 40 people were killed but Syria and Russia deny the attack and Russia even accused Britain of staging the attack.

Saturday's airstrikes came shortly after a fact-finding mission from the Organization of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons arrived in Syria to investigate. The mission is still expected to make it to Douma, where government security agencies and Russian military police have deployed after the town fell under government control, raising complaints from the Syrian opposition that evidence of chemical weapons' use might no longer be found.

Faisal Mekdad, Syria's deputy foreign minister, said Monday that government officials have met with the delegation, which has been in Damascus for three days, a number of times to discuss cooperation.

"Syria stressed during those meetings that it is fully ready to cooperate and to provide necessary facilitations to the delegation to carry out its mission," Mekdad was quoted as saying by state media.

The OPCW is holding an emergency meeting Monday in The Hague to discuss the suspected chemical attack in Douma.

The strikes have ratcheted up international tension, as the U.S. and Russia exchanged threats of retaliation. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley has indicated new economic sanctions will be announced Monday against Russia for enabling Assad's government to continue using chemical weapons.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said the military strikes violated the U.N. Charter and that if they continue, "it will inevitably entail chaos in international relations," according to a Kremlin statement on Sunday.

The Syrian government regained full control of Douma on Saturday, following a surrender deal with the rebels who had controlled the town just east of Damascus. It also followed the purported use of chemical weapons there on April 7.

Douma was the last rebel holdout in the eastern Ghouta enclave, which was the target of a government offensive in February and March that killed hundreds and displaced tens of thousands of people.

Syrian media, Russian and Syrian officials have sought to downplay the impact of the joint airstrikes, saying the Syrian air defenses have intercepted most of the missiles. The Pentagon says no missiles were engaged.

Also Monday, British Prime Minister Theresa May was to face angry lawmakers for authorizing the strikes without a vote in Parliament. Her office said she planned to tell them the strikes were "in Britain's national interest" and were carried out to stop further suffering from chemical weapons attacks.

## US to hit Russia with new sanctions for aiding Syria's Assad

By HOPE YEN and ROBERT BURNS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley has indicated new economic sanctions will be announced Monday against Russia for enabling the government of Syrian leader Bashar Assad to continue using chemical weapons.

The ambassador to the U.N. said Russia has blocked six attempts by the U.N. Security Council to make it easier to investigate the use of chemical weapons.

"Everyone is going to feel it at this point," Haley said, warning of consequences for Assad's foreign allies.

"The international community will not allow chemical weapons to come back into our everyday life," she said in an interview aired Sunday. "The fact he was making this more normal and that Russia was covering this up, all that has got to stop."

President Donald Trump on Sunday said a U.S.-led missile attack on Syria's chemical weapons program was "perfectly carried out."

Trump tweeted "Mission Accomplished" on Saturday after U.S., French and British warplanes and ships launched more than 100 missiles nearly unopposed by Syrian air defenses. While he declared success,

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the Pentagon said the pummeling of three chemical-related facilities left enough others intact to enable the Assad government to use banned weapons against civilians if it chooses.

His choice of words recalled a similar claim associated with President George W. Bush following the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Bush addressed sailors aboard a Navy ship in May 2003 alongside a "Mission Accomplished" banner, just weeks before it became apparent that Iraqis had organized an insurgency that would tie down U.S. forces for years.

Later Sunday, Trump sent a letter to congressional leaders informing them in writing of his decision to order the strike. Under the War Powers Resolution, the president must keep Congress informed of such actions.

Haley made clear the United States won't be pulling troops out of Syria right away, saying U.S. involvement there "is not done."

Haley said the three U.S. goals for accomplishing its mission are making sure chemical weapons are not used in a way that could harm U.S. national interests, defeating the Islamic State group and having a good vantage point to watch what Iran is doing.

"We're not going to leave until we know we've accomplished those things," she said.

Haley said the joint military strike "put a heavy blow into their chemical weapons program, setting them back years" and reiterated that if Assad uses poison gas again, "the United States is locked and loaded."

French President Emmanuel Macron said Sunday that France wants to launch a diplomatic initiative over Syria that would include Western powers, Russia and Turkey. Speaking on French television BFM and online site Mediapart, Macron stressed that the French diplomacy is able to talk with Iran, Russia and Turkey on one side and to the United States on the other side.

He said, "Ten days ago, President Trump wanted to withdraw from Syria. We convinced him to remain."

Asked about Macron's comments, White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders stressed that Trump's plans for the region have not changed. In a statement, she said: "The U.S. mission has not changed -- the President has been clear that he wants U.S. forces to come home as quickly as possible."

The nighttime assault on Syria was carefully limited to minimize civilian casualties and avoid direct conflict with Russia, but confusion arose over the extent to which Washington warned Moscow in advance. The Pentagon said it gave no explicit warning. The U.S. ambassador in Moscow, John Huntsman, said in a video, "Before we took action, the United States communicated with" Russia to "reduce the danger of any Russian or civilian casualties."

Russia has military forces, including air defenses, in several areas of Syria to support Assad in his long war against anti-government rebels.

Assad denies he has used chemical weapons, and the Trump administration has yet to present hard evidence of what it says precipitated the allied missiles attack: a chlorine gas attack on civilians in Douma on April 7. The U.S. says it suspects that sarin gas also was used.

The strikes "successfully hit every target," said Dana W. White, the chief Pentagon spokeswoman. The military said there were three targets: the Barzah chemical weapons research and development site in the Damascus area, a chemical weapons storage facility near Homs and a chemical weapons "bunker" a few miles from the second target.

Although officials said the singular target was Assad's chemical weapons capability, his air force, including helicopters he allegedly has used to drop chemical weapons on civilians, were spared. In a U.S. military action a year ago in response to a sarin gas attack, missiles took out nearly 20 percent of the Syrian air force, the Pentagon said.

In his televised address from the White House on Friday, Trump said the U.S. was prepared to keep up the economic, diplomatic and military pressure on Assad until he ends a pattern of killing his own people with internationally banned chemical weapons.

