

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton United Methodist Women

Salad & Dessert Buffet

Wednesday, May 1st

from 11 am - 1 pm

Please join us for lunch or make your own to-go!

Men & Women \$8 – Children 6 and under free

at the Groton United Methodist Church

Proceeds to UMW Missions

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Groton Area's
KG *Roundup*
has been rescheduled to
April 30th
All scheduled times will stay the same. Please contact Heidi Krueger at the elementary school to confirm this new date.
605/397-2317



4255 6th

Hi, my name is Bary Keith, a Groton resident. I have just recently joined the Harr Motors sales team. I'm excited to start helping people get into the right vehicle for them. Right now, any vehicle purchased from me, until the end of April, will receive an Autostart at no charge. Give me a call (605-216-6952) or (605-725-8624) or stop out and see me at Harr Motors today!!!

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Friday, April 26, 2019

1:00pm: Track: Varsity Meet @ Sisseton High School

Saturday, April 27, 2019

7 p.m.: Prom at Groton Area High School

Sunday, April 28, 2019

2 p.m. - 5 p.m.: Bridal Shower for Emily Kern at Emmanuel Lutheran Church

5:30 p.m.: Princesses Prom Grand March at the GHS Gym

Monday, April 29, 2019

2:00pm: Track: 7th/8th Meet @ Redfield Jr-Sr High School

Tuesday, April 30, 2019

8:30am- 3:30pm: KG Roundup (Screening) at Groton Area Elementary School

1:00pm: Track: Varsity Meet @ Milbank High School

DI Pork Loin Meal, 5-7 p.m., HS Gym.

7:00pm: Middle School Spring Concert

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.: United Methodist Women May Salad & Dessert Buffet at the UMC.

7 p.m.: Carnival of Silver Skates annual meeting at the warming house.

Thursday, May 2, 2019

10:00am: Golf: Girls Varsity Meet @ Lee Park Golf Course

DI Pork Loin Meal, 5-7 p.m., HS Gym.

7:00pm: High School Spring Concert and Awards Night

Friday, May 3, 2019

Howard Wood Relays in Sioux Falls

4:00pm: Track: Varsity Meet @ Sisseton High School

7:00pm: FFA Banquet Groton Area High School

Saturday, May 4, 2019

8 a.m. to 3 p.m.: Groton City-wide Rummage Sale

Howard Wood Relays in Sioux Falls

Sunday, May 5, 2019

5:00 p.m. Groton Softball, Baseball and T-Ball parent meeting at the Legion

**Come and go Bridal shower for Emily Kern, bride to be of Nathan Skadsen,
Sunday, April 28 2019 2-5 pm at
Emmanuel Lutheran Church**

Upcoming
**COMMUNITY
EVENTS**

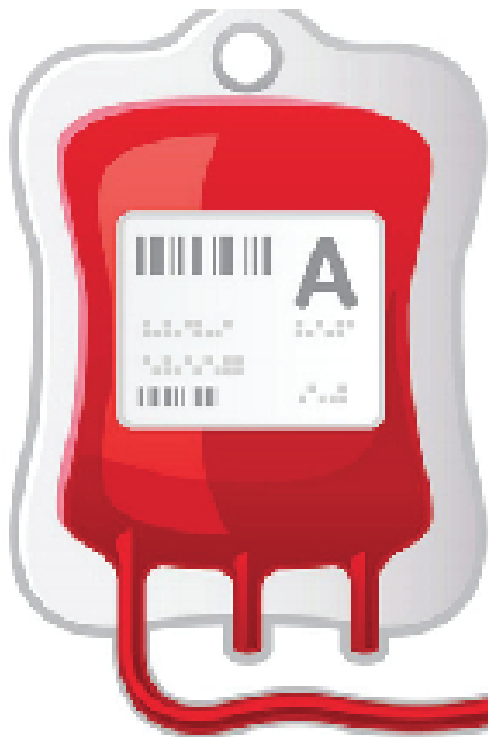
Silver Skates Annual Meeting

Does your child enjoy ice skating?

Do you like to see community traditions continue?

Do you have creative or organizational talents waiting to be shared with others?

Please join us for the Carnival of Silver Skates annual meeting on Wednesday, May 1 at 7:00 p.m. at the warming house.



**Be a hero.
Save a life.**

vitalant.

**Blood Drive
Monday, April 29
12:15 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Groton Community Center
Call 397-8498 or 397-7525 to sign up**

**Don't forget to fill out your Fast Track
Health History online the day of your
donation to speed up the process!
The link for your Fast Track Health
History can be found at
<https://www.vitalant.org/health>.**

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To apply visit www.uslbn.com/careers or call Diane at 605-448-2929.



Pictured left to right are Kayla Jensen, Samantha Pappas, Isaac Smith, Jordan Bjerke, Jamie Ruiz de Medina Maroto and Ethan Clark. (Courtesy Photo)

Groton Math Team wins at NSU Contest again

Forty-one students from the Groton Area School District participated in the 66th Annual Northern State University Mathematics Contest held Wednesday, April 17, 2019, in the Barnett Center at NSU in Aberdeen, South Dakota. They were among 591 contestants representing 30 schools from North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota, who participated in the event and tested in four divisions: Elementary Algebra, Geometry, Advanced Algebra, and Senior Math.

Out of the 149 students taking the Elementary Algebra test, Ethan Clark earned the second place trophy, and Jordan Bjerke received a certificate of honorable mention. Of the 164 students taking the Advanced Algebra test, Samantha Pappas, Jamie Ruiz de Medina Maroto, and Isaac Smith received certificates of honorable mention. Out of the 112 students taking the Senior Math test, Kayla Jensen earned the third place trophy.

As a school, Groton received first place in the Class AA/A division for the second consecutive year. School rank was determined by the highest score in each of the four divisions.

Girls Golf Team placed second at Mobridge

Groton Area's girls golf team placed second at the Mobridge-Pollock Invitational held Thursday. Mobridge-Pollock took first with a team score of 414 followed closely by Groton Area with a 416, Milbank was third with a 436, Aberdeen Central JV was fourth with 484 and Redfield-Doland was fifth with a 539.

Payton Colestock shot at 42 in the front nine and a 48 in the back nine for a total score of 90 to place third. Ashley Fliehs shot a 57 and a 50 for a total score of 107 to place eighth. Hailey Monson shot an 87 and an 82 for a total score of 169 and Trinity Smith shot an 88 and an 83 for a total score of 171.

Members of this year's team are Members of this year team are Portia Kettering, Payton Colestock, Ashley Fliehs, Hailey Monson, Trinity Smith and Carly Guthmiller.

SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's April Column – Hitting the Road

As the newly appointed Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, I spent most of January through March in Pierre discovering and learning our role during legislative session. With the introduction of 584 bills and resolutions, we monitored 37 bills that were military and veteran oriented. In my June column I will highlight the veteran related changes that will be effective July 1.

With session behind me, I have hit the road and begun visiting county and tribal veterans service officers (VSOs). My goal is to visit all 66 county and nine tribal offices. Collectively, the VSOs file, on an average of 450 veterans claims per month. In our effort to enhance the lives of our veterans we need to be kept abreast of the challenges, and the roadblocks, our veterans are facing. Visiting the VSOs will provide me an overview of those issues and guide me in developing a battle plan.

I encourage all veterans, and their families, to visit their respective county or tribal veterans service officer. They should always be your first point of contact. We have posted a link on our website to assist you in locating the VSO located nearest you: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>.

Our Department exists for one clear purpose: to repay our Nation's debt of gratitude to its veterans each and every day. Serving America's veterans by providing them timely access to benefits and quality care; from the day they first take their oaths of allegiance until the day they are laid to rest.

America's veterans are the pride of our nation. They have fought our wars, defended our shores, and kept us free. At the end of each day, our true measure of success will be the timeliness, the quality, and the consistency of the services and support we provide. We will be measured by our accomplishments, not our promises. Our veterans deserve nothing less.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

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Today in Weather History

April 26, 1986: Intense thunderstorms swept across southeast South Dakota, southwest Minnesota, and northwest Iowa. Baseball size hail fell in a 15-mile wide swath from near Pickstown to Scotland, South Dakota. The large hail caused extensive damage to windows, roofs, siding, and vehicles in the path of the storm. Wind gusts of 70 to 80 mph and rain amounts of 2 or more inches in a short period (including 5 inches at Centerville) were reported in southeast South Dakota. Several tornadoes moved across northwest Iowa including one that ran across part of Lyon County destroying several farmsteads. Another tornado moved through Lyon County, Iowa into Nobles County, Minnesota damaging, at least, 16 separate farms. Another tornado touched down briefly on the south side of Okebena in Jackson County destroying or damaging several houses.

April 26, 1991: During a severe thunderstorm event, large hail fell over parts of Brown, Spink, Hand, and Buffalo Counties. Both Brown and Hand Counties received hail up to 1.75 inches in diameter.

April 26, 2008: An area of low-pressure brought widespread heavy snow of 6 to 20 inches to most of northeast South Dakota for much of the 25th and into the early morning hours of the 26th. The precipitation began as light freezing rain in the early morning across parts of the area before changing to all snow by mid-morning. As the low-pressure area intensified, snowfall rates and the north winds also increased. The heavy snow combined with the high winds created widespread visibility problems along with large snowdrifts. Snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Andover, Britton, Gann Valley, and 15 miles south of Miller, 8 inches at Roy Lake, 9 inches at Clark, Big Stone City, Hillside Colony, and Sisseton, 10 inches 7 miles south of Bristol, and 11 inches at Hayti. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included 12 inches at Wilmot, Webster, and Waubay, 13 inches at Milbank, 15 inches at Castlewood, 16 inches near Victor, and near Summit, 17 inches at Clear Lake, 19 inches at Watertown, and 20 inches at Bryant.

Some automobiles went into the ditch along with many other vehicles damaged in accidents. Many stranded motorists had to abandon their cars in the hardest hit areas. Travel was not advised across the entire region. A school bus slid into a ditch east of Castlewood with no injuries occurring. Interstate-29 was closed from 3 pm the 25th until 3 pm on the 26th from Brookings north to the North Dakota border. Also, South Dakota State Highway 12 was closed from Webster to the Minnesota line from the afternoon of the 25th until the late morning of the 26th. Most counties affected by the storm opened emergency shelters when Interstate 29 was closed to house stranded motorists. Also, many schools were closed across the area.

The very heavy snow set several records across the area. The 19 inches at Watertown broke its all-time 24-hour snowfall record of 16 inches. Both Victor and Clear Lake had their second-highest snowfall ever recorded in a 24 hour period. Watertown, along with several other locations in northeast South Dakota, received near-record or record snowfall for April. In fact, Watertown's 29.5 inches of snow for April was almost their average seasonal snowfall.

1884: Tornadoes were hard to capture on old cameras with their hard to use glass plate negatives. The first recorded photograph of a tornado was taken on this date by A.A. Adams near Garnett, Kansas.

1978: An unusually strong occluded front swept out of the Gulf of Alaska and produced the first April thunderstorm of record at Fairbanks. Pea-size hail fell northeast of Fairbanks from thunderstorms whose tops were less than 8000 feet.

1986: The Chernobyl nuclear power station in Kiev Ukraine suffered a massive explosion. The radioactive cloud of particles and gas carried westward and northwestward, contaminating large areas of Europe in the following week.

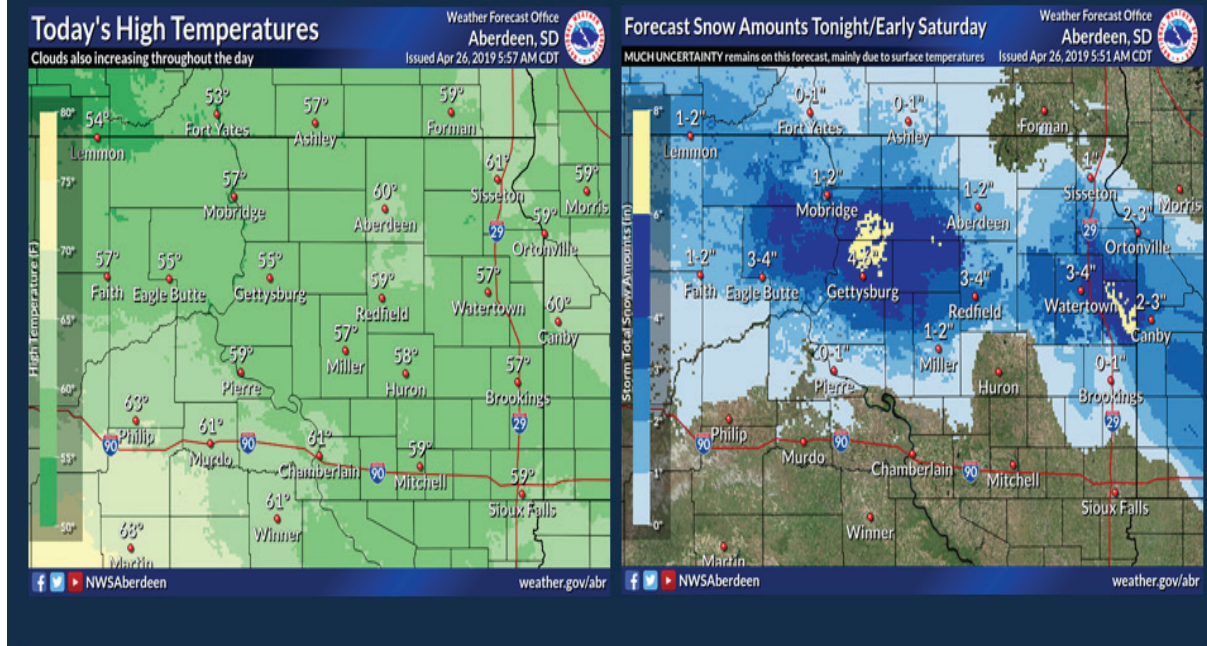
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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
Increasing Clouds	30% → 100% Chance Rain then Rain	80% 80% Rain/Snow then Rain	Increasing Clouds	20% → 50% Breezy. Slight Chance Rain/Snow then Chance Rain
High: 60 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 50 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 50 °F

COOLER TODAY, THEN SNOW TONIGHT?!

- Cooler temperatures today – upper 50s to low 60s.
- Rain spreads east tonight, changing to snow.
- Uncertainty remains in total accumulations – many variables at play.



The cooling trend starts today as high temperatures back off into the upper 50s to low 60s. Tonight, a fast moving, but potent low pressure system will move east across the region. Rain will move eastward across the forecast area, and as temperatures fall into the mid 30s, rain will begin switching to snow for some areas. Snow will be heavy at times, but will depend much on if temperatures can fall to about 35 degrees or colder. There is potential for 3 to 6 inches, perhaps more under the right conditions. Any snow that falls will likely accumulate on grassy areas more efficiently than roads and sidewalks.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 66 °F at 12:02 PM

Low Outside Temp: 43 °F at 10:28 PM

High Gust: 38 mph at 6:41 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 86° in 1922, 1899

Record Low: 20° in 1931

Average High: 63°F

Average Low: 36°F

Average Precip in April.: 1.42

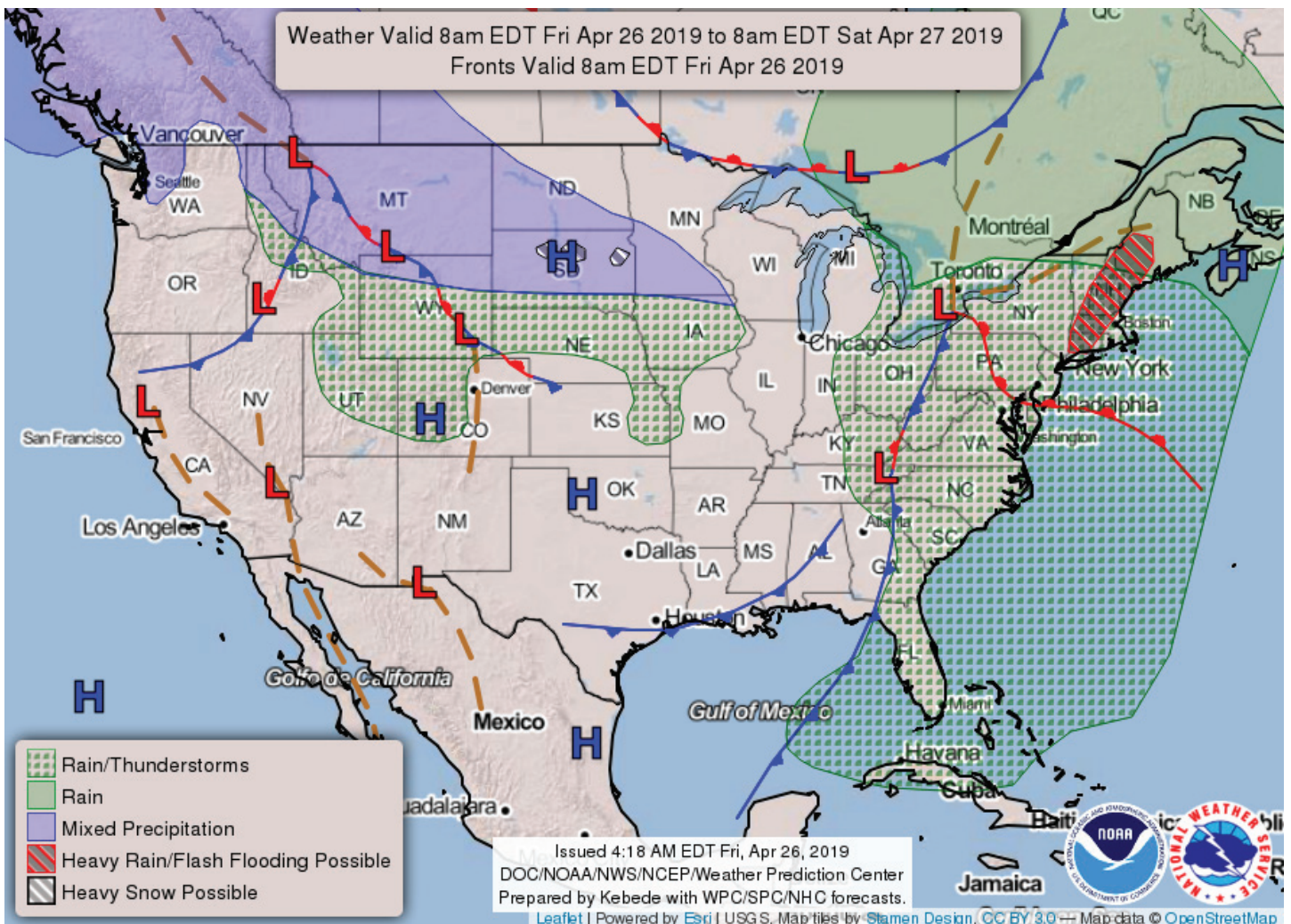
Precip to date in April.: 1.42

Average Precip to date: 3.60

Precip Year to Date: 4.46

Sunset Tonight: 8:34 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:28 a.m.



