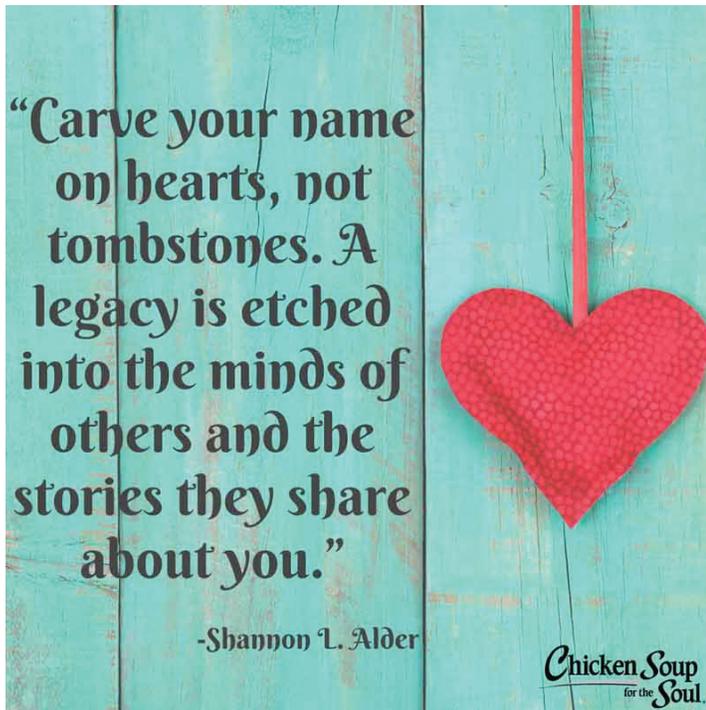


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## Thursday, April 26

- VEX World Robotics Competition at Louisville, KY
- 7 p.m.: FCCLA Style Show (to be broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM)
- 10 a.m.: Girls Golf at Milbank Area

## Friday, April 27

- VEX World Robotics Competition at Louisville, KY
- FFA Banquet
- 3 p.m.: Track Meet at Sisseton

## Saturday, April 28

- VEX World Robotics Competition at Louisville, KY

## Midwest Masonry & concrete Pumping

**Greg Heilman, owner**

405 E 1st Ave., Groton

Greg: 253/929-9137

Mike: 605/492-7041

midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com



## Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

## 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.

## Mail Highway Route Relief Driver

Position available for Highway Relief Driver  
Must be over 21, have a good driving record  
Able to lift 70 pounds.

Route is early mornings and late afternoons

Mainly Saturdays and some week days

Contact Dave Miller 605-397-8277 Leave Message

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The Groton Robotics team served at the Groton Lions Bingo event held Wednesday night at the Groton Legion. They served barbecues, chips, beans and a bar. Alex Dutchek, Lee Iverson, River Pardick (in back is Peggy Feist and Jim Lane), Travis Townsend and Kellie Townsend.

## Officer Bjerke the Ticket Stub Please!

Monday evening at GT Robotics practice Officer Jerry Bjerke draw the winning ticket stubs for the GT Robotics greenhouse raffle.

Jeff Stolle's ticket stub was pulled for the greenhouse, making Tammy very happy.

The 55" TV was won by Vicki Rossow.

The iPad mini was won by Adrian Paulson.

The Dairy Queen Gift card was won by Deb Antil.

The robotists of GT Robotics and I have been overwhelmed by the support we have in our community. Thank you everyone!

Thank You! Thank You!

Jim Lane, Coach of GT Robotics



Nancy Larsen opens up a new pack of Bingo cards at the Groton Lions Bingo event held Wednesday evening at the Groton Legion. The jackpot did not go out, so next week's Blackout Jackpot will be \$5,580.

## Emmanuel Lutheran Church Women's Blood Drive Brings in 53 Volunteers



**Eunice Alberts, June Ackman and Carol Osterman helped to check in blood donors at the Blood Drive held April 16.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

across the region. Donations from O-negative this time of year due to increased accidents and trauma cases.

United Blood Services is the only blood provider to nearly 70 hospitals across the region. The blood supply is dependent on selfless donations from volunteer donors to ensure the lifesaving needs of the region are met.

About 30 percent of UBS's blood supply goes to cancer patients across the region and one in seven people entering the hospital will need blood. Those relying on blood in the region receive that lifesaving blood from UBS.

Donors can make a convenient appointment to give blood at [www.bloodhero.com](http://www.bloodhero.com) or by calling (877)827-4376. With each donation, donors receive a free total cholesterol test and earn points

The Emmanuel Lutheran Church Women hosted a blood drive with United Blood Services on April 16 at the American Legion which helped collect a total of 56 units of blood for patients in need.

A total of 53 individuals volunteered to donate blood and 45 individuals were able to donate at the United Blood Services blood drive on April 16. A total of 11 donors also came forward to donate Power Red Cells (2RBC) which collects two units of red blood cells while returning platelets, plasma and a saline solution back to the donor. There were five people who volunteered for the first time.

United Blood Services expressed their gratitude to Carol Osterman, who coordinated the drive, and Emmanuel Lutheran Church Women which sponsored the blood drive, as well as Jane Ackman who assisted with the drive.

UBS strives to keep a 5-day supply of every blood type on the shelf at all times to be able to meet the needs of patients



**Penny Stolle and Charla Rye assisted with the serving of treats after individuals donated blood.**

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



in United Blood Services' Hero in Me rewards program.

Blood donation takes about an hour from check-in to refreshments. Donors can save about 20 minutes by completing their Fast Track Health History the day they donate on [www.unitedbloodservices.org](http://www.unitedbloodservices.org)

## Ashley Seeklander - 2018 SD School Counselor of the Year

Ms. Ashley Seeklander, elementary and middle school counselor at Groton Area, was selected as the 2018 SD School Counselor of the Year.

The SD School Counselor of the Year award recipient must be a certified and credentialed school counselor who has made an outstanding contribution to the counseling profession or the community served. The nominee must have excellent rapport with students, parents, and school personnel and must be working towards the development or maintenance of a comprehensive school counseling program. The SD School Counselor of the Year is the SD nominee for the American School Counseling Association School Counselor of the Year award.

Ms. Seeklander has been a school counselor since 2009 and has been at Groton Area Middle and Elementary School since 2013. Prior to working at Groton, she worked at the Sully Buttes School District for four years. Ms. Seeklander's practice includes classroom guidance, individual counseling, and group counseling. She has been a member of the SDSCA for ten years, a member of ASCA for nine years, and has served as SDSCA President, Special Projects Chair, Government Relations Chair, and as a counselor mentor. She was selected as the recipient of the Mavis Booze Mentorship award in 2015. "Ms. Seeklander always looks out for our students and for the members of the school and community," stated Jodi Sternhagen, Groton 9-12 School Counselor. "She is such an asset at our school – we are very lucky to have her as a staff member at Groton Area School."



**Ashley Seeklander**

Congratulations to Ms. Seeklander!

## GROTON KIWANIS CLUB

Kiwanis Club met Wednesday noon, for their weekly dinner meeting.

Vice president, Tom Mahan presided for the business meeting. Reports were given on the very successful annual Kiwanis sponsored track meet , on Tuesday. Chuck Padfield, Reid Litch, Lee Schinkel, Roger Rix and Larry Schelle were volunteer workers for the track meet.

Lee introduced his guest, Jamie Simon, and then announced the scholarship committee had chosen Hattie Weismantel for the annual \$500 Kiwanis scholarship.

Chuck Padfield was program leader, and introduced Mike Nehls , who is running for Brown County Commissioners. Mike spoke on his plans for candidacy.



**Hattie Weismantel was awarded the Groton Kiwanis Community Service Scholarship for 2018. On the left is Lee Schinkel and on the right is Kiwanis President Reed Litch.**

## Thinking About Health

### Battle over Affordable Care Act (ACA) shifts to the states

By Wendell Potter, Rural Health News Service

We've heard relatively little from Washington in recent months about the Affordable Care Act, but that doesn't mean our elected officials have forgotten about it or that its future is certain. Republican lawmakers still say the plan forces Americans to buy health insurance they may not want or need and that many may not be able to afford. Democrats say its benefits outweigh any downside.

These days, the battleground over the law's fate has shifted, at least temporarily, from Congress to the states.

Many of the country's state attorneys general are now squaring off against each other the way attorneys often do: with litigation. One of their lawsuits would have the effect of repealing the law, sometimes called Obamacare, while the other would keep it intact.

The first shot was fired in late February when a group of 20 Republican state officials filed a lawsuit that if successful would, in their words, "end the grip of Obamacare."

Nineteen Republican attorneys general, plus Maine Governor Paul LePage, also a Republican, contend that Congress opened the door for their lawsuit when it repealed the penalty that most Americans have to pay if they don't enroll in a health insurance plan.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, the leader of the group, said when he filed the lawsuit in a federal district court in Fort Worth that "when Congress enacted President Trump's tax overhaul, it rendered all of Obamacare unconstitutional by doing away with the tax penalty in Obamacare's individual mandate."

He called the law a "failed experiment" that he said should be replaced "with a plan that would seek to create more lower-cost health insurance options.

The other group of attorneys general, led by California AG Xavier Becerra, contends that the ACA has been upheld by the Supreme Court and that doing away with the penalty to remain uninsured didn't alter that fact. He and 15 other Democratic attorneys general filed a motion in early April to try to block the Republicans' lawsuit from moving forward.

"The Texas lawsuit is based on a dubious legal claim with the sole goal of stripping Americans of their healthcare," Becerra said in a press release. "To roll back the clock and risk the health of millions of Americans is irresponsible and dangerous. We can't and we won't go back."

If the GOP group prevails in district court, their opponents would probably appeal, and the fate of the ACA likely would once again be in the hands of the U.S. Supreme Court. Here is what would go away if the high court sides with the Republican AGs.

- Pre-existing conditions: Before the ACA, health insurers could charge people with pre-existing conditions considerably more than people without them. Insurers also could and frequently did refuse to sell coverage to many applicants at any price because of their health status. Federal data revealed that before the ACA, many insurers often turned down a third or more of their applicants. Since the ACA went into full effect, insurers can no longer base premiums on a person's health status, and they can no longer refuse to sell coverage to anyone because of a pre-existing condition.

- Gender: Before the ACA, insurers charged many women, especially those of childbearing age, more than men for policies they sold on the individual market. The ACA made it unlawful for insurers to charge women more than men for the exact same policy.

- Young people: Before the ACA, in most states insurers could and typically did remove children from their parent's policies when they turned 19. Since the ACA, young people can stay on their parent's policies until they turn 26 if they can't get coverage through an employer.

- Older people: Before Obamacare, insurers in most states could charge people in their 50s and 60s five to 10 times as much as younger people for the same policy. (Some states had no limit.) Since the ACA, insurers cannot charge older applicants more than three times as much as they charge younger ones.

- Low and middle-income people: Before the ACA, many Americans remained uninsured because of the cost of health insurance. Since the ACA, several million Americans have enrolled in Medicaid plans in the

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33 states (including the District of Columbia) that expanded their Medicaid programs. Several million others earning between 100 and 400 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for subsidies to help them pay for their premiums and, in some cases, to lower their out-of-pocket costs.

If the Republican attorneys general win their lawsuit, those provisions of the Affordable Care Act would no longer be in effect.

While Paxton did not specifically address those or other features of the ACA when he filed the lawsuit, he did say that abolishing the law "would give President Trump and Congress an opportunity to replace that failed experiment with a plan that ensures Texans and all Americans have better choices for health coverage at more affordable prices."

He did not speculate on which if any of the ACA's provisions might be restored or how long it might take for Congress to enact a replacement bill.

Are you wondering how the lawsuit over the ACA might affect the future of your healthcare? Send me your questions, concerns and personal stories at [Wendell@tarbell.com](mailto:Wendell@tarbell.com).

Wendell Potter is a former health insurance executive, author and founder of the journalism nonprofit [Tarbell.org](http://Tarbell.org).

## State 4-H Leaders Sponsor Financial Assistance

BROOKINGS, S.D. - The South Dakota 4-H Leader's Association annually sponsors financial assistance for youth wanting to attend 4-H summer camp programs.

"The South Dakota 4-H Leaders are proud to sponsor these scholarships each year. The yearly camps allow youth to meet new friends, experience new culture, learn new things, and have a lot of fun," said Donna Bittiker, SDSU Extension State 4-H Program Director.

The many opportunities include: 4-H Camp at Lake Poinsett; 4-H camp at Camp Bob Marshall near Custer; Performing Arts Camp in Aberdeen and the Teen Leadership Conference in Brookings.

Thanks to the generous support of the South Dakota 4-H Leader's Association 4-H members can apply for \$25 in financial assistance to attend 4-H Camp at Lake Poinsett or Bob Marshall or \$50 for participation in Teen Leadership Conference or Performing Arts Camp.

When 4-H members apply for scholarships, they agree to share their camp experiences with one local group if they attend 4-H Camp or two local groups if they attend Teen Leadership Camp or Performing Arts participants.

"Participants can share their 4-H club or a civic group," Bittiker explained.

Participants will receive their scholarship after they submit their application.

Scholarship application details

Scholarship application forms are due by December 31, 2018. Forms can be found at <http://www.santel.net/~sd4hleaders/doc/App-CampFeeAssistance-2018.pdf>.

The registration deadlines for the summer opportunities are drawing near.

Please follow these steps:

Step 1: Register for the 2018 camp and pay the full camp fee.

Step 2: Attend camp

Step 3: Tell a group about camp

For the \$25 4-H Camp scholarship one group

For the \$50 Teen Leadership Camp or Performing Arts Camp scholarship, two groups.

Step 4: Complete the camp assistance/scholarship application form complete with necessary signatures and submit to the South Dakota 4-H Leaders Association.

Step 5: All youth who complete all steps will receive scholarship within 2 weeks of its receipt.

The South Dakota 4-H Leaders Association raises these funds for scholarships through two State Fair dances held Saturday and Sunday night during S.D. State Fair and through the sale of 4-H attire at the Leaders Booth in Nordby Hall during State Fair.

Both of these activities receive volunteer assistance from many of the 4-H leaders and parents throughout the state. For additional information please visit <http://www.southdakota4hleaders.com/>.

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## Gasoline Demand at Record Highs for April as Pump Prices Surge

April 25, 2018 - The Energy Information Administration's (EIA) latest data registers consumer gasoline demand at 9.857 million b/d. That is the highest level ever on record for the month of April and exceeds typical summer demand measurements. As demand skyrockets, gas prices increased across the country on the week with five states seeing double-digit jumps. The national average ticked up seven cents to \$2.78.

"Pump prices are causing sticker shock across the country," said Marilyn Buskohl, AAA spokesperson. "Gas is selling at \$2.26 or more at every gas station in America. More so, 13 percent of stations have pump prices set at \$3 or more."

South Dakota Average Gas Prices:

Current Avg. \$2.655

Yesterday Avg. \$2.639

Week Ago Avg. \$2.644

Month Ago Avg. \$2.540

Year Ago Avg. \$2.415

West Coast states primarily have the most expensive gas price averages (\$3+). However, on the east coast, Pennsylvania (\$2.97) is inching closer to that same threshold.

Today's national gas price average (\$2.78) is 19-cents more expensive than last month and 38-cents more expensive than last year at this time.

### Quick Stats

The nation's top 10 states with the largest weekly increases are: Florida (+11 cents), Rhode Island (+11 cents), Connecticut (+10 cents), New Jersey (+10 cents), Michigan (+10 cents), Ohio (+10 cents), Utah (+8 cents), Massachusetts (+8 cents), New Hampshire (+8 cents) and New York (+7 cents).

The nation's top 10 most expensive markets are: Hawaii (\$3.59), California (\$3.58), Washington (\$3.25), Alaska (\$3.23), Nevada (\$3.18), Oregon (\$3.16), Idaho (\$3.05), Utah (\$3.02), Pennsylvania (\$2.97) and Connecticut (\$2.89).

### Central and Great Lakes Region

With this week's increases, gas price averages in the region are as much as 35-cents more expensive than this time last year: Michigan (+35 cents), Indiana (+34 cents), Kentucky (+33 cents), Illinois (+33 cents) and Ohio (+30 cents). South Dakota (+22 cents) has the smallest year-over-year change in the region and the country.

On the week, Michigan and Ohio saw prices jump by a dime - the largest increases in gas price averages in the region and among the top 10 states in the country on the week. With a one-cent increase, Missouri saw the smallest increase in the region and the country. Overall, gas prices range from \$2.87 in Michigan to \$2.46 in Missouri.

### Oil market dynamics

At the close of Friday's formal trading session on the NYMEX, WTI increased nine cents to settle at \$68.38, which is the second highest close for WTI since Dec. 1, 2014.

The market saw increased volatility on Friday morning due to President Trump's tweet that criticized OPEC's efforts to restrict global crude supply and raise the price per barrel, but later in the day, crude prices rebounded to the highs they experienced earlier in the week. The jump in price per barrel occurred after Wednesday's EIA weekly report revealed that crude inventories across the U.S. dropped by a combined 1.1 million bbl.

The year-over-year decline in oil inventories is a result of OPEC's agreement with large non-OPEC producers to reduce crude production by 1.8 million b/d which was put into place in January 2017. The agreement is supposed to remain in effect until the end of 2018.

Motorists can find current gas prices along their route with the free AAA Mobile app for iPhone, iPad and Android. The app can also be used to map a route, find discounts, book a hotel and access AAA roadside assistance. Learn more at [AAA.com/mobile](http://AAA.com/mobile).

