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Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

Volleyball: Girls Varsity Match vs Redfield High School (Away) on Aug 29 at 6:00 PM
Redfield-Doland High School
Type: nonconference Opponent: Redfield High School
Comments: C and JV matches @ 6pm

No School on Aug 30
Groton Area Elementary School, Groton Area High School

Football: Boys Varsity Game vs Ellendale/Edgeley-Kulm (Away) on Aug 30 at 7:00 PM
Ellendale High School
Type: nonconference Opponent: Ellendale/Edgeley-Kulm

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

Guthmiller takes second at NEC Golf Tourney

Cade Guthmiller finished three strokes behind the leader at the Northeast Conference Golf Tournament held Monday in Moccasin Creek Country Club in Aberdeen. Mason Carrels of Aberdeen Roncalli won the meet with a score of 77 while Guthmiller finished with an 80. Guthmiller shot a 40 in both sets of nine holes.

Also participating were Brevin Fliehs who shot a 101, Tristan Traphagen shot a 102, Brody DeHoet a 111 and Hunter Kassube a 111.

Roncalli won the team title with a 332 followed by Sisseton with a 366 and Groton with a 394.

Eight Species of Fungus Cause Root Rot in South Dakota Corn

BROOKINGS, S.D. - An invisible enemy is attacking South Dakota corn.

The crop may look fine above ground, but as many as eight species of a common soil fungus may be infecting the roots—and compromising yields, according to South Dakota State University plant disease experts.

Research associate Paul Okello of the Department of Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science identified eight *Fusarium* species that cause root rot in South Dakota cornfields as part of his doctoral research. Furthermore, seven *Fusarium* species isolated from corn also cause disease in soybeans.

This is the first time South Dakota researchers have identified the pathogens causing root rot of corn in the state, according to Field Crops Pathologist Febina Mathew, an assistant professor in the Department of Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science. "The number of species can vary from region to region, but eight species have been identified in South Dakota," Okello said.

"*Fusarium* species have a broad host range, which includes soybean, sunflowers and small grains, such as wheat, consequently the pathogen can affect crops that are commonly rotated with corn," said Mathew, who was Okello's research adviser. "Our research on *Fusarium* root rot of corn will help us work with breeders to develop resistant varieties and with chemical companies to test the efficacy of seed treatments that target these specific pathogens."

The May 2019 issue of *Plant Health Progress*, a journal published by the American Phytopathological Society, featured two articles on the research. The article identifying the *Fusarium* species causing corn root rot received the Editor's Pick Award. Okello was first author on both papers.

The corn research was supported by U.S. Department of Agriculture Hatch Act funding through the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station. The soybean work was funded by the South Dakota Soybean Research and Promotion Council and the North Central Soybean Research Program.



The yellowing wilted leaves on these plants are one of the signs of root rot caused by one of eight species of *Fusarium* in South Dakota corn fields, according to a study conducted by researchers in the South Dakota State University Department Agronomy, Horticulture and Plant Science

Analyzing corn root rot

While identifying species of *Fusarium* causing root rot of soybean in 2014, Okello noticed previous crops in some of the fields were corn or wheat. That piqued his interest in finding out which *Fusarium* species affected corn.

In 2015, SDSU researchers collected discolored roots from 50 cornfields across a 24-county area in eastern South Dakota, which produces 50 percent of the state's corn.

Estimated yield losses due to corn root rot, seedling blight and plant-parasitic nematodes during the last six years varied from average of 225,000 bushels per year beginning in 2012 to approximately 75,000 bushels in 2017 and 2018 in South Dakota, according to surveys conducted by the Corn Disease Working Group. A greater awareness of the disease, unfavorable environmental conditions and changes in management strategies may have helped reduce losses recently, Mathew explained.

"*Fusarium* is always in the soil, but environment plays a big role in disease development," Okello said. Cool, wet soil conditions favor disease development. "This year, we are seeing the disease because many of the fields are excessively wet," Mathew added.

Lisa Richardson, executive director of the South Dakota Corn Utilization Council and the South Dakota Corn Growers Association, said, "Though these losses are small relative to the nearly 800 million bushels of corn produced annually in the state, we are thankful that this research helps producers have an awareness and understanding of this fungus and how it moves and how they can address it should a significant outbreak occur."

Identifying fungal species

Okello isolated the eight species of *Fusarium* from the root specimens and then verified in the greenhouse that these pathogens caused root disease in corn. One of the species, *Fusarium boothii*, had never been reported as affecting corn in the United States. However, *F. boothii* was previously identified as causing disease on wheat in Nebraska.

A 1973 study done by University of Minnesota and Purdue University researchers found six *Fusarium* species in corn. However, the Okello study identified eight species in corn. "This suggests that the *Fusarium* species diversity affecting corn may have changed and additional research is required," he said.

Next, the researchers did a cross-pathogenicity study, putting the *Fusarium* isolates from corn on soybeans and the ones from soybeans on corn in the greenhouse. "We found that seven species of the South Dakota isolates from either soybean or corn cause disease in both crops," Okello said. "This means if you are going to plant soybeans after corn or vice-versa, you are increasing the inoculum level of these soil pathogens, amplifying what's already there."

Mathew's lab is now testing fungicide seed treatment to determine if the current chemistries can help manage *Fusarium* root rot.

The use of partially resistant hybrids can also decrease losses, Mathew pointed out. "However, these are hybrids that can provide resistance to *Fusarium* ear rot, which growers can verify with the commercial seed companies. At this time, we are not sure if the genes conferring resistance to *Fusarium* root rot are also responsible for resistance to *Fusarium* ear rot and/or stalk rot. This warrants further study."

Though knowing what specific *Fusarium* species infect corn will help breeders screen germplasm, Mathew said, "the breeding process can be challenging because resistance to *Fusarium* is controlled by multiple genes."

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Results of Week Zero SDFBCA Coach's Poll:

11AAA
1 Brandon Valley (18) 96 pts
2 SFR (0) 68 pts
3 O'Gorman (2) 62 pts
4 SFW (1) 56 pts
5 SFL (0) 14 pts
Others: Harrisburg 12 pts, RC Central 5 pts, RC Stevens 1 pt

11AA
1 Pierre (19) 103 pts
2 Yankton (0) 60 pts
3 Mitchell (2) 55 pts
4 Huron (0) 47 pts
5 Brookings (0) 37 pts
Others: Sturgis 10 pts, Spearfish 2 pts, Douglas 1 pt

11A
1 Tea Area (15) 86 pts
2 Madison (3) 67 pts
3 Canton (3) 46 pts
4 Dakota Valley 45 pts
5 Dell Rapids 25 pts
Others: SF Christian 21 pts, West Central 19 pts, Lennox 4 pts, Belle Fourche 4 pts, Custer 1 pt

11B
1 BEE (10) 81 pts
2 STM (7) 73 pts
3 Winner (2) 67 pts
4 Sioux Valley (1) 29 pts
5 MVP 25 pts
Others: McM 12 pts, Chamberlain 11 pts, EPJ 9 pts, WWSSC 5 pts, Beresford 3 pts, Groton 3 pts, Garretson 2 pts

9AA
1 Bon Homme (16) 89 pts
2 Viborg-Hurley (2) 56 pts
3 Hamlin (1) 43 pts
4 Baltic 27 pts
5 Deuel 16 pts
Others: A/LP 9 pts, CWL 8 pts, Platte-Geddes 5 pts, Hanson 5 pts

9A
1 Canistota-Freeman (13) 87 pts
2 Sully Buttes (4) 66 pts
3 Britton-Heccla (2) 51 pts
4 Howard (1) 43 pts
5 Gregory 15 pts
Others: KWL 11 pts, Warner 10 pts, Burke 3 pts, DeSmet 3 pts

9B
1 Wolsey-Wessington (11) 85 pts
2 Colman-Egan (7) 66 pts
3 Colome 36 pts
4 Faulkton (1) 31 pts
5 DR St. Mary 22 pts
Others: Harding County 16 pts, Irene Wakonda 13 pts, Corsica-Stickney 5 pts,

Lyman football players present check to Burke

Prior to Friday's game between Lyman and Burke, the Lyman football team presented Burke with a check for \$5,098.91.

Earlier this month Burke was hit with an EF-1 tornado.

After the game, Burke's seniors walked over to the Lyman team to say 'Thank you!'

PC: @Brian_Haenchen



By Richard P. Holm, MD ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

Organ Donation: The Gift of Life

A dear physician friend of mine who practices in Florida developed renal (kidney) failure a few years ago at the age of 60. He was initially treated with peritoneal dialysis which involves repeatedly flushing special fluid into the abdominal cavity, letting it sit for a bit to remove poisons and then draining out the contaminated fluid, usually three times a week at night. Later, he moved to hemodialysis where blood is drained from his arm into a filtering machine where the blood is cleared of the same poisons and then pumped back into his blood stream. This is done usually three times a week taking four hours at a sitting.

It must be a burden to be required to do dialysis three days a week or more for something that most of us take for granted. Since a transplanted kidney is much cheaper than dialysis and is better on the body than dialysis, it would be preferable for most people to get a transplant. However, finding a transplant organ can be difficult. In the past year my friend has had at least four scheduled transplant dates, only to be turned down at the last minute. How frustrating that must be!

The National Kidney Foundation notes that more than 120,000 people in the U.S. are currently on the waiting list for an organ and 100,000 of these are for kidneys. Six thousand living and 12,000 cadaver kidneys are transplanted each year in this country while 20 people die every day waiting for an available organ.

Organs that are commonly transplanted from living or cadaver donors include kidney, liver, heart, lung, pancreas and even small intestine. Tissues include cornea, skin, heart valve, vein, tendon, ligament and bone. A healthy living donor may be related, or not, to the recipient.

It is a courageous and altruistic act of loving kindness to donate an organ so another person may live. To explore becoming a living donor go to organdonor.gov. This gift of life has remarkably minimal risk to the donor and, depending on the organ donated, usually means just a few days in the hospital. While you're thinking about it, TALK TO YOUR FAMILY about your intentions and mark "yes" as a potential donor on your driver's license.

Please consider organ donation, a most precious gift to someone in need, like my friend in Florida. It takes courage but you will save a life.

Richard P. Holm, MD is founder of The Prairie Doc® and author of "Life's Final Season, A Guide for Aging and Dying with Grace" available on Amazon. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPTV most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

We need our farmers.

We need them physically strong. We need them mentally strong.

Northeastern Mental Health Center is now offering counseling services for farmers and their families-**at no cost.**

With the current state of the industry, we understand that farm families can feel overwhelmed in times of stress, instability, and uncertainty.

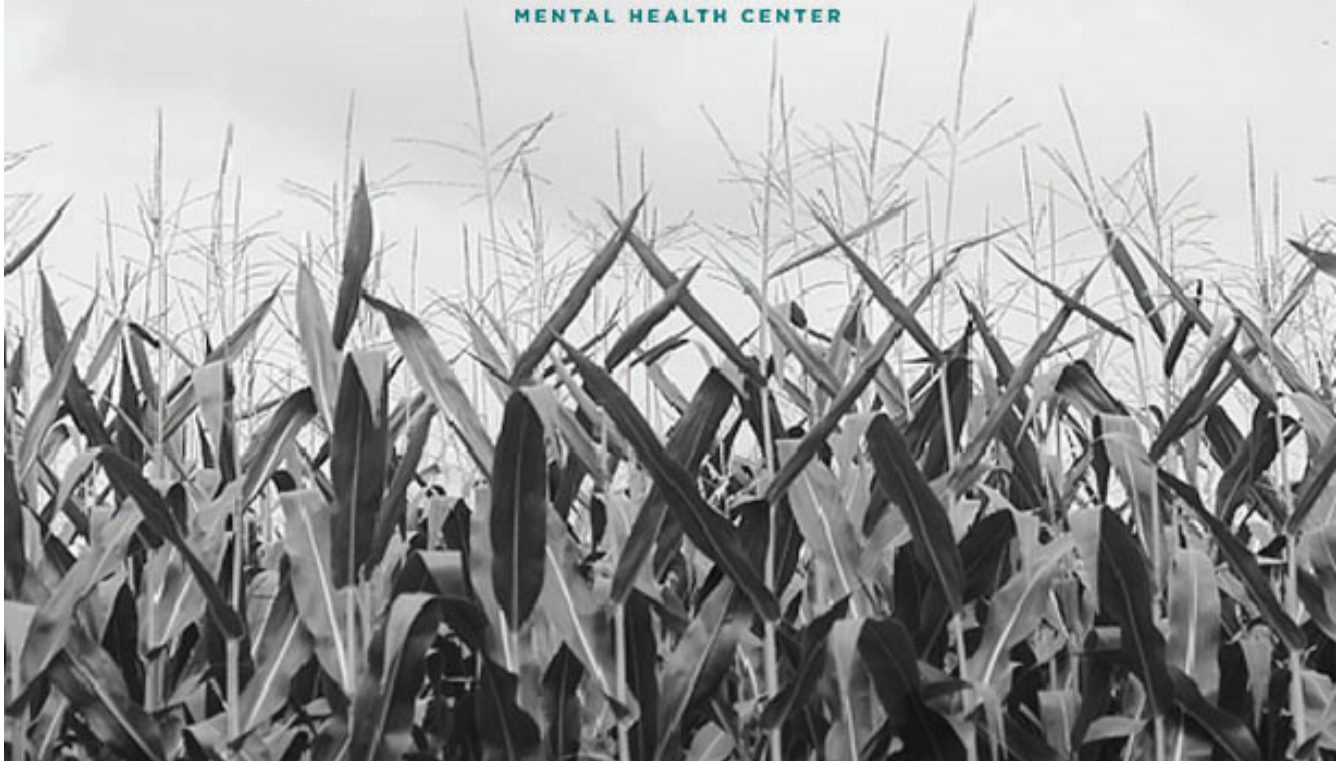
We're here to help.

Call 605-225-1010 for more information.

Northeastern Mental Health Center services the counties of Brown, Campbell, Day, Edmunds, Faulk, Marshall, McPherson, Potter, Spink and Walworth.



Northeastern
MENTAL HEALTH CENTER





*Adults and Students . . . come
learn what social issues are
involving our youth
in our community.*

Solutions **to** **Social Issues**

SPONSORED BY LOCAL CHURCHES

Youth Groups Welcome ~ Large Groups please RSVP 605/377-0709

Seminars are:

September 11 at United Methodist Church:

Drugs & Alcohol

October 9 at Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance Church:

Sex Trafficking and Date Violence


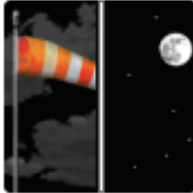



November 6 at Emmanuel Lutheran Church:

Suicide and Bullying

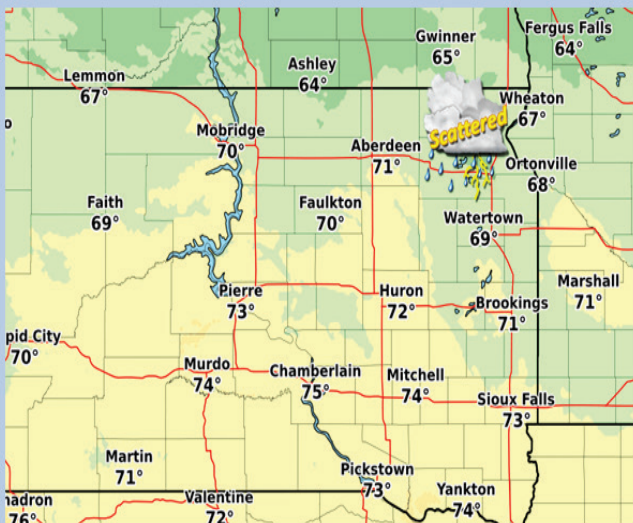
Light Meal at 5:45 p.m. ~ Seminar begins at 6:30 p.m.



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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
				
Increasing Clouds and Breezy	Decreasing Clouds and Breezy then Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny
High: 70 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 74 °F


High Temperatures Today




 National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD
 Windy Today 20 - 30 mph


Tonight

 45 to 55°

- Clear, cool, and dry 

Wednesday

 70 to 82°

-Sunny!
-Less Windy 

8/27/2019 5:50 AM

Published on: 08/27/2019 at 1:53AM

Northwest winds of 20 to 30 mph with higher gusts will bring cool temperatures into the area today with highs in the upper 60s, to the low 70s. Showers and thunderstorms will be possible this afternoon in northeastern South Dakota and Western Minnesota. The storms should dissipate shortly after sunset.

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Today in Weather History

August 27, 1983: High winds tore through Glenham and Wakpala, destroying several structures and damaging crops. The worst damage occurred in Glenham, in Walworth County, where two mobile homes were damaged, the roof of a school torn off, and trees limbs down. A tall TV antenna was blown over, and a boat was blown off a trailer. High winds also tore through the Bowdle area, downing power lines and tree limbs. Numerous roofs were also damaged.

August 27, 2013: Numerous severe thunderstorms brought large hail along with wind gusts from 60 to 90 mph to parts of north central and northeast South Dakota. Numerous trees were downed along with many structures damaged. Eighty mph winds near Polo in Hand County snapped off two large cottonwood trees. Ninety mph winds snapped numerous trees off at their base along with destroying a garage and tipping several campers over onto their side at Cottonwood Lake near Redfield.

