

Groton Daily Independent

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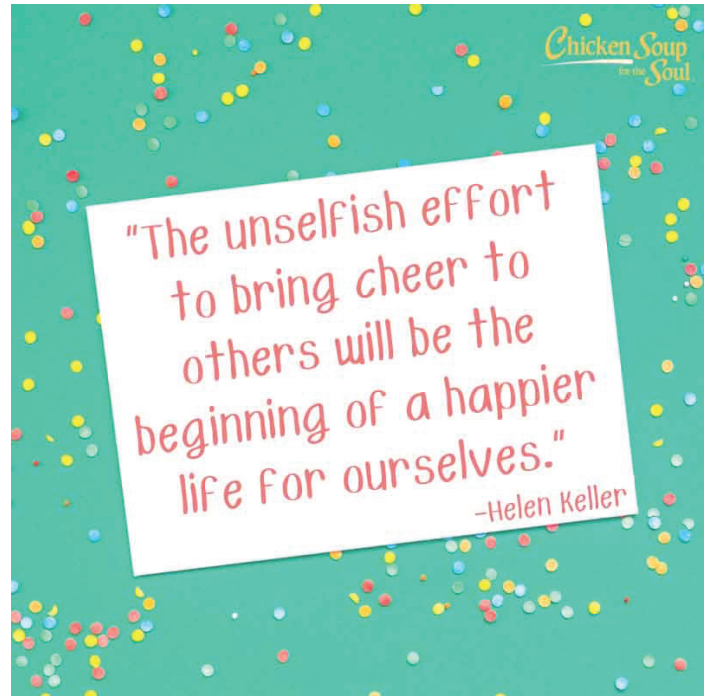
21- SD News Watch: Only half of S.D. students proficient in English; less than half in math and science

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Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

29 - Sunday

St. John's: Bible Study, 8 a.m.; Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10 a.m.

Emmanuel: worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10 a.m.

SEAS Catholic: service, 9 a.m.

C&MA: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; Worship, 10:45 a.m.

UMC: Fellowship, 10 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.; Nursing Home, 3 p.m.

Presbyterian: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Groton Area placed fifth in the Volleyball Pool Play held Saturday in the Pentagon in Sioux Falls. The following are the scores of the matches. We'll have more details tomorrow.

Pool A

Groton Area def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-13, 25-19

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Groton Area, 24-26, 25-20, 25-18

Quarterfinal

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Groton Area, 2-0

Fifth Place

Groton Area def. Sioux Valley, 2-1

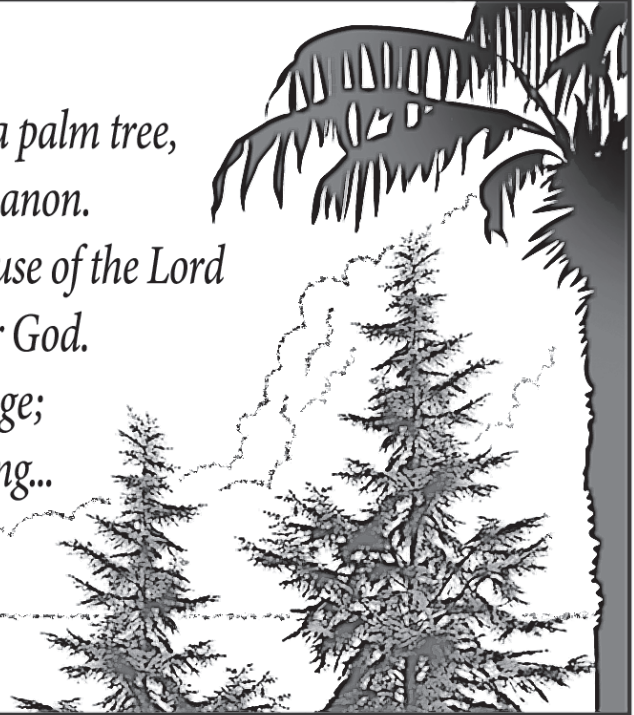
Sunday Extras



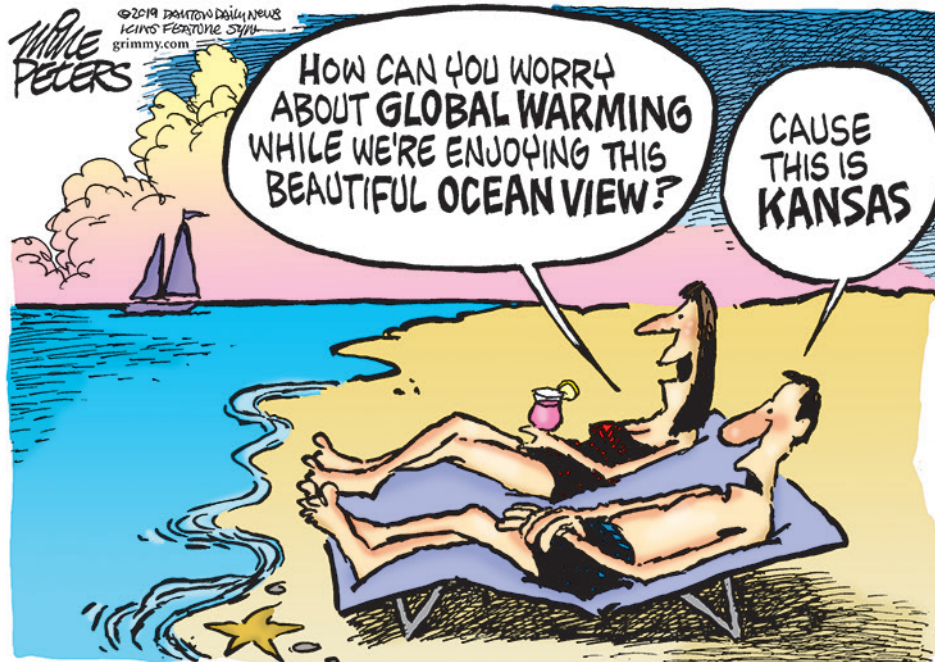
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
Those who are planted in the house of the Lord
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall still bear fruit in old age;
They shall be fresh and flourishing...*

PSALM 92:12-14



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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Acts in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. In 1 Kings 20, who besieged and made war against Samaria after gathering his forces? *Benhadad, Menahem, Rezin, Omri*

3. What king asked for the help of a woman who was a medium? *Jehu, Amaziah, Saul, Neco*

4. From 1 Samuel 19, whose life was saved when his wife put an idol into his bed? *Samson, David, Amon, Cyrus*

5. Who was the father of Elkanah? *Jeremiah, Philip, Esau, Jeroham*

6. From Esther 1, how many days did Ahasuerus' feast last? *2, 4, 7, 10*

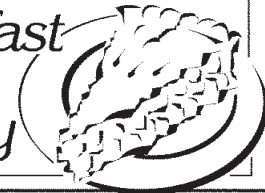
ANSWERS: 1) New; 2) Benhadad; 3) Saul; 4) David; 5) Jeroham; 6) 7

Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson's Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," now available in bookstores and online.

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Comfort foods

Made fast
and
healthy



by Healthy Exchanges

Chicken Waldorf Supreme

Just because there are only two at the table doesn't mean that you can't enjoy elegant main dishes. This autumn luncheon is a perfect example of what I mean.

- 1/2 cup unpeeled, cored and diced Red Delicious apple
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 cup sliced, cooked chicken breast
- 2 tablespoons raisins
- 3/4 cup diced celery
- 1/4 cup chopped green onion
- 2 tablespoons no-fat sour cream
- 1/4 cup fat-free mayonnaise
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon apple pie spice
- Sugar substitute to equal 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 cup shredded lettuce

1. In a medium bowl, combine apple and lemon juice. Stir in chicken, raisins, celery and onion. Add sour cream, mayonnaise, vanilla extract, apple pie spice and sugar substitute. Mix well to combine. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

2. Gently stir again just before serving. For each salad, place 1/2 cup shredded lettuce on a plate and spoon 1 cup chicken mixture over top. Serves 2.

• Each serving equals: About 211 calories, 3g fat, 23g protein, 23g carb., 374mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 2 1/2 Meat, 1 Fruit, 1/2 Starch

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FLASH GORDON

BY JIM KEEFE

9-22

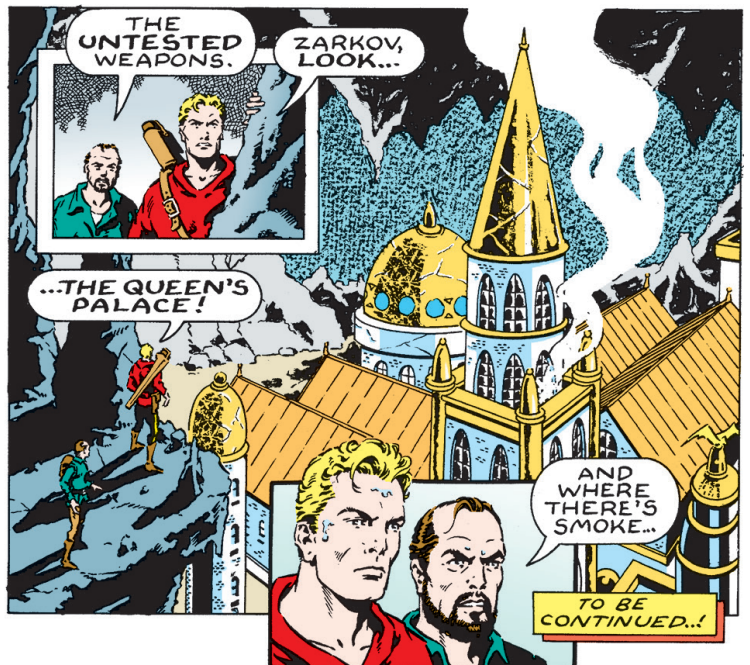
ON THE TRAIL OF A MAN CALLED BLAZE.

FLASH, THIS IS A BAD IDEA. WE SHOULD WAIT UNTIL YOU'RE FULLY RECOVERED.



NO CAN DO, DOC. THE QUEEN MAY NOT LIVE THAT LONG.

BESIDES, THE WEAPONS YOU JURY-RIGGED SHOULD LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD.



THE UNTESTED WEAPONS.

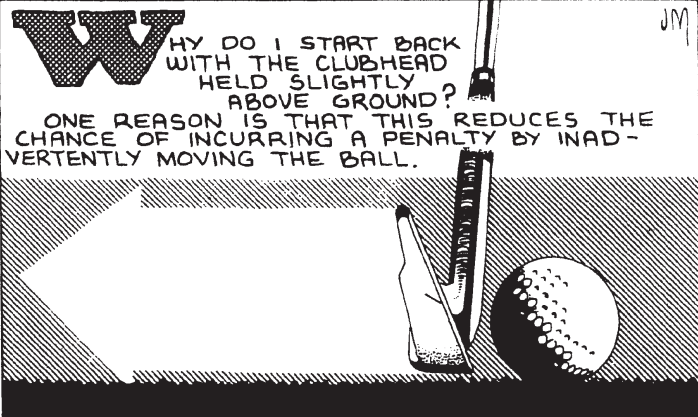
ZARKOV, LOOK...

...THE QUEEN'S PALACE!

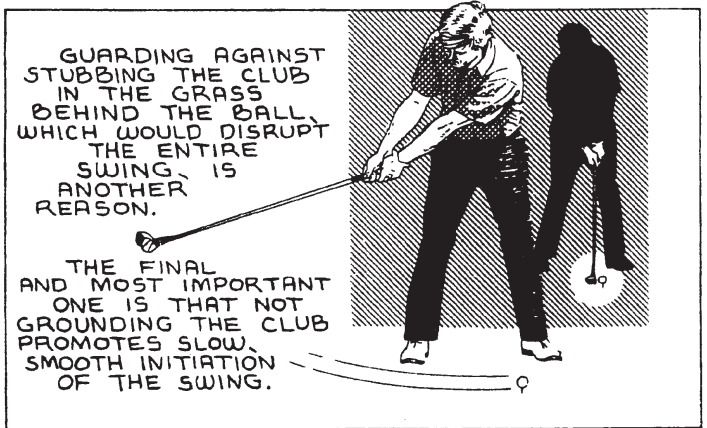
AND WHERE'S SMOKE...

TO BE CONTINUED..!

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



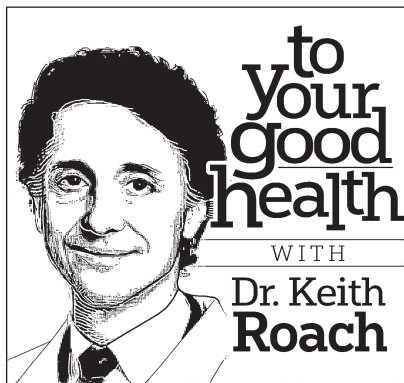
WHY DO I START BACK WITH THE CLUBHEAD HELD SLIGHTLY ABOVE GROUND? ONE REASON IS THAT THIS REDUCES THE CHANCE OF INCURRING A PENALTY BY INADVERTENTLY MOVING THE BALL.



GUARDING AGAINST STUBBING THE CLUB IN THE GRASS BEHIND THE BALL, WHICH WOULD DISRUPT THE ENTIRE SWING, IS ANOTHER REASON.

THE FINAL AND MOST IMPORTANT ONE IS THAT NOT GROUNDING THE CLUB PROMOTES SLOW, SMOOTH INITIATION OF THE SWING.

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Just How Safe Is Knee Replacement?

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am thinking of having a total knee replacement done, as recommended by my doctor. I have bone on bone in my knee. What is your opinion? A friend of a friend had one done three months ago and has had nothing but trouble. He has had two manipulations because he cannot bend past 95 degrees. He goes to physical therapy, but has seen no results. Does this happen often with knee replacement? How about stiffness? How long before a patient is as good as new? Would you recommend the surgery, and what percentage of patients have the issues he is having? — *Anon.*

ANSWER: Knee replacement (also called “total knee arthroplasty”) is one of the most effective surgeries performed, in terms of improving quality of life. Studies have shown that about 80% of people are satisfied with the outcome of their knee replacement. The reasons that the remainder are dissatisfied generally have to do with complications of surgery, including infection, nerve injury, instability and stiffness (the inability to properly flex the knee), which is the issue for your friend of a friend. Only about 5% of people have stiffness, according to a 2006 paper, and these mostly improved with manipulation, although some needed a second operation.

It is important to recognize the limitations of the surgery. You are never going to be as good as new — that is, as good as before the arthritis in the

knee developed. But most people are much better than where they started within three to six weeks of the surgery. Physical therapy after surgery is critical for success (but, as your friend shows, not a guarantee of success).

My own patients’ experiences have been largely favorable. I have seen some bad complications, but most people are very satisfied, and the most common regret I hear is that they had not done the procedure earlier. Eighty to 90% of knee replacements are expected to last 15-20 years.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Last year, my husband was seriously ill from a bacterial infection in his gallbladder. After inserting a drainage tube, they removed his gallbladder. He has done quite well, except for a strange side effect: Whenever he eats, it causes his left shoulder to hurt. Also, when he lies on his right side, it seems to hurt his left shoulder. Do you have an explanation for this mystery? — *L.F.*

ANSWER: I have a possible explanation. The pain nerves to your skin and bones are referred to as parietal pain fibers, and these localize very well: If your left toe hurts, there’s usually a problem with your left toe. The nerves to the organs are visceral fibers, and they do not localize well in the brain. Pain in the heart can feel like it’s in the left upper arm, the left side of the chest or the upper abdomen, depending on who you are.

Pain from the gallbladder most commonly shows up in the right upper quadrant of the abdomen, where it is located directly under the liver, but frequently feels like it is coming from the shoulder. This is called “referred” pain. Right-shoulder pain is more common than left, but I still think that your husband is feeling some referred pain, perhaps from some scar tissue.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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1. What kept the 1960 version of “Wild One” from reaching No. 1 on the chart?

2. The lyrics of which Bob Dylan song are thought to come from the Bible, Isaiah, Chapter 21, verses 5-9?

3. Name the singer who released “If You Really Love Me” on the “Where I’m Coming From” album.

4. Which group achieved international success when they released “Need You Tonight”?

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: “You never close your eyes anymore when I kiss your lips, And there’s no tenderness like before in your fingertips.”

Answers:

1. The Bobby Rydell song stayed at No. 2 for 16 weeks, kept from the top spot by the Percy Faith instrumental “Theme from A Summer Place.”

2. “All Along the Watchtower,” released in 1967. All the songs on his “John Wesley Harding” album were written after his 1966 motorcycle accident.

3. Stevie Wonder, in 1971.

4. INXS, in 1985.

5. “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’” by The Righteous Brothers, in 1964. DJs didn’t want to play the song because it was too long. Producer Phil Spector had to lie on the label to indicate that the song was 40 seconds shorter than it really was.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

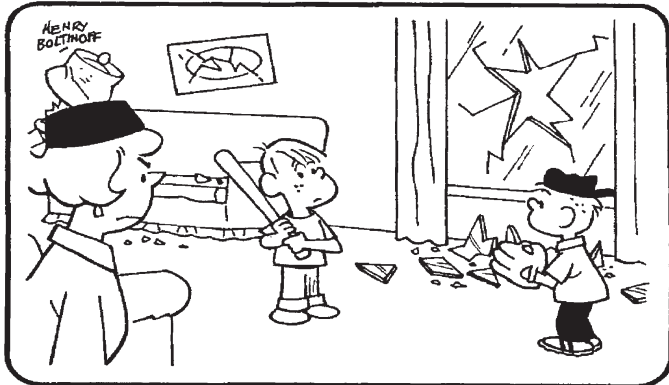
by Dave T. Phipps



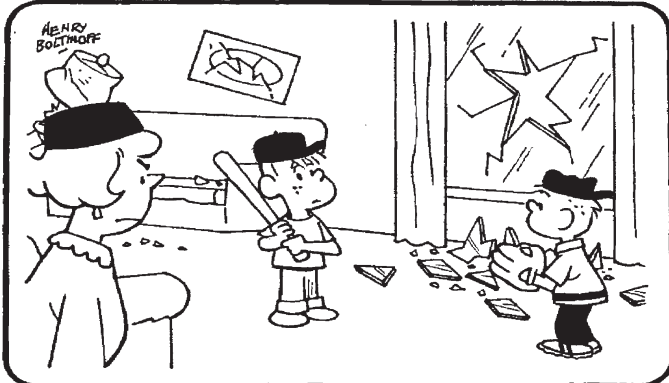
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF



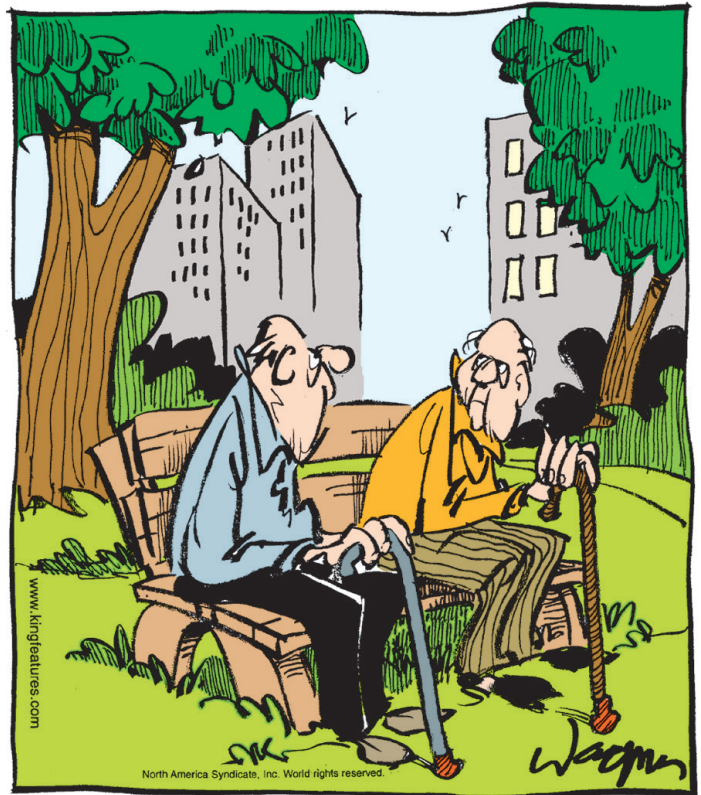
Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Catcher's shirt has a stripe. 2. Batter has a hat. 3. Mom's collar is different. 4. Sofa has no ruffe. 5. Picture is tilted differently. 6. There's more glass on floor.

GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}



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"Have you noticed the pigeons got tired of your stories?"



- “If you have a beautiful planter that has no drainage holes, you can pot your plant in a second pot that will fit inside. Put a few pebbles in the bottom of the pretty planter, then put your potted plant in. This way, the roots won’t rot in any excess water. You can cover any gap between the pots with a bit of moss or more pebbles.” —*K.D. in Georgia*

- Consider this your fall reminder to schedule a visit from a chimney sweep, if you haven’t already. As temperatures drop, you’ll be tempted to light up the fireplace, and you’ll want it checked for any animal intrusion, creosote buildup or mortar that needs repairing.

- “My dresser came with a glass panel that sits on top to protect the surface, but I didn’t like the look of it and just use a table runner across the top. Well, my daughter likes to play with slime (made from glue and other materials), and the glass is the perfect size when set on a table to make a pro-

tected, defined work surface. It’s easy to clean up after and very portable. Even though it’s glass, it’s very sturdy.” —*C.H. in Illinois*

- Flat paint will show fewer defects in a surface than glossier paint, experts say. When refinishing a piece of furniture or a wall that has seen better days, try to stay with a finish that’s less light-reflective.

- “Puzzles are fun and rewarding, but you need a dedicated surface. Try using the back of a canvas. You can find one with a size big enough for your puzzle, and the frame keeps everything contained and portable from room to room.” —*B.B. in Florida*

Send your tips to Now Here’s a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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HIP, HIP, HOORAY! The pennant seller is having a "banner" day. How many pennants can you find in the above picture?

Answer: If you found 30, then you're on the winning team.

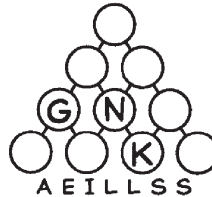
ODD MAN OUT!

Can you help this lad figure out which of the five words doesn't belong on the list pictured here?



Answer: The word ADDLE doesn't belong. In all of the other words, every other letter is a vowel.

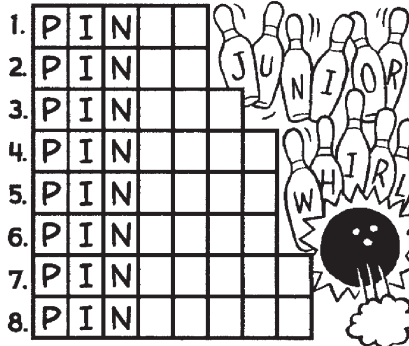
CHAIN REACTION! Take the seven letters printed below the diagram and place them in the circles so that eight four-letter words can be read, top to bottom, along the connecting lines. All the words will begin with the letter in the top circle.



Answers: Top to bottom, left to right: Sags, sage, sane, sank, sine, silk, still.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



A STRIKING PUZZLE!

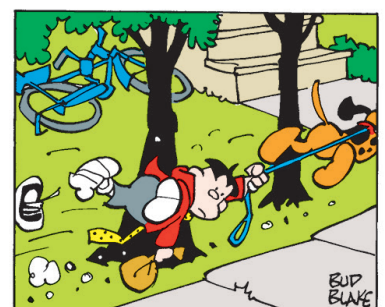
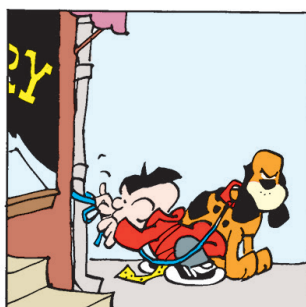
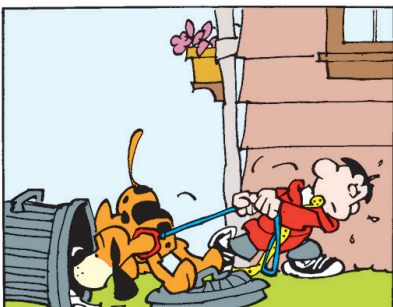
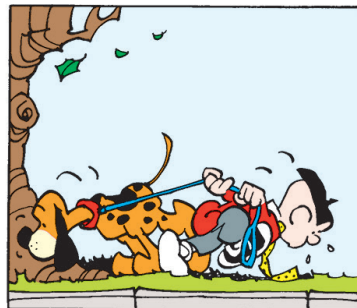
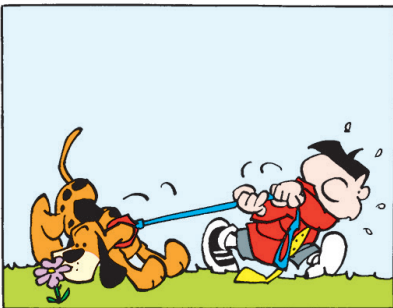
Try bowling a perfect word game by identifying all of these "PIN" words. Each one contains the word PIN. Using the following hints, see if you can "mark out" in less than five minutes.

1. Type of horse.
2. Longed for things past.
3. To hold down; shackle.
4. A popular action game.
5. A grasping tool.
6. Type of notched scissors.
7. A sleeveless dress.
8. Precision accuracy.

Answers: 1. Pinto. 2. Pined. 3. Pinion. 4. Pinball. 5. Pincers. 6. Pinking (shears). 7. Pinatore. 8. Pinpoint.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



BUD BLAKE

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Donkey
- 4 Portion of an act
- 9 Mischievous tyke
- 12 Hawaiian garland
- 13 Overuse the mirror
- 14 Ultra-modern prefix
- 15 Clarified
- 17 Auto fuel
- 18 Upper limb
- 19 Lack
- 21 Uses tweezers
- 24 Long story
- 25 A billion years
- 26 Male offspring
- 28 Jockey's handful

- 31 "No — luck!"
- 33 Phone bk. data
- 35 Winter forecast
- 36 Different
- 38 Charlotte's creation
- 40 Greek H
- 41 War god
- 43 Muffle
- 45 Landi of 1930s movies
- 47 Plant bristle
- 48 Lair
- 49 Didn't vote,

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12				13						14		
15			16							17		
			18				19		20			
21	22	23					24					
25				26		27		28			29	30
31			32		33		34		35			
36				37		38		39		40		
		41			42		43		44			
45	46						47					
48				49		50				51	52	53
54				55						56		
57				58						59		

- perhaps
- 8 Ingratiate
- 32 Towel embroidery word
- 54 Rd.
- 9 Deep-seated
- 34 Tranquilizes
- 55 Shunned one
- 10 Vegan's no-no
- 37 Auction, so to speak
- 56 Wall climber
- 11 Luxurious
- 39 Caveat word
- 57 Central
- 16 Fond du —, Wis.
- 42 Cavalry sword
- 58 Obliterate
- 20 A long time
- 44 Blackbird
- 59 Grant opponent
- 21 Mexican money
- 45 Cheese choice

DOWN

- 1 Heady brew
- 22 LummoX
- 46 Jeans-maker Strauss
- 2 Gender
- 23 "Django —" (film title)
- 50 Hot tub
- 3 Taste a drink
- 27 Promptly
- 51 Zero
- 4 Activates
- 29 Brief letter
- 52 First lady
- 5 Shade of red
- 30 Pavlova portrayal
- 53 Coloring agent
- 6 Still, in verse
- 7 Requirements

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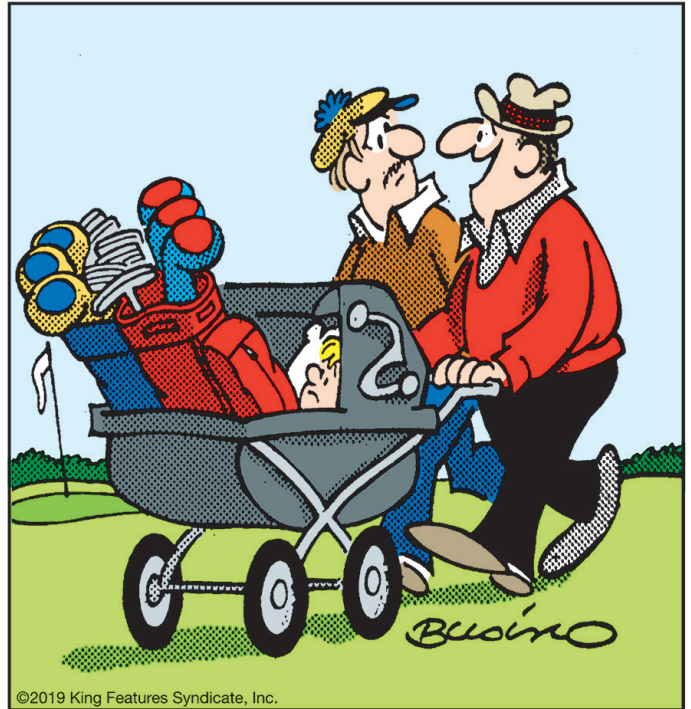
— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

A	S	S		S	C	E	N	E		I	M	P
L	E	I		P	R	E	E	N		N	E	O
E	X	P	L	A	I	N	E	D		G	A	S
			A	R	M			D	E	A	R	T
P	L	U	C	K	S		S	A	G	A		
E	O	N		S	O	N		R	E	I	N	S
S	U	C	H		N	O	S		S	N	O	W
O	T	H	E	R		W	E	B		E	T	A
		A	R	E	S			D	E	A	D	E
E	L	I	S	S	A		A	W	N			
D	E	N		A	B	S	T	A	I	N	E	D
A	V	E		L	E	P	E	R		I	V	Y
M	I	D		E	R	A	S	E		L	E	E

LAFF - A - DAY



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 "Stop worrying — she just said to take the baby out for a walk — she didn't say WHERE."

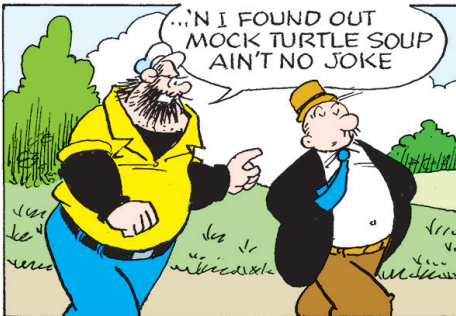
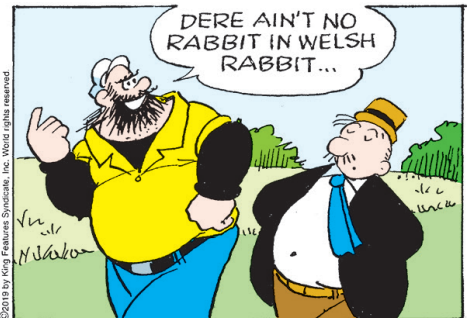
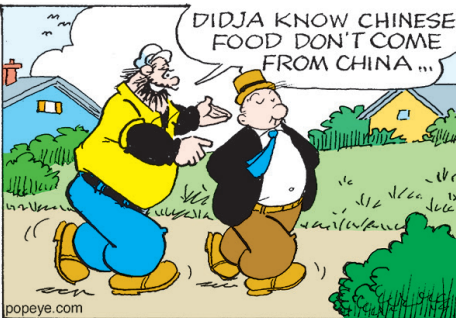
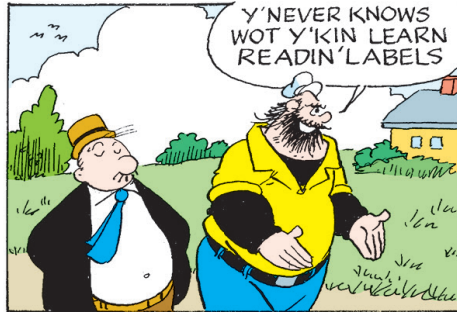
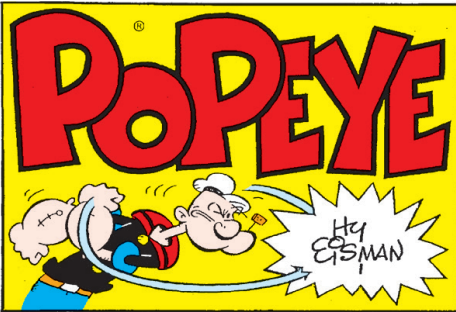
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



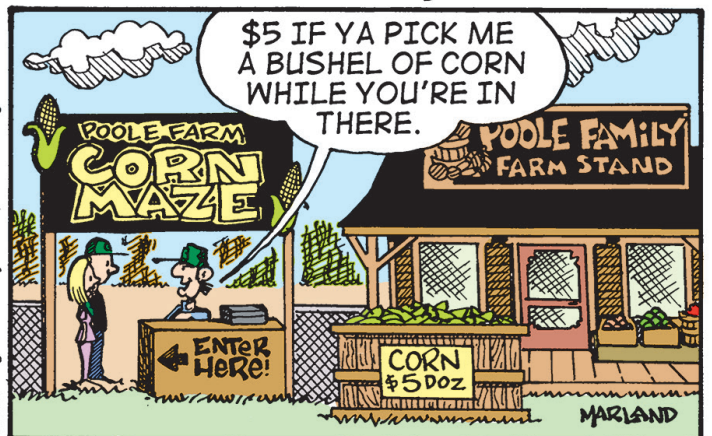
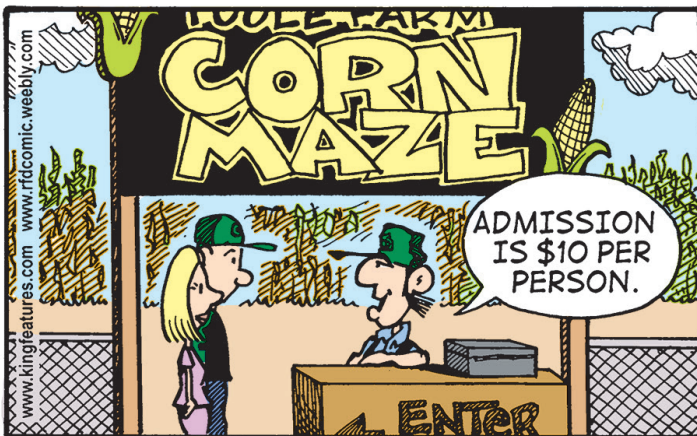
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R.F.D.

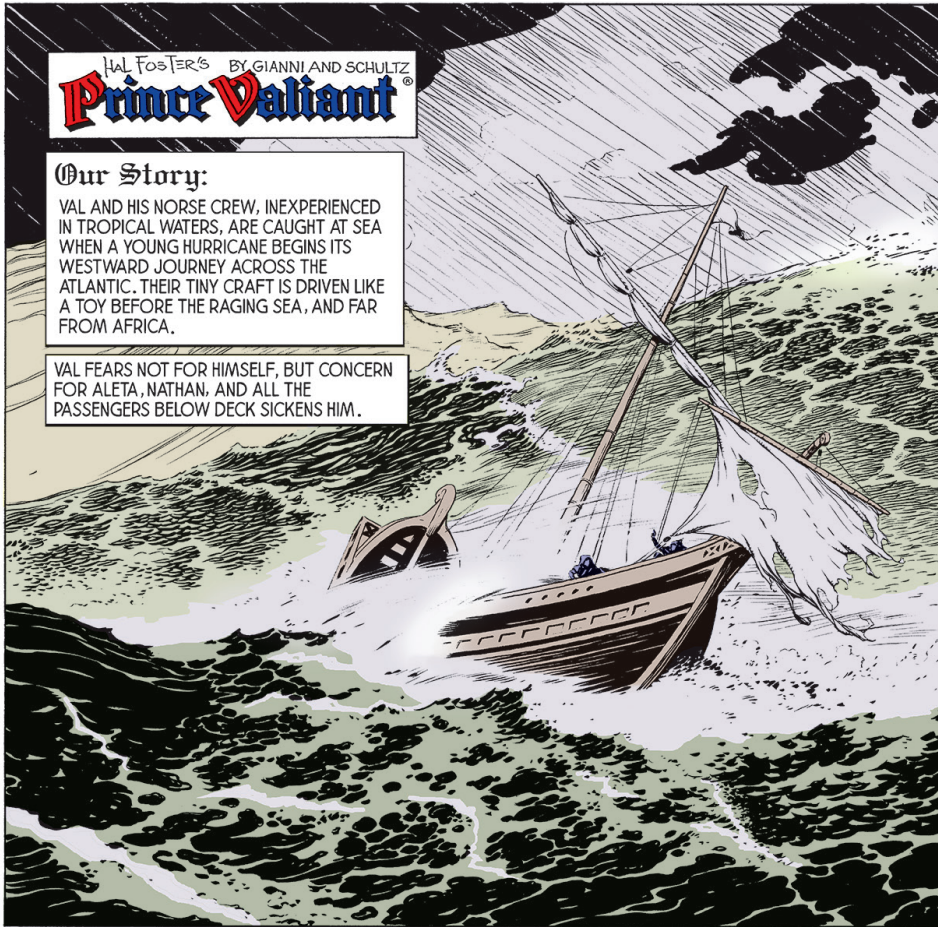
by Mike Marland



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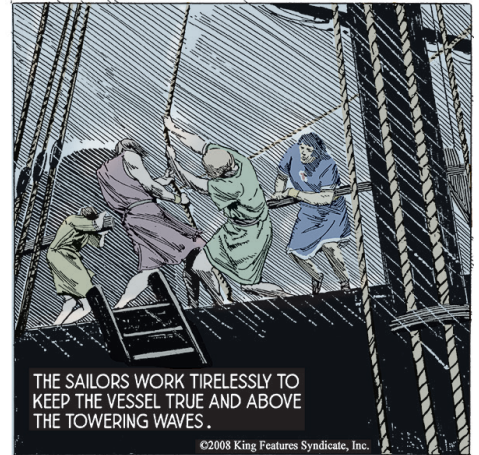


HAL FOSTER'S BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ
Prince Valiant

Our Story:

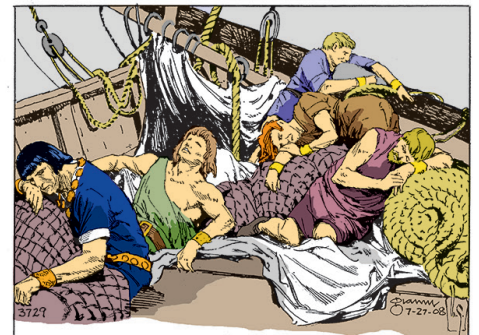
VAL AND HIS NORSE CREW, INEXPERIENCED IN TROPICAL WATERS, ARE CAUGHT AT SEA WHEN A YOUNG HURRICANE BEGINS ITS WESTWARD JOURNEY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC. THEIR TINY CRAFT IS DRIVEN LIKE A TOY BEFORE THE RAGING SEA, AND FAR FROM AFRICA.

