

Groton Daily Independent

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“The guardian
angels of life
fly so high as
to be beyond
our sight,
but they are
always
looking down
upon us.”

-Jean Paul
Richter



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

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225 Brown County Hwy 19 South
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Groton Area

Schedule of Events Monday, October 8, 2018

- No School: Native American Day
- 4:00pm: Volleyball: Girls 7th/8th Match at Milbank
C Team Volleyball Jamboree at Warner (All matches will be in the New Gym. No admission will be charged.)
- 5:00: Warner C vs Groton Black and Redfield vs Groton Gold
- 6:00: Warner C vs Redfield and Groton vs Warner 8th
- 7:00: Groton Black vs Redfield and Warner C vs Groton Gold

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

- Northwestern Middle School Music Festival at Mellette
- Oral Interp at Milbank High School
- 7:00pm: School Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 10, 2018

- PSAT Testing for Sophomores and Juniors at GHS.

Thursday, October 11, 2018

- All-State Chorus Day at South Dakota State University
- 1:30pm- 8:30pm: Parent/Teacher Conferences
GHS Gymnasium, Groton Area Elementary School

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Huntley Overacker was looking for the right white pumpkin at the Pumpkin Patch. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Topper Tastad was busy making lots of hot chocolate during the Pumpkin Fest held Saturday at the City Park. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton holds third Pumpkin Fest

Brooklyn Spanier was busy painting her pumpkin during the Pumpkin Fest held Saturday in Groton. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



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Serving the meal at the Pumpkin Fest were Doris Foertsch, Lori Wiley, Kami Lipp and Karyn Babcock. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



April Abeln, Tammy Guthmiller, Kayleigh Englund and Brenda Englund were going through the entries of guessing the weight of the pumpkin. The actual weight was 247 pounds and four people guessed 250 pounds. A drawing was held of the four and Caelynn Pullan won the main prize. Had-die Miller, Skyler Vensel and Justin Dewey also won prizes for their lucky guesses. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Mike Wiley had a busy day driving the train around the city park. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Once the lid was opened on the grill, lots of hands were available to quickly flip the burgers. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The Groton Kiwanis Club is celebrating its 65th anniversary this year and they served cake at the Pumpkin Fest. The servers were Reed Litch and Kathy Sundermeyer. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Hope Block and Lori Westby were busy with face painting. Block is pictured painting on her son's face, Donovan. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Three people movers from the Brown County Fair were used to shuttle the people to and from the Pumpkin Patch. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Despite the cool weather, a good crowd attended the third Pumpkin Fest held Saturday at the City Park. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Rounds Report: Kavanaugh Confirmed

October 6, 2018

Despite a prolonged 'advice and consent' process in which our Democrat colleagues went to extreme, unprecedented measures to try and stop his nomination, today the Senate confirmed Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. Judge Kavanaugh is immensely qualified to serve as a Supreme Court Justice. During the last 12 years on the D.C. Circuit Court, he has demonstrated a thorough understanding that a judge's responsibility is to interpret and apply the law and Constitution as written, not based on a judge's personal views or political motivations. He clearly recognizes the limited authority of each of the three branches of government. South Dakotans – and all Americans – stand to benefit from his judicial approach as he takes his seat on the nation's highest court.

Thune Statement on the Confirmation of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court

"Judge Kavanaugh will be an asset to our nation's highest court"

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) today issued the following statement regarding the Senate confirmation of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court.

"Judge Kavanaugh is a brilliant jurist who has spent 25 years of his life in public service. He has impeccable legal credentials and has consistently demonstrated a deep respect for our Constitution and the rule of law. Republicans came to Congress to ensure that the judges we confirm are dedicated to a faithful interpretation of the law. I have no doubt that Judge Kavanaugh will continue to demonstrate that commitment. With the confirmation of Justice Gorsuch last year and Judge Kavanaugh this year, Republicans have delivered on our promises. Judge Kavanaugh will be an asset to our nation's highest court, and I wish him the very best as he takes up this new position."



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Wolves football breaks through with 7-point victory over Concordia-St. Paul

St. Paul, Minn. – The Northern State University football team spoiled the Concordia-St. Paul homecoming festivities with a 35-28 win over the Golden Bears. The Wolves scored in all four quarters, improving to 2-4 overall this season.

Alex Gray got the Wolves on the board first with an 82-yard interception return at the 11-minute mark in the first quarter. The interception was the seniors second of the season. CSP tied things up five minutes later with a touchdown of their own, however the Wolves quickly answered back. Hunter Trautman hit Dakota Larson for a 44-yard receiving touchdown, and the duos first of the contest.

The Golden Bears evened the score in the second, followed by the second Trautman-Larson connection of the game. The 35-yard touchdown pass gave the Wolves the 21-14 lead. Concordia notched the first touchdown of the second half and the two teams traded scores in the final 30 minutes of action, as the Wolves 7-point halftime lead held. Chaka Kelly recording a 27-yard reception, and Spencer Johnson notching a 6-yard reception.

Northern combined for 100 yards rushing and 252 yards passing in the victory. The strong defensively with a season high four interceptions. The defense also added two sacks for a total loss of 20 yards, and forced a fourth down turnover by the Golden Bears.

Trautman threw for 235 yards and four interceptions, while completing 16-of-27 attempts without giving up an interception. Larson added the final 17 passing yards for the Wolves. Kelly led the Northern State rushers with 87 yards and a 15 yard long, while Larson led the receivers with 141 yards total yards, averaging 20.1 yards per catch.

Alex Gray led the Wolves defense with 12 total tackles, including five solo stops, and an 82-yard interception return for a touchdown. Preston Droessler, Josh Coyle, and Noah MacPherson each tallied ten tackles of their own sitting second on the team. Droessler and Coyle each recorded an interception, with Droessler notching a 30-yard return. Macpherson, as well as Joe Gorghuber notched the two team sacks for the Wolves, while Etienne Ezeff grabbed the final interception.

Jacob Wiedrich punted for 194 total yards, averaging 32.3 yards with a 41-yard long. The senior added 308 yards kicking off with two touchbacks and a 51-yard long. Zech Culbreath notched the two kickoff returns for the Wolves, totaling 29 yards.

Northern returns to action next Saturday from Swisher Field for the annual Blackout Cancer Game. Kickoff is set for 1 p.m. between the Wolves and Augustana.

Snyder's career high leads No. 2 Wolves over Winona State

Winona, Minn. – The No. 2 Northern State University volleyball team battled with Winona State, recording a 3-2 victory over the Warrior homecoming weekend. The Wolves fell in the first and fourth sets, 25-12 and 25-22, but recorded 25-16, 25-22, and 15-8 victories in sets two, three, and five. NSU improves to 18-1 overall and 10-1 in the NSIC, sitting atop the league standings.

Northern combined for a match high 75 kills, 68 assists, and 85 digs in the win. They added seven service aces, and 5.0 blocks, while hitting .345. Defensively, the Wolves forced 19 attack errors and held the Warriors to a .266 hitting percentage.

Laura Snyder was running on all cylinders for NSU with a team high 22 kills and .500 hitting percentage. The sophomore suffered just one attack error and added four digs. Hailey Busch followed with 17 kills of her own, as well as 13 digs, one assist, and one block.

Morgan Baufield was second on the team hitting .429 with ten kills, followed by Sally Gaul with a .370 attack percentage with 11 kills. Jenna Reiff was the final Wolf in double figures with 12 kills, hitting .286.

Ashley Rozell paced the offense to attack percentage above .300 for the first time since the September win over Minnesota Crookston. The junior tallied 61 total assists, averaging 12.2 per set, with nine digs, one block, three kills, and a team high three service aces.

Jaiden Langlie led the Wolves defense for the second straight contest with 25 total digs. The junior also added five assists, as well as two aces. Lexi Boesl was second on the defensive front with 15 digs, while Alyssa Deobler made her first appearance of the season, recording ten digs. Gaul led the team at the net with three total blocks, followed by Baufield and Reiff with two apiece.

The Wolves return to action for a midweek road contest at MSU Moorhead at 6 p.m. on Tuesday evening. They then return home next Friday at Saturday versus Wayne State and Augustana. Match start is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Friday and 5 p.m. on Saturday Wachs Arena, with the Saturday contest versus the Vikings dubbed as Pink Night sponsored by Sanford Health.

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Today in Weather History

October 7, 1970: On October 7th through the 9th, 1970 a record-breaking early season snowstorm hit parts of southern South Dakota. Snowfall of 5 to 9 inches was typical across the southwest and south central on the 7th. Late on October 8th and into the 9th of 1970 the southeast portion of the state was hit. The 5 inches that fell in Sioux Falls is the earliest significant snow on record for the area.

The heavy snows also affected portions of western Iowa and western Minnesota. Amounts of up to 7 inches were recorded in northwest Iowa. The heavy, wet snow snapped many tree branches and downed power lines. Sioux City recorded their heaviest snow for so early in the season. The snow was very wet and heavy but melted quickly over the next several days.

1825: Raging forest fires in Miramichi region of New Brunswick, Canada, destroy over 3 million acres of forest. As many as 500 people were killed. The blaze has been partly attributed to unusually hot weather in the fall and summer of 1825, coupled with outdoor fires by settlers and loggers.

1970 - Widespread flooding took place across Puerto Rico. Rainfall amounts for the day ranged up to seventeen inches at Aibonito. A slow moving tropical depression was responsible for six days of torrential rains across the island. Totals in the Eastern Interior Division averaged thirty inches, with 38.4 inches at Jayuya. Flooding claimed eighteen lives, and resulted in 62 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1981 - Seattle, WA, received four inches of rain in 24 hours, a record for the city. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - It was another hot day in the southwestern U.S. Tucson, AZ, hit 101 degrees for the second day in a row to again equal their record for the month of October. Phoenix AZ reported a record high of 103 degrees, and Blythe CA and Yuma AZ tied for honors as the hot spot in the nation with afternoon highs of 108 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Morning fog in the central U.S. reduced the visibility to near zero at some locations. Morning lows of 28 degrees at Rockford IL and 24 degrees at Waterloo IA were records for the date. Afternoon highs of 92 degrees at Hollywood FL and Miami FL were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Morning thunderstorms in central Texas drenched San Antonio with 3.10 inches of rain in six hours causing local flooding in northeastern sections of the city. Temperatures dipped below the freezing mark from the Northern Rockies to the Upper Mississippi Valley. (The National Weather Summary)

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Today



Cloudy then
Chance Rain

High: 44 °F

Tonight



Rain and
Patchy Fog

Low: 39 °F

Columbus
Day



Rain

High: 44 °F

Monday
Night



Rain

Low: 37 °F

Tuesday



Chance Rain
then Rain

High: 43 °F

Cloudy and Cold Today
Rain Moving In

Tonight

Rain
Mixed with Snow at Times
Lows: 32 - 42

Monday

Rain
Mixed with Snow in North Central
Highs: 37 - 47



Updated: 10/7/2018 4:51 AM Central

Published on: 10/07/2018 at 4:57AM

A slow moving area of low pressure will begin to affect the region today. Rain will spread north and east through the day, becoming widespread by this evening. Some snow will mix in overnight in north central SD, bringing the first measurable snow of the season before precipitation changes back over to rain on Monday. The system will stick around through mid week.

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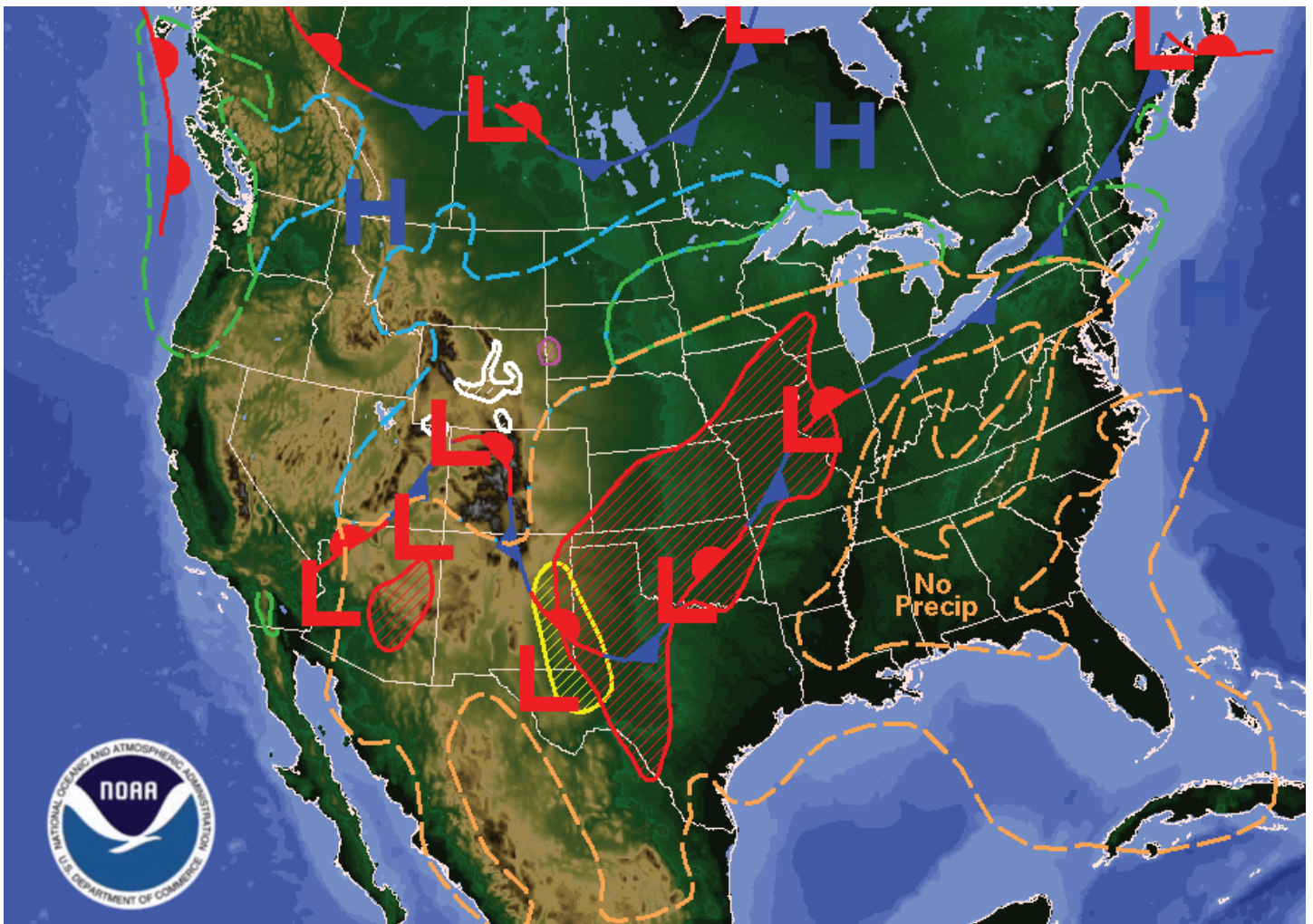
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 41 °F at 5:58 PM
Low Outside Temp: 34 °F at 8:56 AM
High Gust: 16 mph at 12:09 AM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 91° in 1909
Record Low: 14° in 2012, 1952
Average High: 62°F
Average Low: 36°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 0.47
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.21
Average Precip to date: 18.95
Precip Year to Date: 13.78
Sunset Tonight: 7:03 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:41 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sun, Oct 07, 2018, issued 4:51 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Tate with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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OUR LIMITLESS LORD

Understanding, said an angry husband, is one thing my wife knows nothing about. No doubt, there are many who would make the same statement anytime they feel that they are misunderstood. Not only do we want to be loved, but we all want to be understood as well. And, all too often, when we pour out our heart to our dearest friend, it seems that they, too, don't really care.