## Checklist FOR Your Social Security Annual Check-Up

By: **Patty Hoffman**

**Social Security Public Affairs Specialist**

Say "annual checkup" and most people imagine waiting at the doctor's office. But, there's another type of checkup that can give you a sense of wellness without even leaving home. Visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) and follow these five steps to conduct your own Social Security annual checkup.

Your Social Security Statement is available online anytime to everyone who has a my Social Security account at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount). Creating your account gives you 24/7 access to your personal information and makes it impossible for someone else to set up an account in your name. We still send paper Statements to those who are 60 and older who don't have an account and aren't receiving Social Security benefits. Your Statement provides information about work credits (you need 40 credits to be entitled to a Social Security retirement benefit), estimates for retirement, disability, and survivors benefits, plus a history of your earnings.

### **Work Credits Count**

If you have earned 40 work credits, your Statement will show estimates for retirement, disability, and survivors benefits. If you don't have 40 work credits, the Statement shows how many you have and how many you still need to qualify for benefits.

### **Review Earnings Record**

Review your history of earnings year by year to make sure each year is correct. This is important because Social Security benefits are based on your lifetime earnings. If any years are incorrect or missing, you may not receive all the benefits you are entitled to in the future. If you need to correct your earnings, contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please have your W-2 or paystubs when you call.

### **Study Benefit Estimates**

Review the section titled "Your Estimated Benefits." Be sure to review not only your retirement estimate, but your disability and survivors estimates. No one likes to think about disability, but a 20-year-old worker has a one-in-four chance of becoming disabled before reaching retirement age, underscoring the importance of disability benefits. Since the value of the survivors insurance you have under Social Security may be more than your individual life insurance, be sure to check your survivors estimates also.

### **Calculate Additional Estimates**

You can use our Retirement Estimator to compute future Social Security benefits by changing variables such as retirement dates and future earnings. If you want to project what future earnings could add to your benefit, visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator).

### **Schedule Your Annual Check-Up**

Each year, make a date with yourself to review the most recently posted year of earnings on your Statement. By checking your record every year, you can be certain when you retire that Social Security will have a correct record of earnings to use when computing benefits for you or your family members.

Social Security helps you secure your today and tomorrow by providing information to make your financial planning easier. Social Security is more than retirement; it is a family protection plan. For more information about benefits, visit us at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

Patty Hoffman is the Public Affairs Specialist for ND, SD and Western MN. You can write her c/o Social Security Administration, 4207 Boulder Ridge Road, Ste. 100, Bismarck ND 58503 or via email at [patty.hoffman@ssa.gov](mailto:patty.hoffman@ssa.gov).

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## Today in Weather History

April 26, 1986: Intense thunderstorms swept across southeast South Dakota, southwest Minnesota, and northwest Iowa. Baseball size hail fell in a 15-mile wide swath from near Pickstown to Scotland, South Dakota. The large hail caused extensive damage to windows, roofs, siding, and vehicles in the path of the storm. Wind gusts of 70 to 80 mph and rain amounts of 2 or more inches in a short period (including 5 inches at Centerville) were reported in southeast South Dakota. Several tornadoes moved across northwest Iowa including one that ran across part of Lyon County destroying several farmsteads. Another tornado moved through Lyon County, Iowa into Nobles County, Minnesota damaging, at least, 16 separate farms. Another tornado touched down briefly on the south side of Okebena in Jackson County destroying or damaging several houses.

April 26, 1991: During a severe thunderstorm event, large hail fell over parts of Brown, Spink, Hand, and Buffalo Counties. Both Brown and Hand Counties received hail up to 1.75 inches in diameter.

April 26, 2008: An area of low-pressure brought widespread heavy snow of 6 to 20 inches to most of northeast South Dakota for much of the 25th and into the early morning hours of the 26th. The precipitation began as light freezing rain in the early morning across parts of the area before changing to all snow by mid-morning. As the low-pressure area intensified, snowfall rates and the north winds also increased. The heavy snow combined with the high winds created widespread visibility problems along with large snowdrifts. Snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Andover, Britton, Gann Valley, and 15 miles south of Miller, 8 inches at Roy Lake, 9 inches at Clark, Big Stone City, Hillside Colony, and Sisseton, 10 inches 7 miles south of Bristol, and 11 inches at Hayti. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included 12 inches at Wilmot, Webster, and Waubay, 13 inches at Milbank, 15 inches at Castlewood, 16 inches near Victor, and near Summit, 17 inches at Clear Lake, 19 inches at Watertown, and 20 inches at Bryant.

Some automobiles went into the ditch along with many other vehicles damaged in accidents. Many stranded motorists had to abandon their cars in the hardest hit areas. Travel was not advised across the entire region. A school bus slid into a ditch east of Castlewood with no injuries occurring. Interstate-29 was closed from 3 pm the 25th until 3 pm on the 26th from Brookings north to the North Dakota border. Also, South Dakota State Highway 12 was closed from Webster to the Minnesota line from the afternoon of the 25th until the late morning of the 26th. Most counties affected by the storm opened emergency shelters when Interstate 29 was closed to house stranded motorists. Also, many schools were closed across the area.

The very heavy snow set several records across the area. The 19 inches at Watertown broke its all-time 24-hour snowfall record of 16 inches. Both Victor and Clear Lake had their second-highest snowfall ever recorded in a 24 hour period. Watertown, along with several other locations in northeast South Dakota, received near-record or record snowfall for April. In fact, Watertown's 29.5 inches of snow for April was almost their average seasonal snowfall.

1884: Tornadoes were hard to capture on old cameras with their hard to use glass plate negatives. The first recorded photograph of a tornado was taken on this date by A.A. Adams near Garnett, Kansas. Click [HERE](#) for more information from Weatherwise.

1978: An unusually strong occluded front swept out of the Gulf of Alaska and produced the first April thunderstorm of record at Fairbanks. Pea-size hail fell northeast of Fairbanks from thunderstorms whose tops were less than 8000 feet.

1986: The Chernobyl nuclear power station in Kiev Ukraine suffered a massive explosion. The radioactive cloud of particles and gas carried westward and northwestward, contaminating large areas of Europe in the following week. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel.com.

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Thu Apr 26	Fri Apr 27	Sat Apr 28	Sun Apr 29	Mon Apr 30	Tue May 1	Wed May 2
						
64°F 39°F	63°F 29°F	63°F 45°F	76°F 55°F	79°F 49°F	65°F 41°F	66°F 49°F
N 22 MPH	NW 19 MPH	E 11 MPH	SSE 21 MPH	S 16 MPH	NW 14 MPH Precip 40%	NW 9 MPH

## Tonight

Near 40°

**Breezy** near the passage of a cold front overnight

## Thursday

55 to 65°

**Breezy**, especially over eastern SD and western MN

Slightly Cooler  
Thursday, otherwise  
**Warming through  
the Weekend.**



A mostly dry cold front will sink across the area tonight, with a period of breezy winds accompanying it. Temperatures will be slightly cooler Thursday, but will otherwise warm through the weekend!

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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 63.6 F at 4:48 PM**

**Low Outside Temp: 25.7 F at 6:46 AM**

**Wind Chill:**

**High Gust: 24.0 Mph at 3:58 PM**

**Precip: 0.00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 86° in 1952**

**Record Low: 20° in 1931**

**Average High: 63°F**

**Average Low: 36°F**

**Average Precip in April: 1.50**

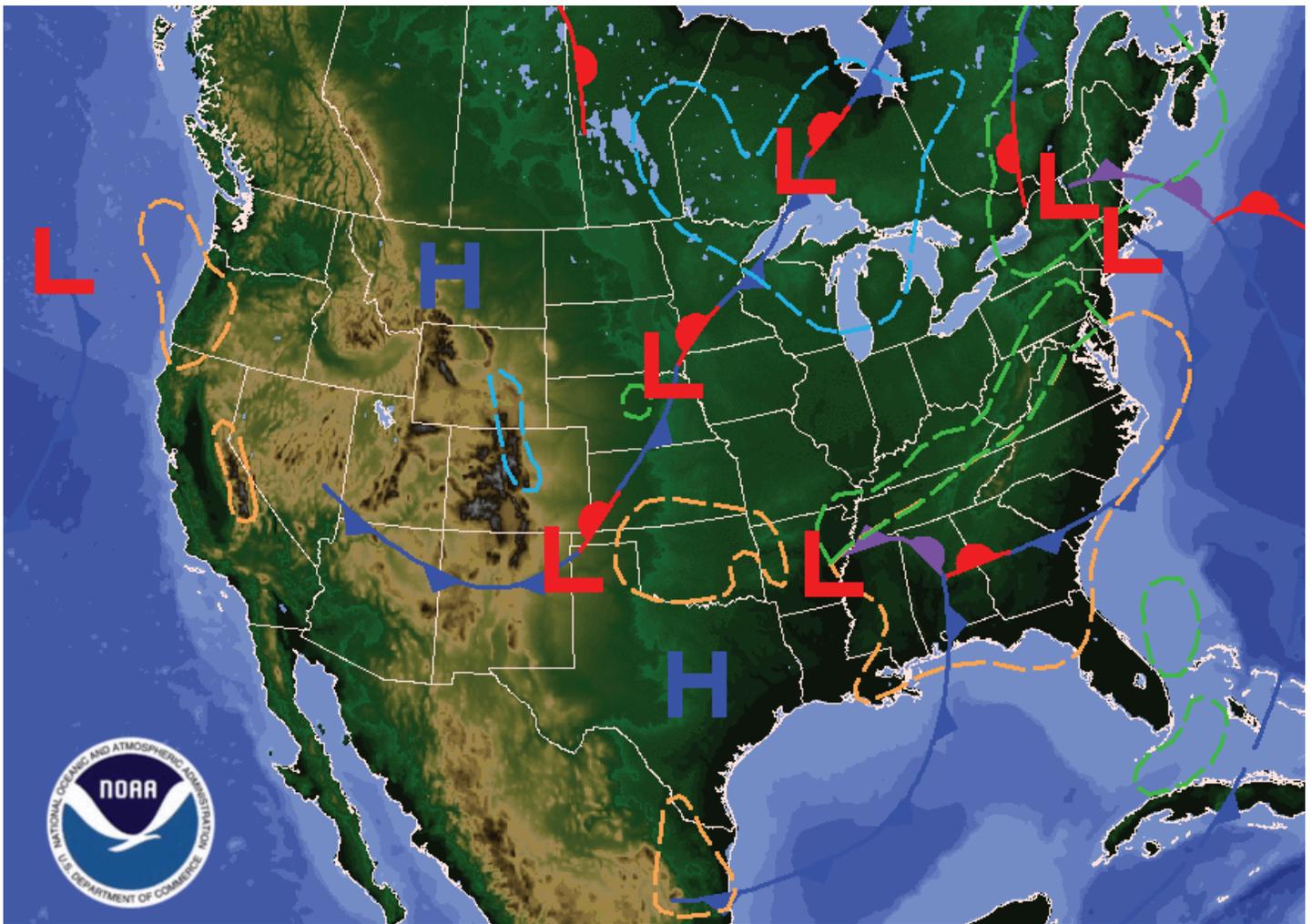
**Precip to date in April: 0.83**

**Average Precip to date: 3.68**

**Precip Year to Date: 2.68**

**Sunset Tonight: 8:34 p.m.**

**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:28 a.m.**



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Apr 26, 2018, issued 4:46 AM EDT  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McReynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain

Rain and T'Storms

Rain and Snow

Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)

Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)

Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)

Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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## THE WONDER OF WORK

Years ago a "hobo" came to the back porch as my mother sat there "shelling peas." "Pardon me, Ma'am, but could you spare a meal to a starving traveler?"

Graciously, but firmly, my mother responded and said she would be happy to provide a meal, but he would have to do some yard work first. Politely, he declined. He was "too weak" to work before he had something to eat. He then walked away quietly and went next door.

God intended for man to work. As soon as He created man He planted a garden in Eden and gave him a job to do: he was told to cultivate the garden. The Psalmist reminded us of the importance of work when he wrote, "Man goes out to his work, to his labor until evening."

Perhaps it is good to remember that in the days of His flesh our Lord Jesus worked. He must have gone to His daily tasks with enthusiasm - not because it was easy or financially rewarding. He was using the skills His Father gave Him to do His will and honor Him through the work of His hands. On one occasion, early in His life, He said, "I always do the things that please Him." He did what was necessary yet never sinned.

How comforting it is to know that the Carpenter of Nazareth faced every situation that we face today or will face tomorrow. This fact assures us that He understands us completely. He faced the same trials and temptations that we face. However,, He never gave in to any temptation or committed any sin so He could one day become our Savior.

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for living a life that sets the example of how we should live so others can see You in us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 104:23 Then people go out to their work, to their labor until evening.

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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
- 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 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

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash  
01-02-30-31-32  
(one, two, thirty, thirty-one, thirty-two)  
Estimated jackpot: \$83,000

Lotto America  
07-22-27-35-47, Star Ball: 4, ASB: 5  
(seven, twenty-two, twenty-seven, thirty-five, forty-seven; Star Ball: four; ASB: five)  
Estimated jackpot: \$3.79 million

Mega Millions  
Estimated jackpot: \$111 million

Powerball  
17-18-39-56-64, Powerball: 12, Power Play: 3  
(seventeen, eighteen, thirty-nine, fifty-six, sixty-four; Powerball: twelve; Power Play: three)  
Estimated jackpot: \$158 million

### Report: South Dakota teachers no longer lowest paid in US

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota no longer has the lowest-paid teachers in the U.S. after holding the ranking for more than three decades, according to a recent report.

The National Education Association released its annual report on Monday. The report showed that salary increases pushed South Dakota from 51st to 48th in the country, including the District of Columbia. A half-cent sales tax increase in 2016 brought millions of dollars into the state's school districts.

The report said the state's average teacher salaries rose nearly 12 percent to almost \$47,000, which marks the largest improvement in percentage and dollars in the country. But South Dakota still lags behind the annual teacher salary across the U.S. by more than \$12,000.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard credited the improvement to the 2015 Blue Ribbon Task Force, which studied how to increase teacher pay and recommended the tax increase.

"We also sent an important message to our teachers — that we value the work they do, that three decades in last place was enough and that we were willing to step up to improve their salaries," Daugaard said in a statement.

Teacher salaries haven't met the \$48,500 average target lawmakers set two years ago.

Overall, the report ranked South Dakota above Mississippi, Oklahoma and West Virginia. South Dakota's new ranking was still behind neighboring states. North Dakota secured the 27th spot, Nebraska ranked 30th and Minnesota ranked 20th, with an average salary of more than \$57,000.

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## **Authorities: No evidence mayor candidate's website breached**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota authorities say investigators haven't found evidence that a Sioux Falls mayoral candidate's bank account or website have been compromised.

The Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office and the state Division of Criminal Investigation said in a Wednesday statement that officials are still waiting on records from other social media organizations. The preliminary investigation results come after mayoral hopeful Jolene Loetscher said she's been the target of several hacking attempts on her campaign and personal email, bank accounts and social media.

Loetscher's opponent, Paul TenHaken, has denied any wrongdoing. The two candidates will face each other in a runoff election next week.

Authorities say in the statement that the investigation is ongoing and isn't focused on "any specific person or business as a suspect."

## **Man banned from hunting for luring big game with bait**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City man who pleaded guilty to illegally hunting mountain lions and deer using bait has been banned from hunting for nine years.

Thirty-nine-year-old William Colson VI pleaded guilty to nine misdemeanor charges, including conspiracy to unlawfully possess a big game animal. The Rapid City Journal reports that his hunting license was revoked a year for each charge.

South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks officials say the sentence does not allow him to hunt anywhere in the United States.

Magistrate Judge Bernard Schuchmann suspended jail time but ordered Colson to serve probation and pay a fine of \$11,500.

Authorities say Colson and another man placed five dead deer at Spring Creek Canyon in southwestern Rapid City to lure mountain lions between December 2015 and January 2016.

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

## **South Dakota State University cutting tennis programs**

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota State University is cutting its men's and women's tennis programs at the end of the academic year.

Athletic Director Justin Sell says a lack of quality tennis courts on campus and in Brookings was a primary factor in the decision.

The move will affect 19 athletes, a full-time coach and a student assistant coach. The school will honor the athletes' scholarships and help those who want to transfer to other schools.

The tennis programs were cut once before, in 1983, but they were reinstated in 1991.

SDSU will continue to have 19 other varsity sports.

## **Remains of South Dakota sailor killed in WWII to be buried**

FLANDREAU, S.D. (AP) — The remains of a South Dakota serviceman whose fighter plane was shot down over the Pacific Ocean during World War II will be laid to rest next month.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency says Navy Reserve Lt. William Punnell of Flandreau will be buried with full military honors May 2 in Arlington National Cemetery.

Punnell's remains were accounted for last June. Scientists used DNA analysis to help identify his remains.

The 27-year-old Punnell was acting commanding officer of the VF-14 Fighter Squadron on July 25, 1944, when his F6F-3 Hellcat was shot down during a strafing mission against Japanese targets on the islands of the Republic of Palau.

His aircraft sank on impact. Other pilots in the mission did not see Punnell bail out.

Punnell's Hellcat was located in 2014.

## **Board OKs money for Rapid City civic center metal detectors**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The board overseeing Rapid City's Rushmore Plaza Civic Center has voted to spend \$50,000 in government grant money to install portable metal detectors at the facility.

The Rapid City Journal reports the civic center's board of directors unanimously approved the purchase Tuesday.

Civic Center Executive Director Craig Baltzer says the metal detectors would help meet security demands of many entertainment acts. Center staff members currently use hand-held metal detector wands but Baltzer called them "cumbersome."