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YOU NEED TO CHANGE HER NAME!

Larry, you need to change Bellas name to Lucky, said my friend Bruce. I cant imagine anyone who would take better care of that dog than you. Its plain to me shes not Bella. Shes Lucky - really lucky she found you. Heres the backstory

One dark, stormy, cold, foggy night I opened the door to our carport. Sensing something at my foot, I looked down. There, looking up at me, was a small, unkempt dog wagging her tail nervously, and wiggling all over as if to say, Im home!

For weeks Mary and I searched for her owners but were unsuccessful. Then, we tried to find her another home. That didnt work either. Every time we thought we found a new home for her, we failed. So, we decided to keep her and named her Bella, which means beautiful.

When reading through Proverbs several months ago, I noticed a verse that had never registered in my mind: The righteous care for the needs of their animals. Please understand that I am not claiming to be righteous, though I try desperately to live right, nor am I elevating animals to the level of humans. But notice this:

A distinct contrast is made by the author between a person who is righteous and one who is not: the one who is righteous has a gentleness that the wicked do not have. And, if one is truly righteous, it becomes obvious: if we as believers willingly give our hearts completely to God, He will remove every trace of cruelty from us - even to the way we treat animals. He will control us and bless us and enable us to demonstrate how much we value every gift He gives us - even animals. We expose who we truly are by the way we care for each gift God gives us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, implant within us a gentle, gracious and loving heart. May we respect all of Your gifts. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 12:10 The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 03/17/2019 Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
- 04/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/27/2019 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/04/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/27/2019 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program (Memorial Day)
- 06/13/2019 Transit Fundraiser (Thursday Mid-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
- 06/22-23/2019 Groton Junior Legion Tournament
- 06/29/2019 Groton U10/U12 Round Robin Tournament
- 07/04/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 07/14/2019 Summer Fest/Car Show (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/18/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Tournament
- 07/21/2019 Granary Ice Cream Social & Family Music Fest
- 08/02/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Wine on Nine
- 08/09-11/2019 State Junior Legion Tournament in Groton
- 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
- 09/08/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 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 (Halloween)
- 11/09/2019 Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Holiday Party
- 12/07/2019 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- Bingo: every Wednesday, Labor Day-Memorial Day, 6:30pm at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 4/4/2020 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 4/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 5/2/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)

News from the Associated Press

Emaciated dogs found in McLaughlin rental home

MCLAUGHLIN, S.D. (AP) — An animal shelter operator says two dogs found in deplorable conditions in a McLaughlin rental home are so emaciated it's hard to even tell their breed.

The male dogs were discovered Tuesday by a landlord. The former renters had moved out about a month earlier.

Mobridge shelter operator Tami Schanzenbach tells the American News that the dogs are believed to be 7-10 months old and are as much as 35 pounds underweight. They're being slowly nursed back to health.

Schanzenbach says she's been in contact with Standing Rock Sioux tribal police and is pursuing charges against the owners.

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

Patrol identifies man who died in collision near Faulkton

FAULKTON, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have released the name of a man who died when his car collided head-on with an SUV in Faulk County.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says 85-year-old Tilmer Larson, of Mound City, died in the crash Sunday afternoon. The patrol says he was driving a Cadillac Seville that crossed the center line on Highway 212 Sunday near Faulkton and struck a Chevy Traverse. Larson was pronounced dead at the scene.

The woman driving the SUV suffered minor injuries and was taken to a Faulkton hospital. Three male passengers, 8, 10 and 14, were not injured.

Supreme Court nixes transfer of child abuse case to tribe

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court has ruled a judge erred when he transferred a child abuse and neglect case from state court to tribal court.

In an opinion issued last week, the high court said the 7th Circuit Court judge should have considered testimony from the child's doctor before making the transfer.

The case dates to September 2016, when a newborn was removed from the mother's care after both tested positive for methamphetamine. The South Dakota Department of Social Services notified the Oglala Sioux Tribe, with which the mother is affiliated, of the removal as required by federal law, the Rapid City Journal reported. The child was placed in temporary foster care. After the mother completed an outpatient treatment program, she was reunited with her baby. But, when she missed a court-ordered urinalysis, the child was again placed in foster care.

The mother again worked toward reunification by getting a job, completing a parenting class and submitting to drug and alcohol screening. The state was working on a plan to return the child to the mother when she was arrested in August 2017 for driving drunk, striking a vehicle and fleeing.

A hearing to determine placement of the child was held in November 2017 when the Oglala Sioux asked that the case be transferred to tribal court. Judge Matthew Brown eventually transferred the case to tribal court but excluded testimony from the child's pediatrician.

A lawyer appointed for the child, Cassidy Stalley, attempted to present expert testimony from Dr. David Whitney that taking the child away from the foster parents could cause short- and long-term physical and emotional effects.

Tribal attorney Dana Hanna argued she had insufficient notice of the doctor's testimony and argued the bond between the child and the foster parents was not an appropriate factor to consider in a transfer motion.

The case will now go back to the 7th Circuit for a new hearing on the transfer request.

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

3 stabbed at Sioux Falls home

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Three people have been stabbed at a home in Sioux Falls.

Officers were called to the house about 2 a.m. Thursday where they found three people with stab wounds. They were rushed to hospitals and are expected to be OK.

Police say two people who knew each other got into an argument. One stabbed the other and those who tried to intervene were also injured.

The assailant fled from the residence and is still at large.

University Center in Sioux Falls changing name, focus

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The University Center in Sioux Falls is changing its name and its focus in order to attract more students.

The center will be rebranded to the Community College for Sioux Falls, offering two-year courses. More than 3,800 students were enrolled when the center opened in 2010. But, last fall enrollment had dropped to about 1,100 students.

Vice President and Dean Carmen Simone says the school will now target students who want to earn a two-year associates degrees. KELO-TV says the college will also work closely with local business to provide hands-on training.

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

Sri Lanka Muslims brave militant threats for Friday prayers

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — At 12:10 p.m. Friday, men and boys in a Muslim neighborhood in Sri Lanka's capital did something everyone had warned them not to do: They came together to pray.

Hundreds gathered at the Masjidus Salam Jumma mosque for their communal Friday prayers, one of many mosques that conducted services despite warnings of more bomb attacks by Islamic State-claimed militants.

And while praying through tears to Allah to help their fellow countrymen, all stressed one thing. The Easter attacks targeting churches and hotels that killed at least 250 people came from people who didn't truly believe the teachings of Islam.

They are "not Muslims. This is not Islam. This is an animal," said Akurana Muhandramlage Jamaldeen Mohamed Jayfer, the chairman of the mosque. "We don't have a word (strong enough) to curse them."

Up until the call to prayer echoed through Colombo's Maligawatta neighborhood at noon, it wasn't certain the community would be able to pray. On Thursday, the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka issued a stark warning over Twitter that places of worship could be targeted by militants through the weekend. Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe also told The Associated Press he feared some of the suspects "may go out for a suicide attack" and local authorities urged Muslims to pray at home.

But Friday prayers hold a special importance to Muslims as the Quran has its own chapter on the worship called "Al-Jumah," or Friday in Arabic.

"When the call is made for prayer on Friday, hurry toward the remembrance of Allah, and leave all business," the Quran commands.

For Muslims, Friday prayers means dressing in their nicest clothes and communing with others, often sharing a meal after listening to the imam and praying.

The day carries the same significance for Muslims in Sri Lanka, where Arab traders brought Islam in the 7th century. Today, nearly 10% of Sri Lanka's 21 million people are Muslim.

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In the hours before, community leaders decided that women should stay home for the prayers because of the threat. It remained unclear if they would hold the prayers, even as young men stopped in the mosque for a moment of quiet prayer, their sweat dripping from their brows as they bowed down on the purple-and-gray carpeting.

"Everyone is nervous," said Abdullah Mohammed, 48. "Not just the Muslims. Buddhists, Christians, Hindus — everybody's nervous."

But as the time drew closer, they decided to hold them. Sri Lankan police officers armed with Kalashnikov rifles stood guard around the mosque, blocking the street. Organizers posted young volunteers to watch surrounding streets above the mosque, near a major cricket stadium.

Inside the mosque, a young man worked on its internal security cameras, one hanging above wooden carvings of Arabic calligraphy and copies of the Quran. Jayfer said they had been installed two years earlier, but they needed repair "given what's happening."

When the electronic clock struck 12:10 p.m., a caller got on the loudspeaker, saying "Allah akbar," or God is great. Men and boys quickly filled two floors of the mosque and part of a third as Imam Mohamed Imran stood before them on the minbar, the pulpit from which he preached.

In English and later Tamil, Imran reminded the congregation they remain a minority in Sri Lanka, that they need to pray and ask for God's help.

As the sermon ended, he offered a prayer, growing emotional as he asked for God for help. Several men in the congregation cried.

Then they bowed toward Mecca and its cube-shaped Kaaba, finishing their prayers and walking safely out of the mosque into the street below. A new sign in Sinhala hung by the mosque outside offered condolences, saying that just because the attackers had Arab names didn't make them Muslims.

"It is our country. We are Sri Lankans," Jayfer said. All "Sri Lankans have a duty to be calm and quiet. (There) has to be peace."

Follow Jon Gambrell on Twitter at www.twitter.com/jongambrellap

Daimler says it has no idea how Kim Jong Un got his limos

By ERIC TALMADGE Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — German automaker Daimler, which makes armored limousines used by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, says it has no idea where he got them and has no business dealings with the North.

Kim has raised eyebrows by using Daimler-branded stretch limousines at several very high-profile summits, including his meeting this week with Russian President Vladimir Putin and both of his earlier summits with President Donald Trump.

The sale of luxury goods, including limousines, is banned under U. N. sanctions intended to put pressure on North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons.

Kim nevertheless had two limos waiting for him at Vladivostok station — a Mercedes Maybach S600 Pullman Guard and a Mercedes Maybach S62. He is believed to have also used the S600 Pullman Guard for his summits with Trump in Singapore in June last year and in Hanoi in February.

"We have absolutely no idea how those vehicles were delivered to North Korea," Daimler spokeswoman Silke Mockert said in a written response to an Associated Press report Wednesday on the limousines. "For Daimler, the correct export of products in conformance with the law is a fundamental principle of responsible entrepreneurial activity."

Daimler, based in Stuttgart, Germany, is one of the world's biggest and more prestigious automobile companies. It is one of the biggest providers of high-end passenger cars and the world's largest producer of trucks above 6 tons.

On its home page, the multinational giant boasts of selling vehicles and services in nearly all the countries of the world and of having production facilities in Europe, North and South America, Asia and Africa.

North Korea, however, isn't one of its official customers.

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"Our company has had no business connections with North Korea for far more than 15 years now and strictly complies with E.U. and U.S. embargoes," she said. "To prevent deliveries to North Korea and to any of its embassies worldwide, Daimler has implemented a comprehensive export control process. Sales of vehicles by third parties, especially of used vehicles, are beyond our control and responsibility."

Kim's ability to procure the limousines anyway is a good example of how porous the international sanctions tend to be.

According to Daimler, the Mercedes-Benz Pullman limousines offer their passengers "a superbly appointed setting for discreet meetings."

The version used by Kim is believed to be equipped with all the key communications and entertainment systems so that, according to a company description of the car, its occupants can remain "fully in touch with the rest of the world while enjoying the luxury and comfort of their own very special place in it."

Talmadge is the AP's Pyongyang bureau chief. Follow him on Twitter and Instagram: @EricTalmadge

Trump to address a divided National Rifle Association

By JILL COLVIN and LISA MARIE PANE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's largest gun rights organization played a pivotal role in President Donald Trump's victory in 2016.

Three years later, the National Rifle Association is limping toward the next election divided and diminished.

It's a reversal that has stunned longtime observers and that is raising questions about the one-time kingmaker's potential firepower heading into 2020 as Trump and Vice President Mike Pence prepare to headline the group's annual convention in Indianapolis on Friday.

"I've never seen the NRA this vulnerable" said John Feinblatt, president of Everytown for Gun Safety, a nonprofit that advocates for gun control measures.

In the months after Trump's election, the NRA seemed on top of the world. After pouring tens of millions of dollars into the presidential race, its dark horse candidate occupied the desk in the Oval Office. Republicans controlled both branches of Congress. And the emboldened group had ambitious plans afoot for easing state and national gun regulations.

Instead, much of the legislation the group championed has stalled, due, in part, to a series of mass shootings, including the massacre at a Parkland, Florida, high school that left 17 dead and launched a youth movement against gun violence that has had a powerful impact.

At the same time, the group is grappling with infighting, bleeding money and facing a series of investigations into its operating practices, including allegations that covert Russian agents seeking to influence the 2016 election courted its officials and funneled money through the group. Indeed, as Trump is speaking Friday, Maria Butina, the admitted Russian agent, is scheduled to be sentenced in federal court in Washington.

And then there's the simple fact that, with Trump in office, gun owners no longer fear the Second Amendment is under attack.

"Good times are never good for interest groups because it's much better when Armageddon is at your doorstep," said Harry Wilson, a Roanoke College professor who has written extensively on gun politics. "Fear is a huge motivator in politics."

The NRA, said Adam Winkler, a UCLA law professor and expert on gun policy, has also dramatically changed its messaging over the last two years, with NRATV advocating a panoply of far-right political views that have turned off some members.

At the same time, public sentiment has shifted. A March AP-NORC poll found that 67% of Americans overall think gun laws should be made stricter — up from 61% in October 2017.

And a June 2018 Gallup poll found overall favorable opinions of the NRA down slightly from October 2015, from 58% to 53%. Unfavorable views have grown, from 35% to 42%.

Views of the NRA have also become increasingly partisan over decades of Gallup polling, and in the

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last few years as well. In 2018, just 24% of Democrats had a favorable opinion. Favorable views among Republicans in 2018 were at a record high, Gallup found.

Against that backdrop, Democratic politicians have become more comfortable attacking — and even actively running against — the NRA and pledging action to curb gun violence. And gun control groups like Everytown, which is largely financed by former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and a political action committee formed by Gabby Giffords, the former Arizona congresswoman wounded in a shooting, have become better organized and more visible, especially at the state level.

That reversal was made clear during the 2018 midterm elections, when those groups vastly outspent the NRA .

During the midterms, the NRA “committed almost a disappearing act,” said Everytown’s Feinblatt.

Winkler, the UCLA law professor, allowed that the group had scored some victories under Trump, including the appointment of two Supreme Court justices who may be open to striking down gun laws.

But overall, he said, “On the legislative front, the NRA has been frustrated,” with top priorities like national reciprocity for conceal carry laws and a repeal of the ban on silencers stalled.

Instead, Trump introduced a new federal regulation: a ban on bump stocks after a man using the device opened fire on a crowd of concertgoers on the Las Vegas strip in Nevada, killing 58 people and wounding hundreds.

That didn’t seem to bother the NRA members who were beginning to arrive at the convention Thursday and insisted the group remains as influential as ever.

“Why do you think Trump and Pence are coming here?” said Roger Frasz, a lifetime NRA member and gun shop owner in Prescott, Michigan, who was wearing a red “Trump 2020” hat.

Alan Jacobson, 24, an airport worker who lives in Downers Grove, Illinois, said he relies on the NRA to inform him about issues and considers them not only relevant, but essential.

“We’re just average people that congressmen won’t listen to. The NRA is our voice,” he said.

Still, Mike Cook, who works at a shipyard in Alabama, said he’s been disappointed that gun rights haven’t seen much movement under Trump. The bump stock ban, in particular, upset him because it was done administratively by Trump officials.

He’s uncertain if the millions spent on Trump’s campaign in 2016 were worth it. But, he said, Trump is “better than the alternatives.”

Exactly how much influence the group will wield in 2020 remains unclear. The NRA, its policy arm and its political committee did not respond to requests for comment this week. But Andrew Arulanandam, the NRA’s managing director of public affairs, has said recent reports of turmoil and financial troubles have been exaggerated and are fueled by anti-gun forces.

Still, the NRA is having financial issues, according to an analysis of tax filings by The Associated Press. The tax-exempt organization’s 2016 and 2017 filings, the most recent years available, show combined losses of nearly \$64 million. Income from membership dues plunged about \$35 million in 2017. And revenue from contributions, grants and gifts dropped about \$35 million.

At the same time, NRA insiders and longtime observers have described an organization at war with itself — a divide that erupted very publicly recently when the NRA sued its longtime public relations firm, Ackerman McQueen, accusing it of refusing to hand over financial records to account for its billings. That could affect the group’s messaging heading into 2020.

But even if the group cuts back from the record \$412 million the NRA’s nonprofit wings spent during the 2016 election year (that’s in addition to the \$30 million two NRA political action committees invested in electing Trump), the group is expected to be an active spender in the election.

Pane reported from Indianapolis. Associated Press writers Brian Slodysko, Emily Swanson and Hannah Fingerhut contributed to this report.

Biden motivated by Virginia racial violence, Trump response

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

Joe Biden spent a hot August day at his lakefront Delaware home watching hatred on display in Charlottesville, Virginia, where torch-wielding white supremacists had marched through town. A counter protester advocating racial equality was killed when a white supremacist drove his car into a crowd.

When President Donald Trump blamed the violence on “both sides,” the former vice president says he was stunned.

He turned to his closest advisers — his family — to discuss what to do next.

