

Groton Daily Independent

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Chicken Soup
for the Soul

“The difference between the difficult and the impossible is that the impossible takes a little longer time.”

-Lady Aberdeen

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Lewandowski Bridal Shower

Come and Go Bridal Shower honoring Bride to Be, Sarah Lewandowski, Saturday, June 2, 2018 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church – Groton. Lance Dennert and Sarah are registered at Bed, Bath and Beyond and Target.

Sunday, May 20

2 p.m.: Graduation (will be Livestreamed live on GDILIVE.COM)

Groton Chiropractic Clinic

Carol McFarland-Kutter, D.C.
1205 N 1st St., Groton 397-8204

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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The high school spring concert was held recently at the Groton Area High School Gym. The high school band, under the direction of Austin Fordham, performed, "Free World March" and "Earthdance." Soloists were Kylie Kassube on clarinet and Grace Wambach on alto saxophone. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The high school choir, under the direction of Cody Swanson, sang, "Sing Alleluia," "For the Beauty of the Earth," and "How Can I Keep From Singing." Soloists were Alexis Hanten, Desiree Blevins and Tylan Glover." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The Chamber Choir sang, "Bill Bailey, Won't You Come Home?," "Frozen: Choral Suite" and "Shut De Do." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

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The high school band came back to play three more selections. Grace Wambach had an alto saxophone solo during the performance of "The Incredibles (Main Theme). Then "Mulan" was performed with soloists Erin Unzen on trumpet, Jenifer Fjelstad on flute and Ashley Garduno on French Horn. The last was "A Disney Spectacular" with AnneMarie Smith on trumpet, Grace Wambach on alto saxophone and Kylie Kassube on clarinet. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The girls choir sang, "I See the Light," with Chloe Daly and Jenifer Fjelstad doing solos. Desiree Yeigh was the accompanist for all of the choir selections. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The boys choir sang, "Kiss the Girl." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

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The mixed choir sang, "He Live in You." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The senior choir members were recognized. They are Aleaya Worlie, Jasmine Schinkel, Hannah Lewandowski, Madilyn Wright, Marshall Lane, Jenifer Fjelstad, Hattie Weismantel and Jackson Oliver. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

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The outstanding senior vocalist was Jenifer Fjelstad. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



A Rising Star award was presented to Madeline Schuelke. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The senior excellence award was presented to Jenifer Fjelstad. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



The John Philip Sousa Award was presented to Hattie Weismantel. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

The senior band members were recognized. They are Jenifer Fjelstad, Emma Donley, Aleaya Worlie and Hattie Weismantel.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



What Would We Do without Rain?

Sometimes I cannot help being a grouch. I guess it is what happens to a person when they get older. They get older, grouchier and grumpier. With that in mind, I guess I qualify for being an old geezer.

The past several weeks I was grouchy about the weather. What else is there to grouch about these days? I would grouch about politics, but it is a world of craziness. I suppose good people go to Washington, DC, but they don't stay good for long. Therefore, I have given up grouching about politics and politicians and such.

One of the good things about grouching about the weather is it there is nothing you can do about the weather. You may not like the weather. You may want a different kind of weather. However, there is actually nothing you can do to change the weather on the outside.

Through the years, I have realized that if I wanted to bet on which day it was going to rain, it would be the day I wash my car. When I am out there washing my car, Mother Nature is looking down on me grinning one of her sarcastic grins, knowing that she is going to send rain my way that day.

I still like grouching about the weather. After all, you need to grouch about something and I would rather grouch about something that I had nothing at all to do with then something I could change.

The other day I started downtown and the sky was bright and sunny. Twenty minutes later, it was raining cats and dogs.

Three weeks ago at the church, we bought a brand-new lawnmower. We have not been able to use it yet so we do not know if it really works or not. The rain has come down for three weeks.

Thinking about the rain condition, we are in I often wonder about how Noah felt about the rain in his day. He built an ark and there was not a drop of rain to be found. He told everybody that it was going to rain; nobody had ever seen rain before and did not know what he was talking about.

For 100 years, Noah was building his ark and telling people that the rain was coming soon. They laughed at him and probably he was the first person called The Rainman. They were not laughing so much when the rain actually did come.

I was sitting in my easy chair, looking out the glass door, watching it rain and rain and rain. Just when I thought it was about over, there was a crackling thunder and the rain came down worse than before.

"When will this rain," I said in a very disgusted attitude, "stop so I can go outside?"

My wife looked at me and said, "What do you want to go outside for?"

Well, she had me there. Because there is nothing for me to do outside and furthermore, I am not permitted to do any repair work on the outside by decree of the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. No matter how bad something is broken, five minutes with me and it will be worse than before. That is, according to her estimation.

I tried to keep quiet for a few more minutes, but lo and behold, out came more grouchiness. I guess a person my age has a lot of grouchy to come out, but there is never an appropriate time.

"I'm getting so tired," I said, "of this rain coming and not stopping. When will the rain ever stop? I can do without all this rain."

At that moment, my wife came into the room where I was sitting and stared at me for a few moments. She has those stares that penetrate directly to the soul and back out again. I was afraid to say anything at that time.

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Then, putting both hands on her hips, she said, "What would we do without rain?"

I did not know if that was a rhetorical question or if she was grilling me about our situation. She then turned around and went back to the kitchen to her work.

It did, however, caused me to think a little bit about that. Where in the world would we be if it did not rain when it was supposed to rain?

If it were not for rain, we would not have the beautiful land we now have. The farmer's fields would not grow. The gardener's vegetables would not grow. The florist's would lose all their flowers.

Thinking along these lines, I came to a conclusion. It is important in this world for it to rain. Rain has a way of making everything grow and be healthy.

David saw rain in a very different matter. "Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains" (Psalm 147:7-8).

A rainy day is somewhat like life. You cannot make it rain and you cannot make it stop. However, every rain has a positive effect on the world around us.

I cannot control the rain, neither can I control much of the elements in my life but I can have a thankful heart like David, knowing that after the rain the flowers will bloom.



Sun Dial Manor in Bristol
is accepting applications for
full time and part time CNA's.
12 hr. shifts- days and nights
(SIGN ON BONUS OFFERED)

DIETARY OPENINGS
Full time cook, 8 hr. shifts
(WITH SIGN ON BONUS)

Part time Dietary Tech

For more information,
call 605-492-3615

Groton Job Opportunities

C.N.A.s ~ Nurses

Part-Time Cook

Contact Brynn Pickrel or Nellie Hatfield at 605-397-2365 or apply in person.
EOE/AA/M/F/V/D-Drug Free Workplace



1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton



Showing Gratitude to South Dakota's Veterans and Service Members

Each year on Memorial Day, we honor the lives of the men and women who bravely served our country and paid the ultimate price. We can never repay them for the sacrifice they made to defend the freedoms we enjoy as Americans. We can, however, work to improve the quality of life for veterans and provide our armed forces with the resources they need to be in the strongest position possible.

I serve on both the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee. We have recently been working on legislation in the Armed Services Committee to authorize funds for the defense of our nation. We call this the National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, and it is one of the bills passed by Congress every year that receives widespread bipartisan support. It's also one of the most important pieces of legislation to pass out of Congress each year because the defense of our nation remains priority number one as we seek to strengthen our military and improve readiness levels.

In an increasingly dangerous world, the United States military remains the best of the best. It's the responsibility of Congress to make sure our armed forces have all the tools they need to defend our country and deter attacks from our enemies.

Just before Memorial Day, Congress passed legislation I introduced with Sen. John Thune and Sen. Mike Enzi to double the size of the Black Hills National Cemetery. Our bill, which will facilitate a permanent land transfer of around 200 acres from the Bureau of Land Management to the cemetery outside of Sturgis, comes after years of work. This land in the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota will be the final resting place for thousands of veterans. Passing this bill is a small way for us to show our gratitude to them and their families.

The Black Hills National Cemetery was dedicated by the Army in 1948. It was projected to run out of burial space by 2031, but this permanent land transfer will make sure generations of South Dakota veterans will have a place to rest peacefully.

It's an honor to work on behalf of South Dakota's servicemembers and veterans in the United States Senate. I'm committed to advancing legislation to improve veterans' quality of life, strengthen our armed forces and cut red tape within the Department of Veterans Affairs. If you are a veteran or servicemember and have a specific question or concern, please don't hesitate to contact me. Office phone numbers and locations can be found at www.rounds.senate.gov.

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Today in Weather History

May 20, 1965: A tornado hit north of Frederick. A barn and all outbuildings were destroyed on one farm. Windows exploded outward at the house. The tornado was estimated to be on the ground for about 5 miles.

May 20, 1974: Softball size hail fell in Kennebec, in Lyman County, breaking many windows in the schools and other buildings.

1894: A record late snow of two to eight inches whitened parts of central and eastern Kentucky. Lexington received six inches of snow, and Springfield Kentucky received 5 inches.

1916: In three consecutive years, a tornado passed near or through the town of Codell, Kansas. The tornado on this day was an estimated F2. The estimated F3 tornado in 1917 passed two miles west of town. Finally, an estimated F4 tornado moved through Codell on May 20th, 1918. This tornado killed 9 and injured at least 65 others. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the Weather Doctor.

1957: A tornado touched down to the southwest of Kansas City and traveled a distance of seventy-one miles cutting a swath of near destruction through the southeastern suburbs of Ruskin Heights and Hickman Mills. The tornado claimed the lives of forty-five persons and left hundreds homeless. It was the worst weather disaster on record for Kansas City. About all that remained of one house were a small table and a fishbowl atop, with the fish still swimming about inside the bowl. A canceled check from Hickman Hills was found in Ottumwa, Iowa, 165 miles away. Pilots reported debris at an altitude of 30,000 feet.

1987 - Thunderstorms in southern Texas produced grapefruit size hail, near the town of Dilley ("by dilly"), and produced wind gusts to 73 mph at Lake Amistad. The large hail broke windows, killed small animals, and damaged watermelon. Thunderstorms developing along a warm front produced severe weather from Indiana to the Dakotas. Thunderstorms produced baseball size hail at Denver IA, and wind gusts to 80 mph in southern Henry County IL. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms in the south central U.S. produced wind gusts to 70 mph at Omaha, NE, and wind gusts to 80 mph at Midland and Dallas, TX. Temperatures in California soared into the 90s and above 100 degrees. San Jose CA reported a record high of 97 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Pre-dawn thunderstorms produced large hail in eastern Oklahoma and northwestern Arkansas. Later in the morning thunderstorms in North Carolina produced dime size hail at Hanging Dog. Thunderstorms also produced severe weather from the Lower Mississippi Valley to the Central Plains Region later that day and night, with baseball size hail reported around Lawn, Novice and Eola TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

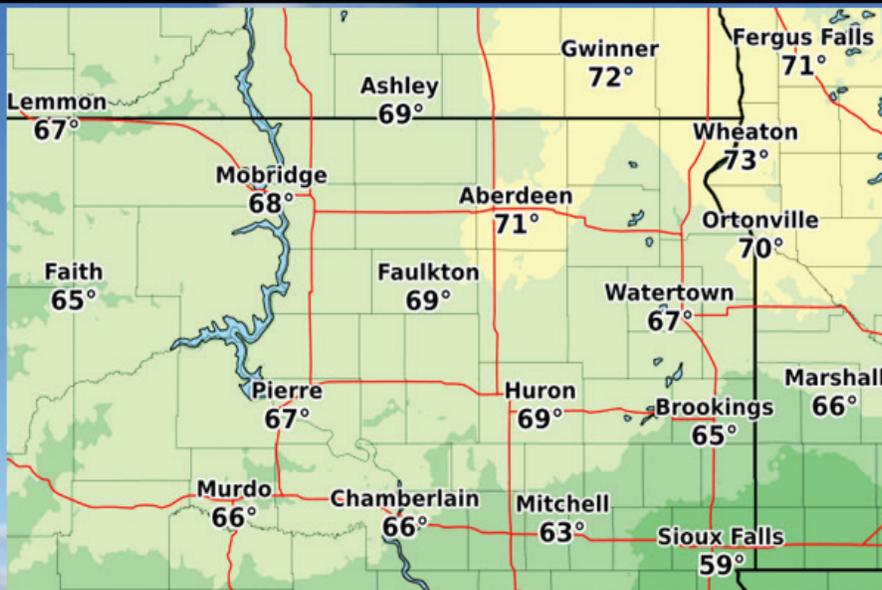
1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather across the southeastern quarter of the nation through the day and night. Severe thunderstorms spawned six tornadoes, including one which injured two persons at Algoma, MS, and another which injured nine persons at Rogersville, MO. There were 119 reports of large hail or damaging winds. Thunderstorms produced baseball size hail at Houston MO and damaging winds which killed one person at Toccoa GA. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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Sun May 20	Mon May 21	Tue May 22	Wed May 23	Thu May 24	Fri May 25	Sat May 26
72°F	73°F	84°F	82°F	83°F	82°F	79°F
47°F	54°F	59°F	62°F	60°F	59°F	57°F
NNE 10 MPH	ESE 8 MPH	SE 9 MPH Precip 20%	ESE 11 MPH Precip 40%	SE 10 MPH Precip 20%	SW 11 MPH Precip 40%	NNW 14 MPH

Mild – Sunny – Less Windy



Warming Trend To Start The Work Week



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD
5/20/2018 4:29 AM

Published on: 05/20/2018 at 4:31AM

Mild temperatures today with mostly sunny skies and notably less wind. A steady warming trend is expected to start the work week, with increasing humidity. That humidity brings more active weather for the latter half of the work week.

