

Groton Area Schedule of Events

The following change has been made to the JHBB schedule:

JHBBB @ Warner on February 11 has been changed to JHBBB @ HOME on Friday, February 8 (in the old gym). 7th grade will play at 4, followed by 8th grade at 5.

Monday, February 4, 2019

Junior High Boys Basketball at Britton-Hecla. (7th grade at 4 p.m., 8th grade at 5 p.m.)

Tuesday, February 5, 2019

Girls' Basketball hosts Aberdeen Roncalli. (JV at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game.)

Wednesday, February 6, 2019

Small Group Music Contest at Northern State University 10:15am- 3:10pm: MathCounts at Northern State University (Northeastern South Dakota Chapter Competition)

Thursday, February 7, 2019

1:30pm- 8:30pm: Parent/Teacher Conferences at GHS Gymnasium and Groton Area Elementary School

Friday, February 8, 2019

Rushmore Challenge Debate at Harrisburg High School
Faculty Inservice - No School
Doubleheader Basketball with Warner in Groton. (Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 5 p.m., Varsity girls at 6:30 p.m. followed by Varsity boys game.)

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

- 2- Wolves drop final game of road trip to Minnesota State Saturday afternoon
- 3- Mason Stark drops a career high 26 for the Wolves in their 8-point victory over MSU
- 3- Groton Care & Rehab Help Wanted Ads
- 4- Arctic air to return
- 4- Winter Weather Advisory
- 5- SD News Watch: Educators struggle to reduce need for remedial classes in S.D. colleges
- 12- Dakota Valley holds off Groton Area at DAK-12 vs. NEC Clash
- 13- Tiospa Zina have clean sweep over Groton Area boys
- 14- Sen. Rounds' Weekly Column
- 15- Re. Dusty Johnson's Weekly Column
- 16- Gov. Kristi Noem's Weekly Column
- 17- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column
- 18- State Rep. Lana Greenfield's Weekly Column
- 20- Today in Weather History
- 21-22 Weather Pages
- 23- Daily Devotional
- 24- 2019 Groton Events
- 25- News from the Associated Press

Skating Rink Hours

Open Monday - Thursday: 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Friday: 4 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Sunday: 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Wolves drop final game of road trip to Minnesota State Saturday afternoon

Mankato, Minn. – Northern State women’s basketball team finished the road trip with a loss at Minnesota Mankato by a final score of 40-54. With the loss, the Wolves dropped to 8-14 and 5-11 in conference play.

Mankato went on an 11-0 run in the first quarter to take a five point lead heading into the second quarter. A total of 13 points was scored in the second quarter, as the Wolves trailed by six heading into the intermission. Wolves shot 21.6 percent in the first half from the field, 12.5 percent from behind the arc, and recorded 29 rebounds.

Wolves were out-scored in the third quarter 10-13 as they trailed by 10 heading into the final quarter. Wolves recorded a 5-0 run early in the fourth quarter to cut the lead to six with 5:05 left to go in the game. Mavericks answered that run with a run of their own, as the Wolves dropped the game by a final score of 40-54. Wolves in the game shot 24.6 percent from the field, 13.3 percent from behind the arc, season high 51 rebounds, three blocks, and three steals.

Brianna Kusler led the Wolves with nine points, 11 rebounds, and two assists. Jessi Marti tallied eight points, two rebounds, and one steal. Lexi Wadsworth recorded six points, eight rebounds, one assist, and one steal. Brooke Luitjens starting in consecutive games finished the game with two points, six rebounds, one assist, and two steals.

Joie Spier led the bench in scoring with eight points, she also recorded five rebounds and one assist. Alayna Johnson was the last starter for the Wolves finishing with five rebounds, one assist, and two blocks. Anika Fredrick tallied four points and four rebounds in the loss. Tori Mekash was the last NSU player to record points, she finished with three points, three rebounds, and one assist. Zoe Hardwick tallied one rebound in the loss.

The Wolves return home for I Hate Winter next weekend, as they host University of Sioux Falls on Friday and Southwest Minnesota State on Saturday. Tip-off is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Friday against the Cougars and 4 p.m. on Saturday against the Mustangs. For a complete list of events and fan information on I Hate Winter check out nsuwolves.com

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Mason Stark drops a career high 26 for the Wolves in their 8-point victory over MSU

Mankato, Minn. – If last night was not enough, the Northern State University men's basketball team continued to pump out career highs in their 88-80 victory over Minnesota State Saturday evening. The Wolves improved 17-5 overall and 13-3 in the league following the weekend sweep over the NSIC South.

Despite a few late comeback attempts by the Mavericks, the Wolves did not fall behind MSU in the entire 40 minutes of play. Minnesota State tied the game on two occasions early in the first period and Northern held their largest lead of ten points with 7:25 left in the second.

They combined for 46 points in the paint, 18 points off the bench, 17 points off offensive boards, and eight points off turnovers. Northern out-rebounded Minnesota State 42-33 in the win, and tallied five made 3-pointers, 13 assists, three steals, and one block.

Northern forced six Minnesota State turnovers in the game and held the Mavericks stagnant from the 3-point line in the second. MSU knocked down just 2-of-10 from beyond the arc in the second half. As a team, Northern shot 50.0 percent from the field and 70.8 percent from the foul line.

Mason Stark came alive for the Wolves with a career high 26 points, 18 of which came in the second half. The redshirt freshman hit 7-of-15 from the floor, 3-of-5 from the arc, and 9-of-10 from the foul line en route to his new career mark. He also added three rebounds and two assists in 33 minutes of action.

After a career high a night ago, Justin Decker dropped a team second best 18 points and matched his career high with a team leading nine rebounds. Decker added two assists and one steal for the Wolves, shooting 47.4 percent from the floor.

Parker Fox was third on the team and led the Wolves off the bench with 16 points and five rebounds. He hit 7-of-10 from the floor and tallied the team's lone block. Andrew Kallman was the final man in double figures with 11 points, hitting two of the team's five 3-pointers. He added two rebounds and one assist.

Gabe King and Bo Fries grabbed nine and six points respectively for NSU, as well as six rebounds apiece. King also fished out a team leading four assists, while Fries notched one assist and one steal. Cole Dahl tallied the final two team points in the win. Jordan Belka and Roko Dominovic may not have scored by combined for three rebounds, three assists, and one steal.

Northern returns to the confines of Wachs Arena next Friday and Saturday for one of the biggest weekends of the year; the annual I Hate Winter celebration. The Wolves will face off with Sioux Falls at 7:30 p.m. on Friday and Southwest Minnesota State at 6 p.m. on Saturday.

Cook/ Dietary Aide

Flexible schedule
and new wage
scale.

Contact Pam Rohrbach



GROTON
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 North Second Street
605.397.2365



HELP WANTED

Director of Nursing

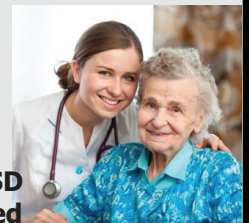
Current RN licensure in SD
BSN/MSN degree preferred
Sign on bonus available
Full benefits included.

Contact Brynn Pickrel



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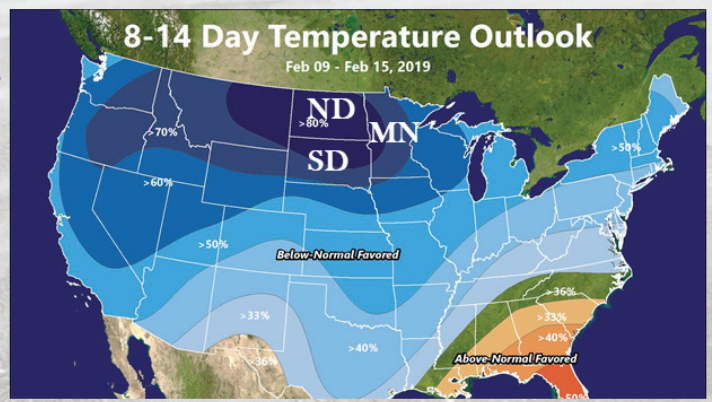
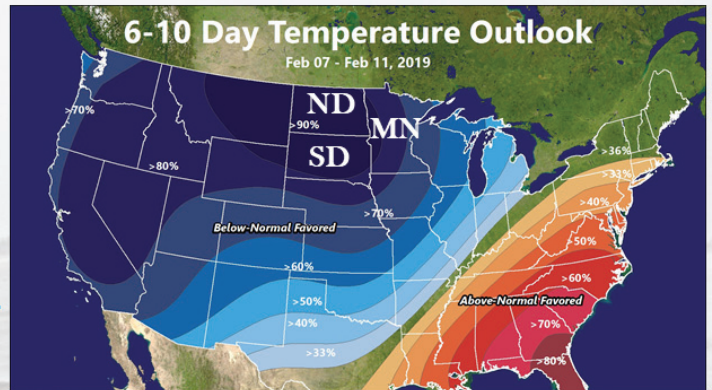
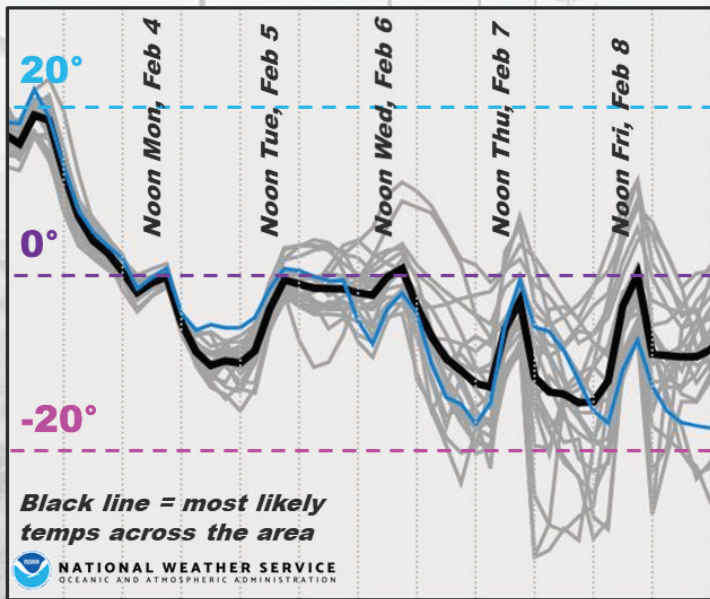


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ARCTIC AIR TO RETURN

While not as extreme as Jan 30-31st, another stretch of continuous near zero or sub-zero temps is possible starting Monday. Below average temps overall are likely to continue well into February



Published on: 02/02/2019 at 1:36PM

While not as extreme as Jan 30-31st, another stretch of continuous near zero or sub-zero temps is possible starting Monday. Below average temps overall are likely to continue well into February.

WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY

Expiration: 12:00 PM Mon, Feb 4, 2019

...WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY REMAINS IN EFFECT FROM 6 PM THIS EVENING TO NOON CST MONDAY...

...WIND CHILL ADVISORY IN EFFECT FROM MIDNIGHT TONIGHT TO NOON CST MONDAY...

* WHAT...Snow, blowing snow, and very cold wind chills. Total snow accumulations of 2 to 4 inches. Winds gusting as high as 35 mph.

Wind chills from 25 below to 35 below zero tonight through Monday morning.

* WHERE...Brown County.

* WHEN...For the Winter Weather Advisory, from 6 PM this evening to noon CST Monday. For the Wind Chill Advisory, from midnight tonight to noon CST Monday.

* ADDITIONAL DETAILS...Plan on slippery road conditions. Areas of blowing snow could significantly reduce visibility. The hazardous conditions could impact the morning commute. The dangerously cold wind chills could cause frostbite on exposed skin in as little as 10 minutes.

A Winter Weather Advisory for snow means periods of snow will cause primarily travel difficulties. Expect snow covered roads and limited visibilities, and use caution while driving.

A Wind Chill Advisory means that cold air and the wind will combine to create low wind chills. Frostbite and hypothermia can occur if precautions are not taken. Make sure you wear a hat and gloves.

The latest road conditions can be obtained by calling 5 1 1.



Educators struggle to reduce need for remedial classes in S.D. colleges

By: Bart Pfankuch

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, a non-profit news organization. Find more in-depth reporting at www.sdnewswatch.org.

Every year, about 30 percent of South Dakota high school graduates who enroll in a state university must take remedial courses in math or English because they don't test high enough in those topics. Those courses cost the students about \$1,000 per class and provide them with no college credit.

The classes are designed to help college-bound students catch up and be ready to take algebra, English composition or other basic classes needed to graduate.

Yet national studies and data from South Dakota universities show that enrollment in a remedial course dramatically reduces the likelihood a student will graduate or complete a degree program. The same problem exists at state technical schools that also require remedial courses for students who test poorly in math or English.

Students forced to take remediation endure additional tuition costs and lose pace with their peers.

"Having to take remedial coursework doesn't doom you, but it puts you behind the eight ball right out of the box in terms of your chances of graduating," said Jay Perry, interim vice president for academic affairs at the South Dakota Board of Regents.

In South Dakota, taking a required remedial course reduces the likelihood of graduating by about half. In 2012, about 43 percent of students who started at a state university and did not need a remedial course graduated in four years, while only 23 percent of students who underwent remediation graduated in four years.

Multiple efforts are underway to improve teaching, learning and testing to better prepare students, and reforms are also taking place at universities to shift students away from remediation and into classes that give them credit and don't throw them off pace to graduate.

For the first time starting as early as this fall, students who don't test high enough in math will no longer be required to take a remedial math class and instead will be offered a course called Quantitative Literacy with a learning lab that will cost them less money, give them college credit and hopefully pave the way to graduation.

Paul Beran, the new president of the Board of Regents, told a legislative committee recently that the high level of required remediation often leads to blaming of the public school system on several levels.

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Beran also said the problem is not one with easy answers or a quick fix.

Beran said continued conversation among educators at all levels is needed to “figure out how we can lessen [remediation] and how we can make it as quick as possible and help those who are motivated to move forward to do that.” He then added: “I wish I had a better answer.”



Education officials in South Dakota are trying to reduce the number of college-bound high school students who need to take remedial classes in math or English before they can begin their college studies. Students who need to catch up come from high schools across the state, including in Rapid City. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch)

Changing nature of remediation

The problem has plagued educational leaders at the high school and university levels in South Dakota for years. In 2010, about 31.5 percent of the nearly 3,000 South Dakota high school graduates who enrolled in state universities full time were required to take remedial math, English or both. In 2017, about 32.8 percent of students were forced to remediate at some level.

The original intent was to help out students who qualified for college but were weak in key subject areas that form the basis for advanced learning in a number of fields. Many years ago, the classes were dominated by non-traditional students who wanted to brush up on the basics before starting off on a delayed college journey.

But as enrollment requirements were lowered, and obtaining a college degree became more critical to landing a good job after graduation, more people entered college and the need for remediation grew among recent high school graduates.

Fall enrollment in degree-granting colleges in the United States rose by 23 percent from 1995 to 2005 and jumped another 14 percent from 2005 to 2015 to a total of about 20 million students, according to the Institute of Education Sciences.

Now, most remedial classes are dominated by recent high school graduates, and data clearly show those students are less likely to complete a degree program.

Taking remedial classes in South Dakota at any level is not cheap.

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Perry said the per-credit cost is much higher than for credit-bearing courses. Depending on the school, remediation classes cost \$340 per credit compared to about \$245 per credit for courses that count toward graduation. Courses are typically three credits and because they must be passed in order to move forward, some students take them more than once.

At state technical schools, the cost for remedial courses is the same for credit-bearing courses, about \$210 per credit or \$420 for the 2-credit courses. Remedial classes at tech schools do not count toward earning a degree or certification, said Julie Brookbank, spokeswoman at Mitchell Technical Institute.

Studies have also found that about one in four students required to undergo remediation in math and one in three remediated in English are "severely mis-assigned" into the courses by current testing and placement methods, and that minorities and men are disproportionately affected.

South Dakota shifted to a more comprehensive assignment model several years ago that includes an index of results in math from college entrance exams, the statewide Smarter Balance standardized test and high school grade point average. Placement in English remediation is based on reaching one of four testing benchmarks. The full placement rules are compiled with a 15-page state report, but a general guideline is that remediation will be required if a student scores below an 18 on the ACT test in math or English.

University officials believe the expanded math index and English benchmarks will reduce the need for remediation by students who perhaps did not test well but possess the skills and work ethic to succeed in college.

"That index captures some people who would have gone to remedial work and suggests they can do the credit-bearing work if they have extra help," said Perry.

A pair of recent studies by the Community College Research Center at Columbia University suggested that remediation may not be needed at all for some students who are being routed into the courses. The studies suggested that many students who skipped taking remedial classes they were assigned to could go directly into college courses and perform well.

Meanwhile, remedial courses may have a disproportionate negative effect on certain population groups. Complete College America, a group focused on improving graduation rates, found that men, older students, minorities such as Hispanics and African Americans and lower-income students are more likely to be channeled into remedial courses and are less likely to complete the classes than other groups.

"The costs of remediation to the taxpayer are substantial, but the financial, psychological, and opportunity costs borne by the students themselves may be even more significant. While they are enrolled in remediation, students accumulate debt, spend time and money, and bear the opportunity cost of lost earnings," a 2009 study by the research center noted.

"What happens is there's a skill gap that develops, so as kids are progressing through the grades, based on our state data we know there's a growing skill gap. As far as why, that's the question we're all trying to answer."

- Becky Nelson, director of learning and instruction at the South Dakota Department of Education.

Officials have struggled with remedial course concerns for years

The high remediation rate in South Dakota is a frustrating and frequent topic of discussion among policymakers and officials in state government.

At a press conference following release of her first proposed annual budget, Gov. Kristi Noem acknowledged that South Dakota students aren't performing as well as they should upon graduation.

"There are some challenges ahead," Noem said. "We need to make sure that every student in our K-12 system has the opportunity to be successful beyond graduation."

Noem, whose budget plan calls for a 2.5 percent spending hike in the K-12 and technical school systems in the coming year, said improvements can start with reforms at the level of individual school districts that have good ideas or have seen success.

The challenges of reducing remediation were made clear during a House Education Committee meeting in January.

Rep. Fred Deutsch asked Beran about what he called a "longer-standing problem" of high rates of remediation needed for students entering colleges and tech schools.

Beran said he wanted to get faculty members from the K-12 system and the university system together to figure out "where does one end and where does the other begin?"

Beran said discussions of remediation tend to focus on blaming the K-12 education system, but he said that ignores the fact that modern students face social, cultural and economic stresses that can make learning a challenge.

"The fact of the matter is, the biggest predictor of success of a student has nothing to do with what happens at a school," Beran told the committee. "The biggest predictor of success is walk into their home and how many books do they have on the shelf?"

Rep. Jamie Smith, D-Sioux Falls, the minority leader in the House and a former teacher, said improvements in K-12 education are needed but that changes should be implemented at the local level when possible and be done in a positive way.

"Part of our job is to express a need for rigor but to also let teachers teach," Smith said recently. "Putting your thumb on someone doesn't really help."

Becky Nelson, director of learning and instruction at the state education department, said focusing on learning in the early grades is critical to helping students prepare for college.

"What happens is that there's a skill gap that develops, so as kids are progressing through the grades, based on our state data we know there's a growing skill gap," Nelson said. "As far as why, that's the question we're all trying to answer."