1854: A tornado struck downtown Louisville around noon on Sunday, August 27th, 1854. It first touched down near 25th Street, southwest of downtown and lifted at the intersection of 5th and Main Streets. Although the tornado was only on the ground for a little over two miles, the twister claimed at least 25 lives. Many of those who perished were killed in the Third Presbyterian Church, where 55 people were gathered for Sunday church services. Straight-line winds that accompanied the tornado did significant damage to the Ohio River, where at least one boat sunk. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the NWS Office in Louisville, Kentucky.

1881: A Category 2 Hurricane made landfall between St. Simons Island and Savannah, Georgia, on this day. Landfall coincided with high tide and proved very destructive. The hurricane killed 700 people, including 335 in Savannah, making it the sixth deadliest hurricane in the United States.

1883: Krakatoa Volcano exploded in the East Indies. The explosion was heard more than 2500 miles away, and every barograph around the world recorded the passage of the airwave, up to seven times. Giant waves, 125 feet high and traveling 300 mph, devastated everything in their path, hurling ashore coral blocks weighing up to 900 tons, and killing more than 36,000 persons. Volcanic ash was carried around the globe in thirteen days producing blue and green suns in the tropics, and vivid red sunsets in higher latitudes. The temperature of the earth was lowered one degree for the next two years, finally recovering to normal by 1888.

1893: An estimated Category 3 hurricane made landfall near Savannah, Georgia on this day. This hurricane produced a high storm surge of 16 to 30 feet which cost the lives of 1,000 to 2,000 people. As of now, this storm is one of the top 5, deadliest hurricanes on record for the USA. 2005: Hurricane Katrina reached Category 3 intensity in the Gulf of Mexico about 335 miles south-southeast of the mouth of the Mississippi River with maximum sustained winds of 115 mph.

1964 - Hurricane Cleo battered Miami and the South Florida area. It was the first direct hit for Miami in fourteen years. Winds gusted to 135 mph, and the hurricane caused 125 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1970 - Elko, NV, was deluged with 3.66 inches of rain in just one hour, establishing a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Washington D.C. soared to a record hot 100 degrees, while clouds and rain to the north kept temperature readings in the 50s in central and southeastern New York State. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Afternoon thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the southwestern U.S. Thunderstorms in eastern New Mexico produced wind gusts to 75 mph near the White Sands Missile Range, and produced three inches of rain in two hours near the town of Belen. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in southeastern Nebraska, eastern Kansas and Missouri. Thunderstorms produced baseball size hail south of Belleville KS, and tennis ball size hail south of Lincoln NE. Thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail and wind gusts to 70 mph at Saint Joseph MO. Thunderstorms in North Dakota deluged the town of Linton with six inches of rain in one hour. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

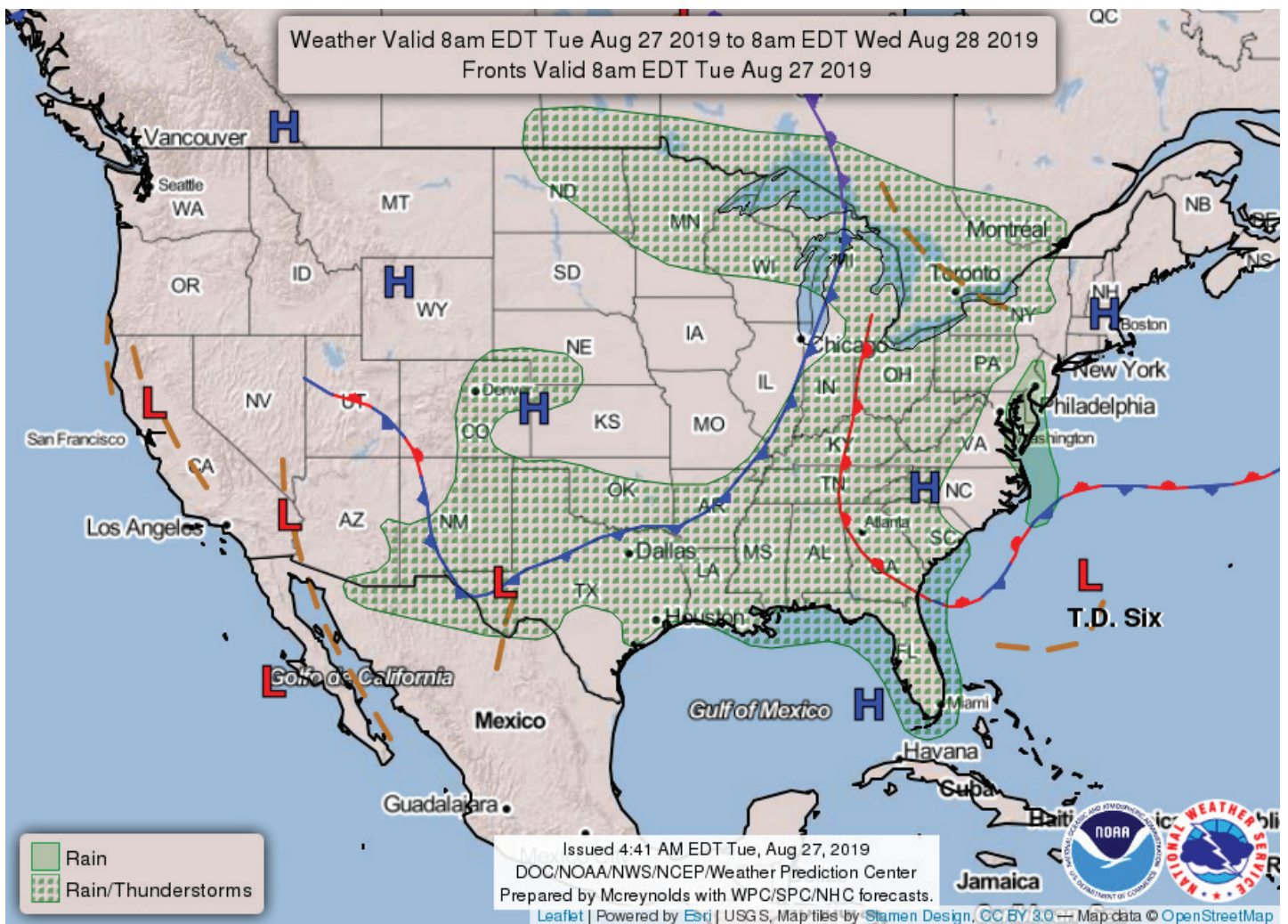
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 75 °F at 3:58 PM
Low Temp: 60 °F at 9:40 PM
Wind: 28 mph at 5:58 PM
Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 106° in 1973
Record Low: 38° in 1967
Average High: 80°F
Average Low: 54°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 2.04
Precip to date in Aug.: 3.01
Average Precip to date: 15.90
Precip Year to Date: 19.60
Sunset Tonight: 8:21 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:50 a.m.



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NOTHING TO CHANCE!

During World War II all Americans were cautious and vigilant about the things they said and did. They did not want to give the enemy any opportunity to gain an advantage that could harm our country.

One of the slogans was Your resolution will bring us victory! Being resolute - or determined, and not wavering in ones opinion, purpose or position - was one of the most quoted. It was a rallying cry that people took to heart because they could not entertain the possibility of defeat.

No wonder Solomon wrote, She watches over the affairs of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. He knew that the alternative of being slothful and compromising, inconsistent and careless, was a disaster. Watching is a full-time responsibility and an important priority for those God calls to be a faithful household administrator. No matter what other tasks or duties are part of her job description, this wife of noble character never allows her attention to be diluted or her mind to be diverted to less important items than her household responsibilities. She is thoroughly absorbed in the things that matter most.

Idleness does not imply that this wife would be one who watches soaps or spends her time foolishly tweeting or on Facebook. Not at all. It refers to a wife who believes strongly in the fact that whatever she has is a result of her faithfulness to her calling as a wife. She has joyously and graciously fulfilled her obligations as a wife, mother, household administrator, and witness of the love of God to all whom He brings into her life.

She is deserving of all of the blessings and benefits of God that she has received because of her untiring faithfulness to God and her fidelity to her husband, children, and community. Dads and children must always support and honor a godly mother.

Prayer: Father, we join our hearts and pray that You will bless those noble wives who serve You with distinction! May they be honored for their service to You! In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 31:27 She watches over the affairs of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12/2019 St. John's Lutheran Luncheon
- 09/20/2019 Presbyterian Luncheon
- 09/28/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 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 at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/26/2020 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m. Sharp (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/14/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

News from the Associated Press

Wirth, Raver seeking US House seat

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Two Democrats say they are running for the U.S. House seat currently held by South Dakota Republican Dusty Johnson.

A financial crime specialist from Dell Rapids, Brian Wirth, is treasurer of the Minnehaha County Democratic Party. He lost to state Sen. Kris Langer in District 25 last year.

The 36-year-old Wirth says he wants to bring attention to the problems of gerrymandering in his campaign. The Argus Leader says Wirth also wants to focus on Republicans' tax increases and Democrats' work to support health care and higher wages for residents.

Another Democrat, 32-year-old Whitney Raver of Custer, also says she is seeking to unseat Johnson. Raver lost in her bid to represent District 30 in the South Dakota House last year.

Johnson, in his first term in Congress, hasn't announced yet that's he seeking re-election.

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

Woman pleads guilty to killing stepfather with tire iron

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A woman has pleaded guilty to killing her stepfather in Wanblee by hitting him in the head with a tire iron.

Krystin Esther Spotted Calf pleaded guilty in federal court Friday to second-degree murder in the death of Jeffrey Lynn Janis Sr. The judge could sentence her up to life in prison.

The Rapid City Journal reports Spotted Calf also will have to pay restitution for killing Janis and attacking his son.

According to court documents, Spotted Calf hit her stepfather with a tire iron on Aug. 11, 2018, after the two argued at his home and he told her to leave. She then attacked Janis' son, injuring his head and scalp.

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

High school footballers clean up storm-hit South Dakota town

BURKE, S.D. (AP) — High school football players have been splitting their time between training and cleaning up debris after a tornado and straight line winds tore up their small South Dakota town.

Winds of up to 100 mph (160 kph) destroyed a lumberyard, mangled the civic center and injured two people in Burke on Aug. 6, authorities said. The Burke High School's gym and at least four classrooms were also damaged. But when Friday rolled around, the school's football team played its first game of the year in hopes of bringing the community together.

"Football isn't more important than community. It's not more important than life. But this is an opportunity for us to heal as a community. The people out there, they're waiting for you," coach Burke coach Mike Sebern told the Cougars before the game.

The Cougars won 46-8, Argus Leader reported.

Following the tornado, players spent their mornings practicing and cleaned debris in the afternoon.

"We're not just a community; we're a family," said volunteer firefighter Jason Mosterd. "Football brings the family back together each week."

On their way to the game, the players walked past a line of tree stumps and holes in the ground, some of which belonged to trees as old as the town itself.

For senior receiver/defensive back Jaden Frank, it was especially hard to witness the images of the high school gym, which will be unusable this season after the roof was torn off. Rain also damaged the hardwood floor, along with weightlifting equipment, band instruments and athletic gear.

"I've spent a lot of time in that gym and when I saw the damage, it took a toll on me," he said before Friday's game. "That's where we did basically everything and now it's gone."

But despite the losses, the team strives to inspire hope.

"We're Burke strong. We're Cougar strong," Frank said standing outside the firehouse, surveying the scene around him. "We'll get through this."

Depth chart of FCS power North Dakota State is a work of art

By DAVE KOLPACK Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — The most dominant team in the history of the Football Championship Subdivision has had turnovers in so many places — head coach, assistant coaches, quarterback and nearly 70% of its starting lineup.

It would seem that this year's playoff might be more than the race for second place. Except for the fact that defending champion North Dakota State's depth chart is a work of art.

The Bison, who have won seven of the last eight national championships, the most in FCS history, have been through this before. After winning the program's first three titles under coach Craig Bohl, the 2014 team entered the season having lost virtually its entire staff to Wyoming and 30 players, including quarterback Brock Jensen, to graduation. The Bison went 14-1 and won a fourth straight championship.

That's one reason why coach Brock Spack, who has built a formidable program at Illinois State, said he doesn't see a different outlook to this season.

"In the years I've been here, the names have changed on the back of the jersey, but the player looks the same every time we play North Dakota State," Spack said. "I don't think they're going to go far from their formula. I think they're set up to be very good for a long time."

Colgate coach Dan Hunt, who last year engineered a playoff victory over James Madison, the only other team to win an FCS crown during North Dakota State's run, said he believes the Dukes and South Dakota State have the talent to compete with the Bison.

That opinion comes with a caveat.

"They have a championship mindset and a championship culture," Hunt said of the Bison. "Nothing is guaranteed, but they are going to be the pre-eminent team on our level for some time. It's up to the other programs to try to catch up."

Bison coach Matt Entz, the team's former defensive coordinator, has replaced Chris Klieman, now at Kansas State. Entz responded quickly when asked if he planned any changes: "Nothing major at all."

"There might be a few wrinkles here and there but the things that have made Bison football special over the last 25 years are still here," Entz said. "I don't think the average fan would notice anything different. We're still going to run the football until we can't run it anymore."

Despite losing their top two rushers, Entz said running back is one of the team's deepest positions. Ty Brooks averaged 7.1 yards per run and Adam Cofield 6.9 a year ago. Dimitri Williams, making the transition from wide receiver, is listed as the No. 2 back and redshirt freshman Saybien Clark is in the mix along with true freshmen Jalen Bussey and Kobe Johnson, perhaps the fastest of all backs.

Freshman Trey Lance, who earlier this week was named the starting quarterback, averaged 10.2 yards a pop when he played two games under last year's new rule that allowed freshman to play four games and still keep their redshirts.

Lance, a highly touted recruit from Marshall, Minnesota, replaces three-time FCS champ and Los Angeles Chargers quarterback hopeful Easton Stick, who replaced two-time national champion and Philadelphia Eagles QB Carson Wentz, who replaced Jensen, a three-time division winner and Canadian Football League player. Entz said his new quarterback "needs to be the best Trey Lance he can be" and not worry about his predecessors.

"I'm just Trey Lance," he said. "If I can become as good as those guys one day that would be awesome."

The 6-foot-3, 231-pound Lance, a dual threat to run and throw, said he learned a lot from Stick but added that winning the starting job over Iowa State transfer Zeb Noland doesn't mean "I have arrived or

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anything like that.”

The Bison also bring back their quarterback on defense, linebacker Jabril Cox, an NFL draft prospect selected for several preseason honors. Cox led the team last year with 91 total tackles and added four sacks and four interceptions. He said he’s confident in the newcomers on the field.

“I think we reloaded pretty well and the young guys are ready for the test,” Cox said.

BEST OF THE REST?

The Bison, who open the season Aug. 31 against Butler at Target Field, home of the Minnesota Twins, were picked first in the American Football Coaches Association preseason poll, followed by James Madison, Eastern Washington, South Dakota State and UC Davis.

James Madison and South Dakota State’s fortunes could depend on quarterback play. Ben DiNucci of the Dukes threw for 16 touchdowns and ran for a team-high nine scores, but he threw 12 interceptions, including five in the playoff lost to Colgate. Redshirt freshman J’Bore Gibbs of South Dakota State mirrors Lance’s size and skillset — along with the lack of experience.

Eastern Washington, which lost to North Dakota State in the title game last season, is led by quarterback Eric Barriere, who took over in the sixth week and piled up 2,450 yards and 24 touchdowns passing and 606 yards and eight touchdowns on the ground.

AP Sports Writers John Kekis in Syracuse, New York, and Nick Geranios in Spokane, Washington, contributed to this report.

More AP college football: <https://apnews.com/Collegefootball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Former Sioux Falls dental bookkeeper ordered to repay \$100K

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The former bookkeeper for two Sioux Falls dental practices has been ordered to pay more than \$100,000 in restitution for embezzling from her former employer.

Cheryl Callies also was sentenced Monday to 90 days of jail time, which can be served with electronic monitoring. Callies also received a five-year suspended prison sentence.

Callies was accused of embezzling nearly \$122,000 from Montoya Dental Office before it became 10th Street Dental. She continued to work at the practice and embezzled more than \$8,000 after the business changed hands.

Prosecutors say Callies admitted adjusting payment records at the businesses in order to receive cash. The embezzlement occurred from 2011 to 2018.

KELO-TV reports court records say Callies told investigators she was stealing money for video lottery and because of “payday loans and loneliness.”

South Dakota Prep Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Prep Media football polls for the week of Aug. 26 are listed below, ranking the top-five teams in each class and for classes 11 B through 9B, last year’s ranking. First-place votes received are indicated in parentheses. The polls in 11AAA, 11AA and 11A are unchanged from the preseason edition.

⌘

Class 11AAA

1. Brandon Valley (22) 110
2. SF O’Gorman 70
3. SF Roosevelt 62
4. SF Washington 61
5. SF Lincoln 15

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Receiving votes: Watertown 8, Harrisburg 2, RC Central 1, Aberdeen Central 1.

Class 11AA

1. Pierre (22) 110
2. Yankton 74
3. Brookings 67
4. Huron 38
5. Mitchell 32

Receiving votes: Sturgis 6.

Class 11A

1. Tea Area (21) 107
2. Dakota Valley 63
3. Madison (1) 47
4. SF Christian 42
5. West Central 31

Receiving votes: Dell Rapids 25, Canton 15.