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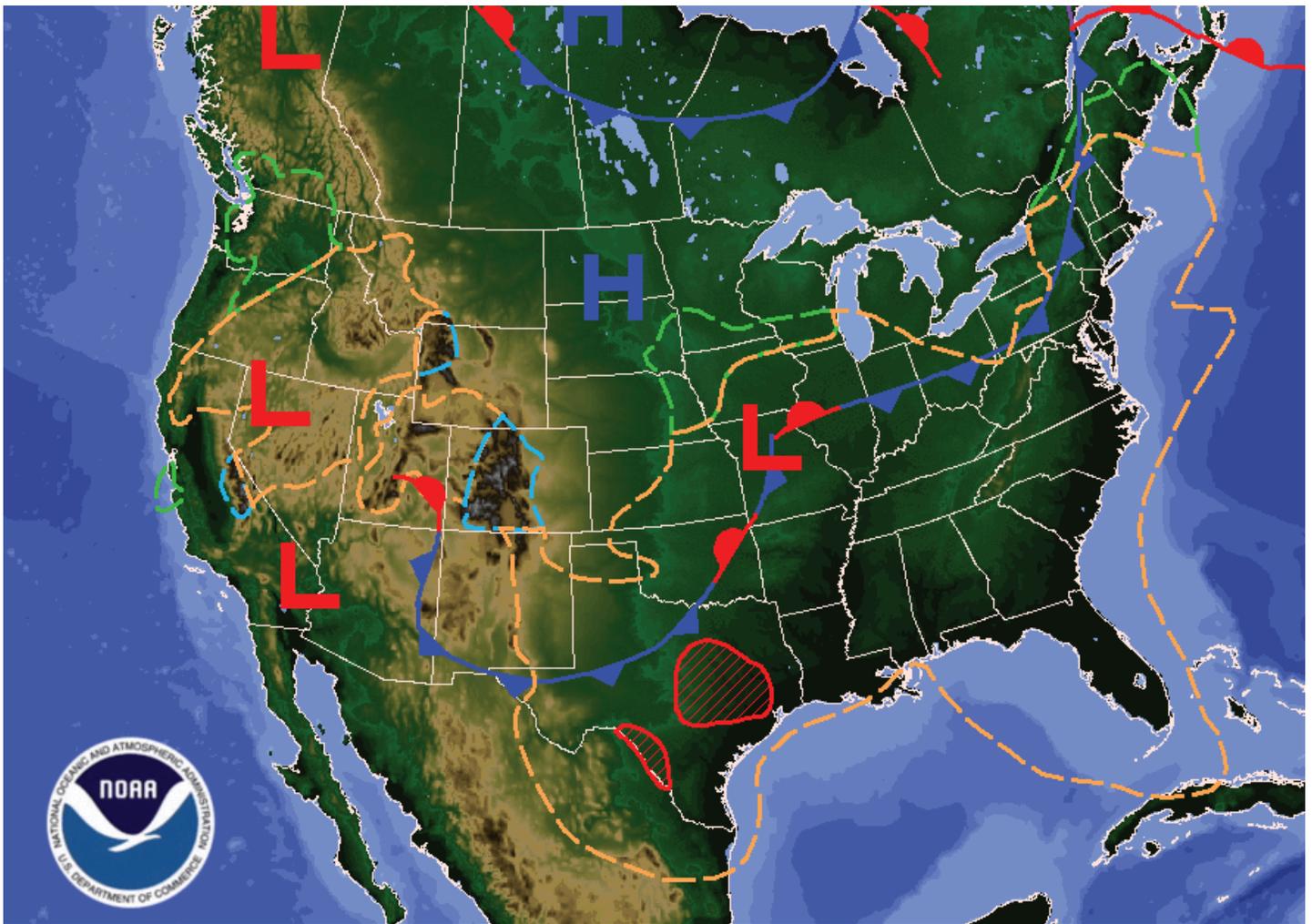
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 65.2 F at 4:39 PM
Low Outside Temp: 44.2 F at 6:07 AM
Wind Chill:
High Gust: 38.0 Mph at 11:52 AM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 96° in 1934
Record Low: 23° in 1907
Average High: 70°F
Average Low: 46°F
Average Precip in May: 20.6
Precip to date in May: 1.31
Average Precip to date: 6.09
Precip Year to Date: 3.99
Sunset Tonight: 9:03 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:56 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sun, May 20, 2018, issued 4:51 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Tate with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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IN HIS PRESENCE

Legend records interesting stories of temples built by the Turks years ago. They built their temples with roofs that were always open. They did this to reflect their belief that God cannot be confined in them or with them. To them God is present everywhere and His presence cannot be contained by a building or any other thing.

The Psalmist wrote, "Tremble, earth, at the presence of the Lord." When God comes and is present things will happen. This is why churches and church attendance are so very important. When the children of God gather together to worship the living God, the unexpected, yet possible, can and will happen, if He is present.

Listen to the Psalmist "...at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turned the rock into a pool, the hard rock into springs of water..." It was Moses who commanded water from the rock. God answered Him and Israel's thirst was quenched because God was present. When Jesus entered His public ministry He performed many miracles. Demons were cast out, the sick were healed, the hungry were fed, lepers were cleansed and the blind could see once again. When Jesus performed His miracles God was present and His power was visible to those who gathered around Him.

Jesus promised that if "... two or three come together in my Name, there am I with them!" When we, as His disciples, gather together in His name and agree to ask for anything that is consistent with His nature, He will be present. He will not only hear us but grant our request.

God will always be present if we gather in His name.

Prayer: Father, forgive us for our self-imposed limits. In Your presence and in Your Name miracles will happen. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm114:7-8 Tremble, earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turned the rock into a pool, the hard rock into springs of water.

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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

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Lotto America

04-08-17-25-31, Star Ball: 10, ASB: 2

(four, eight, seventeen, twenty-five, thirty-one; Star Ball: ten; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.5 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$60 million

Powerball

03-06-09-17-56, Powerball: 25, Power Play: 3

(three, six, nine, seventeen, fifty-six; Powerball: twenty-five; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$306 million

Storm pounds Rapid City, stalling cars in flooded waters

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City firefighters had to rescue stranded motorists from stalled vehicles after heavy rains caused flash flooding.

Fire department spokesman Lt. Jim Bussell tells KOTA-TV about 10 water rescues were performed around Rapid City after the thunderstorm flooded streets Friday night.

Bussell says no one was seriously injured.

The National Weather Service says the slow-moving storm dumped 1.79 inches of rain, breaking a rainfall record for that day. Meteorologist Shane Egan says most of the rain fell in a short period of time.

Egan says the water quickly receded after the rains, but creeks are running fast and high in the Rapid City area. Authorities are telling people to stay away from the water.

Car crash kills 18-year-old man, injuries 3 near Sisseton

SISSETON, S.D. (AP) — A car crash has killed one person and injured three others near Sisseton.

Authorities say the Chevrolet Malibu rolled at an intersection early Saturday. The 18-year-old man who was driving died at the scene. Three passengers all received minor injuries.

The South Dakota Department of Public Safety says none of the occupants was wearing seat belts.

Names of the people involved were not immediately released.

Motorcyclist dies in crash with pickup in South Dakota

WATERTOWN, S.D. (AP) — A 67-year-old motorcyclist has died in a crash with a pickup near Watertown.

The South Dakota Department of Public Safety says the man was driving a motorcycle west on U.S. 212 when he failed to negotiate a curve. The motorcyclist crossed the center line and into the path of a pickup pulling a trailer Friday.

The motorcyclist, who was wearing a helmet, was thrown from the cycle. He later died. His name has not been released. The pickup driver, a 51-year-old man, was not hurt.

The Highway Patrol is investigating.

South Dakota inmates find hope with GEDs

By DANIELLE FERGUSON, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Behind the sturdy walls and clanking cells of the prison up on the hill, Jerry Jackson sat in math class.

The 47-year-old from Wichita, Kansas, is in his third year at the South Dakota State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls, and he's got just under a decade to go before parole eligibility.

Jackson doesn't want to put that time to waste, so he spent the last few months taking classes to receive his general equivalency diploma, or GED.

He was one of about 20 inmates at the state penitentiary to be recognized for achieving that goal. Ranging in age and sentences, the men sported red and black robes and caps donated by local high schools at the graduation celebration on May 10 in the prison's visitor room.

The dimly lit room was brighter for a moment.

A thin banner of congratulations was taped over a large mirror in the front of the room; chocolate sheet cake awaited the graduates in the back. A man in a tan inmate uniform greeted guests just buzzed through double security doors with a program featuring Futurama's Professor Farnsworth.

A podium was stationed next to Pepsi vending machines.

The rounded security mirrors reflected a cluster of smiles and hands proudly clutching GED certificates. "I'm proud of myself," said Jackson, who dropped out of high school about 30 years ago. "This is something to change my life. I was running with the wrong crowd, drugs, drinking. I used to play football, run track. I disappointed my parents."

Codington County native Joseph Carpenter had a similar story.

Now 30 years old, he dropped out of high school after getting involved with the wrong people. He turned to drugs.

"That's why I'm in here," he said.

Carpenter at first wasn't too interested in the GED program. His time in a Florida prison made the idea a bit sour to him. His brother convinced him it was something he needed to do.

"Just getting it is something I never thought I could do," Carpenter said. "It gave me tools for the outside world."

That's why staff pushes the program, warden Darin Young said.

"If you have opportunities to improve, your self-worth goes up, and you want to do more," Young said. "Receiving a GED is not easy. Receiving one in prison is not any easier."

About 120 Department of Corrections inmates have received their GEDs statewide so far this fiscal year, the Argus Leader reported. About 170 received their certificate last year, and 140 or so the year before.

"It improves the quality of life here," Young said. "You have a more positive outlook. When they leave to go get jobs, it'll give them a running start."

The work was tough.

Jackson hadn't seen a classroom in about 30 years. The first time he typed anything was while he was in prison. Having quit the program once, he was never really confident he was going to pass the final test.

A teacher made the difference. "The teachers here are really helpful," Jackson said. "They told me I could do it and I did it."

GED instructor Dave Baumeister was a big influence for Jackson.

"Jerry (Jackson) worked really hard," Baumeister said. "He passed one test after another. He never gave up."

To be eligible for parole, an inmate has to be enrolled in the GED program. Some may participate just for that eligibility, but Baumeister said most of the students genuinely want to succeed in the class.

Jackson hopes to use his new education to get a job making braille books, maps and graphs. He's been in the braille program since January and would like to continue that work when his sentence is up.

"When I get out of here and get a job, I can say I got a diploma," Jackson said. "I accomplished something."

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Carpenter's graduation fell a few days before his first day of parole. He had a look of hope clutching his certificate, talking about his children and his aspirations to go to college.

He's ready to put the life that got him in prison behind him. He wanted one thing to be clear to those outside of the walls:

"Stay away from (methamphetamine)," he cautioned. "If you start it, you're going to end up dead or in prison."

He's looking forward to enrolling in community college. He wants to study criminal justice.

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

Sioux Falls Music store to close after more than 40 years

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A family-owned business in South Dakota is closing after more than 40 years of making life more musical for local residents.

Sioux Falls Music will close June 23, the Argus Leader reported .

"People are not playing guitars recreationally anymore like they used to, and people are willing to buy guitars on the internet," said Don Saxton, who works at the store and is married to owner Barbara Saxton.

The store recently announced the closure on Facebook, which received more than a 100 comments from shoppers who lamented the loss of a music store or remembered their childhood shopping for instruments.

"We have enjoyed serving the Sioux Falls community, and appreciate each and every one of you," the post states.

Saxton said the business has belonged to his wife's family since the 1970s. His family decided to sell the business and retire after Minnesota-based retailer, Riff City, which offers online sales, made an offer.

"Riff City has just tons of enthusiasm," Saxton said. "I think it will be good for our music industry around here."

Discounts on merchandise will be offered during the business's going-out-of-business sale.

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

Maduro favored as Venezuelans vote amid crisis

By **SCOTT SMITH** and **JOSHUA GOODMAN**, Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro is expected to win a second six-year term in Sunday's election, despite a deepening crisis that's made food scarce and inflation soar as oil production in the once wealthy nation plummets.

More than 1 million Venezuelans have abandoned their country for a better life abroad in recent years, while those staying behind wait in line for hours to buy subsidized food and withdraw cash that's almost impossible to find.

While polls show Venezuelans overwhelmingly blame Maduro for their mounting troubles, he's still heavily favored to win thanks to a boycott of the election by his main rivals amid huge distrust of the nation's electoral council, which is controlled by government loyalists.

Maduro, setting an example for government supporters who he called on to vote early, cast his ballot in Caracas shortly after fireworks and loud speakers blasting a military hymn roused Venezuelans from sleep around 5 a.m. local time.

He said Venezuelans would provide an example of democracy to the world and brushed back suggestions he was taking the country down an authoritarian path.

"It's offensive when they say the Venezuelan people are falling under dictatorship," he said after voting, adding that if he were to win the election he would seek an understanding with his opponents on a way forward for the crisis-racked country. "I'm going to stubbornly and obsessively insist in dialogue for peace."

On Friday, the Trump administration added Diosdado Cabello, a key Maduro ally, to a growing list of top

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officials targeted by financial sanctions, accusing the socialist party boss of drug trafficking and embezzlement.

Maduro's main rival, independent candidate Henri Falcon, has faced the dual challenge of running against a powerful incumbent while trying to convince skeptical Venezuelans to defy the boycott called by the main opposition coalition.

Blasting Maduro as the "candidate of hunger," he has campaigned on a promise to dollarize wages pulverized by five-digit inflation, accept humanitarian aid and seek assistance from the International Monetary Fund — all proposals Maduro has rejected as tantamount to surrendering to the U.S. "empire."

"I swear that I will liberate Venezuela from this dictatorship," Falcon shouted to supporters at his final campaign rally Thursday in his home city of Barquisimeto. "I swear it in the name of God."

Also on the ballot is television evangelist Javier Bertucci, who has cut into Falcon's support by providing free soup at rallies.

Around 80 percent of Venezuelans believe Maduro has done a bad job, yet turnout is expected to be the lowest since Chavez was elected in 1998, with only 34 percent saying they are certain they will vote, according to recent polling by Datanalisis.

The election has drawn broad criticism since some of Maduro's most-popular rivals were barred from running, and several more were forced into exile. Echoing the views of Venezuela's tattered opposition movement, the United States, European Union and many Latin American countries have already said they won't recognize the results.

In addition, pressure tactics honed in past campaigns have kicked into overdrive, further tilting the playing field in Maduro's favor.

Almost 75 percent of households said they received government-issued food boxes in the past three months, according to Datanalisis, and Maduro on the stump has promised that the 16.5 million holders of the fledgling "fatherland card" will be rewarded for their vote. Just to be sure, so-called "red points" will be set up outside voting centers checking peoples' cards, which are needed to access social programs.

"This is neither a competitive or democratic election, and the result may not reflect the preference and decision of the voters," said Luis Vicente Leon, president of Datanalisis.

Still, some question the wisdom of not competing in an election, even if it is widely seen as rigged.