Spread out across the country, the Bidens quickly convened through a series of group text messages. For months, they’d weighed whether Biden, whose two prior White House campaigns were abject failures, should try again.

There was now consensus: Prepare to run against Trump.

Biden’s sister and longtime political confidante, Valerie Biden Owens, described Trump’s comments as a “blow” to the man who had served as the No. 2 to America’s first black president.

“It really started percolating, and the essence of this was Charlottesville,” Biden Owens said. “I can tell you that was a major motivating moment for my brother, and the entire family.”

“The big ‘yes’ started with this,” said Ted Kaufman, Biden’s longtime Senate chief of staff.

Nearly two years later, Biden made it official Thursday when he announced in a video that he would seek the Democratic presidential nomination again. He blasted Trump’s “moral equivalence between those spreading hate and those with the courage to stand against it” and declared the election a “battle for the soul of this nation.”

Biden is positioning himself as the anti-Trump, an experienced elder statesman ready to restore stability to Washington.

But he faces steep challenges. He’s staking his candidacy on an appeal to the white working-class voters who swung to Trump in 2016, but he must also energize black voters.

At 76, he’s the second oldest contender in the race (behind Bernie Sanders) at a time when many Democratic activists yearn for generational change. He sees his decades in public life as an asset. Others see it as a minefield of views on race and personal behavior that no longer match the modern Democratic Party.

His candidacy will serve as a fresh referendum on the eight years of the Obama administration, which some Democrats are beginning to view more critically.

But none of that dissuaded Biden from running.

This account of how he arrived at his decision is based on interviews with more than a dozen aides, longtime friends, advisers and family members who have discussed his deliberation over the past three years. Some requested anonymity in order to speak candidly about their conversations and observations.

It didn’t take that much arm twisting. Biden was ready to run in 2016 before his elder son, Beau, succumbed to brain cancer and left him navigating a grief so intense that the rigor of a presidential campaign was out of the question.

“It started out ‘yes’ and he had every intention of running, but ran up against the unthinkable and the only answer was ‘no,’” Biden Owens said.

The regret was palpable after Trump’s win. In January 2017, two weeks before he would hand the vice presidency over to Mike Pence, Biden was on Capitol Hill to unveil his official portrait. Notoriously chatty, he gave a glimpse of his thinking.

“I might just do it,” Biden remarked to a small cadre of staff, some of whom were taken aback that he was already entertaining the idea.

He stayed in regular touch with former President Barack Obama after they left the White House, by phone and in person. Those early conversations after Trump’s inauguration were more about their own personal transitions out of government than Biden’s possible political plans.

But Biden’s interest in another presidential campaign quickly became clear. By May 2017, he started a political action committee to support Democrats in the upcoming midterm elections. He solicited donors

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— something he's never enjoyed — and began mapping out a plan to be a prominent player in the Democratic bid to regain the House and defend difficult seats in the Senate.

As the midterms neared, Biden started getting the feedback he hoped for. In August 2018, he boarded a flight from Washington to New York and a string of passengers encouraged him to run in 2020.

The midterm effort wasn't merely a vanity project for an aging politician wanting to stay in the game. It was a test run of Biden's message, influence and personal stamina.

Biden campaigned for 65 candidates in 24 states, a pace that accelerated to include 13 cities in the last six days. In the final weeks of the campaign, he swung through Iowa, home to the nation's first presidential caucuses.

His combination of midterm travel and financial contributions were outdone by few, if any, of his would-be 2020 rivals.

After Democrats won the House, Biden spent much of the winter in his two-story brick house in suburban McLean, Virginia, plotting his next steps. He regularly called friends, longtime supporters and potential donors to get their views of the emerging presidential field. He pressed people on whether they thought he was too old to run.

By the time Teri Goodman, one of Biden's most enduring Iowa confidantes, arrived in Virginia in mid-February 2019, the dining room table was strewn with newspapers, files and briefing books. The two old friends retired to a sitting room where they chatted about the early stages of the race in Iowa as Biden's German Shepherd puppy, Major, flounced around and Major's older counterpart, Champ, sat quietly.

Goodman said there was no ambiguity about Biden's plans.

"I believed he was going to run," she said. "He was actively engaged, involved in these things."

"I'm his sister. I know he doesn't walk on water," Biden Owens said. "The man has flaws like we all do. But this is a man who is decent."

As he moved toward a campaign, Biden's liabilities were clear. He has faced sharp criticism for his pointed questioning of Anita Hill, the African American woman who leveled sexual harassment claims at Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas in 1991. Biden has also been blasted for his role in crafting the 1994 crime bill, which is now blamed for disproportionately imprisoning hundreds of thousands of young black men.

More recently, he's faced scrutiny for his past opposition to mandatory school busing in the 1970s to achieve integration.

Biden recognized those vulnerabilities early on, studying a briefing book that included discussions of how his long record in public life could be seen differently in 2019 — and used against him.

He was less prepared for what happened on the afternoon of Friday, March 29. Lucy Flores, Nevada's Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor in 2014, wrote an essay saying that, as vice president, Biden approached her from behind, put his hands on her shoulders, smelled her hair and kissed the back of her head.

Flores said the encounter wasn't violent or sexual, but was "demeaning and disrespectful." Biden was suddenly on the wrong side in the #MeToo era. He hadn't launched a campaign, but was already facing calls not to run.

He first seemed to deflect, saying in a written statement he did not recall the episode. He went on to say that "not once — never — did I believe I acted inappropriately." He pledged to listen to women who were sharing their stories.

As negative reaction mounted, Biden's team struck back more aggressively, blaming "right wing trolls" from "the dark recesses of the internet" for conflating uninvited touching with images of the notoriously affectionate Biden hugging women and children.

Another woman soon shared a story of how Biden touched her face with both hands and rubbed noses with her in 2009 when he was thanking aides who arranged an event in Connecticut.

As the week ticked on, news clattered away about whether Biden's patriarchal persona put him out of step with the times.

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Biden was nowhere to be seen. It took nearly a week before he posted a two-minute video of him recounting how expressions of affection had helped him but "social norms have begun to change."

"They've shifted and the boundaries of protecting personal space have been reset, and I get it. I get it," he said. "And I'll be much more mindful. That's my responsibility."

But when he spoke to a union audience in his first public appearance after the controversy, Biden seemed to joke about the issue. He noted the embrace he shared with a male union president, Lonnie Stephenson.

"I just want you to know, I had permission to hug Lonnie," Biden said, to the cheers of the mostly male crowd.

His message was clear: Biden would run as himself, flaws and all.

Beaumont wrote from Des Moines, Iowa. Associated Press writer Julie Pace in Washington contributed to this report.

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. BIDEN ENTERS DEMOCRATIC RACE WITH ANTI-TRUMP THEME

Declaring the "soul of this nation" at stake, the former vice president pushed into the 2020 presidential contest and sparked a fierce debate over the direction of the Democratic Party.

2. TRUMP PREPARES TO ADDRESS NRA

The president and vice president prepare to headline the group's annual convention in Indianapolis at moment of weakness for the former kingmaker.

3. SRI LANKA SAY EASTER ATTACK LEADER DIED IN HOTEL BOMBING

Mohamed Zahran, known for his vitriolic extremist speeches on social media, died in the blast at the Shangri-La hotel, one of six hotels and churches targeted in attacks that killed at least 250 people.

4. AIDE-TO-TRUMP: TRUMP TOWER MEETING EMAILS 'REALLY BAD'

The report of special counsel Robert Mueller shined a light on the much-discussed meeting of the president's eldest son, son-in-law and campaign officials with several people linked to Russia

5. WHOSE LIMOS ARE RAISING EYEBROWS

Daimler, which makes armored limousines used by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that have been seen at his summits with Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, says it has no idea where he got them and has no business dealings with Pyongyang.

6. ARMY VET CHARGED WITH INJURING 8 IN INTENTIONAL CRASH

Isaiah Joel Peoples, who has a history of post-traumatic stress disorder was on his way to a Bible class when he told investigators he intentionally drove into a group of men, women and children.

7. WHO IS PROMISING FASTER SHIPPING

Amazon announced it will soon promise one-day delivery for its U.S. Prime members on most items.

8. MEASLES QUARANTINE AT TWO LOS ANGELES UNIVERSITIES

Quarantines at the University of California and Cal State University affected more than 200 students and staff who may have been exposed to measles.

9. TAYLOR SWIFT RELEASES NEW SINGLE

The pop star released a colorful, upbeat song, ending the weeks-long search she set off when she teased fans with clues about a new project.

10. KYLER MURRAY IS NO. 1 PICK AS NFL TEAMS LOAD UP IN TRENCHES

NFL teams showed some preference for quarterbacks, as always, and an infatuation with players who protect them and disrupt them during the first round of the draft.

Biden enters Democratic race with strong anti-Trump theme

By **STEVE PEOPLES** and **THOMAS BEAUMONT** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Declaring the “soul of this nation” at stake, former Vice President Joe Biden pushed into the crowded 2020 presidential contest and quickly sparked a fierce debate over the direction of the modern-day Democratic Party.

Ignoring the political noise in his own party, Biden aimed directly at Donald Trump in an announcement video seizing on the Republican president’s response to the deadly clash between white supremacists and counter protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, two years ago. That was the spur for him to launch a third presidential bid, Biden said, noting Trump’s comments that there were some “very fine people” on both sides of the violent encounter, which left one woman dead.

“We are in the battle for the soul of this nation,” Biden declared on Thursday. “If we give Donald Trump eight years in the White House, he will forever and fundamentally alter the character of this nation — who we are. And I cannot stand by and watch that happen.”

Yet Biden will get a chance to take on Trump only if he survives a Democratic field that now spans at least 20 contenders. And his party’s more liberal wing was far from welcoming in the hours immediately after he declared his candidacy. Justice Democrats, a group created from the remnants of Bernie Sanders’ failed 2016 campaign, came out against Biden on Thursday and spent much of the day assailing him on social media.

As an older white man with often centrist views, Biden must now prove he’s not out of step with Democrats trying to push the party to the left.

He’s been taking steps in recent weeks to clean up perceived missteps from his long record in elected office, including his role as a senator in allowing sexual harassment accuser Anita Hill to be grilled by an all-male committee during Clarence Thomas’ Supreme Court confirmation hearings.

A campaign aide said Biden has privately contacted Hill to share “his regret for what she endured and his admiration for everything she has done to change the culture around sexual harassment in this country.” But The New York Times reported Thursday that Hill said in an interview she was deeply unsatisfied and unconvinced by his apology.

Biden has also highlighted his role in authoring the Violence Against Women Act nearly three decades ago, legislation that is credited with reducing domestic violence nationwide.

Still, the 76-year-old Scranton, Pennsylvania, native’s political liabilities are many.

He would be the oldest person ever elected president — Trump was 70 in 2016 — even as his party embraces a new generation of diversity. He has yet to outline his positions on issues defining the 2020 Democratic primary, most notably “Medicare for All,” the universal health care plan authored by Sanders that has been embraced in one form or another by virtually the entire Democratic field.

Biden is betting that his working-class appeal and ties to Barack Obama’s presidency will help him win over skeptics. He quickly racked up endorsements Thursday morning, becoming the first Democrat running for president with the backing of more than one U.S. senator.

Rep. Cedric Richmond, D-La., who previously served as chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, said he had urged the former vice president to run and highlighted Biden’s potential electability when asked to assess African Americans’ feelings.

“Black voters are saying the same thing that white Democrats are saying: We can’t afford to lose. That is a big message. That’s a big motivator,” Richmond said.

Obama has so far declined to endorse Biden, however, and several former Obama aides are now working for other candidates. Biden addressed Obama’s position as he briefly faced reporters in Delaware on Thursday.

“I asked President Obama not to endorse,” Biden said. “Whoever wins this nomination should win it on their own merits.”

While he didn’t endorse, Obama took the unusual step of weighing in on Thursday’s announcement.

“President Obama has long said that selecting Joe Biden as his running mate in 2008 was one of the

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best decisions he ever made," Obama spokeswoman Katie Hill said. "He relied on the vice president's knowledge, insight and judgment throughout both campaigns and the entire presidency. The two forged a special bond over the last 10 years and remain close today."

Trump was quick to pounce on Biden, who he has nicknamed "Sleepy Joe."

"I only hope you have the intelligence, long in doubt, to wage a successful primary campaign," Trump said. "It will be nasty - you will be dealing with people who truly have some very sick & demented ideas. But if you make it, I will see you at the Starting Gate."

Privately, Trump allies have warned that Biden might be the biggest re-election threat given the former vice president's potential appeal among the white working class in the Midwest, the region that gave Trump a path to the presidency.

Biden is paying special attention to Pennsylvania, a state that swung to Trump in 2016 after voting for Democratic presidential candidates for decades. While Biden represented Delaware in the Senate for 36 years, he was often referred to as Pennsylvania's third senator.

The former vice president will be in the state three times within the opening weeks of his campaign. He was in Philadelphia on Thursday evening headlining a fundraiser at the home of David L. Cohen, executive senior vice president of Comcast. Biden was aiming to raise \$500,000 at the event.

In remarks during the fundraiser via a video obtained from attendees, Biden said of the Trump era: "I'm hoping that in a couple years, we'll look back and say — whether it is me or anybody else replacing him — that this is an aberration in American history, this four years, because it's not who we are."

Biden will hold his first public event as a 2020 presidential candidate in Pittsburgh on Monday. Then it's off to Iowa, home of the leadoff nominating caucuses, on Tuesday and Wednesday, followed by two days in South Carolina. He'll visit the other two early-voting states, Nevada and New Hampshire, in early May before holding a major rally in Philadelphia.

Biden's first media appearance is set for Friday morning on ABC's "The View," a move that may help him make an appeal to women whose support will be crucial to winning the primary. He also hired Symone Sanders to serve as a senior strategist, tapping a prominent African American who previously worked for Biden's chief competitor, Bernie Sanders, in the 2016 presidential contest.

As Biden neared his campaign launch, his challenges came into greater focus.

He struggled last month to respond to claims that he touched 2014 Nevada lieutenant governor nominee Lucy Flores' shoulders and kissed the back of her head before a fall campaign event. A handful of other women have made similar claims, though none has alleged sexual misconduct.

Biden, a former U.S. senator from Delaware, pledged in an online video to be "much more mindful" of respecting personal space but joked two days later that he "had permission" to hug a male union leader before addressing the group's national conference.

On another issue he'll have to address throughout the campaign, Biden once played a key role in anti-crime legislation that had a disproportionately negative impact on African Americans. And last month he struggled to explain comments he made as a freshman senator in 1975 about the school busing debate.

Despite the challenges, his high-profile status in the race may make it difficult for his competitors. New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker cast Biden's announcement as a direct threat to his own campaign in a fundraising appeal.

"The truth is this poses a real challenge for an underdog campaign like ours," Booker said.

Beaumont reported from Des Moines, Iowa. Associated Press writers Julie Pace in Washington and Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Kim Jong Un leaves Russia after summit with Putin

By IULIJA STASHEVSKA and ERIC TALMADGE Associated Press

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un boarded his private train Friday and headed back to Pyongyang after directing some harsh criticism at Washington during his first summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying the U.S. negotiated in “bad faith” when he met with President Donald Trump in Hanoi two months ago.

Kim left about 4 ½ hours earlier than planned, Russian news agencies reported.

It was not immediately known why he decided to return from Vladivostok early. Putin, who indicated he may be interested in playing a bigger role in breaking North Korea’s standoff with Washington, had already left for a two-day meeting in Beijing.

The Kremlin intends to brief the U.S. on the contents of the summit as soon as the Russian delegation returns to Moscow, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told the RIA Novosti news agency. Putin said he will also brief Chinese leaders on his talks with Kim.

Before leaving Vladivostok, Kim visited a park near the headquarters of the Russian navy’s Pacific Fleet for a wreath-laying ceremony that was held two hours later than expected. Kim also had lunch with the local governor and businesspeople on the outskirts of town before going to the main railway station.

Following their talks on Thursday, Putin said Kim is willing to give up nuclear weapons, but only if he gets ironclad security guarantees supported by a multinational agreement.

Kim strongly criticized Washington for taking a “unilateral attitude in bad faith” at his February meeting with Trump in Hanoi said that caused the diplomatic standstill, North Korea’s state-run Korean Central News Agency said Friday.

He also told Putin the situation on the Korean Peninsula has reached a “critical point” and whether tensions resume will “entirely depend on the U.S. future attitude.”

The agency said Putin credited Kim’s diplomatic initiatives for stabilizing the situation surrounding the peninsula and accepted Kim’s invitation to visit North Korea at a “convenient time.”

No specific measures from the summit have been reported by either side and the leaders’ comments suggest there has been no significant shift in Kim’s basic position.

North Korea has all along contended that it needs its nuclear arsenal to defend itself against what it sees as U.S. hostility and wants concrete reassurances of its safety — including the removal of the American nuclear threat as an integral part of the denuclearization of the entire Korean Peninsula.

Trump has voiced hope that Putin’s involvement could help his efforts to get Kim to abandon his nuclear arsenal. But it could also complicate matters, since Moscow has been critical of sanctions on North Korea and has called on Washington to provide more security guarantees. After Thursday’s talks, Putin suggested the revival of a multilateral approach to the denuclearization negotiations. A similar approach, which Russia participated in, broke down in 2009.

Along with a statement of political support, Kim was also looking for some kind of economic support and possibly even a workaround for sanctions that will require more than 10,000 North Korean laborers in Russia to leave by the end of the year. The laborers are a major source of income for North Korea.

Putin said they discussed the issue and would find a solution taking into account “humanitarian” factors, though he didn’t say what that would be.

Motorists in the Russian port city breathed a sigh of relief at Kim’s departure. Traffic in the city of half a million had been severely disrupted since Kim’s arrival on Tuesday. Just like two days earlier, traffic was completely blocked in the city center during the send-off ceremony for Kim.

Talmadge, the AP’s Pyongyang bureau chief, reported from Tokyo. AP writers Nataliya Vasilyeva and Jim Heintz in Moscow, and Hyung-jin Kim and Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul, South Korea, contributed to this report.

