

# Groton Daily Independent

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**“Tomorrow  
is fresh,  
with no  
mistakes  
in it.”**

-L. M. Montgomery



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

Removal, Grinding, Chipping, Trimming

**605-725-WOOD**

Mason Dinger: 605-216-6098

Trevor Zeck: 605-216-8910



**DAKOTA TREE  
COMPANY**

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## Thursday, Aug. 30

- 10 a.m.: Cross Country at Redfield  
10:30 a.m.: Boys JH Golf at Sisseton  
4 p.m.: 7th Grade Volleyball at Britton  
5 p.m.: 8th Grade Volleyball at Britton  
6 p.m.: JV Volleyball at Britton followed by varsity match

## Friday, Aug. 31

- No School  
7 p.m.: Football at Sisseton

## Rivers at Risk: Few restraints on farm, ag runoff into S.D. rivers

By Bart Pfankuch

South Dakota News Watch

Cattle beat the heat on a Moody County farm recently by wading into a stretch of Bachelor Creek that flows into the Big Sioux River. The cattle moved into the waterway unencumbered because there are no fences.

Corn stretches out in neat rows near Mitchell, planted nearly to the shore of the James River. Riparian buffer strips that slow erosion and limit pollution from manure or fertilizers are nowhere to be seen, allowing runoff from the field to flow directly into the waterway.

Similar scenes are visible across South Dakota as chemicals, animal waste and other contaminants flow from farms and ranches into rivers and streams with only limited efforts to control their path or pollution level.

South Dakota's largest industry is one of the biggest contributors to the impairment of state rivers. The polluting occurs with almost no consequence to producers, even those who openly flout best management practices.

Pollution that has caused nearly three-quarters of South Dakota rivers to be labeled impaired by the federal government arrives in two basic forms: direct, or so-called "point source" pollution from pipes that dump

municipal or industrial wastewaters; and indirect, or "non-point source" pollution such as agricultural wastes and urban runoff that flow off the land and into rivers slowly and steadily over time.

A South Dakota News Watch investigation into state river quality shows that while point-source pollution dischargers are subject to a highly regulated, if occasionally flawed, form of government oversight, non-point polluters are generally guided only by volunteer or incentivized attempts to improve their processes to limit pollution releases.

Despite the growth of proven new technologies and methods to reduce pollution from farms and cities, and good-hearted efforts by some producers and municipalities to reduce runoff in South Dakota, the problems persist.

Agricultural operations put high levels of oxygen-depriving nitrates, dangerous E.coli bacteria and harmful suspended solids into state rivers and lakes. Meanwhile, urban runoff that flows into waterways picks up sand and grit, pet droppings, oil, grease, fuels and toxic metals from vehicle emissions, salt and other roadway additives, and pesticides and fertilizers from lawns.

A visit to any South Dakota city will provide evidence of apartments, commercial buildings or office parks constructed with concrete sidewalks, parking lots and roads that allow polluted stormwater to flow unabated and untreated toward streams, rivers and lakes.

The damage done by untreated stormwater can be significant, especially in South Dakota where most larger cities are located along rivers.

One federal study showed that in the Sioux Falls metro area, a typical half-inch rainfall sends 144 million gallons of tainted stormwater to the Big Sioux River.

The indirect sources of pollution continue to vex South Dakota rivers and leave them contaminated and at times unsafe for humans and fish.

"With a limited number of exceptions, those sorts of sources of pollution are not managed or regulated ... so we have strictly voluntary efforts that are being made," said Jay Gilbertson, manager of the East Dakota Water Development District that oversees water quality in 10 eastern counties. "Some producers



**Cattle wade in a Moody County creek on a summer day. Efforts to control farm runoff in South Dakota waterways are mostly voluntary and few farm operations have taken steps to significantly diminish the pollution.** (Photo: Bart Pfankuch)

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are managing resources very well. But if you don't feel like volunteering, and there's nobody there to make you change the way you're doing things, things aren't going to change."

## Modern pollution-control methods take many forms

Dell Rapids area farmer Mike Schmidt says there is one unavoidable fact associated with an expansive agricultural industry in states like South Dakota.

"Zero runoff is unattainable; we've just got to get past that," Schmidt said. "If you live and farm out here, you're going to have contaminants in runoff."

But Schmidt and many other farmers believe they can do better at preventing pollution than they did a generation ago or even a decade ago.

For 20 years, Schmidt has allowed his 550-acre corn, soybean and cattle operation to be used as the test site for a long-range study to examine the outcomes of using manure as a winter fertilizer on both production and river quality.

The research, done in partnership with South Dakota State University and a host of other agricultural interests, is nearly complete and seems to indicate that winter spreading can be done safely if done carefully and in the right places at the right times.

The study aside, Schmidt, 71, believes that more farmers need to try runoff control and soil protection methods so they can see a payoff for both the environment and their financial bottom line.

"Once you learn to monitor things more closely through grid sampling, you save money on the end in fertilizer," he said. "A lot of us do it right anyway because it's the smart way to do it but also because you get the biggest bang for your buck."

While many critics blame the rising number of concentrated animal feeding operations of cattle, hogs and poultry in South Dakota as a big cause of agricultural pollution, the big operators are far more regulated than smaller family farms or individual operators. Some experts argue that small farms that may be less adaptable and have fewer expendable resources do as much or more damage to the environment than the CAFOs that must get a permit and undergo regular inspections.

Pollution control methods take many forms on a modern farm. High-tech systems use satellites and computers to help farmers apply pesticides only at the right times, amounts and places.

Cover crops, reduced tillage areas and grassy buffer strips slow erosion and increase filtration of runoff. Weirs can slow runoff, and devices such as bioreactors use wood chips to filter runoff and help protect rivers.

Yet finding the sweet spot – where the cost of pollution reduction is outweighed by increases in productivity and revenues – remains elusive in agriculture in the Midwest.

Christopher Jones, a University of Iowa professor who studies farm runoff and nitrates in water, said farmers who already feel over-regulated are unlikely to voluntarily participate in runoff reduction methods.

"Almost all our practices to reduce nitrate delivery from field to stream have no benefit to the farmer in terms of production or soil conservation or income – it's not helping them grow stuff," Jones said. "So the economics are very difficult with this ... it's hard to pencil it out."

Jones recently completed research showing that nitrate loading in rivers due to agriculture in Iowa and



**The Cheyenne River, shown here near Wasta, has suffered significant pollution from the mining industry as it flows through much of western South Dakota and into the Missouri River.** (Photo:

Bart Pfankuch)

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other Midwestern states has led to an expansion of an oxygen-depleted dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico that is now about 2,700 square miles.

Jones said farming operations across the country continue to consolidate, increasing the acreage of farmland that is rented, which tends to reduce focus on runoff reduction.

"When you're renting land and you're paying a lot of money for rent, it's difficult to expect a farmer to do structural things on his land when he doesn't own it," Jones said.

## Incentives designed to promote voluntary efforts

The state of South Dakota in 2017 enacted an incentive program to encourage farmers to install riparian buffer strips along lakes or streams to naturally filter pollutants out of runoff before it enters waterways.

The plan, which passed after an initial veto, gives farmers a 40-percent tax reduction on buffer strips that are 50 to 120 feet wide and are closed to grazing for part of the year.

Even though land along 575 lakes and 11,000 miles of rivers and streams is eligible, the voluntary pollution reduction plan so far has had minimal impact. According to Department of Revenue data, in its first year the program drew 27 successful applications on only 292 acres of land in 12 counties, even though farmers who already have buffer strips in place only needed to apply in order to get the tax credit.

Scott VanderWal, a Volga soybean, corn and cattle farmer who is president of the South Dakota Farm Bureau, calls incentive programs "vital" to improving agricultural processes on a wide scale.

He also understands why not all voluntary programs will work.

"The voluntary part is good because nobody likes to be told they have to do one thing or another," he said. "But if you put in buffer strips, you're basically taking that land out of production. You're still paying taxes on it and you're not making any money off it."

VanderWal said the current ag economy doesn't give farmers much room to take on new runoff or nutrient reduction processes.

"We're not making any money," he said. "South Dakota as a state isn't participating in the full recovery because of the slowdown in agriculture."

Yet as a leader in South Dakota agriculture, VanderWal said he believes that most South Dakota producers are doing their best to reduce pollution impacts.

"Certainly, it does play a role in water quality if we don't do things right, but for the most part agriculture is doing everything we can to promote and maintain water quality and are continuing to improve."

John McMaine, an agricultural biology professor at South Dakota State University who specializes in improving runoff from farms and cities, said he always gets a positive reception when he presents ideas for pollution reduction methods to South Dakota farmers.

But after his discussions, McMaine wonders if anything changed for the better.

"Most of the farmers I talk to, they feel that they have a responsibility to think about water quality, so they're interested to hear about these things," McMaine said. "The reality is that these things do cost money and might be outside their profit margins given current commodity prices."

Some projects have shown positive results, particularly in East River regions where row-cropping and the dairy industry are common and runoff is significant.



**A channel for runoff is clearly visible from this corn field grown almost to the edge of the James River near Mitchell. The use of "buffer strips" between farm fields and waterways can reduce runoff and pollution, but are only infrequently used in South Dakota.** (Photo: Bart Pfankuch)

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A series of joint efforts by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and state and local governments in the mid-2000s included installation of dozens of runoff control measures in the Big Sioux River Watershed from Roberts to Brookings counties. Multiple best management practices were followed during the \$4.4 million project, cutting total suspended solids in the river by 8 percent and leading some segments of the Big Sioux to be taken off the federal government impaired waterways list.

The city of Sioux Falls runs a program called the Seasonal Riparian Area Management program that pays stipends to farmers along the Big Sioux River and Skunk Creek to erect fences and install buffer strips to keep cattle away from the waterways and slow runoff in summer months.

Gilbertson, of the East Dakota Water Development District, is a supporter of more regulation and even fines for farmers that do not follow proper management practices or who allow excessive runoff or pollution releases.

"I don't endorse the idea of running around the countryside and knocking people on the side of the head,"

Gilbertson said. "But I don't think too many people would be upset if the worst guy or gal in the county got nailed, because everybody probably knows they're not doing very well. It would have a tremendous impact if you knew that, well, you can in fact get in trouble."



**Dell Rapids farmer Mike Schmidt checks on a weir set up on his farm to capture and test runoff as part of a 20-year study on the impacts of using manure as winter fertilizer.** (Photo: Bart Pfankuch)

## Efforts to control urban runoff center on construction practices

South Dakota is behind many other states when it comes to efforts to use technology and new storm-water management methods to stop urban pollution from entering rivers and lakes.

Jason Phillips, a Ph.D candidate at the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology who is studying urban runoff, said the state is behind others such as Colorado where Low-Impact Development is far more common and successful.

Techniques used in LID are all designed to return the current flow of stormwater as close as possible to the way water moved before homes, businesses, sidewalks and streets were built.

Some methods come during the design and construction processes, such as installing porous rather than impervious hard surfaces, managing water flow through building construction and positioning, leaving room for retention ponds or manmade wetlands and swales, and reducing the number of concrete roads, sidewalks and curb and gutter.

Other methods take place after construction, such as placing landscaping elements where water will flow into them, creating rain gardens or catchment basins where water can collect and filter naturally, situating rain barrels around a property to capture and reuse rainwater, and installing "green roofs" that use plant life atop buildings to slow water flow and remove pollutants.

Cities in Colorado have worked with the EPA to complete numerous LID projects, and the EPA has since created an online guidebook to help communities implement LID practices and gain momentum for future projects.

The research done by Phillips has proven the effectiveness of green roofs. In a rarely visited corner of the School of Mines campus, Phillips oversees three small buildings that look like tiny homes. One roof is covered in traditional shingles, while the other two have thick layers of plants arranged like large window boxes atop their roofs. One of those has a layer of gravel beneath the plants for further filtration. All three have rain gutters leading to barrels that collect the runoff during rainstorms.

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Over the past three years, Phillips has shown that in a major rainfall of 1 inch or more, the planted roofs improve the quality of runoff and reduce it by 50 to 60 percent. The planted roofs also may reduce energy costs by retaining heat in the building in winter and conditioned air in the summer.

However, without a clear path to designing and implementing LID, and with little experience in the processes among current engineers, developers and city officials, only a handful of successful projects have been undertaken in South Dakota.

The additional cost of LID, which can add 30 percent to the initial capital investment into a development and increase ongoing maintenance expenses, is another major hindrance to implementation in South Dakota, Phillips said.

"They want to get this development done, and it's going to cost extra money, they're not sure how it works, they don't know who's going to take care of it," he said. "Without having some incentives or something to go off of, it's not going to happen; it certainly isn't going to happen fast."

The potential consequences of runoff and the pollution within the runoff are enormous.

According to a U.S. Geological Survey study done 25 years ago, a half-inch rainfall in Sioux Falls in the early 1990s was found to create 19.2 million cubic feet of runoff, or 143.7 million gallons. The 1993 study determined that the region experienced 43 rainstorms of that rainfall amount or more, based on an average taken over 40 years. That means the Sioux Falls metro area send 6.2 billion gallons of stormwater runoff into the Big Sioux River and its tributaries in an average year. The runoff comes on top of the roughly 7.9 billion gallons of treated wastewater dumped into the river by the city of Sioux Falls and Smithfield Foods each year.

The 1993 study showed that while the solid materials found in the Big Sioux were attributable to a host of factors, including runoff of rainfall, the waterways around Sioux Falls are heavily impacted by urban runoff.

"During low flows in the Big Sioux River and Skunk Creek, the runoff from an average storm event could represent a significant portion of these stream discharges, thereby affecting the water quality of Skunk Creek and the Big Sioux River within and downstream of Sioux Falls," the study said.

## Cities struggle to diminish runoff

Both Sioux Falls and Rapid City have ordinances that require developers to manage stormwater on projects that meet a size or impact threshold.

In Sioux Falls, developers of new construction of over two acres or which creates impervious surfaces of one acre or more must get city sign-off on stormwater treatment systems and maximum flow levels, said Lance Weatherly, principal engineer for stormwater for the city.

Existing projects or sites that are redeveloped also must meet eight stormwater criteria before starting construction, Weatherly said.

Treatment of stormwater does not include any mechanical pollution removal methods, but rather relies mostly on creation of above-ground or underground retention ponds where water is held for a time so solids can settle out prior to release into a city stormwater system or directly into a waterway, Weatherly said.

The city has also recently expanded installation of stormwater holding cells and other systems, both locally and regionally, that reduce pollution through natural treatment, Weatherly said. The city's website also notes that buffer strips that reduce pollution flows have been installed astride bike paths that follow the Big Sioux River throughout Sioux Falls.

In 2017, the city enacted an ordinance giving code enforcement officials more authority to enforce stormwater treatment and flows by private industry and developments, Weatherly said. He added that the city



**South Dakota School of Mines & Technology researcher Jason Phillips stands atop a ladder and looks over a "green roof" above a small building on a remote corner of campus. Water from the roof is captured by gutters and tested. Phillips has shown that roofs covered in vegetation and improve the quality and reduce the amount of storm water runoff.** (Photo:

Bart Pfankuch)

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tries to work with developers to improve rather than resort to enforcement actions.

"They could be fined through general code enforcement, but we're approaching it as much as an educational as enforcement issue," he said.

Weatherly and others who work to limit urban runoff say they try to balance the desire to reduce pollution with the need for developers to build properties that can cash flow and remain affordable for consumers.

"It's a cost that is passed through development back down to the end user, but stormwater treatment and stormwater quality is something we're heavily focused on," he said.

While stormwater best practices are being put into place, Sioux Falls and South Dakota as a whole have not embraced strategies of LID, Weatherly said. He doesn't think the city of Sioux Falls will mandate use of LID elements on new construction anytime soon, especially with a great need for more affordable housing in the metro area.

"At this point I don't see us making it a regulatory requirement; it has to come from the residents and the consumers have to have more demand on it," Weatherly said. "Development is going to morph to what demand is, and right, wrong or indifferent, I don't know if in South Dakota right now the demand is there, especially with the drumbeat of affordable housing."

Schmidt, the Dell Rapids farmer, echoes numerous others in agriculture and stormwater management in a mantra he repeats often but which appears nearly unattainable under the current political environment and existing system of water quality protection in South Dakota.

"I want to leave the land better than I found it," Schmidt says, "it's as simple as that."



**Like many small South Dakota waterways, this section of Firesteel Creek in Davison County must endure contamination from indirect sources of pollution that flow off farms and cities across the state.** (Photo: Bart Pfankuch)

## WNV risk down 25% from last week

Risk is down 25% from last week, and all our data indicate that the season has begun to draw to a close. However, we expect that around 3 counties will report cases this week, and around 1 in 5 cases are yet to be transmitted. This means that risk is still very real for individuals, even though the majority of 2018's infections have occurred already. Personal protection and limiting exposure to the mosquito are now far more important than widespread interventions, although some large Fall events (such as football games) might still warrant attention from public health officials.

This week's estimate of total cases for 2018 is 121 cases, up just one case from the 120 cases predicted last week. The data are very stable by this point, even though 1 in 5 cases is probably still to be transmitted in the coming weeks. Weather in the coming week is expected to be chaotic, but after a period of instability, temperatures will almost certainly begin to decline steadily and will put an end to the 2018 WNV season in SD.

