

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Area Schedule of Events

Tuesday, February 26, 2019

**5:30 p.m.: Region 1A Girls in Groton
Groton Area vs. Sisseton**

**8:00 pm: Region 1A Boys in Groton
Groton Area vs. Milbank**

Thursday, February 28, 2019

Basketball: Girls Varsity Region 1A: High Seed (Host) #1 vs #4/#5 winner #2/#7 winner vs #3/#6 winner

Friday, March 1, 2019

Basketball: Boys Varsity Region 1A: High Seed (Host) #1 vs #4/#5 Winner #2/#7 Winner vs #3/#6 Winner
State Debate at Sioux Falls O'Gorman High School

Saturday, March 2, 2019

State Debate at Sioux Falls O'Gorman High School

Sunday, March 3, 2019

2:00pm- 6:00pm: Open Gym at GHS Arena (Grades JK-8
2pm - 4pm; Grades 6-12 4pm - 6pm)

- 1- Groton Care & Rehab Help Wanted Ad
- 1- Help Wanted
- 2- GDILIVE.COM: Girls game tonight vs. Sisseton
- 3- GDILIVE.COM: Boys game tonight vs. Milbank
- 4- Boys Region 1A Bracket
- 5- Girls Region 1A Bracket
- 6- From the Lyman County Sheriff's Office
- 7- South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Food Plot Program Offers Free Seed
- 7- Fish Houses Must be Removed by March 1
- 7- SDHCA Calls on Legislature to Stop Long Term Care Closure Crisis
- 8- Glimpse from Greenfield
- 9- Deep snow prompts safety reminder for Natural Gas Customers
- 10- 2019 National Farmers Union Convention:
- 11- Teeth-Whitening Products Could Cause Bigger Problems Than Yellow Teeth
- 12- Today in Weather History
- 13- Weather Pages
- 15- Daily Devotional
- 16- 2019 Groton Events
- 17 - News from the Associated Press

Help Wanted

Looking for a fun, part-time job? Groton Dairy Queen is now hiring. Stop in for an application. (0216.0316)

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

HELP WANTED

Director of Nursing



Current RN licensure in SD
BSN/MSN degree preferred

Sign on bonus available
Full benefits included.

Contact Brynn Pickrel



GROTON
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 North Second Street
605.397.2365

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It's Girls Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM
Region 1A Game



Sisseton VS
Redmen



Groton Area Tigers

Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019
5:30 p.m.

at the Groton Area Arena

Broadcast Sponsored by:

- *Blocker Construction
- *Lori's Pharmacy
- *Professional Management Services
 - *Olson Development
 - *Groton Legion Post #39
 - *Groton Chiropractic Clinic
 - *TN Tax Business Solutions
 - *BK Custom T's & More
 - *Weber Landscaping
- *Coteau View Hunts & Kennels
- *Grain Solutions, LLC with Jessie Zak
- *McGannon Plumbing, Heating and Cooling
 - *DeHoet Trucking
 - *Aberdeen Chrysler Center
 - *Ken's Food Fair of Groton
 - *Bahr Spray Foam
 - * S & S Lumber

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It's Boys' Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM

Region 1A Game



Milbank VS



Groton Area Tigers

Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019

8:00 p.m.

at the Groton Area Arena

Broadcast Sponsored by:

- *Blocker Construction
- *Lori's Pharmacy
- *Professional Management Services
- *Olson Development
- *Groton Legion Post #39
- *Groton Chiropractic Clinic
- *TN Tax Business Solutions
- *BK Custom T's & More
- *Weber Landscaping
- *Coteau View Hunts & Kennels
- *Grain Solutions, LLC with Jessie Zak
- *McGannon Plumbing, Heating and Cooling
- *DeHoet Trucking
- *Aberdeen Chrysler Center
- *Ken's Food Fair of Groton
- *Bahr Spray Foam
- * S & S Lumber

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Region 1A Boys Basketball Tournament

[Print Bracket](#)

#1 Tiospa Zina

Score:

Date: March 1, 2019

Time: 7:00

Site: Agency Village

Score:

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

#4 Groton Area

Score:

Date: Feb 26, 2019

Time: 7:00

Site: Groton

Score:

#5 Milbank

#2 Aberdeen Roncalli

Score:

Date: Feb 26, 2019

Time: 7:00

Site: Aberdeen Roncalli

Score:

#7 Webster Area

#3 Redfield/Doland

Score:

Date: Feb 26, 2019

Time: 7:00

Site: Redfield

Score:

#6 Sisseton

Score:

Date: March 1, 2019

Time: 7:00

Site: High Seed

Score:

| School | Seed Pts. |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Tiospa Zina | 44.000 |
| Aberdeen Roncalli | 43.400 |
| Redfield/Doland | 40.211 |
| Groton Area | 39.700 |
| Milbank | 39.579 |
| Sisseton | 39.444 |
| Webster Area | 37.316 |

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

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Region 1A Girls Basketball Tournament

Print Bracket

#1 Aberdeen Roncalli

Score:

Date: 2/28/19
Time: 7:00 PM
Site: Aberdeen Roncalli

Score:
Milbank

#4 Milbank

Score: 47

Date: 2/25/19
Time: 7:00 PM
Site: Milbank

Score: 30

#5 Tiospa Zina

#2 Redfield/Doland

Score: 59

Date: 2/25/19
Time: 7:00 PM
Site: Redfield

Score: 22

#7 Webster Area

#3 Groton Area

Score:

Date: 2/26/19
Time: 5:30 PM
Site: Groton

Score:

#6 Sisseton

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

| School | Seed Pts. |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Aberdeen Roncalli | 42.895 |
| Redfield/Doland | 41.947 |
| Groton Area | 39.750 |
| Milbank | 39.722 |
| Tiospa Zina | 37.450 |
| Sisseton | 35.842 |
| Webster Area | 35.842 |

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

From the Lyman County Sheriff's Office

We preach and preach to slow down while driving in winter conditions as well as to not crowd the plow and this is the reason we do. Luckily both drivers are OK after this vehicle collided with rear of a South Dakota DOT plow on Interstate 90 east bound at the 247 mile marker. Unfortunately the plow truck is going to be out of service for quite some time for repairs instead of clearing the roads.

Please slow down and don't crowd the plow!!!



South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Food Plot Program Offers Free Seed

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) food plot program was developed nearly 50 years ago to assist landowners in providing winter food sources for wildlife. Landowners can receive free corn or sorghum seed to plant each spring, plus a payment to help offset planting costs. The program took a step forward in 2015, offering landowners a third seed option, called the brood mix.

The brood mix is an annual mixture of cover crop species (i.e. canola, flax, millet, radish, sunflower), designed to flower from spring through fall and produce seed for wildlife to forage on during winter. By flowering, the brood mix provides pollinator habitat that traditional corn and sorghum food plots lack. Pollinating insects (i.e. bees and butterflies) thrive in areas with flowering plants. Insects comprise nearly 100% of a pheasant chick's diet, therefore making habitats with high insect numbers for pheasant chicks to forage a key component of pheasant production.

Landowners enrolled in the program still retain and may regulate all hunting access privileges; however they cannot charge anyone a fee in exchange for hunting access. For more information and to find a habitat advisor in your area, visit <http://habitat.sd.gov/> or contact a GFP biologist at 605.353.7145.

Seed is typically distributed in May, so it is important that interested landowners get signed up as soon as possible.

Fish Houses Must be Removed by March 1

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) reminds ice anglers that all fish houses, shelters, and other structures must be removed from the ice by midnight on Thursday, Feb. 28, 2019. Fish houses, shelters, and other structures may be used after Feb. 28, but must be removed from the ice on a daily basis.

SDHCA Calls on Legislature to Stop Long Term Care Closure Crisis Urgent Steps Needed to Increase Medicaid Reimbursement

The South Dakota Health Care Association (SDHCA) strongly urges legislators to commit adequate resources to fund long term care as they craft the state's budget prior to the end of the legislative session. Years of inadequate Medicaid reimbursement have resulted in the current long term care funding and closure crisis.

"There have been five nursing home closures in the last three years. Without significant increases in reimbursement, more are sure to come," said Mark B. Deak, SDHCA Executive Director. "We must do more to care for our elderly parents, grandparents, and other loved ones. It is critical that we change course."

Medicaid reimbursement for nursing centers is currently set at such a low level that they lose money for each resident on Medicaid. The most recent data demonstrates the Medicaid funding gap to be an average of \$58.30 per day for each Medicaid resident in their center. With 53% of all nursing center residents on Medicaid in South Dakota, that gap amounts to more than \$66 million in unreimbursed costs statewide.

Both Governor Noem's budget request and bills introduced in the legislature have called for substantially more resources to be dedicated to nursing centers. Governor Noem's budget request alone would not solve the funding crisis, but is an encouraging step. Legislators on the Appropriations Committee must still complete their version of the state budget.

"The years of underfunding have taken a big toll," continued Deak. "If lawmakers don't step up now to support nursing centers, caregivers, and the elderly and disabled South Dakotans who need these services, then there may not be another chance for many nursing homes."



Glimpse From Greenfield

Brock Greenfield
State Senator
District 2

As last week wrapped, we had only one day left before bills had to be either passed or killed by their houses of origin. Therefore, committees were generally swamped, and we were very deliberate about getting through as much of our Senate (floor) calendar as possible each day.

I brought to the floor SB 64, which would require aircraft de-

tection lighting systems (ADLS) on all new wind energy systems going forward. In reality, the SD Public Utilities Commission has required this technology on the three most recently permitted projects, so this appears to be the new standard. Passage of this bill will ensure that state law is consistent with PUC requirements. In short, ADLS technology consists of flashing red lights that are off unless radar associated with the system detects aircraft in the area, at which time the lights come on for pilots to see. It is very important to note that if there is a malfunction within the system, the lights default to on. Therefore, until the glitch has been resolved, the towers are able to be detected, rather than being essentially invisible to pilots at night. Defaulting to "off" would be a disaster waiting to happen. The bill passed the Senate 32-1.

Also, I sponsored SB 120, which sought to decrease the allowable time for an employer to indenture an employee. South Dakota has the most restrictive "covenant not to compete" law and longest allowable time frame for such in the country. State law allows for employers in certain realms to impose upon their employees a two-year time frame in which the person cannot work for a competing interest in the region. It is interesting to note that while the bill was opposed by lawyers serving as lobbyists for certain employers, the legal profession is not subject to covenants not to compete because lawyers view them as unethical. Irony abounds in the hallways in Pierre! In reality, covenants not to compete depress wages and limit a person's opportunities to maintain employment in a field he or she has likely spent tens of thousands of educational dollars on. Moreover, as I read from a letter on the floor, our excessively restrictive non-competes, when pitted against North Dakota's PROHIBITION on non-competes, makes regional employers completely overlook South Dakota job candidates. Yes, one person who works for a division of Johnson & Johnson was so candid as to share that information. Thus, our law not only depresses wages, but it also precludes people from even being considered for employment opportunities. Even though every other state in the nation has figured out a way to operate with shorter and/or less restrictive non-compete laws, and we had cut out the insurance industry from this bill before it emerged from committee, the Chicken Little (or Henny Penny) "The sky is falling!" alarmists were able to win the day and kill the bill by a vote of 16-18. I was actually encouraged at this vote tally, though. I was concerned that with so many people working so hard to kill the bill, we might be lucky to get double-digits. As it was, even a few people who voted against the bill have suggested to me that "we need to do something." We will look forward to fighting the fight another day...say next year!

The Senate failed to heed multiple calls from County Sheriffs, State's Attorneys, Chiefs of Police, County Commissioners, and the Attorney General asking for us to remedy some of the many additional costs and mistakes imposed upon local jurisdictions when we passed SB 70 (the Criminal Code Revision) in 2013 and SB 73 (the Juvenile Justice Reform) in 2015. SB 19 sought to repeal "presumptive probation" and SB 67 attempted to allow the courts more discretion in determining how to deal with juveniles who are repeat offenders for whom probation is not working. Presumptive probation has resulted in the counties bearing thousands and thousands of dollars worth of costs that previously would have been borne by the state, but more practically, it has led to people who would have otherwise been incarcerated for their crimes

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being granted probation. All too often, these people reoffend, and sometimes, even then, they are not remanded into state custody but remain the county's concern and the county's fiscal liability. With respect to the juvenile law, when the law changed in 2015, the courts were prohibited from considering sending nonviolent juveniles to DOC where they would qualify for one of nineteen different treatment options at a cost to the state. Instead, they remain under the UJS, which only allows three treatment options, all at the county's expense. Unfortunately, the Senate doubled-down on the failure and stupidity of SB's 70 and 73 as they killed SB 19, 12-18, with 5 people missing, and SB 67, 16-16, and then 15-19 on reconsideration. Thus, we continue to press down costs on the counties and fail to adequately address criminal behavior. Incidentally, I mentioned the people who were in favor of these bills at the beginning of this paragraph. Those who opposed were the SD Trial Lawyers, SD Criminal Defense Attorneys, and the ACLU, to name a few. Also, Mark Levin and the failing "Right on Crime" organization have been behind this effort since its outset.

A few other bills of interest at a glance include the following: SB 153—will allow the GF&P to create a small number of special big game hunting licenses whose winners will be chosen through a drawing. This is intended to raise a large amount of money for habitat programs. The Senate killed HB 1088, which sought to extend the texting ban in automobiles to further electronic usages and to make it a primary offense. It narrowly failed, 17-17, and failed to be reconsidered. We passed HB's 1257 and 1263, which allow the Department of Military to construct two storage buildings, one at Camp Rapid and one at Joe Foss Field, and to construct a Readiness Center at the RC Airport. The Readiness Center will help the SD National Guard to continue to lead the way as the best Air and Army National Guards in the country.

Finally, SB 117 authorizes the DMV to offer driver's license testing in Spanish. This is a workforce development issue and SD remains one of only six states to not utilize new technologies to make this work. I have heard from English-speaking friends who travel abroad and drive with the US/SD-issued driver's license, despite not knowing the local language. Here, we won't even make available the test in another language. It leads to people driving without licenses and/or without insurance. Moreover, it inhibits people's abilities to get jobs even when they are here legally. I am all for assimilation, but there has to be some common sense in our licensing processes...which may ultimately lead to assimilation. And, it really is egocentric to think we should be able to drive elsewhere without being told we need to assimilate, but we won't even make mere accommodations to allow people to go through the testing process as they attempt to become contributing members of our state and society. The question is, "Which comes first, assimilation or an enhanced opportunity to assimilate?"

With that, I will sign off. God bless!

Deep snow prompts safety reminder for Natural Gas Customers

Sioux Falls, SD – Feb. 25, 2019 South Dakota is knee-deep or more in snow and NorthWestern Energy reminds customers to make sure natural gas meters, as well as furnace and appliance vents, are free from snow and ice. Blocked vents could result in a loss of heat or buildup of deadly carbon monoxide in homes and other structures. Some furnace vents may be located on roofs.

We also encourage customers to clear snow away gently from natural gas meters. This will help prevent a natural gas regulator from freezing over, which would interrupt the normal flow of natural gas into a home or building.

If you have any questions, call the NorthWestern Energy South Dakota and Montana Customer Service line, 800-245-6977.

At 5 a.m. Monday, Feb. 25, the National Weather Service reported the following snow on the ground totals: Aberdeen, 17 inches; Huron, 9 inches; Brookings, 12 inches; Mitchell, 13 inches;

2019 National Farmers Union Convention: Grassroots Policy in Action

HURON, S.D. - Grassroots policy development is the reason several South Dakota Farmers Union members will attend the National Farmers Union (NFU) Convention held in Bellevue, Wash., March 3-5, 2019.

"Bringing our policy to the national convention gets results, because the policies passed during this convention are what the national lobbyists use as guidance when they lobby congressional leaders," explains Union Center rancher Steve Harwood.

Harwood is one of six delegates elected during SDFU state convention, to represent SDFU policy during NFU Convention. The other delegates include: Becky Martinmaas, Orient; Cheryl Schaefer, Polo; Tammy Basel, Union Center; David Reis, Reliance; and Lorrie Hanson, Britton.

Similar to state policy, but on a much larger scale, these delegates will work to make SDFU policy part of the NFU policy book.

"Year-after-year, our delegates do a good job standing up for the common core of South Dakota agriculture and advocating on behalf of SDFU policy," explains Doug Sombke, SDFU President. "Many of us take for granted that the way we farm or ranch here in South Dakota is the same across the nation. And, what is important to us is important to all farmers. This is not always the case. And, this is the reason we make sure our state has solid representation."

Learning about agriculture in other regions of the U.S. makes national convention interesting, says delegate and Reliance rancher David Reis.

"At national convention you see how diversified agriculture is across the entire nation," explains Reis, who has served as a delegate before. "The Farmers Union lobbyists have quite a job, representing all this diversity."

Truth in labeling and E30 are among the hot-button issues SDFU members will advocate for during policy.

"Fake meat or petri-dish protein was a big issue during our state convention, and the way it sounds, it will be among the main issues discussed at national convention," Harwood says. "It is an issue that could have devastating impacts on our livestock prices. And, if we don't get truth in labeling, it could result in misleading our consumers."

Sombke adds that as in years past, SDFU delegates will advocate for Congress to support higher ethanol blends, like E30.

"We'll be discussing all the issues that impact our members and they voted on during state convention," he says.

In addition to policy development, during the 117th Anniversary Convention, SDFU members will have an opportunity to hear from industry professionals and notable speakers.

As the national website boasts, "The convention provides NFU members and attendees the opportunity to learn, collaborate and grow through thoughtful discussions, breakout sessions and farm tours."

Teeth-Whitening Products Could Cause Bigger Problems Than Yellow Teeth

Are you thinking that your teeth don't look nearly as white as the movie stars you see? If so, perhaps you're thinking about purchasing one of those over-the-counter teeth-whitening products.

But buyer beware: Cosmetic teeth-whitening is a \$3.2 billion-dollar industry that is not regulated by the Food And Drug Administration because it is considered a cosmetic procedure.

The sheer number and types of whitening products can be overwhelming. They include whitening tooth-pastes, gels, whitening strips, whitening pens, whitening mouth rinses and even paint on bleach.

"It is best to consult your dentist before purchasing over-the-counter whitening products," says Dr. Anita Myers, a dentist and author of the book *Stunning Smiles: A Dental Guide To Improve the Way You Eat, Smile & Live* (<https://dranitamyers.com>). "Some of these products can lead to thinning enamel, gum irritation and recession, and make teeth overly sensitive."

Some whitening strips contain chlorine dioxide, which can destroy the enamel on teeth. Chlorine dioxide is the same acid that is used to disinfect swimming pools. It whitens teeth by eating away at the surface of the enamel.

"All stains are the same," Dr. Myers says. "Some are mostly on the surface of the teeth and come from consuming lots of dark-colored liquids like coffee, tea and red wine, as well as foods with vibrant yellow spices like turmeric. The tar and nicotine from cigarettes are also huge culprits.

"Often, surface stains can be diminished by routine brushing, flossing and biannual professional cleaning in the dentist's office. Unfortunately, there are deeper stains you just can't avoid by being careful about what you eat and drink. And some issues may remain after whitening. Porcelain or composite dental crowns and bondings will not lighten up. So if you change the color of the teeth around them, you might wind up with an uneven smile or need to replace old fillings and crowns."

If you are going to use an over-the-counter whitening product, Dr. Myers has these recommendations:

Don't leave the strips or gels on longer than recommended. This could lead to sore gums and other dental problems.

Avoid acidic beverages. After you whiten, avoid soda, sports drinks, or other acidic beverages for a couple of hours to protect your teeth.

Pregnant women or nursing mothers should delay applications. Although no studies have shown this to be a problem, it is best to delay using those products, Dr. Myers says.

Monitor Gums. If you use gel-filled trays, which you wear over your teeth like a mouth guard, it may bother your gums if they don't fit well. "Stop using the product if you start having this problem," Dr. Myers says. "If you like the gel-filled trays, your dentist may be able to make one that better fits your teeth."

"If you are in doubt about what to choose as a teeth-whitening product over the counter, look for the The American Dental Association seal of acceptance," says Dr. Myers. "At least you will know that the product has been evaluated by an independent panel of qualified dentists."

About Dr. Anita Myers

Dr. Anita Myers, a dentist and author of the book *Stunning Smiles: A Dental Guide To Improve the Way You Eat, Smile & Live* (www.dranitamyers.com), is a graduate of the University of Texas Dental Branch and holds a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University. She is an alumna and visiting faculty member of the Pankey Institute for Advanced Dental Education. Dr. Myers is a member of the Academy of General Dentistry and the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. Voted one of "America's Top Dentists" from 2010-2019 by the Consumer's Research Council, she is also a member of several local, state and national dental associations.

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Today in Weather History

February 26, 1995: Heavy snow fell on the 26th and the 27th in western and central South Dakota near the northern border of the state. McLaughlin received 14 inches, Eureka 12 inches, and McIntosh 11 inches. Snowfall amounts dropped off to two to four inches about 20 miles south of the northern border.

February 26, 1998: A strong area of low pressure moved across central and northeast South Dakota from the morning of the 26th to the morning of the 27th. As the low moved northeast, cold north winds of 25 to 35 mph gusting to 45 mph caused widespread rain to change over to snow. Many roads became icy and poor visibilities in snow and blowing snow, and low wind chills developed. Four to 8 inches of snow fell across the counties bordering the Missouri river and in far western McPherson and far western Edmunds counties. Many area schools were dismissed early or canceled. Some residents, especially West River, lost power during the storm. Many McIntosh residents were without power for over 24 hours. Numerous activities and sports events were canceled. There were also some car accidents which did not result in injury. A semi rolled onto its side northwest of Gettysburg on the 26th. Ranchers also experienced some calving problems as a result of the winter storm. Some snowfall amounts included, 4 inches at Selby, Herreid, and Mobridge, 5 inches at Isabel, 6 inches at Gettysburg, 7 inches about 11 miles east of Hosmer, and 8 inches at McIntosh. Some large drifts also developed, especially West River, as a result of the heavy snow and strong winds.

February 26, 2009: A vigorous, but relatively fast-moving winter storm system tracked across South Dakota Wednesday night and Thursday. Even with the fairly quick movement of the system, storm total snowfall amounts were quite impressive. In fact, during the peak of the snowstorm, snowfall rates of 1" to 2" per hour were observed!

1910: Parts of Washington State were in the midst of a storm which produced 129 inches of snow at Laconia between the 24th and the 26th, a single storm record for the state. A series of storms, which began on the 23rd, led to a deadly avalanche on the first of March. By late on the 28th, the snow had changed to rain, setting the stage for disaster.

1972: The Buffalo Creek disaster occurred in the Buffalo Creek Hollow of Logan County in West Virginia. A coal slag dam on the Middle Fork of Buffalo Creek burst, sending a fifty-foot wall of water down a narrow valley killing 125 persons and causing 51 million dollars damage. Three days of rain atop a six inch snow cover caused the dam to break.

2011: The tallest tree in Wales falls after a wind storm. Located on the Lake Vyrnwy Estate, this 124-year-old Douglas fir stood at 63.7 m (208.9 feet). The tree reportedly was leaning over and had two substantial cracks in the main trunk. This tree would be carved into a giant hand.