Ben Jones, interim secretary for the Department of Education, said improving learning in the K-12 system may require a deep dive into school districts or even individual schools to seek out and correct weaknesses and to find and model successes.

An example, Jones said, would be to react swiftly if a small district had a wave of retirements that drastically reduced the amount of teaching experience within a school's English or math department. Administrators could then work to shift resources to provide more experienced teachers within that school so student achievement doesn't fall off.

"Looking at a statewide average doesn't always help you move the needle; you have to look at pockets of high or low performance and if they're having difficulties, and ask what can we do to help them out," Jones said.



Under a new program called the Regental Math Pathway Model, beginning this fall, students would not take remedial math courses. Instead, they would take an existing 3-credit course called "Quantitative Literacy," with a 2-credit math lab where they will receive educational support and learn study skills. The course approaches math use in real-world settings.

Ground-level efforts underway

In recent years, the state has taken steps to reduce the number of incoming college freshmen who need remedial coursework.

One program started in the 2013-14 school year gives college bound high school seniors that opportunity to take additional online coursework aimed specifically at passing tests and avoiding remediation.

Under the College Readiness Coursework program, students who sign up are given a pre-test to determine subject weaknesses and then receive online and in-person tutoring before taking a post-test that can be used to skip remedial coursework in college. Students pay a fee ranging from \$125 to \$175 for the course but are fully reimbursed by the state if they complete it.

"What's unique about the coursework is that it is tailored to the individual student's needs," said Nelson. "One student may only need brushing up on a couple concepts, while some students may need more concepts to work on."

So far, participation by school districts and students has been low, Nelson said. In 2016, 100 students

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completed the course, followed by 90 in 2017 and only 61 in 2018. Passage rates have ranged from 51 to 73 percent.

Jolene Christianson, a math teacher in the Britton-Hecla School District in Marshall County, has had success using the college readiness program to help students avoid remediation.

This school year, six students enrolled in the program that she oversees during regular class time at the high school.

Christianson said she supports the program not only as a way for students to learn, but also to avoid the pitfalls that come with taking remedial courses after high school.

"Making them redo that struggle again at the college level or tech school level, it's a bad thing waiting to happen," she said. "If they had to redo math they already struggled with in high school, and maybe also in reading, they're going to fail and they're going to quit and not graduate."

Christianson, who has been teaching math for nearly four decades, said she has seen a drop off in the maturity level of students that may make them less likely to succeed in college. She has also noted societal and parenting changes that protect children from the possibility of failure, which she said does not always prepare them well for college or life and which can make remediation less effective.

"Over the last 37 years, I have watched and noticed that seniors in high school today do not have the same maturity level that kids did when they graduated years ago," Christianson said. "That leads to a feeling that they will be able to get by in any case, which they quickly learn is not true at the college level or in life."

The most aggressive efforts to reduce the number of students in math remediation have taken place at South Dakota State University. Kurt Cogswell, head of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at SDSU, said the college has taken innovative and aggressive steps over the past decade to reduce enrollment in remedial math. Cogswell led the effort to create the math placement index that is now used across the university system, and SDSU also developed a course in which some students could avoid remediation by taking college algebra with a co-requisite class that provides tutoring, study skills and additional support.

Math educators know that passing college algebra, sometimes referred to as "the killer course," is a graduation requirement that frequently prevents students from getting a degree.

"Algebra is very much focused on skills needed in later courses such as chemistry, ag sciences, economics, and it deals with topics that often strike fear into the hearts of people," said Cogswell.

Using the placement index and the co-requisite algebra course reduced the number of SDSU students in math remediation classes from 1,142 in 2012-13 to only 250 this academic year.

With results in hand, Cogswell worked with the Board of Regents to create the Regental Math Pathway Model, which was approved and will begin at South Dakota universities as early as this fall.

Under the program, no future students who qualify to enter college will have to take a remedial math class. Instead, Cogswell said, the students will take an existing 3-credit course called Quantitative Literacy with a co-requisite 2-credit math lab where they will learn study skills and receive educational support. Not only will students save money compared to paying for remediation, but they will also take a credit-bearing math class that for many liberal arts majors will be the only math class they need to graduate.

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Cogswell said the course has some of the same components of algebra but approaches math use in more real-world settings.

Students in majors with a need for higher-level math will still need to take those courses listed under their major, Cogswell said, and all majors at the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology will require more math.

"We asked ourselves, 'What mathematics do you need to be a literate person in the United States?'" he said. "It's a banner initiative that gets students into the right course for their major so they're not trying to take a course that is more challenging than they need, and thereby eliminating another barrier to college graduation."

Cogswell and Perry reject the notion that eliminating the algebra requirement is a "dumbing down" of the math standards in order to allow more poor-performing students to graduate.

"I am old and I'm old school, and I'm not dumbing anything down so that's not happening," Cogswell said. "I just want students to be ready for the world when they get out of here no matter their major."



About Bart Pfankuch

Bart Pfankuch, Rapid City, S.D., is an investigative reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A Wisconsin native, he is a former editor of the Rapid City Journal. Bart has spent almost 30 years as a reporter and editor.

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Dakota Valley holds off Groton Area at DAK-12 vs. NEC Clash

Dakota Valley had a 17 point run in the second quarter to take a 13-8 first quarter lead to a 30-8 lead and led it at half time, 31-12. The Panthers held a 22-point lead for some time, but the last was at 39-17 late in the third quarter.

Groton Area then started a rally, outscoring Dakota Valley, 17-2, and close the gap to six points at 41-35. The Tigers had several opportunities to close the lead even more, but turnovers thwarted the effort and the Panthers went on to win, 43-35.

Kaycie Hawkins led the Tigers with 11 points followed by Payton Maine with 10, Eliza Wanner and Gracie Traphaghen each had four points, Miranda Hanson three, Alyssa Locke two and Jennie Doeden had one point before fouling with 6:55 left in the game.

In the first quarter, Groton Area made three of 10 field goals for 30 percent while Dakota Valley was six of 14 for 43 percent. Groton Area had five turnovers in the first quarter and Dakota Valley had two.

In the second quarter, Groton Area made two of eight field goals for 25 percent while Dakota Valley was six of 12 for 50 percent. The Tigers had seven turnovers and Dakota Valley four.

Groton Area made three of seven field goals in the third quarter for 43 percent while the Panthers were four of 14 for 29 percent. The Tigers had four turnovers and the Panthers had one.

In the fourth quarter, Groton Area made four of 10 field goals for 40 percent and Dakota Valley made one of six for 17 percent. Groton Area had two turnovers and Dakota Valley had four.

For the game, Groton Area made 12 of 41 field goals for 29 percent while Dakota Valley was 17 of 48 for 35 percent. Groton Area had 19 turnovers compared to 11 for Dakota Valley.

Doeden had eight of the team's 28 rebounds, Hawkins had three of the team's seven steals and Doeden had two of the team's seven assists.

Grace Bass led the Panthers with 11 points while Morgan Tritz had 10, Tegan Hennies and Rachel Wentz each had seven and Rylee Rosenquist had two points.

Groton Area made seven of 14 free throw for 50 percent off of Dakota Valley's 16 team fouls. Dakota Valley made seven of 14 free throws as well for 50 percent off of Groton Area's 18 team fouls.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by the Aberdeen Chrysler Center. The game was played Saturday in Madison as part of the DAK-XII vs. NEC Clash.

Sisseton was the only team to post a win this year in the girls DAK-XII vs. NEC Conference Clash. In fact, it was the first win for Sisseton this year. Sisseton defeated Tri-Valley, 52-37. In the other games, Canton whirled past Webster, 56-48; Dakota Valley held off Groton Area, 43-35; Dell Rapids beat the Bulldogs from Milbank, 56-32; Elk Point-Jefferson topped Tiospa Zina, 45-26; Lennox rolled past Redfield/Doland, 50-37; Madison beat Britton-Hecla, 56-32; Sioux Falls Christian repulsed Roncalli, 40-36; Tea Area drubbed Deuel, 66-35; Vermillion clipped Clark/Willow Lake, 57-41; and West Central hopped over Hamlin, 49-36.

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Tiospa Zina have clean sweep over Groton Area boys

Groton Area's boys basketball team dropped a 78-33 game to Tiospa Zina on Friday in a game played at Agency Village.

Cade Guthmiller, Brodyn DeHoet and Abdimalik Mohamed were all home sick and Jonathan Doeden is out with an injury.

Treyton Diegel and Jaydan Zak led the Tigers with seven points apiece while Jackson Cogley had six, Kaden Kurtz had four, Lane Tietz and Tristan Traphagen each had three, Chandler Larson had two and Austin Jones added a free throw.

Divante Greeley led the Wambdi with 16 points followed by Payton Halseide with 11, Marty Fun Maker and Caleb White each had 10 points, Jameson Pratt had nine, Elliott Barse four, Quintin Abbey and Johnny German each had three and Kobe HolyBear, Sam Shepherd and Kuttkins each had two points.

Groton Area made 11 of 52 field goals for 21 percent while Tiospa Zina made 32 of 68 for 47 percent. The Wambdi made three three-pointers and Groton Area made five. From the line, the Tigers were six of 11 for 55 percent and the Wambdi were 11 of 19 for 58 percent.

The Wambdi controlled the boards, 46-24, with Jones having six rebounds. Groton Area had 13 turnovers, 11 of which were steals and Tiospa Zina had four turnovers, with Tietz having the only steal.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by the Aberdeen Chrysler Center.

Tiospa Zina won the junior varsity game, 38-24. Cyrus DeHoet led the Tigers with nine points as Jordan Bjerke and Jackson Cogley each had four, Lane Tietz had three and Wyatt Hearnen and Tristan Traphagen each had two points. Pierce Kettering and Jackson Cogley each had three rebounds.

The Wambdi made it a clean sweep with a 38-28 C game win. Jace Kroll had eight points, Jordan Bjerke five, Pierce Kettering four, Lane Tietz three and Jackson Cogley, Wyatt Hearnen, Tate Larson and Cole Simon each had two points.



USS South Dakota is Navy's Newest Nuclear Submarine

USS South Dakota (SSN 790) is the Navy's newest nuclear submarine, commissioned on Feb. 2, 2019. It is the 17th Virginia-class attack submarine to join the fleet. It was a true honor to be a part of the commissioning event.

USS South Dakota will play an important role in the mission of our sailors, and it will also serve as a new symbolic link between our state and the Navy. According to the U.S. Navy, it has been designed to fulfill the seven core competencies of the submarine force: anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, delivery of Special Operations Forces, strike warfare, irregular warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and mine warfare.

This new submarine includes state-of-the-art technology designed to increase stealth, as well as a revised bow and sonar panels that will allow it to better detect and track other submarines in its area. USS South Dakota is a 7,800 ton vessel, is 377 feet long and will be manned by 132 crew members. It can stay at sea for up to three months at a time. Because it is a nuclear attack submarine, it will be armed with four torpedo tubes and can hold 12 Tomahawk cruise missiles that are capable of hitting targets more than 1,000 miles away.

USS South Dakota is the third commissioned Navy vessel to bear the name of our state. The first was an armored cruiser that was used between 1904 and 1912. The second USS South Dakota (BB-57) was a battleship commissioned in 1942. During World War II, it was vital in blocking Japanese forces from entering Guadalcanal. It was also involved in the Battle of Savo Island, Battle of Philippine Sea, Okinawa and Iwo Jima, earning a total of 13 battle stars. USS South Dakota was present in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945, for Japan's formal surrender. When newspapers or radio stations reported on USS South Dakota during the war, they referred to it as "Battleship X" or "Old Nameless" because the Navy wanted to hide information about the battleship from our enemies.

Several World War II veterans who served aboard BB-57 attended the commissioning ceremony of the newest USS South Dakota. It was very special to have them there to welcome the new submarine to the Navy. We're thankful to them for their service to our country. We are also thankful to the sailors who will serve aboard the new USS South Dakota.

As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, it was truly a privilege to witness the commissioning of this modern attack submarine. We are excited to welcome USS South Dakota to the Navy's fleet, where it will play an important role in our national security for decades to come. When BB-57 was launched in 1941, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox said, "I say to the good ship South Dakota, God go with you, because after all, your mission, the mission for which we built you, is not war, but the prevention of war as God wills." USS South Dakota SSN 790 and its crew will play a significant role in our national security efforts. It will also serve as a tribute to South Dakotans' long history of service in our armed forces.

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CONGRESSMAN
DUSTY JOHNSON
Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



Just Ask South Dakota

Earlier this week, I took to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to make my first official remarks. A bit of anticipation surrounds the first floor speech given by a member of Congress. Some members rush right in – giving a speech just days after being sworn in. Others wait months, preferring to get their “sea legs” under them before addressing the House.

Regardless of the timing, the topic of each freshman’s speech is noteworthy, as it reveals their values and priorities. Some use their time to highlight a local sports team, others attack the other party.

I used my time to celebrate South Dakota and our longstanding commitment to fiscal responsibility.

Eight years ago, I sat in the Rotunda as then-Governor Dennis Daugaard proclaimed “in South Dakota we don’t spend money we don’t have.” I was filled with pride a few weeks ago when our new Governor Kristi Noem echoed those words. Our leaders change, but our core South Dakota values don’t.

South Dakota has never incurred any general obligation debt, and our pension system is fully-funded. Those successes don’t happen by accident. It takes decades of making prudent (and sometimes unpopular) decisions. I’m proud, through my work as chief of staff to the Governor, to have been a part of that history.

Here in Washington, the story is different. There hasn’t always been that kind of intestinal fortitude, resulting in a national debt of \$22 trillion. What’s worse, the debt continues to rise.

Fiscal responsibility shouldn’t be a partisan issue. We can debate what our expenses should be, and we can debate what our revenues should be, but we should agree that our expenses can’t dwarf our revenues. There’s plenty of blame to go around, but I’m more interested in solutions. Taking our medicine – and we do need to take it – won’t be easy, and it can’t happen all at once, but I’m willing to take the tough votes.

I’m not naïve. I understand that one member can’t unilaterally impose fiscal discipline on our national government. There is an important role for me to play, though, regularly reminding my colleagues how important it is for us to act responsibly. Over time the cumulative impact of those efforts might well make a few converts and push Congress toward a better, more sustainable way of doing business.

After all, fiscal responsibility IS possible – just ask South Dakota.

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SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR
KRISTI NOEM



Protecting Our Way of Life

I grew up in a family that always had a shotgun in the pickup; our vacations were spent hunting in the mountains. Even at an early age, I understood the way guns fundamentally made us more safe, secure, and free. Bryon and I have instilled those values in our kids too. See, in South Dakota, the right to bear arms isn't just an abstract right. It's our way of life.

More than 230 years ago, the Founding Fathers of our country penned the Constitution that has since laid the framework of centuries of policies. Many things have changed since then, but our core American values have not. They so firmly believed in the importance of the freedom to bear arms that they enshrined it into the Constitution's Second Amendment.

I believe that right is just as important today as it was back then.

The right to bear arms gives us an opportunity to talk with our kids about the values our country was founded on and allows us to pass on the heritage of living off the land and enjoying the culture we have right here in South Dakota.

Our kids need to grow up respecting the values and protections the Constitution gives recognizing it's a statement on what the government's role in our lives should and should not be. I'm committed to defending our way of life.

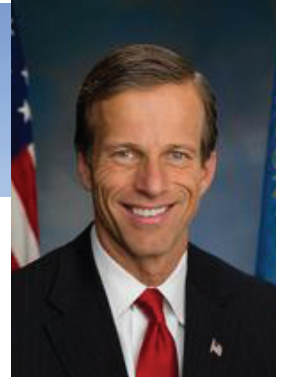
In late January, I signed my first bill into law. I'm proud to say that this bill – Senate Bill 47 – further protects the constitutionally given freedoms of law-abiding South Dakotans.

Constitutional carry, also called permitless carry, is a policy change that has been under consideration in Pierre for several years. The policy was debated and vetted. My administration – as well as many legislators – took time to listen to South Dakotans, law enforcement, and industry experts on this issue. That robust and thoughtful process produced the version I signed into law. I'm grateful to the legislative leadership who pulled the bill across the finish line.

This legislation removes the requirement to obtain a permit in order to lawfully carry a firearm for self-defense. It further gives South Dakotans the freedom to choose the best method of carrying for them.

I believe this constitutional carry legislation will further protect the Second Amendment rights of South Dakotans, once again reaffirming our culture – our South Dakota way of life – for the next generation.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Why Is Death Still a Taxable Event?

Benjamin Franklin was on to something when he said the only certainties in life are death and taxes. He clearly didn't live in South Dakota, otherwise "winter" surely would have made his list, too. But he was right. Death and taxes are inevitable, and while a certain level of taxation is necessary for maintaining a strong military and to fund projects like building roads and bridges, I don't think the government should take one dime more than what it needs to provide the basic functions Americans expect from it.

Defining "what the government needs" is up for debate, though, and it doesn't take long to learn that it's a pretty relative idea, particularly in Washington, D.C. I've always prided myself on being a small-government fiscal conservative who believes in individual rights and liberties. I think states and local communities, not Washington, are better positioned to make decisions, and I believe taxpayers know how to spend their hard-earned money more effectively than anyone in Washington.

Not everyone agrees with me, though, which is what brings me back to death and taxes. Americans are some of the smartest, hardest working people on earth. Some of them work a lifetime to create a nest egg, buy a home, maybe start a business, and hopefully have enough left over to pass on to their kids and grandkids. The federal estate tax, more commonly known as the death tax (yes, that's a real thing), runs contrary to the entire idea of the American Dream, which is why I've spent more than a decade fighting to bury it once and for all.

The death tax is actually a pretty easy concept to understand. When you die, the federal government assesses the value of what you have left behind, and if it thinks you have too much, it taxes your heirs. So if your farm is "too big" or your business is "too successful," your children might have to pay extra taxes when you die, which means they might have to meet the undertaker and Uncle Sam all on the same day.

Like I said, I've been fighting this fundamentally unfair tax for a long time, which is why I was glad the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the pro-growth tax reform bill I helped write, doubled the death tax exclusion level (the estate value at which the death tax kicks in). While this will undoubtedly help protect more families, especially those that have family-run operations like farms or ranches, I think we should eliminate the death tax once and for all, and I've again introduced a bill that would do just that.

Death tax supporters say it's a way to collect more money from the wealthy, but it's sometimes used to tax farmers, ranchers, and small business owners, the people who I'm particularly concerned about in South Dakota and around the country. Nearly all of South Dakota's farms are family-run, and many of them are multi-generational. These operations are often land rich and cash poor, which means they have a lot of money tied up in land, infrastructure, machinery, and crops or livestock, but these investments aren't necessarily reflected in the family checkbook.

The taxman doesn't make a distinction, though, which is why operations that might look bigger on paper than they are in reality have the potential of being ruined by an untimely death. The last thing families should be worrying about after they've lost a loved one is whether or not they might lose a farm, ranch, or other business, too, which is why I won't stop fighting until death is no longer a taxable event.