## West Nile Virus — South Dakota

August 29, 2018



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**Human West Nile Virus (WNV) reported to SD Department of Health (SD-DOH)**

Human cases: 77 (Median age: 47; range 2-89)

Hospitalized: 24

Deaths: 2

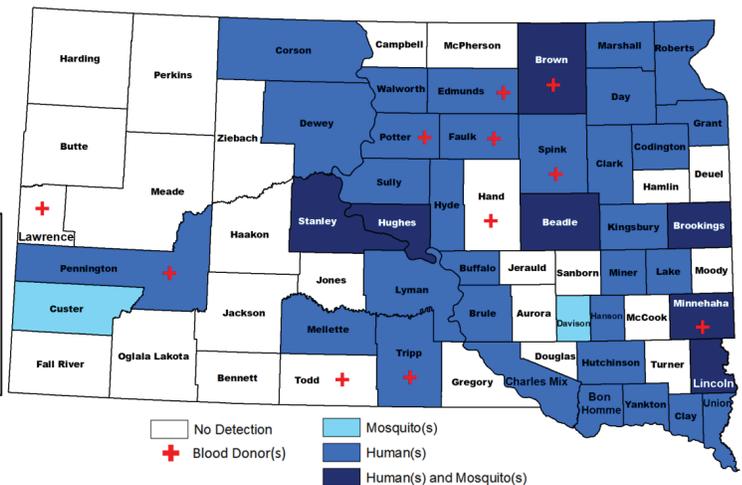
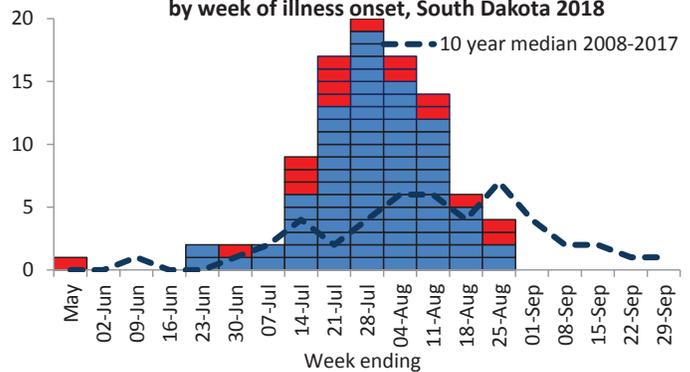
### County Counts

**Human cases:** Beadle (3), Bon Homme (1), Brookings (2), Brown (8), Brule (1), Buffalo (1), Charles Mix (1), Clark (1), Clay (1), Codington (4), Corson (1), Day (2), Dewey (2), Edmunds (3), Faulk (1), Grant (1), Hanson (1), Hughes (3), Hutchinson (1), Hyde (1), Kingsbury (1), Lake (1), Lincoln (4), Lyman (1), Marshall (2), Mellette (1), Miner (1), Minnehaha (6), Pennington (5), Potter (2), Roberts (2), Spink (3), Stanley (1), Sully (1), Tripp (2), Union (1), Walworth (2), Yankton (2)

**Viremic blood donors:** Brown (2), Edmunds (2), Faulk (1), Hand (1), Lawrence (1), Minnehaha (4), Pennington (2), Potter (1), Spink (1), Todd (1), Tripp (1)

**Positive mosquito detections:** Beadle, Brookings, Brown, Custer, Davison, Hughes, Lincoln, Minnehaha, Stanley

West Nile Cases (blue) and blood donors (red) by week of illness onset, South Dakota 2018



**SDSU WNV Risk Assessment**  
**Projected Cases for 2018**  
[mosquito.sdstate.edu](http://mosquito.sdstate.edu)  
**121 Detections Forecast**



**SD-DOH:** Phone 800-592-1861; [westnile.sd.gov](http://westnile.sd.gov)  
**CDC West Nile:** [cdc.gov/westnile](http://cdc.gov/westnile)

## Inaugural Celebration Planning Underway

PIERRE, S.D. – The Pierre community is preparing to welcome South Dakota’s next Governor to the Capital City.

During last night’s Pierre City Commission meeting, Matt and Stephanie Judson were introduced as the chairs of the 2019 Inaugural Committee. They are leading a Committee of about 30 people and hundreds of volunteers who will plan and execute the statewide celebration for South Dakota’s next Governor.

“South Dakota is somewhat unique in that our Inaugural Celebration is hosted by the Capital City and paid for by private donations,” said Pierre Mayor Steve Harding. “Regardless of who wins the November election, the City plans the celebration!”

Harding went on to thank the Judsons for agreeing to chair the Inaugural Committee.

“I understand that this is no small undertaking. I thank you for your willingness to lead the Inaugural efforts,” said Harding.

The Judsons have assembled a team who will work on everything from security to transportation to ticket sales.

“This group handles the Oath of Office Ceremonies, the Capitol Ball, the Inaugural Ball, the decorations and everything in between,” said Judson. “We have met a couple of times to lay the ground work. The heavy lifting will start soon.”

The Inauguration is scheduled for Saturday, January 5, 2019. The majority of activity will take place at the Capitol in Pierre with a post-ceremony ball at the Ramkota Convention Center in Pierre. The events are open to the public. Tickets are not yet available.

## Tax collections increase at the 2018 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally

PIERRE, S.D. — Tax collections at the 2018 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally increased by 3 percent compared to 2017.

To date, the South Dakota Department of Revenue has collected nearly 1.29 million in taxes from temporary vendors at the 2018 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. The state sales tax accounted for the majority of collections with \$742,181. At this time last year, the department collected \$710,839 in state sales tax. The department’s 2018 collections also include \$245,019 in the state tourism tax and \$298,971 in municipal taxes.

“The Sturgis Motorcycle Rally is an important event for South Dakota,” Revenue Supervisor Lori Haupt said. “The Department of Revenue works hard to make the sales tax process as smooth as possible for the vendors who attend the event. This process wouldn’t be possible without our valuable partnerships with fellow state agencies, our local county and municipal governments and vendors at the rally.”

Tax revenue increased in 2018, despite fewer temporary vendors at the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally compared to 2017. The 2018 rally featured 1,011 temporary vendors, while the 2017 event had 1,058.

The Northern Black Hills, which includes Sturgis and all other communities in Meade and Lawrence counties, accumulated \$972,278 in tax from the 804 vendors present. The Southern Black Hills, which includes Rapid City, Custer, Hill City and Keystone, had 207 temporary vendors with \$313,893 in total tax collected.

Taxes collected at the 2018 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally included state sales, tourism, municipal sales and municipal gross receipts.



## Maine recognized at home match

Payton Maine (wearing white) was presented with the banner congratulating her on her 1000th plus digs that she has had during her high school career at Groton Area. Pictured with her are the senior teammates Portia Kettering, Miranda Hanson, Jennie Doeden and Taylor Holm. Maine got her 1,000th dig while playing Ipswich at the Milbank Tournament on Saturday. She was presented with the banner Tuesday night in Groton as the Tigers hosted Ipswich. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

## Twenty South Dakotans Selected for Bush Foundation's Change Network

BROOKINGS, S.D. - SDSU Extension is pleased to announce the 20 South Dakotans selected to join the second South Dakota Change Network cohort.

"From welcoming new populations in Aberdeen to emphasizing inclusivity in the arts in Vermillion, these participants are driven to improve the places they live and work," said Kari O'Neill, SDSU Extension community vitality field specialist.

The Change Network, sponsored by the Bush Foundation, provides South Dakotans, North Dakotans, Minnesotans, and the region's 12 Native nations with a supportive learning environment to lead change within their organizations and communities in a more equitable and inclusive manner.

The cohort will spend the next year working one-on-one with mentors and jointly in group discussions while attending online learning sessions and three participant seminars.

The following South Dakotans make up the 2018 Change Network Cohort: Golnesa Asheghali, Rapid City; Caitlin Bordeaux, Saint Francis; Keith Braveheart, Vermillion; Casey Burrus, Herrick; Naomi Even-Aberle, Rapid City; Bea Fischer, Aberdeen; Amber Hansen, Vermillion; Heidi Hepola, Aberdeen; Betta Jay, Flandreau; Julie Johnson, Mina; Pam Lange, Belle Fourche; Leslie Larson-Cutshaw, Clear Lake; Sandra Kern Mollman, Vermillion; Tamie Nickelson, Frederick; Emily Firman Pieper, Flandreau; Jay Pond, Rapid City; Paul Schipper, Sioux Falls; Julie Stevenson, Watertown; Cary Thrall, Lead and Erica Weston, Oglala.

"We are excited to engage a diverse group of South Dakotans who span multiple backgrounds, professions, ways of thinking, points of view, and ages," O'Neill said. "One of Change Network's greatest strengths is the cohort's ability to learn from and assist each other thanks to their breadth of expertise."

### More about the Change Network

Launched in 2017, Change Network is made possible through the collaboration of 3E Productions, Bush Foundation, CommonSense Consulting@Work, MillerHale Associates, National Arts Strategies, SDSU Extension and Strengthen ND.

Participation in the Change Network is generously funded by the Bush Foundation and includes access to a \$5,000 grant to implement a pilot project or support a related ongoing community project.

## Service Notice: James Torguson

Services for James "Jim" Torguson, 86, of Andover will be 2:00 p.m., Friday, August 31st at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Rev. Howie Krienke will officiate. Burial will follow in Union Cemetery, Groton under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held Friday at the funeral home beginning at 10 a.m.

Jim passed away August 28, 2018 at Sun Dial Manor, Bristol.

## Mom & SDSU Extension Professional Offers Tips for Healthy Afterschool Snacks and Activities

BROOKINGS, S.D. - As her girls start fourth grade and kindergarten this fall, SDSU Extension Early Childhood Field Specialist Audrey Rider says she is working to pre-make easy and nutritious after school snacks to hold them over until dinnertime, as well as prepare some fun activities to keep them busy while they wait for her to get home from work.

"I could go buy the boxed snacks, like fruit snacks and chips, but I want them to get more of their essential nutrients from this snack and be able to eat supper when I get home from work and not be filled up on empty calories," Rider explains. "Eating healthy is a life habit we can help our children develop early on."

So, she did some of her own online research and found no-recipe-needed ideas to pre-make and have waiting for her girls after school. Below she shares some of the easy snack ideas she found on the Food Network website.

- \* Unsweetened applesauce
- \* Dehydrated fruits and vegetables (tomatoes, peas, corn, bananas, apples, mangoes, vegetable blends)
- \* Rice cakes topped with light vegetable cream cheese
- \* Low-fat granola with low-fat milk
- \* Toasted whole wheat pita triangles with light herbed cheese
- \* Cucumber boats filled with part-skim ricotta cheese and Parmesan cheese
- \* Dried figs stuffed with light strawberry cream cheese
- \* Watermelon wedges dipped in low-fat vanilla yogurt
- \* Baked corn chips with fat-free black bean dip or warmed vegetarian refried beans
- \* Baby carrots, bell pepper strips, celery sticks and zucchini sticks dipped in hummus
- \* Sliced apples with cubed cheddar cheese
- \* Cubed cantaloupe, honeydew and watermelon
- \* Dried fruit (raisins, cranberries, cherries, mangoes, pineapple, apricots, and blueberries) mixed with nuts (almonds, cashews, peanuts, pistachios, pecans, walnuts)
- \* Whole wheat pretzel sticks dipped in nut butter
- \* Graham cracker sandwiches made with hazelnut spread
- \* Whole grain, low-sugar cereal with low-fat milk
- \* Guacamole with baked tortilla chips
- \* Whole grain crackers with low-fat cottage cheese and sliced (oil packed) sundried tomatoes

### Non-tech activities

Rider also wanted her daughters to have some non-screen related activities they can do once their homework is done.

"I encourage parents to think about the things their children like to do and then create an activity box or area where the kids can easily access items that will keep them entertained and exercise their imagination," she says.

Below she shares some of her daughters' favorite activities.

- \* Box of Legos to build their own inventions/structures
- \* Art supply box with various paints, brushes, colors, coloring books etc. (I picked up most items at dollar stores)
- \* Flashcards to practice
- \* Sidewalk chalk for creations outside (if weather and space allow)
- \* Slime making materials (if you don't mind a little bit of mess when you get home from work)

For more information on early childhood development and resources contact Audrey Rider at [audrey.rider@sdstate.edu](mailto:audrey.rider@sdstate.edu).

## Destination Imagination, Inc. Moving its Global Finals Event

By: Tina Shaffer

Destination Imagination (DI), a non-profit organization dedicated to teaching students the creative process through hands-on science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) and service learning challenges, today announced its decision to hold its 2019 and 2020 international competition, Global Finals, in Kansas City, Missouri.

Dubbed the “world’s largest celebration of creativity,” Global Finals brings more than 17,000 students, parents and educators from more than 15 countries together. Students who participate in DI spend months solving one of seven project-based learning Challenges that blend STEM learning with the arts and help them to think creatively and critically, collaborate with others, and problem solve. Students compete at local and national levels, vying for a coveted spot at the Global Finals tournament, which is held each May.

With more than 1,400 teams now competing annually, Destination Imagination made the decision to move its event from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville to Kansas City, Missouri to better accommodate its attendees, to provide a more centralized location for its many U.S. teams, and to give attendees the opportunity to customize their accommodations, allowing for tailored experiences that meet each team’s need.

“For nearly 20 years, we’ve had the privilege of calling Knoxville our second home and we are grateful to the University of Tennessee staff and the people of the City of Knoxville, who helped us to put on so many special Global Finals events,” said Michele Tuck-Ponder, DI Interim CEO. “With our increased growth at Global Finals, we want to continue providing a one-of-a-kind, creative and educational event for teams without compromising our attendees’ experience, including travel, accommodations and accessibility on-site. We’re excited about our move to Kansas City, where we will be able to house the entire event under one roof and give attendees the opportunity to completely customize their accommodations.”

“This is our largest booking in terms of room nights since 2008, and we couldn’t be more excited to welcome Destination Imagination to KC next year and again in 2020,” said Cori Day, Vice President of Sales & Services at Visit KC. “With its enormous international base, STEM component and 9,000 youth between the ages of preschool and college, Destination Imagination is a big win for Kansas City—a success that took the entire community coming together to make it happen.”

This year’s Global Finals event will take place May 22–25, 2019. For more information on Destination Imagination and its Global Finals event, visit <http://destinationimagination.org>.

### About Destination Imagination

Destination Imagination, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) volunteer-led non-profit organization whose purpose is to inspire and equip students to become the next generation of innovators and leaders. The organization is a leader in project-based learning experiences, where students work together in teams to solve open-ended STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) and service learning Challenges and then present their solutions at tournaments. Destination Imagination has impacted more than one million students. To learn more, please visit <http://destinationimagination.org>.



## Groton DI receives Gratitude Grant

Groton Area Destination Imagination is very appreciative of the Aberdeen Elks Lodge. We were the recipient of their Gratitude Grant. According to Jan Weismantel, secretary of the Lodge, "Our lodge members are very happy to be able to help your program. The Destination Imagination program does wonderful things for students by guiding them to use their minds and talents to compete with each other and succeed in their efforts." The monies that were received will be used to help offset the costs of the Destination Imagination program this year. Pictured (L to R): Julie Milbrandt, Jan Weismantel and Joann Donley. According to Julie Milbrandt, the grant will make up for the loss of the revenue generated from the recycling trailer. (Courtesy photo)

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## 2019 Planting Intentions Outlook: Best of a bad lot?

Farm Progress' Farm Futures latest producer survey reveals low prices, tariffs could shift acres to corn and wheat.

BOONE, IOWA - Farmers starting to pencil out options for 2019 crops don't have many obvious choices in a year dominated by trade disputes, good yields and low prices. But like it or not, growers are starting to place their bets for the coming year, according to Farm Futures first survey of 2019 planting intentions. Results of the survey were released Tuesday morning on the opening day of the Farm Progress Show, the nation's largest outdoor farm show, held in Boone, Iowa, Aug. 28-30.

Some of the choices appear easy to anyone following the headlines. China's 25% tariff on imports of U.S. soybeans helped pummel prices headed into harvest, and a record crop didn't help the market either. So, growers said they plan to trim seedings by 2 million acres next spring. That would take soybean acreage to 87.5 million, compared to the 89.6 million put in the ground this year, a decrease of 2.3%.

Many of those acres would shift to corn, helping realign rotations after soybean plantings topped corn for the first time in a generation in 2018. Corn could face brighter price prospects headed into 2019, too, giving growers faith to raise corn seedings by 1.7 million to 90.8 million acres. That would be increase of just under 2% compared to this spring.

Global corn stocks are tightening due to weather problems overseas that also hurt wheat production in other exporting countries. Winter wheat futures led a brief price rebound this summer, which appears to be bringing more land into production as growers seed fields this fall.

The survey found farmers ready to put in 33.6 million acres of winter wheat, up nearly 850,000 from a year ago, an increase of 2.6%. Farmers indicated they would seed around 4% more hard red and soft red winter wheat, while reducing white wheat acreage.

"Dry conditions in the Pacific Northwest caused by this summer's extreme heat may be causing that reduction, despite better prospects for exports due to the drought in Australia," said Farm Futures Sr. Market Analyst Bryce Knorr. "Moisture looks better for the other winter wheats, and farmers are also rewarding strong basis in the cash market for both those classes."

Spring wheat prices lagged this year as production rebounded following the 2017 drought on the northern Plains. The survey found a drop in planting intentions for both spring wheat and durum of 2.5%.

Cotton growers have enjoyed a strong market this year due to high abandonment of fields on the Southwest Plains that cut production. Improved moisture could lead more fields into production in 2019, with the survey putting seedings at 13.8 million acres, nearly a 2% increase for 2018.

Sorghum is another crop ensnarled in trade friction between the U.S. and China. Nonetheless, growers reported plans to boost seedings of the feed grain by nearly 8%, to 6.5 million.

"Obviously, it's still very early in the process for fixing acreage, so a lot could change," said Knorr. "But the initial readings from our August surveys historically held up well through the fall and winter."

Over the past 11 years the average difference between Farm Futures August intentions and USDA's Prospective Plantings the following March is 1.5% for corn and 2.5% for soybeans.

Farm Futures surveyed 924 growers July 20 to August 2. Farmers were invited by email to complete an on-line questionnaire.

2019 Farm Futures Crop Planting Intentions Projected Acres Survey Results by Crop:

Crop	Acreage	Change vs. USDA August 2018 Estimates
Corn	90.8 million	1.9%
Soybeans	87.5 million	-2.3%
Soft Red Winter Wheat	6.1 million	4.3%
Hard Red Winter Wheat	24.1 million	3.8%
White Winter Wheat	3.3 million	-7.7%
All Winter Wheat	33.6 million	2.6%
Spring Wheat	12.9 million	-2.5%
Durum	1.8 million	-2.5%
All Wheat	48.3 million	1.0%
Sorghum	6.5 million	7.9%
Cotton	13.8 million	1.9%

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## National Gas Price Average Holds Steady Ahead of Labor Day Weekend

August 27, 2018 - Motorists across the country continue to see their local pump prices dropping. On the week, state gas price averages declined as much as four cents while the national gas price average held steady at \$2.84, which is two-cents cheaper than a month ago, but 48-cents more than a year ago.