That did not mean military strikes would continue. In fact, Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said no additional attacks were planned.

Asked about Trump's "Mission Accomplished" assertion, White said it pointed to the successful targeting of the three Syrian chemical weapons sites. What happens next, she said, is up to Assad and to his

Russian and Iranian allies.

Haley appeared on "Fox News Sunday" and CBS' "Face the Nation."

## **Spokesman: Former first lady Barbara Bush in failing health**

**By MICHAEL GRACZYK, Associated Press**

HOUSTON (AP) — Former first lady Barbara Bush is in "failing health" and won't seek additional medical treatment, a Bush family spokesman said.

"Following a recent series of hospitalizations, and after consulting her family and doctors, Mrs. Bush, now age 92, has decided not to seek additional medical treatment and will instead focus on comfort care," spokesman Jim McGrath said Sunday in a news release.

McGrath did not elaborate as to the nature of Bush's health problems. She has been treated for decades for Graves' disease, which is a thyroid condition, had heart surgery in 2009 for a severe narrowing of her main heart valve and was hospitalized a year before that for surgery on a perforated ulcer.

"It will not surprise those who know her that Barbara Bush has been a rock in the face of her failing health, worrying not for herself — thanks to her abiding faith — but for others," McGrath said. "She is surrounded by a family she adores, and appreciates the many kind messages and especially the prayers she is receiving."

Bush, who is at home in Houston, is one of only two first ladies who was also the mother of a president. The other was Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams, the nation's second president, and mother of John Quincy Adams, the sixth president.

Bush married George H.W. Bush on Jan. 6, 1945. They had six children and have been married longer than any presidential couple in American history.

Eight years after she and her husband left the White House, Mrs. Bush stood with her husband as their son George W. was sworn in as the 43rd president.

President Donald Trump's press secretary, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, said in a statement Sunday evening that "the President's and first lady's prayers are with all of the Bush family during this time."

Bush is known for her white hair and her triple-strand fake pearl necklace.

Her brown hair began to gray in the 1950s, while her 3-year-old daughter Pauline, known to her family as Robin, underwent treatment for leukemia and eventually died in October 1953. She later said dyed hair didn't look good on her and credited the color to the public's perception of her as "everybody's grandmother."

Her pearls sparked a national fashion trend when she wore them to her husband's inauguration in 1989. The pearls became synonymous with Bush, who later said she selected them to hide the wrinkles in her neck. The candid admission only bolstered her common sense and down-to-earth public image.

Her 93-year-old husband, the nation's 41st president who served from 1989 to 1993, also has had health issues in recent years. In April 2017, he was hospitalized in Houston for two weeks for a mild case of pneumonia and chronic bronchitis. He was hospitalized months earlier, also for pneumonia. He has a form of Parkinson's disease and uses a motorized scooter or a wheelchair for mobility.

Before being president, he served as a congressman, CIA director and Ronald Reagan's vice president.

Barbara Pierce Bush was born June 8, 1925, in Rye, New York. Her father was the publisher of McCall's and Redbook magazines. She and George H.W. Bush married when she was 19 and while he was a young naval aviator. After World War II, the Bushes moved to Texas where he went into the oil business.

Along with her memoirs, she's the author of "C. Fred's Story" and "Millie's Book," based on the lives of her dogs. Proceeds from the books benefited adult and family literacy programs. The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy began during her White House years with the goal of improving the lives of disadvantaged Americans by boosting literacy among parents and their children. The foundation partners with local programs and had awarded more than \$40 million as of 2014 to create or expand more than 1,500 literacy programs nationwide.

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## Stapleton, Lambert, Underwood and Vegas win at ACM Awards

By MESFIN FEKADU, AP Music Writer

The 2018 Academy of Country Music Awards marked a memorable night for the victims of the massive Las Vegas shooting, comeback queen Carrie Underwood and triple-winners Chris Stapleton and Miranda Lambert.

Jason Aldean paid tribute to the 58 people who died at the Route 91 Harvest Festival in Las Vegas last October when he was named entertainer of the year Sunday for the third consecutive time.

"It's been a rough year," Aldean said, thanking those "that showed us love and support over the last six months."

The ACMs brought the country music community back to Vegas six months after the deadly tragedy. Aldean was performing onstage when the shooting occurred.

"You guys are in our hearts always," Aldean said. "We love Las Vegas. Vegas strong."

Though Aldean beat out Stapleton for the top honor, Stapleton's Sunday was met with many high points: His wife, Morgane, gave birth to twin boys; he celebrated his 40th birthday; and the leading nominee, who didn't attend the show, won male vocalist of the year and album of the year, where he won twice as a singer and producer.

Underwood also had a big night, returning to the stage like an A-List veteran in her first television appearance since injuring her face and wrist last year due to a fall at her home. Her powerhouse vocals shined when she performed her new song, "Cry Pretty," earning a rousing — and long — standing ovation from the audience.

Immediately following the performance, she won vocal event of the year for the dance-infused country song, "The Fighter," with Keith Urban.

"I am still kind of shaking right now," she added, appearing teary-eyed.

"Seeing her stand up there and be so beautiful, she's one of the greatest singers of all-time in any genre of music," Lambert said backstage of Underwood. "I am just proud of her and I know how strong she is and how hard she's worked."

But Lambert's hard work also paid off: She made history when she surpassed Brooks and Dunn as the most decorated act in ACM history with 32 wins on Sunday. Lambert won her ninth consecutive female vocalist of the year trophy and won twice for song of the year — as the performer and co-writer of "Tin Man."

"I cannot believe this. I really can't. ...I love country music. It's my entire life," Lambert said onstage. "I will never ever take it for granted."

Florida Georgia Line's Tyler Hubbard wore an all-red ensemble and Brian Kelley was in all-white when they hit the stage with pop singer Bebe Rexha to perform the massive hit "Meant to Be," which is spending its 19th week on top of Billboard's Hot country songs chart. It ties Leroy Van Dyke's "Walk On By" as the third longest-running song of all-time on the chart.