How precious, then, are the words of the Psalmist: Great is our Lord and mighty in power, His understanding has no limit. Our God is a God whose understanding is unlimited!

God knows our abilities as well as our possibilities, what we can and cannot do. When we understand and accept that simple fact, we will realize that He is the only one who can direct and guide us each day of our lives. He has given each of us a special skill set and has endowed us with talents and gifts that are uniquely ours and to be used for His glory. So, when He offers us an opportunity to serve Him, He will take the gifts that He has given us and empower us to do what He has called us to do.

God also knows our spiritual limitations. We must never forget for a moment that He alone can deliver us from the temptations of life if we want Him to! If we trust Him and turn to Him, we can be assured that no temptation will ever overpower us. If, when we are being tempted, we turn to Him for an escape route, He will deliver us from anything that will destroy us.

He is great, mighty and understanding. Trust Him!

Prayer: Lord, when we come to the end of our limits, may we realize that we are just at the beginning of Yours. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 147:5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power, His understanding has no limit.

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- Nov./Dec./Jan./Feb./Mar. 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)
- Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 9/7/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party

- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

06-22-23-30-35

(six, twenty-two, twenty-three, thirty, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$20,000

Lotto America

10-14-27-46-49, Star Ball: 1, ASB: 2

(ten, fourteen, twenty-seven, forty-six, forty-nine; Star Ball: one; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$8.93 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$470 million

Powerball

01-22-27-53-67, Powerball: 15, Power Play: 3

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

Estimated jackpot: \$253 million

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Central def. Brandon Valley, 25-14, 25-20, 25-6

Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. Platte-Geddes, 25-23, 25-18, 25-19

Brookings def. Yankton, 30-28, 25-18, 25-16

Burke def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-6, 25-10, 25-9

Hamlin def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-22, 14-25, 25-23, 25-22

Oldham-Ramona/Rutland def. Flandreau Indian, 25-13, 25-16, 25-14

Pine Ridge def. Custer, 25-18, 25-19, 28-26

Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Pierre, 25-27, 25-17, 26-24, 25-19

Watertown def. Harrisburg, 25-14, 26-24, 25-13

Beach Tournament

Pool Play

Pool B

Bison def. Beach, N.D., 20-11, 20-15

Bison def. Alexander, N.D., 20-15, 20-16

First Round

Bison def. Richardton-Taylor, N.D., 25-21, 25-19

Third Place

Bowman County, N.D. def. Bison, 25-12, 25-15

Chester Challenge

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Northwestern def. Chester, 31-29, 25-15, 26-24
Parker def. Madison, 25-18, 25-18, 26-24
Sioux Valley def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-20, 25-16, 25-18
Wagner def. Deubrook, 25-23, 27-25, 25-21
Warner def. Ethan, 25-22, 25-17, 25-14
Winner def. Arlington, 25-14, 22-25, 25-16, 25-19
Cody-Kilgore Triangular
Cody-Kilgore, Neb. def. Little Wound, 25-14, 25-6
Little Wound def. Hay Springs, Neb., 25-8, 25-18, 25-20
Fargo ``Scheels`` Invitational
Gold Tournament
Quarterfinal
Sioux Falls Washington def. Devils Lake, N.D., 25-23, 25-15
Semifinal
Sioux Falls Washington def. Bismarck Century, N.D., 19-25, 25-12, 15-12
First Round
Fargo Shanley, N.D. def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-19, 21-25, 15-11
Consolation Semifinal
Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Bismarck St. Mary's, N.D., 25-16, 25-18
Consolation Final
Jamestown, N.D. def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-13, 26-24
Championship
Sioux Falls Washington def. Fargo Davies, N.D., 25-20, 25-17
Gettysburg Lady Battler Invitational Tournament
Pool Play
Silver Pool
Faulkton def. Ipswich, 25-17, 25-16
Faulkton def. McIntosh, 25-12, 25-22
Ipswich def. McIntosh, 25-11, 25-16
Ipswich def. Timber Lake, 25-14, 25-13
Timber Lake def. McIntosh, 25-17, 25-14
Red Pool
Faith def. Herreid/Selby Area, 17-25, 25-21, 25-13
Faith def. Lyman, 25-22, 25-20
Faith def. Potter County, 25-15, 23-25, 25-11
Herreid/Selby Area def. Lyman, 25-22, 25-13
Herreid/Selby Area def. Potter County, 25-15, 25-11
Potter County def. Lyman, 25-14, 25-16
Third Place
Ipswich def. Herreid/Selby Area, 26-24, 26-24
Oelrichs Triangular
Oelrichs def. Dupree, 21-25, 25-21, 25-19, 17-25, 17-15
Oelrichs def. Takini, 25-21, 25-12, 25-18
St. Anthony Village Tournament
Pool Play
Pool B
Estelline/Hendricks def. Visitation, Minn., 25-13, 17-25, 15-11
Totino-Grace, Minn. def. Estelline/Hendricks, 25-13, 25-14
Silver Division
Semifinal

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Estelline/Hendricks def. West Lutheran, Minn., 25-21, 25-22
Championship

Estelline/Hendricks def. Robbinsdale Cooper, Minn., 25-12, 25-20

Estelline/Hendricks def. Robbinsdale Cooper, Minn., 25-12, 25-20

Stanley County Triangular

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. Todd County, 16-25, 25-22, 25-21, 25-15

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. Stanley County, 25-15, 25-17, 24-26, 25-18

South Dakota State tops Indiana State in OT, 54-51

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Isaac Wallace scored on a two-yard plunge in overtime to give South Dakota State a 54-51 victory over Indiana State in a Missouri Valley Conference battle on Saturday night.

The Sycamores came back from 10 points down with three minutes to play to tie the game and took the lead on Jerry Nunez's 20-yard field goal in overtime.

Ja'Quan Keys raced 57 yards for a touchdown with 2:08 to play to get Indiana State within three, 48-45.

The Jackrabbits pinned Indiana State at its own 1 with under two minutes to play, but Ryan Boyle got the Sycamores out of the hole, hitting Rontrez Morgan with a 47-yard strike to give them a first down at the South Dakota State 22. On second down, Boyle ran to the 7 to give the Sycamores a first-and-goal and with :04 left Nunez kicked a 25-yard field goal to force overtime.

Taryn Christian threw five touchdown passes to lead South Dakota State, completing 20 of 31 attempts for 229 yards. The Jackrabbits piled up 293 yards on the ground, with Pierre Strong Jr. leading the effort with 95 yards on six carries.

Boyle finished 19 of 29 for 276 yards passing and two touchdowns. Keys had 19 carries for 159 yards rushing.

South Dakota holds off Missouri State 35-28

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Austin Simmons threw a go-ahead TD pass to Levi Falck early in the fourth quarter and South Dakota had a late goal-line stand to hold off Missouri State 35-28 on Saturday.

The Coyotes (3-2, 2-0 Missouri Valley Conference) were trailing 28-27 when Simmons hit Falck from 40 yards out and then Simmons connected with Dakarai Allen for the 2-point conversion to cap the scoring.

The Bears (3-2, 1-1) drove to the 1 with a chance to tie, but Donovan Daniels ran for no gain on a third-and-goal and was stuffed for a 2-yard loss on fourth with 2:22 left in the game.

Simmons finished 28 of 38 for 337 yards with one touchdown. South Dakota had no turnovers compared to Missouri State's three.

Peyton Huslig passed for 283 yards, two touchdowns and an interception and ran for 91 yards and two touchdowns for Missouri State.

86-year-old man dies in 2-vehicle crash in Lincoln County

HARRISBURG, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say an 86-year-old man died in a crash west of Harrisburg, in Lincoln County.

The Highway Patrol says the accident happened about 1 p.m. Friday when the man who was killed turned his vehicle in front of a semi with no trailer attached. He died later at a Sioux Falls hospital.

The semi driver was not injured. A passenger in the semi suffered injuries that were not believed to be life-threatening.

Names of those involved in the crash have not been released.

Standing Rock Sioux forming volunteer firefighter program

FORT YATES, N.D. (AP) — The Standing Rock Sioux tribe has formed a volunteer firefighter program, with a long-term goal of creating a full-time fire department on the reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border.

The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs has a wildfire team on the 3,600-square-mile reservation, but the tribe has never had a fire station nor a group of people trained to fight structure fires.

"If we have a fire, the house just burns to the ground," tribal Emergency Manager Elliott Ward told The Bismarck Tribune.

The tribe used a grant of about \$260,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to recruit and train volunteers for the Akicita Fire Program. Up to 18 men have been training since April, and they recently conducted a mock fire drill.

"It's been a learning experience. A lot of knowledge in a short period of time," said volunteer Wyatt Red Tomahawk. "The community doesn't have a structural fire department, so it'd be nice to be a part of the foundation that's being laid for future firefighters."

The volunteers will graduate in about a month from the program being managed by Bismarck-based Heartland Consulting Group. More volunteers will start training next March.

Tribal Chairman Mike Faith said the goal is to eventually have fire stations on both sides of the border, in Fort Yates in North Dakota and either Little Eagle or McLaughlin in South Dakota.

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

Badlands National Park considers renovation plans

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Badlands National Park is considering renovations and new construction to meet the growing needs of visitors and park administrative functions.

The proposal recently released would upgrade the park's visitor center, headquarters, lodge, campground and other facilities in the Cedar Pass area, the Rapid City Journal reported. The plan and environmental assessment are open to public comments through Nov. 2.

"The proposed project is needed because current visitor and employee facilities at the Cedar Pass area do not meet the needs of visitors, the concessioner, or the park," the planning document states.

More than 1 million people visited the park last year. Some of the park's administrative functions are currently being housed in temporary trailers.

Current facilities are inadequate in space and function and were never intended to be a long-term solution, according to the documents.

Park officials are considering four alternatives. The first alternative includes no action, but the other three would improve existing facilities through renovation or new construction.

The National Park Service prefers the fourth option, which is designed to "redefine the experience at Cedar Pass," according to the planning documents.

The plan would build a new visitor center that "would provide an architectural experience worth of a world-class park," the documents state.

The fourth alternative plan calls for demolishing the main building at the Cedar Pass Lodge, which was built in 1938. The lodge would be replaced with a new larger building.

Cedar Pass Campground would also be renovated to accommodate more recreational vehicles, expand camping cabins and increase the number of restrooms and showers.

The second alternative plan focuses on the rehabilitation of existing buildings. The third alternative involves new construction but consolidating buildings on a smaller overall footprint.

Christine Czazasty, the park's chief of interpretation and education, said cost estimates are being prepared and then potential funding sources will be examined.

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

Romanians vote on changing the definition of marriage

By ALISON MUTLER, Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Romanians were voting Sunday for a second day on a constitutional amendment backed by the influential Romanian Orthodox Church that would make it harder to legalize same-sex marriage.

The conservative Coalition for Family initiated the referendum and Orthodox priests during Sunday services encouraged the faithful to vote.

The proposed amendment would change the definition of family in Romania's Constitution to make marriage a union between a man and a woman instead of between "spouses." Same-sex marriage is already illegal in Romania.

The Central Electoral Bureau said 11.67 percent of voters had cast a ballot by lunchtime Sunday in the two-day referendum. The vote requires a 30 percent turnout to be valid.

Concerned about the low turnout, Patriarch Daniel on Sunday called on Romanians who hadn't vote to "vote before it's too late."

"We call on you to vote, to have this honor, to demonstrate this freedom and right, and to receive God's blessing for all his good works" he wrote on the basilica.ro website.

Opponents say the new constitutional language could make LGBT people feel more like second-class citizens and could discriminate against non-traditional families. They also say the amendment is unnecessary since Romanian civil law already says that marriage is a union between a man and a woman.

In the village of Adunati-Copaceni, south of Bucharest, the capital, only 62 people had cast their vote by midmorning out of a total electorate of 1,147.

Priests leading worship at St. Mary's Church encouraged the congregation to vote. Retired farmer Ana Buturgianu, 69, said she'd heed that advice as did Andrei Aurelian, a 53-year-old cashier.

"The vote is for us and for our children. It's normal to have a man and a woman, not two men together," Aurelian said.

But Bucharest resident Marin Soare, 50, who was cycling through the village Sunday, was boycotting the vote, calling it "a waste of money."

"We already have traditional families in Romania and have done so for 2,000 years," he said. "And there's always been same-sex relationships."

Alex Hartan, 23, a hemophiliac who relies on an electric wheelchair, said he was opposed to legalizing same-sex marriages but thinks the traditional family is not under threat in Romania.

"I can't vote in any case, as I can't get into the polling station with my wheelchair," he noted.

Indonesian officials fear 5,000 missing as Christians pray

By STEPHEN WRIGHT and EILEEN NG, Associated Press

PALU, Indonesia (AP) — Christians dressed in their tidiest clothes flocked to Sunday sermons in the earthquake and tsunami damaged Indonesian city of Palu, seeking answers as the death toll from the twin disasters breached 1,700 and officials said they feared more than 5,000 others could be missing.

Indonesia's disaster agency said the number of dead had climbed to 1,763, mostly in Palu. Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said many more people could be buried, especially in the Palu neighborhoods of Petobo and Balaroa, where more than 3,000 homes were damaged or sucked into deep mud when the Sept. 28 quake caused loose soil to liquefy.

"Based on reports from village chiefs in Balaroa and Petobo, some 5,000 people have not been found. Our workers on the ground are trying to confirm this," he said at a news briefing in Jakarta, Indonesia's capital.

Nugroho said that efforts to retrieve decomposed bodies in deep, soft mud were getting tougher and that some people may have fled or been rescued and evacuated. More than 8,000 either injured or vulnerable residents have been flown or shipped out of Palu, while others could have left by land, he said.

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Officially, Nugroho said only 265 people are confirmed missing and 152 others still buried under mud and rubble, nine days after the magnitude 7.5 earthquake and powerful tsunami hit Palu and surrounding areas.

The government targets to end search operations by Thursday, nearly two weeks after the disaster, at which time those unaccounted for will be declared missing and considered dead, Nugroho said.

In Palu on Sunday, at least 200 people, including soldiers, filled the gray pews of the Protestant Manunggal church for a service.

