

## Groton Area Schedule of Events

### Saturday, March 9, 2019

Regional Destination Imagination, Groton Area High School

Best of Show Competition, Sioux Falls Washington High School

### Sunday, March 10, 2019

2:00pm- 6:00pm, Open Gym, GHS Arena

Grades JK-8 2pm - 4pm; Grades 6-12 4pm - 6pm

### Monday, March 11, 2019

Big Question National Qualifier Debate, Aberdeen Central High School

7:00pm- 9:00pm, School Board Meeting, Groton Area High School

### Wednesday, March 13, 2019

End of 3rd Quarter, Groton Area School District

### Thursday, March 14, 2019

Girls Varsity State Tournament @ Sioux Falls

Boys Varsity State Tournament @ Sioux Falls

No School, Groton Area School District - Spring Break

### Friday, March 15, 2019

Girls Varsity State Tournament @ Sioux Falls

Boys Varsity State Tournament @ Sioux Falls

- 1- Help Wanted
- 1- Groton Coffee Cup Bowling
- 2- Truss Pros is Hiring
- 2- City Council Story
- 3- Back-to-back Wolves Champions
- 4- Region DI set for Saturday in Groton
- 4- I "Hate" Winter Party at Groton Care & Rehab
- 5- Weekend Winter Storm Potential
- 6- Today in Weather History
- 7- Weather Pages
- 9- Daily Devotional
- 10- 2019 Groton Events
- 11 - 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)

## Groton Coffee Cup League March 5 Team Standings:

James Valley 27, Biker Chix 23, Kens 23, Ten Pins 15.

**High Games:** Joyce Walter 173, Mary Jane Jark 168, Nancy Radke 166.

**High Series:** Mary Jane Jark 441, Nancy Radke 431, Joyce Walter 429.

## **CLOSED:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

## City to lease new sweeper

The city will be getting a new sweeper. A new sweeper lease would be \$32,800 for a five year lease with a \$70,000 buy-back or put towards a new lease. The existing sweeper is in bad shape and in need of major repairs. There would be no chip seal project this year and the council agreed to use the chip seal money towards the lease of a new sweeper.

One variable frequency drive at the water tower quit working so a new one is on order. Right now the city has only one booster pump that is operational. It should be here in two weeks. The VFDs have been in service for about 18 years.

Police Chief Stacy Mayou reported that more repairs were made to the new cop car. Councilman Jay Peterson said he is growing weary of the number of repairs being done to that vehicle.

The council approved the bid letting for the three-year garbage contract.

The city has received a passing drinking water report for 18 years running now, according to Water Superintendent Terry Herron.

Connor Hanson is going to put a shop in behind his building and was granted the variance through Planning and Zoning Commission.

The council agreed to follow the state in closing the city offices on Friday, April 19 and Monday, April 22 for Easter.

The equalization meeting will be held April 19 starting at 8 p.m.

The council gave second reading to the summer salary ordinance with the only change is in the minimum wage going to \$9.10 per hour.

After an executive session, the following were hired for the summer:

Pool Managers: Brenda Madsen, Kami Lipp and Karla Pasteur

Lifeguards: Eliza Wanner, Payton Maine, Tanae Lipp, Nicole Marzahn, Alexis Hanten, Kaycie Hawkins, Jasmine Schinkel, Tadyn Glover, Grace Wambach, Luke Thorson, Kelli Hanson, Tricia Keith, Cody Swanson, Kylie Hawkins.

Public Works: Aaron Severson

Cemetery Caretaker: Brian Gravatt

Baseball Coordinator: Matt Locke

Softball Coordinator: Matt Locke

Concessions: Rebecca Padfield

Assist. Legion Coach: Seth Erickson

Legion Coach: Matt Locke

PW & Midget Coach: Ethan Kranhold

Jr. Legion Coach: Dalton Locke

U8 Softball Coach: Kayla Krause

U14 Softball Coach: Susan Fjeldheim-  
Tabled gatekeepers, groundskeepers and  
Jr. Teener Coaches.

And Dan Sunne, electric lineman, was given a raise to \$35.15 an hour.

# NOW HIRING!

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## BACK-TO-BACK TOURNAMENT CHAMPIONS

Sioux Falls, S.D. – The No. 25 Northern State University men's basketball team defeated Southwest Minnesota State 72-68, en-route to their second straight NSIC/Sanford Health Basketball Tournament Championship. The Wolves defeated the Mustangs for the second straight year in the title match, improving to 26-6 overall this season.

The title is the fourth NSIC Tournament crown for the Wolves in program history. In addition to the championship, Ian Smith was named the tournament MVP, while Mason Stark and Gabe King were honored on the all-tournament team.

Despite a closely contested game, the Northern State men lead for all 40 minutes of action. The Mustangs did out-score the Wolves 39-34 in the second half, however a 9-point first half lead held for NSU. The Wolves out-shot and out-rebounded the Mustangs, with 38 rebounds to SMSU's 25 and a 52.7 field goal percentage.

Northern combined for 14 assists, four blocks, four 3-pointers, and two steals. They tallied 46 points in the paint, 24 points off the bench, 11 points off 11 offensive boards, five points off turnovers, and five fast break points. Defensively, NSU forced six turnovers and held SMSU to 43.5 percent from the floor and 25.0 percent from the 3-point line.

Smith led three Wolves in double figures with 14 points, hitting 7-of-12 from the floor. The senior added a team leading three blocks, as well as three assists and two rebounds. Gabe King was just one point shy of Smith's total with 13 in the game. He shot 62.5 percent from the floor, and led the team with four assists.

Mason Stark notched a bench high ten points, and was the final Wolf in double figures. He added three rebounds and two assists in the win. Parker Fox and Jordan Belka rounded out the bench total with nine and five points respectively. Fox was one of four Wolves to record a team leading five rebounds, as well as one block and one steal.

Andrew Kallman, Cole Dahl, and Justin Decker each recorded seven points and five rebounds in the win. Kallman added two assists, and one steal, while Dahl notched one assist and shot 50.0 percent from the floor. Decker was efficient offensively, shooting 75.0 percent and pulling down three offensive boards. The senior also tallied three assists.

The Wolves earned an automatic bid to the NCAA Central Region Tournament. The NCAA Men's Basketball Selection Show is set to air on NCAA.com at 9:30 p.m. (CT) on Sunday, March 10. Northern State will host a selection show party, with location and further information to be released later this week.

## Region DI set for Saturday in Groton

Four Groton Area teams will be competing at the Regional Destination Imagination Tournament set for Saturday at GHS.

The Crazy Medical Crew (Shaydon Wood, Raelynn Feist, Makenna Krause, Keira Weismantel, Caroline Bahr, Claire Schuelke, Addison Hoffman. Managers are Josie Hffman and Julie Milbrandt) will perform at 11:40 a.m., the Organized Chaos team (Sage Mortenson, Hailey Monson, Alyssa Fordham, Carter Barse, Jackson Dinger, Rylee Rosenau, Julianna Kosel. Managers Lyncee Monson and Tina Fordham) will perform at 1:20 p.m., the Awesomesauce Dumplings (Axel Warrington, Natalia Warrington, Rebecca Poor, Jacob Tewksbury, Jeslyn Kosel, Corbin Weismantel, Nick Groeblichhoff. Managers are Joni Groeblichhoff and Tina Kosel) will perform at 2:20 p.m. and the Click, Clack, Blow team (Aurora Washenberger, Aryanna Dinger, Ayce Warrington, Owen Tewksbury, Rachel Dobbins, Aspen Beto, Novalea Warrington. Managers are Joann Donley and Laura Arth) will perform at 2:40 p.m.



# I "HATE"

# WINTER

# PARTY

## Free Root Beer Floats

*Open to the community*

**Thursday, March 7th**

**Starting at 2 p.m.**



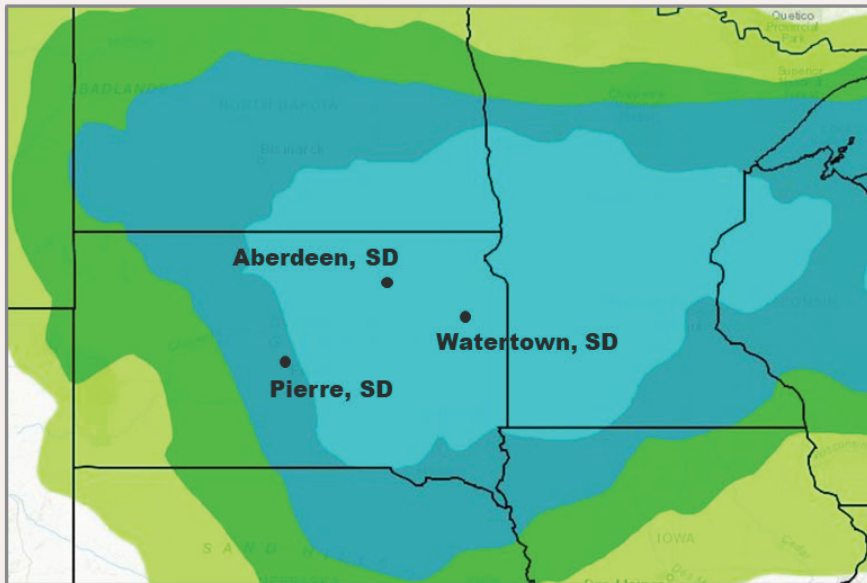
# GROTON

CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

**1106 North Second Street**  
**605.397.2365**

## Weekend Winter Storm Potential

Potential for Moderate to Heavy Snowfall



Updated: 3/5/2019 6:12 PM Central



### What We Know

Confidence is increasing that a significant winter storm with heavy snow and strong winds will impact the Northern Plains Friday night through Sunday. Significant travel impacts are possible.

### What We Don't Know

The exact track of this system and thus the location of heaviest snowfall and potential mixed precipitation, which both affect snowfall totals. Exact timing is also uncertain.

### What You Can Do

Continue to monitor the latest forecast from a reliable source, especially if you have travel plans.

Published on: 03/05/2019 at 6:14PM

In case you haven't heard, a winter storm is possible this weekend. Stay tuned in the days ahead for details!



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, March 6, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 239 ~ 6 of 55

## Today in Weather History

March 6, 1987: Twenty-eight cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Pickstown, South Dakota was the hot spot in the nation with a reading of 83 degrees. The high of 71 at Saint Cloud, Minnesota smashed their previous record by 21 degrees.

March 6, 2000: A grass fire of unknown origin was exacerbated by dry conditions and strong winds, burning 1500 acres of grassland northwest and north of Brandon in Minnehaha County. The fire threatened several homes, but no homes were damaged; although farmland and some equipment burned. In a separate event the same day, a controlled burn went out of control, exacerbated by the conditions and strong winds. The fire caused one fatality and one injury. Damage was confined to grassland.

1962: The strongest nor'easter of this century struck the Mid-Atlantic Region on March 5-9, 1962. It is known as the "Ash Wednesday Storm" and caused over \$200 million (1962 dollars) in property damage and major coastal erosion from North Carolina to Long Island, New York. In New Jersey alone, it was estimated to have destroyed or greatly damaged 45,000 homes. The Red Cross recorded that the storm killed 40 people. It hit during "Spring Tide." When the sun and moon are in phase, they produce a higher than average astronomical tide. Water reached nine feet at Norfolk (flooding begins around five feet). Houses were toppled into the ocean and boardwalks were broken and twisted. The islands of Chincoteague and Assateague, Maryland were completely underwater. Ocean City, Maryland sustained significant damage mainly to the south end of the island. Winds up to 70 mph built 40-foot waves at sea. Heavy snow fell in the Appalachian Mountains. Big Meadows, southeast of Luray, recorded Virginia's greatest 24-hour snowfall with 33 inches and the most significant single storm snowfall with 42 inches. (Luray, Virginia reported 33.5 inches on March 2-3, 1994 making this later snow their maximum 24-hour snowfall total.) Roads were blocked, and electrical service was out for several days. Washington and Baltimore fell into the mixed precipitation zone. The Ash Wednesday storm is noteworthy for producing devastating tidal flooding along the Atlantic Coast as well as record snows and the interior of a Virginia. The extremely high tides and massive waves caused tremendous damage -worst in many of the hurricanes that have hit the region. Along the Atlantic Coast tide ran for 2 to 6 ft above average with 20 to 40 ft waves crashing ashore. National Airport received only 4 inches of snow with a liquid equivalent of 1.33 inches. However, close-in suburbs, such as Silver Spring, Maryland and Falls Church, Virginia and received 11 inches of snow. Outlying areas such as Rockville, Maryland received 19 inches of snow and Leesburg, Virginia received 20 inches of snow. Other snow totals included 15 inches at Richmond; 23 inches at Culpeper; 26 inches at Charlottesville; 32 inches at Winchester; and 35 inches at Fort Royal, Virginia and Big Meadows on the Skyline Drive top the list with 42 inches of snow.

2014: The Great Lakes saw some of their worst ice cover in nearly four decades because of a frigid winter with months of below-freezing temperatures in large sections of the northern United States, the National Ocean, and Atmospheric Administration said. As of March 6, 2014, 92.2 percent of the five lakes were under ice, breaking a record set in 1973 but still short of the 94.7 percent established in 1979, the federal agency said.

# Broton Daily Independent

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Today



Mostly Sunny

High: 14 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy

Low: -5 °F

Thursday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 14 °F

Thursday  
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 5 °F

Friday



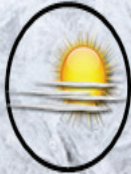
Mostly Cloudy

High: 23 °F

## Another Round of Snow This Work Week



**Tonight:** Dry with lows in the single digits below zero.

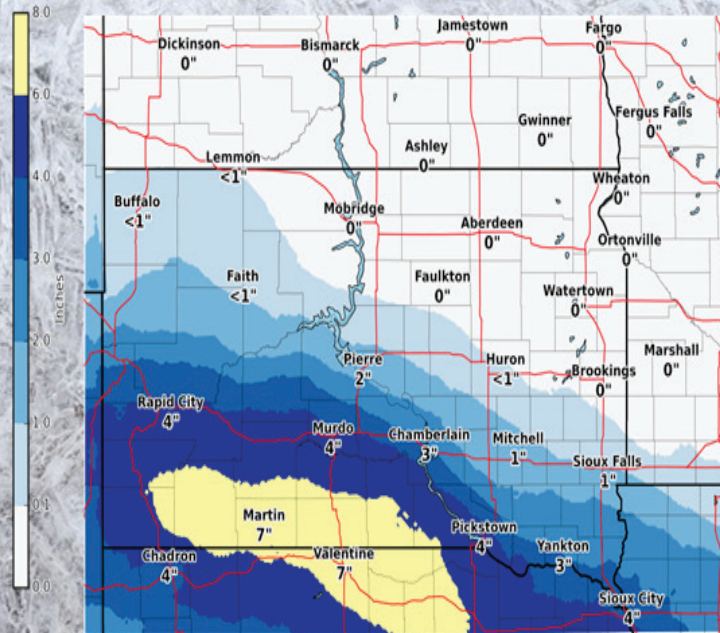


**Wednesday:** Dry with highs in the teens.



**Thursday:** Snow likely south. Highs in the teens.

Expected Snowfall - Wednesday Night through Thursday  
Valid: 03/06/2019 06:00 PM - 03/07/2019 06:00 PM CST



 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 3/5/2019 2:42 PM Central

Published on: 03/05/2019 at 2:45PM

A system will clip southern South Dakota, and northern Nebraska late Wednesday night and Thursday. Those areas will see accumulating snows. Temperatures will remain below normal through the rest of the work week.



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## Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 16 °F at 4:09 PM

Low Outside Temp: 2 °F at 6:43 AM

High Gust: 20 mph at 1:45 PM

Precip:

## Today's Info

Record High: 69° in 2000

Record Low: -16° in 1899

Average High: 35°F

Average Low: 16°F

Average Precip in Mar.: 0.14

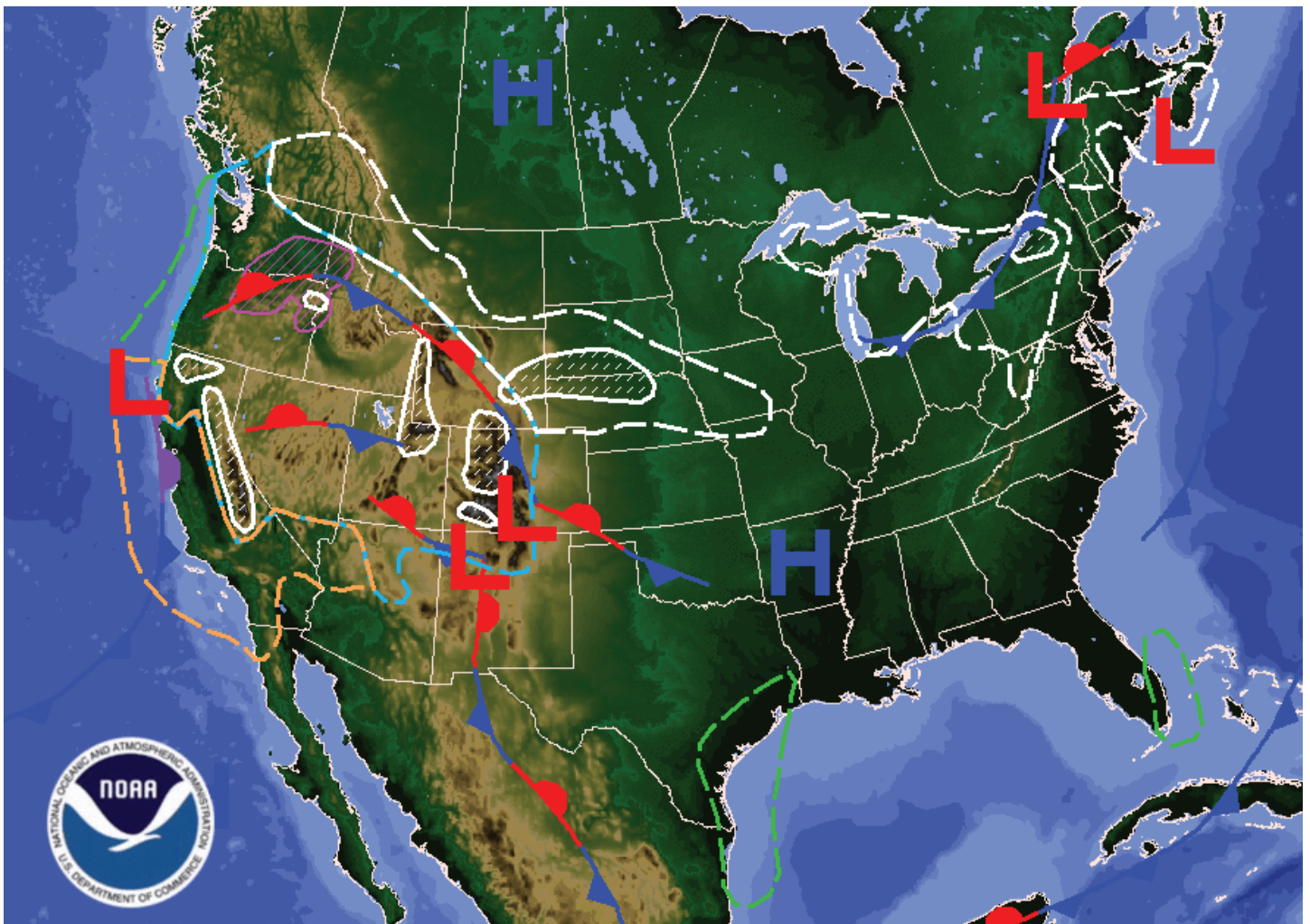
Precip to date in Mar.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 1.16

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 6:27 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:02 a.m.