The longest-running No. 1 song of all-time on the country charts, Sam Hunt's "Body Like a Back Road," won single record of the year at the ACMs; Hunt didn't attend the show.

Little Big Town sang Elton John's "Rocket Man" in celebration of the icon's new album, "Restoration," which features country singers covering his songs. Kane Brown and Lauren Alaina were impressive when they sang their duet, "What Ifs." Kenny Chesney, Toby Keith, Kelsea Ballerini, Alan Jackson, Lady Antebellum and Dierks Bentley also performed.

McEntire, who performed with Kelly Clarkson, hosted the three-hour show a year after Bryan and Bentley did the job.

"It takes one woman to do the job of two men," she said, earning a rousing applause.

Old Dominion won vocal group of the year, besting Little Big Town and Lady Antebellum.

"This is heavy in a lot of ways," lead singer Matthew Ramsey said, holding the trophy in his hand.

"We're so lucky. Look at us, look at us!" he said about his bandmates, all dressed in trendy suits. "We look good. We feel good. We're friends. And we're having a ball.

"Thank you for letting us make music."

Associated Press Writer Kristin M. Hall contributed to this report.

Online:

<http://www.acmcountry.com/>

## 'People are still suffering': MLB back in storm-hit San Juan

By TIM REYNOLDS, AP Sports Writer

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Hiram Bithorn's statue is no longer standing. The stadium bearing his name is ready to bustle again.

That's an apt way to show how things are right now in Puerto Rico, which is about to host its most significant sporting events since Hurricane Maria dramatically ravaged the islands seven months ago. Major League Baseball returns Tuesday to San Juan, with Cleveland and Minnesota opening a two-game series that many hope will remind the rest of the world that recovery from the storm is far from over.

"I hate to say it, but this is a great platform, so people can see the reality," said Boston Red Sox manager Alex Cora, a native Puerto Rican and someone who bought tickets to Indians-Twins for his family — and wishes it was his team playing in San Juan this week. "We're much better than six, seven months ago, whenever it was. But we've still got work to do."

The evidence of that is everywhere in San Juan, and only becomes more prevalent as one ventures into more remote areas of the islands.

Blue tarps still cover countless roofs that were damaged. Many electronic signs along major highways aren't working, traffic lights remain out even in some of San Juan's more upscale areas, and around the airport there are towering palm trees that no longer stand straight — they're curved, yet another reminder of the wind that lashed into them.

Bithorn, the first Puerto Rican to play in the majors, was commemorated by a statue outside the stadium where the Twins and Indians will play. The statue blew over in the storm, landing face-first on the concrete. The massive base of the statue is still there, but the bronze replica of Bithorn in uniform is nowhere to be found.

"People are still suffering over there," Houston Astros star shortstop Carlos Correa, who hails from Puerto Rico, said Sunday. "And to be able to bring baseball, the sport that we love the most, back to my hometown — it's going to be amazing. A lot of people are looking forward to it. I'm pretty sure it's sold out already and it's going to be a life-changing experience for a lot of kids who can't travel to the United States to watch a big league game."

Maria was the third-costliest hurricane in U.S. history, hitting Puerto Rico as a high-end Category 4 storm on Sept. 20. It arrived with 155 mph winds, barely below the threshold for Category 5 status. Hurricanes weaken over land, when they're not drawing energy from warm water to fuel their wrath, but wind speeds when Maria was done with her path across the island were merely down to about 110 mph.

Maria was blamed for 65 deaths in Puerto Rico. But that figure is way too low to be fully accurate; even the National Hurricane Center, in its recently released report on the storm, said it "should be noted that hundreds of additional indirect deaths in Puerto Rico may eventually be attributed to Maria's aftermath pending the results of an official government review."

As far as the cost, in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands alone Maria is estimated to have caused up to \$115 billion in damage.

"There are thousands of people still with nothing over there," Correa said. "No house. No roof. No power. No food. No water. And we still need to help."

A pair of baseball games won't fix all the issues, of course.

But the mere sense of normalcy, in abnormal times, will help.

"We have a chance to have influence," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "Some of it is resource, some of it is just, you put your words and your presence there and it brings significance to the efforts that are

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ongoing. So MLB, the Twins and the Indians have all done a good job of coordinating as many things as we can during the course of those three days without detracting from the fact that we're there to play baseball."

The Twins, the Indians, MLB officials and Baseball Hall of Famers — some, like Roberto Alomar, are from Puerto Rico; some, like Cal Ripken Jr., are not — will be across the island this week. Clinics for kids will be held. Money will be raised and distributed. Supplies will be left behind. Twins employees are planning to aid workers trying to restore water and power. Indians CEO Paul Dolan will help plant native trees to replace some those that were destroyed.

And then for 18 innings or so on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 18,000 fans at Hiram Bithorn Stadium will get to cheer again.

"It's always good to have a reminder that we have work to do," Cora said. "People don't realize it. There's people in the mountains that have no water, no power. It's been like six, seven months. That's tough. Sometimes (in the U.S.) we complain that we don't have power for three days and we're going nuts. Imagine having that."

AP Sports Writers Dave Campbell in Minneapolis and Kristie Rieken in Houston, along with Associated Press Writers Jeremy Rakes in Houston and Ken Powtak in Boston, contributed to this report.

— More AP baseball: <https://apnews.com/tag/MLBbaseball>

## **Boston marks 5 years since marathon attack with tributes**

**By VAISHNAVEE SHARMA and SARAH BETANCOURT, Associated Press**

BOSTON (AP) — The bells of Old South Church in Boston rang at 2:49 p.m. to commemorate a citywide moment of silence in honor of Boston Marathon bombing survivors and victims

It was an emotional moment in a day filled with service projects and ceremonies to remember those impacted by the deadly bombings five years ago.

Boston began the anniversary of the attacks Sunday with Mayor Marty Walsh and Gov. Charlie Baker laying wreaths early in the morning at the spots along downtown Boylston Street where two bombs killed three spectators and maimed more than 260 others April 15, 2013.