A 2010 study by the Brookings Institution covering 171 electoral boycotts around the world — from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe — found that such maneuvers rarely succeed in rendering elections illegitimate in the eyes of the world. Instead, the boycotting party usually emerges weaker and the incumbent empowered.

Javier Corrales, a Venezuela expert at Amherst College, said the opposition's sit-out strategy could be as disastrous as its boycott of congressional elections in 2005, which led the ruling party to sweep all seats and pass legislation removing presidential term limits that further strengthened Chavez.

"The irony is that this is the least democratic election of all but it's also the best chance the opposition has ever had," said Corrales. "If Maduro wins by a large margin, he'll take it as a green light to continue radicalizing and moving in the direction of completely destroying the private sector."

Follow Smith on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ScottSmithAP>

Follow Goodman on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/APjoshgoodman>

2018 midterms: An early heat for 2020 Democrats?

By **BILL BARROW**, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Look closely enough at the 2018 midterm campaign and you'll see the stirrings of a Democratic scramble to reclaim the White House from President Donald Trump.

The leading players — from established national figures such as former Vice President Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren to up-and-comers including California Sen. Kamala Harris — don't necessarily put it that way. But the potential 2020 candidates are making the rounds, raising and distributing campaign cash among fellow Democrats, endorsing candidates and meeting political activists.

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Their movements reflect competing strategies for establishing their reputations and shaping a party that lacks a clear leader and consistent message in the Trump era.

For senators trying to get better known, a primary goal is proving fundraising strength and party loyalty, without necessarily taking sides in the larger fight between the left and moderates who split on the minimum wage, health insurance and other issues.

"I just want to do whatever I can" to help Democrats win, Harris said at a recent stop in Georgia, where she was campaigning and raising money for Stacey Abrams' race for governor.

It is part of an aggressive effort for the freshman senator. She's raised \$3.5 million for her Senate colleagues and the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, plus what she helps candidates such as Abrams raise directly when she appears with them, and at the end of April Harris had nearly a \$1 million balance in the political action committee that she uses to back other Democrats.

Warren boasts that she's raised \$15 million for other Democrats since her 2013 election. The Massachusetts senator faces a re-election campaign this fall, but not as tough a race as confronts 10 colleagues running in states where Trump won. Like Harris, Warren and New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker have aided those senators.

Warren is also helping other branches of the party: a transfer of money to House Democrats' campaign committee, \$5,000 for every state party and \$175,000 spread across state legislative campaigns in contested states.

Democratic and Republican campaign veterans say such contributions and fundraising trips aren't explicitly about future campaigns. "We're not playing 3D chess," says Harris spokeswoman Lily Adams, who describes the senator's priority as "building our numbers in the Senate" for the final two years of Trump's term, while looking for strong women and minority candidates. (Abrams would be the first female African-American governor in U.S. history.)

Operatives also insist there are no quid pro quos, though Republican presidential campaign veteran Rick Tyler says, "These guys are out there accumulating chits."

Tyler worked for Texas Sen. Ted Cruz's 2016 White House campaign. Cruz was among the conservatives who traveled the country before his campaign, endorsing like-minded conservatives and raising money. Trump's improbable rise obliterated that groundwork, but Tyler said it's nonetheless a necessary part of a national campaign, because prospective presidents build their networks and test messages as they meet activists and voters beyond their personal bases.

Harris, for example, is noticeably avoiding most early presidential nominating states — no trips to Iowa or New Hampshire so far. Because 10 Senate Democrats must seek re-election in states Trump won, her travels do put her in some of the pivotal states in the battle to control the Senate. She's been to Ohio five times for Sen. Sherrod Brown, twice to Michigan for Sen. Debbie Stabenow and once to Florida for Sen. Bill Nelson. She has a June trip planned for Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin. Warren has been to Ohio at least four times this campaign season and traveled to Michigan and Wisconsin, among others states.

Those states helped give Trump the presidency. They also could prove important as primary states in an extended nominating fight that could materialize with a large field and Democrats' proportional distribution of nominating convention delegates.

Sanders, whose insurgent presidential campaign in 2016 emboldened the Democrats' left flank, is perhaps the most unabashed of the potential 2020 group about using this year's midterms to put his preferred policy stamp on the party. A prolific small-dollar fundraiser, the Vermont senator no longer has to prove he can raise money or draw a crowd.

"I have been very critical about the business model of the Democratic Party," Sanders told The Associated Press. He said his travel to 28 states since Trump took office and his endorsements in federal and state races are part of his promised "political revolution" intended to advance ideas like a \$15 minimum wage, tuition-free college and universal health insurance.

Sanders bet on liberal challenger Marie Newman in her unsuccessful House Democratic primary battle against conservative Rep. Dan Lipinski in Illinois. But Sanders scored a notable win Tuesday in Pennsylvania

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when his pick for lieutenant governor, John Fetterman, finished with a surprise primary victory.

Biden is at the opposite end of Democrats' identity battle. His endorsement list and fundraising itinerary are replete with state party dinners, events for sitting Democratic senators and rallies for candidates running as moderates, at least in tone, if not in policy preference. "I love Bernie, but ... I don't think 500 billionaires are the reason we are in trouble," Biden said at a recent Brookings Institution speech about his priorities for the middle class.

Biden's aides say he's willing to help any Democrat get elected, but the native of Scranton, Pennsylvania, who loves to wax eloquent about his working-class upbringing is in demand to campaign for Democrats running in GOP-leaning places. He headlined fundraisers and campaign rallies for first-year Alabama Sen. Doug Jones and new Pennsylvania Rep. Conor Lamb, who won among voters who had sided overwhelmingly with Trump in 2016. Biden's next planned campaign venture is to North Carolina on behalf of Democrat Dan McCready, a veteran trying to win a suburban Charlotte House district that wasn't competitive two years ago.

Certainly, many Democratic hopefuls around the country are accepting help from multiple would-be presidents, and the alignments don't always follow cleanly along the party's philosophical battle lines.

Abrams has campaigned as a liberal, but her primary opponent has hammered her for cutting deals with Republicans in Georgia's General Assembly. Besides Harris, she's campaigned alongside Booker and gotten an endorsement from Sanders, who's offered to campaign for her.

When reporters tried to ask Harris and Abrams about 2020, they both smiled and walked away.

Follow Barrow on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BillBarrowAP>.

British royal family thanks those who celebrated wedding

By GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The royal family, blessed with fantastic weather and a buoyant public mood at the royal wedding, has thanked people who attended or watched Prince Harry marry Meghan Markle.

The family tweeted its thanks late Saturday night while Harry and his bride were attending a private soiree hosted by Harry's father, Prince Charles.

"Thank you to everyone who came to Windsor and those who followed from around the UK, the Commonwealth, and the world," the royals said.

The happy couple arrived in style — with Harry at the wheel of a rare, 1968 Jaguar sports car converted to electric power. He wore a tightly fitting tuxedo — shades of James Bond — while Markle wore a white Stella McCartney number.

Kensington Palace did not release details, but photographs showed Markle, now known formally as the Duchess of Sussex, wearing a large, emerald-cut aquamarine ring that had belonged to Harry's mother, Princess Diana, to the reception.

The prominent display of the ring, which Diana wore often, was one more sign of the royal couple's desire to honor Harry's late mother, who died in a Paris car crash in 1997.

Diana's older sister gave a formal reading during the ceremony and many of her relatives were in attendance despite Diana's bitter divorce from Prince Charles, Harry's father.

The spectacular photos and footage of the wedding and procession that followed were seen around the world, leaving a lingering feeling of romance in the air.

Former Cabinet minister Peter Mandelson told ITV Sunday that the wedding was so moving that he is now considering proposing marriage to his longtime partner.

"People all over the country are going to feel inspired, they are all going to want to run out and get married now," he said.

Mandelson said the recent marriages of the princes William and Harry have done wonders for the monarchy.

"I think they have probably secured the royal family and the monarchy for a long time to come," he said.

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Adele posted a message Sunday wishing the couple well and honoring the memory of Diana.

"Congratulations Meghan and Harry," she said on Instagram. "You're the most beautiful bride. I can't stop thinking of how happy Princess Diana is upstairs x."

Harry and Markle spent their first night as a married couple at Windsor Castle. They are breaking with tradition by delaying a honeymoon, and are expected to return to their living quarters at Kensington Palace in central London.

Harry and Markle will fulfill their first royal engagement as a married couple Tuesday when they attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace to honor Prince Charles and his charity work. Charles will mark his 70th birthday later this year.

Before the wedding, Markle said she wanted to take up royal duties immediately. She has long been active in support of a number of causes and charities.

Palace officials have been vague about Harry and Markle's honeymoon plans, but they are expected to take a honeymoon in the near future.

No destination has been announced, and the couple may choose a place where they can relax without being trailed by photographers.

Harry took Markle on holiday in Botswana when they were dating and it is possible he will choose one of his favorite African locations for the idyll.

For complete AP royal wedding coverage, visit <https://apnews.com/tag/Royalweddings>

Iraq's al-Sadr, promising reform, is constrained by Iran

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA and PHILIP ISSA, Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's Muqtada al-Sadr, the maverick Shiite cleric whose political coalition beat out Iran's favored candidates to come in first in national elections, says he wants to form a government that puts Iraqis first.

The electoral commission announced early Saturday that the militant-turned-populist preacher, who has long spoken out against both Iranian and U.S. influence in Iraq, had defeated his establishment rivals.

Al-Sadr — who is remembered for leading an insurgency against U.S. forces after the 2003 invasion — did not run for a seat himself and is unlikely to become prime minister, but will command a significant number of seats and has already begun informal talks about government formation.

Salah al-Obeidi, a spokesman for al-Sadr's Sa'eron political bloc, told The Associated Press that Iraq's sovereignty was going to be the new government's "guiding principle."

"We warn any other country that wants to involve itself in Iraqi politics not to cross the Iraqi people," he said.

However, even as al-Sadr is in position to nominate a prime minister and set the political agenda for the next four years, he will find his choices limited by Iran.

The Middle East's pre-eminent Shiite power has a direct line with some of Iraq's most powerful politicians, and it is trying to rally them as a bloc to undercut al-Sadr.

Al-Sadr's rise threatens Iran's claim to speak on behalf of Iraq's Shiite majority, a precedent that could fuel independent Shiite movements elsewhere. Also at stake are top ministerial posts — political appointments that are a source of patronage and police and military power.

Al-Sadr himself has kept a relatively low public profile. But in a public relations move that appeared to be directed at Iran, he appeared on Thursday with rival cleric Ammar al-Hakim, who has drifted away from Iran's orbit in recent years, to say the two men share similar visions for the next government.

Tehran has dispatched its top regional military commander, Gen. Qassem Soleimani, to pull together a coalition to counterbalance al-Sadr, according to an Iraqi Shiite militia commander who is familiar with the meetings.

"Iran won't accept the creation of a Shiite bloc that is a threat to its interests. It's a red line," said the commander, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the discussions.

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Al-Sadr's relationship with Iran is a complicated one. Though he has maintained close ties with Iran's political and religious leadership, in recent years he has denounced the flow of Iranian munitions to Shiite militias in Iraq, all the while maintaining his own so-called Peace Brigades in the holy city of Samarra, north of Baghdad.

Al-Sadr's former Mehdi Army militia, which spearheaded an insurgency against the U.S., clashed violently with the Iran-backed Badr Organization last decade.

The militias plugged the gaps left by Iraq's army as soldiers deserted their posts in the face of the Islamic State group's lightning campaign in the summer of 2014. With direction from Iran's Revolutionary Guard, they turned the tide against the initial advance. In the years that followed, the militias — coordinating with U.S.-backed Iraqi ground forces — slowly pushed IS fighters back. Iraq declared victory over the group last year.

Al-Sadr has said he wants the militias absorbed into the national security forces, a move Iran would find difficult to accept.

Iran is also rankled by al-Sadr's recent overtures to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which are locked in proxy wars with Tehran in Syria and Yemen. Al-Sadr met with the crown princes of Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi in August, leading Iran's hard-line Keyhan newspaper to accuse al-Sadr of "selling himself" to the house of Saud.

It is unlikely al-Sadr can pull together a governing coalition without Iran-aligned political groups, which have the votes to form their own alliance that could challenge al-Sadr's right to name a prime minister.

An electoral alliance of the militias called Fatah, headed by Hadi al-Amiri, the commander of the Badr Organization, won just seven seats fewer than al-Sadr's bloc. Sa'eroun won 54 seats in Iraq's 329-seat national assembly, a far cry from the 165 required to claim a majority.

The militias control the powerful Interior Ministry in the outgoing government and will expect a similar position of influence in the new one.

Al-Sadr seems inclined to woo incumbent Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who is seen as a centrist when it comes to Iranian and U.S. interests, and who appears to be wavering between al-Sadr and al-Amiri.

But Tehran still holds considerable sway with al-Abadi's al-Nasr bloc, which includes several Iran-aligned figures, including one newly minted deputy who has come under U.S. sanctions for allegedly financing Iran's Revolutionary Guard.

Iran's political allies in Iraq will try to pressure those figures into deserting al-Abadi and collapsing an al-Sadr alliance if the formulation is not to Tehran's liking, said a Western diplomat who has been speaking to the sides involved. The diplomat spoke on the condition of anonymity because of media regulations.

That gives Iran — and al-Abadi — leverage over al-Sadr to moderate his positions on the militias and Iran.

Hanging above the talks is the implied threat by all sides to mobilize their followers — and militias — if they feel they are being shortchanged. The collective effect could be to push al-Sadr's bloc toward a broader governing coalition that would dilute his reform agenda.

His top showing at the ballot box means the next prime minister will have to introduce a civil service law that al-Sadr has championed as an antidote to Iraq's endemic corruption, said Kirk Sowell, the publisher of Inside Iraqi Politics, a political and security newsletter. But that doesn't mean the Cabinet or parliament will sign off on it.

"There's not going to be a functioning majority," said Sowell. "It'll be a hodge-podge, coalition government, and it's not going to be any more stable than the last one."

Associated Press writer Susannah George contributed to this report.

Company in Cuba plane crash had received safety complaints

BY MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN and BERT WILKINSON, Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — The Mexican charter company whose 39-year-old plane crashed in Havana had been the subject of two serious complaints about its crews' performance over the last decade, according to

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authorities in Guyana and a retired pilot for Cuba's national airline.

