


# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 1 of 69

- [1- Community Pep Rally](#)
- [2- Sunday Extras](#)
- [15- Rep. Johnson's Weekly Column](#)
- [16- Gov. Noem's Weekly Column](#)
- [17- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column](#)
- [18- Sen. Rounds' Weekly Column](#)
- [19- Rev. Snyder's Column](#)
- [21- SD News Watch: Native American students left behind by S.D. education system](#)
- [29- Wolves Men Make it an East West Challenge Clean Sweep with Overtime Victory over Black Hills](#)
- [30- Volleyball Send-off Wednesday Morning](#)
- [30 Coming up on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [31- Weather Pages](#)
- [34- Daily Devotional](#)
- [35- 2019 Groton Events](#)
- [36- News from the Associated Press](#)

*Chicken Soup  
for the Soul*

“NONE OF US  
KNOWS WHAT  
MIGHT HAPPEN  
EVEN THE NEXT  
MINUTE, YET STILL  
WE GO FORWARD.  
BECAUSE WE TRUST.  
BECAUSE WE HAVE  
FAITH.”



PAULO COELHO

## G H S COMMUNITY PEP RALLY

**Everyone is Invited  
To Cheer On Our Volleyball Team  
To The State Tournament!**



**Tuesday  
Nov. 19, 3 p.m.**

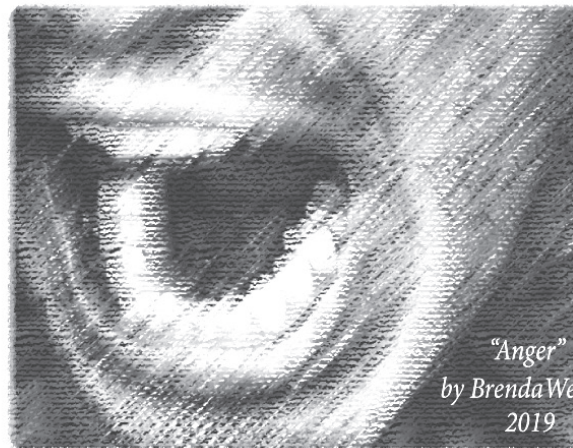
**OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton  
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

## Sunday Extras



### THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.* JAMES 1:19, 20



"Anger"  
by Brenda We  
2019



## BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Which book of the Bible (KJV) mentions the word “thanksgiving” the most times, at eight? *Genesis, Nehemiah, Psalms, Isaiah*

2. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, “In everything give thanks: for this is the ... of God.” Power, Will, Gratitude, Travail

3. From 2 Timothy 3:1-2, Paul lists which human quality as being a sign of the last days? *Adulterers, Sun worshippers, Renegades, Unthankful people*

4. In Psalms 106:1, “O give thanks into the Lord; for his ... endureth forever.” Love, Good, Mercy, Spirit

5. From Leviticus 22, a sacrifice of thanksgiving is most meaningful when it is ...? *Sincere, Often, At your own will, Extravagant*

6. Where was Jonah when he prayed with the voice of thanksgiving? *Fish’s belly, Aboard ship, Wilderness, Mountain top*

ANSWERS: 1) Psalms; 2) Will; 3) Unthankful people; 4) Mercy; 5) At your own will; 6) Fish’s belly

*Comments? More Trivia? Holiday gift ideas? Visit [www.TriviaGuy.com](http://www.TriviaGuy.com)*

## Comfort foods

Made fast  
and  
healthy



by Healthy Exchanges

### Maple ‘Ice Cream’ Pumpkin Pie

On Thanksgiving Day, more pumpkin pies will be served than during the rest of the year combined! Well, we can’t let that tasty tradition pass us by without a new twist to an old standby, can we?

- 2 cups (one 16-ounce can) pumpkin
- 1/2 cup sugar-free maple syrup
- 1 (4-serving) package sugar-free instant butterscotch pudding mix
- 2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 cup fat-free whipped topping
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 (6-ounce) purchased graham cracker pie crust

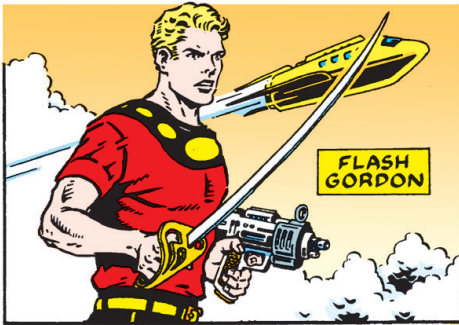
1. In a large bowl, combine pumpkin and maple syrup. Add dry pudding mix and dry milk powder. Mix well using a wire whisk. Blend in whipped topping and 1/4 cup walnuts. Spread filling evenly into pie crust. Evenly sprinkle remaining 1/4 cup walnuts over top of filling.

2. Cover and freeze for at least 4 hours. Remove from freezer at least 15 minutes before serving. Cut into 8 pieces. Freezes well.

• Each serving equals: 225 calories, 9g fat, 4g protein, 32g carb., 378mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 1/2 Starch, 1 Fat, 1/2 Fruit.

# Groton Daily Independent

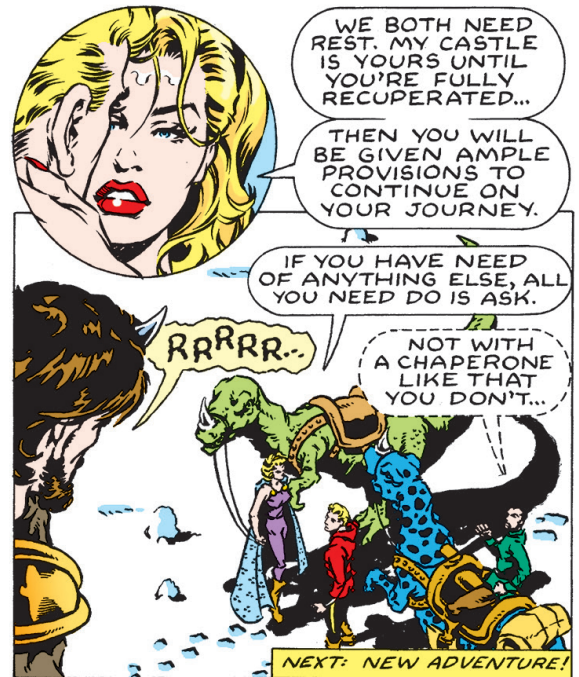
Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 4 of 69



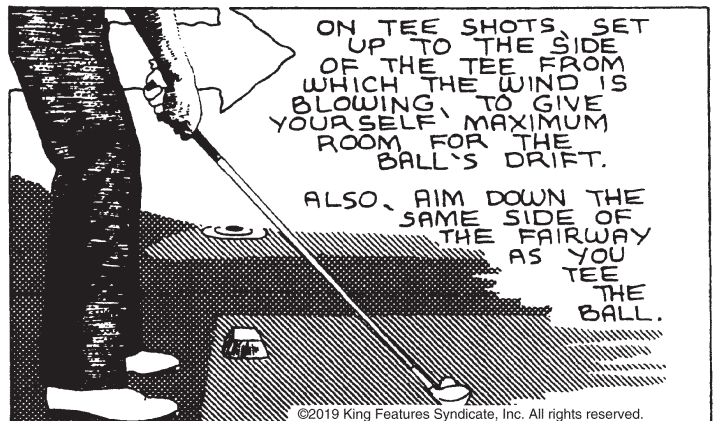
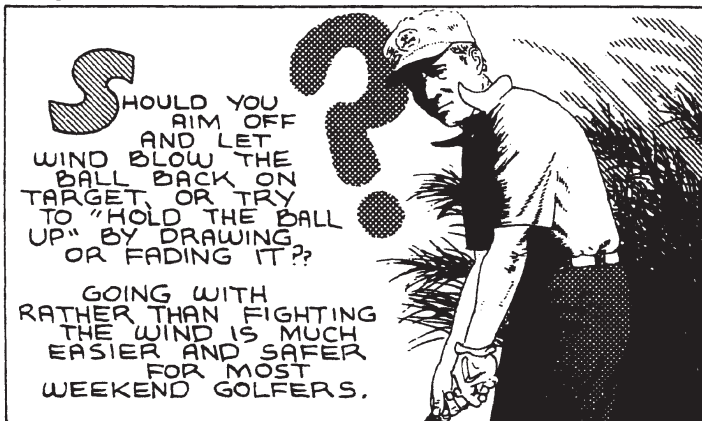
## FLASH GORDON

11-10 BY JIM KEEFE

AT THE QUEEN'S BIDDING, THE CYCLOPS CEASES HIS ATTACK ON FLASH.



## Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





## Daughter Got Measles Despite Vaccination

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** My daughter is 4 years old and has, in the past five days, developed measles. She was vaccinated at 9 months and has been treated with antibiotics, Tylenol and vitamin A supplements. What concerns me is that she is now experiencing seizures, even without a fever. They are not grand mal seizures, but simple ones. They have me worried. What can I do? — G.A.

**ANSWER:** Measles remains a serious disease in many parts of the world, with 90,000 deaths reported in 2016. Even in industrialized nations, there have been outbreaks involving tens of thousands of people infected.

Vitamin A supplementation may be of value in those who are deficient, and Tylenol can help keep the fever down, reducing the risk of febrile seizures. The antiviral drug ribavirin sometimes is used, though without clear evidence of effectiveness. Otherwise, there are no effective antibiotics or other treatments for measles.

When seizures occur in a child with measles in absence of fever, it can indicate a complication called encephalitis — inflammation of the brain. Children also may experience nausea and vomiting, and they usually have a headache. Confusion and sleepiness are other common symptoms. The diagnosis can be confirmed by an evaluation of the fluid around the brain, the cerebrospinal fluid, which is sampled via a needle inserted into the lower back.

Confirmed encephalitis with measles is treated with steroids. This reduces the risk of permanent brain damage from the infection. Even so, 25% of

children may be left with some impairment, including epilepsy.

Unfortunately, vaccination at 9 months is not adequate protection. Children's immune systems may not be able to fully respond to the vaccine so early. Children are recommended to have the measles vaccine at 12-15 months and again at 4 to 6 years in the United States. In countries where risk of measles mortality remains high, children are vaccinated at 9 months, then again at 15-18 months. During an outbreak, a dose may be given as early as 6 months old, in addition to the other two doses.

\*\*\*

**DEAR DR. ROACH:** I get horrible fever blisters when I go on any tropical vacation and am exposed to lasting sun. These blisters develop on my lower lip. I have tried sunscreen, but nothing has worked. On my most recent trip, the blisters appeared on the final day and took nearly three weeks to heal. It's painful and horribly embarrassing. Is there anything I can do? Should I see my dermatologist? — S.A.

**ANSWER:** The sun can cause many kinds of skin reactions. In some people, the light itself causes the problem (these reactions are called photodermatoses). In others, the sun causes a reaction in combination with exposure to a particular substance. Sometimes, it's a fruit, especially limes. In people with blisters around the mouth, I think of mangoes, especially if you are enjoying them in the tropics.

Some skin diseases just get worse in the sun: Lupus is the classic example, but there are many others (my textbook lists about 50, some quite rare).

A dermatologist is indeed the person to see. In the meantime, wear sun-protective clothing on your next tropical vacation, and consider a blocking sunscreen like zinc oxide in the areas where the blistering has occurred in the past.

\*\*\*

*Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to [ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu](mailto:ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu).*

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1. What is the name of the trio that formed in 1974 to back up Bob Marley and the Wailers after Peter Tosh left the group?

2. Name the final No. 1 hit by the Temptations.

3. Phil Spector produced records with lush, layered arrangements. What was this called?

4. "Rivers of Babylon" was written based on which Bible passages?

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "I must accept it, she loves you more than me, So with my broken heart I'll bow out gracefully."

### Answers

1. The I Three, aka the I Threes, which included Marley's wife, Rita. Tosh, born Winston Hubert McIntosh, went on to have a successful solo career.

2. "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone," in 1972. It was their fourth song to reach the top, but they had 38 songs in the Top 40 over their career.

3. The Wall of Sound. It often made use of multiple instruments of the same type, such as three pianos, five drums and four guitars, as well as horns.

4. Psalm 137:1-4, which tells of the Jewish people after Jerusalem was conquered in 586 B.C.

5. "Take Good Care of Her," by Adam Wade in 1961. The song was covered by many others, including Dean Martin, Sonny James and Elvis Presley.

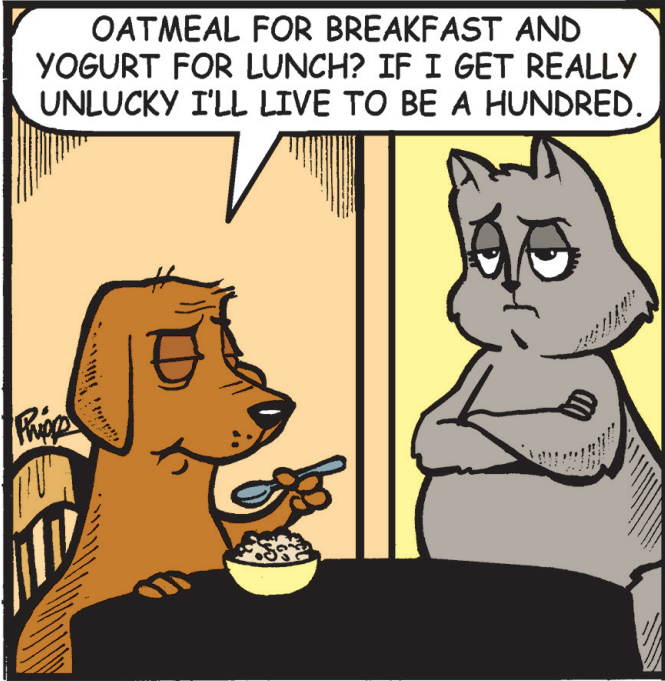
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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 6 of 69

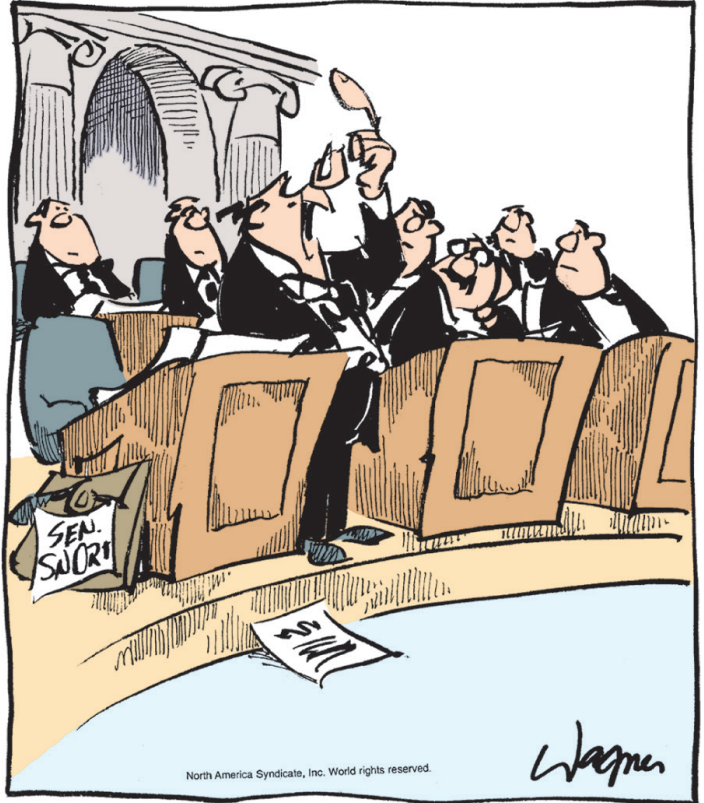
## Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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## GRIN and BEAR IT

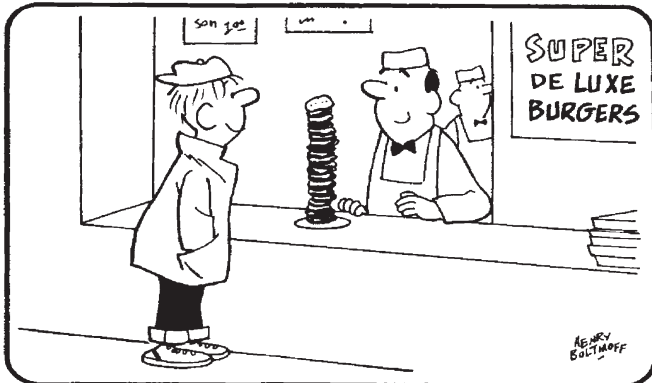


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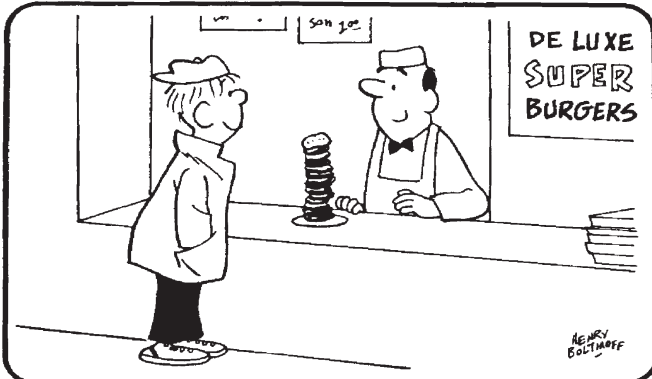
"Some things may be better left unsaid, but I've never heard of one!"

## HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTHOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Burger stack is shorter. 2. Man in background is missing. 3. Stacks have no cuffs. 4. Large sign is different. 5. Customer's nose is smaller. 6. Two small signs are reversed.



- Frozen grapes make great ice cubes for white wine and punch. They are tasty straight out of the freezer, too.

- Want to keep certain rooms off limits to wandering little ones? If you slip a baby sock over a doorknob, then secure it with a heavy-duty rubber band, it will keep toddlers out! — *E.R. in Ohio*

- You might be tempted to reserve your silver flatware for special occasion use, but it can be used daily. If you do so, it will be less likely to tarnish and require special cleaning and polishing. Hand wash gently — never put silver in the dishwasher — and store in drawers lined with a tarnish proof cloth for best results.

- Substitute cottage cheese for sour cream in dips by running it through a blender until smooth. It's lower in calories and higher in protein than sour cream.

- “If you eat one meal out in a restaurant each day, let it be lunch. The prices are typically lower, and the portions are not really smaller. It'll keep you going all day, and you can have a light meal or snack in the evening.” — *S.L. in Nevada*

- Self-care tip: It's a great idea to set aside a bit of time before bed to think about your goals for the future or to review the successes and lessons learned of the day — or just to not think at all. Double down on the me-time by taking the time to hydrate your skin with some lotion.

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 8 of 69



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**DON'T GET SQUASHED** trying to count all of the pumpkins in our picture. See if you can match our total.

Answer: We found 35 pumpkins.

**IT'S LOG-ON TIME!** See if you can compute the answer to this Alpha-Math puzzle. You must replace the letters on the computer screen with the digits 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9 so that you have a correct addition problem. The same letters get the same digits.



One Answer: D=9, O=2, T=4, C=6, M=3, S=1, I=5, E=7, (924 + 623 = 1547).

**LINK-UPS!** Here's a list of 12 one-syllable words that are divided into two columns. Turn them into six longer words by linking them together. To do this, draw a line from the word in the left column to a word in the right column.

- |         |      |
|---------|------|
| 1. OUT  | PORT |
| 2. PLAN | NEST |
| 3. RAP  | AGES |
| 4. SCAN | RANT |
| 5. THIN | TEST |
| 6. WAR  | KING |

Answers: 1. Outages, 2. Planking, 3. Rapport, 4. Scantest, 5. Thinnest, 6. Warrant.

Below are the names of 14 American cities that you will need to complete the puzzle above. Use the trial-and-error method.

**4-letter words:**

- AMES
- BEND
- ELKO
- LIMA
- ROME
- SWAN
- WACO
- WARD

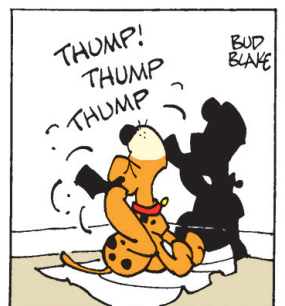
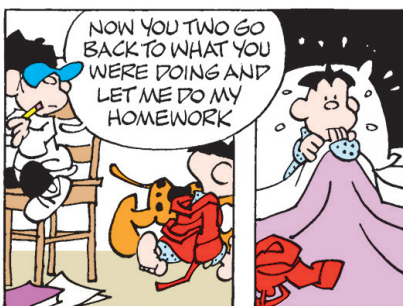
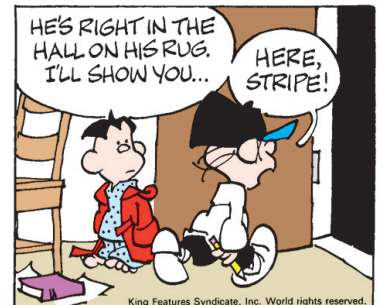
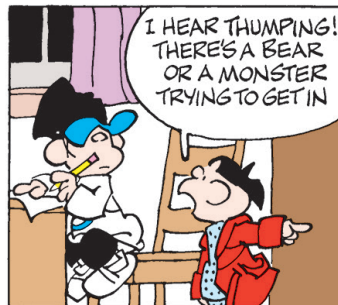
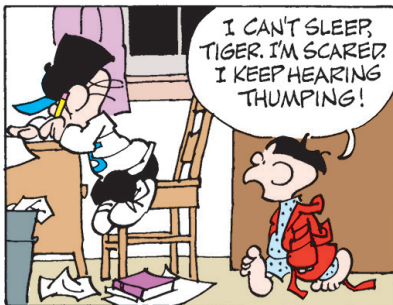
**5-letter words:**

- BLAIR
- CULLY
- NITRO
- OMAHA
- TAMPA
- TYLER

Answers: (Across) 1. Waco, 3. Bend, 5. Rome, 9. Lima, 10. Tampa, 11. Tyler, 12. Swan. (Down) 1. Ward, 2. Cully, 3. Blair, 4. Nitro, 8. Ames, 6. Omaha, 7. Elko.