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Today



Snow Likely
and Patchy
Fog

High: 5 °F

Tonight



Chance Snow
and Patchy
Fog then
Mostly Cloudy

Low: -5 °F

Wednesday



Cold

High: 9 °F

Wednesday
Night



Increasing
Clouds

Low: -3 °F

Thursday



Mostly Sunny

High: 16 °F

Light Snow Today and Tonight



Published on: 02/26/2019 at 4:56AM

Light snow will continue today with highest accumulations along and north of Hwy 12. Another band will develop overnight further south toward Hwy 212. Accumulations of less than an inch are expected with the band tonight.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 8 °F at 3:12 AM

Low Outside Temp: -10 °F at 10:09 PM

High Gust: 36 mph at 9:10 AM

Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 65° in 1896

Record Low: -20° in 1962, 1897

Average High: 32°F

Average Low: 12°F

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.47

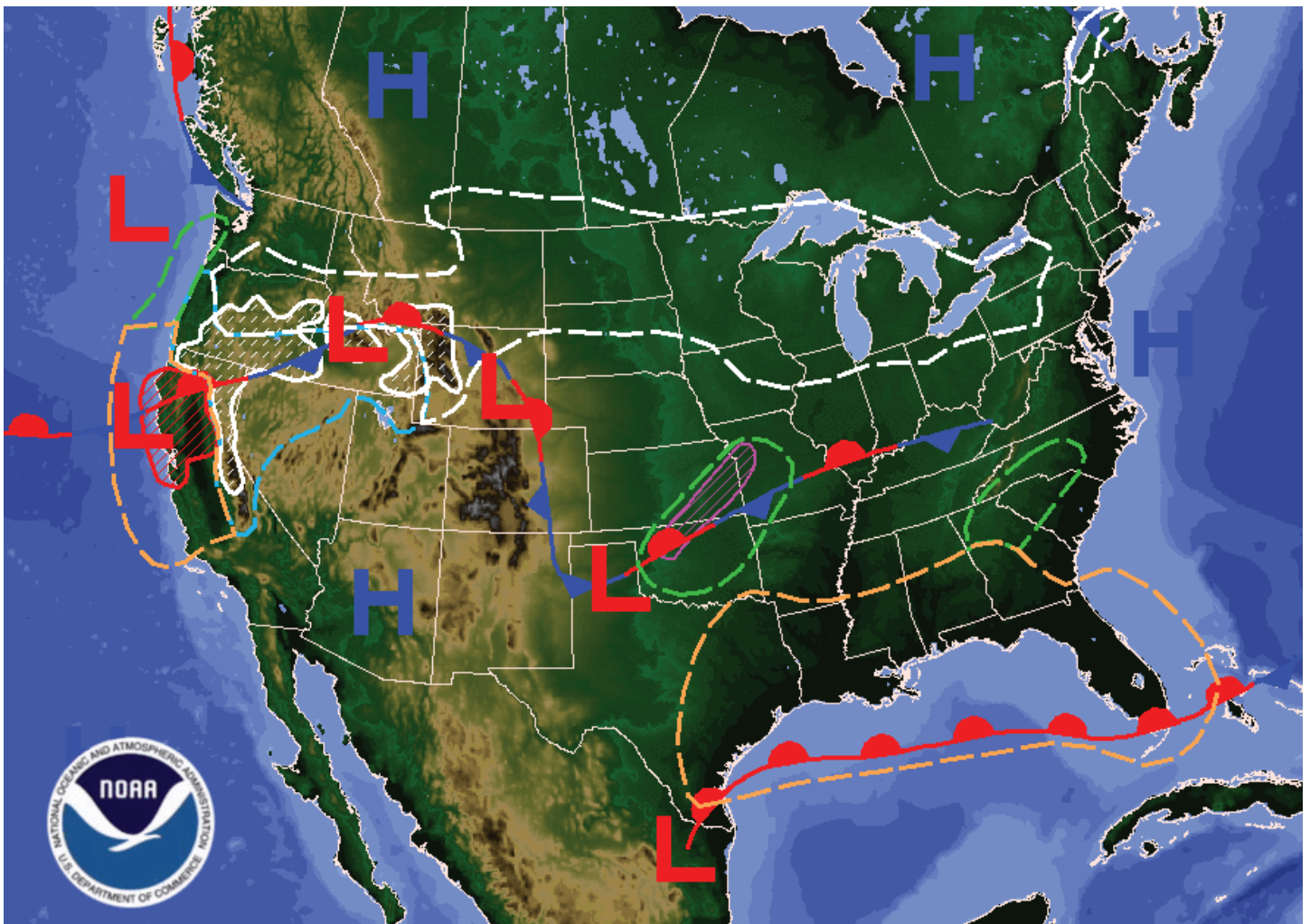
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.94

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 6:16 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:16 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Tue, Feb 26, 2019, issued 4:39 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

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

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LEANING AND LIVING

It was a dark, cold, windy morning with patches of snow and invisible stretches of ice on our driveway. The patches were called black ice because they could not be seen.

Suddenly, even though I was walking very slowly and cautiously, my right heel landed on a patch of that ice, and I slipped and fell. The pain was excruciating, and I began to call for my wife. When she saw my situation, she immediately called EMS who transported me to the hospital.

After x-rays and an examination, the doctor said I had ruptured my patella tendon and needed to have surgery. Unfortunately, it took more than six months before I could walk on my own. I had to have some thing to lean on or I would fall. This was extremely difficult for me because I did not want to depend on anyone for anything. And every time I tried to walk without a walker or a cane, I would fall. Once I sat on the floor, with my back against a wall for over an hour, waiting until someone came to rescue me. A wiser person would have followed the guidance they were given until they regained their strength and were able to walk again. But, I refused to humble myself and submit to the instructions of the physical therapist. How very foolish of me.

Yet, is that not how many approach life? We know what God wants us to do, but we do not do it because of our pride. When that happens, we pay the consequences.

Many of us have refused to lean on and trust in the Lord when we needed His guidance to make the right decision or His power to resist temptation. But, because of our pride, we refuse to lean on Him and fail miserably. We think our strength is sufficient. How foolish!

Prayer: Father, it must disappoint You greatly when we have Your wisdom yet refuse to accept it and follow it. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 3:5b Lean not on your own understanding.

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

News from the Associated Press

Rapid City principal arrested for aggravated assault

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City elementary school principal has been arrested for aggravated assault.

Police say 49-year-old Daniel Janklow displayed a firearm in a threatening manner on Feb. 16. The incident did not involve students or staff at Meadowbrook Elementary School.

Rapid City Area Schools issued a statement which says Janklow has been on leave since Jan. 28 for a reason unrelated to the police investigation. The district's human resources staff members are conducting an independent investigation.

Upper Midwest suffers dangerous cold after weekend blizzard

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Dangerous cold once again gripped the Upper Midwest on Monday, following a deadly blizzard that caused multiple pileups, paralyzed highways, and stranded motorists and anglers.

A wind chill advisory remains in effect for eastern North Dakota and most of the northern half of Minnesota until early Tuesday. The combination of low temperatures and strong wind made it feel like the minus 40s in northern North Dakota and northern Minnesota early Monday.

Cold is expected to linger across the Upper Midwest for the first couple weeks of March, with subzero lows the first week of March, said Twin Cities National Weather Service meteorologist Caleb Grunzke.

"It's just going to be cold," Grunzke said. "It's a very cold air mass."

Dozens of schools in the four states closed Monday or began classes late due to the snow and bitter cold.

Several highways in southern Minnesota remained closed or blocked early Monday after the storm that dumped about a foot (30 centimeters) of snow in some places. Transportation officials reopened Interstate 29 in northeastern North Dakota late Sunday but warned travelers about poor driving conditions.

The Minnesota National Guard and sheriff's deputies rescued nearly 100 stranded motorists over the weekend. The State Patrol said whiteout conditions Sunday contributed to 165 crashes with 20 injuries, according to the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

In Wisconsin, a chain-reaction pileup Sunday involving 131 vehicles on Interstate 41 in the Neenah area killed one motorist and injured 71 others. Winnebago County Sheriff John Matz on Monday identified 30-year-old Andrew Schefelker of Oshkosh as the person killed in the pileup. Schefelker was a middle school/high school science teacher in the Iola-Scandinavia School District, Matz said.

"I've been in the law enforcement business, this is my 27th year," Winnebago County Sheriff's Department Chief Deputy Todd Christopherson told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. "On scene, that was the worst conditions I've ever seen."

No travel was advised in parts of Wisconsin early Monday because of poor road conditions.

A jail in St. James, Minnesota, temporarily housed the St. Cloud State men's hockey team Sunday after its bus got stuck between two snowdrifts on a rural road.

"We were looking for ways around roads that were impassable," assistant coach Mike Gibbons told the Star Tribune. "We thought we could travel on a 1-mile (1.6-kilometer) stretch of road and it backfired. There was probably an 8-foot (2.4-meter) drift in front of us."

In northern Minnesota, rescuers on snowmobiles and snowshoes battled 50-mph (80 kph) winds to rescue four anglers stranded on a snow-swept lake.

The anglers' snowmobiles became stuck more than 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) out on Greenwood Lake Sunday afternoon, Cook County Sheriff Pat Eliassen told the Minneapolis Star Tribune. They were able to call police in Ontario, Canada, who alerted Cook County authorities.

Search and rescue personnel from several agencies found the foursome about three hours later. One angler was showing signs of hypothermia, frostbite and dehydration and was taken to a hospital on roads that had to be cleared of drifting snow by a private plow operator.

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The roof of a 150-year-old historic covered bridge in Zumbrota in southeastern Minnesota collapsed Sunday due to the heavy snow and high winds, Minnesota Public Radio reported. It was the only remaining covered timber truss bridge in Minnesota, according to the state Transportation Department. Mayor Bradley Drenckhahn said the bridge, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is insured and officials have the blueprint to rebuild it.

In northeastern South Dakota, a grain train derailed in Milbank early Monday when it struck a pickup truck hauling a trailer that became stuck in snow at a crossing, City Administrator John Forman said. Twenty-three rail cars and two engines went off the track, spilling an unknown amount of grain. No one was hurt.

Monday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Rapid City Stevens 92, Spearfish 39
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 57, Harrisburg 52
Sturgis Brown 47, Rapid City Central 44
Class B Region 1
First Round
Florence/Henry 63, Great Plains Lutheran 36
Langford 59, Wilmot 39
Waubay/Summit 45, Waverly-South Shore 44
Class B Region 2
First Round
Ipswich 70, Eureka/Bowdle 28
Sunshine Bible Academy 56, Edmunds Central 40
Class B Region 3
First Round
Deubrook 67, Estelline/Hendricks 44
Lake Preston 60, Iroquois 27
Wessington Springs 42, Hitchcock-Tulare 25
Class B Region 4
First Round
Howard 73, Ethan 61
Class B Region 5
First Round
Freeman Academy/Marion 64, Alcester-Hudson 60
Menno 53, Centerville 25
Class B Region 6
First Round
Burke 72, Scotland 53
Gregory 78, Avon 38
Class B Region 7
First Round
Crazy Horse 92, Edgemont 74
Oelrichs 76, Philip 51
Wall 76, New Underwood 44

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Rapid City Stevens 90, Spearfish 32
Sturgis Brown 43, Rapid City Central 39
Class A Region 1

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First Round

Milbank 47, Tiospa Zina Tribal 30

Redfield/Doland 59, Webster 22

Class A Region 2

First Round

Madison 62, Flandreau Indian 41

Sioux Valley 48, Deuel 43

Class A Region 3

First Round

Dell Rapids 66, Tri-Valley 41

Garretson 62, Baltic 31

Class A Region 4

First Round

Beresford 56, Canton 27

Tea Area 45, Elk Point-Jefferson 32

Vermillion 46, Dakota Valley 28

Class A Region 5

First Round

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 73, Platte-Geddes 38

Parker 55, Wagner 40

Parkston 33, Bon Homme 31, OT

Class A Region 6

First Round

Chamberlain 66, Mobridge-Pollock 43

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 70, McLaughlin 52

Crow Creek 65, Stanley County 26

Class A Region 7

First Round

Pine Ridge 67, St. Francis Indian 51

Red Cloud 73, Little Wound 47

Todd County 68, Bennett County 15

Class A Region 8

First Round

Hill City 44, Custer 23

Rapid City Christian 47, Lead-Deadwood 45

St. Thomas More 54, Hot Springs 18

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

Bill targeting transgender athlete policy fails in House

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota bill seeking to scrap a policy allowing transgender students to play on the athletic team that matches their gender identity failed Monday in the state House.

The 34-34 vote fell short of the majority needed to send the bill to the Senate. It's the fourth bill critics have labeled anti-transgender that state lawmakers have rejected this session. A Senate panel last month rejected a similar bill targeting the South Dakota High School Activities Association policy.

House Majority Leader Lee Qualm, the bill's sponsor, said the measure was about fair competition.

"South Dakota is breaking no new ground by doing this," Qualm said, noting it was patterned after Texas. "This is all about fair competition. Boys competing against boys, girls competing against girls, based on

the birth certificate.”

Democratic Rep. Kelly Sullivan urged her colleagues to oppose the bill, saying lawmakers must be focused on work to positively affect South Dakota. Libby Skarin, policy director for the ACLU of South Dakota, said in a statement that all young people should have the chance to play high school sports with their personal dignity respected, and transgender students are no different.

“No one is harmed by allowing transgender people to compete consistent with who they are,” Skarin said.

The bill would have required a student’s sex to be determined by their birth certificate or a South Dakota High School Activities Association physical exam form.

Association Executive Director Dan Swartos has said a “very small number” of transgender students participate with the exemption.

The association’s 2015 policy requires a student and parent to notify their school that the student wants to play on the sports team that matches their gender identity.

The school submits an application and documentation to the association for review by an independent hearing officer who must be a licensed attorney and a member of the State Bar of South Dakota. The student or the student’s school can appeal the hearing officer’s decision to the association’s board of directors for a final decision. The rules say that gender identity can’t be used to gain an unfair competitive advantage.

Similar bills to end the policy failed in the 2015 and 2016 sessions.

This year, lawmakers have also rejected measures to limit teaching about gender dysphoria in public schools and allow a parent to refuse consent to health care treatments for a minor child if the parent thought it would induce, confirm or promote the child’s belief that their gender identity is different than their sex at birth.

Cathryn Oakley, state legislative director and senior counsel at the Human Rights Campaign, said earlier in February that South Dakota introduced four “anti-trans” bills this year, more than any other state.

Yankton casino measure falls short in South Dakota Senate

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — State senators have scrapped a measure that would have put a proposed casino complex in a southeastern South Dakota city to a statewide vote.

The chamber voted 22-13 Monday against the measure. The proposed constitutional amendment would have asked voters to give a nonprofit group one gambling license in Yankton.

Supporters said the Port Yankton project is an effort to drive tourism for the city and state.

Native American tribes in Nebraska and South Dakota objected to the plan. Yankton Sioux Tribe Vice Chairman Jason Cooke recently told a committee the measure would be very detrimental to his tribe.

Supporters could still collect signatures to put the casino and entertainment project on the 2020 ballot.

‘Trigger’ abortion bill clears Oklahoma Senate panel

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Oklahoma would automatically ban abortions if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns its landmark 1973 ruling that legalized abortion nationwide under a bill that has cleared a Senate panel.

While abortion opponents chanted, prayed and sang hymns outside the committee room, the Senate Health and Human Services Committee voted 11-4 on Monday for the so-called “trigger” abortion ban. Similar bills already have passed in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Many of the abortion opponents were upset that a separate bill by Republican Sen. Joseph Silk to make abortion a felony crime was not granted a hearing.

Senate President Pro Tem Greg Treat described Silk’s bill as a dangerous precedent by a state to ignore a U.S. Supreme Court ruling.

Minnesota company aims to explore gold in Black Hills Forest

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Minnesota company is preparing to conduct exploratory drilling for gold near Silver City in the Black Hills National Forest in South Dakota and two other companies have withdrawn bids to drill on forest land.

Forest Service officials are working on an agreement with Big Rock Exploration that would require the company to fund an environmental analysis, the Rapid City Journal reported.

Mark Van Every, Forest Service supervisor, said Big Rock Exploration wants to drill around 40 holes on national forest land. The proposed drill sites are near the west end of the Pactola Reservoir, in an area accessible by roads.

Federal mining statutes prohibit the Forest Service from rejecting an exploratory drilling project. The Forest Service, which oversees the surface rights, is only permitted to evaluate the project and place conditions on it. The agency will collaborate with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, which controls the mineral rights below the surface.

Van Every said Mineral Mountain Resources, a Canadian company that had been conducting exploratory drilling for gold on privately owned land in the Rochford area, suspended its plan to conduct additional drilling on national forest land in order to focus on fundraising efforts. Van Every also said that another company recently expressed interest in exploratory drilling in the Wyoming portion of the Black Hills National Forest, but the company decided against pursuing that project.

Gold exploration and mining have taken place in the Black Hills since the 1870s. The only active, large-scale gold mine in the Black Hills is the Wharf Mine, which is near Terry Peak.

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

Representatives vote down SD science teaching legislation

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota House has voted down a bill that would have allowed teachers to decide how much skepticism to inject into lessons on scientific topics such as climate change.

Representatives voted 46-21 Monday to reject the measure. Republican Sen. Phil Jensen, the bill's Senate sponsor, said previously that the measure would provide protections from termination to teachers who want to help students learn to think critically.

The bill said teachers couldn't be stopped from helping students understand, analyze or critique "in an objective scientific manner the strengths and weaknesses" of scientific information presented in classes aligned with South Dakota's educational content standards.

Republican Rep. Timothy Johns, an opponent, says the bill would allow teachers to present facts or theories that aren't generally accepted within the scientific community.

Mirror legislation failed in 2017.

House rejects lowering mandatory school attendance age to 16

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota bill that would have let 16-year-old students drop out of school has been rejected.

Representatives voted 40-27 Monday against the bill. It would have reduced the mandatory school attendance age from 18 to 16.

The Argus Leader reports supporters have said current law puts too much of a burden on schools to manage kids who don't want to attend class. Republican Rep. Lana Greenfield, the sponsor, says the state is doing an injustice to its schools, parents, taxpayers and students.

Republican Rep. Fred Deutsch, an opponent, says he doesn't want to give up on the state's children, and that's what the bill did. The state Department of Education opposed the bill in committee.

The Legislature in 2009 raised the compulsory attendance age to 18.

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SD House votes down adding clergy to mandatory reporter law

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota representatives have rejected a measure that would have added clergy to the list of mandatory reporters of child abuse.

The chamber voted 34-33 Monday against the bill. Democratic Rep. Erin Healy, the bill's sponsor, says the bill would help offer protection for vulnerable children and free clergy to do the right thing.

The bill included an exemption for clergy who suspect abuse based on a communication made to them under religious privilege rules. The current list encompasses professions including doctors, teachers and social workers.

Republican Rep. Randy Gross, an opponent, says there are already state and federal laws that make it a crime not to report criminal activity.

A push to reconsider the bill failed.

Sturgis seeks ambulance service fee for rally campgrounds

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — The city of Sturgis wants campgrounds outside city limits to pay as much as \$5,100 to secure ambulance service during this year's Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

City manager Daniel Ainslie said last week that ambulance calls to campgrounds during the annual festival lead to "a significant cost" but no reimbursement. Ainslie said repayment for ambulance services by Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance coverage is limited.

The proposed advance payments range from \$300 to \$5,100 per campground and are based on the number of ambulances called to campgrounds during the 2018 rally, the Rapid City Journal reported. Those with one to four calls last year would pay \$650, those with five to nine calls would pay \$1,850, and a fee of \$5,100 would be charged to those that had 10 or more calls.

Campgrounds that don't pay the fees by May 15 won't receive city ambulance service.

Rod Woodruff, Buffalo Chip Campground owner, said his campground has a full staff of EMT-trained security that confirms the validity of an ambulance call and then transports a patient to a pickup point.

"We're doing that just to help the ambulance service to keep their costs down and eliminate the false calls," he said.

Other campground owners strongly oppose the upfront fees, saying their campsites bring in thousands of rally-goers who spend millions of dollars in Sturgis every August.

"They basically have told us if we don't submit and pay, they'll deny us ambulance services and we're not OK with that," said R.J. Ludwick, of No Name City Campground, located between Sturgis and Tilford along Interstate 90.

The Sturgis City Council is set to discuss the proposal on April 15.

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

Girl's Basketball Polls

By The Associated Press

The South Dakota Prep Media Basketball Poll for the week of Feb. 25 is listed below, ranking the top-five teams, the team's record, points received and ranking in the previous poll. First-place votes are listed in parentheses.

Class AA

| | | | |
|-------------------|------|-----|---|
| 1. O'Gorman (19) | 17-3 | 103 | 1 |
| 2. Harrisburg (2) | 16-4 | 74 | 4 |
| 3. Brandon Valley | 16-4 | 65 | 2 |
| 4. Lincoln | 13-6 | 39 | 3 |
| 5. Brookings | 14-4 | 31 | 5 |

Receiving votes: Stevens 2, Washington 1.

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Class A

| | | | |
|----------------------|------|-----|-----|
| 1. West Central (16) | 20-0 | 100 | 1 |
| 2. Winner (5) | 19-0 | 89 | 2 |
| 3. Lennox 17-3 | 59 | 3 | |
| 4. SF Christian | 15-5 | 28 | 4 |
| 5. St. Thomas More | 15-5 | 21 | T-5 |

Receiving votes: Beresford 14, Todd County 3, Vermillion 1.

Boy's Basketball Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Prep Media Basketball Poll for the week of Feb. 25 is listed below, ranking the top-five teams, the team's record, points received and ranking in the previous poll. First-place votes are listed in parentheses.

Class AA

| | | | |
|-------------------|------|----|---|
| 1. O'Gorman (15) | 14-5 | 99 | 2 |
| 2. Lincoln (6) | 16-2 | 86 | 1 |
| 3. Yankton 16-4 | 67 | 3 | |
| 4. Brandon Valley | 15-5 | 41 | 4 |
| 5. Roosevelt | 12-7 | 10 | 5 |

Receiving votes: Stevens 6, Watertown 6.

Class A

| | | | |
|--------------------|------|-----|----|
| 1. Tea Area (21) | 19-1 | 105 | 1 |
| 2. SF Christian | 17-2 | 84 | 2 |
| 3. St. Thomas More | 16-4 | 52 | 3 |
| 4. Pine Ridge | 16-3 | 48 | 4 |
| 5. Tiospa Zina | 17-3 | 14 | RV |

Receiving votes: Lennox 6, Sioux Valley 3, Madison 1, Parker 1, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 1.

Class B

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------|----|---|
| 1. White River (14) | 17-2 | 95 | 1 |
| 2. Clark2Willow Lake (7) | 17-2 | 90 | 2 |
| 3. Bridgewater-Emery | 16-4 | 58 | 3 |
| 4. Viborg-Hurley | 18-2 | 38 | 4 |
| 5. De Smet 18-2 | 31 | 5 | |

Receiving votes: Jones County 3.

Sioux Falls man accused in fatal shooting pleads guilty

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls man accused of accidentally shooting and killing his friend has pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter, avoiding a second trial in the case.

Twenty-four-year-old David Randle Jr. in September 2016 was convicted of first-degree manslaughter in the 2015 death of 19-year-old Mikael Ashame. Prosecutors said Randle accidentally shot Ashame while under the influence of drugs. Randle was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

The South Dakota Supreme Court last fall ordered a new trial for Randle, citing improper jury instructions.

The Argus Leader reports Randle was to stand trial again this week, but he pleaded guilty Monday before that could happen.

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Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Rapid City Journal, Feb. 17

Remove autism therapy insurance exemption

Autism sucks every bit of energy from parents. They shouldn't have to also worry about the bewildering intricacies of small-group, large-group and individual insurance markets. State lawmakers should act to ensure fairness, protect children and invest society's money wisely.