VAL FEARS NOT FOR HIMSELF, BUT CONCERN FOR ALETA, NATHAN, AND ALL THE PASSENGERS BELOW DECK SICKENS HIM.



THE SAILORS WORK TIRELESSLY TO KEEP THE VESSEL TRUE AND ABOVE THE TOWERING WAVES.

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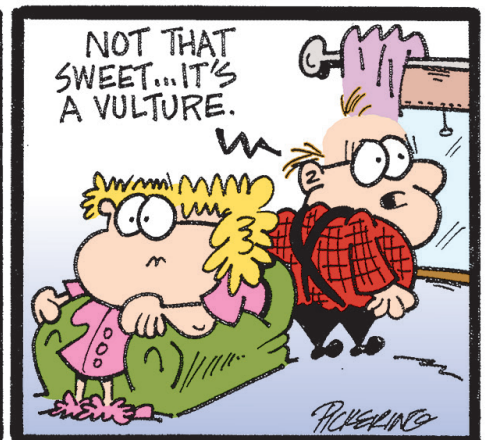
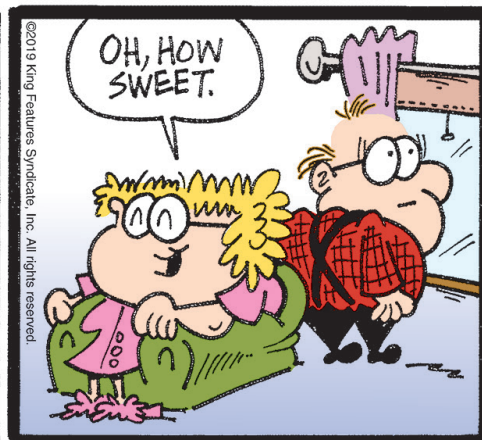
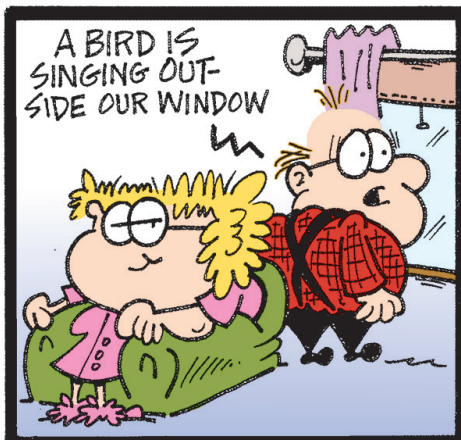


FINALLY, AFTER THREE DAYS, THE WIND AND RAIN SUBSIDE, AND THE SWELLS LESSEN. VAL AND THE OTHERS COLLAPSE IN EXHAUSTION.

NEXT *The Sea of Mists*

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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PICKERING

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Estimated Increase in Social Security

Grab your calculator. Those in the know are making an educated guess about the amount of our Social Security increase for 2020. The Senior Citizens League estimates that the increase will be 1.6%, below the raise we got last year. This will mean an average net gain of \$23.40 per month for those receiving the average \$1,460 per month benefit. In 2019, that benefit amount netted an increase of \$40.90 per month.

The Social Security Administration will come out later with the final number, but the Senior Citizens League has used the Consumer Price Index for 2019 up to the end of the third quarter for its calculations.

At the same time, says the Senior Citizens League, our Medicare Part

B premium is expected to go from \$135.50 to \$144.30 per month. Doing the math, that nets the average benefit recipient an extra \$14.60 per month. Some of us, however, are protected: If the Part B premium goes up more than the increased Social Security amount, the Part B premium will be adjusted to make sure there isn't a net loss.

What about our other expenses though? If we have a drug policy or a supplemental Medicare plan, chances are that the two of those will see increases that exceed the extra \$14.60 per month. Then there's the small matter of the price of fresh vegetables, beef, fish, eggs, dairy and cereal. Based on the Consumer Price Index, expect an increase in those prices, even before we get to 2020. Those of us who pay rent generally see an annual increase, too. Is there any chance the landlord will skip a year?

To see all the things the SCL is doing for us, go online to seniorsleague.org.

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1. Washington's Bryce Harper set a major-league mark in 2017 for most runs scored in the month of April (32). Who had held the record?

2. In the 1960s, three major-league pitchers compiled seasons in which they won at least 20 more games than they lost. Name two of them.

3. Who succeeded Woody Hayes as head coach of the Ohio State Buckeyes football team?

4. Who holds the Oklahoma City Thunder record for most 3-pointers in a playoff game?

5. When was the last time before 2019 that the New York Islanders were swept in an NHL playoff series?

6. Track star Usain Bolt of Jamaica holds the world record for a 200-meter race (19.19 seconds in 2009). Who holds the U.S. mark?

7. Who was the last golfer before Brooks Koepka in 2019 to go wire to wire in winning the PGA Championship?

Answers

1. Colorado's Larry Walker, with 29 in 1997.

2. Whitey Ford in 1961 (25-4), Sandy Koufax in 1962 (25-5) and Denny McLain in 1968 (31-6).

3. Earle Bruce, who coached the Buckeyes from 1979 to 1987.

4. Paul George, with eight 3-pointers made versus Utah in 2018.

5. It was 1994, versus the New York Rangers.

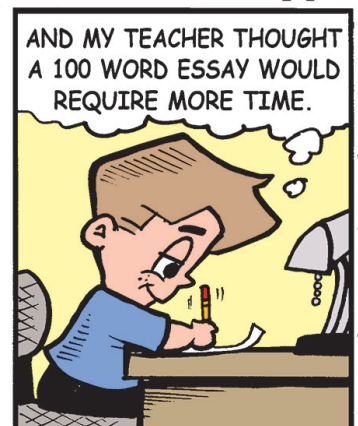
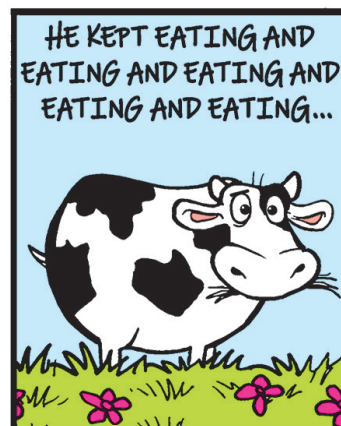
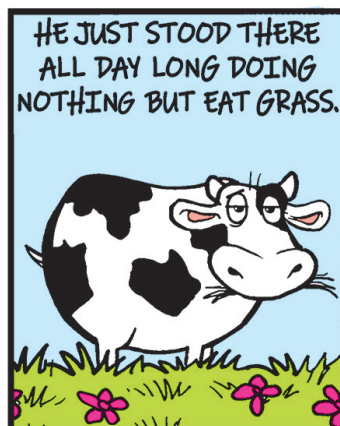
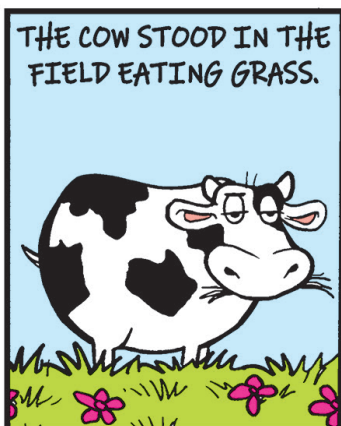
6. Michael Johnson, who ran the 200 meters in 19.32 seconds in 1996.

7. Hal Sutton, in 1983.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





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



Angels in Adoption

Nearly seven million Americans in the United States are adopted. In 2015, more than six-hundred seventy thousand children spent time in our foster care system. One out of every twenty-five families with children have an adoptive child. Families adopt for a number of reasons, but whatever the reason, it is a beautiful and selfless decision.

Joining the U.S. House of Representatives has its rewards—one of them being the people I come across that I normally wouldn't outside of this job. This year, I had the privilege of nominating Kevin and Megan Kinney for the Angels in Adoption Award. Kevin serves as a Highway Patrolman and Megan is an accomplished author and stay at home mother. After they had their oldest daughter Emma, they felt called by God to participate in South Dakota's foster care program.



The Kinney Family from Rapid City

Soon after joining the foster care system, they brought three sisters—Angel, Alicia, and Kylee—into their home. All of the girls were under the age of three when Kevin and Megan became their foster parents.

The Kinney's instantly fell in love with their new additions and decided to take the big step and adopt them, making Angel, Alicia, and Kylee permanent members of the Kinney clan. Even though the Kinney's knew it would be an adventure to adopt all three young children, they understood the importance of not separating the bond of sisterhood.

Every child deserves to be a part of a family that loves and supports them. Stories like these hit close to home for me and my staff. In preparing this week's column, I asked one of my staffers, who is adopted, for input. He was born to an 18-year-old girl out of wedlock. Unable to afford a child at the time, she decided to put him up for adoption. He was adopted by a great family that lives just down the road from me in Mitchell. He is forever grateful for his parents' leap of faith and for his birthmother in allowing him to experience the full life he is living today. Adoption creates a ripple effect of love. It's an antidote to agonizing, painful situations. My staffer described it as the gift of life.

The Kinney's are more than deserving of the Angels in Adoption Award. Folks ranging from Muhammad Ali to First Lady Laura Bush have been recipients of this award. I'm proud to partner with an organization like Angels in Adoption which celebrates families, individuals, and organizations across the country that have made a remarkable contribution to children in need of families. Please join me in thanking the Kinney's, and the rest of our adoptive and foster families in South Dakota, for stepping up when children need them the most.

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SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR
KRISTI NOEM



Grit and Tradition

Many of my favorite childhood memories took place on the back of a horse. Whether I was in the rodeo, chasing cattle, hunting with my siblings, or riding through the hills, there was always something so special about engaging with nature. In many ways, it was through our experiences outside that we learned resiliency, hard work, and a love for the outdoors. We learned grit and perseverance.

This year, South Dakota has needed that grit. Everywhere I go, I hear how families, businesses, and farms have been impacted by the storms. As South Dakotans, we are used to extreme weather. But the persistent wet conditions, starting with the bomb cyclone in March and the heavy rain every few weeks since then, has created a slow-rolling natural disaster of epic proportions. For many, it's been devastating.

In the middle of it all, though, shines that South Dakota grit. Many farmers face the most difficult growing conditions they've ever seen, but every morning, they climb into their combines hoping for a better day. Employers are experiencing workforce shortages and a lull in business because of the difficult ag economy. Yet every day, they turn on the lights and continue demonstrating hospitality and kindness. Neighbors help neighbors. People serve people. And in the face of adversity, we look for the good. We lend a helping hand. We celebrate our traditions – the things that bring us together.

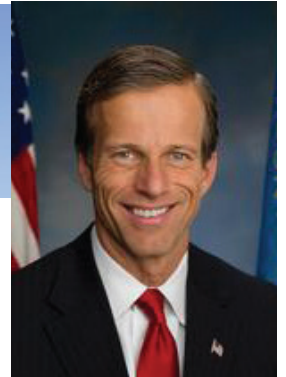
In late September, we celebrated one of those traditions at the annual buffalo roundup in Custer State Park. I joined cowboys and cowgirls on horseback during a cool fall morning as we corralled 1,300 stampeding buffalo through the valley in Custer. The power and force behind the herd paralleled the beauty displayed all around us. The crisp air marked the continued tradition South Dakotans have enjoyed for generations.

See, the roundup is a unique tradition. While it's a tip of the hat to our historic past when millions of buffalo roamed the Great Plains, it's also an opportunity to showcase our state's unique beauty to business leaders and prospects looking to expand their operations to South Dakota. This year, these businesses had a front row seat to our grit. Whether it's recovering from storm damage or launching a new business venture, South Dakotans are second to none when it comes to helping each other and getting things done. It was truly a special time to put our state on display, celebrate everything we have to offer, and show the potential that lies within our people.

South Dakota is the best place to live. It's the best place to start a business. It's the best place to raise a family. We've gotten through tough times before, and we'll get through this year, too. To be a South Dakotan is to celebrate tradition in the face of adversity. To have grit.

I'm proud of our state. I'm proud of our traditions. I couldn't imagine living anywhere else.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Realizing the Joy of Being a Dad

Every once in a while, you experience one of those occasions where you stop to appreciate how blessed you are. Our family had one of those times recently when our oldest daughter, Brittany, was inducted into her collegiate hall of fame.

When our daughters were growing up, we encouraged them to try different activities at school. Of course, I wanted the girls to play basketball. They both tried it to appease me, but neither of them liked it, nor were they very good at it (as I think both girls would freely admit today).

Soccer seemed to be a better fit for Larissa, our youngest daughter, where she excelled, but that wasn't where Brittany would find her niche either. However, as I observed Brittany on the soccer field, I saw that she had a nice, long stride, and I encouraged her to join track and field. It was running that turned out to be her gift.

Brittany came onto the running scene during a very historic period in South Dakota. She got to run with, and against, some of the most competitive and accomplished track and cross country athletes the state has ever seen. Brittany was blessed with some talent, but she had a powerful work ethic, a quality that serves people well in running sports. We watched her battle through injuries to experience a high level of success as a high school athlete.

Of course, we hoped she would compete in South Dakota as a college athlete, but she got a full-ride offer to run at Belmont University, a small Division I school in Nashville, Tennessee – and run she did. She won back-to-back conference cross country championships and was twice named to the NCAA Division I "All South Regional Team." She won numerous other awards, all of which contributed to her hall of fame induction. It was a well-deserved acknowledgement that all the hard work she put in through the years had paid off.

But as we watched her on the stage that night, sharing her remarks at the induction ceremony, I saw something else. I saw that little red-haired, pony-tailed girl all grown up. I heard her talk about the gift God had given her and how she had wanted to use it for His glory. I saw the character and courage that He had formed in her as she fought through an eating disorder and other challenges that came with succeeding as a college athlete. And I saw a confident wife, mother, and professional who continues to live life with the same sense of purpose that enabled her to log the thousands of miles that landed her on the hall of fame stage that night.

For a brief moment, everything else I do in life paled in comparison to the joy that comes with being a dad – and on that night, the dad of a hall of famer. Congratulations, Brittany!

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Constitution Day a Reminder of Founding Fathers' Vision for America

Each September, Americans celebrate Constitution Day. On Sept. 17, 1787, our Founding Fathers signed the U.S. Constitution, the most sacred document in our nation's history. The Constitution established the three branches of our government and still to this day protects the rights of each American citizen. In the Senate, I work to uphold the intent of the Constitution every day. As President Abraham Lincoln once said, "Don't interfere with anything in the Constitution. That must be maintained, for it is the only safeguard of our liberties."

As a member of the legislative branch, our Constitutional role is to write laws—we do not have the power or authority to enforce laws or interpret the laws. Those powers were given to the executive branch and the judicial branch, respectively, when the founders wrote the Constitution. Their goal was to create a separation of powers, so no one branch of government could accumulate more power than the other two.

A system of checks and balances was created to prevent tyranny. Keep in mind, colonists first came to America to escape tyrannical rule. So, when our Founding Fathers sought to establish a new government, they worked to make sure power could not be concentrated by an individual or even a few people. As an example of our system of checks and balances, the president has the authority to nominate federal judges and other executive branch officials, but he cannot simply "hire" them. They go through a thorough vetting process in the Senate to establish their qualifications for the job to which they have been nominated, including a full committee hearing, before senators take a vote on their confirmation.

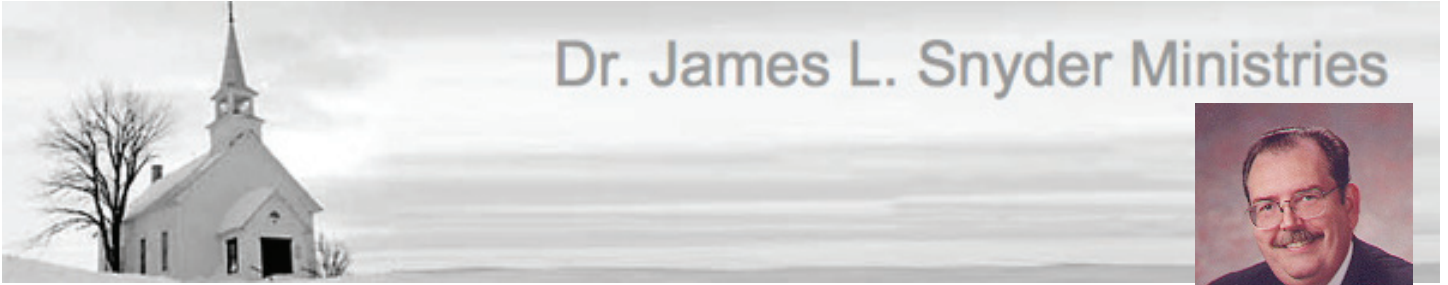
I often think about the deliberations and challenges our Founding Fathers experienced when they were drafting the Constitution. They had differing beliefs and opinions about what the future United States should look like. But at the end of the day, they worked together, indulged the views of their colleagues and wrote the framework for our system of government that has lasted more than 200 years.

We can learn a lot from our Founding Fathers. In our current divided government, Republicans and Democrats disagree with each other daily. That doesn't mean we can't work to find bipartisan solutions to the problems we face as a nation. In fact, we do work together on many issues, most of the time! If we have a common goal, we can work together, and the one commonality we all share is that we're Americans first and foremost.

We want to leave our country in better shape for future generations. We may just have different ideas about how to do it, and that's alright. Like our Founding Fathers, I will continue to seek to build consensus, uphold the rights of American citizens as outlined in the Constitution and work to pass legislation that preserves the greatness of our nation for years to come.

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To Grin or Not to Grin, Is My Dilemma

Through the years, I have experienced one dilemma after another.

I remember my father once told me, "Son, when life delivers you a dilemma, make lemonade out of it." To which I looked at him with a big grin and said, "Is there any dilemma I can make a root beer out of it?"

My father did not grin back.

This may have been the beginning of my career as a grinner. Rarely a day goes by that I do not find something to grin about. I have earned a Ph.D. in Grinology.