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Lana's Annals

**Lana
Greenfield
District 2
State
Representative**

Hello from Pierre. It was a busy week as legislators hurried to file any last minute bills...and file we did! LRC staffers were bombarded all at once.. Some of those may duplicate so not all will be introduced in committees. Ideally, we should be working together if bill filings are similar to each other; however, we never know who is writing what type of bill. That is the tricky part. Hopefully, we can find a way to eliminate duplicity.

Our house education committee had some lively discussions this week. HB1065 would have allowed homeschool students to be exempt from taking standardized tests. We heard testimony that these were, in their opinions, not needed as homeschoolers are dedicated to achieving excellence. There was a lot of

push back from lobbyists of public school entities. Testimony convinced me that, while homeschoolers do an outstanding job, it is necessary to have the validation to prove this. I do believe that, if passed, the bill could have unintended consequences, such as child welfare checks, new bills wanting to mandate that all people who instruct children should have a bachelor's degree just to name two. I do not believe that those who are giving their children a well-rounded education have little to fear. The tests could be valuable proof.

The bill was tabled.

Another bill presented was HB1058. This was a far more controversial bill and filled room 413 on a very cold Wednesday morning. Proponents for the bill, who asked for special education services, felt that it was the obligation of the public schools to do so. The chief lobbyist for homeschoolers cited how her children needed extra services and should be able to go to the public school for 45 minutes (time of one class period in their district) a day to get help. Opponents cited that it would be necessary to enroll students with special needs in order to properly assess needs and then write up an individual educational plan (IEP), monitor progress, and make necessary adjustments. This would suggest that the student with needs should then be at the public school part of each day. After more than an hour of discourse, the committee decided to send this bill to the 41st day.

Our education committee has not taken a final vote on HB1066, which would have high school students take a Civics test in order to test knowledge about the history of our American form of government. This bill was sponsored by our Governor's Office and makes a lot of sense. If we live in a country, shouldn't we know about its history, its Constitution, and other important documents that make it unique from other countries? Action will be taken this week.

We also heard a report from the technical education people. In a nutshell, tech ed is alive and well. The student enrollment is up, (increase of 2.6 per cent in 2018 across the state) retention rates average 80 per cent in three of four school (Western Tech is about 68 per cent), and job placement rate currently is about 97 per cent! I credit many industries who partner with our tech schools. They have been willing to take the students and give them hands-on experience in a specialized field. What a great partnership! I was extremely pleased that my former student, Scott Deslauriers, Doland, is employed by the tech department and was able to attend committee.

Our local government committee listened to a bill which allow conservation districts to combine or divide. The process would be referred to a vote of the people within the district. If the vote fails, the district continues as is. I saw it as a rather proactive bill, set in place, to give direction as to what to do when some districts keep getting smaller. Another bill discussed was HB1056, which prohibits local ordinances regarding firearms. In other words, no county, township, or municipality can pass an ordinance that calls for taxing or licensure of guns. We had a healthy debate, but in the end, it passed 9-4 and now moves to the floor.

We had several groups of visitors this week. Among them were school administrators. Many, including Supt. Chris Lee of Willow Lake, attended our Wednesday House Education meeting. I had the honor dur-

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ing our afternoon session to introduce 2018 South Dakota outstanding Administrators. Among them was Jerry Aberle of our Northeast Services Cooperative. Congratulations on a well-deserved award for all of his dedication and years of service to our area and our state! After session many legislators attended a informational meeting , moderated by former Hamlin Superintendent, Joel Jorgenson(now at Madison High School). We listened to "hot button issues" experienced by various schools in our state. Some were as follows: juvenile justice and programs available; vaping; extra-ordinary cost of special education, just to name a few. We found the sharing time as very eye opening.

I attended SDARL(South Dakota Rural Ag Leadership) meeting and banquet as we had area people who are members of Class X, Jay Esser, Redfield, and Lance Larson, Groton . It is great to see people commit time and effort to such an important program.

In closing, I want to remind readers that we have three more Cracker Barrels in Aberdeen, and tentative ones in Lake Norden, Clark, and Redfield. Times are being finalized so more on that next week.

Thank you for staying informed with what is going on and for the encouragement and prayers offered up for us to make the right decisions, not for us, but for our state and future generations.

Until next week, stay safe and warm!

Rep. Greenfield

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Today in Weather History

February 3, 1997: A winter storm dropped from 6 to 15 inches of snow across central and northeast South Dakota as well as west central Minnesota deepening the already expansive snowpack. The wind came up from the north at 20 to 30 mph during the morning of the 4th causing blowing and drifting snow blocking some roads and making travel hazardous if not impossible. Several vehicles got stuck or went off the road. Due to the massive snowfall, a roof collapsed in Aberdeen, damaging a car. Many schools started late or were canceled, adding to the number of days missed for the season. Some snowfall amounts included, 5 inches at Wheaton, 6 inches at Britton, Summit, Webster, Browns Valley, Artichoke Lake, and Ortonville, 7 inches at Aberdeen, 6 SE McIntosh, Pollock, Timber Lake, 8 inches at Leola, Ipswich, Eagle Butte and Gettysburg, 9 inches at Miller and Mellette, 10 inches at Mobridge, Watertown, Clear Lake, Pierre, Kennebec, and Onida, and 11 inches at Clark and Blunt. Snowfall amounts of a foot or more included, 12 inches at Highmore, Bryant, and Gann Valley, 13 inches at Faulkton, 14 inches 23 N Highmore and Murdo, and 15 inches at 1 SE Stephan.

1844: Boston Harbor was so thick with ice on this date that a channel had to be cut through the ice for the "Britannia" ship to leave with 30,000 letters for England.

1947: The record-low temperature for continental North America was recorded in Snag, in the Yukon Territory, Canada. The temperature was 81.4 degrees below zero.

1988: Arctic air continued to invade the central U.S. The temperature at Midland, Texas plunged from a record high of 80 degrees to 37 degrees in just three hours. Morning lows in the higher elevations of Wyoming were as cold as 38 degrees below zero. Heavy snow blanketed southwestern Colorado, with 16 inches reported at Steamboat Springs.

1917 - Downtown Miami, FL, reported an all-time record low of 27 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1947 - The temperature at Tanacross, AK, plunged to a record 75 degrees below zero. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Wintry weather was confined to freezing drizzle and light snow in the northeastern U.S., and light rain and snow in the western U.S. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Arctic air continued to invade the central U.S. The temperature at Midland TX plunged from a record high of 80 degrees to 37 degrees in just three hours. Morning lows in the higher elevations of Wyoming were as cold as 38 degrees below zero. Heavy snow blanketed southwestern Colorado, with 16 inches reported at Steamboat Springs. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

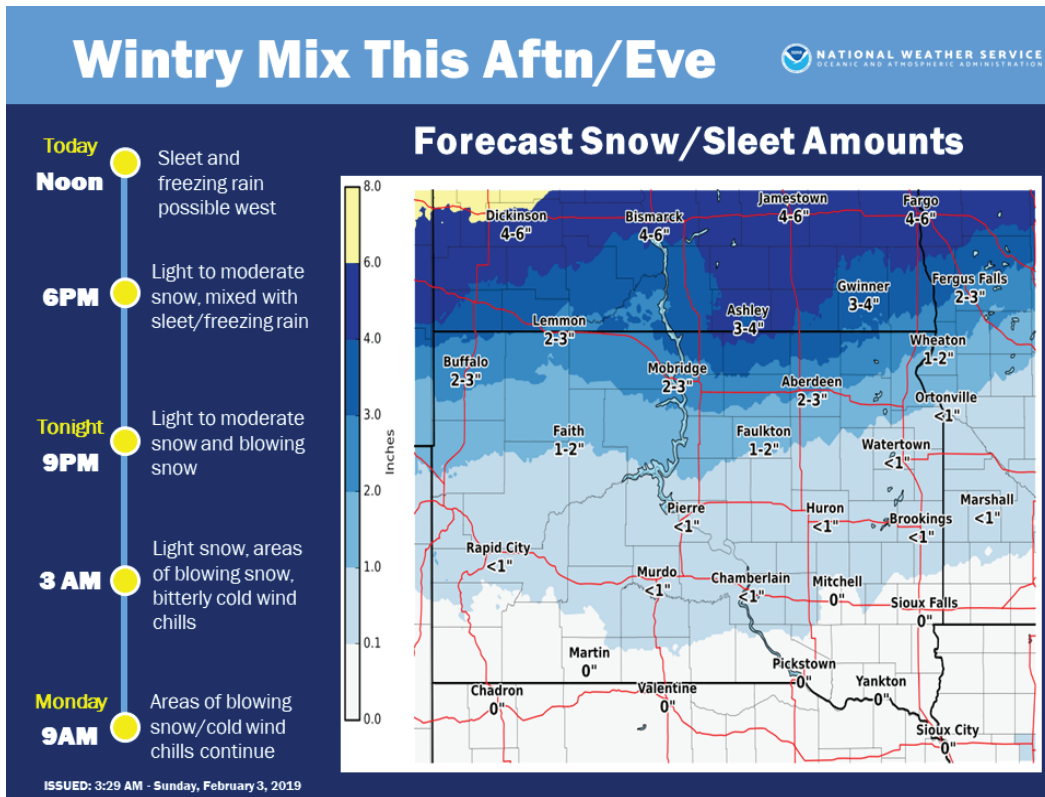
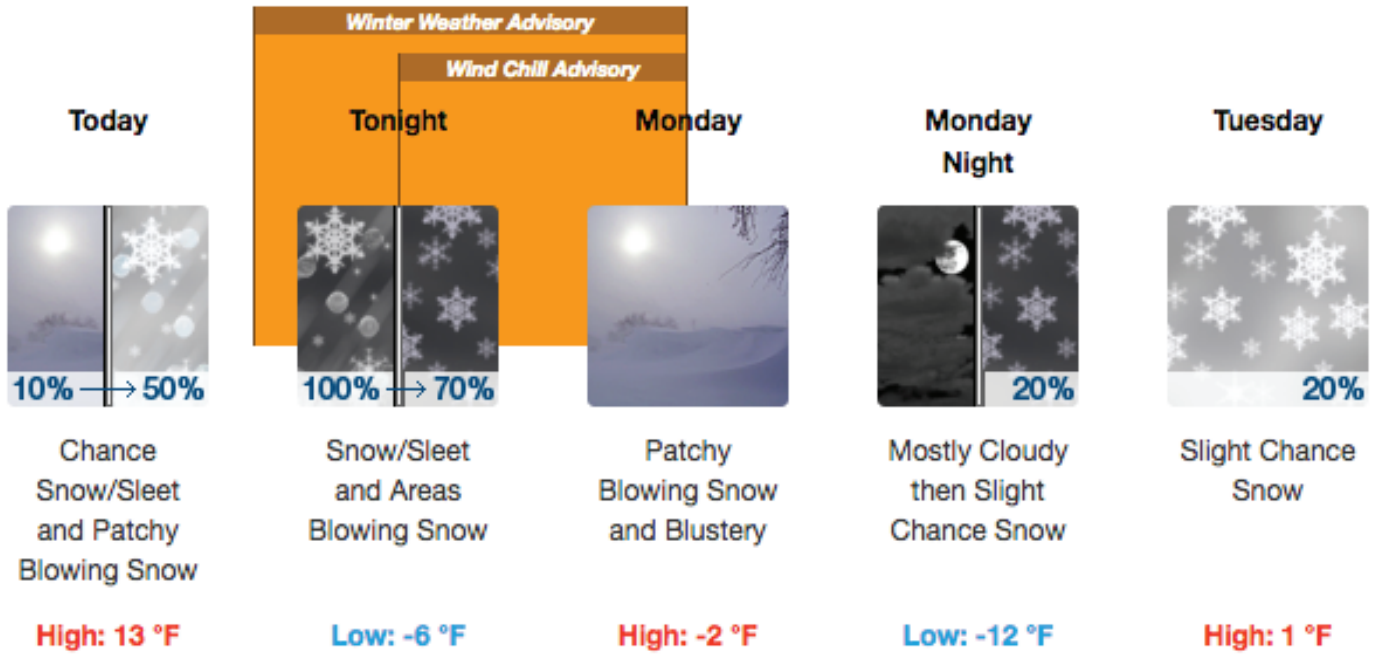
1989 - A winter storm brought heavy snow and high winds to the western U.S. Up to three feet of snow blanketed the Sierra Nevada of California, and buried parts of northeastern Washington State under three feet of snow in five days. High winds across Washington State reached 75 mph, with gusts to 105 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Severe cold gripped the north central U.S. The morning low of 29 degrees below zero at Casper WY was a record for the month of February. Wisdom MT hit 53 degrees below zero. Missoula MT reported a wind chill reading of 85 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather over the central Gulf coast states during the afternoon and evening hours. Thunderstorms spawned seven tornadoes in Alabama, including one which touched down north of Birmingham injuring fifteen people and causing nearly three million dollars damage. A tornado at Margaret injured eleven persons and caused a million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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A wintry mix is expected this afternoon and evening as precipitation spreads from west to east across the region. During the evening all the precipitation should switch over to snow. Winds will also increase, and temperatures will take a nose dive as arctic air moves in. Wind chills will get very cold overnight. Areas of blowing and drifting snow are expected this evening through Monday.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 22 °F at 12:50 AM

Low Outside Temp: 10 °F at 9:33 PM

High Gust: 19 mph at 5:49 AM

Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 58 in 1991

Record Low: -38 in 1893

Average High: 25°F

Average Low: 3°F

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.03

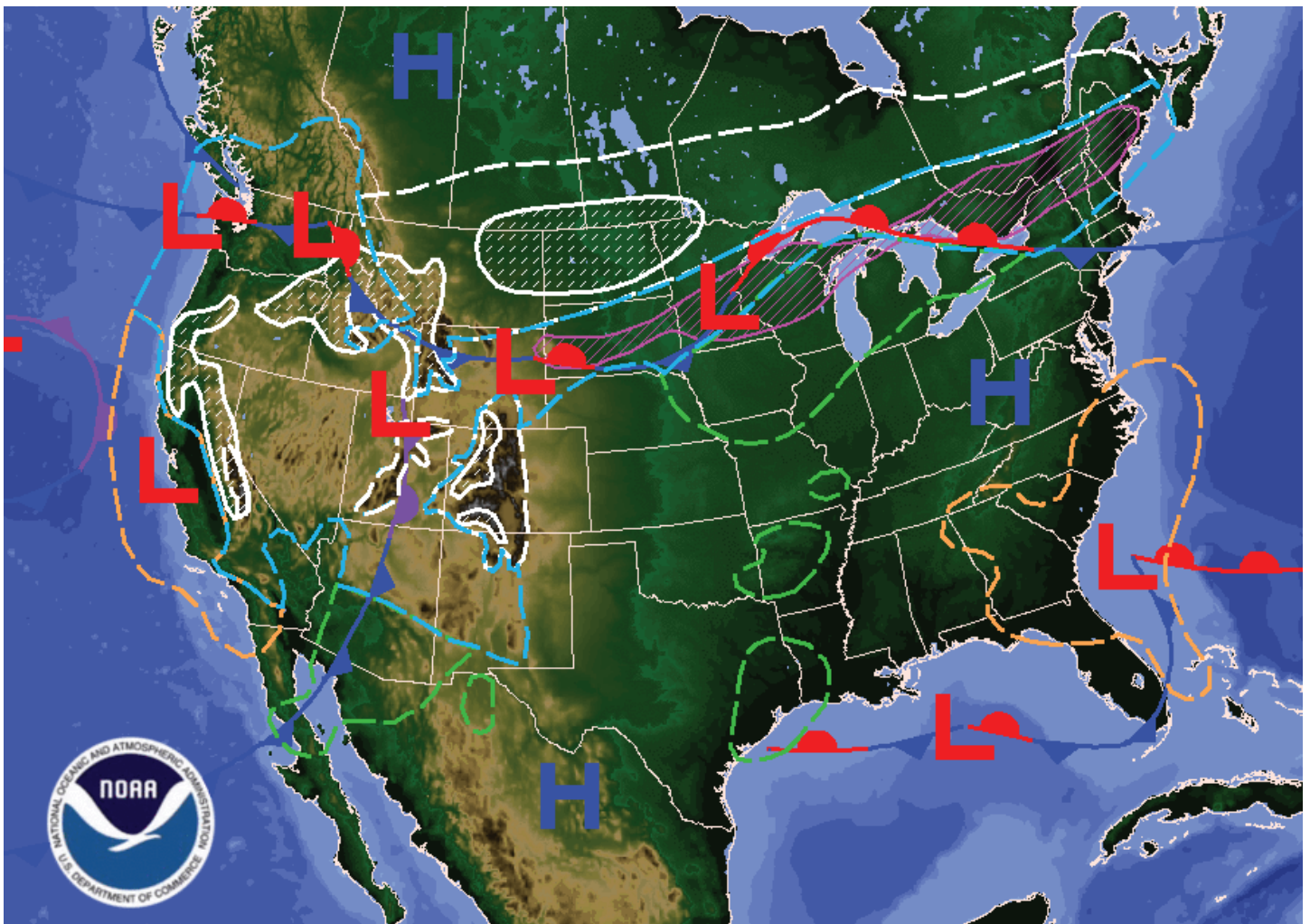
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.50

Precip Year to Date: 0.09

Sunset Tonight: 5:43 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:51 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sun, Feb 03, 2019, issued 4:33 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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WHY THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON?

Wisdom was a very important matter to those living during the time of Solomon. The Bible gives special recognition to the wise men of Israel's neighbor, especially those in Egypt, as well as Babylon and Phoenicia, Arabia, and Edom. The Old Testament also refers to Gentile sages with a certain degree of respect but does not mention the Gentile priests and prophets.

It's important for us to remember that there were many in that period of history who were very intelligent even though they did not speak as one having a special revelation from God. Individuals throughout the ages, even today can think, speak and write wisely within many different fields of knowledge, and yet not speak on behalf of God. It is this simple, significant fact that makes The Proverbs of Solomon different. Solomon spoke on behalf of God, the truth of God, to guide the people of God into paths of righteousness for His sake. Then, as now, following the teachings and instructions of Solomon, God's children have God's filter to see God's world through God's eyes.

We often talk about hindsight and foresight, but God's Word gives us insight into the way we are to live. We may have wisdom from other sources, but the wisdom that comes from God enables us to live victoriously and successfully, and let the world see and understand the value of submitting to His teachings. We are, of all people, most blest to have His wisdom!

One more fact: We, as the children of God, also have access to the power of God, to live lives that are pleasing to God, through the strength and power of God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may we know, understand, accept and live in the light of Your wisdom every day! In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel.