In some children, autism undercuts fledgling neural bridges reaching toward the outer world. Social cues and language skills get blocked, turning young minds increasingly toward frustrating mysteries.

Early intensive therapy creates new neural bridges in malleable young brains. Intensive, one-on-one, 40-hour-per-week training can pull some autistic toddlers — as many as one in seven — fully back from the abyss. Even those who don't fully recover can gain connections that permit a better and more productive life. Later therapy helps, too, but brain patterns begin to harden around age 5. Afterward, it's harder to teach and harder to unlearn.

This biology sets up an easy financial choice for society. We can help pay for costly therapy in the first few years — when it does the most good — or pay potentially higher costs over a lifetime. Autism is an expensive road for everyone, including taxpayers.

Insurance companies face a more complicated choice. They seldom benefit from savings passed along to future generations. Insurers live amid shifting allegiances caused by competitive changes in annual premiums and coverage. So when one insurer refuses to pay for costly therapy, others typically follow suit.

In 2014, state government mandated insurance payments for proven intensive autism therapies — at least among large-group policies. If all insurers live by the same rules, none can gain a price advantage by denying coverage. However, Obamacare initially required states to contribute funds for intensive therapy for policies purchased in the individual and small-group markets. To limit state costs, South Dakota exempted those policies. That Obamacare requirement has since disappeared.

This month, Sanford Health and Avera Health — two of the state's largest insurers — took advantage of the state's exemption, cutting therapy funds for some autistic children.

"It's a price sensitivity issue in the South Dakota health insurance market," Kirk Zimmer, president of Sanford Health Plan, explained to the Argus Leader. "Keeping a competitive product."

Avera explained by email its cut would affect only holders of individual plans and not small-group plans. Sanford said it had mistakenly paid claims against individual plans and was halting the practice. Avera said it had initially hoped other insurers would follow its lead in covering exempted therapy claims, but they never did.

"We hope the discontinuation of coverage stimulates the conversation among insurance providers and regulators on how to best meet the need that exists," Avera said in its statement. It's no stretch to interpret that vague statement as a request to extend the therapy mandate.

Several South Dakota lawmakers are attempting to do just that.

Two bills introduced by Democrats and Republicans will seek to remove the state's loophole for small-group plans. Each does the exact same thing: Cut the exemption.

Republican Rep. Sue Peterson of Sioux Falls and Democratic Rep. Ryan Cwach of Yankton introduced separate bills in the House, with Republican Sen. Brock Greenfield of Clark signing on as a co-sponsor of Peterson's bill.

It would be heartbreaking for the parent of any autistic child to one day learn therapy coverage has been yanked. It would be especially aggravating to learn coverage was yanked due to the size of their employer. Suddenly, an arcane rule that governs insurance market classes will limit their child's lifetime potential.

It's time to close this loophole for the benefit of everybody involved.

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Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, Feb. 22

Preschool education should be state priority

It's too easy to fixate on what qualifies as most outrageous among the time-compressed actions of the South Dakota state legislature each year.

That certainly holds true for the death of House Bill 1175 — which would have created an Early Learning Advisory Council — on a straight-line committee vote this week.

It's easy to raise the alarm over House Speaker Steven Haugaard's hyperbolic claim that educating children prior to kindergarten is an attempt at "instilling a socialist agenda into the system."

It's easy to recoil from the testimony of Florence Thompson, president of the South Dakota Parents Involved in Education, who leveled the charge that preschool is an avenue for indoctrinating young children into "the sexual orientation transgender agenda."

It's easy to decry that nine Republicans on the all-male committee summarily dismissed the efforts of the two freshman female representatives who crafted the bill through hundreds of hours of research.

Those things are important for South Dakota voters to mark. But focusing only on objectional rhetoric and poor optics takes our attention off the pervasive tendency toward poor leadership.

Too often, our state sacrifices enormous potential long-term returns at the altar of miserliness masquerading as "fiscal responsibility." We make decisions on the exclusive basis of firmly held beliefs rather than facts, figures and precedence.

The deferral of HB 1175 to the 41st day shares a "talk to the hand" mentality that reflects other decisions made contrary to objective reality.

South Dakota is one of only seven states that did not even apply for a piece of the \$100 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for early childhood development. Our share went to one of the states that bothered to fill out the form.

So no one can accuse these lawmakers of blindly following the popular crowd.

Further proof of that: South Dakota is one of only four state governments that doesn't fund preschool. Only one of two states that doesn't yet have an Early Learning Advisory Council, a prerequisite for further federal grants.

What's the root cause of such insistence on being the last horse out of the gate?

Maybe it's because, as a 2013 Pew MacArthur study found, South Dakota's legislature is part of an elite group of 11 states that conducts worryingly few cost-benefit analyses to enlighten their policymaking.

House Bill 1175 did not mandate that every South Dakota child be ripped from the arms of wailing mothers and forced to attend preschool. It did not call for universal pre-K funded solely by the state.

What it would have accomplished is the establishment of a 12-person council, appointed by the governor, to study where preschool gaps exist in the state and allow South Dakota to begin receiving some federal funds for preschool programs, to the tune of \$20,000.

Well-documented research indicates stellar returns for investing in quality pre-K access, ranging from three to 16 times back for every dollar spent. That includes money saved on remedial programs and reduced crime/incarceration rates as well as higher earning potential that comes from closing achievement gaps early.

A caucus that so often claims to be protecting South Dakota's children with its legislative proposals throws the baby out with the bathwater again and again. The long-term good of the state is sacrificed for the short-term goal of hiding state tax revenues under the mattress.

That's not leadership. That's business as usual.

Madison Daily Leader, Madison, Feb. 21

The South Dakota Senate Judiciary Committee voted this week to send a bill to the Senate floor that would reverse the state's "presumptive probation" law enacted just six years ago.

A brief background:

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A task force was established in 2012 to study variety of judicial system issues, including concerns of overcrowding in state prisons. In 2013, the Legislature passed and Gov. Dennis Daugaard signed the Public Safety Improvement Act which incorporated the recommendations of the task force.

One of the features of the act was that nonviolent criminals would be more frequently put on probation rather than being sent to prison. The policies was projected to reduce prison growth by more than 700 inmates over 10 years and to avoid more than \$200 million in prison construction and operating costs.

The idea also was that rehabilitation, especially for drug offenders, would be more likely in a community-based, probationary setting, rather than in prison.

Since then, prison population growth has leveled off and we haven't had to build more facilities. However, many offenders on probation have either violated their probation or committed new crimes, and county jails have been filled to overflowing.

So the 2019 bill, spearheaded by new Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg, is intended to reverse the presumptive probation policy, arguing that it ties judges' hand when it comes to appropriate sentencing. Critics say the reversal would cost South Dakota more than \$53 million over the next decade.

We think the issue deserves more discussion than just a few hearings during a legislative session. The judicial reform task force in 2012 included all sorts of constituents, including citizens, judges, law enforcement officials and counselors. Their study involved many factors and enjoyed broad input.

To reverse that work deserves the same treatment. A new task force should be formed to be inclusive, open to public input and thorough. This is an important issue that requires more discussion than it has gotten so far.

India strikes inside Pakistan after deadly Kashmir attack

By RIAZ KHAN and AIJAZ HUSSAIN, Associated Press

BALAKOT, Pakistan (AP) — A pre-dawn airstrike inside Pakistan that India said targeted a terrorist training camp and killed a "very large number" of militants ratcheted up tensions on Tuesday between the two nuclear-armed rivals at odds over the disputed territory of Kashmir.

Islamabad said there were no casualties in the strike near the town of Balakot, close to the border with Pakistan's section of Kashmir, where residents said loud explosions woke them up, rattling their homes.

"It was the middle of the night, we were very scared," one resident, 20-year old Mohammad Abbas told The Associated Press. "We didn't think for a moment that it was from planes but the explosions were very powerful."

Pakistan's military cordoned off the area and kept reporters about a kilometer (half a mile) from the bombing site.

The airstrike was the latest escalation since a deadly suicide bombing in India's section of Kashmir earlier this month killed more than 40 Indian soldiers. Pakistan has denied involvement in the attack but vowed to respond to any Indian military operation against it.

Kashmir is split between the two countries but claimed by each in its entirety. The Pakistan-based militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad claimed responsibility for the bombing. The bomber, who made a video before the attack, was a resident of Indian-controlled sector of Kashmir.

Pakistan's military spokesman, Maj. Gen Asif Ghafoor, said Indian planes crossed into the Muzafarabad sector of Pakistani-controlled Kashmir. He said Pakistan scrambled fighters and the Indian jets "released payload in haste" near Balakot.

India's foreign secretary, Vijay Gokhale, told reporters in New Delhi that Indian fighter jets targeted Jaish-e-Mohammad camps in a pre-emptive strike after intelligence indicated another attack was being planned.

"Acting on intelligence, India early today struck the biggest training camp of Jaish-e-Mohammad in Balakot," he said. "In this operation a very large number of Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorists, trainers, senior commanders and jihadis being trained were eliminated."

Balakot police chief Saghir Hussain Shah said he had sent teams to the area where the Indian bombs reportedly hit, which he described as a mostly deserted wooded area. "There are no casualties, there are

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no damages on the ground," he said. There was no immediate explanation for the differing accounts, but India and Pakistan routinely contradict one another.

The Feb. 14 attack in Indian-ruled Kashmir was the worst attack on Indian forces since the start of the 1989 insurgency in Kashmir and came as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is in the middle of a re-election campaign.

Addressing a rally of former soldier's in the Indian state of Rajasthan hours after the airstrike, Modi said India was in "safe hands."

"I vow that I will not let the country bow down," he said.

China, a close ally of Pakistan, urged both sides to show restraint.

"We hope that both India and Pakistan can ... take actions that will help stabilize the situation in the region and help to improve mutual relations, instead of the other way around," China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told reporters.

Insurgents in the Indian-controlled Kashmir have been demanding either outright independence or union with Pakistan. India routinely accuses Pakistan of arming and training militants who cross the mountainous Himalayan region.

Kashmir has been the cause of two wars between the uneasy neighbors. They fought a third war in 1979 over East Pakistan, which gained independence with the help of India and became Bangladesh.

Pakistan has outlawed Jaish-e-Mohammad and seized its properties in south Punjab's Bawalpur area, including religious schools and mosques. India has demanded that Jaish-e-Mohammad's leader, Azhar Masood, be listed as a terrorist by the United Nations, but has been stymied by China.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi condemned Tuesday's incursion, saying New Delhi had "endangered" peace in the region for political gains.

"We are a responsible nation and our forces are capable to defend each every inch of our motherland," he told a local television channel.

Lt. Col. Devender Anand, an Indian army spokesman, said Pakistani soldiers attacked Indian positions overnight along the boundary in Kashmir, the so-called Line of Control. He called the attack an "unprovoked" violation of the 2003 cease-fire. He said there were no casualties and refused to discuss India's incursion into Pakistan.

Residents of Chikhoti, on the Pakistan side of the Line of Control, said they heard the roar of Indian jets as they crossed overhead. They said they had been expecting an Indian response after the attack earlier this month.

"We built bunkers near our home years ago and we will use them if there is any attack from India in our area," said Mohammad Shafiq, 55.

Earlier this month, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan authorized the army to "respond decisively and comprehensively to any aggression or misadventure" by India, after New Delhi vowed a "jaw-breaking response" to the suicide bombing.

Pakistan said it was "not involved in any way, means or form" in the attack, which it said was "conceived, planned and executed indigenously." Pakistan vowed to help investigate and to take action against anyone found to be using Pakistani soil for attacks on India. It also offered to hold a "dialogue" with India on all issues, including terrorism.

Hussain reported from Srinagar, India. Associated Press writers Kathy Gannon, Zarar Khan and Munir Ahmed in Islamabad contributed to this report.

House to vote on measure revoking Trump's emergency order

By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats are moving quickly to try to roll back President Donald Trump's declaration of a national emergency to siphon billions of dollars from the military to fund construction of a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border.

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Tuesday's vote in the Democratic-controlled House comes on legislation to revoke Trump's executive order from earlier this month and would send it to the Republican-held Senate, where it would take only a handful of GOP defections to pass it.

Trump is likely to prevail in the end since he could use his first-ever veto to kill the measure if it passes Congress, but the White House is seeking to minimize defections among the president's GOP allies to avoid embarrassment.

The vote could be challenging for GOP lawmakers who view themselves as conservative protectors of the Constitution and the powers of the federal purse that are reserved for Congress. But GOP vote counters are confident that the tally won't get near the two-thirds that would overturn a Trump veto.

Democratic leaders said Monday that the vote is not about the merits of Trump's wall but how Trump is trampling on the Constitution by grabbing money that he can't obtain through normal means.

"The beauty of the Constitution, the heart and soul of the Constitution, is the separation of power — co-equal branches of government to be a balance of power," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. "The Constitution spells out the responsibilities, giving the Congress of the United States, among other powers, the power of the purse. The president's power grab usurped that constitutional responsibility and fundamentally violates the balance of power envisioned by our founders."

Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said GOP defections will be kept well below the threshold required to sustain a veto. Describing the argument GOP leaders are using to tamp down Republican opposition, he said, "There's an emergency along the border."

"If Republicans vote their beliefs, we'll get a lot. If they vote their party, we won't get a lot," said Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md.

Trump took to Twitter on Monday to urge Senate Republicans to stick with him.

"I hope our great Republican Senators don't get led down the path of weak and ineffective Border Security," Trump wrote. "Without strong Borders, we don't have a Country — and the voters are on board with us. Be strong and smart, don't fall into the Democrats 'trap' of Open Borders and Crime!"

Vice President Mike Pence is expected to discuss the issue with GOP senators during their weekly private lunch. A Justice Department official is also expected to attend.

On Monday, GOP Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., said he would vote to block the order, joining Maine's Susan Collins and Alaska's Lisa Murkowski as Republicans supporting the resolution. Congress must defend its power of the purse and warned that a future Democratic president might abuse the power to advance "radical policies," Tillis said.

Senate voting on Trump's emergency order could drag under a rarely used procedure, which an aide said is possibly a first for the chamber. The law allows for up to 15 days of committee review— in this case, at the Armed Services panel — with a full Senate vote three days later. Senators, though, said the process could be expedited.

At issue is Trump's longstanding vow to build a wall along the 1,900-mile southwest border, perhaps his top campaign promise. He has long since dropped any pretense that money for the wall would come from Mexico, which he once claimed would be the source of funding.

Earlier this month Congress approved a huge spending bill providing nearly \$1.4 billion to build 55 miles (89 kilometers) of border barriers in Texas' Rio Grande Valley, ending a dispute that had led to a record 35-day partial shutdown of the government. Trump had demanded \$5.7 billion to construct more than 200 miles (322 kilometers).

Also Monday, national security experts and former GOP lawmakers issued public declarations against Trump's edict, saying that the situation along the southern border is not a genuine emergency and that Trump is abusing his powers.

"We are aware of no emergency that remotely justifies such a step," wrote 58 former senior national security officials, including Republican Chuck Hagel, a former Nebraska senator and defense secretary. "Under no plausible assessment of the evidence is there a national emergency today that entitles the President to tap into funds appropriated for other purposes to build a wall at the southern border."

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In addition, 28 Republican former House members and senators, many of them from the party's shrinking moderate wing, wrote an open letter declaring their opposition to Trump's emergency declaration.

"How much are you willing to undermine both the Constitution and the Congress in order to advance a policy outcome that by all other legitimate means is not achievable?" wrote the former GOP lawmakers, among them former Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., once the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

"It was a lawless act, a gross abuse of power, and an attempt to distract from the fact that he broke his core promise — to have Mexico pay for the wall," said top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer of New York.

Trump's declaration of a national emergency gives him access to about \$3.6 billion in funding for military construction projects to divert to border fencing. Lawmakers in both parties are recoiling at the politically toxic prospect of losing cherished projects at back-home military bases. The Defense Department has not identified which projects may face the ax.

But the administration is more likely to tap \$600 million from a federal asset forfeiture fund first. In addition, it is considering shifting more than \$2 billion from Defense Department accounts into a Pentagon counter-drug fund to be tapped for wall construction.

Trump's edict is also being challenged in the federal courts, where a host of Democratic-led states such as California are among those that have sued to overturn the order. The House may also join in.

Mirroring grandfather, Kim rides the rails to Trump summit

By ERIC TALMADGE and ADAM SCHRECK, Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — For his second summit with U.S. President Donald Trump, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un opted to go retro — riding the rails like his grandfather decades before.

Kim's decision to take the train all the way across China was probably prompted at least in part by security considerations— his train is built like a tank and almost as slow. But it also marks a major attempt at showmanship designed to bring back memories of North Korean "eternal president" Kim Il Sung's many travels by railroad.

Kim Jong Un's journey aboard his forest green train from Pyongyang to the Vietnamese border town of Dong Dang took more than two and a half days. That's longer than it took Trump to fly halfway around the world, even with Air Force One stopping for fuel along the way.

But the overland passage was a marked upgrade in optics from Kim's first summit with Trump, in Singapore last June.

For that trip, Kim traveled aboard an Air China Boeing 747, meaning the first images from that history-making arrival showed him disembarking from an American-made plane emblazoned with a Chinese flag.

This time around, when Kim stepped down early Tuesday from his distinctive yellow-trimmed train, he was greeted with a bouquet of flowers on a patterned red carpet lined with a Vietnamese honor guard and the five-pointed communist-starred flags of North Korea and Vietnam. He then switched to a black limousine for the final drive to Hanoi.

That's a much more on-message scene for the North Koreans, who want their home audience to see Kim as the man in charge.

But it's also familiar on another level.

North Koreans grow up seeing images of Kim's grandfather traveling by train, which he took to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, among other places, including Vietnam in 1964.

A mock-up of a car from the train is on permanent display at the mausoleum where Kim Il Sung and his son, late leader Kim Jong Il, lie in state, along with maps that light up to show the routes he took on his travels.

Inside the car is a desk used by the leaders, along with chairs and a sofa. Guides explain that the carriage was used as a mobile office — proof, they insist, the leaders worked tirelessly for the people.

Kim Jong Il, who was Kim Jong Un's father, was known to have hated flying and traveled by train on several trips to China. He is said to have fitted his train out to accommodate lavish parties and karaoke

sessions.

During his father's rule, trips abroad were often not reported for days after they were over, if at all.

But that appears to be changing, also suggesting the importance in the minds of the North's propagandists of getting their own visuals out quickly to the nation.

It took North Korean state media less than half a day from the time his train was spotted crossing the border into China to report that Kim was onboard. Images released by the official Korean Central News Agency showed him inspecting an honor guard in Pyongyang and waving from the train.

Kim's exact overseas travel plans are routinely kept secret for security reasons. His train appears to have bypassed the busy Chinese capital, Beijing, and few images have trickled out since The Associated Press and others witnessed it crossing into the Chinese border city of Dandong on Saturday evening. South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported seeing his train in the central Chinese town of Changsha on Monday.

A Japanese TV network caught another candid moment — early morning shots of Kim, a well-known chain smoker, puffing away while on a stop in Nanning.

Talmadge is the AP's Pyongyang bureau chief. Schreck is AP's Asia Pacific news director. Follow them on Instagram and Twitter: @EricTalmadge and @adamschreck

Cohen expected to tell senators about Trump Russia contacts

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's former personal lawyer Michael Cohen will start a three-day gauntlet of congressional appearances by giving a closed-door interview to the Senate intelligence committee, where he is expected to detail what he claims to know about Trump's contacts with Russians and other sensitive matters related to the president.

Senators are alternately suspicious of Cohen, who is set to serve time in prison for lying to the committee in 2017, and eager to hear what Trump's former loyal fixer has to say after he turned on his longtime boss. Senators on the panel are expected to attend Tuesday's meeting with Cohen, a departure from the committee's usual practice, where witness interviews are conducted by staff only.

Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr told The Associated Press that senators will have staff ask questions but will be in the room to observe. He said no topics will be off limits and Cohen "should expect to get any question from anywhere about anything."

Burr said committee members know a lot more than they did when they first interviewed Cohen, who later pleaded guilty to lying to the House and Senate intelligence committees about abandoning a Trump business proposal in Moscow in January 2016. Cohen has since acknowledged he continued pursuing the project for months after that.

Burr suggested that the committee will take steps to ensure Cohen is telling the truth.

"I'm sure there will be some questions we know the answers to, so we'll test him to see whether in fact he'll be truthful this time," Burr said.

Another member of the committee, Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, said she will also sit in on the interview. She said she wants to see what kind of person Cohen is, and "how honestly he answers questions, how directly he answers questions."

As a close confidant of Trump for many years, Cohen's testimony is among the most anticipated since the House and Senate started investigating the Trump campaign's Russia ties two years ago. In addition to lying to Congress, Cohen pleaded guilty last year to campaign finance violations for his involvement in payments to two women who allege they had affairs with Trump. He is set to begin a three-year prison sentence in May.

Federal prosecutors in New York have said Trump directed Cohen to arrange the payments to buy the silence of porn actress Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal in the run-up to the 2016 campaign. Trump denies the allegations.

Cohen won't testify publicly until Wednesday, when he goes in front of the House Oversight and Reform

Committee. Members on that panel are expected to ask questions about the campaign finance violations, Trump's business practices and compliance with tax laws and "the accuracy of the president's public statements," according to a committee memo.

The hearing's scope does not include Russia. House Oversight and Reform Chairman Elijah Cummings, D-Md., said he set out parameters for the questioning in an effort not to conflict with special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation, with which Cohen has cooperated.

On Thursday, Cohen is set to go back behind closed doors to talk to the House's intelligence committee. Like his Senate interview, there will be no off-limits questions.

According to a person with knowledge of the matter, Cohen is prepared to give a behind-the-scenes account of what he will claim is Trump's lying, racism and cheating as a businessman through specific instances and anecdotes. Cohen will also provide what he will claim is evidence, in the form of documents, of criminal conduct by Trump since he became president, according to the person, who requested anonymity to discuss the confidential preparation.

The person said Cohen will provide information about Trump's financial statements that he will claim shows Trump deflated assets to pay lower taxes on golf courses; will provide details of the Daniels payment and claim that Trump organized a cover-up by pretending Cohen would be repaid; and claim that Trump talked to him about and asked him questions about the Trump Moscow project throughout 2016.

The person said Cohen is expected to discuss what he knows about a meeting between Trump campaign associates and a Russian lawyer in Trump Tower before the 2016 election, a matter that is of particular interest to Mueller and congressional investigators. Another expected topic: Trump's inaugural committee, which is also under investigation by federal prosecutors.

Cohen's week of interviews come as House Democrats launch multiple investigations into Trump's ties to Russia and conflict-of-interest issues within the administration. House Republicans in the last Congress investigated whether Trump's campaign coordinated with Russia, but ended that probe over Democratic objections, saying that there was no evidence that they did so. The Senate's Russia investigation is ongoing.

Cohen had been scheduled to speak to the three committees earlier this month, but rescheduled all of those appearances for different reasons. He said he needed to recover from surgery and also was concerned about what he considered to be threats to his family from Trump and the president's lawyer Rudy Giuliani.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff postponed Cohen's appearance before that committee saying it was "in the interests of the investigation," with no additional details.

Associated Press writer Michael R. Sisak in New York contributed to this report.

Australian Cardinal Pell convicted of molesting 2 choirboys

By ROD McGUIRK, Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — The most senior Catholic cleric ever charged with child sex abuse has been convicted of molesting two choirboys moments after celebrating Mass, dealing a new blow to the Catholic hierarchy's credibility after a year of global revelations of abuse and cover-up.