"With Labor Day approaching, motorists could see a small swing towards higher gas prices, but any jump should not last past the holiday weekend," said Marilyn Buskohl, AAA spokesperson.

Last year's Labor Day weekend saw gas prices spike, but that was due to Hurricane Harvey. As it battered the Southeast, it shut down refineries and pipelines driving gas prices toward their highest point of 2017 (\$2.67). Despite no hurricane activity this Labor Day weekend, gas prices will be at their highest point for the holiday since 2014.

### South Dakota Average Gas Prices:

Current Avg. \$2.816  
Yesterday Avg. \$2.828  
Week Ago Avg. \$2.848  
Month Ago Avg. \$2.886  
Year Ago Avg. \$2.364

### Quick Stats

The nation's top 10 most expensive markets are: Hawaii (\$3.76), California (\$3.60), Washington (\$3.37), Alaska (\$3.32), Idaho (\$3.26), Oregon (\$3.25), Utah (\$3.20), Nevada (\$3.19), Connecticut (\$3.04) and Pennsylvania (\$3.03).

The nation's top 10 largest weekly changes are: Ohio (+10 cents), Michigan (+5 cents), Wyoming (+4 cents), Florida (-4 cents), Colorado (+3 cents), South Dakota (-3 cents), Georgia (-3 cents), Kansas (-3 cents), Missouri (-3 cents) and Utah (+2 cents).

### Central and Great Lakes

Five states in this region land on this week's top 10 list of states with the largest changes: Ohio (+10 cents), Michigan (+5 cents), South Dakota (-3 cent), Kansas (-3 cents) and Missouri (-3 cents). Among the Great Lakes and Central states, gas price averages are as expensive as \$2.94 in Michigan, to as cheap as \$2.57 in Missouri.

Michigan (-9 cents), South Dakota (-7 cents) and Kentucky (-7 cents) lead the Great Lakes and Central states with the largest decrease in month-over-month prices and rank among the top five states in the country. Ohio (+3 cents) is the only state in the region to be paying more compared to the end of July.

### Oil market dynamics

At the close of Friday's formal trading session on the NYMEX, WTI increased 89 cents to settle at \$68.72. A weak dollar contributed to last week's price gain. Moreover, following the release of EIA's weekly report that showed total domestic crude inventories fell by 5.8 million bbl during the previous week, crude prices increased. If this week brings a continued decline in crude stocks, crude prices could surpass \$70 per barrel.

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

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## Friendly Fellows and Daisies

### May 2018

The Friendly Fellows and Daisies met on May 6th, 2018 at the Claremont Church.

Vice President Colin Frey called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Kaitlyn Anderson and the 4-H Pledge was led by Logan Warrington.

Roll call topic was Favorite School Subject. There was one thank you note written for communications. The treasurer's report was given by Kaitlyn Anderson. It was approved by Maddie Wright and seconded by Walker Zoellner. The secretary's report was given by Andrew Marzahn. Approved by Dylan Frey and seconded by Ashlynn Warrington. Motion carried out.

For Old Business we discussed 4-H insurance. Blake Pauli approved closing old business and it was seconded by Axel Warrington. New Business included club leader, Mike Frey, discussing the Newshound. Logan Ringgenberg approved closing new business and was seconded by Kaitlyn Anderson. The meeting was adjourned by Maddie Wright and seconded by Ashlynn Warrington.

Lunch was served by the Zoellner Family. There was one talk given by Walker Zoellner on Goats.

Submitted by Kamryn Fliehs, club reporter

### August 2018

The Friendly Fellows and Daisies 4-H club met on August 5th. The meeting was called to order by President Nicole Marzahn. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Madeline Wright and the 4-H Pledge was led by Logan Ringgenberg. Roll call topic was Favorite 4-H Project. There was no communications. In the treasurer's report there was no bills. Treasurer's report was approved by Kamryn Fliehs and seconded by Axel Warrington. There was no additions or improvements on the secretary's report and it was approved by Ashlynn Warrington and seconded by Natalia Warrington. There was no old business closed by Madeline Wright and seconded by Ashlynn Warrington. New business was the Newshound, bo-peep bingo, livestock set up and livestock signs. New business was closed by Kamryn Fliehs and seconded by Natalia Warrington. Other business was rocket launch and Wylie Activities. The meeting was adjourned by Blake Pauli and seconded by Logan Ringgenberg. There was no talks or demonstrations. Potluck lunch enjoyed by everyone.

Submitted by Kamryn Fliehs, club reporter

### October 2017

The Friendly Fellows and Daisies 4-H club met on Oct 1st at the Claremont Methodist Church. The meeting was called to order by Colin Frey. The American Pledge was led by Axel Warrington and the 4-H Pledge by Braden Boe. The roll call topic was Favorite Community Service Project. The treasurer's report had 4 bills. It was approved by Logan Warrington and seconded by Austin Crawford. There was no additions or improvements. Old business was on record books. Old business was closed by Kamryn Fliehs and seconded by Clay Crawford. For new business members discussed the Newshound, election of new officers, upcoming 4-H activities and Christmas party gift discussion. The new officers for 2017-2018 are President Nicole Marzahn, Vice President Colin Frey, Secretary Andrew Marzahn, Reporter Kamryn Fliehs, Treasure Kaitlyn Anderson, Photographer Carly Crawford and Logan Ringgenberg, Scrapbook Kennedy Anderson and Communications Logan Warrington. New business closed by Blake Pauli and seconded by Braeden Fliehs.

The club members also participated in the Adopt-A-Highway program and cleaned up the ditches before the meeting along Highway 37. The meeting was adjourned by Braden Boe and seconded by Dylan Frey. There was no talks or demonstrations. Lunch was served Axel and Natalia Warrington

Submitted by Kamryn Fliehs, club reporter

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## Today in Weather History

August 30, 1979: A thunderstorm rolled over Ellsworth Air Force Base bringing almost 60 mph winds to the area.

1838: A major tornado, possibly the worst in Rhode Island history, passed south of Providence. It uprooted and stripped trees of their branches, unroofed or destroyed many houses, and sucked water out of ponds. The tornado barely missed a local railroad depot, where many people were waiting for a train. The tornado injured five people.

1949 - The state record for Connecticut was established when the town of Greenville registered an afternoon high of 102 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1965 - The temperature at Portland, OR, reached 107 degrees to equal their all-time record high. (The Weather Channel)

1979 - A forty-minute hailstorm bombed Fort Collins, CO, with baseball to softball size hail. Two thousand homes and 2500 automobiles were damaged, and about 25 persons were injured, mainly when hit on the head by the huge stones. A three month old baby died later of injuries. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Afternoon highs of 105 degrees at Aberdeen SD, 102 degrees at Bismarck, ND, and 102 degrees at Pueblo, CO, were records for the date. Pueblo, CO, reported just .09 inch of rain for the first thirty days of the month. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A dozen cities in the north central and northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Downtown Baltimore, MD, hit 103 degrees, marking a record eight days of 100 degree heat for the month, and ten for the year. The high of 101 degrees at Billings, MT, marked a record seventeen days of 100 degree heat for the year. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the northeast, with nearly fifty reports of large hail or damaging winds in Pennsylvania and New York State. A tree fell on a car at Erie, PA, injuring four persons. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Morning thunderstorms over central Missouri deluged Columbia with 5.98 inches of rain causing flash flooding. Daytime thunderstorms in Kentucky drenched Paducah with 1.73 inches of rain in less than half an hour. Evening thunderstorms in the north central U.S. produced wind gusts to 78 mph east of Moccasin, MT. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2002: Typhoon Rusa dumps torrential rains across South Korea, causing widespread flooding from the 30th through September 1st. Typhoon Rusa was the most powerful typhoon to hit South Korea since 1959. Nearly 90,000 people were evacuated. The province of Gangwon was hit the hardest, where an estimated 36 inches of rain fell in less than 48 hours. The torrential rains flooded nearly 36,000 homes. The Korean Defense Ministry reported flood waters submerged 16 jet fighters and 622 military buildings and facilities at Kangnung airbase.

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Today



Sunny and Breezy

High: 82 °F

Tonight



Slight Chance T-storms then Partly Cloudy

Low: 63 °F

Friday



Chance T-storms

High: 81 °F

Friday Night



Mostly Clear

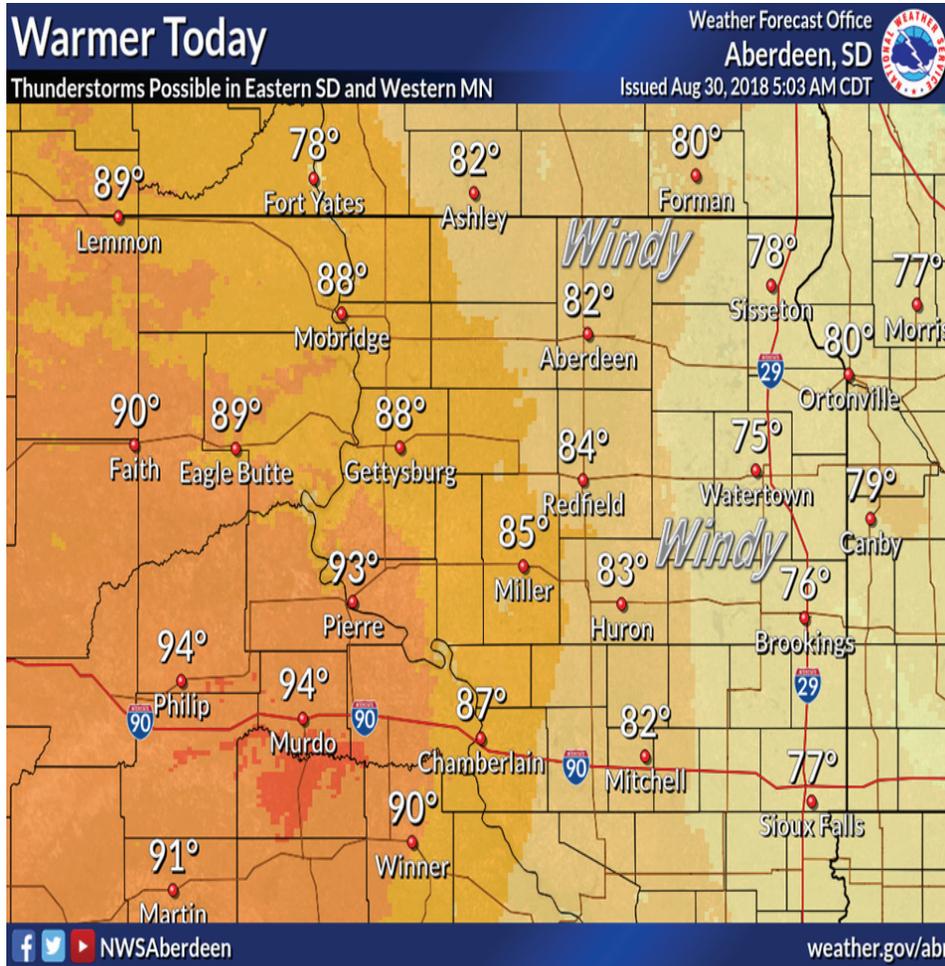
Low: 54 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 81 °F



Published on: 08/30/2018 at 5:18AM

Gusty southerly winds will bring warmer temperatures into the region today, along with the potential for showers and thunderstorms. Far eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota will have the best chance of seeing precipitation, mainly this evening.

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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 76.9 F at 5:24 PM**

**Heat Index:**

**Low Outside Temp: 48.7 F at 7:19 AM**

**High Gust: 17.0 Mph at 3:48 PM**

**Precip: 0.00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 100° in 1898**

**Record Low: 37° in 2003**

**Average High: 79°F**

**Average Low: 53°F**

**Average Precip in Aug: 2.27**

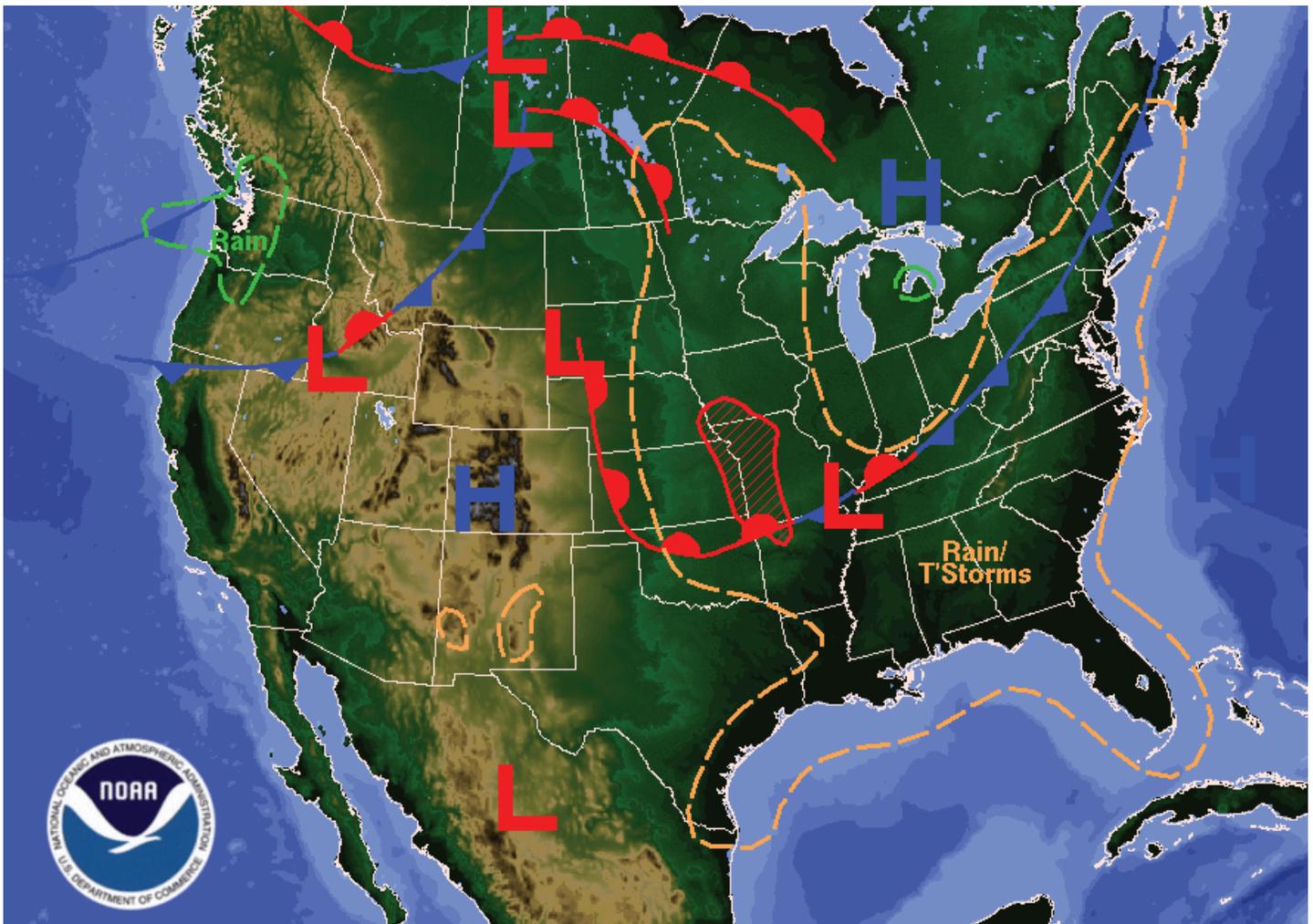
**Precip to date in Aug: 1.37**

**Average Precip to date: 16.13**

**Precip Year to Date: 11.26**

**Sunset Tonight: 8:15 p.m.**

**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:54 a.m.**



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Aug 30, 2018, issued 4:40 AM EDT  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain

Rain and T'Storms

Rain and Snow

Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)

Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)

Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)

Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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## ALWAYS ON HIS MIND!

He was looking forward to his marriage. But at the last moment, his fiancée decided that she did not want a life that included sharing his blindness. In his disappointment and distress, he turned to the Lord for His comfort and compassion. In Christ, he found Someone who would love him no matter what. He became one of the greatest preachers of his day, and people would travel great distances to hear his sermons. Over the years he became known as The Blind Preacher Who Could See Quite Well.

Because of his limited sight, he became dependent on his sister, who assisted him in the chores of living and his pastoral responsibilities. On the day of her marriage, he became very distraught mentally. Whether it was because it brought back memories of his once anticipated marriage or whether he realized that he would be abandoned once again, in pain, anguish, and sadness, he wrote:

O Love that wilt not let me go  
I rest my weary soul in Thee;  
I give Thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

He penned this hymn in five minutes, never having to make one correction or change. And its spirit seems to capture the words of David when he wrote, How precious it is Lord, to realize that You think about me constantly. I cant even count how many times a day Your thoughts turn to me. And when I awaken You are still thinking of me.

What great love God offers us. It will never let us go.

Prayer: Its simply impossible, Father, for us to fathom the depths of Your love. In deep humility we thank You. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 139:17-18 How precious it is Lord, to realize that You think about me constantly. I cant even count how many times a day Your thoughts turn to me. And when I awaken You are still thinking of me.

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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)
- 5/4/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2019 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)
- 7/4/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 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 Wednesday:

Dakota Cash

12-22-29-30-32

(twelve, twenty-two, twenty-nine, thirty, thirty-two)

Estimated jackpot: \$236,000

Lotto America

10-17-20-26-52, Star Ball: 10, ASB: 3

(ten, seventeen, twenty, twenty-six, fifty-two; Star Ball: ten; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$6.92 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$152 million

Powerball

25-41-53-57-67, Powerball: 12, Power Play: 2

(twenty-five, forty-one, fifty-three, fifty-seven, sixty-seven; Powerball: twelve; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$80 million

### Lawyer: Accused Russian agent knows little of SD fraud case

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — An attorney for a woman suspected of being a covert Russian agent said he's confident she's not "aware of or guilty of any crimes" in South Dakota as authorities have pursued an unrelated fraud investigation into her boyfriend.

Defense lawyer Robert Driscoll told The Associated Press on Wednesday that Maria Butina, 29, knew "very little" about the fraud case led by the U.S. Attorney's office in South Dakota. Butina was arrested in July and has pleaded not guilty in Washington to charges of conspiracy and acting as an unregistered foreign agent for Russia.