Sri Lanka says Easter attack leader died in hotel bombing

By EMILY SCHMALL and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — The suspected leader of the militant group Sri Lankan authorities said carried out a series of Easter Sunday bombings died in the blast at the Shangri-La hotel, one of six hotels and churches targeted in the attacks that killed at least 250 people, officials said Friday.

Police said on an official Twitter account that Mohamed Zahran, the leader of local militant group National Towheed Jamaat known for his vitriolic extremist speeches on social media, had been killed in one of the nine suicide bombings.

Police also said they had arrested the group's second-in-command.

They said investigators had determined that the assailants' military training was provided by someone they called "Army Mohideen," and that weapons training had taken place overseas and at some locations in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province.

Police also said that the attackers had worked out at a local gym and by playing soccer using their authentic national identity cards. They added that the vehicles used in the attack were purchased from a car dealership in Kadawatha, a suburb of Colombo, the capital.

They said that the operator of a copper factory who was arrested in connection with the bombings had helped Mohideen make improvised explosive devices and purchase empty cartridges sold by the Sri Lankan military as scrap copper.

Australia's prime minister said earlier Friday that it had been confirmed that the Sri Lanka attackers were supported by the Islamic State group, which has claimed responsibility for the massacre, distributing video of Zahran and others pledging allegiance to the withered caliphate.

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena told reporters in Colombo that some 140 people in the island nation had been identified as having links to the Islamic State group, and that the Sri Lankan government has "the capability" to completely control ISIS activities in the country.

"We will completely control this and create a free and peaceful environment for people to live," he said.

Sirisena blamed Sri Lanka's defense secretary, who resigned Thursday, and police chief, who he said would soon step down, for a failure to share weeks of information from international intelligence agencies about the plot ahead of time.

Across Colombo, there was a visible increase of security as authorities warned of another attack and pursued suspects that could have access to explosives. Authorities had told Muslims to pray at home rather than attend communal Friday prayers that are the most important religious service for the faithful. At one mosque in Colombo where prayers were still held, police armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles stood guard outside.

Armed soldiers also stood guard outside St. Anthony's Shrine, one of the three churches attacked on Easter.

Gratiano Fernando crossed himself when he looked at the church after walking out of his shop there. Fernando says he, like other Sri Lankans, was worried about further attacks.

There is "no security, no safety to go to church," he said, adding that "now children are scared to go to church" as well.

Late on Thursday, Sri Lanka's health ministry drastically revised down its estimated death toll from the coordinated attacks. A statement said "approximately" 253 people had died, nearly one-third lower than the police's estimated death toll of 359.

The discrepancy was not immediately explained, but it fit a pattern of claims and counterclaims by Sri Lankan officials that have muddled the investigation.

In a predominantly Muslim area of Colombo's Maligawatta neighborhood, vegetable sellers laid their produce on the sidewalks near the mosques as women in long black chador shopped.

Leaders at the neighborhood mosques said they planned still to hold Friday noon prayers. They said both the police and volunteers would be guarding the neighborhood to protect the faithful.

Imtiyas Ahamed, one prayer leader, said he planned to preach about how extremists like the Islamic

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State group were not faithful Muslims.

"In Islam, it is not said to kill yourself and kill others," Ahamed said.

As he spoke, men one at a time came into the mosque to pray. They sat on their knees and bowed toward Mecca, the sweat from their brows falling on the mosque's purple-and-gray carpet.

Abdullah Mohammed, 48, another Muslim from the neighborhood, stood outside.

"Everyone is nervous," Mohammed said. "Not just the Muslims. Buddhists, Christians, Hindus — everybody's nervous."

Ahamed also urged people not to think all of Sri Lanka's Muslims were like the people who carried out Sunday's attacks.

"After the New Zealand attack, we don't think every white Australian is an extremist," he said.

Associated Press writers Bharatha Mallawarachi in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and Rod McGuirk in Canberra, Australia, contributed to this report.

Loading up in the trenches a now thing for NFL teams

By BARRY WILNER AP Pro Football Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — NFL teams showed some preference for quarterbacks, as always, and an infatuation with players who protect them and disrupt them during the first round of the draft.

Maybe for the next two rounds they will go after the speed demons and running backs who, in many cases, fell through the cracks as the trenches were filled with the behemoths who work there.

In all, 12 defensive linemen and five on offense were chosen Thursday night after Oklahoma quarterback Kyler Murray went to Arizona and became the second consecutive Heisman Trophy winner from his school taken atop the proceedings, following Baker Mayfield to Cleveland in 2018. Two more QBs went: Duke's Daniel Jones to the Giants at No. 6, a bit of a surprise, and Ohio State's Dwayne Haskins at 15, where the Redskins sat patiently and saw him fall into their arms.

Add in three linebackers and two tight ends and the theme of opening night becomes clear.

"We're building our team and we need building blocks," said Raiders coach Jon Gruden, who took one of those mammoth blocks in Clemson defensive end Clelin Ferrell at No. 4. "We had some in place. But we needed these guys to come in and inherit that responsibility."

There are two more blockers remaining, Oklahoma guard Cody Ford and Florida tackle Jawaan Taylor. They are among five players invited to the draft who didn't go yet but almost surely will Friday night.

Also remaining on the board after receiving much higher projections are Missouri quarterback Drew Lock, Mississippi wide receiver DK Metcalf, and LSU cornerback Greedy Williams.

Metcalf is fast, strong and powerfully built, with many evaluating him as the best wideout in this crop. At one point, Williams was regarded as the top cornerback available. Lock falling out of the opening round, given his position and the near-obsession with filling it with a high pick, was unexpected.

Ford and Taylor have starter potential for 2019 regardless of where they land.

Others still on the board who had first-round grades from some clubs include Washington cornerback Byron Murphy; Mississippi receiver A.J. Brown; Delaware safety Nasir Adderley; Ohio State WR Parris Campbell; Alabama TE Irv Smith; and Texas A&M center Erik McCoy.

Further emphasis on defense shouldn't be a stunner. This is one of the deepest drafts for that side of the ball in recent memory.

"Football is the ultimate team game, and we've got to build this roster to be as strong as we can at every area," Green Bay GM Brian Gutekunst said. "We're going to try to take the best players available that we can (going forward). If there's more defensive players that fall our way, we certainly have room for them."

Atlanta had room for two likely starters in front of QB Matt Ryan: Boston College guard Chris Lindstrom at 14 and, after dealing back into the opening round, Washington tackle Kaleb McGary at 31.

More hulks.

Ryan was sacked 42 times and took 108 hits, a career high.

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"We were focused on offensive line," general manager Thomas Dimitroff said. "We need to protect Matt." Speed and elusiveness wasn't ignored in Round 1, of course. Start at the top with Murray, who can run with anybody in this crop.

Arizona defied NFL custom and at least temporarily created a quarterback quandary by selecting Murray to start proceedings in a wet and wild selection show.

As thousands of fans withstood rain that began just about when Commissioner Roger Goodell spoke Murray's name, the Cardinals spent a second straight high pick on a signal caller. Arizona moved up from 15th overall to 10th in 2018 to grab Josh Rosen.

NFL teams simply don't do that, but with a new coach in college-trained Kliff Kingsbury, the Cardinals made the bold move. At least until they likely move Rosen elsewhere in a trade.

"I've known Josh since high school, so me and him are cool," said Murray, who turned down the Oakland A's to stick with football. "We got along really well, so I've always been fond of him. But us being teammates now, I can't control anything but going in there and working hard."

Murray was one of only three Big 12 players taken, along with teammate Marquis Brown, a wideout headed for Baltimore, and TCU defensive end — what did you expect from this draft? — L.J. Collier. The Pac-12 also had only three, while the SEC scored nine, the ACC had eight, and the Big 10 had seven.

Ohio State edge rusher Nick Bosa went second to San Francisco as expected. The 49ers have used a first-round selection on four defensive linemen in the past five drafts.

Bosa's older brother, Joey, plays for the Chargers and was the 2016 Defensive Rookie of the Year. Their father also played in the NFL.

"Good genes, man," Bosa said with a laugh. "It was just excitement all around. My brother wanted me to go higher than he did (third overall), so just for my dream to come true and my family to be there to watch, it was pretty great."

Across the Bay, Oakland had three selections: Ferrell, Alabama's Josh Jacobs, the lone running back to go Thursday, and Mississippi State safety Johnathan Abram.

The Giants also went three times, getting Jones, Clemson DT Dexter Lawrence and, after trading back in for the 30th spot, cornerback DeAndre Baker of Georgia.

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

Officer fled civil war as a child, resettled in Minneapolis

By JEFF BAENEN and AMY FORLITI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Mohamed Noor fled Somalia's civil war as a child, following a well-worn path with his family to a refugee camp in Kenya, the U.S. and eventually Minnesota. After a difficult start, he "fell in love" with his new city, Minneapolis, and carved out a life in business.

Then he spotted an online ad recruiting police officers.

"I always wanted to serve," Noor said Thursday, breaking more than 18 months of silence since shooting and killing an unarmed woman who approached his squad car.

Noor, now 33, is on trial for murder and manslaughter in the July 2017 death of Justine Ruszczyk Damond, a dual U.S.-Australia citizen who had called 911 to report a possible crime minutes before she was shot.

His testimony added some detail to what was already known about Noor, whose hiring in 2015 was welcomed by city leaders seeking to diversify a police force in a melting-pot city with the nation's largest population of Somalis.

Noor described his early years near Mogadishu as the oldest of 10 children in a middle-class family whose patriarch both farmed and worked for a non-governmental organization. When he was 5, he said, the family fled to Kenya because of strife in Somalia and spent nearly two years in a refugee camp before his father got a U.S. visa.

The family lived for about five years in Chicago. Noor didn't know any English when he arrived and was behind in school, but some teachers helped get him caught up. The family then moved to the Minneapolis

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area, where he found it difficult at first.

"When I moved here, no one liked Somalis, and I picked that up right away," he testified.

But things got better after Noor signed up for football and began making friends. He became a citizen in 1999 and eventually graduated from Augsburg University, a school close to the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood that is home to many of the city's Somalis.

Noor studied economics and business administration and worked as an assistant general manager for a hotel. He was in a job handling pharmaceutical benefits when he spotted the Minneapolis Police Department's ad.

He joined the force through a 29-week cadet training program and had some bumps. Noor testified Thursday about once clearing the ammunition from his gun incorrectly, leaving a round in the chamber, and being chewed out.

Damond's death led to questions about Noor's training, but then-Police Chief Janee Harteau said Noor "was very suited to be on the street."

The cadet program is aimed at finding candidates who already have a two- or four-year college degree in another field, said Nate Gove, executive director of the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training, which sets licensing and training standards for law enforcement agencies and officers.

"Nobody is waved through the program," Gove said. He said such programs are "not fast track" and that candidates still must meet minimum standards and pass license examinations.

After Noor completed the program successfully and was assigned to the city's Fifth Precinct, city leaders heralded his arrival.

"A wonderful sign of building trust and community policing at work," then-Mayor Betsy Hodges posted on Facebook.

Noor, who is married and has a son from a previous marriage, was fired from the force after he was charged with killing Damond. He renewed his peace officer license a few days later, making him eligible to serve as a police officer until 2021 if he's acquitted and can find employment.

A felony conviction prevents anyone from being a law officer in Minnesota.

[Check out the AP's complete coverage of Mohamed Noor's trial.](#)

3 QBs and lots of defenders highlight 1st round of draft

By BARRY WILNER AP Pro Football Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback at the top, two more QBs along the way — and a whole lot of guys who like nothing better than putting passers on the ground.

That was the look for the first round of the NFL draft Thursday night.

Arizona defied NFL custom and at least temporarily created a quarterback quandary by selecting Oklahoma's Kyler Murray to start proceedings in a wet and wild selection show.

As thousands of fans withstood rain that began just about when Commissioner Roger Goodell spoke Murray's name, the Cardinals spent a second straight high pick on a signal caller. Arizona moved up from 15th overall to 10th in 2018 to grab Josh Rosen.

NFL teams simply don't do that, but with a new coach in college-trained Kliff Kingsbury, the Cardinals made the bold move. At least until they likely move Rosen elsewhere in a trade.

"My job is to come in every day, work hard and get better each and every day, do what I can to make this team better," Murray said. "I've known Josh since high school, so me and him are cool. We got along really well, so I've always been fond of him. But us being teammates now, I can't control anything but going in there and working hard."

Resplendent in a pink suit — nothing close to the Cardinals red he will be wearing in Arizona — Murray was a first-round baseball pick by the Oakland A's. He becomes the 22nd Heisman Trophy winner to go first overall and is the second straight Sooners quarterback to pull it off: Baker Mayfield went to Cleveland in 2018.

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"BACK TO BACK!!!! CONGRATS K1!!!! Well deserved my brotha!!!" Mayfield tweeted.

As for bypassing baseball, Murray has no qualms about the decision.

"I love playing multiple sports. I grew up playing multiple sports," he said. "I just think there's no reason to limit yourself to one sport. I love to compete, so it wasn't a big deal for me."

With quarterbacks so in demand these days, the Giants might have reached a bit for Duke's Daniel Jones at the sixth spot, and the Redskins did just the opposite to get Dwayne Haskins. They stayed put at No. 15 and the Ohio State star fell to them.

Perhaps serendipitously, he held a bowling party about 30 miles away Thursday night.

"I'm just going to work on getting my head in that playbook," said Haskins, a one-year starter for the Buckeyes. "I'm going to do all I can to get physically and mentally ready for the upcoming season and just motivate my guys that's coming in with me in this rookie class."

After Murray, though, defense became the order of the night. Of the first 20 picks, 12 were for that side of the ball, all of them pass-rushing threats.

Ohio State edge rusher Nick Bosa went second to San Francisco as expected. The 49ers have used a first-round selection on four defensive linemen in the past five drafts.

"I see him as a three-down player," general manager John Lynch said. "He's got to come in and do it, but he plays the run well. His best strength is rushing the passer, but he can play all three downs and play in all situations."

Bosa's older brother, Joey, plays for the Chargers and was the 2016 Defensive Rookie of the Year. Their father also played in the NFL.

"Good genes, man," Bosa said with a laugh. "It was just excitement all around. My brother wanted me to go higher than he did (third overall), so just for my dream to come true and my family to be there to watch, it was pretty great."

Bosa is the highest Ohio State draft pick since offensive tackle Orlando Pace went No. 1 to St. Louis in 1997. He missed all but three games last season with a core muscle injury, but already had exhibited the kind of playmaking that lifts players to loft status. Such as the second pick in the draft.

The Jets, widely speculated to trade the third pick, used it on Alabama defensive tackle Quinnen Williams. Not even a starter until 2018, he won the Outland Trophy last season and is Alabama's highest-drafted defensive player since linebacker Cornelius Bennett went No. 2 overall in 1987.

More defense with Clemson end Clelin Ferrell going to Oakland and LSU linebacker Devin White to Tampa Bay, both addressing huge needs.

The Giants, looking for Eli Manning's eventual successor, took Jones, the Senior Bowl MVP. Jones generally was not considered a first-round prospect when the college season ended. But he's been tutored at Duke by David Cutcliffe, who also coached Peyton and Eli Manning in college.

"I think it's a tremendous opportunity to learn for a young quarterback, Jones said of Eli Manning.

"He is a guy that's had a whole lot of success in the NFL and there is a reason for that. I'm looking to understand that and do my best to learn as much as I can from him while he's in New York."

Kentucky edge rusher Josh Allen followed to Jacksonville, then it was Iowa tight end T.J. Hockenson to Detroit and Houston DT Ed Oliver to Buffalo.

Finally, in the 10th spot, a trade: Pittsburgh sending the 20th spot, the 53rd selection and a third-rounder next year to Denver. The Steelers, with Hall of Famer Joe Greene making the announcement, selected Michigan linebacker Devin Bush — a player apparently coveted by AFC North rival Cincinnati at No. 11.

The Bengals grabbed Alabama tackle Jonah Williams instead.

Three consecutive picks were dealt later in the round. Denver had gotten No. 20 from the Steelers and took Noah Fant, the second Iowa tight end chosen Thursday night. Green Bay acquired the next pick from Seattle and got Maryland safety Darnell Savage, a somewhat surprising choice. Then the Eagles dealt with Baltimore and probably got a replacement for longtime left tackle Jason Peters with Tytus Howard of Alabama State, the initial non-FBS player chosen.

One spot later, at No. 24, Oakland used its second pick on Alabama's Josh Jacobs, the first running back

to go. The Raiders' third selection was Mississippi State safety Johnathan Abrams.

Baltimore's new GM, Eric DeCosta, made his first choice in charge of the draft Oklahoma receiver Marquise Brown, who also wept upon being called.

Through its bartering, Seattle had consecutive spots at 29 and 30, selecting TCU's L.J. Collier — yet another defensive lineman — before sending the 30th to the Giants, who grabbed cornerback DeAndre Baker of Georgia. That gave New York three first-rounders.

One team that stuck to the trenches, but on the offensive side, was Atlanta. Desperate for blocking help, the Falcons drafted Boston College guard Chris Lindstrom and Washington tackle Kaleb McGary, who they got by trading back into the opening round to get the Rams' 31st spot.

New England concluded a first round that saw 18 defensive players taken (only three in the secondary) and 14 on offense with receiver N'Keal Harry of Arizona State.

Overall, the SEC had nine players, the ACC eight and the Big Ten seven. Clemson, Alabama and Mississippi State had three draftees apiece.

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

John Havlicek, Boston Celtics great, dies at 79

By KYLE HIGHTOWER AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — John Havlicek's legacy was built over 16 years with the Boston Celtics, eight of them as NBA champions, making him among the best to ever play the game.

One play immortalized him forever.

"Havlicek stole the ball! "Havlicek stole the ball!" Celtics radio announcer Johnny Most screamed, a moment that remains among the famous plays in NBA history.

The Celtics said Havlicek died Thursday in Jupiter, Florida. He was 79. The cause of death wasn't immediately available. The Boston Globe said he had Parkinson's disease.

Voted one of the 50 greatest players in NBA history, Havlicek's steal of Hal Greer's inbounds pass helped the Celtics hold off Philadelphia in the 1965 Eastern Conference final.