2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 03/17/2019 Groton American Legion Spring Fundraiser
- 04/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/27/2019 Fireman's Stag
- 05/04/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/27/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program
- 06/13/2019 Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 06/14/2019 SDSU Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 06/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 06/21/2019 Best Ball Golf Tourney
- 07/04/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 07/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 08/22/2019 First Day of School
- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2019 Trunk or Treat/Halloween on Main
- 11/09/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course 2019 Holiday Party
- 12/07/2019 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services

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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

13-14-16-19-32

(thirteen, fourteen, sixteen, nineteen, thirty-two)

Estimated jackpot: \$63,000

Lotto America

15-16-28-46-52, Star Ball: 9, ASB: 3

(fifteen, sixteen, twenty-eight, forty-six, fifty-two; Star Ball: nine; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$14.69 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$139 million

Powerball

10-17-18-43-65, Powerball: 13, Power Play: 5

(ten, seventeen, eighteen, forty-three, sixty-five; Powerball: thirteen; Power Play: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$191 million

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Arlington 68, Great Plains Lutheran 23

Brandon Valley 54, Pierre 31

Chamberlain 71, Sisseton 67

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 69, Winner 55

Clark/Willow Lake 61, Castlewood 27

DeSmet 75, James Valley Christian 23

Freeman 70, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 62

Hot Springs 76, Hill City 53

Irene-Wakonda 65, Menno 48

Langford 64, Wilmot 53

Lyman 77, New Underwood 34

Marty Indian 69, Flandreau Indian 39

Mitchell 72, Spearfish 36

Mobridge-Pollock 65, Todd County 38

Northwestern 74, Waubay/Summit 42

Platte-Geddes 57, Miller 39

Sioux Falls O'Gorman 57, Aberdeen Central 36

St. Francis Indian 74, McLaughlin 60

Sturgis Brown 48, Huron 42

Wagner 74, Avon 61

Wakpala 75, Crazy Horse 71

Wolsey-Wessington 42, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 24

Highmore Action Club Classic

Hitchcock-Tulare 42, Eureka/Bowdle 33

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Little Moreau Tournament

Championship: Timber Lake 76, Lemmon 64
Fifth Place: Bison 55, McIntosh 40
Seventh Place: Tiospaye Topa 54, Dupree 42
Third Place: Harding County 53, Faith 50

Sanford Pentagon Classic

Colman-Egan 47, Bon Homme 34
Corsica/Stickney 44, Warner 40
Elkton-Lake Benton 57, Mt. Vernon 50
LeMars, Iowa 55, Hamlin 38
Madison 80, Sioux City, North, Iowa 62
Sioux City, East, Iowa 75, Sioux Falls Christian 70
Sioux Valley 69, Tiospa Zina Tribal 63
St. Thomas More 67, Harrisburg 55
Tea Area 65, Sioux Falls Lincoln 47
Western Christian, Iowa 60, Dakota Valley 57

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Arlington 44, Great Plains Lutheran 28
Avon 71, Wagner 47
Brandon Valley 57, Pierre 47
Bridgewater-Emery 78, Gregory 57
DeSmet 75, James Valley Christian 23
Flandreau Indian 53, Marty Indian 35
Florence/Henry 51, Waverly-South Shore 50
Freeman 53, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 40
Huron 58, Sturgis Brown 47
Langford 59, Wilmot 40
Menno 56, Irene-Wakonda 51
Miller 47, Platte-Geddes 30
Mitchell 64, Spearfish 39
New Underwood 47, Lyman 36
Pine Ridge 80, Crow Creek 73
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 49, Wolsey-Wessington 36
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 56, Aberdeen Central 26
St. Francis Indian 73, McLaughlin 64
Todd County 73, Mobridge-Pollock 17
Wakpala 66, Crazy Horse 63
Waubay/Summit 58, Northwestern 28
Winner 74, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 42

DAK-XII vs. NEC Conference Clash

Sisseton 52, Tri-Valley 47
Canton 56, Webster 48
Dakota Valley 43, Groton Area 35
Dell Rapids 56, Milbank 32
Elk Point-Jefferson 45, Tiospa Zina Tribal 26
Lennox 50, Redfield/Doland 37
Madison 56, Britton-Hecla 32
Sioux Falls Christian 40, Aberdeen Roncalli 36
Tea Area 66, Deuel 35
Vermillion 57, Clark/Willow Lake 41

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West Central 49, Hamlin 36

Highmore Action Club Classic

Colome 70, Eureka/Bowdle 58

Ipswich 63, Philip 60

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Man who fatally shot brother sentenced to 15 years in prison

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls man who pleaded guilty to manslaughter for fatally shooting his brother has been sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Twenty-eight-year-old Jeremy Eischens was charged in July 2017, after he brought his 24-year-old brother, Brandon Eischens, to the emergency room with gunshot wounds.

Eischens initially said his brother had been shot in a drive-by shooting, but later admitted that he accidentally shot him. Police say Jeremy was drunk and high on marijuana at the time of the shooting.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reports that more than a dozen friends and family members attended Friday's sentencing. The parents of the two men, Daryl and Cindy Eischens, said in a letter to the court asking for mercy that they've lost one son and could not bear to lose another.

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

Man who sold drugs that killed woman sentenced to 10 years

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A man accused of selling a fatal dose of fentanyl-laced heroin to a Sioux Falls woman has been sentenced to 10 years in federal prison.

The Argus Leader reports that 24-year-old Devlin Tommeraasen pleaded guilty in November to conspiring to distribute drugs.

Tommeraasen was initially charged in May 2018, after he sold heroin laced with fentanyl to Emily Groth and her boyfriend. The 21-year-old Groth died from the purchase. Her mother said in court Friday that Groth did not know the drugs were laced with fentanyl.

Tommeraasen himself almost overdosed from the batch. Authorities found him unresponsive at a Sioux Falls grocery store.

Tommeraasen apologized in court for his actions and said he would like to focus on recovery and his hopes of becoming an electrician.

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

A Faulk prison houses inmates from across the state

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — A county jail in northwest South Dakota has become a popular destination to house inmates from other county jails in the state.

Kurt Hall, Faulk County Jail Sheriff, said the 35-bed prison has contracts to house offenders from 13 counties and each county pays a nightly rate of \$85 per inmate, the Aberdeen American News reported.

Less than 30 of the state's 66 counties have jails, according to Hall.

Faulk County's \$5.5 million jail was completed in 2017.

"We had a jail, but it was built in 1918, so it was either get out of the business or get something full," Hall said.

Hall said the new jail has provided a financial boost to the region, including to the local pharmacy and the area's Meals on Wheels program.

Emily Richardt, executive director of Area IV Senior Nutrition, said the Faulkton team added three new part-time employees to assist making meals for inmates at the jail.

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Hall noted that the jail has nine to 12 inmates on average, but that the population could increase if anyone protests the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline in the spring and arrests are made.

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

Experts: Wisconsin's extreme cold can kill emerald ash borer

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The bitter cold temperatures that gripped Wisconsin this week could also have a chilling effect on an invasive insect species that threatens the state's ash trees, according to recent findings.

U.S. Forest Service research biologist Rob Venette co-authored a study that found temperatures around 20 degrees below zero can reduce emerald ash borer populations by half. Venette told Wisconsin Public Radio that this week's extreme cold will likely kill up to 80 percent of the invasive Asian beetles in Wisconsin.

The invasive pest was discovered in Wisconsin in 2008 and has spread to more than half of its counties. Emerald ash borer are responsible for killing tens of millions of ash trees across the U.S.

Venette and other researchers studied ash borer larvae in Minnesota during the last polar vortex in 2014 to measure how much cold it takes to kill them, he said. They recorded up to 70 percent mortality when temperatures reached 23 degrees below zero.

"Because it's been so much colder this go around, we're expecting much more mortality," he said.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources official Andrea Diss-Torrance said the recent polar vortex won't cause the insect to go extinct, but could buy landowners time to treat ash trees that haven't been infected yet.

"Or even kill it out if the infestation has just started and the population in that tree is still pretty low," she said.

Venette said the challenge will be preventing the few insects that survive the extreme cold from re-establishing their populations.

"Within a year or two, unless it's cold again, we expect those populations to be back where they are about now," he said.

Information from: Wisconsin Public Radio, <http://www.wpr.org>

Becker considers options with scaled-back energy plant

BECKER, Minn. (AP) — A central Minnesota city that is home to the largest coal-fired plant in the Upper Midwest is looking to diversify its economy as Xcel Energy plans to retire most of the plant's generators over the next seven years.

The Minneapolis based-utility, which owns the plant, recently announced plans to replace two of the three Sherburne County Generating Station generators with a smaller natural gas plant, Minnesota Public Radio News reported. Xcel Energy aims to eliminate all its carbon emissions from electric power by 2050 as the utility moves to more renewable sources of energy, including wind and solar.

But the coal plant in Becker provides 300 jobs and accounts for three-fourths of the city's property tax revenue. Becker officials are forced to imagine a future without the fossil fuel.

"I never thought I would find myself in the middle of this battle for coal in this country," said Becker City Administrator Greg Pruszinske. "And here we are, smack-dab right in the middle."

City leaders are looking to bring in new businesses so the community can thrive without the plant's coal units.

Many are hopeful about recent news that Google is considering the city to build a new \$600 million data center. The project could create 50 permanent jobs and around 2,000 construction jobs for up to 24 months, according to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Pruszinske said the city has available land, nearby highways and rail lines and a ready workforce, which makes the city attractive to the Google project as well as industries that produce renewable energy or

electric vehicles.

"It's flat. It's easy to build on," he said of the city's land. "We're just waiting for the right client."

Information from: Minnesota Public Radio News, <http://www.mprnews.org>

Gov. Northam says he wasn't in racist photo, won't resign

By ALAN SUDERMAN, Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Efforts by Virginia's governor have so far failed to quell the uproar over a racist photograph that appeared on his medical school yearbook page 35 years ago.

Gov. Ralph Northam on Friday apologized for appearing in a photograph that featured what appeared to be a man in blackface and a second person cloaked in Ku Klux Klan garb. In a video posted on Twitter, he said he could not "undo the harm my behavior caused then and today."

But by Saturday, he reversed course and said the racist photo on his yearbook profile page did not feature him after all. The Democratic governor said he had not seen the photo before Friday, since he had not purchased the commemorative book or been involved in its preparation more than three decades ago.

"It has taken time for me to make sure that it's not me, but I am convinced, I am convinced that I am not in that picture," he told reporters gathered at the Executive Mansion in Richmond, calling the shot offensive and horrific.

Northam's explanation didn't put a dent in the clamor for his resignation.

Both of Virginia's U.S. senators, Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, joined the dean of Virginia's congressional delegation, congressman Bobby Scott, in a statement Saturday night that says they have told Northam that they no longer believe he can effectively serve as governor.

On Sunday, former Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe told CNN's "State of the Union" that Northam - who served as McAuliffe's lieutenant governor - would eventually resign.

"Ralph will do the right thing for the Commonwealth of Virginia," McAuliffe said. "He's going to do the right thing."

While talking with reporters on Saturday, Northam admitted that he had previously worn blackface around that time, saying he once had used shoe polish to darken his face as part of a Michael Jackson costume he fashioned for a 1984 dance contest in San Antonio, Texas, when he was in the U.S. Army. Northam said he regrets that he didn't understand "the harmful legacy of an action like that."

His refusal to step down could signal a potentially long and bruising fight between Northam and his former supporters, which includes virtually all of the state's Democratic establishment.

Since Friday, groups calling for his resignation included the Virginia Democratic Party and the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus. Virginia Attorney General Mark R. Herring, a Democrat, and top Republicans in the Virginia General Assembly also urged Northam to resign, as have many declared and potential Democratic presidential candidates.

"He is no longer the best person to lead our state," the Virginia Senate Democratic Caucus said in a statement.

If Northam does resign, Virginia Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax would become the second African-American governor in the state's history. In a statement, Fairfax said the state needs leaders who can unite people, but he stopped short of calling for Northam's departure. Referring to Northam, Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax said he "cannot condone actions from his past" that at least "suggest a comfort with Virginia's darker history of white supremacy, racial stereotyping and intimidation."

Northam conceded Saturday that people might have difficulty believing his shifting statements.

He was pushed repeatedly by reporters to explain why he issued an apology Friday if he wasn't in the photograph.

"My first intention ... was to reach out and apologize," he said, adding that he recognized that people would be offended by the photo. But after studying the picture and consulting with classmates, Northam said, "I am convinced that is not my picture."

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Walt Broadnax, one of two black students who graduated from Eastern Virginia Medical School with Northam, said by phone Saturday he also didn't buy the class's 1984 yearbook or see it until decades after it was published.

Broadnax defended his former classmate and said he's not a racist, adding that the school would not have tolerated someone going to a party in blackface.

The yearbook images were first published Friday afternoon by the conservative news outlet Big League Politics. An Associated Press reporter later saw the yearbook page and confirmed its authenticity at the medical school.

In an initial apology about the photograph on Friday, Northam had admitted to being in the photograph but did not say which of the two costumes he had worn.

That evening, he issued a video statement saying he was "deeply sorry" but still committed to serving the "remainder of my term." Northam's term is set to end in 2022.

The scars from centuries of racial oppression are still raw in a state that was once home to the capital of the Confederacy.

Virginians continue to struggle with the state's legacy of slavery, Jim Crow and Massive Resistance, the anti-school segregation push. Heated debates about the Confederate statues are ongoing after a deadly 2017 white nationalist rally in Charlottesville. A state holiday honoring Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson is a perennial source of discontent.

Northam spent years actively courting the black community in the lead-up to his 2017 gubernatorial run, building relationships that helped him win both the primary and the general election. He's a member of a predominantly black church on Virginia's Eastern Shore, where he grew up.

"It's a matter of relationships and trust. That's not something that you build overnight," Northam told the AP during a 2017 campaign stop while describing his relationship with the black community.

Northam, a folksy pediatric neurologist who is personal friends with many lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, has recently come under fire from Republicans who have accused him of backing infanticide after he said he supported a bill loosening restrictions on late-term abortions.

In a tweet late Saturday, President Donald Trump called Northam's actions related to the photo and abortion debate "unforgiveable!"

Last week, Florida's secretary of state resigned after photos from a 2005 Halloween party showed him in blackface while dressed as a Hurricane Katrina victim.

Associated Press writer Ben Finley contributed to this report.

1 deputy killed, another wounded in 12-hour standoff in Ohio

PIERCE TOWNSHIP, Ohio (AP) — A sheriff's deputy was shot and killed during a 12-hour standoff at an apartment complex in Ohio that left another deputy wounded and a suspect in custody, authorities said Sunday.

Capt. Jeff Sellars of the Clermont County Sheriff's Office said officers responded about 7 p.m. Saturday to the Royal Oaks Apartments in Pierce Township, about 20 miles east of Cincinnati, following a 911 call from a man who said people were refusing to leave his home. The man said there were weapons in the home.

Sellars said two deputies were struck by bullets during the standoff. The wounded deputy is hospitalized in stable condition.

Neither the deputies nor the suspect has been identified.

Sellars said the suspect was taken into custody about 6:30 a.m. Sunday.

Nissan cancels plans to make X-Trail SUV in the UK

By DANICA KIRKA, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Nissan announced Sunday it has cancelled plans to make its X-Trail SUV in the UK — a sharp blow to British Prime Minister Theresa May, who fought to have the model built in northern England as she sought to shore up confidence in the British economy after it leaves the European Union.

Nissan said it will consolidate production of the next generation X-Trail at its plant in Kyushu, Japan, where the model is currently produced, allowing the company to reduce investment costs in the early stages of the project.

That reverses a decision in late 2016 to build the SUV at Nissan's Sunderland plant in northern England, which employs 7,000 workers. That plant will continue to make Nissan's Juke and Qashqai models. The announcement Sunday made no mention of any layoffs relating to the X-Trail SUV decision.

"While we have taken this decision for business reasons, the continued uncertainty around the UK's future relationship with the EU is not helping companies like ours to plan for the future," Nissan Europe Chairman Gianluca de Ficchy said in a statement.

Less than two months before Britain is scheduled to leave the European Union on March 29, Britain still doesn't have an agreement on what will replace 45 years of frictionless trade. This has caused an enormous amount of concern among businesses in Britain, which fear the country is going to crash out of the vast EU trade bloc without a divorce deal, a scenario economists predict would hurt the U.K. economy.

The Nissan decision, first reported by Sky News, is a major setback for May's Conservative government, which had pointed to Nissan's 2016 announcement that Sunderland would make the SUV — months after the country's Brexit referendum — as proof that major manufacturers still had confidence in Britain's economic future.

Nissan's announced its plans to build the X-Trail and Qashqai models in Sunderland after the government sent a letter to company officials offering undisclosed reassurances about its ability to compete in the future.

British politicians have sharply criticized May's Brexit deal and voted it down in Parliament.

May's government has refused to rule out a no-deal Brexit, saying the threat strengthens her hand with EU negotiators. Parliament voted last week to give May more time to try to iron out a compromise with the bloc.

Nissan's change of heart comes just days after Britain's carmakers issued a stark assessment about Brexit's impact on the industry, warning that their exports are at risk if the U.K. leaves the EU without an agreement.

Investment in the industry fell 46 percent last year and new car production dropped 9.1 percent to 1.52 million vehicles, in part because of concerns over Brexit, the Society of Motor Manufacturing said.

The group's chief executive, Mike Hawes, described the threat of a no-deal Brexit as "catastrophic."

He says the drop in investment is only a foreshadowing of what could happen if the U.K. leaves the EU on March 29 without a deal.

"With fewer than 60 days before we leave the EU and the risk of crashing out without a deal looking increasingly real, UK Automotive is on red alert," Hawes said Thursday. "Brexit uncertainty has already done enormous damage to output, investment and jobs."

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit at: <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

Come together: Super Bowl Sunday, the last stand of live TV

By EDDIE PELLIS, AP National Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Oh sure, there's plenty of evidence to support the soothsayers who are predicting the slow, inevitable death of live television.

And there's plenty of proof to bolster theories about the NFL's slipping popularity.

But when it comes to clicking away from Super Bowl Sunday — forget about it.

Whether streaming it digitally, firing up the cable box or heading to a friend's house for chips, dip and

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commercials, it's a good bet that cord cutters, antenna owners and everyone in between can be found right where they always are on this day — gathered in front of the TV set in massive numbers.

Exactly as they were 40 years ago.

Exactly as they were 20 years ago.

Almost certainly as they'll be 10 years from now.

Fact is, despite today's rapidly fragmenting modern-day viewing audience, most people want to watch their sports live. The Super Bowl is the biggest event of the year. As such, it is, by almost any measure, the last bastion of nationwide communal TV-watching we partake in anymore.

Of the 10 highest-rated television programs in U.S. history, nine were Super Bowls and one was the finale of "M.A.S.H."

"It's an outlier because, unlike pretty much everything else, it's not an event we think of as being disrupted by streaming," said Vince Gennaro, who studies America's viewing habits as a dean at the NYU Preston Robert Tisch Institute for Global Sport.

Or disrupted by anything else.

And so, just as the increased choice brought about by cable couldn't do anything to deter Super Bowl viewing, neither, it seems, will streaming, cord cutting or the Roku-ization of the American public — not even among the younger audience. A survey last week of 2,800 football fans by PCMag and Sports Illustrated found that 33 percent of respondents in the 18-to-24 age group said they would stream the Super Bowl this year. Most, however, planned to stream it straight to their television sets.

The survey found some concern among streamers who experience delays in their stream as compared to the live broadcast. But for the most part, their experience will be the same as watching it on cable — commercials and all.

That's not to say the digitized nature of the 21st century won't change some things.

"The idea of a Super Bowl party, with everyone sitting on their phone tweeting, is going to change the way we experience that Super Bowl party," said Robert Thompson, the Syracuse pop-culture professor who will watch the game with pen and paper in hand, ready to take notes. "But it certainly doesn't threaten it."

What could threaten it?