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

## **Independent Ronald Wieczorek seeking SD congressional seat**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Mount Vernon man who has mounted several unsuccessful congressional bids is seeking to run for South Dakota's lone U.S. House seat as an independent in November.

The Capital Journal reports that Ronald Wieczorek turned in about 4,000 signatures Tuesday to the Secretary of State's office. A supporter of President Donald Trump, Wieczorek describes himself as a "Roosevelt Democrat and a Abraham Lincoln Republican."

He turned in the signatures on the filing deadline for independent candidates. Independent U.S. House hopefuls need 2,775 valid signatures to qualify for the ballot.

If Wieczorek submitted enough signatures, he'll face Democrat Tim Bjorkman, Libertarian George Hendrickson and the winner of the Republican primary in the November general election. GOP candidates Dusty Johnson, Shantel Krebs and Neal Tapio are competing in the June primary race.

Information from: Pierre Capital Journal, <http://www.capjournal.com>

## **4 escape serious injury in emergency landing near Pine Ridge**

ABERDEE, S.D. (AP) — Four people escaped serious injury when a charter plane carrying HKG Architects employees from Aberdeen made an emergency landing near Pine Ridge.

Company President Dean Marske tells the American News that the twin-engine propeller plane registered to Aberdeen Flying Service hit a cold pocket and iced up, forcing it to the ground Tuesday morning in a field near Batesland.

Marske and project managers Mary Jo King and Ron Keller were aboard, along with the pilot. Marske says it took 45 minutes for emergency responders to reach them because of the remote location.

Marske says he suffered a dislocated shoulder, and Keller suffered broken facial bones. King suffered bumps and bruises.

The pilot's name and condition are unknown. Aberdeen Flying Service declined comment.

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

## **Trial delayed in case related to officer-involved shooting**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Trial in federal court in North Dakota for two men indicted in a drug conspiracy linked to a California street gang has been delayed.

The Bismarck Tribune reports that the trial in Bismarck for Ulises Villalobos-Alvarado and Juan Nunez was to be next week, but defense attorneys asked for more time to prepare. Judge Daniel Hovland re-scheduled the trial to begin July 9.

The case began when Villalobos-Alvarado was accused of trying to run over a Bismarck officer who subsequently shot him in the arm during a probation search Jan. 18. He later turned himself in at a gas station in Brookings, South Dakota. Nunez was accused of helping him avoid apprehension.

The state charges were dropped in March, and the two were charged in the federal drug case.

Information from: Bismarck Tribune, <http://www.bismarcktribune.com>

## South Dakota spring wheat planting finally getting underway

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Planting of spring wheat is finally getting underway in South Dakota.

The federal Agriculture Department says in its weekly crop report that 2 percent of the crop is in the ground, well behind the five-year average of 50 percent. Last year at this time, nearly 75 percent of the spring wheat was seeded.

About 2 percent of the oats crop also is planted, behind the average pace of 54 percent.

The state's winter wheat crop remains mostly in fair-to-good condition.

Topsoil moisture supplies are rated 87 percent adequate to surplus, up from 82 percent. Subsoil moisture is 72 percent in that category, up from 63 percent.

## EPA chief faces Capitol Hill grilling over ethical missteps

By MICHAEL BIESECKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt faces potentially make-or-break hearings Thursday on Capitol Hill, where he is expected to be peppered with questions about spending and ethics scandals that have triggered bipartisan calls for his ouster.

Pruitt was scheduled to testify about his agency's budget in back-to-back hearings before two House subcommittees.

The public grilling comes amid notable erosion in support for Pruitt among fellow Republicans after a nearly monthlong hammering of negative headlines about outsized security spending, first-class flights and a sweetheart condo lease.

President Donald Trump has continued to stand by his EPA chief, but behind closed doors, White House officials concede Pruitt's job is in serious jeopardy. In the last week, a growing list of Republican lawmakers has joined the chorus of Democrats calling for new investigations into Pruitt's actions.

Republican Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana said Pruitt's behavior has begun to hurt Trump's credibility, as well as the Republican Party generally.

"I don't mean to be too harsh, but you can't just go around acting like a big shot, and you can't go around seeing how close you can come to the line, and you can't go around disrespecting taxpayer dollars," Kennedy said Tuesday. "It shouldn't be tolerated. That's part of the swamp that we're trying to clean up."

Pruitt has faced a steady trickle of revelations involving pricey trips in first-class seats and unusual security spending, including a \$43,000 soundproof booth for making private phone calls. He also demanded 24-hour-a-day protection from armed officers, resulting in a swollen, 20-member security detail that blew through overtime budgets and racked up expenses approaching \$3 million.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said officials were "evaluating these concerns and we expect the EPA administrator to answer for them."

Pruitt's prepared testimony for the House environment subcommittee made no reference to ethics issues. Released ahead of the hearing, Pruitt promoted his prior accomplishments and remarked on his priorities for the coming budget year.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said congressional hearings were an opportunity to describe the agency's accomplishments, which he said included efforts to repeal the Obama administration's clean power plan, eliminating lead and reducing staffing levels at EPA.

Pruitt in the past has often sought to deflect questions about any missteps by blaming his subordinates.

Asked about his frequent use of premium-class airfare in February media interviews, Pruitt said, "I'm not involved in any of those decisions." The administrator said his security chief made the decision for him to fly in first class after an unpleasant interaction with another traveler raised safety concerns.

Pruitt's troubles began in earnest last month, when ABC News first reported he had leased a Capitol Hill

condo last year for just \$50 a night that was co-owned by the wife of a veteran fossil fuels lobbyist whose firm had sought regulatory rollbacks from EPA.

Both Pruitt and the lobbyist, Steven Hart, denied he had conducted any recent business with EPA. But Hart was forced to admit last week he had met with Pruitt at EPA headquarters last summer after his firm, Williams & Jensen, revealed he had lobbied the agency on a required federal disclosure form.

EPA's press office has declined to discuss the meeting.

Thursday's hearings will be Pruitt's first major appearance since a Fox News interview in early April that was widely considered to be disastrous within the West Wing.

Pressed on reports of significant raises awarded to two close aides he had brought with him to EPA from Oklahoma, Pruitt denied having any role in the decision. Documents later showed Pruitt's chief of staff signed off on the pay increases, indicating he had the administrator's consent.

A lawyer and former Oklahoma attorney general, Pruitt is known to meticulously prepare for congressional hearings, with his office schedule showing he often blocks off hours huddled with top political aides.

An administration official confirmed that Pruitt declined an offer of White House assistance in preparing for the latest congressional hearings. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive internal conversations.

Environmental groups opposed to Pruitt's efforts to gut anti-pollution regulations have attempted to ramp up the pressure this week, paying for TV ads attacking Pruitt to be aired during the "Fox & Friends" morning show on Fox News. Trump is known to be a devoted viewer.

A union representing EPA employees also rallied Wednesday outside the agency's headquarters in Washington to denounce Pruitt's leadership.

Republican Sens. John Barrasso of Wyoming and John Thune of South Dakota said Pruitt faces "serious questions" about his use of taxpayer money.

"I want to make sure taxpayers are getting value for their dollars, make sure money is being spent appropriately. So there continue to be serious questions," said Barrasso, chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. "We'll see what comes out of the hearings."

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Associated Press writers Zeke Miller and Matthew Daly contributed to this report.

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Follow Associated Press environmental reporter Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck>

## Senate committee poised for vote on bill to protect Mueller

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate Judiciary Committee is expected to vote on a bill to protect special counsel Robert Mueller's job — legislation that has split Republicans as President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticized Mueller's Russia investigation.

Two Republicans and two Democrats introduced the bill earlier this month as Trump publicly criticized the special counsel. Mueller is investigating potential ties between Russia and Trump's 2016 campaign as well as possible obstruction of justice by the president.

The measure under consideration Thursday would give any special counsel a 10-day window to seek expedited judicial review of a firing. A handful of Republicans have supported it, but most have opposed it, arguing that it is unconstitutional or unnecessary. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has argued that Trump won't move to fire Mueller and has insisted he will not hold a full Senate vote on the legislation.

If Republicans support the bill, some may be at risk of angering Trump and some of his supporters they represent. But the four lawmakers who wrote the bill — GOP Sens. Thom Tillis of North Carolina and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Democrats Chris Coons of Delaware and Cory Booker of New Jersey — are hoping to win enough bipartisan support to move it out of committee. Then, they say, they could try and find enough support in the full Senate to persuade McConnell to change his mind.

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With most Democrats on board, the bipartisan group has been working in recent days to gather additional Republican votes. They have been negotiating with Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, who had floated an amendment that included increased reporting to Congress by the special counsel.

Democrats had initially opposed Grassley's amendment, saying it could undermine the investigation if the special counsel had to reveal too much to Congress. But a revised Grassley amendment released Wednesday evening appeared to be a potential compromise, dropping a section that would have required the special counsel's office to report to Congress if the scope of the investigation changed while it was ongoing. The Grassley amendment would also require notification if a special counsel were removed.

Republicans opposing the bipartisan bill are expected to vote for an alternative resolution that would express a "sense of the Senate" that Mueller should be left alone to do his job.

Texas Sen. John Cornyn, the No. 2 Republican in the Senate and a member of the Judiciary panel, endorsed that idea Wednesday, saying it had a more realistic chance of passing than the bipartisan bill. He is expected to propose the resolution at Thursday's vote.

The resolution "may be a way forward because it avoids the unconstitutionality issue on a bill that the president won't sign and the House won't pass," Cornyn said. "So that may be a place for us to land."

Trump's legislative director, Marc Short, said in a broadcast interview Sunday that "as far as I know, the president has no intention of firing" either Mueller or Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who oversees Mueller's investigation. Short said he couldn't rule it out in the long term, though, because it's not known "how far off this investigation is going to veer."

The bipartisan group of four senators introduced two separate bills last August when Trump first started to criticize Mueller publicly. That legislation stalled for months, but was revived and the two bills were combined two weeks ago as Trump fumed about a raid of his personal lawyer's office, in an investigation overseen by federal prosecutors in New York.

After the raid, Trump said the Mueller investigation is "an attack on our country" and is "corrupt."

## Kim Jong Un will walk across border for summit with Moon

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon-Jae-in will plant a commemorative tree and inspect an honor guard together after Kim walks across the border Friday for their historic summit, Seoul officials said Thursday.

The talks on the southern side of the border village of Panmunjom are expected to focus on North Korea's nuclear program, but there will be plenty of symbolism when Kim becomes the first North Korean leader to be in the southern section of the border since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Moon will receive Kim after he crosses the concrete slabs that form the rivals' military demarcation line Friday morning. They will then walk together for about 10 minutes to a plaza where they'll inspect a South Korean honor guard, Moon's chief of staff Im Jong-seok told reporters.

After signing the guestbook and taking a photo together at Peace House, the venue for Friday's summit, the two leaders will start formal talks at 10:30 a.m. (0130 GMT). They will later plant a pine tree on the border using a mixture of soil from both countries' mountains and water from their respective rivers. The tree, which is beloved by both Koreas, dates to 1953, the year the war ended, Im said.

Engraved on the stone plaque for the tree will be the phrase, "Peace and Prosperity Are Planted," as well as the signatures of the leaders. After the tree-planting, the two plan to stroll together to a footbridge where a signpost for the military demarcation line stands, Im said.

The leaders will meet again in the afternoon and later attend a banquet, Im said.

Im said Kim is to be accompanied by nine top North Korean officials, including his influential sister, Kim Yo Jong. Im said South Korea hopes Kim's wife, Ri Sol Ju, will attend parts of Friday's summit, but Ri's attendance hasn't been agreed to yet.

It's also not clear how the leaders will announce the results of the summit. The most difficult part, Im said, centers on North Korea's level of denuclearization commitment.

Friday's summit and Kim's planned meeting with President Donald Trump in May or early June were arranged after Kim recently expressed a willingness to put his nuclear program up for negotiation after a year of nuclear and missile tests.

## **VA nominee accused of drunken behavior, reckless prescribing**

**By HOPE YEN, LISA MASCARO and KEN THOMAS, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House doctor Ronny Jackson exhibited a pattern of recklessly prescribing drugs and drunken behavior, including crashing a government vehicle while intoxicated and doling out such a large supply of a prescription opioid that staffers panicked because they thought the drugs were missing, according to accusations compiled by Democratic staff on the committee considering his nomination as Veterans Affairs secretary.

The summary was based on conversations with 23 of Jackson's current and former colleagues at the White House Medical Unit. It is the latest blow to his nomination to lead the government's second-largest Cabinet agency.

In just a matter of days, the allegations have transformed Jackson's reputation as a celebrated doctor attending the president to an embattled nominee accused of drinking on the job and over-prescribing drugs. He was seen pacing back and forth on the White House grounds Wednesday.

And while the White House put on a full-scale defense of Jackson, spokesman Raj Shah said aides are "of course" preparing for the possibility that he might withdraw. "This is, as the president said, Dr. Jackson's decision," Shah said on CNN.

Jackson huddled late Wednesday evening with top White House press staff. They declined to comment on the situation.

A former colleague who spoke to The Associated Press described Jackson as a gregarious, Type A charmer who knew how to position himself for success — attentive to bosses but also causing unnecessary grief and consternation among colleagues.

He said Jackson became known as "Candyman" because of the way he handed out drugs. The ex-colleague spoke on condition of anonymity because of fear of retaliation.

The "Candyman" nickname was also cited in the summary released by the Democrats.

In a section on Jackson's prescribing practices, the summary said that in one case, missing Percocet tabs threw members of the White House Medical Unit into a panic — but it turned out he had prescribed a "large supply" of the opioid to a White House Military Office staffer.

The allegations also referred to multiple incidents of Jackson's intoxication while on duty, often on overseas trips. On at least one occasion he was nowhere to be found when his medical help was needed because "he was passed out drunk in his hotel room," according to the summary.

At a Secret Service going-away party, the summary says, Jackson got drunk and wrecked a government vehicle.

Jackson has denied allegations of bad behavior and told reporters at the White House he was "still moving ahead as planned."

"I never wrecked a car," he said. "I have no idea where that is coming from."

Reports of overprescribing and alcohol-related behavior problems can jeopardize a doctor's license. Many state medical boards allow doctors to keep their licenses and return to practice if they complete special treatment programs and submit to random urine screens.

The allegations were publicly released on the day that Jackson's confirmation hearing was to have been held. The hearing was postponed indefinitely while the allegations against him are reviewed.

"He treated the people above him very, very well. He treated the people below him very, very poorly," Sen. Jon Tester, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, told the AP. "It's not surprising the people above him think he was doing a really, really good job."

White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Wednesday that Jackson had passed "at least four independent background checks" that found "no areas of concern."

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"He has received more vetting than most nominees," she said.

Marc Short, the White House legislative director, could not say he was confident the allegations were false. He was "not familiar" with car wreck episode.

But Short also suggested Tester was airing the allegations for political gain.

"It's quite unusual for a United States senator to take allegations that have not been fully investigated, but to flaunt them to the national public to suggest he's the 'candyman' I think is outrageous," Short said.

Tester, speaking on MSNBC, acknowledged that not all the allegations had been verified.

"Am I 100% rock solid sure that he did this? No," Tester said. "But I've seen a pattern here that continues on and on and on."

Jackson met late at the Capitol with a key Republican on the Veterans Affairs Committee, Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina. They discussed a variety of subjects — "some were the allegations" — as well as Jackson's credentials for the job.

"It was just getting through the facts," Tillis said.

Veterans groups are dismayed over the continuing uncertainty at the VA, already beset by infighting over improvements to veterans care.

"The American Legion is very concerned about the current lack of permanent leadership," said Denise Rohan, national commander of The American Legion, the nation's largest veterans organization.

A watchdog report requested in 2012 and reviewed by the AP found that Jackson and a rival physician exhibited "unprofessional behaviors" as they engaged in a power struggle over the White House medical unit.

That report by the Navy's Medical Inspector General found a lack of trust in the leadership and low morale among staff members, who described the working environment as "being caught between parents going through a bitter divorce."

It included no references to improper prescribing of drugs or the use of alcohol, as alleged in the summary compiled by the Senate Democratic staff members.

The White House has released handwritten reports from Trump and former President Barack Obama praising Jackson's leadership and medical care and recommending him for promotion.

Trump's first VA secretary, David Shulkin, was dismissed after an ethics scandal and mounting rebellion within the agency. But Jackson has faced numerous questions from lawmakers and veterans groups about whether he has the experience to manage the department of 360,000 employees serving 9 million veterans.

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Associated Press writers Darlene Superville, Lisa Mascaro, Catherine Lucey, Matthew Daly and Jill Colvin in Washington and AP Medical Writer Carla K. Johnson in Seattle contributed to this report.

## Accused serial rapist and killer undetected working as cop

By DON THOMPSON and BRIAN MELLEY, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Joseph DeAngelo's six-year career as a cop came swiftly to an end after being busted for shoplifting a can of dog repellent and a hammer from a Pay N' Save store in a Sacramento suburb in 1979.

Authorities are now wondering if the items he snatched were intended as tools for the sinister rash of crimes he's suspected of carrying out.

DeAngelo, 72, was accused Wednesday of being the Golden State Killer who terrorized suburban neighborhoods in a spate of brutal rapes and slayings in the 1970s and '80s before leaving a cold trail that baffled investigators for decades.

He was charged with eight counts of murder in three counties after being linked to the crimes through his DNA. Authorities said he was responsible for a dozen slayings and some 50 rapes and that other charges could be filed.