Both addressed families and survivors at a private ceremony inside the Boston Public Library.

"On April 15, 2013, our city changed forever but over the last five years, we have reclaimed hope. We have reclaimed the finish line and Boston has emerged with a new strength, a resilience rooted in love," Walsh said.

Jane and Henry Richard, siblings of the youngest victim Martin Richard, and members of the family's foundation, also spoke.

Henry Richard urged those listening to follow Martin's message to "choose kindness and do more." The family's foundation was founded in 2014 to connect young people with opportunities for volunteerism and community engagement.

Victim Lu Lingzi's uncle, Sherman Yee, was present at the ceremony and private gathering. He said, "The family has been overwhelmed by love and support from all over the world." He called Lingzi an "extraordinary girl" who represented the youth that come to the U.S. from China to study.

"While she didn't realize her dreams, as her family we invest in the youths through our foundation to keep her memory going," he said.

The bombs also killed 29-year-old Krystle Campbell, of Arlington. Massachusetts Institute of Technology police officer Sean Collier was killed in the line of duty during a confrontation with bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev.

Roxanne Simmonds was at commemorative ceremonies to honor her son, fallen Boston police officer Dennis Simmonds. Simmonds suffered a head injury on April 19, 2013, during a shootout with Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev as law enforcement closed in on them.

He suffered a fatal brain aneurysm a year later assessed to be the result of his injuries from the explosive

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device. Roxanne Simmonds said "DJ" was "brilliant and fearless — he just loved Boston."

The youngest graduate of his class at Lasell College, Dennis Simmonds worked in Mattapan as an officer. "It was important for him to be in a community with men and women who look like him," his mother said. "Individuals of color working hard to make sure their communities were safe." She praised Walsh, saying that it was obvious how significant the victims are to the mayor.

Arreen Andrew, of Boston, said she was in the crowd across the stand when the first bomb went off in 2013.

"It was sheer panic," she recalled. "Just this sense of 'No, this can't happen to us.'"

Five years later, while the day is still a reminder of some painful memories, she said it has also become a day about the relationships that have since been formed and "reformed and recreated our entire community."

For some, such an anniversary is about planting the seeds of change. Forty-three-year-old Heather Abbott of Newport, Rhode Island hosted a fundraiser for her foundation that supports amputees. Abbott was outside of Forum, a restaurant by the finish line, when the impact of the second bomb blew her through the entrance of the building. Former New England Patriots lineman Matt Chatham and his wife Erin were in the restaurant, and carried Abbott to safety.

After three surgeries in four days, Abbott's left leg was amputated below the knee. Her recovery was long, but in 2014, Abbott started her own foundation to help amputees with financial difficulties afford prosthetics and expensive co-payments.

"I want to make some changes in the world of health insurance and help them understand why people need these devices," said Abbott.

Abbott says the foundation has given out 19 prosthetic devices out so far. "They can cost from \$15,000 to as much as \$100,000," she said.

\_\_\_\_ This story has been corrected to show the last name of the young boy who died is Richard, not Richards.

## Syria's allies say airstrikes undercut political resolution

By **BASSEM MROUE** and **SARAH EL DEEB**, Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — The leaders of Russia, Iran and the Hezbollah group in Lebanon said Sunday that Western airstrikes on their ally, Syria, have complicated prospects for a political settlement to the country's seven-year conflict.

A day after the U.S., Britain and France bombarded sites they said were linked to a chemical weapons program, Syrian President Bashar Assad appeared briefly on state TV, seemingly unfazed by the military action — and even reportedly in high spirits.

Assad told a group of visiting Russian lawmakers that the strikes were accompanied by a campaign of "lies and misinformation" against Syria and Russia in the U.N. Security Council.

Moscow and Damascus are waging the same "battles" against terrorism and "to protect international law based on respect of the sovereignty of countries and the wills of people," Assad said in comments carried by state media, an apparent jab at the three Western allies.

Russian lawmaker Dmitry Sablin, who met with Assad, said he appeared upbeat and believed the airstrikes would unify the country.

Russia and Iran have called the action a "military crime" and "act of aggression." The U.N. Security Council rejected a Russian resolution calling for condemnation of the "aggression" by the U.S., France and Britain.

Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke by phone with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, and they agreed the Western airstrikes were an "illegal action ... adversely impacting prospects for political settlement in Syria," a Kremlin statement said.

Putin said the actions violated the U.N. Charter and if they continue, "it will inevitably entail chaos in international relations," the statement said.

The official IRNA news agency quoted Rouhani as saying The U.S. and "some Western countries do not



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want Syria to reach permanent stability.”

Iran and Russia should not allow the “fire of a new tension” to flare up in the region, Rouhani said, adding that the airstrikes were an “invasion” aimed at “emboldening defeated terrorists,” IRNA reported.

Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Lebanon’s Hezbollah group that has hundreds of fighters backing Assad’s forces, said the airstrikes failed to “terrorize or break the spirits” of Syria and its allies.

Instead, he said, the attack bolstered the confidence of the Syrian army and its allies, as well as probably sinking the already-faltering U.N.-backed peace process on Syria in Geneva.

“If the goal was to pressure Syria to expedite a political solution, I think what happened will complicate the political solution and will strain international relations and the Geneva track, if not torpedo Geneva altogether,” Nasrallah told an election rally in Lebanon.

Nasrallah said there is no chemical program in Syria, and he likened the attacks in Syria to the West’s concern over Iran’s nuclear program.

U.S. Marine Lt. Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie, director of the Joint Staff at the Pentagon, said the allied airstrikes “took out the heart” of Assad’s chemical weapons arsenal. When pressed, however, he acknowledged that some unspecified portion of Assad’s chemical arms infrastructure was not targeted.

Assad denies he has used chemical weapons, and the U.S. has yet to present evidence of what it says led to the allied action: a chlorine gas attack on civilians in Douma on April 7 that killed more than 40 people. The U.S. says it suspects that sarin gas also was used.

A team from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is in Syria to investigate the Douma incident and was expected to visit the town. Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mikdad met with members of the watchdog group in their Damascus hotel Sunday.