They sang as a young girl in a black and white dress with a red bow danced in the aisle, prayed and listened to a 30-minute sermon from the pastor, Lucky Malonda. A woman in the front pew wept.

Min Kapala, a 49-year-old teacher, said she came to the city of more than 25 churches from an outlying area because her usual house of worship was destroyed and liquefaction moved a different piece of ground to its location.

"I'm here at this particular church because my own church is no more; it's leveled, and on its location there's a corn plant," she said. "That was very strange to me."

Outside the church, Malonda said the intensity of the disaster had taken even scientists by surprise and called it the will of God. Two people from his congregation were missing, he said.

"This is for sure part of godly intervention, not outside the power of almighty God, that can't be predicted or planned for by anything," Malonda said.

He said religious leaders are discussing holding inter-faith prayers but nothing has been agreed yet.

Protestants, Catholics and Charismatics make up about 10 percent of the population of Palu, the provincial capital of Central Sulawesi. The province has a history of violent conflict between Muslims and Christians, though tensions have calmed in the past decade. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim country.

As searchers continued to dig through rubble Sunday, Central Sulawesi Gov. Loki Djanggola said local officials were meeting with religious groups and families of victims to seek their consent to turn neighborhoods wiped out by liquefaction into mass graves.

He said on local television that survivors in the Petobo, Balaroa and Jono Oge neighborhoods could be relocated and monuments be built in the areas, which now look like wastelands, to remember the victims interred there. Officials have said that it is not safe for heavy equipment to operate in those areas and that they fear the risk of the spread of disease from decomposed bodies.

While grappling with immediate relief needs, the government is also mapping out plans to help more than 70,000 people, including tens of thousands of children, who have been displaced by the disasters to rebuild their lives.

Social welfare officials have set up nurseries in makeshift tents as a stopgap to keep children safe and help them heal from the trauma.

Market vendors have resumed business and roadside restaurants were open in Palu, but long lines of cars and motorcycles still snarled out of gas stations.

In Jakarta, volunteers walked around thoroughfares empty of cars collecting donations for earthquake victims during the weekly car-free morning in the city center.

Ng reported from Jakarta, Indonesia.

Bosnians vote in divisive election testing potential EU bid

By JOVANA GEC, Associated Press

BANJA LUKA, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Bosnians were voting Sunday in a general election that could install a pro-Russian nationalist to a top post and cement the ethnic divisions of a country that faced a brutal war 25 years ago.

The ballot is seen as a test of whether Bosnia will move toward integration in the European Union and NATO or remain entrenched in rivalries stemming from the 1992-95 war.

Some 3.3 million people were eligible to vote for an array of institutions in Bosnia's complex governing system, which was created by a peace accord that ended the war that killed 100,000 people and left mil-

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lions homeless.

The country consists of two regional mini-states — one Serb-run and a Muslim-Croat entity — with joint institutions in a central government. Voters are casting ballots for the three-person Bosnian presidency, the Serb president, and the two entities' parliaments and cantonal authorities.

The campaign was marred by divisive rhetoric and allegations of irregularities that fueled tensions. In a show of widespread popular discontent with Bosnia's politicians, thousands rallied at anti-corruption protests Friday in Sarajevo and in the main Serb city of Banja Luka.

Bosnia's Serbs and Croats want to move closer to their ethnic kin in neighboring Serbia and Croatia, while the Muslims want to keep Bosnia together. The issue was at the core of the 1990s' war.

The main focus is on the race for Bosnia's three-member presidency, because of the candidacy of hard-line Serb leader Milorad Dodik, who advocates eventual Serb separation from Bosnia. Dodik is a key Balkan ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin and his victory would mean stronger Russian influence.

Dodik is shifting to the race for the Bosnian presidency because of term limits for his current job leading the Bosnian Serb regional mini-state. His ruling coalition hopes to maintain a firm grip on power in the Serb region.

He urged the voters Sunday to elect a "complex and unified" government that will preserve the unity of Republika Srpska, the Serb entity and work to further benefit it.

"Of course I expect a victory, a big victory that will enable for important work to be done for Republika Srpska," he said.

The current Serb member of the federal presidency and a relative moderate, Mladen Ivanic, is also running, backed by an opposition Serb coalition that hopes to undermine Dodik's rule.

Ivanic was also optimistic Sunday.

"I wouldn't run if I didn't believe I could win," he said.

The main ethnic Croatian presidential candidate, Dragan Covic, is also dashing hopes that Bosnia will be strengthened as a multi-ethnic union. Covic seeks the formation of a third government body, a Croat mini-state that would spell further fragmentation for the fragile nation.

He urged voters to "deliver a clear, new message" they want to turn Bosnia into a country of "absolute constitutional equality" for all ethnic groups.

Liberal candidates who back a civil society free of ethnic divisions largely have been pushed to the margins. Observers say widespread voter apathy also diminishes chances of an election surprise, despite high unemployment and widespread corruption in the Balkan nation.

"I expect a lot, but I have little hope that something will change," said Dragica Ruzic, a 72 year-old retiree from the Bosnian Serb region.

At the other side of Bosnia's ethnic divide in the capital of Sarajevo, worker Kemal Cengic, 57, said he wished "someone younger wins."

"Anyone really, just not those who have been in power so far," he said. "I don't care who wins, as long as it's someone new. There is great potential here among the young people."

Sabina Niksic contributed from Sarajevo.

Trump refugee policy leaves thousands stranded outside US

By SUSANNAH GEORGE and COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Death threats drove Hadi Mohammed out of Iraq and to a small apartment in Nebraska, where he and his two young sons managed to settle as refugees. But the danger hasn't been enough to allow his wife to join them.

Mohammed, who worked as a security guard for the U.S. military in Baghdad, says he was initially told his wife would be reunited with him and the boys within a month. The wait has now dragged on for more than a year as she goes through stricter screening imposed by the Trump administration.

Mohammed says it's been an agonizing wait, especially for his 9-year-old son. "Every night he cries

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about mom, I need mom," he said in halting English as he sat on a couch with the boy in their apartment in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Tens of thousands of people are experiencing similar anguished waits as the number of refugees entering the U.S. falls to historic lows because of tighter scrutiny that administration officials say is necessary for security. Critics say it amounts to an abandonment of the country's historic humanitarian role and discriminates against certain groups, particularly Muslims.

The U.S. admitted 22,491 refugees in the budget year that ended Sept. 30. That's one-quarter of the number allowed to enter two years ago and the lowest since Congress passed a law in 1980 creating the modern resettlement system.

It was less than half the maximum that the administration had said it would allow, even with millions of people seeking to escape war and famine around the world.

"It's unfortunate for the refugees who could have come this year and didn't," said Jen Smyers with Church World Service, an organization that supports refugees and immigrants. "But these low numbers also show the U.S. turning away from a global leadership role on this issue."

Last month, the cap was set even lower, at 30,000, for the new budget year. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said at the time the U.S. remained "the most generous nation in the world when it comes to protection-based immigration" but that the government needed to work through a backlog of pending asylum cases and support efforts to resettle people closer to home, so they can eventually return.

Behind the reduction are more stringent security protocols for citizens of 11 countries designated by the administration as presenting the greatest potential threat. People from four of them — Iraq, Iran, Syria and Somalia — made up 41 percent of refugees allowed into the U.S. in 2016 and 2017. Now, they make up just 2 percent as people such as Mohammed's wife, whose name he does not want to publicize out of fear for her safety, face much lengthier background checks.

Mohammed, 52, provided security at American military bases in central Baghdad and just north of the Iraqi capital from 2008 to 2014. After a five-year wait, he received word that he had been approved to come to the U.S. as a refugee in June 2017 with his sons. The family was told the wife would be approved soon. In correspondence from the State Department, his wife was told that her application was undergoing "additional administrative processing" but gave little other information. "Unfortunately, we cannot predict how long this administrative review will take."

Another Iraqi, who worked as a translator for the U.S. military and now lives in Utah, said he has been waiting for two years to get his mother and brothers to join him. "If my brother is killed ... I will spend the rest of my life blaming myself for putting my family in harm's way," said the 41-year-old man, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he fears for his family's safety in Iraq.

The State Department acknowledges that the screening and vetting procedures have resulted in fewer refugee admissions in 2018.

The tighter screening of refugees reflects one of the signature issues for President Donald Trump, who imposed a travel ban on people from seven majority Muslim countries as one of his first actions upon taking office in January 2017.

The Department of Homeland Security has since made it harder to enter the U.S. entirely, with more rigorous interviews and background checks. Administration officials say refugee applicants are now subject to strictest, most comprehensive background check process for any group seeking to come to the U.S.

Officials collect more data on refugee applicants and conduct higher-level security vetting. Officers have been given training on how to determine credibility. Fraud detection and national security officers now come oversees with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services teams who are processing refugees.

Officials say the security changes may lead to temporary slowdowns in admissions but it wouldn't be permanent and the U.S. continues to help the world's most vulnerable people.

Administration officials say the U.S. remains at the forefront of helping those fleeing persecution, and they note that from the 2008 budget year to 2017, the U.S. gave lawful permanent resident status to 1.7 million people for humanitarian reasons. "We will continue to assist the world's most vulnerable while never losing sight of our first duty, serving the American people," Pompeo said last month.

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In his speech to the United Nations last month, Trump highlighted his administration's approach as he singled out Jordan, which has taken in at least 650,000 refugees from Syria since the war in their country started in 2011. "The most compassionate policy is to place refugees as close to their homes as possible to ease their eventual return to be part of the rebuilding process," he said.

In choosing who can enter as a refugee, the administration is also showing a preference for people from countries that don't have a majority Muslim population.

Refugees from Ukraine and the Democratic Republic of Congo made up more than 46 percent of refugee admissions in 2018, compared with 22 percent in 2016.

The number of Muslim refugees allowed into the U.S. also has dropped. Christians made up 63 percent of all refugee admissions in 2018, compared with 40 percent in 2017. Muslims, who had been 42 percent of all refugee admissions in 2017, were only 14 percent in 2018.

There were 140 Iraqis accepted during the just-ended budget year, down from 6,886 the year before.

Mohammed's son says his father is lost without his mother: He can't cook, he can't take care of the children very well alone and they need her. Plus, they're afraid of what will happen if she doesn't leave Baghdad. Mohammed worries she could be a target because he provided security at U.S. military bases.

"For my family to be at peace, I need to know that my wife is safe," he said. "But I would never change my decision and return to Iraq. Coming to the United States was an answer to my prayers."

Associated Press data journalists Meghan Hoyer and Michelle Minkoff contributed to this report.

Pompeo cites progress made with Kim Jong Un on N. Korea trip

By MATTHEW LEE, AP Diplomatic Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that he and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made unspecified progress Sunday toward an agreement for the North to give up its nuclear weapons.

But there was no immediate indication whether Pompeo had managed to arrange a much-anticipated second summit between Kim and President Donald Trump.

Arriving in Seoul after several hours in Pyongyang on his fourth visit to North Korea, Pompeo tweeted that he had a "good trip" and that he and Kim "continue to make progress on agreements made at Singapore summit." Trump and Kim held a historic summit there in June that resulted in a vague agreement for the North to denuclearize.

The top U.S. diplomat offered no details, and upon landing in South Korea, he briefed White House national security adviser John Bolton and Trump chief of staff John Kelly on his trip, officials said.

Pompeo, on the third stop of a four-leg Asian tour that began in Japan and was to end in China on Monday, then met South Korea's president, Moon Jae-in. Moon, who has met twice with Kim, asked Pompeo to make public as much information as he could about the trip.

"I dearly hope that your latest visit, as well as the upcoming U.S.-North Korea summit, which I hope will be happening soon, will make an irreversible, decisive progress in terms of the denuclearization as well as the peace process," Moon said. "Since we have the media present here, I would like to ask you to disclose anything that you can open to the public here."

Pompeo declined that opportunity.

"I will certainly tell you in private about our conversation, but we had a good, productive conversation," Pompeo said. "As President Trump said, there are many steps along the way and we took one of them today. It was another step forward. So this is, I think, a good outcome for all of us."

Moon's office said in a statement later that Pompeo told Moon that the North Korean leader had agreed a second summit with Trump "should be held as soon as possible," and that talks on the timing and location would continue.

In Pyongyang, Pompeo and Kim met for about 3 1/2 hours, first in a business session and then in a

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90-minute luncheon that the North Korean leader hosted at a state guesthouse, according to the pool report from the lone U.S. journalist allowed to accompany Pompeo on his Asia trip.

"It's a very nice day that promises a good future for both countries," Kim told Pompeo through an interpreter as they sat down for the meal.

"Yeah, so we had a great, great visit this morning," Pompeo replied. "Thank you for hosting, President Trump sends his regards. And we had a very successful morning so thank you and I am looking forward to our time here at lunch as well."

On the North Korean side, Kim was joined at the lunch by his sister, Kim Yo Jong, and his former intelligence chief Kim Yong Chol, who has been Pompeo's chief interlocutor.

Aside from Pompeo, the U.S. side included Stephen Biegun, the new U.S. special envoy for North Korea, and Andrew Kim, who heads a Korea working group at the CIA that Pompeo set up while he was running the agency.

Pompeo and Kim had exchanged pleasantries and appeared chummy while they walked into the banquet room. "It's good to see you again," Pompeo said as they shook hands. Pompeo placed his hand on Kim's shoulder and they both smiled.

"So is everything OK?" Kim asked Pompeo.

"Everything is great," Pompeo replied. "Everything is great. I am very much looking forward to our time together too."

Other members of the two delegations ate their five-course meal, which included delicacies such as foie gras, conch soup, steak, grilled pine mushrooms and chocolate cake, sweet red wine and soju, in a separate room.

Pompeo had planned to meet with Kim on Sunday's trip, but North Korean officials said Kim's participation in the luncheon had not been expected. Pompeo had not met with Kim on his last visit and Trump had abruptly canceled Pompeo's plans to travel to North Korea last month, citing a lack of progress in the negotiations.

Pompeo earlier held talks in Tokyo with Japan's prime minister, and pledged that the Trump administration would coordinate and unify its strategy for denuclearization with its allies. Japan has been wary of the initiative, but South Korea has embraced it.

Pompeo has repeatedly refused to discuss details of negotiations, including a U.S. position on North Korea's demand for a declared end to the Korean War and a proposal from Seoul for such a declaration to be accompanied by a shutdown of the North's main known nuclear facility.

The U.S. and Japan have pushed for the North to compile and turn over a detailed list of its nuclear sites to be dismantled as a next step in the process. The North has rejected that.

Since the denuclearization effort got underway with a secret visit to the North by then-CIA chief Pompeo in April, there has been only limited progress, even since the June 12 Trump-Kim summit that many had hoped would jump-start the effort.

North Korea so far has suspended nuclear and missile tests, freed three American prisoners and dismantled parts of a missile engine facility and tunnel entrances at a nuclear test site. It has not taken any steps to halt nuclear weapons or missile development.