Most of the crimes, predominantly sex assaults but also two slayings, occurred in the three years he was an Auburn police officer in the Sierra foothills outside Sacramento.

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The attacks on sleeping women — and sometimes their partners — in middle and upper-middle-class subdivisions east of the state Capitol shattered an innocence where people didn't lock their doors and children rode bicycles to school and played outside until dark.

Sales of locks surged. Lights burned all night. There was even talk of vigilantes with CB radios patrolling streets to nab the masked, armed man who became known as the East Area Rapist.

"It all changed," said Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert, who was 12 at the time of the crimes. "The memories are very vivid. You can ask anyone who grew up here. Everyone has a story."

Schubert and law enforcement officers refocused their attention on the case two years ago on the 40th anniversary of the first known attack.

But until a week ago, DeAngelo, who lived in a neatly kept home in the Citrus Heights suburb where many of the attacks went down and where he was caught stealing, was not in their sights.

A break in the case and the arrest came together in "light speed" during the past six days, Schubert said, though authorities refused to reveal what pointed to DeAngelo.

Sacramento Sheriff Scott Jones said detectives with "dogged determination" were able to get a sample of DNA from something DeAngelo discarded, though he wouldn't say what the item was. The genetic material was not a match, but there were enough similarities that investigators got a second sample, which proved conclusive.

"We knew we were looking for a needle in a haystack, but we also knew that needle was there," Schubert said.

In May 1977, as the frequent attacks gained national attention, the rapist told a victim he would kill two people if he saw stories about her attack, according to an Associated Press article at the time.

Some eight months later after another nine assaults, he made good on that promise, authorities said.

Brian and Katie Maggiore were fatally shot in Rancho Cordova on Feb. 2, 1978 while walking their dog.

The number of attacks recorded by police dropped precipitously after he was fired from the police department. But they intensified in violence and moved to Southern California.

Nine killings occurred between October 1979 and August 1981. After a rape and killing in Orange County five years later, the culprit appeared to have quit.

Although it's unusual for serial killers to stop, Jones said there's no evidence DeAngelo committed any crimes after 1986.

"We have no indication of any crimes with a similar or at least a close enough link to his MO and other things that he's done in the past to link him to anything from '86 on," Jones said. "We just have nothing at this point."

DeAngelo had one other minor brush with the law Jones wouldn't reveal in addition to the shoplifting incident.

The graduate of nearby Folsom High School and U.S. Navy veteran who served during the Vietnam War seemed to settle into his own suburban existence in the modest three-bedroom home on Canyon Oak Drive.

For 27 years, he worked in a cavernous Save Mart Supermarkets distribution warehouse in Roseville, a Sacramento suburb, before retiring last year, company spokeswoman Victoria Castro said.

"None of his actions in the workplace would have led us to suspect any connection to crimes being attributed to him," she said in a statement.

DeAngelo built remote-controlled model airplanes and took meticulous care of his house and manicured lawn, neighbors said.

Natalia Bedes-Correnti said DeAngelo appeared to be a "nice old grandpa" who lived with an adult daughter and granddaughter. But he also had penchant for cussing loudly when he was frustrated.

"He liked the F word a lot," Bedes-Correnti said.

Deputies kept watch on the house and his comings and goings for several days and took him by surprise Tuesday afternoon as he walked outside.

As he was being arrested, he told officers he had a roast in the oven. They said they would take care of it.

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Melley reported from Los Angeles. Associated Press Writers Jonathan J. Cooper in Citrus Heights, Sophia Bollag and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, Michael Balsamo in Los Angeles, Olga Rodriguez, Paul Elias and Juliet Williams in San Francisco and investigative researcher Randy Herschaft in New York contributed to this report.

## **Penn State's Barkley is best talent, but QBs to lead draft**

**By BARRY WILNER, AP Pro Football Writer**

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Saquon Barkley is the best player in this year's draft. Yet he might not go in the first handful of picks Thursday night.

Huh?

Blame the desperation to find quarterbacks in great part for the possibility that the Penn State All-America running back could fall well below where his talent, character and versatility warrant.

How good is Barkley? Draft expert Gil Brandt says he's the best at the position since Adrian Peterson. Other scouts and general managers have compared Barkley to LaDainian Tomlinson. Last we looked, LT is in the Hall of Fame, and Peterson sure seems headed there.

"If you remember, there was some concern about Adrian's shoulder and he was not picked until No. 7 (in 2007)," says Brandt, now a draft consultant for the league and analyst for SiriusXM Satellite Radio. "Look at him and he has everything you need to be successful: quickness, speed, strength, a great character person, will pass protect.

"I am sold on Barkley. I think Barkley will be a star in this league."

So why might he wind up out of the first half-dozen or so selections. Brandt cites the preponderance for passing in the NFL these days, noting that two decades ago, teams ran 57 percent of the time, and now it's switched around.

Plus, he notes, "Quarterbacks, they will probably occupy four of the top six in this draft."

It seems certain the Browns at the top, the Jets at No. 3 and the Broncos at No. 5 will go the quarterback route. The Giants could pull the trigger on a QB at No. 2. There's lots of trade talk, too, with clubs such as Miami, Buffalo and Arizona eager to climb high enough to run in the derby for Sam Darnold, Josh Rosen, Josh Allen and Baker Mayfield.

It's possible the three best overall prospects for 2018 — Barkley, North Carolina State defensive end Bradley Chubb, and Notre Dame guard Quenton Nelson — won't come close to going 1-2-3.

The Browns are in a nice spot; of course, they had to go 0-16 last season to earn it. They also own the fourth choice and can grab one of those three after taking a quarterback to start proceedings. There's also the chance a QB-light team will unload a bunch of choices to get to No. 4, and Cleveland still could wind up with Barkley, Chubb or Nelson if it doesn't trade down too far.

"The guy is a really good football player," new Browns GM John Dorsey says of Barkley. "Absolutely. You cannot have enough of them on your team."

There's more to Barkley that could make him the biggest star to enter the league from this draft, even if he goes fifth, sixth, seventh ...

He can break open games with kick returns.

"I'm not going to lie, he's a tremendous talent," says new Giants GM Dave Gettleman. "You put the film on of a defensive guy and if they're playing Penn State, then I'm watching Saquon. He's one of those guys that my mother could have scouted. She could have figured that one out."

Yet, Barkley, who this week became a father to a girl, could last almost an hour into the draft Thursday night.

## Ex-policeman charged with decades-old serial killings

By DON THOMPSON and BRIAN MELLEY, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A man once sworn to protect the public from crime was accused Wednesday of living a double life terrorizing suburban neighborhoods at night, becoming one of California's most feared serial killers and rapists in the 1970s and '80s before leaving a cold trail that baffled investigators.

Former police officer Joseph James DeAngelo, 72, was arrested at his home Tuesday after DNA linked him to crimes attributed to the so-called Golden State Killer and he initially was charged with eight counts of murder and could face dozens more charges, authorities said.

The culprit also known as the East Area Rapist, among other names, is suspected of at least 12 slayings and 50 rapes in 10 counties from Northern to Southern California. The armed and masked prowler sneaked in through windows at night and surprised sleeping victims who ranged in age from 13 to 41.

When encountering a couple, he was known to tie up the man and pile dishes on his back. He threatened to kill both victims if he heard plates crash to the floor while he raped the woman. He then ransacked the house, taking souvenirs, notably coins and jewelry before fleeing on foot or bicycle.

Despite an outpouring of thousands of tips over the years, DeAngelo's name had not been on the radar of law enforcement before last week, Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert said.

"We knew we were looking for a needle in a haystack, but we also knew that needle was there," she said. "It was right here in Sacramento."

A break in the case and the arrest came together in "light speed" during the past six days, Schubert said, though authorities refused to reveal what led to DeAngelo.

Sacramento Sheriff Scott Jones said detectives with "dogged determination" were able to get a sample of DNA from something DeAngelo discarded, though he wouldn't say what the item was. The genetic material was not a match, but there were enough similarities for investigators to return for more and they said they were able to get a conclusive match.

After watching DeAngelo for several days, deputies took him by surprise Tuesday.

"It looked as though he might have been searching his mind to execute a particular plan he may have had," but never had time to act, Jones said.

DeAngelo was arrested on suspicion of committing double-killings in Sacramento and Ventura counties and later charged with four counts of murder in Orange County, officials said.

Ventura County District Attorney Gregory Totten said that before prosecutors decide whether to seek the death penalty, there will be a "solemn and formal death review process that typically takes many months before a decision is made."

DeAngelo, who served in the Navy, was a police officer in Exeter, in the San Joaquin Valley, from 1973 to 1976, at a time a burglar known as the Visalia Ransacker was active, Jones said.

He transferred to the force in Auburn in the Sierra foothills near where he grew up outside Sacramento. About 50 crimes, including two killings, were attributed to the East Area Rapist during the three years DeAngelo worked in Auburn, but Jones said it wasn't clear if any were committed while on duty.

DeAngelo was fired from the Auburn department in 1979 after being arrested for stealing a can of dog repellent and a hammer from a drug store, according to Auburn Journal articles from the time. He was convicted of the theft and fined \$100.

Ten slayings occurred after he was fired and all took place in Southern California.

DeAngelo worked for 27 years in a distribution center for Save Mart Supermarkets in Roseville, a Sacramento-area suburb. He retired last year, said Victoria Castro, spokeswoman for The Save Mart Companies.

"None of his actions in the workplace would have led us to suspect any connection to crimes being attributed to him," Castro said in a statement, adding that the company was working with investigators.

Although it's unusual for serial killers to stop, Jones said they have no reason to think DeAngelo continued to commit crimes after 1986, when the last rape and killing occurred in Orange County.

"We have no indication of any crimes with a similar or at least a close enough link to his MO and other things that he's done in the past to link him to anything from '86 on," Jones said. "We just have nothing

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at this point.”

Jones said he always thought the rapist was alive, but might be in prison.

For the prosecutors and investigators, the arrest not only marked a significant professional achievement but also a personal one that had touched their formative years and early careers.

Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O’Malley was a college student volunteering at a rape crisis center and “sat with survivors who had been assaulted by this guy.”

The wave of horrifying crimes had brought an end to a more innocent era in the Sacramento suburbs when children rode bicycles to school, played outside until dark and people didn’t lock their doors, Schubert said.

“It all changed,” said Schubert, who was 12 at the time. “For anyone that lived here in this community, in Sacramento, the memories are very vivid. You can ask anyone who grew up here. Everyone has a story.”

Totten said he was a young law clerk in the office during the investigation into the 1980 slayings of Lyman and Charlene Smith that “struck terror in the hearts of Ventura residents.”

“We had no idea this killer was connected to so many other crimes,” Totten said.

In 1999, Orange County sheriff’s homicide detectives were able to use DNA to link the Irvine slaying of Keith and Patrice Harrington to nine other slayings in in Orange, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. The genetic evidence was later used to connect the same suspect to dozens of rapes in Northern California.

Harrington’s brother, Bruce, helped bankroll a successful 2004 ballot initiative campaign to take DNA from all convicted felons and some arrestees.

“To the victims, sleep better tonight, he isn’t coming through the window,” Bruce Harrington said at the news conference announcing the arrest.

Jane Carson-Sandler was one of the first victims when she was sexually assaulted in 1976 in her home in Citrus Heights, the same community where DeAngelo was arrested at home.

She said she received an email Wednesday from a retired detective who worked on the case telling her they identified the rapist and he’s in custody.

“I have just been overjoyed, ecstatic. It’s an emotional roller-coaster right now,” Carson-Sandler, who now lives near Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. “I feel like I’m in the middle of a dream and I’m going to wake up and it’s not going to be true. It’s just so nice to have closure and to know he’s in jail.”

FBI agents and other investigators were gathering evidence at DeAngelo’s neatly kept home on Wednesday. Jones said they were looking for mementos that may have been stolen from victims.

Neighbors said DeAngelo took meticulous care of his house, which was always perfectly painted and his lawn manicured. But he was known for an explosive temper and loud cursing.

Kevin Tapia said when he was a teenager, DeAngelo falsely accused him of throwing things over their shared fence, prompting a heated exchange between DeAngelo and his father.

“No one thinks they live next door to a serial killer,” Tapia said. “But at the same time I’m just like, he was a weird guy. He kept to himself. When you start to think about it you’re like, I could see him doing something like that, but I would never suspect it.”

Melley reported from Los Angeles. Associated Press Writers Jonathan J. Cooper in Citrus Heights, Sophia Bollag and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, Michael Balsamo in Los Angeles, and Olga Rodriguez, Paul Elias and Juliet Williams in San Francisco and investigative researcher Randy Herschaft in New York contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that prosecutors haven’t decided whether to seek the death penalty for DeAngelo.

## Lynching memorial and museum in Montgomery open to public

By **BETH J. HARPAZ, AP Travel Editor**

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — The public is getting its first look at a lynching memorial and museum in Montgomery, Alabama.

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, opening Thursday, is dedicated to 4,400 individuals who lost their lives in lynchings and other racial killings between 1877 and 1950. Their names are engraved on 800 steel rectangles, one for each U.S. county where lynchings occurred.

A museum is also opening in Montgomery, called The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration.

Launch events include a "Peace and Justice Summit" featuring celebrities and activists like Ava DuVernay, Marian Wright Edelman and Gloria Steinem.

The summit, museum and memorial are projects of the Equal Justice Initiative, a Montgomery-based legal advocacy group founded by attorney Bryan Stevenson. Stevenson won a MacArthur "genius" award for his human rights work.

## Shot, save: LeBron bails out Cavs with Game 5 buzzer-beater

By **TOM WITHERS, AP Sports Writer**

CLEVELAND (AP) — The game, the series, the season and perhaps Cleveland's future were in jeopardy. LeBron James saved everything.

James dropped a 3-pointer at the buzzer, a crowning moment for another one of his brilliant performances, to give Cleveland a 98-95 victory over the Indiana Pacers on Wednesday night in Game 5, putting the Cavaliers within one victory of advancing in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Moments after blocking Victor Oladipo's possible go-ahead layup — a play the Pacers felt was goaltending — James caught the inbounds pass, took two dribbles and hit his winner over Thaddeus Young.

As Cleveland's sellout crowd exploded, James hugged rookie teammate Cedi Osman before jumping on the scorer's table to celebrate another of those moments that will define a career he dreamed of while growing up in Akron.

"As a kid you always have those 3, 2, 1 moments and that's what it kind of felt like," James said. "I felt like I was a kid all over again playing basketball at my house on makeshift hoops and my socks as a basketball."

James finished with 44 points, 10 rebounds, eight assists and went 15 of 15 from the line.

"He does it at both ends every single night," Cavs forward Kevin Love said. "That's why he's the best player in the world."

Kyle Korver added 19 points and Cleveland's much-maligned defense tightened just in time as the Cavaliers seized their first lead in the first-round series after being down 1-0 and 2-1.

Cleveland can close out Indiana with a win Friday night in Indianapolis.

But while James' shot will long be remembered, the Pacers were stinging from his block they felt was illegal.

With the score tied at 95-all, Oladipo, who shot just 2 of 15, drove the left side and was at the rim when James swooped in for a block on a play reminiscent of his Game 7 block on Andre Iguodala in the 2016 NBA Finals.

However, Oladipo thought his shot hit the backboard first, and goaltending should have been called. TV replays showed the ball appear to hit the glass before Jams touched it.

"I got a step on him and I felt I even got grabbed," Oladipo said. "It hit the backboard and he blocked it. It was a goaltend. It's hard to even speak on it. That layup is huge."

James smiled when asked about the play.

"Of course I didn't think it was a goaltend," he said with a laugh. "I try to make plays like that all the time. He made a heck of a move, got me leaning right and he went left and I just tried to use my recovery

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speed and get back up there and make a play on the ball.”

Oladipo's shooting woes continued. He's only 12 of 50 from the field in the last three games. He scored 32 in the Pacers' Game 1 win, but the Cavs have been double-teaming him ever since.

The third quarter has been a major problem for Cleveland all season. The Cavs had tried everything to try and shake things up after halftime, even doing layup lines at the break in Game 4 like a high school squad. Turns out, all it took was some defensive intensity.

Down by seven at half, the Cavs swarmed the Pacers in the third quarter, forcing five turnovers in the first six minutes and holding Indiana to one field goal over the first 6:52 while opening with a 19-3 run.

Cleveland outscored Indiana 32-17 in the third, when the Pacers shot just 5 for 16 (31 percent) and committed seven turnovers.

“We didn't do anything new,” said guard Jose Calderon, who started his second game in place of George Hill. “We were just more aggressive.”

JOSE, JOSE, JOSE:

Calderon provided a huge lift, making a pair of 3-pointers and contributing several other hustle plays in 20 minutes. The 36-year-old has done whatever Cleveland's needed.

“Jose has been steady for us all year,” Cavs coach Tyronn Lue said. “G-Hill goes down and Jose comes in and makes plays. He's been that guy for us all year.”

DWYANE'S WORLD

James had enough to worry about with the Pacers that he didn't want to discuss close friend Dwyane Wade's future.

Miami's star is mulling retirement after the Heat were eliminated Tuesday in Philadelphia. James spent four years playing in Miami with Wade, who began this season with the Cavs before being traded.

James said that following his last game against Wade he told him, “If it's like our last time going against each other, then it's been everything and more.” James wants to wait for Wade to make his decision and will then “give a more in-depth analysis of his career if he decides to hang 'em up.”