The government regained full control of Douma on Saturday following a surrender deal with the rebels in the town east of Damascus. It later deployed another 5,000 security forces there.

Russian military police had been deployed in Douma, raising complaints from the Syrian opposition that evidence of chemical weapons use might no longer be found.

Douma was the last rebel holdout in the eastern Ghouta suburbs, the target of a government offensive in February and March that killed hundreds and displaced tens of thousands.

France, meanwhile, has reached out to Russia, urging it to join renewed peace efforts.

In an interview published Sunday in the Journal du Dimanche newspaper, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said Moscow “should join our efforts to promote a political process in Syria that would allow a way out of the crisis.”

In a televised interview Sunday night, French President Emmanuel Macron said the U.S., France and Britain had “full international legitimacy to intervene” because they had gotten evidence the Syrian government used chemical weapons against its own people and the airstrikes were enforcing international humanitarian law.

“It was retaliation, not an act of war,” Macron said on French TV channel BFMTV and online investigative site Mediapart. He said the allies acted without a U.N. mandate because of the “constant stalemate of the Russians” in the Security Council.

France has continued to talk regularly with Moscow even as East-West tensions have grown. Macron spoke with Putin on Friday, before the airstrikes.

France and the U.S. say the Geneva process is the only track to pursue a political resolution. Russia has pursued a separate track for political negotiations, hosting talks in Sochi.

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson told the BBC he hopes there is no need for more strikes in Syria, but that Britain and its allies will consider further action if Assad uses chemical weapons again. He said the airstrikes were proportionate and showed “the world has said enough is enough.”

In Germany, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told public broadcaster ARD that he hopes the air strikes will result in a fresh effort to find a peaceful solution to the seven-year conflict. He said European Union foreign ministers will meet Monday to discuss the situation and put forward proposals for steps going forward.

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Associated Press writers Angela Charlton in Paris and Jim Heintz in Moscow contributed.

## In a close race, 'Rampage' takes No. 1 from 'A Quiet Place'

By LINDSEY BAHR, AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — After a wobbly start, Dwayne Johnson muscled his way to a No. 1 opening for "Rampage" — but just barely. Close on its heels was the word-of-mouth sensation "A Quiet Place" in its second week in theaters, and not too far behind that was the Blumhouse horror "Truth or Dare" in a competitive weekend at the box office.

Warner Bros. said Sunday that "Rampage" earned an estimated \$34.5 million in its first weekend in North American theaters, and dominated internationally too with \$114.1 million from 61 territories.

Based on the classic arcade game, "Rampage" carried a sizable budget of at least \$115 million. Although "Rampage" pulled in mixed reviews (it's at 50 percent on Rotten Tomatoes), audiences were more enthusiastic, giving it an A- CinemaScore.

"I wasn't sure how I was going to feel on Friday. But when I look at our global number of \$148.6 million, there's a lot to be proud of for Dwayne Johnson," said Warner Bros. president of domestic distribution Jeff Goldstein. "Talk about a real closer, he knows how to bring it home."

That Friday, of course, was Friday the 13th and audiences had the choice between two wide-release nail-biters to spend their entertainment dollars on — the buzzy thriller "A Quiet Place" that dominated the charts last weekend, and the new horror from the shop behind "Get Out" and "Split," "Truth or Dare."

After its stunning debut, John Krasinski's modestly-budgeted "A Quiet Place" fell only 35 percent in weekend two, adding \$32.6 million to its domestic total, which is now just shy of \$100 million for Paramount Pictures.

"Truth or Dare" also found a sizable audience that was mostly young (60 percent under the age of 25) and female (60 percent). The PG-13 rated pic stars "Pretty Little Liars" alum Lucy Hale.

With a budget of just \$3.5 million, the film took in a terrific \$19.1 million over the weekend — just the latest in a string of successes for the Blumhouse and Universal Pictures partnership.

"They take high quality filmmaking at micro-budgets and just consistently over-deliver," said Jim Orr, Universal's president of domestic distribution. "Everyone at Universal is just thrilled to be in business with these guys."

Orr said despite the competitive marketplace, the studio's marketing found a lane with the younger female audience and played into the Friday the 13th release.

Sliding into fourth place was Steven Spielberg's "Ready Player One," with \$11.2 million in its third weekend, and in fifth was the R-rated comedy "Blockers," with \$10.3 million.

Also, after a limited release, Wes Anderson's stop-motion animated "Isle of Dogs" added 1,385 locations and took the No. 7 spot with \$5 million. Chloe Zhao's well-reviewed indie "The Rider" also debuted this weekend in three theaters with \$45,268.

While the success of a horror, especially a micro-budget one, isn't a surprise for the industry, big budget films like "Rampage" continue to face a complex marketplace. For box office analysts like comScore's Paul Dergarabedian, "Rampage's" performance fits into the post-"Black Panther" narrative for most would-be blockbusters that have followed the Marvel and Disney phenomenon.

"'Rampage' joins a long list of popcorn movies that have opened in the wake of 'Black Panther' to rely heavily on their international box office revenues," Dergarabedian said, citing "A Wrinkle in Time," "Tomb Raider," "Pacific Rim: Uprising" and "Ready Player One" as recent examples.

Disney and Marvel's "Black Panther" added \$5.3 million in its ninth weekend in theaters, bringing its domestic total to \$673.8 million.

It's another down weekend for the industry, too. The same weekend last year saw the massive \$98.8 million opening for "The Fate of the Furious." ComScore reports that the year to date box office is down just over 2 percent. But the tide could be turning soon.