Mexico's government said late Saturday that its National Civil Aviation Authority will carry out an operational audit of Damojh airlines to see if its "current operating conditions continue meeting regulations" and to help collect information for the investigation into Friday's crash in Cuba that left 110 dead.

The plane that crashed, a Boeing 737, was barred from Guyanese airspace last year after authorities discovered that its crew had been allowing dangerous overloading of luggage on flights to Cuba, Guyanese Civil Aviation Director Capt. Egbert Field told The Associated Press on Saturday.

The plane and crew were being rented from Mexico City-based Damojh by EasySky, a Honduras-based low-cost airline. Cuba's national carrier, Cubana de Aviacion, was also renting the plane and crew in a similar arrangement known as a "wet lease" before the aircraft veered on takeoff to the eastern Cuban city of Holguin and crashed into a field just after noon Friday, according to Mexican aviation authorities.

A Damojh employee in Mexico City declined to comment, saying the company would be communicating only through written statements. Mexican authorities said Damojh had permits needed to lease its aircraft and had passed a November 2017 verification of its maintenance program. They announced a new audit late Saturday.

Cuban Transportation Minister Adel Yzquierdo Rodriguez told reporters Saturday afternoon that Cubana had been renting the plane for less than a month under an arrangement in which the Mexican company was entirely responsible for maintenance of the aircraft. Armando Daniel Lopez, president of Cuba's Institute of Civil Aviation, told the AP that Cuban authorities had not received any complaints about the plane in that month. He declined to comment further.

Yzquierdo said it was routine for Cuba to rent planes under a variety of arrangements because of what he described as the country's inability to purchase its own aircraft due to the U.S. trade embargo on the island. Cuba has been able to buy planes produced in other countries, including France and Ukraine, but has pulled many from service due to maintenance problems and other issues.

"It's normal for us to rent planes," he said. "Why? Because it's convenient and because of the problem of the blockade that we have. Sometimes we can't buy the planes that we need, and we need to rent them."

He said that with Damojh, "the formula here is that they take care of the maintenance of the aircraft. That's their responsibility."

He said Cuba didn't have pilots certified to fly the Boeing, so it had hired the Mexican crew with the expectation that they were fully trained and certified by the proper authorities.

Yzquierdo also said the jet's "black box" voice recorder had been recovered and that Cuban officials had granted a U.S. request for investigators from Boeing to travel to the island.

Eyewitness and private salon owner Rocio Martinez said she heard a strange noise and looked up to see the plane with a turbine on fire.

"It had an engine on fire, in flames, it was falling toward the ground," Martinez said, adding that the plane veered into the field where it crashed, avoiding potential fatalities in a nearby residential area.

Field told AP that the Boeing 737 with tail number XA-UHZ had been flying four routes a week between Georgetown, Guyana, and Havana starting in October 2016. Cubans do not need visas to travel to Guyana, and the route was popular with Cubans working as "mules" to bring suitcases crammed with goods back home to the island, where virtually all consumer products are scarce and more expensive than in most other countries.

After Easy Sky canceled a series of flights in spring 2017, leaving hundreds of Cubans stranded at Guyana's main airport, authorities began inspecting the plane and discovered that crews were loading excessive amounts of baggage, leading to concerns the aircraft could be dangerously overburdened and unbalanced. In one instance, Guyanese authorities discovered suitcases stored in the plane's toilet.

"This is the same plane and tail number," Guyanese Infrastructure Minister David Patterson said. He and other Guyanese authorities said they did not immediately know if the crew suspended last May was the same one that died in Friday's crash. Damojh operates three Boeing 737s, two 737-300s and the 737-201 that crashed Friday, according to Mexican officials.

Ovidio Martinez Lopez, a pilot for Cubana for over 40 years until he retired six years ago, wrote in a post on Facebook that a plane rented from the Mexican company by Cubana briefly dropped off radar while over the city of Santa Clara in 2010 or 2011, triggering an immediate response by Cuban aviation security officials. As a result, Cuban officials suspended a captain and co-pilot for "serious technical knowledge issues," and Cuba's Aviation Security authority issued a formal recommendation that Cubana stop renting planes and crews from Damojh, Martinez wrote.

"They are many flight attendants and security personnel who refused to fly with this airline," Martinez wrote. "On this occasion, the recommendation was overlooked and they rented from them again."

Contacted by AP in Havana, Martinez confirmed his Facebook account but declined to comment further. Mexican officials said the Boeing 737-201 was built in 1979.

Mexican aviation authorities said a team of experts would fly to Cuba on Saturday to take part in the investigation.

Associated Press writers Andrea Rodriguez in Havana and Maria Verza in Mexico City contributed to this report.

Family, friends recall shooting victims' optimism, humor

By JUAN LOZANO and SARAH ZIMMERMAN, Associated Press

SANTA FE, Texas (AP) — Hardworking. Funny. Loving.

Grieving family and friends recalled the endearing qualities of some of the victims of Friday's mass shooting at a Texas high school, as authorities on Saturday released the names of the 10 killed.

Eight of the 10 were students: Kimberly Vaughan, Shana Fisher, Angelique Ramirez, Christian Riley Garcia, Jared Black, Sabika Sheikh, Christopher Jake Stone and Aaron Kyle McLeod. The other two, Glenda Perkins and Cynthia Tisdale, were teachers.

At least 13 people were injured in the attack at the high school in Santa Fe, which is about 30 miles (50 kilometers) southeast of Houston. A 17-year-old student, Dimitrios Pagourtzis, is being held on murder charges.

Here are some of the victims' stories:

SHANA FISHER

The mother of 16-year-old Shana Fisher believes that her daughter was intentionally targeted by Pagourtzi.

Sadie Rodriguez said Pagourtzi repeatedly made advances toward Fisher in the four months leading up to the shooting. Pagourtzi was an ex-boyfriend of Fisher's best friend, she said.

"He kept making advances on her and she repeatedly told him no," said Rodriguez over Facebook Messenger. "He continued to get more aggressive."

Rodriguez said that the week before the shooting, Fisher "stood up to him" by "embarrass(ing) him in class." Rodriguez gave no other details.

Rodriguez described her daughter as a "shy and sweet" with a passion for video games. Rodriguez shared a video of Fisher from 2015, in which the teen contemplates whether or not she'll continue making gaming videos because her computer keeps crashing.

The day of the shooting, Rodriguez wrote in a Facebook status to "love like (you're) getting one more day with them."

"Anything can happen," she wrote. "I will no longer get to see my baby my 1st born anymore."

CHRIS STONE

Stone was among a group of students who blocked the door to try to prevent the gunman from entering their art classroom, freshman Abel San Miguel, who was in the class, told The Associated Press. The shooter fired his shotgun through the door, though, striking Stone in the chest, he said.

Stone was outgoing, "really funny" and had a lot of friends, said Branden Auzston, a 17-year-old junior

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at Santa Fe High. He said he knew Stone for about three years, and Stone was one of his best friends.

Auzston's mother, Nicole Auzston, described Stone as a part of her family.

"We would have done anything for him," she said. "He's just a great kid."

Robert Stone told the AP by phone Saturday that his family was grieving his nephew's death and requested privacy.

SABIKA SHEIKH

Abdul Aziz Sheikh was expecting his daughter Sabika to return home to Pakistan in a few weeks for Eid al-Fitr, the three-day holiday marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Instead, he learned that his oldest child was among those killed in the mass shooting at Santa Fe High School, where Sabika arrived as an exchange student last August.

Surrounded by mourning friends and family at his home in Karachi on Saturday, Abdul Aziz Sheikh fought back tears as he relived his frantic efforts to check whether his daughter was safe half a world away. She wasn't returning his calls and neither were her friends. He eventually learned from the exchange program that she was among the dead.

"We are still in a state of denial. We can't believe it. It's like a nightmare," Sheikh told The Associated Press.

He said his daughter was a hard-working and accomplished student who aspired to work in civil service, hoping one day to join Pakistan's Foreign Office.

"One should not lose his heart by such kind of incidents," he said. "One should not stop going for education to the U.S. or U.K., or China, or anywhere. One must go for education undeterred. But controlling such incidents is the responsibility of the respective governments."

CYNTHIA TISDALE

Leia Olinde said Tisdale, her aunt and a substitute teacher at the school, was like a mother to her and helped her shop for wedding dresses last year.

"She helped me put it on, she helped fix my hair," Olinde said through tears.

"She was wonderful. She was just so loving," said Olinde, 25. "I've never met a woman who loved her family so much."

She said Tisdale was married to her husband for close to 40 years and that they had three children and eight grandchildren.

Tisdale's house was the center of family gatherings and she loved cooking Thanksgiving dinner and decorating her house, Olinde said.

Olinde's fiance, Eric Sanders, said of Tisdale that "words don't explain her lust for life and the joy she got from helping people."

AARON KYLE MCLEOD

McLeod, a freshman who went by Kyle, could always be counted on to make light of any situation, said close friend Kali Reeves, who added she wouldn't have been surprised if the 15-year-old "made a joke about getting shot" if he were still alive.

Reeves, 15, said she knew McLeod for years and became close friends with him in the eighth grade. She said he always had a smile on his face and loved to hang out with his friends.

"He was never one to be a sad or down person, he always had to joke or laugh about things," she said. "He was just outgoing and super sweet. He definitely didn't deserve this."

Reeves heard that her friend had been shot as she was evacuating Santa Fe High School. She joked to her boyfriend that if she FaceTimed McLeod, he would have "made a joke about him getting shot," adding that "he just always looked on the bright side of things."

Reeves said she texted McLeod throughout the day to check up on him. She sent him one final text, saying she hopes he "gets better." Shortly after, she checked Facebook and learned he was one of the 10 killed.

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JOHN BARNES

School police officer John Barnes was shot in the arm when he confronted the gunman.

A bullet damaged the bone and a major blood vessel around Barnes' elbow, which required surgery to repair, said David Marshall, chief nursing officer at the University of Texas Medical Branch.

Barnes was the first to engage Pagourtzis, according to Marshall.

Walter Braun, the school district's chief of police, said Saturday that the last he had heard, Barnes was in critical condition.

ROME SHUBERT

Sophomore baseball player Rome Shubert said the gunman walked into his classroom and tossed something onto desks.

Shubert told the Houston Chronicle that he then heard "three loud pops" before the attacker fled into the hall. Shubert said he realized he'd been wounded as he was running out the back door.

Shubert said he was hit in the back of his head with what he says was a bullet, but that it "missed everything vital." He also tweeted that he was OK and stable.

Zimmerman reported from Springfield, Illinois. Associated Press writers Sudhin Thanawala in San Francisco and Amanda Lee Myers in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

Texas school gunman: 'I'm going to kill you.' Then he fired

By PAUL J. WEBER and JUAN A. LOZANO, Associated Press

SANTA FE, Texas (AP) — The suspect in the Texas school shooting began his attack by firing a shotgun through an art classroom door, shattering a glass pane and sending panicked students to the entryway to block him from getting inside, witnesses said.

Dmitrios Pagourtzis fired again through the wooden part of the door and fatally hit a student in the chest. He then lingered for about 30 minutes in a warren of four rooms, killing seven more students and two teachers before exchanging gunfire with police and surrendering, officials said.

Freshman Abel San Miguel saw his friend Chris Stone killed at the door. San Miguel was grazed on his left shoulder by another volley of shots. He and others survived by playing dead.

"We were on the ground, all piled up in random positions," he said.

Galveston County Judge Mark Henry, the county's chief administrator, said he did not think Friday's attack was 30 minutes of constant shooting, and that assessment was consistent with other officials who said law enforcement contained the shooter quickly. But authorities did not release a detailed timeline to explain precisely how events unfolded.

Junior Breanna Quintanilla was in art class when she heard the shots and someone say, "If you all move, I'm going to shoot you all."

The 17-year-old Pagourtzis walked in, pointed at one person and declared, "I'm going to kill you." Then he fired.

"He then said that if the rest of us moved, he was going to shoot us," Quintanilla said.

When Quintanilla tried to run out a back door, she realized Pagourtzis was aiming at her. He fired in her direction.

"He missed me," she said. "But it went ahead and ricocheted and hit me in my right leg." She was treated at a hospital and spoke with a brown bandage wrapped around her wound.

"It was a very scary thing," Quintanilla said. "I was worried that I wasn't going to be able to make it back to my family."

In their first statement since the massacre, Pagourtzis' family said Saturday that the bloodshed "seems incompatible with the boy we love."

"We are as shocked and confused as anyone else by these events," said the statement, which offered

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prayers and condolences to the victims.

Relatives said they remained "mostly in the dark about the specifics" of the attack and shared "the public's hunger for answers."

Pagourtzis' attorney, Nicholas Poehl, said he was investigating whether the suspect endured any "teacher-on-student" bullying after reading reports of his client being mistreated by football coaches.

In an online statement, the school district said it investigated the accusations and "confirmed that these reports were untrue."

Poehl said that there was no history of mental health issues with his client, though there may be "some indications of family history." He said it was too early to elaborate.

Zach Wofford, a senior, said he was in his agricultural shop class when he heard gunfire from the art classroom across the hall. He said substitute teacher Chris West went into the hall to investigate and pulled a fire alarm.

"He saved many people today," Wofford said of West.

The mother of one slain student said her daughter may have been targeted because she rejected advances from Pagourtzi, who was an ex-boyfriend of her daughter's best friend.

Sadie Rodriguez said her 16-year-old daughter, Shana Fisher, repeatedly told him no, and he "continued to get more aggressive." The week before the shooting, Fisher "stood up to him" by embarrassing him in class, Rodriguez said.

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Associated Press Writer Will Weissert in Austin contributed to this report.

Follow AP's coverage of the Santa Fe High School shooting here: <https://apnews.com/tag/Schoolshootings>.

US, China agree to cut American trade deficit

By **MARTIN CRUTSINGER** and **PAUL WISEMAN**, AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States and China have agreed to take measures to "substantially reduce" America's massive trade deficit with China, but the Trump administration failed to get the Chinese to commit to a specific numerical goal.

Still, the talks, which began Thursday and ended Saturday with the issuance of a joint statement, may have helped to ease tensions at least slightly between the world's two biggest economic powers. In recent months the two have threatened to impose punitive tariffs on billions of dollars in each other's exports.