Cardinal George Pell, Pope Francis' top financial adviser and the Vatican's economy minister, bowed his head but then regained his composure as the 12-member jury delivered unanimous verdicts in the Victoria state County Court on Dec. 11 after more than two days of deliberation.

The court had until Tuesday forbidden publication of any details about the trial.

Pell faces a potential maximum 50-year prison term after a sentencing hearing that begins on Wednesday. He lodged an appeal last week of the convictions.

Details of the trial had been suppressed because until Tuesday, Pell had faced a second trial in April on charges that he indecently assaulted two boys aged 9 or 10 and 11 or 12 as a young priest in the late 1970s in a public pool in his hometown of Ballarat.

Prosecutor Fran Dalziel told the court on Tuesday that the Ballarat charges had been dropped and asked for the suppression order to be lifted. The move came days after a judge ruled out two key prosecution

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witnesses in the Ballarat case.

Acting Holy See spokesman Alessandro Gisotti read a statement to reporters Tuesday at the Vatican, saying Pope Francis has confirmed "precautionary measures" already taken against Pell, including a ban on his saying Mass in public and "as is the rule, contact in any way or form with minors."

The victim who testified at Pell's trial said after the conviction was revealed that he has experienced "shame, loneliness, depression and struggle." In his statement, the man said it had taken him years to understand the impact the assault had on his life.

Lawyer Lisa Flynn said the father of the second victim, who died of a heroin overdose in 2014 at the age of 31, is planning to sue the church or Pell individually once the appeal is resolved.

Pell was surrounded by a crush of cameras and members of the public as he was ushered from the courthouse to a waiting car. "You're a monster!" one man shouted. "You're going to burn in hell, you freak!" "Are you sorry?" one woman shouted. Pell did not respond.

Another of Pell's lawyers, Paul Galbally, said Pell continued to maintain his innocence.

The revelations came in the same month that the Vatican announced Francis approved the expulsion from the priesthood of a former high-ranking American cardinal, Theodore McCarrick, for sexual abuse of minors and adults.

The convictions were also confirmed days after Francis concluded his extraordinary summit of Catholic leaders summoned to Rome for a tutorial on preventing clergy sexual abuse and protecting children from predator priests.

Australia's ranking bishop, Mark Coleridge, who delivered the homily at the final Mass of the summit, said Pell's convictions "shocked many across Australia and around the world, including the Catholic Bishops of Australia."

"The bishops agree that everyone should be equal under the law and we respect the Australian legal system," said Coleridge, who is president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

The lifting of the suppression order was welcomed by SNAP, a U.S. support group for victim of clergy abuse.

"We hope that his conviction will not only bring healing to his victims in Australia but hope to survivors across the world who are yearning for accountability at the top levels of the church," SNAP said in a statement. "We believe (the) conviction will make Australian children safer and parents and parishioners better informed about how to prevent sexual abuse."

The jury convicted Pell of abusing two boys whom he had caught swigging sacramental wine in a rear room of Melbourne's St. Patrick's Cathedral in late 1996, as hundreds of worshippers were streaming out of Sunday services.

Pell, now 77 but 55 at the time, had just been named the most senior Catholic in Australia's second-largest city, Melbourne.

The boys were both 13 years old. The jury also found Pell guilty of indecently assaulting one of the boys in a corridor more than a month later.

Pell had maintained his innocence throughout, describing the accusations as "vile and disgusting conduct."

Pell's lawyer, Robert Richter, had told the jury that only a "mad man" would take the risk of abusing boys in such a public place. He said it was "laughable" that Pell would have been able to expose his penis and force the victim to take it in his mouth, given the cumbersome robes he was wearing.

Both he and Chief Judge Peter Kidd urged the jury of eight men and four women not to punish Pell for all the failings of the Catholic Church, which in Australia have been staggering.

Along with Ireland and the U.S., Australia has been devastated by the impact of the clerical abuse scandal, with a Royal Commission inquiry finding that 4,444 people reported they had been abused at more than 1,000 Catholic institutions across Australia between 1980 and 2015.

As a result, Pell's trial amounted to something of a reckoning for survivors, with the brash and towering cardinal becoming the poster child for all that went wrong with the way the Catholic Church handled the scandal.

The conviction capped a year that had been so dominated by revelations of high-ranking sex abuse

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and cover-up that analysts openly speak of a crisis unparalleled since the Reformation. In addition to Pell, the allegations against McCarrick of groping a minor in the 1970s and of sleeping with adult seminarians became public.

As a result of the scandal, Francis' approval ratings have tanked in the United States, and his standing with conservative Catholics around the world has plunged.

When the jury chairman delivered the first guilty verdict, Pell's hands slipped from the arm rests of the chair where he sat in the dock at the back of the courtroom. His head bowed after the second verdict, but he restored his composure for the final verdicts.

Pell, who walked to and from court throughout his monthlong trial with a crutch under his right arm, was released on bail to undergo surgical knee replacements in Sydney on Dec. 14.

The first four offenses occurred at the first or second Solemn Mass that Archbishop Pell celebrated as leader of the magnificent blue-stone century-old cathedral in the center of Melbourne. Pell was wearing his full robes — though not his staff or pointed bishops' hat — at the time.

The now 34-year-old survivor told the court that Pell orally raped him, then crouched and fondled the complainant's genitals while masturbating.

"I was young and I didn't really know what had happened to me. I didn't really know what it was, if it was normal," the complainant told the court.

The other victim died of a heroin overdose in 2014 without ever complaining of the abuse, and even denying to his suspicious mother that he had been molested while he was part of the choir.

Neither boy can now be identified, because it is illegal to name victims of sexual assault in Victoria state.

Pell was initially charged with orally raping the second boy. But that charge was downgraded to indecent assault when the victim who testified said that he couldn't see the other's boy mouth at that moment from his vantage point.

More than a month later, the complainant testified that Pell pushed him against a cathedral corridor wall after a Mass and squeezed the boy's genitals painfully before walking away in silence.

"Pell was in robes and I was in robes. He squeezed and kept walking," the complainant told the jurors. "I didn't tell anyone at the time because I didn't want to jeopardize anything. I didn't want to rock the boat with my family, my schooling, my life."

The complainant testified that he feared that making such accusations against a powerful church man would cost him his place in the choir and with it his scholarship to prestigious St. Kevin's College.

Pell pleaded not guilty to one count of sexual penetration of a child under 16 and four counts of willfully committing an indecent act with or in the presence of a child under 16 in late 1996 and early 1997.

He did not testify at his trial. But the jury saw a video recording of an interview he gave Australian detectives in Rome in 2016 in which he stridently denied the allegations.

Pell grimaced, appearing incredulous and distressed, waved his arms over his head and muttered to himself as the detectives detailed the accusations that his victim had leveled against him a year earlier.

"The allegations involve vile and disgusting conduct contrary to everything I hold dear and contrary to the explicit teachings of the church which I have spent my life representing," Pell told police.

Richter told the jury that the prosecution case compounded a series of improbabilities and impossibilities.

He told the jury that Pell could not have "parted" his robes as the complainant had described.

The jury was handed the actual cumbersome robes Pell wore as archbishop.

More than 20 witnesses, including clerics, choristers and altar servers, testified during the trial. None recalled ever seeing the complainant and the other victim break from a procession of choristers, altar servers and clerics to go to the back room.

The complainant testified that he and his friend had run from the procession and back into the cathedral through a side door to, as Prosecutor Mark Gibson said, "have some fun."

Monsignor Charles Portelli, who was the cathedral's master of ceremonies in the 1990s, testified that he was always with Pell after Mass to help him disrobe in the sacristy.

The defense argued that Pell's usual practice was to linger at the cathedral front steps talking to members of the congregation after Mass. But Gibson said there was evidence that Pell didn't always chat outside

and had the opportunity to commit the crimes.

The lifting of the gag order comes after Francis charted a new course for the Catholic Church to confront clergy sexual abuse and cover-up, a scandal that has consumed his papacy and threatens the credibility of the Catholic hierarchy at large.

Opening a first-ever Vatican summit on preventing abuse, Francis warned 190 bishops and religious superiors last week that their flocks were demanding concrete action, not just words, to punish predator priests and keep children safe. He offered them 21 proposals to consider going forward, some of them obvious and easy to adopt, others requiring new laws.

But Francis went into the meeting even more weakened and discredited after one of his top advisers was convicted of the very crime he has now decided is worth fighting on a universal scale.

Associated Press writer Nicole Winfield in Rome contributed to this report.

Kim readies for Trump after marathon journey, warm welcome

By FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un spent the eve of his summit with Donald Trump traveling around Hanoi in his armored limousine Tuesday, his squad of encircling bodyguards in tow as he visited the North Korean Embassy, with hundreds of visiting journalists and thousands of local citizens following in his wake.

Trump and Kim are to meet Wednesday in their second summit aimed at addressing perhaps the world's biggest security challenge: Kim's pursuit of a nuclear program that stands on the verge of viably threatening targets around the planet.

But before the summit began, Kim took some time to venture out of his locked-down hotel and check out parts of Hanoi, including his nation's embassy, where a loud cheer went up as he entered the compound.

Soldiers, police and international journalists thronged the streets outside Hanoi's Melia Hotel where Kim is staying, and hundreds of eager citizens stood behind barricades hoping to see the North Korean leader. As Vietnamese, North Korean and U.S. flags fluttered in a cold drizzle, dozens of cameras flashed and some citizens screamed and used their mobile phones to capture Kim's rock-star-like arrival.

"I like him," local resident Van Dang Luu, who works at a nearby bank, said of Kim. "He is very young and he is very interesting. And he is very powerful," she said. "Trump is not young, but I think he is very powerful."

Vietnam's authoritarian leaders set up a huge security apparatus to welcome Kim, shutting long stretches of highway and locking down swaths of the bustling capital city. Earlier in the morning, Kim, grinning broadly and waving, stepped off his armored train at the end of a long ride that started in Pyongyang and wound through China to the Vietnamese border. He shook hands with officials as Vietnamese troops in crisp, white uniforms and black boots stood at attention on a red carpet at the Dong Dang railway station on the China-Vietnam border.

Hours ahead of his border crossing, footage from Japanese TV network TBS showed Kim taking a pre-dawn smoke break at a train station in China, a woman who appeared to be his sister, Kim Yo Jong, holding a crystal ashtray at the ready.

Vietnamese officials have shared few details about the specifics of a summit that the world will be watching closely.

Trump was flying to Hanoi from Washington and was to arrive later Tuesday.

Although many experts are skeptical Kim will give up the nuclear weapons he likely sees as his best guarantee of continued rule, there was a palpable, carnival-like excitement among many in Hanoi as the final preparations were made for the meeting. There were also huge traffic jams in the already congested streets.

Officials in Hanoi said they only had about 10 days to prepare for the summit — much less than the nearly two months Singapore had before the first Trump-Kim meeting last year— but still vowed to provide

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airtight security for the two leaders.

"Security will be at the maximum level," Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Le Hoai Trung told reporters.

The ultra-tight security will be appreciated by North Korean authorities, who are extremely vigilant about the safety of Kim, the third member of his family to rule the North with absolute power. Kim's decision to take a train, not a plane, may have been influenced by the better ability to control security.

Vietnam is eager to show off its huge economic and development improvements since the destruction of the Vietnam War, but the country also tolerates no dissent and is able to provide the kind of firm hand not allowed by more democratic potential hosts.

"I really hope to catch a glimpse of Kim Jong Un. He is an interesting man. And he rarely travels anywhere so it would be great to see him here," said Nguyen Trong Toan, a retired teacher who was waiting by the side of the street on Kim's expected travel route.

There are high expectations for the Hanoi summit after a vague declaration at the first meeting in June in Singapore that disappointed many.

Trump, via Twitter, has worked to temper those expectations, predicting before leaving for Hanoi a "continuation of the progress" made in Singapore but adding a tantalizing nod to "Denuclearization?" He also said that Kim knows that "without nuclear weapons, his country could fast become one of the great economic powers anywhere in the World."

North Korea has spent decades, at great political and economic sacrifice, building its nuclear program, and there is widespread skepticism among experts that it will give away that program cheaply.

AP journalists Yves Dam Van in Dong Dang, Hyung-jin Kim, Adam Schreck and Hau Dinh in Hanoi, and Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul, South Korea, contributed to this report.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. KIM JONG UN MAKES GRAND ARRIVAL IN HANOI

After a marathon train journey, the North Korean leader's armored limo rolls into Vietnam's capital with much fanfare ahead of a nuclear summit with Trump.

2. AUSTRALIAN PRELATE CONVICTED OF MOLESTATION

Cardinal George Pell, the most senior Catholic cleric ever charged with child sex abuse, is found guilty of molesting two choirboys moments after celebrating Mass.

3. INDIA STRIKES INSIDE PAKISTAN AFTER DEADLY KASHMIR ATTACK

India says the airstrike killed a "very large number" of militants, trainers and commanders, a tally disputed by the Pakistani military.

4. HOUSE TO VOTE ON MEASURE REVOKING TRUMP'S EMERGENCY ORDER

The president wants to siphon billions of dollars from the military to fund construction of a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border.

5. MICHAEL COHEN HEADS TO CAPITOL HILL

Trump's former personal lawyer is expected to detail to lawmakers what he knows about Trump's contacts with Russians and other sensitive matters.

6. SCIENTISTS RACE TO FIND ALTERNATIVES TO ANTIBIOTICS

In one experiment, a patient inhaled a virus found in sewage to try to tame a bacterial lung infection. Other researchers starve superbugs. Still others try to rev up the immune system.

7. SOME VENEZUELA SOLDIERS CHOOSE DESERTION

When troops loyal to President Nicolas Maduro refused to let aid trucks into the country this past weekend, it set off a wave of military defections unlike any seen yet amid the mounting crisis, AP finds.

8. OPIOID CRISIS SPREADS IN GAZA STRIP

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The scourge has trapped thousands of people in the hell of addiction and adds another layer of misery to the blockaded and impoverished coastal territory.

9. WANTED: FITNESS INSTRUCTORS

The Army National Guard is looking for nearly 5,000 of them and buying roughly \$40 million in workout equipment to help its soldiers meet new fitness standards.

10. FROM WAAAAAHHHHHHH TO WEE-OWW

New York is considering switching police and ambulance sirens to the high-low wail similar to ones heard on the streets of London and Paris.

Using 1 germ to fight another when today's antibiotics fail

By LAURAN NEERGAARD, AP Medical Writer

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) — Bacteria lodged deep in Ella Balasa's lungs were impervious to most antibiotics. At 26, gasping for breath, she sought out a dramatic experiment — deliberately inhaling a virus culled from sewage to attack her superbug.

"I'm really running out of options," said Balasa, who traveled from her Richmond, Virginia, home to Yale University for the last-resort treatment. "I know it might not have an effect. But I am very hopeful."

Pitting one germ against another may sound radical, but it's a sign of a growing global crisis. Increasingly people are dying of infections that once were easy to treat because many common bugs have evolved to withstand multiple antibiotics. Some, dubbed "nightmare bacteria," are untreatable. Now scientists are racing to find novel alternatives to traditional antibiotics, a hunt that is uncovering unusual ways to counter infection, in unusual places.

One possible treatment tricks bacteria out of a nutrient they need to survive. Others rev up the immune system to better fend off germs.

And viruses called bacteriophages — discovered a century ago but largely shelved in the West when easier-to-use antibiotics came along — are being tried in a handful of emergency cases.

"People's frustration with antibiotic resistance boiled over," said Yale biologist Benjamin Chan, who travels the world collecting phages and receives calls from desperate patients asking to try them. "We're more appreciative of the fact that we need alternatives."

Nature's bacterial predator, each phage variety targets a different bacterial strain. Originally used to treat dysentery in the early 20th century, today Chan looks in places like ditches, ponds, and, yes, sewage treatment plants for types that attack a variety of human infections.

"The best places are often really dirty places, because we're dirty animals," he said.

Chan saw hope for Balasa in a lab dish covered in brownish bacterial goo.

Balasa has a genetic disease called cystic fibrosis that scars her lungs and traps bacteria inside, including a superbug named *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. A daily dose of inhaled antibiotics kept the infection in check until last fall, when the drugs quit working. A last-ditch IV antibiotic wasn't helping much either.

Chan grew a sample of Balasa's bacteria from her phlegm. Then came the key test: He dripped several *pseudomonas*-targeting phages into the grimy dish — and clear circles began appearing as the viruses consumed the bugs around them.

But would what worked in the lab really help Balasa's lungs?

BUGS OUTPACING DRUGS

At least 23,000 Americans die every year as a direct result of an antibiotic-resistant infection, and many more die from related complications, according to a 2013 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC plans an updated count, but other research has estimated the toll could be seven times higher.

And while there are no good counts in much of the world, one often-cited British report said unless solutions are found, by 2050 up to 10 million people globally could be dying from drug-resistant infections, slightly more than die from cancer today.

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Yet few new antibiotics make it to market, and many major drug companies have ended antibiotic research, seeing little profit in medicines that germs will soon outsmart. A recent report found just 11 traditional antibiotics being studied to treat any of the World Health Organization's list of worst bugs, with no guarantee they'll work.

And while some people are more at risk — those getting surgery, or cancer chemotherapy, for example — “antibiotic resistance is a problem essentially for everyone,” said Dr. Anthony Fauci, infectious diseases chief at the National Institutes of Health.

“Over the next several years, all indicators seem to point to the fact that this is going to get worse and worse,” he added.

LOOKING FOR BUGS' WEAK SPOTS

Finding alternatives means “figuring out what the vulnerabilities of infecting bacteria are. What do they need to cause an infection?” said Dr. Pradeep Singh of the University of Washington.

Singh and fellow UW lung specialist Dr. Christopher Goss zeroed in on iron, a nutrient vital for bacterial growth. It turns out that bugs can't always tell the difference between iron and a chemically similar metal named gallium. Gallium doesn't nourish and knocks other systems out of whack, Goss said.

For two small studies, the researchers recruited cystic fibrosis patients who had antibiotic-resistant pseudomonas in their lungs but weren't openly sick. The patients received a five-day infusion of a gallium-based drug. Over the next few weeks, their lung function improved, enough that next-step studies are being planned.

“It just seems like a proactive way of destroying bacteria,” said study participant Tre LaRosa, 24, of Cincinnati. His sister died of cystic fibrosis and while his own CF is under control, he worries that one day a resistant infection will flare. “I can't do anything to prevent that. Antibiotic resistance I think is one of the least talked about and most significant concerns.”

SPURRING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Fauci envisions doctors one day vaccinating people a few weeks before, say, a planned knee replacement to guard against catching a staph infection in the hospital.

Sixteen experimental vaccines are in development to target various infections, according to a recent presentation to a presidential advisory council on resistant germs.

Particularly promising, Fauci says, are lab-engineered “monoclonal antibodies” designed to home in on specific bugs. In one set of studies, researchers are giving experimental antibodies to ventilator patients who have bacteria building up that could trigger pneumonia.

HARNESSING VIRUSES FOR THE RIGHT ATTACK

In Virginia, Balasa learned of another cystic fibrosis patient helped by Yale's phage experiments and asked to try, hoping to postpone the last option for CF, a lung transplant.

Phages work very differently than traditional antibiotics. Like a parasite, the virus infiltrates bacterial cells and uses them to copy itself, killing the bug as those copies pop out and search for more bacteria. Once the infection's gone, the virus dies out. Because each phage only recognizes certain bacteria, it shouldn't kill off “good bugs” in the digestive tract like antibiotics do.

Bacteria evolve to escape phages just like they escape antibiotics, but they generally make trade-offs to do so — such as losing some of their antibiotic resistance, said Yale evolutionary biologist Paul Turner.

For example, some phages recognize bacteria by a pump on their surface that deflects antibiotics. As the phages kill those bugs, the bacteria rapidly evolve to get rid of that surface pump — meaning survivors should be susceptible to antibiotics again.

“It's reviving an arsenal of drugs that are no longer useful,” Turner said.

Yale's first test case was an 82-year-old man near death from a heart implant teeming with untreatable pseudomonas. Chan purified a phage from a Connecticut lake that he'd matched to the patient's germs, and with emergency permission from the Food and Drug Administration, doctors squirted it into the wound. The man's infection disappeared.

Then doctors at the University of California, San Diego, saved a colleague who'd been in a months-long coma, using an IV mixture of several phages that target a superbug named *Acinetobacter baumannii*.

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Doctors and families began calling both centers seeking emergency care, even as formal studies are being planned to try to prove phages' value.

"There's an incredible opportunity here," said Yale pulmonologist Dr. Jon Koff. "But with that you have to have the appropriate amount of skepticism," with careful testing to tell when it might help.

Last month, Balasa became Yale's eighth patient, inhaling billions of phages over seven days.

Almost immediately, she was coughing up fewer bacteria. It took a few weeks for her to feel better, though, and during that time she switched briefly to some antibiotics she'd previously given up. Without a formal study it's hard to know, but Chan's tests suggest phages killed much of her predominant *Pseudomonas* strain and made the survivors sensitive again to a course of those antibiotics.

Balasa called that "a very big success for me," and was able to quit her antibiotics. She didn't notice additional improvement after a second round of phages, aimed at different strains.

"The true test," Balasa said, "is how long I can go without using any antibiotics again."

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AP Explains: What everyone wants at the Trump-Kim summit

By FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will likely be all smiles as they shake hands later this week in Hanoi for a meeting meant to put flesh on what many critics call their frustratingly vague first summit in Singapore. But behind the grins is a swirl of competing goals and fears.

In addition to the two main players, China, South Korea and Japan also have deep interests in what Trump and Kim can hammer out in Vietnam, including the biggest question of them all: Can the U.S. and North Korea agree on what the "denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" means — the wishy-washy language they settled on in Singapore — and, if so, can they create a successful framework that gets it done?

A look at the contending goals in a summit meant to settle the world's most vexing nuclear standoff.

NORTH KOREA

If the U.S. position is fairly clear — ridding North Korea of as much of its nuclear program as possible — it is much less certain how much Kim is willing to relinquish of what his propaganda services call the nation's "treasured sword."

Kim is clearly doing something different than his dictator father and grandfather.

In addition to building a nuclear arsenal that commands world attention and working to ensure economic, military and personal security, he's also pushing to lift his nation from poverty.

To do that, he needs to find a way to ease crushing international sanctions so he can pursue engagement projects with South Korea, including two big-ticket ventures to reopen a jointly run industrial park and a tourist resort that once brought in as much as an estimated \$150 million in cash every year.

North Korea also has pushed for a peace declaration ending the Korean War, which halted in 1953 with an armistice, not a peace treaty. North Korea may see this declaration, and an eventual peace treaty, as a way to eventually draw down U.S. forces in South Korea and allow the two Koreas to pursue the dream of reunification, on North Korea's terms.

North Korea has repeatedly insisted that "denuclearization" must be a two-way street: It will not be giving away its nukes cheaply.

Kim must also be convinced of an improvement in what he sees as an existential U.S. threat to his nation's viability — tens of thousands of U.S. troops in South Korea and Japan and a huge array of military firepower meant to protect Washington's allies.

Despite deep skepticism about Kim's intentions, many North Korea nuclear experts suggest that even Kim himself may not know if he will give up his nuclear weapons.

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The Hanoi summit is, in many ways, a test of what the North Korean leader will be willing to accept for sacrificing this ultimate security guarantee.

UNITED STATES

Trump savored the wall-to-wall coverage of his first summit with Kim last June. But he's under pressure to do better this time.