"We're just in this lull waiting for 'Avengers: Infinity War' that is going to blow the doors off of the box office in a little less than two weeks," Dergarabedian said.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to comScore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final do-

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mestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Rampage," \$34.5 million (\$114.1 million international).
2. "A Quiet Place," \$32.6 million (\$22.3 million international).
3. "Truth or Dare," \$19.1 million (\$2.6 million international).
4. "Ready Player One," \$11.2 million (\$33.8 million international).
5. "Blockers," \$10.3 million (\$3.9 million international).
6. "Black Panther," \$5.3 million (\$2.6 million international).
7. "Isle of Dogs," \$5 million (\$2.3 million international).
8. "I Can Only Imagine," \$3.8 million (\$40,000 international).
9. "Tyler Perry's Acrimony," \$3.7 million.
10. "Chappaquiddick," \$3 million.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at international theaters (excluding the U.S. and Canada), according to comScore:

1. "Rampage," \$114.1 million.
2. "Ready Player One," \$33.8 million.
3. "A Quiet Place," \$22.3 million.
4. "Peter Rabbit," \$12.7 million.
5. "Taxi 5," \$9.5 million.
6. "Pacific Rim: Uprising," \$6.4 million.
7. "Annihilation," \$6.1 million.
8. "Blockers," \$3.9 million.
9. "Nothing to Lose (Nada A Perder)," \$3.3 million.
10. "Hindi Medium," \$3.3 million.

Universal and Focus are owned by NBC Universal, a unit of Comcast Corp.; Sony, Columbia, Sony Screen Gems and Sony Pictures Classics are units of Sony Corp.; Paramount is owned by Viacom Inc.; Disney, Pixar and Marvel are owned by The Walt Disney Co.; Miramax is owned by Filmyard Holdings LLC; 20th Century Fox and Fox Searchlight are owned by 21st Century Fox; Warner Bros. and New Line are units of Time Warner Inc.; MGM is owned by a group of former creditors including Highland Capital, Anchorage Advisors and Carl Icahn; Lionsgate is owned by Lions Gate Entertainment Corp.; IFC is owned by AMC Networks Inc.; Rogue is owned by Relativity Media LLC.

Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/lbahr>

## **GOP attorneys general support citizenship question on census**

**By DAVID A. LIEB, Associated Press**

A Trump administration plan to ask people if they are U.S. citizens during the 2020 census has prompted a legal uproar from Democratic state attorneys general, who argue it could drive down participation and lead to an inaccurate count.

Yet not a single Republican attorney general has sued — not even from states with large immigrant populations that stand to lose if a census undercount of immigrants affects the allotment of U.S. House seats and federal funding for states.

In fact, many GOP attorneys general had urged Trump's census team to add a citizenship question.

"We always are better off having a more accurate count of citizens versus non-citizens. I see no downside in this," said Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, vice chairman of the Republican Attorneys General Association.

The diverging views of top Republican and Democratic state attorneys highlight how even the most basic

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data collection decisions can quickly split along partisan lines amid the intense debate about immigration policies.

Concerns among immigrants have risen as President Donald Trump's administration has cracked down on so-called sanctuary jurisdictions, increased arrests by federal immigration officers, called the National Guard to the border with Mexico and sought to limit travel to the U.S. from certain predominantly Muslim countries.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced last month that the 2020 census distributed to every U.S. household will include a citizenship question for the first time since 1950. He said the question was needed in part to help the government enforce the Voting Rights Act, the 1965 law that was intended to protect the political representation of minority groups.

He said it will provide a more accurate tally of voting-eligible residents than is currently available from a smaller sampling survey that includes the citizenship question.

In a letter explaining his decision, Ross said the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that as many as 630,000 additional households might not respond if a citizenship question is included. Yet he acknowledged the administration did not know what the actual consequences might be because it hasn't tested the change.

The nation's only dress rehearsal for the 2020 census, currently taking place in Providence, Rhode Island, does not include the citizenship question on the survey forwarded to residents. Nevertheless, Ross determined the benefits of including the question outweigh any concerns.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, a Democrat, filed a federal lawsuit immediately after Ross announced the question would be added. The nation's most populous state also has the highest number of foreign-born residents, most of whom are naturalized U.S. citizens or hold some other legal status.

Last week, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman led a coalition of 17 Democratic attorneys general, the District of Columbia, six cities and the bipartisan U.S. Conference of Mayors in filing a second federal lawsuit. They contend the citizenship question will deter participation and illegally inhibit the Constitution's requirement for an "actual enumeration" of residents.

A third lawsuit was filed this past week by a group of seven Maryland and Arizona residents who say adding the question could lead to an undercount that could diminish federal funding and congressional representation for their states. The Constitution requires representation in the U.S. House to be based on a count of the total residents in each state, not just citizens.

The census, undertaken every 10 years, also is used to determine how much money to distribute to local communities through various federal programs.

"If we don't count all the people who live in our city — all the residents we have — it could mean that our community doesn't get our fair share of moneys or aid," said Steve Adler, mayor of Austin, Texas, and a Democrat who is on the board of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. "It could also mean that we don't get the representation in government at all levels. The impacts could be huge."

The George Washington University Institute of Public Policy recently analyzed how a hypothetical 1 percent undercount beyond the figures reported in the 2010 census would have affected 2015 federal funding for Medicaid and several other social programs in each state, assuming the undercount occurred only in that state.

The largest financial hits would have been to the Republican-led states of Texas, Florida and Ohio, the swing state of Pennsylvania and the traditionally Democratic state of Illinois, the report found. Democratic-led California and New York would not have been affected because their Medicaid reimbursement rates already are at minimum levels.

Estimates of those living in the U.S. illegally range from 11 million to a little over 12 million people.

Census data is not shared with immigration enforcement authorities. Yet immigrant advocates believe a citizenship question could discourage even some who are lawfully present from responding, partly because of fears the government could track down relatives living in the U.S. illegally.

The U.S. has about 44 million residents who were not citizens at birth, comprising 13.5 percent of the total population, according to the most recent Census Bureau information. More than half of all immigrants live in California, Texas, New York or Florida.

Last week, a Democratic state senator in Florida formally asked the state's attorney general, Republican Pam Bondi, to join the New York lawsuit challenging the citizenship question. That's unlikely because Bondi was among 11 Republican state attorneys general and two governors who signed a March 13 letter urging the Commerce Department to include a citizenship question.

