

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday, October 7, 2019

TBD Golf: Boys Varsity State Tournament vs. Spearfish @ Spearfish High School
Oral Interp Milbank High School
5:00pm: Football: Boys JV Game vs. Aberdeen Roncalli @ Groton Area High School

Tuesday, October 8, 2019

TBD Golf: Boys Varsity State Tournament vs. Spearfish @ Spearfish High School
1st Round Playoffs
3:00 p.m.: Groton Area hosts Vermillion
6:00pm Volleyball: Girls Varsity Match vs. Leola-Frederick @ Groton Area High School
JV match starts at 6pm



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

Groton's digs thunder through the gym in title match with Northwestern

It was the match everyone was waiting for. Groton Area and Northwestern Area. And the venue was like a state tournament. Northwestern had hard hits that Groton Area players returned as the digs thundered through the gym. It's a match you have to watch in the video archives. Northwestern did win the match, 25-23 and 25-17. The Tigers went 4-1 on the day, beating Warner, Belle Fourche, Potter County and Redfield.

The opening match was against Warner and the Tigers posted a 2-1 win over the Monarchs. The last time the Tigers beat the Monarchs was in 2004.

In the first game, Groton Area took the early lead and never trailed and posted a 25-20 win.



Tadyn Glover and Nicole Marzahn team for a dig to return the ball. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Madeline Fliehs hits the ball past Belle Fourche's Hayley Wilbur. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Nicole Marzahn and Eliza Wanner each had four kills and Madeline Fliehs had a kill. Payton Colestock had three ace serves.

Warner got the early lead in the second game and led by as many as five points at 10-5. The Tigers came back and tied the game at 13, 14 and 15. The Tigers briefly had the lead, 14-13, but Warner would regain control and would coast to a 25-18 win. Wanner had three kills and an ace serve, Fliehs and Stella Meier each had a kill.

Groton Area and Warner battled it out with the game tied three times in the early part of the game. Groton Area would get a five-point lead and upped it to seven, 19-12. The Tigers would take a 24-18 win. Indigo Rogers had three kills while Marzahn had two and Wanner one and Fliehs each having one.

In the next match Groton Area took on the Potter County Battlers. The first game was tied four times with the last time at 17. The Battlers would take a five-point lead, 23-18, and go on to win, 25-22. Indigo Rogers had three kills, Eliza Wanner had two kills and Nicole Marzahn, Madeline Fliehs and Stella Meier each had a kill. The second game was tied seven times with the last time at 17 once again, but this time the Tigers would capture the lead and take a 23-19 lead and go on for the 25-20 win. Nicole Marzahn had four kills and an ace serve, Eliza Wanner had three kills, Indigo Rogers had two kills and an ace serve and Madeline Fliehs

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Indigo Rogers goes for the kill in the Belle Fourche game. (Photo by

Jeslyn Kosel)

an ace serve. The second game was tied three times and there were three lead changes before the Tigers rallied for four and five points and went on for the 25-18 win. Nicole Marzahn had four kills, Indigo Rogers had three kills and an ace serve, Eliza Wanner had three kills, Tadyn Glover had two ace serves including the game winning one, and Payton Colestock and Kaylin Kucker each had an ace serve.

That set up the championship match between Groton Area and Northwestern as both were 4-0 on the day up to this point. Northwestern threatened to put Groton Area away early in the first game with a 6-0 lead, but the Tigers would

had a kill. The third game was tied three times in the early part of the game before Groton Area would outscore Potter County, 4-1, to get the upper hand. Later on, the Tigers would score five straight points to take a 19-12 lead and went on to win, 25-18. Nicole Marzahn had five kills and an ace serve, Indigo Rogers had three kills and Eliza Wanner had two kills.

Groton Area took on Redfield in the third match, winning the first game, 25-16. Groton Area jumped out to a 13-1 lead for the win. Nicole Marzahn had seven kills and a block, Wanner had two kills, Kaylin Kucker had three ace serves and Indigo Rogers had two kill. The second game was tied seven time with the last time at 14. It remained a two to three point game the rest of the way as Groton Area won, 25-23. Nicole Marzahn had seven kills and an ace serve, Indigo Rogers had two kills, Stella Meier, Madeline Fliehs and Eliza Wanner each had one kill and Payton Colestock had an ace serve.

Groton Area posted a 2-0 win over Belle Fourche. The Tigers took a 6-0 lead in the first game and coasted to a 25-15 win. Elilza Wanner had four kills, Indigo Rogers had three kills and a block, Nicole Marzahn had two kills, Stella Meier and Tadyn Glover each had a kill and Payton Colestock and Kaylin Kucker each had



Eliza Wanner towers over the Belle Fourche defenders to for a kill. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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Kaylin Kucker sets the ball. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

and then the Wildcats took a three point lead and upped it to five at 10-5. Groton Area closed to within two at 14-12, but Northwestern Area would score six straight points to take a 20-12 lead and would go on to win, 25-17. Nicole Marzahn had six kills, Eliza Wanner had two kills and Madeline Flihs and Indigo Rogers each had a kill. Sydney Schell led the Wildcats with at least nine kills and an ace serve and Madalyn Groft had at least seven kills and three ace serves.

Coach Chelsea Hanson said of the matches of the day, "I was really proud of the girls in all of the matches. They came out flat against Potter County after getting the win over Warner but we played well enough to win. Our matches were much better against Belle Fourche and Redfield and our energy was good which helped us maintain control in both games. We definitely rose to the occasion against Northwestern, at that time they were probably 24 or 25-0 and our girls played fearless! We were on

battle back and then scored seven straight points to take a 15-10 lead. The Wildcats returned the favor and scored seven straight points to take a 17-15 lead. The Tigers tied the game at 18 and took a one point lead at 19-18 and upped it to two points at 21-19. The Wildcats would score three straight to tie the game and reclaim the lead, 22-21. Groton Area tied the game at 22 and 23 before the final two points would be awarded to the Wildcats as they won, 25-23. Nicole Marzahn had three kills, Indigo Rogers had two kills and an ace serve, Stella Meier and Eliza Wanner each had two kills, Madeline Flihs had a block and Payton Colestock had an ace serve.

Groton Area scored first in the second game but Northwestern Area tied the game at one and two



Stella Meier goes for the kill. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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game 5 of the day and game 7 of the week and we could have pretty easily just said that they're a good team and they're going to win and our girls went in with the intention to win and fought for every point and that really shows the heart of our girls! We saw a lot of good things today and are happy to see the things were working on in practice carrying over into games. We're playing every game one point at a time and trying not to settle with where we are, we haven't reached our peak yet so we're working hard towards that!"

- Paul Kosel

All-Tournament Team

1. Nicole Marzahn—Groton Area
2. Eliza Wanner—Groton Area
3. Janessa Storley—Webster Area
4. Emily Kranz—Waverly-South Shore
5. Hannah Kuehn—Redfield
6. Hannah Schentzel—Northwestern
7. Madalyn Groft—Northwestern
8. Sydney Schell—Northwestern
9. Ava Nilsson--Warner
10. Jennifer Aman—Warner
11. Danille Seymour—Warner
12. Jessica Niles—Beresford



Payton Colestock goes for the dig. (Photo by

Jeslyn Kosel)

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings are leaving the east coast with a record of 3-2 after defeating the New York Giants 28-10 on Sunday. The defense did their job as usual, but the offense finally found a groove. The question is whether the Vikings can sustain this level of play against better competition. If they can, then they have a great shot of making the playoffs. If the team can't keep this up, then once again we will be forced to suffer another season where the Vikings don't make the playoffs but played too well to get a good draft pick.

All the talk coming into this game was the Vikings' offense, and specifically Kirk Cousins. Adam Thielen had publicly voiced his displeasure with the team's passing game, while Stefon Diggs decided to skip some practices which led to the team hitting him with a \$200k fine and speculation that Diggs was going to get traded. Luckily for everyone rooting for the purple and gold, the Giants have one of the worst passing defenses in the league, which allowed Cousins and co. to put up the best numbers of the season so far.

Cousins completed 22 of 27 passes for 306 yards and two touchdowns. The Vikings did a great job of getting Cousins on the move, with plenty of bootlegs and play action passes. Adam Thielen was the biggest benefactor, catching seven passes for 130 yards and two touchdowns.

The Vikings' defense has all the pieces to be elite, but for whatever reason they aren't playing up to their full abilities. Don't get me wrong, the defense is still very good, but it could be better. On Sunday, the Vikings were getting good pressure on rookie QB Daniel Jones, limiting him to only 182 yards and one touchdown. The Vikings had four sacks and eight quarterback hits to go along with seven tackles for a loss and eleven deflected passes. The Vikings also didn't let the Giants get anything going on the ground, limiting them (albeit without superstar Saquon Barkley) to only 64 yards on 20 carries.

The player of the game on offense is once again Dalvin Cook. The electrifying running back carried the ball 21 times for 132 yards while adding 86 yards on six receptions. Even with all the great running backs the Vikings have had over the years, Cook is the first to have over 120 rushing yards and 80 receiving yards in a game.

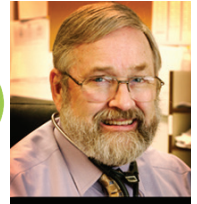
The player of the game on defense is Danielle Hunter. The most physically imposing player in the NFL had himself a heck of a game against the Giants – and specifically former Vikings offensive tackle Mike Remmers. Hunter led the team in tackles (7), sacks (2), QB hits (2) and tackles for a loss (2).

Looking ahead, the Vikings return home and prepare to take on the Philadelphia Eagles. The Eagles are a better team than the Giants, so we can't expect the Vikings to have it as easy as they did in week 5. The Vikings will need to rely on the passing game against the Eagles, who have the best run defense in the league. They're beatable through the air, however, as they give up over 330 passing yards per game. This will be another noon game and will air on FOX. Skol!

If you have any questions or comments, reach out to me on Twitter (@JordanWrightNFL)

The Cost of Health Care

Health care costs too much. The U.S. spends twice as much as other wealthy nations and yet we have poorer outcomes. Patients in this country visit physicians less frequently and spend less time in hospitals than residents of other wealthy countries. So, why such high costs? It's a complex issue with no simple answer.



By Tom Dean, MD ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

Experts have identified three major factors contributing to this situation. The most significant is higher prices, followed by costly administrative complexity and finally, the use of ineffective or overly aggressive medical interventions that provide little benefit to patients.

What about prices? The average U.S. hospital discharge costs over \$29,000 compared to \$18,000 in the Netherlands and \$16,000 in Canada. The average MRI price in Australia is \$350 compared to \$1145 in the U.S. Prices, especially drug prices keep going higher. Lantus insulin introduced nearly 20 years ago at about \$35 per vial now sells for \$260. The U.K. price is \$26. Gleevec, a remarkably effective drug for leukemia, introduced in 2001 at \$26,000 per year, more recently sells for \$120,000. The generic form sells for \$96,000.

Trying to control costs in the U.S., both the government and insurance companies have applied complex regulations resulting in the addition of administrative staff and steadily increasing expenditures. Studies show that 20 to 30 percent of health care expenditures now go to cover admin costs, a much higher rate than other countries.

What to do? As a society we have depended on market forces to control prices. This is effective when selling groceries and gasoline but in health care it has failed. The simple explanation is that health care providers do not compete based on price. Even when patients have comparative cost information, they all too often do not select the most cost-effective approach.

Too little incentive exists for providers, especially physicians, to seek out the most efficient approach to care. In fact, existing financial incentives often push physicians and other providers in the opposite direction – the more you do the more you are paid.

Bottom line: As a society we in the U.S. have never figured out where health care fits in the spectrum of economic activity. Is it a commercial product like automobiles and blue jeans where those with more resources can purchase more elaborate products, or is it a basic human service like public education or fire protection to be made available to everyone?

In the words of the late Professor Uwe Reinhardt, one of the giants of health policy analysis, what we have is a philosophical and ethical challenge not an economic one.

Tom Dean, MD of Wessington Springs, South Dakota is a contributing Prairie Doc® columnist who has practiced family medicine for more than 38 years. He served as a member of the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPTV most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

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Today



Patchy Frost
then Sunny

High: 68 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 45 °F

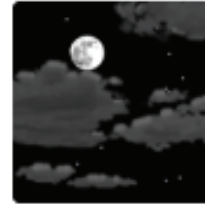
Tuesday



Sunny

High: 70 °F

Tuesday
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 51 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 65 °F

NWS ABERDEEN SD 

Mild Through Tuesday
Rain/Sleet/Snow Likely
Mid/Late Week

Today	Tonight	Tuesday
 62-73°	 39-49°	 67-80°

Updated: 10/7/2019 3:23 AM
Published on: 10/06/2019 at 11:24PM

High pressure will bring another couple days of mild temperatures and dry conditions to the region. However, a storm will move in by mid to late week, likely bringing rain/sleet and snow to the area. Travel may be highly impacted at that time. More to come as we get closer to mid-week. Enjoy the next couple of days!

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Today in Weather History

October 7, 1970: On October 7th through the 9th, 1970 a record-breaking early season snowstorm hit parts of southern South Dakota. Snowfall of 5 to 9 inches was typical across the southwest and south central on the 7th. Late on October 8th and into the 9th of 1970 the southeast portion of the state was hit. The 5 inches that fell in Sioux Falls is the earliest significant snow on record for the area.

The heavy snows also affected portions of western Iowa and western Minnesota. Amounts of up to 7 inches were recorded in northwest Iowa. The heavy, wet snow snapped many tree branches and downed power lines. Sioux City recorded their heaviest snow for so early in the season. The snow was very wet and heavy but melted quickly over the next several days.

1825: Raging forest fires in Miramichi region of New Brunswick, Canada, destroy over 3 million acres of forest. As many as 500 people were killed. The blaze has been partly attributed to unusually hot weather in the fall and summer of 1825, coupled with outdoor fires by settlers and loggers.

1970 - Widespread flooding took place across Puerto Rico. Rainfall amounts for the day ranged up to seventeen inches at Aibonito. A slow moving tropical depression was responsible for six days of torrential rains across the island. Totals in the Eastern Interior Division averaged thirty inches, with 38.4 inches at Jayuya. Flooding claimed eighteen lives, and resulted in 62 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1981 - Seattle, WA, received four inches of rain in 24 hours, a record for the city. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - It was another hot day in the southwestern U.S. Tucson, AZ, hit 101 degrees for the second day in a row to again equal their record for the month of October. Phoenix AZ reported a record high of 103 degrees, and Blythe CA and Yuma AZ tied for honors as the hot spot in the nation with afternoon highs of 108 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Morning fog in the central U.S. reduced the visibility to near zero at some locations. Morning lows of 28 degrees at Rockford IL and 24 degrees at Waterloo IA were records for the date. Afternoon highs of 92 degrees at Hollywood FL and Miami FL were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Morning thunderstorms in central Texas drenched San Antonio with 3.10 inches of rain in six hours causing local flooding in northeastern sections of the city. Temperatures dipped below the freezing mark from the Northern Rockies to the Upper Mississippi Valley. (The National Weather Summary)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 65 °F at 4:47 PM

Low Temp: 43 °F at 7:25 AM

Wind: 24 mph at 2:55 PM

Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 91° in 1909

Record Low: 14° in 2012

Average High: 62°F

Average Low: 36°F

Average Precip in Oct.: 0.47

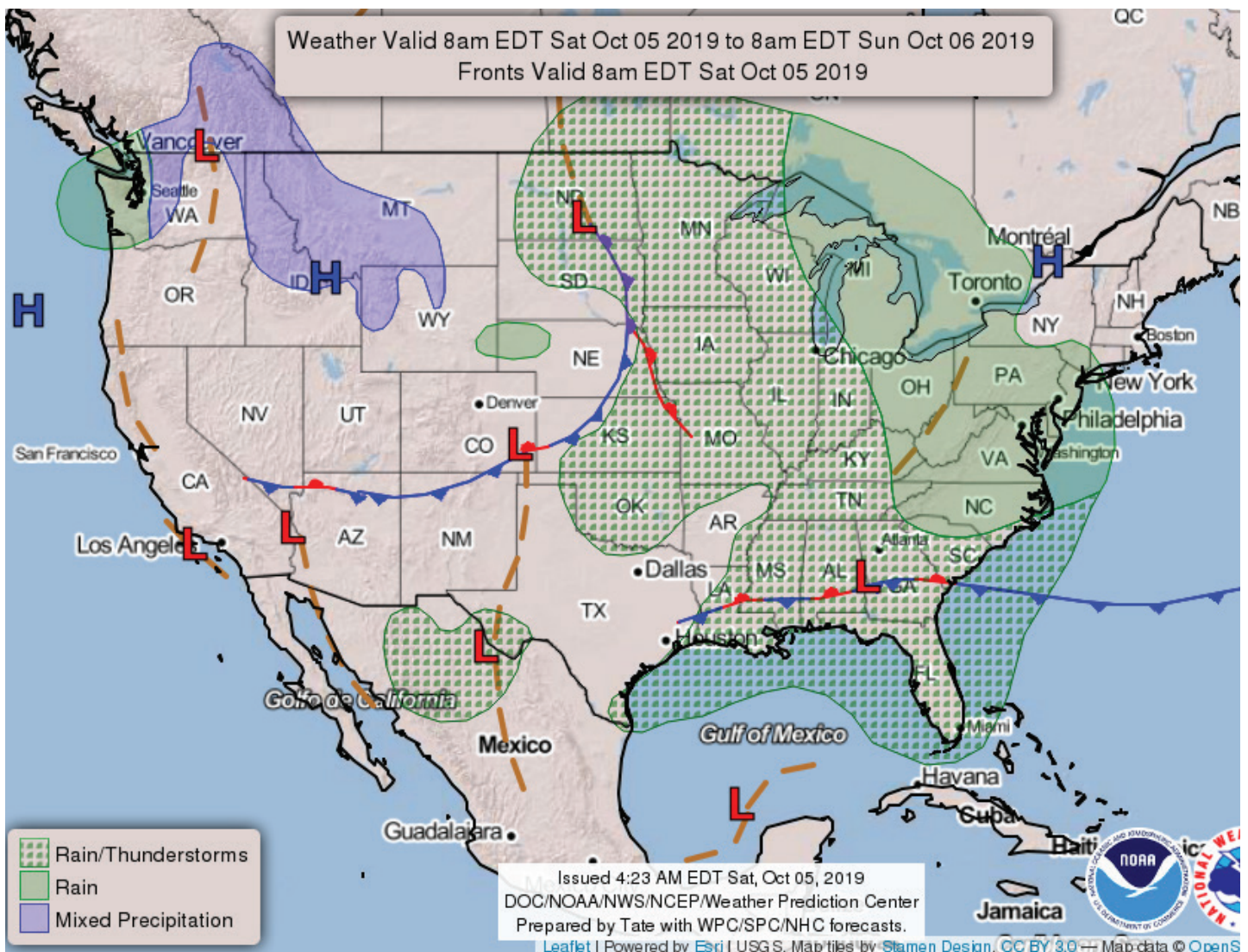
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.38

Average Precip to date: 18.95

Precip Year to Date: 25.40

Sunset Tonight: 7:03 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:41 a.m.