In court papers filed shortly after Butina's arrest, prosecutors accused her of using a personal relationship with an unnamed American political operative — identified only as 56-year-old "U.S. Person 1" — as part of her covert activities for Russia. She's accused of gathering intelligence on American officials and political organizations and working to establish back-channel lines of communications for the Kremlin.

During a July court hearing, Driscoll disclosed that Butina had offered to assist the government in the South Dakota fraud investigation into her boyfriend, U.S. Person 1. Prosecutors confirmed the investigation in court, but provided no further details other than to say it was unrelated to Butina's charges in Washington.

"When the government incarcerated her, I stopped negotiating with them over her testimony," Driscoll said Wednesday of the fraud investigation.

Driscoll said he's operating under the idea that U.S. Person 1 is 56-year-old conservative operative and South Dakota businessman Paul Erickson. Butina's defense said in a recent court filing that they've had a five-year relationship.

A South Dakota U.S. attorney's office spokeswoman declined to comment, and Erickson hasn't returned telephone messages from the AP.

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The new court documents were filed in a legal push to allow Butina to be released from jail and put on house arrest with electronic monitoring as she awaits trial. Butina's defense said in a memorandum that the government has falsely smeared her reputation and painted her as a "Kremlin-trained seductress," arguing she has genuine ties to the U.S. including her relationship with Erickson — she had planned to move in with him in South Dakota — and her wish to have a career in America.

The memorandum states Butina came to the U.S. to attend graduate school and that her activities weren't "covert or clandestine." A status conference in the case is scheduled for Sept. 10.

Erickson in 2015 helped arrange speeches in South Dakota for Butina to talk about freedom and entrepreneurship at a Sioux Falls school, at the University of South Dakota and at a teenage Republican camp held in the Black Hills.

Arranging the events followed an unusual career for Erickson that has included working on Pat Buchanan's 1992 presidential campaign and making an action movie with Jack Abramoff.

## Wood shortage hampers state prison sweat lodge ceremonies

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A shortage of donated firewood supplies is hampering sweat lodge purification ceremonies for South Dakota State Penitentiary inmates.

The sweat lodge ceremonies are usually held six times per week, but lately inmates have had to go weeks without a ceremony, The Argus Leader reported .

The inmates rely on firewood supplies donated by the city of Sioux Falls and the community for the religious and cleansing experience. But prison chapel volunteer Mary Montoya said this summer has seen the slowest rate of donations in her nearly 20 years volunteering.

"It seems to be worse this year than it's ever been," she said.

Some inmates instead participate in a pipe ceremony when there isn't enough wood. But Montoya compared the alternative ritual to saying the rosary instead of going to a full church service.

The sweat lodge ceremonies also help reduce tension in the prison, said Tammy Mertens-Jones, the penitentiary's Cultural Activities Program Manager.

Shawn Mousseau has been participating in sweat lodge purification ceremonies for years, a practice that didn't stop when he was sentenced to prison in 2015. The ceremony is a chance for the men to pray for their families and the people they wronged on their path to prison, he said.

"These sweat ceremonies are to cleanse yourself and your spirit, to refocus on a new day and a new week," he said. "When we don't have wood for the ceremonies, (inmates) don't have a way to cleanse their spirit."

The penitentiary is seeking unwanted wood, including trees lost to the invasive emerald ash borer. Inmates can handle large tree trunks and large branches, but can't use small twigs.

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

## 2 Dakota Access oil pipeline protesters lose appeals

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The first people to be sent to jail for protesting the Dakota Access oil pipeline in North Dakota have lost their appeals to the state's Supreme Court.

Mary Redway, of Providence, Rhode Island, and Alexander Simon, of Lamy, New Mexico, were convicted last October of disorderly conduct. Simon also was convicted of physical obstruction of a government function. Redway served four days in jail. Simon served 12 days.

Both appealed their convictions, citing a lack of evidence and arguing their participation in protests was constitutionally protected activity. Supreme Court justices rejected those arguments.

The Water Protector Legal Collective says the decision is "an ominous ruling for anyone who wishes to gather and express frustration with government or corporate action."

Pipeline protests resulted in 761 arrests in 2016 and 2017.

## **Avera building sports training complex in Sioux Falls**

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Avera Health says it plans to build a \$14 million sports training complex in Sioux Falls.

The regional health system said Wednesday work will begin this fall on the 600,000-square-foot complex. The Human Performance Center is expected to open in December of next year.

The Argus Leader says it'll be the third major development on the Avera campus. A surgical hospital and medical building are currently under construction.

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

## **I-90 construction zone crash near Piedmont kills man**

PIEDMONT, S.D. (AP) — A one-vehicle crash in an Interstate 90 construction zone in Meade County killed the driver.

The Highway Patrol says the 39-year-old man lost control of his pickup truck while entering a construction zone west of Piedmont, and the vehicle struck several cones before rolling in the median.

The driver was pronounced dead at the scene late Tuesday afternoon. A passenger was seriously injured. Neither man was immediately identified.

## **Aberdeen man pleads guilty to firing gun outside bar**

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — An Aberdeen man accused of firing a gun outside a bar and hitting the building with a bullet has pleaded guilty.

Authorities say 22-year-old Jay Maxville fired the gun outside The Zoo bar in March for unspecified reasons. No one was hurt, but the bar's doors were locked to protect customers.

The American News reports Maxville on Tuesday pleaded guilty to felony discharge of a firearm at an occupied building or vehicle, and other charges were dismissed. He now awaits sentencing.

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

## **Chamberlain man sentenced for attacking teen while drunk**

CHAMBERLAIN, S.D. (AP) — A Chamberlain man who slammed a 13-year-old boy's head against a table multiple times while drunk has been given a suspended jail sentence.

Forty-three-year-old David Bies was accused of assaulting the boy on July 8 after being kicked out of a bar. The boy was eating at the time.

The Daily Republic reports Bies initially was charged with simple assault and felony child abuse. He recently pleaded guilty to simple assault. He was sentenced to the day in jail he had already served, given a six-month suspended sentence and fined \$400.

Information from: The Daily Republic, <http://www.mitchellrepublic.com>

## **2 suspects in Rapid City gun store theft plead not guilty**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Two Rapid City men have pleaded not guilty in federal court to charges stemming from the theft of 24 guns from a sporting goods store.

The U.S. attorney's office says 30-year-old Matthew Keifer and 28-year-old Zephaniah Thompson are charged with theft, possession of stolen firearms and use of a firearm during a drug-trafficking crime.

The guns were stolen from The Rooster store on Aug. 22. Law officers have recovered most of them.

The burglary prompted reward offers from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the National Shooting Sports Foundation. Store owner Mike Cummings also decided to stop

selling firearms after his business was burglarized for the second time in less than three years. Keifer and Thompson face at least five years in prison if convicted.

## Trump clarifies remarks about violence if Dems win midterms

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump urged evangelical leaders this week to get out the vote ahead of the upcoming midterm elections and warned of “violence” by opponents if they fail.

Trump made the dire warning at a White House dinner Monday evening attended by dozens of conservative Christian pastors, ministers and supporters of his administration.

Trump was stressing the stakes in November when he warned that, if Democrats win, they “will overturn everything that we’ve done and they’ll do it quickly and violently,” according to attendees and audio of his closed-door remarks obtained by media outlets, including The New York Times. He specifically mentioned self-described antifa, or anti-fascist groups, describing them as “violent people.”

Asked Wednesday what he meant, Trump told reporters, “I just hope there won’t be violence.”

“If you look at what happens ... there’s a lot of unnecessary violence all over the world, but also in this country. And I don’t want to see it,” Trump said.

At the dinner, Trump talked up his administration’s efforts to bolster conservative Christian causes and urged those gathered to get their “people” to vote, warning the efforts could quickly be undone.

“I just ask you to go out and make sure all of your people vote,” Trump said, according to the Times. “Because if they don’t — it’s Nov. 6 — if they don’t vote we’re going to have a miserable two years and we’re going to have, frankly, a very hard period of time because then it just gets to be one election — you’re one election away from losing everything you’ve got.”

Ohio Pastor Darrell Scott, an early Trump supporter who attended the dinner, said he interpreted the comments differently than the media has portrayed them.

“It wasn’t any kind of dire warning,” Scott said, “... except the things that we’ve been working on as a body of voters will be reversed and overturned.”

“What he was saying,” Scott continued, is that “there are some violent people ... but it wasn’t that we’ve got to worry about murder on the streets and chaos and anarchy ... just that the things we’ve worked for will be overturned.”

Tony Perkins, the president of the Family Research Council and another attendee, said he, too, interpreted Trump’s message as a warning not to be complacent.

While Trump did make a reference to antifa, Perkins told CNN, “I don’t think anybody in the room suggested that there was going to be violence across the nation.”

“I did not interpret him to say that the outcome of the election is going to lead (to) violence in the streets, and violence in the churches,” he told CNN.

## Top Trump lawyer latest to leave White House

By KEN THOMAS and ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House counsel Don McGahn, a consequential insider in President Donald Trump’s legal storms and successes and a key figure in the administration’s handling of the Russia investigation, will be leaving in the fall, the president announced Wednesday.

McGahn’s exit continues the churn of top officials as the administration sets records for turnover and the White House struggles to fill key vacancies.

Unlike some less-amiable separations, however, Trump praised McGahn as “a really good guy” who has done “an excellent job.”

Trump said McGahn’s departure had nothing to do with his interviews with the special counsel investigating possible Trump campaign collusion with Russia in the 2016 election.

Pressed by reporters, Trump said he had approved the attorney’s interviews and was unconcerned about anything McGahn might tell prosecutors.

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"We do everything straight," he said. "We do everything by the book."

The departure of Trump's top lawyer, which has been expected, will create a vacancy in one of the most critical — and yet least visible — positions within the West Wing. Besides dealing with special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation, McGahn has had important input on a range of issues from policy to personnel to national security.

He will remain at the White House until after the expected Senate confirmation vote for Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, Trump said in a tweet.

McGahn, a top election lawyer who served as general counsel on Trump's campaign, has played a pivotal role in the president's remaking of the federal judiciary with young, conservative judges.

He also helped guide Trump's selection of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch and the president's nomination of Kavanaugh and helped oversee a dramatic rollback of Obama era regulations.

But McGahn's time has also been marked by tumult as he has been the main point of contact inside the White House for Mueller's investigation. He has met with investigators on at least three occasions for many hours at a time and threatened to resign last year if Trump continued to press for Mueller's removal.

Trump's announcement came more than a week after a New York Times report that McGahn had been cooperating extensively with Mueller's investigation into Russian election meddling and possible collusion with Trump's Republican campaign.

Trump insisted at the time that his general counsel wasn't a "RAT" and contrasted him with John Dean, the White House counsel for President Richard Nixon during the Watergate scandal. Dean ultimately cooperated with prosecutors and helped bring down the Nixon presidency in 1974, though he served a prison term for obstruction of justice.

McGahn has been telling associates for months that he was looking to leave the White House and had discussed the timing. But Trump's tweet came as a surprise to some White House officials and lawmakers.

In fact, Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, tweeted after the president's announcement: "I hope it's not true McGahn is leaving White House Counsel. U can't let that happen."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell hailed McGahn as the "most impressive White House Counsel during my time in Washington." He called the departure "sad news for our country."

Emmet Flood, who joined Trump's White House in May as in-house counsel for the Mueller probe, has been considered a leading candidate to replace McGahn and has the departing attorney's support, two administration officials said. They spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters.

Asked about Flood, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said: "People like him. He's super well-respected around the building. But there's not a plan locked in place at this point."

He's not the only person Trump has considered for the role. In the summer and fall of 2017, Trump asked then-White House staff secretary Rob Porter about his interest in the counsel position. Porter, who later left the White House amid domestic abuse allegations, told the president he didn't think it was a good fit and he liked the policy work he was doing, according to a former White House official who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe internal discussions.

McGahn, 50, has navigated many of the storms of the first 19 months of the Trump White House, figuring in the drama surrounding the firing of national security adviser Michael Flynn and also Attorney General Jeff Sessions' decision to recuse himself from the Russia case.

When Trump announced McGahn's appointment in November 2016, he cited the attorney's "brilliant legal mind, excellent character and a deep understanding of constitutional law."

But McGahn quickly clashed with the president over the Russia investigation.

McGahn, an avowed defender of executive powers, broke with some members of Trump's legal team as he encouraged a less-cooperative stance toward Mueller's investigation, believing it could constrain future presidents.

As members of Trump's legal team looked into potential conflicts of interest involving Mueller, Trump directed McGahn to call Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein to raise the perceived conflicts and push

for Mueller's ouster, a person familiar with the matter said at the time.

McGahn put off making the call because he disagreed with the strategy, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe internal deliberations.

When the president persisted in pressing the issue, McGahn told other senior White House officials that he would resign if Trump didn't back off. Trump let the matter drop, the person said.

The president later denounced the reports as "fake news."

McGahn was the White House official approached in January 2017 by Sally Yates, then the acting attorney general, over concerns that Flynn was vulnerable to blackmail because of conversations he had with Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak.

Flynn was forced to resign after White House officials concluded he had misled them about the nature of his contacts with Kislyak during the White House transition.

McGahn was also among the White House officials who sounded an alarm when Sessions contemplated resigning as attorney general early in the administration. White House officials persuaded Sessions not to resign even after the president berated him for recusing himself from the Russia probe, which led to the appointment of Mueller as special counsel.

Since then, Trump has applied public pressure on his attorney general to leave.

Before working at the White House, McGahn was a campaign finance attorney at Jones Day, a Washington law firm that has filled several top legal roles within the administration.

McGahn also served as chairman of the Federal Election Commission and as a counsel to the National Republican Congressional Committee before joining Trump's orbit as general counsel to the president's 2016 campaign.

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Associated Press writer Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

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On Twitter follow Thomas at <https://twitter.com/KThomasDC> and Miller at <https://twitter.com/zekejmilller>

## Trump revisits wargames with SKorea as NKorea talks stall

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said that there's no reason to spend a lot of money on military wargames with South Korea, but he warned he could "instantly" relaunch the exercises again and they would be "far bigger than ever before."

Trump made the comment Wednesday in a series of tweets that primarily took aim at China, blaming it for lack of progress on getting North Korea to end its nuclear program, following the president's landmark summit with Kim Jong Un in June.

But there was also a loaded message for Kim: mixing an expression of goodwill to the North Korean autocrat with an implicit military threat that will add to speculation over the direction of Trump's attempted rapprochement with a longtime adversary.

"The president believes that his relationship with Kim Jong Un is a very good and warm one, and there is no reason at this time to be spending large amounts of money on joint U.S.-South Korea war games," Trump said, citing what was presented as a White House statement. "Besides, the president can instantly start the joint exercises again with South Korea, and Japan, if he so chooses. If he does, they will be far bigger than ever before."

Trump caught military leaders by surprise in June when he announced the suspension with the South, "unless and until we see the future negotiation is not going along like it should." He called the drills costly and provocative.

The cancellation was an olive branch to Pyongyang, which has long complained that the exercises were invasion preparations. Often the North has reacted to the exercises with its own demonstrations of military might, including firing a new intermediate-range missile over Japan last year as a countermeasure to the drills.

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There was some hope that the gesture of shelving the fall exercises would foster goodwill and help nudge the North in the denuclearization talks. But beyond returning the potential remains of about 55 U.S. troops missing from the Korean War, and its continuing suspension in its missile and nuclear tests, there has been little movement from the North.

As a result, the U.S. last week shelved a planned trip to Pyongyang by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, citing lack of progress on denuclearization, but remaining open to future talks.

As doubts grow in Washington and beyond over Kim's willingness to relinquish his nukes, Trump has been heaping blame on China, which is North Korea's traditional ally and main trading partner. On Wednesday the president accused Beijing of pressuring the North because of current tensions in U.S.-China trade relations, and also of providing North Korea money, fuel, fertilizer and other commodities, which he said was not helpful.

China cooperated with the U.S. last year in adopting tough international sanctions against North Korea and maintains it is still enforcing the restrictions adopted by the U.N. Security Council.

But in his tweets, Trump also signaled that the U.S. has its own military means of exerting pressure on Pyongyang. His remarks compounded confusing messages from the Pentagon over the past two days that have revived speculation over the drills.

On Tuesday, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told reporters the U.S. might carry out drills with South Korea next spring after having cancelled a major exercise this summer. He said no decision has been made on when to resume military exercises, but his statements suggested the recent cancellation might not be repeated.

Several U.S. officials acknowledged Wednesday that planning is going forward for the spring exercises, which require months of preparation.

"Routine planning continues for major U.S.-ROK exercises on the peninsula in accordance with the normal exercise program planning cycle," said Air Force Col. Patrick Ryder, spokesman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, referring to the acronym for South's official name, the Republic of Korea.

Other U.S. officials also said preliminary work on the drills has begun, noting that it is much easier to cancel an exercise than it is to slap one together quickly. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal conversations.

David Maxwell, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies, said the initial planning for the exercises can begin a year in advance, including the funding, scheduling and movement of forces and units that will participate. As time goes on, planners would nail down the war game scenario and other details.

"We continue to plan for exercises, but we can stop them on a dime," said Maxwell, a retired Army colonel who served five tours in Korea. "We can't restart them on a dime."

He said the risk of a continued halt in the major drills would be a diminishing of skills and institutional memory between South Korean forces and the more than 28,000 U.S. troops based there. "The longer we go without exercises, the more risk there is that we will suffer significant challenges if there is a war," Maxwell said.

U.S. officials said Gen. Vincent Brooks, commander of U.S. Forces in Korea, has taken steps to mitigate any loss of training by scheduling smaller exercises and staff drills.

A key challenge in Korea is that the bulk of the U.S. forces deploy for just a year, so they rely on the summer exercise to get familiar with the South Korean military and the ways allied troops coordinate and operate with them. The spring Foal Eagle drill is more expansive and includes fighter jets, maritime maneuvers, amphibious assault tactics and computer-simulated scenarios.