Minority Democrats in the Arizona Legislature also urged GOP Attorney General Mark Brnovich to join the lawsuit. But his spokesman said that won't happen, just as he refused to sign onto the Republican letter urging the question be included.

"We have concerns this issue has been overly politicized," Brnovich spokesman Ryan Anderson said in a statement.

The letter from Republican state officials said a census citizenship question could help minority communities by allowing those drawing legislative districts to ensure there are enough voting-eligible citizens in a particular district for minorities to be able to elect a candidate of their choice under the federal Voting Rights Act.

Citizenship data from the Census Bureau's annual American Community Survey has been sufficient in past court cases to meet the standards of the Voting Rights Act, said Vanita Gupta, who oversaw the Justice Department's civil rights division during the final years of President Barack Obama's administration.

That survey is sent to fewer than 3 percent of U.S. households.

If a citizenship question is asked of every U.S. household, "you would basically end up with a completely inaccurate census because of the concerns around depressed participation," said Gupta, who now is president and chief executive of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

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Associated Press writer Bob Christie in Phoenix contributed to this report.

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Follow David A. Lieb at: <https://twitter.com/DavidALieb>

## **US pastor faces terror charges in fraught trial in Turkey**

**By ZEYNEP BILGINSOY and MEHMET GUZEL, Associated Press**

IZMIR, Turkey (AP) — An American pastor imprisoned in Turkey is going on trial for alleged terror ties and spying in a case that has increased tensions between Washington and Ankara.

Andrew Craig Brunson, a 50-year-old evangelical pastor from North Carolina, is facing up to 35 years in prison on charges of "committing crimes on behalf of terror groups without being a member" and "espionage." The trial begins Monday in western Izmir province.

Brunson was arrested in December 2016 for alleged links to both an outlawed Kurdish insurgent group and the network of the U.S.-based Muslim cleric who Turkey blames for a masterminding a failed military coup that year. The cleric, Fethullah Gulen, denies the claim.

Brunson, who has lived in Turkey for 23 years, has denied all allegations, saying that he solely worked as a pastor.

The Turkish government has clearly linked Brunson's case with its determination to force the U.S. to extradite Gulen — and some see the pastor as a diplomatic pawn.

The American Center for Law and Justice, a conservative Christian group in the U.S., has called Brunson a "hostage of the Turkish government." A petition has garnered more than half a million signatures, claiming that the case was putting Christianity on trial.

Brunson's lawyer, Ismail Cem Halavurt, told The Associated Press on Sunday he expects the pastor's acquittal, arguing that the "weak" indictment lacked sufficient evidence to make the case hold up in court.

American officials have repeatedly requested that Brunson be released — President Donald Trump himself asked Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to have his government "expeditiously" return the pastor to the U.S.

But Erdogan fired back at Washington, demanding that the U.S. first return Gulen.

"You give him to us and we'll give you this one," he said, referring to Brunson.

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Turkey has submitted an extradition request to the U.S. for Gulen, who lives in Pennsylvania, but so far it not been granted. That has created festering frustration in the Turkish government, which has hunted down tens of thousands of alleged Gulen supporters and either imprisoned them or fired them from government jobs.

Brunson has served as the pastor of Izmir Resurrection Church with a small Protestant congregation. He was first detained in October 2016 with his wife, Norine Brunson, who was later released.

Brunson's lawyer said he was healthy but "demoralized" after being stuck behind bars, having missed his daughter's engagement and another child's graduation.

The Izmir prosecutor's indictment against Brunson claims he was in contact with top-level executives of Gulen's network and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. Both are designated terror groups in Turkey. Brunson is accused of acting in "parallel and coordinated fashion" with them, aiming to "divide" the country.

"We think we can debunk these claims tomorrow," Brunson's lawyer said.

The prosecutor also accuses Brunson of espionage, saying Brunson acted "as an agent of unconventional warfare," gathering intelligence with religious work as his cover. The indictment — based on the testimonies of witnesses, including three secret ones, and alleged digital evidence — claims the pastor worked to convert Kurds to Christianity to sow discord.

Halavurt called the use of secret witnesses a "serious wound" in Turkey's legal system that has contributed to Brunson's suffering, and he argues that the spying accusation is "completely baseless."

The lawyer said he is opposed to the "politicization" of Brunson's case and says his client wants to remain in Turkey if he's acquitted.

Bilginsoy reported from Istanbul.

## Iran deal's fate may rest on late European interventions

By **MATTHEW LEE, AP Diplomatic Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The future of the landmark Iran nuclear deal hangs in the balance and its survival may depend on the unlikely success of last-minute European interventions with President Donald Trump.

French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel are to visit Washington separately later this month and, barring a sudden trip by British Prime Minister Theresa May, will likely be the last foreign leaders invested in the deal to see Trump ahead of his mid-May deadline for the accord to be strengthened. Trump has vowed to withdraw from the 2015 agreement by May 12 unless U.S., British, French and German negotiators can agree to fix what he sees as its serious flaws.

Iran has said U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions would destroy the agreement and has threatened a range of responses, including immediately restarting nuclear activities currently barred under the deal.

Negotiators met for a fourth time last week and made some progress but were unable to reach agreement on all points, according to U.S. officials and outside advisers to the Trump administration familiar with the status of the talks. That potentially leaves the Iran deal's fate to Macron, who will make a state visit to Washington on April 24, and Merkel, who pays a working visit to the U.S. capital on April 27, these people said.

"It's important to them and I know they'll raise their hopes and concerns when they travel here to the United States in the coming days," Mike Pompeo, the CIA chief and secretary of state-designate, told lawmakers on Thursday.

Pompeo's testimony at his Senate confirmation hearing came a day after the negotiators met at the State Department to go over the four issues that Trump says must be addressed if he is to once again renew sanctions relief for Iran, officials said.

Those are: Iran's ballistic missile testing and destabilizing behavior in the region, which are not covered by the deal, along with inspections of suspected nuclear sites and so-called "sunset provisions" that gradu-

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ally allow Iran to resume advanced nuclear work after several years, which are part of the agreement.