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DON'T BLAME US!

Over much opposition from members of the community, a man opened a large night club. One of the local churches came to the logical conclusion that the most important responsibility they had in the matter was to ask God to intervene and close the club. They called an all-night prayer meeting and asked God to honor their request.

During the prayer meeting, lightning struck the club, and it burned to the ground. The club owner, learning of the church's prayer meeting, became angry and sued the church. In response to the lawsuit, the church denied all responsibility.

After hearing the case, the judge said, "Wherever the guilt may lie, the night club owner believes in prayer but the church, obviously, does not."

What at first may appear to be humorous may be an indictment on our faith and trust in the power of God. In His teaching on prayer, Jesus said that we are to ask Him for "anything" and "everything" – two "all-inclusive" words. When we take them literally and seriously, they will give us the right and responsibility to ask for "whatever" is within the will of God.

Could it be that we do not believe that God can and will answer our prayers? Do we really believe that God is listening, is willing, and is certainly able to respond if we truly believe?

Prayer: Dear Jesus, You clearly and convincingly said that "everything is possible with God" if only we believe! In Your name, please remove any and all of our doubts. Thank You! Amen.

Scripture For Today: Mark 10:27 Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God."

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12/2019 St. John's Lutheran Luncheon
- 09/20/2019 Presbyterian Luncheon
- 09/28/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/31/2019 Trunk or Treat/Halloween on Main (Halloween)
- 11/09/2019 Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Holiday Party
- 12/07/2019 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- Bingo: every Wednesday at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

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

News from the Associated Press

Sioux Falls libraries aim to be more baby friendly

By SHELLY CONLON Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls area librarians are spending the next three years with one major goal in mind: to increase early childhood literacy skills across the city in measurable ways by 2022.

And the best way to make that happen is by breaking social norms and making libraries engaging, fun and loud.

In the last year, Siouxland Library officials have been focused on finding new ways to captivate young readers and learners by reaching them before they get to kindergarten.

It's part of an early literacy initiative rooted in the fact that more than 50% of South Dakota caregivers don't read to children ages 0-5 each day, and less than half of parents or family members do not tell stories or sing songs, said Jenna Neugebauer, the children's librarian at the downtown library branch.

And it's tied to the early literacy rate for the Sioux Falls School District, which sits at 68%. The district serves less than 35% of incoming kindergartners through its pre-K program, so the remaining children are either served by private providers or not at all, she said.

"I have a lot of pride in South Dakota and our Siouxland communities, but we can do better when it comes to investing in our futures and in our children," Neugebauer told the Argus Leader. "An investment in early literacy endeavors creates healthier communities through interaction, reading, and intentional time with your little one."

Libraries are adding play areas, literacy focused toys

The goal first came about after Mayor Paul TenHaken came up with the idea for each department to set an ambitious goal difficult to achieve, she said. But to achieve it, or even exceed it, developing early literacy skills starts with finding ways to reach parents and takes the work of many, she said.

So librarians across the city started the new school year by assessing space to dedicate some sort of play area at each of the branches, buying specific toys geared toward various early literacy concepts and going through intensive six-week training courses focused on how to include more literacy concepts into programs.

They've also started hosting more parent-child events focused on developing birth to 5 skills, like baby story times, music and movement classes, and workshops about child nutrition and development taught by specialists.

"We learn so much by sound, seeing things and touching things," said librarian associate Aldijana Bonander. "If you're constantly shushing them, it's like, 'Oh, there's the mean old ladies.'"

And that has the possibility to create more of an unwelcome feeling, Bonander said.

"We have always known that what we do in story time is learning based," Neugebauer said. "But we have not always pointed that out."

Events show kids it's OK to get loud at the library

But by being more direct and letting children explore the library in a free and safe way in an area where they can be themselves, the chance to improve literacy skills brings in parents like Shuai Yang, who moved to Sioux Falls with his daughter from Lubbock, Texas, two months ago.

Since he arrived, Shuai and his daughter Mila Yang, 1, have come for baby story time almost every day, he said. The library quickly became a way for his family to connect to the city after he saw events for his daughter online, he said.

Having access to early childhood literacy options like that allow Shuai to watch his daughter learn more and grow faster as she makes new friends, he said. Both were at a recent Friday morning's music and movement class, which started with a book about jazz and rhythm and ended with word play songs and parachute games.

"When you're already at home, it's so quiet," Shuai said. "Here, (she can) open her heart, be happy and

enjoy the time.”

But measuring the success will be the challenge, so the library has developed an action committee working on setting smaller goals to reach the larger one by looking at attendance and feedback as how many books are brought to local day cares as part of the library’s day care delivery program, Neugebauer said.

And librarians have been meeting with other community groups like local nonprofits education experts to learn what works, what doesn’t and where not to replicate things already out there, she said.

“Our hope is that by meeting the series of smaller goals that we’re pushing toward that larger goal,” Neugebauer said.

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

Tumor discovery gives business owner new outlook on life

By **TREVOR J. MITCHELL** Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — “If I was going to die today, would I go to Hell or to paradise?”

That’s the question that ran through Luca Papini’s mind shortly after learning the seizures he’d been having were a sign of something much more serious — a brain tumor that would require surgery.

“You are faced with this question,” the 40-year-old Sioux Falls business owner said. “I’ve got two kids, a wife, a business. I love life, but I’m like ‘I might die.’ Literally.”

But, he said, through his tears he realized that wasn’t the question he needed to be asking.

“The real question here,” he told the Argus Leader, “is how am I going to live this moment?”

The moment hasn’t been an easy one. The seizures mean Papini is unable to drive to his second job, which supplements the income from Luca’s Italian Leather Boutique.

Since 2014, his business has grown from the trunk of his car to a well-trafficked downtown Sioux Falls storefront, but Papini says “it’s paying the bills but not much else.” (A partner he’s worked with will be running Luca’s until Papini returns, he said.)

He had relied heavily on his part-time job to pay for daycare, a necessity for Giacomo and Aria, his two children with wife Sheri Papini.

Both of them say they have a hard time asking for help in any situation, but Luca was convinced to make a GoFundMe page asking for \$16,000 to pay for daycare and part of the medical bills.

After five days, the fundraiser was halfway to its goal.

“It’s been successful beyond my expectations,” Luca said. “I was shocked in many ways by the support of people that I’d in some cases never met.”

Friends and family responded, of course, but so did friends from high school and college he hasn’t spoken to in years. It wasn’t only money, he said. There were prayers, offers to run errands, people simply asking what they could do to help.

“It’s almost like you can’t describe that feeling,” Luca said. “And it’s not the money. It’s the passion.”

These past few weeks, he said, have given him “such a huge desire to make a difference in the lives of others, because so many have made a difference in mine.”

The experience has made him look at his life and how he’s living it in a new light, he said.

“The more I allowed myself to be in front of this, even if it was a dramatic situation, the more I started to feel at peace,” he said. “This opportunity is a bigger opportunity to realize how beautiful life is.”

Finding support in family and the community

It’s an attitude that his wife, Sheri, didn’t originally share at first. Throughout their nine years together, she said, she can be the pessimist in the relationship.

But, she said, “When you’re around someone like Luca it’s hard not to come around to a different way of thinking.”

She and Luca are very different, she said, but a strong faith is something that they share. They met on CatholicMatch.com, and their first conversations centered around what their faith meant to them.

Their connection was strong. After a week of talking online, Sheri was asking her aunt and uncle, who

got married after a month of knowing each other, how'd they'd known it was right.

But she still wasn't expecting when, a day after they'd first met in person, Luca proposed to her.

"It was still pretty surprising," she said. "But at the same time there was a certainty there that had never been there with anyone else." Six months later, they were married.

It hasn't all been easy, of course — when talking about the kind of attitude it took for Luca to move his store from the trunk of a car to a downtown boutique, Sheri chuckles and adds that another important component was "a wife willing to support you."

But she did, of course. "He's the most real, genuine person I've ever met," she said. "He makes you want to be a better person."

So while it's still been overwhelming, she said, she's coming to terms with the fact that they need to ask for help.

"I'm not sure what makes us any more deserving of this than the homeless guy across the street," Sheri said. "But at the same time I want to be open to what's available. I don't want this to be a negative experience for my kids. Both Luca and I are learning and growing from it, and I hope our kids will too."

"If, God forbid," she adds, "something happens to Luca, I know our kids will have his legacy through not just me but this community of people that is now our family."

And even with a surgery planned for Oct. 7, that community is what Luca is focusing on.

"There are some pretty awesome people out there," he said. "And not just because they gave me \$25. Because they want me to be good. They want my family to be good."

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

Swedish teen climate activist touring Dakotas reservations

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) — A 16-year-old climate activist who garnered international attention when she scolded world leaders at the United Nations is visiting American Indian reservations in the Dakotas to talk about oil pipelines.

Greta Thunberg appeared Sunday in a youth panel discussion on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. A similar event is planned Tuesday morning on the North Dakota side of the Standing Rock Reservation.

The Lakota People's Law Project says Thunberg is concerned about the proposed path of the Keystone XL pipeline through South Dakota, as well as plans to double oil flowing through the Dakota Access pipeline in North Dakota.

Thunberg traveled to the United States in August on a sailboat to promote her climate change campaign.

Patrol identifies woman who died in Spearfish Canyon crash

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a 57-year-old woman who died in a pickup crash in Spearfish Canyon.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says Robin Stensgard, of Lead, was killed Wednesday afternoon when she went off the road while trying to make a left-hand turn and hit several trees. The crash happened on U.S. Highway 14A southwest of Spearfish.

The patrol says Stensgard was thrown from the pickup and died. She was not wearing a seat belt.

There were no passengers in the vehicle.

No injuries after gunshots at house with people inside

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say several gunshots were fired at a central Sioux Falls home while adults and children were inside the residence. No injuries were reported.

Police say they were called to the home about 10:45 p.m. Saturday. Investigators found that several bullets had struck the home. A vehicle parked outside was also hit with gunfire.

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Authorities are searching for suspects. Police say they will release more information Monday morning.

AP sources: Trump allies sought changes at Ukraine utility

By **DESMOND BUTLER, MICHAEL BIESECKER and RICHARD LARDNER Associated Press**

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — As Rudy Giuliani was pushing Ukrainian officials last spring to investigate one of Donald Trump's main political rivals, a group of individuals with ties to the president and his personal lawyer were also active in the former Soviet republic.

Their aims were profit, not politics. This circle of businessmen and Republican donors touted connections to Giuliani and Trump while trying to install new management at the top of Ukraine's massive state gas company. Their plan was to then steer lucrative contracts to companies controlled by Trump allies, according to two people with knowledge of their plans.

Their plan hit a snag after Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko lost his reelection bid to Volodymyr Zelenskiy, whose conversation with Trump about former Vice President Joe Biden is now at the center of the House impeachment inquiry of Trump.

But the effort to install a friendlier management team at the helm of the gas company, Naftogaz, would soon be taken up with Ukraine's new president by U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry, whose slate of candidates included a fellow Texan who is one of Perry's past political donors.

It's unclear if Perry's attempts to replace board members at Naftogaz were coordinated with the Giuliani allies pushing for a similar outcome, and no one has alleged that there is criminal activity in any of these efforts. And it's unclear what role, if any, Giuliani had in helping his clients push to get gas sales agreements with the state-owned company.

But the affair shows how those with ties to Trump and his administration were pursuing business deals in Ukraine that went far beyond advancing the president's personal political interests. It also raises questions about whether Trump allies were mixing business and politics just as Republicans were calling for a probe of Biden and his son Hunter, who served five years on the board of another Ukrainian energy company, Burisma.

On Friday, according to the news site Axios, Trump told a group of Republican lawmakers that it had been Perry who had prompted the phone call in which Trump asked Zelenskiy for a "favor" regarding Biden. Axios cited a source saying Trump said Perry had asked Trump to make the call to discuss "something about an LNG (liquefied natural gas) plant."

While it's unclear whether Trump's remark Friday referred specifically to the behind-the-scenes maneuvers this spring involving the multibillion-dollar state gas company, The Associated Press has interviewed four people with direct knowledge of the attempts to influence Naftogaz, and their accounts show Perry playing a key role in the effort. Three of the four spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation. The fourth is an American businessman with close ties to the Ukrainian energy sector.

A spokeswoman for the U.S. Energy Department said Perry, a former Texas governor and Republican presidential candidate, was not advancing anyone's personal interests. She said his conversations with Ukrainian officials about Naftogaz were part of his efforts to reform the country's energy sector and create an environment where Western companies can do business.

The Trump and Giuliani allies driving the attempt to change the senior management at Naftogaz, however, appear to have had inside knowledge of the U.S. government's plans in Ukraine. For example, they told people that Trump would replace the U.S. ambassador there months before she was actually recalled to Washington, according to three of the individuals interviewed by the AP. One of the individuals said he was so concerned by the whole affair that he reported it to a U.S. Embassy official in Ukraine months ago.

THE BUSINESSMEN

Ukraine, a resource-rich nation that sits on the geographic and symbolic border between Russia and the West, has long been plagued by corruption and government dysfunction, making it a magnet for foreign profiteers.

At the center of the Naftogaz plan, according to three individuals familiar with the details, were three

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such businessmen: two Soviet-born Florida real estate entrepreneurs, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, and an oil magnate from Boca Raton, Florida, named Harry Sargeant III.

Parnas and Fruman have made hundreds of thousands of dollars in political donations to Republicans, including \$325,000 to a Trump-allied political action committee in 2018. This helped the relatively unknown entrepreneurs gain access to top levels of the Republican Party — including meetings with Trump at the White House and Mar-a-Lago.

The two have also faced lawsuits from disgruntled investors over unpaid debts. During the same period they were pursuing the Naftogaz deal, the two were coordinating with Giuliani to set up meetings with Ukrainian government officials and push for an investigation of the Bidens.

Sargeant, his wife and corporate entities tied to the family have donated at least \$1.2 million to Republican campaigns and PACs over the last 20 years, including \$100,000 in June to the Trump Victory Fund, according to federal and state campaign finance records. He has also served as finance chair of the Florida state GOP, and gave nearly \$14,000 to Giuliani's failed 2008 presidential campaign.

In early March, Fruman, Parnas and Sargeant were touting a plan to replace Naftogaz CEO Andriy Kobolyev with another senior executive at the company, Andrew Favorov, according to two individuals who spoke to the AP as well as a memorandum about the meeting that was later submitted to the U.S. Embassy in Kiev.

Going back to the Obama administration, the U.S. Energy Department and the State Department have long supported efforts to import American natural gas into Ukraine to reduce the country's dependence on Russia.

The three approached Favorov with the idea while the Ukrainian executive was attending an energy industry conference in Texas. Parnas and Fruman told him they had flown in from Florida on a private jet to recruit him to be their partner in a new venture to export up to 100 tanker shipments a year of U.S. liquefied gas into Ukraine, where Naftogaz is the largest distributor, according to two people briefed on the details.

Sargeant told Favorov that he regularly meets with Trump at Mar-a-Lago and that the gas-sales plan had the president's full support, according to the two people who said Favorov recounted the discussion to them.