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, Mar 06, 2019, issued 4:33 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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## PEACEFUL, PLEASANT PATHS

Peace and pleasant paths sound boring, some would say. Life needs to be exciting, exhilarating, and certainly filled with many different events that are challenging and consuming.

But, is there something more for us to understand? Certainly.

One of my dear friends sponsors an Indianapolis race car. Another played professional soccer for years. Then, there is Greg the Sheriff whose life is filled with sirens and radio alerts with calls to immediate action and life impacting decisions. Another is a pediatric anesthesiologist, who with one very slight miscalculation, would bear the results of that mistake into eternity.

There is one common denominator among all of them: a reassuring pleasantness that confirms their walk with God and their trust in His wisdom. Walking in the ways of Godly wisdom unites their inner and outer man and their lives become filled with joy and happiness, peace and satisfaction. In the midst of trouble and turmoil they all have gracious, delightful, enjoyable dispositions and being in their company brings blessings because they walk with God.

Do they have moments that challenge and threaten their pleasant, peaceful attitudes? Of course. But, in the midst of those moments, their confidence is not changed nor do their skills become impaired. Why? Because of a peace that comes from God.

The word for peace is shalom. It is not a peace that eliminates or ends turmoil and turbulence in their lives. Instead, it is a peace that comes from being satisfied with doing Gods will, being grateful for His gifts, following and trusting His wisdom and worshiping Him.

Prayer: Lord, give us Your shalom! Fill our hearts with Your wisdom and our minds with determination to obey Your teachings. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 3:17 She will guide you down delightful paths; all her ways are satisfying.

## 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

# Groton Daily Independent

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## News from the Associated Press

### Tuesday's Scores By The Associated Press

#### BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Class A SoDak 16

State Qualifier

Dell Rapids 59, Parker 31

Hot Springs 54, Winner 41

Lennox 91, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 55

Madison 72, Tiospa Zina Tribal 63

Pine Ridge 71, Bon Homme 44

Sioux Falls Christian 56, Mobridge-Pollock 33

St. Thomas More 58, Flandreau 45

Tea Area 68, Redfield/Doland 54

Class B SoDak 16

State Qualifier

Bridgewater-Emery 58, Colome 45

Clark/Willow Lake 66, Dell Rapids St. Mary 33

DeSmet 56, Potter County 44

Jones County 63, Corsica/Stickney 45

Timber Lake 61, Wolsey-Wessington 48

Viborg-Hurley 55, Northwestern 52

White River 72, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 58

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Sully Buttes vs. Lemmon, ppd. to Mar 7th.

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

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

15-20-32-37-52, Mega Ball: 6, Megaplier: 5

(fifteen, twenty, thirty-two, thirty-seven, fifty-two; Mega Ball: six; Megaplier: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$381 million

### SD Senate plans to reconsider hemp plan after bill's failure

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota senators plan to reconsider a bill to legalize industrial hemp after the measure failed Tuesday on the chamber's floor.

The 21-14 vote fell short of the two-thirds margin required to pass the bill. Supporters used a procedural move to revive it and schedule debate for Wednesday.

Gov. Kristi Noem has asked that lawmakers hold off on legalizing hemp this year, saying the state isn't ready. Republican Sen. Jordan Youngberg, a bill co-sponsor, said it would give South Dakota farmers the



opportunity to discover another market.

"Why stifle the market that could potentially be there?" Youngberg said.

The Republican governor said Friday that the bill "gravely concerns" her, but she stopped short of threatening to veto the proposal. Noem said she's worried that drug detection dogs flag hemp like marijuana and that the plants look alike.

South Dakota has time because federal guidelines aren't expected until fall, she said.

Republican Sen. Bob Ewing said there are inspections, transportation and other unknown consequences that must be resolved before the bill should be considered. Senate Majority Leader Kris Langer said the bill is premature and "risks a shift in culture with no going back."

The measure overwhelmingly passed through the House. Senators approved changes to the bill that Youngberg said were based on a proposal from Noem's office.

The alterations include broader background check requirements, giving more rulemaking authority to state agencies and restricting who could transport industrial hemp. The changes also require hemp to be grown outdoors.

The 2018 federal farm bill legalized cultivation of industrial hemp nationally. Supporters contend planting hemp wouldn't even happen until 2020 under the bill, which defines industrial hemp as containing no more than 0.3 percent THC.

## Fire at automotive repair shop in Columbia destroys vehicles

COLUMBIA, S.D. (AP) — Authorities are investigating the cause of a late-night fire at an automotive repair shop in the Brown County town of Columbia.

Firefighters responded to the scene about 11:15 p.m. Monday and stopped the fire from spreading to a nearby house and garage.

The American News reports no injuries were reported, but three vehicles and a tractor were destroyed.

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

## Ax killing suspect's case moved from juvenile to adult court

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota teenager accused in a fatal ax attack and other violent assaults will be tried in adult court, where he could face a significantly longer sentence.

Emery Arapahoe III, now 18 years old, was initially charged as a juvenile with second-degree murder and other charges, the Rapid City Journal reported.

His case was moved to adult court during a hearing Monday.

Arapahoe, of Pine Ridge, is accused of attacking two people and killing a third during three separate incidents in 2017.

His attorney noted Monday that Arapahoe was 16 and 17 at the time. But Megan Poppen, assistant U.S. attorney, said the "nature of the charges" warranted moving the cases to adult court.

If convicted as an adult, Arapahoe could be sentenced to life in prison.

Neil Fulton, federal public defender for South Dakota, said throughout the 8th Circuit — which includes South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Arkansas — murder sentences average from 20-25 years in prison. Juvenile court allows defendants to be imprisoned until ages 21 or 26, depending on their age at the time they committed the crime, Fulton noted.

Prior to Arapahoe pleading not guilty to all counts, Magistrate Judge Daneta Wollman read him his rights, which have one crucial difference compared to juvenile court. Arapahoe's guilt or innocence in juvenile court would have been decided by a judge, not a jury, Poppen said.

Since he's in adult court, Arapahoe has the right to be tried by a 12-person jury that can only convict him on a unanimous vote. He could also be asked to be tried by a judge, but the judge and U.S. attorney's office would have to consent to that.

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

## South Dakota movie rental store to close

By PATRICK ANDERSON Argus Leader

DELL RAPIDS, S.D. (AP) — It wasn't the digital era that forced Dan Ahlers to close his video rental store. When national behemoths such as Blockbuster folded under competition from Netflix, Redbox and on-line streaming, his store held its own because he established a strong bond with customers, Ahlers said.

Instead, mounting supply-side problems prompted his decision to shutter Video Plus, Ahlers said. Hollywood wasn't supporting his needs as the owner of a video rental store.

Posters and marketing materials went away a while ago. Orders from vendors started coming late and mixed-up. And then Disney — which is merging with Fox — refused to sell to him directly, Ahlers said.

"These things make it difficult to run a business that really has survived the digital age because of customer service," he said.

Ahlers is planning to close Video Plus in mid-March, but recently had his last day of rentals, the Argus Leader reported. He also began selling DVDs from his inventory of 17,000 movies.

Video Plus is one of South Dakota's last stand-alone video rental stores. Movie Mania in Pierre and Mr. Movies in Rapid City are some of the other holdouts in an increasingly shrinking field. Northview Video in Aberdeen still keeps a couple of shelves dedicated to DVDs, but owner Marian Osborn transitioned to selling party supplies in 2007 and has continued to shrink her video rental inventory.

She keeps it as a resource for the community, but has thought about ending rentals, Osborn said.

"We toy with whether you keep it," she said.

Ahlers recently greeted Baltic resident Charlene Iverson by name when she walked in looking for a copy of "The Sisters Brothers" starring John C. Reilly and Joaquin Phoenix. As Iverson searched the shelves, Ahlers dug a Blu-ray Disc out from behind the cash register and talked about how a couple of customers had been raving about the film.

It's that sort of interaction that Iverson will miss, she said.

"You come here, it's more personal," she said.

Ahlers was the original tenant of the small strip mall when Video Plus opened in 1999. Fresh out of college and working at Menards, Ahlers' friends told him he should open a store because of his love of movies, he said.

His customers are his neighbors. He represented them in Pierre when he was elected to state House of Representatives as a Democrat. He teaches their children at the Dell Rapids School District, where he fills in as a substitute teacher.

Some have told him he should try out a career in sales after he shuts down, but Ahlers isn't sure that's the right move.

His favorite part of running Video Plus was always the connection he made with people, Ahlers said.

"You earn that trust of your customers," he said.

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

## Aberdeen cornhole league draws interest

By VICTORIA LUSK Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The thump as bags land on cornhole boards, one after another.

The occasional silence as a bag is tossed perfectly in the hole — like a basketball going smoothly through the net, but without the swish.

A bag in the hole gets three points, a bag on the board gets one point. Either of those can be canceled out by the other team's bags. The first team to 21 wins the game.

Players show up early, get in a few practice rounds and pay their \$5 buy-in. Then teams are drawn.

# Groton Daily Independent

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When the Aberdeen Cornhole League started, there were set teams. But Wednesday league nights got less enjoyable when the same people continuously won, said Tim Rogers, league organizer.

The number of people who show up determines the structure of play for the night. If there are 20 or fewer players, two-person teams are formed for round-robin style of play. The team with the best record at night's end gets bragging rights. If there are more than 20 players, it's a double-elimination tournament, Rogers said. There's a 100 percent payout at the end of the night, funded by buy-ins.

For the most part, the league follows the rules of the American Cornhole Association, the Aberdeen American News reported.

The boards are placed on faux grass exactly 27 feet apart.

A flip of a coin lets the winners decide either on which side of the board they wish to stand or which team tosses first.

A team will only throw first until points are scored. Whichever team scores tosses first in the next round.

The first squad to 21 wins, and it doesn't matter if a team goes over.

"I'd rather put one in the hole than on the board," Rogers said.

In some games, going over 21 points sends a team back to 11. But resetting just adds time to the games, and time is limited on league night, Rogers said.

It's all in good fun.

For the most part, anyhow.

Most games are coupled with some laughter, some groans and very little smack talk.

When it comes to winning, it's not about being good.

"I don't know how much talent is involved. It's more muscle memory," Rogers said.

Most players stand firmly with their inside foot next to the edge of the board, careful to not cross an imaginary line. The outside leg gives a soft kick as the bag in hand releases with a flick of the wrist. Most bags gently spin as the fly toward the board.

In. In. In. In. The players' bags land in the hole, matching point for point, canceling out potential points.

That's where strategy comes in.

"You can play defensively," Rogers said. "But it's hard to do."

One side of a cornhole bag is rough, made to stick where it lands. The other is slick, made to slide. Players can stack bags in front of the hole, or throw to push bags already on the board in.

Or they can try to avoid any barrier bags and aim straight for the hole — "airmail," it's called.

The league plays year-round. It recently moved league nights to the Yelduz Shrine Center. It started at the Eagles Club, which is now closed.

Games are played outside during the summer, at various sponsors. Their logos can be found on the boards.

The popularity of cornhole is crazy, Rogers said.

"It wouldn't be too far off to say that it'd be in the Olympics one day," he said.

The sport is already on ESPN on occasion.

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

## South Dakota artist creates display that teaches math, art

By **KAIJA SWISHER Black Hills Pioneer**

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — In the midst of patrons running laps and playing pickleball, a display devoted to the art of perspective is currently set up in the Lookout Room at the Spearfish rec center. A group of eighth-grade students recently got to explore the "Up, Down, and All Around" display with its creator, Spearfish artist Dick Termes.

"The concept behind this is basically teaching people about total visual space, that we always are in a total space around us, all the time, and we don't even think about it. This makes us think about it a little bit. Everything I do is based on that total visual space," Termes explained.

Termes is known across the globe for his Termespheres, varying sizes of spherical wonders that feature



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the artist's signature six point perspective, the Black Hills Pioneer reported. Termes chooses the "rotating point," or center of the sphere, which determines the perspective one sees, as the rotating point is as if standing inside the sphere itself. The six points are then directly above, below, in front, behind, and to each side, equally spaced.

Termes explained that the display, which features different stations that allow participants to explore drawing, perspective, 3D geometries, 2D and 3D puzzles, and more, was originally commissioned by the South Dakota Discovery Center in Pierre. The hands-on center had created a series of displays, with topics like electricity, dinosaurs, insects, etc., that could be contained within trailers that different groups could check out to use in libraries, schools, etc. The center approached Termes about creating one focused on Termespheres, so he created the display, which was then used by the center for a number of years.

After the center stopped utilizing the trailers, Termes bought the trailer and display, which he uses at different locations and gallery shows.

"It is really pretty fun, and I would love to get more students through it," he said, describing that the display will be up at the rec center through March before heading to the Dahl Arts Center in Rapid City where Termes has a show.

Eighth-grade students in art teacher Brandi Roetzel's classes recently went through the display with Termes, after he had visited their classrooms previously to help them create their own Termespheres.

Roetzel said that the experience brings the students out into the community, getting them out of the classroom, up, and moving.

"They get to see a local artist, and he's also a world-famous artist," she said, describing that all of the different elements in Termes's techniques show the students that art is more than the traditional methods that come to mind.

Roetzel said she is looking forward to bringing in another group of students to the display during the upcoming trimester.

"He gets them out of the 'Art is just drawing, art is just painting' (misconception) and gets them out into the world and how to apply all of those (elements) to the world," she said.

Information from: Black Hills Pioneer, <http://www.bhpioneer.com>

## South Dakota nonprofit to document combat nurse's life

By PAT BUTLER Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Marcella LeBeau's life story is well-documented.

The 99-year-old Native American began breaking barriers when she graduated in 1940 from St. Mary's School of Nursing in Pierre.

Three years later, she enlisted in the Army Nurse Corps and became a combat nurse during World War II. She would tend to wounded and dying soldiers who ran into a relentless hail of German fire while storming the beaches of Normandy, France, on D-Day.

On the 60th anniversary of that battle, LeBeau traveled to France and received the French Legion of Honor Award. She also served on the front lines during the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium, where she would spend a year and receive a medal of honor from that nation.

After being discharged from the military as a lieutenant, she spent 31 years working as a nurse and in other capacities for Indian Health Service on the Cheyenne River Sioux reservation where she grew up and now lives.

In 2006, she was inducted into the South Dakota Hall of Fame. In 2018, she received an honorary doctorate degree in public service from South Dakota State University. She is a founding member of the North American Indian Women's Association.

She has spoken at countless events and is the subject of two books now being written. What more could be said or written about a woman whose impressive life story has been told over and over again?

The answer may be just around the corner.

The Rural Ethnic Institute of Rapid City recently received a \$10,000 grant from the Mary Chilton Daughters of the American Revolution Foundation in Sioux Falls to create a manuscript documenting LeBeau's life, the Rapid City Journal reported.

The author will be her great-granddaughter, Ryia LeBeau, a 20-year-old who attends Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. She promises the story she tells will be different.

"I will bring a unique perspective," Ryia LeBeau said. "We have spent a lot of time together, traveled widely together. I have been inspired by her. I feel that this is a very important role for me."

Ryia LeBeau said she hopes to finish a 120-page manuscript by the end of the summer.

"I have started working on the manuscript," she said Wednesday. "I have completed a few interviews."

Marcella LeBeau is confident her great-granddaughter is the right choice to pen the manuscript.

"Ryia is awesome. She is one-of-a-kind kid. She does things beyond her age. She's my right hand," said Marcella LeBeau, who lives independently at her home in Eagle Butte and is "doing pretty good for being 99 years old."

Gemma Lockheart submitted the grant application and will assist Ryia LeBeau with the manuscript. Marcella LeBeau's story is an important one in many ways, she said.

"Marcella connects us with stories and values of the old people. More, her story unfolds decisions and experience along the way of making choices for strength of community and country," Lockheart said. "It's a story worth hearing, worth knowing about for how it informs us in our own living."

She also looks forward to seeing what Ryia LeBeau will write about such a well-known figure.

"She is looking forward to writing about her great-grandmother," Lockheart said. "It will be in her words."

Judy Goetz, grant chair for the Daughters of American Revolution in Sioux Falls, said the organization looks primarily at three criteria when it determines who receives grant awards — patriotism, historic preservation and education.

Marcella LeBeau's life covered all three of those categories, she said.

"We want to educate children and adults about what someone has done in their life," Goetz said.

Tom Katus, the managing director for the Rural Ethnic Institute board, said the nonprofit seeks to improve relations between Native Americans and others in the Black Hills and western South Dakota.

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

## Bill to allow guns in South Dakota Capitol heads to Noem

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A bill that would allow people with enhanced concealed carry permits to bring guns into the South Dakota Capitol is headed to Gov. Kristi Noem.

KELO-TV reports the House voted 44-19 Monday for the bill. Majority Leader Lee Qualm, a co-sponsor, says constitutional officers in the Capitol would benefit most from the self-protection.

House Minority Leader Jamie Smith opposed the measure during a recent hearing, saying he supports the Capitol's current safety system.

The measure would require notifying security before carrying in the Capitol. It wouldn't extend to the Supreme Court chamber or private offices that have controlled access, like the governor's office.

Last year, 1,615 enhanced permits were issued. They come with requirements that include completing a training course.

Noem signed a bill in January to let people carry concealed pistols without a permit.

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Information from: KELO-TV, <http://www.keloland.com>

## Sioux Falls man given 15 years for sexually assaulting girl

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — An elderly Sioux Falls man has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for having sexual contact with a young girl at his wife's home daycare.

Seventy-six-year-old David Hirsch had earlier entered an Alford plea to sexual contact with a child under

16, in which he acknowledges there's enough evidence to convict. Hirsch was indicted on four charges involving two girls, but the three other charges were dropped.

A letter from one of the victims read in court Monday said remembering what happened was haunting and that she was nervous to walk to her bus stop each day because Hirsch lived next door.

The Argus Leader reports one of the girls said she was going to wait until Hirsch had died to tell someone about what happened, but was inspired to come forward by the #MeToo movement.

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

## House measure condemning anti-Semitism follows Omar's remark

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Back in January, the Democrats welcomed their brash young newcomers to Congress with smiles and hugs. That was before the new colleagues dragged the party's simmering divisions over Israel out in the open.

Provocative comments from Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota have thrust the Democrats into an uncomfortable debate over Israel policy a few weeks before a high-profile conference where senior Democrats typically make a show of support for the Jewish state. Increasingly, the rift appears as much generational as ideological, with newly elected Democrats showing less deference to the party line.

Omar became the flash point after she suggested last week that Israel's supporters are pushing U.S. lawmakers to take a pledge of "allegiance to a foreign country." It's at least the third time she has forced older, pro-Israel Democrats who run the House into awkward territory over U.S.-Israeli policy.

Republicans have been happy to stoke the furor, with President Donald Trump calling Omar's remarks "a dark day for Israel" and posting a photo of himself in Jerusalem. Inside the Democratic family, meanwhile, leaders are in a bind, torn between a need to admonish Omar for her comments and their desire to defend one of the first Muslim women elected to Congress.

This time Omar is not apologizing. And this time pro-Israel Democrats led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi are not just warning her about the dangers of Jewish tropes. They're expected to offer a resolution condemning anti-Semitism on the House floor.

"Accusations of dual loyalty generally have an insidious, bigoted history," an early draft of the resolution reads in part. "The House of Representatives acknowledges the dangerous consequences of perpetuating anti-Semitic stereotypes and rejects anti-Semitism as hateful expressions of intolerance that are contradictory to the values that define the people of the United States."

Pelosi and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer announced in a meeting of leading Democrats late Tuesday that the text will be updated to include anti-Muslim bias, according to a senior Democratic aide who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private meeting. Other Democrats said an outpouring of support for Omar prompted leaders to consider broadening the measure to avoid dissension. Omar did not speak to reporters outside her office on Tuesday evening.

"There is a lot emotional disquiet about the situation, and it's a good time to restate our values," said Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, who is Jewish and a member of leadership, as he exited a meeting in Pelosi's office. "That's what I hope our resolution can do."