Class 11B

1. Bridgewater-Emery1Ethan (20)1-0 122 1
2. St. Thomas More (4) 1-0 104 2
3. Winner (2) 1-0 82 3
4. Mount Vernon4Plankinton 1-0 48 4
5. Sioux Valley 1-0 27 5

Receiving votes: Groton Area 4, Webster Area 2, Chamberlain 1.

Class 9AA

1. Bon Homme (25) 1-0 128 1
2. Hamlin 1-0 79 3
3. Viborg-Hurley (1) 1-0 71 2
4. Baltic 1-0 60 RV
5. Parker 1-0 20 NR

Receiving votes: ArlingtonRLake Preston 19, Deuel 9, Hanson 3, Platte-Geddes 1.

Class 9A

1. Sully Buttes (16)1-0 113 1
2. Canistota2Freeman (8) 1-0 111 2
3. Britton-Hecla (2)1-0 74 3
4. Howard 1-0 34 RV
5. Kimball5White Lake 1-0 24 5

Receiving votes: De Smet 21, Gregory 7, Warner 3, Wall 3.

Class 9B

1. Colome (11) 1-0 97 2
2. Colman-Egan (5) 1-0 89 5
3. Faulkton Area (5) 1-0 86 3
4. Wolsey-Wessington (2) 1-0 46 RV
5. Dell Rapids St. Mary (3) 1-0 41 RV

Receiving votes: Harding County 20, Corsica-Stickney 6, Faith 4, Irene-Wakonda 1.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, Aug. 23

Time to end Noem's 'reefer madness'

Every so often, a news story emerges from South Dakota that underscores the relative lack of enlightenment among state leadership. The fact that we've become accustomed to it doesn't mean it should continue.

The latest face palm occurred when a Minnesota hemp delivery driver was pulled over while transporting nearly 300 pounds of industrial hemp through South Dakota in July. He was arrested and charged with marijuana possession after a state trooper found two bags full of a "green leafy substance" that the driver was transporting from Denver to a processor in Minneapolis.

The Minnesota Hemp Association quickly called out South Dakota for violating the 2018 Farm Bill, which federally legalized industrial hemp to be used in products such as clothing, food and construction materials. Federal guidelines assert that states cannot prohibit interstate transportation of hemp that meets legal standards, including a low threshold of THC, the substance that produces the "high" associated with marijuana.

That's not a problem in most cases, since 47 states have passed laws to allow for industrial hemp cultivation and production, giving farmers an alternate crop and revenue source in challenging times.

Brace yourself for this: South Dakota is not one of those states. The reason is that Gov. Kristi Noem has a "reefer madness"-type fear that approving hemp is akin to legalizing mind-altering marijuana, which doesn't square with the facts.

Noem vetoed an industrial hemp bill passed by the state legislature last session, calling it "part of a larger strategy to undermine enforcement of the drug laws and make legalized marijuana inevitable."

Experts countered that the only inevitability was that hemp production will occur. It's simply a matter of whether South Dakota farmers will get passed over by tribal interests or producers in neighboring states, losing out on a chance to broaden their agricultural operations.

Legislators are keenly aware of that concern, as well as ongoing dispute over a state law that makes cannabidiol (CBD) oils and lotions an illegal narcotic in South Dakota. Lawmakers from both parties are studying the issue this summer in advance of the 2020 session in Pierre, when they're likely to make another run at a hemp-friendly statute.

This time, emboldened by further research and the realization that the clock is ticking on building the infrastructure for testing and processing, there could be enough support to override a veto from the governor's desk.

Of course, the state would be better served if Noem and her administration showed flexibility on a rapidly growing industry that has little effect on public safety compared to top-tier drug concerns such as opioids and meth.

At a time when many South Dakota farmers and ranchers are feeling the pinch, it's notable that a governor who ran on agricultural awareness would snuff out a potential revenue source due to a misplaced concern over drug enforcement.

Noem's contention that it could be "reckless to introduce a product that has serious implications on the health and safety of the next generation" is ironic considering her support for permit-less concealed carry of handguns, a measure that was opposed by law enforcement organizations.

It's difficult to pass significant legislation against the will of a governor, especially within the framework of South Dakota's single-party rule. Let's hope legislators studying the issue come armed with enough facts to persuade Noem to lower her resistance and become enlightened on this issue.

If that fails, it's probably time to let progress march on without her.

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Rapid City Journal, Aug. 25

Time has come for online registration

We pay our bills online, sign up for car insurance online, view our health records online, and file income tax returns online.

We should be permitted to register to vote online.

Residents of 38 states currently can do it, including our neighbors in Nebraska, Iowa and Minnesota.

Most of us are more concerned about our money than we are about our voter registration. If online transactions can be made safe for money, they can be made safe for voter registration.

That isn't to say that online voting is ready for prime time. There are simply too many nefarious Russians, North Koreans, Republicans, Democrats and Iranians to make online voting secure during an election-day rush.

Voter registration, however, where submitted information is electronically matched against official state IDs, is ready. Any submission that looks amiss can be set aside for human review.

The Legislature will weigh in on whether South Dakotans should be granted this convenience during the next session after the Secretary of State Office's Board of Elections recently recommended approval.

So far, all states that have opted for online voter registration continue to offer paper registration. If a resident does not have a valid ID, he would have to register in person, as voters do now.

Arizona was the innovator in paperless voter registration, implementing its system in 2002. Washington followed in 2008. Since then, more and more states have joined the trend.

According to a 2010 report, Arizona experienced a reduction in per-registration costs from 83 cents per paper registration to 3 cents per online registration. Other states also have experienced significant cost savings.

Online voter registration works, it saves money and it's convenient.

Will it increase voter turnout? At least one study says it can noticeably improve voter turnout among young people in presidential elections.

Increased voter turnout is crucial to the long-term survival of our democracy. Anything that reduces barriers to voting, provided elections remain secure, is a good thing.

The next step to consider will be same-day voter registration. Currently, 21 states plus the District of Columbia permit any qualified resident to register to vote and cast a ballot all in the same day. South Dakota should wait on this, making changes to its voter registration process deliberately and incrementally.

For now, online voter registration would be a welcome improvement.

Madison Daily Leader, Aug. 23

Small historical marker is removed this week

Without anyone noticing, a three-foot-square piece of concrete was removed this week as part of the reconstruction of SD-34 through Madison.

The concrete was part of the sidewalk on the east side of Washington Avenue near Kolorworks Paint & Decorating. In the corner of the square was stamped "WPA 1938." The slab had no cracks or other visible aging marks that would indicate that it was poured 81 years ago.

But we think it's worth revisiting that year to understand the stamp. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was a New Deal agency established to provide work and income to unemployed Americans during the Great Depression, while developing infrastructure to support the nation's future.

The WPA was established by Executive Order on May 6, 1935 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and led by Harry Hopkins, a close adviser to Roosevelt. To calculate the number of people the program would employ, administrators took the number of people on relief in 1935 (about 20 million), then subtracted children, the elderly, students and the incapacitated. Then they subtracted farm operators or others who they wanted to stay in their current occupations under other relief programs. The WPA allowed just one person per household to be employed by the agency, reducing the number to about 3.55 million.

The WPA reached its peak employment of 3.35 million in 1938, the year the sidewalk in Madison was

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constructed.

Other public works projects accompanied the WPA, and projects seemed to be everywhere. The Lake County Courthouse was one of seven constructed in South Dakota through the Public Works Administration. A sampling of WPA projects includes the governor's residence in Pierre, the Post Office in Flandreau and the Watertown stadium, the latter two still being used today.

Hundreds of South Dakota communities had a new park, bridge, road or school constructed by the agency. The first year's appropriation for the whole nation was \$4.9 billion; as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product, that amount would be about \$1.3 trillion today.

When we take a walk through older parts of town (especially the historic district north of downtown), let's look down at the sidewalk occasionally to look for WPA stamps. We can take a moment to remember the program that helped out our nation so much in both the short and the long terms.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. WHAT LIES AHEAD FOLLOWING OPIOID JUDGMENT

Oklahoma's \$572 million ruling against Johnson & Johnson will likely be followed by more trials and legal settlements.

2. IN MISSISSIPPI, CATHOLIC ABUSE CASES SETTLED ON CHEAP

A famed Catholic religious order settled sex abuse cases by secretly paying two black Mississippi men \$15,000 each and requiring them to keep silent, AP finds.

3. HOW TRUMP VIEWED G-7 SUMMIT

Despite differences with world leaders on China, trade, Russia, Iran and more, the U.S. president claimed "flawless" unity.

4. AMAZON FIREFIGHT A GRUELING MISSION

With hoses and machetes, Brazilian firefighters battle one blaze among many in the Amazon — a vast region described by world leaders as critical to the health of the planet.

5. UIGHUR CULTURE, LANGUAGE TESTED IN CHINA

More than 400 prominent Uighur academics, writers, performers and artists have been detained, advocacy groups say, a move critics equate to cultural genocide.

6. IRANIAN PRESIDENT NOT INTERESTED IN 'PHOTO OP'

Hassan Rouhani back-pedals on possible talks with Trump, saying the U.S. president must first lift sanctions imposed on Tehran before agreeing to meet.

7. EPSTEIN ACCUSERS GET DAY IN COURT

Up to 30 women are expected to take a judge up on his invitation to speak at a hearing after the financier killed himself before facing sex trafficking charges.

8. MISSISSIPPI VOTERS TO CHOOSE GOP NOMINEE FOR GOVERNOR

Both Gov. Phil Bryant and former Gov. Haley Barbour have endorsed Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves over retired state Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr.

9. WHO WON BIG, HONORED AT MTV VMAS

The MTV Video Music Awards pays tribute to Missy Elliott's creativity and influence, and Taylor Swift wins video of the year for "You Need to Calm Down."

10. NO DRAMA IN US OPEN ROUNDT

Serena Williams plays nearly perfect tennis and beats Maria Sharapova for the 19th straight time.

Iranian president: First lift sanctions, then let's talk

By NASSER KARIMI Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's president back-pedaled Tuesday on possible talks with Donald Trump, saying the U.S. president must first lift sanctions imposed on Tehran, otherwise a meeting between the two would be a mere photo op.

Hassan Rouhani's change of heart came a day after Trump said Monday that there's a "really good chance" the two could meet on their nuclear impasse after a surprise intervention by French President Emmanuel Macron during the G-7 summit to try to bring Washington and Tehran together after decades of conflict.

"Without the U.S.'s withdrawal from sanctions, we will not witness any positive development," Rouhani said in a televised speech on Tuesday, adding that Washington "holds the key" as to what happens next.

"If someone intends to make it as just a photo op with Rouhani, that is not possible," he said.

Earlier on Monday, Rouhani expressed readiness to negotiate a way out of the crisis following America's pullout from the nuclear deal.

"If I knew that going to a meeting and visiting a person would help my country's development and resolve the problems of the people, I would not miss it," he had said. "Even if the odds of success are not 90% but are 20% or 10%, we must move ahead with it. We should not miss opportunities."

Rouhani also shielded his foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, against criticism from hard-liners over his surprise visit Sunday to France's Biarritz, where leaders of the Group of Seven rich democracies were meeting.

Iran's English-language Press TV issued a vague, anonymous statement later on Monday, rejecting Macron's initiative.

Macron said he hoped Trump and Rouhani could meet within weeks in hopes of saving the 2015 nuclear deal that Tehran struck with world powers, but which the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from last year. Under the deal, Iran agreed to limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

Since the U.S. pullout from the nuclear deal, Iran has lost billions of dollars in business deals allowed by the accord as the U.S. re-imposed and escalated sanctions largely blocking Tehran from selling crude abroad, a crucial source of hard currency for the Islamic Republic.

Rouhani's U-turn can be seen as a result of pressure from hard-liners in the Iranian establishment who oppose taking a softer tone toward the West.

The hard-line Javan daily, which is close to Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard, warned Rouhani in large font on its Tuesday front page: "Mr. Rouhani, photo diplomacy will not develop the country."

G-7 summit achievement: Trump declares, 'We got along great'

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

BIARRITZ, France (AP) — Never mind his differences with world leaders on China, trade, Russia, Iran and more. President Donald Trump's takeaway message from the Group of Seven summit in France was "unity." In fact, "flawless" unity.

During this year's gathering of leaders of the world's wealthiest democracies, Trump went to great lengths to portray it as something of a lovefest, papering over significant disagreements on major issues.

"If there was any word for this particular meeting of seven very important countries, it was unity," Trump said at a news conference Monday closing out the two-day gathering in the French resort of Biarritz.

"We got along great," he said. "We got along great."

After Trump disrupted the last two G-7 summits with his erratic behavior, other world leaders seemed determined to play along this year in the interest of keeping any negative drama out of the headlines.

First came the decision by French President Emmanuel Macron, the summit host, to scrap the annual practice of issuing a lengthy joint statement, or communique, at the summit's conclusion.

The document typically spells out the consensus that leaders have reached on issues on the summit agenda and provides a roadmap for how they plan to tackle them.

Trump roiled the 2017 meeting in Italy over the climate change passage in that summit's final statement.

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And he withdrew his signature from the 2018 communique after complaining he had been slighted by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the host that year.

"I think it's against that background that Macron decided it's not worth it" to issue a statement, said Thomas Bernes, a distinguished fellow at the Center for International Governance Innovation in Canada.

Instead, the leaders issued a final "declaration" that began, "The G7 leaders wish to emphasize their great unity and the positive spirit of their debates."

Macron also sought to play down awkward differences and said that what the G-7 leaders were "really keen on was to convey a positive and joint message following our discussions."

The French leader stressed that everyone had worked "together, hand in hand, with President Trump over these two days."

For all of the happy talk, though, Trump came under pressure to end his lengthy trade dispute with China that is hurting other nations as well.

Macron said the dispute had served to "create uncertainty" that is "bad for the world economy."

Differences over Russia didn't stay hidden, either.

Trump, as he had before last year's summit, said he would like to see Russia re-admitted to the club. The former G-8 kicked Russia out after President Vladimir Putin annexed the Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

While his affinity for Russia has been questioned at home, Trump said Monday he'd prefer Russia be "inside the tent" rather than outside since so many of the issues the leaders discussed involved Russia.

Other members of the Group of Seven besides France, Canada, Italy and the U.S. are Britain, Germany and Japan.

Canada's Trudeau told reporters he had privately aired his objection to Russian readmittance.

"Russia has yet to change the behavior that led to its expulsion in 2014, and therefore should not be allowed back into the G-7," he said at a news conference.

For all the courting of Trump by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Trump wouldn't adopt Abe's position that short-range ballistic missile tests by neighboring North Korea violate U.N. resolutions.

Trump insisted that he and Abe were on the "same page" — but he appeared to defend the missile tests by North Korea's Kim Jong Un by saying a lot of other people were testing missiles, too.

"We're in the world of missiles, folks, whether you like it or not," he said.

Trump also claimed that "great unity" existed on Iran, but he largely just restated his long-held views about the country, some of them hardly shared.

France, Germany and other G-7 members are unhappy that Trump withdrew the U.S. from a 2015 international pact that eased sanctions on Iran in exchange for the Iranians agreeing to limit their nuclear program.

Trump said the biggest conclusion the leaders reached was that Iran "can't have nuclear weapons." Far from a breakthrough, that has been the world's position for decades.

Asked about his efforts to ensure that fighters for the Islamic State group be returned to their home countries across Europe rather than housed by the United States, Trump said during a meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel that the G-7 leaders had "a pretty good meeting." But then he allowed that they had "not reached a total conclusion."

"It's unfair for the United States to take them, because they didn't come from the United States," he complained.

Macron flicked at the challenges of smoothing over differences by reaching back in history.

Seeking to justify the role of mediator between Iran and the United States that Macron is carving out, the French leader quoted one of his predecessors, World War II hero Gen. Charles de Gaulle, who said, "Diplomacy is trying to hold together broken windows."

Follow Darlene Superville and Zeke Miller on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap> and <http://www.twitter.cokm/ZekeJMiller>

Missy Elliott honored at MTV VMAs; Swift wins top prize

By MESFIN FEKADU AP Music Writer

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — The incomparable career of Missy Elliott, the rapper-singer-songwriter-producer-dancer whose music videos have moved the needle over the last two decades, was honored at the 2019 MTV Video Music Awards, where Taylor Swift also took center stage with her gay pride anthem, "You Need to Calm Down."

Elliott earned the Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award and brought her colorful, eccentric and groundbreaking music videos to life, from "Work It" to "Lose Control," on Monday at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey.

She even sported the inflated trash bag she wore with confidence and charisma in the video for "The Rain (Supa Dupa Fly)" in 1997 during the performance.

"I've worked diligently for over two decades and I never thought I would be standing up here receiving this award," Elliott said.

The 48-year-old game-changer also dedicated her award to the dance community and said her music video inspirations included Janet Jackson, Madonna, Peter Dinklage and Busta Rhymes.

She also honored the late R&B icon Aaliyah, whom she was close to and collaborated with, during her acceptance speech. The 18th anniversary of Aaliyah's death was Sunday.

"Aaliyah, I love you. We miss you," Elliott said.