In the statement, Beijing committed to "significantly increase" its purchases of American goods and services, saying that the increase would "meet the growing consumption needs of the Chinese people and the need for high-quality economic development." The two countries also agreed on "meaningful increases" of U.S. agriculture and energy exports and greater efforts to increase trade in manufactured goods and services. The United States said it would send a team to China to work out the details.

The statement, however, provided no dollar amounts on how much China might boost its purchases of American products. Lawrence Kudlow, head of the president's National Economic Council, had told reporters Friday that a reduction in the trade gap of at least \$200 billion by 2020 was a "good number."

Last year, the United States had a record deficit with China in merchandise trade of \$375 billion, the largest with any nation.

Saturday's statement also was silent on whether the talks had made progress in easing a developing tit-for-tat trade war in which each nation threatened to impose punitive tariffs.

Trade analysts said it was highly unlikely that China would ever agree to a numerical target for cutting the trade gap between the two nations, but they said the talks likely were more successful in de-escalating recent trade tensions.

"It is likely that this agreement, weak and vague though it is, will serve as grounds to at least delay the imposition of tariffs," said Eswar Prasad, an economist and trade expert at Cornell University.

"The Trump administration seems eager to engineer at minimum a temporary peace with China to ensure a smooth runup to the Kim-Trump summit in June," Prasad said, referring to the June 12 meeting between President Donald Trump and North Korea's leader.

The Washington talks, which followed a high-level meeting last month in Beijing, were led on the Chinese side by Vice Premier Liu He and on the American side by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. The U.S. delegation included Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.

Trump campaigned in 2016 on a pledge to get tough on China and other U.S. trading partners. He views the massive U.S. trade deficit with China as evidence that Beijing is engaged in abusive trading practices and has outmaneuvered previous U.S. administrations.

Last August, Lighthizer began an investigation into Beijing's strong-arm tactics to challenge U.S. technological dominance. These include outright cybertheft of U.S. companies' trade secrets and China's demands that American corporations hand over technology in exchange for access to the Chinese markets.

Last month, the administration proposed tariffs on \$50 billion of Chinese imports to protest the forced technology transfers. Trump later ordered Lighthizer to seek up to an additional \$100 billion in Chinese products to tax.

China responded by targeting \$50 billion in U.S. products, including soybeans — a shot at Trump sup-

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porters in America's heartland. The prospect of an escalating trade war has shaken financial markets and alarmed business leaders.

In a separate controversy, the Commerce Department last month blocked China's ZTE Corp. from importing American components for seven years, accusing the telecommunications company of misleading U.S. regulators after it settled charges last year of violating sanctions against Iran and North Korea.

The ban amounted to a death sentence for ZTE, which relies heavily on U.S. parts, and the company announced that it was halting operations. A week ago, Trump tweeted that he was working with Chinese President Xi Jinping to put ZTE "back in business, fast." Media reports suggested that the U.S. was offering to swap a ZTE rescue for an end to proposed Chinese tariffs on U.S. farm products.

Hawaii lava flow ramps up as new magma mixes with old

By **CALEB JONES** and **JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER**, Associated Press

PAHOA, Hawaii (AP) — Lava oozing out of cracks for two weeks in rural Hawaii neighborhoods took on new characteristics as fresher magma mixed with decades-old magma, sending a flow toward the ocean Saturday.

Since a first fissure opened in a community on May 3, lava was mostly spattering up and collecting at the edges of the cracks in the ground. Two neighborhoods with nearly 2,000 people were forced to evacuate as lava claimed 40 structures.

On Friday afternoon, the lava changed dramatically with one fissure ramping up and sending a flow across a road, destroying four more homes and isolating residents, some of whom had to be air-lifted to safety.

The change is attributed to new magma mixing with 1955-era magma in the ground, creating hotter and more fluid flows, scientists said.

"There's much more stuff coming out of the ground and it's going to produce flows that move further away," said Wendy Stovall, a U.S. Geological Survey volcanologist.

By Saturday morning, two of 22 fissures had merged, creating a wide flow advancing at rates of up to 300 yards (274 meters) per hour. Aerial footage from the USGS showed fast-moving lava advancing to the southeast. The flow was 1.5 miles (2.4 kilometers) from the ocean, scientists said.

In the background, the footage showed lava fountaining 328 feet (100 meters) high at one of the fissures. The fountains are created by vents closing, forcing magma to burst through a single outpost, Stovall said.

If lava threatens main highways, more people will be told to prepare for voluntary evacuation.

A lava flow was less than a mile (kilometer) away from Highway 137 and would reach it in a matter of hours, officials warned Saturday afternoon. No one lives in its path and another highway remained open as an escape route, said Hawaii County spokeswoman Janet Snyder.

A handful of people were trapped when lava crossed a road Friday and some of them needed to be airlifted to safety.

"They shouldn't be in that area," said County Managing Director Wil Okabe. He wants people to heed evacuation warnings.

Edwin Montoya, who lives with his daughter on her farm near the site where lava crossed the road and cut off access, said the fissure opened and grew quickly.

"It was just a little crack in the ground, with a little lava coming out," he said. "Now it's a big crater that opened up where the small little crack in the ground was."

Experts are uncertain about when the volcano might calm down.

The Big Island volcano released a small explosion at its summit just before midnight Friday, sending an ash cloud 10,000 feet (3,048 meters) into the sky. The USGS's Hawaiian Volcano Observatory said eruptions that create even minor amounts of ashfall could occur at any time.

This follows the more explosive eruption Thursday, which emitted ash and rocks thousands of feet into the sky. No one was injured and there were no reports of damaged property.

It came two weeks after the volcano began sending lava flows into neighborhoods 25 miles (40 kilometers) to the east of the summit.

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Several open fissure vents are still producing lava splatter and flow in evacuated areas. Gas is also pouring from the vents, cloaking homes and trees in smoke.

Meanwhile, more explosive eruptions from the summit are possible.

"We have no way of knowing whether this is really the beginning or toward the end of this eruption," said Tom Shea, a volcanologist at the University of Hawaii. "We're kind of all right now in this world of uncertainty."

U.S. government scientists, however, are trying to pin down those signals "so we have a little better warning," said Wendy Stovall, a volcanologist with the observatory.

The greatest ongoing hazard stems from the lava flows and the hot, toxic gases spewing from open fissure vents close to homes and critical infrastructure, said Charles Mandeville of the U.S. Geological Survey's volcano hazards program.

Authorities have been measuring gases, including sulfur dioxide, rising in little puffs from open vents.

The area affected by lava and ash is small compared to the Big Island, which is about 4,000 square miles. Most of the island and the rest of the Hawaiian chain is unaffected by the volcanic activity on Kilauea.

State and local officials have been reminding tourists that flights in and out of the entire state, including the Big Island, have not been impacted. Even on the Big Island, most tourist activities are still available and businesses are open.

Kelleher reported from Honolulu. Associated Press journalists Jae Hong and Marco Garcia in Pahoehoe, Sophia Yan and Audrey McAvoy in Honolulu, Becky Bohrer in Juneau, Alaska, Seth Borenstein in Washington, D.C., and Alina Hartounian in Phoenix contributed to this report.

Gunman blasted through door, lingered for about 30 minutes

By PAUL J. WEBER and JUAN A. LOZANO, Associated Press

SANTA FE, Texas (AP) — The suspect in the Texas school shooting began his attack by firing a shotgun through an art classroom door, shattering a glass pane and sending panicked students to the entryway to block him from getting inside, witnesses said.

Dmitrios Pagourtzis fired again through the wooden part of the door and fatally hit a student in the chest. He then lingered for about 30 minutes in a warren of four rooms, killing seven more students and two teachers before exchanging gunfire with police and surrendering, officials said.

Freshman Abel San Miguel saw his friend Chris Stone killed at the door. San Miguel was grazed on the left shoulder by another volley of shots. He and others survived by playing dead.

"We were on the ground, all piled up in random positions," he said.

Galveston County Judge Mark Henry, the county's chief administrator, said he did not think Friday's attack was 30 minutes of constant shooting, and that assessment was consistent with other officials who said law enforcement contained the shooter quickly. But authorities did not release a detailed timeline to explain precisely how events unfolded.

Junior Breanna Quintanilla was in art class when she heard the shots and someone say, "If you all move, I'm going to shoot you all."

The 17-year-old Pagourtzis walked in, pointed at one person and declared, "I'm going to kill you." Then he fired.

"He then said that if the rest of us moved, he was going to shoot us," Quintanilla said.

When Quintanilla tried to run out a back door, she realized Pagourtzis was aiming at her. He fired in her direction.

"He missed me," she said. "But it went ahead and ricocheted and hit me in my right leg." She was treated at a hospital and spoke with a brown bandage wrapped around her wound.

"It was a very scary thing," Quintanilla said. "I was worried that I wasn't going to be able to make it back to my family."

In their first statement since the massacre, Pagourtzis' family said Saturday that the bloodshed "seems

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incompatible with the boy we love.”

“We are as shocked and confused as anyone else by these events,” said the statement, which offered prayers and condolences to the victims.

Relatives said they remained “mostly in the dark about the specifics” of the attack and shared “the public’s hunger for answers.”

Pagourtzis’ attorney, Nicholas Poehl, said he was investigating whether the suspect endured any “teacher-on-student” bullying after reading reports of his client being mistreated by football coaches.

In an online statement, the school district said it investigated the accusations and “confirmed that these reports were untrue.”

Poehl said that there was no history of mental health issues with his client, though there may be “some indications of family history.” He said it was too early to elaborate.

Zach Wofford, a senior, said he was in his agricultural shop class when he heard gunfire from the art classroom across the hall. He said substitute teacher Chris West went into the hall to investigate and pulled a fire alarm.

“He saved many people today,” Wofford said of West.

The mother of one slain student said her daughter may have been targeted because she rejected advances from Pagourtzi, who was an ex-boyfriend of her daughter’s best friend.

Sadie Rodriguez said her 16-year-old daughter, Shana Fisher, repeatedly told him no, and he “continued to get more aggressive.” The week before the shooting, Fisher “stood up to him” by embarrassing him in class, Rodriguez said.

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This version of the story corrects the 3rd paragraph to say San Miguel was grazed on his left shoulder, not the stomach.

Associated Press Writer Will Weissert in Austin contributed to this report.

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Guess who's coming to Windsor? Royal ceremony weds cultures

By ERRIN HAINES WHACK, AP National Writer

BURLINGTON, New Jersey (AP) — With a gospel choir, black cellist and bishop, Oprah, Serena and Idris Elba in the audience and an African-American mother-of-the-bride, Saturday's wedding of Prince Harry to American actress Meghan Markle was a blend of the solemn and the soulful.

Guess who's coming to Windsor?

The ceremony married the pomp and circumstance of Britain's most sacred institution with elements of black culture, drawing viewers not normally drawn to the spectacle of the monarchy.

"This was black history," said Joy Widgeon, who attended a house party in Burlington, New Jersey, with her 6- and 8-year-old daughters in tow. "African-Americans were front and center at the royal wedding. This was the first time, and hopefully it won't be the last. I am here for it."

Race has loomed over the couple's relationship from the beginning. After the pair went public in 2016, Harry lashed out in a public statement at what he described as "racial undertones" in media coverage and overt racism toward his then-girlfriend, who has lamented such views. At the announcement of their engagement last fall, many black women around the world cheered the news as a fairytale that doesn't always include them.

Markle, 36, became the first black member of the British royal family in modern history. Her mother, Doria Ragland, is black. Her father is white.

A diverse group of about 20 — mostly black women — gathered before dawn on the rainy Saturday at a house party in Burlington, New Jersey, right outside Philadelphia. They were among the scores of African-Americans and British Americans participating in the global event in person, at home and online.

Decorated with a banner reading "Congratulations Harry and Meghan!," with the bride's biography on a nearby table and glasses of tea and mimosas and the smell of breakfast cooking in the background, the guests gathered in two rooms.

"We were keen to see who was going to look like us," said socialite David Alexander Jenkins, who has ridden horses in the same Windsor countryside where the wedding was held.

As Markle emerged from the burgundy Rolls Royce that brought her to St. George's Chapel, Paula Jackson gasped with approval.

"Oh, she looks lovely! Gorgeous! Beautiful!" Jackson exclaimed, wearing a jeweled blazer and sparkling tiara, sitting on a couch with a spot marked on a note in capital letters: RESERVED FOR THE QUEEN.

"I'm just so happy for her," Jackson said of Markle. "She will be an example for our young African-American women."

The couple also asked Presiding Bishop Michael Curry to participate in the ceremony. Elected the first African-American to his role in the Episcopal Church in 2015, Curry is based in Chicago. His theology, rooted in social justice, was on full display Saturday, as he invoked the words of the Rev. Martin Luther King in his lengthy address to the couple and audience.

For Angelita Byrd, the moment reminded her of being in church with her grandmother.

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"He brought a little bit of Southern Baptist America to Europe," said Byrd, of Philadelphia. "You know what I love about all of this? She's adding a little spice to the royal family."

The bride personally called to invite 19-year-old cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason, who is black, to play at the wedding after Prince Harry saw him perform at a London event supporting an Antiguan charity. The diverse, Christian gospel group Kingdom Choir performed a stirring rendition of Ben E. King's "Stand By Me."

Church hats — a shared tradition in black and British culture — were a fashion highlight. And Markle's dress, designed by Givenchy, was reminiscent of the dress Princess Angela of Liechtenstein wore when she wed Prince Maximilian in their groundbreaking January 2000 ceremony.

Sanya Brown, already a fan of the royals who watched Princess Diana's funeral, as well as Prince William's wedding to Kate Middleton, initially planned to watch alone in her pajamas, but made a last-minute decision this week to watch with a girlfriend at her house in the west Philadelphia suburb of Wynnefield.

"In the time of the 'black girl magic' moment we are currently living in ... for this black girl from Los Angeles to be marrying into the royal family is a really dope and historic moment, so why not have that with someone and celebrate her magic?" she explained.

"We've seen (Harry), but never like this," Brown said. "This is different. She is different."

Whack is The Associated Press' national writer on race and ethnicity. Follow her work on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/emaravelous>.

Justify wins foggy Preakness, keeps Triple Crown bid alive

By **STEPHEN WHYNO, AP Sports Writer**

BALTIMORE (AP) — Justify rounded the final turn and hit the top of the stretch winded but with the lead.