The U.S. president wants progress on denuclearization, even as he tries to keep expectations low, saying he has no "pressing time schedule" in mind.

At the Vietnam summit, the U.S. is likely to seek an agreement on how to start work on Kim's previously reported statements that he's ready to dismantle his country's plutonium and uranium enrichment facilities.

Trump wants Kim to formalize his offer to let international experts in to verify dismantling steps at North Korea's main rocket launch site and a nuclear testing site. Trump also would like to get back the remains of more Americans killed during the Korean War and to move toward a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Ultimately, the U.S. also wants an inventory of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile facilities, equipment and material, and then an agreed-upon process for destroying them in a way that can be verified. But no one expects the two sides to reach that point in Vietnam.

No matter what, Trump the showman wants to be seen as a strong leader on the world stage, leaving behind for a moment the rancor at home over his long-sought wall on the Mexican border and the multiplying investigations into his campaign and business dealings.

SOUTH KOREA

Seoul has prioritized stabilizing its bilateral relationship with North Korea amid the larger nuclear negotiations between the U.S. and the North. It now hopes the second Trump-Kim summit will provide an opportunity to restart inter-Korean economic projects held back by heavy U.S.-led sanctions against the North.

In a recent telephone conversation with Trump, South Korea's liberal president, Moon Jae-in, said Seoul was ready to restart joint economic projects with North Korea and asked Trump to consider offering them as incentives for the North to denuclearize when he meets Kim.

Moon, the son of North Korean war refugees, held three meetings with Kim last year and describes inter-Korean reconciliation as crucial for resolving the nuclear standoff. But the tough sanctions have limited the range of joint activities the two Koreas can undertake, with Washington encouraging its allies to maintain economic pressure on North Korea until it takes firmer steps toward denuclearization.

Some experts question whether Seoul's expectations for sanctions relief for North Korea are realistic when Kim has yet to show he's willing to deal away his arsenal.

CHINA

For China, concerns about instability in North Korea, its ostensible communist ally, have long overridden worries about its nuclear arsenal. Beijing chiefly fears a collapse of the North Korean economy that could lead to armed conflict within the government and a potential flood of refugees streaming across the rivers that separate the neighbors.

China is North Korea's chief source of assistance and trade, and any movement toward sanctions relief would be warmly welcomed by its business community.

To preserve its interests, China has sought regular contact with Kim, hosting him for three visits since the announcement of the first round of talks last year. President Xi Jinping also met Kim informally in the northeastern Chinese port city of Dalian in what some in the United States saw at the time as an act of Chinese meddling ahead of the Singapore summit.

Xi's meetings with Kim are more convincingly seen as an attempt to help guide the process while offering encouragement and ensuring that China's status as a key regional power broker remains intact.

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JAPAN

Japan, which is still tormented by kidnappings of its citizens by North Korea decades ago and lies within easy striking distance of the North's missiles, has long wanted a deal.

But not just any accord will do.

There's worry about reports that Trump may seek an agreement that only partially targets North Korea's missile program — for example, that would scrap the North's long-range nuclear missiles aimed at the United States and leave in place its shorter-range missiles.

Japan also doesn't want to be left behind as negotiations proceed. It is seen as a U.S. bulwark in the region, with tens of thousands of U.S. troops and their high-tech equipment stationed throughout the archipelago.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has repeatedly expressed hope that he can meet with Kim and, to make sure Japanese interests aren't forgotten, has also worked hard to get close to Trump, so much so that Trump said Abe nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize, something Abe didn't deny.

AP reporters Deb Riechmann in Washington, Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul, South Korea, and Chris Bodeen in Beijing contributed to this report.

Foster Klug is the AP's bureau chief in South Korea and has covered the Koreas since 2005. Follow him at www.twitter.com/apklug

House committee to vote on approving Trump admin subpoenas

By COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats are laying the groundwork to subpoena Trump administration officials over family separations at the southern border.

The Oversight Committee will vote Tuesday on whether to approve subpoenas to the heads of Justice, Homeland Security and Health and Human Services. With Democrats as a majority, the authorization is expected, but it's still not clear whether the subpoenas will actually be served.

If they are, they would be some of the first issued in the new Congress. House Democrats have promised to hold the administration aggressively to account. The committee's chairman, Democratic Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland, has pledged to press the administration for documents and testimony on a wide swath of issues, but family separation was among his first priorities.

Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, the committee's ranking Republican, sent Cummings a letter arguing that the subpoenas would not be necessary, and that the administration had produced hundreds of pages of documents in response to earlier requests for information.

"We should not rush to compel documents from the departments, especially when they have sought to comply with your request voluntarily," Jordan wrote.

The House Judiciary Committee authorized a subpoena to compel then-acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker to testify if necessary, but it was never served.

If subpoenas are issued and officials don't comply, the committee and eventually the full House could vote to hold the department in contempt, setting up a potentially lengthy court battle.

More than 2,700 children were separated from their parents at the border last year under a zero-tolerance policy by then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions that criminally prosecuted anyone caught crossing the border illegally.

Because children can't be placed with their parents in jail, they were separated. Watchdog reports have found the administration was not prepared to manage the aftermath of the separations, and had no way to track the families together and did not have a way to reunite them until a federal judge stepped in.

The Oversight Committee is seeking details on the children separated, location and facility where they were held, details on the parents, information on efforts to restore children to their parents, and whether parents were deported.

An internal watchdog report recently found that thousands more children than previously thought could have been separated before the zero-tolerance policy officially began. Immigration officials are allowed to separate children if there is a concern for the child's well-being, if a parent has a criminal charge, or if there are serious health risks.

New fitness test presents challenges for Army Guard

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Army National Guard is looking for nearly 5,000 fitness instructors and buying roughly \$40 million in workout equipment in the next seven months to help its soldiers meet new physical fitness standards being set by the military service.

But even as commanders begin delivering the new 10-pound medicine balls, pull-up bars and hexagon barbells, they also worry whether America's 330,000 citizen soldiers will have the time and the drive to master the new, more grueling Army fitness test.

"For those who are already doing well on their physical fitness test and they have the routine figured out, I think they're going to transition to this new test without any issues," said Army National Guard Lt. Col. Brian Dean, who is responsible for implementing the new test across the Guard. "People who are in those parts of their life where they're still kinda struggling to make the right time for fitness and do fitness in the right ways — this will feel significant."

Could the new physical demands drive soldiers out of the Guard? "It's a concern," Dean said.

Spread out in more than 2,800 armories around the country, members of the Army Guard are required to do weekend duty once a month and a two-week stint during the year. A number of units are also tapped by state governors for help during hurricanes, wildfires, border problems and other events. And, during the peak of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, Guard units were routinely called up for active-duty deployments to fill needs that couldn't be met by the overstretched active-duty troops in the battle zones.

Still, many Guard members see more limited duty, and are often focused on their full-time jobs and other commitments, which can be hundreds of miles from the nearest military base.

"Ninety percent of my soldiers are part-time," Maj. Gen. Timothy Orr, the adjutant general for the Iowa National Guard, told The Associated Press in an interview. "I think there's apprehension. There's always the question of how are we going to do this with the time that we have, and the equipment we have."

Orr, who has been in the Guard for 40 years, said that a key unanswered issue will be how soldiers with various permanent physical limitations will be treated, particularly those who have served for many years. Under the current fitness test, troops can arrange to substitute certain exercises for ones they can't do.

For example, someone with a knee injury who can't run two miles is able to substitute swimming or bicycling for part of the current fitness test. Orr said the Army is still working through the details, so it's not clear yet how they will handle the matter and whether there will be alternate tests.

"I think we have committed troops today, committed leaders, and folks will step up to the challenge," said Orr, who has about 8,600 Guard soldiers in his state. "There may be select individuals that will say, 'Hey, I've had enough and I want to leave.' But I think we're a professional Army and this is just another of the many challenges we've had, especially over the last 18 years."

The Army's current physical fitness test, which is being replaced by a new more strenuous one, consisted of two minutes of push-ups and sit-ups and a two-mile run. By Oct. 1, Army soldiers will begin taking the new test, which takes about an hour and includes a deadlift, more difficult push-ups, a sled-drag, an array of other exercises, and ends with the two-mile run.

Beginning Oct. 1, 2020, all soldiers will have to routinely pass the new test in order to qualify for their military jobs.

Dean said the Guard wants to give its soldiers a full year to learn and train for the new test. So, all the equipment and trainers must be in place in all the armories by October.

"What we don't want is to have people who never trained on weight-lifting equipment grabbing that stuff and injuring themselves," Dean said.

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Orr said he would like to see physical therapists assigned to each state that can help Guard soldiers prevent injuries or help them heal if they get hurt.

Dean said the Army is providing funding for the equipment and Guard leaders are working out how much of it has to be delivered to each armory and state training center. Since units across the country are different sizes and compositions, it will take time to figure out how much equipment each community needs.

The biggest challenge, said Dean, is the timeline — particularly identifying the thousands of trainers needed to staff all of the armories and work with soldiers on the new fitness regime. It takes about two days to get someone certified, and he said that so far only about 500 of the needed 5,000 trainers are in place.

Getting the rest, he said, "is a challenge, but it's not insurmountable."

Attacked and powerless, Venezuela soldiers choose desertion

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO, Associated Press

CUCUTA, Colombia (AP) — The simple house on a street riddled with potholes in this town on Colombia's restive border with Venezuela has become a refuge for the newly homeless — 40 Venezuelan soldiers who abandoned their posts and ran for their lives.

The young National Guard troops sleep on thin mats on the floor. In one room, several flak jackets rest along a wall. On a balcony, boots that got wet crossing the muddy Tachira River are set out to dry.

"I was tired of people seeing me as just one more of them," Sgt. Jorge Torres said, referring to President Nicolas Maduro's socialist government. "I'm not."

A high-stakes plan by the Venezuelan opposition to bring humanitarian aid into the country floundered Saturday when troops loyal to Maduro refused to let the trucks carrying food and medical supplies cross, but it did set off a wave of military defections unlike any seen yet amid the country's mounting crisis. Over 270 mostly low-ranking soldiers fled in a span of three days, Colombian immigration officials said Monday.

With no relatives in Colombia, several dozen have ended up in a shelter run by a priest. The home on a street with low-hanging electrical wires is where they are nervously keeping track of relatives left behind, figuring out how to apply for asylum and deciding what should come next.

"The only way for this government to leave, unfortunately, and all of Venezuela knows it, is for there to be a direct intervention," said Sgt. Jose Gomez, a father of two. "The only one with that power is the international community."

In interviews with The Associated Press, nine National Guard soldiers described the day that they were ordered by commanders to stop the humanitarian aid from entering Venezuela. Fearful of being jailed, many complied with orders and admitted to launching tear gas at protesters. Two said they were part of a failed plot to get the aid in. All fled after making unplanned, split-second decisions with only the uniform on their backs.

"Son, if this decision is to save your life and so that there is change, do it," Gomez said his father told him in a brief phone call before he sprinted across the border.

The defections come as the Venezuelan opposition puts pressure on the military to recognize congress leader Juan Guaido as the nation's rightful president. Venezuela's military has served as the traditional arbiter of political disputes, forcing out dictator Marcos Perez Jimenez in 1958. But the top military brass has stood fast with Maduro, who has shown no sign that he intends to relinquish power.

While Guaido has proposed amnesty to military officers who back him, the low-ranking soldiers who have defected say breaking ranks with Maduro is all but impossible.

Anyone who shows the slightest hint of disapproval risks arrest, they said, and jail has become increasingly synonymous with torture. Even those like Gomez, who wanted to see the aid brought in, followed orders to repress citizens. As Saturday grew increasingly tense, protesters threw rocks and gasoline bombs at him. He said he responded by throwing tear gas at them to protect himself.

Others at the home also had evidence of the resistance they faced that day: Torres still had blood caked beneath the skin on his nose from protesters kicking him on the ground after he surrendered to

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Colombian authorities. A young woman had a scratch across her cheek that she said came from a rock thrown by protesters.

During the clashes, armed pro-Maduro groups known as "colectivos" fired indiscriminately, and several of the soldiers said they feared being shot themselves. National Guard troops are equipped with crowd-control devices like rubber bullets and tear gas but do not carry any regular firearms.

Like the rest of the population struggling against hyperinflation expected to reach an eye-boggling 10 million percent this year, the soldiers also knew the indignities of life in Venezuela, where severe shortages of food and medicine have led to more than 3 million people leaving the country in recent years.

"You know that in your own home you don't even have a kilo of rice," said the female soldier, who requested anonymity, fearing for the safety of the children she left back home. "And I'm supposed to stay here fighting, why?"

Two months ago, Gomez watched as his newborn son died within 15 minutes because the hospital where his wife delivered did not have oxygen to pump into his failing lungs. Torres said an aunt died of cancer and an uncle succumbed to a curable stomach infection.

"That's what pushed me to make this decision," Torres said.

When Guaido first announced the aid push, Torres said that he and three soldiers in his barracks huddled and quietly discussed their options. As National Guard drivers, they had access to armored trucks. They hatched a plan to drive the vehicles across the Simon Bolivar International Bridge, breaking down the barricades that stood in the way and allowing opposition trucks to carry the aid in.

Saturday morning, Torres climb into one of the white-painted trucks and charged it across the bridge. Though he broke through several barricades, he also hit a woman trying to enter Colombia. She escaped serious injury, but he was forced to stop.

Getting out with his rifle in hand, Torres raised his arms in surrender and helped the woman toward an ambulance.

As one of the first deserters, he was quickly taken in and presented to Guaido, who had sneaked across the border into Colombia to oversee the aid launch.

Torres said he stood at attention and pledged his loyalty to the 35-year-old lawmaker recognized as Venezuela's interim president by over 50 nations, including the United States and many Latin American countries.

"We're still in time to change history," he said Guaido told him.

For Gomez, the breaking point came when he saw another National Guardsman hit in the face by a fire bomb. Even though he was badly injured, commanders wouldn't call an ambulance to take him to the hospital, Gomez said. Fearing what might happen if he himself was struck by protesters, he decided to flee.

"They wouldn't have done anything for me," Gomez said.

As he darted into one of the hundreds of illegal dirt paths snaking across Venezuela's porous border with Colombia, Gomez said "colectivo" gunmen shot in his direction. He crossed the river and ran through the brush, about a 20-minute trek. When he reached Colombian territory and spotted the military, he put his hands up in a sign of peace.

"I'm coming to surrender!" he cried out.

Many said they worry their wives and children will face repercussions and they are concerned about how they will make ends meet. Many soldiers who have fled in the last year have had difficulty getting work, winding up making a meager living selling food on the streets.

Asked about who he left behind, Torres said, "My wife," and burst into tears. Too choked up to speak about his daughter, he could only hold up fingers to show how old she is: Six.

Nearly all the defectors would support a foreign intervention in Venezuela and join in the fight.

Guaido called on the international community Saturday evening to consider "all options" to resolve Venezuela's crisis after the clashes over the aid shipments resulted in four deaths and 300 people injured.

In a visit Monday to Colombia's capital for a meeting of regional leaders, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence echoed Donald Trump's warning that "all options are on the table," but he gingerly avoided talking about

the potential for military action.

Floating ideas among each other, several of the defectors said they believe the best way forward is for more troops to desert and help form a resistance from abroad. Some envisioned an intervention led solely by Venezuelans, while others are convinced it can only be done with the help of an international coalition.

All said they don't see themselves as traitors, but rather as troops intent on restoring Venezuela's democracy.

"We're going to change history," Torres said. "We are history."

Associated Press writer Luis Andres Henao in Urena, Venezuela, contributed to this report.

Australian Cardinal Pell convicted of molesting 2 choirboys

By ROD McGUIRK, Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — The most senior Catholic cleric ever charged with child sex abuse has been convicted of molesting two choirboys moments after celebrating Mass, dealing a new blow to the Catholic hierarchy's credibility after a year of global revelations of abuse and cover-up.

Cardinal George Pell, Pope Francis' top financial adviser and the Vatican's economy minister, bowed his head but then regained his composure as the 12-member jury delivered unanimous verdicts in the Victoria state County Court on Dec. 11 after more than two days of deliberation.

The court had until Tuesday forbidden publication of any details about the trial.

Pell faces a potential maximum 50-year prison term after a sentencing hearing that begins on Wednesday. He lodged an appeal last week against the convictions.

Details of the trial had been suppressed because until Tuesday, Pell had faced a second trial in April on charges that he indecently assaulted two boys aged 9 or 10 and 11 or 12 as a young priest in the late 1970s in a public pool in his hometown of Ballarat.

Prosecutor Fran Dalziel told the court on Tuesday that the Ballarat charges had been dropped and asked for the suppression order to be lifted.

"This is not a special case," Dalziel said.

The victim who testified at Pell's trial said after the conviction was revealed that he has experienced "shame, loneliness, depression and struggle." In his statement, the man said it had taken him years to understand the impact the assault had on his life.

Lawyer Lisa Flynn said the father of the second victim, who died of a heroin overdose in 2014 at the age of 31, is planning to sue the church or Pell individually once the appeal is resolved.

Pell's lawyer Robert Richter initially wanted details of the trial suppressed until his appeal was heard, but later withdraw the application.

Pell was surrounded by a crush of cameras and members of the public as he was ushered from the courthouse to a waiting car. "You're a monster!" one man shouted. "You're going to burn in hell, you freak!"

"Are you sorry?" one woman shouted. Pell did not respond.

Another of Pell's lawyers, Paul Galbally, said Pell continued to maintain his innocence.

"Although the cardinal originally faced allegations from a number of complainants, all of those complaints and allegations save for the matters that are subject to the appeal have all been either withdrawn or discontinued," Galbally told reporters outside.

Pell has initially been charged with more than 20 charges of sexual abuse against various complainants.

The revelations came in the same month that the Vatican announced Francis approved the expulsion from the priesthood for a former high-ranking American cardinal, Theodore McCarrick, for sexual abuse of minors and adults.

The convictions were also confirmed days after Francis concluded his extraordinary summit of Catholic leaders summoned to Rome for a tutorial on preventing clergy sexual abuse and protecting children from predator priests.

The lifting of the suppression order was welcomed by SNAP, a U.S. support group for victim of clergy

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abuse.

"We hope that his conviction will not only bring healing to his victims in Australia but hope to survivors across the world who are yearning for accountability at the top levels of the church," SNAP said in a statement. "We believe (the) conviction will make Australian children safer and parents and parishioners better informed about how to prevent sexual abuse."

The jury convicted Pell of abusing two boys whom he had caught swigging sacramental wine in a rear room of Melbourne's St. Patrick's Cathedral in late 1996, as hundreds of worshippers were streaming out of Sunday services.

Pell, now 77 but 55 at the time, had just been named the most senior Catholic in Australia's second-largest city, Melbourne.

The boys were both 13 years old. The jury also found Pell guilty of indecently assaulting one of the boys in a corridor more than a month later.

Pell had maintained his innocence throughout, describing the accusations as "vile and disgusting conduct" that went against everything he believed in.

Richter, his lawyer, had told the jury that only a "mad man" would take the risk of abusing boys in such a public place. He said it was "laughable" that Pell would have been able to expose his penis and force the victim to take it in his mouth, given the cumbersome robes he was wearing.

Both he and Chief Judge Peter Kidd urged the jury of eight men and four women not to punish Pell for all the failings of the Catholic Church, which in Australia have been staggering.

"You must not scapegoat Cardinal Pell," Kidd told the jury.

Along with Ireland and the U.S., Australia has been devastated by the impact of the clerical abuse scandal, with a Royal Commission inquiry finding that 4,444 people reported they had been abused at more than 1,000 Catholic institutions across Australia between 1980 and 2015.

Pell's own hometown of Ballarat had such a high incidence of abuse — and, survivors say, a correlated higher-than-average incidence of suicide — that the city warranted its own case study in the Royal Commission report.

As a result, Pell's trial amounted to something of a reckoning for survivors, with the brash and towering cardinal becoming the poster child for all that went wrong with the way the Catholic Church handled the scandal.

The conviction capped a year that had been so dominated by revelations of high-ranking sex abuse and cover-up that analysts openly speak of a crisis unparalleled since the Reformation. In addition to Pell, the allegations against McCarrick of groping a minor in the 1970s and of sleeping with adult seminarians became public.

As a result of the scandal, Francis' approval ratings have tanked in the United States, and his standing with conservative Catholics around the world — already on shaky ground over his outreach to divorcees — has plunged.

Up until the verdict, Pell's lawyers had appeared confident that they had established a reasonable doubt and had expected quick verdicts of not guilty.

When the jury chairman delivered the first guilty verdict, Pell's hands slipped from the arm rests of the chair where he sat in the dock at the back of the courtroom. His head bowed after the second verdict, but he restored his composure for the final verdicts.

Pell, who walked to and from court throughout his monthlong trial with a crutch under his right arm, was released on bail to undergo surgical knee replacements in Sydney on Dec. 14. Prosecutor Mark Gibson did not oppose bail, saying the surgery would be more easily managed outside the prison system.

The first four offenses occurred at the first or second Solemn Mass that Archbishop Pell celebrated as leader of the magnificent blue-stone century-old cathedral in the center of Melbourne. Pell was wearing his full robes — though not his staff or pointed bishops' hat — at the time.

The now 34-year-old survivor told the court that Pell orally raped him, then crouched and fondled the complainant's genitals while masturbating.

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"I was young and I didn't really know what had happened to me. I didn't really know what it was, if it was normal," the complainant told the court.

The other victim died of a heroin overdose in 2014 without ever complaining of the abuse, and even denying to his suspicious mother that he had been molested while he was part of the choir.

Neither boy can now be identified, because it is illegal to name victims of sexual assault in Victoria state.

Pell was initially charged with orally raping the second boy. But that charge was downgraded to indecent assault when the victim who testified said that he couldn't see the other's boy mouth at that moment from his vantage point.

More than a month later, the complainant testified that Pell pushed him against a cathedral corridor wall after a Mass and squeezed the boy's genitals painfully before walking away in silence.

"Pell was in robes and I was in robes. He squeezed and kept walking," the complainant told the jurors. "I didn't tell anyone at the time because I didn't want to jeopardize anything. I didn't want to rock the boat with my family, my schooling, my life."

The complainant testified that he feared that making such accusations against a powerful church man would cost him his place in the choir and with it his scholarship to prestigious St. Kevin's College.

Pell pleaded not guilty to one count of sexual penetration of a child under 16 and four counts of willfully committing an indecent act with or in the presence of a child under 16 in late 1996 and early 1997.

He did not testify at his trial. But the jury saw a video recording of an interview he gave Australian detectives in Rome in 2016 in which he stridently denied the allegations.

Pell grimaced, appearing incredulous and distressed, waved his arms over his head and muttered to himself as the detectives detailed the accusations that his victim had leveled against him a year earlier.

"The allegations involve vile and disgusting conduct contrary to everything I hold dear and contrary to the explicit teachings of the church which I have spent my life representing," Pell told police.

Richter told the jury that the prosecution case compounded a series of improbabilities and impossibilities.

He told the jury that Pell could not have "parted" his robes as the complainant had described.

The jury was handed the actual cumbersome robes Pell wore as archbishop. Over his regular clothes, Pell would wear a full-length white robe called an alb that was tied around his waist with a rope-like cincture. Over that, he would drape a 3-meter (10-foot) band of cloth called a stole around his neck. The outermost garment was the long poncho-like chasuble.

More than 20 witnesses, including clerics, choristers and altar servers, testified during the trial. None recalled ever seeing the complainant and the other victim break from a procession of choristers, altar servers and clerics to go to the back room.