One problem I have discovered in this is that I do not know when not to grin. This has caused me a dilemma without any lemonade whatsoever or root beer.

On my wedding day, I grinned all day long and nobody ever had to ask me the question, "What are you grinning about?" Everybody knew.

I never had any problem with grinning and nobody ever challenged me about my grinning. I guess it is just my nature to grin about everything.

After my wedding, however, everything changed. Most of it for the good I must confess. I have no regrets or anything of that nature. While I am saying this, you can imagine I am grinning. Nothing has made me happier in life than marrying the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

At the time she was not the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, but as time went by and I became a pastor she took on the role. I'm not sure if she was born with the gifts and talents to take on this role, or if she learned step-by-step what it takes.

That being said, I can look back in my life and I can grin about everything.

Then things changed. By things, I mean me. It was a very simple thing that happened and could happen to anybody.

My wife and I were sitting in the living room having a cup of coffee and talking. As we were talking unbeknownst to me, I was grinning. It is something that happens automatically to me.

"What are you," my wife said in a very somber tone, "grinning about?"

I thought I was in trouble at first. I did not understand what she was talking about my grinning. I simply looked at her and stated, "Huh."

"You're grinning!"

"Oh," I said, "I was just thinking about the first time we met." Then I laughed heartily.

"What was so funny about that?"

That was the beginning of trying to explain why I grinned all the time. I explained to her how that day was the real beginning of my life. Then, she grinned. That began a wonderful conversation of those beginning days of our life.

So often, something happens and I find myself grinning.

I well remember the time my wife was walking around the house everywhere. I stopped her and said, "What are you doing?"

"I'm looking for my glasses."

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I thought I was being set up so I grinned very cheerfully.

"What are you grinning about?"

The way she said it made me take the situation rather seriously. I did not know what kind of trouble I was in for or if she was setting me up for something.

"Have you," she snapped, "seen my glasses?"

I did not know what to say because I could see her glasses on the top of her head where she often puts them.

Then she discovered where her glasses were and just looked at me. I was still grinning.

Recently, she had some problems with her back and I called the ambulance to take her to the local ER. I took my two daughters with me because both were medically trained, one a registered nurse the other an EMT.

My wife was in awful pain and we could barely move her. The local ambulance crew took her to the ER and the doctors begin to work on her.

One of the medications they used was some form of morphine. I let my daughters oversee that because that was completely above my pay scale.

Soon the medications were working and her pain was beginning to rescind. We all were relieved.

On the wall was a very nice picture of a landscape with trees and bushes and so forth. I noticed my wife looking at that picture and then she said, "Isn't a very nice picture of a pickle?"

She then looked at me and said, "What are you grinning about?"

One of my daughters said, "I guess the medication is starting to kick in."

It took us a day or two to explain that it was not a picture of a pickle, but rather a picture of grass and trees.

I have been enjoying my grinning ever since. Occasionally my wife will look at me and say, "You're not still grinning about the pickle are you?"

"Why no," I say, trying to hide a grin, "have you found your glasses yet?"

Trust me when I say, she did not grin back at me.

Thinking about this I was reminded of one of David's Psalms. "Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them" (Psalm 126:2).

My philosophy has been, find something every day to grin about and you will have a happy life along with fresh lemonade.



Only half of S.D. students proficient in English; less than half in math and science

By: Nick Lowrey

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem said she is disappointed in recent statewide standardized test scores indicating that just over half of students were proficient in English language and fewer than half showed proficiency in math and science.

The results of the South Dakota Department of Education 2019 Report Card, based on standardized tests, showed that about 54% of students tested in grades three through eight and in 11th grade showed proficiency in reading and writing. Only about 47% of those same students were proficient in math for their respective grade levels, and roughly 40% of students were proficient in science.

Gov. Noem told South Dakota News Watch that she was unimpressed with the results during an interview two days after the statewide report card was released to the public on Sept. 17.

"I'm not happy with those numbers and we are having that conversation as we speak," Noem said. "We just got those numbers and we will be having conversations about how to improve those numbers for our students."

Despite a half-cent sales tax increase passed in 2016 that generated new revenue to boost pay for South Dakota's roughly 9,700 teachers, student test scores have not increased since then. Over the last three academic years, statewide proficiency scores for math, reading and writing have remained essentially flat. The scores for science proficiency actually fell from the 2017-18 school year, when the science test was first administered, to the 2018-19 school year.

At least part of the reason scores haven't increased is that South Dakota started using a newer, more difficult assessment test during the 2016-17 school year. Comparing results from the old test to the new test isn't fair, state Education Secretary Ben Jones said. The biennially administered National Assessment of Educational Progress, which has used, essentially the same testing methods since 2003, shows flat scores for reading between 2015 and 2017, while math scores rose slightly between 2015 and 2017.

A deeper look at the student test data show that South Dakota's education system — which includes about 135,000 students at 681 schools in 149 districts — is falling short in some specific population groups.

One of the most persistent and pervasive struggles has been in the area of Native American student achievement. Statewide, just 23% of Native American students tested as proficient in reading and writing. The numbers were worse for math at 14% proficient and science at 13% proficient.

The on-time graduation rate for Native American students was 30 percentage points lower than the state average, at around 54% statewide. Native American students' rate of high school completion by the age of 21 was 66%, 24 percentage points below the state's total student population.

Another area of concern has been the achievement gap among economically disadvantaged students, Jones said. South Dakota defines economically disadvantaged students as those who qualify for free or



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reduced-price lunches and the state report card shows such students finish high school at lower rates and tend to score lower on assessment tests than those without financial disadvantages. Statewide, 36% of economically disadvantaged students tested as proficient in reading and writing, 28% were deemed proficient in math and 25% were shown to be proficient in science.

There is some correlation between an individual district's performance and the number of economically disadvantaged students enrolled there.

In Brandon Valley, one of the state's best performing districts as measured by test scores, there were 442 economically disadvantaged students who took the state assessment tests last year, comprising about 20% of the district's test-takers. Overall, 72% of the district's students were deemed to be proficient in reading and writing, 66% were proficient in math and 57% were proficient in science. Meanwhile, about 54% of the district's economically disadvantaged students were deemed proficient in reading and writing, 46% were proficient in math and 40% were proficient in science.

Roughly 55% of the students who took the state assessment tests in the Huron school district, meanwhile, were considered economically disadvantaged. Overall, 47% of the district's students tested as proficient in reading and writing, 39% were considered proficient in math and 32% were deemed proficient in science. Economically disadvantaged students in the district tested as 36% proficient in reading and writing, 29% were proficient in math and 19% were proficient in science.

"It's challenging to teach reading, writing and arithmetic when a child is hungry, when a child is upset because of something not in that child's control," said Mary McCorkle, president of the South Dakota Education Association that represents teachers.

At least part of the state's struggle to address the Native American and economically disadvantaged student achievement gap is that the state's data collection practices have been fairly inconsistent, Jones said. Standardized assessment tests didn't get too much weight in the state's education system until about 2001, when the federal No Child Left Behind Act became law. The act forced states to begin evaluating schools using standard metrics and then report the results to the federal Department of Education as a condition of receiving federal aid dollars.

South Dakota's assessment regime has undergone several major changes over the years between legislative battles over the Common Core national education standards and efforts to devise a better testing system, Jones said. The current version of the state's science assessment, for example, has only been in place for two full academic years, meaning there isn't enough data yet to draw strong conclusions. Inconsistent data has made identifying trends more difficult which, in turn, has made figuring out what to do about problem areas more challenging, Jones said.

For the last four years, though, South Dakota has been using the same assessments for math as well as reading and writing for four years, Jones said. There's enough information now to begin finding solutions. At Noem's direction, Jones said he has assembled a committee of education officials and state leaders in order to address the state's achievement gaps.

"We're on the verge of those decisions," Jones said. "I think we'll have some recommendations in a fairly timely manner."



Ben Jones
South Dakota Secretary
of Education

Standardized tests a snapshot of achievement

Standardized tests have taken on greater importance in the U.S. education system in recent years as national education officials and policymakers have sought ways to compare and grade student achievement between states, districts and population groups.

Yet despite the recent poor results in South Dakota, some education officials say the test scores are only a single snapshot of student performance and cannot paint a full picture of student knowledge or achievement. They note that some national statistics and rankings show South Dakota students are actually performing better than some of their peers.

McCorkle said there are many factors at play when it comes to education quality that cannot be accounted for in a single test.

"It's easy to look at a report card and assign a positive or a negative to a number without going below the surface," McCorkle said. "I think students are more than a four-hour test score."

About 84% of South Dakota's class of 2019 passed required math, English and science courses on top of other requirements and also graduated on time, state data show. Another 6% were projected to graduate before they turn 21, according to the state report card. Overall, the state high school completion rate was projected to be 90%.

The state report card also said that nearly two-thirds of state high school students passed at least one course that could result in earning a college or tech school credit or toward certification in a skilled trade. Meanwhile, 56% of students were deemed assessment ready, meaning they were proficient on at least one state assessment test. About 48% of state students both tested as proficient and passed a dual credit, Advanced Placement or trade-preparation class to earn the distinction of being college or career ready.

About 67% of state high school graduates are going on to higher education of some type. Roughly half of the state's high school diploma holders go on to seek a four-year degree. Another 16% pursue two-year degrees. To enroll at a public university in South Dakota, a student needs a composite ACT score of 18 or to be in the top 60% of their class or to maintain at least a 2.6 grade point average throughout high school.

The state's six public universities had an average freshman retention rate of 72% for the 2018-19 school year. Roughly 63% of students who started college finished within six years, according to the South Dakota Board of Regents.

Looking beyond South Dakota's borders provides some positive context for the state's statistical picture, at least when it comes to college-bound students. South Dakotans who take the ACT score slightly higher, on average, than other states that see similar numbers of students take that test. South Dakota students



Mary McCorkle, president of the South Dakota Education Association, said standardized test scores are only one measure of student achievement and should not be looked upon as the most important measure of learning.

Photo: Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

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averaged a score of 21.9 in 2018, very close to scores in Iowa, where students' average score was 21.8, and in Kansas where students averaged 21.6.

The federal Department of Education's National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, which evaluates fourth, eighth and 12th grade students' skills in reading, math, and science also shows that South Dakota's students, on average, are faring pretty well when compared to their peers.

In 2017, the latest year for which NAEP data is available, 69% of South Dakota fourth-graders showed at least a basic level of reading comprehension, two percent more than fourth graders at the national level. In math, 83% of South Dakota fourth-graders showed a basic or better understanding of math, which was four percentage points higher than the national number.

South Dakota eighth-graders also outperformed

STUDENT TEST SCORES BY DISTRICT

Here is a look at how students fared in terms of proficiency in three subject areas, based on standardized tests, from the 2019 South Dakota Report Card for several school districts across the state.

District	English	Math	Science
Aberdeen	60%	51%	38%
Britton-Hecla	59%	44%	52%
Brookings	59%	46%	48%
Brandon Valley	72%	66%	57%
Douglas (Box Elder)	55%	48%	39%
Frederick Area	65%	61%	41%
Groton	77%	62%	62%
Huron	47%	39%	32%
Harrisburg	62%	56%	47%
Langford Area	43%	45%	27%
Meade (Sturgis)	59%	51%	51%
Mitchell	58%	56%	37%
Pierre	60%	54%	54%
Rapid City	51%	43%	37%
Redfield	40%	25%	36%
Sioux Falls	51%	44%	42%
Spearfish	55%	49%	42%
Warner	75%	76%	58%
Watertown	65%	56%	51%
Webster Area	73%	65%	57%
Yankton	62%	53%	47%



Sara Klaahsen coordinates the Sioux Falls School District English Language Learners summer school program. She said the program has helped hundreds of students improve their grasp of the English language and improve their performance in school.

Photo: Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

their peers. In math, 76% of eighth-graders showed a basic or better understanding of the subject, which was seven percentage points higher than the national number. Meanwhile, 80% of South Dakota's eighth-graders showed at least a basic level of reading comprehension, while 75% of eighth-graders nationally showed the same level of reading comprehension.

The latest science scores for both eighth- and fourth-graders are from 2015. South Dakotans at both grade levels outperformed the nation as a whole. About 77% of the state's eighth-graders showed basic or better understanding of science, while 81% of fourth-graders showed a basic or better level of understanding, both levels slightly higher than the national average.

Some Improvements being made

The Huron school district's troubles cannot be explained solely due to economic disparity, as the district also has one of the state's most diverse student populations. More than 50% of the district's students are non-white. Meanwhile, roughly 34% of the district's students are considered English

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Language Learners, a designation that can encompass children of refugees to Hutterite children who grew up speaking German dialects. Many ELL students struggle with assessment tests simply due to the language barrier.

English Language Learners are one of the fastest-growing demographics in the state's schools, Jones said. Not having a good grasp of English slows a student's progress across all school subjects. In recognition of that fact, many schools across the state have made a point of improving ELL students' progress.

The Sioux Falls school district has been offering up to six classes specifically for ELL students in high school during the district's summer term in June, in addition to the ELL classes offered during the school year. Three summer classes were for language skills development, one was speech, another was personal finance and the final class teaches algebra skills. The classes themselves are free to students and were paid for by federal grants, said Sara Klaahsen, who coordinates the program for the district.

The district's summer English language development classes used field trips with local officials, such as Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken and local business owners, to help reinforce the language skills the students were learning, Klaahsen said.

"If we can offer four days per week where these students get to practice these language skills over the summer, that's less they'll have to make up during the school year," Klaahsen said.

That and similar programs were a big part of the 12% jump in the number of English language learners who were on track to master the language during the last school year, Jones said.


Still, one of the biggest things that South Dakotans need to do if they want to see student performance improve is to get involved with their local schools, both Jones and McCorkle said.

One way South Dakota schools are working to get Native American parents more involved in schools is by expanding the native language curricula, Jones said. There have been great improvements in how the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota languages can be taught, he said.

Parental involvement in education has long been one of the biggest predictors of student success, McCorkle said, and if the wider community gets involved, outcomes can improve even more.

"If you really want to find out how your schools are doing, the best approach is to have conversations with the educators who work with students every day," McCorkle said.




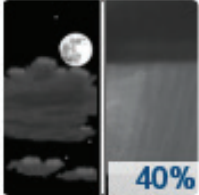

**ABOUT
NICK LOWREY**



Nick Lowrey, based in Pierre, S.D., is an investigative staff reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A South Dakotan for more than 20 years, he is a former editor of the Pierre Capital Journal.

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Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
Showers and Breezy	Showers Likely and Breezy	Chance T-storms then Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy then Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers
High: 65 °F	Low: 58 °F	High: 68 °F	Low: 44 °F	High: 52 °F

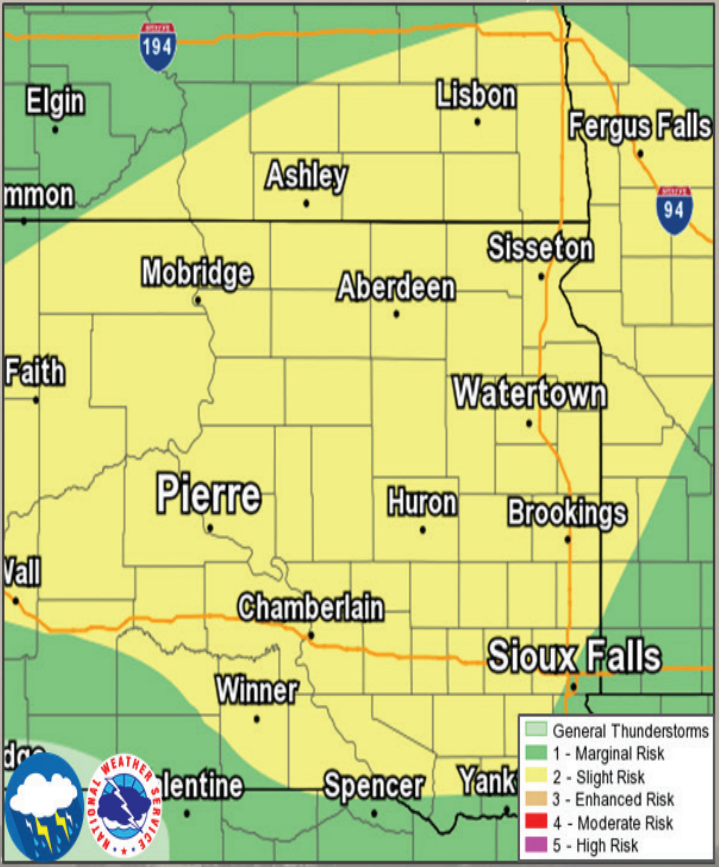
SLIGHT RISK of Severe T-Storms

ISSUED: 5:10 AM - Sunday, September 29, 2019

WHAT
Scattered thunderstorms possible this afternoon into tonight. A few storms could produce **wind gusts up to 60 mph and large hail up to golf ball size**. Isolated tornadoes possible.

WHEN
This evening into the overnight hours. The **highest risk period will be from 6 pm - 3 am**.

ACTION
Monitor the weather and have a plan of action if severe weather approaches your area.



Published on: 09/29/2019 at 1:12AM

Scattered showers and thunderstorms will be possible across the area this afternoon through tonight. Some storms will be capable of becoming severe with large hail, damaging winds, and even isolated tornadoes possible. Stay tuned to the latest forecast updates!

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Today in Weather History

September 29, 1982: An early snowfall in the Black Hills resulted in the breakage of tree branches and caused power outages in parts of Lead and Nevada Gulch.

1927: An outbreak of tornadoes from Oklahoma to Indiana caused 81 deaths and 25 million dollars damage. A tornado, possibly two tornadoes, cut an eight-mile long path across St Louis, Missouri, to Granite City, Illinois, killing 79 persons.