Well, only two years ago, many Super Bowl stories (including this one by The Associated Press) warned of the potential beginning of the end of the NFL. The league was besieged by a concussion crisis, its own mishandling of domestic abuse cases, the still-fresh controversy over Colin Kaepernick's kneeling during the national anthem, along with a steady stream of lackluster games that played as big a part as any in explaining the league's diminishing ratings.

All the off-field issues still exist, with the added specter of a potential labor dispute two years down the road.

But the games were better this season, the ratings were up, and the season's most high-profile mishap wasn't related to player health or politics. Rather, it came on the field: the terrible no-call in the NFC title game.

Former CBS Sports president Neal Pilson was among the few who predicted ratings would rebound.

"The NFL had dramatically improved the schedule for Thursday and Monday nights," Pilson said. "Plus, I thought the issues about the players were not going to be as big this year, and that turned out to be the case."

Which is how we ended up with 18 of the top 30 most watched programs in 2018 as NFL games — much the same as the year before, and the year before that.

Maybe more telling: Last year's Super Bowl between the Eagles and Patriots pulled in an average of more than 104 million viewers for a rating that was 250 percent higher than the No. 2 show on the list — the NFC title game from two weeks previous.

The Olympics bring people together, but they last more than two weeks and were held last year in a time zone half a world away. The opening ceremony was the 13th-most-watched program in 2018.

The Oscars used to command a massive audience, but last year, they tied for ninth and had their worst showing ever in the ratings.

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"I've never received a call from someone wanting to talk to me about Oscar ads," Thompson said.

The vast majority of Super Bowl ads don't live up to the hype, even with a 30-second spot costing about \$5.3 million.

Doesn't seem to matter. Nor does it matter that one of the biggest drivers of the NFL's popularity of late — fantasy football — is essentially a non-event this week with only two teams playing. Straight-up gambling — legal or no, the Super Bowl is the most heavily wagered-upon event in sports — will more than make up for that.

To sum it up, everything we thought about TV, viewing habits and even the NFL itself gets turned on its head for this one, magical day.

No matter who's playing or what the score, the Super Bowl makes us all get together and party like it's 1979.

"It's hard to evaluate the Super Bowl as a football game on any level," Gennaro said, "because it's so much more than that."

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Pope calls for Yemen relief as he heads to UAE

By NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis made an urgent appeal for an end to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen on Sunday as he embarked on the first-ever papal trip to the Arabian Peninsula, where he is seeking to turn a page in Christian-Muslim relations while also ministering to a unique, thriving island of Catholicism.

Francis called for the urgent observation of a limited cease-fire reached in December and for food and medicine to get to Yemen's people, who are suffering the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

He made the appeal at the Vatican before boarding a plane to the United Arab Emirates, which has been Saudi Arabia's main ally in its war in Yemen — a way to avoid embarrassing his hosts with a public call while in the region.

"The people are exhausted by the long conflict and many children are hungry, but humanitarian aid isn't accessible," Francis said in his noontime Sunday blessing. "The cries of these children and their parents rise up" to God.

Francis is travelling to Abu Dhabi to participate in a conference on interreligious dialogue sponsored the Emirates-based Muslim Council of Elders, an initiative that seeks to counter religious fanaticism by promoting a moderate brand of Islam. It's the brainchild of Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, the grand imam of Egypt's Al-Azhar, the revered 1,000-year-old seat of Sunni Islam that trains clerics and scholars from around the world.

In a video message to the Emirates on the eve of his trip, Francis paid homage to his "friend and dear brother" el-Tayeb and praised his courage in calling the meeting to assert that "God unites and doesn't divide."

"I am pleased with this meeting offered by the Lord to write, on your dear land, a new page in the history of relations among religions and confirm that we are brothers despite our differences," Francis said.

In a statement Saturday, Al-Azhar described the upcoming meeting as "historic" and praised the "deeply fraternal relationship" between its imam and the pope, which it said even includes birthday greetings.

Francis and el-Tayeb are to address the "Human Fraternity Meeting" Monday that has drawn not only Christian and Muslim representatives but hundreds of Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist and other Christian faith leaders. It's all part of the Emirates' "Year of Tolerance" and its effort to show its openness to other faiths in a region otherwise known for severe restrictions on religions outside of Islam.

"It's something new for the Muslim world, that within the discussion of dialogue, they're talking about interreligious dialogue across the board," beyond basic Christian-Muslim relations, said Marco Impagliazzo, president of the Sant'Agidino Community, a Rome-based Catholic organization active in interfaith relations

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who will be attending the conference.

Francis' other main initiative in Abu Dhabi is a giant Mass on Tuesday in the city's main sports arena that is expected to draw some 135,000 people in what some have called the largest show of public Christian worship on the Arabian Peninsula. There, Francis will see firsthand a Catholic community that is big, diverse and dynamic, at a time when the wider Mideast has seen an exodus of Christians fleeing persecution at the hands of the Islamic State group and others.

Of the over 9 million people now living in the UAE, around 1 million are Emirati while the rest are foreigners drawn to the oil-rich federation to work in everything from white-collar finance to construction.

The Catholic Church believes there are some 1 million Catholics in the UAE. Most are Filipino and Indian, many of whom have left behind families for work and can face precarious labor conditions, which human rights groups regularly denounce.

"The church has a unique role because it becomes home," said Brandon Vaidyanathan, chair of the sociology department at Catholic University in Washington, who grew up in Dubai. "It becomes a place of belonging" in a country where foreigners can live, work and practice their faith but will never gain citizenship.

Vaidyanathan, who converted from Hinduism to Catholicism while living in Dubai, said the Emirates' religious tolerance is commendable given the trends of the region. He noted the "unprecedented" nature of the government's invitation to Francis, its donation of lands for churches and even a recent decision to rename a mosque "Mother Mary of Jesus."

Yet he pointed to the difference between freedom to worship and true religious freedom. Crosses, for example, can only be displayed inside churches, proselytizing for faiths other than Islam is banned and Muslims are forbidden from converting.

Francis will likely focus on issues of religious freedom and fraternity in his public remarks. Unlike all his other foreign trips, he will not deliver a political speech.

Vatican spokesman Alessandro Gisotti said the reason was to give greater emphasis to his speech to the interfaith conference. He dodged a question about whether Francis would raise Yemen's yearslong war in his private talks with the Emirates' ruler. The UAE is deeply involved in the Saudi-led war in the Arab world's poorest country, where tens of thousands have been killed and millions face food and medical shortages.

"I don't know if the Holy Father will confront it publicly or privately, but certainly on many occasions, even recently, he has underlined the need to search for peace in particular to guarantee the humanitarian rights of the population, especially children," Gisotti said.

Aid groups working in Yemen hope Francis won't just rely on his public appeals, but will use his visit to bring his message to the Emirati leadership in person.

CAFOD, the overseas aid group of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, recently joined a coalition of British humanitarian organizations in appealing for Yemen's limited cease-fire to hold so that humanitarian aid can reach the most vulnerable.

"We have confidence in the greatness of the pope to be our advocate and the advocate for the Yemeni people," said Giovanna Reda, CAFOD's head of humanitarian programs for the Middle East.

Salvadoran front-runner seeks to end corruption, violence

By **MARCOS ALEMAN, Associated Press**

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP) — Salvadorans are choosing Sunday from among a handful of presidential candidates all promising to end corruption, stamp out gang violence and create more jobs in the Central American nation.

The Central American Institute of Fiscal Studies, a think tank based in Guatemala, found great similarities in the four candidates' proposals. Top of the agenda is public safety: roughly 67,000 Salvadorans belong to gangs that terrorize their communities via extortion, murder and other forms of violence. The candidates have touched on ways to generate economic opportunities and restore social values to dissuade Salvadorans from engaging in criminal behavior.

Leading in the polls is Nayib Bukele, the 37-year-old former mayor of the capital, San Salvador. Bukele

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has campaigned on promises to create a commission to tackle impunity and corruption. He also proposes taxing property and idle agricultural land, levying higher taxes on luxury goods and combating tax evasion.

His election would put an end to decades of two-party rule in El Salvador.

Bukele made his political debut in 2012 with the ruling FMLN party, which arose from a leftist guerrilla movement after peace accords ended El Salvador's civil war. Today he is the standard bearer of the Grand Alliance for National Unity — its initials, GANA, mean "win" in Spanish — and he's challenging the political dominance that has reigned since the 1992 peace accords.

A recent poll gave Bukele support from about 40 percent of Salvadorans, compared with 23 percent for businessman Carlos Callejas of the conservative Arena coalition. He was even further ahead of the FMLN's Hugo Martinez, a former foreign minister.

More than 4,500 election observers, including representatives of the Organization of American States and the European Union, will be on hand when Salvadorans go to the polls.

If none of the contenders clinch more than 50 percent of the vote, the top two vote-getters will compete in a runoff in March.

El Salvador is small both in size and population, with just 6.5 million people. Close to a third of its households live in poverty, while the World Bank says per capita income is \$3,560.

Salvadorans searching for a better life have joined recent caravans of migrants trekking through Mexico toward the U.S.

Chiefs QB Mahomes honored as MVP and top offensive player

By BARRY WILNER, AP Pro Football Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Patrick Mahomes' breathtaking breakthrough season earned him the NFL's Most Valuable Player award.

The Chiefs quarterback landed a pair of honors at NFL Honors on Saturday night, taking The Associated Press 2018 MVP and Offensive Player of the Year awards. In his second pro season, Mahomes led Kansas City to its first AFC title game since 1993 with some of the most creative and clutch plays the league has seen in years.

"I'm so humbled," he said. "This is just the beginning. We've got a long ways to go.

"It is an honor. It's a hard award to win. The next award I hope I can get is the Super Bowl."

Mahomes received 41 votes from a nationwide panel of media members who regularly cover the league. New Orleans quarterback Drew Brees got the other nine.

With only one previous start, Mahomes entered the season as something of a curiosity in Kansas City after the Chiefs traded veteran Alex Smith to open up the job. It didn't take long to erase any doubts as Mahomes led the Chiefs to their first AFC title game since the 1993 season, throwing for 50 touchdowns, 5,097 yards and had a 113.8 QB rating, trailing only Brees.

Mahomes' ingenuity — the guy can throw from all angles and make plays inside and outside the pocket — energized the Chiefs' fan base and excited fans across the league.

"The play is never dead. He can find new ways to get you the ball," Chiefs All-Pro tight end Travis Kelce said. "It may look like a screwball, a slider here or there, but it'll get to you eventually."

Mahomes is the sixth straight quarterback and 11th of the past 12 years to win MVP. No Kansas City player had won the award since the Chiefs joined the NFL in 1970.

Earlier, he was selected as the top offensive player, beating Brees 30 votes to 16.

"Yeah, I mean, it's awesome ... I got put into a great situation," he said. "I got to learn behind a great quarterback in Alex Smith. I got to be on a team with a lot of playmakers who helped me excel my game and make me look really good on a daily basis. And, then, to be able to go out there and win football games in front of a passionate fan base is something I get the luxury of doing."

Rams defensive tackle Aaron Donald, who will play in Sunday's Super Bowl against New England, took his second straight Defensive Player of the Year award.

Donald, the only unanimous All-Pro this season and the first Rams player selected for top defensive

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honor, joins Lawrence Taylor and J.J. Watt as players to win the award in back-to-back seasons. Donald led the NFL with 20½ sacks.

"Any time you put a body of work into it and then it pays off," Donald said, "and you're rewarded for it, it means a lot. It's a blessing."

Chicago's Matt Nagy, in his first season with the Bears, was voted Coach of the Year.

Nagy has overseen the development of quarterback Mitchell Trubisky, who blossomed in his second pro season, and saw a defense befitting the "Monsters of the Midway" dominate opponents at times. He is the fifth Bears coach to win the award, joining team founder George Halas (1963, 1965), Mike Ditka (1985, 1988), Dick Jauron (2001) and Lovie Smith (2005).

"It's crazy to think this is one person, so for me, it's being a part of this organization and for our players," Nagy said. "Just being able to believe in what we wanted to do with our culture and then follow through with it."

Colts quarterback Andrew Luck was chosen the Comeback Player of the Year, following a lost 2017 season to a shoulder injury with a sensational 2018 campaign.

"I truly believe there are players on every team, every roster that could be Comeback Player of the Year in their own ways," he said. "Honestly, the best part was playing football again — having fun playing football and being pain free."

Giants running back Saquon Barkley was the top offensive rookie, while the defensive rookie award went to Indianapolis linebacker Darius Leonard.

Described by some as a "generational running back," Barkley rushed for 1,307 yards and 11 touchdowns behind a weak New York offensive line. He drew 26½ votes and edged Baker Mayfield. The Cleveland quarterback who was selected first overall in the draft, one spot in front of Barkley, earned 21½ votes.

Barkley also made a team-high 91 receptions for 721 yards, and his 2,028 yards from scrimmage led the NFL.

For his work as defensive coordinator of the Chicago Bears, Vic Fangio got the head coaching gig in Denver. He also won The Associated Press 2018 NFL Assistant Coach of the Year Award on Saturday.

Philadelphia Eagles DE Chris Long won the Walter Payton Man of the Year Award for community service.

"I don't know, I'm very humbled," Long said. "It's hard to feel deserving with those guys on stage and, obviously, this guy right here on the statue. It's a very heavy statue and it makes sense because his legacy is immense. I'm just honored."

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/tag/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Powerful storm hits Southern California, flooding highways

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The second in a string of powerful storms battered California on Saturday, shutting key highways after water and mud rushed into lanes from bare hillsides in wildfire burn areas where thousands of residents were under evacuation orders.

Flash flood warnings were issued for huge swaths of Southern California and forecasters said the system brought more than 4 inches (10 centimeters) of rain at lower elevations and several feet of snow in the mountains, where whiteout conditions closed roads.

A wind gust in Santa Barbara County topped 80 mph (128 kph) as the storm moved south and at one point dropped more than a half-inch (1.27 centimeters) of rain in five minutes. Trees and power lines were down across the region.

In Malibu, where the Woolsey fire last year destroyed homes and burned hillsides bare, officials closed Pacific Coast Highway and many other roadways after mud carried trees and rocks into lanes. Residents whose homes survived the flames barricaded their properties with sandbags to protect their properties from floodwaters.

Carol Cavella was evacuated during the November fire and again Saturday when the creek behind her

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house threatened to overflow and inundate her backyard.

The 86-year-old put her cat in the car and drove to a coffee shop on higher ground, her son-in-law, Warren Bowman said.

"She does not scare easily, but she got a little scared watching that water rise," Bowman said. He was trying to convince her to come to his house in Los Angeles but she said she'd rather wait to see if the waters recede and she can return home.

The California Department of Transportation said Saturday night in a tweet that the both the northbound southbound lanes of U.S. 101, a vital route between Los Angeles and points north and west, have been reopened. Earlier Saturday, in the Montecito area of Santa Barbara County, several miles of U.S 101 were closed because of flooding.

Elsewhere in the county, evacuations were ordered or recommended for neighborhoods near the Thomas, Whittier and Sherpa fire scars.

"This is a dangerous situation," the National Weather Service said, warning that the high rates of rain could send boulders sluicing down denuded hillsides along with the mud and debris.

It has only been a little over a year since a downpour on the huge Thomas Fire burn scar unleashed a massive debris flow that destroyed or damaged hundreds of homes in the seaside community of Montecito. The disaster killed 21 people, and two others have never been found.

Rescue crews scrambled Saturday to pluck motorists from cars caught in rising waters, said Mike Eliason, a spokesman for the Santa Barbara County Fire Department. He urged drivers who come upon flooded intersections to find alternate routes.

"Turn around. Driving through is going to be a costly error in judgment," he said. "It's just not worth it."

Multiple accidents were reported on slick highways, including a crash on Interstate 5 that killed a volunteer member of a sheriff's search and rescue team, and injured several others.

The team from Ventura County was on its way to a training exercise when members stopped to help at the scene of a single-vehicle rollover crash.

A minivan carrying a family was traveling too fast for the wet conditions, lost control and plowed into members of the team, Los Angeles County fire Capt. Tony Imbrenda said. Nine people were transported to hospitals, including three members of the team. The victim, Jeff Dye, was a volunteer with the Fillmore Mountain Search and Rescue Team, the sheriff's department said.

"This is a very unfortunate situation that could've been avoided," Imbrenda said, warning motorists to slow down in the rain.

In the Holy Jim fire area southeast of Los Angeles, where an August blaze scoured tens of thousands of acres in the Cleveland National Forest, volunteers using heavy equipment removed debris and deepened a creek bed to help prevent flooding.

The National Park Service warned visitors to Yosemite National Park of possible road closures and advised drivers to bring tire chains in the event of snow or icy conditions.

Winter storm warnings were in place for the Sierra Nevada along with avalanche warnings on the Nevada side of the range. The Sierra is already loaded with snow from a series of storms in January. The weather service said areas could see accumulations of up to 10 feet (3 meters) over the next few days.

The weather service lifted flash-flood watches for areas burned by the Mendocino Complex, Camp and Carr wildfires in Northern California. About an inch (2.5 centimeters) of rain was recorded in the San Francisco Bay Area before the storm moved south early Saturday.

A weaker storm soaked much of the state on Thursday. Two cold weather systems will follow on Sunday and Monday, bringing additional widespread showers and snow, forecasters said.

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US sees limitations on reuniting migrant families

By ELLIOT SPAGAT, Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The Trump administration says it would require extraordinary effort to reunite what may be thousands of migrant children who have been separated from their parents and, even if it could, the children would likely be emotionally harmed.

Jonathan White, who leads the Health and Human Services Department's efforts to reunite migrant children with their parents, said removing children from "sponsor" homes to rejoin their parents "would present grave child welfare concerns." He said the government should focus on reuniting children currently in its custody, not those who have already been released to sponsors.

"It would destabilize the permanency of their existing home environment, and could be traumatic to the children," White said in a court filing late Friday, citing his years of experience working with unaccompanied migrant children and background as a social worker.

The administration outlined its position in a court-ordered response to a government watchdog report last month that found many more migrant children may have been split from their families than previously reported. The government didn't adequately track separated children before a federal judge in San Diego ruled in June that children in its custody be reunited with their parents.

It is unknown how many families were split under a longstanding policy that allows separation under certain circumstances, such as serious criminal charges against a parent, concerns over the health and welfare of a child or medical concerns.

Ann Maxwell, Health and Human Services' assistant inspector general for evaluations, said last month that the number of separated children was certainly larger than the 2,737 listed by the government in court documents. The department's inspector general report didn't have a precise count, but Maxwell said staff estimated it to be in the thousands.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which wants U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw's order to apply to children who were released to sponsors before his June 26 ruling, criticized the government's position. A hearing is scheduled Feb. 21.

"The Trump administration's response is a shocking concession that it can't easily find thousands of children it ripped from parents, and doesn't even think it's worth the time to locate each of them," said Lee Gelernt, the lead ACLU attorney.

Last spring, then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions said anyone crossing the border illegally would be criminally prosecuted, leading to widespread family separations. President Donald Trump retreated amid an international outcry, days before the San Diego judge ordered that families be reunited.

Jalyn Sualog, deputy director of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement, said in Friday's filing that it would take up to eight hours to review each of its 47,083 cases between July 1, 2017, and Sabraw's June order, which translates to 100 employees working up to 471 days. Such an assignment would "substantially imperil" operations without a "rapid, dramatic expansion" in staffing.