Other impressive performers Monday included former Fifth Harmony member Normani, who won for best R&B video and brought her recently praised "Motivation" video to life thanks to her skilled dance moves; Spanish singer Rosalia, who also danced with precision and won best Latin and best choreography awards; and rapper-singer Lizzo, who transformed into a gospel singer as she wowed the audience with the upbeat anthem "Good As Hell," her 2016 song that reached new heights this year. She also sang "Truth Hurts," which was released in 2017 but became a worldwide hit this year.

The VMAs, which took place in New Jersey for the first time, closed with a superb performance by artists who are from the Garden State — including Queen Latifah, Redman, Wyclef Jean, Naughty by Nature and Fetty Wap. Rapper-actor Ice-T, who has loudly represented the West Coast, introduced the performance and reminded the audience that he was born in Newark.

Swift kicked off the VMAs, going from eye-popping pop star to guitar-strumming singer-songwriter. She gave a colorful performance of "You Need to Calm Down" — which won video of the year — and later grabbed her guitar to sing the ballad "Lover," the title track from her album released Friday.

"I just want to say that this is a fan-voted award, so I first want to say thank you to the fans because in this video several points were made, so you voting for this video means that you want a world where we'll all be treated equally."

Swift and a number of cast members from the video appeared onstage to accept the honor. The video for "You Need to Calm Down," a song in which Swift calls out homophobes and her own haters, featured a number of famous faces, including Ellen DeGeneres, Laverne Cox, RuPaul and the cast of "Queer Eye." Before the video's release, Swift announced that she supported the Equality Act.

"You Need to Calm Down" also won the video for good honor. Todrick Hall, the multi-faceted entertainer who has appeared in some of Swift's videos, including "You Need to Calm Down," accepted the honor.

"If you're a young child that's out there watching this show who is different, who feels misunderstood, we've never needed you more than now to share your art, share your stories, share your truth with the world no matter what you identify as, who you identify as, who you love, this is such a beautiful place," said Hall, who co-executive produced the video.

Swift won three honors, tying with Ariana Grande and Billie Eilish for most wins of the night. Grande, named artist of the year, and Eilish, who won best new artist, didn't attend the VMAs. BTS also didn't attend the show, hosted by comedian and actor Sebastian Maniscalco, but they won two honors: best group and best K-pop.

Other winners included Cardi B, who took home best hip-hop for "Money"; Jonas Brothers' "Sucker" won best pop; "Senorita," which Shawn Mendes and Camila Cabello performed during the show, won best col-

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laboration and best cinematography; and the Chainsmokers and Bebe Rexha's "Call You Mine" won best dance.

Megan the Stallion, who performed during the pre-show, won best power anthem with her new hit, "Hot Girl Summer," featuring Ty Dolla \$ign and Nicki Minaj.

Lil Nas X and Billy Ray Cyrus' "Old Town Road," the longest-running No. 1 song in the history of the Billboard Hot 100 chart, won song of the year and best direction.

"This is my first award ever," the 20-year-old newcomer said.

Brazilian firefighters toil in Amazon region hazy with smoke

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO and CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA Associated Press

JACUNDA NATIONAL FOREST, Brazil (AP) — Equipped with hoses connected to rubber backpacks, Brazilian firefighters in the Amazon on Monday raced in a truck along dirt roads toward plumes of smoke after a spotter in a military helicopter directed them to a fast-spreading fire.

A landowner opened the gate of a barbed wire fence and the firefighters set to work, dousing a conflagration they believed was intentionally set to prepare land for crops or pasture. When their water supply ran out, they made a fire break, clearing brush with machetes and chainsaws to starve the blaze of its fuel.

The smoke-shrouded scene near the lush Jacunda national forest in the Amazonian state of Rondonia, witnessed by an Associated Press team, showed the enormity of the challenge ahead: putting out a multitude of blazes and safeguarding — in the long term — a vast region described by world leaders as critical to the health of the planet.

The country's National Space Research Institute, which monitors deforestation, has recorded that the number of fires has risen by 85% to more than 77,000 in the last year, a record since the institute began keeping track in 2013. About half of the fires have been in the Amazon region, with many in just the past month.

At a summit in France, the Group of Seven nations pledged \$20 million on Monday to help fight the flames in the Amazon and protect the rainforest, in addition to a separate \$12 million from Britain and \$11 million from Canada.

The international pledges came despite tensions between European countries and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who has accused rich countries of treating the region like a "colony" and suggested the West is angling to exploit Brazil's natural resources.

But the funds, which are widely seen as critical support, are still a relatively meager amount for dealing with an environmental crisis that threatens what French President Emmanuel Macron has called "the lungs of the planet."

The AP team drove for hours at a stretch outside the Rondonia capital of Porto Velho without seeing any major fires, suggesting that many had been extinguished or burned themselves out since rapidly spreading in recent weeks. Many fires were set in already deforested areas to clear land for farming and livestock.

Still, smoke billowed from charred fields and scrub, shrouding the sky. The airport in Porto Velho closed for more than one hour on Monday morning because of poor visibility caused by the haze.

Under international pressure to act, Bolsonaro said he might visit the Amazon region this week to check on firefighting efforts and would make 44,000 troops available to fight the blazes. However, the military presence in the area seemed scarce on Monday, with only a few soldiers seen patrolling roads and lending a hand.

At dawn, the blazing sun was hidden under thick smoke that blanketed the horizon like fog. Trucks carrying fresh timber sped through a road that cut through lands where heaps of ash were piled around charred logs.

Some local residents seemed torn between knowing that the fires were devastating the environment around them, and needing to extract the Amazon's rich natural resources to make a living.

"We have to preserve the land. The government has to help small farmers more, prioritize and take care of the large reserves, where people do most of the illegal things," said Willian Sabara Dos Santos, a farm

manager. Behind him, a Brazilian flag on a pole fluttered in the wind next to a statue of a bull that he said was a replica of the iconic "Charging Bull" sculpture on New York's Wall Street.

In a nearby village, Darcy Rodrigo De Souza walked barefoot into a shop where people drank coffee and ate Pao de Queijo, traditional Brazilian cheese bread, on a street named "New Progress."

"We have many problems with the fires. But we also depend on the wood for our economy. If it wasn't for that, there would be nothing," said De Souza, who wore a straw hat. "It's true that the Amazon has to be protected, but this president is going to protect it. The Americans want us to protect Brazil. But why don't they protect their stuff?"

About 60% of the Amazon region is in Brazil; although the vast forest also spans parts of Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru and Suriname. The Amazon's rainforests are a major absorber of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and described by environmentalists as a critical defense against climate change.

On Monday, army Maj. Fabio da Paixão Pinheiro said officials have determined that the fires around Porto Velho have decreased as a result of rains over the last couple of days.

But near the Jacunda national forest, thunder boomed as firefighters worked to suffocate flames that continued to burn into the evening.

One fireman prayed for rain as he put on a protective mask. All around him, the heavy smell of burning wood permeated the air, making it hard to breathe.

Associated Press writer Luis Andres Henao reported from Jacunda National Forest and AP writer Christopher Torchia reported from Rio de Janeiro.

Scores of accusers to speak at hearing after Epstein's death

By TOM HAYS and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Up to 30 women were expected to take a judge up on his invitation to speak at a hearing after financier Jeffrey Epstein killed himself before facing sex trafficking charges.

The hearing Tuesday morning was scheduled last week by U.S. District Judge Richard Berman, who presided over the case prosecutors brought against Epstein after the 66-year-old convicted felon was arrested July 6 after he arrived at a New Jersey airport from Paris.

A New York City coroner has formally classified the death a suicide. He died Aug. 10.

The judge set the hearing after prosecutors asked that he scrap charges against Epstein since the defendant is dead. Berman said he would give prosecutors, Epstein lawyers and any victims a chance to speak.

Since the hearing was scheduled, it was revealed that Epstein signed a will just two days before his suicide putting over \$577 million in assets into a trust fund. The will, filed in the Virgin Islands where Epstein maintained a residence, was expected to make it more difficult for dozens of accusers to collect damages.

Epstein had pleaded not guilty to sex trafficking charges and was held without bail, accused of sexually abusing women in the early 2000s at mansions in Manhattan and Florida.

Since his death, an angry Attorney General William Barr has vowed that anyone who aided Epstein in sex trafficking will be pursued in a continuing investigation.

He also removed the acting director of the Bureau of Prisons from his position, placed two guards who were supposed to be watching Epstein the morning he died on administrative leave and temporarily re-signed the warden to the Metropolitan Correctional Center.

Barr has said officials had uncovered "serious irregularities" and was angry that staff members at the federal lockup had failed to "adequately secure this prisoner."

At the time of his death, Epstein was preparing through his lawyers to argue in court papers due in September that he could not be prosecuted because he signed a no-prosecution deal with prosecutors a dozen years ago in Florida. Prosecutors in New York said that deal did not prevent the new charges. Epstein signed it before he pleaded guilty to Florida state charges in 2008, admitting sexual relations with teenage girls under the age of consent.

The suicide happened despite a warning in late July when Epstein was found on the floor of his cell with bruises to his neck. After Epstein died, Berman asked the jail's warden for answers about that episode, saying it had never been "definitively explained."

Epstein spent a few days under suicide watch but then was transferred back to a cell in a Special Housing Unit where he had a cellmate. Eventually, though, the cellmate was taken out and he was left alone.

In Mississippi Delta, Catholic abuse cases settled on cheap

By MICHAEL REZENDES Associated Press

GREENWOOD, Mississippi (AP) — The IHOP in Southhaven, Mississippi, was an unlikely place to settle a sex abuse claim against the Catholic Church. But in January a white official from the Franciscan religious order slid into a booth across from a 35-year-old black man and offered to pay him \$15,000 to keep years of alleged abuse by another Franciscan secret.

The Rev. James G. Gannon, the leader of a Wisconsin-based group of Franciscan Friars, arrived at the crowded pancake house with copies of a legal settlement for La Jarvis D. Love, who had arrived with his wife and three young children.

As La Jarvis skimmed the four-page agreement, his thoughts flickered back more than two decades to the physical and sexual abuse he says he suffered at the hands of a Franciscan Friar at a Catholic grade school in Greenwood. He told Gannon he wasn't sure \$15,000 was enough.

"He said if I wanted more, I would have to get a lawyer and have my lawyer call his lawyer," La Jarvis recently told The Associated Press. "Well, we don't have lawyers. We felt like we had to take what we could."

La Jarvis considered his mounting bills, his young family and, with his wife's consent, signed the agreement, dating it Jan. 11, 2019.

Then Gannon announced it was time to eat.

"He was all smiles then," La Jarvis said.

At the time, La Jarvis didn't understand that the agreement he signed is unusual in several respects. It includes a confidentiality requirement, even though American Catholic leaders have barred the use of non-disclosure agreements in sex abuse settlements.

In addition, the amount of money Gannon and the Franciscans offered is far less than what many other sex abuse victims have received through legal settlements with the Catholic Church. In 2006, the Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi, settled a handful of lawsuits with 19 victims, 17 of whom were white, for \$5 million and an average payout of more than \$250,000 for each survivor. More recent settlements have ranged even higher, including an average payment of nearly \$500,000 each for abuse survivors in the St. Paul-Minneapolis archdiocese.

La Jarvis and two of his cousins, who have also reported that they were abused at Greenwood's St. Francis of Assisi School, differ from most victims with sex abuse claims against the church because they are black, desperately poor and, until recently, never had a lawyer to argue their case.

The abuse they say they endured at the hands of two Franciscans, Brother Paul West and Brother Donald Lucas, included beatings, rape, and other sexual violations beginning when they were nine and 10 years old.

The Franciscans tried to settle with one of La Jarvis's cousins, Joshua K. Love, by offering to pay him up to \$10,000 to cover the cost of a used car, maintenance and insurance. Joshua, who has limited reading and writing skills, rejected the offer but later signed a confidential agreement for \$15,000 — something he now regrets.

"They felt they could treat us that way because we're poor and we're black," Joshua said of the settlements he and La Jarvis received.

Catholic officials have been promising to end the cover-up of clergy abuse for nearly two decades. In 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, pledging to respond to abuse allegations in an "open and transparent" manner. And earlier this year, Pope Francis issued a new church law requiring Catholic officials worldwide to report sexual abuse — and the cover-up of abuse — to their superiors.

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But the confidential deals the Franciscans reached with La Jarvis and Joshua show that, in some cases, the American church continues efforts to limit financial fallout and keep sexual abuse under wraps — as it did in the years before 2002 when settlements with victims were routinely arranged in secret for small sums of money.

Gannon, during interviews with the AP, said he believes that both La Jarvis and Joshua were abused and acknowledged that the settlements are less than generous.

"We've hurt them tremendously and no amount of money would ever account for what happened to them," he said.

Asked if the Loves' race or poverty had anything to do with the size of the settlements they were offered, Gannon said: "Absolutely not."

Gannon also said the Franciscans have no intention of enforcing the confidentiality clauses, noting that La Jarvis and his cousins have discussed the settlements among themselves.

"There is no confidentiality," he said. As for why the non-disclosure agreements were included, in violation of the American bishops' 2002 charter, he said, "The lawyers put it in there. I can't give you a good answer on that."

West declined to answer questions for this story, and Lucas died in 1999. The Jackson diocese, for its part, has found the allegations against West and Lucas "credible" and has notified the local district attorney.

The Mississippi Delta stretches nearly 250 miles, from Memphis in the north to Vicksburg in the south. It is 40 miles wide, uniformly flat, and etched by rows of cotton, soybeans and corn, all running to a distant, sweltering horizon.

Near its heart lies Greenwood, a small city of 15,000 with a legacy that looms far larger. It was a flash-point during the voter registration drives of the civil rights movement, and the Delta is where guitar legend B.B. King and other blues players got their start.

It is also a place where the conditions that gave rise to the blues continue to haunt everyday life: racism, unemployment, despair, and a more recent scourge — drugs.

La Jarvis, Joshua and Joshua's brother Raphael grew up in a neighborhood known as Baptist Town, a collection of humble, single-story houses due east of the city center, literally on the other side of the tracks. Often, more than 10 people in their extended family were crowded into their three-bedroom home.

Among them was their grandmother, family matriarch Lou Alice Bolden. Known as "Miss Lou," Bolden was born a Baptist but converted to Catholicism in 1964, after a Franciscan missionary baptized her infant son at a local hospital.

The Franciscan order was established in the early 13th century by St. Francis of Assisi to evangelize and work among the poor. Franciscan Friars based in Wisconsin have been traveling to Mississippi in their trademark brown robes and sandals to fulfill that mission among the Delta's black citizens since the early 1950s.

Like other religious order priests and brothers, the Franciscan Friars report to their order's leaders in the U.S. and at the Vatican. While they don't answer directly to local diocesan bishops, they are subject to bishops' authority and direction in parish work.

Just 3% of American Catholics are black but the percentage in Mississippi is higher, in part because of missionary work by the Franciscans. The church lists 26 parishes in the Jackson Diocese, out of 101, where blacks have a significant presence.

All of Miss Lou's five children were baptized by Franciscans and attended St. Francis of Assisi School and Church, on the order's compound out on Highway 82. It was the same with her nine grandchildren.

"I wanted a positive life for them," said Miss Lou, now 78.

But a positive life eluded her family, as joblessness and the Delta's crack cocaine epidemic stalked it throughout the 1990s. Back then, it was often up to Miss Lou, then an orderly at Greenwood Leflore Hospital, to cover tuition and pay for school uniforms for her grandchildren.

Times were especially hard when La Jarvis and Joshua were fourth and fifth graders. At the time, Joshua's mother was addicted to drugs, living on the streets of Greenwood, and his father had drifted away from home.

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The family's hardships presented a perfect opportunity for a sexual predator.

When Brother Paul West or Brother Donald Lucas offered to pay La Jarvis or Joshua pocket money to work weekends at the Franciscans' Greenwood compound —doing yard work or cleaning up the church and school — it seemed like an act of generosity.

The boys would alternate weekends, so they were never working together. Often, West ended the day with a meal at McDonald's or Pizza Hut. And he sometimes drove one of boys home with a stack of pizzas for the entire family. Raphael, five years younger than his brother, Joshua, would cry because he wasn't yet asked to work at the compound.

West "made it seem like it was really good but it was really bad," said Joshua.

West, then his fourth-grade teacher and later the school principal, encouraged Joshua by telling him he was a good student with a bright future. But this classic grooming soon led to sexual assaults, Joshua said.

As a matter of routine, Joshua said, West would take him to the empty school cafeteria, where he would order him to drop his pants and bend over a railing while he "whipped" him.

On some occasions, Joshua said, West asked whether he preferred to be beaten or molested. "He gave me the option to whup me or play with my penis," he said.

La Jarvis recalls similar experiences. Once, he said, West took him into the men's room at the school, took out his penis and told La Jarvis to hold it while he urinated.

"He was bold to do something in the open like that," La Jarvis said, adding that West also showed him child pornography on a computer in his office.

"It was a grown man with a little boy. He was trying to make me think this is how it should be," La Jarvis explained.

Sometime in 1995, when Joshua was in fifth grade and La Jarvis was in sixth, Lucas arrived at St. Francis. He began working as a cook and quickly took an interest in Joshua.

In contrast to West's aggression and violence, Lucas was gentle and reassuring, the cousins said. "He asked us questions about — like what's Brother Paul doing to you all?" Joshua recalled.