1927 - An outbreak of tornadoes from Oklahoma to Indiana caused 81 deaths and 25 million dollars damage. A tornado (possibly two tornadoes) cut an eight-mile long path across Saint Louis MO, to Granite City IL, killing 79 persons. The damage path at times was a mile and a quarter in width. The storm followed a similar path to tornadoes which struck in 1871, 1896, and 1959. (The Weather Channel)

1959 - A storm produced 28 inches of snow at Colorado Springs, CO. (David Ludlum)

1983 - Heavy rains began in central and eastern Arizona which culminated in the worst flood in the history of the state. Eight to ten inch rains across the area caused severe flooding in southeastern Arizona which resulted in thirteen deaths and 178 million dollars damage. President Reagan declared eight counties of Arizona to be disaster areas. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - A week of violent weather began in Oklahoma which culminated in one of the worst flooding events in the history of the state. On the first day of the week early morning thunderstorms caused more than a million dollars damage in south Oklahoma City. Thunderstorms produced 4 to 7 inches of rain from Hobart to Ponca City, and another round of thunderstorms that evening produced 7 to 10 inches of rain in north central and northeastern sections of Oklahoma. (Storm Data)

1987 - A slow moving cold front produced rain from the Great Lakes Region to the Central Gulf Coast Region. A late afternoon thunderstorm produced wind gusts to 62 mph at Buffalo NY. Warm weather continued in the western U.S. In Oregon, the afternoon high of 96 degrees at Medford was a record for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - High pressure brought freezing temperatures to parts of Vermont and New York State. Burlington VT dipped to 30 degrees, and Binghamton NY reported a record low of 34 degrees. The high pressure system also brought cold weather to the Central Rocky Mountain Region. Alamosa CO reported a record low of 18 degrees, and Gunnison CO was the cold spot in the nation with a morning low of just five degrees above zero. (National Weather Summary)

1989 - Seven cities reported record high temperatures for the date, as readings soared into the 80s and low 90s in the Northern Plateau and Northern Plains Region. Record highs included 91 degrees at Boise ID, and 92 degrees at Sheridan WY. The high of 100 degrees at Tucson AZ marked their 51st record high of the year, and their 92nd day of 100 degree weather. (National Weather Summary)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 56 °F at 12:35 PM

Low Temp: 35 °F at 7:40 AM

Wind: 14 mph at 11:21 AM

Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 95° in 1897

Record Low: 11° in 1939

Average High: 66°F

Average Low: 40°F

Average Precip in Sept.: 2.05

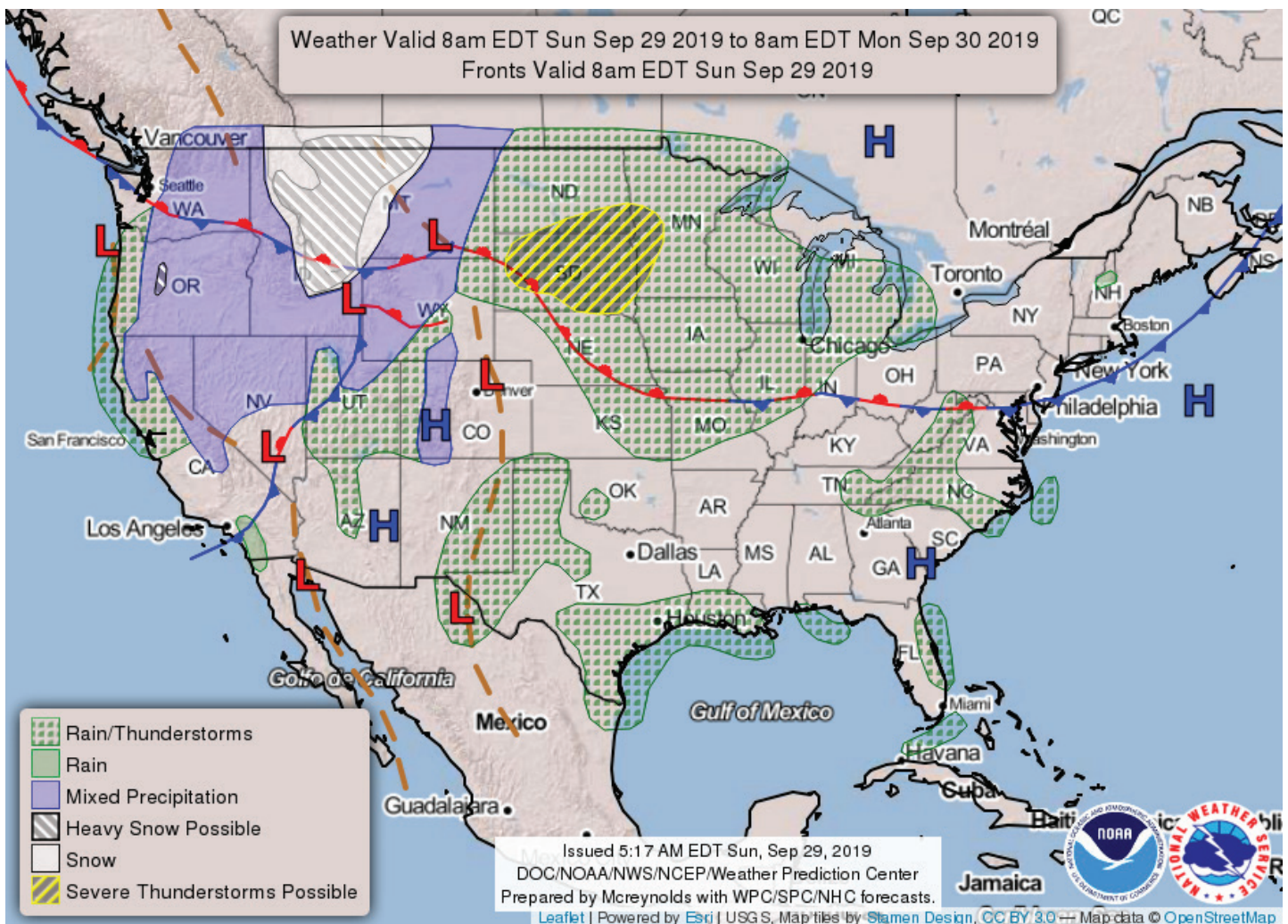
Precip to date in Sept.: 5.26

Average Precip to date: 18.34

Precip Year to Date: 24.98

Sunset Tonight: 7:18 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:30 a.m.



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WHERE THEY BELONG

Once I asked an appliance repairman to come to church with me. "No," he responded. "The church is full of hypocrites."

"Great!" I responded. The man was startled. Continuing, I said, "That's exactly where they belong. Let's join them. I'm sure they won't mind."

If I understand it correctly, a hypocrite is someone who says one thing and does another. Or as a friend said to me, "A hypocrite is a person who does not walk their talk. They profess what they do not possess."

Many who do not want to attend church say the reason they refuse to do so is because the church is full of hypocrites. For as long as I can remember that has been a frequent excuse of many. As I see it, it is a great reason for them to attend! They already know the difference between the saved and the unsaved. The saved are expected to behave like Jesus, and the person who says he sees hypocrisy in Christians already knows what is expected of the born again. So, the choice becomes easy. I'm in or I'm out. It's my choice.

We need to extend a warm welcome to those who use "the hypocrite factor" as an excuse not to attend church. Jesus said that He came to call sinners to be saved. Those who believe that they are already good enough will have a difficult time to admit they are sinners. But the hypocrite? Well, they already know the truth.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live a life that will be an example, not an excuse, for people to seek to avoid knowing You. May my life be meet Your expectations and goals. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

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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)

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

02-13-14-27-35

(two, thirteen, fourteen, twenty-seven, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$158,000

Lotto America

09-23-39-44-47, Star Ball: 7, ASB: 3

(nine, twenty-three, thirty-nine, forty-four, forty-seven; Star Ball: seven; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$3.11 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$45 million

Powerball

15-23-34-51-55, Powerball: 4, Power Play: 2

(fifteen, twenty-three, thirty-four, fifty-one, fifty-five; Powerball: four; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$50 million

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL(equals)

Crow Creek 22, Lower Brule 8

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

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Central def. Yankton, 25-18, 25-9, 25-12

Huron def. Brookings, 25-12, 25-10, 25-10

Northwestern def. Waubay/Summit, 25-10, 25-6, 25-8

Watertown def. Harrisburg, 25-10, 25-12, 25-21

Belle Fourche Tournament

Pool Play

Pool A

Hill City def. Lyman, 25-12, 25-14

Hill City def. Hot Springs, 25-6, 25-6

Pool B

Belle Fourche def. Bennett County, 25-14, 25-22

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-15, 25-15

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Bennett County, 25-17, 25-11

Lead-Deadwood def. Bennett County, 25-5, 25-11

Pool C

Philip def. Rapid City Central JV, 25-22, 25-17

Philip def. Rapid City Christian, 25-23, 25-23

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Rapid City Christian def. Sturgis, 25-22, 25-18
Rapid City Christian def. Rapid City Central JV, 25-21, 25-21
Sturgis def. Rapid City Central JV, 26-24, 25-20
Sturgis def. Philip, 26-24, 25-20
Central South Dakota Conference Tournament
First Round
Miller def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-7, 25-5
Potter County def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-19, 25-21
Wolsey-Wessington def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-20, 26-24
Eastern SD Volleyball Classic
First Round
Dakota Valley def. Milbank, 25-14, 25-10
Tea Area def. Webster, 25-19, 19-25, 26-24
Tri-Valley def. Chamberlain, 25-13, 25-21
Winner def. Sisseton, 25-10, 25-10
Consolation Semifinal
Chamberlain def. Milbank, 18-25, 25-18, 28-26
Webster def. Sisseton, 25-23, 25-21
Semifinal
Dakota Valley def. Tri-Valley, 25-19, 25-14
Winner def. Tea Area, 25-18, 25-19
Seventh Place
Milbank def. Sisseton, 25-15, 25-17
Fifth Place
Webster def. Chamberlain, 25-18, 25-21
Third Place
Tea Area def. Tri-Valley, 25-14, 25-18
Championship
Dakota Valley def. Winner, 25-22, 19-25, 25-18
Kimball-White Lake Tournament
Pool Play
Pool A
Colome def. Iroquois, 15-25, 25-21, 25-4
Kadoka Area def. Colome, 25-17, 25-8
Kadoka Area def. Kimball/White Lake, 25-20, 25-23
Kadoka Area def. Iroquois, 25-10, 25-8
Kimball/White Lake def. Iroquois, 25-10, 25-10
Kimball/White Lake def. Colome, 25-20, 25-15
Pool B
Burke def. Jones County, 25-20, 25-4
Burke def. Canistota, 25-17, 25-23
Burke def. Wessington Springs, 25-16, 25-17
Canistota def. Wessington Springs, 25-17, 25-23
Jones County def. Canistota, 25-12, 15-25, 25-20
Wessington Springs def. Jones County, 20-25, 28-26, 25-22
Seventh Place
Wessington Springs def. Iroquois, 25-18, 25-19
Fifth Place
Colome def. Jones County, 25-10, 25-23
Third Place

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Canistota def. Kimball/White Lake, 16-25, 25-23, 25-20
Championship
Kadoka Area def. Burke, 23-25, 25-22, 25-19
Lakota Nation Invitational
Pool Play
Pool A
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. Todd County, 25-13, 25-12
Crow Creek def. Little Wound, 25-12, 25-23
Crow Creek def. Todd County, 25-12, 25-11
Custer def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-15, 25-16
Custer def. Crazy Horse, 25-19, 25-11
Custer def. Todd County, 25-16, 25-18
Little Wound def. Marty Indian, 25-16, 25-15
Marty Indian def. Crazy Horse, 25-10, 17-25, 25-23
Tiospa Zina Tribal def. Marty Indian, 25-19, 25-15
Tiospa Zina Tribal def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-19, 25-20
Todd County def. Crazy Horse, 25-15, 25-11
Pool B
Pine Ridge def. Lower Brule, 25-10, 25-5
Red Cloud def. St. Francis Indian, 25-17, 25-9
St. Francis Indian def. Oelrichs, 25-16, 25-13
St. Francis Indian def. Lower Brule, 25-21, 21-25, 25-21
White River def. Red Cloud, 25-21, 25-17
White River def. Oelrichs, 25-12, 25-7
Wyoming Indian, Wyo. def. Oelrichs, 25-14, 25-12
Semifinal
Custer def. White River, 22-25, 25-23, 25-16
Pine Ridge def. Crow Creek, 25-15, 25-22
Third Place
White River def. Crow Creek, 25-23, 25-18
Championship
Pine Ridge def. Custer, 23-25, 25-23, 25-16
Little Moreau Conference Tournament (LMC)
Play-In
McIntosh def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-16, 25-15
First Round
Bison def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-10, 25-7
Faith def. McIntosh, 25-3, 25-17
Lemmon def. Harding County, 25-23, 25-22
Timber Lake def. Bison, 25-10, 25-17
Second Round
Faith def. Newell, 25-10, 25-20
Harding County def. Bison, 25-14, 25-14
Lemmon def. Timber Lake, 25-16, 25-18
Third Round
Faith def. Lemmon, 25-16, 25-13
Harding County def. Newell, 26-14, 23-25, 25-18
Consolation Bracket
Harding County def. Timber Lake, 23-25, 25-14, 25-22
Consolation Championship

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Lemmon def. Harding County, 21-25, 25-22, 25-21

Championship

Faith def. Lemmon, 25-17, 25-14

Orange City, Iowa Tournament

Sergeant Bluff-Luton, Iowa def. Sioux Falls Christian, 18-21, 21-17, 15-13

Sioux Falls Christian def. Southwest Minnesota Christian, Minn., 21-14, 21-13

Sioux Falls Christian def. Cherokee, Washington, Iowa, 21-13, 19-21, 15-9

Sioux Falls Christian def. Sioux Center, Iowa, 10-21, 21-16, 15-12

Sioux Falls Christian def. Unity Christian, Orange City, Iowa, 21-16, 21-17

Sanford Pentagon Tournament

Red Division

Pool A

Colman-Egan def. Hanson, 2-1

Colman-Egan def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 2-0

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Hanson, 2-1

Pool B

Freeman def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-21, 24-26, 25-16

Langford def. Irene-Wakonda, 2-0

Langford def. Freeman, 2-0

Pool C

Bridgewater-Emery def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-23, 25-11

Bridgewater-Emery def. Great Plains Lutheran, 2-0

Great Plains Lutheran def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-20, 25-15

Quarterfinal

Great Plains Lutheran def. Freeman, 2-1

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Bridgewater-Emery, 2-0

Semifinal

Colman-Egan def. Great Plains Lutheran, 2-1

Langford def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 2-0

Fifth Place

Freeman def. Bridgewater-Emery, 2-1

Third Place

Colman-Egan def. Langford, 2-1

Great Plains Lutheran def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 2-1

Orange Division

Pool A

Groton Area def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-13, 25-19

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 27-25, 22-25, 25-21

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Groton Area, 24-26, 25-20, 25-18

Pool B

Ethan def. Dell Rapids, 25-11, 25-13

Ethan def. Parkston, 2-0

Parkston def. Dell Rapids, 19-25, 25-18, 25-15

Pool C

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Bon Homme, 2-0

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Sioux Valley, 25-14, 25-22

Sioux Valley def. Bon Homme, 25-22, 25-14

Quarterfinal

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Groton Area, 2-0

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Parkston def. Sioux Valley, 2-0
Semifinal
Ethan def. Aberdeen Roncalli, 2-1
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Parkston, 2-0
Fifth Place
Groton Area def. Sioux Valley, 2-1
Third Place
Aberdeen Roncalli def. Parkston, 2-0
Championship
Ethan def. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 2-0
Blue Division
Pool A
Mitchell def. Vermillion, 17-25, 25-17, 25-18
Western Christian, Hull, Iowa def. Vermillion, 2-0
Western Christian, Hull, Iowa def. Mitchell, 25-14, 25-8
Pool B
Central Lyon, Rock Rapids, Iowa def. Parker, 2-0
Central Lyon, Rock Rapids, Iowa def. Warner, 25-18, 25-19
Parker def. Warner, 25-13, 25-21
Pool C
Chester def. Madison, 2-0
Spirit Lake, Iowa def. Chester, 2-0
Spirit Lake, Iowa def. Madison, 2-1
Quarterfinal
Chester def. Parker, 2-1
Spirit Lake, Iowa def. Mitchell, 2-0
Semifinal
Western Christian, Hull, Iowa def. Chester, 2-0
Fifth Place
Parker def. Mitchell, 2-0
Third Place
Central Lyon, Iowa def. Chester, 2-

South Dakotas annual buffalo roundup attracts 25,000 people

CUSTER, S.D. (AP) — Officials at Custer State Park say 25,000 people turned out to watch this year's annual buffalo roundup.

The Rapid City Journal reports hundreds of bison were herded into corrals during the 54th annual roundup on Friday.

Park resource manager Mark Hendrix says of the 1,460 animals in herd, 470 will be sent to auction Nov. 6. He says staff attempts to keep the herd at an average of 1,000 animals to maintain the ecological balance in the 71,000-acre park south of Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

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

Trump blurs lines between personal lawyer, attorney general

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As Washington plunges into impeachment, Attorney General William Barr finds himself engulfed in the political firestorm, facing questions about his role in President Donald Trump's outreach to Ukraine and the administration's attempts to keep a whistleblower complaint from Congress.

Trump repeatedly told Ukraine's president in a telephone call that Barr and Trump personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani could help investigate Trump's Democratic rival Joe Biden, according to a rough transcript of that summertime conversation. Justice Department officials insist Barr was unaware of Trump's comments at the time of the July 25 call.

When Barr did learn of that call a few weeks later, he was "surprised and angry" to discover he had been lumped in with Giuliani, a person familiar with Barr's thinking told The Associated Press. This person was not authorized to speak about the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Giuliani, a former New York City mayor, often appears in rambling television interviews as a vocal defender of the president. Giuliani represents Trump's personal interests and holds no position in the U.S. government, raising questions about why he would be conducting outreach to Ukrainian officials.

Barr is the nation's top law enforcement officer and leads a Cabinet department that traditionally has a modicum of independence from the White House.

Yet to Trump, there often appears to be little difference between the two lawyers.

"I will have Mr. Giuliani give you a call and I am also going to have Attorney General Barr call and we will get to the bottom of it," Trump told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, according to the memo of the call that was released by the White House this past week.

Since becoming attorney general in February, Barr has been one of Trump's staunchest defenders. He framed special counsel Robert Mueller's report in favorable terms for the president in a news conference this year, even though Mueller said he did not exonerate Trump.

Kathleen Clark, a legal ethics professor at Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, said Trump is treating the country's attorney general as if he's just another personal lawyer.

"I think it represents a larger problem with President Trump," she said. "To him, it appears Giuliani and Barr both have the same job."

Trump has frequently lauded Barr and his efforts to embrace the president's political agenda. That's in stark contrast to Trump's relationship with his first attorney general, Jeff Sessions, whom the president repeatedly harangued in public.

Trump's frustration with Sessions made clear how the president views the Justice Department — as a law enforcement agency that exists to carry out his wishes and protect him. Despite a close relationship during the 2016 campaign, Trump never forgave Sessions for withdrawing from the government's investigation into 2016 election interference, a move that ultimately cleared the way for Mueller's investigation.

Barr has come under the scrutiny of congressional Democrats who have accused him of acting on Trump's personal behalf more than for the justice system. Democrats have also called on Barr to step aside from decisions on the Ukraine matter. Those close to Barr, however, have argued there would be no reason to do so because he was unaware of the Trump-Zelenskiy conversation.

The department insists Barr wasn't made aware of the call with Zelenskiy until at least mid-August.

Barr has not spoken with Trump about investigating Biden or Biden's son Hunter, and Trump has not asked Barr to contact Ukrainian officials about the matter, the department said. Barr has also not spoken with Giuliani about anything related to Ukraine, officials have said.

Trump has sought, without evidence, to implicate the Bidens in the kind of corruption that has long plagued Ukraine. Hunter Biden served on the board of a Ukrainian gas company at the same time then-Vice President Joe Biden was leading the Obama administration's diplomatic dealings with Ukraine. Though the timing raised concerns among anti-corruption advocates, there has been no evidence of wrongdoing by either Biden. There is no evidence that Hunter Biden was ever under investigation in Ukraine.