TIP-INS:

Pacers: Following Lance Stephenson's aggressive, wrestling-like takedown of Jeff Green in the waning moments of Game 4, coach Nate McMillan said he reminded the fiery forward to be careful. “The officials are going to be watching that, Lance knows that and there are some times where I think they (the Cavs) are taking advantage.” ... Dropped to 2-12 in their last 14 games in Cleveland. ... James' triple-double in Game 4 was the sixth against Indiana in the playoffs. James has done it to the Pacers three times.

Cavaliers: With his 21st 40-point game in the playoff, James tied the logo — Jerry West — for the second-most all-time. Michael Jordan scored at least 40 in 38 postseason games. .... Hill's back has improved in the past few days, but he didn't look close to playing while sitting stiffly in his locker-room chair before the game. ... Browns Hall of Fame running back Jim Brown sat courtside.

UP NEXT

Game 6 is Friday night at Indianapolis.

## No verdict from Cosby jury; defense lawyers slammed

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and CLAUDIA LAUER, Associated Press

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (AP) — The jury in Bill Cosby's sexual assault case ended a marathon first day of deliberations without reaching a verdict Wednesday as his lawyers came under heavy criticism for what some called a blatant attempt to “victim-shame” the parade of women who have leveled accusations against the 80-year-old comedian.

In the first big celebrity trial of the #MeToo era, the panel of seven men and five women began weighing charges that Cosby drugged and molested a woman at his suburban Philadelphia home 14 years ago. He says his encounter with former Temple University women's basketball executive Andrea Constand was consensual.

The jury worked more than 10 hours before calling it a night late Wednesday. Deliberations resume

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Thursday.

"Your mind is done. You're exhausted," said Judge Steven O'Neill, sending them back to their hotel.

Trying to keep him out of prison, Cosby's lawyers launched a withering attack on Constand and five other women who told the jury that the former TV star had drugged and assaulted them, too.

Defense attorney Kathleen Bliss chastised Constand for "cavorting around with a married man old enough to be her grandfather." She derided the other women as home-wreckers and suggested they made up their stories in a bid for money and fame.

She questioned the "personal morality" of one accuser and called another, model Janice Dickinson, a "failed starlet" and "aged-out model" who "sounds as though she slept with every man on the planet."

And she slammed the #MeToo movement itself, calling Cosby its victim and likening it to a witch hunt or a lynching.

Critics said the defense team went too far.

"They're playing on the same old myths that have been protecting perpetrators for centuries," said Kristen Houser of the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. She said the defense's closing argument was filled with "rampant and ingrained" misconceptions about sexual assault and victim behavior.

"It was not only an attack on these six accusers," Houser said, "it was a verbal slap to survivors all across this country."

Gloria Allred, the lawyer for three of the women who testified, blasted the defense closing as "victim-shaming and victim-blaming" and said Cosby's lawyers had smeared her clients in a win-at-all-costs effort at an acquittal.

Perhaps anticipating the criticism, Bliss told jurors in her closing that "questioning an accuser is not blaming the victim."

Cosby spokeswoman Ebonee Benson echoed that sentiment when asked Wednesday about the criticism of the defense approach.

"There is no assassination of any character," Benson said. "It is evidence that the commonwealth either selectively, deliberately or just didn't want to take a look into. That's simply what it is. ... If anyone did any assassinating yesterday, it was the commonwealth toward our witnesses."

The back-and-forth outside court came as jurors began their work after a two-week trial that pitted Cosby, the former TV star once revered as "America's Dad," against Constand, 45, who testified that he knocked her out with three pills and violated her in 2004.

Cosby is charged with three counts of aggravated indecent assault. His first trial ended with a hung jury less than a year ago.

Before knocking off for the night, the jury had Cosby's old deposition testimony read back to them.

Cosby gave the deposition more than a decade ago as part of Constand's civil suit against him, testifying that he gave quaaludes to women he wanted to have sex with back in the 1970s. He also spoke about his encounter with Constand, whom he paid nearly \$3.4 million in a 2006 settlement of her claims.

The jurors also appeared to be focused on the credibility of star defense witness Marguerite Jackson, a former Temple colleague of Constand's who claims Constand spoke of framing a prominent person for the money. Her trial testimony will be read back to them on Thursday.

Bill James, a defense lawyer in Little Rock, Arkansas, said vigorous advocacy is a defense attorney's job, and attacking an accuser's credibility — especially if there are no other witnesses and no physical evidence — is standard practice in sexual assault cases.

"What's good taste and what's aggressive representation are not always the same," he said. "In a criminal case you have a greater obligation to go after a witness's credibility because you're dealing with someone's freedom."

In her own closing argument, Cosby prosecutor Kristen Feden rebuked Bliss for engaging in "utterly shameful" and "filthy" character assassination of Constand and the others.

"She is the exact reason why women don't report these crimes," Feden said.

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault unless

they grant permission, which Constand and Dickinson have done.

This story has been corrected to show that Marguerite Jackson was a witness for the defense, not the prosecution.

Follow Mike Sisak at <https://twitter.com/mikesisak>  
Follow Claudia Lauer at <https://twitter.com/ClaudiaLauer>

Associated Press writer Kristen de Groot in Philadelphia contributed to this story.

For more coverage visit <https://www.apnews.com/tag/CosbyonTrial>

## Tears flow as victims of Waffle House shooting remembered

By SHEILA BURKE, The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Employees at a Waffle House where four people were killed in a weekend shooting rampage wore orange ribbons, hugged each other and wept as the restaurant re-opened. And a steady stream of customers came in to the Nashville restaurant Wednesday to show support.

The parents of Joe Perez, a 20-year-old victim of the Sunday morning shooting, signed four white crosses outside, one of them bearing their son's name and picture.

Company officials said they will donate a month of the restaurant's sales to help the wounded survivors and the families of the slain.

Perez's parents, who came from Texas to mourn him, said they did not want to speak. A woman who was working during the attack, her face still bearing scrapes, said she couldn't speak. She knelt before the four white crosses erected to commemorate the victims.

The dead included Perez and Taurean Sanderlin, 29, who worked at the Waffle House. Sanderlin had been on a cigarette break in the parking lot when the killer stepped out of his truck brandishing an AR-15 rifle and opened fire. The gunman then stormed the restaurant.

Also killed were Akilah Dasilva, a 23-year-old student at Middle Tennessee State University who was well known to independent musicians and record labels in town, and DeEbony Groves, a 21-year-old student at Belmont University. Four people were also wounded.

Police credit James Shaw Jr., a customer who wrestled the weapon away from the gunman, for averting more bloodshed. The suspect fled after the scuffle with the customer and was captured the following day after a massive manhunt in Antioch, a neighborhood in southeastern Nashville. Police have identified him as Travis Reinking, 29.

Employees got emotional at times Wednesday, but they also thanked the customers for coming back to the restaurant.

"The Waffle House staff have been so wonderful, and I'm not sure I could hold up as well as they are in a situation like this," said Ramona Witt, who lives in the neighborhood and came out to support the victims.

It was the employees who wanted to get the restaurant up and running again, Waffle House spokesman Pat Warner said.

"I think it's part of the healing process for them," Warner said.

Reinking was wearing nothing but a green jacket and brandishing the assault-style rifle when he attacked the restaurant, police say.

He faces multiple criminal charges, including four counts of criminal homicide. A public defender listed as his attorney has not responded to an email seeking comment.

Police say they still do not know of a motive for the crime.

The onetime crane operator bounced between states and suffered from delusions, sometimes talking about plans to marry singer Taylor Swift, friends and relatives told authorities.

He was detained by the Secret Service in July after he ventured in to a forbidden area on the White

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House grounds and demanded to meet President Donald Trump.

A friend and former co-worker in Colorado, John Turley, told The Associated Press he never saw any hints of violence or aggression from Reinking during the months they knew each other.

"I can't tell you why he did what he did," Turley said Wednesday. "The person I knew would not have done this." Turley added, "He just seemed too passive a person."

Turley said also Reinking never expressed any allegiance to anti-government beliefs, nor did he seem to be racist or advocate for white supremacy.

An audio recording released from a Nashville computer repair shop shows that the shooting suspect was fearful that the techs at the store had tampered with his laptop. This came after Reinking took the computer to the shop because he thought it had been hacked, Robert Hartline, owner of Dang It Repair, said. Reinking can be heard in the recording calling the tech a liar and telling him to kill himself. This was about a week and a half before the killings.

In the meantime, a steady stream of customers came to Waffle House, saying they wanted to help the victims.

One of them was Tammy Burnside, who got food to go for her and a friend.

"I just had to come by and pay my respect," she said of the victims in a crime that has horrified so many people in the city. "When they died, it felt like something died in Nashville."

## More allegations emerge on VA pick as nomination falters

By HOPE YEN, LISA MASCARO and KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House doctor Ronny Jackson exhibited a pattern of recklessly prescribing drugs and drunken behavior, including crashing a government vehicle while intoxicated and doling out such a large supply of a prescription opioid that staffers panicked because they thought the drugs were missing, according to accusations compiled by Democratic staff on the committee considering his nomination as Veterans Affairs secretary.

The summary was based on conversations with 23 of Jackson's current and former colleagues at the White House Medical Unit. It is the latest blow to his nomination to lead the government's second-largest Cabinet agency.

In just a matter of days, the allegations have transformed Jackson's reputation as a celebrated doctor attending the president to an embattled nominee accused of drinking on the job and over-prescribing drugs. He was seen pacing back and forth on the White House grounds Wednesday.

And while the White House put on a full-scale defense of Jackson, spokesman Raj Shah said aides are "of course" preparing for the possibility that he might withdraw. "This is, as the president said, Dr. Jackson's decision," Shah said on CNN.

Jackson huddled late Wednesday evening with top White House press staff. They declined to comment on the situation.

A former colleague who spoke to The Associated Press described Jackson as a gregarious, Type A charmer who knew how to position himself for success — attentive to bosses but also causing unnecessary grief and consternation among colleagues.

He said Jackson became known as "Candyman" because of the way he handed out drugs. The ex-colleague spoke on condition of anonymity because of fear of retaliation.

The "Candyman" nickname was also cited in the summary released by the Democrats.

In a section on Jackson's prescribing practices, the summary said that in one case, missing Percocet tabs threw members of the White House Medical Unit into a panic — but it turned out he had prescribed a "large supply" of the opioid to a White House Military Office staffer.

The allegations also referred to multiple incidents of Jackson's intoxication while on duty, often on overseas trips. On at least one occasion he was nowhere to be found when his medical help was needed because "he was passed out drunk in his hotel room," according to the summary.

At a Secret Service going-away party, the summary says, Jackson got drunk and wrecked a government

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vehicle.

Jackson has denied allegations of bad behavior and told reporters at the White House he was "still moving ahead as planned."

"I never wrecked a car," he said. "I have no idea where that is coming from."

Reports of overprescribing and alcohol-related behavior problems can jeopardize a doctor's license. Many state medical boards allow doctors to keep their licenses and return to practice if they complete special treatment programs and submit to random urine screens.

The allegations were publicly released on the day that Jackson's confirmation hearing was to have been held. The hearing was postponed indefinitely while the allegations against him are reviewed.

"He treated the people above him very, very well. He treated the people below him very, very poorly," Sen. Jon Tester, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, told the AP. "It's not surprising the people above him think he was doing a really, really good job."

White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Wednesday that Jackson had passed "at least four independent background checks" that found "no areas of concern."

"He has received more vetting than most nominees," she said.

Marc Short, the White House legislative director, could not say he was confident the allegations were false. He was "not familiar" with car wreck episode.

But Short also suggested Tester was airing the allegations for political gain.

"It's quite unusual for a United States senator to take allegations that have not been fully investigated, but to flaunt them to the national public to suggest he's the 'candyman' I think is outrageous," Short said.

Tester, speaking on MSNBC, acknowledged that not all the allegations had been verified.

"Am I 100% rock solid sure that he did this? No," Tester said. "But I've seen a pattern here that continues on and on and on."

Jackson met late at the Capitol with a key Republican on the Veterans Affairs Committee, Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina. They discussed a variety of subjects — "some were the allegations" — as well as Jackson's credentials for the job.

"It was just getting through the facts," Tillis said.

Veterans groups are dismayed over the continuing uncertainty at the VA, already beset by infighting over improvements to veterans care.

"The American Legion is very concerned about the current lack of permanent leadership," said Denise Rohan, national commander of The American Legion, the nation's largest veterans organization.

A watchdog report requested in 2012 and reviewed by the AP found that Jackson and a rival physician exhibited "unprofessional behaviors" as they engaged in a power struggle over the White House medical unit.

That report by the Navy's Medical Inspector General found a lack of trust in the leadership and low morale among staff members, who described the working environment as "being caught between parents going through a bitter divorce."

It included no references to improper prescribing of drugs or the use of alcohol, as alleged in the summary compiled by the Senate Democratic staff members.

The White House has released handwritten reports from Trump and former President Barack Obama praising Jackson's leadership and medical care and recommending him for promotion.

Trump's first VA secretary, David Shulkin, was dismissed after an ethics scandal and mounting rebellion within the agency. But Jackson has faced numerous questions from lawmakers and veterans groups about whether he has the experience to manage the department of 360,000 employees serving 9 million veterans.

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Associated Press writers Darlene Superville, Lisa Mascaro, Catherine Lucey, Matthew Daly and Jill Colvin in Washington and AP Medical Writer Carla K. Johnson in Seattle contributed to this report.

## Macron resists Trump's 'America first' in speech to Congress

By JOSH LEDERMAN and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron drew sharp contrasts with President Donald Trump's worldview Wednesday, laying out a firm vision of global leadership that rejects "the illusion of nationalism" in a candid counterweight to Trump's appeals to put "America first."

In the spotlight of a speech to the U.S. Congress, Macron was courteous but firm, deferential but resolute as he traced the lines of profound division between himself and Trump on key world issues: climate change, trade and the Iran nuclear deal.

A day after the French leader had put on a show of warmth and brotherly affection for Trump at the White House, his blunt speech prizing engagement over isolationism reinforced the French leader's emerging role as a top defender of the liberal world order.

"We can choose isolationism, withdrawal and nationalism. This is an option. It can be tempting to us as a temporary remedy to our fears," Macron said. "But closing the door to the world will not stop the evolution of the world. It will not douse but inflame the fears of our citizens."

Issuing a bleak warning, he urged against letting "the rampaging work of extreme nationalism shake a world full of hopes for greater prosperity."

It was a marked shift from the simpatico Macron of only a day earlier during his state visit at the White House. In his first year as France's president, Macron has carefully cultivated as close a relationship to Trump as any world leader can boast. But addressing a joint meeting of Congress — an honor granted only occasionally to leaders of close U.S. allies — Macron confronted his differences with Trump head-on.

As Trump weighs pulling out of the 2015 Iran accord, Macron made clear that France will not follow his lead.

"We signed it at the initiative of the United States. We signed it, both the United States and France," Macron said. "That is why we cannot say we should get rid of it like that."

Macron later told French reporters that he has no "inside information" on Trump's decision on the Iran deal but noted that it's clear the U.S. president "is not very much eager to defend it."

Macron saved some of his most pointed comments during the speech on Trump administration policy on climate change, implicitly lamenting the president's moves to withdraw from the global emissions pact reached in Paris. Macron said humans are "killing our planet" and added: "Let us face it: There is no Planet B."

"On this issue, it may happen we have disagreements between the United States and France. It may happen, like in all families," Macron said. "But that's for me a short-term disagreement."

It was an allusion not to an impending Trump about-face, but to the prospect of America choosing a different path under a successor, whoever that may prove to be. Asked by French reporters about his comments later during a visit to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, Macron said with a smile that he doesn't expect Trump to rejoin the Paris accord but does expect that America will.

Macron's hourlong speech to Congress, delivered in English, provoked obvious delight from congressional Democrats, who erupted repeatedly in cheers and standing ovations for the visiting Frenchman — a contrast to the mostly silent reaction from Republicans in the House chamber. To some, it was an ironic reminder that more than a year after being walloped by Trump in the election, Democrats have yet to coalesce behind either a cohesive message or a messenger, still plaintively searching for the kind of energetic, fresh-faced leader that Macron represents.

For Macron, the exuberant reception may have been equally ironic. At home, Macron does not enjoy the same level of applause or enthusiasm. A centrist in France, he's currently criticized more from the left than the right, notably for ending France's famed worker protection, and he's often derided as the president of the rich.

Still, his soaring speech to Congress and closely watched visit to the United States have buttressed the notion that Macron, more than any other world leader, now carries the torch for the rules-based international system of freedoms, free markets and democratic governance that Western nations have championed since World War II.

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Trump's positions on trade and overseas obligations have chipped away at America's position as the spokesman for that movement. And German Chancellor Angela Merkel, seen in recent years as the inheritor of that role, has faded somewhat amid domestic political challenges in her country.

That France sees itself as uniquely equipped to help fill that void seemed evident as Macron called for communal action to address "urgent" threats to what he called fundamental values.

"Today, the international community needs to step up our game and build the 21st century world order," he said.

It wasn't all criticism from Macron. He sought to showcase the historic bond between the U.S. and France, touting the two allies' "constant attachment to freedom and democracy." Yet he also mentioned "fake news," a point of contention between Trump and others, and warned that lies disseminated online are threatening freedoms worldwide.

In friendly fashion, he recounted trans-Atlantic links from the earliest days of the United States, Macron talked about a meeting between Ben Franklin and the French philosopher Voltaire, "kissing each other's cheeks."

In an apparent reference to his affectionate rapport with Trump this week, Macron mused: "It can remind you of something."

Associated Press reporters Alan Fram and Laurie Kellman in Washington and Angela Charlton and Sylvie Corbet in Paris contributed to this report.