The text, which includes a history of bigotry against Muslims and blacks as well as Jews, sounds unobjectionable by itself. But the fact that senior Democrats felt obliged to put the House on-record on the topic points to a transformation in the country — mostly among Democrats — about supporting the Jewish state.

In a poll by the Pew Research Center in January of last year, 46 percent of Americans said they sympathized more with Israel and 16 percent with the Palestinians in their Middle East discord.

But Democrats are about evenly divided, with about a quarter sympathizing with each side and the rest saying they side with neither or don't know — and in recent years they have become less likely to sympathize with Israel than they were in the past. Liberal Democrats were nearly twice as likely to say they sympathize more with the Palestinians (35 percent) than with Israel (19 percent). Older Americans were



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much more likely to say they sympathize with Israel than with the Palestinians, with more division among younger Americans.

Omar, a Somali-American, says that what she is questioning is the influence game in Washington and she worries that anything she says about Israel and its treatment of Palestinians will be construed as anti-Semitic.

"Being opposed to (Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu and the occupation is not the same as being anti-Semitic," she tweeted on Sunday. "I am grateful to the many Jewish allies who have spoken out and said the same."

But Democrats in Congress remain largely supportive of Israel. Pelosi, for example, often attends the American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference in Washington, which is coming up later this month.

Omar on Tuesday got a boost from allies who point out that the congresswoman, too, has been the target of threats and bigotry.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez suggested in a tweet that her fellow freshman was being treated unfairly. "No one seeks this level of reprimand when members make statements about Latinx + other communities," the New York Democrat wrote.

Jewish groups generally said they support the resolution — but. ...

"We are concerned that the timing of this resolution will be seen as singling out and focusing special condemnation on a Muslim woman of color as if her views and insensitive comments pose a greater threat than the torrent of hatred that the white nationalist right continues to level against Jews, Muslims, people of color and other vulnerable minority groups," said J Street, a nonprofit that says it's a home for "pro-Israel, pro-Peace Americans." The Democrats' strategy, the group added, "plays directly into the hands of the president and his allies, who act in bad faith to weaponize the debate for political gain."

Back home in Minnesota, a collection of elected officials started a #StandWithIlhan hashtag with a statement that reads in part:

"We call on Democrats to stand with Ilhan against Republican efforts to pit Jews and Muslims against each other."

But there also was talk of finding a candidate to challenge her in 2020.

"I firmly believe that her anti-Semitic expressions do not reflect the views of her district's residents," said state Sen. Ron Latz, who is Jewish, lives in her district and has been critical of Omar's recent statements on Israel. "She is rapidly making herself a pariah in Congress, rather than an effective representative for her constituents," he added — "exactly the kind of scenario that would open the door for a primary challenge."

Senior Democrats were standing firmly against Omar's comments, and not for the first time. Earlier this year, she apologized for a 2012 tweet in which she said Israel had "hypnotized" America. And last month, she apologized for suggesting that members of Congress support Israel because they are paid to do so.

That earned her stern rebukes from Pelosi and House Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Eliot Engel, among others. This time, Engel declared that Omar's suggestion about divided loyalties was a "vile" stereotype that had no place on his committee. Republicans, meanwhile, demanded that Democrats throw Omar off Engel's panel. There was no sign of that happening at midday Tuesday.

"I should not be expected to have allegiance/pledge support to a foreign country in order to serve my country in Congress or serve on committee," Omar tweeted.

Michigan Rep. Debbie Dingell said Engel, while upset with Omar's comments, "feels that she brings a different perspective to the committee" that keeps it strong.

"This is a very complicated issue," Dingell said on Fox News Channel. "There is nothing complicated about being very clear that we must stand up against anti-Semitism."

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Associated Press writers Doug Glass in Minneapolis and Emily Swanson and Hannah Fingerhut in Washington contributed to this report.

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Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>

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## 10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

### 1. HOUSE DEMOCRATS POISED FOR MORE COHEN TESTIMONY

Trump's former lawyer returns to Capitol Hill for a fourth day of questioning as Democrats pursue investigations into Trump's White House, businesses and presidential campaign.

### 2. FORMER NISSAN CHAIRMAN LEAVES DETENTION FACILITY

Carlos Ghosn, held nearly four months for alleged financial fraud, appears to have left a detention center in Tokyo in disguise after posting \$8.9 million bail.

### 3. MONSTER TWISTER TAKES 10 RELATIVES FROM 1 ALABAMA FAMILY

Cousins Cordarry Jones and Demetria Jones say their grandparents, an uncle and seven cousins are all gone after the deadliest U.S. tornado in nearly six years ripped through tiny Beauregard.

### 4. IS MILITANTS REMAIN ORGANIZED, AND BRUTAL

As final defeat looms in Syria, the extremists continue benefits like food and money to supporters while their religious police and fighters rule with fear and brutality.

### 5. WHY A MEANINGFUL US-CHINA TRADE DEAL COULD BE ELUSIVE

Beijing's longstanding policy of subsidizing its own businesses and charges that it illicitly obtains U.S. technology remain key obstacles.

### 6. SPECIAL K-TYPE DRUG TABBED FOR DEPRESSION

A mind-altering medication related to the club drug wins U.S. approval for patients with hard-to-treat depression.

### 7. NORTH KOREA REBUILDING STRUCTURES AT ROCKET SITE

Just days after the failed Trump-Kim nuclear summit, experts and officials say Pyongyang is restoring facilities at a long-range rocket launch site that it dismantled last year.

### 8. HOUSE MEASURE TO CONDEMN ANTI-SEMITISM

House leaders plan a resolution against anti-Semitism in the wake of Rep. Ilhan Omar's controversial remarks about U.S.-Israel policy.

### 9. FATHER OF UK TEEN WHO JOINED IS SAYS DON'T SCRAP CITIZENSHIP

Shamima Begum's father also says that she should return to Britain from Syria and be punished if it was determined she had committed a crime.

### 10. 'DIDN'T DO THIS STUFF'

R&B singer R. Kelly tells "CBS This Morning" that rumors of him having sex with and abusing underage girls are "not true" and he's fighting for his life.

## Cohen's 4th day of testimony could touch on Russia, finances

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's former lawyer is returning to Capitol Hill for a fourth day of testimony as Democrats pursue a flurry of investigations into Trump's White House, businesses and presidential campaign.

Michael Cohen became a key figure in those investigations after turning on his former boss and cooperating with special counsel Robert Mueller's probe. He was interviewed behind closed doors by both the Senate and House intelligence committees last week and is due for another private, daylong meeting with the House intelligence panel on Wednesday.

Cohen also testified publicly before the House Oversight and Reform Committee, where he called Trump a con man, a cheat and a racist. He pleaded guilty last year to lying to Congress, campaign finance violations and other charges and is set to begin a three-year prison sentence in May.

Among the issues discussed in Cohen's closed-door interviews with both the House and the Senate was the issue of pardons, according to people familiar with those interviews. They requested anonymity to

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speak about the confidential discussion.

The issue is expected to come up again during Cohen's return visit. Though Cohen told Congress last week that he had never asked for nor would accept a pardon from Trump, a lawyer for Cohen expressed interest to the Trump legal team in a possible pardon for his client in the aftermath of a raid last April on Cohen's hotel room, home and office, according to people familiar with the encounter who weren't authorized to discuss it by name and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The president's attorneys were noncommittal during the conversation with Cohen's lawyer, Stephen Ryan, the people said. Cohen did not participate in the conversation.

No pardon was given, and Cohen ultimately wound up pleading guilty and cooperating against the president in separate investigations by the special counsel and by federal prosecutors in New York. Another of Cohen's lawyers, Lanny Davis, said on MSNBC Tuesday evening that Cohen was referring to the time after he turned on Trump when he testified that he wouldn't accept a pardon.

There is nothing inherently improper about a subject in a criminal investigation seeking a pardon from a president given the president's wide latitude in granting them. But lawmakers have requested information about talks on possible pardons for Cohen and other defendants close to the president who have become entangled in Mueller's investigation.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., said after last week's private meeting with Cohen that the committee had "additional document requests" that they were discussing with him. Schiff would not comment on the substance of the interview, but said it helped "to shed light on a lot of issues that are very core to our investigation."

The intelligence panel is investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election and whether Trump's campaign coordinated with the Russians in any way. They are also looking into Trump's foreign financial dealings and whether there was obstruction of justice. It is one of several probes Democrats have launched in recent weeks as they delve deeper into Trump's political and personal dealings.

On Monday, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., sent 81 letters to Trump's family and associates seeking documents and information. Nadler said he would investigate possible obstruction of justice, corruption and abuse of power.

Cohen pleaded guilty to lying to Congress about the duration of negotiations over a Trump real estate project in Moscow. In addition, he pleaded guilty to campaign finance violations for his involvement in payments to two women who allege they had affairs with Trump, affairs that Trump denies.

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. Cohen told a judge that he agreed to cover up Trump's "dirty deeds" out of "blind loyalty."

Cohen said in the Oversight testimony that Trump directed him to arrange the hush money payment to Daniels. He said the president arranged to reimburse Cohen, and Cohen brought to the hearing a check that he said was proof of the transaction.

Follow all of AP's Trump Investigations coverage at <https://apnews.com/TrumpInvestigations>

## North Korea said to be rebuilding structures at rocket site

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM** and **KIM TONG-HYUNG** Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea is restoring facilities at a long-range rocket launch site that it dismantled last year as part of disarmament steps, according to foreign experts and a South Korean lawmaker who was briefed by Seoul's spy service.

The finding follows a high-stakes nuclear summit last week between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump that ended without any agreement.

South Korea's National Intelligence Service provided the assessment about the North's Tongchang-ri launch site to lawmakers during a private briefing Tuesday. North Korea didn't immediately respond in its state media.

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An article from 38 North, a website specializing in North Korea studies, cited commercial satellite imagery as indicating that efforts to rebuild some structures at the site started sometime between Feb. 16 and March 2.

Dismantling parts of its long-range rocket launch facility was among several steps the North took last year when it entered nuclear talks with the United States and South Korea. North Korea has carried out satellite launches at the site in recent years, resulting in U.N. sanctions over expert claims that they were disguised tests of banned missile technology.

It wasn't immediately clear how the report might affect nuclear diplomacy. The Trump-Kim summit fell apart because of differences over how much sanction relief North Korea could win in return for closing its aging main nuclear complex. The U.S. and North Korea accused each other of causing the summit breakdown, but both sides left the door open for future negotiations.

One of the South Korean lawmakers who attended the briefing said Wednesday that NIS director Suh Hoon said the structures being restored at the launch site include roofs and building doors.

The lawmaker requested anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the information.

He quoted Suh as saying that the move could be preparation to restart long-range rocket launches if nuclear diplomacy completely collapses, or could be an attempt to add structures that could be dramatically blown up in a show of denuclearization commitment when U.S. inspectors visit if negotiations with Washington go well.

The NIS said it couldn't confirm the report on Suh's briefing.

The 38 North report published Tuesday said the rail-mounted processing building, which is where space launch vehicles are worked on before they're moved to the launch pad, is being reassembled. It said two support cranes can be seen at the building, and walls have been erected and a new roof added.

At the engine test stand, the website said it appears that the engine support structure is being reassembled. It said new roofs have been installed on the fuel and oxidizer buildings.

The report was written by Jack Liu and Jenny Town.

Beyond Parallel, a website run by the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank, issued a similar assessment of the Tongchang-ri site. It said satellite imagery taken Saturday, two days after the failed summit, showed North Korea "is pursuing a rapid rebuilding" of the rocket site.

After repeated failures, North Korea successfully put a satellite into orbit for the first time in 2012 in a launch from the site, which is also known as the Sohae Satellite Launching Station. North Korea had another successful satellite launch in 2016.

North Korea has said its satellite launches are part of its peaceful space development program. None of the country's high-profile missile tests, including three ICBM launches in 2017, was conducted at the site.

But many outside experts say ballistic missiles and rockets used in satellite launches share similar bodies, engines and other technology. They say each of the North's satellite launches was believed to have improved its missile technology.

After carrying out the third of its three ICBM launches in late 2017, North Korea claimed to be able to attack the mainland United States with nuclear-armed missiles. Foreign missile experts say the North still needs to master a few remaining technologies, such as perfecting a re-entry vehicle, to have functioning ICBMs.

In early 2018, North Korea abruptly expressed its intention to deal away its weapons arsenal in return for political and economic benefits. The North has since suspended nuclear and missile tests and dismantled its underground nuclear testing site.

Its dismantling of parts of the Tongchang-ri facility occurred at the beginning of U.S.-North Korea negotiations last year. Both the launch pad and engine test stand were in about the same condition since last August, according to the 38 North report.

After a September summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, Kim agreed to "permanently shut down" the Tongchang-ri engine test ground and rocket launch pad with the participation of foreign experts.



A statement issued by Kim and Moon categorized the steps as parts of a broader goal to make the Korean Peninsula free from nuclear weapons and nuclear threat. This could suggest that North Korea acknowledged that the Tongchang-ri site is a nuclear-related facility.

## Monster twister takes 10 relatives from 1 Alabama family

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

BEAUREGARD, Ala. (AP) — Cousins Cordarrly Jones and Demetria Jones have a hard time counting all the relatives they lost to a monster tornado that wiped out a rural community in Alabama.

Their grandparents, 89-year-old Jimmy Jones and 83-year-old Mary Louise Jones, were killed in their home on a two-lane road where most everyone shares family ties.

The couple's son Emmanuel Jones, a 53-year-old uncle to the cousins, is gone too. Also dead, they said, were seven cousins by both blood and marriage: Eric Jamal Stenson, 38; Florel Tate Stenson; 63; Henry Lewis Stenson; 65; James Henry Tate, 86; Tresia Robinson, 62; Raymond Robinson Jr., 63; and Maggie Delight Robinson, 57.

Stunned by the loss of 10 relatives and worried about still more who are hospitalized with serious injuries, the cousins stood Tuesday amid the wreckage of a row of family homes in tiny Beauregard, near the Georgia state line.

"It really hasn't fully hit me yet. I'm still trying to process it," said Cordarrly Jones, 29.

"Everybody in this area just about was related," said Demetria Jones, 28. "It's devastating."

With winds of as much as 170 mph (275 kph), the deadliest U.S. tornado in nearly six years rolled mobile homes across fields and caused even brick homes to collapse into unrecognizable heaps. At least 23 people were killed, some of them children. The full scale of the loss came into focus with the release of the names of the dead. The youngest victim was 6, the oldest 89.

It was the deadliest tornado to hit the U.S. since May 2013, when an EF5 twister killed 24 people in Moore, Oklahoma. The enormous twister apparently churned for about 70 miles (110 kilometers), crossing the state line and ending in neighboring Georgia, the National Weather Service said. Government teams that surveyed Sunday's damage confirmed there was an outbreak of at least 20 twisters in Florida, Alabama, Florida and South Carolina.

On Tuesday, the search for bodies, pets and belongings continued in and around Beauregard amid the din of beeping heavy machinery and whining chain saws. Sheriff Jay Jones said the list of the missing shrunk from dozens to just seven or eight.

Richard Tate, who is part of the same family and lost four close relatives, said he was lucky to be alive. "It could have taken all of us the way it was moving," said Tate, who was inside his home with his wife when the structure was destroyed.

Bernard Reese, a distant relative of the Jones cousins, picked through the remains of his aunt's house on Tuesday. He said he found more than a half-dozen bodies or fatally injured residents along Lee County 39, the road where so many of the family members died.

"It bothers me, but it had to be done," said Reese, who lives about 2 miles away. He arrived in his truck after the twister passed and climbed over downed trees and power lines to get to the scene.

Reese's friend Dexter Norwood said he found three more bodies and the severed leg of a woman.

"I keep seeing it. I ain't slept worth a crap," said Norwood, 46. He suffered a fractured vertebra when the twister hit the mobile home he shared with his wife, but he said both are fine.

The bloated corpse of a gray horse lay on the ground beside the couple's home. Norwood said he had to euthanize the animal after the storm because it suffered a serious leg injury.

The extent of the damage and death left him shaken.

"I never thought I'd see it," he said. "It's rough."

The Jones cousins, who survived at least in part because don't live on the road where their relatives died, said they had to talk their way past police barricades to get to the scene. Officers, they said, kept asking for something to prove they were related to the victims.

"I just had to tell them that everything that proves who I am is out on that road," Cordarrly Jones said.

## Former Nissan chairman Ghosn released after posting bail

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Disguised as a construction worker, the former chairman of Nissan Motor Co., Carlos Ghosn, left a Tokyo detention center Wednesday after posting 1 billion yen (\$8.9 million) bail.

Ghosn wore a surgical mask, glasses, a hat and a construction worker's outfit. There was no immediate official confirmation of his release, but his identity was apparent, especially after he was seen on TV smiling after he removed his mask and hat.

There was a scramble by media to follow Ghosn after he boarded a small Suzuki van, topped with a ladder, and traveled from the Tokyo Detention Center toward downtown. Ten motorcycles trailed the van in formation as it passed largely unnoticed through city streets.

Nippon Television Network showed brief footage of Ghosn after he got out of the van in an undisclosed part of the city.

Ghosn, the former head of the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Motors alliance was arrested on Nov. 19. He is charged with falsifying financial reports and with breach of trust.

The Tokyo District Court confirmed the 1 billion yen (\$8.9 million) bail was posted earlier in the day, after a judge rejected an appeal from prosecutors requesting his continued detention. That cleared the way for Ghosn to leave the facility after spending nearly four months since his arrest.

Ghosn's wife Carole Ghosn and one of his daughters were seen leaving the detention center earlier in the day.

Before his release, Ghosn, who turns 65 on Saturday, issued a statement reasserting his innocence.

"I am innocent and totally committed to vigorously defending myself in a fair trial against these meritless and unsubstantiated accusations," he said.

A date for his trial has not yet been set.

Suspects in Japan often are detained for months, especially those who insist on their innocence, like Ghosn. Some legal experts, including Junichiro Hironaka, one of his lawyers, have criticized the system as "hostage justice," saying the long detentions tend to encourage false confessions.

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said a presumption of innocence for Ghosn was crucial, while noting the importance to France of the alliance between Nissan and French automaker Renault SA.

"It is a good thing that Carlos Ghosn can defend himself freely and serenely, and his release will permit Carlos Ghosn to defend himself freely and serenely," he said.

Hironaka said his legal team had offered new conditions for his release, such as installing a surveillance camera at his doorway and promising not to use the internet. He is allowed to make voice calls, but not to travel abroad.

Prosecutors contend that suspects may tamper with evidence and shouldn't be released. Two of Ghosn's earlier requests to be released on bail were rejected.

Some critics of Japan's legal system hope that Ghosn's release, so many weeks before preparations for his trial are ready, may set a precedent and help bring about change.

Ghosn says he did not falsify financial reports because the compensation he is alleged to have under-reported was never paid or decided upon. The breach of trust allegations center on a temporary transfer of Ghosn's investment losses to Nissan's books that he says caused no losses to the automaker. The charge also points to payments to a Saudi businessman that he says were for legitimate services.

Nissan declined comment on the criminal case against Ghosn but said an internal investigation had found unethical conduct. Nissan has dismissed Ghosn as chairman, although he remains on the board pending a decision at a shareholders' meeting.

Ghosn's family has said that he has lost weight while in detention, and he looked thinner in his court appearance. Hironaka has said he is in good spirits. Ghosn thanked his family and friends, who, he said, "stood by me throughout this terrible ordeal."

Associated Press Correspondent in Paris Sylvie Corbet contributed to this report.

She is on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/sylviecorbet?lang=en>

Yuri Kageyama is on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>

On Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/yurikageyama/?hl=en>

## Sacramento police who killed Stephon Clark won't be charged

By DON THOMPSON Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California's attorney general announced Tuesday that he won't charge two Sacramento police officers who fatally shot an unarmed black man last year, joining a local prosecutor in finding that the officers reasonably believed Stephon Clark had a gun as he moved toward them.