The North has accused Washington of making "unilateral and gangster-like" demands on denuclearization and has insisted that sanctions should be lifted before any progress in nuclear talks. U.S. officials have thus far said the penalties will remain in place until the North's denuclearization is fully verified.

Associated Press writer Tong-hyung Kim contributed to this report.

'Tremendous victory': Trump celebrates Kavanaugh win

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — President Donald Trump at a Kansas rally celebrated the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, condemning Democrats for what he called a "shameless campaign of political and personal destruction" against his nominee.

To cheers of supporters at the Kansas ExpoCentre in Topeka, Trump declared it an "historic night," not long after signing the paperwork to make Kavanaugh's status official.

"I stand before you today on the heels of a tremendous victory for our nation," he said to roars, thanking Republican senators for refusing to back down "in the face of the Democrats' shameless campaign of political and personal destruction."

Kavanaugh was sworn in as a justice Saturday evening in Washington after an extraordinarily fraught nomination that sparked angry protests, nail-biting votes and a national reckoning about sexual assault allegations and who should be believed. Kavanaugh staunchly denied the allegations, but nearly all Senate Democrats voted against his confirmation.

The final vote took place Saturday afternoon as the president was flying to Kansas aboard Air Force One, and he invited traveling reporters to his private office to watch the climactic roll call, which was interrupted several times by protesters in the Senate galleries before Capitol Police removed them.

When it was official, Trump delivered a double thumbs-up from his desk. Several aides applauded.

"Very, very good," Trump said. "Very happy about it. Great decision. I very much appreciate those 50 great votes and I think he's going to go down as a totally brilliant Supreme Court Justice for many years."

Trump, throughout the day, insisted Kavanaugh would not be tainted by the sexual assault allegations from Christine Blasey Ford and others that nearly tanked his nomination. Trump said he was "100 percent" certain Kavanaugh was innocent.

"I have no doubt," Trump said, telling reporters that he had chosen Kavanaugh, in part, because "there's nobody with a squeaky-clean past like Brett Kavanaugh." He said the FBI had done seven background investigations and argued that, had there been an issue, it would have surfaced sooner.

"If there was even a scintilla of something wrong — he was a very big judge for many years on what they call the second highest court — that would have come out loud and clear," he said.

Throughout the day, Trump also kept his focus on the opposition, saying Kavanaugh had withstood a "horrible, horrible attack" that "nobody should have to go through."

He continued lashing out at Democrats when he rallied supporters in Topeka, telling them "radical Democrats" have become "an angry, left-wing mob" and "too dangerous and too extreme to govern." He urged Kansas voters to send Republicans to Congress.

"You don't hand matches to an arsonist and you don't give power to an angry left-wing mob. And that's what they've become," he said.

Kavanaugh's nomination sparked protest across the Capitol, which continued Saturday. When the vote was over, hundreds of protesters massed on the Supreme Court steps, chanting, "We believe survivors."

Asked by reporters aboard Air Force One what message he had for women across the country who feel the nomination sends a message that their allegations of sexual assault aren't believed, Trump disagreed with the premise, saying women "were outraged at what happened to Brett Kavanaugh" and "were in many ways stronger than the men in his favor."

"We have a lot of women that are extremely happy — a tremendous number — because they're thinking of their sons, they're thinking of their husbands and their brothers and their uncles and others and women are, I think, extremely happy," he added.

Trump has repeatedly sided with men accused of sexual misconduct and has warned of the dangers false accusations pose to men — even though research has shown false accusations to be extremely rare.

Pointing to television footage of protesters outside the Capitol, he said their numbers paled in comparison to the thousands of supporters awaiting him in Kansas.

"The crowd in front of the U.S. Supreme Court is tiny, looks like about 200 people (& most are onlook-

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ers) - that wouldn't even fill the first couple of rows of our Kansas Rally, or any of our Rallies for that matter!" he tweeted.

Trump also revealed that he believed a widely criticized rally speech in which he mocked Ford's Senate testimony had been a turning point for the nomination, changing the momentum in his favor.

"I think that the Mississippi speech had great impact," he said, calling it "a very important thing."

He later told Fox News host Jeanine Pirro in an interview from his limousine that once he made the comments, "it started to sail through."

Advisers and Senate leaders had urged Trump not to attack Ford publicly, worried such a move would anger on-the-fence senators. But Trump went after her anyway, mocking her testimony and gaps in her memory as a rally crowd laughed and cheered.

"I thought I had to even the playing field," he said.

Trump was in Kansas to campaign for Kris Kobach, secretary of state and the Republican nominee for governor, and Steve Watkins, the GOP nominee in the 2nd Congressional District of eastern Kansas. Retiring Republican Rep. Lynn Jenkins holds the seat, and Democrats hope to flip it. Both joined him on stage at the Expoentre to speak.

Trump has been holding rallies across the country as he tries to boost Republican turnout in November's midterm elections, which will determine which party will control the House and Senate during the second half of Trump's term.

He said Saturday he thinks Republicans "are going to do incredibly well" in the elections after Kavanaugh's confirmation.

"I think we have a momentum that hasn't been seen in years," he said.

Follow Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

Kavanaugh sworn in as protesters chant outside Supreme Court

By ALAN FRAM, LISA MASCARO and MATTHEW DALY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Brett Kavanaugh was sworn in as the 114th justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, after a wrenching debate over sexual misconduct and judicial temperament that shattered the Senate, captivated the nation and ushered in an acrimonious new level of polarization — now encroaching on the court that the 53-year-old judge may well swing rightward for decades to come.

Even as Kavanaugh took his oath of office Saturday evening in a quiet private ceremony, not long after the narrowest Senate confirmation in nearly a century and a half, protesters chanted outside the court building across the street from the Capitol.

The climactic 50-48 roll call capped a fight that seized the national conversation after claims emerged that he had sexually assaulted women three decades ago — allegations he emphatically denied. Those accusations transformed the clash from a routine struggle over judicial ideology into an angry jumble of questions about victims' rights, the presumption of innocence and personal attacks on nominees.

His confirmation provides a defining accomplishment for President Donald Trump and the Republican Party, which found a unifying force in the cause of putting a new conservative majority on the court. Before the sexual accusations grabbed the Senate's and the nation's attention, Democrats had argued that Kavanaugh's rulings and writings as an appeals court judge raised serious concerns about his views on abortion rights and a president's right to bat away legal probes.

Trump, flying to Kansas for a political rally, flashed a thumbs-up gesture when the tally was announced and praised Kavanaugh for being "able to withstand this horrible, horrible attack by the Democrats." He later telephoned his congratulations to the new justice, then at the rally returned to his own attack on the Democrats as "an angry left-wing mob."

Like Trump, senators at the Capitol predicted voters would react strongly by defeating the other party's candidates in next month's congressional elections.

"It's turned our base on fire," declared Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. But

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Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York forecast gains for his party instead: "Change must come from where change in America always begins: the ballot box."

The justices themselves made a quiet show of solidarity. Kavanaugh was sworn in by Chief Justice John Roberts and the man he's replacing, retired Justice Anthony Kennedy, as fellow Justices Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Elena Kagan looked on — two conservatives and two liberals.

Still, Kagan noted the night before that Kennedy has been "a person who found the center" and "it's not so clear we'll have that" now.

Noisy to the end, the Senate battle featured a call of the roll that was interrupted several times by protesters shouting in the spectators' gallery before Capitol Police removed them. Vice President Mike Pence presided, his potential tie-breaking vote unnecessary.

Trump has now put his stamp on the court with his second justice in as many years. Yet Kavanaugh is joining under a cloud. Accusations from several women remain under scrutiny, and House Democrats have pledged further investigation if they win the majority in November. Outside groups are culling an unusually long paper trail from his previous government and political work, with the National Archives and Records Administration expected to release a cache of millions of documents later this month.

Kavanaugh, a father of two, strenuously denied the allegations of Christine Blasey Ford, who says he sexually assaulted her when they were teens. An appellate court judge on the District of Columbia circuit for the past 12 years, he pushed for the Senate vote as hard as Republican leaders — not just to reach this capstone of his legal career, but in fighting to clear his name.

After Ford's allegations, Democrats and their allies became engaged as seldom before, though there were obvious echoes of Thomas' combative confirmation over the sexual harassment accusations of Anita Hill, who worked for him at two federal agencies. Protesters began swarming Capitol Hill, creating a tense, confrontational atmosphere that put Capitol Police on edge.

As exhausted senators prepared for Saturday's vote, some were flanked by security guards. Hangers and worse have been delivered to their offices, a *Roe v. Wade* reference.

Some 164 people were arrested, most for demonstrating on the Capitol steps, 14 for disrupting the Senate's roll call vote.

McConnell told The Associated Press in an interview that the "mob" of opposition — confronting senators in the hallways and at their homes — united his narrowly divided GOP majority as Kavanaugh's confirmation teetered and will give momentum to his party this fall.

Beyond the sexual misconduct allegations, Democrats raised questions about Kavanaugh's temperament and impartiality after he delivered defiant, emotional testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee where he denounced their party.

Schumer said Kavanaugh's "partisan screed" showed not only a temperament unfitting for the high court but a lack of objectivity that should make him ineligible to serve. At one point in the hearing, Kavanaugh blamed a Clinton-revenge conspiracy for the accusations against him.

The fight ended up less about judicial views than the sexual assault accusations that riveted the nation and are certain to continue a national debate and #MeToo reckoning that is yet to be resolved.

Republicans argued that a supplemental FBI investigation instigated by wavering GOP senators and ordered by the White House turned up no corroborating witnesses to the claims and that Kavanaugh had sterling credentials for the court. Democrats dismissed the truncated report as insufficient.

In the end, all but one Republican, Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, lined up behind the judge. She said on the Senate floor late Friday that Kavanaugh is "a good man" but his "appearance of impropriety has become unavoidable."

In a twist, Murkowski voted "present" Saturday as a courtesy to Republican Kavanaugh supporter Steve Daines, who was to walk his daughter down the aisle at her wedding in Montana. That balanced out the absence without affecting the outcome, and gave Kavanaugh the same two-vote margin he'd have received had both lawmakers voted.

It was the closest roll call to confirm a justice since 1881, when Stanley Matthews was approved 24-23,

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according to Senate records.

As the Senate tried to recover from its charged atmosphere, Murkowski's move offered a moment of civility. "I do hope that it reminds us that we can take very small steps to be gracious with one another and maybe those small gracious steps can lead to more," she said.

Republicans control the Senate by a meager 51-49 margin, and announcements of support Friday from Republicans Jeff Flake of Arizona and Susan Collins of Maine, along with Democrat Joe Manchin of West Virginia, locked in the needed votes.

Manchin was the only Democrat to vote for Kavanaugh's confirmation. He expressed empathy for sexual assault victims, but said that after factoring in the FBI report, "I have found Judge Kavanaugh to be a qualified jurist who will follow the Constitution."

A procedural vote Friday made Saturday's confirmation a foregone conclusion. White House Counsel Don McGahn, who helped salvage Kavanaugh's nomination as it teetered, sat in the front row of the visitors' gallery for the vote with deputy White House press secretary Raj Shah.

Senators on both sides know they have work to do to put the chamber back together again after a ferocious debate that saw them arguing over the sordid details of high school drinking games, sexual allegations and cryptic yearbook entries.

Sen. John Cornyn of Texas said, "The Senate has been an embarrassment. We have a lot of work to do."

Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick, Padmananda Rama, Ken Thomas, Catherine Lucey, Juliet Linderman and Mark Sherman contributed to this report.

Brazil votes amid anger at the ruling class

By SARAH DiLORENZO, Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Brazilians are choosing their leaders Sunday in an election marked by intense anger at the ruling class following years of political and economic turmoil, including what may be the largest corruption scandal in Latin American history.

Many had thought that "throw-the-bums-out" rage would buoy the chances of an outsider and end the hegemony of the center-left Workers' Party and the center-right Brazilian Social Democracy Party, which have for years battled it out for the presidency.

Like much in this election, it hasn't turned out as predicted. The man who has benefited most from the anger is a 27-year veteran of Congress — Jair Bolsonaro — whose outsider status is based largely on hard-right positions that have alienated as many as they have attracted — nostalgia for a military dictatorship, insults to women and gay people and calls to fight crime by loosening controls on already deadly police forces.

In second place is former Sao Paulo Mayor Fernando Haddad of the Workers' Party, which has won the last four presidential elections.

Bolsonaro garnered 36 percent in the latest Datafolha poll, with Haddad 14 points behind. The poll interviewed 19,552 people Friday and Saturday and has a margin of error of 2 percentage points. If no one gets a majority on Sunday, a runoff will be held Oct. 28.

"In general, these are the strangest elections I've ever seen," said Monica de Bolle, director of Latin American Studies at Johns Hopkins University. "It's shaping up to be a contest between the two weakest candidates possible."

The campaign to run Latin America's largest economy, which is a major trade partner for countries in the region and a diplomatic heavyweight, has been unpredictable and tense. Former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva led initial polls by a wide margin, but was banned from running after a corruption conviction. Bolsonaro was stabbed at a rally in early September and campaigned from a hospital bed in recent weeks. And all along, Brazilians have said their faith in their leaders and their hopes for the future are waning.

This election was once seen as the great hope for ending a turbulent era in which many politicians and business executives were jailed on corruption charges, a president was impeached and removed from

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office in controversial proceedings, and the economy suffered a protracted recession.

Instead, the two front-runners merely reflect the rabid divisions that have opened up in Brazilian politics following Dilma Rousseff's impeachment and the revelations emerging from the "Car Wash" graft probe.

Bolsonaro, whose base tends to be middle class, has painted a nation in collapse, where drug traffickers and politicians steal with equal impunity, and a moral rot has set in. He has advocated loosening gun ownership laws so individuals could fight off criminals, giving police a freer hand to use force and restoring "traditional" Brazilian values — though some take issue with his definition of those values in light of his approving allusions to the past military dictatorship and his repeated derisive comments about women, blacks and gay people.

"There is a strong desire for change," said Andre Portela, an economics professor at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, a leading university and think tank. "Bolsonaro has been able to channel that and present himself as the bearer of change, though it's not clear if he really would be."

Haddad and the Workers' Party, meanwhile, have portrayed a country hijacked by an elite that will protect its privileges at all costs and can't bear to see the lives of poor and working class Brazilians improve.

Haddad has promised to roll back President Michel Temer's economic reforms that he says eroded workers' rights, to increase investment in social programs and to bring back the boom years Brazil experienced under his mentor, da Silva.

Caught in the middle are Brazilians who dislike both candidates and see them as symbols of a broken system.

Perhaps nothing has demonstrated the dysfunction more than the Car Wash investigation. Prosecutors alleged that Brazil's government was run like a cartel for years, handing out billions of dollars in public contracts in exchange for kickbacks and bribes. Revelations of suitcases of cash, leaked recordings of incriminating exchanges between powerbrokers and the jailing of some of the country's most powerful people unfolded like a Hollywood script — and then became one: Netflix released a (barely) fictionalized account of the probe this year.