Soon, however, Lucas was also having his way with Joshua.

The cousins say the abuse by West continued during summer excursions to Wisconsin, where the Greenwood Franciscans were based, and to Centerport, New York, the site of a summer camp established by the Franciscans in the late 1800s.

During one of those trips, Joshua said, West was teaching him to float on his back in a motel swimming pool when he suddenly pushed his head under water. After he came up gasping, Joshua said, West threatened to drown him if he ever told anyone he was being sexually assaulted.

West drove the Love boys to Wisconsin, again alternating among them so they were never there together, to live with white, middle class families for a few weeks and escape their troubles back home.

La Jarvis remembers these trips fondly, even though, he said, West continued to molest him there. "I had a lot of good experiences in Wisconsin. Paul West was not one of them," he said.

La Jarvis also said he treasures memories of a summer visit to Camp Alvernia, the Long Island summer camp established by the Franciscans, although he believes West drugged him and molested him on the way there and back.

For the long drive home to Greenwood, La Jarvis said, West brought Joshua along for the ride and, during a motel stop, told the boys he wanted to watch them having sex with each other.

"I don't remember if we did," La Jarvis said. "I don't want to remember."

In 1998 Raphael was in the fourth grade at St. Francis, and La Jarvis and Joshua were no longer students there. It was his turn, Raphael said, to work weekends at the compound — and be molested by West.

Unlike his older brother and his cousin, who waited until two years ago to report their alleged molestations, Raphael told his family and church authorities about West while the abuse was taking place.

According to a Greenwood police report provided to the AP by the Jackson diocese, Raphael was working at the compound on a Sunday after Mass in August of 1998 when he visited a rest room. That's when

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"Brother Paul came in and showed him some nude pictures of men and women, and then started to play with himself and also played with Raphael's private parts."

Stephen J. Carmody, an attorney who represents the diocese, told the AP that the diocese also reported Raphael's claim to the state Department of Human Services and arranged for Raphael to be evaluated by a therapist.

But apparently neither the police nor the diocese discovered the alleged abuse of La Jarvis and Joshua. Greenwood Police Chief Ray Moore told the AP that he could not find any record showing that police investigated the 1998 report. He said his department has been unable to locate "any kind of case file" or even the original copy of the police report.

"I have no explanation for that," he said.

By the time Raphael stepped forward with his allegations, he had lost two father figures: His grandfather, Eugene, and a neighbor who often rewarded him for good grades with the change in his pockets. A year later, his biological father, never a strong presence in his life, was murdered. Then, in 2002, when he was 13, his mother, Linda Faye Love, was stabbed to death on the streets of Greenwood.

After moving to Memphis to live with an aunt when he was 16, Raphael was home with her one evening when teenagers from another neighborhood drove by shooting. Raphael recognized the assailants and went after them. He drove with friends to confront them, and then shot into a crowd of young people, killing two bystanders. A jury convicted him of murder and gave him a double life sentence.

Terence McKiernan, president of BishopAccountability.org, an organization that helps survivors and maintains a data base of Catholic abusers, said it's not unusual for church sex abuse victims to land in prison, although their stories are seldom told.

"Because of what's happened to them, they use drugs, hate authority, get into trouble, and before you know it they're behind bars," he said. "It's an unpleasant fact that many, including some in the survivor movement, choose to ignore."

Mark Belenchia, a clergy abuse survivor and Mississippi leader of SNAP — the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests — said the lack of action on Raphael's 1998 abuse claim amounts to "a tragedy for several families."

If police or the diocese had investigated further, he said, "They would have discovered that two other boys in the same family had been abused. And if Raphael had gotten the help he needed, two young people in Tennessee might not have been killed, and Raphael might not be serving two life sentences."

Belenchia said he hopes attention devoted to the Loves will encourage other black survivors of abuse by Catholic authority figures to step forward and tell their stories. At a recent national conference held by SNAP in Arlington, Virginia, attendees noted the lack of black representation at the event and voiced concern that many African Americans abused by priests are not being heard or getting the support they need.

Even though Raphael's 1998 report of abuse was never thoroughly investigated, the Franciscans recalled Brother West from Mississippi later that year and had him evaluated at the St. Louis Behavioral Medicine Institute, Gannon said. The following year, in 1999, Brother Lucas was found dead at St. Francis Church, an apparent suicide.

Gannon, who is formally known as the provincial minister for the Franciscan Friars of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, would not share the results of West's evaluation. But he said West asked to leave the order and that the Vatican granted his request in 2002.

After that, Gannon said, the Franciscans lost touch with West, to the point where Gannon had to hire a private detective to find the former Friar two years ago, so he could let him know about the abuse allegations made by La Jarvis and Joshua.

But the AP found that in 2000, while West was still a Franciscan, he landed a job teaching fifth grade at a Catholic school near his home in Appleton, Wisconsin, about a two-hour drive from the Franciscans' regional headquarters in suburban Milwaukee.

West held his teaching job at St. John School in the village of Little Chute until at least 2010, according to records reviewed by the AP. School principal Kevin Flottmeyer declined to comment on West's tenure.

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When the AP tried to interview West at his home, the 59-year-old former friar declined to answer questions about his time as a teacher and principal in Mississippi.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said, before closing his front door.

In 2014, La Jarvis got married. His wife landed a steady job at a home for adults with special needs, and the couple soon had three children. When his wife's mother died, the young family moved into her three-bedroom home in Senatobia, Mississippi, a suburb of Memphis.

Suddenly, La Jarvis looked a lot like a middle-class family man. But he didn't feel that way. Often, while his wife worked, he'd stay home to care for their children and wonder why he wasn't able to provide more reliable support for his family.

He tried landscaping but never had enough money to keep his mowers and his car running. At times he resorted to robbery and selling drugs and served prison time for those offenses.

Then, late in 2017, when the news was full of stories about comedian-actor Bill Cosby and the sexual abuse charges he faced, La Jarvis decided it was time to tell someone about West. "I was just sitting here looking at my children," he said, recalling the moment when he picked up the phone and notified officials at St. Francis of Assisi School.

After making the call, La Jarvis was referred to Gannon, who traveled to Mississippi to meet him at his home. And before long, Gannon was sending him money for therapy and transportation to see a therapist.

After a notice about La Jarvis's allegation was published in the St. Francis Church bulletin, Joshua stepped forward with his accusations about West and Lucas. Then La Jarvis, during a phone call with Raphael, learned that his younger cousin had reported his alleged abuse two decades earlier.

That's the first time, the three Love men said, that they realized their family had been targeted — that all three of them had been abused.

For Joshua, the realization was especially painful, he said, because he understood that his years of silence had led to his younger brother's abuse, contributing to Raphael's life of tragedy.

"That's a dagger in the heart," Joshua said, breaking down.

Of the three Love men, Raphael alone turned down the offer of a settlement from the Franciscans. He told the AP that Gannon had also offered him \$15,000, but that he rejected the deal because he needs more to hire a criminal lawyer willing to argue that he deserves a new trial — based on the fact he was tried as an adult, even though he was a juvenile who'd suffered multiple traumatic events.

Law enforcement officials in at least four jurisdictions, meanwhile, are reviewing the sexual abuse allegations against West made by La Jarvis, Joshua and Raphael.

They include the Mississippi attorney general's office; the district attorney's office in Leflore County, which includes Greenwood; the district attorney's office in Milwaukee County, which includes Franklin, headquarters of the Wisconsin Franciscans; and the district attorney's office in Outagamie County, Wisconsin, which includes West's Appleton home and locations where the Loves say he molested them.

Milwaukee District Attorney John T. Chisholm would not discuss details of his review but said his office is devoting more attention to sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, in part because the Vatican has yet to take specific measures to address the issue.

"It hasn't been addressed in a comprehensive, thorough, transparent way," Chisholm said. "And because of that there's always going to be that sense of what else it out there? What's been hidden?"

John F. Hawkins, a civil attorney who represented victims in the 2006 settlement with the Jackson diocese, said he's preparing to file a lawsuit on behalf of La Jarvis and Joshua, in which he will argue that the settlements they signed are not legally binding, in part because of the "extreme emotional and financial duress" they were under at the time they agreed to the deals.

Hawkins will be working against a backdrop of a Franciscan settlement much larger than the \$15,000 payments received by La Jarvis and Joshua. In 2006, a Franciscan province based in Santa Barbara and the Los Angeles diocese paid \$28 million to settle claims made by 22 victims, with an average payment of nearly \$1.3 million.

The Jackson diocese also played a role in negotiating the settlements with La Jarvis and Joshua. Valerie

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McClellan, a therapist and the victim assistance coordinator, accompanied Joshua to his first negotiating session with Gannon.

Joshua said McClellan encouraged him to settle with Gannon, although she denies telling him that and said she maintained appropriate boundaries between her two roles as victim assistance coordinator and Joshua's therapist. But Belenchia said it was a conflict of interest for McClellan to be on the scene in any capacity. "I don't know how she could serve the diocese and serve a client at the same time," he said.

For the time being, La Jarvis says he's looking for help that will allow him to become more of "a rock" for his family.

"I'd love to be financially stable but I want to be mentally stable and emotionally stable, too," he said.

Joshua, meanwhile, offers discount haircuts to friends and family in the three-room shotgun shack in Greenwood that he calls home. He said he's been unable to get a barber's license because he doesn't read or write well enough to pass the exam.

When he's not cutting hair, he said, he spends time alone on his front porch, sitting at what he calls his "thinking chair," a classroom desk and attached chair he recently salvaged from a dumpster.

"I just fell in love with the chair because it makes me feel like I'm still happy," he said, recalling his early grade school years, before West and Lucas interrupted his life.

"It's a school chair and I've been hurt by wanting to learn and go to school," he added, breaking down again. "I guess there's a child inside of me that still wants to sit there and learn."

AP investigative researcher Randy Herschaft in New York contributed to this report.

Follow Associated Press investigative reporter Michael Rezendes at <https://twitter.com/mikerezendes>

China ban on some textbooks seen as aimed at Uighur culture

By **DAKE KANG** Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — For 15 years, Yalqun Rozi skillfully navigated state bureaucracies to publish textbooks that taught classic poems and folk tales to millions of his fellow minority Uighurs in China's far western region of Xinjiang.

That all changed three years ago when the ruling Communist Party launched what it says is a campaign against ethnic separatism and religious extremism in Xinjiang. Suddenly even respected public figures like Rozi were being arrested, caught up in a crackdown that critics have said amounts to cultural genocide.

An estimated 1 million Uighurs have since been detained in internment camps and prisons across the region, and advocacy groups say that includes more than 400 prominent academics, writers, performers and artists. Critics say the government is targeting intellectuals as a way to dilute, or even erase, the Uighur culture, language and identity.

After being taken away by police in 2016, Rozi, 54, was sentenced to more than a decade in prison on charges of incitement to subvert state power.

As one of the first prominent people to be detained, Rozi's story illustrates how even Uighurs who toed the party line and were accepted by the government have been rebranded enemies of the state amid the widening campaign of surveillance and detention underway in Xinjiang.

"He had many friends among government officials. He was able to use his connections to sell his books," said Abduweli Ayup, a linguist who knew Rozi through a Uighur bookstore Ayup once ran. "Those books sold very well."

China's 11 million Uighurs are culturally, linguistically and religiously distinct from the country's overwhelmingly ethnic Han majority, who have increasingly migrated to the resource-rich region and occupy most of the well-paid jobs and powerful government positions. Uighurs speak a Turkic language and many are practicing Muslims.

For decades, Uighur intellectuals maneuvered carefully, working to advance their culture while avoiding being tarred as separatists or extremists. They thrived even as the government periodically relaxed and

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tightened its grip on the region.

Rozi's friends, family, and former classmates describe him as sharp, disciplined and very careful, standing out for his political and business savvy. As a college student in the 1980s, he stayed away from the pro-democracy movements that were roiling China and avoided socializing with known activists.

He shot to fame among Uighurs after tangling with famous writers, winning people over during heated debates on television. He cultivated ties with state officials that allowed him to write on sensitive topics like Islam and Uighur identity.

Rozi urged his people to become educated to counter stereotypes of Uighurs as backward, exotic or extremist.

"It seemed like on TV and in state propaganda, all we did was sing and dance," Rozi's son Kamaltürk Yalqun said from Philadelphia, where he and other family members live in exile. "My father didn't like this label. He wanted us to become entrepreneurs, scientists, intellectuals."

When the government tapped Rozi in 2001 to head a committee in charge of compiling Uighur literature textbooks, he leapt at the chance.

He and his family moved into a housing compound with Xinjiang Education Press editors and schooling officials, debating world events over dinner with others in the tight-knit community of Uighur scholars and writers. Rozi kept a large study overflowing with books, shutting himself in on weekends to focus on writing and editing.

Rozi was accustomed to dealing with the government's fears of an independent Uighur identity, and though he sometimes quarreled with censors, his works always made it to publication.

The family's fortunes and those of the Uighurs as a whole took a dramatic turn after a string of terror attacks in Xinjiang in 2014, shortly after Chinese President Xi Jinping came to power. In response, Beijing kicked off its suffocating security crackdown.

Rozi was arrested soon after Chen Quanguo, a hard-line politician, became Xinjiang's top official in 2016 and his books were pulled from shelves.

Soon his former colleagues at Xinjiang Education Press began disappearing, as did the officials who used to supervise his work. Colleges held political meetings to denounce "problematic textbooks," including Rozi's, calling them "treasonous" and a "great scourge" that poisoned Uighurs with ideas of splitting China.

"Those textbooks weren't political at all," Kamaltürk said. "There were things in there about taking pride in being ethnic Uighurs, and that's what the Chinese government was upset with."

The intensity of Beijing's crackdown caught many by surprise, shocking even hardened dissidents.

"In retrospect, it was a signal," said Abdurehim Dolet, Rozi's close friend and former business partner who now lives in Turkey. "We all thought this was only temporary, that things would get better. He was made an example."

The Chinese Foreign Ministry referred questions about Rozi's case to regional authorities, who did not respond to a fax for comment.

Experts say the campaign against Rozi's books is part of a systematic effort by Beijing to distance young Uighurs from their language and culture, including by putting thousands of Uighurs in Mandarin-only orphanages and boarding schools.

"It's a slow process of cultural reengineering to reshape Uighur culture from top to bottom — to eradicate most fundamentally the Uighur language, or to erode it to the extent that among younger generations, it might potentially die out," said James Leibold, a scholar of Chinese ethnic studies at LaTrobe University in Melbourne.

Today, Kamaltürk, his sister and mother are trying to draw attention to Rozi's case from a cramped two-bedroom apartment in Philadelphia.

Kamaltürk, who once had the highest college entrance exam scores in Xinjiang and won a spot to study chemistry at China's most prestigious university, has put dreams of medical school on hold to support his family. He now squeezes in time to lobby members of Congress between 14-hour days at a pharmaceutical company testing animal blood samples.

He's creating a website dedicated to his father, and plans one day to finish translating what's left of his father's works into English to show the world why many Uighurs consider him among their most significant intellectuals alive.

One of Kamaltürk's biggest regrets is that he didn't take all of his father's textbooks with him when he left China. He worries some may be lost forever.

"Nobody thought they could be a target, that they could vanish one day," he said. "It's shocking that they're gone."

Associated Press videojournalist Joseph Frederick contributed to this story from Philadelphia.

Judge orders drugmaker to pay \$572 million in opioid lawsuit

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. (AP) — An Oklahoma judge on Monday found Johnson & Johnson and its subsidiaries helped fuel the state's opioid crisis and ordered the consumer products giant to pay \$572 million, more than twice the amount another drug manufacturer agreed to pay in a settlement.

Cleveland County District Judge Thad Balkman's ruling followed the first state opioid case to make it to trial and could help shape negotiations over roughly 1,500 similar lawsuits filed by state, local and tribal governments consolidated before a federal judge in Ohio.

"The opioid crisis has ravaged the state of Oklahoma," Balkman said before announcing the judgment. "It must be abated immediately."

An attorney for the companies said they plan to appeal the ruling to the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

Before Oklahoma's trial began May 28, the state reached settlements with two other defendant groups — a \$270 million deal with OxyContin-maker Purdue Pharma and an \$85 million settlement with Israeli-owned Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd.

Oklahoma argued the companies and their subsidiaries created a public nuisance by launching an aggressive and misleading marketing campaign that overstated how effective the drugs were for treating chronic pain and understated the risk of addiction. Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter says opioid overdoses killed 4,653 people in the state from 2007 to 2017.

Hunter called Johnson & Johnson a "kingpin" company that was motivated by greed. He specifically pointed to two former Johnson & Johnson subsidiaries, Noramco and Tasmanian Alkaloids, which produced much of the raw opium used by other manufacturers to produce the drugs.

On Monday, Hunter said the Oklahoma case could provide a "road map" for other states to follow in holding drugmakers responsible for the opioid crisis.

"That's the message to other states: We did it in Oklahoma. You can do it elsewhere," Hunter said. "Johnson & Johnson will finally be held accountable for thousands of deaths and addictions caused by their activities."

Among those seated in the courtroom on Monday were Craig and Gail Box, whose son Austin was a 22-year-old standout linebacker for the Oklahoma Sooners when he died of a prescription drug overdose in 2011.

One of the attorneys for the state, Reggie Whitten, said he also lost a son to opioid abuse.