Attorney General Xavier Becerra announced the results of a nearly yearlong investigation after telling Clark's mother privately. He acknowledged that it was not what Clark's family wanted but said the evidence showed the officers had reason to believe their lives were in danger, though investigators found only a cellphone. SeQuette Clark did not comment Tuesday on Becerra's findings.

"There is a lot of hurt in this community today and certainly in the home of the Clark family," Becerra said. "Our investigation can't change what has happened, but we can make every effort to deliver a fair, thorough and impartial review, which we promised this community."

Clark, 22, was suspected of vandalism when he was shot seven times on March 18, 2018, and his killing prompted protests in California's capital city and across the U.S.

New demonstrations followed Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert's decision this weekend not to charge the officers, with 84 people arrested Monday. A reporter from The Sacramento Bee newspaper was briefly detained while live-streaming the protest, and clergy members were among those arrested. The police said the gathering in a wealthy Sacramento neighborhood was an unlawful assembly and that cars had been keyed.

People who had participated said at Tuesday's City Council meeting that police were overly aggressive, pushing and sometimes striking protesters and ramming them with bikes. One woman said that her ankle was broken.

The Rev. Kevin Kitrell Ross said officers trapped protesters as they tried to leave before arresting them. "We witnessed law enforcement trap us on a bridge as we raised our hands showing that we were in surrender," he said.

Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg called for an independent investigation into police's response to the protest, and police Chief Daniel Hahn said the department was reviewing body camera footage. Police spokesman Marcus Basquez said no protesters were taken to the hospital.

The City Council meeting grew tense as people shared their reactions to the arrests. Steinberg shut the meeting down for about 15 minutes amid shouting. The meeting then resumed and finally ended after about four hours.

With the conclusion of the state and local investigations, U.S. Attorney McGregor Scott and Sean Ragan, who heads the FBI's Sacramento office, said they and the U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights Division will review the results to see whether the officers violated Clark's civil rights. Such reviews are standard practice, Scott spokeswoman Lauren Horwood said.

Sacramento police said they will decide after Scott's investigation concludes whether the officers violated any policies or procedures, which could result in their firings.

Officers Terrance Mercadal and Jared Robinet said they thought Clark was approaching them with a gun after he ran from them into his grandparents' backyard.

The officers had been pursuing Clark after receiving calls about someone breaking car windows and an elderly neighbor's sliding glass door. The attorney general and district attorney said the evidence showed Clark was advancing toward the officers holding what they thought was a gun when they shot him.

Clark could have kept fleeing through an opening at the other side of the backyard, Becerra said, but

instead advanced from about 30 feet (9 meters) away from the officers to about 16 feet (5 meters) away before they opened fire.

Attorneys for Clark's family say an autopsy they commissioned found that police shot Clark seven times from behind.

Becerra said his office hired the San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office to conduct an independent review, which backed the official autopsy showing that Clark was most likely shot as he approached police.

The attorney general said he considered evidence that Clark had drugs and alcohol in his system and had been fighting with his fiancée in the days prior to the shooting.

But while the local district attorney highlighted those factors during her announcement Saturday, drawing protests that she was impugning Clark's character, Becerra said they were not key to his decision.

Becerra, who called for changes in law enforcement practices to prevent other shootings, said there was plenty of evidence to support his conclusion. Still, he said it was not an easy decision.

"There's a young man who's no longer alive," Becerra said. "Two sons who won't have a father. Whose mother I just met is still grieving. Of course it was a tough call. These are all tough calls. It's never easy."

The case has led top state officials to support changes to California's legal standard for when police can use deadly force.

Lawmakers have revived a measure introduced after Clark's slaying that would make California the first state to allow police to use deadly force only when it's necessary to prevent imminent and serious injury or death and if there's no reasonable alternative, such as warnings or other methods.

Strong opposition from law enforcement agencies stalled it last year.

Becerra was vague about what reforms he would support but said change was needed. He did not endorse specific legislation.

"This incident reads like the bitterly familiar passages of a long, complicated and uninviting book," he said. "We must all be willing to write the next chapters in this story of what we call American justice."

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Associated Press writers Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento and Christopher Weber and Brian Melley in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

## **FDA allows treatment of depression with club drug's cousin**

**By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A mind-altering medication related to the club drug Special K won U.S. approval Tuesday for patients with hard-to-treat depression, the first in a series of long-overlooked substances being reconsidered for severe forms of mental illness.

The nasal spray from Johnson & Johnson is a chemical cousin of ketamine, which has been used for decades as a powerful anesthetic to prepare patients for surgery. In the 1990s, the medication was adopted as a party drug by the underground rave culture due to its ability to produce psychedelic, out-of-body experiences. More recently, some doctors have given ketamine to people with depression without formal FDA approval.

The Food and Drug Administration approved Spravato as a fast-acting treatment for patients who have failed to find relief with at least two antidepressants. Up to 7.4 million American adults suffer from so-called treatment-resistant depression, which heightens the risk of suicide, hospitalization and other serious harm, according to the FDA.

The drug will cost between \$590 and \$885 depending on the dosage and before various insurance discounts and rebates.

There have been no major pharmaceutical innovations for depression since the launch of Prozac and related antidepressants in the late 1980s. Those drugs target the feel-good brain chemical serotonin, and can take weeks or months to kick in.

Ketamine and J&J's version work differently than those drugs, targeting a chemical called glutamate that is thought to restore brain connections that help relieve depression.



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When the drug works, its effect is almost immediate. That speed "is a huge thing because depressed patients are very disabled and suffer enormously," said Dr. John Mann, a psychiatrist and researcher at Columbia University. If the drug doesn't work, physicians can quickly switch to other options, he noted.

The FDA approved Spravato, known chemically as esketamine, based on study results that showed patients taking the drug experienced a bigger improvement in their depression levels than patients taking a sham treatment, when measured with a psychiatric questionnaire.

The drug is designed to be lower-dose and easier to use than ketamine, which is normally given as an intravenous infusion.

Robin Prothro, 60, began taking antidepressants more than 20 years ago. But she says none of the five medications she tried relieved the depression that has stymied her personal and professional life.

Since enrolling in a Spravato trial two years ago, Prothro says her depression has lifted and she's returned to hobbies she abandoned years ago, like gardening.

She takes the drug every two weeks at her psychiatrist's office while reclining in a comfortable chair.

"You can feel it coming on, it's a strong drug," she said, describing colors and shapes that drift before her eyes. "I just let the drug work. I close my eyes and my mind is amazingly quiet."

## PSYCHEDELICS RECONSIDERED

The ketamine-like drug is the first of several psychoactive substances making their way through the U.S. regulatory process as physicians search further afield for new therapies. Researchers are conducting late-stage trials of psilocybin, the active ingredient in magic mushrooms, and MDMA, a euphoria-inducing club drug, as potential treatments for depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

"Substantially different agents are only rarely appearing from pharmaceutical companies or other laboratories," said Dr. Paul Summergrad, a psychiatrist at Tufts University. "That's prompting people to investigate other compounds."

Unlike ketamine, psilocybin and MDMA have no legal medical use. Classified in the same category as heroin and LSD, they are tightly restricted by the federal government. But the FDA's approval of esketamine could smooth their path.

## BURDEN OF DEPRESSION

Depression is among the leading causes of disability in the U.S. and is being closely monitored by health authorities amid rising suicides nationwide. In 2017, the U.S. suicide rate rose to 14 deaths per 100,000 people, the highest rate in at least 50 years, according to federal records.

Government officials haven't suggested an explanation for the trend, though academic researchers point to the nation's widening income gap, financial struggles and divisive politics.

J&J's drug will be subject to a number of restrictions due to its abuse potential, side effects and lingering safety questions.

The drug will only be given by accredited specialists who must monitor patients for at least two hours after administration, due to its trippy, disorienting effects. Additionally, all patients will be tracked in a registry to monitor long-term safety and effectiveness.

The immediate impact of ketamine is thought to last just four to seven days and there's no consensus yet on how long patients can benefit from ongoing treatment.

Still, there are few other options for patients who fail to respond to antidepressants. The most effective treatment in such cases, electroshock therapy, requires patients to be fully sedated and can cause persistent memory loss.

Wall Street has high expectations for J&J's medication, with analysts predicting more than \$600 million in annual sales by 2022. But J&J will face competition in the marketplace.

A decades-old drug, ketamine is already used off-label to treat depression by some doctors. At least 150 clinics around the U.S. provide treatment with various forms of the drug, which is available as a low-cost generic. Patients often pay hundreds or thousands of dollars for intravenous infusions of the drug over several weeks or months. Such therapies are generally not covered by insurance because they haven't been approved as safe and effective by FDA regulators.

Some doctors plan to offer both ketamine and the new J&J drug.

Dr. Steve Levine says having FDA-approved standards for dosing and administering the new drug should raise standards in the field and drive out some of the bad actors who are not qualified to treat depression.

"This is going to bring in some standards, regulation and it's going to make it safer and more accessible to patients," said Levine, who serves as vice president of the American Society of Ketamine Physicians, a group representing doctors, nurses and others using ketamine for treating depression or other nonapproved uses.

AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner contributed to this story.

Follow Matthew Perrone on Twitter at @AP\_FDawriter.

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## Trump to battle investigations with condemnation and lawyers

By CATHERINE LUCEY and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House has beefed up its legal team. Its political team is ready to distract and disparage. And President Donald Trump is venting against Democratic prying.

Trump's plan for responding to the multiplying congressional probes into his campaign, White House and personal affairs is coming into focus as newly empowered Democrats intensify their efforts. Deploying a mix of legal legwork and political posturing, the administration is trying to minimize its exposure while casting the president as the victim of overzealous partisans.

"It's a disgrace, it's a disgrace for our country," Trump said at the White House on Tuesday as he accused Democrats of "presidential harassment."

Typically used to setting the national or global agenda, presidents are by definition on their back foot when they come under investigation. And the latest fusillade of requests for information has the Trump White House, already increasingly focused on the twin challenges of dealing with the probes and the 2020 election, in a reactive position.

Trump's response points to his increasing frustration with Congress and his intention to seize on the investigations as evidence that he is under siege in Washington.

While Trump is far from the first president to bristle at Capitol Hill oversight, his enthusiastic embrace of political victimhood is still novel — and stands to serve as a key part of his re-election argument. Trump has made railing against the so-called witch hunt against him a staple of his rallies and speeches, revving up crowds by mocking his investigators and news coverage of their proceedings.

That attitude was emphasized Tuesday by Trump's son Eric, who was among the 81 people and organizations that the House Judiciary Committee has contacted seeking documents as part of a probe into possible obstruction of justice, corruption and abuse of power. Calling Congress "incompetent," Eric Trump told Fox News Radio "we're going to fight the hell out of it. And we'll fight where we need and we'll cooperate where we need, but the desperation shows."

Aware that the shift to divided government would usher in an onslaught of investigations, the White House began making defensive moves late last year. Seeking to be ready for the Democratic-led House, more than a dozen lawyers were added to the White House Counsel's Office and a seasoned attorney was added to the communications team to handle questions related to the probes.

After Democrats took the House last November, Trump declared that they had to choose between investigating him and earning White House cooperation on matters of bipartisan concern like health care and infrastructure. Trump assessed publicly Tuesday that Democrats had made their choice, saying, "So the campaign begins."

His aides had already made that determination, with press secretary Sarah Sanders issuing an acerbic statement late Monday calling the Judiciary Committee probe a "disgraceful and abusive investigation."

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Trump's campaign spokeswoman, Kayleigh McEnany, accused Democrats of stopping "at nothing, including destroying the lives and reputations of many innocent Americans who only have sought to serve their country honorably, but who hold different political views than their own."

White House officials described their plan for addressing the mounting requests as multi-layered. Lawyers in the counsel's office plan to be cooperative, but are unlikely to provide Democrats with the vast array of documents they're looking for. In particular, they intend to be deeply protective of executive power and privilege — a defense used by previous administrations against probing lawmakers with varying degrees of success.

Trump said President Barack Obama "didn't give one letter" when his administration came under congressional investigation. But Obama spokesman Eric Shultz tweeted that the Obama White House produced hundreds of thousands of documents for various congressional inquiries.

Meanwhile, others in the White House and the president's orbit are preparing to do what they can to bring the fight to Democrats, preparing dossiers about Obama's invocation of executive privilege when House Republicans investigated his administration. And all acknowledge there is no chance that Trump will stop commenting and criticizing the investigations.

The officials declined to speak on the record in order to discuss the sensitive planning.

The administration approach was on display this week as White House counsel Pat Cipollone pushed back against a request from the House Oversight and Reform Committee for documents related to security clearances for White House officials. In a letter released by the committee chairman, Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., Cipollone called the request "unprecedented and extraordinarily intrusive" and offered to provide a briefing and documents "describing the security clearance process." White House officials said the Cummings inquiries were seen by aides as a thinly veiled attempt to gain potentially embarrassing information on the president's son-in-law, senior adviser Jared Kushner.

Cummings shot back that the White House position defied "plain common-sense" and said he would consult with colleagues on his next move.

The exchange was predictable, with both sides using the exchange of letters for political means, and in anticipation of almost certain judicial proceedings.

Former Obama administration associate counsel Andy Wright, who also worked as a Capitol Hill investigator, said both parties are aware that their correspondence has multiple audiences.

"You have to assume it's going to play out in the public space," he said. "But you also want to create that record of reasonableness so that the court will be inclined to rule in your favor if and when it comes to that."

As the Judiciary Committee's voluminous requests circulated around Washington on Monday, the president's outside array of former allies, associates and staffers communicated among themselves about who was named in the requests and whether they faced new legal jeopardy. Still, some expressed some relief that the requests dealt with documents previously turned over to other investigators. Others maintained the wide-ranging request would bolster Trump's argument that the probe was a vendetta against him.

But the request affirmed the shadow that current and former staffers still live under. Nearly all the current and former administration officials, friends and family listed on the request have hired private attorneys to navigate both the Mueller probe and now the oversight process — among them Hope Hicks, Reince Priebus, Steve Bannon, Kushner and Don McGahn.

## To the bitter end, IS militants remain organized and brutal

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BAGHOUS, Syria (AP) — As final defeat looms, militants of the Islamic State group have remained organized and ruthless to their last breath. Keeping institutions functioning in their last shred of territory in Syria, they are continuing benefits like food and money to supporters while their religious police and fighters still impose their rule of fear and brutality.

Refusing to surrender, the militants have tried to squeeze out any last possible gain. Over the past last

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weeks, they secured the evacuation of more than 10,000 of their exhausted and wounded followers, looking to ensure long-term survival and continued conflict.

The militants — many of them foreigners, including Iraqis and Central Asians, along with some Syrian fighters — are now fighting their final battle, holed up in tunnels and caves inside Baghouz, the last village they control. Since Friday, they have put up desperate resistance to renewed pounding by the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces aiming to take the tiny pocket on the Euphrates River near the Iraqi border. With no way out, they appear intent to fight to the death, SDF officials say.

Around two dozen evacuees described the group's final days to The Associated Press. They spoke of how IS's once powerful institutions that administered the provinces of the so-called "caliphate" withstood the pressure as fighters focused on maintaining control. All those who spoke with the AP asked to keep their identity concealed, fearing reprisals from IS or punishment for their connections to the group.

The evacuees, most of them relatives of IS members, include shattered families that lost loved ones and wounded, exhausted and hungry men, women and children — but some remain die-hard believers, angry and broken, and potential seeds for an already burgeoning insurgency in a country whose social fabric is in shreds.

Widows, who continued to live together in IS-administered guest houses even when the militants moved into tents, said monthly stipends from the group were replaced by food handouts, though distribution became less and less regular as food became scarce. Money transfer offices worked until the last days. One 24-year-old Syrian woman, Bayan, said her mother wired money from Aleppo a month ago to help her after her husband was killed.

The militants kept up their physical punishments. They killed a senior Iraqi leader for helping people escape their pocket. The IS religious police, known as the "Hisba," drove around the tent encampment inside Baghouz, urging its residents to perform prayers five times a day. When it was time for evacuations, the Hisba oversaw the operation, calling on the wounded and families to register.

A driver named Khodr in one of the convoys of trucks waiting at Baghouz to ferry out a batch of evacuees last week got a first-hand look at how organized and brutal IS remains. During the operation, masked IS gunmen stood at alert, two at each truck, while another militant walked among the lines of evacuees, checking their names against a list, he told the AP.

Suddenly the orderly scene was disrupted. A gunman lashed out at a woman, striking her with what appeared to be a Taser. Khodr couldn't see why — perhaps she had been confused and hesitated to board, perhaps she argued. Crying and panicking, she fell to the ground and plunged her hands in the sand, trying to ease the pain. When she didn't get up, the gunman fired his automatic weapon into the ground near her, until she stood up and boarding resumed.

"It was a terrifying scene," he said. "He hit the woman from a distance, maybe two meters away, psst, just like that. She fell, and I started to cry."

In a leaked audio recording from inside Baghouz, an IS leader who describes himself as responsible for logistics explains to a gathering of supporters how the evacuation, organized from one side by IS and from the other by SDF, would look like. He stressed the evacuation would protect their dignity and freedom of movement. The veracity of the recording could not be independently confirmed, and SDF officials deny they negotiated with IS. But the IS leader's comments jive with the group's continued outreach to its supporters, instilling moral messages and keeping up a veneer of consultation with them.

The scenes of the evacuation have been apocalyptic.

Nearly every day, hundreds of men and women have straggled out of Baghouz, many visibly traumatized or wounded. Some were on crutches, in ambulances or on wheelchairs. Babies and children cried for food. Women, juggling a couple of babies on each arm, pulled duffel bags or plastic sacks with a few belongings. Some had lost children or husbands. Some brought out bags of IS-created copper and silver coins, clearly hoping to be able to use the caliphate currency one day.

They had been on the move for months, running to stay in IS's crumbling territory as the Kurdish-led Syrian forces chased the group from its de facto capital of Raqqa down the Euphrates to Baghouz.

Now outside Baghouz, they lined up for screening by IS's enemy, the SDF, in a reception area in the



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desert, stirring up dust that coated their clothes. Men lined up separately to be searched and screened by SDF fighters who collected their biometric data.

Um Abdulrahman, a 27-year old mother, said she tried four days in a row to be evacuated before finally getting a spot on a truck. Her toddler son was killed and she was badly wounded when a mortar hit them weeks ago. Her husband, a mosque cleaner, had been afraid to leave. "He was so scared they would kill him," she said, drying tears in her eyes with a cloth. Finally, they both came out and her husband was undergoing questioning by the SDF.

Um Rayyan, 25, said she remains a supporter but said she was disheartened by the group's increasing corruption.

"When we first got to the State, everything was orderly. There was no differentiation between Iraqi or Syrian or foreigner," she said. But in the final year, she said, the IS administration was monopolized by Iraqis who favored their own and kept all the jobs.

"I think this is the reason for the failure of the Islamic State ... God protected us (from the international coalition.) But when there was corruption inside us, God stopped making us victorious," she said, speaking while lying on a gurney at a makeshift open-air triage station, being treated by a U.S aid group. She had lost half her arm, and her leg was wounded from an explosion.

Aliya, another 27-year old Syrian from Aleppo, said her husband earned a salary of less than \$100 a month teaching in mosques, but as conditions worsened the militants wanted him to work for free "because they had little to offer." When her husband was killed last month, Aliya said she was unable to join the welfare system that guaranteed widows a stipend. Instead she relied on food handouts and reached out to "sisters" for assistance.

"At the end, they only distributed dates to those nursing. I didn't get any," she said.

Um Zaid, an Iraqi from Fallujah in her forties, said her welfare card that allowed her a stipend didn't work in the final days. "No more money," she said. "They would give food instead."