## Victim's family calls ex-cop's 15-year sentence too short

By RYAN TARINELLI, Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — A Texas jury gave a white former police officer too lenient of a punishment when sentencing him to 15 years for the shooting death of an unarmed black teenager who was in a car leaving a house party, the victim's family members said.

Roy Oliver fired into the car filled with teens the night of the April 2017 party in suburban Dallas, killing 15-year-old Jordan Edwards.

"He can actually see life again after 15 years and that's not enough because Jordan can't see life again," Edwards' stepmother, Charmaine Edwards, said of Oliver after he was sentenced Wednesday night.

She praised the work of prosecutors as well as the jury's decision to convict Oliver of murder on Tuesday. But she wanted that same jury to send Oliver to prison for a longer period.

Daryl Washington, an attorney for Edwards' father, said the sentence could have been longer but still sends a message.

"We know that there are parents all over this country who would love to see the person who took the life of their kid spend the next 15 years in prison," Washington said.

Prosecutors had asked for a minimum of 60 years in prison.

The murder conviction was extremely rare for a shooting involving an on-duty officer. Oliver's defense team said it had already begun the process of appealing. His attorneys said he would be eligible for parole after 7 ½ years, but they also said they were concerned about his safety in prison and that authorities will take extra precautions to protect him.

Oliver was a police officer in the community of Balch Springs when he and his partner responded to reports of underage drinking at the party. Oliver fired into a car carrying Edwards and his friends, later saying he feared the vehicle was moving toward and endangering his partner. Edwards, who was in the front passenger seat, was shot.

The jury deliberated late into the night before settling on a prison sentence, which also included a \$10,000 fine. Earlier, they heard from Oliver's mother, Linda, who said he was a good man and a devoted father and asked jurors for a five-year sentence, saying her young grandson needs his father's support.

"He needs his father's love. He needs his father's income. He needs his father's guidance," she said.

Oliver's wife also testified, saying in Spanish through an interpreter that she was concerned about their 3-year-old son, who is autistic. But the ex-officer's half sister took the stand against him, saying she felt compelled to do so after listening to testimony during the trial and that she hoped he "gets what he deserves."

Earlier Wednesday, Dallas County District Attorney Faith Johnson called Oliver a "killer in blue" and told jurors they could send a message that bad officers will not be tolerated.

Police initially said the vehicle backed up toward officers "in an aggressive manner," but later admitted that bodycam video showed the vehicle was moving forward as officers approached. Oliver's partner told jurors he didn't believe his life was ever in danger.

Investigators said no guns were found in the vehicle. Oliver was fired from the Balch Springs Police Department days after the shooting.

The jury, which featured two black members out of 12 jurors and two alternates, acquitted Oliver on two lesser charges of aggravated assault stemming from the shooting.

It's extremely rare for police officers to be tried and convicted of murder for shootings that occurred while they are on duty. Only six non-federal police officers have been convicted of murder in such cases — and four of those convictions were overturned — since 2005, according to data compiled by criminologist and Bowling Green State University professor Phil Stinson.

Edwards' father has also filed a civil lawsuit in connection to the shooting. The jury's decision is not just about Jordan Edwards, but all other black men and women who have been killed and not received justice, said Washington, the attorney for the teen's father.

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<http://apne.ws/2u1RMfv>

## After church service, McCain to depart Arizona for last time

By MELISSA DANIELS, Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — The celebration of Sen. John McCain's life as a former prisoner of war and maverick politician enters a second day with a church service and a military salute before his casket departs his adopted state of Arizona for the U.S. Capitol.

A motorcade with McCain's remains leaves Thursday morning from the Arizona Capitol, where McCain has been lying in state so thousands of people could say goodbye.

Visibly bereft family and friends gathered there Wednesday for an emotional private service, where Cindy McCain pressed her face against her husband's coffin and daughter Meghan McCain erupted in audible sobs.

Arizona residents have been invited to honor McCain on Thursday by lining the route from the Capitol to the North Phoenix Baptist Church, where an honor guard will greet the hearse when it arrives. Along with invited family and friends, around 1,000 seats were being made available to members of the public who signed up.

Former Vice President Joe Biden was delivering remarks at Thursday's service, where a number of friends and family members of McCain will also speak. A choir from the Jesuit-run Brophy College Preparatory school that McCain's sons Jack and Jimmy attended will sing "Amazing Grace" and "Arizona." The recessional music will be Frank Sinatra's signature song, "My Way," paying tribute to a man who became known for following his own path based on his personal principles.

The much smaller service on Wednesday was solemn and subdued. But it was nevertheless filled with affecting moments and demonstrations of deep respect for the statesman and Navy pilot war hero who was held by the North Vietnamese for 5½ years after being shot down over Hanoi.

Gov. Doug Ducey remembered McCain as "Arizona's favorite adopted son" on what would have been his 82nd birthday at the brief ceremony attended by his wife and children, friends and fellow politicians. McCain was born in the Panama Canal Zone while his father, who went on to become an admiral, served in the military.

The Capitol was then opened to the public Wednesday afternoon, allowing visitors to walk by the flag-draped closed casket after waiting in line outside in the temperatures that reached a high of 104 degrees (40 Celsius). Mariachi singer Jesus Rojas strummed a guitar and sang "Cielito Lindo" in the senator's honor.

Inside, former military members in shorts and T-shirts stopped and saluted. Others placed their hand over their heart or bowed, including Vietnamese-born residents who traveled from Southern California.

Ray Riordan, an 87-year-old Navy veteran who fought in the Korean War, came from Payson, Arizona. "I grew up where a handshake was a contract and your word was your bond," Riordan said. "He represented the last of that as far as I'm concerned."

By the time government offices closed for the day, as many as 6,000 people had filed by, and that number grew to about 7,500 Wednesday night, Arizona Department of Public Safety spokesman Bart Graves said.

Late Wednesday night, the McCain family issued a statement saying that about 15,000 people came to pay their respects to the late senator at the Capitol.

After Thursday's church service, a motorcade will take McCain's casket to Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport for a final salute from members of the Arizona Air and Army National Guard.

From there, a C-32 military aircraft will take McCain to the East Coast for another public viewing at the U.S. Capitol on Friday.

There will be a service at the Washington National Cathedral on Saturday, followed by burial at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

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Associated Press writer Anita Snow in Phoenix contributed to this report.

## Gillum, Nelson: A team approach for Florida Dems?

By **BRENDAN FARRINGTON** and **BILL BARROW**, Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Fresh from a stunning primary upset that boosts the progressive wing of the Democratic Party and potentially scrambles the November midterms in the nation's premier political battleground, Florida's Democratic gubernatorial candidate Andrew Gillum says he's intent on bringing a flood of new voters to the polls in November.

"We're going to be wildly successful at getting more black voters, brown voters, young voters, poor voters, working class white voters to get out and vote for us," Gillum said.

"I honestly believe that the nature of this moment — what's happening at the national level — is fueling and will fuel a whole new segment of people who really want to see more decency, more respect, more humanity and also a brand of politics that says, 'I see you, I hear you and we have a plan to make your life better.'"

Gillum defeated better-funded candidates as the unapologetically liberal who's vying to become the state's first black governor. He'll face Republican Congressman Ron DeSantis, who won the GOP nomination with an assist from President Donald Trump's endorsement.

The questions are how much Gillum's nomination changes the dynamics in a state accustomed to tight elections and whether there's any spillover effect for the titanic Senate matchup between Democratic incumbent Bill Nelson and term-limited Republican Gov. Rick Scott.

Republicans and Democrats agreed Wednesday that the fundamental rules of Florida politics don't change: Both races at the top of the ticket will be close.

"In this environment, base voters on both sides are very likely to turn out, so this going to be a fight over the handful of people who are not already aligned with one or the other candidate," said Whit Ayres, who is polling for DeSantis and has extensive experience polling statewide and presidential races in Florida.

But Gillum's wild card is to change just which independents and casual partisan voters cast ballots in November. Republicans agree that he could boost nonwhites and younger voters, pushing the November electorate more toward what it looks like in a presidential year. Besides Gillum, that could boost Nelson, a 75-year-old white incumbent widely viewed as one of the most vulnerable Senate incumbents nationally.

It's the same strategy that Democrat Stacey Abrams, who joins Gillum as one of three black Democratic nominees for governor, is trying in GOP-leaning Georgia. And it's a contrast to the staid, centrist Nelson and Gwen Graham, Gillum's top primary rival.

"We'll be a good combination for each other," Gillum said of Nelson. "There are constituencies that Sen. Nelson has a stronger network of support with, and I think there are folks I have a stronger network of support with. It just so happens that I think the communities that most resonate with me happen to also be folks from communities that don't typically participate in midterm elections."

Indeed, changing the midterm electorate would upend a decades-long Florida trend of Democratic turnout dropping off precipitously in midterms. It's how Scott won two terms as governor even as President Barack Obama was winning Florida twice. And it explains why Republicans have near absolute control of state government in Tallahassee. And Republicans also argue that Gillum is simply too liberal, with his advocacy for universal health care and scrapping the current iteration of the ICE immigration enforcement agency.

Another warning for Democrats: They were outvoted Tuesday, with Republican ballots exceeding Democratic ballots by more than 100,000 in Florida's closed primaries that don't allow independents to vote.

"The results is clear: There is no blue wave in Florida," wrote Scott's Senate campaign manager Jackie Schultz Zeckman in a post-primary memo released publicly. Schultz Zeckman noted that while Democrats increased their primary turnout in comparison to the 2014 midterms, so did Republicans; the memo also cites Republicans garnering more new voter registrations in Florida since 2016 than Democrats.

The national liberal grassroots that embraced Gillum insists he's a net positive for Democrats.

"We're proud of the overall grassroots energy," said Maria Urbina, the political director for the national office of Indivisible, a group formed in opposition to Trump's election in 2016.

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Beyond the GOP's statewide advantage Tuesday, Urbina pointed specifically to Democratic turnout spikes in Gillum's home county (Leon), in the densely populated Democratic hotbeds of Miami-Dade and Broward counties and in urban centers of Orlando and Tampa.

She described a statewide organization of "movement partners" — local Indivisible chapters and other groups like MoveOn.org — that she said will continue to add staff and volunteers to reach voters ahead of November.

Gillum noted that he endorsed Hillary Clinton over Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders in the 2016 Democratic presidential primary, yet Sanders is now endorsing him. He said that is an example of Democrats getting unified.

"We're going to bring together Bernie supporters, Hillary supporters, Obama supporters. I think I've demonstrated that I have the ability to bring the entirety of our party together and I think that's what's going to be required if a Democrat's going to win in November," Gillum said.

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Barrow reported from Atlanta.

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

## Experts: Unusual factors in ex-Texas cop's murder conviction

By **CLAUDIA LAUER, Associated Press**

Every case is unique, as is every jury. But experts say several factors seemed to stack up against former Texas police officer Roy Oliver this week when, in an extremely rare outcome, he was convicted of murder for a shooting that occurred while he was on duty.

Criminal justice experts tell The Associated Press that fewer than 90 officers have been charged with murder or manslaughter for such shootings since 2005. Less than half were convicted or pleaded guilty to lesser charges.

Even more rare is a guilty verdict on a murder charge: That has happened only five other times in the last 13 years in cases involving non-federal law enforcement officers — and four of those convictions were overturned, according to Bowling Green University criminologist Phil Stinson.

Criminologists have long said jurors are inclined to believe police testimony, and prosecutors have a high bar when trying to convince jurors that a law officer didn't fear for his or her life in the moments before a fatal shooting. But in Oliver's case, experts say, several factors worked against him.

Here is a look at some of those factors and the case:

### THE CONVICTION:

Dallas County jurors weren't swayed by Oliver's claims that he was protecting his partner when he fired into a car full of black teenagers as it left a house party in Balch Springs last year. The shooting in the Dallas suburb killed 15-year-old Jordan Edwards, who was sitting in the front passenger seat.

The shooting occurred after Oliver, who is white, and his partner responded to reports of underage drinking at the party. Oliver initially said he opened fire as the car aggressively moved toward his partner.

But the police chief later said body camera footage contradicted the officer's version of events. Oliver was fired from the Balch Springs Police Department days later.

On Tuesday, Oliver was convicted of murder. On Wednesday, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison and fined \$10,000. His attorneys have said they'll appeal.

### TESTIMONY

University of Pittsburgh law professor David Harris said a major blow to Oliver's case came from his partner, Officer Tyler Gross. Gross told jurors that while responding to the house party, he didn't fear for his life and never felt the need to fire his weapon. He also said he didn't feel like the vehicle that Edwards and his friends were riding in was trying to hit him.

Harris said that likely eroded jurors' trust in Oliver's testimony.

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"To have a partner testify differently is an unusual thing to happen in itself, but to have a partner say he wasn't in fear ... that is a major blow to that guy saying he had a reasonable fear for his or his partner's life," Harris said.

Juries in such trials are told they have to consider how police make split-second decisions. Jurors then have to decide whether an officer was fearful in that brief moment, added Cara Rabe-Hemp, a professor of criminal justice at Illinois State University. In Oliver's case, she said, it appeared the jury was not willing to accept the reasonableness of his claim of fear.

## VIDEO FOOTAGE

Prosecutors also showed jurors the police bodycam video that contradicted Oliver's original version of events, which experts said also likely played a role in the jury's perception of whether Oliver was being truthful about feeling threatened.

Harris said most police departments have some policy prohibiting officers from shooting at moving vehicles because, if the driver is shot, the vehicle can become an unguided missile with no one to stop it. The video showed the car moving away from officers.

"It's a really incredibly reckless thing to do, under the best of circumstances," Harris said.

Officers are often told to move out of the way rather than try to stop a car coming at them. Harris said a jury likely would see Oliver's actions as disregarding safety of others and acting recklessly.

## THE VICTIM

In several cases where officers were charged in fatal shootings, prosecutors had to overcome jurors' tendency to blame the victim if the victim was in the midst of committing a crime or had a criminal history, the experts said.

Rabe-Hemp pointed to the case of Philando Castile, a Minnesota man who was fatally shot after calmly telling an officer that he was legally carrying a gun during a traffic stop in July 2016. Defense attorneys were able to convince a jury that the presence of the weapon caused the officer, Jeronimo Yanez, to react in fear. Yanez was acquitted.

But in Oliver's case, defense attorneys had very little to point to. Edwards was unarmed — investigators found no weapons in the vehicle — and prosecutors told jurors he was an "innocent child" whose last words were "duck, get down."

"It didn't seem reasonable that this officer would be fearful. I think that alone really altered that outcome," Rabe-Hemp said.

Harris said Edwards' age and character also were likely factors in the verdict.

"Every life is valued, but some lives get devalued. It shouldn't be like that, but it is," Harris said. "In this case, you had a 15-year-old kid, who wasn't up to no good. ... In many cases, juries do victim blame. But you couldn't make that happen here."

## Fans stream in for 2nd day of Aretha Franklin public viewing

By JEFF KAROUB and JOSH REPLOGLE, Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Mourners streamed in for a second day Wednesday to pay their respects to Aretha Franklin, who was dressed in a different outfit for her final public viewing, as if making a costume change during a show.

Fans waited festively outside, then walked in a solemn, single-file line into the rotunda of Detroit's Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. There, they found Franklin in a polished bronze casket and a sheer baby blue dress with matching shoes, a change from the bright red outfit seen Tuesday across the world. On the inside of the lid, embroidered into the fabric, read "Aretha Franklin the Queen of Soul."

The two-day viewing was part of a week of commemorations for the legend, who died Aug. 16 of pancreatic cancer. She was 76.

Workers carefully moved Franklin's polished bronze casket from the rotunda late Wednesday night and loaded it in to a 1940 Cadillac LaSalle hearse.

Journalists from The Associated Press were allowed to document the casket's movement after the public

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viewing concluded.

A sold-out concert called "A People's Tribute to the Queen" will be held Thursday night at Detroit's Chene Park Detroit Amphitheatre.

A marathon funeral with an all-star list of speakers and performers was scheduled for Friday.

Just as Franklin's more than six decades of music wrought emotions out of her fans, so too did her viewing.

As they approached the casket and heaping displays of roses, many people smiled, cried, crossed themselves, bowed their heads or blew kisses. The strains of Franklin's gospel recordings echoed in the airy space.

"I was pushed by ... but a tear still came," said Maggie Penn, 78, of Detroit. The retired counselor, who grew up in the same neighborhood as Franklin and crossed paths with her in the pre-fame years, said she always appreciated that the singer remained rooted.

"She never forgot from which she came," Penn said.

Gina Moorman attended Tuesday night's sorority ceremony staged in Franklin's honor at the museum and returned Wednesday.

"I wasn't even going to do it, but I wanted to see her again," said Moorman, 57, as she waited with hundreds of others in a line that snaked around to the back of the museum and beyond. "It's a real blessing to see her."

Peggie Funny and her friend Mary A. Wilson, of Columbia, South Carolina, both born in 1954, came to Detroit for one day only on a whim because they wanted to pay their respects. They were standing outside the museum taking video and sharing it with friends on social media.

"During the '70s, anything she made during that time, we were just dancing to and enjoying it," Funny said.

Seeing Franklin in her casket rendered Wilson speechless. "I felt very emotional going in, very emotional," she said. "I just wanted to stand there. I froze."

They were both impressed that Franklin had on a different outfit.

Delana Kidd said she woke up Wednesday and knew she had to go to the museum.

"Today was my day off, so I said, 'You've got to come,'" Kidd said. Kidd met Franklin at a store where she worked about 10 years ago, and the encounter made her a "forever fan," she said.

She said the singer looked beautiful while lying in repose: "I don't know about red yesterday. I didn't see it, but ... she just looked gorgeous, peaceful," Kidd said.

Lauren Mills, 74, said her late husband proposed to her at a Detroit-area Franklin concert in 1977. She's not sure what overcame him, since they had seen Franklin perform many times before, but "I guess it was something special," she said.

"It was just something about her voice that calmed you — whatever you were going through," said Mills, who attended Tuesday night's ceremony. "Seeing her, I would say she was saying, 'I've done my duty. I'm OK — I'm going to rest now,'" Mills said.

Herman Phillips, another fan who spent time at the viewing Wednesday, shared his own personal connection to Franklin.

"I feel that I'm a privileged one because I sang in a choir with Aretha when I joined her father's church, in a young adult choir," Phillips said. "I sang with her, not often because she was on the road a lot, but I do say I have that privilege. I was able to sing with Aretha at one time."