## Former President Bush out of intensive care, making progress

By MICHAEL GRACZYK, Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Former President George H.W. Bush was moved out of intensive care and into a regular patient room at a Houston hospital on Wednesday as he recovers from an infection that required his hospitalization a day after his wife's funeral, a family spokesman said.

The nation's 41st president is expected to remain at Houston Methodist Hospital for "several more days," spokesman Jim McGrath said. Bush, who is 93, is being treated for an infection that spread to his blood.

"He is alert and talking with hospital staff, family and friends, and his doctors are very pleased with his progress," McGrath said in a statement.

He noted that Bush was more focused on the Houston Rockets playoff series against the Minnesota Timberwolves "than anything that landed him in the hospital." Bush, frequently accompanied by his wife, has long been a fixture at Houston sporting events.

During a Wednesday appearance at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush said his father will be leaving the hospital on Friday. He called his father "stronger than an ox" and the "greatest man alive."

Bush was hospitalized on Sunday, a day after he attended the funeral and burial of his wife, Barbara. Married for 73 years, the Bushes were the longest-married presidential couple in U.S. history. Barbara Bush was 92 when she died on April 17 at their Houston home.

Bush sent a tweet earlier Wednesday thanking Houston for its "professionalism and obvious care" during the memorials and services for his wife. He specifically cited Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, the city's police and transit agency "and really all Houstonians" for "making Barbara's visitors and funeral guests feel so welcomed."

He also thanked St. Martin's Episcopal Church, where the funeral was held and where he and his wife worshipped for years, and Second Baptist Church, which served as a staging area a few miles away for city buses that carried thousands of visitors to St. Martin's for a public viewing a day before the funeral.

McGrath said the former president is thankful for everyone sending prayers and good wishes.

## Police: Man killed deputy, stole his car and robbed store

By **MARINA VILLENEUVE, Associated Press**

NORRIDGEWOCK, Maine (AP) — A man scheduled to appear in court to face gun charges Wednesday killed a sheriff's deputy in Maine, stole his cruiser and robbed a convenience store, officials said.

The fatal shooting of Somerset County Cpl. Eugene Cole around 1:45 a.m. on U.S. Route 2 in Norridgewock triggered an intensive manhunt for the shooter in and around the heavily wooded rural community about 60 miles (96 kilometers) west of Bangor.

Law enforcement officials vowed to maintain a heavy presence overnight and urged residents to remain vigilant as the search continued for 29-year-old John Williams, of Madison, Maine.

"Many times we're able to say that there is not an ongoing threat, but that's not the case today," State Police Lt. Col. John Cote said. "There certainly is an ongoing public threat. He's considered armed and dangerous."

Cole's death is believed to be the first killing of a law enforcement officer in Maine in nearly 30 years. The last time someone killed an officer in the line of duty was in 1989, according to the Maine Department of Public Safety.

Helicopters, armored vehicles and numerous police cruisers were spotted around Norridgewock, and schools were locked down as federal, state and local law enforcement poured into the region to look for Williams.

Police said Williams is 5-foot-6, 120 pounds with blue eyes and brown hair in a ponytail.

Law enforcement officials said he had arrest records in Maine, Tennessee and Massachusetts. In Tennessee, he faced drug and drug-related charges dating as far back as 2008 and was revived from an overdose at least once, according to the Shelby County Sheriff's Office.

Last month, Williams was arrested in Haverhill, Massachusetts, and charged with improper storage and carrying a firearm without a license. He was found with a 9mm handgun and a 16-round magazine after he told the police that he dozed off and drove into a ditch.

An officer wrote in the report that Williams appeared tired and impaired, but denied having consumed any alcohol or illegal drugs.

Williams posted bail on March 31 and was due to return to court on Wednesday for a probable cause hearing.

That image contrasts with Williams' days at Skowhegan High School, where a yearbook showed he once served as a class officer. "When in school he was a nice, funny and an all-around good guy," said classmate Casey Sprout-Costa.

Another classmate, Alex Stetkis, said Williams was a popular honor student who was class president in his junior year. But things went downhill when he started picking fights with other classmates and getting into drugs.

"Most could not believe it," Stetkis said of the news that Williams was suspected in the killing.

"He was always kind and could have gone anywhere in life if he hadn't gotten into drugs," he said.

Williams' Facebook page features photos of him smiling at a graduation ceremony as well as other photos of him hiking, hanging out with friends and dressed in a suit at a wedding party. His last post in 2017 noted how he was starting a new job in nearby Anson, Maine.

Residents in Norridgewock, a town of about 3,500, were stunned Wednesday as state police and federal agents investigated a blue-grey home believed to be where Williams lived with his girlfriend. Overhead, a helicopter buzzed low over trees.

"We're a little on edge. It's unnerving knowing there's a guy running around out there," said Tasha Raymond, who was home with her two children.

Gov. Paul LePage expressed his "deepest condolences" to Cole's family in a tweet. "If you live in Somerset County and the surrounding area, please cooperate with law enforcement and stay safe," the Republican governor said. LePage also directed all U.S and state flags to be flown at half-staff for at least three days.

Cole has a son who also is a Somerset County deputy. Sheriff Dale Lancaster called Cole, a 13-year

veteran of the department, an "outstanding employee, one of the finest deputies."

A relative described Cole as a lover of music who was well-known throughout the community for his generous and peaceful ways.

"He was one of the most caring and considerate people that I had the pleasure to know," said Madison resident Scott Bishop, whose mother had been married to Cole's brother.

Associated Press writers David Sharp in Portland, Maine; Kathy McCormack and Michael Casey in Concord, New Hampshire; and Alanna Durkin Richer in Boston contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to fix the name of a town. It is Haverhill, not Haverill.

## Trump's travel ban likely to be upheld, justices indicate

By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court seemed poised Wednesday to uphold President Donald Trump's ban on travel to the U.S. by visitors from several Muslim-majority countries, a move that would hand the president a major victory on a controversial signature policy.

In the court's first full-blown consideration of a Trump order, the conservative justices who make up the court's majority seemed unwilling to hem in a president who has invoked national security to justify restrictions on who can or cannot step on U.S. soil.

The justices in December allowed the ban to take full effect even as the legal fight over it continued, but Wednesday was the first time they took it up in open court. Trump's tough stance on immigration was a centerpiece of his presidential campaign, and he rolled out the first version of the ban just a week after taking office, sparking chaos and protests at a number of airports.

The ban's challengers almost certainly need either Chief Justice John Roberts or Justice Anthony Kennedy on their side if the court is to strike down the policy that its opponents have labeled a Muslim ban.

But neither appeared receptive to arguments made by lawyer Neal Katyal, representing the ban's opponents, that Trump's rule stems from his campaign pledge to keep Muslims out of the country and is unlike immigration orders issued by any other president.

The room was packed for the court's final arguments until October, and people waited in line for seats for days. "Hamilton" creator Lin-Manuel Miranda was in the audience. Demonstrators protesting the ban filled the area outside the building.

Some who oppose the ban have said courts should treat Trump differently from his predecessors. But that issue was raised only obliquely from the bench when Justice Elena Kagan talked about a hypothetical president who campaigned on an anti-Semitic platform and then tried to ban visitors from Israel.

When Solicitor General Noel Francisco, defending the ban, started to answer that such a turn of events was extremely unlikely because of the two countries' close relationship, Kagan stopped him. "This is an out-of-the-box kind of president in my hypothetical," she said, to laughter.

"We don't have those, Your Honor," Francisco replied.

While there was discussion about Trump's statements both as a candidate and as president, no justice specifically referenced his tweets on the subject, despite Katyal's attempt to get them to focus on last fall's retweets of inflammatory videos that stoked anti-Islam sentiment.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor was the most aggressive questioner of Francisco.

She told him she doubted that the president has "the authority to do more than Congress has already decided is adequate" under immigration law. She and Kagan also questioned Francisco closely about whether the ban discriminates against Muslims.

From the other side, Kennedy challenged Katyal about whether the ban would be unending. He said the policy's call for a report every six months "indicates there'll be a reassessment" from time to time.

"You want the president to say, 'I'm convinced that in six months we're going to have a safe world,'" Kennedy said, seemingly rejecting Katyal's argument.

His only question that seemed to favor the challengers came early in the arguments, when he asked Solicitor General Francisco whether Trump's campaign statements should be considered in evaluating the administration's ban. Francisco told the justices they shouldn't look at those campaign statements.

Kennedy pressed on that point. Speaking of a hypothetical candidate for mayor, he asked if what was said during that candidate's campaign was irrelevant if on "day two" of his administration the new mayor acted on those statements.

Francisco held his ground saying the presidential oath of office "marks a fundamental transformation."

With Katyal at the lectern, Justice Samuel Alito said it seemed wrong to call the travel policy a Muslim ban when it applies to just five of 50 mostly Muslim countries, 8 percent of the world's Muslim population and only one country — Iran — among the 10 largest with Muslim majorities. "Would a reasonable observer think this is a Muslim ban?" Alito asked.

Outside the court, opponents of the ban held signs that read "No Muslim Ban. Ever" and "Refugees Welcome." In another indication of heightened public interest, the court released an audio recording after arguments ended. The last time the court did that was for gay marriage arguments in 2015.

The justices are looking at the third version of a policy that Trump brought out shortly after taking office. That brought immediate turmoil as travelers were stopped at airports and some were detained for hours. The first version was blocked by courts and withdrawn. Its replacement was allowed to take partial effect, but expired in September.

The current version is indefinite and now applies to travelers from five countries with overwhelmingly Muslim populations — Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. It also affects two non-Muslim countries, blocking travelers from North Korea and some Venezuelan government officials and their families. A sixth majority-Muslim country, Chad, was removed from the list this month after improving "its identity-management and information sharing practices," Trump said in a proclamation.

The administration has argued that courts have no role to play because the president has broad powers over immigration and national security, and foreigners have no right to enter the country. Francisco also has said in written arguments that Trump's September proclamation laying out the current policy comports with immigration law and does not violate the Constitution because it does not single out Muslims.

The challengers have said that Trump is flouting immigration law by trying to keep more than 150 million people, the vast majority of them Muslim, from entering the country. They also argue that his policy amounts to the Muslim ban that he called for as a candidate, violating the Constitution's prohibition against religious bias.

The case is Trump v. Hawaii, 17-965.

Associated Press writer Jessica Gresko contributed to this report.

## For Trump lookalike, crops mean more than social media fame

By ARITZ PARRA, Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — A woman in Spain has found unexpected fame on social media after many found she bore a striking resemblance to U.S. President Donald Trump.

A journalist reporting on farming in northwestern Spain posted on Instagram a picture of Dolores Leis dressed in farm clothing with a hoe over her shoulder, prompting thousands of responses.

The 64-year-old has since been asked to comment on pressing U.S. policy and international issues — though she has shown more concern for a moth plague threatening her potato crops.

"I say that it must be because of the color of the hair," Leis told the La Voz de Galicia newspaper Tuesday.

She is different to Trump on one issue though — she doesn't use a mobile phone and has little interest in online chatter.

Leis, who appears standing in the middle of her farming plot, her frowning face looking away from the camera and blond hair held by a diadem, has many fans now.

"Can we replace Trump with this hard working lady?" one responder on Instagram asked.

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Others, who called Leis "Trump's Galician sister," made an online call to research the president's family roots in the Costa da Morte, or Death Coast, the rocky shore in northwestern Spain with a long history of shipwrecks.

A Galician native who has lived in the same town since she married her husband four decades ago, Leis works at home and at her farm, where the reporter found her last week planting potatoes.

Leis told the newspaper she has not felt overwhelmed by sudden fame because, without a smartphone, the online buzz is easy to ignore.

"I look at everything that my daughters show me, but it never stung my curiosity to have one (phone)," she said.

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A previous version of this story has been corrected to show that the woman's age is 64, not 70.

## House already threatened, could GOP also lose Senate grip?

By **BILL BARROW** and **THOMAS BEAUMONT**, Associated Press

Republicans have known for months that their House majority is in genuine peril. But after another bruising showing in a special election, some in the party are reconsidering the once inconceivable notion of losing the Senate.

It's a sobering possibility, particularly given Republican confidence not long ago that they probably would increase their Senate edge after the November vote. Far more Democratic senators are facing re-election in states favorable to Republicans than the other way around. That's why the GOP held out hope of expanding its ranks and easing the path for President Donald Trump's agenda.

Yet a Republican congressional victory Tuesday in the Phoenix suburbs has set off new alarm bells.

Republican Debbie Lesko won the special House election by 6 percentage points, though Trump captured the district by 21 percentage points in 2016. GOP turnout dropped off, and unlike Republicans' shocking losses in a Pittsburgh-area House race and an Alabama Senate contest, there was no weak GOP nominee to blame in Arizona.

The only explanation was the most worrisome for the GOP: Trump's presidency is activating Democrats and demoralizing some Republicans and if that trend continues, trouble is ahead.

"The first question is if Democrats can take the undeniably stronger turnout in most of these special elections ... and replicate that in the fall," said Steven Law, a Republican operative running the Senate Leadership Fund, a political action committee at the forefront of Republicans' November strategy. "My guess is they will."

Democrats certainly have a steep climb and must do more than play defense to win the Senate majority. Even if they successfully protect all 26 incumbents — 24 Democrats and two independents who caucus with them — they still would have to pick up two seats. Arizona and Nevada are the most likely.

For every Democratic loss among the 10 incumbents running in states where Trump won two years ago, Democrats would need to add another Republican pickup. That could leave them dependent on knocking off Republican Ted Cruz in Texas or winning in GOP-dominated Tennessee.

Still, there are signs that seizing the Senate is no longer a pipe dream.

Democratic incumbents are outpacing Republicans in fundraising. Of the 10 Democratic senators running in Trump-won states, nine are among the top 20 campaign fundraisers across all Senate candidates this election cycle. None of their potential Republican opponents has made that cut.

The lone Democratic exclusion, West Virginia's Joe Manchin, ranks 31st, but that still puts him ahead of his potential GOP rivals. In fact, the top Republican Senate fundraisers for the cycle are Roy Moore and Luther Strange, the two Alabama Republicans who vied for the seat now held by Democrat Doug Jones.

Cruz, the Texas senator, tops his Republican colleagues with \$9.1 million for his re-election bid. But Democrat Beto O'Rourke, even with his underdog status, has taken in more than \$13 million.

In Missouri, where Claire McCaskill has been viewed as among the most vulnerable Democratic senators, the two-term incumbent had more than \$11 million in her campaign account this month. That compares

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with \$2 million for the Republican state attorney general, Josh Hawley.

Republicans will have plenty of resources with independent groups and their wealthiest backers paying for advertising and voter outreach. But Democrats' performance among rank-and-file donors is just one more measure of voter enthusiasm.

The Arizona race, in a conservative district northwest of downtown Phoenix, highlighted other Republican concerns.

Republicans tried to turn the tax law into a shield. But the Democratic nominee, Hiral Tipirneni, didn't shy away from hammering Lesko as a lackey for national Republican leaders she said are intent on cutting health care services and Social Security.

The GOP arguments apparently worked well enough for the party to hit its early voting targets in Arizona. But doing that and still winning by only 6 percentage points suggested that the rest of the electorate, including independents, broke solidly for Democrats.

All 10 of the Democratic senators in Trump-carried states who are running for re-election voted against the GOP tax law.

"It wasn't that long ago that Republicans declared that the tax bill was going to solve most or all of their problems," said Democratic pollster Zac McCrary. "Now, even in ruby red Republican area, it's only exacerbated Republican problems, and they're just limping across the finish line in a district like this."

Increasingly bitter Republican primaries also magnify Democrats' early advantages. And beyond being forced to spend precious money now, several Republican primaries have become divisive and could leave the GOP base wounded in November.

In Wisconsin, conservative businessman Kevin Nicholson is accusing his GOP opponent, state Sen. Leah Vukmir, of cuddling up to the party establishment and Gov. Scott Walker. The line of attack may work in a primary, but risks alienating Walker supporters later.

In West Virginia, Republicans are mounting attacks on coal company CEO Don Blankenship, vying to face Manchin, for his role in the deadliest mine disaster in decades.

In Nevada, where Democrat Hillary Clinton won in the 2016 presidential race, Republican Dean Heller has been considered the most vulnerable GOP Senate incumbent. Heller's initial primary challenger, Danny Tarkanian, blasted him for defying Trump on trying to repeal the 2010 health care law and for resisting admitting he voted for Trump. Tarkanian has since left the Senate race to run for a House district, but Democrats argue Heller will bear the scars of the attacks as he also worked to mend fences with Trump, instead of reach out to swing voters.

Barrow reported from Atlanta and Beaumont from Des Moines, Iowa. Follow them on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BillBarrowAP> and <https://twitter.com/TomBeaumont>.

## NCAA begins work of implementing complex basketball reforms

By RALPH D. RUSSO, AP College Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The most difficult part of the NCAA's attempt to clean up college basketball begins now.

Hours after former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice presented the Commission on College Basketball's sweeping recommendations for reforming a sport weighed down by corruption, NCAA leaders set in motion the process for turning those ideas into reality.

The NCAA Board of Governors, a group of 16 university presidents and the association's highest ranking body, unanimously endorsed all the commission's recommendations Wednesday. Now it's up to various subcommittees, working groups and college administrators to dig into a mountain of work over the next three months as the NCAA attempts to change NBA draft rules, create a new enforcement body, toughen penalties for rules violations, revamp summer recruiting and certify agents. All while trying to get buy-in from organizations that might not be motivated to help.

"It's going to be a challenge to say the least," NCAA President Mark Emmert said. "This is a pace of

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decision making that the association's really never done on this kind of scale before."