Yet it's not clear that voters will reject the many politicians implicated in the scandal because the electoral system heavily favors incumbents and big parties.

The election has seen large increases in the numbers of candidates from marginalized groups, including black, indigenous and transgender Brazilians, and some think the anti-establishment feelings could translate into a more representative ruling class.

Associated Press writer Peter Prengaman contributed to this report.

Analysis: Kavanaugh fight sharpens the stakes for midterms

By JULIE PACE, AP Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — The bitter battle over Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court has exacerbated the nation's political divide and left many Americans emotionally raw. It's also given new definition to the high stakes of November's election.

Until now, the fight for control of Congress has largely been viewed as a referendum on President Donald Trump's first two years in office. But the turmoil surrounding Kavanaugh has transformed the midterms into something bigger than Trump, with implications that could endure long after his presidency. The election is suddenly layered with charged cultural questions about the scarcity of women in political power, the handling of sexual assault allegations, and shifting power dynamics that have left some white men uneasy about their place in American life.

Both parties contend the new contours of the race will energize their supporters in the election's final stretch. And both may be right.

Republicans, however, may benefit most in the short term. Until now, party leaders — Trump included — have struggled to energize GOP voters, even with a strong economy to campaign on. The president's middling job approval rating and independent voters' disdain for his constant personal attacks have been

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a drag on GOP candidates, particularly in the more moderate suburban districts that will determine control of the House.

But Republican operatives say internal polling now shows Kavanaugh's acrimonious confirmation has given the party a much-needed boost, with GOP voters viewing Democrats as overzealous partisans following the public testimony by Kavanaugh and Christine Blasey Ford, who accused the judge of trying to rape her while they were both in high school. Ford said she was "100 percent" certain that Kavanaugh was her attacker, while the judge steadfastly denied her allegations.

"Their strategy to capitalize on the 'Me Too' movement for the political purposes backfired on them," Republican strategist Alice Stewart said of Democrats. "The fact that they were willing to use Dr. Ford's story that was uncorroborated to launch character assassinations on Judge Kavanaugh did not sit well with voters. A lot of people looked at this as a bridge too far."

The surge in GOP enthusiasm could recalibrate a political landscape that was tilting toward Democrats throughout the summer. Though Democrats still maintain an advantage in competitive House races, the past two weeks appear to have shifted momentum in the fight for the Senate majority back to the GOP.

In North Dakota, Republican Rep. Kevin Cramer has pulled comfortably ahead of Democratic Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, who voted no on Kavanaugh. GOP operatives say they're also seeing renewed Republican interest in states like Wisconsin, where Democratic candidates for both Senate and governor have been polling strong.

"It's turned our base on fire," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Saturday, moments after the Senate confirmed Kavanaugh.

To be sure, some tightening in the race was likely inevitable this fall. Wavering voters often move back toward their party's candidates as Election Day nears, and most of the competitive Senate races are in states that voted for Trump by a significant margin.

With just over four weeks until Election Day, there is still time for the dynamics to shift again. And the political headwinds from the Kavanaugh confirmation are unlikely to blow in just one direction.

To Democrats, Kavanaugh's assent to the Supreme Court in spite of decades-old sexual misconduct allegations will only deepen the party's pull with female voters, including independents and moderates who may have previously voted for Republicans. Democrats point to the flood of women who have spoken out about their own assaults following Ford's testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Party operatives also believe the optics of the all-male GOP panel that presided over the hearing struck a chord with female voters.

"Kavanaugh's confirmation will leave a lot of outraged and energized women in its wake," said Geoff Garin, a Democratic pollster.

Democrats argue that some of the same tactics that have helped energize Republican voters also motivate their base, particularly Trump's attacks on Ford. During a campaign rally in Mississippi, the president mocked Ford for not remembering key details of the alleged attack, including the date and location of the party she says she and Kavanaugh attended 36 years ago.

"You've seen some shifts, but I still think that we're in a strong place," said New Mexico Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, who heads the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. "I still think that it gives us a lot of enthusiasm on our side because there are a lot of people out there that are really upset, not just with the testimony that came from Judge Kavanaugh but the way the president was even mocking (Ford) days ago."

Trump remains the fall campaign's biggest wildcard. White House advisers and Republican senators are encouraging him to keep Kavanaugh in the spotlight in the campaign's final weeks. But they're well aware that the president often struggles to stay on message and can quickly overshadow his political victories with new controversies.

Given that, Stewart said Republicans can't assume that this burst of momentum will sustain itself through Election Day.

"The question is whether this is the October surprise or the calm before the storm," Stewart said.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Julie Pace has covered the White House and politics for The Associated Press since

2007. Follow her at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

Mormons to spend less time at church on Sundays, leaders say

By **BRADY McCOMBS**, Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Mormons will start spending less time at church each Sunday — two hours instead of three — after a change announced Saturday aimed at making worship more manageable for members around the globe.

The switch, which takes effect in January, is a significant one for Mormons, who since 1980 have been expected to attend all three hours each Sunday to be considered active members of the faith.

The news triggered widespread applause from members, with some posting celebratory memes on social media. It came during The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' twice-yearly conference, where a leader also reaffirmed the faith's opposition to gay marriage and its belief that gender is God-given and eternal.

"The senior leaders of the church have been aware for many years that for some of our precious members, a three-hour Sunday schedule at church can be difficult," said Quentin L. Cook, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, church leaders who help run the faith. "This is particularly true for parents with small children, primary children, elderly members, new converts and others."

The three-hour commitment is a hefty one compared with some other religions' Sunday services. Many Catholic, Lutheran and Methodist churches, for instance, offer weekly worship that lasts about an hour or an hour and a half, along with voluntary classes and other gatherings throughout the week.

Church president Russell M. Nelson called the adjustment a new "home-centered church" strategy that comes as the faith expands throughout the world. More than half of its 16 million members live outside the U.S. and Canada.

"The longstanding objective of the church is to assist all members to increase their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and in his atonement," Nelson said. "In this complex world today, this is not easy. The adversary is increasing his attack on faith and on families at an exponential rate. To survive spiritually, we need counter-strategies and proactive plans."

Paulina Porras, a mother of 1-year-old twins, was ecstatic with the news. Her daughters aren't old enough to go to children's programs alone, so she and her husband have to care for them during Sunday church time.

"Staying three hours is impossible," said Porras, 29, of Logan. "Two hours we can do."

Instead of attending two meetings each Sunday beyond the one-hour worship — such as Sunday school, men's and women's groups — members will attend one each Sunday, with the meetings rotating throughout the month, Cook said.

Marc Fish, an insurance company owner from Las Vegas, also lauded the change. Three hours each Sunday can be intimidating for potential converts and wayward members, and the change gives families the flexibility to weave in gospel activities at home.

Fisher, 38, has seven children ranging in age from 7 to 25 who are busy with piano, volleyball and homework, he said. He plans to have more one-on-one talks with them.

"Schedules are crazy for a lot of families," Fisher said. "Sometimes you hear in the church we're caught up with checklists, the pressure and the stress of just meeting everything."

While U.S. members likely will welcome the new schedule, it seems to mainly reflect the church shifting its focus away from being heavily Western American, where most members live near chapels and can handle the three-hour Sunday commitment, or worship block, said Mormon scholar Matthew Bowman, an associate professor of history at Henderson State University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

"This change is geared toward making participation in the church more flexible and increasingly targeted toward smaller congregations: A shorter worship block means less volunteer demands upon the congregation, fewer jobs which need to be filled, and generally easier administration," Bowman said in an email.

Church membership growth has decreased in recent years, with membership growth in 2017 being the

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slowest in 80 years, according to independent Mormon researcher Matt Martinich. The number of convert baptisms in 2017 reached the lowest level in 30 years, he said.

It's mainly due to slowed growth in the countries with the most members: the United States, Mexico, Brazil, the Philippines, Chile and Peru, Martinich said.

He doesn't think the Sunday change is aimed at increasing retention, but rather at using church resources and members' time more efficiently. The switch could allow multiple congregations to use the same church building in places like Utah where there are large numbers of members. It also will let members do personal and family gospel activities on their own time, he said.

The two-day Mormon conference kicked off a day after the faith announced it was renaming the famed Mormon Tabernacle Choir to drop the word "Mormon." The singing group, now called the Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square, performed at the conference as they always do.

The decision to rename the choir was the first major move since president Nelson in August called for an end to the use of shorthand names for the religion that have been used for generations by church members and the public.

Nelson didn't mention the issue in his brief remarks, but a lower-level church leader named Paul B. Pieper called on Latter-day Saints to take up Nelson's "prophetic call." Pieper encouraged members to "take upon themselves the name of Jesus Christ," which has "singular and essential power."

The comments about gay marriage and gender came from longtime Quorum of the Twelve member Dallin H. Oaks, who called on members to oppose "social and legal pressures to retreat from traditional marriage or to make changes that confuse or alter gender or homogenize the differences between men and women."

Oaks said those relationships and identities are "essential to accomplish God's great plan" and that Satan "seeks to confuse gender, to distort marriage and to discourage childbearing — especially by parents who will raise children in truth."

The comments align with past positions by the faith, which has tried to take a more welcoming stance to LGBTQ people while sticking with fundamental opposition to same-sex marriage and transgender operations.

Kavanaugh sworn to high court after rancorous confirmation

By ALAN FRAM, LISA MASCARO and MATTHEW DALY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Brett Kavanaugh was sworn in Saturday night as the 114th justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, after a wrenching debate over sexual misconduct and judicial temperament that shattered the Senate, captivated the nation and ushered in an acrimonious new level of polarization — now encroaching on the court that the 53-year-old judge may well swing rightward for decades to come.

Even as Kavanaugh took his oath of office in a quiet private ceremony, not long after the narrowest Senate confirmation in nearly a century and a half, protesters chanted outside the court building across the street from the Capitol.

The climactic 50-48 roll call capped a fight that seized the national conversation after claims emerged that he had sexually assaulted women three decades ago — allegations he emphatically denied. Those accusations transformed the clash from a routine struggle over judicial ideology into an angry jumble of questions about victims' rights, the presumption of innocence and personal attacks on nominees.

His confirmation provides a defining accomplishment for President Donald Trump and the Republican Party, which found a unifying force in the cause of putting a new conservative majority on the court. Before the sexual accusations grabbed the Senate's and the nation's attention, Democrats had argued that Kavanaugh's rulings and writings as an appeals court judge had raised serious concerns about his views on abortion rights and a president's right to bat away legal probes.

Trump, flying to Kansas for a political rally, flashed a thumbs-up gesture when the tally was announced and praised Kavanaugh for being "able to withstand this horrible, horrible attack by the Democrats." He later telephoned his congratulations to the new justice, then at the rally returned to his own attack on the Democrats as "an angry left-wing mob."

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Like Trump, senators at the Capitol predicted voters would react strongly by defeating the other party's candidates in next month's congressional elections.

"It's turned our base on fire," declared Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. But Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York forecast gains for his party instead: "Change must come from where change in America always begins: the ballot box."

The justices themselves made a quiet show of solidarity. Kavanaugh was sworn in by Chief Justice John Roberts and the man he's replacing, retired Justice Anthony Kennedy, as fellow Justices Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Elena Kagan looked on — two conservatives and two liberals.

Still, Kagan noted the night before that Kennedy has been "a person who found the center" and "it's not so clear we'll have that" now.

Noisy to the end, the Senate battle featured a call of the roll that was interrupted several times by protesters shouting in the spectators' gallery before Capitol Police removed them. Vice President Mike Pence presided, his potential tie-breaking vote unnecessary.

Trump has now put his stamp on the court with his second justice in as many years. Yet Kavanaugh is joining under a cloud. Accusations from several women remain under scrutiny, and House Democrats have pledged further investigation if they win the majority in November. Outside groups are culling an unusually long paper trail from his previous government and political work, with the National Archives and Records Administration expected to release a cache of millions of documents later this month.

Kavanaugh, a father of two, strenuously denied the allegations of Christine Blasey Ford, who says he sexually assaulted her when they were teens. An appellate court judge on the District of Columbia circuit for the past 12 years, he pushed for the Senate vote as hard as Republican leaders — not just to reach this capstone of his legal career, but in fighting to clear his name.

After Ford's allegations, Democrats and their allies became engaged as seldom before, though there were obvious echoes of Thomas' combative confirmation over the sexual harassment accusations of Anita Hill, who worked for him at two federal agencies. Protesters began swarming Capitol Hill, creating a tense, confrontational atmosphere that put Capitol Police on edge.

As exhausted senators prepared for Saturday's vote, some were flanked by security guards. Hangers and worse have been delivered to their offices, a *Roe v. Wade* reference.

Some 164 people were arrested, most for demonstrating on the Capitol steps, 14 for disrupting the Senate's roll call vote.

McConnell told The Associated Press in an interview that the "mob" of opposition — confronting senators in the hallways and at their homes — united his narrowly divided GOP majority as Kavanaugh's confirmation teetered and will give momentum to his party chances this fall.

Beyond the sexual misconduct allegations, Democrats raised questions about Kavanaugh's temperament



Retired Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, right, administers the Judicial Oath to Judge Brett Kavanaugh in the Justices' Conference Room of the Supreme Court Building. Ashley Kavanaugh holds the Bible. At left are their daughters, Margaret, background, and Liza. (Fred Schilling/Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States via AP)

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and impartiality after he delivered defiant, emotional, testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee where he denounced their party.

Schumer said Kavanaugh's "partisan screed" showed not only a temperament unfitting for the high court but a lack of objectivity that should make him ineligible to serve. At one point in the hearing, Kavanaugh blamed a Clinton-revenge conspiracy for the accusations against him.

The fight ended up less about judicial views than the sexual assault accusations that riveted the nation and are certain to continue a national debate and #MeToo reckoning that is yet to be resolved.

Republicans argued that a supplemental FBI investigation instigated by wavering GOP senators and ordered by the White House turned up no corroborating witnesses to the claims and that Kavanaugh had sterling credentials for the court. Democrats dismissed the truncated report as insufficient.

In the end, all but one Republican, Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, lined up behind the judge. She said on the Senate floor late Friday that Kavanaugh is "a good man" but his "appearance of impropriety has become unavoidable."

In a twist, Murkowski voted "present" Saturday as a courtesy to Republican Kavanaugh supporter Steve Daines, who was to walk his daughter down the aisle at her wedding in Montana. That balanced out the absence without affecting the outcome, and gave Kavanaugh the same two-vote margin he'd have received had both lawmakers voted.

It was the closest roll call to confirm a justice since 1881, when Stanley Matthews was approved by 24-23, according to Senate records.

As the Senate tried to recover from its charged atmosphere, Murkowski's move offered a moment of civility. "I do hope that it reminds us that we can take very small steps to be gracious with one another and maybe those small gracious steps can lead to more," she said.

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Senators on both sides know they have work to do to put the chamber back together again after a ferocious debate that saw them arguing over the sordid details of high school drinking games, sexual allegations and cryptic yearbook entries.