These conversations were recounted to AP by Dale W. Perry, an American who is a former business partner of Favorov. He told AP in an interview that Favorov described the meeting to him soon after it happened and that Favorov perceived it to be a shakedown. Perry, who is no relation to the energy secretary, is the managing partner of Energy Resources of Ukraine, which currently has business agreements to import natural gas and electricity to Ukraine.

A second person who spoke on condition of anonymity also confirmed to the AP that Favorov had recounted details of the Houston meeting to him.

According to Dale Perry and the other person, Favorov said Parnas told him Trump planned to remove U.S. Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch and replace her with someone more open to aiding their business interests.

Dale Perry told the AP he was so concerned about the efforts to change the management at Naftogaz and to get rid of Yovanovitch that he reported what he had heard to Suriya Jayanti, a State Department foreign service officer stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv who focuses on the energy industry.

He also wrote a detailed memo about Favorov's account, dated April 12, which was shared with another current State Department official. Perry recently provided a copy of the April memo to AP.

Jayanti declined to provide comment. Favorov also declined to comment.

On March 24, Giuliani and Parnas gathered at the Trump International Hotel in Washington with Healy E. Baumgardner, a former Trump campaign adviser who once served as deputy communications director for Giuliani's presidential campaign and as a communications official during the George W. Bush administration.

She is now listed as the CEO of 45 Energy Group, a Houston-based energy company whose website describes it as a "government relations, public affairs and business development practice group."

This was a couple of weeks after the Houston meeting with Favorov, the Naftogaz executive. Giuliani,

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Parnas and Baumgardner were there to make a business pitch involving gas deals in the former Soviet bloc to a potential investor.

This time, according to Giuliani, the deals that were discussed involved Uzbekistan, not Ukraine.

"I have not pursued a deal in the Ukraine. I don't know about a deal in the Ukraine. I would not do a deal in the Ukraine now, obviously," said Giuliani, reached while attending a playoff baseball game between the New York Yankees and Minnesota Twins. "There is absolutely no proof that I did it, because I didn't do it."

During this meeting, Parnas again repeated that Yovanovitch, the U.S. ambassador in Kyiv, would soon be replaced, according to a person with direct knowledge of the gathering. She was removed two months later.

Giuliani, who serves as Trump's personal lawyer and has no official role in government, acknowledged Friday that he was among those pushing the president to replace the ambassador, a career diplomat with a history of fighting corruption.

"The ambassador to Ukraine was replaced," he said. "I did play a role in that."

But Giuliani refused to discuss the details of his business dealings, or whether he helped his associates in their push to forge gas sales contracts with the Ukrainian company. He did describe Sergeant as a friend and referred to Parnas and Fruman as his clients in a tweet in May.

As part of their impeachment inquiry, House Democrats have subpoenaed Giuliani for documents and communications related to dozens of people, including Favorov, Parnas, Fruman and Baumgardner's 45 Energy Group.

Baumgardner issued a written statement, saying: "While I won't comment on business discussions, I will say this: this political assault on private business by the Democrats in Congress is complete harassment and an invasion of privacy that should scare the hell out of every American business owner."

Baumgardner later denied that she had any business dealings in Ukraine but refused to say whether the replacement of Ambassador Yovanovitch was discussed.

Sargeant did not respond to a voice message left at a number listed for him at an address in Boca Raton.

John Dowd, a former Trump attorney who now represents Parnas and Fruman, said it was actually the Naftogaz executives who approached his clients about making a deal. He says they then met with Rick Perry to get the Energy Department on board.

"The people from the company solicited my clients because Igor is in the gas business, and they asked them, and they flew to Washington and they solicited," Dowd said. "They sat down and talked about it. And then it was presented to Secretary Perry to see if they could get it together."

"It wasn't a shakedown; it was an attempt to do legitimate business that didn't work out."

THE ENERGY SECRETARY

In May, Rick Perry traveled to Kyiv to serve as the senior U.S. government representative at the inauguration of the country's new president.

In a private meeting with Zelenskiy, Perry pressed the Ukrainian president to fire members of the Naftogaz advisory board. Attendees left the meeting with the impression that Perry wanted to replace the American representative, Amos Hochstein, a former diplomat and energy representative who served in the Obama administration, with someone "reputable in Republican circles," according to someone who was in the room.

Perry's push for Ukraine's state-owned natural gas company Naftogaz to change its supervisory board was first reported by Politico.

A second meeting during the trip, at a Kyiv hotel, included Ukrainian officials and energy sector people. There, Perry made clear that the Trump administration wanted to see the entire Naftogaz supervisory board replaced, according to a person who attended both meetings. Perry again referenced the list of advisers that he had given Zelenskiy, and it was widely interpreted that he wanted Michael Bleyzer, a Ukrainian-American businessman from Texas, to join the newly formed board, the person said. Also on the list was Robert Bensch, another Texan who frequently works in Ukraine, the Energy Department confirmed.

Gordon D. Sondland, the U.S. ambassador to the European Union, and Kurt D. Volker, then the State Department's special envoy to Ukraine, were also in the room, according to photographs reviewed by AP. The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to fear of retaliation, said he was floored by the American requests because the person had always viewed the U.S. government "as having a higher

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ethical standard.”

The Naftogaz supervisory board is supposed to be selected by the Ukrainian president’s Cabinet in consultation with international institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, the United States and the European Union. It must be approved by the Ukrainian Cabinet. Ukrainian officials perceived Perry’s push to swap out the board as circumventing that established process, according to the person in the room.

U.S. Energy Department spokeswoman Shaylyn Hynes said Perry had consistently called for the modernization of Ukraine’s business and energy sector in an effort to create an environment that will incentivize Western companies to do business there. She said Perry delivered that same message in the May meeting with Zelenskiy.

“What he did not do is advocate for the business interests of any one individual or company,” Hynes said Saturday. “That is fiction being pushed by those who are disingenuously seeking to advance a nefarious narrative that does not exist.”

Hynes said the Ukrainian government had requested U.S. recommendations to advise the country on energy matters, and Perry provided those recommendations. She confirmed Bleyzer was on the list.

Bleyzer, whose company is based in Houston, did not respond on Saturday to a voicemail seeking comment. Bensch also did not respond to a phone message.

As a former Texas governor, Perry has always had close ties to the oil and gas industry. He appointed Bleyzer to a two-year term on a state technologies fund board in 2009. The following year, records show Bleyzer donated \$20,000 to Perry’s reelection campaign.

Zelenskiy’s office declined to comment on Saturday.

In an interview Friday with the Christian Broadcasting Network, Perry said that “as God as my witness” he never discussed Biden or his son in meetings with Ukrainian or U.S. officials, including Trump or Giuliani.

“This has been a very intense, a very focused push to get Ukraine to clean up the corruption,” Perry said in the interview. “I can’t go in good faith and tell a U.S. company, go and invest here, go and be involved if the corruption is ongoing.”

He did confirm he had had a conversation with Giuliani by phone, but a spokeswoman for the energy secretary declined to say when that call was or whether the two had discussed Naftogaz.

Biesecker and Lardner reported from Washington.

Follow Associated Press investigative reporters Desmond Butler at <http://twitter.com/desmondbutler>, Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck>, and Richard Lardner at <http://twitter.com/rplardner>

Contact AP’s global investigative team at Investigative@ap.org.

This story has been corrected to show the person’s name is Michael Bleyzer, not Robert.

US troops start pullout from along Turkey’s border in Syria

By **BASSEM MROUE** Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — U.S.-backed Kurdish-led forces said American troops began pulling back Monday from positions along the border in northeast Syria ahead of an expected Turkish invasion that the Syrian Kurds say will overturn five years of achievements in the battle against the Islamic State group.

The Syrian Kurdish fighters also accused Washington of failing to abide by its commitments to its key allies in the fight against IS. It’s a major shift in U.S. policy.

There was no immediate confirmation from the White House of U.S. troops clearing positions in areas in northern Syria.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, however, also said American troops have started withdrawing from positions, and a video posted by a Kurdish news agency showed a convoy of American armored vehicles apparently heading away from the border area of Tal Abyad.

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Erdogan spoke hours after the White House said U.S. forces in northeastern Syria will move aside and clear the way for an expected Turkish assault — essentially abandoning Kurdish fighters who fought alongside American forces in the yearslong battle to defeat the Islamic State group.

Erdogan didn't elaborate on the planned Turkish incursion but said Turkey was determined to halt what it perceives as threats from the Syrian Kurdish fighters.

Erdogan has threatened for months to launch the military operation across the border. He views the Syria Kurdish forces as a threat to his country as Ankara has struggled with a Kurdish insurgency within Turkey.

In the U.S., Republicans and Democrats have warned that allowing the Turkish attack could lead to a massacre of the Kurds and send a troubling message to American allies across the globe.

The Syrian Democratic Forces, as the Kurdish-led force is known, said the American pullout began first from areas along the Syria-Turkey border.

"The American forces did not abide by their commitments and withdrew their forces along the border with Turkey," the SDF said in its statement. "Turkey now is preparing to invade northern and eastern parts of Syria."

"The Turkish military operation in northern and eastern Syria will have a huge negative effect on our war against" IS, it added.

In an agreement between Ankara and Washington, joint patrols had been patrolling a security zone that covers over 125 kilometers (78 miles) along the border between the towns of Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ayn. The SDF had removed fortification from the areas, considered by Turkey as a threat, and retreated heavy weapons. Meanwhile, U.S. and Turkish began joint aerial and ground patrols of the area.

But Turkey and the U.S. disagreed over the depth of the zone, with Ankara seeking to also have its troops monitor a stretch of territory between 30 and 40 kilometers deep (19 to 25 miles). Despite the agreement, Erdogan had continued to threaten an attack.

The Kurdish-led fighters have been the main U.S.-backed force in Syria in the fight against IS and in March, the group captured the last sliver of land held by the extremists, marking the end of the so-called caliphate that was declared by IS's leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2014.

"We will not hesitate for a moment in defending our people" against Turkish troops, the Syrian Kurdish force said, adding that it has lost 11,000 fighters in the war against IS in Syria.

A Turkish attack would lead to a resurgence of IS, it said. IS sleeper cells are already plotting to break free some 12,000 militants detained by Syrian Kurdish fighters in northeastern Syria in a "threat to local & international security."

The Kurdish fighters also control the al-Hol camp, home to more than 70,000 including at least 9,000 foreigners, mostly wives and children of IS fighters.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu tweeted that since the beginning of the crisis in Syria, "we have supported the territorial integrity of this country, and we will continue to support it."

He added that Ankara is determined to ensure the survival and security of Turkey "by clearing the region from terrorists. We will contribute to peace, peace and stability in Syria."

The Syrian Kurdish Hawar news agency and the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also say American troops were evacuating positions near the towns of Ras al-Ayn and Tal Abyad on Monday.

Associated Press writer Suzan Fraser contributed to this report from Ankara, Turkey.

New whistleblower may give House Democrats fresh leads

By ERIC TUCKER, RICHARD LARDNER and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats leading an impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump's dealings with Ukraine may have fresh information to work with after a new whistleblower stepped forward with what the person's lawyer said were firsthand knowledge of key events.

With Congress out for another week and many Republicans reticent to speak out, a text from attorney Mark Zaid that a second individual had emerged and could corroborate the original whistleblower's com-

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plaint gripped Washington and potentially heightened the stakes for Trump.

Zaid, who represents both whistleblowers, told The Associated Press that the new whistleblower works in the intelligence field and has spoken to the intelligence community's internal watchdog.

The original whistleblower, a CIA officer, filed a formal complaint with the inspector general in August that triggered the impeachment inquiry. The document alleged that Trump had used a July telephone call with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate a political rival, Joe Biden, and his son Hunter, prompting a White House cover-up.

The push came even though there was no evidence of wrongdoing by the former vice president or his son, who served on the board of a Ukrainian gas company. Trump and his supporters deny that he did anything improper, but the White House has struggled to come up with a unified response.

A second whistleblower with direct knowledge could undermine efforts by Trump and his allies to discredit the original complaint. They have called it politically motivated, claimed it was filed improperly and dismissed it as unreliable because it was based on secondhand or thirdhand information.

A rough transcript of Trump's call with Zelenskyy, released by the White House, has already corroborated the complaint's central claim that Trump sought to pressure Ukraine on the investigation.

Text messages from State Department officials revealed other details, including that Ukraine was promised a visit with Trump if the government would agree to investigate the 2016 election and a Ukrainian gas company tied to Biden's son — the outline of a potential quid pro quo.

Rep. Jim Himes, D-Conn., a member of the House Intelligence Committee, said word of a second whistleblower indicates a larger shift inside the government.

"The president's real problem is that his behavior has finally gotten to a place where people are saying, 'Enough,'" Himes said.

Democrats have zeroed in on the State Department in the opening phase of their impeachment investigation. The Intelligence, Oversight and Foreign Affairs committees have already interviewed Kurt Volker, a former special envoy to Ukraine who provided the text messages, and at least two other witnesses are set for depositions this week: Gordon Sondland, the U.S. ambassador to the European Union, and Marie Yovanovitch, who was abruptly ousted as the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine in May.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., one of Trump's most vocal backers, provided perhaps the strongest defense of the president. He said there was nothing wrong with Trump's July conversation with Zelenskyy and said the accusations look like a "political setup."

As for Trump, rather than visiting his nearby golf course in Sterling, Virginia, for a second day, he stayed at the White House on Sunday, where he tweeted and retweeted, with the Bidens a main target.

"The great Scam is being revealed!" Trump wrote at one point, continuing to paint himself as the victim of a "deep state" and hostile Democrats.

Aside from Trump's attempt to pressure Zelenskyy, the July call has raised questions about whether Trump held back near \$400 million in critical American military aid to Ukraine as leverage for an investigation of Burisma, a Ukrainian gas company.

Hunter Biden served on the board of Burisma at the same time his father 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.

Joe Biden, a leading candidate for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, wrote in The Washington Post that he had a message for Trump and "those who facilitate his abuses of power. ... Please know that I'm not going anywhere. You won't destroy me, and you won't destroy my family."

Additional details about the origins of Trump's July 25 call with Zelenskyy have emerged over the weekend.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry had encouraged Trump to speak with the Ukrainian leader, but on energy and economic issues, according to spokeswoman Shaylyn Hynes. She said Perry's interest in Ukraine is part of U.S. efforts to boost Western energy ties to Eastern Europe.

Trump, who has repeatedly described his conversation with Zelenskyy as "perfect," told House Republicans on Friday night that it was Perry who teed up the July call, according to a person familiar with

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Trump's comments who was granted anonymity to discuss them. The person said Trump did not suggest that Perry had anything to do with the pressure to investigate the Bidens.

Himes appeared on CBS' "Face the Nation" while Graham spoke on Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures."

Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Ellen Knickmeyer and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

GM-UAW talks take turn for worse; settlement not near

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Contract talks aimed at ending a 21-day strike by the United Auto Workers against General Motors have taken a turn for the worse, hitting a big snag over product commitments for U.S. factories, a union official wrote in an email to members.

The letter from UAW Vice President Terry Dittes casts doubt on whether there will be a quick settlement in the contract dispute, which sent 49,000 workers to the picket lines on Sept. 16, crippling GM's factories.

Dittes' letter says the union presented a proposal to the company Saturday. He said GM responded Sunday morning by reverting back to an offer that had been rejected and made few changes.

The company's proposal did nothing to address a host of items, Dittes wrote, specifying job security for members during the term of the four-year contract.

Normally in contract talks, the union bargains for commitments from the company to build new vehicles, engines, transmissions and other items at U.S. factories represented by the union.

"It did nothing to provide job security during the term of this agreement," Dittes wrote. "We, in this union, could not be more disappointed with General Motors who refuse to recognize the experience and talent of our membership."

In a statement, GM said it continues to negotiate in good faith "with very good proposals that benefit employees today and builds a stronger future for all of us."

The company said it is committed to talking around the clock to resolve the dispute.

But Dittes wrote that while both sides had made progress on important issues two days ago, the talks now "have taken a turn for the worse."

Dittes also sent a sharp letter to GM's vice president for labor relations Sunday, saying: "You didn't even have a professional courtesy to explain why you could not accept or why you rejected our package proposal for each item we addressed."

A person briefed on the talks said Sunday that the union voiced concerns about GM increasing production in Mexico, where it now builds pickup trucks, small cars and two SUVs. The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the talks are private, said both sides are far apart on guarantees of new products in U.S. factories.

GM leads all companies in automobiles produced in Mexico at just over 833,000 last year, according to LMC and the Center for Automotive Research, a think-tank based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Of GM vehicles sold in the U.S., 22% are produced in Mexico.

GM's U.S. factories have been shut down since the workers walked out Sept. 16. Parts shortages also have forced the company to close plants in Mexico and Canada.

Industry analysts say GM is losing more than \$80 million a day as the strike continues. Workers earn \$250 per week in strike pay while they're on the picket lines, about one-fifth of what they normally make.

Wages and pensions are among the issues that remained unsettled.

Striking workers have said they want a bigger share of the more than \$30 billion in profits that GM has made during the past five years. But the company wants to cut its labor costs so they are closer to those at U.S. factories run by foreign automakers, mainly in the South.