## TIGER

by **BUD BLAKE**





# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 9 of 69

## King Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Netting
- 5 Personal question
- 8 Grouch
- 12 Liniment target
- 13 Chop
- 14 Firetruck need
- 15 Barbecue fuel
- 17 One side of the Urals
- 18 Glutton
- 19 Prune
- 20 Skill
- 21 Police officer
- 22 Has potential
- 23 Should, with "to"
- 26 Assail persistently
- 30 Entreaty
- 31 "Delish!"
- 32 Small wagon
- 33 Breastbone
- 35 "It's mine!"
- 36 Diving bird
- 37 Two, in Tijuana
- 38 Pamphlet
- 41 Raw rock
- 42 Pair of performers
- 45 Laugh-a-minute
- 46 Entrancing
- 48 Teen's woe
- 49 Ginormous
- 50 Eastern bigwig (Var.)
- 51 Equal

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

- 52 "Help!"
- 10 "Yeah, right"
- 35 No stay-at-home
- 53 Maravich of basketball lore
- 11 Defeat
- 37 Hauls
- 16 Coagulate
- 20 Rotating part
- 38 Snare
- 21 Role
- 39 Kind of pudding
- 22 Oft-tattooed word
- 40 Top-rated
- 23 Chances, for short
- 41 Major U.S. river
- 24 Last (Abbr.)
- 42 FDR's on it
- 25 "Gosh!"
- 43 One
- 26 Vagrant
- 44 Shrek, for instance
- 27 Upper limb
- 46 Letterman's employer
- 28 Aries
- 47 Paper equivalent of a GPS?
- 29 Coloring agent
- 31 Opposite of 31-Across?
- 30 Parks of civil rights fame
- 34 Eccentric

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 10 of 69

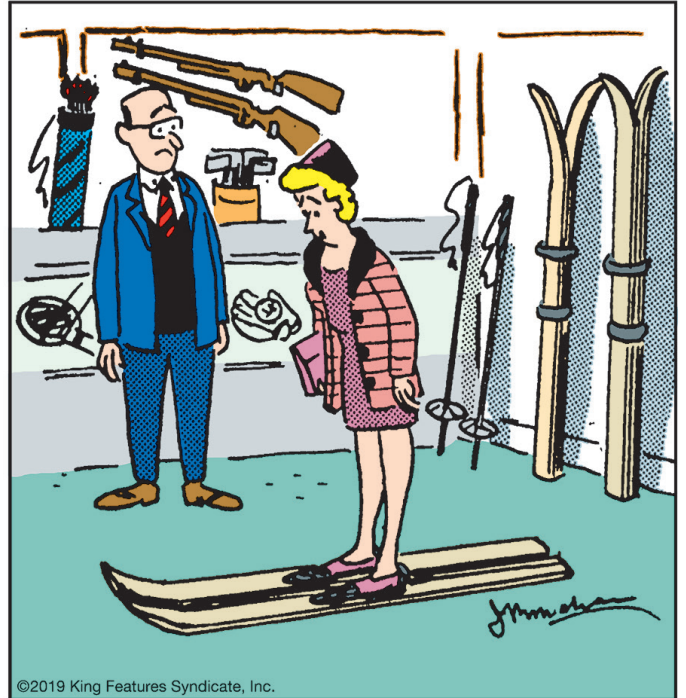
## King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

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

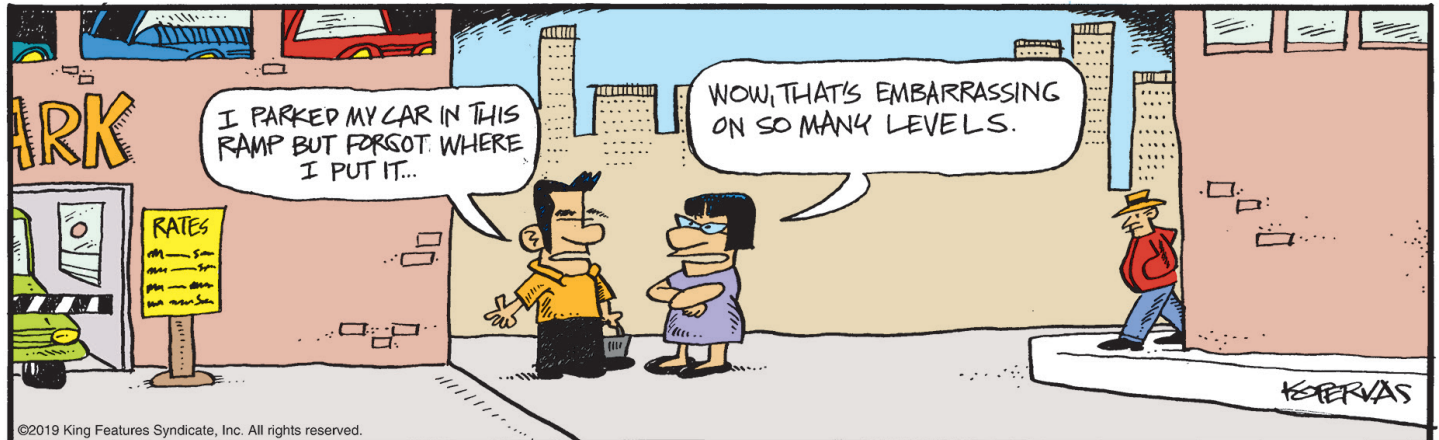
## LAFF - A - DAY



"They make my feet look to big."

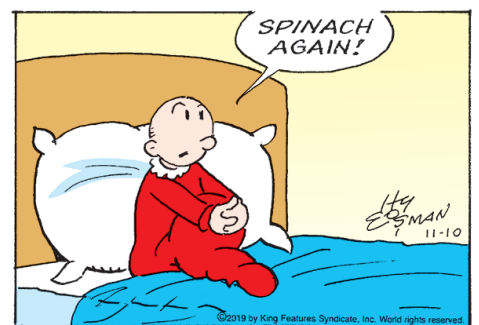
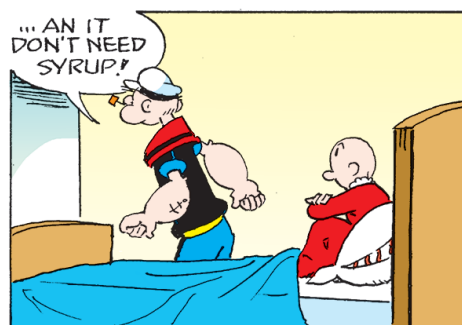
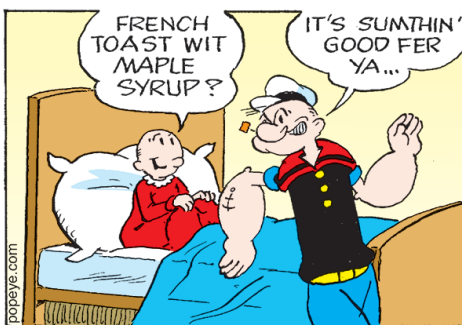
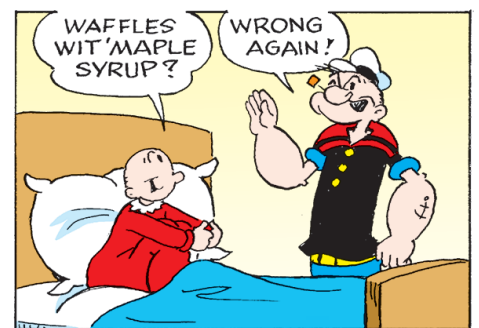
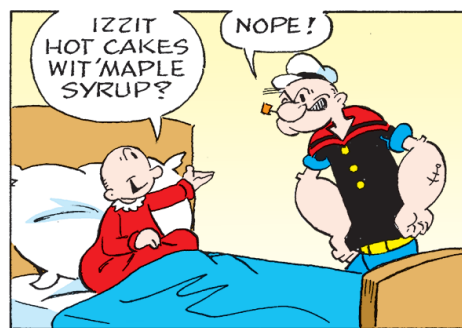
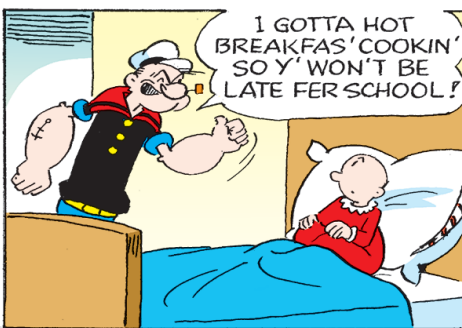
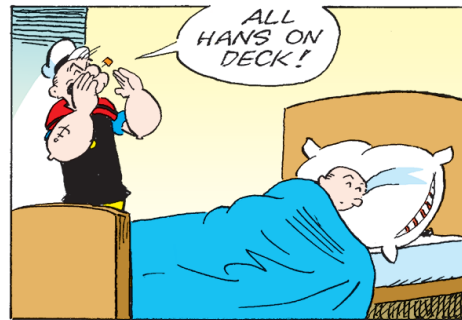
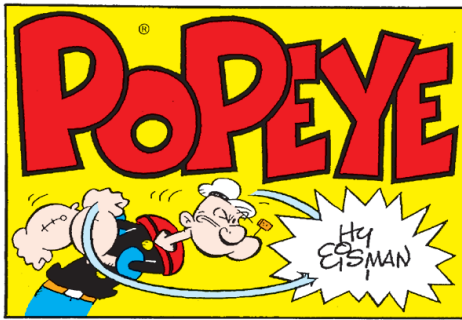
## Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



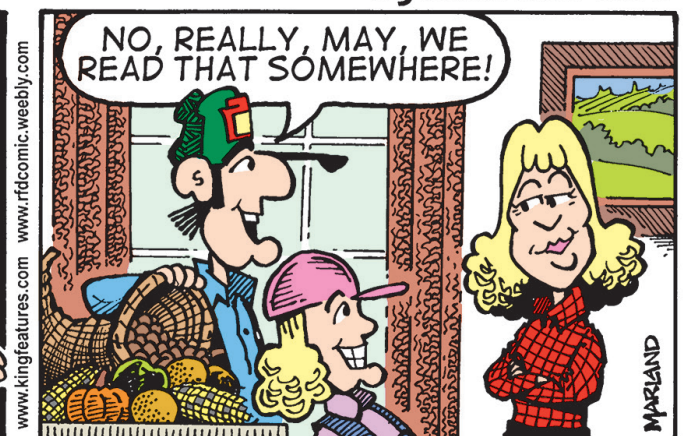
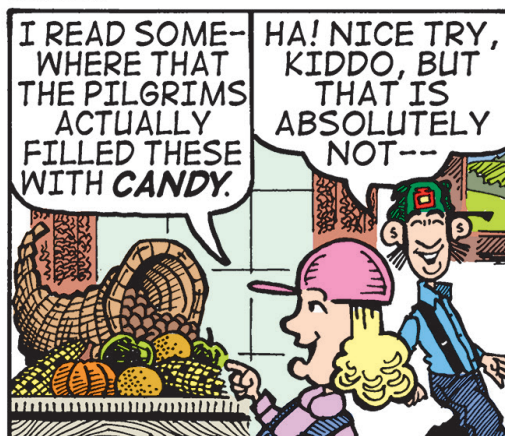
# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 11 of 69



## R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 12 of 69

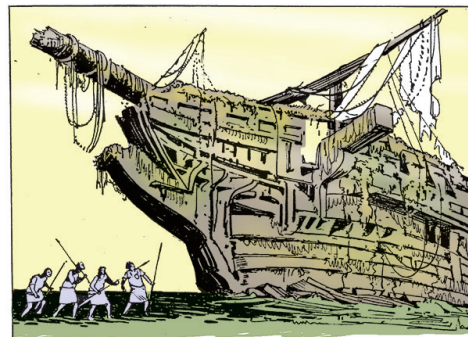
## Our Story:

IN HOPES OF FINDING FRESH WATER, VAL LEADS AN EXPEDITION THROUGH THE TREACHEROUS SEA OF WEED.

HAL FOSTER'S  
**Prince Valiant**  
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ



THE DREARY WASTE IS DOTTED WITH THE HULKS OF UNFORTUNATE VESSELS, AND ON THE HORIZON VAL SPIES A ROCKY ISLAND.



BUT BETWEEN THE WEED-WALKERS AND THAT DISTANT BIT OF SOLID EARTH IS A LARGELY INTACT DERELICT, APPARENTLY UNENCUMBERED BY THE EMBRACE OF ANY MENACING DEVILFISH.



THE FOUR REMOVE THEIR SKIDS AND CLIMB THE WEED THAT HAS OVERGROWN THE HULL. ON DECK, AN EERIE TABLEAU IS REVEALED - THE CREW DIED LONELY, DESPERATE DEATHS.

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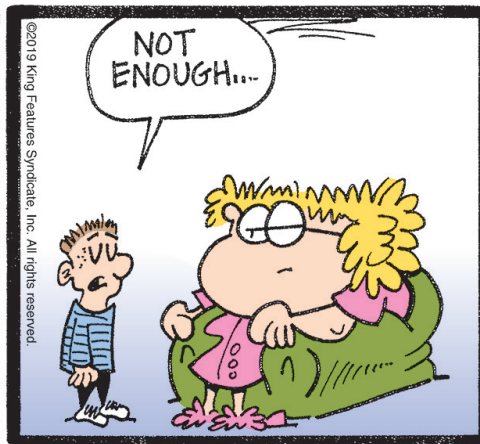
BELOW DECK THEY ARE REWARDED FOR THEIR TRAVAILS AS THEY LOCATE A STORE OF INTACT CASKS. "WE'LL SPLIT ONE OPEN AND, WITH LUCK, THE WATER WILL STILL BE SWEET AND POTABLE," OFFERS GAWAIN ...

... WHILE, IN THE SHADOWS, SOMETHING UNSEEN FLEXES SLIGHTLY - AND BIDES ITS TIME.

NEXT: **Snared**

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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PICKERING

## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### What We Need for Winter

There are three things we seniors need to get through a cold winter: flashlights, insulated mittens and space blankets.

Check your battery and flashlight supply and stock up on what you need. One of the big-box stores has small flashlights, about 4 inches long, for \$1, and they come with three AAA batteries. (At that price it's cheaper to buy new flashlights than the batteries that go in them.) While they won't light up your whole house (20 lumens), they are small enough to carry in a pocket and get you from room to room if the power goes out. Keep a few of them scattered around the house: kitchen counter, dining-room table, nightstand and right inside the front door, just in case. That way you won't have to feel your way across the room to find a light.

Look for insulated mittens instead of gloves. Mittens have the advantage of keeping your fingers together and holding in warmth. Knitted mittens won't keep you warm. Be sure they're not too big and that your wrist is covered.

Consider buying one (or more) of those thermal foil Mylar emergency space blankets. They look like large sheets of aluminum foil, folded down to a few inches. When opened, these blankets are said to hold in 90% of body heat. Right now you can get a pack of two for less than \$8 on Amazon, or check the sporting goods area of your local big box store. (Be sure to check the size.) Keep one in the glove compartment of your car.

In the event you have a hard winter, make calls now to find out where warming stations will be held in your town if there is a long power outage.

Be ready!

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# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 14 of 69



1. Who was the last Cincinnati Reds pitcher before Anthony DeSclafani in 2018 to hit a grand slam?

2. How many times has Oregon State's men's baseball team won the College World Series?

3. Who was the MVP of the first two AFL Championship Games?

4. Princeton's Pete Carril is the winningest coach in Ivy League men's basketball history (514 victories). Which two coaches entered the 2019-20 season tied for second?

5. How many Stanley Cups did the Edmonton Oilers win with Glen Sather as head coach?

6. Which two drivers hold the NASCAR record for most Cup wins at New Hampshire?

7. Who was the last men's tennis player to win the U.S. Open after being down two sets to one?

## Answers

1. Bob Purkey, in 1959.
2. Three times (2006, '07, '18).
3. Billy Cannon of the Houston Oilers (1960 and '61 seasons).
4. Yale's James Jones and Penn's Frank Dunphy, with 310 wins apiece.
5. Four Stanley Cups (1984, '85, '87, '88).
6. Jeff Burton and Kevin Harvick, with four wins each.
7. Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina, in 2009.

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## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





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



## My Time in the Holy Land

During any given week on the U.S. House Floor, I will vote on a variety of legislative topics – from stopping bad robocalls to public lands development – I’ve voted on it.

My past experiences have provided me with much of the knowledge I need to confidently vote on the domestic issues we’re facing here at home. I’ll be the first to admit, however, my time in Pierre did not qualify me as a foreign policy expert. That’s why I felt it was important to travel to the Middle East during my first year in office.

I spent eight days in Israel with Jewish education leaders from the Midwest. I traveled home just hours before Hamas rockets began firing into southern Israel. To understand this complicated part of the world, it’s important to see it first-hand.

It’s difficult to fully understand the violence people from the Middle East face on a daily basis until you see the bomb shelters stationed next to parks and hear the sirens from incoming rocket fire.

Despite all this, Israel is one of the most compelling countries in the world.

My trip was mostly fact finding, but you can’t go to Israel without visiting the Western Wall, a sacred Jewish holy site in the Old City of Jerusalem. On Friday at sundown, thousands from across the world and region gather at the Western Wall to pray, dance, and sing. It’s a once in a lifetime experience. I could go on for pages about my experience at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum on the slopes of the Mount of Remembrance. I walked the road near the West Bank where Jesus described the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Almost directly behind the Western Wall is the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim holy site. Understanding the history of these sites – both so close in proximity – is truly vital to understanding the tension related to the control and management of Jerusalem. During my trip I sat down with U.S. Ambassador Friedman who played a vital role in getting the U.S. Embassy moved to Jerusalem last year – he expressed the complexities of this decision, but ultimately, the United States should respect and recognize Israel’s legitimate capital city.

Security concerns are a part of daily life in Israel. Violence is down, but border fences, security check points, and police presence are evident. I had the opportunity to tour a thwarted tunnel dug by the terrorist organization, Hezbollah. Terrorist groups surround Israel’s borders, so Israeli citizens are required to enlist in the Israeli Defense Forces when they turn eighteen – both men and women. It’s rare to meet an individual who hasn’t been militarily trained by the age of twenty.

I spoke to dozens of military experts and government leaders, but I also made a point to meet with real people of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian backgrounds. Israel faces many threats, the people I spoke with know prospects of peace will take time. My trip solidified one thing, the United States must partner with Israel if we expect peace. Israel has been a strong ally for nearly seventy years, and after visiting the area, it’s evident as to why.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 16 of 69



## SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR **KRISTI NOEM**



### Open Hearts, Open Homes

Family is more about what's in your heart than your blood stream. I've believed that for a long time. Adoption has had an incredible impact on my life. I grew up with a foster brother, and I've been so blessed with several adopted nieces and nephews who've brought sunshine and a new kind of love into our family. Adoption is beautiful. It's a miracle. It's lifechanging.

As governor, I've made it a priority to highlight the impact adoption and foster care can have. The next generation cannot succeed if they don't grow up with the support and love of a family. As we've drawn attention to this need, we've seen the number of foster families increase and more families volunteer to be part of the solution.

And I've heard some incredible stories along the way.

About five years ago, Blake and Rachel Schmieg of Big Stone City were considering adoption. They had three boys biologically and had always wanted a girl. After months of thinking and praying, they decided to try foster parenting. One day, they got a call asking them to take in an 18-year-old girl named Sadie who needed a safe place to live until she finished high school. They said yes.

Sadie quickly became an integral part of their life. Remembering back onto those first few weeks and months in the Schmieg home, Sadie said that she felt like she was part of a family for the first time in her life. She remembers when the younger boys made Christmas ornaments for all their family members at school and made one for her. She remembers having a stocking at Christmas time. She remembers reading to the boys and feeling like she belonged.

As Sadie got closer and closer to finishing high school, they started having conversations about what was next and how everything would work once she went to college. Where would she go for Christmas break? Where would she leave the things that wouldn't fit in a dorm room?

Little did Sadie know that Blake and Rachel had been talking about the possibility of adoption. When they asked her if she wanted to become a permanent part of their family, Sadie started crying. "It was the first time I had ever felt wanted," she said.

Over the next few months, the Schmiegs waded through legal tape and began the process of adoption, only to realize that the adult adoption law in South Dakota didn't fit their situation. They were told there was nothing they could do and that adoption was off the table.

"We hit wall after wall, but we knew this was something God had called us to do, so we looked for doors and windows," said Blake. Working with Representative Fred Deutsch, the Schmieg family drafted a bill to change the law, gave testimony in front of a committee, and followed the bill through the legislative process. In March, they travelled to Pierre when I signed the bill into law. It was an incredible day.

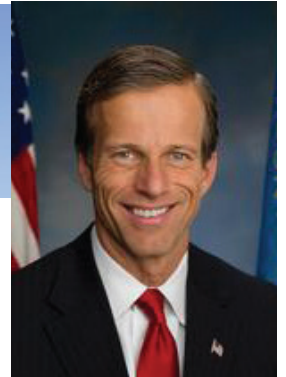
On August 20, Sadie was legally adopted. They got the paperwork that told them what they'd known for a long time – Sadie was theirs and they were hers. Forever.

I love this story. Not only is it a demonstration of how a strong family can change someone's life, but it's also a demonstration of the way your story can shape policy. Never hesitate to use your experiences to make a difference – it can truly change the world.

During this Adoption Month, I want to reflect on the ways our state is working to create strong families – especially when they come through foster care or adoption. If you have an adoption story, would you consider sharing it on social media using the hashtag #SDAdoptionMonth? Your journey could help inspire others to open their hearts and homes to children in need.



**John Thune**  
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



## The Work Goes On

When I served as chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, we had a four-year track record of bipartisanship and a reputation for getting things done. I'm proud of what we accomplished, including helping to lay the groundwork for the 5G mobile broadband revolution, enhancing Ellsworth Air Force Base's strategic value, combatting human trafficking, improving weather forecasting, and working toward ending those illegal and abusive robocalls we all hate receiving.

While I now serve as chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet, I'm still the senior Republican member on the full committee, and I'm glad our members have not only maintained the panel's productive workload under the new chairman, but we have also continued to make progress on many of the issues we started working on years ago.

For example, at our most recent committee markup, which is a formal committee process to consider legislation and presidential appointments, we sent more than two dozen bills and nominees to the Senate floor. Many of the bills we recently considered were bipartisan, and all of them were approved by voice vote, which means there was strong enough support for each of the measures to move without a single roll call vote – something that only happens when there's little or no disagreement among senators.

Three of the bills heading to the full Senate have my name attached to them, including my Learning Excellence and Good Examples from New Developers (LEGEND) Act, which I introduced in October with Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii). This legislation essentially recognizes that there are a lot of smart and talented people who work at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and we should make their innovative weather models available to other smart and talented people who don't work for the government so we can make NOAA's good ideas even better.

Accurate weather forecasting is important for a lot of reasons, from safety to knowing when to put seeds in the ground. We should make these tools as efficient as possible, which is why I believe in my bill's collaborative approach that builds off my previous work toward improving weather forecasting in South Dakota and throughout the United States.

The Reliable Emergency Alert Distribution Improvement Act, which, among other things, would help ensure Americans are receiving important emergency alerts on mobile phones and other devices, and the Harvesting American Cybersecurity Knowledge through Education Act, which would build on the important work being done by South Dakota universities to strengthen America's cybersecurity workforce, were also overwhelmingly approved. I'm proud to cosponsor these bipartisan bills, and I look forward to sending them – and the LEGEND Act – to the president without delay.

With today's 24-hour news cycle, a lot of the good work being done in Senate committees – and by the Senate as a whole – is unlikely to make the top of the evening news or the front page of the daily newspaper. It can be frustrating at times, especially when we've got good things to show for our work, but count me as one who is undeterred. The work goes on, and I'm committed to seeing it through, as always.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 18 of 69



## South Dakota Families Honored During National Adoption Month

The month of November is recognized as National Adoption Month, a time to raise awareness of children in need of a permanent, loving home. Opening one's home to a child in need of a loving family and secure environment is one of the greatest gifts anyone can give. And as many adoptive families have told me, they too feel blessed to have their kids. The countless South Dakota families who have chosen adoption continue to be an inspiration to us all.

Take the O'Connor family from Rapid City for example. Earlier this year, I nominated Sean and Caresa O'Connor for the Angels in Adoption award presented by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute. This award shines a light on loving families who have welcomed children in need of a permanent home. Sean and Caresa adopted two children, RJ and Winnie. They and their three other children, Libby, Maggie and Finn, have made a home for these two new members of the family. It was an honor to nominate the O'Connors for the Angels in Adoption award this year.

If you're a regular reader of our weekly columns, you may remember that we featured the O'Connor family in an August column after I nominated them for the award. Caresa and Sean first looked into adoption when their daughter Libby, who was then in high school, suggested to her mom that there was another child out there who was meant to be in their family. After contacting an adoption attorney, the O'Connors were notified three weeks later that they'd be able to adopt their daughter Winnie. A short time later, they decided to adopt RJ, so Winnie could have a sibling closer to her age. As Caresa told us at the time, God matches you with the child who is meant to join your family.