The complainant testified that he and his friend had run from the procession and back into the cathedral through a side door to, as Gibson, the prosecutor, said, "have some fun."

Monsignor Charles Portelli, who was the cathedral's master of ceremonies in the 1990s, testified that he was always with Pell after Mass to help him disrobe in the sacristy.

The defense argued that Pell's usual practice was to linger at the cathedral front steps talking to members of the congregation after Mass. But Gibson said there was evidence that Pell didn't always chat outside and had the opportunity to commit the crimes.

The lifting of the gag order comes after Francis charted a new course for the Catholic Church to confront clergy sexual abuse and cover-up, a scandal that has consumed his papacy and threatens the credibility of the Catholic hierarchy at large.

Opening a first-ever Vatican summit on preventing abuse, Francis warned 190 bishops and religious superiors last week that their flocks were demanding concrete action, not just words, to punish predator priests and keep children safe. He offered them 21 proposals to consider going forward, some of them obvious and easy to adopt, others requiring new laws.

But Francis went into the meeting even more weakened and discredited after one of his top advisers was convicted of the very crime he has now decided is worth fighting on a universal scale.

Pell's downfall will invariably tarnish the pope, since Francis appointed Pell economy minister in 2014

even though some of the allegations against him were known at the time.

In October, Francis finally cut Pell loose, removing him as a member of his informal cabinet. Pell technically remains prefect of the Vatican's economy ministry, but his five-year term expires this year and is not expected to be renewed.

Associated Press writer Nicole Winfield in Rome contributed to this report.

Trump tamps down expectations as he heads to Kim summit

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Redefining success, President Donald Trump headed to his second meeting with North Korea's Kim Jong Un on Monday, determined to tamp down expectations that he'll achieve big strides toward denuclearization. Yet he was still eager to claim an attention-grabbing victory to offset the political turmoil he faces at home.

Trump is set to land in Vietnam late Tuesday and will have meetings with the host country's president and prime minister Wednesday before sitting down later with Kim for a private dinner.

Trump will be joined at the dinner by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, the White House said Monday. Kim also will have two aides with him, and there will be translators for both sides. Trump and Kim, who arrived in Vietnam Tuesday, will have a series of official meetings Thursday.

Trump laid out ultimate goals for both the U.S. and Kim in an appearance before the nation's governors Monday before boarding Air Force One to fly to Vietnam: "We want denuclearization, and I think he'll have a country that will set a lot of records for speed in terms of an economy."

Worries abound across world capitals about what Trump might be willing to give up in the name of a win, but there seems less mystery about his North Korean counterpart. Survival of the Kim regime is always the primary concern.

Trump was the driving force behind this week's summit, aiming to re-create the global spectacle of his first meeting with Kim last year. But that initial summit in Singapore yielded few concrete results, and the months that followed have produced little optimism about what will be achieved in the sequel.

Trump is publicly unconcerned.

He once warned that North Korea's arsenal posed such a threat to humanity that he might have no choice but to rain "fire and fury" on the nation. However, in the leadup to the new summit, he's proclaimed himself in no hurry for Pyongyang to prove it is abandoning its weapons.

"I'm not in a rush. I don't want to rush anybody, I just don't want testing. As long as there's no testing, we're happy," Trump told the governors on Sunday.

In fact, he is ready to write himself into the history books before he and Kim even shake hands in Hanoi.

"If I were not elected president, you would have been in a war with North Korea," Trump said last week. "We now have a situation where the relationships are good — where there has been no nuclear testing, no missiles, no rockets."

While Trump was airborne, Kim's armored train was on the move in China, bound toward Vietnam's capital. Vietnamese officials promised security at "the maximum level." Reporters from 40 nations were expected to transmit the story to the world.

Kim inherited a nascent nuclear program from his father, and after years of accelerated effort and fighting through crippling sanctions, he built an arsenal that demonstrated the potential to rocket a thermo-nuclear weapon to the mainland United States. That is the fundamental reason Washington now sits at the negotiating table.

Kim, his world standing elevated after receiving an audience with a U.S. president, has yet to show a convincing sign that he is willing to deal away an arsenal that might provide a stronger guarantee of survival than whatever security assurance the United States could provide. The North Koreans have largely eschewed staff-level talks, pushing for discussions between Trump and Kim.

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Though details of the summit remain closely held, the two leaders are expected to meet at some point one-on-one, joined only by translators.

The easing of tension between the two nations, Trump and his allies contend, stems from the U.S. president's own unorthodox and unpredictable style of diplomacy. Often prizing personal rapport over long-held strategic interests, Trump has pointed to his budding relationship with the young and reclusive leader, frequently showing visitors to the Oval Office his flattering letters from Kim.

Trump, who has long declared that North Korea represented the gravest foreign threat of his presidency, told reporters recently that his efforts to defang Pyongyang had moved Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to nominate him for a Nobel Peace Prize, something Abe would not confirm or deny.

Four main goals emerged from the first Trump-Kim summit: establishing new relations between the nations, building a new peace on the entire Korean Peninsula, completing denuclearization of the peninsula and recovering U.S. POW/MIA remains from the Korean War.

While some remains have been returned to the United States, little has been achieved on the other points. Korean and American negotiators have not settled on either the parameters of denuclearization or a timetable for the removal of both Korean weapons and American sanctions.

"The key lessons of Singapore are that President Trump sees tremendous value in the imagery of diplomacy and wants to be seen as a bold leader, even if the substance of the diplomacy is far behind the pageantry," said Abraham Denmark, director of the Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

U.S. intelligence officials testified before Congress last month that it remains unlikely Kim will fully dismantle his arsenal. And many voices in the Trump administration, including National Security Adviser John Bolton, have expressed skepticism that North Korea would ever live up to a deal.

Mark Chinoy, senior fellow at U.S.-China Institute at the University of Southern California, said that after generations of hostility, the convivial atmosphere of Singapore "can't be discounted." But Chinoy noted that Trump had agreed to North Korea's "formulation of 'denuclearization of the Korean peninsula,' which Pyongyang has long made clear meant an end to the US security alliance with South Korea and an end to the U.S. nuclear umbrella intended to defend South Korea and Japan."

After the last summit, Trump unilaterally suspended some military drills with South Korea, alarming some in Seoul and at the Pentagon. But he was insistent this week that he would not draw down U.S. troops from South Korea. And American officials, even as they hint at a relaxed timetable for Pyongyang to account for its full arsenal, have continued to publicly insist they would not favor easing sanctions on North Korea until denuclearization is complete.

A year ago, North Korea suspended its nuclear and long-range missile tests and said it dismantled its nuclear testing ground, but those measures were not perceived as meaningful reductions. Experts believe Kim, who is enjoying warmer relations with South Korea and the easing of pressure from Russia and China, will seek a U.S. commitment for improved bilateral relations and partial sanctions relief while trying to minimize any concessions on his nuclear facilities and weapons.

"Kim is doing pretty well as it is," said Scott Seaman of the Eurasia Group. "The threat of a U.S. military strike is essentially zero, Kim's diplomatic charm offensive has made him into a bigger player on the world stage, and he continues to whittle away at international commitment to sanctions."

The Hanoi summit comes at a politically uncertain time for Trump.

His potential 2020 foes have begun unleashing attacks. The newly elected Democratic House has begun its investigations of the president, calling his former legal fixer, Michael Cohen, to appear before Congress while Trump is in Vietnam. And special counsel Robert Mueller, who has investigated possible ties between Trump's campaign Russian election interference, may finalize his report within days of the president's return to the United States.

Associated Press writers Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul and Deb Riechmann, Catherine Lucey, Zeke Miller and Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

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Follow all of AP's summit coverage at <https://apnews.com/Trump-KimSummit>

Pence in Colombia announces new sanctions on Maduro

By BEN FOX and JOSHUA GOODMAN, Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — The Trump administration announced new sanctions Monday on allies of Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro as it struggles to find new ways to boost his opponent after an effort to deliver humanitarian aid to the economically devastated nation faltered amid strong resistance from security forces loyal to the socialist leader.

Vice President Mike Pence arrived in the Colombian capital for an emergency summit of regional leaders to discuss the deepening crisis and immediately met with Juan Guaido, the opposition leader the U.S. and 50 other nations recognize as Venezuela's rightful president.

In a speech, Pence urged regional partners to freeze oil assets controlled by Maduro, transfer the proceeds to Guaido and restrict visas for Maduro's inner circle. He said the U.S. was imposing more sanctions on four pro-government governors, including a close Maduro ally who negotiated the release of an American jailed for more than two years.

"It's time to do more," Pence said. "The day is coming soon when Venezuela's long nightmare will end, when Venezuela will once more be free, when her people will see a new birth of freedom, in a nation reborn to libertad."

Hours later, Venezuela's government issued a statement accusing the U.S. and the Lima Group countries of conducting "a ferocious campaign to oust" Maduro by trampling on basic international human rights.

The statement also rejected Pence's announcements, accusing him of attempting "to give orders so that other countries join the vulgar plundering" that Washington is pursuing against Venezuela's assets.

Pence's appearance before the Lima Group comes at an important crossroads for the coalition of mostly conservative Latin American nations and Canada that has joined forces to pressure Maduro. A month after Guaido declared himself interim president at an outdoor rally, hopes that support for Maduro inside the military would quickly crumble have faded.

Over the weekend, security forces on the borders with Colombia and Brazil fired tear gas and buckshot on activists waving Venezuelan flags while escorting trucks with emergency medical and food kits. Four people were killed and at least 300 wounded, although only a few were hospitalized.

While Colombian authorities said more than 160 soldiers deserted their posts and sought refuge across the border over the weekend, the highest-ranking among them was a National Guard major. No battalion or division commanders have come forward to challenge Maduro despite almost-daily calls by Guaido and the U.S. to do so.

That's left many asking what Guaido and the U.S. can do to break the stalemate.

The Lima Group, in an 18-point declaration signed by 10 nations and Guaido, reiterated their call on the Venezuelan military to recognize the opposition leader as their commander in chief, urged the International Criminal Court to declare Maduro's aid blockade a crime against humanity and pressed the United Nations to play a bigger role in resolving the crisis.

For now, the U.S. is showing no signs it is considering a military intervention to remove Maduro.

During his visit, Pence repeated President Donald Trump's threat that "all options are on the table" but gingerly avoided talking about the potential for military action.

Instead, he stuck to traditional policy tools that so far have only hardened Maduro's resolve. Foremost among them was the addition of four governors to a growing list of more than 50 Venezuelan officials under sanctions and blocked from doing business or having accounts in the U.S.

The most prominent target was Rafael Lacava, the governor of central Carabobo state who played a key role negotiating the release last year of Joshua Holt, a Utah man jailed without a trial for two years

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on what were seen as trumped-up weapons charges.

Pence also said the U.S. would continue to search for places to pre-position aid for eventual delivery to Venezuela, and announced \$56 million in new assistance to countries in the region helping to absorb an exodus of more than 3 million Venezuelans who have fled hyperinflation and shortages in recent years.

"In the days ahead, the United States will announce even stronger sanctions on the regime's corrupt financial networks. We will find every last dollar they have stolen and return that money to the Venezuelan people," he said.

Guaido, in his visit to the Colombian capital, was afforded all the trappings of a head of state. He posed for selfies with well-wishers upon arriving for the summit and stood before a pile of aid boxes stamped with the U.S. flag as he and Pence greeted a group of Venezuelan migrants, including an elderly man who wept as he shook hands with the U.S. vice president and pleaded for help.

But Guaido's speech to the diplomats was short on specifics despite speculation he would request a military intervention as close ally Julio Borges, the opposition ambassador to the Lima Group, suggested on Sunday.

"Being permissive with the usurpation of power would be a threat to democracy in all of America," Guaido said.

Meanwhile, the Lima Group, which has been staunchly behind Guaido, rejected the use of force.

"Let's hope that the pressure of the international community, dialogue and prudence will prevail," said Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela, who likened the crisis in Venezuela to the one his country faced in the run-up to the 1989 U.S. invasion to remove dictator Manuel Noriega. "Although the circumstances are similar, we must have the capacity to find a solution different than the one used back then."

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, in interviews on "Fox News Sunday" and CNN's "State of the Union," did not rule out U.S. military force but said "there are more sanctions to be had."

Any additional sanctions will increase the suffering of the Venezuelan people and may lead to more political violence, said Mark Weisbrot, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, who advocates a negotiated end to the political crisis.

"The 'humanitarian aid' this weekend was a public relations stunt, since the aid was just a tiny fraction of the food and medicine that they are depriving Venezuelans of with the sanctions," Weisbrot said. "As the Trump administration admitted, it was an attempt to get the Venezuelan military to disobey Maduro. It was a farce, and it failed."

Associated Press writer Ben Fox reported in Bogota, Colombia, and AP writer Joshua Goodman reported from Caracas, Venezuela. AP writer Scott Smith in Caracas contributed to this report.

2020 Democratic hopefuls embrace new meaning of reparations

By **ERRIN HAINES WHACK, AP National Writer**

Several Democratic presidential candidates are embracing reparations for the descendants of slaves — but not in the traditional sense.

Over the past week, Sen. Kamala Harris of California, Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro spoke of the need for the U.S. government to reckon with and make up for centuries of stolen labor and legal oppression. But instead of backing the direct compensation of African-Americans for the legacy of slavery, the Democratic candidates are talking about using tax credits and other subsidies.

Long defined as some type of direct payment to former slaves and their descendants, the shifting definition of reparations comes as White House hopefuls seek to solidify their ties with African-Americans whose support will be crucial to winning the Democratic nomination. But it risks prompting both withering criticism from Republicans and a shrug from black voters and activists if the proposals are seen as an empty gesture that simply renames existing policy ideas as reparations.

"Universal programs are not specific to the injustices that have been inflicted on African-Americans,"

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said Duke University economist William Darity, a veteran advocate of reparations. "I want to be sure that whatever is proposed and potentially enacted as a reparations program really is a substantive and dramatic intervention in the patterns of racial wealth inequality in the United States — not something superficial or minor that is labeled as reparations and then politicians say the national responsibility has been met."

Montague Simmons of the Movement for Black Lives, which has pushed for reparations, said the debate is "not just cash payments."

But "unless we're talking about something that has to be systemic and transfers power to the community, it's not likely going to be what we would consider reparations," he said.

For now, that's not how most Democratic presidential contenders are talking about reparations.

Harris has proposed monthly payments to qualified citizens of any race in the form of a tax credit. Warren has called for universal child care that would guarantee the benefit from birth until a child enters school. Families with income less than 200 percent of the poverty line would get free access and others would pay no more than 7 percent of their income.

Those benefits would likely have a disproportionate impact on African-Americans. But except for longshot candidate Marianne Williamson, no Democratic White House hopeful has called for financial remuneration for blacks.

Harris told reporters in Iowa on Sunday that "we have to all acknowledge that people have not started out on the same base and have not had equal opportunities to success."

Castro told The Root, a black online news site, that America "would be better off" if the government addressed the issue of reparations, which he said he would explore if elected.

And in New Hampshire on Friday, Warren said the U.S. needs to confront its "ugly history of racism" and "talk about the right way to address it." Asked whether she would support reparations for Native Americans, she responded: "It's an important part of the conversation."

Warren has been criticized for claiming Native American identity early in her career and apologized recently to the Cherokee Nation for releasing DNA test results as evidence she had Native American in her bloodline, albeit at least six generations back.

Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, asked at a CNN town hall Monday about his position on reparations given Warren's and Castro's comments, said, "What does that mean? What do they mean? I'm not sure anyone's very clear." He said the U.S. must put resources into distressed communities to improve the lives of people affected by the legacy of slavery.

Sanders did not support reparations during his 2016 presidential campaign.

In terms of a direct payment, reparations could be a tough political sell. In a Point Taken-Marist poll conducted in 2016, 68 percent of Americans said the country should not pay cash reparations to African-American descendants of slaves. About 8 in 10 white Americans said they were opposed to reparations, while about 6 in 10 black Americans said they were in favor.

Republican strategist Whit Ayres said the issue of reparations is "symptomatic of the fundamental debate that is roiling the Democratic Party today."

"There is no doubt that issues of race have been and remain critically important in American society," he said. "But the idea that you resolve those issues by taking money from white people and giving it to black people will make race relations worse, not better. Republicans would love to have that debate."

Pressed on "Fox News Sunday" on whether reparations would ultimately end up in the Democratic platform, Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez said the issue is "something that will be discussed during the course of the presidential nominating process."

Even if Democrats are rethinking the definition of reparations, Ta-Nehisi Coates, who sparked a national debate over the issue with a 2014 essay in *The Atlantic*, said the recent chatter is promising. He noted that a Dave Chappelle comedy skit mocked the idea in 2003.

"It has generally been dismissed as utter lunacy," Coates said. "It's not being mocked now. Step one is to get people to stop laughing."

When Barack Obama ran to become the nation's first African-American president, he opposed repara-

tions. But in an interview with Coates in the final days of his presidency, he didn't question the legitimacy of the concept.

"Theoretically, you can make, obviously, a powerful argument that centuries of slavery, Jim Crow, discrimination are the primary cause for all those gaps," Obama said, referencing the racial disparities faced by black Americans today.

"That those were wrongs done to the black community as a whole, and black families specifically, and that in order to close that gap, a society has a moral obligation to make a large, aggressive investment, even if it's not in the form of reparations checks, but in the form of a Marshall Plan, in order to close those gaps," Obama said, referring to the American initiative to provide economic assistance to Western Europe after World War II.

Still, he said it was politically difficult to achieve such a goal.

If presidential candidates want to prove they're serious about reparations, some proponents say they should back H.R. 40, the Reparations Study Act first introduced by former Michigan Rep. John Conyers in 1989. He reintroduced the bill every session until his resignation in 2017.

Texas Democratic Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee took up the legislation after Conyers' departure and reintroduced the bill in 2018, but it has not been introduced in the current Congress.

"It's not wrong to say we need to cure cancer — which is what I take the support of reparations to actually be — but we don't have a full diagnosis yet," Coates said. "If you can actually get a study that outlines what actually happened, what the needs are, what the debt actually is, and how it was incurred, then you can design programs to actually address it. That gets you out of the vagaries of just saying you support reparations."

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

R. Kelly leaves jail after posting \$100K in sex abuse case

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

CHICAGO (AP) — R. Kelly walked out of a Chicago jail Monday after posting \$100,000 bail that allows him to go free while awaiting trial on charges that he sexually abused four people dating back to 1998, including three underage girls.

Hours earlier, the R&B star pleaded not guilty to the allegations after spending the weekend behind bars. He said little during the brief arraignment, telling the judge only his name. His lawyers spoke on his behalf.

The singer-songwriter was arrested Friday on 10 counts of aggravated sexual abuse. A judge set bond at \$1 million, meaning Kelly had to post 10 percent of that amount to be released. Court records show a 47-year-old woman from the Chicago suburb of Romeoville, Illinois, posted the \$100,000 bail and identified herself on the bond slip as "a friend" of Kelly, according to the Chicago Tribune.

Kelly will be forbidden from having any contact with females younger than 18.

The black van that took the entertainer away from the jail stopped in the parking lot of a large downtown McDonald's. He did not immediately emerge, but some members of his entourage stood outside the vehicle and a dark-colored Mercedes-Benz parked next to it.

The McDonald's, a popular tourist attraction, was known as Chicago's Rock 'n' Roll McDonald's before being remodeled and losing its music theme.

The recording artist has been trailed for decades by allegations that he violated underage girls and women and held some as virtual slaves. Kelly has consistently denied any sexual misconduct, and he was acquitted of child pornography charges in 2008.

Attorney Michael Avenatti, who said he represents two Kelly accusers, said his legal team gave prosecutors a second video Monday that shows Kelly sexually abusing a minor. Avenatti previously gave prosecutors video evidence that he said showed Kelly having sex with an underage girl.

Avenatti said the second video involves a 14-year-old girl. He said the footage from 1999 or 2000 is

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about 55 minutes long, but he did not say if it was the same 14-year-old girl seen in the first video he turned over to the authorities.

"The conduct in the tape can be described as nothing short of outrageous, illegal. It leaves no question as to Mr. Kelly's guilt," Avenatti said.

Avenatti said he is aware of a third tape, but he did not provide details.

Defense attorney Steve Greenberg reiterated at a news conference that Kelly has done nothing wrong and said no one has shown him any evidence to the contrary.

"Everybody is entitled to a defense. Everybody is entitled to the presumption of innocence. We should all be taking a step back. Let's see what happens, what the evidence is and how this plays out," Greenberg said.

Details of the allegations against Kelly emerged Saturday when the prosecution released four detailed documents — one for each accuser — outlining the basis for the charges. The allegations date back as far as 1998 and span more than a decade.

A girl who attended Kelly's child pornography trial in 2008 got his autograph after a court session. He later invited her to his home in the Chicago suburb of Olympia Fields, where they had sex multiple times starting the following May, when she was 16, according to the documents, which said he also slapped, choked and spit on the girl.

In 1998, another girl reported meeting Kelly at a restaurant where she was having a 16th birthday party. Kelly's manager gave her the singer's business card and suggested she call Kelly. The girl's mother heard the exchange, took the card and told the manager her daughter was 16.

But her daughter later retrieved the card from her purse. She contacted Kelly, who told her to take a cab to his studio, where they had sex periodically for a year, the documents said. After the first encounter, she was given an envelope of cash.

In early 2003, a Chicago hairdresser told prosecutors that she thought she was going to braid Kelly's hair, but he pulled down his pants and instead tried to force her to give him oral sex. The woman, who was 24, was able to pull away, but Kelly ejaculated on her and spit in her face, the documents said.

Kelly's DNA was found in semen on one of the accuser's shirts, and semen found on a shirt worn by another was submitted for DNA testing, Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx said. It was not clear when the accusers turned the shirts over to authorities.

Rising from poverty on Chicago's South Side, Kelly broke into the R&B scene in 1993 with his first solo album, "12 Play," which produced such popular sex-themed songs as "Your Body's Callin'" and "Bump N' Grind." He has written numerous hits for himself and other artists, including Celine Dion, Michael Jackson and Lady Gaga.

The jury in 2008 acquitted Kelly of child pornography charges that centered on a graphic video that prosecutors said showed him having sex with a girl as young as 13. He and the female allegedly seen with him denied they were in the 27-minute video, even though the picture quality was good and witnesses testified it was them, and she did not take the stand.

Each count of the new charges carries up to seven years in prison, making it possible for Kelly to receive up to 70 years. Probation is also an option.

The walls began closing in on Kelly after the release of a BBC documentary about him last year and the multipart Lifetime documentary "Surviving R. Kelly," which aired last month. Together they detailed allegations that he held women against their will and ran a "sex cult."

Follow Michael Tarm on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/mtarm>

Check out the AP's complete coverage of the investigations into R. Kelly.

SEC wants Tesla CEO Elon Musk held in contempt for tweeting

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE, AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Tesla CEO Elon Musk's tweeting habits have triggered another legal challenge from stock market regulators worried about him using his Twitter account to mislead investors.

The latest dust-up emerged late Monday when the Securities and Exchange Commission asked a federal court in New York to hold Musk in contempt for violating a \$40 million settlement he begrudgingly reached with the U.S. stock market's chief regulatory agency five months ago.

Allegations that Musk broke the agreement by tweeting without company approval could renew a debate about whether he has become too reckless to continue as Tesla's CEO. That cloud has been hanging over Tesla, even though many analysts still consider Musk's vision to be an indispensable part of the electric car maker he co-founded in 2003.