The Justice Department was first made aware of Trump's call when a CIA lawyer mentioned the complaint from the unidentified CIA officer on Aug. 14, said a person familiar with the matter who wasn't authorized

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to discuss the matter publicly and spoke anonymously. Some Justice Department lawyers learned about the accusations after the whistleblower filed a complaint with the intelligence community's internal watchdog.

The watchdog later raised concerns that Trump may have violated campaign finance law. The Justice Department said there was no crime and closed the matter.

Dark skies: UN meeting reveals a world in a really bad mood

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The planet is heating. Island nations are slipping away. A Pakistan-India nuclear war could be a "bloodbath." Governments aren't working together like they used to. Polarization is tearing us apart. Killing. Migration. Poverty. Corruption. Inequality. Sovereignty violations. Helplessness. Hopelessness.

"The problems of our times are extraordinary," Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, president of the Maldives, an Indian Ocean island nation threatened by the rising waters of climate change, said at the U.N. General Assembly a few days ago.

There are those mornings when you come into work and everyone seems cranky. That's how it felt at the United Nations this past week during the annual gathering of world leaders. Speech after gloomy speech by leaders from all corners of the planet pointed toward one bleaker-than-thou conclusion: Humanity clearly needs a spa day.

The United Nations was founded in an optimistic fervor after World War II's devastation, on the notion that a cooperative body of countries could construct a brighter future by learning to get along. Though that hope remains a fundamental underpinning, the actual tenor these days seems to set a lower bar: Try to mitigate climate Armageddon, and prevent some of its 193 member nations' diligent attempts to undermine and sometimes destroy each other.

So words like "existential threat" were as much a part of the leader-speech landscape this past week as the usual references to "this august body."

"We are living in times when the magnitude and number of lasting crises is constantly increasing," said Igor Dodon, Moldova's president. "We have had enough wars. We don't want new wars," said Iraqi President Barham Salih, who would certainly know. And from Roch Marc Christian Kabore, president of Burkina Faso, came this understatement: "International news has been marked by tension."

Some of this is pure rhetoric. If you're a nation of the world and you want something — money, troops, action, understanding — you must lay out a problem so you can propose the solution or, at least, persuade your compatriots that a solution is necessary.

So leaders and diplomats bring a lot of problems to the U.N. this time of year, hoping to leverage a global stage — and a rare one, if you're a smaller member of the community of nations.

Climate change was a central part of that. A U.N. decision to really place the topic front and center produced both a youth climate summit and a full-on event the day before leaders' addresses started. Many nations answered the call to sound an alarm potent enough to get collectively noticed.

"The challenges of planet and people are colliding with far-reaching consequences," said Belize's foreign minister, Wilfred Elrington.

Yet even given that context, it felt as if a lot more hopelessness than usual was kicking around. The U.N. secretary-general, Antonio Guterres, kicked it off Tuesday in opening the proceedings, painting a bleak picture of this micromoment in human history.

"We are living in a world of disquiet," Guterres said.

"A great many people fear getting trampled, thwarted, left behind," he said. "Machines take their jobs. Traffickers take their dignity. Demagogues take their rights. Warlords take their lives. Fossil fuels take their future."

Yet is this all that different from before? There have been many moments during the United Nations' 74-year history when we've been on the brink with politics, brinkmanship, displaced people, epidemics, possible nuclear war. Chaos has always reigned, right?

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Not quite like this. The speakers' agenda Saturday was stocked with island nations from around the world who are, as so many of them said, on the front lines of climate change. To them, it's not merely melting glaciers or species dieoffs; it's amped-up hurricanes that could wipe them away and rising ocean waters that could slowly turn them into underwater ghosts.

So that mood? They're feeling it particularly acutely.

"There is only one common homeland and one human race. There is no Planet B or viable alternative planet on which to live," said Gaston Browne, the prime minister of Antigua and Barbuda, an island nation in the Caribbean.

But other nations addressing the U.N. General Assembly were hardly sanguine about where we are as a civilization. Two of the biggest, China and Russia, were just as blunt about assessing the global landscape they saw before them.

"The world today is not a peaceful place," declared Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

"The number of conflicts on the planet has not declined and enmity has not weakened," said his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov. "It is getting harder to address these and many other challenges from year to year. The fragmentation of international community is only increasing."

As is tradition with the U.N., leaders did bring solutions to propose, from the thematic (reduce the "deficit of trust") to highly specific (overhaul the Security Council to increase Africa's permanent representation). Perhaps the most common was a renewed call for a full-throated embrace of multilateralism, which many nations — particularly smaller ones with less global oomph — see as their only salvation.

This is particularly true in an era where a growing number of high-profile leaders — prime examples include U.S. President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson — are pivoting toward more unilateral approaches to the world.

"The 2020s could be remembered in history as a turning point, or as the moment when multilateralism lost its way," Rwandan President Paul Kagame said.

The United Nations is often criticized for talking a lot and not getting much done. But when it comes to eloquent talk, particularly about the future, it has always been one of the strongest players on the field.

So of course there were gems of optimism that shone among the muck — about the U.N.'s ability to shape that brighter future, about the potential for sublimating conflict in projects and agreements and resolutions and peacekeeping.

"I do not believe any more in pessimism. It's too easy," French President Emmanuel Macron said.

Good words, and that's where ideas begin. Still, coming off a week of oratorical despondency from some of the smartest, most informed, most powerful people on Earth, you have to wonder: If the United Nations isn't the place for optimism about a prosperous shared future, maybe it's time to really start worrying.

Ted Anthony, director of digital innovation for The Associated Press, has written about international affairs since 1995. Follow him on Twitter at @anthonyted.

Hong Kong protesters march in defiance ahead of National Day

By EILEEN NG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Thousands of protesters regrouped after police fired tear gas at them Sunday and marched along a thoroughfare in downtown Hong Kong in a second straight day of defiance, sparking fears of more violence ahead of China's National Day.

Protesters, many clad in black with umbrellas and carrying pro-democracy posters, sang songs and chanted "Stand with Hong Kong, fight for freedom" as they took over a stretch of a road over 1 kilometer (half a mile) long and headed toward the government office complex.

Many fled earlier after riot police fired multiple rounds of tear gas to disperse a large crowd that amassed at the Causeway Bay shopping area and threw objects in their direction. But protesters returned to start their march, some carrying American, British and other foreign flags.

Some of them defaced, tore down and burned signages congratulating China's Communist Party, which

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will mark its 70th year in power on Tuesday. Others sprayed graffiti along walls and smashed windows at a subway exit. A police helicopter was hovering above.

Sunday's gathering, a continuation of monthslong protests for greater democracy in the semiautonomous Chinese territory, is part of global "anti-totalitarianism" rallies planned in over 60 cities worldwide to denounce "Chinese tyranny."

In Sydney, more than a thousand people rallied in support of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, yelling "Fight for freedom" and "Stand with Hong Kong."

On Saturday, police fired tear gas and water cannons after protesters threw bricks and firebombs at government buildings following a massive rally in downtown Hong Kong. The clashes were part of a familiar cycle since protests began in June over a now-shelved extradition bill and have since snowballed into an anti-China movement.

Protesters are also planning to march on Tuesday despite a police ban, raising fears of more ugly scenes that could embarrass Chinese President Xi Jinping as his ruling Communist Party marks the 70th anniversary.

Many said they will wear black as a symbol of mourning in a direct challenge to the authority of the Communist Party, with posters calling for Oct. 1 to be marked as "A Day of Grief."

Hong Kong's government has already scaled down National Day celebrations in the city, canceling an annual fireworks display and moving a reception indoors.

Despite security concerns, Hong Kong's government said Sunday that Chief Executive Carrie Lam, the city's leader, will lead a delegation of over 240 people to Beijing on Monday to participate in the festivities. She will be represented by Chief Secretary Matthew Cheung in her absence and return to the city on Tuesday evening.

Lam held her first community dialogue with the public on Thursday in a bid to defuse tensions but failed to persuade protesters, who vowed to press on until their demands are met, including direct elections for the city's leader and police accountability.

Earlier Sunday, hundreds of pro-Beijing supporters sang the Chinese national anthem and "Happy Birthday" in a counter show of solidarity for Chinese rule. Wearing red and carrying Chinese flags and posters, they chanted "I am a citizen of China" at a waterfront cultural center. They were later bused to the Victoria Peak hilltop for the same repertoire.

Organizer Innes Tang said the crowd, all Hong Kong citizens, responded to his invitation on social media to "promote positivity and patriotism" and urged protesters to replace violence with dialogue.

"We want to take this time for the people to express our love for our country China. We want to show the international community that there is another voice to Hong Kong" apart from the protests, he said.

Mobs of pro-Beijing supporters have appeared in malls and on the streets in recent weeks to counter pro-democracy protesters, leading to brawls between the rival camps.

Many people view the extradition bill, which would have sent criminal suspects to mainland China for trial, as a glaring example of the erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy under the "one country, two systems" policy put in place when the former British colony returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

China has denied chipping away at Hong Kong's freedoms and accused the U.S. and other foreign powers of fomenting the unrest to weaken its dominance.

In Beijing on Sunday, former Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa was recognized for devoting himself to the implementation of the "one country, two systems" policy. Tung, the first leader after Hong Kong's return to China, was among 42 people who received national medals and honors from Xi for their contributions to the country.

Associated Press journalists Ken Moritsugu in Beijing and Katie Lam and John Leicester in Hong Kong contributed to this report.

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Musk unveils SpaceX rocket designed to get to Mars and back

BOCA CHICA VILLAGE, Texas (AP) — Elon Musk has unveiled a SpaceX spacecraft designed to carry a crew and cargo to the moon, Mars or anywhere else in the solar system and land back on Earth perpendicularly.

In a livestreamed speech from SpaceX's launch facility near the southern tip of Texas, Musk said Saturday that the space venture's Starship is expected to take off for the first time in about one or two months and reach 65,000 feet (19,800 meters) before landing back on Earth.

He says it's essential for the viability of space travel to be able to reuse spacecraft and that it's important to take steps to extend consciousness beyond our planet.

A crowd watched as Musk spoke from a stage in front of the large spacecraft, which has a reflective, metal exterior.

Musk says Saturday marked the 11th anniversary of a SpaceX rocket reaching orbit for the first time.

At UN, a world stage for disputes often out of the spotlight

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The Middle East. Trade tensions. Iran's nuclear program. Venezuela's power struggle. Civil wars in Syria and Yemen. Familiar flash points such as these got plenty of airtime at the U.N. General Assembly's big annual gathering this week.

But some leaders used their time on the world stage to highlight international conflicts and disputes that don't usually command the same global attention.

A look at some of the less-discussed controversies trying to be heard:

NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan landed one of the coveted first few speaking slots, and he devoted a bit of his wide-ranging speech to a clash in the Caucasus: a standoff between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The mountainous, ethnic Armenian area of about 150,000 people is recognized as part of Azerbaijan in U.N. Security Council resolutions dating to the 1990s. But Nagorno-Karabakh and some neighboring districts have been under the control of local ethnic Armenian forces, backed by Armenia, since a six-year separatist war ended in 1994.

Both Azerbaijan and Turkey have closed their borders with Armenia because of the conflict, cutting trade and leaving Armenia with direct land access only to Georgia and Iran.

Russia, the U.S. and France have co-chaired the so-called Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, attempting to broker an end to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

At the General Assembly, Armenia and Azerbaijan accused one another of obstructing the path toward a peaceful settlement.

"No progress has been achieved" in the past year, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov said Saturday, blaming "the apparent lack of genuine interest" on the Armenian side.

Days earlier, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian complained that Azerbaijan's leaders "don't want to seek any compromise."

NORTH MACEDONIA

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' "state of the world" address was largely a grim one, but he pointed to a few matters moving "in promising directions" — among them relations between Greece and the new Republic of North Macedonia.

Greece and what the U.N. cumbersomely used to call the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" sparred for nearly three decades over the latter's name. It was adopted when the nation, which has a current population of about 2.1 million, declared independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991.

Greece said the use of "Macedonia" implied territorial claims on its own northern province of the same name and its ancient Greek heritage, not least as the birthplace of ancient warrior king Alexander the

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Great. Athens blocked its Balkan neighbor's path to NATO and EU membership over the nomenclature clash.

It became "infamous as a difficult and irresolvable problem," in the words of now-North Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev.

Repeated rounds of U.N.-mediated negotiations proved fruitless until June 2018, when the Skopje government agreed to change the country's name to North Macedonia. The switch took effect this February.

European Council President Donald Tusk said this month that North Macedonia is now ready to start EU membership talks. It expects to become the 30th NATO member soon.

The deal has been contentious within both countries, though, with critics accusing their governments of giving up too much. Regardless, North Macedonia's prime minister highlighted it with pride from the world's premier diplomatic podium.

"We can see nothing but benefits from settling the difference," Zaev said, calling it "an example for overcoming difficult deadlocks worldwide."

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis didn't dilate on the deal, saying only that his country supports EU bids by all the western Balkan countries if they respect their obligations to the EU and their neighbors.

WESTERN SAHARA

A mostly desert expanse along the northwest coast of Africa, Western Sahara has been a center of friction between Morocco and Algeria for almost half a century.

Morocco annexed the phosphate- and fishing-rich former Spanish colony in 1975, then fought the Algerian-backed Polisario Front independence movement until 1991, when the U.N. brokered a cease-fire and established a peacekeeping mission to monitor the truce and facilitate a referendum on the territory's future.

The vote has never happened. Morocco has proposed wide-ranging autonomy for Western Sahara, while the Polisario Front insists that Western Sahara's Sahrawi people — a population the independence movement estimates at 350,000 to 500,000 — have the right to a referendum.

Last year, the U.N. Security Council called for stepping up efforts to reach a solution to the dispute.

A U.N. envoy brought representatives of Morocco, the Polisario Front, Algeria and neighboring Mauritania together last December for the first time in six years, followed by a second meeting in March. But the issue of how to provide for self-determination remains a key sticking point.

The envoy, former German President Horst Kohler, resigned in May for health reasons.

At the General Assembly, Moroccan Prime Minister Saad-Eddine El Othmani said his country's autonomy proposal "is the solution," while Algerian Foreign Minister Sabri Boukadoum reiterated hopes for Western Sahara residents "to be able to exercise their legitimate right to self-determination."

CYPRUS

A U.N.-controlled buffer zone that cuts across the city of Nicosia evinces a fraught distinction: Cyprus is the last European country to have a divided capital.

After 45 years, could that finally change? There's "a glimmer of hope," Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades told to the assembly.

The eastern Mediterranean island has been split into an internationally recognized Greek Cypriot south and a breakaway Turkish Cypriot north since 1974, when Turkey invaded following a coup by supporters of uniting the island with Greece. Turkey continues to maintain more than 35,000 troops in the northern third of the island, which only Turkey recognizes as an independent state. The U.N. also has a peacekeeping force in Cyprus.

Tensions have ticked up lately, particularly over natural gas exploration in waters in the internationally recognized state's exclusive economic zone. Turkey is also drilling there, saying it's defending Turkish Cypriots' rights to energy reserves.

On-and-off talks about reunification have spanned decades.

Greek Cypriots have rejected Turkish Cypriots' demands for a permanent Turkish troop presence and veto power in government decisions in a future federated Cyprus. Turkish Cypriots, meanwhile, want parity in

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federal decision-making, believing they would otherwise be relegated to junior partners to the majority Greek Cypriots.

A U.N. envoy made a shuttle-diplomacy effort in recent weeks in hopes of paving the way for formal talks, and Anastasiades suggested in his General Assembly speech there was some agreement on starting points for potential discussion. But he also complained that Turkey's drilling and other activities "severely undermine" the prospect of negotiations.

Turkey's Erdogan, meanwhile, complained about "the uncompromising position" of the Greek Cypriots.

BELIZE-GUATEMALA

It's been a big year in a centuries-old argument between Belize and Guatemala.

Guatemala claims more than 4,000 square miles (10,350 square kilometers) of terrain administered by Belize — essentially the southern half of Belize. It's an area of nature reserves, scattered farming villages and fishing towns, and some Caribbean beach tourism destinations.

The dispute's roots stretch to the 19th century, when Britain controlled Belize and Spain ruled Guatemala.

Guatemala, which became independent in 1821, argues that it inherited a Spanish claim on the territory. Belize considers Guatemala's claim unfounded and says the borders were defined by an 1859 agreement between Guatemala and Britain (Belize remained a British colony until 1981).

The land spat has strained diplomatic relations and at times even affected air travel between the two Central American countries.

Belize and Guatemala agreed in 2008 to ask the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands, for a binding ruling. Guatemalans voters gave their assent to the plan in a referendum last year, and Belizeans gave their approval this May.

Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales celebrated the developments in his General Assembly speech.

"This is a milestone for Guatemala, for Central America and for the world," he said, emphasizing the peaceful process toward resolving the disagreement. "Currently, bilateral relations between Guatemala and Belize are the best they've ever been."

Belizean Foreign Minister Wilfred Elrington told the assembly Saturday that his country also looked forward to resolving "an age-old, atavistic claim that has hindered Belize's development" and undercut friendship between the countries.

"We in Belize certainly have the most fervent wish to live side by side with the government and people of Guatemala in peace, harmony and close cooperation," Elrington said.

But he said Belize remains concerned about various alleged activities by Guatemalan troops and citizens — drawing a bristling reply from Guatemala, which rejects those claims and said they belong in the court, not the big-picture U.N. gathering.

Jennifer Peltz is covering the U.N. General Assembly for The Associated Press. Follow her on Twitter at @jennpeltz.

Coleman easily found: At the front of the pack at worlds

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Everyone knew exactly where to find Christian Coleman this time.

The sprinter who faced a suspension because he couldn't be located for drug testing burst out of the blocks Saturday night and powered to the early lead in track's marquee event.

He got stronger from there, blowing away the seven other entrants in the 100-meter world-championship title race and leaving little doubt about who will be chased, and who will do the chasing, in a reworked track landscape without the retired Usain Bolt.

Coleman's time, 9.76 seconds, might not have turned many heads, but this should: He beat Justin Gatlin to the line by .13 seconds — an entire body length. That marked the biggest blowout in a 100-meter race at worlds or the Olympics since 2011.

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"This is something I'll never take for granted," Coleman said. "The opportunity to come out here and compete. And then to be crowned world champion?"

But Coleman's breakout night had few similarities to any that Bolt dominated over his 10 years of record-setting, reggae-fueled fun.

Even on the races everyone knew he'd win, Bolt brought the entertainment—and some drama—taking forever to unfurl his 6-foot-5 frame from the blocks, then working the first 50 meters to grab the lead, then leaving everyone hanging at the end to see what that clock might say.

Coleman, on the other hand, never trailed—the legs on his muscle-bound, 5-9 frame pumping like pistons from start to finish.

The differences on the second evening at the air-conditioned track in Doha weren't restricted to the men's 100.