The roar from the crowd was delayed, hushed by the thick fog that enveloped the track. When Justify emerged from the haze in view of the grandstand, trainer Bob Baffert could see jockey Mike Smith's white silks and knew his horse had been pushed to his limit with 100 yards left to go.

"I knew he was in for a fight," Baffert said. "I knew this was not going to be easy."

It wasn't easy, but Justify had enough left to hold off several hard-charging challengers and win the Preakness on a sloppy, slippery track Saturday and keep alive the chance for a second Triple Crown champion in four years. After winning the most difficult race of his career, Justify has the chance at the Belmont Stakes in New York on June 9 to accomplish the same rare feat Baffert's American Pharoah did in 2015.

"We'll see how he trains," Baffert said. "Right now, I don't see why not."

Just getting through the Preakness was a test for the Kentucky Derby champion and heavy 2-5 favorite. When Smith looked over his shoulder early and saw Good Magic he thought, "Oh man, it's going to be a match race from this point on," and Justify held up to the challenge down the backstretch and late as Bravazo and Tenfold chased him down.

"They tested his fitness today," Smith said after his second Preakness win and first since 1993. "This is his hardest race that he's had."

With Baffert praying for the wire at Pimlico, Justify won by a half-length after completing the race in 1:55.93. Bravazo edged Tenfold for third, and Good Magic was fourth.

"What I saw of it, I liked it a lot," said veteran D. Wayne Lukas, who trains Bravazo. "I want them to extend it another 50 yards. ... We ran at him. We kept him honest just like we said we would."

Good Magic pressed Justify so much, the Derby runner-up faded near the end of the 1 3/16-mile race and fell out of the money for the first time in his career.

"It just wasn't a good trip," Good Magic trainer Chad Brown said. "I would have liked to see a different scenario, maybe where we're just off the pace a little bit, we weren't getting pressed on the fence the whole way. Disappointing."

That almost happened to Justify. Smith was worried when he saw Good Magic over his shoulder and when Justify slipped early, and he was hoping there was enough left to get to the wire.

Baffert tied Lukas' record with his 14th Triple Crown victory and matched 19th-century trainer R.W. Walden

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with his seventh Preakness title. Baffert also remained undefeated with Derby winners in the Preakness following Silver Charm, Real Quiet, War Emblem and American Pharoah.

Justify, who paid \$2.80, \$2.80 and \$2.60 as the deserved favorite and improved to 5-0, showed more evidence of being the same kind of super horse as American Pharoah, and Baffert has repeatedly drawn comparisons between them. Those will only continue assuming Justify is good to go for the Belmont in three weeks.

"He has to come out of the race well, and he's got to be training really well," Baffert said. "I did the same thing with American Pharoah, all my horses that ran the Triple Crown, they have to be 100 percent."

Justify looked every bit of 100 percent after a bruised heel in the Derby caused quite the firestorm. A bigger question now is how the lightly-raced colt who didn't run as a 2-year-old handles a mile and a half.

Had the Preakness been just a tenth of a mile longer, Justify might have been caught, though Smith thought he had plenty of horse left.

"He withstood that, and even though he got tired today, he was also looking around a bit at the end," Smith said. "Although it was a half a length, I certainly could've got after him a whole lot more a little earlier and made him do a little more, as well."

Justify never had to work this hard to win a race, winning his first four starts by a combined 21 1/2 lengths. He didn't blow away the field of three Derby horses and four new challengers, but he showed something else

"These great horses, they just define themselves when they get in that situation," Baffert said. "He just showed not only is he a big, beautiful, gorgeous horse, but he is all racehorse, and that's what it took to win."

A royal wedding bridges the Atlantic and breaks old molds

By DANICA KIRKA, JILL LAWLESS and GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

WINDSOR, England (AP) — The son of British royalty and the daughter of middle-class Americans wed Saturday in a service that reflected Prince Harry's royal heritage, Meghan Markle's biracial roots and the pair's shared commitment to putting a more diverse, modern face on the monarchy.

British reserve crisscrossed with American verve in a service that broke molds and created new ones. Choirboys and a gospel choir; the archbishop of Canterbury and the African-American leader of the Episcopal church; a horse-drawn carriage and flowers hand-picked by the groom.

The wedding was a global event, thanks to Harry's status as a senior British royal and Markle's celebrity after starring on the U.S. television series "Suits" for seven years. Yet it seemed somehow so personal — and they both beamed like a couple who couldn't take their eyes off each other.

In a rousing sermon that highlighted a bit of a culture gap between outgoing Americans and reserved Brits, the Most. Rev. Michael Curry of the U.S. stirred the congregation from its fairy-tale reverie, quoting Martin Luther King in a sermon that had some reaching for hankies and others shifting in their chairs.

"There's power in love," Curry said, his voice rising. "Love can help and heal when nothing else can. There's power in love to lift up and liberate when nothing else will."

He also quoted from the Song of Solomon in the Bible: "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it."

Joining the couple were a phalanx of celebrities, many of whom shared their wish to change the world. Oprah Winfrey, Idris Elba, Elton John, George and Amal Clooney, Serena Williams, James Corden and David and Victoria Beckham all watched from rows of seats in the Gothic masterpiece that is St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle.

The British weather was — gasp! — sunny and balmy, bathing the ancient stones of Windsor Castle in a beautiful spring light.

Many in the throng who waited outside also embraced the trans-Atlantic symbolism of the moment. Sheraton Jones, 22, who is from California but studying in Britain, described it as a melding of cultures.

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"It was very touching, it's two different cultures kind of coming together, it was just so surreal," she said. In the United States, this royal wedding was embraced for its diversity and inclusivity.

"This was black history," said Joy Widgeon, who attended a house party in Burlington, New Jersey, with her 6- and 8-year-old daughters. "African-Americans were front and center at the royal wedding. This was the first time, and hopefully it won't be the last. I am here for it."

Harry also invited buddies from his 10 years of military service — which included two tours of duty in Afghanistan — and from many of the charities he supports, which have focused on helping wounded veterans and encouraging a more open discussion of mental health issues.

To kick off the festivities, Queen Elizabeth II honored her red-headed, 33-year-old grandson with a new title: the Duke of Sussex, making the 36-year-old Markle the Duchess of Sussex.

The American actress drew raves for her sleek white silk boat-necked dress by U.K. designer Clare Waight Keller of the French fashion house Givenchy. Her sheer veil — down to her waist in front and billowing for what seemed like miles behind her — carried floral references to all 53 countries in the Commonwealth, countries drawn mostly from the former British Empire, headed by Markle's new grandmother-in-law, the queen.

Caroline Burstein, owner of Browns Bride, a top London bridal boutique, called the bridal gown "a nod to Grace Kelly, Audrey Hepburn and every iconic wedding we have witnessed throughout the 20th and 21st century. It's perfect for her and for the occasion they are celebrating."

The palace said Markle also selected two other plant designs to be on the veil: Wintersweet, which grows at Kensington Palace, where the royal couple will live, and the California poppy, in a nod to the bride's birthplace.

Harry and best man Prince William wore white gloves and the frock coat uniforms of the Blues and Royals army regiment, in which Harry was once an officer. Harry also kept his full red beard — a style decision that had sparked British betting earlier.

Markle at first walked down the aisle with 10 young page boys and bridesmaids, then was accompanied by Prince Charles to the altar. As his father and bride drew close, Harry said: "Thank you, Pa."

To Markle, Harry said: "You look amazing."

Markle seemed poised and confident as she delivered her vows without so much as a quiver in her voice. She smiled broadly as Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby declared the couple husband and wife. Harry seemed a bit nervous, but happy.

Other relatives in the ceremony included 4-year-old Prince George and 3-year-old Princess Charlotte, the oldest children of William and the Duchess of Cambridge.

The 92-year-old queen and her 96-year-old husband, Prince Philip, Harry's grandparents, looked on with pride, as did Markle's mother, Doria Ragland, who has spent the last few days getting to know her daughter's new family.

Two of Harry's ex-girlfriends were at the chapel — Chelsy Davy and Cressida Bonas — as was Sarah Ferguson, the ex-wife of Harry's uncle, Prince Andrew.

As they emerged from the chapel as a married couple, the two kissed — and the crowd roared. It just kept on cheering as Harry helped his wife fold her 5 meter (16½ foot) train into an Ascot Landau carriage for their procession through the streets of Windsor.

Police said more than 100,000 people lined the route. The open-topped carriage was pulled by four Windsor Grey horses and past crowds waving flags and holding cellphones aloft. The newlyweds smiled and waved, smiled at each other, waved and repeated the process for the 25-minute tour of Windsor.

It was the crowds in Windsor that seemed to best capture the joy of the moment. Many had camped or arrived at dawn on packed trains, vying for a good spot along the procession route. They cheered and screamed and sighed as the newlyweds passed by.

"I went to William and Kate's wedding, but this is a completely different vibe," said Arlene Prinsloo, who had flown from South Africa. "It's much more relaxed, and I think that reflects who Harry is."

The queen hosted the first of two royal wedding receptions after the service and procession, an afternoon affair for 600 people where finger foods, wine and champagne were served. On Saturday night, a

second, more lively and intimate reception for 200 people was being thrown by Charles.

The newlyweds emerged from Windsor Castle just after 7 p.m. to head for the evening event at Frogmore House, a royal country estate. This time, their wheels came courtesy of a classic Jaguar E-Type convertible instead of a horse-drawn carriage.

Markle traded her wedding dress for a white gown with a high neck and bare shoulders designed by Stella McCartney. Harry was in a tuxedo instead of his military uniform. Both wore big smiles as the groom opened the car door for his bride.

In another break with tradition, Markle was making a speech at the evening event, according to the palace.

The couple planned to spend the night at Windsor Castle and to return to their home in Kensington Palace in London on Sunday.

They are not immediately embarking on a honeymoon and have their first royal engagement as wife and husband scheduled at Buckingham Palace Tuesday.

A honeymoon is expected to happen soon, though. Harry is partial to traveling in Africa, so it's possible their destination may be somewhere there. After only two dates in 2016, he and Markle went camping together in Botswana.

Kirka and Lawless reported from London. Errin Haines Whack contributed from Burlington, New Jersey.

For complete AP royal wedding coverage, visit <https://apnews.com/tag/Royalweddings>

Episcopal bishop Curry gives royal wedding an American flair

By GREGORY KATZ and DAVID RISING, Associated Press

WINDSOR, England (AP) — Nothing quite captured the trans-Atlantic nature of Saturday's royal wedding as much as the guest preacher whose sermon brought American flair to a very English church service.

The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry, the first black leader of the Episcopal Church in the United States, was hand-picked by Prince Harry and Meghan Markle to address their 600 wedding guests.

The bishop's sermon on the theme of love, delivered with energy and studded with quotes from the bible, Martin Luther King Jr. and African-American spirituals, was a contrast to the more solemn Anglican style the royal family is used to.

Quoting civil rights icon King on the "redemptive power of love," Curry told the bride and groom "it's not just for, and about, a young couple who we rejoice with, it's more than that."

Many observers were surprised and delighted. BBC broadcaster Jeremy Vine tweeted: "The preacher is doing 50 in a 30 zone and it's brilliant."

Supermodel Naomi Campbell hit Caps Lock and tweeted: "BISHOP MICHAEL CURRY GIVING ME LIFE."

Curry, who like Markle's mother has African ancestors who were slaves in the U.S., said that even during their time of bondage, love helped those in captivity persevere.

"When love is the way, we actually treat each other, well, like we are actual family," he said in a sermon that touched on poverty, inequality and the healing power of love.

"When love is the way, we know that God is the source of us all and we are brothers and sisters, children of God and brothers and sisters," he said. "That's a new heaven, a new earth a new world, a new human family."

Harry and Markle exchanged a quick glance at one point as Curry drifted from his prepared remarks and ad-libbed. Camilla and Kate — the Duchess of Cornwall and the Duchess of Cambridge — traded sidelong glances.

Queen Elizabeth II, who as monarch holds the title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England, did not show any sign of discomfort and looked as stoic as she had through the entire ceremony.

There may have been a touch of royal relief when Curry quipped "We gotta get y'all married now." But he kept going, bringing a dash of passion to the pulpit.

The crowds waiting outside for a glimpse of the royal couple loved it. Cheers greeted Curry as he walked

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uphill from the chapel along the procession route after the service. One man shouted "well done" — prompting a smile and "God bless you" from the bishop.

Former Labour Party leader Ed Miliband, an atheist, tweeted: "Rev Michael Curry could almost make me a believer."

The Episcopal Church is an offshoot of the Church of England in the United States and has been the spiritual home of many of the American founding fathers and U.S. presidents.

Even though its support for gay marriage has recently caused friction with the greater Anglican Communion, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said ahead of the ceremony that he was "thrilled" Curry would be speaking there, calling him a "stunning preacher."

Curry, 65, who is married and has two grown daughters, was born in Chicago and raised in Buffalo, New York. He began his ministry in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and served as rector in Lincoln Heights, Ohio and Baltimore, Maryland.

Selecting him to give the sermon was one of several personal touches Harry and Meghan put on the service, held in the 15th century St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle.

Markle, who attended a Roman Catholic school, was baptized in March into the Church of England in preparation for the wedding and joining the royal family.

The ceremony was based on Common Worship — the most modern of several Church of England service options — and included prayers and hymns, as well as readings and musical selections chosen by the couple and their families.

That included a fusion of American and British elements, including the London-based gospel ensemble the Kingdom Choir's stirring renditions of Ben. E. King's "Stand By Me" and Etta James' "Amen/This Little Light of Mine."

Teenage cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason wowed the 600 guests with works including Franz Schubert's "Ave Maria." The cellist won the BBC's Young Musician of the Year contest in 2016, the first black musician to do so.

For all the individual touches, the service was dominated by tradition.

The pair read the Church of England wedding vows, promising to have and to hold, "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part."

Then the archbishop pronounced them husband and wife.

"Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder," he said.

Rising reported from Berlin. Jill Lawless in London contributed.

For complete AP royal wedding coverage, visit <https://apnews.com/tag/Royalweddings>

'Shoplifters' wins Palme d'Or, grand prize to Spike Lee

By JAKE COYLE and THOMAS ADAMSON, Associated Press

A tumultuous Cannes Film Festival concluded Saturday with the Palme d'Or awarded to Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda's "Shoplifters," a tender portrait of a poor, impoverished family, while Harvey Weinstein accuser Asia Argento vowed justice will come to all sexual predators.