The vast majority of children are released to relatives, but many of them are not parents. Of children released to sponsors in the 2017 fiscal year, 49 percent went to parents, 41 percent to close relatives like an aunt, uncle, grandparent or adult sibling and 10 percent to distant relatives, family friends and others.

Sualog, echoing White's concerns, said the government would lack legal authority to take children from their sponsors and "doing so would be so disruptive and harmful to the child."

"Disrupting the family relationship is not a recommended child welfare practice," Sualog wrote.

Evelyn Stauffer, a Health and Human Services spokeswoman, said Saturday that the department does not comment on ongoing litigation.

#MeToo movement was not 1-year phenomenon in state capitols

By DAVID A. LIEB, Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — In the first week of 2019, an investigation by Oregon's labor agency deemed the state Capitol to be a hostile workplace because of an unchecked pattern of sexual harassment among lawmakers.

A few days later, two Washington state lawmakers accused of sexual misconduct resigned. Then came new allegations of sexual wrongdoing in Georgia, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, where a veteran male lawmaker was accused of groping a newly elected female colleague during a pre-session reception.

"We've heard for a long time that this is the culture in the building, and then of course we get there and it immediately surfaces," said Massachusetts state Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa, a first-time lawmaker.

Barely a month into the 2019 legislative sessions, it already is clear that the #MeToo movement was not a one-year phenomenon in many state capitols. New claims of sexual misconduct are continuing to be made public concerning actions ranging from a few weeks ago to many years ago.

The latest came Friday, when Montana legislative leaders revealed that a previously unpublicized allegation of sexual harassment helped drive their current push to update policies on harassment, discrimination and retaliation.

Although half of all state legislative chambers updated their sexual harassment policies last year, an Associated Press review found that many are still looking to make changes this year.

Some states are taking their first steps since the October 2017 media reports alleging sexual misconduct against movie mogul Harvey Weinstein sparked a national movement of people coming forward with accounts of sexual assault or harassment. In other states, lawmakers and women's advocates are looking to take the second or third steps in what they say is a long trek toward changing attitudes and behaviors.

Sabadosa is sponsoring legislation that would create an independent commission to investigate complaints of workplace harassment by Massachusetts lawmakers. She said a House rule change adopted last year didn't go far enough when it created a new staff position for an equal employment opportunity officer to investigate complaints.

"It feels important for the first-year class to come in and say, 'We are done, this is enough, that culture needs to end and we're going to be the people to make sure that it happens,'" she said.

Across the country, at least 90 state lawmakers have resigned or been removed from office, faced discipline or other repercussions, or been publicly accused of sexual misconduct since the beginning of 2017, according to an ongoing tally by The Associated Press. Sexual misconduct allegations also have toppled high-ranking executive branch officials, including Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and Louisiana Secretary of State Tom Schedler.

More than a half-dozen members of the U.S. Congress accused of sexual misconduct also resigned. A new federal law that took effect in January extended sexual harassment protections to congressional interns, gave victims access to confidential advisers and made lawmakers personally liable for financial settlements stemming from harassment or retaliation.

An AP review last August found that about half of the 99 state legislative chambers had updated their own sexual harassment policies since the #MeToo movement began (Nebraska has just a single legislative chamber). The most common response was to boost their own training about sexual harassment, typically by making it mandatory or providing it more frequently. Only a few legislatures passed measures that apply to private-sector workers.

Indiana legislators passed a law last year requiring them to take at least one hour of sexual harassment training annually and creating a committee to develop new sexual harassment policies.

In January, the House and Senate followed through by adopting policies expressly forbidding unwanted sexual advances and retaliation against those who make complaints. The policies also ban any sexual contact between lawmakers and interns.

The new Indiana policies come after a year in which the state attorney general and House speaker both were named in sexual misconduct allegations, which they denied.

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"We want to make sure people understand we realize the importance of these issues," said Republican Sen. Liz Brown, an attorney who helped draft the new rules.

Brown, who is chairwoman of the Senate's ethics committee, said the rules were "thoroughly vetted and very thoroughly researched," protect confidentiality and provide flexibility for legislative investigators to get outside help if needed.

But Jennifer Drobac, an Indiana University law professor who has written a textbook on sexual harassment law, described the new policies as disappointing. She said they use outdated definitions of sexual harassment, require a higher standard of proof than most civil cases and fail to require an outside investigation of complaints.

"What they have adopted is a late-20th century, lukewarm approach to the problem," Drobac said. "It's not committed, it's not rigorous, it's not up to date, and it does not instill confidence in my mind."

Other states also have received both praise and criticism for their responses to sexual harassment.

The Missouri House generally was praised for working with the nonprofit Women's Foundation to rewrite its sexual harassment policies after a House speaker resigned in May 2015 while acknowledging he had sent sexually suggestive text messages to a Capitol intern.

This past week, the House revised its policies again, allowing its ethics committee to close preliminary hearings that were previously public. Although some lawmakers objected to the potential secrecy, others said it's intended to protect victims.

"Preliminary hearings, particularly involving sexual assault and harassment, should be not politicized," said Democratic Rep. Gina Mitten, who supported the change.

As one of his first acts in office, Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, a Republican, issued an executive order that strengthened the sexual harassment reporting processes and mandated training for executive branch employees.

But that same day, the Republican-led Georgia Senate changed its rules to make it harder to bring some sexual harassment complaints. The new rules require misconduct complaints against senators and staff to be made within two years of the incident, raise the burden of proof for investigations to go forward from "reasonable grounds" to "substantial credible evidence," require accusers to keep complaints confidential and allow penalties against those who publicize complaints or make frivolous claims.

The changes came as Republican state Sen. Renee Unterman, who was removed from a committee leadership post, publicly declared that "in the last couple of weeks, I have had sexual harassment against me." Unterman has not provided any specific details about her allegations.

Other states have moved in the opposite direction on transparency.

The Massachusetts Senate this past week amended its rules to prohibit nondisclosure agreements, which have been used in some states to keep sexual harassment settlements secret.

In Oregon, House and Senate leaders facing a civil rights complaint over the alleged culture of harassment have pledged a variety of improved policies. One bill would establish an "equity office" to conduct outreach programs and investigate complaints. Another would allow courts to temporarily exclude an elected official from the Capitol, if a judge determines that the person's presence creates a hostile environment.

Legislative chambers in Idaho, Louisiana and North Dakota already have enacted updated sexual harassment policies for 2019. The New Hampshire House voted overwhelmingly in January to make sexual harassment training mandatory, although some male lawmakers said that carried an insulting implication that all lawmakers were harassers.

The California Legislature opened an independent office to handle investigations of alleged workplace misconduct, including sexual harassment or discrimination. A panel of outside experts will be responsible for evaluating the unit's findings and advising the Legislature on whether to take disciplinary action against accused colleagues.

The nonprofit National Women's Law Center in Washington, D.C., is spearheading a coalition seeking to strengthen protections against sexual harassment in workplaces, schools and communities in at least 20 states by 2020. About 300 state lawmakers from 40 states, including men and women of both major parties, have signed on to the pledge.

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"The outpouring of #MeToo stories shows how profoundly inadequate our laws have been for so long," said Andrea Johnson, senior counsel for state policy at the National Women's Law Center. She added: "It's not something that gets fixed in one session."

Associated Press writer Tom Davies in Indianapolis and Andrew Selsky in Salem, Oregon, contributed to this report.

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

Venezuela's Guaido urges military defections amid protests

By MANUEL RUEDA and FABIOLA SANCHEZ, Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela's opposition leader called on more members of the military to abandon the country's socialist government following Saturday's defection of a high-ranking general, while President Nicolas Maduro proposed holding early National Assembly elections that could potentially oust his challenger.

Maduro's call for early legislative voting is likely to intensify his standoff with rival Juan Guaido, who heads the opposition-controlled National Assembly and is demanding a new presidential election. Guaido declared himself Venezuela's legitimate ruler on Jan. 23, and has the support of Washington and most South American nations.

Speaking from behind a podium decorated with Venezuela's presidential seal, Guaido told supporters he would keep his opposition movement in the streets until Maduro stopped "usurping" the presidency and agreed to a presidential election overseen by international observers. On Saturday, tens of thousands of Venezuelans joined opposition protests against Maduro in Caracas and other cities.

Guaido called on "blocks" of the military to defect from Maduro's administration and "get on the side of the Venezuelan people."

"We don't just want you to stop shooting at protesters," Guaido said in a hoarse voice. "We want you to be part of the reconstruction of Venezuela."

He said that in the coming days, the opposition would try to move humanitarian aid into the country by land and sea along three border points, including the Colombian city of Cucuta. He described the move as a "test" for Venezuela's armed forces, which will have to choose if they allow the much needed aid to pass, or if they instead obey the orders of Maduro's government.

Maduro also dug in his heels, insisting he was the only president of Venezuela and describing Saturday's anti-government protests as part of a U.S.-led coup attempt.

"I agree that the legislative power of the country be re-legitimized and that we hold free elections with guarantees, and the people choose a new National Assembly," Maduro said at a pro-government demonstration in Caracas.

The opposition controls the National Assembly while government supporters control the more-powerful Constituent Assembly, so calls for a vote to replace the former and not the latter was seen as a move against Guaido.

The socialist leader also had words for the administration of President Donald Trump which recently imposed sanctions on Venezuelan oil exports in an effort to undermine Maduro's main source of income and weaken his grip on power.

"Do you think you are the emperor of the world?" he asked Trump. "Do you think Venezuela is going to give up and obey your orders? We will not surrender."

The standoff comes amid what appears to be growing dissension among the ranks of Venezuela's powerful military.

Earlier Saturday, a Venezuelan air force general defected from Maduro's administration and called on his compatriots to participate in protests against the socialist leader's rule.

Gen. Francisco Yanez is the first high ranking officer to leave Maduro's government since Jan. 23, when

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Guaido declared himself the country's legitimate leader by invoking two articles of the Venezuelan constitution that he argues give him the right to assume presidential powers. He considers Maduro's election win fraudulent.

In a YouTube video, Yanez described Maduro as a dictator and referred to Guaido as his president. He didn't say if he was still in Venezuela or had left the country.

The officer confirmed in a phone call with The Associated Press, from a Colombian number, the veracity of his declaration and said he would not provide further statements until given authorization by "the commander-in-chief of the legal armed force, which is President Juan Guaido."

The military controls some of Venezuela's key assets including the state run oil company, and until now, its top brass has helped Maduro to survive rounds of mass protests in 2014 and 2017 by jailing activists and repressing protesters.

Yanez said in his video that "90 percent of the military" is against Maduro, but it is unclear how many will actively support the opposition.

Shortly after protests broke out against Maduro last week, Venezuela's most important regional military commanders and its defense minister issued a statement in support of Maduro, describing Guaido as a coup monger backed by Washington.

Venezuela's aerospace command of the armed forces shared a picture of Yanez on its Twitter account with the words "traitor" above it.

"We reject the declarations made by General Yanez who betrayed his oath of loyalty to our nation and chose to follow foreign plans," the command wrote.

On Saturday, Maduro said he was willing to sit down for talks with the opposition in an effort to promote national "harmony."

But that offer has been rejected by Guaido, who describes it as a ploy by the Maduro administration to buy time.

Previous talks between the government and opposition have failed to change electoral conditions in the South American country, and many political leaders have been forced into exile.

At a pro-Maduro rally, supporters blamed the opposition for undermining the Bolivarian Revolution with years of protests and seeking financial sanctions against the Venezuelan government.

Zeleyka Muskus, a 53-year-old tax collector from Caracas, said the opposition was responsible for the country's current economic woes, saying they have staged years of protests that have gotten people injured and killed.

"Chavez is the love of my life," she said, referring to late Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez.

Other public workers attending the pro-government demonstration said they had been forced to go there by their bosses.

Meanwhile, streams of marchers from middle-class and poor neighborhoods walked to another part of the capital and said they were demanding Maduro's resignation and a transitional government that would hold new presidential elections in the South American country.

Xiomara Espinoza, 59, said she felt a change of energy in the crowd, whose hopes for a transition in Venezuela have previously been dashed.

"We are around the corner from freedom," she said, banging on a pot and wearing a Venezuelan flag.

Associated Press writers Scott Smith, Joshua Goodman and Jorge Rueda contributed reporting from Caracas, Venezuela.

New Mexico ceremony marks 'horrible' discovery of bodies

By MARY HUDETZ, Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — The notes are written on paper tags, tributes to the nine women, two teenage girls and unborn child found buried 10 years ago atop a New Mexico mesa.

One bears a stick-figure angel and a message from a woman who says the victims watch over her. Another expresses hope that authorities will find the killer.

The authors, advocates say, are women who spend their days in the district with a history of drugs and sex trafficking that many of the victims were known to frequent.

The bodies were discovered a decade ago this weekend, kicking off an investigation into the largest crime scene in Albuquerque's history. The cases remain unsolved.

All but one of the victims had fallen into prostitution and struggled with drug abuse, according to police.

"It's really a sad and horrible anniversary," said Christine Barber, executive director of Street Safe New Mexico, a nonprofit that seeks to boost safety for women who live and work on Albuquerque streets. "Here is that mark of 10 years. Looking back, what has changed for women on the streets?"

Her organization recently gathered the notes from the women it meets with weekly, and volunteers tied them to fencing near the former crime scene Saturday to mark the anniversary.

Known as the West Mesa killings, the victims' deaths have resulted in no arrests, despite the massive homicide investigation police launched after discovering the makeshift graves.

Police say a woman walking her dog reported finding what appeared to be a femur on the mesa. That discovery of a single bone led to a months-long dig, as police used DNA and dental records to identify the women and girls.

Many of the victims' families reported them missing years earlier. Ida Lopez, an Albuquerque police detective, also noticed sex workers vanishing. She compiled a list of the missing — not all of whom have been found, raising concern there might be more victims.

For homicide investigators, the case posed challenges from the start, said Dirk Gibson, a communications and journalism professor at the University of New Mexico who has authored numerous books on serial killings. Years had passed from the time the women and girls disappeared, likely limiting available evidence.

"You can't have a colder cold case," Gibson said. "In this case, there was almost nothing but bones."

Gilbert Gallegos, an Albuquerque police spokesman, said detectives receive hundreds of tips in the case each year, and they continue to follow different leads while retesting evidence as DNA and other investigative technology advances.

Police haven't ruled out that there might be more victims, and detectives still have multiple suspects, Gallegos said.

Since 2009, families of some victims have stressed publicly that the women and girls were loved. Several women had children now being raised by relatives.

"They didn't deserve what they got. It's awful what happened to them," Myra Salazar, the mother of 27-year-old victim Evelyn Salazar, said in a statement. "They all had families that care for them."

She released her statement through Young Women United, a nonprofit where she helps with programs geared toward assisting women in need.

Evelyn Salazar disappeared in the spring of 2004 with her 15-year-old cousin Jamie Barela after police said they went to a park together.

Barela is the only victim who police say wasn't known to have been subjected to sex trafficking.

Syllania Edwards, also 15, was the only one not from New Mexico. She was from Lawton, Oklahoma, and was reportedly last seen in Denver, police said.

The victims were remembered Saturday at a brief memorial service organized by Street Safe New Mexico next to a place where city officials in June broke ground on a memorial park. For now, the hand-written tributes to the victims hang from the fencing that lines the park.

Barber said the organization hoped the notes written by women who today live on the margins in Albuquerque will highlight the continued struggles for some of the city's most vulnerable.

Street Safe was founded in 2009, aiming to ensure volunteers kept a steady presence in an area along

Historic Route 66 while handing out clothing and other products each Friday. That way if women started disappearing again, there might be more advocates who notice and help in raising concerns, Barber said. "You have to know people, their names and what they look like to know people are missing," she said.

Racist yearbook photo becomes a test for 2020 Democrats

By BILL BARROW, Associated Press

A racist photo tied to Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam spurred the first major test for how Democratic presidential hopefuls will address racial tensions that have polarized American life.

Nearly every major declared and potential Democratic candidate called for Northam's resignation after disclosure of the photo, which shows one person in blackface and another hooded in white Klan regalia.

Their reactions came before Northam, 59, who is white, said during a news conference Saturday that he was not in the photo on his page of the 1984 yearbook. He acknowledged using blackface when he dressed as pop icon Michael Jackson for a dance contest, also in 1984.

That leaves Democrats running for president or considering bids to navigate an explosive and embarrassing story as they mount campaigns intended to serve as a contrast with racial divisions that have intensified under the presidency of Donald Trump.

"The candidates were right on this, but this one was easy; the questions and issues on race will only get harder," said Symone Sanders, one of the Democratic Party's most visible black strategists and an aide to Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign.

Northam's refusal to step down, Sanders added, threatens to "bring down the Democratic ecosystem" when candidates already face challenges explaining their own records on racially fraught matters. "How do you tell black, brown and young disillusioned voters who didn't vote in 2016 to come out and take on Donald Trump and take America with this in the party?" she said. "It's a real concern."

That means more potential pitfalls for candidates as varied as California Sen. Kamala Harris, the daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants, and former Vice President Joe Biden, a white man who prides himself on his working-class heritage.

Harris touts her record as a prosecutor but faces critiques from the left for her role in a system that has for decades disproportionately imprisoned young men of color. Biden, a longtime senator before he was President Barack Obama's political partner, recently expressed regret for supporting a 1994 crime bill that toughened sentencing laws. He had defended the vote for years.

Antjuan Seawright, a veteran of campaigns in South Carolina, which hosts the first presidential primary with a large black vote, said candidates must explain their pasts and use them — and Northam — to talk about institutional racism. "There's a larger discussion here about the poisonous effects of racism on the country and how these things really serve a hindrance for all of us moving forward," he said.

Harris and former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro were the first declared candidates to call for Northam to step down. Among the party's most prominent Latino figures, Castro called the photo "racist and unconscionable." Harris wrote on Twitter that "the stain of racism should have no place in the halls of government."

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who has faced her own troubles over her claims of Native American heritage, followed suit.

New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, a black man who launched his campaign Friday, the first day of Black History Month, put the incident into historical perspective. "These images arouse centuries of anger, anguish and racist violence," he wrote on Twitter.

New York Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, campaigning in the first primary state of New Hampshire, initially stopped short of calling for resignation, telling reporters she'd not seen the picture that she still called "very racist." She later issued a statement saying she'd seen the image for herself and believed Northam should step down.

"There aren't two sets of rules for our friends and our foes: Right is right and wrong is wrong ... and

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racism cannot be excused in our government or anywhere else," she wrote.

Gillibrand helped lead calls for Minnesota Sen. Al Franken to resign after he was accused in 2017 of sexual harassment.

Most of the presidential hopefuls sidestepped what would happen should Northam resign: A black man, Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax, would become the state's second black chief executive.

The most prominent white men in the potential Democratic field, Biden and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, both waited until Saturday morning to issue resignation calls.

Biden has deep ties in the black community, both from two unsuccessful presidential campaigns but also from two terms as the top lieutenant to the nation's first black president.

Sanders, who represents a state that is almost 95 percent white and less than 2 percent African-American, has tried to expand his relationships in the black community after his gaps proved a major liability in his 2016 presidential nominating fight against Hillary Clinton. Sanders, who hasn't said whether he'll run again, did well in much whiter states, but Clinton dominated him in states where black voters held strong sway, building an early delegate lead Sanders couldn't reverse.