"John Havlicek is one of the most accomplished players in Boston Celtics history, and the face of many of the franchise's signature moments," the Celtics said in a statement. "He was a champion in every sense, and as we join his family, friends, and fans in mourning his loss, we are thankful for all the joy and inspiration he brought to us."

Nicknamed "Hondo" for his resemblance to John Wayne, Havlicek was drafted ninth in the first round in 1962 out of Ohio State by a Celtics team stocked with stars Bill Russell, Bob Cousy, K.C. Jones, Sam Jones, Tom Sanders, Tom Heinsohn and Frank Ramsey. Boston won championships in six of his first seven years.

"It is getting difficult each time I hear about another contemporary that passes!" Russell tweeted. "What is harder is when we lose guys like John Havlicek, he was not just a teammate & a great guy, but he was family. That is how our Celtics teams were."

As Russell and others gradually moved on, Havlicek became the elder statesman and moved up to become a starter. The team won championships in 1973-74 and 1975-76 with Havlicek leading squads that included Dave Cowens and Jo Jo White.

"John Havlicek was a wonderful friend who represented the best of the NBA," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said in a statement. "He described himself as a man of routine and discipline — a humble approach that produced extraordinary results."

Havlicek was the MVP of the 1974 Finals, and set Celtics career records for points and games. He was named one of the 50 Greatest Players in NBA History and enshrined in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1984. At Ohio State, he helped lead the Buckeyes to the 1960 national championship.

As much as his deadly jump shot or his play in Boston's triple-overtime NBA Finals victory over Phoenix in 1976, Havlicek was known for his durability.

In his NBA career he scored 26,395 points in 1,270 games and played in 13 All-Star Games.

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"The Boston Celtics are not a team, they are a way of life," Hall of Fame coach and executive Red Auerbach once said. And no one personified the Celtic way more than Havlicek.

His No.17 was raised to the rafters in old Boston Garden and now resides in TD Garden, retired soon after he retired in 1978. He averaged 20.8 points, 6.3 rebounds and 4.8 assists in the regular season, and 22.0 points, 6.9 rebounds and 4.8 assists in 172 playoff games.

Born April 8, 1940, in Martins Ferry, Ohio, Havlicek became a standout athlete at Bridgeport High School in the small coal-mining town of 2,500 near Wheeling, West Virginia.

The 6-foot-5 Havlicek was also an outstanding football and baseball player in high school and was given a tryout by the Cleveland Browns after graduating from college.

As a sophomore at Ohio State, he scored 12.2 points a game as the Buckeyes won the national championship, beating California 75-55 in the final. His junior and senior years, Ohio State again won the Big Ten titles and made it to the NCAA title game but lost to Cincinnati each time. During Havlicek's three years at Ohio State, the Buckeyes went 78-6, dominating most games unlike any team up to that time.

All five starters from Ohio State's title team in 1960 — which included Jerry Lucas and future Celtics teammate Larry Siegfried — played in the NBA. Backup Bob Knight went on to a Hall of Fame coaching career.

Havlicek remained in Boston after his retirement, managing investments. He later split time between New England and Florida. He occasionally returned to Ohio State for reunions of the championship team and Celtics events. His Ohio State number was retired during ceremonies in the 2004-2005 season.

Former AP Sports Writer Rusty Miller in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this report.

Judges: Michigan must redraw congressional, legislative maps

By DAVID EGGERT Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Michigan must redraw dozens of congressional and legislative districts for the 2020 election because Republicans configured them to guarantee their political dominance over the last decade by unconstitutionally diluting the power of Democratic voters, federal judges ruled Thursday.

In a 3-0 ruling — which will be appealed — the panel gave the GOP-led Legislature and new Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer until Aug. 1 to enact new maps for nine of 14 congressional seats and 25 of 148 legislative districts. The number of newly cast seats would be higher, though, because of the impact on adjacent districts.

The judges also ordered that special state Senate elections be held in 2020, halfway through senators' normal four-year terms. The panel said it would draw its own maps if new ones are not submitted or if those that are proposed do not comply with constitutional requirements.

The decision was the latest development in a series of lawsuits alleging unconstitutional gerrymandering in a dozen states. The U.S. Supreme Court is considering whether to set limits on partisan mapmaking.

Judge Eric Clay of the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, U.S. District Judge Denise Page Hood of Michigan's Eastern District and U.S. District Judge Gordon Quist of Michigan's Western District said mapmakers, political consultants and lawmakers involved in the Republican-controlled 2011 redistricting effort elevated "partisan considerations" at every step.

"Their primary goal was to draw maps that advantaged Republicans, disadvantaged Democrats and ensured that Republicans could enjoy durable majorities in Michigan's congressional delegation and in both chambers of the Michigan legislature for the entire decade," they wrote.

GOP legislators vowed to appeal to the Supreme Court.

"We will prepare to comply with this most recent ruling while we await the outcome of the appeal," Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey said in a statement. The state Republican Party said the pending appeal is needed to "uphold the will of Michigan voters."

The suit was filed by the League of Women Voters of Michigan and Democratic voters who claimed districts were shaped by Republicans to ensure the party's supremacy in the state Capitol after the 2010 census. They said constitutional rights were violated when Democratic areas were packed in certain dis-

tricts or diluted elsewhere.

The court agreed, ruling that oddly shaped seats — such as the Democratic-held 9th Congressional District in suburban Detroit — were drawn to strategically wrap around and exclude, “in a snakelike fashion,” Republican areas, contributing to the packing of Democratic votes.

“A wide breadth of statistical evidence indicates that the enacted plan’s partisan bias has proven severe and durable; it has strongly advantaged Republicans and disadvantaged Democrats for eight years and across four separate election cycles. Moreover, the enacted plan represents a political gerrymander of historical proportions,” the judges wrote. Two were nominated by former President Bill Clinton; the other was appointed by then-President George H.W. Bush.

New Democratic Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson had attempted to settle the case by proposing that the Legislature redraw 11 of 110 state House seats — excluding state Senate and congressional districts — but the panel rejected her proposal and held a trial in February.

“The court’s ruling confirms that these Michigan state House and Senate and U.S. congressional districts are unconstitutional,” Benson said in a statement. “I respect that decision, as should we all. As the state’s chief election officer, I’m committed to working with the Legislature, citizens and the court to ensure the new districts comply with our U.S. Constitution.”

The suit pertains only to 2020. Michigan voters in November approved a constitutional amendment creating an independent commission to handle the typically once-a-decade redistricting process after the 2020 census, which will affect the 2022 election and beyond.

Michigan is among five states where Republicans retained control of the state House even though Democratic candidates won more votes statewide last fall, an analysis by The Associated Press found.

“Today is a great victory for the voters of Michigan and for our democracy,” Judy Karandjeff, president of the League of Women Voters of Michigan, said in a statement. “The state will now draw new district lines before the next federal election, which now will better reflect the makeup of the voters — not the interests of the politicians.”

Follow Eggert at <https://twitter.com/DavidEggert00>

Ex-cop: Saw woman at window, fired ‘to stop threat’

By AMY FORLITI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A former Minneapolis police officer on trial in the fatal shooting of an unarmed woman testified Thursday that he saw fear in his partner’s eyes, then saw a woman in a pink shirt with blond hair appear at the partner’s window and raise her right arm before he fired his gun “to stop the threat.”

Mohamed Noor refused to talk to investigators after the July 2017 shooting of Justine Ruszczyk Damond, a dual citizen of the U.S. and Australia, making his testimony his first public statements since her death.

Damond had called 911 minutes earlier to report a possible sexual assault behind her home, and was shot as she approached Noor’s squad car after he and his partner had rolled down her alley looking for evidence of a woman in distress.

Noor testified that he fired to stop what he thought was a threat to his partner, Matthew Harrity, after Noor heard a loud bang on the driver’s side of the squad car. Noor said he didn’t fear for his partner’s life when he heard the bang, but did afterward when Harrity yelled “Oh Jesus!” and went for his weapon. Noor said Harrity was having difficulty pulling his gun from his holster.

Noor said he pressed his left arm over Harrity’s chest, and saw a woman in a pink shirt with blond hair outside Harrity’s driver’s side window. Noor said the woman raised her right arm — and he made a split-second decision.

“I fired one shot,” he said, later adding: “My intent was to stop the threat and save my partner’s life.”

When he realized he had shot an innocent woman, Noor said, “I felt like my whole world came crashing down.”

“I couldn’t breathe,” said Noor, who described feeling great pain.

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He began crying and said that if he had known something like this would happen, "I would never have become a cop."

Noor's attorney, Tom Plunkett, asked: "Would you have discharged your weapon that evening if you were not concerned for your safety and your partner's safety?" Noor said he would not.

Prosecutor Amy Sweasy pounced on that during her cross-examination, asking Noor if he believed "concern" was enough to fire his weapon. Noor said it was when looking at all the circumstances and to protect himself and Harrity from death or great bodily harm.

Sweasy also attacked Noor for making a quick decision without being able to see Damond's hands, or whether she was carrying a weapon or a cellphone.

Noor testified that he had been Harrity's partner since December 2016, and the pair had nearly 400 hours on the job together. He said the partner relationship is "like a marriage" and he knew Harrity well enough to know when his partner was terrified.

Earlier Thursday, Noor described the unorthodox path he took to becoming an officer — he was working as a pharmaceutical analyst before deciding to switch careers — and then detailed his 29-week cadet training in 2015.

Noor was fired from the force soon after being charged.

His attorneys have said he feared an ambush, and Noor testified about "counter-ambush" training that included scenarios such as two officers in a squad car, doing routine tasks, and an instructor yelling "Threat!" The officers had to make a quick decision about whether to shoot, Noor said.

"Action is better than reaction," Noor said. "If you're reacting, that means it's too late ... to protect yourself. ... You die."

Noor described another training exercise where he was sent to a location, heard gunshots and instead of assessing the threat, he ran toward it. An instructor shot him with a paintball gun, he said.

"So the point is if you don't do your job correctly, you'll get killed," Plunkett said.

"Yes sir," Noor answered.

The death of Damond, a 40-year-old life coach who was engaged to be married a month after her death, sparked anger and disbelief in both the U.S. and Australia, cost Minneapolis' police chief her job and contributed to the electoral defeat of the city's mayor a few months later.

Prosecutors have questioned the supposed noise, presumably from Damond slapping the car as she approached, by noting that investigators didn't find forensic evidence of Damond's fingerprints on the car. They also questioned the timing of Harrity's first mention of the thump — not the night of the shooting, but a few days later, as he was being interviewed by state investigators.

Neither officer had a body camera running when Damond was shot, something Harrity blamed on what he called a vague policy that didn't require it. The department toughened the policy after Damond's death to require that the cameras be turned on when responding to a call.

Damond was white. Noor, 33, is a Somali American whose hiring two years before the shooting was celebrated by Minneapolis leaders as a sign of a diversifying police force in a city with a large population of Somali immigrants.

Noor testified earlier Thursday about immigrating from Somalia to the U.S., where he became a citizen in 1999. He lived first in Chicago, then moved to Minneapolis, where he said he fell in love with the city.

He said he became a police officer because he "wanted to serve."

Follow Amy Forliti on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/amyforliti>

Check out the AP's complete coverage of Mohamed Noor's trial: <https://apnews.com/MohamedNoortrial>

Amazon to bring 1-day delivery to Prime members

By JOSEPH PISANI AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Two-day delivery is going out of style.

Amazon, which hooked shoppers on getting just about anything delivered in two days, announced Thursday that it will soon promise one-day delivery for its U.S. Prime members on most items.

The company hopes that cutting delivery times in half will make its \$119-a year Prime membership more attractive, since every other online store offers free deliveries in two days. Amazon also can't compete with Walmart and Target, where ordering online and picking up at a store is becoming more popular with shoppers.

"It is a smart change, but it is also one that is becoming increasingly necessary," said Neil Saunders, managing director at GlobalData Retail. "Other retailers have really upped their game in terms of delivery."

Still, Saunders said the shift is likely to put even more pressure on Amazon's retail rivals, as shoppers become accustomed to even faster shipping times.

Amazon didn't say when the change to its U.S. Prime membership will happen, but it said Thursday that it in the past month it has been increasing its selection of items eligible for one-day deliveries.

In some other countries, such as the U.K., Prime members are already offered one-day shipping.

Brian Olsavsky, Amazon's chief financial officer, said the company is well equipped to offer one day shipping, since it has spent more than 20 years adding warehouses around the country where orders are packed and shipped.

Amazon has also been delivering more packages itself instead of relying on UPS, the post office and other carriers. It has expanded its fleet of jets, has plans to open package sorting hubs at two airports and launched a program last year that allows contractors around the country to deliver Amazon packages in vans stamped with the Amazon smile logo.

Still, Amazon said Thursday that it expects to spend \$800 million in this year's second quarter to speed up deliveries.

Contact Joseph Pisani at <http://twitter.com/josephpisani>

Quarantines at 2 LA universities amid US measles outbreak

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — More than 200 students and staff at two Los Angeles universities have been placed under quarantine because they may have been exposed to measles and either have not been vaccinated or cannot verify that they are immune, officials said Thursday.

The order issued late Wednesday in connection with the University of California, Los Angeles, and California State University, Los Angeles, requires that affected people stay home, avoid contact with others and notify authorities if they develop measles symptoms. Los Angeles County public health officials issued quarantines of 24 to 48 hours until proof of immunity is established, according to a statement from UCLA. Some people may need to be quarantined for up to a week.

"Please be assured that we have the resources we need for prevention and treatment, and that we are working very closely with local public health officials on the matter," UCLA Chancellor Gene Block in the statement.

Measles in the United States has climbed to its highest level in 25 years, closing in on 700 cases this year in a resurgence largely attributed to misinformation that is turning parents against vaccines. Roughly three-quarters of this year's illnesses have been in New York state.

A UCLA student who was diagnosed with measles possibly exposed 500 people on campus to measles in early April, according to a statement from the school.

As of Thursday afternoon, 79 of those students and faculty members had not provided medical records showing that they are immune to measles, the university said.

Meanwhile at Cal State, a person infected with measles visited a library and possibly encountered hundreds

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of employees, some of whom were students. A total of 156 of them could not provide their immunization records as of Thursday afternoon, according to a statement from the Cal State.

Health officials determined that there is "no known current risk related to measles at the library at this time," Cal State said in its statement.

The orders come as a small outbreak of measles occurs in Los Angeles County involving five confirmed cases linked to overseas travel. The state recorded 38 measles cases as of Thursday; there were 11 around the same time last year, said Dr. Karen Smith, director of the California Department of Public Health.

The state typically sees fewer than two dozen cases a year, she said.

This year, California's cases stretch across 11 counties and affect patients from 5 months old to 55.

More than 76% of patients were not vaccinated or did not receive the recommended two doses of vaccine, Smith said. Fourteen of those infected had traveled overseas to countries including Philippines, Thailand, India and Ukraine.

Measles in most people causes fever, runny nose, cough and a rash all over the body. However, a small fraction of those infected can suffer complications such as pneumonia and a dangerous swelling of the brain.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the vaccine for everyone over a year old, except for people who had the disease as children. Those who have had measles are immune.

The vaccine, which became available in the 1960s, is considered safe and effective, and because of it, measles was declared all but eliminated in the U.S. in 2000.

Associated Press Writer John Antczak contributed to this report.

Follow Weber at <https://twitter.com/WeberCM>

Many fire-prone California towns don't plan for evacuations

By **DAMON ARTHUR** Redding Record Searchlight

PARADISE, California (AP) — Wildfire surrounded Darrel Wilken and the three hospital patients in his car. But instead of evacuating Paradise, they were stuck in traffic along with thousands of others.

Cars burned in front of them. Trees, homes and buildings exploded into flames as the gusting firestorm destroyed nearly everything around them.

Wilken, a nurse, knew about Paradise's evacuation plan, which includes route maps and zones. But the speed and intensity of the fire forced him to improvise, he said.

Despite the tragic outcome of that day in November 2018 and the confusion faced by people like Wilken, the city's careful planning made a difference, Paradise Mayor Jody Jones insists.

"I don't know that you could ever prepare for something like what happened here. It was just so fast," Jones said. "But we were not caught flat-footed. We did know what to do. Our people knew what to do, and it did save lives."

Counter-intuitive as it may sound, Paradise has some of the strongest evacuation planning in California. In fact, a USA TODAY Network-California survey of communities at high risk from wildfire found only 22% (including Paradise) have a robust, publicly available evacuation plan.

The scale of disaster in the Camp Fire was unprecedented, but the scene of people fleeing wildfire was familiar, repeated numerous times over the past three years up and down California from Redding and Paradise to Santa Rosa, Ventura and Malibu.

In many of those communities, motorists became stuck in traffic as officials tried to evacuate thousands onto a few roads leading away from the flames.

NO REQUIREMENT TO PLAN

The 85 deaths and nearly 19,000 buildings destroyed in Paradise's Camp Fire made it the deadliest and most destructive blaze in California history. Eight of those who perished were found in their vehicles, with two others found outside near vehicles.

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In some spots, burned-out and abandoned vehicles lined roads leading out of town. But none of that has created a detectable sense of urgency for more evacuation planning. Using Cal Fire's designation of wildfire risks across the state, the USA TODAY Network-California requested evacuation plans from 27 communities at greatest risk of fire.

One group consisted of the 15 most populous communities where 95% or more of residents live in very high hazard areas for wildfires ; the other group included the 15 places with the highest sheer number of residents living in that riskiest zone. Three communities appeared on both lists.

Reporters contacted officials in each of those 27 communities, and filed document requests under the California Public Records Act with those that refused to release plans.

They found that fewer than one in four, just 22%, have a robust evacuation plan that is available to the public.

California does not require communities to plan for wildfire evacuations. And while experts recommend cities and counties develop evacuation plans, there is disagreement over what should be included in those plans.

Tom Cova is a University of Utah geography professor who has done extensive research on environmental hazards, emergency management, transportation, and geographic information science.

Cova said he doesn't understand why communities wouldn't do more evacuation planning.

"To me, it says, one, communities are complacent or ignorant of the risks, and two, it's a failure on the part of local and state governments to not require them (certainly for the highest hazard communities)," Cova said in an email.

Jones, the Paradise mayor, said other communities around the state in high fire hazard areas should learn a lesson from what happened in her town.