Moorman didn't know Franklin personally, but that didn't seem to matter. The music, she said, drew her in as it conveyed joy, pain and all things in between.

"She was intertwined in all of our lives," she said, adding that her love for the singer "started with 'Respect.'" "We're just feeling good about seeing the Queen."

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

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For more, visit <https://apnews.com/tag/ArethaFranklin> .

## White ex-Texas cop gets 15 years in black teenager's death

By RYAN TARINELLI, Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — A white former police officer was sentenced to 15 years in prison Wednesday night after being convicted of murder a day earlier for killing an unarmed 15-year-old boy when he fired into a car filled with black teenagers leaving a house party in suburban Dallas.

Roy Oliver's conviction Tuesday in the April 2017 death of Jordan Edwards was handed down by the same jury that delivered his punishment. He also was fined \$10,000. Prosecutors had sought a minimum of 60 years in prison.

Edwards' family praised prosecutors and the verdict — but said the sentence was too lenient.

Charmaine Edwards, Jordan's stepmother, said of Oliver, "He can actually see life again after 15 years and that's not enough because Jordan can't see life again."

The Dallas-based group Mothers Against Police Brutality expressed dissatisfaction with the sentence, saying in a statement that what Oliver received "is not at all commensurate with his crime."

Oliver's defense team said it had already begun the process of appealing. His attorneys said he would be eligible for parole after 7 ½ years, but they also said they were concerned about his safety in prison and that authorities will take extra precautions to protect him.

The verdict marked an extremely rare murder conviction for shootings involving on-duty police officers. Daryl Washington, an attorney for Edwards' father, said though it could have been longer, the sentence still sends a message.

"We know that there are parents all over this country who would love to see the person who took the life of their kid spend the next 15 years in prison," he said.

Oliver was a police officer in the community of Balch Springs when he and his partner responded to reports of underage drinking at the party. Oliver fired into a car carrying Edwards and his friends, later saying he feared the vehicle was moving toward and endangering his partner. Edwards, who was in the front passenger seat, was shot.

The jury deliberated late into the night before settling on a prison sentence. Earlier, they heard from Oliver's mother, Linda, who said he was a good man and a devoted father and asked jurors for a five-year sentence, saying her young grandson needs his father's support.

"He needs his father's love. He needs his father's income. He needs his father's guidance," she said.

Oliver's wife also testified, saying in Spanish through an interpreter that she was concerned about their 3-year-old son, who is autistic. But the ex-officer's half sister took the stand against him, saying she felt compelled to do so after listening to testimony during the trial and that she hoped he "gets what he deserves."

Earlier Wednesday, Dallas County district attorney Faith Johnson said Oliver was a "killer in blue" and told jurors they could send a message that bad officers will not be tolerated.

Police initially said the vehicle backed up toward officers "in an aggressive manner," but later admitted that bodycam video showed the vehicle was moving forward as officers approached. Oliver's partner told jurors he didn't believe his life was ever in danger.

Investigators said no guns were found in the vehicle. Oliver was fired from the Balch Springs Police Department days after the shooting.

The jury, which featured two black members out of 12 jurors and two alternates, acquitted Oliver on two lesser charges of aggravated assault stemming from the shooting.

It's extremely rare for police officers to be tried and convicted of murder for shootings that occurred while they are on duty. Only six non-federal police officers have been convicted of murder in such cases — and four of those convictions were overturned — since 2005, according to data compiled by criminologist and

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Bowling Green State University professor Phil Stinson.

Edwards' father has also filed a civil lawsuit in connection to the shooting. The jury's decision is not just about Jordan Edwards, but all other black men and women who have been killed and not received justice, said Washington, the attorney for the teen's father.

This story has been corrected to show that Edwards' father testified Tuesday, not Wednesday.

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## John McCain's mother, now 106, a maverick in her own way

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — John McCain's rebellious streak didn't come out of nowhere. His mother, Roberta, had a habit of speeding behind the wheel and racking up tickets. When told during a trip to Europe that she was too old to rent a car, she went out and bought a Peugeot. Her son once answered the telephone to hear his mother say she was on a cross-country driving trip — by herself, in her 90s.

Now 106, the wife of a Navy admiral and mother of a Navy captain lived a life full of travel and adventure, punctuated by her sass and determination.

She once said her son liked to hold her up as an example of "what he hopes his lifespan will be."

But in the end, she is mourning him instead of the other way around.

Though slowed by a stroke, she is expected to attend memorial and burial services in Washington and Maryland later this week for the middle son she called "Johnny," the Vietnam prisoner of war, congressman, senator and two-time presidential candidate who died of brain cancer on Saturday at age 81.

The senator said in one of his books that "my mother was raised to be a strong, determined woman who thoroughly enjoyed life, and always tried to make the most of her opportunities. She was encouraged to accept, graciously and with good humor, the responsibilities and sacrifices her choices have required of her. I am grateful to her for the strengths she taught me by example."

McCain's father, too, had a penchant for living large, with the senator recalling that a predilection for "quick tempers, adventurous spirits, and love for the country's uniform" was encoded in his family DNA.

A native of Muskogee, Oklahoma, Roberta Wright was nearly 21 and a college student in southern California when she eloped to Tijuana, Mexico, in January 1933 with a young sailor named John S. McCain Jr. He would go on to become a Navy admiral, like the father he shared a name with, and the couple would have three children — Jean, John and Joseph — within a decade.

With her husband away on Navy business most of the time, Roberta McCain raised the kids. She didn't complain, and loved Navy life. The family lived in Hawaii, the Panama Canal Zone — where the senator was born in 1936 — Connecticut, Virginia and many points in between.

"To me, the Navy epitomizes everything that's good in America," she told C-SPAN in 2008 during the presidential contest John McCain lost to Barack Obama.

John McCain followed his father and grandfather's footsteps into the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, where he'll be laid to rest on Sunday. He became a fighter pilot and joined the combat action in Vietnam. He was on his 23rd bombing run over North Vietnam when he was shot out of the sky and taken prisoner in October 1967.

His parents were in London getting ready to attend a dinner at Iran's embassy when a special phone that Roberta McCain says she never touched rang while her husband was in the shower. She answered and listened as a friend told her two planes had been shot down and none of the pilots had ejected. She told her husband when he came out of the shower, and they kept to their plans.

"We went and decided we were not going to say one word at this dinner," she said in the 2008 interview.

She said that later learning her son was alive and had become a prisoner of war was "the best news I ever had in my life."

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Roberta McCain missed watching her son's release from Vietnam on television in 1973. Someone telephoned and told her to watch the TV, something she said she did little of. "These people came off and the television stopped, so I turned off the television," she explained. "I didn't know that between ads he did come off ... and I missed it."

She later said she was "ashamed" of her son for the "terrible language" he used toward the Vietnamese captors who tortured him.

"I never would have believed in this world he would ever use language like that, but he did," Roberta McCain said in the interview, which was conducted at her Washington home.

Well into her 90s, she became a fixture on John McCain's 2008 campaign, connecting with audiences and displaying some of the sass and wit he appeared to have inherited from her.

John McCain wrote in his final book, published this year, that his 106-year-old mother's "vivaciousness is a force of nature" but that although a stroke has slowed her once-brisk pace and has made speaking a "chore," she still has "a spark in her, a brightness in her eyes that would light up the world if she could resume her peripatetic life."

Roberta McCain and her identical twin sister, Rowena Wright, who died in 2011, often traveled around the world together.

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Associated Press writer Laurie Kellman contributed to this report.

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## Hackers? No, human error plagues Arizona primary voting

By ASTRID GALVAN, Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — For all the worries about Russian hackers and other cyber-vandals, voting problems this week in Arizona served as a reminder that one of the biggest threats to fair elections is plain old human error.

That appeared to be the case during Tuesday's primary, when dozens of polling places in the state's most populous county opened late because the voter verification machinery had not been set up.

The Maricopa County recorder, the official in charge of running elections in and around Phoenix, said the contractor hired to connect the tablet-like devices didn't send enough workers to complete the job on time. The contractor insisted it dispatched more people than the county requested.

Either way, 62 of the county's 750 or so polling locations did not open first thing in the morning, though all were up and running before noon. Election officials gave no estimate of how many people were unable to cast ballots because of the foul-up.

The confusion in the state where over a million voters cast ballots came two years after Phoenix-area residents ended up waiting for hours in the heat to vote because a previous election chief drastically reduced the number of polling places.

"Obviously anytime any voter is unable to vote or leaves the polls because of a long line or a problem, that's a concern. But equipment failures and malfunctions happen," said Liz Howard, a cybersecurity and elections expert at NYU's Brennan Center for Justice.

Howard said issues like the ones in Maricopa County could have been remedied if officials had a backup plan such as a pre-printed voter list.

Over the past two years, much of the national conversation about elections has been focused on cybersecurity and the threat of meddling by Russian hackers.

Since the 2016 presidential election, state and local election authorities have been scrambling to improve their cyber-defenses, upgrade voting systems and train election officials.

Officials say Russian hackers targeted election systems in at least 21 states in the months leading up to the 2016 vote. There has been no indication any vote tallies were changed.

But security is not the only concern. Machine breakdowns, software glitches and other more ordinary

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problems have disrupted voting.

In California's June primary, nearly 120,000 voters in Los Angeles County were left off printed voter rolls because of a software error. About 12,000 of the affected voters cast provisional ballots and their votes were counted, but it's unknown how many might have walked away because of the hassle and delay.

In South Dakota in June, officials had to use provisional ballots when their equipment couldn't connect to the internet.

In Nevada this June, officials were less-than forthcoming when releasing information about voting machine glitches they said affected only a small number of voters. An investigation by the Reno Gazette Journal found there were over 300 reported machine malfunctions across the state, including software hiccups that led to double-voting and resulted in a special election in Clark County.

In Arizona, Maricopa County Recorder Adrian Fontes said Tuesday that he learned a day before the election that not all of the equipment had been hooked up yet, and he sent out staff members to try to fix the problem.

But he made no mention of the delayed openings during a Facebook Live event on Election Day. Nor did he alert the county Board of Supervisors until Tuesday afternoon, when he asked it to keep polls open past the 7 p.m. closing time.

The board turned down the request, saying Fontes had been given enough resources to run a successful election.

The contractor involved, Tempe-based Insight, said it provided more staff than it was required to and that only 43 of the locations that didn't open on time were late because the machinery hadn't been connected.

"Insight shares the frustration that voters felt Tuesday and has been working diligently to help the county resolve technical issues as they arise," spokesman Scott Walters said in a statement. "Insight is committed to working with the county to ensure that disruptions to the voting process do not continue in future elections."

Criticism came down hard on Fontes, a Democrat who unseated his predecessor, a Republican who had held office for nearly three decades before the long lines of the 2016 primary cost her her job.

By Wednesday, Republicans had released a video ad attacking Fontes, who isn't up for re-election until 2020.

"Adrian Fontes promised a lot in 2016. But today, he failed Arizona again," the ad said.

Fontes said in a statement Tuesday evening that he takes full responsibility and will not let such a mistake happen again. He said Wednesday that his most pressing concern is preparing for the November general election and that he remains committed to improving the process.

Phoenix voter Brent Kleinman said he went to his local polling place twice, at 7 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., and was turned away both times. He ended up at a library, casting a provisional ballot, which is given out when a person's eligibility to vote is unknown.

Kleinman was one of hundreds of voters who waited in long lines two years ago. He said he voted for Fontes in 2016 with the hope a new leader would reform the election system.

"You would think after the bad things that happened in that 2016 that the county and state would create processes that would prevent things like this from happening," Kleinman said.

Christina Almeida Cassidy in Atlanta contributed to this report.

## Dad, partner plead not guilty in toddler's compound death

By MORGAN LEE, Associated Press

TAOS, N.M. (AP) — The father of a 3-year-old boy found dead in a filthy New Mexico compound and his partner pleaded not guilty Wednesday to new charges of child abuse resulting in death after lesser charges were dismissed against them and other members of their extended family as the result of a deadline missed by prosecutors.

The dead boy's father, Siraj Ibn Wahhaj (see-DAHJ' IBN wah-HAJ'), and his partner Jany Leveille remained

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silent as pleas were entered by a judge on their behalf. The charges could carry life sentences in the death of Abdul-ghani Wahhaj (ahb-DOOL' GAH'-nee wah-HAJ').

Their pleas came after a judge dismissed child neglect charges filed against them earlier this month. Another judge made the same decision involving three other defendants earlier in the day.

District Judge Jeff McElroy criticized the office of Taos District Attorney Donald Gallegos for how the charges have been handled, citing a "complete failure to follow procedures in prosecuting the case." Defense attorneys had pointed out that prosecutors failed to schedule a preliminary hearing within 10 days of the arrests.

"It's difficult I'm sure for the public to understand why this has to happen this way," he said. "It's not the court making this decision, it's the decision of the district attorney to not seek a hearing in the time required by the rule."

The Taos County Sheriff's Office confirmed the three were allowed to leave jail late Wednesday afternoon.

Deputy District Attorney Timothy Hasson was asked to comment on the judges' criticism and would only say, "We respectfully disagree."

All five were arrested at a remote desert compound where 11 children were found living in filth. A subsequent search led to the discovery of the dead 3-year-old boy.

Authorities say Wahhaj and Leveille denied the boy proper medicine and health care before he died in December 2017 during a religious ritual aimed at casting out demonic spirits. The exact cause and manner of death has not been determined.

Prosecutors had pressed to keep all five behind bars and planned to present new evidence of an anti-government plot and talk of jihad and martyrdom among some members of the extended Muslim family.

Defense attorneys say their clients have no record of criminal convictions and pose no risk to the public. Federal immigration authorities say Leveille, a native of Haiti, has been in the United States unlawfully for 20 years after overstaying a visitor visa.

Siraj Ibn Wahhaj and Leveille will remain jailed at least until a hearing next week.

Prosecutor John Lovelace declined to comment on how the district attorney's office will proceed on the three who were released. Prosecutors have other options for pursuing charges, including seeking indictments from a grand jury.

Prosecutors said in court filings they discovered a hand-written document called "Phases of a Terrorist Attack" that was seized from the compound and includes vague instructions for "the one-time terrorist" and mentioned an unnamed place called "the ideal attack site."

Prosecutors wrote in court filings that new interviews with some of the children removed from the compound revealed that one of the adults, Lucas Morton, stated he wished to die in jihad as a martyr and that Leveille and Subhannah Wahhaj joked about dying in jihad. Morton, as well as Subhannah and Hujrah Wahhaj, had their charges dismissed Wednesday.

The upgraded charges of child abuse resulting in death against Siraj Ibn Wahhaj and Leveille are tied to an extensive account of Abdul-ghani's death in a journal that prosecutors attribute to Leveille.

Thomas Clark, the attorney for Siraj Ibn Wahhaj, said court filings against his client have unfairly delved into accusations unrelated to charges of child abuse or neglect.

"It's ancillary, inflammatory information that has no bearing on whether or not my client either intentionally or recklessly allowed this child to die from lack of medication," Clark said.

In court filings submitted Wednesday immediately before the hearings, Taos-based District Attorney Donald Gallegos renewed accusations that Wahhaj and Leveille represented a danger to the public and requested they be jailed without bail pending trial. The filings describe the couple's involvement in "bizarre cult practices" and described evidence that compound residents were conducting firearms training "to conduct future acts of violence against individuals and civic institutions."

Judge Jeff McElroy took the unusual step of urging the general public to wait for the court to vet accusations from law enforcement and prosecutors before reacting, saying he was disturbed by threats of violence against another state judge who previously agreed to release the five defendants on house arrest.

"I urge everyone not to react to solely the information contained within the warrants that were filed but

rather to the evidence as it gets developed in this case," he said.

The boy's mother initially reported him missing last year from Jonesboro, Georgia, after Siraj Ibn Wahhaj said he was taking the child to a park and didn't return. Forensic medical investigators have not yet identified the cause and manner of the boy's death.

## **UN: Ortega's Nicaraguan govt behind widespread repression**

**By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN, Associated Press**

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A United Nations report released Wednesday on four months of unrest in Nicaragua describes a comprehensive effort of repression by the government that extends from the streets to the courts.

The report by the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights calls on the government of President Daniel Ortega to immediately halt the persecution of protesters and disarm the masked civilians who have been responsible for many of the killings and arbitrary detentions.

More than 300 people have been killed in violence since mid-April in this Central American nation. Neighboring Costa Rica has been flooded with thousands of requests for asylum by people fleeing Nicaragua.

The report describes illegal arrests, torture and closed trials. Doctors, professors and judges who have spoken out or protested have been dismissed from their jobs to discourage people from participating in or supporting the protests.

"The level of persecution is such that many of those who have participated in the protests, defended the rights of the protesters, or simply expressed dissenting opinion, have been forced to hide, have left Nicaragua or are trying to do so," according to the U.N. report.

Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini, the U.N. human rights chief, told reporters in Geneva that "repression and retaliation against demonstrators continue in Nicaragua as the world looks away."

Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., said the report "highlights what we have been saying for months: Ortega is terrorizing his own people."

"Until the Nicaraguan people are able to use their voices freely and peacefully, the international community must continue to pressure the regime. Failure to do so will lead to another Venezuela," Haley said.

Ortega's government dismissed the report as baseless and relying on anti-government media accounts. It denied accusations of excessive use of force against protesters.

"The report is biased and slanted with subjective assertions," the government said in its response to the U.N. office, also noting that it included no mention of the attempted coup d'état alleged by Ortega.

It said the U.N. had not been invited to evaluate the human rights situation, but rather to accompany the verification commission established as part of the national dialogue. It accused the U.N. of overstepping its authority and violating Nicaragua's sovereignty.

Later, Ortega said at a rally that "if the tortured person was a Sandinista, he doesn't exist for the U.N. human rights commission ... for them, the killer coup plotters were little angels."

In mid-April, retirees and students marched to protest cuts to Nicaragua's social security benefits decreed by Ortega. They were met with violence from young government supporters and riot police. The president eventually retracted the changes, but protests quickly evolved into calls for him to step down.

University students across the country led the protest effort and took over a number of campuses. But in July the government unleashed heavily armed civilian forces that worked with police to clear the barricades that had been erected on strategic highways and throughout some neighborhoods.