Rana, a 27-year old mother of two, migrated with husband from Egypt to IS's self-styled caliphate soon after it was declared in 2014. She said their life in Raqqa was the "best of times" — she was able to buy gold for her daughters and the IS administration had plentiful resources. After Raqqa's fall, she and her family retreated with the militants.

She left Baghouz in the last batch of evacuees before the SDF assault began last Friday. Her husband, 27, stayed behind and was likely to be forced to fight, she said. Rana was searched by female SDF fighters as she stood in line with her daughters, 5 and 8 years old, their faces veiled. She carried their last pieces of gold hidden under her clothes, a backpack stuffed with a few belongings and a bag of dates given to her by the militants just before she left.

After leaving her home in Egypt and falling out with her family to follow her husband and the dream of Islamic rule, "this is all I have left," she said.

## China says new law will bar demands for technology handover

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China will bar government authorities from demanding overseas companies hand over technology secrets in exchange for market share, a top economic official said Wednesday, addressing a key complaint at the heart of the China-U.S. trade dispute.

The provision is contained in a foreign investment law to be debated at the current annual session of the National People's Congress, Ning Jizhe, vice chairman of the Cabinet's economic planning agency told reporters at a news conference.

The law will "clarify the system for advancement and protection of foreign investment," Ning said. The legal system will ensure that foreign businesses "cannot be required to transfer technology by administrative means, providing a more encompassing and beneficial legal guarantee," he said.

The rubber-stamp legislature is expected to pass the law during its 11-day session, although the central

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government routinely says it has little control over commercial agreements between Chinese and foreign firms.

Ning's statement came a day after Chinese Premier Li Keqiang announced a robust annual economic growth target and promised in a speech to the congress' opening session that foreign companies will be "treated as equals" with their Chinese competitors.

Accusations that China demands the disclosure of technology secrets are a key stumbling point in the U.S.-China trade dispute that has significantly disrupted commerce between the world's two largest economies, affecting farmers, liquor exporters and China's key manufacturing industries.

Li on Tuesday set this year's economic growth target at 6 to 6.5 percent. Such a growth rate, if achieved, would be among the world's strongest. Yet it would be slightly below last year's 6.6 percent growth in China and would mark a new three-decade low.

China's emergence as a competitor in smartphones, telecom equipment, solar power and other technologies has increased the range of products available to consumers and helped to drive down prices. But it rattles Washington and other governments that worry Chinese competition is a threat to their industries and employment.

Such concerns underscore a standoff between the U.S. and China over Huawei Technologies, the world's biggest maker of telecom infrastructure for new high-speed 5G networks. Washington has been pushing hard to exclude the Chinese company from building the backbone of the future internet.

News reports say Washington and Beijing might be close to an agreement to end the trade battle and avoid further tariff hikes, although no firm agreements have been announced on the core of the dispute: U.S. pressure on Beijing to roll back its plans for state-led creation of global competitors in robotics and other technology.

Last year, the U.S. levied import taxes of 25 percent on \$50 billion of Chinese imports. It followed in September with 10 percent duties on an additional \$200 billion. All told, the U.S. tariffs covered roughly half of what the U.S. buys from China.

Washington, Europe and other trading partners say China's policies violate its market-opening obligations and give an unfair advantage to domestic firms. Some American officials worry they might erode U.S. industrial leadership.

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Associated Press writer Joe McDonald contributed to this report.

## R. Kelly tells CBS 'I didn't do this stuff' in interview

CHICAGO (AP) — In his first interview since being charged with sexually abusing four people, including three underage girls, R. Kelly says he "didn't do this stuff" and he's fighting for his life.

The R&B singer, out on bail after his Feb. 22 arrest in Chicago, gave the interview to Gayle King of "CBS This Morning," with excerpts airing Tuesday night. More of the interview will air Wednesday and Thursday on "CBS This Morning."

In an excerpt, Kelly tells King that rumors of him having sex with and abusing underage girls are, "Not true.

"Whether they're old rumors, new rumors, future rumors, not true," Kelly said.

When King asked Kelly if he has held women against their will, he replied "That's stupid!"

CBS News National Correspondent Jericka Duncan said on "CBS Evening News" Tuesday the entire interview was about an hour and 20 minutes long.

"Use your common sense. Forget the blogs, forget how you feel about me," Kelly said. "Hate me if you want to, love me if you want. But just use your common sense. How stupid would it be for me, with my crazy past and what I've been through — oh right now I just think I need to be a monster, and hold girls against their will, chain them up in my basement, and don't let them eat, and don't let them out."

When King persisted in questioning, Kelly angrily responded, "Stop it. Y'all quit playing! Quit playing! I didn't do this stuff! This is not me!"

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He broke down in tears as he hit his hands together and says, "I'm fighting for my (expletive) life." CBS also plans to air interviews with two women who are currently living with Kelly, including one whose parents say she is being held against her will.

Kelly was acquitted of child pornography charges in 2008 that centered on a graphic video that prosecutors said showed him having sex with a girl as young as 13.

"For one, I beat my case. When you beat something you beat it. You can't double jeopardy me like that. It's not fair," Kelly also tells King during the interview.

Michael Avenatti, a lawyer for two Kelly accusers, responded to Kelly's "double jeopardy" comment Tuesday on Twitter.

"He fails to understand that it doesn't matter 'how long ago' it happened. And he also has no clue as to how 'double jeopardy' works," the attorney tweeted.

In a follow-up tweet, Avenatti addressed the emotion that Kelly shows in the interview: "R. Kelly's tears are out of fear and despair. Because he knows that after over two decades of sexually abusing underage girls, we blew this wide open and have him and his enablers dead to rights."

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

## Why a meaningful US-China trade deal could be hard to reach

By JOSH BOAK and CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Under President Donald Trump, America's trade deficit with China has so far worsened. That gap represents an unfulfilled Trump pledge just as talks between the world's two largest economies may be nearing a potential deal to suspend their trade war.

Despite signals from Chinese and U.S. officials that some truce could soon be at hand, there are few signs of any truly transformed trade relationship. Beijing's longstanding policy of subsidizing its own businesses and charges that it illicitly obtains U.S. technology remain key obstacles.

During the first 11 months of 2018, America's trade deficit in goods with China — the gap between the value of U.S. goods that China buys and the higher value of what it sells to the U.S. — swelled to a record \$382 billion. And a government report to be released Wednesday is expected to show the U.S. deficit with China reaching a new high above \$400 billion.

A senior Trump administration official asserted that progress had been made during trade talks over the past two weeks, only to acknowledge that the eventual outcome remains a mystery and that China faced no timetable for responding to the U.S. priorities. The official insisted on anonymity to discuss private conversations.

U.S. and Chinese officials have hinted that some kind of agreement could be finalized by the end of March, with Trump and President Xi Jinping possibly meeting to formalize the deal at Trump's private club in Mar-a-Lago, Florida.

For its part, Beijing is publicly expressing its intent to crack down on policies that have long enabled Chinese companies and local government officials to force American and other foreign businesses to share their technology as the price of admission to the vast Chinese market. But such public pledges represent far less than the enforceable commitments to reform such policies that U.S. negotiators are seeking.

Last year, Trump imposed a series of tariffs on Chinese goods in hopes of pressuring Beijing to support more favorable terms for the United States. In June, the White House levied import taxes of 25 percent on \$50 billion of Chinese imports. It followed in September with 10 percent duties on an additional \$200 billion. All told, the U.S. tariffs covered roughly half of what the U.S. buys from China.

But the blowback from the Trump tariffs — and China's retaliatory import taxes on U.S. goods — has been steady, at home and abroad. Many businesses are now paying higher costs to import electrical components and other goods from China that aren't made in the United States. The duties cost consumers \$1.4 billion a month and businesses \$3 billion a month by the end of last year, according to research released last week by Mary Amiti, an economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and economists

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from Princeton and Columbia universities.

And a survey led by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta found that the tariffs had caused U.S. companies to cut their spending on large equipment by 1.2 percent, or \$32.5 billion, last year.

Both figures are relatively modest, given that the U.S. economy produces \$20 trillion of goods and services a year. But there are also secondary effects. The stock market plummeted 19 percent last fall, partly on fears that the trade war would inflict severe damage.

Nor have the tariffs provided the negotiating leverage that Trump sought. Many of China's concessions appear designed to appease some U.S. concerns, rather than establish guidelines for trade that each country would be bound to follow.

Beijing has offered to buy more American farm goods and energy — a pitch that Xi made to Trump when they met during a December dinner at a global conference in Buenos Aires with the idea of narrowing the U.S. trade gap with China.

China's ceremonial legislature was poised this week to back a law that would discourage officials in the country from pressuring U.S. companies to hand over technology. It was a response to concerns about Chinese disrespect for intellectual property that Trump had raised when he first imposed import taxes on Chinese goods.

But it's unclear whether China would actually enforce this commitment — a concern that could potentially prevent a meaningful trade agreement. Speaking to a House panel last week, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said, "I can point to many examples" of Beijing signing onto an agreement "and in very few cases have they actually kept their obligations."

Lighthizer also stressed that it wouldn't be enough for Beijing to agree to additional purchases of American soybeans, natural gas and other goods. Any far-reaching agreement, he said, would need to include changes in China's policies toward intellectual property protection, forced technology transfer and the subsidization of Chinese companies.

Erin Ennis, vice president at the U.S.-China Business Council, said that agreeing on an enforcement mechanism is a huge challenge. The Trump administration wants to be able to impose tariffs on China if it violated its promises in any future pact — without retaliation. Yet Beijing would likely regard such a mechanism as infringing on its sovereignty.

But without enforcement, "it's difficult to see how they will conclude a deal," Ennis said.

Beijing is also resisting U.S. demands to change industrial policies, said Willy Lam, a political analyst at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. And instead of pulling back on support for technology development, Premier Li Keqiang, in his report to the national legislature on 2019 government goals, promised even more such support.

"The Chinese will never agree to compromise on this, because it is key to the country's future," Lam said. "The whole socialist approach to high-tech innovation involves the state playing a big role. The Chinese will never give this up."

That said, China does appear at least open to prying open more of its financial sector, which has largely been closed off to U.S. and European banks.

"What is certain is that in opening up the financial sector, China and the United States can fully agree on each other," Guo Shuqing, the chairman of China's banking regulator, told reporters Tuesday.

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AP Business Writer Joe McDonald in Beijing and AP Writer Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

## More migrants crossing US southern border in large groups

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of migrant families crossing the southwest border is again breaking records, and the crush is overwhelming border agents and straining facilities, officials said.

More than 76,000 migrants crossed the U.S.-Mexico border last month, more than double the number from the same period last year. Most were families coming in ever-increasingly large groups — there were



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70 groups of more than 100 people in the past few months, and they cross illegally in extremely rural locations with few agents and staff. There were only 13 large groups during the previous budget year, and only two the year before.

The system "is well beyond capacity, and remains at the breaking point," U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan said during a press conference Tuesday.

The new figures reflect the difficulties President Donald Trump has faced as he tries to cut down on illegal immigration, his signature issue. But it could also help him make the case that there truly is a national emergency at the border — albeit one built around humanitarian crises and not necessarily border security. The Senate is expected to vote next week and join the House in rejecting his national emergency declaration aimed at building border walls, but Trump would almost certainly veto the measure and the issue is likely to be settled in the courts.

After the deaths of two migrant children in Border Patrol custody, Customs and Border Protection stepped up medical screenings. They also announced sweeping changes including more rigorous interviews as migrants come into the system.

And McAleenan said a new processing center would be built in El Paso, Texas, that will be better suited to manage families and children and handle medical care concerns — but it's not a permanent solution.

"While our enhanced medical efforts will assist in managing the increased flows, the fact is that these solutions are temporary and this solution is not sustainable," he said.

While fewer people overall are being apprehended crossing the border illegally each year — about 400,000 over the last budget year compared with the high of 1.6 million in 2000, the increasing numbers are alarming, officials said.

Those apprehended used to be mostly single men from Mexico, but are now mostly families from Central America — since October, more than 130,000 families have been apprehended between ports of entry. From October through September 2018, about the same number of families was apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border. Tens of thousands of children illegally cross the border alone. While single men used to evade capture, the families are seeking out agents.

Customs and Border Protection also reported using firearms less and less. There were 15 instances where officers and agents used firearms during the budget year 2018, down from a high of 55 reported during the 2012 budget year, and down from 17 during 2017's budget year and 25 the year before.

Despite high-profile instances in recent months where agents used tear gas on groups of migrants that included children, use of less-lethal force like tear gas, batons or stun guns are also down, to 898. That's a decrease from the high in 2013 of 1,168, according to the data.

Border officials said the large families groups are creating opportunities for smugglers because attention is diverted to the large groups. Border officials say they worry they're spending too much time on migrant care and not enough on security.

During 2018's fiscal year, border agents and officers seized more than 1.7 pounds of narcotics, including 1.1 million pounds of marijuana, 282,570 pounds of cocaine, 6,552 pounds of heroin and 2,463 pounds of fentanyl, mostly through ports of entry, according to the border security report from budget year 2018, released Tuesday. Fentanyl seizures were up nearly 70 percent from the last budget year.

Complaints of excessive force prompted the border enforcement agency to commission an audit and investigation by the Police Executive Research Forum, a research and policy group. The 2013 audit highlighted problems that included foot-patrol agents without access to less-lethal options, and it recommended law enforcement not be allowed to use deadly force when people throw rocks — a suggestion that was rejected.

Following those reviews, major training and policy changes were made. Border Patrol agents now undergo scenario-based drills at the academy and learn how to de-escalate tense situations. They get 64 hours of on-the-job training on use of force. Agents and officers are authorized to use deadly force when there is reasonable belief in an imminent danger of serious physical injury or death to the officer or another person.

They have discretion on how to deploy less-than-lethal force: It must be both "objectively reasonable and necessary in order to carry out law enforcement duties" — and used when other "empty hand" techniques

are not sufficient to control disorderly or violent subjects.

Officials say they deploy the lowest form of force necessary to take control of a situation, but instances a few months ago where tear gas was used on migrants that included children drew strong criticism.

The story corrects month to October, not January, on apprehensions between ports of entry.

## FDA chief Scott Gottlieb steps down after nearly 2 years

By **MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb is stepping down after nearly two years leading the agency's response to a host of public health challenges, including the opioid epidemic, rising drug prices and underage vaping.

Gottlieb cited "the challenge of being apart from my family" in Connecticut when announcing his departure Tuesday in a note to FDA staff. He'll leave next month.

President Donald Trump tapped Gottlieb in 2017 to "cut red tape" at the FDA. But Gottlieb bucked expectations by pushing the agency to expand its authorities in several key ways, including an unprecedented effort to make cigarettes less addictive by requiring lower nicotine levels.

The 46-year-old physician and former conservative pundit advanced his agenda while managing to maintain the support of the president, Republicans and key Democrats in Congress.

Still, he departs with his most sweeping plans unfinished, including the initiative to make cigarettes less addictive.

"Scott deserves very strong credit for his stance on tobacco, I only wish he would have seen some of those efforts through to fruition," said Dr. David Kessler, who led the FDA from 1990 to 1997. "In the end you have to bring those things home."

Harvard University professor Daniel Carpenter said Gottlieb benefited from comparisons with more unconventional, anti-regulatory Trump appointees.

"He could govern from a place of moderation and get all the more credit because so many other agencies and positions under the Trump administration were either falling apart or vacant," said Carpenter, who has written extensively on the FDA.

In recent months, Gottlieb has come under fire for not acting more forcefully to address an explosion in teenage use of electronic cigarettes, especially those with candy and fruit flavors. Under Gottlieb, the FDA has emphasized vaping as a potential tool to wean adult smokers off traditional cigarettes. And in a widely criticized move, Gottlieb delayed key regulations on vaping devices until 2022, in part, to avoid over-regulating the industry.

Anti-smoking groups are now suing the agency to begin reviewing all e-cigarettes. While the FDA has proposed steps to keep e-cigarettes away from teenagers, including tightening restrictions on convenience store sales, it's unclear whether they will be enough to reverse the trend.

The pushback against FDA's approach to vaping threatens to overshadow what is by far Gottlieb's most far-reaching plan. Gottlieb announced in July 2017 the FDA would seek to require tobacco companies to drastically cut nicotine in cigarettes, in a bid to help adult smokers quit. The agency has had the authority to regulate nicotine levels since 2009, though no previous FDA commissioner tried to use it. The agency is still in the early stages of writing regulations that would standardize nicotine in cigarettes.

Dr. Peter Lurie, a former senior FDA official under President Barack Obama, said Gottlieb embraced the agency's regulatory powers where other Trump appointees tried to weaken their agencies.

"He tried to use its authority in an appropriate fashion," Lurie said, noting the FDA's recent announcements on dietary supplements and work to continue food inspections during the government shutdown.

Elsewhere, Gottlieb targeted drug industry tactics used to maintain sky-high prices on older drugs, calling them "shenanigans" and "deceptions." For decades, FDA commissioners steered clear of the issue, noting that the FDA has no direct role in regulating U.S. medicine prices, which are set by drugmakers. But Gottlieb said the agency could help spur competition and reshuffled its review procedures to speed

up approvals of lower-cost generic drugs.

Early in his tenure, Gottlieb identified the epidemic of opioid abuse and overdoses as the “biggest crisis facing the nation.” But there have been few clear victories against the problem for either the FDA or the Trump administration.

Drug overdose deaths hit their highest level on record in 2017 — the most recent year for which federal data is available. Fatal overdoses are largely driven by illegal opioids including fentanyl and heroin, though the epidemic was triggered by legal prescription painkillers like OxyContin.

As FDA Commissioner, Gottlieb boosted the agency’s inspectors at U.S. mail facilities to try and intercept illegal opioid shipments from China and other nations. It’s not yet clear whether that effort has reduced drug abuse or overdose rates.

Trump tweeted that Gottlieb “has done an absolutely terrific job,” adding “he and his talents will be greatly missed.”

On FDA’s more day-to-day responsibilities, Gottlieb continued a multi-decade, bipartisan shift toward faster, more streamlined product reviews for drugs and medical devices. That issue has long been the top priority for the powerful pharmaceutical and device industries, which spend millions lobbying Congress and the federal government annually to ensure speedy market access for their products.

FDA approvals for first-of-a-kind drugs, generic drugs and medical devices hit all-time highs last year.

Gottlieb has long been a favorite of the industry, due to his focus on cutting unnecessary regulations and speeding product approvals. He served in the FDA under George W. Bush and then spent nearly a decade as a conservative commentator at the American Enterprise Institute, while also working as a venture capitalist and industry consultant.

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AP Food and Health Writer Candice Choi in New York contributed to this report.

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Follow Matthew Perrone at @AP\_FDWriter

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The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Aftermath: Alabama’s tornado dead range in age from 6 to 89

By KIM CHANDLER and JAY REEVES Associated Press

BEAUREGARD, Ala. (AP) — The youngest victim was 6, the oldest 89. Relatives said one extended family lost 10 members.

The 23 people killed in the nation’s deadliest tornado in nearly six years came into focus Tuesday with the release of their names by the coroner.

They included 6-year-old Armando Hernandez Jr., known as “AJ,” torn from his father’s arms two days after singing in his first-grade class musical; 10-year-old Taylor Thornton, who loved horses and was visiting a friend’s home when the twister struck; and Jimmy Lee Jones, 89, who perished along with his wife of six decades, Mary Louise, and one of their sons.

“Just keep those families in your prayers,” Lee County Coroner Bill Harris said, two days after the disaster.

The search for victims, pets and belongings in and around the devastated rural community of Beauregard continued amid the din of beeping heavy machinery and whining chain saws. But Sheriff Jay Jones said the list of the missing had shrunk from dozens to just seven or eight.