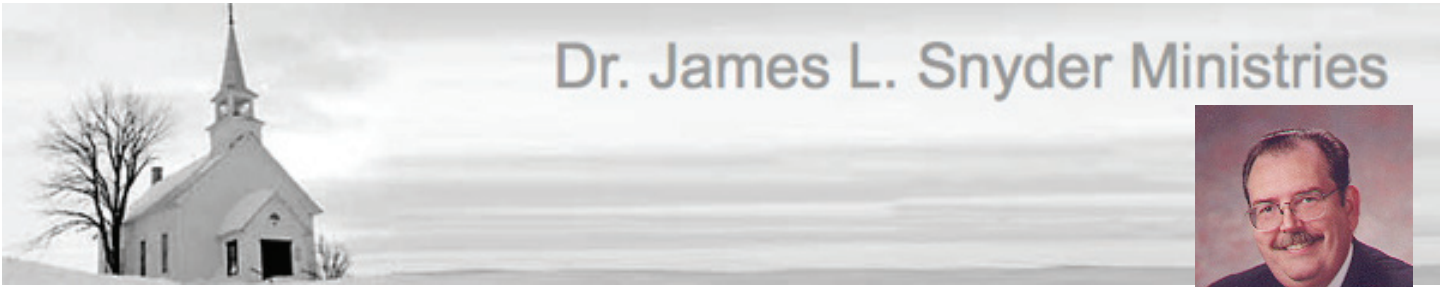
The entire O'Connor family recently traveled to Washington, D.C., to be recognized for receiving the Angels in Adoption award. While I was with Jean during her most recent round of cancer treatment, staff met with the O'Connors in my Washington office to hear their story firsthand and celebrate their unwavering bond. They were also joined by Mike and Kim Adams, and their children Malia, Mason, Josiah, Amanuel, Eva, Selena and Shakira, who were nominated for the award by Sen. John Thune.

More than 100,000 children and teens are awaiting adoption in the United States. Having the stability of a permanent family can make a big impact on the lives of young people. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, teens who age out of foster care without permanent family connections are at a higher risk for homelessness and human trafficking. All children deserve a family, and I encourage anyone considering adoption to talk to others who have gone through the adoption process. If you'd like to speak with someone about adoption, Bethany Christian Services has offices in Rapid City and Sioux Falls. Additionally, the Administration for Children and Families can provide some resources for adoptive and foster parents. Contact information can be found on their website, [www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov).

I'm inspired by all those who choose to create their families or add to their families through adoption. This National Adoption Month, I thank adoptive parents and foster parents for providing a safe, welcoming place for kids to grow up.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 19 of 69



## What's in a name, anyway?

I cannot express how ecstatic I was when someone gave me a coupon for a free donut. Normally, I am not overly excited about "free."

All I had to do was fill out a little survey online and they would send me a code that would guarantee me a free donut. In my "daily diary diet," I have a whole section devoted to the subject that when a forbidden food is free it cancels out all calories.

When I first told the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, she looked at me rather strangely and said, "Who said that?"

I know we are both getting old but we are not that old!

I got close to her, waved my hand so she could see me and said, "It's me. I just said it. Can you hear me now?"

"That is not funny. You know exactly what I meant."

My grin drained from my face and I said to her, "Well, I said it."

"Did," she said inquisitively, "anybody ever say that before you said it?"

My wife has many talents, skills and gifts. It would be difficult for me to say which is her best gift but at the moment, her greatest skill is backing me into a corner. And in a corner, I was thus backed.

I then had to explain to her, in detail, how this was an observation I worked through with much research. This is an original with me and I am quite proud to be the author.

All she said was, "Huh, that is exactly what I thought."

I will go to my grave believing when a donut is free it means it is free of calories. Call it what you will but free by any other name is still free in my personal dictionary.

Getting back to my free donut. I was anxious to get to the donut shop, cash in the coupon and enjoy a donut. I do not know when the best time to eat a donut is, so I just started at my convenience.

I got at the donut shop and walked in and the smell was overpowering. Nothing like the smell of donuts baking in the oven with a hint of coffee brewing in the background. I just stood there for a few seconds absorbing the luxury of this marvelous atmosphere. It is not often I can enjoy such luxuries, especially if my wife knows where I am.

When I became adjusted to the ambiance, I walked up to the counter and presented my coupon for a free donut. It was at that moment I saw them.

I know I am not the most observant person at the circus. Many things get by me without noticing them. Sometimes I am just in deep thought and not aware of my surroundings. I can relate to Walter Mitty in many ways.

There they were, freshly baked Apple Fritters. I was stunned. It just never crossed my mind that a donut shop would have this kind of delicious tidbit. But there they were. Freshly baked and staring at me with alluring eyes of desire.

I do not know how much better a day can get than this. When I got up this morning, I did not realize

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 20 of 69

this would be a wonderful day. There they were staring at me and I stared back and immediately there was a connection.

Standing in line I could hardly wait for my turn to order. I presented my coupon for a free donut and the young woman behind the counter said, "Which donut can I get for you, sir?"

I savored the moment, licked my drying lips and said, "I'll have an Apple Fritter." With that said, I sighed a deep sigh of true contentment.

"I'm sorry, sir," the young woman said.

"There is no need to be sorry, young lady," I said as cheerfully as I possibly could.

"No, sir, I'm sorry but an Apple Fritter is not a donut."

I can take a joke as well as anybody else. In fact, I have put forth my share of jokes. However, an Apple Fritter is no joking matter.

"Excuse me," I said almost breathlessly.

"An Apple Fritter is not a donut, so what donut would you like me to get for you?"

The thought began unfolding in my mind at this point that she was not joking. She sincerely believed an Apple Fritter was not a donut. I know an Apple Fritter is among the Cadillac of donuts but in my mind, it is still a donut.

I did not have much opportunity to set this young woman straight with one of the great fundamentals of life. I had to take one of her "free" donuts along with my coffee, go to a corner and think about these things. What good is "free" if it is not really what you want?

Sometimes people use the word "free" as a device to get you to a place where they can sell you something else.

The Bible is the only place I will accept a "free" offer. One particular verse sets this forth quite nicely. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32 KJV).

This is often used out of context. The truth that makes us free indeed is none other than the truth about Jesus Christ. He is the only One capable of delivering something absolutely free.



## Native American students left behind by S.D. education system

By: Nick Lowrey

### EDITOR'S NOTE

This is the first of two stories in Part 1 of a two-week special report in which South Dakota News Watch will examine the historical and current educational achievement gap between Native American and white students in South Dakota.

This week: An examination of the problem and its causes, and a glimpse inside a successful community program helping Native students achieve.

Next week: A look at reforms that could vastly improve Native education in South Dakota, and an examination of a proposal for Native-focused charter schools in S.D.

The South Dakota constitution demands that state government provide equal opportunity to education for all of its citizens, yet for decades Native Ameri-

cans – who make up 9% of the population – have been left behind by a system that fails to meet their needs and has resulted in generations of Natives suffering the consequences of inadequate educational achievement.

The systematic failure to properly educate Native American students is seen as a major source of devastating later-in-life consequences that have plagued Native people and communities for decades: generational poverty, high unemployment, substance abuse, high incarceration rates and reduced life expectancy.

The latest results from both state and national standardized testing provides a window into just how dire the situation has become, as Native students continue to perform far worse than white students in South Dakota across almost all measures of academic achievement.

During the 2018-19 school year, less than one in four Native American students in grades three to eight and grade 11 was rated as proficient in reading and writing on state standardized tests. Roughly one in seven Native American students was proficient in math, and just one in eight was proficient in science. A separate test, the 2019 National Assessment of Educational progress, found that South Dakota's Native American fourth and eighth graders were between 25 and 30 points behind their white peers in math and reading.

On-time graduation rates for Native American students also are lower than for every other racial group in the state at just 54%, compared with the rate of 85% for students of all backgrounds, according to the state report card. Some Native-dominated school systems in South Dakota suffer more than others, such as in McLaughlin, on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, where too few of the system's roughly 440 students scored proficient in any subject for statistics to be reported.

The reasons for the poor performance are varied and complex, but many educators and experts interviewed as part of a two-month reporting effort by South Dakota News Watch to examine Native education in the state agree that the problems are rooted in circumstances far outside a student's control.



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 22 of 69

"I believe wholeheartedly that we are extremely intelligent, innovative people, but this system is not designed in a way that nurtures that," said Sara Pierce, director of education equity at the West River nonprofit advocacy group NDN Collective.

Pierce, a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe who has worked in school systems in Omaha, Neb., and Rapid City, said the state's schools have struggled to teach Native students in a way that is relevant and responsive to the culture in which they grew up. There also are relatively few Native American teachers in public school districts, which reduces emotional and educational connections and relationships, she said.

The number of different school systems serving Native American students can also be a problem, said Juliana White Bull-Taken Alive, director of the state Office of Indian Education.

Each system has its own set of rules, philosophies and goals, she said. The lack of consistency hurts Native students, who tend to be more mobile than their peers and often hop between school systems one or more times before they graduate. Students



**Sara Pierce, director of education equity at NDN Collective**

in the Oglala Lakota County School District, for example, endure a built-in disruption to their educational path when they reach high school because there has not been a traditional high school in Pine Ridge for decades. Students must move to a virtual school online or transfer to a federal Bureau of Indian Affairs or private school on or near the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in order to stay on track to graduate.

"Over the years, as an administrator working for the tribal departments and now for the state, I've seen that the biggest challenge in terms of our students, ultimately, is building consensus among our schools in the state," White Bull-Taken Alive said.

Native students also have the long, traumatic history of their peoples treatment at the hands of the federal government to contend with, both Pierce and White Bull-Taken Alive said.

They are hampered as well by the most recognizable consequence of that traumatic history – a deep cycle of poverty that persists in tribal communities to this day. In South Dakota, roughly 60% of Native American children were considered to live in poverty in 2018, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's annual Kids Count report. Only 8% of South Dakota white children were living in poverty that year, the report said.

Numerous studies show that people of any race who come from a low-income background are more likely to struggle in school. Impoverished students tend to have smaller vocabularies and are less likely to attend school regularly and graduate high school on time.

Poverty also tends to be self-replicating. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, 82% of children whose parents didn't have a high school diploma were living in low-income families. Thus, they were less likely to graduate high school themselves. Data also show a strong link between low educational attainment and high rates of substance abuse and incarceration, both of which make finding a way out of poverty more difficult.

Most schools in South Dakota do not have many, if any, Native American teachers, which reduces the ability of Native students to make strong connections with adults in schools. Research has shown that having even one minority teacher in a school can boost learning for all students in that minority group.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 23 of 69

School districts where Native Americans make up the majority of the student body also tend to be in remote, rural areas, said Julie Garreau, director of the Cheyenne River Youth Project and a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. The youth project is a nonprofit that provides a variety of after-school programs and services to children in Eagle Butte on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in north-central South Dakota.

Some rural districts do not have access to the same educational programs or job-training opportunities found in more urban districts such as Sioux Falls and Rapid City or even Aberdeen and Pierre. Transportation costs and time, teacher hiring and retention challenges, and restricted funding can also hamper rural districts where Natives commonly attend.

Furthermore, a lack of post-graduation options in small communities where Native populations reside can indirectly hold students back. If students who are trying to figure out what they want to do after finishing high school – whether it's finding a job, going to tech school or college or joining the military – don't see realistic opportunities ahead, they can be prone to giving up on school and perhaps turning to substances for solace, Garreau said.

"Kids are growing, they have a need to learn, they have a need to be active and to do things, and if that's not there, I think any child will find something else to do," Garreau said. "And sometimes that's a negative activity."

South Dakota's Native American population is not unique in facing challenges to getting a good education. Indigenous people across the country are struggling to close school-success gaps. In North Dakota, the graduation rate for Native American students was 72%, 20 points lower than that state's white students. In Montana, Native American fourth and eighth graders were 20 to 30 points behind their white peers on the 2019 national assessment tests. The Native student populations in Montana and North Dakota make up roughly the same percentage of the overall student population as in South Dakota.

In South Dakota, there is new hope on the horizon. More school districts across the state have begun to implement pieces of the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings, a set of educational standards that seek to encourage schools to incorporate Lakota language, culture and history into everyday lessons. Lakota-language classes have been popping up in schools around the state, as well. In majority-Native districts such as Oglala Lakota County, teachers have started Lakota Immersion classrooms, which teach all their lessons in the Lakota language.

More than anything, schools are reaching out to Native communities, often for the first time, to find out what they want and need from schools, White Bull-Taken Alive said.

"For so many years, everyone came in and told us how we were going to educate our kids," she said. "It's only now that Native American people have begun to stand up and say, 'Hey, we want to teach our own kids.'"

Last month, Department of Education Secretary Ben Jones announced the formation of a partnership with education-consulting firm McREL International to design and implement programs to improve Native American educational outcomes in the state. Those efforts, he said, could include a new look at cultur-



**Julie Garreau, founder and director of the Cheyenne River Youth Project, at left, pours over a local newspaper with CRYP Deputy Director Meghan Tompkins. Garreau founded CRYP in 1988 to provide an after school-program education and job-skills program for children in Eagle Butte, a town on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation.** Photo: Nick

Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

ally relevant curricula and efforts to improve Native American teacher recruitment.

A push is also underway by the NDN Collective and other Native groups to pass legislation in 2020 to allow for development of the state's first public charter schools that would provide educators the flexibility to innovate to better reach and teach Native students.

The complexity and magnitude of the challenge facing South Dakota's Native American students certainly has created hurdles, but also provides a tremendous opportunity, Pierce said.

"In South Dakota we are ground zero for indigenous education mobility," she said.

Because there is so much room to grow, even incremental improvements to graduation rates, employment rates and college attendance could make a big impact on Native communities, both financially and socially, Pierce said. After all, economic fortunes have been shown to improve as educational attainment increases, she said.

"There are huge financial implications to our communities as a result of this. That [financial impact] goes for reservations and urban areas in our state," Pierce said.



**Alexander "Zane" Zephier, a member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe, struggled early on in his education in the public schools in Wagner but graduated with the help of an influential teacher and went on to get a degree from the University of South Dakota and now works to help other disadvantaged students succeed.**

Photo: Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

## Enduring generations of trauma

As a high school freshman in Wagner about a decade ago, on the Yankton Indian Reservation in southeastern South Dakota, Alexander "Zane" Zephier found going to school nearly impossible.

He lived with his grandmother and younger brother and sister. Zephier's mother, suffering from addiction and substance-abuse disorders, had left the family. His father was in prison. Zephier, a member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe, had bounced between schools in the towns of Lake Andes and Marty before going to Wagner in time to start sixth grade.

When Zephier started high school, skipping class to stay home and play video games was easier than dealing with school on top of the other hardships in his life. Good grades didn't seem to matter too much in the grand scheme of things. Zephier said he had no idea where he was going after high school.

Trying to process the reality of his mother's departure and his father's absence wasn't easy. He found it difficult to connect with other students and instead withdrew into himself. Eventually, Zephier did find some friends that came from similar circumstances and started drinking with them. The booze was in his community, unfortunately, a readily available coping mechanism, Zephier said.

By the time his grandmother started getting phone calls from the school threatening charges of truancy, Zephier said, he'd gotten so far behind that going back to class seemed impossible.

"It was just kind of a vicious cycle," Zephier said.

Zephier's struggles are common in tribal communities. Native American students have the lowest attendance rate of any racial group in South Dakota at 72%, according to the DOE report card. Native children also have the highest rate of chronic absenteeism of any racial group in the state at 37%.

While many factors play into whether any child, indigenous or not, will show up at school every day, Native communities have the added burden of a long history of historical, cultural and societal trauma. Zephier's story is one example of the impact such historical trauma can have on Native students.



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 25 of 69

No other group of Americans has as troubled a past with government-funded education than the country's indigenous population. In 1819 Congress passed the Civilization Fund Act, which appropriated \$10,000 (about \$202,000 in today's dollars) to teach Native Americans "the habits and arts of civilization." The money was mostly allocated to religious groups to fund mission schools on the country's frontier.

By the 1870s, most of the country's indigenous population had been conquered and forced onto remote reservations. That decade also saw the beginning of the federal government's notorious Indian boarding-school program. Native American children were forced to attend federally funded boarding schools that systematically stripped them of their cultural identity through a combination of harsh discipline and forced religion.

Generations of Native youths as young as six were required, by law, to attend schools where their hair was cut, their clothes were replaced by military-style uniforms and they were denied the right to speak their own languages. School instructors routinely disciplined students physically and mentally for even minor infractions. Often, these schools were hundreds or thousands of miles away from their families.

"In theory it was supposed to be this great tool for assimilation, and we would all coexist together. But what it really did was, it compromised indigenous culture in a way that we're still repairing," said Pierce.

The stated goal behind forced Indian education was, literally, to quash Native American culture under the notion that doing so would eventually lead Native Americans to assimilate into American society. Education at Indian boarding schools was usually trade-focused for boys and focused on domestic chores and skills for girls. Reading, writing and math were taught, too, but the idea was to give Native children practical skills that could lead to jobs in cities or in agriculture.

Racism often prevented former boarding-school students from finding work in American cities, Pierce said. Often, those former boarding-school students were driven back to the reservations where they came from and where opportunities were few.

"There weren't industries on the reservation conducive to those trades, and so what happened then is, they go back to the reservations, and they would feel super isolated because they didn't have deep understandings of their culture, language and spirituality," Pierce said.

In the end, the federal system of boarding schools failed to erase Native culture or force Native Americans to assimilate. What the boarding schools did instead was create several generations of traumatized youths with tenuous connections to their culture, history and families. Many turned to alcohol as a way to self-medicate for serious mental health problems, Pierce said.

"If you're using alcohol to adapt and address some deep mental health issues, and then you start having a family, getting married, having children, when your children misbehave or you and your spouse disagree, you address it in ways that you learned ... the boarding-school movement really yielded chemical dependency, extreme mental health issues, abuse both physically and sexually. There's just a long list of issues," Pierce said.

Until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, Native Americans hadn't been granted automatic citizenship at birth (though some Natives were able to become citizens.) The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitu-



**This image from the National Archives shows Sioux Indian boys as they were dressed upon arrival at Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania in 1879; many Indian boarding schools focused on education but also on depriving Native Americans of their language and culture.**

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 26 of 69

tion, which grants nearly anyone born within the country's borders citizenship, had been interpreted by Congress and the courts to exclude indigenous people. Native Americans were instead considered almost as wards of the state.

Those who had been granted citizenship and were born before 1924 had to give up their tribal affiliations, join the military and accept land grants carved out of reservation lands, and start paying taxes on the land. That system led to tribes' losing hundreds of thousands of acres from reservations to private ownership. Often the lands were sold off to non-Native buyers.

Full citizenship wasn't granted to all Native Americans until 1948. By the 1950s, nationally, about half of all Native American children were being educated in locally controlled public schools. But Native Americans still had little say in what and how their children were taught in those schools. The same was true of the federally managed BIA schools.

Beginning in the late 1960s, tribal governments started taking on a larger role in the education of their children. They began taking over boarding schools and creating new partnerships with local school districts using federal grants authorized by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, as well as the Tribally Controlled Grant Schools Act of 1988.

Forced placement in boarding schools wasn't ended until 1978, when Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Zephier, for his part, said he was able to graduate high school in 2013 and go to college thanks to the teachers and students in the Wagner High School Jobs for America's Graduates program. He was automatically enrolled in the program as a freshman because the school deemed him to be at high risk of dropping out due to his family history. Zephier was joined by 12 other students, all of whom had similar backgrounds, in his JAG class.

With help from lead JAG teacher Renee Van Der Werff, who students saw as a mother figure, the class became a second family, Zephier said. His classmates became an essential support system and kept him connected to school even as he struggled with drinking. Ven Der Werff, meanwhile was able to provide individual help to Zephier and his fellow JAG students with school work and in completing applications for summer programs and even college.

Zephier couldn't pinpoint exactly when he committed to breaking out of the cycle of poverty and substance abuse that had plagued his parents but he credits the stability he found in the JAG program for giving him the emotional space to think about his future and his siblings' future.

"I constantly worried about the world they would grow up in when I was in high school. Those thoughts used to keep me awake at night and give me nightmares. I always thought to myself, 'If I can't make it out of here, how can I expect them to?'" Zephier said. "I also wanted to build a life that when I had my own family, my children would never have to know what it's like to grow up without parents or any of the things I had to witness and endure in my upbringing."

Zephier, now 24, graduated from the University of South Dakota in 2017 after having served in student government. Zephier now works as a field counselor for USD's Upward Bound program, which helps low-income high school students graduate and explore college opportunities.

His brother and sister, though, have both struggled. Zephier said his sister dropped out of high school and his brother has been sent to a juvenile-detention facility. He hasn't been able to speak with his brother or sister for a while, but he worries about them constantly and hopes they'll be able to make a good life for themselves. Unfortunately, his siblings' experience is common on reservations, Zephier said, and it's not something that will be easy or quick to change.

"I don't know how you fix generations of trauma," Zephier said.

**"I constantly worried about the world they would grow up in when I was in high school. Those thoughts used to keep me awake at night and give me nightmares. I always thought to myself, 'If I can't make it out of here, how can I expect them to?'"**  
**-- Alexander "Zane" Zephier, sharing his concerns that his younger brother and sister, who also grew up in a broken home, were not getting a good education or being prepared for life ahead**

## Culture an essential piece of education

States and the nation as a whole have done little to make restitution or even acknowledge how the federal government treated Native Americans from the nation's founding through much of the 20th century through policies that amounted to genocide, Pierce said. Unless and until that acknowledgement is made, she said, healing the bitterness many Native Americans feel toward the rest of American society will be next to impossible. Without that acknowledgement and healing, getting Native children to engage with the education system will continue to be problematic, Pierce said.

"We've never really recognized collectively, the genocide of indigenous peoples here," Pierce said. "There's a lot of historical trauma in that."

One step in the right direction, said Pierce, would be to create school environments where Native American students can be unapologetically indigenous. In other words, she said, the state's schools need to do a better job of creating an environment where Native American students can celebrate and be proud of who they are.

Pierce, who became a Bush Foundation Fellow in spring 2019, is focusing her work on the concept of "cultural safety." The term refers to how comfortable people feel expressing their cultural heritage and identity in public places. South Dakota has a long way to go when it comes to creating more culturally safe school environments, Pierce said.

A recent, widely reported example of a lack of cultural safety in South Dakota occurred in May 2019 at Brookings High School. The school principal confiscated an eagle feather, which has tremendous significance in Lakota culture as a symbol of accomplishment, that was attached to a Native American student's cap right before the school's graduation ceremony. The confiscation was illegal under a state law passed in 2018. Still, the principal insisted that the student give up the feather.

The student was eventually able to walk across the stage and receive his diploma while wearing the eagle feather he'd earned by graduating from high school – but only after the feather had been given to his mother, who found him and reattached the feather to his cap. Later, the Brookings School District formally apologized to the student.

Students, no matter what their race or religion, need to be able to be who they are without having to explain themselves at every turn, Pierce said. The state is getting better in that arena, she said, if only slowly.

White Bull-Taken Alive, head of the state Office of Indian Education, said each school's culture also plays a big role in how successful children of any background can be. Unfortunately, she said, there is often a culture of low expectations when it comes to Native American students.

"Actually hearing people say that Native kids can't learn or this work is too hard, that's devastating. Can you just imagine the trauma or the devastation to understand that, here is your trusted adult saying that, you know, Native kids can't learn this," White Bull-Taken Alive said.

Native American students also tend to be disciplined in South Dakota schools at much higher rates than their peers.



**LaRayne Woster, a Lakota Language instructor at St. Joseph's Indian School in Chamberlain, teaches eighth-grade students Zaylee Zephier and Javin Primeaux, both from Wagner, how to say "hello" and "good-bye" in Lakota. South Dakota education officials hope that increased teaching of Indian culture and language will heighten academic achievement by Native American students.**

Photo: Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

# Broton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 28 of 69

According to the most recent data reported by the federal Civil Rights Data Collection system within the Department of Education, despite Native Americans' being roughly 10% of South Dakota's student population, they made up more than 30% of both in-school and out-of-school suspensions as well as roughly 54% of expulsions during the 2015-16 school year, the latest year for which data is available.