US to step aside for Turkish assault on Kurds in Syria

By ZEKE MILLER and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House said Sunday that U.S. forces in northeast Syria will move aside and clear the way for an expected Turkish assault, essentially abandoning Kurdish fighters who fought alongside American forces in the yearslong battle to defeat Islamic State militants.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened for months to launch the military operation across the border. He views the Kurdish forces as a threat to his country. Republicans and Democrats have warned that allowing the Turkish attack could lead to a massacre of the Kurds and send a troubling message to American allies across the globe.

U.S. troops “will not support or be involved in the operation” and “will no longer be in the immediate area,” in northern Syria, White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said in an unusual late-Sunday statement that was silent on the fate of the Kurds. There are about 1,000 U.S. troops in northern Syria, and a senior U.S. official said they will pull back from the area — and potentially depart the country entirely should widespread fighting break out between Turkish and Kurdish forces.

The announcement followed a call between President Donald Trump and Erdogan, the White House said.

The decision is a stark illustration of Trump’s focus on ending American overseas entanglements — one of his key campaign promises. But his goal of swift withdrawals in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan have been stymied by concerns from U.S. officials and American allies about the dangerous voids that would remain. As he faces an impeachment inquiry at home, Trump has appeared more focused on making good on his political pledges, even at the risk of sending a troubling signal to American allies abroad.

In December, Trump announced he was withdrawing American troops from Syria but was met with widespread condemnation for abandoning Kurdish allies to the Turkish assault. The announcement prompted the resignation in protest of then-Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, and a coordinated effort by then-national security adviser John Bolton to try to protect the Kurds.

Since January, U.S. officials have tried to broker the creation of a “safe zone” in northern Syria to provide a security buffer between the Turkish military and Kurdish forces, but Turkey has repeatedly objected to its slow implementation.

The White House announcement Sunday came a day after Erdogan offered the strongest warning yet of a unilateral military operation into northeastern Syria, as the Turkish military has been dispatching units and defense equipment to its border with the area.

“We have given all kinds of warning regarding the (area) east of the Euphrates to the relevant parties. We have acted with enough patience,” Erdogan said.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces threatened to respond forcefully to any Turkish incursion.

“We will not hesitate to turn any unprovoked attack by Turkey into an all-out war on the entire border to DEFEND ourselves and our people,” SDF spokesman Mustafa Bali tweeted Saturday.

A Kurdish official speaking on condition of anonymity because he’s not authorized to brief reporters said Monday they expect a limited Turkish operation and are still working to ascertain what will happen with American forces in the region. The official said the view is that Kurdish-led forces have a legitimate right to self-defense.

Turkey considers the People’s Protection Units, or YPG, an extension of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK, which has waged an insurgency against Turkey for 35 years.

A senior U.S. official said Sunday that American troops will pull back from the security zone in northeastern Syria, where they have been working with Turkish troops, to an unspecified out-of-the-way location. There have been U.S. troops around Manbij.

The official added that if Turkey goes ahead with the incursion into Syria, it is expected to trigger a large combat response from the SDF, and U.S. troops will almost certainly withdraw completely from Syria. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

U.S. defense leaders have long known that America would not get into an all-out war with Turkey, a NATO ally. But that has been stalled until now by aggressive negotiations by the U.S., urging Turkey against

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invading. The official said senior leaders never believed that the U.S. would go to war to save the Kurds, but just hoped to put off that scenario.

The official said U.S. leaders have spoken with the SDF and that the group, which has long fought alongside the U.S. against IS, is disappointed and angry.

Mattis and other Pentagon leaders had worried that withdrawal would lead to a resurgence of IS in the country, particularly if the SDF abandon the prisons holding the fighters to battle Turkey.

The White House statement Sunday said Turkey will take custody of foreign fighters captured in the U.S.-led campaign against the Islamic State group who have been held by the Kurdish forces supported by the U.S.

Ambassador James Jeffrey, the State Department envoy to the international coalition fighting the Islamic State group, and Trump have said the Kurds have custody of thousands of captured Islamic State militants. They include about 2,500 highly dangerous foreign fighters from Europe and elsewhere whose native countries have been reluctant to take them back and another 10,000 or so captured fighters from Syria and Iraq.

Trump has repeatedly demanded that European countries, particularly France and Germany, take back their citizens who joined the militant organization.

Kurdish officials have expressed concerns of a possible breakout by IS prisoners in case of fighting in the area. In a recently released audio recording, IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi called on members of the extremist group to do all they can to free IS detainees and women held in jails and camps.

IS was defeated in Iraq in 2017. In Syria it lost its last territory in March, marking the end of the extremists' self-declared caliphate. Despite these battlefield defeats, IS sleeper cells have continued to launch attacks in both Iraq and Syria.

Associated Press writers Zeynep Bilginsoy, Zeina Karam and Sarah El Deeb contributed to this report.

Supreme Court begins election-year term full of big cases

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The justices are returning to the Supreme Court bench for the start of an election-year term that includes high-profile cases on about abortions, protections for young immigrants and LGBT rights.

The court meets Monday morning for its first public session since late June. First up is a death-penalty case from Kansas about whether states can abolish an insanity defense for criminal defendants.

The justices also will hear arguments Monday in a challenge to a murder conviction by a non-unanimous jury in Louisiana.

The term could reveal how far to the right and how fast the court's conservative majority will move, even as Chief Justice John Roberts has made clear he wants to keep the court clear of Washington partisan politics. The court is beginning its second term with both of President Donald Trump's Supreme Court appointees, Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, on board.

The justices could be asked to intervene in disputes between congressional Democrats and the White House that might also involve the possible impeachment of the president.

Roberts would preside over a Senate trial of Trump if the House were to impeach him.

Its biggest decisions are likely to be handed down in late June, four months before the election.

The court also could be front and center in the presidential election campaign itself, especially with health concerns surrounding 86-year-old Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

For now, though, the court has plenty of significant cases to deal with, including whether federal civil rights law that bars workplace discrimination on the basis of sex covers LGBT people. The justices will hear arguments Tuesday in two cases on that topic, their first foray into LGBT rights since the retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy, who wrote all the court's major gay-rights rulings.

Next month, the fate of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program is in front of the justices.

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Lower courts have so far blocked Trump from ending the Obama-era program that has shielded roughly 700,000 people from deportation and provided them with permits to work.

During the winter, the justices will take up a challenge to a Louisiana law that would force abortion providers to have admitting privileges at local hospitals. It's another test of whether the change in the court's composition will result in a different outcome. With Kennedy in the majority, the court in 2016 struck down a virtually identical Texas law.

Impeachment tests Democrats' foothold in swing districts

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (AP) — In front of New Hope Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, supporters of President Donald Trump hollered for his reelection. Behind it, taped-up signs on the doors warned, "Firearms Not Allowed." And inside, Rep. Elaine Luria personally delivered her call for Trump's impeachment, drawing a standing ovation from more than half of the 200 or so people attending her town hall — and a few jeers, shut down quickly by church security officials.

"I got no problem throwing you out," the Rev. James Allen, the moderator, told one heckler. "If you can't sit here and be respectful, get out."

The man, a Trump supporter, agreed to quiet down and stay. But the signs were there that Luria's call last month for Trump's impeachment sits uneasily among some of her constituents in one of the most deeply split congressional districts in the country. It's not clear, though, that the calls for formal charges against Trump have generated a voter backlash, even in districts like Luria's.

The majority voted for Trump in 2016, but Luria, a Democrat, won it two years later, helping hand her party control of the House. Here, national security is understood perhaps better than elsewhere: 1 in 5 people are active military personnel, veterans or their families. So House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and national Democrats are closely watching districts like it for clues to whether their drive to impeach Trump supports or imperils the party's congressional and presidential ambitions in 2020.

Win or lose next year, Luria and six other freshmen who flipped Republican districts will have played a critical role, with considerable risk. They resisted calls for the president's impeachment over Russia's election interference. But details of Trump's pressure on Ukraine's president to investigate the Biden family was, Luria and the others wrote in *The Washington Post*, a clear abuse of power and an impeachable offense. Their column, in part, freed up Pelosi to launch formal impeachment proceedings, specifically under the terms Luria and other freshmen had requested: clearly articulated, focused on Ukraine and brought to a quick conclusion.

Luria and the other national security freshmen have quietly become a force within Democratic politics, at a time when the party is struggling to nominate a presidential candidate and project a unified message.

But there's been nothing quiet about their first visits home this after their calls for impeachment. In Michigan, another frontline Democratic freshman and co-author of the op-ed, Michigan's Elissa Slotkin, faced boos — and then applause — when she started explaining why she, too, had called for an impeachment investigation. In Staten Island, N.Y., freshman Rep. Max Rose — like Luria — got a standing ovation from many in his audience when he announced he was supporting the impeachment inquiry, according to multiple news reports.

Back in Virginia, walking around the block of her leafy Norfolk-area neighborhood, Luria acknowledged the impeachment decision may cost her.

"This is a situation where I have to do the right thing," said Luria, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and black belt in taekwondo. Her home, a short walk from spectacular views of the Virginia Port Authority and not far from Norfolk Naval Station, is adorned with ceramics and other souvenirs that she and her husband, Robert Blondin, picked up on their global travels.

Luria says if she loses her seat over the impeachment call, "I will have been on the right side of history."

It's a sentiment Luria repeated that night at the town hall at the E. Ray Cox Sr. Convocation Center. Eight miles away, 12 people were killed during the May 31 mass shooting at Virginia Beach Municipal Center —

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including Ryan Keith Cox, the pastor's son. Luria opened the event by noting that the last time she spoke there, it was for the younger Cox's funeral. His coffin rested where she now stood to answer questions.

But the moment did little to ease the crackling political atmosphere in the room. A few hours earlier, Trump had exhorted China to help investigate the Bidens, defiant in the face of calls for impeachment over the same approach to Ukraine. At the town hall, Trump supporters who were coordinated for the event waved signs reading, "Impeach Elaine" and "Pelosi Puppet."

Luria, like Pelosi and other Democrats, argued she's doing her day job even amid the impeachment drive. Pelosi has referred to that technique as operating on two tracks — legislative and oversight — while Trump has insisted that when there's investigation, there can be no legislation.

The retired naval nuclear engineer, 44, pointed out four people in the front row helped by her office on immigration, health care and veterans issues. And she mentioned work she's doing leading House subcommittees on seapower and disability assistance as a member of both the Armed Services and Veterans Affairs committees. She also said she's working on "commonsense universal background checks" for gun purchases.

Then Luria took questions, drawn from a plastic box and read by Allen. A bit more than half were supportive of her call for Trump's impeachment.

"Bravo," said one questioner, noting Luria's "brave patriotic decision on the impeachment inquiry."

Navy veteran Joe Deleon, 70, of Virginia Beach, shouted something, prompting the rebuke from Allen.

"I like her, she's a good congressman," Deleon, wearing a "Vietnam" Navy cap, said afterward. He said he sees nothing wrong with Trump's pressure on Ukraine for election help against a political rival. But he sees trouble in Luria's decision. "If she continues this farce, she is going to get voted out. This district voted for Trump, and they're going to vote for him again."

Luria won the race over Republican retired Navy SEAL Scott Taylor by a little over 2 percentage points, while Trump won the district by more than 3 percentage points. That makes the district, which straddles the place where the Chesapeake Bay meets the Atlantic Ocean, a key bellwether in a state where people don't register by party.

Both political camps are weighing into the 2020 race. The House Republicans' super PAC and Luria's 2018 opponent, Taylor, are trying to link Luria with liberals. The Congressional Leadership Fund on Sept. 30 launched a digital ad that featured a photo of Luria surrounded by photos of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Bernie Sanders, along with footage of Rep. Rashida Tlaib's now famous vow to "impeach the mother---r."

And the Democrats' campaign arm has pledged to jump into races waged by front liners who have come out for impeachment, including Luria. They're sharing internal polling and help with messaging, including on how to characterize the transcript of Trump's call with Ukraine's president.

"I think that district has a great test for whether Luria and Democrats can bring along kind of maybe disaffected Republicans and moderates to not only vote against the president but also to support an impeachment inquiry," said Kyle Kondik, an elections analyst at the University of Virginia Center for Politics. "I don't necessarily know if there's majority support in that district for that ... it remains to be seen how persuadable a lot of those voters may be."

At the town hall, a man who gave his name as Chris Columbus is exactly the type of constituent Luria hopes to influence. He said he's an independent, troubled by the way the media reports on Trump and how public sentiment has shifted.

"I'm kind of on the fence about certain things, and one of them is directly related to the impeachment," he said. "I think she jumped on the bandwagon too quick."

Associated Press researcher Rhonda Shafner and senior producer Tracy Brown contributed to this report.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump's tale about Romney unrest, impeachment

By HOPE YEN, LINDSAY WHITEHURST and PAUL WISEMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing an impeachment inquiry, President Donald Trump is turning to a familiar playbook to defend himself: blasting the inquiry as illegal, attacking his investigators and critics alike, and deriding the whistleblower process as all-but-rigged.

Many facts are getting lost in the process.

Over the weekend, he suggested that Sen. Mitt Romney, who is among a handful of Republican lawmakers who criticized the president for seeking foreign help to dig up dirt on a Democratic political rival, was in the midst of a voter revolt in his home state of Utah because of those remarks. No voter impeachment effort is underway.

Trump also has repeatedly lambasted Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff, the House Intelligence Committee chairman who is leading the impeachment review, as guilty of treason or defamation for mocking Trump's July 25 phone call with Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Neither charge is valid.

Trump had a similar playbook to dispute the Russia investigation by assailing special counsel Robert Mueller as biased and saying the inquiry was illegally hatched by Democrats. Those charges have been shown to be untrue.

Meanwhile, amid signs of manufacturing weakness, Trump unfairly pointed a finger of blame at the Federal Reserve rather than his escalating trade war with China, and overstated his role in a World Trade Organization ruling for the United States.

A review:

IMPEACHMENT

TRUMP: "Mitt Romney never knew how to win." — tweet Saturday.

TRUMP: "I'm hearing that the Great People of Utah are considering their vote for their Pompous Senator, Mitt Romney, to be a big mistake. I agree! He is a fool who is playing right into the hands of the Do Nothing Democrats! #IMPEACHMITTROMNEY" — tweet Saturday.

THE FACTS: The newly elected Romney won't be leaving his U.S. Senate post anytime soon due to an impeachment effort. Senators cannot be impeached under the Constitution, and Utah has no provisions in state law to recall a sitting senator.

Romney, a former Massachusetts governor and 2012 GOP presidential nominee, won his Senate seat last November with over 62% of the vote. He is a near celebrity in conservative Utah, where many voters, particularly fellow members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, shared Romney's wariness about Trump.

AP VoteCast, a nationwide survey of 2018 midterm voters, found that while two-thirds of church members voted Republican, just over half approved of Trump's job performance. The survey also found that 64% of Utah voters wanted to see the senator confront the president. Shortly before he was sworn into office, Romney pledged to stand up to Trump if appropriate.

The Senate does have power to expel one of its members by a two-thirds vote, but it's unclear why Trump believes Romney should be removed other than the fact he criticized Trump for behavior that spurred the president's impeachment inquiry. The Senate has expelled only 15 of its own since 1789, based on charges of senators supporting the Confederacy during the Civil War or corruption.

Trump has acknowledged that a Democratic-controlled House might have the votes to impeach him, but maintains that the Republican-led Senate would protect him from conviction in a trial.

TRUMP: "As I learn more and more each day, I am coming to the conclusion that what is taking place is not an impeachment, it is a COUP, intended to take away the Power of the....People." — tweet Tuesday.

THE FACTS: No illegal takeover is afoot.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., last month initiated impeachment proceedings against Trump. She accused him of abusing presidential powers by seeking help from a foreign government to undermine Democratic rival Joe Biden and help his own reelection. The move followed a complaint by a whistleblower,

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a CIA officer, who made the charges.

A coup is usually defined as a sudden, violent and illegal seizure of government power. The impeachment process is laid out in the Constitution, giving Congress the authority to impeach and try a president as part of its responsibilities as a coequal branch of government to provide a check on a president when he or she commits treason, bribery, or "other high crimes and misdemeanors."

The standard of "high crimes and misdemeanors" is vague and open-ended to encompass abuses of power even if they aren't, strictly speaking, illegal.

2016 ELECTION

TRUMP: "The Do Nothing Democrats should be focused on building up our Country, not wasting everyone's time and energy on BULLSHIT, which is what they have been doing ever since I got overwhelmingly elected in 2016, 223-306." — tweet Wednesday.

THE FACTS: Trump again misstates the Electoral College vote. The official count was 304 to 227, according to an Associated Press tally of the electoral votes in every state.

UKRAINE

TRUMP: "The so-called Whistleblower's account of my perfect phone call is 'way off.'" — tweet Saturday.

TRUMP: "I had a transcript done by very, very talented people — word for word, comma for comma. ... We had an exact transcript. And when we produced that transcript, they died." — news conference Wednesday with Finland's president.