“We’ve got piles of rubble that we are searching just to make sure,” said Opelika Fire Chief Byron Prather Jr. “We don’t think we’ll find nobody there, but we don’t want to leave any stone unturned.”

Four children were killed, ages 6, 8, 9 and 10.

The youngest, AJ, had taken shelter in a closet with his father and older brother when the tornado hit, said Jack Crisp, the boy’s uncle. The punishing winds tore the family’s home apart, Crisp said, and pulled both boys from their father’s arms.

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"He had them squeezed tight, and he said when it came through, it just took them," Crisp said. "It just demolished the house and took them."

The boy's father and brother both survived. AJ did not.

Jackie Jones said she and her siblings rushed to her parents' house after the storm passed and nobody answered the phone. "They usually answer on the first ring," she said.

The siblings found the home reduced to its foundation. One of their two brothers who lived at the house survived and was taken to a hospital. But Jimmy Lee and Mary Louise Jones, married for more than 60 years, had died along with their 53-year-old son Emmanuel.

Those three deaths meant cousins Cordarry and Demetria Jones lost their grandparents and an uncle. They said seven others killed were their cousins by blood and marriage.

"Everybody in this area just about was related," said Demetria Jones, 28. "It's devastating."

The body of David Wayne Dean, 53, was found by his son in a neighbor's yard after the twister demolished his mobile home. He was known as "Roaddog" because of his love for Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

"He was done and gone before we got to him," said his sobbing widow, Carol Dean, who was at work at Walmart when the storm hit. "My life is gone. He was the reason I lived, the reason that I got up."

The tornado was an EF4 with winds estimated at 170 mph (274 kph) and carved a path of destruction up to nine-tenths of a mile (1.4 kilometers) wide in Alabama, scraping up the earth in a phenomenon known as "ground rowing," the National Weather Service said. It traveled a remarkable 70 miles or so through Alabama and Georgia, where it caused more damage.

Ninety people were injured in the Beauregard area, authorities said. Most have been released from the hospital.

President Donald Trump said he will visit Alabama on Friday to see the damage. "It's been a tragic situation, but a lot of good work is being done," he said at the White House.

In a news release Tuesday night, Trump approved a federal disaster declaration and ordered federal aid to assist state and local recovery efforts.

Along the two-lane country road where some of the victims died, firefighters used heavy machinery to overturn pieces of houses that were blown into a gully. A car sat atop the remains of one house. A red-brick foundation was all that was left at another lot.

The search took its toll around Beauregard, an unincorporated area of roughly 10,000 people near the Georgia line. Church chaplain Ike Mathews walked down a road lined with broken trees and debris as he went to check on members of his congregation and emergency workers.

"Yesterday I talked to some team members who had found bodies. They're hurting. The community is torn up. They started crying talking about it," said Mathews, an associate pastor at Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church.

Many of the people living in the area are senior citizens who moved to the country after retiring from textile mills or an old magnetic-tape manufacturing plant that closed years ago, Mathews said.

"They start with a mobile home and hope they can build a house someday. They invest in their homes, and they have a sense of legacy. It's something to leave their kids and grandkids," he said.

It was the deadliest tornado to hit the U.S. since May 2013, when an EF5 twister killed 24 people in Moore, Oklahoma.

Government teams surveying storm damage confirmed that at least 20 tornadoes struck on Sunday in Alabama, Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

Cindy Sanford said one of her neighbors in Beauregard died in the storm, and another neighbor remained missing Tuesday.

"I pray to God that they find her," Sanford said as she picked through remains of her home, which tumbled in the wind and is now scattered across neighbors' land.

Sanford said she left home with her 5-year-old grandson about five minutes before the storm struck after she got a feeling it was unsafe.

"It was God," she said. "And then I heard the siren."



Associated Press writers Kate Brumback and Jeff Martin in Atlanta and Russ Bynum in Savannah, Georgia, contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that the coroner now says the oldest victim was 89, not 93.

## Teen tells Senate why he defied his mom to get vaccinated

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — An Ohio teen defied his mother's anti-vaccine beliefs and started getting his shots when he turned 18 — and told Congress on Tuesday that it's crucial to counter fraudulent claims on social media that scare parents.

Ethan Lindenberger of Norwalk, Ohio, said his mother's "love, affection and care is apparent," but that she was steeped in online conspiracies that make him and his siblings vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases like the ongoing measles outbreaks.

"I grew up under my mother's beliefs that vaccines are dangerous," Lindenberger told a Senate health committee. He'd show her scientific studies but said she instead turned to illegitimate sources that "instill fear into the public."

Last December, despite his mother's disapproval and realizing that "my school viewed me as a health threat," Lindenberger began catching up on his missed immunizations. He told lawmakers it's important "to inform people about how to find good information" and to remind them how dangerous these diseases really are.

This year is shaping up to be a bad one for measles as already, the U.S. has counted more than 200 cases in 11 states — including about 70 in an outbreak in the Pacific Northwest.

Measles is one of the most contagious viruses, able to be spread through coughs and sneezes for four days before someone develops the characteristic rash. It's dangerous: 1 in 20 patients get pneumonia, and 1 in 1,000 get brain swelling that can lead to seizures, deafness or intellectual disability. While deaths are rare in the U.S., measles killed 110,000 people globally in 2017 — and unvaccinated Americans traveling abroad, or foreign visitors here, can easily bring in the virus.

The vaccine is highly effective and very safe, John Wiesman, Washington state's health secretary, told the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee.

In fact, a massive 10-year study of more than 650,000 children born in Denmark offered fresh reassurance that there's no risk of autism from the measles, mumps and rubella, or MMR, vaccine. An autism-vaccine link was long ago exposed as a fraud but still is cited by vaccine opponents. In *Annals of Internal Medicine* on Tuesday, researchers compared vaccinated and unvaccinated tots and concluded: "Our study does not support that MMR vaccination increases the risk for autism, triggers autism in susceptible children or is associated with clustering of autism cases after vaccination."

In the U.S., more than 90 percent of the population nationally is properly vaccinated but there are pockets of the country, including in Wiesman's hard-hit state, where fewer children get immunized on time or at all. They in turn are a hazard to people who can't get vaccinated — babies who are too young or people with weak immune systems.

Vaccination against a list of diseases is required to attend school, but 17 states, including Ohio, allow some type of non-medical exemption for "personal, moral or other beliefs," according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The hearing came a day after the American Academy of Pediatrics urged the CEOs of Facebook, Google and Pinterest to better counter vaccine misinformation spread through their sites.

"We have an opportunity, and in my view, an obligation, to work together to solve this public health crisis," wrote Dr. Kyle Yasuda, the group's president.

Lindenberger created national headlines after he posted on Reddit several months ago that, "my parents think vaccines are some kind of government scheme" and "god knows how I'm still alive." He asked how

to go about getting vaccinated on his own.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a how-to-list for youths ages 7 to 18 who've missed childhood shots.

Lindenberger's mother, Jill Wheeler, told The Associated Press on Tuesday that that she was proud of how her son carried himself even though "I didn't agree with anything he said." Wheeler said she feared her children having a bad reaction if they were vaccinated, and questioned why a teen was given a national platform to discuss the topic. "They've made him the poster child for the pharmaceutical industry," she said.

Tuesday, the high school senior told the Senate panel that parents aren't the only ones who need better education. "Most of my friends didn't even understand they could get vaccinated despite their parents' wishes," Lindenberger said.

AP reporter John Seewer in Toledo contributed to this report.

The Associated Press Health & Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Ex-NYC Mayor Bloomberg won't run for president in 2020

By STEVE PEOPLES and JULIE PACE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Michael Bloomberg, the billionaire former New York City mayor, announced Tuesday that he will not join the crowded field of Democrats running for president in 2020.

Instead, Bloomberg said he planned to focus his energy and considerable resources on outside efforts aimed at defeating President Donald Trump, as well as on combating climate change and addressing gun violence.

Bloomberg spent months weighing a White House run, traveling to early voting states and building a team of experienced political advisers. But aides said internal polling suggested Bloomberg's path to the Democratic nomination was narrow, particularly if Vice President Joe Biden — who shares some of Bloomberg's moderate positions — decides to run.

In an editorial for Bloomberg News — the media company Bloomberg owns — he said he was "clear-eyed about the difficulty of winning the Democratic nomination in such a crowded field."

Bloomberg has flirted with a presidential run before, but as an independent. He registered as a Democrat last fall and began pitching himself to primary voters as a political centrist. But as an older white man with strong ties to Wall Street, he may have struggled to win over the Democratic Party's energized liberal base that's increasingly embracing diversity.

He encouraged Democrats on Tuesday to unify behind a nominee who could beat Trump, a not-so-subtle dig against candidates pushing the party to embrace liberal priorities such as "Medicare-for-all."

"It's essential that we nominate a Democrat who will be in the strongest position to defeat Donald Trump and bring our country back together," he wrote. "We cannot allow the primary process to drag the party to an extreme that would diminish our chances in the general election and translate into 'Four More Years.'"

Bloomberg aides said Biden's likely White House run was a factor in the mayor's decision. The team's internal polling showed that there is an opportunity for a moderate, like Bloomberg or Biden, to win the Democratic primary, but there wasn't room for both.

Biden may not announce his final decision until April. But Bloomberg concluded that was too long to wait to make his own decision, and he informed advisers on Monday that he would not be running for the White House.

Bloomberg does plan to keep his political network together as he considers how to play a role in the 2020 election from the outside. He's consulting several top advisers to former President Barack Obama, including David Plouffe, the architect of Obama's 2008 campaign, data guru Dan Wagner and Mitch Stewart, Obama's battlefield-states director.

While details of the effort are still being discussed, aides said the goal is to build a robust and well-funded

effort to target Trump even as Democrats are still locked in a competitive primary that could stretch deep into 2020.

"Making sure Trump doesn't have the field to himself is really important," Plouffe said.

It's unclear how much money Bloomberg is willing to plunge into the effort. He invested more than \$100 million to help Democrats in the 2018 midterm election and his team has discussed going much further in 2020.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee is now the only candidate in the 2020 race putting climate change front and center in his campaign, but he declined to speculate Tuesday at a campaign stop in Iowa on whether Bloomberg's departure from the field would boost his bid.

"Whether we were in the same race or he is doing work as a private citizen, I know we will be allied in some sense eventually, one way or another, because he has just been so visionary on this for such a long period of time," Inslee said. "So I look forward to working with him one way or another."

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Follow Steve Peoples at <http://twitter.com/sppeoples> and Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

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Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe in Ames, Iowa, contributed to this report.

## Omar the flashpoint as Democrats confront divide over Israel

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Back in January, the Democrats welcomed their brash young newcomers to Congress with smiles and hugs. That was before the new colleagues dragged the party's simmering divisions over Israel out in the open.

Provocative comments from Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota have thrust the Democrats into an uncomfortable debate over Israel policy a few weeks before a high-profile conference where senior Democrats typically make a show of support for the Jewish state. Increasingly, the rift appears as much generational as ideological, with newly elected Democrats showing less deference to the party line.

Omar became the flash point after she suggested last week that Israel's supporters are pushing U.S. lawmakers to take a pledge of "allegiance to a foreign country." It's at least the third time she has forced older, pro-Israel Democrats who run the House into awkward territory over U.S.-Israeli policy.

Republicans have been happy to stoke the furor, with President Donald Trump calling Omar's remarks "a dark day for Israel" and posting a photo of himself in Jerusalem. Inside the Democratic family, meanwhile, leaders are in a bind, torn between a need to admonish Omar for her comments and their desire to defend one of the first Muslim women elected to Congress.

This time Omar is not apologizing. And this time pro-Israel Democrats led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi are not just warning her about the dangers of Jewish tropes. They're expected to offer a resolution condemning anti-Semitism on the House floor.

"Accusations of dual loyalty generally have an insidious, bigoted history," an early draft of the resolution reads in part. "The House of Representatives acknowledges the dangerous consequences of perpetuating anti-Semitic stereotypes and rejects anti-Semitism as hateful expressions of intolerance that are contradictory to the values that define the people of the United States."

Pelosi and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer announced in a meeting of leading Democrats late Tuesday that the text will be updated to include anti-Muslim bias, according to a senior Democratic aide who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private meeting. Other Democrats said an outpouring of support for Omar prompted leaders to consider broadening the measure to avoid dissension. Omar did not speak to reporters outside her office on Tuesday evening.

"There is a lot emotional disquiet about the situation, and it's a good time to restate our values," said Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, who is Jewish and a member of leadership, as he exited a meeting in Pelosi's office. "That's what I hope our resolution can do."

The text, which includes a history of bigotry against Muslims and blacks as well as Jews, sounds unobjec-

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tionable by itself. But the fact that senior Democrats felt obliged to put the House on-record on the topic points to a transformation in the country — mostly among Democrats — about supporting the Jewish state.

In a poll by the Pew Research Center in January of last year, 46 percent of Americans said they sympathized more with Israel and 16 percent with the Palestinians in their Middle East discord.

But Democrats are about evenly divided, with about a quarter sympathizing with each side and the rest saying they side with neither or don't know — and in recent years they have become less likely to sympathize with Israel than they were in the past. Liberal Democrats were nearly twice as likely to say they sympathize more with the Palestinians (35 percent) than with Israel (19 percent). Older Americans were much more likely to say they sympathize with Israel than with the Palestinians, with more division among younger Americans.

Omar, a Somali-American, says that what she is questioning is the influence game in Washington and she worries that anything she says about Israel and its treatment of Palestinians will be construed as anti-Semitic.

"Being opposed to (Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu and the occupation is not the same as being anti-Semitic," she tweeted on Sunday. "I am grateful to the many Jewish allies who have spoken out and said the same."

But Democrats in Congress remain largely supportive of Israel. Pelosi, for example, often attends the American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference in Washington, which is coming up later this month.

Omar on Tuesday got a boost from allies who point out that the congresswoman, too, has been the target of threats and bigotry.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez suggested in a tweet that her fellow freshman was being treated unfairly. "No one seeks this level of reprimand when members make statements about Latinx + other communities," the New York Democrat wrote.

Jewish groups generally said they support the resolution — but. ...

"We are concerned that the timing of this resolution will be seen as singling out and focusing special condemnation on a Muslim woman of color as if her views and insensitive comments pose a greater threat than the torrent of hatred that the white nationalist right continues to level against Jews, Muslims, people of color and other vulnerable minority groups," said J Street, a nonprofit that says it's a home for "pro-Israel, pro-Peace Americans." The Democrats' strategy, the group added, "plays directly into the hands of the president and his allies, who act in bad faith to weaponize the debate for political gain."

Back home in Minnesota, a collection of elected officials started a #StandWithIlhan hashtag with a statement that reads in part:

"We call on Democrats to stand with Ilhan against Republican efforts to pit Jews and Muslims against each other."

But there also was talk of finding a candidate to challenge her in 2020.

"I firmly believe that her anti-Semitic expressions do not reflect the views of her district's residents," said state Sen. Ron Latz, who is Jewish, lives in her district and has been critical of Omar's recent statements on Israel. "She is rapidly making herself a pariah in Congress, rather than an effective representative for her constituents," he added — "exactly the kind of scenario that would open the door for a primary challenge."

Senior Democrats were standing firmly against Omar's comments, and not for the first time. Earlier this year, she apologized for a 2012 tweet in which she said Israel had "hypnotized" America. And last month, she apologized for suggesting that members of Congress support Israel because they are paid to do so.

That earned her stern rebukes from Pelosi and House Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Eliot Engel, among others. This time, Engel declared that Omar's suggestion about divided loyalties was a "vile" stereotype that had no place on his committee. Republicans, meanwhile, demanded that Democrats throw Omar off Engel's panel. There was no sign of that happening at midday Tuesday.

"I should not be expected to have allegiance/pledge support to a foreign country in order to serve my country in Congress or serve on committee," Omar tweeted.

Michigan Rep. Debbie Dingell said Engel, while upset with Omar's comments, "feels that she brings a



different perspective to the committee" that keeps it strong.

"This is a very complicated issue," Dingell said on Fox News Channel. "There is nothing complicated about being very clear that we must stand up against anti-Semitism."

Associated Press writers Doug Glass in Minneapolis and Emily Swanson and Hannah Fingerhut in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>

## Venezuela's adversaries seek to show resolve in crisis

By CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Appearing a day after his rival returned home to a tumultuous welcome, President Nicolas Maduro denounced his opponents in a speech Tuesday at a military ceremony but did not refer by name to opposition leader Juan Guaido. The man who says he is the rightful president, meanwhile, escalated his campaign to topple Maduro with an appeal for support from state unions, long reliant on government handouts.

The dueling scenes, evidence of the rift in a country in crisis, came as Venezuelans and the world awaited the next moves of two adversaries maneuvering for an edge in what could be a protracted struggle. The Maduro government's decision not to move against Guaido upon his return to Venezuela on Monday reflects the intense pressure Maduro faces and, possibly, a calculation that restraint is the best tactic for now.

Still, Maduro was defiant during a ceremony marking the sixth anniversary of the death of his predecessor and mentor, Hugo Chavez, belittling a "minority of opportunists and cowards." He said government supporters would hold a rally on Saturday, a "day of anti-imperialism" in his words, and a counter to U.S.-backed Guaido's plans to hold nationwide protests the same day.

Maduro also pinned medals on members of the security forces involved in a crackdown on Guaido's failed Feb. 23 attempt to bring humanitarian aid into Venezuela from Brazil and Colombia. Maduro has described the attempt, backed by the U.S. and its allies, as part of a plot to overthrow his government.

Hours earlier, Guaido said police officials were among those at a meeting that he held with leaders of public employee unions, which rely heavily on subsidies from Maduro's government to get by in a country suffering from hyperinflation and shortages of food and other necessities.

"We're not going to collaborate any longer with the dictatorship," Guaido said after a meeting at the offices of an engineers' association in Caracas. He urged state workers to prepare for a strike, though no date was given and he said an immediate priority will be to promote a law guaranteeing rights for public workers.

The 35-year-old leader of the opposition-controlled National Assembly said he would call a meeting of the legislature on Wednesday to craft the law.

Guaido and his backers say Maduro's re-election last year was invalid, making the legislative leader interim president. At least one pro-Maduro Supreme Court judge has accused Guaido of illegally usurping power, putting him at risk of arrest.

Guaido had shrouded the route and timing of his return Monday in secrecy amid concerns he might be detained. Yet he breezed through airport immigration checks after a commercial flight from Panama and brazenly called for Maduro's downfall at a rally where the presence of security forces was minimal.

The United States and other countries had warned Maduro not to move against his adversary, and he possibly realized arresting his foe could generate more street protests.

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, an influential voice in advocating U.S. measures against Maduro, warned that the Venezuelan government could still act against Guaido in ways that it has refined against other opposition voices.

"Issue a standing arrest warrant from a rubber stamp court. Then at a time of their choosing, arrest him late at night with no media, diplomats or supporters around," Rubio warned in a tweet.

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While Guaidó's presence is likely to add at least short-term momentum to his campaign for political change, Maduro has proven resilient and still controls the organs of state, including the critical loyalty of top military officers. Some analysts speculate the two sides might consider behind-the-scenes negotiations as a way to end the standoff.

The U.S. envoy for Venezuela, Elliott Abrams, said in Washington that Maduro had presided over economic decline and human rights violations in Venezuela.

"In every democratic transition in Latin America there are negotiations, but I just would say it is extremely difficult to see how he could play a positive role in a democratic election," Abrams said.

Venezuela is gripped by a humanitarian crisis that is expected to worsen as U.S. oil sanctions designed to put more pressure on Maduro take their toll.

The United States and some 50 other countries have recognized Guaidó as the legitimate leader of Venezuela and have urged Maduro, who is backed by Russia, to resign so the country can prepare for elections. Guaidó left Venezuela last month despite a court order banning him from foreign travel and visited Colombia, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Ecuador.

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Associated Press journalist Luis Alonso contributed to this report from Washington.