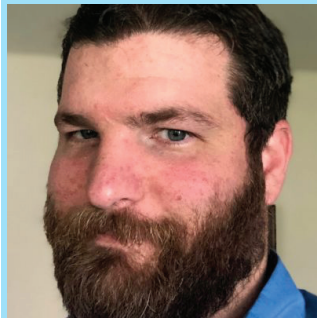
Of the 221 violent incidents reported in the state's schools, 50 involved Native Americans. A total of 127 violent incidents involved white students. There were 123 Native American students arrested in South Dakota public schools, accounting for roughly 45% of the 270 arrests reported in the state's schools. A total of 109 white students were arrested in schools.

"The discipline data is indicative of the need for more culturally proficient strategies," Pierce said.

Ultimately, small improvements may help, but many believe that sweeping changes will be needed to the South Dakota public education system before outcomes improve significantly for Native students, Pierce said.

Jones, a former college dean who became state education secretary in January 2019, said he was not sure why it has taken so long to embrace Native American perspectives and input on education. Jones said he was optimistic that with strong input from Native leaders, educators and families, South Dakota can find a way to improve education outcomes for Native American students.

"For many years Native American (education) improvement has been an objective, and there's been various things tried ... it brings to mind a Winston Churchill quote: "You can always rely on the United States to do the right thing after they have tried everything else," Jones said. "Regarding Native American education, we've tried a wide variety of things, and now we're going to try and listen to them and see how they'd like to approach it."



## ABOUT

### NICK LOWREY

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 29 of 69

## Wolves Men Make it an East West Challenge Clean Sweep with Overtime Victory over Black Hills

Spearfish, S.D. – The No. 15 Northern State University men's basketball team recorded their first overtime victory of the young season on Saturday, defeating host Black Hills State. The Wolves return to Aberdeen as the only team to go 2-0 from the Second Annual East West Challenge.

### THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 83, BHSU 81 (OT)

Records: NSU 2-2, BHSU 1-3

Attendance: 500

### HOW IT HAPPENED

- The Wolves trailed 36-31, but clawed away in the second half out-scoring the Yellow Jackets 38-33
- Black Hills held a 69-65 lead with 1:17 left in regulation and Gabe King quickly cut it down to 2-point deficit with two made free throws
- As the clock clicked down in regulation, Mason Stark headed to the line and drained both free throw attempts with 13 seconds remaining and ultimately forced the overtime period
- The two team's traded leads to open the overtime frame, but made free throws were the name of the game for the Wolves as they hit six straight to seal the victory
- Northern shot 46.2% from the floor, 20.0% from beyond the arc, and 83.3% from the foul line in the win
- They tallied a game high 44 points in the paint, 28 points off the bench, 16 points off turnovers, and 11 second chance points
- As a team, NSU recorded 35 rebounds, ten assists, four steals, three made 3-pointers, and two blocks
- Five Wolves finished the evening in double figures, while three shot 50.0% or better from the floor

### NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

- Mason Stark: 21 points (season high), 62.5 FG%, 10-of-10 from the foul line
- Parker Fox: 18 points, 10 rebounds, 53.3 FG%, 2 assists, 2 steals
- Jordan Belka: 11 points (season high), 83.3 FG%, 4 rebounds
- Andrew Kallman: 10 points (season high), 4 rebounds (career high), 5 assists (career high)
- Gabe King: 10 points, 4 rebounds, 2 steals

### UP NEXT

Northern will face off against Black Hills State tomorrow evening in Spearfish. Tip-off is set for 8:30 p.m. (CT) in the final game of the 2019 East-West Challenge.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 30 of 69



*It's a police and  
fire truck  
send-off!*

*Show your support by  
lining Main Street  
(even in your pajamas!)  
for the great send-off for the  
Lady Tiger Volleyball Team  
**Wed., Nov. 20th  
7:10 am***

**Starting at the south end of Main Street  
and going north to US12**



*Rapid City, Here Comes Groton Area!*

*Coming Up on [GDILIVE.COM](http://GDILIVE.COM)*

**Snow Queen  
Contest**

**7 p.m., Nov. 17, 2019**

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 31 of 69

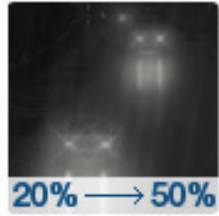
Today



Mostly Cloudy

High: 38 °F

Tonight



20% → 50%  
Slight Chance  
Rain then  
Chance Rain

Low: 34 °F

Monday



20%  
Slight Chance  
Rain then  
Partly Sunny

High: 49 °F

Monday  
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 31 °F

Tuesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 47 °F


**A**bove Average Temperatures  
light rain over central SD tonight,  
expanding to eastern SD & W MN overnight

**Today**  
38 to 52°

**Tonight**  
30s

Light Rain over central SD tonight, expanding to E SD & W MN overnight. Rain may mix with Sleet or Freezing Rain along and E of the Sisseton Hills overnight.

*A few icy spots possible*

 National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

[www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr)

graphic created  
11/17/2019 5:39 AM

Published on: 11/17/2019 at 12:43AM

Expect a mostly cloudy sky, with wet weather returning tonight. Light rain over central South Dakota tonight should expand to eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota overnight. Rain may mix with sleet or freezing rain along and east of the Sisseton Hills, where light icing of around a couple hundredths of an inch or less may be possible. Above average temperatures will linger into Tuesday.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 32 of 69

## Today in Weather History

November 17, 1971: Snow fell off and on from the 16th through the 18th from west central Minnesota to north central Minnesota. A series of weak low-pressure waves moving northeast generally along a Sioux City to Rochester line caused heavy snow of more than 4 inches in a narrow band from Morris to Alexandria; then the snow band widened to 100 miles from Park Rapids northeast into Canada. Milbank, South Dakota received 3 inches of snow, while Wheaton, Minnesota went from no snow on the 15th to reporting eight inches on the morning of the 17th.

November 17, 1986: Three to six inches of snow fell across eastern South Dakota on the 17th and 18th with the heaviest amount reported in Sisseton. Numerous accidents occurred in the southeast part of the state. The slick roads were a factor in the vehicle death of a woman on Interstate 29, near Beresford in Lincoln County. Browns Valley reported four inches of snow, and Milbank received 7 inches.

1927: A tornado (at times to 260 yards wide) cut a seventeen-mile path through Alexandria, Virginia across the District of Columbia from the Navy yard to Benning Rd. & 19th St. NE and Northeast to East Riverdale, Maryland. This storm injured 31 people. The tornado struck the Naval Air Station where a wind gust of 93 mph was recorded.

2013: An unusually powerful storm system spun up five dozen tornadoes from the Great Lakes to the Tennessee Valley. Two EF4 twisters struck Illinois, hitting the communities of Washington and New Minden.

1869 - Southwest winds of hurricane force swept the Berkshire and Green Mountains of New England causing extensive forest and structural damage. (David Ludlum)

1927 - A tornado cut a seventeen mile path across Alexandria and southeastern Washington, DC, injuring 31 persons. The tornado struck the Naval Air Station where a wind gust of 93 mph was recorded. A waterspout was seen over the Potomac River ninety minutes later. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1953 - The temperature at Minneapolis, MN, reached 71 degrees, their warmest reading of record for so late in the autumn. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A storm in the Rockies produced 21 inches of snow at the Monarch ski resort in Colorado, with 14 inches reported at Steamboat Springs CO. Early morning thunderstorms in the southeastern U.S. drenched Mary Esther FL with 4.43 inches of rain. Gale force winds over the Great Lakes Region gusted to 49 mph at Johnstown PA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Another in a series of storms brought heavy snow to the mountains of the western U.S. Totals ranged up to 17 inches at Bob Scott Summit in Nevada. Winds around Reno NV gusted to 80 mph. The Alta and Sundance ski resorts in Utah received 14 inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Freezing temperatures overspread the southeastern U.S. in the wake of the severe weather outbreak of the previous two days. Eight cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Gilbert AR with a reading of 8 degrees. A fast moving storm blanketed the Great Lakes Region and Upper Ohio Valley with snow during the night. Totals ranged up to 12 inches at Pellston MI and Little Valley NY. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 33 of 69

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 46 °F at 2:02 PM**

**Low Temp: 36 °F at 7:41 AM**

**Wind: 22 mph at 10:01 AM**

**Day Rain: 0.00**

**Record High: 72° in 1953**

**Record Low: -8° in 1959**

**Average High: 39°F**

**Average Low: 18°F**

**Average Precip in Nov.: 0.43**

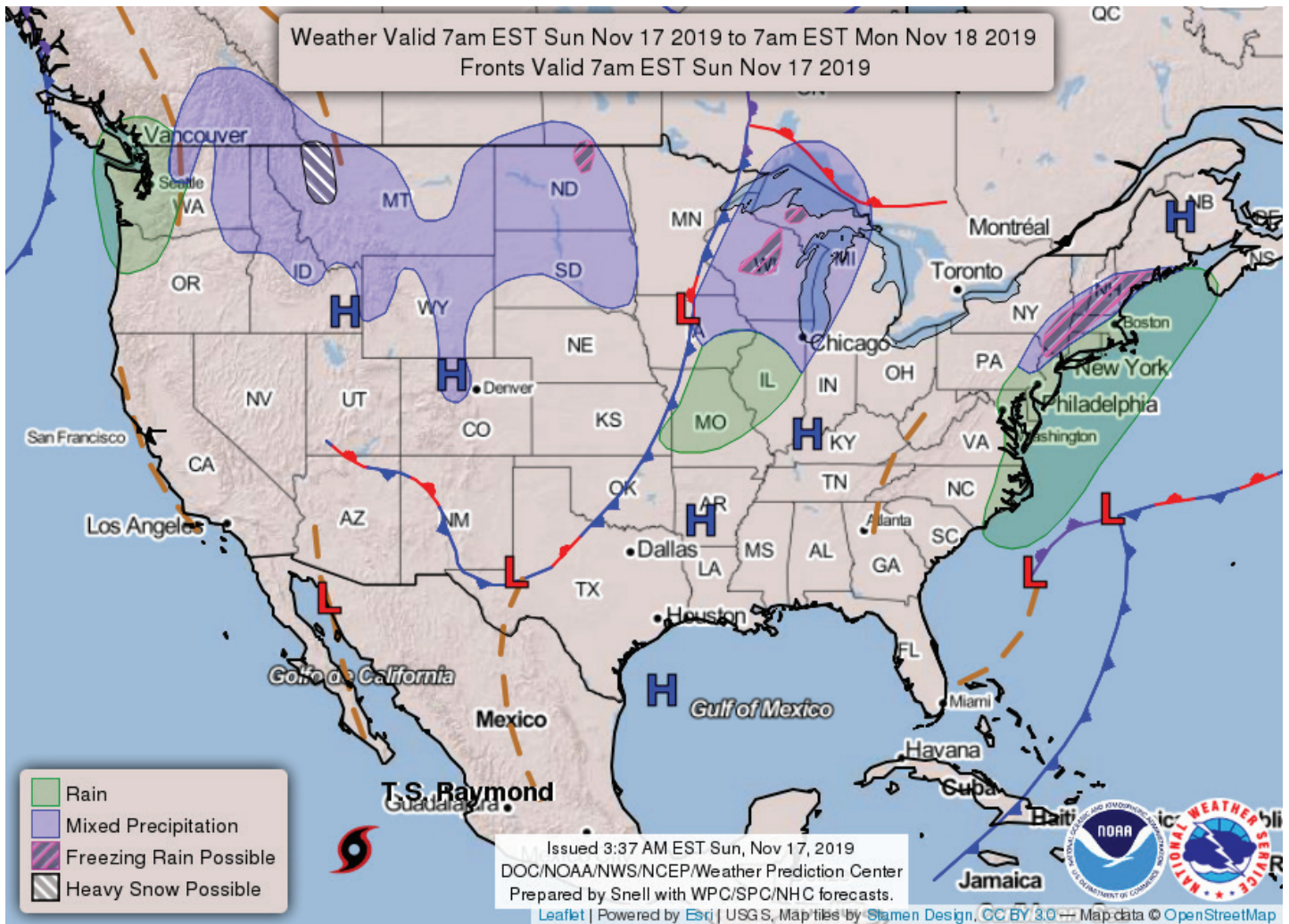
**Precip to date in Nov.: 0.00**

**Average Precip to date: 20.90**

**Precip Year to Date: 26.57**

**Sunset Tonight: 5:02 p.m.**

**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:36 a.m.**



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 34 of 69



## NO MISTAKE

He had been playing football in a nasty, soggy, muddy field. Tired and covered with fresh mud, little James returned home for dinner. His mother horrified with his appearance and wanting to shame him said, "Who's this? I don't know of anyone who lives here who could ever get so dirty and come to the table to eat!"

"It's me, Mom," he shouted. "It's your son James who's underneath all this dirt."

Jesus once told the story of a son who went to his father and said, "Dad, I want whatever you have that has been set aside for my inheritance. I'm leaving home today."

But things did not work out the way the son thought they would. He wasted his inheritance on things that were pleasing but had no eternal value. So, one day he "came to himself!" In this famous story, Jesus described the foolishness of "passing fancies" in comparison to the gift He has to offer: a life worth living through the grace of God.

He was met by his Dad who was filled with joy and compassion, waiting for this day – the day he would realize what his father had to offer him. He wrapped his son in his arms and held him tightly, told him that he was loved and welcomed, and "all is forgiven."

What a picture of Jesus: eyes searching, ears listening, arms open, heart-pounding, and waiting and wanting to offer everyone complete forgiveness for every sin.

Prayer: Thank You, Jesus, for providing a love that exceeds our sinfulness, grace and mercy for anyone, and the opportunity to begin a life with You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Luke 15:11-32 We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 35 of 69

## 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)

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 36 of 69

News from the  Associated Press

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

10-12-21-22-31

(ten, twelve, twenty-one, twenty-two, thirty-one)

Estimated jackpot: \$294,000

Lotto America

05-15-26-46-48, Star Ball: 1, ASB: 2

(five, fifteen, twenty-six, forty-six, forty-eight; Star Ball: one; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$5.06 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$192 million

Powerball

14-22-26-55-63, Powerball: 26, Power Play: 3

(fourteen, twenty-two, twenty-six, fifty-five, sixty-three; Powerball: twenty-six; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$70 million

## NDSU wraps up ninth straight conference title with 49-14 win

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — Trey Lance threw for two touchdowns, Ty Brooks ran for two and FCS top-ranked North Dakota State rolled up 700 yards offense in beating South Dakota 49-14 to clinch the Missouri Valley Football Conference championship on Saturday.

This is the ninth straight title for the two-time defending national champions (11-0, 7-0) and their 32nd consecutive victory, the nation's longest active Division I win streak.

Ty Brooks and Adam Cofield ran for first-quarter touchdowns and Lance threw second-quarter scoring passes of 32 yards to Ben Ellefson and 43 to Christian Watson as the Bison took a 28-7 halftime lead. The lead reached 49-7 before Coyotes (4-7, 3-4) scored their other touchdown with seven minutes remaining in the game.

Lance was a tidy 12-of-15 passing for 249 yards. Brooks rushed for 104 yards on 10 carries and Watson caught three passes for 94 yards.

## Heide leads South Dakota St past N Iowa 38-7

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Keaton Heide was 15-of-16 passing with two touchdowns, the defense forced two turnovers and South Dakota State overwhelmed Northern Iowa 38-7 on Saturday in a battle of top 10 FCS teams.

The Jackrabbits were clinging to a 17-7 lead entering the fourth quarter before breaking the game open. Don Gardner had a 24-yard fumble return after Tolu Ogunrinde's defensive stop, Cade Johnson had a 20-yard touchdown reception set up by an interception and backup quarterback Kanin Nelson had a 12-yard TD run.

For the ninth-ranked Jackrabbits (8-3, 5-2 Missouri Valley Conference) it was their third straight home game against a ranked opponent but the first they won. They piled up 337 yards of offense; 196 on Heide's arm. Johnson had six catches for 134 yards.

No. 5-ranked Northern Iowa (7-4, 5-2) had its four-game winning streak snapped. Will McElvain was 12 of 24 for 85 yards with three interceptions.

## Democrat Edwards wins reelection in conservative Louisiana

By MELINDA DESLATTE Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Deep in the heart of the conservative South, Louisiana's voters reelected Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards to a second term, shocking Republicans who had hoped to reclaim the seat on the strength of President Donald Trump's popularity.

With his focus on bipartisan, state-specific issues, the moderate Edwards cobbled together enough cross-party support Saturday to defeat Republican businessman Eddie Rispone, getting about 51% of the vote.

Trump fought to return the seat to the GOP, but his intense interest in the race not only motivated conservative Republicans, but also powered a surge in anti-Trump and black voter turnout that helped boost Edwards over the finish line.

Coming after a defeat in the Kentucky governor's race and sizable losses in Virginia's legislative races, the Louisiana result seems certain to rattle Republicans heading into the 2020 presidential election. Trump made three trips to Louisiana to rally against Edwards, and fashioned the runoff election between Edwards and Rispone into a test of his own popularity and political prowess.

In a victory rally of his own late Saturday, Edwards thanked supporters who danced, sang and cheered in celebration, while he declared, "How sweet it is!"

He added, "And as for the president, God bless his heart" — a phrase often used by genteel Southerners to politely deprecate someone.

"Tonight the people of Louisiana have chosen to chart their own path," Edwards said.

As he conceded the race, Rispone called on supporters to give a round of applause for Trump, saying: "That man loves America and he loves Louisiana."

Democrats who argue that nominating a moderate presidential candidate is the best approach to beat Trump are certain to say Louisiana's race bolsters their case.

Still, while Rispone's loss raises questions about the strength of Trump's coattails, its relevance to his reelection chances are less clear. Louisiana is expected to easily back Trump next year, and Edwards' views are, in many ways, out of step with his own party.

A West Point graduate and former Army Ranger, Edwards opposes most gun restrictions, signed one of the nation's strictest abortion bans and dismissed the impeachment effort as a distraction.

Meanwhile, Rispone, 70, wasn't among the top-tier candidates Republican leaders hoped would challenge Edwards. He had ties to the unpopular former Gov. Bobby Jindal, started with little name recognition and offered few details about his agenda.

Edwards, 53, also proved to be a formidable candidate, with a record of achievements.

Working with the majority-Republican Legislature, Edwards stabilized state finances with a package of tax increases, ending the deficit-riddled years of Jindal. New money paid for investments in public colleges and the first statewide teacher raise in a decade.

Edwards expanded Louisiana's Medicaid program, lowering the state's uninsured rate below the national average. A bipartisan criminal sentencing law rewrite he championed ended Louisiana's tenure as the nation's top jailer.

Rispone, the owner of a Baton Rouge industrial contracting company, hitched his entire candidacy to Trump, introducing himself to voters in ads that focused on support for the president in a state Trump won by 20 percentage points. Rispone said he was like Trump, describing himself as a "conservative outsider" whose business acumen would help solve the state's problems.

The president's repeated visits appeared to drive turnout for both candidates.

Tour guide Andrea Hartman, 40, cast her ballot for Edwards in New Orleans.

"I do not agree with what Rispone advocates," she said. "I also don't want Trump coming here and telling me who to vote for."

Rispone poured more than \$12 million of his own money into the race. But he had trouble drawing some of the primary vote that went to Republican U.S. Rep. Ralph Abraham, after harshly attacking Abraham in ads as he sought to reach the runoff. He also avoided many traditional public events attended by Louisiana

gubernatorial candidates and sidestepped questions about his plans. He promised tax cuts without saying where he'd shrink spending, and pledged a constitutional convention without detailing what he wanted to rewrite.

"We have nothing to be ashamed of. We had over 700,000 people in Louisiana who really want something better, something different," Rispone said.

Follow Melinda Deslatte on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/melindadeslatte>

## Iran supreme leader warns 'thugs' amid gas price protests

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's supreme leader on Sunday backed the government's decision to raise gasoline prices and called angry protesters who have been setting fire to public property over the hike "thugs," signaling a potential crackdown on the demonstrations.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's comments came as authorities shut down the internet across Iran to smother the protests in some two dozen cities and towns over the rise of government-set prices by 50% as of Friday. One firm said it was the biggest internet outage ever seen in Iran.

Since the hike, demonstrators have abandoned their cars along major highways and joined mass protests in the capital, Tehran, and elsewhere. Some protests turned violent, with demonstrators setting fires and there was also gunfire.

It remains to be seen how many people have been injured, killed and arrested as videos from the protests have shown people gravely wounded.

Iranian authorities on Sunday raised the official death toll in the violence surrounding the unrest to at least two. Attackers targeting a police station in Kermanshah on Saturday killed one officer there, the state-run IRNA news agency reported Sunday. Earlier, one man was reported killed.

In an address aired by state television Sunday, Khamenei said "some lost their lives and some places were destroyed," without elaborating. He called violent protesters "thugs" who had been pushed into violence by counterrevolutionaries and foreign enemies of Iran. He specifically named those aligned with the family of Iran's late shah, ousted 40 years ago, and an exile group called the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq.

"Setting a bank on fire is not an act done by the people. This is what thugs do," Khamenei said.

However, he made a point to back the decision of Iran's relatively moderate President Hassan Rouhani and others to raise gasoline prices. Gasoline in the country still remains among the cheapest in the world, with the new prices jumping up to a minimum of 15,000 rials per liter of gas — 50% up from the day before. That's 13 cents a liter, or about 50 cents a gallon. A gallon of regular gasoline in the U.S. costs \$2.60 by comparison.

Khamenei ordered security forces "to implement their tasks" and for Iran's citizens to keep clear of violent demonstrators.

That seemed to indicate a possible crackdown could be looming. Economic protests in late 2017 into 2018 were met by a heavy reaction by the police and the Basij, the all-volunteer force of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.

"Such illegal actions would not solve any problem but add insecurity on top of other problems," Khamenei said. "Lack of security is the biggest calamity for any country and society. That is what they are looking for."

Iran's Intelligence Ministry said the "key perpetrators of the past two days' riot have been identified and proper action is ongoing."

The protests have put renewed pressure on Iran's government as it struggles to overcome U.S. sanctions strangling the country's economy since President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers over a year ago.

Though largely peaceful, the latest demonstrations devolved into violence in several instances, with online videos purporting to show police officers firing tear gas at protesters and mobs setting fires.

While representing a political risk for Rouhani ahead of February parliamentary elections, they also show

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 39 of 69

widespread anger among Iran's 80 million people who have seen their savings evaporate amid scarce jobs and the collapse of the national currency, the rial.

Cheap gasoline is practically considered a birthright in Iran, home to the world's fourth-largest crude oil reserves. Rouhani had been pushing for higher prices to offer payments to the poor for months. While the hike was eventually expected, the decision to raise gasoline prices still caught many by surprise and sparked immediate demonstrations overnight.

Iranian internet access meanwhile saw disruptions and outages Friday night into Saturday, according to the group NetBlocks, which monitors worldwide internet access. By Saturday night, "real-time network data show connectivity has fallen to just 7% of ordinary levels following 12 hours of progressive network disconnections as public protests have continued across the country," NetBlocks said.

"The ongoing disruption is the most severe recorded in Iran since President Rouhani came to power, and the most severe disconnection tracked by NetBlocks in any country in terms of its technical complexity and breadth," the group said. The internet firm Oracle called it "the largest internet shutdown ever observed in Iran."

The semi-official ISNA news agency reported Sunday that Iran's Supreme National Security Council ordered a "restriction of access" to the internet nationwide, without elaborating.

Protester chants seen in online videos mirrored many from the economic protests in late 2017, which resulted in nearly 5,000 reported arrests and at least 25 people killed. Some criticized Iran's spending abroad on Palestinians and others while the country's people remain poor.

The tensions in Iran came as weeks of anti-government protests have engulfed Iraq and Lebanon, two Mideast nations that are home to Iranian proxies and crucial to Tehran's influence abroad.

Iran long has suffered economic problems since its 1979 Islamic Revolution cut off the country's decades-long relationship with the U.S. Iran's eight-year war with Iraq in the 1980s followed, further straining its economy.