Sen. John Cornyn of Texas said, "The Senate has been an embarrassment. We have a lot of work to do."

Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick, Padmananda Rama, Ken Thomas, Catherine Lucey, Juliet Linderman and Mark Sherman contributed to this report.

Chicago verdict comes 4 years after Laquan McDonald's death

By **DON BABWIN** and **MICHAEL TARM**, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Four years after he fired 16 bullets into a black teenager, three years after dashcam video of the shooting was released and three weeks after his murder trial began, Jason Van Dyke's transformation from Chicago patrol officer to convicted felon came suddenly.

A clerk announced the jury's decision. The judge revoked his bond. And Van Dyke, the first city officer in about a half century to be convicted of murder in an on-duty shooting, put his hands behind his back as if handcuffed and strode across a courtroom into custody.

The scene Friday was a quiet coda to the tension that erupted after the video was made public in No-

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vember 2015. The shocking footage showed Laquan McDonald crumpling to the ground as the officer fired repeatedly at the teen, who was walking away from police. The video drew nationwide outrage and put the nation's third-largest city at the center of the debate about police misconduct and the use of force.

The magnitude of the conviction for second-degree murder was inescapable as Van Dyke walked out of sight of his family and McDonald's relatives.

"This verdict provides validation and a sense of justice for many residents of Chicago and Cook County and beyond this area ... the African-American communities across our country," special prosecutor Joseph McMahon said after the verdict was read.

The choice of second-degree murder reflected the jury's finding that Van Dyke believed his life was in danger but that the belief was unreasonable. The jury also had the option of first degree-murder, which required finding that the shooting was unnecessary and unreasonable. A first-degree conviction, with enhancements for the use of a gun, would have carried a mandatory minimum of 45 years.

Second-degree murder usually carries a sentence of less than 20 years, especially for someone with no criminal history. Probation is also an option. Van Dyke was also convicted of 16 counts of aggravated battery — one for each bullet.

One legal expert predicted that Van Dyke will be sentenced to no more than six years total. But because he's an officer, it will be "hard time," possibly spent in isolation, said Steve Greenberg, who has defended clients at more than 100 murder trials.

McDonald, 17, was carrying a knife when Van Dyke fired at him on a dimly lit street where he was surrounded by other officers.

Defense attorney Dan Herbert called Van Dyke "a sacrificial lamb" offered by political and community leaders "to save themselves." He said it was a "sad day for law enforcement" because the verdict tells officers they cannot do their jobs.

A McDonald family spokesman thanked prosecutors for pursuing a case that, he said, many black attorneys did not believe could be won.

"I can't rejoice because this man is going to jail," said McDonald's uncle, the Rev. Marvin Hunter. "I saw his wife and father. His wife and daughter didn't pull the trigger. I could see the pain in these people. It bothered me that they couldn't see the pain in us."

The 12-person jury included just one African-American member, although blacks make up one-third of Chicago's population. The jury also had seven whites, three Hispanics and one Asian-American.

Jurors said they spent much of their deliberations discussing whether to convict on first-degree or second-degree murder, not an acquittal. They said Van Dyke's testimony did not help him. One woman said he "messed up" and should not have testified. Another said Van Dyke needed to "contain the situation, not escalate it."

The jurors' names were not made public during the trial and were not disclosed Friday during interviews with reporters at the courthouse.

On the night of the shooting, officers were waiting for someone with a stun gun to use on the teenager when Van Dyke arrived, according to testimony and video. The video, played repeatedly at trial, showed him firing even after the teen lay motionless on the pavement.

Prosecutors and defense attorneys clashed over what the footage actually proved.

During closing arguments, prosecutor Jody Gleason noted that Van Dyke told detectives that McDonald raised the knife and that McDonald tried to get up off the ground after being shot.

"None of that happened," she said. "You've seen it on video. He made it up."

But Van Dyke and his attorneys maintained that the video did not tell the whole story.

His attorneys portrayed the officer as being scared by the young man who he knew had already punctured a tire of a squad car with the knife. Van Dyke testified that the teen was advancing on him and ignoring his shouted orders to drop the knife.

Van Dyke conceded that he stepped toward McDonald and not away from the teen, as he had initially claimed. But the officer maintained the rest of his account.

"The video doesn't show my perspective," he said.

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In his 13 years on the force, Van Dyke was the subject of at least 20 citizen complaints — eight of which alleged excessive force, according to a database that includes reports from 2002 to 2008 and 2011 until 2015.

Though he was never disciplined, a jury did award \$350,000 to a man who filed an excessive-force lawsuit against him. Van Dyke testified that McDonald was the first person he ever shot.

To boost their contention that McDonald was dangerous, defense attorneys built a case against the teenager, who had been a ward of the state for most of his life and wound up in juvenile detention after an arrest for marijuana possession. They also pointed to an autopsy that showed he had the hallucinogen PCP in his system.

Prosecutors stressed that Van Dyke was the only officer ever to fire a shot at McDonald.

They called multiple officers who were there that night as they sought to chip away at the “blue wall of silence” long associated with the city’s police force and other law enforcement agencies. Three officers, including Van Dyke’s partner that night, have been charged with conspiring to cover up and lie about what happened to protect Van Dyke. They have all pleaded not guilty.

Even before the trial, the case affected law enforcement in Chicago. The city’s police superintendent and the county’s top prosecutor both lost their jobs — one fired by the mayor and the other ousted by voters. It also led to a Justice Department investigation that found a “pervasive cover-up culture” and prompted plans for far-reaching police reforms.

A week before jury selection, Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced he would not seek a third term, although his office insisted the case had nothing to do with his decision. He faced criticism that he fought the release of the video until after his re-election in April 2015.

Ahead of the verdict, the city prepared for the possibility of the kind of massive protests that followed the release of the video, with an extra 4,000 officers being put on the streets.

Schools and businesses braced for potential unrest, and people across the city paused in the middle of the day to listen for the jury’s decision. In the end, the response was muted, with a few hundred protesters marching peacefully through the downtown Loop.

The issue of race permeated the case, though it was rarely raised at trial. One of the only instances was during opening statements, when McMahan told the jurors that Van Dyke didn’t know anything about McDonald’s past when he encountered him that night.

What Van Dyke saw “was a black boy walking down the street ... having the audacity to ignore the police,” McMahan said.

Herbert countered, “Race had absolutely nothing to do with this.”

For the AP’s complete coverage of the Jason Van Dyke case: <https://apnews.com/tag/LaquanMcDonald> .

#MeToo movement sends Hollywood figures into exile, not jail

By ANDREW DALTON, AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The #MeToo movement has sent dozens of once-powerful Hollywood players into exile, but few of them have been placed in handcuffs or jail cells. And it’s increasingly apparent that the lack of criminal charges may remain the norm.

Harvey Weinstein has been charged with sexual assault in New York, and Bill Cosby was sent to prison in Pennsylvania in the year since stories on Weinstein in The New York Times and The New Yorker set off waves of revelations of sexual misconduct in Hollywood. But those two central figures are exceptions.

A task force launched last November by Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey to handle the surge in allegations against entertainment figures has taken up criminal cases involving nearly two dozen entertainment-industry figures. None has been charged.

The lack of prosecutions stems from a clash between the #MeToo ethos, which encourages victims to come forward years or even decades after abuse and harassment that they’ve kept private, and a legal system that demands fast reporting of crimes and hard evidence.

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The task force has considered charges against 22 suspects, including Weinstein, Kevin Spacey, director James Toback and former CBS CEO Leslie Moonves, all of whom have denied engaging in any sex that was not consensual.

Charges have already been rejected for most. Cases involving six suspects, including Weinstein and Spacey, both of whom have multiple accusers, remain open.

In 14 of the closed cases, charges were declined because the allegations were reported too late and thus outside the statute of limitations. The rest were turned down either for insufficient evidence or because the accuser refused to cooperate with investigators after initially reporting the incidents.

While disappointed in the lack of results, several accusers said they were still glad they talked to police and prosecutors, for a variety of reasons both practical and emotional.

"For me it was not necessarily closure, but one of the healthiest things I've ever done for myself," said Melissa Schuman, whose case dating to 2003 against Nick Carter of the Backstreet Boys was rejected over the statute of limitations. "It felt therapeutic to tell the authorities, to be able to take it out of my body and out of my mind and report it."

Fatima Goss Graves, president of the National Women's Law Center, which oversees the Time's Up legal defense fund, said for some "the act of reporting, putting it on the record is critical, even if they're beyond the limitations."

When law enforcement agencies welcome women to report their experiences, it can eventually result in more prosecutions, she said.

"In too many cases law enforcement has sent a signal that they won't treat these issues," Goss Graves said. "If you've created a climate and space that is friendly to people coming forward, more people will come forward."

Schuman said she found just such a climate. She was well treated by task force investigators and the police in what could have been a much tougher process.

"I really felt supported, and listened to, and cared-for and believed," Schuman said.

Carter has denied the allegations from the start. He said through his lawyer when charges were declined that he felt confident there would be no basis for charges and was happy to put the matter behind him. A representative did not respond to a request Friday for further comment.

There can be more tangible benefits to reporting. In California, simply filing a police report entitles victims to benefits that can include free psychotherapy. The reports also create additional claims that can help in newer investigations or be brought into court to show a pattern of conduct, as they were for Cosby's trial.

"It just gives me peace to have it documented and filed," Schuman said, "and if my abuser does it again, the authorities told me they could use me to help corroborate."

The sexual assault case that sent Cosby to prison was from 2004 and long pre-dated the #MeToo movement. It was filed just as the statute of limitations was expiring.

California requires that charges be brought within a year for many sexual crimes and within 10 years for many of the most serious crimes, including rape and felony sexual assault.

The task force has been looking at allegations of incidents that are sometimes decades old. One rejected case against Spacey dates to 1992. The allegations against Moonves date to the late 1980s. One case for Toback dates to 1978.

In documents released by the task force explaining why charges were not brought, some officials simply declare the effort pointless and say little else. In other cases, prosecutors provide long and sometimes detailed descriptions of acts and the laws they may have violated, only to reluctantly conclude that too much time has passed.

Page after page of the documents end with the same phrase, "prosecution is declined."

Aside from confirming which cases it is considering and has declined, the district attorney's office declined comment for this story.

California has already altered its laws to help victims, eliminating the statute of limitations for rape and other forms of felony sex abuse. But courts have ruled that statutes of limitations cannot be altered to

include suspects who are already past them, so the new laws only apply to crimes from 2017 onward, meaning the practical effects likely won't be felt for years.

Many of the old cases taken under consideration would probably never have reached prosecutors before the Weinstein story broke and cultural attitudes began to change.

Even beyond the time-limit problem, "It would be next to impossible for an investigative agency to find witnesses to corroborate and gather evidence," said Alan Jackson, a former prosecutor in the district attorney's office who ran against Lacey in 2012 and now works as a defense attorney.

Many accusers whose cases were considered by the task force have filed civil lawsuits that may have more staying power.

Goss Graves said it's desirable to leave as many options open as possible.

"What accountability and ultimately healing looks like for survivors is going to vary," she said. "In many ways, we're not in the middle of this process. We're in the beginning."

Follow Andrew Dalton on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/andyjamesdalton> .

Melania Trump puts on happier face during Africa tour

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — It took Melania Trump's first big solo international trip for her to show a different side of herself — a playful, less serious one.

And while she generously dished out warm smiles and happy waves, the first lady also used her four-nation tour of Africa to draw some firmer boundaries between her own views and those of her husband the president.

"I don't always agree with what he says and I tell him that," the first lady told reporters Saturday against the backdrop of the Great Sphinx before she headed back to Washington. "But I have my own voice and my own opinions and it's very important for me that I express what I feel."

The U.S. first lady hopscotched across Africa without President Donald Trump, commanding a spotlight that was hers alone. In doing her own thing, the very private first lady essentially peeled back the curtain ever so slightly as she wiped away the serious face she wears around Washington.

She demonstrated her independence from her husband in ways large and small — like talking up U.S. foreign aid that he's tried to slash and ignoring the Fox-only edict that the president imposes on TV screens when he's aboard Air Force One.

The first lady also did a few things she's never done before, like wave to journalists as she boarded a U.S. government aircraft for the grueling five-day tour across multiple time zones. With big smiles on her face — sometimes paired with the unfamiliar sound of her laughter — she cuddled babies and bottle-fed young elephants.

And she sashayed and shimmied and danced.

The trip, which had been in the works for months, provided a welcome escape from the ugly political battle in the U.S. capital over Brett Kavanaugh, the president's Supreme Court nominee. Kavanaugh's fate had seemed in doubt after he was accused of sexually assaulting Christine Blasey Ford when they were teenagers.

Kavanaugh has denied the charge and on Saturday was confirmed to a lifetime appointment on America's highest court.

Even half a world away, Mrs. Trump couldn't completely ignore the issue. Reporters asked her opinion about the judge, and she said he was "highly qualified" to join the court. As for Ford, Mrs. Trump declined to venture an opinion but said "we need to help all victims, no matter what kind of abuse" they experienced.

The struggle over Kavanaugh resurfaced the roiling debate over the treatment of women who allege sexual misconduct. The first lady has had to grapple with that issue herself, given the multiple women who have accused her husband of sexually inappropriate behavior, claims he says are false.

Always under a microscope, the fashion-conscious first lady caught some criticism for the white pith

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helmet she wore with her safari ensemble in Kenya. Social media lit up with complaints about her choice of a hat viewed by some as a symbol of Kenya's colonial past and its one-time domination by the British.

The former model had a terse rejoinder when asked about that: "I wish people would focus on what I do, not what I wear."

What, then, was her intended message for Africa? "That we care and we want to show the world we care."

It was a message that was especially welcome given President Trump's own derogatory comments about a continent that he has yet to visit.

The happier place Mrs. Trump seemed to go to while in Africa surprised some.

"She's still largely a mystery to the American people because she maintains her largely low profile," said Katherine Jellison, who studies first ladies at Ohio University.

Joshua Meservey, a senior Africa policy analyst at the conservative Heritage Institute, said there were modest expectations for the first lady's trip, and she largely met them, avoiding any major gaffes along the way.

"As a public diplomacy tour, it seemed successful," he said.

The first lady opened the trip in Ghana, where she went to an infant clinic and learned how babies are weighed — in slings that are hooked to a scale. It was at Greater Accra Regional Hospital that she plucked a chubby baby boy from the arms of the woman holding him. She cooed with the baby, who stared back at her with wonder. Photos of the unexpected moment were popular on social media.

She also learned about Africa's slave past by touring Cape Coast Castle, a former slave holding facility on the Ghanaian coast.

Mrs. Trump spent time inside the cramped dungeon that was used to house male slaves. She also walked through the "Door of No Return," the portal through which the slaves were shipped to the New World, and gazed out at the Atlantic Ocean as if trying to imagine the harrowing journey.

In Malawi, she went to Chipala Primary School in Lilongwe, where students sang their welcome to the first lady.