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Follow Christopher Torchia on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/torchiachris](http://www.twitter.com/torchiachris)

## Sanders vs. Clinton: 2016 rivalry proves hard to overcome

By **JUANA SUMMERS** and **BRIAN SLODYSKO** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Bernie Sanders was minutes away from walking onto a Brooklyn stage last weekend to launch a second presidential campaign that he insisted would be all about the future. The problem: Some of his allies were still fighting Hillary Clinton.

Shaun King, the activist and writer who was introducing the Vermont senator, hinted at what might have been had Sanders won the 2016 Democratic nomination.

"In 2016, like so many of you, I campaigned hard for Bernie to be president. And to this day, I still believe that he would have beaten Donald Trump," King told a cheering crowd gathered on a snowy college lawn and waving signs with the same logo that Sanders' campaign used in 2016.

The 2020 Democratic primary may be in full swing, but the bruising 2016 contest between Sanders and Clinton never ended for some. In the opening days of Sanders' latest campaign, Clinton's supporters have warned that he will drag the party to the extreme left and have threatened to reveal unsavory details about him. Sanders and some of his backers have been strikingly dismissive of the first woman to be a major party's presidential nominee. In the process, the entire Democratic field risks getting bogged down in the last campaign instead of positioning themselves to beat President Donald Trump.

"One of the biggest clichés in politics is that elections are about the future, not the past, and there's a reason that clichés are clichés — because they're true," said Mo Elleithee, a former Clinton spokesman who now leads Georgetown University's Institute of Politics and Public Service. "To sit here and relitigate what happened in the 2016 Democratic primary means we're not talking about the 2020 Democratic primary. How's that good for anybody?"

But the 2016 campaign — and all the fallout from its surprise result — isn't going away without a fight.

Trump lamented on Twitter on Tuesday that he won't be able to take on Clinton for a second time after she ruled out running for president again. Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, sought to move past the ambiguity over his party affiliation by signing a Democratic National Committee pledge to seek the presidency as a Democrat and govern as one if he's elected. And in recent interviews, Sanders has sought to deflect criticism that he divided the party and contributed to Clinton's loss by painting himself as a relentless surrogate for the 2016 nominee, something he doesn't think he gets enough credit for.

The 2016 hangover is following some candidates on the campaign trail. Pressed in Iowa this weekend about why she didn't back Sanders in 2016, Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts encouraged Demo-

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crats to “keep our focus on how we’re going to win in 2020.”

It’s the long-simmering feud between the Clinton and Sanders camps that’s proving the hardest to overcome. In 2016, Sanders and his supporters said the primary was stacked against them because of perceived favoritism among Democratic leaders toward Clinton. Her backers argued that Sanders left her bruised heading into the tough fall campaign against Trump.

Those lingering hard feelings have been amplified by a debate among Democrats in the Trump era over whether the ambitious liberal proposals championed by Sanders could backfire. Bill and Hillary Clinton don’t believe Sanders can beat Trump, according to people who have spoken to them and requested anonymity to discuss private conversations.

From nearly the minute Sanders announced his second campaign last month, Clinton supporters worried he would drag the party too far to the left. Sanders, meanwhile, spoke of his “differences” with Clinton during an appearance on ABC’s “The View” and said he wasn’t interested in her advice.

Clinton spokesman Nick Merrill tweeted that “crap like this 613 days before Election Day is irresponsible, counter-productive, & sets us all back.”

By the time Clinton and Sanders made a rare appearance together on Sunday in Selma, Alabama, the tension was clear. Clinton and Sanders shared only a brusque exchange, in contrast to the hug she gave to New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker.

There’s no sign that the strain will fade away soon. David Brock, who in 2016 ran the pro-Clinton super PAC Correct the Record, helped produce opposition research against Sanders. He said only a limited amount of the group’s work was released during the campaign because they were “waved off (from) going very hard on Bernie” to avoid alienating his supporters.

“He wasn’t really scrutinized,” said Brock, who also founded the Democratic opposition research group American Bridge.

Brock wouldn’t provide details on what he learned about Sanders but said he and Clinton supporters won’t hold back in 2020.

“It’s extremely unlikely that he is going to be the nominee, and yet he can cause a lot of problems along the way,” he said.

Jeff Weaver, who ran Sanders’ 2016 campaign and serves as a senior adviser to his second run, brushed off such threats, saying that there’s a small group that could be described as the “Bitteratti” who is interested in fighting the last primary and that he isn’t one of them.

“There is a very small sliver, particularly within some donor circles, who for their own class interests would be very disappointed to see Bernie Sanders be the nominee of their party,” Weaver said. “David Brock is paid by and represents those people.”

“Fortunately,” Weaver added, “the rank and file of the Democratic Party does not agree with the small group of millionaires who holds the leash of David Brock.”

Rebecca Katz, a New York-based liberal strategist, said, “Establishment Washington has to come to terms with the fact that, yes, Bernie Sanders might indeed be the nominee.”

“Not only that, but they also need to know that Bernie Sanders is very well admired outside of Washington, and they can’t discount that just because they don’t like him,” he said.

Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe in Waterloo, Iowa, and Julie Pace in Washington contributed to this report.

## As investigations swirl, Trump team ready to fight, distract

By CATHERINE LUCEY and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House has beefed up its legal team. Its political team is ready to distract and disparage. And President Donald Trump is venting against Democratic prying.

Trump’s plan for responding to the multiplying congressional probes into his campaign, White House and personal affairs is coming into focus as newly empowered Democrats intensify their efforts. Deploying

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a mix of legal legwork and political posturing, the administration is trying to minimize its exposure while casting the president as the victim of overzealous partisans.

"It's a disgrace, it's a disgrace for our country," Trump said at the White House on Tuesday as he accused Democrats of "presidential harassment."

Typically used to setting the national or global agenda, presidents are by definition on their back foot when they come under investigation. And the latest fusillade of requests for information has the Trump White House, already increasingly focused on the twin challenges of dealing with the probes and the 2020 election, in a reactive position.

Trump's response points to his increasing frustration with Congress and his intention to seize on the investigations as evidence that he is under siege in Washington.

While Trump is far from the first president to bristle at Capitol Hill oversight, his enthusiastic embrace of political victimhood is still novel — and stands to serve as a key part of his re-election argument. Trump has made railing against the so-called witch hunt against him a staple of his rallies and speeches, revving up crowds by mocking his investigators and news coverage of their proceedings.

That attitude was emphasized Tuesday by Trump's son Eric, who was among the 81 people and organizations that the House Judiciary Committee has contacted seeking documents as part of a probe into possible obstruction of justice, corruption and abuse of power. Calling Congress "incompetent," Eric Trump told Fox News Radio "we're going to fight the hell out of it. And we'll fight where we need and we'll cooperate where we need, but the desperation shows."

Aware that the shift to divided government would usher in an onslaught of investigations, the White House began making defensive moves late last year. Seeking to be ready for the Democratic-led House, more than a dozen lawyers were added to the White House Counsel's Office and a seasoned attorney was added to the communications team to handle questions related to the probes.

After Democrats took the House last November, Trump declared that they had to choose between investigating him and earning White House cooperation on matters of bipartisan concern like health care and infrastructure. Trump assessed publicly Tuesday that Democrats had made their choice, saying, "So the campaign begins."

His aides had already made that determination, with press secretary Sarah Sanders issuing an acerbic statement late Monday calling the Judiciary Committee probe a "disgraceful and abusive investigation." Trump's campaign spokeswoman, Kayleigh McEnany, accused Democrats of stopping "at nothing, including destroying the lives and reputations of many innocent Americans who only have sought to serve their country honorably, but who hold different political views than their own."

White House officials described their plan for addressing the mounting requests as multi-layered. Lawyers in the counsel's office plan to be cooperative, but are unlikely to provide Democrats with the vast array of documents they're looking for. In particular, they intend to be deeply protective of executive power and privilege — a defense used by previous administrations against probing lawmakers with varying degrees of success.

Trump said President Barack Obama "didn't give one letter" when his administration came under congressional investigation. But Obama spokesman Eric Shultz tweeted that the Obama White House produced hundreds of thousands of documents for various congressional inquiries.

Meanwhile, others in the White House and the president's orbit are preparing to do what they can to bring the fight to Democrats, preparing dossiers about Obama's invocation of executive privilege when House Republicans investigated his administration. And all acknowledge there is no chance that Trump will stop commenting and criticizing the investigations.

The officials declined to speak on the record in order to discuss the sensitive planning.

The administration approach was on display this week as White House counsel Pat Cipollone pushed back against a request from the House Oversight and Reform Committee for documents related to security clearances for White House officials. In a letter released by the committee chairman, Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., Cipollone called the request "unprecedented and extraordinarily intrusive" and offered to



provide a briefing and documents "describing the security clearance process." White House officials said the Cummings inquiries were seen by aides as a thinly veiled attempt to gain potentially embarrassing information on the president's son-in-law, senior adviser Jared Kushner.

Cummings shot back that the White House position defied "plain common-sense" and said he would consult with colleagues on his next move.

The exchange was predictable, with both sides using the exchange of letters for political means, and in anticipation of almost certain judicial proceedings.

Former Obama administration associate counsel Andy Wright, who also worked as a Capitol Hill investigator, said both parties are aware that their correspondence has multiple audiences.

"You have to assume it's going to play out in the public space," he said. "But you also want to create that record of reasonableness so that the court will be inclined to rule in your favor if and when it comes to that."

As the Judiciary Committee's voluminous requests circulated around Washington on Monday, the president's outside array of former allies, associates and staffers communicated among themselves about who was named in the requests and whether they faced new legal jeopardy. Still, some expressed some relief that the requests dealt with documents previously turned over to other investigators. Others maintained the wide-ranging request would bolster Trump's argument that the probe was a vendetta against him.

But the request affirmed the shadow that current and former staffers still live under. Nearly all the current and former administration officials, friends and family listed on the request have hired private attorneys to navigate both the Mueller probe and now the oversight process — among them Hope Hicks, Reince Priebus, Steve Bannon, Kushner and Don McGahn.

## Lawsuit: Trump family-planning rule 'politicizes' medicine

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

A new Trump administration rule for family-planning grants could trigger a national public health crisis, the American Medical Association and Planned Parenthood said in a lawsuit Tuesday challenging the rule.

The new rule, announced last week by the Department of Health and Human Services, would prohibit family planning clinics funded by the federal Title X program from making abortion referrals — a provision that critics denounce as a "gag rule."

Clinics that receive Title X grants also would be barred from sharing office space with abortion providers — a requirement that would in many cases boost costs for providers like Planned Parenthood that offer abortions and other services, including family planning.

The result of the rule, if implemented, "will be a national public health crisis in short order," the lawsuit said.

"Pregnancies that are unintended, and thus riskier, will increase. The number of abortions will also increase. And there will be fewer tests for sexually transmitted infections and cancer screens — putting patients and their partners at great health risk," the lawsuit said.

Planned Parenthood, which operates a nationwide network of health centers, says it will leave the Title X program if the rule is implemented, forgoing an estimated \$60 million in annual funding rather than abide by the new restrictions.

Such an exit could have enormous impact: Planned Parenthood serves 1.6 million of the 4 million women who get care through Title X. The program, enacted in 1970, makes family-planning services available to low-income individuals for free or at low cost.

In the lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Eugene, Oregon, the AMA and Planned Parenthood contended that the new rule violates a congressional mandate that patients receiving information about their pregnancies through Title X must receive complete, unbiased information about their options. They argued that the ban on abortion referrals violates this mandate and unconstitutionally infringes on health care providers' responsibilities to their patients.

"Because of the administration's overreach and interference ... physicians will be prohibited from having

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open, frank conversations with their patients about all their health care options," said the AMA's president, Dr. Barbara McAneny. "This blatant violation of patients' rights under the Code of Medical Ethics is untenable."

Leana Wen, a physician who is Planned Parenthood's president, said a majority of the Title X patients served by her organization are low-income black and Hispanic women.

"Families that are struggling to make ends meet and people who live in rural areas must have the same access to full, unbiased information from their doctor as everyone else," said Wen.

Wen stressed that Planned Parenthood, even if it left Title X, would continue to offer its full array of services, including birth control and screenings for sexually transmitted diseases and cancer. But it would not be able to maintain the level of free or low-cost contraception that was available via Title X.

The new Trump administration rule is scheduled to take effect in 60 days, but implementation is likely to be delayed by litigation. In addition to the AMA/Planned Parenthood lawsuit, the rule is being challenged in a lawsuit filed Monday by California officials and another filed Tuesday by officials in 20 other mostly Democratic controlled states. A lawsuit also is planned by the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association, which represents publicly funded family planning providers.

The Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services have declined comment on the lawsuits. HHS contends that the new rule "makes notable improvements designed to increase the number of patients served and improve the quality of their care."

The AMA cited two primary motives for challenging the rule: to prevent infringement on the physician/patient relationship and to protect the integrity of Title X, which the AMA considers one of the most cost-effective federal health programs. Its grants totaled \$286 million in the 2017 fiscal year.

The AMA has engaged previously in cases involving physician/patient communications. For example, it joined other medical organizations in successfully opposing a Florida law that barred doctors from discussing firearm risks and safety with their patients.

One of the concerns of the AMA and Planned Parenthood is that the new Title X rule may result in a shift of some money to ideologically conservative entities which favor abstinence education and natural family planning and which would be unwilling or unable to provide women with the most effective forms of contraception.

The new rule "blesses biased and incomplete pregnancy counseling where the interests of the patient are no longer paramount," the lawsuit said. The rule "will politicize the practice of medicine and the delivery of health care."

Abortion is a legal medical procedure, but federal laws prohibit the use of taxpayer funds to pay for the procedure except in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the woman.

Religious conservatives and abortion opponents contend that Title X has been used to indirectly subsidize Planned Parenthood — the leading abortion provider in the U.S.

Groups such as the National Right to Life Committee have hailed the new rule, saying it does not cut funding, but "merely ensures that health facilities receiving Title X funds do not perform or promote abortion as a method of family planning."

## 'Rock star for a day': New Orleans celebrates Mardi Gras

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — From children clamoring for tossed strands of beads, to revelers dressed up as "blind referees" poking fun at the NFL, to high school bands marching down the street, people in New Orleans celebrated Fat Tuesday with flair and fun.

Mardi Gras season began Jan. 6 and featured weeks of parades, fancy-dress balls, king cakes and generalized frivolity citywide. Fat Tuesday is the culmination of Carnival. The festivities kicked off in Tuesday's pre-dawn hours with the Northside Skull and Bone Gang in skeleton costumes waking people to celebrate the day. The fun continued throughout the day and across the city with parades, costumes and balls.

"I feel like a rock star for a day," said Van Bender, carrying a sequined replica of the Death Star from

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the Star Wars movies and joined by friends carrying sequined images of Darth Vader, Boba Fett and a Stormtrooper. He said there's a sense of joy on Fat Tuesday. "It feels like peace on Earth. Everyone's filled with love. Everyone gets along. Everyone helps each other."

After rainy weather affected some parades Sunday, Tuesday dawned cold but sunny. People — some of whom came out before sunrise to stake a good spot along the parade route — bundled up under multiple layers. Lorenzo Bridgewater of Slidell, Louisiana, got out at about 4:30 a.m.

"I doubled up my jeans, doubled up my socks. I'm wearing a sweater underneath this and underneath that a thermal with a shirt over it. So I'm pretty layered up," he said.

Pete Fountain's Half-Fast Walking Group was again a crowd favorite. The clarinetist died in 2016, but the walking group he led for years still meets each Carnival Season at Commander's Palace restaurant and strolls the parade route. Lance Pierce, of Leonardtown, Maryland, got up early, ahead of friends, to see the group.

"I enjoyed watching Pete before he passed, coming down here and playing so that's my thing. Everyone else is kind of sleeping in, taking it easy, getting their costumes ready to go. But I like to come out here and watch the guys come by," he said.

Then the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club paraded, followed by the Rex Parade. Zulu's practice of wearing black makeup during its parade drew criticism amid recent national headlines that two Virginia politicians once wore blackface.

Zulu issued a statement in February saying their parade costumes bear no resemblance to those worn by "blackface" minstrel performers at the turn of the century. Rather, the group said, the costumes are designed to honor garments worn by South African Zulu warriors.

Zulu's custom-designed coconut throws are perennial favorites with fans who vie for the chance to get one.

The Rex parade stopped for a toast at a home along St. Charles Avenue that has been an important stop for the Rex king along the parade route since 1907.

A fire on Feb. 20 caused massive damage to the three-story, 150-year-old mansion whose occupants over the years have included four kings and a queen of Rex. Local media showed a sign that had jokingly been hung up outside the mansion, reading, "We are ready for Ash Wednesday."

This year's Carnival season also featured numerous jabs at the NFL and its commissioner Roger Goodell, over the now-infamous "no-call" during the Jan. 20 NFC Championship game between the Los Angeles Rams and the New Orleans Saints.

A Rams defensive back leveled a Saints receiver with a helmet-to-helmet hit at a crucial point in the game, and the Rams went on to win and go to the Super Bowl. They lost to the New England Patriots.

NFL officials acknowledged flags should have been thrown. That's done little to assuage Saints' fans who chose to express their anger and disappointment in costume. The French Quarter was filled with costumed "blind referees" wearing signs like "Blind as a bat" or walking with canes.

"It's been forty-four days since that day. And we're still mad," said Jerry Dellucky, from Hammond, Louisiana. He and some friends were dressed as blind referees and yellow penalty flags. "Football is our passion down here. And we don't get over it."

One parade featured a walking group called the "Robbin Refs" who wore referee outfits and black masks. On the back of their uniforms? A photo of Goodell with a red clown nose. The Krewe d'Etat parade featured a float called "Willful Blindness" with a blind referee on the front holding a cane.

Fat Tuesday ends each year at midnight, with police riding horseback down Bourbon Street to ceremonially "clear" the street. Then comes Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent and a time for many Christians to fast and reflect ahead of Easter.

Follow Santana on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ruskygal> .

## Tornado forecasting improves, but still deaths keep coming

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sometimes in forecasting tornadoes, you can get everything technically right, and yet it all goes horribly wrong.

Three days before the killer Alabama tornado struck, government severe-storm meteorologists cautioned that conditions could be ripe for twisters in the Southeast on Sunday. Then, an hour before the tragedy, they warned that a strong tornado could occur in two particular Alabama counties within 30 to 60 minutes.

And that's what happened.

Yet 23 people died.

To a meteorologist, the forecast was the equivalent of a hole-in-one in golf or a slam dunk, but with so many people killed, "was it a success or a failure or both?" asked Colorado State University meteorology professor Russ Schumacher.

Forecasters "painted a pretty clear picture that something bad was going to happen," Schumacher said, and "there's certainly success in that. On the other hand, we don't like to see entire communities to be turned upside-down like this. So there's more to be done."

Predicting with any precision where a tornado is going to go is still beyond the limits of meteorology, which is why warnings went out for a large two-county area when a tornado might be only half a mile wide. And getting people to listen and take precautions is another matter altogether.

Forecasting tornadoes combines the hard physics of meteorology, the softer human factors of social science and more than a dash of chaos.

At the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma, forecasters look for certain ingredients that can make a tornado. These include warm moist air coming from the south and stormy weather chugging from the west that can bring instability. That's when you can get supercells, which is where tornadoes come from.

But maybe only 10 to 20 percent of supercells spawn tornadoes, said prediction center forecast operations chief Bill Bunting. There are other factors at work, including erratic wind behavior known as wind shear, the amount of cold air present, even the size of the rain droplets, meteorologists said. And then there are the unknown factors at play.

Given all that, the best meteorologists can do is say seven to eight days out — four to five is more usual — when conditions will be ripe for tornadoes, Bunting said. And even that doesn't mean they will happen. And certainly not over all of the large area that meteorologists give in their several-day-out alerts.