TRUMP: "They never thought in a million years that I'd release the conversation ... And this is an exact word-for-word transcript of the conversation, right? Taken by very talented stenographers." — remarks Wednesday to reporters in the Oval Office.

THE FACTS: It's not a word-for-word transcript. The acting director of national intelligence, Joseph Maguire, also told a House panel last month that he believed the whistleblower acted in "good faith" and the complaint was consistent with the White House's rough transcript.

The memorandum of Trump's July 25 phone call with Zelenskyy itself makes clear that it does not represent an exact transcript of what was said.

According to the document, it is "not a verbatim transcript" and instead "records the notes and recollections of Situation Room Duty Officers and NSC policy staff assigned to listen and memorialize the conversation in written form as the conversation takes place. A number of factors can affect the accuracy of the record." It cited potential factors such as the quality of the phone connection, variations in accent "and/or interpretation."

NSC refers to the National Security Council.

TRUMP, on the whistleblower: "He got his information, I guess, second or thirdhand. He wrote something that was total fiction." — remarks to reporters Thursday.

GOP HOUSE MINORITY LEADER KEVIN MCCARTHY: "Whistleblowers were required to provide direct, first-hand knowledge of allegations...but just days before the Ukraine whistleblower came forward, the IC secretly removed the requirement from the complaint form." — tweet on Sept. 28.

TRUMP: "Who changed the long standing whistleblower rules just before submittal of the fake whistleblower report? Drain the swamp!" — tweet on Sept. 30.

THE FACTS: The process for submitting a whistleblower complaint was not rigged against Trump.

There was nothing improper in how the complaint was submitted. No whistleblower law was changed and nothing under that law requires the complaints to have firsthand information. In a rare statement this past week, the inspector general for the intelligence community also made clear that it had determined the whistleblower did have some firsthand, "direct knowledge of certain alleged conduct."

It's not true that the whistleblower could "provide nothing more than secondhand or unsubstantiated assertions," the IG said.

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Intelligence agency workers have long been able to blow the whistle based on secondhand or hearsay information. The law only requires federal workers to have a "reasonable belief" of misconduct in order to file a complaint, according to Debra D'Agostino, a federal employment lawyer.

In this case, the whistleblower flagged in part Trump's July call to Zelenskiy in a typed, nine-page document addressed to the House Intelligence Committee. The watchdog said that while the whistleblower was not a direct witness to the call, the inspector general separately obtained other information during its preliminary review to deem the allegations credible.

Pointing to suspicious activity, McCarthy, R-Calif., cites the removal of some information from the standardized complaint form, which previously stressed the need for firsthand information for an inspector general to determine the complaint credible. The inspector general's office said it had removed that language from the form earlier this year because it determined that "it could be read - incorrectly - as suggesting that whistleblowers must possess first-hand information in order to file an urgent concern complaint with the congressional intelligence committees."

In any event, the inspector general's office said it had provided the whistleblower separate background material on submitting a complaint that included that language.

SCHIFF

TRUMP: "Congressman Adam Schiff should resign for the Crime of, after reading a transcript of my conversation with the President of Ukraine (it was perfect), fraudulently fabricating a statement of the President of the United States and reading it to Congress, as though mine!" — tweet Wednesday.

TRUMP: "Rep. Adam Schiff illegally made up a FAKE & terrible statement, pretended it to be mine as the most important part of my call to the Ukrainian President, and read it aloud to Congress and the American people. It bore NO relationship to what I said on the call. Arrest for Treason?" — tweet on Sept. 30.

THE FACTS: Trump is overstating Schiff's exaggerations. The California Democrat, in what he said was a parody during a committee hearing, mocked and overstated the president's pleas in his July call to Zelenskiy, as Trump does with his critics routinely.

Under the Constitution, treason occurs when a U.S. citizen, or a noncitizen on U.S. territory, wages war against the country or provides material support, not just sympathy, to a declared enemy of the United States. It is defined narrowly as part of an effort by the framers to prevent the government from using it as a reason to suppress political speech, said J. Richard Broughton, associate dean at University of Detroit Mercy and a member of the Republican National Lawyers Association.

The executive branch can only bring charges in extremely limited cases.

For instance, in the Cold War case of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were executed for giving atomic secrets to Russia, the Rosenbergs were convicted of espionage, not treason, because the U.S. and Russia were not officially at war. No one has been convicted of treason since the aftermath of World War II, says Carlton F.W. Larson, a University of California law professor who has a book on treason.

During last week's House Intelligence Committee hearing, Schiff made clear he was providing an account that was in "essence" what he believed Trump was conveying to Zelenskiy, when "shorn of its rambling character."

No exact transcript of Trump's comments with Ukraine's president actually exists, just a rough transcript released by the White House.

TRUMP: "Liddle' Adam Schiff ... fraudulently and illegally inserted his made up & twisted words into my call with the Ukrainian President to make it look like I did something very wrong. He then boldly read those words to Congress and millions of people, defaming & libeling me." — tweets on Sept. 28.

THE FACTS: Schiff's remarks are not illegal nor would it be defamatory or libelous. Lawmakers are given wide protections from liability for comments made in the course of Congress under the "speech or debate" clause in the Constitution, which seeks to foster political debate.

ECONOMY and TRADE

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TRUMP, on a World Trade Organization ruling allowing the U.S. to tax impose tariffs on \$7.5 billion worth of European imports annually: "You never had wins with other presidents, did you? But we're having a lot of wins at the WTO since I became president." — news conference Wednesday.

THE FACTS: Trump is wrong that the U.S. never got any WTO victories under other presidents.

The U.S. has always had a high success rate when it pursues cases against other countries at the WTO. In 2017, trade analyst Daniel Ikenson of the libertarian Cato Institute found that the U.S. had won 91% of time it brought a complaint that ended up being adjudicated by the Geneva-based trade monitor. True, Ikenson noted, the countries bringing complaints tend to win overwhelmingly. That's because they don't bother going to the WTO in the first place if they don't have a pretty strong case.

The WTO announcement culminated a 15-year fight over EU subsidies for Airbus — a fight that began long before Trump was in office.

TRUMP: "As I predicted, Jay Powell and the Federal Reserve have allowed the Dollar to get so strong, especially relative to ALL other currencies, that our manufacturers are being negatively affected. Fed Rate too high." — tweet Tuesday.

THE FACTS: Actually, most economists and many factory owners point to Trump's trade policies for the difficulties in U.S. manufacturing, not the Federal Reserve and Chairman Jerome Powell.

The Institute for Supply Management reported on Tuesday that factory activity shrank in September for the second straight month. That report shows that the factory sector has been contracting in large part because of the trade war against China that Trump sparked by launching a salvo of tariffs.

The index is based on a survey of manufacturers. Of the 10 quoted in the report, none blames the challenges they face on the Fed or the strong dollar. But three say the tariffs and trade war have hurt their businesses.

"The primary culprit here is the trade war," Eric Winograd, senior U.S. economist at AllianceBernstein, said Tuesday.

Trump is right that the Fed's decision to raise short-term interest rates four times last year contributed to a stronger dollar. But it wasn't the only factor. The U.S. economy is growing more quickly than Europe's or Japan's, which attracts more investment and boosts the dollar's value. And many global investors prefer to invest in U.S. Treasury securities when the global economy slows, as it is now, because Treasuries are seen as a safe haven. That also pushes up the dollar.

The Fed has reversed itself this year and cut its benchmark interest rate twice, but that hasn't weakened the dollar, because other central banks are also cutting rates. Trump has previously urged the Fed to slash its rate to zero, but that could spook consumers and businesses, who might see it as a sign that a recession is near. Consumer spending could fall as a result and slow the U.S. economy.

The kind of sharp rate cuts by the Fed that Trump is demanding would also likely encourage investors to place more money in stocks and other speculative investments. This would risk inflating a stock market bubble to levels that might ultimately destabilize the U.S. economy.

Whitehurst reported from Salt Lake City. AP Polling Editor Emily Swanson and Economics Writers Josh Boak and Christopher Rugaber in Washington and Associated Press writer Amanda Seitz in Chicago contributed to this report.

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US researchers on front line of battle against Chinese theft

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the U.S. warned allies around the world that Chinese tech giant Huawei was a security threat, the FBI was making the same point quietly to a Midwestern university.

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In an email to the associate vice chancellor for research at the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, an agent wanted to know if administrators believed Huawei had stolen any intellectual property from the school.

Told no, the agent responded: "I assumed those would be your answers, but I had to ask."

It was no random query.

The FBI has been reaching out to colleges and universities across the country as it tries to stem what American authorities portray as the wholesale theft of technology and trade secrets by researchers tapped by China. The breadth and intensity of the campaign emerges in emails The Associated Press obtained through records requests to public universities in 50 states. The emails underscore the extent of U.S. concerns that universities, as recruiters of foreign talent and incubators of cutting-edge research, are particularly vulnerable targets.

Agents have lectured at seminars, briefed administrators in campus meetings and distributed pamphlets with cautionary tales of trade secret theft. In the past two years, they've requested the emails of two University of Washington researchers, asked Oklahoma State University if it has scientists in specific areas and sought updates about "possible misuse" of research funds by a University of Colorado Boulder professor, the messages show.

The emails show administrators mostly embracing FBI warnings, requesting briefings for themselves and others. But they also reveal some struggling to balance legitimate national security concerns against their own eagerness to avoid stifling research or tarnishing legitimate scientists. The Justice Department says it appreciates that push-pull and wants only to help universities separate the relatively few researchers engaged in theft from the majority who are not.

Senior FBI officials told AP they're not encouraging schools to monitor researchers by nationality but instead to take steps to protect research and to watch for suspicious behavior. They consider the briefings vital because they say universities, accustomed to fostering international and collaborative environments, haven't historically been as attentive to security as they should be.

"When we go to the universities, what we're trying to do is highlight the risk to them without discouraging them from welcoming the researchers and students from a country like China," Assistant Attorney General John Demers, the Justice Department's top national security official, said in an interview.

The effort comes amid a deteriorating relationship between the U.S. and China and as a trade war launched by President Donald Trump contributes to stock market turbulence and fears of a global economic slowdown. American officials have long accused China of stealing trade secrets from U.S. corporations to develop their economy, allegations Beijing denies.

"Existentially, we look at China as our greatest threat from an intelligence perspective, and they succeeded significantly in the last decade from stealing our best and brightest technology," said William Evanina, the U.S. government's chief counterintelligence official.

The FBI's effort coincides with restrictions put in place by other federal agencies, including the Pentagon and Energy Department, that fund university research grants. The National Institutes of Health has sent dozens of letters in the past year warning schools of researchers it believes may have concealed grants received from China, or improperly shared confidential research information. The Justice Department launched last year an effort called the China Initiative aimed at identifying priority trade secret cases and focusing resources on them.

The threat, officials say, is more than theoretical.

In the past two months alone, a University of Kansas researcher was charged with collecting federal grant money while working full time for a Chinese university; a Chinese government employee was arrested in a visa fraud scheme that the Justice Department says was aimed at recruiting U.S. research talent; and a university professor in Texas was accused in a trade secret case involving circuit board technology.

The most consequential case this year centered not on a university but on Huawei, charged in January with stealing corporate trade secrets and evading sanctions. The company denies wrongdoing. Several universities including the University of Illinois, which received the FBI email last February, have since be-

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gun severing ties with Huawei.

The University of Minnesota did the same, with an administrator reassuring the FBI in an email last May that issues raised by a best practices letter an agent forwarded "have certainly been topics of conversation (and occasionally even action) in our halls for a while now."

But the Justice Department's track record hasn't been perfect, leading to pushback from some that the concerns are overstated.

Federal prosecutors in 2015 dropped charges against a Temple University professor who'd been accused of sharing designs for a pocket heater with China. The professor, Xiaoxing Xi, is suing the FBI. "It was totally wrong," he said, "so I can only speak from my experience that whatever they put out there is not necessarily true."

Richard Wood, the then-interim provost at the University of New Mexico, conveyed ambivalence in an email to colleagues last year. He wrote that he took seriously the national security concerns the FBI identified in briefings, but also remained "deeply committed to traditional academic norms regarding the free exchange of scientific knowledge wherever appropriate — a tradition that has been the basis of international scientific progress for several centuries.

"There are real tensions between these two realities, and no simple solutions," he wrote. "I do not think we would be wise to create new 'policy' on terrain this complex and fraught with internal trade-offs between legitimate concerns and values without some real dialogue on the matter."

A University of Colorado associate vice chancellor equivocated in January on how to handle an agent's request for a meeting, emailing colleagues that the request to discuss university research felt "probing" and like "more of a fishing expedition" than past occasions. Another administrator replied that the FBI presumably wanted to discuss intellectual property theft, calling it "bright on their radar."

FBI officials say they've received consistently positive feedback from universities, and the emails do show many administrators requesting briefings, campus visits, or expressing eagerness for cooperation. A Washington State University administrator connected an FBI agent with his counterpart at the University of Idaho. The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill requested a briefing last February with an administrator, saying "we would like to understand more about the role of the FBI and how we can partner together." A University of Nebraska official invited an agent to make a presentation as part of broader campus training.

Kevin Gamache, chief research security officer for the Texas A&M University system, told AP he values his FBI interactions and that the communication goes both ways. The FBI shares threat information and administrators educate law enforcement about the realities of university research.

"There's no magic pill," Gamache said. "It's a dialogue that has to be ongoing."

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas vice president for research and economic development welcomed the assistance in a city she called the "birthplace of atomic testing." "We have a world-class radiochemistry faculty, our College of Engineering has significant numbers of faculty and students from China, and we have several other issues of concern to me as VPR. In all of these cases, the FBI is always available to help," the administrator, Mary Croughan, emailed agents.

The AP submitted public records requests for correspondence between the FBI and research officials at more than 50 schools.

More than two dozen produced records, including seminar itineraries and an FBI pamphlet warning that China does "not play by the same rules of academic integrity" as American institutions observe. The document, titled "China: The Risk to Academia," says Beijing is using "non-traditional collectors" like post-doctoral researchers to collect intelligence and that programs intended to promote international collaboration are being exploited.

Some outreach is more general, like an agent's offer to brief New Mexico State University on "how the FBI can best serve and protect."

But other emails show agents seeking tips or following leads.

"If you have concerns about any faculty or graduate researchers, students, outside vendors ... pretty much anything we previously discussed — just reminding you that I am here to help," one wrote to Iowa

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State.

In May, an agent sent the University of Washington a public records request for emails of two researchers, seeking references to Chinese-government talent recruitment programs the U.S. views with suspicion. A university spokesman said the school hasn't investigated either professor.

Last year, an agent warning of a "trend of international hostile collection efforts at US universities" asked Oklahoma State University if it had researchers in encryption research or quantum computing.

The University of Colorado received an FBI request about an "internal investigation" into a professor's "possible misuse" of NIH funding. The school said it found no misconduct involving the professor, who has resigned.

Other emails show schools responding internally to government concerns.

At Mississippi State, an administrator concerned about Iranian cyberattacks on colleges and government reports on foreign influence suggested to colleagues the school scrutinize graduate school applicants' demographics. "Have to be careful so U.S. law is not violated re discrimination but where does one draw the line when protecting against known foreign states that are cyber criminals?" he wrote.

Though espionage concerns aren't new — federal prosecutors charged five Chinese military hackers in 2014 — FBI officials report an uptick in targeting of universities and more U.S. attention as a result. The FBI says it's seen some progress from universities, with one official saying schools are more reliably pressing researchers about outside funding sources.

Demers, the Justice Department official, said the focus reflects how espionage efforts are "as pervasive, as well-resourced, as ever today.

"It's a serious problem today on college campuses."

This story has been corrected to show the date that charges were dropped against the Temple professor was 2015, not 2017.

Ex-President Jimmy Carter has black eye, stitches after fall

By KRISTIN M. HALL Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Former President Jimmy Carter had a black eye and 14 stitches after falling Sunday at his Georgia home, but made it to an evening concert in Tennessee to rally volunteers ahead of his 36th home building project for Habitat for Humanity.

The 39th president fell earlier in the day at his home in Plains, Georgia, and required the stitches above his brow. By Sunday evening, Carter was on stage at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville with his wife Rosalynn, 92, to talk to volunteers and supporters of the building project that runs through Friday.

Carter turned 95 last Tuesday, becoming the first U.S. president to reach that milestone.

He told the crowd Sunday evening that he had to go to the hospital and get 14 stitches, "but I had a No. 1 priority and that was to come to Nashville and build houses."

Carter wore an Atlanta Braves baseball cap, but his left eye was swollen and bruised and he had a white bandage above his eye. The Carters were introduced by country stars Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood, who called the Carters the hardest working volunteers, and sang some duets during the concert and ceremony.

Rosalynn Carter praised the country music couple for volunteering at previous Habitat for Humanity building projects, saying she once saw Yearwood way up in the rafters of a home working hard during construction.

Former President Carter then joked, "While Garth just watched her," drawing laughs from the crowd and from Yearwood. Carter seemed to be in good spirits and came out a short time later on stage to point to his baseball cap and mention that the Braves beat the St. Louis Cardinals that day as well.