Tesla's stock dropped about 4 percent in after-hours trading Monday, reflecting investors' anxiety about the latest twist in the drama surrounding Musk.

Contempt charges are typically brought against individuals who defy a court order. The SEC settlement was approved by a judge last fall, exposing Musk to potential fines or even jail time if he is found to be in contempt.

"He is looking like a repeat offender and a bad actor," said Carl Tobias, a law professor at the University of Richmond. "The SEC is taking action because it has a responsibility to protect the interests of consumers, investors and the public."

Tesla didn't immediately respond to requests for comment about the SEC's latest move. But letters from the company's attorneys included in Monday's filing argue that Musk remains in compliance with the settlement.

The SEC had sued Musk last September for using his Twitter account in August to announce he had secured financing for a potential buyout of Tesla — news that caused the company's stock to swing wildly. He later backed off that buyout idea, but regulators concluded he never had lined up the money to pull off the deal that probably would have required at least \$25 billion to pull off.

Musk initially contended that he hadn't done anything wrong before reluctantly agreeing to have future tweets that could affect Tesla's stock be pre-approved.

Now the SEC is alleging that Musk broke the terms of that agreement with a Feb. 19 tweet projecting that Tesla would make about 500,000 cars this year. About 4 1/2 hours after that tweet, Musk corrected his statement, saying he meant that Tesla had started to manufacture cars at a weekly clip that would translate into 500,000 cars during yearlong period, but not necessarily for calendar 2019.

Musk acknowledged he didn't get company approval for the initial Feb. 19 tweet, according to the SEC, even though car manufacturing statistics can affect stock prices of automakers. In his defense, Musk said he didn't think his tweet needed clearance because he was basing it on information that had been disclosed in late January. Both Feb. 19 tweets occurred while the U.S. stock market was closed. Tesla's stock rose by just \$1.10, or less than 1 percent, the next day.

But those factors evidently didn't sway the SEC, which illustrated Musk's allegedly contemptuous behavior with some of the comments he made during a television interview with "60 Minutes" that aired Dec. 9.

In that interview, Musk revealed that no one at Tesla was screening the tweets he posts to his account, which now has 25 million followers. When pressed how Tesla officials could know whether his tweets might be violating the SEC settlement if they weren't readying them before they were posted, Musk replied: "Well, I guess we might make some mistakes. Who knows?"

The SEC also pointed out that during the same interview, Musk declared: "I want to be clear. I do not respect the SEC. I do not respect them."

Tesla's legal team realized Musk may have crossed a line with his Feb. 19 tweet about car manufacturing, according to the SEC. After that tweet posted, a Tesla lawyer "immediately arranged to meet with Musk and draft the corrective statement that Musk tweeted out over four hours later."

Nigerian president takes early lead amid vote-rigging charge

By CARA ANNA and JEROME DELAY, Associated Press

KANO, Nigeria (AP) — Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari surged to an early lead in election returns Monday, winning seven of 36 states in Africa's largest democracy, while the main opposition rejected the count, alleging manipulation.

Election observers said the last-minute postponement of the vote until Saturday discouraged some Nigerians from going to the polls as Buhari seeks a second term heading a country troubled by corruption, insecurity and a weak economy.

Buhari, a former military dictator from the north, faced a strong challenge from top opposition candidate Atiku Abubakar, a former vice president and businessman, in a race many saw as too close to call.

As of midnight, Abubakar had won three southern states and the territory that includes the capital, Abuja. Buhari led by more than 450,000 votes overall.

Abubakar's party chairman, Uche Secondus, accused ruling party agents of hacking into the electoral commission's computer server and manipulating results. He rejected the count as "incorrect, thus unacceptable."

The ruling party dismissed the claim and accused Abubakar's party of trying to discredit the election. Spokesman Festus Keyamo urged the opposition not to "derail us to the dark past with its childish antics."

Final results are expected on Tuesday or Wednesday.

African Union observers called the political climate "largely peaceful and conducive for the conducting of credible elections" but urged the country of some 190 million people to remain calm.

A Nigerian civil society platform, the Situation Room, noted "major logistic lapses" in the vote. The election was a step back from 2015, praised as one of Nigeria's most transparent and efficient votes, the group said.

At least 39 people were killed in voting-related violence over the weekend. Election observers organized by the Commonwealth, of which Nigeria is a member, called that "deeply troubling," saying Africa's largest democracy can do better.

"The peaceful achievement of millions was overshadowed by the violence of a few," U.S. Ambassador Stuart Symington said.

Nigeria's election was originally scheduled for Feb. 16 but the electoral commission postponed it just hours before polls were to open, citing logistical issues. The late arrival of election officials and materials, as well as malfunctions and harassment, caused voting to continue in parts of the country into Sunday.

The delays "risk undermining citizen confidence in elections and disenfranchising voters," the U.S.-based International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute observers said. European Union observers said many people were discouraged from voting.

It was not yet clear how many of Nigeria's estimated 73 million eligible voters turned out. The YIAGA Africa project, which deployed more than 3,900 observers, put it at between 36 percent and 40 percent, down from 44 percent in 2015. It projected that no runoff election will be needed.

Widespread concerns continued about possible incitement to violence by the major political parties, the U.S.-based observers said, while noting that Nigerians have showed resilience and patience.

Supporters of Buhari and Abubakar briefly confronted each other in the northern city of Kano, pulling knives and machetes. The overall mood was celebratory, however, as the ruling party anticipated victory in Nigeria's largest city and the heart of the largely Muslim north.

The president is widely seen as being relatively upright in a country riddled with corruption. But some voters said he has not delivered on his promises.

"I believe we need a change," said 34-year-old Cosmos Eze in Kano, as a television in his auto parts shop broadcast election results.

Shops along his street are sprinkled with names like Blessed, Success and Godswill, but workers grumbled. Nigeria's economy dipped into a rare recession in 2016 when global oil prices crashed, and unemployment shot up to 23 percent. Recovery from the recession has been slow.

A bag of rice that was 7,500 naira (\$20) before Buhari took office is now twice that, said Nasir Auwal, a

35-year-old bank worker.

He supported the president, however, saying the threat from the Islamic extremist group Boko Haram has essentially disappeared in the city that once saw scores of people killed.

"Before, when I left my house, my wife would cry because she was afraid I would not come back," Auwal said. The extremists were largely pushed out of communities under Buhari but have made a deadly resurgence in recent months, attacking military bases in the northeast.

Waiting for the announcement of a winner, 48-year-old shop worker Innocent Akannam repeated the wishes of many Nigerians.

"What I'm expecting after the final results is, let there be peace," he said.

Associated Press writer Cara Anna reported in Kano, Nigeria, and AP writer Jerome Delay reported from Abuja, Nigeria. AP photographer Ben Curtis in Kano contributed to this report.

Follow AP's full coverage of the Nigeria elections here: <https://www.apnews.com/Nigeria>

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For many, 'Green Book' win was a confounding Oscar climax

By JAKE COYLE, AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — An Academy Awards that sparkled with more women and African-American winners than ever before came to a screeching halt with the night's final honor. Some would even call it a "Crash."

In a twist ending that shocked many of the Dolby Theatre attendees and those watching at home, Peter Farrelly's hotly debated buddy road-trip dramedy "Green Book" triumphed at the 91st Oscars, complicating the story line on a night that had, until that moment, belonged to cultural milestones like Ryan Coogler's "Black Panther" and Alfonso Cuarón's border-breaking Netflix release, "Roma."

It's not unusual for the announcement of an Oscar winner to provoke a grimace or two. It's less ordinary to see members of the crowd leap to their feet, wave their arms in disgust and nearly stomp out of the theater.

The cameras missed it, but that was how Spike Lee responded in the Dolby Theatre. After all, Lee has seen it before. Almost exactly 30 years ago, "Driving Miss Daisy" — a movie with a similarly simplistic view of race that is often compared to "Green Book" — won best picture in the same year Lee's incendiary "Do the Right Thing" came out. Backstage, Lee joked on the win for "Green Book" that "the ref made a bad call."

"I'm snake bit. Every time somebody is driving somebody, I lose!" Lee, who won his first competitive Oscar for the script to "BlackKkKlansmn," told reporters, laughing. "But they changed the seating arrangement."

Lee was far from alone in his reaction. "Green Book" is the most divisive, and by some measure, most critically derided best-picture winner in more than a decade. Its win was greeted by many as a sign that Hollywood may have changed enough to honor the second and third black female non-acting Oscar winners (as it did Sunday with costume designer Ruth E. Carter and production designer Hannah Beachler for "Black Panther"), but it hadn't progressed so far that it didn't hand the industry's top award to a movie criticized for portraying a retrograde view of race as seen through a white protagonist's eyes.

"Many of us in the black community would like to see greater recognition for movies about the black experience and not just for movies that make the black experience comfortable for white audiences," television commentator and author Keith Boykin wrote.

Los Angeles Times film critic Justin Chang called it "the worst best picture winner since 'Crash'" and, further, "insultingly glib and hucksterish, a self-satisfied crock masquerading as an olive branch." According to the review-aggregation website Metacritic, not since 2004's "Crash" — another movie about race relations made primarily by white men — has there been a winner with worse reviews.

But the backlash to "Green Book" — a film about the erudite jazz pianist Don Shirley (Mahershala Ali, who won best supporting actor) and the Bronx-native bouncer-turned-chauffer Tony "Lip" Vallelonga

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(Viggo Mortensen) — goes much deeper than that. Though the film's fans see in Farrelly's film an often funny, feel-good odd-couple tale, critics of "Green Book" see a movie that trades on racial stereotypes and crassly capitalizes on the Green Book — a segregation-era travel guide for African Americans in the Deep South — with little interest in dramatizing its important history.

Following the win, filmmaker Ava DuVernay tweeted about the guide's creator, Victor Hugo Green, "for anyone who may interested in what the Green Book actually was."

"Green Book" was also fiercely criticized for not consulting with Shirley's family: his last living brother Maurice Shirley and niece Carol Shirley Kimble. Kimble said there was "no due diligence done to afford my family and my deceased uncle the respect of properly representing him, his legacy, his worth and the excellence in which he operated and the excellence in which he lived."

"It's once again a depiction of a white man's version of a black man's life," Kimble told Shadow and Act.

It was noted, too, that in neither acceptance speech did the film's makers — Farrelly, Nick Vallelonga and Brian Currie, who together also won best screenplay — thank Shirley. Asked about that backstage at the Oscars, Vallelonga, the son of Tony Vallelonga, added his thanks to the pianist and addressed Kimble's point.

"I wish I could have reached out to Don Shirley's family," said Vallelonga. "I didn't even know they really existed until after we were making the film, and we contacted his estate for music; and then the filmmakers, we invited them all to screenings and discussions. But I personally was not allowed to speak to his family, per Don Shirley's wishes."

Later, at the Governor's Ball, Vallelonga defended his film.

"Some of the attacks are unwarranted and untrue. But we believed in the movie the whole time," Vallelonga said. "If it wasn't true in our hearts, I don't think it would resonate with people. It would come out false."

And "Green Book" had its boosters. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar praised it in a column for The Hollywood Reporter, arguing that discrepancies that irk family members didn't matter, and that "filmmakers are history's interpreters, not its chroniclers." Ali, who became the second black actor to win two Oscars after Denzel Washington, called the film "a legitimate offering" in a November interview with The Associated Press, saying: "I'm getting some crap from people saying it's a rosy picture of race, but, you know, it's just a rosy picture of that relationship, not all race relationships."

The movie's win also wasn't a complete shock. "Green Book" triumphed at the highly predictive Producers Guild Awards, which, like the Oscars, uses a preferential ballot. And it won one of awards season's first telling trophies: the Toronto International Film Festival's audience award, besting "A Star Is Born" and "Roma."

At the box office, the Universal release (made for a modest \$23 million) was also the biggest ticket seller of any best picture nominee since nominations were announced in January. And two of the biggest rivals to "Green Book" at the Oscars — "Roma" and "Black Panther" — both had some academy members dead-set against voting for them. Netflix is seen as a threat to movie theaters since most of its films debut directly on its streaming service. Others have resentment for superheroes' dominance in today's moviemaking.

Following withering #OscarsSoWhite critiques, the film academy has in recent years moved to diversify its largely white and male membership. Even in his disappointment over "Green Book," Lee credited former academy president Cheryl Boone Isaacs and April Reign, who coined the hashtag, for opening up the academy.

"So that's why three black women, if I'm counting correctly, won Oscars," said Lee, whose tally included Carter, Beachler and Regina King, the supporting actress winner for "If Beale Street Could Talk." "That would not have happened without OscarsSoWhite and Cheryl Boone Isaacs. Facts. As my brother Jay-Z says, facts."

Kevin Willmott, who co-wrote "BlacKkKlansman" with Lee, Charlie Wachtel and David Rabinowitz, was less eager to slam "Green Book" and more inclined to celebrate.

"You know, it's a real breakthrough that any film about race gets to win anything," said Willmott, who also penned Lee's "Chi-Raq." "When I first started in the industry, it was really bad; and we have come

a long way since then. And tonight is a huge step forward I think in many different ways. And it's still frustrating at times, but it's great to see progress being made."

AP Entertainment Writer Mike Cidoni Lennox contributed to this report.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

Authorities: Kraft visited parlor for sex on day of AFC game

By TERRY SPENCER, Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft visited a Florida massage parlor for sex acts the night before and the morning of last month's AFC championship game, authorities said Monday in documents charging him with two misdemeanor counts of soliciting prostitution.

Kraft is one of hundreds of men charged in recent days as part of a crackdown on prostitution allegedly occurring in massage parlors between Palm Beach and Orlando. Ten spas have been closed and several people, most of them women originally from China, have been charged with running the operation.

The 77-year-old Kraft was chauffeured to the Orchids of Asia Day Spa in a 2014 white Bentley on the evening of Jan. 19, where police say they videotaped him engaging in a sex act and then handing over an undetermined amount of cash, Jupiter, Florida, police said in charging documents released by the Palm Beach State Attorney's Office.

Investigators said Kraft returned 17 hours later, arriving at the upper-middle class shopping center where the spa was located in a chauffeured 2015 blue Bentley, the documents said. Kraft, who is worth \$6 billion, was videotaped engaging in sex acts before paying with a \$100 bill and another bill, police said. He then flew to Kansas City to watch his Patriots defeat the Chiefs in overtime hours later.

Kraft, whose team won the Super Bowl earlier this month in Atlanta, denied wrongdoing Friday, shortly after Jupiter police announced he was being charged. The NFL said Monday in a statement that its personal conduct policy "applies equally to everyone in the NFL" and it will handle "this allegation in the same way we would handle any issue under the policy." Kraft's wife, Myra Hiatt Kraft, died in 2011. He has been dating 39-year-old actress Ricki Noel Lander since 2012.

Another high-profile businessman, former Citigroup President John Havens, 62, is also charged with paying for sex at the Orchids of Asia spa. He too has denied wrongdoing. He was Citigroup president in 2011 and 2012. He now runs a hedge fund that was spun off from Citigroup. Twenty-three other men are also charged in Palm Beach County, with others charged in a string of counties spanning more than 150 miles (240 kilometers).

Palm Beach State Attorney Dave Aronberg said Kraft will be issued a summons that is similar to a traffic ticket and assigned a day to appear in court. Most people charged for the first time with soliciting are eligible for a diversion program where they pay a fine, perform 100 hours of community service and attend a class where they learn about the dangers of prostitution and how it is often tied to human trafficking. Fines can be up to \$5,000.

Authorities investigated the parlors for months, gathering evidence through observation, interviews with men stopped leaving the spas, trash bin searches and surveillance of their owners. Judges then issued warrants allowing them to secretly install cameras inside the spas to record what transpired.

Aronberg steered a Monday news conference away from Kraft's case to the larger issue of human trafficking. No human trafficking charges have been filed against Kraft, Haven or any of the other alleged customers, but at least one alleged operator is charged in Indian River County with trafficking.

At least some alleged operators and workers were born in China and Chinese translators are being used to interview women connected with the businesses, according to court documents. The documents said many of the workers were forced to live at the spas and were not allowed to leave without an escort.

"The larger picture, which we must all confront, is the cold reality that many prostitutes in cases like this are themselves victims, often lured to this country with promises of a better life, only to be forced to live

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and work in a sweat shop or a brothel performing sex acts for strangers," Aronberg said.

He called such prostitution "modern-day slavery" fueled by customers "who aren't aware or don't want to be aware of those being exploited."

Kathy Chen, a researcher with the anti-human trafficking group Praesidium Partners, has helped Asian women rescued from sex rings. She said it's often difficult to persuade them to testify against their captors, fearing for themselves and for their families back home.

Chen said Chinese sex rings often prey on young women from lower economic classes. One told its workers that "in six months we guarantee you enough to buy a car and after three years you can buy this store and in five years you can buy a home ... and you can bring your family over and you will have everything."

Aronberg pointed out that Florida has severe punishments for human trafficking and allows the workers to be treated as victims if they cooperate. He also said the federal government offers visas to victims who are foreign nationals if they cooperate, allowing them to remain in the country indefinitely. Authorities have not said how many women worked at the parlors or where they are being housed since the spas' closures.

Aronberg said he was not shocked that Kraft and other wealthy men would be charged with soliciting sex in a massage parlor.

"Defendants in these matters come from every socio-economic group. It is just the reality of the times we live in," he said.

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

AP writers Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale and Jennifer Kay in Miami contributed to this report.

United Methodist Church on edge of breakup over LGBT stand

By DAVID CRARY and JIM SALTER, Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The United Methodist Church teetered on the brink of breakup Monday after more than half the delegates at an international conference voted to maintain bans on same-sex weddings and ordination of gay clergy.

Their favored plan, if formally approved, could drive supporters of LGBT inclusion to leave America's second-largest Protestant denomination.

A final vote on rival plans for the church's future won't come until Tuesday's closing session, and the outcome remains uncertain. But the preliminary vote Monday showed that the Traditional Plan, which calls for keeping the LGBT bans and enforcing them more strictly, had the support of 56 percent of the more than 800 delegates attending the three-day conference in St. Louis.

The primary alternative proposal, called the One Church Plan, was rebuffed in a separate preliminary vote, getting only 47 percent support. Backed by a majority of the church's Council of Bishops in hopes of avoiding a schism, it would leave decisions about same-sex marriage and ordination of LGBT clergy up to regional bodies and would remove language from the church's law book asserting that "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching."

Monday's voting did not kill the One Church Plan but makes its prospects on Tuesday far more difficult. As evidence of the deep divisions within the faith, delegates Monday approved plans that would allow disaffected churches to leave the denomination while keeping their property.

"This is really painful," said David Watson, a dean and professor at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, who was at the gathering. "Our disagreement has pitted friend against friend, which no one wanted."

Formed in a merger in 1968, the United Methodist Church claims about 12.6 million members worldwide, including nearly 7 million in the U.S. While other mainline Protestant denominations, such as the Episcopal and Presbyterian (U.S.A.) churches, have embraced the two gay-friendly practices, the Methodist church still officially bans them, even though acts of defiance by pro-LGBT clergy have multiplied and talk of a possible breakup has intensified.

The strong showing for the Traditional Plan reflects the fact that the UMC, unlike other mainstream

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Protestant churches in the U.S., is a global denomination. About 43 percent of the delegates in St. Louis are from abroad, mostly from Africa, and overwhelmingly support the LGBT bans.

"We Africans are not children in need of Western enlightenment when it comes to the church's sexual ethics," the Rev. Jerry Kulah, dean at a Methodist theology school in Liberia, said in a speech over the weekend. "We stand with the global church, not a culturally liberal church elite in the U.S."

The Africans have some strong allies among U.S. conservatives, including the Rev. John Miles II, senior pastor of First United Methodist Church in Jonesboro, Arkansas, who opposes same-sex marriage and gays in the pulpit.

"I have a very difficult time even though I have gays in my family and in my church," he said. "I know it grieves them and it grieves me to grieve them. But it's just what we believe is the truth."

In recent years, the church's enforcement of its LGBT bans has been inconsistent. Some clergy members have conducted same-sex marriages or come out as gay from the pulpit. In some cases, the church has filed charges against clergy who violated the bans, yet the denomination's Judicial Council has ruled against the imposition of mandatory penalties, which typically called for an unpaid suspension of at least one year.

The Traditional Plan would require stricter and more consistent enforcement.

Among the outspoken supporters of the more permissive One Church Plan was the Rev. Adam Hamilton, a pastor in Leawood, Kansas, who said it offered a way for Methodists "to live together — conservatives, centrists and progressives — despite our differences."

For LGBT Methodists, it is a time of anxiety.

"For me it's about who's in God's love, and nobody's left out of that," said Lois McCullen Parr, 60, a church elder from Albion, Michigan, who identifies as bisexual and queer. "The Gospel I understand said Jesus is always widening the circle, expanding the circle, so that everyone's included."

Crary reported from New York.

Main UK opposition party takes step to back new Brexit vote

By JILL LAWLESS and LORNE COOK, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister Theresa May returned from a seemingly unproductive meeting with European Union leaders Monday to a growing attempt by British lawmakers to stop her from taking Britain out of the EU on March 29 without a divorce deal.

With May and the EU at odds over not just how, but when Brexit should happen, her political opponents were getting increasingly desperate to take control of Britain's muddled departure from the bloc.

At an EU-Arab League summit in Egypt, the EU warned Britain it faces the prospect of delaying its planned March 29 departure or the consequences of a chaotic exit. European Council President Donald Tusk, who chairs meetings of EU nation leaders, said Monday it would be "rational" to postpone Brexit day.

May insisted she intends for Britain to leave as planned in a little more than a month. But her often divided opponents may be coalescing around a plan to prevent Britain crashing out of the EU with no agreement in place.

The main opposition Labour Party took a big step Monday toward backing a new referendum on the country's EU membership.

The party has previously said it would support a referendum as a last resort if it could not secure a new election or make changes to May's EU divorce deal. Britain's Parliament has so far rejected the deal struck between May's government and the bloc, and is due to hold a series of votes Wednesday on next steps in the Brexit process.

Labour has proposed its own withdrawal plan as an alternative to the government's deal with the EU. The party said Monday it would back a second public vote if the House of Commons rejects its plan this week, as is widely expected.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said the party is committed to "putting forward or supporting an amendment in favor of a public vote to prevent a damaging Tory Brexit being forced on the country."

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The party did not specify what voters might be asked to consider in any future vote, though it has previously said the option of Britain remaining an EU member would be included.

Labour has previously said it would only support a second referendum as a last resort if it could not secure a new general election or make changes to May's divorce deal.

The change in approach follows the resignations of nine Labour lawmakers last week, partly over the party's failure to back another Brexit referendum. It is likely to cheer many party members, who have backed calls for a so-called "people's vote."

While there is little chance of a second referendum taking place without the support of Labour, the path to another Brexit vote is far from clear. It would require the support of numerous lawmakers from the governing Conservative Party, for example.

Since lawmakers rejected May's deal with the EU last month, the prime minister has sought to get changes from Brussels on a provision for the border between the U.K.'s Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland.

The mechanism, known as the backstop, is a safeguard that would keep the U.K. in a customs union with the EU to remove the need for checks along the Irish border until a permanent new trading relationship is in place.

May wants to revise the deal to reassure opponents from her Conservative Party, as well as from a Northern Ireland party that props up her minority government, the backstop would only apply temporarily.

But EU leaders insist that the legally binding Brexit withdrawal agreement, which took a year and a half to negotiate, can't be reopened.