The collapse of the nuclear deal has exacerbated those problems. The Iranian rial, which traded at 32,000 to \$1 at the time of the accord, fell to 122,600 to \$1 in trading on Saturday. Iran has since begun breaking terms of the deal as it tries to force Europe to come up with a way to allow it to sell crude oil abroad despite American sanctions.

The U.S. so far has had a muted response to the protests, with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tweeting overnight: "As I said to the people of Iran almost a year and a half ago: The United States is with you."

In Dubai, the new U.S. ambassador to the United Arab Emirates told The Associated Press that America was "not advocating regime change. We are going to let the Iranian people decide for themselves their future."

"They are frustrated. They want freedom," Ambassador John Rakolta said at the Dubai Airshow. "These developments that you see right now are their own people telling them, 'We need change and to sit down with the American government.'"

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Associated Press writer Aya Batrawy in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, contributed to this report.

## Hong Kong officer hit by arrow; police fire water cannons

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — A Hong Kong police officer was hit in the leg by an arrow Sunday as authorities used tear gas and water cannons to try to drive back protesters occupying a university campus and blocking a major road tunnel under the city's harbor.

Police said the arrow struck a media liaison officer and he was taken to a hospital. Photos on the department's Facebook page show the arrow sticking out of the back of the officer's lower leg through his pants.

The protesters held their ground for most of the day, as water cannon trucks drove over bricks and nails strewn by protesters to spray them at close range. They began retreating into Hong Kong Polytechnic

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 40 of 69

University near sunset, fearing they would be trapped as police fired tear gas volleys and approached from the opposite direction.

The use of bows and arrows, along with a gasoline bombs launched with catapults, threatened to escalate the violence in the more than five-month-long anti-government movement. Protesters are trying to keep the pressure on Hong Kong leaders, who have rejected most of their demands.

The protests were sparked by proposed legislation that would have allowed the extradition of criminal suspects to the mainland. Activists saw it as an erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy under the "one country, two systems" formula implemented in 1997, when Britain returned the territory to China.

The bill has been withdrawn, but the protests have expanded into a wider resistance movement against what is perceived as the growing control of Hong Kong by Communist China, along with calls for full democracy for the territory.

Sunday's daytime faceoff came after a pitched battle at night in which the two sides exchanged tear gas and gasoline bombs that left fires blazing in the street. Many protesters retreated inside the Polytechnic campus, where they have barricaded entrances and set up narrow access control points.

A large group of people arrived in the morning to try to clean up the road but were warned away by protesters. Riot police shot several volleys of tear gas at the protesters, who sheltered behind a wall of umbrellas and threw gasoline bombs into nearby bushes and trees, setting them on fire.

The water cannons arrived in the early afternoon, one using blue-dyed water to drench the protesters.

Protesters have largely retreated from occupations of several major campuses they held last week, except for the contingent at Polytechnic. That group is also blocking access to one of the three main road tunnels that link Hong Kong Island with the rest of the city.

Another group threw bricks in the street to blocked a main thoroughfare in the Mongkok district, as police fired tear gas to try to disperse them. The disruption to Nathan Road may have been an attempt to distract police during the standoff at Polytechnic.

Opposition lawmakers criticized the Chinese military for joining a cleanup to remove debris from streets near Hong Kong Baptist University on Saturday.

Dozens of Chinese troops, dressed in black shorts and olive drab T-shirts, ran out in loose formation and picked up paving stones, rocks and other obstacles that had cluttered the street

The military is allowed to help maintain public order, but only at the request of the Hong Kong government. The government said that it had not requested the military's assistance, describing it as a voluntary community activity.

The Education Bureau announced that classes from kindergarten to high school would be suspended again on Monday because of safety concerns. Classes have been canceled since Thursday, after the bureau came under criticism for not doing so earlier.

## **Pope's Asian agenda: Atomic bombs, martyrs, family reunion**

**By NICOLE WINFIELD and YURI KAGEYAMA Associated Press**

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis has agendas both pastoral and personal for his trip to Asia, where he'll appeal for global nuclear disarmament at the sites of the atomic bomb and minister to two tiny Catholic communities that have suffered gruesome periods of persecution.

Emphasizing the dignity of life is also on Francis' to-do list for his trip to Thailand and Japan that begins Wednesday, given the scourge of human trafficking in Thailand and Japan's use of capital punishment and high suicide rate.

As a young Jesuit, Francis dreamed of being a missionary in Japan, inspired by the courage of Japan's Hidden Christians, who braved two centuries of persecution to keep their faith alive.

"In some way, this is the fulfillment of his dream," said the Rev. Bernardo Cervellera, editor of AsiaNews, a Vatican-affiliated news service.

In Thailand, Francis will also be reunited with his second cousin, Sister Ana Rose Sivori, an Argentine nun who has lived in Thailand since 1966 and will serve as Francis' official translator there.



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 41 of 69

Here are some highlights of Francis' pilgrimage, his fourth to Asia and one that could also touch on the Vatican's delicate relations with China:

## ASIAN MARTYRS AND MISSIONARIES

One of the highlights of the trip will be Francis' prayer at the memorial of the 26 Nagasaki Martyrs, who were crucified in 1597 at the start of a two-century wave of anti-Christian persecution by Japanese rulers.

Francis' own Jesuit order had introduced Christianity to Japan with the arrival of St. Francis Xavier on the archipelago in 1549. After converting more than a quarter-million Japanese, missionaries were banned at the start of the 17th century. Japanese Christians were forced to renounce their faith, suffer tortuous deaths or go underground.

Francis will greet some descendants of these Hidden Christians, whose story was recounted in the 2016 Martin Scorsese film "Silence."

Francis will also honor Thailand's World War II-era martyrs, who were victims of anti-Christian persecution by Thais who viewed Christianity as foreign and associated with French colonial powers. Francis will pray at the sanctuary for Thailand's first martyred priest, Nicolas Bunkerd Kitbamrung, who was beatified in 2000.

## THE POPE SAYS NO NUKES

Francis has gone further than any other pope by saying that not only the use, but the mere possession of nuclear weapons is "to be firmly condemned." Japanese bishops are hoping he goes even further and calls for a ban on nuclear power.

Francis will likely repeat his appeal for a total ban on the bomb when he visits Nagasaki and Hiroshima, meets with survivors of the 1945 bombings there as well as victims of the March 11, 2011 Fukushima nuclear plant disaster in northern Japan.

An offshore magnitude-9 earthquake triggered a tsunami that knocked out power for the cooling systems at the Fukushima nuclear plant, displacing more than 100,000 people and coating the area with radioactive waste. In response, Japanese bishops in 2016 called for the abolition of nuclear power to protect "our common home."

"We can only hope" Francis will speak about nuclear power, given his frequent exhortation to care for the environment, said Nagoya Bishop Michael Goro Matsuura.

## MINORITY CATHOLICS AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Catholics make up just .59 percent of Thailand's population of 65 million, most of whom are Buddhist. The percentage is even lower in Japan — estimated at .42 percent of the mostly Shinto and Buddhist population of 126 million.

As a result, Francis will be stressing interfaith ties and the positive role Catholics can play in mostly Buddhist societies, "especially in the service of the poor, the needy and for peace," he said in a video message to Thais.

## THE POPE ON LIFE AND DEATH

Francis has made the fight against human trafficking a cornerstone of his papacy, a message that is likely to resonate in Thailand, which the U.N. considers a key trafficking destination as well as a source of forced labor and sex slaves.

In Japan, hopes are high among Catholics that Francis will send a message opposing the death penalty, and perhaps meet with a former boxer and human rights activist held for nearly five decades on death row.

The Vatican confirmed that Iwao Hakamada, who converted to Catholicism while in prison, has been invited to the pope's Mass in Tokyo, but it's not clear if he will make it. Hakamada is awaiting a Supreme Court decision after being freed when his verdict was overturned in a lower court.

Tomoki Yanagawa, who works at the Jesuit Social Center in Tokyo, said a papal statement about the death penalty would help raise awareness in Japan.

"I hope he will speak about the preciousness of life and clearly denounce what trivializes life," said Yanagawa.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 42 of 69

Francis changed Catholic teaching last year by declaring the death penalty “inadmissible” in all cases. He has also denounced today’s “throwaway culture” where euthanasia, abortion and suicide are often considered acceptable — a message that could resonate in Japan, which has one of the highest suicide rates in the developed world.

## VATICAN-CHINA RELATIONS

When Francis travels from Bangkok to Tokyo next Saturday, he’ll fly through Chinese, Taiwanese and Hong Kong airspace — and will send telegrams to their leaders as part of typical papal protocol.

That could offer Francis a rare opportunity to address not only the current democracy protests in Hong Kong, but the Vatican’s delicate relations with Beijing. It would be the first such opportunity following last year’s agreement with China over Catholic bishop nominations. The pact aimed to unite China’s Catholics, who are divided between an underground church and an official one.

The agreement has been hailed as a milestone by the Vatican, but critics point to continued persecution of underground prelates, including a report last week by AsiaNews that the underground bishop of Mindong was being hounded by Chinese security agents. Monsignor Vincenzo Guo Xijn had stepped aside to allow an official bishop be named as part of the 2018 Vatican deal with China.

Kageyama reported from Tokyo.

## Aide recounts actions tying Trump to delay in Ukraine funds

By **LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and MICHAEL BALSAMO** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gordon Sondland, President Donald Trump’s emissary to the European Union, had a message when he met with a top Ukrainian official.

Sondland said vital U.S. military assistance to Ukraine might be freed up if the country’s top prosecutor “would go to the mike and announce that he was opening the Burisma investigation,” a U.S. official told lawmakers. Burisma is the gas company in Ukraine where Democrat Joe Biden’s son Hunter served on the board.

Sondland relayed the exchange moments later to Tim Morrison, then a National Security Council aide. In his private testimony to impeachment investigators made public Saturday, Morrison recounted that Sondland also told him he was discussing the Ukraine matters directly with Trump.

Morrison’s testimony ties Trump more closely to the central charge from Democrats pursuing impeachment: that Trump held up U.S. military aid to Ukraine in exchange for investigations into Democrats and Biden’s family. Morrison’s testimony also contradicts much of what Sondland told congressional investigators during his own closed-door deposition, which the ambassador later amended.

Both Morrison and Sondland are scheduled to testify publicly next week as part of the historic, high-stakes impeachment proceedings into the nation’s 45th president. Democrats charge that Trump abused his office for personal political gain, while the president and his allies argue that the process is politically motivated and that nothing in the testimony so far meets the bar for impeachment.

Transcripts from the closed-door testimony from Morrison, a longtime Republican defense hawk in Washington, and Jennifer Williams, a special adviser to Vice President Mike Pence on Russia and Europe, were released Saturday as investigators accelerated and deepened the probe. They provided another window into the alarm within the government over Ukraine pressure.

Immediately after the exchange with Sondland during an international gathering in Warsaw, Morrison called his boss, John Bolton, then Trump’s national security adviser.

“Stay out of it,” Bolton told him, “brief the lawyers.”

For Morrison, Burisma was a catch-all for a “bucket” of investigations — of Democrats and the family of Joe Biden — that he wanted to “stay away from.” They had nothing to do with “the proper policy process that I was involved in on Ukraine,” he testified.

Morrison said Sondland and Trump had spoken approximately five times between July 15 and Sept. 11

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 43 of 69

— the weeks that \$391 million in U.S. assistance was withheld from Ukraine before it was released.

While some, including Trump himself, have begun to question Sondland's knowledge of events, Morrison told House investigators the ambassador "related to me he was acting — he was discussing these matters with the President."

Pressed by Rep. Adam Schiff, the Democratic chairman of the Intelligence Committee leading the probe, as to whether Sondland had actually spoken to the president, Morrison said he had verified it each time.

Pence, so far, has been a more unseen figure in the impeachment inquiry, but testimony from Williams raised fresh questions about what Pence knew about Trump's actions toward Ukraine.

Pence was also at the Warsaw gathering. For the new government of Ukraine, situated between NATO allies and Russia, the security aid Congress had already approved was a lifeline to the West.

Williams was among the staffers in the White House Situation Room who listened and took notes during Trump's July 25 call when he asked Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for "a favor." A whistleblower's complaint about that call helped spark the House impeachment investigation.

Williams testified that Trump's discussion on the call of specific investigations struck her as "unusual and inappropriate" and seemed to point to "other motivations" for holding up the military aid.

After the call, Williams told investigators, she put the White House's rough transcript into the vice president's daily briefing book.

"I just don't know if he read it," she said.

Williams corroborated the testimony of a previous witness, Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, an NSC aide on the call, who said the White House dropped the word "Burisma" from the transcript. She said in an addendum to her testimony that Zelenskyy had mentioned the word "Burisma" in the call.

Vindman and Williams are scheduled to testify together during a public impeachment hearing on Tuesday morning.

The White House's decision to put the transcript of the July 25 call on a highly classified server has drawn keen interest throughout the probe. But Morrison said the unusual move was unintentional.

Morrison said he was concerned if the call got out it would be politically damaging. He talked to White House lawyer John Eisenberg and they agreed that access should be restricted, he testified.

But Morrison said Eisenberg later told him that he did not intend for the call summary to be placed on a highly classified server. Eisenberg's staff apparently put it there by mistake, he said.

As the transcripts were released, impeachment investigators wrapped up a rare Saturday session interviewing Mark Sandy, a little-known career official at the Office of Management and Budget who was involved in key meetings about the aid package.

Sandy's name had barely come up in previous testimony. But it did on one particular date: July 25, the day of Trump's call with Zelenskyy. That day, a legal document with Sandy's signature directed a freeze of the security funds to Ukraine, according to testimony.

Throughout Morrison's account, he largely confirmed testimony from current and former officials about what has been described as a shadow diplomacy being run by Trump's personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, often at odds with U.S. national security interests.

A few days after the Warsaw meeting, Sondland was on the phone telling Morrison Sept. 7 he had just gotten off a call with the president.

Morrison said Sondland related that Trump assured him there were no strings being attached to the military aid for Ukraine.

"The president told him there was no quid pro quo, but President Zelenskyy must announce the opening of the investigations and he should want to do it," Morrison testified.

Morrison had what he called a "sinking feeling" that the aid may not ultimately be released. About that time, three congressional committees said they were launching inquiries into efforts by Trump and Giuliani to investigate the Bidens.

At a Sept. 11 meeting at the White House, Pence and GOP Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio "convinced the president that the aid should be disbursed immediately," said Morrison, who said he was briefed about the meeting but did not attend it. "The case was made to the president that it was the appropriate and

prudent thing to do.”

Associated Press writers Matthew Daly and Cal Woodward in Washington and Kathleen Ronayne in Long Beach, California, contributed to this report.

## US, S Korea postpone joint exercise criticized by N Korea

By ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Sunday the United States and South Korea have indefinitely postponed a joint military exercise in an “act of goodwill” toward North Korea.

The move comes even as Japan’s defense minister, whose country feels threatened by repeated North Korean missile launches, told Esper “no one could be optimistic about” changing the North’s behavior.

The statement by Japan’s defense chief, Taro Kono, was a stark illustration of the difficulties facing the U.S. and its international allies and partners as they struggle to get North Korea back to negotiations to eliminate its nuclear weapons and missiles. Talks launched by President Donald Trump in 2018 have stalled with no resumption in sight.

Although the U.S. military for years has called its joint military exercises with South Korea an important means of keeping troops and commanders ready for combat on short notice, Trump has called them a waste of money and a provocation to the North.

Esper announced the postponement of the military exercise at a joint news conference with his South Korean counterpart, Jeong Kyeong-doo. They were in Bangkok to attend an Asia defense ministers’ conference.

Esper insisted the postponement was not a concession to North Korea but rather an attempt to “keep the door open” to diplomacy to eliminate North Korea’s nuclear weapons.

“I see this as a good-faith effort by the United States and the Republic of Korea to enable peace, to shape ... to facilitate a political agreement – a deal, if you will – that leads to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula,” Esper told reporters.

North Korea hardly seemed ready to reciprocate. Shortly after Esper and Jeong spoke, the North Korean foreign ministry issued a written statement of defiance. It said it has no plans to negotiate over its nuclear programs, even if talks were to resume, unless the U.S. offers to first discuss the withdrawal of its “hostile” policies against Pyongyang.

North Korea’s statement also criticized Washington’s support of a recent United Nations resolution condemning the North’s widespread human rights violations, claiming that the resolution shows continued U.S. intent to isolate the North and destroy its political system.

The North also has harshly criticized U.S.-South Korean military drills as provocative and as preparations for an invasion.

Kono, the Japanese defense minister, met with Esper and Jeong after they made their announcement. In remarks with reporters and photographers present, Kono said it was important that the three nations consult closely “under the current situation where no one could be optimistic about North Korea.”

He added that the North Koreans have launched “more than 20 missiles this year including new types of missiles as well as a submarine-launched ballistic missile” in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Kono called North Korea “a serious threat to peace and stability” in Japan and across the region.

Esper told reporters he did not consider the postponement a concession to North Korea, although it follows earlier cutbacks in the scale and prominence of U.S.-South Korean exercises.

“We have made this decision as an act of goodwill to contribute to an environment conducive to diplomacy and the advancement of peace,” Esper said.

As recently as Friday, when Esper was in Seoul to consult with South Korean officials, there was no word on postponing the military air exercise, which had been called Vigilant Ace.

Seoul and Washington had scaled back the exercise recently and changed the name, but North Korea

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 45 of 69

strongly objected, calling it evidence of a lack of interest in improving relations.

Jeong said the exercise had been put off pending further consultations between Seoul and Washington. No new date has been set.

Esper said Seoul and Washington encourage North Korea "to demonstrate the same goodwill" as it considers decisions on its own military training, exercises and testing.

He also urged the North to return to the negotiating table "without precondition or hesitation."

Esper said that even without the planned exercise of South Korean and American air forces, both militaries "will remain at a high state of readiness" for potential combat.

The U.S. has about 28,000 troops in South Korea.

## Migrants thrust by US officials into the arms of the cartels

By MARIA VERZA Associated Press

NUEVO LAREDO, Mexico (AP) — The gangsters trawling Nuevo Laredo know just what they're looking for: men and women missing their shoelaces.

Those are migrants who made it to the United States to ask for asylum, only to be taken into custody and stripped of their laces — to keep them from hurting themselves. And then they were thrust into danger, sent back to the lawless border state of Tamaulipas.

In years past, migrants moved quickly through this violent territory on their way to the United States. Now, due to Trump administration policies, they remain there for weeks and sometimes months as they await their U.S. court dates, often in the hands of the gangsters who hold the area in a vise-like grip.

Here, migrants in limbo are prey, and a boon to smugglers.

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This story is part of an occasional series, "Outsourcing Migrants," produced with the support of the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

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They recount harrowing stories of robbery, extortion by criminals and crooked officials, and kidnappings by competing cartels. They tell of being captured by armed bandits who demand a ransom: They can pay for illegal passage to the border, or merely for their freedom, but either way they must pay.

And then they might be nabbed again by another gang. Or, desperate not to return to the homes they fled in the first place, they might willingly pay smugglers again.

That's what a 32-year-old Honduran accountant was contemplating. She had twice paid coyotes to help her cross into the U.S. only to be returned. Most recently, in September, she was sent back across the bridge from Brownsville to Matamoros.

Now, biding her time with her daughter in the city of Monterrey, she said one thing is for sure: "We are a little gold mine for the criminals."

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Tamaulipas used to be a crossroads. Its dangers are well known; the U.S. has warned its citizens to stay away, assigning it the same alert level as war-torn countries such as Afghanistan and Syria.

Whenever possible, migrants heading north immediately crossed the river to Texas or presented themselves at a U.S. port of entry to file an asylum claim, which would allow them to stay in the U.S. while their cases played out.

But the U.S. has set limits on applicants for asylum, slowing the number to a mere trickle, while the policy known colloquially as "Remain in Mexico," has meant the return of more than 55,000 asylum-seekers to the country while their requests meander through backlogged courts.

The Mexican government is ill-prepared to handle the influx along the border, especially in Tamaulipas, where it has been arranging bus rides south to the relative safety of the northern city of Monterrey or all the way to the Guatemala border, citing security concerns — tacit acknowledgement, some analysts say, of the state of anarchy.

The gangs have adapted quickly to the new reality of masses of vulnerable people parking in the heart

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 46 of 69

of their fiefdom, experts say, treating the travelers, often families with young children, like ATMs, ramping up kidnapping, extortion, and illegal crossings to extract money and fuel their empires.

"There's probably nothing worse you could do in terms of overall security along the border," said Jeremy Slack, a geographer at the University of Texas at El Paso who studies the border region, crime and migration in Mexico. "I mean, it really is like the nightmare scenario."

Yohan, a 31-year-old Nicaraguan security guard, trudged back across the border bridge from Laredo, Texas, in July with his wife and two children in tow, clutching a plastic case full of documents including one with a court date to return and make their asylum claim to a U.S. immigration judge two months later.

Penniless, with little more than a cellphone, the family was entering Nuevo Laredo, dominated by the Northeast cartel, a splinter of the brutal and once-powerful Zetas gang.

This is the way he tells the story now, in an interview at a nonprofit in Monterrey that provides the family with shelter and food:

The plan was to call and ask help from the only people they knew in the area — the "coyotes," or people smugglers, who earlier helped them cross the Rio Grande on an inflatable raft and had treated them well. Only that was in Ciudad Miguel Aleman, about a two-hour drive south parallel to the river.

On their way to the bus station, two strange men stopped Yohan while another group grabbed his loved ones. At least one of them had a gun. They were hustled into a van, relieved of their belongings and told they had a choice: Pay thousands of dollars for their freedom, or for another illegal crossing.

All along the border, there have abuses and crimes against migrants by Mexican organized crime, which has long profited off them. But Tamaulipas is especially troubling. It is both the location of most illegal crossings, and the state where the United States has returned the most asylum seekers — 20,700 through Nuevo Laredo and Matamoros as of early October.

The Mexico City-based Institute for Women in Migration, which tracks kidnappings of migrants and asylum-seekers, has documented 212 abductions in the state from mid-July through Oct. 15. And that's surely an undercount.

Of the documented kidnappings in Tamaulipas, 197 occurred in Nuevo Laredo, a city of about 500,000 whose international bridges fuel the trade economy.

Yohan's family was among them.

They had left Esteli in northwestern Nicaragua over three months earlier after armed, government-aligned civilian militias learned that Yohan had witnessed the killing of a government opponent, he said. They followed him and painted death threats on the walls of their home.

He is identified only by his middle name, because he and others quoted in this story fear for their lives and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Yohan borrowed against his mother's house to pay smugglers \$18,000 for the family's trip. But he had not bargained on the closed door at the border, or the ordeal in Nuevo Laredo, and his bankroll was depleted.

The men who grabbed the family "told us they were from the cartel, that they were not kidnappers, that their job was to get people across and that they would take us to the smuggler to explain," Yohan said. Then they connected a cable to his cellphone to download its contents.

Yohan's first instinct was to give the passphrase that his previous smugglers used to identify "their" migrants. "'That doesn't mean anything to us,' one of them told me," Yohan said — this lot belonged to a different group.

Gangs in Tamaulipas have fragmented in the last decade and now cartel cells there operate on a franchise model, with contacts across Mexico and Central America, said Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera, a political scientist specializing in organized crime, immigration, border security and human trafficking at George Mason University.

"They are contractors. They provide a service, control the territory, operate safe houses and charge for all that," she said.

Yohan's family was held in a series of what appeared to be private homes or offices, along with a family

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 47 of 69

from El Salvador, two Cubans and two Mexicans. Everyone slept on the floor.

One captor, a 16-year-old, told him, "We have 15 smugglers, the cartel brings the people to us here and we take them across paying the cartel for the river crossing."

The gang had been hiring lately: "Since the United States is deporting so many through here, we are capturing them and that has meant more work," the teen told him. "We're saturated."