The Division I Council, comprised mostly of athletic directors and headed by Miami AD Blake James, has the job of turning the recommendations into rules. That requires feedback from schools, then council votes with some conference votes counting more heavily than others. Each proposal then goes to the Board of Directors, where a majority vote is needed to send it to the Board of Governors for final approval.

It's a winding path — crossing 351 Division I schools with varied priorities and concerns — and requiring consensus building and compromise for measures to pass. NCAA rule changes can sometimes take a full calendar year to sort out.

"We've got to make sure we don't let the good fall victim to the perfect here," Emmert said. "Nobody believes we're going to get everything perfect the first time through."

The independent commission Rice led released a much-anticipated and detailed 60-page report, seven months after the group was formed in response to a federal corruption investigation that rocked college basketball. Ten people, including some assistant coaches, have been charged in a bribery and kickback scheme, and high-profile programs such as Arizona, Louisville and Kansas have been tied to possible NCAA violations.

"They believe the college basketball enterprise is worth saving," Rice told the AP of commission members in an interview before addressing NCAA leaders. "We believe there's a lot of work to do in that regard. That the state of the game is not very strong. We had to be bold in our recommendations."

The proposals were wide-ranging, falling mostly into five categories: NBA draft rules, specifically the league's 19-year-old age limit that has led to so-called one-and-done college players; non-scholastic basketball such as AAU leagues and summer recruiting events; the relationship between players and agents; relationships with apparel companies; and NCAA enforcement.

"Some people like some of (the recommendations) more than others, which is human nature, but as a board we're unanimous in the endorsement and the acceptance of these recommendations for the NCAA," said Minnesota President Eric Kaler, chairman of the Division I Board of Directors.

It's not yet clear how the governing body would pay for some of the proposals, though the NCAA reported revenues of more than \$1 billion dollars for fiscal year 2017 in its most recent financial disclosures.

The commission offered harsh assessments of toothless NCAA enforcement, as well as the shady summer basketball circuit that brings together agents, apparel companies and coaches looking to profit on teenage prodigies. It called the environment surrounding hoops "a toxic mix of perverse incentives to cheat," and said responsibility for the current mess goes all the way up to university presidents.

It also defended the NCAA's amateurism model, saying paying players a salary isn't the answer.

"The goal should not be to turn college basketball into another professional league," the commission wrote in its report.

The commission did leave open the possibility that college athletes could earn money off their names, images and likenesses, but decided not to commit on the subject while the courts are still weighing in.

Rice called the crisis in college basketball "first and foremost a problem of failed accountability and lax responsibility."

## ONE-AND-DONE

The commission emphasized the need for elite players to have more options when choosing between college and professional basketball, and to separate the two tracks.

The commission called for the NBA and its players association to change rules requiring players to be at least 19 years old and a year removed from graduating high school to be draft eligible. The one-and-done rule was implemented in 2006, despite the success of straight-from-high-school stars such as LeBron James, Kobe Bryant and Kevin Garnett.

"I'm confident they are going to be very supportive," Emmert said of the NBA and NBAPA.

The NBA and players union praised the recommendations on enforcement and expressed concerns about youth basketball. On draft eligibility rules, however, there was no commitment.

"The NBA and NBPA will continue to assess them in order to promote the best interests of players and

the game," they said.

The commission did, however, say if the NBA and NBPA refuse to change their rules in time for the next basketball season, it would reconvene and consider other options for the NCAA, such as making freshmen ineligible or locking a scholarship for three or four years if the recipient leaves a program after a single year.

"One-and-done has to go one way or another," Rice told the AP.

## ENFORCEMENT

The commission recommended harsher penalties for rule-breakers and that the NCAA outsource the investigation and adjudication of the most serious infractions cases. Level I violations would be punishable with up to a five-year postseason ban and the forfeiture of all postseason revenue for the time of the ban. That could be worth tens of millions to major conference schools. By comparison, recent Level I infractions cases involving Louisville and Syracuse basketball resulted in postseason bans of one year.

Instead of show cause orders, which are meant to limit a coach's ability to work in college sports after breaking NCAA rules, the report called for lifetime bans.

"The rewards of success, athletic success, have become very great. The deterrents sometimes aren't as effective as they need to be. What we want are deterrents that really impact an institution," said Notre Dame President Fr. John Jenkins, who was a member of the Rice commission.

## AGENTS

The commission proposed the NCAA create a program for certifying agents, and make them accessible to players from high school through their college careers.

## AAU AND SUMMER LEAGUES

The NCAA, with support from the NBA and USA Basketball, should run its own recruiting events for prospects during the summer, the commission said, and take a more serious approach to certifying events it does not control.

## APPAREL COMPANIES

The commission also called for greater financial transparency from shoe and apparel companies such as Nike, Under Armour and Adidas. These companies have extensive financial relationships with colleges and coaches worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and Adidas had two former executives charged by federal prosecutors in New York in the corruption case.

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

## Toronto van attack throws spotlight on anti-woman vitriol

By **TAMMY WEBBER** and **JENNIFER PELTZ**, Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — The deadly van rampage in Toronto is training attention on an online world of sexual loneliness, rage and misogyny after the suspect invoked an uprising by "involuntary celibates" and gave a shoutout to a California killer who seethed at women for rejecting him.

The world of self-described "incels," where sexual frustrations boil over into talk of violent revenge against women, has become a virtual home for some socially isolated men like the 25-year-old computer science student charged in Monday's carnage on Toronto's busiest thoroughfare.

Minutes before plowing a rented van into a crowd of mostly women, killing 10 people and injuring 14, suspect Alek Minassian posted a Facebook message that seemed to offer one of the few clues so far to what was on his mind. "The Incel Rebellion has already begun!" it read.

Police confirmed Minassian posted the message but have declined so far to discuss a motive for the attack as they continue investigating. But the post has revived concerns about the anti-woman vitriol embraced by California mass killer Elliot Rodger and invoked by Minassian in his post.

The incel community is "one of the most violent areas of the internet," said Heidi Beirich, who tracks hate groups for the Southern Poverty Law Center. "It may seem to some people that this is kind of a group of

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pathetic, victimized white males who just are lonely. It's not. It's ugly."

Yet some incel sites insist they don't condone violence or misogyny. And Judith Taylor, a University of Toronto professor who focuses on social movements, notes that some participants in incel discussions simply feel forsaken, while others "can become very graphic and very toxic."

Until Monday, Minassian had a life that never attracted authorities' attention.

Living with his family in suburban Toronto, he studied at nearby Seneca College, where some fellow students told news media he had a way with computers. He briefly joined the military last year but asked to leave recruit training after just 16 days, according to Canada's Department of National Defence.

As a teen, he had an awkward personality, those who knew him then said.

"He was known to meow like a cat and try to bite people," though he never was violent, wrote Alexander Alexandrovitch, who said in a Facebook post that he went to high school with Minassian.

Others said Minassian had struggled socially, especially with women.

He'd intone, "I'm afraid of girls," former high school classmate, Ari Blaff, told news media. Another classmate, Josh Kirstein, told The New York Times that Minassian "would cower and avoid eye contact when he saw a girl. ... He would shut down completely."

More recently, people in Minassian's neighborhood saw him as a somewhat withdrawn figure. On walks around his neighborhood, he would talk to himself and looked straight ahead, not acknowledging passers-by, neighbor Saeid Farokhkish said.

Local pizzeria manager Aman Enshai recalled Minassian came in a couple of nights a week for a slice but never said much.

Minassian's family hasn't commented on him or the murder and attempted murder charges against him. His father, Vahe Minassian, looked distraught and only said, "I'm sorry," as he left a courthouse Tuesday. It's not clear whether Minassian has a lawyer who will represent him as the case progresses.

Whatever emerges about his mindset and alleged motivations, his mention of an "incel rebellion" immediately put the virtual community under scrutiny. Discussion forums buzzed with reactions — some celebratory, some shocked, many wary of the attention.

The "involuntary celibate" identity dates to the 1990s, coined by a Canadian woman aiming to launch a supportive exchange about sexual solitude, according to Taylor.

But over time, "incel" has become a buzzword for certain men infuriated at being rejected by women and prone to float ideas for violent payback, according to sociologists and others who follow incel circles.

Participants "see feminism, and women in general, as a reason their lives are so difficult," said Maxime Fiset, a self-described former neo-Nazi who now tracks extremist websites for the Montreal-based Center for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence.

Forums are laced with suggestions that at least some of the discussions are merely satire or a way of blowing off steam.

But the site Reddit shut down one popular incel forum last year, after announcing a ban on content that calls for violence or physical harm.

Bailey Poland, the author of a 2016 book about online misogyny, says the talk of brutality is risky, whatever the posters' intentions.

It's "contributing to an environment where that kind of violence is seen as normal and acceptable. So even if you have no actual intent to do that, someone who does is going to see those posts and think they're not alone," said Poland, a doctoral student in rhetoric at Bowling Green State University.

Rodger, a 22-year-old community college student, killed six people and wounded more than a dozen others in shooting and stabbing attacks near the University of California, Santa Barbara before killing himself in 2014. He had railed in a manifesto and online videos about women who shunned him and called for an incel "overthrow" of what he saw as feminist domination.

To be sure, Rodger wasn't the first killer with a misogynistic mindset. A man who killed three women and wounded nine others in a Pennsylvania dance-aerobics class in 2009 left behind a vitriolic diary about his lack of a love life. In 1989, a 25-year-old man who blamed feminists for ruining his life killed 14 women

at a Montreal engineering college in Canada's deadliest mass shooting.

While violence against women extends beyond any online discussion, "this is a discourse that promotes a wider, broader misogynistic culture," said Ross Haenfler, a Grinnell College sociologist who studies sub-cultures. "We should take it very seriously."

Peltz reported from New York. Associated Press video journalist David Martin and writer Charmaine Noronha in Toronto; writer Ben Fox in Miami; and researcher Randy Herschaft in New York contributed to this report.

## Scientists find lots of gorillas in census, also see decline

By **SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A first-of-its-kind intensive count of western Africa gorillas found far more of the apes than conservationists previously thought.

Maybe not for long: The same study found a 19 percent plunge in that gorilla population in just eight years.

Researchers spent a decade trudging through an area of forest that's about the size of the state of Washington — or Ireland and Scotland combined — looking for lowland gorillas, chimpanzees and nests in what scientists said is the most accurate count for the apes in this primary region where they live, according to a study in Wednesday's journal *Science Advances*.

They put the 2013 population at 362,000 gorillas.

That's considerably more than the 150,000-to-250,000 estimate from the organization that determines how endangered species are, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

But it's also significantly less than the 2005 assessment of almost 450,000 gorillas from the same research team.

The population still qualifies for the IUCN critically endangered red list because the animals are on pace to lose more than 80 percent of their population in three gorilla generations, which is a key threshold, said study author Fiona Maisels of the Wildlife Conservation Society and the University of Stirling in Scotland.

At the current rate, 80 percent or more of the gorillas will be gone by end of the century, said University of Illinois primate expert Paul Garber, who wasn't part of the study but praised it. He said in the five years since the 2013 count, the loss has likely accelerated.

"That is a doomsday scenario, and we need to reverse this immediately," Garber said in an email.

Gorillas are hunted as food, and Maisels blames that for much of the population drop. Four out of five gorillas live in an area not protected from hunting, the paper found. Maisels also said forest loss could be huge in the future.

To conduct the census, pairs of researchers surveyed thick forest areas looking up, down and sideways for both gorillas and chimpanzees, averaging about 1.2 miles (2 km) a day, Maisels said. Overall, researchers covered about one quarter of the 290,000-square-mile (750,000-square-km) area of Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo and Gabon and then used computer simulations to account for the rest.

The same researchers found nearly 129,000 chimpanzees, which is more than conservationists thought. Because of survey sample issues they couldn't significantly show a change in chimp numbers, but they suspect it is decreasing, Maisels said.

"We used around 20,000 nests," Maisels said, referring to both species. "Nobody else has done that."

While two other outside experts praised the study, Volker Sommer at the University College London said the counting method is flawed because researchers can't tell if nests they find are day or night nests, new or old, single or multiple. He said in an email that then adding computer modeling to it "takes a questionable approach to new heights" so "we cannot expect standardized results from such an approach."

Duke University conservation scientist Stuart Pimm called the paper important, especially in the wider context of assessing how a species is doing beyond old pure population estimates.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears . His work can be found here .

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## Germans don Jewish skullcaps to protest anti-Semitism

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER, Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germans of various faiths donned Jewish skullcaps and took to the streets Wednesday in several cities to protest an anti-Semitic attack in Berlin and express fears about growing hatred of Jews in the country.

The kippa protest was triggered by the daytime assault last week of two young men wearing skullcaps in an upscale neighborhood in the German capital. The attack, in which a 19-year-old Syrian asylum-seeker is a suspect, drew outrage in Germany and sharp condemnation by Chancellor Angela Merkel.

It is the latest of several anti-Semitic incidents that have many Jews wondering about their safety in Germany, which has tried to atone for Nazis' killing of 6 million European Jews in the Holocaust more than 70 years ago.

The rising tensions have come at a time when Germany is grappling with an influx of more than 1 million mostly Muslim migrants, along with the rise of a nationalist party, the Alternative for Germany, which was elected to Parliament last year. Its leaders are known for their openly anti-Muslim stance, but their anti-Semitism is less apparent.

Across Europe, anti-Semitism has been on the rise in recent years, and thousands of Jews — mostly from France — have moved to Israel.

More than 2,000 people — Jews, Christians, Muslims and atheists — put on kippas in a show of solidarity in Berlin.

The yarmulkes were of all varieties — silky and knitted, leathery, embroidered and patterned. Holding them so the wind wouldn't blow them away, both men and women cheered when Berlin Mayor Michael Mueller told them, "Today, we all wear kippa. Today, Berlin is wearing kippa."

Jewish community leaders said it was the biggest such display in public since before World War II.

Elard Zuehlke, a 26-year-old non-Jewish Berliner, said he came to the rally in front of the city's synagogue on Fasanenstrasse because "it cannot be that in Germany there is any kind of anti-Semitism — not in schools, not in public, not at work, not in politics, nowhere."

"This cannot be happening. Germany has to live up to its special responsibility," he said.

Reinhard Borgmann, a 65-year-old Jew who lost several great-uncles in the Holocaust and whose mother only survived because she hid from the Nazis, said he was pleased that dozens of organizations had turned out to support the demonstration.

"As Jews, we want to be able to move freely, whether with kippa or without," Borgmann said. "We want to be able to practice religion in peace and not be discriminated against and not live in fear. And this event tonight is a sign and an important one."

Three people who protested separately against anti-Semitism in the Arab immigrant neighborhood of Neukoelln ended their demonstration earlier after a one person took away their Israeli flag, police said.

Beyond that, hundreds of people also rallied in Cologne, Erfurt, Magdeburg and Potsdam.

In last week's attack in Berlin, the 21-year-old victim, an Arab Israeli who said he wore the kippa in a show of solidarity with his Jewish friends, caught the assault on video, which quickly went viral. It showed a young man whipping him violently with a belt while shouting "Yahudi!" — Jew in Arabic.

Germany's main Jewish leader, Josef Schuster, sparked tension within the Jewish community Tuesday when he said he would advise people visiting big cities against wearing Jewish skullcaps.

The RIAS group that tracks anti-Semitism said there were 947 anti-Semitic incidents last year in Berlin, including 18 attacks and 23 threats last year.

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In all of Germany, authorities say there are a high volume of anti-Semitic incidents reported, with the equivalent of nearly four per day in 2017. There were 1,453 anti-Semitic incidents, compared with 1,468 incidents in 2016 and 1,366 in 2015.

Schuster's comments on hiding the skullcap drew sharp criticism from other Jewish leaders, who say Jews should wear a kippa to show they're not afraid.

"Jewish identity is not something we should hide," said Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal. "We have to be proud of who we are and at the same time fight anti-Semitism."

For years, many Jewish men in Germany and across Europe who wear the kippa as a symbol of their devotion to God have been hiding their skullcaps under baseball hats when they are in public.

Anti-Semitism has existed in Europe for hundreds of years, often fanned by Christian churches who have blamed Jews for the killing of Jesus. In recent decades, however, Muslim immigrants have added a new strain by holding Jews responsible for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"We also have new phenomena (of anti-Semitism in Germany). We have refugees now, for example, or people of Arab origin who are bringing a different type of anti-Semitism into the country," Merkel told Israeli TV this week. "In the new government, we have for the first time appointed a commissioner for Jewish life in Germany and in the fight against anti-Semitism."

The new commissioner, Felix Klein, starts his job in early May.

The decision followed a recommendation by experts and came amid concerns over the bullying of Jewish children in schools in recent months and the burning of Israeli flags during a recent pro-Palestinian protest in Berlin.

Earlier this month, a rap band that included cynical references about the Auschwitz death camp in its lyrics won the Echo award, Germany's most important music prize, drawing strong criticism from other artists and government officials. After several past winners said they would return their awards, the German music industry behind the Echo said Wednesday it would scrap the prize in its current form.

Neighboring France also has witnessed virulent anti-Semitism in recent years, notably in two Islamic extremist attacks targeting a Jewish school and a kosher supermarket. More recently, authorities say anti-Semitism was a motive for the stabbing death last month of an 85-year-old Parisian woman, a killing that shocked France.

Thousands of French Jews have left for Israel in recent years, but France still has the highest Jewish population in Europe, about half a million.

Around 200,000 Jews live in Germany, most of them immigrants from the former Soviet Union. That's fewer than half of the 500,000 Jews who lived in the country before the Holocaust.