Seawright, the South Carolina Democrat, dismissed any concerns over comparing candidates' response times over less than 24 hours. He said Republican leaders had ignored years of racist comments from Iowa Rep. Steve King before finally issuing a condemnation and ousting him from House committees in January after he questioned why "white supremacy" is considered offensive.

"We just can't be the party of hypocrisy ... and direction is more important than immediate timing," Seawright said.

North Carolina NAACP leader William Barber, a minister who has spoken at Democratic National Conventions, said he is keeping no scorecard on who has called on Northam to step down.

"People calling for his resignation, or Steve King's for that matter, they have a right to do so," Barber said. But "to simply have all this discussion about racism when we have some pictures and some words, as ugly and grotesque as they are, but not call out the structural racism that is often presented in more genteel ways — by denying health care, by gerrymandering unconstitutional legislatures, by a prison system that is the new Jim Crow to do that is not to deal with what racism actually is."

Associated Press writer Darlene Superville in Jupiter, Florida, and Alan Suderman in Richmond, Virginia, contributed to this report.

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

Senate reasserts foreign policy role, reshapes Trump agenda

By LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two years into Donald Trump's presidency, his allies in Congress are quietly trying to influence and even reshape his "America First" foreign policy agenda.

The Republican-led Senate is reasserting itself as a check on Trump's instincts, while individual GOP lawmakers are seeking sway — defense hawks vying with noninterventionists — over policy in the Middle East, Latin America and beyond.

Within one recent week, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio led a group of lawmakers to the White House encouraging Trump to back Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido as the interim president. Trump tweeted his support. Days earlier, Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul was at the White House reinforcing Trump's plan to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria and Afghanistan.

The result can often seem like a foreign policy in flux, zigzagging from bold pronouncements to more measured actions as "a number of different voices on the Hill are trying to put their imprint on the policy," said Brian Katulis, a former Clinton administration national security adviser now at the Center for American Progress.

"It's sort of this great improvisation directed by the president of the United States, that doesn't really

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follow any of the notes or sheets of music," Katulis said. "Like he's making things up as he goes along."

Setting the tone in the Senate, the first bill of the new year reaffirms sanctions on Syrian officials involved in war crimes and soon will include an amendment taking the unusual step of signaling opposition to Trump's plan to withdraw troops from Syria and Afghanistan.

Pushed forward by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the legislation also is driving a political wedge dividing Democrats, particularly those running for president in 2020, over the troop withdrawal and a separate provision supporting Israel.

Rubio, who led the floor debate and is emerging as a foreign policy leader, said the vote was about ensuring that senators and the legislative branch "play our rightful role in the setting of American foreign policy."

"It is important that the Senate be on the right side of this issue so that we can hope to influence future actions and policies before they are taken, and we can help change them once they have been taken in places headed in the wrong direction," Rubio said.

Next up, McConnell is promising a debate on the importance of NATO, as Trump re-evaluates the U.S.'s long-standing commitment to its allies in Europe.

"NATO deserves the Senate's support," McConnell said.

Danielle Pletka, a senior vice president at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, said lawmakers are doing exactly what they should — asserting themselves as a separate but equal branch of government that has been largely dormant on foreign policy.

"It's abnormal for members of Congress to be as disengaged as they have been," she said. "This is a return to normal."

Trump rode a populist wave to the White House with an "America First" approach focused on rebuilding the United States and bringing U.S. troops home, rather than funding wars overseas.

It's an instinct that fits more neatly into Paul's noninterventionist wing, which rose to prominence with the tea party, rather than the worldview of traditional foreign policy conservatives such as McConnell, Rubio and Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina.

Gaveling that divide is the new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, GOP Sen. Jim Risch of Idaho, who took over from outspoken Trump critic Bob Corker of Tennessee, who retired.

Risch said "don't read too much into" the first vote of the new Congress, saying lawmakers aren't necessarily sending any message or asserting themselves any more than usual.

"I think the Congress recognizes when it comes to construction and implementation of foreign policy, the Founding Fathers gave both the legislative branch and the executive branch a role," he said. "And it isn't really clearly defined as to who's got the upper hand."

Unlike the first years of the administration, when Republicans tested how publicly to oppose the president, often with mixed results, senators now seem to prefer softer diplomacy and private meetings to shape his policies.

Paul said after meeting with Trump in mid-January that no other president in recent history has taken steps as bold as Trump to disentangle the United States from wars.

"We live for the day that somebody will stand up and say, 'I'm going to change history,'" Paul told reporters at the time. "You're really seeing one of the extraordinary things."

A week later, Rubio and a group of lawmakers from Florida were at the White House urging Trump to support the opposition leader in Venezuela over embattled President Nicholas Maduro.

Florida GOP Sen. Rick Scott said the president was in listening mode and Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, R-Fla., said the administration has been "very open to speaking to us."

Trump tweeted his support the next day for the South American nation's opposition leader.

As Trump develops his plan to withdraw troops from Syria and now Afghanistan, the conversations continue.

McConnell talks with the president often. Traditional GOP hawks, including Sens. Tom Cotton of Arkansas and Joni Ernst of Iowa, were among a group of House and Senate Republicans who met with Trump at the White House shortly after he announced his decision for the Syria withdrawal.

Ernst told Iowa reporters this past week that she disagreed with his assessment that the Islamic State

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group had been defeated in Syria, she said she "will continue to do so when I believe what we're getting from the intelligence community is different from what advisers are giving to the president."

Associated Press writer David Pitt in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this report.

Trump is latest to give State of Union in time of turmoil

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is the latest chief executive to deliver a State of the Union address at a time of turmoil.

But others may have had it even worse. Abraham Lincoln delivered a written report during the Civil War, Richard Nixon spoke while embroiled in the Watergate scandal and Bill Clinton gave one of his State of the Union speeches just weeks after he'd been impeached in the very same room.

Despite all of that, presidential historian Douglas Brinkley called Trump's upcoming address on Tuesday "a strange and bizarre State of the Union."

There's the continuing federal investigation into Trump campaign contacts with Russia, calls for Trump to be removed from office and the president's own threat to again close down parts of the government if Congress refuses to spend billions of dollars to build his long-promised U.S.-Mexico border wall.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi added to the theatrics surrounding the event by forcing Trump to postpone the speech a week because of the original shutdown, a record 35-day stoppage.

Plenty of State of the Union addresses have unfolded in turbulent times.

Two decades ago, Democrat Clinton delivered a State of the Union speech not long after the Republican-controlled House impeached him in December 1998 on grounds that he had lied to a federal grand jury and had obstructed justice in the wake of his relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

And just hours before Clinton delivered his speech — in the same chamber where he had become just the second president ever to be impeached — White House lawyers opened their defense of the president in a Senate trial in which they argued he was innocent of the charges and "must not be removed from office."

No president had ever delivered a State of the Union address under such extraordinary conditions.

Speculation was rampant that Clinton would cancel, according to former Senate historian Donald Ritchie. But not only did Clinton show up, he spoke in characteristic length about a booming economy, balanced federal budgets and a proposal to protect Social Security for the ages. He did not mention the circumstances leading up to the impeachment vote that threatened his presidency.

"He came and he delivered a message as if nothing was going on," Ritchie recalled. "It took a lot of the steam out of the impeachment effort against him."

The Senate acquitted Clinton the following month.

Decades earlier, Nixon devoted much of his final State of the Union speech in January 1974 to the country's energy crisis. But near the end of his remarks, he added a "personal word" about Watergate. Nixon called for the investigation to end, declaring "one year of Watergate is enough" and said he had no "intention whatever" of resigning.

But the Republican reversed course and stepped down that August, becoming the only president ever to resign. Nixon had faced impeachment by the House over his participation in the attempted cover-up of a break-in at Democratic Party headquarters executed by burglars connected to his re-election campaign.

Shortly after taking office, President Gerald Ford — Nixon's vice president and successor — pardoned Nixon.

Ford then used his 1975 State of the Union speech to declare "the state of the union is not good" — though not due to any Watergate fallout. Ford cited high unemployment, a recession, inflation, a rising federal deficit and climbing national debt, the energy situation and other issues as reasons for his bleak assessment.

Lincoln faced a situation "more grim than it is now, by far," said Brinkley, referencing the Civil War.

In December 1861, eight months after the war began, Lincoln noted in his State of the Union address —

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they were written in those days — that “a disloyal portion of the American people have during the whole year been engaged in an attempt to divide and destroy the Union.”

Lincoln also warned that “a nation which endures factious domestic division is exposed to disrespect abroad, and one party, if not both, is sure sooner or later to invoke foreign intervention.”

AP News Researcher Monika Mathur contributed to this report.

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

This story has been corrected to reflect that Lincoln’s State of the Union address came in December 1861, not December 1865.

Deadly Brazil dam collapse was disaster waiting to happen

By ANNA JEAN KAISER, The Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Lax regulations, chronic short staffing and a law that muffled the voices of environmentalists on mining licenses made the devastating collapse of a dam in southeastern Brazil all but destined to happen, experts and legislators say.

The failure of the dam holding back iron ore mining waste on Jan. 25 unleashed an avalanche of mud that buried buildings and contaminated water downstream. At least 121 people have died, and another 226 people remain missing.

But one of the cruelest parts of the tragedy in Brumadinho is that it has happened before: In 2015, a mining dam burst about 80 miles (130 kilometers) away in Mariana, in what is considered Brazil’s worst environmental disaster.

What’s more, it could happen again, as many Brazilian states and the federal government move to ease regulation in the name of economic development.

In the three years since the Mariana rupture killed 19 people, the regulation of the industry has gotten less, not more, rigorous in Minas Gerais state.

“It felt like it was just a matter of time before something bigger would happen,” said Josiele Rosa Silva Tomas, the president of the Brumadinho residents’ association.

Problems that existed when the dams in Mariana burst, like dramatic short-staffing, have persisted, while a new law has reduced the say of environmental groups in the project licensing process.

And the danger remains widespread: A 2017 report from the National Water Agency classified more than 700 dams nationwide as at high risk of collapse, with high potential for causing damage.

In fact, some fear the risk may only increase. Environmental groups accused the previous Congress and president of rolling back significant protections, and many expect further weakening under President Jair Bolsonaro, who has said environmental regulation hamstringing several industries, including mining.

But the politics that contributed to the collapses in Minas Gerais are much more local. For centuries, the mineral-rich state has revolved around the mining industry — its name, given by Portuguese colonizers, translates to “General Mines.”

More than 300 mines employ thousands in the state, often in poor, rural areas.

Civil society groups often struggle to achieve basic guarantees. For instance, Tomas’ group has long fought to prevent mining projects from contaminating drinking water.

“Minas Gerais has a centuries-long history of being lenient with the mining sector. It’s cultural,” Joao Vitor Xavier, a state deputy, told The Associated Press. “The industry creates a discourse where they dangle jobs and economic growth in front of people, but they put profit over safety.”

The CEO of Vale SA, which owned and operated the Brumadinho mining complex, acknowledges their regulatory measures fell short.

“Apparently to work under the (current) rules has not worked,” Flavio Schvartsman said during a press conference several hours after the dam breach.

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Vale officials have said they don't yet know why the dam collapsed.

Arrest warrants have been issued for five people responsible for safety assessments of the dam, including three Vale employees. Vale was also involved in the Mariana rupture: The dams there were administered by the Brazilian giant and Australia's BHP Billiton.

The Mariana collapse unleashed nearly 80 million cubic yards (60 million cubic meters) of mining waste into rivers and eventually the Atlantic Ocean. While its environmental impact is considered the worst in Brazilian history, Brumadinho has already far surpassed its death toll.

In the wake of the Mariana tragedy, Minas Gerais was already struggling to implement what regulation it had: A 2016 audit found the state had only 20 percent of the staff needed at the agency charged with regulating mines. Environmentalists say mining regulation has gotten even weaker since.

In 2015, the state approved a new process for licensing mining projects. It shifted responsibility from a board that included several environmental organizations to the state environmental secretary, who created a new board with a majority of participants favorable to mining industry interests.

Then-Gov. Fernando Pimentel argued the bill would reduce bureaucracy. But days before the law was approved, the Minas Association of Environmental Defense called it "one of the biggest setbacks in environmental regulation in the country."

"The conditions are set so the licenses never get turned down," Maria Teresa Corujo, a rare pro-environmental voice on the new board, told the AP.

In December, Corujo, of the National Forum of Civil Society in Watershed Communities, was the only member of the new board to vote against approving the expansion of the mining complex in Brumadinho. Notes from that meeting show the complex's pollutant rating had been downgraded — a move that is now the purview of the environmental secretary — allowing the company to skip regulatory steps.

In July 2018, Xavier, the state lawmaker who has pushed for a ban on iron ore waste dams, made a grave prediction.

"I'm not saying we might have other dam ruptures in Minas Gerais. I am saying that, from everything I've seen and studied, I have no doubt we will have more ruptures of dams," he told the state assembly.

Today, he still has no doubt that there will be more tragedies unless more rigorous regulations are implemented.

"These dams are not 100 percent safe," he said. "How many of them can rupture? Any one of them."

Super Bowl super fan can't stop because Patriots won't stop

KENNEBUNK, Maine (AP) — One of the handful of fans who has seen every single Super Bowl is keeping the streak alive as he prepares to cheer for his New England Patriots.

Donald Crisman, of Kennebunk, Maine, said he's happy to feel well enough to go to Atlanta for his 53rd consecutive Super Bowl. Just like the Patriots battled back from setbacks, so did the 82-year-old football fan, who had a bout of ulcerative colitis that caused him to lose 30 pounds and landed him in the hospital.

"Really, I didn't think (the Patriots) would get this far," Crisman told the Portland Press Herald. "But here we are. I just hope they bring home trophy No. 6."

The streak began when a friend was given tickets to the first Super Bowl in 1967. Over the years, Crisman kept on attending, traveling via train and plane, and battling ice and snow.

He was part of a Never-Missed-A-Super-Bowl club that was featured in a 2010 Visa commercial. The original group, which began with five, is down to Crisman and Tom Henschel of Pittsburgh. Another fan, Gregory Eaton of Michigan, also has attended each Super Bowl.

Crisman told WCSH-TV the ticket for the first Super Bowl was \$12 and that two college marching bands provided the halftime entertainment.

After the first 20 Super Bowls, his group thought of milestones they'd hit so they could stop.

"I kind of made a plan to drop out after number 30 but the Patriots got into 31, and I gotta go," Crisman said. "Then at Super Bowl 50, I said, 'I'm going to go, then that's it,' and the Patriots get in again, and again, and again."

If the Patriots defeat the Los Angeles Rams at the Super Bowl LIII, it will be their sixth big game vic-

tory — tying the record for most victories with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Russia to pull plug on nuclear arms pact after US does same

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Following in the footsteps of the U.S., Russia will abandon a centerpiece nuclear arms treaty but will only deploy intermediate-range nuclear missiles if Washington does so, President Vladimir Putin said Saturday.

President Donald Trump accused Moscow on Friday of violating the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty with “impunity” by deploying banned missiles. Trump said in a statement that the U.S. will “move forward” with developing its own military response options to Russia’s new land-based cruise missiles that could target Western Europe.

Moscow has strongly denied any breaches and accused Washington of making false accusations in order to justify its pullout.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, in explaining that Washington on Saturday formally suspended its treaty obligations, said in a statement that Russia’s “continued noncompliance has jeopardized the United States’ supreme interests.” He said the treaty will terminate in six months unless Moscow returns to “full and verifiable compliance.”

The collapse of the INF Treaty has raised fears of a repeat of a Cold War showdown in the 1980s, when the U.S. and the Soviet Union both deployed intermediate-range missiles on the continent. Such weapons were seen as particularly destabilizing as they only take a few minutes to reach their targets, leaving no time for decision-makers and raising the likelihood of a global nuclear conflict over a false launch warning.

After the U.S. gave notice of its intention to withdraw, Putin said Russia would do the same. He ordered the development of new land-based intermediate-range weapons, but emphasized that Russia won’t deploy them in the European part of the country or elsewhere unless the U.S. does so.

“We will respond quid pro quo,” Putin said. “Our American partners have announced they were suspending their participation in the treaty, and we will do the same. They have announced they will conduct research and development, and we will act accordingly.”

The U.S. has accused Russia of developing and deploying a cruise missile that violates provisions of the pact that ban production, testing and deployment of land-based cruise and ballistic missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers (310 to 3,410 miles). Trump’s move also reflected his administration’s view that the pact was an obstacle to efforts needed to counter intermediate-range missiles deployed by China, which isn’t part of the treaty.

NATO allies have strongly backed Washington and urged Moscow to save the treaty by returning to compliance.

Russia has rejected the U.S. claims of violation, charging that the missile, which is part of the Iskander-M missile system, has a maximum range of 480 kilometers (298 miles). Russian officials claimed the U.S. assertions about the alleged breach of the pact by Moscow were intended to shift the blame for the pact’s demise to Russia.

The Russian Defense Ministry on Saturday released a satellite image of what it described as new production facilities at the U.S. missile maker Raytheon’s plant in Tucson, Arizona, noting that their expansion began in 2017 as the Congress authorized spending for the development of intermediate-range missiles.

“The character and the timing of the works provide an irrefutable proof that the U.S. administration had decided to pull out of the INF treaty years before making unfounded claims of Russian violations,” it said.

Putin has argued it makes no sense for Russia to deploy a ground-based cruise missile violating the treaty because it has such weapons on ships and aircraft, which aren’t banned by the pact.

Speaking Saturday in a televised meeting with his foreign and defense ministers, Putin instructed the military to work on developing new land-based weapons that were previously forbidden by the INF treaty. Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu reported to Putin that they would include a land-based version of the Kalibr ship-based cruise missile and a new hypersonic intermediate-range ballistic missile.

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Putin emphasized that such new weapons won't be deployed unless the U.S. does so.

"Russia will not station intermediate-range weapons in Europe or other regions until similar U.S. weapons appear in those regions," he said.

The Russian leader said Moscow remains open to talks with Washington, but added it would be up to the U.S. to take the first step.

"Let's wait until our partners are mature enough to conduct an equal and substantive dialogue on those issues," he said.

At the same time, Putin told his ministers that he would like to review the progress on building other prospective weapons that don't fall under the INF treaty, including the intercontinental Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle and the Poseidon underwater nuclear-powered drone.

He noted Shoigu's report that a key stage in testing of the Poseidon was completed several days ago. The drone is designed to carry a heavy nuclear weapon that could cause a devastating tsunami wave.

The Russian leader last year unveiled an array of new nuclear weapons, including the Avangard and the Poseidon, saying that they can't be intercepted.

Putin also noted during Saturday's meeting that he would like the military to prepare a response to the possible deployment of weapons in space.

The Pentagon's new strategy unveiled last month calls for a new array of space-based sensors and other high-tech systems to more quickly detect and shoot down incoming missiles.

Putin instructed the military to make sure the research and development works on new weapons don't swell military spending. He said the military must reconfigure the existing defense budget to find money for the new weapons.

"We must not and will not be drawn into a costly arms race," he said.