At the closing ceremony for the 71st edition of the French Riviera extravaganza, the Cate Blanchett-led jury selected one of the festival's most acclaimed entries, one hailed as a modest masterpiece from a veteran filmmaker renowned for his delicate touch. "Shoplifters" is about a small-time thief who takes a young girl home to his family; after seeing scars from abuse, they decide to keep her and raise her as their own.

While many speculated that the Cate Blanchett-led jury might award only the second Palme d'Or to a film directed by a woman, the most likely contender — Lebanese director Nadine Labaki's "Capernaum" — was instead given Cannes' jury prize. The film drew a rousing standing ovation at its premiere Thursday but less enthusiastic critic reviews for its tale of a 12-year-old boy living in poverty who sues his parents for bringing him into such a cruel world.

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Spike Lee's "BlacKkKlansman," the highest profile American film in competition at Cannes, was awarded the grand prize. The film ignited the festival with its true tale of a black police detective who infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan. Lee connected the film to modern day with real footage from last year's violent white supremacist march in Charlottesville, Virginia.

"I take this on the behalf of the People's Republic of Brooklyn, New York," said Lee, accepting his award.

The 12-day festival was the first since the downfall of Weinstein, who was for decades an annual fixture in Cannes. In the aftermath, this year's festival was shaken by debate over gender equality in the film industry and at Cannes. In a striking rally, 82 women — the same number of female filmmakers to ever be selected to Cannes competition lineup — stood on the Palais red-carpet steps in what Blanchett called "a symbol of our determination to change and progress."

Some changes were swift. Just days later, with Blanchett's jury looking on, Cannes' Artistic Director Thierry Fremaux signed a pledge to make the festival's selection process more transparent and promised other measures to improve the festival's record of including female filmmakers.

It was also a part of Saturday's closing ceremony. Argento raised a fist high on the red carpet. The actress has said Weinstein raped her at the Cannes Film Festival in 1997. (Weinstein has denied all accusations of non-consensual sex.)

"In 1997, I was raped by Harvey Weinstein here at Cannes. I was 21-years-old. This festival was his hunting ground," said Argento at the ceremony. "I want to make a prediction: Harvey Weinstein will never be welcomed here ever again."

"And even tonight, sitting among you, there are those who still have to be held accountable for their conduct against women for behavior that does not belong in this industry," said Argento. "You know who you are. But more importantly, we know who you are. And we're not going to allow you to get away with it any longer."

Following last year's Cannes, jury member Jessica Chastain was critical about the female representation on view in that year's films. Blanchett told reporters Saturday that her concerns were primarily behind the camera. Three of this year's 21 films in competition were directed by women.

"All of us, men and women alike on the jury would love to see more female directorial voices represented," said Blanchett. "I feel that there's a very strong drive within the organization of the Cannes Film Festival to make sure they explore, with a curious hat on, female perspectives. There perhaps weren't as many female driven narratives as I would have liked but there certainly some powerhouse female performances."

Polish filmmaker Pawel Pawlikowski took best director for his follow-up to the Oscar-winning "Ida," "Cold War." Like "Ida," "Cold War" is a black-and-white period film that delves into Polish history. The first Polish film in Cannes's competition in 37 years, "Cold War" is about an up-and-down romance in post-war Poland and Paris, behind and outside the Soviet Iron Curtain.

Pawlikowski has been critical of Poland's current right-wing government.

"I'm showing history through people, through emotions with all its complexities and paradoxes. To show history like that is really important these days, to go against the tendency to push everything into ideological narrative," he said. "The fact that it's appreciated here will make a difference in Poland. Poland is an interesting country. It's not how it appears to outsiders these days, believe me."

Best actress went to Samal Yeslyamova for Kazakh writer-director Sergey Dvortsevov's "Ayka." Taking best actor was Marcello Fonte for Matteo Garrone's "Dogman," an award presented by fellow Italian actor Roberto Benigni.

The prize for best screenplay was split between Italian writer-director Alice Rohrwacher's time-warped fable about a poor farm boy in rural Italy "Happy as Lazzaro" and Nader Saeivar and Jafar Panahi's script for "Three Faces." On Sunday, Deadline reported that "Happy as Lazzaro" was acquired for North American distribution by Netflix, which pulled its films from Cannes this year in a dispute over theatrical distribution of its titles in France.

Panahi has been banned from traveling outside Iran since he was arrested for participating in "propaganda against the regime" in 2010 after supporting mass protests over the country's disputed 2009 election. Both Panahi and Russia's Kirill Serebrennikov were unable to attend their Cannes premieres because they are

barred from traveling out of their home countries.

A "Palme d'Or Speciale," a special first-time award, was given to Jean-Luc Godard for "continually striving to define and refine what cinema can be," said Blanchett. Godard's "Image Book" is a film essay collage that contemplates the West's relationship to the Arab world. The 87-year-old French filmmaking legend called into his Cannes press conference via FaceTime.

The closing ceremony came ahead of the premiere of Terry Gilliam's "The Man Who Killed Don Quixote." Famously victim to countless delays and debacles, the film took nearly 30 years for Gilliam to complete. And its Cannes premiere was still almost canceled because of an injunction sought by producer Paolo Branco, who insisted the festival needed his permission. French courts last week denied Branco's request, allowing the screening to move forward.

This story corrects the spelling of director Hirokazu Kore-eda.

Trump welcomes wife home in tweet that misspells her name

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Melania Trump returned to the White House in "high spirits" on Saturday following a weeklong hospitalization for kidney treatment, a lengthy stay that raised questions about whether the first lady's condition may have been more complicated than first revealed.

President Donald Trump heralded her homecoming with a tweet that referred to her as "Melanie" instead of "Melania."

"Great to have our incredible First Lady back home in the White House. Melanie is feeling and doing really well. Thank you for all of your prayers and best wishes!" Trump wrote before quickly superseding that tweet with another that spelled his wife's name correctly.

Mrs. Trump's quiet return to the White House, her husband and their 12-year-old son, after five days at a nearby U.S. military hospital resolved a brewing mystery about when she would eventually be released. What remain are questions about the state of her health.

Her spokeswoman, Stephanie Grisham, has declined to release additional details, citing Mrs. Trump's right to privacy.

"The First Lady returned home to the White House this morning," Grisham said in an emailed statement. "She is resting comfortably and remains in high spirits. Our office has received thousands of calls and emails wishing Mrs. Trump well, and we thank everyone who has taken the time to reach out."

First ladies are under no obligation to make their medical histories public.

She had been at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center near Washington since Monday, when she had an embolization procedure to treat an unspecified kidney condition the White House described as benign. Word of the hospitalization came as a surprise as there was no indication during her public appearances in recent weeks, including during a state visit by France's president, that Mrs. Trump had been ailing.

One week before the procedure, a beaming Mrs. Trump, 48, presided over a splashy announcement ceremony in the White House Rose Garden to introduce her "Be Best" public awareness campaign to help teach kindness to children.

Grisham said Monday that the procedure was "successful," there were no complications and that Mrs. Trump would probably remain hospitalized for "the duration of the week."

The president then tweeted Tuesday that his wife would be released in "2 or 3" days, but Thursday and Friday passed without word from the White House on her whereabouts. Trump had visited her during her first three days of hospitalization. But he did not visit Thursday or Friday, leading some to wonder whether that meant the first lady had been discharged.

The first lady said Wednesday on Twitter that she was "feeling great" and looking forward to going home, but gave no indication of when that might happen. On Friday, she tweeted about the deadly school shooting at a Houston-area high school but did not update her followers on her medical situation.

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Urologists with no personal knowledge of Mrs. Trump's condition said the most likely explanation for the procedure is a kind of noncancerous kidney tumor called an angiomyolipoma. They're not common but tend to occur in middle-aged women and can cause problematic bleeding if they become large enough, said Dr. Keith Kowalczyk of MedStar Georgetown University Hospital.

Doctors often treat the condition by cutting off the blood supply so the growth shrinks, added Dr. Lampros Stamatakis of MedStar Washington Hospital Center. That is done with an embolization, meaning a catheter is snaked into the blood vessels of the kidney to find the right one to block.

Most of the time, these tumors are found when people undergo medical scans for another reason, but sometimes people have pain or other symptoms, Kowalczyk said. Many times, embolization patients go home the same day or the next.

Grisham on Saturday characterized speculation about the first lady as "uninformed," adding that every patient is different.

"Mrs. Trump has a medical team that is comfortable with her care, which is all that matters," she said. "Her recovery and privacy are paramount and I will have no further comment beyond this."

The question of what level of accountability should be expected of first ladies is difficult because they are private citizens, yet public figures who draw keen interest from the public, have taxpayer-supported staff and sometimes involve themselves in politics and policy.

Myra Gutin, a Rider University professor who studies presidents' wives, recalled the backlash Rosalynn Carter suffered for attending Cabinet meetings; she explained that she just wanted to get things right because she was so often out and about representing President Jimmy Carter.

The White House has a mixed record on disclosing information about the ailments of first ladies.

Nancy Reagan revealed in 1987 that she had breast cancer and had her left breast surgically removed.

But nearly two decades later, the White House found itself on the defensive for its after-the-fact disclosure that Laura Bush had skin cancer removed from her right shin in November 2006.

Mrs. Bush had decided it was a private matter, but it nonetheless came to light after she was seen wearing a bandage below her right knee.

The following year, the White House proactively disclosed that Mrs. Bush would have surgery to relieve pain from pinched nerves in her neck. The problem kept her from accompanying President George W. Bush on a trip to Australia.

Sheila Tate, a press secretary to Mrs. Reagan, said the first lady felt it was appropriate to reveal her breast cancer diagnosis.

Such disclosures by a first lady aren't "absolutely required, by any means," Tate said. "Melania is entitled to her privacy, if that's what she wants."

AP Medical Writer Lauran Neergaard contributed to this report.

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

Americans fete royal wedding in pubs, hotels and homes

By JENNIFER PELTZ and ANDREW DALTON, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — From pubgoers in pajamas to merrymakers in finery at a posh hotel, Americans cheered and teared up Saturday as they watched Meghan Markle marry Prince Harry in a royal wedding with trans-Atlantic resonance.

People gathered at wedding watch parties — some before dawn — at a Hollywood pub and New York's swanky Plaza hotel, in oceanfront towns in Florida and spots in the Rocky Mountains, to see an American of mixed race heritage become part of Britain's royal family.

If the U.K. and the U.S. have long enjoyed a "special relationship," this gave it a whole new meaning.

"It was a real-life fairy tale," said Erin Massa, 34, who watched at a Minneapolis pub. "If someone my age from America can suddenly become a princess, essentially, anything really is possible."

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About 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) away at a home in Burlington, New Jersey, Paula Jackson gasped when Markle emerged from the Rolls-Royce that brought her to St. George's Chapel in Windsor, the British royals' longtime home.

"I'm just so happy for her," said Jackson, dressed in a jeweled blazer and tiara. "She will be an example for our young, African-American women."

At gatherings around the U.S., viewers admitted Markle's beauty and naturalness. But they also marveled at the boundary-breaking union between the 33-year-old prince who has been open about how grief shadowed his life for decades after the 1997 death of his mother, Princess Diana, and the 36-year-old American actress who has spoken out about coming to terms with her biracial identity as the daughter of a black mother and white father.

Some viewers wiped away tears as they watched the wedding from Immaculate Heart High School in Los Angeles, Markle's alma mater.

"It's all my family can talk about," said 15-year-old sophomore Daniella Bueno, who got up at 3 a.m. to join dozens of students, parents and staffers for the event. "She's representing our school in such a beautiful way."

Across the country, Varinda Missett and Ellen Polkes donned hats, gloves and bejeweled high heels and went to the Plaza early in the morning because they "wanted to see a California girl become a princess," Missett said.

A crowd in fascinators and tiaras gathered for the storied hotel's first royal wedding viewing party, which came complete with deviled eggs, black pudding, Earl Grey tea butter biscuits and cake pops with champagne and flower liqueur.

"We love a great love story," said Maureen Farley, the hotel's director of hospitality. "This surely is one of the best."

If there was a certain historical irony in Americans celebrating British royalty nearly 242 years after the Declaration of Independence, it had little sway Saturday over Americans who say they were simply rallying around love.

"I think this is a wonderful new way to be royal," said Ralph Campbell, 67, who donned a three-piece dark suit and bow tie for a watch party at Brit's Pub in Minneapolis. He called the ceremony "a global wedding" and added: "I think it will only help the cause of peace in the world."

Another guest at Brit's Pub, British native Victoria Rylee, had no problem with an American marrying a British prince. After all, "I married an American," Rylee, 71, said with a laugh.

At a pajama-and-viewing party at the Cat & Fiddle Pub in Hollywood, California, British-born actor Craig Young was happy to watch a woman from his adopted hometown join the royal family in his homeland. It was something "we never thought would happen, and which we're very excited about," said the actor, 44, who wore a bathrobe and Prince Harry mask.

For Meghan Woods, who was at the Plaza's fete in New York, the takeaway was simple.

"There are so many terrible things going on in the world that when there's something like this— love bringing people together, a reason to celebrate," she said, "why not?"

Dalton reported from Los Angeles. Associated Press writers Jeff Baenen in Minneapolis, Alexandra Villarreal in New York and Errin Haines Whack in Burlington, New Jersey, contributed to this report.

Love and fire: Text of Michael Curry's royal wedding address

WINDSOR, England (AP) — And now in the name of our loving, liberating and life-giving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

From the Song of Solomon, in the Bible:

"Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,

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passion fierce as the grave.

Its flashes are flashes of fire,
a raging flame.

Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it."

The late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr once said, and I quote: "We must discover the power of love, the redemptive power of love. And when we discover that, we will be able to make of this old world a new world, for love is the only way."

There's power in love. Don't underestimate it. Don't even over-sentimentalize it. There's power - power in love. If you don't believe me, think about a time when you first fell in love. The whole world seemed to center around you and your beloved.

Oh there's power - power in love. Not just in its romantic forms, but any form, any shape of love. There's a certain sense in which when you are loved, and you know it, when someone cares for you, and you know it, when you love and you show it - it actually feels right. There's something right about it.

And there's a reason for it. The reason has to do with the source. We were made by a power of love, and our lives were meant - and are meant - to be lived in that love. That's why we are here.

Ultimately, the source of love is God himself: the source of all of our lives.