"I feel like my boy is looking down," Whitten said after the judge's ruling, his voice cracking with emotion.

Oklahoma pursued the case under the state's public nuisance statute and presented the judge with a plan to abate the crisis that would cost between \$12.6 billion for 20 years and \$17.5 billion over 30 years. Attorneys for Johnson & Johnson have said that estimate is wildly inflated. The judge's award would cover the costs of one year of the state's abatement plan, funding things like opioid use prevention and addiction treatment.

Attorneys for the company have maintained they were part of a lawful and heavily regulated industry subject to strict federal oversight, including the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and the Food and Drug

Administration, during every step of the supply chain. Lawyers for the company said the judgment was a misapplication of public nuisance law.

Sabrina Strong, an attorney for Johnson & Johnson and its subsidiaries, said the companies have sympathy for those who suffer from substance abuse but called the judge's decision "flawed."

"You can't sue your way out of the opioid abuse crisis," Strong said. "Litigation is not the answer."

Attorneys for the plaintiffs in the cases consolidated before a federal judge in Ohio called the Oklahoma judgment "a milestone amid the mounting evidence against the opioid pharmaceutical industry."

"While public nuisance laws differ in every state, this decision is a critical step forward for the more than 2,000 cities, counties, and towns we represent in the consolidation of federal opioid cases," they said in a statement.

Also on Monday, the Kentucky Supreme Court declined to review an earlier ruling, making previously secret testimony from former Purdue Pharma President Rickard Sackler and other documents public. The court record was sealed in 2015 as part of a \$24 million settlement between Purdue and Kentucky.

The 17 million pages of documents were being shipped Monday from Frankfort to Pike County, where the case originated. The Pike County Circuit Court Clerk's office could not immediately say how and when they would be available.

Follow Sean Murphy at www.twitter.com/apseanmurphy

Q&A: What lies ahead following Oklahoma opioid judgment

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

Oklahoma's \$572 million judgment against Johnson & Johnson will likely be followed by more trials and legal settlements seeking to hold a drug company accountable for a U.S. opioid crisis that has ripped apart lives and communities.

Monday's ruling could help shape negotiations over roughly 1,500 similar lawsuits filed by state, local and tribal governments consolidated before a federal judge in Ohio. And as the legal cases against the opioid industry accelerate, so do concerns about how the money from verdicts or settlements will be spent.

Following are questions and answers about the opioid crisis and what lies ahead.

Q: Why are so many governments are suing over opioids?

A: Forty-eight states plus around 2,000 local and tribal governments have sued companies in the drug industry, arguing those that make, distribute and sell the drugs are partly responsible for a crisis that has killed more than 400,000 people across the country since 2000, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's including more than 47,000 in both 2017 and last year.

The plaintiffs argue that drugs were improperly marketed and that companies failed to stop suspicious orders from shipping.

Q: What's the financial toll of the crisis?

A: The White House Council of Economic Advisers published a report in 2017 pegging the cost of the crisis at just over \$500 billion in 2015. That includes lost productivity as well as costs borne by taxpayers, such as ambulance runs, jail treatment costs, and the costs of caring for children whose parents have died from opioid overdoses.

Q: What are opioids and how are they used?

A: They're an addictive family of drugs that block pain signals between the body and brain. They include prescription painkillers such as Vicodin and OxyContin, as well as illegal drugs such as heroin and illicit versions of fentanyl. Until recent decades, they were prescribed largely for pain for patients with cancer, at the end of their lives, or with acute pain, such as after surgery. Since the 1990s, there's been a push in the medical world, partly funded by drug companies, to do better at treating pain — and opioids came to be seen as part of the solution.

Q: So what's the problem?

A: Recent studies have questioned their effectiveness with chronic pain and the U.S. Centers for Dis-

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ease Control and Prevention has told prescribers to be cautious about using the powerful drugs to treat patients with long-term pain. Experts say the longer patients are on the drugs and the higher the doses they receive, the more likely they are to develop addictions. Also, more people with prescriptions means more access to the drugs for recreational users and addicts.

Q: What happened leading up to the Oklahoma judgment?

Oklahoma's public nuisance lawsuit against several drugmakers and their subsidiaries was the first in the wave of opioid litigation to make it to trial. Before the start of the six-week trial in May, Oklahoma reached a \$270 million deal with Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin, and an \$85 million settlement with Teva, both of which faced criticism from state lawmakers, who argued they have control over dispersing funds. The Purdue settlement calls for about \$200 million to go into a trust to fund an addiction studies center at Oklahoma State University in Tulsa.

The remaining defendant, Johnson & Johnson and some of its subsidiaries, proceeded to trial.

Q: What makes the cases legally complicated?

A: There are dozens of defendants and thousands of plaintiffs with different interests. State and local governments are battling over control of any settlement money before any national deals have been reached.

In Oklahoma, the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has told the state that the federal government is entitled to a portion of Oklahoma's proceeds from its settlement with Purdue. Several local governments refused to participate in the lawsuit against Purdue so they could pursue their own, while others have criticized how most of the settlement money from that case is being spent.

Q: When did the opioid crisis begin?

A: By the early 2000s, the death toll from opioids was rising and there were growing numbers of thefts of drugs from pharmacies. In 2007, Purdue paid a \$634 million fine and pleaded guilty to understanding the addiction risks of the drug. But the crisis only deepened after that. Prescriptions flowed freely at "pill mill" clinics, especially in Florida, where drug dealers would get drugs and spread them around the country.

Q: How widespread is the problem?

A: In recent years, opioid overdoses have been the nation's largest cause of accidental deaths, ahead of even automobile accidents. The death tolls per capita have been the highest in places with the highest prescription rates. The Appalachian region has been hardest hit.

Q: Have prescriptions stopped being given out so freely?

A: Yes. States have used databases to track prescriptions and prescribers, pill mills have been shut down and prescribers have become more conservative in calling for the drugs since around 2011. Government guidelines and some insurance company standards have also been tightened. But as prescription rates started falling, death rates actually rose, with more addicts using deadlier illicit versions of opioids. Preliminary data shows that the death toll declined very slightly in 2018 for the first time since the crisis began.

Q: What's next?

A: The first federal trial, involving claims from Ohio's Cuyahoga and Summit counties, is scheduled for Oct. 21. The Cleveland-based judge in that case, Dan Polster, intends to use that as a bellwether, providing decisions that could apply to other cases. Polster is overseeing most of the opioid cases and is pushing the parties to settle.

Other cases in state and federal courts could be tried as soon as next year.

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Back at US Open, Serena beats Sharapova for 19th time in row

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Serena Williams was not about to let Maria Sharapova make a match of this.

So facing a break point early in the second set, Williams conjured up a backhand passing shot so good, so powerful, so precise, that Sharapova had no chance to reach it. Williams watched the ball land, and then raised a clenched left fist toward the night sky.

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In her first match at the U.S. Open since last year's loss in a chaotic, controversial final, Williams stretched her winning streak against Sharapova to 19 matches with a nearly flawless performance that produced a 6-1, 6-1 victory Monday.

Asked whether she could even imagine losing that many matches in a row across 15 years against one opponent, Williams paused for a moment, then replied: "Gosh, I never thought about it like that."

She now leads their head-to-head series 20-2.

"Every time I come up against her," Williams said, "I just bring out some of my best tennis."

Sure did this time; the whole thing lasted all of 59 minutes.

Williams won twice as many points, 56-28. She saved all five break points she faced and lashed serves at up to 115 mph. She broke five times.

"I always said her ball somehow lands in my strike zone," Williams said. "I don't know. It's just perfect for me."

Few players would have stood a chance against Williams the way she was hitting balls deep and true — and certainly not a diminished Sharapova, who is ranked 87th after missing much of this season with a bad right shoulder that needed surgery. This was a showdown fit for a final, at least in theory: These two met in a title match at each of the other three Grand Slam tournaments but never had faced each other in New York.

Williams arrived at Flushing Meadows, where she's won six titles, accompanied by questions about her back, because spasms that flared up this month forced her to stop playing during the final of one hard-court tuneup tournament and pull out of another one entirely.

Didn't seem to be an issue against Sharapova.

Not one bit.

"The body's good. I feel good," Williams said. "My back's a lot better. So I'm excited. This is going to be fun."

A year ago, she was beaten by Naomi Osaka in straight sets in a U.S. Open final that devolved after a back-and-forth between Williams and chair umpire Carlos Ramos. When Williams was asked Monday night what she thought of the U.S. Tennis Association's decision that Ramos would not officiate any match involving her or her older sister, Venus, at this year's tournament, this was the reply: "I don't know who that is."

LOL, as the kids say.

Williams was calm and cool as can be against Sharapova, only rarely showing the slightest hint of emotion with a cry of "Come on!" or the occasional fist pump, such as the one after the key backhand on break point.

Sharapova called that shot "great."

It shaped up, at least, as far and away the most intriguing matchup on Day 1 at the year's last Grand Slam tournament.

Few athletes in any sport have been as popular in recent decades.

Williams owns 23 major singles title, Sharapova five.

Both have a career Grand Slam.

Both have been ranked No. 1.

So, yes, there were plenty of other matches around the grounds Monday, with Roger Federer dropping his first set of the tournament against a qualifier ranked 190th before coming back to eliminate Sumit Nagal of India 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-4, No. 1 Novak Djokovic opening defense of his title with a 6-4, 6-1, 6-4 victory over Roberto Carballes Baena, and 21-year-old American Reilly Opelka providing the biggest upset of the afternoon in his U.S. Open debut by eliminating No. 11 Fabio Fognini of Italy 6-3, 6-4, 6-7 (6), 6-3.

And, sure, 2016 champion Angelique Kerber continued her rough Grand Slam year with a first-round exit against Kristina Mladenovic by a 7-5, 0-6, 6-4 score, while 2016 runner-up Karolina Pliskova and reigning French Open title winner Ash Barty both struggled through rough starts before emerging.

The Williams family only dropped a total of three games in two matches Monday, because Venus beat Zheng Saisai 6-1, 6-0 earlier.

Nothing brought out the spectators the way Serena Williams vs. Maria Sharapova did, with full-throated

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roars greeting them when they walked from the locker room into a dimly lit stadium.

When the lights came on, Williams proved far more ready for prime time.

Only once before had Sharapova lost a night match in Arthur Ashe Stadium, going 22-1 until Monday.

"I've had a lot of tough matches here and a lot of tough losses," Williams told the crowd afterward, "but coming out here tonight makes it all worthwhile."

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More AP Tennis: <https://www.apnews.com/apf-Tennis> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Asian shares mostly up on optimism about US-China trade war

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares mostly rose Tuesday as investors found reason to be cautiously optimistic again about the potential for progress in the costly trade war between the U.S. and China.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 rose 1.2% in morning trading to 20,497.09. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 0.3% to 6,458.40, while South Korea's Kospi gained nearly 1.0% to 1,935.18. Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose at first but reversed course and was down nearly 0.2% at 25,635.96. The Shanghai Composite was up 1.1% at 2,894.31.

"It remains all about trade as President Donald Trump's comments on the matter had once again been the primary driver for markets at the start of the week. Even though the sentiment had taken a positive turn on the latest update, uncertainty nevertheless persists to warrant a more cautious stance," said Jingyi Pan, market strategist at IG in Singapore.

Monday's rally on Wall Street got its start early after President Donald Trump said his negotiators had received encouraging calls from China on Sunday, though China's foreign ministry denied knowledge of any such calls.

The S&P 500 rose 31.27 points, or 1.1%, to 2,878.38. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 269.93 points, or 1.1%, to 25,898.83. The Nasdaq, which is heavily weighted with technology stocks, rose 101.97 points, or 1.3%, to 7,853.74. The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies picked up 16.52 points, or 1.1%, to 1,476.

The major U.S. indexes are each on track for losses of 3% or more in August in what has been a volatile month for the market as investors try to gauge whether trade conflicts and slowing economies around the world will drag the U.S. into a recession.

On Friday, China announced new tariffs on \$75 billion in U.S. goods. Trump responded angrily on Twitter, at one point saying he "hereby ordered" U.S. companies with operations in China to consider moving them to other countries, including the U.S.

Analysts say uncertainties are bound to remain on global markets as long as Trump continues to send conflicting messages.

"The bigger picture is that deep-seated issues are unlikely to be resolved on the flick of a switch or tweet," said a report from the Asia & Oceania Treasury Department of Mizuho Bank.

Trump later announced the U.S. would increase existing tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese goods to 30% from 25%, and that new tariffs on another \$300 billion of imports would be 15% instead of 10%.

Global markets appeared headed for another wave of selling early Monday, when indexes in Asia closed lower, until Trump said his trade negotiators had received two "very good calls" from China.

During a news conference in France after the Group of Seven industrialized nations' meeting, Trump said "China wants to make a deal, and if we can, we will make a deal."

ENERGY:

Benchmark crude oil rose 37 cents to \$54.01 a barrel. It fell 53 cents to settle at \$53.64 a barrel. Brent crude oil, the international standard, rose 35 cents to \$59.05 a barrel.

CURRENCIES:

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The dollar inched down to 105.78 Japanese yen from 105.88 yen on Monday. The euro weakened to \$1.1104 from \$1.1118.

AP Business Writer Alex Veiga contributed.

GOP Trump challengers won't get much help from their party

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — “Never Trump” Republicans are eager to see the president confront a credible primary adversary. But the party will likely erect structural barriers that make that kind of challenge exceedingly difficult.

And for good reason: Every incumbent president for four-plus decades who has faced a serious primary opponent was weakened enough to ultimately lose reelection.

Joe Walsh, a former tea-party-backed, one-term congressman from Illinois, on Sunday joined Bill Weld, the former Republican governor of Massachusetts, on the lonely road to try to unseat President Donald Trump.

Other Republicans may join them. Mark Sanford, former governor and Republican congressman from South Carolina, has flirted with a 2020 presidential bid, and Republican ex-Ohio Gov. John Kasich is set to visit New Hampshire, which holds the nation's first presidential primary, in September.

So far, none of them seems to pose a serious threat. The president's supporters note that the ranks of outspoken “Never Trumpers” have dwindled substantially since Trump stormed a deep, 2016 presidential primary field of establishment Republicans and then toppled Democrat Hillary Clinton to win the White House.

Unlike some other incumbents who drew primary challengers, Trump now has the overwhelming support of his party's voters. Other incumbents — in both parties — “saw their base support erode a bit before reelection efforts,” said Keith Appell, a Washington-based Republican strategist. “If anything, this president's support has grown within his party.”

Weld has held out the prospect that a multicandidate Republican field might prompt primary campaign debates. But Republican National Committee members have done away with their standing debate committee ahead of next year's election, and scheduling debates could prove difficult since primary voting begins in about five months.

The RNC has also approved a nonbinding resolution declaring its “undivided support for President Donald J. Trump and his effective presidency.”

Walsh, a conservative talk show host, seemed to be feeling the effects of Trump's power over the party Monday night, when he revealed on CNN that he had lost his national radio show. He noted that 80 to 90% of his listeners were fans of Trump and said he knew his job could be in jeopardy when he made the decision to seek the White House.

Sitting presidents always exert control over the national party to try to quash would-be rivals, but GOP observers say Trump's reelection campaign already has heavily brought its influence to bear. It has had time to do so ahead of 2020, meanwhile, unlike in 2016, when Texas Sen. Ted Cruz used his Republican National Convention floor speech to anger Trump by refusing to endorse him after a second-place primary finish.

Robin Armstrong, a Republican National Committee member from Texas, said the party won't tip the scales in anyone's favor, especially after seeing how 2016 played out.

“Frankly, many Republicans were concerned about President Trump. And so it took a lot of discipline for the party to say, ‘Listen, we're going to listen to our voters,’ and that's ultimately what we did,” Armstrong said. “Trying to have too much control over the process, usually it doesn't work out in your favor. So just trust your voters. I don't agree with all of our voters, but we still have to trust them.”

Some states may yet move to guard against Trump Republican challengers unlikely catching fire during the 2020 primary.

As Sanford considers running, South Carolina's Republican Party has left open the possibility of canceling

its primary as soon as next month. The party did so in 1984 to help Ronald Reagan and in 2004 to help George W. Bush. Democrats did the same for Bill Clinton in 1996 and Barack Obama in 2012.

Sanford told reporters Monday at a fundraiser for South Carolina congressman Jeff Duncan that he had gotten "green lights" from his recent visit to New Hampshire and chats with others in Iowa, which he'll visit this week. Sanford was surrounded by Trump supporters waving signs and shouting, "Go take a hike!" — a reference to his 2009 disappearance when he was visiting his mistress in Argentina but told staffers he was hiking the Appalachian Trail.

In September, Nevada's Republican Party will consider bypassing its 2020 presidential nominating caucuses and instead have governing members endorse Trump, preempting all primary challenges. Nevada goes third in primary voting, after Iowa and New Hampshire but before South Carolina — and that possibility drew an angry statement from Weld, who said, "Donald Trump is doing his best to make the Republican Party his own personal club."

Not brooking even possible party division may pay off. History shows that facing any primary challenger able to gain some national traction can be harmful to a sitting president.

In 1968, Sen. Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota nearly upset Lyndon Johnson in the New Hampshire primary. Weeks later, Johnson stunned the nation by announcing he wouldn't seek another term.