There was a short-lived dialogue between the government and opponents, but Ortega accused the Roman Catholic bishops mediating the talks of being part of a coup conspiracy and talks have not resumed. Ortega has blamed international agents and internal enemies of conspiring to overthrow his government. He has said he will not step down before his term ends in 2021.

Protests continue, but they are smaller as student leaders have been arrested or forced into hiding or exile.

"There are currently no conditions for the free and safe exercise of the rights to freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association," the U.N. report said.

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The U.N. team reached its conclusions despite government obstacles thrown in its path. It said team members could not access relevant government agencies or observe court hearings for those accused of crimes ranging from organized crime to terrorism for participating in the protests. When the team attempted to travel outside the capital, the foreign ministry forbade it for security reasons.

Arbitrary arrests are conducted without arrest or search warrants, the team found. Detainees are typically held incommunicado for days before their families find out where they have been taken.

This month The Associated Press reported on student protesters who were arrested, beaten and tortured by police and armed civilians. One pregnant student was beaten, despite making her condition known to her captors, and eventually lost her pregnancy.

When some families made habeas corpus filings with the courts in an effort to locate their missing relatives, the petitions were initially assigned to dead judges, the U.N. report said. U.N. investigators believe it was an effort to delay the proceedings.

On Monday night, a judge convicted two young men in the April 21 killing of journalist Angel Gahona in Bluefields. His widow, Migueliuth Sandoval, said Tuesday that the two men are innocent.

"This decision is humiliating, it doesn't give us justice. Because we know that these guys didn't kill my husband, that those who really did it are riot police, because there are videos indicating it, that my husband was surrounded by police," Sandoval said.

AP writers Jamey Keaten in Geneva and Luis Manuel Galeano in Managua, Nicaragua contributed to this report.

## Pope's cover-up crisis turns battle lines into first salvo

BY NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The author of the bombshell accusation of sex abuse cover-up against Pope Francis denied Wednesday he acted out of revenge or anger, breaking his silence as his claims continued to divide a Catholic Church already polarized under Francis' reformist agenda.

While the Vatican is no stranger to scandal, leaks or plots, Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano's j'accuse has weakened a papacy already under fire for Francis' poor record on dealing with sex abuse cases, and has intensified a long-simmering ideological battle between right and left for the soul of the Catholic Church.

Vigano told an Italian journalist he was "serene and at peace" after publishing his allegation-laden declaration, albeit saddened by subsequent attempts to undermine his credibility.

"I spoke out because by now the corruption has arrived at the top of the church hierarchy," Vigano was quoted as saying.

For the church's conservatives, Vigano's 11-page manifesto, published on Sunday, is a courageous denunciation of sex abuse cover-up and corruption. For Francis' reformist supporters, it's an angry diatribe from a homophobic bishop embittered that he never got the cardinal's red hat he so craved.

Both sides, however, agree Vigano's accusations require a response given that, as the former chief Vatican diplomat in the U.S., he was in a position to know certain information. Francis' decision to punt — "I won't say a word on this," he declared Sunday — hasn't helped his cause or satisfied the faithful.

"I do think this is a crisis in trust and authority that comes really close to the Lutheran Reformations in the early 16th century," said Christopher Bellitto, church historian at Kean University in New Jersey. "It's like a marriage: When trust is questioned you can go forward, but it's not the same."

In his letter Vigano accused a long list of U.S. and Vatican officials — including Popes Benedict XVI and Francis — of covering up for ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the retired archbishop of Washington, whose penchant for sleeping with seminarians was apparently an open secret in some church circles for over a decade.

Francis last month removed McCarrick as a cardinal and ordered him to a lifetime of penance and prayer after a U.S. church investigation determined that an allegation he groped a teen-age altar boy in the

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1970s was credible.

Up until then, the only accusations against McCarrick had involved sleeping with adult seminarians — a clear abuse of power that was perhaps quietly tolerated in the pre-#MeToo era, but doesn't fly now.

Vigano said he informed Francis of McCarrick's history with seminarians at a meeting on June 23, 2013, and accused the pope of turning a blind eye and effectively rehabilitating McCarrick from the sanctions he claims Benedict had imposed in 2009 or 2010.

There is ample evidence, however, that any sanctions, if they existed, were never fully enforced since McCarrick travelled widely for the church in those years and participated in official church functions, including alongside Vigano, who was responsible for enforcing the sanctions.

Vigano insisted Francis must resign, given the explosion of the McCarrick scandal in the U.S. and a string of other gay sex abuse and cover-up cases in the church in Chile, Honduras and Australia that have implicated several of Francis' top advisers.

Massimo Franco, a columnist for Italy's leading daily, *Corriere della Sera*, said the silence from the Vatican is telling.

"I think that in this case, if these allegations were 'fake news,' I think someone would have spoken out on behalf of the pope," he told *The Associated Press*. "What is striking is the general silence."

The Vatican declined to comment Wednesday beyond Francis' remarks Sunday night, when he was asked by a reporter on a flight home from Ireland if Vigano's claims were true.

"I think the text speaks for itself, and you have sufficient journalistic ability to draw conclusions," he said. "If time passes and you've drawn your conclusions, maybe I'll speak."

For many Vatican watchers, the fallout since has laid bare the ideological tensions that have afflicted the church throughout its 2,000-year history, but which intensified under Francis — and exploded into the open this week.

The battle lines were drawn in 2016 when Francis issued his opening to divorced and civilly remarried Catholics. Later that year four cardinals formally asked him to explain if he was changing church teaching on marriage in a rare public rebuke. Vigano's manifesto marked the first direct shot.

Commentator Philip Lawler wrote in *First Things*, a conservative U.S. Catholic magazine, this week that while the prospect of "open warfare among bishops" is an enticing story line, the divisions are roiling rank-and-file Catholics who are "exhausted and enraged by the serial revelations of cover-ups and corruption" in the church.

Progressive church historian Alberto Melloni, however, wrote in Italy's left-leaning *La Repubblica* daily that Vigano's missive had "nothing to do with pedophilia" and everything to do with uniting various anti-Francis forces, from the traditionalists to the more moderate Catholic political right, for the sake of a future conclave to choose Francis' successor.

Bellitto, the historian at Kean University, said such machinations were nothing new.

"It's as old as Christianity itself," he said. "What we're in now is nothing other than a high-tech version of 'I'm more Christian than you are.'"

U.S. bishops, as well as ordinary Catholics, have called for an independent investigation to find out who knew about McCarrick's misdeeds and when, and expose how he was able to rise through the ranks. Vigano's bombshell allegations might complicate the request given that the pope is now personally involved.

That said, Vigano provided no evidence that Francis had lifted any sanctions, saying only that McCarrick emerged from a meeting with the pope in June 2013 and announced he was going to China. Such a trip would have been completely in keeping with McCarrick's rigorous travel schedule before 2013 when he was allegedly under Benedict's sanctions.

But Vigano said McCarrick had become a close adviser to Francis, who was seeking to appoint more pastorally minded bishops like himself to the U.S. church, which he believed had become too ideologically driven by right-wingers.

Franco, the *Corriere della Sera* columnist, said the McCarrick affair showed once again the danger posed by Francis' penchant for keeping friends with baggage like McCarrick and other compromised cardinals as advisers, rather than relying on official church channels for his information.

"I don't want to say it was a will to ignore or to undervalue," he said. "But it's a boomerang in the end."

## Boy swept in sewer sticks finger out of manhole and is saved

By **TODD RICHMOND, Associated Press**

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — An 11-year-old boy sucked into a flooded Wisconsin storm sewer was saved when an eagle-eyed firefighter saw the boy's fingers pop through an opening in a manhole cover.

The astonishing rescue Tuesday evening came as storms pounded the southern half of the state and southeastern Minnesota.

The Calumet County Sheriff's Office said the boy was playing with friends in a flooded drainage ditch after the rains passed around 6 p.m. in the Village of Harrison. He disappeared under the water and didn't surface.

A dive team, sheriff's deputies and volunteer firefighters responded. Deputy Fire Chief Wesley Pompa said that when they arrived they found a bystander trying to hold onto the boy but he was sucked into a culvert that led to the storm sewer.

Pompa said the water was rushing so quickly it would have sucked a full-grown man into the culvert.

The rescuers could do nothing except try to determine where the flow might take the boy. Pompa called the village road superintendent, Bob Kesler, to the scene to help map out the sewers.

Pompa and Kesler were standing on top of a manhole cover about 30 feet (9 meters) away from the ditch when Pompa saw the boy's fingers pop through an opening in the cover. The boy had found air pocket just beneath the manhole cover and was hanging onto a ladder leading up to the manhole.

The firefighters wrenched the cover open. Pompa and Kesler lifted the boy to safety.

"He was hollering and talking to us and he was able to reach up for us," Pompa said.

The boy was taken to the hospital, and authorities said he was alert and conscious after his ordeal. Pompa said he never got the boy's name.

"I just thank God he was alive and he'd made it that long," Pompa said. "It could have gone a million different ways but this one way it worked out for him."

A string of storms began moving through the region last week, flooding streets and farm fields and cutting power. One man was killed in Madison as he tried to escape from a flooded ditch last week.

State emergency officials said 20 counties have been affected by flooding over the last 10 days. Gov. Scott Walker on Wednesday declared a statewide emergency, directing state agencies and the Wisconsin National Guard to assist local authorities as needed. The declaration also is the first formal step toward requesting federal assistance.

Hardest hit has been Wisconsin's southwestern corner. Up to 11 inches (28 centimeters) fell in the region Monday into Tuesday, forcing evacuations in La Crosse, Vernon and Monroe counties.

The area got another 1.3 inches of rain on Tuesday. The deluge stranded two Amtrak trains carrying about 400 passengers for hours because of flooding over the tracks. One train bound for Chicago was forced to stop near Tomah in western Wisconsin; another bound for St. Paul had to stop near Portage in south-central Wisconsin.

The trains sat on the tracks overnight. Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said passengers were given complementary food and water and the trains are designed to accommodate passengers overnight. Both trains had resumed their routes by midday Wednesday.

Parts of Interstate 90/94 were closed overnight due to standing water on the pavement and highways across southern Wisconsin have been rendered impassable. Emergency officials in Madison were still grappling with flooded streets on Wednesday morning and warned commuters to expect delays for days.

Several tornadoes were spotted Tuesday afternoon in Campbellsport, Lomira, Oakfield and Brandon, Wisconsin, according to the National Weather Service. The service has not confirmed that tornadoes hit in any of these locations. Possible tornadoes also demolished two barns in Fond du Lac County, killing about 100 cattle, Wisconsin Emergency Management spokeswoman Lori Getter said.

Some 12,000 We Energies customers were still without power Wednesday morning as utility crews

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worked overtime to restore service.

Southeastern Minnesota has also been struggling with flooding over the last few days. Tuesday night's storms largely missed that area, passing to the south, although some spots got hit hard.

Houston County officials, for example, reported 7 inches of rain and had to evacuate a campground and a tornado came down in Goodhue County, Minnesota Emergency Management spokeswoman Amber Schindeldecker said. No evacuations have been reported to the state, she said.

Forecasts called for drier weather Wednesday and Thursday. More rain was expected Friday and Saturday.

## Canada stunned and worried about Trump trade threats

By **ROB GILLIES, Associated Press**

TORONTO (AP) — It started with President Donald Trump's attacks on Canadian dairy farmers. Then Washington slapped tariffs on Canadian steel, citing national security. There was that disastrous G-7 summit in Quebec. Now it's a new North American free trade agreement that excludes America's northern neighbor.

Canadians are stunned by the repeated broadsides from what has long been their closest ally and some have even begun boycotts.

"Everybody is afraid," said Margot Lajeunesse, who helps run a family-owned bistro in Quebec. "We depend a lot on the U.S."

About 75 percent of Canada's exports go to the U.S. so the tariff threat looms large after Trump snubbed Canada and reached a preliminary deal with Mexico.

LaLa Bistro, owned by the Lajeunesse family, is among Canadian businesses that are boycotting California wines, American ketchup and other U.S. products in protest. Some Canadians have cancelled U.S. vacations, particularly after Trump assailed Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the G-7 meeting in June, calling him a "weak" and "dishonest" back-stabber.

"It's not the way you treat a friend," Lajeunesse said.

"It's revolting, agreed Raymonde Kennedy, who has ceased buying American products like mustard and clothing. "We won't be insulted like that, by a man with no brain."

Luc Routhier, co-owner of Bar Le P'tit Canot in Quebec, also banned American wine from his eatery after Trump announced tariffs on Canadian aluminum and threatened Quebec's dairy industry.

"I'm not even going to the U.S. this year," he said. "I'm a golfer, and normally I do two trips a year to the U.S. with my buddies."

"I'll only go back to the United States when Trump is gone."

To intensify the pressure on Canada, Trump threatened this week to impose new taxes on Canadian auto imports if Canada didn't negotiate "fairly." Canada must now decide whether to sign onto an agreement it didn't negotiate, or risk that the U.S. and Mexico will make good on threats to do a two-way deal that excludes it.

Canada could lose 60,000 jobs in a trade war and take a 1 percent hit to its GDP — a significant drop because Canada's economy is projected to grow just 2 percent next year, according to estimates from the C.D. Howe Institute, a Toronto-based think tank.

Canada had been left out of the trade talks for the past five weeks, but Trudeau said there was still a "possibility of getting to a good deal for Canada" by Trump's deadline of Friday.

"But," he added, "as I've said all along it has to be the right deal for Canada. We will not sign a bad agreement."

Trump expressed optimism Wednesday that a deal could be reached.

"We gave until Friday and I think we're probably on track," Trump said. "We'll see what happens. I love Canada. And you know what, I love Mexico too. ... I like them both the same."

There is some optimism in Canada's automotive sector despite the Trump tariff threats.

Among other things, the U.S.-Mexico deal mandates that 40 to 45 percent of a car be made in a country with a minimum hourly wage for auto workers of at least \$16 to qualify for duty-free status — a requirement that could stem the flow of auto-sector jobs to Mexico, where auto workers earn on average just

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\$5 an hour.

"This should stop the bleeding in Canada," said Jerry Dias, president of Unifor, Canada's largest private-sector union.

Bank of Montreal chief economist Douglas Porter said the U.S. deal with Mexico leaves Canada in a near take-it-or-leave-it situation. Still, he noted investors have welcomed the news and that helped push the Canadian dollar up 0.5 percent. Stocks of Canadian auto parts companies were up too.

"Perhaps the clearest indicator that the market is viewing the U.S.-Mexico deal as a positive for Canada is the strengthening of the Canadian dollar," Porter said.

Reaction in the Canadian press reflected the mixed feeling about the U.S.-Mexico deal.

"Canada scrambles as U.S., Mexico ink NAFTA pact," headlined the Globe and Mail, Canada's national newspaper.

The Toronto Star had a different take. "PM cool in the face of Trump's NAFTA heat," it read.

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland hurried to Washington this week to try to repair the damage and was in talks Wednesday with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and other U.S. officials.

"Mexico has made significant concessions which will be really good for Canadian workers. On that basis we are optimistic," Freeland said of the talks.

But the opposition Conservative Party accused Trudeau of mishandling negotiations by letting Mexico and the United States cut a deal without Canada.

"Canada is on the outside looking in while Canadian jobs hang in the balance," Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer tweeted. Foreign-affairs critic Erin O'Toole said in a statement that "Mexico has usurped our role as the key U.S. trade partner."

Still, the ties between the U.S. and Canada are without parallel anywhere in the world. Trade between the two neighbors totaled an estimated \$673.9 billion in 2017, with the U.S. enjoying a nearly \$3 billion surplus with Canada. Each day, about 400,000 people cross the world's longest international border. There is close cooperation on defense, border security and law enforcement, and a vast overlap in culture, traditions and pastimes.

Trudeau's father, the late Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, offered this take on sharing a continent with the United States. "Living next to you is in some ways like sleeping with an elephant," he said. "No matter how friendly and even-tempered the beast, one is affected by every twitch and grunt."

Perhaps the younger Trudeau had his father's words in mind when he asserted that he wouldn't let Canada get pushed around by the U.S. at a news conference at the end of the contentious G-7 summit in June — a remark that enraged Trump.

"He made this point that he's going to make Canadians pay," said Nelson Wiseman, a political science professor at the University of Toronto.

University of Toronto professor Robert Bothwell said the latest trade deal excluding Canada shows Trump is more focused on exerting American economic might than reaching a fair deal with friends.

"This is going to have a horrendous impact on Canada-American relations," Bothwell said. "Canada may well have to give in to this because of the threat to the auto trade, but it's going to leave a very bad taste."

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Associated Press writer Tracey Lindeman in Ottawa, Ontario, contributed to this report.

## Outcry over retirement age plan brings rare Putin concession

By NATALIYA VASILYEVA, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Facing protests and a noticeable dip in his approval ratings, President Vladimir Putin made rare concessions Wednesday to an unpopular pension reform package that increased the retirement age for Russians.

The televised address marked an extraordinary occasion when Putin apparently felt compelled to explain a major policy decision to the public, reflecting the contentious nature of the retirement reforms.

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The general idea of increasing the retirement age was justified because of Russia's economy and demographic trends and "cannot be put off any longer," Putin said.

Without such a move, Russia's pension system "would crack and eventually collapse," he said, adding: "I'm asking you to be understanding of this."

In softening the plan, he said the new retirement age for women will be raised only to 60 from the current 55, instead of the previous government proposal to increase it to 63.

Left unchanged, however, was increasing the retirement age for men from 60 to 65.

Russia's economy has been hobbled in recent years by falling oil prices and Western sanctions over the 2014 annexation of Crimea. The country also faces a demographic crisis in the coming years as a result of the extremely low birth rates that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The retirement age is supposed to be raised gradually — by one year every year over the next five years.

The softening of the proposal for women, to five years instead of eight, was because of what Putin called the important role women play in Russian society.

"In our country, we treat women in a special, caring way," he said.

The government's plan to raise the retirement age initially was announced by the government in June on the first day of the World Cup in Russia, when the attention of most of the country was focused on soccer.

Putin has refrained from commenting on the subject for weeks, while a widespread outcry over the move began emerging. Alexei Navalny, one of Putin's biggest opponents, has called for nationwide demonstrations about it on Sept. 9, but on Monday, he was jailed for 30 days over an unsanctioned protest seven months earlier.