The impasse has raised concerns that Britain will leave the EU without a deal, a scenario that would likely mean new tariffs on British exports and serious disruption to trade between the two sides. The Bank of England has warned that the British economy could shrink by 8 percent in the months after a disorderly Brexit.

May has said a new vote on any revised Brexit deal won't be held this week and could come as late as March 12.

A number of British lawmakers are seeking to wrest control of the process from the government and are looking to get support for an amendment that would require May to seek an extension to the Brexit date if Parliament fails to back her deal.

"I don't see how businesses can plan. I don't see how public services can plan, and I think it's just deeply damaging," Labour lawmaker Yvette Cooper, one of those behind the move, told the BBC.

On Monday, the EU's Tusk warned that the chances of a withdrawal agreement being concluded in time are receding, and that sticking by the planned Brexit date would be too risky.

"I believe that in the situation we are in, an extension would be a rational solution," Tusk told reporters at an EU-Arab League summit in Egypt after talks with May that he said included discussions over extending the Brexit process.

May insisted a deal in time was still possible.

"It is within our grasp to leave with a deal on 29th of March and I think that that is where all of our energies should be focused," May said.

She said that "any delay is a delay. It doesn't address the issue."

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte warned her against "sleepwalking" into a chaotic Brexit next month.

"It's absolutely unacceptable. And I think your best friends have to warn you for that," Rutte told the BBC. "Wake up. This is real."

Raf Casert in Brussels and Pan Pylas in London contributed.

This story has been corrected to show nine Labour Party lawmakers, not eight, resigned last week.

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

AP FACT CHECK: Trump overstates the lethality of fentanyl

By **CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump made the astonishing claim Monday that a small spoonful of fentanyl can kill everyone in a U.S. state. That's not close to true.

A teaspoon of illegally made fentanyl could conceivably kill 3,000 people, by one measure. The state with the smallest population, Wyoming, has about 578,000 people. It would take close to 200 teaspoons to kill a population of that size.

TRUMP: "A little tiny spoonful can wipe out a state. It's hard to believe. It can wipe out an entire state, a spoonful of this stuff." — remarks at a meeting with governors.

THE FACTS: It can't.

To be sure, fentanyl can be extraordinarily lethal as well as addictive.

The Drug Enforcement Administration cited evidence in a case last year that 1 gram of fentanyl can kill 300 to 500 people. The case involved a Belleville, Illinois, man convicted in Texas of trafficking nearly 12 kilograms (26 pounds) of the drug, which the agency says is enough to kill up to 5.8 million people.

A teaspoon generally holds 4 to 6 grams, depending on the dry substance, equating to a theoretical death toll from fentanyl of 1,200 to 3,000, far from Trump's claim that an amount that small can wipe out "an entire state."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says illicitly manufactured fentanyl is the main driver of recent increases in synthetic opioid deaths.

Trump made his assertion while discussing efforts to get China to crack down on illicit fentanyl sold to the U.S. The drug killed tens of thousands of users in the U.S. last year.

AP Medical Writer Lauran Neergaard contributed to this report.

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Supreme Court: Judges can't rule from beyond the grave

By **JESSICA GRESKO, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal judges can't rule from beyond the grave, the Supreme Court said Monday.

The high court said in an unsigned opinion that a federal court can't count the vote of a judge who died in a decision issued after the judge's death. The justices said "federal judges are appointed for life, not for eternity."

The case the court was ruling on involved Judge Stephen Reinhardt, a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Reinhardt died on March 29, 2018 but was listed as the author of a decision issued 11 days after he died. A note on the decision said that Reinhardt, who was 87 when he died, "fully participated in this case" and that voting on it, his opinion and opinions written by other judges were completed and final before his death.

But the Supreme Court said that it was "not aware of any rule or decision of the Ninth Circuit that renders judges' votes and opinions immutable at some point in time prior to their public release." The justices wrote that "it is generally understood that a judge may change his or her position up to the very moment when a decision is released."

The court said that because Reinhardt was no longer a judge when the decision in the case was filed, "the Ninth Circuit erred in counting him as a member of the majority."

"That practice effectively allowed a deceased judge to exercise the judicial power of the United States after his death," the justices wrote.

The Supreme Court noted that without Reinhardt's vote, the majority opinion he authored was only approved by 5 of the 10 judges on the panel hearing the case "who were still living when the decision was filed." The Supreme Court sent the case back to the Ninth Circuit for reconsideration.

The Supreme Court's decision aligns with its own practice — that when a justice has voted in a case but dies before a decision is issued their vote doesn't count. That happened most recently in the case of Justice Antonin Scalia who had voted in cases that were pending at the time of his death in 2016.

The Reinhardt case had to do with the federal Equal Pay Act, which generally requires men and women to be paid equally for the same work. The question for the Ninth Circuit panel was whether, under the law, employers can use past salary to justify a disparity in pay. Reinhardt wrote that "Based on the text, history, and purpose of the Equal Pay Act, the answer is clear: No." Five judges agreed with his reasoning. Five other judges agreed with the outcome, but not with the opinion Reinhardt wrote.

The case involved Fresno County public school math consultant Aileen Rizo, who sued after learning she made less than male colleagues. Rizo challenged the school system's policy that based all new employees' salaries on their prior salaries. The school system argued the policy didn't favor men or women. The policy has since changed.

Follow Jessica Gresko on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/jessicagresko>

Vietnam vows 'maximum level' security for Trump-Kim summit

By FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — With North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on an armored train barreling through China toward Vietnam's capital, and U.S. President Donald Trump en route to Hanoi, Vietnamese officials scrambled Monday to finish preparations for a rushed summit that will capture global attention.

Officials in Hanoi said they had about 10 days to prepare for the summit — much less than the nearly two months they said Singapore was given for the first Trump-Kim meeting last year— but still vowed to provide airtight security for the two leaders.

"Security will be at the maximum level," Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Le Hoai Trung told reporters at a briefing meant to showcase the nation's efforts to welcome Kim and Trump.

Another official, Nguyen Manh Hung, the leader of the information ministry, said the 3,000 journalists from 40 countries expected in Hanoi could rely on his agency as "you'd count on a family member."

The world will be watching as Trump and Kim deal with one of Asia's biggest security challenges: North Korea's pursuit of a nuclear program that stands on the verge of viably threatening any target on the planet.

Although many experts are skeptical that Kim will give up the nukes he likely sees as his best guarantee of continued rule, there was a palpable, carnival-like excitement among many in Hanoi as the final preparations were put in place.

T-shirts were being sold bearing Kim's face along with the phrase "Rocket Man," a nod to the insulting nickname Trump gave Kim in 2017, when North Korean weapons tests and back-and-forth threats by the leaders had many fearing war. Kindergarteners dressed in traditional Korean Hanbok were practicing songs meant to welcome Kim. Grinning tourists were posing in front of the hundreds of U.S. and North Korean flags around the city.

The ultra-tight security will be appreciated by North Korean authorities, who are extremely vigilant about the safety of Kim, the third member of his family to rule the North with absolute power. Kim's decision to take a train, not a plane, may have been influenced by better ability to control security. When Kim flew to Singapore, North Korea borrowed a Chinese plane.

Vietnam is eager to show off its huge economic and development improvements since the destruction of the Vietnam War, but the country also tolerates no dissent and is able to provide the kind of firm hand not allowed by more democratic potential hosts.

Take the reaction to two men impersonating Kim and Trump who'd been posing for pictures with curious onlookers ahead of the summit.

Last week, the Kim lookalike, whose name is Lee Howard Ho Wun, posted on Facebook that about 15 police or immigration officers demanded a mandatory "interview" and threatened him with deportation. He said officials later told him that his visa was invalid and he had to leave the country.

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"I feel a little bit annoyed," the Hong Kong-based impersonator, who uses the name Howard X, said as he checked out of his hotel. "But what is to be expected of a one-party state with no sense of humor?"

Vietnam has also announced an unprecedented traffic ban along a possible arrival route for Kim. The Communist Party's Nhan Dan newspaper quoted the Roads Department as saying the ban will affect the 169-kilometer (105-mile) stretch of Highway One from Dong Dang, on the border with China, to Hanoi.

Hundreds of soldiers guarded the area near the Dong Dang railway station on Monday ahead of Kim's expected arrival. Kim may get off his train in Dong Dang and finish his journey to Hanoi by car.

"Dong Dang station will receive leader Kim Jong Un's train, after it passes the Vietnam-China border, starting his official visit to Vietnam and attend USA-DPRK summit," Vietnam's Government Office said in a statement. DPRK is an abbreviation of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

There are high expectations for the Hanoi summit after a vague declaration at the first meeting in June in Singapore that disappointed many.

In a meeting with senior aides in Seoul, South Korean President Moon Jae-in said Monday that the Trump-Kim talks would be a critical opportunity to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Moon, who met Kim three times last year and has lobbied hard to revive nuclear diplomacy between the U.S. and North Korea, is eager for a breakthrough that would allow him to push ambitious plans for inter-Korean engagement, including lucrative joint economic projects that are held back by U.S.-led sanctions against the North.

"If President Trump succeeds in dissolving the world's last remaining Cold War rivalry, it will become yet another great feat that will be indelibly recorded in world history," Moon said.

Trump, via Twitter, has worked to temper those expectations, predicting before leaving for Hanoi a "continuation of the progress" made in Singapore but adding a tantalizing nod to "Denuclearization?" He also said that Kim knows that "without nuclear weapons, his country could fast become one of the great economic powers anywhere in the World."

North Korea has spent decades, at great political and economic sacrifice, building its nuclear program, and there is widespread skepticism among experts that it will give away that program cheaply.

South Korean media have reported that Trump and Kim might strike a deal that stops short of a hoped-for roadmap for full North Korean denuclearization.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on "Fox News Sunday" that he was hoping for a "substantive step forward." He cautioned, "it may not happen, but I hope that it will."

AP journalists Yves Dam Van in Dong Dang and Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul, South Korea, contributed to this report.

Analysis: Pope's sex abuse summit: What it did and didn't do

By NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis' summit on preventing sexual abuse was never going to meet the expectations placed on it by victims groups, the media and ordinary Catholics outraged over a scandal that has harmed so many and compromised the church's moral authority so much.

Indeed, no sweeping new law was announced to punish bishops who cover up abuse. No files were released or global reporting requirement endorsed requiring priestly rapists to be reported to police. In his final speech to the summit Sunday, Pope Francis even fell back on the hierarchy's frequent complaint of unfair press coverage.

But something has changed.

By inviting the leaders of Catholic bishops conferences and religious orders from around the world to a four-day tutorial on preventing sex abuse, Francis has made clear that they all are responsible for protecting the children in their care and must punish the priests who might violate them, or risk punishment themselves.

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"In people's justified anger, the church sees the reflection of the wrath of God, betrayed and insulted by these deceitful consecrated persons," the pontiff said.

And yet as strong as his words were, it was actually the handful of women invited to address the summit who drove the message home most forcefully. That too speaks volumes about the future of an institution where women are officially barred from the hierarchy's ranks but are increasingly raising their voices and walking out when they aren't heard.

Nigerian Sister Veronica Openibo, superior of her religious order, shamed the men in the room for their decades of silence over the "atrocities" committed by their priests and warned them that they would be judged for their inaction going forward.

"This storm will not pass by," she said.

Valentina Alazraki, the longtime Vatican correspondent for Mexico's Televisa, challenged the men in power to decide whether they are on the side of the victims, or the priests who raped them.

"We have decided which side to be on," Alazraki told the summit, warning that unless the hierarchy too sides with victims, "journalists, who seek the common good, will be your worst enemies."

Francis was so impressed by the address of Linda Ghisoni, a canon lawyer and under-secretary in the Vatican's laity office, that he delivered an impromptu ode to women at the end of her speech.

And by all indications, the searing testimony of a woman who as a child endured five years of rape at the hands of a priest — and a lifetime of trauma, eating disorders, depression and suicide attempts — brought the 190 bishops and religious superiors to a stunned, shameful silence.

She told them that she had wanted to tell them something about her childhood, but couldn't because since she was 11 years old "I, who loved coloring books and doing somersaults on the grass, have not existed."

"Instead, engraved in my eyes, ears, nose, body and soul, are all the times he immobilized me, the child, with superhuman strength."

The Rev. Hans Zollner, one of the conference organizers, said her tearful testimony stopped the bishops cold.

"This has really reached the heart level," he said. "And if you get to that level, you cannot be as you were before."

And some concrete steps were announced at the summit's end that will change things as they were before.

For starters, the Vatican in the coming days is expected to issue a new child protection policy for the Vatican City State. Despite having instructed all the world's bishops' conferences to draft such a policy in 2011, the headquarters of the global Catholic Church still has none.

The Vatican will soon issue a step-by-step guidebook for bishops around the world explaining how to investigate and prosecute abuse cases. Task forces at the regional or continental level will be established to give them expert help, since many dioceses in poorer countries simply don't have the legal resources on hand.

All indications are that the Vatican will be re-evaluating the use of "pontifical secret" in abuse cases, so that victims can actually learn the outcomes of their cases.

New "clarifications" are expected to be issued about implementing a 2016 law on holding bishops and religious superiors accountable when they cover up abuse cases.

And individual bishops conferences, such as in the U.S., are plowing ahead to articulate clear accountability proposals for their leadership.

Archbishop Charles Scicluna, the Vatican's longtime sex crimes prosecutor, told reporters at the summit's end that his main takeaway after four days was that there is now a recognition within the church that "abuse of minors is an egregious crime, but so too is cover-up."

And with that, he said, "There is no going back."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Nicole Winfield has covered three papacies and the Vatican since 2001.

More AP coverage of clergy sex abuse at <https://www.apnews.com/Sexualabusebyclergy>

Survey: American companies worry US-Chinese ties will worsen

By JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — American companies want President Donald Trump's negotiations with Beijing to win them real improvements in their access to Chinese markets, not just a smaller overall U.S. trade deficit, a business group said Tuesday.

Companies that responded to a questionnaire last week want an end to Chinese pressure to hand over technology, unequal enforcement of laws and other chronic problems, said Tim Stratford, chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in China. If not, he said, their losses in a tariff war "will be a tremendous waste."

The comments appear to reflect support for U.S. officials including Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer who want changes in industrial policy that Beijing's trading partners say violate its free-trade obligations. Others Trump might accept less in return for China narrowing its politically volatile trade surplus with the United States through higher purchases of soybeans and other exports.

"If we don't address the underlying structural issues, we will have continued trade frictions," Stratford said in an interview.

Trump's dramatic decision in July to hike duties on Chinese imports split the U.S. business world. Some companies support the move to force Beijing into negotiations while others complain the tariffs are too costly and disruptive.

Among 150 companies that responded to a questionnaire last week, 43 percent want to keep Trump's punitive tariffs of 10 percent on \$200 billion of Chinese goods in place while negotiations go ahead, Stratford said. He said nearly 10 percent want Trump to go ahead with a planned March 1 increase to 25 percent.

Trump announced Sunday he would postpone the March 1 increase after weekend talks made "significant progress." He set no new date.

Both governments said they made progress on technology transfer, protection of intellectual property rights and non-tariff barriers to market access but gave no details.

Companies that responded to last week's questionnaire said they want guarantees Chinese anti-monopoly and other laws will be enforced equally against them and local competitors, according to Stratford.

"We want a deal that really addresses the persistent problems," said Stratford, a lawyer and former deputy U.S. trade representative. "There are mixed feelings about the tariffs. The majority are in favor."

Trump raised duties in response to complaints China steals or pressures companies to hand over technology. Washington wants Beijing to roll back plans including "Made in China 2025," which calls for government-led creation of global competitors in robotics and other technology.

Europe, Japan and other trading partners object to Trump's tactics but echo U.S. complaints China is violating its market-opening obligations.

American companies worry U.S.-Chinese relations will deteriorate and are "hedging their bets" by delaying investments or moving operations, according to a separate survey released Tuesday by the American chamber.

Companies ranked "bilateral tensions" as a top challenge alongside chronic frustrations with rising costs and vague laws and enforcement.

Some 37 percent of 314 companies that responded to a survey in November and December expect relations to deteriorate, more than double 2017's level of 16 percent, the chamber said. Another 37 percent expect relations to stay at their current fraught level.

"A growing number of companies are hedging their bets," the report said. Nearly one-quarter of those surveyed were postponing investments or moving supply their supply chains to avoid the impact of possible tariff increases.

UBS reported in January that 37 percent of 200 manufacturers surveyed by the bank have shifted out of China over the past 12 months. The threat of U.S. tariff hikes was the "dominating factor" for nearly half, while others moved because of higher costs or tighter environmental regulation.

The American chamber's European counterpart has reported similar unease among its members and

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reluctance to invest.

Three-quarters of companies in technology and other research-based industries said market restrictions hamper their operations, it said. It said almost half of companies surveyed believe Chinese policies are enforced differently against them and local rivals.

Asian shares lower as tariffs delay rally fades

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Shares were mostly lower in Asia on Tuesday, backtracking from Monday's rally spurred by news that President Donald Trump had pushed back a deadline for raising tariffs on imports from China to allow time for more negotiations.

Mainland China indexes rose, however, after a report in the Hong Kong newspaper South China Morning Post that said a deputy chairman of the Banking Regulatory Commission, Wang Zhaoxing, said risks from soaring debt had been contained.

The Shanghai Composite index added 0.4 percent to 2,973.71, while Japan's Nikkei 225 index lost 0.5 percent to 21,421.31. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index fell 0.5 percent to 28,810.62.

Australia's S&P ASX 200 lost 1.2 percent to 6,111.20 as falling prices for oil and other commodities hit energy companies.

Overnight, stocks closed modestly higher after shedding most of their gains from an early rally spurred by the Trump administration's decision to hold off on a March 2 increase in punitive duties on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports.

Investors welcomed the move, which averted an escalation in the damaging trade war between the world's two largest economies. The fight is over U.S. complaints that Beijing steals technology or pressures companies to hand it over.

But many questions remain about the prospects for a deal that would unwind the tariffs already slapped by both sides on billions of dollars of each other's goods. Trump's conflicting comments on the status of the talks have added to the uncertainty, said Jingyi Pan of IG.

"As it is, we continue to view the trade matter through an opaque screen and make assumptions from the shadows of President Donald Trump," Pan said in a commentary.

The S&P 500 index added 0.1 percent to 2,796.11. The Dow Jones Industrial average gained 0.2 percent to 26,091.95, while the Nasdaq composite rose 0.4 percent, to 7,554.46. The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies dropped 0.1 percent to 1,588.81.

Elsewhere in Asia, South Korea's Kospi lost 0.3 percent and India's Sensex fell 1 percent amid mounting tensions with Pakistan. Shares were lower in Southeast Asia.

Pakistan's military spokesman tweeted that Indian aircraft crossed into Pakistan and then "released payload in haste," but said there were no casualties. The Indian side had no immediate comment.

ENERGY: U.S. crude oil gave up 36 cents to \$55.12 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It lost 3.1 percent to settle at \$55.48 a barrel in New York after Trump criticized rising oil prices in an early morning tweet. Brent crude dropped 22 cents to \$64.54 per barrel.

CURRENCIES: The dollar fell to 110.82 yen from 111.04 yen on Monday. The euro strengthened to \$1.1364 from \$1.1356.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 26, the 57th day of 2019. There are 308 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 26, 1904, the United States and Panama proclaimed a treaty under which the U.S. agreed to undertake efforts to build a ship canal across the Panama isthmus.

On this date:

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In 1616, astronomer Galileo Galilei met with a Roman Inquisition official, Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, who ordered him to abandon the "heretical" concept of heliocentrism, which held that the earth revolved around the sun, instead of the other way around.

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte escaped from exile on the Island of Elba and headed back to France in a bid to regain power.

In 1829, Levi Strauss, whose company manufactured the first blue jeans, was born in Buttenheim, Bavaria, Germany.

In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson signed a congressional act establishing Mount McKinley National Park (now Denali National Park) in the Alaska Territory.

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson signed a congressional act establishing Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona.

In 1929, President Calvin Coolidge signed a measure establishing Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming.

In 1952, Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced that Britain had developed its own atomic bomb.

In 1984, the last U.S. Marines deployed to Beirut as part of an international peacekeeping force withdrew from the Lebanese capital.

In 1987, the Tower Commission, which probed the Iran-Contra affair, issued a report rebuking President Ronald Reagan for failing to control his national security staff.

In 1993, a truck bomb built by Islamic extremists exploded in the parking garage of the North Tower of New York's World Trade Center, killing six people and injuring more than 1,000 others. (The bomb failed to topple the North Tower into the South Tower, as the terrorists had hoped; both structures were destroyed in the 9/11 attack eight years later.)

In 1994, a jury in San Antonio acquitted eleven followers of David Koresh of murder, rejecting claims they'd ambushed federal agents; five were convicted of voluntary manslaughter.

In 1998, a jury in Amarillo, Texas, rejected an \$11 million lawsuit brought by Texas cattlemen who blamed Oprah Winfrey's talk show for a price fall after a segment on food safety that included a discussion about mad cow disease.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama laid out his first budget plan, predicting a federal deficit of \$1.75 trillion. General Motors Corp. posted a \$9.6 billion loss for the fourth quarter of 2008. The Pentagon, reversing an 18-year-old policy, said it would allow some media coverage of returning war dead, with family approval.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama, speaking in St. Paul, Minnesota, said he would ask Congress for \$300 billion to update aging roads and railways. Republican Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer vetoed a bill pushed by social conservatives that would have allowed people with sincerely held religious beliefs to refuse to serve gays.

One year ago: President Donald Trump, who had been highly critical of the law enforcement response to the Florida school shooting, told a roomful of governors at the White House that if he had been there, he would have rushed in, unarmed. A lawyer for former Broward County Sheriff's deputy Scot Peterson rejected accusations that Peterson had been cowardly during the school shooting; he said Peterson hadn't gone inside the school because it sounded like the shooting was happening outside the building. Thousands of people from all walks of life, including former President George W. Bush and his wife, filed slowly past the casket of the Rev. Billy Graham in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Today's Birthdays: Game show host Tom Kennedy is 92. Country-rock musician Paul Cotton (Poco) is 76. Actor-director Bill Duke is 76. Singer Mitch Ryder is 74. Actress Marta Kristen (TV: "Lost in Space") is 74. Rock musician Jonathan Cain (Journey) is 69. Singer Michael Bolton is 66. The president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan (REH'-jehp TY'-ihp UR'-doh-wahn), is 65. Actor Greg Germann is 61. Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., is 61. Bandleader John McDaniel is 58. Actor-martial artist Mark Dacascos is 55. Actress Jennifer Grant is 53. Rock musician Tim Commerford (Audioslave) is 51. Singer Erykah Badu (EHR'-ih-kah bah-DOO') is 48. Actor Maz Jobrani (TV: "Superior Donuts") is 47. Rhythm-and-blues singer Rico Wade (Society of Soul) is 47. Olympic gold medal swimmer Jenny Thompson is 46. Rhythm-and-blues singer Kyle Norman (Jagged Edge) is 44. Actor Greg Kinnear is 42. Rock musician Chris Culos (O.A.R.) is 40. Rhythm-and-blues singer

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Corinne Bailey Rae is 40. Country singer Rodney Hayden is 39. Pop singer Nate Ruess (roos) (fun.) is 37. Tennis player Li Na is 37. Latin singer Natalia Lafourcade is 35. Actress Teresa Palmer is 33. Actor Alex Heartman is 29. Actress Taylor Dooley is 26.

Thought for Today: "Only the mediocrities of life hide behind the alibi 'in conference.' The great of this earth are not only simple but accessible." — Isaac Frederick Marcossou, American journalist (1876-1961).
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