Earlier, Jamaica earned its first gold medal of the championship. Not in its traditional sprints, but in the long jump, courtesy of Tajay Gayle, who won the country's first world-championship medal in a field event.

The Netherlands, home of speed skating and sprinter Dafne Schippers, took home its first 10,000-meter gold on the shoes of Ethiopian-born Sifan Hassan, who is making a smooth transition from middle distance to the long races.

And the United States found a surprising, maybe shocking, gold medal in one of the very few spots it hasn't dominated at some point in track and field's long history—women's hammer throw. It came courtesy of a softball player-turned-throwing star named DeAnna Price whose first experience hurling that big piece of metal resulted in her getting bonked in the head.

"I remember literally dropping it and saying, 'I'm never doing this again,'" she said.

Could anyone have blamed Coleman for thinking the same five weeks ago when his name started showing up in the headlines?

The leak of information about his troubles with the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency opened up a spigot of allegations and recriminations that followed him to Doha and could stay with him on the road to next year's Tokyo Olympics.

"It's pretty disturbing to know people out there say things and they don't know me personally at all," Coleman said. "But at this point, I'm over it."

His case involved three "whereabouts failures" that occurred between June 6, 2018 and April 26, 2019. Three failures in a 12-month span can trigger an anti-doping violation.

But the rules are technical, and there's a difference between not being where you say you're going to be and simply failing to update the app that tells authorities where you can be found. Because of those details, Coleman's first violation was backdated to April 1, 2018—the start of the three-month period at which the original information is supposed to be inputted. That took his first violation out of the 12-month window and compelled USADA to drop the case.

It allowed Coleman to race here in Doha, but couldn't strip away the words "Coleman" and "Doping" that appeared in headlines worldwide.

Coleman, who has been subject to more than 20 doping tests over the past two years and never been hit with a positive, posted a long YouTube video to explain the situation. He came to Doha thinking that would calm things down. It hasn't, and at this point—with the 200-meter qualifying starting Sunday and relays on his plate later next week—he's done trying.

"I'm not spending much time trying to explain things to people who aren't interested in the truth," he said.

Best, perhaps, to let his running do the talking.

With Tokyo a mere 10 months away, Gatlin, who came in as defending champion, bronze medalist Andre De Grasse and Yohan Blake of Jamaica found out just how much room they have to make up.

When did Coleman know he had it wrapped up?

"From the start," he said. "I got up on top of everybody. ... I knew that if I was being patient, the end would take care of itself."

At the end, Coleman let out a primal scream, then pounded his chest twice and jogged a half-circle

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around the track, shouting into the stands. He blew a couple of kisses toward the heavens and kneeled for a brief second.

The half-full, 40,000-seat stadium was emptying. It was a far cry from the Bolt celebrations, all infused with reggae music, Jamaican flags, plenty of preening, picture-taking and the bow-and-arrow pose.

"There are so many people doing really good things right now," Coleman said. "Everyone should be celebrated. It doesn't have to be one face. I'm happy to part of that group."

Fair enough. But on the first big night of track without Bolt, Coleman found himself separated from that group, not running with it.

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

Slain deputy devoted life to Sikh faith, serving others

By COREY WILLIAMS and TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

Sandeep Dhaliwal carried a badge and a gun while devoting his life to a faith that teaches love and peace. Dhaliwal, who was fatally shot from behind during a traffic stop Friday, was the first Sikh sheriff's deputy on a force that covers an area including the nation's fourth largest city of Houston. Four years ago he won an accommodation to wear his turban and a beard while patrolling.

Friends said Dhaliwal, 42, was an example of how love-inspired service to others can tear down walls of distrust and misunderstanding.

"He was just a gem of a person. He was a beautiful soul," Simran Jeet Singh, a senior religion fellow at the New York-based Sikh Coalition, said Saturday. "Everyone who knew him admired him greatly."

Robert Solis, who has an extensive criminal history, has been charged with capital murder in Dhaliwal's killing. Solis, 47, was denied bond at a hearing early Saturday.

Authorities haven't speculated as to Solis' motive or suggested that it was a hate crime. Solis was wanted on a warrant for violating parole, and authorities said Saturday that they had received "credible information" that he might have a mental illness or intellectual disability and ordered an evaluation.

The killing came at a time when the U.S. has seen a string a mass shootings, including several recent ones in the Texas cities of El Paso, Odessa and Midland, stoking the debate over the nation's gun laws.

The country also is riven over President Donald Trump's push for restrictions on immigration and efforts to build a wall on the southern border with Mexico.

Some friends of Dhaliwal said his life showed how the presence of multiple cultures and faiths can enrich the country.

"It's such a powerful message to send to the community that a man in a turban and beard is just as much American as you," said Simran Jeet Singh.

Even so, Dhaliwal's primary motivation was the ability to live his faith, said his friend Manpreet Kaur Singh, an attorney and Sikh Coalition board member who is not related to Simran Jeet Singh. Sikh men often take Singh as a last name, while women take the last name Kaur, rather than using surnames that would identify them by caste. Manpreet Kaur Singh has both her mother's and father's last names.

"When you wear your articles of faith, you're telling the world 'I stand up for injustice, for people and for the greater good,'" she said.

Sikhism, a monotheistic faith, was founded more than 500 years ago in the Indian region of Punjab and has roughly 27 million followers worldwide, most of them in India.

There are more than 500,000 Sikhs in the U.S. Male followers often cover their heads with turbans, which are considered sacred, and refrain from shaving their beards.

Some were targets of anti-Islam violence following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, even though Sikhism is unrelated to Islam.

About 7,000 to 10,000 live in the Gulf Coast Region of the U.S., according to the Houston Chronicle. More than a half-dozen Sikh temples can be found in the region.

Dhaliwal was a member of the Sikh National Center in Houston, said its chair, Hardam Azad.

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Azad said Dhaliwal often would speak with young people at the center, showing his sheriff's badge. A widely-shared video of Dhaliwal posted on the Facebook page of the Harris County Sheriff's Office showed him laughing as he allowed a boy to handcuff him and then unlock the handcuffs with the key.

"Ever since 9/11 happened, a lot of hate crimes have occurred against the Sikhs," Azad said. "The way to counter that was exactly the kind of service Sandeep Dhaliwal provided to the larger community."

Prior to Dhaliwal's hiring, Azad said the center had been in conversations with then-Sheriff Adrian Garcia to bring a Sikh onto the force.

Dhaliwal stepped up, he added.

"His passion for public service was obvious to us all," Azad said. "There are some people who live angry lives. He was anything but angry."

Dhaliwal's father was a police officer in India before moving his family to the United States. The deputy said in a 2015 interview that "serving in the police force is natural" to Sikhs who value service.

"Sikhs have been in this country for more than 100 years (but) we've been absent from the national conversation," Simran Jeet Singh said. "One of the values of serving in uniform gives us a sense as a community that we are being seen and are being understood."

When Hurricane Harvey ravaged Houston, Dhaliwal joined others in the Sikh community to help feed those left homeless. Then when Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, he traveled there to help.

"There are just those people who come out passionate in the world, and you don't know what drives them," said Manpreet Kaur Singh. "He wanted to make sure he helped people. I had no idea what made him sacrifice his time."

She said Dhaliwal didn't fear being targeted because of his appearance, but he did help ensure that Sikh places of worship were protected on Sundays by off-duty officers.

She also said Dhaliwal was deeply affected by the 2015 killing of another deputy, Darren Goforth, who was gunned down at a gas station while fueling his car. Dhaliwal "really jumped in and helped with the vigil, helped put together the memorial," she said.

Dhaliwal is survived by a wife and three children, as well as his father and sisters, Manpreet Kaur Singh said. His mother died last year.

She said she has a picture of him taken the day the policy change allowed him to wear his turban.

"He was so excited. I never had the foresight to see the possibility of him dying in the line of duty," she said.

Williams reported from Detroit and Webber from Chicago. Associated Press writers Terry Wallace in Dallas, Cedar Attanasio in El Paso, Texas, and Monika Mathur in New York contributed to this report.

Impeachment now a threat like no other Trump has faced

By JULIE PACE and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — From the moment Donald Trump became a national political figure, he has been shadowed by investigations and controversy.

They have been layered, lengthy and often inconclusive, leaving many Americans scandal-weary and numb to his behavior. And with each charge against him, Trump has perfected the art of deflection, seemingly gaining strength by bullying and belittling those who have dared to take him on.

Now Trump is facing a high-velocity threat like none he's confronted before.

It has rapidly evolved from a process fight over a whistleblower complaint to an impeachment inquiry within two weeks. Much of the evidence is already in public view. A rough transcript of a phone call in which Trump asks Ukraine's president to help investigate Democratic rival Joe Biden. The whistleblower's detailed letter alleging the White House tried to cover up the call, and possibly others.

Unlike special counsel Robert Mueller's two-year investigation, which circled an array of people in Trump's orbit but not always the president himself, Trump doesn't have the benefit of distance. His words and his actions are at the center of this investigation.

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"The Mueller report, it was always Manafort this and his son that. There was a cascade of players," said presidential historian Douglas Brinkley, referring to former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and Donald Trump Jr. "This was just Donald Trump and a disturbing conversation with another world leader."

So, suddenly, Washington is different and the history of Trump's presidency has changed. By year's end, he could become only the third American president impeached by the House of Representatives.

That new reality caught Trump and his advisers off guard, according to people close to the president. If anything, they thought the specter of impeachment had been lifted after the Mueller investigation ended without a clear determination that Trump had committed a crime.

The contours of that investigation played to Trump's strengths. Mueller spent two years in silence, allowing the president to fill the vacuum with assertions that the investigation was a "hoax" and a "witch hunt." The details of the investigation that did leak out were often complicated and focused on people in Trump's sphere. Even Mueller's pointed statement that he had not exonerated Trump did not seem to stick. There was ultimately plenty of smoke, but no smoking gun.

Numerous other Democratic inquiries appeared likely to meet a similar fate, including House investigation into Trump's business dealings, his tax returns and a variety of administration scandals. For many Americans, they were one big blur of investigations without any clarity of purpose.

Then the whistleblower gave the Democrats what they needed: a simple, easily explainable charge — that the president sought a foreign government's help for personal political gain — and his words to back it up.

For House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and several Democratic moderates who had resisted calls for impeachment, the calculus shifted. It was now more of a risk to recoil from impeachment than charge ahead.

"What we're seeing right now is a completely different moment in the history of this country," said Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, D-Fla.

One thing that didn't change — at least not immediately — was the clear partisan divide over Trump's actions, both in Washington and across the country.

According to a one-day NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll conducted Wednesday, 49% of Americans approve of the House formally starting an impeachment inquiry into Trump. Among Democrats, 88% approve of the investigation, while 93% of Republicans disapprove.

Mike Staffieri, a retiree and Republican who lives just outside of Richmond, Virginia, said Democrats were trying to "throw enough poop at the wall and hope something sticks."

On Capitol Hill, some Trump allies concurred, confidently dismissing the impeachment inquiry as just another partisan effort to take down a president who is despised by many Democrats. That rough transcript of a phone call in which Trump presses Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, to work with Attorney General William Barr and personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani on an investigation into Biden? It's just Trump being Trump, according to his backers.

"You've heard President Trump talk. That's President Trump," said Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis.

Mark Updegrove, a presidential historian and president of the LBJ Foundation in Austin, Texas, said it's that enduring support from Republican lawmakers that currently separates Trump from Richard Nixon, who resigned in the midst of the Watergate impeachment inquiry because his party began to abandon him.

"The big difference between this and Watergate is that you had both Republicans and Democrats being deeply concerned about the president being involved in criminal wrongdoing," Updegrove said. "It was a bipartisan effort and you certainly don't have that here."

But it is early, compared with Watergate. There were small signs that some Republicans were trying to keep some measure of distance from the president. Some GOP lawmakers fled Washington for a fall break claiming they hadn't yet read the whistleblower's complaint. Others said they were open to learning more about the situation.

Trump's hold on the Republican Party makes it nearly impossible to foresee a scenario in which the GOP-controlled Senate convicts Trump if he were impeached by the Democratic-run House.

The president is acutely well aware that it's his party alone that can protect him. In the midst of the past

week's firestorm, he tweeted to Republicans: "Stick together, play their game and fight hard Republicans." He later deleted the tweet.

AP polling editor Emily Swanson and Associated Press writers Alan Fram in Washington and Alan Suderman in Richmond, Virginia, contributed to this report.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

Doctor facing life in prison for thousands of opioid doses

By DENISE LAVOIE and SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — By the time drug enforcement agents swooped into his small medical office in Martinsville, Virginia, in 2017, Dr. Joel Smithers had prescribed about a half a million doses of highly addictive opioids in two years.

Patients from five states drove hundreds of miles to see him, spending up to 16 hours on the road to get prescriptions for oxycodone and other powerful painkillers.

"He's done great damage and contributed ... to the overall problem in the heartland of the opioid crisis," said Christopher Dziejczak, a supervisory special agent for the Drug Enforcement Administration who oversaw the investigation into Smithers.

In the past two decades, opioids have killed about 400,000 Americans, ripped families apart and left communities — many in Appalachia — grappling with ballooning costs of social services like law enforcement, foster care and drug rehab.

Smithers, a 36-year-old married father of five, is facing the possibility of life in prison after being convicted in May of more than 800 counts of illegally prescribing drugs, including the oxycodone and oxymorphone that caused the death of a West Virginia woman. When he is sentenced Wednesday, the best Smithers can hope for is a mandatory minimum of 20 years.

Authorities say that, instead of running a legitimate medical practice, Smithers headed an interstate drug distribution ring that contributed to the opioid abuse epidemic in West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee and Virginia.

In court filings and at trial, they described an office that lacked basic medical supplies, a receptionist who lived out of a back room during the work week, and patients who slept outside and urinated in the parking lot.

At trial, one woman who described herself as an addict compared Smithers' practice to pill mills she frequented in Florida.

"I went and got medication without — I mean, without any kind of physical exam or bringing medical records, anything like that," the woman testified.

A receptionist testified that patients would wait up to 12 hours to see Smithers, who sometimes kept his office open past midnight. Smithers did not accept insurance and took in close to \$700,000 in cash and credit card payments over two years.

"People only went there for one reason, and that was just to get pain medication that they (could) abuse themselves or sell it for profit," Dziejczak said.

The opioid crisis has been decades in the making and has been fueled by a mix of prescription and street drugs.

From 2000 to 2010, annual deaths linked to prescription opioids increased nearly fourfold. By the 2010s, with more crackdowns on pill mills and more restrictive guidelines on prescriptions, the number of prescriptions declined. Then people with addictions turned to even deadlier opioids. But the number of deaths tied to prescription opioids didn't begin to decline until last year, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Martinsville, where Smithers set up shop, has been particularly hard hit.

A city of about 14,000 near Virginia's southern border, Martinsville once was a thriving furniture and

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textile manufacturing center that billed itself as the "Sweatshirt Capital of the World." But when factories began closing in the 1990s, thousands of jobs were lost. Between 2006 and 2012, the city had the nation's third-highest number of opioid pills received per capita, according to an Associated Press analysis of federal data.

Andrew Kolodny, a Brandeis University doctor who has long been critical of opioids, said that in recent years, doctors became less comfortable writing lots of opioid prescriptions and many big prescribers retired. That opened an opportunity for others.

"If you're one of the guys still doing this," he said, "you're going to have tons of patients knocking down your door."

During his trial, Smithers testified that after he moved to Virginia, he found himself flooded with patients from other states who said many nearby pain clinics had been shut down. Smithers said he reluctantly began treating these patients, with the goal of weaning them off high doses of immediate-release drugs.

He acknowledged during testimony that he sometimes wrote and mailed prescriptions for patients he had not examined but insisted that he had spoken to them over the phone.

Once, he met a woman in the parking lot of a Starbucks, she handed him \$300 and he gave her a prescription for fentanyl, an opioid pain reliever that is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine.

When area pharmacists started refusing to fill prescriptions written by Smithers, he directed patients to far-flung pharmacies, including two in West Virginia. Prosecutors say Smithers also used some patients to distribute drugs to other patients. Four people were indicted in Kentucky on conspiracy charges.

At his trial, Smithers portrayed himself as a caring doctor who was deceived by some patients.

"I learned several lessons the hard way about trusting people that I should not have trusted," he said.

Smithers' lawyer told the judge he had been diagnosed with depression and anxiety. Family members said through a spokesperson that they believe his decisions were influenced by personal stress, and emotional and mental strain.

Even before he opened his Martinsville practice in August 2015, Smithers had raised suspicions. West Virginia authorities approached him in June 2015 about a complaint with his practice there, but when they returned the next day with a subpoena, they found his office cleaned out and a dumpster filled with shredded papers and untested urine samples.

Some of Smithers' patients have remained fiercely loyal to him, insisting their severe chronic pain was eased by the powerful painkillers he prescribed.

Lennie Hartshorn Jr., the father of the West Virginia woman who died two days after taking drugs Smithers prescribed, testified for the defense.

Hartshorn said his daughter, Heather Hartshorn, told someone "she would rather be dead than in pain all the time." According to a form Heather Hartshorn filled out when she went to see Smithers, she had chronic pain in her lower back, legs, hips and neck from a severe car accident and a fall.

When asked by Smithers' lawyer if he blames Smithers for anything, Lennie Hartshorn said he does not.

Smithers has been denied bond while he awaits sentencing. His attorney did not respond to inquiries from AP. Smithers has said he plans to appeal.

Associated Press reporters Geoff Mulvihill and Riin Aljas contributed to this story.

Syria demands withdrawal of all American, Turkish forces

By AYA BATRAWY and EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Syria's top diplomat on Saturday demanded the immediate withdrawal of American and Turkish forces from the country and said his government reserves the right to defend its territory in any way necessary if they remain.

Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem's remarks to the United Nations General Assembly were made as Turkey and the United States press ahead with a deal to create a safe zone along Syria's border with Turkey.

On the political front, he reaffirmed the government's support for the recently agreed committee to

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draft a new constitution for the country. As has been the government's tone since the start of the 2011 uprising in Syria, the foreign minister took a hard line, stressing there must be no interference from any country or timeline imposed on the process.

Al-Moallem's speech highlighted the enormous challenges to achieve reconciliation in Syria, where over 400,000 people have been killed during the conflict and millions more have fled.

The more than eight-year conflict has also drawn numerous foreign militaries and thousands of foreign fighters to Syria, many to support the now-defeated Islamic State extremist group and others still there backing the opposition and battling government forces.

"The United States and Turkey maintain an illegal military presence in northern Syria," al-Moallem said. "Any foreign forces operating in our territories without our authorization are occupying forces and should withdraw immediately."

If they refuse, he said, "we have the right to take any and all countermeasures authorized under international law."

There are around 1,000 U.S. troops in Syria on a mission to combat Islamic State militants. The United States also backs and supports Kurdish groups in the northeast that are opposed to the Syrian government and have fought against Sunni extremist groups.

U.S. President Donald Trump had said he wants to bring the troops home, but military officials have advocated a phased approach.