From 1994 to 2017, the weather service's "false alarm" rate for tornado alerts was 74 percent, while last year it dropped to 69 percent, according to weather service spokeswoman Maureen O'Leary.

The problem is that a tornado is a rare, small, fleeting event, harder to predict than giant phenomena like hurricanes or big winter storms. A one-mile variation in a tornado's path can mean the difference between plowing up a field and wreaking havoc in a populated area, Bunting said.

Bunting's office might warn people to watch out across a five- or six-county area or even a two- or three-state region, but "only a very, very small area of that risk area will actually experience dangerous conditions," he said.

And people who don't get hit may not bother to listen the next time, said University of Oklahoma meteorology professor Howard Bluestein.

That's the social problem, which may be even bigger than the meteorology one, Bluestein said. And that's where Kim Klockow-McClain comes in. She is a researcher for NOAA's National Severe Storms Laboratory, also in Oklahoma, who specializes in trying to find out why some people listen and react to warnings and others don't.

"Social sciences, I think, are really going to the heart of the issue," Klockow-McClain said. "You've got to receive the message. You've got to understand it and know what to be able to do about it."

For example, people in mobile homes, which are especially vulnerable to tornadoes, are less likely to receive or seek out storm alerts, she said. Even though they are told to get out, studies show mobile



home dwellers still "shelter in place," Klockow-McClain said. "They think it's the best thing they can do or the only they can do."

It isn't.

The weather service started to change from just focusing on better forecasts to better communication of warnings in 2011 because the agency noticed that the forecasts had improved but that the outcomes were still similar to what they were in the 1950s, '60s and '70s, she said.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter: @borenbears .

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## London man seems to be free of HIV in second such case

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

SEATTLE (AP) — A London man appears to be free of the virus that causes AIDS after a stem cell transplant, the second success including the "Berlin patient," doctors reported.

The therapy had an early success with Timothy Ray Brown, a U.S. man treated in Germany who is 12 years post-transplant and still free of HIV. Until now, Brown is the only person thought to have been cured of infection with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Such transplants are dangerous and have failed in other patients. They're also impractical to try to cure the millions already infected.

The latest case "shows the cure of Timothy Brown was not a fluke and can be recreated," said Dr. Keith Jerome of Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle who had no role. He added that it could lead to a simpler approach that could be used more widely.

The case, published online Monday by the journal Nature, was presented Tuesday at an HIV conference in Seattle.

Brown sat in the front row, stood for a round of applause and shook hands with lead researcher Ravindra Gupta of University College London after Gupta presented details on the London patient.

The patient has not been identified. He was diagnosed with HIV in 2003 and started taking drugs to control the infection in 2012. It's unclear why he waited that long. He developed Hodgkin lymphoma that year and agreed to a stem cell transplant to treat the cancer in 2016.

With the right kind of donor, his doctors figured, the London patient might get a bonus beyond treating his cancer: a possible HIV cure.

Doctors found a donor with a gene mutation that confers natural resistance to HIV. About 1 percent of people descended from northern Europeans have inherited the mutation from both parents and are immune to most HIV. The donor had this double copy of the mutation.

That was "an improbable event," said Gupta. "That's why this has not been observed more frequently."

The transplant changed the London patient's immune system, giving him the donor's mutation and HIV resistance.

The patient voluntarily stopped taking HIV drugs to see if the virus would come back.

Usually, HIV patients expect to stay on daily pills for life to suppress the virus. When drugs are stopped, the virus roars back, usually in two to three weeks.

That didn't happen with the London patient. There is still no trace of the virus after 18 months off the drugs.

Researchers from eight countries are tracking 45 patients with cancer and HIV who have or will soon have stem cell transplants. One of them, a Dusseldorf, Germany, man, is showing no signs of HIV several months after stopping treatment drugs, but it is too soon to tell if he, too, could be in remission.

Calling the London patient "cured" is tricky, Gupta said, because there is no standard definition for how long someone must remain free of virus and off treatment drugs. "We are being cautious" to call it remis-

sion for now, he said.

Brown said he would like to meet the London patient and would encourage him to go public because "it's been very useful for science and for giving hope to HIV-positive people, to people living with HIV," he told The Associated Press Monday.

Stem cell transplants typically are harsh procedures which start with radiation or chemotherapy to damage the body's existing immune system and make room for a new one. There are complications too. Brown had to have a second stem cell transplant when his leukemia returned.

Compared to Brown, the London patient had a less punishing form of chemotherapy to get ready for the transplant, didn't have radiation and had only a mild reaction to the transplant.

Dr. Gero Hutter, the German doctor who treated Brown, called the new case "great news" and "one piece in the HIV cure puzzle."

AP video journalists Manuel Valdes in Seattle and Havovi Todd in London contributed.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## **Alliance to save blue whales from ships stalled by Sri Lanka**

**By MARIA CHENG Associated Press**

When the feeding grounds of blue whales overlap with busy shipping lanes, business interests often supersede those of the endangered marine mammals.

But in Sri Lanka, an unusual alliance has been forged: local conservationists and international shipping companies have aligned in a bid to move the heavily trafficked lane about 28 kilometers (17 miles) away to help avoid collisions between whales and freighters.

The only holdout is the government of Sri Lanka, which has so far declined to sign off on the proposal, jeopardizing the future there of the biggest animal ever known to have lived on the planet, scientists say.

The hundreds of blue whales in Sri Lankan waters — marine biologists estimate there are 600 to 1,500 — feed on tiny shrimp in the shipping lane, and are also believed to mate and give birth nearby.

Shipping executives say they would gladly relocate the traffic corridor, recognizing their ships would be safer in waters not already clogged with fishing vessels, whale-watching boats and the whales themselves, which can grow to more than 33 meters (100 feet), more than twice the length of a Tyrannosaurus Rex dinosaur.

Bryan Wood-Thomas, vice president of the World Shipping Council, said the group wrote to the Sri Lankan prime minister in 2017, affirming that all major international shipping organizations believed Sri Lanka should work with the United Nations to move its traffic lane.

"This is one of the few cases in the world where we can physically separate ships from where the whales are," Wood-Thomas said. "Yes, it adds a little distance, fuel and money to shipping costs, but the extra cost is really minor."

He said it was no small feat to get the majority of the world's shipping companies to agree to move the shipping lane in Sri Lanka.

"There are other places in the world where doing this would incur significant fuel costs or add a lot of time to the journey that businesses will not be happy to absorb," he said.

For a shipping lane to be moved, the country whose waters are most affected must submit a formal proposal to the International Maritime Organization, the U.N. agency that regulates shipping. Despite numerous meetings between scientists, the shipping industry and U.N. officials during the past six years, Sri Lankan officials have demurred from supporting the shipping lane shift.

Rear Adm. Rohana Perera of Sri Lanka's Marine Environment Protection Authority said the government is concerned about the economic impact of the proposed shipping lane move on its ports, fearing passing ships might not be as inclined to stop in Sri Lanka. He said a decision would "hopefully" be made in March.

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The recent political turmoil in Sri Lanka has also complicated matters; a new government was only formed in late December after the president sacked the prime minister, prompting a constitutional crisis. Perera acknowledged Sri Lanka had other priorities at the moment, but said they also recognized the importance of protecting blue whales.

"Conservation problems are usually so complex, but this one is very clear-cut," said Asha de Vos, executive director of Oceanswell, a Sri Lankan marine nonprofit. "This is a situation where Sri Lanka could really shine by taking the initiative."

In many parts of the world, there is no easy solution to the convergence of ships and cetaceans.

For example, scientists have long been worried about the sperm whales that live in the Straits of Gibraltar, but have few solutions.

"It's an incredibly busy area for shipping, but unfortunately, there's not much scope for moving the shipping lane because the straits are so narrow," said Russell Leaper, the scientific lead for blue whales at the International Fund for Animal Welfare, a conservation group.

Once hunted to the brink of extinction, the blue whale population has begun to rebound since the massive marine mammals were given protections from commercial whaling in the 1960s. Due to their size, the whales' only known predators are orcas and humans.

Conservationists estimate there are between 5,000 and 15,000 blue whales globally. While the numbers are thought to be increasing, the whales still are classified as "endangered."

Scientists warn that blue whales in Sri Lanka are particularly vulnerable because they are the only population that doesn't migrate, making them especially susceptible to local threats such as ship strikes, Leaper said.

"It's a very unusual population because they're very isolated and they are in Sri Lanka all year around," he said. "Removing that one threat of ship strikes would make a very large contribution to saving them."

Although statistics on how many whales are killed by ships are patchy, some studies estimate dozens of blue whales are fatally struck by ships in Sri Lankan waters every year. Scientists say they believe that for every blue whale identified in a ship accident, up to 50 others go undetected, largely because once whales are struck and killed, they sink to the bottom of the ocean.

Michael Fishbach, executive director of the Great Whale Conservancy, said that protecting blue whales is crucial not just for the species, but for the planet. He explained that whales help stimulate the production of plankton, which in turn produces more oxygen to offset the impact of climate change.

"For the health of the oceans, we really need more whales," Fishbach said.

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This story has been corrected to show most commercial whaling protections for blue whales were adopted during the 1960s, not in 1946.

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## Prominent French jihadis killed in IS-held area in Syria

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

OUTSIDE BAGHOUZ, Syria (AP) — A prominent French militant who joined the Islamic State group, Jean-Michel Clain, was killed in a mortar strike over the weekend as he struggled with wounds suffered in an earlier airstrike that killed his jihadi brother, his wife said Tuesday after emerging from the group's last pocket of land in Syria.

The wife, who identified herself as Dorothee Maquere, said another French woman who had joined IS, Hayat Boumeddiene, was killed in another strike last week that allegedly hit a safe house known as the "French House," where many French nationals were staying. Boumeddiene had been wanted by French police as a suspected accomplice in a 2015 attack in the Paris region.

Maquere was one of hundreds of people who over the past two days streamed out of Baghouz, the

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last village held by the Islamic State group, under stepped-up assault the past four days by U.S.-backed forces. The latest wave of evacuations brings the final defeat of IS by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces one step closer — a milestone in the devastating four-year campaign to defeat the group's so-called "caliphate" that once covered a vast territory straddling both Syria and Iraq.

Maquere, who is also French, told the Associated Press that the situation inside Baghouz was a "horror film," saying there is a "massacre" inside, with constant shooting. People had to lay flat to avoid the crossfire, she said, adding that there were "no more homes, we live underground in tunnels and tents." She said her 7-year-old daughter was killed and her other daughter wounded by an explosion two weeks ago. Two other sons were killed earlier in a mortar attack and Syrian government fire.

Speaking at a desert reception area where SDF fighters were screening the evacuees, the 38-year-old said she does not want to go back to France, which is part of the U.S.-led coalition fighting IS. "I want France to leave me alone. They killed my husband, my children. ... I want nothing from them. They did already enough harm. I want them to leave me with my children," she said, cradling her two-week old son, one of her five surviving children.

Her account, if verified, closes a chapter on a number of French militants who were connected to attacks in past years in and around Paris and who then made their way to IS's "caliphate" and finally, as it crumbled, to this tiny village on the Euphrates River near the Iraqi border.

Her husband, Jean-Michel Clain, who Maquere said wrote religious anthems for IS, was seriously wounded in a Feb. 20 airstrike in Baghouz that killed his brother, Fabien, one of Europe's most wanted IS members. The U.S.-led coalition announced Fabien's death several days after the strike. The two brothers joined IS together and Fabien went on to become the group's voice in France. Fabien's voice was on an IS recording claiming responsibility for the worst terrorist violence in France's modern history — a series of bombings and shootings in Paris in November 2015 that killed 130 people.

Jean-Michel held on for a little over a week after the airstrike. Maquere said she tried to treat him, but his feet were torn apart and one side of his body was crushed. "He suffered," she said. "There was no hospital." He was killed on Sunday when a mortar struck, causing him a direct head wound, she said.

Boumeddiene was killed in a separate airstrike in Baghouz about a week ago, Maquere said. Two other French citizens who left Baghouz on Monday — a French-Belgian who identified herself as Zohra and a French-Moroccan, who refused to be identified said Boumeddiene was believed to have been staying in the French House and confirmed it was struck last week.

Boumeddiene was the widow of Amedy Coulibaly, a Frenchman who attacked a kosher supermarket in Paris in January 2015, days after two other militants — brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi — gunned down the staff of the weekly satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. Coulibaly killed four people in the supermarket before French police stormed in and killed him. The Kouachi brothers were killed by police in a separate raid. All told, their attacks left 17 people dead.

Investigators then focused on finding Boumeddiene, who was believed to be pregnant at the time. But she had already fled to Syria. Soon after, IS published what it said was an interview with her in French and English, in which she called on women to be patient and make life easier for their husbands.

Maquere said Boumeddiene had "started a new life" and remarried. She said she didn't have any children. The French-Moroccan evacuee said Boumeddiene had told her she had no idea about plans for the 2015 attack in Paris or her husband's plans.

Boumeddiene's evolution was documented in photos widely distributed in French media after her disappearance, from vacation pictures of her in a bikini to images of her holding a crossbow while wearing an all-encompassing black niqab. The last known image of her was from airport surveillance video in Istanbul, going through passport control.

Tuesday's exodus came three days after U.S.-backed forces resumed their push on IS militants holed up in Baghouz. The assault had been slowed the previous week to allow thousands of civilians, including IS family members, to be evacuated from the tiny pocket of territory. As many as 10,000 people who had been squeezed into the eroding patch of land, are estimated to have streamed out — an enormous



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number that stunned the SDF.

Asked about the situation inside Baghouz, a Russian woman who came out with her three children responded in broken Arabic: "Fear." She said her husband had died earlier.

Another woman in her mid-20s, who identified herself as Reem from the central Syrian province of Hama, said she was waiting for her husband to come out of an IS-controlled jail. He has been there for months after killing an IS member in retaliation "for his baby daughter being killed in an airstrike," she said.

"I haven't seen him since and don't know where he is," Reem said, adding that she asked repeatedly for his whereabouts before she eventually decided to leave.

The evacuees said the bombing has been intense in recent days. One woman said she saw a man hit by a missile as she was fleeing from one tent to another.

Earlier on Tuesday, SDF spokesman Mustafa Bali tweeted that about 3,000 people came out of Baghouz on Monday. They left through a humanitarian corridor established by the Kurdish-led forces for those who want to leave or surrender.

Since Feb. 20, more than 10,000 people have left the IS pocket and black-robed women with children in the backs of trucks could be seen passing through the corridor and heading into the desert. They were then whisked off to a camp for displaced people to the north, while suspected IS fighters were moved to detention facilities.

Bali said a large number among those who left Monday were IS fighters who "surrendered to our forces." It was unclear how many IS militants and civilians remained inside, but the number is now likely in the hundreds.

Associated Press writers Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow and Lori Hinnant in Paris contributed to this report.

## Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, March 6, the 65th day of 2019. There are 300 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 6, 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, ruled 7-2 that Scott, a slave, was not an American citizen and therefore could not sue for his freedom in federal court.

On this date:

In 1475, Italian artist and poet Michelangelo was born in Caprese (kah-PRAY'-say) in the Republic of Florence.

In 1836, the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, fell as Mexican forces led by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna stormed the fortress after a 13-day siege; the battle claimed the lives of all the Texan defenders, nearly 200 strong, including William Travis, James Bowie and Davy Crockett.

In 1912, Oreo sandwich cookies were first introduced by the National Biscuit Co.

In 1933, a national bank holiday declared by President Franklin D. Roosevelt aimed at calming panicked depositors went into effect. Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak, wounded in an attempt on Roosevelt's life the previous month, died at a Miami hospital at age 59.

In 1944, U.S. heavy bombers staged the first full-scale American raid on Berlin during World War II.

In 1953, Georgy Malenkov was named premier of the Soviet Union a day after the death of Josef Stalin.

In 1964, heavyweight boxing champion Cassius Clay officially changed his name to Muhammad Ali.

In 1970, a bomb being built inside a Greenwich Village townhouse by the radical Weathermen accidentally went off, destroying the house and killing three group members.

In 1983, in a case that drew much notoriety, a woman was gang-raped atop a pool table in a tavern in New Bedford, Massachusetts, called Big Dan's; four men were later convicted of the attack.

In 1995, "The Jenny Jones Show" taped an episode on same-sex crushes during which Jonathan Schmitz learned his secret admirer was an acquaintance, Scott Amedure; three days later, Schmitz fatally shot

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Amedure, later telling police that Amedure had embarrassed him on national TV. (Schmitz was sentenced to 25 to 50 years in prison for second-degree murder but was released on parole in August, 2017; the episode was never included in the "Jenny Jones" syndication package, but did air on Court TV.)

In 2008, a Palestinian killed eight students at a Jewish seminary in Jerusalem before he was slain; Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip praised the operation in a statement, and thousands of Palestinians took to the streets of Gaza to celebrate.

In 2016, former first lady Nancy Reagan died in Los Angeles at age 94.

Ten years ago: The government reported the jobless rate reached 8.1 percent in Feb. 2009. While acknowledging an "astounding" number of job losses, President Barack Obama told critics of his \$787 billion economic recovery plan in Columbus, Ohio, that it was saving jobs and said, "I know we did the right thing." NASA's planet-hunting spacecraft, Kepler, rocketed into space on a voyage to track down other Earths in a faraway patch of the Milky Way galaxy.

Five years ago: Ukraine lurched toward breakup as lawmakers unanimously declared they wanted to join Russia and planned to put the decision to voters; President Barack Obama condemned the move and the West imposed the first real sanctions against Russia. Actress-singer Sheila MacRae, 92, died in Englewood, New Jersey.

One year ago: Top economic adviser Gary Cohn announced that he was leaving the White House after breaking with President Donald Trump on trade policy. Nashville Mayor Megan Barry, a one-time rising star in the Democratic Party, resigned after pleading guilty to cheating the city out of thousands of dollars to carry on an affair with her bodyguard. Schoolteachers in West Virginia announced an end to a nine-day walkout after state lawmakers approved a 5 percent pay raise.

Today's Birthdays: Former FBI and CIA director William Webster is 95. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan is 93. Dancer-actress Carmen de Lavallade is 88. Former Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova is 82. Former Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond, R-Mo., is 80. Actress-writer Joanna Miles is 79. Actor Ben Murphy is 77. Opera singer Dame Kiri Te Kanawa is 75. Singer Mary Wilson (The Supremes) is 75. Rock musician Hugh Grundy (The Zombies) is 74. Rock singer-musician David Gilmour (Pink Floyd) is 73. Actress Anna Maria Horsford is 72. Actor-director Rob Reiner is 72. Singer Kiki Dee is 72. Fox News reporter John Stossel is 72. Composer-lyricist Stephen Schwartz is 71. Rock singer-musician Phil Alvin (The Blasters) is 66. Sports correspondent Armen Keteyian is 66. Actor Tom Arnold is 60. Actor D.L. Hughley is 56. Country songwriter Skip Ewing is 55. Actor Shuler Hensley is 52. Actress Connie Britton is 52. Actress Moira Kelly is 51. Actress Amy Pietz is 50. Rock musician Chris Broderick (Megadeth) is 49. Basketball Hall of Famer Shaquille O'Neal is 47. Country singer Trent Willmon is 46. Country musician Shan Farmer (Ricochet) is 45. Rapper Beanie Sigel is 45. Rapper Bubba Sparxxx is 42. Actor Shawn Evans is 39. Rock musician Chris Tomson (Vampire Weekend) is 35. Actor Eli Marienthal is 33. Actor Jimmy Galeota is 33. Rapper/producer Tyler, the Creator is 28. Actor Dillon Freasier is 23. Actress Savannah Stehlin is 23. Actress Millicent Simmonds (Film: "Wonderstruck") is 16.

Thought for Today: "Le sens commun n'est pas si commun." (Common sense is not so common.) — Voltaire, French author and philosopher (1694-1778).

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