Twenty-one homes are scheduled to be built in a neighborhood in Nashville. The concert also featured performances by Melinda Doolittle, the Fisk Jubilee Singers and members of the Nashville Symphony Quartet.

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Carter survived a dire cancer diagnosis in 2015 and surpassed George H.W. Bush as the longest-lived U.S. president in history this spring. He has had some trouble walking after a hip replacement in May, but regularly teaches Sunday School.

Meanwhile, he has continued with his humanitarian work. And he also has occasionally weighed in on politics and policy, recently expressing hopes that his Carter Center will become a more forceful advocate against armed conflicts in the future, including "wars by the United States."

"I just want to keep the whole world at peace," Carter had said as he presented his annual Carter Center report last month. "We have been at war more than 226 years. We have been at peace for about 16 years" since the Declaration of Independence in 1776, he said, adding that every U.S. military conflict from the Korean War onward has been a war of "choice."

Carter also has been accepting visits from several 2020 presidential candidates of late, but he's held back on endorsing any of his fellow Democrats, offering few clues about his thoughts of the campaign.

Associated Press writer Kate Brumback in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Iraq blames 'malicious' hands as toll from unrest tops 100

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Twelve anti-government demonstrators were killed Sunday in ongoing protests in the capital Baghdad, the latest fatalities in six days of clashes that have left more than 100 dead and thousands wounded.

Iraq's government has scrambled to contain the popular anger that has racked Baghdad and a number of southern cities since Tuesday. Security forces responded with a crackdown on the spontaneous rallies of demonstrators demanding jobs, better services and an end to endemic corruption in the oil-rich country.

In the first official statement from the government accounting for the violence, Interior Ministry spokesman Saad Maan said Sunday that 104 people had been killed in the six days of unrest, including eight members of the security forces, and more than 6,000 wounded. He said an investigation was under way to determine who was behind the most deadly day of violence, in Baghdad on Friday.

The unrest is the most serious challenge facing Iraq two years after the victory against Islamic State militants. The chaos also comes at a critical time for the government, which has been caught in the middle of increasing U.S.-Iran tensions in the region. Iraq is allied with both countries and hosts thousands of U.S. troops, as well as powerful paramilitary forces allied with Iran.

Iraq's most senior Shiite spiritual leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, has urged the protesters and the security forces to end the violence while the country's prime minister has called on the protesters to go home. Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi also pledged to meet with the protesters wherever they are and without any armed forces, to hear their demands.

Abdul-Mahdi defended the security forces, saying they were carrying out their duties and would only use force in extreme cases of self-defense.

"We can't accept the continuation of the situation like this," Abdul-Mahdi told his Cabinet late Saturday in televised remarks. "We hear of snipers, firebombs, burning a policeman, a citizen."

Speaking on Sunday, Maan, the Interior Ministry spokesman, said protesters have burned 51 public buildings and eight political party headquarters. He claimed security forces didn't confront the protesters, adding that "malicious hands" were behind targeting protesters and security members alike.

That contradicted accounts from demonstrators and journalists at the scene who have said they witnessed security forces firing on demonstrators. Some protesters said snipers also took part in breaking up the protests. Maan said most of those killed Friday were hit in the head and heart.

Officials had said earlier there were attempts at "sedition" from snipers who targeted security and protesters alike. They didn't elaborate.

Late Saturday, the prime minister announced a number of measures designed to appease the protesters, including paying out unemployment benefits and providing subsidized housing and land for low-income

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groups.

Still, demonstrators took to the streets again Sunday— although in smaller numbers. Hundreds gathered on side streets near Sadr City, a Baghdad suburb, some four kilometers (2.5 miles) from Tahrir Square, which has been the destination of the weeklong rallies, although authorities have prevented protesters from reaching it.

A medical official in a local hospital and a security official said 12 protesters were killed and more than 50 others wounded as they repeatedly tried to break through a security cordon to head to the city center. The officials, who did not provide details, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to reporters.

Security forces have beefed up their presence in central Baghdad, deploying as far as Sadr City to seal off Tahrir Square.

Army troops blocked a main road Sunday to prevent the protesters from advancing, then fired on them to push them back. After about an hour, there was more intense gunfire, with soldiers firing over the heads of protesters as they tried to advance.

Ducking in reaction to the fire, some protesters piled over one another trying to hide behind the wall of a nearby water fountain. One protester carrying a drum chanted "peaceful, peaceful," as others joined in. As the gunfire continued, protesters set tires on fire.

Some demonstrators arrived in rickshaws, which have been used to carry the wounded from the bloody clashes.

The U.N. envoy for Iraq appealed for an end to the violence and called for holding to account those responsible. "This must stop. I call on all parties to pause and reflect," Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert tweeted Saturday night.

Meanwhile, Abdul-Mahdi pledged to meet with the demonstrators to hear their demands.

"I am ready to go wherever our brotherly protesters are and meet them or send them envoys to other locations without any armed forces," he said late Saturday. "I will go and meet them without weapons and sit with them for hours to listen to their demands."

He also decreed that those killed in the protests, whether demonstrators or security forces, would be considered "martyrs" eligible for state benefits.

Earlier on Sunday, Baghdad's streets had been mostly quiet and traffic thin as an eerie calm prevailed. Students made it to schools and government employees returned to work. But burnt tires and debris littered thoroughfares while security remained heavily deployed in many neighborhoods.

Atheer Assem, a pizza restaurant owner, said he was able to shop Sunday, the start of the working week, for ingredients for his baked goods. But he said his clients have stopped coming to his shop because of the violence, even though it is in a neighborhood that has not witnessed any protests.

"The protests are making people afraid to go out," he said, estimating his sales to have dropped by 70 percent.

Police look for 2 men in Kansas bar shooting that killed 4

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP) — Two men opened fire inside a bar in Kansas City, Kansas, early Sunday, killing four people and wounding five others in a shooting believed to have stemmed from an earlier dispute, police said.

Authorities were searching Sunday for the two gunmen, said Officer Thomas Tomasic, a police spokesman. He said the two men had apparently gotten into some sort of disagreement with people inside Tequila KC Bar, left, then returned with handguns. Police released surveillance photos of the two suspects Sunday afternoon.

"We think there was something that happened in the bar earlier probably," Tomasic said. "Unfortunately, they left and decided to take it to another level, came back and started shooting."

Around 40 people were inside the small bar when gunfire erupted around 1:30 a.m., Tomasic said. The

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gunfire sent people running for the exits, with the injured leaving trails of blood as they fled. One of the injured was trying to get a ride to the hospital when ambulances arrived.

"It's a pretty small bar, so if you have two guys come in and start shooting, people are just running, running anywhere they can," Tomasic said.

All four men who were killed were Hispanic, but Tomasic said authorities do not believe the shooting was racially motivated. The shooting happened in a neighborhood with a large Hispanic population.

Tomasic cautioned that police were still investigating exactly what happened. He said they were reviewing surveillance video and interviewing witnesses while looking for the gunmen.

"Obviously being a bar at 1:30, stories vary a lot," he said.

Among the dead was one man in his late 50s, another in his mid-30s and two in their mid-20s, police said. Authorities did not immediately release their names.

However, Juan Ramirez, of Kansas City, Kansas, told The Kansas City Star that his 29-year-old nephew was among those killed. He said his nephew left behind a 6-year-old son and a 4-year-old daughter.

"I don't wish this upon anybody," Ramirez said.

Bartender Jose Valdez told the newspaper that he had refused to serve one of the suspects on Saturday night because the man had previously caused problems at the bar. Valdez said the man threw a cup at him and left, but returned later with another man shortly before closing time.

The gunfire created smoke inside the business, Valdez said, and he thought the building was "going to cave in."

Customer Michael Barajas said he didn't realize at first that the fast bangs he heard were gunshots. As he tried to determine who was shooting, Barajas said he felt a bullet hit his shoulder.

"I feel like I should have moved a little quicker but there was shock," he said.

Valdez said three of the people killed were regulars whose parents also frequented the neighborhood bar.

"I don't know what to make of it. A sad day for everybody who lost their lives and their families," he said, choking up. "How can you go into a place full of people and just start shooting?"

Dallas police investigate death of witness in ex-cop's trial

DALLAS (AP) — A man who was fatally shot has been identified as a key witness in the murder trial of a white Dallas police officer who killed her black neighbor, Dallas police said Sunday.

Joshua Xavier Brown, 28, was found Friday night in the parking lot of an apartment complex with multiple gunshot wounds, authorities said. Brown was pronounced dead at a hospital.

Brown lived in the same apartment complex as Amber Guyger and Botham Jean and testified at Guyger's trial, where she was convicted of murder on Tuesday. The Jean family attorney, Lee Merritt, posted a statement on Twitter that said he had spoken with Brown's mother and "she is devastated."

"We need answers," Merritt wrote.

Homicide detectives are seeking the public's help in identifying suspects and a motive in Brown's death.

Brown was a key witness in the trial of Guyger, who was charged in Jean's slaying in September 2018. According to her trial testimony, she mistook Jean's apartment for her own one floor below and shot him after pushing open his unlocked door and thinking he was a burglar.

Brown said he was in a hallway on the fourth floor, where he and Jean lived. He said he heard what sounded like "two people meeting by surprise" and then two gunshots.

At times during his testimony, Brown became emotional and used his T-shirt and tissue to wipe his tears. He said he had met Jean, a 26-year-old accountant from the Caribbean island nation of St. Lucia, for the first time earlier that day.

Guyger, 31, was fired from the department soon after the shooting. She was sentenced Wednesday to 10 years in prison.

The shooting that killed Brown happened at a different apartment complex, according to a Dallas police news release. That statement said several witnesses flagged down officers who were responding to a call about the shooting. The witnesses directed police to the parking lot where a man was lying on the ground.

Witnesses described hearing several gunshots, according to the news release, and saw a silver four-door

sedan speeding off from the parking lot. No one else was shot.

Merritt said Brown "deserves the justice he sought to ensure the Jean family."

Kimberly Leach, director of communications for the Dallas County District Attorney's Office, did not immediately reply to telephone and email requests Sunday from The Associated Press seeking comment about the case.

Analysis: Trump's old ways colliding with new realities

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Telling half-truths and outright lies. Manipulating media coverage. Pushing legal boundaries. Pressuring subordinates to do the dirty work. Believing in the force of his own personality. Accepting no personal responsibility.

The playbook Donald Trump has used as a real estate developer, celebrity businessman and political candidate has, for the most part, proved effective through the first two-plus years of his presidency.

He has shown an uncanny ability to wriggle out of jams that might have doomed just about any of his predecessors.

That M.O. may finally be catching up to Trump amid the House's impeachment inquiry. The tactics that helped win the White House have jeopardized his hold on it, ensnaring him in accusations that he enlisted a foreign government to investigate a political foe and, so far, leaving him flailing against a rapidly escalating investigation.

"He's arrived at a very different place right now. He's being held to account in a way that he never had before and is running into the limits of what he normally does," said Tim O'Brien, a Trump biographer and frequent critic. "The Trump we're used to seeing is someone whose visceral feeling to survive is to plow through public criticism to just push forward. His behavior hasn't changed, his circumstance has."

It was Trump's ability to get out of one predicament that led him into this one.

The investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller into Russian election interference shadowed the White House for two years before ending with a whimper on July 24, when the former FBI director's faltering testimony seemed to close the book on the inquiry. Mueller told Congress that he could not exonerate the president on obstruction of justice, and Trump told the world that he had been completely cleared.

Trump's approval rating has never dipped below 32% or risen above 42% in Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research polls since he took office. His grasp on power and his hold over the Republican Party have been unshaken.

A day after Mueller's congressional appearance, an emboldened Trump asked Ukraine to investigate a leading Democratic rival, former Vice President Joe Biden.

The speed of the story has stunned a capital already used to a relentless Trumpian news cycle. In barely two weeks' time, under an avalanche of disclosures in news stories and Trump's damaging admissions, House Democrats called for an impeachment inquiry, posing the gravest threat yet to his presidency.

To this point, Trump appears foundering in how he's reacted. With no formal response team and with many in his party keeping quiet, Trump has turned into a one-man war room. He's raged at news conferences, berated aides and directed epithets at critics.

"He's being erratic and inflammatory," said Douglas Brinkley, presidential historian at Rice University. "It's not a strategy designed to garner new voters. Who wants to buy into an act of a man screaming in chaotic fashion? Instead of trying to work his way out of the hole, he's digging himself deeper."

In many ways, Trump has lived a life free of consequences.

His two divorces were marriages from which he wanted to escape. He turned the separations into tabloid gold. His early financial struggles were resolved by his father. His bankruptcies mostly impacted his lenders. He never apologizes, moves to win that day's — really, that minute's — news cycle, and trusts that his supporters will believe and follow him.

"He is facing the ramifications of his actions in a new way," said O'Brien. "What is so striking about this Ukraine story is that the anger that his closest allies would only see behind closed doors has burst into

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public view. I think he's going to continue to lash out and burn things down around him. He'll try to throw more people in his close circle under the bus if he needs to."

His upstart presidential campaign was riddled with gaffes and blunders that would have ended his candidacy. Each time, he pushed forward and survived.

He broke norms at every turn. He insulted Republican stalwart John McCain, a former prisoner of war, for being captured. He derided a beauty pageant queen for being overweight. He accused an American-born judge of Mexican descent of being incapable of impartiality on immigration. He had his fixer, Michael Cohen, pay off women with whom he had affairs.

Every time he was wounded, he would strike back, and even harder. The best example came at the most perilous moment of the campaign, the October 2016 weekend after release of an "Access Hollywood" tape in which Trump is heard boasting about sexually assaulting women.

After holing up in Trump Tower for 24 hours as rumors swirled that he might be replaced on the ticket by his running mate Mike Pence, Trump emerged on a Saturday afternoon and plunged into a crowd of supporters gathered outside, as if drawing strength from the unshakable loyalty of his base.

The next day, in the hour before second general election debate with Hillary Clinton, he held a surprise news conference in St. Louis with women who accused former President Bill Clinton of sexual impropriety. It was a jaw-dropping moment in a campaign full of them.

Trump had changed the conversation and a month later, he was elected the president. And that is why some of the closest supporters believe he can escape this crisis too.

"It's not planned strategy, really, it's just who he is," said Sam Nunberg, a former campaign adviser. "The president is trying to take control of the narrative. Releasing everything. On the attack. And what he has been able to successfully do, as of now, is control the Republican Party, keep them in line. His supporters, and small donors, and are still with him."

"If this was any other president, they'd be one foot out the door," said Nunberg. "He'll survive this. He always does."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jonathan Lemire has covered politics and the White House for The Associated Press since 2013.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

Ginger Baker, Cream's volatile drummer, dies at 80

By HILLEL ITALIE Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Ginger Baker, the volatile and propulsive drummer for Cream and other bands who wielded blues power and jazz finesse and helped shatter boundaries of time, tempo and style in popular music, died Sunday at age 80, his family said.

With blazing eyes, orange-red hair and a temperament to match, the London native ranked with The Who's Keith Moon and Led Zeppelin's John Bonham as the embodiment of musical and personal fury. Using twin bass drums, Baker fashioned a pounding, poly-rhythmic style uncommonly swift and heavy that inspired and intimidated countless musicians. But every beat seemed to mirror an offstage eruption — whether his violent dislike of Cream bandmate Jack Bruce or his on-camera assault of a documentary maker, Jay Bulger, whom he smashed in the nose with his walking stick.

Bulger would call the film, released in 2012, "Beware of Mr. Baker."

Baker's family said on Twitter that he died Sunday: "We are very sad to say that Ginger has passed away peacefully in hospital this morning."

His daughter Nettie confirmed that Baker died in Britain but gave no other details. The family had said on Sept. 25 that Baker was critically ill in the hospital.

While Rolling Stone magazine once ranked him the third-greatest rock drummer of all time, behind Moon and Bonham, Baker had contempt for Moon and others he dismissed as "bashers" without style or

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background. Baker and his many admirers saw him as a rounded, sophisticated musician — an arranger, composer and student of the craft, absorbing sounds from around the world. He had been playing jazz since he was a teenager and spent years in Africa in the 1970s, forming a close friendship with the Nigerian musician-activist Fela Kuti.

"He was so unique and had such a distinctive personality," Stewart Copeland of the Police told www.musicradar.com in 2013. "Nobody else followed in his footsteps. Everybody tried to be John Bonham and copy his licks, but it's rare that you hear anybody doing the Ginger Baker thing."

But many fans thought of Baker as a rock star, who teamed with Eric Clapton and Bruce in the mid-1960s to become Cream — one of the first supergroups and first power trios. All three were known individually in the London blues scene and together they helped make rock history by elevating instrumental prowess above the songs themselves, even as they had hits with "Sunshine of Your Love," "I Feel Free" and "White Room."

Cream was among the most successful acts of its time, selling more than 10 million records. But by 1968 Baker and Bruce had worn each other out and even Clapton had tired of their deafening, marathon jams, including the Baker showcase "Toad," one of rock's first extended drum solos. Cream split up at the end of the year, departing with two sold-out shows at London's Albert Hall. When told by Bulger that he was a founding father of heavy metal, Baker snarled that the genre "should have been aborted."