"Have a plan, an evacuation plan," she said. "You're going to have tragedy if you don't have a plan."

But some emergency officials say fires are too unpredictable for that.

Evacuation areas depend on the fire itself and what areas or neighborhoods it is threatening, said Paul Lowenthal, assistant fire marshal and public information officer for Santa Rosa.

He acknowledged the difficulty of evacuating tens of thousands of residents during the Tubbs Fire in October 2017, when between 80,000 and 100,000 residents were evacuated and Highway 101 was clogged.

Lowenthal said evacuation plans may be helpful in communities with few roads in and out. But in communities like Santa Rosa, where there are more options, he believes they aren't needed.

"Conditions dictate the extent and need for evacuations," Lowenthal said.

FIRE EVERYWHERE

Paradise had detailed evacuation plans that had worked in the past, including in 2017, Jones said. The evacuation plan breaks the town into 14 zones. Residents living in each zone evacuate depending on where the fire is located.

The plan is mailed to every home in Paradise each year. The community even practiced evacuating, she said.

But the Camp Fire, which broke out the morning of Nov. 8, 2018, was different. It was "everywhere" by the time it got to Paradise, Jones said.

"The plan was never for the whole town to evacuate at once, so I'm not sure I would say it went according to plan because the evacuation plan we had was predicated on evacuation by zones in a very orderly manner," Jones said.

"And the entire town, because of the wind, the embers were coming in everywhere all at once, so we had fires all over town and the entire town was evacuating at one time, which is going to overrun your transportation system.

"I don't care what town you are, where you live or how big your streets are. They're not sized to take the entire population at one time," she said.

City and county officials had planned on having motorists evacuate via the five two-lane roads and one

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four-lane road leading out of town. But fire forced officials to close three of those routes, further clogging the remaining roads, Jones said.

Still, Jones is convinced the evacuation plan and residents' familiarity with it saved lives.

"People were aware. In Paradise, you had fire every year. You had evacuations every year, usually by zone. People knew what to do, so that was helpful," she said.

Without that, she said, the situation would have been even more chaotic.

Wilken, the nurse, said he had been through two previous evacuations in Paradise. Both went more smoothly, but the Camp Fire was different.

"It just happened too quickly. It was a blitzkrieg of fire, and no one was prepared for that," Wilken said.

SECRET PLANS

When USA TODAY Network-California reporters contacted community leaders and emergency managers around the state, some claimed they do have plans but refused to make them available.

Reporters submitted requests for copies of evacuation plans in March to Los Angeles, El Dorado and San Bernardino counties through the California Public Records Act.

Emily Montanez, a senior program manager with the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management, said the evacuation report is not available to the public because it contains sensitive information about the sheriff's office main station and substations.

Los Angeles County later released a copy of the evacuation plan after it received a public records request for the document.

In San Bernardino County, the sheriff's and fire departments have developed evacuation plans, but "the information is not public record because of the possibility of someone using that information to hamper evacuations during an emergency," said Scott Vanhorne, a spokesman for a county supervisor.

However, in response to a USA TODAY Network public records request, county officials two days later provided 851 pages of documents.

While the documents referred to the roles and responsibilities of various agencies during emergency evacuations, they did not include a separate appendix on evacuations.

The county also did not provide the evacuation plan for the communities of Lake Arrowhead, Crestline and Running Springs — three communities where at least 95% of residents live in very high hazard areas for wildfires.

El Dorado County officials also initially refused to release information about evacuation plans that would cover Pollock Pines, one of the 15 largest communities in the state where more than 95% of residents live in a very high hazard zone for wildfire.

"I confirmed with the (lieutenant) for our (emergency services) division that we do not release our emergency plan, for obvious security reasons," wrote El Dorado County Sheriff's Sgt. Anthony Prencipe, in an email response. He did not elaborate on those reasons.

Then, in response to a Public Records Act request, the county provided one page from its emergency operations plan that refers to evacuations. Three paragraphs on that page were blacked out.

El Dorado County officials also provided several pages of what it called evacuation plans for the area of Mosquito and Swansboro roads near Placerville, but those consisted mostly of general instructions to residents on how to prepare themselves.

WHAT IS AN EVACUATION PLAN?

The detail and quality of evacuation plans vary from community to community across the state.

"One of the more impressive" evacuation plans, according to researcher Cova, was developed by San Diego County and is included as a 76-page appendix to its emergency operations plan.

The evacuation plan is a "regional, 50,000-foot view of evacuation planning" not intended to replace on-the-spot decision making in specific emergencies, said Alex Bell, a spokeswoman for San Diego County.

The county's evacuation plan was born out of the lessons learned from evacuating New Orleans residents during Hurricane Katrina in 2005, as well as hurricanes Irma and Harvey in 2017.

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San Diego's evacuation plan also contains estimates on the number of residents within communities in the county who may require evacuation assistance, sheltering, transportation and help with pet evacuation.

It provides general evacuation routes and road capacities, county-wide shelter capacities, resources available locally and through mutual aid and access considerations for people with disabilities.

There is "all sort of disagreement out there" about what makes a viable evacuation plan, said Tim Haney, professor of sociology and director of the Centre for Community Disaster Research at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta.

He looks for:

- Distinctions between what's needed for slow- vs. fast-onset disaster.
- Plans for the vulnerable: low-income, elderly, disabled, those without a vehicle, etc. The plan should note where those populations are concentrated relative to the hazard and what kind of transportation they'll need.
- A plan for what to do when people don't hear the evacuation order, don't trust it or choose not to evacuate. Will uniformed officers knock on doors, and if so how will that be staffed and organized?
- An estimate of the number of people who will need shelter while they are evacuated and where those shelters will be set up. A plan also should identify sources of food, toiletries, etc. Shelter plans should be set up in a way to minimize risk of gendered violence. Shelter plans should also accommodate pets.
- Assurance that emergency social services such as mental health services will be available and evacuees will know how to get those services.

"A successful evacuation is basically a chain of events that must happen smoothly and if any one link in the chain breaks, the plan fails," Cova said.

A PATCHWORK APPROACH

State law doesn't require evacuation plans. City and county authorities can decide whether to have one, said Mark Pazin, chief of law enforcement for the California Office of Emergency Services.

"Nothing is mandated, but it's highly advisable, given the drama we've seen up and down the state," Pazin said.

Nine of the 27 communities surveyed for this story are in Los Angeles County, which has an evacuation plan within its overall emergency operations plan, but those plans aren't readily available to the public.

Los Angeles County released a copy of its evacuation plan in response to a public records request from the USA Today Network.

The 73-page evacuation plan is part of the county's Operational Area Emergency Response Plan.

While the plan was not available without a public records request, it begins by addressing the "officials, employees and residents of Los Angeles County."

Two Los Angeles County communities, Malibu and Topanga Canyon, have individual evacuation plans that are posted on the internet.

Three communities in San Bernardino County — Lake Arrowhead, Crestline and Running Springs — are covered under the agency's evacuation plan for the mountain communities in an area stretching from Crestline to Big Bear, said Glenn Barley, San Bernardino County unit chief for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

While evacuation routes are posted online, the complete evacuation plan for Crestline, Running Springs and Lake Arrowhead is not publicly available, Barley said.

Two other communities on the list — Magalia and Paradise — have posted evacuation plans online.

The city of Glendale's 2008 emergency plan identifies nine brush fire zones in neighborhoods near the mountains.

Each of the zones includes a population figure and notes about narrow roads or remote neighborhoods with restricted access. The plan cautions that such road conditions could lead to problems for emergency responders as well as people evacuating.

"I looked at that and I don't know if there is a problem. I wouldn't call that a problem, maybe a concern," said Dan Bell, a spokesman for the city.

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Bell said the city has updated the plans but declined to release those newer documents. He said the plans do not list solutions or steps the city is taking to address road obstacles in the brush fire zones.

While officials in Sonoma, Shasta and Ventura counties evacuated tens of thousands of residents from wildfires over the past three years, those counties also do not have evacuation plans.

'CONCERN WITH THAT PRE-PLANNED STUFF'

Kevin McGowan, assistant director of emergency services for Ventura County, said fires are too unpredictable to plan for evacuations: You don't know where they will start and you don't know where they'll go.

"Our concern with that pre-planned stuff is that it doesn't lend itself to that dynamic decision-making process," McGowan said.

He said when fires break out firefighters and law enforcement personnel are authorized to make decisions about evacuations quickly based on current conditions.

"We built a culture in Ventura County to evaluate evacuation needs right away," he said.

Planning out evacuations ahead of time would be very hard to do, he said.

"It's not something you can just have written and on the shelf and then just pull it out. It doesn't work that way with wildfires," McGowan said.

Ventura County officials do evacuation planning for tsunamis, but emergency planners know where a tsunami will come from. Those evacuation plans are available online, McGowan said.

As far as traffic congestion during evacuations, McGowan said evacuation plans aren't likely to solve that problem.

"Every single one of these really large fires had traffic congestion," McGowan said. However, it wasn't gridlock, he said.

"There's absolutely no evacuation in the history of the world that is going to go absolutely seamless," McGowan said.

Evacuation plans are helpful for "well-defined hazards such as a tsunami or dam failure," said Briana Khan, a spokeswoman for Sonoma County.

Wildfire evacuation plans also may help smaller communities but not larger ones, she said. Plus, there's the cost.

"Most communities in California do not have wildfire evacuation plans due to the need to expend resources in addressing other hazards such as flooding or earthquakes," Khan said.

However, she said, Sonoma County is interested in developing evacuation planning for its most at-risk communities.

"Although we do not have a definite timeline in place for delivering and exercising these plans, the county is very aware of — and is counting on — the significant community interest in this subject," Khan said.

Since the 2017 fires, officials also have begun sending out emergency warnings and calling for evacuations earlier, she said.

Haney, the Mt. Royal University researcher, said the success of an evacuation plan rests on several things: effective communication, whether a community trusts its local government, resources available to residents and geography.

The trend among emergency managers is to develop evacuation plans for many different types of disasters — hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, fires, etc. — rather than a single evacuation plan for each, Haney said.

"It's really about imagining the different scenarios — making plans flexible enough to fit many different disaster types," Haney said.

"Things that never happened before happen all the time," he said.

What happened during the Camp Fire in 2018 had happened before, although on a smaller scale, said Jones, the Paradise mayor.

Because of evacuation problems during a 2008 wildfire, Paradise and county officials drew up evacuation plans that include evacuation zones and routes, she said.

"We had terrible traffic jams (in 2008) and from that we developed an evacuation plan," Jones said. But Jones takes away a different lesson than emergency leaders in other parts of California. She doesn't see the Camp Fire deaths as a sign that planning is futile. Quite the opposite.

"(Eighty-five) deaths is a lot and it's terrible, but our residents knew what to do," she said.

USA Today Network-California reporter Megan Diskin contributed to this report.

Pilot rescued from plane that crash-landed atop Idaho tree

MCCALL, Idaho (AP) — A pilot who was trying to crash-land this week in an Idaho field instead brought his small plane to rest at the top of a 60-foot (18-meter) tree, officials said.

Pilot John Gregory was not hurt in the Monday night crash, which happened when his single-engine Piper Cub PA-18 lost power and a wing strut became entangled in the tree, according to the fire department in the resort town of McCall.

Gregory was rescued from his perch atop the giant white fir by volunteer firefighter Randy Acker, who owns a tree removal company.

"My thought was, 'I need to get up there and see what's going on,'" Acker said.

Acker had Gregory stand up in the plane so he could cut the pilot's harness and clip him to a safety line for the descent. Gregory was brought down safely with the plane still lodged in the branches.

Most of the weight of the plane was borne by one tree, but it also was touching a nearby tree.

"Those wings were perfectly centered over the top of the tree," said McCall Fire Capt. Brandon Swain.

A piece of the plane's propeller and one of its wheels had fallen to the ground, but the rest of the plane was intact, suspended in the tree.

Acker cut branches as he scaled the tree until he was about 20 feet (6 meters) from the top, where higher branches were supporting the plane.

Swain said Acker then secured the plane to the tree using rope webbing before Gregory was rescued.

"I've never seen anything like this happen," Acker said. "Just glad I was able to help."

Officials are trying to determine how to remove the plane from its perch and warned people to stay away from it.

California seeks lessons from Florida for fire evacuations

By JENNIFER KAY and PAUL ELIAS Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — With Hurricane Michael strengthening as it took aim at Florida's Panhandle, Mark Bowen and his employees watched the live footage through tears.

They weren't looking at increasingly dire storm forecasts last October. They were watching cameras trained on rural Bay County's three main evacuation routes leading away from sugar-white beaches.

Traffic was flowing smoothly when there should have been gridlock.

Bowen, the county's emergency management chief, had ordered about 120,000 coastal residents to evacuate but only about 20,000 actually left, according to preliminary estimates by county engineers.

"There was this period where we were just beside ourselves," Bowen said. "We couldn't move our population to act."

It's a problem Florida officials face before every big storm, though they usually have far more time than their counterparts in California, who need to evacuate residents threatened by fast-moving wildfires.

Zachary Byrd said he got "not a word" to evacuate a wildfire closing in on the California town of Paradise.

He had signed up for every warning system and previously got evacuation orders on his cellphone. But on the morning of Nov. 8, it took screams from his girlfriend to wake him up to the smell of Paradise on fire. One look out the window and Byrd knew he and his girlfriend had to flee.

On the one main road out of town, gridlock was so bad people abandoned their vehicles and ran as flames crackled closer on both sides. It took Byrd almost three hours to get 15 miles (24 kilometers) to safety.

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"There came a point where I thought I might die," he said of the Camp Fire that would kill 85, many of them elderly people trapped in their homes. He says until recently, he had weekly nightmares of the traffic jam and the sound of exploding propane tanks.

"It sounded like we were getting bombed," he said.

Warning Californians to flee wildfires has been left solely to local officials for decades, and the alerts often came too late and failed to reach a large number of residents.

The evacuation failures in Paradise and elsewhere have state authorities taking lessons from Florida and other states where hurricanes require a unified strategy to potentially get millions out of harm's way.

The efforts still run up against an entrenched problem: Some people just won't leave, no matter the number of the warnings or how dire they are.

California launched its first guidelines in March for local officials to follow during evacuations. The Florida Division of Emergency Management has used similar guidelines for years.

Florida stresses regional coordination and allowing time to evacuate large communities, with county governments deciding when to tell people to flee.

California's new guidance urges communities to rely on a federal warning system, which ensures alerts reach the greatest number of people quickly, usually through cellphones.

One of the biggest lessons in the new California guidelines: "Incomplete or imperfect information is not a valid reason to delay or avoid issuing a warning. Time is of the essence."

Researchers have found that only about half of people in mandatory evacuation zones leave before hurricanes. The percentage is higher for wildfires, but many still ignore the orders.

People stay because of health problems, the cost and skepticism of the danger, as well as pets and animals that can be hard to accommodate. That's why Cathy Fallon, her husband and adult son decided to ride out California's most destructive wildfire as it churned across their modest Paradise ranch.

"My horses," Fallon said of her decision to stay even as the wildfire roared over a hillside.

It's difficult to devise evacuation plans for wildfires because they offer so little warning and can quickly shift direction, said Ron Anderson of Florida Disaster Consulting, who helped coordinate evacuations for hurricanes and wildfires for nearly 30 years with Florida's Department of Transportation.

"How are you going to evacuate for a wildfire when the wind could change and shut the road down with smoke?" he said. "With a hurricane, we know the road isn't going to shut down for a few more days."

The best way to save lives is to plan ahead, Anderson said, by educating homeowners to clear properties of vegetation and debris that can burn and giving them a destination to go in a disaster.

"Set up something in the community away from any wildfire or smoke damage that you could use as a shelter, so you're not just telling people to leave and then leaving them to go their own direction," Anderson said.

To speed up evacuations, Florida transportation officials in January 2018 advised opening emergency shoulders to highway traffic, adding more lanes and emergency roadside services to major evacuation routes, adjusting traffic signals, and adding more cameras and message signs to alert drivers to problems.

Many California communities have similar plans, but rural and remote towns with fewer resources and roads face special challenges. In Paradise, for instance, the main evacuation route was a narrow, two-lane road that couldn't handle the sudden influx of traffic on Nov. 8 when 14,000 needed to flee at once.

Residents need one unambiguous message from local officials when disaster looms, said Marty Senterfitt, director of emergency management and fire deputy chief in the Florida Keys. Offering options can confuse people and lead them to pick the most appealing option, instead of the safest.

"Whatever your message is, you have to be definitive, and you have to be precise," Senterfitt said. "You can't in any way allow people's minds to take the path of least resistance."

Two months before the chaotic evacuation of Paradise, the California governor signed a bill introduced by state Sen. Mike McGuire that led to the publication of the state's unifying guidelines last month. McGuire, a Democrat, represents much of the state's wine country hit hard by wildfire in 2017. Many residents complained they didn't receive warnings.

"Bottom line, this legislation will save lives," McGuire said. "The size and scope of wildland fires in California has grown exponentially over the past decade and a universal emergency alert system can't come soon enough."

Elias reported from San Francisco.

At Kim-Putin summit, hearty handshakes and manspreading

By ERIC TALMADGE Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The ambiance was friendly. Nice, comfy seats. An exchange of polite welcomes.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un even managed to match Russian President Vladimir Putin's manspreading — the two sat with knees spread wide apart as they chatted before the start of their first summit, which began Thursday in the Far East port city of Vladivostok.

With so little else to go on, it's a common practice for North Korea watchers to pay extremely close attention to Kim's every word and gesture when he makes public appearances. Summits are no exception, and there's always lots of analytical commentary, insightful and silly.

What caught the attention of many outside observers Thursday wasn't the scene, but the sound — of Kim's loud breathing.

Clips of the introductory encounter were quickly tweeted around the world, many with comments about the leader's audible breathlessness. South Korea's media, meanwhile, speculated that it could be a sign of Kim's poor health. He is, after all, overweight and a notoriously heavy smoker.

But when the two delivered their opening comments to start the actual talks, Kim seemed to have gotten over whatever the problem was.