In 1976, President Gerald Ford survived Reagan's challenge from the right but lost to former Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter. Four years later, it was Carter who had a strong opponent in Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, and Carter ended up losing to Reagan. In 1992, conservative pundit Pat Buchanan shocked President George H.W. Bush with a strong showing in the New Hampshire primary. A bitter primary battle ensued, and Bush lost to Clinton.

The exception is President Richard Nixon, who swatted away two rather marginal challengers in the 1972 Republican primaries and was reelected in a landslide. Of course, he resigned the presidency less than two years later.

Associated Press writer Meg Kinnard in Anderson, S.C., contributed to this report.

Florida nursing home employees charged in patient deaths

By **KELLI KENNEDY** and **TERRY SPENCER** Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Four employees of a Florida nursing home where 12 people died in sweltering heat after a hurricane cut power were charged Monday, at least three of them with aggravated manslaughter, their attorneys said.

Nursing home patients at the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills, ranging in age from 57 to 99, began dying three days after Hurricane Irma swept through in September 2017.

The center, which housed about 150 patients at the time, did not evacuate any of the residents as the temperature began rising, even though a fully functional hospital was across the street, investigators said. The home's license was suspended days after the storm and it was later closed.

Former Rehabilitation Center nurse Sergio Colin and administrator Jorge Carballo were each charged with 12 counts of aggravated manslaughter, according to jail records. Nurse Althia Meggie was charged with two counts of aggravated manslaughter and two counts of tampering with evidence.

All three turned themselves in at the Broward County Jail on Monday and were scheduled to appear in court Tuesday, their attorneys said.

Nurse Tamika Miller was being held in the Miami-Dade County jail on unspecified charges, according to the jail's website. She was awaiting transfer to Broward County.

Hollywood Police spokeswoman Miranda Grossman said authorities would withhold comment until a news conference planned for Tuesday.

Attorney Jim Cobb said none of the employees understood why they were being charged. He said Carballo and other administrators were repeatedly told before the storm that they could call then-Gov. Rick Scott's personal cellphone directly for help. Cobb said they called five times, but never heard back from Scott.

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Cobb said the administrators "sat there languishing waiting for the cavalry to come. ... They never, ever came."

Attorney Lawrence Hashish remarked that "the real crime is that the state is looking to blame selfless caregivers and the evidence will show that no crime was committed."

Scott, now a U.S. senator, said in a statement that the nursing home should have called 911.

"Nothing can hide the fact that this healthcare facility failed to do their basic duty to protect life," he said.

But attorney David Frankel insisted that the staff did everything they could to keep the patients, some of them in hospice, cool and hydrated. They brought in small air conditioners and fans, he said.

He also criticized the notion from investigators and some family members of the deceased that staff should have taken the patients across the street to the air-conditioned Memorial Regional Hospital. He said the hospital had been sending patients to the nursing home.

"These were very fragile people," he said. "Evacuating them could have caused more damage."

Memorial spokeswoman Kerting Baldwin said she couldn't confirm that the hospital sent patients to the nursing home. She said the hospital's goal, though, would be to discharge the patients to a safe environment.

"It is the responsibility of the receiving entity, in this case the nursing home, to let the transferring hospital know if they are unable to accept patients," Baldwin said.

Memorial's doctors and staff began evacuating the nursing home after several dead and seriously ill patients arrived in the hospital's emergency room.

Frankel also criticized Florida Power & Light, which he said was supposed to arrive within six hours after the first patient became acutely ill.

FPL issued a statement Monday noting that some parts of the home did have power restored after the storm, but Frankel said the blown transformer that had caused the air conditioning to fail was never fixed.

In its statement, Florida Power & Light added that "those customers who have electricity dependent medical needs should call 911 if they are without power and in a life-threatening situation."

Craig Wohlitka and other paramedics from Hollywood Fire-Rescue testified last year that they were haunted by the deaths of patients at the home.

Fire Lt. Amy Parrinello said one of the female patients had a temperature of 107.5 degrees (42 Celsius), the highest she had ever seen in her 12-year career. Later that morning, she said, another patient topped that with a temperature so high it couldn't be measured.

The deaths at the nursing home recalled a similar tragedy in New Orleans in 2005: Moments after Hurricane Katrina ruptured levees, floodwaters filled St. Rita's nursing home, rising to the ceiling of the one-story facility in a matter of minutes and killing 35 patients.

The home's owners, Salvatore and Mabel Mangano, were acquitted of negligent homicide and cruelty charges by a jury that deliberated for less than two hours. Cobb was their attorney.

"The notion of charging caregivers, nurses, administrators ... for care that they rendered during a natural disaster emergency ... is beyond the pale," he said.

G-7 nations pledge \$40 million to fight Amazon fires

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO and CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA Associated Press

PORTO VELHO, Brazil (AP) — The Group of Seven nations on Monday pledged tens of millions of dollars to help fight raging wildfires in the Amazon and protect its rainforest, even as Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro accused rich countries of treating the region like a "colony."

The international pledges at a G-7 summit in France included \$20 million from the group, as well as a separate \$12 million from Britain and \$11 million from Canada. Ottawa has also offered to send firefighting planes to Brazil.

Other groups are contributing support for a region whose rainforests are a major absorber of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Earth Alliance, a new environmental foundation backed by Leonardo DiCaprio, is pledging \$5 million in aid, saying the Amazon is one of the "best defenses" against climate change.

The funds are widely seen as critical support, but a relatively small amount for dealing with an environ-

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mental crisis of such scale threatening what French President Emmanuel Macron called “the lungs of the planet.”

More than \$1 billion, for example, has been paid into a fund to help the Amazon in the past decade. And major donors Germany and Norway recently cut donations to Brazilian forestry projects, saying Bolsonaro’s administration isn’t committed to curbing deforestation.

It was unclear how exactly the new money would be administered. Bureaucracy can slow and reduce the amount that reaches programs in the field. Brazil’s environment minister, Ricardo Salles, said the aid was welcome and that Brazil should decide how the resources are used.

More global funding and political will in Brazil will be needed once the fires are extinguished, said John Robinson, chief conservation officer at the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Brazil needs “legislation and regulations that set clear limits preventing landowners — especially large ones — from burning the forest and converting it to agriculture and rangeland, backed by incentives and investment in alternatives,” Robinson said.

The international pledges came despite tensions between European countries and the Brazilian president, who suggested the West was angling to exploit Brazil’s natural resources.

“Look, does anyone help anyone ... without something in return? What have they wanted there for so long?” Bolsonaro said.

Bolsonaro has insulted adversaries and allies, disparaged women, black and gay people, and praised his country’s 1964-1985 dictatorship. But nothing has rallied more anger at home and criticism from abroad than his response to the fires in parts of the Amazon region.

The Brazilian leader says he is committed to protecting the Amazon and prosecuting anyone involved in illegal fires, many of which appear to be to have been set in already deforested areas to clear land for farming.

But Bolsonaro initially questioned whether activist groups might have started the fires in an effort to damage the credibility of his government, which has called for looser environmental regulations in the world’s largest rainforest to spur development.

“We believe that there are many mining companies and lumber companies and farmers who feel that the president has their backs,” said Raoni Metuktire, a Brazilian indigenous chief and environmentalist who traveled to the G-7 summit in Biarritz.

In response, European leaders threatened to block a major trade deal with Brazil that would benefit the very agricultural interests accused of driving deforestation.

The impact of the fires and smoke has disrupted life for many in the Amazon region. The airport in Porto Velho, the capital of Rondonia state, was closed for more than an hour Monday morning because of poor visibility. On Sunday, a soccer match of a lower-tier national league was briefly suspended because of smoke in Rio Branco, capital of Acre state, as fire burned in a field outside the stadium.

In Para state, where fires have swept many areas, resident Moacir Cordeiro said he was worried about their impact on nature and his health. Smoke rose from nearby trees as he spoke.

“I don’t think there are enough people to extinguish the fires,” said Cordeiro, who lives in the Alvorada da Amazonia region. He said it was difficult to breathe at night because of the smoke.

Another man, Antonio de Jesus, was also worried.

“Nature shouldn’t be killed off like that,” he said.

Macron said the Amazon, while mostly Brazilian, is a world issue and that his message to Bolsonaro is: “We cannot allow you to destroy everything.”

Brazil’s sovereignty must be respected, Macron said, but the world can help Brazil reforest and build its economy “while respecting the natural balance.”

About 60 percent of the Amazon region is in Brazil; the vast forest also spans parts of Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru and Suriname.

Speaking on French TV after hosting the G-7 summit, Macron acknowledged that Europe, by importing soy from Brazil, shares some blame for the agricultural pressure on the rainforest.

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He added that Europe's dependence on imported proteins, including soya, for animal feed is "a very bad choice" and that he wants Europe to develop alternate sources of protein.

Bolsonaro has accused Macron of treating the region "as if we were a colony."

Bolsonaro has announced he would send 44,000 soldiers to help battle the blazes, and military planes began dumping water on fires in the Amazon state of Rondonia.

The move was welcomed by many critics, but some say it's not enough and comes too late.

In violating environmental agreements, Brazil has been discredited and "unable to exercise any type of leadership on the international stage," said Mauricio Santoro, an international relations professor at Rio de Janeiro State University.

Critics say the large number of fires this year has been stoked by Bolsonaro's encouragement of farmers, loggers and ranchers to speed efforts to strip away forest. Although Bolsonaro has now vowed to protect the area, they say it is only out of fear of a diplomatic crisis and economic losses.

Fires are common during Brazil's dry season, but the numbers surged this year. The country's National Space Research Institute, which monitors deforestation, has recorded more than 77,000 wildfires in Brazil this year, a record since the institute began keeping track in 2013. That is an 85% rise over last year, and about half of the fires have been in the Amazon region — with more than half of those coming just in the past month.

Rómulo Batista, a member of Greenpeace Brazil's Amazonia Campaign, said "the rise in deforestation can completely alter the rain patterns by region and devastate agriculture, even in South America."

Brazil's federal police agency announced that it would investigate reports that farmers in Para state had called for "a day of fire" on Aug. 10 to ignite fires. Local media said a group organized the action over WhatsApp to show support for Bolsonaro's efforts to loosen environmental regulations.

Torchia reported from Rio de Janeiro. Associated Press journalists Anna Kaiser in Rio de Janeiro, Leo Correa in Alvorada da Amazonia, Brazil, Frances D'Emilio in Rome, John Leicester in Paris, Sylvie Corbet and Lori Hinnant in Biarritz, France, and Geir Moulson in Berlin contributed to this report.

Barbados braces as Tropical Storm Dorian nears Caribbean

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Much of the eastern Caribbean island of Barbados shut down on Monday as Tropical Storm Dorian approached the region and gathered strength, threatening to turn into a small hurricane that forecasters said could affect the northern Windward islands and Puerto Rico in upcoming days.

Prime Minister Mia Mottley closed schools and government offices across Barbados as she warned people to remain indoors.

"When you're dead, you're dead," she said in a televised address late Sunday. "Stay inside and get some rest."

The U.S. National Hurricane Center issued a hurricane watch for St. Lucia and a tropical storm warning for Barbados, Martinique, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It also issued a tropical storm watch for Puerto Rico, Dominica, Grenada, Saba and St. Eustatius. The storm was expected to dump between 3 to 8 inches (8 to 20 centimeters) of rain in Barbados and nearby islands, with isolated amounts of 10 inches (25 centimeters).

As of 8 p.m. EDT Monday, the fourth tropical storm of the Atlantic hurricane season was centered about 30 miles (50 kilometers) east-southeast of Barbados and moving west at 14 mph (22 kph). Maximum sustained winds were at 60 mph (95 kph). Forecasters said it could brush past southwest Puerto Rico late Wednesday as a Category 1 hurricane and then strike the southeast corner of the Dominican Republic early Thursday.

In St. Lucia, Prime Minister Allen Chastanet announced that everything on the island of nearly 179,000 people would shut down by 6 p.m. EDT on Monday, with the hurricane expected to hit around 2 a.m. EDT

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on Tuesday.

"We are expecting the worst," he said.

Some were still boarding up windows and buying food and water, but not Joannes Lamontagne, who lives in the island's southwest region. He said by phone that everything at his hotel, Serenity Escape, was already protected.

"I don't wait until it's announced," he said of the storm. "We're always prepared no matter what."

Meanwhile, in Barbados, many of the 285,000 inhabitants heeded the government's warning, including Fitz Bostic, owner of Rest Haven Beach Cottages. He said he's prepared in case officials shut down power and utility services as they have in previous storms.

"We have to be very cautious," he said in a telephone interview. "The word 'storm' frightens me man. I'm very nervous."

In the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico, hundreds of people have been crowding into grocery stores and gas stations to prepare for Dorian, buying food, water and generators, among other things. Many are worried about power outages and heavy rains on an island still struggling to recover from Hurricane Maria, a Category 4 storm that hit in September 2017. Some 30,000 homes still have blue tarps as roofs and the electrical grid remains fragile and prone to outages even during brief rain showers.

Forecasters said the storm could pass near or south of Puerto Rico on Wednesday and approach the Dominican Republic on Wednesday night.

On Monday, Puerto Rico Gov. Wanda Vázquez signed an executive order declaring a state of emergency and provided a list of all the new equipment that public agencies have bought since Hurricane Maria.

"I want everyone to feel calm," she said. "Agency directors have prepared for the last two years. The experience of Maria has been a great lesson for everyone."

She said public schools will close Tuesday afternoon and that at least one cruise ship canceled its trip to Puerto Rico. She said those without a proper roof can stay in one of the 360 shelters around the island.

Also on Monday, a new tropical depression formed between the U.S. eastern coast and Bermuda. It was located 295 miles (480 kilometers) southeast of Cape Hatteras in North Carolina and was moving east at 2 mph (4 kph) with maximum sustained winds of 35 mph (55 kph). It was expected to become a tropical storm late Monday or Tuesday.

Ethics outcry as Trump touts 'magnificent' Doral for next G7

By **BERNARD CONDON** and **ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON** Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — President Donald Trump was in full sales mode Monday, doing everything but pass out brochures as he touted the features that would make the Doral golf resort the ideal place for the next G-7 Summit — close to the airport, plenty of hotel rooms, separate buildings for every delegation, even top facilities for the media.

There's just one detail he left out: He owns the place.

Government ethics watchdogs have long railed against the perils of Trump earning money off the presidency and hosting foreign leaders at his properties. But they say Trump's proposal to bring world leaders to his Miami-area resort takes the conflict of interest to a whole new level because, unlike stays at his Washington, they would have no choice but to spend money at his property.

"It's ethics violation squared," said Kathleen Clark of Washington University School of Law in St. Louis.

Added Larry Noble, a former general counsel at the Federal Election Commission, "This is him making it perfectly mandatory that they stay at his resort."

Trump's proposal at the current G-7 Summit in Biarritz, France, portrayed the Doral resort in the most glowing terms, even though he said later he was more interested in logistics for the meeting than making money.

"We have a series of magnificent buildings ... very luxurious rooms," Trump told reporters. "We have incredible conference rooms, incredible restaurants, it's like — it's like such a natural."

Trump's pitch comes as several lawsuits accusing the president of violating the U.S. Constitution's emolu-

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ments clause, which bans gifts from foreign governments, wind their way through the courts.

It also comes as Doral, by far the biggest revenue generator among the Trump Organization's 17 golf properties, appears to have taken a hit from Trump's move into politics.

The trouble began during soon after Trump announced he was running for the presidency in 2015 with a speech that called Mexican immigrants crossing the border illegally rapists and murders. Businesses started cutting ties to the president. The PGA and NASCAR moved events that used to be booked at Doral elsewhere.

Eric Trump, who is overseeing the business with his older brother, Don Jr., told The Associated Press last year that "the Doral is on fire." But a financial disclosure report filed with the federal government this year showed revenue at the club has barely been growing — up just \$1 million to \$76 million.

Trump's financial disclosure also shows he owes a lot of money to Deutsche Bank for the property, which helped him buy it in 2012. As of the end of last year, Trump had two mortgages on the resort, one for more than \$50 million, the other for as much as \$25 million.

A Trump Organization consultant told the Miami-Dade Value Adjustment Board last year that the property was "severely underperforming," according to The Washington Post. The local government cut the resort's assessed value for 2018 from \$110.3 million to \$105.6 million, according to county records.

Another sign of trouble is the long list of former Doral members who quit the club years ago but are still waiting for their initial deposits back. New members have to join first for old ones to get refunds, but that isn't happening, according to Doral member Peter Brooke. He says some former members have been waiting for 10 years or longer.

Brooke said a G-7 summit would bring in "considerable income" for the club, citing the need to accommodate Secret Service, guards and other staff that must accompany each foreign government delegation. "They would have to house all of them at the various lodges, not to mention food and more staff," he said.

In an effort to assuage critics, Trump agreed before he took office to donate profits from foreign government spending at its properties. But the company is private, so it's not certain the \$340,000 donated so far is all of the profits, or even precisely how "profits" is defined.

The company has also said it doesn't actively seek foreign government business, and even tries to turn it away. Earlier this year, Eric Trump said the company goes "to great lengths" to discourage such spending.

It's not clear how hosting the G-7 would square with this policy. The Trump Organization did not respond to several requests for comment.