Initially the captors demanded \$16,000. They gave Yohan and his wife a list of names and accounts; relatives were supposed to deposit \$450 into each one without using companies seen as traceable by authorities.

But they were able to scrape together just \$3,000, and that angered the gangsters.

"I'm going to give you to the cartel," one shouted.

Then Yohan's son came down with the mumps. The family got the captors to provide a bit of extra milk for him in exchange for his daughter's little gold ring, but the boy wasn't getting better and they abruptly released the family.

"They told us that the cartel doesn't allow them to hold sick children," Yohan said.

This is a matter of business, not humanity: A dead child could bring attention from the media, and then authorities, says George Mason's Correa-Cabrera.

After 14 days captive and before leaving the safe house, Yohan was given a code phrase: "We already passed through the office, checking." Only hours later they would need to use it. Arriving at the bus station, a group of strange men tried to grab them. Yohan spoke the six words in Spanish, and they were let go, and they went on to Monterrey.

On Sept. 22, Yohan's family returned to Nuevo Laredo for their court date, bringing with them a report on the family's kidnapping. Though U.S. law allows at-risk people to stay, they were sent back to the parking lot of a Mexican immigration facility, surrounded by seedy cantinas and watching eyes.

Mexican authorities organized bus transportation for those who wanted to return to their home countries. The family did not intend to go back to Nicaragua, so they asked the driver to leave them in Monterrey where they would await the next hearing.

After they were under way, the driver demanded \$200. They couldn't pay, so he dumped them about 60 miles (100 kilometers) from the city at 1 a.m., along with four others.

Unlike other border cities such as Tijuana or Ciudad Juarez, migrants and asylum seekers are rarely seen on the streets in Nuevo Laredo. Fear keeps them in hiding, and safety isn't a sure thing even inside shelters. This summer pastor Aarón Méndez was abducted from the shelter he ran. He has not been heard from since.

Nor is it safe on the streets going to and from the station. A couple of months after Méndez disappeared, gunmen intercepted some people who were helping migrants make those trips; those being transported were taken away, and the helpers were told they would be killed if they persisted.

Kennji Kizuka, a researcher for New York-based Human Rights First, told of one woman who crossed into the U.S. for a hearing date, where she had to surrender her phone. While she was incommunicado for hours, calls were placed to relatives in the United States claiming she had been kidnapped and aggressively demanding a ransom.

"It's clear that they have a very sophisticated system to target people," Kizuka said.

In another instance, Kizuka said, cartel members were in the Nuevo Laredo office of Mexican migration, openly abducting asylum seekers who had just been sent back from the United States.

One woman hid in the bathroom with her daughter and called a local pastor for help; he tried to drive them away, but they were blocked by cartel members blocks way. The two were taken from the car and held by the gangsters, though they eventually were released unharmed.

A spokesperson for the Mexican foreign affairs secretary declined comment on allegations that Mexico cannot guarantee safety for immigrants returned from U.S.

U.S. Border Patrol officials said recently they are continuing to send asylum seekers back over the bor-

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 48 of 69

der, and that includes Nuevo Laredo. The number of people returned there has been reduced recently, but that was related to a decrease in migrants arriving at the border — and not violence in Tamaulipas.

In an interview, Brian Hastings, Border Patrol chief of law enforcement operations, told AP that officials didn't see a "threat to that population" in Tamaulipas and "there was basically a small war between the cartel and the state police" there.

But the numbers indicate the danger is real.

As of August, Human Rights First had tabulated 100 violent crimes against returnees. By October, after it rolled out to Tamaulipas, that had more than tripled to 340. Most involved kidnapping and extortion. Kizuka said the danger is even greater than the numbers reflect because they are based solely on accounts his organization or reporters have been able to document.

Of dozens of people interviewed by AP who said they had been victimized in Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, Matamoros and Monterrey, just one had filed a police report.

Kidnappings of migrants are not a new phenomenon. According to Mexico's National Human Rights Commission, in just six months in 2009 nearly 10,000 migrants were abducted while passing through the country.

Back then the cartels were splintering amid a government policy targeting their top bosses, leading them to fight among themselves in the people-smuggling business to fill two needs: money and labor. Kidnapped migrants generally were told they could avoid being killed by either paying ransom or working for the cartel.

Tamaulipas became a bloody emblem of the problem in 2010 when 72 migrants were found slain at a ranch in San Fernando, and a year later when the bodies of 193 migrants were found in the same area in clandestine mass graves — apparently murdered by a cartel to damage a rival's people-smuggling business.

Raymundo Ramos of the Nuevo Laredo Human Rights Committee said gangs today are more interested in squeezing cash from migrants: "They have to recover a lot of the money lost in those wars."

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has acknowledged that another massacre or escalation of violence is a major fear and has deployed more than 25,000 troops and National Guard agents to police people-trafficking in border regions and along smuggling routes. But all the accounts of violence in this account took place after that deployment.

Reynosa, a factory city of about 650,000, is the largest in Tamaulipas and home to some of the worst drug war violence. It's also a key part of the migratory route and one of the busiest crossing points along with Ciudad Miguel Aleman.

Disputed by rival gangs, Reynosa has the feel of a place with invisible fences demarcating their territories, and numerous migrants said they had to pay to get past checkpoints at the main entrances to the city.

Lawyer and human rights worker Fortino López Balcázar said the gangs first took control of the river, attacking and beating migrants. Then they started grabbing them from bus stations, and then from the streets.

The airport is also tightly controlled.

A 46-year-old teacher from Havana recalled arriving with her 16-year-old son Aug. 13 by plane from Mexico City with the phone number for a taxi driver, provided by a lawyer who arranged their trip. As they drove into Reynosa, two other taxis cut the vehicle off. Two men got in, took away her cellphone and money and whisked them to a home that was under construction.

The lawyer "sold us out," the woman said.

That night they were moved to a thicket near the Rio Grande where they were held captive in an outdoor camp for a week with dozens of others. They met another group of Cubans, who were also abducted shortly after flying into Reynosa: Several taxi and vans brazenly intercepted them in broad daylight, bringing traffic to a halt.

"It was as if we were terrorists and the FBI had swooped down on us," one of the men said. He speculated they may have been betrayed by an airport immigration agent with whom they had argued over



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 49 of 69

their travel documents.

López Obrador's government has said the National Immigration Institute is one of Mexico's most corrupt agencies. In early 2019 the institute announced the firing of more than 500 workers nationwide. According to a person with knowledge of the purge, Tamaulipas was one of four states where the most firings took place. Some worked in airports, others in the city of Reynosa.

In February the institute's deputy delegate to the city was fired and accused of charging detained migrants over \$3,000 to avoid deportation. Later new complaints surfaced of people being shaken down for \$1,500 to be put at the top of wait lists to present claims in the United States.

At the riverside camp, the Cuban teacher was introduced to its "commander" who demanded "rent" and a fine for not traveling with a guide. The ransom was set at \$1,000.

Previously the Cuban woman's only exposure to the world of organized crime came from movies she watched on the illegal satellite TV hookup that caused her to run afoul of authorities back home. Now they were witnessing things both terrifying and hard to understand.

There was the time a man tried to suffocate another with a plastic bag, or when the kidnapers, some barely in their teens, beat a "coyote" for working for a rival outfit. From what she was able to understand from the shouting, he had been kidnapped along with clients he was guiding and they wanted him to switch loyalties.

The captors at the thicket referred to themselves as "the corporation," the teacher said. People came and went, some delivered by men in uniforms who may or may not have been police.

Edith Garrido, a nun who works at the Casa del Migrante shelter in Reynosa, said both crooked officers and criminals dressed as police — known as "black cops" or "the clones" — are mixed up in the racket, making the rounds of safe houses to buy and sell kidnap victims.

"They say 'give me 10, 15, 25.' They tell them they are going to take them to a safer place, and they give them to the highest bidder," Garrido explained. "A migrant is money for them, not a person."

The captors let the Cubans use their cellphones for a few hours to coordinate ransom payments with relatives, always small amounts to different bank accounts. Weeping, the teacher recalled how her 25-year-old daughter in Cuba had to pawn all her belongings.

After the ransom came through, the captors took her picture and she, her son and another woman were put in a taxi and driven off. The cabbie stopped the car along a highway, took her cellphone and said they could go.

She and her son now await their immigration court date in Reynosa, where she has found temporary construction work to pay for rent and food.

There's not enough space for everyone at the shelters, so many rent rooms, and that demand has pushed prices up. It can range from \$35 per person per month for a spot in a cramped five-person bedroom in a seedy area, to \$300-\$500 for a more secure home.

But nowhere is truly safe. Last month a family from El Salvador missed their turn to present themselves for U.S. asylum after a shootout erupted in the streets and they were afraid to leave their home.

Garrido said some pay protection fees so they are not bothered in their homes, while others rent directly from the gangs.

"So one way or another," she said, "they make money."

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Associated Press writers Peter Orsi in Mexico City and Colleen Long in Washington contributed to this report.

## Sorry, wrong number: Statistical benchmark comes under fire

By MALCOLM RITTER AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Earlier this fall Dr. Scott Solomon presented the results of a huge heart drug study to an audience of fellow cardiologists in Paris.

The results Solomon was describing looked promising: Patients who took the medication had a lower

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 50 of 69

rate of hospitalization and death than patients on a different drug.

Then he showed his audience another number.

"There were some gasps, or 'Ooohs,'" Solomon, of Harvard's Brigham and Women's Hospital, recalled recently. "A lot of people were disappointed."

One investment analyst reacted by reducing his forecast for peak sales of the drug — by \$1 billion.

What happened?

The number that caused the gasps was 0.059. The audience was looking for something under 0.05.

What it meant was that Solomon's promising results had run afoul of a statistical concept you may never have heard of: statistical significance. It's an all-or-nothing thing. Your statistical results are either significant, meaning they are reliable, or not significant, indicating an unacceptably high chance that they were just a fluke.

The concept has been used for decades. It holds a lot of sway over how scientific results are appraised, which studies get published, and what medicines make it to drugstores.

But this year has brought two high-profile calls from critics, including from inside the arcane world of statistics, to get rid of it — in part out of concern that it prematurely dismisses results like Solomon's.

Significance is reflected in a calculation that produces something called a p-value. Usually, if this produces a p-value of less than 0.05, the study findings are considered significant. If not, the study has failed the test.

Solomon's study just missed. So the apparent edge his drug was showing over the other medication was deemed insignificant. By this criterion there was no "real" difference.

Solomon believes the drug in fact produced a real benefit and that a larger or longer-lasting study could have reached statistical significance.

"I'm not crying over spilled milk," he said. "We do set the rules. The question is, is that the right way to go about it?"

He's not alone in asking that question.

"It is a safe bet that people have suffered or died because scientists (and editors, regulators, journalists and others) have used significance tests to interpret results," epidemiologist Kenneth Rothman of RTI Health Solutions in Research Triangle Park, N.C., and Boston University wrote in 2016.

The danger is both that a potentially beneficial medical finding can be ignored because a study doesn't reach statistical significance, and a harmful or fruitless medical practice could be accepted simply because it does, he said in an email.

The p-value cutoff for significance is "a measure that has gained gatekeeper status ... not only for publication but for people to take your results seriously," says Northwestern University statistician Blake McShane.

It's no wonder that a statistician, at a recent talk to journalists about the issue just before Halloween, displayed a slide of a jack-o'-lantern carved with this sight, obviously terrifying to anyone in science or medicine: "P = .06."

McShane and others argue that the importance of the p-value threshold is undeserved. He co-authored a call to abolish the notion of statistical significance, which was published in the prestigious journal *Nature* this year. The proposal attracted more than 800 co-signers.

Even the American Statistical Association, which had never issued any formal statement on specific statistical practices, came down hard in 2016 on using any kind of p-value cutoff in this way. And this year it went further, declaring in a special issue with 43 papers on the subject, "It is time to stop using the term 'statistically significant' entirely."

What's the problem? McShane and others list several:

— P-value does not directly measure the likelihood that the outcome of an experiment just is a fluke. What it really represents is widely misunderstood, even by scientists and some statisticians, said Nicole Lazar, a statistics professor at the University of Georgia.

— Using a label of statistical significance "gives more certainty that is actually warranted," Lazar said. "We should recognize the fact that there is uncertainty in our findings."

— The traditional cutoff of 0.05 is arbitrary.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 51 of 69

— Statistical significance does not necessarily mean “significant” — or that a finding is important practically or scientifically, Lazar says. It might not even be true: Solomon cites a large heart drug study that found a significant treatment effect for patients born in August but not July, obviously just a random fluctuation.

— The term “statistical significance” sets up a goal line for researchers, a clear measure of success or failure. That means researchers can try a little bit too hard to reach it. They may deliberately game the system to get an acceptable p-value, or just unconsciously choose analytic methods that help, McShane and Lazar said.

— That can distort the effects not only of individual experiments, but also the cumulative results of studies on a given topic, so that overall a drug can look “a lot better than it actually is,” McShane said.

What should be done instead? Abolish the bright line of statistical significance, and just report the p-value along with other analyses to give a more comprehensive outline of what the test result may mean, McShane and others say.

It may not be as clear-cut as a simple declaration of significance or insignificance, but “we’ll have a better idea of what’s going on,” Lazar said. “I think it will be easier to weed out the bad work.”

Not everybody buys the idea of doing away with statistical significance. Prominent Stanford researcher Dr. John Ioannidis says that abolition “could promote bias. Irrefutable nonsense would rule.” Although he agrees that a p-value standard of less than 0.05 is weak and easily abused, he believes scientists should use a more stringent p-value or other statistical measure instead, specified before the experiment is performed.

McShane said that although calls for abolishing statistical significance have been raised for years, there seems to be more momentum lately.

“Maybe,” he said, “it’s time to put the nail in the coffin on this one for good.”

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## Last-minute audible: Kaepernick back to school for workout

By PAUL NEWBERRY AP Sports Writer

RIVERDALE, Ga. (AP) — Colin Kaepernick’s saga took another surreal turn Saturday — a last-minute audible to nix an NFL-arranged workout and a quick dash 60 miles to the other side of metro Atlanta, where the exiled quarterback staged his own impromptu passing display on a high school field in dwindling light as hundreds of fans cheered him on from behind a chain-link fence.

Kaepernick threw passes for about 40 minutes at Charles Drew High School and spent nearly that long signing autographs for a crowd that steadily grew as word spread that a quarterback who led the San Francisco 49ers to the Super Bowl and sparked a wave of protests and divisive debate by kneeling during the national anthem was in the neighborhood.

Kaepernick declared again that he’s ready to play in the NFL.

If someone will just give him a chance.

“I’ve been ready for three years,” he said. “I’ve been denied for three years. We all know why. I came out here today and showed it in front of everybody. We have nothing to hide. We’re waiting for the 32 owners, the 32 teams, (Commissioner) Roger Goodell, all of them to stop running, stop running from the truth, stop running from the people.”

In a move no one saw coming, the league that Kaepernick claims blackballed him called Tuesday with a take-it-or-leave-it offer to hold an extraordinary workout at the Atlanta Falcons’ training complex in the sprawling suburbs north of the city.

All 32 teams were invited. Former NFL head coaches Hue Jackson and Joe Philbin were set to run the drills. The league said 25 teams were sending scouts and representatives — many of whom had already arrived at the Falcons’ indoor training facility in Flowery Branch when word came that Kaepernick wasn’t going to take part.

Instead, he decided to hold a workout open to the media, unlike the session at the Falcons’ facility, at

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 52 of 69

a high school stadium just south of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

Sixty miles away.

With barely more than an hour to spare, the media that had been herded into a gated-off area in the parking lot and told that was as close as they would get to Kaepernick's workout hustled to their vehicles to set off for a high school most had never heard of.

But only eight of the original 25 team representatives followed along to the new location, including Philadelphia Eagles vice president of football operations Andrew Berry. It appeared the New York Jets, Kansas City and Washington also had scouts in attendance.

They stood along the sideline, jotting into their notepads as Kaepernick tossed passes to four free-agent receivers.

"Our biggest thing with everything today was to make sure we had transparency in what went on," Kaepernick said. "We weren't getting that elsewhere, so we came out here."

Kaepernick, who worked out in a tank top and shorts, has clearly kept himself in good shape during his near three-year layoff. His passes had plenty of zip on them, though he was a bit off target with a few of his deep throws. It was not the sort of session that would likely sway a team one way or the other.

That didn't appear to be the point.

Kaepernick has insisted all along that everyone knows he is good enough to play in the NFL. He claims this is all about his decision to kneel as a way of protesting police brutality and racial injustice, which led to a contentious national debate that stretched all the way to the White House. President Trump called on NFL owners to fire any player who failed to stand during the national anthem.

"We're ready to go anywhere," said Kaepernick, who at age 32 should be in the prime of his career. "Ready to talk to any team, interview with any team at any time. I've been ready, I'm staying ready, I will continue to be ready."

Kaepernick did not take questions from at least 50 media members who scrambled to get to Riverdale to cover his workout.

The quarterback's representatives announced the change less than an hour before the start of the originally scheduled workout, saying the NFL refused their request that journalists be allowed to watch and videotape the session in Flowery Branch.

When he finally got on the field, Kaepernick threw passes to receivers Bruce Ellington, Brice Butler, Jordan Veasy and Ari Werts.

Former 49ers teammate Eric Reid, who joined Kaepernick in his kneeling protest and a collusion lawsuit against the league, watched the session from a bench on the sideline.

Reid, who is now a safety for the Carolina Panthers, left the workout about halfway through to get back to Charlotte. His team, in an interesting twist, hosts a game against the Falcons on Sunday.

"I think there could be a positive outcome," Veasy said. "At the end of the day, any progress is good progress."

But Jeff Nalley, Kaepernick's agent, didn't sound as hopeful. His client hasn't played in the NFL since the 2016 season.

"If teams want to see him, they will ask to work him out," he said. "No team asked for this workout."

Nalley said he feared all along that there was "an ulterior motive" behind the NFL's offer to stage an unprecedented, combine-style workout for one player — especially since Kaepernick was given only two hours to accept or reject it. The league turned down his requests to move the workout to a later date or to hold it on a Tuesday, when more coaches and general managers would be likely to attend since that is an off day for most teams.

In a statement, the NFL said it was "disappointed that Colin did not appear for his workout." The league referenced recent negotiations with Kaepernick's representatives over the workout and cited issues that included media availability and a liability waiver.

"Colin's decision has no effect on his status in the league. He remains an unrestricted free agent eligible to sign with any club," the NFL said.

The league in February settled a collusion grievance filed by Kaepernick and Reid.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 53 of 69

Nalley acknowledged that he had already made arrangements for a different site if talks with the league broke down.

"You've always got to have a backup plan," he said.

Kaepernick's representatives said the NFL "demanded" as a precondition for this workout that he sign an "unusual liability waiver." Kaepernick also wanted his own film crew to attend and videotape the session, which the NFL rejected.

Kaepernick worked out under the lights as the sun set behind the trees at one end of the high school stadium, an American flag flapping in a gentle breeze.

At the other end of the field, Kaepernick was cheered on by a fan contingent that kept growing through the session. A police unit arrived to control the crowd. A barbecue truck set up in the parking lot to provide an impromptu dinner option.

When he was done, Kaepernick worked the entire length of the fence, signing hats, shirts and any other item that was tossed over the fence for his autograph.

One of the fans held up a sign.

"I'm With Kap."

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AP Pro Football Writer Rob Maaddi contributed to this report.

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## **Alleged gunman, victim among 6 charged after game shooting**

**By BRUCE SHIPKOWSKI undefined**

Six men have been charged after a shooting at a New Jersey high school football game that critically wounded a 10-year-old boy and sent players and the packed crowd fleeing in panic.

Ibn Abdullah, 27, was the target of the Friday night shooting and was charged because a gun was found on him when emergency responders went to his aid, authorities said. He is in stable condition and will be undergoing surgery.

The 10-year-old remained in critical condition Saturday. A 15-year-old boy was treated for a graze wound.

The shooting happened in the stands of a Friday night playoff game between the Camden Panthers and the Pleasantville Greyhounds. Authorities said it did not appear that any of the men charged had any connection to the game.

"Our community will not be held hostage by a few idiots intent on jeopardizing our safety and the safety of our children," Atlantic County Prosecutor Damon Tyner said in a news release.

Tyner said the shooting was "petty vengeance against one another."

Alvin Wyatt, 31, of Atlantic City, was charged with three counts of attempted murder and two weapons counts. He was captured on the football field moments after the shooting by a Pleasantville officer who was part of the game's security detail.

Three other men face weapons charges, and a fourth faces weapons and eluding charges.

It wasn't known Saturday if any of the six have retained attorneys.

When the shots rang out, panicked spectators and some of the players knocked down a fence in their haste to escape the field. Some children were separated from their parents, and other parents held children tight to keep them from being run over by those fleeing, according to Jonathan Diego, who was at the game in Pleasantville, right outside Atlantic City.

"It was mayhem, literally people coming in waves running away," said Diego, who helped coach a Pleasantville youth football team involved in a game in which three people were shot and wounded in 2005. All survived. That same team was practicing in 2015 when a spectator was shot but survived.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 54 of 69

Diego said his friend, a retired paramedic, gave first aid to the young boy who was shot. At least six gunshots are audible in a video from Jersey Sports Zone, which also shows players stop mid-play, look at the stands and then turn and run. Officials said the game will resume Tuesday at a neutral field, with no spectators allowed. New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy lamented the violence. "Last night was a stark reminder that no community is immune from gun violence, and that we must not ever give up in our efforts to prevent such senseless acts," Murphy said Saturday.

**Bolivian interim leader meets UN envoy amid violence fears**  
By LUIS ANDRES HENAO and JUAN KARITA Associated Press  
SACABA, Bolivia (AP) — A U.N. envoy met with Bolivia's interim president Saturday to find a way out of the country's political crisis while the world body expressed concern the situation could "spin out of control" amid a rising death toll.

On leaving the meeting with interim leader Jeanine Áñez, envoy Jean Arnault said the United Nations hopes it can contribute to an "accelerated pacification process" leading to new elections following the resignation and exile of Evo Morales.

Meanwhile, another international body, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, condemned Áñez's government for issuing a decree it says "exempts from criminal responsibility" soldiers who took part in efforts to break up protests and unrest that have left at least 23 people dead.

The norm was approved before the most violent day since the crisis began, when at least eight pro-Morales coca growers were killed when security forces opened fire during a demonstration.

"It is not a license for the Armed Forces to kill," Presidency Minister Jerjes Justiniano told a press conference. He said the decree is based on the Criminal Code, which states that "if one defends oneself in self-defense, there is no penalty."

Earlier Saturday, U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachelet issued a statement calling the deaths "an extremely dangerous development."

"I am really concerned that the situation in Bolivia could spin out of control if the authorities do not handle it sensitively and in accordance with international norms," she said.

Protesters said police fired Friday when demonstrators tried to cross a military checkpoint in Sacaba, a town near Cochabamba. Many of the protesters were coca leaf growers loyal to Morales, who had been Bolivia's first indigenous president before being pressured to step down by Bolivia's military chief after weeks of widespread protests over a disputed election.

Witnesses to the clash described seeing the bodies of several protesters and dozens of people rushed to hospitals, many covered in blood. On Saturday, Bolivia's national Ombudsman's Office raised the death toll to eight. It said that overall 23 people had been killed in the violence.

Police and soldiers broke up fresh blockades of flaming logs and tractors Saturday on the road linking Sacaba to Cochabamba, but there were no immediate reports of deaths.

Morales, who was granted asylum in Mexico after his Nov. 10 resignation, said on Twitter that a "massacre" had occurred and he described the interim government led by Áñez as a dictatorship.

On Friday, Áñez said Morales would face possible legal charges for election fraud if he returned home from Mexico City. She also has said Morales would not be allowed to participate in a new presidential election, which is supposed to be held within three months.