Associated Press writers Deb Riechmann, Robert Burns, Matthew Lee and Lynn Berry in Washington contributed to this report.

Hashtag stirs debate over role of Christian schools in US

By DAVID CRARY, AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — For their supporters, the thousands of Christian schools across America are literally a blessing — a place where children can learn in accordance with biblical teachings, untainted by the secular norms of public schools.

To critics, many of these Christian schools venture too often into indoctrination, with teachings that can misrepresent science and history and potentially breed intolerance toward people with different outlooks.

"These schools are front and center in the politicization of knowledge and that's problematic," said Julie Ingersoll, a professor of religious studies at the University of North Florida.

The polarized views have been highlighted in recent days after the appearance of an #ExposeChristianSchools hashtag on Twitter. It was introduced by Chris Stroop, an Indianapolis-based writer and activist, on Jan. 18, shortly after news broke that Karen Pence, wife of Vice President Mike Pence, would be teaching at a Christian school in northern Virginia that lists "homosexual or lesbian sexual activity" as among the disqualifying criteria for prospective employees.

Stroop, 38, calls himself an "ex-evangelical." He says he attended Christian schools in Indiana and Colorado almost continuously from first grade through high school and recalls pervasive messaging that demeaned LGBT people and discouraged the empowerment of women.

"Not everything about it was bad — I had teachers I liked who encouraged me academically," said Stroop, who went on to earn a Ph.D. at Stanford. "But I don't think education as indoctrination is right."

The news about Karen Pence's teaching job was quickly followed by debate over the behavior of boys from Covington Catholic High School in Kentucky during a visit to Washington, D.C. While opinions varied widely as to whether the boys had behaved badly, that incident further fueled debate over faith-based schools.

Within days, there were thousands of responses to #ExposeChristianSchools on Twitter, including many

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personal stories of bad experiences by people who attended them.

One man said his school required students to sign an agreement promising not to listen to “worldly” music. Others faulted their curriculum, such as a Christian biology textbook that cited Scotland’s fabled Loch Ness Monster as evidence of flaws in Darwin’s theory of evolution.

Even as the critiques multiplied, many people took to Twitter to defend Christian schools. Among them was Greg Lukianoff, an attorney active in promoting freedom of speech on college campuses. He said he was an “outspoken atheist” beginning in the seventh grade and frequently skipped school.

“Only as an adult did I realize how kind & tolerant my Catholic high school was towards me,” he tweeted.

In a telephone interview Friday, Lukianoff said he had forged close friendships with people from religious and secular schools, and felt it was unproductive to generalize about them.

Even Brian Toale, a 65-year-old New Yorker who says he was repeatedly sexually abused in the early 1970s by a staffer at his Catholic high school on Long Island, recalls many positive aspects of his school years.

“The education itself was top notch,” he said. “I did have several extracurricular activities where I learned stuff and made friends I still have today.”

But Toale, who eventually converted to Judaism, says the school administration failed to properly vet the person who abused him, and later treated him with disdain when he reported the abuse.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 5.9 million students — a tenth of the national prekindergarten through 12th grade total — attend private schools in the U.S. About three-quarters of them attend one of the roughly 22,000 Christian schools.

By far, the Catholic Church accounts for the biggest share of this group, operating more than 6,300 schools serving more than 1.8 million students — about 20 percent of them non-Catholics. The totals are down sharply from the early 1960s when there were more than 5.2 million students in almost 13,000 Catholic schools nationwide.

The Council for American Private Education identifies 4,154 schools as “conservative Christian,” serving about 664,000 students.

Julie Ingersoll, the religious studies professor, says those schools are faring well, at least in the eyes of their supporters. She notes that many are now able to access publicly funded tax credits and vouchers in various states, and often can operate with limited regulation.

“But this leaves kids vulnerable on all kinds of levels, which of course was what the hashtag was about,” Ingersoll said in an email. “It’s been portrayed as a campaign against Christianity from ‘the left,’ but it was really a group of young adults who grew up in Christian schools (and Christian home schooling) explaining how they believe they were personally harmed by it.”

“These harms were often related to sex, gender, shame, and abuse,” she wrote. “But stories also detailed impoverished education, especially when it came to science and history.”

The Rev. Russell Moore, a high-profile official with the Southern Baptist Convention, said the recent criticisms of Christian schools reflect some broader societal trends that have riled conservative religious leaders.

“There’s a certain mindset in America that sees any religious conviction as authoritarian,” Moore said.

Overall, Christian schooling “is in a very good place,” Moore said. “There are some phenomenal evangelical schools, preparing their children with remarkable academic rigor.”

John Gehring, Catholic program director at a Washington-based clergy network called Faith in Public Life, graduated from an all-male Catholic prep school near Baltimore. He has suggested in recent articles that such schools — while admirable in many ways — could do a better job of teaching their students about the church’s historical role in exploitation and oppression.

“I’m frustrated by the overheated commentary where Christian and public schools are almost viewed as enemy combatants in the culture wars,” Gehring said. “Each has their place, and like any institution they have strengths and weaknesses. The Catholic schools I attended through college shaped my understanding of justice and cultivated a spirituality that frames my life, even if those environments could sometimes be a little cloistered and privileged.”

___ Follow David Crary on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CraryAP>

Poland's political divide widens more after mayor is slain

By VANESSA GERA, Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Krzysztof Strzemeski watched with unease as a high school friend voiced support for Poland's nationalist government on social media, followed by hate-filled extremist posts. But when the liberal mayor of Gdansk was stabbed to death in public in January, he could no longer hold back his anger.

"Congratulations for your perseverance sharing right-wing filth," the 58-year-old university lecturer wrote to his former classmate. The two haven't communicated since.

Poland's political fissures have widened in recent months, pitting conservatives — many of them government supporters — against liberal critics who accuse the ruling party of threatening the country's hard-won democracy by undermining the independence of the judiciary and the media.

In this toxic atmosphere, there has been an increase in hate speech, political threats and, most stunningly, the assassination of popular Gdansk Mayor Pawel Adamowicz, a critic of the ruling Law and Justice Party's anti-immigrant policies.

After stabbing Adamowicz during a Jan. 13 charity event, the attacker grabbed a microphone and said that was his revenge against an opposition political party that Adamowicz had once belonged to.

Although there have been suggestions the assailant also had psychological problems, some government critics blamed Poland's heated political discourse, some of it from state television. Commentators had often vilified Adamowicz for his open acceptance of refugees and gays, and his widow said he had been getting death threats, causing the family to live in fear.

Poles have long spoken of "two tribes" in their central European country. Now, increasingly there is talk of a "Polish-Polish war" — a divide that is greater than at any time since the 1980s, when the Soviet-backed Communist regime tried to crush the Solidarity freedom movement by imposing martial law.

The wedge issues that Poland faces are familiar in many other places: immigration and borders, abortion, the relationship of the nation's mostly Catholic society to Jews, Muslims and other faiths, and the rights of gays and women.

On one level, it seems to be a microcosm of the political struggles elsewhere in Europe and in the United States. But Poland is also one of the European Union's largest and most economically dynamic countries, and its course will help shape the continent's future.

Poland's current government has aligned itself with other populist, conservative or nationalist figures — U.S. President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

The Law and Justice Party won the 2015 election amid Europe's migration crisis and a weariness with the centrist government that had been in power for eight years. Party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski vowed more help for the poor, a tough anti-corruption stance and a hard line against Muslim migrants, who he said carried "parasites and protozoa" dangerous to the native European population.

After mass street protests against his party's plans to overhaul the judicial system, Kaczynski turned his language against internal critics, referring to protesters as "the worst sort of Poles" and "national traitors." His language was widely denounced as reminiscent of the worst of the last century in Europe.

Last year saw a surge in anti-Semitic rhetoric in Poland after the passage of a controversial Holocaust speech law. Some of that was spoken even by public officials and TV commentators, creating a new normal in what seems to be acceptable speech.

On Jan. 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, a far-right activist who had been imprisoned for burning an effigy of a Jew in 2015 staged a protest outside the Auschwitz memorial site, saying it was time to "fight Jewry." Holocaust survivors had gathered for solemn observances not far away.

Muslims, while only a tiny percentage of Poland's population, have increasingly been taunted, spat on and even assaulted, according to the Never Again association, which monitors such crimes.

Since Adamowicz's killing, prosecutors have faced criticism for failing to investigate death threats against politicians. Two weeks before his death, the public prosecutor halted proceedings into symbolic "political death notices" that the far-right group All-Polish Youth issued for Adamowicz and 10 other mayors who

had pledged support for the integration of migrants.

There also have been dramatic calls on all sides for reconciliation. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has met with opposition leaders and urged more "mutual respect" in public debate.

But state television continues to vilify ideological opponents.

Last week, journalists on a talk show lashed out at Rafal Pankowski, a sociologist and the head of Never Again. One of them called him a "terrible" person, among those "who live from a hatred of their own fatherland."

Pankowski, who will be honored by the Anti-Defamation League next week for his work fighting anti-Semitism, decried the "climate of hatred in the air" and the fact that taxpayer money was going to fund such "crass propaganda."

Marcin Makowski, a conservative journalist and commentator, said he believes it's unfair to put all the blame on the government, recalling instances of harsh political rhetoric used by its opponents that fanned hatred and in some cases seemed to call for violence. When Kaczynski's brother, President Lech Kaczynski, died in a plane crash in 2010, some even joked about it, Makowski recalled.

"None of them are saints and pretending as such is pure hypocrisy," Makowski said.

Set against a shaky global picture, US economy looks sturdy

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy, well into its 10th year of growth, still has a spring in its step. And it's all the more visible when set against a tiring global picture.

A robust January jobs report on Friday showed that America's companies are, for now, brushing off an array of economic perils and still hiring at a brisk pace. The risks that for months had induced hand-wringing among economists about a possible looming recession appear to have had little effect on employers.

Overseas growth is stumbling, led by weakness in China, the world's second-largest economy. Europe is hamstrung by a recession in Italy and the potential for an unruly Brexit. A trade war between the U.S. and China and higher U.S. mortgage rates, partly engineered by the Federal Reserve, remain threats.

No matter. Employers added 304,000 jobs in January — the healthiest burst of hiring in nearly a year. The unemployment rate ticked up a notch to a still-low 4 percent. But that was mostly because thousands of furloughed federal workers were considered temporarily unemployed because of the partial government shutdown. That quirk should reverse itself this month.

The solid jobs report and a separate survey that showed Friday that U.S. factory growth picked up last month "stood in stark contrast with evidence of slower economic momentum in China and Europe," said Lydia Boussour, senior U.S. economist at Oxford Economics.

So why is the United States doing so well? And will the sluggish global economy eventually depress U.S. exports and economic growth?

Trends that had looked alarming a month or two ago now appear benign, perhaps even supportive of growth. The stock market, having plunged 16 percent late last year, rose 8 percent in January, its best monthly performance since 2015. Americans who are invested in stocks typically cut spending when market indexes fall steadily. That is now less likely to happen.

And suddenly the Fed under Chairman Jerome Powell looks like an economic ally. The central bank had raised its benchmark short-term interest rate four times last year — action that helped make mortgages and other consumer and business loans costlier. And in December, the Fed's policymakers said they envisioned raising rates twice more this year.

But this week, the Fed held its benchmark rate steady and sent its strongest signal to date that it saw no need to raise rates in the coming months — perhaps even for the rest of the year. Its message ignited a rally on Wall Street, which cheered the prospect of continued modest borrowing rates for the near future.

Other factors have helped give the U.S. economy an edge over most of its major rivals. Ethan Harris, global economist at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, said the Trump administration's tax cuts in late 2017 and a sharp increase in government spending last spring helped fuel growth.

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"No other major economy in the world did what we did," Harris said. "The stimulus did a very good job of covering up all the blemishes of the economy, including the risks of the trade war."

Vigorous U.S. hiring in the past few months partly represents a "lagged effect" from faster growth over the spring and summer, Harris said. Businesses that weren't able to quickly find and hire all the workers they wanted then have kept adding jobs in subsequent months.

The United States, with its huge domestic market, isn't as exposed to the vagaries of the global economy as some of its counterparts overseas are. China, for example, expanded last year at its slowest pace in three decades. That slowdown has, in turn, hit German manufacturers that sold much of their industrial machinery to China, and Italian automakers, whose auto exports to China have plunged.

Though earnings at some large U.S. multinationals, like the heavy equipment maker Caterpillar, have been weak, corporate profits have so far been holding up despite the global slowdown and trade rifts. Of the companies in the S&P 500 that have reported results for the fourth quarter of 2018, 71 percent delivered profit growth that topped Wall Street forecasts, though some have cut expectations for 2019.

And China's downturn might not last. Megan Greene, chief economist at Manulife, said in a research note Friday that Beijing's efforts to stimulate growth appear to be having some effect.

Still, many economists, including Harris, think the U.S. economy will slow this year after expanding roughly 3 percent in 2018, the fastest pace in more than a decade. Harris forecasts that annual growth in the October-December quarter of 2018 will be just 2 percent.

He and other economists expect the impact of the tax cuts and extra government spending to fade and for the rate hikes the Fed has already imposed to hold back growth somewhat. Inevitably, too, a prolonged global slump would weaken the U.S. economy as well.

But exactly how the U.S. economy is faring is harder than usual to judge because many data reports, including the quarterly figures on growth, are still delayed from the 35-day government shutdown. The government hasn't yet said when it will release its first estimate of gross domestic product — the broadest gauge of the economy — for the final three months of 2018.

There are hints that the U.S. economy won't fare as well in the coming year as it did in 2018. Diane Swonk, chief economist at Grant Thornton, noted that U.S. home and auto sales are declining, a sign that they might have peaked. If so, America's consumers may not be able to propel the economy as much as they have.

And businesses have cut back on their investments in buildings and large equipment, which suggests a reluctance to permanently expand their facilities.

"They're willing to add more people — that's good," Swonk said. But "right now they're not willing to pull the trigger and bet on building more capacity. That undermines your foundation for future growth."

Groundhog doesn't see his shadow, predicting early spring

PUNXSUTAWNEY, Pa. (AP) — It may be hard to believe as a large swath of the U.S. thaws out from a bitter polar vortex, but spring is coming early, according to handlers for some of the country's most famous prognosticating groundhogs.

Just before 7:30 a.m. Saturday, Punxsutawney (puhnh-suh-TAW'-nee) Phil emerged from his burrow in Pennsylvania at sunrise and didn't see his shadow. Nearly the same series of events unfolded about 300 miles (483 kilometers) to the east, where Staten Island Chuck's handlers also revealed the same prediction.

The festivities have their origin in a German legend that says if a furry rodent casts a shadow on Feb. 2, winter continues. If not, spring comes early.

In reality, Phil's prediction is decided ahead of time by the group on Gobbler's Knob, a tiny hill just outside Punxsutawney. That's about 65 miles (105 kilometers) northeast of Pittsburgh.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio stopped attending Staten Island's Groundhog Day ceremony in 2015, a year after he accidentally dropped the furry critter that died a week later.

And he wasn't the only New York City mayor who struggled with the holiday. Former Mayor Michael Bloomberg was bitten at a Groundhog Day ceremony in 2009.

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Feb. 3, the 34th day of 2019. There are 331 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 3, 1959, rock-and-roll stars Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson died in a small plane crash near Clear Lake, Iowa.

On this date:

In 1690, the first paper money in America was issued by the Massachusetts Bay Colony to finance a military expedition to Canada.

In 1811, American newspaper editor Horace Greeley was born in Amherst, N.H.

In 1913, the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, providing for a federal income tax, was ratified.

In 1917, the United States broke off diplomatic relations with Germany, the same day an American cargo ship, the SS Housatonic, was sunk by a U-boat off Britain after the crew was allowed to board lifeboats.

In 1930, the chief justice of the United States, William Howard Taft, resigned for health reasons. (He died just over a month later.)

In 1943, during World War II, the U.S. transport ship SS Dorchester, which was carrying troops to Greenland, sank after being hit by a German torpedo in the Labrador Sea; of the more than 900 men aboard, only some 230 survived. (Four Army chaplains on board gave away their life jackets to save others and went down with the ship.)

In 1959, an American Airlines Lockheed Electra crashed into New York's East River, killing 65 of the 73 people on board.

In 1966, the Soviet probe Luna 9 became the first manmade object to make a soft landing on the moon.

In 1988, the U.S. House of Representatives handed President Ronald Reagan a major defeat, rejecting his request for \$36.2 million in new aid to the Nicaraguan Contras by a vote of 219-211.

In 1994, the space shuttle Discovery lifted off, carrying Sergei Krikalev (SUR'-gay KREE'-kuh-lev), the first Russian cosmonaut to fly aboard a U.S. spacecraft.

In 1995, Discovery blasted off with a woman, Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Eileen Collins, in the pilot's seat for the first time in NASA history.

In 1998, Texas executed Karla Faye Tucker, 38, for the pickax killings of two people in 1983; she was the first woman executed in the United States since 1984. A U.S. Marine plane sliced through the cable of a ski gondola in Italy, causing the car to plunge hundreds of feet, killing all 20 people inside.

Ten years ago: Eric Holder became the first black U.S. attorney general as he was sworn in by Vice President Joe Biden. The White House announced that Tom Daschle had asked to be removed from consideration as health and human services secretary after acknowledging he'd failed to pay all his taxes.

Five years ago: U.S. stocks tumbled, pushing the Dow Jones industrial average down more than 320 points after reports of sluggish U.S. growth added to investor worries about the global economy. Former Vice President Walter Mondale's wife, Joan, died in St. Paul, Minnesota, at age 83.

One year ago: The fantasy romance "The Shape of Water" added another key prize in the awards season, as Guillermo del Toro took top honors at the Directors Guild Awards. Linebacker Ray Lewis and receiver Terrell Owens were among eight people voted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. The New York Times reported an accusation from actress Uma Thurman that disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein had forced himself on her sexually years ago in a London hotel room; Weinstein acknowledged making an "awkward pass" but strongly denied any physical assault.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. Paul Sarbanes, D-Md., is 86. Football Hall of Famer Fran Tarkenton is 79. Actress Bridget Hanley is 78. Actress Blythe Danner is 76. Football Hall of Famer Bob Griese is 74. Singer-guitarist Dave Davies (The Kinks) is 72. Singer Melanie is 72. Actress Morgan Fairchild is 69. Actress Pamela Franklin is 69. Actor Nathan Lane is 63. Rock musician Lee Ranaldo (Sonic Youth) is 63. Actor Thomas Calabro is 60. Rock musician/author Lol Tolhurst (The Cure) is 60. Actor-director Keith Gordon

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is 58. Actress Michele Greene is 57. Country singer Matraca (muh-TRAY'-suh) Berg is 55. Actress Maura Tierney is 54. Actor Warwick Davis is 49. Actress Elisa Donovan is 48. Reggaeton singer Daddy Yankee is 43. Actress Isla (EYE'-luh) Fisher is 43. Musician Grant Barry is 42. Human rights activist Amal Clooney is 41. Singer-songwriter Jessica Harp is 37. Actor Matthew Moy is 35. Rapper Sean Kingston is 29. Actor Brandon Micheal (cq) Hall is 26.

Thought for Today: "Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, and riches take wings. Only one thing endures and that is character." — Horace Greeley, American newspaper editor (born this date in 1811, died in 1872).