The pension proposals have affected Putin's approval ratings, which have dropped from 80 percent to under 70 percent — his lowest since before the Crimea annexation.

Older Russians have seen their pensions rise steadily under Putin and have been among his staunchest supporters, enjoying the stability they believe he has brought to the economy. But many of those who oppose an increase in the retirement age question whether they would live long enough to claim their money.

In Russia, the average life expectancy is 67 for men and 78 for women.

Though the proposed changes bring Russia into line with most other countries, many families, especially in rural areas and small towns, are worried that their household income will take a serious hit at a time when the young often struggle to find a stable job.

"This reform will hit hard people in provincial towns and in villages," said Arseny Radin, a Moscow-based engineer originally from the Vladimir region about 200 kilometers (120 miles) northeast of the capital.

Radin said his father, who would be retiring in a few years if not for the planned reforms, must travel to Moscow for work "because there are no jobs in provincial towns."

Asked about Putin's proposal to incentivize employers to hire older workers, Radin said: "What jobs are we talking about and what jobs are going to be kept for those people who are close to the retirement age?"

In his speech, Putin voiced other suggestions aimed at softening the blow, including an idea to keep benefits such as tax breaks for seniors even before they reach retirement age.

Although Putin is famous for his annual marathon call-in TV shows in which he talks directly to ordinary Russians via video link, he rarely gives televised speeches to the nation. For example, he did not give a nationally televised address in 2014 when Russia moved to send troops to Crimea and eventually annex the territory from Ukraine.

For years, Putin has avoided discussing the idea of raising the pension age, a move long advocated by his economic advisers.

Sergei Kosov, a 71-year-old Muscovite who watched Putin's televised address, said the reform "has long been overdue even though not everyone agrees."

Speaking at a city-organized activities club for seniors, Kosov called it "a sincere account of the country's needs," even though he thought the government would not be forced to take the action if it was more effective in fighting corruption.

Alexei Kudrin, chairman of the Audit Chamber and one of the earliest proponents of the reform, welcomed Putin's proposals, calling them "well-thought out and crucial for the nation to be able to achieve its goals."

The Communist Party, one of the main opponents of the reform, said Putin should have made more concessions.

"This bill cannot be improved, in my opinion," party leader Gennady Zyuganov told the Tass news agency, adding that the party is collecting signatures necessary to try to force a national referendum.

## Trump-friendly tabloid sees a decline in circulation

By JEFF HORWITZ, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The National Enquirer has long explained its support for Donald Trump as a business decision based on the president's popularity among its readers. But private financial documents and circulation figures obtained by The Associated Press show that the tabloid's business was declining even as it published stories attacking Trump's political foes and, prosecutors claim, helped suppress stories about his alleged sexual affairs.

The Enquirer's privately held parent company, American Media Inc., lost \$72 million for the year ending in March, the records obtained by the AP show. And despite AMI chairman David Pecker's claims that the Enquirer's heavy focus on Trump sells magazines, the documents show that the Enquirer's average weekly circulation fell by 18 percent to 265,000 in its 2018 fiscal year from the same period the year before — the greatest percentage loss of any AMI-owned publication. The slide follows the Enquirer's 15 percent circulation loss for the previous 12 months, a span that included the presidential election.

More broadly, the documents obtained by the AP show that American Media isn't making enough money to cover the interest accruing on its \$882 million in long-term debt and that the company expects "continued declines in circulation and advertising revenues" in the current year. That leaves AMI reliant on debt to keep its operations afloat and finance a string of recent acquisitions that are transforming the tabloid news industry.

That creditor backstopping AMI is a New Jersey investment fund called Chatham Asset Management. Its top executive dined with Pecker and Trump at the White House last year, and the fund has both a history of Republican political donations and ties to the administration of former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, which awarded it hundreds of millions of dollars in state retirement funds to manage.

AMI's current debts stem from the declining fortunes of the magazine industry and a series of acquisitions. Chatham has kept this number from ballooning further by converting some of the debt it is owed into shares in the company.

The publisher's precarious financials and reliance on Chatham are a backdrop to the publisher's growing entanglement in a federal investigation of allegations of hush money payments and violations of campaign finance laws.

Trump's longtime personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, pleaded guilty last week to criminal violations of campaign laws, accepting prosecutors' claim that he, Trump and the National Enquirer were involved in buying the silence of an adult-film actress and a former Playboy model who claim to have had affairs with Trump. Pecker and his top editorial deputy, Dylan Howard, have both received immunity in exchange for their cooperation. Along with Cohen, they are among the latest longtime Trump loyalists to be swept up in the federal investigations engulfing the president and his inner circle.

Neither AMI nor company officials have been charged in the case.

AMI did not provide an on-the-record response to detailed questions from the AP sent to Howard, Pecker and its outside spokesman. But a confidential financial document obtained by the AP argues that investors should focus on its current cash flows and not its profitability. Over the last two years, it has generated a combined \$12 million cash flow from operations even as it has posted \$160 million in overall losses.

AMI's brush with a campaign finance probe comes amid its recently announced efforts to refinance as much as \$450 million in debt. Despite the company's recent purchases of US Weekly and rival gossip publisher Bauer Media, revenue from AMI's existing publications continues to drop, the financial report obtained by the AP shows.

Pecker has long maintained an aura of absolute control over the Enquirer and its sister publications,

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boasting of his willingness to spend AMI's money to benefit Trump.

"The guy's a personal friend of mine," he told *The New Yorker* magazine last summer, explaining why AMI paid former Playmate Karen McDougal \$150,000 in a deal that prevented her from going public with her claim that she'd had an affair with Trump.

But Pecker owns only a small fraction of AMI, around 8 percent, according to the company. More than 80 percent of AMI — as well as hundreds of millions of dollars of its debt — belongs to Chatham Asset Management, with billionaire investor Leon Cooperman owning an additional 7 percent.

Chatham declined to address questions about the *Enquirer's* relationship with Trump or the future of its investment in AMI. But the firm released a statement saying Chatham "has no involvement in the editorial process or the day-to-day business decisions of the company."

David Larcker, a Stanford Business School professor who studies private equity and corporate governance, said it is normal for a firm like Chatham to give a company like AMI a long leash. But the firm would be expected to investigate any time "something large and unexpected happens" at a company it controls on behalf of the investors who are its limited partners. A firm like Chatham "would owe the LPs an explanation," he said.

Among Chatham's largest investors, according to public records, is New Jersey's public pension fund. Chatham manages investment decisions for more than \$300 million in pension holdings for the state.

Asked about AMI's alleged involvement with campaign finance law violations and hush money payments, state Treasury spokeswoman Jennifer Sciortino told the AP that "we expect our investment partners to invest in good businesses with strong management teams that follow all applicable laws." She declined to say whether New Jersey had discussed AMI with Chatham, but said, "We are in regular contact with our investment partners regarding underlying portfolio companies and we provide feedback when appropriate."

In an interview last Friday, Cooperman deferred most questions to Chatham and AMI, describing himself as a passive investor and calling his 7 percent stake in the company "negligible." Cooperman didn't offer any thoughts about AMI's alleged involvement with hush money payments, but he expressed confidence in Pecker. "I think he's a very good quality guy, and is doing a good job running the company," he said.

The confidential financial document obtained by the AP states that AMI's \$882 million in long-term debt owed to creditors as of March is a competitive disadvantage that may compromise its ability to launch new projects, borrow additional money or even pay for "general corporate requirements."

Cooperman told the AP that AMI has lined up a prominent investment bank to help with its upcoming effort to raise capital and that he expects a prospective deal to be launched after Labor Day. He said he expects AMI to convert more of its debt to shares in the company as part of that refinancing.

While the details of AMI's financial difficulties described in the confidential document haven't been previously reported, the prospect that Pecker and AMI might not protect Trump's secrets forever has long been a concern. Trump and Cohen even discussed the possibility that the ties between Trump and the *National Enquirer* might someday unravel.

In July, Cohen released an audio recording in which the men discussed plans to buy McDougal's story of an affair with Trump from the *National Enquirer*. Such a purchase was necessary, they suggested, to prevent Trump from having to permanently rely on a tight relationship with the tabloid.

"You never know where that company — you never know what he's gonna be," Cohen says.

"David gets hit by a truck," Trump says.

"Correct," Cohen replies. "So, I'm all over that."

According to the documents accompanying Cohen's guilty plea last week, Trump's purchase of McDougal's story never occurred.

## Even a small amount of medical debt can trigger headaches

By TOM MURPHY, AP Health Writer

It doesn't take a huge unpaid medical bill to make a collection agency come calling ... and calling. Researchers found in a study of credit reports that more than 2 percent of adults had medical bills un-

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der \$200 sent to a collection agency. Over half of the annual medical collections were for less than \$600, according to the study, which examined 2016 credit reports for more than 4 million unidentified people.

"A lot of these bills are much more modest than many people will think," said one of the researchers, Benedic Ippolito, an economist with the think tank American Enterprise Institute.

Hospitals or other care providers will send a bill to collections when the patient hasn't paid over a certain amount of time, often six to 12 months. That can hurt the patient's credit rating and lead to repeat phone calls from the agency that takes over the unpaid debt, according to debt experts.

The study, published recently in the journal Health Affairs, also found that trouble with medical debt can hit sooner than patients might think. Here's a deeper look inside the issue.

## WHO WINDS UP IN DEBT TROUBLE

Researchers found that the percentage of people in trouble with medical debt and the size of what is owed generally peaked at a young age, even though medical spending typically rises as people grow older.

People in their late 20s were nearly three times as likely to have a medical bill sent to collections than those in their late 60s, when people can qualify for the federal Medicare coverage program. The average size of the medical debt dropped nearly 40 percent from ages 27 to 64.

All told, about 16 percent of the credit reports included medical bills in collections.

The study's picture of medical debt had some limitations. It only identified bills that landed in collections. It doesn't show debt paid by other means like credit cards.

## WHAT PUSHES THEM THERE

The study didn't delve into the factors, but Ippolito noted that patients in their late 20s probably haven't reached their peak earnings or built up savings, and they are more likely to be uninsured.

Insurance protection also can be limited because some plans require patients to pay thousands of dollars toward a claim before coverage begins.

The extent of a patient's illness and whether they miss work often factor into debt problems, said Erin Singleton of the nonprofit Patient Advocate Foundation, which helps critically or chronically ill patients deal with debt and insurance problems. Neither Singleton nor the foundation was involved in the study.

Medical bills also can remain unpaid if patients must feed a family or pay utilities first.

"If it's a matter of paying a medical bill or putting food on the table, they're going to put food on the table," Singleton said.

## WHAT TO DO

Take action when bills arrive. Check to make sure your insurer processed the claim correctly. Many invoices list a phone number if patients have questions or need help.

"Don't put a bunch of envelopes on the top of your desk and pretend that they don't exist," Singleton said.

Billing departments typically will work with patients who have payment concerns, said Rita Robinson, a case manager for the advocacy group. They might be able to set up a payment plan or connect you with some discounts or charity that the hospital offers.

Patients can no longer get that help once a bill goes to collections.

Robinson said many patients, especially those with cancer, have more anxiety over the bills they will face than over their actual treatment. They're often worried that the treatments will stop if they can't pay their bills.

"It's very terrifying," she said.

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Follow Tom Murphy on Twitter: @thpmurphy

## Asian stocks mixed as weak dollar weighs on US economic data

By ANNABELLE LIANG, Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — Asian markets were mixed Thursday as positive sentiment from U.S. economic data and the country's willingness to strike a trade deal with Canada was shaken by a weaker dollar.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 0.2 percent to 22,883.64 and the Kospi in South

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Korea gained 0.3 percent to 2,316.35. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was 0.4 percent lower at 28,297.41. The Shanghai Composite index fell 0.6 percent to 2,752.13. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 rose 0.3 percent to 6,369.00.

**WALL STREET:** Gains by big technology companies and Amazon took U.S. indexes higher on Wednesday. Stocks have rallied for four days as investors grew more hopeful about trade talks between the U.S., Mexico and Canada. The S&P 500 index closed 0.6 percent higher at 2,914.04, a record high. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 0.2 percent to 26,124.57 and the Nasdaq composite jumped 1 percent to a record 8,109.69. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks climbed 0.4 percent to 1,734.75.

**U.S. ECONOMY GROWS:** The U.S. economy grew at a strong 4.2 percent annual rate in the April-June quarter, the best showing in nearly four years, the Commerce Department said Wednesday. Strength in business investment offset slightly slower consumer spending, placing growth on track to produce the country's strongest full-year gain in more than a decade. Economists expect growth to slow to a still-solid 3 percent annual rate the rest of the year, resulting in full-year growth of 3 percent for 2018.

**POSSIBLE TRADE DEAL:** President Donald Trump has said that efforts to reach a deal with Canada in the new North American Free Trade Agreement were "probably on track". The longtime U.S. ally and the country's second-largest trading partner after China had been left out of talks for the past five weeks. Canada has until Friday to reach a deal. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said there was a "possibility of getting to a good deal for Canada" by Trump's deadline but said the country will not sign a bad agreement. Mexico, long the target of Trump's ire, has cut a preliminary deal with the United States to replace NAFTA with a pact that's meant, among other things, to shift more manufacturing into the United States.

**ANALYST'S TAKE:** "The positive impulse seen in the U.S. market has not flown through to Asia. Weakness of the dollar has reversed sentiment in the markets overnight," Michael McCarthy, chief market strategist at CMC Markets in Sydney, said in an interview.

**ENERGY:** Oil prices have extended their gains on concerns that looming sanctions on Iran may cause supply to drop. Benchmark U.S. crude added 13 cents to \$69.64 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract edged 1.4 percent higher and closed Wednesday at \$69.51. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gained 12 cents to \$77.58 in London.

**CURRENCIES:** The dollar eased to 111.63 yen from 111.69 yen. The euro advanced to \$1.1703 from \$1.1699.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Aug. 30, the 242nd day of 2018. There are 123 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 30, 1963, the "Hot Line" communications link between Washington and Moscow went into operation.

On this date:

In 1862, Confederate forces won victories against the Union at the Second Battle of Bull Run in Manassas, Virginia, and the Battle of Richmond in Kentucky.

In 1941, during World War II, German forces approaching Leningrad cut off the remaining rail line out of the city.

In 1945, U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur arrived in Japan to set up Allied occupation headquarters.

In 1967, the Senate confirmed the appointment of Thurgood Marshall as the first black justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1983, Guion S. Bluford Jr. became the first black American astronaut to travel in space as he blasted off aboard the Challenger.

In 1984, the space shuttle Discovery was launched on its inaugural flight.

In 1986, Soviet authorities arrested Nicholas Daniloff, a correspondent for U.S. News and World Report, as a spy a week after American officials arrested Gennadiy Zakharov, a Soviet employee of the United

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Nations, on espionage charges in New York. (Both men were later released.)

In 1989, a federal jury in New York found "hotel queen" Leona Helmsley guilty of income tax evasion, but acquitted her of extortion. (Helmsley ended up serving 18 months behind bars, a month at a halfway house and two months under house arrest.)

In 1991, Azerbaijan (ah-zur-by-JAHN') declared its independence, joining the stampede of republics seeking to secede from the Soviet Union.

In 1997, Americans received word of the car crash in Paris that claimed the lives of Princess Diana, her boyfriend, Dodi Fayed, and their driver, Henri Paul. (Because of the time difference, it was August 31 where the crash occurred.)

In 2005, a day after Hurricane Katrina hit, floods were covering 80 percent of New Orleans, looting continued to spread and rescuers in helicopters and boats picked up hundreds of stranded people.

In 2007, in a serious breach of nuclear security, a B-52 bomber armed with six nuclear warheads flew cross-country unnoticed; the Air Force later punished 70 people.

Ten years ago: Hurricane Gustav slammed into Cuba as a monstrous Category 4 storm, damaging 100,000 homes and causing billions of dollars in damage, but no reported fatalities. Pro wrestling pioneer Walter "Killer" Kowalski died in Everett, Mass., at age 81.

Five years ago: Indonesia's highest court upheld a death sentence for Lindsay Sandiford, a British woman convicted of smuggling \$2.5 million worth of cocaine into the resort island of Bali. Seamus Heaney, 74, who won the Nobel Prize for literature and gained a global reputation as Ireland's greatest poet since William Butler Yeats, died in Dublin.

One year ago: The former Hurricane Harvey completed a U-turn in the Gulf of Mexico and rolled ashore for the second time in six days, hitting southwestern Louisiana as a tropical storm with heavy rains and winds of 45 miles an hour. Floodwaters began to recede in Houston, where thousands of homes were flooded. A federal judge in Texas temporarily blocked most of a new state law that would have let police officers ask people during routine stops whether they were in the country legally; the law also threatened sheriffs with jail time for not cooperating with federal immigration authorities. (The crackdown on "sanctuary cities" took effect the following March after a federal appeals court upheld the law.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Bill Daily is 91. Actress Elizabeth Ashley is 79. Actor Ben Jones is 77. Cartoonist R. Crumb is 75. Olympic gold medal skier Jean-Claude Killy is 75. Actress Peggy Lipton is 72. Comedian Lewis Black is 70. Actor Timothy Bottoms is 67. Actor David Paymer is 64. Jazz musician Gerald Albright is 61. Actor Michael Chiklis is 55. Music producer Robert Cliviles is 54. Actress Michael Michele is 52. Country musician Geoff Firebaugh is 50. Country singer Sherrie Austin is 47. Rock singer-musician Lars Frederiksen (Rancid) is 47. Actress Cameron Diaz is 46. Rock musician Leon Caffrey (Space) is 45. TV personality Lisa Ling is 45. Rock singer-musician Aaron Barrett (Reel Big Fish) is 44. Actor Raul Castillo is 41. Actor Michael Gladis is 41. Rock musician Matt Taul (Tantric; Days of the New) is 40. Tennis player Andy Roddick is 36. Singer Rachael Price (Lake Street Dive) is 33. Rock musician Ryan Ross is 32. Actress Johanna Braddy is 31. Actor Cameron Finley is 31.

Thought for Today: "Walk on air against your better judgement." — Seamus Heaney (1939-2013).