To the surprise of many, especially Clapton, he and Baker were soon part of another super group, Blind Faith, which also featured singer-keyboardist Stevie Winwood and bassist Ric Grech.

As Clapton would recall, he and Winwood had been playing informally when Baker turned up (Baker would allege that Clapton invited him). Named Blind Faith by a rueful Clapton, the band was overwhelmed by expectations from the moment it debuted in June 1969 before some 100,000 at a concert in London's Hyde Park. It split up after completing just one, self-titled album, as notable for its cover photo of a topless young girl as for its music. A highlight from the record: Baker's cymbal splashes on Winwood's lyrical ballad "Can't Find My Way Home."

"Beneath his somewhat abrasive exterior, there was a very sensitive human being with a heart of gold," Winwood said in a statement Sunday.

From the 1970s on, Baker was ever more unpredictable. He moved to Nigeria, took up polo, drove a Land Rover across the Sahara, lived on a ranch in South Africa, divorced his first wife and married three more times.

He recorded with Kuti and other Nigerians, jammed with Art Blakey, Elvin Jones and other jazz drummers and played with John Lydon's Public Image Ltd. He founded Ginger Baker's Air Force, which cost a fortune and imploded after two albums. He endured his old enemy, Bruce, when Cream was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1993 and for Cream reunion concerts a decade later. Bruce died in 2014.

Baker continued to perform regularly in his 70s despite arthritis, heart trouble, hearing loss dating from his years with Cream and lung disease from smoking. A stranger to no vice, immodesty included, he called his memoir "Hellraiser: The Autobiography of the World's Greatest Drummer."

"John Bonham once made a statement that there were only two drummers in British rock 'n' roll; himself and Ginger Baker," Baker wrote in his book. "My reaction to this was, 'You cheeky little bastard!'"

Born in 1939, Peter Edward Baker was the son of a bricklayer killed during World War II when Ginger was just 4. His father left behind a letter that Ginger Baker would quote from: "Use your fists; they're your best pals so often."

Baker was a drummer from early on, even rapping out rhythms on his school desk as he mimicked the big band music he loved and didn't let the occasional caning from a teacher deter him. As a teenager, he was playing in local groups and was mentored by percussionist Phil Seamen.

"At this party, there was a little band and all the kids chanted at me, 'Play the drums!'", Baker told *The Independent* in 2009. "I'd never sat behind a kit before, but I sat down — and I could play! One of the musicians turned round and said, 'Bloody hell, we've got a drummer', and I thought, 'Bloody hell, I'm a drummer.'"

Baker came of age just as London was learning the blues, with such future superstars as Clapton, Mick Jagger and Jimmy Page among the pioneers. Baker joined Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated, where he met (and soon disliked, for allegedly playing too loud) the Scottish-born bassist Jack Bruce, with whom he was thrown together again as members of the popular British group the Graham Bond Organization.

Clapton, meanwhile, was London's hottest guitarist, thanks to his work with the Yardbirds and John Mayall's Blues Breakers, his extraordinary speed and agility inspiring "Clapton is God" graffiti. Clapton, Baker and Bruce would call their band Cream because they considered themselves the best musicians around.

"Oh for god's sake, I've never played rock," Baker told the blog JazzWax in 2013. "Cream was two jazz players and a blues guitarist playing improvised music. We never played the same thing two nights running. Jack and I had been in jazz bands for years. All that stuff I did on the drums in Cream didn't come from drugs, either. It was from me. It was jazz."

Italie reported from New York. Kelvin Chan contributed from London.

Problematic relatives: A true American political tradition

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Since America's early days, leading politicians have had to contend with awkward problems posed by their family members. Joe Biden is the latest to navigate this tricky terrain.

President Donald Trump has sought, without evidence, to implicate Biden and his son Hunter 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 his father, then vice president, 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.

The president's baseless claims have nonetheless thrust Hunter Biden into the center of presidential politics, complete with reminders of a checkered history that includes the younger Biden's multiple stints in drug rehab and other personal problems. He's part of a sometimes unfortunate American tradition in which the foibles of otherwise obscure people become liabilities for national leaders.

"Everyone's affected when somebody becomes president," said Carl Anthony, author of "America's First Families." "Often these people end up feeling that their entire identity is filtered through who they're related to."

John Adams, America's second president, had a son who died of alcoholism while the father was still in office. Adams' oldest son, John Quincy Adams, became the sixth president, but John Quincy Adams' son John was "thrown out of Harvard for drinking and partying," according to Anthony.

Presidential historian Doug Wead says both the pressures and temptations of a presidential child or sibling can be unique and distinct from relatives of other famous celebrities or prominent businessmen.

"It's just enormous pressure to perform. The expectations are so high," said Wead, author of "All the Presidents' Children: Triumph and Tragedy in the Lives of the First Families."

"It's a hopeless task. Unless you become president yourself, you're overshadowed," he said.

Billy Carter still stands as one of the most prominent examples of troublesome presidential relatives. Jimmy Carter's brother had a string of public embarrassments and flagrant attempts to cash in on his position. His multiple incidents of public drunkenness became so infamous that he launched his own brand of Billy Beer. The hijinks took on a more serious tone in 1980, when he registered as a paid agent of the Libyan government and accepted a \$220,000 payment from Tripoli. The move triggered an investigation by the Senate Judiciary Committee that included a young Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del.

Almost every president has seemingly had some sort of troublesome family member to contend with. Some of the historical misbehavior would be seen as serious in modern times. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's son Jimmy moved from controversy to controversy, including openly selling positions in his father's administration, Wead said.

In other cases, the scandals now seem in hindsight to be more of a window into the quant social standards

of the time. Teddy Roosevelt's daughter Alice was a controversy magnet for her father's entire tenure in office. Her supposed crimes: smoking in public, swearing and showing up at parties with her pet snake. Wead's favorite Alice Roosevelt anecdote: At one point the president said his daughter could not smoke inside the White House, so Alice called a news conference on the White House roof and smoked there.

Richard Nixon reportedly had his brother Donald's phone tapped because he feared Donald's business activities might embarrass the administration. Ronald Reagan's daughter Patti Davis spoke out publicly against her father's politics, published a tell-all book and later posed for Playboy.

Hillary Clinton's brothers were both accused of shady business dealings while their brother-in-law, Bill Clinton, was in office. Meanwhile Roger Clinton, Bill's half brother, had a string of drug-related incidents that famously earned him the Secret Service codename "headache."

President Trump's son Don Jr. has earned his share of headlines for meeting with Russian operatives offering dirt on Hillary Clinton as well as pushing Trump business overseas with deals that may have benefited from his father's position.

George H.W. Bush stands as an interesting exception. His most problematic and seemingly least ambitious son turned out to be the most politically successful: George W. Bush, the 43rd president.

Wead said the Bush family had ambitious plans for several of their sons, but not all of them.

"Jeb was the one who was supposed to be the star," he said. "Junior was the family clown."

Neil Bush's political career was derailed by his involvement in the collapse of Silverado Savings and Loan. Jeb Bush did become governor of Florida, but his presidential ambitions ran headlong into the ascendant Trump phenomenon in 2016.

Wead has deep personal experience with the Bush clan. His entry into politics was working directly with George W. Bush on his father's 1988 presidential campaign. When the elder Bush won, Wead launched a personal research project into the lives of presidential children as a favor to George W. and the other Bush siblings.

"I was astounded at how binary it was. Either you're going to be a great success or you're going to be an alcoholic mess," he said.

Anger grows at civilian deaths by US, Afghan forces

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

JALALABAD, Afghanistan (AP) — The workers were sleeping on the mountainside where they had spent a long day harvesting pine nuts in eastern Afghanistan. Some were in tents, others lay outside under the stars, when the U.S. airstrike tore into them.

Only hours before the Sept. 19 strike, the businessman who hired them had heard there was a drone over the mountain and called Afghanistan's intelligence agency to remind an official his workers were there — as he'd notified the agency days earlier.

"He laughed and said, 'Don't worry they are not going to bomb you,'" the businessman, Aziz Rahman, recalled.

Twenty workers were killed in the strike, including seven members of one family. A relative, Mohammed Hasan, angrily described body parts they found scattered on the ground, gesturing at his arm, his leg, his head.

"This is not their (Americans') first mistake," said Hasan. "They say 'sorry'. What are we supposed to do with 'sorry'? ... People now are angry. They are so angry with the foreigners, with this government."

Increasing civilian deaths in stepped-up U.S. airstrikes and operations by Afghan forces highlight the conundrum the U.S. military and its Afghan allies face, 18 years into the war: How to hunt down their Islamic State group and Taliban enemies, while keeping civilians safe and on their side.

Complaints have also grown over abuses and killings by a CIA-trained Afghan special intelligence force known as Unit 02. In the same province, Nangarhar, members of the Unit killed four brothers during a raid on their home. The brothers' hands were bound and they were shot in the head.

Former President Hamid Karzai, in a recent interview with The Associated Press, said he didn't want the

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U.S. troops for "one more minute" if deaths of civilians continued.

Some 16,000 civilians have been killed since 2009 in the war, according to the U.N. Overall, civilian deaths are down so far this year, on track to the lowest number since 2012.

But civilian deaths caused by U.S. and Afghan government forces are rising, surpassing for the first time those caused by the Taliban and other insurgents, according to a U.N. report .

It found that U.S. and Afghan forces killed 717 civilians and injured 680 in the first six months of the year, up 31% from the same period in 2018. The Taliban and IS killed 531 and wounded 1,437, down 43%.

Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center, said that is because U.S. President Donald Trump has sought to ramp up pressure on the battlefield amid negotiations with the Taliban and has loosened rules of engagement for U.S. forces.

"In effect, the Trump administration has given its blessing to U.S. forces to use a more gloves-off approach on the battlefield that raises the risk of civilian casualties," he said.

In early September when Trump declared as "dead" a deal with the Taliban that had seemed imminent, he boasted the U.S. had "been hitting our enemy harder than at any time in the last ten years."

Last week, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said: "We did step up our attacks on the Taliban since the talks broke down. . . we did pick up the pace considerably."

According to the U.S. Air Forces Central Command, the U.S. conducted more bombings and drone strikes in Afghanistan in August than in any previous month this year — 783, compared to 613 in July and 441 in June.

Dropping more bombs doesn't appear to be working. The Taliban are stronger than they have been since their ouster in 2001, and IS is expanding its footprint, moving into the mountains of the northeast, according to a U.S. Department of Defense intelligence agent. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of his work.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Afghan Defense Minister Asadullah Khaled disputed the U.N. report, saying "we do not have a lot of civilian casualties." He accused the Taliban and their sympathizers of inflating numbers.

"I cannot say there are no civilian casualties from the Afghan side but there is a big difference. Taliban is killing people in the mosque, in the school, in the street, and we are trying our best," to avoid civilian casualties, said Khaled.

Khaled seemed to put some blame for the deaths in the Sept. 19 strike on the farmers. He said they were working on a mountain where IS is known to have bases, without informing the authorities.

But Rahman did inform authorities all the way to the provincial governor's office, according to documents dated Sept. 2 and seen by the AP.

When he heard of the drone over the site, Rahman called the local office of Afghanistan's intelligence agency, known as the National Defense Secretariat, to remind them.

Still the strike came.

Initially, the U.S. military announced it had killed 16 Islamic State group fighters in a strike in that area that date. As angry villagers brought bodies of the dead to the provincial capital of Jalalabad, the U.S. military backed off that and said the incident was being investigated.

More than three weeks after the incident, the U.S military said the investigation was ongoing.

Gen. Scott Miller, chief of the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan, said the best way to decrease civilian casualties is for both sides to reduce violence.

"That said, my commitment to the Afghan people is we will be as precise as possible and support your security forces and when something goes wrong ... we will quickly own it and look to provide the appropriate compensation for those mistakes," Miller said.

Speaking at the Nangarhar provincial capital of Jalalabad, Rahman showed his notebook where he meticulously wrote down the names of his dead workers in a notebook — 20 men.

Jabeen was the only wage earner for his household — a wife, four children and his elderly father. He made 400 Afghanis (\$5) a day harvesting pine nuts. Many Afghans use on only one name.

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Wahidullah had just married. He hadn't had a chance to start a family. He and his young wife lived with his father.

Abdullah was the father of two children, the eldest a 5-year-old daughter. His elderly mother lived with him.

Ibrahim left behind a wife and three children, now being watched over by his father.

"The Americans are attacking our ordinary people," said Rahman. "They are attacking our weddings. They are attacking our funerals ... How is it they can't see who they are killing?"

On Sept. 23, U.S. air support of an Afghan operation against Taliban and al-Qaida in southern Helmand province's Musa Qala district killed at least 40 people attending a wedding. Most of the dead were women and children, according to Abdul Majed Akhund, deputy provincial councilman.

An airstrike by U.S.-led forces a week ago in a Taliban-controlled district in central Ghazni province killed at least five civilians, local villagers said. Angry villagers carried the bodies to the provincial capital shouting, "Death to Ashraf Ghani," referring to the Afghan president, and "Death to America."

It's not just the U.S. air raids that are infuriating Afghans.

President Ghani fired his intelligence chief Masoom Stanikzai last month after complaints from Afghans and the United Nations about widespread abuses by the CIA-trained Unit 02. As early as last year, the U.N. asked the government to implement more oversight over the unit.

The firing came after members of the unit raided a home in Jalalabad, only meters (yards) from the Justice Ministry, and killed four brothers. Family members showed the AP photos of the bodies, bound and shot in the head. One of the brothers was an assistant to a close ally of Ghani. Their uncle, Ibrahim Malikzada, said the Unit's soldiers also took cash and jewelry.

The Unit reported that the dead were insurgents, a claim denied by the family. Eight others were arrested in the raid and later released.

Kugelman of the Wilson Center warned, "These increasing civilian deaths threaten to turn the tide of Afghan public opinion against the United States at a moment when there is already a risk of U.S. forces wearing out their welcome."

Protests, clashes as bid to block Hong Kong mask ban fails

By EILEEN NG and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Furiously yelling "Wearing a mask is not a crime," tens of thousands of masked protesters hit Hong Kong's rain-drenched streets Sunday in defiance of a new ban on facial coverings. Riot police later swept in with volleys of tear gas and muscular arrests as peaceful rallies again degenerated into widespread violence and chaos in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Instead of deterring rioting and calming anti-government demonstrations that have gripped the international trading hub for four months, the ban that criminalized the wearing of face masks at rallies only redoubled the determination of both peaceful marchers and more radical black-clad youths. The hard-liners again lobbed gasoline bombs and trashed subway stations and China-linked banks in the city.

For the first time in the crisis, men on the roof of one of the Chinese military's barracks in Hong Kong raised a yellow banner warning protesters they were breaking the law when laser pointers were flashed at the building, according to video broadcast by Hong Kong media.

Police said masked rioters also attacked bystanders, including two men left unconscious after bloody beatings and a woman who took photos of rioting.

A massive peaceful march to the central business district — on streets spray-painted with the word "resist" and hemmed in by high-rises that echoed with protesters' chants — came as Hong Kong's High Court rejected a second effort to invalidate the mask ban.

Lawmaker Dennis Kwok said the court refused to grant an injunction but agreed to hear later this month an application by 24 legislators against Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam's use of sweeping emergency powers to impose the ban without legislative approval.

Lam's government says that the mask ban will make the identification of rioters easier for police and

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that other measures are possible if violence continues.

The city's MTR network of subways and trains that was entirely closed Saturday partially reopened Sunday, with greatly reduced service that protesters said made traveling to rallies harder but didn't make them want to stay home.

"Carrie Lam is not the god of Hong Kong. She can't do anything she likes," said retiree Patricia Anyeung, marching masked with her sister, Rebecca.

"They can't arrest us all. There are thousands of us," said Anyeung. "There is no going back — we are at the point of no return." Anyeung, who holds a British passport, said she may leave Hong Kong if the city's freedoms are extinguished.

Many malls also remained shuttered as streets downtown turned into a sea of umbrellas held aloft both against rain and because they've become a symbol of protest, used by demonstrators as shields against police identification, tear gas and rubber bullets.

Critics fear Lam's use of the Emergency Regulations Ordinance that gives her broad powers to implement any measures she deems necessary could pave the way for more draconian moves. The law was enacted by British colonial rulers in 1922 to quell a seamen's strike and was last used in 1967 to crush riots.

"This emergency law is so ancient and draconian. Carrie Lam is using it as some sort of weapon of mass destruction to nuke Hong Kong," said legislator Claudia Mo.

Lam says she will seek the legislature's backing for the mask ban when it meets next on Oct. 16. The ban makes the wearing of masks and even face-paint at both illegal and police-approved gatherings punishable by up to a year in jail.

A police official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media said some arrests were made Sunday for violating the ban, but he couldn't give any numbers.

Enforcement is tricky in a city where many have worn surgical masks since a deadly respiratory disease outbreak in 2003.

The ban turned the wearing of masks into an act of rebellion for many protesters.

"For the sake of our freedom, there's nothing we're afraid of," protester Feng Yiucheng said through his black mask, accompanied by his wife and 2-year-old son. "We cannot let them act like emperors."