She toured indoor and outdoor classrooms, observed lessons and watched some students play soccer with balls she donated. The first lady also witnessed the handover of a batch of textbooks donated by a U.S. international developmental agency.

Mrs. Trump seemed most happy in Kenya, where she visited Nairobi National Park to highlight elephant preservation. Appearing reticent at first, she ultimately engaged them and ended up obviously enjoying the experience of feeding baby elephants milk through a super-sized baby bottle, patting one elephant's head and stroking another's ear.

She temporarily lost her footing when an elephant made an unexpected move and got a little too close for her comfort. But she was braced from the rear by a Secret Service agent and resumed playing with the animals, laughing at their antics until it was time to head off on a 90-minute safari.

The first lady seemed more into the swing of things — literally — at events later that day with Kenyan children.

Music accompanied by the beat of drums greeted her arrival at an orphanage in Nairobi, where a group of children dressed in bright yellow T-shirts and patterned bottoms escorted her up a driveway to the building. She gave in to the infectious beat by sashaying as she approached a bank of news cameras, almost as if she was recalling her past life as a fashion model.

She closed her tour in Egypt by touring the pyramids and the Great Sphinx to highlight U.S.-backed preservation efforts there. The U.S. Agency for International Development has been working with the Egyptian government on lowering groundwater levels to prevent additional damage to the landmarks.

Each stop was meant to call attention to the work of USAID, her partner on the trip. But the president twice has proposed slashing the agency's money.

The first lady's focus on elephant preservation also clashed with the administration's decision to allow Americans to resume importation of body parts of African elephants hunted for sport.

"She thinks animals are precious and doesn't like big-game hunting," said Stephanie Grisham, the first lady's spokeswoman.

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

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

How they did it: The Republicans' campaign to save Kavanaugh

By LISA MASCARO, JILL COLVIN and ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mitch McConnell walked onto the Senate floor for the big vote to save Brett Kavanaugh's nomination with a secret: He didn't know how it would turn out.

It wasn't supposed to be like this. The Senate majority leader is often seen as a masterful tactician. But he was watching and waiting like the rest of the nation to see if his Republican senators would advance President Donald Trump's pick for the Supreme Court. Without that vote on Friday, there would be no triumphant final roll call on Saturday.

Kavanaugh's confirmation was always going to be difficult, but over the past few weeks it had veered terribly off course. Three women had accused the judge of sexual misconduct, bringing a #MeToo reckoning to Capitol Hill and transforming the nomination fight into a bitter dispute that pushed the polarization of the Senate to new extremes.

This account of how Republicans brought Kavanaugh back from the brink is based on roughly a dozen interviews with administration officials, senators, aides and others. Some asked for anonymity because they were not authorized to reveal details about private discussions.

The rescue campaign was as bold as the Democratic effort to stop Kavanaugh. It included long-distance arm twisting from a former president, a locker room-style pep talk that helped change the game and decisions made up to the last minute.

THE LOW POINT

The White House was near crisis mode, its lowest point, with dire calls flooding in about whether the president was going to pull the nomination. Republicans had just secured a deal with Christine Blasey Ford's lawyers on ground rules for her testimony to the Judiciary Committee about her allegation that Kavanaugh assaulted her when they were teens. And now a new accuser, Deborah Ramirez, had come forward to claim Kavanaugh exposed himself to her when they were freshmen at Yale.

Republicans knew the hell that would befall them if they bailed out. But this was a moment when Trump's ability to shape events was limited.

Jeff Flake, the Arizona Republican, was publicly wavering on Kavanaugh. And his party badly needed him back in the fold.

Flake had been central to the effort to slow voting and allow Ford a chance to testify. And Republican Sen. Susan Collins had been in constant contact with him. With Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, the trio had forced GOP leaders to give Ford a chance to tell her story.

Another Republican, Utah's Sen. Mike Lee, gave Flake a call. The two had grown close on long flights to Washington and have a lot in common, including their Mormon faith.

But the president himself has never had much influence over the three senators. They are the most independent Republicans in the chamber, and Flake had been forced into early retirement for his criticism of Trump. With Trump on the sideline, White House Counsel Don McGahn became the White House's liaison to the trio.

McGahn had talked to McConnell, the president and others, saying they had to come up with something to change the dynamic. From the well-staffed war room for the nomination on the White House campus and beyond, the consensus answer was simple: Kavanaugh had to tell his side of the story. He would do an interview on Fox News.

"We're basically in a political campaign here," said Scott Jennings, a longtime McConnell political consultant. "We have two candidates — the accuser and the accused."

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WHO IS THE REAL KAVANAUGH?

It was a painful interview, full of repetitive talking points and Kavanaugh's sidelong glances at his wife. The most memorable moment? Perhaps the 53 year-old judge giving a rambling account of his youthful virginity.

The performance rattled some in the West Wing, including the president, who told allies he was frustrated and concerned about how the judge would hold up before the Judiciary Committee.

The No. 2 Republican, Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, acknowledged "it's extremely awkward to be talking about such private matters on TV."

But some in the White House saw it as "game changing" play that served its purpose in denying the accusation and providing a video that could be played over and over again. It also hit a key demographic audience of slightly older Republican-leaning women whose views would be important come November.

Now Kavanaugh had to show the senators themselves — and the public — his human side. Not the Yale-educated judge, but the fire in the belly. He would soon have that opportunity at the Judiciary Committee hearing with Ford.

Her testimony came first, and it captivated the nation. Had the hearing ended there, some senators said, Kavanaugh might not have had a chance. Trump called McConnell, concerned.

But McGahn cleared the side room where Kavanaugh was waiting with his wife. He told the judge this was no longer about judicial philosophy. He needed to be authentic. It was his time to speak, in his own words.

Kavanaugh got the message. He walked to the witness table, adjusted his nameplate and — alternating between angry outbursts and stifled sobs — told the committee he was innocent. He didn't do the things the accusers said he did. And he was not going to let this destroy his life.

He's crushing it, texted one staffer to another.

It was risky strategy that created a partisan Rorschach test. Democrats saw Kavanaugh as unhinged, hysterical, trafficking in Clinton conspiracy theory. Republicans were thrilled, seeing a counterpunch from a qualified nominee unjustly accused.

Trump called McConnell again, this time pleased. "Judge Kavanaugh showed America exactly why I nominated him," Trump tweeted. "His testimony was powerful, honest, and riveting."

But what the senators saw was something else. Collins, watching from her Capitol hide-a-way, had more questions. And for Murkowski, it was the moment that would begin to change her mind — against the nominee.

THE ANTEROOM

The phone rang the next day in the anteroom off the Judiciary Committee.

It was George W. Bush on the line.

The former president had been a big backer of Kavanaugh, the young lawyer who had worked for him as counsel and staff secretary at the White House. Bush was calling Flake, who had abruptly brought the hearing to a standstill.

They were supposed to be voting to send Kavanaugh's nomination to the full Senate, but Flake was considering a delay to allow for an FBI investigation into the allegations of misconduct.

McConnell knew another delay could prove deadly. Tips were flying in to senators' office, some of them anonymously, and Kavanaugh had been forced onto multiple calls with committee investigators to deny them.

The leader gathered Flake, Murkowski, Collins and others in his office. With his slim 51-49 seat majority, he had no choice but to meet the needs of the wavering Republicans. The plan was set for a one-week FBI investigation.

Then the days dragged on awaiting the agency's report. One White House aide said it felt like the final days of a presidential campaign.

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THE VOTE

The White House view was that fellow senators would be more effective than Trump at persuading the wayward Republicans, and "buddies" were assigned to each of the swing votes to keep checking in with them.

And really, who could persuade Collins, Murkowski or Jeff Flake?

Collins is known for thinking long and hard about issues. Murkowski is as independent as her far-flung state of Alaska, after having won a write-in campaign for re-election that made her seem politically invincible. Flake is a loner of sorts who keeps his own counsel.

When the confidential FBI report arrived in the secure room on Capitol Hill, the three went together for a briefing.

Collins went back for a second read of the report. Flake stayed for three hours digging in. Lee was often by his side.

McConnell kept pushing forward, scheduling the vote for Friday to move forward on Kavanaugh even though he didn't have the support locked in. He's usually not one to bluff. But after having declared days earlier, "I'm confident we're going to win," he was more subdued the morning of the vote.

Collins tipped her hand, telling reporters on her way to the chamber she was a "yes." Flake said in a statement he was ready to confirm Kavanaugh. But Murkowski whispered "no" when the clerk called her name.

From his West Wing office, Vice President Mike Pence watched the proceedings on television, poised to step in and break a tie, if needed. Pence's staff began preparing the motorcade for him to travel to the Capitol.

But with no other Republican defecting, the vote had succeeded.

Flake left the Senate chamber without saying much. Collins later delivered a floor speech that was praised as required reading as she catalogued her reasoning and bemoaned a process that she said looked like a "caricature of a gutter-level political campaign."

Murkowski delivered her own speech, saying that Kavanaugh's testimony convinced her he didn't have the temperament or the impartiality for the job.

The senators were tired. The Capitol cleared out, except for a few Democrats who kept up the argument all night.

Then came Saturday's roll call. Dramatic and anticlimactic at the same time. McGahn, the White House counsel who'd given the nominee the Thursday pep talk, was in the front row of the gallery.

It was 50-48. The Kavanaugh campaign had won.

Associated Press writers Catherine Lucey and Ken Thomas contributed to this report.

More reporting on the Supreme Court and Kavanaugh can be found at: <http://apne.ws/IHcZXad>

Chicago verdict raises hope of greater police accountability

By ERRIN HAINES WHACK, AP National Writer

A rare scene in the American justice system unfolded Friday in a Chicago courthouse: A white officer stood before a mostly white jury and was convicted of killing a black teenager.

It was the second such verdict nationally in two months. Jason Van Dyke's guilty conviction for second-degree murder and multiple counts of aggravated battery for fatally shooting 17-year-old Laquan McDonald 16 times came two months after a Texas officer was convicted in the killing of a 15-year-old unarmed black boy.

The pair of guilty verdicts could signal a shift in momentum after years of delayed arrests, non-indictments and not guilty verdicts. Activists and advocates say that their efforts, along with the ubiquity of cellphone camera evidence, could be changing the power balance between police and black communities.

"We're starting to see some verdicts that are in line with justice," said Rashad Robinson, executive direc-

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tor of Color of Change, a civil rights group that has supported electing reform-minded district attorneys in cities such as Chicago and Philadelphia. "No verdict is going to bring Laquan back or change the way he was taken from his family, friends or community. But being able to start sending a message to law enforcement that they are not above the law is important."

It was not an outcome some expected, despite evidence including a video of McDonald's shooting. It is extremely rare for police officers to be tried and convicted of murder for shootings that occurred while they were on duty. Before the conviction Friday, only six non-federal police officers had been convicted of murder in such cases — and four of those were overturned — since 2005, according to data compiled by criminologist and Bowling Green State University professor Phil Stinson.

Several cases in the past few years — including the police-involved deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; Eric Garner in New York; Tamir Rice in Cleveland; and Freddie Gray in Baltimore — have ended in disappointment for many in the black community, as white officers have gone unpunished in their deaths.

Black Lives Matter built momentum from that outrage after 18-year-old Brown, who was unarmed, was fatally shot by a white Ferguson police officer in August 2013. Fueled by social media and nightly street protests, thousands of young people pressed for change in how police deal with black communities. Protests spread around the country when other African-Americans were killed by police. They demanded arrests, indictments, convictions and police reform. The Justice Department investigated multiple police departments and found patterns of racial discrimination.

The McDonald case fueled a racially charged atmosphere in Chicago, and the city anticipated violence if the verdict had gone the other way. Police officers lined the streets and activists converged downtown in anticipation of the verdict.

"If jurors would not convict a police officer who shot a man ... 16 times, when that man was not threatening the officer in any way, when would they convict?" said Georgetown University law professor and former federal prosecutor Paul Butler. "The concern was that it was a very real possibility, based on the way these cases usually go. If the jurors hadn't convicted Van Dyke, it would have been an outrage, but it would have been a familiar outrage."

Van Dyke, 40, was the first Chicago officer to be convicted of murder for an on-duty shooting in 48 years. He was taken into custody moments after the verdict was read.

It culminated a series of events that convulsed Chicago in the aftermath of the 2014 shooting. City officials resisted for months releasing a dashboard camera video that showed Van Dyke fire 16 shots at the teenager, who was walking away from officers. Police said McDonald was armed only with a small knife.

The city erupted in protest after the video became public. Mayor Rahm Emanuel fired the police superintendent and a Justice Department investigation found a "pervasive cover-up culture" in the Chicago Police Department, which is headed for federal reforms. The Cook County district attorney, Anita Alvarez, was ousted from office in the 2016 primary election for failing to seek timely charges against Van Dyke. This summer, Emanuel announced that he would not seek re-election as strained relations with the black community took its toll on his political prospects.

The verdict marks one step in the fight for racial justice and progress, said Charlene Carruthers, an activist and the founding national director of Black Youth Project 100.

"We still have a lot more work to do," Carruthers said. "This is a moment where people are seeing that the blue wall that exists in Chicago has a crack in it. This is an opportunity to continue our organizing and act on the visionary demands that we have to transform our community."

Civil rights leader the Rev. Jesse Jackson called the verdict a "small sign of progress" in Chicago, which leads the nation's largest cities in police-involved killings.

"The people's cup has run over with these police violations of people's rights," he said. "People were hoping for the best and expecting the worst."

Jackson lamented the lack of diversity on the jury — which had a lone African-American, although blacks make up a third of Chicago's population — and wondered whether Van Dyke's conviction would overshadow the need for overall reform.

"They were killing before, and subsequently," Jackson said. "The system continues unabated." But activist Robinson says the recent verdict sends a message to police and others in power. "Those in power know there will be consequences for not valuing black lives."

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

Pope OKs study of Vatican archives into McCarrick scandal

By NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis has authorized a "thorough study" of Vatican archives into how a prominent American cardinal advanced through church ranks despite allegations that he slept with seminarians and young priests, the Vatican said Saturday in its first response to explosive allegations of a cover-up that is roiling the papacy.

The Vatican said it was aware that such an investigation may produce evidence that mistakes were made, when evaluated with today's standards. But it said Francis would "follow the path of truth, wherever it may lead."

The statement did not address specific allegations that Francis himself knew of sexual misconduct allegations against now ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick in 2013 and rehabilitated him anyway from sanctions imposed by Pope Benedict XVI.

Francis has said he would not say a word about those allegations, lodged by a retired Vatican ambassador.

Depending on the scope of the investigation, Francis' actions may be found to have been inconsistent with what he now considers unacceptable behavior by a bishop. However, the study announced Saturday refers only to documentation, a potentially limiting constraint, given the McCarrick scandal apparently involves private, verbal communications that might not have paper trails in Vatican archives.

"Both abuse and its cover-up can no longer be tolerated and a different treatment for bishops who have committed or covered-up abuse in fact represents a form of clericalism that is no longer acceptable," the statement said.