There's an old medieval poem that says: "Where true love is found, God himself is there".

The New Testament says it this way: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God, and those who love are born of God and know God. Those who do not love do not know God. Why? For God is love."

There's power in love. There's power in love to help and heal when nothing else can.

There's power in love to lift up and liberate when nothing else will. There's power in love to show us the way to live.

"Set me as a seal on your heart, a seal on your arm, for love is as strong as death."

But love is not only about a young couple. Now the power of love is demonstrated by the fact that we're all here. Two young people fell in love, and we all showed up. But it's not just for and about a young couple, who we rejoice with. It's more than that.

Jesus of Nazareth on one occasion was asked by a lawyer to sum up the essence of the teachings of Moses, and he went back and he reached back into the Hebrew scriptures, to Deuteronomy and Leviticus, and Jesus said: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

And then in Matthew's version, he added, he said: "On these two, love of God and love of neighbor, hang all the law, all the prophets, everything that Moses wrote, everything in the holy prophets, everything in the scriptures, everything that God has been trying to tell the world — love God, love your neighbors, and while you're at it, love yourself."

Now, someone once said that Jesus began the most revolutionary movement in all of human history. A movement grounded in the unconditional love of God for the world and a movement mandating people to live that love. And in so doing to change not only their lives but the very life of the world itself.

I'm talking about some power. Real power. Power to change the world. If you don't believe me, well, there were some old slaves in America's Antebellum South who explained the dynamic power of love and why it has the power to transform. They explained it this way. They sang a spiritual, even in the midst of their captivity. It's one that says "There's a balm in Gilead..." a healing balm, something that can make things right.

"There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole.

"There is a balm in Gilead

"To heal the sin sick soul."

And one of the stanzas actually explains why. They said:

"If you cannot preach like Peter,

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And you cannot pray like Paul,
You just tell the love of Jesus,
How he died to save us all."

Oh, that's the balm in Gilead! This way of love, it is the way of life. They got it. He died to save us all. He didn't die for anything he could get out of it. Jesus did not get an honorary doctorate for dying. He wasn't getting anything out of it. He gave up his life, he sacrificed his life, for the good of others, for the good of the other, for the wellbeing of the world, for us.

That's what love is. Love is not selfish and self-centered. Love can be sacrificial, and in so doing, becomes redemptive. And that way of unselfish, sacrificial, redemptive love changes lives, and it can change this world.

If you don't believe me, just stop and imagine. Think and imagine a world where love is the way.

Imagine our homes and families where love is the way.

Imagine our neighborhoods and communities where love is the way.

Imagine our governments and nations where love is the way.

Imagine business and commerce where this love is the way.

Imagine this tired old world where love is the way.

When love is the way - unselfish, sacrificial, redemptive.

When love is the way, then no child will go to bed hungry in this world ever again.

When love is the way, we will let justice roll down like a mighty stream and righteousness like an ever-flowing brook.

When love is the way, poverty will become history.

When love is the way, the earth will be a sanctuary.

When love is the way, we will lay down our swords and shields, down by the riverside, to study war no more.

When love is the way, there's plenty good room - plenty good room - for all of God's children. Because when love is the way, we actually treat each other, well... like we are actually family.

When love is the way, we know that God is the source of us all, and we are brothers and sisters, children of God.

My brothers and sisters, that's a new heaven, a new earth, a new world, a new human family.

And let me tell you something, old Solomon was right in the Old Testament: that's fire.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin - and with this I will sit down, we gotta get y'all married - French Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was arguably one of the great minds, great spirits of the 20th century. Jesuit, Roman Catholic priest, scientist, a scholar, a mystic.

In some of his writings, he said, from his scientific background as well as his theological one, in some of his writings he said - as others have - that the discovery, or invention, or harnessing of fire was one of the great scientific and technological discoveries in all of human history.

Fire to a great extent made human civilization possible. Fire made it possible to cook food and to provide sanitary ways of eating, which reduced the spread of disease in its time.

Fire made it possible to heat warm environments and thereby made human migration around the world a possibility, even into colder climates.

Fire made it possible... there was no Bronze Age without fire, no Iron Age without fire, no Industrial Revolution without fire. The advances of fire and technology are greatly dependent on the human ability and capacity to take fire and use it for human good.

Anybody get here in a car today? An automobile? Nod your heads if you did - I know there were some carriages. But those of us who came in cars, fire - controlled, harnessed fire - made that possible.

I know that the Bible says, and I believe it, that Jesus walked on the water. But I have to tell you, I did not walk across the Atlantic Ocean to get here.

Controlled fire in that plane got me here. Fire makes it possible for us to text and tweet and email and Instagram and Facebook and socially be dysfunctional with each other.

Fire made all of that possible, and de Chardin said fire was one of the greatest discoveries in all of human history. And he then went on to say that if humanity ever harnesses the energy of fire again, if humanity ever captures the energy of love - it will be the second time in the history of the world that we have discovered fire.

Dr. King was right: we must discover love - the redemptive power of love. And when we do that, we will make of this old world, a new world.

My brother, my sister, God love you, God bless you, and may God hold us all in those almighty hands of love.

Expanded sports betting fuels fears about gambling addiction

By **DAVID CRARY** and **WAYNE PARRY**, Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — For sports leagues and gambling industries, the imminent expansion of legalized sports betting promises a bonanza. For the experts and organizations already concerned about pervasive problem gambling, it promises a whole new roster of worries.

Much of the apprehension relates to the prospect of myriad forms of online sports betting — accessible to gamblers at any time and location via their mobile phones. There's particular alarm over the anticipated explosion of so-called "in-game wagering" in which gamblers bet, often at a rapid pace, on play-by-play developments — for example, will the next football play be a run or a pass.

"You lose track of time," said Les Bernal, national director of Stop Predatory Gambling. "The goal of the operators is to get you into a zone where you lose your financial reasoning and think of nothing except betting."

Prior to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling this week, only four states were allowed to offer sports betting and only Nevada offered betting on single games. Now that the court has lifted those bans, there are expectations that most states will offer sports betting within a few years in a play to raise tax revenue.

"We think this is the biggest expansion of gambling in our nation's history, in one fell swoop," said Keith Whyte, executive director of the National Council on Problem Gambling. "Absolutely, categorically, there will be more risk factors for addiction — we've never had that much high-speed, high-stakes interactive access to any sort of betting."

The council wants any company, sports league or government that benefits from sports betting to devote at least 1 percent of the revenue to fund programs preventing and treating compulsive gambling. It also wants betting operators to train staff about problem gambling, set and enforce a minimum age limit, and enable gamblers to set limits on how much time and money they spend betting.

Whyte is skeptical that state lawmakers and the gambling industry — even if they pay lip service to problem gambling — will take sufficiently tough action.

"The ball's in their court," he said. "They can rush to grab the money and then deal with a wave of increased addiction, or they can work with us to try to mitigate the harm."

Nationwide, the generally accepted figure for gambling addiction is 2 to 3 percent of the U.S. population, according to Neva Pryor, who runs New Jersey's Council on Compulsive Gambling. But in New Jersey, which until recently had the nation's second-largest casino market, that figure is over 6 percent.

And that's without legal sports betting just a click or call away.

"We're going to be adding fuel to the fire of an already serious problem," Pryor said.

Calls from people who have gotten in over their heads betting on sports currently account for 5 percent of all calls to the council's 800-GAMBLER hotline, a figure Pryor expects to increase.

Arnie Wexler, who once held Pryor's current job, knows personally how addictive sports betting can be.

His problem was once so bad, he says, that on the rare occasion he and his wife had sex, she would swear she heard a baseball game somewhere.

"I told her, 'You're crazy,' but I had a transistor radio hidden under the pillow so I could follow the score," he said.

Now living in Florida, Wexler says problem-gambling treatment programs should be bracing for a surge

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of business.

"This is going to be a volcano two years from now, because two years is typically how long many gamblers take before they start seeking help," he said.

Another recovered problem gambler, Marc Lefkowitz, has similar concerns.

"I'm lucky I quit in 1983," said Lefkowitz, who recently started a gambling treatment program in Long Beach, Washington. "Back then, maybe you could bet by the quarter (of a game). Now you're betting every minute, and that frequency makes it more addictive."

Chuck Bovis of Indianapolis, on learning of the court decision, thought back to when he gambled heavily on sports in his 20s and 30s. He has quit for the past 18 years with the steady help of Gamblers Anonymous and has done extensive work helping others with gambling problems.

"I would have gone crazy with this," he said of the online betting possibilities. "I probably would have been suicidal."

Natasha Schull, a professor of media, culture and communication at New York University, has written about addictive slot-machine technology and expects online sports betting to adopt some of the same features to maximize its profitability.

With in-game wagering, she said, a sports contest "ceases to have boundaries as a single event."

"It becomes this constant, continuous thing that's so fragmented with all these things you are predicting and anticipating," she said. "People end up spending more time and money than they wanted to."

Another expert alarmed by the court decision is Kimberly Young, director of the Center for Internet Addiction Recovery in Bradford, Pennsylvania.

She expects that new forms of sports betting will expand and intensify the allure that fantasy sports leagues already have for vast numbers of Americans, especially young men.

"You watch obsessively," she said. "You're ignoring your family, instead of making sports a nice activity for the whole family."

Yet Young sees little likelihood that an upsurge of compulsive betting can be prevented.

"If anything, it will just keep going further," she said.

Les Bernal, of Stop Predatory Gambling, worries about the impact of the changes on children — whether or not they're placing bets themselves.

He cites research from Australia, where sports betting is legal, showing that many children view sports and gambling as a unified institution, and consider it normal that gambling ads are shown on sports telecasts.

"This is going to be sanctioned and promoted by state governments who are supposed to be in the business of improving people's lives," Bernal said. "Instead they're going to get an entire generation of young people hooked on gambling and in the process fleece them."

Crary reported from New York City. Follow him at <http://twitter.com/CraryAP> and follow Wayne Parry at <http://twitter.com/WayneParryAC>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, May 20, the 140th day of 2018. There are 225 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 20, 1899, taxi driver Jacob German was pulled over and arrested by a police officer riding a bicycle for speeding down Manhattan's Lexington Avenue in his electric car at 12 miles an hour at a time when the speed limit was 8 mph; it was the first recorded speeding arrest in U.S. history.

On this date:

In 1521, Ignatius of Loyola was wounded by a cannonball while defending Pamplona against the French; during his convalescence he turned to religion, becoming a leader of the Counter-Reformation and the founder of the Jesuits.

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In 1712, the original version of Alexander Pope's satirical mock-heroic poem "The Rape of the Lock" was published anonymously in Lintot's Miscellany.

In 1873, Levi Strauss and tailor Jacob Davis received a U.S. patent for men's work pants made with copper rivets.

In 1927, Charles Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field in Long Island, New York, aboard the Spirit of St. Louis on his historic solo flight to France.

In 1932, Amelia Earhart took off from Newfoundland to become the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. (Because of weather and equipment problems, Earhart set down in Northern Ireland instead of her intended destination, France.)

In 1948, Chiang Kai-shek was inaugurated as the first president of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

In 1959, nearly 5,000 Japanese-Americans had their U.S. citizenships restored after choosing to renounce them during World War II.

In 1961, a white mob attacked a busload of Freedom Riders in Montgomery, Alabama, prompting the federal government to send in U.S. marshals to restore order.

In 1978, Japan's Narita International Airport began operations after years of protests over its construction by local residents.

In 1988, a 30-year-old woman walked into a Winnetka, Illinois, elementary school classroom, where she shot to death 8-year-old Nicholas Corwin and wounded several other children. After wounding a young man at his home, the shooter took her own life.

In 1993, an estimated 93 million people tuned in for the final first-run episode of the sitcom "Cheers" on NBC.

In 1998, the government unveiled the design for the new \$20 bill, featuring a larger and slightly off-center portrait of Andrew Jackson.

Ten years ago: Sen. Edward Kennedy was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumor; some experts gave the Massachusetts Democrat less than a year to live. (Kennedy died in August 2009.) Candidate Barack Obama defeated Hillary Rodham Clinton in the Oregon primary, moving to within 100 delegates of the total he needed to clinch the Democratic presidential nomination; Clinton won in Kentucky. President Jimmy Carter's White House chief of staff, Hamilton Jordan (JUR'-dun), died in Atlanta at age 63. Olympic gold medal figure skater Kristi Yamaguchi and her professional dance partner, Mark Ballas, won ABC's "Dancing with the Stars."

Five years ago: An EF5 tornado struck Moore, Oklahoma, killing at least 24 people and flattening 1,100 homes. Former general Thein Sein (thayn sayn) became the first president of Myanmar in 47 years to visit the White House, where President Barack Obama said he appreciated the Asian leader's efforts to lead the country in "a long and sometimes difficult" path toward democracy. Ray Manzarek, 74, a founding member of the 1960s rock group the Doors, died in Rosenheim, Germany.

One year ago: President Donald Trump opened a five-stop overseas tour, his first since taking office, receiving a lavish royal welcome in Saudi Arabia. Cloud Computing ran down Classic Empire in the final strides to win the Preakness by a head.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-author James McEachin is 88. Actor Anthony Zerbe is 82. Actor David Proval is 76. Singer-actress Cher is 72. Actor-comedian Dave Thomas is 70. Rock musician Warren Cann is 68. Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, is 67. Former New York Gov. David Paterson is 64. Delaware Gov. John Carney is 62. Actor Dean Butler is 62. TV-radio personality Ron Reagan is 60. Rock musician Jane Wiedlin (The Go-Go's) is 60. Actor Bronson Pinchot is 59. Singer Susan Cowsill is 59. Actor John Billingsley is 58. Actor Tony Goldwyn is 58. Singer Nick Heyward is 57. TV personality Ted Allen is 53. Actress Mindy Cohn is 52. Rock musician Tom Gorman (Belly) is 52. Actress Gina Ravera is 52. Actor Timothy Olyphant is 50. Race car driver Tony Stewart is 47. Rapper Busta Rhymes is 46. Actress Daya Vaidya is 45. Rock musician Ryan Martinie is 43. Actor Matt Czuchy (zoo-KREE') is 41. Actress Angela Goethals is 41. Actress-singer Naturla Naughton is 34. Country singer Jon Pardi is 33.

Thought for Today: "I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't

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rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next."
— Gilda Radner, American actress-comedian (born 1946, died this date in 1989).