The ousted leader, meanwhile, contended this week that he is still president since the country's legislature has not yet approved his resignation.

Morales stepped down following nationwide protests over suspected vote-rigging in an Oct. 20 election, which he claimed to have won to gain a fourth term in office. Morales has denied there was fraud, though an Organization of American States audit reported widespread irregularities.

"We're not going to let them make us flee, nor humiliate us. Let me say to Mrs. Áñez that she must denounce this. If not the whole country is going to close in on her," said Enrique Mamani, a local resident.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 55 of 69

"They have carried out a state coup, paid off the military, paid off the police. There's political persecution against our leaders."

Backers of the interim government deny there was any coup against Morales, saying police and the military withdrew backing from him only to avoid shedding civilian blood during the mass protests against him.

Supporters of Morales, who was Bolivia's president for almost 14 years and was the last survivor from the "pink tide" of South American leftist leaders, have been staging disruptive protests since his resignation, setting up blockades that forced closure of schools and caused shortages of gasoline in the capital.

Añez, who had been the highest-ranking opposition official in the Senate, proclaimed herself president after Morales resigned, saying every person in the line of succession ahead of her — all of them Morales backers — had resigned.

The Constitutional Court issued a statement backing her claim that she didn't need to be confirmed by Congress, a body controlled by Morales' Movement Toward Socialism party.

Much of the opposition to Morales sprang from his refusal to accept a referendum that upheld term limits that barred him from seeking another term. He got the courts to declare the limits a violation of his human rights to seek office.

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Associated Press Writers Carlos Valdez and Paola Flores in La Paz contributed to this report.

## White House: Trump undergoes exam at Walter Reed

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

BETHESDA, Md. (AP) — President Donald Trump spent more than two hours at Walter Reed National Medical Center on Saturday for what the White House said were medical tests as part of his annual physical.

The appointment wasn't on Trump's weekend public schedule, and his last physical was in February. Press secretary Stephanie Grisham said the 73-year-old president was "anticipating a very busy 2020" and wanted to take advantage of "a free weekend" in Washington to begin portions of his routine checkup.

She did not specify which tests he'd received or explain why the visit had not been disclosed in advance. Trump's 2018 and 2019 physicals were both announced ahead of time and appeared on his public schedule.

Grisham said after the visit that the president had had "a quick exam and labs" and assured he remains in good health.

"The President remains healthy and energetic without complaints, as demonstrated by his repeated vigorous rally performances in front of thousands of Americans several times a week," she said.

Trump also spent time at the hospital meeting with the family of a special forces soldier injured in Afghanistan. And he visited with medical staff "to share his thanks for all the outstanding care they provide to our Wounded Warriors, and wish them an early happy Thanksgiving," Grisham said.

It was the president's ninth visit to the hospital since taking office.

Walter Reed spokeswoman Sandy Dean said the hospital does not comment on patients who receive care at the facility and referred questions to the White House.

Trump's last checkup in February, 2019 showed he had gained weight in office. At 243 pounds and 6 feet, 3 inches tall, he passed the official threshold for being considered obese, with a Body Mass Index of 30.4.

That checkup, which was supervised by Dr. Sean P. Conley, his physician, took more than four hours and involved a panel of 11 specialists.

"I am happy to announce the President of the United States is in very good health and I anticipate he will remain so for the duration of his Presidency, and beyond," Conley wrote afterward.

Test results were released six days later, showing that Trump weighed 243 pounds — up seven pounds from September 2016, before he became president.

A Body Mass Index rating of 30 is the level at which doctors consider someone obese under the commonly used formula. About 40 percent of Americans are obese, raising the risk for heart disease, diabetes, stroke and some forms of cancer.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 56 of 69

Trump doesn't drink alcohol or smoke, but is known to enjoy fast food, steaks and desserts. His primary form of exercise is golf.

Saturday's test came as House investigators on Capitol Hill were interviewing a White House budget official as part of the impeachment inquiry. Trump has insisted he did nothing wrong.

## Sanders stars with Biden, Warren absent at California forum

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE and MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press

LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Bernie Sanders was greeted with booming cheers at a gathering of California Democrats Saturday, underscoring his popularity with the party's liberal base as he looks to capture the biggest prize in the presidential primary season next year.

The decisions by Joe Biden and Elizabeth Warren to skip a weekend gathering of the California Democratic Party less than three months before voting begins gave rival candidates an opportunity to make inroads with the party's most devoted activists, and Sanders' reception made clear he remains among the favorites. Three years ago, the Vermont senator won 46 percent of the vote in California's 2016 Democratic primary in a losing bid against Hillary Clinton.

He assured the crowd he was in good health, just months after suffering a heart attack, and rose from a chair to his feet to apparently emphasize the point during a candidate forum hosted by Univision, the Spanish-language television station. He earned cheers when fending off suggestions that his agenda was pulling the party too far to the political left. "I don't think so, I honestly don't," he said.

After the forum concluded, dozens of Sanders supporters staged an impromptu rally in the lobby of the convention center, unfurling banners and chanting his slogan, "Not me, us."

The convention stage gave candidates a chance to address devoted Democrats who are the backbone of the party and are coveted for their votes as well as potential volunteers and donors. Mail-in ballots for California's primary will begin going out to voters on Feb. 3, the same day as the Iowa caucuses.

After a long campaign, candidates stuck largely to familiar scripts. But after lagging in polls and fund-raising, former Obama administration housing secretary Julian Castro was confronted with an awkward question: Will he stay in the race?

Yes, he said firmly. The Iowa caucuses are 10 weeks away and that's "10 lifetimes in politics," Castro said.

He also criticized debate rules that could keep him off the stage in the next round. And Castro appeared to take a dig at billionaire rival Tom Steyer, saying "it's wrong that people should be able to buy their way onto the stage, but folks that are working hard shouldn't be able to get on that stage."

Talking later with reporters, Pete Buttigieg acknowledged that he's not well-known among Latinos, but he called it a "huge opportunity" to introduce himself to those voters in California in particular. He said his messages on immigration and health care — he favors allowing anyone to access Medicare without creating a completely government-run system — will resonate with Latinos.

Kamala Harris, meanwhile, kicked off the convention winning the endorsement of United Farm Workers, the union started by labor icons Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez. The union's members, less than 10,000, voted to endorse Harris, offering her a show of home-state support.

On a busy weekend of politicking, Harris played to her home-state strength Friday night at two gatherings at local bars, one hosted by Equality California at a gay bar, where she recounted her record of marrying gay couples in 2004 as San Francisco district attorney and called for greater protections for transgender women.

The crowd roared when she declared herself the candidate who could go toe-to-toe with Donald Trump.

Through the convention hall on Saturday volunteers for various campaigns handed out stickers, led chants and signed up volunteers. Amy Klobuchar served slushies with a construction workers union, while the table for Warren set up plastic cups to represent her different plans and asked voters to place small black "billionaire tears" in the cup marking their favorite plan.

Warren, though, was absent from the gathering.

Sanders has made clear California is a key target for his campaign: He already hired 40 staff members



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 57 of 69

in California, far more than any of his competitors, and is treating the state as comparable to early voting states like Iowa and New Hampshire.

Warren's and Biden's decisions to skip the party gathering drew a rare rebuke from Rusty Hicks, the chair of the state party.

"Your decision is a blatant disregard and disrespect to California's grassroots leaders who make the phone calls, knock the doors, and give the money ... in swing districts and swing states alike ... year after year after year," he tweeted.

This will be the third major gathering of Democratic contenders Biden is skipping in California; he avoided the party's summer convention as well as a Democratic National Committee gathering. Warren attended both.

Biden appeared in the state Thursday, attracting a few hundred people to an outdoor rally at the edge of downtown Los Angeles. He spent Friday raising money in Seattle before heading to Las Vegas for a town hall Saturday. Warren planned to spend Saturday in Iowa, the first state to vote.

Yet Biden remains among a cluster of rivals with no clear front-runner, state and national polls suggest. Some California Democrats speculate Biden is avoiding the crowd because it's made up of activists known to heckle more centrist candidates, particularly those who don't support Medicare for All. And, indeed, the large group of Sanders supporters almost certainly would have had a different greeting for Biden.

Others speaking at the Saturday night forum were New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker and businessman Andrew Yang.

Stacy Fortner of Valencia, California, also said she's leaning toward supporting either Harris or Buttigieg. Fortner, a 50-year-old IT worker, said she liked Harris's comments on gun control as the mother of a daughter who knew some of the victims in this week's shooting in Santa Clarita.

In 2016, she supported Sanders in the primary. She still likes what he has to say but is concerned about his age, she said, and thinks some of his supporters are "off-putting."

"I love their passion and I love their vigor but sometimes they take it too far," she said.

## Testimony ties president closer to pressure on Ukraine

By **LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and MICHAEL BALSAMO** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gordon Sondland, President Donald Trump's emissary to the European Union, had a message when he met with a top Ukrainian official.

Sondland said vital U.S. military assistance to Ukraine might be freed up if the country's top prosecutor "would go to the mike and announce that he was opening the Burisma investigation," a U.S. official told lawmakers. Burisma is the gas company in Ukraine where Democrat Joe Biden's son Hunter served on the board.

Sondland relayed the exchange moments later to Tim Morrison, then a National Security Council aide. In his private testimony to impeachment investigators made public Saturday, Morrison recounted that Sondland also told him he was discussing the Ukraine matters directly with Trump.

Morrison's testimony ties Trump more closely to the central charge from Democrats pursuing impeachment: that Trump held up U.S. military aid to Ukraine in exchange for investigations into Democrats and Biden's family. Morrison's testimony also contradicts much of what Sondland told congressional investigators during his own closed-door deposition, which the ambassador later amended.

Both Morrison and Sondland are scheduled to testify publicly next week as part of the historic, high-stakes impeachment proceedings into the nation's 45th president. Democrats charge that Trump abused his office for personal political gain, while the president and his allies argue that the process is politically motivated and that nothing in the testimony so far meets the bar for impeachment.

Transcripts from the closed-door testimony from Morrison, a longtime Republican defense hawk in Washington, and Jennifer Williams, a special adviser to Vice President Mike Pence on Russia and Europe, were released Saturday as investigators accelerated and deepened the probe. They provided another window into the alarm within the government over Ukraine pressure.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 58 of 69

Immediately after the exchange with Sondland during an international gathering in Warsaw, Morrison called his boss, John Bolton, then Trump's national security adviser.

"Stay out of it," Bolton told him, "brief the lawyers."

For Morrison, Burisma was a catch-all for a "bucket" of investigations — of Democrats and the family of Joe Biden — that he wanted to "stay away from." They had nothing to do with "the proper policy process that I was involved in on Ukraine," he testified.

Morrison said Sondland and Trump had spoken approximately five times between July 15 and Sept. 11 — the weeks that \$391 million in U.S. assistance was withheld from Ukraine before it was released.

While some, including Trump himself, have begun to question Sondland's knowledge of events, Morrison told House investigators the ambassador "related to me he was acting — he was discussing these matters with the President."

Pressed by Rep. Adam Schiff, the Democratic chairman of the Intelligence Committee leading the probe, as to whether Sondland had actually spoken to the president, Morrison said he had verified it each time.

Pence, so far, has been a more unseen figure in the impeachment inquiry, but testimony from Williams raised fresh questions about what Pence knew about Trump's actions toward Ukraine.

Pence was also at the Warsaw gathering. For the new government of Ukraine, situated between NATO allies and Russia, the security aid Congress had already approved was a lifeline to the West.

Williams was among the staffers in the White House Situation Room who listened and took notes during Trump's July 25 call when he asked Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for "a favor." A whistleblower's complaint about that call helped spark the House impeachment investigation.

Williams testified that Trump's discussion on the call of specific investigations struck her as "unusual and inappropriate" and seemed to point to "other motivations" for holding up the military aid.

After the call, Williams told investigators, she put the White House's rough transcript into the vice president's daily briefing book.

"I just don't know if he read it," she said.

Williams corroborated the testimony of a previous witness, Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, an NSC aide on the call, who said the White House dropped the word "Burisma" from the transcript. She said in an addendum to her testimony that Zelenskyy had mentioned the word "Burisma" in the call.

Vindman and Williams are scheduled to testify together during a public impeachment hearing on Tuesday morning.

The White House's decision to put the transcript of the July 25 call on a highly classified server has drawn keen interest throughout the probe. But Morrison said the unusual move was unintentional.

Morrison said he was concerned if the call got out it would be politically damaging. He talked to White House lawyer John Eisenberg and they agreed that access should be restricted, he testified.

But Morrison said Eisenberg later told him that he did not intend for the call summary to be placed on a highly classified server. Eisenberg's staff apparently put it there by mistake, he said.

As the transcripts were released, impeachment investigators wrapped up a rare Saturday session interviewing Mark Sandy, a little-known career official at the Office of Management and Budget who was involved in key meetings about the aid package.

Sandy's name had barely come up in previous testimony. But it did on one particular date: July 25, the day of Trump's call with Zelenskyy. That day, a legal document with Sandy's signature directed a freeze of the security funds to Ukraine, according to testimony.

Throughout Morrison's account, he largely confirmed testimony from current and former officials about what has been described as a shadow diplomacy being run by Trump's personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, often at odds with U.S. national security interests.

A few days after the Warsaw meeting, Sondland was on the phone telling Morrison Sept. 7 he had just gotten off a call with the president.

Morrison said Sondland related that Trump assured him there were no strings being attached to the military aid for Ukraine.

"The president told him there was no quid pro quo, but President Zelenskiy must announce the opening of the investigations and he should want to do it," Morrison testified.

Morrison had what he called a "sinking feeling" that the aid may not ultimately be released. About that time, three congressional committees said they were launching inquiries into efforts by Trump and Giuliani to investigate the Bidens.

At a Sept. 11 meeting at the White House, Pence and GOP Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio "convinced the president that the aid should be disbursed immediately," said Morrison, who said he was briefed about the meeting but did not attend it. "The case was made to the president that it was the appropriate and prudent thing to do."

Associated Press writers Matthew Daly and Cal Woodward in Washington and Kathleen Ronayne in Long Beach, California, contributed to this report.

## Warren pushes back on critics of her health care plan

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WAVERLY, Iowa (AP) — Elizabeth Warren pushed back against critics of her newly released plan to phase in implementation of a single-payer health care system, insisting Saturday that she is "fully committed" to Medicare for All and that she plans to first build on existing health care programs because "people need help right now."

"My commitment to Medicare for All is all the way," Warren told reporters, responding to critics who've questioned the timing behind the release of her implementation plan.

On Friday, the Massachusetts Democrat released a plan outlining how she would transition to a full Medicare for All program, first by using executive action to bring down drug and health care prices and by pushing Congress to pass a bill giving Americans the option to buy in to an expanded government-run Medicare plan. Warren says she'll then work with Congress to pass pieces of a universal coverage proposal more gradually, with the whole thing being ready "no later than" her third year in office.

The transition plan drew criticism from opposing campaigns, with a spokeswoman for Joe Biden accusing Warren of "muddying the waters" on health care and South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg's campaign calling it "transparently political."

Several Democratic candidates, including Biden and Buttigieg, have proposed plans similar to the first phase of Warren's health care plan, which would allow Americans to buy into a public option. Asked about the difference between her plan and Buttigieg's, Warren said that "mine is about actually giving people Medicare for All that is going to be full health care coverage," and outlined ways in which she says her public option would offer more expansive health care coverage than those proposed by Buttigieg or Biden.

Warren also brushed off critics, insisting that she released the plan now because "right now is when it's ready" and that the details she's proposed are clear.

"Look, I've shown how we can do this without raising middle class taxes by 1 penny. I've shown how we can do this to get help immediately for people," she said. "It's all laid out, it's all on the website."

But the latest rollout has underscored the political challenge she faces on Medicare for All, a policy some of her more centrist opponents have argued would hurt Democrats in the general election by turning off moderates and swing voters worried about too much government involvement in personal health care decisions. On Saturday, Warren characterized her plan as in fact allowing Americans to have "health care decisions that are just you and your doctor," rather than having intermediaries like drug companies involved in the process.

Warren has however faced persistent questions about the implementation of her plan, first on cost and now on timing. This release comes two weeks after she unveiled a much-scrutinized plan to pay for Medicare for All, which proposed raising most of the additional \$20.5 trillion her campaign says would be needed from taxes on businesses, wealthy people and investors — not the middle class. But some experts criticized that proposal for underestimating how much universal health care would really cost.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 60 of 69

Now, her decision to delay passage of a full single-payer plan until well into her presidency has been criticized by some as an acknowledgement that some of what her opponents say is true: That Medicare for All will be too politically difficult to pass initially. The move could open her up to criticism from supporters of Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who wrote the original Medicare for All bill and who argues on the stump for wholesale institutional change over incremental solutions,

Asked whether the move to break up implementation into two phases was an acknowledgement that passing a single-payer plan may be politically unfeasible, Warren told reporters, however, that "I don't see it that way at all."

She said she saw an "intense need ... for relief, so my plan is first to do the things that as president I'll be able to do on my own."

Warren did seem to suggest, however, that the politics would get easier once Americans see what she's proposing about bringing people into the program gradually.

"When we've got tens of millions of people in the system, we've got lots of allies in the system," she said. "We'll transition to Medicare for All."

## Protests grip major Iran cities over gas prices; 1 killed

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Protesters angered by Iran raising government-set gasoline prices by 50% blocked traffic in major cities and occasionally clashed with police Saturday after a night of demonstrations punctuated by gunfire, in violence that reportedly killed at least one person.

The protests put renewed pressure on Iran's government as it struggles to overcome the U.S. sanctions strangling the country after President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Though largely peaceful, demonstrations devolved into violence in several instances, with online videos purporting to show police officers firing tear gas at protesters and mobs setting fires. While representing a political risk for President Hassan Rouhani ahead of February parliamentary elections, it also shows the widespread anger among Iran's 80 million people who have seen their savings evaporate amid scarce jobs and the national rial currency's collapse.

The demonstrations took place in over a dozen cities in the hours following Rouhani's decision early Friday to cut gasoline subsidies to fund handouts for Iran's poor. Gasoline in the country still remains among the cheapest in the world, with the new prices jumping up to a minimum of 15,000 rials per liter of gas — 50% up from the day before. That's 13 cents a liter, or about 50 cents a gallon. A gallon of regular gasoline in the U.S. costs \$2.60 by comparison.

But in a nation where many get by as informal taxi drivers, cheap gasoline is considered a birthright. Iran is home to the world's fourth-largest crude oil reserves. While expected for months, the decision still caught many by surprise and sparked immediate demonstrations overnight.

Violence broke out Friday night in Sirjan, a city some 800 kilometers (500 miles) southeast of Tehran. The state-run IRNA news agency said "protesters tried to set fire to the oil depot, but they were stopped by police." It did not elaborate, but online videos circulating on Iranian social media purported to show a fire at the depot as sirens wailed in the background. Another showed a large crowd shouting: "Rouhani, shame on you! Leave the country alone!"

Mohammad Mahmoudabadi, an Interior Ministry official in Sirjan, later told state television that police and demonstrators exchanged gunfire, wounding several. He said many protestors were peaceful, but later masked men armed with guns and knives infiltrated the demonstration.

"They insisted on reaching the oil depot and creating crises," Mahmoudabadi said.

The semi-official ISNA news agency later quoted Mahmoudabadi as saying the violence killed one person.

In Iran's oil-rich Khuzestan province, online videos purported to show police firing tear gas on crowds. The province's city of Khorramshahr also saw gunfire, as could be heard in a brief clip played on air by state television. The region has long been a political tinderbox, with its ethnic Arab population that feels

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 61 of 69

disenfranchised from the country's Persian-language majority.

Saturday morning, the start of the Iranian workweek, saw protesters stop cars on major roadways across the capital, Tehran. Peaceful protesters blocked traffic on Tehran's Imam Ali Highway, calling for police to join them as the season's first snow fell, according to online videos. A dump truck later dropped bricks on the roadway to cheers.

A large crowd in the city of Kermanshah demonstrated and later drew tear gas fire from police, a video showed. Others reportedly clashed in Tabriz, another major Iranian city. The online videos corresponded to Associated Press reporting on the protest.

Such protests require prior approval from Iran's Interior Ministry, though authorities routinely allow small-scale demonstrations over economic issues, especially as the country has struggled with currency devaluation. Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli later warned on state TV that authorities would crack down on anyone threatening the nation's security.

It wasn't immediately clear if police made arrests. Iranian state television aired a segment Friday night trying to dispute the claims of opposition satellite news channels about the protests, calling their videos of demonstrations "fake news" in English. Demonstrators in many online videos Saturday began identifying the time and place in response.

Iranian internet access meanwhile saw disruptions and outages Friday night into Saturday, according to the group NetBlocks, which monitors worldwide internet access. By Saturday night, "real-time network data show connectivity has fallen to just 7% of ordinary levels following 12 hours of progressive network disconnections as public protests have continued across the country," NetBlocks said.

"The ongoing disruption is the most severe recorded in Iran since President Rouhani came to power, and the most severe disconnection tracked by NetBlocks in any country in terms of its technical complexity and breadth," the group said. The websites of state media outlets appeared affected by the outage early Sunday.

Protester chants mirrored many from the late 2017 economic protests, which resulted in nearly 5,000 reported arrests and at least 25 people being killed. Some criticized Iran's spending abroad on Palestinians and others while the country's people remain poor. Protests meanwhile continue in Iraq and Lebanon, two Mideast nations home to Iranian proxies and crucial to Tehran's influence abroad.

Iran long has suffered economic problems since its 1979 Islamic Revolution cut off its decades-long relationship with the U.S. Its eight-year war with Iraq in the 1980s followed, further straining its economy.

The collapse of the nuclear deal has exacerbated those problems. The Iranian rial, which traded at 32,000 to \$1 at the time of the accord, fell to 122,600 to \$1 in trading Saturday. Iran has since begun breaking terms of the deal as it tries to force Europe to come up with a way to allow it to sell crude oil abroad despite American sanctions.

Henry Rome, an analyst at the Eurasia Group, said that after mass protests, Rouhani was forced to back down from a 2017 plan to increase fuel prices by 50%.

"The government was clearly attuned to this risk: The latest announcement was made in the middle of the night before a weekend," Rome said. "It took effect immediately, and it was announced without direct consultation with lawmakers."

## Prince Andrew denies claims of Epstein accuser in interview

By JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Prince Andrew offered a detailed rebuttal Saturday to claims he had sex with a woman who says she was trafficked by Jeffrey Epstein, providing an alibi for one of the alleged encounters and questioning the authenticity of a well-known photograph that shows him posing with the woman.

In a rare interview with BBC Newsnight, Andrew categorically denied having sex with the woman, Virginia Roberts Giuffre, saying, "It didn't happen."

He said he has "no recollection" of ever meeting her and told an interviewer there are "a number of things that are wrong" about Giuffre's account.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 62 of 69

Giuffre has said Epstein forced her to have sex with Andrew in 2001 when she was 17. She says Epstein flew her around the world on his private planes to have sex with powerful men, and that she had sexual encounters with Andrew in London and New York and in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"I can absolutely categorically tell you it never happened," Andrew said.

A request for comment was sent to Giuffre's representative. Giuffre recently challenged the British royal to speak out, telling reporters in New York, "He knows exactly what he's done."

"And the answer is nothing," Andrew told BBC.

Andrew's decision to grant the interview was seen in Britain as a high-stakes gamble in a country where the royals don't normally talk with reporters on subjects beyond their charitable works.

The nation's newspapers, most of which featured photos from the interview along with the pre-released excerpts on their front pages Saturday, speculated that the prince thought he had no other choice after months of tawdry headlines that threatened his ability to continue working as a royal.

"This is the gambling equivalent of betting the house on the last spin of the roulette wheel," royal writer Richard Kay said in the Daily Mail. "And Andrew has put it all on black."