Some 3.3 million Jews lived in Poland on the eve of the Holocaust, making it Europe's largest Jewish community, and the second-largest in the world. There are no exact numbers today because many people with Jewish roots do not register. Estimates are in the thousands.

Poland witnessed a startling wave of anti-Semitic comments earlier this year by government officials amid a dispute with Israel over a new Polish law. The law criminalizes blaming Poland for Holocaust crimes. The anti-Semitic rhetoric, unprecedented in Poland in 50 years, deeply shook the country's tiny Jewish community.

Despite the rhetoric, Poland is still considered one of the safest countries in Europe for Jews, with violence extremely rare. With no radical Muslim population and no left-wing anti-Semitism, Jews in Poland have to worry only about the extreme right, which is small but growing more emboldened.

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Associated Press writers Geir Moulson in Berlin, Angela Charlton in Paris and Vanessa Gera in Warsaw contributed.

## Thousands protest in Armenia's capital as talks falter

By YURAS KARMANAU and AVET DEMOURIAN, Associated Press

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP) — Tens of thousands of opposition supporters surged into the central square of the Armenian capital again on Wednesday, calling for the leader of their protests to become prime minister as the country labored through a dramatic political crisis.

The Kremlin is watching with concern as its small but strategic ally, where Russia has a military base, is wracked by nearly two weeks of enormous demonstrations that prompted its former president-turned-prime minister, Serzh Sargsyan, to resign on Monday.

Talks between opposition leader Nikol Pashinian and Karen Karapetian, the acting prime minister, had been expected in the morning but were called off — a decision that sent thousands of anti-government demonstrators back into the streets.

Pressure on the government increased in the evening when the dominant party's small coalition partner, Dashnaktsutyun, announced it was withdrawing. The move leaves the governing Republican party with a majority of 58 seats in the 105-member parliament.

Pashinian had been expected to sit down with Karapetian to discuss the political transition after Sargsyan's abrupt resignation amid the massive protests of his attempts to cling to power.

Karapetian is an ally of Sargsyan, who served as president for 10 years, then became prime minister as Armenia transitioned to a new form of government. It reduced the president's powers and gave more authority to the prime minister.

The opposition insists that Karapetian step down soon to make way for a new prime minister appointed by a new parliament. The talks were supposed to discuss that transition.

Karapetian said in a statement that the talks with Pashinian were canceled after the opposition made unspecified "unilateral demands," and Pashinian urged his supporters to take to the streets.

Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke with his Armenian counterpart Armen Sarkisian; both agreed that the disorder should be met with "restraint and responsibility," according to a Kremlin statement.

About 5,000 people marched in the center of the capital, Yerevan, blocking traffic and chanting "Join us!" Protesters danced and waved the Armenian flag. Outside of Yerevan, demonstrators blocked several major highways including the road to the airport.

"Authorities won't step down, they are just dragging their feet," said 24-year-old protester Garik Migranyan. "But we will make them do that. We are the power."

Armen Tankyan, who was at the main square with his 11-year-old son, said people have lost trust in the authorities, while "the opposition promises change for the better."

Pashinian said he and his allies would boycott the snap parliamentary election if a member of the ruling Republican Party remains prime minister.

"We will not allow authorities to steal our victory," Pashinian told supporters. "There will be more of us here with every day until we take power."

The opposition insisted that "a people's candidate" should replace Karapetian. Pashinian told the massive rally Wednesday night that he's ready for the job.

Armenia's sports minister on Wednesday sided with the protesters, telling the demonstrators on the Republic Square that he is resigning.

Sargsyan said in a statement he is concerned about the tensions in the country and would launch talks with pro-government and ruling parties in search of compromise.

Analysts warned of escalation as the protesters made it clear that they wouldn't settle just for the ouster of Sargsyan; instead, they seek a genuine change of the whole political leadership.

"Authorities have been retreating every day," Yerevan-based political analysts Agarov Adibekian said. "The massive street protests are increasing the opposition's chances to take power."

Russia has been cautious about taking a stand on the developments in Armenia, in stark contrast to previous years when Moscow routinely dismissed anti-government protests in other former Soviet nations as examples of hostile Western influence.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov expressed hope Wednesday that "our Armenian friends will manage to solve this situation soon."

Pashinian has been only mildly critical of Russia, a key ally and economic donor for this landlocked Caucasus Mountains nation.

Associated Press writers Nataliya Vasilyeva and Jim Heintz in Moscow contributed.

## MGM sets August opening date for Massachusetts casino

By PHILIP MARCELO, Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The fate of Wynn's glitzy Boston-area casino may still be up in the air, but rival MGM says it is on track to open Massachusetts' first Las Vegas-style casino resort sooner than expected.

MGM Resorts International President Bill Hornbuckle said in Wednesday interview with The Associated Press that the company is now targeting Aug. 24 as the new opening date for the \$960 million hotel and casino complex it has been building in downtown Springfield.

The company previously envisioned the casino opening sometime in September, but relatively mild winters and steady progress on a nearby highway project impacting the casino have allowed construction to move slightly faster than anticipated, he said.

Hornbuckle, like other company officials in recent weeks, declined to address reports the company has been quietly negotiating with Wynn Resorts to take over its more than \$2.5 billion project on the Everett waterfront, which is slated to open sometime next year.

"We have a longstanding policy that we're not going to speak on rumors," he said. "Whatever happens in Boston is up to the gaming commission, and that story is yet to be told."

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission has been investigating allegations of sexual misconduct by Wynn Resorts founder Steve Wynn and what the company's board might have known about them. The results of the investigation might impact the company's license to operate in Massachusetts.

But taking over Wynn's development in the more desirable Boston market would require MGM to find a new owner for its casino in the western part of the state. Massachusetts law prevents casino operators from holding more than one state gambling license.

Gambling analysts have suggested the Indian tribes that operate Connecticut's Mohegan Sun and Foxwoods resorts would be the most obvious suitors if the Springfield property became available, though a spokesman for the tribes shot down the idea on Wednesday.

"Speculation about us buying Springfield is rumor mill trash," said Andrew Doba.

The Mohegan and Mashantucket Pequot tribes broke ground in March on a 200,000 square foot casino in East Windsor, Connecticut, that is meant to directly compete with MGM just a few miles across the state line. But the tribe's project has been delayed because the U. S. Department of Interior has not signed off on a revised revenue sharing agreement between the federally recognized tribes and the state.

Thursday promises to be a busy one for MGM. The company is set to release its first quarter earnings and Massachusetts gambling regulators will hear updates from city and company officials on the Springfield project.

MGM already has hired some 400 of the 3,000 people expected to work at the 15-acre complex when it opens, Hornbuckle said.

Slot machines are being placed on the 125,000 square foot gambling floor and the 250-room hotel is being fitted and furnished, he said.

Rehabilitation of the city's historic Armory, which the company envisions turning into an events space at the center of a vibrant open air marketplace, is among the next major projects, as is completion of an eight-screen movie theater and other entertainment amenities, Hornbuckle added.

## Ford promises more savings as 1Q earnings rise 9 percent

By TOM KRISHER, AP Auto Writer

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP) — Ford Motor Co. said Wednesday it will shed most of its North American car lineup as part of broad plan to save money and make the company more competitive in a fast-changing marketplace.

The changes include getting rid of all cars in the region during the next four years except for the Mustang sports car and a compact Focus crossover vehicle, CEO Jim Hackett said as the company released first-quarter earnings.

The decision, which Hackett said was due to declining demand and profitability, means Ford will no longer sell the Fusion midsize car, Taurus large car, CMax hybrid compact and Fiesta subcompact in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

Exiting most of the car business comes as the U.S. market continues a dramatic shift toward trucks and SUVs. Ford could also exit or restructure low-performing areas of its business, executives said.

The company has found another \$11.5 billion in cost cuts and efficiencies, bringing the total to \$25.5 billion expected by 2022, Chief Financial Officer Bob Shanks told reporters. Savings will come from engineering, product development, marketing, materials and manufacturing. The company previously predicted \$14 billion in cuts by 2022.

One-third of Ford's belt-tightening will come by the end of 2020, Shanks said.

"We're starting to understand what we need to do and making clear decisions there," Hackett said.

Ford also promised to raise its operating profit margin from 5.2 percent to 8 percent by 2020, two years earlier than a previous forecast. That includes a 10 percent pretax margin in North America.

The company said its first-quarter net income rose 9 percent due largely to a lower income tax rate.

Ford made \$1.74 billion from January through March, or 43 cents per share, compared with \$1.59 billion, or 40 cents per share a year ago. Revenue rose 7 percent to \$41.96 billion.

Earnings and revenue beat Wall Street estimates. Analysts polled by FactSet expected 41 cents per share on revenue of \$36.78 billion. As usual, North America drove Ford's profits for the quarter with pretax earnings of \$1.9 billion.

Pretax automotive earnings fell \$443 million to \$1.7 billion, mainly due to higher metals costs such as steel and aluminum.

Investors reacted favorably to the earnings. Ford stock rose nearly 3 percent in after-hours trading Wednesday to \$11.40. Through the close of regular-session trading Wednesday, it has fallen about 11 percent so far this year.

The cost savings will come by optimizing digital marketing and discounts on vehicles, as well as putting multiple vehicles on five flexible global architectures in the next few years. The company currently builds vehicles on nine platforms that aren't as flexible.

Shanks said Ford is "unleashing the creativity of the teams to challenge norms, challenge conventions." Cuts and efficiencies are not done yet, he said.

Ford will cut \$5 billion from capital spending from 2019 to 2022, reducing it from \$34 billion to \$29 billion. The company will spend less on low-performing areas such as cars. It identified Lincoln as a low-performing area but Shanks said sales are growing and the brand is not in jeopardy. More capital will be allocated to higher performing areas such as trucks and sport utilities, he said.

Lower-performing areas will be targeted for restructuring and some areas could be targeted for "disposition," Shanks said. Shanks defined disposition as a different business model, efficiency improvements, exiting or downsizing. "Whatever it takes," he said.

Shanks wouldn't say if employees would be cut but said nothing is off the table.

Executives talked about the need to further improve operations in Europe and South America.

"We'll restructure as necessary and we'll be decisive," Hackett said.

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This story has been corrected to read that Ford will shed all but two car models over the next four

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years, not the next two years.

## Asian markets mixed as investors consider latest earnings

By **KELVIN CHAN, AP Business Writer**

HONG KONG (AP) — Asian share benchmarks were mixed on Thursday as investors digested the latest quarterly corporate earnings.

**KEEPING SCORE:** Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index climbed 0.5 percent to 22,315.79 and South Korea's Kospi jumped 1.3 percent to 2,481.70 after Samsung reported better than expected earnings. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.7 percent to 30,108.64 and the Shanghai Composite in mainland China lost 0.9 percent to 3,089.21. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 dipped 0.1 percent to 5,218.70. Markets in Southeast Asia were lower.

**EARNINGS:** South Korea's Samsung Electronics reported its net income grew 52 percent in the first quarter on robust demand for its memory chips. Earlier, U.S. companies reported strong numbers, with aerospace company Boeing and railroad operator Norfolk Southern both topping Wall Street's estimates in the first quarter while payment processing giant Visa posted a sharp jump in profits for the period.

**YIELDS:** Rising interest rates for U.S. Treasuries remained on investors' minds, with the yield on the 10-year note hovering at a four-year high as it climbed to 3.03 percent from 3 percent. There were worries that markets would be rattled when the yield crossed the 3 percent threshold because it might cause the Federal Reserve to alter its outlook for interest rates but they now appear to be unfounded. Higher rates, which are rising on expectations of stronger U.S. economic growth and inflation, are also helping shore up the dollar.

**QUOTEWORTHY:** "The market has sort of oversold their equity hand, I think the 3 percent got overplayed," said Stephen Innes, head of Asian trading at OANDA.

**WALL STREET:** Major U.S. benchmarks had a mixed finish. The S&P 500 index added 0.2 percent to 2,639.40. The Dow rose 0.2 percent to 24,083.83. The Nasdaq composite dipped 0.1 percent to 7,003.74.

**ENERGY:** Oil futures extended gains. Benchmark U.S. crude oil rose 30 cents to \$68.35 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose 35 cents to settle at \$68.05 a barrel on Wednesday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, rose 42 cents to \$74.42 a barrel in London.

**CURRENCIES:** The dollar slipped to 109.33 yen from 109.43 yen. The euro rose to \$1.2175 from \$1.2162.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, April 26, the 116th day of 2018. There are 249 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 26, 1937, German and Italian warplanes raided the Basque town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War; estimates of the number of people killed vary from the hundreds to the thousands.

On this date:

In 1564, William Shakespeare was baptized at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon, England.

In 1607, English colonists went ashore at present-day Cape Henry, Virginia, on an expedition to establish the first permanent English settlement in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1777, during the American Revolutionary War, 16-year-old Sybil Ludington, the daughter of a militia commander in Dutchess County, New York, rode her horse into the night to alert her father's men of the approach of British regular troops.

In 1865, John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln, was surrounded by federal troops near Port Royal, Virginia, and killed.

In 1913, Mary Phagan, a 13-year-old worker at a Georgia pencil factory, was strangled; Leo Frank, the factory superintendent, was convicted of her murder and sentenced to death. (Frank's death sentence

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was commuted, but he was lynched by an anti-Semitic mob in 1915.)

In 1923, Britain's Prince Albert, Duke of York (the future King George VI), married Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon at Westminster Abbey.

In 1945, Marshal Henri Philippe Petain (an-REE' fee-LEEP' pay-TAN'), the head of France's Vichy government during World War II, was arrested.

In 1952, the destroyer-minesweeper USS Hobson sank in the central Atlantic after colliding with the aircraft carrier USS Wasp with the loss of 176 crew members.

In 1968, the United States exploded beneath the Nevada desert a 1.3 megaton nuclear device called "Boxcar."

In 1977, the legendary nightclub Studio 54 had its opening night in New York.

In 1986, an explosion and fire at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine caused radioactive fallout to begin spewing into the atmosphere. (Dozens of people were killed in the immediate aftermath of the disaster while the long-term death toll from radiation poisoning is believed to number in the thousands.)

In 1994, voting began in South Africa's first all-race elections, resulting in victory for the African National Congress and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as president. China Airlines Flight 140, a Taiwanese Airbus A-300, crashed while landing in Nagoya, Japan, killing 264 people (there were seven survivors).

Ten years ago: Police in Amstetten, Austria, arrested Josef Fritzl, freeing his daughter Elisabeth and her six surviving children whom he had fathered while holding her captive in a basement cell for 24 years. (Fritzl was later sentenced to life in a psychiatric ward.) Yossi Harel, the ship commander whose attempt to bring Holocaust survivors to Palestine aboard the Exodus 1947 built support for Israel's founding, died in Tel Aviv at age 90. Avant-garde composer Henry Brant died in Santa Barbara, California, at age 94.

Five years ago: Unable to ignore air travelers' anger, Congress overwhelmingly approved legislation to allow the Federal Aviation Administration to withdraw furloughs of air traffic controllers caused by budget-wide cuts known as the sequester, ending a week of coast-to-coast flight delays. Fire at a psychiatric hospital near Moscow killed 38 people; only three escaped. Country singer George Jones, 81, died in Nashville.

One year ago: Dismissing concerns about ballooning federal deficits, President Donald Trump proposed dramatic tax cuts for U.S. businesses and individuals. President Trump told the leaders of Mexico and Canada that he would not immediately pull out of the North American Free Trade Agreement, just hours after administration officials said he was considering a draft executive order to do just that. NASA's Cassini spacecraft survived an unprecedented trip between Saturn and its rings, sending back amazing pictures to show for it. Jonathan Demme (DEM'-mee), the Oscar-winning director of "The Silence of the Lambs" and "Philadelphia," died in New York at age 73.

Today's Birthdays: Architect I.M. Pei is 101. Movie composer Francis Lai is 86. Actress-comedian Carol Burnett is 85. Rhythm-and-blues singer Maurice Williams is 80. Songwriter-musician Duane Eddy is 80. Singer Bobby Rydell is 76. Rock musician Gary Wright is 75. Actress Nancy Lenahan is 65. Actor Giancarlo Esposito is 60. Rock musician Roger Taylor (Duran Duran) is 58. Actress Joan Chen is 57. Rock musician Chris Mars is 57. Actor-singer Michael Damian is 56. Actor Jet Li (lee) is 55. Rock musician Jimmy Stafford (Train) is 54. Actor-comedian Kevin James is 53. Record company executive Jeff Huskins is 52. Former U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey (TRESH'-eh-way) is 52. Actress Marianne Jean-Baptiste is 51. Country musician Joe Caverlee (Yankee Grey) is 50. Rapper T-Boz (TLC) is 48. First lady Melania Trump is 48. Actress Shondrella Avery is 47. Country musician Jay DeMarcus (Rascal Flatts) is 47. Country musician Michael Jeffers (Pinmonkey) is 46. Rock musician Jose Pasillas (Incubus) is 42. Actor Jason Earles is 41. Actor Leonard Earl Howze is 41. Actor Tom Welling is 41. Actor Pablo Schreiber is 40. Actor Nyambi Nyambi is 39. Actress Jordana Brewster is 38. Actress Stana Katic is 38. Actress Marnette Patterson is 38. Actor Channing Tatum is 38. Americana/roots singer-songwriter Lilly Hiatt is 34. Actress Emily Wickersham is 34. Actor Aaron Weeks is 32. Electro pop musician James Sunderland (Frenship) is 31.

Thought for Today: "A great many people think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices." — William James, American philosopher and psychologist (1842-1910).