The Vatican knew as early as 2000 that seminarians complained that McCarrick pressured them to sleep with him. The Rev. Boniface Ramsay, a professor at a New Jersey seminary, wrote a letter to the Vatican in November 2000 relaying the seminarians' concerns after McCarrick was named archbishop of Washington.

St. John Paul II still went ahead with the nomination and made McCarrick a cardinal the following year. McCarrick resigned as Washington archbishop in 2006 after he reached the retirement age of 75.

Francis accepted McCarrick's resignation as a cardinal in July after a U.S. church investigation determined that an allegation that he groped a teenage altar boy in the 1970s was credible. Since then, another man has come forward saying McCarrick molested him when he was a young teen and other men have said they were harassed by McCarrick as adult seminarians and young priests.

The scandal has created a crisis in confidence in the U.S. hierarchy, since it was apparently an open secret that McCarrick, now 88, would invite seminarians to his New Jersey beach house, and into his bed.

Faced with a loss of credibility, U.S. bishops announced they wanted a full-scale Vatican investigation into how McCarrick was able to rise through the ranks, despite his misconduct.

Francis' own papacy was thrown into turmoil in August when retired Vatican ambassador, Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, accused Francis and about two dozen Vatican and U.S. church officials of covering up for McCarrick and said Francis should resign.

In his 11-page denunciation, Vigano said Benedict imposed "canonical sanctions" on McCarrick in 2009 or 2010 that prohibited him from travelling or lecturing for the church or celebrating Mass in public. Vigano said he told Francis on June 23, 2013 about the sanctions and that McCarrick had "corrupted a generation of seminarians and priests." But he said Francis effectively rehabilitated McCarrick and made him a trusted counselor.

The public record, however, is rife with evidence that McCarrick lived a life devoid of any sanction from 2009 onwards.

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Given the uncertainty of whether sanctions were ever imposed, or if Benedict merely asked McCarrick to keep a low profile, there may be little or no documentation in the Vatican about actual sanctions, and a study based solely on documents may not uncover what actually transpired.

First lady talks Trump, Twitter as she tours the pyramids

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Melania Trump says she has, at times, told the president to put his phone down. And she says she doesn't always agree with what he tweets.

The U.S. first lady spoke briefly with reporters Saturday as she was wrapping up a four-country tour of Africa with a visit to the pyramids and the Great Sphinx in Egypt.

Standing in front of the Sphinx, Mrs. Trump said she makes her opinions clear with her husband.

"I don't always agree what he tweets," she said in a rare, unscripted interaction with reporters. "And I tell him that. I give him my honest opinion and honest advice. And sometimes he listens and sometimes he doesn't. But I have my own voice and my opinions and it's very important for me that I express what I feel."

As for whether she's ever told him to put his phone down, she said, "yes," with a laugh.

Mrs. Trump arrived in Cairo on Saturday after a flight from Kenya. She met with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi and his wife, Entissar Mohameed Amer, before heading to the nearby city of Giza to see the pyramids and Sphinx to highlight U.S.-backed preservation efforts.

The U.S. Agency for International Development has been working with the Egyptian government for the past several years on a project to lower groundwater levels to prevent additional damage to the landmarks. Saline content in the water can erode their foundations.

The first lady described her tour, which took her to Ghana, Malawi, Kenya and Egypt, as "amazing" and said she hoped people would talk more about her visit and less about her fashion choices.

"That's very important what I do, what we're doing with U.S. aid and what I do with my initiatives and I wish people would focus on what I do, not what I wear," she said.

Mrs. Trump's outfit choices have drawn considerable attention, as when she wore a jacket that read "I REALLY DON'T CARE, DO U?" during a trip to visit migrant children who'd been separated from their families at the southern border.

___ Associated Press writer Jill Colvin contributed to this report from Washington.

Interpol asks China for information on its missing president

By JOHN LEICESTER, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Interpol said Saturday it has made a formal request to China for information about the agency's missing president, a senior Chinese security official who seemingly vanished while on a trip home.

The Lyon-based international police agency said it used law enforcement channels to submit its request to China about the status of Meng Hongwei. Its statement said the agency "looks forward to an official response from China's authorities to address concerns over the president's well-being,"

China, in the midst of a weeklong holiday, has yet to comment on the 64-year-old security official's disappearance. Calls and faxed questions to the foreign and public security ministries went unanswered.

Meng's wife says she hasn't heard from him since he left the French city of Lyon at the end of September. France has launched its own investigation. French authorities say he boarded a plane and arrived in China but his subsequent whereabouts are unknown.

In addition to his Interpol post, Meng is also a vice minister for public security in China.

Previously, Interpol had said that reports about Meng's disappearance were "a matter for the relevant authorities in both France and China."

The South China Morning Post, a Hong Kong newspaper, has suggested that Meng may have been the latest target of an ongoing campaign against corruption in China.

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His duties in China would have put him in close proximity to former leaders, some who fell afoul of President Xi Jinping's sweeping anti-corruption campaign. Meng likely dealt extensively with former security chief Zhou Yongkang, who is now serving a life sentence for corruption.

The Hong Kong newspaper said Meng was "taken away" for questioning upon landing in China last week by what it said were "discipline authorities." The term usually describes investigators in the ruling Communist Party who probe graft and political disloyalty.

But the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the party's secretive internal investigation agency, had no announcements on its website about Meng and couldn't be reached for comment.

Meng is the first person from China to serve as Interpol's president, a post that is largely symbolic but powerful in status. Because Interpol's secretary general is responsible for the day-to-day running of the agency's operations, Meng's absence may have little operational effect.

The organization links up police officials from its 192 member states, who can use Interpol to disseminate their search for a fugitive or a missing person. Only at the behest of a country does the information go public via a "red notice," the closest thing to an international arrest warrant. "Yellow notices" are issued for missing persons.

Meng has held various positions within China's security establishment, including as a vice minister of public security since 2004.

His appointment as Interpol president in 2016 alarmed some human rights organizations, fearful it would embolden China to strike out at dissidents and refugees abroad. His term as Interpol president runs until 2020.

Military families angry about damage, thefts during moves

By TERRY SPENCER, Associated Press

Moving is nothing new for Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Bill Weir's family, but their latest transfer was the bumpiest yet.

The Italian moving company the military hired to ship their belongings to New Mexico ruined artwork by wife Vennita, a professional artist. The crew boxed paintings with leaky liquid containers, broke a sunflower sculpture and damaged frescos made at a Florence art school. Especially hurtful, Vennita Weir said: The movers destroyed a Rapunzel figurine their 5-year-old daughter received during a Disneyland Paris trip to celebrate her father's return from Afghanistan.

"How do I tell her that special little figurine we got to commemorate that special day ... is gone?" said Weir, who has made three moves in six years with her husband, who has made nine in 24 years of service. "Her Barbie house is broken beyond repair because they just shoved it in a box. There are all these little things."

Weir is one of several military spouses who told The Associated Press stories of frustration, theft, carelessness and dishonest workers during 2018 transfers, with Bill Weir and others calling this year's move the worst they have experienced.

About 400,000 American military members and civilian employees will move this year with their families. More than 100,000 military members and supporters have signed an online petition demanding improvement to a system that costs taxpayers \$2.2 billion annually.

Organizer Megan Harless, an Army veteran whose husband Aaron is a major, said she posted the petition after her family's recent move from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to Fort Eustis, Virginia. Movers improperly wrapped china, threw boxes carelessly onto the truck, and lost or stole bags containing the couple's shooting accessories, she said.

"This really is a bad year," said Harless, whose family has moved nine times in 13 years. Once-isolated problems are now "across all branches, all locations."

The military has no exact statistics on problem moves but said surveys show a slight drop in satisfaction. Maj. Carla Gleason, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said the issues arise from a nationwide shortage of truck drivers and a low unemployment rate that has "made it very difficult for providers to find quality labor."

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Gleason said the 850 approved contractors are assigned specific jobs using a formula that is 30 percent price and 70 percent previous customer satisfaction. Poorly graded companies are suspended or dropped.

"We are very sympathetic to the sacrifices that our members make and do our best to make sure that high quality providers are moving their possessions. Unfortunately, not every move is perfect," she said.

When the AP contacted a military families Facebook group about transfer experiences this year, complaints came from across the country.

Traci Mayes handled her family's move from Jacksonville, Florida, to Naval Station Great Lakes near Chicago while her husband, Petty Officer 1st Class William Mayes, was deployed. With a 6-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter, she was happy when Shur-Way Moving expedited their delivery from October to Aug. 15. But two crates are missing — including a 70-inch television; supplies for her T-shirt business; and her son's clothes, toys, karate awards and a bank made by his great-grandfather.

"He kept asking me, 'Are the movers mad at me? Did I do something wrong?'" Mayes said. "Trying to explain that to a 6-year-old is very tough."

Also missing, she said, are family letters, photos and birth announcements. She filed a claim for \$26,000.

Joe Ambrose, a Shur-Way operations manager, apologized for losing Mayes' belongings but said the company is checking 1,700 storage vaults in hopes of finding them. He doesn't think they were stolen — company employees must pass background checks and surveillance cameras blanket the warehouse. Sometimes crates are mismarked, he said, or delivered to the wrong person, who dishonestly keeps the goods.

"With the amount of tonnage that is handled in a short time during peak season, which is summer, there are going to be service failures," he said.

But not all moving companies fully vet their workers, as Navy wife Amy Alvarez learned. After her husband, an enlisted sailor for 18 years, and their 2-year-old daughter arrived in Hawaii from Jacksonville this summer, the couple noticed his supposedly crated iPad had uploaded new photos to their online storage. They didn't recognize anyone until they saw a Stewart Moving & Storage crew member.

"He stole it. That was the only conclusion we had," Alvarez said.

She notified Florida authorities, who arrested Charles Fort Jr., 59, on theft charges. Florida Department of Corrections records show he's served two burglary sentences.

Stewart Moving apologized for the theft, saying in a statement that it doesn't do background checks on temporary workers like Fort and might stop using temps altogether.

"The people they hire, they need to put a little more thought into it," Alvarez said angrily.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Oct. 7, the 280th day of 2018. There are 85 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 7, 1991, University of Oklahoma law professor Anita Hill publicly accused Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of making sexually inappropriate comments when she worked for him; Thomas denied Hill's allegations.

On this date:

In 1777, the second Battle of Saratoga began during the American Revolution. (British forces under General John Burgoyne surrendered ten days later.)

In 1858, the fifth debate between Illinois senatorial candidates Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas took place in Galesburg.

In 1916, in the most lopsided victory in college football history, Georgia Tech defeated Cumberland University 222-0 in Atlanta.

In 1949, the Republic of East Germany was formed.

In 1954, Marian Anderson became the first black singer hired by the Metropolitan Opera Company in

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New York.

In 1960, Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy and Republican opponent Richard Nixon held their second televised debate, this one in Washington, D.C.

In 1979, Pope John Paul II concluded his week-long tour of the United States with a Mass on the Washington Mall.

In 1982, the Andrew Lloyd Webber-Tim Rice musical "Cats" opened on Broadway. (The show ended its original run on Sept. 10, 2000, after a then-record 7,485 performances.)

In 1985, Palestinian gunmen hijacked the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro (ah-KEE'-leh LOW'-roh) in the Mediterranean. (The hijackers killed Leon Klinghoffer, a Jewish-American tourist, before surrendering on Oct. 9.)

In 1989, Hungary's Communist Party renounced Marxism in favor of democratic socialism during a party congress in Budapest.

In 1992, trade representatives of the United States, Canada and Mexico initialed the North American Free Trade Agreement during a ceremony in San Antonio, Texas, in the presence of President George H.W. Bush, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (muhl-ROO'-nee) and Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

In 1998, Matthew Shepard, a gay college student, was beaten and left tied to a wooden fencepost outside of Laramie, Wyoming; he died five days later. (Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinney are serving life sentences for Shepard's murder.)

Ten years ago: The misery worsened on Wall Street, as the Dow lost more than 500 points and all the major indexes slid more than 5 percent. In their second presidential debate, held at Belmont University in Nashville, Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain clashed repeatedly over the causes and cures for the economic crisis. Makoto Kobayashi and Toshihide Maskawa of Japan and Yoichiro Nambu of the United States won the Nobel Prize in physics.

Five years ago: A partial federal government shutdown lingered, rattling markets in the U.S. and overseas while a gridlocked Congress betrayed little or no urgency toward resolving the impasse. Americans James Rothman and Randy Schekman and German-born researcher Thomas Suedhof won the Nobel Prize in medicine for discoveries on how proteins and other materials are transported within cells.

One year ago: Country music star Jason Aldean, who had been on stage at an outdoor concert in Las Vegas less than a week earlier when a gunman opened fire on the crowd, paid tribute to the victims and to the late Tom Petty by opening "Saturday Night Live" with Petty's song, "I Won't Back Down." Protesters rallied across Russia in a challenge to President Vladimir Putin on his 65th birthday; heeding calls from opposition leader Alexei Navalny to pressure authorities into letting him enter the presidential race.

Today's Birthdays: Retired South African Archbishop and Nobel Peace laureate Desmond Tutu is 87. Author Thomas Keneally is 83. Comedian Joy Behar is 76. Former National Security Council aide Lt. Col. Oliver North (ret.) is 75. Rock musician Kevin Godley (10cc) is 73. Actress Jill Larson is 71. Country singer Kieran Kane is 69. Singer John Mellencamp is 67. Rock musician Ricky Phillips is 67. Russian President Vladimir Putin is 66. Actress Mary Badham (Film: "To Kill a Mockingbird") is 66. Rock musician Tico Torres (Bon Jovi) is 65. Actress Christopher Norris is 63. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma is 63. Gospel singer Michael W. Smith is 61. Olympic gold medal ice dancer Jayne Torvill is 61. Actor Dylan Baker is 60. Recording executive and TV personality Simon Cowell is 59. Rock musician Charlie Marinkovich (Iron Butterfly) is 59. Country singer Dale Watson is 56. Pop singer Ann Curless (Expose) is 55. Rhythm-and-blues singer Toni Braxton is 51. Rock singer-musician Thom Yorke (Radiohead) is 50. Rock musician-dancer Leeroy Thornhill is 49. Actress Nicole Ari Parker is 48. Actress Allison Munn is 44. Rock singer-musician Damian Kulash (KOO'-lahsh) is 43. Singer Taylor Hicks is 42. Actor Omar Benson Miller is 40. Neo-soul singer Nathaniel Rateliff (Nathaniel Rateliff & the Night Sweats) is 40. Actor Shawn Ashmore is 39. Actor Jake McLaughlin is 36. Electronic musician Flying Lotus (AKA Stephen Ellison) is 35. MLB player Evan Longoria is 33. Actress Holland Roden is 32. Actress Amber Stevens is 32. Actress Lulu Wilson is 13.

Thought for Today: "If your contribution has been vital there will always be somebody to pick up where you left off, and that will be your claim to immortality." — Walter Gropius, German-American architect (1883-1969).