Two senior U.S. officials said the sides are "close to agreement" on missiles and inspections but "not there yet" on the sunset provisions.

"Malign" Iranian activities, including its support for Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, Syrian President Bashar Assad and Houthi Shiite rebels in Yemen, were dealt with in a separate session that ended inconclusively, according to the officials, who like the outside advisers were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The two officials and two outside advisers said the missile and inspections issues are essentially settled, but would not detail exactly what had been agreed or predict whether it would pass muster with Trump, let alone his new national security adviser John Bolton and Pompeo. Both men are Iran hawks and share the president's disdain for the deal, which was a signature foreign policy achievement of former President Barack Obama.

Bolton and Pompeo's voices on Iran could be heard as senior U.S. officials discussed Trump's decision to launch airstrikes against Syria on Friday. In addition to punishing Syria for its apparent use of chemical weapons, the strikes were meant to send a message to Iran about its role in the country, the officials told reporters on Saturday.

The officials and advisers said the main sticking point on the Iran deal remains the sunset provisions, with the Europeans balking at U.S. demands for the automatic re-imposition of sanctions should Iran engage in advanced nuclear activity that would be permitted by the agreement once the restrictions expire.

To clear the impasse, one official and one outside adviser said a compromise is being considered under which sanctions would be re-imposed if Iran did enough work to reduce the time it would need to develop a nuclear weapon to less than a year. The current deal aims to keep Iran's so-called "breakout time" to a year. But the expiration of the sunset provisions, the first of which is in 2024, means that the breakout time could eventually drop.

The Europeans, who along with the Iranians, have said they will not re-open the deal for negotiation, are reluctant to automatically re-impose sanctions for permitted activity, but have agreed in principle that Iran dropping below a one-year breakout time should be cause to at least consider new sanctions, according to the official and the adviser. How that breakout time is determined is still being discussed, they said.

Given the remaining differences, U.S. national security officials are stepping up planning for various "day after" scenarios, including how to sell a pullout as the correct step for national security, how aggressively to reimpose U.S. sanctions on Iran that had been lifted under the agreement and how to deal with Iranian and European fallout from such a step.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, April 16, the 106th day of 2018. There are 259 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 16, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" in which the civil rights activist responded to a group of local clergymen who had criticized him for leading street protests; King defended his tactics, writing, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

On this date:

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

In 1818, the U.S. Senate ratified the Rush-Bagot Treaty severely limiting the number of American and British military vessels on the Great Lakes.

In 1862, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill ending slavery in the District of Columbia. The Confederacy conscripted all white men between the ages of 18 to 35.

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

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In 1935, the radio comedy program "Fibber McGee and Molly" premiered on the NBC Blue Network.

In 1945, during World War II, a Soviet submarine in the Baltic Sea torpedoed and sank the MV Goya, which Germany was using to transport civilian refugees and wounded soldiers; it's estimated that up to 7,000 people died.

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

In 1968, American author Edna Ferber, whose novels included "So Big," "Show Boat" and "Giant," and who collaborated with George S. Kaufman on such plays as "Stage Door" and "Dinner at Eight," died in New York at age 82.

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

In 1986, dispelling rumors he was dead, Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi (MOO'-ah-mar gah-DAH'-fee) appeared on television to condemn the U.S. raid on his country and to say that Libyans were "ready to die" defending their nation.

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

In 2007, in one of America's worst school attacks, a Korean-born college senior killed 32 people on the campus of Virginia Tech before taking his own life.

Ten years ago: The Supreme Court upheld, 7-2, the most widely used method of lethal injection, allowing states to resume executions after a seven-month halt. Pope Benedict XVI was welcomed by President George W. Bush as only the second pontiff to visit the White House (after John Paul II) and the first in 29 years. Mathematician-meteorologist Edward Lorenz, the father of "chaos theory," died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at age 90.

Five years ago: Federal agents zeroed in on how the Boston Marathon bombing the day before was carried out — with kitchen pressure cookers packed with explosives, nails and other lethal shrapnel — but said they didn't know yet who had done it, or why. An envelope addressed to Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., tested positive for ricin (RY'-sin), a potentially fatal poison. (A Mississippi man later pleaded guilty to sending letters dusted with ricin to Wicker, President Barack Obama and a judge.) NFL player-turned-broadcaster Pat Summerall, 82, died in Dallas.

One year ago: Robert Godwin Sr., a 74-year-old retiree, was shot to death along a Cleveland street; authorities said his random killing was posted on Facebook by the gunman who killed himself during a police chase in Erie, Pennsylvania, two days later. U.S. officials said a North Korean medium-range missile exploded seconds after launch, a high-profile failure that came hours before U.S. Vice President Mike Pence arrived in South Korea for a visit at the start of a 10-day trip to Asia. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (REH'-jehp TY'-ihp UR'-doh-wahn) won a historic referendum greatly expanding the powers of his office, although opposition parties questioned the outcome.

Today's Birthdays: Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI is 91. Actor Peter Mark Richman is 91. Singer Bobby Vinton is 83. Denmark's Queen Margrethe II is 78. Basketball Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is 71. Former Massachusetts first lady Ann Romney is 69. Alaska Gov. Bill Walker is 67. NFL coach Bill Belichick is 66. Rock singer and former politician Peter Garrett is 65. Actress Ellen Barkin is 64. Actor Michel Gill is 58. Rock musician Jason Scheff (Chicago) is 56. Singer Jimmy Osmond is 55. Rock singer David Pirner (Soul Asylum) is 54. Actor-comedian Martin Lawrence is 53. Actor Jon Cryer is 53. Rock musician Dan Rieser is 52. Actor Peter Billingsley is 47. Actor Lukas Haas is 42. Actress-singer Kelli O'Hara is 42. Actress Claire Foy (TV: "The Crown") is 34. Figure skater Mirai Nagasu is 25. Actress Sadie Sink is 16.

Thought for Today: "A closed country is a dying country... A closed mind is a dying mind." — Edna Ferber (1887-1968).