Groups of black-clad youths roamed the city center, setting up barricades, covering the urban landscape with anti-China graffiti, cutting power lines to traffic lights and using walkie-talkies and messaging apps to coordinate.

Both peaceful and violent demonstrators say violence and vandalism is the only way for young protesters to force the government to bend to clamors for full democracy and other demands.

The shooting of a 14-year-old boy Friday night — the second protest victim of police gunfire — stoked fears of more bloody confrontations. An 18-year-old protester was shot at close range by a riot officer on Tuesday. He was charged with rioting and assaulting police, while the younger teen was arrested.

AP Top 25 Reality Check: Super 6 has rankings on lockdown

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Alabama, Clemson, Georgia, Ohio State, LSU and Oklahoma. Call them the Super Six.

After six regular-season Associated Press college football polls the top six teams are the same teams that were ranked in the top six in the preseason. The order has changed, but at no point have the teams. Since the preseason poll started in 1950, the top six spots have never gone this long being held by the same group of teams.

Some historical background. The season starts earlier now than it did decades ago. In the 1980s, the sixth regular-season poll would typically come out around mid-October. Go back to the 1960s or farther and the sixth poll of the season would come out in late October or early November. But typically, throughout the years, six polls meant most teams had played from four to six games.

This season started with Clemson at No. 1, followed by Alabama, Georgia, Oklahoma, Ohio State and LSU. Now Alabama is No. 1 and Clemson is No. 2.

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When the sixth regular-season AP Top 25 presented by Regions Bank came out Sunday the big change was Ohio State moving into a tie with Georgia for No. 3. LSU is No. 5 and Oklahoma is sixth.

The lack of movement is at least in part due to chance and scheduling. Most of the toughest opponents for all of those teams are still ahead. Oklahoma gets No. 11 Texas this week, and LSU hosts No. 7 Florida.

But don't underestimate just how dominant the Super Six have been. Their average margin of victory is 32 points per game, led by Ohio State at 40.5. Only one of the Buckeyes opponents is ranked this week (No. 25 Cincinnati), but they have combined for a 20-12 record. They have made some pretty good teams look helpless.

So if you have been thinking: Boy, it seems like we're talking about the same teams every week this college football season; your perception is reality.

No. 1 Alabama (5-0)

Next: at No. 24 Texas A&M.

Reality check: This trip to A&M is the only realistic shot the Tide has of being truly tested until November. 'Bama's other October opponents are Tennessee and Arkansas.

Ranked: Too high, but it's hard to complain about anybody voting Alabama No. 1.

No. 2 Clemson (5-0)

Next: vs. Florida State.

Reality check: After catching a scare from North Carolina, the Tigers got a week off to get ready for the Seminoles, which is likely bad news for the Seminoles.

Ranked: Too high.

No. 3 Georgia (5-0)

Next: vs. South Carolina.

Reality check: One area the Bulldogs would probably like to get cranked up: Georgia ranks 78th in the country in pass plays of 20 yards or more with 16.

Ranked: Too high.

No. 3 (tie) Ohio State (6-0)

Next: at Northwestern, Friday, Oct. 18.

Reality check: The Buckeyes might have the best defense in the country, which makes them far less susceptible to the type of unexpected loss to an unranked team that kept them out of the playoff the last two seasons.

Ranked: Ten AP voters have the Buckeyes No. 1 this week. Too low.

No. 5 LSU (5-0)

Next: vs. No. 7 Florida.

Reality check: The best cornerback in the country just might be LSU freshman Derek Stingley.

Ranked: Too low.

No. 6 Oklahoma (5-0)

Next: vs. No. 11 Texas at Dallas.

Reality check: The Sooners top two receivers, CeeDee Lamb and Charleston Rambo, are averaging 25.7 yards on their combined 32 catches. That's a lot.

Ranked: Just right.

No. 7 Florida (6-0)

Next: at No. 5 LSU.

Reality check: Can a team with an elite defense, but just a pretty good offense crack the Super Six? The Gators hope so.

Ranked: Just right.

No. 8 Wisconsin (5-0)

Next: vs. Michigan State.

Reality check: The Badgers profile is similar to the Super Six — average margin of victory, 37.6 — but so much of the damage has come against three very bad teams.

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Ranked: Just right.

No. 9 Notre Dame (4-1)

Next: vs. Southern California.

Reality check: RB Tony Jones has done a nice job as the lead back for the Irish with 381 yards rushing and four touchdowns, but the return of Jafar Armstrong from injury is huge with the schedule about to get more challenging.

Ranked: Little too high.

No. 10 Penn State (5-0)

Next: at No. 17 Iowa.

Reality check: Time to find out what the Nittany Lions are really about. The next three weeks: at Iowa, Michigan and at Michigan State.

Ranked: Little too high.

No. 11 Texas (4-1)

Next: vs. No. 6 Oklahoma at Dallas.

Reality check: Devin Duvernay is ultimate go-to receiver. He has a team-high 45 catches. The next best four players on the team have a total of 49.

Ranked: Just right

No. 12 Auburn (5-1)

Next: at Arkansas, Saturday, Oct. 19.

Reality check: The Tigers play three members of the Super Six. They're probably not good enough to beat all of them, but here's betting they get at least one.

Ranked: Too low.

No. 13 Oregon (4-1)

Next: vs. Colorado, Friday.

Reality check: The nasty Ducks' defense has feasted on some backup quarterbacks.

Ranked: Just right.

No. 14 Boise State (5-0)

Next: vs. Hawaii.

Reality check: The Broncos are doing that thing where a team rises in the rankings mostly because the teams around it lose.

Ranked: This week's: Well, somebody has to be No. 14.

No. 15 Utah (4-1)

Next: at Oregon State.

Reality check: In a conference where the champion is likely to be the team that self-destructs the least, you have to like Utah's chances.

Ranked: About right.

No. 16 Michigan (4-1)

Next: at Illinois.

Reality check: No, there are not a lot of great alternatives, but the voters have given the Wolverines far more slack than they deserve.

Ranked: Too high.

No. 17 Iowa (4-1)

Next: vs. No. 10 Penn State.

Reality check: Only Reality Check's deep respect for the Cy-Hawk Rivalry makes ranking Iowa tolerable right now.

Ranked: Too high.

No. 18 Arizona State (4-1)

Next: vs. Washington State.

Reality check: ASU is one of six Pac-12 teams that have been in and out of the rankings so far this season.

Ranked: Feels too high, but probably too low.

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No. 19 Wake Forest (5-0)

Next: vs. Louisville.

Reality check: The Demon Deacons' 83.5 plays per game ranks third in FBS and tops among Power Five teams.

Ranked: Too low.

No. 20 Virginia (4-1)

Next: at Miami, Friday.

Reality check: The Cavaliers look like the only truly competent team in the ACC Coastal and they don't play Clemson.

Ranked: Too high.

No. 21 SMU (6-0)

Next: vs. Temple, Saturday, Oct. 19.

Reality check: The AAC West is setting up for quite a race with the Mustangs, Memphis, Tulane and Navy all off to good starts. Don't count Houston out either.

Ranked: About right.

No. 22 Baylor (5-0)

Next: vs. Texas Tech.

Reality check: What's behind Baylor's strong start: The Bears ranked 86th in the nation in defense last year (6.49 yards per play). They rank 26th this year at 4.49.

Ranked: About right.

No. 23 Memphis (5-0)

Next: at Temple.

Reality check: The Tigers have another stud running back in redshirt freshman Kenneth Gainwell, who is averaging 124 yards per game and 8.16 per carry.

Ranked: About right.

No. 24 Texas A&M (3-2)

Next: vs. No. 1 Alabama.

Reality check: The Aggies will face the No. 1 team in the AP poll for the second time this season. A chance to grab another quality loss.

Ranked: Too high.

No. 25 Cincinnati (4-1)

Next: at Houston.

Reality check: Being the first AAC team to beat UCF in almost two years is worth a ranking.

Ranked: Just right.

Instead of Texas A&M how about Missouri or maybe Appalachian State?

Follow Ralph D. Russo at <https://twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP> and listen at <https://podcastone.com/AP-Top-25-College-Football-Podcast>

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Mommy's medal: Mother of 2 closes worlds with hurdles title

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — It's no big leap to say Nia Ali had her hands full Sunday night — with one kid in her arms, another on her hip and a gold-medal ceremony on her schedule.

And that was after the race.

The American put an exclamation point on a world championships that any mother could love, adding her name to the list of title-winning moms at these games by pulling an upset in the 100-meter hurdles.

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"It's been such an inspiration to see everyone come together and feed off each other," Ali said.

Her two kids, 4-year-old son Titus and 16-month-old daughter Yuri, came down from the stands to share the victory lap. With the American flag wrapped around her back, Ali cradled Yuri in her arms while Titus skipped, danced and jumped along the outside of the track.

Such a fitting way to close out a meet, and a year, that has been so much about mothers fighting for equal pay, for better contracts and for more corporate respect on tracks and soccer pitches across the globe.

Just as fitting: Allyson Felix, the American runner who helped spearhead a movement that pushed Nike to reconfigure terms for runners who become pregnant, got a gift gold without even stepping on the track.

The American 4x400 relay team, led by hurdlers Dalilah Muhammad and Sydney McLaughlin, blew out the field for a 2.97-second won over Poland. That meant another gold medal for Felix, who had run in the preliminary heat.

No nation had more golds than the U.S., which tied its championships record with 14.

The U.S. total of 29 (Usain Bolt-less Jamaica was second with 14) was one less than the record it set in London in 2017. It sends the signal that the Americans will have contenders spread throughout Olympic Stadium for the Tokyo Games next year.

It figures many of their most competitive races will be between themselves.

Ali beat out world record holder Keni Harrison to give the U.S. women their second 1-2 finish in the hurdles, two nights after Muhammad set the 400-meter hurdles world record in a close victory over McLaughlin.

But Ali's win was hard to see coming — for everyone but her, that is.

Harrison is the world record holder, and she has been finishing second most of the year to Danielle Williams of Jamaica. Williams is the world leader who refused to leave the track after false starting in her national championships, but was later given a reprieve, and a spot here, after her federation declared the race null and void.

"Lord knows I've been through a lot," Williams said after she finished third. "I can't be complaining."

When Ali crossed the finish line and saw her name come up first next to a personal-best time of 12.34 seconds, she broke into tears. It was her first win in anything resembling a major race since 2016.

"I replayed this race so much in my head, and every time, that's the way it ended for me," she said. "So just to see it play out ... exactly how I envisioned it, that was my natural reaction."

Other gold medals went to a dominant U.S. men's 4x400 relay team, Malaika Mihmbo of Germany (long jump), Timothy Cheruiyot of Kenya (1,500 meters), Anderson Peters of Grenada (javelin) and Joshua Chpetegei of Uganda (10,000 meters).

With Ali's event placed on the last day of the championships, she said it's been nice to sit back and watch all the moms succeeding.

Felix, who became a mother last November, also won gold last weekend in the new event, mixed relay, and now has 13 total — two more than the record she shared with Bolt coming into Doha.

New mom Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce of Jamaica has won two golds. China's Liu Hong picked up a gold in the race walk. Even Alysia Montano, a mother of two who was part of the Nike movement along with Felix, was in town last week to accept two bronze medals reallocated because of doping at the 2011 and 2013 worlds.

Ali hasn't been as vocal, but she's been on quite a journey over the past four years nonetheless — one that includes multitudes of trips from home in Florida to training sessions in Germany, and to competitions around the globe. Her boyfriend is Canadian sprinter Andre De Grasse, who is every bit as busy.

Ali told one story about having to break from training in Europe recently so she could head home for a parent-teacher conference for Titus, who is in preschool.

"It was important for me to be there and get a good feel of what he's going to have to go through this year," Ali said.

Now, though, it's time to head back home and get back into the routine.

Show and Tell is every Thursday. If Titus is good on the flight home, Mom might let him bring a gold medal to school.

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

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Oct. 7, the 280th day of 2019. There are 85 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 7, 2001, the war in Afghanistan started as the United States and Britain launched air attacks against military targets and Osama bin Laden's training camps in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

On this date:

In 1777, the second Battle of Saratoga began during the American Revolution. (British forces under General John Burgoyne surrendered ten days later.)

In 1849, author Edgar Allan Poe died in Baltimore, Maryland, at age 40.

In 1954, Marian Anderson became the first black singer hired by the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York.

In 1960, Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy and Republican opponent Richard Nixon held their second televised debate, this one in Washington, D.C.

In 1979, Pope John Paul II concluded his week-long tour of the United States with a Mass on the Washington Mall.

In 1985, Palestinian gunmen hijacked the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro (ah-KEE'-leh LOW'-roh) in the Mediterranean. (The hijackers shot and killed Leon Klinghoffer, a Jewish-American tourist in a wheelchair, and pushed him overboard, before surrendering on Oct. 9.)

In 1991, University of Oklahoma law professor Anita Hill publicly accused Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of making sexually inappropriate comments when she worked for him; Thomas denied Hill's allegations.

In 1992, trade representatives of the United States, Canada and Mexico initialed the North American Free Trade Agreement during a ceremony in San Antonio, Texas, in the presence of President George H.W. Bush, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (muhl-ROO'-nee) and Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

In 1996, Fox News Channel made its debut.

In 1998, Matthew Shepard, a gay college student, was beaten and left tied to a wooden fencepost outside of Laramie, Wyoming; he died five days later. (Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinney are serving life sentences for Shepard's murder.)

In 2003, California voters recalled Gov. Gray Davis and elected Arnold Schwarzenegger their new governor.

In 2004, President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney conceded that Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction as they tried to shift the Iraq war debate to a new issue, arguing that Saddam was abusing a U.N. oil-for-food program.

Ten years ago: A top Italian court overturned a law granting Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi immunity from prosecution, allowing trials for corruption and tax fraud to resume in Milan. (Berlusconi was later convicted of tax fraud relating to the purchase of TV rights to U.S. films on his Mediaset network; the corruption trial ended with a court ruling that the statute of limitations had run out.) Americans Venkatraman Ramakrishnan and Thomas Steitz and Israeli Ada Yonath won the Nobel Prize in chemistry. Fashion and celebrity photographer Irving Penn died in New York at 92.

Five years ago: North Korea publicly acknowledged to the international community the existence of its "reform through labor" camps, a mention that appeared to come in response to a highly critical U.N. human rights report. Two Japanese scientists, Isamu Akasaki and Hiroshi Amano, and a naturalized American, Shuji Nakamura, won the Nobel Prize for physics for inventing a new kind of light-emitting diode (LED) that promised to revolutionize the way the world lighted its offices and homes.

One year ago: Breaking her long-standing refusal to discuss anything political, music superstar Taylor Swift announced that she would be voting for Tennessee's Democratic Senate candidate Phil Bredesen.

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Brazilian voters chose a far-right former army captain, Jair Bolsonaro, in the first round of the country's presidential election, but he fell just short of the margin needed to avoid a late October runoff. (Bolsonaro would win the runoff with 55 percent of the vote.) The Milwaukee Brewers beat the Colorado Rockies 6-0 to sweep their National League Division Series.

Today's Birthdays: Retired South African Archbishop and Nobel Peace laureate Desmond Tutu is 88. Author Thomas Keneally is 84. Comedian Joy Behar is 77. Former National Security Council aide Lt. Col. Oliver North (ret.) is 76. Rock musician Kevin Godley (10cc) is 74. Actress Jill Larson is 72. Country singer Kieran Kane is 70. Singer John Mellencamp is 68. Rock musician Ricky Phillips is 68. Russian President Vladimir Putin is 67. Actress Mary Badham (Film: "To Kill a Mockingbird") is 67. Rock musician Tico Torres (Bon Jovi) is 66. Actress Christopher Norris is 64. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma is 64. Gospel singer Michael W. Smith is 62. Olympic gold medal ice dancer Jayne Torvill is 62. Actor Dylan Baker is 61. Actress Judy Landers is 61. Recording executive and TV personality Simon Cowell is 60. Rock musician Charlie Marinkovich (formerly with Iron Butterfly) is 60. Actress Paula Newsome is 58. Country singer Dale Watson is 57. Pop singer Ann Curless (Expose) is 56. Rhythm-and-blues singer Toni Braxton is 52. Rock singer-musician Thom Yorke (Radiohead) is 51. Rock musician-dancer Leeroy Thornhill is 50. Actress Nicole Ari Parker is 49. Actress Allison Munn is 45. Rock singer-musician Damian Kulash (KOO'-lahsh) is 44. Singer Taylor Hicks is 43. Actor Omar Miller is 41. Neo-soul singer Nathaniel Rateliff (Nathaniel Rateliff & the Night Sweats) is 41. Actor Shawn Ashmore is 40. Actor Jake McLaughlin is 37. Electronic musician Flying Lotus (AKA Stephen Ellison) is 36. MLB player Evan Longoria is 34. Actress Holland Roden is 33. Actress Amber Stevens is 33. Boston Red Sox outfielder Mookie Betts is 27. Actress Lulu Wilson is 14.

Thought for Today: "Being right half the time beats being half-right all the time." — Malcolm Forbes, American publisher (1919-1990).

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