At Monday's news conference, Trump spoke as if the idea of making money off the summit never entered his mind. In fact, he said, other people were pushing Doral as a venue — not just him. He said the Secret Service and the military have been visiting various sites and appear to have formed a bit of consensus already.

"They went to places all over the country and they came back and they said, 'This is where we'd like to be,'" Trump said. "It's not about me. It's about getting the right location."

He then added: "I'm not going to make any money. I don't want to make money. I don't care about making money."

Associated Press writer Steven Wine contributed to this story. Condon reported from New York.

Trump's inconsistent messages on China trade heighten risks

By PAUL WISEMAN and JOE McDONALD AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods are going up. Wait, President Donald Trump says he's having second thoughts. No, no, Trump may actually raise tariffs even higher. He's also demanding that U.S. companies leave China. Well, maybe not.

The communications on China from Trump and his administration since late last week — erratic, sometimes contradictory — are complicating their high-stakes talks with Beijing and elevating the risks to the fragile global economy.

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The messaging has been confusing not just for Chinese officials as they formulate a response to whatever stance the administration is taking. It's also a problem for American businesses. Trump alarmed U.S. companies on Friday by threatening to invoke his presidential authority to order them out of China — a market of 1.4 billion where many American companies have spent decades establishing operations and building relationships with suppliers and customers.

The shifting positions and threats could eventually weaken the U.S. and world economies by leaving businesses paralyzed by uncertainty over whether and where to situate factories, buy supplies and sell products.

"We are on Mr. Trump's Wild Ride," said Jay Foreman, CEO of Basic Fun!, a toy company in Boca Raton, Florida, that imports from China. "Never have we ever experienced such an unhinged practice of governance. It's out of control and outrageous."

Speaking Monday at the Group of Seven summit in Biarritz, France, Trump was unapologetic.

"Sorry — it's the way I negotiate," he said, adding, "It has done very well for me over the years, and it is going very well for the country."

Negotiating a trade deal with China was always bound to be contentious and subject to fits and starts. The administration has accused Beijing of stealing trade secrets, extracting technology from U.S. companies and unfairly subsidizing its own businesses, and has demanded that it stop. What makes a resolution so elusive is that the administration's demands would undercut China's drive to achieve prosperity as the global leader in such transformative technologies as artificial intelligence and quantum computing.

Trump's negotiators are also seeking a way to enforce any deal — arguing, as many independent analysts have, that China frequently violated commitments it made to previous U.S. administrations.

The world's two biggest economies have imposed tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of each other's goods in the biggest trade conflict since the 1930s. The hostilities have hurt global trade and investment and strained the decelerating world economy.

"Trump's contradictory statements and erratic decision-making reflect the fact that he is an undisciplined, tactical thinker who deals with issues and events one-by-one and is guided by no fixed principles or long-term strategic vision," said Jeff Moon, a former U.S. diplomat and trade official specializing in China who is now president of the China Moon Strategies consultancy.

Beijing's negotiators are reluctant to make commitments in the face of what they see as Trump's shifting demands, say economists and businesspeople.

After talks between the two sides collapsed in May, Trump accused Beijing of backtracking on its offers of regulatory changes and market-opening steps. Analysts suggested that Beijing was loath to make commitments without knowing whether the administration would soon make new demands.

"This constant flip-flop definitely makes it very hard for the other side to figure out what the American government actually wants," said Joerg Wuttke, president of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China, which represents 1,600 companies.

Wuttke suggested that Beijing's approach is better coordinated, "whereas I see, Trump has a good day, bad day and, again, no strategy behind it."

He said Trump's approach to decision-making reminds him of Mao Zedong, whose impulsive policies kept China in chaos for much of the '60s and '70s. Like Mao, Wuttke said, "Donald Trump is disruptive. The Chinese cannot figure out what he wants. ... It causes uncertainties. Uncertainty causes investment delay. It causes supply chain rearrangement."

Chinese negotiators might be losing faith in Trump's willingness to make a deal and stick to it, agreed Tu Xinquan, director of the China Institute for WTO Studies at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing.

"We used to have expectations for Trump," Tu said. "We hoped he was a businessman, more rational and less entangled in political issues. But now it seems his degree of rationality is far below our expectations. Constantly changing. The overall situation is getting worse. Simply put, we have no expectations now and don't expect him to make the right responses and decisions."

Chinese negotiators might have taken note, too, of Trump's trade talks with Mexico. Pressured by U.S.

tariffs, the Mexican government yielded last year to Trump's demand to renegotiate a North American free-trade agreement. Yet just as trade between the two seemed to be normalizing, Trump suddenly threatened to impose new taxes on all Mexican goods. He was frustrated, he said, that Central American migrants were crossing Mexico en route to the U.S. (Trump dropped the tariff threat once Mexico agreed to do more to stop the migrants.)

In the meantime, Trump's tariffs against Beijing and the uncertainty surrounding them are troubling U.S. businesses that have built complex supply chains in China or that rely on Chinese imports. Their worries are one reason U.S. businesses' capital investment fell in the April-June quarter for the first time in three years.

"U.S. businesses will have to deal with his unique and what we believe to be consciously disruptive style of policy making for at least another 17 months," Nomura's economists wrote in a research note Sunday. "During this period we think U.S. businesses will, at the margin, hesitate to make major strategic decisions. ... We expect this uncertainty to be a further drag on investment, hiring, and growth in coming quarters."

Joe McDonald reported from Beijing. AP Business Writers Martin Crutsinger and Anne D'Innocenzio contributed to this report.

Macron tries to arrange a Trump meeting with Iranian leader

By LORI HINNANT, SYLVIE CORBET and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

BIARRITZ, France (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday there's a "really good chance" he could meet with Iran's leader on their nuclear impasse after a surprise intervention by the French president during the G-7 summit to try to bring Washington and Tehran together after decades of conflict.

French President Emmanuel Macron orchestrated the high-stakes gamble to invite the Iranian foreign minister, whose plane landed at the locked-down airport of the coastal resort of Biarritz during the Group of Seven gathering of the world's major democracies. Relying on his carefully cultivated chemistry with Trump, Macron shuttled between high-level official meetings in a conference center barricaded by security to a small room in the town hall filled with European and Iranian diplomats.

Macron, who is known to exchange casual texts with Trump, kept him in the loop minute by minute, both men said as they stood together on stage, recounting the weekend. They embraced at least once before going their separate ways.

Their joint news conference capped an unexpectedly dramatic gathering normally known for bland public expressions of unity and no small amount of sharp exchanges behind closed doors.

Macron said he hoped Trump and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani could meet within weeks in hopes of saving the 2015 nuclear deal that Tehran struck with world powers, but which the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from last year. Under the deal, Iran agreed to limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

Trump was less definitive about a time frame for such a meeting with Rouhani.

"If the circumstances were correct or right, I would certainly agree to that. But in the meantime, they have to be good players. You understand what that means," Trump said of the Iranians.

He later added, "At a given point in time, there will have to be a meeting between the American and Iranian president."

Trump suggested offering lines of credit to Iran, giving it access to much needed hard currency amid re-imposed U.S. sanctions crippling its economy. Moments later, he repeated his criticism of former President Barack Obama over his agreement to release large sums of cash to Iran to partially settle a claim over a 1970s military equipment order.

This time, Trump said, Iran was ready to deal. Certainly Macron and the other G-7 leaders, who opposed Trump's decision to unilaterally leave the accord, have been hoping Trump also was ready.

Macron, who had met Friday with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Paris, intercepted Trump as he arrived at his Biarritz hotel the following day, and the two spent nearly two hours alone together on a sunny terrace, eating and talking before the summit's official start. Trump seemed almost

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smitten at the memory.

"He wasn't trying to impress his people. I wasn't trying to impress my people. We were just trying to impress each other," he said.

That seems to be when Macron first broached the idea of the invitation. Trump said he approved, despite new U.S. sanctions against Zarif. The Iranian diplomat's plane was permitted to land at the small airport, which was open only to G-7 flights.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, greeting Macron for a meeting Sunday morning just before the plane left Tehran, congratulated him and shook his hand.

"Well done. Bien joué," Johnson said, using the French expression for "well played."

But the plan almost foundered while the plane was in the air, due to a sloppily written statement from Macron's office that said the leaders had agreed during an informal G-7 dinner Saturday that Macron could serve as an intermediary. Asked about it, Trump looked blank and denied he had agreed to anything.

Zarif's convoy headed to Biarritz city hall, where he met with Macron and diplomats from Britain, Germany and France, who are still parties to the nuclear deal. Trump would not say whether any Americans were present but insisted Macron had kept him informed at every step. The French president's day was fully scheduled, but he somehow carved out 30 minutes and Zarif's plane left. The Iranian tweeted minutes before takeoff: "Road ahead is difficult. But worth trying."

Macron had just enough time to change into formalwear for the G-7 banquet.

A French official said talks on Iran continued into Monday with a small team of diplomats who stayed behind. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations.

Macron would not say how far the discussions went.

"I can't tell you more for the moment publicly because anything I could tell you will undermine the discussions," he said.

Tensions over Iran, Russia, the U.S. trade war with China and the faltering global economy dominated the three-day summit. Trump insisted the gathering was marked by absolute unity, which was true to the extent that the other leaders carefully sidestepped any differences with him.

In a televised speech, Rouhani appeared on the defensive, shielding his foreign minister against criticism from hard-liners who have rejected negotiations until sanctions are lifted.

"If I knew that going to a meeting and visiting a person would help my country's development and resolve the problems of the people, I would not miss it," Rouhani said. "Even if the odds of success are not 90% but are 20% or 10%, we must move ahead with it. We should not miss opportunities."

Iran's English-language Press TV issued a vague, anonymous statement Monday rejecting Macron's initiative.

Merkel said an achievement of the G-7 summit was an agreement to block Iran from having nuclear weapons "by political means." She would not list any specifics.

"What will come out of this, what possibilities will open up, we can't say today. But the firm will to talk is already great progress," she said.

Trump said he was "not looking for leadership change."

"We are looking for no nuclear weapons, no ballistic missiles and a longer period of time," he said.

Associated Press writers Darlene Superville in Biarritz, Geir Moulson in Berlin, and Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran, contributed.

One empty chair at G-7 climate meeting: Trump's

By SYLVIE CORBET and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

BIARRITZ, France (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump skipped a discussion on climate with other world leaders at the Group of Seven summit in France — then claimed to "know more about the environment than anyone."

Trump left an empty chair as global power brokers debated Monday how to help the fire-stricken Amazon

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and reduce carbon emissions.

"I'm an environmentalist," Trump told reporters, even as he celebrated America's oil and gas wealth.

Environmental activists declared the summit a failure, marching to demand tougher global emissions rules and more aid for the Amazon.

Trump was scheduled to attend Monday's session on climate, biodiversity and oceans at the G-7 summit in Biarritz, but didn't. French President Emmanuel Macron, the summit host, shrugged off the absence, noting that Trump's aides were there instead.

Trump is a climate change skeptic who once had claimed it's a hoax that was invented by the Chinese. His decision to withdraw the United States from the 2015 Paris climate accord has severely damaged global efforts to reduce emissions.

Trump started the morning behind schedule, and held one-on-one meetings while others were in the climate discussions. However, his interlocutors, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, managed to make it to the climate meeting.

Asked about attending the climate session, Trump said it would be his next stop and that he wants clean air and water. But he never showed up.

Macron said it wasn't his goal to try to persuade Trump to rejoin the climate accord. "You can't rewrite the past," Macron told reporters.

But Macron said he and Trump had a "long, rich and totally positive" discussion on the Amazon fires and an international effort to invest in "re-forestation" the area.

G-7 countries pledged \$20 billion on Monday to help fight fires in the Amazon rainforest, which threaten its ability to capture carbon released into the atmosphere by cars and other emitters. It's a small sum overall but G-7 summit host France hopes it will bring more attention to the fires.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres - who attended Monday's climate talks - expressed hope that Americans themselves would help fight climate change even if their president doesn't.

"I am very optimistic about American society and its capacity to deliver in relation to climate action," he told reporters afterward. "What matters here is to have a strong engagement of the American society and of the American business community and the American local authorities."

Greenpeace France isn't so optimistic. It said Monday the summit was "a new failure of climate diplomacy. Macron above all produced anecdotal initiatives that badly hide his failure to raise ambition of the G-7 climate goals, and his own inaction in France."

David McHugh in Biarritz, France, and Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this report.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Aug. 27, the 239th day of 2019. There are 126 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 27, 2008, Barack Obama was nominated for president by the Democratic National Convention in Denver.

On this date:

In 1776, the Battle of Long Island began during the Revolutionary War as British troops attacked American forces who ended up being forced to retreat two days later.

In 1859, Edwin L. Drake drilled the first successful oil well in the United States, at Titusville, Pa.

In 1928, the Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed in Paris, outlawing war and providing for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In 1949, a violent white mob prevented an outdoor concert headlined by Paul Robeson (RAH'-buh-suhn) from taking place near Peekskill, New York. (The concert was held eight days later.)

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In 1963, author, journalist and civil rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois died in Accra, Ghana, at age 95.

In 1964, President Lyndon Baines Johnson accepted his party's nomination for a term in his own right, telling the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, "Let us join together in giving every American the fullest life which he can hope for."

In 1967, Brian Epstein, manager of the Beatles, was found dead in his London flat from an accidental overdose of sleeping pills; he was 32.

In 1975, Haile Selassie (HY'-lee sehl-AH'-see), the last emperor of Ethiopia's 3,000-year-old monarchy, died in Addis Ababa at age 83 almost a year after being overthrown.

In 1979, British war hero Lord Louis Mountbatten and three other people, including his 14-year-old grandson Nicholas, were killed off the coast of Ireland in a boat explosion claimed by the Irish Republican Army.

In 1989, the first U.S. commercial satellite rocket was launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida — a Delta booster carrying a British communications satellite, the Marcopolo 1.

In 2005, Coastal residents jammed freeways and gas stations as they rushed to get out of the way of Hurricane Katrina, which was headed toward New Orleans.

In 2006, a Comair CRJ-100 crashed after trying to take off from the wrong runway in Lexington, Ky., killing 49 people and leaving the co-pilot the sole survivor.

Ten years ago: Mourners filed past the closed casket of the late Sen. Edward Kennedy at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston. Jaycee Lee Dugard, kidnapped when she was 11, was reunited with her mother 18 years after her abduction in South Lake Tahoe, California. Alex Grass, 82, founder of the Rite Aid drugstore chain, died in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Five years ago: Both Israel's prime minister and Hamas declared victory in the Gaza war, though their competing claims left questions over future terms of their uneasy peace still lingering. The University of Southern California suspended cornerback Josh Shaw for 10 games after he confessed to lying to school officials about how he'd sprained his ankles, retracting his story about jumping off a balcony to save his drowning nephew. (Shaw reportedly jumped from the balcony of an apartment following an argument with his girlfriend; he was reinstated after authorities determined no criminal charges would be filed against him.)

One year ago: Under pressure to take part in the national remembrance of the late Arizona Sen. John McCain, with whom he had feuded, President Donald Trump tersely recognized McCain's "service to our country" and re-lowered the White House flag, which had been at half-staff only briefly after McCain's death. The Trump administration reached a preliminary deal with Mexico to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement. Simona Halep (HAL'-ehp) lost in the first round of the U.S. Open to Kaia Kanepi (KY'-uh kuh-NEP'-ee) of Estonia, becoming the first top-seeded woman to lose her opening match at the tournament in the half-century of the professional era.

Today's Birthdays: Author Lady Antonia Fraser is 87. Actor Tommy Sands is 82. Bluegrass singer-musician J.D. Crowe is 82. Actress Tuesday Weld is 76. Actor G.W. Bailey is 75. Rock singer-musician Tim Bogert is 75. Actress Marianne Sagebrecht is 74. Country musician Jeff Cook is 70. Actor Paul Reubens is 67. Rock musician Alex Lifeson (Rush) is 66. Actor Peter Stormare is 66. Actress Diana Scarwid is 64. Rock musician Glen Matlock (The Sex Pistols) is 63. Golfer Bernhard Langer is 62. Country singer Jeffrey Steele is 58. Gospel singer Yolanda Adams is 58. Movie director Tom Ford (Film: "Nocturnal Animals") is 58. Country musician Matthew Basford (Yankee Grey) is 57. Writer-producer Dean Devlin is 57. Rock musician Mike Johnson is 54. Rap musician Bobo (Cypress Hill) is 52. Country singer Colt Ford is 50. Actress Chandra Wilson is 50. Rock musician Tony Kanal (No Doubt) is 49. Actress Sarah Chalke is 43. Actor RonReaco (correct) Lee is 43. Rapper Mase is 42. Actress-singer Demetria McKinney is 41. Actor Aaron Paul is 40. Rock musician Jon Siebels (Eve 6) is 40. Actor Shaun Weiss is 40. Contemporary Christian musician Megan Garrett (Casting Crowns) is 39. Actor Kyle Lowder is 39. Actor Patrick J. Adams is 38. Actress Karla Mosley is 38. Actress Amanda Fuller is 35. Singer Mario is 33. Actress Alexa PenaVega is 31. Actor Ellar Coltrane is 25. Actress Savannah Paige Rae is 16.

Thought for Today: "Reality can destroy the dream; why shouldn't the dream destroy reality?" — G.E. Moore, British philosopher (1873-1958).

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