In the wide-ranging interview, Andrew suggested a photograph Giuffre produced of her posing with Andrew could have been doctored, saying he "can't be certain" that it actually shows his hand on the woman's side.

He said he was "at a loss to explain" the image, adding he is not given to public displays of affection. He said it also shows him wearing "traveling clothes," noting he typically wears a suit and tie when he goes out in London, where the photograph purportedly was taken.

"I'm afraid to say that I don't believe that photograph was taken in the way that has been suggested," he said. "If the original was ever produced, then perhaps we might be able to solve it but I can't."

Confronted with details of Giuffre's claims, Andrew insisted he was home with his children on one of the nights Giuffre claims they had sex, saying it "couldn't have happened." He said he specifically recalled taking his daughter to a party at a Pizza Express that afternoon.

Andrew sought to cast doubt on other parts of Giuffre's account, including her recollection of Andrew sweating on her as they danced in a London night club.

Andrew told BBC he has a "peculiar medical condition, which is that I don't sweat or I didn't sweat at the time" after suffering an "overdose of adrenaline" after being shot at in the Falklands War, the 1982 conflict between Argentina and the United Kingdom.

"It was almost impossible for me to sweat," he said.

Andrew also said he regrets not cutting ties with Epstein after the financier pleaded guilty in 2008 to soliciting a minor for prostitution in Florida under a deal that required him to serve 13 months in jail and register as a sex offender.

He saw Epstein following his release from custody in Florida and stayed at his New York mansion for several days. He said he ended his friendship with Epstein during that visit and did not have further contact with him.

"It was the wrong decision to go and see him in 2010," Andrew said. "I kick myself for (it) on a daily basis because it was not something that was becoming of a member of the royal family."

Epstein, who rubbed shoulders with the elite and politically powerful, killed himself this summer while awaiting trial on federal sex-trafficking charges. He had been accused of sexually abusing dozens of women.

Andrew did not rule out cooperating with the ongoing federal investigation in the United States into Epstein's associates, saying he would follow his lawyers' advice.

Giuffre's lawyers have said they also want to depose Andrew.

"If push came to shove and the legal advice was to do so, then I would be duty bound to do so," Andrew said.

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Associated Press writer Danica Kirka contributed reporting from London.

## Sandy Hook lawsuit could force Remington to open books

By LISA MARIE PANE Associated Press

A recent ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court has upended a longstanding legal roadblock that has given the gun industry far-reaching immunity from lawsuits in the aftermath of mass killings.

The court this week allowed families of victims of the 2012 Sandy Hook school massacre to sue the maker of the AR-15 used in the attack. The case against Remington will now proceed in the Connecticut courts.

Remington is widely expected to win the case, but critics of the gun industry are eyeing what they see as a significant outcome even in the face of defeat: getting the gunmaker to open its books about how it markets firearms.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs are certain to request that Remington turn over volumes of documents as part of the discovery phase, providing a rare window into the inner-workings of how a major gun manufacturer markets its weapons. Those materials might include company emails, memos, business plans and corporate strategies, or anything that might suggest the company purposely marketed the firearm that may have compelled the shooter to use the weapon to carry out the slaughter.

The plaintiffs also believe the ruling will put gun companies on notice about how they conduct business knowing they could wind up in the courts in similar fashion.

"If the industry wakes up and understands their conduct behind closed doors is not protected, then the industry itself ... will take steps to try to help the massive problem we have instead of do nothing and sit by and cash the checks," said Joshua Koskoff, the Connecticut attorney who represents a survivor and relatives of nine victims who died at the Newtown, Connecticut, school on Dec. 14, 2012.

The case hinges on Connecticut state consumer law that challenges how the firearm used by the Newtown shooter — a Bushmaster XM15-E2S rifle — was marketed, with plaintiffs alleging Remington purposely used advertisements that targeted younger, at-risk males. In one of Remington's ads, it features the rifle against a plain backdrop and the phrase: "Consider Your Man Card Reissued."

Remington did not respond to requests for comment after the U.S. Supreme Court denied its efforts to quash the lawsuit.

Larry Keane, senior vice president and legal counsel for the National Shooting Sports Foundation, which represents gunmakers, said he anticipates Remington will ultimately prevail and that it's unfair to blame the gunmaker for Adam Lanza's crime.

"Adam Lanza alone is the responsible person. Not Remington," he said.

Suing the firearms industry has never been easy, and it was made even harder after Congress enacted the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act in 2005. The law backed by the National Rifle Association gave broad immunity to the gun industry.

The chances of the plaintiffs ultimately succeeding in this case are slim — a sentiment shared by the Connecticut Supreme Court, which said they face a "Herculean task" to prevail.

Judges and juries generally have a tough time blaming anyone but the shooter for the crime, said Timothy D. Lytton, professor at Georgia State University's College of Law and author of "Suing the Gun Industry: A Battle at the Crossroads of Gun Control and Mass Torts."

Add into the mix that Lanza himself didn't own the firearm; he stole it from his mother after killing her in the home they shared, then went to the elementary school in Newtown, where he killed 20 children and six adults.

"It makes it harder for juries to connect the dots. It's a significant hurdle in all of these cases. It's very rare that you have a very close timeframe between the marketing of a weapon and a mass shooting," Lytton said.

Lanza's mother purchased the Bushmaster AR-platform rifle in 2010 from a Connecticut gun shop. It's unclear if she or her son were influenced by or had seen Remington's advertising.

Still, it's been a tough few years for the industry. Sales plummeted with the election of President Donald Trump, and gun-control advocates have outspent perhaps his most loyal supporter: the NRA. With slumping sales, some companies, including Remington, have faced bankruptcy. And in the wake of high-profile

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 64 of 69

mass shootings, corporate America has begun pushing back against the industry.

AR-platform long guns have been a particular bone of contention for gun-control advocates who believe the firearms — once banned for a decade in the U.S. — are especially attractive to mass shooters for their ease of use and their ability to carry large capacity magazines.

While handguns remain used more often in mass shootings, ARs have been involved in some of the deadliest shootings, including when a gunman fired on a crowd of concertgoers outside his hotel room in Las Vegas in 2017, killing 58 people and wounding hundreds.

The AR-15, its design based on the military M-16, has become one of the most popular firearms in the U.S. in recent decades. Lightweight, easy to customize and able to carry extended magazines, sales took off once the ban expired in 2004. There are now an estimated 16 million AR-platform long guns in the U.S.

Robert J. Spitzer, chairman of political science at the State University of New York at Cortland and a longtime watcher of gun politics, said a case against Remington could cause “pretty embarrassing information” to come out.

“And it is certainly possible they will find memos or other documents that may significantly support their case that Remington was manifestly irresponsible in the way they marketed their guns,” Spitzer said.

Even if embarrassing information isn’t uncovered, he said, it could have a long-lasting impact on the industry and, more specifically, Remington. Considered the oldest gunmaker in the United States, Remington — founded in New York in 1816 and now based in Madison, North Carolina — only emerged from bankruptcy in 2018.

“They’re obviously in a precarious financial situation and this suit is certainly not helpful to them trying to restore their financial health,” Spitzer said.

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Associated Press reporter Dave Collins in Hartford, Connecticut, contributed to this report.

## Czechs use anniversary of Velvet Revolution to pressure PM

By KAREL JANICEK Associated Press

PRAGUE (AP) — About a quarter of a million Czechs gathered on the 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution that brought an end to decades of communist rule in the country to give Prime Minister Andrej Babis an ultimatum — sell your business or quit your job.

Protesters from across the Czech Republic attended Saturday’s demonstration, the second massive protest opposing Babis at Letna park, the scene of massive gatherings in 1989 that greatly contributed to the fall of communism.

Police estimated some 250,000 people attended the demonstration.

The demonstrators see the populist billionaire and his ally, pro-Russian President Milos Zeman as a threat to democracy. They have given Babis a deadline of Dec. 31 to get rid of his business and media empire or resign.

“We won’t give up until you’re gone,” said Mikulas Minar, a student who put his studies on hold to lead a group called Million Moments for Democracy that organizes the demonstrations against Babis.

Babis was required to transfer ownership of his businesses that includes a conglomerate of some 250 companies and two major newspapers to two trust funds in February 2017.

But his critics, including Transparency International, say he still maintains control and a preliminary European Union report leaked to media concluded the same, saying Babis is in a position to influence the EU subsidies companies receive.

Babis denies wrongdoing and says there’s no reason for him to resign.

“It’s great that people can express their view and nobody persecutes and attacks them,” Babis said.

Over 250,000 were at the previous rally at the same place in June which was considered the biggest anti-government protest since the end of communism.

“Resign, resign,” the crowd chanted, facing a banner on the big stage that read “We want healthy democracy.”



# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 65 of 69

Babis also faces allegations that he collaborated with Czechoslovakia's secret police before 1989, and has been criticized for his government's power-sharing deal he signed July 10 last year that gave the Communist Party a role in governing for the first time since the Velvet Revolution.

The Communists are not part of the minority coalition government of Babis' centrist ANO movement and the left-leaning Social Democrats but enabled the government's creation by supporting it in a confidence vote.

Babis' movement won the parliamentary election on October 2017 but his first minority government lost a confidence vote in January 2018 and had to resign. Zeman asked him to form a government again.

"I'm here because I consider Babis and Zeman an evil," said Zbynek Fiedler, who traveled 350 kilometers (220 miles) from the eastern city of Ostrava to Prague with friends.

"They destroy our society," the 68-year-old pensioner said.

The organizers are set to announce a new wave of protests on Jan. 7 if Babis doesn't meet their demands.

## Big study casts doubt on need for many heart procedures

By **MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP Chief Medical Writer**

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — People with severe but stable heart disease from clogged arteries may have less chest pain if they get a procedure to improve blood flow rather than just giving medicines a chance to help, but it won't cut their risk of having a heart attack or dying over the following few years, a big federally funded study found.

The results challenge medical dogma and call into question some of the most common practices in heart care. They are the strongest evidence yet that tens of thousands of costly stent procedures and bypass operations each year are unnecessary or premature for people with stable disease.

That's a different situation than a heart attack, when a procedure is needed right away to restore blood flow.

For non-emergency cases, the study shows "there's no need to rush" into invasive tests and procedures, said New York University's Dr. Judith Hochman.

There might even be harm: To doctors' surprise, study participants who had a procedure were more likely to suffer a heart problem or die over the next year than those treated with medicines alone.

Hochman co-led the study and gave results Saturday at an American Heart Association conference in Philadelphia.

"This study clearly goes against what has been the common wisdom for the last 30, 40 years" and may lead to less testing and invasive treatment for such patients in the future, said Dr. Glenn Levine, a Baylor College of Medicine cardiologist with no role in the research. Some doctors still may quibble with the study, but it was very well done "and I think the results are extremely believable," he said.

About 17 million Americans have clogged arteries that crimp the heart's blood supply, which can cause periodic chest pain. Cheap and generic aspirin, cholesterol-lowering drugs and blood pressure medicines are known to cut the risk of a heart attack for these folks, but many doctors also recommend a procedure to improve blood flow.

That's either a bypass — open-heart surgery to detour around blockages — or angioplasty, in which doctors push a tube through an artery to the clog, inflate a tiny balloon and place a stent, or mesh scaffold, to prop the artery open.

Twelve years ago, a big study found that angioplasty was no better than medicines for preventing heart attacks and deaths in non-emergency heart patients, but many doctors balked at the results and quarreled with the methods.

So the federal government spent \$100 million for the new study, which is twice as large, spanned 37 countries and included people with more severe disease — a group most likely to benefit from stents or a bypass.

All 5,179 participants had stress tests, usually done on a treadmill, that suggested blood flow was crimped. All were given lifestyle advice and medicines that improve heart health. Half also were given CT scans to

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 66 of 69

rule out dangerous blockages, then continued on their medicines.

The others were treated as many people with abnormal stress tests are now: They were taken to cardiac catheterization labs for angiograms. The procedure involves placing a tube into a major artery and using special dyes to image the heart's blood vessels. Blockages were treated right away, with angioplasty in three-fourths of cases and a bypass in the rest.

Doctors then tracked how many in each group suffered a heart attack, heart-related death, cardiac arrest or hospitalization for worsening chest pain or heart failure.

After one year, 7% in the invasively treated group had one of those events versus 5% of those on medicines alone. At four years, the trend reversed — 13% of the procedures group and 15% of the medicines group had suffered a problem. Averaged across the entire study period, the rates were similar regardless of treatment.

If stents and bypasses did not carry risks of their own, "I think the results would have shown an overall benefit" from them, said another study leader, Dr. David Maron of Stanford University. "But that's not what we found. We found an early harm and later benefit, and they canceled each other out."

Why might medicines have proved just as effective at reducing risks?

Bypasses and stents fix only a small area. Medicines affect all the arteries, including other spots that might be starting to clog, experts said.

Drugs also have improved a lot in recent years.

Having a procedure did prove better at reducing chest pain, though. Of those who had pain daily or weekly when they entered the study, half in the stent-or-bypass group were free of it within a year versus 20% of those on medicines alone. A placebo effect may have swayed these results — people who know they had a procedure tend to credit it with any improvement they perceive in symptoms.

Dr. Alice Jacobs, a Boston University cardiologist who led a treatment-guidelines panel a few years ago, said any placebo effect fades with time, and people with a lot of chest pain that's unrelieved by medicines still may want a procedure.

"It's intuitive that if you take the blockage away you're going to do better, you're going to feel better," but the decision is up to the patient and doctor, she said.

The bottom line: There's no harm in trying medicines first, especially for people with no or little chest pain, doctors said.

When told they have a problem that can be fixed with a stent, "the grand majority of patients in my experience will opt to undergo that procedure" to get improvement right away, said Dr. Jay Giri, a cardiologist at the University of Pennsylvania with no role in the study.

Maryann Byrnes-Alvarado is not among them. The 66-year-old New York City woman said she joined the study six years ago after having trouble walking, which "scared me to death," but so did the idea of a heart procedure.

She was relieved when she was assigned to the medication treatment group. Her doctor altered her blood pressure medicine, added a cholesterol drug and aspirin, and adjusted her diet. Now her risk factor numbers are better and she can walk again without difficulty.

"I believe I got the best care that I could get" and avoided an operation, she said.

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Marilynn Marchione can be followed on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/MMarchioneAP>

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## Young Venetians volunteer after flood of their lifetimes

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

VENICE, Italy (AP) — As soon as waters receded from this week's devastating flood, about 50 young Venetians wearing rubber boots and gripped by a sense of determination showed up at the city's Music Conservatory to help save precious manuscripts.

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 67 of 69

Thanks to their work, some 50 linear meters of archival manuscripts, dating from as far back as the 1500s, lay strewn in the conservatory's upper floors to dry when Italian Culture Minister Dario Franceschini visited this weekend.

"This is our city," said Laura Franco, a student at Venice's Music Conservatory who showed up with a handful of friends Saturday morning.

A growing network of more than 2,000 young Venetians are responding to the worst flood in their lifetimes to help salvage what they can, wherever help is needed.

Modeling their network after the so-called "Mud Angels" who famously poured into Florence from all over the world after the 1966 flood swamped that city's treasures with mud from the Arno, these youth are calling themselves "Angels of the Salt," for the corrosive, destructive saline content of the lagoon water.

Social media allows them to be mustered where there is the greatest need. On Saturday that was the island of Burano and the hardest-hit area, the barrier island of Pellestrina, where one man died in Tuesday night's floods.

"We are going to bookshops, to libraries, to shops and restaurants, giving them a hand to try to help out. And when we find a lot of trash piling up, we organize carts to clean it up so it doesn't go in the water," said Vittorio da Mosto.

Many have been helping out at the aptly named "Acqua Alta" bookstore, which poked fun at the frequent high tides that until recently would typically rise playfully and recede, as if another tourist attraction. But this week, the bookstore was completely swamped, with the invading lagoon nearly floating a gondola that serves as a book display and waterlogging countless books.

"I lost thousands and thousands of books, worth thousands and thousands of euros," Luigi Frizzo said ruefully as he instructed the volunteers to bring the ruined books to a nearby boat for disposal.

Institutions like the Venice Music Conservatory limited the volunteers to current and former students after an enthusiastic first-day turnout of the so-called "Angels."

"The problem was trying to stop all the volunteers. There were too many arriving with wet boots. We need people with some expertise," the conservatory's president, Giovanni Giol, said "We said thank you, but these are historic and they need to be handled with care."

Giol said the manuscripts will be saved "thanks to the work of the volunteers."

Irene Maria Giussani, a 22-year-old viola student, has been using absorbent paper to help prevent ink on the manuscripts from running, and standing up books, including precious volumes containing all of Wagner's opera, to dry.

"It is mostly a disaster for the manuscripts, because for some there aren't even copies," Giussani said. "It means the music is lost forever. As musicians, we know what that means."

The most precious manuscripts were being transported on Saturday to Bologna and Florence, where they will be frozen in order to block any mold and also help push out the salt.

The Venice Music Conservatory's archive was one of the hardest hit in the city.

Renovated and reopened with fanfare just five years ago, it was — inauspiciously, as it turns out — put on the ground floor because the upper floors could not bear the weight, Giol said. The previous administration also believed that since the area of the city is one of the higher ones, it would be safer from Venice's frequent floods.

That perception changed dramatically with Tuesday's 1.87-meter tide — the highest since 1966 when Venice was flooded along with Florence. Those events created a network of international conservation groups that continue to work to restore treasures to this day.

The water only covered the lowest shelf of the archives by about a centimeter, Giol said, but the paper quickly absorbed the liquid, spreading the damage. He said water damage was limited to about 5% of the documents, and just 1% of those are considered ruined.

Most of the most famous works, including by composers like Rossini, Cimarosa and Monteverdi, were not touched by the water, Giol said.

When they renovate the library now, Giol said first consideration will be to raise the level by at least a

# Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 68 of 69

meter.

"If it is touched again by water, that means the water would rise another 70 or 80 centimeters, which would be a catastrophe. Books will become the last of the problems," he said.

Damage at the nearby Accademia Gallery — home to the famed Vitruvian Man which is on loan to the Louvre for the 500th anniversary of Leonardo's death — was limited to some recently acquired space in the former seat of the affiliated Fine Arts Academy.

Water seeped into the walls, up to about 10 centimeters, but spared a series of plaster statues by Canova, that were on squat wooden pedestals just high enough to have avoided disaster.

The gallery was opened the day after the flood, one of the few among Venetian attractions, in a pointed signal of the city's resilience; 800 visitors came. The Biennale, the bi-annual contemporary art fair that closes next weekend, re-opened to the public on Thursday and received over 1,500 visitors.

Accademia Gallery Director Giulio Manieri Elia said that reinforced walls prevent water from entering the recently renovated areas of the gallery, which houses masterpieces by Tintoretto, Veronese and Giorgione, among others.

While relieved that the Canova plaster models were spared, Elia worried about the fate of the original tile floors. The real damage from the lagoon floods, as has been documented at St. Mark's Cathedral in the lowest part of the city, comes as the salt is drawn into the brick.

"In the coming months, the floors will become white with salt," Elia said. "I don't have a lot of experience. I think we need to wash it with fresh water to make the salt come out."

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Nov. 17, the 321st day of 2019. There are 44 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 17, 1800, Congress held its first session in the partially completed U.S. Capitol building.

On this date:

In 1558, Elizabeth I acceded to the English throne upon the death of her half-sister, Queen Mary, beginning a 44-year reign.

In 1869, the Suez Canal opened in Egypt.

In 1889, the Union Pacific Railroad Co. began direct, daily railroad service between Chicago and Portland, Oregon, as well as Chicago and San Francisco.

In 1911, the African-American fraternity Omega Psi Phi was founded at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman, in an address to a special session of Congress, called for emergency aid to Austria, Italy and France. (The aid was approved the following month.)

In 1970, the Soviet Union landed an unmanned, remote-controlled vehicle on the moon, the Lunokhod 1.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon told Associated Press managing editors in Orlando, Florida: "People have got to know whether or not their president is a crook. Well, I'm not a crook."

In 1979, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini (ah-yah-TOH'-lah hoh-MAY'-nee) ordered the release of 13 black and/or female American hostages being held at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran.

In 1997, 62 people, most of them foreign tourists, were killed when militants opened fire at the Temple of Hatshepsut (haht-shehp-SOOT') in Luxor, Egypt; the attackers were killed by police.

In 2002, Abba Eban (AH'-bah EE'-ban), the statesman who helped persuade the world to approve creation of Israel and dominated Israeli diplomacy for decades, died near Tel Aviv; he was 87.

In 2003, Arnold Schwarzenegger was sworn in as the 38th governor of California.

In 2006, former "Seinfeld" star Michael Richards unleashed a barrage of racial epithets during a stand-up routine at the Laugh Factory in West Hollywood.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Sunday, Nov. 17, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 139 ~ 69 of 69**

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama held formal, closed-door talks in Beijing with Chinese President Hu Jintao (hoo jin-tow). Sarah Palin's autobiography "Going Rogue" was released; 1 million copies sold in less than two weeks.

Five years ago: Pope Francis confirmed that he would be attending the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in Sept. 2015. Dr. Martin Salia, a surgeon who'd contracted Ebola in his native Sierra Leone, died at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, two days after being admitted. Jimmy Ruffin, 78, the Motown singer whose hits included "What Becomes of the Brokenhearted," died in Las Vegas.

One year ago: Tribesman on the isolated island of North Sentinel, between India and Southeast Asia, were seen dragging and burying the body of American missionary John Allen Chau, who had reached the island the previous day despite a ban imposed by India's government. Argentina's navy announced that searchers had found a submarine that disappeared a year earlier with 44 crewmen aboard; the government said it would be unable to recover the vessel. President Donald Trump acknowledged Californians suffering from twin tragedies, walking through the ashes of a mobile home park in a small northern town virtually destroyed by a wildfire and consoling people grieving after a mass shooting at a bar outside Los Angeles. Democrat Andrew Gillum, Florida's first black nominee for governor, conceded defeat and congratulated Republican Ron DeSantis; Gillum trailed DeSantis by more than 30,000 votes following a machine recount.

Today's Birthdays: Sen. James Inhofe (IHN'-hahf), R-Okla., is 85. Rock musician Gerry McGee (The Ventures) is 82. Singer Gordon Lightfoot is 81. Singer-songwriter Bob Gaudio (GOW'-dee-oh) is 78. Movie director Martin Scorsese (skor-SEH'-see) is 77. Actress Lauren Hutton is 76. Actor-director Danny DeVito is 75. "Saturday Night Live" producer Lorne Michaels is 75. Baseball Hall of Famer Tom Seaver is 75. Movie director Roland Joffe is 74. Former Democratic National Chairman Howard Dean is 71. Former House Speaker John Boehner (BAY'-nur) is 70. Actor Stephen Root is 68. Rock musician Jim Babjak (The Smithereens) is 62. Actress Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio is 61. Actor William Moses is 60. Entertainer RuPaul is 59. Gospel musician Joey Williams is 57. Actor Dylan Walsh is 56. Former National Security Adviser Susan Rice is 55. Actress Sophie Marceau (mahr-SOH') is 53. Actress-model Daisy Fuentes is 53. Blues singer/musician Tab Benoit (behn-WAH') is 52. Rhythm-and-blues singer Ronnie DeVoe (New Edition; Bell Biv DeVoe) is 52. Rock musician Ben Wilson (Blues Traveler) is 52. Actor David Ramsey is 48. Actor Leonard Roberts is 47. Actress Leslie Bibb is 46. Actor Brandon Call is 43. Country singer Aaron Lines is 42. Actress Rachel McAdams is 41. Rock musician Isaac Hanson (Hanson) is 39. Milwaukee Brewers outfielder Ryan Braun is 36. Actor Justin Cooper is 31. Musician Reid Perry (The Band Perry) is 31. Actress Raquel Castro is 25.

Thought for Today: "The upper classes are merely a nation's past; the middle class is its future." — Ayn Rand, Russian-American author (1905-1982).

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