Experts have noted that when Kim met President Donald Trump for the first time, they nearly lunged at each other with hands outstretched for a handshake. They vied several times to lead the other with an alpha male hand on the back. Gazes were carefully not averted, lest that appear to suggest submission.

The impression from their second encounter, in Hanoi two months ago, was more measured. The two tended to mirror each other more closely, which is a sign of respect and cooperation rather than aggression.

Kim's first greeting with Putin was more like his performance in Hanoi, though a bit stiffer. It was in some ways similar to an old style Soviet meeting, with a bit of a formal chill to it.

He and Putin approached each other with fixed smiles and held an extended handshake for the cameras. It's often an awkward moment, even for the most experienced politicians. But they appeared relaxed — or perhaps just well-poised — as they also did during the initial part of the talks, which were broadcast live.

Unlike the much taller Trump, Putin is roughly the same height as Kim, which probably helped.

The health of the North Korean leader has been the topic of speculation before.

During his first summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, last April, he appeared to be out of breath as he signed a guestbook after a short walk. He was also shown on TV red-faced at a banquet, likely from the ample beverages available.

But Kim has managed to make it through nearly a dozen summits now. His meetings with Moon, in particular, were well received in the South and seen to reveal a genuine warmth and desire for better relations.

It remains to be seen how effective he will be in getting out from under the sanctions that have been imposed on his country for its nuclear weapons programs. But if nothing else, he has demonstrated a surprising air of confidence alongside some of the biggest players on the world stage.

California towns at risk from fires often have few ways out

By MEGAN DISKIN, Ventura County Star; and EVAN WYLOGE, Palm Springs Desert Sun
PARADISE, Calif. (AP) — Californians got a deadly wakeup call when more than 27,000 Paradise residents trying to escape the Camp Fire got caught in a nightmare traffic jam. The 2018 catastrophe illuminated the grim reality that road systems throughout the state are not designed to handle a sudden evacuation.

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A new USA TODAY Network-California analysis reveals the extent to which a fundamental problem in Paradise — too few escape lanes for too many people in vehicles — applies to other cities and neighborhoods at great risk of wildfire across the state.

About 350,000 Californians live in areas that have both the highest wildfire risk designation, and either the same number or fewer exit routes per person as Paradise. From the mountains, lakes and forests of northern California, to the San Diego suburbs, some residents in the most fire-prone areas have far fewer evacuation routes than the vast majority of the state.

The ratio of people to exit routes doesn't account for all the complexities of an actual evacuation, experts say, but it does serve as a shorthand for evaluating evacuation efficacy.

In the Gold Rush town of Sonora, about three and half hours southeast of the town wasted by the Camp Fire, Karl Rodefer thinks about Paradise. He worries more as the next dry season approaches.

"If that happens here, we're going to have the same kinds of issues," said Rodefer, a Tuolumne County supervisor. "There's a lot of anxiety in the foothills now because of the Camp Fire."

Both Sonora and Paradise are isolated communities with few roads leading into and out of town.

In Los Angeles County, an area already known for gridlock, the city of Glendale straddles the Verdugo Mountains with neighborhoods, schools, and hiking trails carved into its base. The city's 2008 emergency plan identified them as potential brush fire zones.

The roads can be narrow and some communities have only one way in and out. The plan notes that these conditions could make evacuation and emergency response difficult, but years of construction and development have made any kind of road widening "physically impossible" in those areas, city spokesman Dan Bell said.

The city's police and fire agencies have conducted outreach in these communities and are strict about defensible space around homes. There's also a new, targeted alert system.

"I think the only concern is people not evacuating when we ask them to evacuate," he said.

Plus, Bell said, the area hasn't seen a major wildfire in some time.

But it's the big one that worries Glendale resident James Ward, 62. For 32 years he's lived in Chevy Chase Canyon, a community of 1,600 homes in a cleft of the San Rafael Hills, which the city has also identified as a potential brush fire zone.

There are only two-lane roads that run through the canyon, with a single access point for many streets and only a few main arteries that let people out. But some neighbors don't know all the ways out, Ward said.

"If 80% or 60% of the people thought the only way was Chevy Chase (Drive) and all the emergency vehicles were coming up, yes that's gonna be an issue," Ward said.

Evacuation routes came up at an annual community meeting in March with the police and fire departments because residents saw the tragedy in Paradise and had the same fears, Ward said. The co-president of the Chevy Chase Estates Association said the public safety officials acknowledged their fears but "their message was: be aware of your surroundings and if we ask you to leave, leave."

California officially adopted fire code standards for roads in the 1990s, although they had been used in some areas for decades before that. They set rules for things like grades, road surfaces, passing areas, signage on dead-ends and "critical" secondary access to any subdivision, said Daniel Berlant, assistant deputy director with Cal Fire's office of the state fire marshal.

But most of the road systems California communities like Glendale rely on were built before the widespread use of the standards.

There are also building codes that regulate room capacity and emergency exits, said wildfire evacuations expert Tom Cova. The same consideration should be applied to road infrastructure in communities, he said.

"We're gonna see a lot of bad things happen I think ... before we do something for communities that we did for buildings," said Cova, director of the University of Utah's Center for Natural and Technological Hazards.

Still, Cova and other experts see road capacity as just one element of a healthy evacuation system.

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Timely evacuation orders, residents' willingness to obey them, traffic pinch points at intersections beyond the community and many other factors can also be a matter of life and death.

And road capacities can be sufficient, Cova said, if evacuations are gradual or limited. It's when everyone tries to leave at once that escape routes are quickly overwhelmed.

'THERE WERE JUST SO MANY PEOPLE'

Malibu transplant Cassidy Jones, 40, said that's exactly what happened when he and his family fled their home in the city's Corral Canyon neighborhood the morning of Nov. 9. As the Woolsey Fire bore down, they packed two cars full of belongings and drove south down the windy, two-lane road to scenic Pacific Coast Highway. At the bottom of the canyon, they found bumper-to-bumper traffic.

"I don't think there's really another way out, especially because the fire was coming down the mountain," Jones said. "There were just so many people. PCH can't handle it."

Work brought the Texas native to Los Angeles, but he never liked the city much. That's why he moved his family to the remote neighborhood where his backyard met the sprawling canyon and gave him a glimpse of the Pacific Ocean.

Now there he was stuck in traffic. He couldn't go north. The flames were coming from that direction — just like in previous fires. Plus, north of Jones, the canyon road eventually empties into a network of hiking trails.

At the bottom of the canyon, it took 20 minutes to even turn onto the highway, Jones said. He parked one of the vehicles along PCH and planned to leave it there, figuring the fire wouldn't spread that far. There, Jones rejoined his wife and their children, ages 6 and 8.

The kids became restless as the family's car crept along the highway for two hours to go just two miles. Finally, they stopped at a park to stretch their legs, go to the bathroom and have some snacks.

They watched as the towering smoke plume from the Woolsey Fire changed direction.

"Before it was flowing west then it went south. Our neighborhood was on the eastern edge of where the fire went. Unfortunately, it got our house," Jones said.

WHERE DRIVERS COULD OVERWHELM EVACUATION ROUTES

For others like Jones, who choose to live in places prone to fire, whether in remote parts of rural California or in the "urban-wildland interface" that buffers California's rugged wilderness and dense cities, a similar situation could await.

A USA TODAY Network-California analysis of populations, fire risk zones and roadways shows roughly one out of every 100 ZIP codes in California has a population-to-evacuation-route ratio that is near to or worse than that of Paradise and its neighbor Magalia.

Near the top of the list is South Lake Tahoe, a city west of the California-Nevada state line where vacationers come to camp along the lake that straddles both places. The town is relatively isolated, with only a few thoroughfares to facilitate emergency access for firefighting resources.

There, the number of people living in the "very high fire hazard safety zone" per roadway lanes out is almost three times the number for Paradise.

Interim South Lake Tahoe Fire Department Battalion Chief Jim Drennan said he wasn't surprised to find out his community is in one of the most precarious fire evacuation locations in the state, given the small number of roads in and out of the Tahoe Basin.

Drennan said since Paradise burned, he hears the same question from people on a nearly daily basis: What are they going to do if a major fire breaks out? Evacuation plans fall primarily to police, he said, but his fire department is one of several agencies trying to plan for what feels like a looming threat. His fire department and other public safety agencies in the area are "on super high alert," he said.

"The mindset here is: There's no earthly way you're moving the entire vacation population out of the basin all at once," Drennan said. "If you have just one quirk, you're going to end up with a lot of people stuck on the roads."

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The previous fire chief there wrote in a 2018 op-ed that it's not a question of "if" but "when" a major fire will hit the area, and he pointed out the limited evacuation routes as a major concern.

Police, fire and city officials will hold a public meeting April 25, specifically to discuss fire preparedness and evacuation planning, partly in response to the anxiety many have expressed to him and others, Drennan said.

The Palos Verdes Peninsula in Los Angeles County, densely populated with some of the costliest real estate in the United States, has even more people and fewer lanes leading out, putting it at more than five times the population-to-lane ratio as Paradise.

The western-facing edge of the Sierra Nevada mountain range is full of areas with a low number of evacuation routes for the populations there. Places like Foresthill in Placer County, which has a worse population-to-lane ratio than Paradise, and Nevada City in Nevada County, and Sonora in Tuolumne County, are far worse than average.

The analysis identified some places in California where fires have already combined with jammed roadways, killing drivers attempting to flee. Paradise and its neighbor Magalia were among the areas identified as a populous area with limited routes out, and 2018's Camp Fire proved the point. There, city and county officials had planned on having motorists evacuate using five two-lane roads and one four-lane road leading out of town. But fire forced officials to close three of those routes, further clogging the remaining roads, Paradise Mayor Jody Jones said.

The Cedar Fire, which burned 273,000 acres across the hills of northeastern San Diego in 2003, claimed 10 people trying to flee the blaze in their cars. The fire lashed the densely populated Scripps Ranch area, which has a limited number of roadways that lead to less fire-prone areas.

UNDETERRED

Many Californians clearly understand the risks. They've lived through wildfire evacuations, or have watched others. But that's not enough to pry them from the places they love.

Greg Meneshian, 53, is one. He's rebuilding the Bell Canyon home destroyed last year by the Woolsey Fire. Meneshian moved to the gated, equestrian-oriented community just west of the bustling San Fernando Valley about five years ago. The sense of community he felt the night he evacuated, he said, is just more reason for him and his two daughters, 10 and 12, to stay.

There's only one access point for the neighborhood of 750.

Looking northwest from his driveway on the night of Nov. 8 he could see flames in the canyon. He and his neighbors met on the street in front of his home trying to figure out what they should do, Meneshian said.

"They were looking to me for answers as if I lived through this before," Meneshian said. But he was in disbelief.

He woke up the girls and told them to pack a bag for a week. The power had been flickering on and off, and Meneshian knew that meant it was time to go.

Unlike Jones, whose wife had gotten an evacuation alert, Meneshian left before anyone told him to.

It was dark and smoky with nothing but the pockets of fire visible in the canyon, Meneshian said. Vehicles raced down his hilly street.

"It was really a scramble for our lives," Meneshian said.

He'd find out the next day his home was destroyed.

But the self-proclaimed "nostalgic guy" likes the sense of togetherness in Bell Canyon, where the closest store is 30 minutes away so sometimes borrowing from a neighbor is usually the better bet.

The limited escape routes, he thinks, are just something to be aware of: "It's probably a deterrent for some people (moving) in," he said. "But it shouldn't be."

'YOU HAVE TO MAKE THESE INVESTMENTS'

Before Paradise burned, there were already signs of problems with evacuation routes during major wildfires, said Assemblywoman Laura Friedman, whose district includes Glendale.

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The 2017 Tubbs Fire in Santa Rosa, which killed 22 people and destroyed more than 5,600 structures, raised alarms.

Afterward, Friedman and her staff talked with academics about the lessons learned, and she introduced Assembly Bill 2911, which then-Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law in 2018. Among other things, AB 2911 requires that subdivisions with only one exit route, located in very high hazard zones for wildfire, undergo an assessment. The bill calls for developing safety recommendations.

State fire officials should begin the surveys around July 1, 2021, and continue every five years after.

Friedman's bill is likely to have an impact back in her district. In Glendale's 2008 emergency plan, bold, capitalized letters call attention to the Oakmont Woods and Whiting Woods communities and their single access roads. Both are within the state's very high hazard zone.

"Any city that has those conditions could benefit and certainly it could be a legislative wake-up call to not only identify these areas but (to signal that) you have to make these investments to make the cities safer," Friedman said.

Friedman hopes for more state funding for the assessments. She sees reason for optimism in Gov. Gavin Newsom's declaration of a state of emergency ahead of the traditional wildfire season.

While there's no unified approach to dealing with California's wildfire evacuation problem, Friedman's bill calling for assessments to begin two years from now is not the only potential improvement underway.

In March, Newsom fast-tracked 35 priority projects to remove years of dry, built-up vegetation and create fuel breaks for emergency routes. Those follow an effort by Caltrans since 2016 to remove dead and dying trees from state roadways.

MORE THAN JUST LANES

Cova, the wildfire evacuations expert, said 25 years ago he became preoccupied with the idea that road congestion was the problem. But through his research he also learned it's more complicated.

The direction the roads let out is also important. In most fire-prone areas officials know what historically contributes to large wildfires, such as Santa Ana or Diablo winds, and can plan to build roads in a direction those gusts are unlikely to push the fire, Cova said.

During an emergency, Cova said traffic routing and control makes a big difference. That can be especially important at the points where evacuation routes hit other roads. The Malibu example, where so many roads empty onto PCH, is apt.

The road issues are important because so many other human factors may decrease the amount of time people have to evacuate, he said.

"What really causes the problem is when you have too many people leaving in too little a time," Cova said.

It can take officials a while to order evacuations. And residents often hesitate, contemplating whether they should leave, then take time packing.

Back in Malibu, Jones' wife got an evacuation alert on her phone at 6 a.m. Sheriff's officials came around on a loudspeaker at 7 a.m. It was around 8 a.m. when Jones actually left.

To speed things up, Cova encourages residents to have a go bag with medications, important paperwork, photographs and other irreplaceable items. And they should have a plan to round up pets, since critical time can be lost chasing dogs and locating cats.

"Being prepared to leave at a moment's notice is a good idea," Cova said.

Damon Arthur of the Redding Record Searchlight contributed to this report.

37 hurt, including 7 critical after Chicago-area gas leak

BEACH PARK, Ill. (AP) — A chemical leak that caused a toxic plume to hang for hours over a northern Chicago suburb Thursday sickened dozens of people, including seven who are in critical condition, officials said.

Lake Forest Fire Chief Mike Gallo said a tractor was towing two separate two-ton containers of anhydrous

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ammonia when the leak occurred around 4:30 a.m. Initial reports suggested the vehicle was involved in a crash, but the sheriff's office later said that was not the case. The cause of the leak has not been released.

The leak created a toxic cloud that lingered for several hours over Beach Park, about 40 miles (65 kilometers) north of downtown Chicago. Authorities ordered residents within a 1-mile radius to stay inside and close their windows. Area schools were closed for the day.

Pamela Burnett of unincorporated Warren Township said she was headed to her job in Kenosha, Wisconsin, when she drove through the toxic cloud. Burnett said she wasn't sure if it was smoke or dust from the shoulder of the road.

"It kept on getting bigger and bigger — this wasn't going away. I tried to slow down and not go through it," Burnett told reporters at the scene. "The next thing I knew, I couldn't breathe. It was such a strong smell. I thought to myself, 'Lord this is it. I'm done now.'"

Burnett, 57, said she pulled off the road while "spitting and coughing" and called 911. She was taken to a hospital for treatment. Her condition wasn't immediately known.

Eleven firefighters were among the 37 people who were hospitalized, and one of the injured firefighters was among the seven in critical but stable condition, according to the Lake County Sheriff's Office. Three law enforcement officers were in good condition and several others were serious but stable, sheriff's spokesman Christopher Covelli said.

Authorities said most of those injured suffered breathing problems.

"This is a very dangerous chemical that can cause unconsciousness and, worst case scenario, death," Covelli said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, anhydrous ammonia is a colorless gas that can cause breathing difficulties, burns, blisters and is fatal if breathed in high concentrations. Farmers use it to add nitrogen to soil.

The first two officers who responded to the leak had to retreat because they were overcome by the ammonia, Covelli said.

"It was difficult to get to that scene initially with those chemicals in the air without proper protection and gear to wear over the face," he said.

Authorities said about two dozen law enforcement agencies responded to the leak. The leak was contained within a few hours and the leaking tank was empty, authorities said, adding that they were waiting for the chemical plume to dissipate.

The order to remain indoors was lifted by late morning, Covelli said.

The National Transportation Safety Board announced late Thursday it is sending a team to Illinois to investigate the chemical release. The NTSB said the team of four will be on the scene Friday.

Illinois child welfare system under fire after boy's death

By **DON BABWIN** and **JOHN O'CONNOR** Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Disturbing details emerged Thursday of the torture authorities say preceded the beating death of a 5-year-old Illinois boy who had extensive contact with child welfare workers, escalating scrutiny of a state agency already being reviewed because of the recent deaths of two other children.

Court documents allege Andrew "AJ" Freund's parents killed him by beating him and subjecting him to long, cold showers. An autopsy determined the boy died from blunt force trauma to his head and had been struck multiple times.

His plastic-wrapped body was found Wednesday in a shallow grave a few miles from the family's home in Crystal Lake, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) northwest of Chicago. Child welfare workers had been called repeatedly to the dilapidated and filthy house that stunk of dog feces.

Details of the gruesome death raised the question: Why did those workers not leave with the boy?

"This agency, there is no direction, no mission and it certainly has not been protecting children," said state Rep. Sara Feigenholtz, a Chicago Democrat who chairs the House Adoption and Child Welfare Committee.

Marc D. Smith, the new director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, will appear

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before lawmakers Friday.

The child's parents, 36-year-old Joann Cunningham and 60-year-old Andrew Freund Sr., appeared in court Thursday on first-degree murder and other charges. A judge ordered both held in jail on \$5 million bail.

Prosecutors read charging documents that alleged the boy was killed three days before his parents reported him missing last Thursday. The details fueled concern about how many other children could face the same kind of danger that "AJ" did in his short life.