Al-Moallem described Turkey and the United States as "arrogant to the point of holding discussions and reaching agreements on the creation of a so-called 'safe zone' inside Syria" as if it was on their own soil. He said any agreement without the consent of the Syrian government is rejected.

The deal between the U.S. and Turkey keeps U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters, considered terrorists by Turkey, away from Syria's northeastern border with Turkey. It involves an area five to 14 kilometers deep (three to eight miles), as well as the removal of heavy weapons from a 20-kilometer-deep zone (12 miles). The length of the zone has not yet been agreed to by both parties but will likely stretch hundreds of kilometers.

Most of Syria is now under the control of the Syrian government, which is backed by Russia and Iran. However, Syrian rebels and extremists still hold Idlib in the northwest, and U.S.-backed Kurdish groups hold parts of the oil-rich northeast.

The Syrian government maintains that Idlib remains a hotbed for "terrorists" and al-Moallem vowed that its "war against terrorism" will continue "until rooting out the last remaining terrorist."

In a breakthrough on the political front, earlier this week U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres announced the formation of the committee that would draft Syria's new constitution, which he said could be an important step toward ending the war.

The U.N. chief announced Saturday that the committee will meet for the first time in Geneva on Oct. 30. Its rules state that a new constitution will be followed by "free and fair elections under United Nations supervision."

The committee was authorized at a Russian-hosted Syrian peace conference in January 2018, but it took nearly 20 months for the sides to agree on the 150 members — particularly on a 50-member civil society of experts, independents, tribal leaders and women to serve alongside 50 members from the government and 50 members from the opposition. The U.N. was authorized to put together the civil society list but the choices faced objections, mainly from the Syrian government.

Under the newly announced terms, the "Syrian-led and Syrian-owned" committee, with U.N. envoy Geir Pedersen as facilitator, will amend the current 2012 constitution or draft a new one.

Al-Moallem stressed that the committee will operate without preconditions, its recommendations must be made independently, and "no deadlines or timetables must be imposed on the committee."

On another long-simmering dispute, al-Moallem accused Israel of starting "another phase of escalation" through its repeated attacks on Syrian territory and the territory of other neighboring countries.

He stressed that "it is a delusion" to think that the Syrian conflict would force the government to forfeit

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its "inalienable right" to recover the Golan Heights which Israel captured during the June 1967 war. The annexation is not recognized under international law.

The Trump administration in March signed a proclamation recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, reversing more than a half-century of U.S. policy in the Middle East. He also moved the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem in recognition of Israel's claims of the city as its capital.

"It is a delusion," al-Moallem stressed, "to think that the decisions of the U.S. administration on the sovereignty over the Golan would alter historical and geographical facts or the provisions of international law."

"The Golan has been and will forever be part of Syria," he said.

Ex-official: Trump's past phone-call memos also concealed

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House severely restricted distribution of memos detailing President Donald Trump's calls with foreign leaders, including Russia's Vladimir Putin and Saudi Arabia's Mohammed bin Salman, after embarrassing leaks of his conversations early in his tenure, a former White House official said.

The White House's handling of Trump's calls with foreign leaders is at the heart of House Democrats' impeachment inquiry. A whistleblower alleges the White House tried to "lock down" Trump's July 25 phone call with Ukraine's new president because officials were worried about Trump's request for help investigating Trump's Democratic rival Joe Biden. The anonymous whistleblower alleges the White House also tried to cover up the content of other calls by moving memos onto a highly classified computer system.

The former White House official acknowledged that other calls were concealed, while casting the decision as part of an effort to minimize leaks, not an attempt to hide improper discussions. The former official was not authorized to discuss the classification system publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The White House was beset by leaks of highly sensitive information in the early days of Trump's presidency. Trump was particularly enraged by leaks that disclosed tough conversations with the leader of Mexico on paying for a border wall and with Australia on abiding by an Obama administration deal on asylum-seekers.

After those disclosures, a White House adviser raised the possibility of lie detector tests for the small number of people in the West Wing and elsewhere with access to transcripts of Trump's phone calls.

In previous administrations, rough transcripts of presidential phone calls were kept private, but not housed on the highly classified computer system unless sensitive national security information was discussed. Summaries of the calls were distributed to relevant officials in the White House, the State Department and other agencies.

The Trump administration's process curtailed the number of people who had access. The question is now why.

The whistleblower's complaint paints a picture of a White House scrambling to conceal damaging information about the president, including the July call in which he pressed Ukraine's leader for help investigating Biden.

The White House released a rough transcript of the call this past week in which Trump repeatedly says Attorney General William Barr and his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani could help with that effort. The call came days after Trump ordered a freeze to some military assistance for Ukraine.

The contents of the restricted calls with Putin and bin Salman are unknown. But Trump's relationship with both leaders has been controversial, given Russia's attack on the 2016 U.S. election on Trump's behalf and Saudi Arabia's human rights violations, including the murder of a Washington Post journalist.

The former official noted that even some of Trump's calls with U.S. allies were restricted due to the classified matters that arise during the discussions.

CNN first reported on the White House effort to conceal those calls.

Trump has repeatedly sought to discredit the whistleblower in recent days, accusing the anonymous

CIA officer of having a political motivation. His advisers, however, have confirmed some details of the whistleblower's complaint, but offered different explanations for the White House's actions.

On Friday, the White House acknowledged that the Ukraine call was moved to a highly classified system at the direction of Trump's National Security Council lawyers.

Researchers question Census Bureau's new approach to privacy

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT and MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — In an age of rapidly advancing computer power, the U.S. Census Bureau recently undertook an experiment to see if census answers could threaten the privacy of the people who fill out the questionnaires.

The agency went back to the last national headcount, in 2010, and reconstructed individual profiles from thousands of publicly available tables. It then matched those records against other public population data. The result: Officials were able to infer the identities of 52 million Americans.

Confronted with that discovery, the bureau announced that it would add statistical "noise" to the 2020 data, essentially tinkering with its own numbers to preserve privacy. But that idea creates its own problems, and social scientists, redistricting experts and others worry that it will make next year's census less accurate. They say the bureau's response is overkill.

"This is a brand new, radically more conservative definition of privacy," University of Minnesota demographer Steven Ruggles said.

Federal law bars census officials from disclosing any individual's responses. But data-crunching computers can tease out likely identities from the broader census results when combined with other personal information.

Some critics fear the agency's changes could make it harder to draw new congressional and legislative districts accurately. Others worry that research on immigration, demographics, the opioid epidemic and declining life expectancy will be hindered, particularly when it involves less populated areas.

If the change had been in place four years ago, Ruggles said, he would not have been able to conduct a 2015 study on the impact of declines in young men's incomes on marriage.

With more and more data sets available to the public with a quick download, it has become easier than ever to match information with real names. That means aggregated answers to census questions involving race, housing and relationships could lead to individuals.

The fear is that advertisers, market researchers or anybody with know-how and curiosity could use data to reconstruct the identities of census respondents.

When the bureau went back to the 2010 census, it matched the census data with commercial databases. More than 1 in 6 respondents were identified by name and neighborhood as well as by information about their race, ethnicity, sex and age.

Since the last census, "the data world has changed dramatically," Ron Jarmin, deputy director of the census agency wrote earlier this year. "Much more personal information is available online and from commercial providers, and the technology to manipulate that data is more powerful than ever."

The Trump administration's unsuccessful effort to add a citizenship question to the 2020 questionnaire heightened fears about how census information would be used. But privacy concerns are nothing new for the bureau.

Historians have found evidence that census data helped identify Japanese Americans who were rounded up and confined to camps during World War II. That revelation led to an apology from then-Census Bureau Director Kenneth Prewitt in 2000.

Jewish groups and some liberal organizations had concerns about privacy when the bureau was lobbied to ask about religion for the 1960 census. Some noted that Nazis had used government and church records to identify and round up Jews. The idea never went anywhere.

During the legal battle over the citizenship question, advocates worried that the information could be used to target residents in the country illegally. Some say lingering concerns could have a chilling effect

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on the 2020 census.

To address those worries, the bureau has adopted a technique called "differential privacy," which alters the numbers but does not change core findings to protect the identities of individual respondents.

It's analogous to pixelating the data, a technique commonly used to blur certain images on television, said Michael Hawes, senior adviser for data access and privacy at the Census Bureau.

Redistricting experts say the mathematical blurring could cause problems because they rely on precise numbers to draw congressional and state and local legislative districts. They also worry that it could dilute minority voting power and violate the Voting Rights Act.

"The numbers might be off by five, 10, 20 people, and if you're dealing with exact percentages, that could mean something. That could mean a lot," said Jeffrey M. Wice, a national redistricting attorney. "That's why we care about it so much."

In the past, the bureau has used "swapping" and other methods to protect confidentiality. Swapping involves taking similar households in different geographic areas and exchanging demographic characteristics.

Census data does not need to be exact for most purposes, "as long as we know it's really pretty close," said Justin Levitt, an election law professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles. But "there's certainly a point where blurry becomes too blurry."

The bureau has not decided precisely how much blurring will take place, but researchers have already delivered academic papers and organized a petition signed by more than 4,000 scholars, planners and journalists. The petition asked the bureau to include the research community in its discussions.

Michael McDonald, a University of Florida redistricting expert, said people must be assured their data will be kept confidential or they may not respond at all. If respondents do not answer questions for the once-a-decade census in a timely manner, census workers must try to interview them in person.

"We need high response rates to the census," McDonald said. "If we don't get them, whatever noise will be moot because we won't have good data to start with."

Follow Jennifer McDermott on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/JenMcDermottAP> . Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP> .

AP Interview: The hopes and fears of Buttigieg's mom

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) — Several times a week, Anne Montgomery makes her way a few miles from her home to a fifth-floor office in downtown South Bend that teems with young adults working to elect her son president. She reads letters that bring back anxieties about being the mother of Pete Buttigieg, the first openly gay man to run for president.

The ones that touch her most are testimonials of people who have come out as gay, or from their parents, praising Pete.

"To read them, I realize the terrible time some people have," she said. "The cruelty. The ignorance."

In her own quiet way, the lively, 74-year-old retired Notre Dame linguistics professor, with bouncing white curls and a devilish grin, is clear-eyed about the ugliness that persists in the country her son hopes to lead.

She's been primarily in the background, answering about 40 letters a week and attending an occasional rally. But she also finds herself becoming a more public person as she starts to help tell the story of her son in his quest for the Democratic presidential nomination.

In a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press, Montgomery described a highly literate, chatty, adaptive boy who continually overachieved. Before he was 3, he was arranging plastic letters on the refrigerator and reading signs while riding in the car.

In middle school, when most of his fellow piano students were content performing one Clementi sonatina movement, he had mastered all three.

While growing up, Buttigieg changed schools frequently, which his mother said helped him learn to adapt.

"So a newcomer had to prove himself without aggravating his peers," she said. Then there was that

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"very unusual last name. No one could pronounce it. It was prime for jokes. And so he had to put up with that from the beginning. And that may have given him some steel, given him a little training."

Buttigieg (BOO²-tuh-juhj) continued to excel, winning election as senior class president. "I began to be suspicious in college" that politics might be his calling, she said, given the time he devoted in their conversations to Harvard University's Institute of Politics. His next step, as a Rhodes scholar, only made his path more clear.

Still, she acknowledged, "I'm not sure I saw a track as to where he is today."

That rapid ascent has also brought the kind of scrutiny no parent would welcome. With Buttigieg, there is an additional factor of his barrier-breaking candidacy, a reality for women and minority candidates but new for one who is openly gay.

She sometimes hears resistance about that in the voices of fellow liberal voters she knows. She gets anti-gay mail at home. And she worries harm could come to her son.

Now alone since the death of her husband, Joseph, in January, she has somewhat reluctantly taken on a supporting role for her son.

She has found herself mesmerized by the "hundreds of happy people, really happy, hopeful people," she says, only to remember the "ugly mail" she sometimes gets.

"I kind of look around, and especially in this political climate," she says quietly, adding later, "Let's be honest, you have to worry about public safety."

"I am aware of opposition. So, it's become a part of life really. I want to be reminded of it. I don't want to be where I get careless. It's a presence. Unfortunately, it's a presence."

The idea of her son running for president surprised her less than when he told her in 2011 that he was moving home to run for mayor. Or when he told her he was enlisting in the military to serve in Afghanistan in 2014.

But it was when he was preparing for his re-election campaign, that he surprised her even more. Buttigieg, then 33, visited his parents' home, she recalls, and said, "I have something to tell you" and told them he is gay.

His father had studied for the priesthood. His mother was the daughter of a career Army officer. But they were instantly accepting, and Montgomery asked him if he had met someone. He said he had not.

"I wonder if I was blind," she said. "Because he's always a very private person. "From elementary school on, he was a private person about personal matters. So I did not inquire or ask."

Buttigieg later came out in an op-ed in the South Bend Tribune, setting the tone for what would become his presidential campaign mantra: that Americans hunger for belonging.

Montgomery hopes her son's optimism is well founded.

"I think I'm surrounded by so many positive forces that I could take it for granted" that Americans have moved beyond decades of discrimination and homophobia, she said, even as she admitted to doubts.

Attitudes have changed dramatically in the past 15 years. A 2004 Pew Research poll found 60% against same-sex marriage, 31% supporting it. This year, those numbers are reversed, as the right to same-sex marriage is the law of the land due to a 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision.

There are still hurdles for candidates. In a June poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, 32% of registered voters said they would be less excited about supporting a presidential candidate who is gay, lesbian or bisexual, though younger voters care far less than older ones.

Montgomery is approaching her son's historic candidacy tested by the realities of life and death.

In the fall of last year, as Buttigieg was weighing his candidacy, his father had been diagnosed with cancer and was undergoing chemotherapy.

The thin scar barely visible above Montgomery's neckline is another reminder of that autumn, as she underwent emergency bypass surgery.

"So we had a lousy year last year," Montgomery said, trying to laugh.

Five years earlier, she worried in vain during her weekly conversations with her son, a Navy intelligence officer in Afghanistan, about his location and safety, only to find out later a member of his unit and friend,

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had been killed.

The experiences have helped simplify things to the point that, more than winning the election, what matters most to her is that her son seems to have found happiness.

Buttigieg married Chasten Glezman, a high school teacher from Michigan, last year after meeting in 2015. "I was very glad to see him find someone, to share a life with," his mom said.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Sept. 29, the 272nd day of 2019. There are 93 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 29, 1789, the U.S. War Department established a regular army with a strength of several hundred men.

On this date:

In 1829, London's reorganized police force, which became known as Scotland Yard, went on duty.

In 1918, Allied forces began their decisive breakthrough of the Hindenburg Line during World War I.

In 1938, British, French, German and Italian leaders concluded the Munich Agreement, which was aimed at appeasing Adolf Hitler by allowing Nazi annexation of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland.

In 1943, General Dwight D. Eisenhower and Italian Marshal Pietro Badoglio signed an armistice aboard the British ship HMS Nelson off Malta.

In 1975, baseball manager Casey Stengel died in Glendale, California, at age 85.

In 1977, the Billy Joel album "The Stranger" was released by Columbia Records.

In 1978, Pope John Paul I was found dead in his Vatican apartment just over a month after becoming head of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1982, Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules laced with deadly cyanide claimed the first of seven victims in the Chicago area. (To date, the case remains unsolved.)

In 1989, actress Zsa Zsa Gabor was convicted of battery for slapping Beverly Hills police officer Paul Kramer after he'd pulled over her Rolls-Royce for expired license plates. (As part of her sentence, Gabor ended up serving three days in jail.)

In 2000, Israeli riot police stormed a major Jerusalem shrine and opened fire on stone-throwing Muslim worshippers, killing four Palestinians and wounding 175.

In 2001, President George W. Bush condemned Afghanistan's Taliban rulers for harboring Osama bin Laden and his followers as the United States pressed its military and diplomatic campaign against terror.

In 2005, John G. Roberts Jr. was sworn in as the nation's 17th chief justice after winning Senate confirmation.

Ten years ago: New York City terrorism suspect Najibullah Zazi pleaded not guilty to conspiring to use weapons of mass destruction in what authorities said was a planned attack on commuter trains. (Zazi later pleaded guilty; he spent nearly a decade helping the U.S. identify and prosecute terrorists, and was rewarded with a sentence that effectively amounted to time already served.) Former Democratic fundraiser Norman Hsu (shoo) was sentenced in New York to more than 24 years in prison for his guilty plea to fraud charges and another four years and four months in prison for his conviction at trial for breaking campaign finance laws; he's due to be released in 2030. A tsunami killed nearly 200 people in Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga.

Five years ago: In a blistering speech to the United Nations, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that Hamas and the Islamic State group were "branches of the same poisonous tree," both bent on world domination through terror, just as the Nazis had done. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai was sworn in as Afghanistan's new president, replacing Hamid Karzai in the country's first democratic transfer of power since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion toppled the Taliban.

One year ago: Tesla and its CEO, Elon Musk, agreed to pay a total of \$40 million to settle a government

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lawsuit alleging that Musk had duped investors with misleading statements about a proposed buyout of the company.

Today's Birthdays: Conductor Richard Bonyng is 89. Writer-director Robert Benton is 87. Singer Jerry Lee Lewis is 84. Soul-blues-gospel singer Sherman Holmes is 80. Former Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., is 77. Actor Ian McShane is 77. Jazz musician Jean-Luc Ponty is 77. Nobel Peace laureate Lech Walesa (lehk vah-WEN'-sah) is 76. Television-film composer Mike Post is 75. Actress Patricia Hodge is 73. TV personality Bryant Gumbel is 71. Rock singer-musician Mark Farner is 71. Rock singer-musician Mike Pinera is 71. Country singer Alvin Crow is 69. Actor Drake Hogestyn is 66. Olympic gold medal runner Sebastian Coe is 63. Singer Suzzy Roche (The Roches) is 63. Comedian-actor Andrew "Dice" Clay is 62. Rock singer John Payne (Asia) is 61. Actor Roger Bart is 57. Singer-musician Les Claypool is 56. Actress Jill Whelan is 53. Actor Ben Miles is 53. Actor Luke Goss is 51. Rock musician Brad Smith (Blind Melon) is 51. Actress Erika Eleniak is 50. Rhythm-and-blues singer Devante Swing (Jodeci) is 50. Country singer Brad Cotter (TV: "Nashville Star") is 49. Actress Emily Lloyd is 49. Actress Natasha Gregson Wagner is 49. Actress Rachel Cronin is 48. Country musician Danick Dupelle (Emerson Drive) is 46. Actor Alexis Cruz is 45. Actor Zachary Levi is 39. Actress Chrissy Metz (TV: "This Is Us") is 39. Actress Kelly McCreary (TV: "Grey's Anatomy") is 38. Country singer Katie McNeill (3 of Hearts) is 37. Rock musician Josh Farro is 32. NBA All-Star Kevin Durant is 31. Actor Doug Brochu is 29. Singer Phillip Phillips is 29. Pop singer Halsey is 25. Actress Clara Mamet is 25.

Thought for Today: "Nobody knows enough, but many know too much." — Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, Austrian author (1830-1916).