"How many AJ's are out there right now that we don't know about?" asked Rep. Kelly Cassidy, a Chicago Democrat, a member of the committee Feigenholtz chairs.

Birth tests revealed the boy had opiates in his bloodstream, the first of many troubling signals about danger to A.J. and his little brother that should have been red flags for an agency whose job it is to protect children, Feigenholtz said.

"I got the sense from what I read that the cops were essentially begging (DCFS) to take the child," said Feigenholz, referring to the media reports that DCFS in 2018 alone visited the house to investigate allegations of neglect and determined those allegations unfounded. "There were so many calls made, so many signs of trouble and still nothing was done."

She said the agency's leadership has been a revolving door, with 13 directors since 2003 — many of them interim.

Another concern stems from the tough financial situation the state has found itself in for years.

"We have huge budgetary problems and this is a byproduct of not taking care of the real issues," said Rep. Blaine Wilhour, a Beecher City Republican. "These are the core services that are being hollowed out (and) the most vulnerable people are the ones that end up getting hurt."

Then there are questions about whether it is too difficult for child welfare workers to remove children from their homes, and too easy for parents to have their children returned to them.

Those questions were raised in two recent cases that prompted Gov. J.B. Pritzker to order an independent review of DCFS.

In February, a Decatur woman pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder charges after her 2-year-old daughter died from starvation and deprivation. In that instance, the child was taken from her mother last year during a DCFS child abuse investigation and placed in foster care but returned to the mother last August.

In another case, an autopsy last month found a 2-year-old Chicago boy had bruises and old rib fractures, but records show DCFS never reported the injuries despite making numerous visits.

The research center Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago is expected next month to issue what Pritzker called "actionable recommendations" into how the DCFS's Intact Family Services Unit functions.

But Chapin Hall has shared one conclusion in a press release: "With the lowest foster care entry rate in the nation, Illinois has a high threshold for child removal."

Feigenholtz said lawmakers have to answer the question of whether the threshold for child removal is too high or whether the workers are "not aware of them or are poorly trained."

"I think we all have a great deal of questions, but I will tell you this that this has to end," she said. "It has to be fixed."

O'Connor reported from Springfield, Illinois.

Putin says he'll brief US on summit with Kim

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV and ERIC TALMADGE Associated Press

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia (AP) — President Vladimir Putin says he's willing to share details with the United States about his summit on Thursday with Kim Jong Un, potentially raising Russia's influence in the stalemated issue of North Korean denuclearization.

The two leaders' first one-on-one did not indicate major changes in North Korea's position: Putin said Kim is willing to give up nuclear weapons, but only if he gets ironclad security guarantees.

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However, Putin said Kim urged him to explain the nuances of North Korea's position to President Donald Trump. Such an interlocutor role could be meaningful in light of Trump's apparent admiration of the Russian leader.

Trump has said he "fell in love" with Kim, possibly indicating a proclivity to being swayed toward accommodation with the North Korean leader, although that declaration came before the Trump-Kim summit in Hanoi in February that collapsed over mismatched demands in sanctions relief and disarmament.

At Thursday's summit in the Pacific port city of Vladivostok, about 75 miles (120 kilometers) from the North Korean border, Kim criticized Washington for taking "unilateral attitude in bad faith" at the Trump-Kim meeting that has caused a diplomatic standstill, North Korea's state-run Korean Central News Agency said Friday. Kim told Putin that the situation on the Korean Peninsula has reached a "critical point" where it could return to tensions and that peace and security will "entirely depend on the U.S. future attitude," the agency said.

The KCNA said Kim and Putin held in-depth discussions to promote "strategic communication and tactical collaboration" over the security situation on the Korean Peninsula and also talked about boosting high-level visits and other exchanges between the countries.

The agency said Putin credited Kim's diplomatic initiatives for stabilizing the situation surrounding the peninsula and accepted Kim's invitation to visit North Korea at a "convenient time." It did not report on any specific agreements regarding North Korea's nuclear weapons program and U.S.-led sanctions against the North.

After the summit, Putin stressed that Moscow and Washington both want North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons. But, he said, the security guarantees Kim demands in exchange should be underwritten by multiple countries, hinting at an arrangement like the six-nation talks Russia participated in until their collapse in 2009.

Putin later headed for a two-day trip to Beijing, where he said he will inform the Chinese leadership about the summit.

"And we will just as openly discuss this issue with the U.S. leadership," Putin said. "There are no secrets. Russia's position always has been transparent. There are no plots of any kind."

Putin's remarks reflect Kim's growing frustration with Washington's efforts to maintain "maximum pressure" until the North commits to denuclearization.

But his characterization of Kim's comments also suggests there have been no major changes in North Korea's basic position.

North Korea has all along contended that it needs its nuclear arsenal to defend itself against what it sees as U.S. hostility and wants concrete reassurances of its safety — including the removal of the American nuclear threat as an integral part of the denuclearization of the entire Korean Peninsula.

Trump has made clear that he is eager to work out a deal with North Korea and has already indicated that he thinks he deserves the Nobel Peace Prize. Russia's involvement in the issue could bolster his confidence, though some analysts think Washington and Moscow are too far estranged.

"For Russia, I don't think it will deliver any leverage with the U.S. simply because the relations between Russia and the United States are at such a low level," Vasily Kashin, a researcher at Russia's Higher School of Economics, told The Associated Press.

Leonid Slutsky, chairman of the foreign affairs committee in the lower house of the Russian parliament, saw the summit as burnishing Russia's credentials.

"The fact that Kim Jon Un asked Vladimir Putin to brief the Chinese and U.S. leadership on the results of the summit attests to Russia's significant role as a guarantor of security in the Asia-Pacific region," he was quoted as saying by state news agency Tass.

It wasn't immediately clear what other agreements the leaders might have struck.

Along with a statement of political support, Kim was believed to be looking for some kind of economic support and possibly even a workaround to sanctions that will force more than 10,000 North Korean laborers in Russia to leave by the end of the year. The laborers are a major source of income for Pyongyang.

Putin said they discussed the issue and would find a solution taking into account "humanitarian" factors,

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though he didn't say what that would be.

On the economic front, both sides share an interest in enhanced cooperation if sanctions are eased.

Russia would like to gain broader access to North Korea's mineral resources, including rare metals. Pyongyang, for its part, covets Russia's electricity supplies and investment to modernize its dilapidated Soviet-built industrial plants, railways and other infrastructure.

For Putin, the summit was also seen as an opportunity for Russia to emerge as an essential player in the North Korean nuclear standoff.

Moscow has kept a relatively low profile as Kim embarked on what has been an audacious diplomatic journey over the past year.

The Putin summit follows four summits with Chinese President Xi Jinping, three with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and two with Trump. Despite the current stalemate, Trump has said he would like to meet Kim again.

Moon said Thursday he will try to hold a fourth summit with Kim and facilitate the resumption of U.S.-North Korea talks.

European Union Council president Donald Tusk said after meeting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Brussels, "We call on (North Korea) to concretely engage on denuclearization and the complete, verifiable dismantlement of all its nuclear weapons."

Since Kim's latest talks with Trump, in Hanoi, ended without any sign of progress, North Korea has expressed its open anger with what it calls an excessively hard-line position by Trump's top advisers in the deadlocked negotiations.

Last week, it demanded U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo be removed from the talks and strongly criticized national security adviser John Bolton. There have been reports that Kim has done some internal shaking up as well, possibly firing one of his own main negotiators.

Though Kim appeared confident and respectful as he and Putin met for the first time, he comported himself formally — creating a scene reminiscent of old Soviet-style meetings and a sharp contrast with his more cordial summits with Moon and, at times, even Trump.

Moscow was part of six-nation talks on the North Korean standoff that fell apart after Pyongyang's withdrawal in 2009. Putin said Thursday he wasn't sure if the talks could be revived, but he emphasized that international involvement will be needed to discuss guarantees for Pyongyang.

Vladivostok, a city of more than half a million on the Sea of Japan, faced gridlock on its roads as traffic was blocked in the city center due to Kim's visit. The authorities also temporarily closed the waters around Russky Island to all maritime traffic.

Kim was expected to return to Pyongyang on Friday.

Talmadge, the AP's Pyongyang bureau chief, reported from Tokyo. Associated Press writers Hyung-jin Kim and Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul, South Korea, and Jim Heintz in Moscow, contributed to this report.

US stocks end mostly lower, weighed down by industrials

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

U.S. stock indexes finished mostly lower Thursday as disappointing earnings reports from several industrial sector companies weighed on the market, offsetting strong results from Facebook, Microsoft and others.

3M, which makes Post-it notes and many other products, plunged 12.9% in heavy trading after announcing weak results and a restructuring program. It was the biggest loss for the company since the market crash of October 1987.

The loss for 3M pulled the Dow Jones Industrial Average into the red. The S&P 500 finished slightly lower, holding close to the record high it set on Tuesday.

Facebook and Microsoft both rose after reporting strong earnings. That helped the Nasdaq eke out a small gain.

The indexes' mixed finish gave the benchmark S&P 500 index its second modest loss in as many

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days. The market remains on track for solid gains this month.

Traders have grown more optimistic that most companies will continue to deliver strong growth this year, despite some signs that point to a slowing global economy.

"Earnings are flowing, and we're going to see a positive earnings season," said Karyn Cavanaugh, senior markets strategist, Voya Investment Management. If (the market) keeps going up, up, up, then that kind of makes you a little skeptical. The fact that investors are being a little bit more selective, that's a good sign."

The S&P 500 slipped 1.08 points, or less than 0.1%, to 2,926.17. The Dow Jones Industrial average lost 134.97 points, or 0.5%, to 26,462.08. Without the loss from 3M, the Dow would have been 58 points higher.

The Nasdaq composite rose 16.67 points, or 0.2%, to 8,118.68.

Small-company stocks fared worse than the rest of the market. The Russell 2000 index gave up 12.52 points, or 0.8%, to 1,575.61.

Major European indexes finished lower.

Bond prices fell. The yield on the 10 year Treasury note rose to 2.53% from 2.52% late Wednesday.

Earnings reporting season is more than a third of the way in, and investors are searching for clues about whether profit growth can accelerate later this year following a weak first quarter. The stock market has had a furious rally this year, largely because the Federal Reserve has said that it is halting its plan to raise interest rates, at least temporarily.

Industrial stocks were on the losing side Thursday after 3M reported lower revenue and profit for the first three months of the year than Wall Street expected. It also slashed its profit forecast for the full year.

United Parcel Service said its net income fell 17% on nearly flat revenue, and Illinois Tool Works had weaker revenue than analysts forecast. Rockwell Automation said that automotive related sales were less than it expected last quarter.

UPS lost 8.1%, Illinois Tool Works fell 3.6% and Rockwell Automation sank 6.7% following their earnings reports.

Raytheon, a defense contractor that is also in the industrial sector, dropped 4.4%. It reported stronger profit for the latest quarter than expected, but analysts noted some mixed results for its profit margins.

All told, the companies helped drag industrial stocks down 2%, the steepest loss by far among the 11 sectors that make up the S&P 500.

Altria Group slid 6% after the nation's largest cigarette maker reported weak first quarter results on lower sales and a hefty investment in cannabis company Cronos.

Other companies turned in quarterly report cards that blew past expectations.

Facebook surged 5.8% after the social media giant reported a 26% jump in quarterly revenue. That helped lift the communications sector by 1.1%.

Microsoft gained 3.3% after the software maker said its quarterly revenue vaulted 14% from a year earlier. Amazon reported that its profit more than doubled in the first quarter, the latest sign that the e-commerce company's push into advertising and cloud computing paid off. Amazon reported its results after the close of regular trading.

Coming into this earnings reporting season, Wall Street was expecting a dud. Partially because of slowing economic growth around the world, analysts were forecasting the first drop in earnings for the S&P 500 in nearly three years.

Companies, though, have been surprising analysts with not-as-bad results. So far, about 190 of the companies in the S&P 500 have reported their earnings for the first three months of the year. Among them, earnings actually grew 2.1% from a year earlier.

All the better-than-expected results mean analysts are now forecasting a drop of 2.8% in earnings for S&P 500 companies this reporting season. That's not as bad as the 4% decline they were expecting a few weeks ago.

Energy futures finished mixed. Benchmark U.S. crude fell 1% to settle at \$65.21 per barrel. Brent crude dropped 0.3% to close at \$74.35 per barrel.

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Wholesale gasoline inched 0.2% higher to \$2.13 per gallon. Heating oil was little changed at \$2.10 per gallon. Natural gas gained 2.1% to \$2.51 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Gold was little changed at \$1,279.70 per ounce, silver inched 0.2% lower to \$14.88 per ounce and copper slid 1.7% to \$2.86 per pound.

The dollar fell to 111.62 Japanese yen from 112.35 yen late Wednesday. The euro weakened to \$1.1128 from \$1.1143.

AP Business Writer Stan Choe contributed to this report.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, April 26, the 116th day of 2019. There are 249 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 26, 1865, John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln, was surrounded by federal troops near Port Royal, Virginia, and killed.

On this date:

In 1564, William Shakespeare was baptized at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon, England.

In 1607, English colonists went ashore at present-day Cape Henry, Virginia, on an expedition to establish the first permanent English settlement in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1777, during the American Revolutionary War, 16-year-old Sybil Ludington, the daughter of a militia commander in Dutchess County, New York, rode her horse into the night to alert her father's men of the approach of British regular troops.

In 1933, Nazi Germany's infamous secret police, the Gestapo, was created.

In 1945, Marshal Henri Philippe Petain (ahn-REE' fee-LEEP' pay-TAN'), the head of France's Vichy government during World War II, was arrested.

In 1968, the United States exploded beneath the Nevada desert a 1.3 megaton nuclear device called "Boxcar."

In 1977, the legendary nightclub Studio 54 had its opening night in New York.

In 1986, an explosion and fire at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine caused radioactive fallout to begin spewing into the atmosphere. (Dozens of people were killed in the immediate aftermath of the disaster while the long-term death toll from radiation poisoning is believed to number in the thousands.)

In 1989, actress-comedian Lucille Ball died at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles at age 77.

In 1994, voting began in South Africa's first all-race elections, resulting in victory for the African National Congress and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as president. China Airlines Flight 140, a Taiwanese Airbus A-300, crashed while landing in Nagoya, Japan, killing 264 people; there were seven survivors.

In 2006, Whitney Cerak and Laura Van Ryn, two students at Indiana's Taylor University, were involved in a van-truck collision that killed five people; in a tragic mix-up that took five weeks to resolve, a seriously injured and comatose Cerak was mistakenly identified as Van Ryn, who had actually died in the crash and was buried by Cerak's family.

In 2008, police in Amstetten, Austria, arrested Josef Fritzl, freeing his daughter Elisabeth and her six surviving children whom he had fathered while holding her captive in a basement cell for 24 years. (Fritzl was later sentenced to life in a psychiatric ward.)

Ten years ago: The United States declared a public health emergency as more possible cases of swine flu surfaced from Canada to New Zealand; officials in Mexico City closed everything from concerts to sports matches to churches in an effort to stem the spread of the virus. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton made an unannounced visit to Lebanon, where she met with President Michel Suleiman.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama opened the first visit by a U.S. president in nearly half a century to Malaysia, the third stop on his weeklong goodwill trip through Asia. A British helicopter crashed in

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southern Afghanistan, killing five NATO troops.

One year ago: Bill Cosby was convicted of drugging and molesting Temple University employee Andrea Constand at his suburban Philadelphia mansion in 2004; it was the first big celebrity trial of the #MeToo era and completed the spectacular downfall of a comedian who broke racial barriers on his way to TV superstardom. (Cosby was later sentenced to three to 10 years in prison.) Mike Pompeo was sworn in as secretary of state, minutes after being confirmed by the Senate; he then flew immediately to Brussels for meetings at NATO headquarters. President Donald Trump's White House doctor, Ronny Jackson, withdrew his nomination to be Veterans Affairs secretary in the face of accusations of misconduct. Teachers in Arizona and Colorado converged on state capitols as they launched widespread walkouts in a bid for better pay and education funding. Four quarterbacks were chosen in the first 10 selections in the NFL draft, with the Cleveland Browns grabbing Heisman Trophy winner Baker Mayfield out of Oklahoma.

Today's Birthdays: Architect I.M. Pei is 102. Actress-comedian Carol Burnett is 86. Rhythm-and-blues singer Maurice Williams is 81. Songwriter-musician Duane Eddy is 81. Singer Bobby Rydell is 77. Rock musician Gary Wright is 76. Actress Nancy Lenehan is 66. Actor Giancarlo Esposito is 61. Rock musician Roger Taylor (Duran Duran) is 59. Actress Joan Chen is 58. Rock musician Chris Mars is 58. Actor-singer Michael Damian is 57. Actor Jet Li (lee) is 56. Rock musician Jimmy Stafford (Train) is 55. Actor-comedian Kevin James is 54. Record company executive Jeff Huskins is 53. Former U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey (TREHTH'-eh-way) is 53. Actress Marianne Jean-Baptiste is 52. Country musician Joe Caverlee (Yankee Grey) is 51. Rapper T-Boz (TLC) is 49. First lady Melania Trump is 49. Actress Shondrella Avery is 48. Actress Simbi Kali is 48. Country musician Jay DeMarcus (Rascal Flatts) is 48. Country musician Michael Jeffers (Pinmonkey) is 47. Rock musician Jose Pasillas (Incubus) is 43. Actor Jason Earles is 42. Actor Leonard Earl Howze is 42. Actor Amin Joseph is 42. Actor Tom Welling is 42. Actor Pablo Schreiber is 41. Actor Nyambi Nyambi is 40. Actress Jordana Brewster is 39. Actress Stana Katic is 39. Actress Marnette Patterson is 39. Actor Channing Tatum is 39. Americana/roots singer-songwriter Lilly Hiatt is 35. Actress Emily Wickersham is 35. Actor Aaron Weeks is 33. Electro pop musician James Sunderland (Frenship) is 32. New York Yankees outfielder Aaron Judge is 27.

Thought for Today: "Perfect order is the forerunner of perfect horror." — Carlos Fuentes, Mexican author (1928-2012).